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Dinosaur National Monument

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July 2024

## 1939 Internal Memorandum on the Expansion of Dinosaur National Monument

United States Department of Interior; National Park Service

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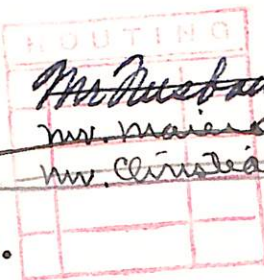
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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
WASHINGTON



December 14, 1939.

Files - Nussbaum - 12-21-39

SPECIAL DELIVERY - AIR MAIL

Memorandum for Acting Regional Director, Region III:

Attention: Mr. Nussbaum.

There is enclosed a brief chronology of events leading up to the enlargement of Dinosaur National Monument. This is sent for what benefit it may be to you in case the subject is raised at the Colorado River Drainage Basin Committees meeting to be held in Salt Lake City, December 18.

There is enclosed, also, a draft of the policy statement, for which we are awaiting the Secretary's approval and about which we radioed you this morning. We will radio to you the outcome of the Secretary's consideration of the policy statement, care of Fort Douglas in Salt Lake City, as indicated in our radiogram to you this morning.

Enclosure 1877789

*G. E. Hummer*  
Associate Director.

Dec. 21-39.

Copy this letter, Dec. 14.  
" Also copy of Service Statement of policy (not approved by Secy)  
made and retained by Nussbaum.

DINOSAUR NATIONAL MONUMENT EXTENSION.

- Dec. 14, 1935 - The Lions Club of Craig, Colorado, urged the establishment of the monument
- Dec. 21, 1935 - Letter from Congressman Taylor requesting information regarding proposed monument
- Dec. 26, 1935 - Letter to Congressman Taylor advising him of general area and stating he will be advised of specific recommendations later.
- Jan. 14, 1936 - Additional information to Congressman Taylor advising him that the Department has approved the establishment of the monument
- Jan. 22, 1936 - Governor Blood, in a letter to Senator King, urges that any proclamation, or act of Congress to establish this area, have a provision to permit possible future power development
- Jan. 31, 1936 -, Letter from Senator King to Secretary of the Interior, enclosing letter from Governor
- Feb. 13, 1936 - Letter to Senator King from the Acting Secretary, advising that the Park Service will inform him
- Feb. 17, 1936 - Letter from Senator Costigan regarding private lands in proposed monument
- Feb. 25, 1936 - Reply to Senator Costigan advising of the proposed establishment of the monument, and that private lands cannot be taken without just compensation.
- June 11, 1936 - A public hearing at Vernal, Utah, to consider the proposed Green River National Monument
- June 13, 1936 - A similar hearing was held in Craig, Colorado.
- Aug. 21, 1936 - Superintendent of Yellowstone was requested to make a further study of boundaries as a result of objections by local stockmen.
- Nov. 23, 1936 - Additional boundary recommendations submitted by Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park
- Mar. 23, 1937 - Senator Johnson was advised of the status of the proposed Green River National Monument
- Oct. 26, 1937 - Acting Director Terrett of the Division of Grazing, in a memorandum to Mr. Burlew, advised the two agencies were in general agreement on the boundaries. However, the Division of Grazing felt these boundaries should be discussed at a State meeting at Grand Junction, Colorado, on Oct. 28. A Park Service representative was not at this meeting

- Oct. 26, 1937 - because we were not advised until October 27.
- Nov. 29, 1937 - Letter to Senator King and Congressman Murdock advising that a proclamation will be submitted as soon as agreement is made with grazing interests.
- Dec. 9, 1937 - Memorandum to the Grazing Division advising that the two agencies are now in agreement after further conferences on the boundaries.
- Dec. 16, 1937 - Memorandum from the Division of Grazing to this Service advising that the boundaries are satisfactory
- Dec. 17, 1937 - Vernal Lions Club advised that because of two towns by the name of Green River, located approximately 100 miles north and south, respectively, of the area, they prefer to retain the name Dinosaur.
- Jan. 17, 1938 - The Service advised the Vernal Lions Club we will recommend the dropping of the name Green River.
- Mar. 18, 1938 - The Lions Club of Craig, Colorado, requests information as to the delay in the establishment of the monument, and advising that many local residents are desirous of having the monument established.
- May 20, 1938 - Senator King of Utah and Congressman Taylor of Colorado were advised of the area included in the draft of proclamation to extend the boundaries of Dinosaur National Monument
- May 25, 1938 - Senators Thomas of Utah, Adams and Johnson of Colorado, and Congressman Murdock of Arizona were advised of the boundaries of the proposed extension to Dinosaur National Monument

