CHALLENGE OF THE BIG TREES

Lary M. Dilsaver and William C. Tweed

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Challenge of the Big Trees

Foreword

MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY ago, in 1933, I accepted a position with the National Park Service in the agency's Region IV, San Francisco office. This was at the height of the Great Depression, and I was very glad to be able to put my newly acquired Master's Degree in Landscape Architecture to work. Soon I was at work in the woods designing and overseeing construction of the Generals Highway, the roadway the National Park Service and the Bureau of Public Roads were constructing to connect Sequoia and General Grant national parks. A few years later I returned to the Sequoia/Kings Canyon region to explore the Kings Canyon back-country on horseback to see if the area met the Service's criteria for inclusion within the national park system. For these reasons Challenge of the Big Trees is for me a very personal and exciting opportunity to renew old memories.

Now, as Sequoia National Park celebrates its centennial and Kings Canyon National Park achieves its golden anniversary, I am struck by how much the Sierra has changed since I first went to work in the region. The highway I helped to design now allows nearly a million visitors a year to see the beauties of the southern Sierra, and the Kings Canyon region I studied is now the heart of one of America's greatest wildernesses.

Challenge of the Big Trees tells of the changes I have seen and more. It is a story of how the dedication and sustained effort of a small group of interested citizens awakened the consciousness of the American people and their government. As a result, the Sierra's giant sequoias and wonderful high country were saved from selfish destruction. In my lifetime of park work I have witnessed many similar stories; people do make a difference.

The story of Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks is also a fascinating bit of history. The authors detail not only how the parks came to exist, but also how the parks were repeatedly threatened with over-development, and how they were fortunate enough to ward off those threats. Again the critical efforts of a few key persons made all the difference. All too often national park histories tend to end with the creation of the parks. Challenge of the Big Trees avoids this weakness and explores in substantial detail the critical actions that made the two parks what they are today.

As we face the environmental challenges of the future it is wise to review the challenges of the past and the lessons they provide. Much can be learned from reading this book; I commend it to you.

—WILLIAM PENN MOTT, JR.
FORMER DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL PARKS ARE MORE THAN LAND, more than just protected resources, more than policy or law, more than their histories, more than the people who use and love them. Our national parks are places where the people of the United States have undertaken a great and still-evolving experiment. Can a modern society preserve "unimpaired" not just isolated natural features, but entire natural ecosystems while at the same time intensively using them for recreation? Further, should these idealistic goals be pursued through gentle, hands-off protection, or through intense and persistent management? Is it possible to define at what point human use begins to conflict significantly with effective resource preservation? Should the natural ecosystems in national parks be allowed to evolve unimpeded towards some uncertain, but natural, future, or should they be stabilized or frozen to perpetuate the features or systems that attracted public attention to the park in the first place?

More than a century after the initiation of this grand American experiment, none of these questions has really been answered. Perhaps in the definitive sense they never will be. Each national park, however, has contributed in its own way to the ongoing debate about what parks really are and how they should be managed. The national park system and the Service that operates it have received increasing attention from scholars in recent years, yet few of these studies have focused in depth on the history of individual parks. It is a premise of this book that our understanding of the national park system can be significantly improved by detailed appraisals at the individual park level. There are two reasons for this: first because the origins of many systemwide policies can be found in episodes and conflicts within individual parks, and second, because the addition of park-level detail refines the picture we have of the entire parks system and the political forces that spawned it. In this light the histories of the oldest national parks are perhaps the most significant. Created well before the national park idea was clearly codified and long before the dawn of ecological biology, these parks have been the scenic battlegrounds where the critical and defining issues that still haunt the parks were first articulated and considered.

Several early national parks, notably Yellowstone and Yosemite, have received prolonged and serious attention from historians and other students of the national park idea. Other parks have not been so fortunate, although their stories are every bit as important. Two of these occupy and protect the spectacular southern climax of California's Sierra Nevada. Here on the rugged flanks of the highest mountains in the forty-eight contiguous states, grow the largest living things of our planet—the incomparable giant sequoias. And surrounding them is a land of enormous scenic and biological fascination, a land that has captured the imagination and spirit of uncountable numbers of people.

Today, the two national parks of the southern Sierra Nevada are known as Sequoia and Kings Canyon. In 1890, when the U.S. Congress first set them aside as the second and fourth parks of the system, they were known as Sequoia and General Grant national parks. A century has now passed since that event. During that century, much more than
is realized, Sequoia, General Grant, and later Kings Canyon repeatedly played critical roles in the evolution of modern national park philosophy and management. Within these parks precedents were set that still bear fruit throughout the American park system. This book is the story of these two parks and their first century of existence.

If the critical question about national parks is "how has humanity perceived and modified the land according to its evolving values," then the state of the land itself becomes the primary historical record. Thus, in this book we shall describe through time the changing state of the lands and ecosystems that are now Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks. Over a century, how have individual people, and the societies they lived in, acted upon the southern Sierra? What did they assume? What did they value? What impact did they have on the land and the ecosystems; and how did this affect subsequent perception of resources and values? Our geographical focus, as noted, will be the lands now within the two national parks we seek to understand. But just as the modern national parks cannot stand fully divorced and separated from the surrounding worlds, neither can our study of them ignore adjoining lands. We shall, therefore, out of necessity, place the two parks in a larger historical and geographical perspective. We will watch and document the fate of the mountain lands which now surround the parks. We will observe also the valley lands to the west of the parks, for their fates also are inseparable from the parks.

The two parks themselves fall mostly into three definable regions or watersheds. The western half of Sequoia, west of the rugged alpine ridge known as the Great Western Divide, is drained by the five forks of the Kaweah River. East of the Great Western Divide, the other half of Sequoia National Park is the headwaters of the North Fork of the Kern River. The main portion of Kings Canyon National Park is drained by the Middle and South forks of the Kings River, which join a few miles west of the park boundary, while the Grant Grove section of Kings Canyon Park occupies the forested divide between the Kings and Kaweah rivers and provides water to both river systems. Small portions of northern Kings Canyon and southern Sequoia are drained, respectively, by the San Joaquin and Tule rivers. It is upon these lands, together with the downstream canyons and valley delta regions of the Kings and Kaweah rivers, that we shall focus.

Several themes will appear so regularly that they must be introduced before we can begin. One, already stated, is that this is a history of the land and its ecosystems. Another, basic to understanding the late-twentieth-century state of the parks, is that contrasting land management goals have worked inexorably to make the parks an increasingly isolated biological island. Yet another theme is that although the parks are places where national policies were executed, they also were the birthplaces of policy, where management philosophy and procedures were created and refined.

Finally, we must introduce one other extremely pervasive theme. We bring to this project the outlooks of two academic disciplines: Lary M. Dilsaver is a geographer; William C. Tweed a historian. We both believe, however, that only an interdisciplinary combination of these two perspectives can adequately explain the reality of Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks. Ultimately, the natural and human worlds cannot be separated.

We wish to establish one additional point. Despite the significant cooperation of the National Park Service in preparation of this history, the opinions and interpretations presented here are solely those of the two authors and in no way those of the National Park Service or any other organization.
Chapter One:
The Natural World of the Southern Sierra

THE SIERRA NEVADA DEFINES the interior of California in a way that overwhelms all other topographic features. The "great snowy mountain range" takes its name from the description offered by a Spanish explorer in 1776. Missionary Pedro Font first saw the snowy mountains, "una gran sierra nevada," from the low hills that separate San Francisco Bay from the Great Central Valley of California. His vista disclosed the central portion of the range—the area that in 1848 would become the focus of the gold rush which began the modern history of California. Altogether the Sierra is nearly 400 miles long with the northern end of the range often defined as Lake Almanor, near Lassen Peak and the southern end at Tehachapi Pass. [1]

For the northern two-thirds of its length the Sierra has a striking consistency. The crest is consistently very far east of the center of the range, and long river canyons drain the deeply eroded, but relatively gentle, western slope. North of Yosemite National Park, which is near the midpoint of the range, only a small part of the Sierra is above timberline. From Yosemite south, however, the range is higher and more rugged. Starting at Mt. Dana, just south of Yosemite's Tioga Pass, and continuing south for more than a hundred air miles, the crest consists of continuous high sharp peaks, each successively more rugged. The ultimate summits of the Sierra rise near the southern end of this high, barren land, in the headwaters of the Kings and Kern rivers.

Despite the increasing heights of the ridges, the Sierra Nevada retains its westerly trending drainage pattern as far south as the Kings River canyons. The two major forks of the Kings River are born on summit peaks very near the eastern edge of the mountains and flow through long deep canyons down the west side of the mountains to the San Joaquin Valley. In the region of the Kaweah and Kern rivers, however, the shape and texture of the Sierra change radically. South of the Kings River, the Sierra Nevada has a double crest. The main crest, and home of the highest peaks in the range, remains far to the east, but a second, parallel, crest appears—the Great Western Divide. West of the divide the five forks of the Kaweah River drop steeply into the San Joaquin Valley. East of the Great Western Divide, but still west of the Sierran crest, is the fifteen-mile-wide canyon complex of the Kern River, draining not west, like every other Sierran river, but instead south for many miles, and finally, even reluctantly, west into the extreme southern end of the San Joaquin Valley.

These two factors—the presence of the highest peaks in the Sierra, and the well-spaced double crest with extensive uplands between—make the southern Sierra very different from the remainder of the range. Nowhere else is the Sierra so high. Nowhere else are the canyons so rugged and deep. And nowhere else does the Sierra rise so steeply from the west. The peaks of the Great Western Divide are much closer to the floor of the Great Central Valley than any other alpine area in the range. At the headwaters of the Middle Fork of the Kaweah River, summits over 12,000 feet high are less than thirty air miles from the nearly-sea-level valley floor. In the Yosemite and Tahoe regions the distance is much greater.
WHEN SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS of Europeans first entered the interior of California in the middle nineteenth century, they were immediately impressed with the land they found. Everywhere they looked they sensed potential. They found people too, sometimes lots of them, but the Europeans were not nearly so impressed with them. In a way the separation of the two was odd, for the land and the people were inextricably bound together.

Just when people first came to live in the southern Sierra is not entirely clear. Archaeologists are now confident that human beings have lived in California for at least 10,000 years, and some evidence suggests much earlier occupation of some parts of the southern California desert. In the Great Central Valley, sites 3,000 to 4,000 years old have been excavated, and it now seems apparent that central California, including portions of the Sierra, has been occupied by humans for at least 6,000 or 7,000 years. [1]

In the Sequoia/Kings Canyon region, the record is much more vague, with much of the area archaeologically unexplored even today. Most of the limited archaeological work within the parks areas, moreover, occurred several decades ago. For our purposes the most useful work was done at several sites along the main stem of the Kaweah River. Three of these sites were explored in the late 1950s during construction of Terminus Dam on the Kaweah River below Sequoia National Park. At Hospital Rock, six miles upstream from the park boundary on the same river, additional work was done in 1960 on a large village site. During the same year limited excavation was carried out at a site in Kings Canyon less than a mile from Cedar Grove. [2]

Taken alone, these sites give only limited information. None demonstrates occupation of great antiquity, although deposits of cultural material at Hospital Rock were up to six feet deep. Remaining physical evidence suggests the basic directions of subsistence and culture, but little more. Only when the excavations are placed in the context of historic anthropological research does the haze of the past begin to recede.
IN THE MIDDLE DECADES of the nineteenth century, the Native Americans who had lived relatively undisturbed in the southern Sierra for countless generations found themselves suddenly and permanently displaced as the dominant mountain culture. The agents of change, of course, were people and cultures of European descent. California is a long way from Europe, yet within fifty years of the first voyage of Columbus across the Atlantic, Portuguese sailor Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo made crude maps of the cold, foggy coast of Alta (Upper) California. Cabrillo found little to excite the Spanish colonial mentality, and over two centuries passed before Spain finally thought Upper California worthy of organized exploration and settlement. In 1769, responding to perceived international threats in the North Pacific from Russia and England, the staid, already centuries-old Spanish colonial administration of the Americas began to establish a tenuous string of European outpost villages along the Alta California coast.

Anchored by the small military posts, or "presidios," at San Diego, Santa Barbara, Monterey, and San Francisco, the chain of Spanish settlements was secured by Christian missionary settlements sponsored by the colonial government, operated by the Franciscan Order, and populated largely by unenthusiastic Native Americans from the coastal tribes. None of the twenty-one missions the Spaniards ultimately established was more than a few dozen miles from the coast, yet the impacts of these settlements on California and its residents were widespread and significant. Even the southern Sierra was not immune.

In a way it is deceptive to call these Spanish settlements "European," for the number of pure-blooded Europeans in Spanish California was never very large. Most of the mission residents were California Indians, and most of the "Spanish" immigrants were actually of the ancestry the Spaniards called "mestizo," or mixed Indian-European blood. Only a tiny handful of civil and ecclesiastical colonial appointees were truly European, born on the eastern shores of the Atlantic. But if the new people who came to Alta California were more truly "American" than European, the material culture they brought was not only European, but specifically Mediterranean. The connection was highly fortuitous, for many of the plants and animals the Spaniards brought to California, with its coastal Mediterranean climate, were actually better suited to life in the new California settlements than they had been to Mexico and the Caribbean Islands. The Spaniards brought to their settlements many crops that are still California staples, including oranges, olives, peaches, corn, and wheat. They also brought with them from Mexico European grazing animals including cattle, sheep, goats, burros, and horses. The crop plants the Spaniards brought to California were limited by water and climate largely to the places they were put, but the grazing animals the Spaniards imported, and the plants that inadvertently came with them, would, within a century, permanently change the face of much of California, including the southern Sierra.
Initially, the Spaniards were content to explore the terrain near the coast, but within a few years they had begun to define the shape and texture of inland California. During the 1770s several expeditions sought some understanding of the lands to the east. It soon became apparent that beyond the coastal mountains was a large, often swampy inland plain, and that east of that was a much higher, rugged mountain range, or "Sierra" as the Spaniards called serrated ridges. In 1776, Franciscan missionaries Francisco Garces and Pedro Font, both members of the first overland colonizing party to come to California from the south, explored the northern and southern extremities of the San Joaquin Valley. To Font fell the accidental honor of naming the high eastern mountains. In his journal he described, as he looked eastward across the marshlands near the confluence of the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers, "a great snow-covered range [una gran sierra nevada] which seemed to run from south-southeast to north-northwest." Font's intentions were merely descriptive, but the mountains east of the San Joaquin have henceforth been known as the Sierra Nevada, the "snowy mountains."

The forested mountain-top plateau of Giant Forest, with its thousands of giant sequoias, has always been the heart of Sequoia National Park. (National Park Service photo)

Time passed slowly in Spanish California, and a new century began before much more was officially known about the eastern mountains. During two expeditions in 1806, Ensign Gabriel Moraga mapped and named a number of features along the eastern edge of the San Joaquin Valley, including the San Joaquin, Merced, and Kings rivers. In the Spanish fashion each feature received an ecclesiastical name appropriate for the day of discovery. Because Moraga camped on the banks of the Kings River on January 6, the twelfth day of Christmas, he named the stream "the river of the holy kings" [el río de los santos reyes] after the three magi of the Christmas story. [1]

Moraga was not the only Spanish Californian to enter the interior during the early years of the nineteenth century. Increasingly, Spanish activity along the coast affected inland areas. The coastal missions had led to a severe and spreading disruption of California Indian life. Refugees from the coastal tribes often sought escape among the tribes of the interior plains, and they brought with them both a hatred for the Spaniards and an appreciation for the tastiness of their grazing animals. Eventually horse and cattle theft became a way of life for many interior Indians, a development that required a Spanish
response. As the early decades of the nineteenth century passed, this situation worsened, with the ultimate victims being the valley Indians themselves. Their cultures diluted by refugees from other tribes, their security reduced by raiding parties of soldiers and mission Indians from the settlements, and their numbers threatened by the introduction of European diseases, the Native Americans found their world crumbling. Least affected by all this were the Indians of the Sierra, but as their valley neighbors suffered, so was their protecting buffer zone slowly eroded.
BY THE LATE 1880S local groups began to compete for resources. Increasingly, the actions of loggers and stockmen in the mountains threatened the activities of farmers and city residents in the valley. From these controversies would emerge a new set of rules governing the use of the Sierra and new controlling groups. Significantly, resolution of these issues would fall to the federal government, which would itself undergo revolutionary changes in its land management policies during the period.

As the agricultural communities of the southern San Joaquin Valley grew in the 1870s and 1880s, their attitudes toward the mountains began to diverge from those of the men who were actually living in and exploiting the highlands. Initially during the pioneer era, the grazing, mining, and lumbering enterprises in the mountains to the east only served to increase economic activity in towns like Porterville and Visalia. Eventually, however, valley towns developed stronger economic bases, founded largely on the spread of irrigation farming, and residents of the valley began to discover reasons to oppose limitless resource consumption in "their" mountains. Opposition centered on two issues—the impacts of grazing and lumbering on stream runoff, and the effects of these activities on mountain recreation and scenery.

From the beginning both concerns were inextricably linked. In the days before large reservoirs were constructed on the rivers of the Sierra, irrigation farming depended completely on natural stream flow. As logging, sheep grazing, and wide-ranging fires often set by sheepmen changed the nature of Sierran vegetation, so too were seasonal stream flow patterns changed. Generally, to the settlers of the time, it seemed like less water came from the mountains, especially during the dry season. [1] Changes in seasonal stream flows made little difference to mountain loggers and sheepmen, but they could be critical downstream, where survival of a field crop in August could make or break a farmer. Significantly, too, as the number of valley residents traveling to the mountains for pleasure increased, so did their concern over the state of the mountains. The intense heat of July and August in the San Joaquin sent many families to the high country seeking relief. There, all too often, they discovered their favorite camping areas logged, or their favorite meadow areas denuded so thoroughly by sheep that a horse party could find no feed for its stock.
THE FOUNDING OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE brought radical and immediate change to Sequoia and General Grant, as well as the rest of the fledgling system. For the first time this loose aggregate of land withdrawals had a unified and dedicated administration. For the first time, they escaped the shadow of the Department of Agriculture, its principal land management agency, the Forest Service, and their entrenched philosophy of multiple use. And for the first time, a group of men zealously committed to preservation for recreation would administer the parks; they were a very different breed from the conservationists of the Forest Service. However, the Park Service was weak and the system of lands it inherited were insignificant compared to the Forest Service and its vast tracts. In addition, the Park Service faced a complicated problem of blending two nearly incompatible purposes—recreational use and preservation.

These challenges demanded men who would be extraordinary in their skills and devotion, for upon their shoulders would fall the very future of the national park system. The decisions they made, the policies they adopted and the infrastructure they approved would become a permanent legacy for the future.

From 1916 to 1931, the Park Service would find four such men at the national level and in the two parks of the southern Sierra Nevada. They were Stephen Mather, first director of the Park Service who ran the agency from 1916 to 1929; Horace Albright, his trustworthy assistant, who became the second director during the years 1929 to 1933; Walter Fry, first civilian superintendent of the two parks; and Colonel John White, the second, longest-tenured, and most important superintendent. During the first decade and a half of the Park Service, these four men would define park goals, establish patterns of visitor use and development, and create two administrations, national and local, that would guide the parks through the remainder of their first century.

Among their tangible accomplishments at Sequoia and General Grant were elimination of nearly all private land holdings, especially in Giant Forest; the enormous expansion of Sequoia to near its present boundaries; establishment of a highly successful natural history program incorporating the familiar and popular campfire talks and ranger-led hikes; installation of a unified and financially stable concession monopoly with vastly improved and expanded infrastructure; and construction of nearly all the significant roads and trails found today in the two parks. Products of their time, these men favored development of parks for visitor use and their greatest accomplishments lie in that realm. Yet it was also these remarkable leaders who first questioned the wisdom of such practices and who took the first tentative steps away from relentless tourism development and toward control or even elimination of some recreational activities and the construction necessary to promote them. [1]

Stephen Mather combined the rare and fortunate qualities of a preservationist
philosophy, extraordinary dedication and ambition, and a considerable personal fortune. Horace Albright, his young second-in-command, matched that dedication and intelligent ability and added uncommon persuasive skills, particularly in the arena of Washington, D.C. politics. Upon successful conclusion of the battle to create the Park Service, the two men returned to the business of putting the system's house in order. For decades the parks had suffered from a lack of purpose and a shallow, almost aimless philosophy of management. One of the earliest and most far-reaching accomplishments of Mather and Albright was firm establishment of a management philosophy for the park system. They performed this through the curious but politically typical technique of composing a letter for Interior Secretary Franklin Lane in which he would instruct them on the rules and practices of national park management.

