



NUMBER 2

MARCH 1970

YELLOWSTONE INTERPRETERS' NEWSLETTER

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK, WYOMING 82190

"---Our concern, and therefore objective, is to bring to all of them (the visitors) the fullest realization possible of the life beyond self and to awaken the drive to preserve and experience all of 'this curious world of ours.'"

Looking Ahead

The 1970 visitor season seems to be rushing in upon us as we work to complete our staffing for the summer. The plows have started to clear the roads and are well on the way to Norris. George Morrison, North District Naturalist, will move into the park on March 19 to start work on a parttime basis. No connection, George, but we expect the first reports of grizzly bears before March 19. Further ahead, we are planning to participate in the Earth Day activities at Montana State University in Bozeman on April 22. All the while, you, we imagine will be planning for your summer in Yellowstone.

All of us have changes to adjust to as we move into the 1970 season. First, the fishing regulations have been changed. For grayling only "catch-and-release" fishing will be permitted. In the fly fishing stretches of the Firehole, Madison Rivers and the Lower Gibbon River up to the base of the falls, only two fish may be taken into possession and they must be 16 inches or longer. On Yellowstone Lake and on that part of the Yellowstone River which is open for fishing above the Upper Falls, the possession limit is three fish, and they must be 14 inches or longer. The possession limit on other waters is five fish, of which no

more than three may be cutthroat trout. The restrictions on the use of lines, bait and lures remain as they were last year except that persons 12 years of age or under may fish with worms as bait on the Gardner River, Obsidian Creek, Indian Creek, and Panther Creek. No bait fishing will be permitted elsewhere in the park. (See the Federal Register, Vol. 35, No. 28 - Tuesday, February 10, 1970 for the full statement).

The fishing regulations will be supplemented by a single-fold full-color handout on fish in Yellowstone. In addition, Phillip Sharpe's new booklet on the fish of Yellowstone is at the printers now and is expected to be on sale this summer.

For our campfire programs, we hope to secure enough equipment so that all the programs can be presented with lapse dissolve equipment. Each program will involve using two drums of slides, with the potential of using 160 slides in a program without changing drums.

Bachelors Take Note

Plans are being worked out so that NPS employees may purchase coupon books that will permit them to eat at Yellowstone Park Company mess halls. The cost will be very reasonable. Sack lunches and sack breakfasts (!) will be available under this program. YP Company is going to a convenience foods program. The meals in the mess halls will be the same as those in the public dining rooms.

Old Faithful Bypass Road

The hot spring flow at the interchange on the Old Faithful Bypass road has been inspected by the park staff and by outside experts at intervals during the fall and winter. No less an authority than Dr. Robert O. Fournier has stated categorically that the flow will not affect Old Faithful. Nothing indicates that it has affected any major features to date. By this summer we will have sufficient information to determine what action must be taken to insure that no major feature will ever be affected by the alteration in the natural flow of hot water in this area. That action will be taken.

Old Faithful Film

In January, Bill Dunmire visited the film animation studio in Atlanta to review their progress on the animation portion of the film for Old Faithful. Dr. Don White and the Chief of the NPS audiovisual production unit were also there. With Dr. White's technical and geological advice they modified some of the models and came up with effects that

are just fantastic. This section of the movie will be tremendous. When it is coupled with footage of thermal features in action, it promises to make a movie that is a real winner.

The Yellowstone Story

Aubrey Haines is busy finishing up a myriad of details on his book, The Yellowstone Story. He is right on schedule. The book is to be published in 1972, to go on sale in that, the Centennial Year.

Plant Succession on Volcanic Rocks

In 1956-57 Doty studied the plant succession on volcanic rocks following the 1955 Pana rift eruption in Hawaii. In terrestrial habitats he noted a seral development of first algae, then mosses, the ferns that arrived simultaneously with higher vascular plants and fungi. As the final observation, he recorded that lichens were last of the pioneers to appear in the sere. Wonder if this is what happened in Yellowstone after the last eruption?

