

SCHOLARS ARCHIVE:

A USEFUL REPOSITORY FOR 35mm FORESTRY SLIDES*

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Preamble:

[1. Title]

As I completed my career in forestry at Oregon State University, I was faced with the task of cleaning out my office and disposing of about 35 years of paraphernalia. I donated my books to students and faculty, my collection of reprints and journals went to our periodicals room, and my file drawers of paperwork largely went to the dumpster for recycling.

[2. Kodachrome Slide]

[3. Slide Notebooks]

But what to do with my collection of 35 mm Kodachrome slides? Over the years I'd accumulated close to 5,000 slides covering a broad array of forestry topics. Many I'd used in my classes, many had been used in the scientific papers I'd delivered over the years, and a few were used to illustrate articles and books I'd written. So I couldn't bring myself to just throw them out. And none of my colleagues had much use for an outdated mode of visual aids.

[4. About Scholars Archive @ OSU]

Fortunately about this time, OSU developed a repository for various forms of media that could be stored and then easily accessed in its so-called "Scholars Archive." Along with student theses, electronic articles, research data, and other items was the capacity to store digital images. So I quickly determined that this might be a suitable and useful place to save some of my slides. But first they had to be digitized and organized.

* Paper presented at the Society of American Foresters National Convention in Charleston, SC on October 26, 2013.

Process:

[5. Prospective Topics]

The first step was to determine the array of topics I wished to illustrate with my old slides. During the course of my career, I'd specialized in areas such as reforestation, vegetation management, forest protection, wildland fire, and several other aspects of silviculture. So these became logical topics to feature.

[6. Slide Sheet]

I began by selecting the best slides from my large collection. This turned out to be much harder than I thought, because almost all of the slides had special significance for one reason or another. But after some ruthless decision-making, I pared the selection down to about 10% of the original set of slides. So out of a slide sheet of 20 slides, I would usually pick about 2 for digitizing.

[7. Nikon Scanner]

The next step involved scanning the slides into digital format. I used a Nikon CoolScan V ED Film Scanner to do this. It scans individual slides in about 2 minutes, and produces a reliable, high-quality digital image.

[8. Dog-eared Slide]

I sometimes used a batch scanner, but it was prone to jamming because of the dog-eared nature of many of the well-used slides. So scanning individual slides forced me to be selective in choosing the slides to digitize. Also, it gave me an opportunity to recall pertinent information about each slide and develop the story line as I went.

[9. Photoshop Book]

The next step in the process involved running the digitized images through various Adobe Photoshop functions. This allowed me to enhance the color of over-exposed or under-exposed slides and to crop the image to suitable dimensions for subsequent computer display. The Healing Brush and other tools allowed me to remove imperfections on the image like spots, smudges, and scratches. This process averaged about 3 minutes per image, so the total time involved was about 5 minutes from slide to final image.

[10. Edited Comparison]

The end result was often an image far superior to the original slide I began with. And here's an example of the comparison. On the right-hand image, note that the slide border has been cropped out. The color is also brighter, and blemishes have been removed.

[11. Topical Outline]

With the edited images in hand, the next step was to develop an outline for presentation. This was a critical step in making the final product flow in an orderly fashion and to make it user-friendly. Here's an example of the outline I developed for Wildland Fire: (read list).

[12. PowerPoint Logo]

I chose Microsoft PowerPoint as the vehicle for displaying the images because it is a versatile, widely-used medium for presentations—like the one I'm giving this morning. Images can be inserted where desired, and title slides, narrative notes, and other explanatory material can be added easily.

[13-17. Fire PP Sample]

Here's a small sample of the images contained in the PowerPoint on Wildland Fire (5 slides).

[18. Scholars Archive @ OSU]

The final stage in the process involved submitting the PowerPoint presentations to OSU's Scholars Archive. Transmission was done electronically with the help of David Zahler and Brian Davis, two of our media specialists at OSU.

OSU's Scholars Archive is situated on a website connected to OSU's central library system, making it readily accessible to faculty, students, and the public in general. New additions to the site are regularly publicized in various University and College media, ranging from newsletters to Facebook. Feedback from users has been very positive. Here you can see some of the data indicating its popularity: (highlight selected data)

Outcome:

[19. PP Products]

Here are the products I've developed so far:

Images of Fire in Pacific Northwest Forests
<http://hdl.handle.net/1957/36542>

Selected Images of Forest Pest Management
<http://hdl.handle.net/1957/36374>

Images of Reforestation & Vegetation Management in Pacific Northwest Forestry
<http://hdl.handle.net/1957/41603>

Selected Images of Southern Pine Management
<http://hdl.handle.net/1957/42368>

Images of Animal Damage Management in Pacific Northwest Forests
<http://hdl.handle.net/1957/42982>

The URL search pathways to access these items are shown as well. I'll repeat this slide at the end of my talk in case you need more time to jot down any of the information. Or you can see me after the talk.

[20. Accessible Formats]

In addition to the PowerPoints, separate PDF and Zip files of all the images are also provided to facilitate access to individual images. So there's lots of versatility for prospective users.

Bonus Outcomes:

[21. Bonus Outcomes]

One of the unexpected pleasures of this whole enterprise was recalling the many memories and events associated with the slides as I reviewed them. It was a bit like reliving my career, especially the fieldwork days of my research and practice. I also ran across several unusual and humorous scenes that I encountered during the course of my travels and fieldwork. Here's a small sample:

[22. "Heaven"]

[23. "No Dumpin' on My Land"]

[24. Absolutely No Parking]

[25. MT Pet Rest Stop—complete with fire plug]

[26. Cemetery—No Outlet]

[27. Benton County Fairgrounds—mixed messages]

[28. Lind, WA—drop in!]

[29. Promise, OR—all that's left]

[30. Sheriff Detention Facility—Woodland, CA]

[31. Eternity—Smoking or Non-smoking?—take your pick!]

[32. North UMBERLAND Cows—and their feeding habits]

[33. Cows @ Breakfast—Dingle, Ireland]

[34. Flying Lessons]

[35. Wheelchair Ramp Warning—Alligator]

[36. Mule in Car Trunk—Alabama]

[37. Meadow Muffin & Mushrooms—always a silver lining!]

Needless to say, none of these images made it into OSU's Scholars Archive, but they're still worth keeping for other purposes—like this talk!

[38. PP Products]