

week. J. E. Bryan, who began working for Dantzler in 1945, was assigned to work with Howell because "he had all this information in his head. And he was one of the worst drivers in south Mississippi. He drove on the wrong side of the road and everything else, and Mr. Dantzler was convinced that Mr. Howell was going to run into a tree or somebody one of these days and all this knowledge would be gone. So he wanted me to devise some method of getting this information from Mr. Howell and putting it down on paper." Howell also toured the South with a U.S. Senate reforestation committee and argued that the best solution to the cutover land problem was reforestation, not conversion to agricultural use. He served on the first Mississippi Forestry Commission.⁷

These men and others like them shared a sense of mission about their work. They believed deeply in the need to manage the nation's forests, public and private, responsibly to perpetuate the country's timber supply. Arthur W. Nelson Jr. remembered that as he was finishing forestry school at the University of Idaho in the 1930s, "I was . . . told by a number of people that if you really wanted to accomplish something in your lifetime in forestry, the place to head for was the South. At that time Yale Forestry School had an outstanding southern program in which they operated on the lands of the Crossett Lumber Company . . . and the Urania Lumber Company. . . . My interest in coming South prompted me then to apply to Yale." As [Elwood L.] Demmon put it, "Most of us went into forestry because we liked the work and we liked to be doing something that would benefit the country."⁸

All of these professionals did not share a single approach to implementing responsible policies on the timberlands they managed. In fact, R. D. Forbes, director of the U.S. Forest Service Experiment Station at New Orleans, emphasized this fact in a speech before the Southern Pine Association annual meeting in 1921: "One point cannot be overemphasized at the outset. If you insist that we put down in black and white requirements which will apply to all operations of the Southern Pine belt . . . you must expect that the best land for timber growing will be penalized on account of the poorest land. Forestry is not, and never will be, something which can be intelligently applied from a swivel chair in an office. The only place to practice forestry is in the woods. Conditions on one type of soil may be most unfavorable to reforestation, while conditions on another soil may be extremely favorable. If you ask us to name measures which will secure the natural reforestation of the entire pine region, which includes bad conditions as well as good, you must not complain if those measures are more than is really necessary to secure natural reforestation under the best conditions."

Forbes went on to summarize the requirements for keeping southern pinelands "reasonably productive" as follows:

1. That four seed trees of longleaf pine, or two seed trees of any other kind of pine, be left standing and uninjured on each acre of land cut over.
2. That all tops and slash left in logging be removed to a distance of 20 feet from the seed trees, unless twice the prescribed number of seed trees is left per acre, in which case the slash may be left untouched; the slash to be burned the first winter, or carefully protected by patrol and fire lines for five years.

3. That the cutover lands, when once reseeded, be rigidly protected from fires at all seasons of the year for 3 years in the case of longleaf pine, and for 10 years in the case of other pines, after which less careful protection will be sufficient.
4. That wherever razor back hogs are sufficiently numerous to keep longleaf pine seedlings from reforesting the land the hogs be excluded, unless the land will reforest to other kinds of pine.

Part of Forbes's prescription had long been accepted. As early as 1880 in his "Report on the Forests of North America" for the tenth census, Professor Charles S. Sargent of Harvard College had noted that "fire and browsing animals inflict greater permanent injury upon the forests of the country than the ax, recklessly and wastefully as it is generally used against them."⁹

The activities of the Yale Forestry School and of a few pioneering lumber companies inspired foresters and other lumbermen across the South to believe that there might be a profitable future in regeneration and selective cutting of their timberlands. The later arrival of pulp and paper companies on the scene made the potential even more attractive. These people were conservationists by some definitions, but they were definitely not preservationists or environmentalists in the modern sense. They sought simply to work toward a continuing supply of timber as an economic resource, not for recreational use or for scenic or biolog-



The Yale Forestry School conducted field programs in the south. Here a student performs surveying exercises on Urania Lumber Company lands.

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