

C.D.T.C.—A New Star on the Training Horizon

by

ROSS TEUBER, '48



IF YOU want to know whether an idea will work, one of the surest ways to find out is to try it! That is exactly what the Southwestern Region of the U.S. Forest Service was doing when they established the Continental Divide Training Center. This is a pilot project to determine the feasibility of a permanent training center for Forest Service Employees, staffed by a group of trained, full-time instructors and the necessary clerical and maintenance force. It is the first and only training center of its kind in the United States. The facilities are maintained primarily to meet the training needs of Forest Service personnel in Region Three. This project has the blessing and backing of the Chief's office. If it proves as effective as we hope to make it, it may serve as a model for the establishment of similar training centers in other Forest Service Regions across the country. Our activities are being scrutinized by administrators and training officers from other regions and units all over the United States. The results of our efforts last year, and so far this year have been very favorably received. The consensus seems to be that this is a very worthwhile and effective program. It will probably be maintained on a permanent basis, at least in this Region of the Forest Service.

We have long recognized the importance and necessity of in-place training for all employees. This is essential to maintain standards of performance, keep employees informed and for individual career development. Many methods such as short duration training camps, periodic group training sessions, technical workshops, manual study courses and reading assignments, individual coaching and training details and assignments have been used in the past. These are all good techniques. But with the rapid expansion during the past decade, both in number of personnel and in intensive functional programs, no combination of currently used methods seemed adequate to keep abreast of both technical and management training needs. So the concept of in-service training is not new!—Only the approach to training through the establishment of a permanent training center, manned by a fulltime staff of trained instructors, who devote their efforts exclusively to carrying on the training program is new.

Although training of personnel is a primary responsibility of unit managers, other demands on their time frequently force these people to neglect this phase of their activity. Unit by unit training in the same subject matter can also result in duplication of effort and facilities, lack of uniformity and excessive cost. In some technical aspects of resource management qualified instructors are not always available on all units. Unit supervisors must be trained in the techniques of instruction if they are to effectively carry on training programs. Any well rounded training program must be evaluated to determine its effectiveness. We need to develop means to accomplish this evaluation. All of these criteria indicated that

perhaps one approach to our training job was to establish a permanent, fully equipped, centrally located training center.

TRAINING PHILOSOPHY IN REGION THREE

We believe that if we are to carry forward the Forest Service program of multiple use management effectively and efficiently, so the public will receive a full value from our efforts, our people must be skillful, well informed and enthusiastic. This emphasizes the need for formal training. As our program grows in size and responsibility, more and more effort must be concentrated on individual training.

In-place training of the individual is a three-part program. First and most important is self development—growth of the individual through his own efforts. Closely following in importance is on-the-job training and coaching by the immediate work supervisor either individually or in groups. Finally comes formal training, usually carried on in groups under special, technically competent instructors. Although low on the scale of relative importance, formal training is necessary to provide a context from which other forms of training obtain purpose and direction. Formal training provides the framework upon which the immediate work supervisor may build in on-the-job coaching, and guide the individual in his self-development efforts.

Formal training in basic functional and management activities tends to give guidance to the development of new employees. Formal training also provides our employees with a working knowledge of the elements of good instruction, which they are frequently called upon to use in their day-to-day contacts with others, both on and off the job. With the foregoing philosophy in mind, the Continental Divide Training Center was established with a dual objective. First is to fulfill the formal training needs of the Southwestern Region. We recognize and emphasize that the accomplishment of this objective



The Continental Divide Training Center is located on the Continental Divide, four miles south of U.S. Highway 66, (Interstate 40). Facilities which have been remodeled for academic use were originally constructed to house a U. S. Air Force Radar Base.

will not relieve unit managers of their training responsibilities. However, we believe that if this objective is fully accomplished it will make the unit manager's training job easier and more effective. The second objective is to conduct pilot studies and trial operations in areas having national Forest Service training significance.

