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**Memorandum**

**To:** Regional Director, Western Region

**From:** Superintendent, Yosemite

**Subject:** Annual Reports

Enclosed is Yosemite's "Superintendent's Annual Report" for the calendar year 1975.

(sgd) LESLIE P. ARNBERGER

**Enclosure**

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## SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

### Yosemite National Park

1975

#### PARK HIGHLIGHTS FOR 1975

This past year can best be termed as the year of the Master Plan (General Management Plan). The first of a series of 48 workshops began in February at Yosemite National Park and was concluded in mid-June with public workshops being held in New York, Washington, and other east coast cities. Thousands of people participated in person and by mail, with the Yosemite Master Plan Team doing the bulk of the data collecting and ultimately preparing a 37 page action document, entitled "The Workbook--Yosemite Master Plan".

In November, the first mailing of approximately 60,000 workbooks was made and the process of public participation in the Park Master Planning process took another step forward. This unprecedented mailing included four planning alternatives for the future management of Yosemite National Park. Without a doubt, the Yosemite "thrust" in Master Planning will probably prove to be the most expensive of operations and with the greatest amount of public involvement in contemporary Park planning history.

An exceptional winter provided abundant moisture for the spring runoff, and subsequent waterfall display.

Mariposa County's first stoplight was installed on Park Route 140 near El Portal to control traffic as a 5.1 million dollar sewer line construction project continues on the Arch Rock Road. By year's end, this serpentine project was approximately 50 percent completed. With unusual dry autumn weather permitting uninterrupted construction, the El Portal Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility, another 5 million dollar project, under construction at Railroad Flat, also approached 50 percent completion by year's end.

A fire at Curry Village destroyed the Mountain Shop and seriously damaged the remainder of the commercial complex in May. Investigation first suggested the cause as a rodent nest in an electrical connection, but subsequent investigation concluded arson was involved. In view of the construction moratorium and Master Planning considerations the decision was made to repair only that portion of the building not including the Mountain Shop. Work is underway with completion scheduled for the 1976 season.

Miss Susan Ford, daughter of the President of the United States, participated in the twelve day Ansel Adams workshop, and added a touch of White House prestige to the Park for approximately two weeks.

Numerous foreign visitors came to Yosemite to meet with staff personnel regarding all facets of park management. Conspicuous were the numerous Australian park personnel who passed through, eager to learn more about the shuttle bus system and the Master Plan process in particular. In exchange, they shared with our staff their expertise in wildfire management as it related to large tract burning.

A General Accounting Office report released in July, 1975, said that the National Park Service was inadequate in the monitoring of its prime concessioner at Yosemite National Park, which, according to GAO, resulted in "overcharges to the public, high discounts to employees, and the loss of revenue to the Federal Government." National Park Service Director Gary E. Everhardt, made a statement before the Subcommittee on Conservation, Energy, and Natural Resources, the Committee on Government Operation and the Subcommittee on Energy and Environment, the Committee on Small Businesses, and other representatives, at a joint hearing of the concessioner and planning activities at Yosemite National Park.

Assistant Secretary of the Interior, Nathaniel P. Reed, and Director Gary Everhardt visited the Park to discuss on site hang gliding, Master Plan, and concessioner matters in late October and early November.

Perhaps one of the most unusual climbing episodes in the history of Yosemite National Park took place in September when a team of Soviet climbers succeeded in ascending El Capitan. Five climbers plus a coach made up the Soviet team, with assistance being provided by an escort from the American Alpine Club. Two Soviet climbers and the American Alpine Club climber successfully topped out on El Capitan; while the three remaining Soviet climbers elected to descend to the Valley Floor. Wall climbing, as practiced in Yosemite National Park, was a new experience to the Soviets. However, the entire week-long exercise was an opportunity for both staff and Soviet visitors to participate in a new level of detente.

Early in the spring, one of the most intensive search and rescue exercises in the history of Yosemite National Park was undertaken when a noted cardiologist from the University of Wisconsin, Dr. Edgar A. Gordon, was lost while cross-country skiing in the Badger Pass, Dewey Point area. Dr. Gordon was the object of an intensive search, and it was not until a month later that his remains were located near the edge of Bridalveil Fall.

The National Park Service's Western Regional Advisory Board met at Yosemite National Park in May to discuss the pending Yosemite Master Plan process, the major topic of agenda.

The long history of medical practice in Yosemite National Park took a turn when Lewis Memorial Hospital quit functioning as an inpatient facility in mid-October. Visitors and employees requiring hospitalization (overnight or longer) are now referred to other hospitals. This change was precipitated by drastic increases in liability insurance, operating and administrative expenses, and a change in the nature of the medical practice (increasing office visits and diminishing hospital inpatient days). The Yosemite Medical Group continues to practice, however, turning into a clinic facility, rather than the traditional historic hospital.

