

**Interview with Kathryn Rickard on Saturday, May 16 2015**  
**Interview conducted by Hope Tejedas and Arica Sears**

**Interviewer (I):** Lets start from back with your dad and the forestry, what your involvement was when you were younger, with a story of you out in the field.

**Kathryn Rickard (KR):** Well, my dad is a second-generation logger. He owned his own company, Sebastian Logging. He worked from ground crew up to where he was able to purchase his own. We had four kids in the family, and it got kind of crazy. His idea was that we all needed to understand where our food came from and where are clothes came from, he wanted to teach us a good work ethic. So from the time I was 5'6" I was out in the woods with him, usually weekends, that kind of thing. That was our camping; they would take a trailer up on to the logging site. Mom would sit there and do her crossword puzzles and we'd be chasing after dad and moving chips that he would take home for the fire. As I got older, I started hauling things like gas and diesel cans. I got stronger, and I was being sent down the mountainside to get hundred-pound jacks because the winds and trees were blowing the wrong direction. He then started having me set chokers, and my brother who was eight years older than I was thought it was very funny to do seven to my one. I was a woman, not quite a woman, but a young girl.

So, when I was learning how to set chokers, my brother was always laughing at me because I wasn't strong enough. One of the main things that they wanted me to do was they wanted to make sure that I knew how to fight (It was because I was sometimes alone with the guys on the crew). So my brother every night used to get me down on the ground and he'd put his knees on my shoulders and he'd flick my nose. Dad allowed it because he wanted me to be tough. By the time I was thirteen I figured out how to hurt a boy and he never did that to me ever again.

One of my favorite stories then, and it didn't have to do with the woods, and this is what Dad would find funny, old logger he is. So, they always chewed, like Red Man and my brother chose Copenhagen. Jack had tormented me and tormented me, so I thought I'd get back at him. I stole his Copenhagen and I put red food dye in it. I made it vermilion color and put it back where it was supposed to be. Well, they were out next to the gas tanks filling up the crummy. Jacks acting all-that with Dad, and he takes a big handful of snooze and puts it in his mouth. He takes his hand away and sees it, and my dad had seen me do this, so he knew what was coming. Jack thought he was dying because he was blood red everywhere and dad started laughing and I took off running. That was my household that I grew up in.

Because I was so slow on the actual choker setting, dad put me on buck and limbs. I was notorious for falling off the darn thing so it became a danger. You have to have a special set of cork boots to really be able to walk on the logs, and even with those I was such a klutz. But I was a tomboy too. So dad decided to teach me how to drive the D8 Cat. They'd hook up the logs and put some rigging on the choker set around the log. Then I'd haul it up onto the deck and dad would put it on the log truck. It

was interesting; it really wasn't a place for a lady. I didn't really become a lady until I realized that there's boys that aren't looking at me that I'm looking at. So, I kind of changed venues a little bit. I still went out and dug fire trails for dad, but I didn't want to work in the actual woods. That all stopped when my brother was killed out there. I was just turned fifteen and it was a shovel accident. When you work in the woods you know it's one of the most dangerous jobs on the planet. It was devastating for all of us; I was out of the woods for good then. My dad kept logging but his heart wasn't in it anymore and that used to be everything.

I loved walking behind him in the woods; he could walk a stand of timber and just look at it and tell you how many board feet he could get out of it. He loved teaching you the different types of trees. One of my favorite smells when he'd come home was wood chips and sweat. I know that sounds really funny, but it was a comforting smell as a kid. I can't say it was a horrible childhood; it just was different than all my friends because a lot of my friends were city kids, and they didn't understand that. We also ran a small ranch and had area ranches around us so I helped herd sheep, bucked hay, anything for money as a kid. I got my own car at the age of fifteen. So I was pretty self-sufficient. That's what my dad, that's what logging, made of me, pretty self-sufficient.

**I:** So if you could fast forward to today, between you and your dad and the relationship between the forest, and especially what you are involved with now, with pesticide reform. What is the conversation between the two of you? What does he think about your activism?

