

The State of Fear

**How it affects your ability to
grow trees**

December 4, 2019 - Heather Hansen

**Washington Friends of Farms &
Forests**



Who's afraid?

- Neighbors (may include anyone who drives by)
- City Council (responsible for drinking water)
- County Commissioners (must maintain roads and parks, control weeds, hearing from constituents)
- Timberland owners/managers (may impact ability to grow trees)
- Fear makes it harder to focus on your job

Fear of what?

- Cancer – TV commercials
- Movement of herbicides through soil into ground water
- Presumption of drift
 - Contaminating drinking water
 - Polluting Puget Sound or streams and harm salmon and orcas
 - Home gardens
 - Pets

Fear is real even though logic behind it is not

- Compare to vaccines – for some people, fear is very real even though data shows vaccines are safe
- Fear is not logical

How did it begin? (Short Version)

- A timber company posted notices of planned aerial application as required by the Washington Forest Practices Act
- Citizens complained to legislators and county commissioners
- A public meeting escalated when Seattle TV crews arrived
- Senator Rolfes introduced SB 5597 – Aerial Application over Forestland

Aerial Application over Forestland - SB 5597

- Review regulatory agencies that approve herbicides for use
- Review application technology to increase herbicide application accuracy
- Review research regarding the most frequently used herbicides in forestry

Aerial Application over Forestland - SB 5597

- Develop recommendations, if appropriate, for managing forestland through an integrated pest management approach that combines traditional chemical and other vegetative control methods, with other silvicultural practices to protect resources from pests, minimize effect on nontarget species, ensure the protection of public safety and human health, while maintaining effective control that is economically feasible on a commercial forestry scale

Aerial Application Work Group – SB 5597

- Report due to legislature December 31, 2019
- Activists asking for a minority report

Work group members have asked for...

- Increased notification requirements
- Use reporting
- Increased buffers
- Increased use of SEPA review
- Water monitoring with reporting

Escalation

- Environmental groups form in Kitsap and Jefferson Counties

- Protesters stood along a road during an aerial application and claimed the helicopter intentionally sprayed them
- Alleged a public drinking water supply was sprayed
- Claimed WSDA falsified information during the investigation
- No violation found

Kitsap Environmental Coalition claims victory

- Timber company cancels planned aerial application in Kitsap County
- Kitsap County, City of Bainbridge Island, City of Poulsbo, Port of Kingston and North Kitsap School Dist. stop using glyphosate
- Local garden stores remove Round-up

Activists are saying...

- Timber harvest in Washington is accelerating climate change
- Herbicides are causing toxic algae blooms in lakes
- Calling for “stop all applications of toxins across all ecosystems in Washington State.”

Forest Practices Requirements in WA

- Permit required for aerial application
- Notices must be posted at access points, including trailheads, 5 days prior to treatment and remain up at least 15 days after treatment.
- Signs must contain the name of the product used, date of treatment, a contact telephone number, and any applicable restrictions
- All water and wetlands must be buffered (Since a harvest buffer is also required, the spray buffer is usually duplicative.)
- Buffer of 200 feet for homes and 100 feet for agricultural land

How is Washington law different than Oregon with respect to citizen initiatives?

- Only seven counties have the authority to run citizen initiatives: Whatcom, San Juan, Snohomish, King, Pierce, Clallam, and Clark
- 60 cities also have authority for citizen initiatives
- In 2016, the Washington Supreme Court rejected a ballot initiative in the City of Spokane that would have extended “rights of nature” to the Spokane River

Other Legislative Concerns

- Analysis of glyphosate use by state agencies
- Consideration of alternatives
- Report due to legislature at end of year

Lessons learned the hard way

- Beware of public meetings
- Public meetings draw media
- Meeting one at a time eliminates following the herd

Where to from here?

- The vocal minority is visible – but they are the minority
- Focus on reaching the others
- Build positive visibility – sponsor community celebrations, trails, parks, etc.
- Meet with County Commissioners, City Council members

Where to from here?

- Get comfortable talking to neighbors
- Participate in training (yesterday)
- It takes practice
- It takes time



Questions?

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