



Down on the farm

Maple K Farms

Colfax, Washington

VOLUME 11 ISSUE 1

2016

Special points
of interest:

**Come visit
us on the
farm!**

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fore you visit to
make sure we
are here to
show you
around.

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More Grass and Natural Habitat



cent wetland mitigation project and after much research, we decided to seed the ten acres to native grasses for the wildlife, forbs for the pollinators and add in some trees and brush for cover,

October of 2016 emergence of overwhelming success. The result is a phenomenal grass stand. Next spring, we will plant the trees and brush and welcome the wildlife both four-footed and winged.



In 2014 we purchased the property adjacent to the Mitigation Site next to the South Fork of the Palouse River and a ten acre plot which had been in active crop production. The question after the purchase became "What are we going to do with ten acres?" The farmers in the area were not interested in taking on a ten acre plot as it was more time and effort than there was return for them. So, as the property bordered the adja-

thus making it a companion piece for the work done on the wetland acreage. This spring the work was accomplished with results mostly good. There were a few areas that the grass did not come in as well as hoped so early in October, I overseeded those areas in hopes of filling in the grass. With the unexpected 6 inches of rain and mild temperatures through October, the hoped for spring of 2017 emergence became an

High Water!



This spring was a time of high waters on both the Spring Flat Creek and the South Fork of

the Palouse. The winter of 2015-2016 didn't amount to much snow accumulation, but the temperatures were cold enough to freeze the ground solid which proved to be disastrous when the rain came. We had a great deal of rain all at once and when the run off started, it started with a vengeance. Some of the enclosed areas developed for the



mitigation project were wiped out by the high water and debris, but the reshaped landscape to slow the water in the riparian area did its job

Another Loss on the Farm

This year we marked the passing of Carmel. In the last newsletter we introduced you to Smoke and Mirrors added to the farm as



companions for Carmel after the passing of Elmo the Goat two years ago. Carmel did not seem to be having any difficulty and was



enjoying her new pasture mates when one day we noticed she hadn't come out of the goat house. She passed quickly. We will miss her. She was the first to let us know if the goats needed feed and she was always first at the fence for treats.



A Chapter in the History of the Meyer's Farm Closes



IN LOVING MEMORY

Harold H Meyers

December 25, 1932 - March 6, 2016

It was with great sadness that we were informed of the passing of Harold Meyers (83) this past March. Harold was the family representative that moved forward the sale of his family's 105 year farm to Cheryl and I in 2006.

After the sale, Harold and I would either meet at the Spokane Interstate Fair or visit on the phone each and every year and became

good friends. We discussed how the farm was doing, what improvements we were making and the history of his how his family managed to keep it together through all the generations. Each year Harold would come down to Colfax on Memorial Day to decorate his families' graves and go by the farm so see how we were doing. A year before his passing, Harold and I were visiting on the phone when he said, "Tom it was really hard for me to sell the family farm but after watching what you have done I am sure I did the right thing. I am pleased with what you have done with it." Knowing what he personally went through at the time of the sale, those words were the greatest compliment

that I could have received. Then came the second honor – as I was asked by Pat, his wife, to be a pall bearer at Harold's funeral. At the funeral I met many of his family for the first time. An especially interesting moment occurred as the pall bearers were moving his casket from the church to the hearse. One of his sons, another pall bearer, looked across the casket at me and asked, "Who are you and how did you know my Dad?"

He was laid to rest in Colfax and then the entire family came to the barn and visited and once again enjoyed being "on the farm".

Side Note: Harold's resting place at the Colfax Cemetery looks across to see the rolling hills of his beloved farm.

Rest in Peace, Harold.

More Trees !!!

This spring approximately eight thousand more trees and bushes were planted on two pieces of property adjacent to the wetland mitigation project. This work has been done on the north side of the South Fork of the Palouse River in order to enhance and compliment the work primarily done on

the south side. This planting was in cooperation with the Palouse Conservation District and the Department of Ecology. With the wetland mitigation, this new planting and the ten acres

of native grasses planted this spring, the total acreage is close to 200 acres on both sides of the South Fork of the Palouse River.

The length of the combined work is about



9650' of the river. Continued maintenance and replanting for those plants that do not survive initially will continue for the next few years.

Our hope is that this will give some meaningful lift to the water quality, wildlife, and enhance our neighbors view shed.



Almost a Jeep Disaster

For those of you traveling passed the Meyers Place on HWY 195, you might recall the old Willy's Jeep parked in the pasture. The Jeep has been subjected to high water, cow rubbing and the occasional photographer, however, this year we nearly lost it.

In March a semi-truck traveling north to Colfax lost control on the curve and was headed for the Jeep. Luckily the ground was so soft from the spring thaw, the truck became mired in the mud before reaching the Jeep and averted a disaster. The fencing along the highway wasn't as lucky. With some artistry with a tow truck, the semi and trailer were removed from the pasture, upright, and still attached and the driver was able to drive off.

With the S-curves, we expect some slide offs every year but this was one of the most spectacular, especially ending with no injuries to the driver.



Farm Tours



This past spring we hosted two events. The first being a University of Idaho class of about 20 on Natural Resource Management. The class came to see the Mitigation Project and the two companion projects and learn how we had combined both for an overall effort to improve over 200 acres.

Northport, WA and Troy, ID. We spent the day visiting about the concepts of managed and well timed grazing.

