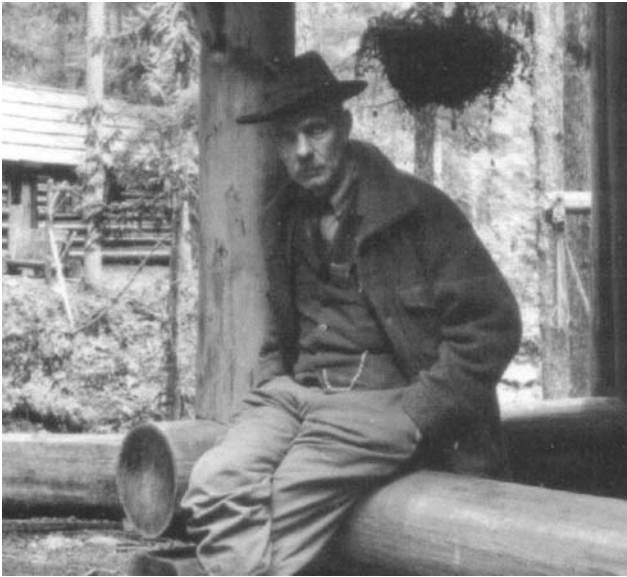


Gifford Pinchot National Forest: A Century Ago

The First Plan of Work

Lands now forming the Gifford Pinchot National Forest were originally part of the Mount Rainier Forest Reserve, established in 1897 under the Department of the Interior. In 1902, the Department of the Interior appointed Grenville F. Allen to the position of Supervisor of the Forest Reserve. Allen, previously employed by the U.S. Geological Survey, came to the new job with a background in engineering, logging, farming, and teaching in the public schools.

On February 1, 1905, President Theodore Roosevelt signed House Bill 8460, the Transfer Act. The act unified all Federal forest administration under the Department of Agriculture. Initially known as the Bureau of Forestry, the Forest Service was officially established as a new agency on July 1, 1905. With the Transfer Act, G.F. Allen became Forest Supervisor, reporting directly to Gifford Pinchot, chief of the Forest Service.



G.F. Allen Forest Supervisor - 1905

From his headquarters in Orting, Pierce County, Washington, Supervisor Allen wasted no time in preparing his first official plan of work, sent to Pinchot on February 1, 1905:

**Forestry Service, Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C.**

Plan of Work for the month of February, 1905, is herewith submitted.

Owing to weather conditions there is no particular danger of trespass. There is a possibility that the settlers in the Ahtanum Valley may cut fire wood or material for hop poles from the reserve, but the probability of their doing so is not sufficient to justify placing a ranger on duty in that district.

There seems to be one case of free use under way. No application has been made for the purchase of timber.

Applications for the grazing privilege for the season of 1905 were received from January 19 to January 26. The number of applicants for permits to graze sheep was considerably less than 1904 and it is thought that there will be no difficulty in so apportioning the 142,000 head allowed on this reserve as to provide pasturage for a reasonable number to each owner. I have not yet had the opportunity to ascertain the exact number of cattle applied for, but it is greatly in excess of the number allowed. There is no more pasturage adapted to the grazing of cattle on the reserve than is sufficient for the actual needs of the small owners whose holdings are in its vicinity. The demands of the numerous stockmen whose herds are wintered at a distance from 30 to 50 miles from the reserve and who have not in past seasons made use of it, to be now allowed to drive on bands of several hundred head to the injury of the range, should not be considered.

The approved applications will be forwarded at an early date. A few were received by mail and as some of these were unsigned or unintelligibly made out it will be necessary to return them for correction.

I have been notified by the Assistant U.S. Attorney for this district to appear before the grand jury at Tacoma on February 7 in the case of timber trespass against Mr. J.S. Siler.

Rangers Conrad and Randle will be employed in the construction of the Copper Creek Trail, along the Puyallup River. Ranger Schmitz will be on duty in the Cowlitz and Cispus Valleys. He will attend such business with the settlers as may be necessary and will continue work on the Cispus Trail. Ranger Cryder is expected to be off duty on leave of absence during the month of February.

There has been so far an unusually light snow fall on the west slope of the Cascades, but it is probable that during the next six weeks the weather will be so severe as to cause field work to be done at great disadvantage.

Very respectfully,

**G.F. Allen
Forest Supervisor**

Historical Notes:

- G.F. Allen's February 1905 letter is from *Records of the Office of Forest Reserves, 1904-07*, Record Group 95, Entry #44, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.
- At the time, the Forest Reserve included lands now administered by the Wenatchee National Forest, including the upper Ahtanum Valley mentioned in the letter.
- As the large numbers of stock indicate, grazing of both sheep and cattle was an important use of the Forest Reserve in 1905. By contrast, only 716 head of cattle are permitted on two remaining grazing allotments within the Gifford Pinchot National Forest today. Sheep grazing ended in the 1980s.