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11150 Eagle Creek Road, Leavenworth, WA 98826
Ph: 509-548-4275; Email: jmikey@rah.net

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Welcome to the fifth edition of the NCW Forestry Forum. Thank you members! You have shown your faith in WFFA by renewing your membership for 2010. Your support is very much appreciated.

There have been several Field Days this past year, including one at Leavenworth last fall, one at Republic this spring, and one at Athol, Idaho, this June, that provided forest landowners the latest educational information for managing your forest property. The field day scheduled next describes one of the most difficult methods of forestry, growing conifers where moisture is insufficient. Many of us that have property in North Central Washington have areas like this.

ADVANCE NOTICE
FALL FIELD DAY
October 9th

GROWING CONIFER TREES ON DRY SITES

TIME: 10 AM to 1:30 PM

GENERAL LOCATION: One mile south of Orondo, WA, off Hwy 97/2
Ten miles north of Odabashian Bridge

LOCATION: Meet at Coldwater Canyon Road (Log Arch Driveway)
Turn up paved drive for 100 yards to First Stop.

FIRST STOP: View and discuss drip irrigation system for Christmas tree plantation.

SECOND STOP: View and discuss Ponderosa pine planting w/o using drip irrigation.

LAST STOP - LUNCH & LOG HOME TOUR: Monty and Penny Bickford, our hosts, recently built their lovely log home on the hillside south of Orondo, WA. The Engleman spruce logs used for their home came from their Frosty Creek Tree Farm located east of Tonasket, WA, in the Aeneas Valley. The field day ends at their home where fresh elk roast will be served for lunch. Drinks will be available, and you may bring a salad or desert if so inclined.

ELECTION: At lunch there will be an election of chapter officers, as required each year by the chapter bylaws and the WFFA Charter. Your Chapter President, John Malone, and Secretary/Treasurer, Mike Salisbury, have been in office for many years and are more than willing to pass along the baton to others. Please step forward if you are so inclined. We promise this election will be brief.

REGISTRATION: Please let Mike Salisbury know by email, mail, or phone if you plan to attend. He would like a response by October 7th.

These meetings are always open to the public, so bring your relatives (including kids), friends, commissioners, etc.

PROPERTY SIGNING

Do you post your forest property? Many of us do, and the way you do it can leave a positive message (i.e. Private Forest Land) rather than a negative one (i.e. No Trespassing). Many landowners use both. I personally (your chapter president) like to avoid the no trespassing signs, with the premise that most of the visitors are fine people and will respect your property. The people who do not will trespass no matter what signs are posted, using their chain saws and chain cutters.

WFFA has a new sign as described and offered in its latest newsletter to the membership (Washington Farm Forestry/Private Forest Land). Your chapter is soliciting a consolidated order to minimize the cost of the signs and shipping. The signs are $3.00 each plus shipping ($7.50), or four for $10 plus shipping. The chapter will order them and pick them up in Chehalis, WA (i.e. WFFA Headquarters). Simply contact your hard-working, reliable, dedicated Secretary/Treasurer, Mike Salisbury, and your signs order will be processed. Your signs will be available to you by making some arrangement with Mike Salisbury.

LOG MARKET REPORT

There still is not much going on in the timber industry to get forest landowners encouraged to do a commercial thinning or a regeneration harvest. However, if you need to do some harvesting now, here is some market information for selling your timber:

Boise Wood Products at Kettle Falls, WA

Douglas fir logs can be delivered for about	$325 per MBF
Ponderosa pine 11 inches at the small end for about	$375 per MBF;
Ponderosa pine 8-10 inches at small end for about	$275 per MBF.

Hampton Lumber Mill at Darrington, WA

Douglas fir logs	40 ft.	$450 per MBF
	28-30 ft	$383 per MBF

Selling your logs Westside vs the Eastside of the mountains does not compare in prices shown because of a log scaling difference. Westside scaling measures the logs in 32 foot segments; Eastside scaling measures the logs in 16 foot segments. The shorter scale segments in Eastside scaling increases the log volume. Therefore factor in an estimated 18% decrease in Westside log prices for comparing Eastside log prices. There will also likely be a significant difference on log haul, which needs to be factored in also.

