



# **Siuslaw National Forest** *Fun Facts*

June 2, 2008

## **As I Remember It: Life of an Early Forest Ranger**

*Note: C. P. Cronk came to the Siuslaw National Forest in the summer of 1910, serving first as a forest guard on the Hebo Ranger District, and later promoted to an Assistant Forest Ranger after successfully passing the Forest Ranger examination. In this excerpt from his memoirs, Cronk writes about the use of donkeys, the coastal trail system, and the condition (or lack) of roads on the Siuslaw NF in the early years.*

**T**his installment deals with a unique feature of the Siuslaw National Forest in 1910-1911 -- the use of donkeys for packing. Supervisor Cahoon [Forest Supervisor, Anson E. Cahoon, 1908-1913] promoted their use in those days of almost no roads, few trails and little pasturage.

On a rainy day about November 1, 1910, I made the acquaintance of two of my traveling companions, the mother May, and he daughter, Fanny. We started out of Eugene in style and ease, I riding May, Fanny trailing with my belongings stowed in panniers. This was my first acquaintance with the species. I found it highly educational; their actions unpredictable. . . .

We continued on toward the Coast as far as Indian Creek. Here I picked up the rest of the party, "Vic" the biggest and most even-tempered of our burros and "Bubbles," the jackass; smartest and smallest. These two had been used during the past field season to pack supplies to the trail along the backbone of the Coast Range from near Mapleton on the Siuslaw River to near Waldport on the Alsea River.

All burros seem to have a sense of humor. Unless led by a horse or bell mule they delight in exploring all side trails to the discomfort of their driver. Bubbles had learned that he would be given candy if he walked up the steps of the store in Florence.

One of the trail crew told a story of Supervisor Cahoon...

"When approaching the camp riding Bubbles quite properly, they reached a mud puddle when the burro lowered his head to the ground and the Supervisor slid off into the puddle, to the merriment of the crew assembled at the end of the day."

From the end of the ridge trail at the Corvallis-Waldport road we turned east, there being then no road along the Coast. From Corvallis we went north to Sheridan and along the road to Willamina to Dolph and Hebo, then up the main to the ranger station. This was approximately 225 miles and 22 days from Eugene.



. . . The burros were used to pack supplies to the planting crew on Mt. Hebo during the winter of 1910-11. . . . I took the two donkeys down to the Hebo store where, beside my duffel, I loaded on a mile of telephone wire, 25 brackets, 25 insulators and an extension bell.