

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Training Center Program



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Training Center Program
of the
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK,
CALIFORNIA

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"Pride in their Government, love of the land, and faith in the American tradition -- these are the things the national parks can give to the people of America. To assure them these products of national parks is more than an obligation, it is a national necessity. It is a task worthy of the highest measure of dedication."

– Our Heritage

EVOLUTION

The idea of a field training facility for the National Park Service was first voiced in the early 1930's and since that time has been the subject of frequent discussion around campfires and in park offices. During the early years of the Service, it was necessary to accomplish practically all career training at the field area level. As the Service expanded, it became possible to offer some specialized training at the regional level and in the Washington Office. But the great majority of the orientation and skills development of new employees continued in the field.

Over the years, a reputation was established for the excellent quality of training that was being accomplished in many of the parks and monuments. At the same time, it was also realized that the wide variety of field conditions, as well as variations in the personal interest and training ability of some Service supervisors, was not conducive to a systematic approach to the orderly development of new employees. Also, the needs for training were slowly changing as the result of expanded visitor use.

It was not until the clear recognition of the conditions which eventually resulted in the MISSION 66 program that serious consideration was directed to the formal establishment of a field training facility. At this time it was decided that, as a corollary to the development of physical plant and protective and interpretive resources required for conservation and visitor enjoyment of the National Park System, the Service must also design a program for employee growth and development. Thus, the National Park Service Training Center emerges as a logical part of the personnel development phase of MISSION 66.

GOALS

The National Park Service Training Center is an in-Service training activity which is designed to promote the orderly orientation, indoctrination, and basic skills development of new employees who aspire to rewarding public service careers in the National Park Service.

The objectives of the training are fourfold:

▲ To develop a basic knowledge and understanding of Service objectives, philosophy, policies, organization, administration, legislation, and operating programs;

▲ To develop physical and mental skills in the public information, interpretation, and protection services and programs of the Service;

▲ To develop proper attitudes with respect to human and work relations, to public service in general, to specific phases of national park conservation, and to a lifelong career in the National Park Service; and

▲ To develop a dedication to the work of the Service, and a willingness to promote Service ideals through thoughtful application of individual and group efforts to achieve the successful accomplishment of the total National Park Service program.

The Yosemite Ranger Club, a present to the rangers of Yosemite from Stephen T. Mather, first Director of the National Park Service.



FEATURES OF THE PROGRAM

1. *Diversity in the Curriculum.*

The broad scope of subject matter in the curriculum adds considerable diversity to the training activity. The program employs a variety of instructional methods ranging from classroom presentations on the one hand to group problem solving on the other. There is also diversity in discussion leaders. In addition to the resident training staff, instruction is provided by representatives of cooperating Government agencies, educational institutions, and independent conservation groups. Service personnel from the Washington Office, regional offices, design offices, and from various field areas are brought to the Training Center to participate in different phases of the program.

2. *Diversity in the Trainee Group.*

At the outset of the Training Center program, special emphasis is being placed upon the indoctrination and skills training of the public contact groups of employees--the park rangers, park naturalists, park historians, and park archeologists. As the program develops it is intended that other categories of employees will be included. Thus, many academic fields and work specialties will be represented in the average trainee group. Further, trainees represent field areas both large and small in size; Eastern as well as Western in location; of scenic, scientific and historic significance; and urban or remote in character. Trainee contributions to the program based upon these very fundamental differences in area character will add much to the diversity of training.

3. *Active Trainee Participation.*

Every effort is expended to provide opportunity for trainees to actively participate in classroom and other training sessions. The general pattern in presenting a subject is to offer the basic information during the early portion of the instruction period. This is immediately followed by questions and answers, group discussions, individual or group practice, or similar trainee activity. Each trainee is given several opportunities during the program to conduct meetings, either reporting orally on an assigned topic or project, or acting as chairman of a discussion. Individual and group problem solving are used as much as possible.

