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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Yosemite National Park
California

June , 1947.

TRAVEL: The most significant highlight of the fiscal year of 1947 was the phenomenal increase in the number of visitors who enjoyed the inspirational and recreational benefits of Yosemite National Park. During the war years travel was comparatively light and there was little more than a skeleton force on duty to administer, protect and maintain the area.

Immediately following the end of hostilities, the travel boom was on. This year's rate of increase has continued consistently about 15 to 20% ahead of last year. Memorial Day, 1947, hit an all-time record for the largest number of visitors to enter the Park in any one day when 19,818 people drove in the rain to see the area.

The end of the 1947 fiscal year will likely show that more than 710,000 visitors entered Yosemite, exceeding last year's record travel by approximately 47%.

Such large numbers of enthusiastic vacationists presented both an opportunity and a challenge. The National Park Service welcomed the many visitors. We did our best to offer the services and facilities which they needed in order to get the most from their park experience. Such an opportunity to contribute to the cultural life of a travel-hungry America was unequalled. Both the government's and Company's services were inadequate and unsatisfactory in some ways, but we believe that despite the many handicaps imposed by lack of sufficient appropriations, lack of materials, shortage of trained personnel, and the limitations of the 40 hour week, a great service was rendered.

Long before the war, accommodations for the public were run down or outmoded. Tents, which should have been replaced by the concessioner many years ago, were continued in use. Three long outmoded units - the Lodge, store and warehouses of the concessioner were scheduled for replacement 21 years ago. This lack of replacement has resulted in traffic congestion, poor service, and verbal complaints from park visitors for many years and has introduced many administrative problems for the National Park Service.

The conversion from the stagecoach facilities to adequate modern placement of planned structures must be completed before either the Public Service or the National Park Service objectives can be accomplished.

DEVELOPMENT WORK: The Yosemite Park and Curry Co. reopened the Ahwahnee Hotel in December, 1946, after it had served as a naval hospital during the war. This hotel and bungalows that are used in connection with it serve a maximum house count of about 220, which is less than 2% of the number of overnight visitors in Yosemite Valley during most of the summer season.

While the re-opening of the Ahwahnee Hotel does not accommodate many guests, it does relieve the Park of some criticism heaped on the antiquated bath cabins at the Lodge by those who can afford the rates at the Ahwahnee.

A few new tents have been purchased, but it is hoped that many additional tents may be erected at Yosemite Lodge to replace those which have become unservicable. The demand this year far exceeds the facilities available in accommodating visitors.

Thousands of prospective visitors who wrote for advance reservations were turned away. Thousands who came without advance reservations stood in line for hours, often to be accommodated on a night to night basis. This arrangement made it possible to take care of large numbers of transient visitors from all parts of the country, and automatically spread the use of the Park to take care

of more people for shorter stays.

The Hawona Hotel, closed since the start of the war, is planning to re-open on June 12. This unit contains only 96 rooms and accommodates a maximum of 192 persons, hence it will not relieve the heavy demand for accommodations to any great extent.

From last year's experience in endeavoring to carry out the Director's stated policies with the concessioner, it seems obvious that there must be a greater degree of cooperation on the part of the operator with the Superintendent, and a greater recognition on the part of the concessioner that all matters pertaining to his operations are to be taken up with and through the Superintendent.

No new campgrounds have been developed by the National Park Service, and present camping areas, including many outside of Yosemite Valley, are filled to capacity over weekends and holidays. At the present time the Vint Plan of relieving the Valley of habitations, public services, etc. is under consideration. If it should be decided later that the present general method and locations for serving the public are to continue, then we must recognize the fact that Yosemite is still functioning under primitive developments in many respects so far as the concessioner's services are concerned. Until the main facilities are decentralized and placed off the main travelled roads, and new and adequate structures provided for serving the public efficiently, there can hardly be much relief from present congested conditions.

There is a dire need for tables in the campgrounds. We have less than half enough for the normal summer campers, and only a small fraction of the number needed on peak days, a demand we do not hope to meet.

Over 400 camp tables were repaired and repainted in our carpenter shop during the past few months. No new tables were constructed on account of short-

age of funds as well as the shortage of lumber. Lack of tables is probably the greatest and the only material source of complaint in the campgrounds aside from the condition of restrooms.

The National Park Service is still providing primitive pit toilets in Camp 9 (organization camp) in Yosemite Valley and at many of the outlying camps and picnic areas where such service is needed. There were 6 pit privies reconstructed during the past fiscal year and 107 will have been repaired and restained inside and out by July 1. The interiors of 27 modern restrooms have been repainted. Inadequate appropriations make it necessary to continue the use of pit privies throughout most sections of the Park. This unsanitary condition can never be remedied until adequate funds are provided.

Our campgrounds and the area for camping space has gradually been restricted and reduced during the past 20 years. It is unfortunate that many times the number of campers who used to visit Yosemite Valley are now congested into a smaller area than was available at that time. Fortunately, climate and soil conditions in Yosemite Valley are favorable to tree growth and our campgrounds are perhaps in as good or better condition now than they were 20 years ago. Nevertheless, the crowded condition weekends, and for a large part of the summer, is not conducive to the greatest enjoyment for the visitor. It seems obvious the free public camping area should be enlarged to the capacity of 1930 or greater.

