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# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL MONUMENT  
74485 NATIONAL MONUMENT DRIVE  
TWENTYNINE PALMS, CALIFORNIA 92277-3587

IN REPLY REFER TO:

A2621

May 6, 1988

## Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Western Region  
From: Superintendent, Joshua Tree National Monument  
Subject: Annual Report of Significant Events - 1987

Much was accomplished during the year even with a restricted budget of \$1,479,604 supplemented with cyclic monies of \$155,550. It is frustrating however, to see roads, campgrounds and other facilities progressively deteriorate due to funding short-comings. Visitation for the year was a record 833,341 showing an increase of approximately five percent over 1986.

### PROTECTION

During 1987 Monument personnel handled 29 search and rescue incidents, of which three were fatalities, and 33 emergency medical incidents. Rangers investigated approximately 800 law enforcement incidents, including 103 incidents of off-road investigations resulted in five arrests and 205 citations issued. There were 44 motor vehicle accidents in the Monument, resulting in 5 fatalities.

The most significant law-enforcement incident was the attempted car-bombing of the headquarters visitor center in Twentynine Palms by Lesley Marr, resulting in \$5,000 damage to exterior walls, and the destruction of Marr's vehicle. Marr died later of burns and a self-inflicted gunshot wound suffered during the incident.

Twenty-two wildland fires occurred in the Monument, including the Paul fire, which burned 1450 acres. The JOTR Wildland Fire Management Plan, which provided for prescribed natural fires, was approved and put into effect in July.

The Fee Collection program was initiated in 1987, with entrance stations in operation at all four Monument entrances as of February. These stations collected a total of \$245,059 during the year.

## INTERPRETATION

The Division of Interpretation and Visitor Services provided visitor information and orientation services at five visitor centers or contact stations from October 1986 til February 1987. In February 1987 the Indian Cove and West Entrance Contact Stations were converted to fee collection stations. Interpretive services continued for the remainder of the fiscal year at the Cottonwood and Oasis Visitor Centers and Black Rock Canyon Visitor Center through May. Black Rock Campground was closed for the summer. Because of limited interpretive personnel during the summer, Cottonwood was only open on a part-time basis. The Black Rock Visitor Center was staffed exclusively by VIPs and Cottonwood Visitor Center was operated at least three days a week by VIPs.

A major personnel deficiency was brought about by the resignation of long time employee Park Naturalist Pat Flanagan who resigned in March 1987 after 17 years at Joshua Tree. This position unfortunately remained vacant for the remainder of the fiscal year resulting in a lack of close supervision over Natural History Association operations, no work accomplished on trail and way-side exhibits and interpretive brochures, and no museum curation work being accomplished. In addition, major functions of the position such as payroll, budget and administrative activities had to be given other division employees thus reducing their effectiveness.

Again an excellent group of seasonal Naturalists were hired in October; and with the assistance of Natural History Association information desk employees and Association tour guides, plus over 30 VIPs assisting at visitor centers, contact stations, presenting talks and roving campgrounds, we were able to provide a wide variety of interpretive activities. Again this year the local Andromeda Astronomical Society presented monthly star programs in the Hidden Valley area and another VIP presented monthly star programs at Cottonwood amphitheater. Weekly Saturday night slide programs were presented by a VIP at Black Rock also, and volunteer members of the Joshua Tree Search and Rescue team presented weekly rock rescue demonstrations.

The following is a breakdown of programs and the number of visitors contacted:

Visitor centers and contact stations	120,522
Roving assignments	12,808
Guided hikes/walks	159/1,241
Live talks	155/4,204
Demonstrations	16/261
Talks to clubs, organizations	13/581
Cooperative Association fee Interpretive tours	145/1162
Environmental Education Programs (NHA)	115/3378
Cooperative Association Oasis Tours	49/1149

The Joshua Tree Natural History Association continued its steady increase in business and gross profits. During FY 1987, the Association income was \$108,718.78. This increase over 1986 is noteworthy when we consider that Haley's Comet in 1986 brought record crowds and during the spring of 1987 we closed the West entrance and Indian Cove sales outlets when these stations became fee collection booths. Again the Association sponsored Oasis of Mara tours and our Environmental Education program. In addition they operated the historic area fee interpretive tours again. The Natural History Association donated \$21,639 to the National Park Service during FY 1987.

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The new Fire Management Plan was implemented, two natural fires were managed and one prescription burn was conducted for hazard fuel reduction and vegetation management. Federal Highways Construction revegetation was completed along park roads and the native plants nursery facility was expanded to increase production capacity to 4,000 potted plants per year. The first Bio-monitoring plot in Western Region for monitoring ozone sensitive plants was established at Lost Horse Ranger Station in Joshua Tree National Monument. Additionally, a program for eradication of tamarisk was assessed and implemented. The Bighorn sheep population in the Coxcomb Mountains was censused and a cyclic maintenance program for Bighorn sheep guzzlers was initiated. A contract was issued for a research project on the desert tortoise and a research project on endangered plants was completed. An Operations Manual for Capture and Immobilization of Wildlife has been produced.

