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Great Sand Dunes National Park

Colorado National Parks

1941 Memorandum Regarding Geologic History Museum of Great Sand Dunes National Monument

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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK
COLORADO

GREAT SAND DUNES NATIONAL MONUMENT

10-23-41

Here again is a scenic Monument with the outstanding features in the field of geology.

In order to present the geological story to visitors, however, it will be necessary to include the entire surrounding region. Most of the geological occurrences that were responsible for the sand dunes took place outside the Monument and the entire San Luis Valley as well as the high bordering mountain ranges will need to be brought into the picture.

Although the geological story is dominant in this Monument, two other angles may deserve consideration; history and archaeology. The San Luis Valley has an interesting historical background that is worthy of a minor treatment. In the field of archaeology nothing of especial importance has as yet been found but there is a possibility that evidences of the Folsom complex may come to light. If this should develop, a minor treatment of these ancient Indians and the recent Utes, of whom there are many indications, would be called for.

A small museum seems to be essential in the interpretive program for this Monument. One large room with a large observation porch overlooking the dunes would suffice. By means of wall cases, and relief models in the main room, and pointers and pictures set in the parapet wall of the porch the geological story could be presented.

If the museum development should be slow in coming, an immediate trailside treatment should be considered. A trailside structure, such as those suggested for the other monuments, would permit an adequate interpretive treatment until the museum develops.

The sand dunes are so unusual that they certainly must excite the curiosity of the average visitor and a simple presentation, such as would be possible in a trailside exhibit, should be of interest to them.

Don Watson -

Park Naturalist

General aspects at "Dunns"
not efficiently developed
& no museum at
present. Believe
trail side exhibit
best treatment for time
being, altho this must
be deferred for duration.

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