The U.S. District Court, Fresno, denied a request for an injunction to reopen Tioga Road in Yosemite for snowmobiles. This issue was hotly contested at a workshop hearing in Oakhurst at the beginning of the and resulted in a suit being filed in the District Court on behalf of the Sierra Snowmobile Club of Fresno. The injunction against the snowmobilers means that Yosemite National Park, and also several other Parks in California, have been closed to off-the-road vehicles, both winter and summer.

## DIVISION OF VISITOR PROTECTION

The travel statistics emphasize a 12 percent increase over the past year. During 1975, 2,619,000 visitors came to Yosemite. Visitation remains high on the weekends and the months of September and October are becoming increasingly popular for travel to the Park. The heavy travel period has expanded from the traditional Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend to include September and October. About 500,000 visitors came to Yosemite in those two months alone. This creates a problem for budget reasons, for we are without adequate manpower to serve the public as effectively as we would like.

Several operational decisions have had a positive result for the visitor. The newly established Campground Committee has pinpointed problem areas that need attention. Campgrounds in the Valley were upgraded to include new picnic tables, better fire grates, a realignment of various campsites, and new cement site posts for better identification of the campsites for the visitor. Signing in the campgrounds and entrance stations has also been improved.

At Yellow Pines Campground parking was eliminated, the name was changed to Muir Tree Campground, and definite campsites were established. A proposal and an environmental assessment were submitted for Sunnyside Campground to establish definite sites for better visitor control. The proposal was approved and the restructure of the campground is now in effect.

### Bear Management

A new bear management plan was effected which required extensive relocation of problem bears. In addition, an attempt was made to remove all unnatural food sources, including garbage and campers' food.

A special regulation was established to enforce proper storage and handling of food by campers in the campgrounds. Relating to this, 14 citations, 466 written warnings, and over 20,000 verbal warnings were given to Park visitors.

Personal injuries decreased this year, but bear related property damage increased. The property damage increase was not unexpected since most open sources of unnatural food were removed.

### Law Enforcement

For the year 1975, Yosemite National Park had a total of 748 arrests, as opposed to 637 arrests in 1974. Of the 748 arrests, 148 were felonies, 559 were misdemeanors, and 41 were for jurisdictions other than Yosemite. These figures show only arrests where persons were actually taken into custody. There were numerous less serious situations handled by citation only. Even though Yosemite's total arrests were up this year, the total felony arrests were down by approximately 25 percent from 1974.

The decrease in felony arrests for Yosemite in 1975 was a phenomenon shared by counties surrounding the Park. At present, this condition is unexplained, but welcome. It is suspected that the more stringent control of Muir Tree Campground and better law enforcement training of Rangers accounts for at least some of the drop in felonies occurring in Yosemite.

The 1975 arrest count was taken from the jail booking sheet and does not show the additional 15 arrests of persons subsequent to their being indicted by the Federal Grand Jury in Fresno, California, on various felony drug charges that were the result of a successful undercover operation by Park Rangers during the summer of 1975.

### Search and Rescue

There were 112 search and rescue incidents in 1975 - a rate of about one every three days. Technical rock rescues and summer backcountry evacuations were the rule, as usual, but there were also several major winter searches: one for a downed aircraft and others for stormbound cross-country skiers. This type of incident, probably on the increase, stretched the search and rescue budget to the breaking point. Costs to other agencies were considerably greater, which included the loss of a million-dollar Navy helicopter during a rescue in June near El Capitan.

Twenty percent of the 1975 operations involved outside assistance. The search and rescue effort was augmented by Mountain Rescue Association teams, state and county law enforcement agencies, Park concessioners, the Military Air Rescue Network, and emergency personnel recruited locally.

### Hang Gliding

Hang gliding was still permitted this past year, and approximately 943 flights were flown over the last two years. The program was tightly controlled and an experienced hang glider pilot was hired to enforce compliance with Yosemite regulations. The Hang Glider Association has continued to be cooperative with us in policing this activity. A new proposal permitting hang gliding has been published in the Federal Register as of December 11, 1975. Although hang gliding is currently in suspension because of snow at Glacier Point we expect this activity to continue to increase and attract greater national attention. This type of Park usage remains a main issue which will be confronting us for several more years.

### Emergency Transportation

With the transformation of Lewis Memorial Hospital from hospital to clinic, the need for a new ambulance is critical. A G.S.A. carryall van was converted and equipped to meet the need, and Regional reserves were finally approved for the purchase of a new ambulance.

### Horse Patrol

The Horse Patrol function was standardized with Rangers being rotated into different districts. This has provided the visitor with better services in both law enforcement and search and rescue missions.

### Backcountry

Management of Yosemite's backcountry was very much the same as it was in 1974 with Ranger personnel emphasizing their efforts in visitor contact, resource protection, visitor safety, and interpretation. Again, certain travel zones were limited in use and permits were denied once the carrying capacity reached its maximum level. The carrying capacity was enforced by patrolling Backcountry Rangers. Each trail was patrolled a minimum of once every 10 days. It was noted this year that 87 percent of the people contacted had Wilderness Permits.

