



# Progress continues at Tulelake monument

By Mike Slizewski  
Daily News  
Thu Dec 24, 2009, 09:35 AM PST

Tulelake, Calif. -

There are about 1,500 residents in and around the eastern Siskiyou County town of Tulelake at present. During World War II, there were well over ten times the amount of individuals living there – making it briefly the most populous city in the region. More than 18,000 of those American citizens – men, women and children of Japanese descent – were forced to live there against their will.

And in one of former president George W. Bush's last acts while in office, areas around Tule Lake associated with this wartime incarceration became part of a new national monument, the World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument, established in recognition of one of the darker moments in American civil rights history.

A small gathering watched a PowerPoint presentation and listened to a talk about progress on the new monument by David F. Kruse, Lava Beds National Monument superintendent, Dec. 16 at Tulelake Elementary School.

Tule Lake became a monument along with other units in Hawaii and Alaska by Presidential Proclamation in December 2008. Tule Lake includes sites in the Tule Lake Basin where Japanese Americans were incarcerated during WWII. The population of Japanese-Americans rounded up and housed at the Tule Lake Segregation Center between Tulelake and Newell between September 1943 through July 15, 1944 peaked at 18,789, attendees were told.

The monument was created by proclamation by former president Bush on Dec. 5, 2008. It is one of nine sites in three states included in the new monument.

Pearl Harbor and areas surrounding it in Hawaii is part of the new monument, as are sites in the Aleutian Islands of Alaska.

“Japan invaded three islands in the Aleutians and actually held U.S. territory,” Kruse said. During World War II, there were approximately 110,000 Japanese-Americans living in the U.S. Not all of them were sent to segregation centers. There was an “exclusion area” drawn up that stretched down the West Coast, and many Japanese-Americans were sent to one of 10 different segregation centers in several western and midwestern states.

Many that were sent to the Tulelake site were Californians, Kruse said. “The irony is that if you lived in Klamath Falls, Ore., you would not have to be interned. You weren't in the the exclusion area,” he explained, even though that city was just across the state line from the segregation center. Sites at the Tulelake section of the national monument will remain locked and fenced, Kruse said, and public access will only be through guided tours, primarily in the summer months. “It will be seasonal only for the next five years,” Kruse said.

Site identification signs are coming in January 2010, with wayside exhibits set for an expected spring opening, and as long-range general management plan will be completed by the end of 2010. Even with little publicity, Kruse said 1,200 people visited the site in its first year, as well as another 700 for its opening. "Those 1,200 heard about it mostly by word of mouth," he said.

The National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will co-manage the new monument sections in the Tulelake area. "We're hoping to have a base budget by 2012 of about \$200,000, which will buy us about two or two and a half employees," Kruse continued. Meanwhile, staff will be loaned from Lava Beds National Monument and the area's wildlife refuges.

The Tulelake-Butte Valley Fairgrounds is allowing the monument to use space temporarily to house and feature historical exhibits. Tulelake City Clerk Joe Cordonier commended those involved for their efforts. He has a personal connection to that time and place. Both of his parents were in Pearl Harbor when it was attacked, and he was born on an Aleutian island. It was not one of the ones that the Japanese captured during World War II. "It had a military base on it built to bomb where the Japanese were in the Aleutians," he said.

Here are some facts from the new monument's Web site, [www.nps.gov/tule](http://www.nps.gov/tule):

"Did You Know?"

"Many scenes from the 1976 television film, "Farewell to Manzanar" were shot at the Tule Lake M.P compound. A remnant of the filming is the simple wooden arch on the side of the compound that was part of the 'Manzanar'" entry-gate.

"The Tule Lake Segregation Center National Historic Landmark and nearby Camp Tulelake in California were both used to incarcerate Japanese-Americans forcibly removed from the west coast of the United States.

"They encompass the original segregation center's stockade, the War Relocation Authority Motor Pool, the Post Engineer's Yard and Motor Pool, a small part of the Military Police Compound, several historic structures used to imprison Japanese Americans and to intern German and Italian prisoners of war at Camp Tulelake, and the sprawling landscape that forms the historic setting.

