



Charles H. Stoddard
1912-1997

“We have a choice about the kind of world we leave to future generations. But unless we heed the warning signals, there may be no historian to recall one day that we failed to act in time.”

—Charles H. Stoddard

Charles Stoddard was a central figure in one of the first major large-scale water pollution battles in the Nation. The Reserve Mining Company controversy over the pollution of Lake Superior drew attention all across the country.

As a government official in the middle of that dispute, Stoddard's actions would earn plaudits from conservationists and heavy criticism from business and industry.

Stoddard was involved in conservation for most of his life, as a professional forester, a policy-maker near the highest levels of government and, after retiring, as an environmental activist. He's the author of a forestry textbook that's still in use in some universities, more than 40 years after its first printing, and the author of numerous other scholarly articles on natural resources. He also authored a book entitled "Looking Forward: Planning America's Future," which was published in 1982. In that book, which was highly praised by former U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson and former U.S. Interior Secretary Stewart Udall, Stoddard made the case for major reforms in government and economic policies to move the nation toward what he called a "conservator society," which would conserve and protect our natural resources for generations to come.

At his home near Minong, a 340-acre forest with walking and hunting trails, a spring-fed trout stream, ponds, wildlife openings and wetlands bears his mark. It was his outdoor laboratory, where he practiced resource management and enhancement throughout his adult life.

Still, Stoddard may be most remembered for his important role in the Reserve Mining controversy.

A Wisconsin native who always maintained a residence at Minong, Stoddard was on the tail end of a career in the U.S. Interior Department in the 1960s when a preliminary report from the State of Minnesota's natural resources agency was submitted to him regarding the Reserve Mining Company in Silver Bay, Minnesota, along the north shore of Lake Superior. The report indicated that the Reserve Mining Company was dumping up to 67 million gallons of taconite tailings in a wet slurry into Lake Superior, and that this was causing cloudy waters and was adversely affecting sport and commercial fishing in Lake Superior along the Minnesota and Wisconsin shorelines. Based on this report, Stoddard coordinated development of a formal Interior Department

study which resulted in a report on the matter that became known as the “Stoddard Report.”

Before that, Stoddard had served in Washington, D.C., for a decade, including a stint as director of the Interior Department’s Bureau of Land Management, from 1963-66.

When Harold “Bud” Jordahl, Jr. left the position of Upper Midwest Regional Coordinator for Interior Department in 1967, Stoddard saw an opportunity to get out of Washington and closer to his beloved Wolf Springs Forest near Minong. He set up his Interior Department office in Duluth, where his minor children attended school, but he maintained his permanent home and voting address in Minong.

Stoddard, who was familiar with environmental and natural resource controversies from earlier battles in government, soon saw himself in the middle of another relating to the taconite dumping by Reserve Mining Company.

Here’s how Minneapolis Star Tribune writer Dean Rebuffoni recalled the Reserve Mining Company controversy and the issuance of the “Stoddard Report” in a December 30, 1997 story, which was written following Stoddard’s death on Christmas Day 1997:

“Charles Hatch Stoddard was a besieged man 29 years ago.” Noting that Stoddard had coordinated the study, Rebuffoni wrote, “Although the study had just been completed, it hadn’t been released to the public.

“However, Stoddard had provided copies to Reserve, which quickly went over his head to Interior Secretary Stewart Udall. The company urged Udall not to release the study, arguing that it was riddled with errors. Some critics suggested that Stoddard, a Democratic political appointee and longtime conservationist, was biased against Reserve.

“Reporters were constantly calling Stoddard’s office in Duluth, seeking information about the study. Also, Stoddard knew that he’d have to resign soon from his federal post: Richard Nixon, a Republican with strong political ties to Reserve, was about to be inaugurated as president. So Stoddard decided to release the study without Udall’s consent.”

Stoddard’s son, Glenn, a Wisconsin environmental attorney, recalled in a Conservation Hall of Fame interview that his father had, indeed, been pushed by reporters for a copy of the study. Glenn Stoddard tape recorded his father’s reflections

about his career and has made a copy of the transcript available to the Conservation Hall of Fame.

