

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1995 DEVILS TOWER NATIONAL MONUMENT

"It is our story we are writing. The trick is to write it as we would write it not as others would write it for us."

1995 will stand out in our minds as the year when the Climbing Management Plan was successfully implemented. Some would say that it was implemented against all odds. The plan heralded the beginning of managing the tower as both a natural and cultural resource.

Director Roger Kennedy visited the tower in June, marking only the second time that the Director of National Park Service has visited the nation's first national monument and for the first time an American Indian was employed within our ranks and told the story of the tower to our visitors. Angora goats ate leafy spurge, a multi-cultural interpretive program was launched, fire burned where and when it was supposed to, First Amendment activities took place to protest the new climbing plan, the Sun Dance was conducted by Lakota people for the eleventh year in a row, the second climbing fatality in the history of the monument occurred, the National Park Service reorganized, and employees suffered the indignity of being furloughed, not once, but twice. Through good and bad, the watch on the frontier of the new Intermountain Field Area never wavered.

General Administration

"Get good people and keep them."

The monument's administrative technician position was upgraded to a GS-341-09 and Paula Klinker EOD'ed as Devils Tower's first Administrative Officer shortly after the new year. Paula transferred to us from the Midwest Regional Office through Operation Opportunity (OPOP) the service-wide placement service designed to move central office personnel to the field and we are clearly the beneficiary of this program. Long-time park employee Paul Conzelman (WG-8) retired after 38 years of government service and was appropriately honored at a dinner, roast, and dance with Paul's favorite "old-timey" music. The stories told in the maintenance shop will never be the same! Purchasing agent, Pat Brimmer resigned in August, Rod Jahnig was promoted to the WG-8 maintenance position, and Randy Brooks from Carlsbad Caverns transferred into the WG-7 position vacated by Jahnig. Kelly Donley will join us early in the new year to fill the purchasing agent position to round out the permanent staff. Sue Skrove, our long-time seasonal interpreter, was converted to a term position and assumed the lead in the monument interpretive position.

A major effort was made (for the first time in years) with excess property by the administrative staff. Our boneyard received the highest compliment when Deputy Field Director Ron Everhart pronounced it the "cleanest boneyard he'd ever seen!"

Under the reorganization plan of the NPS, Devils Tower chose to stay within the Intermountain Field Area and became part of the Rocky Mountain Cluster. Although closely

related geographically to the other Black Hills parks, there were compelling budget and support issues which predicated this decision. Devils Tower will continue to share a Fire Management Officer with the other Black Hills parks and work cooperatively on joint issues as we have in the past.

Community Relations

"Change is painful."

Community relations at the tower range from extremely supportive to extremely hostile. There is no question that our relations with our neighbors are seriously shadowed by the anti-federal atmosphere surrounding public land management in the West. The implementation of the climbing management plan and an increasing amount of traditional cultural use by American Indians at the monument has fueled an anti-park bias.

In spite of racist complaint letters and threats of illegal activity, the summer concluded with major strides being made on the climbing management plan. The monument and the innovative plan received positive media coverage - including an excellent five minute CNN segment broadcast world-wide. An 85% compliance with the voluntary June closure to climbing was an excellent beginning. The bulk of the climbing community chose to comply. As a result of the climbing management plan process, the monument has excellent contacts in both the climbing community and the American Indian community.

The monument's expressed concerns on a proposed general aviation airport in Hulett caused an uproar in parts of the community and the superintendent's scheduled meeting with the Bear Lodge Multiple Use Association became a large community forum whose organizers were hostile to the National Park Service. The October meeting in Hulett, WY drew 140 people and the park viewed the outcome as largely positive. We were glad to present our positions and concerns in an open forum and dispel bar room rumors.

Cooperating Associations

1995 was a rocky year for relations with the Devils Tower Natural History Association (DTNHA). The Board chair (and former monument superintendent) had unilaterally appointed his spouse to a vacant board seat and then resigned - all of this occurring when a NPS representative was not present. The park sent a formal letter of protest to the Board and asked them to re-evaluate these actions. The Board met in executive session and the spouse resigned.

