



The Quarterly Bark

Volume 33 | Issue 4

October 2026

Stay in the Statewide Loop

Mike and Mary are working to keep OSWA members informed through monthly electronic newsletters. Watch your email in-box! For now, the newsletters are not being snail-mailed. Postage is simply too expensive, and OSWA has not set up advertising to support a printed newsletter. If you know members who don't use email, please share what you read with them.

If you miss a newsletter—or cleaned out your inbox too enthusiastically—they are also available on the oswa.org website in dropdown (second on the list!) from the Resources menu tab. The website keeps improving and adding information (like a Forestry Professionals list on the Resources Page), so if you haven't been there in awhile, it could be worth a visit, whether you missed a newsletter or not!

In Case You Missed It

Interested in Traveling with OSWA?

OSWA has a history of organizing trips that combine learning, fellowship, and fun. Over the years, members have traveled throughout the United States and internationally to meet fellow woodland owners and forestry professionals, tour forests and wood products facilities, experience local culture, and enjoy great food and memorable adventures along the way.

We're interested in bringing this tradition back.

Whether it's exploring another region of the United States—perhaps the East Coast—or traveling internationally, no decisions have been made yet. Before we begin planning, we'd like to know if this is something our members would enjoy.

If you'd like to be part of the conversation, we'd love to hear from you! At this stage, we're simply gauging interest—there's no commitment required. If enough members respond, we'll work together to explore possible destinations, travel dates, trip styles, and what would make the experience most valuable and enjoyable for everyone.

If this sounds like an adventure you'd enjoy, let Mike(mike@oswa.org) or Mary (mary@oswa.org) know!

Show your OSWA pride

Visit the OSWA online store & wear your love for Oregon's forests: bonfire.com/store/oswa-swag/

In this Issue

General News & Notes

An array of updates, announcements and reflections from OSWA, partners & friends
OTFS | OFRI | OSU | ODF

Benton County

Lane County

Lincoln County

Linn County



Published quarterly, in January, April, July, and October, *The Quarterly Bark* is a joint venture of the Benton, Lane, Lincoln and Linn County Chapters of the Oregon Small Woodlands Association.

Editor: Kate McMichael

To offer contributions to an upcoming edition, please contact: quarterly.bark.23@gmail.com

Mike Cafferata

Founded in 2004, FFO is organized as a 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit, which means it is eligible to receive grants, donations, and planned giving contributions to support its work. The key distinction between OSWA and Family Forests of Oregon lies in their respective nonprofit classifications and purposes.

- FFO can access a broader range of grants and donation opportunities that are not available to OSWA to promote family forest landowner management. For example, The Weyerhaeuser Giving Fund granted FFO resources to support reforestation education. These resources will be used to support local OSWA chapter efforts to host reforestation education events in the coming year.

OSWA continues its “Sharpen Our Edge” Campaign (for members to contribute above and beyond membership

Other OSWA programs that have 501(c)(3) status include the OSWA sub-fund of the Oregon Natural Resources Education Fund (high school education) and the OSWA OSU Forestry Scholarships (college scholarships).

Farther afield, our 501(c)(3) friends in the community offer a range of opportunities to support forestry – Oregon Women In Timber, Forests Forever, Pacific Forest Trust, Forest Stewards Guild, Sustainable Northwest, Oregon Natural Resources Education Fund, among many others.



The Family Forests of Oregon board will be working to identify opportunities where FFO can promote family forest ownership and augment OSWA's education efforts. If you have an interest in promoting family forest ownership and management, either through a contribution or joining the board, contact a current member for opportunities. Current board members are: Ken Nygren, President; Suzi Armstrong, Treasurer; Vic Herinckx; Greg Fox; Connie Battles; Gordon Culbertson, Rick Spring and Kate McMichael.

Contributions can be mailed directly to the Family Forests of Oregon at 187 High Street NE, Salem, OR 97301.

Celebrate TREES!

2026

OTFS Annual Members Meeting

speakers | lunch | recognitions & awards

November 14 | 8:30am-2:00pm

The Oregon Garden | Silverton



**please register by
November 6**



OTFSAnnual2026.eventbrite.com

Highlights include

Keynote speaker: Kacey KC, Oregon State Forester

Celebrated Trees: Oregon Ash, Coast Redwood, Incense Cedar & Oregon White Oak

ATFS News

Business Meeting: membership vote on updated By-laws

Recognitions including: County Tree Famers of the Year from Clackamas, Columbia, Lane, Linn and Yamhill Counties

For more info and tickets: OTFSAnnual2026.eventbrite.com

Trees, Timing & Timber Sales

What Conversations to Have with Your Logger

Margaret Miller | Forest Landowner Education Manager | OFRI

For many landowners, the idea of harvesting timber can feel overwhelming. Sometimes the decision comes up because an opportunity presents itself — a log buyer stops by, a neighboring property is being logged, or a life event is approaching when additional income could be helpful — and you may feel like you're winging it. Whatever the reason, it can be difficult to know whether the timing is right or whether you're getting a good deal. If you don't follow timber markets every day, you're certainly not alone!

It can be tempting to begin by asking, "What are my trees worth?" This is an important question, but the value of the wood is just one part of the financial picture. Access to the harvest area, road conditions, the amount of rock or road work needed, logging costs and hauling distances can all affect how logging contracts are negotiated and what a landowner ultimately receives.

There are also costs and decisions that occur well after the last load of logs leaves the property. Slash management, site preparation, reforestation and follow-up vegetation management should be considered when evaluating a harvest's overall financial return. Understanding these costs and who will be responsible for each part of the work can help prevent surprises later.

Who should be at the table?

A logger or timber buyer may be the person who first approaches you about a harvest, but they shouldn't be your only source of information. This is particularly true if you've received an unsolicited offer for your timber; an offer isn't necessarily a bad opportunity, but it's important to understand what you have, what it may be worth and what you're agreeing to before making a decision.

A consulting forester can help you evaluate your stand, clarify your management objectives, estimate timber volume and value, understand current markets, solicit bids or proposals, and develop a timber sale agreement that reflects your goals. To learn more about consulting foresters and find one in your area, visit the Partnership

for Forestry Education's [KnowYourForest.org](https://www.knowyourforest.org) website for information and direct links to professional organizations such as the Society of American Foresters and the Association of Consulting Foresters. You can also ask fellow OSWA members about their experiences working with consulting foresters and who they might recommend.

The logger you select is another important part of the team. Loggers understand the business, including equipment, access, operating conditions and the practical realities of getting timber from the woods to the mill. Professional loggers also receive ongoing education in areas such as Oregon's forest practice requirements, environmental protections and efficient logging techniques. Learn more and find a professional logger using AOL's Oregon Professional Loggers Directory at oregonloggers.org/page/OPLDirectory#OPLDirectories.

In addition to your consulting forester and logger, your local OSU Extension forester and ODF stewardship forester can be valuable resources. OSU Extension can provide education and technical information to help you better understand your management options, while ODF can provide guidance on forest practice requirements, stewardship resources and other programs that may apply to your property. Both can also help connect you with local resources and professionals. The goal isn't to become an expert in all of these areas yourself. It's to have the right people involved and know enough to ask good questions.

Why your neighbor's timber check may not tell you much about yours

It's easy to hear what someone else received for their timber and use that as a benchmark. But even two properties next door to each other can produce very different results. Species, tree size, log quality and the products that can be manufactured from those trees all influence value. So do factors outside the stand: Where and when will the logs be delivered? How far

away is the mill? What products are mills currently buying? How difficult is the ground to log? Can trucks easily access the property?

The operator you choose and their logging system matter, too. Different loggers have different equipment, markets and ways of approaching a job. They may also have established relationships with particular mills, log buyers and other markets that can influence the options available for your timber. One logger may have a good market for a particular species or product that another does not. Even the way a log is bucked can influence its market and value, since logs may be cut to different lengths and sorted differently depending on where they're headed.

Rather than focusing only on a price per thousand board feet (MBF), ask questions: Where are you expecting these logs to go? What products do you expect to get out of my trees? How will the logs be measured? What expenses come out before I'm paid? What work is included in the agreement?

