

United States Forest Service – The Early Years

By Leonard H. Wurman B&C Regular Member



After the Revolution, all of the unsettled lands between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River, which comprised half of the territory of the just established

United States, became known as the public domain. Selling this land in 160-acre parcels accounted for a good portion of the country's early income. Following the Louisiana Purchase in 1807, the newly created General Land Office (GLO) handled these land sales.

During the whole of the 19th Century, the GLO transferred over one billion acres to private ownership. Just before the Civil War, the GLO was incorporated into the newly established Department of Interior. Paper work often lagged years behind, thus coining the saying "doing a land office business."

Two important land laws were passed in 1862. The Homestead Act gave away 160-acre segments of the public domain for only a filing fee and a five-year commitment. The Morrill Act the same year granted 30,000 acres of the public domain to each state. A state could sell the land but must use the proceeds to establish a College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts. These "land-grant colleges" would eventually also train the nation's foresters.

For its first century, the United States functionally divided the public domain into either agricultural or non-agricultural land, and laws were created with the farmer in mind. An 1831 law outlawing timbering in the public domain was almost totally ignored. It was nearly a quarter of a century later that the GLO was finally charged with not just selling but also protecting the public domain. The 1873 Timber Culture Act treated forestry like agriculture, allowing settlers to harvest, plant, and cultivate trees as part of their homestead requirements.

In 1874, Secretary of the Interior Carl Schurz, a future Boone and Crockett Club

member, was among the first to voice concern about "the rapid destruction of timber" on both public and private lands. A year later, the American Forestry Association (AFA) held its first meeting and urged the appointment of a federal forester.

Department of Agriculture

When this idea stalled in the Congress's GLO Committee, a rider was attached to the agricultural appropriations bill that allotted \$2,000 for the Department of Agriculture to study the forestry issue. This somewhat counter-intuitive decision is why today the Forest Service is part of the Department of Agriculture. All of the other federal land bureaus, as the Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and National

but others wanted the reserves to be public parks, sources of timber, public cattle grazing lands, and even mining lands.

In 1896, the National Academy of Sciences created a five-member Forest Commission to tour the present and potential reserves and make recommendations. Other interested parties, including John Muir, periodically and informally joined the tour. The intents were to determine whether fire protection and even permanent forests were practical, evaluate the influence of soil, water, and climate, and then make recommendations to congress. Gifford Pinchot, a young American private forester who had studied forestry in Europe, was a member of the commission.

The 1896 Commission did not agree on whether well-trained civilian foresters or the military should manage the forest reserves, or what should be the dominant purpose of the reserves. They did agree, however, that the reserves should be expanded, which by President Grover Cleveland's edict were enlarged by another 21 million acres. This sent a furor through Western states' rights advocates who saw the lands within the public domain removed from their potential grazing and mining use.

Most importantly, the Commission brought before the public the complex issues of the reserves' purpose, highlighting such concerns as watersheds, timber stand protection, whether the Great Lake States' cut-over stands should be replanted, and whether there was even the need for professionally trained foresters to manage the nation's forests.

The Organic Act

Newly elected President William McKinley was placed in a difficult position in 1897 when Westerners demanded that he rescind Cleveland's edicts. McKinley called a special session of Congress that passed the Organic Act.

The Organic Act established the criteria by which a new Forest Reserve could be created. First, it had "to improve and protect the forests within the [new reserve's] boundaries." Secondly, it should "secure favorable conditions of water flows, and thirdly, it must be able to "furnish

It was nearly a quarter of a century later that the GLO was finally charged with not just selling but also protecting the public domain. The 1873 Timber Culture Act treated forestry like agriculture, allowing settlers to harvest, plant, and cultivate trees as part of their homestead requirements.

Park Service, are in the Department of Interior. Although forestry began in Agriculture, the forestlands themselves remained for many years within the GLO as part of the Department of Interior.

