New Extension District Starts with New Office Hours

On July 1st, the Clackamas County Extension office reopened to the public five days per week with 40 hours of service for the first time since 1994. Shrinking local budgets forced Extension to reduce their staff and hours of service 15 years earlier. But, last November, Clackamas County residents approved an Extension and 4-H Service District that provides dedicated and permanent funding to ensure Extension’s future in the county. The new District officially started business the first of this month.

“This is a great day for Extension,” said Mike Bondi, Staff Chair at the Extension office in Oregon City. “We look forward to continuing to serve the informal education and outreach needs in the county while working with hundreds of volunteers—like our 4-H leaders, Master Gardeners, Master Woodland Managers, Family Food Educators, and others—who help us bring valuable information to local residents.”

Extension’s new county service district will see several significant changes in the coming months and years.

The first change is expanding the Extension office hours and service to the citizens. The new office hours at Extension will be Monday through Friday, from 8:00am until 4:30pm, each day. The Friday public office hours and everyday lunch hour service are key upgrades added with the new Extension District.

Likewise, the Master Gardener Clinic housed at the Extension office on weekdays will add Friday clinic hours, too. Their service hours are now 9:00-Noon and 1:00-4:00pm daily.

Other changes for Extension in the coming months could be in the offing, too. A strategic planning process is now underway that will begin to identify priority education and outreach needs in the community. More than 30 community focus groups, to be held between now and mid October, will help provide information and ideas for growing Extension programs and services in the county.

Watch Extension and see us grow like we never have before to better serve you!

Michael C. Bondi, Extension Agent—Forestry and Christmas Trees
Upcoming Programs

Community Forestry Day
Saturday, July 11 (8:00am-4:00pm)
Hopkins Demonstration Forest
16750 S. Brockway Road, Beavercreek

July will be a key time to get all of the existing facilities in order for the coming school season and the wet weather coming in the fall. Also, we need to make sure all of the odd jobs around the farm are cleaned up before we get into any new construction projects beginning in the coming weeks or months. So, here’s what we have going on:

- Scraping and staining all exterior cedar siding on the shop, Hopkins Hall and the two restrooms.
- Cleaning the wood shake roofs on the entry sign, the kiosk and the Cedar Grove Shelter and apply sealant.
- Clean and treat with sealant the four footbridges and boardwalks on the farm.

Other jobs may be available, too, but right now it looks like a lot of preparation work and staining. Bring your painting clothes and your favorite brush. Better yet…call Tim at the tree farm for more details, tools to bring and get your name on the list for lunch.

A good ol’ fashioned summer BBQ is planned—yes, burgers on the grill and all of the fixin’s.

Christmas Tree Culturing Field Day
Saturday, July 18 (8:30am-Noon)
Location: Gerry Willits C & M Tree Farm
17572 S Springwater Road Estacada

Join us for the annual Christmas tree culturing field day. This year’s session will feature the basics of culturing Douglas-fir, grand fir and noble fir. We’ll discuss basal pruning, set up practices and finish culturing including “tricks from the pros.”

Chal Landgren, OSU’s Christmas Tree Extension Specialist, will help lead the session, along with Gerry and his crew. Look for our “Tree Tour Signs”. See map below
Portable Sawmilling

Wednesday, July 22 (6:30pm until dark)
Kaster Custom Cutting
29700 S Beaver Creek Road, Meadowbrook

Kevin Kaster will host this twilight tour to look at his portable sawmilling operation. He’ll discuss milling practices, the products he is manufacturing and marketing in value-added niches. Kevin’s business includes “on-farm” milling and cutting delivered logs. He has recently added his own drying kiln, too. His markets include certified wood and non-certified products. Look for our “Tree Tour” signs. See map below.

Tree Farmer of the Year Summer Picnic and Tour

Saturday, August 1 (5:00pm until dark)
Jones Creek Tree Farm
22363 S. Dan’s Avenue, Beavercreek

Paul Bishop, Clackamas County’s Woodland Farmer of the Year in 2008, hosts this year’s Summer Picnic and Farm Tour. Plan to arrive anytime about 4:30 to visit with friends, neighbors and woodland owners you haven’t met before. Potluck dinner begins at 5:00pm.

