

Olympic
Helen Daly

In a light, airy sunroom surrounded by lush growth and a view of Puget Sound, Helen recounts the events that led to where she is now: “My Dad first came to Kitsap County in the early ‘20s. He had a place over where the Bangor Dock was built. Then the Navy took the land he owned. Dad went searching up and down Hood Canal for



another place to build and decided on this place. Back in the twenties and teens, when they were doing all this conniving to make money, this was platted as the town of Landis. Its streets and roads were on a map, but not on land. They were selling lots.

During the depression, a lot of people’s land went for taxes, and some of it was just never sold. This was the ‘40s and there were 155 acres of backland. Dad bought the whole thing. It had very nice timber and had been logged at the turn of the century. Back in those days they left some of the old ones. So, some of the original trees were still on the place.”

Helen’s father, Dr. Clyde Gockley, purchased the 155 acres, not for tree farming or logging investments, but for access to build a home for his family. Years later, in 1974, Helen Daly returned home to live closer to her mother, Bernice Gockley. At her mother’s insistence, they built a smaller home next door for Bernice to live out her life.

Frustrated with taxes doubling annually, Helen sought an alternate plan in order to hold onto the family land. Through her neighbors she was introduced to a local forester, Bob Kline. Bob helped them create a management plan and change their status to “designated timberland,” which lowered the taxation rate.

Helen, “I had a steep learning curve. It was necessary to keep the place, so I started by understanding the trees and the forest. It’s only until fairly recently that they’ve started forest management. It’s fun to see the changes – the philosophy and thinking. When I started, it was considered good forestry to take out every tree, every diseased tree, and every log. No snags.”

Helen began attending meetings to learn tree farming and timber management. She eventually became a member of the Washington Farm Forestry Association. The Kitsap County Chapter had been defunct for years and non-existent. Through the encouragement of Nels Hanson, Helen Daly reinstated the Chapter in 1989. Helen, “I had the help of the County Extension Service in both Kitsap and Mason Counties. They helped us with the mailings. By going through tax records, we were able to send out the first mailings to people who had open-space forestland or designated timberland.”

Through trial, error and personal research, Helen has learned the elements of best forest practices and has encouraged others to take part in preventing timberlands from becoming subdivisions. Helen, “This County is getting so much residential population coming in that our larger holdings of trees are fast disappearing.”

Driving up through their forest you see a variety of cedars, firs, maple, alders and more, managed through thinning, pruning, planting and an occasional small clear cut. A ‘Wildlife Area’ has been set aside to become Old Growth as long as it is in the family. Helen says it’s hard to see an old growth cut and have saved some of their big trees, but also enjoys seeing the growth of smaller trees and the wisdom of smart management.

“There are so many reasons to tree farm; for love of the land, for the fun of improving a stand or starting a new stand, and yes, a little bit of money. But you could get a lot more money by selling the land for something else. If you’re going to be a tree farmer around here, you’re not doing it for the money.”

CLYDE TREE FARM: GENERATIONAL

Dr. Clyde Gockley

Bernice Gockley,

Helen Gockley Daly, born December 2, 1938

J. Drew Daly, born July 19, 1941

Nanci Lee, born May 17, 1936

David Lee,

Olympic Farm Forestry Association, Founder and 10-year President