The Society for the
Protection of New Hampshire Forests.
Concord, N. H.

Frank W. Rollins
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Addressed to the
Members of Congress

Reasons for a
National Forest Reservation
in the White Mountains

With Letters From

Hon. T. Jefferson Coolidge
Morris K. Jessup, Esq.
Hon. Richard Olney
Rev. Edward Everett Hale, D.D.
REASONS FOR A NATIONAL FOREST RESERVATION IN THE WHITE MOUNTAINS

I. The remaining virgin forests in the White Mountains are rapidly disappearing.

The spruce forests on the high slopes have recently become valuable in the manufacture of paper from spruce pulp. This shallow-rooted tree holds in place the thin soil on the mountains and prevents the rapid flow-off of the streams in freshets with corresponding periods of drought. It is a tree of very slow growth, requiring one hundred and twenty-five years to become six inches in diameter, at high elevations where the seasons are short and cold. Two hundred and fifty years are required for the return of a forest approaching in size the trees now being cut. When fire burns up the soil, which is largely vegetable mould and therefore combustible, much longer time, three or even five hundred years, intervenes before the return of a valuable forest. In places, both on account of fire and of erosion, the return of a forest is forever impossible. Snow and rain are quickly shed from the bare rock.

II. The method of cutting is the most destructive possible.

In the valleys the valuable species are entirely removed, leaving the undesirable and useless trees
in possession of the soil. These reseed it to their own kind, permanently preventing the return of a valuable forest.

On the high slopes above the valleys the entire forest is felled, every tree. Of the spruce trees which grow here unmixed with other species, only those six inches or more in diameter are used for pulp. The remainder of the forest, two-thirds or even more of the trees, are felled simply to get them out of the way and let the larger trees roll over them to the lumber roads below. They are left on the mountain side to rot or to burn. The profit is paltry in comparison with the reckless waste of resources.

**III. Fire follows cutting and sweeps over the mountains, destroying not only standing timber, seedlings and seeds, but also the soil itself.**

The dry tops and trunks left on the mountains invite fire, which sweeps repeatedly over them, consuming also the vegetable materials of the soil.

The following illustration is that of a spruce tree at whose roots a fire burned away two feet and eight inches of soil. This tree was two hundred years old. Twenty years after the fire there is no young growth of spruce trees around it—only bird-cherry trees of no value. During the past summer alone, it is estimated that two hundred thousand acres were burned over in the White Mountain region and that nearly five hundred thousand dollars' worth of standing timber was destroyed. The loss of the soil and of all future product from it is incalculable.

**IV. New Hampshire is unable to cope with the situation, having an agricultural population with no large cities.**

New York and Pennsylvania have purchased large areas within their boundaries as State forest reservations. To protect the waters flowing from the White Mountain region and to conserve the supply of spruce timber will require the taking of a much larger proportion of the small State of New Hampshire. It is impossible for a population mostly farmers, few of whom acquire wealth, to set aside and maintain so large a portion of their domain for a reservation for the country at large.
V. It is an inter-state problem:–

A. The great cities and manufacturing plants on the rivers below in other States have interests at stake.

Three important rivers rise in the mountain region of New Hampshire—the Connecticut, the Merrimac and the Saco. The Merrimac alone probably turns more spindles than any other stream in the country. A fourth, the Androscoggin, flows through the Eastern part of the mountains, receiving important branches from them. These rivers all flow into other States and supply water and power to New England industries that are national in importance.

The great interests of navigation must be considered, as well as the imperative necessity to the cities using these streams as a source of water supply that they be not only steady but also free from the debris of freshets.

B. No more important scientific and educational object lesson can be found.

As a demonstration of forest management the methods used in the White Mountains would be widely known. An excellent opportunity would be afforded for the protection of native species of fish and game. The range of botanical and of insect species in the White Mountains is very large. Alpine, sub-Alpine, Canadian and Alleghanian, thus making them of peculiar value for study because of their unusual proximity. For the scientific study of the whole range of nature, including the study of timber-growth, virgin
forests should be maintained in selected places and guarded from all trespass. Unless protected, all primeval forest in the White Mountains will soon be swept away.

C. The mountains are visited annually by large numbers of people, representing every State in the Union.

These mountains are located within easy reach of the largest group in our population. They give health, rest, and recreation every year to thousands of people who come from all parts of the country, particularly from the plains of the middle West, and from the South and Southwest. Among these are the brain-workers of the country, and many of the wage-earners. To these the forest is a source both of health and inspiration. The benefit from the destructive removal of the forests is small in comparison with their use to that great number of earnest men and women who come in search of rest.

