STATE OF CALIFORNIA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

REPORTS OF THE

DIVISION OF WATER RESOURCES

EDWARD HYATT, State Engineer

REPORT ON WATER MASTER SERVICE ON PARKER CREEK MODOC COUNTY, CALIFORNIA FOR SEASON OF 1931

oOo

By
F. G. Montealegre, Jr., Water Master

oOo

Sacramento, California
January, 1932

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Department of Public Works

SACRAMENTO

/ISION OF WATER RESOURCES
401 PUBLIC WORKS BUILDING

EDWARD HYATT, STATE ENGINEER
CHIEF OF DIVISION

February 8, 1932

Mr. Harold Conkling
Deputy State Engineer
Sacramento, California

Dear Sir: Attention: Mr. Gordon Zander
Supervising Hydraulic Engineer

Herewith is submitted a report covering the water master service on Parker Creek in Modoc County, California, during the 1931 season.

This report covers the regulation of the waters of Parker Creek and Shields Creek, its tributary, in accordance with the decree Phear E. Porter, et al., vs. C. A. Ward, et al., dated April 24, 1923, pursuant to the order of the Superior Court of the State of California in and for the County of Modoc, dated July 31, 1931.

Run-off records and other pertinent data are included together with a discussion of the results obtained.

Respectfully submitted,

F. G. Montealegre Jr.
Water Master

ORGANIZATION

Walter E. Garrison	Director of Public Works
Edward Hyatt	State Engineer

Harold Conkling	Deputy State Engineer

Gordon Zander
Supervising Hydraulic Engineer

T. Russell Simpson	Senior Hydraulic Engineer
F. G. Montealegre, Jr.	Water Master

INTRODUCTION

Parker Creek, tributary to the North fork of the Pit River, serves irrigation water to an area of approximately 1744 acres about six miles east of Alturas.

For a great many years there has been more or less friction between the ranchers on Parker Creek over the use of water from the creek. A decree was entered in the case of Phear E. Porter, et al., vs. C. A. Ward, et al., on April 24, 1923, by the Superior Court of California in and for the County of Modoc, defining the rights between the upper and lower users.

The decree specifies that when there is sufficient water all parties on both Parker and Shields creeks may divert and use a quantity sufficient to irrigate their lands properly. During this period when there is a surplus, water may be diverted from Parker Creek for use on the John Porter Homestead. When the supply diminishes to such an extent that there is not sufficient water for the owners of the ranches to irrigate their lands simultaneously, the use of the water must be rotated. Separate rotation schedules are set forth in the decree for Parker and Shields creeks.

On Shields Creek it is provided that for three days, E. E. Archer and wife and Nettie Pepperdine, now L. G. McDowell, and Mrs. Alice Porter shall use one-half of the flow in the creek and in the following three day period they shall use none of the water except stock water. John Porter and wife, Lester Porter and wife and James Porter, now W. S. Trumbo, are entitled to all the water in the creek passing their diversions except

stock water for John Page for a period of three days beginning 36 hours before McDowell and Mrs. Porter commence to rotate. This amounts to all the water for one and one-half days and one-half the water for one and one-half days. The following three days there shall be no diversion, not even for stock water, all the water passing Mrs. Porter's land going to John Page for that period. He also receives all the water for one and one-half days and one-half the water for one and one-half days, following which he is on a stock water basis for three days. A further provision states that following the first period of use by Page in July all the water in Shields Creek, except stock water, shall be turned into Parker Creek for one day and thereafter every seventh day for one day.

On Parker Creek, E. D. Payne, W. S. Trumbo, John Page, W. M. Stanton and Cahn Fogerty have the use of all the water for three days and then must turn the water, except stock water, to the Porters and the X. L. Ranch for a period of four days.

