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HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF LAKES DISTRICT  
MT. HOOD NATIONAL FOREST

by

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Introduction

This thesis as originally planned was to be a history and development of the Lakes Ranger District, of the Mt. Hood National Forest, Oregon, Region Six. However, after considerable searching, I found that history as applied to a specific area was extremely difficult to obtain and assemble, and it was therefore necessary to incorporate within my writings a general discussion of the workings and resources of this district. I have also attempted to gather as many photographs of interest as possible in order to make this report pictorial as well as written.

For most of the historical information that I received, I am indebted to Ex-Ranger Joe E. Graham, who, for twenty-three years was District Ranger on this District. Ranger Graham retired from active service in the fall of 1930, and is now living a quiet life in the community of Wapinitia, Oregon.

I wish, also, to acknowledge the kindness of Ranger Everett Lynch in securing for me many of the photographs herewith presented.

## Lakes Ranger District

### Location

This Ranger District is located in the Mt. Hood National Forest, and is known as the Lakes District, or is perhaps better known as the Clackamas Lake District. The most northern point of the District is located at Barlow Pass, T 3 S, R 9 E, Sec. 28, Wil. Meridian and extends south to a point described as follows: T 10 S, R 8 E, Sec. 11. The district is bounded on the north, extending from east to west, by White River, Barlow Creek, Ghost Creek, Salmon River and Roaring River, and on the south by the south fork of the Breitenbush River, on the east by the Warm Springs Indian Reservation, and on the west by the south fork of Roaring River, Shellrock Creek, Clackamas River, and Cub Creek. The post office address is Maupin, Oregon, a small town situated on the banks of the Deschutes River some forty miles from the Ranger headquarters. The area of this district is 553,000 acres.

### Personnel

The present Ranger is Everett Lynch, and the Supervisor is Mr. A. O. Waha, being assisted by Foster Steele.

### Historical Reference

The area within this district was set aside as a Ranger District in 1911. The forest was then known as the Cascade Forest North. At the time the area was set aside as a District,

Joe Graham, who was forest guard at Lemiti Guard Station, just across the forest boundary, on the Cascade Forest South, was asked to come to Clackamas Lake as assistant ranger. However he really acted in the capacity of district ranger, working directly under the Forest Supervisor, T. H. Sherrard. The only improvements on the district at that time were two rather loosely built log cabins, one at Lemiti and one at Olallie Lake.

The road from what is now known as the Wapinitia Cut-Off into Clackamas Lake had been cut through in 1908 by a Dr. Miller from Portland, who had taken up a homestead at Clackamas Lake, but this road, beside being very poorly located, was barely passable with horse and wagon. The present Forest Service road into Clackamas Lake was built in 1915 by Ralph Shelly, present Supervisor of the Siuslaw National Forest. The road from Bear Springs, on the Wapinitia Cut-Off into Clackamas Lake was built in 1918 and 1919 by Ranger Joe Graham. The present road into Olallie Lake was started by Joe Graham in 1914 and finished to Olallie Lake in 1926.

The first Lookout to be developed was the Mt. Wilson Lookout, but the first firefinder to be set up and used was on Olallie Butte, the highest point on the district, with an elevation of slightly over seven thousand feet. Peavine Mt. was first used as a Lookout in 1925 and the present old shake

cabin was built in 1927. Highrock Lookout has been used as a Lookout since 1916, but the house on this point was not built until many years later.

The first year on the district, Ranger Joe Graham had one man working on protection and two men on a trail crew. Last season there were twenty-two men on protection, five on a trail crew, fifty on a road crew, and an average of fifty ERA men working on various projects. The lowest paid protection man received \$110 per month during the last season.

The first big fire occurred in 1911, when Peavine Mt. burned over. This fire burned over several thousands of acres, and there remains now a large snag patch where once stood a beautiful stand of alpine type timber. A small area of the Highrock country burned over this year also, but the big fire in the Highrock-Hambone country occurred in 1919. The big Dry Creek fire came in 1922, and the Breitenbush Lake fire occurred during the summer of 1928.

According to Joe Graham, the Olallie Lake Recreational Area was started to be developed as a recreational area in 1926 and further development has continued since then. The Bear Spring camp ground on the Wapinitia Cut-Off was developed as a camp ground in 1925.

In November, 1930, Joe Graham retired, and the ranger assigned to the district was O. J. Johnson, who had been an assistant ranger on the adjoining Clackamas River District.

### The Great Era of Building and Spending

The "boar's nest" and "rain-catcher" periods of Forest Service architecture in the Pacific Northwest came to an end in 1933. It is seldom in architectural history that the ending of one period and the beginning of a new can be so definitely dated, yet no one disputes that the Renaissance of the National Forests was coincident with the coming of the Roosevelt Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps.

