

**Supplementary Report on
Wallowa Forest Reserve
Oregon**

by

M. L. Erickson, Assistant Forest Inspector

January 1907

January 21, 1907.

Erickson's Report — January 4, 1907.
Wallowa

Mr. H.K. O'Brien,
Wallowa, Oregon.

Dear Sir:

Enclosed for your information is a memorandum concerning the only special privilege case, Grande Ronde Electric Company, Ditch, 6/22/06, mentioned in the report of Mr. M. L. Erickson, dated January 4, 1907, upon the Wallowa Forest Reserve.

Please file this letter with your copy of Mr. Erickson's report, and file the memorandum with the Grande Ronde case.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) OVERTON W. PRICE
Associate Forester.

Enclosure.

January 21, 1907.

ERICKSON'S REPORT — JANUARY 4, 1907.

Wallowa

Grande Ronde Electric Co. – Ditch – 6/20/06

The agreement sent to the Supervisor on December 21, 1906 for execution by the Company has not been returned to this office. This agreement required the Company to pay for all timber cut at the rate of \$1.50 per M., and requires the Company (Clause 3) to cut timber and dispose of refuse as directed by the forest officers.

By a separate communication to be prepared in the office of Management the Supervisor will be fully instructed how to conduct the cutting and Timber Settlement.

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

WALLOWA FOREST RESERVE.

Erickson, Jany. 4, 1907.

Wallowa, Erickson, Jan. 4, 1907.

BOUNDARIES.

I would recommend that all that portion of Townships 7 South, Ranges 45, 46, and 47 East, outside of reserve be withdrawn from entry, pending examination for addition to the Wallowa Forest Reserve. Most of this territory is included within the Eagle Valley petition, which was gotten up by the people living in the vicinity. It was presented to the forester and had received the recommendation of Mr. O'Brien.

There is also a large timbered country known as the Grizzly Ridge, extending north of the Wallowa Reserve, between the Snake River and Imnaha River. It is an exceedingly rough country; it is deeply cut with steep canyons, forming sharp, razor-like ridges, as the spur from the main Grizzly Ridge. The tops of the ridges and the heads of streams are well timbered with lodge pole pine and red fir. The timber often extends on north slopes down to an altitude of 2000 feet. The top of the Ridge is between five and six thousand feet in elevation. Since there was much snow in this country and it was exceedingly dangerous and rough to travel through during the winter, I did not examine it; but I saw sufficient to warrant recommendation for an examination to add to the Wallowa. It is not agricultural land in the least. There are reported to be a few ranches on the Snake River side, probably a half dozen, and on the Imnaha River benches there are a few claims taken up. The probable boundary would be the Snake River on the east and north, and the range line between R. 48 and 49 East, on the west and bordering the Wallowa reserve as a southern boundary. As far as I could determine this township line would cut out most of the agricultural land on the Imnaha River benches, and yet include the timbered land and the rough, grazing country.

(Signed) M.L. ERICKSON
Asst. For. Insp.

January 19, 1907.

Mr. W. H. B. Kent,
Hotel Albany,
Denver, Colo.

Dear Kent:

I enclose a carbon copy of that portion of Erickson's report on the Wallowa, dated January 4, 1907, relating to Boundaries. A request has been made for the withdrawal of that portion of T. 7 S., R. 45, 46, and 47 W., which is outside of the reserve for an addition to the Wallowa, as recommended by Erickson. Will you please take up the matter of an examination of the Grizzly Ridge country extending north of the Wallowa Reserve, between the Snake River and Imnaha River described in Erickson's report? This country is unsurveyed.

Very sincerely yours,

(Signed) R. E. BENEDICT

In Charge.

Enclosure.

Wallowa, Erickson, Jan. 4, 1907.

PROTECTION.

Forest Fires.

Because of the nature of the forest which consists of small fir and lodge pole pine and also is characterized by considerable dead and down and other inflammable material, fires in the southwestern portion of the Wallowa Reserve are a great deal more dangerous than in the eastern portion of the reserve, and will require more careful patrol. Ranger Giffin has had two or three forest fires in his district, one of which was quite large, burning over one hundred acres. It is advisable to secure more efficient patrol for this district, and also to have better trails and more lookout stations.

Lookout Stations.

Mount Fanny will make an excellent lookout station, from which point Ranger Giffin says he can look over three-fourths of his district. There are also two or three other points on the reserve within Ranger Giffin's district which will be important lookout stations. The tops of these hills are bare and open, hence no provisions for seeing in all directions are necessary.

Trails.

