VIEWS

FROM THE

NATIONAL FORESTS

N O R T H E R N R E G I O N

VIEWS
of the
NATIONAL FORESTS
from the
NORTHERN REGION

THE National Forest enterprise is a huge one. It involves, in part, protection and management of National Forest properties comprising 153 units with more than 162,000,000 acres of Government land located in 34 States, Alaska and Porto Rico. These National Forests are protected, developed, and administered for the use and benefit of all the people.

In the administration of this vast domain the Forest Service makes every effort to follow a sound, long-time, national policy. Conservation through use, rather than by hoarding, is the very backbone of that policy; its object is to devote every acre and every resource to the greatest public usefulness in the long run.

Whether or not you have visited the National Forests, the views here presented may be of interest to you. Most of them portray some of the resources of the 19 National Forests embracing more than 22 million acres (1) within what is officially known as the "Northern Region" (2). Others illustrate a few—a very few, because space is limited—of the activities of the Civilian Conservation Corps—that army of 300,000 young men most of whom have worked on planned, worth-while projects for the protection and development of the National Forests and their resources.

The mountain country of the Northern Region still breathes the atmosphere of frontier days; still offers mile upon mile of trackless wilderness. If, through these photographs, you catch something of its flavor; if, for a short half hour, you breathe the scent of its pine-clad hills and hear the murmur of its mountain streams, you may wish to visit this National Forest empire of yours. When you do, we who protect and administer it shall be glad to welcome you; shall be happy, indeed, to help make your visit both interesting and worth while.

Most of the photographs are by K. D. Swan.

(1) As of June 30, 1933.
(2) See map on last page.

U. S. Forest Service,
Northern Region,
Missoula, Montana

FOREST COVER

Forest cover, adequately maintained, helps prevent floods such as that on the Mississippi and its tributaries, which in 1927 inundated 18,000 square miles, drove 750,000 people from their homes, took 246 human lives.

Many headwaters of the Mississippi's main tributary—the Missouri—heading within National Forests in the Northern Region—are clothed with an adequately maintained forest cover.

Middle Creek Canyon, Gallatin National Forest, Montana

FOREST DENUDATION

Forest denudation is followed—all too often—by soil erosion which threatens huge national values.
And silt—washed from treeless slopes—causes huge expenditures, too. Those by the Federal Government on existing river and harbor projects directly connected with streamflow total—to June 30, 1932—$844,452,177.
Compare this mountain slope—once heavily timbered, but now denuded by smelter fumes and unrestricted cutting—with forest covered ones. Here erosion has started.

East of Butte, near the Deerlodge National Forest, Montana.

K.D. Swan, 1930

WO # 247623, R-1 ARCHIVES 99-2742

EROSION

The Dakota Badlands are a striking example of erosion. Scientists tell us the ratio of erosion as between barren land and that clothed with forest cover is as from 15, 1000 and up to 3,920 to 1; that one inch of soil may be removed in a single year, but that it may take 1000 years to rebuild it!

How long would irrigation ditches carry water—or streams remain navigable—if they were subject to silting from such eroded areas as this?

Castle Buttes, in the Badlands of North Dakota.

STREAM FLOW

One of the major objectives, when our National Forests were created, was to help control erosion and regulate stream flow by protecting and maintaining an adequate forest cover. Practically every major stream west of the Great Plains, and most of the minor ones as well, head in the National Forests.

National Forests in the Northern Region help regulate streams which flow east and south—through the huge Missouri-Mississippi Drainage—as well as those flowing west through the Columbia.

The Lochsa (which flows through the Clearwater to the Columbia) in the Selway National Forest, Idaho.

K.D. Swan, 1932

WO # 272229, R-1 ARCHIVES 99-6988

TIMBER

Another major objective of the National Forests is to help insure a perpetual supply of timber.

When the Mayflower anchored off Plymouth Rock, in 1620, our (continental) virgin forests contained, it has since been estimated, 5,200 billion board feet of timber. Today only one-quarter remains; of that, only 10% is now in public ownership.

National forests in the Northern Region contain 54 billion feet of saw timber; slightly over 50% of the total supply of Montana and Idaho north of the Salmon River.

