



E. T. Allen

1875-1942

Looking far beyond his time, E.T. Allen saw the forest as a possible source of perpetual industry and not as a mine to be worked out and abandoned. He grew up watching loggers sweep the trees off tracts of forestland and then move on, leaving the barren land behind. In 1898 he was appointed by the U.S. Bureau of Forestry to be the first forest ranger in the Pacific Northwest, and from that time on forest conservation became his life work. He saw the necessity not only for long-range planning, but also for cooperative action among the timber owners, the government, the public, and among the states. He devoted his professional life to bringing these forces together in timely cooperative action.

Allen became familiar with the forests of the West as a boy. In 1889, when he was fourteen, his father turned away from the academic life of a Yale professor, and brought the family West to settle in the wilderness at the foot of Mt. Rainier. Here he tutored his

youngest son in all disciplines, and in later years the younger Allen was known as an extremely well-educated man with a brilliant mind.

Allen's first position was as a reporter for the Tacoma Ledger, and it was during this time that he met Geo. S. Long of Weyerhaeuser Timber Company who introduced him to forestry as a profession. In 1898 he received the Congressional appointment to be the first forest ranger in the Pacific Northwest. When he asked for an outline of his specific duties as a forest ranger he was told that the duties of a forest ranger were "to range". In due course he became responsible for defining his position and was so resourceful that in 1899 he was called to the headquarters of the Bureau of Forestry in Washington, D.C., to make a serious study of western trees and to reorganize forest reserve administration throughout the West. One of the more successful results of this study was a

collaboration with Filibert Roth which produced the first manual of forest reserve administration. In 1905 he was appointed State Forester of California, and in 1908 was appointed by the U.S. Bureau of Forestry to be first U.S. District Forester of the Sixth District of the United States Forest Service (which included Oregon, Washington and Alaska). In 1909 Geo. S. Long, founder of the Western Forestry and Conservation Association (W.F.C.A.), appointed him first forester of the organization.

In 1909, before assuming his duties as forester for the W.F.C.A. at the annual meeting of the California Timber Owners, Allen urged the Californians to join forces with the northern states that he had already persuaded to commit to a cooperative action. At the meeting, he said, "It is only a matter of time until private as well as public lands must come under conservative forestry management and protection. Economic laws leave no alternative. The public...is bound to come to consider the ownership of so vital a resource as a public trust. It will have an interest before which no private interest can stand. We see the handwriting on the wall...It is high time for the timber owner to recognize this and lay his plans accordingly. Like all good generals, he must avoid the weakness of a forced defense, and already he is dangerously near it...LET THE PRIVATE LAND OWNER LEAD THE MOVEMENT."

After being appointed Forester, Allen terminated his work with the U.S. Bureau of Forestry, not resigning, but listed technically by the Bureau, as a 'collaborator' at a salary of a dollar a month. This position gave him desirable neutral standing between government and timber owners.

He officially assumed his duties as Forester for the W.F.C.A. on December 1, 1909, and this was his professional position until his retirement in 1932. In a report to the trustees at the onset of this work he outlined his objectives for the W.F.C.A. and these

objectives proved to be his life work. His main objective was to establish a policy of fairness and neutrality, creating a strong central organization to which private and public interests alike might turn with their individual concerns. His first specific objective was fire protection. He centered on this issue first "because it is easiest understood as well as desirable." Establishing fire protection led to his second objective which was reforestation: the provision for growing a second crop of timber as the first was harvested. The pattern Allen saw was that the reduction of fire hazards was a great step toward any plan of reforestation. His third specific objective was taxation: working out a more scientific method of taxing timber. In order to encourage reforestation he had to discourage abandoning land as soon as it was logged. He worked to lessen the burden of taxation on forestland during the long years while the trees were reaching maturity, encouraging good forest management and maximum yield when the forest was most ripe for harvesting.

Among his colleagues, Allen was best known for his brilliant mind and farsighted programs that benefited the industry and the government in ways that their own executives and administrators were not in a position to see. He and Col. W.B. Greeley were the principal architects of the Clarke-McNary Act of 1924, said to be the most important environmental legislation passed by Congress.

He and his wife, Maryland, to whom he was married for many years, had two daughters. Both were writers; she was the successful writer of short stories and articles about the South Seas. He wrote informative literature for the public about W.F.C.A. accomplishments and directions. These articles, pamphlets and books began creating public awareness of forest conservation. E.T. Allen's best known books on forestry are Practical Forestry in the Pacific Northwest (W.F.C.A., 1911) and America's Transition from Old Forests to New (W.F.C.A., 1923).