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A POLICY OF
FORESTRY FOR THE NATION

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THE STATEMENT OF A POLICY PRESENTED
BEFORE FORESTRY CONFERENCES OF 1919

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A POLICY OF FORESTRY FOR THE NATION.

A NATIONAL POLICY of forestry seeks the protection and beneficial utilization of our present forest resources, the renewal after cutting of forests on lands not needed for agriculture and settlement, the stability of forest industries and of satisfactory conditions for forest workers, and the restoration of forest growth on lands now unproductive and idle.

The public interests in the continuance of forests justify and require direct public ownership of extensive areas, and also participation by the public working out the problem of protection and renewal of private forests. A program of forestry for the Nation should include action by the public through the Government and the States, action by landowners and operators, and the means of uniting the efforts of all for the achievement of a common purpose.

The service of forests is not alone local; it is national as well, for the products are widely distributed without reference to State lines, the industries are engaged in interstate business, and the protective benefits of forests often extend far beyond the localities where they are situated. It is the function of the Federal Government to take the leadership in formulating a national economic policy that gives consideration to the relationship of all forests to the industrial life of the country. The central Government alone can bring about concurrent and harmonious action within given regions. Its research and educational work may be directed to the problems of the Nation and of the regions that comprise more than one State. Representing the whole Nation, the Government can stimulate and guide local action where individual States by their own efforts would fail. The Government can act to organize all agencies affected by the forest problem in a united undertaking to inaugurate and carry out a program of forestry.

The States have not only the function of handling the public forests owned by them, but they have also a direct responsibility in the protection and continuance of private forests. In this, the Federal Government should take part to meet interstate and national problems, to stimulate action by the States, and to bring into harmony the efforts of different States. In the problem of private forestry, the Government would work through and in cooperation with the

States. The legislation affecting the private owner in the matter of protection and continuance of forests should be by the States. The Government should help the States in formulating plans and developing methods and should give direct assistance in carrying them out. The assistance offered by the Government should be contingent upon the States taking legislative and administrative action to provide for the protection and renewal of their forests.

A national policy must recognize the problems of the private owner of forests. Greater security of forest property from fire, better returns from timberland in the long run, and more stable industrial conditions must be sought. A program in which the public participates and recognizes industrial problems, like taxation, would enable private proprietors to handle their forests in a way that would result not in a public injury but in making these forests serve in building up the localities in which they are situated.

PUBLIC FORESTS.

There should be an extensive program of public forests, owned by the nation, by the States, by municipalities, and too, by quasi-public institutions and organizations. The public forests to-day comprise about 25 per cent total forest area of the country. They should be extended to include ultimately from 40 to 50 per cent.

In any plan of extensive public holdings, whether Federal or State, provision should be made for returning to the communities a share of the receipts, as is done in the case of National Forests, or for otherwise compensating them for withdrawing the lands from taxation.

The Federal Government should not only provide adequate support properly to protect and develop its forest properties; it should also rehabilitate, by planting if necessary, the depleted and wasted cut-over and burned lands.

NATIONAL FORESTS.

The Federal holdings should be extended by purchase, by exchange of stumpage for land, and by placing under permanent administration forest lands now in unreserved public domain.

The program of acquisition should seek two classes of forest land:

1. Areas needed for the protection of water resources, to prevent erosion, for recreation and other general public purposes. These should include both virgin forests and cut-over lands.
2. Cut-over lands, with the purpose of insuring the production of Lumber and other products and of establishing demonstration areas and centers for Federal cooperation with States and private owners.

The present Weeks law program contemplates the purchase of about 1,000,000 acres in New England and 5,000,000 acres in the Southern Appalachians. This program should be completed as fast as is compatible with public financial conditions, and should be extended to include other important areas needed for watershed protection and other general public service. Lands acquired for protective purposes as well as those for lumber production should be distributed through all forest regions of the country.

The acquisition of cut-over lands by exchange for stumpage would serve to consolidate and block out the National Forests of the West. This principle has already been recognized in several special laws applicable to certain forests.

There are still forest lands in the public domain which should be added to the National Forests. There are several million acres of such lands outside of Alaska. The great forests of the interior of Alaska should also be placed under adequate protection and administration.

STATE FORESTS.

The States should establish public forests, with the same general objectives as the federal Government, and with special reference to the economic and industrial needs within their boundaries. Many western and southern States still own forest lands received in previous grants from the Government. These should be placed under permanent forest administration, with provision for the settlement of areas suited to agriculture. Lands reverting to the States for taxes or otherwise should, where practicable, be retained and used to build up permanent public forest reservations.

OTHER PUBLIC FORESTS.

Every encouragement should be offered to municipalities to establish public forests or woodland parks. These may be necessary to protect the local water supplies, or to serve as public recreation grounds; and in many instances they may yield products that will help in a material way to reduce local taxation for schools or public works. Permanent institutions and organizations of a quasi-public character should also be encouraged to acquire forests and handle them on the basis of continued production.

PRIVATE FORESTS.