### Winter Backcountry

Six Ranger personnel were stationed at Tuolumne Meadows, Snow Creek and Ostrander Lake during the winter months to provide assistance and protection to the increasing number of people participating in the sports of Nordic skiing and snowshoeing. Extensive day and overnight patrols were scheduled from these isolated stations, and the contacts and observations made by these Nordic Rangers enables the Division to obtain a better insight on winter use impact and to formulate more realistic plans for future protection responsibilities.

A summary of backcountry use reveals:

1. A total of 22,500 Wilderness Permits were issued in 1975. An advance reservation permit system resulted in 1,750 permits being issued by mail. Up to 50 percent of the capacity of each zone was available for reservation.
2. Approximately 79,000 overnight backcountry users spent 219,000 nights in the backcountry.
3. The average length of stay of backcountry campers was 2.6 nights.
4. The average group size was 3.1 persons.

#### Fire Management

In December, 1974, the Fire Management function was transferred from the Division of Resources Management to the Protection Division. This move resulted in a more closely coordinated effort in the Park's emergency operations and a better utilization of manpower and equipment.

There were 162 recorded wildland fires in the Park during the 1975 calendar year. Of these, 21 were in the natural burn area and accounted for 782.83 acres. The 141 fires that required suppression totaled 767.17 acres.

Ninety-three structural fire alarms were responded to by a three-battalion volunteer fire department. The total property loss from these fires totaled \$1,021,541.

A great effort was initiated in the area of prescribed burning by the Protection Division. Coordination with the Park Research Biologist and the Division of Resources Management resulted in the application of controlled fire to 2,385 acres. This operation also resulted in on-the-job fire behavior training to Ranger personnel.

Fixed-wing aircraft were used on two occasions for fire reconnaissance of the Park.

No fire retardant was dropped on Park fires.

The contract helicopter was utilized as follows:

	<u>Hours of Flight</u>
Fire Suppression	118.1
Search and Rescue	51.2
Reconnaissance/ Presuppression	8.1
Administration	20.3
Pilot Orientation and Maintenance	6.0
	<hr/>
TOTAL	203.7

The structural fire department is in the process of upgrading to meet required O.S.H.A. and N.F.P.A. standards. Firemen's turnout gear that failed to meet safety standards has been replaced with approved equipment. The new turnouts have already paid off in the protection of two firemen from serious injury or loss of life during the Mountaineering Shop fire at Camp Curry. One obsolete 1939 fire engine is in the process of being replaced with a unit that meets modern protection requirements in Yosemite.

#### Arctic Ski Area - Badger Pass

Badger Pass was extremely busy during the year. Visitation was up 24 percent over the previous year, the total being 168,015. The Yosemite Transportation System brought 25,913 of these visitors to Badger via bus; therefore eliminating a lot of the parking confusion that previously existed. Over 250 major injuries were treated at the Badger Ranger Station. Four major search and rescue missions were run out of the Badger area, the largest of which was the search for Dr. Edgar Gordon.

#### Special Problems

Ten individuals were bitten by coyotes in Wawona and Bridalveil Campgrounds during August and September. All of these people were sleeping on the ground with no tent or other shelter. A total of four coyotes were trapped or shot in the vicinity of the two campgrounds with no assurance the offending animal was taken. All animals were tested for rabies with negative results.

## DIVISION OF INTERPRETATION

1975 was a year of program refinement and consolidation in interpretation. The free-swinging, anything-goes policy that produced a plethora of interpretive offerings the past several years was trimmed in an effort to serve more people more effectively with strained resources. Innovation and creativity in program development were still encouraged as before, but within a more restrictive framework of defined program priorities and objectives. The balance of personal services was shifted to increase the number and availability of short-duration activities. The social diversity of Yosemite's visitors remained a paramount consideration in determining program direction and specific activity levels.

The year also witnessed record travel totaling 2.6 million visits; the beginning of the Bicentennial Commemoration and its associated programs; the inception of a new Master Planning process; establishment of an Information Coordinator position; updating of performance standards; attainment of a minority recruitment goal; implementation of an intensive bear management program with interpretive involvement; and satisfying achievements coupled with frustrating problems in each functional area. A topical summary of interpretive operations follows.

### Yosemite Valley

In line with the objective to streamline the interpretive program, conducted activities were curtailed twenty percent from the previous year, most of them during the summer. Yet, the reduced schedule of services attracted 19 percent more visitors. The average increase in program attendance was 33 percent. This objective necessitated the identification of major interpretive themes, and program topics were assigned to the staff within this context and on the basis of a statistical analysis of visitor response to the 1974 schedule of activities. The Youth Natural High and High Trampers programs particularly were reduced to levels more consistent with budget constraints and program priorities.