Typical of Northern Idaho's forests is this mature white pine stand near the Clearwater National Forest.

K.D. Swan, 1928

WO # 228520, R-1 ARCHIVES 99-8597

USE—NOT HOARDING

Is the objective in managing our National Forests. So when National Forest timber is mature, it may be sold and harvested. But always in ways which will insure a continuous crop and so—permanence of the industries, communities and labor dependent for existence upon that timber. Western yellow—or ponderosa—pine is one of the principal commercial timber species in National Forests in Montana.

A thrifty stand near the Lolo National Forest, Montana.

FUTURE FORESTS

Are assured when mature National Forest timber is harvested. In forests such as this, for example, every tree is carefully selected and marked by foresters before harvesting may start. From 15 to 25% of the merchantable volume is left standing, to throw seed and provide for a second cut in 40-60 years.

And inflammable slash is lopped, piled, and burned in spring or fall, when weather conditions are safe.

A logging operation in western yellow pine. Note the number of trees which have been left. Kootenai National Forest, Montana.

K.D. Swan, 1926

WO # 210986, R-1 ARCHIVES 99-8979

FIRE

Is a most destructive forest enemy. It burns over each year more than 41 million acres of forest land in the continental United States.

Of the 20 million acres of private, State and Federal forest lands in Montana, nearly 3 million acres were burned —with a resource loss of 14 million dollars—between the years 1908-1930.

And man, carelessly or wantonly, was responsible for 65% of the 17,500 individual forest fires which were reported during that period!

Green forests, such as this—on the South Fork of Flathead River, Flathead National Forest, Montana—are an asset. But—

BURNED FORESTS

—such as this, are a liability. Note that this photograph is from the identical spot from which the previous one was taken. The fire which was responsible for this ruin was man-caused—therefore preventable.

Man-caused fires in National Forests of the Northern Region burned more than 9,000 forest acres in 1933; their damage plus suppression costs totaled nearly $42,000.

And smokers—careless with matches, pipes, cigarettes and cigars—were responsible for more than two-thirds of those preventable forest fires; for nearly 80% of the damage and cost of all man-caused fires on the National Forests in the Northern Region.

Be careful when you visit your National Forests.

LOOKOUTS

Are stationed in small, glass-sided houses perched on towers and lonely mountain peaks in the National Forests. Their job is to discover forest fires immediately they start; to locate them accurately; to report them promptly by telephone or radio.

Then the smokechaser leaves, at once, to catch the fire while it is small; before it has a chance to spread death and destruction to the forest.

Lookout and smokechaser on the Coeur d'Alene National Forest, Idaho.

K.D. Swan, 1932

WO # 270789, R-1 ARCHIVES 99-1119d

THAT FIRST BURNING PERIOD!

The spread of fire—in the city or in the forest—bears direct relationship to time which elapses between start of the fire and its "corral." And the first burning period—between start of the fire and 10 a. m. next morning—is the critical period for forest fires in the Northern Region. If fires can be corralled and controlled within that period, they can be kept small and inexpensive; if not, size, damage and costs increase by leaps and bounds.

The smokechaser is the first line of defense. Carrying tools and three-day emergency rations on his back, he is the one who bears the brunt of the fire suppression job.

Smokechaser bucking heavy brush—Kaniksu National Forest, Idaho.

ROADS

National Forests in the Northern Region have been inaccessible. Roads were essential as a means to overcome that delay in fire control which breeds disaster; to permit that speed of attack essential to adequate fire protection. The Northern Region's protection system now includes more than 2,800 miles of road. "Truck Trails" is a more accurate term, for they are narrow, one-way affairs, built primarily to aid in the big job of fire protection.

Here is one of them: A truck trail built by men of the Civilian Conservation Corps during the summer of 1933.

TRAILS

But trails are still necessary through many otherwise inaccessible National Forests. And over these trails are transported, each year, hundreds of tons of everything imaginable:—fresh eggs and kegs of nails; ham, bacon and anvils; baking powder and blasting powder, by way of example.

This work is handled by expert packers and more than 1,750 head of Government-owned stock. The usual outfit consists of a packer, his saddle horse, and nine head of mules. The average pack load is 225 pounds per animal. A fair day's trip, loaded, is 18 miles, but 35 miles in one day is not unknown.

