

montana TREE FARM news

Fall 2020



O'Neil Lumber on Main Street, Kalispell, in 1897

O'Neil Family Tree Farm History

By Henry Schnackenberg, Tree Farmer

In 1944, the O'Neil timberlands were certified by the American Tree Farm System as Tree Farm #12 in the nation. But the story starts long before that...

In 1895, Charles Israel O'Neil found the town of Kalispell, population 1,500, to have "over forty licensed saloons and an untold number of houses of prostitution," but sensed great opportunity in the lumber industry. "C.I." had been invited by James Coram to manage a lumber yard on the corner of 4th Street and Main. C.I. was adventurous and had a good head for business opportunity.

By 1896, C.I. had purchased this lumber yard in Kalispell and over the next 10 years continued to buy ownership in lumber mills, such as Northwestern Lumber on the Stillwater River and Dawson Lumber in Libby (later sold to J. Neils). He opened O'Neil Lumber yards in Whitefish, Great Falls, and Havre.

He purchased lots in the Kalispell townsite and resold them with a 24' x 24' house built on them. All the while, he was buying timberland.

He never bought timber without a personal inspection. Much of the land was homestead properties. Farming in the forest is well-nigh impossible, but many folks filed for a homestead in the Flathead Valley, "proved up" the land, sold it for cash, and moved on. Much of the current O'Neil timberlands west of Kalispell in the Rhodes Draw and McMannamy Draw areas were purchased from homesteaders.

C.I. married Kathryn Fingado in 1904 and had 5 children: Sylvia, Lawrence, Charles, John, and Isabelle. John later lost his life in World War II. In the winter of 1905-1906, C.I. made many trips up the Stillwater River to check logging camps and direct the

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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 meeting. Many 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. I have included a donation of \$_____.

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

The Montana Tree Farm System is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization, and donations are tax deductible.

Letter from the Chair: Strange Times

Jared Richardson, Chair, Montana Tree Farm Program

Greetings Montana Tree Farmers,

I hope you are all able to maintain some sense of normalcy during what can only be described as a very strange time. To say things are different right now is an understatement, and while I hate to focus on how the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted our lives, it is impossible to ignore. I write this letter while sitting at a desk in my spare bedroom, in what I thought was a temporary home office but now feels more and more like where I will be conducting business for the foreseeable future. I was reviewing my last “Letter From the Chair,” written at the end of February while attending the AFF National Leadership Conference in Maryland, before the words “mask,” “quarantine,” and “social distancing” had become part of our common vernacular. It feels like 100 years ago.

Concerns over COVID-19 have hit close to home for Montana Tree Farmers, as we have decided to cancel our 2020 Annual Meeting that was scheduled for October 3rd, in Clancy. We did not arrive at this decision lightly, but ultimately the Steering Committee did not feel we could responsibly host a meeting with so many people converging from across the state. Several of our Steering Committee members voiced concerns over the meeting and stated that even if we were to hold the meeting they would not attend. With statements like that in mind, we felt that even if we were to push forward with a meeting, attendance would be greatly reduced, we may struggle with costs, and the risk exposure would be high. It was a disappointing decision, as we had what I considered to be a fantastic schedule and tours lined up. All is not lost, however, and we are planning on picking up where we left off in 2021 and hosting the same meeting in the same place: meetings and tours at Mark’s Lumber in Clancy and a tour of the McKelvey and Wilson Tree Farms in the North Fork of Travis Creek just west of Clancy. I hope to see you all there.

The other significant news I want to share with our membership is that the Executive Committee voted to institute an annual membership fee of \$25. This is another decision we did not arrive at lightly; in fact, it has taken quite literally years of discussion to arrive here and I will attempt to summarize why we decided to institute a fee. The concept of an annual membership fee most recently arose around 5 years

ago. At that time, AFF had proposed a national annual fee for Tree Farmers and the MT committee grappled with a way to cover those costs. In fact, at the Annual Meeting in 2016, members approved a \$30 per year annual membership fee to cover the cost of the Certification Assessment and offset the cost of our new Part-time Administrative Assistant. Annual membership fees from the national office never came to fruition, but we kept the option on our radar, as we don’t forecast financial growth in line with how we want to grow the program. Our annual operating expenses are typically covered by our investments, but stocks and bonds are not always a reliable source of income; when the pandemic hit, the world went into quarantine and our income stream slowed to a trickle.

