**Minutes of the Fall 2017 PSCTA Meeting**

On October 7, 2017, 10:00 a.m., the meeting was called to order by president, Bob Moore. The Association welcomed Bill Campbell, a guest from Wintergreen Tree Farm in Arlington, WA. Our meeting was held at Lochsloy Acres in Lake Stevens, WA, farm of Mike Peters and Sheila McKinnon.

As always, Mike gave us an entertaining overview of this farm which he and Sheila started in 2003. What was once a cattle farm, this tree farm has been a labor of love with its highs and lows. As Mike told us about his first planting of 1200 trees, he noted he made a few mistakes along the way. Although they didn’t have any cows, he found that the neighboring cows found their way into his trees (Mistake #1) so he made a correction and fenced their access. He also planted 5 varieties of trees originally which included Siberian spruce (Mistake #2). Mistake #3 came by planting noble firs in wet areas. There is always a learning curve when it comes to what type of tree to plant in an area where the soil and water table makes such a huge difference in the survival of your trees. By 2007 when they first opened the farm, they had planted 7,000 trees and sold 76 trees. In 2008 they joined the Association (hooray for all of us) and were added to the website. That year they sold 500 trees and from then on they have sold out each season.

Over the years Mike has planted 21 varieties of trees, but now just has 5 varieties (Doug, Noble, Nordmann, Fraser and Grand). As a corrective measure he tries to just plant one type of tree in a particular field. Although it is expensive he has also developed an effective drainage system to help with the water problems he has faced over the years. (If other farms have similar problems check with Mike about his system of laying pipes throughout the farm where the water builds up. Mike has been very successful with his system.)

Mike and Sheila open their farm for pre-selection weekends in November before Thanksgiving and begin cutting after Thanksgiving. They do not have pre-cut trees for sale. All trees that are for sale are tagged. The farm has 14-15 workers during the season to assist customers with their trees. The workers shake and bale all trees (there is no charge to the customers for this service) and assist customers with their trees to their vehicles. The farm offers wreaths, tree bags, funnels, wreath hangers, preservative, water meters, and floor mats. Their barn is a welcoming place for young and old to warm up with cider and cocoa after purchasing their tree.

**Minutes of the Summer Farm Tour** were approved as submitted by the secretary.

**Treasurer’s Report** was reviewed by Sheila McKinnon. There is one new farm to be added to the report. Sheila cashed in the Association’s CD’s with Bank of American and opened a money market account with Homestreet Bank. The interest on the CD’s was so low that this move is an advantage to the Association. There is $9,000 in this account. The treasurer’s report was accepted as presented.

**Website Updates** Sheila encourages all farms to review their listings and make all updates. If you need assistance, please contact Sheila soon. As an added note, if you have tall trees for sale, please check the “amenities” section of your listing and add “tall trees” to the selection.

**Puyallup Fair Update** Once again the fair booth was a great success thanks to Mike and Denise for all their hard work and planning. The TV monitor showing “work on the farms” was excellent. The booth set up showcased the trees and fairgoers had lots of comments on how beautiful the trees were. Our presence in the Northwest Outdoors building is important and we will continue to have our booth in the building. Although we didn’t have a representative from the Association all the time, we did have coverage during the busy times of the fair. We will have some business cards made again for next year’s booth.

**PNWCTA Meeting in Portland** Bob Moore attended the meeting and added comments on the meeting. This association, like so many, has fewer members that in years past. The PNWCTA had a membership as high as 900 and now is just under 300 members. The vendors at the meeting are also fewer than in years past. Some of the agenda items included the labor shortage of seasonal workers from Mexico, the shortage of wholesale trees for tree lots and a panel discussion about things choose and cut farms do to bring people to their farms and also some new products for customers.

**Agri Tourism Signs** Denise distributed the signs that had been order by members to be in compliance with the new State law that requires farms to have signage on the farm that contains the warning notice to customers of the Agri Tourism activity on the farm. These signs must be clearly visible at the entrance of the location with the specific wording stated in the law (Senate Bill 5808). “Failure to comply with the requirements concerning warning signs and notices provided in this law prohibits an agritourism professional from invoking the privilege of immunity provided by this act and may be introduced as evidence in any claim for damages.” (a quote from the law). If you don’t have a sign, Bob Moore commented that the Washington Farm Bureau has order forms for the sign on their website.

After our lunch break there was some discussion about seedlings lost to the drought this summer. We all had losses, but nothing was devastating. The members had a tour of the fields with Mike before the rains came.

Many thanks to Mike and Sheila for hosting our fall meeting.

**January meeting is scheduled for January 27, 2018 at the Meridian Grange in Kent**

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Moore, Secretary