Over the years historians have argued about who wrote this letter, Mather or Albright. However, Albright himself has maintained that he wrote the letter basing it primarily on the ideas of Mather, but also on those of William Colby, Francis Farquhar, and Joseph LeConte of the Sierra Club, Gilbert Grosvenor of the National Geographic Society, J. H. McFarland and Harlean James of the American Civic Association, Robert Marshall of the United States Geological Survey, and Robert Sterling Yard of the National Parks Association. This cast of advisors gave the letter a considerable tilt toward preservation values, very much a minority opinion in those early Park Service days. Mather and Lane both approved the document which then reappeared on the director's desk dated May 13, 1918. It embodied "... an outline of the administrative policy to which the new Service will adhere..." and has subsequently been called the "creed for the National Park Service." [2]

Secretary Lane recommended three basic management "that the national principles to shape future park policy. First, parks were to be preserved unimpaired for future generations," a restatement of the earlier congressional act; second, "that the parks were to be used for the observation, health and pleasure of the people;" and third, "that the national interest must dictate all decisions affecting public or private enterprise in the parks." Because the statement of preservation preceded that of popular use in the letter, it has provided justification over ensuing decades for administrative changes toward preservation and away from recreational use.

The letter went on to give twenty-three specific directives on various issues ranging from grazing permits to concession activities. The general tenor of the letter reflected the limited knowledge of ecology at the time but made a strong statement toward object and scenery preservation both still novelties in this recent frontier country. Tree cutting, cattle grazing, and construction of roads and buildings were to be permitted, but only if these activities proved absolutely necessary and harmonized with the natural setting. Camping, concession operations, and automobile use were to be encouraged within the limits required for persistence of "natural conditions." Park rangers were to encourage educational use of the parks in every way while allowing "appropriate" recreation. In addition, the Lane letter addressed issues of expansion of the park system, maintenance of proper standards within each unit, acquisition of adjacent park-quality lands, and elimination of private in holdings within existing parks. [3]

At Sequoia and General Grant the directives of the Lane letter were greeted by Superintendent Walter Fry as welcome confirmation of most existing practices and affirmation of ambitious and worthy goals. Since taking over the superintendence in 1914, Fry had established a reputation based on his knowledge of the two parks and his total dedication to their protection. Now, he skillfully implemented the new Washington office policies and helped establish Sequoia and General Grant under the new Park Service in those first few critical years. However, Fry's real love lay not in
administration but in the forests and among the wildlife of his park home. Over his years in the parks, he had become obsessed with nature study, an obsession that would soon pay rich dividends for the visitors. His opportunity came in 1920 when he was offered the position of U.S. magistrate at Sequoia and, two years later, leadership of an incipient natural history program. At age sixty-one, Fry accepted the new challenges and for the next two decades helped build the nature guide service at Sequoia, a program which became a model for other parks. [4]

Mather, meanwhile, had been searching for a younger generation of men with "the right stuff" to operate his parks and carry out his philosophy. He found such a man for Sequoia and General Grant in Colonel John White, late of the Philippine Constabulary and arguably the most important individual in the history of the two parks. John Roberts White was born in England and attended Oxford University before joining the American Army as a lowly private in 1899. Assigned to the U.S. garrison trying to pacify the Philippines, White soon found himself a colonel in the Philippine Constabulary, commanding a small army of Filipino soldiers with distinction during the guerrilla war in that turbulent place. However, in the process White contracted malaria and tuberculosis which forced his retirement. He rejoined the U.S. Army during the First World War and rose again to the rank of colonel while serving in Europe. In 1919, he retired again from the military, and looking for outdoors work which would maximize his administrative talent, as well as restore his health, White stumbled across Albright and Arno Cammerer, later directors of the Park Service. Although Albright had nothing available that he thought proper for a colonel, White persisted until Albright offered him a position as ranger at newly established Grand Canyon National Park. Within a year he assumed the superintendency of Sequoia, the second oldest of America's national parks. [5]

In White, Mather had a man committed to the principles of nature appreciation, preservation of park resources, and encouragement of visitor use and education, ideas the director himself espoused. With Mather and Albright directing policy from Washington, White tirelessly operating his benign dictatorship within the two parks, beloved Walter Fry building one of the nation's great natural history and public interpretation programs, and with a codified creed of policies and philosophical tenets, Sequoia and General Grant entered a new era of development and popularity and a new level of debate over the two purposes for which they and the youthful agency were founded—use versus preservation.
IN FEBRUARY 1936, Colonel John White delivered an address to a group of national park superintendents meeting in Washington, D.C. With nearly seventeen years at Sequoia National Park, White was one of the senior spokesmen, a man with experience ranging from the early days of Stephen Mather through to the Depression and its drastic government changes. He had seen park visitation multiply sixfold and auto use twelvefold. And he had seen it all from the perspective of his home park—Sequoia. With the benefit of those years of experience had come changes in the superintendent's philosophy and interpretation of the Park Service's 1916 charter—to use and preserve national parks. In his address, Colonel White expounded on that philosophy derived from his years in Sequoia:

To preserve the national park atmosphere we must curb the human desire to develop the parks quickly to compete in popularity with other resorts, or even State or other parks or national forest areas. When a new project is proposed, the first question should be, "how will it affect the park atmosphere which we desire to maintain or restore?"

We should boldly ask ourselves whether we want the national parks to duplicate the features and entertainments of other resorts, or whether we want them to stand for something distinct, and we hope better in our national life.

We are a restless people, mechanically minded, and proud of doing constructive work. Our factories, railroads, roads and buildings are admired by the world. We have in the parks a host of technicians, each anxious to leave his mark. But in all this energy and ambition there is danger unless all plans are subordinated to that atmosphere which though unseen, is no less surely felt by all who visit those eternal masterpieces of the Great Architect which we little men are temporarily protecting. [1]

Preservation, thus, was the paramount value according to White, not simple protection of objects as curious and isolated treasures, but protection and preservation of a nearly intangible feeling of national park "atmosphere." This represents one of the earliest expressions of systemic preservation, although admittedly immature and unscientific. What White wanted to protect was a semblance of the natural world, not some isolated objects within a much paved and adorned visitor complex. He still wanted heavy visitor use, but for education and enrichment. He still encouraged or accepted many types of use incompatible with today's Park Service values, but discouraged many others of common acceptance in his time. He believed that encouragement of the proper "atmosphere" in national parks had to be the province of the superintendent, as did the power to control and implement whatever policies and actions were necessary toward that end.
White had developed these ideas by the late 1920s and simply refined and strengthened them as time passed. The situation at Giant Forest, where 80 percent of the visitors and seemingly even more of the problems concentrated, had forged in him strong likes and dislikes about Park Service policies and practices. The 1931 pillow limit applied to the concession in Giant Forest represented a partial victory in his ongoing war to make Sequoia fit the image later described in his address to the superintendents.

However, White would face constant battles to protect and restore his ideas of national park atmosphere in Sequoia. In some areas serious pressure arose for the first time, such as the designs of road builders upon the backcountry. In other cases constant agitation for new development demanded unceasing vigilance and diplomacy particularly concerning popular amusements of dubious propriety. And in one area, Giant Forest, development clearly had already gone too far. The problem there would bedevil the Park Service throughout the system and throughout its history—how to remove facilities and suspend activities that had already become established. Having achieved the questionable adjective, "traditional," almost no practice with any adherents, no matter how offensive to administrators, could easily be halted.

Thus in 1931 Colonel White faced an increasingly complex task; to control escalating development and, in fact, reduce it in some areas. For the next seventeen years Colonel White, his staff at Sequoia, and the Park Service itself would dramatically reassess priorities and policies. No longer was it imperative to scramble for visitors to justify a park's existence. The early generation of development minded Park Service officials like Horace Albright and Arno Cammerer gave way to a second generation. Colonel White's spirit and philosophy of atmosphere preservation replaced that of object preservation first at Sequoia and later nationally. In the process, the foundations of scientific inquiry and ecological preservation were laid as well. At Sequoia, White's experience, seniority, and personality would create a unique situation whereby policy initiation and impetus for change came from the local administration. This marked the only time in the park's post-1916 history when the Washington office was reduced to the role of policy reviewer rather than policy originator. Nevertheless, despite the shift of initiative, Washington always maintained ultimate veto and this would eventually bring an end to Colonel White's reign and a retreat from many of the standards he pursued and the difficult changes he demanded.
John Roberts White served as superintendent of Sequoia National Park from 1920 until 1938, and again from 1941 through 1947. After 1943 he also superintended Kings Canyon National Park. (National Park Service photo)
In the vast Sierra wilderness, far to the southward of the famous Yosemite Valley, there is yet a grander valley of the same kind. It is situated on the south fork of the Kings River, above the most extensive groves and forests of the giant sequoia, and beneath the shadows of the highest mountains in the range, where canyons are the deepest and the snow-laden peaks are crowded most closely together. [1]

SO WROTE JOHN MUIR in 1891 about an area he had come to love and admire in nearly two decades of exploration. Muir was not the earliest to explore the region or to pen its praises, but it was Muir, poet and scientist of the Sierra Nevada, and after him his beloved Sierra Club, who would inextricably link their goals and philosophy with the future parkland. [2]

Thus began one of the longest and ultimately most cantankerous struggles to create a national park. Recent historians of the park movement in America have suggested that national parks were created from lands deemed "worthless" for traditional resources like minerals, timber, agriculture and water. [3] The problem of Kings Canyon, and its ultimate solution however, were quite the opposite. Contestants so perceived the presence of such valuable resources, especially irrigation and hydroelectric potential, that they fought one another to a developmental standstill for more than sixty years. In so doing, they allowed recreation and preservation factions to gain power, divide their enemies, and negotiate a compromise which allowed the eventual formation of one of the nation's earliest "wilderness" parks.
DURING THE FIRST SIXTY-FIVE YEARS of their existence, Sequoia and Kings Canyon, as well as the remainder of the national park system, evolved through three stages. The early years were difficult and confused as goals and policies remained unclear. The parks had received little money and few employees to define and defend the reserves. The establishment of the National Park Service under Stephen Mather and Horace Albright initiated a second phase which emphasized development of recreation and visitor amenities. That phase lasted through the decades of the twenties and thirties, culminating in the spectacular achievements of the Civilian Conservation Corps. The third stage overlapped with this period of development and resulted from it. Questions of the propriety of recreational activities and their infrastructure began to crop up even as newer and more ambitious plans were submitted. Were park managers living up to their congressional charge of preserving the resources unimpaired for the future? These thoughts heralded a series of moves aimed at both studying and controlling use and abuse.

This might have stimulated an uninterrupted evolution toward improved funding, more scientific management, and a philosophy that emphasized preservation. However, World War II brought the parks and their management to a catastrophic decline which in turn sparked a virtual repetition of these three stages. The Park Service budget had been cut more than 75 percent, and during and after the war, the park system wallowed in low funding and grudging congressional attention for more than a decade and a half. To correct these problems, the Park Service undertook a dramatic, highly publicized program of infrastructural development. Once this program had caught attention from the public and dollars from lawmakers, the Park Service revived questions of philosophy and resource management. This cycle of retreat, renewal, and reappraisal further strengthened the Park Service within the mass of government agencies competing for funds, and again moved it toward the scientific, ecology-oriented management that prevails today.
IN EARLY 1973, the management of Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks found itself attempting to overcome a growing list of difficult planning and resource problems. The new Master Plan for the parks, completed in early 1971, identified many of these issues, including visitor congestion in developed areas; aging and inadequate facilities; understaffed resources management, research, and interpretive programs; and a lack of broad-based planning in and around the parks. Issues not specifically mentioned in the plan, but directly threatening the two parks in the same year included the ongoing Forest Service effort to develop Mineral King, increasing heavy use of adjacent Forest Service lands, enormous growth in backcountry travel, and the rapid population increase of both California in general and Tulare and Fresno counties in particular. For these problems the National Park Service had no bold solutions. The Master Plan, as mentioned, did not call for any major facility removals from congested areas like Giant Forest. Instead, the plan conservatively suggested a highway bypass around the Giant Forest area, a bus system, and relocation of the Giant Forest Lodge to a nearby site with fewer sequoias. About Mineral King the agency had almost nothing to say. With the top of the federal executive branch committed to the project, neither the Department of Interior nor the National Park Service was in a position to object. Some other problems had proven more amenable to change, however. The experimental limiting of backcountry use along the Rae Lakes Loop had worked out well during the summer of 1972; and as the new year began, park managers seriously discussed extending backcountry entry quotas to the remainder of the two parks. The staffing shortfalls identified in the master plan also showed promise of improvement. In many ways, calls for additional programs and additional staffing were easier for the parks to present than initiatives which threatened existing facilities or uses, or challenged incompatible uses on adjacent lands.

The last two decades of the first century at Sequoia and Kings Canyon would see rapidly intensifying debate over proper use and management of the two parks. For the first time, the public would be invited to join the planning process, a change that would have large consequences because of the enormous shift in public awareness of environmental issues. During the period, this same shift would become apparent in the Park Service itself, as a new generation of science-trained and environmentally-aware personnel entered management levels within the agency. This new generation of park managers would take the recommendations of the 1963 Leopold Report to heart and seriously attempt their full implementation. In the process, the veracity and attainability of the Leopold goals would themselves ultimately fall into question. The final chapter of the parks’ first hundred years would also see vastly exacerbated threats from outside the parks’ boundaries—threats of a magnitude never before faced by Sierran parks’ managers. And against all these changes, the haunting legacy of tradition—traditional uses and traditional attitudes—would prove to be a formidable obstacle. As Sequoia and Kings Canyon moved toward their second century, questions of management philosophy and technique, questions of public and personal values, and questions of human/land
interaction loomed larger than ever.

Inside the front cover of the 1971 *Master Plan* could be found a note informing readers that the document was "based on plans presented at the Public Discussions held in conjunction with the Wilderness hearings in 1966." This simple note, quite unlike anything that had previously appeared in NPS planning documents for the parks, marked the opening wedge of a new era. In 1969 Congress passed the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an elaborate statute that resulted in revolutionary changes in the federal planning process. NEPA required that the environmental consequences of all major federal actions be evaluated, and those consequences mitigated to the greatest degree possible; the statute also required public input as a part of the evaluation and consideration process. Henceforth the resolution of any park management question which affected the natural or human environment would require some form of public disclosure and participation. One of the unintended consequences of NEPA and the formalization of the planning procedure would be to minimize the delays and confusion of personnel changes. During the 1970s, Sequoia and Kings Canyon would have no less than five superintendents, but a combination of NEPA regulations and a stable upper-level management team kept the planning procedure on a relatively steady course.
## Appendix A:
### Visitation Statistics, 1891-1988

**Estimated Annual Visitation To Sequoia, General Grant, and Kings Canyon National Parks, 1890-1988**

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<th>YEAR</th>
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<td>1964</td>
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During the summer seasons of 1891 through 1913 Sequoia and General Grant national parks were supervised by military officers assigned by the War Department. Each of these officers received the title of "Acting Superintendent of Sequoia and General Grant National Parks" from the secretary of the interior. Generally, these appointments began in May and expired in October. Beginning in 1900 civilian rangers served as "Park Ranger in Charge" during the remainder of the year. After 1912, the civilian officer in charge of the parks during the winter also took the title "Acting Superintendent." The first formally designated "Superintendent" took charge of the parks in 1914 after the War Department discontinued its park protection program at Sequoia and General Grant. In 1933 the Superintendency of General Grant National Park was separated from that of Sequoia National Park. In 1940, when Kings Canyon National Park came into being, it too, functioned initially as a separate park with a separate superintendent. In 1943, as a war time economy measure, the two superintendencies were merged.

Since that date the two parks have been administered jointly.

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### Acting Superintendents Under The War Department

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<tr>
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<td>1891, 1892</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAPTAIN JAMES PARKER,</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIEUTENANT ALEXANDER TRACY DEAN,</td>
<td>1894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPTAIN JAMES LOCKETT,</td>
<td>1895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPTAIN GEORGE HENRY GOODWIN,</td>
<td>1896, 1897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEORGE LANGENBERG (CIVILIAN APPOINTEE IN LIEU OF MILITARY PERSONNEL DURING SPANISH AMERICAN WAR),</td>
<td>1898</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAPTAIN BENNETT X. SMITH,</td>
<td>1898 (REPLACED LANGENBERG LATE IN SEASON)</td>
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<tr>
<td>LIEUTENANT JAMES ALFRED MOSS,</td>
<td>1899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECOND LIEUTENANT HENRY BENJAMIN CLARK,</td>
<td>1899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPTAIN FRANK WEST,</td>
<td>1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERNEST BRITTEN, (WINTER) RANGER IN CHARGE,</td>
<td>1900—1904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPTAIN LINCOLN CLARKE ANDREWS,</td>
<td>1901</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAPTAIN FRANK ARTHUR BARTON,</td>
<td>1902</td>
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<tr>
<td>LIEUTENANT GEORGE BLANCHARD COMPLY,</td>
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CAPTAIN CHARLES YOUNG, 1903
CAPTAIN LESTER WARREN CORNISH, 1903
CAPTAIN GEORGE FRENCH HAMILTON, 1904
CAPTAIN JOHN O'SHEA, 1905
WALTER FRY (WINTER) RANGER IN CHARGE, 1905—1912
CAPTAIN KIRBY WALKER, 1906, 1907
CAPTAIN CORNELIUS COLE SMITH, 1908, 1909
CAPTAIN EDMUND SEHON WRIGHT, 1910
CAPTAIN JAMES BRYAN HUGHES, 1911
CAPTAIN WALTER MONTEITH WHITMAN, 1912
CAPTAIN DOUGLAS MCCASKEY, 1913
LIEUTENANT HUGH S. JOHNSON, 1913

Superintendents and Acting Superintendents of Sequoia National Park
Under The Department of the Interior Prior To October 1, 1943

WALTER FRY, (ACTING) 3/20/12—7/1/14
WALTER FRY, 7/1/14—7/14/20
JOHN ROBERTS WHITE, 7/14/20—1/1/39
EIVIND T. SCOYEN, 1/1/39—7/15/41
JOHN ROBERTS WHITE, 7/15/41—10/1/43

Superintendents and Actings Superintendents of General Grant
National Park Prior to March 4, 1940

JOHN ROBERTS WHITE, (ACTING), 7/15/20—3/15/33
GUY HOPPING, (ACTING), 3/15/33—10/16/36
GUY HOPPING, 10/16/36—3/4/40

Superintendents and Acting Superintendents of Kings Canyon National Park Prior To October 1, 1943

GUY HOPPING, (ACTING), 3/4/40—3/15/40
EIVIND T. SCOYEN, 7/16/41—10/1/43

Superintendents and Acting Superintendents of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
<table>
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<td>THOMAS J. ALLEN</td>
<td>5/6/56—11/1/59</td>
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<td>JOHN M. DAVIS</td>
<td>11/1/59—2/27/66</td>
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<td>FRANK KOWSKI</td>
<td>3/13/66—9/24/67</td>
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<tr>
<td>JOHN S. MCLAUGHLIN</td>
<td>10/8/67—11/25/72</td>
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<tr>
<td>HENRY G. SCHMIDT</td>
<td>11/26/72—7/31/75</td>
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<tr>
<td>GENE V. DAUGHERTY (ACTING)</td>
<td>7/31/75—10/30/75</td>
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<tr>
<td>STANLEY T. ALBRIGHT</td>
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<td>DAVID D. THOMPSON, JR.,</td>
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<td>JOHN H. DAVIS</td>
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<td>J. THOMAS RITTER</td>
<td>1/15/89—</td>
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Challenge of the Big Trees

Notes to Chapters

Notes to Chapter One


Notes to Chapter Two


9. Roper Wickstrom, op. cit. passim.
Notes to Chapter Three


2. Ibid., pages 23-29.

3. Ibid., page 32.

4. Ibid., pages 31-39.

5. Ibid., pages 59-60.


8. Ibid.


10. Fry, "Discovery of Sequoia National Park."


15. Ibid., page 39.

16. Ibid., pages 29-30.

17. Ibid., pages 31-35.


24. Ibid., page 10.

25. Ibid., page 45.

26. Ibid., page 50.

27. Tulare County Historical Society, "Early Sawmills in Northern Tulare County," Los Tules, No. 6 (October 1950).


29. Ibid., pages 7-9.


33. Farquhar, History of the Sierra Nevada, pages 179-80, and 194-95.


35. Farquhar, History of the Sierra Nevada, pages 180-81, and 194-95.

36. Ibid., page 182.


38. Otter, op. cit., page 70.


Notes to Chapter Four

1. William R. Dudley, "Forest Reservations; With a Report on the Sierra Reservation,


5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., page 82.

