
REPORT OF THE ACTING SUPERINTENDENT OF THE
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK.

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CAMP NEAR WAWONA,
Mariposa County, Cal., July 15, 1893.

SIR: I have the honor to submit the following report of the condition of affairs and of the management of the Yosemite National Park during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1893.

The law forbidding trespassing on the lands within the limits of the park has generally been observed, but there were a few cases where the trespass was so clear, and the intent so evident, that examples of some severity were made of the offenders.

The Tuolumne River has its source at the north foot of Mount Lyell, and for a distance of about forty miles the river runs practically parallel to the summit of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. This river drains all the country north of it to the summit, and as far west as the western boundary of the park. The portion of this area lying between Mount Conness and Lake Vernon on the east has been so torn by glacial action that there is a succession of deep and rugged canyons running from the summit to the river. The divides between these canyons are composed of bleak, bare rock, destitute of vegetation of any kind. In the canyons there is generally a growth of tamarack trees, and at places they open out a few rods, where a little meadow of grass grows. Into that almost inaccessible region the sheepmen thought they could graze their herds in security. It was thought, even by men accustomed to these mountains, that our cavalry horses could not pass over so wild and rugged a country. Thinking it very probable that the sheepmen would enter the park and try to graze in this country, I furnished Lieut. Davis with a detail and ordered him to scout the country out thoroughly. He found that one herd had escaped him by passing out of the park before he reached them, but he arrested the herders of other herds and marched them, their dogs, and pack outfits, to the western limit of the park, whence he ejected them. He subsequently found a herd about half a mile within the park boundary in Township 2 S., Range 25 E., but the herders discovered him before he could reach them. They hid in the neighboring canyons, and the lieutenant could not find them.

The sheepmen understand thoroughly that they are liable to great loss if they are caught grazing their herds within the park. The penalty for such trespass is ejection, but I claim that the offender can not select his own punishment, hence I have the right to eject from such point of the park boundaries as will, in my judgment, prove the most effective. Of course this journey is not in accordance with the will of the offender, and consequently he is under restraint, or, in other

words, he is under guard, until the point on the park boundary which I have designated as the place of ejection is reached. In order to save him unnecessary hardship, he is allowed to take along such horses or pack animals as he may have with him, and also his complete camp outfit and provisions. When ejected, some of them usually ask and obtain permission to see me for the purpose of getting written permission to go and collect the herd and move it off the park.

The owners of these herds are not always with them, so, in order to compel them to give orders to their herders not to trespass upon the park, when herders are arrested they are marched to another part of the park for ejection, this march consuming four or five days; and after they are ejected it takes as long to get back to their herds. In the meantime the sheep are alone, and the forest animals are liable to scatter and destroy many of them. When the owner awakens to this fact, he takes more interest in the doings of his herders, and gives them orders not to enter the park under any circumstances. A few examples have made all of them respectors of the law, and so far this season no willful trespass by the sheepmen has been discovered.

When the troops first came here to guard the park, there were a great many cattle habitually grazed upon the lands now within its limits. Some ranchmen owned homesteads in which they lived during the summer months, and they had habitually driven their cattle to their possessions in the mountains, and turned them loose to roam and graze at will until just before the autumn storms, when they would round up their herds and drive them back to where they had provided a winter range for them. The policy of preventing all trespassing upon the park by the employment of the troops was so suddenly adopted, that these people knew nothing of it until the soldiers actually arrived here; but by that time those living on the park had either returned to their summer homes in the mountains, or were on their way to them; and to enforce the order against their stock would have subjected them to hardship and pecuniary loss, which they were not prepared to bear without real suffering, in some cases, which I wished to avoid. To do so, I told those who lived within the park to do the best they could during the summer toward keeping their cattle upon their own lands, but to be prepared to comply with the law the following year. Those living outside of the park were given to understand that they must keep their cattle off or I would have to adopt measures to do it for them. This did very well until sometime during September, at which time a man ran in about 600 head of cattle and thoroughly intermingled them with those of the residents. When I discovered this trick and took a detail to round up and eject these cattle, I found that the task of separating them was a great one; and when I threatened to drive the whole outfit through Bloody Canyon, the resident owners begged so hard for their stock that I had to relent, but, as a compromise, they promised to round up and take all their stock out of the mountains much earlier than usual. When I returned the following season (1892), I notified them that residents on the park could bring in such stock as they could graze upon their own inclosed meadow land, but they could use such other land as they had patents or deeds for, provided they marked the boundaries so that my men could see them, and, also, provided that they herded the stock so that it would not graze upon adjoining lands; in other words, did not trespass. Some of them promised to comply with the rules; some brought their stock on the park without saying a word about it.