## MAINTENANCE

Joshua Tree's Maintenance Division overcame many changes during FY 1987. In February of 1987 Chief of Maintenance, Mr. Pete Fielding, transferred to Olympic National Park. Mr. Fielding was replaced by Mr. John A. Gentry from Golden Gate National Recreation Area in April of 1987. During this period Alyn Helms, Project Clerk for Maintenance Division, retired. Mrs. Helms was replaced temporarily by Mrs. Marie Lewis. In June of 1987 Mrs. Lewis was converted to permanent full-time.

Many major projects were completed during this fiscal year. One of the major projects completed was the Federal Highway Road Reconstruction Contract. This construction package, Pkg. #173C, was awarded to Ron Lewis Construction Inc. out of Moapa, Nevada. This dealt with the reconstruction of Park Route #12 from Pinto Wye to Geology Tour Road, including Jumbo Rock Campground rehabilitation. Final project inspection was held on June 4, 1987. Portions of the contracts final payment were withheld due to future potential road surface problems, resulting from contaminated materials and poor workmanship. Another inspection was held in October 1987 to determine the extent of pay factor reductions and payment retention. To this day, portions of this contract still are not completed to the satisfaction of the National Park Service and the Federal Highway.

Another Federal Highway project concern in FY87 was the reconstruction of the low water crossings on Route #11 in the Cottonwood Canyon area. This project was contracted out by the Federal Highway to Jesse Hubbs & Sons of Rialto, California, in December of 1985, Pkg. #173B. The over-all project was not completed satisfactorily, due to design problems (Federal Highway) and poor workmanship and material usage (Hubbs & Sons, Contractor). This resulted in major flood damage to 2.615 miles of road in Cottonwood Canyon, main Park Route #11. During FY87, at three different intervals, a Review Task Team from Federal Highway and DSC was sent here to recommend redesign proposals of our 15 low water crossings in Cottonwood Canyon.

The first proposal was to allocate FHWA funds for reconstruction of these crossings in FY88. These funds were authorized from the FHWA budget in the amount of \$1,000,000 for FY88. After all the reviews were completed by DSC and Federal Highway and recommendations made, not enough time was available to complete this project during FY88. The project was rescheduled to be completed and funded in FY89. Indecisiveness and timing on DSC and Federal Highway resulted in delaying our programmed 7 year Park Road package by an additional 2 years. Tentative completion date is now 1995.

On the morning of July 5, 1987, an individual ran his vehicle through the front retaining wall of the Park Headquarters and set his vehicle on fire, doing approximately \$5,000 worth of damage. Repairs and clean up were made and absorbed into our Maintenance NPS base.

Four major Cyclic projects were funded and three completed:

Reroof 10 Monument buildings, Contract \$69,491; Pkg. #252.

Paint exterior of buildings #100, #104, and #106, day labor; \$10,000; Pkg #320.

Chip and seal park road; Contract \$45,150; Pkg. #300; alternate purchase cold mix and overlay 1.5 miles of Park Route #11; day labor.

Reroof/replace heating and air conditioning units; Contract \$160,000; Pkg. #247. No bids were submitted and project was readvertised in FY88.

Equipment Replacement program for FY87 resulted in the purchase of a new vibratory diesel powered road roller/with an equipment trailer and an upgraded gas powered self-propelled road striper.

Other projects completed in FY87 were the design and rehabilitation of the Oasis of Mara Handicap Trail. This project was started in FY87 and only one-fourth of the project was completed due to lack of funds.

Assisted in over-all specification of new NPS Quarters program and development. Awarded a new 3 bedroom module house to be located at Black Rock Campground during FY88.

Installed a new potable water chlorinating system at Black Rock Campground.

Set up new underground fuel storage tank monitoring system, Monument-wide.

Began MMS training and preparation for implementation.

Completed varied Park-wide work requests.

Administration accomplishments and events for FY87 were as follows:

Reorganized the entire Maintenance Division and established two separate sub-divisions; Roads and Trails, and Buildings and Utilities. The present General Foreman was shifted to oversee the B & U operations and a vacancy announcement was issued for the R & T Foreman position.

Updated and reviewed all Maintenance Division position descriptions. This resulted in upgrading a Motor Vehicle Operator WG-4 to a Motor Vehicle Operator WG-7 and the upgrade of a Maintenance Worker WG-6 to a Maintenance Worker WG-7. Reclassified our Maintenance Mechanic position from a WG-9 to a Work Leader WL-8.

Personnel positions lost in FY87 due to budget restraints and cut backs were; Position #40, Black Rock Canyon Campground Maintenance Work Leader, and position #520, Indian Cove Campground Laborer.

Special achievement award was given to Maintenance Worker Patrick McFarland for his sustained work performance.

During FY 1987 many changes within the Maintenance Division occurred. The Maintenance Division experienced extremely heavy workload due to being understaffed and increased visitation. The accomplishments this past fiscal year were abundant and accomplished in an above average manner. This was due to the versatility and dedication of our Maintenance employees here at Joshua Tree National Monument.



Rick Anderson