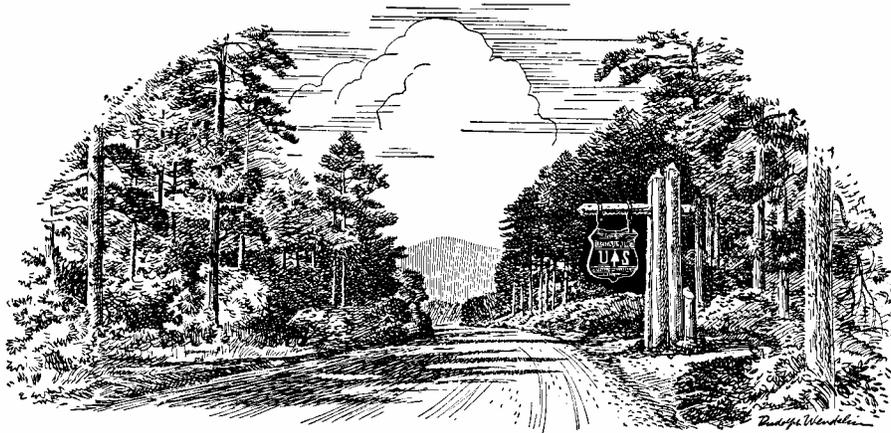


Blue Mountains National Forests: A Chronological Record of Selected Boundary Proclamations

Compiled by David C. Powell

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This document provides a chronological record of major establishment or modification events for the Blue Mountains national forests (Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman national forests). Establishment proclamations and inter-Forest land transfers are included; minor events such as land additions or deletions within a single national forest or reserve, or national forest boundary modifications, are not included. The source of the chronological information is:

USDA Forest Service. 1997. Establishment and modification of national forest boundaries and national grasslands; a chronological record: 1891-1996. FS-612. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Lands Staff. 96 p (plus independently numbered index, exhibit, and addendums).

July 28, 1902: Blue Mountains Forest Reserve was informally withdrawn from the public domain.

November 5, 1902: Wenaha Forest Reserve was informally withdrawn from the public domain.

May 29, 1903: Heppner Forest Reserve was informally withdrawn from the public domain.

February 5, 1904: Baker City Forest Reserve was formally established by proclamation.

May 6, 1905: Wallowa Forest Reserve was formally established by proclamation.

May 12, 1905: Wenaha Forest Reserve was formally established by proclamation.

May 12, 1905: Chesnimnus Forest Reserve was formally established by proclamation.

March 15, 1906: Blue Mountains Forest Reserve was formally established by proclamation.

March 15, 1906: Baker City Forest Reserve: a portion was combined with the Blue Mountains Forest Reserve and the remainder restored to public domain, and the Baker City name was discontinued, by proclamation.

July 18, 1906: Heppner Forest Reserve was formally established by proclamation.

March 1, 1907: Chesnimnus Forest Reserve: all Chesnimnus lands were combined with the Wallowa Forest Reserve to create the Imnaha Forest Reserve, and the Chesnimnus name was discontinued, by proclamation.

March 1, 1907: Wallowa Forest Reserve: all Wallowa lands were combined with the Chesnimnus Forest Reserve to create the Imnaha Forest Reserve, and the Wallowa name was discontinued, by proclamation.

March 1, 1907: Imnaha Forest Reserve was formally established by proclamation.

March 2, 1907: Blue Mountains Forest Reserve: certain lands were transferred to the Blue Mountains Forest Reserve from the Maury Mountains Forest Reserve.

**“The Forest Reserves Shall Hereafter Be Known As National Forests”
(Act of Congress approved March 4, 1907; 34 Stat. 1269)**

June 13, 1908: Whitman National Forest was established by executive order #813.

June 13, 1908: Malheur National Forest was established by executive order #814.

June 13, 1908: Heppner National Forest: all Heppner National Forest lands were combined with a portion of the Blue Mountains National Forest to create the Umatilla National Forest, and the Heppner name was discontinued, by executive order #815.

June 13, 1908: Umatilla National Forest was established by executive order #815.

June 13, 1908: Blue Mountains National Forest: all Blue Mountains National Forest lands were distributed among the Whitman, Malheur, Umatilla, and Deschutes national forests, and the Blue Mountains name was discontinued, by executive orders #813-#816.

July 2, 1908: Imnaha National Forest: name changed to Wallowa National Forest by executive order #908 (this EO reestablished the Wallowa name, now as the Wallowa National Forest, because the Wallowa Forest Reserve had been discontinued by proclamation on March 1, 1907).

May 20-21, 1910: Umatilla, Malheur, and Whitman national forests: certain lands were deleted by proclamations #1037-#1039.

May 27, 1910: Wallowa National Forest: a portion of the Wallowa National Forest was transferred to the Wenaha National Forest, and certain other lands were deleted, by proclamation.

