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Yosemite National Park
California

July 25, 1944.

A N N U A L R E P O R T

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

FISCAL YEAR 1944

Use of the Park by the Armed Forces

In providing recreation, inspiration and recuperation for the men of the armed forces, Yosemite National Park has served well, and has been widely utilized during the 1944 fiscal year:

U. S. Naval Convalescent Hospital -- With the conversion of the luxurious Ahwahnee Hotel into a Naval Convalescent Hospital in June 1943, from 500 to 661 patients were at the hospital each month during the 1944 Fiscal Year, and participated in hiking, skiing, fishing, and other out-of-door activities available in Yosemite National Park.

In order that patients might enjoy the thrilling sport of skiing, the Navy, under a cooperative agreement with the Park Service, defrayed the cost of snow removal on the roads to the Badger Pass Winter Use Area from recreational funds. Of the 18,874 people who visited Badger Pass during the winter season, 3,354 were Yosemite Naval Convalescent Hospital patients.

Every cooperative effort was made to assist the Navy in solving the problem of housing civilian hospital personnel and staff officers. Available dormitory space and residences were rented by the Navy from the Yosemite Park and Curry Co., and the National Park Service, because of reduced personnel, was able to assign eight of its residences and two apartments to Navy families. In addition, six rooms at the Rangers Club were rented to Navy officers who do not have their families with them.

U. S. Army Signal Corps Training Camp -- The former Wawona CCC Camp provided adequate facilities for its continued use as a special refresher training camp for detachments of 200 men from the U. S. Army Signal Corps, Camp Pinedale, Fresno, California, who were sent to the camp for two-week periods throughout the summer. The camp closed for the winter in October 1943, save for seven men who remained as custodians. In May 1944, it reopened on the same basis as the previous summer. This spring, through cooperation of the Commanding Officer, Colonel Wm. H. MacDonald of Camp Pinedale, a crew of

Army men was assigned to assist the National Park Service in repair and rehabilitation of outlying telephone lines that had been damaged by winter storms. Because of reduced appropriations and labor ceilings this assistance was invaluable in getting the lines in readiness for the fire season.

Another group of 200 men from the Army Signal Corps, Camp Pinedale, used the Badger Pass area for training during July and August 1943.

Bivouacking, etc. -- Camp 11, which has been set aside for use of the armed forces desiring to bivouac in the park, was utilized by 43 different outfits, with a total of 4,854 men who camped from two to six days. These convoy groups in most instances combined maneuvers and training with recreation. Thus, it was not an unusual sight to see jeeps, trucks, guns, radio and full marching equipment on the roads and trails of the park at most any time. Most of these convoy groups were given special attention by our rangers and naturalists through guided trips and talks at the Museum. During the entire fiscal year, a total of 32,567 military men visited the park, or 27 percent of the entire park travel.

Winter Sports

With the Navy appropriation to keep the road to the Badger Pass winter use area open, skiing was available to 2,029 other men of the armed forces--in addition to the Naval Hospital patients previously mentioned--and to 13,491 civilians, a large proportion of whom were defense plant workers. The total of 18,874 skiers, represented a gain of 32 percent over the 14,160 skiers for the previous season, but a great decrease as compared with pre-war 1940-41 winter, when 73,000 skiers were recorded at Badger Pass.

The total of 44 ski injuries were less than last year, and of that number there were only ten leg and ankle fractures. Accidents per thousand skiers were 2.5, as compared with 3.9 for the 1942-43 winter.

The skating rink, operated by the Yosemite Park and Curry Co. on a non-profit basis, was maintained to a large extent by volunteer workers, some of whom were Navy patients. Skating was very good, and the season longer than in past years.

