

A CHRONOLOGY OF THE RIB LAKE SCHOOL FOREST

by  
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In the year 1945, the Rib Lake Schools began a search for a suitable tract of land which could be used for a school forest. The school was beginning to feel the need for such a tract of land to increase its ability to teach conservation and related subjects.

With the aid of plat books, county maps, and the county agent, Mr. Carl Zoerb, a tract of land belonging to Taylor County, lying along the so called "Westboro Short Cut Road," was selected to be the ideal parcel for a school forest. The parcel offered nearness to the school, it had a creek through it, and had need for the many aspects of school forest management.

The Rib Lake Schools were given permission to use this parcel of land by the county, and the first planting was done on this land in 1946, under the direction of the high school agriculture class, supervised by Mr. Keith Zintz. This initial planting consisted of 200 White pine and 300 Norway pine trees.

Each additional year after 1946, 500 trees were planted in this parcel of land with the exception of the year 1951. In 1951, 6000 Norway pine were planted in a furrowed field. The entire high school, again under the direction of Mr. Zintz, made a field day for planting the 6000 Norway pine. Future checks showed a 90 percent survival for this large project.

The year 1951 also showed that the white pine was starting to suffer from blister rust. School boys under the direction of Mr. Depta of the Federal Forestry Division spent many hours removing gooseberry bushes to help destroy the blister rust. The problem still remains a serious one for the forest.

The school, by the year 1952, was beginning to get a great deal of use out of the forest resources. However, the students and teachers were beginning to get a little disheartened about the whole project, in that much time and effort was being put into the forest land area, but we did not own the land. It was the general feeling that to continue, we should try to obtain the rights to the land in order to reap the rewards of our efforts.

In early spring of 1955, a meeting was held in Rib Lake. At this meeting were the Taylor County Forestry Committee, members of the school board of Joint School District #1, Rib Lake, Joe Tuss, Taylor County Agent, Milton Reinke District Forester, Fred Trenk, University of Wisconsin Extension Forester, Robert Becker, Principal, Rib Lake Schools, and Keith Zintz, the school's agriculture instructor. The purpose of the meeting was to ascertain whether or not the County Forestry Committee would consider selling the land to the Rib Lake Schools.

The Forest area was toured on snowshoes and the problems discussed. The area around the original eighty acres also belongs to the county, consisting of 200 acres in all. The entire 200 acre tract, after deliberation, was purchased from the County for the Rib Lake School Forest.