

February 24, 1931

REPORT ON PROPOSED METOLIUS NATURAL AREA
TO BE WITHDRAWN UNDER REGULATION L-20

Following are the data called for under (b) in the "Procedures" paragraph, page 5 of the instructions appended to circular letter L-44, 975 of May 11, 1929. The paragraph numbering is taken from pages 52 and 53-L in the Manual.

1. (a) $W\frac{1}{2}$ Sec. 25, $E\frac{1}{2}$ and $E\frac{1}{2}W\frac{1}{2}$ Sec. 26, $N\frac{1}{2}$ Sec. 35, and $W\frac{1}{2}$ Sec. 36, all in T 12 S, R 9 E, W.M.

(b) This area lies within the Metolius river watershed about five miles below its visible source, occupying land on east side of said river.

(c) The above sections are regular, hence the total acreage is 1440.

4. (a) All excepting about 125 acres is considered as of the western yellow pine type. About $\frac{1}{3}$ of this type is on steeper ground than typical of the best stands of this species in the Deschutes forest. Approximately 650 acres now carry commercial stands. None of the area has been cut over, excepting for very narrow clearings for old roads.

(b) The noncommercial areas aggregate about 800 acres, most of which is on a rather steep slope two miles long by a little more than one-half mile wide along the east side. In the southeast corner of the tract, well up a rather steep slope, is about 125 acres of the mixed Douglas fir-white fir-western larch type, partly merchantable but not so classified at present from the practical logging standpoint.

(c) The latter could easily be considered as "woodland bearing commercial stands", if not truly commercial under present day demands.

(f) The 125 acres of mixed type is not considered merchantable at the present time because of inaccessibility, light stand and a preponderance of inferior species.

(1) Most of the tract has been burned over at one time or another, but none is actually barren. The most seriously affected portion is the steep slope along the east side, where the bulk of reproduction is yellow pine.

5. (a) Elevations range from 2800 to 4300 feet above sea level.

(b) The topography is rather simple, consisting of a low bench of almost level land nearly a half-mile wide, changing at first rather gradually and then more sharply to a decided but quite regular

slope. The slopes are, however, of the yellow pine type, typical of the more rolling or rougher areas of that species within the Deschutes Forest.

(c) The soil is mostly of volcanic origin, partially decomposed pumice, forming a sort of sandy loam with a high humus content on the lower levels but changing to a coarse pumice with very little humus and much broken rock on the higher slopes and ridges.

(d) No weather records are maintained on the Metolius, but the annual precipitation is higher than at Bend, probably between 15 and 20 inches.

(e) Temperatures range from about 10 below zero to nearly 100 degrees.

(b) Frost may occur occasionally in the summer months, but as a rule, July and August are entirely free in this respect. The growing season, however, is generally quite short.

6. (a) Over 90 per cent of this tract is of the western yellow pine type, the balance being of the mixed Douglas fir-white fir-larch type with incense cedar sprinkled in throughout both types. The main bench or flat area just east of the river is of mature yellow pine, generally in good condition, and occupies about two-thirds of the entire yellow pine type. The remainder of this species is immature growth of varying ages, being natural reproduction subsequent to extensive fires, and occupying quite steep slopes.

(b) According to a cruise in 1913 by a party working under direction of Fred Matz, the following estimates of the different merchantable timber species is possible: western yellow pine 12,206,000 feet B.M., Douglas fir 1,152,000, incense cedar 232,000, western larch 4,000, and grand fir 10,000, or a total for all species of 13,604,000 feet B.M.

(c) Of the 1440 acres within this entire area less than half is considered as carrying merchantable timber. The balance of the area is noncommercial, partly because of high steep slope and partly due to a bad fire history. The yellow pine is, of course, the most valuable species and is generally of very good quality, although sprinkled here and there with old spike tops.

(d) Although not covering the headwaters or beds of any visible creeks, all of the timbered area no doubt has some favorable influence on maintenance of the banks of the Metolius River and prevention of soil wash. The latter is particularly important along the steep slope extending up to Green Ridge.

(e) Practically the entire area, excepting under the denser groups of mature yellow pine, is covered with reproduction sufficient for a complete stand. This is principally yellow pine with some of the fir species and incense cedar along the upper slope and top of Green Ridge.

(f) There are no fresh burns within this Reserve, the old burned-over slope being now well restocked.

(g) The area is conveniently located for practical forest management so far as concerns topography and accessibility. However, it can very easily be reserved from timber sale operations because of its location adjoining the Metolius River recreation strip, and because said strip embraces practically all of the merchantable size timber beyond this proposed Reserve down river to the north forest boundary.

(h) At present no use is made of the timber on this area.

7. (a) This proposed natural area embraces no land in cultivation.

(b) None of said acreage is susceptible of cultivation unless the mature timber should be removed. Even in such event the soil is too light and porous and the growing season too short for successful agriculture. The climate is suitable for the growing of such hardy crops as hay, but there is plenty of private land already cleared to answer local needs.

8. (a) No live stock is grazed on this area, excepting such cattle as wander along the river during the fall round-up.

9. (a) and (b) There is no mineral present nor prospective on this proposed natural area.

10. (a) This area embraces no water power streams.

(b) The land lays too high and too distant from agricultural areas to possess any reservoir possibilities from an irrigation standpoint.

(c) While it is well situated in the interest of public recreation, this prospective natural area is too far back of the river and road to involve any valuable summer home or camp site ground. A recreation plan has already been developed for a stretch of nine miles up and down river from this area, and it is believed that this plan embraces ample ground for future needs as far as can now be anticipated. The proposed natural area includes no particularly valuable features from a recreational standpoint.

(d) There is no other present or likely future use with which this area will seriously interfere if set aside and fenced.

12. A very good forest road follows the east bank of the Metolius River, making this area readily accessible by automobile except during deep snows. It is about 18 miles northwest of Sisters, or 40 miles from Bend. The Metolius River is not navigable to boat travel from below, and there is only a very poor trail down river from the end of the road four miles to the north.

13. The public has not been consulted in regard to this proposed natural area: excepting for a couple of news items in the Bend paper outlining our local recommendations and purpose. There is no reason, however, to anticipate the slightest objection. On the other hand, I believe the sentiment will be highly favorable after the idea and location become better known. There should be no occasion for harmful trespass or abuse if it is decided to fence this area to better preserve natural, uninterrupted conditions. It is furthermore quite accessible for protection from fire. Neat signs explaining the purpose of the reservation should, of course, be appropriately provided, particularly if or when fenced.

Revised from letter of R. L. Fromme,
Forest Supervisor, of December 31, 1929
by Thornton T. Munger, Director

Approved:

CAEL B. NEAL
Forest Supervisor
March 2, 1931

Approved: Mar 10/31 T T Munger Director

Mar 23/31
Approved: E. W. Karamagh Regional Forester