

Oregon

Bond Starker, head of Oregon timber company Starker Forests, announces his retirement

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

Starker Forests Inc., the Corvallis-based company that began with an Oregon State University forestry professor who saw the value of buying cut-over timberland in the wake of the Depression, is looking for a new CEO.



Bond Starker

Bond Starker, president and chairman and one of the founder's grandsons, said he will retire in April, when he turns 70. The company is advertising for a CEO, most likely to bridge the gap until the next generation of Starkers — potentially his children and those of his brother, Barte — is in position to assume control. Barte Starker retired in 2015.

In a prepared statement, Bond Starker said he's looking forward to seeing the next generation continue to implement the vision, values and ingenuity that made the company successful.

"That's a value that our family has maintained for decades — from our forestry practice to our commitment to this community — we're in it for the long haul, and that won't change," he said.

The company owns 87,000 acres of timber in Benton, Lane, Lincoln, Linn and Polk counties and survived Oregon's timber wars with its reputation intact. The company didn't venture into the more volatile milling side of the business, instead focusing on growing and selling timber as logging on public forests was restricted by environmental decisions and lawsuits.

The company developed from the foresight of T.J. Starker, Bond and Barte's grandfather, who in 1910 was one of the first four graduates from the forestry program at Oregon Agricultural College, now OSU. T.J. Starker returned to the college as a forestry professor in 1922 and taught for 20 years. He began buying second-growth timberland in 1936, specifically seeking land with no snags on the ridges, gentle terrain and good drainage, according to an online family history. At the time, few in the timber industry realized that Oregon's old-growth timber would become a reduced commodity.

T.J.'s son, Bruce Starker, also an OSU forestry grad, took over the company but died in a plane crash in 1975.

Portland's urban coyotes become a research project

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

PORTLAND — Coyotes are a fairly common sight in rural areas of the Pacific Northwest and Northern California, and landowners might instinctively reach for the rifle if they see one in the pasture or sniffing around the barn.



Zuriel Rasmussen

Put a coyote in a city, however, and residents are more likely to react in a way that ranges from trying to feed them to panicking over their pets and children. Coyotes sometimes lose their heads as well, becoming so habituated to people and urban environments that they trot down streets in daylight and snack on garbage or the occasional cat.

Many cities, Portland among them, now are home to thriving coyote populations. Researchers in Chicago a few years ago estimated Cook County there had 1,500 to 2,000 coyotes.

Zuriel Rasmussen, a student at Portland State University, is trying to learn more about how coyotes and humans coexist in cities. Rasmussen is a researcher and director of the Portland Urban Coyote Project, which maps coyote sightings and provides information in collaboration with the Audubon Society of Portland.

Rasmussen is pursuing a Ph.D. in Earth, Environment and Society, a program offered through PSU's Geography Department. She's interested in science communication and public engage-



Courtesy of Tara Lemezis and Portland Urban Coyote Project

A photo taken in November 2015 shows a coyote exploring a Portland neighborhood in daylight. Rural residents might instinctively reach for the rifle, but that's not practical in a city. A doctoral student at Portland State University who studies urban coyotes suggests hazing them so they don't get habituated to humans and food sources.

ment, and the coyote project offers opportunities for both.

She comes at it from a rural perspective. She lived in Weston, near Pendleton in Eastern Oregon, until she was 12. Coyotes were part of the landscape there, and she was startled the first time she saw one in Portland.

"I was one of those East Oregonians surprised to see a coyote," she said. "I thought it was pretty cool. I was fascinated with how they were living in the city and how that's even possible."

The possible now is commonplace. Residents of the Portland metro area have reported 1,916 coyote sightings to Rasmussen's project website just this year. Coyote calls keep USDA's APHIS Wildlife Services hopping as well: From 2012 through 2015, officers responded to an average

of 373 coyote "conflict" complaints in Clackamas County, which borders Portland, and killed an average of 30 a year, according to statistics provided by Kevin Christensen, of the Wildlife Services office in Portland.

Wildlife Services responded to an average of 222 coyote conflicts a year in Washington County, on Portland's westside, and killed an average of 15 a year during the same time frame. Wildlife Services does not have a cooperative service agreement with Multnomah County, which covers most of Portland, but killed three coyotes that were acting aggressively toward people and pets.

