

History of Forest Conservation in Indiana

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The interest of man in forest trees dates back to the dawn of mankind. Even though forest trees were growing in the garden of Eden, the fruit of them was not as tempting as that of the apple. Man's early interest in the forest was related to his dependence on the products it supplied him.

Just when man's interest began in the forests of the area we know now as the State of Indiana is not known. However, the Indians and the early explorers were much concerned with the forests because they provided many things that made possible their existence.

The first contacts of the white settlers with the forest of Indiana were such that they devoted their efforts to get rid of them. Clearing the land of trees in order to grow food was an early necessity. So the forests that were here during the settlement of Indiana were considered as a product of nature to be used, destroyed and not replaced. The forest conservation concept, the wise use of the forest, was not evident during the opening and settling of the State by white people.

The period 1800 to 1860 was the era of active settlement in Indiana. This was followed by the period 1870-1900 when cities were built, railroads were constructed and farm machinery was introduced. Consequently the forests were cut, the land put to crop use and little thought was given to the future supply of timber. It is therefore interesting to note that a few progressive people began to be concerned about the destruction of Indiana's forests. A few pioneer thinkers suggested "forest preservation" and advocated the reforestation of cut-over lands. There was considerable interest in natural resources and in 1869 the Department of Geology and Natural Resources was established in Indiana.

Chronologically the history of forest conservation in Indiana falls into four broad periods of time; (1) 1870-1900, (2) 1901-1918, (3) 1919-1932, (4) 1932-1956.

In tracing the course of forest conservation in Indiana it is very apparent that national forestry movements and other state activities greatly influenced the forest conservation activities in Indiana. The events and happenings that appeared to me to be important have been selected from the records that are available. In interpreting some of the records I have had notes and records by the late Charles C. Deam who over a period of years, gave me the benefit of his experiences in forestry in Indiana.

Unfortunately it is not possible to state exactly what did take place at certain times and the names of people associated with such events may have been omitted because the references available did not include them. There must have been those who did much to aid the cause of

forest conservation but for some reason they did not leave a written record of the part that they took.

1870-1900

During this period many individuals were advocating measures that would preserve the forests. Although many of these people were primarily interested in botany nevertheless they helped lay the ground work for later and more specific plans for forest conservation. There were organized groups such as the Indiana Horticultural Society, Indianapolis Academy of Science, Indiana Academy of Science, State Board of Agriculture and Farmers Institutes that helped promote interest in forest conservation. To illustrate how the concept of forest conservation was developed a few examples are presented. Forestry subjects reported in the transactions of the Indiana Horticultural Society which typify the period were:

- 1871—Tree Planting—T. Montgomery
- 1876—Artificial Timber Production—Prof. J. Hussey
- 1877—Sanitary Influence of Forests—George L. Andrews
- 1880—Trees—John A. Warder
- 1890—Forestry—B. E. Fernow
- 1894—Resolutions on Forestry—John Coburn
- 1898—An Enlarged Forest Area a Necessity to the State—J. P. Brown

Two references from the Indiana State Board of Agriculture reports also indicate the interests of the period; 1881 Forestry—Prof. C. L. Ingersall, 1889 Forests and Droughts by Daniel M. D. Berry. The influence of the Indiana Academy of Science in the forest conservation movement during this period was expressed by the activities of John M. Coulter, Stanley Coulter, E. C. Pegg, Will Scott, W. P. Shannon, M. B. Thomas, Guy Wilson and John S. Wright.

Events were taking place on a national scale and outside stimulus came from the organization of the United States Department of Agriculture in 1862. The American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1873, "Memorialized Congress and the Several State Legislatures on Preservation of Forests." National movements that must have influenced forest conservation in Indiana occurred in 1875 when the American Forestry Association was organized in Chicago, Illinois; in 1882 when the first American Forest Congress was held in Cincinnati, Ohio; in 1891 when the President of the United States was given power to establish forest preserves; 1897 President G. Cleveland proclaimed over 20 million acres of new national forest reserves.

