

## Chapter 7 - The Pooler Era: 1920-45

The years from the end of World War I to the end of World War II saw important changes in the United States, the Southwest, its forests, and the forest products industry there. This period witnessed a post-war slump, an erratic and uneven boom in the 1920's, the Great Depression, another and greater world war, which taxed the Nation's resources to the fullest, and the dawn of the nuclear age. Between 1920 and 1945 six Presidents occupied the White House, and six different chiefs (called "foresters" until 1935) headed the USDA Forest Service. However, in the South- western Region during this time of change, one man served as regional forester (district forester until 1930): Frank C.W. Pooler.

Frank Pooler was, in many respects, a survivor. Born in New York City in 1882, he acquired a general education there but without any technical or professional training in forestry. In 1904, at age 22, he came West and took a job as forest ranger in the General Land Office under the Department of the Interior. His first assignment required him to furnish his own horse and equipment and provide his own housing and office—all at a salary of \$60 per month.

In 1905 he became supervisor of the Prescott Forest Reserve with headquarters at Prescott, AZ. Later that same year he transferred to the Forest Service when the forest reserves were moved from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Agriculture. As supervisor of the Coconino National Forest in 1908, he oversaw the transfer of smaller forest areas to consolidate the Coconino as a major unit in the National Forest System, with headquarters at Flagstaff. From 1910 to 1919 Pooler served as assistant district forester in charge of lands under Arthur C. Ringland and then Paul G. Redington.

Although not one of "Pinchot's boys" nor a graduate forester, Pooler advanced to district forester in January 1920, a post he was to hold for 25 years. In announcing the appointment, the Washington Office noted that he had "worked his way up through the ranks." His colleagues described him as experienced, friendly, fair, and diplomatic but firm in enforcing Forest Service regulations. During his tenure, Pooler gained recognition as an expert on lands and grazing problems and as a strong conservationist. Apparently a good administrator, he was able to make steady progress in bringing the Southwestern Region up to desired national standards and at the same time maintain an excellent esprit de corps among all ranks of the Forest Service in the region. Thus in a very real sense, this period reflected the goals of Frank Pooler and could be called the 'Pooler Era.'<sup>1</sup>

The national forests of the region went through many changes and consolidations during those 25 years. From the welter of forest reserves transferred from the Department of the Interior or later acquired, 12 national forests eventually took shape and have become stabilized: the Apache, Carson, Cibola, Coconino, Coronado, Gila, Kaibab, Lincoln, Prescott, Santa Fe, Sitgreaves, and Tonto National Forests.<sup>2</sup> Collectively, they encompassed more than 22 million acres. The largest of these, the Gila, included some half-million acres of wilderness.

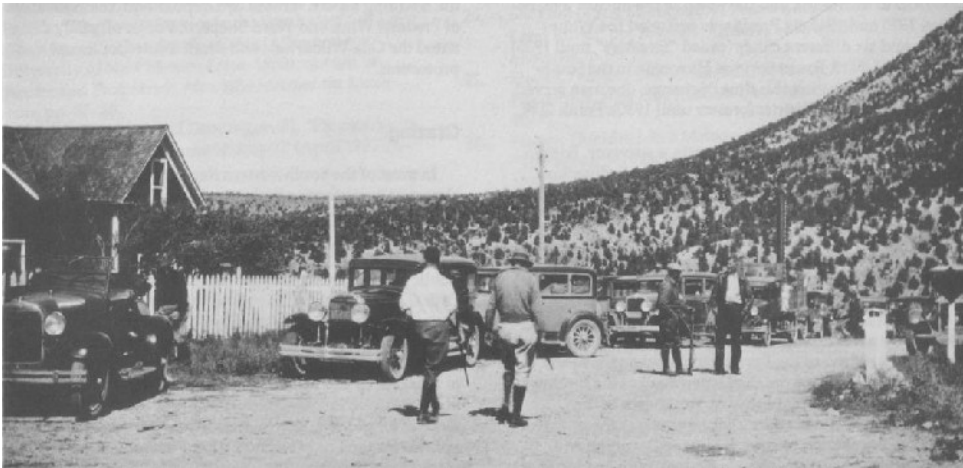
Aldo Leopold, one of the first advocates of extensive wilderness reserves, urged Pooler to set aside a substantial area as wilderness while it still existed. Pooler instructed him to make a personal inspection of the Gila area. From the resulting report, written by Leopold with the assistance of Frederic Winn and Ward Shepard, Pooler officially designated the Gila Wilderness and drafted rules for its use and protection.<sup>3</sup>

## Grazing

In most of the Southwestern Region, forest grazing was almost as important as timber and caused as many headaches for the rangers and forest supervisors. The problems centered on overgrazing and overstocking the range and went back to the turn of the century and before, when the public domain was under the control of the General Land Office. Knowing that this problem might prove crucial nationwide and that he would need expert professional help in solving it, Gifford Pinchot persuaded Albert F. Potter, a rancher who had been in the sheep and cattle business in Arizona, to join his newly expanded Forest Service team in Washington in 1905. Potter was given the title of assistant forester for grazing, and he formulated grazing and land policies for the Forest Service. After Pinchot's departure, he continued as associate forester under Henry S. Graves from 1910 to 1920 and did much to instill into Forest Service employees sound principles of grazing regulation.<sup>4</sup>

Most rangers were impatient with controls and hated the paperwork required for grazing permits. From the early settlements there had been range wars between cattlemen and sheepmen, cattlemen and miners, cattlemen and loggers, and, on occasion, cattlemen and the Forest Service. Generally, cattle ranchers hated sheepmen and repeatedly threatened to kill the herders and run the “woolies” over the canyon cliffs. One advertisement for a cowhand in the Arizona Exchange illustrated the old attitude: “Wanted—A real rough guy—a cow hand who knows cows, not under 35 years of age nor over 50. One who smokes, drinks, swears, tells the truth, and hates sheepherders.”<sup>5</sup>

Most ranchers gradually recognized the need for regulations and the limitation of herds on the available pasture. Respect for Potter and fair treatment by the Forest Service encouraged confidence and cooperation. In 1907 the Arizona Cattle Growers Association passed a resolution favoring the Federal regulation policy on the national forests and other public lands.<sup>6</sup> Individual grazing inspectors and forest supervisors often paved the way to better understanding of the necessity of limiting herds and protecting the range.