Of the Clackamas County coyote complaints, 56 percent involved damage or threat of damage to agriculture. In Washington County, 54 per-

cent of the coyote conflicts involved agriculture, according to statistics provided by Christensen.

At PSU, Rasmussen's studies over the past couple years have shown the urban and rural divide plays out with coyotes as it does with many other issues. Some Eastern Oregon residents have posted graphic YouTube videos about hunting coyotes, complete with slow-motion replays of bullets hitting coyotes at long range.

Portlanders' reaction to the presence of coyotes appears to range from neutral to positive, Rasmussen said. Although concerned about coyotes attacking pets, they're generally supportive of coyotes and opposed to lethal control.

"One of the big things I've found is that the impact coyotes have on your life bears a

More information online

Portland Urban Coyote Project
Audubon Society of Portland
Graphic YouTube video of coyote hunting in Eastern Oregon

lot on your attitude," she said. In rural areas, they've been vilified — along with wolves — as something that threatens people's livelihoods, particularly with livestock, she said.

In cities, they're not seen as a threat to the way people make a living. Instead, they are "a glimpse of the wild in an urban environment, which is a different experience than seeing a coyote near your sheep pasture."

Analysis of urban coyote scat shows their diet is primarily rats, mice, squirrels and rabbits, "pretty similar to a rural coyote," Rasmussen said. They eat more garbage than their rural cousins, and about 1 to 2 percent of their diet is cats.

"They're super opportunistic," she said.

Part of her work involves advising city residents what to do when they see a coyote. She said urban coyotes can become habituated to humans, and people should "retrain" them to be wary. She recommends "hazing" them by yelling, using an air horn, shaking a coffee can full of rocks or other methods. People obviously shouldn't feed coyotes, either directly or by leaving pet food or garbage accessible, and should keep a close eye on pets, she said.

"When they get used to being around people, those are the coyotes that cause problems," she said.

Perrydale High School FFA food donations top 260,000 pounds

By GEOFF PARKS
For the Capital Press

AMITY, Ore. — Perrydale High School FFA Chapter's Food For All Program winds up this month with the lofty goal of distributing over 130 tons of locally collected agricultural produce to needy families in Oregon.

The program, now in its 19th year, was started by former long-time Perrydale FFA Chapter Adviser Kirk Hutchinson. It's now headed by second-year adviser Christina Lorenz, but "Hutch" takes an active role in each year's collection and distribution efforts.

Students from all of Perrydale's three public schools help the high school FFA chapter's members gather, package and distribute the donated vegetables and other produce — from onions to squash, beets and other items — to needy people around the Willamette Valley. The



Geoff Parks/For the Capital Press

Perrydale High School FFA Chapter president Sierra Starr, center, and former adviser Kirk Hutchinson, right, meet in the Northwest Onion warehouse to watch the loading of donated onions for the Food For All effort. At left is NW Onion sales manager Duane Olson.

efforts extend to the central Oregon Coast and Eastern Oregon as well.

"Each year, I am beyond impressed with the pride that my students take in this project," Lorenz said. "It's inspiring to see that tomorrow's leaders are selfless and generous people who want

to make their world a better place for everyone."

Lorenz is also Perrydale High's agriculture curriculum instructor.

The busload of kids, accompanied by Hutch and a large flatbed truck, made stops at several donor plants and warehouses to collect food and chat with the businesses' representatives during a collection stop on Dec. 1. The route wound up the Willamette Valley from Perrydale along Highway 99E through Salem, Canby



Christina Lorenz/For the Capital Press

Perrydale High School FFA students and volunteers package donated food at the school during the FFA's Food For All effort.

and farther northeast.

Stops at places such as EZ Orchards and Schlechter Farms were intended to introduce the FFA students to the donor's plants and warehouses, watch the loading activities and chat with owners and managers.

EZ Orchards was the first stop, and the bus then headed

up the corridor to NW Onion Co. in Brooks.

Duane Olson, NW Onion's sales manager, had a big grin on his face and was clearly enjoying giving away 400 sacks (10 tons) of yellow onions to the FFA program's "ambassadors" that gathered at the company's warehouse.

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