

OREGON **Fish & Wildlife** JOURNAL

**Massachusetts Audubon Promises
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From Damage To Atmosphere!**

Furthering The Concept of Multiple Use of Our Lands For Over 40 Years!

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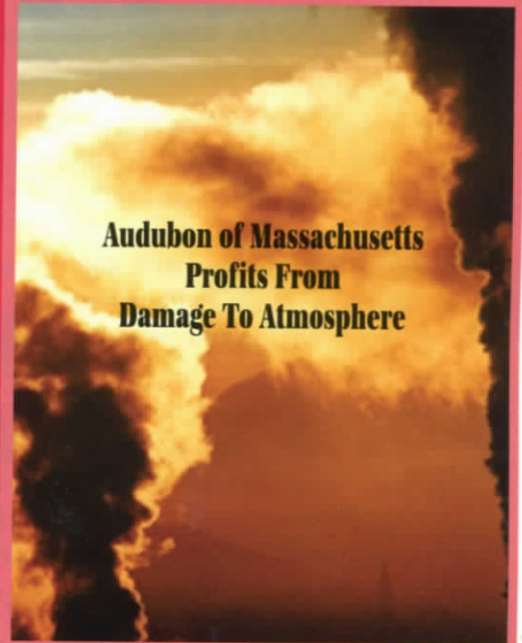
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Profits From
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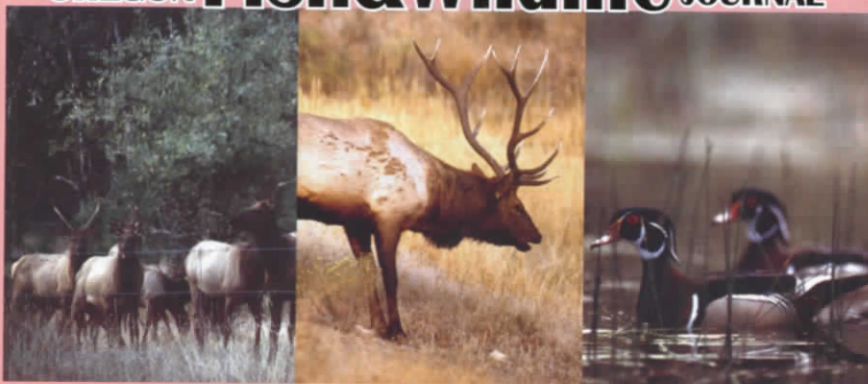
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Oregon Fish&Wildlife Journal

