

produce wood fiber for industry and provide hunting, fishing, camping, picnicking, wildlife habitat, soil and water protection and areas for research and demonstration. Such studies encompass projects on insects and diseases, plant genetics, site studies, and various elements of timber management.

Because of the complicated land ownership pattern at Green Ridge State Forest, a new program of acquisition of interior holdings has been initiated. When these tracts have been acquired, forest management practices on Green Ridge can be intensified.

Maryland's forest acreage is distributed among three topographic regions. The Appalachian Province of the State contains 588,000 acres. The Piedmont Province has 515,000 acres, and the Coastal Plain Province, 1,535,000 acres. Since the initial gift from the Garrett Brothers, the Department has acquired, through gift and purchase, approximately 169,000 acres of land.

The Department has established a nursery capable of producing ten million seedlings annually for reforestation. Through the four districts, the Department is developing modern forest culture and protection for every forested area of the State. In cooperation with County Forestry Boards, it administers Maryland's Forest Conservancy Districts Act and cooperates with State and Federal agencies and the wood-using industry in the many facets of a complete public forestry program.

Since 2,586,000 acres are covered by timber, forest lands in Maryland are of great economic importance and the proper management of this valuable natural resource is imperative.

Reforestation is vital to a continuous supply of marketable timber. During the 1969 fiscal year, the Department of Forests and Parks produced and distributed more than six million seedlings which were used to plant over seven thousand acres of private forest land.

The Forest Division manages the South Mountain-Catoctin watershed. Acquisition of this watershed is proceeding as rapidly as funds are available. A watershed is a natural collection area for rain and snow, much of which eventually contributes to the supply of water in main streams. Well-managed watersheds have trees, shrubs and ground cover which intercept and hold this precipitation. The Forest Division also implements a comprehensive fire prevention and control program for the protection of Maryland's woodlands. Without this forest protection, there would be no forest acreage or recreation facilities to administer. In recent years, the State has been among the leaders in forest fire prevention and control. Only on one occasion in the past decade has more than 2,000 acres burned in any single year.

The State is divided into nine fire control areas, each with a supervisor and from one to six forest rangers. There are thirty-four fire towers scattered across the State, from extreme Western Maryland to the lower Eastern Shore. The central command post is located at the Long Hill station in Anne Arundel County.

The Department is constantly expanding its campaign for forest fire prevention in every way possible and has achieved an excellent record over the years. The efficiency of the suppression program is evidenced by the reduction in the annual loss from forest fires, which has been kept well below the national average for seventeen consecutive years.

The Information Division, in effect, is the Department's link with the general public. Since the taxpayer's money is being spent to provide him with the best possible forests and parks program, it is important that he be kept well informed of the Department's activities. This is accomplished through the medium of newspapers, radio and television, and implemented with brochures, reports, displays and