FOREST EDUCATION IN OREGON

by

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OREGON'S FOREST AND PEOPLE

Introduction

"Forestry today is concerned with more than trees. Back of the trees lies the soil resources upon which the existence of the region depends. And back of the soil lies the economic and social welfare of the people. All of these things concern us today. As forestry has broadened in the domain of sociology and economics, so has the need of effective public relations become increasingly important."

"It should be made clear that public relations means more than making speeches or writing newspaper items. Every contact with the public and every action that affects the public has important public relation aspects. This emphasizes the fact that Public Relation work must be carried on throughout the year, providing for it in in the working plan, for every activity, and making it an integral part of every contact with the public."

"Public opinion is a mighty force. Today, as always, we depend upon favorable opinion for our official existence and accomplishments of our objectives. It is even more important that the public should understand and support our new objective under the head of
sustained yield and multiple use management, with all that these imply. The problem of fire prevention is not yet solved, and continues as a challenge to our best public relation efforts."

"In dealing with public opinion, our case can and should be presented on a dignified and ethical plane. We need not stoop to mere propaganda or questionable methods, --indeed we must not do so. As public servants we have a responsibility to report to the public on what we have done, what we are doing, and what we plan to do, to justify our stewardship. This concept should be the foundation of all our public relation work. If we build upon this basis with skill and experience, with thoughtful analysis, planning and expectation, we should accomplish satisfactory results." (1)

A great number of people in the state of Oregon are beginning to realize the importance of their forests, but are failing to cooperate with the various branches of the forest service in protection methods because they lack an understanding of the need or how they can help to protect their timber resources which were so bountiful given to them by nature. They fail to see that the state and private protective associations are having to work under a great handicap in not having the supporting help of the people. Therefore, being allowed to use somewhat of a trite expression, it can be said that the time is ripe to get in many good licks by launching an intensified public
educational program in forestry for the next few years. Not only will such a program give the people who wish their forest lands protected an understanding of how to help in protecting them, but also win over most of those people who are somewhat indifferent in attitude toward the forest lands of Oregon. It will also change the attitudes of many of those people in the public group who consider the forest a menace and detriment to their welfare after they once see what the forests really mean to Oregon.

It is possible by carrying on a good educational program in forestry, which will teach the people of Oregon the many benefits derived from their timberlands, that within a short period of years there would be few people who would not be willing to help in whatever way they could in protecting and conserving this great resource.

Carelessness, which has resulted in so many disastrous fires by the public while using the forest lands would be cut to a much lower figure than now exists. The few people left who are still adverse to forest protection and conservation after learning the facts that an educational program would give them, would be much easier to deal with and less likely to do things which are rapidly decreasing the forest.

So with this sketch of what a public educational program in forestry will do, let me give my opinion as to the why, the where, and how I think such a program should function.
A Wisconsin bulletin on education in forestry points out the importance of the boy and girl in this work by saying: "The youth of today are the future trustees of our forest. The best way to reach the citizen of tomorrow is to instruct the boy of today. He has most of his life still before him to profit by instructions he receives, by habits he acquires, by attitudes of appreciation he forms, and from the trees he plants and protects and the soil he conserves. If the old adage, 'As the twig is bent so will the tree incline,' is still true of human beings, the boy is too important an element to neglect in forestry."

"They cannot all be foresters, but all will be voters and some of them will be lawmakers and administrators. Today's accomplishments cannot long endure or plans for future achievements proceed unless there is built up in those who follow an attitude and technique that will further the work and provide security from greed and unwise action. The conviction should be indelible in their minds that forestry is absolutely necessary, not only to supply timber, but also because forests will put to use vast acres of non productive lands, and aid in controlling floods, conserving soils, in moderating climate and providing healthful recreation. 'Have boys and trees grow up together.'" (2)
There should be more definite advancements in Oregon schools toward a thorough and comprehensive instruction in the protection and conservation of the timber resources because the training of the boy and girl is essential to the success of any long time protection and conservation plan.