After hours of debate at our May Steering Committee meeting, we voted and decided to implement an annual membership fee of \$25. We ultimately felt this was a manageable cost for our membership, yet it would provide tremendous benefit to our program, helping us cover our annual operating expenses and providing funds to help grow the program. We hope you are supportive of this nominal fee and decide to continue as Montana Tree Farmers. We are preparing to send Membership Fee Statements out in November for the 2021 calendar year. There will only be one membership fee charged per Tree Farm, no matter how many owners are listed. Landowners who happen to have multiple Tree Farms will only pay one membership fee.

I want to close with some good news. Montana Tree Farm was able to secure some grant money to host a “Women in the Woods” retreat, which will be scheduled for 2021, and also some breakfast meetings where members can gather and brainstorm ways to boost membership. More details on these events are described in this newsletter on page 9. In the meantime, it’s summer in Montana and we don’t have much of a fire season to speak of (so far), which means we are fortunate enough to be in one of the most glorious places in the world and the weather is nice and the air is clear. One thing Tree Farmers can do during all of the craziness going on in the world: get out and enjoy the woods. You don’t need a face mask or hand sanitizer to do that!

Jared

construction of a dam on Lower Stillwater Lake. Travel was by sleigh and he slept on logging camp floors. He ended up with shooting pains in his fingers and toes, pneumonia, and possibly tuberculosis. He was advised by his doctor to spend some time in a warmer, drier climate to restore his health.

Over the next 10 years, many trips to California were made, most notably their California trip in 1915. That year, C.I. decided to travel to California by car. He purchased an automobile and then hand-crafted custom wooden boxes to attach to the fenders for storing their tent, cooking supplies, food, bedding, and auto repair parts. He and Kathryn loaded their four children, ranging in age from 2 to 10 years old, and set out for Pomona, CA. It took weeks to get there, driving on unmarked, muddy wagon roads and camping wherever there was a level spot and water. It took 4 days just to drive from Kalispell to Spokane!

By 1918, the decision was made to leave Montana and move permanently to Pomona, CA. C.I. largely sold off all of his interests in Montana lumber yards and mills, keeping only his timber holdings. This might have been the end of O'Neil activity in the Flathead Valley, were it not for his second son, Charles Henry.

Charles "Chuck" O'Neil was 9 years old when the family moved to Pomona. He enjoyed his boyhood in Southern California, but as soon as he graduated from Pomona High in 1928, he went back to Montana to enroll in the University of Montana forestry program. He worked for the Forest Service in the summer fighting fire. Chuck received his forestry degree in 1932, deep in the Depression. He was hired by the Forest Service. To his disappointment, his assignment was not hands-on forestry work, but that of a Forest Service detective in the Fortine area. He was given a car and fishing gear and told to hang around the woods looking for suspicious people ... and Fortine had many of those! During the depression, out-of-work men would light fires in the woods and then apply for fire-fighting work with the Forest Service. Chuck left this job to become City Engineer in Kalispell. He bought some equipment and started a custom planing operation on the NE corner of Main Street and East Montana Street. He operated a lumber mill near Ashley Creek, known as "Montana Forest Products."

During this time, Chuck met a girl from the Lower Valley, Wynona Webster. Wynona's dad was



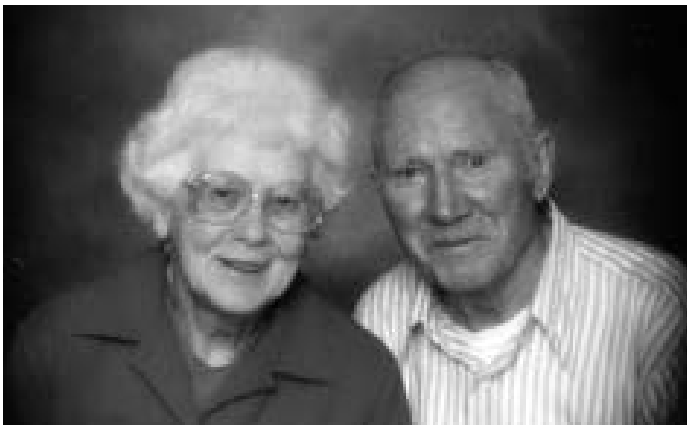
Chuck O'Neil's planing operation on the NE corner of Main & East Montana Streets in the 1930s. The building later housed Kroger-Noble Lumber and The Bikology.

the engineer at Somers Lumber Co. Chuck and Wynona were married in 1937 and started their family with daughter Lorene in 1938, followed by Nancy, Charlene, and John. Using the profits from his lumbering operations, Chuck and Wynona started buying as much timberland as they could afford from Chuck's father, C.I., most of it in the Rhodes Draw area.

