



The Tree Green News



Pierce County Chapter,
Washington Farm Forestry Association Newsletter
Volume 23, Number 3

December, 2010

President's Message

Greetings, fellow tree farmers:

Markets

The price of logs is finally picking up. I have recently received two unsolicited e-mails from brokers looking to export large volumes of wood to China. And Manke raised their prices last month about 13 to 14%. Logs with a 5 inch and up top are now worth \$58 a ton. Logs 36 to 40 feet long with 12-inch tops net \$440 a thousand. According to the U.S. International Trade Commission, lumber exports from Washington climbed 82% in the first three quarters of 1010. Wow! It's about time!

Log exports increased 24% to \$209 million during the same three quarters. Weyerhaeuser and PLS have increase their export prices also.

Behind these moves is the gradual, but steady, growing economy. However, there are some significant international effects as well. For example, the European Union recently approved Russia's bid to join the World Trade Organization after Russia agreed to lower their log export duties. China is Russia's largest log importer, but interestingly, the current 30% export duty to China is not expected to change. If the E.U. tariffs are reduced, Russian loggers will likely shift some of their export volume from China to the E.U. This will add to already growing log supply gap in China.

Got export timber? You many want to plan a harvest in 2011.

2010 Annual Meeting

Our 2010 Annual Meeting was a grand affair for 28 members at the Tacoma Yacht Club. Don and Florence Theoe took home the Tree Farmer of the Year Award for our chapter. They are truly deserving of the recognition. Frank Shirley passed the Editor's baton to Kay Townsend, and Julie Nyborg passed the secretary's pen to Sylvia Russell. Frank had been The Tree Green News Editor for over 20 years! Thank you, Frank. But there is no rest for him; he succeeds Don Theoe as a Director.

Rick Dunning gave a great presentation on the happenings at the WFFA office, and the more aggressive stance we have been taking with our stakeholders and with our elected officials. The State budget problems are actually good in terms of revising the streamside buffers. The state cannot (and has never been able to) afford to pay FREP. Humm, if the state cannot afford to pay for the streamside trees, why was it ever assumed that we small landowners could?

The silent auction brought in over \$200. Thanks for those who donated or purchased an item.

Membership Drive

Upper Puget Sound and Lewis County Chapters have both reached 90% of their goals for new members. Pierce is lagging behind! Who can bring in a new member this month?

Estate Taxes

The new tax law exempts the first \$5 million from estate taxes and sets a 35 percent tax rate on any excess for the next two years. While this is a good start, the American Forest Foundation continues to work for us to get Congress to pass a long-term solution concerning the estate tax for family forests.

Western Region Council on Forest Engineering

The Western Region Council on Forest Engineering is sponsoring a seminar titled, Improving Forest Harvesting Operations in Eugene, OR on January 2011. See

http://www.cofe.org/index_files/Page1070.htm or call 541-754-7558 for further information.

Staying active is a requirement of life, both personally and organizationally. Continue to work on your tree farm and bring a friend to the next meeting, and both you and WFFA will live to see your trees grow tall.

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

Woodlot Ramblings - By Bob Arnold

Trying to decide which of several topics to write about gets complicated. CSAF (Community Supported Agro Forestry) for smaller tree farms seemed good but needed a bit more development. The various uses of Western Red Cedar by current and aboriginal groups had a great deal of appeal as I am currently splitting shakes to replace a roof on a garden shed made from left over lumber from a 1960 remodel of our old(1880) house. I did this 48 years ago with shakes rived (split) from fence posts reclaimed from replacing the fence here in Puyallup. They were good sized but after rotting off at ground level there was about 4' of good wood left. So I sawed them into 20" sections and split them for barn shake application.

While taking out blowdown for firewood recently I was taken aback a bit by the size of some of the trees on our stump farm. They were 4-6" dbh when we bought the place in January of 1971 and some are pushing 36" or so it seems.

I remembered a pamphlet from the USFS from 1924 on "The Yield of Douglas fir in the Pacific Northwest". Revised 1949 and slightly revised in 1961. There is an extensive footnote on "Big Trees" in there that is worth mentioning. The language is 1924ish.

"The greatest diameter so far authentically reported is of a tree until very recently standing in a grove of giant cedars and firs is in Mineral,, Wash. This tree measured in 1924 with steel tape and Abney level, had a diameter of 15.4 feet at 4.5 feet above the mean ground level, and a height of (up to a broken top) of 225 feet. A large part of the tree had been burned out at the base, leaving a door like opening at one side. The rings of yearly growth are plainly visible in the charred walls of the interior, and by counting these rings the age of the tree was estimated to be 1,020 years (in 1924).

Another large tree about 15 feet in diameter was reported in 1900 by E.T. Allen, who writes, "It was about 3 1/2 miles from Ashford Wash., on the Mount Rainier road and was a fallen tree which itself lay quite sound, but the stump

which was about 25 feet high had been burnt or rotted out from one side, leaving a large opening. I rode a horse into this stump, turned him around, and rode out again. It was a small horse but you can see it was also a big tree.”

