

## SILVICULTURAL SYSTEMS - UNEVEN-AGED MANAGEMENT

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Uneven-aged Management, to me, indicates some form of partial cutting, perhaps selective cutting or diameter limit control in the harvesting cut, which, in most cases, removes the larger diameter, more mature trees and leaves a residual stand composed of healthy, fast-growing, well-spaced second growth timber, with a good number of trees in the 6" - 12" diameter class.

My whole forestry background has been largely oriented towards some form of partial cutting, having been brought up in a logging family that believed strongly in this method of handling timberland. In fact, my own experience, gained from over 40 years of working with and observing the forests of Maine, has done nothing to shake my original belief that some form of selective or partial cutting is best suited for a high percentage of Maine forest land and, most particularly, for the spruce-fir type. Natural regeneration and good stocking is no problem here and nature needs only a little help to improve growth rates markedly.

I can think of only two future changes that could greatly alter my thoughts along these lines. One would be the development of some fast-growing softwood species or "super tree" that could be, hopefully, planted cheaply and would grow several times faster than natural regeneration. The other break-through would be some method wherein pulp mills could utilize bark-on softwood chips that would permit commercial and profitable thinnings of softwood thickets that normally occur after clear-cutting procedures.

When thinking of partial cutting, there comes quickly to mind several distinctive benefits to the landowner:

1. Better and more continuous growth rate (no raspberry stage).
2. Less exposure to a disastrous fire.
3. Better conservation of both soil and water.
4. Better control of desirable species mix in the residual stand and the natural regeneration that follows harvesting.
5. The control of species mix helps to reduce susceptibility to future insect epidemics; i.e., spruce budworm.
6. Improved wildlife habitat (for the public).
7. Higher return per acre because of increased stumpage values from sawlog quality, larger diameter trees.
8. Maintaining a constantly high resale value of the land, due to the ever-presence of a residual merchantable stand.
9. More frequent and continuing stumpage returns, with the escalation of stumpage value staying closer to the ever-increasing expenses of supervision and logging.

I did not mention in the above listed advantages the subject of aesthetics, but, surely, this is uppermost in the minds of some, and cannot be wholly discounted.

It is my strong belief, in view of rapidly rising cost of supervision and land taxes, that a forest landowner in Maine can no longer afford clear-cutting, in most instances. In this land of long, cold winters, the landowner cannot lose a single growing season. It is true that the landowner may gain in lower logging costs at the time of cut, but the continuing annual expenses of administration, protection, and taxes will

will surely eat up the money saved in logging expense before he can return to cut again on the same parcel.

It is apparent that it is becoming increasingly difficult to perform selective cutting in large commercial operations. It is also true that most mechanical logging systems on the market today do not lend themselves well to a system of partial cutting. It is my belief, however, that just around the corner, in Maine, there will be a need for more intensive forestry and, with this approach, the demand for machines oriented toward partial cutting will manifest itself. Heretofore, in Maine, wood supply has not been a problem and the demand has been for a machine to (1) replace labor, and (2) to log more cheaply, although it is sad to contemplate that this has not been achieved. It is obvious that the timberland base is going to remain about the same in this State and, somehow, more intensive forestry must be practiced if the growth rate is going to meet the demand.

Twenty years ago this spring, in 1956, International Paper Co. commenced the first large-scale marked wood operations in Maine. I think it will make more sense to you if I confine my remarks to spruce-fir management in northern Maine and I would like to use Twp. 16 Range 9 as an example of what one might expect as a result after some 50 years of partial cutting. I chose this town particularly because the cutting history of this land is typical of many land ownerships in northern Maine. T 16 R 9 is located fairly close to the confluence of the Allagash and St. John Rivers, with the township draining northerly into the St. John and easterly into Fish River. Company ownership in this town commenced by purchasing 1/4 interest in common and undivided in 1917. Over the years, the Company has acquired additional interest in this town until the present ownership is 65/72 I-P and 7/72 Pingree Heirs. This is a full size township comprising 23,340 acres, with almost exactly 80% of the land area in either mixedwood or softwood type. Although there are small volumes of white spruce and black spruce in the softwood mix, the major species, by far, consist of red spruce and balsam fir. In our Maine lingo, Foresters would refer to T 16 R 9 as a "good growing town", meaning a good site,

well drained, and definitely better growth than experienced on some other towns.

I think I should start the story on this town with a Company cruise in 1927 as made by John Marsh under the direction of Charles King. This cruise was made immediately after sawlog operations were completed, with most timber being cut to a stump diameter of about 12". This 1927 cruise found a residual stand of 144,000 cords, or 6.2 cords per acre. Some comments in this 1927 cruise report may be of interest to you.