7. Ibid., pages 84-86.


10. Ibid., page 100.

11. Ibid., page 108.


18. "Rules and Regulations Prescribed for the Sequoia National Park..., Department of the Interior, October 21, 1890, National Archives, Record Group 79, Entry 1, Sequoia and General Grant. Hereinafter National Archives record group, entry numbers, and file sections will be abbreviated, for example, "NA 79:1," S&GG.

19. Letter, Secretary of the Interior to the Secretary of War, October 21, 1890, NA 79:1, S&GG.


21. Letter, William Stone, Assistant Commissioner, GLO, to Secretary of the Interior, November 20, 1890, NA 79:1, S&GG.

22. Letter, Cauldwell to Newsham, November 29, 1890, NA 79:1, S&GG; Letter, Cauldwell to Vandever, December 5, 1890, NA 79:1, S&GG.

http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/dilsaver-tweed/notes.htm[7/2/2012 5:15:06 PM]
23. Letter, Secretary Noble to Commissioner, GLO, April 6, 1891, NA 79:1, S&GG.

24. Letter, Commissioner, GLO, to Secretary of the Interior, May 25, 1891, NA 79:1, S&GG.


26. Letter, Cauldwell to Commissioner, GLO, June 1, 1891, NA 79:1, S&GG.


28. Letter, Commissioner, GLO, to Secretary of the Interior, June 18, 1891, NA 79:1, S&GG.


30. Ibid., page 4.


33. Ibid., pages 4-6.

34. Ibid., page 7.

35. Ibid., page 8.

36. Ibid., pages 8-11.

37. Ibid., page 11.

38. Ibid., pages 11-12.

39. Letter, Lt. Nolan to Captain Dorst, August 9, 1891, NA 79:1, S&GG.

40. Letters, Sgt. P. Daugherty to Dorst, August 19, 1891 and August 31, 1891, NA 79:1, S&GG.


42. Letter, Cauldwell to Commissioner, GLO, August 12, 1891, NA 79:1, S&GG.


44. Letter, W. W. Bowers to Secretary of the Interior, September 17, 1891, NA 79:1, S&GG.

45. Letter, Cauldwell to John Noble, September 17, 1891, NA 79:1, S&GG.

47. Ibid., pages 140-42.


50. Ibid., pages 143-44.


53. Ibid., pages 4-5, 10-11.


57. Letter, J. W. Dobson to Charles S. Newhall, Supt. of Forests, CA, June 1, 1899, NA 79:1, S&GG.

58. Letter, Ernest Britten to Secretary of the Interior, December 22, 1899, NA 79:1, S&GG.

59. Letter, Britten to Secretary of the Interior, January 22, 1900, NA, 79:1, S&GG.

60. Letter, Acting Supt. West to Secretary of the Interior, September 18, 1900, NA 79:1 S&GG.


63. Letter, Britten to Secretary of the Interior, May 9, 1901, NA 79:1, S&GG.

64. Annual Report: 1903, passim.


70. Letter, William Hammond to Secretary of the Interior, January 29, 1902, NA 79:1, S&GG.


77. By 1914, in addition to Yellowstone and the three California national parks, Congress had designated Mount Rainier [1899], Crater Lake [1902], Mesa Verde [1906], and Glacier [1910] national parks, and several presidents, using an authority granted to them by the 1906 Antiquities Act, had also designated a number of national monuments.


**Notes to Chapter Five**


5. Hydrick, up. cit.; see also Sequoia and Kings Canyon (hereafter cited as SEKI) *Annual Superintendent's Reports* 1920-31 for eloquent personal expression of Colonel White's ideas and actions.

6. An excellent treatment of this subject is provided in Strong, op. cit., pages 165-92.


8. See especially Albright and Cahn, op. cit., pages 81-93; Shankland, op. cit., pages 42-55, 114-28; Letter, Secretary Lane to Mather, May 13, 1918; *Administrative Polices*, op. cit.


10. For a detailed description of the evolution of the interpretive program, particularly as it affected Sequoia National Park, see William Tweed, "The Early Naturalist Program in Sequoia National Park," op. cit.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.


14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.


17. SEKI, *Annual Superintendent's Report 1926*.


19. For a good indication of the rising control of landscape architects see especially the *Annual Superintendent's Reports 1920-1932*.

21. Letter, George Goodwin to John White, October 19, 1920; Memorandum, Arno Cammerer to George Goodwin, May 4, 1921.

22. Letter, Arno Cammerer to Ben Maddox, June 24, 1921; Memorandum, George Goodwin to John White, March 31, 1922; Memorandum, W.M. Austin to John R. White, March 22, 1927.


25. Letter, John White to Howard Hays, December 1, 1933.

26. See the voluminous correspondence on Colonel White's "attitude" toward the concessioners and their presence in Giant Forest. SEKI Archives under "Giant Forest Development."

27. Memorandum, Frank Kittredge to Horace Albright, August 3, 1933. SEKI Archives filed under "Middle Fork Road."

28. Letter, John White to Francis Farquhar, August 29, 1934. SEKI Archives filed under "Middle Fork Road."


31. Letter, John White to Thomas Vint January 10, 1928; Memorandum, Frank Kittredge to Horace Albright, March 12, 1930; Letter, John White to Chief N.P.S. Engineer, April 4, 1930. All in SEKI Archives, "Road and Trails" file.

32. See the early years of the *Sierra Club Bulletin* (especially 1893-1915) for frequent references to the pressing need for new and more trails in the Sierra. Also see the extensive correspondence between Colonel White and William Colby and Francis Farquhar of the Sierra Club filed under "Roads and Trails" and "Sierra Club" in the SEKI Archives.

33. Memorandum, Guy Hopping to John White, February 9, 1938. SEKI Archives under "Roads and Trails."

34. U.S. Forest Service, "John Muir Trail, History," a segment of a larger and unlocatable Forest Service report. This segment is in the SEKI Archives (March 8, 1933); Also see Edward Hyatt, "History of John Muir Trail" (January 14, 1929) given to Colonel White and also located SEKI Archives under the trail name.

35. There is a thick file of correspondence and reports in the SEKI Archives labeled "High Sierra Trail," but for synopsis see William Tweed, "The High Sierra Trail," Sequoia Natural History Association (1982), 48 pages.

37. Ibid.


40. Letter, John White to H.B. Hommon, February 14, 1923; Letter, H.B. Hommon to John White, April 26, 1923.


42. White, "Some Notes."


44. Ibid., pages 49-49.

45. Ibid., pages 53-54.

46. Ibid., pages 55-57.


48. Letter, Howard Hays to John White, August 26, 1927.

49. Ibid.

50. Letter, George Mauger to John White, January 25, 1930.

51. Letter, Howard Hays to John White reporting concession profits, January, 1930-specific date unreadable.

52. SEKI, Fire Management Plan: An Amendment to the Natural Resources Management Plan (April 1984 Revision), pages 14-16.


54. SEKI, Annual Superintendent's Reports 1930-1931.

55. Letter, John White to Mrs. Edward Breck, April 2, 1930; Memorandum, Horace Albright to John White, April 16, 1930; Memorandum, John White to Horace Albright reporting on destruction of predators, August 26, 1931; Horace Albright response to above address by John White (November 10, 1931).


57. Ibid., pages 15-23; Annual Superintendent's Reports 1921-1931.


60. Memorandum, Walter Fry to Stephen Mather, June 17, 1918; Memorandum, John White to Stephen Mather, April 22, 1924; Letter, Horace Albright to Earl Schlaman, April 15, 1931; Tobin, op. cit., page 5.


63. Meinecke, op. cit.; John White, "Retrospect," a five-page memorandum to the files on development in Sequoia National Park (1932); White, "Some Notes."

64. Meinecke, op. cit.

65. Letter, Stephen Mather to John White, June 17, 1927; White, "Some Notes."

66. Letter, Mather to White, June 17, 1927.

67. White "Some Notes."


69. Ibid.

70. Letter, Howard Hays to John White, March 14, 1931.

71. Memorandum, John White to Director, November 23, 1944 summarizing events and conditions for planning, especially in Giant Forest, 7 pages.


73. Memorandum, Horace Albright for Washington office files, July 10, 1931. Copy in SEKI Archives under "Giant Forest Development."

74. Memorandum, White to Director, November 23, 1944.

**Notes to Chapter Six**


3. Ibid., pages 66-70, 131-32.


7. Filmore Criss, interview conducted by Dana Abell (August 1974), two-page interview summary in SEKI files under CCC.

8. Rod DeVoe, interview conducted by Peter Pellegrin (September 23, 1982), two-page interview summary in SEKI files under CCC.

9. SEKI, "Statement of Conditions in Sequoia National Park Before CCC (1933) and Now (1941)," list and description of changes and accomplishments in SEKI archives (1942).

10. SEKI, *Annual Superintendent's Reports 1918, 1940 and 1941*.


12. White, op. cit.

13. Ibid.


16. Ibid; White, op. cit.; Letters, Howard Hays to John White, December 6, 1937; Arno Cammerer to John White, September 6, 1931; John White to Horace Albright, May 31, 1930; John White to Regional Director, March 18, 1946.

17. See *Annual Superintendent's Reports 1936-1938* under "Winter Use."

18. Letter, Lawrence Cook to John White, September 15, 1933.


21. Ibid.


25. Davidson, op. cit.; *Annual Superintendent's Reports 1935-1938*. 

http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/dilsaver-tweed/notes.htm[7/2/2012 5:15:06 PM]

27. Letter, John White to George Mauger, October 3, 1933.


29. Letter, John White to George Mauger, September 7, 1936.

30. Letters, John White to Harold Bryant, September 17, 1937; Ernest Davidson to Regional Director, September 15, 1938; John White to George Mauger, March 4, 1938; Annual Superintendent's Report 1940.

31. Letters, John White to Eivind Scoyen, February 25, 1941; Eivind Scoyen to John White, Match 3, 1941.

32. Memorandum, John White to Regional Director, September 13, 1941.


35. Ibid.

36. George M. Wright, Joseph Dixon and Ben Thompson, Fauna of the National Parks of the United States, Fauna Series No. 1, USDI, National Park Service (1933), 157 pages.

37. Sumner, op. cit.


40. Sumner, op. cit.

41. SEKI, Development Zone Vegetation Management Plan (September 1987), pages 4-26.


43. Newton Drury, "Park Meadows and Tree Encroachment," excerpt from the minutes of the Regional Director's Conference of the National Park Service, Chicago (January 6 to 15, 1944). Located in SEKI Archives under "conferences.

45. Letter, John R. White to Mrs. W.K. Webber, January 17, 1927; "Seven Counties Concerned in Greatest Summit-Parks Highway; Plan Organization," Visalia Daily Times (January 17, 1927); "proposed New Routing for Parks Highway," The Fresno Morning Republican (July 15, 1929).

46. See minutes of the meetings of the Sierra National Parks Highway Association contained in SEKI Archives in three folders listed as "Sierra Way."

47. Ward P. Webber, Report on the Reconnaissance of a North and South Road Sequoia National Park and Approaches. Office of Chief Engineer, Branch of Engineering, National Park Service (September 1931), 8 pages plus maps. Located in SEKI Archives under "Sierra Way."


49. Letter, Frank Kittredge to Arno Cammerer, January 8, 1936.


51. Letter, Acting Director Demaray to Secretary Harold Ickes, November 30, 1935; minutes of the San Joaquin Valley Council of the California Chamber of Commerce (December 12, 1935).

52. H.A. Alderton, Jr. and E.E. Erhart, Route Study of the Proposed Western Divide Highway Between Greenhorn Summit and South Boundary of Sequoia National Park, USDA, Bureau of Public Roads (September 1935), 24 pages plus maps and photos.

53. The Commonwealth Club of California, "Should We Stop Building New Roads into California's High Mountains?" The Commonwealth, Vol. 12, No. 22 (June 2, 1936), pages 327-86.

54. Memorandum, Frank Kittredge to Arno Cammerer, March 19, 1936.


56. Letters, Arno Cammerer to Allen Hughes, December 15, 1936; Frank Kittredge to Arno Cammerer, January 8, 1936; memorandum, John White to Newton Drury, April 18, 1944.

57. Memorandum, John White to Frank Kittredge, July 15, 1944.


60. Memorandum, Herbert Maier to Western Region Superintendents, December 9, 1942; letter, John White to B.M. Hobbick, October 22, 1943; memorandum, Daniel Tobin to Newton Drury, February 7, 1945; Annual Superintendent's Reports 1943-1945.

62. Reference to this memorandum is contained in a memorandum from Regional Director Owen Tomlinson to John White June 10, 1942.

63. Davidson, op. cit.

64. Letter, Howard Hays to Newton Drury, June 1, 1945.

65. Memoranda, Lawrence Cook to Newton Drury, January 19, 1944; Thomas Vint to Drury, September 4, 1944; John White to Drury containing a recapitulation of Olmsted's conclusions, November 3, 1944; Meinecke, op. cit.; Davidson, op. cit.; John White, "Arguments for and Against Removal of Giant Forest Lodge and Village to New Site," memorandum to the Director, September 16, 1944.


67. See both SEKI Archives and SEKI Central Files under Giant Forest Development for the years 1945 and 1946.

68. Memorandum, John White to Newton Drury, September 22, 1945; Eivind Scoyen to Lawrence Merriam, January 8, 1951.

69. Memorandum, John White to Owen Tomlinson, June 4, 1945.

70. Memorandum, Eivind Scoyen to Lawrence Merriam, January 8, 1951.


Notes to Chapter Seven


2. Francis Farquhar, "Kings Canyon National Park," unpublished manuscript in Bancroft Archives, University of California, Berkeley (ca. 1938), 9 pages.


8. Letter, Chester Warlow to John White, date unclear, 1931, SEKI Archives under "Kings Canyon."


13. George Gibbs, Preliminary Plan for Development of Kings River Canyon for Recreation, United States Forest Service (1933); George Gibbs, Reappraisal of the Development Plan for the Kings River Canyon, United States Forest Service (1934); letter, Regional Forester to George Gibbs, February 23, 1934, attached to 1933 Gibbs report.


15. Memorandum, Frank Kittredge to National Park Service Director Arno Cammerer, January 8, 1936; San Joaquin Council, California Chamber of Commerce, minutes of meeting on Sierra Way, March 13, 1936, Sequoia National Park Archives.


17. Ibid; also see S.B. Show, "Background and Events of Kings Canyon Controversy, Part 4 of an unpublished interview by Amelia R. Fry, Bancroft Archives, University of California, Berkeley (1963), pages 175-211.


20. Quoted in Mackintosh, page 82.

21. Memorandum, Harold Ickes to Arno Cammerer, Francis Farquhar Papers, Bancroft Archives, University of California, Berkeley. [September 20, 1935].

22. Frank Kittredge, "Kings Canyon National Park," unpublished memoir of the former Regional Director, National Park Service, Sequoia National Park Archives (1950), 20 pages; B.F. Manbey, seventeen unpublished memoranda to the Regional Director of the National Park Service reporting on meetings with San Joaquin Valley citizens and associations (1938).

23. Kittredge, op. cit.

24. Manbey, op. cit.


28. Kittredge, op. cit.; Show, op. cit.


31. Show, op. cit.


33. The entire amazing account of Elliott's misdeeds, Gearhart's response and the reaction of House members is available in Congressional Record, House, Vol. 84, 76th Congress, 1st Session (May 2, 1939).

34. Congressional Record, House, Vol. 84, Appendix to 76th Congress, 1st Session (August 4, 1939).

35. Ise, op. cit.; Kittredge, op. cit.

36. SEKI, Superintendent's Annual Report 1940.

37. Memorandum, Acting Director Arthur Demaray to Secretary Ickes, May 14, 1940.

38. Memorandum, C.M. Granger to Regional Forester Show, July 11, 1940.


40. Memorandum, Eivind Scoyen to the Regional Director, May 20, 1949.

41. See especially letters, Chester Warlow to Arthur Demaray, December 30, 1938 and May 24, 1940 and to George Mauger September 14, 1954.

42. See especially letters, William Colby to Newton Drury, September 5, 1946 and John White to Arno Cammerer, November 11, 1940.

43. Letter, John White to Guy Hopping, October 23, 1940.

44. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., "A Report on Kings Canyon Development Plans,"

45. Letter, Warlow to Demaray, December 30, 1938.

46. Ibid.

47. Letter, Arthur Demaray to Chester Warlow, January 20, 1939.


49. Letter, Chester Warlow to Arthur Demaray, June 10, 1940; Letter, Warlow to Eivind Scoyen, March 5, 1952.

50. Olmsted, op. cit.


53. Olmsted, op. cit.

54. Ibid; Memorandum, Superintendent Eivind Scoyen to Director Newton Drury, February 3, 1950.

55. Olmsted, op. cit.


57. Olmsted, op. cit.; Memorandum, Regional Director O.A. Tomlinson to Director Newton Drury, January 27, 1950.


59. Letter, Regional Director O.A. Tomlinson to Chester Warlow, August 1947.

Notes to Chapter Eight

1. SEKI, Annual Superintendent's Reports 1943-1945.


5. "Road Will Open New Scenic Area in Kings Canyon," The Fresno Bee (March 25,


8. Ibid., pages 237-38.


10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.


18. Letter, George Mauger to John White, January 5, 1945; Memorandum, John White to Newton Drury, January 8, 1945.

19. SEKI, "Master Plan Development Outline, Kings Canyon Area, South Fork Region" (May 1957) pages 10-12; NPS, *Master Plan for the Preservation and Use of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, California* (October 1961), Chapter 5, pages 4-7. Also for information on the concession contract agreement see memorandum, Chief of Concessions Management Donald Lee to Regional Director Merriam, November 12, 1953. All in SEKI Archives.

20. See especially memorandum, NPS Administrative Officer to Assistant Superintendent of SEKI, February 24, 1972 and also the large volume of correspondence between the NPS in both Washington and the regional office; George Mauger, B.F. Quinn, and Walter Lindborg of the concession company; and representatives of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company filed under Cedar Grove Development (1957-1972). All in SEKI Archives.


22. Memorandum, Acting Superintendent Carlson to Regional Director Merriam, March 3, 1952; memorandum, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power to the California State Board of Water and Power Commissioners, April 1952.


25. Ibid.


27. See the voluminous correspondence between George Mauger and NPS officials from SEKI, the regional office, and Washington during the period 1960-1963. SEKI Archives under Cedar Grove Development.


29. SEKI, "Master Plan Development Outline, Sequoia and Kings Canyon: Kings Canyon Area, South Fork Region" (May 1957).


31. Read especially correspondence under files for "Development" in the two parks to see the preponderance of attention given to reports accepted from landscape architects from 1925 to the 1950s. Also see reports of the park scientist and *Annual Superintendent's Reports* for the same period.

