



What Should Foresters Wear?

The Forest Service's Seventy - Five -Year Search for a Uniform

by Frank J. Harmon

Throughout the seventy-five-year history of the Forest Service, there have been many changes in the uniform worn by its personnel. Only one part of it has remained constant (except for variations in size) since its creation three-quarters of a century ago—the bronze badge with shield; popularly called the pine tree badge or shield.

Gifford Pinchot, as chief of the Bureau of Forestry, began thinking about the need for a unique badge and uniform for his agency even before the forest reserves were transferred from the Department of the Interior to Agriculture. When the shift finally took place early in 1905, and the bureau was designated the Forest Service, he set about at once to get both items designed.

For creation of the badge, he announced a contest among Washington Office employees. A highly varied collection of tree-related designs resulted, including scrolls, leaves, and maple seeds. The judges appreciated their artistic merits but were dissatisfied because none included generally recognized symbols of authority. The group agreed that the vast responsibilities of the new Forest Service required such a symbol to help assure public recognition of the agency and respect for its officers and their authority, both in Washington and in the field. A reliable symbol was especially needed for those men in the field who were charged with applying and enforcing federal laws and regulations, many of them new, in the face of an often suspicious and hostile local populace.

Edward T. Allen, one of the judges, strongly believed that a conventional shield was the best authority symbol.

As it turned out, he and an associate, William C. Hodge, Jr. (who, like Allen, worked both in the Washington Office and in California between 1904 and 1906), came up with the design that became the official badge.¹ The two men were together in the spring of 1905, perhaps in Allen's office or at a railroad depot in Missoula, Montana. Allen, who was attracted by the type of shield used by the Union Pacific Railroad, began tracing an outline of this shield (from a UP timetable) on a sheet of paper. He inserted the large letters *U* and *S* halfway from the top to the bottom of the shield, leaving a space between them. Hodge, looking on, was inspired to sketch a fir tree on a sheet of "roll-your-own" cigarette paper he took from his pocket. He then laid this between the *U* and *S*. The two men then quickly wrote "FOREST SERVICE" across the top and "DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE" across the bottom. The placement of the two names was probably dictated by available space. Whether this design had any influence on the soon-to-develop and still widely used but unofficial expression "U. S. Forest Service" is debatable. In any case, Pinchot and his assistant, Overton Price,

¹ "The Forest Service Badge," information sheet prepared by Forest Service, Information & Education Division, March 24, 1961, copy in History Section (HS) files; "The Shield and the Tree," *American Forests and Forest Life* 36 (July 1930): 392. The information sheet was based mostly on the latter article. An article in the *Oregon Journal*, July 27, 1947, p. 14A, credits Thomas H. Sherrard as co-designer of the badge.



The photos above, all taken in Colorado, show early Forest Service uniforms. Lower left: The first official uniform, adopted in late 1906 for voluntary wear, was made of greenish-brown worsted wool. The jacket was a compromise between U. S. Army and civilian styles; either trousers or breeches could be worn. A stiff-brimmed army campaign hat was regulation, but in practice many hat styles were tolerated. Top left: The second uniform, adopted in 1909, offered two styles in olive green, military and business. The forest officers of the San Juan National Forest, here photographed at Durango, apparently favored the military look, but many others found it uncomfortable and dubbed it the "German crown prince" uniform. Right: More popular was the business sack coat version of the second uniform, here seen in 1909 in the office of the Leadville National Forest. The female clerk wears an unofficial uniform; this is the earliest known photo of a woman in an adaptation of Forest Service attire. The author provided the Forest Service photos appearing in this article.

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were pleased with the design and called off a planned second contest.²

The large badge was issued to all field officers by July 1, 1905. Less than two years later, Pinchot issued an order on the wearing of the badge: "Hereafter the badge will be worn only by officers of the Washington Office when on inspection or administrative duty on the National Forests, by Inspectors, and by Supervisors, Rangers, and Guards and other officers assigned to administrative duty under the Supervisors."³

The history of the uniform itself is far more complicated. No design has ever had unanimous support. Pinchot was impressed in 1903 by efforts of the United States Geological Survey to have field men wear standardized clothing. He then suggested to his top aides that the Bureau of Forestry might adopt an official uniform. Two years later, when his bureau became the Forest Service and assumed responsibility for the national forests (then called forest reserves), Pinchot appointed a committee to begin selecting a uniform. The agency solicited informal bids in September 1905 and accepted one in the fall of 1906.⁴ It has had a uniform ever since.

