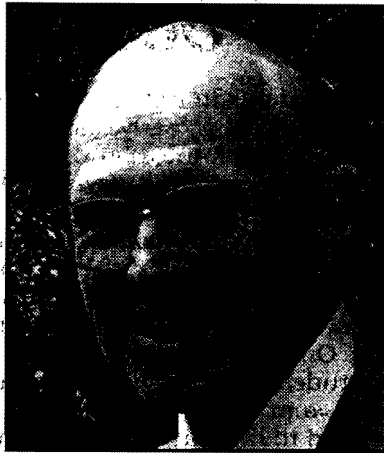


Nov 4, 1998

History of Tillamook Burn explored in slide show

Author explores transformation of forests after burn



Larry Fick

Without having lived in this area for 40-50 years, no one would suspect that the lush forests to the west were nothing more than a sea of blackened snags in the mid-20th century.

After four devastating fires of the '30s, '40s and '50s, it took a huge effort to replant over 350,000 acres. The account of the transformation of the Tillamook State Forest is described from firsthand memory by Larry Fick of Forest Grove. In his book, *The Tillamook Burn, Rehabilitation and Reforestation*, Fick and coauthor George Martin tell the story of the devastation that also destroyed the hopes of many Northwest foresters in the vast old growth forest

they were managing and harvesting in the middle of the Great Depression.

Fick will be talking about the Tillamook Burn and offering a slide show at a free presentation, sponsored by the Friends of Historic Forest Grove (FHFG) when its members and guests assemble Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. in the Forest Grove Light and Power

building, 1818 B St.

Fick is a retired Oregon state forester who knows much about how the Tillamook State Forest was transformed at a price of \$13 million over a period of 24 years. Fick will describe how the task involved hired crews, contractors, state employees, inmates and many volunteers such as school children, scouts, individual residents and members of civic groups.

Also on the program is the new interpretive center, which is being built near the Wilson River Highway to tell the Tillamook Burn story — the largest project of its kind in the United States. It was a project that consumed the attention of Forest Grove residents for over two decades, according to FHFG member Barbara Holmen, therefore the burn and its rehabilitation are significant in the history of the city.

For more information on the program or FHFG, call Holmen at 648-5833.

PEOPLE

George Martin
and Larry Fick

AGE: Martin, 68; Fick, 75

HOME: Martin lives in Hillsboro; Fick,
in Forest Grove.OCCUPATION: Both are retired
foresters from the state Department
of Forestry.FACE
TO FACECLAIM TO
FAME: Co-
authors of
"Tillamook
Burn:
Rehabilitation
andReforestation," a history of the
Tillamook Burn.WHY WRITE IT? They did it partly for
the public but also for foresters. Both
were worried that Department of
Forestry workers knew nothing about
the Tillamook Burn.WHAT WAS IT? What's now the
Tillamook State Forest burned
repeatedly from the 1930s into the
1950s. There were major fires in
1933, 1939, 1945 and 1951 and
smaller ones in 1931 and 1932 — a
series known collectively as the
Tillamook Burn. In the end, the fires
burned 355,000 acres, 13 billion
board feet of timber. In all, Oregon
legislators passed a special tax in 1948 —
the time one of the largest Oregon
fires — and started one of the
largest reforestation projects ever.
The Tillamook State Forest, as the
area's now designated, is slowly
turning to timber production and
offers many recreational
opportunities.BIGGEST PROBLEM IN THE
RECOVERY: Bureaucracy. To carry
out the reforestation plan, the state
had to acquire the land from the
counties. But a complex series of
long-term contracts the counties had

ROBERT BACH/The Oregonian

Retired foresters Larry Fick (left) and George Martin have combined forces to write a book about the Tillamook Burn.

signed earlier with timber companies
greatly complicated the acquisitions.BIGGEST MISTAKE: Not getting
started faster.

BEST PUBLIC RELATIONS:

Thousands of Oregon schoolchildren
planted millions of seeds during the
1950s and 1960s. Their impact on
reforestation was minimal, but the
effect on public awareness of forest
issues was huge.WHERE DID THEY GO? One school
group was told to stay close to the
road while seeding. But once it was
time to leave, the students were
nowhere to be found. They were
finally found spread out halfway up

the side of a mountain.

TRY, TRY AGAIN: Aerial seeding from
airplanes didn't work. The seeds fell
to the ground in strips. What finally
worked was a seed spinner attached
to the bottom of a helicopter.SMOKE ON THE WATER: Stimson
Lumber built a mill after the 1933 fire,
and the first logs into the pond were
still smoldering.MAKES YOU GASP: 72 million
seedlings were planted during
reforestation.FICK SAYS: "We developed better
methods of seeding as we went
along. You can't jump into a projectnobody had ever tried and expect to
do it right the first time."MARTIN SAYS: "It's not very often
you get to see that kind of test, where
you start with bare, burned ground
and wind up with a forest. That
doesn't happen very often in one
person's lifetime."

WHERE TO BUY THE BOOK:

"Tillamook Burn: Rehabilitation and
Reforestation" is available for \$15 at
the Department of Forestry offices in
Salem, Forest Grove and Tillamook.
It's also available by mail, for an
additional \$3, from the Forest Grove
office, 801 Gales Creek Road, Forest
Grove, Ore., 97116.

— Don Hamilton