

# Tree Planting Day

## History:

For years, we'd have a Cub Scout den leader call us and ask about taking a small group of boys out to plant trees. This was a bit of a chore because we'd have to find someone who was available for the day that would work for the Cub Scouts. Or, sometimes, we did not have a unit that was close, or it was too steep, or it had too many hazards, etc. Sometimes, they'd call and we were already finished with planting season.

When my son was still in Cub Scouts in the mid-80's, I was Cub Master for Pack 462 and we'd take the whole Pack (about 30 boys) out for a Saturday. It worked pretty well and someone came up with the idea of inviting everyone to come for a single day each year.

By the late 80's-early 90's, my son was in Boy Scout Troop 142, I was Scout Master, and we were getting more and more Cub Scouts. Barte thought we should make it a more festive day and Fred designed the t-shirts. Troop 142 did a flag-raising to begin the day and staffed the kitchen for the hot dogs.

Tree Planting Day as we know it began in 1992 with 120 kids. In 1994, we had 225 kids and, in 1995, 321 kids. We quickly realized that we had chaos. E.g., people did not know what 10-foot spacing was; they did not know the difference between soil and duff; they did not know the difference between the top of the tree and the roots or that the green part goes above ground the brown part goes into the ground; and we had lots of dropped trees. In other words, we essentially sent a crew out the next week to pull and replant virtually every tree – not too productive and not too good for the seedlings.

By this time, Terry Selby was the Philomath High School forestry instructor; PHS entered the picture and the day went much, much better.

PHS goes out and spends a good deal of time in January marking off 100-ft. square plots and, on Saturday, they are responsible for taking a group of 10 kids and their 10 trees each to plant a hundred-tree plot. They quickly learned they sometimes had too many trees or too few trees; i.e., their spacing wasn't very good. They began to mark every planting spot but found that a spot of white paint on the ground that is under frost didn't work so well! With that, they came up with the color-coded bamboo stakes they now use. [Although, people still tend to drift from a red plot to a blue plot!]

From Terry's perspective as a teacher, the day did 5 things for his students:

- 1) Tree planting is something industry does,
- 2) This is a community service,
- 3) The students have to act as teachers,
- 4) The students have to act as a foreman to get the job done, and
- 5) They have to take responsibility.

*[When we greet at Philomath High School and introduce the day, I remind everyone that the high school students are in charge and to let them give direction. This is because the students say that parents are not very good at taking direction from teenagers!!!!]*

Troop 142 would go out the week before to build the kitchen and, the night before, would camp on-site – oftentimes inside the kitchen and have “straw fights”. After I left as Scout Master, the troop continued to do this until the demise of the troop. At that point, Troop 2 took over the kitchen and have done this for us ever since.

After Boy Scouts, I started doing more with Explorer Post 122; these were both boys and girls of high school age. They'd go out early that Saturday morning to assess what the parking situation was like and then greet and park the cars. The main thing was safety, keep the roads open, and try to avoid getting cars stuck off the side of the road; i.e., try to minimize the chaos. The Post no longer exists but the 2 main leaders (Bill Cohnstaedt, Gene Johnson, and a couple of their friends) still handle the parking for us.

### Timeline:

- In mid-summer, talk to Rick about finding a planting site.
  
- The criteria for choosing a site are:
  - Safety
  - A loop to drive since our roads are not suitable for cars and 2-way traffic - safety
  - Roads that will provide parking spots
  - Roads with a solid surface, no high-centers, not too steep, etc.
  - Keep in mind, most people are not accustomed to driving off paved streets
  - Avoid nearby creeks and rivers as they attract kids – safety
  - Ground not too steep - safety
  - Ground with not too much logging slash – Rick may do a little extra slash disposal - safety
  - A driving route that utilizes county roads and avoids main highways - safety
  - If having to use a main highway, try to make all right turns to avoid having a caravan of 3-4 dozen cars making a left turn and crossing a lane of traffic – safety
  - Think about where to place the kitchen, the potties, and the t-shirt tent/pickup
  - A tree farm with nice vistas – i.e., leave a nice, lasting impression for a tourist
  
- As soon as school starts, talk to Simon and find a date. Check with the Troop 2 Scoutmaster, Explorer Post 122, and the Woods Patrol Deputy to make sure the date works for all of them. Develop the Tree Planting Day flyer and get it to Boy Scouts and to Girl Scouts by the first of October (some leaders will have already started calling to find the date as they develop their calendars).
  
- Let Ann and Pam know the dates so they can start taking RSVP's. Get the date on Facebook and the website.
  
- Contact the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts at the beginning of January as a reminder. Send them another copy of the flyer.
  
