

Theodore S. “Ted” Young

1931-2000

A dedicated conservationist, forester, and businessman, Theodore S. “Ted” Young helped shape the landscape of Central Oregon with his commitment to long-term land management goals and a strong vision for a sustainable timber industry in the Northwest. With a career spanning more than 40 years in the railroad and forest products industries, Ted eventually served as Corporate Administrative Forester for Crown Pacific. In this position, Ted guided key decisions on management of the company’s more than 835,000 acres in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana.

The second of four children and the oldest son, Ted Young was born on July 24, 1931, in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, in the southeastern corner of the state. Ted’s parents, Wellington S. Young and Mildred K. (née Miller) Young, were both first-generation Americans of German descent. Mr. Young was a partner in a sign company, where he created hand lettered and eventually neon signs. Mrs. Young was a teacher before she had children, and later returned to substitute teaching once the Young children were in school.

As a youth, Ted was a star athlete, excelling at baseball, basketball, and football. He also showed an early interest in the outdoors, eventually becoming an Eagle Scout and serving as the assistant nature director of a Boy Scout camp.

Ted’s interest in the outdoors translated into early academic success and eventually brought him west. In 1950, he won the Outstanding Freshman award at the Pennsylvania State Forest School. Based on his academic achievement, Ted received a summer position at the U.S. Forest Service Sisters Ranger District in Sisters, Oregon, after his sophomore year of college. Ted ended up staying in Oregon, completing his education at Oregon State College in Corvallis, where he received his BS in Forest Management in 1953. While at Oregon State, Ted was also elected to Phi Kappa Phi national honor society.

Ted finally got a chance to put his forestry expertise to work on a permanent basis when he joined the Northern Pacific Railway’s Department of Timber and Western Lands in 1957. His work for the railroad included assignments in several locations in Washington and Montana. He worked first as Forest Inventory Crewman and eventually reached the position of Area Forester for western Washington.

In 1965, Ted joined the Cascade Pole Company in Tacoma, Washington, as Chief Forester. Five years later, in 1970, he returned to Oregon for good, taking a position with Brooks-Scanlon, Inc. In 1972, Ted became the company’s Raw Materials Manager, helping provide approximately 125 million board feet per year for two sawmills.

Bob Holowecky, who worked for Ted at Brooks-Scanlon, fondly remembered his boss's honesty, intelligence, and character. "He had a good sense of humor and was fond of telling stories, usually relating to loggers and the logging profession."

According to Holowecky, while at Brooks-Scanlon, Ted took on the colorful nickname of "Dick Tracy," the square-jawed comic strip detective. "He drove around in a blue Ford pickup – the only incognito vehicle in the company fleet – so he wouldn't be recognized when looking at potential private land acquisitions. Ted also had a flat top haircut that lent itself to the Dick Tracy image."

From 1976 to 1984, Ted worked as Timberlands Manager for Diamond International Corporation, the timberlands of which later became part of Diamond Group, Inc. From 1984 to 1986, Ted stayed on with Diamond Group, continuing to manage approximately 250,000 acres of the company's timberlands and taking on greater duties in planning and budgeting.

While at Diamond International, Ted worked hard to arrange a number of highly beneficial land exchanges with the U.S. Forest Service and other parties. The exchanges consolidated timberlands and increased the efficiency and success of their management under Ted's stewardship. These exchanges also laid the groundwork for the greatest achievement of Ted's career, a large scale land exchange in central Oregon.

After working briefly for the D. R. Johnson Lumber Company and as a private consultant, Ted joined Crown Pacific in 1988, first as Resource Manager for the company's central Oregon timberlands. He held this position until 1993, when he was appointed Corporate Administrative Forester, a position he held until his death on March 19, 2000.

Under Ted's guidance, Crown Pacific entered into a land exchange with the U.S. Forest Service in 1999 that represented one of the largest exchanges in Oregon's history. This complex exchange took nearly five years to arrange, and Ted's fortitude and diplomatic acumen helped see it through. "One of Ted's greatest strengths was his ability to work with a wide variety of groups to reach agreement on sensitive issues," explained Ted's Crown Pacific colleague, Ray Jones. "He was always able to move toward common ground. His gentleness, great intellect, and tenacious spirit always prevailed personally and professionally."

As part of the exchange, Ted helped arrange the protection of more than 3,000 acres, including 1,000 acres of old growth forest. Now called the Hopkins-Young Special Management Area, this protected space represents nearly 10 percent of the land received by Crown Pacific in the exchange.

Ray Jones noted that Ted was driven from the outset by the desire to find benefits for all parties. "His vision was to tear down arbitrary boundaries and exchange lands so that both the Forest Service and the company could manage according to natural ecosystems rather than blocks of land." Crown Pacific acquired land that put logging operations closer to its mills, reducing transportation costs, and the Forest Service consolidated land into larger blocks, making for easier and more efficient land management.

Deschutes National Forest Supervisor Sally Collins echoed Jones' assessment of the importance of the exchange, noting that her agency acquired important wildlife habitat and miles of riparian area. "From an environmental perspective, this is the most significant thing I would have done in 12 years on this forest."

Throughout his career, Ted was involved with numerous professional organizations, eventually serving as director and president of the Oregon Forest Protection Association and the Northwest Pine Association. He also served as a member, advisory member, or director of the American Forestry Association, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality Visibility Advisory Committee, Oregon Forest Industries Council, the Oregon Resource and Technology Development Corporation, and the Oregon State Board of Forestry. A member of the Society of American Foresters for 47 years, Ted played an active role in the Central Oregon Chapter.

In 1999, Ted was a nominee for the High Desert Museum's Earle A. Chiles Award, which recognizes outstanding contributions to high desert resource management. He was also a recipient of the Central Oregon Community College endowed scholarship award.

Ted started a family just as his forestry career was beginning, and eventually raised three daughters and two sons. Following his later marriage to Elizabeth "Betty" Geck Thenell in 1981, Ted also helped rear his stepchildren.

Like all dedicated foresters, Ted loved the woodlands, and he developed what one former colleague called "a terrific feeling" for the Deschutes plateau pine country where he spent 30 years of his career. Ted understood that the beautiful Northwest forests must be preserved and sustained, and he also knew that humankind could continually benefit by making sound use of this renewable natural treasure. His crowning achievement -- seeing through one of the nation's last great land exchanges of the twentieth century -- left behind both a legacy of protected forest and a strengthened forest products industry in Central Oregon.