

WASHINGTON FARM FORESTRY ASSOCIATION

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THE VOICE OF THE SMALL FOREST LANDOWNERS IN WASHINGTON STATE

Budgets, Fees, & Legislation *By Rick Dunning*

As mentioned in the recent email “*Update*”, we hope the legislative session ends in late April as planned. The recent focus has been on the state’s overdrawn bank account (\$200 million for this year), and a projected \$5.3 Billion deficit for our next two years of operations!

Raise taxes or cut spending?

Discussions have focused on whether to raise taxes or to cut spending. We hope for lots of the cutting and then a little of the raising if still needed. Senator Zarelli’s (18th-R) statement that, “The state cannot do it all anymore” is right on. And we have other areas to cut before we cut education, health programs and the programs that serve the poor. The Forest and Fish Habitat Conservation Plan is a good example. Started around 2001, this federal effort and state supported plan to provide cool and clean water in our streams may have over-reached. Today it costs millions annually to pay for Forest and Fish process to operate. A team of agencies, environmentalists, tribes and industry are the policy arm and a team of scientists provide data. They produce little change or value to the HCP...at a huge cost. At a time of budget crisis we should put the protection of the public values (water, air, and habitat) that come from timberland, back into the hands of qualified foresters and forest landowners and hold them accountable, instead of paying numerous state agencies and an expensive process to regulate it.

Balancing the state checkbook

Indications point to an effort by the current administration to raise hundreds of millions in new fees. One fee increase in the works is for a timber cutting permit or Forest Practice Application (FPA).

Class	Current Fee	Proposed	% Increase
II	\$50	\$100	200%
III <20 acres	\$50	\$100	200%
III 20-120 acres	\$50	\$150	300%
III > 120 acres	\$50	\$550	1100%
IV S (Steep slopes)	\$50	\$750	1,500%
IV G (Conversions)	\$500	\$5000	1,000%

Another fee suggested by the Governors budget proposes to increase Burn Permit fees in the Department of Natural Resources. In the past, most tree farmers paid \$25.50 for up to 100 tons of slash to burn. It is proposed to go up to between \$80–\$100. Currently, there are no legislative plans for this increase but it would be implemented through DNR rule making.

WFFA’S LEGISLATION

Our HB 1192 died in the House rules committee by failing to get “called to the floor” for a vote. And that is just part of the story. HB1192 was previously amended without input from the WFFA. The amended or substitute SHB1192 changed our original bill’s intent of legislating smaller buffers on smaller streams for smaller harvests.

Your calls and emails to your legislators are a big help. The WFFA has plans to ask for your involvement to promote our legislation again next year. If you chose to contact your legislators now on the fee increases, be sure to tell them that the WFFA will provide an even better resolution to the budget next year, with legislation that can save the state *hundreds of millions of dollars*. Our power is in “*We the people*.” It is our right and responsibility to know and inform those we elect to represent us. With communication to them we can protect our liberties.

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From the President

Springtime On A Tree Farm

Daylight hours are getting longer and spring should be in the air, but it's been cool, not unlike last spring. Between rain showers, we got the chance to burn a small pile of slash and I managed to get a proposed harvest and the associated riparian zone flagged out.

We elected to submit an FPA (Forest Practices Application) now, rather than wait for the potential of increased permit fees, given the mood of the legislature. We also opted for an alternate plan, the fixed width buffer. In our case, it is site III, F stream, a 101-foot buffer from bank full width is in order. It seems like the quickest and easiest for us. We also opted for a 5-year permit. The FPA is still in process, but we are hopeful. I do my own permits and I find DNR (Department of Natural Resources) staff very helpful. We do have issues with an eagle management plan that we had to formulate on a previous permit, but apparently with the delisting of bald eagles, the distance of a forest practice from a roost site has been reduced from mile to mile that would require an eagle management plan. In addition, the current riparian rules exceed the buffers we agreed to on the eagle management plan back in 1997. There was also a requirement on the old eagle management plan not to have harvest activity during the critical roosting season, Nov. 1st to March 1st. The FPA has provisions for declaring what seasons one will be harvesting in, so we excluded the winter months. One might think that the permit will be forthcoming, but it is likely that DNR and F&W (Fish and Wildlife) will have to sort the eagle issue out. Our observations, since 1997, tell us that the roost site has not been used since then. It appears the eagles show up when there are

spawning salmon in the creek, which has not been happening for some time. I believe one could request a reevaluation of the use of the roost site, but am sure a number of years would be required to satisfy any protocol to be administered along with funding to accomplish such. If some salmon would show up, the eagles would too.

