

The First Seminar on Selective Logging

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In July, 1953, the Bureau sent the late Forester Nicanor Lalog to Basilan purposely to map and plan out the first management plan for dipterocarp forest. For this purpose, he was assisted by six foresters and 16 rangers, forest guards and concession guards. This pilot project covers systematic and regulated timber cutting, reforestation and protection of a solid national forest land of about 35,548 hectares. Called the Basilan Working Circle, it comprised 28% of the total land area of this Island City. In this working circle operate three companies: the Basilan Lumber Co., the Western Mindanao Lumber Co., Inc. and the Sta. Clara Lumber Co.

Briefly, the plan consisted of systematizing and regulating the cut so that there is left in the logged-over areas sufficient healthy residuals able to grow up to harvestable timber after so many years: meanwhile insuring protection of the cut-over areas from squatters and/or *kaiñgineros*, strict enforcement of flexible diameter limits, protection of healthy smaller trees remaining from injuries and destruction during and after logging operations, and acquisition of the understanding and cooperation of the lumbermen and the public. The area of a licensee is divided into as many as the number of years for a particular tree to grow to a desired harvestable size. If 30 years is required by a 20-centimeter diameter tree to grow to harvestable size, the total area is divided into 30 annual cutting areas. Timber is cut in the first cutting area during the first year; in the second area the second year; in the third area the third year; and

so on until the 30th area in the 30th year. In the 31st year, the 2nd cutting cycle begins — the first area logged 30 years ago is again cut and the sequence of cuts in the corresponding areas is followed. In the 61st year, the 3rd cutting cycle begins; and so on — so that there is a continuous harvest with more or less the same quantity and quality of timber.

In October, 1954, Forester Hipolito Marcelo was sent to Basilan to take over the reins of the plan from Forester Lalog who was called back to Manila preparatory to being sent on an observation trip to the United States. (*It is noteworthy that both were professors of Forest Management in the U.P. College of Forestry at College, Laguna.*) A man of action, he convinced the whole city to cooperate with him. Slowly but surely, the problems were solved until the plan was working satisfactorily.

In the First Forest Conservation and Reforestation Conference on September 30-October 1, 1954, the Agriculture Department decided to introduce sustained yield management throughout the country by July of 1955.

On May 22, 1955, Undersecretary Jaime N. Ferrer visited Basilan during his tour of inspection in the South. District-44 Forester Marcelo interested him on the management plan in the island. An aerial inspection of the cutting areas in a low-flying plane finally made him decide. Before leaving Basilan he requested the District Forester to prepare a plan of instruction and demonstration for a workshop the holding of which, as per his recommendation, was approved by the Department to be on July, 1955.

Bureau top officials conferred with Forester Marcelo and decided on sending to the seminar representatives from 25 districts with substantial remaining forest resources where sustained yield management should be practised. On July 7, 1955 the First Seminar on Selective Logging & Forest Management began. Under the management of Forester H. B. Marcelo, it was attended by 25 district foresters and by Forester Florencio Asiddao, Chief of Forest Experiment Stations representing the Director and Forester Rosales Juni, forester in charge of the Forest Experiment Station at Malaybalay, Bukidnon. Following is the proceedings of the seminar taken and prepared by the author:

July 7, 1955—The seminar began with a flag ceremony at District No. 44 headquarters. The flag was raised by the Boy & Girl Scouts of Basilan City. Vice-Mayor Exequiel read Mayor L. S. Brown's welcome address. Forester Asiddao read Dir. Amos' message. After which a one minute of silent prayer was offered for the late For. N. Lalog. Mrs. Amos planted the Director Amos Tree (Narra) in the office front yard.

After the Basilan City Council Resolution was read by For. Marcelo, the group of foresters was oriented to Basilan; maps showing locations, areas and operations of lumber companies were explained to them.

Papers on "Initial Rules and Regulations for Selective Logging", "Ten Steps in Examining a Forest Area for Selective Logging" "Suggested Guide in the Regulations of Cut" and "Residual Stand in Selective High Lead Yarding" were read.

July 8, 1955—Ranger Agbayani explained how he planted Tangile seedlings in the logged-over area of Western Mindanao Lumber Co. with data on the costs and results. This was followed by a discussion on artificial and natural regeneration of cut over areas. Forester Tagudar read his paper on "The Adaptability of Linear Regeneration Sampling in the Residual Dipterocarp Forests of Basilan Working Circle." The afternoon was spent in discussing problems common in forest districts.

July 9.—The group visited the Magnolia Garden and the Lalog Memorial Grove at the Reforestation Project Nursery at Kapatagan, the 5-year old sample plots of the Western Mindanao Lumber Co. showing the effects of selective logging.

The Boy and Girl Scouts of Basilan played hosts to the foresters at the GSP headquarters who donated ₱100 to their annual campaign.

