

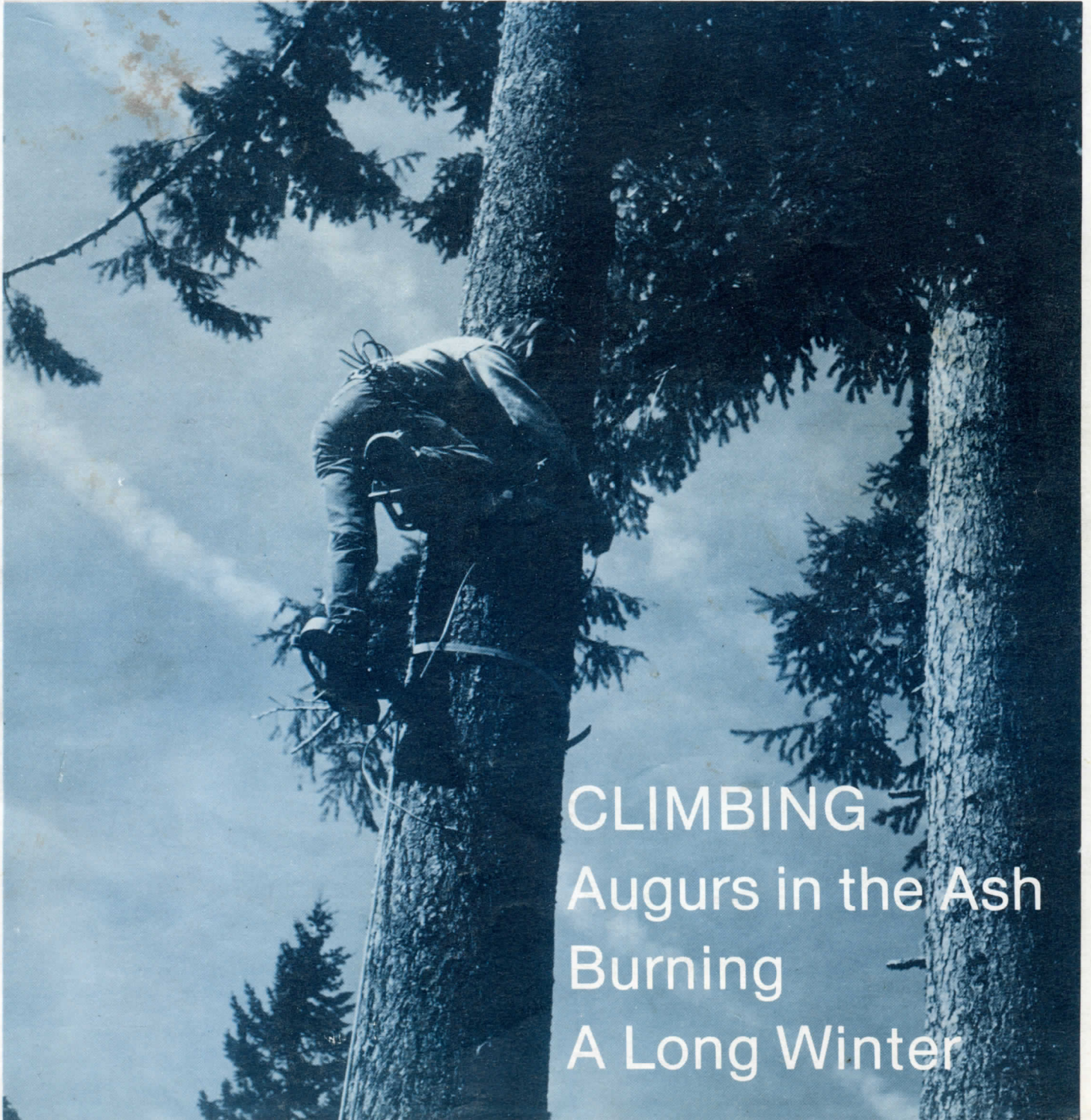
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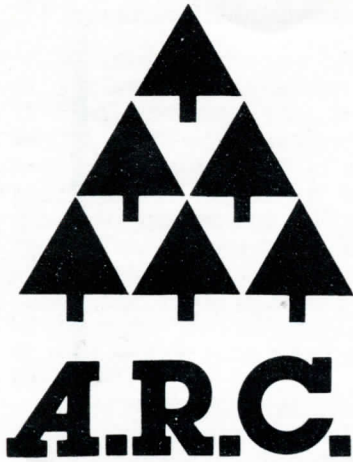
A.R.C.Q. QUARTERLY

