

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Yosemite National Park
CALIFORNIA

A N N U A L R E P O R T

FISCAL YEAR 1941

GENERAL

During the 1941 fiscal year, 539,728 people visited Yosemite National Park, more than during any previous period in its history. Each year, former travel records are broken by new increases, and with the two-fold objective of protecting native values against excess use and at the same time providing improved facilities for the pleasure and safety of the constantly growing number of visitors, the Yosemite organization accomplished many worthwhile projects and continued with basic planning which will greatly affect the future of the park. Some of the more important achievements are summarized below:

After years of study by administrative officers and technical experts in the park, regional, and Washington offices, as well as by the Yosemite Advisory Board, the Director approved plans on December 22, 1940, for the proposed development by the Yosemite Park and Curry Company of the area east and south of Government Center in Yosemite Valley. This undertaking will include construction of store, garage, service station, warehouse, and housing units by the Company, and the proposal contemplates the abandonment of a number of out-of-date, unsightly buildings on undesirable sites. As rapidly as this project progresses and funds are available, the Service will provide utility services and make necessary road changes.

As the result of many discussions and field surveys, agreement was reached in May, 1941, as to the most desirable route for the proposed future construction of the Big Oak Flat Road section between Crane Flat and the new western park boundary at the former site of Carl Inn. The present route, which passes through the Tuolumne Grove of Big Trees, is a narrow, winding road with steep grades. Representatives of this office, Region Four Headquarters, the Branch of Plans and Design, and the Public Roads Administration cooperated in the studies culminating in selection of the new location.

A new horse trail 12 miles in length was constructed from Triple Fork Creek over the Clark Range through a pass 11,100 feet elevation via upper and lower Ottoway Lakes to a junction with the Merced Pass trail. The combination of remote location, rough terrain, and high altitudes made the work difficult, but the trail was passable during the late summer of 1940. Some improvements are yet to be accomplished.

In the fall of 1940, administrative supervision over Joshua Tree National Monument was transferred to Region Four Headquarters. Superintendent James E. Cole, formerly Junior Park Naturalist at Yosemite, was placed in direct charge of the monument, with headquarters at Twentynine Palms, California.

In an endeavor to improve the bear-visitor problem, which in past years has resulted in altogether too many injuries, some of which were hospital cases, a local committee, assisted by Field Biologist Joseph S. Dixon of the Fish and Wildlife Service, recommended discontinuance of the bear-feeding program on the floor of Yosemite Valley. Under the supervision of the wildlife ranger, bears were trapped and transported to the vicinity of Gin Flat, where control feeding has been conducted. The result has been not only the elimination of injuries to visitors, but the establishment of a far more natural existence for the bears themselves. Visitors who become acquainted with these circumstances and with the Service's wildlife policy are accepting this program with approval.

The experimental packing procedure, under which the Yosemite Park and Curry Company relinquished its preferential right to conduct pack and saddle animal operations in the park in 1940 for a period of three years, was followed during the fiscal year. Certain packers who hold permits to operate in adjacent national forests continued to conduct packing operations under special use permit, into the park from various points where packing bases were not already established by the authorized park operator.

Private land problems in the park were given considerable study during the year, including the preparation of a detailed report on all private holdings at Favona. Two lots in the Foresta subdivision were acquired. Appraisals were made of various patented land parcels including the Powers Estate lands in the Illilouette basin and adjacent to Tenaya Lake, and preliminary steps were taken in an effort to obtain an option to purchase the latter, following approval of this procedure by the Washington Office.

In accordance with the approved objective of restoring the Old Village area in Yosemite Valley to its native condition as rapidly as possible, Cedar and Oak Cottages were razed and the sites landscaped.