

September 2011 Forestry Tour

The Conservation District along with the Blue Mountain Chapter of the Washington Farm Forestry Association held a forestry tour in Anatone, WA on the 17th of September. Good tour, good attendance, everyone got some of their questions answered, and nobody got stung by all the bees that joined us for lunch. Thank you all for attending.

Special thanks to Jay and Tana Holzmilller for hosting the event at their home and on their tree farm. Ed and Elaine Nagle, Bob and Carol Druffel, and Dick and Della Allen also took the time to show us their projects. The tour's purpose is to acknowledge the good forestry work these folks have done on their forest land and to learn by seeing and through discussions. Need to thank Susan Kelly and Tom Beechinor from WFFA for their help and inviting the folks from Columbia and Garfield Counties to attend. One more thank you to the Asotin FFA students and Glen Landrus for bar-b-queing lunch under adverse yellow jacket conditions that most adults would have run for cover from.

First stop after "good" coffee and donuts was the Druffel Pine thinning that was done last year with a cost share from the NRCS. Before thinning, this stand was suffering heavy mortality from bark beetles and gall rust. One year later there were no dying trees, grass production increased and the stand was grazed this year. Kevin Bott, our expert guest star for this year's tour pointed out that this is a nice fit for this habitat type, growing trees and grass underneath for grazing.

Ed and Elaine Nagles' Ponderosa Pine thinning project which was done with a DNR cost share was our next stop. The thinning job looked great but what we got to see here was how to deal more efficiently with the labor intense job of disposing of slash. Ed showed us his new Kubota Wheel Tractor that he modified with a brush rake for piling on the front and log grapples on the rear. The tractor enabled him to market the small logs from thinning for pulp.



Went up the road to Dick and Della Allen's beautiful log home. Dick and Della had Firewised the immediate area around their home but were concerned a crown fire in the wooded area still threatened the home. With the aid of a DNR cost share they thinned, pruned, removed dead trees, and chipped ground fuels on five acres, so that fire when it comes, hopefully stays on the ground, and the trees and the house survive.

Last stop was Jay and Tanas' tree farm for bar-b-que lunch, forest management talk, and an equipment demonstration. Kevin Bott, a forestry consultant from Pomeroy, and our guest speaker talked about the steps he and Jay went thru writing a plan for 400 acres of forest ground. When you own a fair size chunk of ground it is important to have a plan in place. Jay used DNR cost share to have Kevin write his plan that he is "plum tickled with." The DNR will cost share management plans for owners of twenty acres or more of timber ground. Jay demonstrated his mini excavator with a power pruner and brush piling buckets attached. He also showed his pull-thru delimeter that makes limbing the logs faster than with a chainsaw. These tools cut the labor time and let you market small diameter wood for fiber just as the Nagles have done. That was the take home message of the day. See what other folks are doing on these small jobs to make them more efficient.