A main trail should be constructed along the top of the divide between Minam River and the La Grande Valley. This trail will extend for a distance of about thirty miles from the head of Catherine Creek northwesterly to the edge of the reserve. It is quite necessary both in patrol and in examining grazing allotments to have this trail. From points along this trail, short ones could be constructed on either side to visit points either on the Minam River or in the La Grande Valley. The cost of the construction of this trail will not involve much expense for powder since very little rock work will be necessary. The trail will follow the open divide as close as possible, and the greatest expense will be in clearing and grading. Outside of Forest Ranger help I would estimate the cost not to exceed \$100.

Telephones.

It seems that some better system of communication to the Supervisor's office at Wallowa should be secured. There are no telephone lines from any part of the interior of the reserve, except from Cornucopia, which necessitates a forest officer traveling outside of the reserve in order to secure telephone communication. I have already recommended in a previous report the construction of a telephone line from Cornucopia across the mountain to Joseph. I likewise recommend another line to extend from a point about in the vicinity of the mouth of the North Fork of Minam River down the river to the canyon house at the mouth of the Minam River. This is a distance of approximately twenty miles. It will afford a very direct means of reaching the

Supervisor's office at Wallowa from the very heart of the reserve. The connections at Canyon House will be with the Pacific States Telephone Company, and arrangements for the joint use of the two lines with the Pacific States Telephone Company should be arranged without extra charge when used by forest officers.

From Cove by the way of Mount Fanny to the mouth of the North Fork of Minam to connect with this line already proposed, I would recommend the construction of another line. This is a distance of less than ten miles across the country, and will be a very important telephone line, since it will afford direct communication from Giffin's headquarters and also from the lookout station on Mount Fanny.

Costs: I figure that in the construction of these telephone lines, wires can be strung from tree to tree, care being exercised to avoid placing on trees that are likely to fall during the first storm, and in every way to make an attempt at permanency as far as possible. I do not advise the setting of posts in the ground since the nature of the country is too rocky, and also the great cost and length of time required in constructing the line.

The cost of telephone wire will be approximately \$5 per mile. The instruments can probably be secured for \$25 each. This would make a cost of \$150 for wire and \$50 for instruments, not counting the cost of ranger labor.

PERSONNEL.

Assistant Forest Ranger Marshall Giffin:

I have recommended that Giffin be promoted to deputy Forest Ranger at \$1100 per annum, which was verified by wire to take effect January 1, 1907. Mr. Giffin passed the civil service examination for ranger, and was placed on duty January 1, 1906. He has proved to be a very efficient forest officer, and has done careful work. Mr. Giffin is just forty years of age, but retains his strength and vitality remarkably well. He appears more to be thirty years of age. His former experience has been mining and ranching in the Blue Mountains. He has, however, just sold his ranch there and now has no interests other than his position as ranger. He is a very hard worker, very faithful, conscientious and careful; so decidedly conscientious and scrupulous that his manners often embarrass others. Small favors, such as horse feed or a meal in a sheep herder's camp he will not accept gratis. He believes that by so doing he will be placed under some sort of obligation to them, and as a result he offends rather than pleases people who wish to accommodate him, as is the custom in the western country. In this respect he hardly uses sufficient tact. He could get on with people much better if he was not so doggedly insistent upon adhering to set principles. He is inclined to interpret the Use Book too literally, and as a consequence has got into several minor complications, but which have not resulted in anything further than a slight ill-feeling resulting between himself and parties with whom he had dealings. Because he is very strict in the enforcement of the regulations, many of the residents were somewhat adverse to Forest Reserves, but as it has worked out now, there are very few who cannot clearly see the

benefits both immediate and in the future resulting from the administration of the Forest Reserve; some even are complimenting him on his thorough work. Mr. Giffin does very thorough work, and is very much enthused over his position as Forest Ranger. He has provided himself with every convenience and necessity that he knows of and can afford. Among his effects he has a pair of expensive binocular field glasses for use in discovering forest fires; he also plans on purchasing a \$90 typewriter for use in his office, as he calls it, located at Cove. In my mind, he is the kind of man that is going to inspire the people with more confidence in our Forest Reserves. Mr. Giffin is fairly well educated, he writes a good report, and uses fair judgement in his recommendations. He is too prone, however, to take up small points, and is very apt to take notes of a man's statements whether he has any necessity for so doing or not. He has even meddled with the affairs of people in their business outside of the reserve; for example, investigating the validity of their claims. All these matters he will report to the Supervisor, most of which are overlooked. However, I think Giffin is overcoming this trait quite largely. I think Giffin will make an excellent forest ranger and when he gets over some of his peculiar ideas he may develop into supervisor material. He will at any rate reach the ranger grade.

Since there is greater danger of forest fires in this district than I expected before making the examination, and also much improvement work in the nature of trail building and telephone line construction which will be required I recommend that an additional forest guard be assigned to the Wallowa Forest Reserve. This guard should be stationed at the head of Catherine Creek and worked in connection with Ranger Black and Ranger Giffin. There is considerable work in the way of grazing allotments, also, to care for in this part of the reserve. He should go on duty May 15th, and serve a period of six months.