Winter - Swans and Snowmobiles

Early in January we counted waterfowl on the open waters in the park. In all, 92 Trumpeter Swan were observed. One group of observers had the privilege of watching 70 swans on the Yellowstone River just below the Fishing Bridge.

Continuing with numbers, a recent airplane flight yielded a count of 5500 elk in the Northern Yellowstone winter range. At times hundreds of these have been viewed by visitors as they travelled the road to Cooke City this winter.

Travel by snowmobile has become a big thing this year. Oversnow travel in January alone increased 265% over the January travel in 1969. The figures: 4841 visitors in January 1970; 1822 in January 1969. The majority of these visitors go to Old Faithful. With that volume of travel, we may well have a seasonal naturalist to provide interpretive services at Old Faithful during the winter a very few years hence. The Maintenance and Protection Divisions are already considering the needs for increased management next winter - more law enforcement patrols and some means of maintaining a smooth, safe running surface for the snowmobiles to operate on. The attached press release indicates other problems that have cropped up. We enjoyed warm spring weather through most of February with the result

that the snow cover vanished from parts of the road, especially on the warm ground between Madison and Old Faithful.

Prospects for Permanent Type Employment

" In all probability, the Service will hire only 35 to 45 new employees in the Park Management series during the next two to three years. Few opportunities presently exist for new employees in this area because (1) the Service already has an abundance of well-qualified employees on hand, and (2) there are some 2,500 applicants who have passed the Federal Service Entrance Examination with scores of 95 and above. Of these, some 750 to 1,000 applicants are waiting specifically for NPS employment.

While the employment story may not be too bright in the Park Management series, it is a bit more encouraging for aspiring park aids and technicians.

For this series, the Service is currently recruiting, and for the next two to three years, it is anticipated that approximately 80 to 100 aids and technicians must be hired each year to implement the FOST recommendations."

NPS Newsletter
November 27, 1969

Bear Management

This has been a subject of active discussion all year. We are guided by three management objectives:

1. "To maintain populations of grizzly and black bears at levels that are sustainable under natural conditions as part of the native fauna of the park.
2. To plan the development and use of the park so as to minimize conflicts and unpleasant or dangerous incidents with bears.
3. To encourage bears to lead their natural lives with minimum interference by humans."

One way we can help the visitor reduce the danger of bears at his campsite is to urge him to store his food in his car, not in his tent, not on his picnic table - nowhere except in his car. This message could be included in the preliminary comments before our evening programs. A second procedure, which we should help with, is to issue citations to bear feeding. Sure, bear feeding has been a

tradition in Yellowstone, but it does not fit into our growing concept of Yellowstone as a park in which the natural (not man-related) processes function. We shrink at the thought that the visitor will no longer see bears as he drives the roads of Yellowstone. But, is the loss of the roadside beggar that important? Isn't it a little like having to give up a beloved pet because your children have become allergic to him? Let's help logic win this one.

Water Pollution Study

The Federal Water Pollution Control Administration, an agency of the Department of the Interior, is planning to conduct a very extensive water quality study in Yellowstone during the coming year. The study will include all the major watersheds in the park. A thorough analysis will be made of streams above and below all major developments and of all major backcountry streams and lakes. The study would also try to identify any areas of natural pollution which might result from heavily used wildlife wintering ground; lakes containing residual DDT; areas of natural radioactivity; extent of water pollution by motor boat exhaust; plus several other potential pollution problems. There will be two 3-week field sampling periods. The first during early May and the second during late August. Based on information obtained from the study, water quality standards will be developed and areas of pollution will be identified. It is anticipated that the entire project will be completed in one year.

Surgical Success for Downing

As you may know, George has been inflicted with degenerative arthritis of the hip for the past two years. In early December he was admitted to surgery and has been in a state of convalescence ever since. We're happy to report now that even though this was major surgery and complete recovery is a long drawn out process, there is every indication that George will be returning to Canyon for the 1970 season. We're all very pleased.

