

# **Forest Forum**

## **Washington County Small Woodlands Association**

**January 2026**

**Stewardship | Advocacy | Fellowship | Education**

### **January 27 WCSWA Monthly Meeting- The Nuts and Bolts of Thinning Jake Barker, OSU Extension Forester**

Thinning is an important step in the forest management cycle in Northwest forests. In this presentation, Jake will review the concepts of forest stand thinning including competition and density, timing, and operations. Beyond the theoretical basis for thinning, he will also discuss the logistics of how to implement a thinning project on your property. Finding the right operator is important to achieve your objectives, and the process requires planning and patience. He will review different equipment used for thinning and how to schedule thinning in your management cycle.

### **2026 WCSWA Monthly Programs**

<b>January</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>The Nuts and Bolts of Thinning, Jake Barker, OSU Extension Forester</b> See above for details.	7:00pm Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District Office. 7175 NE Evergreen Pkwy, Ste. 400.
<b>February</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>Forestry in the Soils, Dean Moberg</b> See page 2 for more information.	7:00pm Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District Office. 7175 NE Evergreen Pkwy, Ste. 400.
<b>March</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>OFRI Landowner Project Update, Margaret Miller, OFRI Forest Landowner Education Manager</b>	7:00pm Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District Office. 7175 NE Evergreen Pkwy, Ste. 400.
<b>April</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>Bighorn Logging - Past and Present, Mark Standley, Vice-President, Bighorn Logging</b>	7:00pm Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District Office. 7175 NE Evergreen Pkwy, Ste. 400.
<b>July</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>TFOY Tour and Picnic</b>	Dave & Leslie Rabon's tree farm, Banks, OR

**Don't forget! It's OSWA membership renewal time**  
You can renew by mailing a check or paying online at [www.oswa.org](http://www.oswa.org).



**WCSWA Leadership**  
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**Program Committee:** John and Cathy Dummer – 503-970-8789,  
Tony and Mary Spiering – 503-680-8112, Tom Nygren 503-628-5472

**EMAIL FOR ANYONE ON THIS PAGE:** [washcosmallwoodlandsassoc@gmail.com](mailto:washcosmallwoodlandsassoc@gmail.com)

**Tualatin River Watershed Council Representatives:** Tom Nygren, primary, 503-628-5472, Eric Chambers, alternate, 503-647-2458

**WCSWA Website – <https://wcswa.com/>**

Website Manager: Michael Morgan  
Contact Cathy Dummer for web postings and information.

**Facebook:**

<https://www.facebook.com/WashingtonCountySmallWoodlandsAssociation>

**Forest Forum Newsletter**

Editors: Norie Dimeo-Ediger and Bonnie Shumaker  
503-432-1733 and 503-324-7825

Proofreaders: Bonnie Shumaker, Dan Hundley,  
Tom Nygren, Ardis Schroeder, Norie Dimeo-Ediger

## **The Tree Farm Tradin' Post**

You can place an advertisement in *Forest Forum*. This is a free service to our members (3 month limit). List tree farm items/land to buy, sell or trade. Email ad to [washcosmallwoodlandsassoc@gmail.com](mailto:washcosmallwoodlandsassoc@gmail.com).

**For Sale: No items this month**

**Wanted: No items this month**

## **Forestry in the soils is the topic of February meeting**

At the February 24 meeting of the WCSWA, Dean Moberg will present a slide show and discussion on the soils of Washington County with a focus on forests. Dean retired after 35 years with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and currently serves on the board of directors of the Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District. He is co-author of the reference book *The Soils of Oregon*.

The presentation will include a review of soil processes and terminology, descriptions of the main soil series that support Washington County forests, and current ideas and tools that can help maintain or improve forest soil health. Specific topics will include the five factors that influenced the formation of our local forest soils and a new tool to evaluate the vulnerability of local forests to higher temperatures and changing precipitation patterns.

