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Review

This is the view looking west toward Boulder Creek and Boulder sale area from a point 7 miles west-northwest of the summit of Mount Adams, Mount Adams Ranger District, Gifford Pinchot National Forest, Oregon....in 1977, at least. But what would this area look like 40, 100, or 150 years from now after timber harvesting and regrowth? Thanks to two Forest Service research scientists, you can see for yourself.

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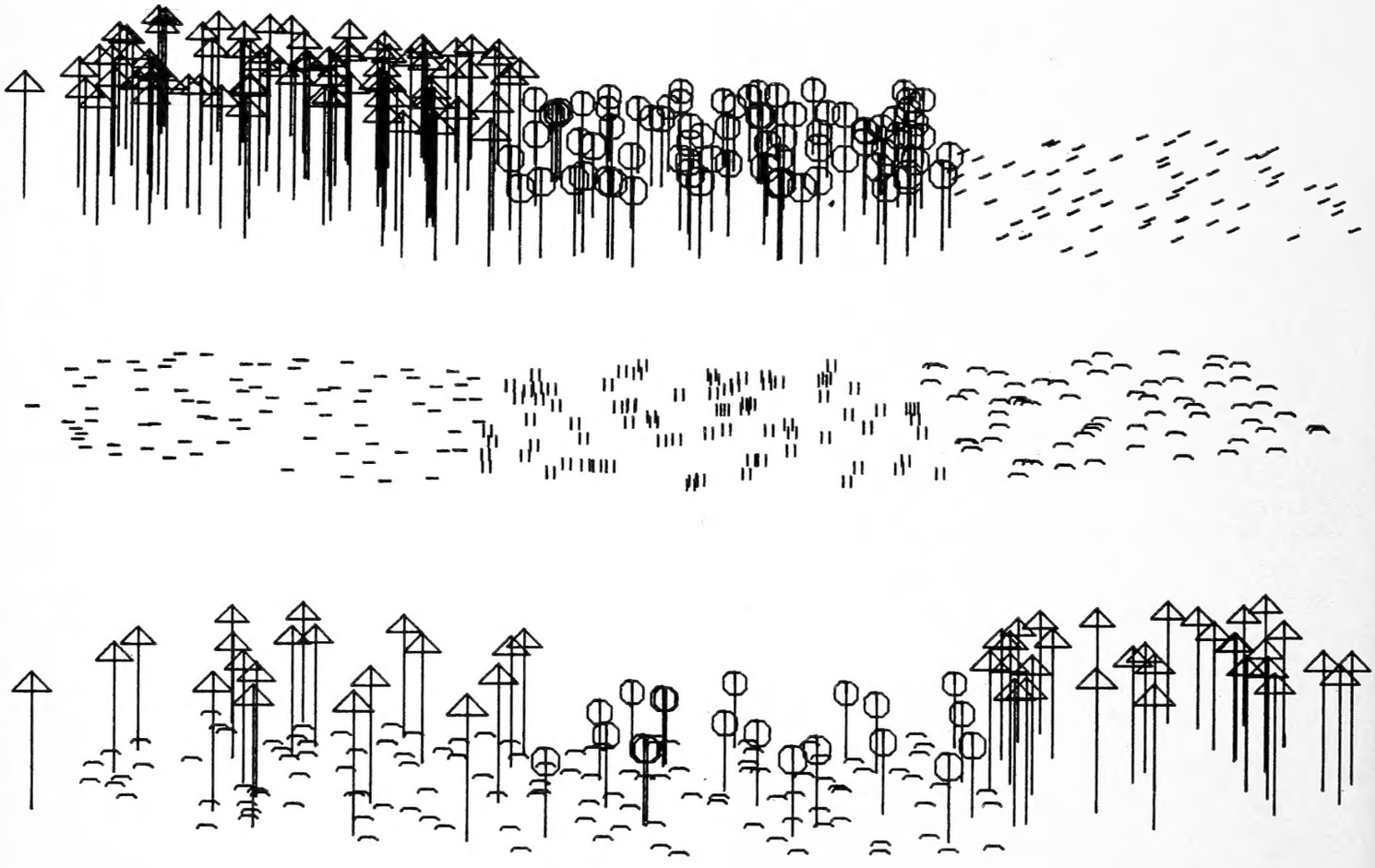
NORTHEASTERN FOREST EXPERIMENT STATION • UPPER DARBY, PENNSYLVANIA 19082

Ever wonder how you'd look with short hair?...or bald?...or what you'll look like 20 years from now? Picturing the answer to the last question could throw some of us into "future shock"; however, being able to see the results of some of the things we do before we do them could avoid a lot of future problems.

