



Family Forests of Oregon

Press Release: 19 August 2006, Lebanon, Oregon.
“Tree day” hosts receive award for their service to Oregon’s Family Forests



Bert and Betty Udell, (seated) receive the inaugural “Golden Shovel” from Jim James, President of Family Forests of Oregon and Gray Springer, President of Benton County Small Woodlands Association. The “Golden Shovel” symbolizes the work the Udell family has and continues to do over generations to enhance their family woodlands, help their community and protect the environment. (Fletcher 2006)

At the final "Tree Day," an educational and fun event held in the Happy Valley forest owned by the Udell family, the family was awarded the Golden Shovel by the Oregon Small Woodlands Association (OSWA) and Family Forests of Oregon (FFO). This was in recognition of their lifelong commitment to educating others about family forests and

effective ways to manage them. The award was presented by FFO chair and OSWA member, Jim James, a long time friend of the family, on behalf of family woodland owners around the region.

Since its inception in 1979, the annual Tree Day program attracted more than 20,000 participants of all ages. Happy Valley Tree Farm owners, Bert and Betty Udell were joined in putting on the annual Tree Day program by their three children and several grandchildren. In addition to Tree Day, the Udell family annually hosts outdoor learning events for the Boy Scouts, local school districts and a host of other organizations. Happy Valley Tree Farm consists of 1000 acres of forests, meadows, and ponds, with lots of diversity of tree species and wildlife habitat. A 25-year thinning study, conducted in conjunction with Oregon State University researchers, will be completed during the winter of 2007. This study compares the Udell's innovative crown-thinning method with a more common method where just the small trees are removed. Bert Udell was one of the first in the Willamette Valley to recognize the need to restore the Willamette Valley Ponderosa Pine that was once plentiful in the region. Today, Happy Valley Tree Farm has more than 100 acres of these native pines.

Betty Udell and daughter Fay Sallee have been major contributors through their work in the 4-H youth development program. Betty has served as a club leader for more than 50 years, and Fay followed in her footsteps, hosting the largest 4-H club in Oregon with her husband Sherm over the past decade. The other Udell children Jim and Jan, along with their spouses and children, are also actively involved in the Happy Valley Tree Farm operation. Bert and Betty's educational and forest management efforts were honored in 1982 when they were named the National Outstanding Tree Farmers by the American Tree Farm System; the nation's largest family forest certification organization with more than 86,000 members and 35 million acres of certified forests.

The Golden Shovel award was jointly presented by OSWA and FFO to the family which has demonstrated, from generation to generation, an outstanding commitment to Family, Woodland and Community. For more information contact Mike Gaudern at OWSA (Tel 503-588-1513) and FFO (Tel 503 507 0348), or visit www.familyforestsoforegon.org and www.oswa.org

Support Family Forests of Oregon

Family Forests are being converted to "higher economic value" uses at an alarming rate. You can help ensure that diverse family forests continue as a part of our future, protecting our environment, economy, communities and culture by supporting Family Forests of Oregon

Our Beliefs: Family Forests of Oregon believes that stable or growing family ownership of Oregon's forests:

- Is vital to the longevity and diversity of Oregon's forests
- Contributes positively to Oregonians' quality of life
- Contributes to a healthy state economy
- Offers opportunities to educate current and future generations about the connection between family-owned forests and the values, services and products they generate.

Our Vision: Family Forests of Oregon envisions a future in which:

- A growing number of families own and steward forestland in Oregon and are able to pass their ownership and stewardship ethic on to future generations
- Oregonians value the environmental, social and economic contributions of family-owned forestlands throughout the state
- Interaction among public agencies, family forestland owners, and of the public is constructive and productive

Our Mission: Ensuring diverse family forests are a part of our future

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