



Spokane

## David Henry

“The first quarter section had been run over by sheep. I don’t think there was a tree there bigger than an inch and a half because the sheep would take out the seedlings, and it had been heavily logged before.” David Henry recaps the history of his land. “The north part had been hit by fire at that time. It was interesting to watch how the trees came in and took over. It’s a full-fledged forest now where it was just bare ground 60 or 70 years ago.”

The land has been part of the family since the 1940s when his father Austin L. Henry purchased his first parcel in Eastern Washington. David, “He started with a quarter section in 1940. It was \$300. I was five years old when Dad got his first quarter section. He took me when he went out. Dad was a schoolteacher, so he didn’t go during the week except in the summer. During the summer we were out there at least three to four days during the week, and we were usually there on Saturday and sometimes Sunday. It was just a natural thing that I liked and he liked.”

Austin was initially motivated to purchase land because he fished and hunted. David, “At one point, those interests became secondary. The tree farming part took over as my father began to observe the country and watch the natural reproduction and realize the possibility.

“In 1941 he bought an adjoining 188 acres for \$900. At that time it was still a fair amount of money.” Austin added land in 1948, purchasing an adjacent quarter section. In 1980 he purchased 22 acres, which cost more than the first few purchases combined, bringing the total to 690 acres.

Austin started early with the Washington Farm Forestry Association. As an active member, he served as treasurer and hosted tree farm tours and soil conservation meetings until his health began to fail in the summer of 2000. David speaks with a profound respect for his father, “He was such a kind and good man all the time, it was a blend of good experiences to be with him. A

natural teacher, he was always trying to teach himself something, and us too. We learned a lot about practical forestry by just going out there and actually trying it, by seeing what worked and what didn't."

Mick Lewis, recalls Austin as a colleague, "Austin Henry was definitely a leader in the community when it came to tree farming. He did a lot of management everyone was envious of. You'd walk into his timber and you would hardly know anything was done as far as forest management because it was very well done. He always did a superb job of management."

Following in his father's footsteps, David attended Eastern Washington University for his master's degree in education. He served two years in the army as a signal corps officer, two years in the reserves, and the next 35 years teaching high school students. Like his father, David has been a longtime member of the Farm Forestry including serving on the board as treasurer.

Fertile soil makes natural reproduction ideal. The Henrys maintain a mixed stand of ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, hemlock, grand fir, larch and lodge pole pine. It's managed through a partnership with members of his sister's family and junior partnerships with their children. A sustained yield is used for management.

They do enough select cutting and thinning annually to pay the taxes and maintain a cabin on Priest Lake. The farm is also kept as an unofficial game refuge in honor of their father. David, "We have a couple of hunters in the family and we try to keep it hospitable for the wild animals that exist there. If we cut one area, they can move to another. We never cut any one area of the place very heavily.

"People tree farm for the love of the land and I think that's an important element. One element that has been with our family is to just do it right. Treat the land as well as you can, which to some extent means leaving it alone a little bit too. I think tree farmers are ultimately interested in trying to make the land the best they can. They rarely clear-cut. Instead, they try to follow the proper practices in replanting and maintaining the best cover of vegetation that they can. From what I've seen, it's best if you have several different sites on your land. If it's all just mature trees, then to some extent, you're restricting the kinds and amounts of wildlife you'll have. If you have sites cut fairly heavily and some cut to different degrees, then you have these different sites that would be that much more hospitable to a variety of wildlife.

"I think man has interfered for many years in preventing forest fires. And if we look at it from a large scale, forest fires are probably good because they force nature to start over. Since we're suppressing forest fires, I think we have to take some corrective action so that all of our forest isn't a climactic forest. With the conditions that we have, not doing anything will result in a forest of pure hemlock and white fir – which is okay, but it isn't the most desirable wood. By harvesting occasionally, we're creating a dynamic where different species of trees can come in, where we maintain a variety of conditions instead of having a stale, climactic forest."

David believes that if rules were less extreme and more reasonable it would help individuals keep their land in trees and not development. But he remains optimistic, "I'm encouraged by the way things are going, by the way state legislature is acting, and by the latest move by the Department of Natural Resources. We need to keep making sure things are at a practical level and not too extreme either way."

David's impressions of tree farming, "There is a lot of satisfaction in tree farming. I think we're doing some good – not only for ourselves, but also for the country. We try to maintain the forest, at least most of it, as natural as if nobody interfered, hoping to promote diversity and continuity of wildlife, for both animal and vegetable."

SUREWOOD FOREST: HENRY AND CHAPMAN, LLC - GENERATIONAL

Austin L. Henry, 1905 - 2001

Marie B. Henry, 1908 - 1982

David Henry, born February 11, 1935

Constance L. Henry, July 3, 1943

WFFA Tree Farmer of the Year, 1981

Senior partners: David Henry (Manager), Daisy Chapman, Constance Henry, Hugh Chapman

Junior partners: Adult children, each owning a small percentage of the tree farm.