Dinner Arrangements

- CCFFA will provide meat and the beverages for the dinner.
- Last name that starts with A through H, please bring a dessert.
- Last name that starts with I through Q, please bring a salad.
- Last name that starts with R through Z, please bring a side dish.
- Bring your own plates and silverware and a chair or blanket to sit on during the meal.
- Cups and napkins will be provided by CCFFA.

About 6:00pm, the CCFFA will convene a brief business meeting and follow with the field tour beginning by 6:30 or sooner.

Paul has a beautiful tree farm that is about as flat as a pancake. He has excellent roads and trails so walking or riding will be easy, too. Come, one and all. Be sure to invite family members and friends…and that new woodland owner or family down the road that you need to get to know!
Community Forestry Day
Saturday, August 8, (8:00am-4:00pm)
Hopkins Demonstration Forest
16750 S. Brockway Road, Beavercreek

Our August plans will include finishing up any of the scraping, cleaning and painting projects that didn’t get finished last month. But, in addition, and depending on what will be needed in and around the new classroom project or the fire tower project, we want to be flexible to put people on deck for those projects, too.

Bottom-line is that we could use a lot of help in August. Stay tuned. Check in with Tim or watch the FFI website for the latest information (see: http://www.forestsforever-or.org). Don’t miss the fun. Contact Tim to reserve your place at the lunch table. We are planning another summer BBQ for the August Community Forestry Day.

News You Can Use

New Extension Publications Now Available

EC 1124, Safe and Effective Use of Chain Saws for Woodland Owners
Authors: Steve Bowers, Raini Rippy
Revised June 2009, 16 pages, $2.50
http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pdf/ec/ec1124.pdf

PNW 609, Managing Organic Debris for Forest Health
Authors: Chris Schnepf, Russell T. Graham, Sandy Kegley, Theresa Jain
New March 2009, 64 pages, $7.00
http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pdf/pnw/pnw609.pdf

EM 8980, Managing Insects and Diseases of Oregon Conifers
Authors: David Shaw, Paul Oester, Greg Filip
New June 2009, 104 pages, $15.00

What’s New on the Web?

Be sure to keep watching Extension’s website at http://extension.oregonstate.edu/clackamas for additional information about woodland management and Christmas trees—not to mention info about Extension’s other program areas like 4-H, families, watersheds and agriculture.

The woodland and Christmas tree information on our site is under the tab called Trees and Forests. Recent postings include a write up about the recent and successful Christmas Tree Disease Management workshop, the woodland tour to Rosebrook’s, and a special update forest disease management training for Master Woodland Managers in Clackamas County.
Christmas tree check off program moving along

Everyone knows marketing, promotion and research for a commodity is not cheap. Investing in these activities is what has to happen to strengthen, grow and maintain a competitive position in an industry. Raising needed funds is never easy.

For the past 1½ years, there has been renewed talk about forming a national marketing order for the Christmas tree industry to provide needed resources to ensure future viability. These discussions are continuing amongst Christmas tree growers throughout the country.

Authorized through the federal government, check-offs collect funds from producers of agricultural commodities and use these funds for promotion, marketing, research and other specified programs. Check-off funds promote the commodity in a generic way without reference to a particular producer. Commodities with federally-authorized check-off programs include avocados, blueberries, cotton, honey, mangos, mushrooms, peanuts, popcorn, soybeans and watermelons.

It is likely that small growers (harvesting fewer than 500 trees each year) would be exempt from Christmas tree check-off program. Other growers would pay a fee per tree harvested. The current proposal is 15 cents per tree. Fund payment would be the responsibility of the grower. Funds collected could be used to “develop and carry out research, promotion and information activities designed to expand, improve or make more efficient the marketing or use of the agricultural commodity.” Check-off funds cannot be used to influence legislation or governmental action or policy (lobbying) nor for industry membership programs.

