

Forest Forum

Washington County Small
Woodlands Association

February, 2012

“Is An LLC, or An FLP, More Appropriate For Your Estate Planning Needs?”

This question will be posed and addressed in the February 28th monthly meeting of WCSWA at the North Plains Fire Department meeting room. The meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m.

Clint Bentz, well known to Oregon small woodland owners as a past National Tree Farmer of the Year, leader in development of the “Ties to the Land” estate planning program offered by OSU Extension, past president of the American Forest Foundation (sponsor of the American Tree Farm System), has been working on this question as part of a sequel to the “Ties to the Land” program. Clint has agreed to share his work in this regard at our February meeting.

Those who have heard Clint talk in the past know that he speaks from experience. His presentation to WCSWA will be a natural successor to the “Ties to the Land” message he has championed so effectively.

Thinning – Between Trees and a Hard Place!

WCSWA members were treated to a solid overview, a variety of perspectives and experiences, and a lively audience focused on a topic of concern to many small woodland owners: ***How do I manage my overstocked Douglas fir plantation?***



Stephen Fitzgerald, OSU Extension forester - and silviculture and fire specialist - led off with the basics. Trees rely on having a good growing space, which is defined as the appropriate combination of water, light, nutrients, and physical space. Two ecological “truths” which affect the tree’s success are: 1) the amount of growing space available to trees in a given space is fixed; and 2) the amount of growing space required by trees is proportional to their size.

Managing a forest (to meet the needs of trees) is governed by the ***silvicultural need*** (maintaining the growing space), ***markets available*** for products from the forest, and the ***cost/return*** for necessary treatments. Each situation must be evaluated in terms of these three factors. The manager’s job is finding a balance in light of the risk (short and long

See “Thinning” on page 6

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The Prez Sez: A Time to Plant and a Time to Protect

By the time this newsletter arrives in your mailbox, many of the 42,000 seedlings purchased through WCSWA will already have their roots settled into the soil of their new forest homes. This year the entire order sold out before the seedlings were picked up at the nursery. Of course, state law requires replanting after harvest, but it is the beginning of a new forest and a noble exercise, just the same. You are engaged in maintaining a part of the earth's ecosystem that supports the viability life on our planet, and providing a renewable resource for future generations. As your back recovers from planting or the other hard work you do, maybe it will help to think of the work in that light. You done good! And thanks to Bob Shumaker and his crew for another successful sale!

On the farm, I will be planting my few farm-grown native seedlings, just to fill in here and there. I will also be collecting tiny seedlings to replenish the seedling bed. I will mark a few of the natives I plant out this year by "planting" a t-post near each one. It will be interesting to track these native trees on their native site and compare their growth to that of the nursery-grown seedlings.

As I was yarding a few small maple logs last week, I took the opportunity to saw through some scattered limbs crisscrossed on the ground, but partly suspended. Cutting the limbs shorter brings them into close ground contact, and it was handy to do the work while I was right there. The limbs will stay damp longer, reducing fire danger and speeding decay. (You do want those stored nutrients back in the ground, right?) With the brush and weeds down in winter, it is easier to get this kind of work accomplished.

On the topic of fire risk, my understanding of landowner-operator liability has been refined a bit by discussions with ODF personnel. In the worst case, if it is determined that negligence was involved in an operation in your forest (meaning ODF forest-practice fire-safety rules were not followed), you and/or your contractor will be liable for ALL fire-suppression costs. If there was no negligence, you still are liable for the first \$300,000 of suppression costs. If the fire on your property is not due to an operation, say there is a lightning strike or the fire spreads onto your property from a neighbor's place, you are not liable for costs, provided that you have complied with regulations when cleaning up after previous operations. (An operation is any activity for which forest practice rules require you to file a notification with the Oregon Department of Forestry.) More thorough and authoritative information can be found in the brochure, Landowner Fire Liability. Copies will be available at the next WCSWA meeting or you can view it at:

http://www.oregon.gov/ODF/PUBS/docs/Landowner_Fire_Liability_reduced.pdf

Let me take this opportunity to remind you that one benefit of OSWA membership is the group insurance policy covering that first \$300,000 of non-negligent fire cost. The policy is available only to OSWA members. That same policy covers comprehensive liability and acts as loggers' broad form liability for work done by you on your own property. Of course, if you are not planning any operations, you do not need the insurance. The usual policy anniversary is July 1, but if your operating plans change you can sign up any time during the year. Brochures for the insurance will be available at our next meeting.