Major accomplishments included: construction of a new three-panel wide screen in the West Auditorium and the installation of a new orientation slide program produced by the Eastman Kodak Company (it will knock your eyes out!); installation of two wildflower print displays, one in each auditorium; construction of a ramp behind the Visitor Center to provide wheelchair access to the auditoriums; the application of earth cement to the Wildflower Garden trail to facilitate use by the physically handicapped; completion and publication of a printed leaflet for a Self-Guiding Trail on Wildness; improved staff training, primarily in five interpretive theme seminars held in the spring and in the seasonal orientation program; development of interim displays for the Junior Nature Center; expansion of the Indian Cultural Program as a Bicentennial project along with improved authenticity of cultural demonstrations; employment of Miss Caroline Vulner from England as a VIP; and the strengthening of inter-divisional relationships.

Problems were: substandard activity levels; the poor condition of the Lower Pines and Curry Village Amphitheaters; inadequate funds for audiovisual supplies and inadequate time for AV technicians to furnish technical assistance to the staff for program production; introduction of a revised seasonal performance rating form; insufficient time for supervisory training and coaching and, consequently, diminished program quality; difficulties in administering a Credit Option Program arranged through San Francisco State University and which attracted four student VIP's; the absence of permanent supervisors for extended periods; continued physical deficiencies in the Visitor Center, particularly in its stark and cave-like quality and the poor location of the information desk; inadequate methods for estimating the number of visitors using the Visitor Center and Happy Isles Trail Center, despite the installation of electric-eye counters (they don't work!), trails, and wayside exhibits; inadequate facilities maintenance and housekeeping; inefficiency in handling group program requests; and the delay in commencing the Indian Cultural Center development project caused by the uncertainty of Bicentennial funding.

One major personnel change occurred: Dan Card replaced Jim Warner, who transferred to Blue Ridge Parkway, as Assistant Valley District Interpreter.

### Wawona District

Participation in the summer Living History Program at the Pioneer Yosemite History Center increased 27 percent over the 1974 figure. The Center attracted an estimated 35,000 visitors during this period. A major program objective was to develop task-oriented activities to stimulate visitor involvement. Improvements in the program were notable despite a 75 percent personnel turnover, a large number of VIP's, and a new supervisor. They included the conception of a popular schoolhouse program in the Cuneo cabin; expansion of barn dances; better publicity; installation of introductory interpretive signs in front of the structures; completion of a new coach constructed from scratch by Maintenance Worker Claude Johnson for the stagecoach operation; vastly improved supervision, coordination, and teamwork; and development of a wagon-builder's demonstration program and staffing of Hill's Studio as Bicentennial projects. Disappointments included failure to obtain the visitor involvement objective to the degree expected, sparse displays in Hill's Studio, the deferral of the "Wawona History Gazette" project caused by the uncertainty of Bicentennial funding; and difficulties in starting the wagon shop and Hill's Studio projects.

A special July weekend performance of folk music and dances presented in workshops and two concerts at the Center by the Westwind International Folk Ensemble from the Bay Area also highlighted the summer.

Elsewhere in the District, astronomy programs at Glacier Point were enhanced with the acquisition of a Celestron 8 telescope donated by the Yosemite Natural History Association and with the strengthening of relationships with the San Francisco Sidewalk Astronomers during their annual two-week stint at Glacier Point. At the Mariposa Grove additional displays were developed for the Tram Boarding Area and the Museum, and the installation of speakers and wiring on the trams was completed.

Participation in 1974-75 winter activities at Badger Pass, Summit Meadow, and the Mariposa Grove increased 25 percent. Mild weather and light snow early this winter dropped attendance below last year's level during the same period. A significant achievement was the development of a Ghost Forest Trail self-guiding leaflet for cross-country skiers and snowshoers between the Ostrander Lake trail and Bridalveil Creek Campground.

### Mather District

A talented staff, coupled with stronger supervision, invigorated Mather District interpretation in 1975. The White Wolf program and a new Bicentennial Living History Program comprised of conducted hikes by period "miners" to several old silver mines particularly sparkled. Other highlights included development of additional exhibits and a brighter appearance in the Tuolumne Meadows Visitor Center; expansion of interpretive activities at White Wolf and Crane Flat to a daily schedule; development of backpacking, climbing, and Indian crafts demonstrations; part-time staffing of the U.S. Forest Service's Lee Vining Station to improve information services and provide an advance outlet for Wilderness Permits; relocation of the Wilderness Permit Station from the Visitor Center to the Lembert Dome parking area; and completion of a Tuolumne Grove self-guiding trail leaflet (not published yet).

Several problems pinpointed needs for clearer program definition: an interpreter's handbook; better training and coaching; new housing supplies, especially canvas; more effective use of Parsons Lodge; a better location for backpacking demonstrations; and reducing the time required to refurbish the Visitor Center after a winter of use as an overnight ski hut.

