

Forest Health Assessment

Shore Acres Estates

June 25, 2016

A field visit was conducted on June 25, 2016 at Shore Acres Estates to give the homeowners a basic forest health assessment of the 40 acre parcel of timber that is owned by the association. Dominant overstory tree species included ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir. Other species represented in very small numbers were lodgepole pine and western larch (tamarack). Understory tree species included ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir. The shrub layer was mostly ocean spray and snowberry and pine grass dominated the grass layer.

The group covered most of the area, stopping to talk in 6 specific locations. One main “grassed in” road was used to look at the center of the parcel and a few old skid trails were also walked. A light timber harvest was completed in 1999 which helped improve the spacing of the mature trees and open up some new areas for natural regeneration to take place.

Overall, the forest health was quite normal/good across the landscape. The ponderosa pine was doing quite well except for one mature tree which died from western pine beetle and wood borer attacks.

In pockets, the Douglas-fir was getting hit with a common root rot fungus known as Armillaria root disease (*Armillaria ostoyae*). These pockets have dead Douglas-fir trees in them, some mature and some at the regeneration stage. Larger trees often have their tops gone and rotten stems of various heights remain. White marshmallow like conks were noticed on the bark of some dead trees. The best management recommendation is to cut dead trees for firewood and try and replant the pockets with a tree that can withstand the disease better. Western larch is a great choice, but your site may not support a planting due to the dryness. Ponderosa pine is the next best choice. Although it's not totally safe to plant in a root rot pocket, it is adapted to the dryness of the site. Sprays and strategic timber harvesting have proven to be costly and ineffective in battling this disease.

We also talked about wildfire. The 1999 timber sale did remove some mature trees and reduce the fuel loading somewhat. The regeneration has good spacing in general. The brush component is thick in places and could pose a threat in a fire. Brush reduction is only beneficial for 1-2 years because it grows back so quickly, so the recommendation is to just leave it as is. Eastern Washington landscapes have and will be augmented by fire. If a fire were to start on or near your property, your location is almost ideal. Air resources are located in Deer Park and Loon Lake is used for scooping and dipping. Hwy 395 is close by and there are multiple agencies with ground resources that can respond quickly.

Steve DeCook, Fuels Specialist, Washington Department of Natural Resources