Meanwhile, back in California, Chuck's brother, Larry, graduated with a business degree. In the early 1940s, C.I. decided to provide cash and assets to launch a family lumber business. Chuck would manage the operations and forestry end of the business and brother Larry would move back to Kalispell to take care of the finances and accounting. The new company was incorporated as Forest Products and a new lumber mill was built at the west end of Second Street. They continued to buy timberland and also purchased the Kal-Mont Lumber Co. mill in the early 1960s. By 1980, Forest Products owned roughly 12,000 acres of timberland, but in 1981, Larry passed away. Market conditions, operating and estate debt, and the legal nature of their simple partnership made it unfeasible to continue operating the mills. This was a devastating blow to Chuck and Wynona, especially as they considered their many long-time employees. Negotiations to divide the assets began immediately with Larry's heirs. Chuck's daughter, Charlene, left her teaching, paralegal, and commercial fishing careers in Washington state to support Chuck and Wynona in Kalispell. Daughter Nancy worked daily from San Diego and made frequent trips to Kalispell to iron out the deal. In the end, Chuck and Wynona retained ownership of the two sawmills and approximately 6,000 acres of timberland.

Out of the divided assets of Forest Products, a new family partnership was created to carry on the O'Neil legacy in forestry. With Char and Nancy's help, "Montana Forest Products" was incorporated in 1982. You could almost say "re-incorporated," as this was the business name Chuck had used in the 1930s. All of Chuck and Wynona's children were set up as shareholders, and all grandchildren were given shares in 1983. Chuck and Char worked side by side every day at the old Forest Products office, managing the timberlands, leasing portions of the mill sites, working easement issues, etc. They created a financially stable and inclusive family business.

Larry O'Neil's heirs sold 6,200 acres of inherited timberland to F.H. Stoltze Land & Lumber. This sale was beneficial to Montana Forest Products, as these lands were interspersed with MFP timberlands. It allowed Montana Forest Products to work with a single landowner who had similar family-based forest management philosophies. F.H. Stoltze has been a valuable partner in managing Montana Forest Products lands for 3 decades.



Chuck and Wynona O'Neil

Chuck never retired from his life of forestry and lumber. He worked daily at the office until his late 80s, with Char by his side. In 2001, Wynona passed away and less than a year later, Chuck passed away at age 92.

Char continued to manage Montana Forest Products after Chuck's passing. With help from her siblings, especially Nancy, the family partnership continued to manage existing timber stands and acquire additional lands. F.H. Stoltze provided sound forestry guidance and handled the harvest operations.

A successful family forest must inspire its younger generations to be involved. To this end, Char and Nancy set up the first family "Day in the Woods" event

in 2004. Every year since then, Chuck and Wynona's children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren get together and spend the day on the family timberlands. Typical events include visiting active harvest sites, pulling deer screens from recent plantings, viewing troubled stands, and discussing management options.

Montana Forest Products was extremely fortunate to benefit from Ron Buentenmeier's legendary wealth of knowledge and experience. When Ron retired from F.H. Stoltze, he agreed to become Resource Manager for Montana Forest Products. Ron started managing MFP stands on June 1, 2008, and also began educating the family on how to self-manage the timberlands.



Charlene O'Neil and Ron Buentenmeier install a Forest Stewardship sign at the 2013 Montana Forest Products "Day in the Woods"

With Ron's guidance, the next generation of the C.H. O'Neil family has taken on management. In 2009, Garren Hartman (husband of grandchild Sarah Jayne O'Neil) was asked to join in managing Montana Forest Products and is now the General Manager. Grandson Jordan O'Neil joined the Montana Forest Product management team full time in 2014. Both completed the forest stewardship programs and became Accredited Logging Professionals. Garren and Jordan harvest nearly all of the Montana Forest Products' sustainable yield of 1.25 million board feet annually. Montana Forest Products was also a partner in starting Custom Beams and Milling LLC in 2017. The family of Charles H. O'Neil was proud to mark 75 years as an ATFS certified tree farm in 2019, but also proud that the O'Neil legacy in the Flathead Valley lumber industry marks 125 years in 2020. Chuck and Wynona's 4 children, 7 grandchildren, and 12 great-grandchildren will continue careful stewardship of the lands and maintain their long-term management outlook for future O'Neil generations. ♦

American Forest Foundation: An American Tree Farm Story

By Kari Klehm, Tree Farmer



Over 60 years ago, my parents purchased 160 acres of timbered land in Lincoln County, Montana. It was a huge investment for them financially, but my father was a professional forester with a long eye for the future management of this property. I believe the definition of a forester is “someone who plants trees that they will never see harvested.”

