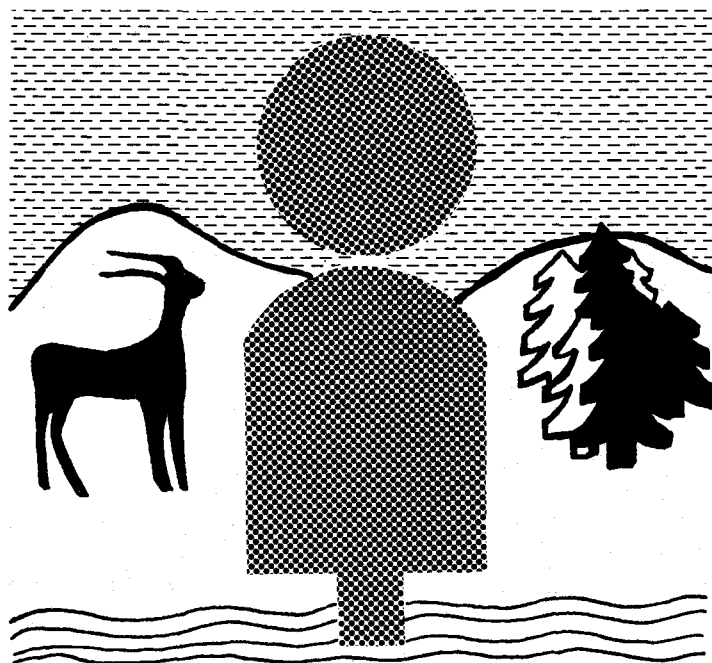


# The Early Conservation Movement in Oregon, 1890-1910



by William Robbins



Oregon  
State  
University

## Preface

In December 1971, the Rockefeller Foundation announced a grant to Oregon State University for the support of a project entitled, "Man's Activities as Related to Environmental Quality." This grant was made with the expectation 1) that Oregon State University would be strengthened in its capacity to deal with problems of environmental quality, 2) that a multi-disciplinary educational experience would be provided for several graduate students, and 3) that research results would be generated that would be useful to people in state government, to members of the legislature, and to the citizens of Oregon.

The research has attempted to focus on issues that are of burning and crucial importance in Oregon. The impact of environmental policies on income and employment, and the location of people and industry provide examples. A broad range of university disciplines and departments are involved in these studies in an attempt to bring the most appropriate and best talent to bear on the problems identified.

In the conduct of this project, an attempt has been made to present the research results in a way that would be understandable and useful. Liaison activities have been established with those units of state government that might have use for the results. In addition, emphasis has also been placed on issuing research results in an understandable and usable form.

In this report, Professor Robbins discusses the early conservation movement in Oregon with particular reference to forest lands. The manuscript makes clear that the term "conservation" has always been subject to different interpretations. It is also obvious that the term has a somewhat different meaning today than it did in the early part of this century when the term enjoyed its first popular appeal in this country. While there has always been controversy within Oregon on the best use of her resources, it is interesting to learn that Oregon stood almost alone among the Western states in supporting greater federal control of the timber resources of the West. This report will be useful to anyone who wishes to gain an insight into the early attitudes toward natural resources in Oregon.

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IN OREGON, 1890-1910

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## INTRODUCTION

When Congress passed the Forest Reserve Act of 1891 during the administration of Benjamin Harrison, the United States embarked on a policy of setting aside large sections of the federal domain from public entry and occupation. This action initiated a series of moves that reached a high point in 1907 when President Theodore Roosevelt created or enlarged 32 national forests. After issuing this controversial executive order, Roosevelt then signed an agricultural appropriations bill to which Oregon Senator Charles Fulton had attached a rider prohibiting the President from setting aside forest reserves except with the expressed consent of Congress. In effect, the President removed any authority his successors might have to act in similar fashion. But, to many westerners the damage already had been done. Roosevelt's action exacerbated the already festering conservation controversy. It sharpened divisions and hardened the attitudes of people on each side of the debate. It brought the opponents of federal conservation into the open and set off a national debate that involved exaggerated rhetoric and personal vilification of both the proponents and those who attacked federal conservation of natural resources (e.g. federal ownership and management of public lands).

Although it differed in some respects from other western states because of the uniqueness of its vast stands of timber, the state of Oregon had many tendencies characteristic of the national conservation movement. From the very beginning of the debate newspapers, public officials, and

more importantly, the resource users themselves, took sides on the many-sided issues of conservation. Some people actively sought state rather than federal ownership of all public lands, while others countered that vesting ownership at the state level would be a preliminary step to the transfer of public lands to private ownership.

Advocates of federal retention of public lands openly voiced their concern about the real motives of those who promoted state control. Proponents of state control and regulation argued that federal ownership kept resources "bottled-up" and inaccessible to public use or to homestead entry, and just as importantly, kept such lands from being placed on the public tax lists. Federal ownership and control of such resources, according to supporters of state control, was detrimental and served as a financial drain on the states where the resources were located. Critics of state control said that a transfer from federal to state ownership was a mere prelude to private ownership.

Support for the federal conservation movement was not confined to any particular segment of the community in Oregon or elsewhere, and the movement itself was divided between the aesthetic preservationists and the more popular conservationists who opposed pure preservation in favor of controlled resource use. Conservation was a complex issue, and the movement thus, should not be viewed solely in terms of a struggle between the interests of the "few" and the "many" as much pro-conservation literature would have us believe. The rhetoric used by the conservation propagandists was just as often a smokescreen for special interest groups who saw federal ownership and control of resources as a positive advantage

to systematic and efficient economic planning. This was especially true of the larger lumber companies in the Pacific Northwest.

Even greater confusion prevailed where conservationists themselves were divided over the use of resources on federal lands. Pure conservationists (e.g. preservationists) in the tradition of John Muir argued for the creation of wilderness areas that would be open for the enjoyment of the public but closed to resource exploitation. Aesthetic qualities and the untrammelled, pristine wilderness attracted such people. The more numerous and better known conservationists, such as the European-trained Gifford Pinchot, promoted the idea of systematic management, development and use of natural resources. This latter group never suggested that resources should be removed from public use and entry in perpetuity. Rather, they advocated that resources should be systematically managed as with the sustained-yield timber management program or similar planned-use techniques related to any other of the potentially finite resources. Industries which backed these programs often represented an enterprise that would benefit from resources on federal land. These people led the conservation fight in Oregon and their counterparts dominated the national scene. They assumed a posture of superior morality and high-minded idealism even though they often represented practical and profit-minded interests.

Large companies with connections in the federal government, and especially in Congress, were the most vocal advocates of federal conservation. When their efforts prevailed, it usually was at the expense of the smaller and local entrepreneurs. Smaller companies feared federal

sales would be too large and they would be priced-out of successful bidding. The larger organizations implied that in supporting federal conservation programs, they were less exploitive and more "planned-use" oriented. A contemporary analogy might be the off-shore oil deposit furor that is in the making between some of the Atlantic coastal states and the federal government--with the big petroleum companies supporting federal rights. It is more convenient for the big oil companies to "do business" with a few federal officials than a multiplicity of state officials.

