

Stokes Nature Center
History & Lore of Logan Canyon Podcast Series
A Growing National Forest

The protected area that includes Logan Canyon has grown and changed names many times. In 1903, the Logan Forest Reserve was created by presidential proclamation and covered 107,540 acres. It and other forest reserves across the nation were under the jurisdiction of the Interior Department's General Land Office.

Two years after the Logan Forest Reserve was established, Gifford Pinchot, Chief of the Bureau of Forestry at the Department of Agriculture, transferred all forest reserves to his agency and then renamed it the Forest Service. While in office, Pinchot brought millions of acres of land under forest reserve status. The reserve system across the country tripled from 56 million acres in 1905 to 172 million acres in 1910. This is roughly twice the size of the state of Utah. At this time, the Logan Forest Reserve was expanded and renamed the Bear River Forest Reserve. It now included most of the Bear River Mountains up to Soda Springs, Idaho.

William Weld Clark, Forest Supervisor for a short time, reported in 1907 the public opinion of Rich County residents to the growth of the protected forest region. “The attitude of the users and neighbors of this Forest is on the whole very friendly and favorable. There are still plenty of kickers who are to be found in all communities and are constitutionally opposed to any regulation by which they are required to ask for something that they have been in the habit of obtaining without consulting anyone.”

Pinchot didn't like the term “forest reserve.” He thought it gave the impression that the forests were set aside and not meant to be used. But in fact, forest reserves have always been meant to have multiple uses, from grazing and timber harvest in moderation to recreational opportunities, as well as protecting the forests for future generations. To emphasize the idea of utility, Pinchot changed “forest reserves” to “national forests.” Thus, the Bear River Forest Reserve became the Bear River National Forest.

In 1908, the Bear River National Forest was split. A portion of the Idaho lands were transferred to the Pocatello National Forest, and the remaining area was renamed the Cache National Forest. Over the years, the Cache National Forest transformed many times, as lands were added and subtracted. Notably, in 1915 the Pocatello National Forest was eliminated, and its lands transferred to the Cache National Forest.

Then in 1973, in an effort to consolidate management, Cache National Forest merged with neighboring Wasatch National Forest. Idaho lands were transferred to the Caribou National Forest. The result was the Wasatch-Cache National Forest.

The most recent change occurred in August, 2007. The Uinta National Forest was merged with the Wasatch-Cache to create the current Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest. The forest covers nearly 2.1 million acres, or nearly 4% of Utah's total area and is one of the most frequently visited national forests in the nation.

References:

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