June 7, 1911: Whitman National Forest: a portion of the Whitman National Forest was transferred to the Umatilla National Forest by proclamation.

June 10, 1911: Wallowa National Forest: a portion of the Wallowa National Forest was deleted, and the Minam National Forest was established, by proclamation.

June 10, 1911: Umatilla National Forest: a portion of the Umatilla National Forest was transferred to the Malheur National Forest, and other lands were added to the Umatilla National Forest from the Whitman National Forest, by proclamation.

June 13, 1911: Malheur National Forest: a portion of the Malheur National Forest was transferred to the Ochoco National Forest, and other lands were added to the Malheur National Forest from the Umatilla National Forest, by proclamation.

June 20, 1920: Minam National Forest: all Minam National Forest lands were transferred to the Whitman National Forest, and the Minam name was discontinued, by executive order.

November 5, 1920: Wenaha National Forest: all Wenaha National Forest lands were transferred to the Umatilla National Forest, and the Wenaha name was discontinued, by executive order.

January 31, 1947: Umatilla and Whitman national forests: certain lands were transferred from the Umatilla National Forest to the Whitman and Wallowa national forests, and other lands were transferred from the Whitman National Forest to the Umatilla National Forest, by public land order.

July 6, 1948: Umatilla National Forest: certain lands were transferred from the Umatilla National Forest to the Whitman National Forest, by public land order.

January 25, 1968: Whitman National Forest: certain lands were transferred from the Whitman National Forest to the Malheur National Forest, by public land order.

What follows is selected background information about formation of Forest Reserves in the Blue Mountains; it was taken primarily from an article in the Oregonian newspaper (dated March 18, 1906 and entitled: “Forest reserve created at last; President sets aside Blue Mountains for timber purposes”) and from an account by forest inspector Harold Langille (“Mostly Division “R” Days”) and published in the December 1956 issue of Oregon Historical Quarterly.

In 1901 residents of Baker County sent a petition to their congressional representative requesting that the mountains around Baker City and Sumpter be withdrawn from the public domain in order to protect the area’s water supply. The following year residents of Malheur and Harney counties submitted petitions asking that the Strawberry Mountains and the headwaters of the Malheur, Silvies, and South Fork of the John Day rivers be withdrawn to protect water, timber, and grazing resources. The Secretary of the Interior responded in July 1902 by authorizing the temporary withdrawal of more than 3 million acres of land in the forested areas of northeastern Oregon.

Federal surveyor Harold Langille later noted that the 1902 withdrawal was “doubtless the most controversial of all the withdrawals....It bore upon the economic life and welfare of almost the entire northeastern quarter of Oregon. Agriculture, stock-raising, mining, lumbering and all of their adjunctive interests were actually or potentially concerned.” Langille recalled a meeting in Canyon City with area stockmen, many of whom

were initially against the proposed reserve. He explained to them that the reserve was not intended to keep them off the land but rather to prevent destructive exploitation of forest resources and to reduce conflict over grazing and logging activities. He noted that “many of the strongest opponents of the proposed reserve afterward came to me and said that if the facts were as I had stated them they would welcome the reserve.”

More problematic than local opposition were the land speculators who claimed land in the proposed reserve with the intention of trading it for more valuable land elsewhere in the state. This practice was at the heart of a major land fraud scandal that resulted in the indictment of dozens of Oregonians, including most of Oregon’s congressional delegation. [Note that the Oregon land frauds are described in a book called “Looters of the public domain” by S.A.D. Puter and Horace Stevens, 1908, and with a subtitle called “embracing a complete exposure of the fraudulent system of acquiring titles to the public lands of the United States.” This book describes widespread and lucrative land frauds occurring in Oregon in the early 1900s, many of which involved officials associated with the General Land Office. The scandals also reached to Oregon’s congressional delegation, including Senator Mitchell and Congressman Williamson.]

This land fraud scandal delayed the establishment of the Blue Mountain Forest Reserve, but in March 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt finally authorized the permanent withdrawal of 2,627,270 acres of land in the Blue Mountains. The reserve was intended to conserve the area’s water supply for farmers, as well as to reduce conflict between stockmen and to protect timberlands and summer rangelands from “destruction and wasteful use,” as explained in this Oregonian article.

In 1908, the Blue Mountain Forest Reserve was broken up into several different administrative units, which later evolved into the Wallowa-Whitman, Malheur, Ochoco, and Umatilla national forests.

Langille, H.D. 1956. Mostly Division "R" days. Oregon Historical Quarterly. 57(4): 301-313.

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/uma/publications/history/division%20r%20days.pdf>

Oregonian. 1906. Forest reserve created at last; President sets aside Blue Mountains for timber purposes. Oregonian. March 18; Portland, OR.