It is obvious though that before any forestry subject can be included in the schools for teaching, it will be necessary to prepare material suitable for the use of the teachers, such as teaching outlines, reference and narrative material. Along with this the teachers should be trained in teaching forestry. They should be first interested in the subject and then prepared for at least the teaching of the fundamentals in forestry.

There should be the preparation of teaching material by some group such as the state of Michigan has a few years ago. In this state a committee composed of members of the Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Conservation set to work and prepared such material. This type of a committee could be organized in Oregon in which it would be composed of the leading educators of the state and men of the State Forestry Department and the Protective Associations. The retiring President Peavy of Oregon State College would be an excellent person to have at the head of this committee. It would be the work of
this group to prepare material for the teaching in the grade and high schools and have it so that the schools of higher education in Oregon would give to those who are preparing to teach the basic fundamentals in forestry so they will be able to teach it in the grade and high schools.

Cooperated with this plan of including forestry subjects in the grade and high school's curriculum is to have school forests in which the students are taken to visit them especially in the spring of the year, to do improvement work et cetera. These school forest should be for both recreation and constructive work in showing the boys and girls about forestry. Picnics and outing into these forests should be planned as often as feasible.

The following quoted paragraphs about prizes offered for the best school forests shows how far along the state of South Carolina is in this field. "The awards to schools and teachers are in cash: Those to students consist of educational trips to forest industries, National Parks and State Parks, and properties under forest protection and management. Ratings are determined on points awarded on the following projects: Boundary and firebreaks, thinning sample plots, burned and unburned sample plots, forest signs, prevention of fire on school forests, seedling bed, tree planting records on school forest, measuring farm timber
improvement cuttings and thinnings, percentage of boys having forestry projects, completed home projects and the number of adults doing forestry work as a result of the projects." (3)

Closely correlated with this school program should be the work in other youth groups such as the Four H Clubs, and any others such as the Boy Scouts, Camp fire Girls, possible the Future Farmers of America clubs, and numerous others. The recently started Junior Forest Council in Oregon and Washington is an organization all the youths should be urged to join. Considerable is already being done by the Forestry Departments in cooperation with the leaders of these youth organizations but there is still a large field for expansion.

The program for teaching forestry to these groups should include forested areas where tree planting and demonstrations, showing forestry work can be carried out. In communities where school forests are started, they can be further used probably by these youth organizations, and ever further correlated with former demonstration areas which will be described later. As indicated before, recreation as well as constructive work should be provided for these youth organizations under the supervision of the club leaders.

Men of the forest service should visit these areas as often as possible when either the schools or one of the organizations are using it, to give
talks and offer a word of praise to the boys and girls for their work. In most cases these youths look upon the man in the forest service as a person to be admired and any word of encouragement or praise from him while they are at their work will cause them to take more pride in their work and increase their interest.

It would also be up to the club leaders and forest service men to see that other leading men and women visit these young people at their work and play and show them that they are interested in what they are doing. The citizens of Oregon may be assured that this training in forestry will enhance the chances of making better citizens of their young people as well as helping Oregon protect its forests.

Getting the boys and girls interested in planting trees and shrubs along highways, roadsides, and about community buildings under the supervision of the club leaders is another important means of teaching these groups about forestry. Trees for this type of work of planting or any planting work by the young people should be supplied by the state nursery when asked for by any of the leaders of these groups.

Further means of educating the youth in forestry is to have shown in the school with lectures motion pictures.

Essay and poster contest each year with some suggested topic in fire prevention or conservation work will help a lot in interesting the boys and girls in forestry if attractive prizes are to be awarded to the most outstanding
winners. This plan should be carried on in the spring of the year a while before the fire season of the year starts. The schools should also encourage the young students to make exhibits for the fair booth which will explain late developments and will be explained later.

School libraries should be well supplied with forestry literature so that the student has it available when he wishes it.

And so it is, if the youth of today is well trained in forestry fundamentals, the forests of tomorrow will have much better protection than they have had in the past.

