Elers Koch, 73, Retired Forester, Dies

Elers Koch, 73, 420 E. Berk with Ave., retired Forest Service official, died late Sunday night at a local hospital.

He retired in the spring of 1942 from the Forest Service after 40 years of service. A forest field assistant, inspector and super-
visor, Mr. Koch was appointed supervisor of the Lolo and Bitter Root National Forests with headquarters at Missoula in 1907. From 1908 until 1919 he was chief of the Lolo National Forest. He then served two years as fire control chief for Region 1, comprising Montana and northern Idaho. In the fall of 1920 he became chief of the division of timber management, administering the resources of the timber stands of the region until his retirement.

Following the forest fires of 1919, Mr. Koch initiated the first formalized fire training, associates stated. He also established boards of review on fires, pioneered fixed lookout networks and team-area maps, a map orienting table and invented a fire tool that bears his name.

Mr. Koch was a fellow of the Society of American Foresters. From 1936 through 1937 he served on the council of the Society of American Foresters.

Aside from forestry, Mr. Koch's chief interest was northwest history. (Continued on Page 2, Col. 4)
In other fields he was credited with making major contributions to fire control and the establishment of the first formalized fire training program.

Koch was the author of many technical publications, among them "Passing of the Lolo Trail" which appeared in the Journal of Forestry. In 1952 he published "The High Trail," a book for young readers. In 1942 he was recognized by "Who's Who in America."

A rugged outdoorsman, he led a party which was the first to climb mighty Granite Peak. Comparable to Grand Teton and located just northeast of Yellowstone Park, it is the highest point in Montana.

The pioneer forester was the father of Tom Koch, Hamilton attorney. His other son, Dr. Peter Koch, is a mechanical engineer with the Champlin Lumber Co. in New Hampshire. Stanley a third son serving with the navy in World War II was killed during the invasion of Normandy when his ship struck a mine.

Koch Mountain which is 9,036 feet in elevation, compares with Trapper Peak which is 10,131 feet high and El Capitan which is 9,865 feet. Troper said that he has submitted the name of W.W. White to be honored by naming a mountain in his memory. The mountain is located west of Koch Mountain. White, who died recently, was a pioneer forester and a former Bitter Root Forest supervisor.