

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT  
CALIFORNIA

March 31, 1935.

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

Dear Mr. Director:

Following is the report for Death Valley National Monument for the month of March, 1935:

000-GENERAL

010-Introduction: The remarkable flower display in Death Valley continued all through the month of March, with new varieties coming into bloom from time to time. It was unfortunate that generally bad weather during the month along the Pacific Coast held down the travel which otherwise would have been enormous. Even as it was, accommodations were taxed to the utmost, and hundreds of people were obliged to leave the area for the lack of any lodgings available. This proposition is already becoming serious, as so many people have been turned away that it is becoming known that accommodations are not available in Death Valley without making reservations two or three weeks in advance — which will deter many visitors from coming in at all. Weather conditions in Death Valley itself have been excellent for travel, although exceedingly cool for the time of the year, until the last two or three days of the month when seasonal weather made its appearance.

One of the outstanding developments of the month was the securing of an hitherto unsuspected water supply in the hills between the Cow Creek utility area and the Park Village. Prospecting for an additional supply of water for the proposed swimming pool developed a large additional supply in the canyon from which the present water supply is secured. In addition to this, an abundantly flowing source was opened up on a nearby ridge at such an elevation that it can be diverted to the Cow Creek or Park Village areas. The amount of water which is now available for these two areas is apparently ample for any future demands, and an excellent possibility exists of securing an hydrostatic head sufficient for operating a good sized hydro-electric plant.

021-Weather in the Monument: Temperatures are climbing as can be seen by the fact that the average maximum for March was 77, against 73 for February. The average minimum was 53, against February's 50. The highest temperature recorded during the month was 96, and the lowest 44. The average mean was 65 against that of 61 for February. There was 0.08 inches of rain. There were twenty three clear days, five partly cloudy, and three cloudy. There were windstorms on nine days.

#### 100-ADMINISTRATION

121-Inspection by Superintendents: Superintendent John R. White of Sequoia arrived in the Monument on March 10th, accompanied by ex-governor Cameron Forbes of the Philippine Islands. Colonel White made inspections of the various projects and went over the proposed future work.

Colonel C. G. Thomson, Superintendent of Yosemite National Park, visited the Monument accompanied by Mrs. Thomson. They remained over until the following day and looked over the numerous projects underway.

127-Other Agencies: A caravan from <sup>the</sup> Sierra Club, consisting of fourteen cars, arrived in the Monument on March 24th under charge of Frank Lewis. They remained until March 26th, and made a complete inspection of the various points and were entertained with lectures and naturalist's talks, as well as given the assistance of a naturalist guide.

180-Publicity: Weekly press bulletins giving road conditions, weather, and travel were issued during the month.

#### 200-MAINTENANCE AND CONSTRUCTION

210-Maintenance: The very heavy travel through the Monument roads during the month necessitated continuous maintenance work, and this was over better than two hundred miles of roadway. The newly oiled road requires but very little maintenance work, but the natural gravel roads when receiving much travel become corrugated so quickly that it is almost next to impossible to travel them unless they are continually graded. A concentration of equipment was used for this purpose, and all of the main roads were kept in a reasonably good condition throughout the month.

230-New Construction: Completion of twelve miles of minor reconstruction on the North Highway gave another excellent stretch of road to the public on the road north to Scotty's and Ubehebe Crater. Unfortunately, due to a misunderstanding, there was a delay in submitting plans for the improvement of an intermediate section of road, so that at the present time there is a fine oiled road for twenty miles north, then a section of twelve miles of very poor desert road, and then a further section of twelve miles of excellent new construction. Had approval been received in time, this bad section, always dangerous when wet and continually covered with blow sand, would have been relocated and completed.

240-Improvement of Approaches to Park: Authoritative word has been received from the California Highway Commission that funds are available for oiling the entire distance of the west approach by way of Towne's Pass to the Park line, and the south approach from Baker to Death Valley Junction. Also information has been received that the Nevada Highway Commission intends to immediately oil the remaining gap between Boulder Dam and Death Valley Junction. There is also to be a considerable amount of improvement and re-alignment on these approach roads. This work is to begin immediately, and most of it will be completed this season, which puts it squarely up to the National Park Service to improve and oil the sixteen mile gap between Towne's Pass boundary and Stovepipe Wells Hotel, as this will be the only remaining section of road on the three main entrances to the Monument not improved and oiled.

250-Landscape Work: Several thousand small plants of various types have been transplanted from the nursery to their permanent locations in Park Village. Several thousand seedlings are just coming to first transplanting age. Collection of seeds has just started, and will continue through April and May. Grading is largely finished around Park Village for this year, and general clean-up is underway. Additional water has been developed on the mesa immediately south of Park Village, and will be piped to the CCC camp reservoir for use in the swimming pool.

Graveling of parking areas in public camp near Furnace Creek is completed and graveling of the roads will start about the first of April. The new water main is installed at the public camp ground. Repairs have been made to the reservoir; the overflow has been carried to the upper end of the camp and is being used for irrigation purposes.

Material for nine sheets of the Master Plan have been sent to Field Headquarters at San Francisco, and work is underway on the first Master Plan book. Sketches have been prepared for extension of Park Village and the public camp near Furnace Creek, and for equipment sheds as called for by Director Rechner.