**Figure 9. Deer hunters at Ryan Station on opening day in 1929.**

One such forester was Paul H. Roberts, who came to the Southwest in 1915 after earning a bachelor of science degree in forestry at the University of Nebraska. He worked on range reconnaissance and, after serving in World War I, returned as grazing inspector for the region. He became supervisor of the Sitgreaves National Forest in 1922, a position he held until 1931. There he divided the available range between cattle and sheep. This proved to work better than having

both types on the same range. He followed a policy of fairness and frankness that he credited to John Kerr, his boss when he was grazing inspector in 1918. Kerr laid down only two simple rules for dealing with ranchers:

- a. Decide each case on an individual basis; decide what is right and what is wrong. If you can't give him what he wants, tell him so, but in a nice way.
- b. Handle everything that comes in and don't have anything waiting in your basket when I come back.<sup>7</sup>

## War Puts More Livestock on Forests

The war had caused a rapid increase in livestock as ranchers added to their debts to boost meat production. In cooperation with the war effort, the Forest Service encouraged livestock permittees to put more cattle and sheep on the national forests. This was followed by a fall in prices in 1919 so that ranchers could not sell their animals at a profit. Soon the ranges were overgrazed, and the ranchers were on the verge of bankruptcy. This situation continued during most of the 1920's and resulted in Forest Service personnel having to make temporary concessions and delaying progress toward reducing herds to satisfactory levels on Federal lands.<sup>8</sup>

An interesting and most unusual forester of the same era was Frederic Winn. Born in Madison, WI, of parents who were medical missionaries, Winn studied at Princeton and Rutgers, receiving his bachelor of science degree in 189k). Briefly he became a rancher in Texas and then returned East for further study at Rutgers and the Art Students' League in New York. He became a professional artist and moved to New Mexico where he painted and illustrated western life. He joined the Forest Service in 1907 and served as ranger, assistant supervisor, and supervisor of the Apache, Gila, and finally the Coronado National Forests, where he was in charge from 1925 to 1942. Although not a trained forester, he was a keen observer and learned quickly. When asked why a professional artist would switch to forestry, Winn would reply that he "got tired of painting naked women" Actually, he continued painting as a hobby, and his wife, Ada Pierce Winn, who had been a music student and soloist, regularly enlivened foresters meetings with song. Contemporaries described Winn as tall, spare, and carefully dressed, loyal to the Forest Service, but friendly and diplomatic with the ranchers in his area. He paved the way for harmony between the stockmen and the Forest Service. To many people in southern Arizona, Fred Winn was the Forest Service. Col. Bill Greeley and Frank Pooler could not have had a better representative.<sup>9</sup>



**Figure 10. Deer kill on the Kaibab National Forest after overpopulation of herds, early 1930's.**

## Taylor Grazing Act

A new element entered the grazing picture in 1934 with the passage of the Taylor Grazing Act by Congress. This measure in effect closed the public domain by creating grazing districts on all public lands administered by the Department of the Interior. A division of grazing would administer the Act with the stipulation that 25 percent of grazing fees go to the Federal treasury, 50 percent to the States, and 25 percent to improve the range program.

The Forest Service, which had originally supported a similar measure, opposed the final act as inadequate and without provisions to protect the land against erosion or overgrazing. Nor were there safeguards to prevent the destruction of wildlife. As Arizona and New Mexico each had some 12 million acres of public domain that would be affected by the Taylor Act, the creation of grazing districts under the Department of the Interior would result in two competing jurisdictions, often side by side, with which stockmen would deal. The Forest Service feared, often with good reason that the Department of the Interior would play for the support of cattlemen and sheepmen with lower fees and little concern for the environment. In Washington in 1936, the research branch of the Forest Service produced a massive report, *The Western Range* that set forth the position of the Forest Service and questioned the wisdom of the Taylor Act and its application. In the meantime, the Forest Service continued to administer grazing permits in the national forests in a conservative manner along the principles laid down by Albert Potter, Pinchot, and Greeley. Unfortunately, the issues relating to grazing policy remained unresolved between the two departments and were the cause of much rancor and continued ill-will.<sup>10</sup>

## Timber

The southwestern lumber industry expanded at the end of World War I, then suffered a sharp decline during the brief depression of 1920—21. The industry recovered, and through the rest of the decade, mills in the Southwestern Region set new production records, reporting a high of more than 320 million board feet in 1929. The industry was not healthy, however, as prices for ponderosa pine, the principal commercial timber, declined steadily from \$37.85 per thousand in 1920 to \$24.18 in 1929 (Table 4). Also, thanks in part to the excellent interstate connections provided by the two transcontinental railroads, local lumbermen faced ever-increasing competition from California lumber in the urban centers of Albuquerque, Phoenix, and Tucson.<sup>11</sup>