The monument budget request for 1995 was \$36,100 dollars based on \$200,000 in sales in 1994. This was a record request for Devils Tower but consistent with the service-wide average. The Association did a record \$240,000 in sales in 1995 due in part to an improvement and upgrade of the visitor center and sales area that benefitted both the NPS and DTNHA sales operation. In addition to the cash donation, the Association donated a picturesque new mural of the tower for the visitor center. The working relationship with the DTNHA business manager is strong and very productive to both partners.

Consultation

"You are always talking about preserving the environment – places and things that we can see. I'm worried about protecting the things that exist that we can't see. "

- Cheyenne friend to Pat Parker

Informal American Indian consultation continues to increase and the monuments contacts in the American Indian community continue to grow. Mr. William Tall Bull, Northern Cheyenne Elder and member of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, traveled with the Director to Devils Tower in June.

In September formal consultation meetings were held in Spearfish, SD between the National Park Service and designated tribal representatives. The meeting was extremely productive for the National Park Service and the staff at Devils Tower and was very favorably received by American Indian participants. This meeting ranks as one of the high points for 1995.

Devils Tower was a pilot park to video tape our NAGPRA eligible museum objects to facilitate the consultation process. The video has been very well received and is an important statement about our intentions towards American Indian peoples.

Interpretation

"We must move beyond interpreting prairie dogs and climbing."

The interpretive program made major strides in 1995. The program began to shift in a major way to tell a multi-cultural story about the tower and articulate the stories in such a way as to respect the reverence that many different groups feel about the tower.

A new cultural emphasis in conjunction with the implementation of the climbing management plan was at the forefront of our interpretive program. Funding through the Devils Tower Natural History Association and the Wyoming Arts Council enabled a comprehensive series of cultural demonstrators. Programs included American Indian demonstrators, a Teddy Roosevelt actor, cowboy poets, and guitar with poetry.

The minor renovation to the interior of the visitor center and sales area, new bulletin boards park-wide, the conversion of a lead seasonal to a term position, and the employment of an American Indian contract interpreter all mark the shifting of the park interpretive program to a broader-based and pro-active interpretive approach. The year also marks our initial foray into the grant writing business with the submission of a Parks-As-Classrooms proposal to the National Park Foundation that would bring 4th graders from Crook County and from the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in Montana to the monument for an outdoor learning experience.

Law Enforcement

High visitation and a low incidence of citations have characterized the patrol operation at Devils Tower for many years. However, the potential was high in June of 1995 for conflict between American Indians and climbers who did not support the new climbing management plan. Racist complaint letters and threats of illegal activity supported the monument's request for additional personnel during the Sacred Hoop Run and the Sun Dance during the week of the solstice in June. Four additional law enforcement personnel were detailed to the staff and 24-hour coverage was provided. The week concluded without incident. Later in the summer, monument personnel issued First Amendment permits on two occasions to a climber protesting the climbing management plan.

Monument personnel conducted three search and rescues in 1995, one of which involved a fatality. This is only the second climbing fatality in the history of the monument. An unroped Czech climber fell 150 feet from the Jump Traverse on the Durrance route on July 1st. The fall was observed by many other climbers and resuscitation efforts were unsuccessful. In the course of resuscitation efforts, a potential blood borne pathogen exposure occurred to rescue personnel. Post-incident activities included dealing with potential exposure and issues and a critical incident stress debriefing was conducted.

Sturgis Rally Week continues to be the busiest week of the year at the monument. For the first time, special use permits were denied for catered picnics to two motorcycle groups. The groups were encouraged to use adjacent businesses for their commercial activities. Not everyone was happy with this decision but it was a definite plus for monument resources and visitor management. The monument will begin to work aggressively with Rally organizers to better manage this activity which is beyond our boundaries but has severe impacts on our operations.

Memorandums of Agreement were completed with the Hulett Ambulance, Crook County Sheriff, and Hulett Fire. For the first time, commissioned monument rangers were issued Special Deputy status and can respond under the direction of the Crook County Sheriff beyond our boundaries.

