

Tillamook Burn Replanted By State Forestry Workers

By PAUL W. HARVEY JR.
TILLAMOOK BURN 48 — Standing on top of Kilchis Point, 3,200 feet high in the coast range of Tillamook County, you get a dramatic view of the progress the people of Oregon are making in planting a new forest on the 350,000-acre Tillamook Burn.

Five years ago, the State Forestry Department began the 15-year job of restoring the area, most of which had been burned by the three terrible fires of 1933, 1939 and 1945.

It is the biggest forest planting job in the world. It's an investment for future generations. It will be 80 years before the new trees are ready for harvest.

While the job already is a third completed, it is only now that improvement can be noticed to any considerable extent.

Kilchis Point, reached by a new road that would try the patience of a mountain goat, gives a view of almost all of the 500 square miles of the burn.

Looking west toward the coast, you see a big area that has been untouched since the great fire. It is a ghostly, distressing scene, the rugged mountain country being packed with tall, grey snags.

But looking in the other directions, you can see big areas where the snags have been removed and little trees have been planted. It's a big contrast from the view to the west.

Having watched this tremendous project from its infancy, it was a big difference from the days I used to go up to see that country burning.

I thought of the day in 1945 when ex-Gov. Earl Snell, former State

Forester Nels Rogers and I stood high on a hill, watching the forest area go up in smoke for the third time.

Snell and Rogers are dead now, but the new forest will be a living memorial to them.

They are the two men most responsible, Rogers worked out the plan, and Snell launched the campaign to get it approved by the Legislature and the people. The people voted in 1948 for the 11 million dollars worth of bonds to restore the great forest.

On that hot day at the third fire, Rogers was talking to the governor about his plans to build the new forest. Rogers first got the idea during the 1939 fire.

Snell died in 1947, and Rogers died in 1949, the same year the first tree was planted in the burn. Part of this new forest is being set aside as a Rogers memorial.

Fifteen billion feet of timber were killed in the burn, which now is 34 per cent rehabilitated. All of this was considered a total loss, until lumber prices soared in World War II. This made it economical to use a lot of the burned timber for lumber.

Lumber companies now have salvaged two billion feet more.

Seventy-five miles of fire corridors have been built. These snag-free strips are from a half mile to a mile wide. Workers have built 91 miles of new roads, and 250 more miles have been improved. All of this is called protection, as its purpose is to make the area as fire-proof as possible.

The number of snags cut down already totals 336,000.

The rehabilitation itself consists so far of planting 18 million seedling trees on 22,000 acres, and seeding another 36,000 acres by helicopter.

There's human rehabilitation here, too. A 60-man crew of state prison convicts cuts snags, plants trees, builds roads and fights fires.

The State Forestry men hope they can finish their job before another fire ravages the land. While they have worked hard to remove fire hazards, they have not yet removed all of them. Some severe hazards exist in piles of

old snags. Some of the rehabilitation work is delayed in order to allow the lumber companies to remove the good timber.

The project already gives proof to doubtful skeptics that the job can be done. Five years ago, when the project was started, there were doubters. The job presented every possible handicap, largely because of the terrific fire hazard that is

present while the work is going on. One fire, started by a tourist tossing a cigarette from his car into a pile of snags, still could cause a lot of damage.

But because of the corridors and access roads, it's doubtful if very much of the area would be burned at any one time.

Seeing the burn again was quite a thrill. But it readily opened the eyes of Jens Oaulsen, 29-year-old

forester from Norway. Jens is spending a year working for Bohemia Lumber Co. at Culp Creek in Lane County.

Jens was surprised that so much of the country could burn at once. He said the biggest fire in Norway was less than 1,000 acres.

State Forester George Spaur, who now heads the vast project, thinks rehabilitation will be completed on schedule 10 years from

now. Not many of us will be around to see the new forest when it grows to its full height by the year 2034.

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Morse To Back Democrats

LONG BEACH, Calif. (AP) — Sen. Wayne Morse (Ind-Ore), sharply criticizing President Eisenhower, says he will make 100 speeches for the Democrats before the November congressional elections.

Morse outlined to a reporter Wednesday night a speech scheduled for Thursday before the convention of the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen.

Morse said in his outline that the Eisenhower administration has a "bumbling and fumbling foreign and domestic policy." He added: "The day for his (Eisenhower's) political accounting is at hand, and on Nov. 2 the American people should answer his sorry record by placing the committees of Congress under Democratic control so that the Eisenhower administration will have to sit down on a truly bipartisan basis and work out a foreign and domestic policy that will advance rather than retard the best interests of the American people."

"His administration is one of advertising slogans, his speeches for the most part are devised to conceal meanings and create false hopes in the minds of the American people."

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