

U
WASHINGTON - Columbia
Cedar Flats Natural Area
(Proposed)

REPORT ON CEDAR FLATS NATURAL AREA (PROPOSED)

I. Description

This area is located within the boundaries of the Columbia National Forest in the State of Washington, in the E¹/₂ Section 11, that portion of Section 12 lying west of the Muddy River and that portion of E¹/₂ Section 13 lying west of the Muddy River, T. 7 N., R. 6 E., W.M. This includes approximately 600 acres all of which is National Forest land.

The area as described is recommended on the basis of a recent comprehensive reconnaissance and eliminates that portion of Sections 12 and 13 lying east of the Muddy River, which was previously considered for inclusion in the area.

II. Special Features

The dominant feature of this area is a dense old growth stand of western redcedar (*Thuja plicata*) of approximately 220 acres in extent. The trees contained within the stand are fine examples of a species that was once plentiful throughout the Northwest, but because of its high commercial value and nature of growing in the moist accessible valleys, is rapidly being depleted. The trees are of average size for this species, ranging from three to ten feet in diameter and are of excellent form. Quality is average and although windfalls indicate that many of the trees contain interior trunk rot, it is seldom reflected in the outward appearance of the trees and will have very little effect on the longevity of the stand as a whole. The density of the stand is indicated by the fact that individual acres within the pure cedar type often subtend as high as thirty stems with a gross volume exceeding 200,000 board feet. Average net volume for the pure cedar type averages 110,000 board feet per acre.

In addition to the cedar there is approximately 400 acres of old growth Douglas-fir type consisting largely of large high quality Douglas-fir trees representing some of the finest examples of this species to be found in the Northwest. Size ranges up to ten feet in diameter. There is a variety of age classes represented on the area but the majority of the trees are in the large diameter class. This type surrounds the cedar type and blends into it at the edges. Most of the Douglas-fir on the west and south is very decadent and the stand is in a state of transition into a hemlock and silver fir type. Most of the trees are very defective and the numerous snags and windfalls indicate that this part of the type will be very short lived. The remainder of this type on the north and east sides of the area is comparable in size and age but is thrifty and relatively free of defect and can be expected to remain in this natural state for many years.

Minor species on the area include western hemlock, Pacific silver fir, grand fir, western white pine and western yew. These represent a very small percentage of the total volume of the stand and none are outstanding examples of their species. They exist largely as an understory or as individual trees in mixture with the major types. Regardless of their quality, they will make a desirable contribution to the area from a naturalist's point of view.

Shrubs and deciduous tree species on the area include black cottonwood, Oregon crab apple, vine maple, broadleaf maple, red alder, western dogwood, creek dogwood, bitter cherry and cascara.

A dense stand of tall lady fern covers most of the open moist sites with some maidenhair fern on the moist stream banks. This, with the dense understory of vine maple and other vegetation, lends a jungle-like atmosphere to the cedar type.

The area is now accessible by a good horse trail extending from road terminal at Spirit Lake and Lewis River. Distance from the Lewis River Road is nine and one-half miles which is the easiest and shortest route. Construction of a forest highway to within two and one-half miles can be predicted for the very near future, and a road directly to or across the area will follow as logging proceeds onto adjacent land. The existing trail runs north and south through the central part of the area and through the most outstanding part of the cedar type.

III. Physical Conditions

Elevation ranges from 1,200 feet adjacent to the Muddy River to 2,000 feet in the extreme northwest corner.

For the most part, the topography consists of a series of benches beginning at river level and extending to the foot of a ridge along the northwest side. About half of the area, which includes the cedar type, is almost level being broken only by a couple of small stream courses.

IV. Wildlife

Indications are that there is very little permanent big game on the area. This is due to the lack of desirable forage for the deer, elk and bear that are native to the surrounding country. However it is used extensively as part of the late fall or winter range for the deer and elk which are probably followed by predators such as cougar, coyotes, and wildcats. Bear use the swamp area for spring forage and hunt salmon along the Muddy River during the fall. It is possible that a few hibernate on the area during the winter. There are no indications of game birds. The Muddy River, which is suggested as the east boundary of the area, abounds with native trout and also supports two annual salmon runs. Other wildlife is limited to native birds and a few furbearers such as marten, weasel and civit cats which inhabit the area occasionally, and mink, otter and beaver which travel or live adjacent to the river.

V. Present Occupancy

There are no people living on the area and outside of the trail no development exists. A trail shelter about one-half mile north of the proposed area is the only structure within several miles. There are no mining claims or other restrictions.

