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Yosemite Natl
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Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Western Region

From: Superintendent, Yosemite

Subject: Superintendent's Annual Report

Enclosed is the "Superintendent's Annual Report" for the Calendar
Year 1977.

(Sgd.) Leslie P. Arnberger

Leslie P. Arnberger

Enclosure

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PARK HIGHLIGHTS FOR 1977

During 1977, the General Management Plan process was held in abeyance while detailed studies of potential impacts of the proposal and alternatives on the prime concessioner, the Yosemite Park and Curry Company, were prepared. Through the Denver Service Center and consultants Creegan and D'Angelo, the economic analysis and evaluation was made by Harris, Kerr, Forster, and Company, Certified Public Accountants.

The newsletter, UPDATE, March 1977, was mailed to approximately 62,000 people on the General Management Plan mailing list.

General Kurisu, Chief of Staff, accompanied by his wife and ranking Japanese military officers of the Ground Self-Defense Forces, visited the Park during June.

From September 30 through October 2, the National Parks Foundation conducted a Board of Directors' Meeting at the Ahwahnee Hotel.

The California Congressional Delegation met with the Regional Director, Park Superintendent, and his staff to discuss park program summaries on December 17. Congressmen B.F. Sisk and John Krebs, Senator S.I. Hayakawa, Mariposa County Supervisors Frank Long and Jim Owings, and House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee Member Fred Mohrman, composed the group.

In July, California State Governor Jerry Brown announced the appointment of Forestry Foreman Jay Johnson to the recently established Native American Heritage Commission.

Representatives of the American Indian Council of Mariposa County met several times with National Park Service officials and later in December with Congressional representatives concerning the Council's involvement with the Park's General Management Plan.

SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

DIVISION OF VISITOR PROTECTION

Calendar Year 1977 was distinguished by a second year-long drought condition that necessitated water rationing and severe fire weather precautions. Travel was characterized by a visitation increase in the spring and fall and a reduction in the summer due to the fear of fire by the visiting public. A travel decrease of eight percent below 1976 recorded 2,535,846 visits for 1977. The Tioga Road was closed November 4 due to snowfall, and the Badger Pass Ski Area opened November 24.

Law Enforcement

In 1977, the crime rate declined to a lower level of 1,503 offenses compared to 1,595 the previous year, a 5.8 percent decrease. As a result of two major law enforcement emergencies, only 50 percent of the cases could be investigated.

Wreckage of a Lockheed Lodestar twin-engine aircraft was discovered in Lower Merced Pass Lake January 29, 1977. Investigation, salvage work, and body recovery extended until April 15. Confiscation of 5,000 pounds of marijuana increased costs significantly, totaling \$67,037.

Four arson sets in Yosemite Park and Curry Company facilities and 80 tire slashings resulted in an arrest and confession following intensive investigation of a \$1,043,000 property loss.

Search and Rescue

There were 121 search and rescue incidents, including 24 unattended fatalities with the following causes:

- 9-falls
- 4-suicides
- 3-asphyxiations
- 3-drownings
- 2-plane crash victims
- 1-heart attack
- 1-deer goring
- 1-motor vehicle

Fire Management

There were 188 recorded wildland fires in the Park; of these, 24 were in the natural fire management zone, accounting for 299.84 acres; 159 fires required suppression on 96.3 acres; and five were unfounded reports. The volunteer structural fire department responded to 113 fire alarms; property loss totaled \$1,054,883.

Backcountry

A trailhead quota system replaced the travel zone concept as a means to regulating maximum capacity on a given day. A total of 21,510 Wilderness Permits were issued in conjunction with an advance reservation system. Approximately 63,000 overnight backcountry users spent 177,900 user nights.

Badger Pass Ski Area

The practice of strip parking beyond the main parking lot was eliminated, and traffic was controlled at Chinquapin with bussing whenever the Badger Pass parking lot reached capacity.

