1966 Summer Camp

Rick Hall
Iowa State University

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It has been said that two things in life are inevitable—death and taxes. For forestry students there is a third inevitable—summer camp.

This fact of life brought together 54 Iowa State forestry students for two months this past summer on the Leubrecht Forest 30 miles northeast of Missoula, Montana.

Camp was to open on June 5th and miraculously enough, by late that afternoon the last of the summer students had arrived. The trek west was accomplished in a myriad of fashions; some came by train, others road either with their thumb as a ticket or in their own (or a friend's) conveyance. For many it was a constant battle with rainy weather and faulty fuel pumps.

The first thing upon arrival was to set up "housekeeping" in our summer homes. With three to four men in each living unit it was, of course, a question of who got first claim on which drawers and what bed. That settled, it became a group project to coerce the small wood-burning stove in each cabin to function correctly.

Then came that first trip across the Camp grounds (a trip often repeated on many a cold Montana morning while still half asleep) to the washroom. It suddenly became apparent that we all had one thing in common—the desire to take a shower, just when everyone else had decided to do so too. Rather than set a "shower stacking" record of 54 men under two showers, each one learned to adjust his shower schedule so as to outsmart his compatriots and be first to the available space and hot water.

Supper that first day turned out to be our first educational experience of the summer. We found our cook, Mrs. Caldwell, was determined to turn us into good husband bait during our service on KP while expecting us growing boys to sympathize with a budget that allowed us but two small glasses of milk and occasional seconds on the main dish at each meal.

Getting up for 7:00 a.m. breakfast the next morning proved to be no less of an education for many.

Classes, we found, were to be administered on a two section basis—both sections to be attired in their yellow hats "while working in the woods or visiting mills where they are required." We also soon found there was a spy in the group—we were not all foresters. Would you believe one EE? There was one. We all accepted it though—sort of as a form of cultural exchange program for a member of an underdeveloped department.

Dean Bolle of the University of Montana was once again on hand to greet his midwest guests and to begin our formal studies with an orientation tour of the surrounding countryside.

Then began eight weeks of study in the four courses endemic to summer camp.

Dr. Bensend's wood utilization course found us splitting our time between learning of the basic wood conversion processes in classroom lectures and viewing these processes in action at some of the area's mills and plants.

Among the numerous places we visited was the Waldorf-Hoerner pulp and paper operations. This plant's utilization of waste chips from the surrounding sawmills has been a significant step in forwarding the prosperity of the Montana timber industry. In addition to touring their conventional set-up we also observed under construction a new continuous digester which will turn sawdust into pulp, no doubt furthering the company's contribution to the economy of the region. Whatever the case, W-H made a profound contribution to us students. They treated us to a cafeteria style dinner (all one could eat) at a restaurant well known for its fine food.

Del Conner's sawmill south of Missoula held some intriguing sights, one of which was their rapid production of 2x4's. This company utilizes small logs and veneer bolt cores in an operation which feeds logs in one end, passes them through a four-sided beaver and a dimension slicer, and spews out completed 2x4's at the other end, all under guidance of a single operator.

Cruising timber on Leubrecht!!
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the woods, some bewildered but never completely lost

cruising crews, and many long hours compiling data.

Starting from a basic introduction to the tools of

the trade (abney level, staff compass, raincoat, etc.)

we worked our way into the subject.

First came some curve layouts that tested our skill

with compass, chain, and computation of formulas.

Then it was out to the woods for the real thing—

boundary closures and reconnaissance from which

we developed a control map and a pollen allergy.

About the middle of the summer a logger obliged

us by upsetting his truck and spilling his load of logs

near camp where they were available for some in-

struction and practice in scaling.

The big task was running a simulated inventory

analysis on a nearby acreage of trees for Dr. Thom-

son and the Leubrecht Goldbrick Lumber Company.

During the data collecting part of this problem two

of the crews accomplished an astounding mathemati-

cal feat; they managed to have the parallel lines

they were running cross over one another.

Dr. Gathrum attended the first four weeks of camp
to teach the forest biology course which introduced

us to some of the environmental manipulations prac-
ticed in forestry, taught us the process of keying out

unknown vegetation, and demonstrated how not to

try to turn a bus around on a muddy mountain road;

it was a good thing there was a caterpillar tractor

handy to pull out the wrecker when it got stuck, too.

A typical afternoon in this class might have found

us tramping over a clear cut area identifying animal
droppings and checking out tree regeneration or it

might just of well have found us out chipping away

in a soil pit and picking flowers to place on the

resulting grave-like mound of dirt.

Dr. Hopkins arrived for the second four weeks to

teach the Forest operations course. He acquainted

us with the workings of the several governmental

agencies that administer forest lands.

The Forest Service was presented to us at several

levels. At the district level we were instructed on the

managerial chains of command, looked at problems

in forest recreation planning, and found that rangers’
dogs are not to be trusted especially if you’re a red

haired person sitting on the ground and slightly re-

sembling a fire plug. At the regional level we learned

about several other aspects, among them being pub-

licity and education work being carried on by the

Forest Service. We also met with some of their pro-

tection (Smoke Jumper headquarters) and research

work.

The workings of the Park Service were presented
to us as a part of a scenic tour of Glacier National

Park, a place that was often toured on weekends by

many of the boys who were wildlife enthusiasts.

The new Bureau of Outdoor Recreation showed us

some plans they have for interdepartmental develop-
ment of recreation facilities. A part of our visit with

the BOR took us to a high pass in the Lolo trail which

Lewis and Clark had once followed. There, at what

is called the Indian post-office, we left a note so that

all those who would later visit there might know the

intrepid Iowa State foresters had preceded them.

Of course, not all our time was spent in class.

Nearly every evening the troops would assemble for

a game of volleyball (played under jungle rules until

the net was raised), football, or softball. We even

had some outside competition from a nearby Forest

Service district.

Another source of interest was a horseshoe tour-

nament held near the end of camp. This even saw

the champion of previous years, Dr. Thomson, yield

his title to a new challenger, Norv Baker.

The area’s rivers held an attraction for the fisher-

men and “skiny” floaters among us. They also,

thanks to our industrious trout enthusiasts, provided

camp with a couple of fish dinners.

Once a week there were movies shown with re-

freshments available from Seth’s pop machine. And

there were always those certain nights when some

of the fellows went to get their tanks filled at Hap’s

gas station.

All in all, it was an interesting, educational sum-

mer that will be long remembered by those of us who

were there. Of the three inevitables it comes out on
top; cheaper than taxes and easier to survive than
death.

“Now, when you see the rangers dog approaching . . .”

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