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An Insight into the Current Forestry News

Forestry



Current Topics >>>

Valuable news, tips and information all geared towards helping forest landowners and operators in Asotin County build more successful operations.

For more information go to www.asotincd.org



Competition and Density in Woodland Stands

Forest landowners can learn to manage stands to meet their objectives by looking closely at average stand diameter, trees per acre, and stand density tables.

The number of trees growing in a forest at any point in time shapes the look and character of a woodland and determines the benefits woodland owners may reap from it.

A thorough look at competition and stand density can help landowners get the most from their woods. Family forest landowners have many aims and expectations for their property. The objectives of small woodland owners are generally quite different from those of their neighbors who manage timber industry or government land. Many people want an attractive, peaceful place to live or play, with privacy, as well as a place that is diverse and welcoming to wildlife and human visitors. They view it as a personal and economic investment, and a legacy that they hope to leave for heirs. Although timber production is not a primary motivation for most family

forest landowners, it is important for some, and periodic income from property is often seen as a way to help pay the bills or make desired improvements. The main strategy for

Control competition during the life of the stand to achieve desired goals.

many family landowners' objectives is to grow older forests. Both stand age and disturbances, such as thinning to reduce density and competition, can enhance development of many desired stand characteristics.

the effects of competition on how trees grow and how forest stands develop is critical to shaping the conditions you want on your property. Managing for or restoring desired conditions is easier if you understand that competition develops in a predictable manner and that a developing forest moves predictably through zones of increasing competition.

[*OSU Extension Service*](#)

Conifer Pruning Basics

Conifer pruning is the practice of removing the lower branches from live green conifer trees. Without pruning, the lower branches on conifers, such as Douglas-fir, western



larch, and ponderosa pine, may persist for up to 80 years. The primary objective of pruning for wood quality improvement is to produce a small, uniform knotty core throughout the length of the pruned bole so that clear wood volume will be maximized. There are many other benefits from pruning, even if clear wood production or financial concerns are of secondary importance.

- Increased understory vegetation for wildlife
- Reduced fuel ladders
- Reduced incidence of disease
- Improved visual aesthetics
- Improved access within stands
- Improved stand vigor

Pruning is a cultural practice that can be done anytime except when the bark on young trees is soft. Soft, easily damaged bark and branch collars occur when the tree is actively growing—from about mid-March to mid-July. If in doubt, wait until later in the summer or until winter to do your pruning.



Safety Concerns

As with all activities in a forest, safety should always be stressed. Personal protective clothing is necessary, including eye protection. Sawdust has a nasty habit of getting in your eyes when cutting branches off above your head! Sturdy boots with good soles must also be worn (remember—no caulk boots on aluminum ladders!). We can always summarize safety recommendations as, “Simply use common sense.”

[WSU – Conifer Pruning](#)



Forest Health >>>

Pruning Operations

The basic premise of wood-quality pruning is to remove the lower branches of young trees, so that the tree can seal over the branch stub and from that time forward, produce higher-value clear wood until the tree is harvested.

Pruning is accomplished by removing the lower branches in three “lifts.” A few years may be required between each lift. As a general rule, never remove more than one-half of the live crown at any one time and never leave less than four whorls of branches. The diameter at the mid-point of the length of bole to be pruned should be about 4–5 inches at the time of each lift.

First Lift: Remove lower branches from ground level up to 7–8 feet high on a 16- to 20-foot-tall tree. Prune about 130–150 of the best trees per acre from the dominant and co-dominant classes. Thin out poor-quality trees prior to pruning.

Second Lift: The second lift will occur as the tree grows and usually is accomplished two to four years after the first lift. Remove lower branches up to 14–15 feet high on a 26- to 32-foot-tall tree. Prune about 115–130 of the best, previously pruned trees per acre.

Third Lift: Remove lower branches up to 20 feet high on a 36- to 40-foot-tall tree. Prune about 105–120 of the best, previously pruned trees per acre.



