COMMITTEE REPORT AND RESOLUTIONS
ADOPTED BY THE
FORT COLLINS COMMERCIAL CLUB
CONCERNING
THE PROPOSED EXTENSION OF THE
ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL
PARK AND THE COLORADO
NATIONAL FOREST
COMPARISON OF FOREST SERVICE
AND NATIONAL PARK RULES

The following report and resolutions were adopted by a unanimous vote of the Fort Collins (Colorado) Commercial Club on November 26, 1915.

To the Directors and Members of the Fort Collins Commercial Club:

Your committee, appointed to investigate and report concerning the proposed addition to the Rocky Mountain National Park, would respectfully report as follows:

Mr. Enos Mills telephoned your secretary that he was leaving for Washington to work for the proposed extension, and asked that an expression be secured from the Chamber of Commerce, now merged into the Fort Collins Commercial Club, and the citizens of the northern part of the county.

We have then to decide which is most desirable:

(1) To have these lands included within the Rocky Mountain National Park;

(2) To have these lands retained within the Colorado national forest; or

(3) To have these lands restored as a part of the open range, without the supervision thereof by the Forest Service.

The Rocky Mountain National Park now contains about 231,000 acres, of which more than one hundred thousand acres are within Larimer county. We are not informed as to the total area which it is proposed to add to the park, but we are informed by Mr. Mills that he proposes to have added to the park in Larimer county alone, all of the territory now included within the Colorado National Forest, extending north from the park to the Wyoming line, and certain territory without the forest. This would take about 405,000 acres of public lands within the forest and nearly 50,000 acres without, or a total of about 455,000 acres, in addition to the 100,000 acres of Larimer county land now within the park. There are also 22,080 acres of privately owned land, and 1280 acres selected by the Colorado Agricultural college for forestry purposes, the title to which has not yet passed to the college, within the proposed addition to the park. Nearly all of this is excellent grazing land and some of it is heavily timbered. It includes the Manhattan mining district and practically all of our mineral lands. It also includes the headwaters of all of our irrigation systems not already within the park. It would prevent the completion of the Poudre river road and the construction of a railroad into North Park, unless the secretary of the interior may see fit to consent thereto.

The rules and regulations for the Rocky Mountain National Park, adopted May 29, 1915, a copy of which is attached hereto, state:
"National parks are established for the benefit and enjoyment of the people, preserving the natural conditions within their boundaries, in unimpaired form for present and future generations."

The act creating this national park withdrew all public lands therein from all forms of "settlement, occupancy, or disposal under the laws of the United States."

The 1915 Use Book, a manual for users of the National Forest, issued by the secretary of agriculture, states:

"National forests are open to all persons for all lawful purposes. The timber, water, pasture and other resources are for the use of the people, and the minerals are open to exploitation just as on unreserved public lands . . . Under authority imposed by congress, the secretary of agriculture has issued regulations for the protection and administration of the national forests, to the end that the fullest possible use of them, consistent with their proper conservation, may be made."

Also, "In the administration of the forest reserves, it must be clearly borne in mind that all land must be devoted to its most productive use for the permanent good of the whole people, and not for the temporary benefit of individuals or companies. All the resources of the forest reserves are for use. . . You will see to it that the water, wood, and the forage of the reserves are conserved and wisely used for the benefit of the home builder first of all, upon whom depends the best permanent use of the lands and resources alike. The continued prosperity of the agricultural, lumbering, mining, and livestock interests is directly dependent upon a permanent and accessible supply of water, wood and forage, as well as upon the present and future use of these resources under businesslike regulations, enforced with promptness, effectiveness and common sense. . . . . The primary purpose of all the regulations is to make the national forests as useful as possible to the people consistent with their protection and perpetuation."

The policy of the department of the interior is to make of the Rocky Mountain National Park one of the nation's play grounds; to lock up and preserve its resources in their natural condition for the benefit of tourists and pleasure seekers.

The policy of the department of agriculture is to conserve and develop all the natural resources in the national forests, and to so permit their use as to bring about the greatest good to the greatest number.

We have made a very thorough investigation and have talked with many residing within and near the forest, and in this and adjoining counties, representing grazing, mining and irrigation interests, and with those who have engaged in hunting, fishing and camping within the forest, and they are unanimous in opposing the plan to enlarge the park as proposed by Mr. Mills, or to do away with the Colorado National Forest; while many have expressed a desire to have additional territory included within the forest. Men who formerly opposed the forest service are now among its heartiest supporters.