Later in the season we hosted the Whitman Conservation District field day on riparian grazing and spring development. In attendance were about 17 individuals from as far as

We showed how developing a spring for cattle drinking water in different grazing areas can enhance the production of grass, benefit the soil, and lead to additional weight gain in the cattle.



A Look into the Past



After Harold Meyer's funeral, we were visiting with the family and talking about the property during the time the family had lived on the farm. We had heard about the house that was located near the present barn but we had also heard that the family had lived in a house closer to town (The foundation is still there). We discussed with the family where the houses were located and where there had been various outbuildings

when they said they thought they had a picture of the original place.

Imagine our joy when they forwarded a picture of the original Meyer Place from about 1913. In looking at the photo many of my suspicions were confirmed and some new

information arose. The barn was just as it is now, but a watering trough showed up and additional buildings that we weren't aware of. In addition, they sent photos of the home place closer to town showing members of the family outside the home.

These photos are the crown jewels in our collection as far as we are concerned and are in hopes that if they find additional photos, we will get an even more complete history.

With these photos we now have pictures of all the houses that were on the property and were gone by the 1940's.

Thank you Meyers' Family.



Glorious Color



Writing this in December, it is hard to remember the beautiful colors of spring and summer. This year the gardens were in great shape and I'm including a few pictures of the flowers to remind us all of spring. With everything covered with snow there is very little to do, but with the coming of warmer temperatures, the work begins again



Head Em Up! Move Em Out!



cattle, we were convinced they were serious. This led to the sale to the Rohlfing's of Northport. They purchased a cow/calf pair and two heifers. So on the agreed date we loaded the cattle and headed to

This year we have had a number of cattle sales to people wishing to start Highland herds of their own. We started in March. We got a call from some folks interested in Highland cattle. After visiting with these folks, having them down to look at our operation and then viewing the

Northport. Do you know where Northport is? They have a beautiful property right along the north Columbia River. After the long drive, the cattle were delivered and all was well.

The second purchases occurred in May and October to the Davis's of Pocatello, ID. They purchased

two heifers for a new herd in their new home.

We truly appreciate the purchase of our animals and the opportunity to see our genetics spread throughout the northwest.



Ties to the Past

If you drive by the Meyer's Place on SR 195 and look over beginning at the Rock Pit, you will see several of old pieces of early tractor and horse drawn farm equipment. I have been collecting the machinery and stories, if they had one, since finding the first pieces in the far back fence corners. Many of the pieces were abandoned there decades ago. My effort gives the perspective of how farming was done when it was with a two or three bottom plow and a team of horses rather than a 620 horsepower Quad-track with GPS and an air-conditioned cab.

To date there are 35 different pieces. Some are just a representative of their type and others could go back in

service tomorrow.

So, if you know of any horse drawn equipment that could be given a new home for display, please let me know and help preserve a look at yesterday.



Family Update



This year has been busy with grandchildren as they grow and begin participating in many more activities. Grace and Kellan

showed Boer goats for the first time at both the Colton and Palouse Empire Fairs. It was more fun getting to watch rather than doing all the work, but it still was four days at the fair. Zakiah started kindergarten this year so she is very involved in school activities and making new friends. Kamden is growing quickly and has developed quite the skill of competition in board

and card games. Maisy and Otis are busy with growing up and getting ready to begin a new adventure. With dad finishing his internship, the family will be moving to a new location as he gets ready to begin the next phase, his Residency. As yet, he doesn't know where that will be, but by summer, they will be located a new home ready for the adventure.



Lazy Chicken Owners

Well that wasn't our goal but it seems to have turned out that way. Because our chickens free-range during the day, meaning they have the run of the barnyard and pastures, we have to open the door to the pen every morning and then make sure it is closed in the evening to ensure their safety. That doesn't sound like much responsi-



bility but when we are going to be gone for the evening or overnight, it led to keeping the chickens in the pen rather than letting them roam. This isn't good for their health or well-being. I had been seeing advertisements for automatic chicken doors in several magazines but they all required electricity or needed to be inside protected from the weather. I finally found a door that could be mounted on the fence to the chicken pen because it was weather-proof, powered by a battery and controlled by daylight. Now the door goes up automatically in the morning as soon as it is light enough to activate and closes after dark when all the chickens have returned to their roosts. Sometimes



modern technology is helpful for both animal and owner!



Ponderosa Plant Inventory

Several years ago we had the opportunity to work with a plant biologist, Justin Trujillo to identify and locate the types of native plants on the property we now call the Mitigation



site. Because his initial evaluation was in the fall of the year, he wasn't able to identify all the plants he found or even be sure what he was finding. He came back this last spring to review his findings and then present us with a complete list of the plants in the area, both native and

introduced. It has been fun to create an album of pictures and information about the plants that will be kept near the site to help us identify what we are seeing as the area changes and grows.





Maple K Farms LLC

**1102 Kammerzell Rd.
Colfax, WA 99111**

Address Block

Phone: 509-397-4589

E-mail: maplekfarms@gmail.com

**We are on the web
www.maplehighlands.com**

Naturally Grown, Naturally Good!

If you are not interested in receiving this newsletter, please let us know. Thank you.

Please notice—we have a new email.

maplekfarms@gmail.com

Winter Temps and Snow



This year the arrival of December meant the onset

of snow and really cold temperatures. We haven't had a long lasting snow cover like this in a few years so remembering the protocols (breaking ice on water troughs, making sure



feed is always available, keeping snow away from doorways, etc.) took some getting used to. However, the beauty of the snow can't be denied.