The two old, large, established lumber companies in Arizona, the Arizona Lumber and Timber Company (AL&T) at Flagstaff and the Saginaw and Manistee Lumber Company (Saginaw) at Williams, generally supported Forest Service policies regarding culling contracts, grazing permits, and conservation goals. But they disagreed violently with Pooler’s policy of open bidding and giving equal consideration to newcomers and small operators. The three Riordan brothers who headed AL&T often spoke for the industry in the Southwest and regularly conferred with the Forest Service on questions of general interest. Dennis M. Riordan, the senior brother, had known and entertained Gifford Pinchot back in 1900 and consequently assumed that he enjoyed a special position with regional forestry officials.<sup>12</sup> As the only two pioneer big mill operators in the region, the owners of AL&T and Saginaw argued that they should have preference in bidding for cutting contracts and stumpage purchases. Indeed, they regarded all new companies as intruders and interlopers.<sup>13</sup>

**Table 4. Lumber production (thousands of board feet) In Southwestern region (1916-46)**

Year	Production			Average price ponderosa pine per 1,000 bd.ft.
	Arizona	New Mexico	Total Region	
1916	98,872	80,406	173,278	\$14.65
1920	120,485	109,982	230,477	\$37.85
1925	145,609	152,330	297,839	\$26.56
1929	174,594	148,287	322,881	\$24.18
1930	95,049	142,885	238,382	\$24.24
1932	58,162	71,715	129,877	\$17.78
1935	100,001	126,394	226,395	\$19.99
1940	128,776	112,786	241,562	\$24.87
1945	157,984	99,100	257,084	\$33.31
1946	240,735	44,214	384,949	--

*Source: Henry B. Steer, Lumber Production in the United States, pp. 14-18.*

Such an attitude could only result in added difficulties and headaches for District Forester Pooler. Back in 1919 (when Pooler was still assistant district forester), the Forest Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs had determined that a large block of mature timber on the Apache Indian Reservation in the White Mountains should be harvested. To justify the construction of a large mill in the area, the Forest Service agreed to include timber located in the Sitgreaves and Apache National Forests in the package presented for bids. The total timber amounted to more than 600 million board feet, much of which was considered of superior quality.<sup>14</sup> To compete for this tract, Flagstaff businessman Thomas E. Pollock and A.B. McGaffey of Albuquerque organized the Apache Lumber Company (ALC). They successfully won the contract over the protests of Riordan and R.A. Nickerson (Saginaw) who called the new company “unnecessary” and predicted that it “could not succeed.”<sup>15</sup>

Pollock constructed a large, electric-powered three-band sawmill capable of producing 175,000 board feet of lumber per day. He also built a company town at Cooley (later renamed McNary) complete with general store, school, hospital, and houses. He arranged with the Santa Fe Railway to build a short-line railroad from Holbrook to the mill at Cooley. All of this plunged Pollock deeply into debt, and the post-war depression wiped him out and the mill closed.

## Cady Lumber Company

In 1923, William M. Cady and James C. McNary (both of Louisiana) bought the Apache Lumber Company's assets (known locally as "the big sale") and reorganized the operation as the Cady Lumber Company. McNary purchased additional timber in the Sitgreaves and Coconino National Forests and floated new loans to provide operating capital for expanding production. Despite these efforts the company defaulted in 1930 and the mill again closed.<sup>16</sup>

McNary blamed the Forest Service and the Indian Bureau for his problems. He insisted that declining retail prices would bring reduced stumpage prices. He also argued that much of the timber was overripe and did not produce as much high grade lumber as was predicted. Pooler was much concerned that the White Mountain venture had foundered, but as a question of government policy he would not renegotiate the stumpage contracts. He pointed out that he represented the public and not the lumber business. He believed that competitive bidding was the only fair method of determining value and conducting sales. This system allowed large and small companies to participate in national forest purchases on an equal basis. On the other hand, Mr. Riordan continued to upbraid Pooler for allowing the Apache Lumber Company to exist. He blamed the slump in his company's sales on the competition of the Apache and frequently charged that the "White Mountain outfit" gained accounts by cutrate prices that they could not sustain. In conversations with Pooler and others, he again and again returned to the theme that the established firms (i.e., AL&T and Saginaw) were more dependable and deserved to have the contracts.<sup>17</sup>

The difficulties of the lumber mills of the Southwest during the 1920's were not the result of production problems. New technology and more modern machinery enabled the sawmills to produce more lumber than they could market. In the face of the competition from expanding mills in California and the Pacific Northwest, the operators in the Southwestern Region not only found it difficult to export finished lumber but saw their local markets invaded.<sup>18</sup> This was due, in part, to inequitable freight rates set forth by the Interstate Commerce Commission, but Riordan laid much of the blame on Pooler for his policy of encouraging new companies and giving equal opportunity to small out-fits. Nickerson went so far as to charge that the regional forester was conspiring to force Saginaw out of business. Pooler responded that the Forest Service was not in the lumber business and could not guarantee a company a profit. Furthermore, companies that ignored Forest Service regulations concerning seed trees, clear cutting, disposal of tops and branches, and logging camp health standards could expect to be penalized, he told them.