“Even before it was released, he wanted approval to release it,” the younger Stoddard said of the controversy. “The company sought to block it and did, through (U.S. Representative John) Blatnik (a Duluth Democrat). Blatnik went to Udall, who held it up,” said Glenn Stoddard. “The report said, yes, there’s this contaminant going into the lake, it’s affecting fisheries and fishermen are complaining. He was really upset. He felt like it was an open document, and reporters were chasing it. He sort of felt like the rug was pulled out from under him as a public official.”

So Glenn Stoddard said his father decided to release the document on his own. “I think he called a couple of reporters and said a copy of the report was on his secretary’s desk,” his son recalled.

“On Jan. 16, 1969, the biggest headline on the front page of the Minneapolis tribune read, ‘U.S. Study Finds Taconite Tailings Pollute Superior,’ ” wrote Rebuffoni in the Star Tribune.

The study became known as the “Stoddard Report,” and “made him a hero among conservationists,” wrote Rebuffoni.

Udall, however, initially told Congress that the study was a “preliminary staff report.” Blatnik and Reserve Mining attacked the report, but the courts would prove Stoddard right.

“Ultimately, Stoddard was vindicated by the federal courts, which ruled that Reserve was polluting Lake Superior with potentially injurious asbestos-type fibers. Reserve was fined more than \$1 million and shifted its taconite wastes to an on-land disposal site,” the Star Tribune reported.

In final vindication, “Udall eventually retracted his statement, telling the New York Times that the study was an official Interior Department report,” the Star Tribune reported.

The Reserve Mining battle was by no means the only one that Stoddard was engaged in while in public service.

“He had a strong sense of righteousness when it came to the public good,” said his son. “He felt he was doing his job, and what he was doing wasn’t clever, and wasn’t

anything really other than what he was supposed to do in that job. But he felt it was the right thing to do, of course.”

Public service was but one facet of Stoddard’s life.

Born in 1912 in Milwaukee, Stoddard’s love of the outdoors grew from the outings he took with his father, Charles H. Sr., a physician and member of the local Izaak Walton League chapter.

As a young man, Stoddard worked for a time in the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. He settled on forestry as a field of study after a year of undergraduate work at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Madison didn’t have a forestry program at the time, so he transferred to the University of Michigan, where he would earn undergraduate and graduate degrees. Glenn Stoddard recalled that while his grandfather loved the outdoors, he wasn’t pleased with Charles Jr.’s chosen field, so new was it as a discipline.

His early career was marked by an array of practical forestry experiences mingled with public policy. He was a forest economist with the U.S. Forest Service, Lake States Region, working in offices in Minnesota and New York State in the 1930s. His duties included analysis of the timber requirements of forest industries in the lake states from 1936-40.

He also established a forest products and marketing cooperative, sponsored by the Farm Security Administration, in the late 1930s. While with U.S. Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Land Economics Division from 1941-43, he completed the first study of forestland ownership in Northern Wisconsin. He was a staff member for the Izaak Walton League for less than a year in the late 1940s, and a candidate for the Wisconsin State Senate in 1948. He also worked as a private forestry consultant in northern Wisconsin, working from his home in Minong, in the 1940s and ’50s.

As a consultant to the Legislative Forestry Study Commission in Minnesota, Stoddard prepared a complete analysis of Minnesota’s resource programs with recommendations for reorganization of the Minnesota Department of Conservation. The recommendations were adopted in the 1950s.

He was pulled toward Washington, D.C., in 1955, when he took a position as resource economist for Resources for the Future, a Washington natural resources policy

center. He served in that position until 1961. He also served as a consultant to the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Small Business in 1958-59.

He became involved in the 1960 presidential campaign, first working for U.S. Sen. Hubert Humphrey, D-Minn., then as an advisor to presidential candidate John F. Kennedy.

That led to a political appointment after Kennedy was elected President as Director of Program Staff in the Office of Secretary of the U.S. Department of Interior, under Secretary Stewart Udall, from February 1961 to June 1963.

In 1963, Stoddard was appointed by Secretary Udall to serve as Director of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in the Interior Department. The BLM manages vast acreages of federal lands, primarily in the western United States and Alaska. As BLM Director, Stoddard advocated better conservation practices on the public lands, including less clear cutting of forestlands in the West and increasing the grazing fees paid by ranchers to the federal government for the right to graze their cattle on the public lands administered by the BLM. These policies were a lightning rod for controversy in the West. But Stoddard believed higher grazing fees would discourage overgrazing and more fairly compensate the public for the costs of range management that were associated with allowing grazing on the public lands.

