

RCP 1986-027

CALIFORNIA FOREST PEST COUNCIL

Minutes of the 35th Annual Meeting Held in the Resources Building  
1416 Ninth Street, Sacramento, California  
October 24, 1986

Current Forest Animal Damage Research: James Evans, USDA-APHIS-ADC, Olympia.

On March 30, 1986, APHIS reopened the Forest Animal Damage Research Station in Olympia, Washington. The Station had been closed in early 1985 by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The goal of the Station is to help the Forest Industry alleviate its annual multimillion dollar loss of timber production to wild animals in western United States. The Station is the only one of its kind in the Federal Government researching forest ADC methods and materials.

Top priority, to date, has been to re-equip and re-staff the Station. Other priorities include "tying up loose ends" on past research projects as well as planning and prioritizing future research projects on ADC problems in western forests.

Area of responsibility includes, but is not restricted to, major timber producing states in western United States such as California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana. Damaging animals of principal interest include pocket gophers, mountain beavers, deer, elk, hare, rabbits, porcupines, and bear.

Wrap-ups of "old research" include negative results of selenium as a systemic or area deer repellent, positive results of increased stocking levels to minimize impact of gopher damage on establishment of pines, quantitative analysis of applying deer repellents before and after bud burst, and effect of porcupine damage on growth of Douglas-fir and hemlock.

"New Thrust" studies currently underway include aversive conditioning of deer and mountain beavers to repellent-treated trees, behavior studies using mountain beavers to transport control materials (toxicants and fumigants) to their nest, and a study of effect of nest and burrow destruction on reducing reinvasion of populations of burrowing rodents.

Future studies will be governed by available funding and needs voiced by APHIS State ADC Directors, the U. S. Forest Service, and others in Western Forestry. Studies of immediate interest include determining effectiveness of high and low concentrations of strychnine on pocket gophers, evaluating sound and shock as a means of excluding big game animals from tree improvement sites, developing an effective bait for porcupine control, and evaluating effects of kill trapping vs feeding bears in tree damage areas.