

# Lester D. McClung



Lester D. McClung was born in Greenbrier County and although life decisions took him away from his beloved state for a while, his heart and soul were always that of a West Virginia Mountaineer.

His career began as a professional forester in 1939 following graduation from Colorado State University with a bachelors degree in forestry. In 1941, he returned to West Virginia and started his work in public service with the West Virginia Division of Forestry. He served as forest superintendent of Panther State Forest, district forester for the Elkins and Romney regions, assistant state forester for fire control and state forester of West Virginia for the last 20 years of his career. His time “in the woods” was interrupted during World War II when he proudly served in the U.S. Navy from 1944 to 1946.

Lester saw the West Virginia Division of Forestry grow from 65 to 143 employees while he was state forester. He began a landowner services program that reached forest owners across the state with tree planting, timber sales and cultural forestry activities to ensure that West Virginia’s forest resources continued into the future. He established the Lakin State Tree Nursery which provided tree seedlings for West Virginia’s first efforts toward mined lands reclamation of mined lands. The nursery also provided native seed stock for the planting of open land and returning it to viable forests. He also instituted the very first multiple use management program for public lands designated as State Forests. Detailed forest management plans were developed to safeguard water quality, expand recreation, protect and improve wildlife and fishery habitat and to demonstrate the responsible harvesting of timber.

Mr. McClung was a member of the Society of American Foresters, visiting committee member of the WVU Division of Forestry, member and secretary of the National Association of State Forester, advisory committee member for the Northeast Forest Experiment Station, and West Virginia Licensed Forester #37. His awards include Outstanding Service recognition from the U.S. Forest Service, W.Va. Forests, Inc., and Forest Farmers Association; W.Va. Wildlife Federation “Forester of the Year”; and “Distinguished West Virginian Award” presented by Governor Arch Moore, Jr.

Mr. McClung devoted his life to the service of West Virginia. His career, which spanned 35 years, brought with it a new awareness of the state’s forest resources, the need to protect it and manage it for the future. Today, over 600,000 private landowners in West Virginia and the public can be proud of the decades of work that protected and conserved the forest resource we enjoy today.