

REPORT

OF THE

ACTING SUPERINTENDENT

OF THE

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

TO THE

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

1896.

WASHINGTON:
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.
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YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK,
OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT,
Wawona, Cal., August 15, 1896.

SIR: In compliance with instructions of the Department, conveyed in letter of July 2 last, I have the honor to submit the following report of the condition of affairs and of the management of the Yosemite National Park for the fiscal year ended June 30 last, and also up to the present date.

I assumed the duties of superintendent of the Yosemite National Park at noon May 19, having under my immediate command for the purpose of patrolling, guarding, and enforcing the rules and regulations thereof, Troops B and K of my regiment, aggregating a force of 6 commissioned officers and 106 noncommissioned officers and privates. Camp was established on the site formerly occupied by the forces of my predecessors in a sheltered nook on the South Fork of the Merced River, about 1 mile distant to the westward and on the opposite bank from the Wawona Hotel, which stands on the outer edge of the park boundary line, with many buildings, including store, studio, carpenter and blacksmith shop, on patented lands within the boundary line.

Under existing conditions, including facilities for supplies, mail and wire communications, this location for the main camp is for the present the most advantageous of all other camping grounds that have been observed by me in the park. I found it necessary to establish and maintain an outlying camp near Crockers, on Big Oak Flat road, the main thoroughfare entering the park from the west, in township 1 south, range 19 east, Mount Diablo meridian.

Although the heavy snows still obstructed the various passes leading to the northern and eastern townships, officers' patrols were sent out in due time to ascertain the condition of affairs and instruct the new men in the geography, trails, streams, etc., of the country. One of these patrols gained entrance to the southeastern township by making a wide detour to the south of the park boundary and Mount Raymond, and avoiding the deep snow in the Chilnualna passes, where the trail was covered to an average depth of 4 feet, making it impassable for animals. This patrol, under Lieutenant Rutherford, found sheep to the number of about 7,000 by discovering the trail outside the park boundary and following it in. The owners, Jonathan Dalton and Fred Hildreth, and the herders were arrested and brought to my camp under guard, and the sheep driven outside the boundary and scattered.

Lieutenant Rutherford found other bands of sheep outside the reservation that were evidently wending their way, under herders, to enter it in case of no danger signals. The owners and herders having their own supplies and having been under guard four days, were detained a few hours for examination and then released on their voluntary promise never again to trespass. Their intention was to pass through that corner of the park to grazing grounds east of the boundary. That south-east section has been visited by patrols on four different occasions since, and no trespassers or evidence of any have been discovered. All other patrol parties, except in the southwest and middle-west townships, were checked by high waters and deep snows until the latter part of June, but all sections of the park have since been thoroughly patrolled and no evidence of trespass by cattle or sheep were found except in the case narrated.

Evidence of destruction of game was found north of Yosemite Valley and in Hetch Hetchy Valley, and information, believed to be reliable, was obtained by officers in charge that market hunters and trappers entered the park grounds during the winter and spring months and destroyed considerable game. In some instances nesting fowls (duck, grouse, and quail) had been destroyed by campers and tourists. In order to prevent, as far as possible, trespass and flagrant violations of the rules of the park, and during the close season laws of the State, I have refused permits to carry any firearms inside the park boundaries, and have required all persons to give up firearms in their possession on entering the park at points where guards are permanently stationed. Persons entering by trails from the north and east, on which there are no permanent guard posts, when discovered, are disarmed by patrol parties. Notwithstanding the adoption of these measures, firearms are occasionally smuggled into the park by campers, and in addition to the discovery of evidence showing the destruction of game and song birds, evidence showing the destruction of fish in spawning beds by shooting and the use of explosives has been found.

Many persons plead ignorance of the rules and regulations, although there is not a township, thoroughfare, trail, or point of interest within the entire area of the park where copies of the rules in large print, on heavy muslin, have not been posted. In many places they have been torn down and destroyed by vicious persons as often as posted. Every patrol party sent out is supplied with copies to post in conspicuous places and to replace those that have been destroyed.

