

## SUMMER 2008 TOUR REVIEW

The summer meeting was attended by approximately 25 people. The forecast that day was for 103 degrees and may have been a contributor to the low numbers. However, this did create great opportunities for the folks that did attend. Because of the small group, when a question was asked, everyone could participate and it became more of a round table discussion out in the woods. So, between forest landowners' loggers and qualified foresters, there was some great tree dialog going on.

So here is a basic overview of the tour.

- First stop was Loon Lake Conservancy property. It was selectively logged 5 or 6 years ago in the winter, tree length skidded to landing, slash burned as they logged, then most brush and woody debris was masticated with excavator mounted masticating head. The landowners wanted good access for their members on foot and ORV trails and this method seem to do a great job for that purpose.

-Next stop was right across the street for the onsite chipping demo by Bigfoot Trucking, Colville, WA. The site was a logging job from last year where the slash had been piled but was never burned. Chris, owner of Bigfoot Trucking, has mobile onsite chipping equipment and a contract with Avista Power generation plant (Kettle Falls) to supply chips. Chris is able to come to your site, chip the slash, and truck it away for free if you have enough volume and you're close enough to the Colville/Kettle Falls area. If not, there is a minimal fee per ton. This sure seems like a better option then burning, which brings us back to the first stop. Apparently, there were some issues when they were burning so close to the road and a few smoke complaints. Chipping would have been a great solution. Anyway, the demo was impressive.

-Next was sort of a self guided tour on the way to the final lunch stop. Along this route, there were sites numbered that corresponded with a description on your tour map. The example sites showed different types of logging, thinning, fuel reduction and one site that had been planted with offsite species of ponderosa pine. Needless to say, the growth rate was about half of what it would have been with proper site-specific trees.

-Last stop was on some of Bob Playfair's tree farm ground, known as Beaver Cabin. As you can guess, there is some history there. We had a masticating demo there featuring a rubber tracked, skid steer machine owned by Clayton Burch out of Chewelah, WA. The operator and machine are capable of achieving different results: fire reduction, masticating the woody debris and fuel on to the ground, or getting down into the dirt for some site prep - great demo!! Then, it was lunch time. Brian Culler had a great site set up with picnic tables in the shade overlooking the beaver pond and a good looking logging job on the far hillside. Brian and his son do all the logging on the Playfair tree farm. It was a wonderful place to have lunch, make new friends, and talk more about tree stuff.

I think a good time was had by all.

One other positive note is that we will be getting a least two new members from the tour attendees.