Loading lumber for a lookout house. At Honeysuckle Ranger Station, Coeur d'Alene National Forest, Idaho.

AIRPLANES

Airplanes are also used—to speed up fire control in back country where roads are impracticable. Starting from civilization's centers, pilots deliver men and supplies in an hour or two at emergency landing fields which—by travel on the ground—are two, three and four days from any source of supply.

So time is saved and funds conserved. For men and supplies can be delivered to many such inaccessible spots cheaper, by air, than over long and tortuous trails.

From emergency landing fields, pack strings deliver to lookouts and ranger stations.

At an Emergency Landing Field on the Flathead National Forest, Montana.

K.D. Swan, 1932

WO # 274763, R-1 ARCHIVES 99-801

FORAGE

A major resource, forage is so protected and administered as to maintain the supply and provide the largest possible contribution to permanent social and economic welfare. National Forest forage makes its direct contributions through its use by domestic stock and wild game. Montana offers a striking illustration of the former.

Within 29 Montana counties are certain lands which total about 5 million acres. Their main product, livestock, is dependent upon near-by National Forest forage for summer range. These lands, their livestock, buildings, fences and equipment are valued at close to 55 million dollars, which is more than one-fifth, or 20%, of the assessed valuations of all lands, livestock, buildings, etc., within the 29 counties!

A Western Ranch on the Yaak.
Kootenai National Forest, Montana.

K.D. Swan, 1926

WO # 210910, R-1 ARCHIVES 99-3081

FORAGE AND COMMUNITY WELFARE

So that National Forest forage contributes, in large part, to the integrity of those *ranches and investments, the social and economic welfare of 5,000 ranch people and of others in near-by towns who depend for part of their livelihood upon ranch trade.

In 1933, 141,100 cattle and 581,200 sheep grazed on Government lands within the Northern Region's National Forests. Grazing permits, issued by the Forest Service, limit numbers and kinds of stock to certain seasons and specific areas on which, examinations have shown, the feed is ample to support them after provision has been made for wild game.

* See previous page.

Pure Bred Herefords on Summer Range, in the Lewis & Clark National Forest, Montana.

DOMESTIC STOCK RESTRICTED

Take the National Forests in Montana as an example. Here domestic stock graze from 2½ to 4 months in the summer only,* and are confined to 34 per cent of the Federally owned and controlled acreage.

Wild game, on the other hand, uses all the acreage during each summer—the 34% assigned to domestic stock and the 66% which that stock does not touch.

In fact, forage on National Forest summer ranges is ample to support wild game in numbers even greater than those dependent upon it for their summer sustenance.

* A few domestic stock graze year-long on the Custer Forest.

Sheep on Summer Range in the Gallatin National Forest, Montana.

WILD GAME

The Northern Region is noted for its big game, 82% of which, it is estimated, now live in the National Forests.

Wild Game resources are estimated to include 67,000 deer, 25,800 elk, 470 grizzly and 5,750 brown and black bear, besides moose, caribou, antelope and many fur-bearers. Summer range is more than ample to support them, but a different situation exists with respect to winter range.

For National Forests are within the belt of heavy snowfall. Winter feed can be obtained only on south slopes, wind-swept ridges and small mountain valleys where snowfall is light enough so wild game can reach grass and browse during long, hard winters.

Deer Feeding in Spots Left Bare of Snow, in the Absaroka National Forest, Montana.

K.D. Swan, 1924

WO # 185371, R-1 ARCHIVES not yet cataloged

WINTER RANGE

Is woefully inadequate to support, during hard winters, the present big game population on the National Forests. Glance for a moment at the following figures, which apply to Forests in Montana.

Here the acreage used by game during summer months totals 18,890,000 acres, 14% of which is owned by ranchers, miners, lumbermen and others. But because of heavy snows in hard winters this shrinks, according to present knowledge, more than 90 per cent.

And much of the 10 per cent—which is all that is left, within the National Forests, for winter game range—is privately owned and not, therefore, subject to Federal or State control.

Rangers spend months on snowshoes, checking on wild game population and winter range conditions.
Flathead National Forest, Montana.

