



The Tree Green News



Pierce County Chapter,
Washington Farm Forestry Association Newsletter
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President's Message

Greetings, fellow tree farmers:

We had 28 members at the 2011 Annual Meeting Banquet at the Tacoma Yacht Club. Frank and Myvanwy Shirley won our Chapter's Tree Farmer of the Year Award. Congratulations, again, Frank and Myvanwy! A nice article about the award was in the Key Peninsula News. See <http://www.keypennews.com/index.php/this-months-articles/item/85-kp-couple-chosen-as-tree-farmers-of-2011-by-forestry-association?tmpl=component&print=1>

Legislative Action

We look forward to 2012, another year of education, fellowship among tree farmers, and legislative action. The latter category, handled by the State office, will focus on funding the Forest Riparian Easement Program (FREP), reducing streamside buffers for harvests of 20 acres or less, and participating on the DNR's Small Forest Landowner Office Advisory Committee and the Forest Practice Board.

WFFA updates

WFFA will be working on a new website to increase member benefits and facilitate communications. WFFA is also creating a WFFA Endowment Program, which will include a Family Forestland Trust to accept gifts of assets or land.

WFFA Annual Meeting

The 2012 WFFA Annual Meeting will be held in Spokane May 3 through 5. This year's meeting is entitled "Am I Crazy to Own Timberland? The Good, the Bad and the Ugly." Don and Florence Theoe, our chapter's tree farmers of the year for 2010, are our nominees for the State level award. Registration for the annual meeting can be done at the WFFA website.

PCFFA Meetings

Our Chapter will continue with the monthly educational meetings at the Puyallup Library on the first Wednesday of every month at 7 PM. Our next meeting will be on February 1. Our guest speaker will be Kirk Hanson, Northwest Natural Resources Group. Please join us.

Do you have suggestions for future topics or speakers? If so, please drop me a line at townsenddw@comcast.net

Our goals are many; our resources are thin. Please show your support by renewing your membership to WFFA, inviting a new tree farmer to join us, and by attending the tours and meetings.

Treefully,
Dave Townsend,
President,
Pierce County Chapter, WFFA

Woodlot Ramblings by Bob Arnold

Well the firewood season is upon us, and firewood is a form of Biomass. One can look at it as stored sunshine, unlike photovoltaic energy that is intermittent and needs to be used straight away or stored in batteries to perform.

In our travels the past few years we have seen solar energy used for hot water heaters on roofs from Buenos Aires to Beijing to Lhasa, Tibet. Lhasa, at 12,000 feet elevation, gets 300 days of sunlight. There are many greenhouses that have been built, and many parabolic solar cookers that focus the sun's rays on a teapot for tourists in our case.

The heat for cold winter nights in the Tibetan home we visited was dried Yak dung patties, complete with the farmers hand print to identify the provider. I asked how much it cost—about \$15 per a sack or about a cubic meter. The annual budget was \$45 for 3

sacks for the winters heat. They only heated the house from 7 pm to 9 pm. Tibet's future wood supply may be the Populus (same genus as our Cottonwood) cuttings planted in the rivers' sand bars or along the riverbanks. I assume they were chosen because they are extremely intolerant to shade and could do well in the 300 days of sunlight. How well they survived the Tibet winters is questionable. In China, once again the cuttings, which again looked like Populus, were 3-4 inches in diameter and 15 to 20 feet long. There were braced with 4 stakes about halfway up the cuttings until they were stable I assumed. These were everywhere in Beijing probably for dress-up for the 2008 Olympics. They line the new freeways and major roads. Perhaps they are also to help with the air pollution that is really something in China's cities. Closer to home, my firewood supply is coming from a 2 acre patch I clearcut to provide more sunlight for the "quasi-greenhouse" on the south side of the barn. The barn is downwind of the Alder leaves and Doug Fir needles which build up on the roof and the 100' gutters. I also use the room to as an air dry kiln for lumber. My firewood supply was a 75% hardwood-25% softwood mix. The softwoods were 80-90 year old natural reproduction from 1920-21 logging that survived the 1969-70 logging of "take the best and leave the rest" just before we bought the place. A few made 40' logs and the rest made shorter logs after the curved butts and snow break damage from 1974 was cut out. Those pieces were cut into 2' pieces and split for the Arnold firewood supply this winter. The hardwoods were a mixture of 75% Alder, 20% Big Leaf Maple and the remaining 5% some Oregon Ash, Native Cherry and Cottonwood. These had, for the most part, stagnated from lack of management but were tight-grained logs with branchy tops. Logging was done with my old, finally mostly repaired, excavator by pushing the trees over to get the root wads (leave no stump behind) out for the burn pile. Limbs were firewooded in 2' lengths down to 2' diameter for Maple, Cherry and Ash as the density of these woods still makes good firewood. The Alder and Cottonwood was cut down to 3'. The 2' wood is for our old Fisher fireplace insert and for the 6 cords we trade for the use of a ski lodge at Crystal Mountain. Still, it bothers me to see the rest of the slash go up in smoke when it could be used for a local wood fired co-gen electrical plant. Or--- converted to pellets to supply all state buildings for heat. JOBS for local people that are AXE READY ??? A recent article stated that biomass is cheaper than coal and only hydropower is cheaper. The Doug fir and Maple are comparable for BTU's per cord. Alder and Hemlock match up a bit lower and Cottonwood and Cedar still lower. Ash is up there with the fruitwoods, Oak and Madrone etc. Much of our home firewood is crooked, half-rotten, punky and other lowgrade stuff that I would have to clean up anyway. We ran our electric furnace for a month in this spring, which was the coldest in recorded history. We did this for an estimate of what it would cost. As we suspected the electric bill doubled. There are 9 cords of wood in the wood shed and lots of strips cut up for kindling from the sawmill trimmings. Remember the old story about the ant and the grasshopper ?

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Calendar:

Feb 1: PCFFA monthly meeting at 7:00pm at Puyallup Library. Guest speaker will be Kirk Hanson, Northwest natural Resources Group

March 7: PCFFA monthly meeting (speaker TBD)

May 3-5: WFFA annual meeting in Spokane

Got E-mail Now?

If you are receiving this newsletter the old fashioned way and have a new E-mail address, please send it to Dave Townsend at townsenddw@comcast.net. Newsletters are sent via bcc, so your address is safe. Having your e-mail address facilitates correspondence, saves time, and saves our organization money.

Chapter Officers:

PCFFA Chapter officers and directors for 2011 are:

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Publication:

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