During the month of August last I discovered that the promises were not very rigidly adhered to. Not one of them had marked the boundaries of his premises, and the cattle were not very carefully kept within their inclosed meadows. I frequently warned them and told them what would be the consequences of continued neglect to comply with their promises. I fear that this mild treatment encouraged them in the belief that I would not be severe with them even if they did not do as I wished. The last few days of September I learned that they made no pretense of keeping their cattle from trespassing, and, finally, I also learned that the same man had repeated the same trick of the year before and had driven his herd upon the park. It was not long before Lieut. Davis was among them with orders to round up every head of stock he could find at large upon the park, to arrest and send to Wawona every stock owner who did not live on the park, or other trespasser. After he had rounded this stock up, the lieutenant was to drive it through Bloody Canyon. This man had, years ago, fallen trees and built two houses on Government land. These houses were now within the limits of the park, notwithstanding which he had made them his headquarters, had stored provisions and bedding, as well as arms for his men, and, generally, he had made them a rendezvous for men intent upon violating the law. These houses, his goods, and cattle became, therefore, as to the Government, a private nuisance, and as the representative of the Government I had the right and it was my duty, to abate it. I therefore ordered Lieut. Davis to burn these houses and everything that might be in them. These orders were obeyed. The men had one or two ludicrous chases after cattlemen and herders, but they were too fleet and too well acquainted with the country and were not caught. The houses and their contents were burned, a bunch of cattle was rounded up, and on the 8th of October they were driven through the Bloody Canyon to the Nevada side of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The western side of the park was thoroughly policed for the winter, and it became generally understood that the law forbidding trespass was going to be enforced.

Two fires occurred in the park last year, in the latter part of September. The first fire occurred in township 2 south, range 19 east, and burned over an area about a quarter of a mile square. It reached the Tuolumne grove of *Sequoia gigantea* and touched one of the trees before it could be extinguished. The tree was not injured. This fire evidently spread from the fire left by some careless camping party. The second fire was a very serious one and burned an area of country within the park about 1 mile wide by 3 miles long, in townships 1 and 2 south, range 19 east. It was finally extinguished by driving it against the South Fork of the Tuolumne River. This fire originated outside of the park, but in what manner investigation could not determine.

My men have no facilities here for subduing fires. Upon the two occasions of last year they used gunny sacks, brush brooms, etc. An iron-headed and toothed rake would be the most effective instrument that could be used for extinguishing fire in this forest. There are never any high winds here. Even the fires themselves do not make much of a current of atmosphere; hence fires burn very slowly, and when not in a thick growth of firs, or other material that makes a dense smoke and heat, they can be approached with impunity. Advantage can be taken of the open spaces, and all the pine needles, leaves, and other combustible matter can be raked into a windrow, which will enable us to back burn, and thus check the fire effectually. If my men

had been provided with rakes last September both fires could have been subdued before much damage had been done. August and September are the months when fires do the most damage. The long, dry, hot summer has made tinder of the pine needles, fallen leaves, etc., and it takes but very little to start a fire.

Last season the autumn rains commenced early in October, and the forest was soon so damp that there was no more danger of fire. The summer resident started for the plains and, as the trespasser had departed the country, this command, on October 25, 1892, joined the general movement for a lower altitude and a more hospitable climate for the winter.

Having received the proper orders, we started from the Presidio of San Francisco, Cal., on our return to this park May 8, 1893, where we arrived May 24, after a most pleasant and agreeable march of 250 miles.

