

**Washington State University
Forestry Club and Society of American Foresters Chapter**

**Application for Student Senate Superior Club Award
March 2009**



Faculty Advisor

Dr. Mark E. Swanson

Assistant Professor of Landscape Ecology and Silviculture
Department of Natural Resource Sciences

markswanson@wsu.edu

Alumni Advisor

Mr. Wade Tinkham

College of Natural Resources
University of Idaho

Membership

List of active members

Craig Allen
Will Bedient
Randy Burke
Alyssa Button
Brandt Cappell
Grant Davis
Darren DeLoe
Matt Doumit
Ryan Edwards
Andrew Elson
Matt Fisher
Cameron Garrett

Rebecca Hamm
Josh Himsl
Matt Howard
Joe Hulbert
Konrad Kauer
Lindsey Kelley
Brian Lanouette
Whitney Machado
Gabe Mahlum
Luis Maloney
Kyle Maxwell
Mike McClellan

Adam Moir
Lance Pekus
Katie Reed
Erika Sanchez
Russell Seiler
Matt Shethar
Nicole Sobottke
Matthew Stonich
Karin Thorsen
Susan Wang
Dan Worley

List of Officers

Joshua Himsl- President
Rebecca Hamm- Vice President
Brian Lanouette- Secretary
Russell Seiler- Treasurer
Nicole Sobottke- Historian



Club photo taken March 1st, 2009. Not all club members pictured.

Activities

Report on year's activities – 2008-2009

The WSU Forestry Club and SAF Chapter has had a tremendously successful 2008-2009 academic year. We have seen membership increase from 12 to 35, and attendance rise at meetings and activities. In November of 2008 we planned and performed a thinning-pruning-fuels treatment operation on private land in Idaho, similar to our first activity in spring of 2008. We also acted as inventory consultants on an 80-acre tract nearby in February of 2009. All along the way we have conducted stand improvement and salvage cuts in forest stands at WSU's Steffen Center, which generates firewood revenue for the Club. We have had several "bonfire socials" to reduce academic stress and hazardous fuels at the same time. Our Club made a group presentation on our activities to the Palouse-Snake River Chapter in January, which was well received by our counterparts out in industry and academia. We have also had a few socials with the student chapter of The Wildlife Society (TWS), fostering good relations between students involved in two important natural resource-related professional societies. Finally, we had a very successful T-shirt printing and sale to benefit the Club. All of these efforts were recognized with the receipt of the "Inland Empire Student Chapter of the Year" award from the regional Society of American Foresters Chapter. We are looking forward to more growth and enjoyable experiences in academic year 2009-2010.

Member activities

Our members enjoy regular social activities, including off-campus meetings at local restaurants and our renowned "bonfire socials", both of which help cement students' identities as foresters and networked professionals. Our t-shirt printing and sales provided revenue to the Club and served as a source of pride for the members. We are also initiating a printing of patches for the Club.

College activities

We serve the College of Agricultural, Human and Natural Resource Sciences by managing forest resources at the 80-acre Steffen Center, thus reducing forest health problems and fire hazard. This protects other values involved at the Steffen Center, including nationally important programs in endangered species conservation and deer nutrition. We also participated in the Fall Festival in fall 2008, and have interacted with another student organization (The Wildlife Society student chapter) to the benefit of students in both chapters.

University or community activities

We have been very active in the community. We served as the consultant and operator on a hazardous fuels reduction operation on private land in Idaho (described in more detail below). We also served as the consultant on a state-required forest inventory project, also on private land in Idaho, helping a forest landowner achieve certification of their forest stewardship plan. This activity helped a landowner achieve a sustainable management plan on her land, and gave the students a tremendous learning opportunity. Our firewood sales program gives local citizens a chance to buy firewood for the holidays at a very fair price.



Consulting team in Potlatch, Idaho, January 2009.

State, regional, national or international activities

A number of our students have attended leadership meetings sponsored by the national Society of American Foresters (SAF), the premiere professional society for the forestry profession. We have also made presentations on our activities at regional meetings of the SAF (under the purview of the Palouse-Snake River and Panorama chapters of the SAF). We were unable to attend the national convention of the SAF this year due to the current poor economic situation. However, we attended the 2007 national convention, and a number of students plan to attend the national convention in fall of 2009. Members of the club recently attended the Inland Empire SAF regional meeting, where we were honored with the Irwin Award for Inland Empire Student SAF Chapter of the Year.

