

Down on the Tree Farm

TICKLER OF THE DAY: *Note to self...I will keep trying to engage my heirs about the benefits to body and soul of my forestland. I will not give up on my heir's interest in the tree farm!*

WHAT TO DO IN...

AUGUST

➤ Don't BURN, BABY, BURN!!!

PLAN and think AHEAD.

Where will pumpers or helicopters fill up with water on or near your place?

Plan how you will CALL FOR HELP should a fire start...911 or state forestry or local rural fire department...neighbors...cell phone range, phone numbers at hand.

You might require EXTRA READINESS from your logger if you have difficult conditions like poor access, south slopes or rocky soils.

You might require OPERATION RESTRICTIONS during severe weather conditions: high temps, low humidity, dryness, warm winds, dry slash. Consult with state forestry, consultant or industrial neighbor for advice.

DON'T HESITATE TO CALL for help. A small fire can quickly spread.

COMMON FIRE CAUSES and TIPS TO PREVENT.

· Burn barrels, BACKYARD BURNING and fireworks when conditions are dry. Talk to your neighbors...burning may be banned.

· MOWING roadsides in dry grass...equipment can strike rocks and cause sparks to ignite.

· Don't park your pick-up or other vehicle where there is TALL, dry GRASS.

· NO SMOKING or unsafe FIRES or fireworks on property during fire season.

· IF your fire truck is A HALF MILE from where you are working, it's not going to do you much good! Move it as you or your logger moves.

· CHECKLIST:

- Fire truck starts and moves, battery charged.
- Tank full of water.
- Pump starts.
- Hose and nozzle attached.
- Pump pumps water at good pressure.
- Fire tools at hand and sharp.
- Fire extinguisher and shovel right with chainsaw.
- Fire watch being done after operation ceases each day.

· CHECK YOUR LOGGER's equipment for yourself. Have him pump some water and see that the crew knows what to do! Be polite, but assertive, it's your land!

- ALWAYS PARK equipment in FIRE SAFE area... a “short” can start a fire on a machine that is turned off. Clean debris from machines regularly. Fix oil leaks. Use battery shut-off switch.
- It can still be dry, so HUNTERS: NO WARMING FIRES!
- Monitor/patrol LIGHTNING strikes.

➤ **If you haven't ORDERED SEEDLINGS, do it now.**

➤ **CONTROL that WOODY BRUSH COMPETITION.**

- Late August through early October on westside is BEST TIME for fall FOLIAR HERBICIDE application.
- Always CHECK LABELS and consult experts for specific chemicals, application rates and how to measure.
- “SITE PREPARATION” (higher) rates where no conifers present.
- “RELEASE” (lower) rates where conifers present.
- Might TANK MIX with Oust to control next spring's grasses and herbaceous weeds. The order of mixing chemicals may matter.

SEPTEMBER

➤ **WRAP UP summer projects.**

- Good WATERBARS are dug 12” below grade with 12” mound of dirt on downhill side at a 45 degree angle to road.
- SEED SKID trails and LANDINGS for erosion control with suitable, non-invasive grass/cover mix. Do it early.
- REMOVE TREES INFESTED with bark beetles before next spring when adults breed again.

➤ **ROCK ROADS for wet weather use and to extend hauling season in spring and fall.**

- ROCK can be a WISE investment to take advantage of higher log prices during wet weather when fewer logs are going to mills.
- Do a COST-BENEFIT calculation to see if the cost is worth it: Rock is very expensive, but it lasts a long time.
- DON'T WASTE your money: Prepare road and rock it right! Seek advice and competitive bids.
- SOFT SPOT? Consider using geotechnical fabric to create a barrier between muck and rock.
- If you only need personal, not truck access, buy an ATV—it may be cheaper than rock.

➤ **SLASH TREATMENT and SITE PREPARATION after logging or brush clearing projects, notify state forestry (before you start) and get going.**

You need good PLANTING SPOTS. Deep slash and brush are barriers.

TOO MUCH SLASH is a fire hazard, both now and as your forest grows. Snags on unit may be potential torches. On the other hand, snags can be good for animals.

PILING: Do it when soils are dry, make them dirt-free to protect soils and for a clean burn. Use a dozer with a toothed blade or an excavator with a brush grapple, and a good operator.

COVER PILES.

Don't burn until the rains come for real. A 10' by 10' covered spot will give a DRY AREA so you can light piles in the wet.

Use HEAVY (4) MIL plastic AND ANCHOR well...some tie corners, some pile with sticks.

Cut out DIRTY SMOKE: Remove plastic before burning or use waterproofed Kraft paper to cover piles.

➤ **OPTIONS TO BURNING.**

Instead of piles, GRIND, chip, lop or otherwise cut up slash and SCATTER over unit.

Plan logging so WHOLE TREES are yarded to remove as much slash from unit as possible and to rip up competing brush. Send all chip logs possible to market. Then burn landing piles, or cut for firewood.

Make SMALL PILES that can be planted around. You may need seedling protection from pile-loving critters.

OCTOBER

➤ **DID YOU KNOW...we have some of the tropics in our forests!**

NEOTROPICAL MIGRATORY BIRDS (NMB) live in our forests one third of the time during summer months. In winter, they live in the tropics of Mexico, Central America and South America.

Zoo species TRAVEL THOUSANDS of miles TWICE a year. The American robin and house wren make the trip.

NMB and some-year round residents (YRR) are great PREDATORS OF potential tree defoliators, the CATERPILLARS, or larvae of the Western spruce budworm and Douglas-fir tussock moth.

A breeding pair of evening GROSBEAKS (YRR) can DEVOUR 25,000-50,000 CATERPILLARS during the time it takes them to raise a family.*

➤ **Prepare for game and mushroom hunters, and mud machines, those that ask and those that don't. Maybe limit access. Figure the pros and cons, and have written policies for visitors.**

➤ **WINTERIZE your tree farm equipment OR plan on problems!**

- DRAIN fire pumps and hoses.
- DRAIN and RUN gas out of small engines or add fuel stabilizer.
- COVER your equipment to keep water out of and off engine heads.
- Unhook BATTERIES.
- Put hand tools in dry, rust-free STORAGE.

➤ **PLAN your winter TREE PLANTING.**

➤ **A PROMISE and a QUESTION...**

I promise to put as much time into the “FAMILY WORK” needed to continue our ownership as I put into tree farming.

If I were to drop dead tomorrow, WOULD MY FAMILY KNOW what to do down on the tree farm?

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* *Source: USDA PNW Research Station, Dec. 1995, “Save our Birds, Save our Forests.”*