2020 “Distance Learning” and Elliott State Forest Recreation

By Bob Zybach, Ph.D

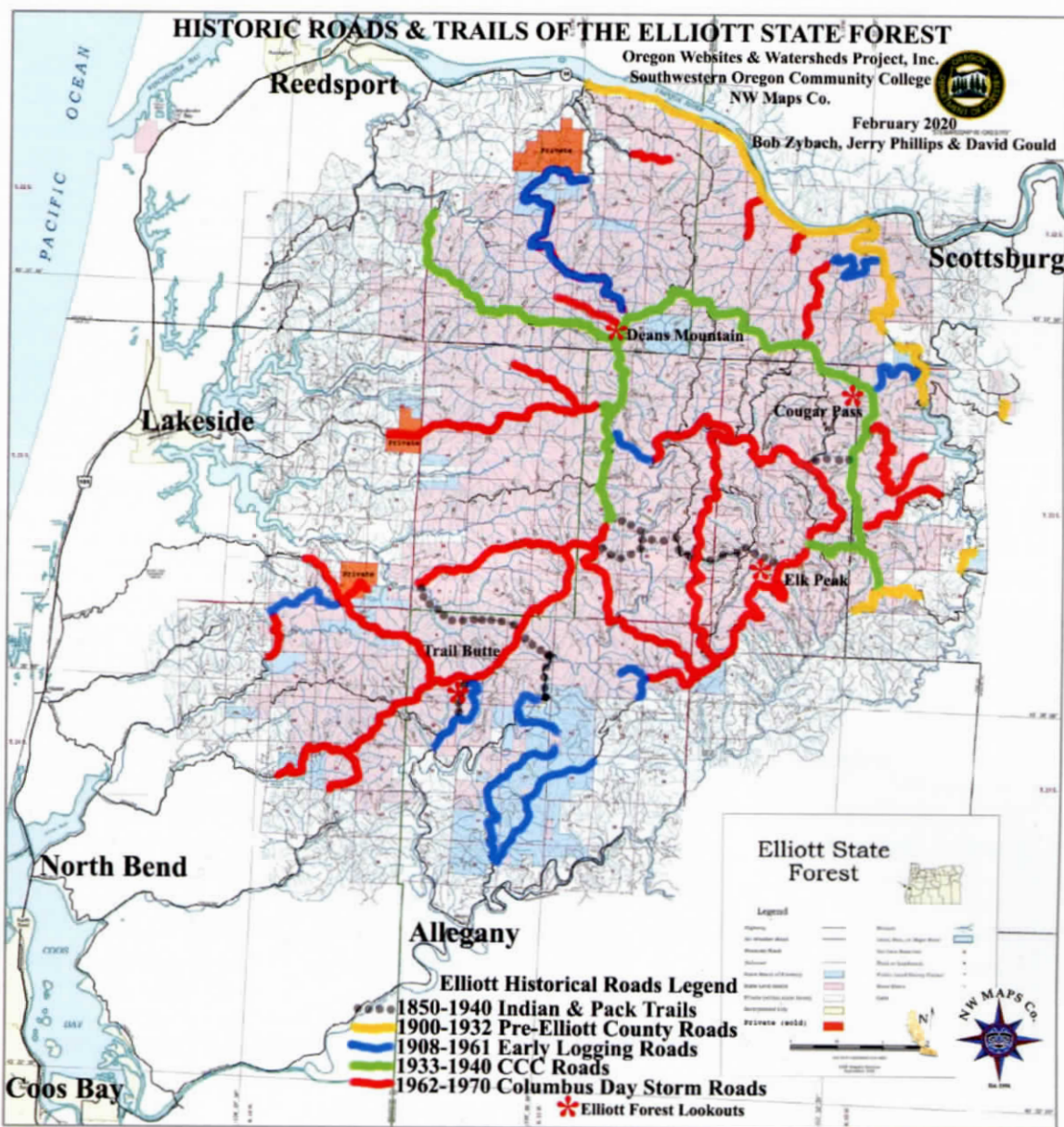
It is difficult doing a field trip without actually going into the field; or to do a group project or workshop without actually gathering as a group or working in a shop. The 2020 coronavirus pandemic caused some immediate and significant changes to spring-term plans for many people that had been formalized just a few days or weeks earlier.

I have been working with Tasha Livingstone and her spring-term Southwestern Oregon Community College (SWOCC) F251 Forest Recreation class for the past four years. The focus has been on student group projects related to recreational opportunities on nearby Elliott State Forest: the 2018 class produced the first draft recreation plan ever written for the Elliott and the 2019 class peer-reviewed and refined the draft plan (see Summer 2019

issue: “Elliott State Forest’s First Recreation Plan”).

Both classes participated in a series of either five (2019) or six (2018) four-hour field trips to the Elliott. They were accompanied or met by local experts at each stop in order to witness, experience and document the topics they were learning about. All finished student work -- including documented

field trips -- was put online as Oregon Websites & Watersheds Project, Inc. (ORWW) educational websites by both classes. This process was for the purposes of refining student internet communication skills and for sharing their findings with others -- especially future students -- interested in learning more about the Elliott and about forest recreation: www.orww.org/



Map of the principal historic roads and trails of the Elliott State Forest. This map was constructed from a 1996 Oregon Department of Forestry GIS Base Map by Bob Zybach, Jerry Phillips, and David Gould in February 2020 for the use of the SWOCC spring-term F251 Forest Recreation class. The intent was to hand out copies at the first planned lab -- before it was canceled in March.

Elliott_ Forest/ Recreation

As an important component of the draft recreation plans, the students were also tasked with making and prioritizing recommendations for improving recreational opportunities on the Elliott. Both the 2018 and 2019 students were consistent in their recommendations to add directional signage to the Elliott's network of rock roads and trails and to better maintain those access routes in the interests of public safety as top priorities.

