

A Statistical History
Of
Tree Planting In The South
1925 -1985

PREFACE

The Forest Service is indebted to Philip C. Wakeley, longtime silviculturist with the Southern Forest Experiment Station, for researching and writing the first practical guides for artificial reforestation with the four major southern pine species. Mr. Wakeley, in turn, credits F. O. (Red) Bateman, Head Ranger of the old Great Southern Lumber Company, Bogalusa, LA, for developing some of the planting techniques generally used today with southern pine. Mr. Bateman began his efforts in 1919-20 and, by the end of the 1925-26 season, had successfully reforested 12,700 acres mostly by planting. At that time, there was no other successful planting, south of Biltmore, N.C., of more than 100 acres. Since then, almost 39 million acres have been planted or seeded in the South.

The first great reforestation effort was in the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) era, 1935-42. Large scale industrial tree planting started about 1948, and has continued at an increasing rate ever since. The Soil Bank Program of 1956-61 was the second great reforestation effort in this country and was responsible for the planting of 1,922,604 acres to trees on small private ownerships in the South. Presently, about 2 million acres are planted annually on all ownerships in the South with 60 percent of the acres on industry lands. However, the largest percent increase in tree planting over the last 10 year period (1976-1985) has been on nonindustrial private forest lands, showing a 300 percent increase. The 1.6 million acres planted under the Forestry Incentives Program (Federal) since 1974, and the nearly 600,00 acres planted by State and industry cost-sharing programs since 1972 (VA, MS, NC, SC, TX and FL) have contributed significantly to the rapid increase of tree planting on nonindustrial private lands.

A statistical history of tree planting in the South is presented on the following pages. It includes statistics published each year by the Forest Service and the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service. SOME of the data for earlier years is from the files in the Forest Service's Washington Office, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), the various States, and some industrial organizations that planted trees before World War II. The data was sometimes fragmented and, where there was more than one source, often incompatible. Only a few records were kept during the war years of 1942-44.

Acreages planted are gross acreages. Although many acres were replanted, there is no known way to come up with net acreages. For example, on the recent Yazoo-Little Tallahatchie Flood Prevention Project in Mississippi, where nearly 800,000 acres of small ownerships have been planted to loblolly pine to control erosion, it has been necessary to replant 18 percent of the acreage during the 30-year period of the project.