The safeguarding and perpetuation of forests on private lands are possible through an organized system of protection, through the prohibition of destructive processes that produce waste lands, and through the promotion of constructive and entirely practical meas-

ures of forestry. The participation, liberal cooperation, and direction of the public in working out the problems involved are necessary for success.

FIRE PROTECTION.

The objectives of fire protection are:

1. To prevent destruction and injury to standing timber by fire.
2. To safeguard young growth already established within the older timber and on cut-over lands.
3. To promote natural reproduction so far as this can be done by fire protective measures.

Effective fire protection is achieved only through a joint undertaking between public and private agencies in which all lands, regardless of ownership, are brought under and organized system. Such a system requires:

1. An effective service for preventing forest fires and detecting and suppressing those which may be started. Such a service already exists in a number of States.
2. Improvements needed for the prompt detection and suppression of fires. These include roads, trails, lookout stations, properly located stations for rangers, bases for airplanes when these are used and so on.
3. Measures to reduce the inflammability of the forests. These may consist in lopping the tops, as is practiced in parts of the East; or burning the brush in piles, as is done in many pine stands on the National Forests; or burning over at the proper season cleared areas, protected by fire lines, as in heavy Douglas fir stands; or felling dead snags, as is required in many national Forest timber sales; or other measures. In some places fire lines may be desirable, as practiced in southern California, or carefully controlled burning at the proper season of strips and selected areas, as is practical in certain open pine forests. Uncontrolled light burning should be prohibited everywhere.
4. A vigorous campaign of education of the public regarding the danger of forest fires and the need of cooperation on the part of every user of the woods.
5. A systematic campaign of law enforcement, in which all citizens should be asked to cooperate, to punish those who by carelessness or intent start fires or permit their spread.

There should be incorporated in the forest laws of every State requirements to bring all forest owners into the protective system, and to extend it to all cut-over and unimproved lands in the State. To these requirements should be added the disposal, by lopping or burning, of dangerous slashings, and other special measures that the local conditions may require.

There should be provided by the State the administrative machinery necessary to carry out the work effectively.

The public should share in the burden of protection. The division of cost will necessarily be different in different States, as is now the case among those States which have inaugurated such a system. The public may properly bear the cost of the State-wide patrol system, including overhead, inspection, lookouts, and similar items, and a portion of the fire suppression costs.

In general, the cost of the preventive system should be shared about equally between the public and the owner of the land. At the present time assistance by the States and the efforts of the private owners alike are inadequate. Measures like brush disposal are essentially part of the logging operation and should be a charge against it.

The Federal Government should grant liberal financial aid in fire protection, far greater than at present. This aid should be contingent on the State's inaugurating and carrying out such a system as above described, and should not exceed in amount the funds appropriated by the State.

PROTECTION AGAINST INSECTS AND DISEASE.

As in fire protection, the spread of dangerous insect infestations and diseases requires the aid and direction of the public. Both the National and State governments should participate and appropriate liberally to check the depredations.

FOREST RENEWAL.

The renewal of forests on lands not needed for agriculture and settlement is an essential feature of a national policy of forestry; and an effective program should be worked out in each State, backed by appropriate legislation and efficient administration, which will achieve this object on private as well as on public property. As in the case of fire protection, forest renewal on private lands requires the participation and aid of the public.

There are two problems of forest renewal; first, the restocking of lands already cut over and now in a condition of waste; and second, that of providing for natural reproduction when timber is cut.

Where there are still seed or seed-bearing trees on cut-over lands, continued fire protection may in many cases suffice for restocking. Where there is no chance for natural reproduction, planting or sowing will be necessary. The public will have to take over a large portion of these cut-over lands and restore them to productivity. In many other cases owners may be induced to restock their waste lands as a business undertaking.

On lands still timbered, provision for forest renewal should be made at the time of cutting. Sufficient restocking of the average private tract may be accomplished by natural reproduction without resort to planting or other intensive measures. On certain types forest renewal will result from fire protection alone. In many instances of unrestricted exploitation, however, fire protection alone does not suffice to secure renewal and to prevent the lands' becoming waste. If protection alone does not suffice to secure forest reproduction, the owners should be required to adopt such measures as may be necessary to accomplish this, with cooperative aid by the public in working out the problem as a practical undertaking. As in the case of fire protection, the additional measures necessary for forest renewal should be made a part of a systematic program in which the public and private owners engage in a joint undertaking with a common objective.

The first steps in this undertaking are to determine in each region:

1. The circumstances under which fire protection alone will not suffice to prevent wasting of the land under prevailing methods of lumbering.
2. The additional measures necessary to secure conditions favorable for natural renewal.
3. The classes of land upon which forest growth should be continued.
4. The cooperation that should be given by the public to make feasible in practice the measures that may be necessary for the owners to take.
5. The legislation needed to bring these measures into practice, as a part of the State's program of forestry.

As in the case of fire protection, the plan for special measures and for forest renewal should be worked out through State legislation and administration, with the assistance and backing of the Government. The Federal Government should seek to secure concurrent action by the States within given economic regional units, to bring about uniform standards of practice, to conduct experiments and research, to grant material aid in various ways, and to act as a coordinating agent to bring together the different local agencies into full cooperation. The Government should make its assistance to the States contingent upon effective action by the latter.

