



## Spotlight on a Forest Steward/Tree Farmer

Richard Goldberg

By Richard Goldberg & Cindy Bertek



Richard Goldberg began his naturalist lifestyle as a legacy from his Father who was a scout master. His early adolescence years included becoming a junior scientist and herpetologist under Gerry Williamson at the Savannah Science Museum in Savannah, Georgia. Backpacking the Appalachian Trail from Springer Mountain to the Shenandoah Valley during 1973 to 1978 gave him a great appreciation of the outdoors and a strong sense of independence.

Richard's four children understand the goals they are working towards and assist in the forest management practices. Several of his children enjoy what the property has to offer and their appreciation of their forest will certainly increase with time. Richard is a practicing Mechanical Engineer at the firm of DC Engineering in Missoula, MT. He currently serves as the Chairman of the Wildhorse Parks Road Users Association and as a landowner representative of the Montana Forest Stewardship Steering Committee (since 2004) and he is a member of Montana Tree Farm.

One early spring day in the rain: David Goldberg planting lodgepole pine seedlings



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Since 1984, Richard has taken an active part in planning and managing his forest as well as land in the surrounding area. The desire for serenity and solitude were major components in acquiring his property. Over the years he has purchased adjacent properties as they became available. Richard's property is located in Powell County on the south west edge of the Helmville valley near Drummond, MT in the Garnet Range. The property includes one developed spring, undeveloped springs, two creeks, and a pond. The forest includes ponderosa and lodgepole pine, Douglas fir, aspen, as well as larch which he introduced on the more moist north facing slopes. The terrain varies and provides many recreational opportunities.

Prior to taking the Forest Stewardship workshop, his forest management practices were mostly random. Activities involved weed spraying and harvesting deformed and dead trees for firewood. Richard says, "At the workshop I learned that private forest health is a huge responsibility. The management practices I established at the workshop gave me an action plan. When I began pre-commercial thinning I purchased a saw mill so that I could use the wood instead of burning it in slash piles."

Richard has an active Forest Stewardship/Tree Farm Plan that is SFI (Sustainable Forest Initiative) certified for his 93 acres and an additional contiguous five acres which is owned by his partner, Kathy Dutton. His stewardship plans key objectives include management for forest health and diversity of species, recreation, and wildlife habitat.

Slash treatment, burning jackpot piles



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The wildlife encounters at Richard's property include black bear, mountain lions, mule deer, white-tailed deer, wild turkeys, snowshoe hares, coyotes, wolves, badgers and a grizzly bear sow with two cubs. There is a rich population of birds including owls, hawks, eagles, nighthawks, pileated woodpeckers, grey jays, stellar jays, roughed and blue grouse, and northern flickers to name just a few. Richard believes wildlife is not an unlimited resource and must remain wild. The policy at his forest is to observe, do not feed, and log sightings of the wildlife.

One of Richard's management practices is to introduce genetically superior trees which he purchases from the state nursery every other year. He plants tree species where they naturally thrive and have been wiped out by disease or beetles. Unfortunately not all forest management practices turn out well. The pre-commercial thinning was done to meet some of his management goals; although, his preferred tree species were the same preferred species of the mountain pine beetle therefore he has several groves of nicely spaced dead trees. The pine beetle diverted his efforts for several years to mitigation and damage control.

Richard was recently involved with the USDA NRCS (John Bowe) wherein he applied for and received cost share assistance to implement management practices identified in his Forest Stewardship Plan. The Powell County Weed Control Program (Karen Laitala) has been a great resource in the ongoing pest management. The Powell County Weed program assisted in weed control by providing the use of equipment and the cost sharing of chemicals. Richard dedicated a specific acreage to biological weed control practice and has built a thriving community of *Cyphocleonus achates* (knapweed root weevils) thanks to the efforts of Ms Laitala from the weed program. All weed control management has been reported to the Douglas Creek Weed Control Group (Sheila Manley) in an effort to provide statistical data.

Making slash sustainable,  
utilizing his own wood



Renewing life, a ponderosa pine seedling  
hosted by a beetle killed tree.



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Thanks to Richard Goldberg for sharing his story.

Richard says, “Being a forest steward and actively managing the forest is rewarding and a legacy I will hand off to my children and future generations to come. Being a landowner representative on the Montana Forest Stewardship Steering Committee has allowed me to meet forestry professionals who have enriched my life.”

Grass seeding, displacing weeds in areas  
where the slash was burned



Note from MSU Extension Forestry: Five Forest Stewardship workshops are offered annually, see the calendar at [www.msuextension.org/forestry](http://www.msuextension.org/forestry) All family forest owners are encouraged to attend as well as Tree Farmers and second/third generation Forest Stewards and repeat attendees.