Count'n Redwoods

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Exposure To Urban Forestry
Jim Jaminet

It was getting late in spring quarter before the City of Des Moines, Iowa decided to hire me for the summer to work on an oak wilt survey. I then became aware that three other ISU foresters would also be employed by the Des Moines Forestry Department. We were all old summer camp companions so no introductions were necessary. Dave Binegar, Pat Lynch, and myself chose to find an apartment in Des Moines and Raldo Schneider, the best tree climber I ever saw, commuted from Ames every day, or almost every day. Also employed were Dennis Schulte, an entomology major, and Dan Hertel, an entering freshman in forestry at ISU.

The first day on the job we divided the city into four sections while looking at what seemed to be the largest city map in the USA. Our instructions were to cover every square block of the city, (approximately 60 square miles) and count all oak trees, sample the unhealthy ones, keep accurate records, and count the remaining elm trees. The data collected included DBH, % crown, species, health, location on property, and at times an estimate on removal cost. That first day I was sure the three months alloted for the job would never possibly be enough time.

The typical work day hours were from 7:30 to 4:00 and included various experiences such as: discovering dead end streets with several square blocks of drainage ditches and woods, encountering mean dogs and ill-tempered residents, finding no house numbers for address purposes, flat tires, overheated vehicles, and either too much or not enough rain.

It all passed very quickly and at last we had only office work left to do and one week to do it in. To our amazement, the job was completed but only with days of overtime, watermelon in the park, coffee at Dahls, and noontime poker games.

Overall, it was a very educational summer in that we learned about tree diseases, city government, the scope of survey planning, unhappy residents as well as helpful and interested residents, and the general picture of urban forestry.

Count’n Redwoods
Steve Jones

For the past two summers, I worked for Hamman, Jensen, Wallen, and Associates, a forestry consulting firm in Oakland, California.

The job I worked on was in Sequoia National Park, California. We were inventorying and mapping every Sequoia tree, from seedling to fallen tree, logs, snags and stumps, in several of the back country groves of the park.

When the job was described as arduous they were not kidding. Every grove we mapped was in the backcountry, and many had no trails to them. One particular grove required bushwacking up a 100 percent plus slope through manganita for a mile and a half.

We worked a shift of 10 days on and 4 days off. Much of the time we were cooking our own meals which meant we were up at dawn to cook breakfast, in the field until 6 p.m., and back to camp to cook supper, which meant we worked from sun up until sun down.

This past summer we had two women on the crew, which got us a front page story in the local newspaper. The reporter was most interested in whether we all washed up together and slept in the same tent. We did.

My days off were spent in the tourist portion of the park. I also traveled to Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay area to visit relatives.

The work was hard, but that is what life is all about, and I cannot think of anything I would have rather done.