CUPID STRIKES

Kathy Downey and Bob Schultz are planning to take that big step - - - They will be married June 10 at the Soldier's Chapel in the Gallatin Canyon.

INFORMATION PAPER - GRIZZLY BEAR

Populations of grizzly bear have been preserved in national parks while they have disappeared from much of their historical range. Preservation and management practices for the grizzly have evolved from experiences and records that cover a 50-year span of time. Research has been carried out on the grizzly by park biologists in Mount McKinley, Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks.

Two fatalities from grizzly, in 1907 and 1916, have occurred in Yellowstone over the past 97 years. Two have occurred in Glacier over the past 59 years. Park records show 13 persons (1 per 1 million visitors) have been injured by grizzly in Glacier over the past 20 years. Yellowstone records indicate that 63 persons (1 per 750,000 visitors) were injured by grizzly bears over the past 40 years. Forty-seven of the 63 injuries in Yellowstone required only first-aid treatment or minor suturing; 16 required hospitalization for one night or more. Records show hiking encounters with female bears defending young were responsible for the comparatively few backcountry injuries that occurred in Yellowstone (3 injuries) and Glacier (6 injuries). Bears that had learned to frequent campgrounds to obtain food caused most of the remaining injuries.

Garbage dumps and other sources of artificial food that contributed to bears visiting campgrounds or other high visitor use areas were eliminated in Glacier National Park by 1968. This, and a highly refined management system to regulate backcountry use and guide bear control operations, has greatly reduced the chances for grizzly-caused injuries. No injuries occurred in 1969 and one in 1968 resulted from a photographer getting between a female bear and her yearling cub. An average of about two bear per year have been killed for control purposes. This amounts to approximately 1 percent of the population of about 180 grizzlies.

Yellowstone Park records show that on the average three grizzlies were killed for control purposes and about one injury occurred per year from 1930 through 1962. An average of four grizzly have been killed and almost five injuries occurred per year between 1963 and 1969 (8, 2, 8, 4, 3, 2 and 6, respectively). The higher bear kill and injury rate since 1963 mainly resulted from attempts to substitute trapping and transplanting within the park for destroying particular bears. This trapping and transplanting was done because of sincere concern for the grizzly as a rare and endangered species and because animals had been marked for research purposes. The average of three to four bears destroyed per year for control purposes amounts to removals of between 1 and 2 percent from a population that has probably numbered in excess of 200 animals since the 1930's.

During the 1950's, grizzly bear control in Yellowstone was largely preventive (i.e., bears not permitted to frequent campgrounds--animals that could not be successfully transplanted were destroyed or shipped to zoos). An average of 2.5 bears were killed per year and injuries to visitors averaged one every two years under this management system. A return to preventive management, along with the elimination of artificial foods that contribute to bears entering park campgrounds, could reduce injuries from present levels and ultimately reduce the number of bears which need to be controlled.

The possibility of transplanting bears into remote wilderness areas which once held grizzly populations is being explored with western states as an alternative to destroying animals that cannot be transplanted sufficient distances inside the park to overcome their homing capabilities. Animals that are destroyed are salvaged as scientific specimens for educational institutions or museums.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

★ news release

INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 18, 1970
Hennessey 344-7381

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK CLOSED TO SNOWMOBILING

Officials of Yellowstone National Park announced today that lack of snow will force them to close the park to snowmobiling effective midnight Monday, February 23. Unseasonable warm temperatures the past few weeks and below normal snow depths has caused the snow to melt to the point that the roads are becoming bare. With no snow on the road surface, some damage to the road has already occurred, officials said, and with continued warm weather it is feared extensive damage will be done.

The officials said that should the park receive snow in sufficient depth to prevent snowmobiles from damaging the road and before the spring snow removal begins, the park will be reopened to snowmobile use.

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