Many advertisements painted on rocks and trees, and on sheets of tin, muslin, paper, and all the usual forms, have been found throughout the park. All except those painted on rocks and trees have been destroyed whenever found and the others effaced so far as practicable.

The majority of campers are careless and negligent about extinguishing their fires and policing their camp grounds when leaving. The spectacle of empty tins that had contained preserved fruits, soups, vegetables, sardines, etc., together with offal from the cook fire, and other more objectionable, is detestable anywhere, but is abominable in the superlative degree when included in the view of a beautiful mountain stream, skirted with meadows of luxurious grasses and gardens of wild flowers. Six fires occurred in July, caused by intention or neglect of campers, and one by lightning. Four of these were discovered by patrol parties and extinguished before any great damage was done. One, of which notification was received from a man living on patented lands, had burned over an area of 5 or 6 acres before a detail from my camp, which made a rapid night march for the scene, reached it. No

trees of value were destroyed. The smoke of the other was first observed from my camp, and being only 2 miles distant my entire available force was soon engaged on it, but it had gained such rapid headway that it required three days to check its spread and hold it within bounds, and a strong guard and patrol party was necessary for four days afterwards to prevent any possible spread until it was entirely exhausted and extinguished. This fire covered in area about 500 acres, and did considerable damage in killing the young growth of trees. In this area were many large dead conifers in the stages of dry decay that burned rapidly and fell, intermingling with and crashing through the young and vigorous pines and oaks, the burning fragments spreading destruction over their surroundings. Had this fire occurred 20 or 30 miles distant from my camp it would have caused immeasurable destruction. The one caused by lightning was extinguished soon afterwards by a heavy fall of rain.

The protecting floor of fallen leaves and twigs, resinous cones, fallen trunks and branches, covered over with interposing foliage and undergrowth, conducts the flames with amazing rapidity in the dry season; but this great forest floor and coverlet constitutes the most important factor in preserving, increasing, and in a great measure equalizing the water supply by retarding the surface drainage and preventing rapid evaporation by the winds; consequently, to destroy this tree mold in the early season by burning in spots, as the snow disappears, when the fires can be controlled and damage to the growth of trees prevented—as a preventive against forest fires in the dry season—would be to destroy the natural preservation and regulation of the water supply, which is the prime object of the great forest reserves in this State. The employment of such measures would be a violation of the spirit of the act of Congress approved October 1, 1890, setting apart these lands in the State of California as forest reservations. The spirit of section 2 of that act, that the original woods and lands shall be restored to their pristine condition, the flora, trees, animals, birds, and fish being carefully preserved from any interference whatever, has been enforced in every particular, excepting as to fish, during my management.

Through the generosity of the California board of fish commissioners in establishing a hatchery on the southern border of the park, at Wawona, a majority of all the main streams and lakes in the park have been more or less stocked with trout. Some of the waters had been stocked by efforts of enterprising citizens and angling sportsmen before the establishment of the park, and afterwards, before the establishment of the hatchery. Trout have been taken this season over 5 pounds in weight. The following form of permit has been issued to all tourists, pleasure seekers, campers, and visitors who have made proper application:

Permission is hereby granted Warren Olney, esq., of San Francisco, to carry fishing tackle on a pleasure tour in the park, and to capture fish for the use of his party only. Fish of less than 5 ounces in weight, if captured, must be released and put back into the waters without injury. A strict compliance with the general rules and regulations of the park is required. Copy herewith inclosed.

Parties found taking fish without such permit or found violating the conditions thereof have been summarily ejected from the park with the loss of their tackle.

