

REPORT  
TO THE  
SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
BY THE  
SUPERINTENDENT OF THE MESA VERDE  
NATIONAL PARK

1915



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# REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK.

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MANCOS, COLO., *September 20, 1915.*

SIR: I have the honor to submit the following report on the management of the Mesa Verde National Park for the year ending June 30, 1915:

## GENERAL STATEMENT.

The park was established by the act of June 29, 1906 (34 Stat., 616). It is situated in the extreme southwestern portion of Colorado, in Montezuma County, and embraces an area of 66.2 square miles, or 42,376 acres, but by the act of Congress approved June 30, 1913, the boundaries of the park were so changed as to include an aggregate area of 76.51 square miles, or 48,966.4 acres.

The park is under the direct control of the Secretary of the Interior, who is empowered by law to prescribe rules and regulations for its government.

## CHARACTER OF THE COUNTRY.

Mesa Verde is a high table-land, dividing the Mancos and Montezuma Valleys. This mesa is elevated above the valleys some 2,000 feet, and rises abruptly from their floors, with precipitous sides, like the walls of a canyon. The northern extremity of this great mesa terminates in Point Lookout, which juts out between the two valleys, a landmark for miles in all directions. The surface of this table-land is broken by innumerable canyons, which start from the very edge of the mesa on the northern and western sides, and, growing deeper and more rugged as they descend, finally open out into the Mancos Canyon. These canyons have many great caverns in their side walls, with the overhanging rock for roofs, and in these caverns are found the ruins of the cliff dwellings. The principal ruins are found in Navajo, Cliff, Soda, Long, and Rock Canyons, though there are hundreds of lesser ruins in all the canyons in the park. Spruce Tree House is in Spruce Canyon, a branch of Navajo; Cliff Palace is in Cliff Canyon; Balcony House is in Soda; Peabody House and Inaccessible are in Navajo; Long House is in Rock Canyon; and a recently discovered ruin is in Long. These ruined houses, or villages, are found in the recesses of the canyon walls and, protected from the weather, are remarkably well preserved. Some of them are small, with only a few rooms, while others are large and must have accommodated a large population. The ruins found on the mesas, without the protection of the overhanging cliffs, have not withstood the ravages of time and are now but mounds of stone and earth.

Park Point, near the northern boundary of the park, is the highest point, with an altitude of 8,574 feet.

### CUSTODIANSHIP.

The custody of the park is delegated by the Secretary of the Interior to a superintendent, whose office is maintained at Mancos, Colo., the nearest railroad point to the park. The superintendent is assisted by a limited number of rangers, whose duty it is to act as guides through the ruins and to police the park.

The best of order has been maintained within the park, and the ruins have been protected from vandalism; in fact, no attempts have been made to evade the rules and regulations.

### STOCK.

It has been the custom for the department to lease the grazing lands to owners of patented lands within the park, and at present there are three leases or permits for the grazing of 1,335 head of cattle. The lessees are required to assist in maintaining order and to guard against fires within the park.

### ROADS AND TRAILS.

All the roads in the park have been worked, and in most cases widened and improved. A short section of the old road, known as the Decker Road, has been abandoned, on account of the steep grade and rocky roadbed, and a new piece of road constructed which maintains an easy grade and a smooth roadbed. The road from Spruce Tree Camp to Cliff Palace, Balcony House, and Peabody House, heretofore only cleaned of brush and trees, has been widened, plowed, and graded.

### WATER SUPPLY.

The water in all the wells has held out, and two new reservoirs have been constructed for stock use by the lessees of the grazing lands. The supply at Spruce Tree Camp never varies, and the engine and pump furnish an abundant supply of pure water at the camp and for the camping parties. The spring at Balcony House is always the same, a pool of clear, cold water, with no visible inlet or outlet, but always there to refresh the thirsty traveler.

### BUILDINGS.

No new buildings have been erected, although the department has authorized the building of a ranger station at Spruce Tree Camp, where a man has to be stationed all the time. This building will be erected some time during the present season.

