

# THE LAND REVISION ACT OF 1891

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## Foreword

BY

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Editor, MLHP

In a history of the development of public land laws published in 1968, Paul W. Gates, a noted historian of the west, summarized the 1891 Land Revision Act:

“[T]he General Revision Act of March 3, 1891, repealed the Timber Culture and Preemption Acts while preserving equities already established, required more specific information showing improvements and their value on desert land entries, denied the right of homestead to persons owning more than 160 acres, extended the commutation period to 14 months, ordered no further public auctions of lands except for military reservations and scattered tracts, and authorized the President to set aside public lands for reservations. Never before had Congress pruned out so many obsolete and incongruous provisions of past laws that had become subject to enormous abuses and provided additional safeguards to prevent laws still on the statute books from being misused. After most of the arable, grazing and forest resources of significant value had gone into private hands, frequently in large tracts, it was now possible for the Commissioner of the General Land Office to say, “The great object of the Government is to dispose of the public lands to actual settlers only—to bona fide tillers of the soil....” \*

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\* Paul W. Gates, *History of the Public Land Development* 462 (U. S. Govt. Print. Office, 1968), citing the statute and GLO, Annual Report 3 (1890).

While this legislation repealed several land laws, it also contained savings clauses to protect or preserve existing rights of settlers. In addition it amended or added specific sections of others, which are quoted sometimes at length, making it difficult to follow.

The first section repealed the Timber Culture Law, which was enacted in 1873 and revised in 1874 and 1878. Section 2 reduced Desert Land entries to 320 acres while tightening irrigation requirements. Section 3 recodified an 1873 amendment to the Homestead Act of 1862, that permitted a settler to donate portions of his or her tract to cemeteries or churches or grant rights of way to railroads without jeopardizing title to the claim. Section 4 repealed the Preemption Act of 1841, a hoary measure that figures prominently in any history of the public lands. Sections 5 and 6 amended the Homestead Act, and extended from 6 to 14 months the time needed to commute a homestead claim into a preemption right under which the tract could be bought for \$1.25 an acre. Section 7 provided the correction of clerical errors by the Land Office, while Section 8 established statutes of limitations for actions by the government to vacate certain patents (granting title) to public lands. Section 9 barred future sales of public lands except abandoned military reservations. Section 10 provided that no Indian treaties or agreements were altered by this legislation. Sections 11 through 23, covered a range of matters — settlements in Alaska Territory, mineral rights, grants of rights of way through public lands to canal or ditch companies “formed for the purpose of irrigation,” and special provisions for the Dakota Central Railroad Company and settlers who made claims on the reservation of the Ossage Indian Tribe in Kansas.

Section 24, which concludes the legislation, is so significant that it is sometimes called The Forest Reserve Act of 1891. It allowed the president to create forest reservations on public lands — these later became National Forests. Seizing on this authority, President Harrison established the first timber land reservation near Yellowstone National Park on March 30, 1891. It is posted on pages 15-16 below.

The texts of the Preemption Act, the Homestead Act, the Timber Culture Act and other land laws are posted separately on the MLHP.

