

Loggers Tackle Winter Blowdowns

Powerful mid-winter winds swept through the high country in the northwest portion of the reservation early this year, an event witnessed by few if any humans. When the snow melted and foresters ventured into the remote area, a panorama of destruction awaited their eyes. Acre after acre of trees had

been snapped in two or torn up by the roots, leaving forest graveyards throughout the 20 square mile area.

Air and ground reconnaissance confirmed that this was the worst blowdown that veteran Bureau of Indian Affairs foresters had seen on the reservation. A total of 1950 acres of

timber of 33 million board feet, fell victim to the winter winds.

In the Mt. Hood National Forest where blowdowns were heavier than usual this year, foresters are blaming a late January or early February storm with winds up to 75 m.p.h. Locals have not pinpointed a particular storm.

Forester Bill Apgar, who directs forest management efforts for the B.I.A. described the summer fire hazard potential of the fallen timber as "one big bomb ready to explode." The B.I.A. Agency and Area Offices have "come on real strong," said Apgar, directing that all the blowdown be removed this year.

Hank Palmer, logging manager from Warm Springs Forest Products, is pulling four local loggers from their scheduled green sales to perform salvage operations. Blowdown will make up a staggering 40 per cent of the annual allowable cut for the reservation.

The mid-winter catastrophe, which Apgar referred to as "nature's clearcutting," made pick-up sticks of both young and old stands of Douglas-Fir and White Fir between the Warm Springs River and Badger Butte, just east of the McQuinn Strip. The concentrated area that was hit has been logged periodically since 1970.

Much of the blowdown was associated with clearcuts where the wind blew across the barren, irregular ground generally from the southwest and wiped out the north and east fringes of the blocks, sometimes sweeping through a string of clearcuts. But some partial cuts were affected too. The only preventative measure that could have been taken would have been "not to cut at all," said forestry staff.

The greater part of the destroyed timber was old and decadent but healthy 8-14" trees on the old Cedar Creek sales also became victims as did some virgin stands. There was "no rhyme or reason," said Apgar.

Once the evidence was recorded in aerial photographs, forestry staff created new sales and amended existing sales. Normal cruises were abandoned in favor of estimating volume based on the known volume of adjacent unit. When the blowdown is cleared away, foresters will take a look at the remaining stands and determine the best course for future management.

Loggers are currently negotiating with the Mill for their new sales. "Our loggers are willing to do anything if the price is right," said Palmer. They face operations that are more costly and more dangerous than green logging.

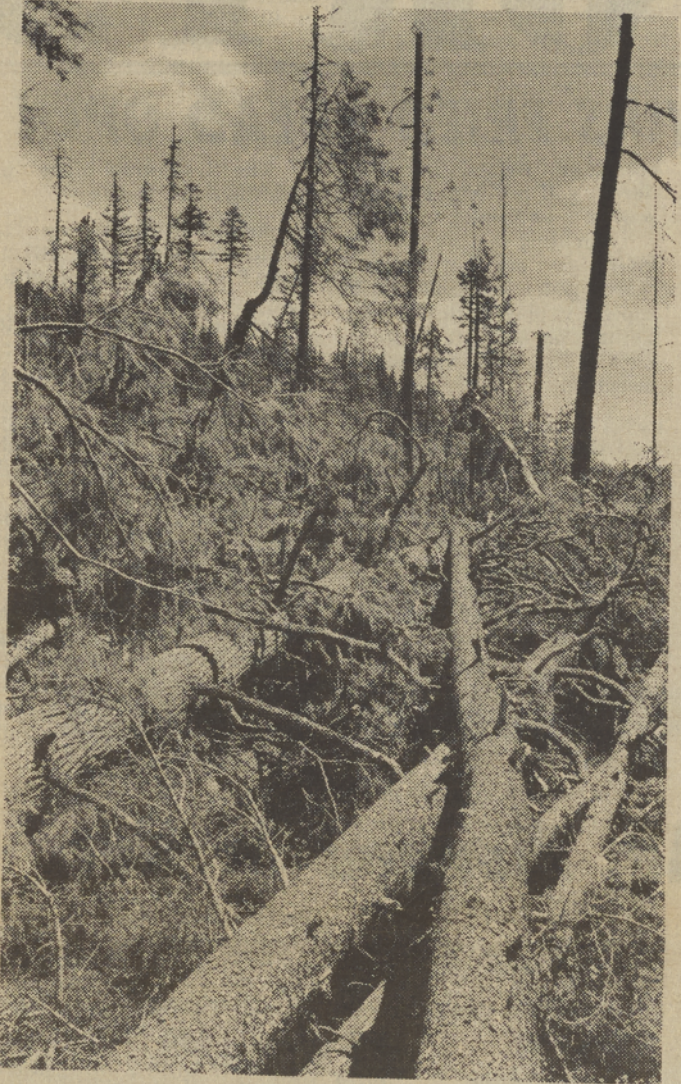
Risks are higher and work-slower when the logs are lying "like jackstraws," said Palmer. Falling and bucking are more

