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M. A. Ellerhoff

Iowa State Conservation Commission

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Iowa's Farm Forestry Program

By M. A. ELLERHOFF¹

It is well that the Iowa Academy of Science recognize that the trees in our woodlands are a farm crop since 98% of Iowa's timber is farm owned. In addition, we must recognize timber as a natural resource that can be renewed, providing proper management is given to it. Our woodlands are intimately related to the agricultural problems of the State, in that they are the protectors of agricultural soil and the guardians of our water supply. They play an indispensable and permanent role in our economy both rural and urban. The total value of lumber and other forest products harvested in Iowa in 1946 has been estimated to be \$17,000,000. This annual return could be multiplied several times through improved management of the existing woodlots and better marketing of the wood products.

The Federal Government and some States, as early as 1898, recognized the need for better management of privately owned woodlands. Owing to limitations in both funds and trained personnel, almost all of these early efforts were aimed at owners of large forest properties.

Though the need for public technical assistance of this kind was recognized at an early date, adequate legislative authorization and appropriations were lacking. An attempt was made in 1924 to provide more fully for this kind of public assistance in the Clarke-McNary Act, but this effort was only partly successful. The Forest Service and the Association of State Foresters began in 1935 a long series of efforts to remedy this legislative deficiency. Among the many bills dealing with this subject was S. 903 introduced by Senator McNary on January 19, 1937, which included an amendment to the Clarke-McNary Act (to be known as Sec. 10 of that Act) comprising some of the same features as the Cooperative Forest Management Act of 1950. With one exception, neither this bill nor any of nearly 50 other bills to follow in the course of the next 13 years was enacted.

The one exception, the Norris-Doxey Cooperative Farm Forestry Act enacted in 1937, was another attempt to provide the legislative authority needed for these public assistance programs.

¹Superintendent of Forestry, Iowa State Conservation Commission.

The Norris-Doxey Act made provision for public assistance in tree planting, farm forestry extension work, farm forestry research, and service assistance in forest management. It was restricted to farmers and no provision was made for aid to processors. In defaults of cooperation by the States, direct Federal action was authorized. The first appropriations were made for F. Y. 1940. Service assistance in forest management as originally carried out under the Norris-Doxey Act was concentrated on a few very intensively operated demonstrations aimed at showing how farm woodlands could be managed at a profit. Sixty-two "farm forestry" and "forest farming" demonstration projects were set up. Each project involved very intensive management of a few selected farm woodlands with detailed record keeping a major activity. (One project was established in Allamakee County, Iowa.)

A few years later the Nation was at war. More wood was urgently needed. To aid farmers and other small landowners and small processors in turning out more wood for war needs, the Congress transferred funds from the discontinued Shelter-Belt Project with instructions to establish what became known as "woodland marketing assistance projects." Some 90 of these projects were established—all in cooperation with state agencies, four of which were located in Iowa. These marketing assistance projects were so successful that beginning July 1, 1945 the more intensive Norris-Doxey projects gradually were converted to this type of work. Meanwhile, Congress incorporated the former shelter-belt money into the Norris-Doxey appropriation and thus all projects eventually became known as "Norris-Doxey Projects."

After the war ended, several changes were made in the scope and character of these Norris-Doxey projects and in procedure for their administration. Major emphasis was put on management rather than on quick harvesting of forest products. Where heretofore project foresters had been joint Federal-State Employees, the policy was changed to have State Employees only. By July 1948 all projects administered by the Federal Government had been discontinued or placed under State administration. Dual Federal-State budgets also were abandoned in favor of the reimbursement procedure similar to that used for cooperation with the States in forest fire protection and tree planting. Administrative policies, technical procedures, reports, inspection, training, and similar matters became standardized and well established. During this period, one of the more important developments was clearer recognition of the relationship of this service type of public assistance

and the also long-established public assistance in farm forestry extension work.

In 1949, the Association of State Foresters and the Association of Land Grant Colleges joined forces in an effort to obtain the legislation needed for a more fully rounded program in aid of private land forestry. This effort was successful and on August 25, 1950 the Cooperative Forest Management Act was passed by Congress. This Act authorizes an annual appropriation to the U. S. Department of Agriculture to be paid to States, Territories, or possessions who provide technical forestry services to private landowners, operators, and processors of primary forest products.