It's also important to understand how you will be paid. Many mills offer split payments, which allow the landowner to receive their portion of the log proceeds directly from the mill rather than having the full payment pass through the logger or landowner. Other payment arrangements may also be used, so ask how payments will be handled and when you should expect to receive them. Ask what documentation you will receive, such as mill tickets, scale tickets, or receipts, so you can verify the volume or weight delivered, the price paid, and how your payment was calculated.

If you hear something you don't understand, ask questions. Understanding what the operator is proposing is more important than knowing all the terminology beforehand.

Think about the whole operation

Before equipment arrives, think and talk through what needs to happen before, during and after the harvest. In Oregon, a harvest will likely require a Notification of Operation through ODF's Forest Activity Electronic Reporting and Notification System, better known as FERNs. Talk with your forester or logger about who will submit the notification and what activities it covers.

Some topics to address include: Do roads need improvement or additional rock? Where will the landing be? How will slash be handled? Am I allowed to pile-burn in my area? If reforestation is needed, when will site preparation and planting occur? (Some work is easier and less expensive to accomplish while logging equipment is already on-site!)

Asking questions helps ensure that your operator is a good fit for your property and objectives. Ask about their equipment and experience with similar harvests. Reach out to other small woodland owners for references. Then, ensure you have a written agreement that clearly outlines what will be harvested, how payment will be structured, and how roads, slash, cleanup and other responsibilities will be handled. Price matters, but so does your overall experience and having a shared understanding of what the property should look like when the job is finished.



Keep in mind that a recently harvested forest does not need to look perfectly clean and tidy. Some disturbance and down wood can benefit the forest, and even newly

planted seedlings can benefit from some protection from intense sun and dry conditions. I digress and can save that discussion for another newsletter but remember that healthy forests can serve a variety of objectives and don't always have to look tidy!

Learn more and see the process in action

You don't need to be an expert in timber markets before selling timber. Recruit the right people, have a good contract in place and ask questions when you hear something you don't understand. Curious about what should be included in a logging contract, or looking for more information about planning a timber harvest, working with forestry professionals and selling timber? Visit [KnowYourForest.org](https://www.knowyourforest.org). On the Logging and Selling Timber page, there's an entire section dedicated to

"Things to consider before you conduct a timber harvest."

As I work to prepare for upcoming forest management activities in the Rediscovery Forest at The Oregon Garden, I'm having many of these conversations myself. Before harvesting begins, OFRI and our partners will be working through questions about access, roads, logging operations, slash, reforestation and what we want the forest to look like in the future.

As that work moves forward, we're planning opportunities for woodland owners to see portions of the process firsthand. Watch the OSWA and [KnowYourForest.org](https://www.knowyourforest.org) event pages for more details. As always, here's to growing our knowledge as we grow our forests!

Other OFRI News of Note

A New Publication & a New Hire

A new report commissioned by the Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) synthesizes and interprets the most recent data and research related to Oregon's forest resources and the economic contributions of the state's forest sector, revealing that it not only remains a source of jobs for tens of thousands of Oregonians, accounting for about 4% of state employment, but also makes up 4% of Oregon's gross domestic product.



In addition to the 85-page 2026 Forest Report, OFRI has published Oregon's Forest Economy, a 16-page booklet that summarizes key points from the longer report and features a series of interviews with the lead report author, the president of an Oregon-based mass timber company, and an economist from the Oregon Office of Economic Analysis. The full and summary reports can be downloaded at [TheForestReport.org](https://www.theforestreport.org). Free printed copies of both reports are also available to order from the publication library on OFRI's main website, [OregonForests.org](https://www.OregonForests.org).

Additionally, OFRI has hired a new director of business operations: Angela Handran. Handran, who officially joined the Institute's staff on July 15, brings more than 12 years of public sector leadership experience in business operations, policy implementation and organizational management to the position. As director of business operations, she will direct OFRI's office administration and support its executive director, staff and board of directors in the development of programs and projects to carry out the Institute's mission and objectives.



Raised in Coos Bay and a fourth-generation Oregonian, Handran has a lifelong appreciation for Oregon's forests and outdoor spaces and is excited to support OFRI's mission. She is filling a position left vacant following the retirement of the former director of business operations, Kathy Storm, who worked for more than 20 years at the Institute.

Fall Bird Migration in Oregon's Forests

By Jon Cox, Cafferata Consulting

The winding down of summer in the northern hemisphere means wildlife will soon be on the move in a big way. Having completed their seasonal mission to breed and raise young in the Pacific Northwest or sunny far-north during spring and summer, many bird species will be making the journey south to winter habitats, sometimes traveling thousands of miles. This phenomenon will involve **billions of individual birds** over several months, with millions of them traveling through the skies simultaneously each night. Occasionally, nightly bird movements can even **top 1 billion individuals!**

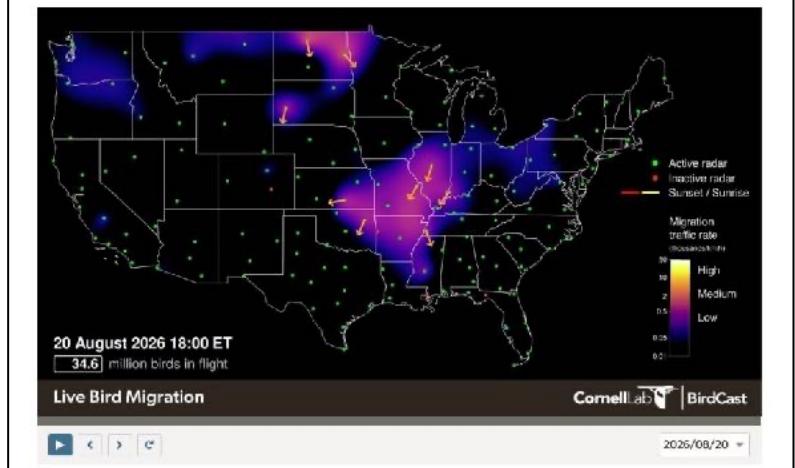
How and why do birds migrate?

Migration is a perilous endeavor that can push birds to their limits and beyond. Predators, storms, exhaustion and a myriad of anthropogenic dangers **claim the lives of billions of migrating birds** each year. So why do it? In short, it is because birds evolved to seek better conditions in different places at different times of year, and the risk is worth the reward. By moving south and closer to the equator in winter, birds can avoid the seasonal slowdown of the north and take advantage of abundant daylight, as well as plant and insect life. Returning north in spring for breeding means the timing is just right for emerging insects and budding plants, with plenty of space for nesting and fewer predators than in the tropics. Similarly, birds that travel to the far-north in spring are fueled by incredible amounts of daylight, can make use of vast expanses for nesting, and feed on a brief, but intense, seasonal burst of plants and insects.



For a deeper dive into the details of bird migration, see the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's **All About Birds website**.

Live Maps



The Pacific Flyway

Oregon lies within the Pacific Flyway, one of North America's four major bird migration routes. This route is used as a highway connecting the far-north Arctic region of eastern Russia and Alaska to sites as far south as Patagonia in South America, and everything in between.

When does migration happen?

Migration can generally be observed during two seasons in Oregon: spring and fall. Spring migration produces summer migrants, which are those species that begin arriving in Oregon as early as February to breed, nest and raise their young, only to leave again in late summer and early fall. Arrival dates **vary by species**.



Winter migrants are birds that breed elsewhere but return to Oregon in the fall to spend their winters here. Winter migrants include many species of waterfowl and shorebirds, as well as raptors and sparrows. Many of Oregon's familiar winter waterfowl species spend

summers breeding on sunny arctic tundra, then migrate south to wait out winter in milder climates.

What can we do to help migratory birds?

Here are several ways you can help migratory birds this fall and in the future:

Reduce light pollution

Bright lights are known to disorient birds as they complete their nocturnal migration flights. By turning off nonessential outdoor lights overnight during peak migration times, we can reduce our impacts on migratory birds (and save a few dollars on our electric bills, too). For more information, see the Bird Alliance of Oregon’s [Lights Out webpage](#).

