Credit: Dave Townsend

Small Forest Landowner Perspective on *"Long rotations and set aside forests: Economic and environmental implications"*

Western Forest Economists Meeting

May 15, 2025

Seattle, Washington

Presented by
Elaine Oneil, PhD
Executive Director

Washington FARM FORESTRY ASSOCIATION

"Stewards of the land... for generations to come."

Celebrating our History – Embracing our Future

As a part of nature, rather than apart from it

Providing education, mentorship and experiential learning

Longevity and Succession

Celebrating Family, Community, & Mentorship

Washington Farm Forestry Association

The Voice of the Small Forest Landowners in Washington State

Successful Advocacy for Small Forest Landowners in Washington State

Forest Riparian Easement Program bill

Flame Capped Kiln Bill

Aiming for a crop today, another tomorrow ….. through good forest management

A Focus on Timber

Wildlife and Water

And other creatures that share our forests

Working with and learning from our participation in Sustaining our Rural Landscape

Stewards of the Land…. For Generations to Come

Clean Water and Fish

But it isn't good enough for regulators

Wow - a 376,000+ strong run of returning salmon

Who are Small Forest Landowners (SFLO) and what do they want?

We are important enough that we have our own statute (RCW 76.13) and state resources dedicated to understanding what SFLO need and want to keep their forests as forests

https://nrsig.org/projects/small-forest-landowner-regulatory-impacts/files/Small-Forestland-Owners-ESSB-5330-Report-2021011.pdf

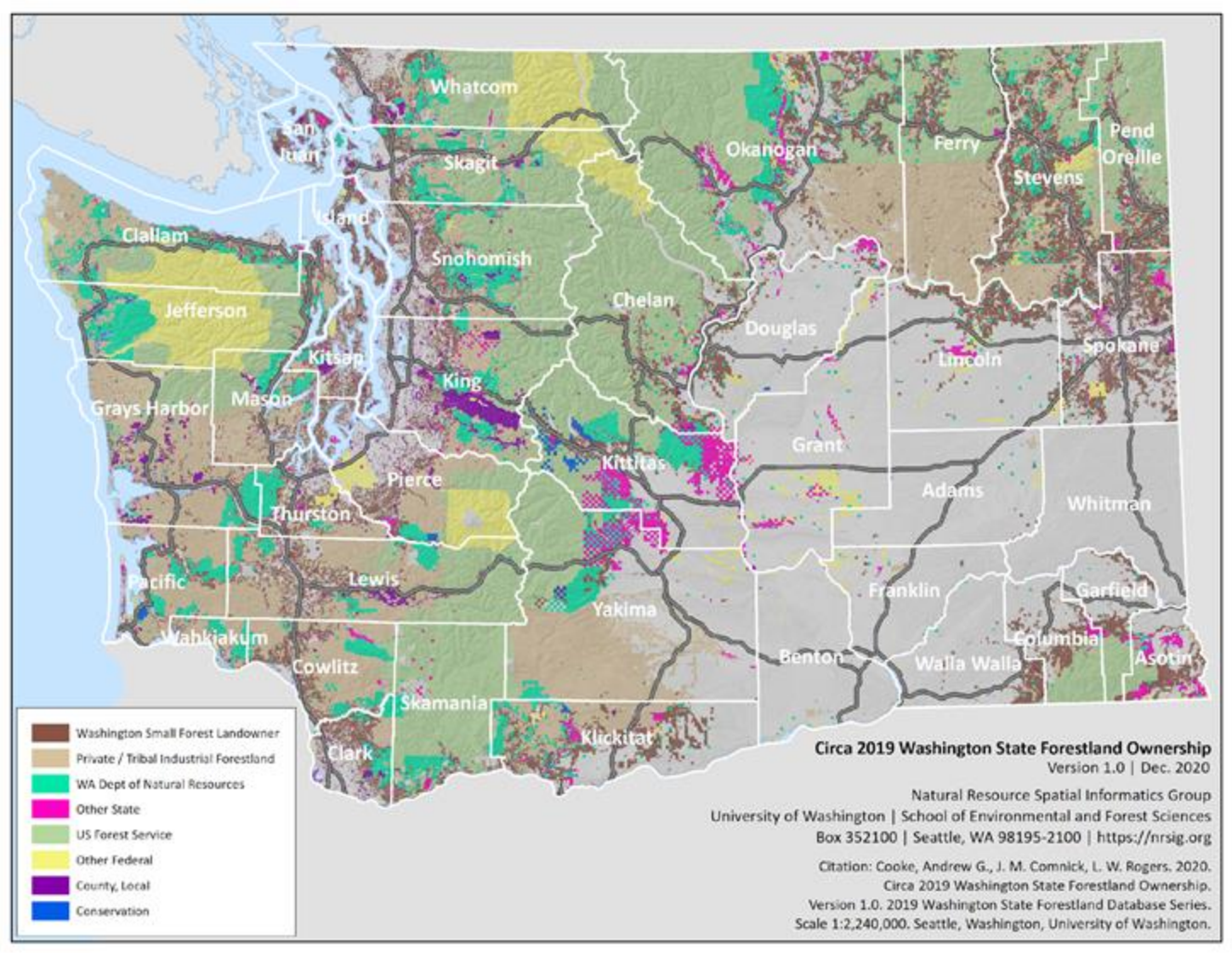
Washington's Small Forest Landowners in 2020