While we may still be a long time away from Orson Welles' concept of the time machine, the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, has its own version of a "machine" that can take us more than 100 years into the future. It is a new concept in forest landscaping called PREVIEW -- a computer program that shows the visual effects of proposed timber harvesting, regrowth, and other landscape changes from selected viewing points.

Developed by two Forest Service research scientists, Erik Myklestad, now located in Seattle, Washington, and J. Alan Wagar, Northeastern Forest Experiment Station, Syracuse, New York, PREVIEW shows landscapes by a grid of distorted squares or by using trees and other vegetation symbols. It can also plot perspective views of road systems, power lines, boundaries, and other linear features. Drawings can include any combination of nine ground surface or cover types -- conifers, hardwoods, fallen timber, water, grass or brush, rock, and mixtures of these. Additional symbols can be developed as needed.

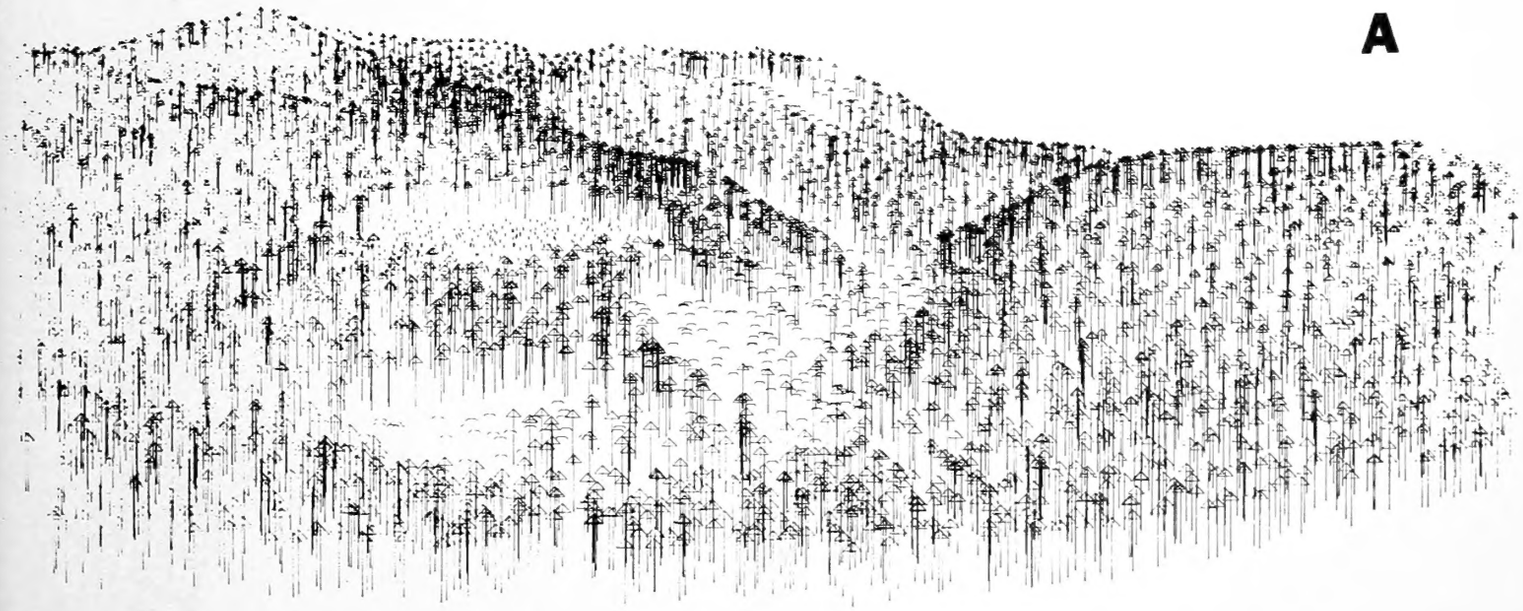


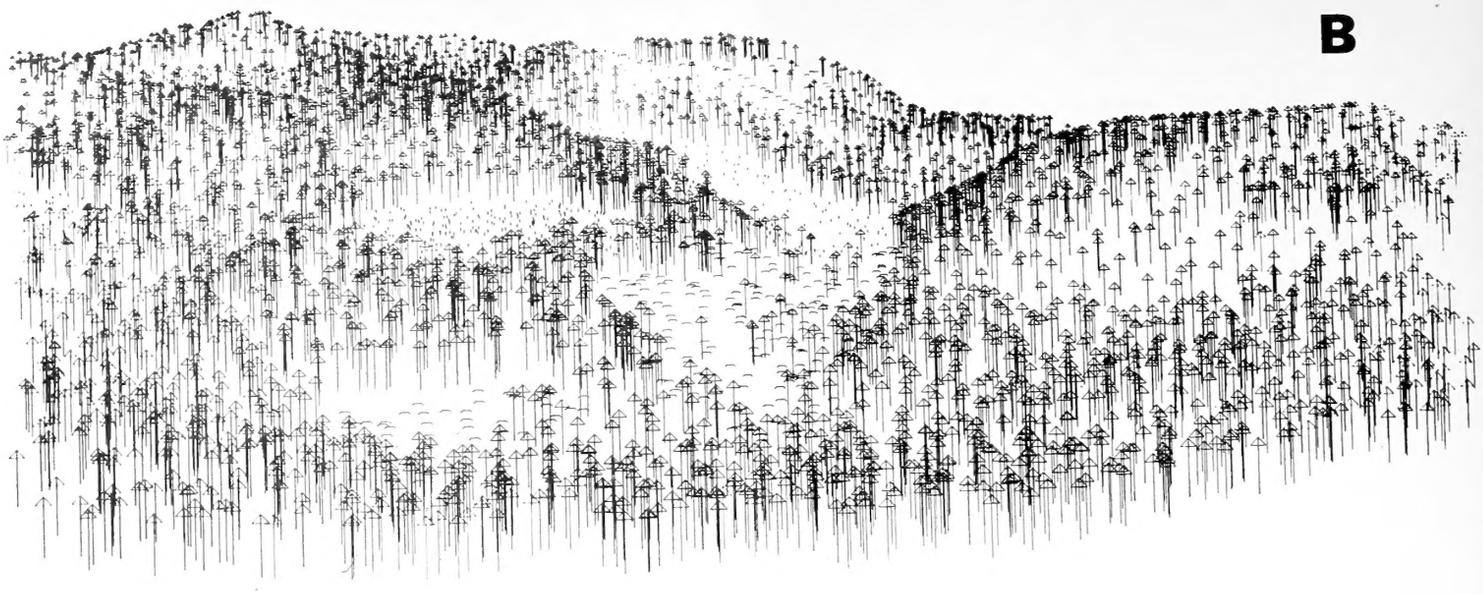
Ground surface or cover symbols currently used by PREVIEW program. From left to right and top to bottom, symbols are conifers, hardwoods, and felled stems; water surface, grass or brush, and rock outcrop; and rock with scattered conifers, rock with scattered hardwoods, and coniferous shelterwood.

