

WASHINGTON FARM FORESTRY ASSOCIATION

Landowner News JAN / FEB 2010

THE VOICE OF THE SMALL FOREST LANDOWNERS IN WASHINGTON STATE

Our Current Political Realities

In the last issue of the *Landowner News*, we shared how Washington State's Forest Policy failure led our association to seek relief through legislation. Many of you responded by calling or emailing legislative representatives and senators regarding the two bills that the WFFA introduced, providing reasonable ways for the state to save millions of dollars annually, while still protecting our clean water and fish.

As a result of your efforts, the House and the Senate Natural Resource Committees have become more aware of the depth of our issue and have kept it alive in a new bill, **SB 6776**. This bill would create a legislative study group to focus on resolution by Sept. 15, 2010. By the time this prints, we should know if that bill will survive.

As thankful as we are to have this out of the Forest & Fish Policy arena, where it has labored for the past ten years, we are still facing overwhelming political realities. The state is struggling to pay, as promised, for the expensive and oversized buffers that the Forest & Fish Law requires you to leave streamside. Now the current administration may decide not to pay. They are using the "Letter of the Law," which states that they may pay "When funds are available." This does not meet the promise, nor the spirit of the F&F law. This session, Senator Fraser (22nd District) introduced a bill that would have essentially taken the Forest Riparian Easement Program (FREP) away from tree farmers. That bill did not pass through committee.

The WFFA offered a legitimate option to reduce FREP with a "20 Acre Harvest Rule." It would reduce our harvest size, for smaller buffers on smaller streams. We have valid science to back this up. In response, Commissioner Goldmark's office has stated that, "After discussions with the federal government, it is not the intent of the current administration to make any changes to the current buffers." So now it seems that their efforts are to just try and reduce the number of tree farmers who are eligible for FREP.

In 2005, when the Statewide Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) that brought these F&F rules was signed, Governor Gregoire lifted up this HCP and the FREP program as a "One of a kind in the nation." She said, "This is an approach that engages local citizens and ignites interest in the long-term environmental health *and economic sustainability* of the Northwest." We predict that if the State of Washington attempts to *take* all

of the trees that tree farmers have been asked to leave in these oversized buffers, Governor Gregoire and the citizens of the State of Washington, will not achieve ***either*** of those two goals!

Landowner News is the official newsletter of the Washington Farm Forestry Association.

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Call To Reserve Your Room At Alderbrook For The Annual Meeting

The Alderbrook Resort and Spa is offering a special room rate for attendees of the WFFA Annual Meeting. Call the resort directly for reservations: 800-622-9370.

Reservations must be made by March 1, 2010 (and mention WFFA) to get the discounted price of \$70 per night for hotel rooms (double occupancy) or \$110 per night for cabins which sleep up to four adults and two children.

You can learn more about this beautiful location at: <http://www.alderbrookresort.com/>

For more information about the 2010 Annual meeting, please call or email Howard Wilson at 253-579-2489 or wilsonhs@aol.com.

From the President

It's no secret that we are in challenging times for the wood products industry. If you own your tree farm for simply the esthetic benefits, then you may not be much concerned. But for guys like me who make my living off our family's timber, it's been a tough couple of years.

While we have adjusted our harvest level down in the depressed log and lumber, we still need some harvest each year to stay afloat. This makes marketing all the more important. Here are a few tips I have picked up over the years.

1) *Have a valid Forest Practices harvesting permit at all times.* If you have larger or more diverse timberlands, that might mean having several different permits. The best answer is to have an alternate plan for all your timberlands with an accompanying long-term permit. This gives you quick options if a certain market opens up. Just a few years ago, maple pulp shot up to over \$60/ton (about three times its normal value). That market lasted less than three months, then collapsed.

2) *Have a great relationship with your logger.* In a suddenly rising market, his phone will ring off the hook. It would be nice if he is willing to move you to the front of the line because you've given him work when times were slow.

3) *Have a good relationship with local log buyers.* They may be

willing to contact you if they get a special order or simply need more wood.

4) *If you aren't actively involved in the management of your tree farm, then these duties may fall to your forestry consultant. Talk to them frequently.* Ask about current markets and what they think may happen in the next year or two. Be sure your consultant knows your management plans, especially if those change for any reason. *And introduce them to the next generation.* I recommend an annual family/forestry consultant meeting to keep everyone on the same page.

