



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
**EXTENSION**

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# Forester's notes

## A desire for restoration

With the ubiquity of environmental degradation on the landscape, restoration is a common theme in forest stewardship. Forest, stream, and habitat restoration are frequently cited as management objectives, and I regularly refer to silvicultural activities such as native species planting, thinning, invasive species removal, and fuel reduction as restoration efforts. Merriam-Webster defines restoration as “a bringing back to a former position or condition,” and indeed we think of forest restoration in terms of recreating conditions that reflect some sort of historical benchmark. That benchmark may be referred to as “old growth,” “pre-settlement conditions,” or a similar term, and it can be characterized by certain conditions, functions, or both.

A desire for restoration can stem from a variety of noble sentiments. Restoration advocates may feel a sense of responsibility for repairing ecosystem damage that resulted from human activities. Others may see it as a recovery avenue for threatened and endangered species or biodiversity as a whole. In the Inland Northwest, restoring forests to historically low fuel loads is associated with lower risk of catastrophic wildfires.

A desire for restoration may also reflect our general interest in the past. History is fascinating, and we restore all sorts of things from old cars to old buildings to ancient artifacts as a way to experience history firsthand and better understand and appreciate the way things were. I remember as a child having little interest in museums, but as an adult I have a great appreciation for curated collections of restored artifacts as a real-life form of time travel that allows tangible interaction with bygone eras.

## The challenge of restoration

While the past-focused nature of restoration has value, it can also be problematic. If we focus too much on the past, we can lose sight of the present and the future. From a practical standpoint, the things of yesteryear may not fit the modern world. A restored crank telephone or antique appliance, for instance, may not work with today's technology infrastructure. Similarly, the forests of hundreds of years ago may not thrive in our highly altered environment. Climate change alone means that the forests of tomorrow are not going to be able to look the same as the forests of yesterday. Development and fragmentation have indelibly changed the landscape context in which forests must now exist. Invasive pests, pathogens, and vegetation place new limits on stand structure and species mixes.

This is not to say that the forests of old are irrelevant or that we should not work to preserve our remnant old growth stands. On the contrary, these forests are highly instructive for current and future forest stewards, not to mention functional, adaptable,

inspiring, and full of intrinsic ecological and cultural value. This is also not to say that we should not strive to foster much older and more complex stands than we commonly have on the landscape right now. Rather, the point is that we should not simply grow replicas of the forests of yesterday. Forests are not museum pieces; they are dynamic, living systems.

Forests that provide key ecological functions while being appropriate for new and ever-changing conditions may be a more desirable and realistic target. This target is, by nature, a moving target, and it brings up all sorts of questions and conundrums about species choices, assisted migration, silvicultural techniques, and so forth. Humility, a willingness to keep learning and adapting, and a tolerance for not always getting it right the first time are some of the most essential forest management tools. As Aldo Leopold noted in his Land Ethic essay, there is a lot that scientists do not understand and may never fully understand about complex biotic systems.

## Redemption

I wonder if redemption is a more appropriate paradigm in which to approach forest stewardship. Redemption does not imply a simple reversion to a past condition. Rather, redemption implies that an exchange of some sort takes place. When we redeem a coupon, voucher, or gift certificate, for instance, we exchange it for something of greater value and that which we ultimately desire from the transaction. Back to Merriam-Webster for comparison, the definitions of redemption include freeing from harm as well as changing something for the better. In other words, whereas restoration is inherently tethered to the past, redemption is rooted in a new and better future. It is not a reset but a transformation. It is also more than simply leaving things better than we find them; it is a profound shift in how we conceptualize the land.

Redemption has long been a common theme throughout cultural expressions of literature, scriptures, and film. What is it that draws us to redemption stories? Maybe it is that redemption is the seemingly impossible made possible. Redemption stories illustrate inspiring transformations of people or situations that seem beyond help or hope. Redemption is not simply the nullification of a past ill as restoration would imply, but an active force against present, and future ills.

Sometimes the applicability of redemption as opposed to restoration is obvious. Those of us who are foster and adoptive parents have an acute awareness that the last thing victims of childhood trauma need is a reversion to the way things were, and I am not sure it is possible to ever truly restore innocence. The lives of these children can certainly be redeemed, though, for a better future in which they thrive. Similarly, people looking to turn from a past characterized by major mistakes would never want to go back to the way they were but rather embrace a new and better version of themselves.