Reduce collisions

Glass is essentially invisible to birds, making buildings with large windows a major threat during migration, especially when coupled with disorientation from light pollution. A 2024 study estimated that about 60% of all

Examples of summer migrant birds associated with Oregon's forests
Turkey vulture
Osprey
Western tanager
Purple martin
Violet-green swallow
Western wood pewee
Black-headed grosbeak
Swainson's thrush
Hermit warbler
Olive-sided flycatcher
Common nighthawk
Rufous hummingbird

building collisions resulted in fatality, even accounting for wildlife rehabbers attempting to treat many birds that survive the initial collision. In total, the study suggests that over 1 billion birds die from building collisions annually in the United States alone. Fortunately, there are many approachable methods for helping birds avoid these deadly collisions, including many options for window treatment. For additional info, see [All About Birds’ webpage on how to prevent window collisions](#).

Species Spotlight: Western purple martin (*Progne subis arboricola*)

The western purple martin is a summer migrant to Oregon, foraging and breeding mainly west of the Cascades from about March till October. To get here, these large swallows travel up to 8,000 miles from parts of South America, mainly Brazil. Purple martins are [linked to Oregon’s forests](#) by the fact that they nest in snags — often near water, but also in upland forest habitats. Land managers and small forest landowners can make an impact for purple martin and other cavity-nesters by maintaining the presence of snags in woodlands or by setting up nest boxes, like this one:



Be stewards of migratory bird habitat

Migratory birds may only spend part of their time in Oregon, but whether they arrive in spring or fall, or are just making a brief stop, having good habitat waiting for them is crucial to their survival. To learn more about creating and maintaining forest habitat for birds and other wildlife, see the Oregon Forest Resources Institute's [Oregon Forests as Habitat](#) and/or [Early Seral-Associated Songbirds](#) publications, which are free to download or order in print, and browse their [publication library](#) for more ideas.



The Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) supports the forest sector and the stewardship of natural resources by advancing Oregonians' understanding of the social, environmental and economic benefits of our forests. Learn more about OFRI and order or download its free educational publications at the Institute's website, [OregonForests.org](https://oregonforests.org).

Her Memory will be a blessing



The Oregon woodland community lost one of its dedicated champions and fellow travelers on September 5, 2026 with the passing of Anne Doneen Hanschu.

For many years Anne served in multiple capacities, with her involvement spanning from the Oregon Small Woodlands Association to the Oregon Tree Farm System to the Oregon Forest Resources Institute.

In the words of her obituary: "Her greatest joy was watching her family and the trees grow. There was no other place she wanted to be but in the woods with the trees and if camping was included, the better. She was a special lady and will be sorely missed by all."

A funeral Mass was held on September 17 at the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church in Forest Grove.

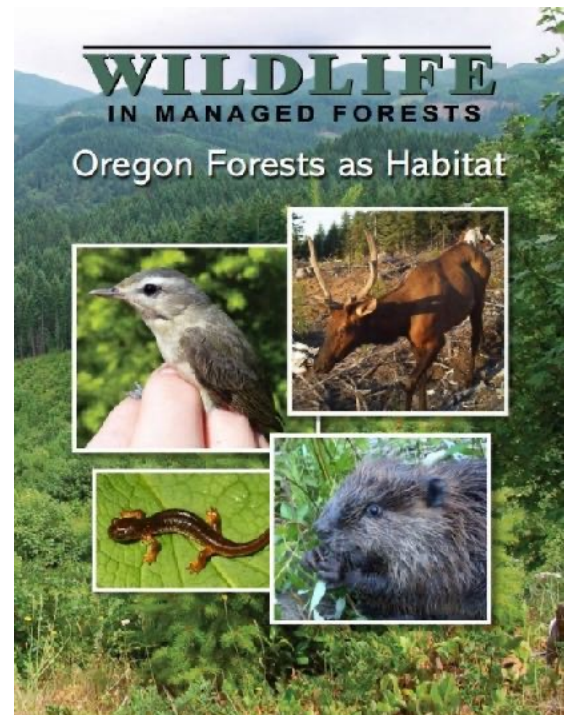
Keeping up with migration

These days, we have many incredible tools at our fingertips, including resources for learning about bird migrations and even tracking them in real time. Explore some of these resources if you're still curious about bird migration. You won't regret it!

Live bird migration maps: <https://birdcast.org/migration-tools/live-migration-maps/>

Migration Dashboard: <https://dashboard.birdcast.org/>

Bird Migration Explorer: <https://explorer.audubon.org>



Put Up Signs to Show the Public What We Do!

Wylda Cafferata

“The general public gets their impressions of forest management from what they see out of their car windows.” I can’t remember where I heard that, but it rings true to me. I could wish such impressions came from informed reading, or attending OSWA workshops, or visiting Knowyourforest.org, or other reliable sources, but given so many misconceptions of how forests are managed, public *misperception* of small woodland owners’ dedication to sustainable forestry is widespread. A group of OSWA members has formed a Public Perception Working Group to discuss how to influence public perception of what we do. We welcome other interested OSWA members to join us. Email Executive Director Mike Cafferata at mike@oswa.org for zoom invitations to the next meeting. Generally they are held by Zoom at 7 AM on the 4th Wednesday of each month.

One topic discussed at the last few Public Perception meetings was the lack of understanding the general public has of what they see out their car windows. For example, Steve Cafferata once led a tour for some visiting dignitaries, and as they were driving along a forest road, someone asked why the acreage they were driving through had not been replanted after a recent clearcut. To a woodland owner’s eye, it clearly had been; twelve-inch Douglas fir seedlings dotted the hillside as far as the eye could see. Steve, bless him, brought the tour bus to a screeching halt, directed everyone out and handed each a roll of ribbon with the instructions to tie a ribbon to every young tree they could find. Soon the hillside was a mass of ribbons waving in the wind. As another example, in a book by a



well-respected OSU professor, the author states that just driving Highway 126 to the coast proves how unsustainable Oregon’s forest practices are, since the land is a mass of clearcuts with no replanting. Our Public Perception Group realized we cannot stop cars and hand passengers rolls of ribbon. However, we decided we could put up more signs showing what we do. We agreed to all look for such signs before the next meeting.



We all thought putting up signs was a good idea. People could look out their windows and get positive impressions of forest management. Yes! But then I started to really look at signs out my car window. On a recent trip driving from Mapleton to Veneta, I counted 97 signs, which I divided into four categories:

Advertising signs; Legal signs (speed limits, etc.); road directions (road narrows etc.); and Informational signs. I did another count from Veneta to Eugene’s city limits. I counted another 79 but

may have missed some because there were so many. Here are the results:

Type of Sign	Mapleton to Veneta	Veneta to Eugene
Advertising Signs	7%	44%
Legal Signs	32%	12%
Road Directions	57%	40%
Informational Signs	4%	4%

With such a welter of signs, informational signs were lost in the shuffle, and, of course, only a few of the informational signs pertained to forest management. If putting up signs to show good forest management is part of an answer to informing the public about what we do, clearly, we need more signs. OSWA has small signs announcing the dates logged and planted. Contact mike@oswa.org for information on how to get these. And particularly if your forest land lies along a well-traveled highway, OFRI (Oregon Forest Resources Institute) has larger signs available free of charge. Here's a link to order one: knowyourforest.org/request-signage-form.



Changing public perceptions is a long-term proposition, but if we all do what we can, bit by bit, person by person, perception by perception, progress can be made. Let's do it! Let's put up these signs!

Making Woodland Wreaths: A Creative Way to Celebrate Your Forest

**Sarah Cameron | Women Owning Woodlands (WOWNet) Coordinator
OSU Extension Service**

As autumn settles in, your woodland offers an abundance of evergreen textures, seasonal accents, and understory materials. It's a time of year when many landowners notice subtle changes in their forest, and an opportunity to harvest and celebrate those elements through a creative and hands-on activity. One simple approach is making a decorative wreath using materials gathered from your own property.