Status, trends and recommendations after 20 years of Forests & Fish

January 11, 2021

SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND FOREST SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON
College of the Environment

High Quality Data on SFLO

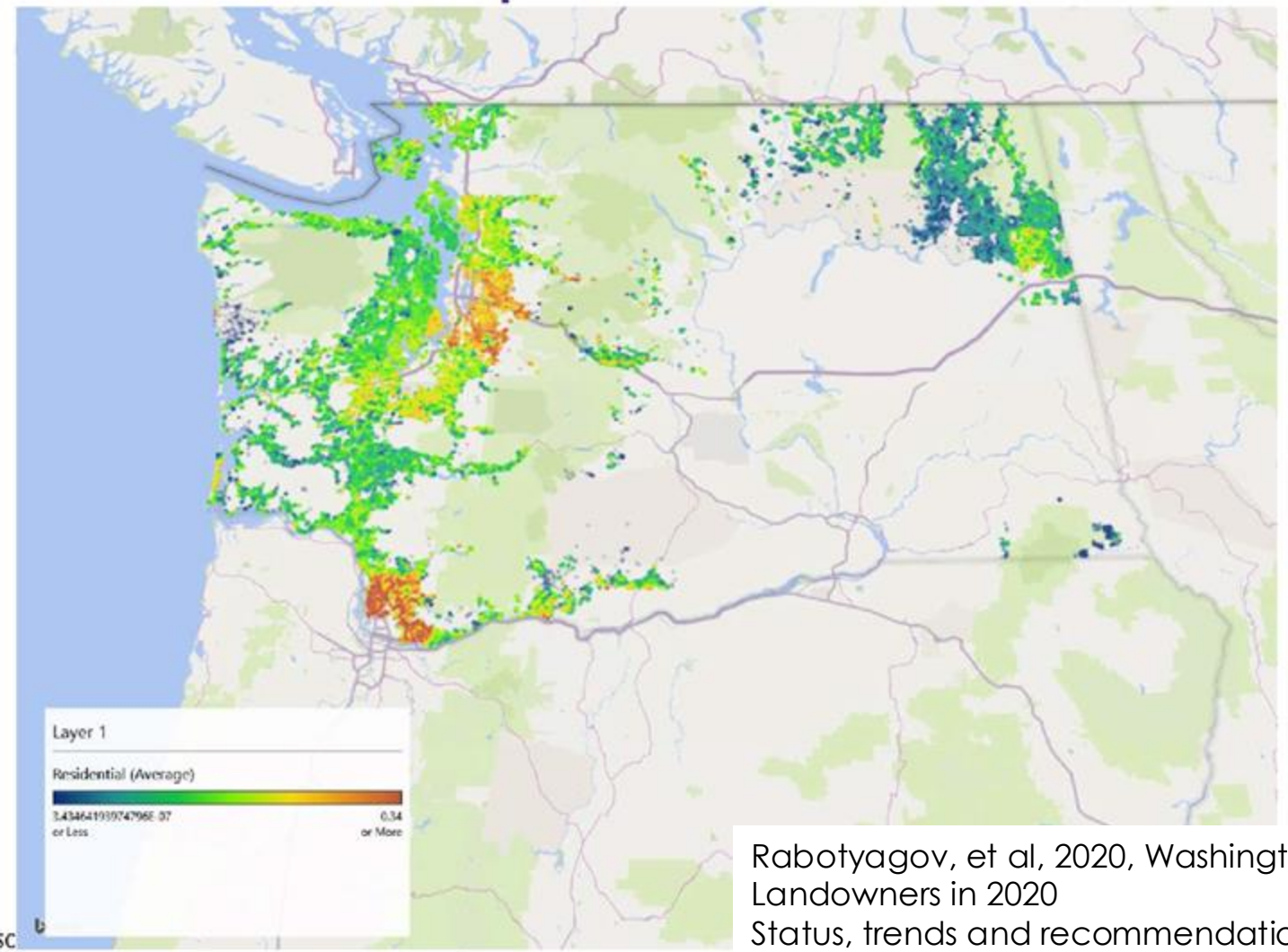


Small Forest Landowner Statistics (2019)