This Department of Agriculture study led to the establishment, in 1881, of a one-man Division of Forestry within Agriculture, but it wasn't until five years later that a licensed professional forester from Germany, Bernard Fernow, was appointed chief. Urged by Fernow and the AFA, Congress passed in 1891 the Forest Reserve Act, giving the president the ability to set aside "from time to time" forested lands as public reservations.

Forest Reserves

Within a year, President Benjamin Harrison had created 15 forest reservations encompassing 13 million acres. The original intent of the reserves was to protect water supplies,



Roosevelt created a number of new national forests that, by 1907, totaled 150 million acres.



Secretary of the Interior, Carl Schurz (above) was among the first to voice concern about "the rapid destruction of timber" on both public and private lands.

HOLY CROSS FOREST RESERVE.
COLORADO.

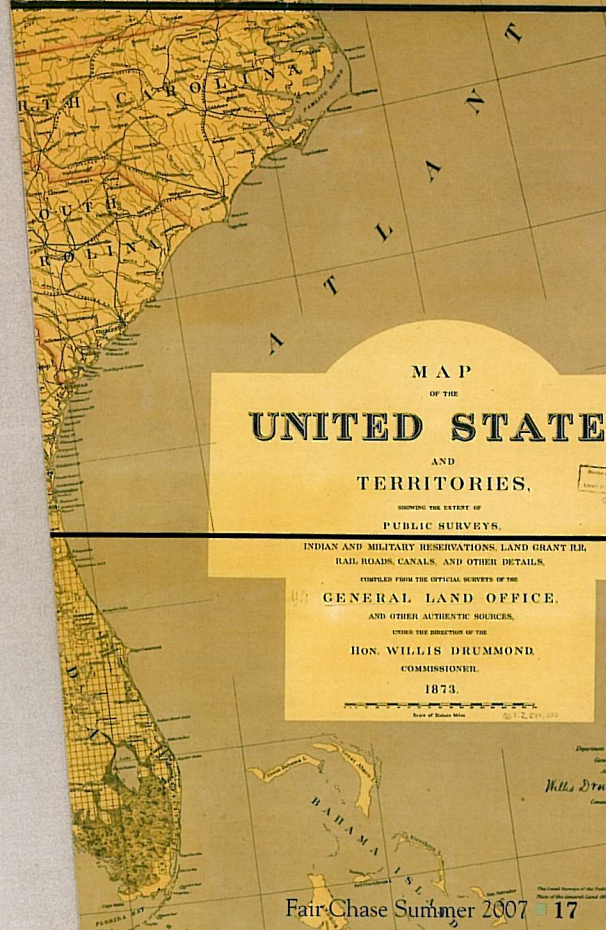
By the President of the United States of America:
A Proclamation.

WHEREAS, it is provided by section twenty-four of the Act of Congress, approved March third, eighteen hundred and ninety-one, entitled, "An act to repeal timber-culture laws, and for other purposes", "That the President of the United States may, from time to time, set apart and reserve, in any State or Territory having public land bearing forests, in any part of the public lands wholly or in part covered with timber or undergrowth, whether of commercial value or not, as public reservations, and the President shall, by public proclamation, declare the establishment of such reservations and the limits thereof";

And whereas, the public lands in the State of Colorado, within the limits hereinafter described, are in part covered with timber, and it appears that the public good would be promoted by setting apart and reserving said lands as a public reservation;

Now, therefore, I, THEODORE ROOSEVELT, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested by section twenty-four of the aforesaid Act of Congress, do hereby make known and proclaim that there are hereby reserved from entry or settlement and set apart as a Public Reservation all those certain tracts, pieces or parcels of land lying and being situate in the State of Colorado, and within the boundaries particularly described as follows:

Beginning at the north-west corner of Section seventeen (17), Township two (2) South, Range eighty-two (82) West, Sixth (6th) Principal Meridian, Colorado; thence easterly to the south-west corner of Section ten (10), Township two (2) South, Range eighty-one (81) West; thence northerly to the north-west corner of Section two (2), said township; thence easterly to the north-west corner of Section thirty-five (35), said township; thence southerly to the south-west corner of said township; thence township; thence easterly to the south-east corner of said township; thence southerly to the south-west corner of Township three (3) South, Range eighty (80) West; thence easterly to the south-east corner of said township; thence southerly to the south-west corner of Township five (5) South, Range seventy (70) West; thence easterly along the First (1st) Corner



MAP
OF THE
UNITED STATES
AND
TERRITORIES.