**KR:** To be truthful, at first my dad was very upset with what I was doing. He was looking at it like "well there was already too much regulation on logging and the whole spotted owl issue caused so many people to lose their jobs", and I said "but dad they are poisoning us" and he says, "well you know I got directly sprayed" and he says "I never had any problem". I said "dad you do have problems, you have a type of cancer that can be linked to this, I'm not saying that these pesticides did this to you". He got sprayed more than one time. This was back in the mid '70's. Once I said that to him and I told him, "you know dad, look what's happening to Mr. Leo, my dog, and look at what has happened to my sinuses, and look at the evidence that I'm providing for you and what is happening and who is not helping us". "Well ODA is supposed to help you." "Well dad, they are not helping us."

This is what they are doing, they are supposed to promote timber, they're not there for the person, yes they're supposed to protect you because they have these specific laws, but in reality what they are doing is promoting timber and agriculture, that's what they are supposed to do. That's their mandate, that's why we should have OHA (Oregon Health Authority) actually have the control of investigating people who have actually been sprayed, so that they are able to actually investigate and treat people who have become ill. When you have a state agency who's mandated is to do both, they can't. It puts too much of a burden on the actual agency itself. Which way are they supposed to go? If they go and support of the people, who say they've been

sprayed and they start assessing fines against the timber owners, then they aren't doing their job of making the timber industry and the agriculture department grow. So in reality, it's a catch-22 for that agency.

I have some biases by the way we've been treated, but it comes directly from this, this same catch-22. You cannot help me and do an appropriate investigation when you are trying to protect the very people who have harmed me. So that is one of the reasons I am very supportive of some of the reforms that we've been trying to get passed. It's unfortunate that these modest laws that we've been trying to get passed haven't even been able to be seen on the floor in the legislature. House and Senate have their own agenda because they do get a lot of support from Oregonians for Food and Shelter, who are backed by major timber and by major chemical companies. You have other timber lobbyist that all contribute to certain people, so like Senator Kruse and Krieger.

Senator Kruse and Representative Krieger and other representatives and senators in the state legislature get money from these individuals to fund their campaigns. This is another catch-22; they can't really run a good campaign without people contributing to their campaign. But at the same time, the more money that comes in from the special interest groups influence how your state representatives and senators vote. So, our specific senators and representatives have not been very supportive of any of the bills we've wanted to pass. In fact, a certain representative up in the state didn't want to support advance notification so people could get out of the way. They could bring their elderly, their sick, their babies indoors, or they could actually move out of the area for a day or two, until all of the fumes go away so there is no chance of a drift. They thought we would act like Nazi terrorists and blow up the helicopters, or do something to the helicopters so they would not be able to do a spray. My argument to that is: those are extremists, we are just regular everyday citizens and we should be protected, and we should be able to have that option. I can't come over to you, and I can't spray you. Why are these people allowed to do that? I have to tell you if I'm going to do something like that prior, but they don't, why? It's common courtesy to allow someone who may have someone who is sick, or even someone who isn't sick, to be able to get out of the way. That's just a given, or should be a given. Buffer zones, yeah we were asking for buffer zones on waters, schools, and homes. Granted, 200 ft. isn't enough but no matter whom you talk to it's never going to be the right amount of buffer zones. Somebody's going to want 600ft, somebody's going to want a mile, somebody's going to want five miles, and somebody's going to want no spray whatsoever. So, you're not going to make everybody happy, but what we were trying to do was show the state and show the timber company at least the facts of what other states have done. Such as Washington, Idaho, California, who all have 200 ft. buffer zones. Lets start there, that sounds fine, and it didn't cause problems for them. The only person that's going to have a big problem with the cost may be the helicopter pilot because he's going to have to be that much more tight, right? Once they saw that 200 ft. was okay then maybe we could have asked for a little bit more, or give us that 200 ft. and then do your study. Give us that 200 feet and put your money, good money after bad I

personally think, and use that money to do a study and see what scientifically in this area is really needed. The spray laws that they have on how they mix, what wind speeds, how low the helicopter has to be are all based on flat lands such as Corvallis, OR. It is not made for this type of terrain. So for our Oregon Coast, it's ridiculous that they think they can spray over there, and spray the same way over here. It's not even close to the same geography. We have mountains, we have inversions, we have wind, we have fog. As you can see right now the wind is blowing; this is a normal Gold Beach day. You can't tell me you can spray in this amount of wind, be safe, and not get drift.