The tools you'll need:

Hand pruners for clipping boughs and stems, a wire wreath frame (8-14"), and floral wire paddle (22-24 gauge)

Basic steps to make a wreath:

- 1) Gather materials from your forest, including evergreen boughs (Douglas-fir and western redcedar are common choices) and decorative accents



such as cones and berries

a. Learn more about harvesting evergreen boughs from your woodland at <https://beav.es/TuN>

- 2) Make small bundles of 3-5 stems each, about 5-7 inches long
- 3) Lay an individual bundle onto your wire frame and tightly wrap it with your floral wire paddle
- 4) Continue adding bundles, overlapping with the one before. Angle one bundle slightly outward toward the edge, and angle the next bundle slightly inward toward the center to create a full, balanced shape
- 5) Once you return to the starting point, tuck the final bundle under the first one placed
- 6) Check for any gaps before to fill in foliage and trim any stray ends
- 7) Add accent materials such as cones, berries, or additional evergreen sprigs with floral wire



Beyond expressing creativity, wreath-making is a hands-on way to learn more about your forest's foliage and connect with your woodland. It's an enjoyable activity to explore on your own, and it can easily become a fun, social project to share with friends, family, or fellow woodland owners.

Each year, the Women Owning Woodlands Network (WOWNet) hosts a series of wreath-making workshops across the state. Join us to learn about wreath-making as a creative outlet or as a value-added product for your woodland property.

Upcoming WOWNet wreath workshops:

- November 12, 1-3 p.m. (Benton County)
- November 14, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. (Clackamas County)
- November 21, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. (Lane County)
- December 12, 1-3 p.m. (Douglas County)
- Deschutes County date TBD

You can find registration for the WOWNet wreath workshops by visiting <https://beav.es/YAC>, or contacting Sarah Cameron at sarah.cameron@oregonstate.edu.



Want to be friends?



Friends of the Andrews offers volunteer support of HJA education, community events, participatory research and the upkeep of grounds and trails.

Check out the new HJ Andrews Experimental Forest website!

andrewsforest.oregonstate.edu

Friends of the Andrews can be found under ABOUT US | Choose either the About Us Overview or Opportunities link

The Committee for Family Forestlands



CFF meetings take place on a quarterly basis, generally the week following a Board of Forestry meeting, at ODF in Salem, with a virtual option. Sign up to be notified of meetings, receive the agenda, watch past meeting recordings, and learn more about the Committee's work on the [CFF webpage](#).

This year's annual report can be found under the link for the [September 9 Board of Forestry meeting](#), Section E of the Consent Agenda. (Just click on the E to be taken directly to the report without having to scroll through the preceding pages in the materials packet.)

Immediately preceding the report is a page providing a summary of the Committee's role and the Context of its creation, make-up and purpose.

Following the Consent Agenda vote, Ben Deumling took the opportunity (beginning at [13:40 on the recording](#))

to encourage the Board to read the full report, calling out both the importance of the Committee and of the work summarized in the report. He even read a short portion into the record that included specific suggestions that could be of value to small woodland owners.

Thanks, Ben, for the shout-out and your support!

OSWA members serving on the CFF:

Dave Bugni - Chair
NW Oregon

Gary Jensen
SW Oregon

Maurizio Valerio
Eastern Oregon

Kate McMichael - Vice Chair
landowner at large

From the SFO Office

Small Forestland Investment in Stream Habitat (SFISH) Program Delivers Results



Before: Perched culvert restricting fish passage
Photo credit: ODF



The Small Forestland Investment in Stream Habitat (SFISH) Program, created by the Oregon Legislature in 2022, funds forest road projects on properties owned by small forestland owners, where projects benefit fish species listed in the Private Forest Accord Report and help reduce risks to natural resources associated with forest roads.

Since the SFISH program went into effect in 2024, nearly \$5 million has been disbursed to 16 projects across nine Oregon counties. Fourteen projects are expected to be fully implemented by the end of this year. Once all 16 projects are complete, fish passage will be restored to nearly 60 miles of habitat for native salmon and trout, and the risk of sediment delivery to fish-bearing streams will be reduced through the replacement or removal of 27 culverts.

SFISH Project Spotlight

The McBride Creek project replaced a fish-barrier culvert with a clear-span bridge, improving access for cutthroat

trout as well as federally listed Coho salmon and steelhead to nearly three miles of upstream habitat. The project also enhanced fish habitat by regrading and realigning the stream to a more natural geometry and installing woody debris structures and boulders. The area will be replanted later this fall with native vegetation.

Do you have questions for us or topics you would like to see in future newsletters?

Let us know!

We would love to hear from you at

smallforestlandowneroffice@odf.oregon.gov.

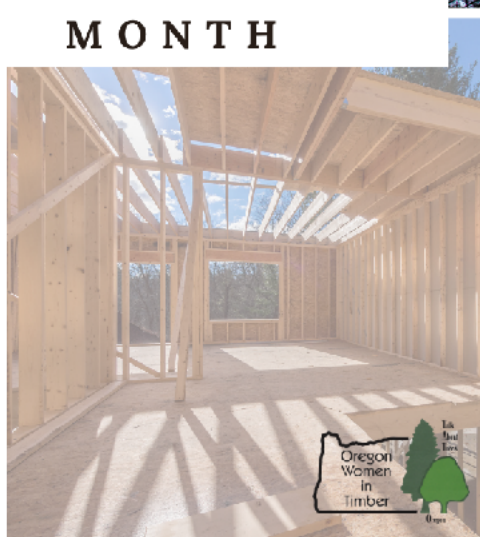


After: Clear-span bridge restoring fish passage
Photo credit: ODF



Celebrating

**FOREST PRODUCTS
MONTH**



National Forest Products week takes place annually during the third week of October, but Oregon's forests and forest sector are too amazing to limit to a single week. Join Oregon Women in Timber for a month of celebration. Watch for ads in local theaters, playing on the radio or tv or find a coffee sleeve or coaster in a local coffee shop with a fun forest fact on it that you can share with friends and neighbors. Or follow us on Facebook or Instagram to join us for a month of learning a few fun facts, meeting some amazing women of the woods, highlighting forestry education, honoring the women and men who make Oregon's forest sector second to none, expressing some gratitude, and, most of all, celebrating the wonder we find during every walk in the woods.

**Happy Forest Products Month
from Oregon Women in Timber!**

Benton County Chapter News

President's Reflection

Fire

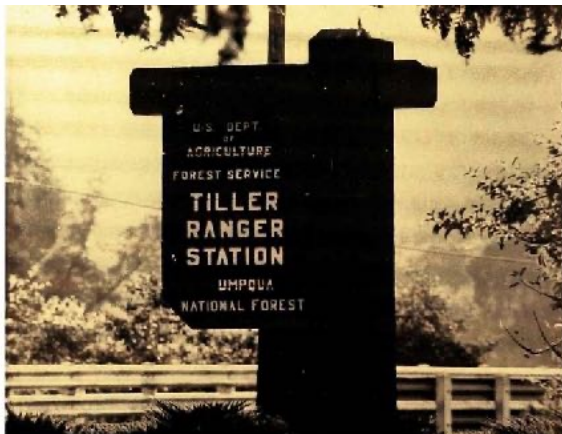
Diana Blakney

Part of my growing up was spent living on the Tiller Ranger Station located on the western slopes of the Cascade Mountains in southern Oregon. My father was the Fire Control Officer for the South Umpqua District of the United States Forest Service, and my mother ran the office as clerk for both the South Umpqua and the Cow Creek Districts. I contributed by occasionally donning a Smokey Bear costume and accompanying a Forest Service employee to local grade schools where Smokey stood silently while children learned how to prevent forest fires.

One summer I was the sole sibling at home when a forest fire broke out in the woods on the opposite side of the South Umpqua River from the Ranger Station. My dad was busy directing fire suppression efforts. My mother was helping evacuate the families who lived on the station. Me? I was allowed to pick one toy from my collection and then was relegated to sitting on the lawn where Mother could see me.

At some point in the middle of the hazy dreamlike smoke blanketing the area, I heard a shout saying the fire had jumped the river. The flames that had been visible to me, but safely across the river (or so I thought), were now in the woods where my siblings and I spent endless hours exploring. I had never been so afraid.