- In November:
  - Place the order for the t-shirts with Shirt Circuit
  - Order the potty from Best Pots
  - Contact the OSU student SAF chapter
  
- In January:
  - Take Simon's class out to the woods so they can start laying out the plots
  - At the month's first staff meeting, make sure people are on board for Tree Planting Day – i.e., someone to handle t-shirts, seedlings, etc.
  - Select the spot for the kitchen, the potty, and the t-shirts

- Get the kitchen poles from last year and deliver them to the site (afterward, make sure the Scouts place the poles up off the ground – they'll last much longer and can be used year after year)
- Develop a map for the caravan drivers on Tree Planting Day
- Develop a handout for Tree Planting Day – this notes things of interest on the route they'll drive or on the tree farm (e.g., wildlife leave trees, riparian zones, planted/thinned signs, etc.), then/now aerial photos, and so forth
- Put up a planted sign at the unit with that year's date – also glue on the Boy Scout and Girl Scout logos – give them credit for planting that unit (put up planted signs for any other units people will be driving by) – you'll often see kids posing for pictures at this sign
  
- The Saturday before, take the Boy Scouts and help them get the kitchen built ---- take:
  - o all the post hole diggers and rakes you can find
  - o a bucker's tape is handy
  - o some shovels
  - o a bin of firewood
  - o a chainsaw may be useful
  - o a drawing of the kitchen is attached
  - o take your camera and, next week, post some pictures of the Scouts building the shelter
  
- During the week and the day before
  - Ask if any of the temporary crew wants to work
  - Confirm with the Woods Deputy that he is still on board
  - Call or send a PSA to the Corvallis Gazette-Times
  - Get the bullhorn and make sure the battery is charged
  - Make sure the roads are clear of rocks, limbs, etc.
  - Pick up litter – e.g., flagging that no longer serves a purpose, beer cans, signs tacked on trees, etc. [*in other words, make the woods look like we care and that we are proud of our forests – make sure people leave with a positive impression of our brand of forestry*]
  - Get approximately 15 straw bales from the Bowlby barn and place them inside the kitchen to keep them dry
  - Take out the rented potty and the Starker potty and scatter straw around the potties to minimize the mud
  - Pick out the spot for the t-shirt tent/pickup
  - Take out picnic tables, garbage cans and liners
  - Place signs to note planted/thinned dates, riparian zones, wildlife trees, etc. – essentially anything we'd really like them to see
  - THOROUGHLY SIGN THE ROADS – GO LEFT/RIGHT, EXIT, ARROWS, ETC. or you risk having someone driving in the wrong direction or locked behind a gate Saturday afternoon (ask how I know that!)
  - Do whatever it takes to make sure people follow the designated route
  - Get the seedlings counted out with 10 seedlings per bag
  - Usually go out with someone (Gene Johnson) so he knows where the unit is and can be thinking about how/where to park

**Tree Planting Day:**

- Arrive at the office about 7:30
- Cam and Rick will probably already be there and getting seedlings, etc. loaded

- Greet any of the OSU student SAF chapter members and send them with Cam/Rick when they leave
- Take a seedling, the maps, handouts, bullhorn, and the shop's first-aid kit to the Philomath High School parking lot – get there by 8:30
- Park at the west end of the lot so that, when leaving, you can be at the head of the line - it is hard to lead from the middle of the caravan (ask how I know that)
- At 9:00, hop up on the pickup's tailgate and get the day started
- Ask several kids to hand out the maps and the handouts
- Introduce the woods deputy –
  - if there is anyone not able to walk very far, he'll leave then and lead those people to the unit [if they are at the front of the line, they'll have a shorter walk]
  - If he does leave and leads someone (this doesn't happen very often), make sure all the others don't immediately try leaving because they will (ask how I know this)
  - Most of the time, he'll stay behind and bring up the rear of the caravan
- Briefly describe a seedling, green end up and brown end down and a quick lesson how to plant it correctly
- Mention the first-aid kit in the pickup – once in a while there will be an ouch and need for a band-aid
- Mention all those helping that day and to thank them – PHS, OSU, Boy Scouts, Explorer Post, Woods Deputy, Starker crew, etc.
- Ask people to turn their headlights on
- Head for the woods, using back roads and making right turns wherever possible
- Don't drive too fast because stop signs and traffic lights cause breaks in the caravan – i.e., give people a chance to catch up or you'll lose them (ask how I know that)
- Once at the site – park near the kitchen so the pickup and the first-aid kit are easy to find
- If people need something (first-aid kit), I tend to stay near the pickup and kitchen since people know me from the introduction at the high school
- Basically, just stay out of the way and let everyone do what they've prepared
- When it is all over, pick up trash, pack up garbage cans, picnic tables, etc. and take the potties home
- Thank the Boy Scouts for all they've done and remind them to leave the poles up off the ground for future use
- You'll probably be back at the shop, have everything put away, and headed for home before 2:00 PM [not too bad for an event of around 200 people!]

#### Next week:

- Whoever took care of the t-shirts will inventory what is left, store them in the shop, and determine what to order next November
- Go back out to the site to make sure the Scouts left the poles off the ground
- Pick up any trash that was left
- Pull all the signs from the trees (exit, arrows, etc.)
- The Scouts will have borrowed our water jugs for the hot chocolate and they'll return them.