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Puget Sound Forest Stewardship E-Newsletter

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The Puget Sound Forest Stewardship E-Newsletter is sent out periodically as news and announcements become available. Please feel free to forward and share this information with others who may be interested.

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Forester's Notes

Fall has arrived, though you would hardly know it by the weather. There are other signs, though, like the fact that we are underway with workshops again. Our fall Coached Planning class started this week in Issaquah, and it is going to be a great class. We also had a Ties to the Land class scheduled to start next week, but this has now been postponed due to low enrollment. This is the first workshop I have ever cancelled due to low enrollment. Perhaps the poor economy has finally caught up to us! From the feedback I've gotten, this topic is of high interest to most of you, and I think it is one of the most important workshops we offer that every forest owner should take. I am working on rescheduling this for January – hopefully that will be better timing. If you are interested in a January class, drop me a note and let me know.

Meanwhile, I have undertaken some other endeavors. After a long and hard-fought resistance, I have finally given in and moved the program into the 21st century by getting it up on Facebook and Twitter. If you are into this stuff, pay a visit and become a “fan” (Facebook) or a “follower” (Twitter) – I am sure people will think this program is much cooler if we have a bunch of Facebook fans. If you have no idea what I’m talking about with this, or if you found yourself involuntarily rolling your eyes at the mention of such things, don’t worry – the official website and this newsletter will still be the primary means of communication. Even so, I hope that utilizing tools like Facebook and Twitter will help to reach more people, improve program communication and publicity, and ultimately to build some online community areas where you can engage each other with discussion and ideas. If you have any ideas or suggestions along these lines, please drop me a note and share those with me – I’m interested in what tools and social networking sites you all are using and how you like to communicate and share information. Who knows – maybe next I’ll start my own forestry blog.

Back to forestry, below is the usual list of news articles and upcoming events, including an opportunity to join with another one of our Extension foresters to share your thoughts, concerns, and opinions about climate change and what it means for you as a family forest owner (it’s all for the sake of research and there is free food involved). I also have some information on diagnosing forest health problems, certifying your forest (or even just your backyard), and some policy stuff to be aware of.

Kevin W. Zobrist
WSU Area Extension Educator
Serving King, Snohomish, and Skagit Counties

Ties to the Land - Postponed

The Ties to the Land class that was scheduled for October 1st and 8th in Arlington is now postponed until January due to low enrollment. If you are interested in this class but could not make the October dates, consider signing up for January. Exact dates and location will be announced soon; visit <http://snohomish.wsu.edu/forestry/TTL2009.htm> or call 425-357-6017 for more information.

Climate Change Discussion

Researchers from Washington State University Extension and University of Idaho Extension invite you to participate in a focused discussion regarding global climate change. More specifically, we are interested in what family forest landowners, such as you, feels about the topic. We are soliciting family forest landowners of all ownership sizes, management objectives, and backgrounds to participate.

No background knowledge regarding climate change is required. In fact, there is nothing you need to prepare for this discussion. All that is needed is your interest and willingness to participate. A light meal will be served.

This discussion is one of 24 being held throughout Washington, Idaho, Oregon, and Alaska in 2009-2010. The results of these discussions will serve to inform the development of a regional extension and technology transfer program that addresses climate change relative to family forests in the Pacific Northwest.

For more information or to RSVP to attend this event, visit <http://snohomish.wsu.edu/forestry/climatefocus.htm> or contact Janean Creighton, WSU Extension Natural Resources Educator, at 509-477-2199.

Upcoming Non-WSU Forestry Events of Interest

Note: the events below are not WSU or WSU Extension events. Some WSU Extension newsletters provide links to external sites for the convenience of users. These external sites are not managed by the WSU Extension. Furthermore, WSU Extension does not review, control or take responsibility for the content of these sites, nor do these sites implicitly or explicitly represent official positions and policies of WSU Extension.

- **Backyard Wildlife Habitat Speakers Series.** The Edmonds Backyard Wildlife Habitat Project is hosting a speaker series in Edmonds on Thursday evenings in October. The series will cover topics such as bird and insect identification, encounters with wildlife, shoreline stewardship, sustainable gardening practices, and how to record data on your own backyard birds. To register contact the Edmonds Parks & Rec service at 425-771-0230 or visit <http://www.reczone.org/Course/#11666>.
- **National Public Lands Day** – The Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is calling for volunteers to help clean up state lands this Saturday, September 26, 2009. Several volunteer events will be held in the area, including trail work and invasive plant removal at Tiger Mountain. For more information visit http://www.dnr.wa.gov/RecreationEducation/News/Pages/nr09_162.aspx

Now on Facebook and Twitter

The Puget Sound Forest Stewardship program is now on Facebook and Twitter. These social networking sites provide some additional avenues for me to communicate and get information to you. Just about every day I come across things that are likely to be of interest to many of you, including news articles, new publications, other resources I find, class announcements, etc. An advantage of these social network sites is that they allow me to share these tidbits on a more regular and timely basis. They also allow me to share more than would end up in a typical newsletter.

