

PROPOSED ALABAMA HILLS NATIONAL MONUMENT

Report by:

Charles S. Watson, Jr.

1. LANDS INVOLVED: (8300 acres, approx.)

T.15 S., R.35 E.; Mount Diablo Base & Meridian.

sec. 1, 2 (E $\frac{1}{2}$), 11 (S $\frac{1}{2}$), 12, 13, 14, 15, 22, 23, 2425 (N $\frac{1}{2}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$), 26 (N $\frac{1}{2}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$)

T.15 S., R.36 E.; MDB&M.

sec. 6, 7, 18, 19, 20, 29 (W $\frac{1}{2}$), 30 (NW $\frac{1}{4}$, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$) (also, portion of E $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, & portion of SE $\frac{1}{4}$).2. BACKGROUND:

The Alabama Hills are probably the most familiar, yet least known scenic lands in the Western U.S. Many a western movie and TV company have used the Hill's scenic grandeur as a backdrop for their outdoor dramas. Yet, if someone mentioned "Alabama Hills" to the man in the street he would probably bring to mind those green hills far removed to the Southeastern United States.

The Alabama Hills are an outstanding example of desert and Great Basin scenery and geological phenomena, unmatched anywhere. The hills contain miriads of fantastic rock pinnacles of all kinds, sizes and shapes. The hills are also unique for their fabulous backdrop of the Sierra Nevada, crowned by 14,495 foot Mt. Whitney, the highest peak in the U.S. outside Alaska. The area also affords a fine view of Owens Valley and the towering, precipitous Inyo Range. Although much of the proposed National Monument is dry and barren, two streams flow thru the the Hills at the North and South proposed boundaries (see map). Lone Pine Creek flows by the South boundary. This clear, year-round stream has been used for years by fishermen, picnickers and recreation seekers, mostly families from the Los Angeles area on weekend sojourns. Proposed campgrounds are recommended in the S $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$ of sec. 30, T.15 S., R.36 E. Another campsite is recommended in the central portion of the proposed Monument; the site should be determined so as to avoid avoid interfering with movie company use areas in the "Movie Flat" area and elsewhere. In regard to movie and TV company use in the Hills, it is recommended that a provision be included in the National Monument proclamation that movie companies be allowed to continue using the Hills, provided scenic values are protected. It should be noted, however, that such use would not necessarily be detrimental to the primary purposes of the proposed National Monument. This reasoning is derived from the fact that it would be to the movie company's advantage to retain the scenic character of the Hills so that it could be used again and again.

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MONUMENT IS NEEDED:

The proposed Alabama Hills National Monument is rapidly becoming a recreational focal point for residents of the Los Angeles area, who flock to this area on weekends and holiday periods. The outstanding scenic beauty found here serves as an added attraction to funseekers. This area is also being considered for extensive real estate development. So, protection is needed now, to insure the people needed preservation of this area, for this and future generations. The Los Angeles Dept. of Water & Power now has the use of the land as a watershed protection area. However, the Bureau of Land Management still holds title to the land and has withdrawn it from entry by the public for the above use. It is our reasoning that a National Monument would serve best the need for watershed protection, by insuring better administration of the area by the National Park Service. This proposal would "kill two (or three) birds with one stone", in that this proposal would preserve the Hills outstanding scenic character, provide badly needed recreational facilities, and preserve the watershed.

