



Forest Service
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Longtime Pacific Northwest engineer recognized by the Forest Service

Story by USDA Forest Service

Portland, Ore., April 10, 2024 — The USDA Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region recently awarded Stephen Sichau, an esteemed Forest Service Engineer, and 1970 Oregon State University Graduate, as the Region's Technical Engineer of the Year for 2023. Award recipients were nominated by their supervisors, peers, and employees.

Sichau, son of Reinhold and Jessie Sichau, is an Oregon native and graduated from Wilson High School (now Ida B. Wells) in Portland, OR in 1966.

"Steve has been an integral part of our Region for years and his contributions are nearly immeasurable," shared Aaron Carpenter, Pacific Northwest Region Facilities Program Manager. "He is a major contributor on countless facilities projects and is one of the most dependable and sought-out experts we have. I hold him in such high regard and consider this opportunity to work with him as one of the highlights in my career."



Over his 53-year tenure, Sichau has been a mentor to hundreds of engineers, and he continues to share his wealth of information in trainings, meetings, and through the many tools he's developed. Not only is Sichau a sought-after expert by colleagues, but he is also known to respond to emergencies quickly, and effectively, making him an essential leader for the Region.

Sichau has been integral to the design, renovation, and maintenance of the Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region's most visible, high-

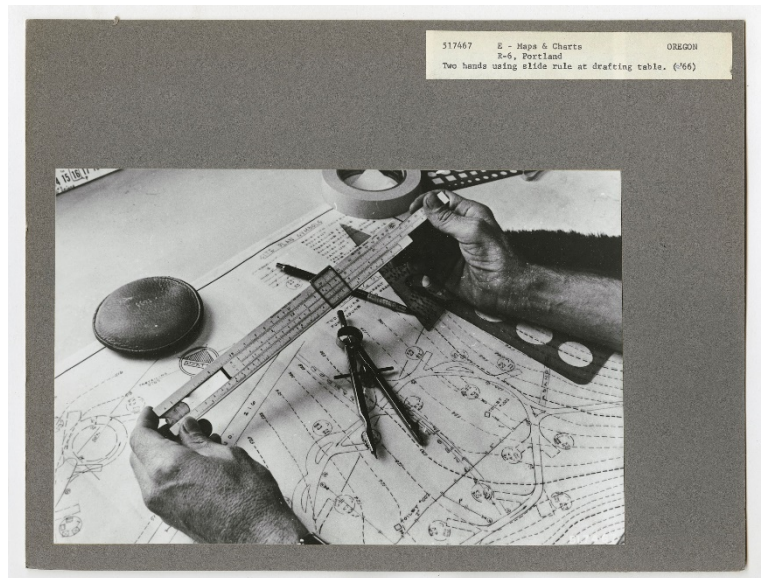
profile projects including [Timberline Lodge](#), [Multnomah Lodge](#), and numerous tree cooler renovations that support the agency's regional replanting program, as well as a variety of specific engineering projects, throughout the Pacific Northwest.

“A fun part of my job is working with field staff to design, develop, commission and adapt electrical systems and keep up with the ever-increasing complexity of electrical and information technology systems in our facilities,” Sichau said. “The best part of the job doing field visitations and inspections of a system I have worked on with designs and seeing them being built and used. It never gets boring after a 53-year run!”

After high school, Sichau earned a bachelor’s in science in Electrical Engineering in 1970 from Oregon State University. After getting his bachelor’s degree, Sichau continued to study solid state physics at the University and worked as a summer intern with the Forest Service. In 1971, Sichau returned to the Forest Service regional office in Portland as an employee, where he works to this day.

During his Forest Service career some of the tools Sichau developed include: the first national web site for engineering in 1996, a library of electrical construction specifications and drawings, a standard for national use such as building access control systems and IT technology systems, and an electronic library of historic drawings by scanning technology, and an online index for forest projects with over 400,000 drawings.

When asked if the agency has changed since he began his career, Sichau simply answered, “Quite a lot. I started with a slide rule in 1971.” Which he calls “historic equipment from the olden days.” Sichau added, “The original computer aided design drawings



and details were distributed to field offices on 20 floppy disks by mail, as there was no electronic file transfer system in 1985.”

Sachau continues to be an essential figure in the engineering department thanks to his extensive technical knowledge and experience. Indeed, Sichau has served the Forest Service for almost half the agency’s existence, witnessing substantial change, while providing guidance and expertise on countless projects.

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