## **Save the Date: Tree School Clackamas**

**March 21, 2026, 8:15 am–5:15 p.m. Clackamas Community College, 19600 Molalla Avenue, Oregon City**

Tree School planning is underway! You can expect the Tree School Catalog to be available early this month, with registration opening on Tuesday, February 3. Google Tree School/Clackamas for further details.

Tree School started in Clackamas County in 1991 as a mini-college program designed to attract a broad audience and offer a diverse array of educational topics to address goals and challenges of forest landowners. Classes are typically around 90 minutes long, meaning you can participate in up to four during the day.

Tree School also offers other opportunities for learning and networking, including field sessions/tours, demonstrations, vendor tables and exhibits, round table discussions, and Q&A sessions.

## Leadership Notes by Dan Shumaker

I hope everyone had a great holiday and ended 2025 with many accomplishments and increased knowledge.

As the year ends, I want to make sure we recognize our members who make the extra effort to volunteer their time and energy to help organize and schedule our programs and meetings. Without these volunteers, many of our goals and objectives would not be achieved. The programs and events are great resources and help members find out about new research and keep up with current trends and practices for maintaining and managing their woodlands.

I want to also thank and recognize the volunteers who gather the information and put the Forest Forum together. This monthly newsletter is another great source of information and helps members find out about upcoming events and meetings.

I wish everyone a great 2026 and hope all your projects and goals are accomplished on your small woodlands.

### **Starker Lecture Series Set for 2026**

In 1926, Oregon State University acquired the first parcel of what is now a statewide network of 10 research forests. The 2026 Starker Lecture Series will explore the history of these forests and how perspectives and stewardship have shifted with new knowledge and pressures. It will also show how today's approaches are laying the groundwork for the next generation of learning, building on a century of discoveries that continue to shape our understanding of forests in a changing world. All lectures are held in the Peavy Forest Science Center (PFSC) on the Corvallis campus, or available to attend remotely on Zoom.

All lectures are free and open to the public; registration needed for Zoom webinar option only.

Register at: <https://www.forestry.oregonstate.edu/news/2026-starker-lecture-series-century-research-forest-discoveries>

A reception will be held immediately after the lectures.

#### ***McDonald Forest: A Century of Dynamic Landscapes***

Bill Robbins, Emeritus Distinguished Professor of History, Oregon State University  
January 21, 4:00 pm-5:00 pm

#### ***What We've Learned from Decades of Long-Term Forest Research***

Fred Swanson, Research Geologist (retired) US Forest Service and Emeritus Faculty  
March 11, 4:00 pm-5:00 pm

#### ***Panel Discussion: Managing Forests for Multiple Values in a Changing World***

Moderated by: Mark Swanson, Associate Professor and Interim Director, OSU Research Forests  
May 20, 4:00 pm-5:00 pm

## **A GIFT SEED – Accelerated Genetic Improvement of Fir Through Sequencing, Extension, Economics, and Diagnostics**

**Priya Rajarapu, OSU Extension Christmas Tree Specialist**

The Christmas tree industry has been thriving with continued scientific research to address emerging production challenges and consumer preference. In September 2024, North Carolina State University received a \$7.5 million USDA-NIFA Specialty Crop Research Initiative grant to support the Accelerated Genetic Improvement of Fir Through Sequencing, Extension, Economics, and Diagnostics (A GIFT SEED) genetic project that will benefit the US Christmas tree industry. The four-year project focuses on addressing all aspects critical for improved Christmas tree cultivation in the nation. It is led by Dr. Justin Whitehill who is a Christmas tree geneticist at North Carolina State University. The A GIFT SEED team represents professionals with diverse expertise in modern tree breeding, entomology, plant pathology, molecular biology, social science, environmental policy, economics, and extension education. Project scientists are located at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, Michigan State University, North Carolina State University, North Carolina Cooperative Extension, North Carolina Department of Agriculture, University of California Davis, University of Connecticut, University of Florida, Washington State University, Oregon State University, the University of British Columbia in Vancouver (Canada), and University of Copenhagen/Copenhagen (Denmark).