And on the topic of operations, be sure to file your 2012 "Notification of Operation/Application for Permit" with ODF. This will help you to be in compliance with ODF rules - in other words, enhance your forest management and keep you out of trouble.

In addition to our regular meetings, upcoming Chapter events include the native plant sale on March 10th and continued preparation for the OSWA Annual State Meeting June 21st through 23rd. Indoor sessions, silent auction, and banquet are all at Pacific University right here in Forest Grove on June 22nd. Be sure to mark your calendar for these events. Want to assist with either event? Just contact any Board member.

I'll see you at our next meeting on February 28th at the North Plains Fire Hall!

Jim Brown

WCSWA Leadership

President – Jim Brown, 503-284-6455 jimbrownorch@g.com
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WCSWA Website

www.wcswa.org

Website Manager: Kathy Scott

Contact Tom Nygren or Bonnie Shumaker for web postings and information.

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The Tree Farm Tradin' Post

A free service to our members: List tree farm items/land to buy, sell, or trade. Contact Tom Nygren, 503-628-5472. Got a tool or piece of equipment you don't need any more? Or maybe you are looking for tools, equipment, property, or materials? You can place a free advertisement in Forest Forum. Another way for tree farmers to help each other! (3 month limit)

For Sale: (none)

Wanted: Small Alaskan Chainsaw Saw Mill (to build an Adirondack Lean-To, also called an Open Camp). Call Scott Hayes if you have a mill...or if you want the plans for a Lean-To... at 503-992-1509.

Event Calendar

February	28	WCSWA Monthly Meeting - 7:00pm at the Washington County Fire District 2 Fire Station, 31370 NW Commercial Street, North Plains. Clint Bentz presents further information on "Ties to the Land".
	28	Symposium on Forests and Water – Corvallis. Featured speakers on Oregon's forest and water resources – Free. Contact OFRI Mike Cloughesy at cloughesy@ofri.org
March	10	WCSWA Native Plant Sale – 9 to 3, Bales Thriftway parking lot at the corner of Farmington Road and Kinnaman Road, Aloha
	27	WCSWA Monthly Meeting - 7:00pm at the Washington County Fire District 2 Fire Station, 31370 NW Commercial Street, North Plains. USDA programs will be featured.
April	24	WCSWA Monthly Meeting - 7:00pm at the Washington County Fire District 2 Fire Station, 31370 NW Commercial Street, North Plains. A wood products them will be on the program.
May		WCSWA Annual Potluck Meeting - Date, Time, and Place To Be Determined Later

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WCSWA Meeting, January 24th



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Thinning Panel, WCSWA Meeting on January 24th. Left to Right: Scott Hayes, Ron Larson, and Mike Jamieson



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Tree Ring Music! <http://io9.com/5879326/a-machine-that-turns-a-trees-rings-into-a-musical-score>
 (from *MWM Fun February Update*, by Nicole Strong)



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Thinning, continued from page 1

term), potential changes in markets, stand conditions, funds available, and the health and skill of the manager.

Prevention of over-dense stands is the best option. This can be accomplished by adjusting the planting density (less costly), or **very** early thinning (pre-commercial thinning) – which requires a minimum of effort and cost.

A panel (see pictures, pages 4, 5, 11) of WCSWA members responded with their experiences. **Scott Hayes** led off by describing his recent thinning experiences. He thinned a 15 acre stand of 50 year old trees. Scott uses the Stand Density Index system to determine thinning removals (see article on pages 8-9). He used a small contract processor, and figured that the cost breakout for logging was 32% of sale price, and 7% for the hauling.

Mike Jamieson followed Scott, and described a variety of thinning and management practices he uses, including how he manages mixed conifer-hardwood stands, when to slash alder (July-August), tax benefit of timber stand improvement (cost to deduct against income), and "bump" trees that reduce damage to desired trees when thinning. Mike Described the following "Factors to consider":

- Distance from home (hire out if far away, do the work yourself if close to home)
- Consider what the neighbors are doing (wind effects)
- Use variable thinning on wind breaks, multiple entries, S and SW sides, - also helps with sunscald
- Consider price breaks in working with multiple jobs (consulting forester can help)
- Contractors – look at their work – quality counts! Have they done thinning before? Mark your trees; don't let the contractor do it. Look at their past work (thinning) on the ground.