The fall of snow in these mountains the past winter has been unusually heavy. The season thus far has been quite cool and, as a result, vegetation is fully three weeks later than usual; but the sheep men brought their herds to the mountains as usual, and, being disappointed in the matter of grazing for their stock, the most of them returned to the valley and rented grazing land. This accounts for the anxiety of some who own land within the limits of the park to get their herds upon it. The vegetation has been protected for two years and, of course, it is much better grazing than anywhere else in the mountains. None of them own land enough to support their herds more than a few days, at the end of which time they would be situated as they now are—the portion of the park passed over by their herds would be a desert, and, if their herders followed their usual practice, numerous fires would be in the forest, thus burning what was not eaten or trampled into ruin. If sheep are allowed to enter this park you might as well withdraw the guard and have Congress repeal the act creating it. For thirty years they have made their annual visits to these mountains and the damage that they have wrought is incalculable. When we pass through the forest that is frequented by these herds and note the absence of young growth to replace the matured forest trees, and when we reflect that it takes about seven hundred years for the sugar pine to mature, and about two hundred and forty for the fir to attain its extreme age, we can then realize that the damage wrought has been enormous, reaching far into the future, and for this reason it is inestimable.

The cattle men living outside of the park have given no particular trouble thus far, but those who reside within the park have been careless and their cattle have trespassed. In order to correct this I sent Lieut. Davis among them with orders to round-up such stock as he found roaming at large upon the park and drive them to Wawona for ejectment. The snow was so deep in Bloody Canyon that it was impassable. He rounded-up a bunch and sent them here, but the owner accompanied them, and he begged so hard, and promised so faithfully to comply with my orders hereafter, that I allowed him to drive them back. They all soon saw that I had ceased to exercise forbearance, and now the few cattle that are on the park are in inclosures which are on patented lands. One man brought his cattle to his inclosed meadow without letting me know anything about it. He had the good luck to escape my patrols and was upon his own land before he was discovered, but he soon learned the condition of affairs, and he hired a herder to take care of them and keep them within his inclosure. I have camped

a detail near him, and if any of his stock gets at large it will be driven here and ejected.

These people have had two years in which to prepare for this, and when I talk to them they acknowledge that they can blame only themselves. I have been as lenient as possible with them for the past two years, but until I commenced to enforce the rules in all their cast-iron features they manifested no inclination to prepare themselves for what I repeatedly told them was coming. Not one of them has marked the boundaries of his land, and before this spring not one of them had repaired his fence around his grazing land to keep his cattle from roaming at will over the park. The reason for this neglect to comply with the orders is that if compelled to graze their stock upon their own land the animals would starve to death before the summer was over.

The mining interests within the limits of the park have been very quiet this year. The owners of some claims in township 3 south, range 25 and 26 east, said they wished to build a road into their property on Shadow Creek (erroneously printed "Shaw Creek" in my last annual report). I investigated the matter and reported favorably, and the honorable Secretary gave the required permission, but no steps have been taken to construct the road. From what I know of the parties and the situation, I doubt if they ever intended to build the road. A road constructed into that mining region from the east, which is the only practicable route, would benefit it very much. The reasons stated in my first and second annual reports for changing the boundaries of this park still remain good. It would leave out all the mining country in the northeast or Mount Gibbs district; it would leave out the entire Minerette mining district in the southeast; and if the line follow the South Fork of the Merced River down to its intersection with a line drawn north and south through the middle of township 2 south, range 20 east, thence west along said south boundary line to the present western boundary, which it should follow to its intersection with the Tuolumne River, with the exception of one or two claims, this would leave out all the old settlements, some of which have been established for thirty years, and all the mining country in the southwestern part of the park. These mines can not eternally be kept locked up in this park, nor is it good public policy to have them in the park. Even if Congress should pass a forestry law, and indicate a method whereby mines could be worked and timber could be cut, none of these laws should be applicable to a national park, which should contain nothing but natural curiosities, for the preservation of which alone the park was created.

I can only form an approximate estimate of the number of mining claims on this park in the districts above described. The number must be nearly three hundred, and probably there are more than that number. In this connection, if we consider the fact that, in addition, there are more than 65,000 acres in homesteads, preëmption, and timber claims within the boundaries of the park owned by private individuals we can form some idea of the private interests involved, but the acting superintendent only can form an idea of how much trouble these interests create.

