Why the Forestry Summer Camp?

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SUMMER CAMP

AND I SAY
THE ONE WRAPPED
WITH WIRE IS
NORTH......
Year in and year out, Iowa State University forestry students have migrated many miles to different parts of our country to attend their respective summer camps. Last summer, 48 students and three faculty members traveled 780 miles to take part in the second consecutive forestry camp held at Winter Park, Colorado. Many wonderful days were spent surveying forestry in this beautiful country of high, timbered ridges and open range country of the lower altitudes. Long days in the field, cold winds and sometimes rain, hail and snow were to be tolerated. Several reasons for conducting these camps will be considered here.

In many areas, the purpose of forestry camp is to develop proficiencies in techniques and to gain a knowledge of the principles or theories behind these field techniques. The camps are usually conducted by schools found in areas where a special type of forest prevails. Ponderosa Pine forests and the Southern Pine plantations are good examples of these specific field procedures and operations applicable to their native forest types.

Iowa has no such highly specialized timber industry. Consequently, Iowa State’s approach to her forestry camp is very different from these many forestry schools because of the lack of the handy outdoor laboratories. Iowa State Forestry therefore takes a different, quite unique approach to the idea of a summer camp.

Why the Forestry Summer Camp?

by

JOHN DeVilbuss

(Note: This article is based on information received in an interview with Dr. George Thomson, October 30, 1962 at the Iowa State University campus in Ames, Iowa and on personal experience from attendance of the 1962 Forestry Summer Camp held in Winter Park, Colorado 1962.)
Can't get the hang of it.

That rock was here just the other day.

"Our Leaders"
Many forestry students leave the “corn country” and enter the thousands of acres of forests for the first time. They go to camp not only to use the staff compass and volume tables, but, also to observe foresters and forestry at work. This, then, is their introduction to real forestry.

Unique to Iowa State Forestry camps is a course which encompasses the individual fields of management, policy, economics, utilization, silviculture and mensuration. This course, Forest Operations, combines these fields into a two-credit course combining the above fields into a single “multiple-use” consideration of the forest.

Along with Forest Operations are courses in mensuration, silviculture, and utilization. Mensuration brings the forestry students about as close as they will come to specialized field procedure. “Doing it” aids the students to understand the “why” of the cruising, scaling, surveying and mapping of this field.

Silviculture, like Forest Operations, shows there is more than the separate parts of a forest, but a closely-woven forest system. The science of the forest community is stressed rather than that of the individual tree.

If forestry is to survive it must pay for itself in one way or another. Utilization of harvestable timber is one of these methods. In utilization, the harvesting and milling of trees into wood products is examined. Competition among the various forest enterprises and the problems found in dealing with people are considered. These summer camp courses lay the groundwork for many future classroom principles and a complete understanding of these courses depends upon an understanding of their field applications.

If forestry is a student’s field, he should find the work enjoyable and interesting. However, as is often the case, the neophyte forester may find forestry not to his liking. Summer camp may be the realization that he was not cut out to be a forester. This point is stressed time and again. If forestry is not your field, find out now and look for the profession which will be more to your interests. Forestry camp can be a wonderful summer of enjoyable work in the out-of-doors or it can be an unbearable eight-week concentration camp. As much as camp is meant to stimulate interests in all students, it is also meant to cull out the misfits who find the work bitter and unrewarding.

By attending roving summer camps rather than those permanently established, Iowa State students are exposed to the types of forestry characteristic of different areas. At least two different summer camp locations are represented across the four-year range of students. Those students attending the different camps are continually influencing each others ideas with their own interpretations of forestry problems respective of their camp location. A more liberally educated student results.

Staff members are also affected by different camps. To teach students in these different areas, the staff must be acquainted with the specific forestry of that area and how it compares and contrasts with other areas of forestry interest. Thus, the staff members by teaching camp courses throughout the different areas of our country bring back new ideas and methods to the classroom.

People in the many areas visited by our camps hear about Iowa State and its foresters. Many of these people would not otherwise be aware of the excellent forestry being taught at this corn belt university. This is indeed an advantage in placing our senior graduates in good positions across the country as has been done since Iowa State’s first forestry camp back in the summer of 1914.

The reasons for a camp may be all well and good, but, the means for realizing these goals and the goals themselves must be of the highest professional order, if the camp’s existence is to be justified. Iowa State’s summer camp objectives are three-fold. One, to allow the student means by which he can decide whether or not to continue in forestry. Two, to give the forestry student a knowledge of basic forestry science. Three, to encourage the student to develop an ability to communicate with his fellow students, the staff and the world about him. Without this ability to communicate with others, all else is futile.

Let’s adjourn to The Fog Horn