SUMMER 1982

Journal of the Associated Reforestation Contractors of the Western United States



CLIMBING
Augurs in the Ash
Burning
A Long Winter



ARC is a non-profit association of reforestation contractors. Begun in 1974, ARC has served as an effective voice on a wide range of pertinent issues. Members of ARC are concerned about growing regulations, workers' compensation, safety, regional and seasonal volume of available work and illegal alien labor. This quarterly is published from our office in Newport, Oregon.

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Up Front —

This issue marks the completion of one year's publication of both this column and this magazine. That they have been as entertaining, informative and effective as planned and hoped for has been primarily due to the initiative and hard work provided by Dean Pihlstrom, editor for the first three issues. Next issue Dean will be back at the helm, as I am only filling in so that he can take a well-deserved break.

In his first editorial, Dean mentioned the issues of illegal alien labor being exploited by certain members of our industry, the downturn in the timber market, changes in workers' compensation and unemployment insurance laws and our (ARC) lawsuit against two Oregon-based "cooperatives" as being of particular interest to reforestation contractors. In the following quarterlies we attempted to address those issues as well as the more general subjects of safety and training. By and large, what feedback has been received from ARC members has been overwhelmingly in favor and support of these efforts. Again, we can thank Dean for whatever success this magazine has attained as an effective forum for the legitimate concerns of the reforestation industry.

A big change in the format of the ARCQ included in this issue is a reprint of a germane article from an excellent publication, "Oregon Business," and a re-print of a Mt. St. Helen's article from Finley Haye's well-known "Logger's World," written by John Martin. Although this change is not anticipated as being permanent, we will probably reprint other articles from time to time that are of special interest to our organization.

In addition to assuming many of Dean's regular duties, Bruce Fraser has put together another excellent Safety Section. Included are a look at safe climbing techniques, (cone season should be upon us as you are receiving this issue), a brief analysis of Oregon's approach to industrially-related hearing problems, ("Little Whistles"), an argument for sharpening the hoedags of experienced workers and a proposed ARC drug policy. He has also assembled the two articles featured in this issue's ARC Focus concerning slash and burn site prep and auger planting in the Mt. St. Helen's Red Zone.

This issue also contains two new features. At the suggestion of John Foster we have added a cartoon and may be adding more in the future. John's editorial was written

before Governor Atiyeh's recent raid on SAIF coffers, an action that should further bolster his contention that a review of WCD budgeting operations is in order. Also, we have included an Index of Advertisers. It is the hope of the staff of the ARCQ, (and also of the board of the ARC), that many of the expenses associated with publishing 1,000 copies of this quarterly and mailing them to industry representatives can be borne by a group of satisfied advertisers. I encourage all members and readers to read these ads and shop with the advertisers offering those products and services that you need. It is to our mutual advantage to establish good working relationships with the professionals that we depend upon during the course of our operations.

Finally, thanks to Steve Winston for his Crew of the Month photo featuring some active members of the Hoedads.

Hope you enjoy this issue.

Bob Zybach, Editor

New WCD Assessment Needs Review

by John Foster

Under the new "file and use" system in Oregon the Worker Compensation insurance carriers use a base rate set by the OCCI and then each carrier adds fees they feel will adequately cover administrative costs and profits for the insurance company. However this total is not the true total the employer will pay. An additional 16.8 percent surcharge is added by the Oregon Workers' Compensation Department to finance their 1982-83 budget. This figure is up from the 12.4 percent assessment they used the prior year.

According to the Workers' Compensation Department this assessment which is collected from employers thru the premiums they pay will provide an approximate \$55 million for their operating budget. 41.7 percent of this will go for direct rehabilitation costs including retraining when necessary (assumed to include the cost of operating the William A. Callahan Center in Wilsonville which the Governors

Task Force on Workers Compensation had recommended closing); 23.2 percent is to fund reimbursements to insurance carriers and self-insured employers for time-loss payments; 32.7 percent or a whopping \$18 million for department operations; and 2.4 percent for claim costs due to noncomplying employers.