Advisory Board Studies

The Advisory Board met in Yosemite the latter part of August and the first week of September 1943. Their previous meeting had been held May 21-31, 1943. At the late summer session many projects previously considered were restudied, including: the restoration of Happy Isles to its original sylvan beauty; relocation of Yosemite Park and Curry Co. and National Park Service stables; proposed trail from Fish Hatchery to trail junction above Vernal Fall Bridge; construction of footpath from the Fish Hatchery well up on the talus extending westward back of Camp Curry and the Old Village, and bridlepath along the same slopes, but lower; review of the bear feeding area and sanitary conditions with

respect thereto; encroachment of the forests upon the meadows of the Valley Floor, with particular reference to the report previously prepared by Park Forester Emil Ernst; the desirability of opening vistas on the Valley Floor obscured by the forests; proposed location of lecture area at Glacier Point; proposed new location for Yosemite Lodge, according to plans prepared by the Yosemite Park and Curry Co.; proposed Nevada Fall High Sierra Camp location--4-1/2 mi. east of Nevada Fall; proposed location of District Ranger's headquarters building and naturalist residences at Tuolumne Meadows.

No report has been received from the Advisory Board to date covering this latter meeting and their findings.

Weather

Precipitation for the fiscal year (also the weather year) was 29.7 inches--4.3 inches below the normal of 34 inches, and 14 inches less than the 43.7 inches for the 1943 fiscal year. The summer of 1943 was clear and delightful with a total rain fall during July, August and September of only .17 inches. The first fall storms came on October 18. Eighty-seven inches of snow fell on the Valley Floor, which was slightly below normal, with a maximum depth on February 21 of 21 inches. At Badger Pass a total of 222 inches fell with a maximum depth on March 4 of 104 inches.

In cooperation with the State Division of Water Resources, snow surveys were carried on as in past years with scheduled trips to the high country courses being made about the first of February, March, April and May. The snow pack for this year was about 3/4 of the 14-year average depth taken since 1930.

Travel

The following table gives a comparative analysis of travel for the 1944 F.Y., as compared with that for the 1943 F.Y., and with pre-war 1941 F.Y.:

F.Y.	Total Travel	Stage Travel	Military travel
1944	122,618	22,149	32,567
1943	228,723	11,372	23,272
Pre-war 1941	539,728	15,010	14,189

The above figures represent a 46.4 percent loss in total travel for the 1944 F.Y. as compared with last year, and a 77 percent loss as compared with total travel for pre-war 1941 F.Y. Stage travel for the 1944 F.Y. naturally shows a great increase--94.8 percent--over last year because of additional gasoline rationing. The most outstanding trend in travel is the 40 percent increase in military travel over last year, which represents 27 percent of all park travel for the 1944 F.Y.

Administration

Appropriations for the 1944 F.Y. totaled \$311,643.35. Total revenues, amounting to \$136,638.95 were \$69,521.20 less than for the 1943 F.Y., when \$206,160.15 was collected. The account No. 140520, "Permits to Enter Nat'l. Parks," was the one mostly affected, showing a loss of \$75,453, as compared with last year. This was partially offset by gains in Accounts Nos. 145193, "Sale of Water," and 145275, "Telephone and Telegraph Service," which showed increases of \$1,050 and \$5,812 respectively over 1943.

Following the resignation of Chief Clerk Kenneth Pennebaker on February 12, 1944, Auditor Clarence Persons from the Region Four Office was detailed to Yosemite, and served as Chief Clerk until the appointment of Charles F. Hill to that position on May 1, 1944.

Maintenance, Construction and Physical Improvements

Due to extremely low labor ceilings, the park maintenance crew was drastically reduced, with the result that regular maintenance on roads, trails, and on park utilities and other installations was performed under great difficulty.

The only construction project completed during the F.Y. was Account No. 451, relocation of 7-1/2 mi. of telephone line along the new Big Oak Flat Road from Big Meadows to Crane Flat.

Because of reduced appropriations and war restrictions governing the use of tires and gas, snow removal operations were accomplished on a greatly curtailed basis. The South Entrance Road was closed, and the road kept open from the Valley Floor to Wawona only. Thus the All-Year-Highway was the only access to the park, and only the most necessary roads on the Valley Floor were kept open. Had not the Naval authorities deemed skiing a necessary health builder and recreation for the patients at the U. S. Naval Convalescent Hospital, and appropriated a recreational fund to defray the cost of snow removal, the Badger Pass winter use area would not likely have been made available to skiers, since it would not have been possible to keep the road from Chinquapin to Badger Pass open.

