



Forestry

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Forester's Notes

This summer has been like none I have ever experienced—some good, some bad, and some just plain weird (like the freak windstorm that postponed our field day). Speaking of the postponed field day, it's this Saturday (the 12th)! We lost a lot of attendees with the reschedule, so if you're free on Saturday, please consider coming out and supporting our event. We have 14 workshops for you, including our most requested ones (e.g. forest health, wildlife, mushrooms, chainsaw use). Plus, the weather forecast for the field day site is...perfect—sunny with a high of 75. In the [next section](#) are all the details. You can save a few bucks and some time in line if you pre-register online by 5 PM Friday. Also note—we have [another field day](#) specifically for folks in the San Juan Islands coming up September 26th.

Another thing I want to call your attention to is the selling logs symposium that is next Friday and Saturday. One of the top questions I get from landowners, especially those who go

through our Coached Planning program, is how to actually go about harvesting trees, whether for forest health and restoration, income, or other objective. If you want to do it right, it's not simply a matter of calling the local logger that the neighbors recommend. There are a lot of things to consider, and not having the job done right can mess up your property for decades. Plus, a little education can make the difference between getting \$33,000 for your trees vs. \$150,000 for your trees (true story behind that one!). This is not part of our ongoing curriculum, but rather a unique opportunity made possible by a grant. [Read more about it](#) in one of the sections below. Registration closes the 16th, and we are getting very full.

Speaking of full, we only have a few spots left in our fall coached planning classes in Preston and on Whidbey Island (which will be the last class on Whidbey for the foreseeable future—more on that later). So if you want to get in on this, [read below](#) and get signed up.

OK, with those promotional messages aside, let's talk about some of the not-so-good that we experienced in our state this summer. I'm talking about the drought and the fires. I struggled with whether or not to talk about fire again in my notes column this month because I covered the issue pretty thoroughly in previous issues over the past couple years (e.g. http://forestry.wsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/Newsletter_07_03.pdf and http://forestry.wsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Newsletter_05_05.pdf). In the end, though, I decided it's just too big of an issue not to address it.

I've lived here all my life and I'm comfortable saying that this is the worst fire year I've ever seen. Before this year, I would have said last year was the worst—not a good trend! But it is a trend, and we need to heed that. The long range forecast is for us to have unusually hot, dry weather for at least another year, so it's reasonable to expect that next summer is going to be as bad if not worse when it comes to drought and fires.

Knowing this in advance, what could you do in the meantime to make your home and property less vulnerable? Now is the time to be thinking about this, as we head into the wet season. Don't put it off until next summer. We had one local wildfire this summer that was ironically started by someone do fuels reduction work to be more Firewise (<http://www.komonews.com/news/local/W-Wash-wildfire-danger-Its-going-to-burn-faster-and-hotter-307311801.html>).

I've said it time and again, though, that the best time to prepare for a bad fire season is when it's wet and rainy and there's no hint of fire season, not when a bad season has already commenced. (Just like best time to do succession planning is when you're in good health and don't yet have the age of average life expectancy in the rearview mirror—but that's a soapbox speech for another time.)

I think those with property in Eastern WA are pretty well tuned-in now about the importance of wildfire preparedness. However, I don't know what it's going to take for people on the westside to start taking fire seriously. Just last year I had a landowner belittle me and another landowner and treat us like fools for talking about fire risk reduction because apparently "everybody knows that the forests in western Washington are too wet to ever burn." He went

on to say that some of us are so stupid we even think the Olympic rainforest will burn. Well, guess where a major fire has been burning all summer... There have also been countless other wildfires of various sizes all over the westside this year.

In terms of nature, fire in westside forests is a normal event that is an integral part of the ecosystem. Fires on the westside happened very infrequently compared to the eastside. In some places it would be centuries between fires—they would only when conditions were just right and there was an ignition event, and then there would be large conflagrations. Do you know what it means when the Weather Service issues a red flag warning? It means that we have achieved those conditions that are just right for a major fire event. We had a number of red flag warnings throughout western Washington this summer, as we have had for several summers now. We've been lucky that there hasn't been an ignition that caused a major event. Will our luck hold for another year?