This rotation is in effect until the X. L. Ranch does not receive stock water. The decree then provides for the use of water as follows:

> "It is further ordered, adjudged and decreed that if at any time during any season of the year there is not sufficient water flowing in said Parker Creek to the lands of X. L. Land and Cattle Company, for stock water on said last mentioned lands, that at such times all of the parties on said Shields Creek and said Parker Creek shall cease to use any of the waters of either of said creeks, for irrigation, but must allow all of the waters of said creeks to run down the channels of said creeks, except sufficient water for stock and domestic purposes for each of the parties hereto, at the places where they customarily use the same, so that the said X. L. Land and Cattle Company, as well as all the other parties along said creeks shall receive stock water, if there is sufficient for that purpose, but whenever there is more water in said creeks than is required for stock water and domestic purposes for all of the parties hereto, that at such times the parties hereto shall be the owners of and shall have the rights to

divert and use the waters of said creeks in the amounts and in the manner and at the times hereinbefore decreed."

In the early part of the season when there is a sufficient quantity of water for all the users no trouble is experienced over the division of the water. Just as soon as the rotation schedule goes into effect, however, friction commences. A water master has not been employed, the regulation being done by the users themselves, and complaints that the provisions of the decree have not been followed have been general.

In July, 1931, the Porters, being unable to obtain stock water, petitioned the court for the appointment of a water master to enforce the decree. On July 31, 1931, Judge Jamison of the Superior Court issued an order appointing the Division of Water Resources as water master for the remainder of the 1931 season. A copy of this order has been included as Appendix 1 of this report.

On August 4, 1931, field work was started. The various ranches were visited and all diversions were inspected to see that only the minimum quantities for domestic and stock water were being taken. The total combined flow of Parker and Shields creeks above diversions was approximately 2.00 cubic feet per second on that date. After considerable difficulty stock water was obtained for the lower ranches and the flow maintained until September 30th, when the water master service ended.

Since the decree was issued in 1923 the following changes of ownership have taken place. L. G. McDowell now owns the ranch described as the Archer Ranch, Mrs. Alice Porter now owns the ranch described as the Pepperdine Ranch, William Stanton now owns the ranch described as the Ward Ranch and W. S. Trumbo now owns that portion of the property of James Porter, John and Pearl Porter and Lester and Alice Porter lying above the confluence of Parker and Shields creeks.

The map included in this report is a copy of the one made by S. A. Mushen in 1923. The original of this map is on file in the Court House at Alturas with the records of the case of Porter vs. Ward.

Table 8 of this report shows the acreage normally irrigated on each ranch and is based on the Mushen survey.

DISTRIBUTION OF WATER

(1) Functions of Water Master

The water master was appointed to enforce the provisions of the decree entered in the case of Phear E. Porter, et al. vs. C. A. Ward, et al. This decree specifies that when there is insufficient water for stock watering purposes on the X. L. Ranch all general irrigation must cease. At the time that the water master was appointed no water was reaching the X. L. Ranch. All general irrigation had ceased but it was necessary to reduce some of the diversions for domestic and stock watering purposes.

In order to obtain records of stream flow and diversions, measurements were made at intervals during the period of water master service. Because of the extreme low water conditions and the shortness of the period of water master service no permanent measuring devices were installed.

(2) Efficiency of Distribution

A fair degree of efficiency of distribution of the water was obtained. The poor condition of the creek channels towards the lower end and the fact that they had become dried out lowered the efficiency of distribution. Where it was possible the water was confined to one channel of the creek to reduce the heavy channel losses.

RUN-OFF RECORDS

Very few records were obtained of the run-off of Parker and Shields creeks. When the water master service was started it was late in the season and due to the extremely dry season the water had receded to a fairly constant low flow.

Because of the extremely low flow and the shortness of the period of water master service, no permanent measuring devices were installed but measurements were made with portable devices at intervals during the period. The estimated daily discharges of Parker and Shields creeks during this period were then based on these measurements and are shown in tables 2 and 3 of this report.