difficult and skids are longer. There is also more breakage and therefore greater waste.

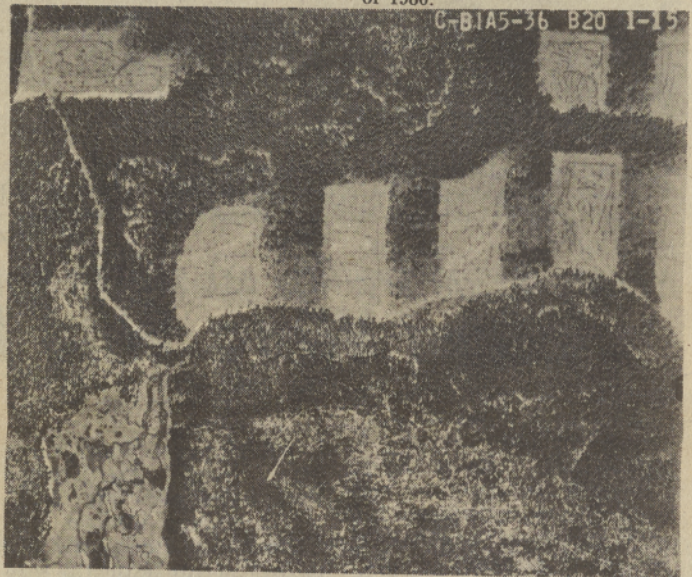
But the loggers are "fairly flexible" and will be moved to the blowdowns when their present sales are completed. Palmer noted that he is also looking for two outside logging outfits to take the wet areas and steep slopes.

W.S.F.P.I. will be only slightly affected by the logging changes, according to operations manager Bob Macy. A market is being sought for the small stems which are not efficiently used by the Mill. The rest of the wood will be processed as usual, with millworkers keeping an eye out for cracks and breaks, some of which do not become obvious until a board gets as far as the planer or kiln.

After the blowdowns are cleared and the piled brush burned, the B.I.A. will go back in to replant with Douglas-Fir, and ponderosa pine seedlings. The program, to begin this fall, will be completed by the spring of 1980.



Once a healthy stand of fir between clearcuts on the Camas Prairie logging unit, this "leave-setting" suffered some of the worst damage from winds that ravaged the high country last winter. Trees were snapped or torn up by the roots, and many of those left standing suffered severe damage. Some have since fallen.



An aerial view of the Camas Prairie logging unit shows where wind swept through a string of clearcuts (see light gray patches). Photo at left was taken between blocks 7 and 8, the first of the four clearcuts shown at the center of the aerial.

Continued
from Page Five

TRIBAL LEADERS DISMAYED WITH TRUST FAILURES

Gerard, who went to bat for Indian water rights, regretted that final formulation of the policy was not done in his department but at the White House level. However, he encouraged tribes to "seize this opportunity to initiate a comprehensive water development program."