FORESTRY EDUCATION, THE FARMER AND STOCKMAN

Today the attempt to educate this category of public, to help protect and conserve the timber, seems to run into a tough proposition. The biggest detriment caused by this group is the continuous burning of the timberlands either by accident or maliciously. There is a certain percentage in most country communities to consider the timber a menace and detriment to their welfare. Especially is this so in the scattered settlers and families living within forested areas on small valley farms and who usually raise some stock.

The right type of dealing with this part of the public has never been satisfactorily solved in any of the Western States or the south and not by many in the east. This student received replies from letters
sent to more than twenty-five state forest departments to a letter asking about this problem and the gist in practically all of them was that here was a problem in which they were far from finding satisfactorily, solution to. Some figured public education was very helpful means but better law enforcement would be more effective. These men in a way are probably right and the answer to the question probably lies in the coordination of good law enforcement and education in forestry. It might be if Oregon would get a few good blood hounds such as some of the Southern states did to track down incendiaryist. It would help a lot in reducing this type of fire and if one or two were caught by this method it would undoubtedly help check this problem. But it is still true that education is fully as important as the law enforcement and education in with this group in the educational field should show fruits.

In somewhat analyzing why this group of people continually burn the timberland, it can be said in most cases these people fail to understand the harm they are doing and that sooner or later it is going to affect them. Many of them think the lumber industry will never reach the places on which they are living on or that the vast supply of timber will ever be exhausted. Others think substitutes will soon be taking the place of lumber and thus the present protection system is unnecessary, while others say the present forest policy of protection is "all wet." They say the forests should be burned over
each year like the Indians used to do it and the present policy is merely storing up trouble if a fire ever does get really started because of the added accumulation year after year of inflammable material. They claim if the timberland was burned every year it would keep out the underbrush thus giving the timber a better chance to grow. Then this cost of protection would not be necessary. It is hard to believe these ideas still exist but this person has heard these beliefs expressed many times and the persons saying them were sincere in expressing these ideas. Now if anyone can show me that public relation work with these people by showing and explaining to them the harm they are causing, won't help a great deal, I'm willing to listen.

The program to be followed in working with these people should be one of community interest and personal contact by foresters. Lectures at community socials is one means of selling to these people the forester's viewpoint. As stated by a state forester though, these people generally aren't very enthusiastic in what a person has to tell them by a lecture unless they are interested in the subject. Then probably the best way to hold the interest of these people and still get across the importance of the forests is by the motion picture. The actual showing how much the forests mean to the social and economic life of a community as depicted by some of the reels now available will mean a lot to these people.
Different pictures should be shown several times a year in each community if possible. The person showing the picture should get in touch with the leader or leaders of the community in advance and arrange for the most favorable time for the community to see it. It is up to him to approach the leader in a tactful manner to see if he or she will not do everything possible to get everyone in the neighborhood to come out that evening. If the forester knows the leader real well and is familiar with the community he might even offer suggestions on ways of getting people to come. Such things as a pot luck supper or an ice cream feed usually interest everyone in a country community.

One other thing from the psychological standpoint is that those who are opposed to forest policies will show up just out of curiosity to see what anyone has to say or show against their viewpoints.

The man giving the show might also have a few circulars printed and sent out to the individuals of the community announcing the date of the showing and what it is about. This would be best in places where fires were bad as in some of the Douglas county communities last year and in the past. Many of the community building have been wired with electricity in the past few years which will make the showing of the motion pictures more convenient.
Along with this lecture and movie program should be another supervised by some county leader or other person which encourages these country communities to beautify the community buildings, roadsides, and about their own homes by planting of shrubs and trees. This should be correlated with the youth program on this point which was mentioned earlier in this paper.

