



Forestry

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EXTENSION

WSU North Puget Sound Extension Forestry E-Newsletter

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Forester's Notes

Here we are in June and this is the first newsletter of the year. This is a testament to how busy we have been with programs. We are almost done with our third Coached Planning series, we are halfway through our four forest health and fire workshops, and we completed two major mail surveys. It also is a testament to the fact that I've been sidelined a lot with some personal health issues that have dogged me for the past four months (nothing serious—I just haven't been able to keep up my usual frenetic pace). But I digress.

In the midst of all this, I've lost time track of time and days. Last Thursday my father wished me a "happy tenth" and I had no idea what he was talking about. I finally realized it was exactly ten years prior that I had started this job. My coworkers can't believe they have put up with me for

that long! A lot has changed over the past ten years. The world has changed significantly. I have changed, the WSU Extension organization has changed, and your lives have changed. Our scientific understanding of how forests work has changed, as has the way we do education. We hardly did anything online back then, most of us still had flip phones, and I think social media consisted of teenagers using Myspace.

Many of these changes have been very good. I do feel some sense of loss, though. As a society we have retreated deeper into our “devices.” Enormous ultra-high-definition televisions and powerful gaming PCs promise more “realistic” media experiences. It seems that everything is about being realistic. We live the time of virtual reality, supposedly more realistic video games, and endless “reality” TV shows that are anything but real. What is really telling is how the cable company advertises these days. Their commercials show people watching TV everywhere in their house, including the closet and the bathroom. Or they show people watching TV on a device in the middle of nowhere. Do you really want television shows following you into the woods? The tagline is something like “TV everywhere is awesome.” Do you believe that?

My observation is that the more we strive for “realistic,” the further we get from actual reality. We settle for a lot of fake. Just read the ingredients list on some processed “foods” and you’ll see what I mean. “Made with REAL cheese.” “Contains X% REAL fruit juice!” The fact that the inclusion of anything actually resembling food is called out as if it should be surprising is a sad commentary.

For myself, I have been trying to do a better job of seeking out and appreciating what’s real—experiencing the world as it is rather than how it’s displayed on a screen. I have had some great real experiences recently. I got to visit the Eiffel Tower (the actual one, not some smaller scale replica in Las Vegas or Disney World). It was something I had always wanted to do. While there in Paris, I visited several art museums, including the Louvre where I saw the actual Mona Lisa (it’s really small!). I also got to see some of Monet’s work, including, of course, the water lilies. When I got home I got to see U2 when they came to Seattle—not a recording, video, or cover band, but the real deal.

Even authentic art, though, whether original paintings or live, original music, is ultimately a representation of something else—a person, place, feeling, or idea. That’s why I think the highlight of my time in France was visiting Monet’s estate at Giverny. There I saw the actual pond, stood on the little bridge, and saw the actual water lilies that still grow there.

I think my epiphany of appreciating that which is real hit me most profoundly several months ago. It was the end of December and I was taking down our Christmas tree. It was a beautiful noble fir, which is my favorite. Once the ornaments and lights were off, I touched and marveled at the foliage and really focused on its authenticity—this was no plastic tree. No, I am not making any commentary or judgement on real vs. artificial trees, I was simply enjoying a bit of nature right there in my living room.

My point is this—how do we stay grounded in this crazy time when the line between real and fake has become so badly blurred? Not only are we as a society immersed in entertainment media, but when we pull out of our fantasy worlds to take in what’s going on in the real world, we are bombarded with terms like fake news and alternative facts. Press briefings start to seem just as fictional as Game of Thrones. Scientists and journalists are no longer trusted. Conspiracy theories abound. Hard evidence (or the complete lack thereof) is no longer relevant. People we consider trustworthy tell us opposite things. Can we trust anyone anymore? Are the images and storylines we are presented with real, fake, or just presented out of context?

Thinking about that moment with my Christmas tree and the quiet time I spent in Monet’s gardens, I think our forests can help provide us with some grounding. Time spent on your tree farm or in your backyard woods, whether doing chores or just observing nature’s small gifts and listening to the wind in the tree tops, is an experience that is as real as it gets. No politician, cable news pundit, social media rumor, or internet meme can diminish the realness of those moments. I hope you are able to spend quality time with your trees, fully experience your forest, and hold onto those moments to keep yourself grounded in reality.

