



cutting the hell out of everything in sight.

Near the Round Mountain sale are several new roads that have mulch along their shoulders. Holt owns the company that does this. By putting fertilized mulch with grass seed along new roads, erosion can be lessened.

Holt believes that clearcutting has its place. "You cannot say clearcutting is the only way, just as you can't say selective logging is the only way. Common sense and knowledge have to be applied to each stand of timber before deciding which method should be used."

When clearcutting on their own land, Sun Studs clears long, narrow tracts. This allows a certain degree of shade, but not too much, for young trees. It also allows the area to benefit from windblown seeds.

Sun Studs puts its own land back into production as quickly as possible. The company has its own crew of tree planters. "We don't trust Mother Nature to do this," Holt says, "because only once every three years is the weather right for natural reseeding, and only once every seven years is the natural seed crop good. This means that you get a good job of natural reseeding roughly once every 20 years."

While the National Forest administration replants its land, Sun Studs replants 300,000 trees a year on its own land, and due to increased land acquisitions, that figure will increase to half a million very soon.

But the planting crew is interested in more than just tree planting. At the end of the growing season the planting crew begins its thinning program. Trees are killed by injecting a poison into their base. The dead trees are left standing to provide a windbreak for the living trees.

In summer, the planting crew builds recreational trails and even shelters. This program began last summer. Holt expressed dissatisfaction at some of the Forest Service's requirements for such projects. Sun Studs wanted to put in a primitive campground, but the Forest Service would not permit it unless running water was provided. Considering that many of the Forest Service's campgrounds are dry, Holt cannot understand this.

While some of the logging methods used by Sun Studs are uncommon, its stud mill, which produces two-by-fours and other studs, is unique.

The mill is operated by computers, and while its production is not yet up to what it will be when a new computer system is completed, the bonus of the mill is in highly increased utilization.

This is profitable for the company, but more important to the public, it means that less of the country's valuable resources are being wasted.

The mill utilizes between 79 and 90 percent of the wood, while most mills only get between 35 and 45 percent recovery.

It is a gleaming tribute to the great god technology, a mechanized answer to an ecological problem.

The operator of the mill places each log the best way he sees fit as it is about to be sawed, and from then on the computer takes over.

The log goes between scanners which measure its length, width, and taper down to the nearest tenth of an inch. The log moves to the saws, the speed of which is also computer controlled, and when the finished studs emerge, the sawing is so good that planing is not even necessary on two sides.

The lack of a large amount of sawdust on the mill floor testifies to the effectiveness of the band saws, and to the efficiency with which the wood is cut.

By eliminating human judgement, the Sun Stud mill computer can scan a block and decide how to cut it for maximum utilization.

A man sits in a darkened room watching five television screens that scan different parts of the mill, watching for malfunctions. You see this man, sitting in this electronic throne room and think about what mechanization does. Yet not a single employee was fired when the mill became automated. Sun Studs simply added a second shift.

Most of the technology for the mill was imported from Europe by Fred Sohn. European lumber technology is more advanced than that of the United States, Holt explains, because with the limited wood resources Europe had to increase utilization as much as possible.

"We copied ideas from the old world," Burt Holt says, "and now many people over here are beginning to copy ours." The trend is toward greater utilization because the wood supply in the United States is not unlimited, and more companies are beginning to realize it.

As a business that must place emphasis on economic concerns, Sun Studs is typical, but what distinguishes the company from others is that the men who run it are gaining an awareness that is vital to the lumber industry if it is to survive.

They have found that by using methods which yield more lumber from fewer trees they are able to make more money and be more concerned with the supply of natural resources. Sun Studs is a company whose foresight extends far beyond the end of the next fiscal year.

There are changes, and it seems that Sun Studs may be the beginning of a new species of logging company. Those which cling to the

philosophy of "cut and get out" may become extinct.

It is often said that a lumberman is a person who looks at a forest and sees only board feet, but in Burt Holt you sense something different.

Sitting in the pickup on Round Mountain he gazes across the valley at clearcuts on the other side. "Those really don't look too bad," he says, looking at you with anticipation. To you, they are just plain ugly, but there is still a sort of good feeling in knowing that he cares about what you think, and that he and men like him are concerned with the world around them.

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