



A newsletter for  
those interested in  
Forestry, Woodland  
Management and  
Christmas Trees in  
Northwest Oregon

**Fall 2010**

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My job takes me to all corners of two counties – nearly 1,400 square miles – but lately, I’ve been spending a disproportionate amount of time in one place: Vernonia. I’m sure that everyone remembers the devastating floods that took place there in 2007 – the second such event in a decade. Disasters like these could spell the demise of a small town, but in the past three years the community has rallied, passed a key bond measure and is on track to rebuild the entire school system (out of the floodplain!) as well as much of the downtown core and public infrastructure.

So what does all this have to do with forests? Here are some interesting developments underway in Vernonia:

- Current designs for the new schools and other public buildings include woody biomass heating systems. So, in the future there may be another local outlet for biomass producers.
- The entire teaching staff of the Vernonia School District is embarking upon a three-year process of becoming a “Stewardship School” – integrating natural resources and outdoor learning into all grade levels and subject areas. So, hopefully a new generation of Vernonians will be trained to understand, value, and think critically about forests, waters, and wildlife and how we interact with them.
- The Pinchot Institute is using Vernonia to pilot a project involving private woodland owners, carbon sequestration, and health care. “Huh?” you may ask. It’s complicated, but the essential idea would be to compensate woodland owners in the form of some type of health coverage in exchange for sequestering carbon. The rationale behind this is data showing that landowners cite having to pay for medical care for themselves or a family member as a primary reason that they would sell their land or accelerate timber harvest.

All of the above is still unfolding, but together they and other projects make for an inspiring example of how a community has come together to make the best of a catastrophe. It also demonstrates the many connections between forests and other seemingly unrelated aspects of life that constantly demand our attention as citizens – public works, public education, and health care. That in itself is pretty exciting.

## Planning for the future of the family property: *Ties to the Land* workshops to be offered this fall/winter

Passing the family property on to the next generation can be a real challenge. Success in navigating that challenge is critical not just to your family, but to your property, your community, and the landscape of Oregon. **Succession planning** is an important tool to help families plan to successfully transfer not just their woodland, but also the passion and skills for taking care of that land to the next generation. [For more on succession planning, see article later in this newsletter.]

*Ties to the Land* is a national program developed in Oregon to help families begin their succession planning, and this very important conversation about the future of their property.

Several *Ties to the Land* workshops are scheduled in our area:

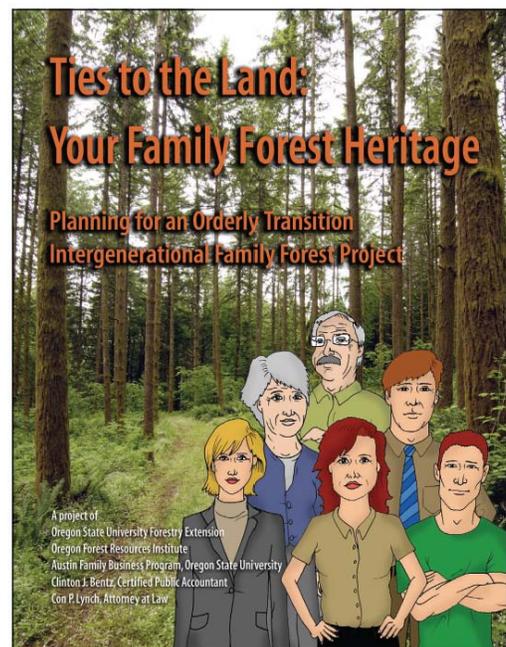
- **Rainier Senior Center, on Tuesday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2010 (part 1) and January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011 (part 2) – 6:00 pm;**
- **Washington County Extension Office, on Tuesday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010 (part 1) and January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011 (part 2) – 6:00 pm;**

**To reserve a space in either course, please RSVP** to the Columbia County Extension office, (503) 397-3462, to ensure that there are materials for you. Please RSVP one week in advance of the course.

There is a \$25 fee (per family, per location) for the course, which includes one copy of the *Ties to the Land* workbook and DVD. Additional workbooks can be reserved for \$25 each. However, because both the Washington and Columbia County Small Woodlands Associations are co-sponsoring the course, some discounts are available. The first 25 families to sign up for the Rainier class will receive a \$10 discount. The course fee is waived entirely for WCSWA members.