Half-State	Acreage Class	Parcel Acres (2019)	Forested Acres (2019)	Number of Owners*
East	2-20	233,277	145,682	26,176
East	20-100	638,459	432,082	17,617
East	100-1000	1,131,649	608,948	5,187
East	1000-5000	689,963	233,611	618
East	5000+	109,242	39,409	32
East	All Classes	2,802,589	1,459,732	49,375
West	2-20	739,354	492,574	126,937
West	20-100	638,156	446,825	23,060
West	100-1000	541,794	402,282	4,167
West	1000-5000	102,936	82,705	124
West	All Classes	2,022,240	1,424,386	154,014

Anticipated conversion to non-forest uses

> Residential development



Rabotyagov, et al, 2020, Washington's Small Forest Landowners in 2020
Status, trends and recommendations after 20 years of Forests & Fish, University of Washington, School of Environmental and Forest Sciences, 430 pp.
https://nrsig.sefs.uw.edu/projects/small-forest-landowner-

Take Home Notes

- There are a lot of different reasons for owning forest land
- Huge variability in those goals among even a sample of the SFLO community

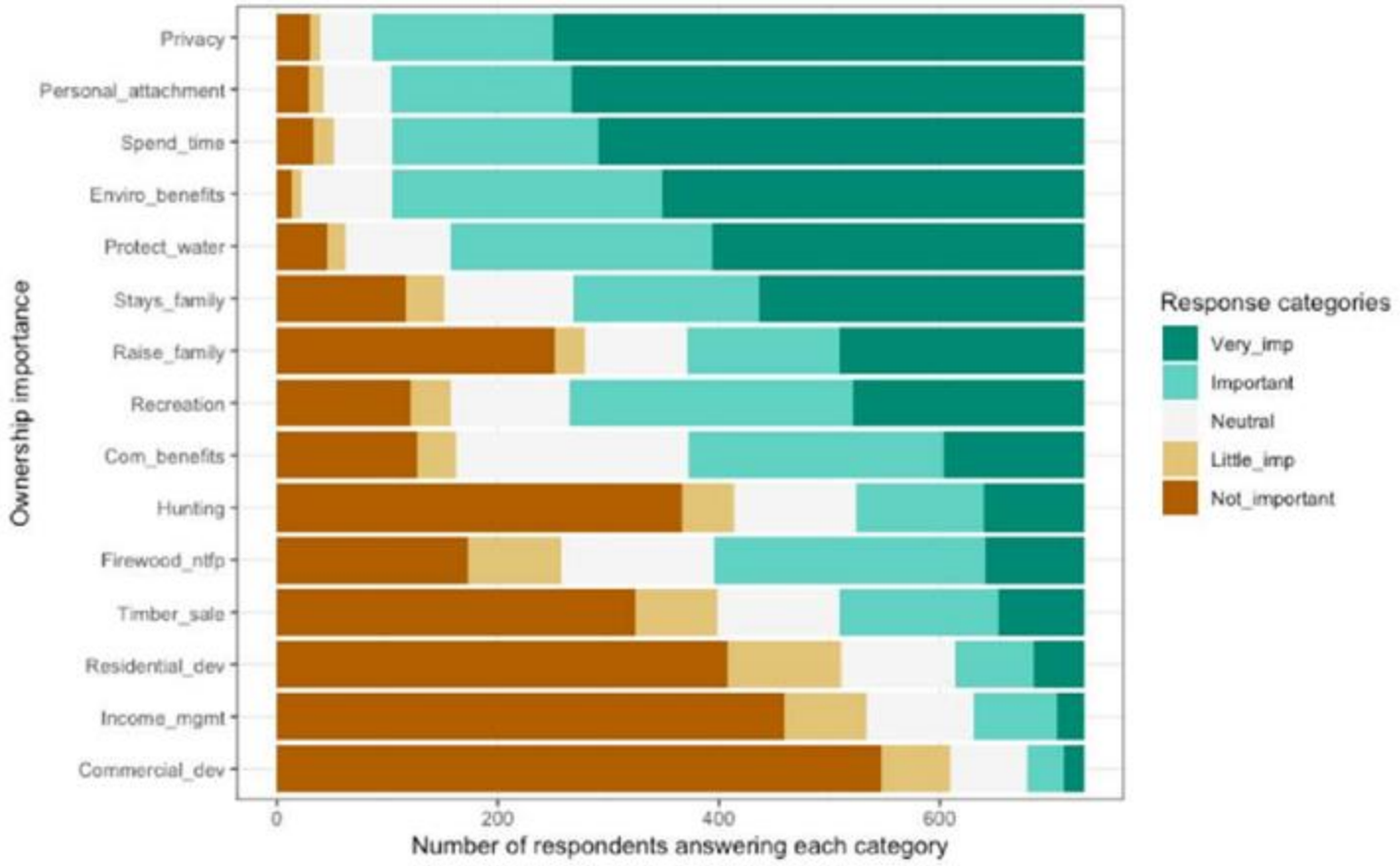


Figure 13. The distribution of answers to the importance of 15 aspects of forest ownership objectives from the 2020 GP survey. Objectives are presented in descending order of frequency of the "very important" response category.

