

Research Note. Pacific Northwest Forest and Range Experiment Station, Portland, OR: US Dept. of Agriculture, Forest Service, 1961-1990. (Reviewed by Alletta Brenner)

This newsletter is a publication by the Forest Service on different forestry techniques and protocols. In particular, it examines the influence of forestry practices on forest health. One major area of emphasis is that of chemicals used for replanting, and for general pest control. Under this topic, much discussion is made of different chemical options, including "new" technologies and how they all compare in terms of effectiveness and environmental impact. Other themes include: surface erosion, replanting methods, fertilizer use, impacts of different logging practices on soil (and thus water) quality, impact of forestry practices on aquatic habitat, the consequences of forest fires and how they ought to be dealt with, and finally how practices affect wildlife. Some note is also made of new restrictive laws, such as the endangered species act, and how they affect forest practices.

Critique

As we are well aware, forest practices from logging to replanting and pest control all have a significant potential to impact watersheds. These newsletters, beginning in the 1960s and continuing up through the 1990s, provide an interesting insight into what kinds of practices were used in the past, and how these have changed over time as the preservation of natural ecologies has become more important to policymakers. Within them, several trends are clear. First, as we move further forward in time, there is much more emphasis on environmental protections. Though second, the main priority of forestry remains quite consistently that of the growth and harvest of trees. By this count, concern for the environment at large is generally secondary to specific forestry needs. For example, the widespread use of chemical insecticides and herbicides is widely accepted in order to protect trees, even when they are detrimental to wildlife (one article even suggests the continued use of DDT even after it is banned because there is no equally effective insecticide against the gypsy moth).

As we well know, historic logging practices have often been extremely detrimental to the environment. This damage only increased in the post war era when new equipment made it possible to log more trees faster, and the widespread use of chemicals appeared on the scene. Today, many of the same problems of management plague us, damaging watersheds and killing off wildlife. Overall, this series of newsletters provides a good view of forestry practices from the point of view of those who to a great degree regulate them.

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