March 10, 2020
SWOCC Planning Meeting

A public planning meeting was held at SWOCC on March 10, 2020 to discuss upcoming field trips and workshops for spring-term F251 students, beginning in April.



Fig. 1. Wayne Giesy, Jerry Phillips and David Gould, Jerry Phillips Reserve, Elliott State Forest (photo by Bob Zybach, July 8, 2017).

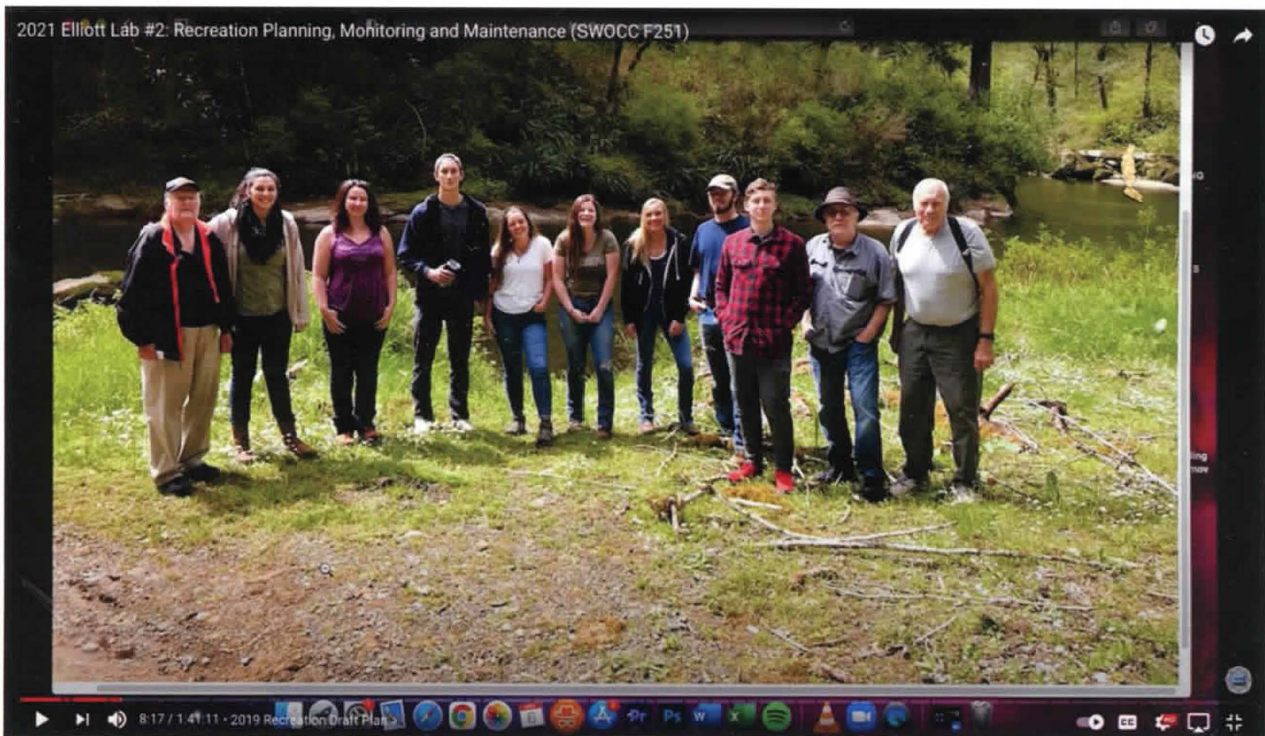


Fig. 2. The 2019 SWOCC F251 Forest Recreation class on their first field trip to the Elliott. Location is at an undeveloped campsite along the West Fork Millicoma River with Instructor Tasha Livingstone and field guides Jerry Phillips, David Gould and the author (photo by Wade Gould, April 23, 2019).

Existing field trip routes, group online project design, and lectures were decided to remain about the same as proven successful in previous years. The major difference was to switch the focus of student projects from recreational opportunities to a study of Elliott road and trail histories and potential futures

-- as recommended by previous F251 students.

A few expected planning people were suddenly and unexpectedly absent at the March 10 meeting because of rapidly emerging pandemic concerns and resulting official directives at that time.