In all, Frank Pooler was a staunch defender of Forest Service policies and not overawed by even the most prestigious industrialist. Gradually, Riordan, Nickerson, McNary, and the others came to appreciate his integrity and fair-mindedness. Once they did, relations improved.<sup>19</sup>

The coming of the Great Depression had as bad an effect on the lumber industry in New Mexico and Arizona as it did in other sections of the United States. Mills closed, customers canceled orders, and shipments dropped 75 percent from the 1929 level. In both States, half of the banks closed their doors and the mining industry payroll fell to 11 percent of its pre-depression rate. The AL&T, the oldest and largest company in the region, which had manufactured 38.5 million board feet of lumber in 1929, produced none in 1932 and only 4.4 million board feet in 1933. As T.A. Riordan wrote to Nickerson, "it has been a long hard pull in the lumber game, going on 4 years trying to keep out of the bread lines. And the Lord knows when improvement is going to set in, even with beer and Roosevelt."<sup>20</sup>

## The National Industrial Recovery Act

Franklin D. Roosevelt had more plans to aid recovery than merely the legalization of beer and other alcoholic beverages. Soon after his inauguration in March 1933, Congress passed the National Industrial Recovery Act, which set up the National Recovery Administration (NRA). This measure attempted to promote recovery through a program of shorter hours, increased employment, higher wages and prices, fair business practices, and cooperation. Each industry, including the lumber industry, was to draft a code of business practices. Several trade associations (such as the Western Pine Association), the Forest Service, and representatives of the public hammered out a code to be applicable to the different divisions of the lumber industry. In addition to provisions that called for production controls, safety regulations, prohibition of child labor, wage and hour standards, and collective bargaining, the code included an article (X) that committed the lumber industry to conservation, selective cutting, sustained yield, reforestation, and a program to prevent forest fires. In turn the code relaxed antitrust laws that in the past had prevented combinations and uniform pricing.<sup>21</sup>

The Western Pine Association, whose leaders had a role in drafting the code, administered it for the pine industry in the West. The entire Western United States was divided into districts, and District 9 was made up of Arizona, New Mexico, and part of southern Colorado. On the board (officially the Timber Products Association) to administer the code in District 9 were several prominent lumbermen, including Thomas P. Gallagher (New Mexico Land and timber Co.), James McNary (Apache Lumber Co.), J.M. Bedford (Saginaw), and Joseph Dolan (who had recently bought out the Riordan interests in the AL&T). Provisions were also made for representation from the small mills in the district.<sup>22</sup>

At once, controversies and protests occupied much of the time of the board. The Western Pine Association had assumed that the West Coast wage scale of about 42 cents per hour would apply to all of its jurisdiction, but lumbermen in the Southwestern Region had been used to paying approximately the southern wage scale of about 25 cents per hour or \$2.00 to \$2.50 per day. This was resolved by compromise more or less to the satisfaction of the lumbermen of the Southwestern Region. There was also a question of price differential for Southwestern and Mountain States lumber that McNary personally secured by an appeal to the Western Pine Association headquarters. The larger problem of production quotas was never satisfactorily solved. Although McNary and George E. Breece (Albuquerque) appeared content, Dolan, Gallagher, and Bedford withdrew from the board, and Gallagher appealed directly to NEC head Donald Richberg in Washington. Certainly, after 1934 the lumbermen of Region 3 largely ignored the code and the Timber Products Association. All of the confusion and rancor, however, were swept away in May 1935 when the Supreme Court declared the NRA to be unconstitutional.<sup>23</sup>

This left Article X, the conservation article of the National Industrial Recovery Act. Although it no longer had the force of law, the lumber representatives had drafted its provisions themselves as a standard for sound forestry practices. It was, of course, the same set of measures that the Forest Service had been attempting to persuade lumbermen to adopt for a generation. On National Forest System land these principles were standard operating procedure and had been accepted by the larger mills on their own proper ties. Article X became the yardstick to measure the performance of all loggers and lumber companies, large or small. Slowly, lumbermen of the Southwest learned that good forestry was also good business.

## The Civilian Conservation Corps

One of the most popular and successful New Deal programs was the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Throughout most of his life, Roosevelt had considered the merits of a forest army made up of unemployed young men. As Governor of New York (1929—33), he had put young men to work doing conservation duties in the State's forests with success. Other States, including California and Washington, had also instituted forest conservation work camps for their unemployed young men in 1931 and 1932. But essentially it was FDR's brainchild in which he took the land and the unemployed youth, both largely wasted resources, and tried to save both.<sup>24</sup>

The law establishing the CCC quickly passed Congress in the spring of 1933, and its administration involved the Army, the Department of Labor, the Forest Service, the Soil Conservation Service, and the Department of the Interior. Soon camps sprang up in all the States, and enrollments ran as high as a half-million men at a given time. In the South-western Region, where the population was small but Federal landholdings were large, most CCC enrollees came from further east. The number of camps in the region varied from year to year as crews completed projects and super- visors moved or disbanded the camps. The number of camps on June 30, 1935, would be representative (both in number of camps and in the Southwestern Region proportion to the Nation's total): 22 camps in Arizona; 17 in New Mexico; 39 total in the Southwestern Region; and 2,110 total in the United States. By comparison, the neighboring states of Colorado, Utah, and Nevada had 31, 19, and 14 camps, respectively.<sup>25</sup>

One problem connected with the rapid expansion of CCC personnel was the recruitment of supervisory workers. The normal complement of supervisors, assistants, and rangers assigned to a national forest was totally inadequate to provide direction and leadership for the several hundred untrained CCC young men that would arrive in the summer of 1933. At the Southwestern Region headquarters in Albuquerque, Operations Chief Hugh Calkins quickly grasped the situation and at once wired a dozen forestry schools asking for 80 men. By this quick action Calkins was able to employ an excellent group of young foresters, perhaps better than most other regions. Many foresters who started as supervisors of CCC camps later transferred to the Forest Service and spent their entire careers in the region.<sup>26</sup>

When the plans for the CCC were first announced from Washington, many forest workers and unemployed loggers from the lumber companies in the area protested bitterly that these "eastern city boys" were taking their jobs and "in their forests." Fortunately, the provisions setting up the program called for the employment of "local experienced men" as foremen and section leaders. This took the edge off of the complaints. Before long the local ranchers and lumbermen were as enthusiastic about the CCC as the Forest Service itself.<sup>27</sup>

