

## First cutout for Team Mossyrock in 2015

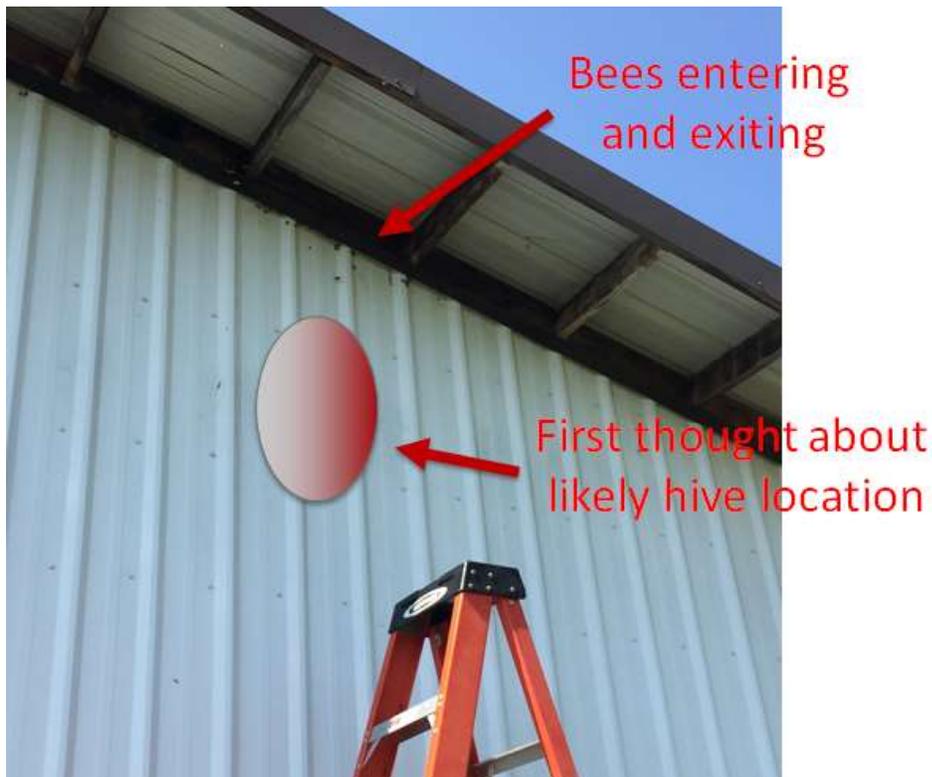
Sunday, April 19<sup>th</sup>

The bee phone rang on Sunday evening April 19<sup>th</sup>, the weather was nice that day so we suspected swarm activity but had not hear anything all day. I had a gentleman from Mossyrock on the phone who said he talked to Tim Waible. Tim suggested consultation of the LCBA website to determine whether or not there is anybody in Mossyrock that could help him out. We scheduled a first visit for Monday.

Monday, April 20<sup>th</sup>

When we ran through the first checklist:

1. Are they really bees? Yes, they are bees, not wasps, hornets or bumblebees.
2. Is it accessible for a removal? Yeah, from the looks of it (see picture below) we should be able to access it with the right tools. Note to self, you can never have enough tools with you. In this case I was missing the fitting driver bit to loosen the metal siding



We discussed the findings with the home owner, especially given that this is not a shed, but their house. We explained that we could remove the bees, but would not be responsible for re-assembling/fixing the house or possible siding damage. The first question out of his mouth was: "What do I have to pay you for all of that?" We explained that our services are free which put him right at ease and made him very appreciative. We further explained that we will use this as a teaching opportunity for other beekeepers and have a team back here in a few days. Scheduling and weather became the sticky points. In good LCBA tradition we wanted to schedule it for a weekend to allow as many people as possible to attend, but given the forecast and the visible, unfounded concern the owners had about bees flying through

their living room, we decided to get a removal attempt on the books as quickly as possible. I sent out an email to the Swarm and Removal support list that evening to schedule a removal for Thursday the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

#### Thursday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>

We got a good team together for Thursday, but the weather was everything but cooperative. It was pretty cool and rained from time to time, but we were prepared, the location was under an overhang and we had the “hiving station” setup under a canopy.

The first thing we noticed was that there was no bee in sight. We knocked on the siding and expected to hear something or see activity. Nothing. So we started unscrewing the siding to get a look at the belly of the beast. Not much of anything to be seen at the location. We stopped and discussed. Given the last cutout last year where we opened up siding that had been active just weeks before but turned out to be abandoned, we thought about the different possibilities:

1. Was this maybe just a robbing, but then where is the comb they are robbing out?
2. Have they magically disappeared? Very unlikely.