As it turned out, the fire was short-lived, but the experience gave me an inkling of why Oregonians (and indeed others) should take wildfire seriously. I know I join all of my fellow OSWA members in thanking those who risk everything to fight the fires burning across our state. May they finish out the season safely and may we all work hard to ensure that they get the resources they need this season and in all of the fire seasons to come.



2026 Benton Small Woodlands Association Board Members

President: **Diana Blakney**
Treasurer: **Jane Brandenburg**
Membership &
Program Director: **Sarah Edwardsson**
Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year
Coordinator: **Mike Magee**
Education **Rita Adams**
OSWA Liaison &
OTFS/OSWA Ambassador: **Dave Ehlers**
Media Coordinator: **Sarah Johnson**
At Large: **Dena Oakes**
Darrell Oakes
Pat Boren
Nancy Hathaway
Lily Hull

Forest Thinning Tour

A Tour with Dave Gibbs & Sarah Carr

By Sarah Edwardsson

A group of 30 Benton county members and guests were recently hosted by Dave Hibbs and Sarah Karr at their Cedar Springs tree farm near Corvallis. We were able learn about the history of this plantation and to see a thinning operation in progress. We learned about many things that Dave and Sarah have done to ensure a healthy forest that meets commercial as well as conservation goals. Thanks to Dave and Sarah for a memorable morning - and for the homemade cookies!



Lane County Chapter News

President's Reflection

Words to Live by (literally)

Kate McMichael



You never know when or where one of life's "aha" moments will occur. A recent one for me, captured by the photo to the left, came while driving home from a workshop. The words on the tire cover felt like an encapsulation of one of my favorite lines from a Mary Oliver poem: "Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?" ("The Summer Day" from *The House of Light* collection.)

It is not a bad question to ask ourselves now and then. Knowing that our days are not unlimited, how do we want to spend them, and with whom? Knowing that our energy—and the hours in the day—are not unlimited either, how do we prioritize activities and/or organizational commitments? What about family and friends and self care? How do we balance work, whether paid or volunteer or on our woodlands, and the time to sit back, breathe, enjoy the sun on our faces or a good book or afternoon nap?

It's easy to get so caught up in every day's "doing" that we lose sight of the "being" part of our human being-ness. That is the value of an "aha" moment that causes a moment of pause and reflection. Earlier this fall T and I spent some time looking back over the past year. She went through the collected photos on her phone; I went through the calendar. It took a while to accomplish and we both realized that we have well and truly earned our sense of being a bit over-committed and tired. It also made us aware of our deep gratitude for the many people we have come to know and respect, value and love in the natural resources and woodland community.



Lane County Board of Directors

Kate McMichael | President
Rick Olson | Vice President
Kevin Tuers | Treasurer
Wylda Cafferata | Secretary
Gary Jensen | Past President
Gordon Culbertson
Dan Kintigh
Tim Gurton
Becca Fain
Theresa Hausser
Dan Menk | ODF
Lauren Grand | Extension



Like reading over your management plan or annually reviewing how many things actually have been accomplished on your property, such a review is a worthwhile exercise. How have you spent your past year? What do you wish you'd spent more time doing? Less? What moments were precious?

There are so many ways to be involved in the woodland community. Each issue of this newsletter and the myriad others that likely land in your mailbox, whether physical or digital, are filled with volunteer needs and opportunities. Voluntary associations, from OSWA to OTFS to Friends of the Andrews to your local Watershed Council or Fire Protective Association, rely on people like us to support them, to be willing to give them priority status on our calendars and in our check registers/credit card statements.

What organizations really matter to you? How have you supported them over this past year? How can you support them in the coming year, whether with your membership renewal or your time or a donation? Could you step up to take a spot on a Board or a committee so that another person might have the opportunity to step off and re-direct some of their energy elsewhere? Could you attend another conference or workshop or two, both to expand your own knowledge, but also to support those who work to provide the opportunities? Could you respond to a call for volunteers to staff a table or host a tour? Could you join an organization where your participation and dues might make a difference (Society of American Foresters or Oregon Women in Timber or the Oregon Chapter of the Wildlife Society come to mind). Could you write a check to support something that matters to you, whether Family Forests of Oregon or Oregon Tree Farm System or Forests Today & Forever or the Oregon Natural Resources Education Fund?

None of these questions are new to any of you reading this reflection. And I am beyond grateful to the many of you I have come to know and cherish as we've learned and worked alongside one another at workshops and on Boards and committees and in the trenches of volunteering together. I know that all of us, especially as we age (and who isn't?!?), have to negotiate the trade-offs of our organizational commitments and the health and well-being of our own bodies and our families as well.

Every season—of the year and our lives—calls to us to pause and reflect on how we are choosing to spend our one “wild and precious life.” Here's to many more healthy, woods-walking-and-working-filled years to grapple with those choices!

Mark Your Calendar!

Oct 6

Forestry Education celebration
with OWIT at Public House in
Springfield

Oct 19

Candidate Meet-and-Greet
The Pint Pot in Eugene
sponsored by Lane Families for
Farms & Forests

Feb 6, 2027

Annual Seedling & Native Plant
Sale at Alton Baker Park in Eugene

2026 Board Meetings

remaining meetings:

October 8

2:00-4:00pm | Springfield
(rescheduled)

December 3

2:00-4:00pm | Veneta

note:

Board meetings take place at ODF
offices, rotating between the East
Lane/South Cascades and Veneta
locations.

Springfield: 3150 Main Street
Veneta: 87950 Territorial Hwy

All members are welcome to attend!



interested IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT
FORESTS FOREST PRODUCTS
 AND FORESTRY & NATURAL
 RESOURCES EDUCATION
 OPPORTUNITIES
 in Lane County

then join us!
October 6 | 4:30-6:30pm
 PublicHouse | 418 A St #4606 | Springfield

Drop in, grab a beverage, learn more about local groups who are passionate about forestry & natural resources education for learners of all ages.

Look for the table of obviously fun women measuring out matchsticks.

Want to be friends?



Friends of the Andrews offers volunteer support of HJA education, community events, participatory research and the upkeep of grounds and trails.

Check out the new HJ Andrews Experimental Forest website!

andrewsforest.oregonstate.edu

Friends of the Andrews can be found under **ABOUT US** | Choose either the **About Us Overview** or **Opportunities** link



Candidate Meet-&-Greet

Monday

October 19

5:30-7:30pm

The Pint Pot Public House

195 E 17th Ave | Eugene



Forestry for the Birds

Co-hosted by the Forest Stewards Guild and Extension, this lovely walk through Elijah Bristow State Park included lots of fun facts, great management tips as well as a side hike to see an osprey nest high over the river.



6 years of Upriver Community Recovery & the Fruition of a Friendship

This September marked six years since the Holiday Farm Fire and the 6th Annual Locals Helping Locals Community Celebration at the Blue River Track—as well as the public “launch” of Friends of the Andrews. Currently focused on providing volunteer help around Headquarters, this group can trace its roots back to our 2024 Annual Meeting at HJ Andrews and participation in the Collaborative Futures Project.



Hands-On Management Over the Long Term:

Celebrating Elmer Shew & Lonna Devereaux, Lane County's 2026 Tree Farmers of the Year

Who knew you could manage so meticulously over 36 acres? Elmer Shew certainly did—and does! Blessed by beautiful fall weather, the morning tour took us along a pond, a stream, through 75-year-old trees, a recent harvest and several stands of reproduction of varying ages. Along the way we discussed blowdown, culverts and stream buffers. A sandwich buffet—served up by our Volunteers of the Year, Becca Fain & Rick Olson—provided the opportunity for more casual conversation to round out the day. Having seen the Shew Family Tree Farm in person, we can hardly wait to continue the celebration and see the video at the OTFS Annual Meeting on November 14 at the Oregon Garden!





Photo credit: Mary Berrian, Kate McMichael, Theresa Hausser



Planting Incense for Drought

Dan Kintigh

There's been a lot of concern about failing Douglas fir stands due to drought. I think a solution to this problem is planting Incense Cedar in the areas where Doug fir is dying.