² Other accounts of the incident include a pamphlet, "Your Forest Service Uniform" (July 1965), p. 2, copy in HS files, and an inscription on a display plaque titled "The First Badge" and located in conference room 3840-42, South Agriculture Building, Washington, D. C. The pamphlet account is based largely on the inscription (apparently written in the late 1930s) and on the article in *American Forests and Forest Life*. The inscription states that the incident took place "on a field trip in Montana," while the pamphlet gives the location as "a railroad station in Missoula, Mont." There is no evidence of the authors or sources of these statements.

³ Service Order 134, "Use of the Badge," *FS Field Program for May 1907*, p. 47.

⁴ Minutes of the Divisional Committee meeting of April 11, 1903, in Minutes of the Service Committee, Series 8, Records of the Forest Service, Record Group 95 (RG 95), National Archives, Washington, D. C.; Records Relating to Forest Service Uniform, 1905-1908, Boxes 10 and 11, General Correspondence of the Division of Operation, Series 40, RG 95; Memorandum of Agreement with Pettibone Brothers Manufacturing Company, Cincinnati, Ohio, September 20, 1906 (signed by Acting Forester William L. Hall), *ibid.* Xerox copies of pertinent records relating to the uniform are in History Section (HS) files. The U. S. Geological Survey uniform never caught on. Some supervisors of forest reserves prescribed uniforms for their rangers. In 1901 men on the San Gabriel Forest Reserve in southern California wore cavalry-style jackets and pants and light-colored sombreros. Brass buttons on the jacket carried a representation of an eagle, and the letters *S.G.F.B.* were embroidered in gold wire upon green broadcloth and affixed to either side of the coat collar.



The official solid-bronze badge in the form of a shield has been worn by permanent field officers of the Forest Service since 1905. It is the only part of the present uniform that is unchanged in design. Its size, however, was reduced by half in 1915, and a much smaller one was adopted as an option about 1920.

The original metal button (left) with bronze coating was used from 1907 until about 1921 on the first and second uniforms and their variations. A small size was made for outside pockets. The same design is used for buttons on the modern dress blazer. The second Forest Service button with insignia was worn with the Norfolk jacket uniform from 1922 to 1935. Instead of metal, it was made of South American ivory palm nut and was stained a light chocolate brown.



J. H. Sizer, deputy forest supervisor on the Tonto National Forest of Arizona in 1909, wears attire common for rough fieldwork. Although not the standard uniform, it was suited to local conditions. The extra large badge shows his authority, reinforced if necessary by the pistol stuck into his trousers at the waist.



Forest supervisors and deputies of the Southwestern District met at Reserve, New Mexico, on the old Datil National Forest in October 1912. They wear mostly standard components of the second uniform, with footwear and hats showing the greatest variety. A. O. Waha (second from left), then assistant district forester, wears a jacket resembling the Norfolk, which he helped influence the Forest Service to approve just after World War I. The man in cap and sweater (acceptable options) is Robert L. Deering. Later operation chief for the California Region, he still lives in San Francisco.

From the start, the official uniform has alternated between a quasi-military and a civilian appearance, somewhat reflecting prevailing public attitudes. The new field and dress uniforms of 1978-1979 climax a trend away from a military style and toward a relaxed and casual style that began in the middle 1930s and was temporarily modified after World War II. The preference of top Forest Service leaders for wide use of a uniform began very early. There was much support from those doing supervisory, inspection, or office work. The attitudes of men in the field, however, especially at the ranger level, have varied widely from acceptance to rejection, both at the beginning and for much of the time since. Many objected to wearing uniforms for dirty fieldwork, and there was also reluctance to

change clothes the same day for different chores. For years many men wore what they found most comfortable, usually denim or Levis. Gaining broad acceptance for any particular design or style—even within the uniform committees—has proven very difficult.⁵

To try to overcome objections, satisfy as many tastes as possible, allow for great climatic and seasonal differences, and accommodate a variety of situations, ranging from office work to fire fighting, alternative items of clothing have always been approved. These have included rough work clothes, a different uniform for seasonal employees, and more recently, a uniform for women. But the questions of who should wear a uniform and when, also have caused frequent debate, both at national headquarters and in the field, and policies have shifted often.