Another way of showing the farmer and others the importance of the forests is to have demonstration areas wherever possible in the neighborhood on which farm forestry and other thing can be demonstrated openly. If a school or some youth club forest has been established this part of the program can be correlated with this area. One thing that especially wants to be shown on these demonstration areas is the effect of continued burning. There should be a plot which is burned yearly compared with a plot along with one in which fire has been kept out. Other things to be carried on in these demonstrations in these areas are prunnings, thinnings, improvement cuttings and many other things. Methods in fire fighting techniques and how to control fires when burning slash if shown to these farmers would undoubtedly result in fewer fires getting out of control on the farms.

The holding of these demonstrations in a community will cause those who are opposed to present fire prevention policies to attend because they will, as previously stated,
be curious to see what anyone can show or has against their ideas. If these individuals should openly oppose forest policies at these demonstrations the person handling the project wants to be ready with some well organized facts which he can give to prove the person giving opposition to be wrong. The forester wants to be tactful and show a willingness to be helpful in all cases.

It may seem that little headway is being made in selling the need for forest protection to these individuals who openly oppose any such policies, but in most cases there will be considerable doubt in their minds as to whether they had the right idea after hearing and seeing a few things which can be shown on a demonstration area.

The best time to carry on this work is in the spring of the year before the fire season starts. This is a good time because it is somewhat of a slack season for the farmer between the spring seeding of crops and the summer harvest.

These farms in many instances, have considerable acreage of timber on them and it is probably possible for the forester in some cases to point out to the owner the value of this farm woodland in that it will probably soon have a good sale value in the form of poles, piling, or sawlogs. This would stop a lot of the burning and slashing that is taking place on most of these farms today.
Another way to get across some good work in forestry in these country communities is to arrange lectures to be given to the women in the neighborhood. Practically in all these neighborhoods the women have afternoon socials in which they meet and have a program, visit, sew, etc. If these groups can be interested, and they usually can because most of the women like the beauty of tree covered slopes it will mean that an important thing is going to be used in many instances by these women.

One more phase of forestry education in country areas and that is with the larger stockmen. Probably this can be done here or any place, but the main thing to do is to persistently and tactfully try to reason individually with these men. Also a cooperative attitude should be had between the agriculture men and the foresters instead of one where each say the other is working in his land use policies. These men must come to an agreement that there is a place for grassland and forest land both in the Oregon counties. If there was less conflict between these two groups as to what is the right land use policy the problems arising on the cut-over areas in Oregon could be settled much easier. These two departments, agriculture and forestry, are going to have to cooperate in the solution of these problems if there is to be much accomplished.
This farm or country program can have a lot of assistance from county agents, 4-H leaders and other people who are leaders. It does not all have to be carried on by men in the forest departments but these men should work out programs to carry on this work and be ready to further cooperate with any work along forestry education which calls for their assistance.

**FORESTRY AND THE KEY MAN OF THE STATE**

These men include the state legislators, county officials, city and municipal officials and others. Taking these men in groups or individually prepared "show me trips" is probably as beneficiary way of getting favorable results as any, for here are the present day administrators. Once these men are shown what the forest mean to Oregon and are sold on the idea that the forests are necessary for Oregon to be a prosperous state, it is certain they will exert a strong influence in public groups.

Men in the forest service should keep in contact with these men as much as possible and inform them of what the service is doing, why they are doing it, and how it is being done. Literature and circulars about forestry and the work being done should be sent to officials and other state men as often as possible. In other words the main point is to show these men the every moment the need for expansion in the forest service so that the timber of Oregon will be adequately protected.
One place where it will be difficult to convince county officials of the need of forestry work is in some of the towns where large stockmen live who have considerable influence as leaders in that section of the country. In these places that forester will have to show his willingness to cooperate with any plan which is for the betterment of the community and state. He must exert all the influence possible to win these county officials to his way of thinking when he has facts and proof to show he is right. The District Attorney, Judge, and the Justice of Peace are county officials that he especially wants to be on friendly with as better law enforcement and more convictions of those violators of Oregon fire laws will be an important influence on this type of person who maliciously burns the forests. If these key men can just be won over it will mean the forest departments will have a good chance to being up to standard such weakness as new exist due to various handicap conditions they are working under.

