Washington FARM FORESTRY ASSOCIATION

Landowner NEWS

Inside: Alder, Cedar & Redwoods Info

The Voice of the Small Forest Landowners in Washington State Volume 21, Issue 3 • Fall/Winter 2023

Carrots & Sticks

By Elaine Oneil, Executive Director

Carrots and sticks, reward and punishment, incentives and regulation: they all describe the idea that human behavior can be modified or directed towards desired outcomes in one of two ways. In civil society we have learned that sticks don't work very well for child development. We apparently don't apply that learning within the broader context of society given that we are subject to ever increasing regulation across most aspects of our lives. Based on our current public policy work, this is particularly true within the domain of natural resource management in Washington state. So why is this a problem?

There is a highly influential paper by Holling and Meffe (1996) (visit https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Command-and-Control-and-the-Pathology-of-Natural-Holling-Meffe/48e2cb2ba8864ca3a5938a32a0383eaaa50969c0) that describes

in detail how more and more regulation in natural resources leads to less and less benefit. This is because it generates an inflexible management structure that eventually leads to ecosystem and societal collapse. Holling and Meffe's solution is to apply, "Innovative approaches involving incentives leading to more resilient ecosystems, more flexible agencies, more self-reliant industries, and a more knowledgeable citizenry".

Contrary to the Holling and Meffe recommendation, in November 2022 a surprise vote at the Forest Practices Board (FPB) refused to even include a landowner option in the assessment of the need for a rule change to address potential warming in non-fish streams (reported on in December 2022 *Landowner News*). There were some issues with the vote, so the FPB rescinded it and re-voted exactly the same way at the August 2023 FPB meeting. The majority of FPB members, including four state agencies, were not even willing to evaluate the landowner proposal because an existing regulation must prevail. This despite the fact that we even heard from proponents of the FPB decision that "forestry is not the problem" at that meeting.

And we can believe that "forestry is not the problem". I had the opportunity to visit one of our landowners on a western Washington river this fall to witness the amazing miracle of a 60,000 strong pink salmon run. Since pink salmon are apparently not a highly valued commercial or sport fish, fishing pressure is not one of the gauntlets they need to run. That means the strength of the returning run provides a truer picture of the health of our forested watersheds than nearly any of the other salmon species. Taken together, these elements suggest that we are facing not only regulation for the sake of regulation, but perverse regulation moving forward to solve a problem that

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P.O. Box 1010 • Chehalis, WA 98532 • Office (360) 388-7074
info@wafarmforestry.com • www.wafarmforestry.com

Pink Salmon Run, Western Washington

is unlikely to be solvable within the boundaries of our forests. But we persevere. Because if you aren't at the table, you are on the menu.

On a more positive note, we continue to work with the Department of Natural Resources on an experimental prescription package that might be considered an incentive approach within the regulatory system. These 'experimental prescriptions' would offer opportunities to landowners that see a clear need to manage within their riparian zones to meet desired future condition outcomes.

We have spent the past year in the small forest landowner (SFLO) Carbon Workgroup (CWG) learning about the nuances of carbon markets, carbon accounting, forest measurement systems, stakeholder needs, silvicultural opportunities, and incentive structures. As part of this effort, the CWG has found that management activities that support forest health are needed, particularly in our dry, fire-prone east-side forests and aging west-side alder forests, where carbon sequestration has nearly stopped, and the risk of senescence and catastrophic loss is high. In these situations, common carbon market solutions such as longer rotations, no-touch management, and the maintenance of high carbon density forests are inappropriate. However, solutions that generate durable carbon stores and support forest resilience hold great promise. Biochar produced from low value wood and forest residues can meet both objectives. It turns out that it is also a cleaner way to dispose of slash as shown in the screen capture of a traditional residue pile (below) and the Ring of Fire biochar kiln (right) about four minutes after ignition at a permitted Fire Training Burn in Skagit County. These differences arise because the kiln design enhances the complete combustion of the volatile portion of the residues, leading to a cleaner burn than open burning of similar residues (see WSU publication Biomass to Biochar, visit https://csanr.wsu.edu/biomass2biochar/).

Encouraging and incentivizing the creation and use of biochar as a climate mitigation solution will be an element of the CWG report. Creating opportunities for SFLOs to participate in the creation and selling of biochar, or selling feedstocks to biochar facilities, is also the frame that we used to develop a grant proposal submitted to the United States Department of Agriculture last month to access federal Inflation Reduction Act funding in support of our SFLO community.