DIVISION OF INTERPRETATION

A portion of the budget cut imposed on Interpretation during FY 1977 was restored by internal reprogramming from other Park accounts.

Two new permanent positions, Research Librarian and Audio Visual Technician, were established and filled by personnel conversion. Highlights included completion of the two-year experimental program in fee interpretation conducted by the Yosemite Institute under contract to the National Park Service; arrangements to produce a film on giant sequoias for Yosemite under contract to Harpers Ferry Center; establishment of a seasonal trainee position earmarked for a Native American under the Park's Affirmative Action Program; an extensive Folk Music and Dance Workshop at the Pioneer Yosemite History Center featuring "Liberty Assembly" and other folk musicians; and the opening and operation of Parson's Lodge at Tuolumne Meadows by the Yosemite Natural History Association as a backcountry information center.

Environmental education increased to six teacher workshops, attracting a representation of 200 schools and providing the educational community with 15,000 man-hours of training.

Two years of work by the Yosemite Natural History Association and the Chicago Albumen Works ended with the publication of a limited edition portfolio of 10 Eadweard Muybridge facsimile reproduction prints. The portfolio has been acclaimed as one of the finest art reproductions ever published.

The new Research Library, relocated in the former study room with new lighting and furnishings, was completed. A \$10,000 trust fund was established by Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Barton of Middlesburg, Virginia, in memory of their son, to further book acquisition.

DIVISION OF MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT

Due to the mild winter, the Tioga Road and Glacier Point Road were opened early on April 8.

Commencing March 29, 11 miles of State Route 140 were resurfaced, following installation of the main trunk sewer in the El Portal access highway. The project cost was \$1 million, and final acceptance occurred November 1.

Monitoring of Park water supplies in compliance with the new E.P.A. Drinking Water Standards was initiated during June.

The new El Portal Wastewater Treatment Plant was placed in service during January, and the old Valley and El Portal Plants were retired. An unfortunate accident in January allowed heavily chlorinated effluent to reach the Merced River killing fish and attracting widespread attention. The new plant has many problems, as can be expected of all complex and unique facilities. In December, when the drought was broken by heavy rains, it became evident that the percolation ponds were inadequate, and plans were initiated to modify the plant to meet National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit requirements.

In concert with the Yosemite Park and Curry Company, an intense refuse recycling program was undertaken. Some 33½ tons of refuse were segregated and reprocessed from nine unmanned recycling stations.

To support the Park's bear management program, a heavy steel bear-proof food locker was designed and installed in the White Wolf Campground on an experimental basis.

DIVISION OF RESEARCH

The primary accomplishment was the completion of computer programs necessary to analyze Wilderness Permits for use with the Wilderness Simulation Model. The model was modified and run to develop trailhead quotas for 1978.

Two major studies under contract to the University of California, Berkeley, continued. The Black Bear Population Ecology Study entered its final year; the Sociological Carrying Capacity Model Study was completed, and the final report is expected in May 1978.

DIVISION OF RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The Natural Resources Management Plan and Environmental Assessment were completed in May and distributed for public review and comment in August. Following the 90-day review period, the Plan was approved by Regional Director Chapman.

During the summer and fall, a survey of 102 lakes was conducted to secure basic information for evaluation of the proposed phase-out of fish stocking.

One deceased chipmunk, recovered from Loop "A" of the Tuolumne Meadows Campground, August 13, was confirmed plague positive, following laboratory analysis by the California State Department of Health. Immediate preventive measures included a dusting of all squirrel and chipmunk burrows in Loop "A" with the insecticide, Carbaryl, posting of informational signs and personal contact with visitors using the area.

Incidents and property damage involving black bears declined from the high recorded in 1975 to the present level of 516 incidents and \$30,820 property loss. Installation of 86 individual food storage lockers at White Wolf Campground resulted in a significant decrease of bear incidents and property damage.

A second interagency draft Environmental Impact Statement and study report involving the Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River Study was rejected by the Forest Service; followed by a third draft attempt presented to the interagency group in mid-December.