Over the course of my parents’ life, the land provided our family with recreational opportunities like camping, hiking, bottle hunts, and grouse and big game hunting, as well as the winter activities of snow-cattling, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing.

The income aspects have been just as varied; my brother and I grew up dragging cut Christmas trees to the pickup truck. In this way, we earned our money to buy Christmas presents, and I’m sure it was how my folks generated money for bills. When our homes were heated with wood, this was the source of that wood. As my dad’s forestry experience expanded, so did his management skills. He knew when log markets were good and scheduled selective logging on the property.

During our 60+ years at the helm, the Tree Farm was partially logged at least six times, most recently in 2018. During his earliest explorations, my dad discovered an old logging camp and the remains of a cabin with corrals. He showed us evidence of 20-inch-diameter trees used to construct that old cabin, which were likely the remains of the earliest logging on this location, estimated at around 1915. That’s over 100 years of being a timber-producing property! Those remains have since returned to the ground that grew them. I’d bet the bottles and cans are still there for the searching, though.

Over the years, access to property has improved only slightly! It still takes about 2 hours to travel the 60 miles “door to door,” with the less pleasant parts near the Tree Farm end of the journey. Accessibility has been both a curse and a blessing! It is not the place for an impromptu road-trip and would be a serious hindrance for anyone hoping for mischief.

When my brother and I were young teens, we helped Dad construct a 12’ x 16’ cabin. This was a

game changer in the Christmas tree business. Now we could spend a couple nights at the property and work a full day and a half. This was also when my mom decided she didn't like facing down a packrat that was more fully invested in the cabin than she was. I really enjoyed the additional time we could spend as a family at the cabin and being able to work with a wood cook stove. What fun that was! Running to the outhouse, in the middle of the night, was the only drawback for me.

I have to admit that I am a "city girl" now, and I really love the luxury of water on demand. Hauling water for anything besides consumption isn't fun. At the Tree Farm, we had to schlep water from the spring, boil it on the stove, and use that for cleanup ... just a brief taste of the days when laundry was done on a washboard and dishes were judiciously washed by hand. You certainly didn't waste water that you had to carry.

Starting in the 1990s, I attended forest stewardship classes and workshops as they have been available. I listened and learned what my father had to teach me about forest management. I also know where my limits are, so gathering good, honest and knowledgeable people to guide us has been a huge blessing. The most recent logging of the property, in 2018, was a culmination of my coming into full stewardship of the Tree Farm and my longing to see the contour of the land. I wanted to see what it looked like when I first saw it and the forest was more open following corporate logging. The timing for this couldn't have been better: Floyd Quiram, the logger from the previous selective logging job, and his protégé Shelby George (2019's Montana Tree Farm "Logger of the Year" recipient) tackled this project with new methods and a light touch. Their artistry was immediately evident and will grow more so as the ground heals. Holly McKenzie, our forestry consultant, had been a friend and associate of my father's. He had trusted and respected her for years. She helped guide us through an experience that I was concerned I would do disservice to. F.H. Stoltze Land & Lumber provided the logging plan, which was overseen by Cameron Wohlschlagel. The log and lumber markets were good! The timing was right for a financially lucrative harvest and additional benefits included reducing the risk of wildfire as well as insect and disease outbreaks. Selectively logging the Tree Farm seemed like a no-brainer to me.

This logging job was completed in November of 2018, and every visit I have made since then still makes

my heart happy. Nature has already stocked the new forest with a fine understory of saplings to replace the older forest one day. We will do weed treatments to take care of disturbed soils; however, since our loggers utilized low impact logging methods, this will be easier for us to do.

On the Tree Farm are a couple of springs that have always enchanted me. Who doesn't love a wetland? We never developed them for fear of not doing it properly. Now this possibility falls to my son and his future management of the Tree Farm property. My husband and son are scheduled to take the Montana Forestry Stewardship course this summer—there are lots of opportunities to learn and network there!

We have a small family memorial space on the Tree Farm property. It is my most sincere hope that I will be buried there when I die. To this end, I am hoping to develop a green cemetery there for people who wish to go back to the earth in the most natural way. There will be no embalming; simple coffins or shrouds only, and small organic markers. Life will continue on above. Animals will come and go. Recreation and agriculture will continue. This is life as it has always been.

