

# “Building a Sustainable Forest Management Program” x *Family Forest Landowners and Managers Conference*

Dick Wittman, Wittman Farms

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[www.CampWittmanOC.com](http://www.CampWittmanOC.com)

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## Biosketch

- Ag Lender – FCS (1972-1980) – Spokane, WA & Washington, DC
- Partner in 20,000 acre diversified family farm business (1980-present)
  - *New title – Jan. 1, 2017 – Board Chairman/Transition Coach*
- Farm management consultant (1980-present)
  - Farm family transitions and formalization of governance structures, financial planning, managerial accounting, process improvement, consultant training
- Industry boards/affiliations
  - Farm Financial Standards Council – Past President
  - PNW Direct Seed Association – Director, Past President
  - Director – numerous commodity group and bank boards
  - Faculty member – TEPAP Program (fin mgmt. & process improvement); Texas A&M King Ranch Institute (MA)

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## Wittman Farms - Overview

- 20,000 acre grain, cattle, timber and wildlife operation
- “In transition” since 1980
  - Father and two uncles built business foundation
  - 25 first cousins for potential successors; only three continued in the business
  - 12 transition events in 40 years
  - 4 active principals active today



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*...in the beginning there was chaos!*

### Genesis 1:1-2

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep...



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## Agenda Today – Critical Strategies To Consider

- Is your forestland a **piggybank** or a **regenerative resource to be managed**?
- Multiple use vs. single use focus?
- Manage for diverse species and tree life vs. monoculture/clearcut
- Manage for disease, genetics & growth potential vs. maximize returns today?
- Optimal Harvest Strategies –
  - Logger mentality vs LT Sustainable Forest – means 180 degree thinking
  - Cat log, line skid, mechanized, etc.
  - Pre-commercial thin; re-enter later
  - Fire mitigation
  - Self-medicate vs. Contract Site Mgmt
- Compliance with IFPA, burn permits, ad nauseum
- Programs & Resources



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## Timber Harvest Efficiency Trends

- Horse/Oxen logging
- Dozers with winches
- Skidders
- Faller-bunchers
- Stroker/delimiters



Process Improvement-Wittman  
Consulting 2023

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2-3 loads/day

9 loads/day

Process Improvement-Wittman  
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## Harvesting Strategies

- Cat, line vs. mechanized logging; skid trail layout
- Timing of species harvest, ground compaction & root damage
- Clear-cut vs. Selective Cut
  - Species mix goals?
  - Aging mix goals?
- Pulp or saw logs – how decide?
- Logger mentality vs LT Sustainable Forest – means 180 degree thinking
- Pre-commercial thin; re-enter later or cut everything now?
- Fire mitigation considerations
- Self-medicate vs. contract site management & administration of logging process



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## Pre-Commercial Thinning

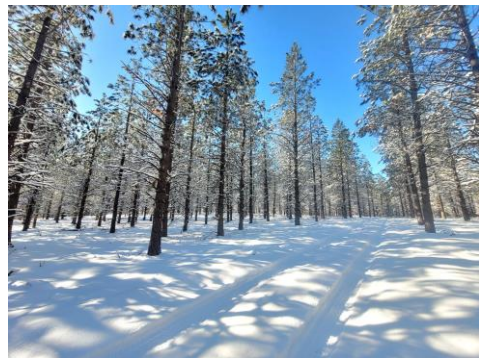
- **Why:** forests stagnate due to lack of moisture & sunlight; fires decimate entire stands
- **Options**
  - Hand clear
  - Faller/buncher
  - Dado head machines
  - Grant Program – road fire barrier thinning
- **Camp Pasture – 25yr impact**
  - Early 90's–thin/log with high defect → \$5mbf/ac.
  - +25 years–cut 10mbf/ac. & still fully stocked



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## Importance of Mentors, Advisors

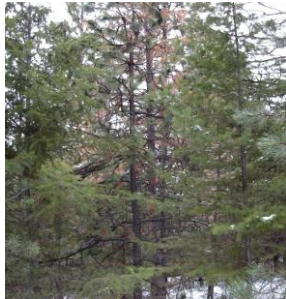
- Pre-harvest planning; compliance with IFPA
- Pre-marking before harvest
  - spacing (2' per 1" dbh);
  - **Good Rule: 2x change diam = 4x increased in volume**
- Selecting optimal trees to harvest; ID disease and bad genetics
- Market considerations
  - Pulp vs. Saw Log Pricing
  - Log specific species or not
- Value of feedback from mills



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## Disease, Genetics & Growth Management

- Konks, pulp indicators
- Bug kill – pine, fir bugs
- Armillaria root rot
- School marms, mistletoe
- Key metrics: Crown health, size, age, growth potential



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## Slash Management

- Limb in the woods vs. skid trees to landing for limbing & processing
- Pile and burn
- Chip slash for renewable fuel - climate change impacts



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## Selective Replanting

- Planted 6-10,000/yr
- Hire out or do it yourself?
- Ground prep and protective measures
  - Pronone granules
  - Tubes, DeerSkyd, etc.
  - Best: Plant stumps!
- Cost share programs can help



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### *Dispel the Myth – “They’re cutting down all our trees”*

- What can your efforts look like 100 years later?
- Responsible harvest, disease management, selective thinning, reforest where needed, good advisors, manage like a CROP!



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Questions?