Many of the benefits derived from the creation of the national parks are now enjoyed to an equal or greater degree under the forest service. A comparative statement of the results of including this territory within the Rocky Mountain National Park or the Colorado National Forest, will make this clear.
(1) Encourages bona fide settlement within the forest. In 1913, there were 20,000 permanent settlers within the national forests.

(2) Permits grazing under regulations which insure the fullest use without overgrazing. Homesteaders and ranchmen residing within or near the forest are given preference. Ten work animals or milch cows may be grazed free. Twenty-five per cent. of all grazing fees are returned to the county for road and school purposes, and an additional ten per cent. of all grazing fees within the state are used by the Forest Service for building roads. There are 6,000 cattle grazing within the national forest in Larimer county.

Stockmen are permitted to construct drift fences, (which may not be done on the open range), and some materials are furnished for this purpose.

(3) Free use of mature, dead and down timber is granted to settlers, miners, residents and prospectors, under proper regulations, and such timber may be purchased by others at the cost of making sales. Poles have been thus furnished for use not only in Larimer county, but at Nunn, Ault, Greeley and as far as one hundred miles distant from the forest.

(1) Land is withdrawn from settlement. Rule 9 provides, “No person will be permitted to reside permanently, engage in any business, or erect buildings upon the government lands in the park without permission, in writing, from the secretary of the interior.”

As hotel and transportation facilities are managed in other national parks, they are not only monopolies but are monopolies licensed and protected by the federal government.

(2) Rule 11 provides that “grazing must be avoided except when authority therefor has been granted by the supervisor.” The announced policy is not to grant such authority.

Mr. Mills states in his book “The Rocky Mountain Wonderland”:

“Scenic places, if used for parks, will pay larger returns than for any other use that can be made of the territory. They can be developed as parks and used for people and for nothing else . . . . Grazing, lumbering, shooting and other commercial conflicting and disfiguring uses should be rigidly prohibited . . . . The forester pastures cattle in his meadows, while the park man has only people and romping children among his wild flowers.”

If no grazing is permitted within this territory, it will very seriously injure the cattle industry, as stockmen who now own ranches outside the forest and graze their stock within the forest, would be deprived of their grazing lands.

(3) Rule 2 permits the use of dead or fallen timber for fuel by camping parties, but by no one else. No one may cut living timber without permission of the supervisor, it being the policy of the department to keep everything in its natural condition.
(4) Fires are prevented and controlled. Supervisor H. N. Wheeler and his assistants have on different occasions assisted in extinguishing fires outside the forest, notably the recent fire within the Rocky Mountain National Park, which was extinguished before the park supervisor could arrive from Denver, and which might have resulted in great damage.

(5) The Use Book provides: "Prospecting will not be interfered with .... Prospecting may be carried on without obtaining a permit from the forest officials." We have been informed by prospectors that they are not in any way hindered by forest officials, but that waste of timber is prevented, and they desire to see the forest boundaries extended so as to include all mineral lands.

(6) Hunting and fishing are allowed, forest rangers serving as deputy state game wardens without pay.

(7) No guides are required.

(8) Sites are leased for nominal sums and long terms of years for summer homes, hotels, stores, etc.

(9) Automobiles are admitted free and their use is not restricted.

(4) Presence of dead and down timber, brush, and grass not grazed increases danger from fire by making it easier to start and more difficult to extinguish them.

(5) Prospecting is not allowed. Molybdenite ore (now worth four times as much as tungsten) was recently discovered in the park, but when requested for permission to prospect further, the department refused it. The bill creating the park, as drawn and as endorsed here and in other counties from which the park was created, provided for prospecting, but this was stricken out before passage.

(6) Fishing is permitted, but may be suspended by the park supervisor. Hunting is not permitted. Fire arms must be surrendered upon entering the park, unless written leave is obtained to carry them through the park sealed.

(7) Large camp outfits and pack trains must employ licensed guides, unless special arrangements are made with the supervisor. Guides must be licensed.

(8) No announcement has been made as to whether summer homes will be permitted within the park.

(9) Rule 15 provides that "Automobiles are permitted on all the highways of the park without charge until further order," but it is understood that a charge will probably be made as soon as the department begins making improvements. At present there is no auto road within the park except four and one-half miles of the Fall river road, but the proposed extension would include others.
(10) Scenic spots are set aside for recreation, when requested, and are made accessible. Shelters and other conveniences are provided. An instance of the attention given by the Forest Service to the play ground feature of the forests, is the bringing of elk to Estes Park and to Boulder county.

Cities may obtain park sites or have stock excluded and lands set aside for camping or recreation purposes.

We are informed by forest officials that lands along the Poudre will be so set aside, if requested by the city of Fort Collins, when the Poudre river road is constructed to a point where they may be utilized.

