

## Vision of Forest Cleanup (Excerpt from SSRC Sustainability Plan)

An ongoing project at SSRC is that of attending to the forest-building interface. Land Management at SSRC is guided by a member of the Board of Directors who is a Registered Professional Forester. A forest cleanup work-weekend in the spring has become an annual event. By removing dead and down trees and pruning the low-hanging branches in the forest around the SSRC facilities, the risk of damage from a catastrophic forest fire in our immediate area is reduced. Most of the material that is removed during the "clean-up" is chipped. Any large material suitable for firewood is burned in our air-tight stoves.

The "Forest Clean-up" that we have carried out is not expected to have any significant impact on mycorrhizal deposition, plant succession, or biodiversity. SSRC is situated within a coastal rainforest ecosystem which consists of more than 95% coniferous species (Hemlock, Cedar, and Douglas Fir). The forest has 100% crown closure, with an understory of suppressed conifers, and small deciduous shrubs and plants. We are not disturbing any of the deciduous trees (mainly alder, cottonwood and birch) and shrubs because these trees are fairly fire-resistant and have a cooling/moist influence on the forest floor - in fact, we encourage the establishment and growth of the deciduous tree species because they can provide an effective "fire-break".

Our focus to date has been on removing the lower (mostly dead) branches from the trees on the slopes below our buildings, as well as a minor amount of suppressed understory conifers, with the objective of preventing a ground-fire from "laddering-up" the dominant coniferous trees and into the forest crown, where it would be virtually impossible for us to control or suppress. A "crown fire" would sweep up the slope, destroying our buildings, as well as the surrounding forest. We do have a chance of suppressing a ground fire using our hand-tools and on-site water system, but we have no way of suppressing a crown fire.

A major forest fire during the "dry season" would have a huge impact on the sustainability of the forest ecosystem - this is readily evident by looking at what remains of the forest after the fire that occurred forty years ago on the eastside of Daisy lake in the current rockfall area. The SSRC land and the surrounding public land consists of steep, rocky, moss-covered slopes with relatively shallow soil and numerous rock outcroppings. A major forest fire would not only destroy the forest cover but also the moss and humus layer, leaving a boulder strewn slope of dead trees from which the soil would rapidly erode, and which would take many decades to regenerate.

The goal of our activities on SSRC lands is to protect our facilities and to sustain and protect the forest ecosystem and the plant and animal community that is dependent upon it. SSRC is the only human habitation on the East Side of Daisy Lake, and as such, we potentially could act as an early warning system for forest fires in the local area. By virtue of SSRC's forest fire preparedness and vigilance, there is a better chance of effectively containing a small forest fire that otherwise could become a large fire. Our efforts in this regard potentially protect SSRC buildings as well as the forest itself.

### FOREST/BUILDING INTERFACE GUIDELINE

These guidelines are based upon the "site preparation guidelines" contained in the 'Fire Smart Manual'. When applying these guidelines consideration **must** be given to the preservation of the aesthetics of the area.

1. Remove all dead and down woody material within 30 meters of the buildings, with particular emphasis being given to the down-slope areas.

2. Prune all trees to a height of at least 2 meters (or higher to remove dead branches).
3. Material removed (trees, branches and dead woody material) should be brought to the roadway (parking lot) and be chipped, burned, or hauled away to the municipal dump.
4. Remove all accumulations of dead grass, leaves and needles within 10 meters of buildings, with particular emphasis on accumulations under porches and sundecks.
5. Clear all vegetation within 3 meters of propane tanks.
6. Grass and weeds within 10 meters of buildings should be kept cut.
7. Store firewood at least 10 meters away from the buildings during the period June 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup>.
8. Remove small coniferous shrubs within 10 meters of buildings
9. When equipment and manpower is available to remove felled trees, select high-risk trees within 10 meters of buildings may be removed.
10. Know how to identify yew trees and red huckleberry shrubs. Avoid cutting these plants. Also, old-growth trees, large over-story trees, and deciduous trees should be retained whenever possible.

### **2011 Work Weekend Projects**

- Forest Cleanup –Below Staff /Office building and southwards:
  - Prune tree branches as high as possible and cut small evergreen trees (except Yew trees). - Carry and pile branches at roadside.
  - Load branches in pickup and haul to chipping site. **Note: Offload braches at chipping site and pile with butt-ends out for easy handling when chipping.**
- Cut cedar and other coniferous saplings growing in alder area between bio-filter and retreat cabins. Carry saplings to roadside for pickup and hauling to chipping site.
- Cut Alder and Cottonwood saplings growing on septic fields at Main Lodge and Teahouse, and on bio-filter.
- Rake dead leaves from around Retreat House and all other buildings and haul away with wheel-barrow.
- Clear-out brush and dead leaves around propane tanks.
- Clear-out any brush on trails (to mid-level and Bungalows etc.).
- Clear-out vegetation growing against buildings
- Clean-out road ditches and clean out in and around culverts.
- Cut any dead/down trees for firewood.
- Split and pile wood in woodshed
- Help in kitchen.

### **SAFETY REMINDERS**

1. Wear proper sturdy footwear and gloves.
2. Use safety glasses when pruning upper tree limbs.
3. Wear ear protection if using gas powered trimmer and chain saws.
4. Stay at least a tree-length away from anyone using a chain saw to fell trees.
5. Individuals using chain saws should not work alone (be where others can see or hear you.)
6. Do not “surprise” anyone using a chain saw – make sure that they see you before you walk up to them. (Same goes for “gas powered trimmers”).