



Siuslaw National Forest Fun Facts

May 8, 2008

Spruce Production Division ~ 1918

Did you know that the Siuslaw National Forest had a hand in building airplanes for the military during World War I?

Following its creation in late 1917, The Spruce Production Division, the home-front division of the US Army Signal Corp, established 6 Districts in Washington and Oregon, with the expressed purpose to supply a growing need for raw materials to build airplanes and ships for the allied forces.

Oregon districts included the Clatsop District with 3,342 soldiers, Yaquina Bay District with 3,370 soldiers and the Coos Bay District with 870 soldiers.



Soldiers with the Spruce Production Division were tasked primarily with building railroads, cutting trees, and sawing the logs into lumber. The Spruce Division's use of trucks and cars was the first large scale use of motor vehicles in the Pacific Northwest.

Remnants of some of the old road beds and railroads are still evident in portions of the Siuslaw.

In all, Oregon districts produced 53.7 million board feet of spruce before the end of the war on November 11, 1918.

As part of the "Fun Facts" series, the Centennial Committee will occasionally share information gleaned from The Salt. The Salt, sub titled "Take it With a Grain" was a Siuslaw National Forest newsletter sporadically published in the 1930's. Most issues contained brief reports from the districts, stories of employee's field and office adventures, bits of wisdom, an occasional joke or two (many of which could not be published in a newsletter today!), some historic information, poems and quotes from other publications. These newsletters give us a glimpse into forest happenings and social norms 70 years ago.

He likes It. A postscript on the bottom of a ranger's fire Trespass Report states:

"He gave me a free ride from his place on North Fork to Mapleton, bought my dinner, fed me on ice cream, soda pop and grapes and took me on home to Florence. In other words, no hard feelings at all. It is a pleasure to arrest such a man."

[This man plead guilty to burning slash without a permit and was fined \$10 and costs.]

...and another!

"Elk Are Prospering so well on the Waldport district that it is necessary for the ranger to scare them out of the trail before he can visit his lookout. They seem to be fat and prosperous and while they eat down much of the fern and browse along the upper edge of the trail they persist in breaking down the outside. Eventually trespass proceedings may be necessary or the matter referred to the Game Commission for appropriate action."