THE WESTERN FORESTRY AND CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION;
ITS HISTORY AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN PROMOTING
PRIVATE FORESTRY IN THE FIVE WESTERN STATES
AND BRITISH COLUMBIA

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[Signature]
Professor of Forestry
Lumber, fuel,
Beauty, joy;
Forests furnish,
Fires destroy.

This was a contest winner in 1919 when the Forest Patrolman, a publication of the Western Forestry And Conservation Association made one of the initial attempts to interest the public in fire prevention. The thought behind it is just as true today as it was then.

The Western Forestry And Conservation Association has had and will continue to have a tremendous part in the solution of the Forestry Problems with which the great northwest is faced. The Association's policy was formulated on the day E. T. Allen was hired as Forester. When he asked George S. Long, lumberman of Tacoma, what his duties were, Long straightforwardly replied, "Find the right thing to do, then go ahead and do it".

Mr. Long saw the need for a closer relationship of forestry-minded men if we were to achieve a conservation awareness among the citizens of this country. At its inception, in 1909, the primary purpose of the Western Forestry And Conservation Association was to evolve some plan which would provide a more adequate fire protection program. The fire laws were seriously inadequate due to lack of enforcement, politics or both. Public sentiment decidedly needed to be swung toward a better understanding of the urgent necessity for halting the wanton destruction of the timber resources.

At this time the founders also realized the need for a system of forest taxation which would be more just. One which would be conducive toward encouraging the practice of Forestry. The public also needed an
insight into the difficulties with which forest owners were faced.

The officers in 1909 were A. L. Flewelling of Spokane, President; George M. Cornwall of Portland, Secretary; and A. W. Laird of Potlatch, Treasurer. E. T. Allen was employed as Forester and remained in that capacity until his death in 1943. Those closely associated with Mr. Allen during his many years of invaluable service unhesitatingly recognize his work as the power and dynamic drive to which the growth and effectiveness of the Association is due. He realized that cooperation was the keynote to success and was always in close contact with the western timber industry, the U. S. Forest Service, Weather Bureau, Bureau of Entomology, State forestry organizations and the early forestry schools.

In 1911, the Association published a book by E. T. Allen entitled, "Practical Forestry in the Northwest". It was a pioneer step toward management planning for the future; looking toward the future by doing something about it in the present.

As early as 1911 we find \(^1\) that fire losses had dropped from a billion board feet one year to twenty-six million the next! This was due entirely to the patrolling and activity of members of the Association. Such a huge saving over previous fire seasons can hardly be expressed in dollars and cents, so great is its value to the community and nation as a whole. The W. F. and C. A. can rightly lay claim to the conception and birth of the first cooperative fire protection work in the Northwest. This has saved unknown millions of acres from devastation and destruction.

\(^1\) Forester Allen's report to conference. Proceedings 1911.
In three short years progress was being made. Mr. Allen had already appeared before the various state legislative bodies and had been instrumental in the passing of much needed statutes pertaining to forest practices, particularly fire laws.

In 1912 the forestry people from British Columbia joined in the conference for the mutual benefit of all concerned. They took a lively and constructive interest in the proceedings.

The 1913 meeting was held in Vancouver, B.C. It was an outstanding success and as President Flewelling remarked in his opening address the following year, "I hope that the members from this side learned a valuable lesson from that meeting and that this year we will handle the discussion in as snappy a manner as our friends who march to the song 'It's A Long Way To Tipperary'."

It was now that education was realized to be the key towards opening the public mind. Public indifference was being corrected by supplying the people with information; information which up until that time had never been thought worthwhile to disseminate. Many novel and new ideas were used to do this. To instruct the younger generation, booklets were sent to the schools. Sermons on conservation were preached in the church during the summer months. Warnings were placed everywhere to attract the public attention. Advertising was put in telephone directories and railroad time tables. Not the least of the ways in which the educational work was carried on was the supplying of country and city newspapers with reliable news of the situation, especially during the dangerous season; and at all times providing editorial

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President's address, 1913 Proceedings.
material tending to educate the public to protect the forests as part of the assets of the Commonwealth.

New innovations in fire control work were being constantly tried and tested. Field telephone service was being used with considerable success. Some far-seeing gentlemen were even experimenting with the possibilities of that new discovery, the "wireless". Carrier pigeons were being considered. The timbermen of the western country were setting the entire nation an example of practical conservation. This was being done along lines that meant a great saving to the people of this country; a saving up to millions of dollars through the conservation of forests and prevention of their loss by fire and other causes.

