

Montana Family Forest News

Issue No. 42—Spring 2015

A publication of the, MSU Extension Forestry, Montana Tree Farm System, Forest Stewardship Foundation, and the Montana Forest Stewardship Program.



Should This Stand be Thinned?



A 100+ year old mixed ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, western larch stand on a grand fir/ninebark site on a ridgetop with shallow soils.

(see back page for more)

Letter from the Editor

Do You Have Winterburn on Your Evergreens? By Peter Kolb (PhD)
 MSU Extension Forestry Listerves and Newsletter, by Martin Twer

Tree Farm News

- 1 Montana Tree Farm, letter from the Chair, by Angela Mallon
 Save the Date, 2015 Annual Montana Tree Farm Meeting
- 2 Montana Tree Farmers Convene Way up the North Fork, by Steve Arno
- 3 Balsam Woolly Adelgid in Montana, by Amy Gannon
- 4 2015 Tree Farm Scholarship Recipient, by Cindy Peterson
 Montana Tree Farm Scholarship, by Cindy Peterson
- 5 2015 Tree Farm NRCS Update, by Chris Town
 Dennis Swift Memorial, by Gary Johnson
- 6 Missoula County Recognizes Tree Farm for Exemplary Stewardship, by Kali Becher and Angela Mallon
- 7 Tree Tops to Grassroots – News for Leaders, by Angela Mallon

Extension Forestry and Stewardship News

- 8 Montana Forest Stewardship Steering Committee, letter from the Chair, by Mike Christiansen
 The Next Generation of Family Forest Landowners, by Martin Twer
- 9 Family Forest Ownership, Whose Legacy Shall it be? by Peter Kolb (PhD)
- 11 E3A: Exploring Energy Efficiency & Alternatives, by Martin Twer
- 12 BANR: Bioenergy Alliance Network of the Rockies, by Martin Twer
- 13 NARA: Northwest Advances Renewable Alliance, Supply Chain Products, by Martin Twer
- 14 How Property Title Affects, Who Receives it After you Die? by Marsha Goetting
- 15 Montana Master Forest Steward Program - An Advanced Curriculum for Forest Landowners, by Martin Twer
- 16 Landowner Spotlight, by Paul Cockell
- 17 2015 Forest Stewardship Workshop Schedule

Forest Stewardship Foundation News

- 19 Forest Stewardship Foundation, letter from the Chair, By Ed Levert
 Ties to the Land, by Ed Levert
- 20 2015 Forest Landowner Conference, by Ed Levert

Features

- 23 Montana’s Forest Products Industry: 2014 Conditions & Outlook for 2015, by Todd A. Morgan
- 24 Montana’s Fire-Dependent Forest: Lessons for Landowners, by Steve Arno

Feedback?

If you like/dislike certain things about this newsletter. Please send us your thoughts!

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Dear Reader,

This newsletter highlights numerous articles that have been submitted on information and resources that a forest landowner can use to better their knowledge and potentially implement on their own land. The overall concept is to provide articles that capture one's attention based on current issues and updates on various organizations on a state and national level. Our goal is to provide articles that will give important information and encourage landowners to develop new ideas towards their land.

Warm regards,

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Peter Kolb - MSU Extension Forestry Specialist
 Cindy Bertek - MSU Forest Stewardship Coordinator
 Martin Twer - MSU Extension Forestry Bioenergy Assoc. Specialist

MSU Extension Forestry Listservs and eNewsletter

By: *Martin Twer*

Over the past few years MSU Extension Forestry has developed electronic methods to inform landowners and other interested forestry related groups about our programming and upcoming educational events in a timely and efficient manner.

As such, a set of listservs have been implemented to which interested individuals can subscribe (opt-in) or unsubscribe (opt-out). The service is available from the MSU Extension Forestry website <http://www.msuextension.org/forestry/listserv.htm>

Currently the following listservs are available:

- FORESTRY - Forest/Woodlot Management (including Forest Stewardship Program, Master Forest Steward Program, and Forestry MiniCollege)
- MNRYC - Montana Natural Resources Youth Camp
- MT-PLT - Montana Project Learning Tree®
- NARA - Northwest Advanced Renewables Alliance

We strongly encourage anyone interested in any of these topics and related information to take the time and make an effort to subscribe/opt-in to one or more of these services.

We have retired previously used email lists and exclusively use these listservs to disseminate regular information and programming updates, including our eNewsletter.

If you have problems with or questions regarding the Subscribe or Unsubscribe procedures or general functionality, please feel free to contact Martin Twer (Extension Forestry BioEnergy Associate Specialist) by phone (406) 243-2775 or email martin.twer@cfc.umt.edu.

Do You Have Winterburn on Your Evergreens?

By: *Peter Kolb (PhD) MSU Extension Forestry Specialist*

Some years evergreen trees are afflicted with a bad case of needle discoloration that ranges from yellow to brown to purple followed by needle drop. Often this is most prevalent on the south side or windward side of the tree, and often only the new needles are impacted. The general phenomenon is commonly referred to as "windburn" or "winterburn" and results from needles freezing before they fully harden for winter. Physiologically this means that trees increase cellular sugars and lipids that both decrease the freezing point of cell cytoplasm but also act to break apart cell water content into microsized droplets that can "supercool", reaching temperatures as low as -38 F before they freeze. As water freezes it expands, and within living cells this can result in cell wall rupture. This years extreme early cold impacted a lot of trees and it is interesting to see that in many cases only portions of tree crowns were impacted showing that individual tree branches can winter harden or break dormancy independent of one another.



FORESTRY



MNRYC



MT-PLT



NARA

Montana Tree Farm *Letter from the Chair*



Seeing the Forest for the Team

During the first week of February, I traveled with Montana Tree Farm Steering Committee Past Chair Mark Boardman and Vice Chair Allen Chrisman to St. Louis, Missouri, for the American Tree Farm System National Leadership Conference (NLC). This was my third year attending NLC, and it is always one of the highlights on my work calendar, a gathering which I value as much for the relationships built as the opportunity to keep pace with evolution of this dynamic organization.

This year was especially meaningful, though, as it was the first time I attended in my new capacity as Montana Tree Farm Steering Committee Chair. When I assumed this role at the beginning of 2015, I had cause to reflect on the path that led me to this point. The familiar green and white diamond touting wood, water, recreation, and wildlife is imprinted upon my earliest memories, posted prominently at the entrance to my family's 110 acre parcel of warm, dry mixed conifer forest on the eastern slope of the Cascade Mountains in Washington State. My dad let me drive an old beat-up pickup with a Tree Farm decal in the back window to and from school and sports practice, and when my teenage friends asked me, "What's a Tree Farmer?" I proudly reported, "That means we practice good stewardship of our forestland."

When I first accepted the position of Private Forestry Assistance Specialist for the Montana DNRC more than 5 years ago, I was excited to learn that my duties included serving as a liaison to several forest landowner groups. I barely heard my supervisor's admonition to avoid "taking on too much" with these groups, so fervent was my enthusiasm at having a chance to interact directly with landowners. Even if my dream of being a forest landowner is for now beyond reach, the next best thing for me is working side-by-side and supporting those who are.

Among state employees, I am not alone in my affinity for Tree Farm and organizations like it. Many of our personnel, service foresters in particular, work alongside volunteers, consultants, and forest industry representatives devoting countless hours to serving forest landowners in the course of developing management plans and provide technical consultations. Many of them work after hours or weekends, forgoing overtime or compensatory pay, because they take a personal interest in the forest stewardship cause. Gathered around the campfire at an inspector appreciation campout following the 2014 Tree Farm annual meeting up the North Fork of the Flathead, it dawned on me that maybe it's the intangible benefits that keep us all engaged. These include the pride in being part of a team with a unified stewardship mission, the friendships that spring up between inspectors and landowners, and the genuine fun that

landowners, foresters, and volunteers enjoy together (I'm smiling now remembering the ruckus over the impromptu live huckleberry pie auction at Sondreson Hall). These benefits won't fill a wallet, but they enrich the heart immeasurably.

At NLC, as I hug and shake hands with old friends from previous years' meetings, I observe that our affiliations – agency, industry, or private sector – overlap and blur and merge. People don't talk in terms of ideology or ego or platforms. They talk in the language of outcomes. We are all on the same team. I returned from NLC even more grateful to the large network of volunteers and paid professionals alike who support our forest landowner organizations in Montana, including Tree Farm, the Montana Forest Stewardship Steering Committee, and the Forest Stewardship Foundation, with their time and energy. To the rest waiting in the wings I say, "Come join the team!"

Warm wishes,
Angela Mallon, Montana Tree Farm Steering Committee Chair

SAVE THE DATE

The 2015 Annual Montana Tree Farm meeting will be held in the Bozeman area. Pending release of the Bobcat football schedule, the meeting will be held on September 26th OR October 3rd.

Look in the August Tree Farm newsletter for final details and registration.



Montana Tree Farm Program
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Missoula, MT 59808
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Montana Tree Farmers Convene Way Up the North Fork

By: Steve Arno

Soon after first light on the blustery morning of Saturday, October 11, 2014, a caravan of Tree Farmers set out in school buses from Columbia Falls for the far reaches of the North Fork Flathead Valley. On the way, we passed through stands of golden colored larch and dense dog-hair thickets of lodgepole pine, meadows with colorful aspen groves, and a sweeping backdrop eastward into the mountains of Glacier National Park. Ron Buentemeier provided a running commentary on the numerous large wildfire burns of the last few decades that we travelled through on the long bumpy ride up this beautiful, remote valley.

We stopped at Sondreson Hall for a welcome and trip introduction, coffee, and sweet rolls. Here, more passengers boarded the buses—folks who had chosen to travel much of the wash-board road in their SUV's and modern pickup trucks!



Sondreson Community Hall, 8 miles north of Polebridge, proved the perfect venue for the 2014 Montana Tree Farm annual meeting.

North from the Polebridge area we passed through many small parcels of private land with cabins. We learned that there are about 450 different landowners in the North Fork Valley. Some had accomplished a nice job of tree thinning and slash cleanup, while others were surrounded by dense forest. The implications of these contrasting situations for wildfire hazard were obvious, especially considering the large swaths of recently burned forest we traveled through.