Your forestland is a tremendous resource to you, your family and your community. With good stewardship it can continue to be so *for generations to come!*

Bob Brink

President

WFFA Annual Meeting “The Original Green” April 25 & 26, 2010

The 2010 program begins Sunday afternoon, April 25th at the Hama Hama Tree Farm near Eldon, Washington. Hama Hama Tree Farm is proud to be the *2008 Washington State Outstanding Tree Farm of the Year*. Come tour this beautiful tree farm and enjoy a dinner of prime rib and fresh oysters at Hama Hama. Then plan to attend a social at Alderbrook Resort and Spa on Sunday evening.

Monday's program continues at Alderbrook. The WFFA General Membership Meeting starts at 8:30 a.m. In the morning program, experts will share what is new in forestry. We will celebrate the Tree Farm winners at a special luncheon. An environmental panel will take your questions in the afternoon. The day wraps up with the awards program at 4:20 p.m.

To register, use your online or mailed registration packets. If you have not received a packet, please contact the WFFA 360-736-5750 or email info@wafarmforestry.com.

Take Advantage Of New Membership Outreach Program

The WFFA Executive Board has implemented a new membership outreach program to allow members to call into the State officers and staff with questions and comments.

In 2010, these conference calls will take place **10:30 AM to Noon** on the following dates:

- **APRIL 9**
- **JULY 9**
- **OCTOBER 8**

Call **1-800-882-3610** and use the following guest code when prompted: **9498903#**.

This is open to any member of the WFFA. In fairness to all callers, a limit of two minutes will be given to ask your question or give your comment. Then, time will be allowed for a dialogue between officers, staff and the caller.

Consider this an audio blog and give it a try!

Regional Tree Farm Nominee

The Mueller-Sack Tree Farm is moving on to the Washington Tree Farm Competition. The Tree Farm took home the 2009 Washington Outstanding Tree Farm of the Year State Award. The 203-acres was certified as Tree Farm # 90 the same year it was purchased by Stan Mueller and John Sack in 1976. At the time of acquisition, it was mostly pasture and alder. With lots of hard work and a three stage conversion process, it is now a fine example of a Working Tree Farm. *Congratulations Stan and John!*

2010 OTFY to be Announced

The Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year will be announced at the 2010 WFFA Annual Meeting. There are two nominees, owners Earl and David Ingebright of the Valhalla Tree Farm and owners John MacRae and Candance Ranney of the MacRae Family Tree Farm.

Earl and David have 70 acres of certified woodlands that have been in the WTFP program for 40 years. John and Candance have 240+ acres of certified woodlands that have been in the WTFP program for 57 years. Special recognition will also go to the OTFY for the 2008 Lewis County Chapter winner, Jim and Tricia Murphy and OTFY for the 2008 Clark County Chapter winner Charlie Swift.

Vote for 2010 Officers

Below is the slate of officers for 2010 to be voted on at the 8 a.m. General Membership meeting. Nominations will also be taken from the floor.

President: **Sam Comstock**

1st VP: **Steve Stinson**

2nd VP: **Matt Hobbs**

Secretary: **Michelle Blake**

Treasurer: **Bill Scheer**

Forest Practices Board Simplifies Application Process For Small Forest Landowners

OLYMPIA – The Forest Practices Board last week approved an alternate plan template, simplifying the way small forest landowners set the riparian (streamside) buffers required adjacent to fish-bearing streams when harvesting timber in western Washington.

Previously, owners of small forestlands (those harvesting less than two million board feet of timber in a year) in western Washington were required to conduct a multi-step process within the streamside areas to determine the width of no-harvest buffer zones around fish-bearing streams. Computing the zones under the old criteria often required expert outside help, and the results could be open to different interpretations. The new rules will base the width of these ‘no-cut’ buffers on the riparian area’s Forest Site Class. Site Classes range from Class I sites, where trees grow best, to Class V sites, where trees grow the slowest.

The new alternate plan template for small forest landowners in western Washington will go into effect as soon as the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) develops the Fixed Width Riparian Buffer form to be attached to the Forest Practices Application expected in early March.

Getting To Know... WFFA First VP–Sam Comstock

As the current First Vice-President of the WFFA, I would like to introduce myself. My wife, Joy and I live on a fifty-acre patch in North Mason County and have been members of the Olympic Chapter since 1990.

