

Tree School Clackamas—an Awesome Many Faceted Production!

MERRILY ENQUIST

You have heard about Tree School for years—and may have even attended numerous times. But, how is this complex event produced? Let's draw back the curtain on this popular annual event. You may be surprised at the whole process. This year's Tree School was produced by Glenn Ahrens, Forestry Extension Agent, and his crew—Tim DeLano, Sally Yackley, Cheryl Keithan, and Merrily Enquist.

Tree School (or T/S as it is known at the office) begins immediately after the previous event has ended. Those class evaluations you fill out provide valuable insight into your likes and hopes for future events. We study those sheets carefully. A few months later, as summer starts to cool, Tree School work heats up. Folks come together to share new class suggestions—that's our "focus group." Then we begin planning a collection of classes—60 to 70 classes with perhaps one-third being new classes. We have standard classifications—business management, weeds and diseases, equipment, water, forest management, marketing, wildlife, etc. Each category needs to have a certain number of classes and each class needs an instructor—and eventually classrooms with the right number of seats for the expected registration. We are fortunate to not only have Oregon State University and our OSU Extension Service for many of our instructors, we also have lots of talented, experienced local folks who share their expertise by teaching classes. A staff person issues the invitations to teach, makes all the arrangements, and keeps the instructor informed as the school date nears. Sounds simple, doesn't it? In theory it is, but remember that there are lots of classes and at least seventy instructors. A smooth running T/S includes scheduling, room selection, seating, providing audio-visual equipment, collecting handouts, and printing if needed, and being sure that instruc-

tors can find his/her classroom and that every detail is there as promised. Multiply this process by 60 or 70 classes and you have the scope of educational program development for T/S.

The 625 folks who register for Tree School every year need to have access either online or with a printed catalog for class descriptions, schedules, and a registration blank. Producing the catalog requires collecting class descriptions, developing the class schedule for the day, collecting the advertising, planning the graphics, writing a few instructor sidebars, and proofreading, endlessly. After we mail about 14,000 catalogs, our Tree School registrar must process about 625 individual registrations while striving for 100 percent accuracy! Then, one day she plugs in the card printer—utters a special incantation—and hundreds of class registration post cards are printed-perfectly.

Then volunteers—some who have done their assignments for years—step in to help assemble and label the packets. Usually about 800 packets are needed!

On Friday before T/S, Tree School moves to Randall Hall at Clackamas

Volunteers Needed!

Help is needed on Friday, March 21 and/or March 22, Tree School Day! Easy, fun, really necessary jobs. Call OSU Extension, 503-655-8631 for details.

Community College. On T/S day, we are joined by several very helpful staff folks at CCC as we occupy classrooms in several of their buildings. Additionally, a flock of volunteers take over the last minute details—hanging out signs, distributing personalized packets, directing traffic, helping in the exhibit hall, selling raffle tickets, etc. Meanwhile, Tree School staff members operate a busy office where instructors', students', and visitors' needs and questions are handled as they work through the day's classes and events.

After a full day of classes . . . volunteers help clear the exhibit hall, staff packs up all the T/S equipment and Tree School is formally concluded—except for the follow up details—from which you are to be spared. ■

Editor's Note: Merrily Enquist, Master Woodland Manager, Heritage Tree Farm, Molalla.