## Unique Forest Management Group Approaches Tenth Anniversary

## PINCHOT PARTNERS:

Collaboration is Key for Group Composed of Loggers and Environmentalists

By Bianca Fortis

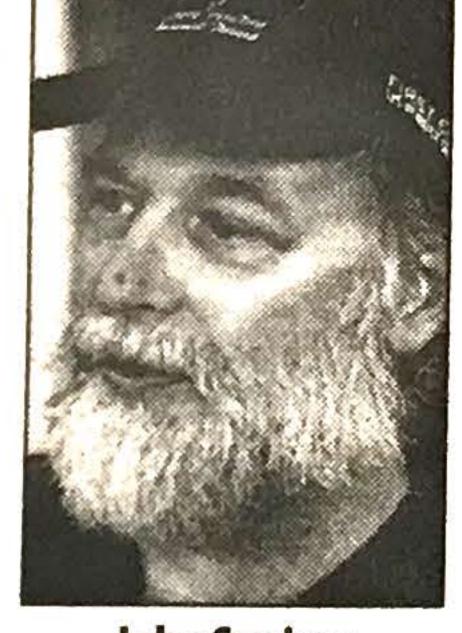
bfortis@chronline.com

In 2002, a group of stakeholders in the timber industry who seemingly had nothing in common attended a field trip in the forest, and they discovered they held a lot of common ground.

"We loved the forest — we had differences, but there was that love of the forest," John Squires, a director of Pinchot Partners and longtime Packwood resident, said. "We didn't yell at each other."

In response to the loss of family-wage timber jobs and

faced with crippling unemployment, those stakeholders environmentalmembers of the timber industry, labor representatives, Ser-Forest officials formed the



**John Squires** a director of Pinchot Partners

Gifford Pinchot Collaborative Working Group. This Septem- the building of relationships," ber that group, now known as Pinchot Partners, is set to cel- common ground. Let's go do ebrate its tenth anniversary.

The organization, now a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, focuses on ecosystem management as well as creating local jobs.

Squires said he dreams of again having a Packwood mill.

"Will we go back to the heyday?" Squires said. "Probably not. But how sustainable was that? Not very. What I am look-

ing for is the ability for us to go back to family wage jobs. I think the forests can produce it."

Among the group's accomplishments are forest thinning to create habitat plantations, restoration work and a huckleberry enhancement project.

The progress can be credited in part to the idea of so many interest groups working toward a common goal.

"Collaboration about Squires said. "Well, we've got the market need?" he said. "We something, let's try something."

Squires acknowledged that interested. If so far the Pinchot Partners' projects have been fairly small- tainable supscale, compared to the work that's needed.

"But what's the alternative?" he said. "Do nothing and have less? You can't run a four-minute mile until you learn to tod-

"Am I distressed by how the he hopes local community is? Yeah, it both- residents see ers me. But we're starting in the right direction. We will go back to working in the woods, and our kids will be able to afford bicycles," said Squires, the father of two school-aged children.

Bob Guenther, also a director of the group, said there is no plan to go in and "slaughter" all the trees.

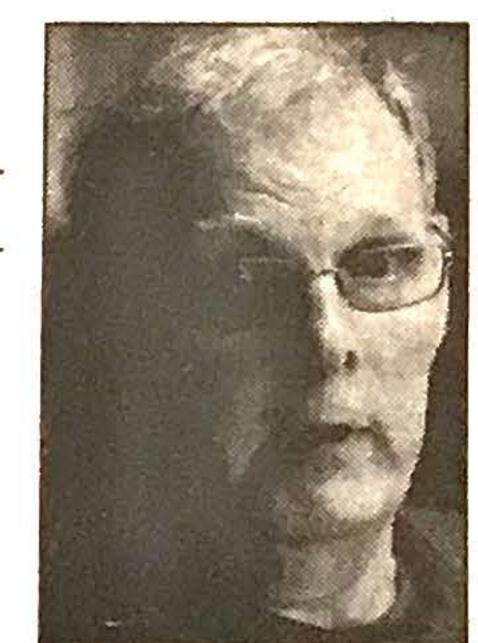
"We'll look and say here's what's here — now what does

have to get businesses there's a susply for me, I'm willing to invest some money to add value to that product."

**Bob Guenther** a director of Member Pinchot Partners Bill Little said

what opportunities are avail-

"We need to get local people the sense that there is a future for them if they would come up and see what it



**Bill Little** treasurer of Pinchot Partners

takes to contract for the National Forest," he said.

The group's members known there is a lot of work to come.

"We've lost a lot of infrastructure, we've lost a lot of knowledge," Squires said. "It leaves our community pretty hard-pressed for intellectual manpower. But once there's jobs, people will come."

Bianca Fortis: (360) 807-8245, twitter.com/biancafortis and facebook.com/biancafortis

000