4. *Close Contact Between Staff and Trainees.*

In addition to administrative and instructional assignments, members of the resident training staff are available for discussion, they offer corrective assistance when the need is apparent, and they counsel with trainees in personal as well as work-related problems. They also provide an opportunity for personal or group discussions with visiting instructors and prominent individuals who may visit the Training Center.

5. *Close Contact with Current Service Affairs.*

The Training Center program provides for an intimate understanding of current practices and procedures in the Service. As new statements of policy are announced, as new procedures are recommended for the field, and as new problems confront the Service, they are taken up at the Training Center and discussed with the trainee group.

6. *Cultivating Cooperation.*

One important by-product of this training activity must be the increased appreciation for and understanding of the work and efforts of other Service employees. The Training Center program offers the same fundamental training to rangers and interpreters alike. Thus, protection personnel will acquire a basic understanding of the principles of park interpretation and the interpretive program of the Service. Similarly, interpretive personnel will become familiar with the Service's obligations to preserve park values and the responsibility to protect park visitors. Both categories of employees will receive an early insight into the administrative and operational problems of park management.

If the objectives of the MISSION 66 program are to be fully achieved on schedule, all segments of the Service organization must work harmoniously toward this common goal. There can be no better investment in the early career training of new employees than to develop in them a healthy regard for the efforts of their co-workers.



Every National Park Service employee shares the responsibility for park and visitor protection.

THE COURSE PROGRAM

1. *The Sessions.*

The training period is 12 weeks in length and two near identical training sessions are conducted each year. The Fall Session extends from late September to mid-December. The Spring Session extends from early February through late April. From time to time other formal training courses may also be conducted at the Training Center facility.

2. *The Curriculum.*

The curriculum is divided into five major divisions:

a. **General Orientation.** Includes the National Park Service role in the national conservation and recreation program, the ethics and philosophy of park conservation, history of the national park movement, National Park Service objectives and policies, organization and function of the Department of the Interior, organization and administration of the National Park Service, legislation affecting Service programs, rules and regulations, matters of legal jurisdiction, the National Park System, and MISSION 66.

b. **Basic Visitor Service Skills.** Includes the Service Uniform, public appearance, standards of conduct, employee attitudes, visitor requirements, the need for visitor orientation, visitor attitudes, visitor complaints, service due the visitor, problems of concessions management, public information, special and minority groups, press relations, Service literature, and supervision of public-use facilities.

c. **Basic Protection Skills.** Includes public health and sanitation, communications, visitor control, fire prevention and control, search and rescue activities, law enforcement problems and techniques, forestry problems, wildlife management problems, entrance station operations, regulation of visitor activities, cooperative activities, and ranger district administration.

d. **Basic Interpretive Skills.** Includes the history of the educational movement in the National Park Service, general principles underlying the interpretive program, natural history interpretation, historical interpretation, archeological interpretation, interpretive facilities and services, interpretive talks, interpretive publications, the research program, technical and

popular writing, junior natural history, Service needs in photography, cooperating associations, visitor center activities and management, audio-visual equipment and methods, and administrative cooperation.

e. **General Park Administration.** Includes personnel management, fiscal management, an introduction to supervision, and a study of typical large and small park organizations and operations.

3. *Program Facilities.*

Classroom sessions are conducted in the Yosemite Museum. The trainee groups have free access to the comprehensive museum library as well as to other facilities in the museum. Modern training equipment is available for instructional use as such needs arise. Field equipment, such as that used in the various protection and interpretive activities, is provided for classroom use and for individual and group practice.

4. *Field Operations.*

Frequent opportunity is provided the trainee group to visit, observe, and participate in actual field operations. As much as possible, trainees are given the opportunity to participate for short periods in interpretive and protection activities such as entrance station operations, visitor center activities, ranger patrols, and other public contact opportunities as may become available. In all such programmed activities, each trainee will be under interested supervision and will receive a formal appraisal of his work.

The information and interpretation program helps visitors enjoy the parks and use them wisely.



