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### Memorandum For regional Director, Region Three

Robert H. Rose

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October 7, 1947.

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Haggen*

MEMORANDUM for the Regional Director, Region Three.

Comments prepared by Custodian B. R. Finch of Colorado National Monument are transmitted herewith in reply to Acting Director Tolson's memorandum of August 28 forwarded to us by Acting Regional Director Davis' memorandum of September 4.

It is noted that some rather serious visitor impact problems exist at Colorado. Heavy travel and inadequate capacity of facilities in areas of heavy visitor concentration are the principal factors involved.

Custodian Finch's report is submitted in duplicate for your further appropriate action and distribution. Your instructions asked that this material be received by you on, or before, October 10.

Robert H. Rose,  
Superintendent.

Enclosure -900841.

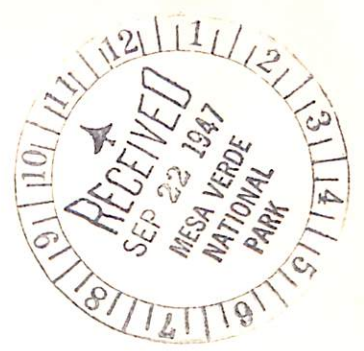
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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
COLORADO NATIONAL MONUMENT  
GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO  
Fruita,



September 18, 1947.

MEMORANDUM for the Coordinating Superintendent,  
Mesa Verde National Park.

The following answers to the questions on the effects of visitor use have been prepared as requested by Acting Regional Director Davis on September 4.

A. The campground at the Headquarters area has been used to date this travel year by 13,961 picnickers and campers. While no vandalism has occurred here, the impact of such heavy use in such a small area has trampled out the vegetation and compacted the soil. The survival point of the ground cover on this barren soil is low and will not long survive such heavy use. Plans have been made for the enlargement of this campground and provisions made for large group picnics. These plans should be approved and the work done as soon as possible.

The Shelter House, located only four miles from Grand Junction but 18 miles from headquarters also receives heavy use and abuse. Due to the lack of personnel adequate supervision can not be given this area and some damage to vegetation has resulted.

B. There are no problems concerning concession facilities and privately owned establishments.

C. The entire Scenic Rim Rock Drive might be considered as a "Rim Area" at the Colorado National Monument. However, there is no need for developments to prevent irreparable damage but there is a need for facilities for public benefit. Plans are being developed for a contact station where visitors may congregate and be contacted. Very little organized interpretive work is possible without such facilities.

D. At the Colorado Monument there are no particularly fragile features or delicately balanced geological and biological processes. On the whole the vegetative cover is being fairly well protected.

E. Flora and fauna are not particularly outstanding. We do have a herd of about 25 bison and perhaps our objectives concerning the future of this herd could be better defined. The herd is confined behind a woven wire fence and have approximately 2300 acres of rough country over which to roam and graze. The majority of people who come to see this herd are disappointed since it can be seen only on rare occasions. The herd is descended from one pair which was released here in 1925. Since forage is limited the herd is kept down to 20 animals which are now showing serious signs of inbreeding. How long this herd will last without some new blood is unknown. At any rate it seems rather expensive to maintain this scrubby herd for the benefits being derived.

F. There are no bears here and we have discovered no evidence of the feeding of deer. Rodents share in the remains of food left scattered in the campgrounds and along the roadsides but we have seen no actual pauperizing of the rodents.

G. None

H. Certainly railings or barriers are needed to restrict visitors. But the problem of where they should be placed is puzzling. Sheer cliffs extend all along the Rim Rock Drive and practically everywhere that visitors congregate. Cold Shivers Point and Window Rock are especially outstanding examples. People stand on overlooks within inches of sheer drops up to 400 feet with no protection whatever. It would be inconsistent to protect a few places when there are hundreds of other places just as dangerous. Sooner or later there will be accidents. We feel that a study should be made of the problem and proper guard rails installed where needed along the highway and in the danger spots which are used the most.

I. We have no studies being made or planned to determine the effects of visitor use on the preservation of essential values.

J. Visitors are excluded from the Black Ridge truck trail . There are no scenic values there.

K. We feel that checking stations at the boundaries and an orientation station near Sun Temple in the Headquarters area would do much to control visitor abuse of the area.

L. The problem posed by the Shelter House should be studied. This place should be either eliminated or plans made for its proper control. At the present time it is certainly not a dignified addition to the Monument's services and reflects adversely on Park Service standards.

*B. R. Finch*  
B.R. Finch  
Custodian

In triplicate