## I

### Conservation Becomes A Major Social Issue

Of the many resources subjected to unrestricted exploitation in the last half of the nineteenth century, few were so ruthlessly despoiled and dramatically open to speculation as the nation's timber resource. The pine and spruce forests of northern New England were severely cut over, the valuable pineries in the Great Lakes and then the timbered regions in the South were rapidly being harvested, and timber cutting in the Pacific Northwest was well underway by the 1890's. Throughout the land lumbermen seemed to show little concern for the diminishing stands of timber or for the consequences of their activities to the forest environment. There was virtually no concern for adequate reproduction and reforestation, because it was not economically feasible to regenerate in 1890 when so much cheap timber was available. A reaction against the unrestrained



exploitation of such natural resources and the accompanying, undirected economic development, took place at about the same time.

Scientific forest management practices initiated in various western European countries stimulated the beginnings of forest conservation in the United States. In the sense that it was scientific, conservation arose from certain tendencies within western industrial society--tendencies that convinced the more far-seeing, scientifically-trained people to concern themselves with the kind of planning that would lead to the efficient development and use of all natural resources.

The formation of the American Forestry Association in 1875 was the first indication of a greater interest in scientific forest management practices in the United States. The association's publicity worked well and by the 1890's the organized forestry movement was actively promoting sustained-yield forest management. When Gifford Pinchot became head of the Bureau of Forestry in the Department of Agriculture in 1900, he set out to educate the public and the private forest industry about the benefits of scientific forest management. The larger timber companies promptly swamped the Bureau with requests for information.<sup>1</sup>

Under the Forest Reserve Act of 1891 President Benjamin Harrison established the first of the great forest reserves when he withdrew thirteen million acres of timberland from public entry.<sup>2</sup> Two years later, President Grover Cleveland created the Cascade Forest Reserve in Oregon under this same authority.<sup>3</sup> The federal conservation movement was gaining momentum and in the process becoming increasingly aggressive in its attitudes toward the public domain. In 1896 the National Academy of Sciences sent a

special forestry commission through the West to survey standing timber on the public domain, one of the first indications of an increasing interest in federal management of federal timberland. President Grover Cleveland used the commission's recommendations to create additional forest reserves and in the process set off a public uproar against further withdrawals.<sup>4</sup>

The storm of controversy in the West swirled around the desirability and feasibility of federal regulation. Forestry associations generally supported federal control and regulation while a disparate group of westerners that included a few smaller timberland owners and grazing and mining interests, ridiculed the various conservation programs and accused its backers of seeking to control the resources of the West for the selfish and narrow purposes of eastern theorists.<sup>5</sup>

Mining companies provided early and vigorous protest against the establishment of the forest reserves. However, as the early years of the twentieth century passed, mining interests recognized that federal control of the forests was actually favorable to their activities, because they could easily file on federal land and patent it if they wanted to. Although some Oregon stockmen and sheep producers opposed federal regulation, more stockmen in Oregon supported federal control than in any other state. By 1911 the Oregon delegation to the American National Woolgrowers Association successfully backed a resolution in support of the Forest Service. This marked a sharp departure from the association's normally negative stance.<sup>6</sup>

The conservation dispute in Oregon at the turn of the century centered, in part, around the issue of sheep grazing in the Cascade Forest Reserve. Forestry associations argued for stringent grazing controls and enforceable federal regulation. The sheep producers solicited the aid of Oregon's Governor, William P. Lord, who, in turn, convinced the naturalist, John Minto, to lend his impressive literary talents to the sheep industry. Although Minto directed most of his effort to the problem of grazing in the reserves, he also called for a reduction in the size of the Cascade Reserve and criticized the American Forestry Association for advocating such a large reserve in Oregon. When the new McKinley administration took office in 1897, Minto applauded the opponents of federal regulation and called the new administration a "potent agency" for staying a course of development that could prove injurious to grazing interests.<sup>7</sup> John Minto's efforts on behalf of the sheepmen was ultimately successful. Through cooperative programs worked out between the state of Oregon and federal officials, sheep grazing was permitted in the Cascade Reserve earlier than in any other region.<sup>8</sup>

Some segments of the lumber industry, especially the largest owners, supported federal regulation and the adoption of scientific practices. Lumbermen, as mentioned previously, gave increasing attention to modern forest practices through their solicitations to the Bureau of Forestry. Lumbermen's associations also expressed interest in exploiting existing forests more efficiently, utilizing low-grade wood, providing fire protection and ensuring guaranteed reproduction. Industrial lumbermen, especially those representing large accumulations of capital, were generally less hostile to federal regulation of timberlands.<sup>9</sup> The cooperation

of the lumber industry with federal regulatory programs prompted E. T. Allen, the first district forester in the Northwest and later head of the Western Forestry and Conservation Association, to declare in 1911 that; "the northwest lumberman, far from being an element requiring regulation by the public in the interest of forest preservation has become the leader in reforms."<sup>10</sup>

Private lumbermen in the Pacific Northwest were particularly concerned with damage caused by forest fires, especially after a series of disastrous fires in the summer of 1902. The success of the Forest Service in developing fire control programs convinced many lumbermen of the feasibility of planning and coordinating their own fire control programs. Timberland owners proceeded to organize fire protective associations and to finance other fire prevention measures. These independent private fire protective associations combined in 1909 to form the Western Forestry and Conservation Association.<sup>11</sup> Systematized and managed forestry had arrived at last. Although private and public forestry people still differed over regulatory practices, both factions wanted stable and predictable industrial practices that used the most forward-looking technology available. Progressive-minded timbermen in both the public and private sector found the federal forestry program appealing.<sup>12</sup>

There were some urban spokesmen in the West who also supported conservation programs and policies, although their motives sometimes differed from conservation-minded timbermen. Urban conservation leaders worked to secure the establishment of forest reservations to protect city water supplies and to preserve areas of natural beauty. These people contended

that the establishment of forest reserves would best protect watersheds that served as sources for city water supplies. In addition, they were interested in preserving areas with unusual aesthetic beauty.

The Oregon Alpine Club (now the Mazamas), organized in 1889 by William Gladstone Steel, was largely responsible for the creation of Crater Lake National Park. This group, whose membership and management lived in Portland, lobbied effectively for the creation of the Bull Run timber reserve for Portland's watershed in 1892, the Ashland watershed in 1893 and the Cascade Range Reserve in the same year.<sup>13</sup>

Conservation programs that subsequently were implemented in Oregon and the Pacific Northwest originated both from within and without the region. Special interest groups who promoted the regulation of natural resources sometimes worked from opposing ends. Some individuals, like Gifford Pinchot, influenced officials at the federal level to adopt systematic methods of forest management. Pinchot's contributions to forest conservation included programs directed at the preservation and management of the nation's timber resource, especially the introduction of a stable and predictable sustained-yield management program. This message quickly found adherents in the timber-producing states in the Pacific Northwest. Urban political leaders in the Northwest added their support to federal conservation programs, although for quite different reasons. They supported measures that would protect city watersheds and aesthetically valuable natural phenomenon from the scourge of unregulated exploitation.

