

Youth To Learn How Forests Function

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — A walk in the woods is at the center of a research project in Penn State's School of Forest Resources designed to give urban youths from Philadelphia and surrounding communities a first-hand look at how a forest functions.

The program, slated to begin in fall 1996, is aimed at seventh-, eighth- and ninth-graders. Each session will consist of a series of classroom lessons on forestry based on Project Learning Tree,

and environmental education program developed by the American Forest Foundation. The classes will be followed by a day-long tour and activities at a forest demonstration site in French Creek State Park, near Reading.

The seven Penn State sites are in Forbes State Forest in Ligonier, Penn State's Stone Valley Experimental Forest near State College, State Game Lands 211 near Dauphin, Tiadaghton State Forest near Williamsport, Lackawanna State

Forest near Thornhurst, French Creek State Park, and on private land in Clarion County. A demonstration site is typically 12 acres divided into six two-acre parcels harvested to illustrate various methods of timber cutting.

The six treatments are:
 • **No Harvest.** By seeing a section that has not been cut at all, viewers can better understand each harvesting alternative.

• **Thinning from Below.** This method removes all trees smaller

than a calculated diameter. Because the smaller trees are being outcompeted by larger neighbors, removal provides minimal benefit to the trees that are left. Elimination based on size also could mean cutting out several tree species that develop at a slower rate.

• **Improvement Thinning.** This treatment is designed to meet goals for production of timber for income, maintenance of wildlife habitat, and protection of soils and other resources. Trees of various

sizes are cut, redistributing growing space to trees that are more desirable for timber production or wildlife value.

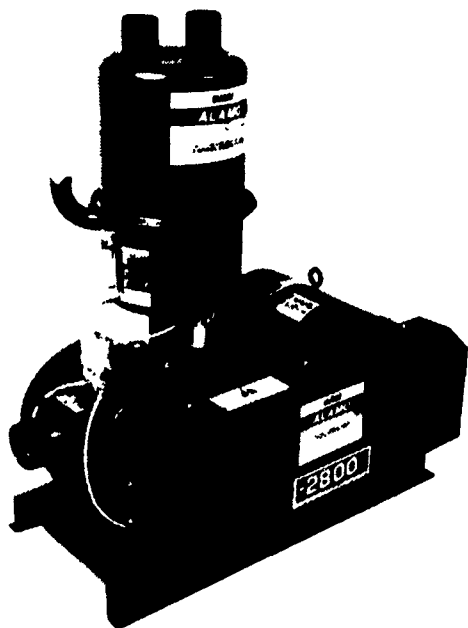
• **Thinning from Above.** This treatment, called "high-grading," removes all trees larger than a certain diameter, usually regardless of location. By cutting for diameter only, certain species can be totally eliminated from the remaining tree stand. In addition, forest regeneration falls on smaller, and possibly genetically inferior, trees.

• **Clearcut.** A clearcut removes all trees in one harvest, much like a natural disturbance such as a fire or a tornado. Foresters must ensure that natural regeneration of young seedlings is in place before the cut is made, to prevent the site from being overgrown by ferns or grasses. Clearcutting leads to forests of even-aged trees, usually species suited to direct sunlight, such as poplar, aspen, or cherry.

• **Shelterwood.** This treatment favors such tree species as oak or white pine, which grow best under the partial shade or shelter of other trees.



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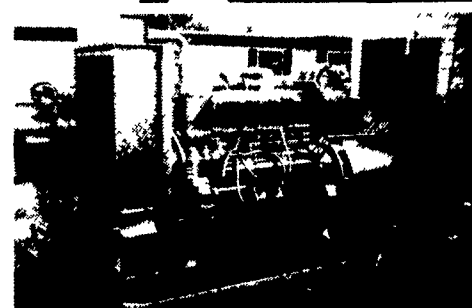
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