Now, imagine that you are a person with long hair who would like to see how you'd look in short hair. What are your alternatives? Well, you could take a chance and cut it short. But what if it looks terrible? How can you put back the hair that you've cut? You can't -- no more than a forester can put back a tree that the logger has cut down. PREVIEW allows foresters, landowners, and landscape architects to see what an area will look like after timber harvesting without having to actually cut any trees. In addition to showing landscapes at a single moment, PREVIEW can also show timber harvesting entries and regrowth that would occur over periods of 100 or more years. Because managers are able to preview the future, they have the option of being able to adjust their management to protect the natural beauty of the forest.

For more information and a copy of Research Paper NE-355, "PREVIEW: Computer Assistance for Visual Management and Forested Landscapes," by Erik Myklestad and J. Alan Wagar, contact: Information Services, Northeastern Forest Experiment Station, 6816 Market Street, Upper Darby, Pa. 19082, (215)-596-1628.

Computer-generated preview of 152 years of timber harvesting designed for minimal visual degradation, Boulder sale area, Mount Adams District, Gifford Pinchot National Forest. A. Year 1 (showing test unit 1 but no other cutting). B. Year 1 (1 year after initial clearcut and shelterwood entries). C. Year 39 (1 year after second clearcut in Block B and 19 years after shelterwood entry). D. Year 115 (1 year after fourth clearcut in Block B and 15 years after sixth shelterwood entry). E. Year 153 (1 year after fifth clearcut in Block B and 13 years after eighth shelterwood entry). Scale is 100 feet between data points.

