

Observations from a Woman in the Field

By Lynn Dawn Wiseman, CTSP

Nearly all my adult life work has been in forestry related fields. I have always possessed passion for trees, yet my professionalism continues to increase as decades pass.

Currently in line clearance operations, I am a degreed forester, timber harvesting specialist, Certified Arborist, Certified Arborist/Utility Specialist and Certified Tree Care Safety Professional (CTSP). I work daily in the field in all types of weather as a working foreperson of a two person aerial lift operation for one of the largest line clearance companies in the world. I am also female working diligently with integrity in a predominantly male dominated field. Many field observations have come to light through decades of observation of my surroundings.

Homeowners respond well to my knock at their door to speak of intended work to be performed on their property. Elderly folks have repeatedly informed me that they wouldn't answer the door for some random male that looked like he fell off a tree truck.

Elderly women seem particularly glad to find a woman knocking and find it refreshing that I am willing to acknowledge that the property in question (usually reclamation of existing right-of-way on American Electric Power property in Ohio) truly belongs to the homeowner. It is true that the power companies can muscle right in and cut trees growing into their lines regardless of the wishes of the homeowner. It seems to go much better for me to let the property owner own their property and ask, in earnest, for their permission to trespass on their property to trim or remove trees interfering with the reliability of electric service in the area. The property owner has



the responsibility for the trees, the right to the shade or to rake the leaves, so it becomes my responsibility to both gain access for the utility work and gain the confidence of the homeowner that their wishes will be respected. In giving the ownership back to the property owner, we develop a few moments, or a relationship, based on mutual respect.


At that point, I am able to complete the required work and obtain the maximum clearance desired. The property is always left cleaner than our crew found it. We also integrate clearance with aesthetics. This approach gleans benefits such as hand-crafted pottery, cookies, homemade breads and smiling homeowners in our wake. We behave with integrity and respect on the property of another individual. It is worth it

to help turn around public opinion of field tree workers.

Consideration goes a long way in modern society and is appreciated by many. Recently we had occasion to work deep in Amish communities in Southern Ohio where horse drawn buggies are still the preferred means of transportation. Running a MUTCD (Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices) compliant flag operation in such areas, it baffled me to see why a Durango with a mom on the cell phone while driving (much too fast, I might add) had any more right to the roadway than a traditional horse and passenger-carrying buggy.

In my work zone on a state route with two lanes of opposing traffic, I will allow the right of way to the slower moving vehicle in nearly every instance. When automobiles and semis out horsepower or squeeze vehicles like the horse drawn buggy on the road to town, such slower moving vehicles don't stand a chance. It doesn't cost a dime to be considerate. Integrity and consideration will never completely fade "out of style."

Integrity is about doing the right thing even when (and especially when) no one else is watching. Consideration is about giving the other person the polite and professional respect you would, in fact, like to see shine your way. From the viewpoint I have in the field, it is undeniably worth it to keep integrity and consideration alive and well and living in America. We will all get farther with sugar than with salt. Public opinion of tree professionals is difficult to repair once tarnished. We can each work to make a difference. This should be an obligation, not an option.

Lynn Dawn Wiseman lives in Copley, Ohio, and works in the area for Asplundh Tree Expert Company. 

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