Our local workshops are part of a coordinated and synchronized statewide effort to present *Ties to the Land* in communities all around the state this fall. The idea of presenting synchronous workshops in many locations at about the same time is to help entire families participate in the workshop, even when family members are living in different communities around Oregon. Other nearby workshops will be in Portland and McMinnville. To find a complete list of workshops scheduled in Oregon this fall, go to <http://www.tiestotheland.org>, [click “Events” at the bottom of the page] or call Mary at (541) 737-6014. Workshops will also be presented next year in Washington, Idaho and California, if you have family members living in those states.

Plan to participate this fall, encourage members of your family to take part where they live, and begin the conversation with your family about the future of your cherished woodland property **this year**.



## Ties to the Land: Succession versus Estate Planning

By Clint Bentz

*[This article first appeared in Tree Farmer magazine, November/December 2009]*

Nothing motivates us to action like witnessing the painful mistakes of our neighbors. In our **Ties to the Land**™ seminars we discuss the important difference between succession planning and estate planning. We define Succession Planning as preparing your property and your family for a change in ownership and leadership. Estate planning is the process of understanding and using the set of legal tools that are available to make sure your Succession Plan happens the way you want it to happen. Talking about the tools before you have the plan is like packing your bags before you decide what kind of trip you want to take. Many families make this mistake and have spent large sums on elaborate estate planning documents without having ever stepped back and asked what they wanted to accomplish in the first place.

The saddest stories, however, are from those families who know what they wanted to do, but didn't get their estate planning documents in order. I recently heard such a story. Dad owned a large ranch here in the West that had both cattle and timber as the main sources of value and income. This ranch had been owned by the family for over 100 years. Dad's daughter, his only child, had her own herd of cattle that she ran on the ranch. She was very involved in the operation of the ranch and it was an important part of her heritage and identity. Her son, Dad's grandson, was also building up his own herd of cattle on the ranch and was also involved in the day-to-day operations of the ranch.

Dad's wife had died several years earlier and he had remarried. While he talked many times with his daughter and grandson about his plans for the ranch and his intention that they continue to own and manage it after his death, as with many farm couples, his will left everything to his wife. When Dad died last year, the new spouse inherited the property. Well, you can guess what happened next. The spouse promptly sold the property. To make

matters worse, after the sale closed the woman who bought the property called her husband on her cell phone to tell him excitedly that he would never guess what she just bought him for his birthday... This property, which had been a working cattle ranch for over 100 years, had been reduced to a trinket for a wealthy couple.

Imagine the sense of loss and grief for this family. Not only had they lost their father and grandfather, but now they had lost their heritage, their identity, and the wealth that had been accumulating in this family for over 100 years. The spouse has no intention of sharing the money from the sale with her step daughter, and she has no legal responsibility to do so. Not having any other place to run their cattle, the daughter and grandson sold their herds and had to turn to another line of work to support themselves.

This is not the result that Dad envisioned for his children or for his property. He had already done the hard work of successfully passing on his passion and vision for the ranch. His daughter and grandson had bought into this vision both emotionally and economically. However, like many of his generation, he did not seek the services of a competent accountant and attorney to help him ensure that his plan for the ranch and his family actually took place.

Are you in this category? If so, you are not alone. According to a new survey just released by findlaw.com, fifty-eight percent of Americans have not written a will, giving them little control or input into issues such as what will happen to their assets and any minor children when they die.

A will is a basic component of estate planning. Among other things, it specifies how your assets will be distributed when you die, and who will receive them. Without a will, the laws of the state in which you reside, and the laws of any state in which you own property, will determine how your estate is distributed.

Other components of estate planning may include a living trust, a medical power of attorney for end-of-life health care decisions, life insurance trusts, family limited partnerships, limited liability companies, charitable trusts, and the like. While all of this can be very confusing, think of these things as tools in a toolbox. You only pull out those tools that are necessary to fix the problem. Just like a competent mechanic, a competent, experienced estate planning professional can help you to understand which tools you need to use to make sure your succession plan happens the way you want it to happen.