This will make a total of nine men for the Wallowa Forest Reserve, which I recommend to be allowed.

(Signed) M.L. ERICKSON
Assistant Forest Inspector.

Recommendations.

1. Build a main trail along the divide between Minam River and La Grande Valley from head of Catherine Creek northwest to edge of reserve.
2. Build additional trails, short ones, from this main trail to points on Minam River and La Grande Valley.
3. Construct a telephone line from mouth of North Fork of Minam River down Minam River to Canyon House.

4. Construct another line from Cove via Mount Fanny to mouth of North Fork of Minam River to connect with proposed line (Rec. No. 3).
5. An additional guard for the Wallowa Reserve, making a total ranger force of nine men for summer season.

March 4, 1907.

Mr. H. K. O'Brien,
Wallowa, Oregon.

Dear Sir:

I enclose extracts from Assistant Forest Inspector Erickson's report on the Chesnimnus and Wallowa Reserves. He makes a number of recommendations in regard to the construction of trails, cabin, telephone lines, &c., which I would like to see carried out. Lack of funds prevents the increase of your present letter of authorization, but I hope you will be able to accomplish a good deal with the funds now at your disposal. It is expected that a large sum will be available after July 1, for improvement work on these reserves and I wish you would carefully consider Mr. Erickson's recommendations in your annual estimate.

Mr. Erickson reports that you have been very successful in the administration of these two reserves and I want to thank both you and your rangers for the excellent work done. I hope you will soon be able to secure a good clerk for your office and that I can assign a Technical Assistant to you on July 1. You should then find it possible to get into the field more frequently and give the work your personal supervision.

I am very glad to note that you have been able to afford protection to the game on your reserves, and I am highly pleased to hear of Ranger McClain's exploit in keeping the Indians out. Do the rangers hold appointments as Game Wardens? If not, I suggest that you take up the matter with the proper authorities, for I am convinced that the game if protected will in time prove very valuable to the adjacent community, owing to the amount of tourist travel which it will bring in.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) OVERTON W. PRICE
Associate Forester.

Enclosure.

Wallowa, Erickson, Jan. 4, 1907.

TIMBER SALES.

Free Use.

Ranger Giffin has located several free use areas in the vicinity of Cove in this part of the Wallowa Forest Reserve, and has cared for a great many free use applicants. The timber in this part of the reserve is mostly mature yellow pine and a great deal of lodge pole, tamarack and fir. There are a few areas of dead standing timber which makes excellent fuel for the settlers. The free use work carried on in this district is done very excellently. Material is fully utilized, and all down material is cleaned up as far as possible. Even dead material already fallen and partly decayed is largely utilized in connection with the sound wood. The brush is piled very carefully. In the matter of brush piling Ranger Giffin has made good use of his experience, and has a method of piling the brush which will in all cases insure a clean burn. The principle involved in this method of brush piling is to lay the butt ends of branches side by side, but alternating the direction of the tops. The center of the pile then will be made up of the larger portion of the branches piled very closely together. The limbs are not crossed, since this does not form a compact pile. Therefore, the brush would be interlaced more or less and the leaves and branchlets would be on the exterior of the pile while all the large material would be in the middle of the pile which when once fired causes a fierce heat, resulting in all the material being burned thoroughly.

The stand of timber on the Wallowa reserve would be very difficult to arrive at. The percentage of barren land is great, and also the scattered growth on some of the more exposed hillsides, while a dense growth exists in the ravines and on north slopes. The variation in the types is extreme and frequent. It is impossible to arrive at any definite statement without a very careful study of the forest and the types in the reserve. A conservative statement would be to say that eight hundred million feet of merchantable timber exists on the Wallowa Forest Reserve.

(Signed) M. L. ERICKSON
Asst. Forest Insp.

(Copy.)

February 8, 1907.

Grande Ronde Electric Co. (Ditch)
June 12, 1906.

Timber Settlement.
Wallowa.

Mr. Howard K. O'Brien,
Wallowa, Oregon.

Dear Sir:

Assistant Forest Inspector Erickson in his report on privileges, a copy of which has already been sent you, discussed this case.

The agreement specifies the rates to be paid for the timber and the duplicate letter of transmittal for \$146.90 has been received. The deposit, however, has not been made. Since the agreement also provides for the cutting of timber and the disposal of the refuse as directed by the forest officers, you should require that the cutting be cleaned up thoroughly. The trees which were felled down hill and the tops of which were scattered in the brush should be lopped and all branches piled, but unless you consider it necessary you need not require that the Company cut up the trees into logs or move them. You should require that the Company leave their right of way in good condition as a protection against fire, requiring them to skid the logs if you consider it necessary.