Because of his efforts to improve range management and implement soil conservation practices on the public lands in the West, Stoddard received a Distinguished Service Award from the National Association of Conservation Districts while he was Director of BLM in 1963.

Stoddard was the first appointee as BLM Director from east of the Mississippi, recalled his son. He held the position for three years, resigning in 1966 to return to his previous job in the Interior Department.

During the 1960s, Stoddard worked closely in an official capacity on behalf of the Department of Interior to advocate various conservation legislation. In these efforts he worked closely with U.S. Senators Gaylord Nelson and Walter Mondale on the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. He also worked closely with Senator Nelson and others in Congress to secure passage of the Wilderness Act, to establish Redwood National Park and the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, and on other national conservation

legislation. In some of these efforts he also worked closely with his friends and conservation colleagues in Wisconsin, including Martin Hanson and Harold C. “Bud” Jordahl, Jr. Hanson is a well-known northern Wisconsin conservationist and Jordahl was then the Upper Great Lakes Regional Coordinator of the Department of Interior. Jordahl was inducted into the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame in 2005.

His recollections, as recorded by his son, show that Stoddard clashed with timber interests in the West over logging and clear cutting policies on the public lands. “The controversies over the allowable timber cut in Oregon and the grazing fee issues were part of what led to his resignation as Director of BLM,” his son said. His critics generally accused him of being overly concerned about conserving natural resources and environmental values on the public lands, his son said.

Stoddard resigned from his position and retired from the federal government shortly after releasing the “Stoddard Report” on the Reserve Mining Company’s pollution of Lake Superior, but he quickly established the Northern Environmental Council, a regional environmental and conservation federation that worked on several issues in the northern region. It was a federation of many local environmental groups and conservation clubs in Wisconsin, Minnesota and North Dakota. He also began working as a member of the Wisconsin Public Intervenor Citizen’s Advisory Committee, which he served on as a volunteer for over ten years.

In addition, Stoddard served as a volunteer on the Wilderness Society’s board of directors, and he served one year as the Society’s president.

He also established close relationships with Indian tribes in northern Wisconsin and was saluted for his work in the spring 1997 issue of “Masinaigan,” the official newspaper of the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission.

“Tribal members fondly remember Stoddard through his support in recapturing the Chippewa Flowage, opposing the Sanguine Project in the 1970s and his help following Chippewa treaty rights litigation in the early 1980s,” wrote Charlie Otto Rasmussen in a news article reporting Stoddard’s death.

Project Sanguine was an extensive underground communications system proposed by the U.S. Navy for northern Wisconsin. It was meant to be a communications system

with the U.S. submarine fleet. Opponents didn't stop the project, but the Navy scaled it back and renamed it Project ELF.

Stoddard endured what his son noted was a big disappointment when Republican members of the Wisconsin Senate blocked his appointment to the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board in 1972. They questioned whether Stoddard lived in Wisconsin or Duluth, Minnesota. While his father worked in Duluth before retiring and owned a home there, he always maintained Minong as his home and residence, said his son. He always considered himself first and foremost a Wisconsinite, said his son.

Stoddard made a name as a public servant, but his credentials as a forester, author and educator are also impressive. While in the U.S. Navy during World War II, he identified a new species of tropical tree in Solomon Islands.

He also established a forestry correspondence school for forestry technicians and established a summer camp at his 340-acre Wolf Springs Forest property near Minong. He developed course materials for the school, and when he took them to a publisher, he was advised to turn the materials into a book, recalled his son. "Essentials of Forestry Practice," originally published in 1959 by Ronald Press Co., is still in print and is used in universities and technical schools. Glenn Stoddard helped his father revise the book in 1987.

Stoddard was proud of having convinced the Department of Natural Resources to designate a grove of eastern hemlock trees in Washburn County as a scientific preservation area, his son noted.

"He was a driven person when it came to conservation and looking out for the public interest in our natural resources," said his son. "He loved the outdoors and he devoted his life to conserving natural resources for future generations," his son commented.