The ancient dwellings similar to the old log cabin at Clackamas Lake, protected from the sun, and many of them even kept out some of the rain and part of the wind. They were comfortable in a Daniel Boone sort-of-way, that is, comfortable to the Spartan sort of men who inhabited them. Not a few of them were eye-sores, having the appearance of district school houses of the McKinley Era or of the stump-rancher's mansion.

There was not much, however, that could be done about it. The Forest Service was required to do all of its own building and construction. From 1905 (or year one in Forest Service chronology) until after the World War, appropriations for ranger stations and other buildings in the forest were entirely inadequate for the job in hand. Even then, in the great days of normalcy, the requisitioning and the getting of fifty pounds of nails with which to whack a ranger station together was considered a notable feat. Thus it continued until 1933.

Then came 1933 and the CCC. The Forest Service was permitted to hire experts of all kinds from the relief rolls along with the great army of labor in the CCC. Never before had such a force of skill and labor been available to the Forest Service. During the summer of 1933, two hundred CCC camps were placed at the disposal of Ranger O. J. Johnson. Happily, the Forest Service was not caught without plans of what to do with its new and huge army. Unimaginative urbanites might, and did, put their new battalions to raking leaves, and learning Grecian dancing, and compiling a census of owners of radios, but on in the silent places there was work to do that would be of lasting benefit to the increasing thousands who have discovered the nation's natural playgrounds.

The architectural problem of the Forest Service was fitting the thing wanted to the forest. Not just any forest, for there is as much difference between, say the Siuslaw National Forest and the Mt. Hood National Forest as there is between the dwellings of the Chinook and the Pueblo. The adjoining Deschutes and Willamette Forests in Oregon likewise have nothing in common except trees, and those trees are of vastly different character.

Previous to the time of the CCC, the improvements at the Clackamas Lake Ranger Station consisted of the ranger's home, a typical old log cabin, built in 1909, a log barn, and warehouse combined, and a few other out buildings.

However, during the summer of 1933 and the following years, construction and development on this district has gone ahead with leaps and bounds. A new and spacious home was built for the district ranger. A barn, "fit for the King's horses", as well as a comfortable home for the packer was built. The district was equipped with a new office and Protective Assistant's home, and the following other additions were made: a large fire warehouse, a general maintenance warehouse, a modern blacksmith shop, a large recreational hall with sleeping quarters, as well as a mess hall with a large modern kitchen and a well equipped service station. A very adequate water system has been installed and the grounds have been beautifully landscaped to harmonize with forest setting. Within the short period of three years this ranger station has risen from a small log cabin, out-of-the-way affair, to what is now considered the prize or A-1 district headquarters of Region Six.

Construction and development, however, has not been confined to the district headquarters alone. Lookout houses and garages of the latest type have been built on all except one of the nine lookouts. Two new towers have been built, one eighty-seven foot steel tower on Frog Lake Butte, and a one hundred and four foot tower on Clear Lake constructed from timbers. This tower on Clear Lake Butte received quite a write-up in the American Forests magazine about a year ago, and is considered one of the best of its kind anywhere in the



United States. Last season, a new tower was started on Foreman's Point and will be finished this spring, prior to fire season. A new rustic Guard Cabin was constructed at Bear Springs camp ground. This cabin inside, contains all the modern conveniences of home, including fireplace and shower. New guard cabins were also built at Olallie and Breitenbush Lake and at Linney Creek. A fire and maintenance warehouse, office, blacksmith shop and garage were also constructed at Bear Springs, which was the location of one of the three C camps.

Many miles of new road and trail were constructed, as well as fire breaks and telephone line, and sheep driveways. Thousands of acres of snags were felled in hazard reduction work. Old blow downs were cleaned up and made safe. Recreational development received a great deal of attention, not merely because of this long-awaited for chance, but because of a pressing need.

The discussion following will deal with the various phases of work as carried on in this district.

#### Fire and Protection

The fire hazard is extremely high during a large part of the summer months. However, fate has been kind, and there has not been a fire in this district larger than Class A in eight years. A highly efficient protective organization has contributed a great deal to this fine record. Fire equipment of the latest design is provided for use when necessary. During the

past season there was an average of twenty-two men carried on the protection payroll. Five of these men were college men, four from Oregon State College, and one from Washington State College. One of the newest pieces of equipment in the line of protection and presuppression came out last summer to be tried. This was a fire danger rating board, the result of experiment and study carried on by Mr. Andrews of the Pacific Northwest Forest Experiment Station. This board (as per the season of 1936) was based upon the following weather conditions: fuel inflammability as read from the hazard stick of the fire danger stations, relative humidity, wind velocity, visibility as measured with the Bryon Haze Meter, and number and class of visitors in the forest. At a glance the District Ranger or Protective Assistant can determine the fire situation of his district. For the coming season, this board has been further developed so that a certain combination of the above-mentioned conditions will refer to an action card, which in turn calls for certain action to be taken by the District Ranger or the Protective Assistant.

