

Historical Society
City Hall

THE DESCHUTES ECHO

VOL. II.

DESCHUTES, CROOK COUNTY, OREGON, OCTOBER 10, 1903.

NO. 20.

FOREST RESERVES IN OREGON.

Warner Mountain Withdrawal to Protect Water Supply.

If ever a reserve is created in the Warner Mountain country in Southern Oregon, it will be unique among forest reservations in the Northwest. The large withdrawal that has been made in that region is unlike withdrawals elsewhere, having been made almost entirely with a view to creating a reserve whose main object will be to perpetuate the water supply, so essential to the outlying country, which depends so largely upon irrigation.

The creation of a Warner Mountain reserve was first suggested in 1898 by Forest Superintendent B. F. Allen, of California, who had been making examinations in the Warner Mountains in the northern extremity of that state. The project originated in California, and was at first confined solely to that State. Later on, however, Superintendent G. I. Taggart looked into the question, and extended his investigations northward into Oregon, under authority granted by Commissioner Hermann, with the result that he on May 27, 1900, recommended the withdrawal of a large tract in Northern California and the adjoining section of Oregon, surrounding Goose Lake.

In the course of his travels Taggart found that there was a great deal of unlawful cutting of timber in the Warner Mountains, and it was only when he reported this fact that Commissioner Hermann issued specific instructions detailing him to make examinations with a view to determining the necessity for a permanent reserve.

It is stated in Taggart's report that a great majority of the citizens whom he interviewed were in favor of the creation of a forest reserve. "The water question is a serious and important one to all settlers. The only objectors to a reserve were sheepmen, sawmill men and shake makers." He went on to say that the disastrous fires of the past have been started largely by sheepmen. The millmen, he found, did not want a reserve because it would prevent them trespassing upon Government land and cutting timber illegally, which, he added, many of them were then doing. The shake-makers are accountable for the waste of thousands or rather millions of feet of the finest timber to be found in the mountains.

He reported that the timber supply of the Warner Mountains is limited, there not being over 10 per cent of the whole area of the mountains containing timber. Merchantable timber, he said would average 25,000 feet per acre in Oregon, and in some instances run as high as 50,000 to 70,000 feet. Not 5 per cent of the land embraced in the present Warner Mountain withdrawal is agricultural. Yet preser-

vation of the water that comes from these mountains is the only hope of the settlers in Lake County.

Mr. Taggart believes most of the settlers now within the limits of the withdrawal are there for the purpose of making permanent homes, although some of the claims were taken for speculative purposes. In his judgment, much timber land has been obtained fraudulently, and much timber is still being cut illegally. There is practically no land under cultivation within the limits of the withdrawal.

"In my judgment, what timber is there," says Taggart, "should be preserved for the conservation of the water and for future as well as present uses. I can see no injury that could be done to any one by reserving these lands, but that great benefits would accrue if they were reserved."

"Sheep do great damage to the undergrowth and brush generally, and should not be allowed in these mountains or within the limits of the proposed reserve."

Taggart's report was eventually submitted to the Geological Survey, for recommendation, and came back August 11, 1902, with the following comment by the Director:

"The proposal for the creation of a forest reserve in Northern California and Southern Oregon, under the name of the Warner Mountains and Goose Lake Forest Reserve, is disapproved."

No reasons were assigned. There was no evidence that the matter had received intelligent or careful consideration. Nothing but this bare adverse report, a characteristic method of the Survey.

On May 9, 1903, the Bureau of Forestry recommended the creation of a reserve in the Warner Mountain country in Oregon, and on July 15, recommended the withdrawal of an even larger tract, with the last recommendation offering the following explanation:

"These lands are practically all non-agricultural, forested lands, and their protection is of great importance not only to preserve the forest as a source of timber supply, but also to insure an equable and continuous supply of water to those arid and semi-arid districts. Though a considerable part of these lands has unfortunately passed into private hands, it is believed that much of it is still vacant, and particularly is this true of the more mountainous districts, and the more mutilated and inferior forests, the territories most in need of proper management and protection."

"The sentiment of the residents of the districts, most all stockmen, is heartily in favor of forest protection by the creation of forest reserves."

July 27, on the showing made by the Bureau of Forestry, combined with the report of Superintendent Taggart, the Secretary ordered the withdrawal that stands today.—Oregonian.

THE BEND MERCANTILE CO.

Keeps a complete stock of Sash, Doors, Windows, and

The Famous Fireproof Rubberoid Roofing.

HEADQUARTERS FOR SHEEPMEN'S AND CATTLEMEN'S SUPPLIES.

Full Line of Hardware, Stoves, Etc.

Everything at Prineville Prices.

A. H. GRANT, MANAGER

BEND - OREGON.

STAATS

Has a complete line of goods at his new store. A two-thousand dollar addition has just been received. Qualities right and prices right.

W. H. STAATS, Prop.,
Deschutes, - - - Oregon.

MINNESOTA BUFFET

TWOHY & M'KEOWN, PROPS.

The only first-class establishment of its kind in Western Crook County.

The finest brands of wines, liquors, beers and cigars constantly on hand.

Eastern people are especially invited to call at the Buffet when in the city.

J. L. McCULLOCH,

Abstracter and Examiner of Titles.

Real Estate bought and sold and property looked after, and taxes paid for non-residents.

Agent for Lytle Townsite, proposed terminus of the Columbia Southern.

Fire and life insurance. Prineville, Oregon

Accommodations first-class in every respect at

HOTEL STAATS

This popular resort is under the special management and supervision of Mrs. Wm. Staats.

DESCHUTES, OREGON.