Our soil conditions vary significantly on our own forest land. There is nice topsoil for the most part, but we have places where the soil is shallow and rocky. In one particularly crummy area, I reforested with Incense Cedar and put Douglas fir in what I thought was a better spot. Ten years later, it turns out, I should have used a bit more Incense. The nearby Douglas fir isn't looking great, while the Incense Cedar is thriving. It's important to give a wide berth around less than ideal spots.

I feel like Incense Cedar is an underutilized species and can greatly benefit forestlands when planted appropriately. Incense Cedar needs to be planted in groups. Like all species, it should not be interplanted but used in areas that support its preferred growing conditions. Incense Cedar is not shade tolerant. You cannot plant one or two in the middle of Douglas-fir, or it will get shaded out.

In my opinion, a healthy Incense Cedar is better than a poor performing Douglas fir or brushy weeds. Capture the site and keep out the unwanted vegetation.



kintighs.com
Healthy Trees Start from the Roots

Lincoln County Chapter News

Guest Reflection

Partnership for Lincoln Lands & Waters Tour Showcases Natural Resource Businesses & Projects in North Lincoln County

By Pami Monnette | PLLW Coordinator

Over the last 120 years, the natural resource industries of fishing, farming and forestry in Lincoln County have fluctuated with the times. Though a smaller industry now, the three sectors are still a prominent part of our community. As the fabric of our local area continues to change, there is a need for building trust through transparency and connection within these industries.

Partnership for Lincoln Lands and Waters (PLLW) was formed in 2016 to foster collaboration and uplift the voices of the diverse producers, operators, and supporters of Lincoln County's farming, forestry, and fishing sectors. Together, we empower and support these vital industries by telling our authentic stewardship stories and practices through tours, talks and public engagement.

Last month, PLLW wrapped up our 2026 Natural Resource Tour: North County Edition. We were thrilled to have 50 folks in attendance to learn from the ground, what it takes to operate and manage a natural resource based business or project. We were happy to welcome Representative David Gomberg and his wife, Susan, as well as Lincoln County Commissioner Walter Chuck. During the full day tour we attended three stops in North Lincoln County: Steere Farm, Cedar Creek Quarry and the Lower Drift Creek Restoration Project. We had a fabulous catered lunch at Beachcrest Brewing.

On stop one, participants got to see the inner workings of **Joe and Cathy Steere's cattle farm** operation on pasture



Lincoln County Small Woodlands Association Board Members

Ben Barclay, President
Joe Steere, past President
Judy Pelletier, Secretary
Jan Steenkolk, Treasurer

Steve Allen
Connie Battles
Joe Steenkolk
Scott Steenkolk
Rex Capri
Christana Woods
Todd Holts
Jim Holt
Tim Miller

alongside the Siletz River. The farm was purchased in 1960 from the Immonens who were the original family that established the property as a pastureland farm starting around 1909. Joe and Cathy demonstrated their new corral system that handles cattle safer and more humanely. They also discussed pasture management challenges and market realities. Hayley White, OSU Livestock & Forages faculty was also on site to share about the Beef Quality Assurance program, which teaches good husbandry techniques coupled with scientific knowledge to raise cattle under optimum management conditions.

Stop two was just a short distance back down Immonen Road to **Cedar Creek Quarry**. On this site, they operate a rock crushing operation, and sister Road & Driveway Company that operates as an asphalt plant. Together they produce the crushed aggregates and asphalt mixtures used in road and highway construction, building foundations, drainage, and slope armoring throughout the central Oregon coast. General Manager, Rob Wienert, explained how they have operated at this location since the 1990s, with the lease carried forward through several property ownership changes. They are proud to continue working in partnership with this land spanning more than three decades. Road & Driveway Co. and Cedar Creek Quarries are a fourth generation, family owned and operated businesses. The story begins in the 1930s with a family general store that grows into a lumber mill in Eddyville, and evolves over the decades into the quarrying, rock crushing, and asphalt paving companies operating today.

What makes the site so valuable is the rock itself. It yields a dense aggregate ideally suited to asphalt mixtures meeting ODOT and federal specifications, a quality of rock that is genuinely rare in the Coast Range. Rob described roads as the circulatory system of a community: they move goods, connect neighbors, and keep local business running. A

local rock and asphalt source means lower material costs for the cities, counties, and residents, fewer trucks hauling material long distances over coastal highways, and fast response when storms and slides occur. The operation also supports family wage skilled jobs, including equipment operators, truck drivers, and technicians, that stay right here on the central coast.



After a great lunch at Beachcrest brewing, our last stop took the tour group to view Phase 2 of the **Lower Drift Creek Tidal Wetland Restoration Project**. The Drift Creek Unit of Siletz Bay National Wildlife Refuge is undergoing a multi-year tidal wetland restoration aimed at rebuilding historic marshes, tidal channels, and spruce swamps that were lost after decades of diking and agricultural conversion. This summer, crews are restoring 37 acres by filling old ditches, carving new tidal channels, adding large wood, reconnecting floodplain surfaces, and preparing the site for fall planting. These actions will improve water quality, reduce flooding, and create safer, more productive habitat for salmon and other estuary-dependent species. By fall, machinery will leave, tides will reach farther inland, and native vegetation will begin to reestablish the marsh. This work builds on Phase I, completed in 2023, and is supported by a wide partnership of local, tribal, state, and federal organizations. Partners in this project include the MidCoast Watersheds Council, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management, Wolf Water Resources, and BCI Contracting.

One thing that was clear from this year's tour is just how varied land management can look depending on the goals. Each stop emphasized the need to balance management with environment and habitat needs, jobs and markets, regulations, and resource access.

It was invaluable to hear, straight from the sources, what it takes to operate large-scale land management businesses or projects. It was very eye-opening to understand the restrictions and challenges of turning a natural resource like rock or grass into a full-fledged business that provides necessary products like roads and food. These sites are all tremendous assets for Lincoln County, and they need to be understood and supported if we want to be able to provide for our communities in the future.

Based on our follow-up survey, 100% of participants would recommend a PLLW tour to a colleague. Quotes from this year's participants:

"Another example of being allowed to see how something gets made and with what resources for something so important - Roads!"

"Thank you SO MUCH for including this in the tour. Social media has made a complete mess of what this project is and the good things it is producing!"

"It certainly gave me a better framework for understanding more of the moving parts and pieces."



Photo credit: Pami Monnette & Evie Smith

Who forms the Partnership for Lincoln Lands and Waters? We are farmers, foresters, and supporters of the fishing industry who seek to preserve our thriving natural resources sectors in Lincoln County. Through our collective efforts, we work to tell our stories of stewardship and care of the land for the well-being of generations to come. We strive to be a resource to our county that brings experience, practice, knowledge and history of land management to the table. Question about our work? We guarantee to connect you to an actual practitioner in the natural resource field! E-mail us at lincolnlandsandwaters@gmail.com or visit us at <https://lincolnlandsandwaters.com/>. We are proud to host and coordinate the Leadership Lincoln natural resource section and we would be happy to coordinate a talk or discussion for your organization if you work in Lincoln County.



Linn County Chapter News

President's Column

Activities, volunteers help make SAFE motto a reality

By Jim Merzenich | LCSWA president

I represent the Linn County chapter of the Oregon Small Woodlands Association (OSWA). Our motto is **SAFE** which stands for Stewardship, Advocacy, Fellowship, and Education.

Strengths:

Proceeds from the Linn County annual seedling sale are dedicated to education. This includes sponsoring a Forestry 4-H club, college scholarships, workshops, and tours. Please volunteer to help with this event which will be at the Linn County fairgrounds Feb. 11-13.

Members are encouraged to have their tree farm certified and host a tour. Linn county members have participated in the Tree Farm competition for 23 of the past 25 years.

With the Benton County chapter we conduct a **Woodland Information night** each March. OSU Forestry Extension agents Lorelle Sherman and Crystal Kelso help us organize this and other events. Thank you, Lorelle and Crystal!