# THE LAND REVISION ACT OF 1891

**26 Stat. at Large, ch. 561, pp. 1095-1103 (1891)**

CHAP. 561.--- An act to repeal timber-culture laws, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That an act entitled "An act to amend an act entitled 'An act to encourage the growth of timber on the Western prairies,'" approved June fourteenth eighteen hundred and seventy eight, and all laws supplementary thereto or amendatory thereof, be, and the same are hereby repealed: *Provided,* That this repeal shall not affect any valid rights heretofore accrued or accruing under said laws, but all bona fide claims lawfully initiated before the passage of this act may be perfected upon due compliance with law, in the same manner, upon the same terms and conditions, and subject to the same limitations, forfeitures, and contests as if this act had not been passed: *And provided further,* That the following words of the last clause of section two of said act, namely, "That not less than twenty-seven hundred trees were planted on each acre," are hereby repealed: *And provided further,* That in computing the period of cultivation the time shall run from the date of the entry, if the necessary acts of cultivation were performed within the proper time: *And provided further,* That the preparation of the land and the planting of trees shall be construed as acts of cultivation, and the time authorized to be so employed and actually employed shall be computed as a part of the eight years of cultivation required by statute: *Provided,* That any person who has made entry of any public lands of the United States under the timber-culture laws, and who has for a period of four years in good faith complied with the provisions of said laws and who is an actual bona fide resident of the State or Territory in which said land is located shall be entitled to make final proof thereto, and acquire title to the same, by the payment of one dollar and twenty five cents per acre for such tract, under such rules and regulations as shall be prescribed by the Secretary of the Interior, and registers and receivers shall be allowed the same fees and compensation for final proofs in timber-culture entries as is now

allowed by law in homestead entries: *And provided further*, That no land acquired under the provision of this act shall in any event become liable to the satisfaction of any debt or debts contracted prior to the issuing of the final certificate therefor.

**Sec. 2.** That an act to provide for the sale of desert lands in certain States and Territories, approved March third, eighteen hundred and seventy-seven, is hereby amended by adding thereto the following sections:

Sec. 4. That at the time of filing the declaration hereinbefore required the party shall also file a map of said land, which shall exhibit a plan showing the mode of contemplated irrigation, and which plan shall be sufficient to thoroughly irrigate and reclaim said land, and prepare it to raise ordinary agricultural crops, and shall also show the source of the water to be used for irrigation and reclamation. Persons entering or proposing to enter separate sections, or fractional parts of sections, of desert lands may associate together in the construction of canals and ditches for irrigating and reclaiming all of said tracts, and may file a joint map or maps showing their plan of internal improvements.

Sec. 5. That no land shall be patented to any person under this act unless he or, his assignors shall have expended in the necessary irrigation, reclamation, and cultivation thereof, by means of main canals and branch ditches, and in permanent improvements upon the land, and in the purchase of water rights for the irrigation of the same, at least three dollars per acre of whole tract reclaimed and patented in the manner following: Within one year after making entry for such tract of desert land as aforesaid the party so entering shall expend not less than one dollar per acre for the purposes aforesaid: and he shall in like manner expend the sum of one dollar per acre during the second and also during the third year thereafter, until the full sum of three dollars per acre is so expended. Said party shall file during each year with the register proof, by the affidavits of two or more credible witnesses, that the full sum of one dollar per acre has been expended in such necessary improvements during such year, and the manner in which expended, and at the expiration of the third year a map or plan showing the character and extent of such improvements. If any party who has made such application shall fail during any year to file the testimony aforesaid the lands shall revert to the United States, and the twenty-five cents advanced

payment shall be forfeited to the United States, and the entry shall be cancelled. Nothing herein contained shall prevent a claimant from making his final entry and receiving his patent at an earlier date than hereinbefore prescribed, provided that he then makes the required proof of reclamation to the aggregate extent of three dollars per acre: *Provided*, That proof be further required of the cultivation of one-eighth of the land.

Sec. 6. That this act shall not affect any valid rights heretofore accrued under said act of March third, eighteen hundred and seventy-seven, but all bona-fide claims heretofore lawfully initiated may be perfected, upon due compliance with the provisions of said act, in the same manner, upon the same terms and conditions, and subject to the same limitations, forfeitures, and contests as if this act had not been passed; or said claims, at the option of the claimant, may be perfected and patented under the provisions of said act, as amended by this act, so far as applicable; and all acts and parts of acts in conflict with this act are hereby repealed.

