

NATIONAL PARK IN THE STATE OF OREGON.

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MARCH 3, 1898.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed.

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Mr. ELLIS, from the Committee on the Public Lands, submitted the following

R E P O R T .

[To accompany H. R. 7200.]

The Committee on the Public Lands, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 7200) to create a national park in the State of Oregon, after having fully and carefully examined the same, amend it by striking out the word "mining," in line 3, section 3, page 2, of said bill, and as so amended recommend that it do pass.

The purpose of this bill is to reserve from the public lands within the State of Oregon, as a national park, that certain tract bounded on the north by the parallel  $43^{\circ} 4'$  north latitude, on the south by  $42^{\circ} 48'$  north latitude, on the east by meridian  $122^{\circ}$  west longitude, and on the west by the meridian  $122^{\circ} 16'$  west longitude, embracing in all 249 square miles, or about 159,360 acres. The area included within the proposed park is situated in the Cascade Mountain Range in southern Oregon, and does not embrace in its limits any agricultural lands; the altitude is from 6,000 to 8,000 feet above sea level. While a large part of the tract is covered with timber, it is not of a character suitable for lumber, most of it being what is known as lodge-pole pine, and of very little commercial value.

Near the center of the proposed park is situated Crater Lake, which is conceded by all who have visited it to be one of the greatest scenic wonders in the United States, if not in the known world. Increasing numbers of scientists visit it from year to year for the purpose of making additional investigations, and all of them regard it as one of the greatest natural wonders of our country. The people of the West, as well as tourists, with one accord join the scientist in the wish that this grand work of nature may be preserved in its original beauty for the instruction and pleasure of all who may desire to visit it.

There are no settlers within the limits of the proposed park; hence its establishment would in no way interfere with any vested or squatters'

rights, and for this reason it is desirable that the proposed park be authorized at an early day.

Another argument in favor of such action is the fact that the park would be easily accessible by means of roads already constructed.

We are fully satisfied that the land designed to be set aside for the purpose contemplated by this bill is of such a character that it can not be utilized for agricultural purposes, nor with profit for any purpose of trade whatever, but is chiefly valuable for the purpose for which the proposed act seeks to appropriate it. The honorable Commissioner of the General Land Office, who has for many years lived near the proposed park and has personal knowledge of the lands embraced within its boundaries, gives this bill his unqualified support, as will be seen by the following letter:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
GENERAL LAND OFFICE,  
*Washington, D. C., February 12, 1898.*

SIR: I am in receipt, by your reference for report, of a letter from Hon. John F. Lacey, chairman of the House Committee on the Public Lands, forwarding for any suggestions you may desire to make, House bill 7200, "Reserving from the public lands in the State of Oregon, as a public park for the benefit of the people of the United States, and for the protection and preservation of the game, fish, timber, and all other natural objects therein, a tract of land therein described, etc."

I have the honor to report that the bill seems to me to be admirable in all its features. The boundaries proposed have heretofore been suggested at various times as the proper limitations for the preservation of the area about Crater Lake. I think it important that this locality should be reserved and protected, on account of its great natural wonders and beauties, and the constantly increasing interest that is being manifested by the people in regard to it.

All of the features of this bill seem to have been carefully considered, and appear to meet all questions that can possibly arise in the protection and management of this area as a national park.

The bill meets with my hearty approval, and I herewith return the same with the recommendation that it become a law.

The sheets of the United States Geological Survey, showing the Crater Lake region, with the boundaries of the proposed park indicated thereon, and the official map of the State of Oregon showing the boundaries of said park, are herewith transmitted.

Very respectfully,

BINGER HERMANN,  
*Commissioner.*

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

The foregoing views of the Commissioner of the General Land Office are approved by the honorable Secretary of the Interior, as evidenced by the following letter addressed to Hon. John F. Lacey, chairman of the Committee on the Public Lands of the House:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
*Washington, February 12, 1898.*

SIR: I have the honor to hand you herewith copy of report from the Commissioner of the General Land Office, dated the 12th instant, on House bill 7200, "Reserving from the public lands in the State of Oregon, as a public park for the benefit of the people of the United States, and for the protection and preservation of the game, fish, timber, and all other natural objects therein, a tract of land therein described," etc.

The Commissioner gives to the bill his hearty approval, as all the features of the same appear to have been carefully considered, and appear to meet all questions that can possibly arise in the protection and management of the area about Crater Lake as a national park.

I concur in his view, and recommend that the bill become a law.

I inclose, for your information, sheets of the United States Geological Survey, showing the Crater Lake region, and the official map of the State of Oregon, showing the boundaries of the proposed park.

