

Arthur William Sampson 1884-1967

Arthur William Sampson was privileged to be associated with the beginning of a subject-matter discipline—range management. During 60 years devoted to teaching and research, his ideas and philosophies shaped that field. The accomplishments of his students attest the thoroughness of his teaching, and over 200 publications indicate the results of his research. To students and colleagues alike, he was affectionately known as “Sammy.” His death on February 7, 1967, of virus pneumonia marked the loss of a warm friend who was a constant source of encouragement to students and colleagues and had a remarkable zest for living.

Arthur W. Sampson was born in Oakland, Nebraska, March 27, 1884. He developed an early interest in the outdoors and pursued it in his study of botany and plant ecology at the University of Nebraska, where he received the B.S. degree in 1906 and the M.A. in 1907. He accepted immediately a position as Plant Ecologist with the U.S. Forest Service, his assignment being to determine the results of overgrazing in the Blue Mountains of Oregon. His keen observations and sound research ability were soon evident, as his first publication appeared in 1908. In the next few years his application of the research method of forest land-management problems resulted in clear and convincing evidence of the undesirable effects of improper grazing and led to many land-management recommendations that are used today. Between 1912 and 1922 he was the first Director of the Great Basin Forest Research Station in the Wasatch Mountains, Utah. Much of his time from 1914 to 1917, however, was spent in graduate work, first at Johns Hopkins University and later at George Washington University, where he received the Ph.D. degree in 1917.

Professor Sampson's association with the University of California began with a lectureship in 1922. In 1923 he was promoted to Associate Professor, in 1936 to Professor, and upon retirement in 1951 he was granted Emeritus status. He organized and strengthened the program of graduate study in Forestry, and his four textbooks in range management plus many research publications have had far-reaching influence. Of perhaps greater importance was the pains-

taking care that he took in his teaching. It challenged and inspired everyone who was exposed to his courses. Professor Sampson was universally held in high esteem not only by every one of his students in range management but also by virtually everyone working in this field. He had great ability to inspire interest, enthusiasm, and rigorous standards of personal and research accomplishment. No one has exerted a more profound influence on the field of range management.

He was always interested in sports. At Nebraska he had participated in track, boxing, and wrestling. After he came to California he practiced with the track team each season until he was about 45 years of age. He also loved to pitch horseshoes and had stakes installed behind the forestry building, where he carried on contests with his students almost daily.

The focus of Professor Sampson's research was on the ecology of western ranges. He gave particular attention to the role of fire in the ecology of California brushlands, to patterns of forage growth and the impact of grazing on them, and to careful scientific description of range plants of many western areas. He also published extensively on problems of dendrochronology, methods of controlling undesirable plant species, and various aspects of education in forestry and range management. In addition to continued research during his retirement years, Professor Sampson devoted a great deal of time

and energy to the preparation of judicious scientific statements applicable to areas in which such discussions were essential to the development of sound public policies in the management and conservation of natural resources.

The accomplishments of over 50 years in Professor Sampson's distinguished career were recognized in a number of ways. He was elected a Fellow in the Society of American Foresters, voted a Certificate of Merit by the American Society of Range Management, given the fifth Eminent Ecologist Award by the Ecological Society of America, presented with a Distinguished Service Award by the American Forestry Association, and declared a Distinguished Alumnus by the University of Nebraska. He gave guest lectures at the invitation of a number of universities and took part in several world-wide efforts concerned with natural resources.

In the belief that Professor Sampson stood for standards of excellence that should be perpetuated, many of his friends have established the Arthur W. Sampson Scholarship at Berkeley to encourage students to study range management or related fields.

Professor Sampson is survived by his wife, Mrs. Helen Rannells Sampson, of Berkeley, and by his nephew, Dr. Robert Johnson, of Los Altos.

Myron E. Krueger
Harold H. Biswell
Harold F. Heady