

FOREST PROTECTION.

The protection of forests from fire is the first essential in the development of a forest policy for a State. Past experience has proven that the forests of Wisconsin have suffered great damage from fire at times, and, without question, history will repeat itself in the future, unless a well planned fire organization is developed, to be ready for the real dry season.

The protection of forests from fire in the north one-half of the State is brought about through an organization of town fire wardens, assistant fire wardens and the protective force of rangers and patrolmen in what is known as the forest reserve region. The town fire warden system is established by having each town chairman become ex officio fire warden and the road superintendents, assistant fire wardens. The chief duties of the fire wardens, of whom there are about 555 in the territory, in which there is a fire hazard, are the fighting of fires, instead of prevention and detection. The system of fire protection as applied to the greater part of the State lands or the so-called forest reserve area is one of *prevention, detection and control*.

The present forest fire organization outside of the protected area is inadequate since there is no definite plan of detection and prevention. The local wardens usually will wait until fires are upon them before taking any protective measures. From a conservation standpoint, forest fire prevention is the most important feature. Therefore, adequate appropriation should be made through State taxation to make it possible to provide for the appointment of so-called district fire wardens, whose duties would be to cooperate with the local fire wardens, timber owners, and others, throughout the entire wooded area of the State.

The protected area, within which the greater portion of the State reserves is located, includes 1,250,000 acres in Forest, Vilas, Oneida, Iron and Price counties. In protective work, over this entire area the State is aided by the Federal Government under the Weeks Law, and by individuals and companies owning large tracts of lands within its borders. This area is divided into 17 districts, varying in size from 66,000 to 138,000 acres. A ranger or patrolman is in charge of each district. Protective work is facilitated by a telephone system, a network of roads and trails, proper means of transportation and lookout towers, the latter making it possible to observe over one-half of this area.

The cost of protecting this one and one-fourth million acres of land was one and one-third cents per acre in 1915. It is proposed to gradually extend the lines of protection as funds and outside cooperation become available.

FOREST FIRE ORGANIZATIONS.

As an example of the development of organized effort of timberland owners in the prevention of fire, the following data was compiled from reports of several associations. Organized effort on the part of timberland owners in this state would do much toward solving the fire problem. An organization covering three or four counties lying contiguous would be the most effective since an opportunity would present itself of close cooperation with the Federal, State and town wardens and patrolmen.

COMPILATION OF DATA ON FOREST FIRE PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATIONS.

Name of Association	Address	Date of report	Acreage protected	Public acreage	Private acreage	Total cost per year	Assessment per acre	Max. No. wardens	
Klamath Lake Counties Forest Fire Protective Association.....	Klamath Falls, Ore.	1915	449,888		449,888	\$7,535.26	.01		Private, with State Coöperation.
Douglas County Fire Patrol Assn.....	Roseburg, Ore.	1915	801,557	535,275	266,282	9,271.54	.012	35	State, Federal & Private Coöperation.
Coas County Fire Patrol Association.....	Marshfield, Ore.	1915	460,446		460,446	9,208.92	.02	23	State, Federal & Private Coöperation.
Polk County Fire Patrol Association.....	Dallas, Ore.	1915	117,205	12,587	104,618	1,758.08	.015	10	State, Federal & Private Coöperation.
Union-Wallowa Counties Fire Assn.....	La Grande, Ore.	1915	317,913		317,913	3,078.95	³ .01	11	State, Federal & Private Coöperation.
Washington Forest Fire Association.....	Seattle, Wash.	1915	2,586,409			46,022.01	⁴ .005	85	Chiefly a private organization, but co-operates with State & Federal Governments.
Northern Montana Forestry Association ...	Kalispell, Mont.	1915	706,746	¹ 345,317		1,470.27	.01	19	State, Federal & Private Coöperation.
Central Pennsylvania Forest Fire Protective Association.....	Snow Shoe, Pa.	1915	300,000	² 361,429		690.37		26	Private & State Coöperation. Depends on small assessments and gifts from land owners.
Pocons Protective Fire Association.....	Monroe County, Pa.	1915	212 members. No statement of acreage			503.06		7	Private. Depends on small assessments and contributions for support.
Central West Virginia Fire Protective Association.....	Elkins, West Va.	1915	No statement of acreage			3,828.93		16	Private principally, but receiving aid under Weeks Law.
Kennebec Valley Protective Association.....	Bingham, Maine.	1915	1,250,000			2,024.86	^{1 1/2} mills		Private concerns.
New Hampshire Timberland Owners Assn.	Gorham, N. H.	1915	930,540		930,540	6,699.07	^{3/4} ¢	17	Private concerns.
Vermont Timberland Owners Assn.....	Bloomfield, Vt.	1915	275,128		275,128	1,928.09	.01		Private concerns.
Northern Forest Protective Association.....	Munising, Mich.	1915	1,000,000		1,000,000		.01		Private concerns.

(1) Federal. (2) State & private. (3) Timbered Land. (4) Cutover Land.

FROM 1908 TO 1914 INCLUSIVE.

	Contributing area.	Protection cost.	Annual cost per acre	Average number of fires per year	Average number of acres burned annually	Average number M. B. F. timber burned annually
Potlatch Association.....	310,000	\$32,080	\$0.10	41	21,136	111,963
Clearwater Association.....	411,000	\$22,127	\$0.05	54	10,139	165,462
Coeur D'Alene Association.....	439,000	\$27,387	\$0.06	66	2,815	12,500
Pend Oreille Association.....	445,000	\$18,736	\$0.04	97	16,660	1,268