SHOWING THE EXTENT OF
PUBLIC SURVEYS,
INDIAN AND MILITARY RESERVATIONS, LAND GRANT RR,
RAIL ROADS, CANALS, AND OTHER DETAILS,
DERTIFIED FROM THE OFFICIAL SURVEYS OF THE
GENERAL LAND OFFICE,
AND OTHER AUTHENTIC SOURCES,
UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE
HON. WILLIS DRUMMOND,
COMMISSIONER,
1873.

United States Forest Service – The Early Years

a continuous supply of timber for the use and necessities of citizens..." The Organic Act legislated new rules and regulations to govern the reserves.

Fernow remained chief of the Division of Forestry for 12 years and published over 6,000 pages of technical material, ranging from the properties of wood to the relationship of forests to climate. In 1898, he resigned to take over the nation's first forestry school at Cornell. Fernow's replacement was the 33-year old private forester and Forest Commission member, Gifford Pinchot, who had joined B&C the previous year.

The reserves had an ambiguous authority structure. The Department of Interior owned the reserves. The Division of Forestry, now with a staff of 60 within the Department of Agriculture, was only advisory. While Interior patrolled the reserves and enforced the laws, the Division

of Forestry examined the reserves, made technical decisions, and administered the plans. A further complication was that the Geological Survey within Interior had a small forestry department whose function overlapped the Division of Forestry within Agriculture.

offered technical advice to lumber companies on private land for a fee. Federal foresters also worked with state agencies and other federal bureaus. This cooperative experience was of great value and enhanced Pinchot's reputation.

In 1902, Pinchot wrote the reserves' procedure and rules manual for the Department of Interior. It covered multiple issues, including mining, cattle and sheep grazing, prospecting, road permits, timber sales bidding, and allowed timber to be taken by settlers but not by sawmills.

Pinchot developed a summer student-assistant program. Students worked for minimum wages and had to pay their own travel expenses to and from the western job sites. Starting with 33 students in 1900, it increased to 300 by 1902. Many of these young men went on to study forestry and enter the service.

Unlike the corrupt GLO, Pinchot's foresters received promotion only through civil service exams. In 1901, the Forestry

Of the 16 Chiefs of the Forest Service, 10 have been or are presently members of Boone and Crockett Club. In their early years, the history of the Boone and Crockett Club and the Forest Service were intertwined. That special relationship persists in some degree even today.

Pinchot

Because of its lack of authority over public forests, Pinchot's Forestry Division first

ZEISS CONQUEST PROMOTION

UNBEATABLE OPTICS AT

Imagine it is just past sunrise and low, misty fog is hanging over the forest. In the distance you hear movement in the trees. It could be the trophy buck you have been tracking for two days. You know the success of this hunt could depend on your ability to spot and identify your prey in the next few minutes. This is when you will fully appreciate the unsurpassed quality of Zeiss Sports Optics.

**CONQUEST 3-9X40
WITH Z-PLEX RETICLE**

ONLY

\$399⁹⁹

WAS \$449⁹⁹

ZEISS

We make it visible.

ALSO AVAILABLE WITH
RAPID
BALLISTIC RETICLE

Division became a Bureau. By 1903, there were 500 employees.

One of the thorniest issues was grazing. Pinchot appointed an Arizona rancher to the Bureau and worked out compromises with the stockmen: permits were granted equitably, regulations were to be flexible, and the carrying capacity would determine the grazing allotment size.

