

KFPA Plays Vital Role In Protection Of Forests

Editor's Note—For more than 50 years, it has been the practice to call the Klamath Fire Protective Association when fire, bugs, or thieves threatened the timber of the area. A brief history of the association and the significant part the association has played in the development and preservation of timber resources in the area appear in a recent edition of the Weyerhaeuser News. Portions of that article are used in this account of the development of the association.

Fire, long the bane of timber owners, was a principal cause for losses sustained by owners in the early stages of timber harvesting. Then came poachers to add to the problem of orderly harvesting and marketing.

Throughout the country, foresters and timber owners had been trying to find some way to cut the timber losses caused by fire. There was talk of organizing private timberland patrols, which would watch over the timberlands and try to keep firebugs and fire out of the woods.

The coming of poachers gave added incentive for establishing such patrols, and owners set about developing these private organizations.

These patrols formed the basis of the Klamath-Lake counties Forest Fire Association, established in 1908 by several timber companies, including Weyerhaeuser. Today, this association is one of nine forest protective associations operating in Oregon.

Jackson Kimball was picked as the first association manager. Over a period of 36 years, he built a tightly-knit and dedicated staff.

By 1916, Kimball had laid out a pattern of action. The forestlands requiring protection were divided into five districts, with one or two patrolmen in each district. Temporary workers were added when the fire danger was at its height. Each patrolman was required to furnish a saddle horse, and several of them kept two animals.

The telephone network, which was gradually strung into the forests, gave the headquarters in Klamath Falls some control over the men reporting for work each day. With the aid of phone communication, men could be shifted where needed.

In 1911, the association report called attention to another forest foe—the pine beetle. While entomologists were aware of the destruction caused by beetles, few foresters concerned themselves with this enemy hidden under the bark.

Every year thereafter, the battle with the bug was given equal or greater prominence than fire suppression. In 1912, two of the association's most experienced men, Hal Ogle and G. G. Anderson, made a survey of the adjoining Paulina National Forest and returned with an alarming report of bug-infested trees.

BUGS GREATER MENACE

Kimball was one of the first to recognize that insects were potentially a greater menace than the more awesome fire. His method of fighting the beetles was simple. Cut down the infested tree, strip the bark and burn it to destroy the beetle brood. Part of the timber could then be salvaged.

Facing fire in the summer and bugs in winter, the association had sufficient work to keep competent men on the staff.

Kimball realized the need for controlling the beetles on federal lands, and he annually appealed for Congressional action. Finally, in 1921, the U.S. government appropriated \$150,000 for the work.

The same year the association's title was changed to the present Klamath Forest Protective Association. The budget of 1922 showed how much the emphasis had shifted. Fire protection costs totaled \$12,752, while pine beetle protection amounted to \$31,919.

Significant advances in public education and improvements in reporting and fighting forest fires came about the same time. Telephone lines were extended deeper into the forests, and motorcycles and horseless carriages speeded up the job of moving men and equipment around.

The association adopted the U.S. Forest System of using lookouts equipped with the Osborne Fire Finder. Discovery of the ef-

fect of relative humidity on the combustibility of forests gave fire fighters a major tool in their work. Hygro-thermograph instruments to accurately predict the degree of fire danger were installed in 1924. As the humidity went down, the fire lines were reinforced.

A 10-man "flying squadron" organized in 1926 proved successful. Since then, this type of highly trained crew has been used in all parts of the west. These men, arriving early and taking fast fire suppression action, took the place of hundreds needed if a blaze got out of control.

With the purchase of a small tractor in 1927, the association gained a mighty aid in fighting fires. A truck could move the "cat" to the hot spots and a fire trail could be cut a mile an hour.

Attention to esprit de corps has been a major factor in the widely recognized success of the association. Competent men have remained and eventually furnished leadership. Promoted up from the ranks to the top spot have been Charles Ogle, who served during the 1944 and 1945 and his brother forward line. Two other fires Hal Ogle, who served from 1943 could have become large ones.

HERALD AND NEWS, Klamath Falls, Ore.
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complacently. In 1959 it adopted another technique for fighting fire—borate "bombing." One man-ranks to the top spot have been for fire was controlled by dump-trucks along the forward line. Two other fires Hal Ogle, who served from 1943 could have become large ones.

Cost of these three "bombings" came to \$5,132. The first year the association entire budget came to only \$2,800. Comparisons should take into account the value of the timber 50 years ago. At 25 cents per 1,000 board feet it was cheaper to lose some standing timber than to spend a few hundred dollars on one blaze.

In recent years, incendiary fires have become rare. However, Wardell reports a study of fires from 1906 to 1954 showed 49 per cent were carelessly caused by man. These fires accounted for 97 per cent of the acreage burned. So, man still remains a big forest enemy.

