

BLM Expands Staff To Speed Timber Salvage

To speed up the salvage of blowdown, fire and insect killed timber, the division of forestry of the Bureau of Land Management is being expanded to meet the task by recruiting and orienting a considerable number of foresters.

Roscoe E. Bell, northwest regional administrator of the Bureau, said at Portland today that seven days of intensive field training and orientation for a group of the new foresters has just been completed. The training session was held at Swisshome and on logging operations in the area.

The new men, graduate foresters and engineers from western colleges, were trained in cruising blowdown timber, the layout and administration of timber sales in these emergency areas, the location and engineering of logging roads, and the enforcing of fire prevention stipulations on logging operations.

Hiring of the additional field men was made possible by Congress to expedite the salvage program granting the emergency funds which the BLM requested in its recent budget to salvage as much of the timber as possible and to help check the Douglas-fir bark beetle epidemic.

Heavy Salvage Expected

Bell said, "With the enlarged force of foresters and forest engineers in the field it is believed that during the fiscal year 1952-53 approximately three hundred thirty million board feet of dead and damaged timber can be salvaged in addition to the approximately 375 million board feet of green timber which is planned for sale on BLM lands."

"The important fact is that a huge amount of dead and dying timber is in the woods and must come out as fast as possible. On BLM land the windthrown, fire-killed and beetle-killed timber is now estimated at approximately one billion board feet with a value of more than sixteen million dollars. The approximate area of beetle infestation has been estimated at 1,500,000 acres of private timber, 1,000,000 acres of national forest and 600,000 acres of BLM timber. Almost every timber-covered mountainside is now beginning to show a polka dot pattern of small patches of insect-killed trees. Wherever the dead trees are found, about twice as many surrounding them are infested with the tiny timber-killing beetles."

"The cooperative aerial and ground survey in which the lumber industry, the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, the U.S. Forest Service, the State Forester, and the BLM have been searching western Oregon for areas containing blowdown and beetle-killed timber and classifying them, is continuing and will have to continue for a considerable time, for the entomologists have said that the beetle epidemic will increase in 1953. They also have told us that the only feasible way to fight the epidemic is to remove the infested trees, the windthrown and the fire-damaged timber."

Access Roads Needed

The Bureau chief added, "The salvage program calls for the construction of roads into many areas to prevent heavy losses. In some places this will mean long and costly access roads. In most cases, fortunately, a spur road or the extension of an existing road will reach the critical areas. The 82nd Congress granted the BLM \$2,750,000 for the construction of major access roads."

The Secretary of the Interior recently approved authority for the Bureau of Land Management to grant emergency short-term rights-of-way permits across lands administered by the Bureau for the removal of private salvage timber. Marketing area restrictions were also eased on any block of BLM salvage timber which does not sell the first time it is offered for sale. Such timber may now be sold for primary processing in any of the O & C marketing areas, which include all of western Oregon and limited specific areas immediately adjacent to the state lines in Washington and California.

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