Many professional foresters began their careers working with CCC enrollees. D.D. Cutler (later supervisor of the Lincoln National Forest) began work in 1933 as technical foreman of the Woods Spring CCC camp in the Coconino National Forest. There he had some 200 enrollees from Texas working on a variety of projects. Some thinned a pole stand of ponderosa pine. Others repaired and rebuilt a telephone line to Flagstaff. He had a small detail that hunted and poisoned porcupines. That fall, they moved to a more permanent camp at Sedona where they constructed check dams to control erosion, built or repaired roads in the forest, and developed campgrounds, complete with tables, benches, fireplaces, and outdoor toilets. They even put in a water system for the neighboring ranger station. The next year, they moved again to the Prescott National Forest where they sought to eradicate twig blight on ponderosa pine. While there, one of Cutler's



colleagues made a scientific discovery that advanced the knowledge and treatment of this problem.<sup>28</sup>

Norman E. Johnson (later forest ranger of the Winslow District) had a CCC group at Camp F-32A, in the Sedona District of the Coconino National Forest. These were young men from the East, mostly the coal mining towns near Scranton, Pennsylvania. Initially they were unskilled and not familiar with the basic tools needed in conservation work. As they worked under supervision and became more proficient, they also became more enthusiastic about their camp and the CCC. Johnson recalled that one crew had made a series of rustic signs from blueprints marking out trails, roads, and points of interest on the Coconino. When finished, the crew leader inquired: Who would erect these signs and when? He was told that other enrollees would put them up during the next summer. The crew leader insisted that his group wanted to finish the job and proposed a longer working day so the men could travel to the various locations to put the signs in place. The camp commander approved this change of schedule with the provision that the crew take “camp time” off the next working day. Johnson thought that in addition to useful work, fresh air, and a better diet, this crew had learned a spirit of cooperation and the satisfaction of completing a job that would last a lifetime.<sup>29</sup>

CCC workers performed a variety of tasks and completed some important projects. They plugged a bad leak in Lake Mary in the Coconino. First, they seined out and moved the fish, which they transported to other waters, and then filled the cracks, holes, and faults in the lakebed with clay and concrete. By fall the lake held water again and once more became a favorite camping and fishing site for people from as far away as Flagstaff and Phoenix.

The CCC repaired and improved the rim road that ran west along the Mogollon Rim in central Arizona. General Crook had originally constructed a crude trail along this route in 1873, but it had fallen into disuse. The Forest Service had attempted to repair it in 1908. After the CCC worked on it, the road became an important link in the fire control system as well as a road for campers and vacationists. The CCC also put in a catwalk bridge across White-water Canyon, in the Gila National Forest, which opened a popular area for hikers and fishermen.

Many CCC camps continued in the same location for several years with no shortage of conservation work to do. Camp F—43N at La Madera celebrated its sixth birthday on the Carson National Forest. The director declared a holiday for April 30, 1939, and arranged an open house for the area’s citizens. The CCC enrollees escorted several hundred visitors through the camp, explaining their work and the functions of the various buildings. There is no doubt that one benefit of camp life was the development of an esprit de corps among the enrollees.<sup>30</sup>

The CCC also provided a program for the young Indians of the Southwest. The reservations for decades had suffered from overgrazing and soil erosion. The forests were urgently in need of management, clearing, thinning, and planting. The operations on the reservations departed from the usual CCC format in that few camps were established, as the young men lived at home. They received the standard cash stipend of \$30 per month and benefited from the education and health programs that were a normal part of all CCC camps. On one project the young men built a pipeline from the mountains to the grazing lands and filled a large pool for watering stock and, incidentally, planted and nurtured a grove of shade trees. Some 200 young Indian men worked at erosion control on an old Spanish grant that had been purchased by the Federal government. During the two years of this project, rehabilitation of the youths went hand in hand with restoring the land.<sup>31</sup>

Perhaps most important of all the CCC contributions, the young men provided the manpower to prevent and control forest fires much better than ever before. Thanks to the CCC, fire losses dropped to a new low, and new trails, firetowers, and firebreaks made the Forest Service's firefighting network much more of a reality.

## Regulation of Private Cutting

The New Deal years saw a renewal of the push for Federal regulation of private forests and cutting practices. Ferdinand Silcox, Roosevelt's Chief of the Forest Service from 1933 to 1939, was an ardent believer in Federal regulation and control as had been Pinchot, Graves, and others. In contrast, many foresters and most lumbermen strongly supported the Greeley philosophy that education, conciliation, and cooperation had a better chance of bringing improved forestry practices to the forest products industry. The brief experience under NRA with its codes and quotas had convinced most businessmen that Federal controls would bring more problems than they would solve. In the Southwestern Region, however, more than half of all merchantable timber was on Federal lands—national forests, Indian reservations, Bureau of Land Management land, and soil conservation grazing areas. Federal agencies sold stumpage rights under contract with provisions for approved conservation practices to be followed by the loggers. Thus, the question of Federal regulation was never as controversial in the Southwestern Region as it was on the Pacific Coast or in the Gulf South, where most of the large timber holdings were in private hands. As it turned out, Congress again refused to approve Federal regulation of private timber lands, and the Greeley philosophy continued to prevail within the Forest Service. In his efforts to promote regulation, Assistant Chief Earle H. Clapp (who had worked in the Southwestern Region in the early days under Arthur Ringland) alienated President Roosevelt, and this, perhaps, later cost him promotion to Chief of the Forest Service.<sup>32</sup>

## Government Reorganization

Another controversy raging in Washington at the same time did intimately affect the Southwestern Region and its entire staff of professional foresters. Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, a staunch conservationist and early Roosevelt supporter, proposed that in the general government reorganization, the Department of the Interior be changed to a Department of Conservation with all Federal lands, including the national forests, and the Forest Service included under his jurisdiction.