Oftentimes, though, there is a fallacy of restoration that is not so obvious, and we must consider it more carefully. The past has a strong pull. Nostalgia is not a bad thing, and there are many losses of people and things past that are worthy of grief. However, rosy retrospection is a powerful psychological force that leaves our thinking biased toward the past over the present or even the future if we are feeling particularly pessimistic. In reality, though, the past may not have been so great as we remember it while the possibilities of the future exceed what we can currently imagine.

The pursuit of restoration can be particularly tempting when it comes to the mistakes we make in life. Wouldn't it be nice if we could simply erase the mistake and go back to exactly how things were before things went off the rails? At worst we can try to cover up the mistake and pretend it didn't happen. At best we try to make amends, and such amends may be quite necessary and appropriate. Life's big mistakes usually involve damage to relationships, however, and it is not realistic to think a relationship can be restored to exactly the way it was. Even with the sincerest forgiveness and reconciliation, the relational dynamic is forever altered. This is not to say that the alteration is for the worse. On the contrary, forgiveness and reconciliation can have an even greater impact than the transgression, working to strengthen a relationship and bring about a new and better chapter.

It is in these dynamic, living systems that form our lives, our relationships, and our forests where restoration, in the strictest sense, struggles to be fully applicable. In terms of the forest, the everyday stewardship work we do like planting, thinning, fighting invasives, improving habitat, learning, and adapting can transform degraded systems into a resilient, thriving, diverse natural landscape. While some may argue that it is only a difference of semantics, I see this not as the work of restoration but as the work of redemption where the future is even better than the past.

Kevin W. Zobrist  
Professor, Extension Forestry  
Washington State University  
Serving the Puget Sound Area

## **Western Washington Online Forest Owners' Field Day – October 22nd**

### **Coming up this Saturday!**

Back by popular demand, this is the virtual version of our summer classic. The Online Field Day features the same great content and instructors as our in-person field days. Like the in-person field days, you will get to pick from a variety of sessions every hour.

Unlike our in-person field days, attendance is free, no travel is required, and you can watch recordings of any sessions you miss.

The “field” day is a hybrid of live and pre-recorded video. Most of the session content has been pre-recorded in the field, but the instructor will be on Zoom live as the pre-recorded content is playing, taking your questions in real time and pausing for discussion. The difference between this and our online Winter School is that the content is field-based, not PowerPoint-based.

## Topics covered

This year’s topics include:

- Forest health
- Wildfire risk reduction
- Forest measurements
- Garry oak restoration
- Invasive weeds
- Non-timber products
- Thinning and pruning
- Chainsaw safety
- Wildlife species and habitats
- Variable density thinning
- Emerging disease issues
- Forest soils
- Shiitake mushroom cultivation (live demo!)

## How to participate

The Online Field Day is this Saturday, October 22, 2022, from 9:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. This event is free, but pre-registration is required. Are you interested but don’t think you can make it to the live event on the 22nd? Register anyway so that you will get access to the recordings after the event.

You will need a computer or mobile device capable of running Zoom and a high-speed internet connection. Alternatively, you can dial in to the Zoom system via telephone to get the session audio over your phone.

Visit the [Online Field Day website](#) for the schedule of events, information on using Zoom, and to register.

## Acknowledgements and Accommodations

This program is made possible in part by funding support from Washington State University, Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Island County, King Conservation District, King County, Lewis County, Pacific County, Pierce County, San Juan County, Skagit County, Stevens County, Snohomish Conservation District,

Snohomish County Surface Water Management, USDA Forest Service, and the Renewable Resources Extension Act.

Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension office. Reasonable accommodations will be made for persons with disabilities and special needs who contact Rebekah Zimmerer at [rebekah.zimmerer@wsu.edu](mailto:rebekah.zimmerer@wsu.edu) at least two weeks prior to the event.

## **Focus on Forestry – November 10th**

### **Focus on forest health**

Focus on Forestry is part of the annual regional Focus on Farming conference. The Focus on Forestry track of the conference is specifically geared toward small forest landowners and those who work with them. This year's theme is forest health, with session topics including overviews of insect and disease issues in Washington as well as newly emerging forest health issues like emerald ash borer, sooty bark disease, and western redcedar decline.

Come join us for a full day of learning and networking!

### **How to participate**

#### **Date and time**

Thursday November 10, 2022

Gates open at 7:00 a.m.

#### **Location**

This event will be held at the Evergreen State Fairgrounds in Monroe.

#### **Cost**

Advance registration (before 8:00 p.m. Sunday, November 6, 2022) is \$60 per person.

Day-of registration at the door is \$70 per person.

Registration fees include keynote sessions, concurrent sessions, morning coffee and baked goods, and a gourmet lunch.