If you're ready to take fire seriously and start reducing risks, especially to your home, first give yourself a pat on the back and second get some professional advice before you start, especially since we're already in fire season. Talk to me, Lauren, Kristi, Boyd, Julie, your local conservation district, and/or your local fire district--lots of resources to get help. We'll be doing several fire risk reduction classes at the field day on Saturday, and we're working on getting a comprehensive online learning module produced that focuses specifically on protecting your home (watch for that in the near future).

If you're like me, as you think about these things you feel torn between spending your efforts on the urgent things going on right now vs. the important but non-urgent things like preparing for disasters. I encourage you to make the important stuff a priority, even if it's not necessarily urgent such as during the rainy season. As the Chinese proverb says, the best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago, the second best time is now. The same can be said for fire preparedness, succession planning, etc.

- Here is a nice article from the summer edition of Forest Stewardship Notes on basic wildfire preparedness: <https://foreststewardshipnotes.wordpress.com/2015/06/16/fire-doesnt-wait/>
- Here is a nice article from the July edition of DNR's SFLO News on what to do when fire strikes: <https://sflonews.wordpress.com/2015/07/22/what-to-do-when-wildfires-strike/>
- Here are two website resources for assistance if you or someone you know has property that was damaged by wildfire:
 - <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/wa/programs/financial/equip/?cid=NRCSEPRD337723>
 - <http://wildfires.wsu.edu/>

One other thing I want to address regarding fire. I talk a lot in my classes about the ecological role of fire, the importance of disturbance, and that these events are not necessarily bad things. I want to be clear that when I say this I am talking purely in ecological terms about natural processes and events. I don't want this to ever come across as dismissive of the very real human costs and the profound losses that are experienced due to these major

disturbances. Homes and even entire communities are destroyed, animals (pets, livestock, wildlife) perish, and even people die in these events. Four firefighters in our state were killed by the fires. These were four young men in their prime with bright futures that now will never be. There is a lot of misery and suffering associated with these fires.

So please consider the real risks that wildland firefighters face and how extremely hard these women and men work for lengthy periods in miserable conditions, with potential long-term health impacts from all the smoke exposure. Think about how you could make it easier/safer for them to defend your home during a fire. And give these folks all the support you can.

Speaking of support, the wildfire victims face a long and difficult recovery and they have very tangible needs right now. If you'd like to help, there are a number of options. As always, do your homework to make sure you're donating to a legitimate organization, etc. Here are a few options to consider:

- Red Cross – Northwest Region: <http://www.redcross.org/local/wa/northwestregion>
- Community Foundation of North Central Washington (several specific relief funds for victims of both this year's and last year's wildfire victims: <https://cfncw.smalldognet.com/erp/donate/list>)
- United Way of Chelan and Douglas Counties: <http://www.uwcdc.org/>
- Salvation Army: <https://donate.salvationarmyusa.org/northwest/northwest-division-2015-northwest-wildfires>

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Serving the North Puget Sound Area

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2015 North Puget Sound Forest Owners Field Day

After being postponed by the big wind storm, the field day is finally here! It is this Saturday, September 12th from 9 AM to 4 PM. Gates and exhibits open at 8 AM. The field day will feature 14 different outdoor workshops for people with forested property. Forestry specialists from around the region will be providing instruction, demonstrations, and resources throughout the day on a variety of topics that will help you to better understand, protect, enhance, and enjoy your forest.

