

Reflections of the 2014 SAF Sponsored Germany Study Tour -- Should SAF do more study tours?

ESSENTIAL RESOURCES

The German Foresters embraced all aged management; however, small clearcuts were employed to regenerate or to facilitate desired species establishment. Early silviculture treatments included intensive weeding utilizing string trimmers several times during the first three growing seasons. Subsequent treatments included early identification of crop trees, thinning to favor the crop trees, and pruning of specific crop trees. Commercial species included Norway Spruce, European Beech, Scots Pine, European Oak, Maple, and Douglas-fir. Often, all of these species occurred in the same stand.



Firewood comprised much of the first thinning, while the subsequent treatments emphasized favoring the crop tree's development into high quality sawtimber.

Water quality protection comprised an overall objective with harvester and skidder traffic confined to designated trails. The foresters kept the location of the trails and marked them to continue into subsequent rotations when final harvests were conducted. At one forest, we noted that these skid trails were planted with fast growing trees that would be removed as firewood in the first thinning entry.

Wildlife management comprised an important objective, as many landowners received significant income from leasing the hunting rights. Also, managing the deer and hog population to minimize browse damage to young natural regeneration and planted seedlings constituted a major objective.

With regards to **recreation**, the German Foresters must obey a law that allows public access to all forestlands within the country. This access includes hiking, biking, vehicular access, and horseback riding. The hunting season starts in July and runs through January. Hunters must accommodate all other recreational access and must complete special safety and shooting classes before they can hunt. Most hunting was accomplished through shooting clubs, which proved similar to hunt clubs in the U.S., but with special requirements regarding liability, access, and other demands governed by the hunting agreements with the individual landowners.



One unique use we observed was using an existing stand of trees as a **cemetery**. The landowner hired a Forester who also possessed a degree in Theology. Together they worked with the local municipality and churches to meet the requirements to establish a cemetery. The cemetery consisted of designated trees, and some rocks, surrounded by twelve spots where a person's ashes could be interred in a biodegradable urn. The price of the tree included special considerations such as tree species, location and view of Lake Constance. We found the area peaceful, respectful, and a beautiful site.