In the early years, field officers were only *requested* to wear the uniform, although some

See W. W. Robinson, *The Forest and the People: The Story of the Angeles National Forest* (Los Angeles: Title Insurance and Trust Company, 1946), p. 38. On the same forest reserve in 1905, rangers were wearing blue flannel shirts, corduroy trousers, and canvas leggings. See Jacinto D. Reyes, "Thirty Years Fighting Fires in Our Forests," *Touring Topics* [Los Angeles magazine], July 1930, pp. 52 if. At the same time, rangers on the Gila Forest Reserve in New Mexico were wearing blue denim overalls, various work shirts, short blue denim jumpers, and wide-brimmed sombreros, plus six-shooters and chaps. See A. O. Waha, "Early Day Reminiscences," typescript, p. 45, copy in HS files.

⁵ Waha, "Early Day Reminiscences"; "Attitudes Toward An Official Uniform in General," file title for twenty-eight letters and articles from the newsletter of the Forest Service's Washington Office (*Service Bulletin*, 1921-1935), HS files; summaries of telephone conversations between the author and retired Forest Service leaders (Richard E. McArdle, June 1 and August 14, 1978; Clyde P. Fickes, May 31, 1978; Edward C. Crafts, August 1, 1978; and Clare W. Hendee, March 28, 1978), copies in their biographical files, HS; Earl S. Peirce to author, September 1, 1978, biographical file, HS.

districts tried to require it.⁶ The Washington Office began to *require* certain categories of employees to wear the uniform in certain circumstances under the regimes of Chief Henry S. Graves in the late teens and Chief William B. Greeley in the early 1920s.⁷ For a long time efforts were directed toward getting a maximum of field men into uniform. Those in charge felt strongly, especially in the early days, that this action was vital to gain public recognition and respect for the organization, as well as to assure high morale. Forest Service officials no doubt believed that rangers in smart uniforms would help to accent the change in administration from the often indifferent, poorly trained, and poorly led field force of the old General Land Office to the carefully selected men of the new agency—a shift that Pinchot did so much to promote.

The first uniform jacket, put into use in 1907, was a compromise between the contemporary army officer's service coat and a business sack coat. Brown with a green cast, it was made of worsted wool. It had a small collar, no lapels, four pockets with flaps, and five bronze "pine tree" buttons.⁸ The first uniform hat was the same as the army campaign hat—light-colored felt with a wide, flat, stiff brim, usually worn with a high peak. A choice of trousers or cavalry-style riding breeches was provided, a choice that continued for many years. The shirt was a gray flannel pullover like the army's olive drab.

The chief's office asked for comments from the field on the uniform, and there were many, chiefly complaints about poor fitting and a style that appeared too military. As a result, new uniforms were adopted for 1909, an agreement being made with a new supplier who proved more dependable. Instead of a compromise, a choice of two styles was provided, military and business, both in olive green with lower pockets only. Four weights of



The light cruiser jacket, long favored in the Northwest, is worn here by Elers Koch in a photograph he made of himself on the Kootenai National Forest, Montana, 1922. He also wears breeches, boots, and the army campaign hat with peak. Koch, Montana born and Yale educated, was chief of the Division of Timber Management in the Northern District (Region) until his retirement in 1944.

⁶James B. Adams, Acting Forester, to field officers, November 6, 1906; C. S. Chapman, Assistant Forester, to forest officers, November 27, 1908; Albert F. Potter, Associate Forester, to forest officers, August 1, 1910, all in Uniform Records, 1905-1908, Boxes 10 and 11, Series 40, RG 95. See also *Service Bulletin*, July 4, 1921, for letter by Joseph C. Kircher, inspector and public relations director for Southwestern District, regarding early efforts for conformity in the California and Southwestern districts in 1915.

⁷Minutes of meetings of the Service Committee, August 2, 1917, and September 23, 1921, Series 8, RG 95; William B. Greeley, "As to the Service Uniform," *Service Bulletin*, October 17, 1921; *National Forest Manual* (issued October 23, 1923), p. 82, copies in HS files and files of Directives Management (DM) Group, Administrative Management Staff, Forest Service, Washington, D. C.

⁸"Specifications, Service Uniform," Memorandum of Agreement with Pettibone Brothers, 1906, copy in HS files.

worsted allowed a choice to suit various climates and seasons. Corduroy was also permitted; it proved popular in the business coat style. Louis A. Barrett, first supervisor on the Plumas Forest Reserve in northern California, said the corduroy was "the longest wearing uniform I ever owned," a statement borne out by the fact that his coat and hat are now in the Plumas County Museum in Quincy.⁹

The army-style jacket collar was stiff and tight fitting at the neck-so uncomfortable in wool and in warm weather that it caused a chorus of complaints from the field. It was dubbed the "German crown prince" uniform and apparently did not last long. On the other hand, the business or sack coat style was more popular. A vest and caps (fur or wool) were added to the uniform. An army-style buttoned khaki shirt was made optional, as was a lighter-weight summer and work uniform, dark denim in the army style.¹⁰ The 1909 sack coat style persisted, with variations and modifications, through World War I.

