

Program 32 - CONSERVATION PROGRESS IN WISCONSIN - May 12, 1941SOMETHING TO DO AND TALK ABOUT FIRST

What measures are taken in your neighborhood to preserve and restore woods, wild life and soil?

What encouragement has the U. S. government given to conservation in the last few years?

Do you think the State Law requiring the teaching of conservation in schools is a step in advance? Why?

DO YOU KNOW THESE WORDS?

Natural resource
delinquent taxes

hazard
zoning

cooperative
selective cutting

LISTEN FOR THESE IDEAS

1. What advance has the state made in protective measures against fire? How many fire protection districts are there? In which one do you live?
2. What is meant by Cooperative Fire Districts?
3. Cities are zoned, that is there are areas for industries, residences, etc. Much of the state forested land is zoned also. What does zoning forest land mean?
4. What are county forests? How much land is in county forests? What is being done to improve these forests?
5. What is the woodlot exemption law?
6. How is the work of the Conservation Department supported?
7. What use is made of the fines imposed for violation of game laws?

SOMETHING TO DO AND TALK ABOUT LATER

1. What is the area of Wisconsin? How much is in forest land? Woodlots? Is there any virgin timber left?
2. Ask your lumber dealer where he gets most of his building timber.

Wisconsin School of the Air
Afield with Ranger Mac
May 12, 1941

PROGRESS IN CONSERVATION

(Being the last one for the year 1940-41)

Hello Boys and Girls:

Today brings our companionship on the trail to an end for another year, but the trail stretches on for each one of you into the summer and fall when again many of our trails will meet. Ranger Mac hopes your trail will be flower-bordered, with the air vibrant with bird songs, and made interesting with the sight of many animals that you have come to know better because of our trips afield. Nature's creatures are just like human beings - the better you know them the better you like them.

So, rejoice, Trailhitters, laugh and sing,
And just be glad for everything!
Be glad for morning and for night,
For sun and stars that laugh with light,
For trees that chuckle in the breeze,
For singing birds and humming bees -
Be one with them, and laugh along
And weave their gladness in your song.

There has been much progress in conservation even in your life-time of a few years. Many thousands of acres that were logged in a thoughtless manner, long before you were born, and then burned over repeatedly until there was little left - many thousands of these acres are now growing trees. Nature has provided some kinds of trees that travel far and wide - the popples and birches - these now cover many thousands of acres, hiding the stumps, and their leaves each year adding humus to the fire-scored soil. Wild flowers, once ruined by repeated fires, are now gradually coming back to these lands. These popples and birches act like a nurse crop, and gradually the more desirable trees like the pines and oaks and maples will creep under their protection and take possession of the land. It would take a long time for this to occur, but if we can keep out the red demon of the forests - fire - and do nothing else, nature would do it in time. But we cannot wait for nature to remedy our

careless treatment of the land. That is why the state has established tree nurseries to provide young trees to plant on this land and on land worn out by farming. Ranger Mac worked in one of these tree nurseries when it was just getting under way. We struggled to turn out a few thousand plants. Now the three state nurseries are turning out as many as 25,000,000 trees each year. These are being planted on state forest land; in county forests; on waste places on farms, in school forests, and for windbreaks and shelter belts. Much of this development has occurred during your life time. You would be interested to know that the boys and girls of the state planted 800,000 trees this year. About 275,000 of these were planted on school forests. There are 178 of these schools each owning 40 acres of land or more, where children each year can plant trees, and give of their time and strength to the beauty and value of the landscape. This has occurred during your life time. You know that Ranger Mac believes that unless boys and girls make some sacrifices, do some work, and give, they never come to know true values. That's true about trees, as well as home, school, country, or anything else. A tree planter is quite sure to be a tree protector. One who helps build up our landscapes is quite sure to be a protector of our landscapes. You boys and girls now in our schools must, in a few years, handle these gifts of nature - our soils, trees, birds, and all. It won't be long now before you will be out managing these and other affairs. That's why the closer you can get to these things now the better understanding you are sure to have. That is the reason why the teaching of conservation is required in the public schools of our state. This was started just a few years ago. This is one of the great forward steps that has taken in your lifetime. 6000 country schools - all teaching conservation - all teaching boys and girls that you can't take from nature all the time without cooperating with nature, any more than you can take continuously from the cookie jar all the time without occasionally putting something back.

We have mentioned thus far three forward steps that have taken place in conservation in our state - the large production of trees in our nurseries; the establishment of school forests and the planting of trees by boys and girls; and third, the teaching of conservation in our schools. Let's look for some more evidences of progress.

