

**Wanted:**

# A Forest Land Grant for the College of Forestry

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The primary function of the forestry school is to educate and train in the fundamentals of forestry foresters who will upon graduation, practice their profession, whether for public or private employ. To achieve this, it is not only sufficient to have a strong teaching staff but also its indispensable counterpart of adequate facilities to meet the expanding trends of forestry education.

## *An Object Lesson*

An honest appraisal of the present facilities and means of the College of Forestry reveals that it is by no means unfortunately inadequate in comparison with some forestry schools abroad. Instructions in different subjects such as the basic courses (silviculture, management, forest engineering and lumbering) pitifully limit the professor or instructor to merely theoretical phases of the study because of lack of facilities and/or suitable grounds for field laboratory work. Where the students have to practice (in plantations) silvicultural operations in thinning and improvement cuttings as well as make observations of applied silvicultural systems in selection, shelterwood or clear cutting, students are fed up and limited to illustrations and pictures that are only available in the classroom. It is obvious that no amount of explanation and board illustrations can fully impress the students of the full workings of these methods although there is the laudable claim that field excursions which are carried on once in a blue moon, have a telling effect. Nevertheless, the places visited are too far away, involving heavy expenses, consumption of precious

time, and inconveniences in making arrangements.

Sometimes it is heart-breaking to learn that in almost 50 years of forestry practice in the Philippines, not a patch of our vast forest land is being managed in the strictest sense of the word. Students of forest mensuration, forest improvement and the formulation of working plans can obviously supplement their knowledge if only an experimental forest under a management plan is available for study and demonstration.

As an eye opener from our lethargy, the New York State College of Forestry of Syracuse University has under its management a forest experiment station of 90 acres besides an area of about 3,250 acres of experimental and demonstration forest available to students and faculty members for research and study. The Harvard Forest School likewise, has a forest experimental station of 2000 acres which is under management on a sustained yield basis for the last 43 years and where many phases of regional silviculture are highly developed. Besides participating in the handling of the forest in logging, milling and marketing, students conduct research projects in collaboration with the staff.

## *Need of a Forest Land Grant*

While we do not claim our College of Forestry to be at par with other colleges abroad, it is clear altogether that there is the dire need of a forest land exclusively for our college taking as a pattern those from abroad. Although the present trend of our national economic program is toward

industrialization and wise utilization of our natural resources, the basic knowledge for the sound implementation of such program is furnished by research by which the forestry college can play a vital role. The stability of the industries, likewise depends upon how long such resources will last and in the case of replaceable resources, such as the forest, depends upon how it is managed to provide continuously the necessary forest products. The principles and knowledge of sustained yield management for a particular forest is only acquired through long research. A forest land for the college can, therefore, provide not only an area for study along the production phase of forestry but also furnish a training ground for future forest researchers.

Should such forest land be made available, the students of the College of Forestry can have ample place to practice and observe the effects on the forest of such silvicultural operations as thinning, improvement cuttings, pruning, etc. They can study which silvicultural system is feasible in reproducing our fast receding forest resources. Besides these studies, the students can actually participate in the handling and tending of the forest and in so doing, they can impressively acquire the fundamental knowledge in forest improvements, forest protection against pest and disease, forest aesthetics, and forest utilization. Besides being an experimental and demonstration ground, the forest can be studied and managed as a continuous source of revenue for the college through the sale of forest products removed as a result of improvement cuttings or selection cuttings.

In defining the forest land advocated herein, distance, accessibility and the condition of the forest cover are to be considered. While it is true that the University of the Philippines has a forest land grant in Basilan Island, its distance from the College of Forestry leaves it impracticable for the purpose described herein inasmuch as it entails time and money to go there and conduct

studies. Likewise, the fact that the College of Forestry is situated in the Makiling National Park, the available areas for experimentation and research along sustained yield management, formulation of working plans for the same and along silvicultural lines, are now becoming limited. There are existing plantations in this area but the designed policy of treatment by the Bureau of Forestry may run counter with the phases of study conceived by the faculty of the college. Also, the purpose of experimentation can be against the policy of the management of the park in keeping its pristine condition; and whatever improvements are conceived in the long run must render some touches of civilization to attract visitors. Hence, there is no room for further expansion and intensive treatment of the forest.

In considering the accessibility of the area proposed, the forest need not be interspersed presently by roads and trails for such improvements shall be made later in connection with the teaching of forest engineering in the college. What is a necessity of course, is a principal road leading to the area so that men and equipment can be brought in during the operations.

As to the forest cover, a virgin forest is not always essential. A logged-over area is preferred for purposes of instruction to permit the different phases of forestry work to come into play. If possible, it must be reached in about 2-3 hours of travel by a cheap means of transportation. This is necessary so that during the instruction in the college, the forest can be visited from time to time as conditions so require.

In achieving the solution posed by these problems, it is but unmistakably plausible for us to act now and not merely wait for the stars up high in the heavens to mock us for our unconcerned complacency. The authorities that be should unselfishly avail to us the realization of this pet dream for which we can be proud of and remain ever grateful.