Visitor participation in interpretive activities increased 38 percent in the Tuolumne Subdistrict and 49 percent in the West Subdistrict.

### Environmental Education

The major accomplishment by the Park staff was the implementation of an Environmental Living Program at the Pioneer Yosemite History Center starting with a teachers' workshop September 27 and 28. At Le Conte Lodge a Credit Option Program student developed a guide to a sensory perception trail and a Sierra Club staff member presented regular puppet shows. The Environmental Education Specialist conducted value clarification exercises and strands activities for Sierra Club outing leaders and on four successive weekends for 140 teachers in the California Field Studies Program. Student recipients of Environmental Education activities included 45 participants in the Upward Bound Program; 600 Merced County School District students at Camp Green Meadows near Fish Camp; and 620 students from two other California school districts.

### Library

The new librarian, Steve Medley, has substantially improved library operations since his arrival in April. He has greatly improved circulation procedures, physical organization of materials, and security; moved and reorganized the card catalog; developed a new classification system for separates to facilitate their retrieval; developed a periodical holdings file; completed a physical inventory that disclosed a large number of missing books, including some rare volumes; and added 642 titles, some of which were purchased with \$800 donated by the Natural History Association.

### Curatorial Functions

A number of cultural and historic resources were used in off-site exhibits at several major museums, and many publications used manuscripts and photographs in the Park collections. The inventory progressed well but revealed serious weaknesses in catalog documentation. The Indian artifacts, Muir manuscripts, and fine arts materials were completely inventoried and their repository conditions brought almost to standard. The Park received several significant donations, including two Thomas Hill paintings and a portrait of I.W. Raymond by Burgess.

Major deficiencies are inadequate space to provide minimum standard repository conditions for the collections and inadequate staffing necessary to bring record-keeping and conservatory functions up to acceptable standards. One full-time museum technician is needed.

In the Visuals Center the slide library was reclassified, the quality of transparencies was upgraded, and the production of nearly perfect duplicates was attained.

## DIVISION OF RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

### Fire Management

Accomplishments in management (prescribed) burning were greater this year than any time since the program was established in 1970. Seven burns totaling 2,283 acres were burned in the spring, summer and fall. This year's total was 98 percent of all previous acreage burned since 1970.

Of 21 natural fires (management fires) allowed to burn unsurpressed in 1975, the following achieved relatively large size: Mount Watkins, 518 acres; Illilouette, 227 acres; Grayling Lake, 15 acres; Cathedral Peak, 12 acres; and North Dome, 12 acres. The large Pate Valley fire that started outside a Natural Fire Management Unit was controlled on three sides and allowed to burn into the unit at the top.

This year also saw Conditional Fire Management employed for the first time in Yosemite. Such management has elements of Natural, Routine, and Prescribed Burning Fire Management, the element employed being determined by the time of year, precipitation received, and other relevant factors.

### Grazing Management

Use of Wawona Meadow as a spring and fall transitional pasture for 265 to 275 Yosemite Park & Curry Company horses and mules was terminated for all time when these stock were trailed out of the Park in October. Twenty to 30 head of concessioner stock will continue to graze the meadow from June into September incidental to their use at Wawona through 1977, after which all grazing there will be terminated.

Similarly, the practice of grazing Big Meadow by government stock was terminated in November of this year.

### Fisheries Management

In the wake of growing concern over the Park's November 22, 1971 proposal to gradually phase-out fish stocking, the California Department of Fish and Game sought a National Park Service policy clarification during May 16, 1974. Soon thereafter, various private angling groups, individuals, local Boards of Supervisors, packer-outfitter organizations and resort interests expressed concern over the effects of the phase-out.

Inquiry by the newspaper sport media during late April 1975, culminated in extensive critical press coverage during May 1975. Subsequently, a joint Department of Fish and Game and National Park Service position paper was developed August 18, 1975, essentially seeking a variance to the no-stocking policy.

Director Everhardt disapproved the variance and advised that fish stocking be maintained at the 1974 level, whereby 63,799 fingerlings were planted in seven lakes. The directive amends the approved five-year fish stocking phase-out initiated in 1972, so as to permit a proposed two-year joint angling study by the California Department of Fish and Game and the National Park Service. Interim stocking will be confined to those seven lakes previously stocked within the past three years.

Interim authority was granted to engage in Paiute cutthroat trout management activities pending application for a Section 10 Threatened Species Permit under Title 50 CFR S 17.32.

Our consensus is that the Park's best interests are served and the welfare of the Paiute cutthroat trout fishery enhanced by seeking removal of the species from Delaney Creek prior to opening these waters to public angling.

California Department of Fish and Game personnel surveyed 40 percent or 0.8 mile of primary habitat during October. The sampling was limited and does not permit a precise appraisal about the status of the Paiute cutthroat trout. We believe a population decline has continued based on a 1974 density of 60+ Paiutes/mile, which has now reached an estimated 30 Paiutes/mile.