President Theodore Roosevelt's February, 1907, decision to create new and expand the nation's existing forest reserves set off a storm of

controversy, especially in the western part of the nation. Opponents quickly organized a sounding board for their arguments in a regional commercial convention held in Denver, Colorado, in the middle of June.<sup>14</sup> Although the Denver conference represented the largest regional challenge to the Roosevelt withdrawal policy, several western states expressed their disapproval in petitions and legislative memorials to Congress. Oregon was one of these states.

The Oregon House of Representatives expressed the state's initial reaction to the expanded federal reserves and the withdrawal of federal timberland from public entry in a protest wired to Oregon's representatives in Congress. The House protest claimed that under the new arrangement the state of Oregon would be prohibited from selecting public domain timberlands as indemnity lands for school sections sixteen and thirty-six that were already occupied when the government surveys were made. The protest claimed that Oregon still was entitled to indemnity or lieu selections of about 60,000 acres, and after the Roosevelt withdrawals, the state would be restricted to selection of nontimbered land of much less value. The petition asked that Oregon be granted additional time to make its lieu selections and that the state's reclamation fund be "generously endowed" from the sales of timberlands.<sup>15</sup> During the same session that the Oregon legislature petitioned the national Congress, it created the State Board of Forestry. The board was initially intended as a legislative fact-finding body and not a permanent administrative agency.<sup>16</sup>

In contrast to the state legislature, Oregon's Governor George Chamberlain, a reform-minded Democrat and personal friend of Theodore

Roosevelt, reacted favorably to the expanded forest reserve policy of 1907. Chamberlain's support probably stemmed from his experiences as Oregon's governor during the land fraud disclosures between 1903 and 1905.<sup>17</sup> Oregon's State Land Agent in 1907 and a future reform governor, Oswald West, also supported the Roosevelt-Pinchot withdrawal policy.<sup>18</sup> West related in later years that he, Roosevelt, Pinchot, Governor Chamberlain, and another conservationist, Malcolm Moody, agreed on a strongly pro-conservation delegation to the Denver, Colorado, conference in 1907. West also noted that he and Chamberlain were among the very few western officials who gave their support to the early conservation policies of Roosevelt and Pinchot.<sup>19</sup>

Various special interest groups in the West convened the Denver conference to air grievances against "Pinchotism." The debate involved, in part, Roosevelt's withdrawal of sixteen million acres in forest reserves and the attendant issue of state control of its own resources.<sup>20</sup> From all indications stockmen and wool growers from Wyoming and Colorado dominated the meeting. The Portland Oregonian referred to the convention as a mask for "the hopes of predatory corporations in respect to the limit of the remaining wealth lying upon and under the public domain..."<sup>21</sup> Even though delegates from Colorado and Wyoming out-numbered all others at the convention, the outcome showed that western states were divided over the issue of state vs. federal management of natural resources. States' rights advocates dominated the delegations from Wyoming, Colorado, Idaho and Montana, while the Oregon and Arizona delegates favored federal control and regulation.<sup>22</sup>

Despite the predominance of states' rights advocates, the resolutions reached at the convention were more moderate than some of the anti-federal control delegates wanted. The convention recognized the necessity of forest reservations, perhaps a concession to the strong and noisy pro-Pinchot delegation from Oregon and to President Roosevelt's emissary, Secretary of the Interior, James A. Garfield, who told the convention that the end result of the forest reserve policy was to thwart the timber speculators from buying up public lands through illegal and fraudulent methods.<sup>23</sup>

The Pacific Northwest's leading newspaper, the Oregonian, consistently supported the Roosevelt-Pinchot withdrawals in its initial stages. Harvey W. Scott, long-time editor of the Oregonian and a leading Republican in Oregon, later advocated a states' rights position, but in 1907, at least, he saw merit in the Roosevelt-Pinchot philosophy. Before the Denver convention met, the Oregonian noted some dissatisfaction in the West over the creation of the forest reserves, however it concluded that "public sentiment throughout the West is far more favorable to the forestry policy today than it has ever been since the reserves were created." Lumbermen, too, according to the Oregonian, supported the federal forest reserve policy. The newspaper decried the likelihood that Roosevelt's public land policy would be condemned at the convention.<sup>24</sup>

After the convention was underway, the Oregonian criticized Roosevelt's enemies for favoring unrestricted exploitation. It said these special interests had made millions exploiting the public domain and, "inspired to greater lust the fatter they wax, are insidious enemies of the people."<sup>25</sup>



Finally, in an editorial assessing the impact of the Denver convention, the Oregonian took a more moderate position, although it still gave whole-hearted support to the forest reserve policy. It advised in an editorial of June 21, 1907, different policies for public lands that were tillable and those that contained mineral or timber resources. It recommended that tillable land should remain open to entry for homesteaders while the reserve policy should be predicated on the reservation of land not suited for home building. "The forest reserve policy therefore includes neither the retarding of settlement nor the hampering of the lumber industry."<sup>26</sup>

At the instigation of President Theodore Roosevelt, several governors appointed commissions in their respective states to coordinate and advise on matters pertaining to conservation. The measures adopted by some state governments in the West included a few distinct victories for conservationists. Oregon was one of these. With the President's encouragement, Governor George Chamberlain appointed a temporary, semi-official commission of fifteen members in 1908 to serve as a fact-finding body. A legislative act of February 23, 1909, which received the unanimous approval of the state legislature, then formally created the Oregon Conservation Commission.<sup>27</sup>

The Oregon commission, like its counterparts in other states, served as an adjunct of the National Conservation Congress, a Roosevelt-Pinchot inspired organization. Although the commission received meager financial support from the state legislature, it published reports every other year until 1915 when it was abolished. The Oregon Conservation Commission

consistently supported federal conservation policies while it existed and, according to one authority, was "the strongest single force for conservation in the state."<sup>28</sup>

Throughout the period of its existence, Joseph Nathan Teal, a Portland lawyer who defended the lumber industry in his private practice, served as Chairman of the Oregon Conservation Commission.<sup>29</sup> Teal and the Oregon commission actively promoted the Gifford Pinchot faction at regional and national conservation meetings. The commission clearly stated its position in its 1908 report to the governor when it defined conservation as meaning orderly development. "Conservation of resources means the highest utilization of them." It urged interstate cooperation in utilizing the resources of the Columbia Basin and called for increased state-federal cooperation in the development of all natural resources.<sup>30</sup>

Because of Chamberlain and West's influence, the Oregon Conservation Commission remained heavily committed in its support of federal conservation policy. However, the commission's existence was always dependent on the governor's support and the willingness of the legislature to provide funds for conducting its business and publishing its report every two years. If a governor had opposed federal control of natural resources, it is doubtful that the commission could have survived. At best, its membership would have been composed of people supportive of such policies.<sup>31</sup>

When George Chamberlain went to the United States Senate in 1909, the Oregon Conservation Commission survived the opposition of the interim Acting Governor, Jay Bowerman, who was an opponent of federal conservation. In his parting message to the Oregon legislature early in 1911, Bowerman

viewed federal conservation merely as an attempt on the part of easterners to gain control of western resources for their own selfish purposes. The federal government's policy, according to the governor, resulted in great loss to the state because it prevented large areas from being settled and denied the state the power of taxation on lands held in federal ownership.