Our annual meeting is held on the third Saturday in January at the Z Hall in Scio. We will honor the Mauters, our tree farmers of the year, Christie Tye, our volunteer of the year, and forestry 4H club members and scholarship participants. BTW this is the best potluck in Linn County!

From February through October we plan at least one organized event each month. This includes mill and tree farm tours, a summer picnic, and workshops.

Because of the tireless efforts of Larry Mauter and web master Nancy Hildebrandt, our website Linncountyswa.com keeps members and the general public informed about our activities which promote responsible forest management.

Improvements Needed:

We plan to elect at least two new board members at our January annual meeting and are still determining who will be our next



2026 Board Members

Jim Merzenich — president

Christy Tye director — director, treasurer, scholarship co-chair

Jim Cota —director

Lauren Parks —director, membership chair

Anna Merzenich — director, secretary

Dan Lowrie— director

Greg Harty — director

Timbre White — director

Mike Barsotti — past president

LCSWA Committee Members

Bonnie Marshall — scholarship co-chair

Lee Peterman— activities chair

Fay Sallee —4-H forestry education chair

Larry Mauter —publicity, Bob Mealy committee

Tim Otis — past president

Lorelle Sherman — OSU Extension agent

Colin Pyle — Linn County Sheriff's Office

president and vice president. People interested in being elected to the board should contact me.

At most quarterly meetings only board members are present. We need to incorporate educational presentations designed for all members and friends.

We depend too much on our board members. Outside assistance to plan events and recruit and retain our members is needed. Please volunteer to give us a hand.

Two weekly newspapers now serve Linn County. ***The New Era***, published in *Sweet Home*, also serves Lebanon and Scio and ***The Times***, published in *Brownsville*, serves the central Willamette valley. Many citizens support responsible forest management but are unaware of our work. We must use these news sources to inform citizens about upcoming events. Remind friends or associates that citizens who support us, but do not own forest land, can join as **Associate** members of OSWA.

We need to maintain active relationships with organizations such as the Linn Soil and Water Conservation District, the Oak Working Group, The Santiam and Calapooia Watershed Councils, Industrial Forest Landowners, and the state and federal agencies that support us.

Two projects that we are now working on are:

- 1) Coordinating with the Oregon Department of Forestry, consulting foresters, and others to improve reforestation success in Linn County,
- 2) Helping to assist others by providing firewood, Christmas trees, or other forest products.

Lebanon tree farmers recognized

Nancy and Larry Mauter honored by LCSWA for forestry effort

By Scott Swanson | *The New Era* (reprinted with permission)

When Larry and Nancy Mauter got married in 1992, they decided they wanted to have a plan for retirement – something different.

Larry was a newspaper editor at the Telegram-Tribune daily in San Luis Obispo, Calif., at the time. He met Nancy when he suffered an injury and visited her physical therapy practice.

Although San Luis Obispo, where Cal Poly State University is located, is considered one of the more desirable locations to live in in the Golden State with its “Mediterranean” climate, they wanted something “greener,” Nancy said.

“We wanted to be in a forest environment.”

Upcoming Events

October Mill Tour
details are still under construction—watch the website to learn more!

December 3
Linn County Small Woodlands Association
Board of Directors meeting
All members are invited to attend.

January 16
The annual meeting will take place Saturday Jan. 16 at the Z Hall in Scio. Activities will include 4-H forestry presentations, a guest speaker, TFOY presentation, door prizes and an auction along with a potluck meal.

February 13
Annual Seedling Sale | Set-up will take place on February 11-12.

For all of our events, see our website www.linncountyswa.com for more details and registration links

Larry said they considered “different things – not necessarily a business.”

“We looked at starting a trout farm, fish farming, and that was way too complicated.

“We looked at Christmas trees, also pretty complicated,” especially since they were still living and working in SLO.

“So then we started looking at timber property,” he said. After searching in Oregon and Washington, they found an approximately 15-acre mixed-forest parcel on Bellinger Scale Road, near Mallard Creek Golf Course.

That was a plus, since Larry also liked to golf.

“I saw the plans for the golf course two years before it was built, right? I said, ‘OK, well, there’s another factor.’”

They did the deal and bought the land in 1997, making the 850-mile trip a few times a year to stay in a fifth-wheeler and work on the south-facing property, which had been logged and had not yet been replanted, Larry said.

Larry, who has a double major in journalism and environmental studies, said that the internet was just starting to take off in the 1990s, so he was able to access Oregon State University Extension Service information on the computer.

“I kind of self-educated myself.”

When they finally moved to Lebanon, in 2015, after Larry finished his working career with seven years at Hearst Castle, north of SLO. They built a small, comfortable house and settle down to grow trees.

Thirty years later, they’ve been named the 2026 Linn County Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year by the Linn County Small Woodlands Association.

“They don’t have a real big tree farm, but they’ve done an exceptional job with it, especially controlling all the noxious weeds,” said Jim Merzenich, LCSWA president and one of the early Tree Farmer of the Year honorees. “Nancy has the pollinator garden and they’re kind of emphasizing that. It’s just well taken care of.”

Linn County is one of five Small Woodlands chapters in Oregon that name a Tree Farmer of the Year, and a state selection team will visit each honoree’s woodland this summer, Merzenich and Larry Mauter said. A recognition luncheon will be held in November, where the state Tree Farmer of the Year will be named.

Getting to this point has been a long process for the Mauters, a lot of it just learning about trees.

“There were some challenges,” Nancy said, adding that the distance between SLO and their tree farm did not work in their favor, statistically.

“I read a study once looking at what are the reforestation rates in terms of closeness to

your forest. You know, one to five miles – success. When they got out to the 800 mark, it was like ‘Don’t count on it.’”

The weather didn’t help, at least initially. That first year, 1997, they replanted in what turned out to be a hot, dry El Nino year and that – especially the southwestern exposure to blazing sun – didn’t help their young trees.

“They got cooked,” Larry said.

They did a replant two years later, this time with a lot of Willamette Valley ponderosa pines, which were better suited to the conditions.

Another challenge has been the soil. The best ground is near the base of the property, along Bellinger Scale,



Nancy Mauter, left, has nurtured a pollinator garden in a meadow that was a failed planting during the El Nino year of 1997. | Photo credit: Shayna Robledo

rising 200 feet to the top of the property, he said. “Up the hill it’s mostly cobble.”

“We have a very diverse forest property,” he said. “We’ve got a mixed age and a mixed stand. We’ve got about 30 varieties of trees on the property, so it is forest property rather than a typical plantation farm.”

Merzenich said their land, which once comprised the south end of the Udell property, is “volcanic ground.”

The soil looks like it’s in Sisters, Oregon. It’s remarkable what they’ve done with it, the success they’ve had with Douglas fir and cedar.”

Over the years, the Mauters have both been very involved in LCSWA. Larry was one of the creators of the Robert H. Mealey memorial at Sunnyside Park, a demonstration forest featuring 60 Willamette Valley Ponderosa pines and a memorial information kiosk. LCSWA members maintain the grove. They’ve also been very active in the LCSWA Seedling Sale and on the Scholarship Committee.

Larry has also been a board member for the organization and has handled much of the publicity, including writing articles that appear regularly in *The New Era*.

They’ve put in a lot of work on the property, which now is covered by a wide range of conifer species and hardwoods. Bluebird boxes line the hillside along the trails, and Larry said they have a wide range of wildlife on the property.

The Mauters hosted a tour of some 45 visitors, including some family members, of the property June 20. Even that was an educational experience.

I was asking a lot of questions,” Larry said. “‘How would you have handled this,’ or ‘What should we be doing?’ I got a lot of good responses.”

They showed off the forest and Nancy’s pollinator garden, which is a recent project.

Nancy said the property finally looks “healthy.”



Discussions on the trail June 20 included chats about habitat piles and maintaining a mixed-species tree farm. | Photo credit: Shayna Robledo

“Everybody says it’s very healthy, whereas before it wasn’t healthy.

“It’s a really nice forest now. It’s looking good.”

Merzenich credited the Mauters with taking on a daunting project as retirees.

“They wanted to physically do something, get involved some place,” he said. “They didn’t want to live in a retirement community.

