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OREGON FOREST FIRE FIGHTERS SERVICE PROGRAM

National Program

The Forest Fire Fighters Service on the order of James M. Landis, National Director of the Office of Civilian Defense under the Facility Security Program is for the purpose of providing additional fire protection to forests and adjacent areas.

Oregon Objectives

In Oregon, the major objective of the Forest Fire Fighters Service program will be to aid and improve Oregon's cooperative program of fire suppression and prevention which operated so effectively in 1942. Recruitment of FFFS membership will be a major contribution to this objective.

State Leadership

The State Coordinator is the leader of the program in Oregon as a representative of the Forest Defense Council, composed of members of major protection agencies in the state. The entire program will be guided according to plans adopted by this council. In the actual development of the program, the State Coordinator will be assisted by designated representatives of each protection agency. Since actual recruitment of members is a function of the Office of Civilian Defense, state-wide programs will be developed in close cooperation with the Oregon State Defense Council.

County Organization

As suggested by the Oregon Forest Defense Council, the program in each county will be the responsibility of a county fire defense committee representing major interests outside of urban areas. These committees work in close cooperation with the county defense council and other interested agencies. Because of the wide variation in conditions from county to county, there necessarily will be local variations in the program.

County fire defense committees have been appointed by the State Coordinator with the approval of state administrators of the different agencies. Membership has been held to a minimum. The organization of these committees can be changed or enlarged if it is to the advantage of the county program.

Membership

FFFS membership in Oregon will be strictly on the volunteer basis.

1. Permanent and Seasonal Personnel

Information from some other states indicates that membership in the FFFS is mandatory on the part of all permanent and part-time employees of protection agencies with the justification that in an emergency, the FFFS would function as a part of other civilian defense activities. There is no need for this general policy in Oregon as the forested areas are generally distinct from the urban areas. There would be some advantages in membership for certain permanent employees to assure the proper functioning of protection activities outside of the urban areas in case of a general emergency. Certainly membership in the FFFS should not be denied a permanent worker who might wish the recognition of participating in the local civilian defense activity. Obviously, he would be much more

useful performing duties in his own field than in some other field of civilian defense activity.

2. Manpower Reservoir

The major objective of the FFFS as set up on the national basis is to provide a reservoir of trained manpower from which protection agencies could draw fire fighters. Upon being called, these men would be under the employment of the protection agencies and under their direction. With the present shortage of manpower for all types of work in Oregon, it is unlikely that this phase of the program can be developed to a stage of major importance. Any source of manpower from towns or cities willing to accept employment on a part-time basis and willing to be transported to any given area will depend on local conditions and the resourcefulness of the personnel of the protection agencies and county defense councils.

3. High School Trainees

Membership can well be extended to all high school students signing up for the high school training program. This could include not only those actually hired by protection agencies, but also those who complete the training but find jobs elsewhere.

The possibility of organizing volunteer crews from class surpluses and other student volunteers should not be overlooked. These might function as crews during the late spring and early fall, and in some cases, the crews could be kept active during the summer months, depending on the local situation and available time for leadership from protection agencies' personnel.

4. Rural Fire Crews

It is not anticipated that the Oregon farm fire protection organization would come under the FFFS as an entire organization; nevertheless, there will be many individual members who might wish to join. Membership would be particularly applicable to those residents of the rural areas who volunteer to assist in controlling fires within protection boundaries. In some areas, these volunteers have been a major source of the personnel for forest protection. Work in rural areas must be planned to provide protection of farms as well as forests. To call all trained fire fighters from a community away from their farms might lead to disaster.

5. Loggers and Mill Workers

Since these men are subject to call on any fire, it would seem only fair that they be extended membership in the FFFS if they so desire. Again, as with the permanent employees of the protection agencies, membership would give these people the possibility of active participation in the local civilian defense program.

6. Community Fire Crews

In Oregon there are many towns and cities where the residents have a distinct interest in adjacent forest and agricultural land. In many towns, it is the custom for business and professional men to assist in controlling fires in adjacent areas without the aid of any formal organization.

It should be possible to perfect an organization of these groups under the FFFS which would result in more effective service because of organization and training, and at the same time give the volunteers the recognition of belonging to a national civilian defense organization. Sponsoring organizations might be:

- a. Sportsmen.
- b. American Legion.
- c. Service clubs and fraternal organization.
- d. Older members of the Future Farmers of America and 4-H Clubs.
- e. Older Boy Scouts.

The organization of these groups would be possible chiefly because of their interest in public welfare. In most cases, they should be organized with the objective of assisting with all fires in both agricultural and forest lands. The attraction of wages for work within protection boundaries would be a minor consideration but should not be overlooked. Certain individuals may be willing to work for protection agencies for several days at a time. It should be possible to develop many specialists, such as emergency lookouts; patrolmen; machine, pump, and truck operators; tool repairmen; cooks; etc.

Women

Josephine County achieved national recognition for the organization and training of canteen crews last year. This could well be done in other areas. Women could also be interested in other work--timekeeping, emergency lookouts, warehouse duties, light truck driving, etc.

Requirements for Recognition

The national program establishes 12 hours of training as a minimum requirement for membership. This will necessarily be modified to suit local conditions--many loggers, ranchers, and others because of past experience will be more useful than inexperienced persons with many times 12 hours of training. Arm bands will be provided by the national Office of Civilian Defense.

Individual Responsibility

The success of this program will depend on the efforts of the individual personnel of the protection agencies within the different counties. The program must necessarily be developed according to available personnel for training and for organization for training and for maintaining continued interest throughout the fire season. County defense councils can be of real assistance in this work, but it will be the responsibility of the local protection agencies to guide this assistance to present the greatest possible measure of protection to the community.

Arthur King
State Coordinator FFFS
O. S. C. Extension Service
Corvallis, Oregon
January 9, 1943