

**REPORTS OF THE FOREST PARK
RESERVATION COMMISSION OF
NEW JERSEY. EIGHTH ANNUAL
REPORT, FOR THE YEAR ENDING
OCTOBER 31ST 1912**

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Reports of the Forest Park Reservation Commission of New Jersey. Eighth Annual Report, for the Year Ending October 31st 1912 by Various

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VARIOUS

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REPORTS OF
THE FOREST PARK RESERVATION COMMISSION
OF NEW JERSEY

EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT

For the Year ending October 31st

1912



UNION HILL, N. J.
DISPATCH PRINTING COMPANY

1913

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1911/12

The Forest Park Reservation Commission.

- Hon. WOODROW WILSON, GOVERNOR, *ex-officio President.*
HENRY B. KÜMMEL, STATE GEOLOGIST, Trenton, *Executive Officer.*
ELMER H. SMITH, Salem.
CHARLES L. PACK, Lakewood.
WILLIAM W. SMALLEY, Bound Brook.
-

- ALFRED GASKILL, Trenton, *Forester and Secretary.*
JAMES O. HAZARD, Trenton, *Assistant Forester.*
CHARLES P. WILBER, Trenton, *State Firewarden.*

OFFICE, State House, Trenton.

AGRIC. DEPT.

DIVISION FIREWARDENS.

- Div. A—WILLIAM LINDSAY, Dover.
Div. B—FREDERIC C. TORREY, Lakehurst.
Div. C—JOSEPH E. ABBOTT, Hamonton.
Div. D—LEONIDAS COYLE, Millville.

Letter of Transmittal.

*To His Excellency, Woodrow Wilson, Governor of the State of
New Jersey and ex-officio President of the State Board of
Forest Park Reservation Commissioners:*

SIR—I have the honor to submit the annual report of the Forest Commission for the year ending October 31st, 1912, as required by law. The control of forest fires continues to be our greatest problem, though marked progress has been made. The work of the Commission in practical forestry and on behalf of the shade trees apparently meets with public approval. The thirteen pages of illustrations accompanying the report are necessary to a proper understanding of our work.

Respectfully yours,

HENRY B. KÜMMEL,
Executive Officer.

ALFRED GASKILL,
Secretary.

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STATE OF
MISSISSIPPI

Report of the Forest Commission.

SUMMARY.

Forestry applied in practical ways—The people approve—Forest fires much less serious—Forestry must be practiced by forest owners if by anyone—State reserves beginning to yield some revenue—Much activity on behalf of shade trees—Legislation and appropriations adequate—Financial Statement—Organization.

In publishing its eighth annual report the Forest Commission records with much satisfaction a very material improvement in the condition of the forests of the State and an increasing interest in forestry and arboriculture. Much of the interest is undoubtedly a part of the nation-wide extension of the conservation idea: it apparently is true, however, that the Commission's efforts have made forest property more secure and more valuable than it was, that the shade trees in cities and towns are better cared for. The matters that have engaged the Commission's attention are presented in some detail in the reports of the State Forester and State Firewarden which are printed herewith. A summary of them follows:

GENERAL POLICY.

The constant aim of the Commission is to solve in a practical way the problems presented. Conditions in this State are unlike those in most others. We have two million acres of woodland, yet little of it is either good forest yielding lumber or devastated barrens. Good soil, good climate and a sufficient remainder of the old stand make it possible to establish fairly good commercial forests anywhere *without planting—provided fires are stopped*. See Figs. 6, 7, 8, 14. The first concern, therefore, has been, and is, to organize an effective fire service. The second is to get forest owners to practice forestry. There are plenty of arguments in support of

State forestry, the difficulty is to get the forests. Therefore, since the State owns but a small portion of the woodland within its borders, private owners, not the State, must do most of the forestry. The third line of effort is to make the State forest reserves as valuable, in themselves and as demonstrations, as is possible; and the fourth to get more and better shade trees.

PUBLIC APPROVAL.

The Commission feels justified in calling attention to the generous measure of approval that is accorded its efforts, by those who watch from a distance as well as by those who are immediately concerned.

At home the last remnant of opposition to the Commission's policy with respect to forest fires has given place to constant demands for a strict enforcement of the laws. The effort to interest forest owners in the practice of forestry by giving security and value to their properties is steadily gaining support. The work that is done for shade trees satisfies a large number of urban citizens and makes the Commission and its activities widely known. In other States, New Jersey's laws and policy are frequently endorsed by imitation.

But in many ways the Commission's work is little more than begun. The fire habit is checked, not broken. Now comes the task of enriching the State by establishing good forests where poor forests, or none, have been, and providing for their highest utilization. The effort is educational and will proceed slowly, for in this direction the Commission can compel no one.

TRAFFIC IN WILD LAND.

A subject that has engaged the Commission's attention, though not strictly within its province, is the exploitation of land in forested sections by unscrupulous promoters. On account of its proximity to New York and Philadelphia, New Jersey has always been a fertile field for this sort of thing. The worst offenders are those who seek to sell building lots in "towns" whose existence is evidenced solely by a plot map and by "streets" cut through the brush. The statement that the "streets are opened" seems to satisfy those who think to inquire about improvements, and a railroad within

a mile or two gives an impression of conveniences that is apt to be illusory. Less objectional are the schemes for exploiting small farms. Some valuable pioneering has unquestionably been done, and is being done, in this way, though in numerous instances the facts are greatly distorted and innocent people misled.

Many of these projects are hard to deal with because no law is violated. The land is shown—often free excursions are run to it, and a valid deed is given; but improvements are promised, not made, and the ignorant foreigners who are the majority of victims know nothing of the conditions which attach to such situations, whether "town" or "farm." The worst feature, of course, is that the prices demanded are usually at least ten times as much as the land is worth. To one accustomed to city values a town lot is cheap at twenty dollars, and a farm, at only fifty dollars an acre looks easy to one who in the old country has had to pay that much each year as rent. Discontent and discouragement are apt to enter when it is realized that land as good can be bought nearby at its market value and that the payments made, and many yet to be made, are money thrown away.

The town lot schemes have another bad side, for when they fail, as most do, the property is actually of less value than it was before, because the divided ownership and clouded titles that result make it unavailable for legitimate development.

In respect to agriculture New Jersey offers opportunities that need only to be known. The State has plenty of good farm land unoccupied that can be bought at low prices. In co-operation with the Board of Agriculture plans are making to inform prospective buyers of its location and value. The Forest Commission is impelled to refer to these schemes because the abuses deal largely with land that is now forested.

THE FOREST FIRE SERVICE.

Forest fires, that for years ravaged the State, are steadily becoming less serious. This statement is not born of hope, nor is it based upon the record of a single favorable season. The year for which this report is made gave almost as great opportunity for disastrous fires as any of the three years preceding. As the State Firewarden's report amply shows forest fires in this State are now affairs of minutes, or at most hours, whereas they often