"Camp Tulelake

"Another section of Tule Lake monument is Camp Tulelake, a former Civilian Conservation Corps camp. During WWII, after the CCC program ended, the camp was used before segregation to imprison several hundred Japanese American men who protested and refused to answer the loyalty questionnaire. It was used again shortly after segregation to house Japanese American strikebreakers brought in from other WRA camps to harvest the crops that Tule Lake strikers were leveraging to demand better living and working conditions. Between 1944 and 1946 the camp housed German and Italian Prisoners of War who worked for local farmers in the Klamath Basin.

"Did You Know?"

"Internees prior to segregation put up the original wooden cross on castle rock. In 1974 the wooden cross fell down. Local farmers and businessmen donated their time and materials to construct the metal cross that can now be seen standing in place of the wooden cross.

"What is there to see at each site from the road?"

"At Camp Tulelake you can view four of the original twenty-three buildings that were built in 1935 by Civilian Conservation Corps enrollee. There is also a wayside panel at the entrance of the camp that

explains the sites history from 1935-1946.

“At the Tule Lake Segregation Center, along Hwy 139 there is memorial marker that provides an overview of the history of Japanese internment. Behind the marker is the concrete jail that was built after Tule Lake was converted from a War Relocation Center into a maximum security segregation center.

“What is there to see or do at the visitor center?

“Currently the visitor center is located inside the Tulelake Butte Valley Fairground office, and offers interpretive displays that provide an overview of both Camp Tulelake and the Tule Lake Segregation Center. The visitor center is staffed Memorial Day through Labor Day, with brochures and exhibits available year round. The visitor center also provides easy access to the Tulelake Butte Valley fairground museum of local history.

“When are ranger guided tours? How do I sign up for them?

“Tours are offered regularly Memorial Day through Labor Day, and do not require any reservation. To find out when tours are please contact the visitor center.

“Tours are offered between Labor Day and Memorial Day by request. To request a tour please contact the visitor center.

“What Happened to all the Buildings from the Segregation Center?

“After the war most of the residential barracks were distributed to local farms that were part of the 1946 homestead lottery. Barracks could be purchased for \$1, plus the transportation cost which was around \$300.

“Do Former Incarcerates come back to visit?

“Former incarcerates come back to Tule Lake. The Tule Lake Committee, a nonprofit educational organization, sponsors a pilgrimage to Tule Lake over the July 4th weekend on a bi-annual basis; the next pilgrimage will take place in 2010. Many former internees, and a growing number of young people, participate in this event.

“Did You Know?

“Approximately 150,000 German and Italian POWs arrived in the United States after the surrender of Gen. Rommel's Afrika Korps in 1943. When the war was over, there were 425,000 enemy prisoners in 511 main and branch camps. Camp Tulelake was a branch camp.

“Martial law was imposed on November 14, 1943. The Army took control of the Tule Lake Segregation Center with 1,200 armed soldiers. The 28 guard towers were manned 24/7 by armed soldiers, 8 tanks, 6 patrol cars. The Army had 18 horses used by the guards to patrol the perimeter of the prison.

“Japanese American families, prior to segregation at Tule Lake, went snow-sledding on Castle Rock.

“In late 2009 and early 2010 we will begin preparing a General Management Plan (GMP) for the new National Monument. During the GMP process we will identify what themes are critical to interpreting the history, what resources and lands are critical to preserve and support the telling of the historic story, and what facilities and staffing structure will be necessary to operate the Monument. For a new Monument such as this it will be a complex, interagency process involving the National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the public. It will take approximately three to four years to complete the GMP. As we get closer to starting the process we will post notices on this site about upcoming events and opportunities for the public to contribute and be involved in the planning process.

“Martial law was imposed on November 14, 1943. The Army took control of the Tule Lake Segregation Center with 1,200 armed soldiers. The 28 guard towers were manned 24/7 by armed soldiers, 8 tanks, 6

patrol cars. The Army had 18 horses used by the guards to patrol the perimeter of the prison.”

Interested parties can write to:

Tule Lake Unit

P.O. Box 1240

Tulelake, CA 96134

The new national monument can also be contacted by an e-mail option of its Web site at [www.nps.gov/tule](http://www.nps.gov/tule).

Visitor information phone number is (530) 260-0537.

Original Post at Siskiyou Daily News

<http://www.siskiyoudaily.com/news/x1689181305/Progress-continues-at-Tulelake-monument>