GENERAL INFORMATION

1. *Location*

The Training Center is located in Yosemite Village in the heart of Yosemite Valley. It is reached from the west via State Route 140, leaving U. S. 99 at Merced, California. From the south State Route 41 leads from Fresno to the South Entrance of the park. Two other roads, the Big Oak Flat road from the west, and the Tioga road from the east, are narrow mountain roads and are open only between June and November. The Yosemite Transportation Company provides daily bus service throughout the year from Merced.

2. *Trainees.*

Since it is the public contact groups of employees which will bear the brunt of the on-site impact and increased problems of tomorrow's growing visitation, it is the new employees in these groups who will profit most from and who will receive the first training under this program. It is intended that the Training Center will eventually provide courses and programs for employees in other technical and administrative specialties.

3. *Nomination.*

Participation in the Training Center program is considered mandatory during the probationary year for the groups of employees mentioned above. Deferment will be considered only upon the presentation of sufficient cause, either of personal nature or in the interest of the Service. Each Regional Director will be advised of the regional quota for each training session and he will make his selections accordingly. Each Superintendent, when requested to do so by the Regional Director, will complete a nomination form for each new employee who is eligible for the program.

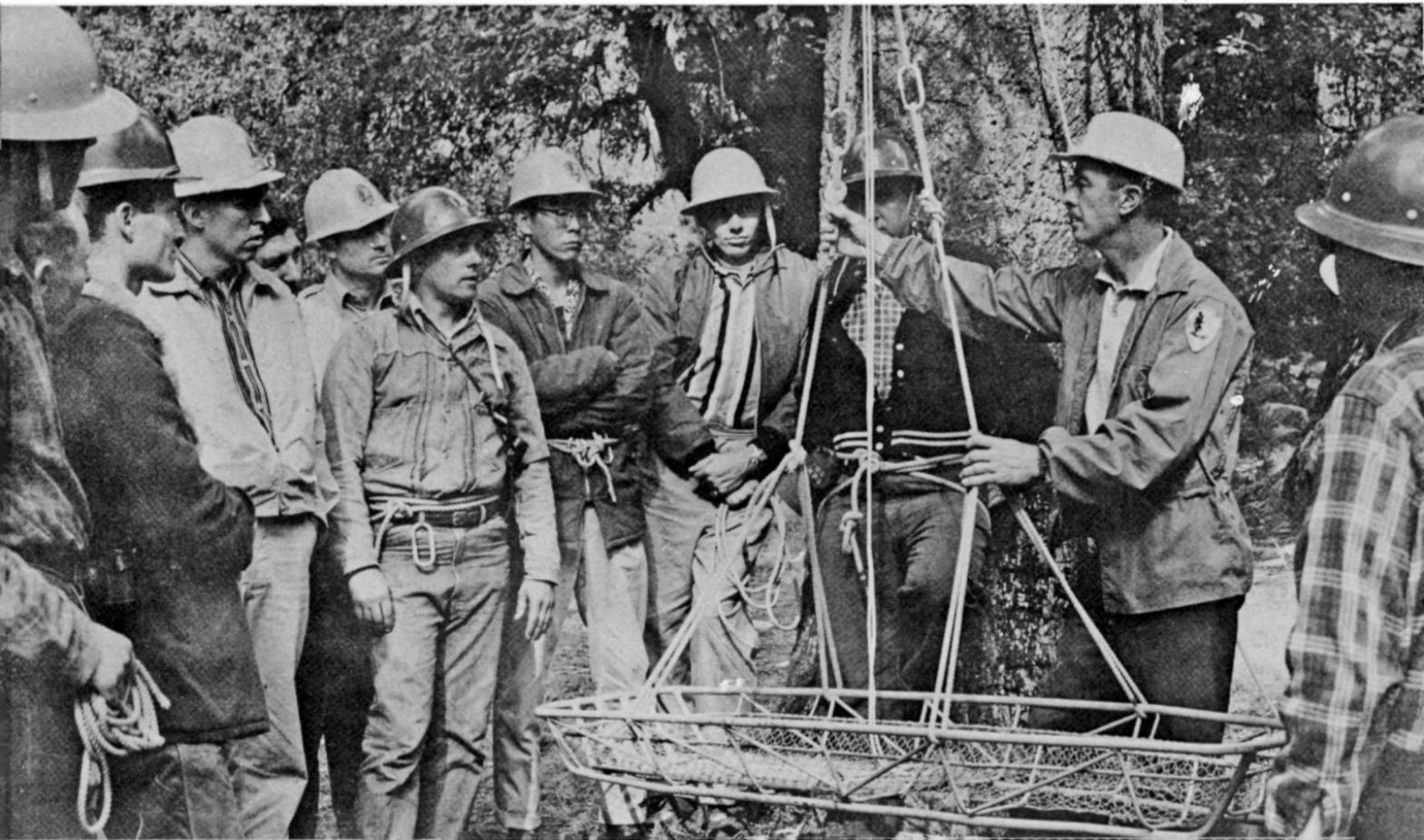
4. *Selection Date.*

All selections are made and candidates notified at least six weeks prior to the beginning of the following training session.

5. *Transportation.*

Transportation via common carrier will be authorized. Use of

The Stephen T. Mather class receiving instruction in Search and Rescue techniques, Fall Session 1957.



privately owned vehicles will also be authorized not to exceed the cost and per diem allowances of common carrier transportation.

6. *Per Diem Allowances.*

Per diem en route by common carrier will be authorized at \$12 per day. Special meal rates and a nominal charge for quarters have determined a reduced per diem rate while at the Training Center.

7. *Living Accommodations.*

Trainees will occupy dormitory quarters in the Yosemite Ranger Club. No quarters are available for trainee families. A trainee may make his own individual arrangements with the park concessioner or other parties for family accommodations.

8. *Meal Arrangements.*

