
HAMILTON RODDIS
MEMORIAL LECTURE SERIES
No. 7

**Everything I Really Needed to Know
About Forestry,
I Learned from My Parents**

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HAMILTON RODDIS

MEMORIAL LECTURE SERIES

This Memorial Lecture Series honors the late Hamilton Roddis who served as Secretary, President and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Roddis Plywood Corporation for more than sixty years.

Hamilton Roddis was born in 1875 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and moved to Marshfield with his family in 1894 when his father invested in and assumed the direction of the Hatteberg Veneer Company. Mr. Roddis enrolled in the University of Wisconsin—Madison Law School in 1896 intending to proceed through a normal course of study. A fire destroyed the Hatteberg Veneer plant in 1897 and Hamilton Roddis remained in Marshfield to help get the new plant running smoothly—simultaneously, by independent study, he pursued his second-year law program by studying at night. He later rejoined his class in Madison and graduated on schedule. His capacity to operate on many functional levels served him well during the ensuing years in meeting the many challenges of the business world and at the same time maintaining an active involvement in civic, church and cultural affairs. Originally intending to enter the law profession, he was instead persuaded to join his father's firm (then known as the Roddis Veneer Company); he became president in 1920 and headed the company until his death in 1960. His character and intellect combined with his imaginative and progressive leadership spurred a business success through what we would today tout as Quality Management.

The Roddis enterprise spearheaded many innovations in forest products. It was the first to recognize the potential of the flush door and manufacture it on a large scale. During WW II it produced materials for the war effort by fabricating interior woodwork for the Liberty ships and aircraft plywood for the British Mosquito bomber and reconnaissance plane. In August of 1960 the Roddis Plywood Corporation, with holdings throughout the U.S. and Canada, was merged with the Weyerhaeuser Corporation.

Mr. Roddis' family, friends and university beneficiaries are pleased to honor the man and his extraordinary accomplishments in the Hamilton Roddis Memorial Lecture Series.

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INTRODUCTION

Writing this paper was a very daunting task. I have always dreamed of one day attending a university. I just never dreamed that my first paper would not only be graded, but published. So as you read this, please remember that no matter what I have achieved in my professional life, I still think of myself as the wife of a logger, someone who somehow stumbled into the role of forest activist. What follows are my personal views which were earned from a lifetime of bouncing over logging roads and enjoying the forest as a source of both income and pleasure. For me the issues in the forest resources debate are more about culture than career. This paper comes not from the President of the Timber Producers Association, but from a woman who has experienced firsthand the "Forest Wars" that seem so common in the resource debates of the nineties.

It was things my parents taught me that fueled my desire to speak out on behalf of those men and women who work as loggers. It was also from my parents that I inherited my deep love of the forest. As a child I spent many hours in the forest, working and playing. My parents viewed the forest not only as a source of income, but of pleasure as well. From my parents I gained a respect for the resource, and it is their wisdom and understanding of the land that still speak to me today.

I have many opinions and beliefs about forest management. Most of these ideas came not from books or classes I took, but from a deep-rooted land ethic that I inherited from my parents. It is this ethic that drives me to look for solutions to the environmental problems we face today. Every day we learn more about the biological nature of the forest. My desk is stacked high with the latest scientific information. Science can and does allow us to gain a greater understanding of the environment. It can also help us to understand the complex relationships between the forest and the species that depend on the forest for their existence. Science can be a tool that we use to ensure the future of our forest, but it will only be an effective tool if

we combine that science with a land ethic that acknowledges the relationships between humans and the environment. That is why even though I gain new information every day, I still believe that "everything I really needed to know about forestry, I learned from my parents."

LESSONS I LEARNED FROM MY PARENTS

For Us to Live, Something Somewhere Must Die. I grew up on a small farm. We lived in a house that my parents built, on land that my grandparents gave them, at the edge of the Shasta Trinity National Forest. They built the house on rock that they carried up from the creek, and with lumber made from trees my father logged. We were very poor and very rural, but it was a great life. Each year my parents would preserve, freeze, raise, or kill everything we needed to live through the winter. If we wanted a chicken dinner, we didn't go down to the local market or KFC; we simply went to the chicken house and made use of a non-productive laying hen.

Today, however, we live in a society that is bombarded with the message that we can "have it all." All we have to do to "get it all" is to get in our car and drive downtown to the mall. The only cost associated with the purchase is how much it will impact our budget.

When I was growing up I knew the cost of consumption. A hamburger meant the loss of a cow. Firewood meant being warm two times—once when you split the wood and once when you burned it in the stove. I grew up understanding that in order to live, we have to produce. Even the vegetables needed care and caused an impact on the soil that grew them. I only had to watch my father on a warm spring day wrestle our antique tiller around the garden to understand that nothing in life is easy. Every tomato, every ear of corn, comes with a price.