Some of those associated with these national events were B. E. Fernow, F. B. Hough, John A. Warder, Warren Higley and Baron Von Steuben. They dramatized the need of forest conservation, they organized groups of interested people and outlined programs of action. Although the records do not show Indiana men as leaders of national movements nevertheless men like Stanley Coulter, John M. Coulter, John P. Brown and others were aware of national events and were

encouraged by these to continue their efforts in Indiana. This period from 1870 to 1900 could be called one in which "building forest conservation sentiment" was developed.

1901-1918

Public sentiment toward forest conservation took form on March 1, 1901 when the Indiana State Legislature established a State Board of Forestry. The provisions were that, "It shall consist of five members who shall be appointed by the Governor as follows: One from the membership of the State Forestry Association, one from the membership of the Retail Lumber Dealers Association of Indiana, one from the faculty of Purdue University, one from the woodworkers of the State and one who shall have special knowledge of the theory and art of forest preservation and timber culture and technical knowledge of the topography of the State, and said last described member shall, upon his appointment and qualification, become and be the secretary of said board and ex officio State Forester." The five members of the board were: Albert Lieber, Indianapolis, President; John Cochrane, Indianapolis; S. P. Carson, Michigan City; Stanley Coulter, Lafayette; and W. H. Freeman, Indianapolis, Secretary.

Apparently the act as passed wasn't entirely suitable because in 1903 it was revised. The membership representative from the woodworkers of the State and the State Forestry Association were deleted and in their place specified a member from the "Hardwood Lumber Dealers Association and one who is actively engaged in farming." The five man board known as the State Board of Forestry functioned from 1901 until 1919 when the Conservation Department was organized.

It is interesting to note that when the State Forestry Board was set up in 1901, the State Forestry Association was to have one of its members on the board. In 1903 the State Forestry Association member was deleted from the board. Unfortunately other references to the State Forestry Association were not found and the question arises, "Was this association active in 1901, in 1903 and in later years?"

In all my discussions with the late Charles C. Deam, who was well acquainted with the history of forestry in Indiana, no mention was made of a State Forestry Association. Deam put together a bibliography on forestry in Indiana which was published in the 1910 report of the State Board of Forestry. It did not contain a reference to the State Forestry Association. This bibliography was freely used in preparing this paper.

In 1903 the State Board of Forestry was empowered to buy 2,000 acres of land in any county or counties for a forest reservation, laboratory of forest demonstration and state nurseries at \$8 or less per acre. The board, after considering 30 offers, decided to buy the tract offered by Dunlevy and Freeman of Henryville, Indiana. Funds for the purchase came from Governor Durbin's contingent fund. The tract was located in the northwestern part of Clark County and consisted of 20 old farms. The price paid for the land varied from 21 cents to \$38.79 per acre. It was part of the 150,000 acres given to General George Rogers

Clark and his men for their part in capturing Vincennes from the British. The forest reserve is now called the Clark State Forest, the present area of the forest is approximately 18,000 acres.

In 1905 forest fire laws were enacted but little was accomplished by these laws. Local prosecuting attorneys failed to prosecute the violators.

Arbor Day was officially designated in 1913. A year later, in 1914, forestry courses were started at Purdue University. Stanley Coulter, Dean of the School of Science secured the services of B. N. Prentice, a forestry graduate, to teach the courses.

The progress of forest conservation in Indiana during this period is well illustrated in the annual reports of the State Board of Forestry. In these reports are records of contests and essays to promote forestry, progress reports of board activities, reports on forestry problems of Indiana, the work of the State Forester, and the results of experiments in forestry on the Clark State Forest.

Under Charles C. Deam's leadership many experiments in tree planting and forest culture were initiated on the Clark Forest. Others who did much to promote forestry in the state were Stanley Coulter, a member of the State Forestry Board who wrote about woodlot conditions in Indiana; Glen Culbertson, who wrote about tree planting problems and forest land use problems. Another person who made contributions to the forestry movement was John P. Brown of Connorsville, Indiana. He advocated tree planting and his interest in tree planting led him to publish a book, *Practical Arboriculture*, in 1906, and a magazine, *Arboriculture*. This magazine published from 1902 to 1909 was widely read and did much to promote tree planting. Perhaps the era of catalpa planting was largely due to Brown's efforts and he was given much publicity assistance by the leading farm papers.