Mr. A. J. Fletcher, agent of the State fish commission, was rendered every assistance desired in the distribution of fry in the park waters. The following correspondence shows the successful work accomplished and the deep interest displayed by the honorable board of fish commissioners in San Francisco, Cal., composed of H. E. Emeric, president,

William C. Murdock, and J. M. Morrison, and their worthy agent, Mr. Fletcher:

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., July 27, 1896.

DEAR SIR: Herewith please find tables of distribution of trout fry from the Wawona hatchery during the season of 1896.

It has occurred to me that we might receive some assistance another year from Captain Brice, of the United State Commission, through Captain Dougherty, of Hoopa. There were forwarded to our Sisson hatchery this last season by Captain Dougherty some 10,000 brown trout eggs, and it is my opinion that this variety would readily adapt themselves to the waters of the Yosemite National Park. These eggs are ready for shipment in January—too early to hatch at the Wawona station, but I am confident this commission would undertake to hatch them at one of the other stations for you if the eggs could be secured. Some orders have recently been issued regarding the brown trout culture at Hoopa, looking toward its abolishment, I am told, and you may desire to take the matter up at once with Commissioner Brice or Captain Dougherty so as to insure your getting them for the national park if possible. If they can not give you the brown trout eggs they may be able to send some other variety.

Please accept my sincere thanks for your generous aid in my work at Wawona station this past season, and believe me,

Yours, respectfully,

A. G. FLETCHER,
Deputy Fish Commissioner.

Col. S. B. M. YOUNG,
Fourth Cavalry, U. S. A., Wawona, Cal.

Distribution of rainbow (Salmo irideus) and cutthroat (Salmo mykiss) trout from Wawona hatchery during 1896.

Date.	Where distributed.	Rainbow.	Cutthroat.
1896.			
June 17	South Fork of Merced River		10,000
18	do		5,000
19	Big Creek		5,000
20	South Fork of Merced River, above bridge		4,500
21	Big Creek		2,000
22	do		3,000
23	Junction South Fork of Merced River and Big Creek		5,000
24	South Fork of Merced River		5,000
24	Junction South Fork of Merced River and Big Creek		6,000
25	South Fork of Merced River		2,500
25	Big Creek		2,500
26	South Fork of Merced River	2,500	
27	Big Creek, above ditch		2,500
27	Bridal Veil Creek, above falls	5,000	
28	do	5,000	5,000
28	South Fork of Merced River		4,500
29	Big Creek		3,000
29	Hog Ranch Creek ¹	2,000	1,000
30	Tuolumne River, in Little Hetch Hetchy ¹	10,000	5,000
July 1	Babcock Creek ¹	2,000	1,000
1	Slide River ¹	3,000	
1	Rodgers River ¹	5,000	3,000
4	Alder Creek	5,000	
5	Big Creek		2,500
5	South Fork of Merced River		2,500
6	do		2,500
6	Big Creek		2,500
7	do		2,500
7	South Fork of Merced River		2,500
8	Bishop Creek	5,000	
10	South Fork of Merced River		2,500
10	Big Creek		2,500
11	Sunrise Creek	500	
12	Budd Creek, Tuolumne Meadows	5,500	
12	Unicorn Creek, Tuolumne Meadows		5,000
12	Dingley Creek, Tuolumne Meadows	4,500	
12	Delaney Creek	4,500	
15	Swampy Creek	1,000	
15	Chilnualna Creek, between falls	2,000	2,000
18	Illilnette River, above falls	6,000	
18	Ellman Creek ¹	6,000	
18	Merced Lake ¹	6,000	6,000
20	Upper Stella Lake, for distribution	44,000	26,000
	Total	124,500	134,500

¹ Hard trip; loss very great.

Distributed in Yosemite Valley June 9, 1896.

Where distributed.	Rainbow.	Cutthroat.
Bridal Veil Creek.....	3,000	3,000
Yosemite Creek.....	3,000	5,000
Cold Spring Creek.....	3,000
Tanaya Creek.....	3,000
Total.....	12,000	8,000

Total distribution from Wawona hatchery during season of 1896.