32. Memorandum, Director Demaray to Regional Director Merriam, June 22, 1951; memorandum, Superintendent Scoyen to Regional Director Tomlinson, August 18, 1948; memorandum, Merriam to Director Wirth, February 8, 1954; SEKI, *Annual Superintendent's Reports* 1948-1952.

33. See correspondence between George Mauger and Howard Hays on one side and SEKI and Western Region officials on the other from 1947 through 1952 filed under "Development—Giant Forest" and "Concession Relations in SEKI Archives.

34. Memorandum, Demaray to Merriam, June 22, 1951; memorandum, Merriam to Wirth, February 8, 1954; memorandum, Scoyen to Tomlinson, April 28, 1948; White predicted what the concessioner would do in a memorandum to Regional Director Tomlinson, June 4, 1945.


36. Letter, George Mauger to Assistant Superintendent Oscar Carlson, June 6, 1947, gives inventory of concession structures.


39. See especially letter, John Davis to George Mauger, February 5, 1964; letter, George Mauger to John Davis, January 23, 1965; and correspondence listed under "Roads and Trails" and "Development——Giant Forest" between Mauger and park officials.


41. Memoranda Eivind Scoyen to Regional Director Tomlinson, September 15, and September 25, 1950; letter, Howard Hays to Secretary Oscar Chapman, October 25, 1950; memorandum, Regional Forester Burnett Sanford to Superintendent Scoyen, October 9, 1950.


43. See general correspondence in file "Hazard Trees" for the period September through November 1950. SEKI Central Files.

44. Memorandum, Eivind Scoyen to Owen Tomlinson, September 25, 1950; memorandum, Scoyen to Lawrence Merriam, June 23, 1953; Mauger, op. cit.


46. Ibid.


50. Memorandum, John Davis to Regional Director Merriam, June 20, 1960.

51. SEKI, "Recommendations from the Giant Forest Development Meeting" (June 1960).

52. Memorandum, Conrad Wirth to Lawrence Merriam, August 16, 1960.


27 pages and many enclosures.


58. Memorandum, Acting Regional Director Mulvany to Superintendents, Western Region, October 23, 1968.

59. Without any explanation, all the correspondence and planning documents from 1965 on discuss a pillow limit of 1,200 or 1,240 while those of 1963 specifically maintain the original 1,000. There is no documentation extant concerning this important change.


64. Ibid.


66. Ibid.


68. Cain, et. al., op. cit., page 4.

69. Ibid., page 5.

70. Ibid., page 8.

71. Sumner, op. cit.; memorandum, Assistant Director to All Field Offices, October 14, 1965; memorandum, Director Hartzog to All Field Offices, September 22, 1967; letter, Secretary Udall to Leopold Committee Members, printed with the report in *Sierra Club Bulletin*, op. cit., page 3.


73. See correspondence and memoranda from the Research Biologist and from the chief ranger for the period 1965-1972 filed under "Wildlife," SEKI Archives plus the *Master Plan* op. cit.

75. SEKI, Wildlife Management Plan (March 1987), pages 24-25.

76. Ibid.; memorandum, Park Biologist Sumner to Superintendent Scoyen, August 12, 1955, on the deer reduction program of 1955 and summarizing actions up to that time.

77. See annual reports from the park biologist to the superintendent on the deer reduction program. SEKI Archives under "Wildlife."


81. See especially SEKI, Bear Management Plan (December 1987 revision), 34 pages.


83. Hartesveldt, op. cit.


85. SEKI Fire Management Plan.

86. Ibid.


90. Memorandum, Stanley Bechtel to chief ranger, May 2, 1952.


92. Ibid., page 32.

93. Memorandum, Lowell Sumner to NPS Regional Naturalist, April 1, 1953, SEKI Archives (also included at the back of the Back Country Use Report).
94. Letters, Superintendent Scoyen to B.F. Bole, October 18, 1951, April 25, 1952, June 1, 1953; Superintendent to Richard Leonard, Sierra Club, October 1, 1951; Mrs. Virginia Romaine to Superintendent Scoyen, October 5, 1951.


97. See the enormous amount of correspondence between these two associations and the parks between 1945 and the present housed in SEKI Archives under "Stock Use" and "Backcountry Management."

98. Memorandum, Assistant Director Thomas Allen to Superintendent Scoyen, November 7, 1953.


100. See correspondence between Hugh Traweek and his many supporters and the Park Service filed under "Traweek" in the SEKI Archives (dating from January 1, 1958, to September 14, 1961).


103. Ibid.


107. See Annual Backcountry Reports filed for the years 1960-1969 as well as correspondence filed under "Stock Use" for the same dates. All in SEKI Archives.


114. Ibid.

115. SEKI, "Wilderness Proposal for Sequoia and Kings Canyon" (November 1975). This proposal includes a two-page synopsis of the events and actions which occurred in the planning and public hearing procedures from the time of the original proposal of November 1966.

116. Ibid.

117. Ibid.


Notes to Chapter Nine


3. Ibid., page 28.


PUBLISHED WORKS dealing directly with the history of Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks are surprisingly few, a situation that inspired this book. Nevertheless, a number of useful volumes shed light on some portion of the history of the region. The following are volumes the authors found useful.

As a general history, Francis P. Farquhar's *History of the Sierra Nevada* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966) still stands alone. This wonderful book brings together, in a way never attempted elsewhere, the broad history of California's great mountain range. Students of the southern Sierran national parks should pay special attention to the chapters on the California Geological Survey, Kings Canyon, and Mt. Whitney. Farquhar's history drew heavily on more than forty years of research, much of which was published over many decades in the *Sierra Club Bulletin*. Any serious student of the Sierra history should consult these articles as well.

The only general history of Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks to appear previously is the slim volume by Douglas Hillman Strong, *Trees—or Timber? The Story of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks* (Three Rivers: Sequoia Natural History Association, 1968). Strong's main areas of research, which are summarized in much more detail in his unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, were the founding and early enlargement of Sequoia National Park. In these areas he is likely to remain the ultimate source. Strong made no attempt to explore the Kings Canyon National Park campaign in 1939-40 or later management of either park.

Tulare County and the Tulare Lake country have inspired many books, most of which are outside our focus. Standing alone in quality and significance, however, is William L. Preston, *Vanishing Landscapes, Land and Life in the Tulare Lake Basin* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1981). In *Vanishing Landscapes* Preston did for the southern San Joaquin Valley what this book hopes to accomplish for the southern Sierra.

The California Geological Survey is unique among the early western scientific endeavors in the amount and quality of the literature it generated. Two books authored by participants in the survey remain in print, and together they still present a concise and extremely readable summary of the survey's efforts and adventures. The two classics are William H. Brewer, *Up and Down California in 1860-1864*, first published in 1930, and Clarence King's *Mountaineering in the Sierra Nevada*, originally issued in 1872 by James R. Osgood and Company of Boston.

The logging of the Big Trees also generated a number of books, two of which stand out. Hank Johnston's *They Felled the Redwoods* (Los Angeles: Trans-Anglo Books, 1966) tells the story of the destruction of the sequoia forests surrounding General Grant Grove, while Floyd Otter's *The Men of Mammoth Forest* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Edwards Brothers, 1963) does equal justice to the Tule River country immediately south of the parks. Both are recommended. Another view of late-nineteenth-century Sierran logging...
can be found in William C. Tweed, *Kaweah Remembered, The Story of the Kaweah Colony and the Founding of Sequoia National Park* (Three Rivers: Sequoia Natural History Association, 1986).

The story of Mineral King Valley and its mining rush and later development battles has been explored in a number of publications. The best summary of the mining rush remains Samuel Thomas Porter's privately published *The Silver Rush at Mineral King, California, 1873-1882*, but unfortunately, this volume is now quite rare. A recent book that adds considerably to Porter and to the story of the area's middle years is Louise Jackson, *Beulah, A Biography of the Mineral King Valley of California* (Tucson: Westernlore Press, 1988). Henry McLaren Brown, *Mineral King Country, Visalia to Mount Whitney* (Fresno and Springville: Pioneer Publishing Company, 1988) consists largely of reprinted items from Mineral King's twentieth-century history. The most complete attempt to date to summarize the Mineral King ski development controversy can be found in John L. Harper, *Mineral King, Public Concern with Government Policy* (Arcata, California: Pacifica Publishing Company, 1982). Harper's account is quite useful, but it must be understood that he was a protagonist in the controversy and that his account is biased in favor of preservation.

John Muir has received more historical attention than any other comparable figure in American history. Many biographies exist including the recent and very useful *Rediscovering America, John Muir in His Time and Ours* by Frederick Turner (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1985). Another way to approach Muir is through his own writings, many of which remain surprisingly readable. Students of Sequoia and Kings Canyon should seek out Muir's *Our National Parks*, first published in 1901 (Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston) for an interesting account of his first visit to the Giant Forest, and Frederic Grunsky (editor), *South of Yosemite, Selected Writings by John Muir* (Garden City, New York. Natural History Press, 1968). Grunsky contains a good variety of Muir's otherwise scattered writings on the Sequoia-Kings region.

Yet another way to approach Muir is through the organization he founded, the Sierra Club. A good start is Michael P. Cohen, *The History of the Sierra Club, 1892-1970* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1988). The early recreational explorations of the Sierra Club are still best read in the early editions of the *Sierra Club Bulletin*. Few other organizational journals hold interest as effectively as these wonderfully written and illustrated volumes. Look especially for articles prior to 1915 by Bolton Coit Brown, Joseph N. LeConte, and Marion Randall Parsons. Also by LeConte is the very pleasant volume *A Summer of Travel in the High Sierra* (Ashland, Oregon: Lewis Osborne, 1972), which recounts LeConte's 1890 visit to Kings Canyon and Mount Whitney.

Only a very few items address directly National Park Service activities in the two parks. In this department Robert Shankland's *Steve Mather of the National Parks* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1954) still reads well. The important story of Colonel John R. White and Sequoia National Park is now available through the efforts of Rick Hydrick, "The Genesis of National Park Management: John Roberts White and Sequoia National Park, 1920-1947," in the April 1984 issue of the *Journal of Forest History*. Another journal article that still stands alone as the only exploration of its field is William C. Tweed, "Sequoia National Park Concessions: 1898-1926," in the spring 1972 issue of the *Pacific Historian*. Another first attempt at Park Service history is the same author's *Guide and History to the High Sierra Trail* (Three Rivers: Sequoia Natural History Association, 1982).

Finally, simply because they don't seem to fit anywhere else in this bibliographic essay, we must mention two efforts which address two of the region's most colorful and

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### Archival Resources

WORKING WITH THE ARCHIVES on these two parks is a daunting task, but rich information can be found by one who is willing to search. Three sources of material are available in government holdings. First, early records (up to 1936 and especially before 1915) are found in Washington, D.C., at the National Archives and Records Center. However, all correspondence between park superintendents and national officials prior to 1908 has been microfilmed from this source and is now available at the Ash Mountain Headquarters Library, Sequoia National Park.

In 1937 the National Park Service was reorganized with Sequoia and General Grant national parks henceforth reporting to a regional director in San Francisco instead of the director in Washington, D.C. The regional branch of the National Records Center at San Bruno, California, received the records and correspondence generated by the regional office and the parks since this change. However, former Sequoia archivist Betty Knight and the authors have recalled some thirty-one boxes of the most pertinent material and these are now also at Ash Mountain.

The third and most important holdings are those that have never left the Ash Mountain Headquarters. However, their distribution and organization demand explanation. The greatest repository is the museum-archives collection which contains, in addition to the recalled San Bruno Center boxes, all the annual and monthly superintendent's reports, and some twenty file drawers of other historical correspondence. Many old maps, reports, old subject files, and nearly 12,000 historic photos loom like a lost treasure in this basement collection. Upstairs are the "Central Files." These are the current working files for the parks, dating primarily from the 1970s and later, although much historical data can be found in the forty to forty-five file drawers.

Within the headquarters area are a number of other scattered nuggets in addition to these two huge collections. The resources management division contains nearly every report and study on the parks' resources ever compiled. The chief ranger's office contains assorted reports as well. The parks' maintenance office has many maps, plans, and reports on park roads and buildings, while the Sierra District ranger's office holds some thirty boxes and file drawers of studies and correspondence on the backcountry. Finally, the research scientist's office holds substantial research collections, principally on ecology and wildlife management issues. In addition to these archives, the Ash Mountain library contains pertinent rare and recent books and papers, a ten-drawer subject file, the aforementioned microfilm, and a microfiche collection of maps, plans, and studies done on the parks over the last forty years.

Despite the vastness and relative richness of these collections, there are other nongovernment data that a researcher should check. Principal among these are the Francis Farquhar Collection and the Sierra Club Archives, both housed at the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. The Sierra Club collection in particular is huge (thirty-six boxes on Sequoia and Kings Canyon alone) but is only partially described. Colonel John White's papers are currently housed at the University of Oregon.
Library in Eugene. Each of the above sources is a worthwhile addition to the hundreds of thousands of document pages located at Sequoia National Park.
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Regional Distribution of Native American Groups Circa 1700

WOBONUCH

WESTERN MONO

WAKSACHI

POTWISHA (also known as PATWISHA or BALWISHA)

OWENS VALLEY PAIUTE
Explorations of the California Geological Survey 1864

- Mt Goddard
- Mt Clarence King
- Grant Grove
- Giant Forest
- Mt Silliman
- Mt Brewer
- Mt Tyndall
- Mt Langley
- Mt Whitney
- Kings Canyon
- Kearsarge Pass
- Independence
- Tehipite Valley
- Route of Main Party

King's first attempt to climb Mt Whitney
King's second attempt to climb Mt Whitney
Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks after Act of March 4, 1940 and Presidential Proclamation of June 21, 1940
Giant Forest/Lodgepole Development Concept Plan
Approved 1980

- **Clover Creek**
  - Construct new Lodging Facilities

- **Lodgepole**
  - Retain Camping and Improve Visitor Services and Employee Housing

- **Red Fir**
  - Construct new Maintenance Facility

- **Wolverton Ski Area**
  - Retain

- **Wolverton Corrals**
  - Replace with Transportation Staging Area

- **Pinewood**
  - Remove

- **Camp Kaweah**
  - Remove

- **Giant Forest Lodge**
  - Remove

- **Giant Forest Village**
  - Remove

- **General Sherman Tree**

- **Moro Rock**

- **Limit of Giant Forest Sequoia Grove**

- **Crescent Meadow**

- **0 Mile**
National Park Land Acquisition in the Grant Grove Area 1890-1984

- General Grant National Park: October 1, 1890
- General Grant Tree
- Grant Grove Village
- Act of March 4, 1940
- Act of August 14, 1958
- Presidential Proclamation of June 21, 1940
- Act of September 28, 1984
Challenge of the Big Trees

Chapter One:
The Natural World of the Southern Sierra
(continued)

Geological Background

Why the structure of the Sierra varies so distinctly at its southern end is not entirely obvious. A study of the surface rocks alone certainly does not disclose a clear answer. In most of the southern Sierra the bedrock is granitic—hard, crystalline rock that cooled slowly from a molten state while still deep within the earth. Revealed by erosion these rocks usually appear as speckled ("salt and pepper"), massive, light-colored granites, which when closely inspected consist entirely of small, hard crystals. Other types of rock sometimes appear with the granites. Most often these are brown or reddish with strong visible layering, and usually the layers are severely deformed. These layered rocks are customarily older than the granites and are more common in the foothills than the high country. Occasionally in the south, and more frequently to the north, a third type of rock appears, surface volcanics in the form of weathered lava flows and cinder cones.

After a century of study, the origins of these three rock types can now be explained. At the end of the Paleozoic geological era, about 225 million years ago, the region that would become today's Sierra Nevada was near the oceanic edge of North America. According to plate tectonic theory, two large moving plates collided at this continent-ocean edge. One plate, of relatively heavy rock, formed the floor of a large oceanic basin; the other, lighter, plate was mostly the North American continent. The two plates were being slowly forced against each other with the result that the heavier, oceanic plate dove beneath the lighter, continental plate. Geologists say it was "subducted." Minerals trapped in the intense heat and pressure of the collision (subduction) zone eventually melted and began moving upward through the earth's crust.

As the large bubbles of molten minerals moved upward, several events occurred. First the molten rocks began to deform the oceanic sediments above them. Some sediments hardened and recrystallized; others probably were completely melted and became part of the magma pool. Eventually some portions of the magma reached the surface and vented as volcanos, forming an island chain similar to modern Japan. From these eruptions extensive beds of marine and terrestrial volcanic sediments accumulated, each subject to deformation by the next eruption. Some of these eruptions were extremely violent and entire mountains exploded and disappeared, leaving behind empty craters, or calderas, which filled with sediments from yet other eruptions. Much of the magma did not reach the surface, however, and began slowly to cool beneath the surface of the earth. This process continued for tens of millions of years until ultimately an enormous mass of cooled igneous material was trapped near the coastal edge of the continental plate. Eventually the zone of magma intrusion and formation moved off to the east, apparently because the angle of collision between the two large plates shifted.
By roughly eighty million years ago, both major rock types that now form the southern Sierra had been formed and positioned. On the surface, weathering away, could be found an extensive, severely distorted mass of volcanic and marine sediments. Generally beneath these rocks, but sometimes nearly surrounding them, were even larger amounts of now-cooled magma. Today geologists call the distorted sediments "metamorphic," or "changed" rocks, while the cooled magmas are grouped together as "igneous" ("fire-caused") rocks. The cooled, igneous magmas of the Sierra are what we now see on the surface and call granites.

The mechanism that caused the Sierra to rise to its current height is less well understood than the forces that created the range's rock types. It is known, however, that about twenty-five million years ago the tectonic plate collision ended that had been going on for so long along the western edge of North America. In its place new forces were exerted. Instead of collision, the dominant mode became continental stretching and uplift. The brittle continental plate began to fracture and volcanics again came to the
surface through these cracks. The northern Sierra was buried beneath flows and even the southern portion of the range saw scattered eruptions. Then, for reasons that are highly debatable, the gigantic block of cooled magma began to rise up out of the continental plate. One contemporary explanation for this phenomenon is that the relatively light granites had been "frozen" into the continental plate at the time of their formation, and they had thus long been held in place, as a block of ice might hold a cork embedded within it as long as the ice was solid and intact. When tectonic stretching "broke the ice," so to speak, the granite was freed and began to float upward.

For the past ten million years the granite block we call the Sierra has been rising rapidly, at least in the geologic sense. Most of the uplift has occurred on the eastern edge of the block, explaining the strongly asymmetrical shape of the range. Nowhere is the power of this process more apparent than in the Owens Valley along the eastern edge of the Sierra in the Kings and Kern rivers regions. Here the obvious displacement along the fault is more than two vertical miles. And the uplift almost certainly is not over. Every several hundred years the Sierra jumps farther into the sky in a violent earthquake that shakes most of California. The last one occurred in 1872, when the vertical difference between the summit of Mt. Whitney and the floor of Owens Valley immediately below the peak to the east, increased by more than twelve feet.
Before We Came

At the end of the sixteenth century, before a single European had entered the great valley that is the true heart of California, before anyone but Native Americans had seen the mountains we call the Sierra Nevada, the world that now contains Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks at its center was an unseamed, unitary whole.

From the human point of view, and humans were already very much a part of the landscape, the heart of the region was the tule swamp later known as Tulare Lake and the oak forests that insulated the rivers from the surrounding dry grassland. The lake itself, if seen from the air, was a giant oval of concentric rings. The innermost ring, miles across, was open water, too deep for tules or other reeds, but green with other kinds of floating life made possible by the warm water of summer. Closer to the lakeshore were miles of the thick tules that would ultimately share their Spanish name with the lake itself. Six to ten feet tall, grey-green and tubular, the tules were a world unto themselves, endless and regular.