FORESTRY AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC (City and Urban) ........

The group named here includes the business men, the industrial workers, the wives and families of these men and others.

In dealing with forestry education in this part of the public, it is somewhat easier in certain ways in getting across forest policies because these people are more willing to listen as practically all of them use the
forests for some recreational purpose and wish to see them retained, one difficulty is that few of them know but very little about forestry and thus they do things while using the forest which adds to the expense of protection.

Forestry education in this group is also difficult because of its large size and unless a program is worked out so as to keep the issue before them almost constantly they will soon forget it in the regular routine of their business.

The program for this public group should include such means for selling the need for protection and conservation to them as the radio, newspapers, lectures, motion pictures, exhibits at fairs, showboats, publications, and other miscellaneous ways.

The state and federal service should go together in much of this program and thus they could make the work much more effective.

One place of importance to carry on public relations in this category of the public is in the civic organizations. Again the lecture and motion picture will probably be the most effective means of showing the importance of the forests to the people. Using the motion picture more than the lecture will be an important feature to keep in mind in this work, or at least using them more until the people show quite an interest in the work.
Having a system of exchange of reels with other states would help in getting a good variety of pictures. Selecting those that have the most interest and scenic beauty would be best to show first.

Lecture for these civic organizations should not be of the long winded variety but rather short with stress being placed on fact giving material.

In working with these civic organizations the forester should personally contact the leaders and try to interest them to the fullest extent in forestry, for the success of a program in any group will depend a great deal on the way the leaders feel.

Another field to work in is with the sportsmen and the out of door groups. Here the forestry departments and the Wild Life Conservation organization in Oregon should cooperate in carrying on a program to interest these people in protection and conservation.

In this group of people one will usually find several who enjoy and have the knack of being able to write excellent literary work and if the forester can induce these men or women to write articles to be published in newspapers and other publications, he will have found another important means of bringing the material before the public.

Today, another field, which does not want to be left out of an education program of this sort, is in the women organizations. Here as in the others, women continue to play an increasing important role in conservation work.
and the forest department should give them every possible assistance they can. If forest service men can give lectures to these groups and interest them to the point of getting the group to take trips into forested areas in an endeavor to increase their knowledge of forestry as a part of the club's activities, it will mean that an important step has been accomplished. If these women clubs do take trips into the forests, the forester should keep in contact with leader and try to arrange it so that he would be able to give some his time to the group while in the forests and point out facts which would probably interest them.

VARIOUS OTHER WAYS OF REACHING THE PUBLIC

The radio is an important means of doing this but it is a tough proposition to write out talks which will interest the public, or put on a program which will be listened to in the midst of the variety of things coming over the air now days. But if interest can be created in forestry by some of the foregoing mentioned methods or others, the radio will be an effective and important way of selling forestry to the public.

If some such group as the Junior Forest Council could gain a large enough membership so as to include a boy and a girl in most of the homes and then have a program given over the radio on these smaller town stations it will mean that most of the members will listen to it and probably insist upon the rest of the family hearing it also which will mean another way of getting forestry education across to
the public which is very important in this particular age. We need radio education.

Radio talks or programs should be publicized as much as possible through the local newspapers and other means so that people will at least know about them.

Any talk to be given by an agriculture man over the radio on some agricultural question can usually be found in the local paper in a paragraph by itself, and forestry should try to do the same thing.

The programs and talks should include as much as material as possible of local interest on how the layman can enjoy Oregon forests et cetera.

Another thing that should be done to further education in conservation of Oregon's forests is to have a state wide Fire Prevention Week sometime in the early summer. Here the objective should be to create an air among the people of preventing and stamping out the cause of forest fire.

School children should be urged to make posters and signs of forest fire prevention work. Civic organizations and business organizations should be induced to cooperate in putting up signs and posters denoting the importance of the week. Radio, newspapers, and other state publications I'm sure would cooperate in helping whatever way they could. If carried out correctly this should result in an effective way of protecting the forests.