President's Reorganization Project

As a consultant to the BIA reorganization effort, Sam Deloria of the American Indian Law Center has tried to encourage Indian input for the last year. He reported to the NCAI conference that the project has made every mistake they were expected to make and he is still trying to get the task force members out to the reservations to "see what's happening."

The four points that Deloria said the task force should be keeping in mind are: 1. The trust responsibility is shared by all federal agencies and no department can get off the hook. 2. All federal programs must be made available to Indians. 3. Tribal governments are local governments, entitled to the same services and consideration as county and municipal governments. 4. Long-range planning has been difficult when Tribes

are kept on an "annual funding mentality."

Tribal potential deriving from P.L. 93-638 is that of building programs from the ground up but they are far from realizing this, Deloria said.

93-638-An Impossible Dream?

Failure to implement the Indian Self-Determination Act, billed as the "Impossible Dream" in the NCAI agenda, was cited by four experts who have been evaluating the BIA's performance under 93-638. The law and its regulations are basically sound, said Gary Morishima who is affiliated with the Quinault Nation, but the BIA must be cleared of the deadwood among its staff before it will be effective in implementing self-determination.

Some recommendations made by the evaluation team were that the role and function of 93-638 in the Bureau be defined, that the BIA respond more sensitively to Indian needs and that self-determination efforts be made accountable through sound budgeting and standards of evaluation.

S. 991 debated

Although NCAI has taken an official stand against the Senate

bill that would transfer Bureau of Indian Affairs education programs to a new Department of Education, the matter was debated thoroughly by two panels of experts at the conference.

Neither side supported the proposed legislation as originally introduced but several educators offered modifications that would make it acceptable.

Representing the Advocates for Indian Education, an arm of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, Lorraine Misiaszek called S.991 a first step in dismantling the BIA and terminating the federal government's trust responsibility.

"It's termination in disguise," said Maxine Edmo, a Sho-Ban also with the Advocates.

Administratively, there are no improvements promised—just temporary chaos—and legally, the removal of trust responsibility from the Department of Interior is questionable, noted Forrest Kutch, director of education for the Ute Tribe.

Education programs comprise 60 per cent of the BIA budget, said opponents, so a transfer would have a major impact on the Bureau, which admittedly doesn't have a great

track record in education but has undergone considerable improvement through the years.

Calvin Isaac, whose Mississippi Band of Choctaw supports the proposed legislation, maintained that a cabinet-level department would give education the national stature it deserves and would encourage the coordination of programs at the national level.

Isaac, along with Joe Little of the All-Indian Pueblo Council, recommended the creation of an Assistant Secretary for Indian Education within a new department of education to ensure the delivery of coherent and culturally sensitive services to Indian children.

The transfer might also be acceptable if Indian preference was still honored and the present level of funding for Indian programs was maintained or increased, they said.

Negotiation instead of renegotiation

In light of recent challenges to treaty rights and trusteeship presented at the state, congressional and executive level, the NCAI opted to negotiate rather than await possible renegotiations.

Delegates to the convention approved a resolution to support the formation of a Commission on Tribal-State Relations, to be comprised of seven tribal chairmen and seven alternates from the NCAI and NTCA, along with seven legislators and seven alternates from the National Council of State Legislatures.

Operating under the assumption that tribal and local governments have interests in common, the commission would be a forum for mutual concerns and an opportunity to cooperate in the resolution of fundamental differences.

Said Sam Deloria, who has been instrumental in effecting this alliance, tribes must be careful not to unify non-Indians in opposition to them by assuming there is no basis for communication or cooperation. "Unify and Lose" could become the disastrous counterpart of the non-Indians' "Divide and Conquer" tactic, he warned.

The next NCAI convention is scheduled for September 18-22 at Rapid City, South Dakota.