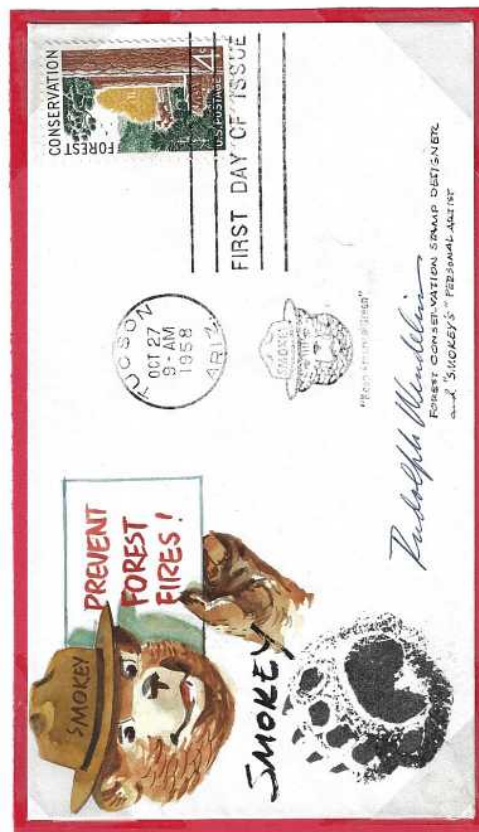


Forest Conservation Issue of 1958 - Concept, Production, First Day Covers and Use

This First Day Cover exhibit tells the story of the 1958 Forest Conservation issue, through the stamp's conception, production, first day covers, and varied commercial uses. The stamp was issued on the 100th anniversary of the birth of Conservationist President Teddy Roosevelt. President Roosevelt, trees and the forests, and Smokey Bear are recurring themes in the first day cachets.

In the mid-1950s, the forestry industry pushed to honor the work that the Smokey Bear program had accomplished during WWII by featuring the ursine spokesman, Smokey Bear, and to educate the public on the continuing need to conserve our precious forests. The effort was led by E.R. Waggoner of the Texas Forestry Association. With intervention by the multi-state Keep America Green committees, Smokey was pushed to the background with the result being the pastoral scene of the 1958 issue of the Forest Conservation stamp, designed by Rudolf "Rudy" Wendelin.

"Rudy," Wendelin, a U.S. Forest Service employed illustrator, and officially designated, "Caretaker of Smokey Bear's image," served the stamp committee as artist and advisor. Rudy also designed both variations of first day canceled dies used for this issue.



In response to a request from a collector, Rudy provided this hand painted first day cover, with his pen-added signature block using a very rare self-designation as "Smiley's Personal Artist." Of the many hand-signed renderings by Rudy that I own, or have seen, this is the only one using that title.

Titles and Tables of Contents are in Arial Bold 10 point type

Captions and explanatory notes are in Arial Narrow 11 point type

Background and Additional Information is in Georgia Regular 11 point type

Original Research is noted with a

Red Matting Frame indicates rare, unique or difficult to obtain items.



Rudy Wendelin, Forest Conservation stamp designer was instrumental solely, or as co-designer on all six designs of conservation and preservation themed stamps, affixed to this combo-cancelled cover on the Smokey Bear first day of issue.

Rudy Wendelin designed the forest stamp by default, as the graphic artist on the stamp committee. Forest Conservation issue became the first in a series of six stamps that Rudy was to design.

Plan of Exhibit: Tell a complete story of the desire to create a stamp to indicate the importance of the forestry industry, and the need for conservation of our forest products.

Importance: Whether in wartime or peace, trees are important agricultural products providing ship-decking, bullet wades, building material, writing paper...and the list goes on.

Scope:

Stamp Design - Rudy's hand-written letter describing the design process

Production: Error, Freaks and Oddities

First Day Artifacts: Programs, Covers (Dorothy Knapp and others) and many others

Commercial Uses: Variety of postal uses, service, transportation and philatelic events



Personal signed drawing by Rudy,
with signature block of
Stamp's Artist and Stamp Designer.
(Not cancelled)

Synopsis: Forest Conservation Issue of 1958

The *Forest Conservation Issue of 1958* story, is a Conventional, General Class, First Day Cover Exhibit.

- **Purpose and Scope** of this exhibit is to tell the story of the evolution of the Forest Conservation stamp within the use of, a descriptive **one-of-a kind artist letter**, production issues, and many first day covers of varying design and production, along with multiple commercial uses, (auxiliary markings, surface mail, international, QSL radio card, RPO, HPO, etc.), all included in the plan.