The cruiser referred to two small sawmills that had been operating on the town during the 1920's and both of these mills had machinery for making shingles as well as lumber. He also commented that the sawlogs were hauled to the mills by log haulers and that the town had been cut hard (in his opinion) during the last 15 years.

I believe the significant thing here is that there was a residual stand left of some 6.2 cords of spruce-fir per acre, with 56% of the softwood volume in trees 10" d.b.h. and larger.

For the next 20 years, through the depression era, there was very little cutting of any kind taking place on this ownership and the next inventory figures available on this town were developed from a joint cruise by Great Northern Paper Co. and International Paper Co. in 1946. This cruise indicated a total stand of 213,000 cords, with an average stand per acre of 8.88 cords of spruce-fir. A few comments made in this cruise report might also be of interest.

I note that the cruiser is still making observations in 1946 about a road system that needs corduroying. He also mentioned extensive damage to white and yellow birch by the bronze birch borer. He also stated that in spite of heavy logging prior to 1929, "there is a good stand of spruce-fir on this town, due no doubt, to the fact that at the time of operating, the smaller diameter trees were not considered merchantable". The cruiser found no evidence of epidemic infestation of insects; so apparently this town missed the earlier spruce budworm epidemic.

Shortly after this cruise and in 1949, we commenced extensive operations on this town, with 179,000 cords being removed during the next 12 cutting seasons through 1960. All of these operations were on some type of a partial cutting basis, with the period 1949 through 1955 on diameter limit controls, and with the period 1956 through 1960, for the most part, marked wood on an individual tree selection basis. Since 1960, little cutting took place on the town until the spring of 1975 when nearly 5,000 cords were salvaged as a result of the spruce budworm epidemic. The total volume removed from the town, 1947 through 1975, and before the 1975 cruise, was 185,000 cords.

This township was re-cruised again last year (1975) which is some 15 years after large-scale operations ceased. The 1975 cruise revealed a total stand of 226,000 cords of spruce-fir, with 51% of the volume in sawlog quality trees 10" d.b.h. and larger. I might mention that the 1975 cruise indicated a stand of 11 cords per acre in the softwood plus mixedwood types and 13.6 cords per acre in the softwood type only which comprised almost exactly 50% of the total forested area. Of this volume above 10" d.b.h., 55% is spruce and 45% is fir.

Now, bear in mind that this present stand of timber on T 16 R 9, comprising 13.6 cords per acre in the softwood type, is now ready to cut again, even though 185,000 cords of softwood were removed from this town between 1949 and 1975. A comparison of the 1927 cruise with the 1975 cruise indicates that land classified as softwood had increased from 38% of the area to 49.8% of the forested area. It is true that some of this difference could be caused by a variation in cruising techniques, but it is obvious that the partial cutting procedures had at least maintained, and probably increased substantially, the acreage in softwood type.

There are many ways of expressing growth and growth rates on forest land. However, a factual examination of the growth data on this town between 1946 and 1975, based on actual cords removed and cords now standing in 1975, indicates a growth rate of .353 cords of spruce-fir per acre per year on the mixedwood plus softwood types together (18,327 acres).

Of course, if the rate of growth could be identified separately on just the softwood type, it would be considerably more than the .353 cords per acre aforementioned.

I would like to have you bear in mind that the results on this town were obtained with no added expense of site preparation, planting, or the incumbent costs associated with artificial regeneration. The only extra costs involved here were some 22¢ to 30¢ per cord for tree marking spent on approximately one-half of the volume that was removed. The cutting operations were on a large-scale, commercial basis, with the cutters all paid on piecework. The operations were nearly 100% horse yarded. During the cutting operations, we were blessed here with a Woods Superintendent who had an intense desire to see the land handled well, two cooperative woods contractors, and two thoroughly experienced Scaler-Inspectors. Pulpwood from this town is expensive, at a long freight rate, and our new mill at Jay had not yet been built at the time of these operations. In fact, at that time, we were hard pressed to market the allowable cut. However, it is my belief that if conditions had permitted the expenditure of a few dollars more per acre to further improve and control the harvesting, we could have increased the growth rate per acre on the residual stand even more than has been experienced.

Time has permitted me only to sketch briefly the history on this one township in northern Maine, which is surely not the worst land owned by International Paper. I believe you can agree, from the facts presented, that with only a little care exercised in the harvesting, you can "have your cake and eat it too" in the spruce-fir type of northern Maine.