

SESSION ON VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Introduction

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Mr. Lloyd E. Myers, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Irrigation and Drainage Division, ASCE, and Director of the U.S. Water Conservation Laboratory was Co-chairman of this session. Our objective for the vegetation management session was to have a truly interdisciplinary discussion where ecologists, foresters, and wildlife managers, as well as engineers, could explain their interests and problems resulting from vegetation management and describe results of recent research.

Vegetation management is a fundamental tool available to the watershed manager which may allow him to optimize water use for both local and downstream water users while maintaining high levels of timber or forage production. Because management or manipulation of vegetation is a complex discipline, problems have developed when research results are transferred from one area to another. Additional problems result because gains to one interest group may be losses to another.

In the first paper, Mr. H. C. Storey summarizes the experiences of the U.S. Forest Service in their work to increase water yield from forested watersheds. Then, Dr. D. H. Gray summarizes, from a researcher's standpoint, some slope stability problems arising from silviculture practices. The next paper, by Dr. DeBano and Dr. Rice, discusses water repellency soil conditions arising from wildfire on steep forested slopes in southern California. Dr. D. Neff points out that wildlife habitat enhancement is an important element of vegetation management and that increasing pressures for recreation activity, particularly on public lands of the Western United States, have produced situations where the greatest economic gain from vegetation management is increased wildlife production. Finally, Dr. F. H. Wagner discusses the broad ecological impact of vegetation management on various life forms and discusses the Desert Biome portion of the U.S. International Biological Program.

Vegetation management, although not a new concept, will undoubtedly receive additional emphasis in the future because of the increased demands on our land resources, particularly in the Western United States. Because the objectives of such management programs may not be compatible to all interest groups, multi-disciplinary discussions with representatives from the many interest groups involved can be the only solution to the complex problems of vegetation and watershed management.

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