- Treatment (**Plan**) is organized into chapters to include: stamp production, covers, mounted on light gray mattes, except as noted, and uses, ending with the epilogue. Rare items will be matted in red, with explanation of rarity, in red font nearby.

The items contained within, offer a rare and important insight to the development of this stamp, and the artist, Rudolph Wendelin. Printing irregularities are shown, with errors, freaks and oddities. First day covers, are arranged with first cachets, hand-drawn and hand-colored, colored and printed cachets which carry the common themes of a peaceful forest scene, Smokey Bear, or the 100th anniversary of Teddy Roosevelt's birth.

- The national importance of forest conservation involves the natural resources within a forest that are beneficial to both humans and the ecosystem, assuring the many uses of wood in our daily lives. During WWII, an intensive campaign was launched to "prevent fires", allowing labor to go to war, and not stay back to fight man-made fires. In an attempt to honor the *Smokey Bear Campaign*, the stamp committee intent was hijacked by members of the *Keep America Green Committee* and the Forest Conservation stamp was born. This stamp reminded everyday postal users that they could play a role in the important, and necessary, conservation of forest. This exhibit is structured to show the conceptual urging from the forest industry for a new stamp, originally to depict Smokey Bear, and to honor conservationist president Teddy Roosevelt's 100th birthday.

The stamp design process is documented here with a rare hand-written letter by Rudy, as Wendelin was known, detailing the design concept, selection, and final drawing of this issue. Wendelin worked for the US Forest Service and was assigned responsibility of caring for the legal protection of Smokey Bear's image, which was to be an important element of the intended subject and anticipated design. The subject changed to forest conservation in the development process, keeping Wendelin as the stamp designer.

In a unique hand-written post-script from Rudy Wendelin to a collector, Rudy acknowledges the first-day-of-issue cancel dies, which he designed and were used for this issue. A rare, signed plate block by stamp designer and lettering engraver, and first day covers with autographs of vignette and lettering engravers, separately, are also included.

The Forest Conservation issue was only the second issue to use three-color capability of the Giori press. Examples of oddities include the printing and perforation stages of the stamp production, one-of-a-kind sheet folds from printer sheet-feeding, and mis-perforations, both horizontal and vertical. In postal history and usage, you will find domestic and foreign addressees, advertising, auxiliary markings, airmail, and combination covers. Included are examples of all known plate numbers and rare usage of corner numbers on a 'round-the-clock' cover. Photographs in this exhibit are 'of the period', and are from USPO or newspaper sources.

First day cachets, include “first cachets” and recurring artist themes of wildlife, and numerous designs of Teddy Roosevelt, honoring his role in setting aside more than a million acres of national forests and his connection to conservation of parks and forests. Cachet designs for this issue include printed, flocked, hand-drawn, hand-painted, (primitive, and traditional) in numerous mediums. Included are hand-painted cachets from some of the more well known cachet artists of the period, plus short bios and information of the cachet artists or cachet makers, where available. First day covers to international destination are scarce, but over my years of collecting this issue, a few have been found and are shown.

A prize of this collection is the Dorothy Knapp hand-drawn and hand-painted first day cover, acquired from Wally Knapp, son of Dorothy, through agent Doug Weisz. Wally stated that he has, “...no evidence to indicate...” that this cachet is duplicated, making it the only known, and exceptionally beautiful issue. (Evidence of Dorothy Knapp copies was an opened cover with black pencil used as carbon paper, of which Wally has many for other issues.)

Ralph Dyer’s two different, each one-of-a-kind, handpainted designs, and the cachet of Herman Maul, from Columbus, Ohio, again unique, are not listed in Mellone catalogue. The forest-themed cachet of W. N. Wright of Ogden, Utah, is listed as cachet design number 22 in Mellone, which, has only been seen once by me in numerous years of accumulating this collection, yet production numbers are unknown.

Days of personal research at the APRL resulted in much Postal Bulletin information, the most important of which has been included in the narratives, where they would add clarification. When first querying about bulletin information, the ‘Scott 1122 folder’ at APRL included only one page concerning a guard used by the post office.)

This exhibit, has won Large Gold and Reserve Grand at Florex 2017 in a five frame format, Large Gold at Minnesota Stamp Expo (MSE) 2021 in seven frames, and **as an eight frame exhibit with many new covers and uses included, won Grand in MSE 2022.**

The push to honor Smokey lead to the issuance of the Forest Conservation issue of 1958, but loyal Smokey supporters were rewarded with a 1984 Smokey Bear commemorative creating a happy move for environment and Smokey Bear.

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