The watershed of Parker Creek lies on the western slope of the Warner Range of Mountains and covers an area of about 57 square miles with a range in elevation of 4600 to 8400 feet. By comparison with the adjacent Pine Creek watershed, which has an area of 30 square miles and is similar in elevation and climatic conditions, a seasonal run-off may be estimated. The 1930-31 run-off of Pine Creek was 5,900 acre feet and that of Parker Creek may be estimated at 11,200 acre feet. The dry weather flows are not comparable because on Pine Creek there are some excellent springs which sustain the flow throughout the summer and except for several small springs on Shields Creek, Parker Creek has but little spring flow.

PRECIPITATION

The precipitation at Alturas is a good indication of the precipitation on the Parker Creek area. During the 1930-31 season this was 6.05 inches, 52.0 per cent of normal.

Normally the dry weather flow is considerably helped by the summer rains. From May 1st to September 1st the total was only 0.61 of an inch, or 27.4 per cent of normal.

The precipitation records at Alturas were kept by the Weather Bureau during the period 1904 to 1919, by the United States Forest Service from 1925 to 1928 and from 1928 to 1931 by the State of California.

Table 1 of this report shows the precipitation for the 1930-31 season compared with the mean for 21 years.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the water master service in 1931 was to obtain uniform distribution of stock water and domestic water among all of the ranches in accordance with their respective requirements. According to general practice in this area, a small quantity of water for garden use is included with domestic water when the water supply has decreased to stock and domestic use only.

At the start of the water master service L. G. McDowell on Shields Creek and E. D. Payne and Cahn Fogerty on Parker Creek were diverting water continuously for garden use. These diversions were reduced to a minimum and so held for the remainder of the period. In the case of McDowell, household water was obtained from this diversion. W. M. Stanton and W. S. Trumbo used water on their gardens intermittently and the others had no garden water.

The lower end of Parker Creek channel is in very poor condition. The channel is split into several branches at some places and they are clogged with trash and gravel bars. The creek bed is of a porous gravelly material which results in large seepage losses especially noticeable during periods of low flow. A large part of the difficulty in getting stock water to the lower ranches is due to these conditions.

On August 4th, only 0.05 cubic foot per second of the flow of Parker Creek was passing the Stanton Ranch. Stanton's ditch was open and he was attempting to divert water through it to his barnyard for the stock. The diversion was small, approximately 0.20 cubic foot per second, and the remainder of the flow, approximately 0.30 cubic foot per second, was lost before reaching the lower boundary of the Stanton Ranch. Because Mr. Stanton

was getting no results from his diversion and in order to cut down the heavy channel loss, the entire flow was turned into Stanton's ditch. A short distance beyond the barnyard the water was turned back to the creek. It required about ten days to get the water into the creek again but once the ditch was thoroughly wet, losses were small and the average return was about 65 per cent of the total diversion. Mr. Stanton irrigated his garden two days out of fourteen and the seepage from this irrigation returned to the creek.

Mr. Fogerty had a continuous diversion averaging 0.09 cubic foot per second for his garden. The successful use of the Stanton ditch in carrying the flow of Parker Creek with only a small loss encouraged the trial of the same procedure with the Fogerty ditch. This time, due to a highly pervious section in the ditch, failure resulted and after a few days the water was returned to the creek channel.

Considerable time elapsed before stock water was obtained for the lower ranches. Part of the delay was due to the very poor channel condition and the fact that it had dried out and had to be saturated before any surface flow would result. The clearing of the lower end of the channel and the increased supply from Parker Creek through the Stanton diversion proved to be the required conditions for obtaining stock water the entire length of the creek. The water gradually increased until it was possible to maintain a flow of approximately 0.55 cubic foot per second at the county road crossing below the Pearl Porter Ranch. This water was sufficient for the James Porter and X. L. Ranches.

The conditions on the X. L. Ranch did not become as serious as on the other ranches at the lower end of Parker Creek due to springs rising on the ranch. These springs are apparently fed by the underflow in the creek channel. At the lower end of the ranch the canyon rims come close together

forming a narrow rocky outlet for the creek. The bottom becomes a hardpan and the underground flow comes to the surface in the form of springs on the X. L. property.

