

REVIEW OF U.S.D.A. FOREST SERVICE NATIONAL GUIDELINES, COOPERATIVE FORESTRY — URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY

by Leslie S. Mayne

Recently I was asked to review the "USDA Forest Service National Guidelines — Cooperative Forestry — Urban and Community Forestry" which is a suggested procedure for "The Cooperative Forest Management Act of 1950, as amended by PL 92-288, General Forestry Assistance." It will be very evident from my remarks and criticism that as much as I respect those professional foresters in public service, recognizing that much as we differ in philosophy yet we all have had a common educational background in the basics of forestry, however we may differ in its application.

A dedicated forester in public service strives to render the best service possible to all citizens of the nation or state, depending on his professional affiliation. However his reward apart from the recognition of his job well done, must also include a financial one. He, therefore, has the very human ambition of bettering his financial position. In many cases, his financial rewards are based not only on his ability but also on the number of people that he has working under him. The consequence is that he has the constant urge to expand his department and so his income. This is a very natural trait, no worse nor better than that of the forester in private practice who also wishes to improve and expand his services in order to increase his income.

The private consultant therefore looks with foreboding and dismay on the expansion of free public services in his field, for he can see not only the reduction in the scope of his activities, and so his income, but also if he is permitted economically to continue then in a subordinate position to the professional in public service. In many instances, this subordinate position would not be justified because, generally, the private consultant by experience, training, and orientation is much more likely to be the expert in his field than a public service professional who has

been conditioned by training and experience to cover a much wider field and so may become a "jack of all trades but a master in none."

Most of us, I believe, abhor socialism, partly, I assume, because such leads to a greater bureaucracy and the stultification of the free enterprise system. None of us grudge the poor and the underprivileged the simple free services that should be due to them but to supply a free service to a prosperous community or individual is basically wrong, for such services should only be supplied for a fee sufficiently high to encourage the survival of private enterprise in their capacity as professional consultants. Therefore, I believe that all consultants, not only in the field of Urban and Community Forestry, but also in allied fields such as arboriculture, landscape architecture, horticulture and land planning, will recognize in the present draft of "the Guidelines to Urban and Community Forestry," a menace to their livelihood and position in society.

When Public Law 92-288, known as the Urban Forestry Act was approved in May, 1972, many of us welcomed this amendment because the approval implied that urban and community forestry was indeed a suitable activity for a professional forester. However few of us recognized what the consequences might be: that the approval might mean the end of our careers as private professionals, or, if not the end, then as stated, professionals tolerated only in a subordinate and emasculated condition.

The "Draft of July, 1974, No. 3250 USDA Forest Service National Guidelines — Cooperation Forestry, Urban and Community Forestry" brings out the points that I have mentioned above very clearly, as the following quotations illustrate plainly:

"Technical assistance and training may be provided to local governments and their subsidiaries (sic), planning agencies, soil con-

servation districts, private organizations and corporations, consultants, and to developers of residential and commercial areas. Technical advice, assistance and training, involving establishment, maintenance, protection and use of trees and associated woody plants to improve environmental quality, may be provided to individuals."

What does the above signify? It signifies that virtually all the functions of the private consultants in the related field would be taken over by the Forest Service with free services to all. Would not this be the death knell of private enterprise in this allied field? Or, again, Page 5, Item No. 3, "*Planning*. Technical forestry assistance may be provided to regional and local planning agencies and other qualified clients," etc. Then further: "Such planning assistance includes advice on land development — the selection of trees and other woody plants for streets and roadsides —" etc. All this very definitely usurps the functions of private consultants in this field for what local planning agency would employ a private consultant if such a service is provided free of charge by the Forest Service whether Federal or State?

Once again, last paragraph, Page 3, "Planning assistance may include inventories of street trees in communities to provide a basis for recommendations for removal — or maintenance." This is presently one of the functions of the private Urban Forester Consultant.

Or under "Kind of Assistance" Section 'd' Page 6 — Maintenance — Technical advice may be available in the proper maintenance of trees and woody shrubs." This is a very large part of the activities of the private Urban Forester or the Consulting Arborist who supply this service for a fee.

Or Section "E", Page 6, "Land Use Changes." Many landscape architects perform this service. Should they be deprived of one source of their income?

Although the "Policy" Page 3, states, "The program will encourage and support competent private enterprise tree services, landscape services, professional consulting services and others," it assumes that the Forest Service is better able to judge what is "competent" rather than leaving the judgment of competency to the give and take of the market place — the traditional place of judgment in a free enterprise system. If the Forest Service is to be the sole judge, then all of the above professionals and craft services would be subordinate to the opinions of the Forest Service and thereby those professionals would have to place themselves in a demeaning position in order to survive.

Cooperative Forestry — Urban and Community Forestry under the ACT as amended by PL 92-288, general forestry assistance can best service the nation, not by killing off free enterprise consultants, but by educating political bodies and individuals on the desirability of employing private consultants; and certainly not by supplying free services which would deprive consultants of their just living.

I do believe that we private consultants should express our opinions not only to the Forest Service in order to modify this Draft but also to our representatives as our whole independent existence may depend on it.

*Leslie S. Mayne Associates
Landscape Foresters
Burlingame, California*

ABSTRACT

Anonymous. 1976. **Match the chain saw to the job.** *Weeds, Trees and Turf* 15(5): 28, 30-31.

Match the operator to the job too, says Michigan State University agricultural engineer Howard Doss. His checklist for safe, efficient chain saw work can be used as basic training for every person on your crew.