

THE CHALLENGE FOR FORESTRY IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

Dr. James G. Newman*

As an introduction to my colleague's presentation, Bob Engelhard has spent a portion of the past two summers studying the activities of foresters in the state of Baden-Wurttemberg in the Black Forest of West Germany. The new direction which German forestry has taken in recent years has been an eye-opener for those of us who have had the opportunity to witness these trends. It is most appropriate because German forestry has provided a great deal of our forestry heritage.

The public and professional reactions to present environmental conditions have prompted the title of this presentation. The environmental movement in the United States probably had its greatest response for the masses about four years ago. The first Earth Day occurred in March 1970. The planners and participants in this Earth Day or Earth Week involved many of the natural resources professionals but foresters were notably absent., Foresters often appeared to be fighting a defensive battle to justify many of their practices. I recall Lee James (the Chairman of the Forestry Department at Michigan State University) at a Wisconsin-Michigan Society of American Foresters Section Meeting saying that foresters should become more involved in the environmental movement. We should show how forestry practices are a positive element in environmental management. Since then we've had controversies develop even more strongly in regard to clearcutting on the Bitterroot and Monongahela National Forests. These situations continue to deteriorate. The forester's image in the eyes of some of the public is not a protector of the environment. We have objectives dear to our heart which we have often attempted to achieve without regard for the other aspects of forest usage. Most of us can justify our forestry practices, but i feel we have a degree of tunnel vision.

Such channelled vision is quite natural and easily explained in light of traditional forestry training. Certain aspects of forest use are still paramount in our thinking. This early tradition had its roots with the father of American Forestry, Gifford Pinchot. His ideas involved conservation and wise land use as opposed to his contemporary, John Muir. Muir was an advocate of preservation as opposed to Pinchot's production oriented philosophies. Pinchot's philosophy has continued over the years and was reinforced in 1944 at the Society of American Foresters' policy meeting. In that year H. H. Chapman prevailed to maintain fiber production as the main goal of forestry as opposed to stress on a multiple-use approach to forest management. My own forestry education which began in 1947 is colored by this tradition. Many foresters have changed their attitudes.

*Faculty, College of Natural Resources, University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point

Our summer camp faculty this past summer was quite impressed by the attempts of the Chequamegon National Forest to achieve multiple use management. These faculty members included other than forestry disciplines, They often have been critical of forestry policies. The challenge is still before us . There is evidence that pressures are being exerted on foresters to change their current policies. One example of this is the creation of the Governor's Committee to Review Timber Management Policies on State-owned Lands here in Wisconsin. This committee was motivated by the concerns expressed by a botany professor on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus . He prevailed upon the Governor to look into this issue because of a threat to cut the so-called "Big Block" area on the Flambeau State Forest. The individual involved was concerned with preserving natural areas and scientific areas. In his opinion. this wa.s a prime valu.e to be saved, The Governor called this Committee together, We have been deliberating the question for several years. Although the results of the committee's work has not been officially released, it is safe to say that many of the recommendations are oriented towards recreational land management, urban forestry, efficient use of high-quality forest sites for timber and better wood utilization. We know that in the year 1900 the amount of land designated per person on a world-wide basis was estimated at 24.4 acres. In 1970 this figure had declined to slightly over 10 acres; a fantastic reduction in only 70 years. The United States, with a large resource, has been called upon to supply much more to the world than our population would indicate. The present food situation is certainly indicative. At the same time, developed countries are enjoying more an.d more leisure time, putting an. additional strain on. the resource base to help provide for this social need. We must be innovative in order to continue to supply Americans with their fiber needs of about one ton per person per year while still providing aesthetic and recreational experiences. The U.S. Forest Service is involved in. this question in the initiation of a wilderness system in the eastern. national forests. We talk in terms of single use areas simply because of the area we have in contrast with a country like West Germany. We will probably be stressed even more. We will have to capitalize on the experiences of our German Peers. American foresters have primarily been experts in regard to trees; the luxury of such a simple existence is no longer available to u.s We must relate to people as well. This is forcing the evolution of new areas of our discipline such a.s forest recreation and urban forestry. Some practicing foresters are taking positions in these a.rea.s without prior background or even a keen interest, but rather as an opportunity or short-cut up the ladder of advancement. These disciplines will not be truly mature until we get dedicated people with good preparation. This is the challenge to forestry educators. The German. experience is one wa.y of answering this challenge,

Bob Engelhard will now discuss his impressions of how the German Forest Service is attempting to cope with this charge.