

New Member Spotlight—the Widmark's

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I recently had the opportunity to spend the morning with Tim and Rebecca Widmark at their Hult Road Farm. While they have been longtime attendees at Tree School and have participated in our Twilight Tours and educational programs, they finally made the decision to become members of CCFFA-OSWA in 2013.

The Widmarks have a 40-acre farm/forest that they acquired in 2004. Their intent was to rent out the house and some of the outbuildings. It soon became apparent that this arrangement wasn't going to meet their needs and the decision was made to move to the property in 2007. With busy professional lives, the move allowed them to stay on top of things much better.

The property is zoned farm/forest, but the overall plan is to convert it entirely to forest that can be used for

relaxation, recreation and future income. They both seem to agree that relaxation is the same as work on the place.

The property is a checkerboard of sites; an eight acre patch of 30 to 40 year old Douglas-fir with some interspersed big leaf maple, approximately eight acres of noble fir Christmas trees that are now some 20 feet in height and a similar plantation of Douglas-fir Christmas trees. The remaining open areas, once used for pasture and hay ground, will be converted to forest. They also have a small pond on the back corner of the property which has its own requirements for maintenance and improvements.

The previous owner had begun a thinning process of the larger Christmas tree segment of Doug-fir. The agreement with the contractor was to remove the thinned trees and sell them for poles. The project fell apart when the pole market fell below profitability and the contractor pulled out. When Tim and Rebecca took possession, they were confronted with trees laying on the ground, cut but hung up in the other trees and near zero accessibility. The danger for fire was significant and with the added fuel load, cleaning up the piece of the checkerboard became top priority. Downed material was removed, cut for firewood or



Tim and Rebecca Widmark

burned, and the pruning process begun. They both agreed that they have more work to do in this area.

Planning for the existing woodland is now focused on the stand of noble fir in need of thinning. Work had been started on this process around the perimeter, but interior access is needed for easier ability to do thinning and pruning. Tim built a platform with safety rails that can be mounted on the front forks of the Kubota tractor and used to increase the reach when limbing up trees. In discussing their plans for this parcel, Tim indicated his thinking was to remove trees

that were dying, followed by those with deformities and missing tops. In areas where spacing exceeded norms, he was looking at properly spacing in some Doug-fir seedlings. With some shading being a factor, we discussed the possibility of using western red-cedar (WRC) instead.

Now comes the bigger task of converting eight acres of farm ground into forest production. This open farmland has been rototilled, soil tested, limed, and is ready for planting. A northern portion of this parcel was planted to Doug-fir last March. The plan is to plant Doug-fir seedlings in the majority of the remaining parcel with the exception of a southern facing, partially shaded, slope and bottom land where they are contemplating WRC. Let the transition begin!

When I asked them what they did for relaxation or hobbies, the answer was a sweep of the arms indicating the land. From the looks of what they have accomplished, that seems to be mainly spot on.

They do enjoy some travel, when Rebecca can move Tim from home, and have spent some time visiting places like Montana, Wyoming and the West. Disneyland seems to come up in the conversation with some regularity. They spend as much time as possible with their three children and seven grandchildren.

For seven and one-half years Tim was a Senior Service Engineer for Trumpf, a large manufacturer of laser

plate cutting equipment, whose job took him all over North America installing, repairing, and servicing equipment and training customer personnel in the care and use of that equipment. This meant that he was away from home more than he was at home. It may have something to do with Rebecca's problem of getting him to travel and eat out on occasion. The time finally arrived that being home was more important, and Tim now works for the Portland firm of Temp Control. For over the past four years he's been using lasers cutting sheet metal used in fabrication of heating, air-conditioning and ventilation equipment. He's home nights and is working four ten hour days to get more work done.

Rebecca has spent her professional life in the business world as an accountant. She has worked for several companies, but for the past thirteen years has been the supervisor of the accounts payable department of Harder Mechanical Contractors, one of the larger contractors of this type in the Northwest. She says that she is the most popular person with their customers because she is the one who pays their bills. With that I would have to agree. Her personal goal for the woodlands is to make it a park-like setting in areas, where they can sit, relax and enjoy the fruits of their labors.

They have made an allout effort to educate themselves on the tasks ahead

and are now more comfortable in where they are headed and who they can contact when assistance is needed. We wish them well.

Over the past few years I've had opportunities to visit with the Widmarks at Tree School and on Twilight Tours and have always enjoyed talking with them. Say hello, when you can, and spend a few minutes talking with them about their woodlands; you'll enjoy the conversation. ■