Winter closing and spring opening of outlying roads were as follows:

<u>Road</u>	<u>Winter Closing</u>	<u>Spring Opening</u>
Tioga Road	Nov. 19, 1943	June 26, 1944
Big Oak Flat Road	Nov. 29, 1943	May 20, 1944
South Entrance Road to Wawona	Jan. 24, 1944	April 8, 1944
Glacier Point Road	Nov. 19, 1943	May 20, 1944
Mariposa Grove Road	Jan. 2, 1944	May 12, 1944

Interpretation

The following is a summary of interpretive contacts and comparisons. Decrease in public contacts is largely attributable to their being only two naturalists on the staff during practically the entire fiscal year.

	<u>1944 F. Y.</u>	<u>1943 F. Y.</u>
Total contacts	181,507	500,483
Visitor Hour Participation	149,742	383,798
Park travel	122,618	228,723
Percentage of park travel contacted	148%	219%

Principal activities of the Naturalist Department embraced the approval of the previously prepared museum prospectus, revision of history room exhibits, revision of accession records, plans for future museum activities at Tuolumne Meadows and Glacier Point, maintenance of Museum wildflower garden, preparation of report by Associate Park Naturalist Beatty on tungsten mining operations at Dorothy Lake, participation in discussions regarding the bear problem, snow surveys, etc., special interpretive services to military convoy groups and U. S. Naval Convalescent Hospital patients, the annual glacial survey, and regular weekly talks at Yosemite Lodge during the winter months.

Yosemite Natural History Association -- Publication of Yosemite Nature Notes was continued as usual, and included a special January 1944 issue - "Fishes of Yosemite National Park," by Willis Evans, a former ranger-naturalist and now a lieutenant in the Army. Dr. Carl Sharsmith was employed by the Natural History Association as of June 22, 1944, to undertake botanical research and work on the museum herbarium.

Concessioners

On the whole the Yosemite Park and Curry Co. has cooperated with us in our attempts to maintain an atmosphere of refinement befitting to a national park during these war times. The Naval Hospital patients and a large number of defense plant workers and their families who have plenty of money to spend, some of whom come to the park to have a "good time," have complicated our problem.

The closing of the Yosemite Lodge bar in the fall of 1943, and the confinement of the sale and public drinking of beer to the Old Village have helped to alleviate the undesirable atmosphere and conditions in other parts of the park which accompany drinking in public.

Since the closing of the Yosemite Lodge bar, the public drinking of beer only, has been permitted at stated hours during the day at Degnan's Store and

Delicatessen in the Old Village and in an enclosed patio adjoining the Old Village Store. Hard liquors can be purchased "off sale" by the visiting public on Fridays only between 10 and 2 p.m., and by local residents holding "privilege" cards in small amounts when desired. Even with these restrictions, however, the drinking problem has not been solved, and we have numerous complaints because of noisy drinking parties at Camp Curry and Yosemite Lodge disrupting the peace and disturbing guests who have come here to enjoy the beauty of the park.

The following tabulation shows the guest days use of Yosemite Park and Curry Co. hotel facilities by fiscal years:

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Hotel Housecounts</u>	<u>Average length of stay</u>
1944	245,700	3.9
1943	320,735	2.9
Pre-war 1941	389,498	2.3

It is interesting to note that the decrease in housecounts this year is only 23.4 percent less than last F.Y., while total visitors for this year showed a loss of 46.4 percent. Compared with pre-war F.Y. 1941, the loss in housecounts for this year is 37 percent, while the decrease in travel is 77 percent. The average length of stay has almost doubled since the 1941 F.Y.