This effort was successful and on August 25, 1950, H. R. 7155 became the Cooperative Forest Management Act (Public Law 729). Public Law 729 repeals the Norris-Doxey Act effective June 30, 1951, all provisions of that Act now being better provided for under other authority.

The Cooperative Forest Management Act, although new legislation, is the culmination of long effort to obtain more adequate legislative authority for a public assistance program which actually has been in effect for a great many years. The value of this program has been impressively demonstrated and its worth should be even more evident in the years to come under this improved authority.

QUALIFYING AREAS AND OWNERSHIPS

The technical assistance provided for under the Cooperative Forest Management Act is restricted to woodlands or potential woodlands (i.e., plantable areas), including shelter belts. Areas with horticultural or ornamental tree problems will not qualify under this act.

Forest Management services provided under this program are restricted to privately owned woodlands but both farm and non-farm forests are included. Land owned by organizations such as the YMCA, 4-H Club Camp Associations and the Boy Scouts of America will qualify for service under this act; State forests, county-community-town, and public-school forests are publicly owned and cannot qualify for this service, but often are provided for under the general forestry programs of the state forestry agencies.

The Cooperative Forest Management Act places no restriction on size of ownership. Services are not restricted to landowners, but also include managers, land supervisors and operators of privately owned land acting as agents of the owners.

Federal participation in giving service assistance to processors of forest products is restricted by the Act to processors of primary forest products. These are interpreted to be forest materials in the round, such as sawlogs, poles, piling, pulpwood, veneer bolts, stave bolts, etc. Processors of primary forest products are those who take the first steps in conversion of these primary products to manufactured articles: sawmills, veneer mills, pole-treating plants, stave and shingle mills, and the like. To put it another way, a manufacturer of furniture who buys manufactured lumber, billets, and other rough dimension stock, is not a processor of primary forest products. Service to processors may be provided whether the raw material is from private or public land.

COOPERATION TO BE WITH STATE FORESTERS

The Cooperative Forest Management Act specifically restricts Federal cooperation to "State Foresters or equivalent officials." The "equivalent officials" are those with responsibilities comparable to the State Foresters but who may have somewhat different descriptive titles. In some States the equivalent officials may have the title Director, Commissioner, or some designation other than State Forester. Execution of agreements, preparation of budgets, and disbursements of Federal funds will be only with the State Foresters or equivalent officials (or, of course, with their immediate superiors.)

This Act does not prevent the State Foresters from making supplemental agreements with other State agencies qualified to fulfill the provisions of the Act but the Department may not do so directly.

FEDERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Federal responsibility for administration of this Act is vested in the Secretary of Agriculture. The Secretary is responsible for formulation of plans and procedures necessary to carry out the purposes of the Act effectively and equitably.

Federal cooperation will be administered through the Chief of the Forest Service who also may delegate authority and responsibility within established broad policies for current conduct of the program. The Forest Service units most concerned in administration of this Act are the following.

The Division of Cooperative Forest Management will handle all parts of this cooperative program except those assigned to the Division of Fiscal Control. This includes responsibility and authority for coordination and recommendation of plans, for review and

approval of cooperative budgets, for apportionment and allotment of Federal funds, for determination of standards, for inspection, correspondence, and other duties necessary for efficient conduct of the cooperative program.

The Division of Fiscal Control will be responsible for doing these things necessary to insure the integrity of the expenditure of Federal funds. This includes authority and responsibility for prescribing financial procedures, records, and reports necessary in both State and Federal offices to accomplish fiscal management adequate to insure compliance with the law, decisions, and regulations governing the expenditure of Federal funds; and for correspondence, audit, and inspection necessary to carry out these duties.

STATE RESPONSIBILITIES

The State (through the State Forester) is responsible for local administration and supervision of the cooperative work. This involves such activities as: planning the work; hiring the men; equipping them adequately; locating them properly in the field; making sure that they are trained adequately; making regular inspections of the work; preparing an annual financial plan—budget; and making all expenditures incident to the program.

