

CALIFORNIA FOREST AND RANGE EXPERIMENT STATION

TO : STATION STAFF

FROM: KEITH ARNOLD, Director

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HOW THE CF&RS STARTED

Ever wonder how the Station was born? Here's an answer extracted from a manuscript being prepared by Ray Clar of the California Division of Forestry. You will be interested not only in the dates and names, but also in the record of the long-standing cooperation with State forestry that has helped the Station in its scientific progress.

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The Forest Experiment Station

Forest trees as individual species and as tree communities growing in California are naturally different from those growing in other parts of America and Europe. The first exploiters of the forest in California probably did not know or care too much about this fact especially after the utilitarian values of the various local species became recognized. For instance, redwood and sugar pine were very promptly sought out as easily worked woods of many uses.

But as the specific wood uses became more intricate, and as the use of wood products increased, and as more forest land assumed personal value in private ownership, then the problems of forest use and protection likewise multiplied and expanded. Probably the relationship between the vegetation on a steep slope and the behavior of soil and water upon and below the soil surface presented the first serious questions of a so-called forestry nature in California.

It will be remembered that the first Board of Forestry was curious about planting methods and species for reforestation and afforestation. About 1904 progressive lumbermen were ready to unite with government in an attack on the problem of forest fire protection in the virgin and cut-over forest.

The cooperative spirit among interested agencies in engaging in problems of forest research has continued through the years. However, in the 1920's it became quite obvious that the increasing complexity of most technical problems required the interest of an agency which could direct the full energy of men specifically qualified to conduct proper investigations.

Small attempts had been made by the U. S. Forest Service prior to the first World War to engage in some pioneer research respecting the general nature of things out on the ground. Then curtailed budgets had eliminated the Feather River and Converse Flat Stations. Yet there was no resignation in the attitude of the few people who appreciated the great need for continued and more intensive investigations.

It has been noted that Senator Hiram Johnson had introduced a bill into Congress in January of 1922, asking Congress to appropriate \$40,000 for a forest experiment station in California. A year later the State Legislature (SJR 4) urged Congress to authorize the expenditure and make the necessary appropriation.

Now in January of 1925, State Senator A. B. Johnson of California introduced his SB 5 as a cooperative gesture on the part of the State.

Two months earlier the Board of Forestry had stated by Cuttle's resolution that it intended to sponsor a bill which would provide for the appropriation of \$10,000 "for the establishment and maintenance of forest experiment stations in this state, providing the United States Government appropriates \$25,000 for the same purpose, such forest experiment stations to be under the joint supervision of the Federal Government and the State Board of Forestry of California".

Senate Bill 5 simply included the \$10,000 and provided that the State Board of Control could enter a contract with the Forest Service for establishing and operating a forest experiment station provided the Federal Government appropriated the sum of \$25,000 for the same purpose. The Legislature lived up to its implied agreement with Congress and passed the bill. But Governor Richardson allowed it to die in his pocket on May 29.

Congress was much more congenial with S 4156. Hiram Johnson's bill was passed and approved by the President on March 3, 1925 as Public Law 542.

This act authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to establish and maintain a forest experiment station "in California and the surrounding States". It could be located at any place or places deemed suitable, and could be conducted independently or in cooperation with practically all agencies of government, schools, or private parties. Studies were to be made leading to the best methods of protection and conservative management of timber and other forest products. Authorization was included for the appropriation of \$50,000 for immediate expenditure.

It was not, however, until the fiscal year 1926-27 that the federal sum of \$32,412 was made available for the California Forest Experiment Station as it was called. About five years later the words " and Range" were inserted in the title after Forest, because intensive mountain range studies were added to the growing list of experimental projects.

Edward I. Kotok, who had been liaison officer (commonly called Clarke-McKary Inspector) working with the State Forester in respect to federal aid expenditures, was made Director of the experiment station. He set about vigorously to build the new institution. At first, four rooms were secured at the University in Hilgard Hall, and then the upper floor of the new Giannini Hall.

Four more experienced field men of the Forest Service elected to transfer into the station along with two clerks.* This work

*Duncan Dunning, A. E. Wieslander, H. W. Siggins, Roscoe B. Weaver (former State Ranger) assigned to Devil's Canyon Nursery, Miss D. E. Vinther and Miss L. O. Baxter. State Forest Ranger C. R. Clar was attached to the station for type map work from August, 1927 until the spring of 1931. From time to time, especially during non-fire season, State Rangers assisted in this project by providing transportation for mappers.

force was increased substantially as time and work projects accumulated.

Los Angeles County contributed \$1,500 and the State \$3,500 toward the development of Devil's Canyon Nursery. From unrecorded sources the State contributed an additional sum of between \$3,000 and \$5,000 prior to July, 1927.

In this first period the Feather River Station was again activated. Here and elsewhere throughout the forested region the job of locating permanent substations and sample plots for silvicultural and ecological studies was given high priority. In the summer of 1926 began the making of a statewide inventory of vegetation through the cover type mapping project. This latter job had last been seriously undertaken more than twenty years earlier during the joint federal - State forest survey. Then it was recorded on State Forester Haman's generalized type map of 1911.

In the general support budget made available for the Board of Forestry for the biennium beginning July, 1927, there was included the sum of \$20,000 specifically earmarked for allotment to the California Forest Experiment Station. The specialized business of research into forestry problems in California was at last established upon a sound and permanent basis. It has thus continued and expanded.