



# The Tree Green News



Pierce County Chapter,  
Washington Farm Forestry Association Newsletter  
Volume 21, Number 3  
September 2008

**PCFFA General Membership Meeting**  
September 3, at 7 PM  
Almendinger Hall, Puyallup  
**Topic: Carbon Credits, Cap and Trade, Steve Stinson**

## **Presidents Message:**

Fellow Tree Farmers,

Fall is upon us and I hope you will attend our upcoming meetings and participate in the furthering your knowledge and in training the others in our tree farming community.

One new and exciting initiative is the recent effort toward the pricing of carbon credits. We tree farmers have been storing carbon for as long as we have been planting trees, and finally the societal benefits of our efforts are beginning to be understood. The American Tree Farm System (ATFS) is working through Steve Stinson and the Family Forest Foundation to establish certified tree farms as credible and sought-after sources of tradable carbon. Join us on the Wednesday after Labor Day, September 3, 2008 to hear Steve tell how we may benefit. We will meet, as usual, at Almendinger Hall, 7612 Pioneer Way, Puyallup at 7PM.

The ATFS has international accreditation for their certification standards. If the American Tree Farm System has not certified your tree farm, this is an excellent time to get certified.

Can you increase your involvement in our Chapter? Can you bring in a new member? We need to always be reaching, within ourselves, and out to others, to further our goals as an organization. The top goal, according to a recent WFFA survey, is to reduce the burden of Forests and Fish on Riparian Zones. We are making progress on that. The second goal is education for our members. And we are here to do that. But we need your help to help you.

The October meeting will be on Timber Markets. Yes, prices are at the low point of the decade. What's in store? Come on October 1 and join the discussion.

Be sure to join us for the PCFFA Annual Banquet at the Tacoma Yacht Club on November 1. We will elect officers for the new year and award our Chapter's Tree Farmer of the Year. More

to follow.

The January 6<sup>th</sup> meeting will be titled, "What's Your Plan?" This will be a round robin type of discussion to discuss your tree farm ideas for 2009. Got an idea? Share it. Got a problem? Bring it. This will be a meeting of tree farmers for tree farmers.

Treefully submitted,  
Dave Townsend

### **Woodlot Ramblings - By Bob Arnold:**

The local Black Cottonwood, *Populus trichocarpa*, is quite a species. One report says it can be up to 8 feet in diameter and 225 feet tall and 150 to 200 years old. Green wood weighs 46 lbs. per cubic foot and 12% dry wood is 24lbs per cubic foot. That gives it about 18 million BTU's per cord, about the same as Western Red Cedar. It is highly shade intolerant. It has about 1 million seeds per pound. I'm not sure if the term Cottonwood comes from the seeds floating around or the fuzz that develops when the sawn wood is sanded. The heartwood looks black in mature trees, hence the "Black" Cottonwood. It is the largest of the genus *Populus* in the US.

Years ago my cows ate all the bark off some cottonwood logs I had decked. That recalled the story of Lewis and Clark peeling cottonwood bark for their horses to eat. An article about cottonwood plantations in Russia said that the small prunings of limbs and leaves were used for cattle food.

Along the upper Missouri River large quantities of cottonwood were felled and stacked in cords for steamboat fuel.

A recent article in the Pierce County Herald wrote about a sugar barrel factory (2500 barrels a day) in Puyallup in 1877. This was Puyallup's first industry. The barrels were made of the local cottonwood and continued until labor and reduced timber resources caused its demise in 1889. Brew's Mill used cottonwood for berry boxes, crates, lard, and butter boxes, as it is odorless and tasteless. Tongue depressors and coffee stir sticks are used for the same reason.

There is a house in Easton, Washington, made entirely of the east side cottonwood. The owner had a sawmill and decided to maximize use of the wood. He had several discussions with guests that the large summer beam was white pine and not cottonwood. Many corn cribs and other buildings in my birth state of Kansas were/are made of cottonwood. My father said they used a homemade explosive to split the bigger logs to manageable size for horse logging.

Today one of cottonwood's major uses is for the center core of Douglas-fir plywood. One local mill uses the bark to run its boilers and the irregular peeled pieces are cut out and turned into a form of wood straw for landscape purposes. An older use was for wood excelsior used

for packing and is still used for this purpose today in some areas. Some of the peeler cores were treated with CCA (Copper, chromium and Arsenic) and used for fence posts. A paper out of OSU said that cottonwood posts incised and soaked for 48 hours in Penta lasted an average of 18 years before failure. Even the thick bark from older trees is collected and used for carving.

One of my logger nephews loads whole cottonwood logs into containers that go for pulp and some to Asia that come back here in the form of frames in furniture.

Another major use is for paper as its long fibers make good writing paper as opposed to the short fibers of Alder. That also explains why it is so much harder to split than Alder. Today the Hybrid Cottonwood being raised is a cross between the local *P. tricarpa* and *P. deltoides* from back east. The big timber companies are reluctant to give out production figures. However Paul Heilman, one of the primary researchers and a neighbor said that there were two sprouts from a stump down at the WSU Farm 5, that were 15' or 16' tall by the 4th of July and had leaves at the top that were 15" across. He held his arms out with his fingers together to illustrate. Leaf fall was about 3000 lbs. per acre.

