

Cowlitz County

## Ron Pursley

Classified as new-age tree farmers, Ron Pursley and his brother Lloyd are loggers by trade. Ron holds a bachelor of science degree in chemical engineering from Oregon State University. He chooses the woods and self-employment over the safety net of a job with a pension.

Ron put himself through college in the '70s by logging with his father Myron Pursley, a contract logger. Ron, "I always knew I liked it out in the woods. I wanted to major in something in college and the degree gives me a fallback. But I enjoy working for myself. It gives us more time and flexibility. We also spend three months out of the year hunting elk, deer, sheep, goats, moose, and caribou. We couldn't do that working for somebody else."

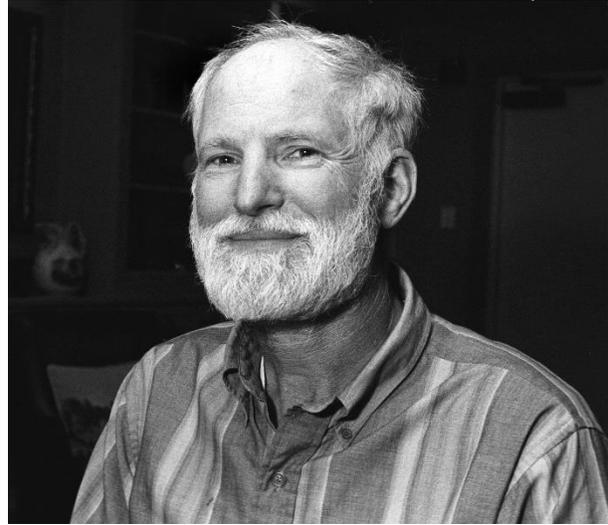
In 1977, the Pursley brothers had a chance to purchase 480 acres in Lewis County. Ron, "We decided to jump on the opportunity. My brother is an equal partner with me. Dad was originally involved. We bought him out. We're not quite sure how much land we have now."

Lloyd has a double degree in forest management and forest engineering. Like his brother, Lloyd chooses logging over a desk job, but they put their education to practice when purchasing property, placing bids, and consulting with clients.

Reforestation is a primary concern with the brothers, knowing that it will create longevity for a healthy forest and for future generations. Neither knows whether their children will carry on the legacy. Ron, "My daughter will be 18 in June and she's not that interested and doesn't see herself being a tree farmer. Things may change down the road, which is fine. She's going to go see what she wants to do in the world and maybe she'll come back."

Ron and Lloyd have been involved with the Farm Forestry since the mid-1980s. Ron served as president for Cowlitz County in the late '90s for six years. Ron, "I've testified in regards to forest practice and tried to stay involved. I certainly try to keep abreast. We've cut a hell of a lot of timber in anticipation of some of the rules, which is an unfortunate way to manage your tree farm."

Ron is skeptical of the road that lies ahead, "There are challenges ahead of us. In my opinion, if we don't get some regulatory relief, there's no future. The areas along the streams are just not workable. With the markets as harsh as they are right now, we can't be giving from both sides. It's something we're trying to work on. It's all going against us right now and we're trying to turn the tide or it won't work." As if to explain how he perseveres, he adds, "You have to be an optimist if you're going to stay in the business."



### PURSLEY FAMILY TREE FARM

Ron Pursley, born December 7, 1951

Lloyd Pursley, born December 4, 1950

Lewis County Tree Farmer of the Year, 1996

President Cowlitz County Chapter, 1996 - 2000