Workshop topics are:

1. Animal Damage Control
2. Chainsaw Felling and Bucking
3. Fire Prevention and Pruning
4. Forest Health

5. Intro to Forest Ownership with Forest Dan
6. Invasive Species Control
7. Measuring Trees
8. Mushroom Cultivation
9. Native Tree and Plant ID
10. Property and Forest Management Tour
11. Soils
12. Thinning and Forest Ecosystems
13. Tree Planting and Seedling Care
14. Wildlife Habitat

Complete field day schedule: http://forestry.wsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/Conway_FD_Schedule_Revised.pdf

Where: Grandy Lake Forest in Conway – right off I-5 just south of Mount Vernon. Driving Directions: From I-5, take exit 221 (south of Mount Vernon) to SR 534 (Conway/La Conner). Go east on SR 534 for three miles, and look for the field day sign/entrance on your left right by mile marker 3. Head up the gravel road to the parking and registration area.

Cost (includes lunch!):

- Online special – \$25 per person or \$35 per couple (same household or ownership) for online pre-registration until 5 PM Friday 9/11 - <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2044048>
- \$30 per person or \$40 per couple for on-site registration at the event
- Youth under 18 may attend free

This program is made possible in part by funding from Skagit County and generous donations from Grandy Lake Forest, the Skagit Conservation District, and the North Puget Sound chapter of the Society of American Foresters.

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Selling Logs from Your Property - A comprehensive educational symposium for landowners

September 18-19 – Deming, WA

Selling logs is one of the most important decisions you face as a landowner. Landowners log their property for a number of reasons. For some it's the culmination of decades of planning and hard work to produce a valuable crop. For others it might be a liquidation of an asset to meet a sudden financial need. Still others might be undertaking a thinning operation to improve forest health and habitat.

Whatever your reason or goal, selling logs is a high-stakes endeavor, and mistakes can be costly–this is not a time to cut corners! Timber is a valuable financial asset, YOUR asset, that took decades to produce–don't lose out on thousands of dollars by not getting a fair deal for your logs. Don't expose yourself to unnecessary liability or be left "on the hook" for someone else's mistake. Make sure your property looks how you want it to when the job is done and don't risk unnecessary damage to your property that could take decades to restore.

Topics we'll address include:

- Timber sale fundamentals
- Selling methods (sealed bid vs. negotiation)
- Types of sales (stumpage, lump sum, etc.)
- Types of buyers (mill, broker, logger)
- Getting fair value for your logs
- Understanding your rights and responsibilities as a landowner
- What a forestry consultant can offer you
- Protecting yourself from liability
- Minimum harvest amount to be economically viable
- Inventory and marketing for different forest products
- How to select a logger
- Permitting requirements and harvest regulations
- Excise taxes, current use taxation, and cost share programs
- Logging roads and operational logistics
- Silvicultural alternatives
- Portable sawmilling

Speakers will include:

Consulting foresters, log buyers, loggers, and representatives from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Department of Revenue (DOR)

The field trip will include:

A scaling yard, a portable mill demonstration, a logging site from this year, and examples of what different harvesting objectives will reveal 40-70 years later.

When:

Friday September 18, 2015 5:30 – 9:30 PM (Doors open at 5:00 PM) &
Saturday September 19, 2015 8:30 AM – 5:30 PM (Doors open at 8:00 AM)

Where:

Deming Logging Show, 3295 Cedarville Rd, Bellingham, WA 98226

Cost:

\$25 per person or \$35 per couple (same household or ownership)
Student and Master Gardener discounts available – contact us at 425-357-6017 for details

What's Included:

- Friday evening and Saturday morning classroom sessions and panel discussions
- Saturday afternoon field trip (bus transportation provided)
- Dinner on Friday
- Lunch on Saturday

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San Juan Islands Forest Owners Field Day

September 26th – Eastsound, WA

This is a smaller, local version of our regional field day. The San Juan Islands Field Day will feature a suite of outdoor workshops specifically for people with wooded property in the San Juan Islands. Forestry specialists from around the region will be providing instruction, demonstrations, and resources throughout the day on a variety of topics that will help you to better understand, protect, enhance, and enjoy your forest.