In the process of flagging out the riparian area, I discovered some 30-inch DBH fir that had suffered root rot, went down this past winter. Hopefully, we will salvage these nice sticks. The market looks good just now and we have already had some operators contact us. We've heard that President Obama is opening up harvesting on federal lands, which could impact the market, although those federal logs can't be exported.

I'm kind of rambling here, but am trying to convey what's going on for us and encourage folks to come out to their chapter meetings and share their experience. The Kittitas Chapter recently published a newsletter, which listed many of their member's current activities. I found it very interesting. There is a lot to be learned from your fellow tree farmers and most are happy to share their experience.

Sam Comstock

President,

Washington Farm Forestry Association

Mark Your Calendar

Hardwood Supply in the Pacific NW: Challenges and Opportunities

June 15–16, 2011 at Veterans Memorial Museum in Chehalis, WA.

Contact Washington Hardwoods Commission at (360)835-1700 or

whc@wahardwoodscomm.com

Oregon–Washington Forest and Range Owners Field Day

June 18, 2011 at the Kreps Ranch in Klickitat County, Washington. More info to come. Contact: Andy Perleberg (509) 667-6658 or andyp@wsu.edu

Oregon Small Woodland Association Annual Meeting

June 23– 25 in Baker City, OR. The program and tours will focus on East-side issues. WFFA members are welcome to attend. The theme of the meeting on June 24th is “Dealing with Changing Realities in Woodland Management”. Contact: Jim James, Executive Director, Oregon Small Woodlands Association at (503) 588-1813

For WFFA Chapter spring events, please go to www.wafarmforestry.com and click on calendar.

Landowner Liability Insurance Options

After research and discussion by the WFFA Executive Committee and Board, The WFFA agreed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOA) with the National Woodland Owners Association (NWOA). This decision was made due to the staff time required for WFFA administration of an insurance program, vs. the low charge to landowners offered by NWOA and a royalty rebate offered the WFFA.

With NWOA, you can insure up to 500 acres for \$150. This affords a \$1/\$2 million Comprehensive General Landowner Liability coverage.

To qualify, WFFA members simply purchase a membership in the NWOA at \$35/year. NWOA will send a royalty rebate of \$10/policy sold to the WFFA annually. Go to <http://www.woodlandowners.org/NWOAAapp.pdf> or see contact information below.

NWOA

The National Woodland Owners Association is a national non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring the long-term viability and existence of

private woodlands owned by families and individuals. NWOA works to complement the work of state and local woodland owner groups like the Washington Farm Forestry Association. Like WFFA's expertise on issues and legislation affecting woodland ownership and private forest management in the state of Washington, NWOA has amassed similar knowledge at the federal level.

In addition to discussing land-use practices, taxation, forest markets, and natural resource legislation in our quarterly magazine, *National Woodlands*, NWOA also strives to provide useful, practical benefits to landowners. One of these benefits is a group Woodland Liability policy offered by our partners at Outdoor Underwriters. National Woodland Owners' policy offers individuals and families a low-cost method to protect themselves from common woodland liability risks. Time not spent worrying about liability risks means more time spent on growing trees, watching grandchildren build forts, feeding wildlife and running tractors.

Phone: 703.255.2700 or 703.281.9500

www.woodlandowners.org Email: talk@nwoa.net

Long Term Forest Practice Permits: Application Overviews

Landowners must have an approved forest practices application to harvest timber, build roads, or conduct other forest practices activities. Standard approved applications are valid for two years and the application process can be complex and time consuming. As an incentive for small forest landowners to keep their land in forestry use, the Forest Practices Board authorized a long-term application that is valid for up to 15 years. An approved long-term application is subject to rule changes however. Now, small forest landowners have the option of submitting the standard application or the long-term application. For more information, contact your local Department of Natural Resources Office or visit http://www.dnr.wa.gov/BusinessPermits/Topics/SmallForestLandownerOffice/Pages/fp_sflo_lta.aspx

Who is eligible?