#### Bear Management

Efforts to restore bears to their natural foraging habits and behavior by removing unnatural food sources, controlling problem bears, and educating visitors on proper food storage methods were greatly intensified in 1975. All 4-cubic yard dumpsters in use in the Park were bear-proofed with a mail-drop type lid. Flat lids requiring manual closing and locking were installed on 6-cubic yard dumpsters. Special regulation S 7.16 (e)(3) CFR 36 requiring proper food storage was adopted and ranger patrols in campgrounds intensified to gain visitor cooperation and compliance. Bear incidents, which have been increasing exponentially since 1970, totaled 975 incidents and involved \$113,197 damage. Personal injuries were reduced from 28 in 1974 to 15 in 1975.

One hundred tagged or identifiable bears were relocated one or more times for a total of 125 relocations. Of the 100, 24 returned to the same or another Park developed area and were recaptured one or more times for a total of 33 recaptures. This represents a 74 percent transplant success in preventing returns to developed areas. Ten bears were destroyed, nine of which were intentionally killed and one accidentally killed in a backcountry research action. Two of the nine were backcountry bears in backcountry areas.

### Fomes annosus/Hazard Tree Evaluation

Pathologists from the University of California worked with Resource Management crews in developing crown-symptom indicators for the presence of Fomes annosus infections in incense-cedar trees.

About 70 trees were uprooted to examine root conditions in an effort to correlate the amount of root decay from annosus root rot to crown symptoms. A draft report has been completed, and indications are that infected incense-cedar trees can be identified with a high degree of reliability. Implementation of report recommendations for hazard tree control in developed areas will greatly reduce personal injury and property damage accidents from tree failures. However, tree removals and costs for the Valley will increase from 300 trees, 100 limbs and \$70,600 to 530 trees, 100 limbs and \$122,700 annually, respectively.

Undeveloped areas were also examined for the presence of root rot. Of about 120 new locations identified at probable sites, about one-half were positively confirmed as having fomes infections. These findings show that Fomes annosus is widespread throughout Yosemite Valley and is not an isolated problem limited only to developed sites such as campgrounds or lodging areas.

During the calendar year, 860 trees and 8,150 hazardous limbs were removed Parkwide. This results in 61 percent of the area being treated at 35 percent of standard, with Yosemite Lodge, Curry Housekeeping Units, and two campgrounds being at 98 percent of standard. All remaining areas were scouted and obvious hazards as a result of winter storms or other damage were removed.

#### DIVISION OF MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT

The updating of land assignment plans for Yosemite Park and Curry Company, the Park's prime concessioner, are in the final draft stage and being reviewed by the concessioner's staff.

The Division assisted in a comprehensive maintenance, safety, and fire inspection of buildings used by Yosemite Park and Curry Company.

The facilities of the Park were subjected to earth tremors caused by earthquakes centered near Oroville, California, on June 1 without any apparent damages.

The Park was allotted \$55,000 of special Public Works Program funds for paving the Badger Pass Ski Area parking lot. The project was completed in September.

The Park entered into an agreement with Merced Community College in October that would permit the College to use 15 of the Park's horses during the period of October through April in their equestrian vocational education class.

The Wawona Hotel and annex buildings were re-roofed during late September and October this year.

#### DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING

The establishment of a water laboratory at the Tuolumne Meadows Wastewater Treatment Plant complemented backcountry water operations by simplifying the logistics of getting water samples to the laboratory for bacteriological analysis.

Backcountry public water supply operations were hampered by the lack of trained operators to provide daily operation of High Sierra Camp water systems. Every effort is being made to negotiate an operations and maintenance agreement with the Yosemite Park and Curry Company for the training of Company operators to perform daily chlorine residual checks and make necessary adjustments to hypochlorinator feed rates to maintain desired residuals.

The bentonite seal on the Vogelsang wastewater oxidation tank, which was constructed by Park and YCC forces during the 1973 season, failed, and it became necessary to revert to the use of the old septic tank-leach field system for the duration of the season. A membrane liner has been purchased for installation with Park forces prior to next season.

Park and YCC forces have placed a reinforced concrete slab over the old spring box which serves the Foresta Campground and laid 650 lineal feet of water line from the spring box to the campground. The construction of a pumphouse with a hydropneumatic system is scheduled to be accomplished prior to next season.

The YCC forces returned to May Lake again this year to continue reconstruction of the High Sierra Camp water system. They completed laying of all but 200 lineal feet of a new 2-inch water main in the trail between the lake intake and the water storage tank. Park and YCC forces are scheduled to return to May Lake next season for completion of construction.

The Division accomplished preparation of an environmental assessment for the Interim Wastewater Facility, Wawona Hotel Complex and of environmental summaries for Vernal Fall, Foresta Campground, and Mariposa Grove Parking Area Water Systems.