Workshop topics:

- Fire Prevention and Pruning
- Forest Health
- Invasive Species
- Measuring Trees
- Native Tree and Plant ID
- Portable Mill and Horse Logging Demo
- Thinning
- Tree Planting and Seedling Care
- Wildlife Habitat

When: 8:40 AM – 2:40 PM Saturday September 26, 2015. Gates open at 7:40 AM

Where: Camp Orkila - 484 Camp Orkila Rd, Eastsound, WA 98245

Cost (includes lunch!):

- \$20/ person or \$30/ couple (same household or ownership) before September 15th
- \$30/person or \$40/couple September 15th or later (including walk-in registration at the event)
- Online late registration special: \$25/person or \$35/couple September 15th until 5 PM Friday 9/25
- Student and Master Gardener discounts available – contact us at 425-357-6023 for details
- Youth under 18 may attend free.

Additional Details and Registration: <http://forestry.wsu.edu/nps/events/sanjuan/>

This program is made possible in part by funding from WSU San Juan County Extension, San Juan County, and the San Juan Islands Conservation District.

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Fall Forest Stewardship Coached Planning

Coached Planning is our flagship program. This comprehensive, university-based forestry class will help you get the most out of the land you love. Whether you have just a few acres of woods or a large forest tract, if you have trees on your property, this class is for you.



Topics covered include:

- How do you know if your trees are healthy? What should you do if they aren't?
- Are characteristics of your property attracting or repelling the wildlife you enjoy? What can you do if wildlife cause damage?
- Are there certain trees you should always keep or remove? How do you remove trees without damaging your land?
- When selling logs, are you getting a fair deal or getting ripped off?
- How do you find or grow edible berries or mushrooms? How do you cut holiday greens without hurting the tree?
- Are invasive and noxious weeds taking over your underbrush? What are the risks and what can you do about it?
- What kind of soil do you have and how does that affect what grows?

Save money, too!

As part of this class we will "coach" you in the writing of your own simple forestry plan that may qualify you for property tax reductions or conservation cost-share grants.

What's included:

- 8 classroom sessions taught by forestry experts
- A Saturday field trip
- A large notebook full of reference materials and how-to guides
- A copy of the book Native Trees of Western Washington
- A tree-measuring tool

- A one-on-one consultation at your property with a professional forester.

Our two remaining 2015 classes are scheduled for this fall:

1. There will be a class in **Preston** (King County) on Tuesday nights starting September 22, 2015. For details and registration for this class visit <http://forestry.wsu.edu/nps/events/cppreston/> or call 425-357-6023
2. There will be a class in **Langley** (Whidbey Island) on Thursday nights starting October 8, 2015 (note new start date). For details and registration for this class visit <http://forestry.wsu.edu/nps/events/cpwhidbey/> or call 425-357-6023

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Other Educational Opportunities

Disclaimer: these non-WSU events and are listed for informational purposes with no implied endorsement by WSU.

- **September 24-25 – NNRG workshop “Precision Tree Felling” in Eastsound** – This is a hands-on training program for small woodland owners who are interested in conducting their own timber harvests. Visit <http://nnrg.org/workshop-tree-felling-yarding-courses-september-24-26/> for details and registration. *Stay an extra day and attend our San Juan Islands Forest Owners Field Day just down the road on the 26th!*

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Drought Damage

This has been a bad year for drought damage. Lots of trees are suffering/dying due to drought stress. Symptoms may include sudden death of tops, branches, or the entire tree. Also, drought-stressed trees are more vulnerable to insect and disease agents. These may be secondary agents, though, whereas lack of water is the primary issue. Supplemental watering, such as an occasional deep watering with a soaker hose, may help high-value trees in your yard. Please be mindful of water supplies, though, and any local watering restrictions. Supplemental watering is not practical in a forest setting. These trees need to learn how to survive on their own in their environment anyway (tough love!).

Fall "flagging" (see photo below) in western redcedars and pine trees is likely to be particularly pronounced this year. This is when the tree sheds its innermost (oldest) foliage. This is normal and not cause for alarm. For more information on this phenomenon, check out our fact sheet at <https://pubs.wsu.edu/ItemDetail.aspx?ProductID=15444>. Also, some deciduous trees may drop their leaves early this year due to drought stress.