On the eastern side of the lake, opposite the dry rolling hills of the coastal mountains, the marshlands fringed into the oak forest. If still on wing an observer would look down into an inconsistent and confusing forest of dark, drooping, rounded oaks and slightly higher and drier islands of grass. Scattered along the meandering streams, the bright green marshes added another hue. The forest belt of the Kaweah River averaged perhaps fifteen miles in width. To the north and south brown, open grassland stretched toward seeming infinity; herds of pronghorn and tule elk lived in the brown openness. To the east, distantly visible above the oak forest, rose a miles-high blue and grey mountain wall—the Sierra Nevada.
No clear and abrupt color line separated the foot of the Sierra from the valley. The first foothills did arise abruptly from the surrounding prairie, but they shared the same colors and textures as the lowlands they bordered. A little higher up, more commonly on the slightly less severe northern slopes of the lowest hills, the first of the dryland oaks appeared—well-spaced compact trees making no pretense at being a forest. Above, on the looming mountain face, darker and denser forests began to come into view. These were the forests that gave the mountain its dark blue cast on clear days from the distant lake. First there were oak forests of increasing density, then steep, thick mountainsides of intertwined brush, and finally the great conifer forest itself.

The forest of tall, densely packed angular trees rose steadily, rank upon row, up the steep flanks of the Sierra—broken only occasionally by a small, wet meadow or a gleaming, gray-granite dome or ledge. Above the forest, visible from a hundred miles away, the granite asserted itself at last as the dominant and crowning feature of the range—clean and spare, angular and symmetrical. Bare rock in summer; shining ice in winter and spring. And above the rock, on hot summer afternoons, would grow towering blue-white thunderstorms, rising another four or six miles into the sky.

All this was visible to any creature who chose to look. And looking at this land already, and changing it, were thousands of people. It is time to remember them.
Chapter Two:  
The Native Americans and the Land  
(continued)

Native Americans of the Southern Sierra

At the beginning of the nineteenth century two distinct groups of people occupied the southern Sierra Nevada. In the higher mountains, and also down into the western foothills, lived hunters and gatherers remembered today as the Monache or Western Mono. West of the Monache in the lowest foothills and also across the expanses of the Great Central Valley were a second group, the Yokuts. The Monache and Yokuts were separated by language and history. The Yokuts spoke a Penutian language, which related them to many other loosely organized tribes of interior California, while the Monache language makes it clear that their ancestors were relatives of the Shoshone or Paiutes who still occupy the Great Basin east of the Sierra.
The Monache apparently were fairly recent arrivals on the western side of the Sierra. Their language still strongly resembled that of the Owens Valley Paiute immediately east of the Sierra. Certainly, if the two groups had been separated for a long time, their two languages would have begun to diverge.

The Owens Valley Paiute, or Eastern Mono, were a well-established desert culture relying for their survival upon a variety of resources. Their main villages occupied sites near streams in the dry desert valleys east of the Sierra, where they lived largely on a diet of gathered seeds, fish, and game. Nuts from the pinyon pines that grew extensively in the desert mountains east of the Owens Valley and the eastern foothills of the Sierra were an important food staple. Rich in fats and calories, the nuts are one of the few foods of the early Native Americans of California still to be consumed in any volume today. [3]

The pursuit of pine nuts and game, as well as the summer climate of the desert valleys where they made their homes, often sent the Eastern Mono into the high mountains. The
Sierra, with its pinyon-forested eastern foothills and herds of deer and bighorn sheep, certainly attracted these people. The Eastern Mono had other reasons to ascend into the high Sierra, and perhaps even cross the range, for west of the high peaks were other peoples with goods to trade. A surprising amount of Native American commerce seems to have occurred across the high ridges of the southern Sierra. From the east, the Owens Valley Paiute brought salt, pine nuts, mineral paints, obsidian, and many other critical items not obtainable west of the mountains. Traded eastward across the mountain were other unique commodities, including fresh and saltwater shells, acorns, manzanita berries, and bear skins. This trade benefited both groups and increased their contact with each other. Modern archaeological work confirms the pattern. Most westside arrow points, for example, were fashioned of obsidian that came from the east slope or desert, while desert camps, when excavated today, almost always include fragments of jewelry made from seashells.

Eventually, for reasons that today can only be surmised, some Eastern Mono people began to winter west of the Sierran Crest. In some ways the change was not a big one, for the Mono pattern had long been to winter in the lowlands and range higher during the warm summer months. Perhaps they were invited west; perhaps the west slope enticed them with its wetter but less severe winter climate; perhaps a portion of the tribe found itself cut off from the desert by an early winter and sought refuge. We shall probably never know. The date, too, of this change is not completely clear, but appears to have been about 500 or 600 years ago. Interestingly the apparent division of the Mono into western and eastern bands came at about the same time as the onset of the Little Ice Age, with its increased snowfall and resumption of southern Sierran glaciation. Changes in Native American cultures also occurred at this time, not only in the Sequoia-Kings region but also throughout the central and southern Sierra.

Whatever their initial reasons for developing winter settlements west of the Sierra Crest, the Monache successfully adapted to the available resources of their new home. Their pattern of establishing permanent villages at relatively low altitudes and then ranging much higher during the summer months fit easily to the west slope. The intense cold and heavy snow found above 5,000 feet on the west slope required that the permanent villages of the Western Mono be located in the foothill region. Central Valley village sites were already occupied by the much more numerous Yokuts, a group perhaps ten times the size of the Mono, and far too large to displace from their main residences; thus the Western Mono established over time a line of winter village sites in the middle foothills of the west slope. Several of these village sites, including Hospital Rock and Potwisha along the Middle Fork of the Kaweah River, are now within Sequoia National Park. Other Western Mono groups located permanent villages on foothill lands along the North Fork of the Kaweah and in the lower Kings River watershed.

The Western Mono did not displace the Yokuts from their main homelands along the lower stretches of the Kaweah and Kings rivers and around Tulare Lake. But they probably did displace them from the foothill areas they previously had occupied. Certainly, as we have noted, these areas had already witnessed human activity before the arrival of the Monache. The oldest and deepest archaeological sites on the western slope generally show a significant cultural change around the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries. Many aspects of physical culture altered, and the brownware pottery of the desert Paiutes began to show up where none previously had been seen.
Native American Impacts on the Land

Modern Americans tend to believe that the Native Americans who first inhabited this continent lived in almost perfect harmony with the environment. There is some truth to this assertion, and a great deal of dangerous misinformation. A fundamental beginning for understanding the relationship between precontact Native Americans and the natural environment is to understand that they would never have asked the question. Before the arrival of European man in California, the people who lived here saw themselves as inseparable from the natural world of plants and animals. The Western Mono lived in a unified world of predator and prey, of spirits and totemic clan groups. Their mythology related them to their fellow creatures and to the landscape. But this does not mean that they had no impact upon their world, for they certainly did.

Perhaps the most difficult historical question modern wilderness managers face in California and the Sierra is defining how preindustrial human beings affected the ecosystems we are now seeking to preserve. Were early human actions so insignificant that they really are of no modern consequence? Or were they critical to the development and maintenance of the landscape that we now call "natural" and that we so deeply appreciate? The final detailed answers to these problems are still deeply hidden, but a preliminary picture is emerging, and that picture suggests that Native Americans were, in many ways, a major factor in development of the California landscape.

Many Native American impacts on the landscape were localized. Hale Tharp, apparently the first white man to visit the Monache village at Hospital Rock, reported in 1858 that he found several hundred Indians living at the site, that the camp was occupied all year, and that the campfires were never allowed to go out. [8] Perhaps not all the people Tharp met that day actually lived at Hospital Rock, but nonetheless even a well-run collection of camps with this many people would have had significant local impacts. To support several hundred people through hunting and gathering involves a great deal of resource manipulation, and keeping camp fires burning 365 days a year would definitely affect local vegetation. Without doubt, a camp like Hospital Rock, which according to the archaeologists had been occupied for at least 500 years prior to Tharp's arrival, had changed the appearance and biology of considerable surrounding acreage. Quantifying this change, unfortunately, is as yet impossible. We simply don't know enough about what the Indians were taking from the environment, how they were taking it, or even exactly what the environment was at the time.

Native American impacts were not always local, however, for at least one of their cultural habits affected the entire landscape. Throughout North America, anthropological research makes it clear that Native Americans used a great deal of fire
to modify the landscape. Fires were kindled for various reasons, including improvement of forage for game animals, encouragement of valuable plants, game herding, and visibility improvement. From all we can tell, the Western Mono, the Yokuts, the Tubatulabal, and the Eastern Mono all set fires at various times for various purposes, and likely a substantial number of fires. Understanding the impacts of these fires is difficult. Fires change both the density and composition of vegetation. Frequent fires, from any cause, can completely change ecosystems. We know that Native Americans frequently lit fires. [9] We do not know, however, how many fires burned, or what percentage of those fires were kindled by Native Americans rather than by natural causes. Thus we cannot, as did the early European pioneers, separate the land from its Native American inhabitants.

In the middle nineteenth century, when Europeans first studied the resources and landscape of the southern Sierra Nevada, they profoundly misperceived what they saw. Because they refused to take seriously the technologically simple people they found living there, they completely missed how significantly the Native Americans had changed the landscape and its natural systems. Because the early Europeans missed these crucial relationships, they convinced themselves that they were looking at a virgin, primeval landscape, the work of God. The rapid disappearance of the Indians in the 1860s, which we will detail in the next chapter, only served to reinforce this perception.

Ultimately, this mistaken idea of a primeval landscape would be taken up not only by pioneers, but also by politicians and conservationists and would in time become a subtly flawed foundation block in the formation of Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks.
Not until 1827 did the Sierra first succumb to a crossing by the new people, and then it was not the Spaniards who finally accomplished the feat, but a new breed of naturalized Europeans emanating from the upstart republic of the United States of America. These men were motivated not by the large goals of empire or salvation, as the Spaniards had been, but by an ambition for personal advantage, and a rather considerable dose of sheer curiosity. During the 1820s the rapid harvesting of the beaver of the Rocky Mountains had sent adventuresome trappers farther and farther afield in search of un-trapped beaver habitat. It was only a matter of time before the trappers of the Rockies found their way into contact with the Mexican settlements of Upper California. (Mexico had separated from Spain in 1821 and taken California with it.) Already contact between the two cultures had been made in New Mexico. Nevertheless, California authorities were not pleased when trapper Jedediah Smith succeeded in crossing the Great Basin and finding his way to Mission San Gabriel in late 1826. Mexican Governor Echeandia ordered Smith out of California, but during the winter and spring of 1827 Smith instead wandered north through the San Joaquin Valley, trapping the numerous beaver of the valley's rivers and noting the lay of the country. His first attempt to cross the Sierra took him up the Kings River, where the extremely rugged terrain and the earliness of the season stopped him cold. Finally, in May, on his second try, Smith succeeded in crossing the mountains in the vicinity of the Stanislaus River, east of modern Stockton. Smith returned to trap in the San Joaquin in 1828, and in 1829 and 1830 employees of the Hudson's Bay Company trapped the same areas. As knowledge of California spread, the number of trappers increased.

In 1832-33 a party that included Ewing Young and J. J. Warner trapped the Kings River "some distance into the mountains." During 1833 and 1834, a party led by Joseph Reddeford Walker crossed the Sierra from the east in the Yosemite country, and proceeded south along the western foothills of the Sierra. Finally, taking the advice of local Indians, they departed through the Kern River route still known as Walker Pass. Once across the Sierra a second time, Walker turned north and explored the Owens Valley country, taking a hard look at the severe eastern face of the Sierra. Finally he connected with his route of the previous year and turned east.

It did not take long to exhaust the beaver populations of the Sierra foothills. Unlike the Rockies, the Sierra had beaver only at the lowest altitudes. California beaver depended mostly upon cottonwood trees for their sustenance, and since significant cottonwood groves were limited to foothill and valley riverbanks, the fur trappers had little cause to explore the high country in any detail. But in late 1844, Second Lieutenant John C.
Fremont of the U. S. Topographical Engineers, illegally exploring the fringes of Mexican California for the U. S. Army on the eve of the Mexican War, made a serious attempt to cross the high country of the southern Sierra. It was late December, and Fremont's goal was to rendezvous with the remainder of his party on the east side of the mountains. He left Sutter's Fort (modern Sacramento) on December 14 and ascended the Kings River, following the north bank. As the canyon narrowed, Fremont climbed out of the canyon and followed the ridges to the northeast. Finally, having climbed all the way to timberline, he found himself not on the crest of the Sierra but somewhere on the divide between the North Fork of the Kings and the South Fork of the San Joaquin River. To the east rose masses of 13,000-foot peaks. That night a snowstorm began, and by morning the explorer abandoned all further thought of crossing the Sierra. Only with difficulty did Fremont and his party succeed in regaining the floor of the San Joaquin Valley. Had they been another day or two's travel into the mountains, they might not have escaped at all.

Smith, Walker, Fremont and their contemporaries established the basic truths about the southern Sierra. Along the western slope deep, rugged canyons made travel very difficult. To the east, the high peaks of the crest stood as a barrier visible for a hundred miles. Between was a barren difficult land of high peaks and nearly impassible gorges. If one wanted to get to the other side of the southern Sierra, it was best to go around.
The Impacts of Exploitation

As the eighties ended, so did the first generation of Sierran use by Caucasian man. With only a few exceptions, the generation that replaced the Native Americans sought opportunities to use the resources they found. At first the number of people involved was tiny, and the resources of the Sierra seemed limitless. How could so few ever affect so large and richly endowed a place? Yet, after three decades, the pioneers had influenced the mountains and valley far more than most of them realized. They had destroyed the lifestyle and culture of the Native Americans, and thus ended the impacts of their activities, including their forms of hunting and vegetation burning. On the valley floor, the spread of farming had disrupted native vegetation and wildlife, and begun destruction of the riparian oak forests. So much water was being diverted for irrigation that before the century ended, Tulare Lake would go dry for the first time. In the foothills three decades of heavy grazing, with periodic droughts, had led to the destruction of the perennial native grasses and their replacement with less nutritious Eurasian annuals. Heavy grazing also had badly damaged many middle-altitude meadows and the high country. Much of the high Sierra had been so ravaged by domestic sheep use that it had been almost completely denuded. Along the lower edge of the forest belt, three decades of logging had begun to create significant gaps in the once-continuous forest, and much bigger lumber enterprises seemed imminent. Only a tiny fraction of the total forest had yet been affected, but in limited areas with good access to the valley, mainly around Grant Grove and on the North Fork of the Tule, the damage was locally appalling.

In short, everywhere one looked there was resource consumption and environmental change. In thirty years the pioneers, with their widely shared ethic of unlimited resource use, had changed the mountains forever. Against these trends had been raised only a few voices, and until the mid-eighties those voices had been easily ignored by a culture that saw itself as building a new civilization. But inevitably, as population and resource use continued to grow, the free, largely individualistic consumption patterns began to run into limits. The pioneer world was becoming increasingly complicated, and the perception of unlimited resources was beginning to unravel.
At times all it takes to focus attitudes such as these is an individual with sufficient vision and drive to turn a concern into a movement. Fortunately for the ecosystems of the southern Sierra one of those individuals appeared in Tulare County in the late 1870s. George W. Stewart came from a new generation of westerners. Born in Placerville, California, in the waning years of the gold rush, Stewart saw the California landscape in ways far different than did the emigrants of his father's generation. In 1872, only fifteen years old, Stewart moved to Tulare County, where he soon found a vocation that would occupy much of his life—journalism. It was in 1876 that Stewart began writing for the Visalia Delta, one of two newspapers in the growing town. Two years later, Stewart, only twenty-one years old, first addressed the destruction in the mountains east of Visalia. In a Delta editorial, he called for a state law to prohibit the cutting of giant sequoias.

In the early 1880s, Stewart was not entirely alone in his interest in protecting the mountain country. The U.S. Surveyor General for California had withdrawn from sale four sections of land surrounding the General Grant Tree in 1880, an action supported by the valley residents of Tulare County. And the Mt. Whitney Military Reservation had been created in 1883, after the meeting of the Langley expedition and the Wallace-Wales-Wright groups in 1881. Upon their return, the Wallace party also began actively to advocate a Sierran alpine national park which would focus, as had their journey, on the Mt. Whitney region. In this proposal they received considerable support from several members of Langley's scientific group.

Stewart championed a similar idea. Seeking support for his 1880 candidacy for the U.S. Senate, General John F. Miller had come to Visalia to talk with the editors of the Delta. During Miller's visit, Stewart filled his ear with local concerns about the mountains. After his election to the Senate by the California Legislature, Miller introduced Senate bill 463, "a bill to provide for setting apart a certain tract of land in the State of California as a public park." Miller's proposal, which did not receive serious attention from his colleagues, sought to protect an extensive tract of land including most of what is now Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks. Its significance lay not in its fate, for it was premature in many ways, but in its expression of what Stewart and his friends had in mind nearly a decade before any Sierran national park came into being. Within a few short years Stewart had moved from trying to protect certain species of
Sierran trees through state law to attempting protection of the entire southern Sierra through federal action.

In their proposals for a federally-established public park in the Tulare County mountains, Stewart and William Wallace drew upon several existing western precedents. In 1864, recognizing that it was in the public interest to preserve the Yosemite Valley and the nearby Mariposa Grove of the Big Trees, the U.S. Congress withdrew the two tracts from the public domain and transferred them to the state of California to be managed for the public good. After an idealistic start, however, California's administration of the Yosemite reservations eventually proved subject to political intrusions of all sorts. The state granted numerous uncontrolled concessions, and its administration of the reservations could only be described as haphazard. In 1872 a similar situation arose in the northern Rocky Mountains, with a proposal to preserve in public ownership the thermal areas near the head of the Yellowstone River. This time, however, there was no state government to put in charge of the lands. Hence, Congress responded by creating a "national" park. Again, like Yosemite, the early administration of Yellowstone was replete with difficulties, many of which negatively affected the landscape and its natural residents. Nevertheless, as a national park, Yellowstone represented an alternative to the Yosemite model, and after 1883, when the frustrated Interior Department finally turned protection of Yellowstone over to the U.S. Army, the model began to look increasingly attractive. The lands and resources that Stewart and his contemporaries hoped to protect were under federal control, and thus could be protected only by federal action. Nowhere in his public papers did Stewart discuss his perceptions about the successes and failures of the state's Yosemite reservations, but from the beginning he advocated not the Yosemite but the Yellowstone model for the southern Sierra.

It was into this milieu that the Kaweah colonists stumbled in late 1885, when they filed their Timber and Stone Act claims for the Giant Forest area. Suspicions about the colonists being dummy "entrymen" led the Delta to request that the General Land Office (GLO) look closely at the situation. As a result GLO Inspector G. C. Wharton reviewed the status of claims in eighteen townships in the southern Sierra. In many of these he saw evidence of possible fraud, and he recommended that nine full townships, including all the Colony's claims, be withdrawn from the market until the situation could be clarified. GLO Commissioner W. A. J. Sparks, a self-appointed critic of the entire Timber and Stone procedure, suspended all eighteen townships. In 1887, Sparks was forced out of office, but his replacement, S. N. Stockslager, continued the Sierran withdrawals Sparks had initiated.