Although I am retired Federal Civil Service and a past Labor Union Officer, I am from the *old school*: I believe in eight hours work for eight hours pay. I value my independence and owning and managing forestland gives me a sense of wellbeing that I cherish.

I grew up on one end of an old cross cut falling saw, since we heated with wood. As a result, my affinity for the out-of-doors was blended with the realization that our survival depended on those resources.

I’ve been asked to answer the following questions that might reveal my sentiments.

Q: Do I think President Obama’s Stimulus Program would bring more value to Washington State and the Nation?

A: Obviously it would put more money in someone's pocket, but at whose expense? Often times you do a disservice to people by giving them too much. I simply wouldn't put myself in a position that I would require such aid and to accept it would potentially compromise my core beliefs. I've come out on the short end of bankruptcies precipitated by major banks and have no empathy for them.

Q: What would be my top goal as WFFA President?

A: Every incoming president is required to have an agenda. Items might include membership, training, reorganization, etc. My goal is to let the world know that we are the good guys, the greenest of the green. We are actually the progressives of our time.

I believe that ours is an investment and labor of love that stands unique and unequalled. There is already a lot of movement in the direction of recognition of working forests, and I hope to capitalize on it through outreach programs and events. One good example is the recent Forest Festival in Port Gamble in which the Olympic Chapter participated.

We can also strengthen our ties with likeminded groups in order to promote our story. We can even further engage those who have been our adversaries in the past.

Below are three reasons why my wife, Joy and I volunteer our time to WFFA:

- It puts us in contact with likeminded folks who have similar values. They keep us sane.
- We are willing to contribute time in addition to our membership dollars in order to better know who is in charge and how they are representing our interests.
- Holding an office puts us in direct contact with other numerous volunteers who have a wealth of knowledge and expertise.

*Sincerely, Sam Comstock
First Vice-President WFFA, 10/15/09*

Wood & Steel By Gerald Hilden

Managing a timber crop also includes managing steel. The harvest phase is where the two come together. A passive tree farmer will locate a willing logger and get the job done. Some flexibility is lost when you don't have your own equipment. The job or sale has to be big enough to induce a logger to come on board with you. If you have a few blow downs to clean up or dead standing trees to salvage, without some steel of your own, the

value is lost.

Now is a good time to buy that small crawler or rubber tired skidder that would be handy to have around the farm. With the current downturn, there is a lot of iron out there for sale. Many of the older skidders were made of generic parts and are fairly uncomplicated mechanically. Modern loaders and skidders are hydraulic, and this is where most of the problems occur. Locating and repairing hydraulic leaks will be your major maintenance chore. Pins and bushings are probably the next category to overcome.

I personally acquired a thoroughly trashed skidder and loader and over a couple of years went hand-over-hand through its problems, saving thousands of dollars over new. In these days of contract loggers owning \$450,000 feller/bunchers, there still is a niche for landowners to skid their own logs and produce added value with firewood and saw timber that might have been left on the ground to rot.

When shopping for the equipment you need, I would avoid machinery with two stroke diesels, as they are annoyingly loud. When looking at loaders, consider its lift ability. You need enough power to lift a log trailer off the truck. Anything less than that is not worth buying. Criteria for skidders include diesel power, planetary rear ends for maximum traction, blade and a winch with at least 20,000 lbs. of line pull.

The main points to consider in gaining a little more control of your wood lot is a tolerance for some grease under the fingernails, some basic mechanic skills, which is more about a positive attitude to do the work, and to ask questions about what you don't understand. A few hand tools will handle most problems you incur.

Wholesale lumber prices are moving up, so now might be the time to buy some iron and become an active, fully integrated tree farmer.

Gerald Hilden of Darlin' Creek Tree Farm is an active member of the South Sound Chapter of the Washington Farm Forestry Association.

2009 WFFA Chapter Tree Farmers of the Year

• **WHATCOM COUNTY CHAPTER** Tree Farmer of the Year goes to The Smith family, including Doug and Maralee Smith and Sara and Kevin Brown.

Doug and Maralee purchased 63 acres of neglected farm and forested land and joined the Farm Forestry Association in 1983 to learn more about taking care of the trees and soon began taking an active role in the Whatcom County Chapter.

Doug held the office of Chapter President for four years, and daughter Sara was Chapter President for three years.

