

Northeast

## Mick Lewis

Mick Lewis is not a property owner, but that doesn't stop him from tree farming. His love of wildlife encouraged him to get a degree in forestry. "I realized when I was in college that what better way to manage wildlife than in managing a forest. So, that's where my channel took me – toward timber management."

Lewis graduated in 1967 from Southern Illinois University with a degree in forestry. After serving time in the Army, he took a job in 1970 with the Soil Conservation Service, now named the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Spokane. He's been there ever since. Mick, "My job requires working with tree farmers, so that's my interest. As a forester that's the job I have with the Natural Resources Conservation Service."

Looking up to former forestry legends like William Jolley and Elmer Kegel, Mick hopes to guide tree farmers into making wise decisions for their land. Mick, "I feel like my niche is in helping tree farmers with management techniques."

As a member of the Washington Farm Forestry Association, Mick has served on the board for a number of years and provided a place for meetings and materials for newsletters through the Stevens County Conservation District. Bob Playfair comments on Mick's commitment, "Mick has served very ably as our secretary of the Northeast Chapter for more years than I want to mention. He has been instrumental in keeping it operating."

Over the years the most vivid change he's seen while working in the community involved the Playfair ranch in an area known as Elk Pasture. Its trees, some of which are up to 100-years old, were decimated by root rot and bugs. Through his guidance the trees were removed, or "scarified," to mimic Mother Nature. Mick describes the results, "Fifteen years later and now there's a new stand of trees coming back. It is one of the most dramatic things we've seen in the whole area."

Mick acknowledges the support of his partner, "My bride Judy, of 30 years, has been the real inspiration for my life and work. A forester's wife puts up with a lot of ticks, sticks, and mud tracked into the house over a 30-year career. She deserves more credit than I can express."

*"There is no richer experience than seeing your trees grow and develop into useful materials for our society and our culture." – Mickey Lewis*

*"I'm a surrogate tree farmer through all the people I work with. So, I have more trees than anybody you'll talk to today."*

Mickey Lewis, born September 24, 1943  
Judy Lewis, July 5, 1951  
Secretary, Northeast Washington Farm Forestry

