

# EDITOR'S NOTE

by James G. Lewis

Earlier today I finished revising a guest column for the Asheville (NC) *Citizen-Times*, which you can read in its entirety on our blog, "Peeling Back the Bark." I wrote "The Gift of the Pisgah National Forest" for the centennial of the establishment of the Pisgah National Forest on October 17, 1916. Here are the concluding paragraphs:

*In 1914 George Vanderbilt's widow, Edith, sold Pisgah Forest for a fraction of its value in part to honor and preserve the conservation legacy of her husband, and as a "contribution" to the American people. Pisgah Forest became the nucleus of the Pisgah National Forest, the first established under the Weeks Act, and Biltmore Forest School graduate Verne Rhoades became its first supervisor, in 1916.*

*But that is the past. The future of the Pisgah National Forest (and its neighbor the Nantahala) is being written now. The U.S. Forest Service is drafting a forest management plan to guide how it manages the forests for the next dozen or so years. At open houses, the Forest Service has been hearing from citizens and groups like the Pisgah Conservancy to help it craft the forest's future. Like Carl Schenck and Vern Rhoades before them, Pisgah's current managers face great uncertainties, only now in the form of forest pests and disease, climate change, and a place so attractive that its visitors are "loving it to death." Those who cherish the Pisgah for its "beautiful, working landscapes" can honor those who gave us that land by continuing to sustainably manage it. That can ultimately be our greatest gift to future generations.*

The Pisgah National Forest is at a turning point in its history, and the Forest Service is trying to develop a forest management plan that, as Pinchot famously said, will serve "the greatest good for the greatest number in the long run." I don't remember where I saw the following adage but I know it was spoken about working in the Forest Service: it's not about managing the land, it's about managing people. Bringing a wide variety of stakeholders to the table and satisfying everyone's expectations is no mean feat. The challenge the U.S. Forest Service and other government agencies face, then, is one of inclusivity.

On a much smaller scale and with much less at stake, inclusivity is also a challenge I face as editor of this magazine. I try to maintain balance between interests in several informal categories. For example, the Forest History Society has members all over the world, so I often include an article or two about places or events outside North America. Doing so also alludes to the diversity of our archival collections and library holdings. After all, they have a global focus. What is in this magazine should reflect that. In this issue our global perspective is found in the "Biographical Portrait," which looks at the life and work of Fujikazu Nakagawa, a Japanese lumberman, a piece that came courtesy of the World Forestry Center. I also keep a global

focus in mind when selecting items for the "Books and Films of Interest" column.

When it comes to articles that look at North America, naturally the majority of articles have focused on the United States. But because of the long-time relationship with our friends to the north, I strive to always address some aspect of Canada's forest history. In this issue Mark Kuhlberg brings the two countries together with his look at an American forester, Benjamin Avery, and his silvicultural program in Ontario. In future issues I would like to include more on Central and South America. If you are working on a topic that involves Latin America, or if you know someone who is, I invite you to consider submitting proposals and articles. With a nod in that direction, the "History on the Road" column offers a look at El Yunque National Forest in Puerto Rico, with text by Char Miller and beautiful photos by Tim Palmer.

I believe that the scales should also be balanced between public and private forestry, the latter of which can encompass either industrial or nonindustrial lands. Who owns private lands (and why) has undergone great transformation in the past few decades. To help us understand one of the major engines for that change, Brooks Mendell gives us a short history of timber REITs and TIMOs.

Regarding public forest management, I hope to complement articles on national forests with articles focusing on national parks as well as forest management at the state level, whether in the United States or abroad. Next year, in addition to producing our regular issue, I'll be curating a special issue on the National Park Service. But in this issue, Ronald Billings recounts the establishment of Texas Forest Service in 1915, and I wrote the text to accompany a photo essay on the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

With articles on the United States I try to keep things regionally balanced as well. I am very excited about two articles in this issue. First, Jack Reid examines the role of the lumber industry in Arizona in influencing African American migration patterns in the mid-twentieth century. Then Leslie Kemp Poole illuminates an overlooked aspect of Florida's environmental history—the role of women in forest conservation. I hope to include more work on minorities and women in future issues. Both of these subfields are wide open and fertile ground for researchers and historians. Again, if you are working on such a topic, or know someone who is, please submit proposals and articles.

Achieving a good balance of subjects to cover in each issue requires a range of papers from which to select. Some of our articles are unsolicited, others come about through conversations at meetings and conferences, or are sparked by a question someone poses to Forest History Society staff. In short, if you know about a topic that would interest our readers or if you see an article that you think deserves to be reprinted in *Forest History Today*, please contact me via email at [james.lewis@foresthistor.org](mailto:james.lewis@foresthistor.org). □