Then, before classes began in April, we were informed that students couldn't be in close proximity to one another (at least in a field trip van); then, shortly after, they couldn't assemble in classrooms, either -- at least for a few weeks; and then, all term.

No direct physical contact, much less group projects, classroom lectures, or field trips allowed. But students could still take the course online for required credit.

Quick decisions were made. Tasha implemented a community Google.doc file for students to use for collaborating, developing and editing their work in concert with instructors. Everyone was theoretically learning together, but at different times, in different locations, using different computer equipment, and with different WiFi reception speeds -- with many of us in rural locations and no one with direct technical, library, or personal access.

But at least we were all working on the same documents with mostly the same Word formatting -- a big improvement in itself from previous years!

ORWW "Distance Learning" Response

After receiving the news of the SWOCC campus shutdown, McKenzie Peters, NW Maps Co., and I began videotaping "distance learning" lectures as de facto ORWW workshops for the 2020 spring-term class. Due to circumstances, we were limited to an Android phone and a tripod with me against a wall with a map of the Elliott, or close-ups of the computer screen. These were then posted to the ORWWmedia YouTube channel for students to view in lieu of actual meetings.

Online worksheets with links to the digitized videos, earlier SWOCC student photos and reports, oral histories, maps,



Fig. 3. McKenzie Peters, NW Maps Co., videotapes Jerry Phillips and David Gould during interview at Jerry Phillips Reserve, Elliott State Forest, April 29, 2020 (photo by Bob Zybach).

articles, books, historical photos and other relevant research materials were posted on the ORWW Elliott Forest Recreation website and distributed weekly to the students. Feedback and instruction were done by email and Google.doc comments.

McKenzie also videotaped David Gould, Jerry Phillips, Nancy Stewart and me on five socially-distanced "virtual" field trips of the Elliott. These replicated the courses taken by the 2018 and 2019 classes, were directly linked to previous student work and ORWW Elliott content, and also posted on YouTube.

The field trip videos were also done with the Android, a tripod, and inexpensive editing software. No schools, libraries, archives, computer repair shops, or even public restrooms were open. There was no budget, advanced warning, good quality equipment, technical expertise, or even an available studio or classroom to work in.

David's and Jerry's families were reasonably concerned about their health and risk of being in close proximity to people from the Willamette Valley while traveling by vehicle during the field trips, but everything was somehow completed on time and with surprisingly few problems. Everyone also remained in generally good health and spirits.

As a result of the pandemic, the 2020 F251 students did not directly participate in field trips, take their own photos, ask direct questions, or take part in group discussions. Instead, they were forced to use photos and videos taken by McKenzie, myself, earlier students, and others working on these projects; and they also needed to rely on the earlier observations, writings and reports of others -- including local experts -- as well.

Elliott Roads & Trails History

The ORWW 2020 SWOCC F251 educational project was designed to focus on the historical significance of Elliott State Forest roads and trails and their potentials for current and future public access and recreational opportunities.

“Historical significance” has important management and use implications that are regulated by state and federal laws. There are two basic definitions of “historical” in this context: 1) the record of time during which people have lived in a certain location; and 2) the written eyewitness accounts of people for a certain location.

People have lived within and around the current area of Elliott State Forest since “time immemorial” -- more than 10,000 years, at least. This record can be partly told with archaeological research, persistent vegetation patterns, and early historical documentation. A few precontact traditions also persist through family stories and oral histories.

So long as people have lived near or within present-day Elliott there have been trails along the streams and ridge-lines, with hunting, fishing, camping, and firewood gathering always being a major focus.

At some point people began cultivating huckleberries, myrtle nuts, iris and other food and fiber plants along these routes. Butterflies, songbirds, deer, elk, mountain beaver and bear quickly followed and populated these creations. This symbiotic relationship between people, fire, favored plants, and native animals likely existed for millennia before the first written records, and was well established and documented during early white immigration.

The documentary history of the Oregon Coast can be said to have generally started with sightings and contact by the James Cook expedition in 1778, or possibly with Francis Drake in 1579. Land-based records for the Elliott area, including written eyewitness accounts, maps, and drawings, began in 1826 with Hudson Bay Company beaver trapping expeditions led by Alexander Roderick McLeod.