Ranger Service

The death on August 11, 1943, of Chief Ranger Forest Townsley, who had been Chief Ranger in Yosemite National Park for 27 years, was a great loss to the Service. Until February 25, 1944, Assistant Chief Ranger Wegner served as Acting Chief Ranger. On that date he was transferred as Chief Ranger to Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park, and Oscar A. Sedergren of Mt. Rainier assumed the duties of Chief Ranger of Yosemite National Park. For part of the fiscal year there was an average of 13 permanent men on the ranger force. This number was increased to 15 by June 30, 1944. The temporary force consisted of 23 seasonal rangers during the summer of 1943, and 22 were on duty as of June 30, 1944.

On February 1, 1944, District Ranger Mernin left for duty in the Navy. On February 9, District Ranger Frank Givens was transferred to the position of Acting Custodian at Joshua Tree National Monument. Upon the release of the regular Custodian, James Cole, from the Army, Mr. Givens returned to Yosemite to assume his regular position on the Yosemite ranger staff.

Accidents

There were three fatalities during the fiscal year: (1) The drowning on July 8, 1943, of Edson Dale Bonar, age 16, a Company employee, while fishing in the Merced River above Nevada Fall. His body was not recovered until September 7; (2) the disappearance and assumed drowning on July 18, of Mr. Emerson Holt, age 62, of Riverside, California, who disappeared while on a hike to Merced Lake with a party of friends. No trace was found of his body, though numerous searches were made; (3) the disappearance and assumed drowning on June 17, 1944, of Arthur Muff, age 30 of Los Angeles. It is believed that he slipped from wet rocks while taking photographs, and fell into the turbulent waters of Snow Creek Falls. No trace of his body has been found, although searches have been carried on at intervals since his disappearance.

On January 7, rangers rescued from the Bridalveil Creek area a U. S. Navy Convalescent patient who had become lost while on a ski trip. He was found suffering from cold and exposure after spending a night and a day wandering around in the snow.

Police Protection

During the fiscal year 13 cases were taken before the U. S. Commissioner, as compared with 28 for the previous year and with 60 cases for the F.Y. 1941. Fines totaling \$105 were paid. Two jail sentences for five and three months were imposed, and suspended fines and jail sentences were ordered in the less serious cases.

Wildlife and Fishplanting

Bear feeding as a control measure was terminated on November 6, 1943, and a vigorous trapping and removing campaign initiated. Twenty bear were removed prior to hibernation, and 28 have been removed this spring. The removed bears were weighed and marked with white paint. Of the 48 removed, it is estimated that 25 percent had previously been removed, but had returned to the Valley, necessitating a second removal to outlying regions. Bears are well dispersed throughout the camping areas in the Valley, and are causing complaint because of their depredations.

As the deer population is on a gradual decrease, no removal of deer was necessary.

Fish planted totaled 772,350. In order to improve present fishing conditions, as well as for after the war, the fishing possession limit was reduced from 20 to 15 fish effective at the beginning of the 1944 fishing season.

Two new birds were added to the check list: Sage Hen (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) and American Egret (*Albus egretta*).

Insect and Tree Disease Control - Forestry Activities

In connection with the White Pine Blister Rust control, 1011 acres received initial eradication, and re-eradication was completed on 1,622 acres--mainly by high school student workers--along the western boundary of the park within and adjacent areas to the 1941 power line burn. Five hundred twenty-two pine were treated for infestation of Needleminer.

On January 14, 1944, Park Forester Emil Ernst was furloughed for military service as an Army Lieutenant. On March 18, 1944, Associate Forester Maurice Thede of the Regional Four Office was detailed to Yosemite to take over the park forestry work.

Fires

The only building fire of consequence was the burning on September 24, 1943, of a mill owned by the Yosemite Park and Curry Co. in the Camp Curry area. The loss involved was \$10,136.

There were 38 forest fires, resulting in a burned area of 82.13 acres. Of the total fires, 24 were man-caused, and 14 were started by lightning.

With the transfer of Acting Chief Ranger and Park Fire Chief Wegner to Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park, Ranger Homer Robinson, who had been assisting Mr. Wegner in fire control activities, was designated Park Fire Chief.