VI. Value for Natural Area versus Value for Other Uses

Timber volume on the proposed area includes 24,000 M board feet of western redcedar, 16,500 M board feet of Douglas-fir, 1,520 M board

feet of western hemlock, 600 M board feet of Pacific silver fir, 80 M board feet of grand fir, and 180 M board feet of western white pine, or a total of 47,000 M board feet.

Upon the development of a transportation system, this volume of timber could be expected to have a stumpage value of \$210,000. This represents a high value, but since the Lewis River watershed subtends a total loggable timber volume of 6,800,000 M board feet, the amount of timber that would be set aside in this proposed area would have little or no bearing on economic or social values that might be derived from commodity use.

A true value of this area cannot be realized until such time as it is made more accessible by roads and the virgin stands of timber in the Northwest have been largely depleted. Then it will stand out as a fitting monument to the vast stands and types of timber that were the heritage of this nation. Combined with the planned recreational development along the adjacent Muddy River this will be a Mecca for nature lovers from far and near. It will also provide a valuable forest laboratory where tree characteristics and ecological changes can be accurately observed.

Such use will not contribute any monetary returns to the Forest Service but it should have a profound influence on the amount of transient trade that will be experienced by adjacent communities and private accommodations that will eventually be developed on private lands along the route of travel into the area.

It is anticipated that after the existing old growth trees have served the purpose for which they have been set aside and have deteriorated to the extent that they no longer present a natural or scientific attraction, possibly a portion of the volume can be salvaged so as to minimize the loss in commodity value and realize the full benefits that can be derived from the stand.

From the people who have seen this stand and from those who know of its existence, there has always been an expression of hope that this body of cedar could be preserved from cutting. It is felt that this can be considered ample proof that public sentiment is in favor of the establishment of this natural area.

VII. Recommendations

It was originally recommended that all of Section 12 and all of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 13 be included in this area which would have made a total of 1,120 acres. However, after a more thorough examination it was found that all of the area to be included east of the Muddy River subtends a heavy volume of decadent old growth Douglas-fir and associate species with a stumpage value of approximately \$95,000. In addition the topography is steep and the river limits accessibility. It is felt that this part of the area is much more valuable and adaptable for timber production with reservations for recreational use and it is very probable that this would eliminate the need for a road through the proposed natural area. In addition, the Muddy River will act as an excellent fire break. The prospects of heavy recreational use along the river, and especially near the junction of Clear Creek and the Muddy, both of which provide excellent fishing, cannot be disregarded. Therefore ample provision should be made for this without subjecting it to the restrictions that would be imposed by extension of the natural area.

It is recommended that the private land in the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 14 be acquired and added to round out the area and complete a buffer strip along the south side of the main body of cedar. However, reservations should be made to salvage the large volume of high quality Douglas-fir snags, windfalls and spike tops on this and that part of Section 13, included in the area.

Since none of the cedar type is involved this would not affect its value as a buffer strip and would not detract from the area as a whole. This would forestall any criticisms of leaving this valuable timber to rot without putting it to a beneficial use.

While it is felt that exclusion of the area east of the Muddy will eliminate the need for a timber access road through the proposed area, reservations should be made for such a road until such time as logging plans for both the adjacent private and Forest Service lands are developed.

If such a road is needed, it should be restricted to a location along the foot of the slope on the west side of the area with no development permitted through the main body of the cedar.

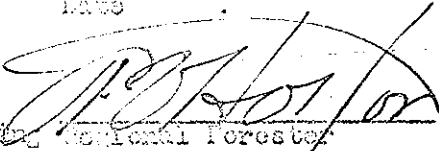
Prepared by:

(s) H. V. Hall
Forester

Approved:

K. P. Cecil
Forest Supervisor

November 26, 1945
Date


Acting Regional Forester

February 4, 1946
Date

-i-EIK /s/ Lyle F. Watts
-i-CLG Chief

March 14, 1946
Date

By virtue of the authority vested in me by Regulation U-4 (251.23 CFR) of the Secretary of Agriculture, I do hereby designate as the CEDAR PLATS NATURAL AREA the lands described in a report dated November 26, 1946, by K. P. Cecil, Forest Supervisor; said area shall hereafter be administered as a Natural Area, subject to the provisions of said regulation and the instructions thereunder.