Mr. Trumbo diverted garden water twice during the period of water master service for five days each time. His ditch is long and subject to considerable loss, a portion of which returns to the creek. It was necessary to divert approximately 0.30 cubic foot per second in order to get 0.10 cubic foot per second to the garden.

It was necessary to have a continuous diversion at the Payne Ranch. A small amount of the water was used for stock water in a sheep pasture at a considerable distance from the creek. Part of the time the remainder was used on the garden, the seepage from which returned to the creek, and the rest of the time it was returned directly to the creek opposite Payne's house. A flow of approximately 0.2 cubic foot per second was maintained in the ditch.

A continuous flow of approximately 0.09 cubic foot per second was diverted by the Page ditch for stock water. This diversion was from Shields Creek and the point of use was near the Page home.

Tables 4 to 7 at the end of this report show the estimated daily diversions of the Payne, Fogerty, McDowell and Page ditches.

OBSERVATIONS

After a study of the decree and a survey of the conditions in the field several observations are made that might improve the conditions along the creek and increase the efficiency of the use of water without disturbing the relative rights as they are defined in the decree.

The decree specifies rotation periods of three days each between the groups of users on Shields Creek and on Parker Creek three days for the upper users and four days for the lower users. Experience with various streams in Modoc and Shasta counties shows that these rotation periods are too short for the most efficient use of the water. Periods of approximately double the present length would doubtless be much more satisfactory.

A second suggestion would be to change the grouping of the parties in the rotation classes. Instead of rotating between upper and lower users as specified in the decree, place alternate ranchers the entire length of the creek in the same rotation class. This would effect a considerable saving of water as the creek would no longer be subject to alternate wetting and drying, as it now is, and a minimum in fluctuation of flow could be maintained at all times. Stock water would be available through all the ranches at all times.

These changes would of course require 100 per cent cooperation of the water users, but since they would undoubtedly work to the mutual advantage of all concerned, it appears feasible to obtain full cooperation in the matter. The efficiency of use of the water would be increased and in seasons such as 1931 this is of particular importance.

TABLES

TABLE 1

PRECIPITATION AT ALTURAS FOR THE SEASONAL YEAR 1930-31
COMPARED WITH THE MEAN - 1904 to 1919 and 1925 to 1931

Month	Mean Precipitation (21 years)	Precipitation 1930-31	1930-31 in per cent of normal
October	0.80	1.15	148
November	1.02	0.57	55.9
December	1.27	0.23	18.1
January	1.65	0.67	40.6
February	1.26	0.67	53.2
March	1.46	1.03	70.5
April	1.03	0.46	44.7
May	0.87	0.06	6.8
June	0.68	0.57	83.8
July	0.46	0.00	0
August	0.29	0.00	0
September	0.64	0.64	100
Total	11.64	6.05	52.0

TABLE 4

ESTIMATED DAILY DISCHARGE, IN CUBIC FEET PER SECOND,
OF PAYNE DITCH FROM AUGUST 1 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 1931

Day	August	September	
1	0.20	.20	
2	.20	.20	
3	.20	.20	
4	.20	.20	
5	.20	.20	
6	.20	.20	
7	.20	.20	
8	.20	.20	
9	.20	.20	
10	*.20	.20	
11	.20	.20	
12	*.20	.20	
13	.20	.20	
14	.20	.20	
15	.20	.20	
16	.20	.20	
17	.20	.20	
18	.20	.20	
19	.20	.20	
20	.20	.20	
21	.20	.20	
22	.20	.20	
23	.20	.20	
24	.20	.20	
25	.20	.20	
26	.20	.20	
27	.20	.20	
28	.20	.20	
29	.20	.20	
30	.20	.20	
31	.20		
Total Second Feet Days	6.20	6.00	61 Day Period
Mean Second Feet	.20	.20	.20
Maximum Second Feet	.20	.20	.20
Minimum Second Feet	.20	.20	.20
Total Acre Feet	12.3	11.9	24.2

* Discharge measured.