Page 92 of https://nrsig.org/projects/small-forest-landowner-regulatory-impacts/files/Small-Forestland-Owners-ESSB-5330-Report-20210111.pdf

Financial Goals Matter – maybe not immediately, but over time they are always a consideration…

Take Home Notes

- HUGE variability in financial goals across owners and # acres owned
- Huge variability in # acres owned
  - Grey dots are westside owners
  - black dots are eastside owners

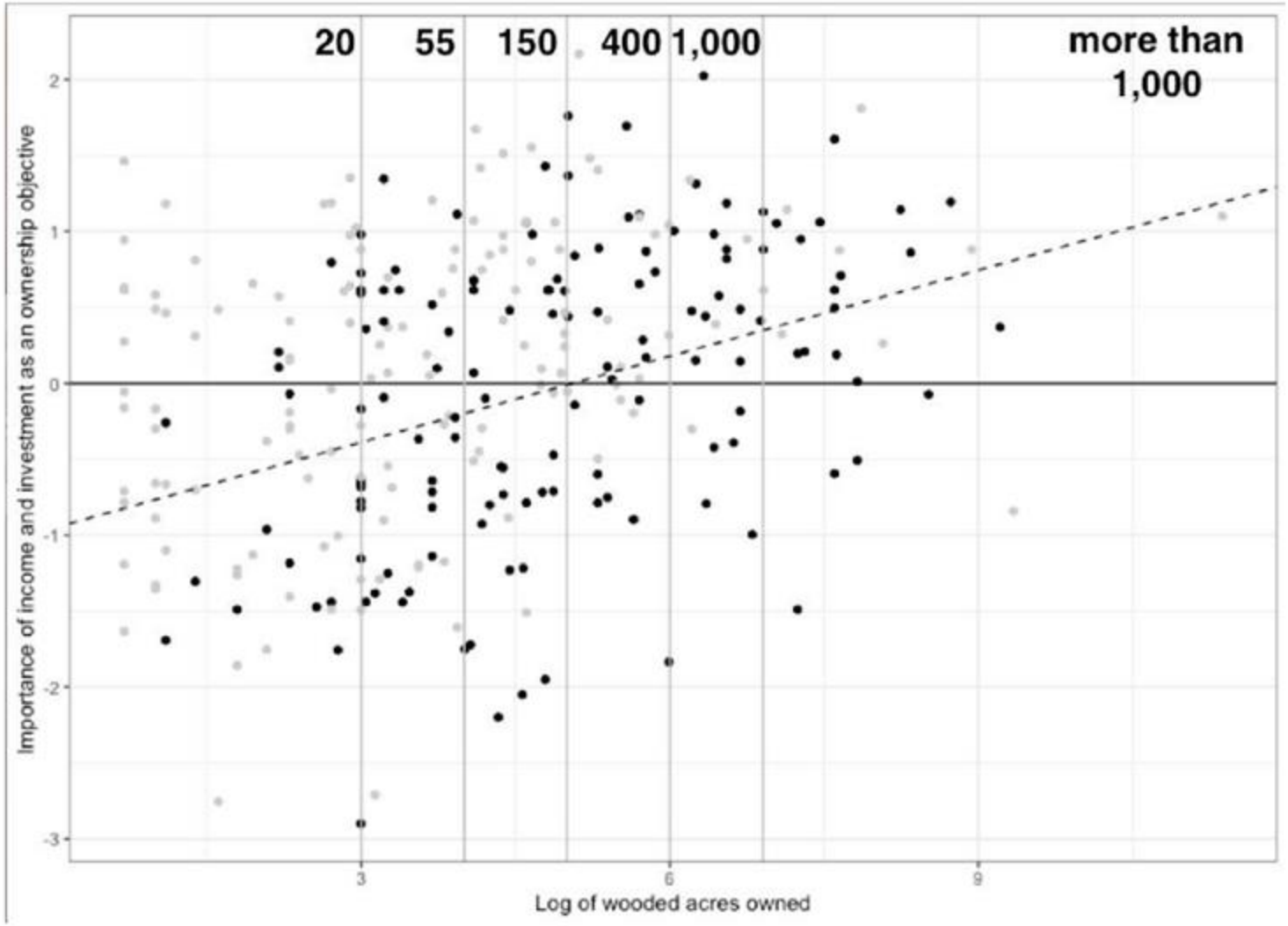


Figure 14. The relationship between the amount of wooded acres owned (log of wooded acres), and PCA scores for "Income, investment & heirs." SFLOs in the west half of the state are grey dots and those in the east half are black dots. Numbers at the top of the figure show the actual amount of wooded acres owned at various points on the log scale. The dotted line is the average association between log of wooded acres and the importance of income and investment from an OLS regression.