The largest Douglas Fir on record was reported in 1900 was reported by E. T. Allen. This tree, found near Little Rock, Wash., was 330 feet tall and had a diameter of 71.6 inches. A down tree 380 feet long has been reported, but , unfortunately, the details of the measurement were never recorded and the exact location of the tree forgotten.

Other tall trees for which accurate information is available are the following: One near Hoquiam, Wash., 318 feet; one at Little Rock, wash., 310 feet; one near Darrington, Wash.,325; one near Pawn, on the Siuslaw National Forest in Oregon, 295 feet.

Several instances of exceptional volume of individual Douglas fir logs have been reported. At Bellingham, Wash. A log 12 feet in diameter at the butt, 278 feet long, scaled 105,00 board feet, Scribner rule. At clear Lake, Wash., a log 12.9 feet in diameter at the butt 170 feet long, scaled 78,000 board feet, Scribner rule.

The oldest Douglas fir of which there is any authentic record was found in 1913 by Ranger Hillgoss on the Finney Creek watershed about 30 miles east of Mount Vernon, Wash. The age count was made on a section about 40 feet above the stump, and the age at that point was 1,375 years Since at least 25 years were required to reach the height at which the age count was made, this tree must have been over 1400 years old when cut. The next oldest is the tree at Mineral. There may be taller, older, or larger trees than these, but the forest Service has no record of accurately measured trees which surpass those described.”

Darius Kinsey photographed a Douglas Fir near Victoria, British Columbia in 1895 on the ground. It was 26 feet in diameter at the butt and 415 feet long. People had ladders to the top of the long and were having their pictures taken. On a trip on the Alaska marine Ferry 10 or years back I talked with a Native American logger who said he had taken down Sitka spruce that was 18 feet at the butt. Sitting in the restaurant that used to be at the head of Lake Ozette and talking with a busted up logger under repair, he mentioned a Sitka Spruce that was 16 feet at the butt. The made a 32 foot log but still couldn't move it so they made two 16 foot logs but could only move the smaller and had to leave the larger butt log.

To see some large trees locally there is the “Grove of the Patriarchs” on the Onhanapecosh road into Rainier. On the Nisqually entrance at mile 3 there are some big fir and at mile 5 there is a Doug fir 59 inches dbh and 210 feet to a broken top. The top has a diameter of at least 12 inches. I measured it each year with students. Step off the left side of the road and you will see the old wagon road probably put in by Longmire in the 1870's and where there were several trees cut down for building back then.

These thoughts all came about again after looking at the growth of 39 years on our stump farm a week ago.

Bob Arnold

From the Editor

Hello! My name is Kay Townsend and I am the new editor of the Tree Green News. My husband, Steve, and I live in University Place. Our son, Ian, is a research scientist in Seattle. My husband and I have both retired from public education. Steve is now teaching part-time as a math instructor at Tacoma Community College, and I volunteer in the Education Center at Nisqually Wildlife Refuge, so we have not left education entirely!

We now have time for all of those planned retirement activities, which includes working on our family tree farm near Eatonville. We grow mostly Douglas fir, but we also have some alder and a few other species. Our tree farm is a legacy from Steve's grandfather, Bob Wise and from his parents, Ivan and Lane Townsend, who worked very hard to develop it into the tree farm it is today. They also passed along to their children and grandchildren a respect for nature and an appreciation for the beauty of the forest. Our motto is The Forest Eternal; we practice sustainable forestry.

Our tree farm has been, and continues to be, a way for us to be together as a family. Whether we are straightening nets, pruning trees, or logging windfalls we are sharing the work of an enterprise that is important

Tree Green News - December, 2010

to each of us. After the work is done, there is always time for picnic lunches on the deck of the cabin and evenings around the fire.

We have enjoyed the opportunity to get to know many of the other families involved in tree farming through Pierce County Farm Forestry. It has been a way to share knowledge and skills. It is also a way to share a love for the forests that we all nurture.

I look forward to my new job as the editor of your newsletter. If you have a strong opinion or some thoughts to share, please send them to me so that they can be included in the Tree Green News.

Work Safely:

Remember your hardhat and steel toe boots whenever working in the woods. It only takes a minute to put them on and they could add many years to your good health or even your life.

Forest Terminology:

Spiral Grain

Grain direction is the orientation of wood fibers along the trunk of the tree or log. With most wood species, grain spirals around the trunk in one direction or another like the stripes on an antique barber pole. It's easy to see the grain direction in peeled, dried logs, because checks follow the grain and most dried logs have checks to some degree.

