

WOOD AND FIBER SCIENCE

JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY OF WOOD SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

VOLUME 28

JANUARY 1996

NUMBER 1

“WISE USE” AND WOOD SCIENCE

When I began my forest products research career in 1951 at the Forest Products Laboratory in Madison, emblazoned over the entrance in the lobby were the words “FORESTRY IS THE PRESERVATION OF FORESTS BY WISE USE.” As I worked there, I came to understand the significance of those words, coming from the time and the efforts of President Teddy Roosevelt, Secretary of Agriculture “Tama” Jim Wilson, and Forest Service Chief Gifford Pinchot. Although the words “wise use” have somewhat different meanings now to those concerned with preservation and sustainability of the forest, the sense in which they were written is still valid.

At the turn of the century, the stark reality of forest deterioration was hitting home among thinking resource professionals in this country. The first steps in research in wood science were taken to provide options that would permit some sense of wisdom in resource use by conserving the forest while meeting the needs of a growing nation. Wood science and technology research, while acknowledging its European heritage, began to meet uniquely American needs of a uniquely American resource. In that context, we began to build up a body of literature on which to base decisions regarding “wise use.” That information was a key element in forest resource management. The literature that emerged during those early

years has provided a solid foundation on which to build.

The social, economic, ecological, and political perspectives of the forest are quite different now from what they were in those early days. They add a degree of interaction and complexity inconceivable then. The choices that underlie “wise use” are much more complicated now. Yet there is an even greater need for soundly developed, carefully thought-through wood science and technology. Our capability to produce that was never greater. The need to produce that was never more urgent.

I see *Wood and Fiber Science* as a key element in recording and communicating our progress in providing a firm technical basis for “wise use” decisions. We recognize that many other factors are involved, but in matters of science and technology we must “keep up our scientific socks” by doing our job thoroughly and well. My experience already tells me that this will be both interesting and challenging. I look forward to working with you to maintain wood science and technology as both good science and good technology, and a sound foundation for “wise use” in the truest sense of the words.

BOB YOUNGS

Editor

Wood and Fiber Science