

HOW OFTEN SHOULD A FOREST TRACK BE GRADED?

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In Forest Notes No. 3 an article was submitted entitled "Tracks Can be a Wasting Asset". In this the importance of drainage was stressed. In the last winter most of us have had this brought home with a vengeance.

Despite this, there is a very big mileage of our Forest Tracks which have been well drained and because they carry no regular traffic require little attention in the way of grading to improve drainage or to restore an even surface. However, we still tend to grade these tracks to remove the leaf litter or knock down the scrub.

Since 1954 two things have occurred which could have an important bearing on the treatment of these tracks:

- (1) We are now control burning all the forest at regular intervals.
- (2) Hormone sprays have found an important place in our work.

Because of (1) the leaf litter on one side of the track is burned whenever the forest on that side is burned. Mr. Pect has advocated the use of a marker such as a truck drawn scraper around the perimeter of each area to be burned. This scraper also makes a break in the leaf litter on the track. In the Kirup Division where we practice early edging of all proposed burns with flame throwers, it is found that a very rough trail will do to contain the burn. In many cases all the litter on the side of the fire is burned. If it doesn't burn we are no worse off.

This demonstrates that there is no need to carry out a full scale grading or even use a grader for fire control reasons.

If tracks are not treated in some way they will all ultimately become overgrown to the extent that traffic is impeded or prevented. 245T spray has been proved effective on most forms of scrub. Why not use it on our tracks? It would be much cheaper than grading. Some trials on this are being planned. The use of a torch to scorch the scrub in winter might also be tried.

If these trials are successful it will indicate that there is no need to use a grader for reasons other than restoring the surface or the drainage. Longer intervals between grading will:

- (a) Reduce a departmental cost which is so large that some of us may be bashful about seeing it on paper.
- (b) Allow the surface to become harder. In this state it will not wash so readily.
- (c) Allow scrub to become established and further assist to bind the surface. It will only be removed when the scrub becomes too large.

When you are sending a grader to work in a certain area, how often does an officer who really understands the requirements actually inspect each track before it is graded and give specific instructions?

Because of the points made in this paper it becomes even more important that this be done.