There are three toll roads which enter the park and center in the Yosemite Valley. The honorable Secretary appointed an agent, with whom I was to act last year, to investigate the status, etc., of these roads, among other things. I attended the meetings of this commission, but never got to see the report, and consequently do not know what recommendations were made; but if the object was to ascertain the value of these roads, with a view to their purchase by the Govern-

ment, I would observe that, if the Government does purchase these roads, it must be prepared to make an annual appropriation of at least \$12,000 to keep them in repair, and these repairs must commence in March and continue until the winter storms suspend the travel.

Last September the State fish commissioners sent me 25,000 young rainbow trout. I put 13,000 of them in the small tributaries of the South Fork of the Merced River, 2,000 in the head waters of Bridal Veil Creek, 4,000 in the Illillouette Creek above the falls, and 6,000 in Lake Ostrander. The State fish commissioners have very generously given me 20,000 young New England brook trout for distribution in the streams within the park. They will be distributed in August, when they get stronger. The same commission has promised me a few more young trout in September.

The South Fork of the Merced, the main Merced, and the Tuolumne were stocked with the steel-head trout about fifteen years ago, but this trout, when he attains a certain size, generally seeks salt water, but he can not return on account of the falls of the Merced, which are located in the foothills, those of the Tuolumne being at the head of the canyon in township 1 north, range 22 east. The result is that the trout in these streams weigh only a few ounces, and even these are not found above the great falls in the Yosemite Valley. The Merced and Tuolumne rivers, above the great falls, are entirely destitute of fish, and more beautiful streams can not be found. There are about a dozen lakes in the park that should be stocked with trout. There is not a fish in them at present. I applied to the United States Fish Commission for young trout to stock these streams and lakes. I have been notified that my application was put on file, which appears to end the matter.

If this is maintained as a national park a guard of some kind will always be necessary; and until the inhabitants of these mountains and foothills become habituated to the present state of affairs, the guard will have to be furnished by the Army; and as the nature of the duties make it impossible for a footman to perform them the cavalry will naturally have to furnish it. I have been over every foot of the ground in this park, and studied it with a view of selecting the most available place for a permanent camp. Under the present condition it is not advisable to build barracks and place a permanent garrison upon the park, but an encampment of five or six months every year will accomplish the object of protecting the park and educating the men in field duties in a manner that these times of peace would otherwise deny them. The place for this encampment is here, for this is on the main traveled road to the valley, it is by far the nearest point to the railroad, and supplies can be obtained at the least expense. From the direction of the trails, roads, and the present location of the settlements it is the most central point. All points in the park can be reached from here quicker than they could all be reached from any other place. This southern border needs the most guarding and a patrol sent from any other part of the park to a particular point on the southern border would first have to come here and then go to its destination. The elevation here is 4,000 feet, just right, for a command can come here between the 20th and 31st of May, form its camp, and get into good shape for patrol duty long before the snow has melted on the elevations about 8,000 feet. I am told by those who have been among these mountains ever since 1852 that there have been three different years, when, owing to the cool seasons, the snow did not entirely leave the 7,000 feet elevations, and the meadow lands on the

8,000 feet elevations were covered with snow all the year of the periods mentioned. Snow generally falls on all elevations above 7,000 feet during September, but there is liable to be trespassing or fire in the southwest portion of the park, which is from 4,000 to 6,000 feet elevation, until the last part of October, when every living thing, except a few fur-bearing animals and the grouse, seeks the foothills.

If troops are employed, I would most respectfully suggest that the honorable Secretary should make application for them some time during the month of February, in order that they may get the order not later than the middle of March, for, as they will have to commence the march about May 4 to 10, that will give their commander time to make the proper requisitions for supplies. Some of these requisitions, for ordnance, for example, will probably have to go to Washington and return, or to the Springfield arsenal. It will also give time for the legal period of thirty days for the Quartermaster's and Commissary Departments to advertise for supplies, one for forage, and the other for fresh beef, and for other contracts. Unless time is given the command will arrive at the park poorly supplied. Officers and men always do their duty more cheerfully, and much more can be exacted of them, if they are properly provided for, and they see that those in authority are really interested in their welfare.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. E. WOOD,
Captain Fourth Cavalry,
Acting Superintendent, Yosemite National Park.

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.