The Transfer Act

Nevertheless, having the foresters in Agriculture and the forests in Interior proved awkward. When Pinchot had worked on an Adirondack Forest project in 1899, he met New York Governor Theodore Roosevelt, and the two hit it off. Roosevelt had founded B&C in 1887. When Roosevelt ascended to the presidency in 1901, he and Pinchot attempted to combine the forests and foresters into one department.

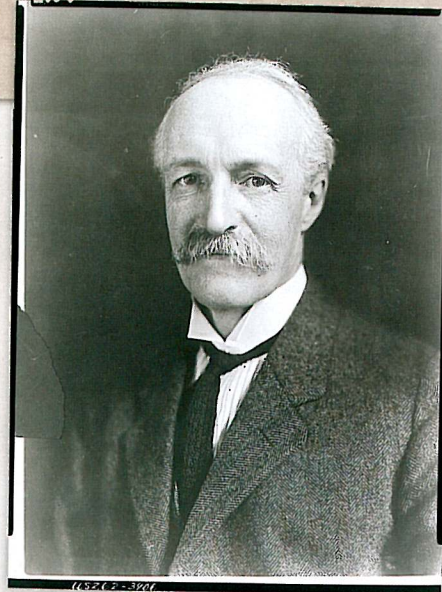
Westerners and the GLO opposed the idea, citing the potential difficulties of handling mining and settlers' claims. But spectacular scandals involving the GLO muted the opposition. In 1905, President Theodore Roosevelt signed the Transfer

Act: 63 million acres of the GLO forest reserves were transferred to Agriculture and the Bureau of Forestry was renamed the U.S. Forest Service. Two years later, the reserves were renamed the National Forests.

Pinchot decentralized the Forest Service. Foresters in the field received a large degree of independence. The *esprit de corps* was extremely high. Pinchot decreed that decisions would "always be decided from the standpoint for the greatest good for the greatest number in the long run."

Roosevelt created a number of new national forests that, by 1907, totaled 150 million acres. But Western opposition mounted and, that same year, Congress limited the president's authority. When TR stepped down in 1909, Pinchot's assertiveness clashed with President Taft and he was fired.

His assistant, 39-year old Henry Graves, succeeded Pinchot. Graves was also a B&C Club member, as were the three following Chiefs, William Greeley, Robert Stuart, and Ferdinand Silcox. Of the 16 Chiefs of the Forest Service, 10 have been or are presently members of Boone and Crockett Club. In their early years, the



In 1898, Gifford Pinchot was appointed Chief of the Forestry Division. He worked with Roosevelt to combine the forests and foresters into one division, which was ultimately achieved with the Transfer Act in 1905.

history of the Boone and Crockett Club and the Forest Service were intertwined. That special relationship persists in some degree even today. ■

ZEISS CONQUEST PROMOTION

UNBELIEVABLE PRICES.

If you haven't experienced the confidence that comes with owning the world's finest optics, **THERE IS NO BETTER TIME THAN NOW TO SEE YOUR NEAREST ZEISS DEALER.** Now through December 31, 2007, Zeiss is offering tremendous savings on some of their most popular Conquest Sports Optics.

All of these specially priced Conquest products feature patented Zeiss T* or MC multi-coated lenses for unequalled optical performance in all lighting conditions, including twilight. In addition these rugged nitrogen filled optics are waterproof, dustproof, and they will not fog in adverse weather conditions. Once you see the difference you won't be satisfied with anything less!

CONQUEST BINOCULARS

SAVE UP TO **\$200⁰⁰**

CONQUEST 10X40	WAS \$999⁹⁹	NOW \$799⁹⁹
CONQUEST 8X40	WAS \$949⁹⁹	NOW \$769⁹⁹
CONQUEST 10X30	WAS \$629⁹⁹	NOW \$519⁹⁹
CONQUEST 8X30	WAS \$579⁹⁹	NOW \$479⁹⁹

Don't miss this opportunity to visit your nearest Zeiss dealer and save on these selected Conquest products. These special prices will only be available for a limited time.



ZEISS