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Colorado National Monument Annual Narrative report

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Colorado National Monument Annual Narrative Report for Fiscal Year 1944.

COLORADO NATIONAL MONUMENT

Travel

Travel to the monument during F. Y. 1944 totalled 5,737 visitors, or a decrease of 30.3% from the 8,234 visitors of F. Y. 1943.

Collection of the 50-cent auto entrance fee and manning of the checking station (located at monument headquarters) have been discontinued since June 1, 1943, due to more compelling demands on an inadequate force.

Personnel

From July 1, 1943, through March 22, 1944, the monument staff consisted of Ranger Evan A. Byrd and General Foreman Hubert W. Atchison, Ranger Byrd serving as Acting Custodian during this period. Effective March 23, 1944, George T. Hopper entered on duty as Acting Custodian, by transfer from Glacier National Park. Ranger Charles E. Smith was on military furlough throughout the year, serving as Captain with Army forces in Africa and elsewhere.

Fiscal

The F. Y. 1944 appropriation for Colorado National Monument was \$9,649. This amount covered all administration, operation, and maintenance.

General Maintenance and Construction

Necessary maintenance and repair of monument buildings, equipment, power and telephone systems, roads and trails, fences, etc., required most of the time of the small monument staff.

Extensive repairs were necessary on the power and telephone lines following a heavy wind storm of October 18.

The interior of the Custodian's residence was put in as good condition as possible--refinishing of floors, walls, woodwork--prior to entrance on duty of Custodian Hopper on March 23, 1944.

In May 1944, a flush toilet and lavatory were installed in the ranger quarters (located in the old officers' quarters of abandoned CCC Camp NP-9 closely adjacent monument headquarters and held by the NPS under Memorandum Receipt), replacing the indoor-pit-toilet and tin-wash-basin facilities formerly provided for

the quarters. The new installation required construction of a 4'x8' addition to the building, a 6'x6'x6' cess pool, and the laying of 60' of vitrified tile. Work was performed by monument personnel, using materials on hand at Mesa Verde National Park and Colorado National Monument.

Following Custodian Hopper's entrance on duty, a program was initiated for completing, with monument personnel and supplies on hand, as much as possible of the construction work left unfinished with termination of CCC Camp NP-9 in October 1941 and NP-8 in March 1942. This undertaking was made possible and practicable because of Mr. Hopper's engineering experience.

Final completion of the 100,000-gallon water storage reservoir (save for waterproofing) at monument headquarters was practically accomplished at the close of the fiscal year. This work included the pouring of 18 cu. yds. of concrete, installation of four control valves and one filter box, laying 160 feet of 2-inch W. S. pipe and 156 feet of 4-inch C. I. pipe, recaulking 500 feet of 4-inch C. I. pipe and backfilling 500 feet of trench. The new reservoir (to be waterproofed later, permits, for the first time, regular impoundment of a substantial reserve of clean, potable water at monument headquarters and ends for all time the uncertain and at times unsatisfactory water supply formerly taken directly from the Fruita, Colorado water line.

The repair garage was sealed and the entire ^{interior} given two coats of paint.

Roads

Due to the impossibility of obtaining qualified labor, etc., work on construction of a 6'x6' drainage tunnel and masonry diversion wall to safeguard, from surface run-off, the major uncompleted fill section of Section E of the Scenic Rim road was not initiated in 1944, as contemplated. Authority to resume this project was received from the War Production Board as of May 29, 1943.

The monument road system continued to occupy the major position in the monument's maintenance program, every effort being made by General Foreman Atchison, with the assistance of Custodian Hopper and Ranger Byrd, to maintain it in as good condition as possible. Ditches and culverts were kept clean, slides and rock promptly removed, shoulders built up, and oil mat repaired where necessary. Heavy rain storms on August 16 and 17, 1943, severely damaged the Serpents Trail section, requiring 10 man-days of work with heavy equipment to make repairs. Fortunately, this storm did no damage to the big fill on Section E, Mentioned above.

Chief Engineer Burney visited the monument September 6, 1943, and inspected the monument road system, particularly Section E. Mr. Burney stated that the road system was generally in good condition, and, under the circumstances, all that could be done for the duration of the war was to maintain it as best as possible with the limited force and funds available.

