

Excerpt from a Brief History of The Boone and Crockett Club

A group of men was working on forestry matters. These were E. A. Bowers, B.E. Fernow and F. H. Newell - members of the American Forestry Association's Executive Committee - and they were active in the Interior Department and in Congress. Mr. Bowers was Secretary of the American Forestry Association in 1889-1891, and was appointed in 1893 Assistant Commissioner of the General Land Office; Fernow was Chief of the Division of Forestry of the Agricultural Department, and Newell was connected with the Geological Survey. Fernow as an educated forester and the father of many bills to conserve the forests of the public domain; Bowers and Newell were familiar with the West and with the dangers that threatened the forest there. Devoted to this work, they drafted a number of bills, which they submitted to Congress, frequently appearing before committees, urging that action should be taken to protect the forests.

In 1887 William Hallett Phillips, a member of the Club, had succeeded in interesting Mr. Lamar, Secretary of the Interior, and a number of Congressmen, in the forests; and gradually all these persons began to work together. At the close of the first Cleveland Administration, while no legislation had been secured looking toward forest protection, a number of men in Washington had come to feel an interest in the subject. Some of the bills introduced in Congress passed one House and some the other, and finally one; the McCrea bill, so-called, passed both Houses, but did not reach the Conference Committee. Finally, on March 3, 1891, was passed the bill on which our national forest system is based, entitled 'An Act to Repeal Timber Culture Laws and for other Purposes. The meat of the bill, so far as forestry matters are concerned is found in its Section 24, which seems to have originally been introduced in the Senate by the late Cushman K. Davis, of Minnesota, as a bill of a single section. It reads: 'That the President of the United States may, from time to time, set apart and reserve in any state or Territory having public lands bearing forests, any part of the public lands, wholly or in part covered with timber or undergrowth, whether of commercial value or not, as public reservations, and the President shall, by public proclamation, declare the establishment of such reservations and the limits thereof.'

The Act of March 3, 1891, was the result of a compromise. It had come over from the House to the Senate as a bill of a single section to repeal the Timber Culture law. Senator Pettigrew, then a member of the Public Lands Committee, states that the bill was amended in the Senate Committee by the addition of twenty-three other sections, of which the one providing for the establishment of forest reserves, was the last.

Gen. John W. Noble was then Secretary of the Interior, a man of the loftiest and broadest views and heartily in sympathy with the efforts to protect the forests. He induced President Harrison to sign the bill, and later, to set aside the first United States forest reserves, the earliest one being the Yellowstone Park Timber Reserve to the east and south of the Yellowstone Park. This was designed to further protect the Yellowstone Park, and Mr. Noble in determining the boundaries of this new reservation consulted Mr. Hague, whose knowledge of the matter was

greater than that of any other man. When the Presidential proclamation establishing the reservation appeared, the boundaries were defined in the language used in Mr. Hague's recommendation to Mr. Noble.

"The Boone and Crockett Club was quick to acknowledge Secretary Noble's first acts under the new law, for at a meeting of the Boone and Crockett Club, held April 8, 1891, it was, on motion of W. H. Phillips, seconded by Arnold Hague,

'Resolved, That this Society most heartily thank the President of the United States and the Honorable John W. Noble, Secretary of the Interior, for having set apart, as a forest reserve, the large tract situated in Wyoming, at the head waters of the Yellowstone and Snake Rivers, and for having set apart the Sequoia Park, for the preservation of the great trees of the Pacific Slope.

'That this Society recognizes in these actions the most important steps taken of recent years for the preservation of our forests and measures which confer the greatest benefits on the people of the adjacent States. 'Resolved, that copies of this resolution be sent to the President of the United States and the Honorable the Secretary of the Interior

'By the President of the Club: The Honorable Theodore Roosevelt.'

Source: A Brief History of the Boone and Crockett Club; published in 1910, George Bird Grinnell