WSU Extension Specialist Jim Freed wrote an excellent article in the latest edition of Forest Stewardship Notes about caring for drought damaged trees and native plants. It's worth a read: <https://foreststewardshipnotes.wordpress.com/2015/09/04/care-for-drought-damaged-native-plants/>

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Focus On: Red Alder Defects

This month's Focus On column is courtesy of Lauren Grand, with information and photos she gathered at the Washington Hardwoods Commission annual meeting in June

Alder trees are generally merchantable between the ages of 35 and 55 years old. I talked to a hardwood log scaler to find out what the major deductions are on alder logs. Below are photo examples so you can work with your loggers to avoid deductions where possible.



Figure 1: This is a log scaling yard. The logs are lined up after they are felled and processed. The scaler will walk down the line assessing damage and take deductions where necessary. In the bottom right of this photo there are two logs that have a series of nicks along the length of them. This is a result of the mechanical damage from the processor's feeding wheels. Try and encourage your loggers to stay away from steel feeding wheels in their processors if possible. Rubber wheels are the best for hardwoods. These nicks cause compaction in the wood and are visual defects in the finished alder boards. This decreases the quality of the processed wood to a paint grade board and could mean a quality deduction depending on the type of sale you are doing. Additionally, if these nicks become deep enough then they can result in a diameter deduction as well.



Figure 2. Sweep or crooks can cause length deductions in the logs. There is no deduction as long as the log scaler can run a tape measure along the length of the log without it leaving the log's surface. If it does leave the log's surface then the scaler will consider it 2 or more logs - depending on the number of sweeps and crooks - and then deduct the length of the

log that bends. The log in the center of this photo is 30ft long and has a sweep. The scaler will scale this as 2 logs. A ten foot log - the piece at the bottom of the screen - and a 16-18 foot log at the top of the screen. He will then remove 2-4 feet as a deduction over the section that causes the sweep.



Figure 3. This is a black knot. These knots are unstable and usually are associated with decay. If these Knots are typically a major problem if they run the entire length of the log. If there is only one knot at one end of the log then then the scaler will deduct a foot and remove the knot. If the black knots run the length of the log, but are not deep enough to enter the small end diameter of the log then there is no deduction. If they are deep enough to enter the small end diameter of the log, then there will be a diameter deduction for the knots.



Figure 4. This is an example of stumpage pull. This happens when the logger is falling the tree and pieces of the inner log stay on the stump. This will cause a length deduction totaling

length that these holes enter the center of the log. This maple would likely see a 1ft deduction.



Figure 5. This is an example of cross break, where the log is split vertically and horizontally. This could result in a length deduction for the length of the split depending on the severity of the break.



Figure 6. This log has a split. Since it is mostly vertical it may not endure a deduction because when the log is processed the mill may be able to cut the log along the split. If the split is long and jagged or on a curve, then a length deduction can occur.

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Tidbits

- Now is the time to order your seedlings for the 2015-2016 planting season. DNR's Webster Nursery is already sold out of several planting stocks, so act quickly.
- Here's a nice article by Ken Bevis and Jim Bottorff on using wildlife forage seed mixes in disturbed areas: <https://sflonews.wordpress.com/2015/07/22/a-disturbed-opportunity-wildlife-seed-mixes/>
- Here is a nice article by DNR Landowner Assistance Forester Boyd Norton on preparing your forest roads for fall and winter: <https://sflonews.wordpress.com/2015/07/22/summer-to-fall-road-maintenance/>
- Here is an update on a forest health issue affecting bigleaf maple: <https://dnrtreelink.wordpress.com/2015/09/10/whats-going-on-with-bigleaf-maple/>

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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. Reasonable accommodations for the events described above will be made for persons with disabilities and special needs who contact us at the address above at least two weeks prior to the event.