Expanded Activity

We believe that one of our hazardous fuels reduction operations, conducted October-November 2008 on private land in adjacent Idaho, is most emblematic of our commitment and esprit de corps as a Club. One of our off-campus mentors, Professor Emeritus Harold Osborne (University of Idaho), identified a stand of very dense ponderosa pine on private land belonging to an acquaintance. The landowner was struggling with some of the costs of managing land, but had a very serious forest health problem developing in a stand that was also vulnerable to fires originating in adjacent roaded agricultural lands. Twenty-five Club members, plus numerous other individuals (including a group from the WSU Center for Civic Engagement) participated in this activity. The Club engaged in the following activities to treat this stand and restore it to productive capacity:

- *Obtained a thinning permit from Idaho Department of Lands.* Several students and the faculty advisor visited regulatory foresters at the Idaho Department of Lands to notify the state of Idaho of a proposed forest practice and to obtain the required permits for operation.
- *Conducted a professional-grade forest inventory of the property.* Numerous plots were established in the forest stand to obtain estimates of density, species composition, and health. These data were entered into statistical software and analyzed.
- *Wrote a silvicultural prescription for treatment of the stand.* Stand statistics generated in the previous step were used to craft stand management recommendations, or a 'silvicultural prescription', to be carried out in the stand to achieve the specified objectives of restoring health, enhancing tree growth, and reducing risk of intense wildfire. We recommended that the stand density be reduced from the current 1400 trees per acre down to about 200 trees per acre.
- *Marked the stand for treatment.* Using the quantitative recommendations in the prescription, students marked trees to be retained, or kept, through the thinning operation.

- *Treated the stand.* Using safe logging methods and equipment, students carried out the thinning prescription, felling trees and pile-burning slash (hazardous materials left from thinning). Wood above 3" in diameter was sold as firewood to provide some revenue to the Club. We enlisted both Club members and volunteers from the WSU Center for Civic Engagement to prune retained trees (a low-risk activity), further reducing hazardous forest fuels in the unit. This provided an opportunity for students from outside the Club to experience an exemplary form of restoration forestry.
- *Performed compliance checks.* The Club conducted checks to ensure that the prescription was carried out effectively (fuels and density were reduced) and within Idaho law (residual fuels were less than the maximum allowed). As with our previous operations, we scored very well on the Idaho Department of Lands scoring sheet for hazardous fuels reduction.

This activity was educationally pivotal for the Club members, since they received a hands-on, start-to-finish forest management experience. This is an experience that they otherwise would not have had until several years into their professional career. The operation also benefited the landowner and the adjacent landowners, since fire risk is a concern that carries over property lines. The three acres we treated are in a critical portion of the landscape for stopping fire before it can spread to valuable commercial timber.

The value of the Club is apparent in this and many others of our activities, and may help explain the growth in numbers that we have experienced. In fall of 2007, five students comprised the Club. By the beginning of fall semester 2008, the Club's numbers had grown to over 25. Now, midway through academic year 2008-2009, the Club consists of 35 dedicated individuals, all of whom have participated in Club activities. More students have recently come to meetings, and are not yet integrated into the roster. In short, we are an actively expanding group.



Left: Joshua Himsl, student and professional wildland firefighter, delivers a safety seminar to Club members. Right: Erika Sanchez-Kopitea, student and firefighter, tends a pile burn of hazardous fuels.



Left to right: Dr. Mark Swanson showing the cross-section of a diseased pine removed during the thinning. Alyssa Button, student and firefighter, felling trees. John Pickett, student and forest manager, measuring a plot in the stand.



Left: a view of the overly dense forest stand before the Club carried out the prescription. This stand was unhealthy and vulnerable to a catastrophic fire. Right: a photo taken from the same point near the end of operations. This stand is healthier and can no longer carry a catastrophic fire. Note the pile burning in the mid-background, reducing 'activity fuels', or slash created by thinning, in a safe manner.

Letters

Please find attached two student letters, one from a current student, and another from a recent graduate.

Additional Information

Please find attached a newspaper clipping from the Moscow-Pullman Daily News describing our work on private land in Idaho. While this article dates from the last academic year, what it describes is characteristic of our continuing, and growing, involvement.

In addition, please find attached a letter from Dr. Mark Kimsey, a Society of American Foresters official and scientist at the University of Idaho who is very familiar with our activities.

March 11, 2009

Attn: CAHNRS Student Senate Superior Club Award Committee

To whom it may concern:

Being a member of the Forestry Club at Washington State University has allowed me to expand my experiences, knowledge, and development into my career objectives. Specifically, the club has allowed me and other students to implement ideas, lessons, and classroom exercises on club projects to attain real world experience. Before joining the Forestry Club, I knew little about what foresters actually did in the field. Through the club I have been taught in many more ways about forestry than those I've experienced in the classroom. Beside the academic issues addressed in club activities, I have been able to provide and receive personal and professional training in tools, equipment, and procedures commonly used in the field. The club has also given me the confidence to take on multiple leadership roles in club activities and as a club officer. I view it to be hard for any WSU student going into a natural resources field dealing with forest issues to be well adapted, trained, and confident without being a part of the Forestry Club at WSU.

