

## Forest

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who saw timberland as a renewable resource to be used for development and home construction for a rapidly expanding population.

Environmental advocates and industry supporters, though often the loudest, were not the only groups with a stake in forest lands. As with any controversy, forest management wasn't, and still isn't, a black-and-white issue.

In 1890, conservationist Gifford Pinchot introduced "new forestry," according to the Forest History Society. This method of forest management promoted selective logging over clear-cutting. When selective logging is used, young immature trees are left standing while older, larger trees are harvested. The small trees provide seed sources for new growth and continue to offer protection for undergrowth and wildlife after the larger trees are removed.

"We found that large trees surrounded by dense growth of smaller trees could be logged with surprisingly little injury to the young growth, and that the added cost of taking care was small out of all proportion to the result," Pinchot wrote in 1947 for the U.S. Forest Service.

Many logging outfits, including Eugene-based Mobile Salvage Logging Inc., practice selective logging techniques. Mobile is a contract logging outfit working primarily for Giustina Land and Timber. Recently, Mobile Salvage — owned by brothers Gary and Rob Johnson — logged several acres of Giustina land west of Fall Creek. The crew removed the majority of large first-growth trees from the site, but left almost all of the small seedlings and underbrush intact.

"Every bit of natural old growth you see around here won't be here someday," Gary Johnson said. "All this old-growth you see is dying. It's rotten in the middle. It's part of life. If we get it out of here, the young, small trees will have room to grow. It's just a natural thing."

Rob Johnson added that logging wasn't about destroying the forest and that the men who worked as loggers were also fishermen, hunters and family men who respect and en-



Adam Amato Emerald

A member of the Eugene-based Mobile Salvage Logging Inc. crew takes a moment away from setting chokers to talk to one of the heavy equipment operators. The eight-member crew can often clear an entire hillside in a matter of weeks.

joy the forest.

"Nobody respects nature as much as loggers," Rob Johnson said. "We work in the elements year-round. We know exactly what goes on in nature, but we know what these trees are here for. The forest is renewable; all these trees will grow back. It's a cycle."

Gary and Rob Johnson's parents started Mobile Salvage in 1962 after the Columbus Day windstorm. Gary and Rob bought the company from their mother after their father's death. Robbie — Rob's son — works on the eight-man outfit, and Rob and Gary's wives keep the books and run the office.

"We've been family-owned and operated all along," Gary said. "Logging is important to our family. It's important to a lot of families."

However, many activist groups have said the logging problem isn't small outfits like Mobile Salvage. The problem, they say, is the Bush administration's economic ties to industry and its overall forestry policy.

According to directors at Earthjustice, a non-profit public interest law firm, the Bush administration's affinity for the timber industry may be a result of campaign contributions. Records from an analysis of federal election commission campaign contributions show the timber

industry contributed \$3.4 million to the GOP in 2000. However, this amount pales next to the \$40.7 million contributed to the GOP in 2000 by mining, oil and gas, chemical and coal industries.

"When it comes to our national forests, the Bush administration has adopted a policy of 'leave no tree behind,'" Earthjustice legislative director Marty Hayden said in a statement. "Never in modern times has there been an administration so singly focused on getting fish, wildlife, the public and the law out of the way of commercial timber interests and other extractive industries. ... If it gets in the way of cutting trees, it's out of there."

The administration's plans for forest management, including the Healthy Forest Initiative and the restructuring of the Northwest Forest Plans, are considered by many to be just another step in repaying the timber industry for their support. The implementation of this legislation — increased logging in the name of fire prevention — could begin in a few weeks.

This summer, the Northwest may find out just how far stakeholders are willing to go in the name of forest management and sustainability.

Contact the senior reporter at [aimeeurudin@dailyemerald.com](mailto:aimeeurudin@dailyemerald.com).

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