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WSU Extension Puget Sound Forest Stewardship E-Newsletter Large Print Edition

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Forester's Notes

Some of you may have been beginning to wonder what happened to this newsletter. A hiatus of over four months was certainly not how I had planned things. To make a long story short, late last fall my wife suffered a stroke, so all else for me was immediately set aside. I returned to my duties on a semi-regular basis last month, and have had a lot of catching up to do. I think I am most of the way through the backlog, so now it is time to start rebuilding momentum and getting back to the regular business of this program, such as planning classes and writing newsletters.

Fortunately my new program assistant Tamara Neuffer, who started last fall, has been a tremendous help keeping things going, answering the phone, making preliminary arrangements for 2011 classes, and of course keeping me steered in the right direction when I lose track of which way is up. Despite our efforts to keep everything moving forward these past few months, I fear there may have been phone calls and emails that fell through the cracks. So if you tried to contact me and didn't hear back, please accept my apologies and please don't hesitate to contact me again—it's OK to be a squeaky wheel right now!

With that aside, let's look to the coming spring and summer months and all of the great educational opportunities we have coming up for you. This is going to be a great year for learning new things, reinforcing and practicing existing knowledge, and passing your knowledge and passion for forest stewardship on to others. We'll be kicking off our spring Forest Stewardship series, which is our number one program, next month in Everett. We've also got other workshops coming up, a spring social, and summer field days to look forward to. Read on for details, and I look forward to another year of teaching and learning about the woods together.

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

Forest Stewardship Coached Planning

Our flagship and most popular and powerful program is ready to roll this spring. This 10-session practical, hands-on course will guide you through the development of your own stewardship plan with “coaching” from the top natural resource professionals in the state. In the process of creating a forest plan unique to your property and objectives, you’ll go in depth with us both in the classroom and in the field covering a wide range of forestry topics. Things we’ll cover in detail include ecology, Silvics, soils, wildlife, forest health, fire, applied silviculture, water resources, aesthetics, regulations, special forest products, working with contractors, and more. The class includes nine evening classroom sessions, a Saturday field trip, a personal site visit to your property from a professional forester and/or wildlife biologist, and a forest stewardship notebook packed with information.

Your completed forest stewardship plan may qualify you for significant property tax reductions, as well as qualify you for a whole range of cost share and other assistance programs. It will also provide you with a road map for maximizing your enjoyment of your land. Perhaps even more beneficial than the plan itself, though, is the educational process of preparing one. Even those who do not complete a written plan find the education they receive in this class to be invaluable in the stewardship of their property. I have never heard from anyone who did not find this to be well worth the time and investment to attend. You will leave this class a different forest owner than when you start.

As usual we have a great set of speakers lined up who are eager to share their expertise with you. For this class we will also be rolling out our brand new forest stewardship notebooks, with lots of updates and new goodies. The class is open to all, regardless of how many acres you own or what your ownership objectives are. Registration is open, and the class is already about half full. There is a \$25 early registration discount for registration received by March 15th.

For details, including the full syllabus and registration information, visit <http://snohomish.wsu.edu/forestry/CP11Everett.htm> or call 425-357-6017.

Spring Potluck Social

Another favorite program is coming up this spring. Join us from 6:30 – 9:00 PM on Friday May 13th (a lucky day!) at our usual location at the Snohomish County Extension building in south Everett. Come and enjoy great food, see old friends, meet new friends, and enjoy an after-dinner education program. Our featured speaker will be local beaver expert Jake Jacobson who will be talking all about beavers and their role on the landscape. We'll also have a “virtual tree farm tour” from a local forest owner.

RSVP now at

<http://snohomish.wsu.edu/forestry/social2011May.htm> or by calling 425-357-6017. Persons with a disability requiring special accommodations while participating in this program may call WSU Extension at 425-357-6017. If accommodation is not requested in advance, we cannot guarantee the availability of accommodation on site.

The Return of Forest Stewardship Notes

Some of you may remember Forest Stewardship Notes, which was a statewide quarterly newsletter that used to be mailed out to forest owners across Washington. This newsletter was discontinued back in 2005 due to lack of funding. We are pleased to announce, though, that this excellent resource has returned.

The new Forest Stewardship Notes will be delivered via email. It's more than a newsletter, as it actually reads like a magazine with feature articles and how-to tips. This resource is provided free by WSU Extension and the Washington State DNR.

Sign up to receive this at

<http://visitor.r20.constantcontact.com/manage/optin/ea?v=001DHL4fuLXGfmrmyxLLgAA%3D%3D>

Read the January issue at:

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs009/1103464106731/archive/1104240712174.html>

Welcome Island County

Several years of effort have finally paid off, as the WSU Extension Forest Stewardship program has now been expanded to cover Island County. . This means we will be having workshops and field days on both Whidbey and Camano Islands. For you Whidbey folks, imagine not having to always take the ferry to come to one of our educational events! Island County forest owners should have received an email last week with a survey link to help select the topics we will cover this year. Don't forget to participate in that survey if you received that link.