### GAME.

Deer are more and more numerous each year now that they are unmolested. Small game is plentiful, and the rabbit is everywhere. Coyotes, too, are numerous.

## TRAVEL.

The number of tourists registering at Spruce Tree Camp during the year ended June 30, 1915, was 663, a gain of over a hundred, and this does not show the real gain, for the season was late opening and tourist travel did not commence until the year had closed.

## REPAIRS TO THE RUINS.

During the year no repairs to the ruins were undertaken other than replacing ladders or repairing the trails leading to the ruins. A ruin in Long Canyon was entered by one of the rangers for the first time since it was abandoned by its original tenants. Its difficult approach had protected it from all vandalism, and it was found just as it had been left, no one knows how long ago. One sealed room contained a fine collection of jars and implements. It was reached by swinging a ladder over the cliff, anchoring it at the top, and letting it swing. Down this swinging ladder the ranger went and then anchored it at the bottom. Now tourists make the descent.

## TELEPHONE LINE.

A telephone line has been constructed from Mancos to Spruce Tree Camp with five road boxes along the road, and now tourists are not beyond the use of the long-distance telephone. The boxes along the road are for the convenience of the traveler, and connect with the Mancos exchange of the Mountain States Telephone & Telegraph Co.

## AUTOMOBILES.

Automobiles and motorcycles are allowed to make the run to the ruins, and many machines have been permitted within the park. The run is made in about three hours.

## MINING.

The mine operated by George S. Todd, of Cortez, Colo., has produced 474 tons and 1,281 pounds of coal during the year ended June 30, 1915. This is the only mine now operated within the boundaries of Mesa Verde National Park.

## LANDS.

There are 720 acres of patented lands within the park, and these lands should be acquired by the Government at as early a date as possible, especially the four claims that lie on the mesa, in the heart of the park—the two Prater claims, the Armstrong claim, and the Waters claim. The following are the patented lands:

*Patented land in Mesa Verde National Park.*

	Acres.
H. E. 915, made Feb. 20, 1900, by Albert Prater, for SE. $\frac{1}{4}$ SE. $\frac{1}{4}$ sec. 18, E. $\frac{1}{2}$ NE. $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE. $\frac{1}{4}$ SE. $\frac{1}{4}$ , sec. 19, patented Nov. 14, 1915.....	160
H. E. 0939, made Mar. 19, 1900, by Mabyr Morefield (now Armstrong), for E. $\frac{1}{2}$ NW. $\frac{1}{4}$ , E. $\frac{1}{2}$ SW. $\frac{1}{4}$ , sec. 20, patented Aug. 25, 1910.....	160

	Acres.
C. E. 339, made Apr. 10, 1889, by Frederick Richards, for NE. $\frac{1}{4}$ SW. $\frac{1}{4}$ sec. 26, patented July 14, 1891.....	40
C. E. 395, made Oct. 15, 1889, by George M. Comfort, for NE. $\frac{1}{4}$ NW. $\frac{1}{4}$ sec. 26, patented July 14, 1891.....	40
H. E. 0354, made Sept. 11, 1903, by Ellen Elizabeth Waters, for W. $\frac{1}{2}$ SE. $\frac{1}{4}$ and W. $\frac{1}{2}$ NE. $\frac{1}{4}$ sec. 28, patented May 15, 1911.....	160
H. E. 1021, made Feb. 16, 1900, by William F. Prater, for SE. $\frac{1}{4}$ SE. $\frac{1}{4}$ sec. 19 and E. $\frac{1}{2}$ NE. $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE. $\frac{1}{4}$ SE. $\frac{1}{4}$ , sec. 30, patented Aug. 10, 1906.....	160
Total.....	720

(All in T. 35 N., R. 14 W., New Mexico principal meridian.)