4. LOCATION AND ACCESSABILITY:

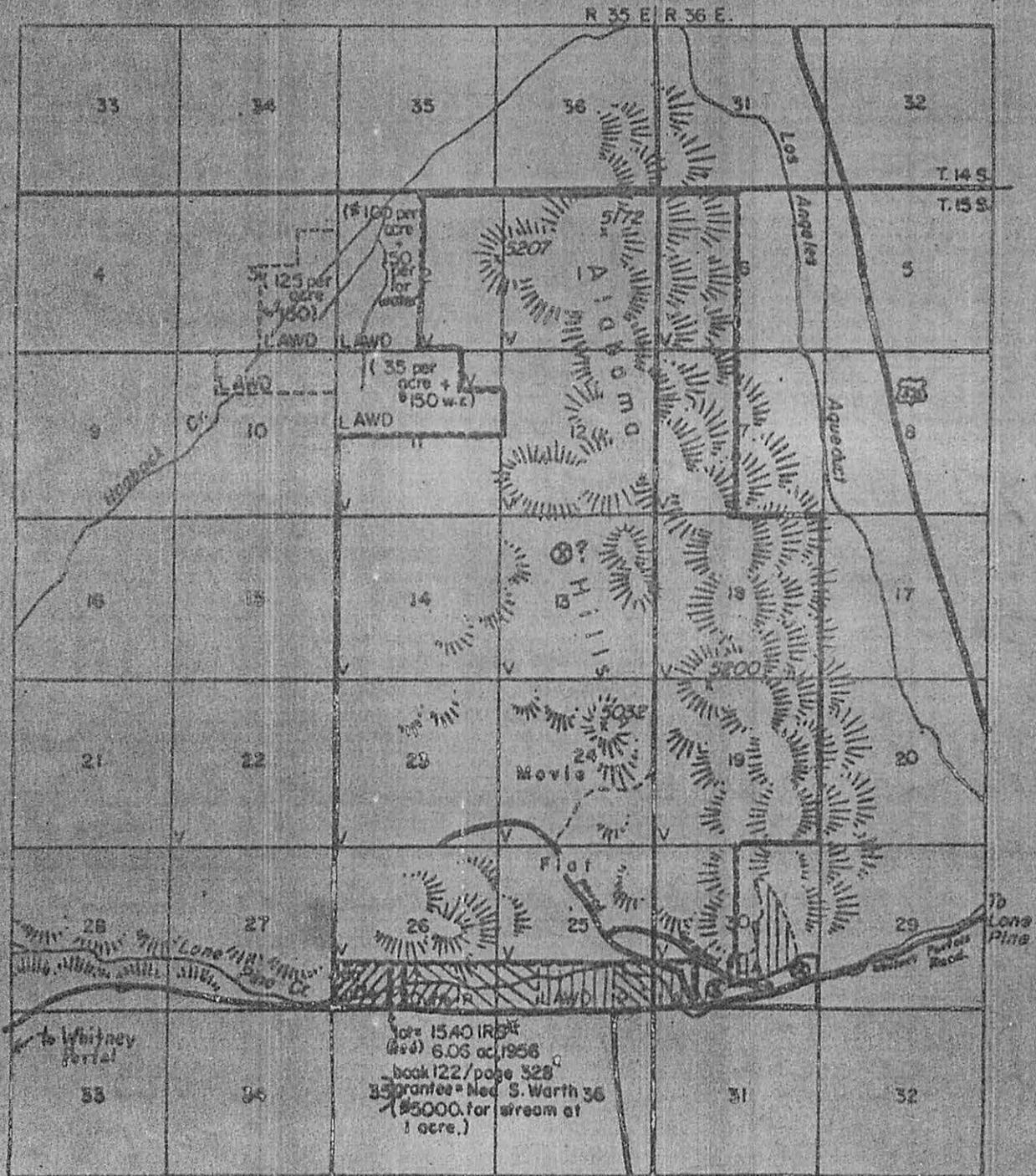
The proposed National Monument lies just to the West of the City of Lone Pine, Calif.; not far from U.S. Highway 395. From Lone Pine, a paved county road enters the hills, skirting Lone Pine Creek as it passes thru a narrow notch in the Alabama Hills. From this road, about 5 miles from Lone Pine, a good surfaced and graded road winds into the proposed National Monument, into the area known as "Movie Flat". This road ends about two miles inside the proposed boundaries. Other unimproved roads provide access to the "Pinnacles" area.

5. RECOMMENDATION:

It is our conclusion that since the proposed Monument is public domain, under withdrawal status, a lateral transfer could be made between the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service; both of the same Dept. of Interior. In addition, it is recommended that the previous users of the area, namely the movie companies and the Los Angeles Dept. of Water & Power, be allowed to continue using the area as long as scenic values are scrupulously protected. In conclusion, it is our sincere opinion that a proclamation creating this area (see map) a National Monument would be in the public interest and realize the highest and best use of the land.

Charles S. Watson, Jr.
Conservation Chairman
Toiyabe Chapter, Reno

MAP OF ALABAMA HILLS PROPOSED NAT'L. MON.



(Lays County Recorder)
 ⊙ proposed campground sites
 ⊙ IRS = Internal Revenue Stamps
 \$1.0 = \$1000. valuation
 Deacon by
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