Twitter is a site where you can give very brief “tweets” – usually a one-sentence blurb, announcement, or link. Facebook is more involved and includes space for program photo albums, discussion threads, and general program information. If you are already using Facebook or Twitter, check out our pages and consider becoming a “follower” on Twitter or a “fan” on Facebook. If you don’t use these sites, you can still take a look at our pages at the links below and sign up for free at either site if you wish.

Visit us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/WSUExtForestry>

Visit us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Everett-WA/WSU-Extension-Puget-Sound-Forest-Stewardship/148183126376>

As always, I am interested in your feedback on this. If you find these to be useful communication tools or have other feedback or suggestions for how we can best utilize social networking tools, let me know. My hope is ultimately to foster more than just one-way communications from me to you, but to establish discussion boards and community forums where you can interact and learn from each other.

Fall is for Forest Health

There is something about the fall that has many people thinking about forest health. Perhaps it is because the end of summer represents a peak stress on trees as the dry season culminates and problems are revealed in this time of vulnerability. Many of us also spend more time outside this time of year, and so we are more observant and aware of things. Whatever the reason, I have been getting numerous calls and emails about forest health issues, as I do every year at this time.

Keep in mind that some of the phenomena that you may be observing is natural. Conifers shed their oldest foliage this time of year, which is something that is especially evident with the cedars. You will notice a lot of orange foliage on cedars this time of year, which is called “flagging.” This is normal and that dead foliage will blow out during our fall windstorms and the tree will look fully green again.

You may also observe phenomena that is not normal, with entire branches or portions of the tree turning yellow or red, evidence of insects, thinning tree crowns, etc. You may even observe some complete mortality in some trees, or multiple trees being affected by the same symptoms.

If something is amiss in your woods, I will do my best to help you figure out what is going on. Keep in mind, though, that this is a lot like visiting the doctor – it is not always clear what is going on, and ultimately I am making an educated guess or postulating a theory rather than making a concrete diagnosis. In some cases, I have no ideas at all. The forest health experts at DNR can also provide additional expertise, but they cover a lot of territory and sometimes have limited availability.

Also keep in mind that in many cases there may not be immediate practical things you can do to address a forest health issue. These are not like garden pests where you can go to your local garden center and get a spray to quickly clear up the problem. In many cases it is a matter of letting the problem run its course (oftentimes the trees will recover, though with some growth loss). In other cases, the tree may be already doomed to mortality by the time you observe any symptoms.

There will always be a background level of insect and disease activity in the forest – this is normal and part of a healthy ecosystem, providing dead wood for habitat, recycling nutrients, and providing other elements of forest structure and function. Managing for forest health does not mean the complete elimination of disease, insects, and mortality, but rather the promotion of a diverse and resilient system. If you have a forest health issue, one thing I will talk with you about is your forest condition. Is it overcrowded? Are the species appropriate for the site? If there is a serious health problem, there is often an underlying management issue like this that is causing undue stress to the system. But again, this is not something that can be fixed quickly and you may not be able to save the currently ailing trees. Rather, it is a management “course correction” over time to build resiliency in the system.

In any case, here are some tips of things to make note of when working to diagnose a problem:

1. What trees are affected? Just one tree, or multiple trees? Which species are affected, and which are not?
2. When did you first notice the problem? Spring? Late summer?
3. What color is the affected foliage? Red? Yellow?
4. What pattern of foliage decline do you observe at the tree level? From the top down, bottom up, random patches, or a uniform crown fade?
5. What pattern of foliage decline do you observe at the branch level? Are the current year’s needles (branch tips) affected, previous year’s needles, or both?
6. What evidence do you observe on the foliage? Tiny black spots on the undersides? Large black spots? White pustules? Honeydew or egg masses from insects?
7. What evidence do you observe on the stem? Sawdust (frass) from wood-boring insects? Animal chewing or girdling around the stem or individual branches? Resin streaming or flowing? Evidence of mechanical injury?
8. What evidence do you observe in the upper canopy? Distress cones present? Has the tree leader shortened, creating a rounded-looking top rather than a pointy top?

Finally, if you have photos, do send them. While I cannot conclude anything from a photo alone, it may still help me to better visualize the symptoms you describe. Please reduce the file size of your photos to smaller than 1 MB when sending by email, and do not send more than 2 – 3 MB total.