Ron Larson finished up the panel discussion, describing the history of thinning on his tree farm, beginning with his first commercial thinning in 1991. Every few years he would thin some more. He used a hatchet for pre-commercial thinning in the early years, later turning to chemicals. Recently he did some pre-commercial thinning on 15 year old trees, and some on 7 year old trees – to a 14' spacing with retention of any trees that were 8" or larger.

“Crown is Key”

“Crown is Key” was the closing quote by Steve Fitzgerald in the question and answer period following the excellent presentation on thinning at last month’s WCSWA meeting. Scott Hayes has an excellent article elsewhere in this Forest Forum on the subject, but in this column, I will share our personal perspective on the issue.

Thinning is especially important now on our tree farm as most of our trees are young (13-16 years) and the first thinning is coming due. We carefully planted our trees on 10 x 11 foot spacing and then replaced any that didn’t make it for the next two years. We certainly never had issues with the “free to grow” in six years requirement of the Forest Practices Act, and in order to keep them growing at the pace we would like, we need to do some thinning over the next decade. One patch especially was planted too close to begin with, and we will start with that five-acre patch.

We have already cut out the obvious defective trees, which are stacked in our garage awaiting next winter when they will provide us warmth in our wood stove. Tom Nygren gave us good advice in choosing which additional trees should come out to bring about the desired density. “Look at the crown,” he advised “and take out the trees with lesser crown,” which is why I grabbed on to Steve Fitzgerald’s remark, “crown is key.” Based on this advice, we have marked about seventy more trees for cutting which we plan to do right after we finish this year’s quota of “conifer release” (cutting excess brush and natural reprod and limbing up the remaining trees) in the south forty. Both these projects need to be done before March in order not to injure the leave trees when their sap starts to flow and the bark becomes fragile. I asked Mike Jamieson, who was on the panel at last month’s meeting, about a date when winter activity should cease, and he replied that you cannot go by a certain date because of weather fluctuations, but when you see log trucks going down the road with the bark totally skinned off, that is a huge clue. Unusually warm or cool spring weather will adjust the date when the sap starts to flow and the bark becomes fragile.

The market for this first thinning is the next consideration. We did a casual inventory of the diameter of the trees. By casual, I mean we measured about ten trees in what might be loosely called a plot. The average dbh was eight inches. They are not saplings anymore! Yea! I’ve been waiting for the year when they would graduate from saplings to trees (having a dbh 7” or more). This is the year. It would be smart to put in permanent plots after we finish thinning this year. I’ll report in a later column whether this was accomplished. For now, we are looking at firewood as the market (the only one available) for this thinning. The Oregon Woodland Coop has developed a fast growing market for high-end firewood, and we are exploring becoming a supplier.

STAND DENSITY INDEX TABLE
Expressed as a Percent of Maximum Stocking for Douglas-fir

		Quadratic Mean Diameter of Trees in the Stand, in Inches *																				
		4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Spacing, Feet x Feet	Trees per Acre																					
30	48	2%	3%	4%	5%	6%	7%	8%	9%	11%	12%	14%	15%	17%	19%	21%	23%	25%	27%	29%	31%	33%
25	70	3%	4%	5%	7%	8%	10%	12%	14%	16%	18%	20%	23%	25%	28%	30%	33%	36%	39%	42%	45%	48%
20	109	4%	6%	8%	10%	13%	15%	18%	21%	25%	28%	31%	35%	39%	43%	47%	51%	56%	60%	65%	70%	75%
19	121	5%	7%	9%	11%	14%	17%	20%	24%	27%	31%	35%	39%	43%	48%	52%	57%	62%	67%	72%	77%	83%
18	134	5%	7%	10%	13%	16%	19%	23%	26%	30%	34%	39%	43%	48%	53%	58%	63%	69%	74%	80%	86%	
17	151	6%	8%	11%	14%	18%	21%	25%	30%	34%	39%	44%	49%	54%	59%	65%	71%	77%	83%			
16	170	7%	9%	13%	16%	20%	24%	29%	33%	38%	44%	49%	55%	61%	67%	73%	80%	87%				
15	194	7%	11%	14%	18%	23%	28%	33%	38%	44%	50%	56%	63%	69%	76%	84%						
14	222	9%	12%	16%	21%	26%	32%	37%	43%	50%	57%	64%	72%	79%	87%							
13	258	10%	14%	19%	24%	30%	37%	43%	51%	58%	66%	74%	83%									
12	303	12%	17%	22%	29%	36%	43%	51%	59%	68%	78%	87%										
11	360	14%	20%	27%	34%	42%	51%	61%	71%	81%												
10	436	17%	24%	32%	41%	51%	62%	73%														
9	538	21%	30%	40%	51%	63%	76%															
8	681	26%	38%	50%	65%	80%																
7	889	34%	49%	66%	84%																	
6	1210	47%	67%	90%																		
5	1742	67%																				