When I was a kid most people knew someone who had a farm. Today two percent of the world produces the commodities that feed, house and clothe the other ninety-eight percent. It is easy to see why a little boy attending a farm show in southern California, when asked what he wanted to see at the farm replied "I want to see the pigs who lay the biggest bacon." The urban population is expanding every year and with that expansion comes the belief that we can eliminate the chicken and still have the egg. Thomas Jefferson wrote over two hundred years ago about his concern that the loss of an agrarian society would have serious impacts

on our ability to maintain a healthy economy. That has never been more true than it is today. While we may have more income, we are losing touch with the fundamental knowledge that will allow us to make good environmental decisions.

Ecosystems Are Bigger Than We Think They Are. We spend a lot of time these days talking about ecosystems. We talk about their health and their protection, but we talk very little about how humans determine the size and shape of ecosystem impacts. Each human life affects the ecosystem that supports it, but more importantly, that area of influence grows each year as we become more of a global economy.

When I was a child, my sphere of influence was small. Most of what it took to sustain life came from our small farm. An occasional orange would make its way into our home, or maybe a special toy ordered from the catalog. I was six years old before I ever saw a television. Today I'm afraid, as is true for most Americans, my ecosystem is much larger. I eat blueberries from South America, I type on a Toshiba laptop computer made in America with imported parts. That computer runs on a battery of lithium derived from a mine somewhere in the world, but definitely not in my backyard.

Today, while the average family size has decreased sixteen percent, our average house size has grown by forty percent. I grew up in a house that was eight hundred square feet in size; now most people have garages bigger than that. With each generation expectations have increased. What would have satisfied my grandmother will not meet the expectations of my daughter. With less time spent in the production of food than at any time in history, this trend of increased expectations will continue. The number of people pursuing the American dream of owning a home grows each year. If we don't harvest the wood for those homes on land that we manage with the most current forest practices, you can be sure that someone somewhere in the world will fill that need. Every choice we make has an impact somewhere. We must be willing to produce our share of natural resources, as well as protect them.

A recent picture in the *National Geographic* about mining practices in South America shows a group of miners using a hydraulic mining technique that hasn't been used in this country for at least one hundred years. If we were truly striving for environmental balance, pictures like that would only be found in history books. Studies show our impact on the

world landscape will continue to grow. Our consumption influences production. If we care about the environment, then we have an obligation to produce forest products on lands suitable for production, and not to export our consumptive needs to less suitable or less well-managed forests.

Take Care of What You Have and Don't Waste. As a result of living through the Great Depression, my mother was very thrifty. She reused everything—old foil, string, rubber bands, tin cans—she had a use for it all. We had a family of four and each week our garbage would fit in a large paper sack. My mother didn't invent "reduce, reuse, recycle," but she sure lived it. My father was the same with his work. In the forest nothing was wasted. Wood left after logging was gathered and brought home to be used as fuel to heat our home. Because we lived so close to the resource, we could get a very visual picture of our consumption. If we killed too many chickens, they would not be able to reproduce. The same was true for the forest; if we were unable to stop fires or logged in areas that would not reproduce, we endangered our ability to sustain future generations with both water and forest products. To us the forests and the land were more than just production, they were insurance that we would be able to support our family. The forests were our future.

Today the forest products industry plants millions of acres of trees each year. Current harvesting techniques are based on the latest technological methods. New methods are being used to create wood products out of what once would have been a waste product. Today it might be said that the forest products industry uses everything but the shade from a tree. From wood-fired power plants to trees grown for cancer-fighting drugs, the forest products industry is still growing its own future. My mother would be proud.

Learn to Share. We all learned it as children, but now we seem to have forgotten how. Many special interest groups profess to speak for what is best for the national forests, but any debate centering on a fifteen-second sound bite cannot hope to solve the complex problems facing resource managers today. The national forests belong to all of us. My mother came from a large family of seven kids raised on a farm not far from where I grew up. Half of my mom's family stayed in the area, choosing lifestyles that were similar to the ones they grew up with, but the other half set out for the big cities. So every summer my mother's family would descend on

us with high expectations of good fishing, good swimming, hiking, and camping. In other words, a wonderful summer in the mountains. We may have been living there, but we also understood that the forest was important to those of us that had opted for a different lifestyle. We were the caretakers holding in trust the resource that belonged to all of us.