## Registration

Visit the [Focus on Farming conference website](#) for additional details and to pre-register. Please note that your registration will be for “Focus on Farming,” which includes the Focus on Forestry track.

## Acknowledgements and Accommodations

The Focus on Forestry track is made possible in part by funding support from Washington State University, Snohomish Conservation District, and Snohomish County Surface Water Management.

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# Winter 2023 Online Forest Stewardship Coached Planning course

## Registration is now open for winter 2023!

Registration is now open for the Puget Sound area section of our winter online course. This section is for people with properties in **Island, King, Kitsap, Pierce, San Juan, Skagit,** and **Snohomish** counties. There will be separate concurrent sections for northwest Washington (Clallam, Jefferson, and Whatcom counties) and southwest Washington (all other westside counties). For details and registration information for these other two sections, please contact [Molly Darr](#) (northwest WA section) or [Patrick Shults](#) (southwest WA section). There is also an [in-person class in Cle Elum](#) for eastern WA property owners starting on November 10th.

## A forestry course for property owners

Our flagship course will teach you how to assess your trees, avoid insect and disease problems, attract wildlife, and take practical steps to keep your forest on track to provide enjoyment and income for years to come. In this course you will develop your own Forest Stewardship Plan, which brings state recognition as a Stewardship Forest and eligibility for cost-share assistance, and may also qualify you for significant property tax reductions.

Topics covered include:

- How do you know if your trees are healthy? What should you do if they aren't?
- Are characteristics of your property attracting or repelling the wildlife you enjoy? What can you do if wildlife cause damage?
- How do you choose which trees to keep or remove? How do you cut trees without damaging your land?
- What types of trees do you have? Does your forest look like a "mess"?
- How do you know if your trees need to be thinned, and how do you go about it?
- How do you identify and mitigate fire risks?
- Are invasive and noxious weeds taking over your underbrush? What are the risks and what can you do about it?
- What kind of soil do you have and how does that affect what grows?
- What is the risk of wildfire on your property?

## **When and where**

The class sessions will be held as live, interactive webinars 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Wednesday evenings January 27 – March 22, 2023. Participants will need a high-speed internet connection and a computer or mobile device capable of running Zoom. Access instructions will be provided prior to the course.

The course also includes an in-person Saturday field trip 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on March 11, 2023.

## **Cost and registration**

### **Cost**

The registration fee is \$150 per household or ownership. Space is limited and is first-come, first-served. The online courses always sell out early (sometimes in a matter of hours), so don't wait to register if you want to take the course.

Registration includes:

- Nine evening class sessions taught by state and local experts
- An in-person Saturday field trip
- A digital library of reference materials and how-to guides
- A copy of the book *Native Trees of Western Washington*

- A consultation site visit to your property from a state or county service forester
- A tree measuring tool

## **Registration is now open**

If registering as a family from the same household/ownership, only do one registration for all of you—do not do separate registrations for individual family members. The registration process includes a required short questionnaire. If you have forested property, please make sure you have your property information ready before you start the registration process, including acreage and county parcel number(s).

[Registration and additional details for the Winter 2023 Online Coached Planning course](#)

## **Acknowledgements and accommodations**

This program is an educational partnership between Washington State University Extension Forestry and the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR). This Program is made possible in part by funding from Island County, King Conservation District, King County, Pierce County, San Juan County, Skagit County, Snohomish Conservation District, and Snohomish County Surface Water Management.

Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension office. Reasonable accommodations will be made for persons with disabilities and special needs who contact Rebekah Zimmerer at [rebekah.zimmerer@wsu.edu](mailto:rebekah.zimmerer@wsu.edu) at least three weeks prior to the event.

## **Sapsuckers bigleaf maple syrup community science program**

Are you tapping maples on your property? If yes, we're interested in learning from you!

Sapsuckers is a community-based science program that sources on-the-ground data from individuals who are actively tapping bigleaf maples in western Washington and Oregon.

We need your help! Bigleaf maple sugaring is catching on at both the hobby and commercial scale. Data from hobbyists and syrup producers can help us gain a better understanding of how things like site, tree, and weather characteristics influence sap yield and quality over a broader geographic area. This will guide our understanding of

best practices and assist the development of a sustainable bigleaf maple syrup market in the Pacific Northwest.

Are you interested in joining the Sapsucker program? Visit the [WSU Extension Forestry Sapsuckers Program website](#) to learn how to tap your maple trees, what equipment to purchase, what data to collect and how to submit it, and, most importantly, how to enjoy some great syrup! After all, the key to sugaring is having fun while doing it. Enjoy getting outside, engaging with your forest, and savor a well-earned sweet treat at the end of it.