Several miles north of Sondreson Hall we took the branch road up Trail Creek, and soon came to the Hoiland Tree Farm, owned by Duke and Naomi Hoiland who were selected as the 2014 Tree Farmers of the Year. Some beautiful old-growth larch trees stand out amidst a younger forest of lodgepole pine, larch, and Douglas-fir. We climbed off the buses in front of the log house that the Hoilands built painstakingly over a few years from beetle-killed lodgepole pines on

their property. Duke showed us the little old Belsaw sawmill they used for making their own lumber, again mostly from dead lodgepole.

We then set out and followed a narrow, winding road eastward to the Chrisman-Wiley Tree Farm. This place has a nice mixture of larch-lodgepole forest with scattered moist meadows, aspen groves, and fast-growing spruce. Alan Chrisman's parents purchased two adjacent 1920s homesteads here in 1958, and they began establishing a summer retreat and managing the forest. The first major harvest was a commercial salvage of beetle-damaged lodgepole pine in 1978. Several commercial thinning projects were conducted thereafter, and hazard reduction treatments were done around the two attractive log homes in the past 5 years. The Chrisman-Wiley Tree Farm's management goal is to grow large, long-lived larch and spruce trees. They have also conducted many different improvement projects including burning and brush-cutting willows to stimulate browse production, removing conifer invasion from aspen groves, thinning around large larch and Douglas-fir trees to reduce fire hazard, maintaining fuel breaks around structures, and reclaiming large burn piles with scarification and Cenex Wilderness Seed Mix.



Naomi (far left) and Duke (second from right) Hoiland accept the 2014 Tree Farmers of the Year award in the company of their son Tom, daughter Julie, and grandson Bridger.

Following our tour of the Chrisman-Wiley Tree Farm we returned to Sondreson Hall for a luncheon provided by Cimmaron Café and Catering of Columbia Falls. Afterward, the following 2014 Tree Farm awardees were recognized:

- The Hoiland family was honored as Tree Farmers of the Year. They received a \$600 gift certificate to Triple-W Equipment, contributed by the Montana Forest Council and Triple W, and a huge custom-carved plaque commemorating the award, and suitable for outdoor display.
- Philip Williams, a student at the University of Montana received the \$500 Tree Farm Scholarship.

Continued on page 3

- Mark Boardman was honored as Inspector of the Year, and Cindy Bertek, Everett Young, and Matt Amo were chosen as Outstanding Inspectors for their dedicated volunteer work.
- Educator of the Year was awarded to Amy Gannon, the insect and disease specialist for the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation who has provided outstanding service to Tree Farmers.
- Tree Farm Logger of the Year was awarded to Jerry Okonski, Great Northern Land Services, who has done a great deal of work for North Fork landowners, is a promoter of the Tree Farm program, and is active in educational outreach for the Montana Logging Association.
- The American Forest Foundation presented Mark Boardman an award to acknowledge his long service to the Tree Farm program as outgoing chair.

Following the awards, Mark, Angela, and Paul McKenzie gave a briefing and led discussion on issues facing the Montana program. An important one is the need to obtain a part-time paid administrative staff person, as keeping up with the current and future workload (maintaining up-to-date membership records, coordinating inspections, responding to requests from the national T.F. program, and expanding services to membership) seems unsustainable with only volunteers. Attendees were asked to comment on whether they felt that asking Montana Tree Farmers to pay a small annual membership fee to help support this and other program costs would be appropriate.

Members also engaged in a lively discussion about States Voice, States Choice. This process is a process designed to engage Tree Farm membership in a collaborative discussion to select a pathway relative to third party certification. In the next year, Montana must choose between two options:

- 1) The Certification Pathway, in which Montana's Tree Farms continue to be 3rd-party certified, or
- 2) The Recognition Pathway, in which Montana's Tree Farms are no longer third-party certified, but the program remains for recognition and outreach. Various sides of this choice, which must be decided and presented to the national office by June 15, 2015, were discussed. It was agreed that more information regarding the choices and their implications needs to be presented to all Montana Tree Farmers, and that their input must be sought and their preferences become known.

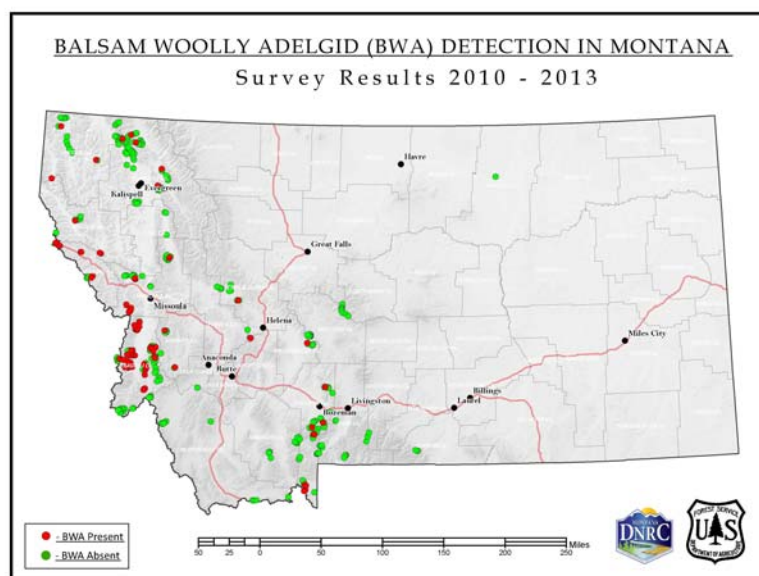
The good news is that the Montana Tree Farm program is doing well, with 20 new members this year. The atmosphere at this year's annual conclave was decidedly upbeat and convivial. Donated Silent Auction items raised \$583 for the program, and the threatening rainstorm held off until we were gathered inside the community center!

Balsam Woolly Adelgid in Montana

By: Amy Gannon

Balsam woolly adelgid, *Adelges piceae* (Ratzeburg) (BWA), is a non-native invasive insect that damages subalpine and grand fir. The insect feeds on branches, twigs, and the main bole of host trees. While feeding, the insect injects a chemical that stimulates abnormal growth. These abnormal growths are round nodules and are referred to as "gouts." Trees can withstand multiple years of feeding but may be killed after subsequent years of heavy feeding. Infested trees appear to be covered in white wool along the main stem and along branches. The females can reproduce without males thus, outbreaks can expand rapidly.

Balsam woolly adelgid is widely distributed in Idaho and was likely introduced into North America on infested nursery stock. It was first detected in Montana in 2007; no previous reports of BWA in Montana were on record at that time. The DNRC and USFS Forest Health Protection group initiated distribution surveys in 2010 to determine the extent of BWA. The DNRC Forest Pest Management Program is interested in learning about additional infestations. Please contact Amy Gannon (agannon@mt.gov) or your local service forester with information. To date, BWA has been confirmed in the following counties in Montana: Broadwater, Flathead, Gallatin, Granite, Lewis and Clark, Lincoln, Mineral, Missoula, Ravalli, and Sanders.



Philip Warren Williams - 2015 Tree Farm Scholarship Recipient

By: Cindy Peterson

Philip Warren Williams was the recipient of the 2015 Tree Farm Scholarship. Philip works for the Burnt Fork LLC as an apprentice forester where he selects and marks trees for harvest, does forest inventory, monitors weeds and forest pests, and post-harvest activities such as burning and grass seeding. He has also worked with and learned from USFS forester Bill Bradt and former DNRC forester Mark Lewing.

Philip completed four years at Williams Home School High School, Stevensville, MT he graduated in 2012. He is an outstanding upper-division honors forestry student at the University of Montana and carries a 3.95 GPA. Philip has provided community service to the Missoula and Stevensville area for many years. This service included cleaning the Clark Fork River, counting fish populations and monitoring stream irrigation practices for the USFS, teaching the Excellence in Writing Speech Boot Camp to home school students, adopt a grandparent. Serving as a tour guide at St. Mary's Mission and Museum, peer tutoring, piano performances at the Bitterroot Valley Living Center, and service to his church. Philip has

received numerous awards for his musical and scholastic achievements.

Philip is grateful for the Tree Farm scholarship and says, "This scholarship will help me become a forester who recognizes the dual functionality of forests as healthy, productive places benefiting both society and the natural realm. My goals parallel those of the American Tree Farm System by growing and sustaining forests that will, in their turn, sustain our future by providing us with economic, personal and natural growth." He aspires to learn how to manage forests, he is interested in climate change and its effects on water and forests, which he is learning about in his studies. Philip says, "Whether I work for a forestry firm or earn, a PhD and teach at a University, I hope to show people the importance of recognizing their potential to positively impact natural ecosystems."

Congratulations Philip and best wishes in your endeavors, studies, and career.



Our professional forestry, wildlife and range staff has provided service to forest landowners across the Inland Northwest since 1984. Let our experience work for you.

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- Expert Witness
- Forest Stewardship Planning
- Slash Disposal
- Forest Management Auditing (SFI, FSC)

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MONTANA TREE FARM SCHOLARSHIP

MT Tree Farm offers a \$500 scholarship annually to a resident of Montana enrolled (for the first time) or attending any accredited institution of higher education, on a full time basis, have a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or above, and must demonstrate an interest in forestry. **Applicants must have a Tree Farmer or a Tree Farm Inspector as a reference.** Perhaps you know someone who qualifies for this scholarship. If so, please let them know about this great opportunity.

The objective of this scholarship is to help a student with an interest in forestry and also to get knowledge out to these students about Tree Farm and the family forests of Montana. Making a connection between future foresters and land managers can lead to the development of long term personal and professional relationships.

The application deadline is September 15, 2015. For an application go online: <http://www.mttreefarm.org/about-us/scholarship.html>, email: cindy.bertek@cfc.umt.edu, or call Cindy Peterson at 406-243-4706.

2015 Tree Farm NRCS Update

By: Chris Town, Forester NRCS

With a newly approved Farm Bill, several programs administered by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) are funded for the next five years.

You may be familiar with the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) that provides incentive cost share for each forest management activity, such as, pre-commercial thinning, wildfire fuel breaks, and weed control.

There are a couple other programs that may not have reached your radar screen.

One program of particular relevance to Tree Farmers is the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). The CSP is a five year contract to encourage landowners, who are already good stewards, to continue implementation of conservation activities. Each year of the contract, landowners receive an annual payment calculated by the cumulative amount of conservation applied to forest, range, pasture or cropland.