Herein lies the wrinkle in this incentive and market opportunity. Washington's current air quality regulations limit the use of these small-scale biochar kilns as they fall outside forestry burn regulations into the jurisdiction of regional air quality agencies. We will be working with agency and legislative bodies to address this challenge so that this innovation can be made available to SFLOs who see its benefit.

Biochar Burn Photo, courtesy of Nick Kunz, Skagit Conservation District

President's Message - Words to Ponder

By Ann Stinson, WFFA State President (2023-Present)

Over the last few weeks, I heard things that have stuck in my mind and made me proud to be a small forest landowner.

I went to the Kittitas Chapter meeting where Phil Hess and Patty O'Hearn hosted a good crowd at the Hundley family property. The Hundley family has been working with the Kittitas Conservation Trust and the Mid Columbia Fish Enhancement Coalition to restore salmon habitat on the Yakima River. They've reopened old channels and planted diverse species of trees along the banks. Afterwards, one attendee wrote a thank you note which included this line, **"I didn't know rivers need shade and salmon need structure in the Yakima in order to spawn."** I am always learning anew how much the general public gains from being on the lands we steward.

We are working to have one of our U.S. House of Representatives visit a member forest and as I was talking with an assistant, he asked, **"So what is the difference between a tree nursery and a tree farm?"** Again, we have much knowledge and wisdom to share with the general public.

At the last Executive Committee meeting, the board was brainstorming our communications strategy. I asked members to think of all the audiences WFFA has: members, potential members, legislators, etc. After I thought we'd exhausted the options, Ken Miller said, **"We forgot one. The critters. The deer, the elk, the owls– they are our audience too."** It is so true! We are creating a home for them with all that we do. How fitting that our 2024 Annual Meeting (AM24) theme is "Managing Your Timberlands for Wildlife"! See our Save the Date and AM24 details below. We look forward to seeing you all in Tacoma at the end of April for this great AM24 gathering.

If you have any general comments or questions, please feel welcome to contact me at president@wafarmforestry.com.

SAVE THE DATE

Washington Farm Forestry Association

2024 Annual Meeting

MANAGING YOUR TIMBERLANDS FOR WILDLIFE

Executive Board Meeting -- Hotel Murano, Downtown Tacoma -- Sunday, April 28
WFFA Annual Meeting -- Hotel Murano, Downtown Tacoma -- Monday, April 29
Field Tour -- Joint Base Lewis McChord, Tacoma -- Tuesday, April 30

Look for more details in communications from our host, WFFA Pierce Chapter.

Steve Stinson 2024 Scholarship Announcement

WFFA is proud to announce the 2024 offering of the Steven D. Stinson Leadership in Natural Resources Scholarship. This is the ninth annual scholarship offering, made available to WFFA members, families and affiliates. The scholarship is a maximum of $7,000 split between college students majoring in natural resources and Ag-Forestry Leadership Program applicants. The 2024 scholarship announcement and details are available on our www.wafarmforestry.com website. The due date for scholarship applicants is March 15, 2024, and awardees will be notified by April 15.

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Havlak's Win Bigleaf Maple Leaf Contest

Dirk and Dixie Havlak, proud members of our South Sound, Lewis and Clark Chapters, were the recent winners of the Bigleaf Maple Leaf Contest held by Rep. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (WA-03). Their beautiful 23.5-inch behemoth was found by Dirk on their forested property near Randle, in Lewis County. Their leaf won the contest by five inches! Visit the X (formerly known as Twitter) link featuring all the contest winners' submittals from across Washington's Third Congresssional District at https://twitter.com/RepMGP/status/1725214299738521787. Rep. Gluesenkamp Perez even took the winning leaf to D.C. to post on her office wall so that visitors can get a taste of home (see https://twitter.com/repmgp/status/1732122537822163173?s=46&t=bdKExRKX-u8lATY1ZWHHkag). The Havlak's made sure their submittal included that they were proud members of the Washington Farm Forestry Association (WFFA). Thank you for spreading your WFFA pride and congratulations, Dirk and Dixie!

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Whatcom – Jan Vollmer

WISHING ALL OF OUR MEMBERS, PATRONS AND FRIENDS A JOYOUS HOLIDAY SEASON SHARED WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS!

FROM THE OFFICERS AND STAFF OF WFFA

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Thank you to our 2023 Patrons for your generous contributions to WFFA.