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Large areas of the state remained undeveloped because "of the blight of the present federal policy."<sup>32</sup>

Acting Governor Bowerman singled out the Oregon Conservation Commission for special condemnation. He was appalled by the fact that the state appropriated only \$500 each two years for forest fire protection while it spent \$5,000 for a like period for the Oregon Conservation Commission. Bowerman said the commission had performed "...little, if any, real service for the State," and furthermore, had used its influence to support the "administrative policies of the federal government in preventing the development of the State and in encouraging the withdrawal of our lands from entry." He recommended that the commission "be abolished and the money heretofore appropriated to it devoted to some useful purpose."<sup>33</sup>

As part of the effort to conserve and manage public lands according to modern practices, Pinchot conservationists in the United States resorted to nationwide congresses to discuss and publicize their arguments. These congresses followed in the wake of congressional refusal to continue funding the Roosevelt instigated National Conservation Commission.<sup>34</sup> Oregon

conservation supporters, led by Joseph Nathan Teal of the Oregon Conservation Commission, played an integral role in the meetings of the several congresses.

The first National Conservation Congress met in Seattle, Washington, from August 26 to August 28, 1909. Joseph Nathan Teal of Portland was on the executive committee and delivered an address to the congress. Teal's speech supported the federal conservation policies of the Roosevelt administration and emphasized that proper conservation, while providing for present needs, also protected resources for the future. In Teal's words, conservation "is the antithesis of waste." It meant protecting "the heritage of all the people in the interest of all the people." Teal foresaw a lengthy struggle, because he believed that private interests would attempt to capture the rich natural resources of the nation for their own personal gain.<sup>35</sup>

The conservation movement in Oregon was fortunate in having articulate spokesmen like Joseph Teal in influential positions. Likewise, people like Teal dominated the movement in Oregon. Oregon delegations to national and regional meetings that concerned conservation issues were normally sympathetic to Pinchotism. And, in this capacity, they served the state well in promoting the retention of federal ownership of resources.

In establishing firmly the federal government's control over public domain resources within the state, conservationists in Oregon faced a series of crucial tests. The gubernatorial election of 1910 was one of these. Oswald West and Jay Bowerman were the respective candidates of the Democratic and Republican parties. Both men had established and public

reputations as to the disposal of natural resources within the state. Bowerman recommended the dissolution of the Oregon Conservation Commission in his last message to the Oregon legislature. In addition, he had forwarded a message to Congress protesting the continued existence of the national forests. Bowerman contended that the combined policy of the Oregon Conservation Commission and the Forest Service was to withhold timber from being harvested.<sup>36</sup>

Democrat Oswald West, the victor in the 1910 election, reversed the policy recommendations of ex-Governor Bowerman. The conservation and development of Oregon's resources was a first priority in West's 1911 address to the Oregon legislature. Besides recommending the reappointment of the Oregon Conservation Commission, West issued a plea for the scientific management of the state's natural resources. "Effective conservation," West argued, "can come only through state and federal cooperation." He urged that Oregon should pause before pressing the federal government to turn over to the state of Oregon all unappropriated timber and mineral lands within her boundaries. West cited the gross mismanagement of the state's school grant lands as a primary reason for maintaining federal control and management of Oregon's natural resources.<sup>37</sup>

Throughout his tour as Governor of Oregon, Oswald West remained an ardent proponent of federal control and development of the nation's resources. In this manner West continued policies set in motion when George Chamberlain was first elected governor in 1902. The brief interlude of Jay Bowerman as acting governor did not do irreparable harm to the conservation movement in Oregon. West, like Chamberlain before him, continued

to appoint like-minded people to regional and national meetings concerned with the development and use of natural resources.

Oswald West and the advocates of federal control did their work well. By the time West left office in 1915 federal control over resources was established firmly enough to withstand the attacks of its old adversaries. It should be emphasized again that Oregon conservationists were resource-use oriented and not preservationists in the tradition of John Muir. Yet, despite their arguments in favor of the controlled development of natural resources, they continued to come under attack from those who wanted unhindered and unlimited access to public resources.

## II

### Trends In The Conservation Movement

The conservation controversy in the first two decades of the twentieth century involved exaggerated rhetoric on all sides and all sorts of claims to moral righteousness. The fact that the conservation dispute had moral consequences, especially for those who crusaded on its behalf, should not detract from the real issues involved, however. Some conservationists in the true Progressive tradition saw themselves leading a righteous crusade on behalf of the public against the monopolistic and greedy practices of a few rapacious capitalists. Conservation leaders across the country met and fought the issue with the moral intensity of avenging angels. Great principles were at stake, according to the proponents of conservation--principles that required constant vigilance and

a watchful eye to protect the public's interest. Such was the rhetoric, the smokescreen in one sense, of the conservation movement.

Developments in Oregon provide a capsule of what was happening on the national level during the height of the debate. Preservationists, conservationists and their respective political backers employed various stratagems to garner support for their solution to the disposition of Oregon's natural resources. The conservationists in the state, again, perhaps best exemplified through the Oregon Conservation Commission, viewed corporate monopoly as the evil genius behind the uninhibited exploitation of Oregon's natural resources. In its annual report of 1910 the Commission maintained that Oregon's forest resources were "the assets of all its citizens. The lumberman or timber owner is, economically, only their agent in using them....The question involved is not one of personal property but one of community resource."<sup>38</sup>

Despite claims of this nature which raised the issue of monopoly ownership of timberland, the conservation movement in its initial stages did not concern itself with national economic trends. The national effort leading to the establishment of the forest reserves came from such disparate sources as wilderness groups who wanted to preserve untouched the pristine wilderness of forest lands and from water users in the western states who wanted to protect the sources of water supply from silting.<sup>39</sup> Similar patterns emerge in predominantly mining and cattle raising states as well. Thus, the issue of antimonopolism, in some respects, was self-serving rhetoric, and antithetical to actual circumstances. From the very beginning certain large corporations gave full backing to federal control of resources while smaller owners opposed federal conservation measures.