For thinking on a larger scale, the NRCS has a new program if not a new concept dubbed the Regional Conservation Partnership Program. The RCPP encourages partnerships on a watershed, state, regional, or even national scale, to work with the NRCS to focus our usual programs for a concentrated conservation response to resource concerns. This year, in Montana, the Gallatin Valley Land Trust received funding by partnering with a dozen organizations to improve water quality and soil health in the Missouri headwaters and the lower Gallatin basin. A cardinal rule for capturing funding for a project is not to wait for the funding announcement to develop a plan. If you have an idea, develop a plan then seek out the funding for that project. Any project funded under RCPP will take time to construct, and as with most funding announcements, the timeline for proposal submittal will be short.

For more information about these programs, please contact the USDA/NRCS office that serves your county. An internet search of MT NRCS will help you find your point of contact.



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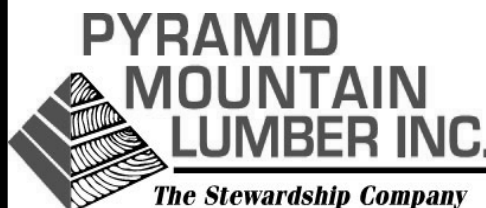
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Office - 406-677-2201 Ext. 34	Office - 406-677-2201
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PML Bitterroot

Doug Wasileski—Resource Forester
Office - 406-777-0464
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DENNIS SWIFT MEMORIAL

Tree Farm Inspector Recognition Award

Each year the Montana Tree Farm System recognizes the top Tree Farm Inspectors at the annual state Tree Farm meeting. These inspectors along with the many other Montana Tree Farm Inspectors volunteer their time, equipment and vehicle use in promoting the Tree Farm System through their certification and inspection activity.

Are you willing to support Montana Tree Farm Inspectors by contributing to the Dennis Swift Inspector Recognition Award?

YES, I would like to show my support in recognizing the importance of our Montana Tree Farm Inspectors in promoting the Tree Farm Program by contributing to the Dennis Swift Inspector Recognition Award:

\$ _____.

Please make your check payable to **Montana Tree Farm System** and return it with this slip to:

Montana Tree Farm System, Inc.

P.O. Box 17276

Missoula, MT 59808-7276

The Montana Tree Farm System is a 501 (C) (3) Organization

Missoula County Recognizes Tree Farmers for Exemplary Stewardship

By: Kali Becher, Missoula County and Angela Mallon, Montana Tree Farm

In the mere 4 years since its inauguration, the Missoula County Land Stewardship Award (MCLSA) has already recognized two long-time Tree Farmers. The goals of MCLSA Program are to celebrate individuals who demonstrate outstanding land stewardship practices and to share information about these stewardship practices so that others can learn from their work – criteria which are in lock step with the goals of the American Tree Farm System.

Tree Farmers Bill and Betty Potter of the Blackfoot Valley were recognized in 2012, shortly before Bill's passing. Bill Potter spent the entirety of his 95-year life on this piece of land, located at the confluence of the Blackfoot and Clearwater Rivers. In the 1970s, Bill began focusing on the management of his timber with the goal of "taking the worst and leaving the best." This led him on a path of invention and experimentation as he tried to develop attachments for his tractor that would help him remove and process small trees. These timber practices also resulted in numerous demonstrations and field tours over the years as Bill and his partner Hank Goetz shared their experiences with other foresters and landowners at the University of Montana's Lubrecht Forest. Now, the Potter legacy lives on in approximately 4,000 acres of sustainable working pastures, riparian corridors, meadows and forestlands. In the words of the Potters' MCLSA nomination, "The fruits of Bill and Betty's stewardship are evident in [their] timbered acres, which are among the very healthiest and productive in the valley – bar none."

On the heels of the Potters' recognition came the selection of Swan Valley Tree Farmers Dave and Kay Owen as Missoula County Land Stewards of 2013. The Owens have spent the past 40 years carefully managing their forestland located on Buck Creek. This land is a forest successional showcase – an 1889 stand-replacing fire led to site conversion from old growth Western larch and Douglas-fir to lodgepole pine-dominated stands with isolated larch. The current site composition is vulnerable to pests and disease that attack lodgepole pine, most notably mountain pine beetle. The Owens consistently walk and observe their land to make sure they find pine beetle attacks early so they can cull these trees to reduce infestation and capture economic value. Other proactive measures include working with neighbors to prevent noxious weed invasions and maintain their road. These efforts have protected native plant communities, kept their land relatively weed free, and enhanced Buck Creek water quality. For their efforts, they were also recognized as Montana Tree Farmers of the Year in 1997. According to their Tree Farm inspector, Roger Marshall, "The forest lands of Dave and Kaye Owen are biologically diverse, supporting a mix of trees, shrub, forbs, flowers and grasses that allow the land to be resilient, healthy, vibrant and alive."

External recognition of Tree Farmers' commitment and success in stewardship is perhaps the most powerful validation of the Tree Farm program. The nomination period is now open for the 2015 MCLSA program. Nominations are due to Missoula County by April 6th, 2015.

Kali Becher is Missoula County's Rural Landscape Scientist and can be reached at kbecher@co.missoula.mt or 406-258-4869





The Missoula County Land Stewardship Award Program is seeking nominations of outstanding land stewards

If you know someone in Missoula County who is doing great work restoring, protecting, or enhancing the land and natural resources, please let us know!

Contact Kali Becher at 406-258-4869 to find out more about the award or visit the Missoula County Land Stewardship Award webpage to download the nomination form.

Nominations are due by April 6, 2015.

Tree Tops to Grassroots – News for Leaders

By: Angela Mallon

A delegation of three Montana Tree Farm committee members traded rain coats for down jackets to attend the 2015 Tree Farm National Leadership Conference on February 3-5 in St. Louis, Missouri in the midst of a Midwestern arctic blast. The climate within the walls of the Hyatt Regency at the Arch was warm and friendly however, as counterparts from state Tree Farm committees in 44 states shared perspectives and learning opportunities, gained tools to improve their organizational capacity, and provided guidance to ATFS staff on the future of the program. Following is a summary of conference highlights.



The Gateway Arch and Old Courthouse illuminated by street lights on a chilly evening in downtown St. Louis. Photo by Mark Boardman.

State's Voice, State's Choice around the West

For those who haven't heard, States Voice, States Choice is a process designed to engage Tree Farm membership in a collaborative discussion to select a pathway relative to third party certification. Montana must choose one of two options: 1) the Certification Pathway, in which Montana's Tree Farms continue to be 3rd-party certified, or 2) the Recognition Pathway, in which Montana's Tree Farms are no longer third-party certified, but the program remains intact for recognition and outreach.

In a panel discussion on the first day of the National Leadership Conference, representatives from Tree Farm's Western Region discussed topics related to the State's Voice, State's Choice. Of the 9 states in the region – California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington, and Wyoming – 3 have officially declared their status. Oregon and California have chosen the certified pathway; New Mexico the recognition pathway. Of the remaining states, most reported during the panel discussion that they are leaning toward selecting the certification pathway, even those which have no immediate market for certified wood products. As in Montana, other parts of the region have used statewide and regional meetings to query their membership about the State's Voice, State's Choice decision. Many states have also consulted with their Sustainable Forestry Initiative State Implementation Committee. A few others have polled their membership using mail surveys. This input is being used by state committees to make an informed, fair decision on State's Voice, State's Choice. It is im-

portant to note that both pathways required adherence to the Tree Farm Standards of Sustainability (next section).

New Standards of Sustainability

The new 2015-2020 Standards of Sustainability for Forest Certification, the criteria which Tree Farms must meet to maintain third-party certified status and recognition, have been officially adopted. To view the new standards visit <https://www.treefarmssystem.org/standards-review>. These standards are now in effect for 2015 reinspections, while new inspections must use the new standards starting March 15th. If you are an inspector who is planning a new inspection this winter, please submit your forms by March 8th to leave time for the certification coordinator to enter them in the database.

Inspector Training

With the release of new standards, ALL current Tree Farm inspectors will be required to complete inspector training 2015. Angela Mallon, Allen Chrisman, and Mark Boardman attended the inspector training facilitator workshop at NLC and will be leading the process to get Montana inspectors current on their certifications. There will be a classroom and field-based training on **April 9th in Kalispell**, the day prior to the state SAF meeting. Inspectors who cannot attend the in-person training and that have completed an inspection within the last 2 years are eligible to take an on-line training. Contact Angela Mallon at amallon@mt.gov for more information on how to update your Tree Farm inspector credentials.

Tree Farm turns 75!

In 2016 Tree Farm will celebrate 75 years of growing stewardship from the roots. ATFS has been surveying its membership to seek input on how best to celebrate this occasion. If you receive a survey, please take a few moments to chime in. As part of the commemoration, the 2016 National Leadership Conference will take place in Seattle, Washington, not far from the site of the first ever Tree Farm dedication which occurred on June 12, 1941. Montana hopes to take as many of its leaders as possible to NLC 2016, funds permitting. If you are an active steering committee member or inspector and are interested in attending the 2016 conference, please contact Montana Tree Farm Chair Angela Mallon.

Tree Farm Steering Committee Meeting Schedule for 2015

All members of the Montana Tree Farm system are invited to attend steering committee meetings, held once every two months at Triple W Equipment just outside of Missoula. Committee meetings begin at 9:30am and last approximately 3 hours. Following are the 2015 meeting dates:

March 17
May 19
July 21
September 15
November 17

Meetings nearly always include a delicious plate of treats generously provided by Judy Johnson. Mark your calendars!

Montana Forest Stewardship Steering Committee Letter from the Chair



The Montana Forest Stewardship Steering Committee (MFSSC) has expanded its activities and role in supporting stewardship for non-industrial private forest landowners (NIPFLs). The Committee continues to provide its full support to the MSU Extension Forestry Forest Stewardship workshops and to DNRC's stewardship efforts. It also continues its annual ranking of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks' Legacy projects.

Once each year the Committee meets offsite (from its usual meeting at DNRC Headquarter in Missoula). This past year we held our meeting at the Ten Mile Water Treatment Facility in Helena and reviewed the DNRC-FS Master Stewardship Agreement Chessman-Red Mountain Flume Special Project Authority. This project in the Ten Mile watershed focuses specifically on maintaining the water quality, supply, and its infrastructure through a variety of fuels treatments along the segment of the flume located on National Forest Service lands, and adjacent to Chessman Reservoir. DNRC employees provided tours of the Red Mountain Flume, stopping at the Minnehaha Overlook.