If you have any questions about this program, please contact [Patrick Shults](#).

## New northwest Washington Extension Forester



We are pleased to welcome Dr. Molly Darr to the WSU Extension Forestry Team! Molly joined the WSU faculty as an assistant professor on October 1, 2022. Molly is currently stationed at the WSU Northwest Washington Research and Extension Center in Mount Vernon. While her exact duties are still being sorted out, Molly will likely be serving Whatcom, Clallam, and Jefferson counties, which do not currently have an Extension Forestry program. Molly's program will complement the Puget Sound Extension Forestry Program (Kevin Zobrist, Grace Garrison, Rebekah Zimmerer) and the Southwest Washington Extension Forestry Program (Patrick Shults) to provide broader coverage in western Washington.

Molly specializes in forest entomology and tree health, with a concentration in integrated pest management techniques. Before joining WSU, Molly served as the director of the Southern Forest Health and Invasive Species Program at Clemson University, which provided forest and tree health information for landowners and professionals throughout the southeastern U.S. Molly also served as a tree fruit entomologist in Wenatchee, WA, where she provided expertise in entomology, pathology, and tree health and management in an orchard setting.

Molly's Extension Forestry program is rapidly ramping up. Watch for new resources she will be offering, including webinars, newsletters, publications, social media, workshops,

site visits, and field tours to assist property owners with forest health, invasive species, and other forest stewardship issues in the northwest corner of the state. In the meantime, feel free to reach out to Molly at [molly.darr@wsu.edu](mailto:molly.darr@wsu.edu) to introduce yourself. Welcome, Molly!

## 2023 conservation district native tree and plant sales

It's that time of year—time to mark your calendars for the preorder and pickup dates for the annual conservation district native tree and plant sales. Below are a few of the local sales that have dates posted already.

### King Conservation District

- Pre-orders start November 15, 2022
- Pickup on March 4 or March 5, 2023 at the Tukwila Community Center
- [King Conservation District Plant Sale website](#)

### Pierce Conservation District

- Pre-orders start November 1, 2022
- Pickup date TBD at the Pierce Conservation District office in Puyallup
- [Pierce Conservation District Plant Sale website](#)

### Snohomish Conservation District

- Pre-orders start early 2023
- Pickup on March 4 or March 5, 2023 at the Evergreen State Fairgrounds in Monroe
- [Snohomish Conservation District Plant Sale Website](#)

### Whidbey Island Conservation District

- Pre-orders start November 1st
- Pickup on February 26, 2023 at Greenbank Farm
- [Whidbey Island Conservation District website](#)

# New publications of interest

## Seasonal foliage discoloration and loss in Pacific Northwest evergreen conifer trees

Are you wondering why the evergreen trees (especially western redcedars) are showing more fall color than the deciduous trees right now? This publication explains why parts of cedars and other conifers turn color in the fall, what constitutes regular seasonal color variations and what might be more serious, and how drought affects the timing of color change and leaf drop in deciduous trees. [Free download of \*Seasonal foliage discoloration and loss in Pacific Northwest evergreen conifer trees\*.](#)

## A climate resilience guide for small forest landowners in western Washington

This practical guide produced by the University of Washington Climate Impacts Group describes the most immediate climate impacts on forests and potential actions landowners can take to increase climate resilience. This guide is geared toward small forest landowners in western Washington, as well as organizations (non-profits, conservation districts, local governments) that support these landowners. [Free download of \*A climate resilience guide for small forest landowners in western Washington\*.](#)

## Porcupines in managed woodlands: Tools for family forestland owners

Porcupines play an important ecological role in forest ecosystems, but they can also damage your trees. Learn how to coexist with these prickly characters in this latest publication in the Woodland Fish and Wildlife series. [Free download of \*Porcupines in managed woodlands: Tools for family forestland owners\*.](#)

## Saving forest ecosystems – A century plus of research and education at the University of Washington

If you are interested in how forestry research and education at the University of Washington (a certain Extension forester's alma mater) evolved over the past century, you might enjoy this new book by Emeritus Professor Bob Edmonds. [More information about \*Saving forest ecosystems\*.](#)

# Other educational opportunities

Non-WSU events are listed for informational purposes with no implied endorsement by WSU.

[Climate-adapted forest management tour](#) - Join NNRG and King County for a free afternoon driving tour of climate-adapted forest management practices at Taylor Mountain Forest at 12:30 p.m. October 26, 2022.

