

The 1940 special use permit applies to the area described in the 1927 cooperative agreement. It provides, briefly:

For exclusive use and occupancy of this area by the Taos Pueblo for the period in the latter part of August when members of the Pueblo are conducting certain religious ceremonies; non members of the Pueblo may enter the area in other periods only with written permits issued by the Forest Supervisor and concurred in by Tribal officials.

That the timber, wood and forage are reserved for the exclusive use of the Indians of the Taos Pueblo—that which is used for personal or tribal use to be free, but that used for commercial purposes to be paid for under the regulations relating to sale of National Forest timber.

That the Forest Service within financial limitations will extend and improve the forest within the area.

That the Pueblo may with the concurrence of the Forest Supervisor construct and maintain at its own expense such improvements and facilities as it needs.

That the Pueblo shall also when funds are available therefor, construct and maintain such improvements as it and the Forest Service agree are necessary for the protection of the forest and water supply because of the use made of the area by the Pueblo.

That the Pueblo may patrol the area to such extent as may be mutually agreed upon with the Forest Service for the purpose of reporting violations of the terms of the permit or the regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture and for preventing and suppressing forest fires and the maintenance of sanitary conditions.

This special use permit remains in effect today. We believe it adequately protects and provides for the interests of the Indians. To the best of our knowledge the Indians have not been harassed nor interfered with in the practice of their religion by the forest officers or the general public.

The lands are closed to all occupancy except that of members of the Pueblo during the 10 days in August when the special ceremonials take place in the Blue Lake area. Other use and occupancy by non-Indians has been controlled by the Forest Service through issuance of permits for many years.

Non-Indian use has been small and for limited periods. Contrary to some reports we have never nor do we plan to encourage tourist use of the area. In fact for the last 5 years Blue Lake and its immediate environs have been closed to all public use.

Timber on the area has been held and now is held for use of the Indians. Occupants of the Taos Pueblo graze their livestock over these lands without charge. The watershed has been protected from fire and we have continued to give close attention to the use of the lands by livestock in the interest of watershed conservation.

At the same time the permit and the 1933 act which authorized it, allow other public use and benefits consistent with Indian needs. These lands are important watershed lands. The people of the Taos Pueblo depend upon water from the Rio Pueblo de Taos and the Rio Lucero for both domestic and irrigation water.

So also do many other people in towns and villages and on farms to the south and west of the Pueblo. The enhancement and conservation of good watershed conditions in these drainages are of first rate importance to the Pueblo Indians and to many other people, too.

The lands provide forage for domestic livestock and for wild game. About 10,000 acres of the area described in H.R. 3306 are grazed by livestock belonging to non-Indian permittees. The area also has potential for wildlife production and for outdoor recreation in the form of hunting, fishing, and camping, particularly at the higher elevation.