The Department of the Interior instituted suit to prevent the City and County of San Francisco from selling, or offering to sell, Hetch Hetchy power at rates not in compliance with the Raker Act.

On March 4, the City and County of San Francisco petitioned Secretary Andrus to reduce the required interim flow release from O'Shaughnessy Dam as a drought mitigation measure. However, the request was denied on October 20 as a result of an interagency environmental analysis report dated June 20.

Preparation and arrangements were made for a prehearing conference and an evidentiary hearing in the matter of the City and County of San Francisco's protest of the Tuolumne River Flow Study Report of the Canyon Power Project. Subsequently, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was directed by Secretary Andrus to make an Environmental Assessment as to the effects of the recommended Secretarial action.

From April 30 to November 14, the Park participated in an interagency study to determine current recreational use levels, water temperature, and significant changes in the river fishery resulting from interim flow releases required by the Canyon Power Project.

DIVISION OF CONCESSIONS

Yosemite Medical Group's contract was extended pending completion of formal renewal procedures; new contract negotiations were scheduled for 1978. The El Portal Motor Service prospectus was published; however, no qualified applicants applied, and the concession opportunity was terminated. The Yosemite Park and Curry Company's Wawona Building Assignment Agreement was modified to withdraw eight cabins due to sewage problems.

From March 20 to April 12, six cases of infectious hepatitis in employees of the Yosemite Park and Curry Company were reported. This resulted in Park contact with the Public Health Service in Denver, and the Communicable Disease Center, Hepatitis Branch, Phoenix.

Among the new procedures, Yosemite Park and Curry Company initiated a program to make guest facilities more accessible for the handicapped; adopted a revised convention policy decreasing weekend room rates during April and October at the Ahwahnee Hotel; revised the Bracebridge Dinner reservation procedure, effective Christmas 1978; and introduced a cooperative food service sanitation training program.

The Beverage Container Deposit System was extended to all applicable concessioners, including those in El Portal. Interim trip-lease procedures were approved to eliminate public inconvenience for entering commercial busses.

Concessioner improvements to facilities included refurbishment at Yosemite Lodge, the Ahwahnee Hotel, and completion of exterior painting of the Wawona Hotel complex.

DIVISION OF LAND ACQUISITION

The expected suit by the Citizens to Save Wawona was filed April 1. There were two postponements before the hearing was held in Federal District Court in Fresno. At that time, the Service moved to have the suit dismissed. Dismissal was denied, and the Court has instructed us to respond to the questions posed by the suit. A full hearing is scheduled for May 9, 1978.

Revised Land Acquisition Policies were received from the Director's Office on September 14, and basically, the only change re-emphasizes that no new improvements will be allowed nor substantial alterations permitted to existing dwellings. As a result, four condemnation actions were initiated to prevent development and further commercial expansion, with one action still pending.

Acquisition during F.Y. '77 consisted of 14 tracts containing 5.07 acres at a net cost of \$422,190. This does not include the three condemned tracts containing 18.53 acres at an estimated cost of \$277,000 filed during December in Federal District Court at Fresno.

DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATION

The Branch of Personnel has resumed classification authority, undertaken redescription of all positions in the new Factor Evaluation System format, and is attempting to audit 25 percent of the positions annually, while processing 1,500 Requests for Personnel Actions, S.F.-52's.

The Fiscal Office processed 2,200 Bills of Collection resulting in total bank deposits of \$1,208,319; approximately \$1,000,000 of this was income to reimbursable accounts for quarters and utilities.

Excess property was screened regularly for usable equipment; using this method, property valued at \$151,615 was brought into Yosemite at a substantial savings to the Park.

Processing of purchase orders has been reduced through the utilization of C.O.D. purchasing, the savings to the Government approximates \$40,000.

First-time development of a Zero Base Budget taxed resources; however, after six week's effort, the package was submitted on time.