When Republican Benjamin Harrison defeated incumbent President Grover Cleveland in November 1888, a more traditional attitude returned to the U.S. Department of the Interior. The new Interior Secretary, John Noble, made it clear that he disagreed with the policies of his predecessors and that he would work to return as much withdrawn land as possible to the market. In response, Stewart and the Delta initiated a campaign for permanent withdrawal of the townships in question. Stewart's plan called for the federal government to retain title to these tracts, a policy he hoped would protect Tulare County's forests and the interest of valley farmers. The effort began in earnest in January 1889, when California, taking advantage of the school section statute, claimed a portion of the Grant Grove. Since the claim fell with the four withdrawn sections, the GLO rejected it. In April, sensing that the national political change might be to their advantage, several private parties also filed claims in the area. On April 25 Stewart editorialized that the land was already "regarded as a public park" and that it needed to be permanently designated as such. Stewart also organized a flurry of letters to the GLO reminding the agency of the importance of the four sections to local residents. The GLO
responded that at best its actions were only temporary and that it was up to Congress to provide permanent protection for the area. [7]

During the summer and fall of 1889, Stewart pursued his goal of protecting large portions of the local mountains. Using the Delta, he kept the issue before the public and worked to create a consensus. Several local farmer's organizations offered public support, and in October a meeting with interested individuals from adjacent Kern and Fresno counties went well. Park backers developed a petition and collected signatures. Over the winter, however, the petition disappeared. Supposedly it had been forwarded to Washington, D.C., but even the governor of California could not discover its whereabouts. By June, Stewart was a little discouraged. Speaking of the sequoias he so loved he wrote:

Nearly all have already passed into private ownership. Certain tracts, like the Giant Forest, that were once on the market and filed on by applicants in good faith, should be restored to the market. This would be nothing more
than justice under the circumstances; but every acre of unsurveyed timber lands in the Sierra Nevada should be reserved immediately and for all time.
Chapter Four:
Parks and Forests: Protection Begins
(1885-1916)
(continued)

Three Formative Decades

Creation of the National Park Service marked the final step in federal assumption of control of the Sierra Nevada. When George Stewart and his allies first turned to the federal government for help in limiting local abuse of the Tulare County Sierra in 1890, they initiated a course that ultimately took control of the land away from Tulare County altogether. Sequoia and General Grant national parks and the Sierra Forest Reserve had all been created in response to regional demand for better protection of mountain resources. No one intended initially that the two types of federal reservations would go forward forever in different directions, but ultimately they did; and no one intended that the reservations would cease to respond to local needs, but ultimately they all did. Just as surely as creation of the Forest Service reduced the locals to permittees on the national forest, creation of the National Park Service would move control of the two parks from local residents, subject to Washington's direction but still in close touch with the community, to a new and professional bureaucracy. Initially created by the residents of Tulare County largely for their own ends, Sequoia and General Grant national parks and the Sequoia National Forest were, by the end of 1916, truly national reservations, supported and controlled by the federal government.

In the thirty years between 1886, when the Kaweah Colony began constructing the Colony Mill Road, and 1916, when the National Park Service, assumed legal responsibility for Sequoia and General Grant national parks, the land-based resources of the southern Sierra underwent significant changes, mostly for the better. In the 1890s, just as local populations technology, and transportation reached the critical mass necessary to truly devastate the natural resources of the region, an effort began to slow and limit that destruction. As a result, the same decade that witnessed the destruction of Converse Basin, the largest natural Big Tree grove, also saw creation of two national parks to preserve giant sequoias and the withdrawal of all remaining Sierran forest lands from sale.

Beginning in the two parks, and, after 1905 in the forest reserves, effective protection and land management ended the era of unlimited resource consumption. In Sequoia and General Grant national parks the primary goals of this effort were to prevent large-scale grazing and hunting, and to control fire. Unregulated grazing in the parks took a decade to stamp out, but it was gone, except from some small inholdings by the turn of the century. Nevertheless, residual scars marked the slopes and valleys. In the foothills heavy grazing had destroyed native grasses, which had been replaced by annuals of Eurasian origins. In the high country near timberline, much of the vegetation was gone, leaving behind a landscape far more barren and severe than had existed before the late
nineteenth century. Localized grazing remained a problem, mostly in middle-altitude forest meadows that either remained in private hands or were adjacent to the growing tourist camps. Hunting had turned out to be relatively easy to control. Fires also were not a problem in those early years for, although it would not be understood for another fifty years, the unlimited burning of the late nineteenth century had so thinned the Sierra's forests that it would be several decades before the fire hazard rose again. Early national park management affected wildlife, too. Although the prohibition against hunting gave many animals protection not found outside the parks, management also felt free to "improve" wildlife situations. Predators were often shot on sight, and trout were introduced into many previously barren streams. Early in the century, a well-intentioned if misguided attempt at wildlife preservation had even witnessed introduction into Sequoia Park of some of the last tule elk from the San Joaquin Valley, an attempt that was defeated by the inability of the prairie animals to adapt to life in the mountains.

Because the goals of Sequoia and Sierra national forests diverged from those of Sequoia and General Grant national parks, different protection measures were undertaken in the forests. The Forest Service, for example, controlled, but by no means eliminated grazing. In 1917, in the Great Western Divide country, the Forest Service administered more than a dozen grazing allotments including several designed for sheep. According to Forest Service policy, other consumptive activities, including logging, were appropriate forest uses, but in reality, resource demand was not yet sufficient to justify much activity in these areas. The Forest Service suppressed fires aggressively and with increasing efficiency, and hunting and fishing regulation began in cooperation with the state of California.

In 1916, despite their widely divergent management policies, the national parks and national forests of the southern Sierra had not yet diverged significantly. In most places the only real change along their shared physical boundaries was the transition from no grazing to regulated grazing or the shift from no hunting to low-intensity recreational hunting. In 1916 the parks were better protected than the surrounding national forest lands, but both types of lands were far better treated than they had been in the late nineteenth century. Rational management by outside federal agents had come to the Sierra.
One of the first problems Mather and his staff tackled in Sequoia and General Grant was acquiring privately held lands within the two parks. From the earliest days of the military administration, superintendents and civilian officials had pleaded with Congress to appropriate money for purchase of these lands which included many of the finest meadow tracts in the sequoia belt. Indeed, the options Captain Young had obtained in 1903 on all 3,877 acres held in the parks were for a paltry $73,000 or $19.00 an acre. However, not until 1916 did Congress finally appropriate $50,000 to buy just 670 acres in Giant Forest owned by two Tulare County ranchers. Unfortunately, this appropriation still fell well short of the ranchers' $70,000 asking price. Here Mather's great personal skill and persuasive ability combined to carry the day. The director appealed to friend Gilbert Grosvenor and his National Geographic Society for the remainder and was rewarded with a well-publicized $20,000 donation in November 1916. Once the purchase of this important tract of Giant Forest was complete, the first for any national park using a congressional allocation, Mather turned his attention and his own personal fortune to other plots. From 1919 to 1927, the Park Service acquired another 2,166 acres, relying heavily on contributions from the National Geographic Society, the Tulare County Board of Trade, wealthy industrialists like George Eastman, and Mather himself who spent more than $55,000.

In addition to buying and donating lands within the parks, Mather was instrumental in obtaining title to Redwood, Wet, and Funston meadows outside Sequoia, but within the area to be included in a hoped-for park expansion. The Sierra Club and its directors held title to the land until 1926 when Sequoia was enlarged to include the area surrounding these choice meadows and sequoia groves. During this period the National Geographic Society and the Save-the-Redwoods League provided the beneficial publicity that encouraged landowners to maintain or even depress their prices until Mather, his friends, and the government could gather the funds. During the decade, Giant Forest was entirely freed of private lands and many other popular visitor areas also came into the fold. Southern California Edison donated outright its large holding at Wolverton Meadow, which it had absorbed along with the remainder of the Mt. Whitney Power Company assets. The only piece of highly desirable private land that the government failed to get was a 160-acre plot in General Grant which was developed for summer cabins beginning in 1919. That private enclave still exists today as Wilsonia Village in Grant Grove near the park's visitor complex. [6]
As Stephen Mather and his wealthy associates endeavored to eliminate private holdings from the two parks, a much larger and more important battle swirled around the floors of Congress and the meeting rooms of local businessmen and preservationists. Since the establishment of the parks in 1890, successive superintendents and secretaries of the Interior Department, prodded by preservationists, had campaigned for enlargement of Sequoia to include the majestic high country to the east. Indeed, for years it was confidently expected that the new additions would be forthcoming momentarily. However, park proponents underestimated the variety and numbers of anti-park forces. Local farmers, cattlemen, timber interests, and even recreation advocates were leery of Park Service control and the restrictions that would inevitably be placed on commercial and personal activities. The Forest Service, on the other hand, imposed few limitations on mining, lumbering, summer cabins, or even reclamation projects. It was the preferred agency among those who stood to benefit from the tangible resources of the region, or to lose upon their withdrawal for preservation. Not incidentally, Forest Service men lost no opportunity to foster this attitude and cling to their territory against what they perceived as aggressive land-grabbing by the new Park Service.
The principal problem in the initial proposals by Mather and other park backers was the magnitude of their suggested enlargement. Sequoia National Park contained 252 square miles of woodland, meadows, and chaparral. Under the proposals offered from 1916 to 1919, a new Roosevelt-Sequoia National Park would contain more than five times that much land encompassing the Kern drainage south to Coyote and Kern peaks, the South and Middle forks of the Kings River westward nearly to General Grant, and part of the San Joaquin drainage in and around Evolution Valley. (The Roosevelt portion of the name came from attempts to make the enlarged park a memorial to Theodore Roosevelt.) The component of this huge proposed park that presented the greatest controversy was the Kings River drainage which we will look at in depth in a forthcoming chapter. Another area of contention was the Mineral King Valley where dozens of private cabins formed a popular summer recreation zone for residents of the San Joaquin Valley. Still another problem arose from the potential commercial timber lands on the western and southern edges of the proposed park. Indeed, lumbermen and the Forest Service were already casting covetous eyes on the timber resources of the southernmost and rarely visited portion of the existing park.

Mather initiated efforts to enlarge the park immediately upon his appointment. As director of the new Park Service, he engaged in a series of meetings with Chief Foresters Henry Graves and William Greeley aimed at hammering out some sort of compromise. Both Forest Service men drove hard bargains, but in 1921 it seemed that a solution was imminent. Mather agreed to sacrifice the three southern townships of the existing park, the same area that had first inspired George Stewart to work for creation of the park, as well as the J.O. Pass area of the proposed parkland. Greeley looked forward to receiving the valuable timber lands within the park in exchange for a huge tract of worthless rockland. Accordingly, local congressman Henry Barbour, who had earlier opposed any notion of park expansion, introduced the compromise bill to Congress. Unfortunately, irrigation proponents had not been consulted in these negotiations and they sent up a crescendo of opposition to withdrawal of the Kings River area. In addition, an assistant curator of the American Museum of Natural History, one Willard Van Name, flooded the media and Congress with letters and bulletins opposing exclusion of any portion of the existing park. Proposed exclusions included the Garfield Grove of giant sequoias, one of the finest and largest groves, as well as Hockett Meadow, an area that was far more popular for visitors in the early years of the park than it is today. Van Name vilified the Forest Service as greedy and unprincipled and saved enough anger to accuse the Park Service of irresponsible dereliction of its duty. The combined outrage of these dissimilar opponents crushed the Barbour Bill and delayed park enlargement for nearly five years.
Immediately Mather, Albright, and White took up the negotiations again. After some years of delicate discussion it became apparent that the Kings River addition was simply too embroiled in controversy and counterclaims to be acquired. Likewise, the Mineral King Valley drew too much antagonism and presented too much of an administrative headache. Hence, in early 1926 Mather, the Sierra Club, the Forest Service, and most irrigation proponents agreed to a compromise bill that would expand Sequoia National Park to include the Kern River drainage and readjust the park's northern boundary to follow the divide between the Kaweah and Kings watersheds. On July 3, 1926, President Calvin Coolidge signed the bill which increased the park's acreage by 140 percent to 604 square miles. The bill also designated 25 square miles in the Mineral King area as the "Sequoia National Game Refuge," but left that area under Forest Service control; this was meant to protect the wildlife in the area, which moved freely in and out of the surrounding park. The loss of the Kings River country was a particularly bitter pill for the park men and Mineral King remained like a knife of potential development plunged into the southern boundary. Nevertheless, the 1926 act retained the southern townships for which Van Name had campaigned and added a vast and
magnificent new area to the park. Assistant Superintendent Dan Tobin later gleefully wrote that the addition made Sequoia not only the "biggest tree" national park but also the "biggest mountain one as well. [7]
The first fifteen years of National Park Service management of Sequoia and General Grant national parks witnessed significant human impacts on the environments of the two parks. Before 1916, for twenty-five years, the parks had been run mostly as strict preserves, not necessarily because of a strong philosophical commitment to preservation, but largely because pressure for tourist development and congressional appropriations for visitor facilities were limited. All this changed with the successful establishment of the Mather-Albright program in the years immediately following the First World War.

Determined to build and maintain public support for the national parks and their new National Park Service, Mather and Albright found successful ways to publicize the parks and succeeded in obtaining increasing amounts of development money. The result was a nearly logarithmic increase in parks' visitation and an equal increase in visitor impacts on natural resources. When combined with a visually based philosophy of national park management, which allowed almost no consideration of what little was known then of ecology, the unsurprising outcome was a significant setback in the biological health of the two parks.

The damage done in the 1920s unevenly affected the parks and their resources. In Giant Forest, and to a lesser extent in General Grant, the sheer physical impact of heavy visitation was unmistakable. In these geographically limited areas nearly all resources suffered. Unrestricted heavy camping trampled and destroyed forest undergrowth and meadow vegetation, while animals suffered habitat disruption and predator destruction. Most severely affected were large animals like bears, which were strongly attracted to human food sources, and mountain lions, which were regularly killed throughout the decade. Smaller species suffered too, however, and never again would it be possible to describe Giant Forest's fauna as natural or undisturbed.

National Park Service impacts were not limited to areas of heavy development, however. The resumption of cattle grazing in Sequoia was a setback that undid a quarter century of military protection, as did the increasing effectiveness of National Park Service fire suppression activities. Serious fire suppression support from Congress arrived in the two parks in the late 1920s just as three decades of fire suppression began finally to allow the dangerous accumulation of fuels. This coincidence would bear increasingly significant results as the next several decades passed.

In the surrounding Sierra and Sequoia national forests, the same period saw much less
change in the state of the natural environment, for the Forest Service during these years
did little more than continue the policies defined during its first decade of existence.
Grazing remained widespread throughout the forests, and limited development in the
form of roadbuilding, logging, and recreational settlement took place along the
accessible western fringes of the forests. The Forest Service shared many resource
management programs with the Park Service during these years, including fire
suppression and predator control, but the immense size of the national forests, and their
relative inaccessibility rendered them less susceptible to quick change. In many ways the
wilderness resources of the national forests of the southern Sierra were protected better
than those of the national parks of the same region during the 1920s. In 1926 Sequoia
National Park doubled in size by absorbing the national forest lands at the headwaters of
the North Fork of the Kern River. These lands were little different than they had been in
1910, shortly after the Forest Service had finally succeeded in controlling unpermitted
sheep grazing. In comparison, many national park resources had suffered significantly
since 1916. (The Forest Service had its plans, though. In the extensive high country of
the Kings River drainage, the Forest Service, true to its mission, allowed studies to
proceed that were intended to eventually lead to massive hydroelectric power
development.) As the decade ended, though, the national forest wilderness of the
southern Sierra remained almost completely intact, except for the continuing impacts of
grazing.

In the last years of the 1920s, Superintendent White, whose understanding of his parks
had grown considerably, began to realize what the National Park Service programs had
wrought. He and others were beginning to note human impacts on the landscape and
even on ecosystems, and were pondering the implications. Two more major waves of
development would have to be weathered, however, before resource concerns would
come to dominate National Park Service management of its southern Sierra national
darks.
The CCC: Almost Too Much of a Good Thing

Long before that final battle, White faced a potentially grave challenge to his principles and to his control of park development. In the early years of his superintendency, he had complained endlessly about the dismal lack of funds and manpower available to accomplish the park's many necessary improvements. Later, although he continued to press for more money and employees, his tone and subject had shifted to controlling development in the park. Ironically, beginning in 1933, White's earliest priorities were satisfied to such a remarkable extent that his later preservation ones could have been seriously jeopardized. The crash of the stock market in 1929 and resulting Depression had created a desperate situation for the American economy and people. A full one-quarter of the work force was idle while another 30 percent struggled to eke out a living with part-time jobs. Through the remainder of the Republican term in the White House, the nation wallowed in misery and unemployment. However, with his sweeping victory and that of his Democratic party, Franklin Roosevelt ramrodded a massive collection of federal aid and social programs through Congress, changing forever American society and government. One of the bills in this spate of legislation created the Emergency Conservation Work program, popularly called and later officially renamed the Civilian Conservation Corps. The CCC would employ young men in quasi-military camps to carry out primarily manual labor projects on federal lands, including national parks. Suddenly, as Colonel White wrestled with controlling the concessioner, limiting and redirecting development, and allocating meager funds toward maintenance and protection, several thousand men per year and the money to pay and support them arrived in the parks. Over the next nine years the CCC would accomplish more labor-intensive and landscaping work than the military and Park Service administrations had in the previous forty-three years. Colonel White's intimidating task became moderation of this unwieldy development machine to preserve the park from construction on a scale and at a pace completely out of proportion and out of Park Service control. [2]

Fortunately, the Colonel's power and skill prevented excesses and turned the CCC into the most valuable development tool in the park's history.

The CCC operation was an ambitious project, the like of which has never been matched in U.S. history. During its years of operation, 1933 to 1941, more than two million young men performed work in nearly 900 camps located in ninety-four national parks and monuments and 881 state, county, and municipal areas. Starting from scratch with no model or experience to draw upon, its directors and personnel forged a program still ranked among the most successful in federal government history. Some credit for the success in the national parks went to CCC director Robert Fechner, to the coordinator of the CCC program in national parks and future Park Service director Conrad Wirth, and...
to Roosevelt himself. More of the reason for success lay in the organization and allocation of responsibility. Administration of the camps themselves and the day-to-day activities of the men fell to the army, as befitted the military form and approach to camp operation and projects. Selection and supervision of projects, hiring of specialists, allocation of crews to specific duties, and compilation of progress reports were carried out by park superintendents. Finally, the Washington office of the Park Service approved projects and exercised quality control through a system of regional directors and skilled specialists who became the framework for later reorganization of the Park Service into regions and specialized branches. [3]

At times there was friction between the camp commanders and park superintendents, largely owing to the attempts of one to interfere with the duties of the other. Sequoia had up to five camps operating at a time, and each army officer in charge naturally tended to extend his authority to the projects of his men. On the other side, Colonel White sought ways to further dominate the day-to-day camp operation as well as the choice of projects upon which the enrollees worked. In his reports on CCC progress, as well as his annual superintendent's reports and general correspondence, White complained about being deprived of direct control over the thousands of young men living and working in his park. He thought that the only way to assure that park values were preserved from youthful exuberance and ill-placed recreation desires was for the superintendent to control those activities. White found particularly obnoxious some of the movies shown at CCC camps as well as the boxing matches and vaudeville shows. He agitated for greater emphasis on educational, "park appropriate" activities. Still, as an old military man, White accepted and understood the way camps were run, and he limited most of his protestations to what he deemed offensive activities. [4]

Over the years eleven different CCC camps operated in Sequoia National Park, while Grant Grove and later Kings Canyon were sites of three others. In most years five base camps were occupied at once, their crews alternating between high-altitude summer work and foothills winter work. Among the most important summer camps were Potwisha, at the present-day campground; Atwell Mill along the Mineral King Road; Marble Fork on the Crystal Cave Road; Yucca Creek on the North Fork of the Kaweah; and Buckeye, near Ash Mountain. Each of these camps as well as other less popular
sites became temporary homes for up to 200 men. A standard camp consisted of a rough U-shaped formation of wooden buildings including barracks, a mess hall, recreation hall, officers’ quarters, a lavatory and bathhouse, an educational building, and various storage, maintenance, and special function structures such as a dispensary, blacksmith’s shop, generator house, and pump house. [2]

The men themselves were generally eighteen to twenty-five years of age, in good health, unemployed, unmarried and United States citizens. They were paid thirty dollars a month of which half went directly to dependents and another seven dollars into a savings account to be turned over to the enrollee upon his discharge. Six months was the normal enrollment period and at the end of each period, capable enrollees were encouraged to reenlist. The men wore military-style uniforms, attended a "boot camp" of sorts for two weeks prior to assignment, and were expected to finish their volunteer assignments. Desertion remained a small but nagging problem throughout the CCC program. In addition to their meager salaries, the enrollees received full room and board as well as access to education and recreation. It was an attractive option both for young out-of-work men and their desperate and hungry families.

