

DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT

ANNUAL REPORT 1938

FOREWORD

Death Valley National Monument has now been administered by the National Park Service over five years.

Travel increase has been steady during the entire period, and during the 1938 Fiscal Year will reach close to 60,000 persons.

Until April 14, 1938, the monument was under Superintendent John R. White of Sequoia National Park, but on that date, by the appointment of Assistant Superintendent T. Raymond Goodwin, it entered a period of separate entity.

There are many problems in this vast area unique among National Park Areas. With its near neighbor, Boulder Dam Recreational Area, it draws by far its greater number of visitors during the winter season. The permitting of mining in the area introduces a problem of regulation and relations which is practically without precedent, but which is gradually being worked out in a satisfactory manner.

Public Service operations are practically all on privately owned lands, and the question of regulation is by mutual agreement rather than regulation. This delicate problem also seems to be working itself out, although there are still many points for adjustment.

GENERAL

The travel season for 1937 and 1938 has been very successful and will show approximately a twenty percent increase over the previous year, in spite of the floods during the busiest period of the year, which paralyzed traffic all through Southern California.

Three outstanding events marked the year; first the unique three day celebration marking the opening of the Mount Whitney-Death Valley State Highway in which water from the highest lake in the United States, Tulainyo, was transported by Indian runner, pony express, burro, ox wagon, twenty-mule team, stagecoach, narrow gauge railroad, automobile, and airplane to the lowest point in the Western Hemisphere (Badwater) in Death Valley. State, Army, Forest Service, and National Park Service officials assisted in making this the most successful and widely advertised celebration ever held east of the Sierras in California.

The Aviation Country Club of Southern California landed more than forty airplanes on Furnace Creek Airport in their annual visit to Furnace Creek Inn.

The Easter Sunrise Service in the Sand Dunes was broadcasted over a national hook up by the National Broadcasting Company as part of the National Park Service Easter hour.

PROTECTION

In addition to the Assistant Chief Ranger, one permanent and three seasonal rangers were authorized, and by using C.C.C.

enrollees for checking duty, the ranger force was able to patrol the 600 miles of roads in the monument.

EDUCATION

Splendid work was done by Junior Park Naturalist H. Donald Curry, both in his field work and educational program, but he is greatly handicapped for assistance in the nightly talks and public contacts.

The Naturalist and two assisting permanent rangers gave 152 lectures at Furnace Creek Camp, Furnace Creek Inn, and Stovepipe Wells Hotel, during the busy season from December to April inclusive to 10,094 people aside from numerous field trips.

HIGHWAYS

Within the monument, improvements to main highways now total 200 miles of good oiled surfaced roads to main attractions. Improvement by the State of Nevada of the Beatty Approach Road was met by comparative improvement of the road within the monument, and a great increase in traffic may be expected over this fine highway.

The State of California completed two major improvements in the west approach road, and has allocated funds for further improvements of twenty miles between Death Valley Junction and the monument boundary. This work should be completed during the Fall of 1938.

EMERGENCY CONSERVATION WORK

Two C.C.C. camps have occupied the Cow Creek Camp during the winter, and one at Wildrose through the summer.

Marked improvements were made in roadside cleanup and landscaping in the camp grounds, the utility area, and Park Village. The completion of the original nine houses in the Shoshone Indian Village, and erection of a combined laundry and comfort station were outstanding C.C.C. achievements.