

The Western Forest Tree Seed Council is a member council of the Western Reforestation Coordinating Committee of the Western Forestry and Conservation Association. It is organized to solve problems concerning tree seeds among organizations and individuals in the eleven Western States and British Columbia, and represents western forestry interests in matters of tree seeds. The Council Charter, adopted in 1965, allows that any person actively engaged in tree seed matters shall be a member in good standing with full privileges. Members meet periodically to discuss problems of common interest, to exchange scientific information and to undertake cooperative projects that will enhance reforestation practices.

The Council came into being as the Northwest Forest Tree Seed Committee in 1953 in Corvallis, Oregon. A name change to the Western Forest Tree Seed Council reflected its affiliation with the Western Forestry and Conservation Association and its geographic scope encompassing the western United States and Canada. While its objectives have broadened over the past 27 years, the Council continues to actively encourage, promote and participate in seed studies and the reporting of seed research. Space for an annual Seed Council report is provided in the proceedings of the Western Reforestation Coordinating Committee. The Committee and the parent Association serve as forums in which the Council can air important seed concerns before larger audiences. The Association has adopted several resolutions from the Seed Council and has also provided much needed assistance in reproducing and distributing several Council publications.

The Council executive comprises four officers elected every second year. Meetings are held at least once a year, more frequently if the need arises, and written minutes are circulated. As with many other organizations, the interest in and activities of the Western Forest Tree Seed Council have been difficult to sustain at certain times. During the early and mid-1960s, considerable activity centered around amendments to the Federal Seed Act, the development of seed zone maps and a seed certifying agency, to mention only a few. In 1975-76, a proposal surfaced to place the Council in an inactive status, since no critical seed issues were recognized at that time. However, the Council has rebounded vigorously in the last 4 or 5 years, due to the leadership of Ed Hardin of the Oregon State Seed Laboratory.

A series of committees concerned with seed standards, certification, legislation, seed zones, research, referee testing and other matters have carried forward most of the Council's activities. The early achievements have been

1/ Paper presented at Joint Meeting of Intermountain Nurseryman's Association and Western Forest Nursery Council, Boise, Idaho, Aug. 1980.

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documented by Stein (1974)^{1/}, so only a brief synopsis is necessary here.

- i) The 1966 Seed Zone Map for Oregon and Washington. Revised in 1975, allowing zones to mesh with those in adjacent states and British Columbia.
- ii) Establishment of the Northwest Forest Tree Seed Certifiers Association, also in 1966.
- iii) In the late 1960s, the development of a Model State Seed Law for forest tree seeds.
- iv) Publication of a booklet on tree seed testing techniques, first issued in 1959. The Council's testing methods for tree seeds were adopted by the Association of Official Seed Analysts in 1965, and an updated booklet on tree seed sampling and testing was published in 1966.
- v) Secured funds for a study on germination in Abies species, the results of which were published in two reports by the Oregon State Seed Testing Laboratory.
- vi) Continued to press for additional research on western forest tree seeds, culminating in a proposed seed research program aimed primarily at (a) improving seed processing, (b) better seed testing, and (c) improved seed use. The proposed program was to be conducted at a federally funded laboratory in Corvallis.

Since 1976, the Council has persisted in emphasizing seed research needs. The Seed Research Committee met with the Director and Assistant Director (South) of the Pacific Northwest Forest and Range Experiment Station to explore the development of the much needed cone and seed research program. Although space and equipment have been allocated in the Corvallis station, completed in 1977, no work has been initiated.

Despite the compilation of a list of tree seed research requirements that identified more than 20 problem areas, such work retains low priority in the PNW Station's plans, since funding is still a major stumbling block. As something of a palliative, the Council has encouraged and promoted active participation in its meetings of seed researchers employed by private industry, university and other government agencies. In the last 3 years, a considerable amount of tree seed research has been reported to the Council by representatives from Weyerhaeuser Company, Washington State and Oregon State Universities, the British Columbia Ministry of Forests and the Canadian Forestry Service, and others. This work is the result of individual programs at each Centre and remains uncoordinated. Many of the problems identified by seed workers in the Pacific Northwest remain unresolved and the Western Forest Tree Seed Council must redouble its efforts of pressuring for funds if new seed programs are to be undertaken.

Other activities in recent years include:

- vii) Referee testing of Douglas-fir and Abies species. Two 2-day workshops were

^{1/} Stein, W.I. 1974. Activities of the Western Forest Tree Seed Council. Proc. Western For. Nurs. Council, Portland : 3-7.

also promoted by the Council and held in the facilities of the Oregon State Seed Testing Laboratory. Each workshop attracted some 30 participants who studied purity and germination testing, and the so-called quick tests (tetrazolium, excised embryo, hydrogen peroxide and x-ray). Emphasis was on uniformity of testing through the use of procedures described in the AOSA Rules.

- viii) A long-term seed storage project at the National Seed Storage Laboratory, Fort Collins, Colorado, that now includes several tree species.
- ix) Compilation of a list of tree seed research requirements. The list, identifying 23 problem areas, was widely distributed.
- x) A half-day symposium on Seed Vigor was held during the 1979 meeting. Participants had the components of seed vigor and the testing of seed vigor explained by staff members of Oregon State University.
- xi) The last three annual meetings have seen detailed accounts of research on revegetation of disturbed lands; true fir seed maturity, cone and seed insect control, cone collection and after-ripening, grading and sorting; air drying of stratified seeds of ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir to improve germination; quick tests to replace standard germination tests, and drying and storing stratified true fir seeds.

The Council is working toward revising and re-issuing the booklet on "Sampling and Service Testing Western Conifer Seeds" and is considering the preparation of a publication on quick tests. Other seed testing workshops have also been proposed.

Peripheral supporting actions continue, as ongoing events and as new developments, but the Council's major concern is the lack of implementation of its seed research program. As nurserymen, you are as vitally concerned with tree seeds as anyone, and your support of the Western Forest Tree Seed Council is highly valued. On behalf of the Council, I invite your participation in all our activities, and especially welcome your support on problems of mutual concern.