The overall project goal is to develop genomic tools and resources that facilitate and accelerate genetic improvement efforts to benefit the US Christmas tree industry. Research will focus on Fraser, noble, and Turkish firs. The development of genotyping tools will enable rapid identification and selection of elite germplasm that will tolerate and thrive under the increasing number of environmental challenges growers are facing. This project will reduce time frames required to produce elite fir genotypes which have traditionally relied on establishment of seed orchards which can take 20+ years before growers can benefit. That timing will be reduced by the implementation of cutting-edge technologies in genomics. The project is also focusing on producing elite Christmas trees through somatic embryogenesis, a high throughput process of propagating hundreds of trees with desirable traits in petri. Unlike traditional breeding, somatic embryogenesis can produce desirable trees in 1-2 years. The project aims to propagate elite germplasm for the US Christmas tree industry, in collaboration with industry partners, to facilitate commercialization efforts and provide positive economic and environmental benefits.

As a part of the project, the OSU Christmas Tree Program will support genome sequencing of noble fir, identify genetic markers associated with various elite traits in the seed orchards to continue PNW Christmas tree breeding, and develop educational materials for growers on tree improvement, pest and disease identification.



**Know Your Forest**

### **An educational website for Oregon forest landowners**

The Partnership for Forestry Education, a collaboration of state, federal and private organizations dedicated to assisting and educating forest landowners, created this website to serve as a gateway to the information, tools and educational opportunities available to Oregon forest landowners. Go to [www.knowyourforests.org](http://www.knowyourforests.org).

**Advertising Opportunity:** The Forest Forum is a monthly newsletter sent out to over 300 members and friends of WCSWA. Advertisers receive free newsletters for the duration of their ads. ADVERTISING RATES (PRICE

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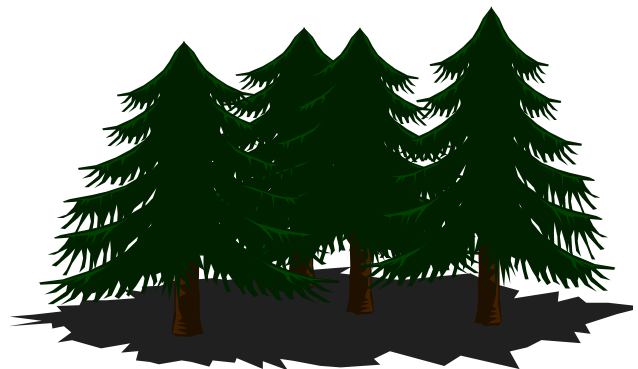
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## Fall 2025

### Whatever you need to know



Gail and Gordon Culbertson (2019 Oregon Tree Farmers of the Year)  
working with Lauren Grand (center), OSU Forestry Extension Agent

Keep your forest healthy • Improve wildlife habitat  
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### Find it at [KnowYourForest.org](http://KnowYourForest.org)

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assistance to manage your  
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- Search by County for local  
resources
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in the Learning Library
- Refer to forest practice laws
- Register for classes



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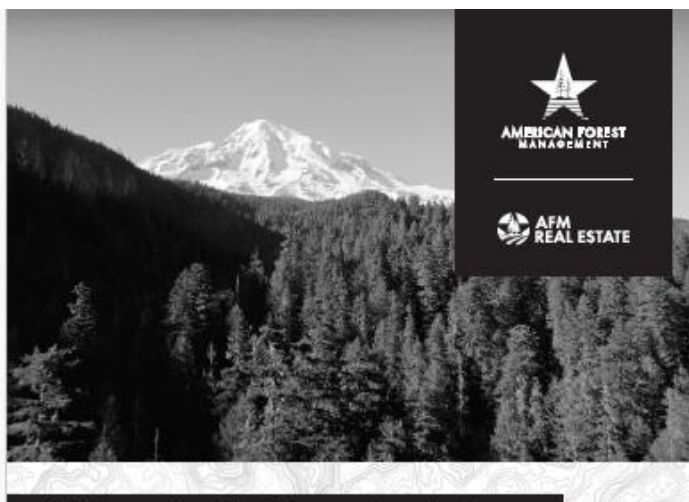
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**All important ideas must include the trees,  
the mountains, and the rivers.**