These visits culminated with a return trip in late 1828

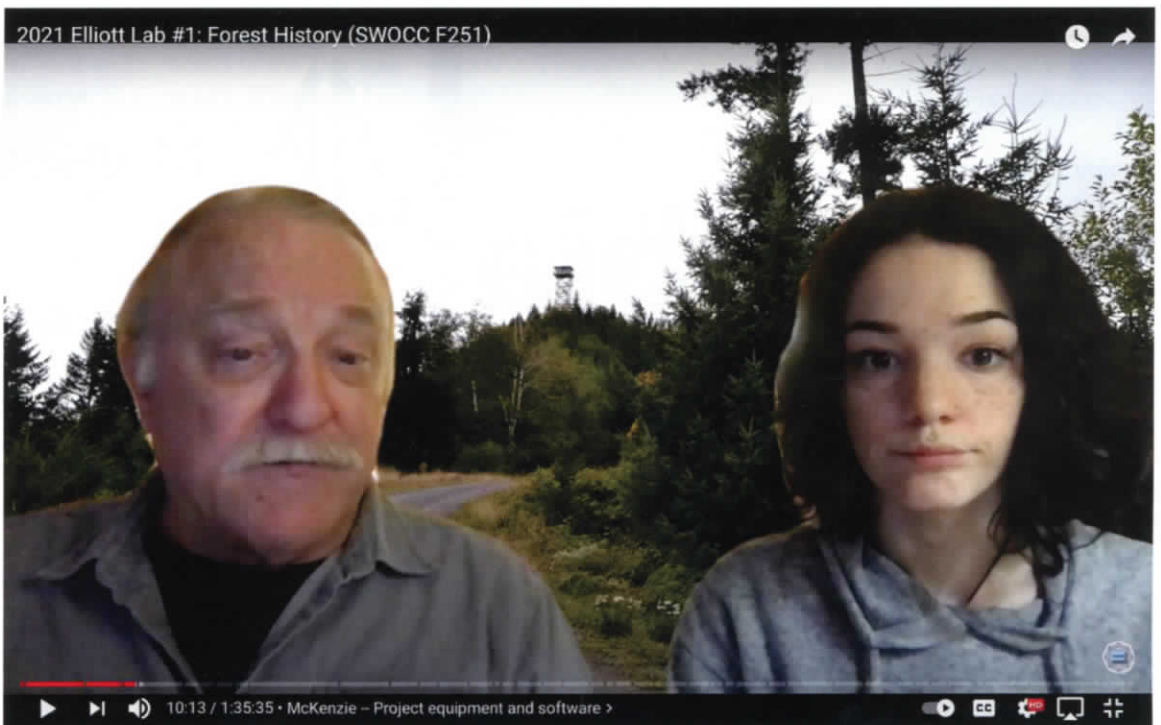
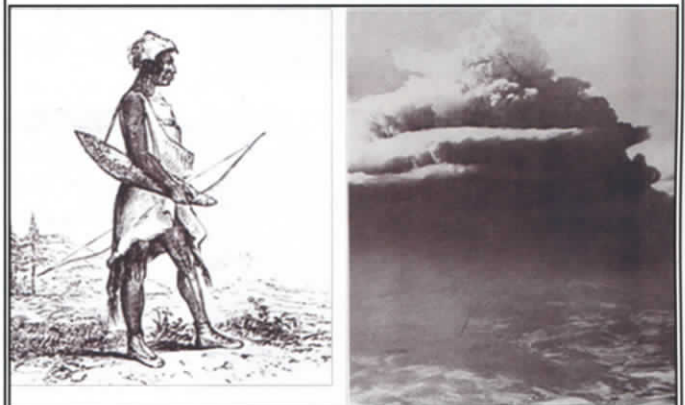


Fig. 4. The author and McKenzie Peters presenting a videotaped “distance learning” Zoom Lab for the 2021 SWOCC F251 Forest Recreation class, April 12, 2021. Background photo is Cougar Pass Lookout, Elliott State Forest.

with Jedediah Smith in order to recover valuables -- mostly horses and beaverskins, but also a map and written journal -- and bury the dead from the massacre that had taken place at the mouth of Smith River a few weeks earlier.