Several different groups in Oregon backed conservation programs and federally controlled resources. Some were large holders of timberland who were looking to the future with a vested interest in a carefully managed timber resource. Early Forest Service officials in Oregon and the Northwest obviously were supportive of conservation programs, and some of their priorities went beyond the veil of the argument over who should control the resource. Such singularly important matters as fire control, reforestation and grazing on forest lands were vital to those who viewed the forest as something more than a finite resource. In nearly every instance, the dominant motive behind conservation was the recognition that the timber resource was potentially exhaustible and that, in the long run, the large lumber companies would be better served by ending indiscriminate cutting practices.<sup>41</sup>

As Chief Forester and later the foremost lobbyist for the conservation movement, Gifford Pinchot actively sought the support of industrial lumbermen. Pinchot began writing and publicizing the merits of sustained-yield management and planning at a time when lumbermen themselves were becoming increasingly cognizant of the need for more stability and predictability in their industry. And, in the Pacific Northwest, the Northern Pacific Railroad Company, the Weyerhaeuser Lumber Company and the King Lumber Company, as well as others who owned large timber acreages, supported Pinchot's policies.<sup>42</sup> James L. Penick's recent book on the Ballinger-Pinchot controversy emphasizes that the opponents of conservation in the West were by no means the larger corporations. In fact, many large concerns supported conservation programs while smaller firms



"...bitterly fought against it side by side with the small grazers and farmers, while their more prosperous neighbors were often complacent."<sup>43</sup>

In effect, while lumber corporations like the Weyerhaeuser Company were expanding their vast timber holdings in the Pacific Northwest, they also gave active support to forest conservation programs and to federal control of national forests. The Bureau of Corporations released a study in 1913 in which it cited among its "foremost facts" the concentration of standing timber in a few enormous holdings. Weyerhaeuser was one of these.<sup>44</sup> At the same time, Oregon became more actively involved in planning and implementing standards for the management of private and state-owned timber resources. Lumber industry leaders supported the state in these efforts.

The beginning of the present-day Oregon State Board of Forestry dates back to 1907 when the Oregon legislature appointed an administrative agency under that title to serve as a fact-finding body. After Oswald West's successful election campaign in 1910, the legislature complied with one of West's recommendations and formally established the State Board of Forestry which included the governor, the head of the Forestry School at Oregon State College and five appointees. The appointees were selected upon the recommendation of the Oregon State Grange, the Oregon Fire Association, the Oregon and Washington Lumber Manufacturer's Association, the United States Forest Service and the Oregon Wool Growers' Association. The board also was authorized to appoint a state forester.<sup>45</sup> Timber owners who wanted to avoid repeating the disastrous fire year of 1910 brought much of the pressure for the creation of a state board of forestry.<sup>46</sup>

The establishment of the Oregon State Board of Forestry, although forest fire control remained its primary concern, initiated an era of increased cooperation between state and federal agencies and the private lumber industry. The formation of the Western Forestry and Conservation Association during the same period marked a similar development. This association, according to E. T. Allen, one of its principle organizers, included in its membership the cooperative protective associations, state and federal forest agencies, lumbermen, railroads, municipalities and counties, equipment manufacturers, paper companies and trade associations.<sup>47</sup> The state of Oregon provided much of the leadership for the Western Forestry and Conservation Association, just as it did in the semiofficial regional and national conservation meetings.

Private lumber companies combined their efforts with state and federal agencies to promote conservation planning in Oregon. These various groups became increasingly cognizant of the movements in eastern states to secure the services of trained men to study and develop programs for the planned-use of natural resources and to protect these same resources from unrestrained exploitation.<sup>48</sup> The Oregon Conservation Commission, likewise, urged the state to compile physical data regarding its resources, a program already undertaken by its sister states in the east.<sup>49</sup> The commission's report for 1909 found both California and Washington ahead of Oregon in progressive forest legislation and called for the creation of a state forest independent of politics, something that the state legislature accomplished two years later.<sup>50</sup>

In its second annual report, the commission again noted that Oregon was still far behind other timber states in forest protection and management.

Oregon's problem, according to the commission, was not due to lack of legislation but "no legal machinery for their enforcement."<sup>51</sup> The commission listed the weaknesses in Oregon's forest legislation: (1) no one to enforce the fire laws, (2) no means of stopping fires that start, (3) no means to help the progressive timber owners to secure the cooperation of the unprogressive timber owners and, (4) no means to educate the public.<sup>52</sup>

By 1911 most of the weaknesses in Oregon's forest legislation were eliminated, according to the commission. The commission reported great advances in forest protection in Oregon as a consequence of legislative enactments in that year. The report emphasized that the improved conditions were "not due to chance, it is the result of greater activity on the part of all agencies--government, state and private."<sup>53</sup> The age of modern progressive forest practices had arrived.

The concern and solicitude that large lumber interests displayed toward forest conservation in Oregon is exemplified by the support given to both state and federal forest policy. To representatives of the lumber industry and their allies in state and federal agencies, the issue was one of giving future direction to large-scale economic development. Consolidation of land holding occurred, as in the case of the Weyerhaeuser Company, along with a companion spirit that urged the adoption of measures that would assure a stable and planned economic growth.<sup>54</sup> It was not necessary that the lumber industry have outright ownership of the standing timber resource. The larger operators would be in an advantageous situation to bid for timber on federal lands in any case. The more important

issues to industrial lumbermen were to secure the efficient and proper management of the federal timber resource. Private industry simply found it more profitable and its timber resource better managed by the federal government. The more progressive-minded lumber capitalists viewed private, state and federal cooperation as a necessity by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century.<sup>55</sup> By the 1930's the lumber industry widely accepted federal and state ownership and sustained-yield management.<sup>56</sup>

The conservation movement has been charged in the past with attempting to "lock-up" America's natural resources. The nation's leading proponent of conservation, Gifford Pinchot, found it necessary to repeatedly deny such charges, and despite cogent arguments to the contrary, Pinchot was not always successful.<sup>57</sup> Some men did advocate preservation rather than conservation of resources, but that charge certainly does not apply to Pinchot. Nor is such an accusation appropriate in describing the leading conservationists in Oregon, especially the Oregon Conservation Commission. And yet the commission repeatedly had to deny such charges.

The Oregon Conservation Commission consistently advocated controlled use and development, rather than unrestricted exploitation of Oregon's resources. The commission consistently stuck to its position, despite the allegations of Acting Governor Jay Bowerman in 1910 and early 1911, that the commission favored "locking-up" Oregon's resources for posterity. Bowerman, it should be remembered, accused the commission of promoting policies that would prevent the development of the state's resources.<sup>58</sup> This was not the case. In each of its reports, the commission insisted

that orderly development was central to the conservation movement rather than circumscribing the use and access to such resources.