D. This reservation would conserve the timber supply and steady the industries dependent upon it.

There have been significant changes in the lumber market during recent years. The white pine business has migrated from New England to Michigan and later from Michigan to Minnesota, and the hardwood market has shifted from Buffalo to Memphis. Owing to the exhaustion of important timber trees in the East, the policy of the United States under the last four Presidents, to set
aside large forest reservations in the West, has been fully approved. Sixty-three million acres in western States and Territories have been reserved, an area larger than New England, besides the fine National parks in the West. There should be forest reservations in the East both in the northern and southern Appalachian Mountains, in order that the wood-working industries may secure the best and least expensive material. The rich industrial life of the Black Forest region in Germany is due primarily to forest management that ensures an uninterrupted supply. Wood-working factories in New York and Michigan are now forced to purchase material in the West at great expense. The high mountain regions in the East are non-agricultural, and under private management become quickly non-productive. In the long run, under proper care, they can be made to yield large revenues. Intelligent foresight compels their reservation.

LETTERS URGING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THIS RESERVATION.

From Hon. T. Jefferson Coolidge.

Boston, Mass.

Hon. F. W. Rollins,

Dear Sir: I have read with great interest the bill of Senator Gallinger of New Hampshire, proposing that Congress should make a forest reservation of one-half a million or more of acres in the region of the White Mountains.

It is unnecessary for me to say to you that for some years the manufacturing establishments on the Merrimac River in New Hampshire have suffered seriously from the cutting down of the forests. One freshet, a few years ago, cost the Amoskeag Company more than one hundred thousand dollars.

Besides the injury done by the excessive flow of water in freshets, we suffer also in the same way from absence of water during dry seasons, as the woods no longer retain the water. It is emptied at once, and not held back to trickle slowly into the streams.

But New Hampshire is not the only State to which this reservation would be of inestimable value. The Connecticut, the Merrimac, and the Saco, all have their sources in the White Mountains, so that Vermont, Connecticut, and Massachusetts are equally interested in the scheme, and even the Androscoggin derives part of its stream from the country north of the White Mountains. Maine, therefore, will also be benefited.

All the States in Europe have realized that it is absolutely necessary to preserve the forests, in order to prevent freshets at one season and droughts at another, and I think almost all of the Governments have adopted forestry laws which forbid the cutting of wood unless with permission of the Government.

I trust, therefore, that the senators and representatives will unite in the heartiest approval of Senator Gallinger’s proposition.

T. Jefferson Coolidge.
From Hon. Richard Olney.

Boston, December 26, 1903.

Hon. Frank W. Rollins,

My dear Governor: I trust Senate bill, 58th Congress, No. 2327, introduced by Senator Gallinger of New Hampshire, may become a law.

That it is in the public interest and seeks to promote objects of great public importance cannot be doubted.

The only question is whether these public objects may be properly considered as national in character—as being purposes for which the national revenues may be legitimately appropriated. On this point it is to be remembered that the mountain regions of New Hampshire are the sources of three important rivers—the Connecticut, the Merrimac, and the Saco—and that the Androscoggin traverses a part of the State and is indebted to it for two important branches; that these rivers flow into other States and furnish water and power to municipalities and large manufacturing industries, whose welfare and prosperity are greatly dependent upon the regularity and evenness of the supply; that the increase of the timber supply of the country is as important as the increase of any other product of the soil; and that in addition to the large commercial and industrial interests involved, thousands of people from all parts of the land annually visit the hill country of New Hampshire for rest and recreation. In view of these considerations, it cannot be fairly claimed that the subject-matter of Senator Gallinger’s bill is of interest to, and should be dealt with by, New Hampshire alone.

Richard Olney.

From Morris K. Jessup, Esq.

New York City.

Hon. F. W. Rollins,

Dear Sir: I am in receipt of yours of the twenty-second relative to a national forest reserve in the White Mountains. I am in hearty accord with this movement, and have always advocated the cause of the preservation of our forests, which are so essential to our water-supply for the large cities, as well as the manufacturing industries. **

You have my earnest wishes for the success of your undertaking, and I trust Congress will see fit to carry out the proposed bill which has been introduced in the Senate.

Morris K. Jessup.
From Edward Everett Hale, D.D.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

My dear Governor Rollins:

I was appointed at Intervale, New Hampshire, chairman of the committee which should express the sentiments of powers outside New Hampshire regarding the preservation of the New Hampshire forests. And I also write with a good deal of personal feeling. For I was on the Geological Survey in those regions in 1841, and have with these eyes seen forests demolished in which were trees centuries old, and where the region is given over to sumach and blackberry bushes. It is no mere matter of botanical curiosity which we are pleading for. It is the preservation of a water-supply which affects five out of the six New England states. It also affects the very existence of whatever makes the region attractive to persons from every part of the nation. It is easy to see, on mere economical grounds, that the destruction of forests has been the ruin of many a nation which did not have wisdom enough to keep them. In our case, the gradual denudation of our noblest mountains will destroy the noblest and best ground for Re-Creation which is now open to all people east of the Mississippi.

We hope with all our hearts that the great Appalachian Reserve will be purchased for the nation. Four thousand square miles is none too large a reservation. Certainly with so satisfactory a standard as that, ten or twelve miles square, say a hundred and sixty square miles, is none too large for another breathing-ground for forty million people.

Edward E. Hale.