Most foresters viewed this move as attempted empire-building and recalled the history of the management of public lands under the Department of the Interior as one of laxness, expediency, and, at times, corruption. They feared that forest conservation, with its concern for wildlife, wilderness, and the balance of nature, would be lost to the appeasement of special interest groups. Foresters already had become concerned over the competition between the conservative grazing policy (designed to restore and preserve the range) pursued by the Forest Service over a quarter of a century and the easier and less stringent grazing rules of the Department of the Interior. Most ranchers, as could be expected, favored lax regulations or none at all, so that they could graze all the cattle, horses, and sheep they wished. This would, of course, result in the rapid destruction of the range. Because ranchers in the Southwest had over 200,000 cattle and almost as many sheep grazing on National Forest System lands, the questions of grazing regulations, allotments, and fees were of prime importance. Congress again rejected the proposed transfer and reorganization, thanks largely to the strong opposition of the Secretary of Agriculture, the Forest Service, and its friends throughout the country. The national forests remained in the Department of Agriculture, and the Ickes conservation empire evaporated.<sup>33</sup>

## Working Conditions

Work and living conditions did not change very much for forestry personnel in the years between the wars. The roads improved some, and Model T Fords and other cars and trucks began to appear in the region. But most of a ranger's district was over trails, up and down canyons, through ponderosa pine forests, and across trackless grazing areas where a horse was still invaluable. Housing conditions continued to be primitive. For married men (and most rangers were married), it was a task to find a suitable house at a new station. Wood-burning cookstoves, kerosene (oil) lamps, hand-filled water tanks, and outside toilets were the norm except for those few who were fortunate enough to be stationed at a larger town or city. Rangers moved frequently, which added to their difficulties and doubtless was most frustrating to their wives, who would work to make a house livable and attractive only to move the next year. Ranger Zane Smith told of being moved to Alamogordo, first to a substandard house, then to a better apartment, only to be transferred to the regional office in Albuquerque—all within one month.<sup>34</sup>



**Figure 11. Ranger on the trail with packhorse, Carson National Forest, 1939.**

The typical forest ranger was a man of many talents. He supervised timber sales and frequently had to personally mark trees and scale logs for the logging crews. He had to be knowledgeable about grazing permits and to have the experience needed to see at a glance whether grazing permits were being grossly exceeded. He needed to be an expert on water, watersheds, and erosion. In addition, rangers served as deputy game wardens and, on occasion, arrested and brought to court hunters who killed game out of season or fishermen who took fish illegally. And with everyone, he had to be diplomatic, firm, but controlled, and at all times he had to represent the standards of the Forest Service.<sup>35</sup>

Many forest personnel preferred the outdoor work and were reluctant to accept administrative assignments. Some rangers were content to continue as rangers and sought to remain at one location. To many, perhaps most, the best job in the Forest Service was that of supervisor of a national forest. There you would be in charge “of your own forest” and be able to spend most of each month out of doors, too. Aldo Leopold, Frederic Winn, Paul Roberts, Elliott Barker, and many others confirmed that this was the special attraction of the mountain forests of the Southwestern Region. There you could work and live in the clear dry air and enjoy the great distances of the desert Southwest.<sup>36</sup>

## Fire Control

Although the Southwestern Region largely escapes the tragic holocausts that periodically devastate the forests of California and the Pacific Northwest, fires were and are frequent in all of the forests in the region. Indeed, the principal responsibility of the ranger in the early days was fire protection and fire control. Fire fighting equipment was simple and relatively primitive. The rangers assembled axes, shovels, mattocks, and rakes in central locations, and distributed them to

fire fighting crews whenever a burn broke out. The first rangers, under Arthur Ringland, listened to old-timers tell of the destructive burn along the Mogollon Rim (Sitgreaves National Forest) that raged for days in 1904, with great clouds of smoke darkening the sky. The fire eventually burned itself out.<sup>37</sup>

Rangers organized the fire control work systematically. During the “hot season,” which usually ran from early May until the summer rains began in July, they hired “fire guards” to staff lookout towers located in strategic points and report all smokes or fires. Efforts to connect towers with ranger headquarters by telephone wire were a continuing but not always successful project. Early wireless communication and later two-way radios supplemented phone lines. The region had perhaps the first short-wave radio in the Forest Service, built in 1916 for \$75 and installed at Baseline to communicate with Clifton, AZ. Work in the fire tower could be dangerous. In the Lincoln National Forest, lightning struck a lookout tower and temporarily blinded the ranger on duty there.<sup>38</sup>

When a fire call came to the ranger station, the ranger dropped everything and went. Gathering his crew, which included ranch hands from the local cattle outfits, mill workers, Indians from the reservations, and others (most of whom realized the potential danger of unchecked forest fires), the ranger walked or rode to the fire location. Most often they built a fire line to contain the fire and stayed with it until the fire was out. Paul Roberts, supervisor of the Sitgreaves National Forest in the 1920’s, recalled that in the “hot season” there could be as many as 35 fires a day. To keep them under control was a full-time job. An important supplement to fire protection work through World War II was the “per diem guard,” a local resident such as a rancher who lived in a strategic location near the forest. He was trained as a fire fighter and given a complete set of tools, including rations, first-aid kit, and lantern. He would, on his own initiative, go to and attempt to suppress area fires, and received pay or “per diem” only when engaged in fire work.<sup>39</sup>

