



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Death Valley National Monument
California

IN REPLY REFER TO:

May 5, 1939

Memorandum for the Director:

Submitted herewith is the report for Death Valley National Monument for the month of April, 1939:

000 General

010 Introductory. April as usual marked the peak of the travel season in Death Valley National Monument. Due to the earliness of Easter and the fact that travel always falls off very rapidly after that day, it was rather gratifying that there was only a loss for the month of 5.1 percent. Unquestionably, the San Francisco Fair had a considerable bearing as a very cheap excursion rate for school children was made for Easter week which attracted thousands who ordinarily go to the desert.

The Easter sunrise service in the sand dunes was attended by well over 600 people, and was the most successful of any that has been given. Installation of a public address system added very materially to the service.

CCC Company 5435 left for a new station in Nevada on April 22, reducing the work force very materially, and therefore slacking up activities.

The good news has been received from 9th Corps Area that replacement of the unsatisfactory tent camp at Wildrose will be made with a complete new camp this season. The superintendent has made a four year campaign to accomplish this result, and it will be a great forward step in the comfort of enrollees in the Wildrose camp.

020 General Weather Conditions. Warm weather arrived on schedule, reaching beyond 100 degrees on April 21, and averaging 92.5 degrees for daytime temperatures for the month. Mean temperature for the month was 79 degrees.

Three rains fell on the area totalling .80 of an inch. Very slight damage was occasioned to the roads by the run-off.

Northern lights (aurora borealis) were visible to observers at Death Valley the night of April 16.

100 Administrative

110 Superintendent's Special Activities. The superintendent made a trip to Bishop, California, in company with Superintendent

Scoyan of Sequoia National Park, to attend the annual conference of the Inyo-Mono Association. This meeting was attended by a number of representatives of the Forest Service, including one of their Regional Office staff, and many advertising men and newspaper correspondents interested in the development of this section. Death Valley National Monument came in for more than its share of praise for attracting visitors to the region during the past year and for the great interest displayed in the valley itself.

120 Monument Inspections. Regional Director F. A. Kittredge visited the area on April 1 and 2, and inspected FWA and Park Service projects. He was of material assistance to the superintendent in straightening out some matters which had been long pending.

Major T. E. Buechler, district commander, CCC, made an inspection of both the Cow Creek and Wildrose CCC camps on April 16 and 17, and with the superintendent and commanding officer formulated plans for a temporary tent camp during construction of the new buildings.

140 Status of Private Lands. From an unexpected source, information was received that Saratoga Spring had never been legally transferred from the original owner, and that there was several years taxes due on the property. The superintendent, the Regional Office, and the State Fish and Game Commission have been trying to figure out ways and means of securing this property for a game refuge, and the Regional Attorney is now investigating the above mentioned report in hopes that it might be purchased for a reasonable sum.

160 General Publicity. Bulletins describing roads, camps, and facilities were issued weekly to newspapers, hotels, and filling stations.

A special press release was issued to news organs along the coast describing flower display and other interests.

200 Maintenance, New Construction and Improvements

230 Special improvement activities. Nearly all the FWA projects are complete with the exception of the very important water line from the Nevares property to Cow Creek. After long delays, the pipe for this project was received, and its laying is proceeding very rapidly.

Owing to a savings made in the FWA projects, it will be possible to purchase a hydro-electric power plant for Park Village which will result in not only a tremendous saving in operation costs of the gasoline driven generator, but will furnish continuous power so that desert coolers can be installed for the three or four men who are obliged to remain in Death Valley all summer for irrigation and protection. This is a long step forward, and will make living very much more comfortable for these men. It is also planned to again use the tail race water at the Cow Creek utility area for a smaller hydro-electric plant at that place which will furnish sufficient power to

operate shop tools, radio, and to charge batteries without being obliged to keep a gasoline driven generator in service practically all the time. A change in outline of work has been submitted to the Washington Office to permit these improvements, and as soon as this is approved, contracts will be let for the hydro-electric plants, so that they can be installed before the extreme hot season.

240 Improvements of approaches to Monument. The status of the new construction on the Furnace Creek entrance road, being done under State Contract, is much the same as before; work appears to be dragging very slowly.

400 Interpretation

410 Lecture and guide service. An all time high for the number of visitors contacted in lectures was made this month with a total of 3,451 in 40 lectures; an average of 86 per lecture. This important type of contact, lasting in all cases in excess of an hour, was made with 24 percent of the total visitors to the monument. Other types of contacts, including guided trips, etc., brought the total to 4,737, or 33 percent of all the visitors. Without the cooperation and help of members of the ranger force, the number of contacts, and hence the service rendered to the public, would have been much less.