**I:** Do you think that since the Senate Bill 613 has died, you want more regulations? Do you now feel that maybe it's a chance to revise the bill that you were wanting before?

**KR:** Well, the interesting thing is 613 was being put forth with modest requests, honestly. Let me just explain what 613 is: its buffer zones on water and schools. It was for advance notification so that people could get out of the way. It was for accurate record keeping so that they would have to file exactly what was sprayed within three days of a spray, so that if and when there was an incident, they would be able to respond quickly with what types of chemicals and how to protect the people. Those were just a few little things and those are minor. Those are great things to have. What they tried to replace it with had nothing to do with buffer zones. What it said was, we'll do a study, but we are not going to do a proactive type of boundary around streams or homes or schools. We don't need to do that until or after we conduct our study. They also wanted to do regulation for the pilots. They had to have extra education and they had to be certified, which they already do. I agree they need to have extensive education and continuing education and I thought that was great for that bill. What I didn't agree with was adding 2-point-some million dollars to add onto the agriculture department to add more investigators. That isn't what we need, what we need, which was in 613, is to have the OHA take authority of the health and inspect the health, while agriculture inspected the criminality of the spray incident. What they wanted to do was to keep it with Oregon Department of Agriculture, but they wanted to add more investigators, more people to talk on the phone, an expansion of the government. That isn't what we need. That bill was ridiculous.

My understanding of what I'm hearing is that the bill isn't even going to be heard on either side, although that was what the house was pushing to get, our bill out. Interesting. Both bills now aren't going to be seen and now there are no bills for this legislative session to deal with spray issues. Very interesting, Because of who? Who wants those not to hit the floor, the timber companies, the chemical companies, Oregonians for Food and Shelter? Of course they have been pushing hard so that these bills don't get seen.

So yes, to answer your question, now we're back to the drawing board. What can we do, how could we have worded it differently? How can we present a bill that people are going to feel more comfortable with, one that still protect lives, human lives. I'm not quite sure how we're going to do that, but working with Lisa and other citizens around the state. We have 13 counties that have been affected. We all pool our resources and we talk once a month in a big blog, telephone, and conferencing. We bounce ideas off each other, such as, okay what do you think we could do here, how do you think we could handle this here? That's how we start formulating, we bring it to a representative or a senator and say, "hey this is what we would like to see done, is there anything we can do here". They either say "no I don't want anything to do with it or they say oh yeah I kind of like that, let me see what I can do about it". Then, they put into a language that could possibly be seen, but again you have to get the votes to actually be seen. If the Wanes Rules Committee decides that they don't want it to go to the floor, they just throw it out. Even if a majority would vote for it. If the rules say no, it's gone. Once it goes through the rules and it does get to the floor and they vote on it. Then it has to go to the Wanes and Means committee, it can be thrown out there as well. There are so many steps to get an actual bill through the house and representatives and senators I'm amazed that we do anything in our state. To tell you the truth, to me, they waste a lot of time. So an example, and I'm sorry that this has to do with the University of Oregon, I can't believe that somebody says "okay I want to change the state bird to the Oregon duck". That actually had to go before the representatives and senators to get it passed. We have people over here dying from spray and we're going to vote on changing whether we're going to go to the duck. I'm a duck fan. Love ducks, especially baby ducks. But what's more important to be voting on? Why would that make it to the floor but a bill of protection of people does not? Did I answer your question?

**I:** You talk a lot about "we" and you are definitely part of this community here. But how are you personally doing and how has your perspective changed since the senate bill was killed?