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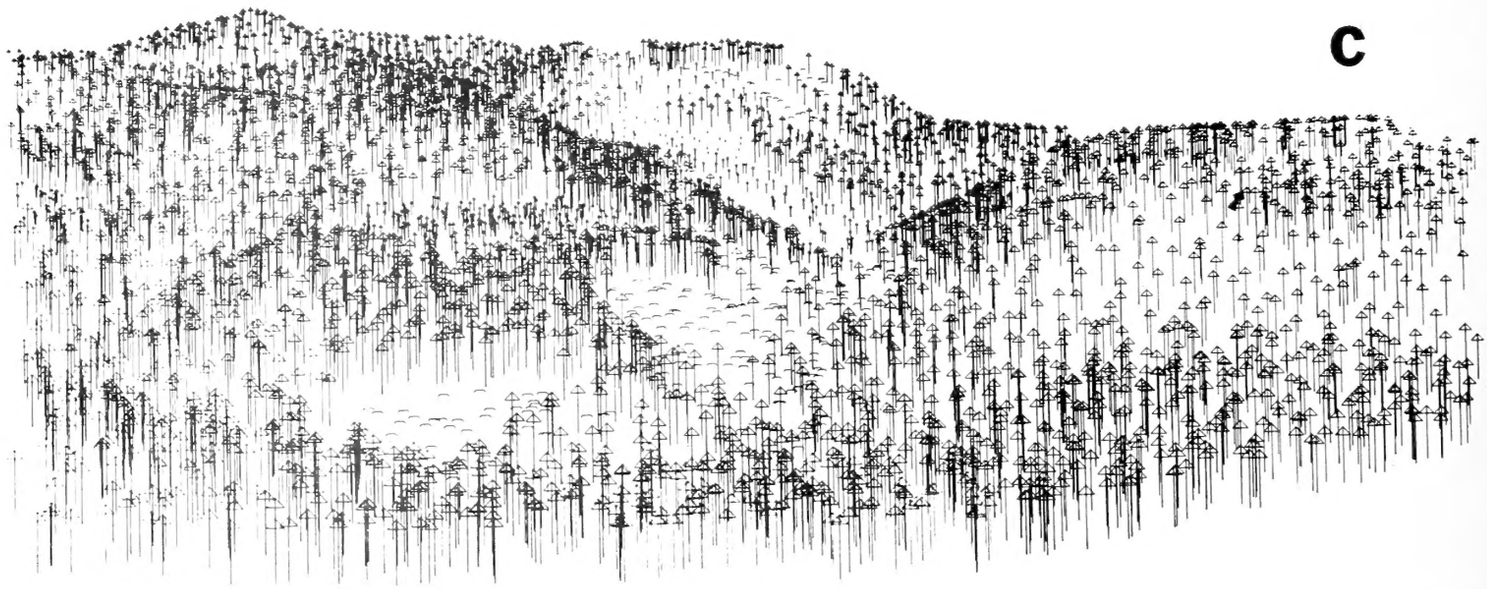
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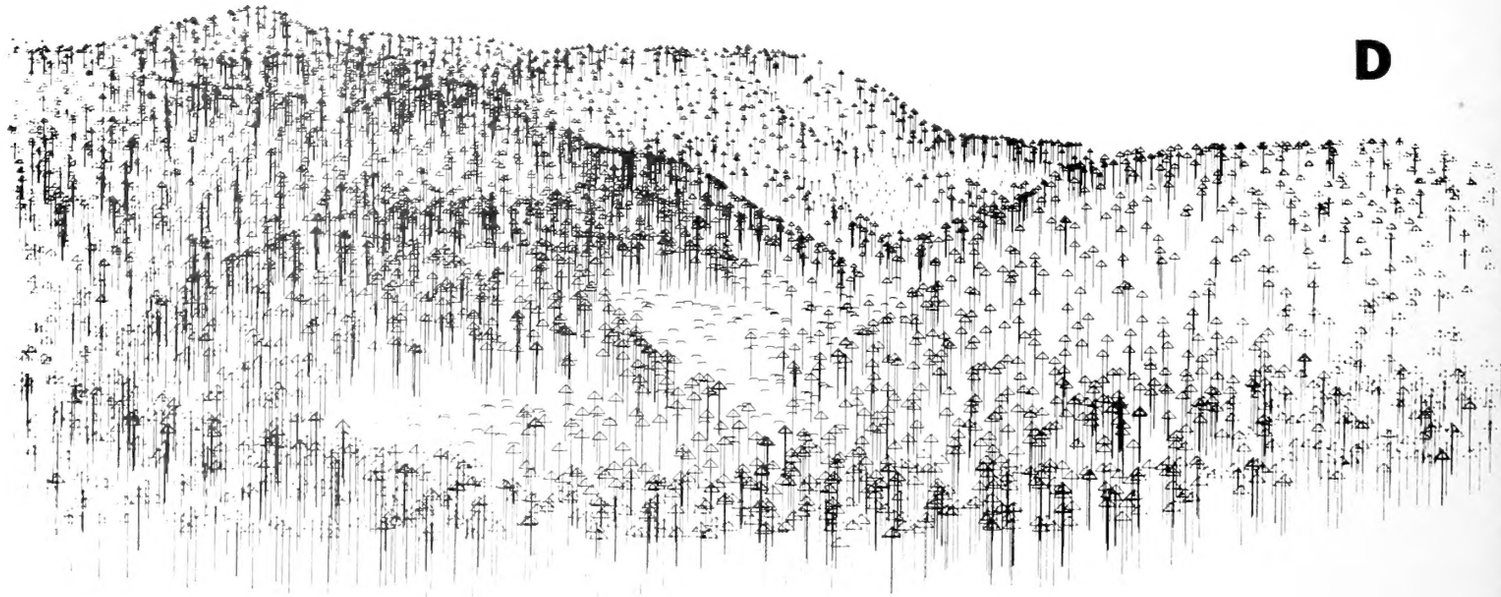
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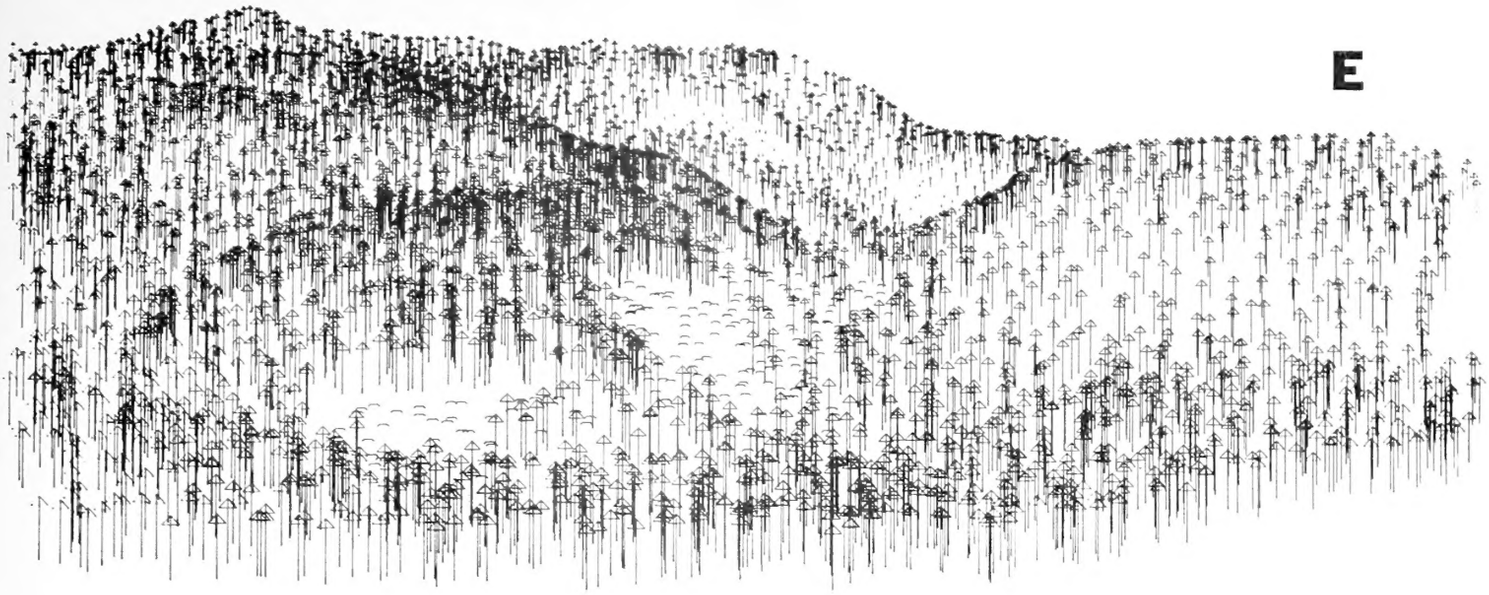

Hypothetical clearcuts in rectangular blocks. Because PREVIEW represents vegetation by randomly-spaced symbols around relatively few grid points, boundaries of clearings may appear less harsh on drawings than on the ground.