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Recreation on Forest Lands

By Arthur H. Carhart

Before forests were designated as definite forest area, recreation was present on the lands which were later included by such acts as administrative units. The recreational use of certain of the forests in England, was the prime reason for their being set aside as Crown Forests. Great areas, partly tree covered, and partly open meadow land, were included in these great reservations and within their borders, only the king or the nobility could follow the chase and there find recreation.

During more recent times in our own country, a certain amount of recreation has been present in all forest areas wher-

Trout Fishing on one of our National Forests.

ever located. Jackson Hole, of the Teton Forest, is known the world over as a huntsman's paradise. Estes Park, surrounded on three sides by the Colorado National Forest, is equally well known. People seeking recreation recognise only the opportunities for play out of doors, and do not stop to analyze administrative systems or man-made limits, and go into tree covered mountain lands and lake territories wherever they may be, regardless of boundary lines or other organization features.

Twenty-four
In so doing, these seekers after recreation in the out-of-doors, invade our forest lands whether they be State, County, Municipal or of larger National proportions. There at once come problems of taking care of this use of forest territory, so that the other activities usually present in forest land will be interfered with as little as possible, and the greatest aggregate return secured from all uses.

Today, the human use of the forest is recognized as one of the major returns possible to the owners, who are the people. During 1920, more than 190,000 people visited the National Forests of the State of Colorado, securing something over 3,000,000 man-days of recreation in that use. More than 250,000 people passed over one road leading into the Angeles National Forest in California.

When a use of this magnitude develops, there are present some pretty serious problems both from the view-point of the landscape architect and from the viewpoint of the forester. The forester as such is primarily interested in the practice of forestry, the growth of timber for use in the production of lumber and other wood products, the watershed protection afforded by the forest growth and the grazing of cattle. The human use of forest lands is a fourth use which involves not the principles of forestry in its planning so much as it does landscape architecture which nevertheless affects the management of the forests for these other uses. It is in this field that the forester need concern himself particularly, in order that in handling forest areas for the production of timber and protection of watershed, he may properly plan for the setting in of the recreation use, so there will be little interference in the economic production of the woodlands.

The landscape architect has a somewhat different field, in that care should be taken to so plan the area which will be used for recreation that it will properly serve human use, and he must look primarily to this phase before he takes into consideration the other side of the problems. He must apply the fundamental principles of landscape architecture rather than the principles of forestry. He must consider also the economic phases of forestry and endeavor to co-relate the human use with the production of commodities as one of the fundamental principles of all landscape work is the proper balancing and co-relating of all activities. The forester may not look on the plan of the landscape man with any dread whatever, for, because of this training, the landscape architect will always have in mind the service side—the production side of the forest—as well as the human use side.
There are then two distinct fields of activity in the forest work relative to recreational development and use. The first must be approached by the forester from the angle of "How is Recreation going to affect the fundamental purpose of the forest, namely, Timber Production and Watershed Protection?" On the other hand, the Landscape Architect must approach the problem with the question: "How shall we adapt this land surface and its conditions to a use made by human beings?" Each has as a back ground the fundamental principle of a science and art, each is distinct, and yet each must concern itself with the proper handling of recreation on forest lands of all types. In order to fully accomplish this work, landscape architects expecting to practice in the field of rural recreational design should have a sympathetic understanding of the broad phases of forestry and the goal to which the forester is working. The forester should have some outlook on the ideas and ideals of landscape architecture and what it is striving to do when it plans to adapt large surfaces of rural landscape to the use of human beings. There must be this understanding to bring this about. It is very desirable, therefore, to have all foresters who are going into the active field of the profession become somewhat familiar with the art of landscape architecture during school years, at least so they have an understanding of its ideals and objectives. The same is true of the landscape architect in regard to technical forestry. While the landscape architect should never attempt to step into the field of forestry as a forester, he should know what the forest man hopes to attain in his plans of work, and his programs for advancement of forestry, in order that he may adequately understand the other side of the problem where strictly forestry and strictly landscape may come in conflict in plans.

The outlook for this new use of the forest shows that at the present time there is a use present in recreation which needs immediate consideration. The future looms big in possibilities and probabilities for this use. A decade ago, less than 300,000 people came to the state of Colorado, who during their visit entered National Forest Lands. During the past season very nearly four times that number were in the forests. If the next decade continues in the same ratio, by 1930 Colorado will be entertaining 4,500,000 recreation users in her National Forests, who will be getting at the present rate of use, something over 12,000,000 days of recreation per year. If a 10-hour day in the out-of-doors is worth $1.00 to each of these visitors, the total return in recreation from the forests of this one state will attain a magnitude of $12,000,000 worth of play, measured on this inadequate basis. It is possible that this use will return greater aggregate value from certain areas, or even total forests, within the near
future than any other forest product. The great feature of this is that this use can continue in an even greater quantity year after year, and with proper planning and direction will never dissipate the resources. Looking on scenery does not detract

from its permanent value, and the week's vacation secured by one individual in forest lands does not prevent another person

*Twenty-seven*
Finally, this recreational use is the one great, direct, universal, personal use which can be made by every person in the United States of forest lands. We cannot all be timber operators nor can from getting an equal time of play in the same area but a few days later.

"On the trail" in the National Forest.

we all be grazing men or owners of irrigation systems dependent upon forest cover of watershed, but each one of us can be a vacation user of forest lands if we will but grasp the opportunity. Because this is the one great, direct, personal use, it offers the opportunity to interest all people in forests. Once interested in this personal use these same people will become interested in the other phases of forest activities, and through recreation more than any other medium, the forester will in the future present the needs of forestry and sell to the people of the United States the idea of proper support of forest industries and forestry in general.

Forest recreation is with us to stay. People would not stay out of the forests even if they were posted to keep out trespassers. In fact, if a trespass sign were put up it might lend zest to the invasion of the forest by a recreationist, and it might mean an even greater attendance than at present when they are welcome to their own forest lands. It therefore behooves the forester to look forward to a reasonable increase of the recreation use in forests, and the co-relation of that use with the more commercial uses found in wood production and watershed protection. It is equally important for the professional landscape architect to rec-
ognize the need of more specially trained men to handle the planning of recreation use on great areas of rural landscape, whether they be parks or forests. Such planning by such men is needed regardless of whether they are the small forest lands or park places of a municipality or the greater, broader land surfaces of National Parks or Forests where millions of acres are involved in a single, comprehensive study.

Centuries ago, the first forests of the old world were used primarily for recreation purposes. They were play grounds of kings and princes. Our modern economic life has made us all look upon forests as producers of necessities for the industries. It is entirely proper that this economic phase should be emphasized, but we are entering into another stage in forest development, and that stage brings back into the economic forest lands of today the use made many years ago by the nobility—the human use—and makes that resource available for all people of the country. The plans of forest systems of the future will emphasize first the production of timber and protection of watershed, but will also recognize this other use—the human use—so that the greatest possible return from all sources will be made available.

Twenty-nine