Henry Thol, 1927

WO # 223665, R-1 ARCHIVES 99-3797

THE KEY TO WILD GAME SITUATION

So serious is the situation that (an estimated) 70% of Montana's big game leaves the National Forests, during hard winters, for privately owned lands outside their boundaries—lands that are heavily grazed by livestock throughout much of the year.

Recognizing winter range as the key to the wild game situation, the Forest Service began remedial action more than 25 years ago. Since then it has reserved more than 2½ million acres for exclusive use as game range; has moved thousands of domestic stock and permitted very light use in summer only, on many other ranges; has, by exchange of grazing use, made available as winter game range more than 150,000 acres of private lands.

Elk migrating from one winter range to another in the Gallatin National Forest, Montana.

C.W. Shocklay, 1933

WO # 276663, R-1 ARCHIVES not yet cataloged

ACQUISITION ONE ANSWER

Winter range is the key to the wild game situation and it is, in part, the owner of private lands—which are used by game purely on sufferance—who now holds that key. A program of land acquisition, with State or Federal control, is indicated. On the basis of present knowledge around one-half million acres now in private ownership are needed to assure sufficient feed, during hard winters, for present game population in the National Forests of Montana.

Some of that land lies within the present Forest boundaries; much of it is sub-marginal land outside but adjacent to those boundaries.

Antelope on a Mountain Park in the
Lewis & Clark National Forest, Montana.

BEAR—GRIZZLY AND OTHERS

On the National Forests in the Northern Region there were, it is estimated, 470 grizzlies and 5,750 black and brown bear in 1933. And unlike the famous bear of the Yellowstone, the National Forest bruin is a wild and elusive creature that does not depend upon supplies begged or pilfered from passing tourists.

For he lives way back—far from the haunts of man—and must gather berries and kill meat for himself and his family.

Grizzly and her cubs on the feed ground, Yellowstone National Park.

MOOSE

Moose, though not too common in Northern Region National Forests, occasionally may be found on the edges of lonely mountain lakes, deep in the primeval forest.

Moose feeding at a mountain lake, Beaverhead National Forest, Montana. Photo by C. D. Simpson.

C.D. Simpson, 1932

WO # 274763, R-1 ARCHIVES not yet cataloged

THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

A relief measure, early urged by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, created the Civilian Conservation Corps. Enrolled largely in cities, 300,000 youths were soon headed for the forests and, very largely, for the National Forests. Here, under Army guidance except during work hours, they lived for the most part in huge, 200-men camps.

Within the Northern Region during part of 1933 were approximately 17,800 men of the C.C.C. Sixty-three of their camps were on the National Forests, 12 on National Parks, 14 on State and private lands.

Priest Lake, in the Kaniksu National Forest, Idaho.

K.D. Swan, 1928

WO # 228504, R-1 ARCHIVES 99-7458

PURPOSE OF THE C.C.C.

The purpose of the Civilian Conservation Corps project was essentially one of restoring confidence, of building men. And its accomplishment was through work—worth while work, largely in the forests.

National Forest projects, carefully selected, were for the most part those which had long been planned as necessary for adequate protection and development of those Forests.

Reduction of fire hazard was one project—one which helped develop men; helped restore their confidence; helped protect our forest heritage. And since "snags"—huge dead trees—are a serious fire hazard, they were felled on hundreds of thousands of acres.

Snag-felling by the C.C.C.
Columbia National Forest, Washington.

REFORESTATION

Forest fires have, in the past, taken heavy toll—of National Forests, even. Hundreds of thousands of acres have been devastated. Fortunately, Nature is reclothing with the soft green of new growth, many of those blackened mountain slopes.

And assisting Nature, insofar as funds permit, have been the efforts of man. Since 1910, more than 90,000 acres in the Northern Region have been reforested with young trees raised at the Forest Service's Savenac Nursery. Established in 1909, Savenac's capacity has been increased until, in 1934, there will be raised in its beds more than 8 million forest seedlings destined, later, for planting on mountain slopes so heavily burned that no seed trees are left thereon. This, too, was a C.C.C. project.

Seed beds, at Forest Nursery, being weeded by C.C.C.

