SPECIFIC AREA STUDY
TENSAW RIVER SWAMP
ALABAMA

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
REGION ONE

October - 1960
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ALABAMA

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Elbert Cox, October 14, 1960
Regional Director
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SPECIFIC AREA STUDY
TENSAW RIVER SWAMP
ALABAMA

SUMMARY

1. The Tensaw River Swamp, a bottomland hardwood forest with cypress growing in association in moist locations and pine on the higher sites is located along the Tensaw River approximately 25 miles north of Mobile, Alabama.

2. Logging has already removed almost all of the mature cypress trees and is at this time being carried on in the hardwoods.

3. Hunting and fishing are the principal recreational activities in the area.

4. All the land considered is in private ownership.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that past and present logging activities have so altered natural conditions in the Tensaw River Swamp, that it does not merit further consideration as a possible addition to the National Park System.
NAME OF AREA

Tensaw River Swamp

LOCATION

Baldwin County, Alabama

BACKGROUND TO AND PURPOSE OF STUDY

Authorization for this investigation was given by Acting Director Tolson by his approval on September 18, 1959, of the Recommended Work Program, National Park System Plan, Region One, submitted by memorandum dated August 7, 1959, in which a preliminary investigation of the Tensaw River Swamp was recommended.

The purpose of the study was to find out if an area of southern river bottom hardwood forest comparable to the Congaree River Swamp, South Carolina in size, species composition and other natural values existed along the Tensaw River.

STUDY PROCEDURES

This study was made July 13-14, 1960 by Carl P. Schreiber, Regional Chief, Proposed Park Studies Section, Region One. As the area is without roads or trails it was decided that the best way to see a representative portion was by small boat.

July 13. Spent this day visiting around the fringes of the swamp by car, talking to fishermen, boat rental operator and residents about conditions likely to be found in the swamp. Made arrangements to rent a boat the following day.
July 14. Spent this day traveling along the meandering waterways of the area. (See area map in map section for travel route and photograph points.)

DESCRIPTION

The portion of the Tensaw River Swamp visited during this investigation is a region of low lying hardwood bottomland along the Tensaw River with pine on the high ground bordering the swamp and cypress growing in association on the more moist sites.

The waterways are relatively wide, deep and slow moving. The so called lakes in the area appear to have originated as stream meanders.

Logging is the principal commercial use being made of the area and although for the most part this activity is not visible from the streams, it is in other places such as in picture No. 1. Here logs, slash, skidways and log landings give notice of the activity.

ACCESSIBILITY

The Tensaw River Swamp is located approximately 25 miles north of Mobile, Alabama. U. S. Highway 43 parallels the river to the west, while U. S. Highway 31 and State Highway 59 parallel the river to the east. Numerous county roads, some paved and some unpaved, give access to the riverbank from the main highways. Access into the interior of the swamp is by small boat.
ANALYSIS OF AREA

Scenic

Much of the scenic appeal of the area has been lost to logging activities which continue at a heavy rate. Even so, along the streams where logging scars have grown over, a pleasant atmosphere for boating and fishing is found.

Scientific

It appears that in an uncut condition, the Tensaw Swamp was an outstanding scientific exhibit. However, the loss of values suffered by past logging and the damage being done by present logging are so serious as to impair whatever national significance the area at one time possessed.

Recreation

Hunting and fishing are the principal recreational uses being made of the area. Since the logging going on does not particularly interfere with either of these activities, it can be expected that the area will continue to have considerable local importance for this type of recreation.
1. Active log landing.

2. Hardwood logs rafted together prior to being towed to the mill site.
3-4. Although logging continues throughout most of the area there is still considerable appeal for water based recreation.
TENSAW RIVER SWAMP, ALABAMA

5. Little Lake.

6. Big Beaver Creek.
7. Here at Hubbard's landing, boats, motors and supplies are available for fishermen.

8. A small tug tows a raft of hardwood logs down Tensaw Lake.