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REFLOODING OF LOWER KLAMATH LAKE HELD IMPRACTICABLE

It has long been the hope of conservationists that some arrangement might be made by which a program could be undertaken for reflooding Lower Klamath Lake, which was at one time a splendid waterfowl breeding and feeding ground, lying partly in southern Oregon and partly in northern California. By reason of the use of the water of Klamath River in recent years for irrigation of agricultural lands and also for power, water has been lacking to keep the marshes of Lower Klamath Lake habitable for waterfowl.

A study was made this year by L. T. Jessup, an irrigation engineer assigned by the Bureau of Public Roads to the Biological Survey, of the United States Department of Agriculture, to determine the practicability of a reflooding program. At a conference held in Klamath Falls, Oreg., on September 27 and 28, by Paul G. Redington, chief of the Biological Survey, with representatives of the California and Oregon Game commissions, the report of the engineer was rendered. The many obstacles that preclude further consideration of the project were there brought out.

In the first place, the full supply of water from the Klamath River is needed for existing and projected irrigation plans and for power use. In the second place, legislation of the States of Oregon and California, which ceded the lands involved to the Federal Government for use as a reclamation project, stipulated that the water should be used for irrigation purposes. In the third place, even if water were available, it is held that the reflooding of Lower Klamath Lake would be detrimental to agriculture in the immediate region, and the cost of necessary project works, such as dikes and pumping plants, and the purchase of privately owned lands, would run into a very large figure.

At the conference held in Klamath Falls it was decided to drop consideration of the reflooding program in the Lower Klamath region and to concentrate the efforts of sportsmen and others interested throughout the country on the :

restoration work to be done on the Bear River Marshes, at the northern end of Great Salt Lake, in Utah. Here it is possible by diking to establish large areas of fresh water, which when completed will not only furnish breeding and feeding grounds for a very large number of waterfowl but will operate to decrease the mortality that has been so serious among the birds for many years.

The Chief of the Biological Survey, in commenting on this general situation, stated that the news of the abandonment of the Lower Klamath Lake project would be disappointing to many sportsmen and conservationists of the country who had banked on the reestablishment of an important waterfowl concentration area there. Continuing, Mr. Redington said, "I am very sorry to be the harbinger of this bad news, since I am well aware of the great interest displayed by thousands of sportsmen and bird lovers in the project, but the obstacles to reflooding Lower Klamath Lake appear to be of an insuperable nature. Copies of the engineer's report on the project are to be given to many of the organizations that have been behind this project, and it is my opinion that after reading the report their judgment as to the unfeasibility of the project will coincide with the judgment of the Oregon and California fish and game commissions and with that of the Biological Survey.

"We are daily expecting the report of our engineer who has been working for the past few months on a plan to construct additional dikes on the Bear River Marshes in Utah. We know that this sort of restoration work is entirely possible since the State Fish and Game Commissioner of Utah, Mr. Madsen, and certain duck clubs owning land on the Bear River Marshes have already by diking established such areas.

"The State of Utah has by legislation consented to the establishment of a Federal project, which, when completed, will comprehend more than 100 square miles of fresh-water marshland territory for wild fowl, and it is our hope that this project may be consummated in the near future. Valuable not alone as a breeding ground but for feeding and resting, it is as important a concentration area as any that can be found throughout the United States, and it is imperative that action be had to remedy the conditions that for the past decade or so have caused such a heavy mortality of the ducks and other waterfowl in the lines of the great western migration."

Mr. Redington further stated that the engineering examinations of the Bear River Marshes in Utah and the Lower Klamath and Malheur Lakes in California and Oregon would not have been possible but for the generosity of western sportsmen, who raised a fund of more than \$6,000, which permitted the Biological Survey to obtain the services of competent engineers.

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