Maintenance

"You eat an elephant one bite at a time."

- Richard T. Gale

The maintenance division completed the rehabilitation of the visitor center steps and railing, implemented a new sign plan, completed site work for the Devils Tower Natural History Association storage building, completed a new VIP trailer site, installed new bulletin boards monument-wide, painted and improved the entrance station, completed a minor renovation of the visitor center interior - and mowed, cleaned, plowed, fixed, figured, repaired, computed, dug, burned and whatever else was necessary to keep monument operations afloat. The division continues to work minor miracles keeping an aging infrastructure operating and serving park visitors. Preparation work was done for new telephone fiber-

optic lines (a new MOU), new handicapped restrooms, and an upgrade of the septic line.

Resource Management

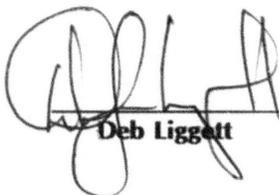
The Finding of No Significant Impact on the climbing management plan was signed by Regional Director John Cook in February of 1995. Last minute negotiations with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation overuled determinations by the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office and the plan was distributed in March - in time to implement the raptor closures.

The role of resource management in monument operations continues to expand and a significant portion of time is spent on cultural resource management. Our improving relationship with the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office has benefitted from face-to-face meetings with NPS and state staff. Section 110 work was completed on the tetrahedrons and basket dam revetments. Work was conducted on the National Register nomination for the CCC structures. Significant strides were made on backlog cataloging of historic photographs, negatives, maps, and blueprints. The draft report of an archeological survey conducted by Midwest Archeological Center in 1991 was received. The report was four years overdue and failed to complete the scope of work - all in all, an extremely poor result for the park.

Draft legislation authorizing the proposed boundary expansion and exchange was presented to Senator Craig Thomas' office. Late in the year, the Senator proposed an equal exchange of property involving other BLM sections so that no money would need to be appropriated. The process drags on and we remain neutral in our hopes for success.

Angora goats grazed on leafy spurge for the second year in a row as part of a cost-share effort with Crook County Weed and Pest Control. The flea beetle insectary sites in the monument were harvested and placed on spurge on five adjacent ranches. A spring prescribed burn in the riparian zone was conducted and met resource objectives.

A proposed airport adjacent to Hulett, Wyoming and its potential effects on the monument view shed, noise shed, and visitor experience occupied much of our time late in the year. The monument provided formal public comment on the draft Environmental Assessment for the proposed airport. Public comment was received by local supporters as adversarial to their economic interests. On-going dialogue with Ellsworth Air Force Base resulted in a five-mile flight free bubble from all military aircraft originating at the Rapid City facility.


Deb Liggatt

1/23/96
Date

Vital Statistics

- ◆ Annual visitation for calendar year 1995 was 456,539. Visitation for October 1994 - September 1995 was 450,529.
- ◆ 1578 interpretive activities (walks, talks, roves, climbing demos) were conducted. 29,364 visitors were contacted. 5183 Junior Ranger certificates were issued.
- ◆ The high vehicle count during Rally Week was 2500 vehicles through the entrance station. The normal summer load is 1200-1500 vehicles per day.
- ◆ Twenty special use permits were issued. Two First Amendment permits were issued.
- ◆ Eight commercial use licenses for guided climbing activity were issued.
- ◆ The ONPS budget was \$535,000 with \$239,000 of special project money. A total of 17 FTE was allotted the monument. 15.4 FTE were used. Fees collected totalled \$422,199 and are fee collection goal was met.
- ◆ 400 Angora goats grazed. 46,000 flea beetles were collected inside the monument and released onto adjacent ranches and another 188,000 were released onto sites in the park. 1500 biological control insects of two weevil species were released on Canada thistle in the monument.
- ◆ One prescribed fire was conducted on 250 acres of primarily riparian habitat.
- ◆ Devils Tower Natural History Association sales were a record \$240,000.
- ◆ 9 Fast Track recognition awards and 11 Peer Recognition Awards were given.