Very respectfully,

THOS. RYAN,  
*Acting Secretary.*

Hon. JOHN F. LACEY,  
*Chairman Committee on Public Lands, House of Representatives.*

The views of Prof. J. S. Diller, geologist of the United States Geological Survey; Prof. C. Hart Merriam, chief Biological Survey of the United States Department of Agriculture; Prof. Barton W. Evermann, ichthyologist, United States Fish Commission, and Prof. Frederick V. Coville, Botanist United States Department of Agriculture, all of whom have visited the region of the park and made scientific investigations, agree that the bill should pass.

Letters from each of said gentlemen are hereto annexed as a part of this report.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY,  
*Washington, D. C., February 28, 1898.*

SIR: Concerning your inquiry as to the reasons for making Crater Lake, of Oregon, a national park, I have the honor to submit the following brief reply:

Crater Lake should be made a national park because it possesses in a high degree all of the essential features necessary to make a park of importance to the nation. It is one of our greatest natural wonders and in every way favorably situated for a healthful and instructive pleasure resort of the people. The beauty and majesty of the scenery are indescribable, but the order of its impressiveness is like that of the Niagara Falls, the Yosemite Valley, the grand canyons of the Colorado and the Yellowstone, and yet it is wholly unlike any of these. The lake is nearly circular, with an average diameter of about 5 miles. It is deeply set in the summit of the Cascade Range at an altitude of over 6,000 feet above the sea.

There is no visible outlet through the completely encircling cliffs, ranging from 500 to 2,000 feet in height. The water is a rich ultramarine blue, and embraces a beautiful conical island, a perfect little volcano, whose deep-green, pine-covered slopes are in strong contrast with the encircling lake and the 20 miles of inclosing cliffs.

The outer slopes of the rim are gentle, well wooded, and watered, and diversified with beautiful vales, affording an especially inviting place of resort during the summer to enjoy the scenic beauties of the lake and the healthful and invigorating air of the mountain summit. It thus appears that this great natural wonder is so favorably surrounded as to strongly recommend its being made a national park or pleasure ground for the benefit of the people. In fact, the place is already a well-recognized resort for summer campers. As many as 500 persons are known to have visited the lake in one season notwithstanding the hardships attending the trip, due to lack of proper conveyance and place of entertainment at the lake. It is especially desirable that the region be made a park with proper facilities for the preservation and enjoyment of its beauties.

Beautiful and majestic as its scenic features are, the lake and its surroundings have a geological history that is even more attractive, and if made a national park, and published to the world as furnished with facilities for study and entertainment, it would doubtless attract many scientific tourists and contribute in no small measure to the prosperity of the region, as well as to the general information of the country at large.

For the preservation of these natural features, and especially the timber, it is not only desirable but necessary that the region be made a national park with regulations which provide more fully for its care than is afforded in a simple timber reserve. The ravages of fire in that region are very great and proper protection can be obtained only by special measures.

Crater Lake region is well situated for a park, but is unfit for any other purpose. It contains no agricultural land, for at an average altitude of nearly 7,000 feet it is far above the limit of cereals. It is well timbered, but the timber is of no value for lumber. Its rocks are all fresh lavas and contain nothing whatever of value to the miner.

Making the region a national park, therefore, would in no way conflict with the interests of the farmer, the miner, or the lumberman, but, on the other hand, it would be a public benefaction in calling attention to and preserving one of those great natural features, an increasing appreciation of which does so much for the pleasure and general advancement of our people.

More concisely stated, the reasons are:

- (1) That Crater Lake is one of our greatest natural wonders.
- (2) It is so surrounded as to make it an excellent pleasure resort.
- (3) It is already well recognized in Oregon as such a resort, but has no facilities for transportation and entertainment.
- (4) Park regulations are necessary to preserve the timber and other natural objects and permit improvement for transportation and entertainment.

(5) Making it a national park injures no interests whatever, but instead gives rise to a local and national benefit.

Very respectfully, yours,

J. S. DILLER,

*Geologist of the United States Geological Survey.*

Hon. W. R. ELLIS,

*House of Representatives, Washington, D. of C.*

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,  
BIOLOGICAL SURVEY,  
*Washington, D. C., February 28, 1898.*

DEAR SIR: Having spent some time in studying the fauna and flora of Crater Lake Mountain, or Mount Mazama, in the southern part of the Cascade Range in Oregon, I am interested in the bill providing for the setting aside of this natural wonderland as a national park.

The proposed park is a very small affair—only 18 by 22 miles, if I am correctly informed—and contains no agricultural land of any kind, but consists wholly of a mountain, a little more than 9,000 feet in altitude, whose summit has been destroyed by volcanic action and is now occupied by a gigantic caldron nearly 6 miles in diameter and 4,000 feet in depth.

This caldron contains the far-famed Crater Lake, one of the most attractive bits of scenery on the American continent. The water of this lake is of an intense indigo blue color, and is 2,000 feet in greatest depth. It is encircled by a continuous wall of cliffs varying in height from a little less than 1,000 to upward of 2,000 feet. There is no break in this wall, which is so nearly perpendicular that climbing it is impossible save in a few places. Large masses of snow remain all summer on the cooler slopes, and small streams, turned upon end, dash down the precipitous cliffs from the melting snowbanks. A remarkably symmetrical cinder cone rises nearly 1,000 feet above the water of the lake and is known as "Wizard Island."