As to that distant future, I hope that through the natural events that come, someone takes up stewardship of this place and maintains a kind and guiding hand. We'll do our part until then. ♦

TREE FARM ANNUAL MEETING

The October 2020 meeting
is postponed.

The planned events will take place
in the same location in 2021.
Clancy, Montana - just south of
Helena

Visit
www.treefarmssystem.org/montana
for updates.

MARY NAEGELI MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



Each year the Montana Tree Farm System recognizes a deserving college student with an interest in forestry and who is a resident of Montana with an academic scholarship. At the 2017 Montana Annual Meeting, the membership unanimously approved a recommendation to name the scholarship the Mary Naegeli Memorial Scholarship after longtime Tree Farm member Mary Naegeli. Would you be willing to support the Montana Tree Farm System by contributing to the Mary Naegeli Memorial Scholarship?

Mary Naegeli, a long-time Montana Tree Farmer, former steering committee member, and strong advocate for long-term land stewardship poses with her son Bill and Inspector Everett Young, proudly displaying her Forest Stewardship sign.

YES, I would like to show my support in promoting the Tree Farm System by contributing to the Mary Naegeli Memorial Scholarship.

I have included a donation of \$ _____.

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

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2020 Montana Tree Farm Mary Naegeli Memorial Scholarship Recipient

By Holly McKenzie, Vice Chair of MT Tree Farm Steering Committee

This year, we are pleased to inform you that the Mary Naegeli Tree Farm Scholarship has been awarded to a deserving young lady you have watched grow up in the Tree Farm Family! She is Sophie Kolb, daughter of Robin and Peter Kolb of Evaro.

Sophie just finished high school at Frenchtown, where she was very active in 4-H for 9 years and Speech and Debate for all 4 years.

She is an excellent policy debater; every parent dreads when their teenager hones their skills in arguing!

Sophie is headed to Montana State University this fall where her declared major is biological sciences and conservation biology and ecology. She loves science and comes by it naturally, as her mom has a degree in geology and her dad is a forest ecologist. Sophie grew up helping on a tree farm and spent every summer at the Natural Resources Youth Camp (14 years as a kid shadowing the big campers in hopes that she could one day attend, and 3 of those years as a camper). Congratulations Sophie and good luck at MSU! We are proud of you! ♦



Montana Tree Farm Is Awarded Grants!

We recently received some very good news about grants awarded to the Montana Tree Farm. We were awarded a grant for \$1,000 to host a Women in the Woods retreat next spring. When the DNRC hosted a similar retreat in 2019, there were almost 30 women who met in the Nine Mile Valley for 3 days and 2 nights of information and bonding to learn about ways to enhance their family forestlands. The weekend included chainsaw safety training, hiring contractors, noxious weed management, testimonials from other women with forestland, and bird identification. The Montana DNRC and Montana Tree Farm offered to increase the grant funding so we will be able to keep the cost down for attendees. As we prepare for this retreat, we would like your input on where we host the event and whether an overnight workshop would appeal as much as several one-day workshops held in different locations.



Participants at the 2019 Women in the Woods Retreat

We were also awarded \$500 to help us with regular administrative work like advertising and outreach.

Lastly, the National Tree Farm Program agreed to help Montana host several breakfasts with informational speakers. Our objective is outreach, and we hope to increase Tree Farm enrollment and networking through several breakfast meetings near Helena, the Flathead Valley, Eureka, Libby or Troy, and the Bitterroot Valley. Stay tuned and watch for postcards during the long, dark days of January!

Your ideas are valued and we would like to offer a variety of interesting topics and motivational speakers to make forestland management more rewarding and effective.

Please send input to montanatreefarmsystem@gmail.com. ♦



Wind Events and Bark Beetle Outbreaks

By Amy Gannon, Montana DNRC Forestry



Since November 2019, a number of wind events have toppled large-diameter trees throughout northwest Montana, one of the most significant occurring in May 2020. The timing and magnitude of these events have created the ideal habitat for localized bark beetle outbreaks.

Douglas-fir beetle, *Dendroctonus pseudotsugae*, preferentially attacks freshly downed, large-diameter Douglas-fir where it can reproduce in high numbers. The beetles disperse in mid-May and seek out freshly killed or marginalized trees in which to lay eggs. The eggs take an entire year to develop into adults which, conveniently, affords landowners some time to employ management tactics. Infested logs can be removed, burned or chipped to kill beetles. A slightly less labor-intensive approach is to manipulate the beetles' communication system by applying packets of pheromones in the surrounding stand or on desired trees. The pheromone packets deliver a chemical, methyl-cyclohexanone (MCH), that mimics a "no vacancy" message that the beetles otherwise emit when a tree is too full to support more beetles. The packets are commercially available from home and garden stores or easily found online. These packets should be hung by April 15th (in this case, 2021) to effectively deter beetles when they fly in approximately mid-May.