His father specified that he wanted a memorial stone at the family's Wolf Springs Forest property to simply say: "Forester-Conservationist." Glenn Stoddard noted later that he had "made an executive decision." He said, "I added something someone had said about my dad in public regarding his role in the Reserve Mining Company controversy. The person had said he was a "fearless public servant". So the stone

reads: ““Charles H. Stoddard, 1912-1997, Forester-Conservationist and Fearless Public Servant””. I thought it was fitting,” said the younger Stoddard.

**CHARLES H. STODDARD
1912-1997**

BIRTH: April 28, 1912, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

DEATH: Dec. 25, 1997, Spooner, Wisconsin.

EDUCATION: Educated in Milwaukee K-12 schools
BS degree in forestry, University of Michigan, 1934.
Master’s degree, forest economics, University of Michigan, 1938.
Also did graduate work at University of Wisconsin-Madison and Princeton University.

MILITARY: Lieutenant, U.S. Navy Reserve, 1943-45, including active duty in Solomon Islands.

BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

Employed with National Recovery Act and Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s.

Forest economist with U.S. Forest Service, Lake States Region, working in offices in Minnesota and New York State. Duties included analysis of timber requirements of forest industries in lake states, 1936-40.

Established forest products and marketing cooperative, sponsored by Farm Security Administration, 1937-38.

Served with U.S. Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Land Economics Division, completed first study of forestland ownership in Northern Wisconsin, 1941-43.

Staff member for Izaak Walton League for less than a year in the late 1940s.

Democratic candidate for Wisconsin State Senate, 1948.

Private forestry consultant in northern Wisconsin, working from home in Minong, 1946-52.

Manager of Forest Products Division of U.S. Office of Price Stabilization, 1951-53.

Consultant to the Legislative Forestry Study Commission in Minnesota. Prepared complete analysis of Minnesota's resource programs with recommendations for reorganization of Dept. of Conservation which were adopted in the Gov. Freeman Administration, 1953-55.

Resource economist for Resources for the Future, a Washington, D.C., natural resources policy center, 1955-61.

Consultant to U.S. Senate Select Committee on Small Business, 1958-59.

Coordinator for presidential campaign of U.S. Sen. Hubert Humphrey, D-Minn., in 1968. Later worked as adviser to presidential candidate John F. Kennedy.

Director of Programs Staff in Office of Secretary of the Interior (Stewart Udall), February 1961 to June 1963.

Director of U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Interior Department, 1963-66. Resigned as director in 1966.

Director of Programs Staff in Office of Secretary of Interior, 1966.

Upper Midwest Regional Coordinator for Interior Department, 1967-69.

ORGANIZATIONS, ACTIVITIES

President, Wilderness Society.

Organizer of Northern Environmental Council, a regional environmental group, 1970s.

Served on Wisconsin Public Intervenor Advisory Committee, 1970s to early 1990s.

AUTHOR

Wrote, "Essentials of Forestry Practice," Ronald Press, 1959.

Wrote "Two cut System in Northern Hemlock Hardwood," 1939, technical publication.

Wrote, "Looking Forward," a book on his philosophy of philosophy of government and policy and where they ought to go in the future, McMillan Press, 1982.

Authored technical bulletins and numerous journal articles.

SPEECHES

Gave numerous speeches and presentations while director of the Bureau of Land Management.

AWARDS, HONORS

Twice awarded Charles Lathrop Pack Forestry Foundation Fellowship. Produced report, "Forest Farming and Rural Employment" as part of fellowship.

Recipient of Distinguished Service Award, National Association of Conservation Districts, 1963.

While serving with the U.S. Navy in the Solomon Islands, Stoddard discovered a new tropical tree species, *Mastixiodendron stoddardii*.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

This bibliography sites several sources in the narrative. They include articles in the Minneapolis Star Tribune and "Masinaigan," the official publication of the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission. The latter publication was published in spring 1998. There is no date on the photocopied Star Tribune story, but it is in the archives of the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame. According to Glenn Stoddard, it was published on December 30, 1997.

Other sources include The Associated Press, a Dec. 30, 1997 obituary in the Madison Capital Times, and a Dec. 30, 1997 story in the Wisconsin State Journal, Madison.

Other information was provided in a lengthy Conservation Hall of Fame interview with Stoddard's son, Glenn Stoddard, then of 5703 Glenway, McFarland, WI, 53558. The interview took place in June 2001. Glenn Stoddard was also consulted in 2005 for additional input which has been incorporated into the above information.