Building an exhibit at the State Fair, showing the importance of the lumbering and other wood industries along with the need of protecting the forests would bring the issue before alot of people in Oregon and make them more
conscious of the fact that here is an important industry which means a great deal to Oregon. Building and maintaining a portable unit, as done in the state of Michigan, to be exhibited at county and smaller fairs over the state would also help a great deal. This exhibit could be made as interesting and probably more so than most industrial exhibits at fairs.

If the youths have been interested in forestry work and have made good posters and signs and done other good work, a part of the exhibit should be used for the showing of these.

A theme for such an exhibit could be the comparison of proper methods of protection and conservation with the past procedures of destruction and waste of our timber resources.

One thing more the forest department can do and that is to keep a file of photographs which can be used by newspapers, magazines, and other publications for depicting the contents of published articles on forestry or conservation work. There are few things which will catch a reader's eye quicker than a good picture displaying some part he is reading in the article. According to some of the eastern states who keep a file of these photographs, the demand runs into thousands of orders each year by the various public and private agencies.
Various degrees of understanding from good to poor of forest policies exist among the harvesters of the timber today. Also, various degrees of cooperation with these policies exist among these men. As a general thing, though, it can probably be said that the lumbermen are beginning to realize they are going to have to cooperate with the forest departments if they are going to continue to have good and accessible timber to cut.

Forest laws in Oregon are making it so that the lumberman has to comply with forest policies in cutting but even with these, there is certainly a place for public relation work with these men.

The following statement made by a man of the State Forestry Department in a radio talk shows how this work with the lumberman should be done. "Education through friendly cooperation and the earnest selling of the need for compliance, and through frequent contact and discussion are principal means by which results are secured. Legal action is not taken unless it becomes a necessity." (4)

The forester should do everything possible to make it plain to the new operators why it is that Oregon has these laws and make them realize the necessity of many precautions that the state takes in harvesting the timber. From the first contact between an operator of a forestry enterprise and the forest service, which comes when the individual wishing to harvest forest products applies for a forest operation permit to the last contact, should an attitude of helpfulness and cooperation.
The two general types of precautions, one dealing with the tools, equipment, and general fire prevention program in effect in the immediate vicinity of the logging operation and the other with the treatment of the land logged so that it will be as nearly safe as possible from future fire damage, should be fully explained to any new operator and his men. Just telling them what they have to do is not the right type of procedure, but also requires a tactful and reasonable explanation of why these things have to be done as they are. Being sure the operator and his men understand the situations and requirements should be the important point of the field inspector.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion let me say this. Now is the ideal time to launch a program in forestry education with the public, because of the increasing activity in forest industries. Newspapers throughout the state are including more articles all the time about the new developments in forest industries. These are causing the people to realize that here is an important industry.

So now it is up to every individual in forestry and those entering the field to do everything possible to earnestly sell to the public the need for protection and conservation of the forest what they mean to the people in the State of Oregon.
"The surest way to public support is to have the public understand how and why we are serving it. Casual contact and unplanned personnel impressions cannot be depended upon." (2)
Cited Material


Annotated reference:

I wrote a circular letter to most of the State Forest Departments in the United States or the department in some of the states which was carrying forest work, asking certain questions pertaining to education work and fire prevention. In reply I received good answers to these questions and practically all the states sent considerable material in reference to this work which covered what they were doing in this line. With this material, a visit to the Oregon State Forestry Department where I obtained more valuable materials from the Forestry School's library and college library, and my own ideas I have written this thesis.

The main material used was:

1. The letters from the various State Forestry Department
2. Literature and other material from these States.
3. The interviews with the State Forest Service men.
4. Literature, magazines and other material such as:
   a. The American Forests.
   b. Public Relation Handbook by the Regional office
   c. Fire Control notes
d. Conservation Activities circulars.
e. Oregon's Forest Fire Laws.