March 14, 1946
Date

/s/ Lyle F. Watts
Chief, Forest Service

M A P

Legend



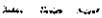
Proposed Natural Area



Proposed Acquisition and Addition



Existing Access Roads





Proposed Forest Highway

CEDAR FLATS
NATURAL AREA
(PROPOSED)

Scale - 1" = 1 Mile

LEGEND






-  Boundary Proposed Area
-  Boundary Proposed Acquisition

114.000

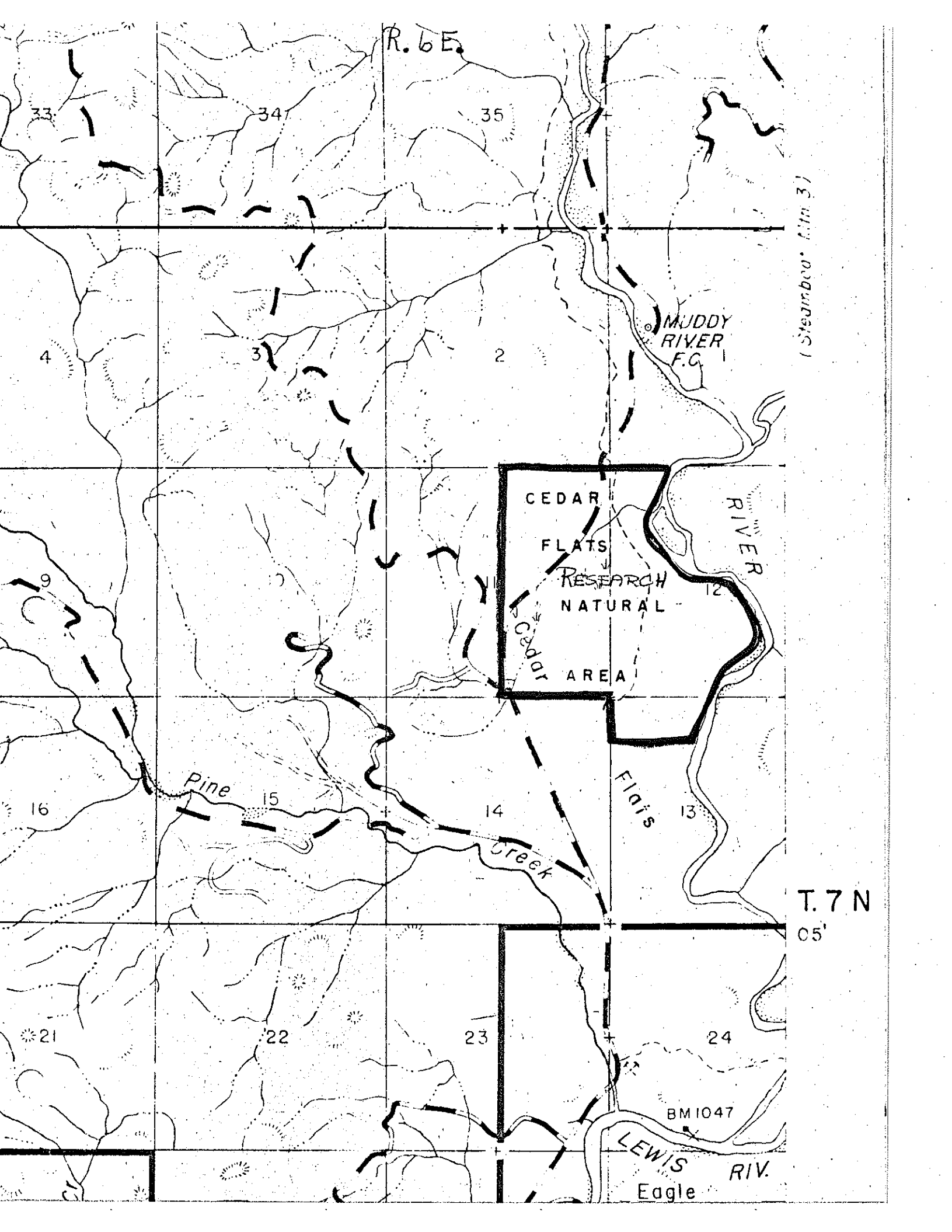


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TIMBER TYPE LEGEND

-  D5 Douglas fir mature
-  D4 Douglas fir large second growth
-  Cedar (mature)
-  Hardwoods
-  Swamp

7700 1145



R. 6 E.

(Steambed. 1/11/3)

Muddy River F.G.

CEDAR
FLATS
RESEARCH
NATURAL
AREA

RIVER

Pine

Creek

Flats

T. 7 N

05'

BM1047

LEWIS RIV.
Eagle