

Claeysens, Paul G. "Private Enterprise and Early Twentieth Century Water Resource Development on Oregon's Second Largest Lake: A Cultural Resource Evaluation Report of the Klovdahl Tunnel." Eugene, OR: Oakridge Ranger District, Willamette National Forest, 1987.
(Reviewed by Jessica Bliss)

This report evaluates the Klovdahl Tunnel's eligibility as a National Historic Place. The tunnel is located on the southwest side of Waldo Lake, the headwaters of the Middle Fork of the Willamette River. Constructed in 1905, the tunnel was the first (and only) step in a project to turn Waldo Lake into a reservoir, with the intent to provide irrigation and power to the Willamette Valley.

The aptly named Waldo Lake Irrigation and Power Company, owned by Frederick H. Ray until the reservoir project's demise ten years later, had grand plans for its anticipated reservoir. The company projected supplying enough water to irrigate 100,000 acres of farmland and to generate 40,000 “horsepower” of energy.

In addition to giving adequate and assuredly precise information about the tunnel's construction, this resource includes several pages of maps, photographs, and plans regarding the lake. It puts the entire project into its historical context, and considers the many reasons why Ray figured he could create a monopoly on the water supply of the Willamette. It also examines the reasons for the project's ultimate failure.

Interestingly, the Klovdahl Tunnel was declared a Historic Place, due not exactly to its significance as a structure, but more due to the significance it *would* have had if the project had been completed. Intriguing! The author, Paul G. Claeysens, believes that the enormous impact that the Waldo Lake reservoir project could have had on local and regional economy, demography, and natural resources warrants it a place of cultural and historical importance.

Critique

This report rocks. It's not unbearably long, and it gives a wealth of background about the tunnel. The project is considered from several different standpoints—historical, management, and environmental aspects—which provides the reader with a comprehensive understanding of its significance. I enjoyed reading it, and look forward to visiting the site.

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