Sec. 7. That at any time after filing the declaration, and within the period of four years thereafter, upon making satisfactory proof to the register and the receiver of the reclamation and cultivation of said land to the extent and cost and in the manner aforesaid, and substantially in accordance with the plans herein provided for, and that he or she is a citizen of the United States, and upon payment to the receiver of the additional sum of one dollar per acre for said land, a patent shall issue therefor to the applicant or his assigns; but no person or association of persons shall hold by assignment or otherwise prior to the issue of patent, more than three hundred and twenty acres of such arid or desert lands but this section shall not apply to entries made or initiated prior to the approval of this act. *Provided, however*, That additional proofs may be required at any time within the period prescribed by law, and that the claims or entries made under this or any preceding act shall be subject to contest, as provided by the law, relating to homestead cases, for illegal inception, abandonment, or failure to comply with the requirements of law, and upon satisfactory proof thereof shall be canceled, and the lands, and moneys paid therefor, shall be forfeited to the United States.

Sec. 8. That the provisions of the act to which this is an amendment, and the amendments thereto shall apply to and be in force in the State of Colorado, as well as the States named in the

original act; and no person shall be entitled to make entry of desert land except he be a resident citizen of the State or Territory in which the land sought to be entered is located.

**Sec. 3.** That section twenty-two hundred and eighty-eight of the Revised Statutes be amended so as to read as follows:

Sec. 2288. Any bona fide settler under the pre-emption, homestead, or other settlement law shall have the right to transfer, by warranty against his own acts, any portion of his claim for church, cemetery, or school purposes, or for the right of way of railroads, canals, reservoirs, or ditches for irrigation or drainage across it; and the transfer for such public purposes shall in no way vitiate the right to complete and perfect the title to his claim."

**Sec. 4.** That chapter four of title thirty-two, excepting sections twenty-two hundred and seventy-five, twenty-two hundred and seventy-six, twenty-two hundred and eighty-six, of the Revised Statutes of the United States, and all other laws allowing pre-emption of the public lands of the United States, are hereby repealed, but all bona fide claims lawfully initiated before the passage of this act, under any of said provisions of law so repealed, may be perfected upon due compliance with law, in the same manner, upon the same terms and conditions, and subject to the same limitations, forfeitures, and contests, as if this act had not been passed.

**Sec. 5.** That sections twenty two hundred and eighty-nine and twenty-two hundred and ninety, in said chapter numbered five of the Revised Statutes, be, and the same are hereby, amended, so that they shall read as follows:

Sec. 2289. Every person who is the head of a family, or who has arrived at the age of twenty-one years, and is a citizen of the United States, or who has filed his declaration of intention to become such, as required by the naturalization laws, shall be entitled to enter one quarter section, or a less quantity, of unappropriated public lands, to be located in a body in conformity to the legal subdivisions of the public lands, but no person who is the proprietor of more than one hundred and sixty acres of land in any State or Territory, shall acquire any right under the homestead law. And every person owning and residing on land may, under the provisions of this

section, enter other land lying contiguous to his land, which shall not, with the land so already owned and occupied, exceed in the aggregate one hundred and sixty acres.

Sec. 2290. That any person applying to enter land under the preceding section shall first make and subscribe before the proper land office an affidavit that he or she is the head of a family, or is over twenty-one years of age, and that such application is honestly and in good faith made for the purpose of actual settlement and cultivation, and not for the benefit of any other person, persons or corporation, and that he or she will faithfully and honestly endeavor to comply with all the requirements of law as to settlement, residence, and cultivation necessary to acquire title to the land applied for; that he or she is not acting as agent of any person, corporation, or syndicate in making such entry, nor in collusion with any person, corporation, or syndicate to give them the benefit of the land entered, or any part thereof, or the timber thereon; that he or she does not apply to enter the same for the purpose of speculation, but in good faith to obtain a home for himself, or herself, and that he or she has not directly or indirectly made, and will not make, any agreement or contract in any way or manner, with any person or persons, corporation or syndicate whatsoever, by which the title which he or she might acquire from the Government of the United States should inure, in whole or in part, to the benefit of any person, except himself, or herself, and upon filing such affidavit with the register or receiver on payment of five dollars when the entry is of not more than eighty acres, and on payment of ten dollars when the entry is for more than eighty acres, he or she shall thereupon be permitted to enter the amount of land specified."