## RECOMMENDATIONS.

*Road building.*—A new road should be constructed to make the ascent of the mesa, and the road from the northern boundary of the park to station 64 should be abandoned, as this is the most expensive portion of the road to maintain and is the only part where there can be any danger to travelers. The old road, now in use, is narrow, and is directly under the overhanging cliffs of Point Lookout, where every shower brings down rock and earth, causing great expense in repairs. The proposed road would ascend the mesa on the east of Point Lookout and pass through a scrub-oak country with nothing to threaten overhead. The heavy growth of oak holds the earth, and a cut through such ground does not slide in or fill from wash of rains. The distance would be approximately 8 miles, and would join the Mills survey at station 64. One-fourth mile beyond this point the road should ascend the divide between Morefield and Prater Canyons, and strike the Mills survey at a point near station 167. The estimated cost of the 8 miles of road is \$600 per mile, an aggregate of \$4,800. A new road should be constructed from near the head of Navajo Canyon, on the line of the present road, to Rock Springs, and the many interesting ruins in that vicinity, a distance of approximately 12 miles, and at an estimated cost of \$350 per mile, an aggregate of \$4,200. With \$300 for widening a short distance of the Decker Road this would call for \$9,300 for road construction and make the park much more interesting to tourists and open a section full of interest that is now too hard to reach.

*Ladders, etc.*—I would recommend the erection of new iron ladders in place of the wooden ones, both in the ruins and at the approaches thereto, and good strong iron railings in the dangerous places. For this work I have asked for the sum of \$1,700.

*Restoration of ruins.*—I would recommend that the sum of \$3,000 be appropriated for the purpose of restoring and protecting from decay Peabody House and Long House. These ruins are too fine to be allowed to remain as they are, and the work of restoration would preserve them from further decay.

The estimate for the fiscal year 1917 calls for the sum of \$22,895.20, and I would most respectfully urge that this amount be appropriated.

Very respectfully,

THOMAS RICKNER,  
*Superintendent.*

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

## APPENDIX.

### RULES AND REGULATIONS OF MARCH 30, 1912.

Pursuant to authority conferred by the act of Congress approved June 29, 1906, the following rules and regulations for the government of the Mesa Verde National Park, in Colorado, are hereby established and made public and extended, as far as applicable, to all prehistoric ruins situated within 5 miles of the boundaries thereof on Indian and public lands not alienated by patent from the ownership of the United States:

1. It is forbidden to injure or disturb, except as herein provided, any of the mineral deposits, natural curiosities, wonders, ruins, and other works and relics of prehistoric or primitive man on Government lands within the park or the ruins and other works or relics of prehistoric man on Government lands within 5 miles of the boundaries of the park.

2. Permits for the examination of ruins, the excavation of archaeological sites, and the gathering of objects of antiquity will, upon application to the Secretary of the Interior through the superintendent of the park, be granted to accredited representatives of reputable museums, universities, colleges, or other recognized scientific or educational institutions, with a view to increasing the knowledge of such objects and aiding the general advancement of archaeological science, under the conditions and restrictions contained in present or future regulations promulgated by the Secretary of the Interior to carry out the provisions of the act of Congress approved June 8, 1906, entitled "An act for the preservation of American antiquities."

3. Persons bearing archaeological permits from the department may be permitted to enter the ruins unaccompanied after presenting their credentials to the superintendent or other park officer. Persons without archaeological permits who wish to visit and enter the ruins shall in all cases be accompanied by a park ranger or other person duly authorized by the superintendent.

4. The superintendent is authorized, in his discretion, to close any ruin on Government lands within the park, or the 5-mile limit, to visitors when it shall appear to him that entrance thereto would be dangerous to visitors or might result in injury to walls or other insecure portions thereof or during repairs.

5. The superintendent is authorized, in his discretion, to designate the place or places to be used by campers in the park and where firewood can be obtained by them. All garbage and refuse must be deposited in places where it will not be offensive to the eye or contaminate any water supply on the park lands.

6. It is forbidden to cut or injure any timber growing on the park lands, except as provided in paragraph 5 of these regulations; but dead or fallen timber may be taken by campers for fuel without obtaining permission therefor.

7. Fires should be lighted only when necessary and completely extinguished when not longer required. The utmost care must be taken at all times to avoid setting fire to the timber and grass.

