

Spring is Upon Us...

after not much of a winter. As much as we're enjoying the flowers blooming and the sunny weather, we're still holding out for a bit more rain. We have so many exciting things to talk about! See the backside of the newsletter for info about our new website and check it out!!

www.troutmountain.com

Then read on about our latest working conservation easement property, new stream regulations, our regular log market update and more.



Highlights

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Expect Changes to Oregon's Forest Practices Rules

In January 2015, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ruled that Oregon does not have an adequate nonpoint source pollution water quality program for coastal waterways. NOAA and EPA first notified the state of this in 1998 and are now requiring development and implementation of a program that will meet Clean Water Act requirements. Four areas were identified needing work including: protections for small and medium fish bearing streams as well as non-fish bearing streams, programs for improvements to forest roads that may be delivering sediment, programs to identify and reduce risks of landslides and, assurance that federal laws are met regarding aerial application of herbicides.

Changes appear imminent for stream rules as the Oregon Board of Forestry has directed Oregon Department of Forestry to analyze stream protection rules to identify how buffers could be improved for small and medium fish streams, though there is currently no proposed increase in



protection for non-fish bearing streams. Recent legislation addressing aerial herbicide application (Senate Bill 613) establishes no spray buffers around homes and schools and expands buffers on fish bearing streams and domestic water sources. The bill, which is currently being addressed by a legislative work group, also

requires additional notification and documentation of aerial spray activities.

Current rules and voluntary efforts around forest road sediment delivery and landslide protection are not sufficient to meet NOAA and EPA requirements so we will likely see new regulations addressing those items as well.

Log Market Update

It's hard to get inspired about the log market at times like this. After the brief year-end price spike there aren't too many bright spots. The domestic lumber market has been steadily dropping in the first quarter of 2015, the U.S. dollar is so strong in Japan and Europe that it's slowing log and lumber exports, and the weather has been so unseasonably good that the normal "winter bounce" in log prices has not materialized. Most mills have plenty of logs and are not foreseeing a quick recovery in Douglas-fir log prices. Log prices for Douglas-fir are currently in the \$550-to-\$650 per mbf range, and some mills are not buying. What can change this picture? We are hoping for a return to normal spring weather (wet) that would slow the flow of logs to mills and increased demand for lumber as the eastern part of the nation recovers from their "arctic vortex". Stay tuned!

On the positive side the western red cedar log market is at an all-time high (\$1,500 per mbf). The alder market



remains steady and bigleaf maple demand is good (see Barry's article on the specialty market for maple).

The chip market is often counter-cyclical to the log market and that's

true today with fir pulp prices around \$40 per ton. Some owners are taking advantage of this and thinning young plantations or removing overgrown patches of Christmas trees.

Oregon Woodland Co-op



Oregon Woodland Co-op offers clean, seasoned firewood that's sustainably harvested from family forests. Barry Sims interviewed Neil Schroeder, who helped create the program. Here is what he learned.

The firewood program has been going on for 5 years. The co-op received a grant from the USDA for a brand and label design as well as a part time person to explore the sales possibilities. The first sales were to the New Seasons

Groceries. The part time person took orders and at first delivered them himself and then found members who learned to bundle and deliver. When that person left, Neil took over as administrator and began to conduct meetings twice a year for the purpose of developing consistency and quality in the firewood bundles. Their concern is that no matter who bundles the wood, it should all look the same to the customer at the time of purchase. The grant also gave them the money to have a video produced which stars Lyal Purinton teaching how to cut, season, split, bundle, palletize and deliver a perfect bundle of firewood. They distribute that video to members only when they show an interest in participating. However, they conduct the classes because the socialization and interaction of members creates a milieu for better product and

improved efficiency.

In 2014 the Co-op sold 23,000+ bundles and grossed nearly \$100,000. In 2015 they hope to sell about 35,000 bundles. In addition to New Seasons, they are now selling to the seven Metro area Whole Foods stores and to similar stores in Seattle. They've even had interest expressed by the large chains like Safeway and Albertsons.