#### Grazing

Grazing on this district is confined mostly to sheep grazing in the high country. The large areas of old burns and mountain meadows provide excellent feeding grounds for sheep. The Highrock area provides the largest area for sheep grazing, however, a large area in this burn has been set

aside for huckleberry picking and sheep are not allowed in this area. During the past season seven thousand sheep and six hundred head of cattle were grazed on this district.

#### Timber Sales

At present there are no timber sales on this district for logging purposes. Quite a large amount of cord wood as well as several thousand cedar fence posts are sold each year.

#### Fish and Game

Deer are becoming very scarce on this district. During hunting season very few if any deer are killed. The area is well stocked with bear, both black and brown, however, and the sheep men find them quite a menace to their sheep in certain areas. Numerous bear are killed on this district each summer by sheep herders. As the name implies, this district has numerous lakes. From the top of Olallie Butte, one can count thirty-seven lakes while standing in one spot. Practically all of these lakes, as well as many others are stocked with trout. Thousands of fishermen visit the Olallie Lake Recreational Area each year, and fine catches are usually made. Besides the lakes there are several well stocked streams among the best which are, Salmon River, Linney Creek, Shellrock Creek, Clear Creek and the main fork of the Clackamas River, and the Oak Grove fork of the Clackamas River, the South and main forks of Roaring River. Every year for several years there has been an extensive planting program carried out on this district in

cooperation with the State Game Commission. During the past season of 1936, five hundred and forty fish were planted in numerous lakes and streams. These fish are cut-throat, rainbow, and eastern brook.

### Recreation

Recreation is really the "big business" of this district. It is now possible to drive from Portland out past Government Camp, down the Wapinitia Cut-Off, and thence by Forest Service road south by Olallie Lake, Breitenbush Lake, Breitenbush Hot Springs, Detroit, Salem, and back to Portland. Large areas over the district are devoted solely to recreation, but the most developed and highly advertised area is the Olallie Lake Recreational area. Olallie Lake covers an area of one hundred and seventy-five acres, is nearly one mile long and one-third of a mile wide at the widest point. The free public camping area extends along the western shore between the road and the lake shore. The lake offers excellent fishing, boating, and swimming. The campground may be used as a base camp for numerous hiking, pack and fishing trips to nearby points of scenic interest, lakes and streams. The Skyline Trail, which at present extends from the Columbia River to Crater Lake, traverses the Olallie Lake area from north to south, and with the numerous secondary trails branching from it, makes possible some wonderful horseback and hiking trips. Convenient improved campgrounds, some equipped with shelters, are located at scenic

or natural stopping places on the Skyline Trail. The campgrounds at Olallie Lake may be used as base camp for such interesting hiking trips as, Olallie Lake-Monon Lake circular trip of seven miles, Olallie Lake Circle of three miles, Twin Peaks of three miles, and Double Peaks trip of two miles. Olallie Butte, with an elevation of 7210 feet, can be reached by a four-mile hike from the trail junction with the road between Olallie Lake and Olallie Meadow. An unexcelled view of Mt. Jefferson and the myriad of lakes in this area may be had from Olallie Butte, as well as a view of thousands of acres of forest, desert land to the east, and many principal mountains of the Cascade Range.

Six miles south of Olallie Lake on the main road, lies Breitenbush Lake at an elevation of 5600 feet, covering an area of approximately 30 acres. It is about 2400 feet long and 900 feet wide at the widest point. Free camping space is available along the southwest shore of the lake. This site offers an excellent place for a base camp for trips into the Mt. Jefferson Primitive Area. Fishing is usually good in the Lake. No boats are available. During the warmer summer days the lagoon at the southwest end of the lake becomes warm enough for swimming. An excellent view of Mt. Jefferson, mirrored in the water, may be had from the north end of Breitenbush Lake.

One of the principal points of entry to the Mt. Jefferson Primitive Area is by way of the Skyline Trail from Breitenbush Lake. A six mile trip afoot or by saddle horse places the

traveler in Jefferson Park near the center of the area. The Primitive Area includes approximately 30,000 acres set aside to be preserved in its natural state. No improvements other than primitive shelters, camps, and trails are permitted within its borders. Within the area may be found many lakes, alpine forests, open glades and parks carpeted with unusual flowers and shrubs, snow fields, glaciers, glacial fed lakes, and tumbling streams, all centered around Mt. Jefferson, a rugged, steep, extinct volcano towering 10,495 feet, and offering an exceptional opportunity to experienced mountain climbers. Crevasses, avalanche areas and other hazards make it inadvisable for inexperienced persons to attempt the climb except when accompanied by an experienced mountain climber.

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