Probably the greatest piece of work done by the conservation department in recent years is the establishment of a fine system of protecting the forested areas of our state from fire. The forested area of the state is divided into ten fire protection districts. These embrace almost 13,000,000 acres of forested land, most of it located in the northern half of our state. Each of these ten districts has a headquarters with a forest ranger in charge. He has under him two to five forest rangers whose job it is to prevent fires, to put them out, to help in the planting operations, to see that the laws are obeyed, and to protect the forests in many other ways. Many of these rangers help the school children in the planting work on school forests. They see that furrows are plowed in which the children plant, and they plow fire lanes around the school forest as a fire protection. Each of these ten fire protection districts is divided into sub-districts. Some have only three sub-districts; others have as many as five. Each of these sub-districts is divided into patrol areas. These patrol areas are in charge of emergency fire-wardens. An emergency fire-warden is not a ranger but a responsible citizen living in a community. Very often this emergency fire-warden is a farmer. You have such an emergency fire-warden in your neighborhood if you live in the fire protection district. By means of telephone he reports fires to his headquarters that he cannot put out himself or with the aid of men he can summon. It is he who knows when brush can be burned without danger of the fire spreading to the countryside; and so it is he who issues burning permits. The clearing of land used to be one of the great causes of forest fires. Scattered throughout these fire protection districts are fire towers - the watch eyes of the forest. There are 123 of these

fire towers. Men are kept in them to watch for and report fires during the dry periods of the year. By means of telephones they report fires to the headquarters station where men and motorized equipment are ready to hasten to the locality and suppress the fire before it gets well started; for the secret of successful fire-fighting is to get the fire under control before it gets well started. By these means forest fires have been not only greatly reduced in numbers, but the amount of acreage covered and damage done greatly lessened. So you can see that the greatest effort in restoring trees to our land is made in keeping out the red demon of the forest - the fire. More money and effort are spent in this work than in any other conservation endeavor. Besides this there is a constant program of education going on. Signs along the highways; bulletins for people to read; studying losses from fires in schools; how to behave when in the woods; even severe punishment for careless or willful handling of fire - all have helped to make the public more careful. Maybe you have had a ranger visit your school and to inform you about your duty with regard to fire; maybe he showed you movies revealing what fires do. Well, there are a few men whose job it is to do this work in education, for after all is said and done, education is the most effective means of preventing fires. Much of this development in preventing and putting out fires has occurred during your lifetime.

You know from your study of our state that there are many millions of acres of land that are good for the growing of trees and nothing else. Some of this land was sold for farming after the timber had been cut and many have been the heartaches and backaches from efforts to get a living by farming this land. It is a story full of hardship and failures. Roads had to be built and schools established for these scattered families. Finally much of this land came back to county ownership because even the taxes could not be paid. Along with these farms the county acquired large amounts of cut over land on which lumber companies fail to pay taxes. 25 northern counties acquired land in this way. Finally each of the counties organized these lands into country forests. Now there are 25

counties having county forests. The state legislature appropriates money to give these counties 10 cents per acre each year to be spent on these county forests in protecting them, planting and otherwise improving the tree growth on them. Besides this the counties get $7\frac{1}{2}$ cents per acre each year to be distributed among the townships to half meet the expense of the schools and roads. This comes under the forest crops law. There are almost 2,000,000 acres now in county forests devoted primarily to the growing of trees. That is quite a progressive step in conservation - setting aside vast areas of county owned land just to grow trees. This has taken place in your lifetime. Besides the federal government has purchased over two million acres of cut over land in northern Wisconsin and is protecting it from fire and theft, planting and improving the tree growth in these national forests. This has taken place in your lifetime. Besides this there are 183,000 acres in state forests in Vilas and Lincoln counties; 181,000 acres of state trust funds land, practically all of which is forested land used to help the schools in our state; and there are 150,000 acres of privately owned land which are used for the growing of trees under the forest crops law.

Now here is a problem in arithmetic for you. Our state comprises about 56,000 square miles. With 640 acres to the square mile, this would make almost 36,000,000 acres of land in our state. About 23 million acres of this 36 million acres is farm land, woodlots, and pasture land. This leaves 13,000,000 in forests. If these 13 million acres are well administered for the next fifty years, and that will be a part of your task as citizens of the next adult generation, you should have some beautiful forests yielding an abundance of lumber. Along with this progress, one who has observed things for a period of years can see windbreaks beautifying an increasing number of places and making the homes more comfortable; more and more of our woodlots being protected from grazing and from fire; less and less of our boys using birds for targets and taking eggs from birds' nests

while more and more of them are constructing homes for birds and watching the housekeeping of our feathered friends. There is less picking of wild flowers and more enjoyment of them in their native haunts; there's a growing appreciation of the lowly things of nature and the part they play in nature's scheme - such lowly things as the angleworm, toads, frogs and snakes. My observation is that boys and girls are getting to be better sports in the outdoors. This, in my way of thinking, is the greatest step that has been made in the whole field of conservation. If the boys and girls of America learn these lessons well, our nation will be one with forests, self-sustaining, valuable and beautiful.

Goodbye and may your trail this summer lead you

Where the blackbird sings the latest,
Where the hawthorne blooms the sweetest,
Where the nestlings chirp and flee,
That's the trail for you and me.

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