

Feature

Signs of the Times

For more than a century, America's national forests and their facilities have been identified by distinctive signs. Here are just a few Pacific Northwest Region examples of U.S. Forest Service signage evolution.

By Les Joslin

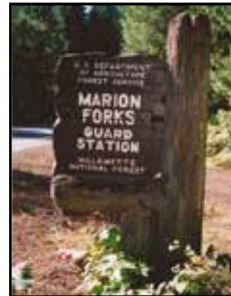


Many early national forest portal sign designs featured the U.S. Forest Service “pine tree shield” symbol.

The new 1930s-era signs at right were delivered by rail to Eugene, Oregon, for erection at Willamette National Forest boundaries. U.S. Forest Service photographs



This undated photograph was made at the Willamette National Forest entrance on the Santiam Highway.



“Rustic” is the adjective that characterized the style of national forest signs which prevailed during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s—many of them crafted by Civilian Conservation Corps members. *U.S. Forest Service photographs*



The earlier portal sign designs gave way in the early 1960s to the current “family of shapes” signs designed by a Washington Office team led by the late OldSmokey Virgil R. “Bus” Carrell. With passage of the Wilderness Act of 1964, portal signs at entrances to National Forest System units of the National Wilderness Preservation System reflected the “family of shapes” design. Bus, a veteran Forest Service ranger, is shown at above right in 1935 with his horse Buddy on the Cle Elum Ranger District, Wenatchee National Forest, Washington.

Photographs by Les Joslin; photograph of Bus courtesy of Bus Carrell.