State or regional Christmas tree associations would be able to apply for funding to a national Check-off Board to help fund their own local projects. The amount of the grant to any one state or regional association would be limited to 10% or 15% of what is collected in that state or region.

To find out more about the proposed Christmas tree check-off program, see the following website: www.checkoffstudy.com.

State Budget Cuts to effect Extension

Challenging economic times are affecting all state agencies and their budgets for the coming biennium. Extension’s state wide budget will be cut, too, currently about 10-15%. Extension’s state budget provides the salary support for most its on-campus and off-campus faculty. The planned reduction will be spread across all five of Extension’s program areas: agriculture, 4-H, Family and Community Health, Forestry and Sea Grant.

Although reductions will be coming in all programs, it appears that no faculty will be cut from the Extension Forestry program at this time. Past retirements in our Extension Specialist staff (Timber Harvesting and Forest Management/Taxation/Business) have left these positions unfilled. Extension Forestry’s Silviculture Specialist position has been vacant for more than 3 years, too.

Two new Extension Forestry Agents were added to the staff within the past several months despite the budget challenges. These were Tristan Huff, Coos and Curry Counties, and Amy Grotta, Columbia and Washington Counties. There are 12 Extension Forestry Agents serving counties throughout Oregon.
OSWA Summer Tour

This year’s Oregon Small Woodlands Association Tree Farmer of the Year summer tour will be held in northeast Oregon featuring Ted and Mary Brown’s Wisdom Creek Ranch near Medical Springs—between Baker City and LaGrande. The tour will be Saturday, July 18 from 9:00am-2:00pm. There is a $10 per person registration fee. The OSU Extension office in LaGrande is handling the registration. Contact the office at 541-963-1010 for information and to sign up.

The Browns were named 2008 Oregon Tree Farmers of the Year. They manage a 730 acre ranch including property first purchased more than 50 years ago. The farm tour will include successful ways for converting old fields to thriving tree plantations, managing uneven-aged stands for old forest characteristics, long-term ponderosa pine commercial thinning trials, managing dwarf mistletoe, small sawmill demonstration, and making rustic doors and other products as a “value added” business. Union County’s 4-H Youth Exchange will host the western BBQ beef lunch.

FFI Update

The foundation work for the new classroom building at the Hopkins Demonstration Forest is now underway! A provisional building permit has been awarded for the project by Clackamas County, pending the completion of a sprinkler system design for the new building. The building site has been excavated, forms constructed and the foundation (in two pours) should be completed by the mid part of July.

Construction of the building will depend on continued fund raising and funds needed to get the classroom building to a weather-tight stage before the winter rainy season begins.

“We are very excited to get this first phase of the classroom project underway,” said Ken Everett, President of Forests Forever, Inc. “With the summer weather here, we need to get as much done as we can on the building.

Everett says it is also important to begin the building construction soon if the goal of a weather-tight building by fall is to be realized. “Now is a great time to build. Materials that we will need to purchase are less costly. Contracting costs are more competitive. And, we’d like to provide our own economic stimulus for the local community and put a few folks to work building something that will be a huge asset for tree farm and the county.”

Donations for the building fund can be made by contacting Everett at 503-655-5524. About $25,000 in cash and/or supplies or labor is still needed to be able to construct the building shell—including the roof, windows and all exterior components.
FFI Update: new trails...new picnic tables

This past spring and early summer has been an especially busy time for activities at the Hopkins Demonstration Forest. New trails and upgrades for existing trails have been the focus for several groups including local scout projects. Also, you’ll find a new, updated trail map. Stop by the information kiosk in the parking lot for a copy. This is still only a temporary version of another map that will be coming later this year.

Come enjoy the summer months with a hike on the alder plantation trail, walk the east, middle and west loops of the Watershed Trail, see the latest improvements to the Riparian Demonstration Area and the ponds—all available for your use by Forests Forever, Inc.

And, be sure to stop by and admire the new picnic tables in the Hopkins Hall area. Made from wood provided by tree farmers John and Carol Belton, the tables provide a great place for a picnic lunch or dinner—and, are the result of another Boy Scout Eagle project at Hopkins.

