



# Elers Koch: Forty Years a Forester

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## **Elers Koch: Forty Years a Forester** Elers Koch

1998 Crown of the Continent Nature Writing Award Elers Koch was a groundbreaking silviculturist, a pioneering forest manager, and a master firefighter in the early days of the United States Forest Service. Working as one of "Gifford Pinchot's young men," he helped to establish the boundaries of most of our national forests in the West, designed new fire-control strategies and equipment, and served through all the formative years of the agency. *Forty Years a Forester*, Koch's entertaining and illuminating memoir, is published here in its entirety for the first time, along with the author's controversial essay "The Passing of the Lolo Trail," an impassioned plea to embrace the principles of forest conservation. Sprinkled with personal anecdotes and family photos, *Forty Years a Forester* reveals one remarkable man's contributions to the then-new science of forest management and his role in building the human relationships and policies that helped make the U.S. Forest Service prior to World War II the most respected bureau in the federal government. At the same time, the book vividly describes the natural world that Koch so carefully tended. Readers will find tales of political imbroglios and personal heroism, along with a few old-fashioned campfire yarns. For forestry students, western history buffs, scholars, and lovers of a good story, these reminiscences give a detailed history of the early days of the U.S. Forest Service and provide an authoritative and very human snapshot of an important period in the growth of an American conservation ethic.

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