Conservation, as defined in the 1910 report of the Oregon Conservation Commission, "applied to the development, use, protection, and perpetuation of Oregon's resources, for the highest benefit of Oregon's people, now and always." The commission reports frequently employed antimonopolistic rhetoric, "safe-guarding any rights of the many that may be in danger of monopoly by the few."<sup>59</sup> Despite its protestations on behalf of the general public, the commission's policies, like those of the federal government, urged the efficient management and development of resources for the controlled use of timber capitalists. "Conservation," according to the commission, "will ward against waste that would entail a famine of materials essential to modern industry and to the comforts of modern life."<sup>60</sup> In urging more progressive fire control measures, the commission justified the development of such a program to relieve the timber owner from the entire burden of protecting his property, because fires were often started on private lands by the public.<sup>61</sup>

The commission's 1912 report succinctly characterized the dilemma of its public image on the issue of resource management:<sup>62</sup>

"The word 'conservation' has in the past been used by many misinformed or purposely misled people to typify all that is theoretical, visionary and impractical in dealing with those matters which conservationists have sought to remedy. The questions taken up by this commission...will appeal to citizens of the state as being not visionary, but practical; not theory but actual necessities."

The report went even further and recommended public development of water

resources, because "private capital will not lead the way to lowering prices,...nor will it pioneer the way through the development of power in advance of a market."<sup>63</sup> In other words, private industry would benefit directly if the state participated in the development of its water power potential.

By 1914 the commission was able to define more carefully and with greater perspective the development of the conservation movement. It viewed the early years of the conservation movement as restrictive and negative with the predominant emphasis on reservation and withdrawal. The report saw these early tendencies as necessary, because "to insure utilization, prompt, full and perpetual, he (the conservationist) was compelled to assume the initial role of the restrictionist."<sup>64</sup> However, by the time the Oregon Conservation Commission was appointed in 1908, it, in effect, served as the state's initial resource development agency, and it clearly identified itself as such. In this capacity the commission enjoyed the support of those industries who were interested in the efficient management and utilization of Oregon's natural resources.

Thus, the objectives of the conservation movement were transformed during the Roosevelt years from its initial efforts towards the withdrawal of resources from public use, to a commitment to public management with an accompanying objective of replacing unrestricted competition with economic planning. Industrial users of Oregon's resources supported the conservation movement, especially when its tendency toward development, rather than withdrawal, became obvious policy.<sup>65</sup> Conservation ultimately placed emphasis on the needs of the corporate community, and its impact had the

effect of eliminating waste and bringing stability to the uncertainties of competitive resource use. The hand of Essau still had its way, but this time behind a smokescreen of rhetoric that preached antimonopolism and the conservation of resources.

### III

#### Conservation And The States' Rights Issue

No single issue was as pertinent to the conservation movement as the struggle over who should control publicly owned resources. Between 1907 and 1915, the states' rights doctrine was persistently invoked to argue for state rather than federal resource management. During these years, the debate over resource control was waged with varying intensity at both the state and national level. George Chamberlain, Oswald West and the Oregon Conservation Commission once again added strong support for federal ownership and control.<sup>66</sup>

Shortly after President Theodore Roosevelt withdrew large sections of the public domain from entry in 1907, proponents of state control, as was mentioned earlier, organized the first of what was to become a series of public land conferences to discuss the issue of national versus state control.<sup>67</sup>

The state's leading newspaper, the Oregonian, accused those who opposed federal control with erecting a facade for "the hopes of predatory corporations in respect to the exploitation to the limit of the remaining wealth lying upon and under the public domain..."<sup>68</sup> The Oregonian did not

view the creation of the federal forest reserves as a threat to the timber industry, and it urged those attending the June, 1907, public land conference in Denver to act accordingly. However, many speakers at the Denver conference criticized the federal government for eroding states' rights. The Oregon delegation picked by Governor George Chamberlain, did offer strong support for the policies of Gifford Pinchot, but they were outnumbered by the states of Wyoming, Idaho, Montana and Colorado who had predominantly states' rights delegations.<sup>69</sup>

At the second meeting of the National Conservation Congress held at St. Paul, Minnesota, in September, 1910, the Oregon delegation divided over the issue of resource management and control. This was due largely to the fact that Acting Governor Jay Bowerman had appointed some of the delegates and these appointees supported state control. The timber associations and the Oregon Conservation Association appointed the other members of the Oregon delegation. Leslie M. Scott, the son and successor to editor Harvey Scott of the Oregonian, served as one of Bowerman's appointees.<sup>70</sup> It is significant, however, that seven timber association men were among the Pinchot supporters in the delegation from Oregon, and that the Bowermen appointees accused the Pinchot supporters in the Oregon delegation of looking out only for timber interests. Despite the Bowerman appointees, the Oregon contingent did adopt a resolution declaring against state control.<sup>71</sup>

When Leslie Scott became its editor in 1910, the Oregonian switched its support to those who advocated state control of resources. The Oregonian's reports on the St. Paul congress reflected this change in



the extensive coverage given to the resolutions of the anti-Pinchot forces. These same reports said very little about the majority of the Oregon delegation who favored federal retention of natural resources within the states.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, the Oregonian accused the Pinchot forces of organizing the congress with an iron hand and with manipulating programs, discussions and resolutions. It claimed that Oregon was losing much needed revenue by having so much federally controlled land in the state. Under the Pinchot system, "money is thus to be taken out of Western states for the benefit of Eastern people...who now insist on sharing the fruits of Oregon, Washington and Idaho."<sup>73</sup>

Shortly after the adjournment of the Second National Conservation Congress, Governor Marion B. Hay of Washington delivered a speech in Spokane in which he issued a real blast at what he called the "Pinchotonsians," some of them in the Oregon delegation. The Oregonian reacted enthusiastically to the Washington governor's address. Hay said the eastern states "have eaten their cake and now insist that we shall share ours with them." He defended the proponents of state control and insisted that this did not necessarily mean control by "special interests."<sup>74</sup>

*just like  
Western  
states  
are doing  
now with  
energy  
development*

The point raised in the pages of the Oregonian and by Washington's Governor Hay was a constant theme in the arguments of the proponents of state control. Oregon's leading newspaper and the Washington governor were fearful about the disposition of revenue from resources lying within the boundaries of federal lands. They argued that elimination of federal control would bring the respective states increased revenue in the form of taxes, and, in addition, would prevent the income from such resources

from leaving the region.<sup>75</sup> Jay Bowerman, Oregon's leading critic of federal control, added that Pinchot conservationism also permitted timber to be destroyed by fire, held up agricultural land in reserves and prevented settlement on it.<sup>76</sup>

Despite the claims of Bowerman and Governor Hay of Washington, there appeared to be more to the controversy than the reputed financial drain on the resource wealthy states. Even that argument met with stiff opposition from certain factions within the resource holding states. To counteract the publicity given the proponents of states' rights, the Oregon Conservation Commission published an eight page pamphlet in 1913 titled State vs. National Control of Public Forests. The pamphlet claimed that although private ownership of the national forests was not the issue at present, the consequences of state ownership would lead to private monopoly by a few because of "the opportunity for manipulating state politics." The underlying purpose of those who initiated the state control movement, the pamphlet argued, was to replace public control with private monopoly.<sup>77</sup>

The Oregon Conservation Commission pamphlet sharply disagreed with those who claimed that the state lost money because the national forests were nontaxable. Even if the state owned the forests, they would still not be taxable, and, furthermore, "the perpetual income the state will eventually receive from sales of stumpage would far exceed any amount that could probably be received from taxes." The pamphlet adamantly pointed out that the Forest Service conducted studies and experiments regarding the use, cultivation and the production of by-products "which have been

of enormous value to the public as well as to the lumber industries."