*Mary Oliver*

## New OSU Extension Publication

### Growing redwood and giant sequoia in Oregon: A resource guide for small woodland owners

By Dan Stark, Norma Kline, Lauren Grand, Alicia Christiansen and Stephen Fitzgerald

Coast redwood and giant sequoia, two large tree species native to California, are finding a niche in the Northwest. Find out why people are planting them on small woodland properties, large private timber company lands, and in urban and suburban areas.

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/em-9475-growing-redwood-giant-sequoia-oregon> |  
October 2025 |





# Turning Waste Into Value: Advancing Biochar Production

By Kyle Freres

At Freres Engineered Wood, our business philosophy has always been to do more with less and to use every bit of a log that arrives on our property. Efficient use of a valuable natural resource—whether through renewable wood products or biochar production—is at the heart of sustainability, but it also makes financial sense. We have paid for the cutting, logging, transport, and processing of each log into renewable wood products for the construction market and developing markets for byproducts from our primary markets, keeping us financially competitive.

We have been operating biomass cogeneration facilities for more than 17 years, producing both electricity which is sold to utilities, and heat, which is used in our production processes. The byproducts from cogeneration are basically a mix of material that are either not fully combusted or unable to be combusted in the process.

The obvious materials that cannot be combusted in the process are rock that is entrained in the biomass fuel and metal, such as nails or fasteners, from ground pallets or reclaimed lumber. Another portion of the biomass fuel that can't be combusted is an ash product that is made up of soils and sands that are necessarily taken up in bark or wood of a tree during its lifetime. This is very similar to what you would see left in your fireplace after a cozy fire in your home.

The not-fully-combusted portion of the byproducts from cogeneration consists of a high-carbon char material that has traditionally been combined with the residual ash from combustion and disposed of in landfills. It is important to note that much of the biomass combusted in our facility could have been destined for landfills without providing benefits of electricity or heat energy, and at much higher volumes. However, as I mentioned previously, we don't like to waste anything. We are happy to report that we, along with partners, are developing markets for these byproducts and turning waste products into beneficial products, and a potential cost center into a revenue stream.

With the installation of a screening system at the end of 2024, we are producing a high-quality biochar that has multiple potential uses from agriculture to concrete and plastics. We have performed many tests on different screen configurations and sizes and are currently screening biochar size greater than 1mm and less than 6.5mm from our system. We have found this size of material from our particular reactor maximizes the carbon content, improves the nutritive characteristics of the product, and provides a consistent size for our customers.

We continue to improve the system to meet the needs of the market. For agricultural markets specifically, we have worked with partners such as Pratum Coop, Valley Environmental, and CO2 Trust to help develop opportunities. These companies understand the wide array of benefits of using biochar such as improving soil structure, enhancing water and nutrient retention, and boosting microbial activity.

We have also worked with partners such as the USDA, Oregon State University, and Santiam Valley Ranch to explore opportunities for additional environmental benefits, such as remediation of polyethylene contamination in soil. All these benefits are in addition to providing carbon sequestration in the soil and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. There are exciting new prospects for the use of biochar and we look forward to developing this market further. This is complicated at times with competing interests such as established firms that may see the introduction of biochar into agriculture markets as a risk to fertilizer sales. Our message has been to come on board and work with us.