FFI Update—teachers take to the woods

Four local teachers will be spending the month of July at the Hopkins Demonstration Forest. Led by David Scharfenberg, a two-time veteran of the Teachers on Summer Assignment program sponsored by the Oregon Forest Resources Institute, three of David’s teaching partners from Pleasant Valley Elementary School will be joining him for this year’s intensive forestry course.

Mike Bondi, Extension Forestry Agent, will provide daily instruction and practical instruction on forest inventory, silviculture, surveying and mapping, and streamside management. Master Woodland Manager, John Poppino, will work with the team for the silviculture and stand marking activities that will lead to the next harvesting operation at the farm.

“Summer is a great time to spend in the woods with teachers and to provide them with practical information and skills they can bring back in the classroom starting this fall.
Finding a new and better Christmas tree variety is not that different from finding a new variety of any other plant. It is a numbers game. The more new plants you test, the more likely you are to find something better than you currently have. In black raspberries, for example, OSU/USDA evaluates around 2000 new plants each year. Around 4000 new strawberry plants are tested yearly at OSU alone. And with strawberries you can finish trials in 2 years and have new plants for growers to use plus eat strawberries along the way. In Christmas trees, the time between testing and seed production runs around 15 years, if all goes well. And from 1996 to 2015 we will have around 500 trees of all species in an evaluation program.

All of this is preamble and a little envy to say that tree breeding is a little slower and lower budget. Nevertheless we are finding better trees as we continue to evaluate more trees. And we are finding trees in new locations. A few examples from recent tests will help to illustrate these points.

Each year, the OSU Extension Christmas tree team composed of myself, Mike Bondi, Rick Fletcher and Brad Withrow-Robinson evaluate, on average, around 30 new sources for Christmas trees. Typically these trees will be grown at 5-6 different locations with around 750 trees per site. Prior to harvest, each tree at each site will be evaluated usually by 2 people- measuring height, grade, pest damage, color, and anything else pertinent to producing a great tree. At the end of 5 to 8 years depending on the species, a few trees always emerge at the head of the class.

For example in 2007 and 2008 our team evaluated 2 noble fir trials comprised of 43 different sources. The “sources” in these cases will be cone/seed collections from individual trees. In each trial, we have a “standard” source that we evaluate the newer sources against. Usually these will be a source from Riley/Fanno that we know is a good performing individual. The trees in the 07 and 08 evaluations originated from Bureau of Land Management and US Forest Service selections made in the early 70’s. Two new locations emerged as being potentially “better” than many of the Riley/Fanno standard trees. Both locations are in the Oregon Cascades. One collection area is east of Tillamook, OR. The other near Grass Mountain, South of Mary’s Peak in Benton County. Both sources had higher value ratings than the Riley/Fanno crosses. (See example in figure 1).

The exciting part of this is that these are areas new to the testing program and we are likely to continue to find better trees the more we look.

I placed the word “better” above in quotes for a reason. “Better” is influenced by the criteria uses in making the evaluations. Growers are paid, generally, by tree height and grade. So a tree that grows rapidly and fills in well usually comes out on top in our evaluations. In one of the sites we evaluated in 2007 I had a group of commercial tree growers evaluate a trial and a group of wreath makers.
The short story was that they did not agree a “best” source. The tree growers liked the fast growing and fast filling trees. The wreath makers tended to like slower growing sources from the USFS collection in the Cascades. Fast growth did not matter much; they liked the needle form on the Cascade trees (see fig. 2). So, when you are told that one tree is better and another, ask “why”. If the reasons fit with your needs and criteria then you may have a winner.

**REMINDERS**

July 1\textsuperscript{st}  New Days and Hours

July 11\textsuperscript{th}  Community Forestry Day Hopkins

July 18\textsuperscript{th}  Christmas Tree Culturing Field Day

July 22\textsuperscript{nd}  Portable Sawmilling Kaster Custom Cutting

Aug 1\textsuperscript{st}  Tree Farmer of the Year Summer Picnic & Tour

Aug 8\textsuperscript{th}  Community Forestry Day Hopkins