Many Forest Service men went into the armed services when the United States entered the war in 1917. Their association with allied troops abroad seems to have encouraged a widespread preference for a change in the official uniform to one based on a British military-style Norfolk jacket. A single-breasted jacket, it had numerous variations and was already familiar in this country. Chief Graves and his divisional heads discussed a switch to this style in meetings of the Service Committee, both before and after the war. In fact, a uniform regulation (A-12) was approved by Secretary of Agriculture David F. Houston in July 1917, and Acting Forester Albert Potter appointed a committee on August 2, 1917, to select a uniform and establish rules for its wear. He passed on the secretary's recommendations that "year-long employees, especially administrative men on Forests, should wear the uniform." The committee, at first headed by A. O. Waha, worked on the project for two years and reported on August 14, 1919, after considering

⁹Regarding bad fits for rangers, supervisors, and some Washington Office personnel, see C. S. Chapman to Pettibone Brothers, June 11, 1907, and "Report of Committee Upon National Forest Uniforms," headed by Guy B. Mains, meeting at Salt Lake City, January 25, 1908, Boxes 10 and 11, Series 40, RG 95. See also Barrett, *Leaves from a Forest Ranger's Diary* (1940; reissued by Plumas National Forest, Quincy, California, 1976), p. 36.

¹⁰ C. S. Chapman to forest officers, November 27, 1908, and Agreement with Fechheimer Brothers Company, Cincinnati, Ohio, December 3, 1908, both in Boxes 10 and 11, Series 40, RG 95. See also Waha, "Early Day Reminiscences," pp. 46-47, and sources cited in footnote 9.



The Norfolk uniform (the agency's third) is worn by Clyde P. Fickes, photographed in 1925 while assistant supervisor of the Madison National Forest in Montana. He wears a vest and small badge and carries a soft western hat then prescribed as an alternate to the western low sombrero. Fickes was later operation chief for the Northern Region in Missoula, where he still lives.

bids and rejecting the only two received as "entirely too high."¹¹ Uniform cloth during this period was scarce and expensive.

Chief William B. Greeley forced the issue in the fall of 1921. After seeking and receiving comments from the eight district (later called regional) foresters, Greeley issued instructions to become effective on January 1, 1922. They made the modified Norfolk the official uniform. It was "forestry green," including the shirt. Although Greeley considered it, he did not provide for an alternative business sack coat, but he did allow the popular western cruising coat as an option. He had wanted a green tree sewn on the coat lapels and, while opposing symbols of rank, he favored service stripes for length of service. Opinion within the Forest Service was divided on these points, and none of them was included in his final uniform order. (Bronze letters indicating rank had been considered in 1905 but dropped.) All permanent employees were required to wear the uniform on appropriate occasions; yet, no penalty was provided for not wearing it,¹² Forest Service employees had to pay for uniforms out of their own salaries. Although a uniform allowance was discussed for many years and was urged in Forest Service newsletters in 1921, 1930, and 1931, it was not adopted until 1955.¹³

The Norfolk jacket was somewhat formfitting, with a broad, notched collar and short lapels. It became quite popular, especially in the new, durable whipcord fabric, although many contended that it was not practical daily wear for rangers.¹⁴ Versions of the Norfolk had been worn by Forest Service employees, including women, as early as the spring of 1918, probably an influence of the uniform committee's deliberations.¹⁵ After Greeley's formal order, the new uniform was worn through the 1920s and into the mid 1930s.

¹¹ Waha, "Early Day Reminiscences," p. 48; Minutes of meetings of Service Committee, August 2, 1917, January 24, 1918, and August 14, 1919, Series 8, RG 95.

¹² Minutes of meeting of Service Committee, September 23, 1921, Series 8, RG 95; "Specifications for Standard Forest Service Uniform. . . As Officially Adopted January 1, 1922," *Service Bulletin*, October 17, 1921; *National Forest Manual* (1923), p. 82.

¹³ The uniform allowance is spelled out in various editions of the *Forest Service Manual*, *Forest Service Handbook*, and in a 1965 pamphlet, "Your Forest Service Uniform." For early discussion of an allowance, see *Service Bulletin*, July 18, 1921, January 6, 1930, and March 23, 1931.

