The Plants Found in a Beaver Swamp

L. H. Pammel

Iowa State College

Follow this and additional works at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/amesforester

Part of the Forest Sciences Commons

Recommended Citation

Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/amesforester/vol6/iss1/14

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Ames Forester by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.
THE PLANTS FOUND IN A BEAVER SWAMP.
By L. H. Pammel, Professor of Botany, Iowa State College.

The American beaver was, at one time, numerous in the Rocky Mountains and at many points in the north. The great value of the fur has greatly lessened this fine fur-bearing animal. In many parts of the Rockies and in the north, geographic names indicate the abundance of the animal, such as Beaver creek, Beaver dam, etc. The presence of the beaver is often indicated by arms built, many of them long ago, and the impounding of water in the form of little lakes. A fine series of these was observed by the writer last summer on the Grand River beyond Ouray. Another small series was observed by the writer on Spruce creek, a tributary of the west fork of St. Louis creek, just above the summer camp of the Ames Foresters near the ranger station, at an altitude of about 9,200 feet. Spruce Creek

Dr. Pammel taking the air on a mountain peak in the Rockies.

is a small stream of clear water, fed mostly by springs. There were four of the little ponds situated in a little expansion of Spruce Creek. The ponds are located about a quarter of a mile back from the west fork of St. Louis Creek. The ground is somewhat higher and is covered mainly with the lodge pole pine a few open spaces where the bunch grass (Festuca scabrella),
Beaver dam, west fork St. Louis Creek Arapaho Nat'l. Forest, Colorado.
red fescue (Festuca rubra), Valerian (Valeriana edulis), switch grass (Agropyron sp.) and hair grass (Deschampsia caespitosa) were growing in profusion. On the border of the lakes were good-sized trees of the Engelmann spruce (Picea Engelmannii) and on the hillsides Arnica (Arnica cordifolia), fireweed (Epilobium spicatum) and twin flower (Linnea borealis). The dam in each of the little lakes was overgrown with willows and here and there a young Engelmann spruce. On the dry borders and drives adjacent to the old swamps were hair grass (Deschampsia caespitosa), wild barley (Hordeum nodosum), Gentiana (Gentiana sp.), foxtail (Alopecurus geniculatus), manna grass (Glyceria nervata), alpine timothy (Phleum alpinum), larkspur (Delphinium sp.).

In the swamps created by the beaver, I found swamp birch (Betula glandulosa), lungwort (Mertensia sibirica), aconite (Aconitum columbianum), rush (Juncus sp.), luzula (Luzula parviflora), gentian (Swertia palustris), green hellebore (Veratrum speciosum), twisted stalk (Streptopus amplexifolius), cress (Cordamine cardiophylla), saxifrage (Saxifraga punctata), parnassus (Parnassus fimbriata), trollius, (Trollius albidiflorus), sedge (Carex eburnea), orchid (Limmorchis viridiflora), Cow parsnip (Heracleum lanatum), (Pyrola chlorantha), Avens (Geum macrophyllum), reed grass (Cinna pendula), groundsel (Senecio triangularis) Epilobium adenocaulon, Polemonium occidentalis, Calamagrostis, dock (Rumex densiflorus), Blue joint (Calamagrostis canadensis, and C. acuminata). Several species of willows were observed. Some of these growing on the artificial dams, and others—the swamp.

I observed a quaking aspen four inches in diameter cut off by the beaver. I was told that the beaver feeds on the bark of the quaking aspen and that their dams are constructed near aspen groves. Aspens were abundant in the vicinity. It is probable that bog conditions have been largely preserved by the beaver in making lakes and ponds.

The fourth annual convention of the Intercollegiate Association of Forest Clubs was held at New Haven, Connecticut, February 27 and 28 of this year, the Yale Forestry School acting as host to the other clubs in the association. The Ames Forestry Club was unable to send a representative this year but expect to be on hand next year at the convention which is to be held with the University of California.