Kevin W. Zobrist
Associate Professor, Extension Forestry
Serving the North Puget Sound Area

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Free workshops on forest health and fire risk reduction

Are you noticing dead or dying trees? Are you seeing tree issues that you haven’t seen before? Western Washington has seen an increase in tree mortality over the past few years. Join us for one of our FREE community workshops to learn about why trees are dying, what you can do to improve the health of trees on your property, and how to reduce fire risk.

Experts from Washington State University and the Washington Department of Natural Resources will talk about:

- Why trees die
- How and when trees can be saved
- Preventing problems before they start
- How to tell the difference between insect, disease, and weather damage



- How tree-killing insects and diseases spread
- How to tell the difference between normal cycles of tree death vs. a serious or emerging threat
- Practical tips on how to improve the chance of your home or cabin surviving a wildfire, which is a serious risk in western Washington forests, especially in foothill communities.

Please join us for these free workshops and bring a friend or neighbor. RSVP is appreciated (but not required). Light refreshments will be provided.

Remaining dates:

- **Wednesday June 7th:** 6:00 – 8:00 PM at the **Camano Island Multipurpose Center** (forest health portion only; fire will not be covered at this one)
- **Thursday June 8th:** 6:00 – 9:00 PM at the **North Bend Library**

For details and RSVP, please visit <http://forestry.wsu.edu/nps/events/foresthealth/> or call Kelsey Ketcheson at 206-263-1128.

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2017 Forest Owner Field Days

The weather is turning warm and it is time to start thinking about summer field days. We have several Field Day options for you:

- **North Puget Sound Regional Field Day**
 - July 22nd
 - Whatcom County, just a short distance east of I-5 from Bellingham
 - <http://forestry.wsu.edu/nps/events/fieldday/>
- **Vashon Mini Field Day**
 - August 5th
 - Agren Park
 - <http://forestry.wsu.edu/nps/events/vashon/>
- **Whidbey Island Mini Field Day**
 - September 9th
 - Clinton
 - <http://forestry.wsu.edu/nps/events/whidbey/>



Each Field Day will feature forestry specialists from around the region offering classes, workshops, demonstrations, tours, and resources on a variety of topics throughout the day for forest owners of all skill levels (from “newbie” to seasoned veteran). There will also be vendor exhibits from forestry agencies, organizations, and other resource and equipment providers that will allow participants to network with professionals in addition to other forest owners. Whether you have just a couple wooded acres or a large forest tract, if you have trees on your property, this field day is for you.

Typical topics include:

- Animal damage control
- Fire risk reduction
- Forest measurements
- Forest soils
- GPS use
- Insects and diseases
- Invasive weed control
- Pruning
- Shiitake mushroom cultivation
- Thinning
- Tree and plant ID
- Wildlife habitat



Complete schedules will be posted at each respective field day website soon.

Other 2017 regional field days (please visit <http://forestry.wsu.edu/> for details):

- SE WA Field Day – June 24th in Dayton, WA
- ID-NE WA Field Day – July 15th in Athol, ID
- SW WA Field Day – August 19th in Oakville, WA

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2017 Coached Planning



Is your forest a recognized Stewardship Forest? Do you have the sign and the matching hats? Do you want to know why people say this is the best class they've ever taken? Would you like to walk through your woods with a service forester and learn about everything that is going on in your forest? Now is your chance—fall Coached Planning classes are coming up in September.

Coached Planning is our flagship program. This comprehensive, university-based forestry class will help you get the most out of the land you love. Whether you have just a few acres of woods or a large forest tract, if you have trees on your property, this class is for you.

Topics covered include:

- How do you know if your trees are healthy? What should you do if they aren't?
- What types of trees do you have? Does your forest look like a "mess"?
- Are characteristics of your property attracting or repelling the wildlife you enjoy? What can you do if wildlife cause damage?
- When should you worry about trees being hazards?
- How do you know if your trees need to be thinned, and how do you go about it?
- Are invasive and noxious weeds taking over your underbrush? What are the risks and what can you do about it?
- What kind of soil do you have and how does that affect what grows?
- What is the risk of wildfire on your property?

Save money, too:

As part of this class we will "coach" you in the writing of your own simple forestry plan that may qualify you for property tax reductions or conservation cost-share grants.

Remaining 2017 Classes:

- **Preston – Fall 2017:** Tuesdays starting September 12th. For details and registration, visit <http://forestry.wsu.edu/nps/events/cppreston/>.
- **Sedro Woolley – Fall 2017:** Thursdays starting October 5th. For details and registration, visit <http://forestry.wsu.edu/nps/events/cpskagit/>.