TABLE 5

ESTIMATED DAILY DISCHARGE, IN CUBIC FEET PER SECOND, OF FOGERTY DITCH FROM AUGUST 1 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 1931

Day	August	September	
1	0.09	0.10	
2	.09	0.10	
3	.09	0.10	
4	.09	0.10	
5	.09	0.10	
6	* .09	0.10	
7	.09	0.10	
8	.09	0.10	
9	.06	0.10	
10	.09	0.10	
11	.09	0.10	
12	* .07	0.10	
13	.07	0.10	
14	.08	0.10	
15	.09	0.10	
16	.09	0.10	
17	.09	0.10	
18	.09	0.10	
19	.09	0.10	
20	.09	0.10	
21	.09	0.10	
22	.09	0.10	
23	.09	0.10	
24	.09	0.10	
25	.09	0.10	
26	* .09	0.10	
27	.09	0.10	
28	.09	0.10	
29	.09	0.10	
30	.10	0.10	
31	.10		
Total Second Feet Days	2.73	3.00	61 Day Period
Mean Second Feet	.09	.10	.09
Maximum Second Feet	.10	.10	.10
Minimum Second Feet	.07	.10	.07
Total Acre Feet	5.41	5.95	11.36

* Discharge measured.

TABLE 6

ESTIMATED DAILY DISCHARGE, IN CUBIC FEET PER SECOND, OF McDOWELL DITCH FROM AUGUST 1 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 1931

Day	August	September	
1	.30	0.20	
2	.30	.20	
3	.30	.21	
4	.30	.21	
5	.25	.21	
6	.25	.21	
7	.25	.21	
8	.25	.21	
9	.25	.21	
10	.25	.21	
11	.25	.21	
12	*.21	.21	
13	.21	.21	
14	.21	* .21	
15	.21	.21	
16	.21	.21	
17	.21	.21	
18	.21	.21	
19	.21	.21	
20	* .11	.21	
21	.11	.21	
22	.11	.21	
23	.11	.21	
24	.15	.21	
25	.20	.21	
26	.20	.21	
27	.20	.21	
28	.20	.21	
29	.20	.21	
30	.20	.21	
31	.20		
Total Second Feet Days	6.62	6.28	61 Day Period
Mean Second Feet	.21	.21	.21
Maximum Second Feet	.30	.21	.30
Minimum Second Feet	.11	.20	.11
Total Acre Feet	13.1	12.5	25.6

* Discharge Measured.

TABLE 7

ESTIMATED DAILY DISCHARGE, IN CUBIC FEET PER SECOND, OF PACE DITCH FROM AUGUST 1 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 1931

Day	August	September	
1	0.09	0.09	
2	.09	.09	
3	.09	.09	
4	.09	.09	
5	.09	.09	
6	* .09	.10	
7	.09	.12	
8	.09	.14	
9	.09	.12	
10	.09	.11	
11	.09	.10	
12	*.09	.09	
13	.09	.09	
14	.09	.09	
15	.09	.09	
16	.09	.09	
17	.09	.09	
18	.09	.09	
19	.09	.10	
20	.09	.13	
21	.09	.14	
22	.09	.13	
23	.09	.13	
24	.09	.13	
25	.09	.13	
26	.09	.12	
27	.09	.12	
28	.09	.12	
29	.09	.12	
30	.09	.12	
31	.09		
Total Second Feet Days	2.79	3.26	61 Day Period
Mean Second Feet	.09	.11	.10
Maximum Second Feet	.09	.14	.14
Minimum Second Feet	.09	.09	.09
Total Acre Feet	5.53	6.46	11.99

* Discharge measured.