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Washington Department of Natural Resources
Domestic Mill Log Prices

Coast and Eastside Domestic Log Price Averages
http://www.dnr.wa.gov/BusinessPermits/Topics/TimberSaleAuction/Pages/psl_ts_query.aspx
or www.dnr.wa.gov

The Washington Log Market Report
Contact for a full report subscription
John Lindberg • 360-693-6766 • logmkt@comcast.net

December 1, 2023 Western Washington Report Summary

Domestic Log Price Range Averages

Douglas Fir	#2 saw	$ 738.48/mbf
Douglas Fir	8"-11"	$ 716.84/mbf
Douglas Fir	chip/saw	$ 76.04/ton
Hemlock	#2 saw	$ 520.79/mbf
Hemlock	8"-11"	$ 505.63/mbf
Hemlock	chip/saw	$ 53.23/ton
Red Cedar		$ 1,267.86/mbf
Alder saw	12" +	$ 569.64/mbf

Export Log Price Range Averages

Douglas Fir	12" + Japan	$ 881/mbf
Douglas Fir	12" + Hi China	$ 768/mbf
Douglas Fir	8-11" + Japan	$ 820/mbf
Douglas Fir	8" + Korea/China	$ 595/mbf
Hemlock	12" + J-K	$ 572/mbf
Hemlock	12" + Hi China	$ 503/mbf
Hemlock	8-11" K	$ 572/mbf
Hemlock	8" + China	$ 503/mbf

Bringing Redwoods Back to the Pacific Northwest

By Philip Stielstra, President and Co-Founder, PropagationNation

As members of the WFFA are aware, coast redwoods capture more carbon dioxide than any other tree on Earth. Each tree can remove up to 250 tons of carbon from the air over its lifetime. These particular trees are so large that measuring them with current methods may not represent their potential power, meaning they may hold onto even more carbon than we are able to know right now.

While I am not a tree farmer, joining the WFFA felt very serendipitous. For several years, I've been working with two colleagues, Bob Bashor and Fred Korn. Our mission is simple: plant trees for the planet. We have assisted in the planting of over 10,000 coast redwood and giant sequoia saplings in more than 200 communities across 10 different Washington counties. In 2019, we formed a nonprofit for this purpose.

PropagationNation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that promotes the assisted migration of Redwoods back to the Pacific Northwest. Contracting with various nurseries, PropagationNation grows and sells both saplings from seed and clones of the largest old-growth Redwoods in California. They are then distributed to individuals, organizations, and tribes for planting in the Pacific Northwest. Coast redwoods and giant sequoias have special characteristics that make them incredibly resilient, but they need our help to migrate beyond their modern-day limited range. So, we are bringing them back to the Pacific Northwest where they once grew.

Millions of years ago, redwoods were more widely distributed across North America. Their current range is due to glaciation not environmental mismatch. With our support, they can be reintegrated back into our forests with great advantage.

Redwood fossils from Eastern WA in UW's Burke Museum

World distribution of Redwoods from millions of years ago

Indisputably, forests are the greatest tool we have to remove carbon emissions. Forests have been here all along helping us breathe, giving us grounding, and living as the central character in the ecosystems where we humans live.

The people of PropagationNation value early experiences with trees because we've been touched by them ourselves. Some of our earliest memories are among trees. Those trees gave us a sense of safety and play that lives within us still. Our work ensures that those experiences of awe and healing continue for our own children, their children, and our children's children. We are a generational solution to a generational problem. It is important to us that the next generation learn about the power of trees to help the vulnerable Earth, and when we work with youth in hands-on tree planting projects, a value for trees and the environment itself becomes paramount in their vision of their own future.

We know that these trees will go on growing and doing their work long after the founders of PropagationNation are gone. What will remain is a loyalty to the majesty of redwoods. The trees will continue because we have passed our work onto a new generation.

Joining the WFFA has been a wonderful experience for me personally. Entry into WFFA has been met with a warm reception every step of the way. The May tour of Dave Robbins' redwoods (see photo) was energizing, as was the Annual Meeting. My colleague, Bob Barnes, and I were able to meet many folks who were interested in supporting our mission. Many indicated an interest in purchasing trees from us.