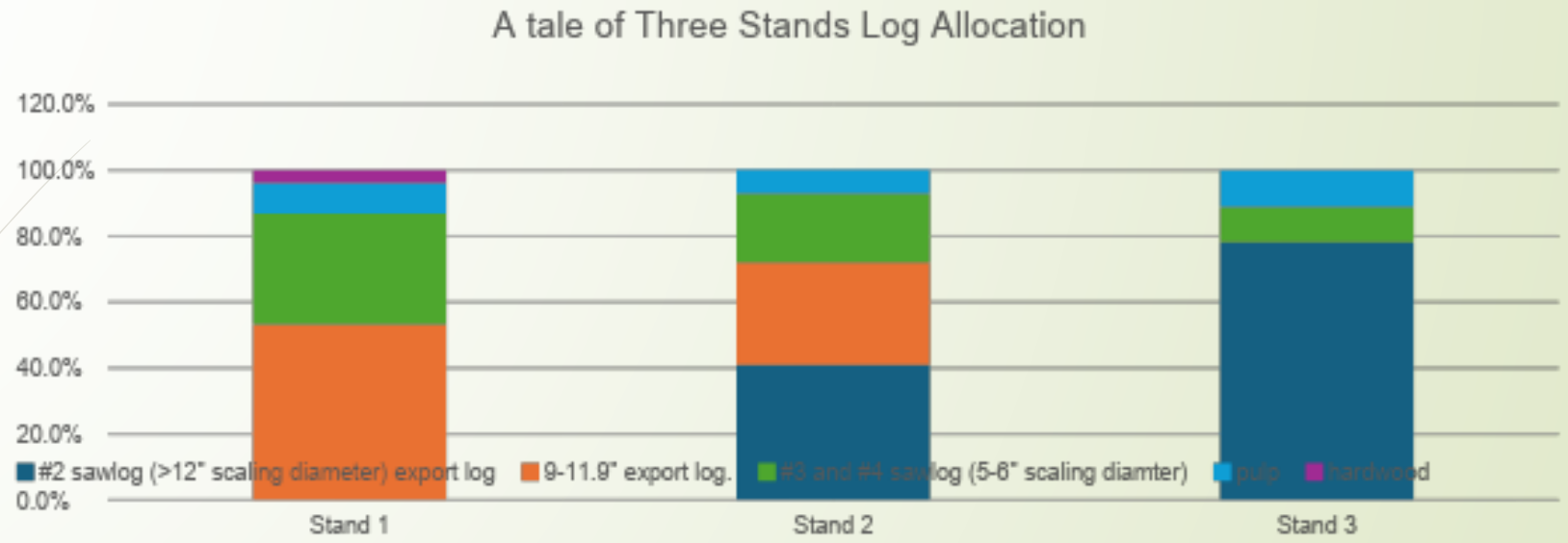
Page 96 of

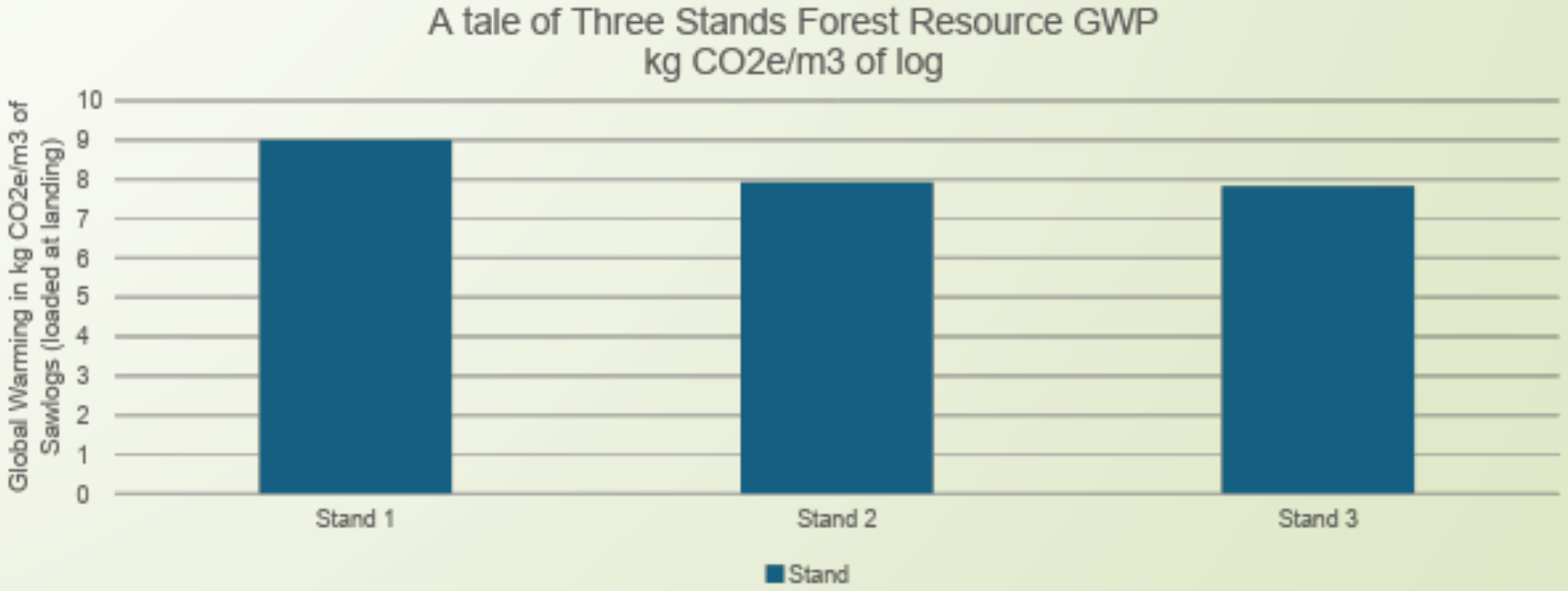
https://nrsig.org/projects/small-forest-landowner-regulatory-impacts/files/Small-Forestland-Owners-ESSB-5330-Report-20210[illegible].pdf

A Tale of Three Stands: Silviculture, harvesting, and yield comparisons

Treatment Regime	Stand 1 - Low intensity	Stand 2 -Moderate intensity	Stand 3 -High intensity
Age at harvest	41	43	45
	Per acre values		
Pre-commercial thin - age 11	300	300	300
Stocking at final harvest	230	153	100
# commercial entries	1	2	3
Commercial Thin #1	0	4,500*	4,500*
Commercial Thin #2	0		4,273*
Gross Board Feet (BF)	27,972	27,629	29,935
Net BF Final harvest	25,808	26,485	27,927
Total volume removed (merch + non-merch)	27,972	32,129	38,708
Green metric tons removed	168	253	219
Metric tons of carbon removed	51	77	67
Metric tons of carbon per year in product	1.25	1.79	1.48
Log allocation across all stand entries			
#2 sawlog (>12" scaling diameter) export log	0.0%	41.0%	78.3%
9-11.9" export log.	53.3%	31.0%	
#3 and #4 sawlog (5-6" scaling diameter)	33.6%	21.0%	10.7%
pulp	9.4%	7.0%	11.0%
hardwood	3.7%		

Log Size, Efficiency, and Footprint





A Tale of Three Stands: Experienced and Extrapolated (*) harvesting and yield comparisons for extended rotation stands under managed conditions