The line of Section E, North Highway, has been partially inspected on the ground, and as far as we have gone it seems to be satisfactory. The new alignment of the South Highway, west side, is approximately the same as we agreed upon last year, and has the approval of the landscape division.

#### 300-ACTIVITIES OF OTHER AGENCIES IN THE PARK

310-Public Service Contractors: As commented upon in the introduction, the facilities for taking care of visitors have not only been greatly overtaxed, but there has been a large amount of dissatisfaction by visitors who have made the long trip to Death Valley and then have had to drive out for many miles to secure lodging. At the present time, the Pacific Coast Borax Company can accommodate about seventy five persons at the Ranch, one hundred at Ryan, and about one hundred at Furnace Creek Inn. Stovepipe Wells Hotel can take care of another seventy five. All these accommodations are generally reserved as much as two weeks in advance, so that the casual traveler has no chance whatever of securing accommodations.

It is understood that the Pacific Coast Borax Company is contemplating an addition to Furnace Creek Inn, and a considerable addition to the Furnace Creek Ranch cabin camp. It is hoped that these improvements will be approved and completed in time for next season, as the marked improvements in road conditions will undoubtedly lead to a steady further increase in visitors, unless they are discouraged by the general knowledge that accommodations are not available.

#### 400-FLORA, FAUNA, AND NATURAL PHENOMENA

410-Wanger, Naturalist, and Guide Service: No complete report being made on the naturalist and education activities for the month of February, this report will cover both February and March.

Evening lectures have been given on week-end nights and holidays, and at any other time when there is a sufficient number of tourists in the Valley to warrant it. The talk usually covers about an hour, followed by questions from the audience. Because of the quick turnover in the tourist traffic, an attempt is made to cover all subjects of interest to the public, including the geology, history, zoology, botany, ethnology, climatology, etc. of the Valley. The writer has been assisted on two occasions by Mr. French Gilman, who has talked on the flowers and plants.

In February ten evenings were devoted to lectures attended by approximately 500 people; in March fifteen lectures were given to audiences totalling 850. In addition short talks have been given and information dispensed to several hundred individuals at Dante's View, Salt Pools and other places. The writer accompanied a group of forty five members of the Sierra Club for two days, visiting various parts of the Valley, as well as acting as guide to several smaller parties. Auto caravans have been conducted twice in the month of March, with a total of thirty cars and about eighty people. Caravans are made difficult by dusty roads.

Fifteen benches, eighteen feet long have been made under the direction of the writer and are being used at the evening lectures. During March the writer accompanied Mr. Stuart, photographer for the National Geographic Society, and Mr. Wilkerson, photographer, on numerous trips to photograph flowers, scenery, ghost towns, etc.

#### 500-USE OF PARK FACILITIES BY THE PUBLIC

510-Increase or Decrease in Travel: Following is an analysis of the travel into Death Valley National Monument during March as recorded at Furnace Creek Ranger Station by enrollees and at Towne's and Daylight Passes by self-registering stations:

2,722 cars and 8,210 people.

9 private planes bearing 24 passengers.

25 passengers were brought into the Valley by the William's Air Line, operating commercially from Glendale.

This brings the season's total to 9,707 vehicles and 29,058 visitors against last season's totals of even date

of 3,391 vehicles and 15,959 visitors, a substantial gain of 82.7% in vehicles and a gain of 82.07% in visitors.

530-Visitors:

Don Doig, head of the Touring Bureau of the Automobile Club of Southern California.  
Captain Woods )  
Major Brown ) of Field Staff of March Field Air Base.  
Captain Hudson )  
Frederick Law Olmsted, noted landscape artist.  
Dr. Meinecke, of the Department of Agriculture.  
Cameron Forbes, Ex-governor of the Philippine Islands.  
Colonel and Mrs. C. G. Thomson, Superintendent of Yosemite National Park.  
Ex-president and Mrs. Herbert Hoover.  
Captain Duncan )  
Captain Baker ) famous pilots of March Field Air Base.  
Ginger Rogers, actress of Hollywood.  
Law Ayres, actor " " "  
George Eschumy, mayor of Visalia.  
Colonel Fitch, of the United States Army.  
Roy Booth, Supervisor of Inyo National Forest.

540-Public Camps: The Furnace Creek automobile camp was generally well filled through the month and, in fact, its capacity was taxed to some extent on week-ends. The smaller outlying camps were used to a very considerable extent, although the weather was cool for outdoor camping.

600-PROTECTION

610-Police Protection: Eight motorists were warned about speeding.

650-Signs: Signs were painted and placed at needed points throughout the Monument under Ranger supervision.

660-Sanitation: This work is taken care of by an HCV foreman and enrollees. The work is outlined and inspected by the Ranger.

900-MISCELLANEOUS

With the authorization of a summer camp in the Panamint Mountains at Wildrose Canyon, considerable development work was necessary at this camp site. A spike camp was installed and radio connections established with the main radio station in Death Valley. The service was exceptional/fine. A sufficient water supply was developed at the campsite and improvements made in the road facilities in and out of the camp.

Respectfully submitted,

F. R. Goodwin,  
Engineer in charge.

TRG:RM

CC: The Director ( with original ),  
Mr. F. A. Kittredge,  
Mr. W. G. Carnes,  
Forestry,  
Sequoia.