We also connected with Ken Miller, who gave us a tour of his tree farm and hiked in with us to the Port Blakely redwood stand. We had learned about this stand from Elaine Oneil when she first welcomed us into the WFFA family. Seeing a thriving stand of redwoods thirty years after it

Dave Robbins' 1951 truck and 1990 redwoods

was planted was more evidence that our mission is not just a good idea but a tangible way to help. Standing among Port Blakely's healthy redwoods, we knew our mission was the right thing to do.

We saw Ken and Bonnie Miller again the next week when we attended the South Sound Chapter picnic at their tree farm. It was inspirational to me to meet even more members interested in obtaining redwoods and sequoias in order to plant them and let the trees work their magic with our environment while also creating healthy, fast-growing forests for their tree farms.

Our team was so inspired by what we saw at Port Blakely, we wanted to document and share the progress being made by these redwoods planted in Washington thirty years ago. There are over 400 living coast redwoods there, and they are some of the tallest trees at the Port Blakely farm. This planting is a testament to the viability of redwoods to thrive in our Northwest climate.

With permission from Port Blakely, and in collaboration with Evergreen State College GIS professor Mike Ruth, drone imagery was used by PropagationNation to obtain aerial photography of these redwoods. PropagationNation used those images to create a story map here: https://arcg.is/1n1jC10.

"What's in this for you?" Bob was quick to answer, "I'm doing this for my grandchildren and their grandchildren."

In August, Bob Barnes and I were at the Far West trade show in Portland describing the mission of PropagationNation to one of the vendors and Bob was asked, "What's in this for you?" Bob was quick to answer, "I'm doing this for my grandchildren and their grandchildren." I've heard that same philosophy spoken by other members of WFFA when talking about their tree farms and their families. We hope that you are inspired to investigate redwoods for your own forests, and when you are, that you will reach out to us.

If you are interested in ordering redwood or sequoia seedlings for planting in December 2023 or January 2024, please use this link to place an order: https://propagationnation.us/order. To receive discounted pricing, enter "WFFA" in the "Organization" blank on the form. Further discounts are available for purchasing 120 or more seedlings. The discounted pricing will show up on the estimate that we send you. Prices include shipping.

Port Blakely Redwoods

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to Shaina Thompson at customersupport@propagationnation.us or 425-470-3059. We are a growing nonprofit organization, so please leave a voicemail and you will be contacted in a timely manner.

Phillip Stielstra is the President and Co-Founder of PropagationNation, and a proud member of our South Sound Chapter. Phillip can be reached at info@propagationnation.us.

P.S. October 29th news flash: A relevant article featuring PropagationNation came out in the 10-29-23 NYTimes Magazine titled: Can We Save the Redwoods by Helping Them Move? Visit: https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/25/magazine/redwoods-assisted-migration.html.

Passing of a Great Steward of the Land – Don Hanley (1947 – 2023)

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of one of our beloved WSU Extension Forestry agents, Don Hanley. Those of us lucky enough to meet him usually became one of his many friends. After all, who wouldn't want to be around someone whose mantra was "Every Day is a Good Day"? One of Don's many legacies was to help establish WSU Extension Forestry's flagship Coached Planning Courses to the great benefit of our small forest landowner (SFLO) community. We are also ever so grateful that prior to his retirement Don hired both Andy Perleberg and Kevin Zobrist, our two long-standing WSU Extension Forestry agents who ably carry on his legacy of service to SFLOs across the state. As with many retirees, Don did not really retire – he just did other things – most of them forestry related. He will be greatly missed. You can read more about Don's forestry legacy and leave a note for the family by visiting https://funerals.coop/obituaries/donald-philip-hanley.html.

WFFA Supports AFF's Rural Forest Markets Act

By Ann Stinson, WFFA President

In July, I had the opportunity to go to Washington, D.C. as a part of the American Forest Foundation's (AFF's) Legislative Fly-In. Vicki Christiansen and I represented Washington landowners and joined about thirty other small forest landowners from around the country. Each of us met with our legislators to talk about forest issues. One topic we discussed was a bill called the Rural Forest Markets Act (RFMA). AFF has been working on this bill to help connect small forest landowners to carbon markets. The bill was introduced to the house by Reps. Pingree (D-ME) and Timmons (R-SC). It has since been sponsored by Representative Kim Schrier (D-WA) and others.

At the last Executive Committee meeting, members voted to add WFFA's support to this bill. If it passes, it will provide additional funding for voluntary carbon markets. Specifically, RFMA gives the U.S. Department of Agriculture the authority to issue up to $150 million in guarantees for loans and bonds that help create carbon markets for small forest landowners. USDA already issues such guarantees for traditional agricultural markets. This bill will help support the goals of the WFFA Carbon Workgroup.

