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Puget Sound Forest Stewardship E-Newsletter – Large Print Edition

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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

It has been a good fall season. We just finished a fantastic Coached Planning class in King County. It was one of our biggest classes, and the participants brought a lot of energy, enthusiasm, and dedication to the class and to their forestland. I have also been busy doing a lot of site visits, both for the class and outside of the class. It has been great to visit with so many of you in person and see what you are doing on your land. I have also gotten more phone and email questions in the past couple months than I think I ever had. I am so pleased that so many folks are turning to WSU Extension for information and assistance.

Unfortunately, any feelings of celebration have been short lived. The budget crisis that we faced at the state level last spring (which may get replayed this spring as the state budget deficit deepens again) is now playing out at the county level. WSU Extension is a three-way partnership between WSU, USDA, and local counties. Like a three-legged stool, you take away any of the three legs and the whole thing falls over. As of today it looks like we have lost King County Extension entirely and Snohomish County Extension is slated to take a huge hit. See below for details by county for King, Snohomish, and Skagit. This will have a huge impact on the forestry program and the services you receive.

With so much program infrastructure loss, including key county and DNR partnerships, we have to completely re-think how we deliver information and assistance. I will be taking a break from my usual tasks to plan, strategies, and develop some new initiatives. I will be largely unavailable between now and mid-February; read below for details.

I do not expect to send out another newsletter until early 2010. For some of you (King County forest owners), it looks like this

may be the last newsletter you receive. If that indeed proves true, I wish you well and will miss all of you. It has been an honor to serve you, if only for a few months.

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

Deep Cuts to WSU Extension

We survived the state budget cuts in the spring, but there are a lot of things are not looking promising at the county level. WSU Extension is a partnership, and without the county support the partnership falls apart. Here is what is going on by county:

King

This is the worst news. I learned today that the King County Council has completely zeroed out WSU Extension, including the minimal support for 4-H that was originally slated to be retained. This means no more 4-H, Master Gardeners, Agriculture, or any of the other King County Extension programs, including forestry. This will end King County Extension's 95-year history, and King County will become the only county in the state to not partner with WSU and the USDA to offer Extension services. We hope this does not have a domino effect on other counties.

I will no longer be able to provide any services to King County forest owners. This means no workshops and no availability to do site visits to answer questions by phone or email. This newsletter will also no longer be sent directly to King County forest owners. The information, along with other resources, will still be posted on our website for "self service."

I believe there will still be some limited technical support from King County DNRP (Kristi McClelland, Bill Loeber, et al.), but even this is being trimmed down further. There will be nothing available from WSU Extension, and as you know the Washington State DNR has already eliminated its stewardship services throughout western Washington.

My understanding is that the official comment window ended at 3 PM today (I did not know in advance that any of this was happening). Citizens are always free to call or email their councilmember anytime, though, to ask questions or give feedback. If anything changes with the King County situation, I will let you know. I believe that the actual council vote will be tomorrow morning. Contact information for your King County Councilmember is available at

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/council/councilmembers.aspx>

Snohomish

There is bad news here as well, though not as bad as King County. The Snohomish County Council has proposed reducing Snohomish County Extension by one third, specifically eliminating the agriculture program. While cuts to the forestry program have not been proposed per se, we are highly integrated and forestry would be significantly impacted. The proposal cut would impact a lot of shared resources, everything from the support staff to the copy machine to the office space itself. In other words, while there will still be a forestry position here, I do not know how it will function effectively with no support staff or basic office resources. Funding that went directly to forestry programming may now have to be diverted to cover basic overhead costs. All of these “indirect” impacts would significantly impact program delivery.

Also, many of you have agriculture land in addition to forestry, so you would feel the loss of those services. Furthermore, Master

Gardeners are included in the agriculture program, and this is also an important program that many of you rely on.

The final public hearing and budget decision by the County Council is scheduled for 9:00am Monday morning (11/23). The public may provide input to the budget discussion online at <https://web5.co.snohomish.wa.us/council/budgettestimony/>

Skagit

There is some good news here – while we have already had some significant cuts this past year, no new cuts to the forestry program have been proposed for 2010. Keep in mind that this will not be finalized until December 15th, though. **The budget should be available on the Skagit County website on Monday, with opportunities for the public to comment.**

The Forester is Out

As I mentioned in the notes above, much of the infrastructure and partnerships that support the delivery of this program have been lost to budget cuts. I have been trying to cover the same ground that approximately six of us across various agencies used to cover when we began this year. This is just not sustainable and so much is falling through the cracks. We cannot offer Coached Planning or other key programs in the same way that we have been used to doing.

Overall, people are seeking forestry assistance now more than ever, and we need to develop new and innovative ways to meet these needs without key staff and funding. At the same time, I am preparing for my third year review as a WSU faculty, which is a time to really focus in on program priorities, identification of needs, and delivery strategies. After much consideration and input from colleagues and superiors, starting immediately I am going to

pull myself away from much of what I have been doing in order to redesign and reprioritize this program from the ground up. I will be meeting with various folks, collecting input, identifying priorities, and coming up with a delivery plan.

What this means for you is that between now and mid-February I will be largely unavailable. It will be sort of like a “sabbatical,” but not really. It is a chance for me to regroup and develop this program into something that is proactive rather than simply reactive, which again is proving to be unsustainable. I will be working on developing some new publications, online delivery of Coached Planning, and some other really exciting new initiatives.

I appreciate your patience as I will not be available for site visits in the short term, and there will be long delays in getting questions answered by phone and email. I am doing this because I believe that this temporary short-term disruption will be well worth it in the long term.

Ties to the Land Postponed . . . Again

The Ties to the Land class was originally scheduled to be in Arlington in October, and then was postponed until late January due to low enrollment. We have gotten a lot of feedback that the new January dates do not work for many folks interested in this workshop. Because of that, coupled with other issues including the uncertainty around the agriculture program that is partnering with us to put on this workshop, we are postponing again, most likely until April.

2010 Conservation District Plant Sales

Dates are beginning to be announced for the 2010 native plant and tree sales hosted by your local conservation district:

- King County
 - March 5 – 6, 2010
 - For details and pre-order information, visit http://www.kingcd.org/pro_native.htm
- Snohomish County
 - March 5 – 6, 2010
 - For details and pre-order information visit <http://www.snohomishcd.org/plant-sale>

Forestry in the News

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.

- *The New York Times* reports on conflict between wood certifiers: <http://greeninc.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/10/26/eco-friendly-wood-certifiers-continue-feud/>
- Another story on certification conflict was in *Architecture Week*, this one based on the infamous landslides from that 2007 storm in Southwest WA:
http://www.architectureweek.com/2009/1021/news_2-1.html

- The *The Seattle Times* reports on an OSU study on climate change impacts on PNW forests:
<http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2010135057aporclimateforests.html>
- Another trees and climate change article from The Seattle Times:
<http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/politics/2010298828apusnationalforestsclimatechange.html>
- The Federal Way Mirror reports on problems with invasive ivy in the city's forests:
http://www.pnwlocalnews.com/south_king/fwm/news/70238907.html

Forest Tax Resources

The 2009 edition of the Forest Service's annual Tax Tips for Forest Landowners is now available:

<http://www.timbertax.org/developments/TaxTip09-Final.pdf>

Also, the 12th biennial NW Forest Tax Conference will be December 1st in Spokane. Sponsored by the USDA Forest Service and the WA Association of CPAs. For details and registration information visit

<http://www.wscpa.org/Public/catalog/coursedetails.aspx?courseID=10108023>

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