The outstanding training program was the fire school conference held in Yosemite from May 8 to 13, inclusive, and conducted by representatives from the Director's and Regional Director's offices. Thirty-four Park Service men attended which included six park superintendents, several assistant park superintendents, custodians, chief rangers and rangers of Region Four areas. Twenty-one men of the Yosemite organization also attended.

Cooperative agreements were made with the Commanding Officers of the Merced Air Base, and of Camp Pinedale and Hammer Field, Fresno, California, to detail soldiers to this area for the suppression of forest fires, if and when an emergency necessitated additional fire-fighters.

Grazing

Because of the scarcity of feed for cattle in the foothills occasioned by the dryness of the season in the spring of 1944, cattle owners in counties near the park brought pressure to bear on the Secretary to open Yosemite National Park to grazing. In response to their petitions, the Secretary advised that he would consider applications to graze only "purebred breeding stock" in the park. Numerous applications were received, and in early June 1944, Regional Forester Harold M. Ratcliff of the Region III Office, was

detailed to Yosemite to study the needs of the stockmen, to review their applications, and to make recommendations thereon. All applications received were forwarded to the Regional Director for review and transmission to higher authorities with the recommendations of Mr. Ratcliff and of the Superintendent.

Sanitation

Because of concern among local residents and National Park Service officials in charge of sanitation that the mosquitoes of Yosemite Valley might be of the species that would carry insect borne diseases from patients at the U. S. Naval Convalescent Hospital to other individuals on the Valley Floor, E. T. Washburn, Entomologist, U. S. Public Health Service, San Francisco, conducted a study of this situation from June 7 to 14. His report had not been received by June 30, but his belief was that the Yosemite mosquitoes are not of the species that carry insect borne diseases.

Lewis Memorial Hospital

Dr. O. E. Kuhn entered on duty as Medical Director of Yosemite National Park on June 18, 1943. He undertook his contract at a period of comparative quiescence in Yosemite National Park, as compared with prewar years. He has been required to maintain the hospital in operation with minimum medical, nursing and hospital facilities at all times, and with increased personnel at the busy seasons. Recognizing the difficulty of obtaining nurses and other personnel in these times, he has maintained a good standard; in fact, better than in the period just prior to his coming. Although there have been no written complaints, there have been verbal ones regarding his services, but particularly, regarding his personality. However, the complaints have not been so numerous as with his predecessor, and without doubt we must expect these complications with any doctor whom we might obtain. 12

During the 1944 F.Y. Dr. Kuhn's gross income was \$18,356.13. His net profit, however, is not available at this time as we do not have a record of his expenditures.

The following shows the amount of business undertaken by Dr. Kuhn during all months of the Fiscal Year, excepting July and August, when reports were not received of his activities:

Number of cases	2,210
Number of office calls	3,279
Number of house calls	318
Hospital days:	
Plan	390
Compensation	114
Accidents	133
Major operations	13
Minor operations	8
Births	7

Yosemite National Park Church

On May 26, Rev. Ralph F. Doescher, Minister and Executive Secretary of the Yosemite National Park Church and Coordinator of Religious Activities in the park, and W.A.E. Park Ranger, passed away at his home in Yosemite after a several months illness. At a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Yosemite National Park Church, held on June 15, 1944, the late minister's widow, Mrs. Ralph Doescher, was designated to carry on religious activities of this position until such time as another minister could be selected.

Misc.

In the several bond drives, the National Park Service employees more than met their designated responsibilities in reaching the established quota. A certificate of merit for the fine spirit shown in purchasing bonds was received. Wm. Breckenkamp, Chairman of the Bond Drive Program, was particularly deserving of this recognition.

Devil Postpile National Monument

Supervision was handled by the District Ranger at Tuolumne Meadows, since no temporary man was assigned to the area. The U. S. Forest Service also cooperated by keeping watch for possible fire. An estimated 2300 people visited the Monument, as compared with 6,082 during the previous year.

(SGD.) FRANK A. KITTREDGE

Frank A. Kittredge,
Superintendent.

EG

cc - Region Four Office.