DEC 16 1939  
MINERAL PAUL SMITH  
II REGION

A statement of general policy was presented by representatives of the National Park Service at the last meeting of the Colorado River Drainage Basin Committees, held in Denver, November 18, 1939. Because a number of State representatives were not present at that meeting, it has been requested that the subject be reconsidered at this meeting. The statement presented November 18, is as follows:

"Recreational resources of the Colorado River Basin are internationally known. Any plan for the coordinated development of the Basin's resources must recognize that asset. Coordinated development of the Basin should provide opportunity for the maximum use of each resource.

"It is recognized that available water and power are fundamental in the Basin's growth. It is recognized, also, that mineral, forest, and range resources must be utilized. The studies now being conducted should result in a wise exploitation of all of the resources, so that each development would be supplemental to the others in the Basin's economy.

"It would not be justifiable to advocate the exploitation of one resource without regard for such exploitation upon the others. Overgrazing, for example, that results in soil erosion, floods, impoverishment of forests, range, and all other affected resources, cannot be advocated as wise land use. There must be a correlation of the uses, if the maximum benefits are to be achieved.

"It is upon this general basis that the National Park Service offers cooperative assistance in the drainage basin studies.

"We urge that in all plans for development of the Basin's resources, the recreational potentialities be evaluated. It should be possible to classify each resource according to its most profitable use. An area, such as the Grand Canyon National Park, is unquestionably of primary importance for its recreational, or inspirational, value and it has been so classified by action of the Congress. Secondary uses of the Grand Canyon National Park, such as the development of power and reclamation projects within it, would detract from the primary use and must, therefore, be opposed.

"On the other hand, the Boulder Dam region is primarily valuable for water control purposes and the area has been so developed. In that development, however, recreational and wildlife values have been recognized and are being developed for public benefit. Because of this recognition of the several resources, it is reasonable to forecast that Lake Mead will become one of the major recreational assets of the Colorado River Basin.

"The proposed Escalante National Monument embraces one of the little known but most spectacular scenic regions in the United States. The mineral and grazing

resources of the area have not been proven to be significant. Its water control potentialities may prove to be important. Its recreational assets can become a significant factor in the economic development of the Basin. It may be possible that the water control and recreational factors can be developed coincidentally. The plans eventually formulated should rest upon a carefully considered appraisal of all the resources involved, and the relative importance of each should be determined.

"The exploitation and impairment of great, publicly owned scenic resources for the sole purpose of reducing the cost of a water control project is questionable public policy. If important recreational resources are involved in a water control project, the additional expenditure required for the protection and development of those resources should be considered as a legitimate expenditure.

"An open mind is essential to the success of the Basin studies and the National Park Service wishes to cooperate on that basis."

Discussion following the reading of the above statement indicated that amplification of these general policies was desired.

It is well known that studies are now being conducted to determine the feasibility of a transmountain diversion project to bring water from the Green River in the Dinosaur National Monument region

to the agricultural lands of the Great Salt Lake basin. The National Park Service realizes that the development and utilization of water and power resources are of vital importance in your industrial stability. The Service believes that the merits of such a project, and the effects of it upon the recreational utility of the national monument, likewise, should be considered upon the basis of facts produced by these studies. It is believed that reconciliation of the numerous interests can be achieved by this method.

With reference to the proposed Escalante National Monument, there are constructive as well as destructive ways in which the recreational development of that area may be handled. No public benefit will result from the refusal to recognize the dominant resources of this publicly owned area. There is no question that the area is one of the most scenic regions in the United States. The State of Utah and the public generally can profit by the proper development and utilization of those scenic resources. There appears to be no question, also, that meritorious projects for the development of water and power resources of the Colorado River should be undertaken. It may be many years, however, before the appropriate means for such water control projects can be found. Does the State of Utah want these scenic resources to remain unused or despoiled during that intervening time?

Legislative measures could be sought, and widely supported, to establish the Escalante area as a national recreational area, with adequate provisions assuring future development of water and power



resources, when such projects are found feasible and duly authorized. Such legislation could prevent damage to a major state asset, the recreational resources. Provision could be made, also, for prospecting and mining.