8. Hunting or killing, wounding, or capturing any bird or wild animal on the park lands, except dangerous animals when necessary to prevent them from destroying life or inflicting an injury, is prohibited. The outfits, including guns, traps, teams, horses, or means of transportation used by persons engaged in hunting, killing, trapping, ensnaring, or capturing such birds or wild animals, or in possession of game killed on the park lands under other circumstances than those prescribed above, will be taken up by the superintendent and held subject to the order of the Secretary of the Interior, except in cases where it is shown by satisfactory evidence that the outfit is not the property of the person or persons violating this regulation and the actual owner thereof was not a party to such violation. Firearms will be permitted in the park only on written permission from the superintendent.

9. No person shall be permitted to reside permanently or to engage in any business on the Government lands in the park without permission, in writing, from the Secretary of the Interior. The superintendent may grant authority to competent persons to act as guides and revoke the same in his discretion, and no pack trains will be allowed in the park unless in charge of a duly registered guide.

10. Owners of patented lands within the park limits are entitled to the full use and enjoyment thereof; the boundaries of such lands, however, must be determined and marked and defined, so that they may be readily distinguished from the park lands. While no limitations or conditions are imposed upon the use of such private lands, so long as such use does not interfere with or injure the park, private owners must provide against trespass by their stock or cattle or otherwise upon the park lands, and all trespasses committed will be punished to the full extent of the law. Stock may be taken over the park lands to patented private lands with the written permission and under the supervision of the superintendent, but such permission and supervision are not required when access to such private lands is had wholly over roads or lands not owned or controlled by the United States.

11. Allowing the running at large, herding, or grazing of cattle or stock of any kind on the Government lands in the park, as well as the driving of such stock or cattle over same, is strictly forbidden, except where authority therefor has been granted by the superintendent. All cattle or stock found trespassing on the park lands will be impounded and disposed of as directed in regulations approved March 30, 1912.

12. The sale of intoxicating liquors on the Government lands in the park is strictly forbidden.

13. Private notices or advertisements shall not be posted or displayed on the Government lands within the park, nor upon or about ruins on Government lands within the 5-mile strip surrounding the same, except such as may be necessary for the convenience and guidance of the public.

14. Persons who render themselves obnoxious by disorderly conduct or bad behavior, or who may violate any of the foregoing rules,

will be summarily removed from the park and will not be allowed to return without permission, in writing, from the Secretary of the Interior or the superintendent of the park.

15. The act creating the park provides that any person or persons who may, without having secured proper permission from the Secretary of the Interior, willfully remove, disturb, destroy, or molest any of the ruins, mounds, buildings, graves, relics, or other evidences of an ancient civilization or other property in said park, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction before any court having jurisdiction of such offenses shall be fined not more than \$1,000, or imprisoned not more than 12 months, or such person or persons may be fined and imprisoned, at the discretion of the court, and shall be required to restore the property destroyed, if possible.

Any person or persons guilty of such vandalism upon Government lands within the 5-mile strip will be liable to a penalty of \$500, or imprisonment of not more than 90 days, or both, in the discretion of the court, as provided in the act of Congress approved June 8, 1906, entitled "An act for the preservation of American antiquities."

16. The superintendent designated by the Secretary of the Interior is hereby authorized and directed to remove all trespassers from the Government lands in the park, and to enforce these rules and regulations and all the provisions of the act of Congress creating the same.

The Indian police and field employees of the General Land Office are required to cooperate with the superintendent in the enforcement of these regulations as regards the 5-mile strip surrounding the park.