Vicki Christiansen (L) and Ann Stinson, WFFA President (R) at Landowner Advocate Congressional Fly-In, Washington, D.C.

Save Time and Money – Renew Your WFFA Membership Online

We have a goal to have at least 25% of our WFFA members complete their 2024 annual renewal online. This saves you:

• **TIME** – the online renewal is quick and easy at www.wafarmforestry.com;

• **MONEY** – no stamp is needed to send in your payment; and

• **STRESS** – ensure your payment information is safe and confidential by using our secure website.

Remember to:

1. Review and update your personal information and your preferences for how you receive communications and

2. Renew online:

- Visit www.wafarmforestry.com.
- Go to the green "Member Login" button at the top right corner of the homepage. Enter your email address as your username, add your password and click the Log In button. NOTE: You ***must*** use the email account that is linked to your WFFA membership account; if you are not certain of your correct email account, please contact Kelly. If you forgot your password, please request a new one – it comes automatically.
- Review your membership information that appears on the screen, scroll down to the "Membership Renewal" link and click on the blue "Click Here" link on the right side of the page.
- Follow the instructions at the top of the page to complete your membership renewal and enter your payment information into our secure website. **Your on-line payment is the most secure way to ensure your payment is kept confidential.**
- If you need assistance or would like to renew your membership over the phone, contact Kelly at 360-388-7074 or Donna Loucks, Membership Chair, at membership@wafarmforestry.com.

WFFA membership renewal emails and paper invoices have been mailed.

Renew Early – Skip the Time, Money and Stress – Renew Online!

Free Alder Seedlings to Small Forest Landowners!

We're happy to invite all our WFFA members to get free alder seedlings from the Northwest Hardwoods (NWH) Alder Seedling Program. NWH needs small forest landowners to help establish a greater population of alder in the Pacific Northwest, and to do so they are offering free alder seedlings.

Why alder? They offer a distinct ecological advantage. Unlike softwoods, alders enrich nutrient-poor and disturbed soils with usable nitrogen, revitalizing the soil and setting the stage for healthier forest growth. Alder trees also serve as both forage and habitat, supporting a myriad of wildlife and enhancing biodiversity.

NWH is offering 35,000 alder seedlings annually – at no cost – to small woodland owners. These seedlings, grown from seed sourced by Weyerhaeuser, are specifically adapted to the Pacific Northwest's unique growing zones. NWH would love to see these alder trees flourishing on your woodlands!

The first batch is slated for pick-up in Spring 2024. Seedlings must be picked up by landowners at the NWH Longview mill. Together we can plant our way to a greener future, one alder at a time.

Meet-A-Member: Dave Pearsall, South Sound Chapter – Long-time WFFA Member Hangs Up Hoedag

Dave Pearsall and daughter, Jill Carter, at Mount St. Helens tree planter statue

I just celebrated my 82nd birthday; I have determined it is time to hang up my hoedag. I have been planting tree seedlings continuously since 1957 – a period of 65 years planting trees. Our small family-owned company chose to never plant for the state, federal government nor industrial forest landowners. We found our niche with small forest landowners who practice the values of so many WFFA members. We reached a milestone in 1991 when we successfully completed planting 22,000,000 seedlings for the small landowners throughout Washington state.

Our two sons, Dave and Ron, at a very young age, planted along my side on weekends and continued until they chose different career paths; one in law enforcement, the other a firefighter. Our daughter, Jill, has taken over as resource manager for our nine tree farms which are in Thurston and Grays Harbor counties. Jill has worked with me for over 30 years of slash burns and all forms of site preparation for planting. Jill and her husband, Tom Carter, also manage other tree farms as well as their own logging and reforestation business.

Now I am devoting my time to creating a 2-acre redwood grove near Highway 101, mile post 150, near Queets. Jill and Tom (who are WFFA members) are helping me with this endeavor, with site preparation and planting. The area will be called "Pearsall Legacy Redwood Grove," planted with coastal redwoods. The coastal redwoods will appreciate the Pacific Ocean air and the foggy conditions.

Starting Them Young – Dave Pearsall and daughter, Jill, April 1977

Ralph ("Dave") Pearsall and his wife, Ginnie, live in McCleary. He owned and operated Olympic Forestry Company, providing services to small forest landowners for over 35 years. Dave and Ginnie's daughter, Jill Carter, and her husband, Tom, have continued the family forestry legacy. Jill manages Pearsall Resources LLC, their family timberland business.