Since the Company is to pay for this timber, it will have title to it and the Forest Service has no right to adopt Mr. Erickson's recommendation that the timber be either sold or given away under the free use privileges, unless the Company should give written consent to such disposal.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) OVERTON W. PRICE
Associate Forester.

Erickson. Jan. 4, 1907.

PRIVILEGES.

The Grande Ronde Electric Company.
June 12, 1906.

Ditch.
Wallowa Reserve.

This case was reported by Marshall Giffin toward the middle of summer. This was news to Mr. O'Brien who had not any information that work was being done by this company on the reserve. He requested Ranger Giffin to make a report on the case, which was done October 15, 1906. Meantime, Mr. O'Brien referred the matter to the Forester. He had supposed that the Grande Ronde Electric Company possessed a permit from the Department of the Interior for this privilege. The Forester instructed that, although this was a trespass, the company manifested the proper spirit in expressing a desire to immediately make out an application and comply with all rules and regulations of Forest Reserves, and the case would pass, and the company allowed to make its application in the ordinary way and secure a permit. In respect to the nature of the trespass, what is known as Ditch No. 1 was surveyed in October 1904, and the construction was completed in November, 1904. Ditch No. 2 was surveyed earlier, and the construction work was done in July and August, 1905. This information is through Mr. Giffin from the authority of Mrs. Wade, who boarded the surveyors and crew at the time the work was being carried on.

The application submitted by the Grande Ronde Electric Company specifies a right of way fifty feet wide, to be used for the ditch which has already been constructed, being three feet wide on the bottom and two feet wide on top, located on Mill Creek, and is known as Ditch No. 1. It begins at the northeast quarter of the northeast quarter of Section 20, Township 3 South, Range 41, East, and extends 7910 feet westerly to the intake of the pipe line, which is about one-fourth mile through the reserve. The Mill Creek Ditch No. 2 which is already constructed begins at the S.E. 1/4 of the N.E. 1/4 of Section 19, and extends southerly to the head of Mill Creek, a distance of 5229 feet, all within the reserve. The purpose of this privilege is to generate, by diverting the course of streams, electric power for light in La Grande Valley and the towns of Cove, La Grande and Union. A projected proposition involves the factor of furnishing water for irrigation purposes in the La Grande Valley.

Report on the claim shows that it passes over but one valid claim which is a tract of 60 acres situated in Lot No. 1 S.W. 1/4 of Section 19, and which the company now owns. Instead of 50 foot right of way, it is reported that a 30 foot right of way is sufficiently wide; 15 feet on the lower side of the ditch has already been cleared. The ditch passes through both open and timbered country. From the lower side of the ditch to a width of 15 feet there has already been cut 48,968 feet. There is an equal amount standing on the upper side of the ditch.

The recommendations in this report are that the company be required to pay for all timber used in construction and to pay for all the remaining timber standing within the 30 foot right of way. All timber hereafter cut should be piled and burned so as to clear right of way. Since a bridge 90 feet wide has already been constructed over the main cattle drive-way to afford a passage over the ditch for the stock, there is no further recommendation for this accommodation since stock do not ordinarily cross the ditch at other places than where the bridge is located.

In Supervisor O'Brien's letter to the Forester he recommends charge of \$2.00 per thousand for all tamarack and red fir, and \$1.50 per thousand for yellow pine and spruce and \$1.00 per thousand for white fir, and 70 cents per thousand for dead material. I approve of these stumpage values. The total amount of timber of all sorts both live and dead cut and standing on the right of way, amounts to 97,936 feet B.M. About 9500 is dead material. This estimate also includes about 300 feet of abandoned right of way from which the timber was cut. Mr. O'Brien also recommended the cleaning up of all the tops, lops and rubbish left from the cutting. As a whole I approve his report.

I found upon examination of the privilege that the trees cut in the construction without having a permit are in undesirable condition. All the trees were felled down hill in every case, and the tops of course were scattered in the brush below. Many large merchantable trees felled in this manner and left as a result of this cutting, will be quite impossible to utilize, because of the difficulty in getting them out. The logs and fallen trees that were utilized is an insignificant amount. Only some small material was used for covering the top of the ditch.

Recommendations in Addition to O'Brien's Report.

I recommend that the fallen trees be converted into logs 16 feet in length, that the limbs and tops be cleaned up and piled compactly in the more open places, and that the logs be banked in convenient places alongside the ditch so that they may be utilized by forest officers or by others, either by sale or gift. It may be necessary to clear out and construct a wagon road to secure a part of this timber, since it has fallen in very bad locations. It is doubtful in my mind whether a complete utilization of this material can now be secured; at any rate, I advise the working up of it by the company. Considerable of the material is small, consisting of lodge pole pine, white fir and small spruce. This is of no commercial value and should be worked up and piled so as to burn clean.

(Signed) M.L. ERICKSON
Asst. For. Insp.