As Oregon residents are aware of, the tight economic conditions of the State has reduced tax revenues used to finance State agencies budgets. Agencies receiving operating revenues from the general fund were forced to make large cutbacks in expenditures. One of these agencies was the State Unemployment Department which had an increased work load.

One would think that with less employees working in Oregon that there should be less accidents in the work force and of course a lighter work-load for the Workers' Compensation Department. The De-

partment counters that they need this record-high assessment to adequately administer the duties mandated to them by the Oregon Legislature. Members of the ARC have observed thru the years that the Department is filled with bureaucratic inefficiency and questionable practices.

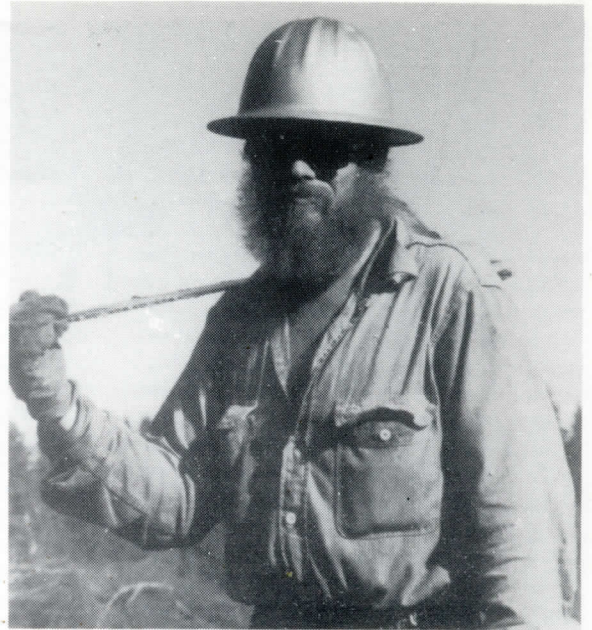
It is obvious that the Workers' Compensation Department does not plan to cut their budget on their own in an effort to economize as other State agencies were directed to do. For this reason the Oregon Legislature should have an outside task force investigate this agency for abuse, waste, and possible fraud. The Legislature and Administrative heads of the Workers' Compensation Department should then act on any recommendations by this task force. Employers do not desire or need any hidden tax increases. The increased assessment to finance the agencies budget should be reviewed!

SITE PREP

By Bruce Fraser

SITE PREPARATION

Site prep includes pre- and post-logging slashing, constructing fire trails with hand tools such as shovels and pulaskis, helicopter applications of herbicides and dessicants, helicopter and hand ignition of slash piles and broadcast burns, laying primer cord and jelly gas and mopping up controlled burns and "slop-overs" with chain saws, hand tools, hoses and sprinkler systems as well as aerial applications of fire retardants. Also included are plowing fields with conventional farming equipment, scarification (removing surface and subsurface biomass with a caterpillar or high lead system), yarding unmerchantable materials (YUMing), snag falling, and hand application of herbicides.



Rodney Slattum, Crew Foreman
Phoenix Reforestation

A vast amount of timberland in Lincoln County was logged off without any plan for subsequent reforestation after the harvest. This is why so much of the forest here is either dominated by weed trees, or has just been re-established as conifer plantations in recent years. To quote an elderly pioneer logger from Harlan, "We just creamed the hell out of her and it shows today."

To convert their trash lands around their Toledo Mills' into good tree farms both Georgia Pacific and Publishers have conducted ongoing programs to maximize the future yield from their Lincoln County holdings. Both of these timber companies hire local reforestation crews to do their site preparation. Often the same crews will plant these sites the following winter. For the past several years G.P. has contracted with Phoenix Reforestation of Eddyville, and Publishers has worked with Dean Pihlstrom Inc. of Newport.

Bob Zybach is the main man at Phoenix Reforestation Inc. The definitive sub-title at the top of this article is taken from his paper entitled Reforestation Practices, used last year as an aid by the Northwest Ratings Bureau to establish Oregon's Worker's Compensation class codes for Reforestation. Over the past eight years Bob's cutting crews have slashed several thousand acres of weed trees in the Coast Range.