**Sec. 6.** That section, twenty-three hundred and one of the Revised Statutes be amended so as to read as follows:

"Sec. 2301. Nothing in this chapter shall be so construed as to prevent any person who shall hereafter avail himself of the benefits of section twenty-two hundred and eighty-nine from paying the minimum price for the quantity of land so entered at any time after the expiration of fourteen calendar months from the date of such entry, and obtaining a patent therefor, upon making proof of settlement and of residence and cultivation for such period of fourteen months," and the provision of this section shall apply to lands on the ceded portion of the Sioux Reservation by act

approved March second, eighteen hundred and eighty-nine, in South Dakota, but shall not relieve said settlers from any payments now required by law.

**Sec. 7.** That whenever it shall appear to the Commissioner of the General Land Office that a clerical error has been committed in the entry of any of the public lands such entry may be suspended, upon proper notification to the claimant, through the local land office, until the error has been corrected; and all entries made under the preemption, homestead, desert-land, or timber-culture laws, in which final proof and payment may have been made and certificates issued, and to which there are no adverse claims originating prior to final entry and which have been sold or incumbered prior to the first day of March, eighteen hundred and eighty-eight, and after final entry, to bona-fide purchasers, or incumbrancers, for a valuable consideration, shall unless upon an investigation by a Government Agent, fraud on the part of the purchaser has been found, be confirmed and patented upon presentation of satisfactory proof to the Land Department of such sale or incumbrance: *Provided*, That after the lapse of two years from the date of the issuance of the receiver's receipt upon the final entry of any tract of land under the homestead, timber-culture, desert-land, or pre-emption laws, or under this act, and when there shall be no pending contest or protest against the validity of such entry, the entryman shall be entitled to a patent conveying the land by him entered, and the same shall be issued to him; but this proviso shall not be construed to require the delay of two years from the date of said entry before the issuing of a patent therefor.

**Sec. 8.** That suits by the United States to vacate and annul any patent heretofore issued shall only be brought within five years from the passage of this act, and suits to vacate and annual (sic) patents hereafter issued shall only be brought within six years after the date of the issuance of such patents. And in the States of Colorado, Montana, Idaho, North Dakota and South Dakota, Wyoming, and in the District of Alaska and the gold and silver regions of Nevada, and the Territory of Utah, in any criminal prosecution or civil action by the United States for a trespass on such public timber lands or to recover timber or lumber cut thereon, it shall be a defense if the defendant shall show that the said timber was so cut or removed



from the timber lands for use in such State or Territory by a resident thereof for agricultural, mining, manufacturing, or domestic purposes, and has not been transported out of the same; but nothing herein contained shall apply to operate to enlarge the rights of any railway company to cut timber on the public domain: *Provided*, That the Secretary of the Interior may make suitable rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this section.

**Sec. 9.** That hereafter no public lands of the United States, except abandoned military or other reservations, isolated and disconnected fractional tracts authorized to be sold by section twenty-four hundred and fifty-five of the Revised Statutes, and mineral and other lands the sale of which at public auction has been authorized by acts of Congress of a special nature having local application, shall be sold at public sale.

**Sec. 10.** That nothing in this act shall change, repeal, or modify any agreements or treaties made with any Indian tribes for the disposal of their lands, or of land ceded to the United States to be disposed of for the benefit of such tribes, and the proceeds thereof to be placed in the Treasury of the United States; and the disposition of such lands shall continue in accordance with the provisions of such treaties or agreements, except as provided in section 5 of this act.

