

TIMBER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Executive Officer's Report at the June 1978 meeting included the staff's estimate of 100,000,000 board feet of merchantable timber on scattered school lands in northern California. This volume figure is a rough estimate; however, appraisals done in 1975 showed a reliable volume figure of 40,000,000 board feet on 21 parcels. There are 90 to 100 additional parcels that may support a total of at least 60,000,000 board feet according to the meager data currently available. Most of this volume is estimated to be in old-growth stands varying in area from 10 to 500 acres on these scattered parcels. The staff has obtained aerial photographic coverage of 11 parcels and is currently plotting the school land parcels and delineating timber stands. Using the photography, supplemented by selected field checks, it is hoped to have more reliable acreage and volume estimates within the next few months upon which to base long range plans for timber harvest. Currently, we know of 2 parcels that have some insect damage in addition to the 4 on which the Commission has already authorized salvage logging. Because of the effects of the recent drought, it may be expected that additional insect and disease damage may be found.

If the staff's estimate of 100,000,000 board feet of old-growth timber is accurate, harvesting at an annual rate of 3,000,000 board feet could probably be sustained indefinitely. This estimate is based on projected growth rates that would provide 3 million board feet becoming mature annually subsequent to the depletion of the existing old-growth. If the depletion of the old-growth is accelerated to 10,000,000 board feet annually, it would be depleted in approximately 10 years. This would leave a gap of perhaps 20 to 30 years thereafter before income could once again be obtained from the young timber, then reaching maturity. It is emphasized that these estimates are based on very meager information and need a great deal of refinement. The only reason for holding harvest to 3,000,000 board feet annually is for even revenue flow. To maximize revenue, it may be advantageous to schedule heavier harvesting in years when the market indicates higher stumpage prices.

If more personnel were allocated to the preparation of timber sales, it would be possible to sell 5,000,000 to 7,000,000 board feet during the 1979-1980 fiscal year.

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This could probably be maintained in subsequent years with no further increase in personnel. Limiting factors in the volume to be sold include: (1) time required to obtain access to scattered parcels, (2) need for environmental impact reports and working out mitigation requirements (current sales activities are either emergency salvage operations or on environmentally non-sensitive sites), (3) insect, disease and fire salvage have high priority but take time away from preparing higher valued timber for harvest, (4) the sale of timber separate from the land was made possible on school lands by legislation enacted in 1969. Since that time a total volume of 5,254,000 board feet has brought in revenue totaling \$662,000 or an average of 524,500 board feet and \$66,200 per year. Over half of this timber volume was insect or fire damaged timber that was sold on an emergency salvage basis and the manpower was expended at the expense of other work, chiefly in the appraisal function. In fiscal year 1977-1978 during a temporary lull in routine timber appraisal work the Ferris Creek timber sale was prepared which brought in \$428,000 in revenue.

The staff proposes to provide for a higher level of timber harvest consistent with the growing capacity of forested school lands. With the addition of 3 professional foresters, it is estimated 5,000,000 to 7,000,000 board feet can be offered for sale annually with a potential revenue of \$500,000 to \$700,000 or more. The necessity to acquire access and the many small scattered parcels of timber are the chief limiting factors in the number of sales that can be offered annually. However, offering of a number of small volume sales will fill a need of small operators who cannot compete for the large volume offerings of the United States Forest Service.

The staff proposal is to establish a Timber and Range Management Section within the Division of Land Management and Conservation. This section would take over the non-mineral resource management programs on the school lands. It would incorporate the existing timber and range land appraisal workload, the Forest and Watershed Rehabilitation Program Administration of Grazing leases, the school land consolidation program and take on greatly increased activity in a timber harvest program including access road acquisition. For these activities the section would absorb 4 positions from the present Wetlands and Surface Management Section (2 from the Special Services Unit and 2 from the Appraisal Unit). An additional 3 new positions will be required for the expanded timber harvest

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and access road activity. Because of the specialized nature of resource management and special expertise in forestry that is required; staff feels that these activities can most effectively be carried out with professional forestry direction.

The long-range staffing for the Forest and Range Management Section is 1 supervising-level licensed professional forester, 2 senior-level licensed foresters and 4 associate-level professional foresters (not necessarily licensed).

All but 3 are currently carrying on the existing level of activity noted above. The addition of 3 new associate-level positions will permit expanding the sale and harvest of merchantable timber with an increase in annual revenues of \$500,000 to \$700,000.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE COMMISSION REQUEST FOR THE 1979-1980 BUDGET FOR 3 NEW POSITIONS TO EXPAND TIMBER SALE ACTIVITY ON STATE SCHOOL LANDS FOR THE PURPOSE OF INCREASING REVENUES AS OUTLINED IN THIS CALENDAR ITEM.