(11) Stock is excluded from water sheds furnishing municipal water supplies, and streams from which municipal water plants are supplied are protected from pollution.

Campers are required to be careful with fires and to avoid polluting streams.

(12) Irrigation rights are protected, reservoir sites and ditch rights of way granted.

(13) The Forest Service assists stockmen in the killing of predatory animals which are a menace to live stock on the range, also in killing prairie dogs, and in controlling insect attacks on commercial timber. It is stated that 256 prairie dogs eat as much as one cow, and 32 as much as one sheep. Many thousands have been poisoned by the Forest Service within the Colorado National Forest.

(10) The entire area would be set aside for recreation and left in its natural condition.

(11) Campers are urged to burn garbage and to leave no refuse in or near running water.

(12) Existing irrigation systems may be maintained. No rights of way for new irrigation enterprises may be obtained, except that a mere revocable license may be granted, at the option of the secretary of the interior, but may be revoked at any time, and shall not be held to confer any property rights.

An application for a reservoir site within the present boundaries of the Rocky Mountain National Park, for irrigation purposes, was submitted and approved by the Forest Service before the creation of the park, but was rejected by the department of the interior after the creation of the park.

(13) Predatory animals are protected, as rule 5 states that the park is a sanctuary for wild life of every sort, and hunting is prohibited.
(14) In addition to grazing fees returned, the county receives taxes from range stock, improvements, etc., within the forest.

(15) A comprehensive system of roads and trails has been outlined by the Forest Service, including some in this county which will be of great value, and work has been done as funds have permitted.

A preliminary survey has just been made for a road from the village of Estes Park to a connection with the Poudre river road at the Rustic, and has been favorably reported on by forest officials. Funds for this road may be obtained from the ten percent improvement fund or by special appropriation. It goes through the Miller's Fork country, and will make the Colorado Agricultural college forestry lands more accessible, and relieve the congested traffic through the Big Thompson canon, if constructed. It would come within the Rocky Mountain National Park if the proposed addition is made.

We believe that the only benefit to be derived by Larimer county, or the people of Colorado, from the creation of the Rocky Mountain National Park is the advertising it will bring to our scenic resources, unless large appropriations are made for improvements. To enlarge the park as suggested would not add to the advertising value.

Your committee is convinced that from every standpoint—even that of the tourist or pleasure seeker—it is better to have these lands included within the Colorado National Forest, rather than within the Rocky Mountain National Park, with the park rules as they now are. Tourists have easier access and freer use under Forest Service rules than under the park rules. The "Come, use but do not waste" of the Forest Service, is preferable to the "Thou shalt not," and "No trespassing," contained in the park rules.

(14) No revenue will be received, and further increase in taxable property will be stopped, if this territory is added to the park.

(15) The department insists that those who obtained the passage of the park bill promised that the Fall river road will be completed without expense to the department, and park officials have definitely stated that no substantial sums will be expended in park improvements until the Fall river road is so completed.

We believe that it will be to our advantage, especially as a protection to our municipal water supply, to have the forest boundaries extended eastward. We recommend:

(1) That our senators and representatives in congress be urged to use their efforts to secure a liberal appropriation for the improvement of the Rocky Mountain National Park;

(2) That no lands be added to the Rocky Mountain National Park.

Respectfully submitted.
(Signed)
EDWARD D. FOSTER,
C. P. GILLETTE,
H. H. HARTMAN,
committee.

Following the reading of the report Judge Garbutt read of the following resolution in support of its adoption, which was adopted without a dissenting voice:
WHEREAS, The Rocky Mountain National Park is wholly without roads
or trails to permit the use thereof as a pleasure ground for the enjoyment and pleasure of all or any part of our people, and

WHEREAS, The state of Colorado and the several counties adjoining the park have expended thousands of dollars in building and improving roads leading thereto, now

THEREFORE, Be it resolved that the secretary be and he hereby is instructed to send copies of the report of our committee and of these resolutions to our senators and representatives in congress, requesting them to use their best efforts to secure a liberal appropriation for the immediate improvement of the Rocky Mountain National Park, to permit the use thereof as a pleasure ground for the enjoyment and pleasure of all of our people; and,

WHEREAS, It appears from said report that the Rocky Mountain National Forest adjoining said park has been and is being greatly improved by the building of roads and trails, by the granting of sites for summer homes therein and in every reasonable manner aiding the public to make the same a playground for all of our people, as well as a source of profit to our state and nation.

THEREFORE, Be it further resolved, that our senators and representatives in congress be urgently requested to use their best efforts to build up and maintain the same, and that no land whatsoever be added to the Rocky Mountain National Park.