¹⁴ Richard McArdle, former chief, said that he considered the Norfolk to be the "best uniform the Forest Service ever had." For other comments, pro and con, see the file titled "Attitudes Toward the Norfolk Uniform, Jacket, etc." HS files.

¹⁵ *Service Bulletin*, October 17, 1921.

There were some changes in accessories, including a new miniature badge. A new "pine tree" button, of "vegetable ivory," replaced the bronze button on the jacket. A big light-gray western sombrero of optional crown height was substituted for the stiff-brimmed army campaign hat; however, many men remained attached to the old hat with high peak, some continuing to wear it into the 1930s, as photos show. The necktie was listed for the first time; black or dark green. The vest, long a popular outer garment in the West in mild weather, was continued as an option.¹⁶

After Greeley resigned in 1928, there was a resurgence of openly expressed criticism of the uniform, both in the field and at headquarters. In response to this and at the suggestion of the regional foresters, a uniform committee was set up early in 1930, and minor changes in the jacket style were adopted in February 1931. It was somewhat demilitarized, a goal unanimously agreed on by the committee, and looser fit was specified. Bedford cord was permitted for breeches in warm weather to meet objections to hot, tight, uncomfortable "choke-bores" (slang for breeches in those days). Also permitted were fedora-type hat styles in felt or stitched cloth, which allowed more ventilation. There had been numerous complaints that the "cowboy hat" was hot and bulky. Tweed knickers with wool stockings were made new options, as were sweaters of various styles and colors.¹⁷ Altogether, the 1931 uniform regulations definitely set a high-water mark for variations and flexibility in the uniform, leading directly to reaction in the opposite direction. Only four years later the uniform was drastically revised by another committee.

The trigger for this major shift so soon after the changes of 1931, which had gone so far to meet field sentiment, apparently was the expression of dissatisfaction from a very high source indeed—President Franklin D. Roosevelt. He disapproved of the attire of many men in the field and mentioned this in 1934 to his close adviser,

¹⁶ When Arthur C. Ringland went to the Lincoln Forest Reserve in New Mexico in 1905, it was common for field men to wear the large bronze badge on the left breast of the vest and to have the tag of a bag of Bull Durham tobacco dangling out of the right breast pocket. "Out Where the Vest Begins" was the title of a doggerel verse going the rounds. Summary of Ringland's telephone conversation with the author, June 7, 1978, HS files. See also "Portrait of Ranger to Be Exhibited in New York," *Service Bulletin*, October 17, 1921.

¹⁷ *Forest Service Manual* (October 1931), p. 23A, and *Service Bulletin*, April 6, 1931, September 22, 1930, July 16, 1934, and October 8, 1934.

Under Secretary of Agriculture Rexford Tugwell. Just a year earlier, Tugwell had been responsible for selecting a new chief, Ferdinand A. Silcox, an early field officer of the agency who returned after some years in labor relations and mediation work.¹⁸ So it can well be imagined that Silcox was eager to please his bosses, and he had support from his associates and many field men. All during 1934 there had been a spirited debate on the uniform in the Forest Service, reflected by many letters published in the *Service Bulletin* that year.¹⁹

Silcox reacted swiftly by appointing a new uniform committee, headed by Associate Forester Edward A. Sherman. Its goal was a "uniform with harmony between the colors of suits, shirts, neckties. . . exuding distinctiveness and exclusiveness . . . which would express the woodland work the men were engaged upon. . . appropriate both from a psychological and utilitarian standpoint." The group acted slowly and with care, consulting first with men's fashion experts from *Esquire* magazine, then examining sample fabrics and parts, and furnishing photographs of them to regional foresters, division chiefs, and experiment station directors.²⁰

Between 1935 and 1937 the color, style, and fabrics of the uniform were all changed. The smaller business-style pinch-crown hats were deleted as options, and the insignia on the buttons was removed. The official reason given for the rather abrupt shift was that the Norfolk was too military in appearance.²¹ But another reason was that it was being widely copied and worn by gas station attendants, state police, bellhops, messengers, and others, and that this was being widely publicized.²² In 1935 the color was changed from "forestry green" to "bronze-heather green," which contained some red strands making it harder to copy. The style was changed to a businesslike loose-cut sack coat with long, wide lapels and only two buttons (leather nubs or bone). The large western-style hat was required. The hard-wearing, popular whipcord and



The fourth Forest Service uniform, adopted in the mid-1930s, featured a bronze-heather green jacket in the civilian sack coat style with long lapels and two leather nub buttons (insignia removed). This man, photographed in Arizona in 1939, wears wool serge, one of several fabrics approved at that time. His western hat has a deep center crease and side dents toward the front (optional).