TABLE 6

ACREAGE NORMALLY IRRIGATED FROM PARKER AND SHIELDS CREEKS
(Based on Mushen Survey)

Name of Ranch	Source	Acreage normally irrigated
Fogerty	Parker Creek	123.5
McDowell	Shields Creek	142.5
Page	Shields Creek	237.5
Payne	Parker Creek	121
Porter, Alice (Pepperdine)	Shields Creek	46.5
Porter, Alice	Parker Creek	199
Porter, James	Parker Creek	237.5
Porter, Pearl	Parker Creek	153
Stanton	Parker Creek	118.5
Trumbo	Parker and Shields creeks	205.5
X. L. Land and Cattle Company	Parker Creek	159.5
Total		1744.0

APPENDIX

ORDER APPOINTING THE DIVISION OF WATER RESOURCES
AS WATER MASTER FOR PARKER CREEK FOR 1951.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA,

IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF MODOC.

Phear E. Porter, James Porter,
J. L. Porter, and Pearl Porter,
his wife, Lester Porter, and
Alice Porter, his wife, Nettie
Pepperdine and W. F. Pepperdine,
her husband, and the X. L. Land
& Cattle Company, a corporation,
and W. P. Heryford, Defendants,

vs.

C. A. Ward, and Annie Maud Ward,
his wife, Cahn Fogerty and Electa
Fogerty, his wife, E. D. Payne and
Blanche Payne, his wife, John Doe,
Richard Roe, Hiram Moe, Jane Doe,
Sarah Doe, Rebecca Doe and James Doe,
Defendants.

Phear E. Porter, James Porter, Pearl Porter and Alice Porter, having given notice to the other of the above named parties and to their successors in interest, of their intention to move for the appointment of a water master to enforce a decree in the above entitled matter.

Said matter coming on regularly this day to be heard, and the other parties to said action having appeared by their attorney A. K. Wylie, and contested said motion, said petitioners appearing by their attorney Oscar Gibbons, and evidence having been introduced and said matter submitted,

IT IS ORDERED that the Division of Water Resources of the State of California be, and it is hereby appointed as Water Master to enforce the mandates of the decree in said action, during the year 1931, and for such time in such year as said Division of Water Resources shall feel that its services are necessary.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, that the costs and expenses of said Water Master be defrayed by all of the users upon said creek, said payment to be made in proportion to the water allotted to each user.

Done in open Court this 31st day of July, 1931.

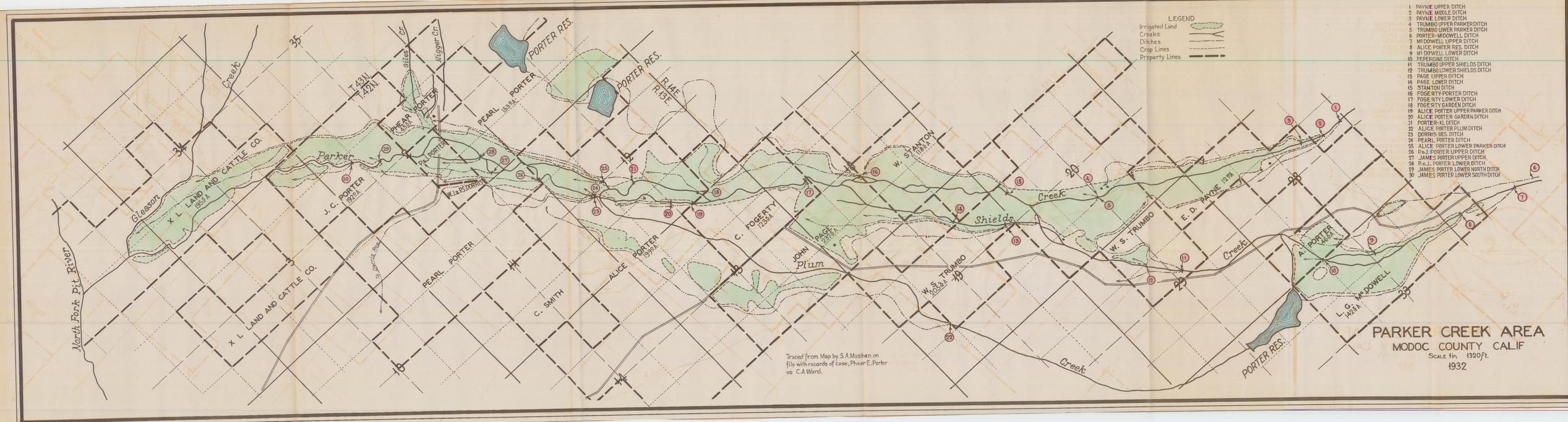
F. M. Jamison, Judge.

