

Working.

Part of living in the mountains full-time is preparing for everything that happens over the coming year. One essential preparation is for winter and not being caught without heat. My primary source of heat is wood, and since I live in and am surrounded by forest, harvesting logs from dead trees is simple.

As you know, trees are round. Once they are felled, the tree is sawn into sixteen-inch lengths, which I get delivered. I then use a gas-powered wood splitter to split the rounds into logs that fit into my wood stove. Now, some rounds are crazy heavy, especially for a guy who spends an inordinate amount of time writing, walking, and not lifting heavy weights. But I try to ease into the heavy workload, and my body adapts quickly. My muscles get sore, I get exhausted at times, and I take naps during the day before going back out for more. On a few occasions, and once during the night, I needed to use my wonderful electric massager, which I call The Thumper, on my legs to stop the cramping. It worked wonders. Doing this work is an extreme shift but another one that I still enjoy.

I have already split and stacked an area ten feet by nine feet by four and a half feet high. Now, I am almost finished filling an area eighteen feet wide, ten feet deep, and four and a half feet high. It's a lot of work to split and stack everything, and then it's done! The best part is when the woodpile is full, neat, and ready for next winter. Then I get to do other things, knowing my winter's wood pile is ready.

The point in me telling you this is that cooler mornings are the best time to work that hard, but they are also when I love and prefer to write. I could write in the afternoons when the sun beating down makes it too hot for me to work, but by then, I'm too tired to write.

How to do both is my quandary. Taking today off was my answer.

I didn't want to get out of my comfortable and cozy bed this morning. I woke up as usual around four but snuggled into the bed and fell back asleep. I lay there enjoying my rest and listening to the birds singing. Finally, as if a small electric jolt went through me, I got up. A large pregnant doe was lying outside my back door waiting for breakfast, and a pine squirrel ran to the back door when it saw me for its peanut. I put out birdfeed for the blackbirds, the wood pigeons and doves, and many others, who all came to eat. Once I had fed my hoofed, feathered, and hairy neighbors, I went inside and made coffee.

Today became a day to catch up on my blog and get my hair cut. Once my pile of rounds is in the shade, I'll split and stack again- or maybe I won't. Haha.

Sometimes, especially when I'm only a couple of days from finishing splitting and stacking my entire winter supply of firewood, it's good for me to take time off the heavy labor and not feel I'm being lazy.

Written by Peter Skeels © 5-23-2024