

School Forest Marks 30th Anniversary

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Laona, with the state's oldest school forest, celebrated in 1958. Twelve schools established new forests during the year, and four added acreage.

When the Laona school district celebrated the 30th anniversary of the dedication of its school forest on May 9, three men who had a part in the founding of the forest were on hand to take part in the ceremonies.

John Baltus, a district forester of the Wisconsin Conservation Department, and a former Laona grade-school student, talked from personal experience on the values of a school forest.

C. L. Robinson, administrator of the Laona public schools, who as school principal led the student body to the school grounds on forest activity days for 30 successive years, reviewed the responsibility of teachers and students in making a school forest contribute to the over-all forest conservation program.

Walter A. Rowlands, a land-use specialist of the College of Agriculture in 1928, currently director of branch experiment stations as well as land-use specialist, outlined the part school forests can play in promoting maximum development of natural resources in a community.

THE LATE Wakelin (Ranger Mac) McNeel, who had delivered the principal dedication address on May 9, 1928, was in Laona last April to make plans for the re-dedication ceremonies, and at that time was stricken by the fatal illness which claimed his life on July 26.

With 12 new school forests currently listed in the box score of community forest registrations, there are 335 school forests in Wisconsin, containing 24,442 acres. Two of the latest additions, Tomah and West Salem, consist of land within the boundaries of Camp McCoy, declared surplus by the U. S. Department

of Defense, and deeded to these school districts by the Government Service Administration. It is possible other school forests will be established from parts of Camp McCoy.

When Birnamwood high school acquired an 80-acre school forest adjacent to U. S. Trunk Highway 45, a few miles north of the village, a contest was held in the school to select a name for the forest. "Birnam-Hi-Wood" was voted the most acceptable of the names submitted, and at the dedication services early in May, it was officially designated by that name.

Two county community forests—representing county-owned lands not entered under the forest crop law—were increased by over 1,300 acres when Monroe county added 480 acres to its established county forest and Oconto county added 840 acres.

A **SPECIAL** school forest workshop for teachers, students, and school board members was conducted at Camp Upham Woods, the official state 4-H camp near Wisconsin Dells. The workshop was financed through provisions of the will of the late Harry Russell, former dean of the College of Agriculture. Dean Russell was active in promoting the school forest movement which began with the dedication of the Laona school forest. Staff members of the Extension Service of the College of Agriculture, the Department of Public Instruction, the Conservation Department, and the Milwaukee public schools provided leadership for a three-day camp which gave special emphasis to factors in establishing, developing and integrating the school for-



C. L. Robinson, center, a Laona school official for 35 years, has figured prominently in the history of the forest. Mrs. George Weidner, left, and Mrs. Louise Divlic were students at the time of the original forest dedication in 1928. Now they are teachers and are mothers of the young fellows in this picture.

est into the general educational pattern of the school.

The activities scheduled for the rural schools in the town of Washington in Eau Claire county on planting day are typical of what is possible in making educational use of a forest when tree-planting in successive, parallel strips has been followed over a period of years. Each rural school group, after completing the planting job on an assigned area, was taken on a guided tour through a cross-section of the older parts of the plantation, beginning with trees planted in 1957, progressing to the oldest block, set out in 1950. Each year of growth provided easily-detected differences in height, formation of crown density, shading out of weeds, next the grasses, the formation of a mulch from fallen needles, and the very first crop of imperfect but promising cones. The tour was literally a cross-section study of a growing forest in annual stages, made possible only by the advance planning which laid out the designated parallel planting strips for the entire area of the open lands.

Pruning dead limbs from trees in older plantations is growing in popularity as a school forest activity, and fortunately many of the older school forests have reached the age where interior pruning

COMMUNITY FOREST BOX SCORE July 1, 1958

Community Forests	No. of Forests	Acreage
Community Forests Previously Registered	393	95,893
New Registrations:		
Peshtigo School Forest		39
Wausaukee-Middle Inlet School Forest		43
Cornell Jt. Dist. #2 School Forest		53
West Salem School Forest		160
Tomah Area School Forest		65
Wonewoc School Forest		80
Birnamwood School Forest		80
Marshfield Senior High School Forest		40
Neillsville School Forest		160
Turtle Lake Consolidated School Forest		153
Rice Lake High School Forest		40
Siren School Forest Unit No. 2		55
Town of Trade Lake, Burnett County		40
Boy Scout Twin Lake Reservation, Waushara County		250
Total New Registrations	14	1,258
Additions (acreage) made to previously registered Community Forests:		
Monroe County Community Forest		480
Oconto County Community Forest		840
New London Future Farmers School Forest		118
Colby High School Forest		20
Total Additional Acreages		1,458
Cancellations:		
Richland County Forest		80
Total Cancelled Acres	1	80
Net Totals	406	98,529