

REPORT
OF THE
ACTING SUPERINTENDENT
OF THE
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK
TO THE
SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

1895.

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ACTING SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK,
OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT,
Wawona, Cal., August 22, 1895.

SIR: In compliance with instructions contained in your letter of July 1, I have the honor to submit the following report of the condition of affairs in the Yosemite National Park:

Under the provisions of Special Orders, No. 58, headquarters Department of California, May 2, 1895, designating Troop K, Fourth Cavalry, for duty in this park in 1895, I reported to you by letter, and was directed to carry out the regulations laid down by the Interior Department, and to be guided by such additional instructions as had been from time to time given to my predecessors.

The troop left the Presidio May 9 and arrived here May 21, thus giving time to the men to get camp well established before May 25, the date prescribed for the arrival of the troop.

It became apparent soon after the arrival of the troop here that there was a general idea that the enforcement of the law against trespassing was going to be very lax this year, and that the Government was not going to protect its rights in the park. I wrote to you reporting the condition of affairs, making certain recommendations, and asking for definite instructions on questions that seemed never to have been settled. Your reply so strongly supported the views expressed by me that I sent to most of the postmasters in and near the park a circular letter containing many extracts from your letter, and requested each of them to put this circular letter in a conspicuous place in his office in order that the innocent tourist and the deliberate trespasser might know what to expect. This has made clear to all the fact that the Interior Department is in earnest, and there has been a sincere effort made by all the officers on duty here to show that the duties of the troops stationed here are not performed in a perfunctory manner, but in such a way as to make trespassing an unprofitable thing.

Without waiting to receive your reply to my letter, I began sending out details to patrol the park. Every detail so sent out has been under a commissioned officer. A detail sent out to make the Tioga road passable for mounted parties and lightly loaded wagons was under a non-commissioned officer, as were also several others sent to accompany stock entering or leaving the park under permits issued to their owners, patentees, or lessees of land in the park.

At the southeastern corner of the park the snow disappears quite early in the season, and sheep men have always driven their stock in there, as the deep snow between there and the rest of the park makes it difficult or impossible to get there from this side. On May 25 a detachment was sent out to try to reach that district, but returned on the third day, having encountered 16 feet of snow, which was just beginning to melt and was therefore impassable. On May 30 another detachment was sent by another route to try to get through, but it returned in five days, having been unable to do so. Later in June another detachment, under Lieutenant McClure, got through. The sheep had by that time left the extreme southeast corner, but Lieutenant McClure got into the Shadow Lake country nearly two weeks earlier than patrols had ever got there before and captured two bands of sheep and five herders. As is done in all cases of this kind, the sheep were driven off the park, they having been found about 2 miles inside the line, and the herders were brought here, when they were admonished never to return to the park with sheep, and were then released.

Two detachments have since then been through that part of the park without finding any sheep, although there were evidences of their having been a short distance within the boundaries of the park. The great trouble is that the sheep men know the country thoroughly. They band together and hire men who act as scouts, and from commanding points watch the trails. When troops are seen they give warning, and the sheep, which are just inside the line, are driven out. With the small force kept here (I have only 46 horses), it is very difficult to keep out the sheep; but we can make them stay very close to the boundary. A detail under Lieutenant Smedberg has just returned, after scouting a region where sheep are said to have almost always been held, and where it is stated that no troops have ever been before. He found a band of sheep and arrested the herders. Lieutenant McClure has found a new route into the region near Mount Lyell, and has succeeded in surprising two bands of sheep and capturing the herders. It is said that no troops had ever patrolled there before. The patrols have been sent out so frequently that sheep men are afraid to go far in, except those who drove over the snow to places heretofore not visited by troops. Efforts are being made to find all such places.

