

GUSTODIAN'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL MONUMENT

Alienated Lands

Of the 638,288.3 acres within the Monument 185,154.6 acres are still alienated although efforts, started in 1946, are still being made to eliminate some of these by acquiring the Southern Pacific owned sections through exchange. To date no acquisitions of alienated lands have been consummated.

Land Exchange Applications, which are now being processed, are as follows:

Curtis	18,233.93	acres
Allen	1,917.60	"
Trottier	1,600.00	"
McClellan	3,387.52	"
Dever	4,872.34	"
Southern Pacific (Salton)	2,240.00	" - 80
Southern Pacific (Yuma)	640.00	"
City of Needles	5,820.36	"
Wilson-Cummings	<u>2,560.00</u>	
	41,271.75	acres

An outright purchase of 12,836.34 acres of Southern Pacific land by the National Park Service is now being processed.

The Brady land exchange application, which would have eliminated 38,980.29 acres of Southern Pacific land, collapsed.

During the year the Bureau of Land Management land examiners spent considerable time examining the lands involved in the various exchanges.

Many complications were encountered in the land exchanges due mainly to continued filing of Small Tract Applications (5-acre home-sites) after the land exchange applications had been filed.

## **Mining**

Mining conversation is very active but actual production is at a standstill. We know of no gold mine that is producing although a large number are being improved and developed mainly, we believe, to make them presentable to prospective investors.

The Goat Basin Mine, which was played up considerably by our local opponents, went bankrupt. Their failure, and inability to pay their debts to local creditors, did not cause the Service any harm. However, their mill is being moved to a new location which offers better possibilities.

The Mission Mine and Milling Company has spent an enormous amount of money in improving their property. They plan to do custom milling as well as operate their own mine. The project is being financed by a Mr. O'Conner, a wealthy Los Angeles auctioneer.

A local chapter of the Western Mining Council was organized during the year. A meeting was held in Twentynine Palms attended by approximately 200 miners, land promoters, homesteaders, etc. They are apparently attempting to organize all opponents of the Monument to make a concerted attempt to open the area to each of their several exploiting schemes.

Considerable activity is in evidence at the Kaiser Mine in the eastern part of the Monument. The new railroad and crushers are about completed and many new buildings have been erected. The amount and grade of ore is reported to be satisfactory for profitable operation for many years to come.

## Protection

It is very difficult to evaluate the damage done to the botanical specimens in this area. The flower display along secondary roads is superior to that along primary roads. The display in areas away from all roads is far superior to that along any road. Too many visitors take home "just one plant" which nibbling process is beginning to result in the reduction of the more spectacular plants like the cacti.

Wildlife appears to be holding its own - reproduction offsets the occasional killing by hunters. However, deer and sheep are far more scarce (almost never seen by visitors) than if adequate patrols could be made.

An area containing 838,888 acres, 28 possible entry roads and 202 miles of roads, plus untold miles of old roads remaining from prospecting activity, cannot be adequately protected by the custodian and two rangers who have no clerical help and who are required to spend practically all their time in the headquarters office at Twentynine Palms. Not only have the three employees been unable to take their annual leave but they have not been able to take their compensatory time off.

## Sanitation

Most criticism comes from the fact that there is not a single public toilet in Lost Horse Valley, Keys View and places of concentrated camping. The Monument does not own a single toilet. It is not difficult to visualize conditions especially near camping areas. Toilet paper and Kleenex lodged in the brush are in keen competition with our desert primrose, datura, etc.

We have been able to acquire old oil barrels for use as incinerators but these are inadequate. The rangers, road crew members and fire control aids do a creditable job in gathering the refuse that is widely scattered. Designated campgrounds, with some improvements to encourage camping within a prescribed area, would better satisfy the visitors and lessen the task of cleaning up after them.