Pinnacle Paul Ready To Go Home

Associated Press

March 29, 1970

CHOTEAU (AP) — Pinnacle Paul Hazel, a 73-year-old self-educated backwoodsman who came out of Montana's wilderness last week for the first time in five years, says he cant wait to return to his own brand of civilisation in the Bob Marshall Wilderness.

"I've become adapted to my way of lift and I doubt if I could over return to the way the root of the world lives," Hazel said from his bed in the tiny Teton Memorial Hospital. "I camo to the Bob Marshall in 1919 and except for only a few times, I've never left it"

Hazel was being treated for frostbite on his feet, "a result of my own carelessness, a mistake I never made before."

He's called "Pinnacle" because of the many years he spent on Beartop Mountain spotting fires for the Forest Service.

Born in Indiana in 1897, Hazel and his parents moved to Montana and settled on the outskirts of the scenic wilderness southeast of Glacier National Park.

"They moved away later to the Flathead Valley and lived there until they died several years ago" Hazel said. "I dropped out of school and went into the woods where I have been ever since."

Hazel is a slim Moot-3 and weighs "about 130 pounds during the winter." His charcoal-gray hair is worn in mod shoulder-length fashion, "only because I don't want to leave the woods all the time for a haircut.

He eats off the land, shooting big game with his 1930 model rifle. He sleeps in the open air during the summer and stays at a temporarily deserted dude ranch deep in the woods in winter. Resting on a table near his hospital bed were three volumes: "Wilderness and the American Mind," "My Way was North," and "Outdoor Life."

"Just as you probably never tire of your way of life," he said, "1 never get tired of the way I live. This is my brand of civilization."

Hazel quit after two years of high school at Valier, but that didn't stop his desire to learn. He said he reads everything he can, most of it studies on conservation, wildlife and hiking.

He doesn't own much, several pair of overalls, hiking boots, shirts, a radio, rifle and a few other things.

"I don't need much. I hint for my food and my recreation is my life," he said.

Hazel said he has had numerous serious encounters with big game, more than a few with the huge grizzly bear. However, he declined to talk about them.

"I've forgotten most of them, and the way I live, it happens quite often. It's just one of those things."

During World War II, he was drafted by the Army and placed in the Air Corps. Under the administration of the U.S. Forest Service, he was allowed to remain in the wilderness as a member of a "crash crew." That, he explained, was a group of forest rangers which located crashed airplanes along the Continental Divide.

Although he is not a registered guide, he said he knows the area bettor than most because he has tracked and hunted its hundreds of square miles since a teen-ager.

He has praised the Forest Service, the Montana Fish and Game Department, and the U.S. Geological Survey, with which he was working when he froze his foot.

"They always seem to take care of me if I need it," he said. "Now," he added with a grin, "I wish they'd come and take me back where I belong, in the woods."

The Future Farmers oi America organization was founded in 1928.

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