



Oregon Department of Forestry Records Scope and Content

By Gary D. Halvorson, 2008

The records of the Department of Forestry consist of correspondence, meeting minutes, technical and informational reports, publications, maps, photographs, legal case files, speech transcripts, motion picture films, plans, and plat books dating from 1914 to the present. Although the Department of Forestry has existed since 1911, few series contain records prior to 1933. The 1935 State Capitol Fire destroyed most of the department's existing records (surviving pre-1935 records are characterized by fire and water damage). The records document most Department of Forestry responsibilities and activities from 1933-1970; many records created after 1970 remain in the department's custody.

Other forestry-related federal, state, and private organizations are represented in this accession. Included are the United States Forest Service (1929-1983); Protection Associations (1933-1957, 1969-1984); the Forest Products Laboratory and its advisory committees (1941-1962); Junior Forest Council (1939); Forest Defense Council (1942-1945); Keep Oregon Green Association (1941-1961), 1970); and the Pacific Northwest Regional Commission (1974-1981).

Records of the pre-World War II period (1933-1940) document the use of New Deal programs (under the Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Reconstruction Administration) to hire forestry workers; the organization and administration of protection associations; the evolution of forest laws; the development of fire-fighting equipment and techniques; the construction of the Salem Department of Forestry building complex; the creation and administration of the Elliott State Forest; and the rehabilitation of major forest fire areas, most notably the Tillamook Burn (1933).

Records of the World War II period (1940-1946) document the establishment of an Aircraft Warning System; the growth of the Forest Products laboratory; Federal Communications Commission hearings to determine radio frequency allocations; the Forest Practices Act (1942); wartime forest fire protection; the movement of Japanese and Nisei to unforested areas; the "Red Hat" emergency employment program; the implementation of civil defense plans; and the protection of forests from sabotage.

Records of the post-war period (1946-1984) document the expansion of forestry research and forest genetics; the development of forestry and logging safety programs; the organization of fire schools; the protection of endangered species and their habitats; the regulation of the use of pesticides and herbicides; the termination of the Klamath Tribe Reservation; the Oxbow Fire and resultant legal actions; the inventory and classification of forest lands; long-range forest

planning; the establishment of wilderness areas; the use of convicts for forest labor; the marketing of forest products; the development of new uses for forest products; and the development of a natural resources geographic information system.

The records of the Department of Forestry were originally accessioned into the State Archives under accession numbers: 88A-14; 87A-46; 87A-36; 84A-45; 79A-90; and 63A-63. Currently, most of the records of the Department of Forestry consist of more than 101 cubic feet, dating from 1914-1984, and are identified by accession number 87A-36. A small amount of records was added in 1997 with the accession number 97A-8. An additional 9 cubic feet of records were added in 2004 with accession number 2004A-019.

Current Department of Forestry programs and records are described in a records retention schedule produced by the Oregon State Archives.



Buz Wagner and Jim Walker pose for a picture during a lull in the fire fighting efforts on an Eastern Lane Fire Protection Association fringe area fire in 1938. (Department of Forestry Records, Miscellaneous Photographs, 97A-008, Walker Retirement)