¹⁸ "Onward, Uniforms!" *Service Bulletin*, November 9, 1936, and Harold K. Steen, *The U. S. Forest Service: A History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976), pp. 198-99.

¹⁹ Copies of these are contained in a file titled "Attitudes Toward the Norfolk Uniform, Jacket, etc.," HS files.

²⁰ "Onward, Uniforms!" *Service Bulletin*, November 9, 1936.

²¹ *Forest Service Manual* (1935), section titled "Equipment & Supply, Personal Equipment, Field Clothes" (GA-H6-1), pp. 1-2, copy in HS files.

²² McArdle conversation. See also file of *Service Bulletin* clippings titled "Comments Regarding the Uniform Being Copied and Worn by Others. . .," HS files.

²³ *Forest Service Manual* (1935), GA-H6-1, p. 3; "Onward, Uniforms!" *Service Bulletin*, November 9, 1936; Charles E. Randall to Henry Clepper, July 16, 1958, copy in HS files.

gabardine were discarded, leaving the less-durable wool worsted and serge. These wholesale changes created widespread dissatisfaction and protest, especially concerning the fabrics. Employees complained that when the new uniform was worn in the forest and on rangelands it wore out quickly, rumpled and snagged easily, and that it did not take a press as well as the Norfolk. The loose-woven tweedlike fabric was ridiculed in the field and called "gunnysack." Also, changing the lower outside pockets from patch style to



Another view of the fourth uniform shows the jacket in worsted wool and trousers with cuffs. Photographed in Washington State in 1936, this officer wears a high crowned hat with center crease and side dents. Some employees complained that the new uniform rumpled and snagged easily and did not take a press as well as the Norfolk.

western style made the edges stand out awkwardly, and the back vent would not stay closed.²⁴

Forest Service leadership in Washington responded by going back to the fashion experts and consulting with woolen companies and the navy. A much-revised set of fabrics was adopted in 1937. Five fabrics were specified, all with "Forest Service" included in their official names, so as to prevent their being used by other groups. The new fabrics were sharkskin (a highly wear-resistant, attractive substitute for whipcord and gabardine), a heavy elastique (for trousers, breeches, and cruiser coat), and tropical worsted (for wear in the Deep South). The two heavier weights of serge were also retained in a tighter weave and better quality. The prescribed western hat had to be worn with a long center crease;

²⁴ McArdle conversation and summary of telephone conversation between the author and Lawrence O. Barrett, January 5, 1979, HS files. See also "Uniform Committee Issues New Specifications," *Service Bulletin*, February 22, 1937.

two side dents were optional. The peak-top "Smokey Bear" style was firmly outlawed. The Norfolk was retained for seasonal "guards," with cossack jacket optional.

Along with the new uniforms came a determined effort to get them worn more consistently. The official statement accompanying the new regulations made a strong appeal to pride in personal appearance and to self-esteem, emphasizing the importance of maintaining the esprit de corps of a colorful and traditional public agency, eliminating the military look, impressing the public, and providing better service. "Slovenliness," it was pointedly emphasized, "will not be tolerated nor will habitual carelessness in dress. . . ."²⁵ The uniform shift and the strictness and criticism in the regulations seem certain to have been intended as a rebuke to many field officers and as a strong reassurance to Under Secretary Tugwell that the public would again associate a neat, sharp appearance with Forest Service field personnel. Field discipline in dress apparently had become greatly relaxed, perhaps influenced by the Great Depression and the great influx of new young men into government forestry, which was stimulated by the fast growth of the Civilian Conservation Corps. The attire of Forest Service personnel attached to certain CCC camps was sometimes unfavorably compared to that of uniformed men from the army and other federal and state agencies assigned to the camps. It would seem that attitudes of some Forest Service men toward field dress had reverted to those of the cowhands and lumberjacks who entered the agency in its earliest days. At any rate, the new basic uniform became accepted, despite some grumbling. It lasted, with some modifications in cut and materials, and alternative jackets, until the major changes of 1978-1979.

A number of clothing items went in and out of style with the years, such as vests, sweaters, gloves, gauntlets, mackinaws, trouser cuffs, knickers, wool and fur caps, leggings, puttees, chaps, knee stockings, boots, and breeches. Shorts and a loose jumper shirt had been seriously suggested for summer wear at one time.²⁶ Breeches, of course, declined along with the use of horses, especially after World War II, when the romantic picture of the heroic forester on horseback, silhouetted on a high peak, began to fade from the public's mind.