Statistics gathered from association records show education programs are paying dividends. During the decade ending 1945, the association fought an average of 34.7 man-caused fires a year, in

the decade ending in 1955, the average was 32.5 per year, despite a great increase in logging, camping and picnicking.

This record has been achieved with a staff of 45 employed in summer and 10 working the entire year. The crew is small for protection of approximately 950,000 acres of timber. But backing it are the logging operators in the open Ponderosa stands who can immediately rush their heavy bulldozers and other equipment to a fire.

State law in Oregon requires timber owners to protect their lands. They can use private patrols, forest protective association membership or state forestry protection.

During the fire danger season the association staff is in constant contact with the nearby U.S. Forest Service, the Klamath Indian Reservation and state for-

estry crews. Reserves from co-operating agencies are ready no matter where the blaze is fought.

These reserves were alerted and called into action in stopping a 2,900-acre fire in 1959. Bulldozers, power saws, trucks and pumping equipment were rushed to the flaming area. From overhead an amphibian plane dumped a borate solution on the encroaching fire.

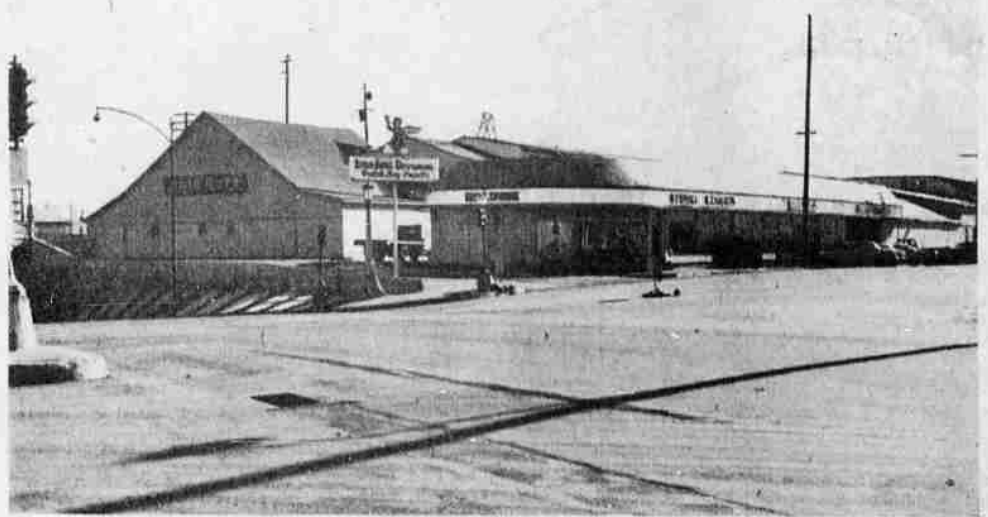
The action was far different from the time in 1906 when the Klamath-Lake Counties Forest Fire Association sent a telegram to the Southern Pacific Railway offices in San Francisco telling them about a big uncontrolled fire on SP lands south of the California line. Two days later the head office acknowledged the warning. The answering telegram reported the company was sending one man.



THIS 1915 TEAM OF HORSES would bring men and supplies from the Klamath-Lake Counties Forest Fire Association headquarters. H. H. Ogle is shown astride a belt-driven Yale motorcycle. On the wagon from left are Maj. M. E. Spencer, Carl Grubb, William Lambert and Ottis Osborn. (From H. H. Ogle Collection)

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The Klamath Falls Long-Bell Lumber Store was a familiar landmark back in the days even before the Railroad purchased land for their present right-of-way. The underpass (built in the 30's) and the recent remodeling of the retail store have helped greatly in the appearance and progress of the Klamath Basin.



PLOTTING a fire location occupies the attention of George Wardell, district warden. Watching with an expert's eye is Hal Ogle, former warden who retired in 1959. Reports from two or more lookouts permit pinpoint accuracy.



RAPID DISPATCH of fire fighters is assured by two-way radio. Here, Blanche Beldrine, assistant dispatcher at the Weed-Ashland junction, checks weather reports from lookouts in the area.



LES LISTON, owner, checks this amphibian over before it is loaded with fire fighting borate solution. Borate, mixed with water, has been found effective in controlling fires. Chet Stinson is pilot of this plane.



The staff at Long-Bell offers you a total of over 100 years experience in the Retail Lumber Business. Their knowledge and experience can help you immeasurably with any or all problems you may have regarding remodeling or new construction. Pictured, left to right, sitting, Emma Behnke, Cliff Clayton. Standing, left to right, Dick Kruger, C. S. Ball, Chuck Rackleff, Sharon Bliss, Bob Walton, Pete Stride, Wilbur Muma.

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