

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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The Director,
National Park Service,
Washington, D. C.,

Yellowstone Park, Wyo.,
May 3, 1933.

Dear Mr. Director:

I has been suggested by several people that the short-leaf yucca or Joshua tree is one of the most conspicuous of the desert plants and that it would form a satisfactory basis for the establishment of a national monument, in order to protect the best stand of the Joshua trees in the United States.

Last December I visited an area of Joshua trees south of Victorville, California, of which photographs are attached.

In January while Mr. Vint and I were enroute to Red Rock Canyon, we examined some areas of Joshua trees near Palmdale, Lancaster and Mojave.

The California State Park Commission has given consideration to the Joshua trees as a state park, but Mr. Drury says that in the areas they have investigated there are almost insurmountable obstacles to the acquisition of a considerable block of land because of mining claims.

It seems that a considerable area of the Joshua Tree stand is in private ownership and this tends to increase the importance of determining which is the best available stand on public domain.

In general the Joshua trees occur in a ring-like zone around the Mojave Desert. Joshua trees occur in southern California, southern Nevada and east central Arizona. I have visited some stands in each of these states.

I have not as yet seen any area of Joshua trees that seems desirable for a national monument. In some cases private holdings interfere and in other cases the stand of Joshua trees is not exceptionally heavy and would not be of outstanding public interest. There are some further areas that should be considered, but which have not yet been inspected. The most promising of these seems to be in the vicinity of Cima, California. I have considerable correspondence and miscellaneous data regarding Joshua trees, which I will hold until the investigation on this subject can be completed.

Very truly yours,
(S) Roger W. Toll

Inclosures

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF NATIONAL PARKS,
BUILDINGS, AND RESERVATIONS

April 7, 1934

515 Custom Building
Denver, Colorado

Mr. Arno B. Cammerer, Director,
Office of Nat'l Parks, Bldgs. & Res.,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Director:

In accordance with your instructions I visited the proposed Desert Plant national park or monument, in California, on March 9, 10, and 11, in company with Mrs. A. Sherman Hoyt of Pasadena and Dr. Philip A. Munz of Claremont.

The area under consideration comprises 1,136,000 acres. The public domain within this area was withdrawn from entry, by executive order, on October 25, 1933, for consideration as a national monument, but the advocates of the project request its establishment as a national park.

It is believed that the area is not suitable for a national park, for the following reasons:

1. It is not the outstanding desert area of the United States. Death Valley National Monument is far superior to it in scenic quality and has many important features of interest not possessed by the area under consideration.

2. The area is interesting and of great value for local and state use, but it is lacking in any distinctive, superlative, outstanding feature that would give it sufficient national importance to justify its establishment as a national park.

It is believed that a part of the area would justify the establishment of a national monument, with the Joshua trees as its primary feature, and other sources of interest as secondary features. While the groves of Joshua trees are not the finest in the state, their surroundings are scenically interesting. The area is available to two million people of the Los Angeles district, and taken all together, it is as suitable for a Joshua tree national monument as any area I have seen.

Other parts of the withdrawn area could be made available for a metropolitan district park or for county parks. The State Park Commission is not interested in the area since it believes that the Borego State Park is similar and preferable; the Commission plans to establish a state park, for Joshua trees, in another area.

It is recommended that an area containing 216 square miles or 138,240 acres, including the best of the Joshua trees, some native palms, and other features, be authorized as a Joshua tree National Monument, when the lands therein, that are now owned by the State of California and by the Southern Pacific Railroad Company, have been transferred to the United States in exchange for other public domain. Only about half of the area is public domain.

Very truly yours,

Walter W. Toll