Rainbow.....	284,000
Cutthroat.....	160,000
Total.....	444,000

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., *July 27, 1896.*

DEAR SIR: Please accept our heartiest thanks for your kindness in extending to our Mr. Fletcher so much assistance in our endeavor to stock the waters of the Yosemite National Park. He advises us that every assistance in your power was rendered him, and that all of the officers and men of your command were most kind and courteous. In thanking you we would, through you, also extend our thanks to the officers and men, and especially to Lieutenants Benson, Rutherford, and Neall, who had command of the several detachments sent out with fish and who did everything in their power to insure the success of the distribution. Having your assistance, we were able to reach waters and cover more ground than would otherwise have been the case, and we feel that it is a work well begun and a work which deserves the thanks of all true sportsmen and anglers.

Mr. Fletcher informs us that about 70,000 fry were placed in a small lake near Wawona, which will, later in the season, be distributed under your supervision. You have our thanks for your kindness in this matter, and if we can in any way assist you we shall be glad to do so in so far as we are able. We shall be pleased to have tables of whatever distributions may be made.

Yours respectfully,

H. E. EMERIC, *President.*

Col. S. B. M. YOUNG,
Fourth Cavalry, U. S. A., Wawona, Cal.

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK,
OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT,
Wawona, Cal., August 10, 1896.

DEAR SIR: I thank you very much for the kind acknowledgment of your appreciation of the assistance rendered by the officers and men of my command in the distribution of fry in stocking the waters of this grand national park under the supervision and guidance of your worthy and enthusiastic Mr. Fletcher. Your letter will be read to the men on parade and extract copies furnished to the officers named therein.

Lieut. H. C. Benson, of my command, who is an enthusiast on the subject, has been charged with the care and distribution of the 70,000 fry now in a small lake near my camp.

Inclosed herewith is a copy of letter to Commander Brice, United States Fish Commissioner, Washington. In event of a favorable reply, of which there can be no doubt, I will communicate immediately with your Mr. Fletcher relative to the hatching of the brown trout eggs and distribution of the fry.

Very respectfully,

S. B. M. YOUNG,
Lieutenant-Colonel Fourth Cavalry, Acting Superintendent.

Hon. H. E. EMERIC,
President Board of Fish Commissioners, State of California.

I have written to Commander Brice, of the Navy, United States Fish Commission, requesting a supply of brown trout eggs for the park.

Over 200 stand of arms have been taken from persons entering the park by the two main thoroughfares, including those taken from parties found inside, and as a probable resultant, young broods of quail and grouse abound throughout the park. The deer, bear, lynx, fox, coon, tree squirrel, and chipmunk, although not scarce, are not so plentiful as they should be in their natural home in the park. If firearms, hunters, and trappers are kept out of the park they will multiply and become plentiful, and their instinctive fear of man will gradually so lessen in a few years that visitors will be enabled to see and study them in their natural state. These animals drift down below the heavy snow line in winter and the supply that is taken by ranchmen and hunters outside the park boundaries will be a sufficient trimming in numbers to promote a healthful breeding and growth in the natural game nursery within the boundaries.

Two men were discovered placer-mining in Neds Gulch on the Merced River, about 2 miles from the western boundary, in township 3 south, range 19 east. They were ejected from the park and their sluice boxes destroyed. Their average findings amounted to 40 cents per day each, and they seemed glad of a good excuse to quit. Two parties found taking fish were deprived of their tackle and ejected from the park.

Owners and lessees of lands have so far, with a few exceptions, complied with all the rules governing the bringing in of stock, and keeping it under fence. Measures have been taken that will either remedy the exceptions or eject the trespassers. One large holder having, according to his admission, last year about 1,000 acres of park land in Hetch Hetchy Valley and vicinity inclosed under fence with his own has not come into the park this year.