You may submit a long-term forest practices application if you harvest less than two million board feet of timber each year from lands you own in Washington and you are not converting your land to a non-forestry use.

Benefits

- An approved long-term forest practice application is valid from 3-15 years (determined by landowner request).
- Harvest activities under the plan can start after submitting the 5-Day Notification Form to your DNR Office.
- Reduces paperwork over the long-term.
- Allows you more flexibility to react quickly to changing markets and unforeseen forest health problems or windthrow.
- Encourages long-term planning.

Before you get started

Download necessary forms to submit a Long-Term Application. Contact your local DNR region office if you have questions about the forms or process. Landowners who need assistance in planning their long term management and identifying sensitive areas should contact a private forest consultant

How the process works

A long-term forest practices application is submitted and reviewed in two steps:

Step 1) Inventory and classify all the natural features such as streams, wetlands, springs, and steep slopes within the application area. Also, assess road condition to identify work needed to keep soil from entering water. Submit the resource and road information to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Region Office. DNR foresters then review the information with help from other agency and tribal staff. When the DNR forester determines that all of the required features are identified and properly classified, then you submit Step 2 of the application form.

Step 2) Describe all of the activities that may be done over the request time period. Show the location of the proposed activities on maps. You may propose an alternate plan as part or all of the application. DNR personnel will review the proposal and either approve, approve with conditions, or disapprove the application. It takes a minimum of 90 days to receive approval for a long-term application.

Last winter, the Department of Natural Resources asked the WFFA why more tree farmers were not utilizing the long term or 15-year permit. As a result, 1st VP, Steve Stinson and Executive Director, Rick Dunning each applied for one. Their stories follow.

Steve Stinson Reports:

The Cowlitz Ridge Tree Farm Long Term Forest Practice Application experience

The reasons for us to embark upon this process really boiled down to three things:

- 1) Concern over increased Forest Practice Application fees*
- 2) Volatile log markets with short timing windows*
- 3) A desire to lay out a long-term management plan*

Step 1 Resource Assessment was pretty involved for us. We included four separate parcels with nearly five miles of roads and miles of stream segments. Fortunately, we had submitted a full-blown Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan early in the Forest and Fish rule process. We only had to review about 3/4 of a mile of road on a parcel we had purchased after the initial RMAP planning effort.

The stream segments got a bit more involved. We mapped and marked on the ground 33 different stream segments. We also submitted water type modification forms for each track with what we proposed for stream type, location and length. In our case, many segments appeared on the DNR steam layer which didn't exist

on the ground. The objective for the agencies in Step 1 is to confirm whether or not your stream typing is correct.

(Remember...under the Forest and Fish rules, if a stream, intermittent drainage, or pond has the potential to provide habitat for any life form of any fish species, it receives a site tree height potential buffer.)

Once we had all the mapping and paper work requirements completed, we scheduled an interdisciplinary team (ID) visit. Representatives from the DNR, DOE, WDFW and affected tribes participated in a review of our water and road resources. Things went pretty smoothly until we hit a stream type break based on an end of fish habitat call that was associated with a road crossing. The break had been determined under a protocol survey by a professional biologist and approved by the stake holder groups represented by the ID team. An ID team member questioned the professional call, suggesting that it was invalid. We currently lack the protocol in the ID team process to resolve this issue. After spending an hour stomping around in a forested wetland proclaiming potential fish habitat, the ID team member backed off and said that it was up to DNR to make the call. DNR chose to go with the protocol survey and we completed Step 1. Step 2 was relatively straight forward, although we did include an alternate plan on one unit. DNR approved the application and we successfully submitted a 5-Day Notification in hopes of capturing some value during the first quarter market bubble that we are currently enjoying.

Lessons Learned

- The Forest Practices Staff at Pacific Cascade are the best! They made this happen in an efficient and timely matter when and where they had control over the process.
- Never bring an ID team out in January. This should be reserved for July, August or September.
- We must find resolution to disagreements between protocol surveys and ID team member opinions.

