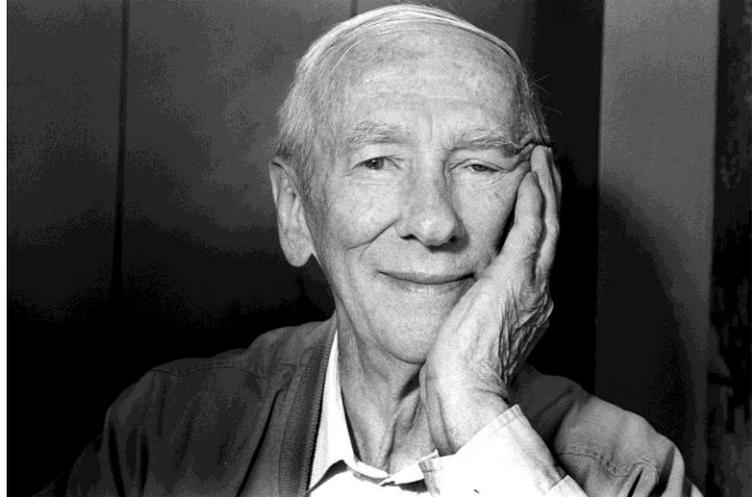


Pierce County

## Joe Buhaly

“When you’re there, up in an airplane, you have your foot on a jump pad. The air is swirling by and you can’t jump until the jump-master tells you to jump because you have to be right over the jump spot. If you wait five minutes, you’re over the next ridge. The airplane is going a couple hundred miles per hour, so you’ve got to



jump in a timely fashion to land where the fire is starting. You also have to haul in big fire fighting tools that are dropped subsequently. When that’s done, you get out. Sometimes you have to spend the night, but that’s part of the game, part of the assignment. We never did stay in large crews. It was stimulating, I can say that.”

While attending Washington State University in the late ‘40s, Joe Buhaly worked as a smoke-jumper fighting fires during his summer breaks. Joe, “Before that, I was a fire fighter in Eastern Oregon. I was about 16 or 17 then. I enjoyed the forest atmosphere and decided that it was an occupation I wanted to pursue.”

Joe graduated with a bachelor of science in agriculture and a major in forestry. Just out of college, he worked as a forest practice forester for the Division of Forestry. From there, Joe went to Whatcom County to work as a soil conservationist for the Soil Conservation Service (SCS).

Joe, “I was later transferred to Grays Harbor, where I took a forester position with the SCS. After two years I was promoted to unit conservationist and worked out of Port Townsend. After leaving the SCS, I joined the co-operative extension in Tacoma and was then promoted to extension forestry specialist for the Research and Extension Center out of Puyallup. My job entailed working with county extension agents in Western Washington as a forestry specialist.”

In 1957, while Joe was an extension forestry specialist, he became involved with the Western Washington Farm Forestry Association (WWFFA) Pierce County Chapter. Joe understood forestry and the bureaucracy behind it. Joe, “I assisted in educational programs and was editor of the member newsletter. My title was editorial committee chairman. I always had input from a Department of Natural Resources (DNR) farm forester to help me develop the newsletter. We also encouraged contributions from anybody with information that might be useful to forest owners in managing or selling their timber or property.”

Joe has a wealth of fond memories from the people he has met over the years. He is, however, discouraged by the regulations and paperwork affecting the small landowner. Joe recalls an incident, “One of our members attempted to apply for a cutting permit. He’s a small forestry owner who logs his own property with a caterpillar tractor. What he got back was 60 pages of forms and directions. He was so frustrated in trying to understand what he was required to do that he just put the stuff on the shelf and didn’t do anything. It’s so typical of the impact of regulations currently on small landowners. It’s hard for those who don’t have a lot of acreage to justify spending a lot of time on that kind of thing.”

Joe is now retired and his involvement has taken a backseat to other endeavors. He continues to stay current with news impacting small forestry landowners.

*“To have a forest of your own is stimulating when you get out there and do some work on it. You plant trees, prune, weed, and ultimately know that you can harvest trees and get a return on your investment. That combination stimulates most people to acquire, hold onto, and appreciate nature.”*

**BUHALY TREE FARM**

Joe Buhaly, born March 15, 1926

Jean Atkins, April 17, 1933

Member Pierce County Farm Forestry