

L
Clayton
H. R. R.

May 28, 1919

Mr. Stahl:

Herewith is memorandum in regard to Sweetwater Lake.

Please understand that this is prompted only because I feel that this lake and its surroundings are really worth while and should be preserved in so far as possible for the use of the public. I am in other words recording only my estimate of its value from a scenic standpoint. I believe that that land we now hold should be held for all time for the use of the public and that belief is based on the fact that there seems to be so little shore line in the state that is not patented by placer, homestead or other method or held under some sort of water rights.

Where irrigation comes into a lake basin it in a measure ruins that lake for recreative use. I have just come from seeing Jasper lake converted from what must have been a very delightful mountain lake to a mud hole.

Have seen Brainard edged with dead trees and have seen Eldora held entirely by private individuals for their own profit. It has made me feel more strongly that we should if there is any way that is feasible hold to that land we now own around Sweetwater Lake. It is accessible it is nearly half in our control, and it has a combination of interest points that will be difficult to find elsewhere. *Practically all the water in the lake is used for irrigation.* I may not know the

whole situation with relation to the desirability of excluding this area from the forest and the reasons for excluding it may outweigh many times the arguments and reasons for holding it as public land. It may be a very advantageous move to eliminate the lake from any public control whatever. But if I did not state what I found here in the way of recreational possibilities and what I consider the desirabilities of the lake as a recreational unit I feel that I would be slacking the job I am on.

I therefore respectfully submit this memorandum for your consideration and ask that you direct what further if anything be considered along the line of recreative possibilities of this lake.

L(IE)
White River,
~~Sweetwater Lake.~~

May 28, 1919.

Boundary

MEMORANDUM.

At the time the location of the new ranger station at Sweetwater was visited the lake and its surroundings were noted. The following points concerning it are noteworthy, from a purely scenic standpoint.

The lake is about three quarters of a mile in length and half that in width. It has been sounded to great depth and no bottom found. The waters are clear and cold and the depth gives them an attractive deep hue that well reflects the cliffs and nearby mountains. On the side of the lake which the Forest Service controls there are two very good looking cliffs. These are buff and pinkish in color with residual slopes at their base, where near the lake grows attractive trees and shrubs. Between these cliffs and extending back for some distance is the canon of small creek. It is like a deep wide gash in the face of the cliffs and gives each of these a very abrupt and interesting corner where they enter the lake. The creek itself is of a medium size with the usual clear cold mountain water running through its bed. A good stand of timber is found in this gulch. At the lower end of the creek where it empties into the lake is a delta that is in itself interesting and on which it is proposed to put a fish hatchery.

Besides being attractive because of these general attributes of situation and detail the creek and its canon walls possess two very excellent pieces of detail. The first is a waterfall or cascade that is found a short distance from the lake. Here the water tumbles over the limestone formation in a mighty interesting fashion. The rock strata is stepped very much like a stairs with regular treads about 6" to 8" wide and 8' long. The water falls from one to the other of these steps with a merry splash through all of the fifteen or eighteen feet of the fall. This stepped falls is set in a good stand of trees and is so arranged that if the stream dwindled to not more than a thread of water in the heat of the summer still this falls would be a thing of distinctive charm.

Within a few moments walk from the fall and higher up the creek is another feature that will call for study and exploration to fully determine its worth. This is a cave in the lime rock where the little creek mentioned probably formerly rushed into the canon. It is about 200' below the plateau on the top of the cliffs and it is reasonable to suppose that its chambers run to very near the upper plateau surface. While there we visited this cave and with the aid of a lantern got back about 100'. Here we were stopped because of a lack of a ladder. It is believed that the chambers extend above this point for probably some distance. While this is not anything that will become famous for its beauty, it is so much added interest.

Here then we have a very pleasing combination. First

the deep blue-hued lake with striking colored cliffs rising abruptly from one side, trout grounds at the head of the lake, within the lake, and in the stream that is the outlet, at least two places on the lake shore where beaches are a possibility and where the hardier visitors could get a cold plunge, the probability of a state hatchery on the delta of the creek of the cliffs, a delightful woodsy canon extending back along the creek from the great gash where that comes through the cliffs to the lake, a waterfall that would continue to be attractive at all times throughout the year, and a cave that has not been fully explored. These conditions can all be found in other situations singly or in pairs or possibly in combination of three or four, but here is a group where they are all together within less than half a mile of each other in an accessible region for the most part on land which we now control.

Perhaps three-fifths of the lake shore is owned privately. Over these owners we have no control. But we can preserve an area where the public can get to the lake, beach, canon, water fall, fishing and cave without having to cross privately owned land. Further with this attractive combination there is no question that in years to come if this all be placed under private control, just that method of getting revenue out of the lands will be followed. And unless the Forest Service does preserve this public ownership at the present time it will forever slip from public hands and become through exploitation the of livelihood to some settler when it should be free and open to

the public at all times. It is private ownership of this type that has made cities and counties in the older states ruefully gaze back to the time when they owned the land they now wish for a park and then vote the money necessary to buy that ownership back from the individual who has been given this property that should rightfully belong to the public.

Recreation is recognized as a major use of the forest. Preservation is the first great care that comes with this activity. For unless we preserve natural scenic beauty and make it accessible to the public we will be in a position where we will have nothing to offer. And there is no exaggeration when the statement is made that every lake shore, stream bank, canon and mountain side that we can protect for the public will be finally fully utilized. It may not be this century when that time comes, or it probably will be less than that time but it is surely approaching.

Then on this basis of preservation of recreational resources and that alone it is my opinion that we should reserve that area we hold on the banks of the lake against all comers and that if the whole block in which this is situated, is eliminated from the forest as land not suitable for forest purposes that this area be retained, if necessary as part of the ranger station so that there never can be a question but that we are really protectors and conservers of our natural resources entrusted to our care, whether they be grazing, water protection, timber or those play areas that of a right belong to those generations that are to come when the least scrap of natural

beauty will be at a premium. This land is distinctly for public use and should be retained on that basis as much as we protect grazing, timber, or water supply for public benefit.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Arthur H. Chandler". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

Recreation Engineer