**KR:** When I first went up to the senate hearing, I was amazed at how little time the spray victims were invited up there to give testimony. The agriculture department was only supposed to have 20 minutes and we were supposed to have 20 minutes. Well, the agriculture department decided to take an entire 45 minutes and this was only supposed to last an hour. So, I was already getting upset because I knew exactly what they were doing. They were trying to keep our testimony out because they didn't want us to be heard. So I was a little aggravated to begin with. I wasn't allowed to speak at that one until the very end. John Burns, another one of my friends said, "will you please allow Kathryn to speak?", and they stood up and said "can you do it in 2 minutes?" I laid everything out on the line. I told them I thought they were basically full of it. I lost complete faith in my government, which I have. I do not trust them to help me, or protect me. It's not a conspiracy theory, all I have to do sit here and look at what we've been going through. Such as ODA actually changing, it wasn't a spray malfunction; it was an actual malicious act. Just listening to how we've been talked about and that fact that it took six months for them to

finally tell us what we were sprayed with. Then they finally said, "Oh, I guess you were telling the truth". Still even afterwards, they're still doing the whole "well you know, that's not quite true and oh I think they are fudging on this or their health issues aren't that bad, well they should've sought care". How do you seek care for what you've been sprayed with when you don't know what you've been sprayed with? They won't tell you what you've been sprayed with. Your physicians have no idea how to treat you. And when you do go up they just throw their hands up in the air and say "you know what I don't want to hear anything about it anymore". How are you supposed to prove that you've been injured? Yeah, I've gone to the doctor, I've had to have surgery, I've had to do this and that. My dog has gone through multiple, multiple vet visits, hospitalized until finally euthanized, special foods, I mean, all kinds of pills. They tell me that I haven't been injured, and it's highly offensive to me. Just like having a senator say to me "Well I don't know whether it's more important to save the timber owners or the Eco terrorists". This was an exact quote on advance notification.

So I have a really bias view of our government as it stands now, but there are a few shining lights. When I said to Senator Dembrow that I had lost faith in my government, the look on his face was priceless. He never, ever dreamed anybody would ever say anything like that to him. Representative Lininger, she is a strong, strong proponent of this issue. And there are others, but they don't speak out and they don't make a huge stand because they have to live in that atmosphere. How do you live in an atmosphere where if you go against the grain, you're out? How do you do that? So what I'm doing is trying to stay active in the community. I've gone before the League of Women Voters. I've been asked to speak at a couple colleges just recently, and we had a town hall meeting. I stay active with the OHA meetings. I try to attend other town hall meetings, but I have to admit there are times that I have to back off because it is overwhelming and you do get discouraged.

For people who are in this situation, I strongly suggest that you get yourself affiliated with a group of people who have lived this. Just for the support. One of our very special friends has PTSD and he is involved in this spray issue and when it gets too much for him he just needs to retreat to his home. That's what we do for each other, we make sure that he is safe, we make sure that he is well taken care of, we also know that he doesn't eat so we make sure that we get him some food. Sometimes it's just a phone call, sometimes it's just a hug, sometimes we cry together, but that support group is what you really need to be able to keep forging through.

Also educating yourself. You have no idea what you're up against. If we hadn't had Lisa Arkin through Beyond Toxics to help us navigate that bureaucratic maze up there, we would have gotten nowhere. They would have just rolled right over us. People don't understand what it's like up there and it's actually kind of scary. I had a couple of people ask me if I would run for a seat, and I have to admit that I have seriously thought about it. One of the seats was for commissioner. The other asked me to run for representative. Now I have to tell you, I'm not politically savvy, I don't