Regarding the Forest Stewardship Workshops, we have the daunting challenge to overcome the continual reduction in funding.

Cindy Bertek (with the support and aid of her boss Peter Kolb) has been adept at reducing various workshop costs, but her reductions cannot keep up with the funding reductions. Recall that the USFS (State and Private Forestry) provides funding to the DNRC which contracts with MSU Extension Forestry for the workshops. Our Committee has been working the issue for some time with moderate success at best. The Committee has renewed its efforts to seek additional funding sources. Toward that end the Forest Stewardship Foundation has stepped up and contributed toward the cause. MFSSC members Ryan Lutey and Peter Pocius have been particularly generous in donating significant time and talents toward searching for funding.

The Committee is always accepting new members. The landowner positions are staggered to keep the Committee fresh and with continued vigor. Therefore, if you are interested to serve on the Committee (which meets quarterly), you are welcome to sit in on a meeting before making a decision to join. Contact Jody Christianson, Membership Chairman at jody@mjchristianson.com.

By Michael Christianson, MFSSC Chair

The Next Generation of Family Forest Landowners and Natural Resource Professionals

By: Martin Twer

For over 25 years, the Montana Natural Resources Youth Camp (<http://mnryc.org>) has provided young people an opportunity to study in an outdoor classroom the scientific principles, economic realities, historical heritage, and social perspectives of natural resource management today, to help future leaders in their quest to gain a perspective that is informed and progressive.

Campers spend one week (July 12-17, 2015) in the rustic setting of The University of Montana's Lubrecht Experimental Forest learning about Montana's natural resources. The accommodations are comfortable, the food is great, and the instruction and friendships are the best!

The camp is open to all youth ages 14-18. The full cost of the camp to students is \$200 which includes meals, supplies, and lodging. Campers are encouraged to contact their local Conservation Districts, which usually offer significant scholarships to our camp.

Campers learn about wildlife, forestry, streams, soils, geology, range management, and recreation, taught largely by professionals that volunteer from a variety of natural resource management agencies and industries. They also spend a half-day rafting the Alberton Gorge of the Clark Fork River. The field sessions, specialty evening programs, guest speakers, hands-on learning-through-discovery, and campfires provide for a lasting summer camp experience.

Student teams also compete in a land-use simulation game where they manage a 3,800 acre ranch for 20 years. As in real life, teams must make hard choices between profits and conservation ethics, especially if they face poor commodity prices. Most students enjoy the competition and have the typical reaction of, "Wow, I never knew that making a living by managing land was so hard."

An advanced level curriculum, the Conservation Leadership School, is offered for returning campers (fee \$250), including an overnight camping trip into the mountains.

For more information contact Martin Twer, Camp Director, phone (406) 243-2775, email director@mnryc.org, or visit the camp website <http://mnryc.org>.



Family Forest Ownership, Whose Legacy Shall it Be?

By: Peter Kolb (PhD) MSU Extension Forestry Specialist

Private forest landowners, whether 3rd generation to original homesteaders or relatively recent forest owners have shown themselves to be capable of terrific stewardship, keeping lands functional and productive for wildlife and as working forests. Keeping these forests in the family is a tremendous investment for all generations. The older generation might forgo some of the monetary value they could use for other endeavors if they pass these lands to the next generation, who may commit to maintaining and working with the land as their parents, also forgoing some of the cash value they might use for other endeavors. It is both an honor and sacrifice to the families. However, selling the property can also be a very viable and noble thing. It is hard to let go of a natural resources asset that has been acquired and improved over the course of many years, especially when you may have a plan for it that the next owner may want to deviate from. Alternatively, allowing someone else to have the chance to live and work with a forest also has its tremendous benefits. Through land sales, additional families have the chance to grow up in a rural setting, to learn about their new forest and perhaps let their kids develop the value system that working with the land can bring. When we think about our land, and the legacy to our work it represents, remember that change is also a part of a natural landscape. One might also ask: is it better for a land to remain in the same ownership, even if the next generations might not be as enthusiastic about it as we were, or is it better for someone else, who really wants to own and manage a forest take over that responsibility? These are deep and personal questions to which there are no right or wrong answers. Land these days is expensive and it stands to reason that someone who buys a forested property must really want it. There is not only the initial price, but the snow to shovel, the wildfires to worry about, the weeds to control and the bears to shoo out of the garage, all of which can require a lot of time and energy. You have to love it to do it. A survey of the past several years of stewardship participants indicated that about one-half of the participants had owned their properties for 5 years or less. Considering that in the context that out of the 28,000 or so of Montana forest landowners with 10 acres or more, maybe 10% or less have owned their lands for less than 5 years. From that overall population slightly more than 3000 have completed the Montana Forest Stewardship program. This statistic might indicate that although both original and new landowners are responsible land managers, a disproportionate

number of new forest landowners seem to be excited about their property and want to do good things, or at least learn about them.

Twenty-five years ago the first Montana Forest Stewardship class was held for forest landowners at Lubrecht Experimental Forest. The 5-day program was an experiment and the brainchild of then MSU Extension forestry specialist Bob Logan and an advisory board of landowners and University of Montana Forestry professors including the likes of Robert Pfister – a long time forest ecologist, University of Montana Forestry Professor and private landowner advocate. The program for Montana, unlike any other state at the time, was based on the premise that landowners who learned about their forest by conducting their own inventory, and who wrote their own management plans would implement management and conservation practices far better than if a forest management plan was handed to them by a professional forester with the direction of “do what the plan says”. Almost all other states opted for a version of this later practice, since the paradigm of the day was that only a trained forester could understand and do what the complexities of good natural resource management required.

As part of this first class of landowners, Thorn and Karen Liechty had eagerly enrolled. Having moved to Montana several years earlier from Wisconsin, both were pursuing their dream of living in the western mountains, which they had visited many times during their past vacations from their professional careers. At the time Montana, like many other rural western states was still reeling from an economic recession that had closed many of the sawmills that had sprung up after WWII in order to supply the returning soldiers and then baby boomers with wood for the extreme housing shortage. The western U.S. had been the last great reservoir of large diameter trees growing on endless National Forests. During the late 70's and early 80's, transportation was slow and amenities lacking in rural communities, unless you were an outdoors person who enjoyed hunting and fishing and didn't mind stoking a wood stove for heat, thus land was relatively cheap. I recall rural acreages selling in north Idaho for as little as \$200 per acre at the time, and only getting one AM radio station if you were lucky in Plains, MT or McCall, ID. If the timber was not big on your land, it had little value. Into this environment the Liechty's bought an old house sitting on about 80+ acres of stagnant, dog-haired forest comprised of mistletoe infected Douglas-fir, rot

infested grand fir mixed with tall slender larch and struggling ponderosa pine. Although forest fires at the time were not uncommon, they had been proven to be controllable and containable by the modern forest service and a “go get em” attitude by fire fighters. That was until the 1988 wildfires of Yellowstone showed that large wildfires might not be containable, and the risk of fire had changed from the cool-wet 40-year period after WWII into the warming trend of the late 80’s.

With the help of the Stewardship class, Thorn and Karen learned all about their forest tree species, how they grow, forest insects and diseases, soils, water and potential silvicultural treatments. They conducted an inventory, wrote a management plan and went right to work, hiring a logger, firing a logger when he did not do what they wanted, hiring a different logger and a consultant, marking endless trees, finding markets for small trees, pulp and sawlogs, and then cleaning up all of the non-merchantable debris, seeding grasses, and planting different tree species to diversify their forest more. All this while helping their two young kids grow up. Knowing Thorn and Karen, they are hard working, enthusiastic and studious individuals who also wanted to offer their share of community service and over the next decade they helped create the Montana Forest Owners Association, participated on the Tree Farm steering committee, helped plan and implement the National Tree Farm Convention here in Missoula, and served and chaired the Montana Forest Stewardship Steering Committee. Ten years after their first forest harvest, they implemented another commercial thinning of their forest, since not too surprisingly their trees had grown and were crowding each other as indicated by slowing growth rates of their larger trees. A lot of regeneration had sprung up following their first harvest and giving it some more sunlight was also an objective.

As another 10 years went by, the Liechty’s continued to work on their forest, controlled weeds, took out beetle infested pines and fir, and stayed vigilant regarding the many things that can go wrong across a natural landscape in western Montana. A real test came when the 2007 Blackcat fire blew up on the mountain behind them. Summer drought along with a lightning strike ignited a small fire about 5 miles as a crow flies from their house, though thankfully on the opposite side of the mountain from them. Unfortunately the fire burned into several sections of very dense timber and blew up to become the #1 national priority fire. Although mandatory evacuation was instigated, and even somewhat over-enforced by the local sheriff, Thorn stayed on his property which became a safety zone and one base of operations for fire fighters working on the blaze. Karen, who had been out of town, was prevented by local roadblocks from joining Thorn and had to spend several nights in a

motel. Their property was spared from the wildfire by a change in weather, and the management they and their neighbors had implemented that allowed fire suppression crews to effectively contain and suppress that flank of the fire.

Eventually, as with all of us, age and health issues started to catch up to the Liechty’s. Although they love their property, 6 months of deep snow, a long driveway to plow, dispersed kids with grandkids that wanted to see them more often, and a variety of other factors prompted Thorn and Karen to think about putting their place up for sale with the intention of moving to a warmer and more family accessible location. The property was after all, as with most of us, a substantial investment that could not just sit idle. Although available to their kids as a legacy, careers in other states, duties to growing families and other factors did not make the transfer of the land to the next generation a feasible option. Thorn and Karen, as with everything they did, thought very carefully about their property and decided to offer it as 3 separate parcels in order to make it more affordable and attractive to potential buyers, who could of course buy all parcels as well if they wanted a larger holding. The house and 30+ acres around it sold fairly quickly, leaving two remaining contiguous forested parcels that totaled about 135 acres. Still connected and concerned about their land, the Liechty’s, now out-of-state residents still visit and actively manage their land, including the implementation of a 3rd harvest this past winter as a careful look at the trees and growth rates indicated that the bigger trees once again had significantly slowed down in growth and thus might be more susceptible to insects, diseases and drought. The front and back covers of this publication highlight part of their forest.