National events that occurred during the period 1901-1918 also helped promote forest conservation in Indiana. Perhaps the greatest stimulus came in 1905 when President Theodore Roosevelt addressed the Forest Congress in Washington, D. C. Another one who took an active part in the Forest Congress was James Wilson, Secretary of Agriculture, who was the deciding influence in the establishment of the United States Forest Service. Other developments during this period were: changing the National Forest Reserves to National Forests in 1907; the white house conferences of governors in 1908; passage of the Weeks Law in 1911. Although these acts did not relate directly to Indiana nevertheless they did indirectly influence its forest conservation progress.

1919-1932

This period began with the organization of the Indiana Department of Conservation. The act was passed in 1919 and provided for a Conservation Commission of four members. That the Indiana Academy of Science was recognized is illustrated by a clause in the act which states that, "at least one member of such commission may be appointed by the Governor from a list of persons nominated by the Indiana Academy of Science and the successors of such appointee may in like manner

be so nominated and appointed." Was this part of the act changed or has the Academy failed to exercise its influence? The first conservation commission was composed of W. A. Guthrie, DuPont; John W. Holtzman, Indianapolis; Stanley Coulter, Purdue University; Richard Holman, Wabash.

Another event which stimulated much interest in forestry was the Tri State Forestry Conference held in Indianapolis in 1919. The States of Illinois, Ohio and Indiana were represented by forestry interests and "forestry experts," at the conference were: H. S. Graves, Chief of the United States Forest Service; J. G. Peters, Chief of State Cooperation, U. S. Forest Service; R. B. Miller, State Forester of Illinois; Edmund Secrest, State Forester of Ohio and I. C. Williams, Deputy Conservation Commissioner of Pennsylvania and Charles C. Deam, State Forester of Indiana.

Through the efforts of State Forester Deam, who was ably assisted by Oliver P. LaFuze, representative for Wayne and Union Counties, in the legislature, the Forest Land Tax Reduction Act, (commonly known as the Classification Act) was enacted in 1921. This provided for assessing forest land at one dollar per acre providing it is maintained as a forest and protected from livestock grazing.

A real step forward took place in 1925 with the enactment of the LaFuze Law which provided tax money to be used for forest land purchase, maintenance, and fire protection.

In 1926 forestry instruction given in the School of Science at Purdue University was transferred to the School of Agriculture. A four year course in forestry was initiated at this time with Professor B. N. Prentice as Head. In addition to forestry instruction experimental forestry research projects were started in woodland management and utilization. Four years later, in 1930, a forestry extension program was started at Purdue University in cooperation with the Indiana Division of Forestry.

Some other events of the period which were a stimulus to forestry were as follows:

1923—Organization of Central States Section—Society of American Foresters.

1924—State Forestry Conference in Indianapolis.

1924—Clarke-McNary Act (Federal Cooperation with States).

1928—Central States Forest Experiment Station (U. S. F. S.) at Columbus, Ohio.

1930—Central States Forestry Conference in Indianapolis.

The year 1929 saw the addition of the Morgan-Monroe State Forest. The area was purchased by the State and prior to this time the Clark State Forest was the only State Forest operated by the Division of Forestry.

1932-1956

The establishment of the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1933 marked the beginning of a period of accelerated forest conservation activities in

Indiana. The Soil Erosion Service was also organized that year and the influence and activities of these agencies extended to all parts of the state. The work programs of these agencies centered around tree planting to control soil erosion, woodland improvement and other related activities. Work camps were established on State Forests and forest improvements, tree planting and woods improvement constituted part of the camp program.