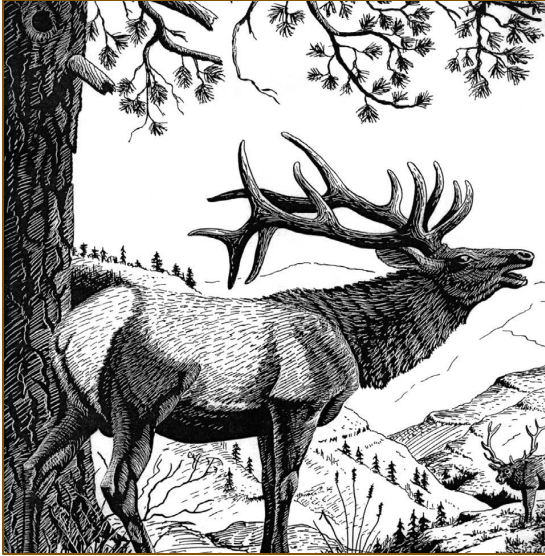
[WSU – Conifer Pruning](#)

Pruning Rules

- Pick the best trees to prune. Do not prune stagnated, diseased, or crooked trees.
- Pick high quality sites and stands that are well stocked and not over-sized. Average DBH should not be over 6 inches at time of first lift. If stands are over-stocked and stagnated, thin trees first.
- Do not use a chain saw for wood-quality pruning unless it is expressly designed for this purpose. Bark tearing and branch collar damage often result when a chain saw set up for falling and bucking is used for branch removal. Bole scarring can invite the introduction of stem rot fungi into the tree.

Managing Ponderosa Pine Woodlands for Fish and

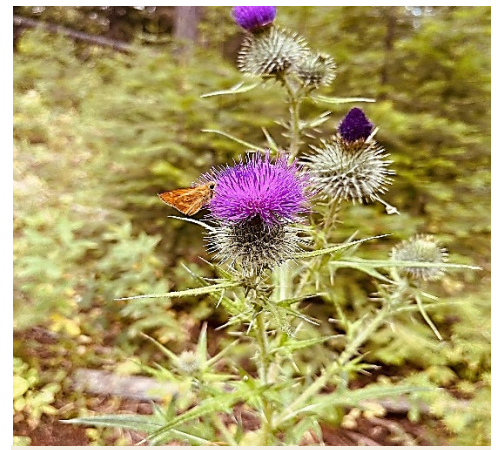
Management activities can be used to create a mosaic of successional stages that will support a wide variety of wildlife species.



The Ponderosa pine woodland is an area of immense variety and home to a diverse fish and wildlife community. Fire, insects, disease, and wind all play a part, creating a mosaic of open meadows, dense pole stands, and park-like settings with large old trees and snags. Proper management practices can help maintain or create fish and wildlife habitat and provide a continuing supply of wood products.

The development of a Ponderosa pine forest from a bare ground condition to old growth forest can be generally divided into six successional stages: grass/ forbs, shrub/ seedling, sapling/ pole, young forest, mature forest, and old growth. Depending on the stand's history and climatic and soil conditions, one or more of the successional stages may be skipped. Fire, insects, disease, or wind can cause a stand to revert to any one of the earlier stages, depending on the severity and timing of the disturbance. Timber management can be used to skip some stages completely or to reduce the time spent in others. Each successional stage provides a unique blend of open land, brush land, vertical diversity, canopy cover, snags, and downed logs. This blend of habitat elements influences the type of wildlife found in the area. Before you can decide which wildlife species you wish to manage for, you must first determine which of the habitat elements already exist, what wildlife species are present, and what your timber management objectives are.

[WSU – Managing P. Pine](#)



Invasive Weeds in Forestland: Bull Thistle

Bull thistle is native to Europe, western Asia, and North Africa. It probably was introduced in eastern North America during colonial times, as a contaminant in seed or ship ballast. It is now the most widespread of the thistles in the United States and is commonly found in disturbed areas such as roadsides and burned or newly logged forests. It invades a variety of habitats where it displaces native plants by outcompeting them for water, nutrients, and space. It does not grow well in shade. Bull thistle reproduces only by seed. Individual plants set seed before dying, and a single large plant can produce tens of thousands of seeds.

Management options

Biological, chemical, and mechanical methods are available for managing bull thistle. For this reason, it's best to use an integrated weed management plan, including tactics to prevent the spread of bull thistle outside infested areas.

Biological control

The bull thistle seedhead gall fly has been released as a biocontrol agent. The larvae feed on developing seeds in the flower heads and decrease seed production. A crown weevil, a seedhead weevil, and a flower fly also are established. However, biocontrol is considered relatively ineffective.

Ask the Experts

Q: What's so special about a Ponderosa Pine tree?

A: *Pinus ponderosa* (aka: ponderosa pine, bull pine, yellow pine, scotch pine, or blackjack pine) can live for 400 years or more and are named for their "ponderous" (heavy) wood. Ponderosa pine is one of the most fire-tolerant conifer species with thick bark that acts as armor, and self-pruning crowns that sit well above most low-intensity ground-fires. Ponderosa pine lumber is generally recognized as the most versatile wood found in abundance in North America, and is often used for: construction, architectural woodworking, furniture, cabinets, doors, boxes, crates and more!