Fires were and are the result of many causes. Lightning, sparks from locomotives, and sawmill explosions all can start fires. Many fires, however, are human-caused, and many are deliberately set by arsonists. The Southwestern Region had its share of “firebugs,” but most fires there, especially in recent years, have been from natural causes. In earlier years some nesters hated the Forest Service and set fires for spite. A few ranchers also set fires to vent their hostility. Supervisor Fred Arthur recalled a fire in 1927 on the Lincoln National Forest in which he suspected a local man who had a previous record of arson. When they approached the man at his house, he opened fire on the ranger, and in the ensuing gun battle both the suspect and an assisting forester were killed. Fortunately, most torch-setters surrendered peacefully when confronted by the sheriff and the forest ranger armed with the evidence.<sup>40</sup>

Fire fighting equipment and techniques improved markedly during the two decades between the wars. The introduction of the bulldozer as a fire fighting tool enabled foresters to move much more rapidly and decisively in containing fires. Rangers also learned to organize and train their available personnel into teams that knew how to tackle a forest fire and contain it and then stamp it out before an untrained group could have begun action. Because the dry climate of the Southwest does not produce an abundance of grasses and bushes in the understory of the forest, the fires are less severe than those in the Northwest. At times Southwestern Region fire fighters went to other regions to assist in containing major fires. Beginning about 1929, trained fire fighting crews regularly flew to Montana, Washington, and Oregon to lend their expertise and experience in containing major conflagrations in the Northwest.<sup>41</sup>

The CCC greatly assisted, as has been discussed earlier, in fighting forest fires, both by their added manpower and their youth and energy. The 1930’s witnessed great progress in reducing the

fire losses and in promoting a greater public awareness of the responsibility of all citizens to participate in the fire prevention program. From 1935 to 1940, an average of 1,648 fires per year, which burned some 21,162 acres in total, was reported in Arizona. In contrast, during the same period, 86,394 acres burned in Washington and 132,370 in Oregon.<sup>42</sup>

## World War II

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and the entrance of the United States into World War II put the forestry and conservation plans of the Forest Service “on hold” for the duration of the conflict. The second global war was much more mechanized than World War I, but it made greater demands on America’s forests and used far more wood products. Where the war effort of 1917—18 had consumed about 6 billion board feet of lumber of all types, the military and related services from 1942 to 1946 used some 8 billion board feet per year. Congress created the War Production Board, which immediately listed lumber as a critical material and froze its sale for civilian use. The Office of Price Administration fixed the price of lumber and wood products, which remained relatively constant from 1943 to the end of the war.<sup>43</sup>

The Forest Service of the Southwestern Region participated fully in the war effort. Many foresters joined the armed forces and fought in the Pacific and in Europe. The CCC camps closed, and those young men marched off to war, leaving forest supervisors to organize volunteer citizen groups for fire protection. Ponderosa pine was in demand for army camps, aviation fields, and other military establishments. The smaller available quantities of Douglas fir, white fir, and spruce went for aircraft and ship construction. The Manhattan (atomic bomb) Project took over a section of the Santa Fe National Forest at Los Alamos and used the adjoining arid grazing lands as a buffer zone.<sup>44</sup>

Paul Roberts (onetime supervisor of Sitgreaves National Forest) had a leading role in a project to develop synthetic rubber from guayule. This desert plant grew well along a belt running from Southern California, Arizona, and New Mexico to west Texas. As early tests were successful, Roberts and his colleagues soon had several guayule nurseries where they were cultivating more than 200,000 acres of guayule. The project was abandoned in 1945 when sources of natural rubber again became available. But the aborted project demonstrated that this desert plant can be converted into excellent rubber, and probably would have if the war had continued.<sup>45</sup> It is again the subject of research by the Agricultural Research Service of the Department of Agriculture.

The war left the regional forestry staff depleted. Post-war plans had to coordinate improved timber management programs and increased lumber production with greatly expanded demands for recreational facilities in the national forests. Much of this post-war planning fell to Ray Marsh, once supervisor of the Carson National Forest but in 1945 assistant chief in the Washington office.<sup>46</sup>

But these new plans and programs brought their own critiques and problems, and demanded new blood and energy. Frank Pooler was 63 years old and a 41-year veteran of service on the Southwestern Region forests; he was glad to retire and leave post-war problems to Phillip Woodhead, who had been assistant forester for grazing. No other forester in the Southwest has, to date, equaled Pooler in his long tenure as regional forester and in his quiet, conscientious, and firm handling of the problems that beset the region in the generation between the great wars.<sup>47</sup>