“Every tree farmer, big or small, has a story to tell other tree farmers and I thought they have a really good story.”

Linn County Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year

2026 Nancy and Larry Mauter

2025 xxxxxxx

2024 Steve and Katie Kohl

2023 Neil, Valerie and Damon Bell

2022 Ed and Jim Merzenich and their families

2021 Mike and Jo Barsotti

2020 Lee Peterman and Shirley Jolliff

2019 Kathy and Tim Otis

2018 Sherm and Leslie Weld

2017 Ivan and Rebecca Wolthius

2016 Joe and Shirley Holmberg

2015 Dave and Karen Bateman

Fun Forest showcased in Linn summer picnic

By Larry Mauter | LCSWA member

Wagon rides into a working forest, play equipment for kids, fellowship and plenty of food was a formula for fun Saturday July 18.

The Linn County Small Woodlands Association (LCSWA) summer picnic was hosted by Jim Cota and the Melcher family at the Fun Forest.

The 1,500 acre tree farm is located on Upper Berlin Ridge Road. It features varied-age Douglas-fir stands that were recently thinned, a recreation barn. It also hosts a bow-shooting course for hunters.

Close to 40 people attended the event on a warm, sunny day.

Cota, an avid fisherman, provided the banquet — including grilled and breaded salmon and halibut, “cooler” corn, baked beans, watermelon and drinks.

A stop on the wagon tour included a bow-hunter shelter equipped with a wood stove that was originally a steam pot used to operate a mill in the Hamilton Creek watershed, said Cota.

The New York company that built it went out of business in 1892, Cota said, making the steam pot at least 130 years old.

“Its last years in life it ran a cedar mill in the late ‘30s or early ‘40s,” according to Cota’s research.



July picnic goers were treated to a wagon ride through Douglas-fir stands and a bow-hunting course at the Fun Forest near Waterloo. | Photo credit: LCSWA

Life of Michael ‘Scott’ Melcher celebrated

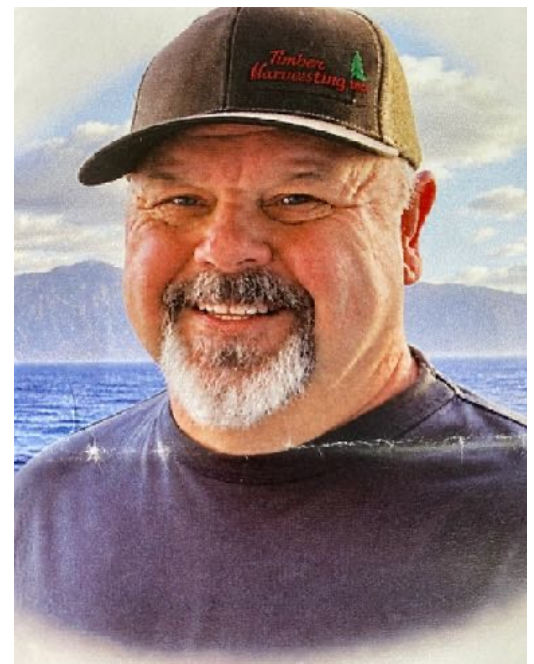
By Larry Mauter | LCSWA member

With partly cloudy skies outside nearly 700 people packed the Sweet Home High School gym Saturday Sept. 12 to say goodbye to Michael “Scott” Melcher. He died Aug 28.

An opening prayer and closing remarks were delivered by the Rev. Scott Baier of St. Helen’s Catholic Church in Sweet Home.

The eulogy was given by Milt Moran, a long-time neighbor of the Melcher family and president of Cascade Timber Consulting Inc. of Sweet Home. Moran noted Scott’s connection to the timber industry and the growth of Melcher Logging Inc. along with his public service — including being a two-term president of the Oregon Logging Conference.

He called Scott Melcher and his brother Robbie an inspiration to his own children.



Michael “Scott” Melcher, 1967-2026

Reflections were provided by Scott's wife of 34 years Wendi — and sons Nathaniel Melcher, Chris Melcher — as well as family friend Patricia Schilling.

Scott Melcher, his brother Robbie and Jim Cota were Linn County Small Woodlands Association (LCSWA) tree farmers of the year in 2009.

The trio were named Loggers of the Year by Associated Oregon Loggers in January, 2010. They were selected as Oregon and Western States tree farmers of the year in 2010 for their 1,500-acre Fun Forest tree farm north of Berlin Road.

Melcher Logging provided site preparation, hauling and planting assistance for a grove of Willamette Valley Ponderosa pines at Sunnyside Park. The LCSWA project included an educational kiosk honoring Bob Mealey for his work re-establishing the valley pine.

Following services, a luncheon and open microphone was available at the Boys & Girls Club of Sweet Home.



Memorial donations in Scott's name to
the Sweet Home Alumni Foundation
P.O. Box 83
Sweet Home, Or, 97386
or online at shafgives.org.

Friends and family of Michael "Scott" Melcher gathered
Sept. 12 at Sweet Home High School.
Photo credit: Larry Mauter

Rain a welcome visitor in dry year

Very strong El Nino pattern likely to keep
temperatures higher this fall

By Larry Mauter | LCSWA member

Fall is starting to show its color in Linn County, with welcome rain arriving the first week of September.

While much has been written about the scant snowpack in the Cascades, rainfall in the county's foothills has also been in short supply.

Joe Holmberg has tracked rainfall on his tree farm for the past 25 years. For the year, his rain gauge has captured just over 38 inches, he said.

"Unless we receive significant rain in September, we will have the second driest water year in the 25 years I have been recording," said Holmberg. "This has been kind of a meager year so far." Holmberg's records show the wettest year in the past 25 was 2018 with 61.91 inches and the driest 2010 with 36.96 inches.



A clump of big leaf maple contrasts with a
hemlock on Sept. 4.
Photo credit: Larry Mauter

“We are nearing the end of the 2026 water year which runs from the beginning of October 2025 to the end of September 2026,” explained Holmberg. Average rainfall at his site 3 miles north of Waterloo is about 45 inches.

Above-average temperatures are expected for the next three months, according to the National Weather Service long-range forecast. Precipitation is expected to be normal during that time, according to a NWS forecast posted Aug. 20.

In early June 2026, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) Climate Prediction Center [declared that an El Niño has developed](#) and it is expected to strengthen in the Pacific Ocean.

Though El Niño conditions are normally subtle in the summer months in the Northwest, NOAA predicts a [63% chance](#) of a very strong El Niño during November 2026 to January 2027. Weather patterns throughout Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington are affected by El Niño, particularly in the winter season.



Vine maple, in foreground, and big leaf maple show some color in early September.
Photo credit: Larry Mauter

32nd annual Linn seedling sale has expanded line-up of shrubs, perennials

By Lena Tucker| LCSWA Seedling Sale Chairperson

Linn County Small Woodlands Association (LCSWA) will host its 32nd annual tree and shrub seedling sale on Feb. 13, 2027 from 8 a.m. to noon at the Linn County Fair and Expo Center.

Pre-orders can be placed online at the LCSWA seedling shop starting Dec. 1, 2026 through the end of January 2027. Watch our LCSWA website <https://linncountyswa.com/> for more details on store opening and how to place your pre-order.

This year’s seedling offers will include a variety of conifer including, Douglas-fir, Willamette Valley Ponderosa pine, Noble fir and Coastal Redwood.

We will also have a nice selection of deciduous tree species including Pacific dogwood, Western crabapple, Osage orange, Oregon White oak and Cascara. A few new shrubs and perennials are being added to the selection this year – Mountain huckleberry, Western spice bush, Redstem Ceanothus, Oregon Sunshine, Douglas’ Aster and Pacific Bleeding Heart.



Oregon White oak is among the selections for the 2027 seedling sale. Online pre-orders will start Dec. 1. | Photo credit: Photo by LCSWA

Proceeds from the seedling sale fund both university-level and 4-H forestry scholarships.

Fall is the perfect time to start thinking about your planting needs for early 2027. Get your pre-orders in early for the best selection. We will to see you at the sale!