#### **REGULATIONS OF MARCH 30, 1912, GOVERNING THE IMPOUNDING AND DISPOSITION OF LOOSE LIVE STOCK.**

Horses, cattle, or other domestic live stock running at large or being herded or grazed on the Government lands in the Mesa Verde National Park without authority from the superintendent of the park, will be taken up and impounded by the superintendent, who will at once give notice thereof to the owner, if known. If the owner is not known, notices of such impounding, giving a description of the animal or animals, with the brands thereon, will be posted in six public places inside the park and in two public places outside the park. Any owner of an animal thus impounded may, at any time before the sale thereof, reclaim the same upon proving ownership and paying the cost of notice and all expenses incident to the taking up and detention of such animal, including the cost of feeding and caring for the same. If any animal thus impounded should not be reclaimed within 30 days from notice to the owner or from the date of posting notices, it shall be sold at public auction at such time and place as may be fixed by the superintendent after 10 days' notice, to be given by posting notices in six public places in the park and two public places outside the park, and by mailing to the owner, if known, a copy thereof.

All money received from the sale of such animals and remaining after the payment of all expenses incident to the taking up, impounding, and selling thereof, shall be carefully retained by the superintendent in a separate fund for a period of six months, during which time the net proceeds from the sale of any animal may be claimed by and paid to the owner upon the presentation of satisfactory proof of

ownership; and if not so claimed within six months from the date of sale such proceeds shall be turned into the Mesa Verde National Park fund.

The superintendent shall keep a record in which shall be set down a description of all animals impounded, giving the brands found on them, the date and locality of the taking up, the date of all notices and manner in which they were given, the date of sale, and the name and address of the purchaser, the amount for which each animal was sold, and the cost incurred in connection therewith, and the disposition of the proceeds.

The superintendent shall, in each instance, make every reasonable effort to ascertain the owner of animals impounded and give actual notice thereof to such owner.

**PUNISHMENT FOR DEPREDATIONS AND FOR NOT EXTINGUISHING FIRES ON PUBLIC LANDS, ETC.**

[Excerpt from an act entitled "An act to provide for determining the heirs of deceased Indians, for the disposition and sale of allotments of deceased Indians, for leasing of allotments, and for other purposes," approved June 25, 1910 (36 Stat., 857).]

SEC. 6. That section fifty of the act entitled "An act to codify, revise, and amend the penal laws of the United States," approved March fourth, nineteen hundred and nine (Thirty-fifth United States Statutes at Large, page one thousand and ninety-eight), is hereby amended so as to read:

"SEC. 50. Whoever shall unlawfully cut, or aid in unlawfully cutting, or shall wantonly injure or destroy, or procure to be wantonly injured or destroyed, any tree growing, standing, or being upon any land of the United States which, in pursuance of law, has been reserved or purchased by the United States for any public use, or upon any Indian reservation or land belonging to or occupied by any tribe of Indians under the authority of the United States, or any Indian allotment while the title to the same shall be held in trust by the Government, or while the same shall remain inalienable by the allottee without the consent of the United States, shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars or imprisoned not more than one year, or both."

That section fifty-three of said act is hereby amended so as to read:

"SEC. 53. Whoever shall build a fire in or near any forest, timber, or other inflammable material, upon the public domain, or upon any Indian reservation, or lands belonging to or occupied by any tribe of Indians under the authority of the United States, or upon any Indian allotment while the title to the same shall be held in trust by the Government, or while the same shall remain inalienable by the allottee without the consent of the United States, shall, before leaving said fire, totally extinguish the same; and whoever shall fail to do so shall be fined not more than one thousand dollars or imprisoned not more than one year, or both."

**EXCERPT FROM THE DEFICIENCY APPROPRIATION ACT  
APPROVED JUNE 25, 1910.**

The Secretary of the Interior may, upon terms and conditions to be fixed by him, grant leases and permits for the use of the land or development of the resources thereof in the Mesa Verde National Park,

and the funds derived therefrom shall be covered into the Treasury of the United States: *Provided*, That such leases or grants shall not include any of the prehistoric ruins in said park or exclude the public from free or convenient access thereto; for necessary expenses hereunder there is appropriated the sum of two thousand dollars, to continue available during the fiscal year nineteen hundred and eleven.