On May 25 a detachment was sent out to go to the Hetch-Hetchy Valley. It got as far as the Hog Ranch, when a heavy snowstorm checked its further progress. On June 3 a detachment went to the southwest corner of the park and up to the Merced River, through a region where practically all the land is patented. It then went by the Yosemite Valley to Hazel Green, near which place a band of sheep and three herders were captured. That country and the country up to Till Valley have since been covered by numerous detachments.

Within the last month Lieutenant Benson has been out constantly, except two days. He has scouted the northern townships of the park. Since the park has been established only two detachments had ever been through any of the country visited by him, and some of it had never been visited by troops. By driving out over 20,000 sheep and capturing 15 herders he has done much to cripple the industry of sheep grazing in that district. It is hoped that by keeping the park thoroughly patrolled serious depredations may be prevented.

Special mention should be made of the faithful and efficient manner in which much hard work has been done by Lieutenants Benson, McClure, and Smedberg. Much of the sheep country is so rough that it is impossible or unadvisable to take horses into it. In such cases

they have established a camp, and then scouted the country on foot. They have performed their duty cheerfully and well, and are always eager for hard work.

Lieutenant McClure, who was on duty in the park last year, prepared an excellent map of it, which has been of great service to detachments on duty in the park. It is a good map to travel by, and is very accurate. Notes taken by him and by other officers will enable him to correct the few inaccuracies now existing in the map. The map is the result of much hard labor on the part of Lieutenant McClure, to whom great credit is due. A copy of the map is herewith submitted.

The comparatively small number of cattle in the park are in the western part. As a rule the owners are Americans who take an interest and pride in the natural beauties of this part of the country. Cattle do comparatively little damage, and they are in most cases kept by the owners on lands owned or leased by them. Some of the cattle owners expressed themselves as believing that they ought to be allowed to graze their cattle anywhere in the mountains. Measures were adopted making it rather risky for a cattle owner to graze his cattle except on his own land, and in consequence of these measures two owners who have heretofore given considerable trouble have asked for escorts to accompany their cattle to the line, saying that they could not keep them in the park if restricted to their own lands. In another case, two partners who have always given trouble, and who acted in defiance of the regulations, have been compelled to keep their cattle inside their fence. They had fenced certain land not owned by them, and have received orders to move the fence to the proper lines before August 15.

The amount of game in the park is said to be increasing. The difficulty of catching persons having and using firearms is great, owing to the fact that there are so many ways of entering and leaving the park. A few good examples would be very beneficial. It is not believed that much game is killed.

The California Fish Commission sent in here early in June 30,000 Eastern trout, which were put in streams by Mr. Fletcher, a deputy of the fish commission, assisted by a detail, and using pack mules from this camp. The fish commission also established a hatchery near here, and I have been able with men and animals to assist Mr. Fletcher in stocking many of the streams in the park with trout. In a few years trout should be plentiful in most of the streams and lakes in the park.

I am unable to concur in the recommendations of my predecessors as to cutting down the size of this park. Township 4, section 19 east, and that part of township 3, section 19 east, 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. The Devil's Post Piles, in the southeastern part, constitute in themselves a good reason for not cutting that country off the park.

The country north of the Tuolumne River should also be kept. If that is cut off trespassers would come right up to the new line and would cross it whenever an opportunity offered.

The only published regulations for the government of the park were issued a few days after the passage of the act creating it, and are in need of modification and addition. In their present form they leave the well-meaning visitor to the park in doubt as to what he should or should not do, and gives the willful lawbreaker a plausible excuse for his wrongdoings.

I therefore recommend that to paragraph 5 be added the following clause:

All persons entering the park will leave outside the park, or in charge of the acting superintendent, such firearms, traps, nets, tackle, or appliances as they may have in their possession. Any person who shall violate this paragraph shall be expelled from the park.