Starting with an originally very dense and stagnant forest at high risk to wildfires, these new forest owners helped create a magnificent stand of large healthy tall trees on the landscape that with the right care could remain in this condition for at least the next century. Around the now giant larches, pines and fir a new stand of trees has developed – waiting for a precommercial thinning to release them to grow taller. So who will be the next steward of this property? The unknowing and uncertainty may drive some people crazy, predicting a subdivision, junkyard, or other predetermined “bad actors”. I would be willing to bet, however, that it will be responsible nice people who are pursuing their lifelong dream of owning some forested land in Montana. Ultimately what is important is that programs such as Stewardship, Tree Farm, The Montana Forest Owners Association, DNRC Service Forestry, Fish Wildlife and Parks, the Natural Resources and Conservation Service, Consultants, Wood Products Industry, and Universities (MSU Extension Forestry) are providing the programs that help landowners gain the information, multiple perspectives and help they desire.

E³A: Exploring Energy Efficiency & Alternatives



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About

E3A is your Extension teaching resource for non-biased, research-based information on energy efficiency and small renewable energy technologies for home, farm, and ranch.

For Educators: E3A is a self-guided, self-contained toolkit of resources to help you teach energy. In addition to fact sheets, presentation materials, and educator forums and tools you'll find online, the E3A toolkit includes lesson plans and resources to help make teaching energy easy – right out of the box! You can download the sheets for free on the website or you can [order a hard copy, including folders and a branded box](#). In addition, the design files are available for FREE to other universities to customize the resources for your own state. If you are interested in receiving the files please [contact Milton Geiger](#).

The curriculum was graciously funded through the WSARE Professional Development Program

For the Public: The E3A curriculum is designed to be a teaching tool for natural resource professionals. Please visit your state Cooperative Extension Service or www.e3a4u.info to learn more about options for individual action.



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**BIOENERGY
ALLIANCE
NETWORK OF THE
ROCKIES**

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About



Infestations of pine and spruce bark beetles have led to widespread tree death in coniferous forests across the Rocky Mountains over the past decade, with ~42 million acres of U.S. forests impacted since 1996. This trend is only likely to intensify with future global climate change. The resulting beetle-killed wood represents a vast bioenergy resource that requires no cultivation, circumvents food-versus-fuel concerns, and may have a highly favorable carbon balance compared other forestry feedstocks. However, beetle-killed biomass is typically located far from urban industrial centers in relatively inaccessible areas with challenging topography, and transportation costs have been a key barrier to more widespread productive utilization of this vast resource.

Cool Planet Energy Systems' recent advances in modular thermochemical conversion technologies enable the production of advanced liquid biofuel feedstocks and biochar co-products on-site deep within stands of beetle-killed timber, bypassing these fundamental logistical constraints. There are still significant technical and knowledge barriers that must be explored before such systems can be widely deployed in an environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable manner. The Bioenergy Alliance Network of the Rockies (BANR) brings together scientists, educators, and extension specialists from universities and government agencies across the region to work with the industry and develop a comprehensive program addressing the major challenges limiting feedstock development, production, logistics and utilization of insect-killed trees for the production of biofuels and biochar. The BANR approach focuses on 5 major task areas:

Feedstock Supply: Integrating field plot data, remote sensing and geospatial layers to estimate feedstock supplies and produce digital feedstock atlas

Harvest Logistics & Processing: Develop cost and production models for bioenergy-specific forest harvest & biomass transport operations; establish specifications for beetle-kill feedstock quality & pretreatment

System Performance & Sustainability: Quantify the ecological impacts of beetle-kill harvest, the financial viability of the supply chain and potential for lifecycle greenhouse gas mitigation, and the value of the biochar co-product; **assess economic, social and policy constraints; produce a web-based decision support system**

Education: Promote general bioenergy literacy through the development of middle school and high school educational materials, K12 teacher professional development activities, and undergraduate- and graduate-level course development

Extension, Outreach, Health & Safety: Provide information to communities and stakeholder groups on all aspects of a potential beetle-kill industry in the Rockies; understand and address concerns of communities regarding the health and safety aspects of biofuel and biochar production and transportation



Feedstock Supply



Harvest Logistics & Processing



System Performance & Sustainability



Education

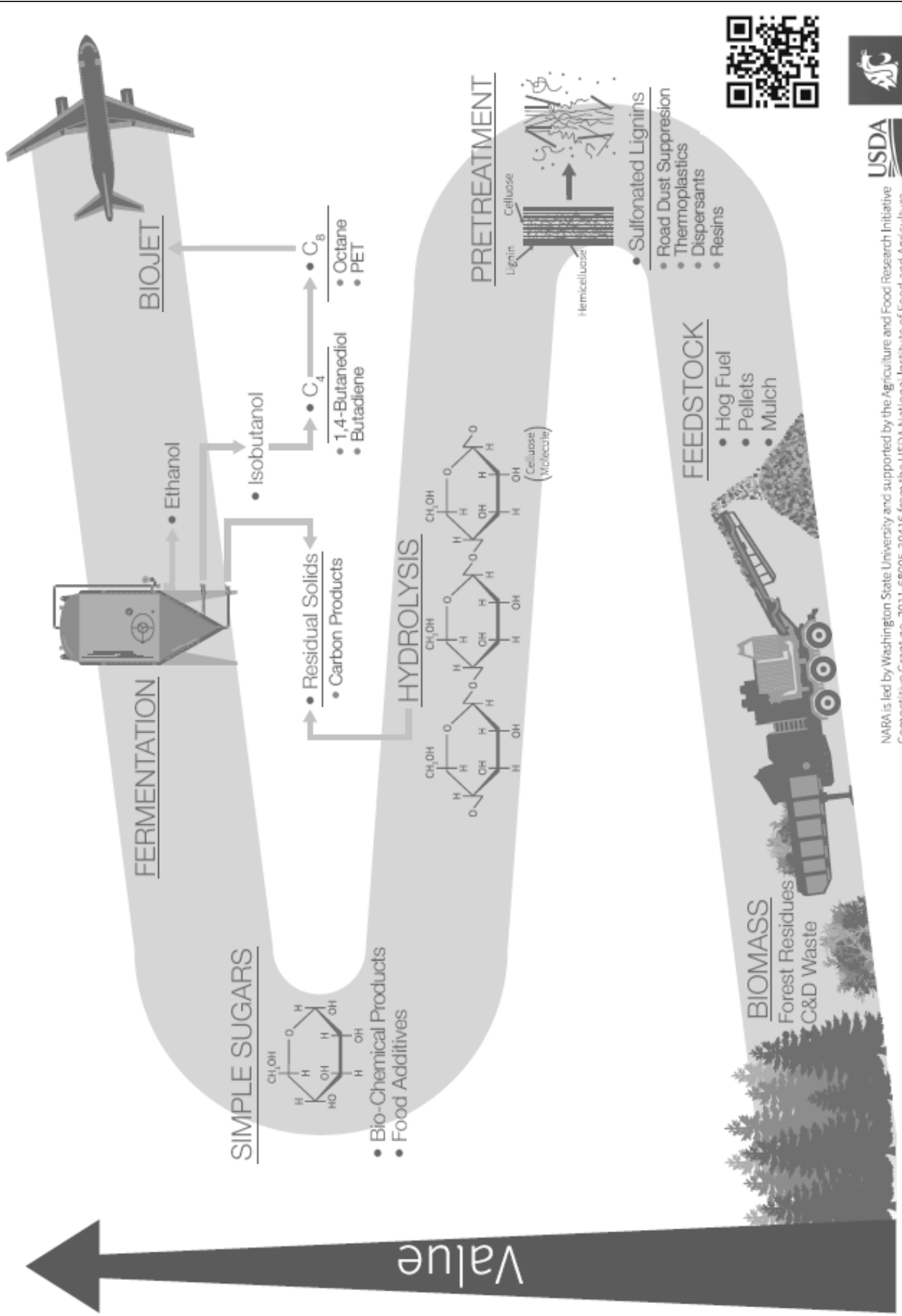


Extension Outreach Health & Safety



BANR is a Coordinated Agricultural Project (CAP) funded by the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative Competitive Grant no. 2012-54005-22206 from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)

SUPPLY CHAIN PRODUCTS



NARA is led by Washington State University and supported by the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative Competitive Grant no. 2011-68005-30416 from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

How Property Title Affects, Who Receives it After you Die?

By: *Marsha A. Goetting, MSU Extension Family Economics Specialist*

How you title your real and personal property affects how it is transferred at your death. Title can also have unintended consequences for your survivors. For example, a father and son were landowners together for 15 years with the land in joint tenancy between them. They assumed that, upon the death of the father, the son would become the sole owner and they would avoid probate and federal estate taxes. But the unexpected happened – the son was killed in an automobile accident leaving a wife and three children. The son's family was "disinherited" because under joint tenancy contract law the property passed to the father as survivor. True, Montana law does provide some protection for the surviving spouse but Dad's estate planning goals were not achieved.

Regardless of how your land and financial accounts are titled, you need to be aware of what happens to that property when you die so you take appropriate actions to see that it is distributed according to your wishes instead of Montana law. Let's examine three situations to see how informed you are about Montana intestacy statutes (dying without a will) that I share in my estate planning meetings across the state.

Property titled in sole ownership in a marital situation; no written will. Assume Jack died without writing a will. Jack's survivors are his wife and parents. All property valued at \$800,000 was in his name only. What dollar amount did Jack's wife receive?

1. \$800,000
2. \$650,000
3. \$550,000
4. \$400,000
5. None, all passes to the state of Montana because Jack didn't write a will

Montanans typically believe that Jack's wife receives all \$800,000 (#1). Wrong answer. Why? Because the property was solely in Jack's name and he had surviving parents in addition to his wife. The Montana Uniform Probate Code (UPC) provides for the surviving spouse to receive the first \$200,000 in value of the estate and three-fourths of the balance. The remaining balance of one-fourth passes equally to his parents. Jack's wife receives \$650,000 while Jack's father and mother each receive \$75,000.

Property titled in joint tenancy with right of survivorship; no written will. Assume that Tim and Sharon, a married couple without children, had titled all their property in joint tenancy with right of survivorship. They had not written a will. In an automobile accident Tim died before the ambulance arrived. Sharon passed away in the hospital three days later. Who receives their property?

