WATER—A HANDMaidEN OF FOREST USES

NOT all forest wealth is in trees. Forests that frame a lake, or feed a trout stream, aren’t reckoned in saw logs, not, at least, in a region that has found the vacationist a better customer than the lumberman. So also, is some land more valuable when under water, than above it. There is yet no surplus of cooling lakes or sparkling streams in this state, which is proud of its heritage of both.

These other values that are found in an associated use of forests and waters have been fully recognized since county forests have been established. Work projects designed to protect and increase them have been favored at every opportunity. As each project has been completed, new and higher land values have been created; the basis for higher and a steady source of income has been established. Although not financed directly by county forest aid funds, because investments in land, labor, and materials are generally too great for these modest sums, efforts in county forests to increase water resources and water values have been directed principally along two lines: the creation of new lakes by the construction of dams, and the improvement of trout feeding and spawning grounds in our forest streams. The labor and materials have been supplied largely through federal emergency funds, but the benefits are being realized by the counties themselves.

A brilliant example of flood water conservation and control, and a whole chain of benefits arising therefrom, may be found in the Lake Nancy dam, constructed in Washburn County by work funds. A new lake with a splendid high shore line is being created, giving recreational value to lands hitherto almost valueless. Through a diversion canal, to be constructed in the future, an entire chain of lakes, each with resort property along the shores, will be restored to normal level, by diverting spring flood waters of the Totogatic river into them. This will sustain ground water levels in the adjacent areas. Fresh water,

(Top) The flowage area of the future Lake Nancy on the Totogatic river.
(Center) Construction work on the Lake Nancy dam.
(Lower) Another dam for a lake on the Totogatic river, Sawyer county.
preventing stagnation in the summer, will promote fish life, make the lakes more attractive for fishing, and for summer resorts, increasing thereby adjacent land values and incomes. Several hundred acres of county forest land, contributed for the purpose, and cleared of all trees, so there will be no snags in the flowage, will bring more revenue to the county, many times over, than this land could possibly have brought in the form of tree growth. Yet this dam, the lake, and the canal, are only a part of the entire plan of land use within this county forest, formed from the tax-delinquent lands the county took when no one would have them.

This is but one dam and lake being constructed in county forests, for the primary benefit of the county. Others completed or in process of construction include the dam and lake on the St. Croix river in the town of Gordon, Douglas County; the dam and lake on the Totogatic river in the town of Lenroot, Sawyer County; the dam and lake on the Eau Claire river in Eau Claire County; and the smaller dam on Hay Creek in Clark County.

Plans for the development of the shoreline property created by the dam on the Eau Claire river, all of which is now county owned, illustrate the safeguards which assure full public benefits on this land. There is to be a public camp ground reserved for each mile of shore line. It would be expected, of course, that Eau Claire County would want to sell cottage and cabin sites on the new lake frontage, to realize income, through taxation, on the improved real estate; but this lake will never become one encircled with "No Trespassing" signs. A score or more of public camp sites, distributed around the entire lake, lying almost entirely, as it does, within the Eau Claire County forest, assures permanent public use of this part of the county forest.

Less spectacular in appearance, but no less valuable in contributing to the recreational value of many county forests, is the stream improvement work being carried on by the Civilian Conservation Corps, other federal emergency agencies, the Conservation Department, and by the counties. The ideal trout stream must be kept cool, principally through shade; it must have clean spawning beds, it must provide food where the trout can obtain it; it must be free from mud and silt; and it must afford natural hiding places for the trout. It is a tremendous job to do all of this for streams which have collected mud and forest debris in their stream beds during half a century, but it is a work that is going successfully forward. It is creating one more value that will make the county forests a public asset, and a source of added income.
(Top) A light frame house was moved by a county owned tractor from the old location to the new.

(Center) Cutting timber skids upon which to move the barn.

(Lower Left) A good potato field on the "new" farm.

(Lower Right) A new barn has been built, and a concrete base has been constructed for a small farm house.