Meals will be provided by the park concessioner at public facilities but at a favorable reduction in rates. Meals may also be secured at the Government mess at established rates.

9. *Community Activity.*

Yosemite Village has all of the conveniences of the average small community. Available throughout the period of training are a hotel, dining room, lodge, cafeteria, general store, service station, photographic studio, souvenir shop, elementary school, church of several faiths, library, barber shop, theater, laundry and cleaning services, and medical, dental, and hospital facilities. The Government community provides a wide assortment of recreational, fraternal and civic organizations, and activities. Ice skating and skiing are available during the winter and necessary equipment may be rented or purchased.

10. *Additional Information.*

Questions relating to other phases of the Training Center program and operation may be directed to the Supervisor, National Park Service Training Center, Yosemite National Park, California.

The Horace M. Albright training class, Spring Session 1958.



STAFF SERVICES

The resident training staff, in addition to instructional assignments and administrative duties, provides a multiple and impersonal appraisal of each trainee at the conclusion of the training period. This evaluation is forwarded to the Superintendent of the area to which the trainee returns and the information contained therein assists the Superintendent in his preparation of a performance rating for the probationary year. The formal appraisal of each trainee is also aimed at identifying leadership ability and other job potentials for which the Service may have need. Such identification should be of assistance to Superintendents and will help to place the individual trainee in job situations where he has an opportunity to use his special talents.

For at least a 1-year period following each training session, the staff will keep in contact with each Superintendent who sent a trainee to the program in an effort to check on the validity of the program and particularly the applicability of the course content.

The training staff will devote much of its time at the outset to the preparation of course materials. Once the basic course materials are prepared, the resident staff will concern itself chiefly with improvements in course presentation, in auditing and evaluating the efforts of instructors, and with revision of training materials.

During the period between the spring and autumn training sessions the resident staff will, as much as is possible, visit a number of parks and monuments and assist area staffs in local training activities for permanent and seasonal Service employees and for concessioner employees.