- **UPPER PUGET SOUND CHAPTER** Tree Farmer of the Year goes to the Valhalla Tree Farm. The Valhalla Tree Farm has been in the Ingebright family for close to 50 years. Earl and David Ingebright have managed it with a multiple-use philosophy with a strong emphasis on maintaining a natural setting. For more information, see their website at <http://www.valhallatreefarm.com>.

- **LEWIS COUNTY CHAPTER** Tree Farmers of the Year goes to Bryon and Donna Loucks. Bryon and Donna purchased their first 40 acres of forest land in 1979 after it had been clearcut, and they worked hard for years to get seedlings established through a serious scotchbroom problem. In 1987 they purchased a 160 acre parcel containing 120 acres of young plantations and 40 acres of older timber. Since then, they have actively managed both parcels with pre-commercial thinning, pruning, commercial thinning, and are now conducting regeneration harvests when market conditions are favorable.

Both Bryon and Donna have been active in the Lewis County Farm Forestry Association, the Washington Farm Forestry Association, and the Washington Tree Farm Program, and Bryon, as a professional forester, has been active in the Society of American Foresters.

Amphibians – Secrets Of The Invisible Night Crew *By Ed Styskel*

It's a dark and stormy night. The sky is black as ink and all surroundings are lost in the gloom. Warm rain falls to earth in lapping waves, sometimes as gentle mist, then as lashing torrents, never signaling the shift in fortune. You're walking back to the pickup in the downpour and you stop to rest on a stump. The setting is peaceful, even mystical. Suddenly, your full attention darts to the flashlighted ground near your feet. A dark shiny reflection surprises you enough to imagine the worst—poisonous snake...coyote trap...marijuana garden tripwire.

Not to worry. It's only a three inch-long salamander. This little critter is the most abundant amphibian within Washington forests. Amphibians are vertebrates that mostly start life in the water, then change form to either remain there or move to land for adult life. Washington amphibians include 13 species of salamanders, one newt, 11 frogs, and two toads.

Depending on species, salamanders / newts may go through up to four stages of growth form: egg, hatchling, larva, and juvenile/adult. A small number of species live yearlong only in cold seeps or fast-moving water.

Other species are terrestrial except during reproduction when they lay eggs and grow to larva in slow-moving or still waters. Another group is entirely terrestrial and breeds in logs or rock talus. Many terrestrial species live underground in deep forest litter, rodent burrows, root cavities, or talus during dry or cold weather, but may come to the surface in the rainy season to forage. Nearly all species are nocturnal when above ground.

Salamanders/newts in all their forms prey on aquatic insects, ants, termites, centipedes, millipedes, or other bugs. Adults will eat any animal that fits in their mouth, including smaller forms of themselves. This may be why females of yearlong terrestrial salamanders guard their eggs until hatching. Some salamanders ooze white drops of toxin from skin glands when alarmed, but only the Rough-Skin Newt is considered poisonous to humans.

All frog/toad species require water for egg-laying. The Northern Leopard Frog and Oregon Spotted Frog are the only amphibians having Endangered or Threatened status in Washington. The Northern Leopard Frog is known from nine counties: Asotin, Benton, Grant, Kitsap, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Walla Walla, and Whitman. The Oregon Spotted Frog has been found in 8 counties: Clark, King, Klickitat, Pierce, Skagit, Skamania, Snohomish, and Thurston. Both species live in marshes, ponds, lake edges, or slow-moving streams with much aquatic vegetation. The leopard frog may venture onto dry land near water; the spotted frog is less likely to do so. Calls by both frogs may occur in daylight from February to April.

In addition to their ecological value, amphibians have potential to benefit human health. Chemical compounds that amphibians secrete from their skin glands to prevent infection and deter predators are being studied for human use as antibiotics. And the ability of some frogs and toads to survive in a dormant state after freezing solid may have application in transplanting human organs.

Human activities that can be harmful to amphibians include:

- (1) altering water or soil-moisture characteristics,
- (2) disturbing or removing surface woody debris,
- (3) applying pesticides especially if contamination can leach offsite,
- (4) introducing predatory non-native animals (e.g. bullfrog, game-fish, etc.)