It is also recommended that the number of paragraph 8 be changed to 9, and that the following paragraph be inserted after paragraph 7:

8. Persons who own or lease patented land within the park and who wish to graze cattle, sheep, or horses on such land, and to drive their stock through the park to or from such land, must do so under the supervision of the acting superintendent, who will send an escort to see that no trespass is committed in driving stock to or from such land. The acting superintendent will require the owners of patented lands or their lessees, before taking any steps to drive their stock to such lands, to file with him satisfactory evidence of title thereto, and have the lands properly surveyed and the metes and bounds thereof properly marked and the land fenced. Any stock found off the land on which it is authorized to be will be driven off the park.

As the law now stands there is no penalty for trespassing in the park, and the only thing that can be done is to expel the offender at a point selected by the superintendent. It is of the utmost importance that a law should be passed prescribing a penalty of fine or confinement, or both, for trespassing. One or two trials and convictions under such a law would constitute an object lesson which would lessen by 50 per cent the difficulty of guarding this park. A great majority of the sheep herders, the most numerous and annoying class of trespassers, are Portuguese and Frenchmen of the lowest order of intelligence. They are lawless, and have absolutely no respect for a law for violating which there is no penalty. Under the influence of fear and force they are as meek a lot of villains as ever stole Government grass, and the knowledge that a few of their kind had gone to prison for trespassing on the park would keep most of them outside its borders. There should also be a fine imposed on the owners of sheep found on the park; the same to be paid before the owners are allowed to recover possession of their stock.

Some steps should be taken by the Government to acquire title to all the patented agricultural, and timber lands within the borders of the park. This subject has been thoroughly covered by Captain Wood and Captain Gale, and I fully concur in their recommendations. In order to have a properly conducted park the Government must have undivided ownership and control of all the land.

A complete survey of the park should be made, the lines should be blazed, and signs put up at points where roads or important trails cross the line. Occasionally an innocent person is guilty of trespass on the park, owing to ignorance of the lines. The sheep herders who come in all know where the limits of the park are, but they boldly claim ignorance.

I have spent nearly a month in traveling through the park, having been over all except the northeastern corner and part of the northern line of townships. The above recommendations are based on my own personal observation and that of the officers on duty with me.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

ALEX. RODGERS,
Captain Fourth Cavalry,
Acting Superintendent Yosemite National Park.

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

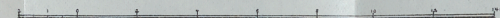
MAP
OF
THE YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

PREPARED EXPRESSLY FOR USE OF U. S. TROOPS BY

N. F. MACLURE, 1ST LIEUT. 5TH U. S. CAVALRY.

FEBRUARY, 1895.

SCALE



PLACES WITH TWO NAMES

SIGNAL PK.	DEVIL'S PK.
SNEAK CREEK P.O.	DARRANG
HENNESSY'S	WARD'S
GRAY PEAK	MT. HAY'S
CROOKERS	SEQUOIA P.O.
SMITH'S MT.	COTTONWOOD PK.
WADES MT.	BALD MT.
N. F. RUSH CK.	SILVER CK.
GLACIER LAKE	JOHNSON LAKE
RETURN CK.	MT. TUOLUMNE RIV.
MT. TRUMBULL	GRANBERRY PEAK
INDIAN CK.	CHINGUAPIN CK.
IRON CAMP	77 CORRAL
BALLOON DOME	GREAT DOME
MYGILL'S	MIQUEL'S
FAIRVIEW DOME	SODA SPR. BUTTE
HOBBS DOME	WAMELOD ROCK
HAZEL BROWN CK.	BIG CREEK

REMARKS

IF ACCURACY IS NOT CLAIMED
ON THIS MAP FOR POINTS
MORE THAN THREE MILES OUT
SIDE THE LIMITS OF THE YOS-
EMITE NATIONAL PARK.
2^D DISTINGUISH BETWEEN WELL
TRAVELED OR WELL-BLAZED
TRAILS MARKED THUS: ————
AND DIRT OR UNBLAZED TRAILS
OR CROSS-COUNTRY ROUTES OR
TRAILS BUT LITTLE USED. ALL
OF WHICH ARE THUS: ————