Rick Dunning Reports:

When Mary McDonald, administrator of the DNR SFL Office asked if the WFFA could provide outreach to WFFA members about the value of a 15 year permit, I used the opportunity to get busy and file for one...something I had thought about for years but never committed to do. I say committed because

having had spoken to those who had acquired a 15 yr permit, I knew I needed to hire a forestry consultant who specializes in these permits.

The process went smoothly at first, as I only had to have my forester come look at my farm, see my management plan, suggest alternate plan prescriptions for me, and then apply for my permit.

The process then broke down with the first ID team visit. You see, back in 2002 I needed to know if the 20' wide stream that meandered in a 200' valley floor on my tree farm was a "channel migration zone" or if I should measure my buffers from "bank full width". So a team of DNR and fisheries experts came down, studied the creek and determined it NOT a CMZ.

But on the first ID team visit for this 15-year permit, a fisheries biologist, without identifying factors that led to his opinion, declared it a CMZ. Another fishery biologist concurred and it was game on. This then took another ID team with an expert 'River Scientist' and more fishery biologists and DNR staff to determine it was in fact not a CMZ.

In the end I am happy to have a 15-year permit. Now for the next 15 years, I will only need to give a 5-day notice to harvest, which will allow me to try and cut at the peak of the market. But it cost me \$1400, as I needed to pay my forester to help represent me on not one but TWO ID teams. My forester was worth every nickel spent and my DNR area forester was outstanding. But it is unfair that the DNR permitting process should cost a Small Forest Landowner so much, just to agree what the rules allow. For this tree farmer Washington State's Forest Practice system seems like overkill for small forest landowners and at great expense to taxpayers.

LTA: Cost-Saving Tool For Your Future

The Small Forest Landowner Advisory Committee is committed to helping landowners better understand and take advantage of the benefits of Long Term Forest Practices Applications (LTAs).

Since the LTA or “15 year permit” was introduced in 2007, only 51 landowners have taken advantage of this opportunity. With proposed fee increases for a standard forest practice application, the LTA is not just good planning, but also a cost saving tool for the future.

The Small Forest Landowner Advisory Committee is requesting input from all interested parties including: landowners, foresters, and agency employees on how to improve the LTA process and increase the number of approved LTA’s.

Please contact Phil Hess with comments about the LTA process. Phil can be reached at hessphil@msn.com or by calling 509-952-0678.

Examples of LTA Concerns

- Are the application questions and related instructions clear and easily understood?
- What are specific examples where the instructions can be improved, including the Activity Mapping instructions, and Step 1 field work instructions?
- In your experience, are the instructions being consistently interpreted within DNR regions? Across DNR Regions? If you have experience in this regard please elaborate.
- If you have water, the first step is to accurately identify your water types and bank-full width (BFW) on type F (fish) streams. Describe your experiences with water typing and how we can improve and clarify the instructions including the water type modification forms.
- Please provide us any other LTA experiences you have encountered – positive or negative.

Phil Hess is the chair of the Department of Natural Resource’s Small Forest Landowner Advisory Committee and President of the Kittitas Chapter of the Washington Farm Forestry Association.

Are Bears Killing Your Trees? By Ken Miller

WFFA members Ken Miller, Steve Pedersen, Dick Atkins, and Harold Brunstad recently met with the Washington Dept of Fish and Wildlife seeking help for bear damage. Our friends in the Ag, Orchard, and Ranching communities are eligible for wildlife damage compensation that reaches threshold levels – compensation that is not available to forestland owners. “Bear damage losses can easily exceed \$2,000/acre with the worst damage exceeding \$10,000/acre at normal harvest time - if not a loss of the entire economic value of a 50 year crop rotation which could also be the entire small landowners retirement nest egg”.

WDFW recognizes that, due to our relatively small ownerships, we are particularly vulnerable to potentially ruinous effects on our crops in high damage areas. They want to help minimize damage and also find viable alternatives to our dependence on hound hunting – but are significantly hampered by Initiatives that have been passed by a caring but misunderstanding majority of voters. WDFW is working towards a vibrant “Master Hunter Program” that will utilize authorized volunteers to capture or kill problem bears in ways that avoid some of the problems of hounds pursuing bears over an increasingly populated landscape

Experiencing untenable animal damage problems? Contact Sean Carrell, at WDFW: 360-902-2926 or sean.carrell@dfw.wa.gov.