A former student was involved in the harvest of hybrid cottonwood in Eastern Wash. on an irrigated circle, Boise Cascade stuff. They took the slash, limbs, and leaves for fuel but were surprised when it turned out to be 15 wet tons per acre.

I felled a cottonwood in my front yard several years back that was 22 years old and 51" at the stump. That was the number of inches that I paid for to have the stump ground out. That averaged 2.3" per year growth. It was also tapped into our septic system.

Albany, Oregon has a site set up to use the treated water from the town sewers to irrigate the hybrid cottonwood they have planted. It is a pity that the cities of Tacoma (8-9 million gallons per day) and surrounding towns aren't using a similar system instead of allowing the treated water to just go into the Puyallup River. Using all of those nutrients would be a matter of conservation.

In the natural order of things, the Douglas-fir, cottonwood, and red alder are the trees in the re-establishment of a forest after a disaster or clearcut. The alder provides the nitrogen, the cottonwood provides the organic matter and the Douglas-fir grows underneath until it overtops the two shade intolerant species and becomes the dominant species in a 100 years or so. About the only forestland owners today who can afford that sort of rotation are governments who aren't faced with the monetary constraints of private owners.

One of the future uses for cottonwood is for cellulosic ethanol. Thirty years or more ago a fellow back east said that an acre of his brand of hybrid cottonwood would yield \$3000 per acre from using the cellulose and hemi-cellulose in the wood if the ethanol sold for \$1.25/gallon. If the separation is done by enzymes rather than strong sulphuric acid as is

done in paper mills today the un-sulfated lignin portion of wood can be used as a polymer for plastics.

Even using the cottonwood for wood-fired generation of electricity for a greenhouse/aquaculture rural operation sounds great to me.

Bob Arnold

## **Editorial – Intergenerational Transfer**

Have you been thinking about who is going to take over the management and/or ownership of your tree farm when you no longer are able to take care of your dream? If you are wondering about how to go about the process, check on “Ties to the Land” at the University of Oregon, Business School.

I just returned from spending ten days on my tree farm in New York. We are in the process of figuring out how to transfer the property to the next generation. “Ties to the Land” has helped. My nephew Tim, who is a high school history teacher, said he could free some time in the summer to look after the forest. We really did not know him very well since he has grown up on the East Coast and now lives in the Boston area. Our first chance to meet his family was last Labor Day weekend when we gathered most of the next generation for a get together to find out about the interest in the forest. We were not quite sure what we were getting into when we agreed to spend a week with Tim and his family.

We had a delightful time with them. We took their children, ages 3, 8, and 12 out in the woods to paint boundary. The children thought we would take a paintbrush and paint a line on the ground. They found out we painted trees. We went to one of our permanent inventory plots and demonstrated how we set up the plot and measure the trees. Tim’s wife was interested in seeing how fast some of the trees had grown in the past three years, almost 1.5 inches dbh for a couple of them.

It seems that we have my nephew interested in the forest as well as his wife and children.

How is your intergenerational transfer plan coming? Check “Ties to the Land” Website ([www.familybusinessonline.org/resources/ttl/home.htm](http://www.familybusinessonline.org/resources/ttl/home.htm))

## **Work Safely: Protection During Lightning Storms**

Do not take refuge under any tall, isolated object, such as a tent or tree. Standing under a group of trees, shorter than others in the area, is better than being in the open. Avoid electrical fences, clothes lines, metal pipes, rails, telephone poles and other conductors. Put down any object that might conduct electricity, such as a rake, hoe, shovel or golf club. Seek low ground, preferably a ditch or gully. If you are outside with no protection, get to a low spot. Make your body low to the ground, but do not lie flat on the earth. Curl on your side or drop to your knees and bend forward, putting your hands on your knees. If there is a group of people, spread out. If someone feels their hair stand on end, it may mean lightning is about to strike. Stay calm and keep low. This will help reduce your chances of being struck by lightning.

## **Forest Terminology:**

**Wheels, logging.** A pair of wheels from 7 to 12 feet in diameter, for transporting logs. Syn. Katydid; Slip-tongue cart; Sulky; Timber wheels; Big Wheels.

## **Calendar of Events:**

- Sept. 3, "Carbon Credits, Cap and Trade", (Steve Stinson) 7 PM, Almendinger Hall, Puyallup
- October 1, "Timber Markets, or the Lack Thereof" 7 PM, Almendinger Hall, Puyallup
- October 16-18, National Tree Farmer Convention, Portland, Oregon For information call 202-463-2733 or email [info@treefarmssystem.org](mailto:info@treefarmssystem.org)
- November 1, "PCFFA Annual Banquet at Tacoma Yacht Club" (Jo Snyder)
- January 6, "What's Your Plan?" A discussion of tree farmers for 2009 plans. 7 PM, Almendinger Hall, Puyallup

## Chapter Officers:

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