

KLAMATH FALLS, OREGON, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1961

Infant Winema National Forest Gives Cordial Welcome To Hunters



SCENIC SPLENDOR — This fallen log created a picturesque scene where the inspection party stopped for lunch at Deep Creek opening day. Under the log can be

seen the barest trickle of a water fall; the stream is not over 10 inches deep at this point.



TALKING WITH CAMPERS — The Yates family of Agency Lake provided Smith with some information about how the hunters were treating the newly opened campgrounds at Lamms Camp at the head of Williamson River.

They were not hunting, however, just camping alongside the springs where the Williamson begins. Darrel Smith is at right.



CHECK STATION — A voluntary Oregon State Game Commission check station for hunters drew Winema National Forest Supervisor Alex Smith's attention. As soon as the Department of Agriculture car stopped, hunter traffic began to pile up and Smith patiently answered their questions.



TALKING WITH GUARDS — Part of Smith's tour included U.S. Forest Service guard stations. Here he chats with an employee about how the hunters seemed to be conducting themselves. The trailer house in rear was added to existing facilities at the stations which were operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs for the Klamath Tribe while the reservation was still intact.

By ANDY MERSON

DEEP IN THE WINEMA — Keeping up with a long-legged forester when he decides to cover over 80 miles of timbered land and talk to a hundred or more people is no mean assignment.

Supervisor Alex Smith of the infant Winema National Forest was curious as to how 5,000 to 10,000 hunters were treating his young forest, so he invited this writer and his own young son, Darrel, to join him in an impromptu tour of the area.

Because of its unique arrangement—on a map it looks like a disjointed patchwork quilt—the Winema could have been in for trouble opening day, Sept. 30.

In addition to national forest lands in the area, several hundred thousand acres of land belonging to remaining members of the Klamath Tribe are scattered through its outside boundaries and several hundred thousand belonging to timber concerns and individual owners.

The remaining Klamaths, on one hand, had resolved to keep outside hunters off their land; the withdrawing members, or so the rumor had it, did not intend to buy hunting licenses to shoot on what used to be their reservation. The Indians maintained that when they sold the reservation, they still held their hunting and fishing rights.

It could have been an action-packed opening weekend. So Smith decided to tour the forest, cross-sampling all three areas: Those held by remaining members, those held by outsiders and timber concerns and those in the national forest system.

The Winema set up hunter information centers on both ends of the forest. One was located at Barclay Springs on the south, the second at Diamond Lake Junction on the north.

At these two centers, hunters could get maps, information about campsites and available water. Most of all, they were able to find out where they could hunt.

The first point Smith checked was the information center. He found out what hunters had been asking. He also made suggestions as to how his men could better utilize their areas. Pleased with what he found in the Barclay Springs roadside center, he proceeded on up the road.

Turning into the back country behind Chiloquin, the green U.S. Department of Agriculture car which carried the inspection tour on its way, passed through the Klamath Indian Forest—lands still held in trust by the U.S. National Bank for the remaining members.

At a corner where just a tip of Winema National Forest came down to join Indian land, a hunter's car was pulled off to the side of the road. Hastily, Smith consulted a map and satisfied himself the buck seeking hunter was in an allowed area.

Within 300 yards the party was

out of the forest again, and back surrounded by Indian country. A car ahead stopped in the center of the gravelled road; its driver left the vehicle, took a lunchbox from the trunk and resumed driving. Half a mile more, and still in Indian territory, he pulled onto a fire road and parked.

Smith stopped his car and went to advise the man he was not on national forest land. Disbelieving, the hunter yanked one of the forest service's maps to prove his point.

Alex showed him he was trespassing. "I'm sure sorry," he said. "I'll move right on . . . thanks a lot."

"We just don't want to abuse these people's rights," Smith answered. "No, nobody does," the hunter replied. "Thanks again."

Traveling on, Smith came upon an Oregon State Game Commission checkpoint for hunters in the Silver Lake Unit.

The stop was scheduled to be a short one, "just want to check how business is," he said.

Immediately, from three directions, hunter-bearing vehicles began to pile up at the intersection. One caravan of three cars was headed for the Bly area, some 20 miles distant. When Smith had put them back on the right track he commented to his party wryly, "I'm constantly amazed how a guy will plunge off into the woods with little or no conception of where he is or how to get where he's going."

Some had questions which the supervisor answered with great patience. He explained maps, pointed out roads, and advised hunters where to get information on game laws.

At the headwaters of the snake-like Williamson River, Lamms Camp, Smith paused to talk with hunters and campers in the area. Here the party viewed their first hanging deer and Smith questioned the hunters.

He talked with all kinds of people, about all kinds of things. He found out what they liked about the forest and its camping grounds, and what they didn't like. He watched as some teenagers splashed each other with spring water and conducted a strength test on a rocky log.

"Kids can enjoy the forest in many ways," Smith laughed.

The party left the Lamms Camp area and took to the dusty back roads of the Winema again. Smith explained that road signs, which are constantly being erected in the Winema, all bear a U.S. Forest Service number. "The first two numerals," he said, "tell what township the road begins in; the next two or three give the road's numerical sequence within the forest."

Wherever the green car went, the party paused to inspect hunters' camps and look over the deer that had been taken. "This one's sure fat, Dad," Darrel marveled. He spent most of the day inspecting hanging and gutted animals and piercing the forest with his eyes looking for animals on the hoof.

"Darrel's a little miffed at me," Alex said. "He wanted to go hunting today."

From his station in the back seat Darrel said dryly, "that sure was a fat deer."

After lunch at Deep Creek, where Weyerhaeuser Land joins national forest, the party began to wind back out of the woods again.

Where two dusty dirt roads and one gravelled and graded road come together, Smith spotted some Oregon State Police vehicles pulled off the side of the shoulder.

Oregon State Police is charged with enforcing the game laws on the new Winema.

Smith stopped and chatted with the officers for about 20 minutes. During that time they covered everything from comparing their public-owned cars and trucks to problems common to both agencies. "You've sure got a beautiful forest here," one policeman said. Alex replied, "It's beautiful, but full of headaches."

Swinging back out to the highway again, the group passed the Diamond Lake Junction information station, then stopped for a coffee break before returning to Klamath Falls.

In summing up his tour, Alex reflected, "Well, I'd say, generally, we've got a pretty well-behaved bunch of hunters this year. They seem to be respecting the Indians' rights, and seem to be enjoying the former reservation lands. Let's hope they stay that way."



THAT'S SURE A GOOD SET OF HORNS — Smith's son Darrel, who accompanied him on the opening day of deer season, admired a forest service guard's deer. Darrel is center, back to camera, Supervisor Smith is on ladder.



LUNCH BREAK WITH POLICE — Smith, center, stopped to talk with two Oregon State Policemen who were patrolling the forest opening day. OSP is charged with enforcement of game laws.



ANSWERS QUERY — Smith points out to a hunter that he is about 20 miles off his mark. He had stopped, only briefly, to inspect a checking station, but wound up answering questions from five vehicles that halted at the unmanned station.