Park forces accomplished construction of a 3.0-acre spray irrigation disposal field with new irrigation pump and started construction of the aerated tank wastewater treatment facility for the Wawona Hotel Interim Wastewater Facility.

Two new 30-cubic yard front loading refuse compaction body trucks and a new truck tractor, which is being used to pull the Park's 75-cubic yard refuse compaction trailer to the Mariposa County sanitary landfill, were delivered by dealers.

Water service was extended to the new Curry Village Dining Pavilion fire suppression system by day labor construction.

The conventional water closets in the Glacier Point comfort station were replaced with recirculating chemical toilets in order to reduce wastewater flows to easily disposable quantities.

The watertight doors on the Yosemite Valley sewage pumping stations were replaced with new doors which will provide an easily maintainable, positive seal against flood waters.

Contract construction continued on water pollution control facilities for Tuolumne Meadows.

Contract construction of the Hodgdon Meadow and White Wolf water pollution control facilities were completed, and these new seasonal facilities were receiving wastewater for treatment and disposal by fall.

Construction continued on water pollution control facilities for the Valley and El Portal. Construction consisted of a trunk sewer from the Valley to El Portal and a Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility at El Portal.

Workmen who were constructing trunk sewer manholes on Foresta Road in the vicinity of the Rancheria Flat housing area accidentally displaced a manhole frame and cover on the old sewer and dozed road gravel into the manhole. The gravel plugged the pipe, and sewage overflowed and cascaded down on top of the well site below for five hours before it was discovered. It was necessary to terminate pumping from the polluted well until nature disinfected the soil mantle in the vicinity of the well and a new section of water main, which would assure disinfection of all water pumped from the well, was constructed by change order to the trunk sewer contract.

Construction was completed on water system improvements to the Valley system including test pumping of the second public water supply well and construction of Well Station No. 1 and a pressure reducing station at Happy Isles.

A new vacuum operated solution feed chlorinator was installed on the Wawona water system.

A concrete block well station with solution feed chlorinator was constructed over the new El Portal well.

Renovation of the Cascades water system was accomplished by force account. Renovations consisted of a new wood frame structure housing a rapid sand filter and hypochlorinator and construction of a new roof for the old wood stave water storage tank.

New chlorinators were installed at two locations on the Mariposa Grove water system.

The Park continued the Merced River monitoring program ordered by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board and carried out by the U.S. Geological Survey.

At the request of the EPA Regional Administrator the Park made application for NPDES permits to make indirect discharges at 15 locations within the Park.

The EPA Regional Administrator issued the Park a NPDES permit to continue direct discharge of treated wastewater to the Merced River in Yosemite Valley and at El Portal.

The refuse bin bear-proofing and maintenance program was expanded as part of the bear management program. Bear-proofing of all refuse bins within the Park was accomplished. The Park received a non-recurring operating increase to bear-proof refuse bins which were transferred to the Park by Yosemite Park and Curry Company.

The Park continued efforts to get solid waste rates established in February 1974 reviewed and adjusted.

The Water and Wastewater School, Neosho, Missouri, was contracted to conduct a four day solid waste training course for Park personnel.

The Park made a proposal to Mariposa County for the transfer of Wawona and Fish Camp solid waste from Fish Camp through the El Portal transfer station to the County's landfill at Mariposa.

DIVISION OF LAND ACQUISITION

The Land Acquisition Program at Yosemite is proceeding very satisfactorily. In Fiscal Year 1975, we acquired 31 tracts consisting of 18.00 acres for \$883,151.

Number of tracts remaining to be purchased by area as of December 31, 1975:

Aspen Valley:

21 tracts  
5.99 acres  
Estimated value: \$184,900

Hetch Hetchy:

The City and County of San Francisco has expressed an interest in exchanging three tracts, containing 361.49 acres, that are surplus to the operation of Hetch Hetchy.

	<u>Improved</u>	<u>Unimproved</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Foresta:</u>			
Private Inholdings	59		59
Acreage	8.76		8.76
Estimated Acq. Costs	\$813,850		\$ 813,850
 <u>Wawona:</u>			
Improved	245	149.18	\$7,406,769
Unimproved	88	43.33	874,550
Wellsites	6	2.29	included w/improve.
Right of Ways	13	12.21	Nominal
River Channel	1	6.12	25,000
TOTAL	353	213.13 <sub>+</sub>	\$8,306,319

TO BE ACQUIRED -- YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Improved	323	163.43	\$8,328,019
Unimproved	93	405.73**	889,550
Wellsites	6	2.29	included w/improve.
Right of Ways	13	12.21	Nominal
River Channel	1	6.12	25,000
TOTAL	436	589.78 <sub>+</sub>	\$9,242,569

LAND NOT TO BE ACQUIRED:

Seventh Day Adventist	1	28.81+ (Wawona)
***City & County of San Francisco (Tract 14-101 - 14-105)	5	659.89+
***City & County of San Francisco (Tract 15-101 - 15-106)	6	552.43+

Proposed to Option in Wawona Before June 30, 1976:

5 tracts  
0.98 acres  
Estimated Acquisition Cost: \$128,000

\*Based on a 1973 estimate of values for the Land Acquisition program in Yosemite National Park.