The firewood program can be entered on a part time basis and is certainly open to anyone who is willing to meet OWC's standards of quality and service. The members who participate are thinning their forests and making money on what used to be called a "Pre-commercial Thinning." If you think selling a cord of firewood at over \$600 is pre-commercial you probably don't see things the way the OWC sees it!



Red Hills Sale and Conservation Easement

Trout Mountain Forestry recently celebrated the successful culmination of a five-year effort to protect the 275-acre Winter Forest in the Red Hills of Dundee. Many of the larger forested tracts in this area of the Willamette Valley are being subdivided and developed as vineyards, leaving few parcels large enough to support important wildlife species dependent of fir and oak habitat. This

property is adjacent to the Trappist Abbey (also protected by a conservation easement) and together these two tracts provide over 1,600 acres of contiguous habitat, including several hundred acres of important oak woodland and oak savanna. We call this the “Red Hills of Dundee Conservation Area”, which is now one of the largest protected natural areas in Yamhill County.

The Winter Family had owned the forest for the past 40 years and have employed Trout Mountain forester Scott Ferguson as manager since 1987. The family came to the reluctant decision to sell the property when the third generation (living in California) wanted to be “cashed out”. The need to sell conflicted with the strong desire of the family members to protect the forest and not see it subdivided and developed.

The solution to this dilemma was provided by the Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program (WWMP) which provides funding for the acquisition and protection of important wildlife habitat. Scott brought together a conservation buyer (in this case the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs) and the needed funding (the \$3,600,000 WWMP grant) to make the deal happen and permanently protect the property. Project partners included the Yamhill County Soil and Water Conservation District and the US Fish and Wildlife Partners Program.

Bigleaf Maple Reconsidered

Maple and alder have long been considered weeds by the Oregon tree farmer. The rehabilitation of alder’s image from a “weed” to a desirable crop tree is now well known. Alder has become regarded as a valuable and fast-growing forest tree. But landowners often complain about maple. One of the biggest complaints is about the perceived low quality and economic value of the wood. But Trout Mountain Forestry’s Barry Sims believes maple has potential to be a greater contributor to our forest economy.

Barry conducted 2 harvests in 2014 with significant maple. In Clackamas County the average delivered log price for the maple was over \$700/mbf—more than Douglas-fir! What really brought the prices up was the sale of several loads of oversize maple to a specialty buyer for a delivered log price of just over \$1,000/MBF. This buyer is looking for figured grain, and cuts a variety of

specialty maple products for remanufacturing, such as gunstocks and instrument blanks. In Columbia County, the average delivered log price for maple was just over \$600/MBF.

To be fair, not all maple stands will capture these kinds of prices. These were both mature stands with better than average quality timber. And the presence of some large figured maple logs brought the average log price up quite a bit. But even without the figured maple, the average bigleaf maple sawlog price was in the \$500s—better than most people would expect.

Bigleaf maple could become the next alder—transforming from a nuisance tree that forest managers work hard to



eliminate, to an important contributor to our forest economy. But only if it passes two tests—1) it has to have genuinely valuable qualities and traits, and 2) people in the industry—forest landowners, hardwood lumber producers and users—need to believe in it and work to develop markets.

Based on Barry’s experiences this year, he thinks bigleaf maple passes the first test. It can produce incredibly beautiful wood for a variety of applications and can grow very fast. Whether it can pass the second test is up to us.



BRAND NEW Website!

Trout Mountain Forestry is very excited to announce the debut of our new website!! We have been scheming about our ideal website for years but haven't found the time to come in from the woods and make it happen. This past year we decided to hand it over to some pros. With the help of our friends and former office mates, designers and branding magicians—The Sparktank (Dan Fredman and Linda Reese) we now have a beautiful, informative, easy to navigate website with pictures of us and our clients' properties—the places we love to be. We've added some features that we're really excited about. First—welcome to social media with Trout Mountain! We now have a Facebook page AND an Instagram feed so like us and follow us to get regular updates of what's going on out in the woods. We also have an area on the website where we can put documents or maps for you to pick up and vice versa. The blog also remains a part of the site and our own Mike Messier is going to be updating it regularly. Check it out and let us know what you think!! We hope you'll love it as much as we do.

Find the website at www.troutmountain.com



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