

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF NATIONAL PARKS,
BUILDINGS, AND RESERVATIONS

DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT

CALIFORNIA

October 31, 1934.

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

Dear Mr. Director:

Following is the report for Death Valley National Monument, for the month of October, 1934:

OOO-GENERAL

010-Introduction: On the morning of October 8th, Companies 1240 and 1246 CCC arrived from Glacier National Park and occupied the two camps NM 1 and NM 2. As there was no E.C.W. group of trucks available, equipment was rented from the Pacific Coast Berax Company, supplemented by two army trucks. It required three days and nights to bring in all the men and impedimenta to the camp, a distance of 35 miles. The lack of transportation also prevented the starting of any projects except in the immediate vicinity of the camp where the men could walk to and from work.

Enrollment of the LEM quota commenced on October 20th and was terminated on October 27th. On the morning of this later date approximately 160 recruits arrived from the East to bring the companies to strength.

Work was begun on numerous projects near camp and in Park Village, and there was a continuation of the reconstruction of the approach road in Furnace Creek Wash, which was practically obliterated by a summer cloud-burst.

The month was mainly notable by the early influx of visitors, and the number of cars entering the Monument exceeded any expectations for such an early season.

021-Weather in the Monument: The weather was mild and cool throughout the month. On the evening of the 17th, a general rain commenced and lasted all through the night, with a measured rainfall of .81 inches. A heavy shower the following morning, or rather evening, added another tenth inch. Such a heavy precipitation over the

entire area caused an almost unprecedented run off , and roads traversing the edge of the salt flat became impassable bogs. Cars were mired, and considerable rescue work became necessary. The entire road system where located in the bottom lands was unsafe for travel for over a week, but the wisdom of the higher locations as had been practised by all new or reconstructed roadways, was shown to be sound, as only minor damage occurred on these sections.

100-ADMINISTRATION

110-Status of Work: The administrative work organization was built up to a smooth functioning status with the Engineer in Charge acting as direct representative of Acting Superintendent John R. White. Ranger activities by selected men were directed by Ranger Thomas Williams, office and accounting under the direction of Paul Connelly, clerk, with selected enrolled assistants, and the warehouse was also staffed with enrolled men under the direction of Foreman Perrin.

121-Inspection by Superintendents: Superintendent John R. White arrived at the Monument at noon of October 21st, and departed for Sequoia National Park late that afternoon. He went into all office matters, status of work and organization.

150-Equipment: The transfer of equipment from other Parks as directed by the Western Field Headquarters, began during the month. Owing to an error in billing instructions, trucks from Glacier and Yellowstone were shipped to Sequoia, California, a small town north of San Francisco, not only causing a great deal of delay, but increasing the distance of freight haul immensely. Four dump trucks from Yellowstone were unloaded finally at Sequoia National Park, and driven overland to Death Valley. They arrived in fine mechanical condition. Seventeen trucks and pick-ups finally arrived from Glacier, being diverted down the Pacific Coast and via Mojave. They were in extremely bad mechanical condition, and only three or four can be used without extensive repairs. In the emergency, two stake body trucks were loaned by Sequoia National Park.

Three tractors were received from Yellowstone Park, all in excellent condition.

180-Bulletins: Weekly bulletins on road conditions and other matters of interest were issued weekly.

200-MAINTENANCE AND CONSTRUCTION

210-Maintenance: Owing to lack of transportation and non-arrival of tractors and grading equipment, very little road maintenance could be accomplished. A road maintainer was started south on the East Side Highway, and has the road in fine condition as far as Bad Water. As soon as trucks are available to carry work crews, two motor graders will be started north over the badly washed sections leading to Scotty's and Ubehebe Crater. Reconstruction of the Furnace Creek Wash section is practically completed, and in fine condition.

220-Improvements: A number of approved projects for improvements are awaiting either signed plans or the arrival of materials, and will be started as soon as possible.

230-New Construction: No new construction of roads has yet been started, owing to delay in arrival of equipment, and the fact that signed plans have not been received.

240-Approach Roads: The approach roads from Baker and Beatty on the south and east are in good condition, but the main approach from the west over the Tell Road through Towne's Pass, is in very bad condition, passable but very rough and dangerous. No effort is being made by the owner to improve this road, although toll is being collected from all cars entering. Negotiations for purchase of this road by the State of California have not progressed to any extent, and there is much dissatisfaction among the traveling public over the existing conditions.

260-Landscape: Owing to lack of transportation for work crews, it has been necessary to use the enrollees near enough to walk to work, and for this reason a considerable amount of landscape work has been accomplished in Park Village, and the improvement is marked.

300-AGENCIES

310-Public Service Contractors: Although the official opening date for Furnace Creek Inn has been set for November 1st, guests have been received since October 27th. Furnace Creek Ranch and store have been operating all during the month. Stovepipe Wells Hotel commenced receiving guests late in the month.

400-RANGER, NATURALIST, AND EDUCATIONAL

410-Ranger: The Furnace Creek Checking Station has been manned by selected and trained enrolled men under direction and supervision of Ranger Williams. A sanitary crew has also been started for camp ground clean up and sanitation.

430-Naturalist: Foreman Donald Curry, acting as Naturalist, has made numerous exploratory trips when his time would permit. No entertainment or educational programs have yet commenced.

460-Animals: A lynx discovered the turkey enclosure at Furnace Creek Ranch and killed 50 birds before he was discovered and shot by the ranch manager. While coyotes are common to this area, and an occasional mountain lion is reported, this is the first authenticated visit of a lynx to this area.

500-PUBLIC TRAVEL

510-Increase or Decrease: The increase in visitors was very marked, and although a considerable increase had been anticipated, it was not expected so early in the season. There were 414 cars and 818 visitors. As no official records are available for the corresponding month last year, the percentage of increase is not accurately known, but it is without doubt more than 100 percent. Several airplanes landed on the Furnace Creek Inn private field.

900-Miscellaneous: Radio schedule is maintained every odd hour with March Field at Riverside, California, and no difficulties have been experienced with the voice radiophone. Two schedules daily are maintained with Yosemite National Park and information as to road conditions etc. exchanged. As soon as radio is installed at Sequoia a schedule will be established and the present expensive and unsatisfactory telegraph communication abandoned.

Respectfully submitted,



T.R. Goodwin,
Engineer in charge.

TRG:RM