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Upcoming Weed Control and Alder Management Programs

Save these dates! We have some new programs coming up to address some current hot topics for forest landowners:

- **Invasive weed management field practicum #1**
 - August 12, 2017
 - Kent, WA

- **Invasive weed management field practicum #2**
 - September 16, 2017
 - Arlington, WA

- **Two-day alder management symposium for landowners**
 - October 6-7, 2017
 - Arlington, WA

Details and registration will be coming soon. Watch our website and the next edition of this newsletter.

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Other Educational Opportunities

Please note: any non-WSU events are listed for informational purposes with no implied endorsement by WSU.

Beaver Workshop – June 20, 2017 in Carnation.

Beavers are amazing creatures, but sometimes they can cause serious problems for farm and forest owners. There is a fair amount of confusion regarding what can and cannot be done to remedy these types of situations. Attend a free workshop focusing on helping landowners find appropriate solution for their unique beaver problems. The workshop is sponsored by WSU Extension, King Conservation District, and King County. Representatives from King and Snohomish Conservation Districts, Beavers Northwest, The Tulalip Tribes, Snohomish County Surface Water Management, Snoqualmie Watershed Improvement District, King County Water and Land Resources, and Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife will be there to share the options their programs offer and help answer questions. The workshop is free, but space is limited and pre-registration is required. For details and registration, visit <http://extension.wsu.edu/king/event/gotbeavers/> or call Kate Ryan at 425-357-6024.

Energy Opportunities for Woody Biomass – June 24, 2017 in Friday Harbor

Woody biomass in densely stocked San Juan forests may present an opportunity to support local energy needs. The Northwest Natural Resources Group (NNRG) is hosting a free workshop that will discuss examples of community-based energy projects from throughout the Pacific Northwest. Learn about the cost-effective methods for converting biomass into energy to heat and power our houses, businesses, and communities. For details and registration, visit <http://www.nnrg.org/energy-opportunities-for-woody-biomass/> or call NNRG at 360-316-9317

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Funding Update

Just an FYI (for informational purposes only), the budget proposed by the Trump Administration eliminates the key federal funding for Extension Forestry programs nationwide, including ours. Many of the programs and resources we offer you are funded by this, so a chunk of our programs and services to you would be going away. It is now up to Congress to accept or revise these changes. I do not have any information beyond that. More information may be available through your congressman or U.S. senator.

County-level funding is up for renewal at the end of this year in three of our counties: San Juan, Skagit, and Snohomish. The county-level funding is what determines which counties we offer programs in. We have appreciated the years of generous support from these counties and are looking forward to continuing to partner with them and offer programs and services in these counties.

The San Juan County Council and Skagit County Board of Commissioners will consider ongoing funding for the Extension Forestry program (along with every other county program) in these respective counties when they start their 2018 budgeting process. More information about this process may be available from the councilmember or commissioner representing your local district. They have been big advocates for this program and we look forward to working with them far into the future.

Funding from Snohomish County comes through a unique partnership with the Surface Water Management (SWM) Division in recognition that forest owners protect water quality through good forest stewardship and that most of forest landowners are in unincorporated areas and thus contribute surface water management fees annually. SWM has been an amazing partner who goes beyond funding by also providing expertise and moral support in program planning and delivery. We hope to have the opportunity to partner with them once again in 2018.

The San Juan Islands and Snohomish Conservation Districts also provide a significant part of our county-level funding, supporting our programs for the San Juan Islands, Snohomish County, and

Camano Island. They too will be looking at funding renewal options for next year. Both Districts have been incredibly supportive of this program and wonderful partners to work with to serve you.

Funding from King County, King Conservation District, Island County, and Whatcom County will last through 2018. These are more examples of great partners to work with.

We are very thankful for ALL of the funding support folks mentioned above. We couldn't do any of this without them, and if I could somehow transmit applause through the newsletter, I would (I am clapping anyway as I wrap up this paragraph).

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Forest Health Alerts

- State forest health experts have found evidence that foliar pathogens called Rhizoctonia caused western hemlock defoliation around western Washington. The understory trees and the lower crowns of overstory trees seem to be particularly effective. If you see possible evidence of this on your hemlock trees, please contact Amy Ramsey at the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR): amy.ramsey@dnr.wa.gov.
- There are invasive insects from South America called greenhouse thrips that are beginning to cause damage to salal in Pacific Northwest forests. It was thought that these insects could not survive outside protected greenhouse environments, but damage is showing up along the southern Oregon coast and may impact our forests at some point. If you see unusual salal damage with silvery or bleached leaves, please send me a photo.