Phoenix Workers know quite well what good slashing can mean to the planting operations to follow. On one long term contract in 1975 they weren't required to cut vine maple, but merely to drop the dominant, full sized Alder on top of it. There was no burn scheduled for this unit on which heavy pulp logs were yarded with a D-8 Cat. Though the Cat Skinner was good, the vine maple could neither be torn out with the blade, or crushed by the

tracks of the D-8, as was hoped. The vine maple was a tremendous obstacle for the planters this winter, and has badly hurt the growth of the new Forest there. That experience brought home the value of the thorough clear-cutting that is a crew trademark on all their slashing jobs since then. Phoenix does burning too so they also readily appreciate the importance of good slashing from the standpoint of creating good, hot fires, and the safe, high-production planting sites that are created as a result.



Tom Swinford



Steve Huguley



Dean Pihlstrom crews work on some slashing contracts, but coastal residents recognize them far more for their professionalism in broadcast burning. Dean's business card features Control Burning as one of the services his company provides. The high columns of smoke that fill the summer skies over Newport bear this out. In the 5 years that Pihlstrom crews have done control burning in Lincoln County they've put over 10,000 acres in the air.

This series of pictures shows a helicopter ignition of a broadcast burn. They were taken by Dean at a burn conducted jointly by G.P. and Publishers on a tract where they are adjoining landowners. This was a smooth collaboration involving both Bob's and Dean's crews deployed over the units of both timber companies.

Dean has never had a major accident on his burning crews. One reason for this is probably because of the vast amount of experience the men on this crew have. Over the course of the season he's built a 20 man burning crew from the best of the 100 workers he employed during this year's planting. His crew list included five quality foremen. Two of the foremen do the snag falling that precedes many burns. One advantage to having so much experience is that the snag cutters can work with the fire trail crew to even out fuel concentrations on the perimeters of the unit, thus helping to protect any standing timber bordering the burn from fire damage.

Although the burning Dean is currently involved with is done entirely by helicopter ignition, he'll quickly point out the circumstances in which hand ignition by drip torch, or mass ignition with primer cord can be preferable. On every unit decisions must be made from evaluations of unit size, steepness of slopes, fuel concentrations, moisture, the type of surrounding forest, fire trail, road access, wind conditions, personnel, water resources and tool supplies.

Dean believes in long range planning in the logistics of deploying men and equipment for containment and mopping up operations. He states his professional philosophy toward broadcast burning as being simply . . . "though fire must be regarded with caution it is eminently controllable."

A Controlled Burn

As of August 31st this had been a slow year for slash burning operations at Publishers Paper Company's Toledo Timber Division. It's been a wet Summer on the Oregon Coast. As a result the burning of nearly 1,400 acres of slashed and logged off Publishers' ground had to be postponed repeatedly as fickle rain clouds doused the coastal hills time and again. When the weather forecasters confidently predicted a short streak of true summer weather it obviously meant an opportunity to do some catching up on the backlog of unfinished site preparation. Publishers Foresters weren't about to waste this chance and scheduled their work accordingly.

On Tuesday the 31st the main landing on a Publishers burn site between Logsdon and Nashville was crowded with visitors who didn't usually attend these functions, including myself. The main burning crew of Dean Pihlstrom Inc. was there to do their job, which on this day looked to be about 400 acres worth of mop-up firefighting.

Besides Dean and his crew there was an entourage of Publishers' Forestry personnel headed by their boss Shannon White. G.P.'s Eric Bundy was there along with an assortment of observers from the Oregon State Forestry Department. The occasion that brought them there was the testing of some foaming chemicals, and the demonstration of some new foam spraying equipment by its inventor, Al Crosby.

From watching the videotape I took of the tests I'd have to say that the sprayer can pay for itself in spot situations, especially in containing heavy fuel concentrations and protecting high priority timber. It's a little awkward in its current form to be very effective in inaccessible areas, but with some modifications it's conceivable that foam spraying might grow to be as worthwhile in forest fire prevention as it has been in all fire fighting.