Douglas-fir are not the only tree species that can

be attacked by bark beetles after a wind event. Pine engraver beetles, *Ips* spp., commonly infest downed ponderosa pine and can create significant damage in nearby standing trees. Beetles infest downed logs in late spring, laying a brood of eggs that develop by summer. These summer offspring then emerge as adults and infest fresh slash or, more detrimentally, pole-sized trees or the tops of large-diameter trees. Pine engraver beetles can be readily managed if detected before the second generation of beetles attacks residual trees. Infested logs can be removed, chipped or burned to interrupt beetle development.

Now is a good time to determine whether beetles have infested downed logs on your property. A fine brownish-red boring dust will be evident where beetles have bored into the log. Be sure to look on the underside as well since beetles often attack in the bottom, shaded segments. A sharp hatchet can be used to peel back the outer bark to reveal distinct galleries carved by the beetles. If you determine that you have an infestation underway, you should review your landowner objectives and decide what action to take. You can find more information by searching the Montana DNRC Forest Pest Management website where you will find links to identification tools and management resources. ♦

Good Neighbor, Bad Neighbor, Mind Your Own Business Neighbor!

By Holly McKenzie, Vice Chair of MT Tree Farm Steering Committee

Recently I was asked the question, “Whose responsibility is it when an adjacent property has dead trees that are at risk of falling on your property?” In a neighborhood, it usually falls to the landowner who owns the dead tree. But things get more questionable when it is remote forestland where there are no nearby roads to access the snag and there are no foreseeable management activities for that property.

When our tree farm inspectors go out to visit with forestland owners, they get a lot of questions and similar concerns. How does one handle noxious weed populations across property lines for absentee neighbors that live out of state or even out of the country? Is it OK to spray a little over the line to prevent infestations on our own land when the neighbor never addresses their weeds or doesn't believe they have a problem? Of course, it's best to get permission, but this is easier said than done.

What about bark beetle infestations or advanced dwarf mistletoe disease that is upwind from a healthy, well-managed forest? Sure, the managed forest has a better chance of survival because the thinned trees have more available water and resources to ward off attacks—however, it isn't a sure bet. Is it best to inform a neighbor of the effect they have on your land and see if they need help combating their weeds or beetles? Some neighbors are only on amicable terms and they don't often talk.

I recently visited with a fellow tree farmer who had spent considerable time and money getting his boundary lines surveyed and marked, only to find that a neighbor had uprooted and moved several hundred

feet of the markers and stakes to an interior location that followed a logging trail. How do you handle a situation like that one? It is illegal to move boundary lines, but if neighbor kids do it, would you take them to small claims court?

These and so many other issues come into play on private lands each day. We'd be interested in hearing about how you may have dealt with a sticky or tough situation regarding neighboring forestland. Ignorance is bliss, but it's our responsibility to use good communication skills and reach out to our neighbors who don't realize their lack of action has impacts on our property. It's all right to use good educational materials and information to help them be better stewards of their forestland. Owning forestland is a privilege, and with that comes great responsibility. Not everyone realizes this when they acquire forestland through inheritance or a purchase. Pass along your family forest newsletters or Woodland Magazine from AFF. Tell neighbors about the MSU Extension's Forest Stewardship Class or invite them to attend one with you if you haven't taken it yet. The class offers an amazing opportunity to acquire Forestry 101 course information without a whole semester of college!

This cross-boundary approach to managing forestlands is currently embraced by federal and state managers alike. We make a greater difference when forest health doesn't change from one ownership to the next . . . and when great stewardship continues across boundaries. Tree Farmers and Forest Stewards make a difference in Montana! Keep up the good work! ♦



In Passing

Jerry Okonski, a longtime forester and logger, passed away from a heart attack on May 14, 2020, at his home near Echo Lake. Jerry was well known for his forest engineering skills and ability to rig up complicated line logging systems and build hybrids of other mechanized logging equipment. He used his time and talent to thin hundreds of tree farm properties between Lincoln and Flathead Counties. He and his wife, Mary Ann, were married for 52 years and had 3 lovely daughters. Jerry spoke to us at the Rose family property during our Annual Meeting last fall near Blankenship Fire Hall. We will miss him! ♦

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