BLUE GOLD

Some of the "wood ticks"—as the boys of the C.C.C. call themselves—have experienced at home the delights of deep-dish huckleberry pie. But many there are who, prior to 1933, had never tracked this berry to its mountain lair.

Growing in great profusion, this wild but delicious berry yielded in one year and from one locality in Northern Region's National Forests, more than $25,000 to local people who, leaving ranches, towns and cities, gathered, sorted, cleaned and marketed the berries through individual and cooperative efforts.

Gathering Coast Huckleberries.
Columbia National Forest, Washington.

K.D. Swan

R-1 ARCHIVES 99-5589

FUTURE FORESTS AND FORESTERS

Training, through work, was afforded boys of the Civilian Conservation Corps. Training in many things—training that will stand them in good stead during the years to come.

Here is a survey crew, running compass line through a young forest which has been thinned and trimmed so that its future growth may be accelerated.

"Civie" Conservationists in the Black Hills National Forest, South Dakota.

INSPIRATION AND HEALTH

Are his who visits his National Forests. And while mountains and their silent places were new to most city boys of the Civilian Conservation Corps, many there are who long to return to such peace and quiet as is depicted in this fall scene.

Marshall Lake After the First Snow.
Lolo National Forest, Montana.

K.D. Swan, 1926

WO # 215153, R-1 ARCHIVES 99-7548

PIONEER DAYS

The atmosphere of the Old West still clings to the National Forests in Montana, northern Idaho and eastern Washington; their wilderness areas offer health, happiness and inspiration. In these National Forests—

> "You do not need to keep to the path . . . You may make your own trail, whithersoever fancy leads you; and at night you may pitch your tent under any tree that looks friendly and firm."—Henry Van Dyke in "Fisherman's Luck."

Camping at Big Creek Lakes, Bitterroot National Forest, Montana.

RECREATION

Of all the uses of our National Forests and their many resources, recreation is most popular. In 1917, three million people sought health, happiness and inspiration within them; in 1931 that number had increased to more than 32 million!

And somewhere within those Forests is to be found that which you most desire: modern resorts in charming mountain settings, tourist camps, free public camp grounds, summer homes, and sites for more of them.

Or Primitive Areas—without roads—where you may wander for a week, never crossing your trail or seeing human habitation except for an occasional ranger station or observation post for forest firemen.

Beach at Sullivan Lake Public Camp Ground.
Kaniksu National Forest, Idaho.

FISHERMAN'S PARADISE

May be found in many places, and on many waters, in Northern Region's National Forests.
For within them Forest Rangers help plant, each year, more than 17½ million trout.
Come, if you will, to the Rockies; camp and fish in a spot like this!

Middle Creek above Chisholms. Gallatin National Forest, Montana.

K.D. Swan, 1924

WO # 189057, R-1 ARCHIVES 99-7359

BOATING

Is safe, as is swimming, on many beautiful lakes that dot the National Forests in Montana, northern Idaho, and eastern Washington.

And some of the many public camp grounds—like those at Luby and Reeder Bays on Priest Lake—are within one half day's easy drive, over good dirt roads, from civilization's doors.

A family party at Luby Bay. Kaniksu National Forest, Idaho

WINTER, TOO—

Offers its attractions. Calm, quiet, mysterious, are mountain slopes when all is covered with winter's mantle of snow. But what exhilaration there is in trips like this; with mountaineers!

Missoula Mountaineers on Mt. Stuart, Lolo National Forest, Montana.