420 Museum activities. Mr. M. French Gilman, nurseryman, and his assistant, have added a large number of pressed specimens of the flora of the Valley to the herbarium, making good use of the supply afforded by the unusual number of flowers. Seeds of numerous species of native plants have been collected for future use in the nursery. Several species of plants that are ordinarily rather rare were found in great abundance this year.

A 3-1/2' X 2-1/4' relief model of the Death Valley region has just been received for donation to the monument by Mr. J. T. Edwards of Hollywood, California. It is a fine piece of work, and although discrepancies due to faults in the topographic sheets from which the relief model was made cannot be corrected, owing to the metal film sprayed on its surface, it will admirably serve our present needs, once it is repainted and the roads and place-names are brought up to date.

430 Research and Observation:

433 Geology. As the naturalist is still convalescing from the accident suffered in February, little field work has been done. Office work on fossil and rock collections has been carried on, however. Thirty-four thin sections of Death Valley rocks, made in Washington laboratories, were received during the month. Preliminary studies shows them to bear out some of the theories of origin and relationship of the important Tertiary "granite" that represents one of the most interesting problems in the geology of the Valley.

An abstract entitled "Fossil Mammal and Bird Tracks in Death Valley, California", has been submitted for presentation at the summer meetings of the GSA and Paleontological Society at Berkeley in August. This is the third abstract on the geology of the Valley to be published by the naturalist, the other two appearing in GSA Bull. 49, #12, pt. 2, pp. 1874-75, December, 1938. All are preliminary announcements, to be followed by more comprehensive reports as soon as possible.

436 Other. Three rolls of Kodachrome film were taken of Death Valley subjects for the Washington Office this month, using a Retina camera and equipment provided by them on a short-time loan. These pictures have not yet been returned from the developing laboratories. Several days were spent with Mr. Gordon Dunthorne, who was engaged in taking pictures of the flowers; and much information on colored photography was obtained through him. It is the hope of the naturalist that suitable color photography equipment can be made available in the near future, as there is so much color in the monument to be recorded.

500 Use of Park Facilities by the Public

510 Travel. A loss of 5.1 percent was recorded during the month of April. This loss is felt to be the effect of the World's Fair at San Francisco on west coast travel. The favorable effect of the Fair is anticipated later in the season, when eastern people visit the Fair.

Previous gains in travel served to show a 1.7 percent gain for the season despite the above mentioned loss. 4628 vehicles and 14, 141 visitors were registered during the month.

Form 10-157 is attached.

520 Visitors.

Mr. C. S. Bauder	Inspector, Calif. Fish & Game Comm., Los Angeles, Calif.	April 8
Mr. E. T. Scoyen	Sup't., Sequoia Nat'l. Park	April 26
Mr. Frank L. Ahern	Chief, Safety Div., Nat'l Park Service, Washington, D. C.	April 28
Mr. Randall Jones	Advertising Manager, Union Pacific Railroad, Omaha, Neb.	April 10
Mr. Gordon Dunthorne	Botanist Photographer, Wash., D. C.	April 13
Mr. Allen Hanks	Chief Ranger, Grand Teton Nat'l. Park	April 14
Mr. Carl Lenhert	Chief Ranger, Boulder Dam Recreational Area	April 28

600 Protection

610 Ranger service. During the past month particularly, the ranger division has been seriously handicapped by lack of transportation. The cars assigned to the rangers are very old in service, and are continually laid up for repairs.

Rangers have been shifted for summer duties and stations, and the general preparatory work to "digging in" for the summer is well underway.

Ranger Nealis went on leave April 24, preparatory to assuming duties at Sequoia National Park for the next six months.

Three checking stations were operated by CCC enrollees under ranger supervision.

Considerable time was given organized school groups.

620 Police protection. An investigation was made at the request of the Furnace Creek Inn management; one of their guests left without formality, leaving a bill in excess of \$70.00.

One arrest was made during the month and the party was sentenced to thirty days in the county jail for admitted theft.

630 Wildlife protection. Some serious educational work among enrollees and visitors has been done to acquaint them with the value of lizards and snakes. Most people have an overpowering desire and impulse to kill any reptile observed. Most people contacted on this subject have been surprised and pleased with the knowledge.

650 Building fire protection. Mr. Frank L. Ahern, Chief, Safety Division, arrived in the monument April 28, to look over our "set-up". The inspection was well underway at the close of the month and promises to be of great value to the administration of this area.

A fire main was completed for the utility area, which, when equipped with suitable hose, will afford the first real protection of this sort in the monument.

900 Miscellaneous. Plans are being made to move both the Park Service and CCC to Wildrose about the middle of May.

T. R. Goodwin
Superintendent