The whole mountain is covered with a dense forest, notable for the size and magnificence of its trees. This forest is made up of a number of species of conifers, growing in three different belts or zones. The uppermost of these is the Hudsonian or belt of Alpine hemlock, Alpine fir, and Shasta fir. Below this is the Canadian zone or belt of lodge-pole pine, mountain white pine, and Douglas spruce.

Still lower down is the Transition zone, characterized by a noble forest of gigantic yellow pines, mixed with incense cedar and the California long-coned sugar pine. Immediately below the yellow-pine zone, and outside the limits of the park, we enter the sagebrush plains of Klamath Basin, forming another very distinct belt, known as the Upper Sonoran.

Each of the four life zones mentioned is characterized by an association of forms of animal and plant life not found in the belt above or the belt below.

Owing to the accessibility of the region and its extraordinary attractiveness as a summer resort, it is a peculiarly favorable area in which to study the successive faunas and floras that characterize the several life zones. Its preservation, therefore, is of much educational value.

At present the natural beauties of the region and the native animals and plants are in great danger of destruction by forest fires, which, intentionally or through carelessness, are started every year about the rim of the lake.

Crater Lake Mountain is of special interest to the naturalist, because a number of northern and southern species find here, so far as known, the extreme limits of their ranges. The same is true of certain Rocky Mountain and Pacific coast species which here overlap, so that the fauna and flora of the region are peculiarly rich. Thus, more than 60 species of mammals inhabit the mountain slopes, and the number of birds, plants, and forest trees is correspondingly large.

Trusting that your bill will obtain unanimous approval and a speedy passage, I remain,

Respectfully,

C. HART MERRIAM,  
*Chief Biological Survey.*

Hon. WILLIAM R. ELLIS,

*House of Representatives, Washington, D. C.*

UNITED STATES COMMISSION OF FISH AND FISHERIES,  
*Washington, D. C., February 28, 1898.*

DEAR SIR: I am glad to learn that the Public Lands Committee have unanimously agreed to report favorably the bill making a national park of Crater Lake and its environs, and I sincerely hope that the bill may become a law.

Crater Lake is unique among American lakes. The beauty and wonder of the lake itself, together with the magnificent beauty of the wall which hems it in, render the place one which ever constitutes one of the great scenic attractions of our country, not at all inferior to the Yellowstone and the Yosemite.

The scientific interest of Crater Lake is very great, and it is important that the physical and natural history features of the region be preserved intact.

There are no agricultural, mining, or other interests which will be interfered with if this be made a national park.

Very respectfully,

Hon. W. R. ELLIS,  
*House of Representatives.*

BARTON W. EVERMAN,  
*Ichthyologist, United States Fish Commission.*

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,  
DIVISION OF BOTANY,  
*Washington, D. C., March 1, 1898.*

DEAR SIR: In response to your inquiry relative to the importance of setting aside Crater Lake as a national park, I would say that in my opinion such action would have a strong influence on the protection of the remarkable beauties of the place.

Crater Lake lies within about 4 miles of the crest of the Rogue River and Fort Klamath road, one of the old country roads crossing the Cascade Mountains. Hundreds of the people of Oregon go to the lake each year, and their number is constantly increasing.

I have visited Crater Lake three times, once in 1896, twice in 1897, and I am convinced that if its natural beauties are to be preserved and made more easy of access, as the people of Oregon desire, some improvement over present conditions of management is necessary. I estimate that from 3,000 to 5,000 acres of the forests in the proposed reservation have been destroyed by fire. In 1896, at the time of my visit, several small, though not so far very destructive, forest fires were burning. In 1897 I found a small fire burning near the summit of the road on the western slope and another near the head of Anna Creek Canyon on the eastern slope, and I was informed that a few weeks later a fire occurred on Wizard Island in the lake itself. In previous years one fire burned off a strip of forest right up to the edge of the crater.

Commercially these fires are of little importance, as most of the species of trees in the vicinity are not valuable for lumber, and the small proportion that would make valuable lumber is so far removed from a market that it will probably never have any commercial value; but with regard to aesthetic considerations it is clear that unless a better supervision of the area than has heretofore been possible is provided in the near future the burning of timber will continue until one of the chief beauties of Crater Lake has been destroyed. The moral effect of making the lake a national park, added to the protection afforded by an efficient fire guard, will do more than anything else to preserve the forests.

Very sincerely, yours,

FREDERICK V. COVILLE,  
*Botanist.*

Hon. W. R. ELLIS,  
*House of Representatives.*

The committee gave this matter its most careful investigation and consideration, and reached the unanimous conclusion that the pending measure is a meritorious one, and therefore recommend that the bill, as amended, do pass.

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