Request Your Alder Seedings Here

by January 31, 2024
nwh.com/alder-seedlings

First priority for all alder seedling requests will be given to small forest landowners. NWH will take every request into consideration and do their best to meet the demand. Request your alder seedlings at: https://nwh.com/alder-seedlings/

Phil Hess Named Washington State Forester of the Year

J. Phil Hess, long-time President of the Kittitas Chapter of WFFA, was recently recognized by the Washington State Society of American Foresters (SAF) for his contributions to the forestry profession and to the forestry community as a whole. Phil has been an SAF member for 56 years. An excerpt of an article written by Andy Perleberg, as published in the *North Kittitas County Tribune* on May 11, 2023, reads, in part,

"Phil('s) range management background helped him enter the private forestry sector where he led a distinguished career with Boise Cascade. Following his industrial forestry career, Phil has practiced consulting forestry and is presently the principal forester and owner of Forest & Land Services, a consulting forestry business in Cle Elum, WA, where general services have included forest management advice, plan writing, forest practices permitting, timber sale management and marketing wood products, reforestation, vegetation management and integrated pest management, and wildlife habitat enhancement. Phil jokes that "every client gets a Forest Stewardship Plan whether they want one or not!" This is testimony (to) Phil's belief that responsible forest management denotes the stewardship of all resources – abiotic and biotic, regardless of management intentions. He feels landowners must be aware of their property's current condition, must understand how their property has been shaped by natural and human disturbance, and that s/he needs to understand the choices they have for protecting resources and accomplishing their multiple-resource management objectives, and to determine their comfort level of expected risks due to their choices. Phil is a long-time member of the Central WA chapter of SAF. He has served on many local, state, and federal advisory boards and committees, presently including the eastern Washington representative for the DNR Small Forest Landowners Advisory Committee, DNR Forest Stewardship Interagency Advisory Committee, Kittitas Fire Adapted Communities, City of Cle Elum Fire Protection Committee, and USFS Resource Advisory Committee. Phil has been the president of the Kittitas Chapter of the Washington Farm Forestry Association since inception; he is a qualified inspector for the American Tree Farm System; and is a founding member of the Forest Stewardship Education Committee for Washington State University. Like most great consulting foresters, Phil has influenced the public and private forest management of municipalities & counties, dignitaries, movie stars, professional athletes, resorts, and an occasional officeholder. Recent innovations Phil has contributed to include the restoration of the Suak Prairie ecosystem contributing to climate change benefits, as well as carbon sequestration and biochar experiments. Phil's goal is to help his clients become the experts of their own property. For fun and service, Phil plants long-butt stumps upside down. Phil has one son, Daniel, who is an officer (battalion chief) and fireman for the City of Seattle."

There is an additional article published in the *Ellensburg Daily Record* detailing Phil's service and SAF award (https://www.dailyrecordnews.com/business/hess-named-wa-forester-of-the-year/article_dd0d99ce-0a08-11ee-ac47-730e30375e11.html). WFFA is so very thankful for Phil's dedication to serving our members and all small forest landowners of our state. Congratulations, Phil!

Cultivating Cedars

By James Edstam, MD, MPH, Member of Grays Harbor Chapter

We purchased our 90 odd acres of tree farm in the winter of 1980. It is hilly land located in Pacific County between the junction of Wilson and Ward Creeks, a few miles east of Raymond on the outskirts of Old Willapa. For twenty years we raised llamas, highland cattle and (for a time) kids on about forty acres of it. When we bought it, the back forty was forested with mature second growth spruce, hemlock, and cedar. All the Douglas fir had been removed by the previous owners. We clear cut those trees in 1982. Our timing was poor; there was no market for any of those species. We ended up with a massive cold deck with nowhere to send the logs. Fortunately, my wife, Akiko Kitada, DDS, was able to trade dental care for portable sawmilling from a local logger with two young daughters. We ended up with enough lumber to last us over the years through one house remodel and about five outbuildings - the last of it finally gone in 2019.