**Sec. 11.** That until otherwise ordered by Congress lands in Alaska may be entered for town-site purposes, for the several use and benefit of the occupants of such town sites, by such trustee or trustees as may be named by the Secretary of the Interior for that purpose, such entries to be made under the provisions of section twenty-three hundred and eighty-seven of the Revised Statutes as near as may be; and when such entries shall have been made the Secretary of the Interior shall provide by regulation for the proper execution of the trust in favor of the inhabitants of the town site, including the survey of the land into lots, according to the spirit and intent of said section twenty-three hundred and eighty-seven of the Revised Statutes, whereby the same results would be reached as though the entry had been made by a county judge and the disposal of the lots in such town site and the proceeds of the sale thereof had been prescribed by the legislative authority of a State or Territory:

*Provided*, That no more than six hundred and forty acres shall be embraced in one townsite entry.

**Sec. 12.** That any citizen of the United States twenty-one years of age, and any association of such citizens, and any corporation incorporated under the laws of the United States, or of any State or Territory of the United States now authorized by law to hold lands in the Territories now or hereafter in possession of and occupying public lands in Alaska for the purpose of trade or manufactures, may purchase not exceeding one hundred and sixty acres to be taken as near as practicable in a square form, of such land at two dollars and fifty cents per acre: *Provided*, That in case more than one person, association or corporation shall claim the same tract of land the person, association or corporation having the prior claim by reason of possession and continued occupation shall be entitled to purchase the same; but the entry of no person, association, or corporation shall include improvements made by or in possession of another prior to the passage of this act.

**Sec. 13.** That it shall be the duty of any person, association, or corporation entitled to purchase land under this act to make an application to the United States marshal, ex officio surveyor-general of Alaska, for an estimate of the cost of making a survey of the lands occupied by such person, association, or corporation, and the cost of the clerical work necessary to be done in the office of the said United States marshal, ex officio surveyor-general; and on the receipt of such estimate from the United States marshal, ex officio surveyor general, the said person, association, or corporation shall deposit the amount in a United States depository, as is required by section numbered twenty-four hundred and one, Revised Statutes, relating to deposits for surveys.

That on the receipt by the United States marshal, ex-officio surveyor-general, of the said certificates of deposit, he shall employ a competent person to make such survey, under such rules and regulations as may be adopted by the Secretary of the Interior, who shall make his return of his field notes and maps to the office of the said United States marshal, ex-officio surveyor-general; and the said United States marshal, ex officio surveyor-general, shall cause the said field notes and plats of such survey to be examined, and, if correct, approve the same, and shall transmit certified copies of

such maps and plats to the office of the Commissioner of the General Land Office.

That when the said field notes and plats of said survey shall have been approved by the said Commissioner of the General Land Office, he shall notify such person, association, or corporation, who shall then, within six months after such notice, pay to the said United States marshal, ex officio surveyor-general, for such land, and patent shall issue for the same.

**Sec. 14.** That none of the provisions of the last two preceding sections of this act shall be so construed as to warrant the sale of any lands belonging to the United States which shall contain coal or the precious metals, or any town site, or which shall be occupied by the United States for public purposes, or which shall be reserved for such purposes, or to which the natives of Alaska have prior rights by virtue of actual occupation, or which shall be selected by the United States Commissioner of Fish and Fisheries on the island of Kadiak and Afognak for the purpose of establishing fish-culture stations. And all tracts of land not exceeding six hundred and forty acres in any one tract now occupied as missionary stations in said district of Alaska are hereby excepted from the operation of the last three preceding sections of this act. No portion of the islands of the Pribilof Group or the Seal Islands of Alaska shall be subject to sale under this act; and the United States reserves, and there shall be reserved in all patents issued under the provisions of the last two preceding sections the right of the United States to regulate the taking of salmon and to do all things necessary to protect and prevent the destruction of salmon in all the waters of the lands granted frequented by salmon.

**Sec. 15.** That until otherwise provided by law the body of lands known as Annette Islands, situated in Alexander Archipelago in Southeastern Alaska, on the north side of Dixon's entrance, be, and the same is hereby, set apart as a reservation for the use of the Metlakahtla Indians, and those people known as Metlakahtlans who have recently emigrated from British Columbia to Alaska, and such other Alaskan natives as may join them, to be held and used by them in common, under such rules and regulations, and subject to such restrictions, as may prescribed from time to time by the Secretary of the Interior.