At the Seventh American Forest Congress several years ago, the urban contingent was probably the largest in the history of the Congress. Their message was clear, "take care of the forest." "While we might only see it once or twice a year, it is a part of our lives also." There are presently several efforts being made to build a community process that will insure that all interested parties have a voice in management decisions. The Quincy Library Group, and The Applegate Partnership are just two of the many groups trying to bring about a shared vision for resource management of public lands. These groups and others like them are the future of resource management. They have a vision for the national forests that includes communities, both urban and rural, as well as the environment. We owe it to future generations to support these efforts. We must empower those people who work toward solutions in public land management, and not those whose contribution is limited to sound bites and fund-raising.

Empower Those Closest to the Resource. When I was very young my father almost burned to death fighting a forest fire. He and several other men survived by digging a hole and letting the fire pass over them. My father lost his hair and eyebrows for a while, but no lives were lost. You can still see the scars on the land from that fire thirty-five years later. If you are a logger in the west, you are expected to fight forest fires. Each year local loggers are asked to risk their lives to protect the forest, and they do so because they understand the future for their families depends on the resource.

In the last twenty years the debates over forest management have changed; they have become much more polarized. In some instances regarding public lands, the debates have brought people to the point of violence. Maybe that polarization could have been avoided if we had been willing to listen to those people closest to the forest. In the seventies my father complained about clear cuts and the road building program. If he would have had a voice in the decisions made in forest planning, I do not believe the Shasta-Trinity National Forest would have half the roads that exist today, and I know that many clear cuts would not exist. My father

was willing to risk his life to save the forest, but when it came to important resource decisions, he wasn't allowed to be part of the process. Studies show that if you give people who stand to make long-term economic gain from natural resources adequate information and the choice between short-term profit and long-term financial stability, they will make good resource management decisions. Maybe sometimes the best science does not come from the lab, but from the hearts of the people.

CONCLUSION

Each of us in our own way impacts the world around us by how we choose to consume. We cannot divorce ourselves from that fact. The success of future generations depends on more complex solutions to forest management that just locking up the forest and letting nature take its course. The forests are not jelly to be preserved. Whether we like it or not, the forests will continue to evolve into their next stage of growth—we cannot stop that change.

We must facilitate that growth with a balance between production and consumption, between commodities and environmental protection. Instead of retreating to the courtroom, we must build a new paradigm for the future—a paradigm that reduces consumption, puts value on truly environmentally produced commodities, a paradigm based on listening to wisdom and not just rhetoric. Together we can build a model for resource consumption and production that will insure that we will have healthy communities and healthy forests for this generation and the next. This conclusion is based on those basic lessons I learned about forestry from my parents, combined with my own life experience.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nadine Bailey is the daughter of a third generation logger and wife of a timber faller. She became known nationally as a result of her activism on behalf of the small forest community of Hayfork, California. Her background in political activism had its roots in her own experience dealing with the consequences of forest policy decisions. When the northern spotted owl was listed as an endangered species, most of the forestland around Hayfork was suddenly off-limits to timber harvesting. Hayfork's economy started to decline and Nadine and her husband had to shut down their failing timber business.

With members of the local community, Nadine started the "Trinity County Concerned Citizens." The goal of the County Concerned was to bring national attention to the plight of timber workers in the Pacific Northwest and California, and to amend the Endangered Species Act to include consideration of social and economic impacts. Using true stories that illustrated the economic and social devastation brought on by the Endangered Species Act, Nadine gained access to both Presidents Bush and Clinton, and Vice-Presidents Quayle and Gore. President Clinton asked Nadine to sit on the first panel at the President's Forest Conference, held in Portland, Oregon. Nadine was credited with making the conference reflect the impact of federal actions on the lives of working people.

Nadine Bailey has been instrumental in bringing diverse groups together to work out solutions to many conflicts facing resource users in California. Along with fisherman Nat Bingham, Nadine formed "Fish, Forest, and Farm" to stop or modify listing of the coho salmon in California.

For four years, Ms. Bailey served as a consultant to the California Forestry Association, and eventually became their Director of Community Relations. Nadine is past president of California Women in Timber, former chair of the Trinity County School Board, and winner of the 1993 American Pulpwood Association's Forest Activist Award. She was also appointed to the Klamath Advisory Committee on federal land issues.

The tragic bombing of the office of the California Forestry Association, which took the life of Association Executive Gil Murrey, had a profound effect on Nadine and she and her family felt the need to make some changes in their personal life. In October, 1996, Nadine accepted a

position with the Timber Producers Association of Michigan and Wisconsin in Rhinelander, Wisconsin. She is currently president of the Association.

Nadine and her husband, Wally, have two children: Justin is a United States Marine stationed in Okinawa, Japan; Elizabeth is a junior at Rhinelander High School.