know all the ropes. Unfortunately, I'm the type of person that what you see is what you get. I will tell you right to your face what I think and I don't really guard my words well. I'm basically honest. I can't say I'm 100% honest because nobody's ever 100% honest, and if you're an honest person you'll say that. I honestly can't see myself being in that arena and being able to come out unscathed. I do not want to put myself in a position where I'm going to become influenced and corrupted. So I think my position is going to be more as trying to make them have a conscious. That's basically what this is. It's a moral and ethics issue, and also a constitutional issue. It is unconstitutional for somebody to spray me. I think the Oregon's Right to Farm and Timber act is an unconstitutional type of bill that is a law. Basically, I can't sue somebody who has sprayed me unless I'm dead, dying, or I've been commercially harmed. If I do bring suit they can actually hide underneath that immunity, and I have to pay all their attorney fees. Automatically. There is no hearing. It's automatic, done. Now we did try to overturn that law here in Curry County. There were 45 of us involved in it. They used their scare tactics. They brought in ten attorneys, we brought in one. Our judge dismissed the case without prejudice because what he said was that we had to bring in a tort case before them first and then if they hid under the immunity law then we could go after the immunity law. How is that not backwards when we are trying to prove an unconstitutional law? It just protects one group, not an entire group. It's not best for everybody and that's what the laws are supposed to be. Overall, what is best for the overall community? Why are there two standards? So, that was one of the things we went against. Those are the types of things I'm trying to do to be proactive. I'm just an average woman and before this, as I told you before, I wish I'd been more aware when I was younger and paid attention. I had a lot of opinions but I never got involved with anything and so if I were to say anything to young people now, it's that, to be more aware. We're not against logging. In fact, logging is a very important industry and the spray bills we were passing wouldn't actually hurt the logger itself. It wouldn't really hurt the timber owner. They might have had to do a little hack and squirt, an alternative method of aerial spraying.

It really comes down to how many people are affected, but I would also tell you young people get involved in something that is important to you that is close to your heart. When you guys came, I said you couldn't look at the loggers being a bad guy just because he does the clear-cutting. That is actually a little bit necessary. Not as large of tracks, but yes it is necessary. Thinning is also necessary. Replanting is necessary. Is aerial spray necessary? No. Hack and squirt method would work. Our own US constitution, our own US forest quit aerial spraying.

I would say when you go for something you really need to look at both sides because you can sit there and say that the logging industry is the bad guy. It's really not that they are so much the bad guy, but that they are just trying to make it easier to their job. What is easy isn't necessarily the right thing. As you all know in anything you do, taking short cuts usually causes more problems than if you had just done it right the first time.

**I:** What is your vision of change?

**KR:** How honest do you want me to be?

**I:** We want you to be honest. For this website purpose every women we have talked to has a drastically different vision of change. And there is none that is wrong.

**KR:** My name is Kathryn Rickard. Maybe I should go Kathryn Sebastian Rickard since it was Sebastian Logging that I grew up in. My vision, what I'd like to see happen is I would like to see a ban on all aerial spraying, but I want to be a realist at the same time. I think that to be a realist you need to understand both sides of the issue. I would like them to change boundaries and laws regarding aerial spray. I'd like to see that there is more accountability. I'd like to see that there were more buffer zones. I'd like to see both sides living in the world together, rather than opposite. They don't have to aerial spray, but yes they need to give those little trees a chance to grow. That I understand, but there are alternative methods. It doesn't cost them anymore and it would actually add jobs. People would actually have jobs.

Chemicals are going to be in our life no matter what we do. I use chemicals every time I wash my clothes. I use chemicals when I do my dishes, but I have a choice if I choose to use those. I want a choice if somebody sprays me or if they spray close to my property and it drifts onto my property. I want a choice. I want to see everyone in the state to have a choice. Do I think this is going to happen? I'm going to tell you honestly, no. And I'll tell you why. Unless the citizens in the United States, or even just this state alone, stand up and in one voice say, "Enough. We want to see change. We want to see our health improve. We no longer want to see the birth defects in our babies from these chemicals. We no longer want to have cancer from these chemicals". I want to have clean drinking water. I want, I want, I want. Until we stand up to our own officials (who we have elected) and tell them "enough, quit taking money from them, start talking to your own constituents, start doing what your constituents want and quit worrying about your campaign". I guarantee you, I would vote for a man that stood up to his principles for what was morally and ethically right even if he ran the worst campaign because he didn't have enough money to do so. That is what I have to see change for us to get my vision. Without that, it's not going to happen, but it can start with you. You young people, that is important.