

Annual Tree Farm Conference and Field Day!
Saturday October 2, 2010
Kalispell, Montana

Please join us for our annual Montana Tree Farm conference and field day to be held on Saturday, October 2nd in Kalispell, MT. Our theme this year is “Growing Trees!” We have focused on more specific forestry issues over the past few years, fuel hazard reduction, insect and disease salvage, small tract management etc.... so we decided it was time to “get back to basics” and look at silvicultural practices on Tree Farms where one of the primary objectives is revenue generation from growing and harvesting trees in a long term sustainable manner. We will explore how issues like growth rates, regeneration success, stocking levels, species diversity and risk management are viewed and managed. Additionally, we plan equipment demonstrations, discussion of state and national Tree Farm issues, award presentations, and of course our silent auction.

We will meet Saturday at 8:00 am at the Stillwater Grange Hall. It is easy to find, just north and west of downtown Kalispell. From the Hwy 2 - Hwy 93 intersection just north of downtown Kalispell, follow Hwy 93 north for about 2.7 miles to the West Reserve intersection. Take a left on West Reserve and follow it for about 2.3 miles to the Stillwater Grange Hall, the brown building on the south (left) side of the road. We will have it well marked, just follow the Tree Farm signs!

After a little while for doughnuts, coffee and catching up, we will be heading to the Rhodes Draw area to view a variety of silvicultural treatments on two tree farms in that area. Our hosts will be the O’Neil Family on their Montana Forest Products tree farm and the F.H. Stoltze Land & Lumber Co. tree farm. We will be making a loop through various forest types with multiple stops to review various silvicultural activities including multiple regeneration techniques, fertilization, pre-commercial thinning, insect and disease management and a variety of harvest prescriptions and harvest methods.

The Montana Forest Products tree farm has been in the program since June 1, 1944 and has the proud distinction of being Montana Tree Farm #12. The O’Neil family has owned and managed these roughly 6000 acres for multiple uses for multiple generations. Montana Forest Products manages through implementing stewardship forestry principals to meet the goals of long term sustainability, periodic revenue generation, and long term asset protection. The O’Neil family has worked hard to engage multiple generations in the management of the property to perpetuate the knowledge and understanding of the benefits and risks of this type of investment. Montana Forest Products was the recipient of the 2010 Montana Society of American Foresters “Excellence in Forestry” award for their outstanding commitment to sustainable forestry and the practice of state of the art land management practices.

The F.H. Stoltze Land & Lumber Company has been in existence since the turn of the last century. Long time supporters of the Tree Farm program, their 38,000 or so acres of timberland have been certified through the American Tree Farm Program since 1966. This family owned company is recognized as a leader in innovative forest management practices. We will have the opportunity to review some of their experiments (both successful and some not so successful!) in forest management such as aerial fertilization, un-even aged management, various thinning exercises and multiple regeneration techniques. The Stoltze lands are managed under a set of Stewardship Forestry Principals that also include an open lands policy that provides both challenges and benefits to their land management, examples of which we will discuss and review on the tour.

Even if cutting trees or making money from your tree farm are not high on your list of goals and objectives, the lessons learned and techniques demonstrated on these tree farms will be very

informative and educational. We can (almost) guarantee that you will learn something that you can implement on your own tree farm to help you meet your objectives.

After our field tour, we will return to the Stillwater Grange for a delicious buffet style meal enjoyed in the comfort of the grange hall. We will have an opportunity to look over the great silent auction items, browse some displays provided by our supporters and chat with old friends.

Our awards ceremony will include Tree Farmer of the Year, Lifetime Achievement Award, Inspector of the Year, Logger of the Year, Environmental Educator of the Year and the Dennis Swift Memorial award. Be sure to join us to congratulate the award recipients this year!

We will also be providing a “State of the Forest” update. This will include important and informative updates on legislative issues, forest products industry updates, updates on the Tree Farm program and landowner assistance programs.

For many, the Kalispell location will be very convenient and not require travel, but for those coming from out of the area, there is a lot to do outside of the annual meeting! A variety of lodging alternatives exist both in the Kalispell and Whitefish areas. Most of the golf courses are still open and fishing and hiking opportunities abound. There are great restaurants, art galleries and museums to visit in the area. Being only a 20 minute drive to Glacier National Park, this is a great opportunity to visit the park without all of the crowds and the colors in the high country can be spectacular this time of the year!

Please join us in making your annual convention a roaring success! If anyone is interested in more information or helping out, please contact Paul McKenzie at 892-7005 or pmckenzie@stoltzelumber.com