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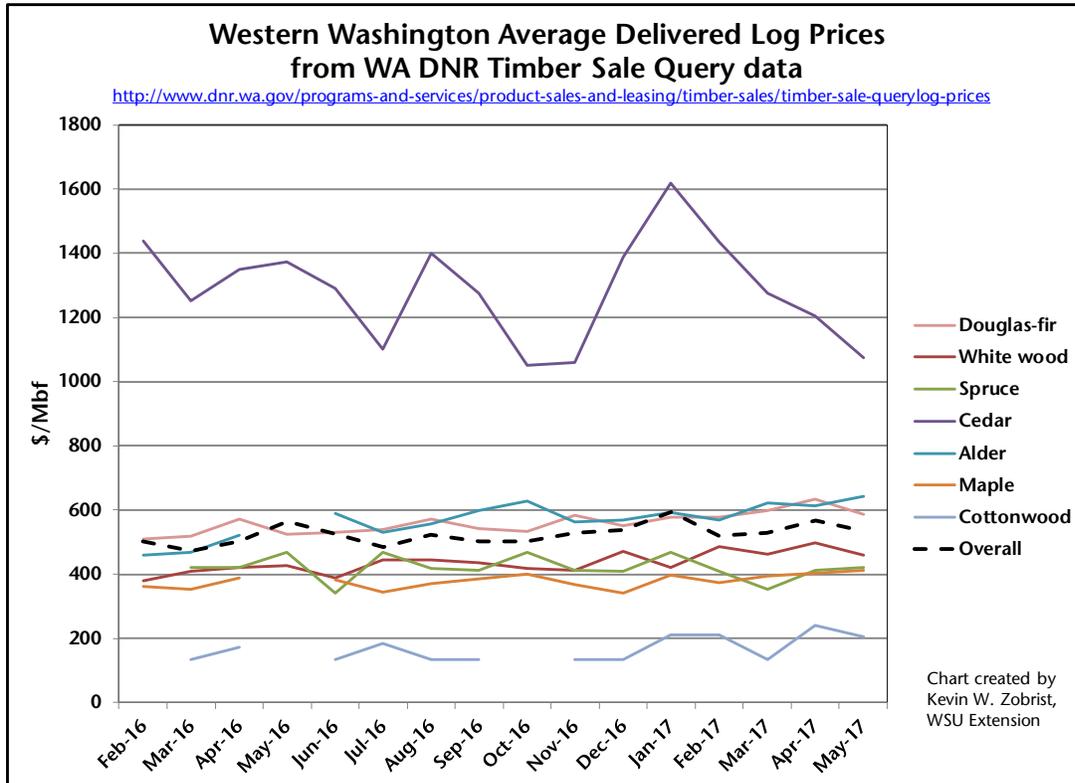
Market Update

Here is the latest news on log prices in Western Washington based on data provided by our friends at DNR in their monthly Timber Sale Query reports.

<http://www.dnr.wa.gov/programs-and-services/product-sales-and-leasing/timber-sales/timber-sale-querylog-prices>)

Prices for Douglas-fir and red alder have remained strong this year. Cedar had a big peak at the beginning of the year but then has steadily declined. For a more in-depth analysis of current

and forecasted log prices, you can subscribe to DNR's "SFLO News" e-newsletter at <http://dnr.us8.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=686976a400749d61e09522350&id=c8cf71d34a>.



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Tidbits

- The summer edition of Forest Stewardship Notes is now available at: <https://foreststewardshipnotes.wordpress.com/2017/06/>. There is some great information on identifying wildlife signs (scat, tracks, etc.), managing burn piles, and livestock grazing in forests. You can subscribe to Forest Stewardship Notes at <http://dnr.us8.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=686976a400749d61e09522350&id=c8cf71d34a>.
- Tom Westergreen, tree farmer and tree farm inspector from Whatcom County, was named National Inspector of the Year 2017 by the American Tree Farm System. Tom also was awarded the WSU Extension Forestry Ron Munro Education Service Award for his many contributions to this program, including hosting events, putting in many volunteer hours (probably more than he realizes!) to assist with our programs, and building community support. Congratulations, Tom!

- Mike Blais received the WSU Extension Forestry Owens Educational Achievement Award this year. Mike is committed to increasing his forestry knowledge as a landowner, and he has attended more than 15 of our programs over the past ten years. Way to go Mike!

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Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension office. Reasonable accommodations for the events described above will be made for persons with disabilities and special needs who contact us at the address above at least two weeks prior to the event.