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Public Relations for Foresters

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Most of the men leaving forestry schools today expect to go into the United States Forest Service. They exclude the possibility of state forestry work as an outlet for their services. Each year states are adding forestry departments to their branches of state government to take care of the forestry problems within their boundaries. Many students of forestry are not following this growth, and continue to educate themselves for Federal work.

In Minnesota the forestry program is carried on under the State Conservation Department. The field is large, for our activities cover fire suppression and prevention on state forests, state parks and monuments, timber sales, land classification, and educational work. In fact our system is very similar to the Federal work in all respects.

The public relations forester has a wide opportunity before him. Today there are very few schools offering courses in this line of forestry work, and most of the men in these positions have been chosen because they have a special ability either to meet people, to write, or to make attractive displays of various forestry phases.
I have found that in my work the ability to meet people is the prime essential. It is not always easy for a man, fresh from college, to go out in the woods and get along successfully with those who are inclined to look down on technically trained men. I believe the most interesting phase of my work at the present time is the opportunity to get out and meet people from all classes and in all positions of business.

Research work is an important consideration for the prospective public relations forester. If the young forester decides to enter research he should get employment in some experiment station and learn the fundamentals of the broad subject. Logging and woods work will aid him greatly in forming a background for all the research he is to take up. Besides this, work with older men will teach him how to get along with associates older than himself.

Before I took up research work with the Minnesota State Forest Service and after my graduation from Iowa State, I worked for a time with the Federal Forest Service on the Superior National Forest on fire prevention and mapping projects.

Reconnaissance work was my next step into the public relations field, and soon I broke into the Minnesota Department of Public Relations, where I am now stationed.

During all that time I was called upon to do educational work along forestry lines, and my forestry training proved to be very useful. Again my ability to contact persons of all kinds helped me to hold my position.