

GREETINGS FROM J-P: INDIANA'S NORTHERNMOST STATE FOREST NURSERY

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INTRODUCTION

Indiana's two state forest nurseries are distinctively different in geographic location, soil conditions, topography, and certain operational features. Yet collectively, they spearhead the reforestation program of our Division.

During conference proceedings, you were able to witness certain aspects of our southern nursery operation at Vallonia. To fulfill your understanding of Indiana's state nursery system, I would like to supplement that experience with a brief synopsis of background and operational information on Vallonia's counterpart to the north.

BACKGROUND

Jasper-Pulaski State Nursery (J-P) originated with the establishment of the Indiana Conservation Laws in the Acts of 1919. These Acts charged the Indiana Division of Forestry with the responsibility of establishing, operating, and maintaining nurseries for the production of reforestation stock. This stock was to be sold to landowners, public and private at or below the cost of production. The Division was given the added responsibility of propagating trees and shrubs for various state institutions.

Over the next twenty years, the Division established four "permanent" nurseries to meet these goals. With the aid of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), J-P was the fourth and last state nursery to begin production in 1939. A Conscientious Objector Camp of approximately 100 men was established at this facility during World War II, to serve as a manual labor force.

Peak production years included the depression and post-war era. However, a sharp increase in demand for planting stock by the early fifties required a shift from the manual to a more expedient mechanical type operation.

OPERATIONS

Jasper-Pulaski is the northernmost of two state forest nurseries currently operating in Indiana. As yet, it is the only nursery completely owned by the state. Located near Medaryville, approximately 75 miles southeast of Chicago,

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in Pulaski county, it services the northern half of the state. It is uniquely situated within the Jasper-Pulaski State Fish and Wildlife Area.

J-P consists of approximately 140 acres, with 64 acres in productive use as follows:

- 28 acres - seedbeds (under permanent irrigation)
- 17 acres - transplant area (6 acres under permanent irrigation)
- 10 acres - Black walnut seed orchards
- 3 acres - wildlife shrub seed orchards
(Autumn Olive, Shrub Dogwood,
Amur Honeysuckle, Highbush Cranberry)
- 3 acres - willow propagation area
- 3 acres - lining-out stock (for state institutions)

The remaining acreage encompasses facility features, vacant (surplus) transplant sections, and roadways.

In addition to normal seedling production, J-P produces all windbreak stock for the state. It is grown primarily to check severe soil erosion problems in northwestern Indiana, but is distributed state-wide. A majority of the wildlife shrubs are produced here also, as well as many deciduous and coniferous timber species deemed suitable for various facets of reforestation in northern Indiana.

Current production is estimated at 8-10 million seedlings, encompassing some twenty-five species of trees and shrubs. A salable inventory of three million seedlings is projected for the 1980 shipping season. In turn, tree orders are expected to exceed the 3600-mark of last year. Unlike Vallonia, sales at J-P focus largely on the private landowner- though public consumption is steadily increasing.

The nursery hosts three Black Walnut superior seed orchards- one seedling, two grafted- ranging from five to fifteen years in age. Though frost is a frequent problem, they may one day help alleviate seed collection problems related to this valuable timber species.

In addition, seed orchards of several relevant wildlife species were established this Spring (1979) to facilitate seed collection efforts in this regard.

J-P continues to propagate larger trees and shrubs (lining-out stock) for various state institutions, as in the past, but on a smaller scale. Currently, several thousand stems are being grown for this purpose. Hundreds are shipped each year, ranging from two to eight feet in height.

The permanent labor force at J-P consists of:

- 1 - Property Manager
- 1 - Assistant Property Manager
- 1 - Salaried Crew Foreman (Inmates)
- 2 - Salaried Laborers
- 1 - Salaried Secretary

Inmate labor from the Medaryville Youth Camp (Indiana Dept. of Corrections) is actively utilized throughout the year for many nursery operations. Six to twenty men are required seasonally.

In addition, a seasonal labor force of 15-20 persons (mostly women) is employed to process nursery stock and perform other vital functions.

At present, three CETA personnel supplement this labor force and aid in the execution of relevant nursery operations and maintenance practices.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Recent years have seen the accomplishment of several major "rehab" projects at J-P. Among these were the installation of surface and sub-surface drainage tile in critical seedbed areas. Corresponding drainage ditches were installed to conduct this water into the Ryan Ditch- a principal drainage system transecting the western edge of the nursery.

The two nursery ditches are independent of the Ryan and equipped with electric pumps to transfer water into the Ryan (if necessary) during periods of high seedbed moisture.

The nursery has also experienced the construction of a new machine shed, complete with workshop. The shed itself serves as both a materials and equipment storage facility. The building replaced a former structure destroyed by fire several years ago.

Aside from "rehab" projects, a soils analysis was conducted last Fall (1978) by S.U.N.Y. at Syracuse as a first step toward correcting potential soil deficiencies at J-P. The soil here is classified as a Boswell fine loamy sand with 4% organic matter. Though an excellent nursery soil, it is not without its problems. This information is presently serving as a guide to help alleviate these problems.

Currently, plans are being made for a new and expanded irrigation system. The present system is old and no longer adequate for the increased production that has been experienced in recent years.

Simultaneously, preparations are being made for the construction of another much-needed building which would house additional equipment and materials.

Nursery personnel have been involved in a number of building, equipment, and grounds maintenance activities during inactive field periods. Though too numerous to mention, all are directed at maintaining and improving the property's appearance, condition, and efficiency of operation.

Hope that you will visit one day soon!