The first objective is being met through a curriculum consisting of management and functional courses. The management courses are taught primarily by the full-time instructors on the training center staff. These include such subject matter as Basic Indoctrination and Orientation, Foremanship, Basic Supervision, Administrative Management, Basic Communication, Communication for Managers, Leadership through Communication and Instructor Training. The functional courses are taught primarily by subject matter specialists from Regional and Forest Headquarters, assisted and advised in instructional techniques by the training center staff. Functional subject coverage includes not only procedures and techniques in management of the five basic resources, but workshops and practical exercises in the service and supporting functions such as engineering, fire control, personnel management, work and financial planning, safety and training, aerial photo interpretation and radiological monitoring. Service wide courses in Fire Generalship and Fire Simulator Training were held last year. Additional service wide courses are planned for this academic year. Professional educators are brought in occasionally for communication and management courses at the more advanced levels.

We believe that the maximum amount of learning takes place when trainees actively participate. Therefore student participation is an objective which is actively pursued. We also feel that skill in communication and human relations are essential in any public service positions. For this reason these aspects are strongly stressed in all management courses.

The curriculum is planned and scheduled to interfere as little as possible with the accomplishment of the National Forest work program. Therefore no formal sessions are held during the heavy field season from May to September. Trainees are selected for participation in the various courses on the basis of individual training needs. Individual training plans pointed at specific career development objectives are developed and revised annually in Employee Development Conferences. These conferences provide for joint participation by the employee and his immediate work supervisor. Candidates for each course are recommended by the immediate work supervisor, and assigned to appropriate classes based on the needs identified in the individual training plan. As the need for a specific type of training becomes apparent a course is developed to meet this need. Courses are planned to satisfy the needs of all employees, male and female, at all levels and in all facets of Forest Service activity. Subject matter and

lessons are constantly being revised to adapt them to identified needs.

Classes vary in size from 12 to 60 trainees, and in length from two days to four weeks. They average about 30 trainees per class and 4½ days in length. Schedules are arranged to make the fullest possible use of training facilities and instructor's time. Thus two, three or four classes may be going on simultaneously. During one week resident instructors may be teaching a management course; contracted professional educators may be conducting an advanced communication course; staff specialists may be teaching a technical course in some functional activity; and forest staff officers may be participating in a procedural workshop. Classes are ordinarily conducted between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. In some instances evening sessions are held to present outside speakers, training films or group conferences and seminars.

During its first year of operation the Training Center provided 1150 man-weeks of formalized training to over 30 different classes. The planned program for the current year will employ 37 separate classes to provide some 1500 man-weeks of management and functional training.

The second objective is being approached through the selection of 14 pilot areas for study. These pilot areas include studies and operations in the fields of New Methods in Adult Education, Evaluation of Formal and On-the-job Training, Cost of Central Group Training vs. Training at the Forest or District Level, Training Library Development, Practicality of Using Full-time, Expert Instructors vs. Casual, Part-time Instructors and Research into New Types of Teaching Equipment, Aids and Facilities. Some of these areas are rather nebulous. Many have proven



Comfortable chairs and adequate table space are provided each student.

perplexing to long established educational institutions and experienced educators. Obviously this objective will require more time for accomplishment. Concrete results will be slowly and painfully achieved in many of these fields. These results must be tested and evaluated in the light of accumulated experience.

Some progress has been made, but much remains to be done.

FACILITIES

The Forest Service was fortunate in acquiring a former Air Force Radar Base as a site for the Training Center. The facility is located in West Central New Mexico, 100 miles west of Albuquerque and 30 Miles East of Gallup. It is four miles south of U. S. Highway 66 (Interstate 40). A paved road leads from the Continental Divide Interchange to a relatively isolated site at an elevation of 7600 feet.

We believe that maximum learning takes place when the most favorable possible climate for learning is provided. Therefore we have tried to make all facilities pleasant, comfortable and conducive to learning.

The Training Center has three classrooms. Two of them will accommodate 30 trainees each in well-lighted, soft-seated attractive comfort. The third classroom will provide for 60 students seated at double desks, or 125 in auditorium style seating arrangement. In the near future provision will be made to divide this room into two fully equipped classrooms with a folding partition when needed. Each classroom is fully equipped with the latest instructional aid equipment. This includes 16MM sound movie projector, 35MM slide projector, overhead projector, screen, chalkboard, flannel board, magnetic board, easels and tape recorder. Specialized equipment such as slide-tape projector, film strip projector, teaching machines and the fire simulator are available on a more limited basis. Two small conference rooms are available for small groups, meetings and "buzz" sessions.