The opening of Civilian Conservation Corps Camp One at Potwisha in May 1933 marked the beginning of a rapid era of facility development. (National Park Service photo)

The work conducted by the CCC men in the national parks primarily consisted of road construction, trail maintenance, construction and razing of buildings and campsites, fire fighting, insect and fungus control, replanting and landscaping. Those so trained conducted specialized activities such as surveying, resource planning, and even participation in natural history programs for visitors. Each day began at 6:00 A.M. with reveille followed by calisthenics, breakfast, and a general policing of the camp. Work began at 8:00 A.M. and generally concluded between 4:00 and 5:00 P.M. with a one-hour lunch. The maximum work week was forty hours. On evenings and weekends enrollees engaged in sports or games with equipment procured by local park officials. It was a well-ordered life disrupted only by inclement weather or forest fire. [6]
The experiences of two CCC men at Sequoia National Park exemplify the work done in the park under that program. A West Virginia native, Filmore Criss, joined the CCC at age sixteen and, after working near Phoenix, Arizona for a short time, came with his company to Ash Mountain in 1936 to work on the Mineral King Road. Later he and some of his coworkers were assigned to clear part of the High Sierra Trail which had been damaged by severe storms the previous winter. During their time in the high country, the men stayed near Bearpaw Meadow in a temporary camp of four-man tents dating from the Spanish-American War. Despite substandard accommodations, Criss much preferred trail work to the hot and dusty labor on the Mineral King Road. He participated in several fire-fighting assignments some of which were as far away as the Coast Range. [7]

In contrast to the typical duties of Filmore Criss, Roy DeVoe of Welden, California enjoyed several unusual and more intellectually demanding tasks. Transferred from Lassen National Park early in the CCC days, DeVoe was one of only a few young men with any surveying experience. Although his expertise was limited, he secured a position as surveyor for CCC projects in Sequoia and studied nights to keep up with his job. Among his accomplishments were surveying a road to Muir Grove and the layout of Dorst Campground. When not surveying, DeVoe participated in several other noteworthy jobs. When a sequoia fell across the Moro Rock Road, it was he and his crew who suggested cutting a tunnel in the huge log. With torches and adzes they chopped out Colonel Tunnel Log much as Indians had made their log canoes. Colonel White was pleased with their suggestion and encouraged them to think about other such improvements. DeVoe also assisted with filming a movie at Beetle Rock. Living at Lodgepole or Wolverton during most of his assignment, DeVoe guided visitors on Sundays, chiefly at Moro Rock. He even claimed to have discovered an unclassified and unnamed fly at Red Fir which a University of California biologist purchased from him. For Roy DeVoe the CCC was an opportunity to participate in many activities that would have been denied him as an unemployed and undereducated youth in the Depression. [8]

The results of the CCC work in Sequoia National Park form a legacy that still shines today. From 1933 to 1941 the Park Service added ninety buildings and renovated another sixteen with CCC labor. At the same time, enrollees razed dozens of old and dilapidated structures. In those nine years park road mileage doubled from 75 to 138 miles. No new major trails were added, but the CCC assumed annual maintenance of the 625 miles of backcountry paths and oiled several miles within Giant Forest. Enrollees installed 2.7 miles of underground electric cable, built more than fifty comfort stations, designed 200 new campsites and helped install new water systems, five sewage plants and several electric generators. Under the direction of Colonel White's landscape architects, CCC men put in several miles of fence, four dozen benches and eight corrals. They graded and landscaped 243 acres in visitor areas and cleared and cleaned hundreds more acres; they planted 50,000 shrubs and trees and 41 acres of lawn, supplied all the firewood for the park, and constructed countless retaining walls, stone-lined gutters, and parapets along the roads. In addition to these tangible results of their labor, CCC workers fought dozens of fires; cleared tons of brush in presuppression programs; collected refuse from trails, campgrounds, and roadsides; and acted as surveyors, guides, and safety officers. [9]

One final project of note that CCC men completed was construction of visitor infrastructure at Crystal Cave. The cave was first discovered in 1918 by A.C. Medley and C.M. Webster, two NPS employees who happened upon it while they were fishing. Initial exploration showed that the new cave's beauty far surpassed that of two other oft-visited caverns in the park, Clough and Paradise caves. In addition, the two well-known
caves had been severely damaged by vandals and trophy seekers. With this destruction in mind and with no funds for proper development, the Park Service decided to close Crystal Cave. More than twenty years passed before the Park Service devoted money and men to Crystal Cave. Finally during the seasons of 1939 through 1941, CCC men paved more than one thousand feet of the cave, installed electric lights and built a road connection to Generals Highway, a parking lot, and a steep trail to the cave entrance. Within weeks of its opening in 1940, the cave became one of the most popular visitor attractions in the park. [10]

Through the first six years of this era of construction and development, Colonel White maintained iron control of the progress and projects in his park. Picking and choosing tasks, coordinating plans, and allocating work crews, White continued his rule of Sequoia's development and prevented the abuse that too much labor and too much money threatened to bring. By late 1938 FDR and his Washington administration had scaled back the CCC, and soon Sequoia and other parks found the work force inadequate to meet their demands, inflated by six years of rich supply. When Colonel White accepted, without much enthusiasm, the first of two and one-half years of jobs away from his beloved park, much of the danger of exorbitant and irresponsible construction had passed. His successor, Eivind Scoyen, continued White's use of the CCC for conservation projects and careful, limited development. Thus, when the Colonel returned to oversee the last half-year of CCC activity, the program had tremendously improved visitor access and helped maintain his increasingly staunch policy of resource preservation. In the history of Sequoia National Park, the CCC ranks as one of the most important factors in promotion of Park Service goals and values. Carefully controlled and operating within the rigid philosophical confines of Colonel White's preservation-oriented policies, the CCC gave a huge boost to infrastructural improvement while avoiding the pitfalls of sudden, uncontrolled development. Visitors today who file through Crystal Cave, lean on the parapet at Amphitheater Point, camp at Lodgepole Campground, drive through Tunnel Log, run their hands along the Moro Rock handrail, hike the trails and drive the roads of Sequoia, and enjoy a thousand other little benefits can thank the young men of the Civilian Conservation Corps for their labor.
The state of Sequoia National Park's resources in 1947 reflected unmistakably the imprint of Colonel White and his full quarter century of responsibility. The Colonel had worked hard in his early years to create a national park for the use of the people, and he had succeeded so well in that task that all his later efforts to control and even undo his early successes were largely ineffective. Nowhere is this better represented than in the endless failures of the 1930s and 1940s to control the concessioner in Giant Forest.

The battles of Giant Forest were not total defeats, however, for they sensitized park officials to the concept of too many visitors, and brought the beginning of formal development limits. Critical as these accomplishments were in the long run, they did little to reduce the continuing damage to the Big Trees. The state of Giant Forest in 1947 was better than it had been in the early 1920s, but not much better. Physical limits had been placed on development, it is true, and camping had been organized and confined to certain areas, but congestion in those areas remained as bad as it had ever been. On an average summer night in the late 1940s several thousand people slept in Giant Forest, a rustic city in a fragile forest, and a city with only marginally adequate infrastructure.

Yet, if the 1930s and 1940s saw no improvement in the protection of Sequoia National Park's best-known single feature, other portions of the park benefited from stunningly significant victories by the stubborn superintendent. Of these victories, by far the greatest was White's successful containment of the road-building urge that swept over America during the 1930s. Once the Generals Highway was completed in 1935, the Colonel held the line successfully, preventing construction of the new Middle Fork Highway to Giant Forest and the Sierra Way south from Giant Forest to Mineral King. Had these roads been built, the entire future character of Sequoia National Park would have been drastically altered.

In his anti-backcountry-roads campaign Colonel White prevented a full third of Sequoia Park's later formal wilderness from being lost. Yet, he was not opposed to appropriate, low-level development, even in the backcountry. We have already documented his trail-building efforts, and it was in 1933, while he was still smarting from his first serious attempts to remove facilities from Giant Forest, that Colonel White and George Mauger rode together out the new High Sierra Trail to choose a location for the park's first concessioner-operated High Sierra Camp at Bearpaw Meadow.

Ultimately, Colonel White was no scientist. When given the chance in 1936 to
summarize his ideas to his peers, he spoke not of resources but of "atmosphere." In this he was very much a man of his times. The 1930s were the great era of National Park Service visual management—if a park looked good, it must be successful in its goal of resource protection. Often during the 1930s the Colonel railed against landscape architects, but ultimately he thought much like they did. And so, during the two final decades of Colonel White's reign, the true resources of the park, the forests, the wildlife, and the natural systems which connect them into functional patterns, suffered locally in areas of out-of-control development. Yet, they survived generally because the Colonel had come to see the critical necessity of limiting the geographical spread of visitor congestion with its inescapable impacts. This was the Colonel's greatest contribution to the generations that have since come to the parks. John Roberts White did not understand in late-twentieth-century terms what was critically important in Sequoia National Park, but he knew instinctively, after his early experiences in Giant Forest, that visitors were best sustained as small, widely dispersed groups.

Later, it would be apparent that Sequoia National Park's greatest feature was its grand and spacious backcountry. Other national parks started with equally grand wilderness resources, but projects like Going-to-the-Sun Highway in Glacier National Park and Trail Ridge Road in Rocky Mountain drastically limited future options for wilderness. In Sequoia, the Generals Highway avoided the high country, and the Middle Fork Highway and Sierra Way were never built. For these reasons, and many others, Colonel White deserves grateful remembrance.
Chapter Seven:
Two Battles for Kings Canyon
(1931-1947)
(continued)

The Early Battles

Although grazing and timber interests had deflected previous attempts to establish a park in the Kings watershed, the worth of pasture and timber resources was recognized as relatively low. However in 1902, the United States Geological Survey published an evaluation of the water storage capacity of the Kings River. It suggested four major damsites with associated irrigation canals and power plants. Two sites were in the spectacular canyons of Tehipite Valley and Kings Canyon. More than half the financial support for this study had come from local irrigation associations. Although ground water and surface sources within the San Joaquin Valley had proven adequate to date, the future of the district's agriculture appeared to depend upon the rugged watershed of the Kings River. With this favorable report, local farmers and businessmen commenced long-range planning in an atmosphere of comfortable confidence.

Meanwhile, fresh from its water diversion victory in the Owens Valley and mindful of San Francisco's water and power triumph on the Tuolumne River, the city of Los Angeles cast an interested eye toward the Kings River. In 1919, the Los Angeles Bureau of Power and Light released a study showing the watershed's considerable potential for power generation. Contemporary rumors suggested that Los Angeles had struck a deal with Southern California Edison to sell its surplus power to the utility company for a healthy revenue addition to the city's budget.

In June 1920, the Federal Power Act touched off the real action by creating a commission to be headed by the secretaries of Agriculture, Interior, and War, which could license water and power projects on government lands, including national forest lands. Several months later Los Angeles seized the initiative by applying to the commission to construct an elaborate water control and power generation system on the Kings River. Principal dams were to be located at Cedar Grove and Tehipite Valley with other units on tributaries above the canyons and on the main channel below. The fledgling Federal Power Commission took the plan under study, and Los Angeles dug in to fight the expected opponents.

They did not have long to wait. San Joaquin Valley residents were angered by what they perceived to be a territorial intrusion by money-hungry urban business interests. They also feared a repeat of the Owens Valley debacle which had all but destroyed a bustling agricultural industry in that distant valley. Before the Federal Power Commission was entirely sure of its duties and limits, the San Joaquin Light and Power Corporation filed a proposal to develop the same sites Los Angeles desired, but for local consumption.
While the power contestants froze the commission, both tourism and park proponents gained steam. Increasingly in the 1920s businessmen from Fresno and other nearby towns looked favorably on the potential tourism revenue of another Yosemite Valley. Although still overshadowed by reclamation proponents, talk of a major resort complex began to circulate at businessmen's socials and in the halls of local government. The Forest Service, which had administered the area since 1905, seemed favorable to recreation as part of its portfolio of activities for the Kings River watershed. [8]

Meanwhile, from 1881 through the 1920s, pressure for a national park encompassing the Kings River country continued to mount. A succession of Interior secretaries vocally supported park status. Conservation groups, led by the Sierra Club, kept up a continuous drumbeat through pamphlets, editorials and letters to congressmen. The legislators responded with a dozen bills between 1911 and 1926 aimed at creating a new park or enlarging nearby Sequoia National Park to protect the Kings River drainage. Establishment of Sequoia and General Grant national parks in 1890 and the vast expansion of Sequoia in 1926 both represented compromises in drives that had set out to save the Kings River country. Agitation by preservationists and other supporters consistently kept the Kings River watershed in the public eye. [9]

The result of all these conflicting proposals by water, power, tourism, and park proponents was an atmosphere of such confusion and desperate antagonism that those politicians and government officials not directly involved avoided the controversy. Politicians who were involved moved slowly and cautiously, weighing each decision for political as well as legal and economic consequences. Hence, the Federal Power Commission took nearly three years to reject the 1920 power application of Los Angeles. The city immediately refiled and the controversy continued. Congress simply found the Kings River issue too hot to handle. The campaign to enlarge Sequoia was extremely well organized, lasted seven long years, and succeeded in adding Kern Canyon and the Mt. Whitney country to the park in 1926. However, the original proposal to include the Kings River watershed brought such diverse, rapid, and boisterous opposition that the legislators opted to ignore the entire region. [10]

By 1930 a harried Federal Power Commission, stinging from criticism of its apparent inactivity and indecisiveness, released its own report on Kings River water resources. Challenges by opponents to reclamation and power development had increasingly taken the form of disputing the very feasibility of damming the Kings River in the mountains. The commission's so-called Randell Report aimed to settle the matter of water storage and power generation capacities once and for all. Senior engineer Ralph Randell
concluded that nineteen damsites were feasible. One, at Pine Flat in the lower foothills, would be a huge structure intercepting the main valley-bound flow of the combined Kings River. Included among the other sites were both Cedar Grove (Kings Canyon) and Tehipite Valley, as well as the rugged junction of the Middle and South forks. Eastward and upward smaller dams could flood more than a dozen alpine basins. San Joaquin Valley and Los Angeles power enthusiasts gleefully noted Randell's healthy figures for potential electricity from the network of structures. [11]

The report momentarily stunned park and tourism proponents, as the potential benefits of such a reclamation project appeared insurmountable. Soon, however, controversy again reared to cloud the issue. Reclamation opponents discovered that Randell's "extensive field survey" actually consisted of an eight-day horseback circuit of part of the watershed and a one-day flyover of the larger area he could not reach. Based on this circumscribed field work, Randell not only recommended nineteen sites, but provided a construction cost estimate of $130 million. When pressed for an explanation of this figure, the engineer admitted that three small dams in the Mineral King Valley formed the basis of his cost figures on the nineteen proposed dams. Opponents quickly pointed out that the Mineral King dams lay three miles from a road while some proposed for the Kings River watershed were more than twenty-five miles from a road, and some were in remarkably rugged terrain. The expense of packing workers, supplies, and construction materials to such sites would far inflate the total project figure. Several months of debate and defense ensued as an embarrassed Federal Power Commission tried to salvage parts of the report. By the end of 1931, however, the Randell Report was virtually discredited and confusion again reigned in the battle for the Kings River country. [12]
The battles fought in the 1930s and 1940s over the creation and proper development of Kings Canyon National Park represented a full collision between two equally valid but completely incompatible concepts of federal land use, each with its own view of what constituted a valuable resource. In the nineteenth century, despite considerable searching, only a few shepherds had found resources of significant value in the rugged maze of canyons forming the Kings River watershed. By the turn of the century, another value had been established—wilderness recreation—but its practitioners remained small in number, if not always in visibility.

By the early 1920s, however, the resource value of the region had risen significantly. Two sets of perceived resources, only barely related, were clearly defined; two sets of resource users awaited the opportunity to implement their schemes, and two sets of potential managers sought either to maintain or obtain control of the region. The Forest Service, together with competing irrigation and hydroelectric interests, defined their resources through a utilitarian world view. Kings Canyon would best serve America by being tamed, by sharing its water and power with the country's economic mainstream. Opposed to this utilitarian vision were the descendents of its ultimate critic—John Muir. The Sierra Club, after several decades of organized and individual recreational use of the Kings River country, saw the region's resources not as potential contributors to industrial America but rather as an antidote. To the club and others who loved the wild Sierra, the valuable resources of the region were not water power, and grazing potential, but wild surging rivers and fields of alpine wildflowers. Sharing the view of the Sierra Club was the National Park Service.

To the true physical resources of Kings Canyon, the ecosystems and their natural inhabitants, the decisions of the Kings Canyon political wars were of paramount importance. Ultimately, the preservationists won most of their goals, despite the initial handicap of Forest Service management of the area. Passage of the Kings Canyon Park Act seems in hindsight as much a political accident as a carefully moderated political decision. Without Congressman Elliot's decisive blunder, Kings Canyon National Park might never have come to be. Had the park not been created, the alternative conservation vision would have altered the landscape and its inhabitants severely and permanently.

More than either Sequoia or Yosemite both of which were created before the twentieth-century resource values of the Sierra Nevada had become apparent, Kings Canyon National Park was a commitment of valuable resources. From that commitment came a
half century of wilderness recreation, and, at the same time, a partial recovery from the impacts of early grazing and trapping use. Many individuals and organizations helped to create Kings Canyon National Park and to determine its destiny once it was established; but it was the membership of the Sierra Club, over nearly five decades of exploration, publicity, and lobbying, that played the single biggest role and deserves ultimate credit.
Challenge of the Big Trees

Chapter Eight:
Controlling Development: How Much Is Too Much?
(1947-1972)
(continued)

Retreat: Hard Times and Tough Questions

The postwar era began for the Park Service with a flood of optimistic enthusiasm. Park planners expected a speedy return of visitors and with them funding at prewar levels. Thousands of structures built by the CCC as well as many more built during earlier years desperately needed renovation or reconstruction. Miles of roads and trails also demanded major repairs. Most postwar park planners hoped for a return of CCC type work camps from which they could draw labor to continue the parks' progress. It was time to get on with plans and dreams, time to reevaluate park resources, redesign facilities, and redouble efforts to make each visitor's experience educational and fulfilling.

In Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks, the staff shared this service-wide optimism. Cedar Grove promised to be a new and exciting area to develop, a second Yosemite Valley. Giant Forest might finally be freed from its half century of crowds and clutter to become again the spiritually and emotionally uplifting reserve park planners knew it could be. Elaborate remodeling of structures at Grant Grove, Lodgepole, and Ash Mountain awaited attention, as did hundreds of miles of winter-ravaged backcountry trails. Along with all this development, Colonel White and his successor Eivind Scoyen hoped to reassess park management and study the problems of resource use and concomitant preservation.

To the dismay of the Park Service, its allies in the preservation movement, and such public as visited and used the parks, these hopes were dashed for more than a decade after the war. Although the number of visitors to the park system rose more than 250 percent between 1940 and 1955, funding lagged far behind with an increase of only 56 percent. All over the nation superintendents reported decaying structures, potholed roads, tawdry visitor displays, and gross understaffing of popular areas. Laws and regulations went unenforced in backcountry areas. Virtually all acquisition of inholdings ceased, as did negotiations for elimination of grazing permits. By 1955, noted historian and popular author Bernard De Voto penned an article in *Harpers* calling for a drastic solution to these problems. Specifically, he suggested closing some of the larger parks because "they have the largest staffs in the system but neither those staffs nor the budgets allotted them are large enough to maintain the areas at a proper level of safety, attractiveness, comfort, or efficiency. They are unable to do the job in full and so it had better not be attempted at all."  

Back in the two Sierran parks, the problems of insufficient funds and manpower were keenly felt. Over the decade and a half after 1940, annual visitation rose from 483,743...
to 1,074,134 or 122 percent, but funding failed to increase even half that percentage. Colonel White complained in 1947:

Despite our best efforts, our public camps are run down, our scenic spots improperly protected, our park buildings and all facilities inadequately maintained, and the public neither protected nor advised, or educated, as should be possible in these great heritages and builders of national pride and morale. [4]

His successor, Superintendent Scoyen, reiterated such sentiments in succeeding years and added that a doubling of appropriations would not overcome the years of neglect.