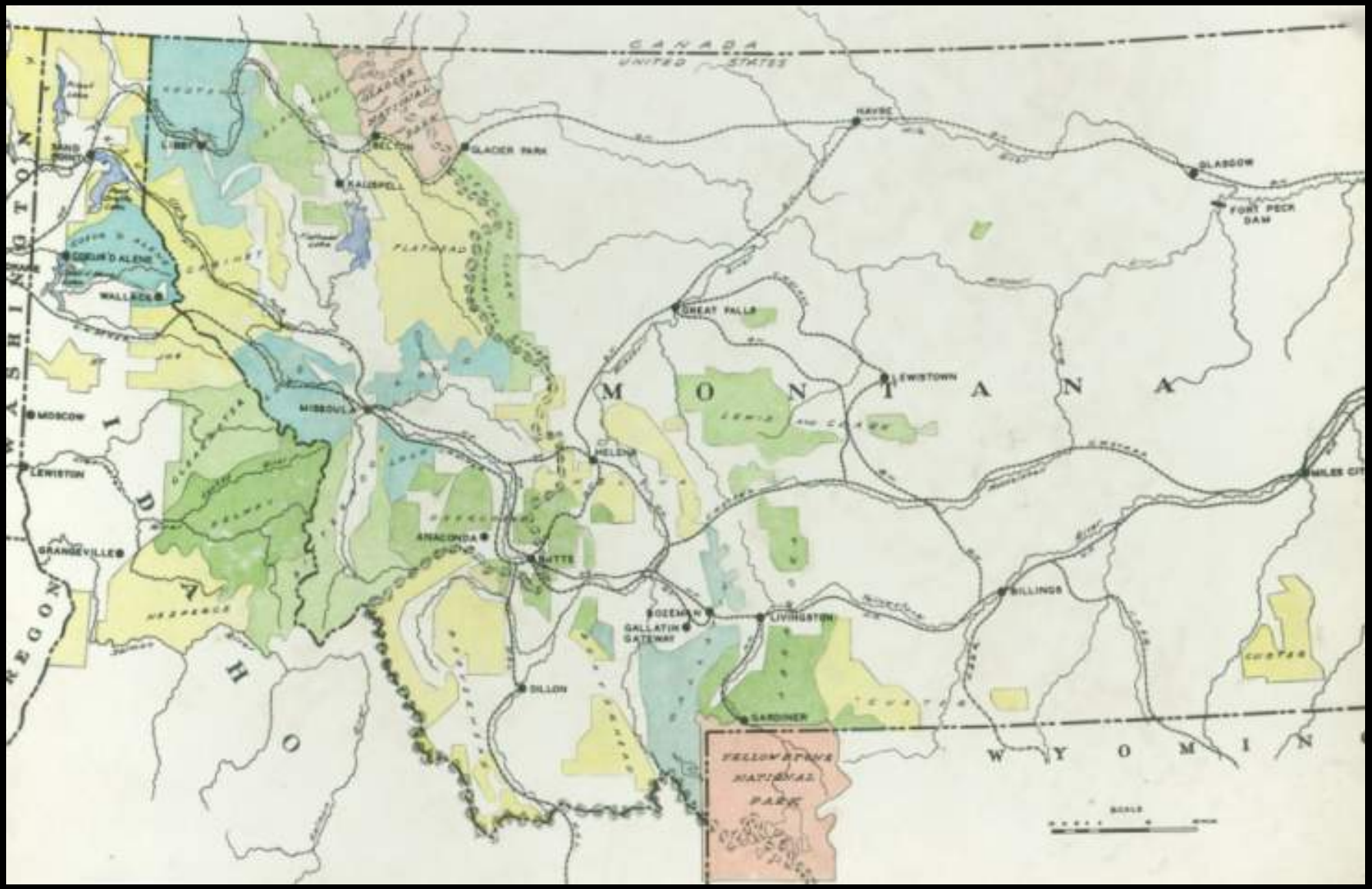
THE "BACK OF BEYOND"

. . . beckons. Follow, if you will, the trails. Some there are that are broad and plain; others as dim as when trod by the Blackfeet and the Nezperce, long before Sacajawea faithful Indian squaw, led Lewis and Clark through the unbroken wilderness.

The National Forests are your Forests. We who protect and administer them for you, bid you welcome. Come, then, and let us give an account of our stewardship. Only—when you come, please be careful with fire!

The Big Creek Lakes. Bitterroot National Forest, Montana.

1934 Map of the NATIONAL FORESTS of the NORTHERN REGION



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ca. 1939

USFS Region 1 Archives Collection; Album F.

The Archives are located in the federal building in downtown Missoula, MT. For additional information on the exhibit or the Regional Archives please contact carliemagill@fs.fed.us, 406-329-3098. For technical difficulties please contact Jan Oliver at joliver@fs.fed.us .