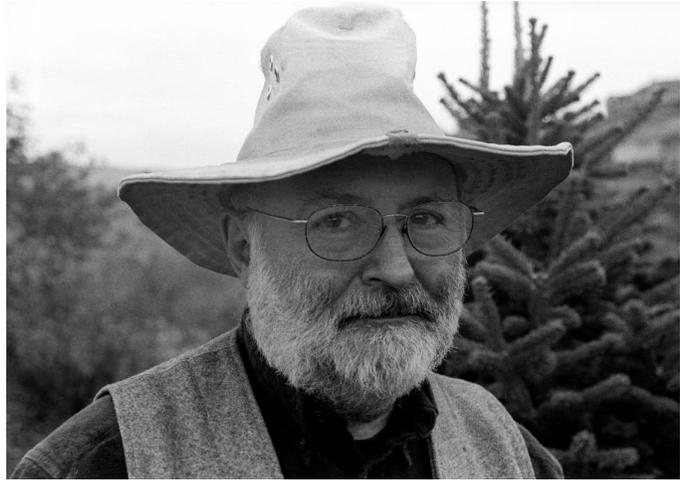


North Central

Mike Salisbury

“I grew up in Chicago where there was no nature to bond with, just asphalt and concrete and cars. You touched your neighbors next door. When I worked on a job here, I knew that I wanted to stay working and living where there were forests. It’s more important how you live than how much money you have. I live out in the woods and walk with my dogs. It’s a lifestyle choice. I have seen it both ways and I decided I like this better,” Mike Salisbury reflects.



Born in Chicago, Illinois, Mike’s life as a child went where his father’s construction work took him. In 1971, he graduated from Michigan Technological University with a civil engineering degree. Following his father’s lead, Mike worked around the country as a structural engineer. Then, while working in Wenatchee, Washington, Mike fell in love with the area and the forest and made the decision to leave his job and plant roots.

Mike’s interest in trees continued after he purchased three acres near Leavenworth in 1980. Mike, “The first thing I had to do was cut most of the trees because the land was too crowded. It had never been harvested and was very overgrown with forked-top trees. I had to thin it out, open it up, get rid of the bad trees, and get rid of the brush. Then I built an underground house. In the summer it’s cool. In the winter it’s warm. I began replanting trees where there were none. What I did in the beginning was a big mistake, because I moved trees from the forest to my property. It was a change in elevation, so they never grew.”

In spring of 1982, Mike noticed an ad in the paper. Mike, “They were having a meeting at an assembly hall in Monitor, Washington to start a Farm Forestry group. I went to it and have been going ever since. I’m pretty sure I went to their first meeting.”

The meeting was the first of many for Chelan Farm Forestry, which later merged with the Okanogan group to become North Central Washington Farm Forestry. Mike attends meetings regularly, learning from fellow tree farmers and spreading the word among those who don’t know. Mike, “I do engineering for new homes, and in the course of doing that, I meet people that have purchased property in the woods. I explain to them that you’ve got to cut trees in order for the others to be better off.”

Mike is dedicated to education and awareness, which he puts into practice. Mike, “We host field days to teach people what we have learned at various members’ tree farms. People that have forests in this area are, primarily, not foresters. They have orchards or are cattle ranchers or homeowners whose secondary interest would be the forest. They are not particularly educated in forestry. We want to spread the word to them to help them with their forest.”

With no ambitions to be a timber baron, Mike is satisfied with his three acres, promoting good forest practices, and raising public awareness. A bumper sticker on Mike’s truck reflects his mantra that trees are a renewable resource. Mike, “You got to put something into it for whatever you’re going to get out of it. Regardless of any mistakes we make, the trees will probably survive and outlive all of us. We receive much from the forest and we should give something back.”

Mike Salisbury, born February 12, 1949
Secretary/Treasurer, North Central Farm Forestry