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## Reference Notes

- <sup>1</sup> *Journal of Forestry*, 58 (1960): 842; Edwin A. Tucker and George Fitzpatrick, *Men Who Matched the Mountains* (Washington, DC: USDA Forest Service, 1972), p. 143; U.S. Forest Service, Service Bulletin 9:13 (March 2, 1925).
- <sup>2</sup> Richard Davis, ed., *Encyclopedia of Forest and Conservation History* (New York: Macmillan, 1983), pp. 743-788. It was not until 1953 that the Crook National Forest disappeared, being divided among the Coronado, Gila, and Tonto.
- <sup>3</sup> Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 185-188; Aldo Leopold, "Wilderness and Its Place in Forest Recreational Policy," *Journal of Forestry* 19 (1921): 718-721.
- <sup>4</sup> *Journal of Forestry* 42 (1944): 208.
- <sup>5</sup> *Carson Pine Cone* (April 25, 1924).
- <sup>6</sup> Edwin A. Tucker, "The Forest Service in the Southwest," unpublished manuscript, p. 402.
- <sup>7</sup> Paul H. Roberts, *Them Were the Days* (San Antonio: Naylor Press, 1965), pp. 82—84; Ben H. Huey, "Paul H. Roberts: Tall in the Saddle," *Journal of Forestry* 50 (1952): 413-44.
- <sup>8</sup> Roberts, *Them Were the Days*, p. 81.
- <sup>9</sup> *Journal of Forestry* 43 (1945): 370-371; John D. Guthrie, "Biographical Sketch of Fred Winn," *Journal of Forestry* 44 (1946): 534.
- <sup>10</sup> Harold K. Steen, *The U.S. Forest Service: A History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976), pp. 205-209; Edgar B. Nixon, ed., *Franklin D. Roosevelt & Conservation, 1911-1945* (New York: Arno Press, 1972), pp. 657, 672, 822, 830.
- <sup>11</sup> Henry B. Steer, *Lumber Production in the United States, 1799—1946* (Washington, DC: USDA Forest Service 1948), pp. 13-16, .207-208.
- <sup>12</sup> Robert L. Matheny, "The History of Lumbering in Arizona before World War II," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Arizona, 1975, pp. 198-223.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 284-285.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 232.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.248-254.
- <sup>17</sup> Tucker and Fitzpatrick, *Men Who Matched the Mountains*, pp. 125-141; Matheny, "Lumbering in Arizona," pp. 283-285.
- <sup>18</sup> Matheny, "Lumbering in Arizona," pp. 272-273.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 285-298.
- <sup>20</sup> Steer, *Lumber Production in the U.S.*, pp. 15—16; Matheny, "Lumbering in Arizona," pp. 302-305.
- <sup>21</sup> William B. Greeley, *Forests and Men* (New York: Garden City Press, 1951), pp. 137-138; William C. Robbins, "The Great Experiment in Self-Government: The Lumber Industry and the National Recovery Administration," *Journal of Forest History* 25 July 1981): 128-143.
- <sup>22</sup> Matheny, "Lumbering in Arizona," pp. 312-315.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 321-328.
- <sup>24</sup> John A. Salmond, *The Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942: A New Deal Case Study* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1967), p.4.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84. California had 155 camps that June, the largest number for any State.
- <sup>26</sup> Tucker and Fitzpatrick, *Men Who Matched the Mountains*, pp. 162-163.
- <sup>27</sup> Salmond, *The CCC*, pp. 34-36.
- <sup>28</sup> Donald Dean Cutler, letter to Henry C. Dethtoff, March 1, 1985.
- <sup>29</sup> Norman E. Johnson, Letter to Henry C. Dethtoff, March 22, 1985.
- <sup>30</sup> Roberts, *Them Were the Days*, pp. 33-34; Tucker and Fitzpatrick, *Men Who Matched the Mountains*, pp. 163- 167; *Carson Pine Cone* (May 5, 1939).
- <sup>31</sup> Salmond, *The CCC*, pp. 33-34; Erna Fergusson, *New Mexico: A Pageant of Three Peoples* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, second ed., 1964), pp. 343-345.
- <sup>32</sup> Steen, *The U.S. Forest Service*, pp. 228-237.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 237-245; C. Otto Lindh, "Administration of National Forest Lands" (May 3, 1950), USDA Forest Service Regional Office, Albuquerque, NM.

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- <sup>34</sup> Roberts, *Them Were the Days*; Tucker and Fitzpatrick, *Men Who Matched the Mountains*, pp. 135, 170-171, 267-275.
- <sup>35</sup> Carson Pine Cone (November 13, 1925); Tucker and Fitzpatrick, *Men Who Matched the Mountains*, pp. 259-266.
- <sup>36</sup> Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 130-145, 237-264; Huey, “Paul H. Roberts”; Guthrie, “Sketch of Fred Winn”; Tucker and Fitzpatrick, *Men Who Matched the Mountains*, p. 267.
- <sup>37</sup> Roberts, *Them Were the Days*, p. 91.
- <sup>38</sup> Tucker, “The Forest Service in the Southwest,” pp. 1113-1114; John A. Adams and L.V. Slonaker, “Apache National Forest, 1916: Report on the Baseline Wireless Station,” *Journal of Forest History* 18 (April, 1974): 22-27; and see Robert W. Bates, *Historical Firsts in the U.S. Forest Service*, Cultural Res. Rep. 26 (Albuquerque: USDA Forest Service, Southwestern Region, 1978).
- <sup>39</sup> Roberts, *Them Were the Days*, p. 91; letter from W.D. Hurst, Bosque Farms, NM, to Henry C. Dethioff, January 22, 1986.
- <sup>40</sup> Tucker and Fitzpatrick, *Men Who Matched the Mountains*, pp. 55-67; Roberts, *Them Were the Days*, pp. 101-103.
- <sup>41</sup> Roberts, *Them Were the Days*, pp. 103-106.
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 105-106; Ralph R. Widner, ed., *Forests and Forestry in the American States* (Washington, DC: Association of State Foresters, 1968), pp. 577-578.
- <sup>43</sup> Steen, *The U.S. Forest Service*, p. 247.
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 246-247; Fergusson, *New Mexico*, pp. 333-340; Steer, *Lumber Production in the U.S.*, pp. 105-113.
- <sup>45</sup> Steen, *The U.S. Forest Service*, pp. 248-249.
- <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* p. 254.
- <sup>47</sup> Tucker, “The Forest Service in the Southwest,” pp. 1341-1344; Forest Service, USDA News Release (May 29, 1945).