Modern equipment for reproducing handout materials and for the preparation of projection transparencies, slides, charts, graphs, flannel and magnetic board visuals, photographs and other training aids is available to instructors and trainees. Expert advice and assistance may be obtained from members of the resident staff.

A small but rapidly developing library is available. This includes technical reference material, lesson plans and training aids for all courses offered, and recreational reading material. Library services are available to all Regional personnel.

In addition to classroom facilities at the Training Center a field laboratory is rapidly being developed in the McGaffey area on the adjoining Gallup Ranger District. This area includes model recreation, timber sale, range, wildlife and watershed areas and a well planned and engineered trail and fire lookout. These facilities are used for field exercises in National Forest resource management. Three dormitories have clean, well-lighted, comfortably furnished single and double rooms to accommodate 75 trainees. Additional quarters are available for visiting instructors and guests. Delicious, well-balanced, home-cooked meals are prepared and served cafeteria style by a full-time



"Home-Cooked" meals are a specialty, served cafeteria style in a large dining room.

cooking staff. The dining room seats a little over 100 people. Recreation facilities include a gymnasium, T.V. and radio lounge, tennis court, rifle and pistol ranges and a baseball diamond.

The resident staff at the Training Center includes the Director, Administrative Assistant, two full-time Instructors and supporting clerical and maintenance workers. They are housed in modern, three-bedroom dwellings located about one-fourth mile from the academic area.

SUMMARY

The Continental Divide Training Center is a pilot project implementing a new concept of in-service training. Although the Forest Service has long recognized the importance of training to keep employees currently informed, improve job performance and enhance potential for career development, this is the first time a full-time, permanently staffed training faculty has been tried. Future training programs in the Forest Service may be based on the experience gained and techniques developed here if the Training Center successfully fulfills expectations. It was established to meet recognized needs in the Region and to conduct pilot studies in specific training areas having national Forest Service training significance.

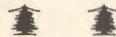
We believe that training has three facets; self development, on-the-job coaching and formal training procedures. We recognize that the first two are of greatest importance in individual career development. But we also realize that formal training is necessary to lay the groundwork and give direction to this development. The Training Center was established to instill this much needed formal training, which must precede the other steps. It will help, but not relieve unit managers of their training responsibilities.

Courses, which fall into two broad categories, management and functional, are designed, scheduled and administered to fulfill to the maximum extent possible the individual needs of Regional personnel. Every effort is made to provide a favorable learning situation. Management courses are primarily the responsibility of resident instructors, while functional and technical subjects are conducted by staff specialists with advice and assistance from the resident instructors.

The resident staff consists of 15 full-time Forest Service employees, whose efforts are directed toward providing what we hope will be the best and most favorable in-service training atmosphere in the country.



Spacious dormitories provide nicely decorated and comfortable living quarters.



Ross L. Teuber, '48, a career employee of the U.S. Forest Service, has worked in the Southwestern Region for the past 16 years. He is married (Clara Griffith, H.E., '42) and has two children; a son, Larry, aged 12 and a daughter, Rebecca, aged 9. He is a senior member of the S.A.F., and an active member of the N.F.F.E. He has held several local and state offices in the latter organization.

A native Iowan, he first enrolled in the Forestry Department at Iowa State in the fall of 1938. His college career was frequently interrupted by the necessity of earning money to meet expenses, and a 3-year tour of duty with the U.S. Navy Seabees during W.W. II. While in attendance at Ames he was active in Forestry Department and Forestry Club activities. He served as Assistant Editor of the *Ames Forester* in 1947 and Editor in 1948. He was elected to Alpha Zeta and Gamma Sigma Delta during his senior year. He received his B.S. in Forestry in 1948.

Immediately upon graduation he accepted employment as a junior timber sale officer on the Kaibab National Forest. Since that time he has held positions as Assistant District Ranger, District Ranger and Timber Management Staff Assistant on various forests in the Southwestern Region of the U.S. Forest Service. In July, 1962, Mr. Teuber was assigned as one of the full-time instructors at the newly established Continental Divide Training Center. In this position he specializes in the preparation and use of instructional visual aids, serves as a technical advisor to visiting instructors and assists in instruction of the management courses, aerial photo interpretation and radiological monitoring.