1. State of Montana because Tim and Sharon had no written will
2. Tim's parents
3. Sharon's parents
4. ½ to Tim's parents and ½ to Sharon's parents
5. ½ to Tim brothers and ½ to Sharon's sisters

Most people choose #3 thinking Sharon's parents would receive the property because she survived Tim by three days. They are wrong. The property passes one-half to Tim's parents and one-half to Sharon's parents. Why? The UPC states that "if property is held in joint tenancy with right of survivorship and neither survives the other by 120 hours, then the property is split equally between their heirs." In this case, the priority heirs are Tim and Sharon's parents.

Who gets the property if Sharon survives until the eighth day? Sharon's parents! Why? Because Sharon lived beyond the 120 hours (5 days), she became the heir and, after her death the property passes to her priority heirs...her parents. Who gets the property if Sharon dies immediately and Tim dies on the eighth day? Tim's parents receive all the property.

In summary, very few Montanans are aware that by titling property in joint tenancy with right of survivorship and by not writing a will, their property could pass to unintended heirs. A will could assure that assets do not get passed to one set of heirs simply because their relative survived the longest.

Remember, a will only controls the property after the death of the joint tenants. For example if Tim writes a will leaving the property to his parents, the will "works" only if Sharon is not living. If she is still alive, the property passes to her. That's why many married couples have mutual wills with the property passing to the surviving spouse, and if the spouse is not living to the children, and if neither is surviving, then to the parents, brothers or sisters or whomever they wish. An attorney drafting a will provides the appropriate wording to accomplish the will writer's wishes.

Property held in joint tenancy with right of survivorship with a written will in existence. Gary, age 67, has remarried and titled his land in joint tenancy with his new wife. His adult children are quite "concerned" but Dad told them not to worry because he has written a will leaving them the land and the house to his wife. If Gary dies, who receives the land and house?

1. Gary's new wife as the surviving joint tenant
2. Gary's children as directed in the will because it has priority
3. Gary's kids receive ½ and his wife receives ½
4. Gary's kids receive ¾ and his wife receives ¼

Most people choose #2 thinking that Gary's children receive the land because the will was written after the joint tenancy with right of survivorship between Gary and his new wife was established. Wrong! The joint tenancy title on the land is a contract. Gary cannot undo the contract with his written will. His new wife receives his land, not his children as Gary intended.

Any property that is held in joint tenancy with right of survivorship passes to the surviving joint tenant. It doesn't matter if the asset is a savings account with a balance of \$500 or \$5 million in land. It doesn't matter if a person writes a will leaving the property to someone else that is not a part of the joint tenancy. The surviving joint tenant receives the property under joint tenancy contract law. In Gary's case it's no wonder the children are "concerned" as their dad is unaware of the consequences of Montana joint tenancy contract law. Dad has disinherited his children without realizing it!

That's why it's important that Montanans know how their real and personal property assets are titled. This includes checking accounts, certificates of deposit, and land. Additional information is available in our MSU Extension MontGuides. They are available on the Web www.montana.edu/estateplanning/eppublications.htm

If you do not have computer access, copies of "Property Ownership" and "Wills" are available from your local County Extension office or from Goetting, P.O. Box 172800, Montana State University, Bozeman, MT 59717.

Montana Master Forest Steward Program - An Advanced Curriculum for Forest Landowners

By: *Martin Twer*

One of the primary and most consistently offered forest-landowner oriented educational programs has been the Montana Forest Stewardship Program. The goal of this program is to help landowners assess their forests, develop short and long term objectives for their lands, and write a plan that reflects their personal objectives and resource potential for their land.

The initial Forest Stewardship Program is complemented by the multiple-workshop Montana Master Forest Steward Program (MMFSP). To gain the status of "Master Forest Steward," landowners are required to complete seven core courses and three elective courses for a total of ten courses. Landowners who complete this program will be recognized with a certificate.

Each course provides participants an opportunity to find out about a new subject, study a familiar topic in more depth, interact with and learn hands-on from professionals as well as fellow landowners, and complete a subject-specific supplement to their existing Forest Stewardship Plan. While most of the classes are one-day, some are offered as two days, either back-to-back or with a week in between to allow landowners to conduct an inventory of their land regarding a specific topic, and return a week later to discuss their findings and hear about possible management considerations.

Since we are still in the process of scheduling our workshops for 2015 please visit our online educational calendar <http://www.msueextension.org/forestry/calendar.htm> for the most current information.

Tentatively planned workshop topics include:

- Forest Harvesting Practices/Advanced Silviculture
- Forest Soils - Evaluation and Protection
- Forest Wildlife Habitat Identification and Management
- Introduction to GPS for Forest Landowners
- Safety Tips for working in your Forest
- Using Google Earth to map your Forest

From an educational perspective these classes are available to any Montana landowner, however, they may be more useful to landowners that have attended the initial Forest Stewardship Workshop. Additional information and knowledge is offered to learn about and adjust their management plans to meet new expectations and changes to their forest. By offering a Master Forest Steward curriculum we not only give landowners the opportunity to pursue more in-depth training, but will also present them with an acknowledgement of their commitment, and achievement.

For more information on this program see online at <http://www.msueextension.org/forestry/mmfs.htm> or contact Martin Twer (MSU Extension Forestry BioEnergy Associate Specialist) by phone (406) 243-2775 or email martin.twer@cfc.umt.edu.

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Spotlight on a Forest Steward/Tree Farmer Paul and Diane Cockrell

By: Paul Cockrell

Paul and Diane Cockrell met while attending college at the University of Wisconsin, Madison in the mid 1980's. Paul obtained a degree in Construction Administration, and Diane went on to earn a Master's Degree in Animal Science. They took numerous trips to Montana to ski and backpack, and it wasn't long before the young couple moved out west to live in Moscow, Idaho. In 1998 they relocated to Montana and have lived here since.

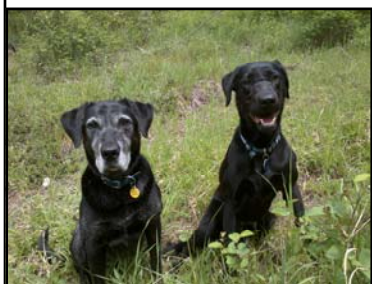
The past 11 years, they lived in Hamilton. Paul is a self-employed building contractor and Diane works at Rocky Mountain Lab as a research scientist. They have no children, but have always been dog (specifically Lab) owners. They currently have two black Labrador retrievers, Molly and Sara, who both very much enjoy forest management! "They are very accomplished at the scatter part of the lop and scatter technique. If only I could train them to pile the branches," says Paul. "They are also very good at making sure I stop at the coffee shack for biscuits on the drive home!"



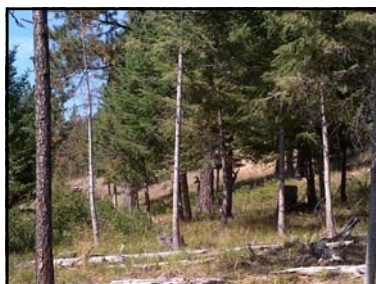
Paul built a barn, a shed, and furniture with the wood from his forest

Having 160 acres of forest land, and not a lot of forest management experience can be overwhelming. So in 2011, Paul signed up for the Forest Stewardship class being offered in Corvallis that year. "It was a very good learning experience, and led me to sign up for the MSU Extension mini courses, and whatever other forestry educational opportunities came along." Both Angela Mallon, and Peter Kolb made site visits to the property and gave Paul encouragement and shared their valuable wisdom. "We enrolled our property in Montana Tree Farm, and it has given us the opportunity to meet many like-minded people."

A couple years ago, Paul became involved with the Montana Forest Stewardship Steering Committee (MFSSC), and it has been a rewarding experience. Highlights so far have included a tour of the F. H. Stoltze Land and Lumber Companies new co-gen facility, and a tour of Stoltze's Haskill Basin property that was being evaluated for the Forest Legacy Program. Last spring (2014), Cindy Bertek worked with Paul to use their Rainbow Ridge Tree Farm as the host site for the Missoula Forest Stewardship workshop field training. "It was a very



Molly and Sara



Pre-treated area

"In 2008 we bought 160 acres of recreational property in the Blackfoot corridor, midway between Bonner and Potomac. We like to camp, hunt, and hike, and figured it would make a fine base to do it from. I was also fascinated with trees," says Paul. They have heated their home with firewood for many years, and having spent a career working as a carpenter, Paul considers trees to be "the ultimate renewable resource." "I bought a Wood-Mizer portable sawmill to convert the dead and dying trees into lumber for some of my construction jobs." Projects have included building a barn, a cabin, a garage, many fences, and furniture.

Tree species on the property consist mostly of ponderosa pine and Douglas fir, along with some pockets of lodgepole pine, and western larch. Wildlife on and around the property include deer, elk, bighorn sheep, moose, both black and grizzly bear, coyotes, wolves, cougar, turkey and grouse. Paul is member of the Wild Sheep Foundation, and they always enjoy seeing the bighorn sheep. A dramatic die off of the local bighorn herd several years back, has unfortunately made those sightings less frequent in recent years. Birds are common, with bluebirds, western tanager, and cedar waxwings being some of Paul and Diane's favorites. They have placed several bluebird nesting boxes on the property, with good results.



Thinning the trees and burning the slash



Chipping the slash

large class and very rewarding to see so many people interested in forest stewardship," says Paul.

To date, Paul and Diane have thinned about 40 acres of the property, cleaned up a bunch of slash, taken out some old barb wire fencing, and have tried to battle the noxious weeds. "This year I plan to declare all-out war on the weeds," says Paul. "I am starting to see the results of good forest management and it encourages me to do more and learn more. I recently bought a used wood chipper and plan on working it hard this spring."

Future plans are to continue to work towards creating a healthy, productive forest, capable of providing a sustainable supply of wood products with the best possible wildlife habitat. Recently, over 100,000 acres of neighboring Plum Creek Timber properties have been sold to the Nature Conservancy. Paul and Diane are looking into the possibility of placing their Tree Farm in a conversation easement.



A flush of forb growth where the forest was thinned and debris removed

Note from MSU Extension Forestry: Four Forest Stewardship workshops are offered annually, see the calendar at www.msueextension.org/forestry All family forest owners are encouraged to attend as well as Tree Farmers and second/third generation Forest Stewards as well as anyone who wants to take the course again.