We replanted after that harvest with fir but then pretty much ignored the woods. We spent most of our free time with the livestock. By the mid '90s, having moved our medical and dental practices from South Bend to Olympia, we had eaten through the highland herd, and the llamas were aging out. We started turning the high pastures into new fir plantations. In 2005, we sold the farmhouse, barns and surrounding few acres of pasture. All that time, those neglected trees in the back forty were growing. In 2011, we took down approximately 2 miles of old barbed wire fence. In 2016, we harvested 15 acres of alder from areas where it had outcompeted the fir. In 2019, we harvested the fir. In 2020, with the help of our forester, James Powell, we replanted 9,000 fir seedlings. (Fortunately, being exempt "timber workers", Covid did not keep us isolated indoors during the lock-down.)

Which brings us to cedar – we figured out that fir did not do well in the low, moist, and shaded areas, particularly since they would be shaded out by four feet of berry bushes (blackberry and salmon berry) in one summer. We also knew from experience that planting a cedar seedling was tantamount to planting a dead stick. The deer and elk would have an unprotected, newly-planted cedar sapling stripped bare in one night (if it could be found at all). But we wanted cedar for their beauty, for their value, and as living carbon sequesterers. Our tree farm plan documents intent to grow cedars for three hundred years. But first we had to get them started.

That brings me to the meat of the story. I started planting cedars in the low, sub-irrigated bottom land previously used for animal pasture in 2016. We have now planted over 1,000 since then, successfully using the process described below. This year, having covered most of the gullies, bottom land and hillside drainages, I planted a hundred or so in places more suited for fir. With the dry summer of 2023, I lost about 50 percent (compared to my previous record of about 98 percent survival). It's not that our process doesn't work anymore; we have just run out of appropriate space. Fir seedlings will go into those areas come winter.

Here is the process: My wife and I collected sprouting cedars wherever we saw them. Mostly we've gotten them from our daughter's yard in Maple Valley where in some years they come up like weeds. For the first year, I grow them in half pint pots or in garden beds. Over the next couple of few years, I pot them up using a mix of garden compost and tree farm soil. Usually they are about two or three feet tall by the time they've spent a summer in two gallon pots (see photo 1). I've

Photo 1: Cedars in 2 Gallon Pots

produced so many in that fashion that last year I had to give away about 200 just to be able to move around in my nursery. Each of the last seven years, in the late fall, we have planted several hundred on the tree farm. I prep the plant site by skimming off the sod with my tractor or my Stihl FS91 brush cutter. Fortunately there are no rocks in Pacific County soil. I dig a hole, pull the root-ball from the pot, and plant the tree in the usual fashion. The next part is key (and expensive). I stake a metal t-post on one side of the seedling and a wooden or bamboo stake (from our own bamboo plot) on the other. Those support a four-foot-high circle of 2x4 inch wire mesh (see Photo 2). I've figured out that

Photo 2: T-Post, Bamboo and 2x4 Mesh Cage

I can get 27 1/3 fence circles out of a one-hundred foot roll. Those rolls are now up to $120 each, so the fencing costs me about $4.50 a tree. Fortunately, the trees were free - or, as my wife says, "Paid for." Having used up all the t-posts we salvaged from our own fences several years ago,

"We think the effort is worth it, and it certainly beats going to the gym."

we now look for cheap metal posts wherever we can. Two years ago we did manage to find a couple hundred for a dollar apiece at a local junk yard. Thus, each tree has cost about five dollars and quite a bit of TLC to plant. Each year we go back

Photo 3: Cedar Almost Ready to Come Out of Their Cages

and raise the mesh a foot or so to keep the tops from being nipped off. We think the effort is worth it, and it certainly beats going to the gym. Going forward, some of those trees planted in 2016 are getting ready to come out of their cages (see Photo 3 – note how the elk eat the branches as high as they can reach). Ultimately, by the time

my grandkids are in their teens, their summertime jobs will be to take down all that metal – intergenerational transfer!

James Edstam, MD, MPH, and his wife, Akiko Kitada, DDS, reside in Lacey and are proud members of the Grays Harbor Chapter. If you have an article you think might be of interest to your fellow WFFA members, please email Kelly at info@wafarmforestry.com.

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P.O. Box 1010 • Chehalis, WA 98532

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How do you show "It's Cool to be a Tree Farmer"? Send in your photos of tree farm: walks with your kids or pets, unique animals that share your property, beautifully tranquil scenery, spectacular Three Log Loads...show what is unique about your tree farm. This is a great way to get your children or grandchildren outside and appreciating the uniqueness of tree farm living! Email your photos to info@wafarmforestry.com and look for your photo to be used in a future WFFA publication or on our website.

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