In 1940 a uniform for winter sports adminis-

²⁵ *Forest Service Manual* (1937), GA-H6-1, pp. 3, 9-12; McArdle conversation; and *Service Bulletin*, September 24, 1934, November 9, 1936, and February 22, 1937.

²⁶ *Service Bulletin*, July 16, 1934, September 24, 1934, October 8, 1934, and January 7, 1935.



A later version of the fourth uniform (center), together with alternative Eisenhower (left) and cruiser (right) jackets, is shown in Washington, D. C., 1963. All men wear precreased western felt hats, which were required by 1965. The man in cruiser jacket reveals the bright orange-yellow shoulder patch (with agency names in forest green) and the unit identification strip across the top. At first these identification strips bore names of regions, experiment stations, and national headquarters; later they carried the names of individual forests. Philip L. Thornton, the man in the "Ike" jacket, shows another innovation in the brown plastic nameplate worn on the right breast of jacket or shirt.

trators and supervisors was introduced in response to the big public attraction to skiing, which is still growing today. The short Eisenhower military jacket was made an official alternate to the sack coat in the late 1940s as a result of its popularity with servicemen returning from the war.²⁷ It became the counterpart of the Norfolk jacket of the post-World War I period, having only recently (1978-1979) been deleted from the uniform. By the mid-1950s serge and elastique fabrics were eliminated and gabardine reinstated. Sharkskin was still recommended for hard field wear, and the tropical fabric had become more than half synthetic. The cruiser coat became recognized as an alternative to the sack coat and Eisenhower jacket.²⁸ The sack coat,

however, was required wear for employees meeting the public.

Early in the 1960s came another series of changes in the uniform, stimulated in part by the new Visitor Information Service program. The VIS program meant more contacts with the public and more women employees. There was need for more prominent identification of the parent agency and of VIS personnel.²⁹ The major innovations were: adoption of a large USDA Forest Service shoulder patch, rounded at the top, with black insignia and agency lettering on a bright orange-yellow background; a strip across the top of the patch with orange-yellow lettering on a dark green background denoting, at first, regions, stations, and national headquarters, and later, individual forests; a brown plastic nameplate to wear on the right breast of jacket or shirt; a multiple-use symbol tie tack; and a complete set of uniform clothing for women. The

²⁷ *Forest Service Manual* (February 1940), GAH6-1, pp. 12-13. The Eisenhower jacket was described in the *Forest Service Manual* as "Jacket (Waist Length)," copies of pertinent pages in HS files.

²⁸ Announcements, "Approved Fabrics for Forest Service Uniforms," October 22, 1956, and "Specifications for Regulation Forest Service Uniform," February 1, 1957, copies in HS files. See also *Forest Service Handbook* (June 1959) under "Components of Regulation Uniform, 1, Regular Yearlong Personnel"

²⁹ On uniform requirements for VIS personnel, see memo from Clare Hendee, Assistant Chief, to regional foresters and directors, June 25, 1962, and on uniform instructions, memo from Hendee to Chief Edward P. Cliff, March 21, 1963, copies of each in HS files.



Left: The first official uniform for women was adopted in 1964. One woman wears a short-sleeved shirt and skirt; the other wears a short jacket with unit and agency patches, nameplate, and small badge. The basic parts were still bronze-heather green. The complete women's uniform included an overcoat and round brimmed hat. Slacks were not yet permitted. Right: The current official Forest Service uniform, adopted in 1978, is worn by Receptionist Diane Ward and District Ranger Gordon Reinhart at Skykomish, Washington, March 1980. Components for men and women are very similar. Both wear dark forest-green blazer with cloth shield patch (gold on metallic green) on left breast and metal nameplate on right breast, sage-green trousers or slacks, and greenish-tan shirt with gold-striped, myrtle-green tie. Women may wear skirts instead of slacks. The blazer, trousers, slacks, and skirt are of 80 percent polyester and 20 percent wool. The shirt is 65 percent polyester and 35 percent cotton - all designed for year-round wear. A taupe western felt hat or straw hat is optional.

women's uniform included jacket, skirt, shirt, necktie or bolo tie, round-brimmed gabardine hat, and overcoat. The basic parts were still bronze-heather green.³⁰ No slacks; they were still

³⁰ Memo from C. K. Lyman, director, Division of Personnel Management, to regional foresters and directors, January 16, 1964, constitutes a progress report on the Forest Service uniform. See also "Your Forest Service Uniform," pamphlet issued in July 1965; "Standard Forest Service Uniforms, Men -Women," booklet of photographs issued in 1964; "Specifications for Standard Forest Service Uniforms (M-1675)," February 6, 1964; and *Forest Service Manual* (July 1965), section on insignia, with minor amendments of June 1967, copies of each in Organization Group (OG) files, Administrative Management Staff, Forest Service, and of first two items in HS files.

generally frowned upon, but they did become part of the women's uniform in the next decade.