The Great Fires



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The next historical record of note was a journal and correspondence of a two-day visit to the mouth of the Umpqua in 1840 by Methodist missionaries Gustavus Hines and Jason Lee.

Then, in 1850 a ship sailed into the mouth of the Umpqua and white immigrants from San Francisco claimed 640 acres at the mouth of Mill Creek -- where they soon constructed a home, the namesake sawmill, a shipbuilding yard, and began paying taxes. This history became the starting points for the 2020 F251 student projects.

2020 Elliott Roads Report

The historical roads, trails and canoe routes of the Elliott State Forest and bordering lands and waters have directed its human history and native plant and animal populations for thousands of years, until now. The detailed written accounting of this landscape begins about 1850, but the actual history of the Elliott begins with its creation in 1930, a little over 90 years ago.

The CCCs, World War II, logging, the Columbus Day Storm, hunting, fishing, political protests, illicit crops, mud-running, camping, reforestation, and the 1982 and 1996 floods and landslides have shaped much of the Elliott's history since 1930 -- and all reflected in its roads and trails and their uses and potential uses today.

The 2020 F251 "distance learning" workshops and "virtual" Elliott field trips began as eight students, with three dropping out before completing their assignments. This left only five students to consider past recommendations, learn the topic, and produce a report -- without ever meeting in person, before Zoom, and under unprecedented learning conditions.

The remaining five students were each given a separate assignment to complete as lead author, and the choice of two additional assignments to assist with, as coauthors: 1) historical Indian trails and pack trails from 1826 to 1900; 2) pre-Elliott County roads and early logging roads from 1900 to 1930; 3) the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) road and fire lookout network from 1930 to 1962; 4) the Columbus Day salvage logging network from 1962 to 1970; and 5) roads built since 1970 and with a focus on the recreational and educational opportunities provided by a proposed replacement and enhancement of the Cougar Pass Lookout.

As with the 2018 and 2019 student draft plans, these papers were combined into a single, citable, and printable PDF report, and a separate HTML website with linked videos, maps, photos, reports and other referenced

materials. Both versions, PDF and HTML -- as with the 2018 and 2019 student projects -- can be found on the ORWW educational website: www.orww.org/Elliott_Forest/Recreation/2020_Roads/Report.html

These student reports, despite being written under unique circumstances and without the aid of first-hand observations or discussions, provide an excellent foundation of maps, facts, resources, and recommendations to learn from: whether by future Elliott State Forest student visitors, researchers, recreationists, or forest managers.

Now what?

As this was being written, current 2021 F251 students were also being limited by ongoing pandemic restrictions and couldn't meet in person, attend classes, or take field trips. However, the intervening year has allowed for more "distance learning" practice by everyone, the rapid development of Zoom communications, better video equipment and software, and the added uses of YouTube indexing and closed captioning for the videotaped 2020 field trips.

The 2021 students were required to submit their reports, based on the videos, websites and reports of their F251 predecessors, in an MP4 (online video) format. In this manner the 2020 Elliott Roads Report was combined with the earlier draft recreation plans to form the principal research basis for the current reports -- which will also be edited for online use for future students and interested visitors to the Elliott.

These online products are still not ideal substitutes for actual field trips, group projects, or personal discussions, but make good improvements for future Elliott "distance learning" educational products and their applied uses. The hope is that these uses will be complementary to actual meetings and field trips in the future, rather than continue to be used as substitutes.

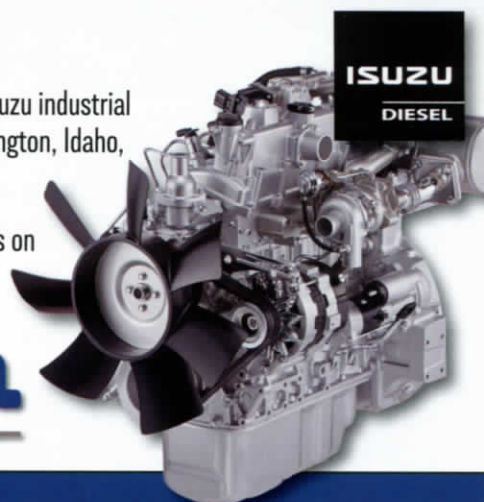


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