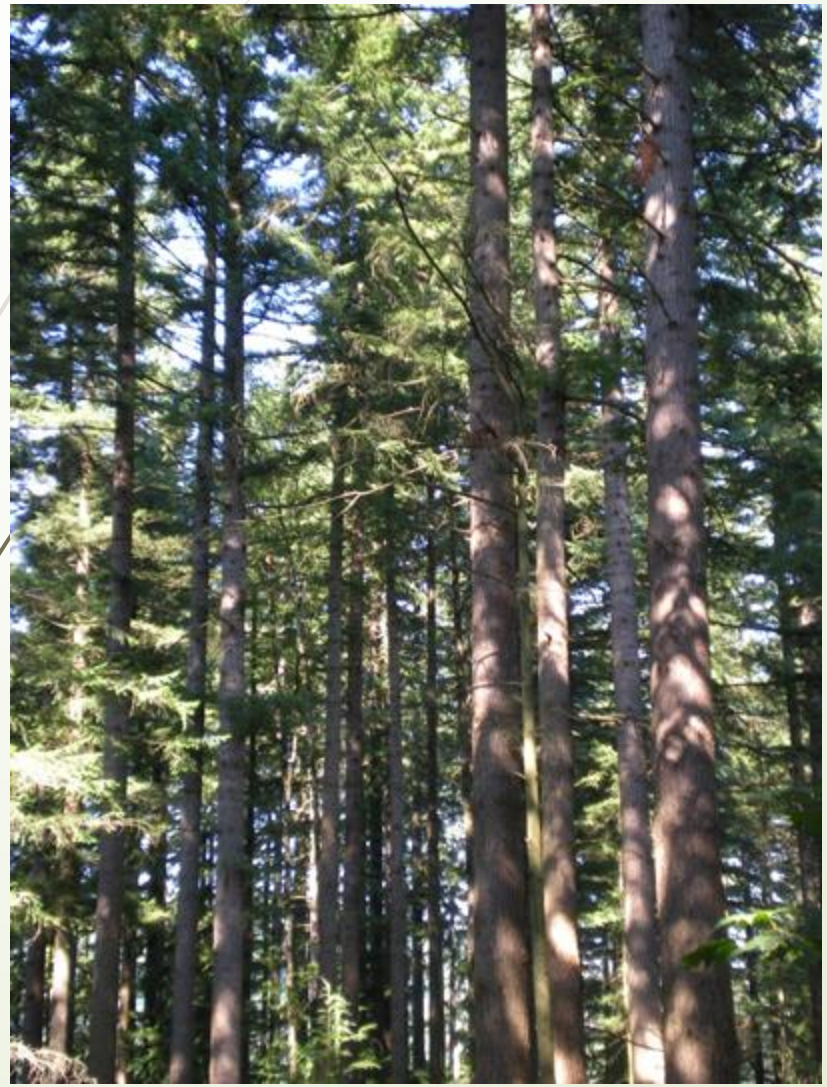
Treatment Regime	Stand 3 -High intensity	*Stand 3 – Extended Rotation Pathway**
Age at harvest	45	*60*
	Per acre values	
Pre-commercial thin - age 11	300	*300*
Stocking at final harvest	100	*85*
# commercial entries	3	*3*
Commercial Thin #1	4,500	*4,500*
Commercial Thin #2	4,273	*4,273*
Gross Board Feet (BF)	29,935	*50,000*
Net BF Final harvest	27,927	*46,646*
Total volume removed (merch + non-merch)	38,708	*58,773*
Green metric tons removed	219	*341*
Metric tons of carbon removed	67	*104*
Metric tons of carbon per year in product	1.48	*1.73*

2023 Washington State
Tree Farmer of the Year
Coburg
Tree Farm

The 90 Year Plan

Long term commitment and succession planning

Ruth Chris vs McDonalds



From planting through the diaper phase is a slog

It takes a long time to get there

- Establishing a crop
- Helping it grow
- And after a good long while reaping what we sow

