

Forest History Association of BC (FHABC)

Publishers Note:

Trail Tractor History and Owner Registry

FHABC is pleased to publish this piece by Steve Hansen on Trail Tractors, as introduced in newsletter 114 (June 2023).

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<https://www.fhabc.org>

Trail Tractor History and Owner Registry

By Steve Hansen

Supported by Material From Fire Control Notes 1940

TRAIL TRACTOR AND TRAIL MOBILE

Thomas A. Rice

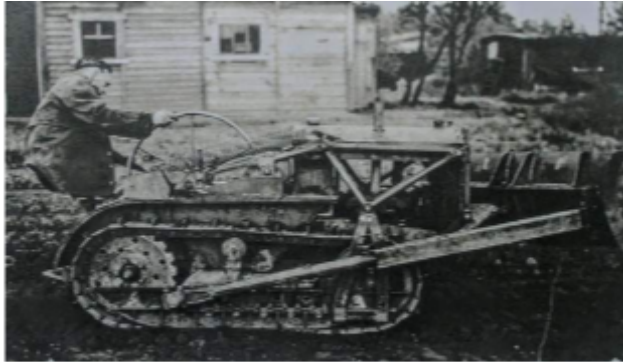
Division of Engineering, Region 6, US Forest Service

The Trail Tractor

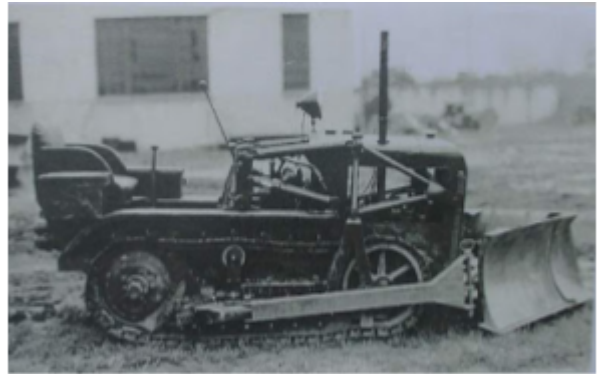
Waukesha FC 94: 133 HP

Weight: with bulldozer: 3,650 lbs

The Trail Tractor was developed in the Forest Service Experimental Equipment Laboratory at Portland, OR during 1937 and 1938, primarily for the purpose of reducing trail-construction costs. The experimental model (prototype #2) was used in trail construction on the Willamette National Forest during 1938 with satisfactory results, both as regards work accomplished and testing of the machine itself.



Prototype # 1 ~ Wheel-lift blade



Prototype # 2 ~ Hydraulic-lift blade. *Image Credit: Oregon Historical Society*

On the basis of the 1938 tests, five additional tractors were built for Region 6 during the winter of 1938-39, one for Region 4, one for the State of Washington, and two for the British Columbia Forest Service, a total of nine. The BC Archives has a fairly extensive set of Trail Tractor images, which you can access via

<https://search-bcarchives.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/informationobject/browse?topLod=0&sort=relevance&query=trail+tractor>

Dennis at the Waukesha Engine Historical Society confirms that sometime during the winter of 1938-39 the US Department of Agriculture placed an order for 8 Waukesha FC 94 "engines only" (not auxiliary power units). The engine numbers of that order include at least two engines on currently-known Trail Tractors: #446705 and #446069

Trail Tractor History and Owner Registry

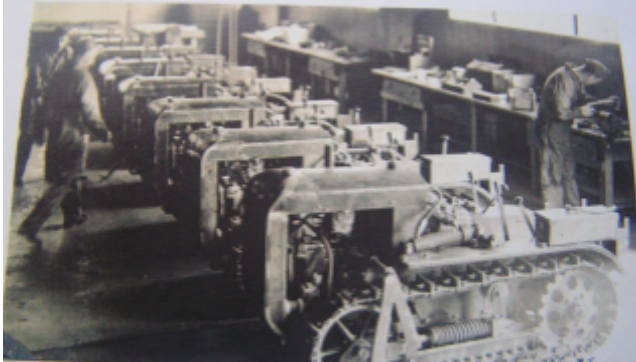


The beginnings of the 5 Region 6 Trail Tractors



8 Trail Tractors being built in the Portland Shops

Trail Tractor History and Owner Registry



Another angle of the construction process



Trail Tractor Kitten Units, Langford British Columbia. BC Archives Image NA-07091.

The reason for the different designs for ID plates on the Trail Tractors remains a total mystery to me



Not sure where I got this image but it is clearly different from the USDA Forest Service ID Plate - perhaps the 8 means (3-8). I have an information request into Clark Equipment. So far no response



The original USDA Forest Service ID plate for Steve and Bonnie Greenlee # 3-5

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Registry of the Original Trail Tractors in existence today

3-1

3-2

3-3

3-4 Gary Bural Waukesha FC 94A *Engine # 454622 396
Gary's machine has a hand crank and magneto ignition and purchased apart from the original order of 8 engines
Enumclaw, Washington.

3-5 Steve and Bonnie Greenlee Waukesha FC 94 Engine # 446075
This machine has electric start and magneto ignition
Surrey, British Columbia.

3-6

3-7 Kelly Oaks Waukesha FC 94 Engine # 446069 393
Kelly's machine is hand crank and magneto ignition
Port Angeles, WA.

3-8 Maybe the weird tag from Clark Tructractor

3-9

3-10

One Trail Tractor currently with a blank replacement ID Tag with no number, was owned over the years by these men: Ross Wilson/Marv Hedberg/Tom Siembieda/Current owner unknown. This tractor is electric start with magneto ignition

* Engine # 454622 396, a Waukesha FC 94 A, was sold to the USDA Forest Service after the order of the previous 8 engines was received

** Current owner and location unknown

Trail Tractor History and Owner Registry



Trail Tractor restored by Jim Zimmerman for Marv Hedberg, now in a new unknown character's hands



Steve and Bonnie Greenlee's Trail Tractor # 3-5

Steve has also written a related piece that you might like to access from the internet.

<https://forestservicemuseum.pastperfectonline.com/archive/0F5EA9A4-9CC6-4FA8-98DE-182722103735>