An excellent book for identifying amphibians is by Corkran and Thoms (1996). To survey for salamanders/newts, put out multiple cover boards and check under them during the wet season. "Cover boards" can be cedar shingles and scraps of lumber or plywood. Larger size and quantity

is better. Place them at intervals on shaded, damp ground next to water if possible. It's illegal to keep most wildlife of the state, so pre-position a reference object of known size on the ground under the board. Have a camera ready to snap close photos as the cover is lifted, since most amphibians scoot when uncovered. Considering that a salamander/newt is small—most are 3-4 inches long, though two species reach 10-11 inches—it's wise to experiment at finding an optimum camera distance above the cover board.

To survey for frogs/toads, listen for their calls at night (or daylight for some) during the breeding season, generally January – May but varying by species. Some species are audible from a distance, while others are barely heard within a few feet. Only the Coastal Tailed Frog and Rocky Mountain Tailed frog make no calls audible to the human ear. Frog and toad recordings are available for purchase on CD or tape by Davidson (1995). The white light of a flashlight at night can spook amphibians to flee or hide, so try a dim red light instead.

References

Corkran, Charlotte C., and Chris Toms. 1996. Amphibians of Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia: A Field Identification Guide. Lone Pine Publishing, Renton, WA. 175 pages.

Davidson, Carlos. 1995. Frog & Toad Calls of the Pacific Coast: Vanishing Voices. Library of Natural Sounds, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

Washington Department of Natural Resources. 2010. Washington Herp Atlas: Checklist of Washington Amphibians and Reptiles. On the Internet at <http://www1.dnr.wa.gov/nhp/refdesk/herp/speciesmain.html>.

Ed Styskel is a wildlife biologist, a tree farmer in Pend Oreille County, and a member of the Washington Farm Forestry Association. Ed advises the Association as a volunteer on the 'Northwest Woodlands' Magazine committee. He can be reached at esi@bendnet.com

Welcome To Our New WFFA Members!

COWLITZ

Jared Smith

Wayne & Kelly Truscinski

LEWIS

Morris & Phyllis Freeman

David Rockwood

Amy Rockwood Daniele

NE WASHINGTON
Olga Mill

PIERCE
Donald G. Ketcham, Jr.
Tim & Amy Miller

SOUTH SOUND
Nick & Deanna Miller

SPOKANE
Douglas & Barbara Waali

UPS
Deborah Caruso

WHATCOM
Myrle & Virginia Foster
Scott Kleinhuizen & Debi Berilla

From the Executive Director's Desk

Back in my scuba diving days, spent diving along the Oregon and Washington coastlines and Straits of Juan De Fuca, where the tides and the currents decided when and where we could dive, my dive partners and I had a saying, "The tide waits for no man!" And now, as we close in on the first legislative session in which I have fully engaged, I can say that with legislation, "Time also waits for no man (or woman)!" Legislative bills take on a life of their own and even the best of ideas can falter and die. Good timing is as crucial as good substance.

I am grateful to all of you who took the time to call or write your legislative representatives, or testify at a hearing, as requested in our last newsletter. It was truly a grassroots outreach. Those of you who made the effort can be proud that you helped "Protect the liberty of those who will follow us."

Once the dust clears from this year's legislative efforts, it will be time for the Washington Farm Forestry Association leadership to take another serious look at our capabilities. As presented at this month's Executive Board meeting, we cannot be all things to all tree farmers. Non-profits, like most businesses, must allow their budgets to dictate what they are capable of achieving. Our future will be decided by our dues-paying membership.

A WFFA membership committee is currently meeting to discuss creative

ways to ensure that our dues structure and process is best serving this association. They have also engaged the WFFA Chapters in a membership drive and outreach, to provide each of you with the tools to personally contact your friends, neighbors, or family and ask them to join with us. Membership growth is the logical way that we will maintain this association “For tree farmers and by tree farmers” and ensure it will survive to continue to meet our member’s educational and legislative requests. To do so will take not just some other members involvement, but each of you!

Once again I am proud of the packed House hearing room and testimony that many of you provided for our association. You can be proud of the way that this association continues to deal with our issues and concerns. Those issues, so intuitive to you, are now on the minds of your state legislators and decision makers. Thank you for your support and for continuing to promote “*Family Forests for the Generations to Come.*”

Treefully,

Rick Dunning,
Executive Director

Contact Us!

Phone: (360) 736-5750

Fax: (360) 736-2704

E-mail: info@wafarmforestry.com