

# SILVICULTURE FIELD TIP

Field tested ideas.

Contact the author for further information.



Division of Forestry

Field Tip No. 9

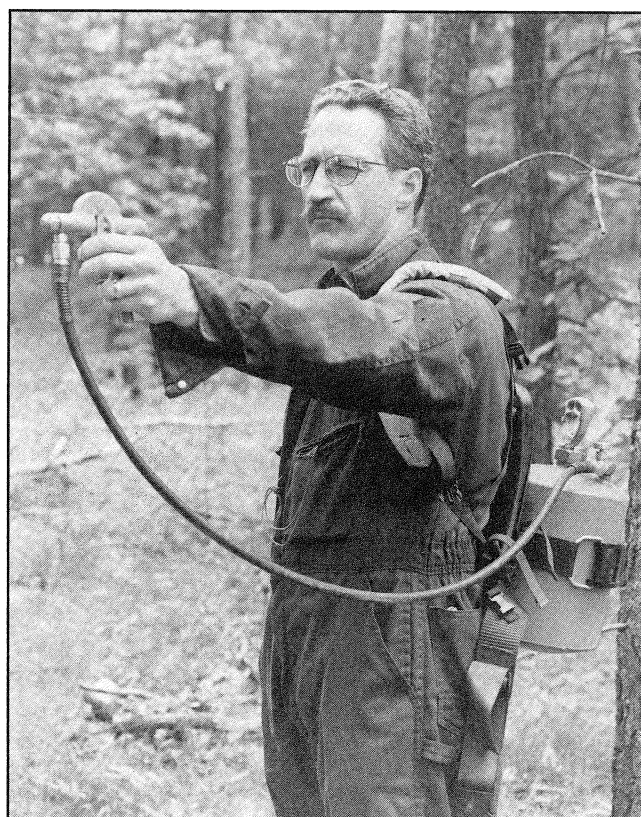
September 1997

## USE OF PANAMA PAINT GUNS

BY: Bill Barnacle, Brainerd Region Silviculturist  
Paul Peterson, Utilization & Marketing Specialist

In this day and age of changing and progressive forestry it is important that we use the most efficient and user friendly technology and equipment available. Marked partial cuts are going to be much more common on Forestry-administered timber sales in the future. For decades Division of Forestry foresters have used the Nel-Spot gun with quart cans. However, we have found a piece of equipment that will help us mark trees with tree marking paint more efficiently - the Panama tree marking gun.

This gun is designed to carry up to 1.5 gallons of paint and can be pressure charged up to 125 psi. The pressure in the gun provides the energy to propel the paint, not the muscles in the forester's hand. You can paint trees all day long and have no hand fatigue. The gun almost never clogs. The gun is carried as a backpack with shoulder straps. Although the gun itself is well designed and is made out of quality materials, the straps that go over the shoulders are only 2-inch wide plastic that tends to cut into the shoulder. Some foresters have replaced this with fire web gear that has padded shoulder straps. You can order a set of equipment belt (#1530 in the catalogue) and web gear harness (#1557) for a cost of about \$27 through the fire cache (call Tom Stadahar at 218-327-4579). These



**Bill Barnacle demonstrates use of Panama Paint Gun. Individuals in Region III have marked up to 10 acres per day with this tool.**

items are normally well stocked during the non-fire season.

If you use this gun you will be putting out more paint per day and per tree. It takes a little practice to shorten the trigger stroke to avoid excess paint use. The paint will gush

out as long as you hold the trigger. A forester who puts in a full day of marking may be able to do 10 acres and 400+ trees during that day.

When leaving the office for a day of marking, some foresters give their gun an initial charge of 110-120 lbs/sq. in. with the shop compressor. This will give them enough pressure to empty the gun of 1.5 gallons of paint in the morning. Some Areas have procured an "iron pig" that they charge up to 125 lbs/sq. in. for subsequent fills in the field. Another option is to bring a portable compressor that runs off of the car battery or cigarette lighter. However, the gun can be pumped up by hand, too. 150 strokes in 3-4 minutes of pumping will give plenty of pressure for spraying. The common nozzle size is 3/64" and comes standard with the gun. However, for more efficient paint use, you can order a 1/32" nozzle which gives a smaller stream but which may also tend to clog more.

The Panama tree marking gun can be purchased from Ben Meadows or Forestry Suppliers. Although it is a little more expensive, we suggest that you get the stainless steel model. It is about three

pounds lighter than the mild steel model. You should also order your paint by the gallon rather than by the quart to supply your Panama gun. You can save about \$1/qt when ordering gallons. Paint can be ordered directly from the Nelson Paint Co., Inc through contract M-6409. We have found that orange paint works very well in marking individual trees for partial cuts. It seems to show up better than the yellow.



One and one-half gallon capacity Panama Paint Gun. Note the user retrofitted web harness.