

## Spotlight on a Forest Steward: Linda and Carl Haywood of Thompson Falls

*(Thanks to Linda and Carl Haywood for submitting this article)*

Carl realized his childhood dream in 1968, when he arrived in Montana to work for the State Foresters Office in wildfire and timber management and eventually as a service forester. In 1953, after being inspired by the movie, "Red Skies Over Montana", as a fifth grader he decided he wanted to be a "forest ranger", live in Montana and battle forest fires. His professional path led him to many parts of the United States, but his goal was always to return to Montana and Sanders County. A goal that was finally realized in 2003, nearly 35 years from the time he left.

Carl and his wife, Linda, settled on a 20-acre tract near Thompson Falls. The property had good timber potential, but due to neglect there were many areas in need of thinning and pruning. Adding to the neglected state of the forest, the previous own had clear-cut and graded a large area in preparation for a stock car racetrack. When those plans fell through the barren ground was left to reclaim itself—in knapweed.

Shortly after arriving at their new home, a tremendous fire broke out only a few miles from their home in the Cherry Creek drainage. Carl's background in fire suppression told him they needed to think about fire prevention and take preventative measures for the future. Clearing, thinning and pruning were high on the list.



*Cherry Creek Fire - Smoke in background of Haywood home, 2003.*

Carl continued working for an engineering contractor, a job that kept him away from home for extended periods. Linda was left to manage the forestlands, a task she was ill prepared to handle. Her first project was to oversee a small timber sale letting the contractor know which trees to take and which to leave. The next project was to manage a fire suppression project having a contractor clear a 5-acre area around the house.

Although, she made it through these projects and still had a standing forest, Linda decided it was time to learn more about the forest and managing their timber. She was just learning the names of trees on the property when an ad appeared in the local paper announcing a Forest Stewardship Workshop. That was July 2005. So she signed up.

That same year, Linda bought a John Deere Gator and equipped it with spraying equipment to rid the property of the knapweed infestation. For the past several years, they have managed to slow the spread of the knapweed. Carl retired in 2010, and has been taking an active role in overseeing the pruning of younger trees to stimulate height growth and eventual wood quality. For a comparison, check out the following photos taken nearly thirteen years apart.



*Three trees in center - 2000*



*Three trees in center – 2013*

The small tree in the foreground was barely a foot tall in 2000. The brush piles visible in the 2013 photo will be burned this coming burn season. Carl says the trees put on nearly 4 feet of growth since 2010 when they were first pruned.

Haywood's have one rarely seen tree on their property—a “honey tree”. This old, hollow larch was host to a honeybee colony for perhaps decades. At some point a previous owner cut a small “door” to provide access to the honeycomb inside. The block of wood was held in place by a nail. As time passed, use of the honey tree was abandoned and continuing growth of the old tree eventually grew to partially seal the cuts.



In the fall of 2005, after attending the Forest Stewardship Workshop and completing a forest management plan, Linda was invited to become a member of the MFSSC. Carl joined her later after he retired. They will be completing their second and last term with

MFSSC later this year. Linda holds a bachelor's degree in geology and worked for 20 years in state government overseeing the development of mining properties. MFSSC members are required to join one of the MFSSC subcommittees so Linda opted for the Forest Legacy subcommittee feeling her experience was better suited to land acquisition.

The Forest Legacy Program is a Federal program that works in partnership with States to protect privately owned forest lands from conversion to non-forest uses. Each spring FWP calls for projects to be submitted for review and consideration for funding. Montana competes nationally against other States for the Federal grant funds to pay for a portion of the value of a conservation easement or fee purchase. One of the main provisions to receive the grant is the recipient must execute a forest management plan and is required to maintain a healthy forest.

The Haywood's continue working on the health of their forest. When timber prices rebound, they plan more commercial thinning. They are actively pursuing efforts to control the knapweed and cheat grass and are ever watchful for indications of potentially damaging insect problems. They have a little bit of heaven here at the end of the rainbow and hope to keep it that way.



Note from MSU Extension Forestry: Four 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.