



Tule Lake Unit and Lava Beds Staff Clean Plaque on Castle Rock

Tule Lake Unit and Lava Beds National Monument staff spent an afternoon in early April hiking to the cross atop Castle Rock (The Peninsula) and cleaning off a plaque at its base that had been vandalized several years ago.

Rising over 800 feet above the surrounding landscape, Castle Rock, known as the Peninsula to local residents, represents an important landmark to both Japanese Americans who were incarcerated at Tule Lake and their descendants, and to the surrounding community. Images and mentions of Castle Rock appear in artwork and literature relating to the Tule Lake Segregation Center, many of which were created by former incarcerated of Tule Lake.



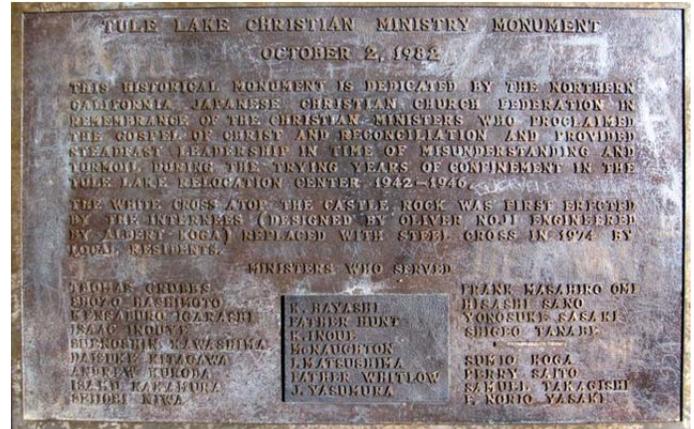
Lava Beds and Tule Lake Unit staff removing graffiti from one of the plaques. (NPS Photo)

As part of the Easter services in 1943, Japanese Americans incarcerated at Tule Lake erected a white wooden cross atop Castle Rock. This cross, which was designed by Oliver Noji and engineered by Albert Koga, was dedicated on May 2, 1943. During 1942 and until the center became segregated in July 1943, Japanese Americans incarcerated at Tule Lake were permitted to hike up Castle Rock and obtain incredible 360-degree views of the camp and surrounding landscape. Photographs from that time show Japanese Americans making the hike in all types of weather, including pulling sleds up the hill in deep snow. After Tule Lake became a higher security segregation center in 1943, however, incarcerated were no longer permitted to make the hike and were required to remain within the camp's barbed wire fences.

In late 1973, this original cross fell over, and during the following spring, members of the surrounding Tule Lake Basin community worked together to build and place the white metal cross that sits at the site today.

There are two plaques at the base of the cross. One of the plaques lists the names of the local residents who helped replace the fallen cross in 1974 and serves as a tribute to the Japanese Americans who were incarcerated at Tule Lake.

The second plaque, titled "Tule Lake Christian Ministry Monument," was placed in 1982 and lists the names of ministers who served at the Tule Lake Segregation Center. Thanks to a generous donation, Tule Lake Unit and Lava Beds staff were able to use special cleaners to remove graffiti from this plaque, pictured at right.



One of the plaques at the base of the cross that lists the names of ministers at the Tule Lake Relocation Center. NPS staff used special cleaners to remove old graffiti from this plaque. (NPS Photo)

Castle Rock is one of the three sites that comprise the Tule Lake Unit, and it is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Currently, the site is closed to the public to protect important raptor habitat, but NPS and USFWS staff are working together to find ways to expand access. In addition to gathering information for the Tule Lake Unit's long-term General Management Plan, NPS staff used this recent site visit to develop more immediate plans for expanded public access, with permission granted from USFWS for NPS staff to lead limited ranger programs at the site. The Tule Lake Unit hopes to begin these guided tours in the near future!



Lava Beds and Tule Lake Unit Superintendent Mike Reynolds takes in the view from a high point on the Peninsula. (NPS Photo)