July 10.—Ex-congressman and Mrs. J. S. Alano who were hosts to the district foresters at their Basilan Estates Plantation at Tairan expressed their gratitude to the Bureau for the help extended to them and requested for 5,000 mahogany seedlings for reforestation purposes in their plantation.

July 11.—Visit of the Group to the Sta. Clara Lumber Co. area, led by Mr. Nazario Peñas, Field Manager of the Company. At the open forum, Forester Asiddao recounted his observations of forestry practices abroad, and stressed the importance of schools in forestry propaganda and the necessity of timber stand improvement in a forest. Mr. Bedard explained the fundamentals of forest finance along efficient forest management towards sustained yield.

July 12.—Ranger H. Esteves demonstrated the methods of marking a tree before cutting, the taking of inventory after logging and the establishment of sample plots.

At the U.P. Land Grant, Mr. Denoga oriented the group to the place and explained the tapping of rubber to them.

July 13.—The foresters visited Camp Mahayahay of the Basilan Lumber Co. where Forester Manager Walter Barnes and For. Engineer Perry Donaldson acquainted them with the place and with matters concerning the procedure, and the tabulated data compiled by the Co. were discussed and explained.

July 14.—Various Set-ups were visited. In the open forum in the evening, Mr. Barnes talked on the operations on selective logging by the company, their problems, topography and finance and possible solutions to these.

Former Dir. Tamesis talked on the background of the management plan in Basilan and cautioned the foresters of the importance of knowing the forest conditions first before practicing selective logging for sustained yield in their districts.

Mr. Bedard spoke on the factors to be considered in establishing a forest under management.

July 15.—Permanent sample plots in Abong-abong, under Engineer F. Alcarmen were visited. From there, the foresters visited the company's barker-peeler-clipper at Port Holland.

July 16.—Visit to the Actual yarding area of Watts Selective Timber Co. at Abong-abong then to the company's headquarters at Canas.

July 17.—Visit to the plantation of the Menzi family where foresters were welcomed by Mr. Arnold Winiger.

July 18.—The district foresters planted their trees (Mahogany) in the Selective Logging Grove of the Western Mindanao Lumber Co.

Forester Tagudar demonstrated his linear-regeneration sampling in the logged over area along the road.

At WEMILCO Camp Kapatagan headquarters, the group proceeded to the set-up logged on Dec. 1953. Various sample plots were also visited.

A message of the Wemilco president, Mr. Antonino was read by Mr. Bagamaspad, the Co.'s administrative officer.

July 19.—At a breakfast given by the Basilan Jaycees and Jaycerettes and at the luncheon tendered by the Basilan Lumber Co., different problems were taken up for discussion. The following recommendations were submitted by the district foresters.

Signed by all of them, the district foresters submitted the following recommendations:

1. That the application or request for additional areas and/or additional cut, as the case may be, by licensees should invariably be referred to the District Forester concerned for comment and recommendation prior to approval or disapproval by the Director of Forestry or by the Secretary of Agriculture and Natural Resources;

2. That the technical force of the Bureau of Forestry and the management of Lumber Companies should come to a common understanding concerning selective logging to attain sustained yield management;

3. That before a timber licensee can operate on his licensed area, the Bureau of Forestry must be assured that he is, or at least has in his employ (part of full-time basis) trained foresters with a view to effecting a better and more efficient management of our forest;

4. That land classification and delimitation of our permanent forests be stepped up; but in the meantime that this activity is not yet completed, the District Foresters should require selective logging practices in places which, in their discretion, are not potential alienable and disposable lands;

5. That to carry out an intelligent implementation of selective logging for sustained yield management, a task force should be formed consisting of Forester H. B. Marcelo and his associates to be sent to the different selected districts to set up records and to start the work along said lines, priority of which is at the discretion of the Director of Forestry; and

6. That the Director of Forestry should call a conference of lumbermen, key men of the Bureau of Forestry and District Foresters to thresh out problems that may be encountered incident to the implementation of selective logging as early as possible.

The seminar has ended. The foresters went to Basilan, saw the results of selective logging and management practices therein and returned to their districts. Of course, the plan applied there may or may not work in other districts. Modifications must be adopted to suit the actual conditions therein. In extreme conditions it may not apply at all so that an entirely different plan must be worked out — but the main objective of effective management to eventually achieve sustained yield production of the forest must be aimed at.

Yes, the seminar has ended. But the results are yet to be realized. Only after the recommendations have been considered and effected, only when our forests are being worked under sustained yield management can we know that the first seminar on selective logging and forest management held in Basilan on July 7-19, 1955 is a success and that the pilot forest management project in Basilan is worth the sacrifice. Till that time, let us not be discouraged by trifles, instead let us contribute our share for its successful implementation on our invaluable forest resources.

Anakan Foresters

C/O SANTIAGO A.
BERBANO

Anakan, Gingoog,
Misamis Oriental