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Colorado National Monument

Colorado National Parks

Memorandum for the Acting Coordinating Superintendent, Mesa Verde National Park

John F. Aiton

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

June 30, 1943

MEMORANDUM for the Acting Coordinating Superintendent,
Mesa Verde National Park,

There follows the Custodian's Annual Report for Colorado National Monument.

INTRODUCTION

The accomplishments at Colorado National Monument consisted primarily of maintaining and protecting the government investment and the protection of the natural features from fire, poaching and vandalism.

CONSTRUCTION

A fire break, eight miles in length, was constructed along the buffalo fence during April. All other construction work was stopped due to war necessity.

MAINTENANCE

The roads were maintained throughout the year. A total of 4500 yards of dirt was hauled for use in widening and protecting fills. A large mud slide required the removal of 5000 yards of mud. Ditches were cleaned, rock slides removed and the oil mat repaired.

USE OF PARK FACILITIES BY THE PUBLIC

8,235 people in 2,621 cars visited the Monument during the year compared to 22,851 people in 6,391 cars during the previous year, a decrease of 63.9%.

PERSONNEL

Park Ranger Medray Carpenter transferred to the War Department on July 26, 1942.

Custodian B.R. Finch transferred to Glacier National Park, leaving the Monument on January 15, 1943.

Park Ranger Evan A. Byrd served as Acting Custodian from January 15 until noon on March 5, 1943.

Custodian John F. Aiton entered on duty at noon on March 5. He was sworn into the Army on June 23, 1943.

Seasonal and temporary workers were employed for a total of approximately twelve months.

Personnel - cont'd.

The Park Ranger position, formerly occupied by Charles E. Smith, remained vacant through the 1943 fiscal year.

General Road Foreman Hubert W. Atchison and Park Ranger Evan A. Byrd served the entire year.

PROTECTION

The checking station was operated until November 1. It is closed for the 1943 travel season.

Patrols, sanitation, fire protection and suppression work and office duties constituted the primary work of the ranger force.

~~Three~~ ^{Four} fires, one smoker and ~~two~~ ^{three} lightning fires, occurred on the Monument and were suppressed, being limited to 18.11 acres.

WILDLIFE

The buffalo have continued to increase and are now estimated at thirty three in number. Serious overgrazing has occurred on the range utilized by these animals.

The elk have scattered to some extent from the Monument to adjacent areas. A considerable number of fresh tracks were observed in Ute Canyon in June. The estimate is placed at fifteen head.

Mule deer tracks have been observed all over the Monument. These animals appear to be increasing.


Tracks of bobcats, foxes and coyotes have been observed in numerous places on the Monument. It is believed the population of these species remains about static.

Porcupines are numerous and serious damage has resulted to the pinion pines in widely scattered areas. Particular note is made of the heavy loss at the head of Ute Canyon.

FORESTRY

The damage by insects and fungi appears to be normal. Similar conditions have been observed all over the pinion-juniper types adjacent to the Monument.

The planting of road slopes and shoulders, done in former years, shows very gratifying results.


John F. Aiton
Custodian