Pole Specs

The following paragraphs provide an overview of what we look for in a stand of red pine.

1. **Diameter:** This is the beginning of the process. Does a tree have the diameter to be a potential pole? Note that the specified diameter is not DBH, but at 6’above the location of where the butt end of the log will be. A point that is 6’ above the butt end, represents the “ground line”, when the pole is installed. Other specifications are driven from measurements that reference the ground line. The minimum diameter at 6’ is 11.5” outside of the bark. Maximum diameter is driven by how much height the potential pole will have. A 55’ pole could potentially approach 21” diameter, at 6’.
2. **Straight:** Nearly every tree has some degree of sweep in it. While the worst offenders are obvious from a distance, the way to tell for sure is to view the stem from directly underneath, and from multiple sides. Sweep of approximately 1” in 10’ is the maximum allowable.
3. **Straight:** If a stem has a double sweep, it could be considered for selection if the two sweeps are in the same plane. The double sweep cannot make a pole be a 3-dimensional corkscrew.
4. **Spike Knot Defect:** This is a significantly angled branch that may have been battling to be the tip/leader at some time in the past. These are unacceptable weak spots and often have bark pockets and bark inclusions associated with them.
5. **Cluster Knot Defect:** This is a group of knots that are very close together, resulting in an unacceptable weak point in the pole.
6. **Excessive Knots Defect:** Knot Whorls: Too many large knots in a whorl. Roughly 1/3 of the circumference of the peeled pole can be knots. The sum of the diameters of all knots in *any one foot section* shall not exceed 1/3 of the circumference of the pole.
7. **Snow Break Defect:** This defect is introduced to the stem when the tip/leader was destroyed and all the branches in the highest whorl that remains, try to become the leader. Only 1 branch will succeed, but there will be a shift in the centerline of the stem. Often there is a remaining bark pocket located where the other competing branches in the whorl died and fell off.
8. **Bark Pocket Defects:** This defect is when bark is retained deeper into the stem than would be expected around knots.
9. **Large Branch Defect:** A large branch can create an oversized knot. Any single branch cannot create a knot that will exceed 3” in any dimension, including vertical length.
10. **Old Thinning Scar Defect:** This is when the stem was damaged in a previous thinning and growth in that immediate area of the stem has been disrupted.
11. **Butt Hook/Sweep Defect:** The butt portion of a potential pole cannot be hooked or have a severe sweep to it. It may be possible to cut a 1’-3’ chunk off the bottom of the stem to remove most of the hook, or it we may mark the stem to have an 8’bolt or 12’log cut off so the cut-off piece can still be utilized.