We decided that the smart thing to do is to make sure the siding is not flapping in the wind, but also not completely seal it back up to come back one of the following days when it is warmer to see where they are at?

#### Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup>

I received a call from the home owner early in the morning assuring me that the bees are still there. They are flying again. Norm and I had discussed the previous evening for me to pick up one of his Stethoscopes to play doctor and see where their nest might be located. I picked it up and stopped by the house in Mossyrock on my way back. I checked inside the house around the location of their flight entry but could not hear any place that sounded like a big hive. Listened to the ceiling drywall that is directly under the roof, checked the drywall on the outside walls. Nothing. I went back outside where a lot of bees were visibly entering and exiting the siding again, put on my suit and peeled back the siding.

I saw quite a number of bees but most of them that were actively moving seem to come out of a little “tunnel” between 2 two by tens from the left. I thought to myself, we should have probably removed one or two more panels to the left and would have probably found the hive yesterday. Good enough, I told the owner that if the weather holds we will be back on Saturday to take care it.



### Saturday April 25<sup>th</sup> – Part 1

Marcelle and I decided with that short notice we simply see what we can do ourselves. We drove out after breakfast, setup, unscrewed some more siding and tried to trace back the bees. Well, surprise again. Rather than going to the left we see them coming out from behind the 2x12.



At that point in time you want to start ripping your hair out as your great master plan has fallen flat on his face once again. After some more investigation of what is directly behind the 2x12 we are migrating to the inside of the house and determine that the bathroom is behind that wall. In the bathroom itself, we unscrewed the lightbulb of the recessed lighting and 30 dead bees are falling on my face. Getting warmer. Suddenly we see a live bee pushing herself through the small slits in the light fixture. I guess we now know where they are... Marcelle and I look at the home owner and ask him the question as to what he wants to do before we start cutting into his bathroom. He said he can fix the sheet rock easily and he certainly wants the bees out. We decide to regroup and get a team together for 6pm the same night to hopefully finally take care of things.



When we get home around 1pm I send out an email to "the list" and get a number of replies within 2 hours. ***I think this is one of the great things with LCBA that you have so many great beekeepers that are willing to help on a moment's notice.*** We are on for 6pm. I call the home owner and let him know that I have my team and we are good to go.

### Saturday April 25<sup>th</sup> – Part 2

When Marcelle and I get there we are setting up a canopy with work table underneath as processing station, our bee vacuum version 2.0 and get ready to start removing bees. We decided we have a small team inside the bathroom, seal the bathroom from the rest of the house so that if the bees come flying out we don't have to catch them in the remainder of the house. We use the open window to feed in the vacuum hose and hand out the comb.



When the team arrives, we decide that Nancy and Martin will work on the inside the remainder is taking care of the bees on the outside. Given that we still have not seen the hive I am a little anxious as to whether or not we draw another blank. The homeowner was kind enough to mark the studs in the meantime. So I use a power drill to drill a half an inch hole and expect a bee to greet me. Nothing. I then use a jigsaw to cut a 10x10 inch hole into the ceiling. The dry wall piece is falling on my head, I look up

and expect to see comb and... nothing. Ok, let's look inside. When Nancy used her light to illuminate the chamber in direction to the outside wall we finally see what we are looking for.



From there everything runs like clockwork. We increase the size of the opening by cutting out a wider and longer area that lets us access and work properly.



Nancy is using the vacuum to suck the first few layers of bees off to make it easier for the comb to be removed.



As you can see, the comb is brand new, we don't find any capped brood yet. We are lucky as we must have found them right after they moved in.

We are sucking the bees out, they are swishing down the hose and ending up in the box, probably a little nauseated from the 25 foot swirl, but happy to be with their sisters. The cut out comb pieces are handed out of the window where Marcelle, Jakob, Jan and Dave are putting them into frames and into the prepared box.



By 8pm we are packing up taking pictures and heading home to put the girls into their new apiary.



Thanks to the team for making this a success and a home owner in Lewis County very happy.

From left to right in the picture: Dave, Jan, Jakob, Nancy, Martin & Marcelle.

Thanks and appreciation for the team that came out the first time: Sarah and dad, Ed and Norm.

A special thanks to Susanne Weil (Secretary) and Norm Switzler (President) for the continued support!

## Lessons Learned

1. You can never have enough tools with you and you probably still miss the one you need!
2. Bees sometimes pick places that are far, far away from where they enter an exit to setup their hive.
3. Try to find the hive location as early as you can. Bring a stethoscope and tools to evaluate the exact location to then make a plan. Don't assume, confirm if possible.
4. LCBA has a great support team always willing to help out and if necessary jump into action on a moment's notice.

Contact us if you have any questions,

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