It doesn't stop there. Innovative new uses from biochar and even ash byproducts have potential uses in concrete applications. We continue to work with innovative companies and organizations such as Solid Carbon, Beltertech, and the Synthetic Aggregates Association. Though we are obviously proponents of wood in construction, there are uses where concrete is just the right product for the job, and these companies are leading the way to reduce the environmental impact of concrete and encourage the use of recycled products in concrete applications. We are excited to play a role in the circular economy, supporting renewable energy, reducing the use of natural resources, recycling products, and regenerating natural systems.

## Forest waste into clean jet fuel gambit – Ghanaian scholar contributing to Oregon’s Clean Fuel Initiative

Reported in OSU College of Forestry E-News by Alfa Shaban, Ghana Broadcasting Corporation

The global race for sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) has been hard and long but might be on the threshold of a major breakthrough thanks to work by Oregon State University (OSU) in the United States. One of its clean fuel teams is drawing international attention for breakthrough research that could help transform forestry residues and agricultural waste. OSU’s College of Forestry is leading catalytic research in Oregon’s Clean Fuel Initiative, a multimillion-dollar program funded by the State of Oregon to develop low-carbon fuels from local biomass.

Leading the team is Dr. Alhassan Ibrahim, a Postdoctoral Scholar at OSU, whose work has already demonstrated measurable efficiency gains, making crude bio-oils cleaner and more stable for use as jet fuel.

According to experts, while raw bio-oil from forest waste is like a dirty soup that clogs machines, the research being undertaken will develop catalytic chemical helpers that clean and stabilize this oil so it can become renewable jet fuel. With Ghana and other developing countries looking to other more sustainable and climate-friendly forms of energy, such catalytic innovations promise a low-carbon future for aviation and beyond. “Dr. Ibrahim’s work is a game-changer for sustainable fuels,” said Prof. Gerald Presley, one of his project leaders at OSU. “He is helping Oregon lead the way in turning forest waste into renewable energy.”

The Clean Fuel Initiative is a collaborative program supported by the Oregon State Legislature (HB 3409, 2023 session), OSU College of Forestry, Oregon Department of Forestry, and Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. Its mission is to develop renewable, low-carbon fuels from regional biomass resources to meet state and national decarbonization goals.

Dr. Ibrahim’s findings have been published in respected journals such as *Catalysts* and *Energies* and have already been independently cited by research teams worldwide. His contributions were recognized with the Outstanding Ph.D. Student Award at Mississippi State University. Back home in Ghana, his works have been featured across a number of public and private news portals.

### ***Forest Pubs Program set for January and February***

Step into the world of our forests at *Forest Pub*, a monthly program brought to you by the World Forestry Center in partnership with McMenamins History at the Mission Theater in NW Portland. Held every second Monday, a dynamic guest speaker explores how forests touch every part of our lives.

**January 12 at 7:00 pm: *Bringing Fire Back to the Land*** In partnership with The Columbia Land Trust, a discussion of the importance of bringing fire back to the land through controlled, prescribed, and cultural burning as a way to manage our forests

**February 23 at 7:00 pm: *Elderflora: Lifecycle of a Tree***  
Majel Connery performs *Elderflora*, a song cycle tracing the life and death of a tree.

For more information and to purchase tickets  
Go to <https://worldforestry.org/forestpub/>



## Browse and More

by Susan Schmidlin

While the busyness of summer logging and fall planting slows down, the opportunities to observe, organize and plan future tasks abound.

I have been trying to seek out those areas of our forest that are off the beaten paths, the ones that tend to be forgotten sometimes for years after they are thinned or replanted. I was pleasantly surprised recently when poking into a corner of the farm that had been replanted about five years ago. It was a space near one of the far corners, on the backside of hillock where we left some large habitat piles of slash. Not an easy place to find, plant or even just walk to. About 200 assorted seedlings were planted in spots around the piles, in dips and groves made by the dozer and along a steep edge that dropped off into a deep draw. After bushwhacking through a thick maze of dried bull thistles, teasels and Canadian thistles, I was surprised by the number of surviving seedlings. There were nearly twenty cedar trees taller than my head, ten or so spruce trees, countless Douglas-fir and a few alders. When beginning the plot, we commented that we were planting in plain sight but just a few additions of a complicated terrain gave them the edge to survive.