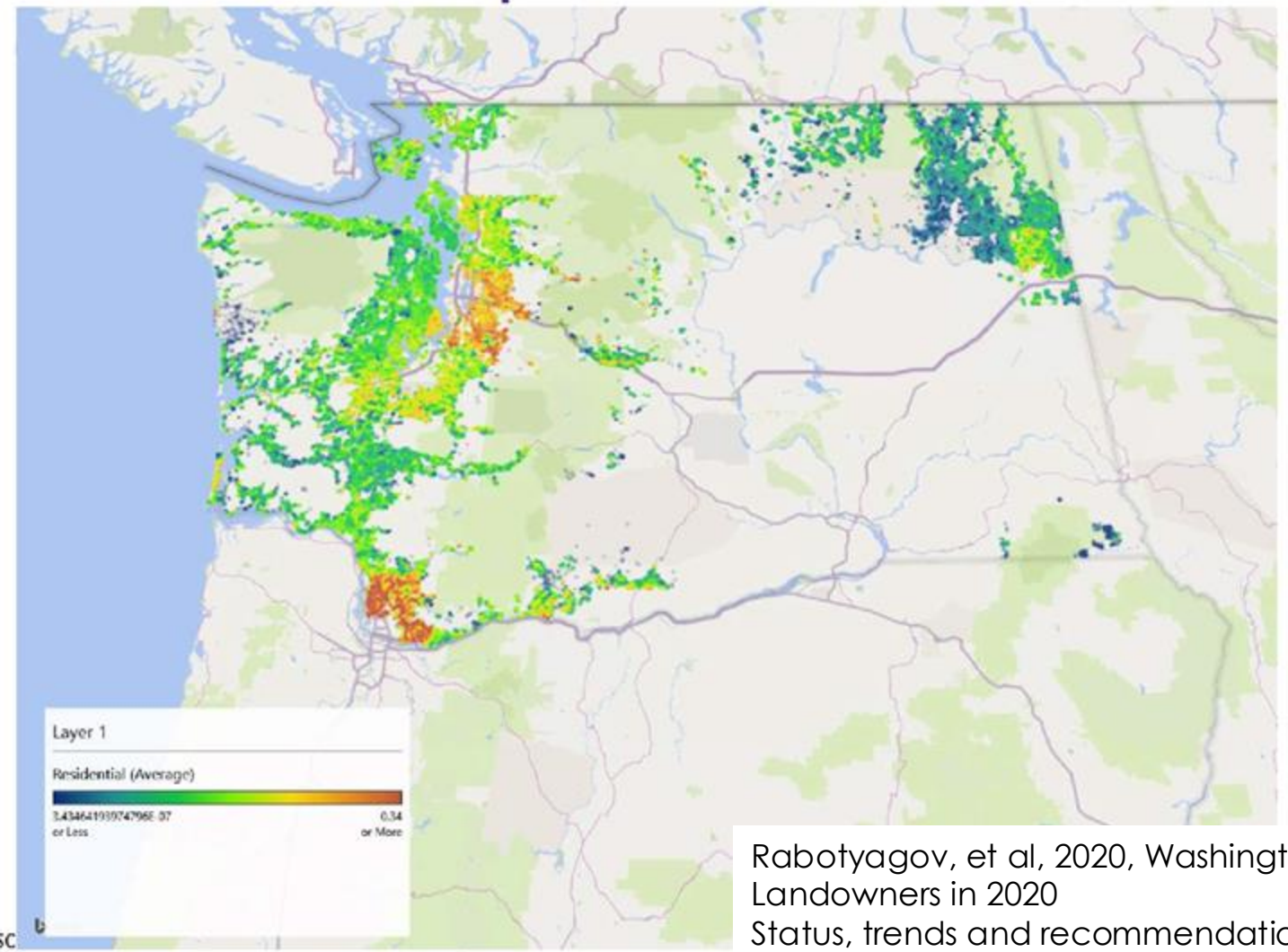
Soon you need to thin

A market for pulp and Chip n Saw

COBURG TREE FARM
PLANTED
1976
PRIVATE FOREST LAND

Anticipated conversion to non-forest uses

> Residential development



Rabotyagov, et al, 2020, Washington's Small Forest Landowners in 2020
Status, trends and recommendations after 20 years of Forests & Fish, University of Washington, School of Environmental and Forest Sciences, 430 pp.
https://nrsig.sefs.uw.edu/projects/small-forest-landowner-

	WWA SFLO (5-2500 acres)	WWA Industry	Conservation/Utility/ Real Estate and NIPF> 2500 ac	WWA All Private
total lost timber value to private forest landowners for parcels over 5 acres using species specific log prices	**-$276,884,015**	**-$1,455,510,007**	**-$94,779,659**	**-$1,827,173,681**
total lost carbon value to private forest landowners for parcels over 5 acres assuming $50/ton	**-$69,221,564**	**-$372,289,183**	**-$25,764,839**	**-$467,275,587**
total lost timber and carbon value to private forest landowners for parcels over 5 acres	**-$346,105,579**	**-$1,827,799,191**	**-$120,544,498**	**-$2,294,449,268**

Regulatory burden is often huge … and it impacts the long-term viability of small family ownerships

Pacific Cascade Region (38% SFLO harvests)

- **Morgan -** Raising timber should be encouraged, awarded, and applauded, and it must be sustainable from both an economic and resource perspective. If it is not economically sustainable, the land is just waiting for conversion. **Even the best stewards of the land have to be stewards of their families first.**
- **Bloomfield – It has been my experience that loss of manageable acres due to regulation aimed at public resource protection is a significant consideration for landowners when assessing the value of their land and contemplating asset management decisions.**
- **Lentz -** as I look out 20 years, I am concerned about my heirs being able to manage and enjoy the tree farm the way I did. **The thought of passing on something that becomes so onerous it becomes a liability.**

Westside County	SFLO parcel acres (2019)	SFLO buffer acres (2019)	% acres in buffer	rank
Pacific	49,180	13,482	27.4%	1
Wahkiakum	15,484	4,112	26.6%	2
Grays Harbor	83,681	17,856	21.3%	3
Lewis	157,052	28,993	18.5%	4
Cowlitz	88,225	16,139	18.3%	5
Clark	74,104	13,343	18.0%	6
Clallam	65,463	9,446	14.4%	7
Snohomish	124,675	17,821	14.3%	8
Skamania	30,306	4,310	14.2%	9
Skagit	75,416	10,060	13.3%	10
Mason	71,473	9,369	13.1%	11
Jefferson	53,720	6,956	12.9%	12
Thurston	83,081	9,967	12.0%	13
Kitsap	72,323	8,082	11.2%	14
King	90,399	9,926	11.0%	15
Whatcom	75,184	7,881	10.5%	16
Pierce	103,428	10,273	9.9%	17
San Juan	51,160	3,423	6.7%	18
Island	50,678	2,509	5.0%	19
total westside SFLO acres	1,415,035	203,947	14.4%	
most impacted counties	533,190	103,370	20.6%	1-7

2023 Washington State
Tree Farmer of the Year
Coburg
Tree Farm