Nothing in the Cooperative Forest Management Act itself, or in these guide lines for its administration, in any way prohibits a State from providing technical assistance of any kind and in any amount appropriate under State authority and without regard to Federal-State cooperation under this act. The State is entirely free to provide any additional service desired at State expense.

PERSONNEL POLICY

Technical training in forestry (or forest products processing) is essential to do the type of work required by this program. The nature of the service forester's work is such that the most effective assistance can be given by an individual who concentrates his efforts on—specializes in—timber management work (or processing of forest products).

The qualifications for a service forester are included in each State agreement, but are repeated here: (a) the service forester shall have at least a bachelor's degree in forestry, except as provided in "b" and "c" below, (b) satisfactory men now employed as service foresters who lack a bachelor's degree in forestry need not be dismissed for this reason, (c) in the event States should

wish to employ as service foresters men who lack a bachelor's degree in forestry, but who otherwise are well qualified, they may do so with the prior concurrence of the Forest Service, and (d) comparable requirements will apply to men employed to provide services to processors.

SPECIAL SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The work contemplated by the Cooperative Forest Management Act is such that almost all of it can be handled effectively through the State Foresters.

To do so eliminates the possibility of duplication of effort by Federal and State Governments. The State Foresters want the work handled this way. The U. S. Department of Agriculture endorses this policy and agrees that the great bulk of work contemplated by the Act is to be carried out by the State Foresters. However, circumstances do arise when direct participation by the Department is desirable.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

It was not intended that the Cooperative Forest Management Act would provide every essential feature of a complete program for better forest management and processing. Experience has shown that such a program must include several related but distinctly different kinds of activities. The service forester operating under this Act must depend on other agencies and organizations for certain features essential to his work just as they, in turn, must look to him to supplement and complement their efforts.

Obviously important is the need to interest forest owners in good land use and in the fact that timber growing can be profitable. An increasing number of organizations are active in this work. Among them are public agencies such as the Soil Conservation Service, Extension Service, Forest Service, Farm Credit Administration, Farmers' Home Administration, the Production and Marketing Administration, the professional forestry colleges, soil conservation districts, state conservation departments and state agricultural extension services. There are forest-industry groups such as American Forest Products Industries, Trees for Tomorrow, and regional and national trade associations such as the Lumberman's Associations, and others. There are other private or semi-private groups as, for example, the American Forestry Association, state forestry associations, the Society of American Foresters, the U. S. and Junior Chambers of Commerce, the American Bankers' Association, General Federation of Women's Clubs, individual

newspapers, radio stations, and several forest products cooperatives.

In varying degree all of these organizations and others like them are seeking to persuade forest landowners that forest management can be profitable to them and warrants consideration.

Most forest owners who become interested in timber growing want to do their own forestry work. In time they will learn how to do much of it. At the start, however, it is a new business and for many would be a difficult task because their woodlands are not now in productive condition. In a great many instances considerable technical skill, which these landowners do not have, is required right at the start.

The principal effort to overcome this difficulty is at present largely concentrated in public agencies, principally the state agriculture extension services and state forestry or conservation departments. Most of this work is a cooperative venture with the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The cooperative extension forestry work is done under authority of Section 5 of the Clarke-McNary Act and covers the broad field of educational assistance in forestry including the technical aspects of forest management. The objective is to teach the forest owner to do as much of the forestry job as he can do for himself. As a rule, it is most feasible to do this through group action. By follow-up work with individual members of such groups the service forester can take account of the inevitable, and often appreciate differences in conditions prevailing in individual forest tracts. His main job is to get the forest owner headed in the right direction and to avoid serious mistakes that might take many years to correct.

At the present time, Iowa has five farm or service foresters. These men are employed by The State Conservation Commission which is cooperating with the U. S. Forest Service under the terms of the Forest Management Act. The foresters are headquartered at Adel, Albia, Anamosa, Fairfield, and McGregor, each having a district comprising four to six counties. It is estimated that a total of fifteen to twenty farm or service foresters are needed to carry on the field program in Iowa. How soon this number is reached depends entirely on the people and the legislature of Iowa, in that all funds expended for this program by the State are Legislative Funds (48% of present program costs furnished by Federal Government).