With a camping population often exceeding 8,000 in the upper end of Yosemite Valley, it was impossible to maintain restrooms in as good condition as the public had a right to expect this past year. Lack of funds, particularly, but also lack of reliable employees and an unfavorable wage scale made it impossible to keep an adequate staff of cleaners during the peak of last summer's travel season.

PRIVATE LANDS: Skyrocketing of land values throughout California produced a land boom at Wawona and Foresta, two of the most desirable parcels of private land within the boundaries of Yosemite National Park. Lots were sold and resold. Lots on which no taxes had been paid for many, many years at Foresta were sold by the County at inflated prices. Real estate dealers boasted lots for sale in Yosemite National Park!

Cooperation of conservation-minded organizations such as the Isaac Walton League and the Sierra Club was offered but due to inflated prices no property has yet been bought by these organizations.

We feel a great need of having an established policy, together with regulations governing private lands within the Park.

WINTER USE: The use of Yosemite National Park in winter continued to increase during the past fiscal year. A total of 97,000 visited the ski fields at Badger Pass last winter, 20% more than the previous year.

The Yosemite Park and Curry Co. installed a Constam T-bar lift in order to transport greater numbers of skiers to the top of the hill with more efficiency than was formerly possible with sled lifts. The new lift has a theoretical capacity of 1,000 per hour, and the 25¢ a ride charge should make it possible to liquidate the Company's investment of over \$52,000 before long.

Unfortunately, this was not a good year for such a construction program and the Company's contract with the builder was sufficiently lax to permit the contractor to lose incentive and the project lasted practically all winter.

A small skating rink was in operation on the parking area at Camp Curry. The four-track toboggan slide was so badly damaged by rocks that it was not in operation this year. These appropriate and wholesome activities are very important, and it is hoped to have them in operation next winter.

Increasing thought is being given the development of skiing in other sections

of the Park, such as the Glacier Point area. It is felt, however, that the Badger Pass area can be made to accommodate many more skiers by proper development.

EFFECTS OF LIMITED APPROPRIATIONS: Shortage of ranger personnel from lack of appropriations resulted in not manning entrance stations to the Park adequately, and less patrolling of the area and less service to the public than was desirable.

Vandalism was at a minimum. Newly erected signs on the trails were rarely mutilated and few initials were found carved on trees and benches. Every effort was made to remove evidences of vandalism as soon as they appeared, since it is well known that one initial on a tree or sign, if not erased, soon leads to others.

ACCIDENTS: Yosemite is proud of its low auto accident rate. Only one fatal accident involving automobiles was recorded in the Park during the fiscal year.

Distressing was the series of drownings which took place during July, 1946. Five cases of accidents in the streams and lakes were recorded. Most of the cases seemed avoidable, had parents or guardians exercised ordinary precautions. Nevertheless, they pointed to a need for additional safeguards to protect the lives of thousands of visitors along the streams and mountain trails. Only a small amount of work along this line has been done, nor can it be done until funds are made available.

To prevent repetition of the tragedy of persons going over Vernal Fall, ropes were installed and warning signs posted. A drinking fountain was constructed to reduce the temptation of hikers to go beyond protective railings to get a drink.

FORESTRY: The white pine blister rust moved closer to Yosemite National Park, and is now in evidence only 50 miles north of the Park. Experimental work with 24-D show very promising results. It is expected that this chemical may reduce considerably the over-all cost of ribes eradication and white pine blister rust control in Yosemite National Park.

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CONCLUSION: The road and trail maintenance activities have been more adequately taken care of under the new financial set-up. The Administration, Protection and Maintenance of the Park have been very inadequately provided for. In 1947 fiscal year our funds did not go as far as they did in 1941, due to greatly increased costs of per diem labor, and supplies.

Furthermore, there has been an increase in the number of visitors of approximately 46% over 1941. In addition, there was a very material depreciation of government facilities during the war which necessitated increased need for funds. This resulted in not carrying on urgently needed services to the public.

Frank A. Kittredge,
Superintendent.

Unprecedented numbers of visitors enjoyed the inspiration of the natural features of Yosemite National Park during the past fiscal year. Here Half Dome is seen towering almost a mile above the green floor of Yosemite Valley.

Newly constructed Constam T-bar Lift in operation
at Badger Pass ski fields in Yosemite National Park.

The Yosemite Museum has served excellently as an orientation station and has made it possible for tens of thousands of people to better enjoy the Park and to gain an appreciation of the government's objectives. The popularity and enthusiasm with which the public has received the Branch of Interpretation's activities has served to emphasize our serious limitations in personnel and equipment - in other words, funds.

The free public campgrounds have been a source of
pleasure, health and recreation to more than 100,000 campers
in Yosemite National Park during the 1947 fiscal year.

Corner of a crowded campground during the recent
Memorial Day holiday rush. All previous records for one-day and
or three-days travel to Yosemite were broken when 19,818 people
entered the Park despite a heavy rain storm.

Heavy traffic west of the Old Village
during a holiday peak travel period during the
1947 fiscal year.