**Sec.16.** That town-site entries may be made by incorporated towns and cities on the mineral lands of the United States, but no title shall be acquired by such towns or cities to any vein of gold, silver, cinnabar, cooper, or lead or to any valid mining claim or mining claims. When mineral veins are possessed within the limits of an incorporated town or city, and such possession is recognized by local authority or by the laws of the United States, the title to town lots shall be subject to such recognized possession and the necessary use thereof and when entry has been made or patent issued for such town sites to such incorporated town or city, the possessor of such mineral vein may enter and receive patent for such mineral vein, and the surface ground appertaining thereto: *Provided*, That no entry shall be made by such mineral-vein claimant for surface ground where the owner or occupier of the surface ground shall have had possession of the same before the inception of the title of the mineral-vein applicant.

**Sec. 17.** That reservoir sites located or selected and to be located and selected under the provisions of "An act making appropriations sites for sundry civil expenses of the Government for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, eighteen hundred and eighty-nine, and for other purposes," and amendments thereto, shall be restricted to and shall contain only so much land as is actually necessary for the construction and maintenance of reservoirs; excluding so far as practicable lands occupied by actual settlers at the date of the location of said reservoirs and that the provision of "An Act making appropriations for sundry civil expenses of the Government for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, eighteen hundred and ninety-one, and for other purposes," which reads as follows, viz: "No person who shall after the passage of this act enter upon any of the public lands with a view to occupation, entry, or settlement under any of the land laws shall be permitted to acquire title to more than three hundred and twenty acres in the aggregate under all said laws," shall be construed to include in the maximum amount of lands the title to which is permitted to be acquired by one person only agricultural lands and not to include lands entered or sought to be entered under mineral land laws.

**Sec. 18.** That the right of way through the public lands and reservations of the United States is hereby granted to any canal or

ditch company formed for the purpose of irrigation and duly organized under the laws of any State or Territory, which shall have filed, or may hereafter file, with the Secretary of the Interior a copy of its articles of incorporation, and due proofs of its organization under the same, to the extent of the ground occupied by the water of the reservoir and of the canal and its laterals, and fifty feet on each side of the marginal limits thereof; also the right to take, from the public lands adjacent to the line of the canal or ditch, material, earth, and stone necessary for the construction of such canal or ditch: *Provided*, That no such right of way shall be so located as to interfere with the proper occupation by the Government of any such reservation, and all maps shall be subject to the approval of the Department of the Government having jurisdiction of such reservation, and the privilege herein granted shall not be construed to interfere with the control of water for irrigation and other purposes under authority of the respective States or Territories.

**Sec. 19.** That any canal or ditch company desiring to secure the benefits of this act shall, within twelve months after the location of ten miles of its canal, if the same be upon surveyed lands, and if upon unsurveyed lands, within twelve months after the survey thereof by the United States, file with the register of the land office for the district where such land is located a map of its canal or ditch and reservoir; and upon the approval thereof by the Secretary of the Interior the same shall be noted upon the plats in said office, and thereafter all such lands over which such rights of way shall pass shall be disposed of subject to such right of way. Whenever any person or corporation, in the construction of any canal, ditch, or reservoir, injures or damages the possession of any settler on the public domain, the party committing such injury or damage shall be liable to the party injured for such injury or damage.