There are ultimately only five things that you can do with your property. You or your heirs can sell the property to someone else; you can give part (e.g. through conservation easements) or all of it away to charity; you can break it up and divide it among your children; you can give it intact to one child, or you can give undivided interests in the property to your children. There are benefits and risks to each of these actions which need to be thought through

carefully so that you don't have any unintended consequences.

Succession will happen. At some point in the future, your property will pass into the hands of someone else. The real question is: have you done anything to preserve the lifetime of work and passion you have invested in your property when this transition ultimately occurs? Is the next generation of leadership groomed and prepared to care for this property? Do they have both the love for the property and the technical skills they will need to be successful land managers? Have you provided an appropriate legal and financial framework that will help them to be successful?

There are many resources available to help you. Our website, [www.tiestotheland.org](http://www.tiestotheland.org), is one of them. Other great websites include the national timber tax website, [www.timbertax.org](http://www.timbertax.org), and the forest service estate planning website at [www.na.fs.fed.us/stewardship/estate/estate.shtml](http://www.na.fs.fed.us/stewardship/estate/estate.shtml)

Don't become a statistic. Get some help to start your succession and estate planning today!

### **OWC “Kicks Off” New Woodland Owner Opportunity**

The Oregon Woodland Cooperative (OWC), a member owned cooperative to serve the management and marketing needs of its members, will host members and all other interested woodland owners at an information sharing gathering on **Saturday morning, September 25<sup>th</sup>, at the Forest Grove District office of the Oregon Department of Forestry. The meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m.** with light refreshments, and conclude by noon. The theme of the meeting will be the diverse opportunities available with non-timber forest products.

Non-timber forest products (NTFPs) include floral greenery, firewood, medicinal plants (cascara, Oregon grape, etc), mushrooms and truffles, essential oils, and a variety of other products from forests. The Co-op has had success the past two years with bundled firewood and floral greenery; achieving value-added prices by using innovative marketing techniques, and is seeking to help members take advantage of these opportunities, and expand into new products.

A panel of experts in these non-timber forest products – including buyers – will present information to help those attending determine if these opportunities might be appropriate for them. Examples of successful products will be on display as “Goods from the Woods”, and knowledgeable producers will be on hand to answer questions about the products.

The Co-op has acquired a \$150,000 grant from the USDA Value-Added Producer Grant Program to assist in this new initiative. The grant will provide working capital funds for the OWC to develop capabilities to harvest, process, and market NTFPs. The grant will provide matching funds to the Co-op for identifying viable NTFPs, such as essential oils, medicinal plants in the forest, craft and niche products, and other potential income producing products. Members who wish to participate can then get expert assistance in harvesting, processing, and marketing their products.

# Thousand Cankers Disease of Walnut

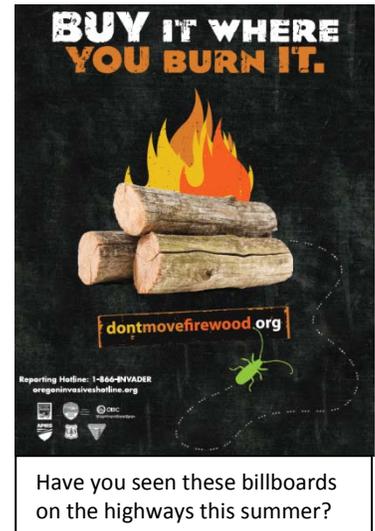
By David Shaw and Paul Oester, and Jay Pscheidt, OSU Extension Service

A new disease syndrome has emerged in the western USA on black walnut called “thousand cankers disease”. The disease kills both black walnut (*Juglans nigra*) and Hinds’s walnut (*Juglans hindsii*), but the cultivated English walnut (*Juglans regia*) and many *Juglans* hybrids are more resistant. This disease is caused by a newly described fungus called *Geosmithia morbida*. The fungus is carried by the walnut twig beetle (*Pityophthorus juglandis*). It is called, “thousand canker disease” because cankers develop around every location where beetles attack trees. The beetle doesn’t just attack twigs, as was thought to be typical in its’ native range, but attacks larger limbs and trunks, therefore causing thousands of cankers.