One example of the irksome effects of diminished funding occurred with the road from Cedar Grove to Copper Creek. Even as San Joaquin Valley newspapers reported a promised completion time of late 1948, actual construction bogged down due to paltry funding and contractor problems. By 1952, annoyed Fresno citizens demanded that the Park Service fulfill its promise. Yet four years later, the winter of 1955/56 brought flood damage to a still incomplete road. Work on a bridge over the Kings River dragged into late 1956, and six months later the contractor suffered bankruptcy. Finally, in September 1957, the road was completed ending a decade of frustration and confusion arising from what had begun as a relatively simple one-year project. [5]

Elsewhere in Sequoia and Kings Canyon, conditions were equally worrisome. Giant Forest and other visitor areas suffered from overuse and a lack of vegetative regeneration. The replanting program and the Ash Mountain Nursery had been early casualties of wartime and postwar funding cuts. Crying for repair were tumbled-down visitor contact stations, dirty and undersized amphitheaters, and campgrounds sporting tire-damaged sites, wrecked camp facilities, and nearly denuded forests. In the backcountry some trails became impassible; meadows turned to muddy bogs as a few overtaxed work crews and rangers tried to care for more than 1,100 square miles of territory. Park employees, many of them recent veterans of World War II and Korea, crammed into grubby and substandard tent cabins. [6]
(continued)

How Much is Too Much?

In the quarter century following the end of the Second World War, Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks repeated the same cycles of development and concern that had occurred in the two decades before the war. Again, as recreational use of the parks grew rapidly, the Park Service found itself without adequate funds to meet the demand. Again, when funds were finally forthcoming, this time through Mission 66, they were invested almost entirely in visitor facilities, and again, as the period drew to a close, the realization grew that preservation of the critical features of the two parks would require far more than just new and better bathrooms and campgrounds.

Nowhere was this cycle of retreat, renewal, and reappraisal more apparent than in the developed sequoia groves. In the early 1950s, tight budgets and continued resistance from the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Company forced abandonment of the two-decade dreams of restoring Giant Forest to a more pristine state. When the Service allowed the felling of the leaning tree at Giant Forest Lodge in 1950, it in effect also felled its own efforts to limit additional human impacts within the grove. Accepting all the problems that had been unacceptable to park planners and managers in the 1940s, the Service learned once again to live with Giant Forest's congestion and mediocrity. Not until after the concession company finally changed hands in 1966, did the Park Service succeed in making even the smallest improvements in what everyone agreed was a deplorable situation. And even then, improvements of the late 1960s and early 1970s—closing campgrounds, and removing of the post office, gas station, and old Giant Forest Museum—only cleared the way for another wave of concessioner investment in upgraded dining facilities and new motel rooms.

The only bright spot in sequoia management during this period came from the long-needed initiation of sustained ecological research into the status of the Big Trees. Within a few years, work begun in the mid-1960s by Richard Hartesveldt revolutionized the Service's understanding of what was necessary for the long-term preservation of the groves. Ultimately, Hartesveldt's fire ecology research would synergize with the Service's acceptance of the Leopold Report and changing public perceptions of environmental priorities to lead the Service in completely new directions. In 1971, however, as the Park Service completed a new and very cautious master plan for Sequoia and Kings Canyon, the biggest changes still remained in the future.

In the backcountry the postwar years witnessed a recreational revolution unprecedented in the history of the two parks. In a few short years beginning in the mid-1960s, fifty years of backcountry management schemes were rendered almost useless by the arrival
of the backpacking baby-boom generation. In the years after the war, the Service focused largely on controlling the impacts of past and present grazing and on undoing the old habits of burying garbage and the like. Suddenly, as the 1970s began and backcountry use skyrocketed, the Service rushed to respond to new and different problems, carrying out experiments with limiting people—something it never had the nerve to try elsewhere in the parks. At the same time the Service wrestled with how much of its backcountry to formally designate as wilderness, a legislative requirement of Congress that drew no clear and focused response from the agency. Here was a chance to clarify the agency's wilderness management directions and reconcile once and for all how the remainder of the parks were to be developed or preserved. But, the final recommendations represented merely a cautious mixture of Colonel White's prewar land management decisions and the input of numerous interest groups.

In the postwar era the world surrounding the two parks changed quickly also. Nowhere was this more evident than in the three surrounding national forests. During the postwar decades Sequoia National Forest began at last to execute the full mission that had been identified for it decades earlier. In the lands surrounding the parks this took largely the form of logging, especially on the Sequoia Forest's Hume Lake District. By 1970 logging had begun to approach the parks' boundary for the first time since the turn of the century. Perhaps even more threatening to the biological integrity of Sequoia was the proposed ski resort development in Mineral King Valley. As endorsed by the Sequoia National Forest in the late 1960s, this development would have placed as many annual visitors in tiny Mineral King Valley as were then visiting all of Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks. And nearly all of those visitors would have come to Mineral King by crossing the park on a modern highway cut through a major sequoia grove. How these visitors would affect the park, in both winter and summer, the Park Service had just begun quietly to consider. In public the agency had nothing whatsoever to say, exactly the instructions it had received from the Nixon Administration. The protection of the park's interests instead fell largely to political groups like the Sierra Club.

Only in the true high country, it seemed, were the boundaries of the parks relatively safe from threat—a situation confirmed by the creation of the John Muir Wilderness, which bordered Sequoia and Kings Canyon on the east and wrapped around the northern end of Kings Canyon. Elsewhere, in the Hume Lake country, along the foothill western border of Sequoia, in the Mineral King region, and eastward across the southern side of Sequoia, the Park Service watched silently as the modern world crept ever closer.

In the two and a half decades following the war, it is possible to suggest that the Park Service lost its way as it attempted to protect the two parks. Certainly none of the numerous superintendents who revolved through showed the vision or the strength of Colonel White. In a larger sense, of course, the Park Service of the 1950s and 1960s reflected accurately the temper of its times in its commitment to facility development and its hesitance to upset resolved situations. But nagging at the Service throughout the period, and increasingly as the 1960s ended, was the realization that the status quo would not ultimately succeed. In the sequoia groves, increasing scientific evidence clearly pointed out the consequences of overdevelopment and fire suppression. In the backcountry, with the onset of the 1970s, some sorts of use limits were beginning to be set. And on the surrounding lands? Well, that would have to be someone else's battle, perhaps the public's. Luckily, and in fact as the 1970s began, the American public had begun to show an attitude shift that would revolutionize its expectations of national parks, and allow the resolution of many of Sequoia and Kings Canyon's most pressing issues.
Public involvement in the planning process soon had an unexpected and startling impact. In response to planning problems raised about Giant Forest in the Master Plan, the NPS decided to produce a "Development Concept Plan" (DCP) for the Giant Forest/Lodgepole area. Preparation of the development plan fell to a private contractor, Sasaki, Walker Associates, working in conjunction with the NPS systemwide planning staff at the agency's new Denver Service Center. During preparation of the DCP, Sasaki, Walker Associates rediscovered what others had known for several decades—that the preservation of Giant Forest required significant reductions in development within the grove. The new DCP described the visitor experience at Giant Forest in starkly unflattering terms:

Upon cresting the hill. . . the visual impression in Giant Forest Village and Kaweah is that of old dilapidated buildings bounding a rather large, disorderly area of asphalt paving—cars every where—some at a standstill . . . with occupants reading signs. . . . This anticlimactic, confusing and disorderly arrival brings traffic to a standstill and prolongs the frustration caused by the climb into the Giant Forest. [2]

To correct the dismal situation, the DCP called not only for the relocation of a portion of the accommodations, as had the recent master plan, but also for full removal of all overnight visitor facilities from the grove. Once again, Colonel White's grand plan resurfaced, this time with a variety of complicated new twists. New structures at Lodgepole would replace the hundreds of small Giant Forest concessioner cabins. Near Wolverton, on the site of the existing pack station, the DCP proposed the construction of a large "staging area," which would serve as the terminal for interpretive bus tours of Giant Forest. The tours would make use not only of the existing Generals Highway between the Sherman Tree and the Village, and the existing Moro Rock/Crescent Meadow Road, but also of a new interpretive roadway to be constructed across the northeastern portion of the grove, connecting Crescent Meadow with Wolverton. Thus, the DCP went well beyond previous plans for removing traffic from the grove by attempting to replace auto touring with public transportation.

On the issue of camping, the plan remained vague. The 1971 Master Plan called for maintaining existing campsite capacity and relocating the Giant Forest campgrounds to the "Clover Creek-Willow Meadow" area north of Lodgepole. However, by August 1974, after the three remaining Giant Forest campgrounds had been closed, the DCP itself made no specific allowance for any camping construction at all, except to note
that: "All camping at Lodgepole may eventually be phased out, allowing room for the village development with the balance of open space to be returned to a more natural state." [3] On several other issues mentioned in the master plan, including the proposed tramway up Alta Peak, the DCP remained silent.

In August 1974, a confident Park Service released the draft DCP to the public and held public hearings in Visalia, Fresno, and Ash Mountain. At the hearings, required by NEPA, the Park Service ran directly into a shocking crossfire. Frustrated campers complained bitterly that first they had lost the Giant Forest campgrounds, and now the Service wanted to phase out camping at Lodgepole, too, with only a vague promise of additional development in the undefined future. To the park's many longtime campers, the proposal to move Giant Forest Village's functions to Lodgepole was offensive and biased in favor of lodge visitors. Significantly, however, while repeated critics angrily attacked the use of Lodgepole for accommodations construction, and others questioned the need and potential impact of an additional road through Giant Forest, most supported the concept of removing facilities from the grove, if only another site could be found for the new development.

The Park Service's first public hearing under the new NEPA procedures had not gone well. Nobody on the park staff could have expected such a vigorous and angry public response. But through the cloud of criticism, park planners and managers saw the bright light of opportunity. With apparent public support for removal from Giant Forest, perhaps it would at last be possible to break the generation-long stalemate that continued to threaten Sequoia National Park's most cherished feature. Quickly, the Park Service moved to exploit the limited public mandate it had received during the summer hearings. In November Superintendent Henry Schmidt announced that since the public agreed with the concept of relocating facilities to less fragile sites, and objected only to the designation of Lodgepole as the new hotel site, the park would revise the draft DCP and seek alternative development locations. [4]

In his November 1974 news release, Superintendent Schmidt promised to have a revised Giant Forest plan available for public review by early summer, 1975. What came out instead, in May, was a set of four "planning alternatives" together with a "response booklet." Stung by the response to the Sasaki, Walker proposal, yet encouraged by the public's general support for the removal of facilities from Giant Forest, the Service now proceeded cautiously. The four alternatives included a "no action" option, which left Giant Forest's facilities largely intact, and three possible patterns of relocation. One option followed closely the Sasaki, Walker plan of 1974, while the remaining two proposed either centralizing most visitor accommodations at Clover Creek, two miles north of Lodgepole, or scattering the accommodations through the Lodgepole/Wolverton/Clover Creek region. All the facility relocation options included proposals for a public transportation system using only existing roads, and all four proposals carefully spelled out provisions for maintaining a substantial number of campsites. [5]

In July 1975, a chastened but quietly optimistic Park Service held another series of public workshops to accept comments on the four planning alternatives. Trying to avoid the camping problems that had blown up so badly the previous summer, these workshops occurred not only in Visalia and Fresno, but also at Lodgepole Campground. Parks' officials also took their workshop format to six local service clubs. Again, several themes came through clearly in the public's response. Generally, the public strongly supported converting Giant Forest to a day-use-only area and did not object to a public transportation system, as long as accommodations and camping were maintained in the Lodgepole/Clover Creek area and campsite numbers did not drop below the existing
level. Conspicuous in its absence was any strong criticism of the removal alternatives from Government Services, Incorporated (GSI), the company that had purchased the Fred Harvey concession operations within the park in 1972. Previously, Howard Hays and George Mauger had violently opposed removal for decades, insisting that the public would never accept accommodations that did not stand beneath the Big Trees. But now, with visible public support for removal, the new concessioner remained largely silent, tacitly accepting at least the concept of change.

Two years passed while professional park planners at the Denver Service Center analyzed the public comment received in 1975 and converted it into a viable redevelopment concept. Finally, in December 1977, the Park Service announced the availability of a new draft plan for the Giant Forest/Lodgepole area. The package the NPS presented to the public in late 1977 differed markedly from that first experiment of three years earlier. No longer did the plan set out boldly to solve every problem once and for all. Indeed, the first words inside the document set a cautious tone: "This plan has not yet been approved. Its purpose is to provide planning information for further consideration and discussion, and it may undergo considerable revision." In content, the new plan drew mostly from elements evaluated during the 1975 public review. It called for the redesign of Giant Forest as a day-use-only area, with public transportation access near Wolverton. At Clover Creek, north of Lodgepole, the concessioner would build its new lodges, keeping to the limit of 1,240 pillows established in 1964. Camping would remain at Lodgepole, with no significant change in the number of sites. Additional provisions included interim improvement of waste-water processing in Giant Forest and major changes in NPS employee housing and maintenance. To meet the requirements of NEPA, an additional public document supported the new draft DCP, the Draft Environmental Statement. This 280-page document discussed in detail the possible environmental impacts of the proposed action. Altogether, the 1977 package, based on public reaction to the four alternatives of 1975, and supported by a detailed environmental assessment, reflected how thoroughly NEPA had changed park planning in Sequoia during the 1970s. Never again would the Service have the luxury of planning park development without having to explain its actions to the public.

On December 21, 1977, new Superintendent David D. Thompson, Jr., announced public meetings to discuss the new plan. At two February meetings, in Fresno and Visalia, a majority of the attending public voiced support for the central portions of the scheme. Again, the concessioner did not object. However, during the public comment period which followed the meetings, Government Services, Inc. President Walter Williams clarified the concessioner's stance with an ominous warning: "in our past comments we have not suggested that it was within the concessioner's purview to argue against the relocation of visitor facilities from the Giant Forest Village area." Yet, Williams continued, "the scope of concessions activities at Sequoia/Kings Canyon National Parks is not sufficient to finance, either through debt or revenue . . . a capital investment approaching $11 million." Williams had picked that figure from the total project construction costs estimated in the new draft DCP, which called for almost $20,000,000 of NPS work and over $11,000,000 of "concessioner-related costs." During the 1980s, the issue of economic feasibility for the concessioner would prove to be yet another stumbling block in the ongoing effort to restore Giant Forest.

In November 1979, still moving slowly and deliberately, the Service issued the final Environmental Assessment for the project, and on December 31, 1979, the last public comment period for that plan passed without additional surprises. NPS Regional Director Howard Chapman quietly approved the final Development Concept Plan for Giant Forest/Lodgepole on January 17, 1980. The final plan differed little from the second draft that had been released in 1977. For the first time since 1952, when the
removal effort instigated by Colonel White collapsed, the Park Service had a formal plan to restore Giant Forest and correct the development mistakes of the 1920s. It took nearly a decade to secure the new plan, starting from the vague 1971 Master Plan and the 1972 concession contract which called for no real changes, and persevering through a seemingly endless cycle of planning documents and public meetings. Those meetings proved crucial, however, for they allowed the public, an interest group whose views had long been assumed by both the NPS and the concessioner, to speak for itself about Giant Forest development, and to show its willingness to accept change. With public support, the other necessary aspects of the plan, including acceptance by the concessioner, followed in due time.

With the plan in place, restoration of Giant Forest moved from the arena of policy to the arena of implementation. During the early 1980s the fight to restore Giant Forest became a battle for money, a battle intensified by a new round of federal budget cutting under President Ronald Reagan which began in the same year that the final Giant Forest plan was approved. By 1982, parks' managers perceived the funding shortage to be so acute that they feared that removal of Giant Forest facilities might be delayed indefinitely. In response to this fear, and to pressure from the concessioner to upgrade worn out facilities in Giant Forest, the park reluctantly granted permission to replace fifty old housekeeping cabins in the Giant Forest Village area with fifty new motel units. Park planners retained enough faith in the plan, however, to insist that the new buildings be constructed modularly so that they could be dismantled and moved.

The 1982 push by the concessioner to improve facilities in Giant Forest led finally to a commitment by the director of the Park Service to initiate funding for Clover Creek development in fiscal year 1984. Actual work on the site began that summer. During the next three summers the NPS constructed roads and utilities at the site, including a four-mile water line from Wolverton Creek, and a new maintenance yard at nearby Red Fir. By the end of 1987, when national funding shortfalls caused work on the project to stop temporarily, nearly half of the necessary Clover Creek infrastructure had been constructed. During the same years the money issues raised by the GSI's Walter Williams began to receive attention. An agreement in 1987 finally resolved the value of the company's existing facilities in Giant Forest, all of which the government had to purchase before they could be closed and razed. At the time these words were being written, removal of visitor facilities from Giant Forest looked more likely than at any previous time in the history of Sequoia National Park. With strong public support, with tacit concessioner acceptance, with new resolve among Park Service management, and with almost $20,000,000 already invested, it seemed possible that critical momentum had been achieved at last.
Challenge of the Big Trees

Challenge of the Big Trees
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As the twentieth century drew to a close, after 150 years of increasingly intense European occupation of the Great Central Valley of California, Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks lay cut off and isolated from the seamless natural world that had surrounded them only a few generations earlier.

Where once had lapped the waters of the great Tulare Lake, with its expansive, reed-covered marshlands and countless waterfowl, there now stretched only giant, straight-plowed fields of cotton. Here and there a few of the ancient blue-green tules lingered in the irrigation canals, the last reminder of an obliterated natural world. On the east side of the now-dry lake basin, straightened canals flowed in place of the meandering, tree-lined sloughs that once brought mountain water to the lake. In most years little water now reached the lake basin, for farmers diverted nearly all of it to feed their hundreds of thousands of acres of irrigated fields, orchards, and pastures.

Through the croplands that stretched towards the Sierra from the eastern shore of the old lake, and along the channelized river beds, could be found occasional ancient oaks—huge lonely trees six feet in diameter, often towering more than a hundred feet above the surrounding walnuts or summer corn. Here and there a small remnant of forest survived, perpetuated as a county park with green lawn or a setting for an old farm house. But the isolated remnants gave little life to the stories of endless summer shade and wild grapevines. Gone, too, were the herds of tule elk and pronghorn, their ghosts living on in the valley with the ghosts of the Native Americans who had once hunted them. In their place were people and cities.

From the fields and cities that had replaced the oak forest, something else was missing—the view of the mountains that had so dominated the forest clearings in earlier times. To the east, where once the miles-high wall of the Sierra had risen so distinctly, now could be seen only a flat, hazy horizon, and perhaps a few brown foothills. The mountains remained, of course, but the summer smog generated by the several million human residents of the valley often obscured the range from view. Sometimes people now came to live where the oak forest had once prospered and resided there for months before they realized that the mountains even existed. After winter storms, however, the air often briefly regained its old clarity, and then the grand Sierra again dominated the landscape.

On those occasional winter days when rains washed the air of all its modern contents, it was possible still to study from afar the shape and condition of the range. Three zones
of color still appeared, as they had in centuries past. In the lowest mountains a confused color scheme of oak and grass persevered. In summer the foothill grass now browned sooner, for the native perennials, which remained green through much of the summer, had long since given way to short-lived Eurasian annuals, which died and paled each year by early May. Scattered through the spare oak forest could be seen the countless barns, ranch houses, and suburban homes the people had built.

Above the foothills, a darker blue-green forest still clothed the slopes. Here, for the first time, it appeared that nothing had changed from the old times. Endlessly the forest stretched north and south, blanketing each ridge. And from the forest, in sheltered locations, ruddy-trunked giants still protruded rudely, reducing all their neighbors to insignificance. Crowning the range, as in times past, could still be seen the barren, shining granite summits, still spare, still angular. Only in the mountainside forests and on the granite summits did life continue almost as it had in times past. On the mountains, bear and deer still roamed, coyotes still hunted at night, and ancient trees lived out their lives without disturbance.

The natural world of the mountains had survived as long as it had because the people of the cities protected, even treasured it. But now, their daily activities threatened even the mountain forests a mile above their valley homes. Ultimately the people of the valley ruled the entire landscape, and all its inhabitants lived in their shadow.