**Sec. 20.** That the provisions of this act shall apply to all canals, ditches, or reservoirs, heretofore or hereafter constructed, whether constructed by corporations, individuals, or association of individuals, on the filing of the certificates and maps herein provided for. If such ditch, canal, or reservoir, has been or shall be constructed by an individual or association of individuals, it shall be sufficient for such individual or association of individuals to file with the Secretary of the Interior, and with the register of the land office

where said land is located, a map of the line of such canal, ditch, or reservoir, as in case of a corporation, with the name of the individual owner or owners thereof, together with the articles of association, if any there be. Plats heretofore filed shall have the benefits of this act from the date of their filing, as though filed under it: *Provided*, That if any section of said canal, or ditch, shall not be completed within five years after the location of said section, the rights herein granted shall be forfeited as to any uncompleted section of said canal, ditch, or reservoir, to the extent that the same is not completed at the date of the forfeiture.

**Sec. 21.** That nothing in this act shall authorize such canal or ditch company to occupy such right of way except for the purpose of said canal or ditch, and then only so far as may be necessary for the construction, maintenance, and care of said canal or ditch.

**Sec. 22.** That the section of land reserved for the benefit of the Dakota Central Railroad Company on the west bank of the Missouri River, at the mouth of Red River, as provided by section sixteen of "An act to divide a portion of the reservation of the Sioux Nation of Indians in Dakota into separate reservations and to secure the relinquishment of the Indian title to the remainder and for other purposes," approved March second, eighteen hundred and eighty-nine, shall be subject to entry under the town-site law only.

**Sec. 23.** That in all cases where second entries of land on the Osage Indian trust and diminished reserve lands in Kansas, to which at the time there were no adverse claims, have been made and the law complied with as to residence and improvement, said entries be, and the same are hereby, confirmed, and in all cases where persons were actual settlers and residing upon their claims upon said Osage Indian trust and diminished reserve lands in the State of Kansas on the ninth day of May, eighteen hundred and seventy two, and who have made subsequent pre-emption entries either upon public or upon said Osage Indian trust and diminished reserve lands, upon which there were no legal prior adverse claims at the time, and the law complied with as to settlement, said subsequent entries be, and the same are hereby, confirmed.

**Sec. 24.** That the President of the United States may, from time to time, set apart and reserve, in any State or Territory having public land bearing forests, in any part of the public lands wholly or in part covered with timber or undergrowth, whether of commercial value or not, as public reservations, and the President shall, by public proclamation, declare the establishment of such reservations and the limits thereof.

Approved, March 3, 1891.

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*Taking advantage of the sweeping authority granted him by §24, President Harrison issued the following Proclamation establishing the first forest reserve near Yellowstone National Park on March 30, 1891:*

[No. 17.]

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA .  
A PROCLAMATION.

Whereas it is provided by section twenty four of an Act approved March the third, eighteen hundred and ninety one, entitled an act to repeal timber-culture laws, and for other purposes: "that the President of the United States may, from time to time, set apart and reserve, in any State or Territory having public land bearing forests, in any part of the public lands wholly or in part covered with timber or undergrowth, whether of commercial value or not, as public reservations, and the President shall, by public proclamation, declare the establishment of such reservations and limits thereof."

Now therefore, I Benjamin Harrison, President of the United States by virtue of the power in me vested, do hereby make known and proclaim that there has been and is hereby reserved from entry or settlement and set apart for a public forest reservation all that tract of land situate in the State of Wyoming contained within the following-described boundaries.

Beginning at a point on the parallel of forty four degrees fifty minutes, where said parallel is intersected by the meridian of one hundred and ten degrees west longitude, thence due east along said parallel to the meridian of one hundred and nine degrees and thirty minutes west longitude; thence due south along said meridian to the forty fourth parallel of north latitude; thence due west along said parallel to its point of intersection with the west boundary of the State of Wyoming; thence due north along said boundary line to its intersection with the south boundary of the Yellowstone National Park.

Warning is hereby expressly given to all persons not to enter or make settlement upon the tract of land reserved by this proclamation.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington this 30th day of March in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and ninety one, and of the Independence of the United States the one hundred and fifteenth.

[Seal]

BENJAMIN HARRISON.

By the President:  
JAMES G. BLAINE  
*Secretary of State.*



Posted MLHP: June 8, 2012.