25% SDI: Crown closure; onset of self-pruning, competition starts & understory loss begins.

35% SDI: Lowest limit of full site occupancy; self-pruning, competition increases, and a halt in understory development.

55%-70% SDI: Trees stressed. Self thinning begins. Understorey die off.

100% SDI: Maximum stocking (rare)

* Quadratic mean diameter (QMD) is the diameter of average basal area per tree. In a stand of perfectly uniform tree diameters, the average diameter is equal to the QMD.

s. hayes, 2-1-2012

Source: Oregon Department of Forstry

Stand Density Index – A Guide to Thinning Young Stands

By Scott Hayes

The stand density index table [preceding page] is a guideline to help you decide whether a particular stand has too many trees, too few, or just the right number. First, here's some background.

Stand density index (SDI) is a measure of the stocking of a stand of trees based on the number of trees in an area and average tree diameter. Some describe SDI as the degree of tree crowding in a forest, based on spacing and diameter ratios.

The computed value of SDI is compared to a species maximum to determine the relative "stand density", or stocking of the stand. For Douglas-fir growing in Oregon and Washington, maximum stand density is defined as a stand having 595 trees per acre, all of them measuring 10" diameter breast height. That is called 100% SDI, a rare occurrence. A general silvicultural interpretation is described as a percentage of the maximum:

At 25% SDI - Crown closure; onset of self-pruning, competition starts & understory loss begins.

At 35% SDI - Lowest limit of full site occupancy; self-pruning, competition increases; halt in understory development.

55%-70% SDI - Trees stressed. Self thinning begins. Understory die off.

100% SDI -Maximum stocking (rare).

A good management strategy is to keep a stand growing in the 35% to 55% range.

First, some words of caution. Average diameter is used loosely in forestry, with most thinking of it as the arithmetic mean. But in forest calculations, quadratic mean diameter (QMD) is used since it gives greater weight to larger trees and is equal to, or greater than, the arithmetic mean. If you have a small diameter stand with a narrow range of diameters, like a reforestation area with uniform tree diameters, there is not much difference between arithmetic mean and QMD. If your stand has a wide range of diameters, you should use QMD. (*Google* the formula; my head hurts trying to explain it...)

Calculating SDI is done by plotting the logarithm of the number of trees per acre against the logarithm of the QMD of the trees. The formula is scary: $\log_{10}N = -1.605(\log_{10}D) + k$. My head really hurts now.

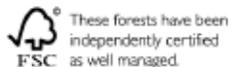
Luckily forestry colleague Al Kranz sent me the handy SDI table a few years ago. Here are two examples how we use it. In 1993, a two acre pasture was planted on 11' x 11' spacing. Today there are still about 360 trees per acre. The average diameter (and QMD) is 8". In the table, look down from 8" and across from 11x11 foot spacing/360 trees per acre, and find an SDI = 42%. Our goal is to keep SDI in the 35% to 55% range, the "sweet spot". Since QMD will be 9" in two years, our plan in 2014 is to cut about 57 trees per acre. The stand will then have 303 trees per acre with an SDI of 43%.

Another area has 51 year old "Christmas trees gone wild". There are 170 trees per acre. The average tree diameter is 14.7. The quadratic mean diameter is 15.0. Using the table, look down the 15" column and across from 170: SDI = 55%. Our thinning goal in this stand is to end up with an SDI in the 35%-40% range. In 2012 a commercial thin will remove about 60 marked trees per acre, leaving 109 trees per acre. By cutting only smaller diameter and poor quality trees, the QMD should rise to 17". SDI would then be 43%, within our managed density range.



