Greetings OSWA members, families and friends; Springing into Summer 2019 May, June and July

We’ve had a ‘nice winter’ I’d say, with plenty of moisture in the ground now as the trees come alive! It was rougher as you go south, with heavy snows and flooding rains, but here in our Marion-Polk area it seemed like the good old days.

We had some great events in the past quarter, one of which will be continued in the coming quarter, as the Value of your Forestland topic is growing into a mini-series. 1) Clint Bentz presented a wonderful talk at the Independence Public Library and we will be following up with a different take on the same general topic later in May, at the Salem Public Library, read on. 2) Terry Lamers presented on forestland property taxes at the end of March. I was the fourth person to come in by the deadline of April 1st at the Polk Co tax assessors office. Thank you, Terry. And lastly, the wonderful folks at 3) Brooks Tree Farm seedling nursery gave us a (nearly King’s reception) nice tour of their intensive seedling-raising operations and even held a raffle for some Coastal Redwood seedlings, giving the ticket sale proceeds to our chapter! Thank you!

In the order they will come, this quarter’s events start off with the second presentation in the Value of your Forestland series on Tuesday, May 28th. Aptly named Nuts, Bolts and Dollars $$$, this presentation by our Terry Lamers and recently retired ODF forester Steve Vaught, will look into the actual dollar values you may have, how you can tap into them and what smart ways you should use to avoid some of the bad outcomes we have seen over the years. From the cruise of what you have, to the way and when to access it with appropriate roads, as well as the various logging costs and taxation treatments. So, come one and all to the Salem Public Library in the evening of May 28th from 6 to 8 pm and find us downstairs in the Anderson A and B rooms. Remember to bring a few quarters for the parking meters.

Then, on Saturday June 8th from noon until 2, we will have our annual meeting! Held at the Scottish Rite Temple in Salem, as in the last few years. This is a quality meal and an entertaining event for which the charge is just $5 at the door, as our chapter picks up the rest of the cost. We also like to show others the sort of group we are, so please plan on bringing a guest or two that have forestland and may be interested in the Oregon Small Woodlands Association! The doors open at 11:30 and lunch is serve at 12:00. You may arrive a few minutes early if you like, to share news and views with others. The address is 4090 Commercial St SE, Salem OR 97302 just south of McDonalds on Commercial at the Browning St. intersection. Our keynote topic is Archeology and our speaker is Keith Baldwin who taught at Tree
School, and we hope to also have someone from the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. Of course we will have our regular items such as a log market report and treasurer’s report, and please be ready to raise your hand as we have chapter director and officer elections too.

With the last frost perhaps behind us, many of us are turning to our gardens, or turning our gardens, and it seems like just a few years ago that those tall trees were just seedlings too. Amazing what comes from little seeds!

Which is somewhat like what we have as modern man, so much for so little. There is so much available to us! We have all of the knowledge of the ages, all wrapped up in our little palm devices, if we could only find something worth knowing…worth sharing, worth passing down. To get a little perspective on this, I urge you to pick up a book called Concise History of the World, a Natural Geographic book, which will amaze you with how much has gone on in such a short time span! To realize that ‘all this’ has happened in just 100 generations, for instance, and the last 3 or 4 generations have also changed the world.

And while we are at it, talking about various books that are available to us, please look up Wendell Berry’s book titled ‘Sex, Economy, Freedom and Community’ which has little actually to say about, you know, Sex. But much to say about Community and how we come to be in the communities we are in! According to Mr. Berry, “a community is the commonwealth and common interests, commonly understood, of people living together in a place and wishing to continue to do so”. Or, to put it another way “community is a locally understood interdependence of local people, local culture, local economy and local nature. This is us. We are a bunch of forest landowners, willingly coming together with the application of a few dollars, who access information, camaraderie and pleasure in each other’s company. This is our OSWA at the local chapter level. These are the folks you will meet at the annual meeting and on the tours. We know the same sorts of things, we all share in the wonders of forests.

Which leads me to another topic; our OSWA. This group has been around for decades, perhaps 3/4 of a century, and we and the organization have evolved to be the new us, quite rapidly. Recently, the state office sent us a list of folks that hadn’t paid their dues and may be dropped from the roll, and it was up to each chapter to reach out to those folks to see if they might continue to be part of this community. Well, it was me that called around and I have to add that this is not an enjoyable task, but necessary nonetheless. But boy how embarrassing it was to call one of our members that HAD paid their dues asking them if their membership in our organization was OK and if they might continue. The OSWA statewide office, particularly the web site, had some problems processing renewals in a timely fashion. If you were affected, we appreciate your patience. It did, however, give me a chance to speak with and listen to one of our longtime members tell me what they like and what they don’t. And it gave me a chance then, to suggest other sources of good information for forest landowners too. I really suggest you find and subscribe to Northern Woodlands, a magazine out of Maine, and written primarily for the NE US. But what a magazine! Wonderful writing, great photography, timely topics and a real appreciation of a functional forest economy. This is in contrast to the boom and bust cycles of the industrial PNW where we live and participate.

There is so much to be aware and part of. While we can visit the mills and listen to speakers and cash in from time to time, there is so much more than just the money, in being a forest landowner. There is the wonder of our forests and streams, the wildlife and the plants all around us. The six flying squirrels I flushed from a decaying snag at the urge of my dog, and the fact that we can actually OWN this land. Which got me to teach a class at Tree School this year, titled; ‘Is this heaven, or just paradise?’