Guest Editorial, by Steve Townsend

Trees and Spiral Grain

You have probably noticed the spiral¹ grain in a dead² tree or snag. Have you ever wondered what caused it? The subject came up while my brother, Dave, our niece, Spring, and I were hiking in the Sierra Nevada Mountains this past September.

We noticed that the grain in most of the dead² trees in the area had a slight-to-well-defined twist to the right in them. Why, we wondered, is this so? And why is it so much more pronounced in some trees than in others? And finally, why is the twist always to the right, or clockwise (as you look towards the top from the base)?

For the next hour or so we looked carefully at the trees in the area and speculated as to why they might be as they are. The first myth that we put to rest was that all trees that have a spiral grain twist to the right; they don't! It seems that about one tree in 20 actually twists to the left, or is counter clockwise.

Hmm, that negated the Coriolis theory. That observation may have provided a bit of insight, but raised even more questions in the process: Why do about half of the trees have no or a negligible spiral, while the other half are split 19 to 1 in favor of a clockwise spiral? Random genetics? The wind? Sunlight (phototropism)? And finally, is there any advantage to the tree in having a spiral, or is it 'just the way things are', just as most people are right handed, but a significant proportion are left handed?

Upon retuning from our hike, we did a bit of research. It turns out that our casual observations and hypotheses have been the basis of much discussion, and have even been the subject of a few research grants amongst foresters and forestry professors. What is *really* interesting however, is that our one-hour unofficial study produced nearly identical results and raised mostly the same questions as all of the official studies and learned insight combined.

The best explanation (in my opinion) that I have heard or read to date is: that by spiraling up the tree, the fibers in the cambium layer (ie, the grain) connect each root with parts of all sides of the tree. In this manner, if a large root were to be damaged, the (lower) branches that it feeds would not all be on the same side of the tree, say for example, the sunward side.³

To read more about this phenomenon, do a web search of << tree trunk spiral grain >> and see where it takes you. Better yet, retreat to your favorite place in the forest and think about what may be the cause and benefits of a tree's spiral and its orientation. If you come up with some good suggestions, the Tree Green News will be glad to print them in subsequent issues.

Notes:

1. See photo, below (internet file, photographer unknown)
2. It is hard to tell the orientation of the spiral of living trees because the bark covers the trunk.
3. A related, but easily explained observation: If hit by lightning, the scar caused by the electrical current follows the grain.



Calendar:

January 5, 2010. General Membership Meeting. Puyallup Library 7 PM

"What's Your Plan?" The round-robin style discussion of what our members are planning for the upcoming year was very popular last year. This is your opportunity to develop some plans, or have some peer review of your plans. We will all have a chance to discuss what we are doing, (or not doing) and learn something in the process. Who intends to sell some export timber? Do some planting? Take advantage of a cost-share practice?

February 2, 2010. General Membership Meeting. Puyallup Library 7 PM.

"NRCS, the Guys in the White Hats." **Joshua Himsl, Puget Sound Team Forester stationed in the Puyallup field office will discuss what NRCS now has to offer. Joshua replaces Monica Hoover.**

March 2, 2010. General Membership Meeting. Puyallup Library 7 PM

A speaker from Washington Hardwoods Association will talk about alder and other hardwoods.

March 23-25, 2011. Small Log Conference. Coeur d' Alene, ID

Contact Craig Rawlings: craig@smallwoodnews.com or 406.240.0300 for further information.

April 6, 2010. General Membership Meeting. Puyallup Library 7 PM

Topic to be Determined. Let Dave know your ideas for this meeting.

April 14-16, 2010. Washington Farm Forestry Association Annual Meeting

Tree Green News - December, 2010

The Heathman Lodge Vancouver, Washington. Mark your calendars!

Chapter Officers:

PCFFA Chapter officers and directors for 2010 are:

President	Dave Townsend	425-746-4523	townsenddw@comcast.net
Vice President	Gary Snyder	253-863-7786	snyder@nwrain.com
Membership			
Treasurer	Paul Hansen	253-862-9561	pmhansen@q.com
Past President	Bob Arnold	253-845-2242	Raarnold@aol.com
Newsletter Ed.	Kay Townsend	253-565-7172	kay.townsend@yahoo.com
Secretary	Sylvia Russell	360-832-1712	briandsyl@rainierconnect.com
Director 10	Rick Pabst	253-862-9076	blueribbonfarm@tx3.net
Director 11	Phil Poppleton	360-825-3365	parnpop@aol.com
Director 12	Steve Townsend	253-565-7172	swtownsend@yahoo.com
Director 13	Frank Shirley	253-884-2283	fshirley@centurytel.net

Publication:

THE TREE GREEN NEWS is published occasionally by the Pierce County Chapter, Washington Farm Forestry Association, Kay Townsend, editor. Comments and contributions are welcome. Please send them to:

Kay Townsend
3605 Soundview Dr. W
Tacoma, WA 98466
(253) 565-7172
kay.townsend@yahoo.com