# HISTORY OF FORESTRY

# Merriam-Webster defines **FORESTRY** as the science of developing, caring for or cultivating forests. It is also defined as the management of growing timber.

The main activities performed under forestry consist of harvesting and replanting timber. Management of the balance between timber harvest and replanting is the job of a forester or forest manager. A forest manager is schooled in protecting wildlife and how to protect forests from weeds, insects, fungal diseases, fire and erosion. The planned management of forests began in the 1800s. It is essential to be knowledgeable about the history of forestry to understand today's management practices. Below you will find a brief overview of the history of forestry; however, you are encouraged to dig deeper for a more thorough representation of the timeline.

#### Today

According to the U.S. Forest Service, approximately 73 percent of the 191 million acres of national forests are considered forested.

# 1960's and 1970's

The concept of multi-use began which consisted of forests being used for timber, forage and water, along with wildlife conservation and recreation.

## Pre- and Post-World War II

Prior to WWII, the Forest Service focused on watershed protection, forest restoration and wildfire prevention. Post-WWII, there was an increase in demand for building materials resulting in the widespread use of national forests to obtain timber.

#### Weeks Law of 1911

Several national forests were created under the Weeks Law of 1911 to restore forests on formerly private lands.

#### **Organic Act of 1897**

Served as the basis for the management of newly created forest reserves. At the time, there were fewer than 10 individuals in the nation with any formal forestmanagement training, and all of them studied in Europe.

## **Prior to European Settlement**

The original forest covered about one billion acres, or about half of the U.S. land area (including Alaska). About three-quarters of that forest covered the eastern third of the country.

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