This fall we are seeing large areas of the understories that are completely torn up by the large elk herds that are hanging around more than moving through the landscape. Some of our favorite chanterelle patches have been stomped into muddy messes with the help of our mild temps and copious rains. Even though we are having trouble finding those delicacies here, we are able to connect with other nearby woodland owners that are still finding some. In mild weather, the chanterelles can still be found into the new year albeit smaller in size than the faster growing fall ones.

Early in December I was able to sit in on a Zoom meeting hosted by Columbia County Small Woodlands and chaired by OSWA Executive Director, Mike Cafferata with Michele Schmidt, tree farm owner and forest forager and Heather Mohan-Gibbons, Columbia County Master Gardener.

Mike wondered how to expand uses for family forests by utilizing ideas from landowners. This initial Zoom meeting focused on fall cultivars that can be utilized for fun, food and family enjoyment with native species. It was a lively conversation that included several mushroom varieties with cooking recipes, pesto made from forest greens, dandelion faux capers, steamed nettles (akin to spinach), wild rose hip tea and more. Tips on identification, harvesting, processing and preserving also added to a diverse conversation. Interest in the subject of increasing the value of our forests through overlooked species or techniques shows that future Zoom meetings could cover different months with their own seasonal growing times.

### Do You Have an Ash Tree That You Care About?

Now that the damaging emerald ash borer (EAB) is infesting ash trees in our area, it's time to make a plan.

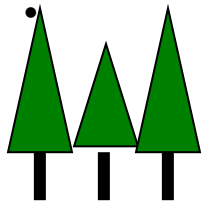
Review the new Ash Tree Decision Tool in English and Spanish.

Go to: [https://tualatinswcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/EAB\\_DecisionTree-Final\\_Web.pdf](https://tualatinswcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/EAB_DecisionTree-Final_Web.pdf)





# Forest Forum



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ASSOCIATION

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## Potpourri

**New Members:** Welcome to **Ben Hayes**, Springboard Forestry, Portland. We are here to help members achieve their management goals. To get the most out of your membership, come to the meetings and tours that are scheduled throughout the year. You'll find many kindred spirits among our diverse membership – and many opportunities to learn and share together! Questions? Contact any of the directors, officers, or Newsletter Editors listed on page 2.

### **Helpful Links:**

#### **Oregon's Forest Protection Laws: An Illustrated Manual 2025**

***This edition is now available as a print copy. You can order at [Oregonforests.org](https://oregonforests.org). We will also have print copies available at WCSWA meetings.***

**Forestry for the Birds: Western Oregon** was produced by the Forest Stewards Guild. Download at: <https://foreststewardsguild.org/foresters-for-the-birds>

#### **Recommended Fire Related Brochures:**

**Initial Attack Fire Equipment for Woodland Owners Booklet:** [www.wcswa.com](http://www.wcswa.com). About us/links.

**Firewise Landscaping:** [Firewise Landscaping Basics | OSU Extension Service \(oregonstate.edu\)](https://oregonstate.edu/extension/firewise-landscaping-basics)

**Wildfire Prevention:** [Oregon Wildfire Response and Recovery: Wildfire Prevention : State of Oregon](https://www.oregon.gov/forestry/landmanagement/wildfire-prevention)

#### **Other Helpful Links:**

- [www.oregonwoodlandcooperative.com](http://www.oregonwoodlandcooperative.com) learn about the Oregon Woodland Cooperative
- <https://www.facebook.com/WashingtonCountySmallWoodlandsAssociation>
- For E-Notification.: [FERNS - Welcome \(oregon.gov\)](https://www.oregon.gov/ferns-welcome) or visit an ODF Office