Through its pamphlet the commission expressed the obvious fear that state control would mean a reversion to private control under the guise that the state simply could not afford to support a viable forest program.<sup>78</sup>

Other public figures in Oregon spoke just as forcefully in defense of federal control. Governor Oswald West, in his initial message to the legislature in 1911, cautioned that the state had already frittered away its valuable school grant and should guard against repeating similar mistakes.<sup>79</sup> In his last message to the legislature four years later, West reviewed his opposition to state control of resources:

There are representatives of organized greed and monopoly who oppose every conservation movement; their sole desire being freedom to loot the public domain. To accomplish this end, they desire to seize every opportunity to poison the mind of the public against the policies of the federal government.

West cited as one example the restoring to public entry in 1901 of over 705,000 acres in the Olympic National Forest in Washington. Within ten years, according to West, 526,500 acres had accrued to the hands of timber interests with over 178,000 acres included in five holdings. The governor warned, "this incident teaches us that we should be wary of the cry of the wolf. While lending aid to every legitimate movement which will make for progress and development, we should not be fooled into opening the door to land pirates."<sup>80</sup>

The Forestry Committee report to the Fifth National Conservation Congress of 1913 emphasized a theme similar to others who opposed state

control. Because of past performance the forestry committee doubted the ability of states to act responsibly as administrators of public forest lands:<sup>81</sup>

Enormous areas of land have been granted to all the public land states and it is an indisputable truth that not one of these states has appreciated the heritage bestowed or shown ability to protect it. The chief purpose has seemed to get of the public land at any price, with the result that state control has rapidly been substituted for private ownership and exploitation, at inadequate return to the state.

The report contended that the states had neither the organization, the programs, nor the money to properly manage public forest lands.

The committee took a particularly critical view of forest and land management practices in the states of Washington and Oregon. Washington, according to the committee's report, was always the storm center of opposition to federal control and had some of the more articulate spokesmen for state control. It was also a comparatively new state with large acres of forest land. Yet, despite the fact that Washington had the experiences of other states for guidance, it had done nothing to promote forestry.

"It has made no studies, collected no information, made no maps....It does nothing to encourage restocking."<sup>82</sup>

The committee's report gave Oregon an even sounder lashing. It accused the state of disposing of practically all of its valuable timber lands at \$1.25 per acre, and, the report continued, Oregon "is now doing its best to trade the fragmentary remains of its lands, scattered throughout the national forests, for a solid body of 50,000 acres of forest land which will in terms be inalienable." The committee deplored the fact that

Oregon which had one of the greatest stands of state-owned timber of any state in the Union, "is now seeking 50,000 acres for a State Forest."<sup>83</sup>

Like the Oregon Conservation Commission, the Forestry Committee of the Fifth National Conservation Congress denied that states were losing tax money because the federal government controlled timber resources.

"Those who advance this argument cannot believe in a public forest, State or national, for it would be nontaxable in either event." The tax argument was "fallacious," the committee said, because the taxable value of timber in inaccessible regions was problematical, and the income the state would likely receive from stumpage when these areas became accessible would exceed by far income received from taxes.<sup>84</sup>

Conservation of resources was also a major subject of discussion at successive meetings of western governors. These conferences paralleled the meetings of the national conservation congresses and with the exception of Oregon and sometimes California, the general mood at these conferences was supportive of states' rights and state control of resources. Governor Marion Hay of Washington, in calling a conference of western governors to meet in Salt Lake City in the summer of 1910, urged the delegates to support "a conservation that will not hamper industry and retard development. We want the rights of the states most directly interested...more fully recognized and protest against infringement of the sovereignty of the states."<sup>85</sup> Hay probably expressed the dominant mood among western governors.

Three years later, Governor Oswald West of Oregon addressed the 1913 western governor's conference, again in Salt Lake City, and reiterated his support for federal conservation. He cited statistics showing the immense holdings in the Pacific Northwest of the Southern Pacific Railroad, the Northern Pacific Railroad and the Weyerhaeuser Company. West's statistics showed that these three large corporations controlled as much timberland as the federal government in the Pacific Northwest.<sup>86</sup>

Yet, in spite of West's defense of federal control, the 1913 western governor's conference adopted a resolution that proposed to extend the jurisdiction of the states "to all their territory, taxing power to all their lands." The resolution further recommended that states take over the work of conservation from the federal government. "The permanent withdrawal of any lands from entry and sale," the resolution continued, "we believe contrary to the spirit of the ordinance of 1787 and we urge that such lands be returned to entry."<sup>87</sup>

The Oregonian, as was its fashion during these years, criticized Governor West's address in Salt Lake City. The Oregonian took issue with the federal government for including within the forest reserves large areas without a trace of standing timber. It also described the policy of administering federal land law, "oppressive," and called the conservation of resources "picayunish" in character and "widely scattered in its application....The repressive policy adopted by the Government thus ranges from the severe to the ridiculous. It is the result of long range supervision by theorists and bureaucrats."<sup>88</sup>

The western governor's conference of 1914 expressed similar sentiments, again, with Governor West of Oregon the leading dissenter. The Oregonian headlined its report of the conference, "States Rights Asserted at Conference...Oregon Executive Alone Expresses Approval of System, Until Somebody Shows Him Something Better, At Any Rate."<sup>89</sup> West, as he had before, defended the forest reserves. "Every stick of available timber in the State of Oregon would have been in private hands," West asserted, "had it not been for the creation of a forest reserve in our state...if these great resources had fallen into the hands of the state, they would nearly all have been gone by this time..."<sup>90</sup> The governor's conference passed a resolution similar to ones in previous years that requested Congress to turn all remaining federal lands over to the states. It also declared itself unalterably opposed to the existence of permanent withdrawals.<sup>91</sup>

In 1915, but this time as Oregon's ex-governor, West represented Secretary of the Interior, Franklin K. Lane, at the Western Governor's Conference. West pointedly accused states' rights advocates of shielding the real issues by crying out against the "red tape entanglements of the Interior Department."<sup>92</sup> At this conference, again, the federal government's policy was subjected to sharp criticism. The Oregonian concluded in an editorial that, "it ought now to be obvious to Secretary Lane, if it had not been heretofore, that Pinchotism, either pure or adulterated, is not acceptable to the West..."<sup>93</sup>

Oswald West's departure from the governor's chair did little to abate the controversy over resource control. After a federal court decision to revest the Oregon and California Railroad land grant to the United States

government, a struggle ensued over control and management of the so-called "O. & C. lands." Sunset magazine raised the old tax issue in a 1916 article, "Skinning the Land Grant Bear." Half of western Oregon, according to the article, was nontaxable national forest land, therefore, the O. & C. lands should not be added to the national forests. Sunset backed Governor James Withycomb's recommendation that the grant be "classified, appraised and sold for what each acre is worth..." It opposed "eastern arm-chair conservationists" who want to make the two million acre grant part of the Cascade Forest Reserve. Already "more than fifty percent of Oregon's area produces no annual tax revenue for public purposes." Sunset favored selling the timbered sections within the grant to the larger lumber companies "who can logically afford to pay the most."<sup>94</sup> And, so the debate continued.