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THE 2015 FOREST STEWARDSHIP WORKSHOP SCHEDULE



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John Wells, participant and family forest owner

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Brochure, schedule details, and registration form available at: www.msueextension.org/forestry/calendar.htm

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Forest Stewardship Foundation

Letter from the Chair



As you read this Montana Family Forest News edition you might ask yourself, what is the Forest Stewardship Foundation? Many of you already know us, but sometimes it seems our group falls between the cracks. We are a non-profit organization with a basic mission of educating and informing forest landowners, resource professionals and the general public on natural resource issues. Originally formed in support of the forest stewardship workshop program we now attempt to find needed educational subjects not being covered by Montana State University Extension Forestry, DNRC or other educators. Yes, we still believe the forest stewardship workshop program is integral to forest landowner education and will present the program in February with \$2500 in support of these workshops.

It appears that most of our success comes from our efforts to team up with other groups. In 2015 we will once again co-sponsor the Helena Landowner Conference on April 24 with Northwest Management, Inc. This marks our sixth year of involvement with this successful conference. This year's theme is "Things that Live in the Forest".

We will offer two nationally acclaimed Ties To The Land Workshops in association with the Montana Association of Land Trusts. This is our second year of these workshop on succession planning or "who ends up with the property". The first workshop will be held in Bozeman on April 23 and second in Helena on April 25. For more information on these workshops contact me at televert@kvis.net.

Twice a year we publish the Forest Steward's Journal, which goes to over 1400 landowners, etc. For those of you who are not afraid of Facebook, you will find a multitude of information about natural resource management on our new site. You can access this site by typing in "Montana Forest Stewardship Foundation" in the top "search" box.

How do we do all of this with only a handful of volunteer board members? We do it through your help with a \$25 year membership, donations and other support. Please consider joining our foundation by mailing your request to the Forest Stewardship Foundation; PO Box 1056; Libby, MT 59923.

Ties To The Land

By: Ed Levert

If you missed attending one of the two Ties To The Land Workshops on succession planning in 2014 you will get another chance this spring. One of the biggest hazards to good forest land stewardship is the fact that many of these properties end up getting sub-divided, sold off to new owners who have no interest in good stewardship or simply split up among family members who may care less about the property. Don't let this be your legacy.

Under the expert tutelage of Kirk and Madeline David landowners will learn how to take those first steps toward passing on their property. The one day workshop uses the workbooks and video developed by Tree Farm and Oregon State University.

Here is what one of last year's attendees, Klare Matthew had to say about the workshop. "The strategies we learned in this workshop give us a great starting point to develop a plan with our family and make sure that everyone feels like their opinions are heard. We had a great experience at the Ties To The Land Workshop and left with the motivation to start planning for the future."



Kirk and Madeline David facilitating the 2014 Ties To The Land workshop.

Mark your Calendar for the 2015 Forest Landowner Conference

By: Ed Levert

The 2015 Forest Landowner Conference has been scheduled for Friday, April 24th in Helena at the Red Lion Colonial Inn. The theme for this year's conference is *"Things that Live in the Forest"*. You've probably heard the saying "can't see the forest for the trees". In reality there is a lot of truth to that statement. Recognizing and appreciating all of the flora and fauna present in the forest environment is part of the fun we experience when out in the woods. It can take a lifetime to develop the skills and knowledge to truly "see the forest". Developing a better understanding how various species interact with the forest environment and each other also helps us to manage the forest in a way that benefits a diversity of plants and animals.

Expert speakers at the conference this year will include botanists, wildlife biologists, and other natural resource specialists who will speak about the diverse array of wildlife, plants, and animals that inhabit Montana forest landscapes. You will develop a heightened awareness of things that you may not be currently seeing in the woods. In addition we plan to cover some of the long-time favorite subjects such as timber markets and preparing for a timber sale. Look forward to seeing you in Helena!



2015 MONTANA FOREST LANDOWNER CONFERENCE

"Things That Live in the Forest"



Red Lion Colonial Hotel, 2301 Colonial Drive, Helena, MT

Friday, April 24, 2015

One day seminar, includes lunch: Cost \$35/person

Conference Topics and Invited Speakers include:

- Managing for Biodiversity on the Forest Landscape
Jon Haufler, Executive Director, Ecosystem Management Research Institute
- What Critters Might be Living in Your Forest?, Amphibians, Reptiles and Bats
Bryce Maxwell, Zoologist, Montana Natural Heritage Program
- People Living in the Forest, Firewise Landscaping Around Your Forest Home
Angela Mallon, MT DNRC
- Sharing your Forest Home with Wildlife
Russell Palmo, Defenders of Wildlife
- The History of Filming Wildlife in Montana
Mike Grunett (MT FWP retired)
- Managing for Things That Live in the Forest, Habitat Management on the Mount Haggin Wildlife Management Area
Vanna Boccadori, Wildlife Biologist, MT FWP

Continued on page 21

- Ponderosa Pine: People, Fire and the West's Most Iconic Tree

Stephen Arno & Carl Fiedler, Authors

- Wood Product Markets and Preparing for a Profitable Timber Sale, Who is Buying Wood and What Are They Paying?

Todd Morgan, University of Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research

- Fundamentals of Timber Sale Preparation

Jared Richardson, Forester, Northwest Management, Inc.

Program by: Montana Forest Stewardship Foundation and Northwest Management, Inc.

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Montana's Forest Products Industry: 2014 Conditions and Outlook for 2015

By: Todd A. Morgan and Steven W. Hayes

University of Montana's Bureau of Business and Economic Research

While new home starts in the U.S. continued their gradual increases, the gains were less than anticipated, and that took some of the momentum out of the forest products industry's advances of the past few years. For Montana's industry, 2014 brought mixed results. Lumber production was estimated to be about 5 percent higher in 2014 than 2013, marking the fifth consecutive year of production increases from the record low during 2009. Several log home manufacturers also indicated increased orders and production. Production levels of panel products (plywood, particleboard, and MDF) were estimated to be down from 2013. Total sales value from Montana's forest products industry was estimated to have increased very slightly from 2013, with gains in lumber and log homes.

Wages paid to mill workers were estimated to be higher than in 2013, but income among forest workers was estimated to be down slightly. Total forest industry employment in Montana during 2014 was estimated to be about 7,660 workers, increasing less than 1 percent from 2013. The number of production workers at Montana wood products facilities was estimated to have increased during 2014, with almost 40 percent of wood products facilities indicating they increased their workforce during 2014 but nearly one-quarter indicating a reduced number of employees. Montana's in-woods employment levels were estimated to be down slightly from 2013, due in large part to a decline in timber harvest.

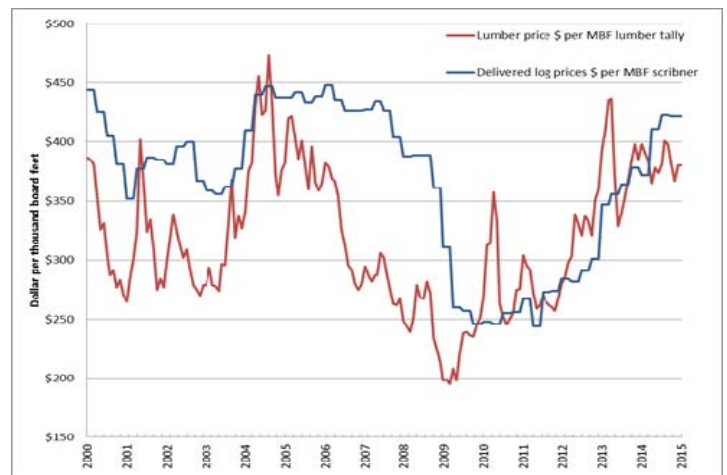
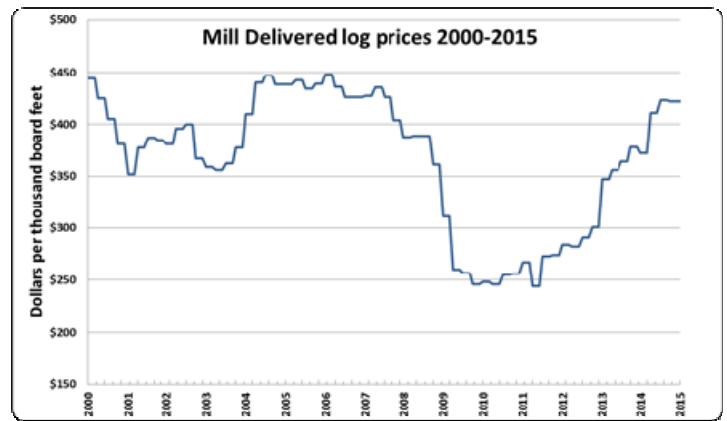
Montana's total timber harvest volume during 2014 was an estimated 348 million board feet (MMBF) Scribner, having dropped about 8 percent from 2013 and just 7.5 percent above the 2009 record low of 323 MMBF. Harvest was estimated to have declined across all the public owners (state, BLM, and Forest Service) and Tribal lands, while private lands harvest was estimated to have increased somewhat.

As wood product prices and the volume of products being demanded have increased over the past four years, Montana's forest industry has been challenged by very low timber harvest levels. Delivered log prices in Montana have been increasing, rising almost 50 percent since 2011, as mills have tried to procure more timber to capitalize on stronger product markets. Current log markets are good for Montana forest owners that want to sell timber.

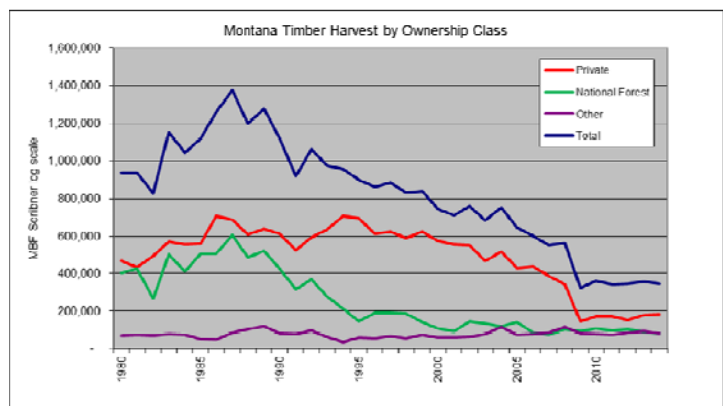
Looking forward, wood products markets in 2015 are expected to improve. Continued increases in U.S. housing starts are projected, although getting back to the long-term average of 1.4 to 1.5 million new home starts annually is still anticipated to be one to two years away. In addition to housing, several factors are expected to benefit domestic wood product manufacturers in the coming year: reduced timber harvest and lumber production in western Canada resulting from the mountain pine beetle epidemic; continued overseas demand for logs, lumber, wood pellets, and other products; increasing public recognition that wood products are sustainable, renewable, and have significant carbon benefits relative to many other materials; and a U.S. Congress favoring increased use of domestic natural resources.