These satisfactory results are no doubt due to the firm stand taken in enforcing the rules and particular instructions received from time to time from the Department by my predecessor, Captain Rodgers, Fourth Cavalry, acting superintendent.

It must be admitted that this strict enforcement of the rules causes some little annoyance and hardship to bona fide owners and settlers, but the line must be drawn, and exceptions become dangerous precedents so long as the present custom obtains of annually changing the superintendent and guard details, according to the military roster for ordinary field service.

Troops should be in the park or near enough to send small patrol parties into the southern and western sections in the month of April to protect the game and arrest trespassers.

The bridge for saddle and pack animals, with log stringers supported on timber cribs filled with rock and floored with split timber, on the Tuolumne River in Hetch Hetchy Valley, must be repaired or abandoned next season. This bridge is the only means of communication in the park with all that section north of the Tuolumne until August 1, when the fords become passable.

Two log bridges, which could be constructed by the labor of troops at a cost of about \$50 each (perhaps less), are necessary to enable the mounted patrols and their pack animals to get through the southeastern section early in the season without great danger to men and animals. The beds of the streams are thickly covered with large, rough bowlders, and the currents are fierce and angry. One horse has been drowned and one officer and one man have had narrow escapes this season.

The old toll road of the Great Sierra Wagon Road Company, commonly known as the Tioga road, has fallen into such bad repair as to be no longer passable by wagon. It leads eastward, as shown on the

map, from a point 1 mile south of Ackersons, in township 1 south, range 19 east, through township 1 south, in ranges 20, 21, 22, 23, and into 24 east, thence north through Tioga Pass, on the summit of the Sierras, at an altitude of about 9,000 feet. It has been abandoned by the owners, and so far as I can learn no repairs have been made on it since the park was established. This road leads through nature's ideal park, and should be repaired and kept in good condition for traveling carriages and baggage wagons. Southward from one camping point on it, the foot of Mount Lyell, on the summit of the grand Sierras, can be reached by an easy trail for saddle animals in 11 miles. From another good camping point on it, Mount Conness, on the summit to the northward, can be reached in 10 miles over a good saddle trail, leading practically to the very summit, at an altitude of about 13,000 feet, which commands one of the grandest views in the United States. Besides traversing innumerable mountain streams, glacier meadows, and lawns of luxuriant grasses and natural flowers, it touches the shore of Lake Tanaya, skirts the bases of Mounts Hoffman and Dana, and passes within easy distance of the Ten Lake country, and many other places of great interest and natural beauty.

I am informed, by hearsay, that the original cost of building this road was about \$60,000. The foundation shows excellent work, intended to be permanent.

Assuming this road to be in excellent condition, a tour of the park could be made, starting with comfortable road and baggage wagons, accompanied by saddle animals for incidental uses, from Wawona on the southern boundary, 15 miles from the western boundary, passing to the north and east into the Yosemite Valley, thence west and north by the Big Oak Flat road to Crockers, within 3 miles of the western boundary, and thence by the Tioga road, as already described, through the central section to a point on the eastern boundary, 12 miles from the northern boundary.

The driving distance, exclusive of distances that might be traveled incidentally on trail animals, would be about 100 miles through, perhaps, the most beautiful natural park in the world. A rough estimate of the cost of repairing the old Tioga road will be submitted in my supplemental report for the remaining portion of the first half of the present fiscal year.

The park should be accurately surveyed and boundaries clearly defined and marked in a substantial manner. If, however, the adjustment of the boundary lines is contemplated, in order to satisfy the rights of bona fide settlers and preserve the purposes for which the park was established, an examination of the entire park and its present boundary lines by a competent and duly appointed commission should be made before the actual survey; and a definite and stable system of management should be established that would be operative in all the national parks and forest reservations in this State.

California, with her 20,000,000 acres of magnificent timber, owns but little, if any, of the land upon which it stands.