Slash burns on State or privately owned ground require a permit from State Forestry. They base their decisions largely on the Oregon guidelines for smoke management. The burn this day was somewhat of a determining factor in obtaining an unrestricted permit for the following day. Publishers Forester Shannon White and the State Forestry Inspector (Toledo Dist.) in charge of burning permits were busily discussing where to light the

fire today to best shape proceeding operations. I asked Shannon how it looked for being issued that permit.

"I don't know yet," he replied, "It's still too early to tell." Then motioning to the nearby inspector he added jovially, "That's up to this gentleman right here."

"Now he calls me a gentleman," the State inspector laughed.

Any slash burn requires some degree of waiting. While we watched the helicopter G.P. Forester Eric Bundy answered some of my questions about helicopter fire lighting. He described the copter's flame dripper, explaining how it ignited a mixture of regular gas and Alumal-Gel with a flint device on the spout of the dripper's torch. I asked him what difference the experience level of the pilot could mean to burning jobs.

"A lot," Eric said. "A Pilot who hasn't worked or seen many burns can hit the wrong spots and cause an uneven burn. These guys have to be able to fly in dense smoke and still hit their targets. It often means relying solely on instrument readings for accurate ignition in zero visibility."

We discussed how G.P. was benefiting from site preparation, and specifically how Phoenix Reforestation's crew was doing on G.P. ground this summer.

"They're doing pretty good despite this wet summer. It's great how some of the guys who've been around awhile are putting out. I think it's partly because they work all year and can see how much good they're doing for themselves as well as us.

On the last few passes of the copter I got in position to shoot some videotape and could see how the pilot was drawing his flame lines and getting the most out of each load of igniting fuels. It was a long stretch of units being burned so that meant a long fly back to fuel up the drip torch. In all it took slightly over 2 and a half hours to ignite this burn. Since the State permit dictated that they start lighting around noon it wasn't until about 2:30 that the bulk of Dean's crew came up in the fire trucks assigned to this section. I rode with Foreman Dave Maier down to the farthest landing where Dean had already dispatched a pumping outfit. Enroute I asked Dave about snag falling when it's done just as preparation for burning.

"I don't fall every snag on the unit," he said. "Since I see all these burns, and the eventual planting too, I know I don't need to drop them all. I just drop the ones I

think will help the burn go better. It's safer snag falling and the owner gets all the benefits of a better fire without having to hire a full time faller."

Through the smoke we saw a converted dump truck with a custom built 3,000 gallon water tank filling a portable pool. Crewman Larry Robison was rigging a pump as the pool filled. Dean and other crew men were on the unit scouting for hot spots. When the pump was ready I asked Larry if they'd had any "slop-over" this year.

"Sure, fires jump the lines every so often. If they didn't we wouldn't be here," he said jokingly. "Nothing real serious though. I wish he'd touched off that string of salal and vine maple," Larry said as we watched the fire cleaning the slope above a flat valley where the brush hadn't been ignited. "That will be tough to plant. It's too bad because that salal burns real well. Most of that steep ground is going to be a lot easier."

Dean hiked out of the unit and prescribed the required number of T's, Y's, nozzles, and lengths of hose. The men fixed their bandanas over their noses and hiked down into the smoke toting the gear their boss recommended.

Dean started the pump and being sure that the water was working in this area shifted his concentration to another section of the burn. His crew is well equipped with radios both in the rigs as well as with hand held walkie-talkies. The radios were calmly busy with a steady exchange of information among the crew. As we rode up to my truck I asked Dean if he saw any reason why they might not get the unrestricted permit tomorrow.

"None," he assured me. "As well cleared off as this is right now I'm pretty sure this will all be cool and blown off by morning. They'll probably get 2 helicopters out here and really let it rip."

As Dean predicted State Forestry did issue extensive burn permits for that Wednesday. Not only did Publishers burn over 600 acres the next day, but G.P. burned 390, and Starkers 143, all in the same general area.

On September 1 there were a lot of complaints from folks in Newport about the pall of smokey haze that loomed in the sky to the North and East. It is unfortunate that the best days of Summer are often the best days for burning, but as I try to explain to people, it's hard to appreciate slash burning if you don't plant trees for a living.