Measures of forestry upon private lands sought by the proposed program fall into two classes: First, those necessary to prevent [sic] the lands becoming waste after lumbering; and second, those which seek a maximum production of timber and other products. The first class of measures should be required on all lands that ought to remain in forest growth. The measures to secure maximum production are of a more intensive character. They should be encour-

aged in every way but should not be obligatory. They involve a larger initial investment, and when they are practiced the lands render a larger ultimate return to the owner. Under the second class fall such measures as planting where needed, leaving a larger number of seed trees, cutting in favorable seed years, leaving medium-sized trees, even though now salable for a second cut for cover, various kinds of thinnings of second growth, organization of the forest work on a basis of sustained annual yield, and so on. Experiments should be conducted by the public to establish and make generally known the best practice in each region. Advice by public officers should be freely afforded. Planting stock should be offered at cost. Taxes should be adjusted to encourage owners to undertake the methods found to be most efficient, and other measures of aid given, as indicated in the last section of this statement.

ECONOMIC UTILIZATION.

Every encouragement should be afforded to bring about close utilization of timber in the forest and to prevent losses in the handling and use of the manufactured product. This will be accomplished largely through cooperation and research, in bringing information to the knowledge of operators and users of wood products. It is a problem of investigation and industrial education, in which the public should take the leadership.

ASSISTANCE AND COOPERATION BY THE PUBLIC.

In a national policy of forestry the public itself should assume certain responsibilities and certain burdens. It should cooperate with and assist private owners in carrying out their part of the undertaking. The measures of cooperation fall under the following heads:

1. *Fire protection.*—As already indicated, the public should directly share the burden of fire protection, especially in a preventive system and in the cost of suppression.

2. *Assistance in forestry.*—The public should assist owners in working out plans for cutting that will promote natural reproduction, in planting, and in other measures of forestry. The State should offer planting stock at cost and cooperate with the owners in establishing plantations.

3. *Taxation.*—The States should adopt a form of taxation calculated to encourage good forest practice. The present methods of taxation, with their lack of uniformity in application, often tend to promote premature and wasteful cutting and to discourage forest renewal. To promote action by the States, the Federal Government should help the States to investigate the current methods of taxation and their effect in causing premature and wasteful cutting and in

increasing the difficulties of holding cut-over lands for tree growth, and should assist in drafting model tax laws applicable to various forest conditions.

4. *Forest loans.*—It has been suggested that existing legislation concerning farm loans should be extended to include loans for purchase and improvement of forest lands; to encourage the holding of lands previously acquired, where the purpose of the owner is to hold and protect cut-over lands or those having growing timber, to reforest lands by seeding or planting, or to use other measures in promoting forest production. To obtain the benefit of such loans, which should be for a maximum period of 50 years, the land owner should enter into a specific obligation to retain the land in growing timber and protect and care for it during the life of the loan.

5. *A survey of forest resources.*—Funds should be provided whereby the Federal Government in cooperation with State and private interests may make a survey of forest resources of the country. This would determine the quantities of timber suitable for different industrial uses, the current consumption of forest products, the probable requirements of the different regions for material, the possible production of the forests by growth to meet these requirements, and other matters which will aid in developing and carrying out the national forest policy.

6. *Land classification.*—The public should cooperate in land classification to aid owners to put their lands to the most productive use. The public should aid in bringing settlers upon lands suited to agriculture, and at the same time should discourage speculative undertakings that lead to the deception of innocent investors and efforts to colonize lands which are not suited to settlement. Land classification would indicate the classes of land which should be devoted to the production of timber, either permanently or pending a development which would make possible their successful settlement.

7. *Research work.*—Adequate funds should be provided to enable the Government and other public agencies to carry on investigative work needed in carrying out a national policy of forestry. This would include investigations on a larger scale than at present for determining the best methods of forest practice, and also research in forest products.

8. *Forest insurance.*—As soon as forest property becomes secure under systematic protection, fire insurance comes within the range of feasibility. Every encouragement should be given to plans of insurance such as that already inaugurated in the Northeast.

A program for the Nation must be an aggregate of local programs adapted to different conditions, and correlated and standardized through the federal Government to meet the broader requirements of the whole country. A national program can not be put into

effect in its entirety at once. Local programs will also probably have to be worked out by steps. Some States are already able to go forward more rapidly than others, partly because of their financial strength and partly because experience has already demonstrated the methods of protection and forestry required to secure results on the ground.

The initiation of a national policy of forestry requires as one of the first steps the passage of a Federal law that recognizes its objectives and provides the Government with authority and means to extend cooperation with the States in protecting and perpetuating the forests under their jurisdiction along the lines of the foregoing statement. At the same time, Federal appropriations for the purchase of forest lands should be greatly increased.

Much can be accomplished pending such a law. Thus, there should be at once a joining of hands in a most vigorous campaign for fire protection that will educate the public to dangers from fire and lead to more effective action in all forest regions. Individual States should go forward with plans for better legislation and larger support of forestry. But the passage of a basic Federal law with the aid that the Nation can offer would make possible the inauguration of a policy that would secure results impossible without such national action.