2011 at a Glance

The Spring Coached Planning class and the Spring Social are the only events we are currently taking registrations for, but we've got many other events coming up to watch for and a few dates to save on your calendar. Here's a summary of what's coming up (note: some of these events may change based on speaker and venue availability):

- Spring Coached Planning, Everett, April 12th – June 7th (Registration is open)
- Spring Social, Everett, May 13th (Registration is open)
- Trail Building Workshop, Arlington, TBD
- Special Forest Products Series, Mount Vernon, TBD
- Firewise Workshops (2), Snohomish County, TBD
- Whidbey Forest Field Day, Coupeville, September 10th (Save the date)
- Summer Twilight Tours, Carnation, Sultan, Camano, and Sedro Woolley (watch for details)
- Whidbey Forest Workshops (2), TBD
- Fall Coached Planning, Preston, September 20th – November 8th (Save the date)
- Fall Social, Everett, October 28th (Save the date)

Forest Finance Resources

Owning forestland is truly a long-term investment, with often more than 50 years between planting (investment) and harvest (return). Just as biological and ecological health are important in a forest, financial health is also important. A financially healthy forest does not mean one that is managed purely or even primarily for monetary benefits (thank goodness!). Rather, a

financially healthy forest is one in which costs and revenues are carefully planned for, minimizing financial burdens to landowners and providing opportunities for supplemental income that can offset the costs of management, be reinvested in the land to support stewardship activities, be invested in the stewardship of additional acreage, or be used to meet other family needs. A little bit of financial planning can be the difference between a successful harvest that meets multiple objectives or a poorly timed harvest that leads to needless loss for the landowner.

Financial analysis is a “tool in the toolbox” to help landowners make informed management decisions that achieve all of their ownership objectives, both monetary and non-monetary. This “tool” is often poorly understood, though, and may be subsequently dismissed or ignored. This in turn can result in unintended and unsustainable outcomes. WSU Extension has developed new educational materials to help forest landowners understand the basics of forest finance, apply financial principles to day-to-day decision making, and to be better informed when it comes to managing what is likely their largest capital asset for long-term sustainability.

A new WSU Extension Manual, “Financial Principles and Applications for Private Forest Lands,” is available for free download, or a print copy may be ordered for a nominal fee. There is also a companion free online learning module called *Economagic* that provides supplemental materials, video lessons, and free online tools such as a forest finance calculator.

The new forest finance extension manual is available from <https://cru84.cahe.wsu.edu/ItemDetail.aspx?ProductID=15391>

The *Economagic* online learning module is available at <http://ext.wsu.edu/forestry/economagic/>

Market Update

This is a new short feature on current log prices in the Puget Sound area based on DNR's monthly Timber Sale Query reports.

Local log prices continued to climb in February, matching the one-year high achieved last April. Most prices are up significantly from a year ago, especially cedar (\$1,025) and Douglas-fir (\$508). Following strong prices for most of the past ten years, alder has dropped back down below Douglas-fir, but is still respectable at an average price of \$454, with higher grades fetching over \$600.

For a current price graph, see

<http://snohomish.wsu.edu/forestry/documents/LogPrices.pdf>

Focus On: What is Extension?

This newsletter, and the Puget Sound Forest Stewardship program, are part of the services provided by Washington State University Extension. But what is Extension, why does it exist, and how does it work?

Washington State University (WSU) is Washington's designated land-grant university. The land-grant system was established by Congress in the 1800s to provide better higher education opportunities for working classes. Building on this mission of providing greater public accessibility to university resources, the Cooperative Extension Service was established as part of the land-grant system by the Smith-Lever Act of 1914.

WSU Extension is a three-way partnership between the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), Washington State University, and local county governments. WSU Extension

has offices in every county in Washington, with each local office providing a different mix of local programs that may include agriculture, gardening, community and economic development, health and wellness, youth and families, and natural resource stewardship. Master Gardeners, Beach Watchers, 4-H, and Forest Stewardship are some examples of specific programs offered by WSU Extension around the state.

The WSU Extension Forest Stewardship Program provides educational workshops, tours, online trainings, publications, newsletters, and individual consultation on a variety of subjects, including forestry, wildlife, and other natural resources. Extension Educators are WSU faculty members who are stationed at local county Extension offices. Many, but not all counties in Washington are served by a Forestry Extension Educator. For additional information about WSU Extension resources in your county, please contact your local county Extension office. Contact information is available in the government listings in your local telephone directory and online at <http://extension.wsu.edu/locations/>.

Public education through Extension programs is part of the land grant university system nationwide. In addition to all of the resources available on the WSU Extension website, you can also plug into the entire national Extension network through a website called eXtension, which has a vast array of resources: <http://www.extension.org>.

In the next issue we will focus on: The benefits of a forest stewardship plan.

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Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension office.