OSAF Message from the Chair - 06/11/2021

My friends, it is with great remorse that I inform you today of the passing of Gary Thad Springer of Corvallis on May 25th, 2021.

To the uninformed, Gary was simply a forester, but to the forestry community and the greater Oregon natural resources community, Gary was a go-getter, a master of humility, and in most senses, quite the comedian.

While I could attempt to inform you of the many incredible deeds, opportunities, and roles that Gary played in the forest sector, I’ll just mention the parts of him that allowed me the opportunity to get to know him. Please take the time to read Gary’s obituary found here: <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/democratherald/name/gary-springer-obituary?pid=198871222>

I first came into contact with Gary through the Marys Peak SAF Chapter based out of Corvallis. Gary was an active member, always willing to make a joke at a meeting, and of course, he always had a witty answer to one of my many icebreaker questions. Gary often had thoughtful and great questions for our guest speakers, questions that often challenged the speaker to see the influence and impact of their research or of their projects.

I was lucky to interact with Gary when he was on the Board of Forestry, a role that I personally believe only the brave would dare-undertake. With the Board, Gary played a major role in the development and acceptance of the new Salmon, Steelhead, and Bull Trout (SSBT) forest practice riparian rules that were implemented in 2017. It was his courage and strive to serve on the Board of Forestry that awarded him the OSAF's Tough Tree Award in 2016. Additionally, in 2017 Gary was recognized as a National Society of American Foresters Fellow.

Even after Gary’s time on the Board of Forestry, he continued to play a role in forest policy in Oregon, by spending time on various boards and committees that range from the Oregon Small Woodlands Association board, to the Oregon State University College of Forestry Research advisory committee. Shortly before his retirement, I can recall talking to Gary about all these other opportunities he would now have time for now that he was retired, I recall him very politely shaking his head and saying something along the lines of “probably not”, in his typical Gary way.

Gary’s knowledge of forestry and natural resources was vast, from his days as a timber falling contractor for Willamette Industries to his work as policy advisor for Starker Forests, he truly knew what he preached and represented the best a forester can be. Gary's legacy and his impact on Oregon forestry will not be bound by time.

To Gary’s family, and the Starker Forests family/community, my prayers and wishes are with you.