THE NORTH CENTRAL RESEARCH STATION SILVICULTURE RESEARCH PROGRAM IN NORTHERN MINNESOTA — PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

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ABSTRACT.—The North Central Research Station (NCRS, USDA Forest Service) and its venerable predecessor, the Lake States Forest Experiment Station, has had a silviculture research program in northern Minnesota, northern Wisconsin, and Michigan’s Upper Peninsula for more than 70 years. Much of this research has been conducted in the experimental forests of this region—Pike Bay and Cut Foot Sioux on the Chippewa National Forest, Argonne on the Nicolet National Forest, and the Dukes Forest near Marquette, Michigan. This research has provided important information for the development of silvicultural systems for wood production in northern Minnesota as well as in Canada and as far north as subartic Alaska.

The purpose of this paper is: (1) summarize the past research and the history of the silviculture research program; (2) provide a brief update on the status of some of the long-term studies—e.g., growth and yield, thinning methods and prescribed burning in red pine, aspen regeneration and growth and yield, and northern hardwood regeneration and growth and yield; (3) describe the design and types of data available from the long-term studies; and (4) describe the possible future direction for the long-term studies and the type of new research on silvicultural systems relevant to forest productivity in northern Minnesota. The role of experimental forests in future research on forest production in Minnesota will also be considered.

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