State of California)
) ss
County of Modoc.)

I, L. S. Smith, County Clerk of the County of Modoc, and ex-officio Clerk of the Superior Court thereof, do hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing copy of ORDER of said Superior Court, made and entered in the case No. 2379, Entitled: PHEAR E. PORTER, ET AL, VS. C. A. WARD, ET AL, with the original of the same now on file in my office, and that the same is a full, true and correct copy of said original, and the whole thereof.

Witness my hand and the seal of said Superior Court, this 4th day of August, 1931.

(Signed) L. S. SMITH
Clerk


PARKER CREEK AREA
MODOC COUNTY CALIF
SCALE 1in 1320ft.
1932
LEGEND
Irrigated Land
Creeks
Ditches
Crop Lines
Property Lines
1 PAYNE UPPER DITCH
2 PAYNE MIDDLE DITCH
3 PAYNE LOWER DITCH
4 TRUMBO UPPER PARKER DITCH
5 TRUMBO LOWER PARKER DITCH
6 PORTER-McDOWELL DITCH
7 McDOWELL UPPER DITCH
8 ALICE PORTER RES. DITCH
9 McDOWELL LOWER DITCH
10 PEPPERDINE DITCH
11 TRUMBO UPPER SHIELDS DITCH
12 TRUMBO LOWER SHIELDS DITCH
13 PAGE UPPER DITCH
14 PAGE LOWER DITCH
15 STANTON DITCH
16 FOGERTY-PORTER DITCH
17 FOGERTY LOWER DITCH
18 FOGERTY GARDEN DITCH
19 ALICE PORTER UPPER PARKER DITCH
20 ALICE PORTER GARDEN DITCH
21 PORTER-XL DITCH
22 ALICE PORTER PLUM DITCH
23 DORRIS RES. DITCH
24 PEARL PORTER DITCH
25 ALICE PORTER LOWER PARKER DITCH
26 P.&J. PORTER UPPER DITCH
27 JAMES PORTER UPPER DITCH
28 P.&J. PORTER LOWER DITCH
29 JAMES PORTER LOWER NORTH DITCH
30 JAMES PORTER LOWER SOUTH DITCH
PORTER RES.
PORTER RES.
PORTER RES.
T.43N.
T.42N.
R.14E.
R.15E.
Gilles Cr.
Nigger Cr.
Parker Creek
Gleason Creek
North Fork Pit River
Plum Creek
Shields Creek
Creek
X L LAND AND CATTLE CO. 165.5A
X L LAND AND CATTLE CO.
J. C. PORTER 192.5A
PHEAR PORTER 165.5A
PEARL PORTER 159.8A
Pea. PORTER
W.J. & DORRIS
PEARL PORTER
C. SMITH
ALICE PORTER 195.6A
C. FOGERTY 125.5A
JOHN PAGE 237.5A
W. STANTON 188.5A
W. S. TRUMBO 205.8A
W. S. TRUMBO
E. D. PAYNE 129.8A
A. J. PORTER 165.5A
L. G. McDOWELL 142.5A
Traced from Map by S.A. Mushen on file with records of case, Phear E. Porter vs C.A. Ward.