**REGULATIONS OF MAY 18, 1914, GOVERNING THE ADMISSION OF AUTOMOBILES AND MOTOR CYCLES.**

Pursuant to authority conferred by the act of June 29, 1906, setting aside certain lands in the State of Colorado as a public park, the following regulations governing the admission of automobiles and motor cycles into the Mesa Verde National Park are hereby established and made public:

1. No automobile or motor cycle will be permitted within the metes and bounds of Mesa Verde National Park unless the owners thereof secure a written permit from the superintendent or his representative. Permits may be secured at the superintendent's office at Mancos, Colo.

2. Applications for permit must show: (a) Name of owner, (b) number of machine, (c) name of driver, and (d) inclusive dates for which permit is desired, and be accompanied by a fee of \$1 for a single trip or \$5 for the season. Permits must be presented to the superintendent or his representative at Spruce Tree Camp. The permittee will not be allowed to do a commercial or transportation business in the park without a special license therefor from the Secretary of the Interior. All permits will expire on the 1st day of November of the year of issue.

3. The use of automobiles and cycle cars will be permitted on all roads in Mesa Verde National Park except that portion of the Mills survey between station 64 and station 327, not earlier than 6 a. m. nor later than 7 p. m. No machine will leave Spruce Tree Camp to make the trip to the northern boundary of the park later than 5 p. m.

4. When teams approach, motor vehicles will take position on the outer edge of the roadway, regardless of the direction in which they are going, taking care that sufficient room is left on the inside for the passage of teams.

5. Motors will stop when teams approach and remain at rest until teams have passed or until teamsters are satisfied regarding the safety of their teams.

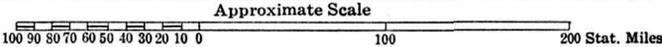
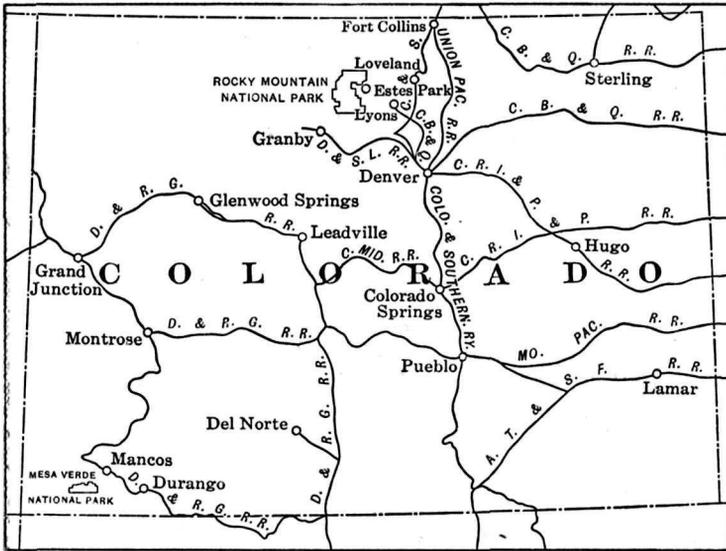
6. All machines will be limited to a speed of 6 miles per hour in making the ascent of the mesa or in making the descent therefrom between stations 0 and 62, and on all roads beyond station 62 speed will be limited to 8 miles per hour, except on straight stretches where approaching teams will be visible, when, if no teams are in sight, this speed may be increased; but in no event, however, shall it exceed 15 miles per hour.

7. Signal with horn will be given at or near every bend of the road to announce to approaching teams the proximity of the motors. At all turnouts between station 0 and station 62, and wherever signboards shall so announce, motors will stop on the outer edge of the turn and wait for three minutes to allow any vehicle time to become visible around the turns.

8. Teams have the right of way, and machines will be backed or otherwise handled, as necessary, so as to enable teams to pass with safety.

9. All persons when entering the park with machines are required to report at Spruce Tree Camp and register their names.

10. Violation of any of the foregoing rules or the general regulations for the government of the park will cause revocation of permit, will subject the owner of the machine to any damages occasioned thereby and to ejection from the reservation, and be cause for refusal to issue a new permit to the owner without prior sanction in writing from the Secretary of the Interior.



MAP SHOWING RAILROAD ROUTES TO MESA VERDE AND ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARKS.