You can also contact Ken Miller at 360-705-1888, kenbonniemiller@gmail.com.

Firewood, Pests & Forest Protection

Firewood is pretty harmless stuff. Most of the time, that’s true. However, we’re starting to hear more about firewood-associated pest risks to timberlands and this is something we should know more about.

In the Great Lakes Region, the emerald ash borer beetle, a native of Asia, is killing ash trees and some of its spread is linked to moving infested ash firewood. Other non-native insects and tree diseases have entered the country over the years and certain of these are easily transported with domestic firewood. The risk is not limited to within our country. Firewood is imported from over a dozen countries and even though there are treatment requirements to eliminate hitchhiking pests there is still potential pest risk.

Multiple approaches are available to reduce the domestic firewood pest risk: firewood producers could develop pest-free firewood certification programs; regulatory mechanisms could be enacted to require firewood pest-freedom; and information outreach at the public level (such as campers) and private/corporate level –including landowners– is already underway.

More information can be found at www.dontmovefirewood.org or locally at www.invasivespecies.wa.gov. After all, Washington's private forests can do without any new forest pests.

From the Executive Director's Desk

I know it is springtime when the Chinook make it into the Columbia River! I caught a dandy one March 29th.

Springtime also means the WFFA annual meeting is here. Our Clark and Cowlitz Chapters have set the table for a good one...I hope you are able to attend.

Springtime is also when the log markets usually start their downward trends. Well this year they are UP and at em'. Exports, especially to China, have driven most mills to increase log prices on the west side of the state. The Spring issue of Center for International Trade in Forest Products (CINTRAFOR) suggests a number of things may keep them up. A Russian log tariff, weakness of the US dollar, new log verification laws, and the need for wood (both logs and lumber) in Asia, all could increase the demand for our logs.

This spring we have completed our first year membership drive. All Chapters competed to see which could increase their size. Prizes will be awarded at the annual meeting awards banquet, but consider helping your Chapter by finding one new member for the 2011 membership drive.

The WFFA is transitioning its technology process. In the future you will see a new website, communication capabilities, online registering and marketing, as well as data base storage for the three non-profits housed in this office.

The WFFA is also laying the groundwork for a new Charitable Giving

program for those who have shown interest in donating timberland to the WFFA, to be managed as a working forest.

There is lots of growth in store for the Washington Farm Forestry Association. We hope it is meeting your needs as a tree farm Association.

Respectfully,

Rick Dunning,
Executive Director

Welcome To Our New WFFA Members!

AT LARGE

FIA Timber Growth Washington LLC

Hawthorn Timberlands LLC

Matoaka Forests, LLC

Blue MT

Mary & Roger Dye

Tim & Loretta Wright

CLARK

Roy & Allison Buckingham

Ron & Stephanie Denis

Ryan Edwards

Anitra Gorham

Emily Lucas

Marvin Mathison

Wendy McDowell

Robert & Katharina McGrew

Mike Morgan

Scott & Taznie Nemeth

Dave & Mary Paladeni
Alan Schumacher, Schumacher Family Trust
Gabriel & Brittany Stephenson
James D. Wilder, Wilder Winter Greens

COWLITZ
Jack & Cathy Craggen

KITTITAS
Mike August

LEWIS
Chapman Family Partnership
Matt & Jodi Comisky
Joe & Kathy Doench
Steve & Barbara Grega
Larry & Jill Livingston
Douglas & Julie Olsen
Court & Kelly Stanley

NE WASHINGTON
Carmelite Sisters of Mary

PACIFIC
Paula Kaiser, GRCC Natural Resources

SOUTH SOUND
Kathy Grover

UPPER PUGET SOUND
John & Pam Begley
Meg Steed

WHATCOM
James & Gail Assink, Ben G. Assink Estate
Janel & Todd Black

Doug & Marilyn Curtis
Diana L. Rauch
