

# The West Point of Region Nine

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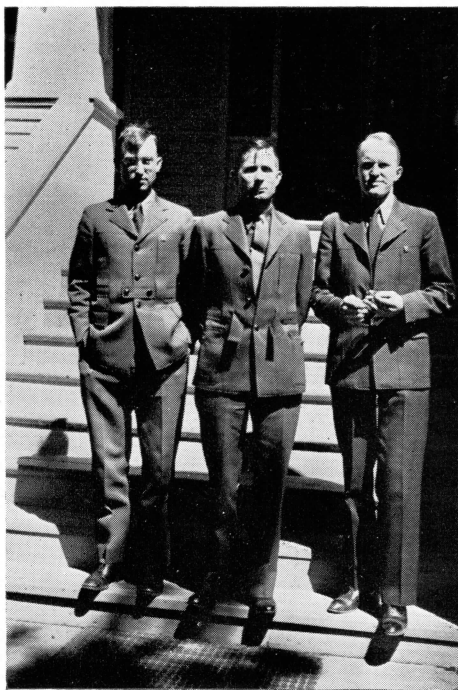
Assistant, Region Nine Training School

THE West Point of Region Nine is the name given to the Region Nine Training School which was established in June, 1935, in northern Wisconsin for the training of men in the junior forester, assistant ranger, and forest ranger grades.

Training schools for men in the forest ranger grade are not new in the U. S. Forest Service. Region two has maintained such a school near Dear Park, Colo., for over 10 years. Region five has a school near Quincy, Calif., and Region six has also started a similar school in recent years. These schools have been held more or less periodically depending upon the number of new men to be trained. Ordinarily the schools have been operated for a period of about six weeks each fall for the purpose of training the new men who have been appointed during the year. Since the establishment of Region Nine in 1929, the need for a training school has been strongly felt and recommended by the supervisors at their annual meetings with the regional forester. Funds for the establishment of such a school were not to be had. Hence the project was postponed.

IN 1933 the funds made available by the New Deal conservation legislation started a great expansion program in this region. In 1929 the region embraced 5 national forest areas in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan. By February, 1935, this had increased to 15 national forest areas in North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa and Missouri. At this time it was estimated that some 700 technically trained foresters were employed as foremen in C.C.C. camps and as rangers and assistant rangers on these areas. This group had received but little actual experience and had little understanding of the problems and conditions in other parts of the region. The need for a training school to bridge the gap between the technical training these men had received at the various forest schools and its practical application in the forest work of this region was apparent.

In addition a large number of new manuals and handbooks were being issued during the period. This group of books set forth the regional policies and objectives in all Forest Service activities and brought all existing instructions together in compact form. The new men with their numerous and varied duties, found little opportunity to review these texts and had considerable difficulty in grasping the interpretation and scope of the instructions. A region wide master plan was also started early in 1935 and instruction in its preparation and correlation with all other activities was of vital importance.



*Instructors at the school, left to right, Ball, Pommerening, Chase.*

IN THE summer of 1935 funds were obtained for the establishment of a school. Mr. L. A. Pommerening was appointed acting director. An abandoned C.C.C. camp near Three Lakes, Wis., was remodeled into suitable quarters, and on June 25, 1935, the first session opened with 25 of the more promising technicians of the region in attendance.

The initial training course covered a period of 5 weeks of lecture, discussion, laboratory and field work. At the end of this time a new group of men was enrolled for a like period. By late fall 4 groups had taken the 5-weeks course. At first the teaching staff was made up of men from the regional office and from the various forests. These instructors were detailed to the school for short periods of time. In October, 1935, L. A. Pommerening, acting director, and Donald R. Ball, '28, assistant, and Clarence D. Chase, M. S. '31, assistant, were assigned to the school as the permanent staff.



*"The Morey," winter quarters for the school.*

IN NOVEMBER, 1935, the school was moved to the Morey Resort near Eagle River, Wisconsin, for the winter. The main resort building afforded ample room for the housing of thirty trainees and was well equipped with an office, lounge room, dining room, class room and recreation room. The curriculum was revised and lengthened to a 6-weeks course designed primarily for men in the ranger and assistant ranger grades. The curriculum now includes courses in master plan preparation, forest surveys, land use planning, fire control, reforestation, acquisition, technical management, wildlife management, timber stand improvement, public relations, recreation, engineering, and administrative work plans. No attempt has been made to duplicate any work given by the respective forest schools.

TO DATE four sessions of the technicians' school have been held, and the third session of the rangers' school is in progress. The forest schools represented by the men who have attended the seven sessions are shown by Table I.

Table I

School Attended	Degree Received	
	B.S.	M.S.
Minnesota U. ....	35	2
Mich. State College.....	30	—
Syracuse .....	22	—
Iowa State .....	21	—
Michigan U. ....	18	2
Washington U. ....	8	—
Idaho U. ....	8	—
Penn State .....	7	—
Cornell .....	7	1
Oregon State .....	6	—
Montana U. ....	6	—
Purdue .....	5	—
Washington State .....	3	—
Yale .....	—	6
Miscellaneous .....	11	—
	187	11

IOWA STATE Foresters have been well represented. Following is a list of those who have attended the school to date:

George A. Turney.....'27	Charles M. Swanson.....'32
Fred E. Boeckh.....'28	Helmer Anderson.....'32
Samuel M. Battel.....'28	W. D. Giffin.....'32
Lawrence Battey.....'29	W. W. Intermill.....'32
Edward M. Howell.....'29	Arthur Schafer.....'32
Karl E. Moessner.....'30	Lawrence M. Gibson.....'33
Luther B. Burkett.....'30	William L. Hatch.....'34
Edward N. Lee.....'30	Gerold M. Schroeder.....'34
J. E. Longmoor.....ex '30	Keith W. Dorman.....'34
Eliot Zimmerman.....'31	Darold F. Newville.....'34
Harold S. Coons.....'32	

THE open discussion method has been adopted in the presentation of the courses, and all trainees are required to enter into the daily discussions. By the use of this method it is possible to clear up all questions regarding regional Forest

Service policy. All trainees act as discussion leaders at some time during the training period and thus receive experience in group leading and discussion. Each subject is attacked individually, i. e., the instruction and discussion of a subject is covered in its entirety before a new one is started.

After a subject is completed, a written examination of the so-called "objective type" is given. The purpose of the examination is not only to find out what the trainee knows but also to point out what he does not know so that he will be able to improve himself.

**A**CTUAL training by doing is stressed where possible. Due to the wide variety of conditions, both ecological and sociological, found in the region, this method of training is limited in its application. However, it is particularly well adapted to such courses as the master plan and the administrative work plan in which actual plans are compiled by each trainee.

Each group of trainees is self governing. At the beginning of every session a president, vice-president, secretary, and house manager are elected. These officers govern the group, subject to the rules and regulations prescribed by the director. Each Tuesday night is devoted to a general class meeting at which regular class business is discussed, songs are sung, and short prepared talks on assigned subjects are given. The purpose of the talks is to give each individual, training in public speaking.

At the close of every session a personnel chart of each man is drawn up and mailed to the supervisor of the national forest to which the individual is assigned. The chart points out the strong points so that additional training and follow up can be given on the Forest as needed.

The value of the Training School is five-fold:

1. It brings about a uniform understanding and interpretation of regional policies and objectives as well as their application in field activities.
2. It provides uniform training of the individual for the job.
3. It permits the immediate weeding out of undesirables, thereby giving the individual an opportunity to find a field of endeavor to which he is more adapted.
4. It gives each individual a better appreciation of the diversification and problems of the region.
5. It develops the ability to train others.