Despite resolutions adopted at regional conferences and the lobbying of congressional legislators, western states made few inroads into the federal government's regulation and control of natural resources during these years. The great reserves, whether they contained timber, grazing or mineral resources, remained as such. However, federal lands became increasingly available to users--cattle and sheepmen were able to gain liberal leasing and grazing rights, even in those areas classified primarily for timber.<sup>95</sup>

Accessibility, not control of the resource, was the key issue. Increasingly corporate users of resources lying within the public domain wanted liberal leasing rights to grazing lands, liberal interpretations to mineral rights on public lands and, for the lumber industry in the Pacific Northwest, the right to the future harvest of the abundant stands



of timber. Eventually, the resource-users gave up the states' rights issue and brought their weighty influence behind a resource-use policy that was in their best interests.

#### IV

#### Conclusion

The conservation movement developed from a series of convergent forces that were peculiar to early twentieth century America. Industrial exploitation of natural resources, especially in the American West, and the consequent and expressed need of the industrial economy for assurance of some form of future predictability, prompted a number of people to rethink old attitudes toward what had been considered unlimited supplies of natural resources. Conservation was never a simple issue because it involved a complex of various interests who were vying for the same resources. Because of the complexity involved, competing users of natural resources often found themselves on opposite sides in the conservation struggle. Some large corporate monopolies, and in the Pacific Northwest lumbermen were the most striking examples, backed conservation efforts from its earliest days. Others eventually supported the conservation programs of the federal government when it was clear that the dominant mood of the movement was controlled and scientifically managed development and not withdrawal and preservation.

College trained foresters in the late nineteenth century initiated the more popular phases of the conservation movement. Urban groups who

were interested in protecting city watersheds from erosion and silting and who were interested in conservation for its aesthetic values complemented their efforts. The forest reserve policy began in the 1890's when Presidents Harrison and Cleveland set aside forest areas for future sources of timber and to protect city water supply systems. This same policy culminated in 1907 with the great withdrawals under President Theodore Roosevelt.

An immediate and loud reaction greeted the Roosevelt withdrawals in most western states. The Oregon legislature was one of the many western state legislatures that took collective action to reverse the presidential withdrawals of 1907. Despite a memorial sent to Congress from the Oregon legislature, there was considerable support within the state for the withdrawals and for federal control of resources. Two forward-looking Oregon governors, George Chamberlain (1903-1909) and Oswald West (1911-1915) consistently supported federal resource control during the height of the controversy between the advocates of state and federal control. These were crucial years for the conservation movement. And, in this respect, Oregon was an exception among western states. Other western states occasionally supported Roosevelt conservationism, but none backed federal conservation programs as consistently or as effectively as Oregon did.

Chamberlain and West supported the like-minded appointees to the Oregon Conservation Commission between 1908 and 1915, when it finally was disbanded. They also made certain in their appointments that the commission's make-up remained steadfastly supportive of conservation. In addition, both men were in positions to appoint delegates to regional conservation conferences who were similarly inclined. Unlike its sister

states, strong-minded conservationists in the tradition of Gifford Pinchot usually represented Oregon. Despite newspaper and sometimes legislative hostility, Chamberlain and West and their supporters remained strong and influential proponents of federal control of resources. Their ties to the national conservation movement were intimate and long-lasting.

Much of the rhetoric of the national conservation movement directed itself at the conventional themes of the Progressive Movement such as corporate monopoly and corrupt business practices. However, to many conservationists, the real issues were the accessibility and availability of resources to the corporate users. By this time, considerable corporate consolidation had already taken place. Weyerhaeuser had accumulated much of its growing timber empire in the Pacific Northwest, and the larger lumber manufacturers were looking to the future for a stable and planned forest reserve. Thus, corporate consolidation and the conservation movement, with its emphasis on stable and planned economic growth, paralleled each other.

And, this is precisely what the much-maligned Oregon Conservation Commission had been preaching all these years. The most important criterion, according to the commission, was controlled use and management with an emphasis on development. Corporate users of Oregon's timber resource could have their timber and harvest it too without even concerning themselves with such matters as protection and reforestation. Forest Service programs were being developed to care for such needs.

This tendency illustrates a central fact about the United States Forest Service as it has evolved in the twentieth century. Since its inception, the Forest Service's policy has been directed at controlled resource management and development. That policy always has taken cognizance of the interests of the large lumber companies which it serves so well. Despite popular beliefs to the contrary, the Forest Service has been a great benefit to Weyerhaeuser and its counterparts in the Northwest.

But, times have changed. In the early twentieth century the Forest Service under Gifford Pinchot could rally the public to its banner against those who threatened to despoil the public domain. Today, the service itself is under fire from an increasingly environmental-minded public in its continual quest for more timber. The French Pete controversy, involving an uncut valley adjacent to the Three Sisters Wilderness Area, is one example in which environmentalists are aligned against the Forest Service. The Forest Service is still recommending further timber cutting on the Bull Run watershed east of Portland despite the wishes of the City of Portland and interested citizens who claim that timber cutting should be sharply curtailed because of silting damage to Portland's water supply. On this issue, again, the Forest Service cannot be called a harbinger of conservation, at least, not according to present definition of the term. But then, both time and circumstance have changed. The French Pete and Bull Run issues will eventually be resolved in the courts.

The point is clear, however. The Forest Service can no longer make claims to superior moral and ethical values in the interests of the public as it once could. The service now assuredly speaks for development and

pursues policies convenient, in most cases, to the large lumber interests. Those who see logging activity causing potential harm to the environment often find themselves battling against the entrenched interests of the Forest Service and the big lumber companies. This, again, is a complex issue that involves jobs for Portland area residents and an available and cheap lumber supply for the housing needs of the nation.

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21. Oregonian, June 20, 1907.
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23. Oregonian, June 21, 1907.
24. Ibid., June 5 and June 17, 1907.
25. Ibid, June 19, 1907.
26. Ibid., June 21, 1907.
27. Oregon, Report of the Oregon Conservation Commission to the Governor (1909), 7; Richardson, Politics of Conservation, 45.
28. Rakestraw, "The West, States' Rights, and Conservation," 92.
29. Rakestraw, "The Northwest Conservationist," 55n.
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