The beetle is native to the Southwest USA and northern Mexico, where it occurs on twigs and small branches of the Arizona walnut (*Juglans major*). Apparently, the twig beetle has moved into the urban and rural areas of the west where black walnut was planted, and at some point picked up this new fungus. The disease was first noticed in Boulder, Colorado after all the black walnut trees in town died over a 2 to 3 year period. The disease has since been detected around the west, and is currently known in California, Oregon (throughout the state), Washington (eastern), Idaho, Utah and Colorado. It is feared that the disease is a major threat to the forests of the eastern USA where black walnut is native, and several close relatives also may be threatened. Unfortunately, the disease was detected this year (July 2010) in Tennessee, and our worst fears may become realized. The unrestricted movement of firewood and wood products is a direct threat to native forests, and this now appears to be another case study.

In Oregon, Jay Pscheidt, OSU Extension Plant Pathologist Specialist, led the investigations into thousand canker disease on Oregon’s black walnut and closely associated hybrid walnuts. He summarized his observations in the 2010 Plant Disease Management Handbook, available on-line at <http://plant-disease.ippc.orst.edu> (search for “thousand canker” on the page). A copy of the Handbook is also in the Extension office. A few salient points from Jay’s writeup:

- The dominant symptom of thousand cankers disease is failure for the tree to leaf out in the spring. Dieback appears to start in the upper crown and progress to lower branches in succeeding years. Oval cankers are found in the living bark (see photos).
- Little is known about ways to control thousand cankers disease or prevent its spread. Do not sell or transport walnut firewood or logs with bark attached, especially to areas where the disease is not yet present.



Have you seen these billboards on the highways this summer?



← Oval cankers in the bark of an infected tree.

Early (left), moderate (center) and severe (right) symptoms. →

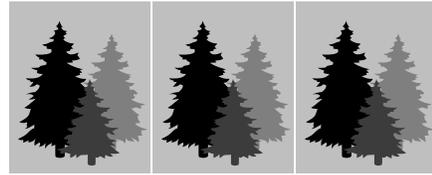
Photos by Jay Pscheidt



More information available online: [California Thousand Canker Disease Field Identification Guide](#)

# Christmas Tree Corner

By Chal Landgren, OSU Extension Christmas Tree Specialist



## Getting the Straightest Top

Many of you are now spending hours with bamboo sticks and ties trying to straighten noble or Nordmann fir leaders. During this tedious and expensive process you may be wondering if there might be a better method to convince the leader to “grow straight” in the first place. The short answer is “probably”, depending on how and when you cut the leader. To explain, let me outline the results of a small coordinated trial that Ken Brown and I conducted on our own farms this year.

The treatments we compared are common options and included:

C= leader cut to a single bud; other buds within 2" removed

M= Aluminum "skate key" bud clip

B= Paper bud cap stapled to tree; 3 staples per cap

P= PVC tube. 2" stub left above bud. PVC secured with clothes pin



Cut leader



Bud clip



Paper bud cap



PVC tube

Treatments were applied on 6-8 foot noble and Nordmann fir at two locations during the first week of April 2010 and evaluated the first week of August 2010. Each treatment takes different degrees of time and effort. Cutting and bud removal is the quickest. The paper bud cap required the most time. The PVC tube/clothes pin and the bud clip were somewhere in between. But for each, you still need to cut the leader.

For evaluations of the treatments, we considered a “10” as a perfect top (i.e. you could scarcely see any deformity with a straight leader). A 5 rating (commonly our lowest) indicated the new leader emerged at around a 60-degree angle from horizontal and would definitely need serious straightening efforts in order to get straight (our 9 to 10 rank).

After treating around 150 trees and evaluating each top, the average for the cutting and metal bud clips was the same-7.7. The paper bud caps were lower and averaged around 7.1. The PVC tube was the straightest and averaged 8.6. However, on two trees the PVC tube could not be removed or had trapped the leader inside, resulting in dead tops.

In the end, both Ken and I concluded that simply cutting the top with clippers to a single isolated bud was by far the quickest method and the one that resulted in the least damage.

With any of these treatments your success might be improved by better timing or technique. For example, cutting the leaders in the Summer-Fall after the buds can clearly be identified (rather than the following April), likely would improve the straightness of the leaders. And there likely are similar procedures that could enhance the other method.