[Native plant selection workshop](#) – Join Whidbey Island Conservation District at 5:30 p.m. October 27, 2022 for a free webinar on how to choose the best native plants for your landscape. A great way to plan for the 2023 plant sale!

[Benefits and beauty of landscaping with native plants webinar](#) – Join King Conservation District for a free native plant talk at 6:00 p.m. November 3, 2022. A great way to plan for the 2023 plant sale!

[Streamside landowners webinar](#) – Join Snohomish Conservation District at 6:30 p.m. November 3, 2022 for a free webinar on how to care for water resources on your property. There will also be a [streamside landowner field tour](#) at 10:00 a.m. November 5, 2022.

## Focus on: Emerald ash borer

By Kevin Zobrist, Patrick Shults, and Joey Hulbert, Washington State University

Emerald ash borer (EAB) is an invasive pest native to eastern Asia that causes high levels of mortality of North American ash species. It was accidentally introduced to North America in Michigan in the 1990s. Its first known occurrence on the West Coast was [confirmed in northwest Oregon](#) in July 2022. The Pacific Northwest region can expect significant losses of the native Oregon ash (*Fraxinus latifolia*) as well as the ornamental ashes commonly found in urban forests and home landscapes in communities around the region.

The introduction of EAB has changed forests and communities in the eastern U.S. by practically eliminating ash species from the landscape. Many states and communities have tried to mitigate the spread and impact of EAB, but its recent spread to Oregon demonstrates of the difficulty of containing this aggressive pest. Land managers and communities are encouraged to prepare for the seemingly inevitable spread of EAB into Washington.

Oregon ash is an important tree for ecosystems and communities in the Pacific Northwest. It is endemic to the west coast where it is distributed from central California

to the Puget Sound area. It is a dominant component of riparian and wetland areas where it helps protect water quality and provides habitat for salmon and other aquatic species. Oregon ash and ornamental ash trees are also important components of urban forests where their large canopies provide shade and other ecosystem services for communities. The loss of ash trees in the Pacific Northwest will diminish ecosystem functions in sensitive areas. It will also cause a loss of valuable ecosystem services and require the expensive removal of hazardous dead trees in urban landscapes.

Land managers and municipalities should identify vulnerable areas and prepare for the arrival of EAB. Property owners and municipalities should avoid planting ash species. In natural areas, alternatives to Oregon ash include black cottonwood, willows, red alder, and western redcedar. There are numerous non-ash options for urban forests. Existing high value ash trees in urban forests can be protected by biennial stem injections of emamectin benzoate. These injections must be done by pesticide-licensed tree care professionals. The use of certain parasitoid wasps as biocontrol agents is a promising long-term control option for both urban forests and natural areas, but biocontrols will not stop initial outbreaks. More specific recommendations will be available soon from WSU Extension.

Individuals and municipalities are encouraged to report signs of EAB infestations in ash trees such as adult insects, larval galleries, or D-shaped exit holes in the bark. Symptoms of EAB infestations include crown dieback, wilting, leaf chlorosis, early leaf drop in autumn, and extensive woodpecker activity. Anyone who observes these symptoms on ash trees is encouraged to check for and report signs to the Washington Invasive Species Council or Washington State Department of Agriculture via the Washington Invasives mobile application. Local WSU County Extension offices can help concerned citizens confirm signs and symptoms. Non-ash species are not affected by EAB.



Figure 1: An adult emerald ash borer. Photo: M. Prue, Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources – Forestry, Bugwood.org.



Figure 2: Serpentine galleries from EAB larvae under the bark of an ash tree. Photo: S. Katovich, Bugwood.org.



Figure 3: D-shaped exit holes created by mature emerald ash borer. Photo: D. Herms, The Ohio State University, Bugwood.org.

Researchers are working to develop planting stock of North American ash species that is genetically resistant to EAB. Researchers are also continuing to investigate biocontrol options and develop next-generation insecticides. WSU Extension will continue to share updates with the public as information becomes available.

## Additional Resources:

- [Emerald Ash Borer Information Network](#)
- [Emerald Ash Borer Identification Guide](#)
- [USDA APHIS Emerald Ash Borer website](#)
- [Biology and Control of Emerald Ash Borer](#) (USDA Forest Service Publication):
- [Insecticide Options for Protecting Ash Trees from Emerald Ash Borer](#)
- [Emerald Ash Borer Biological Control Release and Recovery Guidelines](#)

# Subscription and contact info

## Manage your subscription

You are currently subscribed to the Washington State University Puget Sound Extension Forestry mailing list. This newsletter is also available in a **large print** format. You can unsubscribe or change your subscription options by visiting our [newsletter website](#).

## Contact info

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