\*\*Includes the City & County of San Francisco.

\*\*\*The City & County of San Francisco tracts are all reservoir, consisting of Lake Eleanor and Hetch Hetchy.

BRANCH OF CONCESSIONS MANAGEMENT

Hearings were concluded before the Conservation, Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations and the Subcommittee on Energy and Environment, of the Committee on Small Business, House of Representatives, covering concession operations in the National Parks and various improvements needed in the administration of these operations. The summary of the hearings reflected the need to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of the present concession operations to insure that government improvements are maintained properly and that concessioner prices and services are comparable. It was recognized that a review and update of the concessioner guidelines was needed. Concession operations at Yosemite National Park were also highlighted. As a result of the same committees' concerns and National Park Service reviews, it was decided to increase the staff of the Concessions Management Branch at the Park level and to more fully implement local monitoring and evaluation programs. Fire, safety, and maintenance inspections of concessioner-assigned facilities are now a regular feature of the concessions management function at the Park level. These inspections are conducted on an annual basis with periodic review and follow-up.

Regular price, meal, housekeeping, and service evaluations are also delegated to the Concessions Management program at the Park level. Efforts are currently underway to formalize comparability and maintenance responsibilities by way of pre-agreement with the Yosemite Park and Curry Company. Progress is expected in these areas bringing some pre-determined definition to these now gray areas of concern.

#### BRANCH OF PROCUREMENT AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

This Branch has been active in the preparation of a contract which utilizes Park generated timber as fuelwood processed by a contractor instead of using Government manpower. This method reduces the cost of firewood to the Government by at least 20 percent.

The processing of purchase orders reported to be \$50.00 or less per award is being reduced by the use of G.O.D. purchases. The vendor's invoice is paid from the Imprest Fund. Estimated savings amount to \$30,000.00 annually.

Excess property is scanned regularly for quality items. To date, this year we have brought into the Park excess property valued at over \$10,000.00. While this saving in expense is not as impressive as it may be later on, it is in line with the Government's policy of operating within a tight budget.

The Warehouse operation has been purged of dormant items. We are preparing for the summer season and need the space occupied by stock which has not moved in years. Only emergency quantities of slow moving items will remain on the shelves.

In addition to their daily work assignments, members of the Branch are seeking training for advancement. They actively participate on the E.E.O. Committee, Safety Committee and the Park Fire Company.

#### BRANCH OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

In the past year the Personnel Office has processed approximately 750 SF-52's, interviewed 300 people, and directed countless more to other offices. We have converted eleven temporary employees to Career-Conditional, and are waiting for permission from WASO to convert thirteen others. The Civil Service Commission conducted an audit of the office the first week of November. One of the requirements in the ensuing report was for us to convert all long-term temporary employees to either Excepted- or Career-Conditional, but some Park managers have been very reluctant to do so. Most position descriptions for the Park have either been, or are in the process of being revised. There still has been no action on moving the Personnel Office from the front of the building, as in last year's report.

## FISCAL OFFICE AND MAIL ROOM

The fiscal office prepares and processes a large volume of bills of collection and accounts payable in a relatively timely and accurate manner. Our monthly follow-up reviews of delinquent bills have resulted in a fast turn over of capital. Payroll problems have been reduced to an acceptable minimum. The DIPS Coordinator has been instrumental in effectively maintaining a high degree of accuracy despite a heavy turn over ratio for 1975. The PFM system is in its third year. The PFM Coordinator has provided numerous analytical and useful reports thereby enabling the Division Chiefs the opportunity to make decisions based on current obligations. We have re-emphasized the need for proper training of fee collectors. Our fee collection audit reports clearly bear this out. Errors were minimized after the training sessions. The mail room clerk has brought all files and disposition of files up to date in accordance with directives and training from the Western Regional Office. In the midst of several personnel changes and added workload, the productivity of the Fiscal Branch was improved.

## RESEARCH

The Research Program in the Park had a very successful year in 1975. The Research Scientist was actively engaged in two projects--the determination of backcountry carrying capacities and the evaluation of the ecological role of fire in subalpine ecological systems. Service-supported projects included continuing investigations of black bear population ecology, sociological carrying capacity, and campsite impacts. A total of 42 different independent investigators conducted research in the Park, ranging from Geology and Ecology to Sociology and Psychology. Three photo reports were received and their recommendations considered for implementation. These were reports on refined burning prescription, use of shuttle busses, and managing human components of Park ecosystems.

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