Joshua J. Himsl
himsljosh@hotmail.com
(509) 303-9052

3/20/2009

To whom this may concern,

In August 2004, I came to Washington State University to pursue a degree in forest management. I became aware of the WSU forestry club in my freshman year while speaking with an active member. The club did not have many people involved, but did have many projects they were involved in. During my first few years in the club we were allowed to cut dead trees for firewood from the Steffen Center to sell for club revenues. We did not have many people willing to put in the physical labor for this type of activity, but we made it work and the club survived.

In the 2005-2006 and the 2006-2007 school years the club lacked leadership and membership. In these years the forestry club did not have many activities but continued to have meetings and provide a social network for members. After participating in the club for several years and seeing the potential in the program, I decided to nominate myself for club president in the 2007-2008 school year.

At the beginning of the 2007-2008 school year, the forestry club had three officers, an advisor, and no members. The officers wanted the club to be active and involved in the community as well as provide a place to introduce students to forestry as a profession. We began looking for projects, fundraising opportunities and social events that would encourage student involvement. To start the year, the club was provided funding to attend the Society of American Foresters Conference in Portland Oregon. The Conference had not been attended by the club since 2001. The officers spread the word to fellow students about how important this conference is for networking with professionals in the industry and the educational benefits as well. The forestry club suddenly increased in numbers and ten students attended the conference.

Club officers began to brainstorm and contact community members to find activities to for the club to participate in. We reinstated the firewood program and trained club members how to operate chain saws and fall trees at the Steffen center. We had so many members participating that we ran out of firewood within a month. The club advisor put us in contact with a private landowner in Idaho that would allow the club to operate on his property. The forestry club was given a three acre parcel of land to examine, prescribe a treatment and treat the property to reduce fuels hazards on the parcel. The club would be able to retain and sell all timber removed from the parcel. This project had over twenty members involved through the whole process and provided professional forestry experience.

At the end of the 2007-2008 school year, the club had over 30 active members and was well on its way to becoming a great resource for students. I feel the WSU Forestry Club has provided me valuable professional experience and knowledge as well as a large social network. After graduating from WSU in the spring of 2008, I was able to gain employment with the Bureau of Land Management in Roseburg Oregon as a layout forester. With my degree and experiences out of school, I must also contribute my employment to the social network and experiences gained while participating in the WSU Forestry Club.

Sincerely,

Jered Bowman



March 23, 2009

Dear Awards Selection Committee:

The Palouse – Snake River (PSR) Chapter of the Society of American Foresters (SAF) strongly supports the WSU Forestry Club (FC) and SAF chapter in its application for the Student Senate Superior Club Award.

The WSU FC/SAF organization has shown unparalleled growth in a few short years – growth we have not seen in a student forestry club – ever. This unmatched growth can be credited to the dedicated, enthusiastic and professional approach of Dr. Mark Swanson with his students, and a receptive and eager class of students to learn and apply their newfound knowledge.

Unlike many student clubs, WSU FC/SAF combines recreational activities with natural resource education and stewardship. This organization takes seriously the mission statement of the Society of American Foresters, which can be summarized as the “advancement and application of sound forest management to ensure forest health for present and future societal benefit”.

It would take too much space to highlight every accomplishment, so I will take one example that typifies their organizational standard. Dr. Mark Swanson, wishing to capitalize on his students’ natural resource education, initiated a forest management project with a local forest landowner. This project required his students to 1) develop and implement a forest stand inventory, 2) analyze cruise data, 3) develop and ecologically defend a forest stand treatment, 4) personally implement stand treatment, 5) analyze forest stand, post-treatment, for achievement of project objectives, and 5) develop and defend a long-term, post-treatment forest management plan. This project required the students to synthesize and apply the principles of natural resource management learned in the classroom. The forest landowner, a private forest contractor and former University of Idaho forestry professor, praised their work. They have applied this same dedicated effort to a thinning regime/firewood salvage effort at WSU’s Steffan Center, and the development of a forest health stand improvement project with the Sravasti Abbey in Newport, WA.

Chair
Mark Kimsey
University of Idaho
208-885-7520

Chair-Elect
Kara Chadwick
United States Forest Service
208-875-1701

Secretary
Terry Shaw
University of Idaho
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Treasurer
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Northwest Management
208-883-4488 ext. 133

Our life, exempt from public haunt, finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything.

- William Shakespeare



The WSU FC/SAF was asked to develop and present a student chapter update at the monthly professional meeting of the PSR in January. At most professional meetings only 2-3 students attend. At this meeting, 15 students of the WSU FC/SAF chapter attended and participated in an hour long discussion on their activities and learning opportunities. This was a wonderful opportunity for them to learn how to present ideas and defend actions in a professional setting. They did a great job!

