

Excerpts from an article about a 182-acre family forest in Northern California

In 1995, soon after acquisition, it became apparent that other uses for the property could contribute substantially to yearly income. What used to be considered “minor forest products” have assumed a major financial role on this property.

Cellular towers – A cellular phone company representative approached the new owners within 3 months of purchase to offer a lease agreement for a cellular tower. Negotiating the lease not only produced a monthly income but also provided an access road to the hilltop as well as installation of underground power, phone, and fiber optic cable, all at lessee’s expense. Other cellular companies followed, producing additional improvements and income.

Wind generators – The Berryman’s are currently involved in a study of wind currents in the area to determine whether the property is feasible for wind turbines. Tru-Wind, a consulting company from Albany, New York has prepared a study for the California Energy Commission that details wind speed in the nearby areas.

Firewood – Firewood production is an important way to utilize “waste wood” from thinning operations and slash from logging. When the property was logged in 1996, the Berryman’s instituted a “free firewood” program for senior citizens from Weed. The end result was a lot of happy senior citizens who didn’t have to travel far for firewood as well as complete removal of logging slash. The entire tops of trees were skidded to the landing with limbs piled beside the landing for eventual burning. The result was a “win-win” situation as the logging slash was removed and the seniors got “easy” firewood with minimal travel.

Apiary – Honey production occurs late in the spring as hives move north into the higher country, following the blooming of desirable species. Star thistle occurs on the property and so far, the only use for this plant is extremely high quality honey.

Manzanita sales - Yes, you read this one right. Who would have thought that you could monetize what is a “weed species” and actually have someone pay the owner for cutting the stuff! Much of the manzanita harvested ended up being shipped in a container to Marseille, France for use in silk tree manufacturing! Some of the manzanita was used for set design in Hollywood, while others used it for decorations at their weddings. The Berrymans are currently harvesting premium manzanita burls for use in a wide range of products.