All these factors should benefit Montana's forest industry and forest landowners. Most Montana mills are operating at less than full

capacity and, with an adequate supply of timber, can increase production to meet market demand. As in previous years, availability of timber continues to be a major challenge to Montana's forest industry. Most of the timber-processing facilities in Montana have indicated that raw material availability – log supply – was a major issue that affected their plant in 2014 and will impact them in 2015. Log prices could continue to increase during 2015. Visit BBER's web site for more information. (<http://www.bber.umt.edu/FIR/default.asp>)



Quarterly Lumber prices and Delivered log prices 2000-2015
(Source: Random Lengths, BBER)



(Source: USFS Region 1, Montana DNRC, BBER)

Montana's Fire-Dependent Forest: Lessons for Landowners

By: Steve Arno, Family Forest Owner since 1971, and retired USFS research forester

Forest fire scientist Bob Mutch, whose experience spans six decades, tells forest landowners, "The question isn't if your land will burn; instead it is when and how will your land burn." Investigations of pre-1900 fire history in forests all across Montana reveal that stands on all but the wettest sites at high elevations were shaped over thousands of years by fires. As a result fire-dependent forest ecosystems composed of fire-adapted species dominated the forest landscape.

However, by the early 1900s for a variety of reasons government forestry and society in general embraced a policy aimed at eliminating fire in the forest. For several decades efforts to greatly reduce the impact of forest fires seemed to work. From the early 1930s through 1982 the total area burned each year in the eleven contiguous western states was consistently less than 1.5 million acres, and was always less than the average area burned during earlier years. This success was aided by improvements in fire prevention, detection, communication, firefighting mobilization, equipment, and other technology. Then an astounding reversal took place. Since 1983 the annual extent of western wildfires has averaged more than 1.5 million acres, and many years have produced wildfires totaling more than 3 million acres. Moreover, this proliferation of uncontrollable fires has occurred despite continuing improvements in dispatching firefighters, better equipment and technology, and substantially greater expenditures. Principal factors in the burgeoning impact of wildfires include accumulation of forest fuels, warmer weather and drought, and the vast increase in homes imbedded in the forest that diverts firefighting resources to home protection.

Amidst this troublesome trend there is a ray of hope for individuals who own forestland and forest homes: Relatively simple measures in management of forest fuels can greatly reduce the risk of severe fire damage. Most forest residents have heard about things they can do to help protect their home from wildfire. Landowners can also help increase the odds that their forest will survive or sustain only limited fire damage. The following are a few tips:

1. Safe access roads to the property may make the difference in whether firefighters are willing to enter. Trees should not overhang or encroach on single-lane roads, clearance should be ample around curves, and pullouts should allow vehicles to pass each other.

Turnarounds should be large enough to accommodate fire engines. A thinned-out roadside corridor is helpful.

2. Ponds, water-holes in streams or irrigation ditches, and other water sources accessible for re-filling a pumper truck can be very useful.

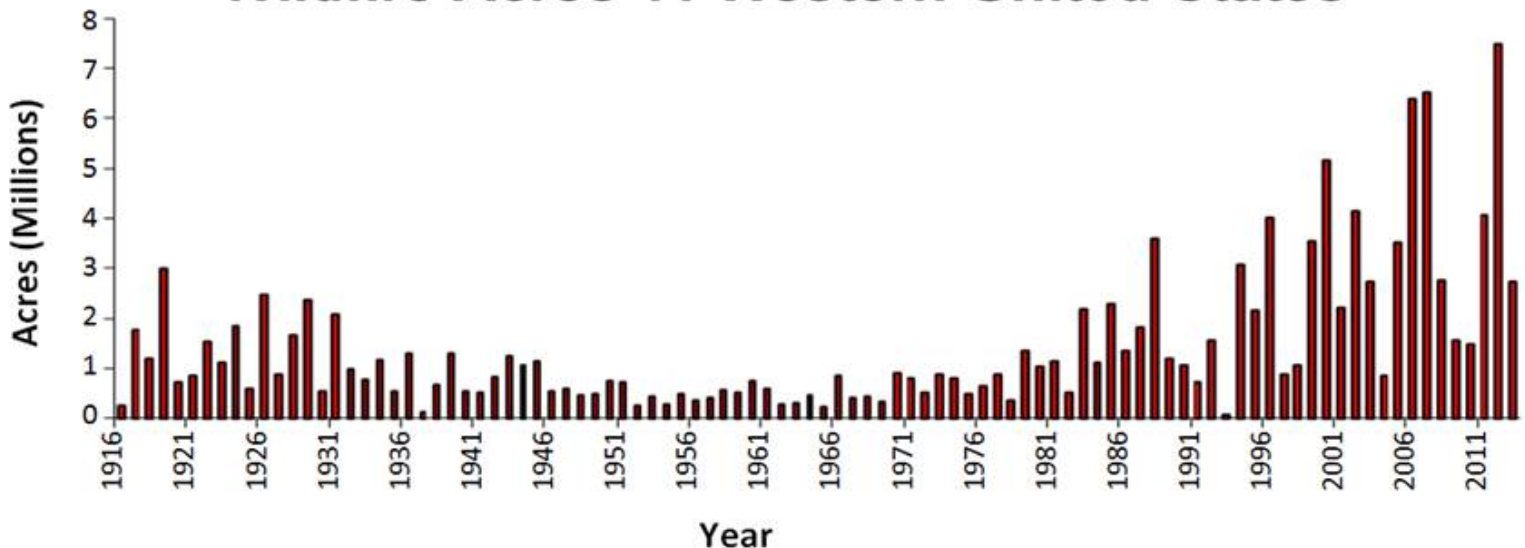
3. The forest itself and at least a broad strip of it along a protection road should be thinned so that tree crowns are well separated and few understory trees or thickets would allow flames to torch and climb into the forest canopy and create a crown fire.

4. Thinning should be accompanied by cleaning up the slash, usually accomplished by utilizing small stems for pulpwood, hog fuel for some sort of energy plant, or firewood. Branches are usually piled and burned in a safe season or are chipped.

5. Landowners who live on their forest property may benefit from having some basic equipment for controlling small fires, such as flames that escape from burn piles. A firefighter's 5-gallon backpack pump can be kept full and ready for immediate use during the fire season. An ATV mounted water tank with pump and hose, or a 200+ gallon poly tank and pump on a 4-wheel-drive pickup truck can help subdue a fire while it is still small.

The long history of fire suppression in the western U.S. makes it abundantly clear that modern firefighting technology alone cannot protect forests from damaging wildfires. In dozens of examples throughout the West crown fires raging through a dense forest encountered a tract that was well thinned and cleared of slash. At that point the fires dropped to the ground and burned with low to moderate flames. Reduced fire intensity greatly aids suppression efforts. Even without suppression the reduced intensity allowed fire resistant species such as Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, and larch to survive. Even thin-barked lodgepole pine sometimes survived. Meanwhile the adjacent dense forest was turned into a charred mass of snags often with damaged soil and a pressing problem for the landowner. He would likely arrange for a salvage harvest, at greatly reduced timber value, and live with the remaining abundance of nonmerchantable, but hazardous snags. Fortunately active management of stand density and forest fuels can avoid this latter scenario.

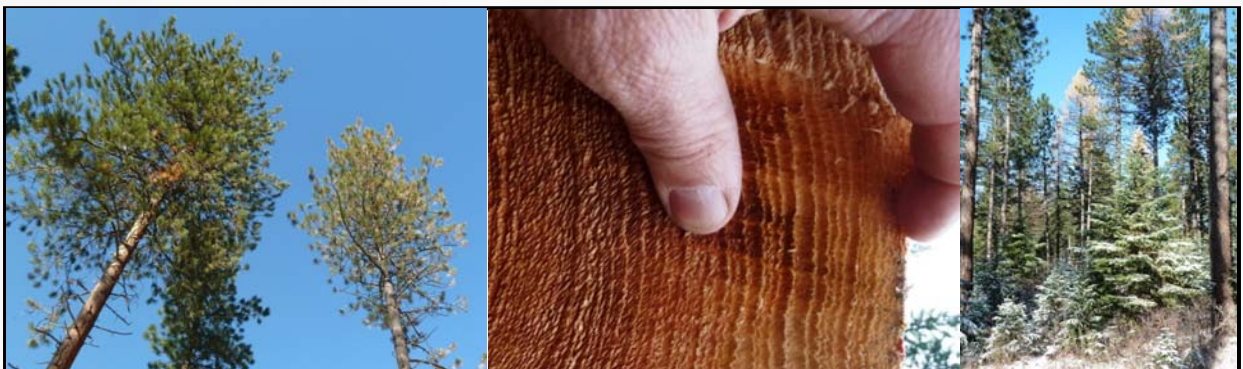
Wildfire Acres 11 Western United States



Graph provided by Charles McHugh, Missoula Fire Sciences Lab, USFS.



Same picture as front cover after harvest. Approximately one truckload of high value logs (4500 bdf) per 2 acres was removed. Selective marking was used to remove trees that had weaker crowns with some bias against Douglas-fir and for western larch. Improving overall vigor, retaining aesthetic value, maintaining resilience to wildfire, increasing larch and pine regeneration, and generating revenue were all landowner objectives.



Left picture shows a vigorous crown (left) with good needle retention versus a stressed crown (right) with declining needle retention (branch ends start to look like Q-tips). Tree cores or cross sections (center) show growth rates increased following first thinning 18 years prior and once again slowed down in recent years, indicating water stress. Regeneration (right) is dominated by Douglas-fir with sparse larch and pine, indicating more light is needed to the soil surface as well as some soil surface scarification to allow for larch and pine regeneration.