Forestry in the News

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- WSU Today featured work by WSU silviculture professor Mark Swanson and his forestry students to do a forest restoration project at a Buddhist Abbey:
<http://www.wsutoday.wsu.edu/Pages/Publications.asp?Action=Detail&PublicationID=15780>
- *The Oregonian* published an interesting article about a group in the Portland area that is working to connect consumers with local wood sources:
http://www.oregonlive.com/environment/index.ssf/2009/09/group_connects_local_timber_ow.html
- *The Seattle Times* reports on efforts by a local man to protect the area along the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River:
http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2009809936_midfork05m.html
- *The Seattle Times* reports on a study of bats in area forests:
http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/outdoors/2009860734_bats14m.html
- The *Skagit Valley Herald* reports on the proposed management plan for the Anacortes Community Forest Lands:
http://www.goskagit.com/home/article/forest_land_proposal_draws_comments/
- The *Anacortes American* had a short article on fall colors:
http://www.goskagit.com/home/article/vince_streano_weather_or_not_looking_back_on_the_weather_fall_colors_shoul/
- *The Enumclaw Courier-Herald* featured an article on how arborists value trees involved in disputes:
http://www.pnwlocalnews.com/south_king/ech/lifestyle/57657262.html

Get Certified

Certify your forest

Certifying your woodland can have several benefits. There is the satisfaction of third-party recognition of your sustainable management efforts (along with a cool sign to hang at the end of your driveway). There is also the benefit of being involved with a network of forestry professionals and other certified woodland owners. There are potential economic benefits of being able to sell certified wood, and participating in emerging carbon credit markets will likely require being certified.

There are several certification options available (and you can have multiple certifications). Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is one of the most broadly recognized certification standards. If you want to get FSC certified, there are organizations like Northwest Certified Forestry (<http://www.nnrg.org/nw-certified-forestry>) who provide this service for a fee. There is also the American Tree Farm System (ATFS), which is free and is attractive to a lot of family forest owners. With its recent PEFC endorsement, ATFS is becoming a more robust certification standard. Any landowner with at least 10 acres of forest can be ATFS certified – you can contact me for details and an application form. For either FSC or ATFS certification, you will need to develop a written management plan. Our Coached Planning program is a great way to do this (<http://snohomish.wsu.edu/forestry/programs.htm>). There are other certification options as well (SFI, etc.), but these are the two I see most commonly utilized by family forest owners.

Certify your backyard

If you don't have "forestland" per se (or less 10 acres) but rather a wooded backyard, you can still get certified by several organizations to recognize the habitat you provide. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has their popular Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary program, which costs \$5 and includes a cool sign. You can get also now get triple-certified with WDFW, the National Wildlife Federation (NFW), and the Northwest Zoo and Aquarium Alliance (NWZZ) for \$15. Visit <http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/backyard/> for more information. This is a great project for kids.

Policy Update

Riparian Buffer Rule Change

In the last newsletter, I mentioned that the Washington Forest Practices Board had approved some rule changes to the state riparian buffer requirements. I have some additional information on one of the rule changes, which goes into effect tomorrow (September 25, 2009). The western WA Desired Future Condition (DFC) basal area target for when the stand is 140 years old is now 325 sqft/ac for all site classes. Previously the target ranged from 190 (site V) to 285 (site I) sqft/ac. What this means is that if you are

harvesting along a fish-bearing stream in western WA and you wish to do one of the partial harvest options in the inner zone, the leave tree requirements are greater. DNR has new forest practices forms and an updated version of the DFC worksheet program available to reflect this rule change at http://www.dnr.wa.gov/BusinessPermits/Topics/ForestPracticesApplications/Pages/fp_for_ms.aspx For more information on this and other rule changes, contact your local DNR office (a list of DNR regional office contacts is included in the Forest Stewardship Quick Reference Guide at http://snohomish.wsu.edu/forestry/documents/FS_QuickRef.pdf).

Natural Resources Reform

The Washington State Legislature has directed our state's natural resource agencies to develop a plan to provide consolidation, lower costs, and improved service delivery. A draft report has been developed, and now Governor Gregoire and Lands Commissioner Goldmark are soliciting public comment. To access the report and comment, visit the governor's natural resources reform website at <http://www.governor.wa.gov/priorities/reform/naturalresources.asp>

Contact Info:

Kevin W. Zobrist
WSU Area Extension Educator, Forest Stewardship
King, Snohomish, and Skagit Counties
600 128th St SE
Everett, WA 98208-6353
425-357-6017
kzobrist@wsu.edu
<http://snohomish.wsu.edu/forestry/>

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