The lumberman was also brought into the forestry movement in 1933 by Article 10 of the National Recovery Act. Although the act was declared unconstitutional it did bring together the lumberman, the wood using industries and forest conservationists. Better working relationships between these groups grew out of this movement.

The year 1935 saw the beginning of the land use programs such as Rural Resettlement, Soil Conservation Service, and the Hoosier Purchase Unit. Two of these agencies, the Rural Resettlement and Hoosier Purchase Unit had as their major purpose land purchase.

Even though these federal agencies competed with each other and with the State of Indiana in land purchase nevertheless a considerable acreage of submarginal land was placed in public ownership. The land purchase activities certainly focused attention on land use problems and the need for action that would rehabilitate both the people and the "worn out" land.

Along with federal activities in land purchase, land acquisition for additional State Forests was accelerated. The following State Forests were acquired during this period: Ferdinand, Jackson, Harrison, Scales Lake (transferred to Parks in 1951), Greene-Sullivan, Pike, Martin, Francis Slocum, Salamonie River. The Selmier Forest was a gift to the State by Frank Selmier and the Yellowwood Forest by transfer from federal to state ownership. The Wells County Forest was also purchased during this period, but later transferred to the Fish and Game Division. Cagle Mills State Forest, the most recent purchase, was transferred to the Parks Division, now Cataract Lake State Recreation Area.

In 1937 the federal Norris-Doxey farm forestry act was initiated. This act provided financial assistance to the state in order to stimulate interest and carry out a farm forestry program. Expansion of activities relating to farm woodlands in Indiana followed and its influence continues to be evident at the present time.

It wasn't until 1941 that legislation was enacted pertaining to strip-mine coal lands. The act passed by the legislature represented a joint effort on the part of the coal land owners and forestry interests to formulate and carry out a program for the revegetation of the spoil banks. The law was amended in 1951. The law is still in effect and most of the stripped coal lands have been planted to trees.

With the advent of World War II, work of the Civilian Conservation Corps was terminated. This program which was active from 1933 to 1942 left a real mark on Indiana's landscape. Many forest conservation lessons were learned through the efforts of the C.C.C. This activity exerted a greater influence on forest conservation in Indiana

than any other event that has taken place since the beginning of forest conservation.

During the war period Indiana's hardwoods furnished many essential wood products. Its land area was also effected by military land purchases of both forest and agricultural lands. Many of these areas are still being used for military purposes.

Immediately following the close of World War II nine new state forest districts were set up and staffed with district foresters. Forest tree nurseries were also expanded and the State Division of Forestry began an enlarged program of activity. At the same time the Purdue University Extension forestry program was expanded by the addition of 4 district extension foresters.

Curtailement of the activities of the State Division of Forestry took place in 1952, the number of district foresters having been reduced to four.

The most recent event in Indiana's forest history took place in August, 1956 when the National Tree Farm Program was initiated. Dedication ceremonies took place in DuBois County. This marks another forward step in which forest industries and woodland owners cooperate to wisely use and perpetuate Indiana's forest resources.

Summary

The major events in the history of forest conservation in Indiana show that in each period certain individuals left published accounts of their activities, while others did not record their activities. From the record of those who were associated with the forest conservation movement, two names are most prominent, Stanley Coulter and Charles C. Deam.

Stanley Coulter was on the first State Board of Forestry and also on the first conservation commission, serving on these two boards for 32 years. He remained interested until his passing in 1943.

Charles C. Deam became State Forester in 1909 and except for a brief period he continued in that capacity until 1929. He remained active until 1940 and very influential until his passing in 1953.

Those who served the forest conservation cause and who have passed on were: John P. Brown, John M. Coulter, Glen Culbertson, W. P. Freeman, Richard Lieber, O. P. LaFuze, T. E. Shaw and John S. Wright.

Those who are still active in forestry and who have been associated with the movement for many years are Professor B. N. Prentice, in educational work at Purdue University since 1914 and R. F. Wilcox who joined the Division of Forestry in 1926. He served as State Forester from 1929 to 1935 and was appointed again in 1946. He is now serving as State Forester.