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HISTORY *MWM Feb. Update*

For you history buffs out there, a historical look at Oregon's wood product industry (via Oregon Dept. of Economic Analysis):

<http://oregoneconomicanalysis.wordpress.com/2012/01/23/historical-look-at-oregons-wood-product-industry/>



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Questions: call Don Scott, 503-359-5983

WCSWA Board Meeting – January 24, 2012

The Board's second meeting at Elmer's in Hillsboro covered a variety of topics:

- Welcomed Vic Herinckx as new vice-president
- Seedling pick-up – all 42,000 sold. Agreed to buy 2 pounds of seed for next year. Discussed price.
- Native plant sale – March 10th, Bales Thriftway – looked at options for potting bare root plantings for WCSWA's 2013 sale, 500 plants
- Discussed programs and ideas for future programs
- Membership – how can we attract more members (loss last year was less than previous year, but still worrisome). Possible ideas include subsidizing 1st year members, tying into OSWA membership drive, etc
- Tree Farm vs Family Forest – do we need to change the name for Tree Farm of the Year?
- Annual meeting preparation update
- Bylaw changes – continue work started 2 years ago
- Speaker/token gifts – possible need to order more

Summary from notes taken by Sam Sadtler, Board member

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Items from Kilwa Energy – Biomass News

China is Now the World's Largest Importer of Softwood Lumber and Logs Despite a Slowdown in Imports During the 4Q/11

Wood Resources International LLC Company:

Importation of softwood logs and lumber to China has increased continuously over the past 15 years, and in 2011 the country was the largest importer of softwood lumber and logs in the world, according to the Wood Resource Quarterly. Total import value equaled almost eight billion US dollars last year, which was an increase of 57 percent from 2010, and up from only 70 million dollars 15 years ago.

Could Biomass Aid Woodland Diversity?

Enagri info

One reason for the lack of management, and also the poor take-up of new planting grants, particularly in Scotland, is the lack of economic viability of low value timber, prunings and thinnings. While accepting that elements of cuttings and dead wood are vital to maintaining biodiversity, if much of this material was put into the biomass supply chain, then forestry margins would improve, promoting better management of existing forests.

New Wood Biofuel Plant in Boardman Planned

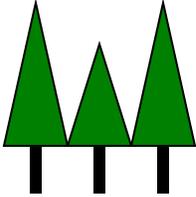
Rich Christianson, woodworkingnetwork.com

U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced a financial commitment of \$232.5 million to assist the development of the ZeaChem Boardman Biorefinery in Boardman, OR. The plant, which would convert a mix of 70% woody biomass and 30% agricultural waste into cellulosic ethanol, is to be built in Boardman along the Columbia River. The ZBB plant would reportedly produce 25 million gallons of biofuel per year with fuel production slated to begin in 2014. The total cost of the project is estimated at more than \$390 million.

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Forest Forum



COUNTY CHAPTER OF THE
OREGON SMALL WOODLANDS
ASSOCIATION

Potpourri

Ready To Triple The Harvest Tax?

The coming budget pinch for timber-reliant counties – due to expiration of federal payments that originated during the “spotted owl/salmon wars” – has generated several political initiatives. One put forward by U.S. Representatives Schrader, DeFazio, and Walden would divvy up the O&C lands (recovered railroad trust lands) into two parts: one that would be managed by a private trust to provide timber revenue benefits to counties, and one that would be added to nearby National Forests.

A new proposal by several environmental groups (Oregon Wild, Sierra Club, Geos Institute, Coast Range Association, and others), however, is sure to create concern in many quarters, especially private forest landowners. This proposal would consist of three actions:

1. The state would increase the harvest tax assessed to private landowners to \$9.21 per mbf (from its current rate of \$3.21). The money would go to the counties.
2. Transfer management of the O&C lands from BLM to the U.S. Forest Service (in expectation of reduced management costs) with savings going to the counties.
3. County voters would be asked to approve property tax increases.

Dubbed by many as a “non-starter”, this latter proposal is sure to generate strong opinions. Small woodland owners will need to weigh in, as they would be directly affected. Comments heard:

- The current harvest tax revenue is dedicated to forest-related programs.
- Revenue collected will be at its lowest when the economy is down, so counties will get the least help when they need it the most