When you hear that Boise or Hampton are paying so much a Thousand Board Feet (MBF), this price does not include the logging or hauling cost. A common approach is for the landowner and logger, with the help of a professional forester (highly recommended), to have a contract that spells out how this market price is paid out. Often the mill will agree to split the amount due to each party for delivered logs on a weekly or monthly basis, based on the scaling and value of these logs.

TREE THINNING

Most eastern Washington forests are overstocked with too many trees per acre, putting them at high risk for stand replacement wildfires or insect and disease outbreaks. Thinning your trees, preferably in the fall and winter when the bark isn't easily damaged on residual trees, will help a lot to minimize the damage from overstocking.

The two main types of thinning are commercial and pre-commercial. Commercial thinning removes excess merchantable trees (i.e. trees 8+ inches in diameter), usually the suppressed, intermediate, and co-dominate trees if the landowner wants to manage for a sustainable forest. This removal should result in a timber sale. The help of a professional forester is recommended. The dominate, tallest healthiest trees are left for the future stand on a spacing of about 30 feet.

Precommercial thinning removes excess trees from seedling, sapling, and pole stands. Leaving the tallest, healthiest trees of a desired species. These stands are thinned on a spacing of from about 6 feet for seedlings to about 15 feet for pole stands.

To help protect these thinned stands and adjacent forest land from catastrophic wildfire, it is wise to treat slash created from these thinnings. In commercially thinned areas the tree or log removal can include trees and logs that are too small or defective to be a merchantable log, but can be sold for pulpwood or firewood. Pre-commercial thinning slash treatments could include pile and burn, lopping (cutting it close to the ground to deteriorate faster), or slash-busting (using an excavator with a slash buster attachment) to pulverize the slash so it is broken up and can mix easily with the ground cover.

For a more in-depth look, a technical report about tree thinning is attached, prepared by Dick Schellhaas, Consulting Forester. Two other articles on thinning that can be ordered are:

Thinning: An Important Timber Management Tool
http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pdf/pnw/pnw184.pdf
Silviculture for Washington Family Forests http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/eb2000/eb2000.pdf

Chapter President, John Malone (509-884-6349)
Secretary/Treasurer, Mike Salisbury (509-548-4275)
Publicity and Programs, Andy Perleberg (509-667-6658)
Member at Large, Dick Schellhaas (509-630-6486)

ADDENDUM

How many trees per acre should be left for a sustainable, healthy forest? By Dick Schellhaas, Consulting Forester

Much depends on the landowner's objectives and goals for their property. Some landowners want to manage for wildlife or recreational use only, some want to produce timber and wood products, some want it all. Most eastern Washington forests are overstocked with too many trees per acre putting them at high risk for stand replacement wildfires or insect and disease outbreaks.

Tree rings and radial growth rates are the "blood pressure" for assessing the health of trees. Maintaining crop tree radial growth rates at less than 15 rings per inch will help ensure more vigorous, healthy trees which in turn will help resist insect and disease attacks.

By using an increment borer we can monitor the trees radial growth rates in rings per inch to see if the current growth rates are producing healthy trees and increasing wood volume at a sustainable rate. If growth rates have slowed due to overstocking than it is time to thin the stands. This thinning will improve radial and top growth rates – increasing the timber value. Thinning will create more diversity, attracting wildlife by increasing forage. Some areas can be left unthinned as wildlife habitat for cover and bedding areas. This creates heterogeneity or patchiness for a variety of wildlife and birds. Thinning will also lower the risk of wildfire if the fuels are treated.
Are thinning guidelines adequate for your site?

The general number of trees per acre to leave is normally based on the site potential or site class. The site class is a rating of a site's potential for growth ranging from I – V; from very wet fast growing sites (site class I & II) to very dry, slow growing sites (site class V). Most Eastern Washington forests fall into site classes III, IV and V.

A first entry of commercial thin on site class III and IV can leave a range of 120 to 60 trees per acre (20' – 26' spacing)and leaving the largest, best crowned several species as crop trees. A good mix of species will lead to a healthier forest. Normally radial growth rates reduce after this first commercial thin, or pre-commercial thin in +/- 15 years. This slowdown in growth is a signal to take out more trees.
The 2nd thinning will leave an average of 45 trees per acre or a 30' spacing. The 2nd commercial thin can be followed by a shelterwood harvest in +/- 15 - 20 years, with a spacing of 40' leaving 30 trees per acre.
Sapling and small pole stands can be thinned on a tighter spacing, usually 12 to 16 feet or 300 to 170 trees per acre.