## Update from the Committee for Family Forestlands

*By Brad Withrow-Robinson, OSU Forestry and Natural Resources Extension*

The Committee for Family Forestlands provides a family landowner's perspective to the Oregon Board of Forestry and the State Forester. The Committee sets an annual work plan guided by landowner inputs such as the 2005 Family Forest symposium and by emerging events.

The Committee recently presented its Annual Report to the Board of Forestry held July 30<sup>th</sup>, in Eugene. The report provides an overview of the Committee's work during the past year, and identifies issues likely to affect forest landowners in the year ahead. The [report](#) is available on the Board of Forestry website, <http://www.oregon.gov/ODF/BOARD/index.shtml>.

Here are some highlights.

### Annual Report (FY 2009-2010)

Declining state revenues and proposed budget reductions were a key issue, causing the Committee to spend a lot of time and effort to understand and advise the Board about the potential impacts of various scenarios. Maintaining ODF Services to family landowners, fairly sharing costs of fire protection, and ensuring the viability of the Forest Practices Act in a harsh budget environment became a major focus for the Committee.

### Looking ahead to FY 2010 – 2011

The Committee anticipates that budgets and finance will remain high priorities for the ODF and woodland owners. There is concern that the current budget creates a disincentive to own and manage private forestland, and that the State government is losing its will to share in the responsibility for maintaining sustainable forests. This is reflected in the reductions to staffing and services provided to family forestland owners and the potential for increasingly shifting carrying costs (fire protection and other) to landowners. Other issues the Committee will be watching include the effects of nonpoint source pollution on water quality, the decline in forestry infrastructure, and ways to maintain the "social contract" to practice forestry.

Family landowners and other members of the public are encouraged to communicate with the Committee about issues they see as relevant to family woodland ownership in Oregon. Contact information for members can be found at the Committee for Family Forestlands website, <http://www.oregon.gov/ODF/BOARD/CFF/cff.shtml>.

### **About the Committee for Family Forestlands**

Established in 2000 by the Oregon Legislature at the request of the Oregon Board of Forestry, the Committee for Family Forestlands' overall priority is to keep family forestlands in forest, by helping address the challenges to maintaining the viability of family forestlands. The Committee advises the Board and the State Forester on matters such as developing financial incentives, maintaining infrastructure, preventing forest fragmentation and conversion and the potential effects that changes in forest policy may have on family forestland owners. The Committee also gives guidance to the Department of Forestry on efforts to provide and improve services to family woodland owners and to raise public awareness of the role that family forestlands play in maintaining a healthy forest environment, economically, socially and ecologically.

The Committee meets on a regular basis. Members include four family forestland owners (representing small to large acreage ownerships in various regions of the state), a citizen at large, representatives of the environmental community and forest industry representative. Ex-officio members include representatives from Oregon State University, the Oregon Forest Resources Institute, Associated Oregon Loggers and the Department of Forestry.

Two long-serving members of the Committee retired this summer, Ned Livingston to his ranch in Bonanza (Klamath Co.) and Gary Springer to a warmer seat on the Board of Forestry. New members are Grant County landowner Roje Gottee and Benton County landowner Sara Leiman.



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## Upcoming Events



- **Sept. 15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>:** Pacific Logging Congress “Live in the Woods” show, Clatskanie. Info: [www.pacificloggingcongress.org](http://www.pacificloggingcongress.org).
- **Saturday, Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>:** Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District BBQ. 10 am – 2 pm, Cornelius. Learn about SWCD activities and USDA conservation programs. Info: 503-648-3174 x117
- **Saturday, Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>:** Oregon Woodland Cooperative information session. 9 am – noon, Forest Grove. Theme is non-timber forest product opportunities. Info: 503-628-2344 or see page 4.
- **Tuesday, Oct. 19<sup>th</sup> and Jan. 18<sup>th</sup>:** Ties to the Land. Rainier, 6:00 – 9:00 pm. See page 2 for details.
- **Tuesday, Oct. 26<sup>th</sup> and Jan. 25<sup>th</sup>:** Ties to the Land. Beaverton, 6:00 – 9:00 pm. See p. 2 for details.
- **Saturday, Nov. 13<sup>th</sup>:** Rainwater Harvesting Workshop. 9 am – 1 pm, Hillsboro. Info: 503-648-3174