Leadership opportunities are crucial for the development of competent natural resource professionals. In addition to their stewardship activities and professional presentations, they have actively sought opportunities to be involved with leadership at the chapter and state levels of SAF. In February, WSU FC/SAF sent 7 students to the Inland Empire SAF Leadership Retreat in Chewelah, WA. At this event, the state society asked them to present alternative methods of fund-raising for the chapters and state society in a challenging economic environment.

The WSU FC/SAF also provides opportunities for its members to engage in social activities that help foster new friendships and develop a sense of camaraderie, not only within their club, but with other student clubs at WSU and the University of Idaho. Through these events they have learned that no profession stands alone, but relies on relationships built with others.

In summary, the WSU FC/SAF student club, is, in my estimation, not only worthy of the Student Senate Superior Club Award, but sets the standard for such an award.

Thank you for the opportunity to write on behalf of WSU FC/SAF. If you have any question, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Mark Kimsey
Chair, Palouse – Snake River Chapter
Society of American Foresters
208-885-7520

Our life, exempt from public haunt, finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything.

- William Shakespeare

From: Moscow-Pullman Daily News [articles@dnews.com]
Sent: Tuesday, April 15, 2008 9:48 AM
To: Swanson, Mark
Subject: Article from the Moscow-Pullman Daily News Online

Someone has sent you an article from the Moscow-Pullman Daily News Online Edition.

Here is the article:

Firsthand forestry: Thinning trees for fire safety

The region's forest managers worked under the theory that fire is an enemy for nearly a century.

That led to improved fire suppression techniques and fewer fires, but it also left many of the forests throughout the Pacific Northwest with dense undergrowth and at high risk of intense fires.

This past weekend, Washington State University landscape ecology and silviculture professor Mark Swanson and members of the WSU Forestry Club began the job of clearing that undergrowth and reducing the overall density of vegetation on 2 acres of private forestland north of Potlatch. Nearly every tree under seven inches in diameter was removed and will be sold for firewood.

"This is a lot of work to do this kind of treatment, and there are thousands of acres across the West that need to be treated like this to create sustainable landscapes that won't burn down catastrophically and that offer good wildlife habitat and that are also aesthetic," Swanson said. "The prescription is designed to bring the stand back into balance, make it a healthier stand, more resistant to fire and more resistant to insects and disease."

Swanson said the thinning will accomplish many objectives, ecologically and economically.

"There's a manifold objective, there's the creation of habitat, the production of better quality of wood products, and then there's also the creation of aesthetics and the creation of better health," he said. "All these things are wrapped up in this kind of treatment and the students are getting to learn that and how to accomplish that on the ground."

Prior to the weekend's work, the land had many small, shade-tolerant trees like Douglas and grand firs littering the ground - a perfect recipe for a fire that would burn all but perhaps the tallest trees, Swanson said.

"This is a hugely dense fuel bed and so if fire got in here it would be a stand-replacing fire," Swanson said. "That's what we want to prevent. Fire

will have a lot harder time jumping from crown to crown" with the undergrowth gone.

Cliff Osborne, a logging safety adviser with the Idaho Division of Building Safety, said trees on the land should be surrounded by a clear, 16-foot radius, with approximately 250 trees per acre. Prior to the thinning, the land had at least 300 trees per acre and finding a path through the dense undergrowth was difficult.

Swanson said he and the students essentially are acting as "mother nature" and returning the land to its natural state.

"In nature, competition, disease, insects and fire all are thinning agents," he said. "But in stands where we have kept fire out for a long time you have to come in and treat mechanically by cutting stems out and then you can let fire take over again.

"Forestry today is as much about mimicking nature as getting what we need out of the woods," he added. "So, we look at what mother nature does tending her garden and we try to mimic that as much as possible"

Students were involved in every step of the project, from selecting the trees to be removed, writing a prescription for their removal and obtaining the proper permits to using chain saws to cut them down.

It's a firsthand lesson they can't get in the classroom, Swanson said.

"They'll get the scientific training in the classroom and the quantitative statistical training, but then they can come out here and see how forestry is practiced on the ground," he said.

WSU senior and Forest Club President Jared Bowman said the experience will help each student down the road when they are looking for jobs after graduation.

"This is great, it's really good experience," he said. "We don't get a lot of field work during our courses. Getting students out here is good for all of us. The more experience we have when we graduate and move into the professional field it really firms up our possible employment."

Swanson said many of the students graduating from the WSU Forestry Department will be responsible for managing thousands of acres.

"That points to the need of good forestry education, the production of professionals like these up and coming students here to be able to come in and do a scientifically credible job of restoring these stands to a desired condition," Swanson said.

Devin Rokyta can be reached at (208) 882-5561, ext. 237, or by e-mail at drokyta@dnews.com.

To read the entire article please visit:
<http://www.dnews.com/story/Local/29954/>

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