As we look back in retrospect it is easily seen that the important and immediate problem facing the Association was control of fire losses. Its success along this line is legendary. As E. T. Allen said, "Forest fire prevention was our obsession and no agency in the world ever hit it so hard or went so far and fast".

By 1914 the strength and public service of the Association had broadened to include general forest industrial consideration. Among these were the new Federal Trade Commission's purposes; lumbering's future; public forest resources; taxation and like economic subjects. Another major step was being considered; the possible cooperation along these lines with public agencies.

One of the indications of the Association's power and prestige was its national recognition in 1914. It was realized that the improvements in Oregon's and Washington's fire law were the fruits of the influence brought into play by the Association. Facts and information presented by the Association were accepted by the Government and Congress.
Recognition of its authoritative information in many aspects of Western Forestry has been the result of conscientious, diligent work on the part of its early members.

Definitely not a haywire outfit, the Association had grown until in 1919 the budget was $25,000.

1921 found Ed Allen working on the problem of forest taxation. Speaking for tax relief and reform measures, he issued a statement, parts of which have been repeated many times and shall bear repetition again. "Mostly", he said, "They have attacked the problem not so much to attain just and sound taxation as to encourage forest growing".

Allen held that you must have a tax law based on economic laws. Subsidy in the form of bounties and tax exemption is not economically sound and therefore in time will fail of its own inadequacy. Until the basis of taxation is justice and is uniform as far as possible on all similar lands, it will remain a serious problem to private forestry.

1918 to 1927 saw a study made of fire insurance on timberlands, the lack of which has long been realized to be an axe hanging over the timber grower's neck. Additional work was done by the U. S. Chamber of Commerce. In 1930 a timber insurance project was instituted under the authority of the Clarke-McNary Act.

Investigation has shown that the important ideas of the Clarke-McNary Act evolved from correspondence between E. T. Allen and W. B. Greeley. This act, one of the most constructive pieces of forest legislation ever passed, brought new responsibility to the forest holders of the west. That responsibility was to make cooperative effort solve specific local problems of forest protection, reproduction and management.
A practicable sustained yield was being discussed during the 1930's.

Insurance of standing timber was a point of discussion in the 1939 conference. It was becoming more and more evident that it was a necessity. As Thornton T. Munger remarked,¹ "Forest growing, long-term, timber management ought to be on the same basis as owning an apartment house or factory or anything else". You must have insurance to protect your capital investment. No regulation by state or government can make a man carry on an enterprise that he cannot insure.

More and more the scope of the Association's program was spreading. It was encompassing much more than the original fire protection program. To prepare for the future, while protecting the present, became a goal for the thinkers and planners.

Noteworthy among the topics of the past few meetings have been the Columbia Valley Authority and sustained yield. Sustained yield seems to be a much misinterpreted and maligned term. Suffice it, for my part, to say that the solution of continuous growing of timber is probably the item of outstanding importance to the forest industry and forest agencies of the west today.

In reviewing the history of the Western Forestry And Conservation Association I cannot help but mention what I believe has been the driving force that has produced this terrific organization. The proceedings of former years are rife with the spirit of cooperation. Every year, while E. T. Allen was alive, he would read the foresters report. Never did he fail to emphasize that what had been accomplished was due to cooperation and what would be accomplished would be due to better, fuller and continued cooperation. Not just cooperation when it would be

¹ Proceedings 1939, p. 45.
of benefit to you, but along every step of the way.

If private forestry is to continue it must cooperate, within itself and with others to a greater degree than it has ever done before.

This Association has helped to foster such cooperation in the past and if history is any indication, the results in the future will be even more stimulating and far reaching.
THREE FIELDS OF ENDEAVOR

1. Study the possibilities of setting up a market, similar in operation to the grain markets.

This would be of great value in supplying both sellers and buyers with a common meeting ground. The growers could possibly sell futures on their timber crop and thus realize enough money for current taxes and expenses. Buyers would be able to see all the products that the market had to offer. Prices could be equalized. Products could be standardized. In short, the merits of such an undertaking should be considered.

2. The proposed methods of financing the rehabilitation of the Tillamook Burn and similar areas does not seem to be favorable to many timber owners.

Some plan agreeable to the timbermen of the state and the public agencies concerned should be formulated. What better way to study the problem than through the auspices of this Association.

3. A third field of investigation might be the one of greater forest products utilization.

This field has long been investigated only when immediate high profits were available. With the war there was an awakening of interest and a substantial increase in utilization. Now that log prices are falling off there will probably be a reversion back to the old low standards. What comes out of the woods is only part of what should come out. If utilization can be pushed higher and higher, everyone from the logger to the public would benefit.
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