

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum *11/1/65*

TO : Chief Park Ranger through District Park
Ranger, Southern District

DATE: October 31, 1965

FROM : Park Ranger, Southern District

SUBJECT: Report of the Beaver situation in the Warner Valley-
Drakesbad Area

On October 29, Chief Park Naturalist Robert Carpenter and I conducted an investigation of the beaver in Warner Valley along Hot Springs Creek. Our objective was to determine the amount of damage, if any, and to estimate how many beaver habitate the area. Following is a report of our findings and recommendations.

In the area of Hot Springs Creek below the Warner Valley Ranger Station, there was evidence of old beaver cuttings and dams, but no new sign whatsoever. Apparently the beaver have moved out of this area for the time being and have re-located themselves elsewhere.

In the Drakesbad area along the creek from the picnic area to approximately one-half mile beyond the northwest end of the meadow, numerous signs were observed. A few fresh cuttings were noted in the vicinity of the bath-house and swimming pool, and the dams that are presently there turned out to be mainly log jams and not the result of the beavers. Park Forester Runney removed one log jam about 75 yards from the bath-house with dynamite and the creek appears to be following its original course.

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Ern (Leapt)

Continuing on up the creek, we observed more and more fresh beaver sign. Also ~~some~~ evidence of muskrats were seen along the banks of the creek. In the area of the dead stand of lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*), there were a whole series of freshly constructed beaver dams.

Further beyond the west end of the meadow, up the creek, there is a large stand of aspens (*Populus tremuloides*) probably in the neighborhood of 300 - 400 trees. Of these approximately 75 - 100 have been worked on by the beaver. A beaver lodge was noted in this area with fresh sign in the immediate vicinity of the lodge.

Of the approximate two miles of creek that was worked, there were only about twelve dams, with most of them being located far enough from the Drakesbad area that no problem existed. The beaver's food supply was generally that of the riparian vegetation, that being Aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), Cottonwood (*Populus ^{TRICHOCARPA} fremontii*), White fir (*Abies concolor*), Red fir (*Abies magnifica*), Lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*), Willow (*Salix* sp.) and Mountain alder (*Alnus tenuifolia*). In our estimation there has been probably 200 trees either cut down or damaged by the beaver. From all beaver sign we would estimate that there is probably 2 to 3 families residing in the area and our guess would be a total of 12 to 14 beaver.

A short hike was also made up and around Dream Lake to see if any beaver had been working along the lake's edge. There was no fresh sign and just a minor amount of old to indicate that the beaver had been there at one time.

In conclusion, Chief Park Naturalist Carpenter and I would strongly recommend that since the concentration of the beaver are removed from the vicinity of Drakesbad, that they be left undisturbed. The beaver are as much a part of the natural scene in Lassen Volcanic National Park as any other form of wildlife.

If any beaver dams or log jams occur near the swimming pool and jeopardize the facility, we suggest they be removed by park personnel with dynamite or other physical means. We also suggest re-locating the creek; at present, it runs directly toward the bath-house and then makes a sharp right angle turn approximately 10 to 15 feet from the back of the building. The bank near the building is heavily eroded and undercut; with high water in a flood condition, it could possibly destroy the building. If the creek were re-routed from a point about 100 yards upstream to flow in a straight line just south of the bath-house the possibility of destruction of the facility would be greatly decreased.

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We recommend that the specimen aspen trees in the vicinity of the developed area be protected from the beaver by putting a wire mesh around the base of the tree.

William H. Ehorn
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Park Ranger