Hat styles for men were relaxed in the 1950s and early 1960s, but then in 1965 came another crackdown on individualistic variations in hat brims and creases. The Forest Service decreed a precreased western felt hat, convinced that it was more dignified.³¹ Again the recurring conflict between individuality and uniformity was clearly revealed.

The last decade proved to be another period of

³¹ "Specifications for Regulation Forest Service Uniform," February 1, 1957; *Forest Service Handbook* (June 1959), under "Uniform Specifications, Regulation Uniform"; "Specifications for Regulation Forest Service Uniform," August 1961, copies of each in OG files.



The current official field uniform, when worn with cruiser coat, is shown here on Robert L. Datema, timber sale administrator on the same ranger district. The cotton cruiser coat is dark forestgreen; the cotton shirt is greenish tan; and the cotton twill trousers are sage green. The cap, originally a standard part of the field uniform, is optional, as are the felt and straw hats.

transition toward informality. Regulations in 1970 explained: "The uniform required to be worn shall be based on the actual demands of the job and the nature of the public contact. . . . The dress uniform is required when the nature of the contact is formal or ceremonial. . . . The field uniform. . . when it . . . is informal or field and work oriented."³² This naturally resulted in less frequent wearing of the dress (standard) uniform.

In 1970 and 1971 plans were made for a radically different, bright dress uniform for women. Its parts, style, fabric, and color (to become chartreuse) were all to change, making it both strikingly feminine and much more relaxed in

appearance. Reflecting the new shift in public tastes, slacks would at last be allowed, as well as a long vest and a choice of skirt lengths, including the sexy miniskirt that was beginning to enjoy its long popularity. A new shield patch in gold or dark green replaced the small badge and the shoulder patch. The result was a sharp contrast to the drab men's dress uniform. Women also got their own work uniform. These changes were adopted in May 1972, and other minor changes were made in 1974.³³

In 1973 a Forest Service committee of men and women with wide geographical and job representation was established to design new uniforms, but individual preferences differed so greatly that it was unable to reach an agreement. The following year it was decided to retain a professional consultant to assist in designing completely new uniforms; in 1975 a firm was awarded a contract to study the need for new uniforms, the kinds of uniforms needed, and to develop three designs for review. But when the proposed designs were shown to employees in the field, they were generally not liked. Finally, in 1977, many of the contractor's proposed uniform changes were discarded, while the concepts of the dress blazer and the two-tone colors (dark forest-green jacket and light-pea or sage-green trousers, slacks, and skirts) were retained in the approved design of the new uniform.³⁴

The 1978 regulations incorporated the new uniform but continued the basic rules of 1970 for uniform wear. They make the dress uniform dressier, make the men's and women's uniforms more alike (thus reverting to the pre-1970 pattern), continue to allow women to wear slacks for dress, allow both men and women to wear jeans for official field wear instead of just for extra rough duty, and provide a pleasing contrast between jackets and trousers, slacks, or skirts. VIS employees no longer wear the "Ike" jacket; they wear the dress uniform indoors and the field uniform outdoors. The shield patch replaces the metal badge on the field uniform.³⁵ The final result, the agency believes, is a simpler, friendlier, more casual uniform appearance that is suited to the present age yet adequately identifies the

Forest Service. □

³³ Emergency Directive No. 19, May 31, 1972, to *Forest Service Manual*; authorized uniform manufacturers' booklets and order forms for 1972; Amendment No. 96, April 1974, to *Forest Service Manual*, copies of each in OG and DM files.

³⁴ Memos and correspondence of the uniform committee, 1973-1979, in OG files.

³⁵ *Forest Service Manual* (July 1978), under "Uniform Policy," and *Your Forest Service Uniform*, Leaflet FS-322 (September 1978), p. 5, copies of each in HS and DM files.

³² *Forest Service Manual* (as amended in March 1970), under "What and When to Wear," copy in OG files.