

Oregon Daily Emerald

World News & Sports

Supplement

Larger cuts threaten forest recreation

By STEVE KATZ
Of the Emerald

Faced with orders to increase the timber harvest and a simultaneous cutback in funding and manpower, the U.S. Forest Service is having difficulties meeting its other obligations and duties.

These other duties include providing more outdoor recreation opportunities than any other federal agency. In other words, maintenance of campgrounds, hiking trails, access roads, watershed protection, reforestation, to name a few will all be severely jeopardized.

Last year's budget of \$562 million was reduced to \$479 million for the 1973-1974 fiscal year. Yet at the same time the Forest Service has been directed to increase the annual timber cut to 11.8 billion board feet, up from 10.8 billion board feet in 1972. Thus an additional cost of roughly \$20 million will be needed for the initial expenses of just the expanded timber harvest alone.

Zane Smith, Willamette National Forest supervisor, is constantly working with the many problems of the Forest Service. The roughest problem in his mind is the increase in the national annual timber cut of 11.8 billion board feet. Smith explained that the additional timber to be cut "puts a burden on foresters to cut all that extra timber and still maintain good forest service."



Photo by Sam Frear, courtesy U.S.D.A. Forest Service

ANALYSIS

THE PRESIDENT'S Office of Management and the Budget (OMB) originally raised the Forest Service's manpower ceiling by 450, (up to the June 1973 high of 20,854) to meet the required increased timber cut.

By this June the ceiling will be down to 19,260, yet the timber must be cut.

"The publicity was all on the additional manpower and never anything on the withdrawals of manpower," said Smith.

Orders for the manpower reductions as well as increased timber cutting came from the White House. In line with the President's belt tightening, the Forest Service requested the lowered budget of \$479 million.

Richard Gale, associate professor of sociology at the University and past chairman of the local Sierra Club group, is angered by the President. "The tragedy is that the cuts are caused by executive action, it's Nixon. Congress has been nullified by Nixon."

Gale sees little hope for the Forest Service in the immediate future. The problem will continue as long as Nixon stays in office, he says. "There is no way out of it. It's very disappointing."

GALE'S CONCERNS lie not only with the Forest Service's problems, but with alerting the public as to who is responsible. He suggests putting up signs on any campgrounds closed due to the present situation. The signs, according to Gale, should read, "This campground closed by Nixon."

Zane Smith is also concerned with alerting the public to the Forest Service's problems, as well as to who is responsible for them.

"This is a source of much frustration, in that people think it's doing," says Smith. It's a congressional mandate, he adds. "Most of us are good soldiers and do

the best we can. We are trying to tell Washington that the people need wilderness and beauty."

Smith sees the imbalance in Forest Service duties slowly growing with unfinanced recreational facilities losing out to timber cutting. "The chief of the Forest Service and many others including myself have spoken out against the problems we are facing," Smith said.

THE POSSIBILITY of closing or reducing National Forest facilities are very real to Smith. He thinks the public is getting the "short end of the stick."

"We have explored the possibility of closing down campgrounds," said Smith. Perhaps just sections of certain campgrounds will be closed. Less maintenance and less policing of campgrounds are also being looked at as possibilities. Many economy measures must be taken to stretch the dollar.

As for improving or expanding the National Forest recreation system, Smith was pessimistic. There are just "very very limited funds" for capital improvements, new camping areas, and trails," he explained.

There is no easy solution to the Forest Service's problem. The reductions experienced are part of general economy measures seen everywhere.

The order to increase timber cutting means that the Forest Service must expand its timber cutting programs. These programs include responsibility for deciding what pieces of land are available in the National Forests, and then calculating how much timber that land will yield. These pieces of land are analyzed thoroughly by the Forest Service and an environmental analysis report is made.

Measurements of quality and quantity of timber are also made. Specifications as to operating procedures, logging roads, and spacing and planting of new trees after cutting, are all accomplished before bids are invited by the Forest Service.

The Forest Service selects the bid from private companies and then supervises the cutting, all 11.8 billion board feet of it.

THE MONEY the private logging companies pay for harvesting the timber goes to the U.S. Treasury. Twenty-five per cent comes back to local counties for roads and schools. Lane, Linn, and Marion counties together received a little less than \$11 million for the last fiscal year.

Some of the timber money also goes toward replanting, which is behind schedule. There is a backlog of some 5 million acres of unforested land, largely due to forest fires, acquisition of treeless land, and seedling loss. Two thousand such acres are in the Willamette National Forest.

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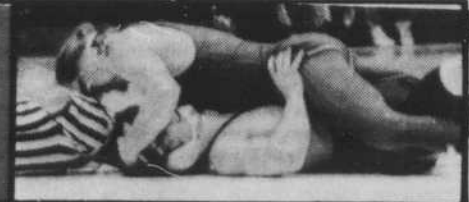
Impossible to believe, but Italy's political situation is becoming even more chaotic than ever. An approaching referendum on divorce is literally splitting the nation.



Meanwhile, in Paris, the government is suffering from an acute case of embarrassment over a Watergate-style attempt to bug a newspaper's offices.



Well, the Ducks met the Falcons, and our team got its wings clipped in an upset basketball contest over the weekend.



Oregon wrestlers fared much better. They demolished the Washington Huskies, who were top-ranked and favored.