

Canaan Mountain

The Monongahela National Forest was established, in part, in reaction to the devastating logging practices common prior to the arrival of modern forestry to the United States in the early 20th century. These earlier practices, involving deforestation on a massive scale, removed approximately 30 billion board feet of timber from West Virginia between 1870 and 1920. This short-sighted management led to serious environmental degradation: soil erosion with resultant stream and river sedimentation, flooding, devastating slash fires, and denuded landscapes were all a result of these practices.

Some of the most poorly managed land in the state was put under the stewardship of the US Forest Service after 1920. The Forest Service, in cooperation with other federal agencies and the state of West Virginia, has attempted to actively and responsibly manage the landscape since that time, balancing the needs of the American people, wildlife, and our precious natural resources.

The photographs shown below provide an historical view into the landscape we inherited, and how we have managed the people's resources.



Canaan Mountain in 1933, after clearcutting and resulting fire, near Davis, West Virginia. The Forest Service planted Norway spruce here in 1927. Note current Route 32 in background. View is to the east.



Same area in 1954. The Norway spruce plantation is well established and thriving.

At the end of 1924, the Monongahela National Forest had a total ownership of 150,367 acres. Currently, the Forest stewards 910,155 acres of public land, 81 percent of which is closed canopy forest over 60 years of age.