The General Government has reserved and controls about 6,548,000 acres of these forest lands that regulate and conserve the water supply of the State, and upon it rests the responsibility of providing the proper means for the preservation and management of these reservations.

The Yosemite, Sequoia, and General Grant national parks comprise in all about 1,114,000 acres, leaving about 5,434,000 acres of these grand forests without any practical protection against timber thieves, sheep herders, and their natural sequence, destructive forest fires.

I concur in and renew the recommendation of my predecessor in

office, Capt. Alex. Rodgers, Fourth Cavalry, and of all former acting superintendents, that penalties be prescribed for violations of the "rules and regulations."

Special reports called for from time to time by the Department have been submitted, viz: No. 1, on a petition from the citizens requesting that township 4 south, range 19 east, Mount Diablo meridian, be excluded from the park; submitted June 10; adverse. No. 2, on copy of Senate bill 2770 (Fifty-fourth Congress, first session), granting to the Yosemite Valley and Merced Railway Company right of way over and station sites on park lands; submitted June 1; adverse. No. 3, on letter of Lindley and Eickhoff, attorneys in behalf of Mr. Samuel Sussman, asking authority to construct a wagon road from section 36, township 3 south, range 21 east, to main traveled highway; submitted June 17; adverse. No. 4, on letter of R. N. Graves, asking permission for Mrs. Anna C. Graves to make storage reservoirs for water by constructing dams at the outlets of several lakes in the park near the eastern boundary line; submitted July 23; adverse. I do not concur in the opinions and recommendations in reference to new boundaries excluding certain large areas described in the annual reports of the acting superintendents for 1892 (p. 9), 1893 (p. 7), 1894 (p. 6).

Capt. Alex. Rodgers, Fourth Cavalry, acting superintendent in 1895, in his report (p. 5) says: "I am unable to concur in the recommendations of my predecessors as to cutting down the size of the park. Township 4 south, range 19 east, and that part of township 3 south, range 19 east M. D. M., south of the Merced River, being almost all patented lands, much of which is used for mining purposes, might be left out without much injury to the park;" but in conference with him on the subject of my special report No. 1, submitted June 10, he says:

Since the date of my report last year I have modified my views as to the advisability of cutting off from the park township 4 south, range 19 east, and that part of township 3 south, range 19 east M. D. M., lying south of the Merced River.

At the time that the report was made I had not received any official information from the Land Office as to the amount of patented lands in that part of the park, and had been led to believe that most of the land was patented. The official records show that such is not the case. Even if it were so it would be better to make no reduction in the size of the park.

People are now making efforts to get concessions of different kinds within the park limits, and any reduction in the size of the park would encourage those who are now trying to get in.

To make the park a success, no concessions should be granted to persons wishing to use it for private purposes.

I fully concur with Captain Rodgers, and believe the requirements to insure success demand that no syndicate, company, or individual should be granted any concessions whatever beyond that contemplated and provided for in section 2 of the act setting apart and establishing the park.

The stakes set by the trespassers employed by the management of the Yosemite Valley and Merced Railway Company to survey a route up the Merced River from the western boundary line of the park to the State grant line have all been pulled up and destroyed. Captain Rodgers had many of them destroyed last year; he supposed all of them.

I beg leave to urge the necessity of Congressional measures toward acquirement of title by the Government to all lands within the park boundaries. This subject has been urged by every acting superintendent since the establishment of the park.

So long as settlers own lands in the park and live thereon trespass

can not be entirely prevented. As Mr. John Muir so aptly remarks in the Sierra Club Bulletin, No. 7:

The smallest reserve, and the first ever heard of, was in the Garden of Eden, and though its boundaries were drawn by the Lord, and embraced only one tree, yet the rules were violated by the only two settlers that were permitted on suffrage to live in it.

Very respectfully,

S. B. M. YOUNG,

Lieutenant-Colonel Fourth Cavalry, Acting Superintendent.

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, D. C.

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