**Forestry Practices to Help Protect and Create Wildlife Habitat on Westside Small Woodlands**

A few quick recommendations for your land from

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**Our Goal = Habitat Diversity**

To maintain and enhance the various habitat types on your property to provide the best opportunities for all of the wildlife species on your woodland.

***Protect existing habitat features***

1. Locate and protect unique habitats – The most valuable for wildlife are wetlands, springs and seeps, older hardwoods, riparian zones, patches of old conifer at least 1 acre in size. Protect these areas with buffers from activity. Work to keep livestock out of these areas.
2. Wildlife Trees - Locate the best quality snags and live trees with dead tops, cavities, feeding excavations. Protect standing dead trees in any state decay to provide cavity habitats. When possible retain broken and multiple topped trees. Have “no cut” patches around the best snags if harvesting. See below for information on creating snags.
3. Down logs - Protect all larger down logs (>12” dia), known as LWD (large woody debris), especially those in advanced decay - If they are the way during logging, move them to a safe place if possible. Work with equipment owners to avoid crushing the logs during activities.
4. Understory shrubs and low trees - Retain preferred fruit bearing species such as cascara, Indian Plum, huckleberry, elderberry, wild rose, etc. <http://nativeplantspnw.com/category/deciduous-shrubs-vines/>
5. Gather firewood using small diameter green trees: After thinning cuts, pile the stems left a year (or more) before burning. You can also collect and use small diameter blow down (<10” diameter) for firewood.

***Enhancements***

1. Create snags At least 8’ tall. If using mechanical harvesters, snip stems off at 8-15 feet. Climbers can cut stems at 25-40 feet. In thinning, make some short snags out of 4-6” trees at chest height. Target 2-4 per acre if they do not exist. <https://dnrtreelink.wordpress.com/2016/12/09/how-to-make-a-wildlife-tree/>
2. Create Log surrogates and Habitat piles. Place 3-5 small diameter logs in parallel piles to create a space in the center. Stack larger branches and stems into crisscross piles on top of this. Use stumps or old logs as basis for pile. Cover with a “roof” of smaller branches 1-2 feet thick. In stands where English ivy and/or Himalayan blackberry is removed, the vines can be pile on top of these woody piles. Make sure the overall pile is no taller than 3 feet.
3. Create Openings in stands with uniform canopies. Use patch 1 to 2 dominant tree heights across (about 100 to 200 feet) to allow enough sun to reach the ground for wildlife forage. <https://washingtondnr.wordpress.com/2017/11/28/mind-the-gap-mimicking-nature-in-the-managed-forest/>
4. Plant shrubs - identify preferred species of fruit bearing shrubs (elderberry, serviceberry, chokecherry) and plant in openings or along edges. These may need browse protection. Ask your Stewardship Forester about purchasing these plants. <https://wnps.org/native-gardening/resources#habitat>
5. Plant seed mixes on disturbed sites such as skid trails and landings. This can provide forage for wildlife and help prevent weeds. Be careful with these mixes as they can contain invasive species. <http://www.washington.edu/news/2002/04/18/wildflower-seed-mixes-include-some-wicked-bloomers/>
6. Install Nest Boxes. Nest boxes provide habitat for birds and small mammals (such as squirrels and chipmunks). Place larger boxes inside the forest canopy and bluebird style boxes on the edges of forest openings. <https://nestwatch.org/learn/all-about-birdhouses/> <https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/ec1556>