General Protection

Ever since its completion in 1941, the picnic and shelter house at the Grand Junction entrance to the monument has presented a major protection problem to the monument force. Misuse of these public facilities late at night by certain elements of the local citizenry for "brawls" has resulted in grave damage to both physical improvements and natural values. Trees have been cut down, closet doors yanked from hinges and broken up, bench-and-seat combinations damaged and burned, stores of fire wood stolen, dangerously-large fires built in the central fire place, and other acts of vandalism and disorderly conduct committed.

Patrols to this hidden location, 20 miles from headquarters, have been as frequent as possible with the force available. During the summer travel season the shelter house is cleaned and patrolled twice a week (Tuesdays and Fridays), and visited again on Saturday evenings and Sundays. Additionally, it is inspected at any time a member of the monument staff happens to be near the area. Public sentiment has been appealed to through local publicity, interpretive and public contacts, and through signs at the area, but without satisfactory results. At the suggestion of the Mesa Verde office, the broom and toilet closets at the shelter were left unlocked, following complete destruction of one of the doors in January 1943, and, prior to the opening of the 1944 travel season, the six picnic table-and-bench combinations were bolted to the floor of the house to prevent some of the rough treatment to which they were subjected. The possibility of utilizing a chain barricade or gate on the approach road to the shelter has not been resorted to, due to the local public resentment it would undoubtedly arouse among the majority of persons using the facilities. Forest Service officials report comparable damage to, and misuse of, public facilities provided in national forests in this region.

Still manifest and surviving in this region, as a result of no administration or public control during the early road-construction period, is the attitude that Colorado National Monument "is our monument and pleasuring ground and we can use it when, how, and as we please." Past efforts of Monument personnel to develop a more cooperative and friendly attitude in this element of the local residents have effected some improvement and it is believed will, in time, achieve the results desired.

Somewhat more than the usual amount of trouble was experienced during the fiscal year with wood haulers and cattle trespass, due, no doubt to war conditions and the impossibility, with only two employees in the area for most of the year, of providing adequate patrol.

Publicity

Burton Holmes, famous travelogue lecturer, and 20th Century Fox took color moving pictures of Colorado National Monument in July and August, 1943, respectively.

Life photographers took pictures of the area in August 1943 for inclusion in Life's October 25, 1943, picture-essay on Colorado.

Wildlife

Due to various unavoidable delays, planned reduction of the monument buffalo herd to a maximum of 20 animals, pursuant to the Director's instructions, was not carried out during the winter of 1943-44. All important factors relating to the reduction have now been cleared and actual reduction will be accomplished as soon as suitable cold weather arrives in 1944-45. The hog-dressed carcasses will be disposed of, at the monument, to the Consolidated Ute Agency.

Only one 1944 buffalo calf has been observed by monument personnel.

An elk herd of approximately 15 head continues to be seen on and near the monument.

Forestry

Dr. James L. Meilke, Plant Pathologist, Bureau of Plant Industry, Office of Forest Pathology, Department of Agriculture, made an inspection of monument forest disease and insect conditions in August 1943, primarily for the purpose of determining if the Leptographium root disease of pinyon pines, discovered at Mesa Verde in the fall of 1942, was present on the monument. Dr. Meilke found no evidence of Leptographium nor observed any noteworthy diseased or insect-infested condition. He reported that scattered dead and dying pinyons were observed as fairly common on parts of the monument, but the primary cause of death of all trees examined appeared to be bark beetles (*Ips* sp.).

Dr. Meilke confirmed previous reports by monument personnel of extensive porcupine damage to pinyons by reporting noticeable damage to these trees throughout most of the monument.

No forest fires occurred within the monument boundaries during the fiscal year.

War Bond Cooperation

Colorado National Monument employees participated 100% each month during the fiscal year in the purchase of U. S. War Savings Bonds, buying bonds in the amount of \$818.75 through the pay-roll deduction plan and reporting additional cash purchases in the amount of \$675, or a total of \$1,493.75, or nearly 22% of the gross pay roll of \$6,834.21.