

NEW DEVELOPMENTS AT MEDFORD FOREST NURSERY

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A bare root nursery to serve Southern Oregon and Northern California has been in the back of some people's minds for a long time. As early as the mid-sixties, surveys were being taken and prospective sites were being researched. The need was finally forced to the forefront when increased emphasis was placed on reforestation within the National Forest system.

Basically, a Western Nursery Study conducted by a Task Force was begun in early 1975 and completed in July of that same year. This study vividly displayed that Forest Service (R-6) needs for planting stock would increase to about 92 million by 1980.

Where would the seedlings come from? These seedlings could only come from the existing nurseries and they are:

FEDERAL NURSERIES:

Wind River – Region 6	22 MM
Bend – Region 6	10 MM
Coeur D'Alene – Region 1	9 MM
Humboldt – Region 5	6 MM

STATE NURSERIES:

Dwight Phipps, Oregon	1 MM
Webster, Washington	4 MM

CONTAINERIZED STOCK:

Private	6 MM
F.S. Beaver Cr. – Region 6	<u>4 MM</u>
	67 MM

In addition, the Bureau of Land Management in Southern Oregon and three (3) National Forests in California needed additional high quality planting stocks and they brought the total to about 78 million leaving a deficit of 25 million. This is the figure that started the processes for the Medford Forest Nursery. Recent additions and reductions in production at other nurseries has boosted Medford to between 35 and 40 million.

The Medford Forest Nursery will serve six (6) National Forests and the Bureau of Land Management in Southern Oregon and three (3) National Forests in Southern California.

There will be ten (10) or more species of trees grown with Douglas-fir making up about 46% of the production. The pines; Ponderosa, white, sugar, and Jeffery will be about 41% and others; true firs etc., the balance.

Total capacity will be about 41.1 million annually at 25 seedlings per square foot. The nursery will be on a three year rotation, growing two-year-old seedlings and a cover crop with soil amendments being added in the cover crop year.

The first crop of seedlings is scheduled for sowing in April, 1978, with about 10 million in the first attempt. Maximum capacity will be reached in increments of 10 million each with 20 million being sown in 1979 and 35 million and probably more being sown in 1980. The first crop is scheduled to be harvested in December 1979 and January-February 1980. One of the strong points for this nursery location is the apparent flexibility it will have in lifting. The normal lifting time will occur during the period when the seedlings will be in their deepest dormancy. Most nursery managers can see this advantage over their normal one to two fire seasons of four to eight weeks per year.

Soils are sandy loams with high water percolation rates. The nursery does have an impervious layer of hard pan that is 2-5 feet under the soil surface. A contract has been written and will soon be let that will subsurface drain the entire seedling area. The subsurface water will be collected, sampled, treated if needed and recycled through the 100-104 acre foot reservoir that will store the irrigation water.

Water will be supplied from four sources. One irrigation district will supply approximately 765 acre feet of water, another irrigation district will serve as backup in case of failure of the first and there will be a water tie with the City of Medford that will serve for supplement water for frost control and domestic purposes on the Administrative Site. The fourth source is the previously mentioned, subsurface drainage water.

Total cost of the project will be between 8-10 million dollars. The 255 acreage was purchased for just under \$3000/acre and this is included in the total cost.

The first buildings will be constructed, beginning in September of 1977. Final completion of all buildings and other improvements is scheduled for 1980-1981.