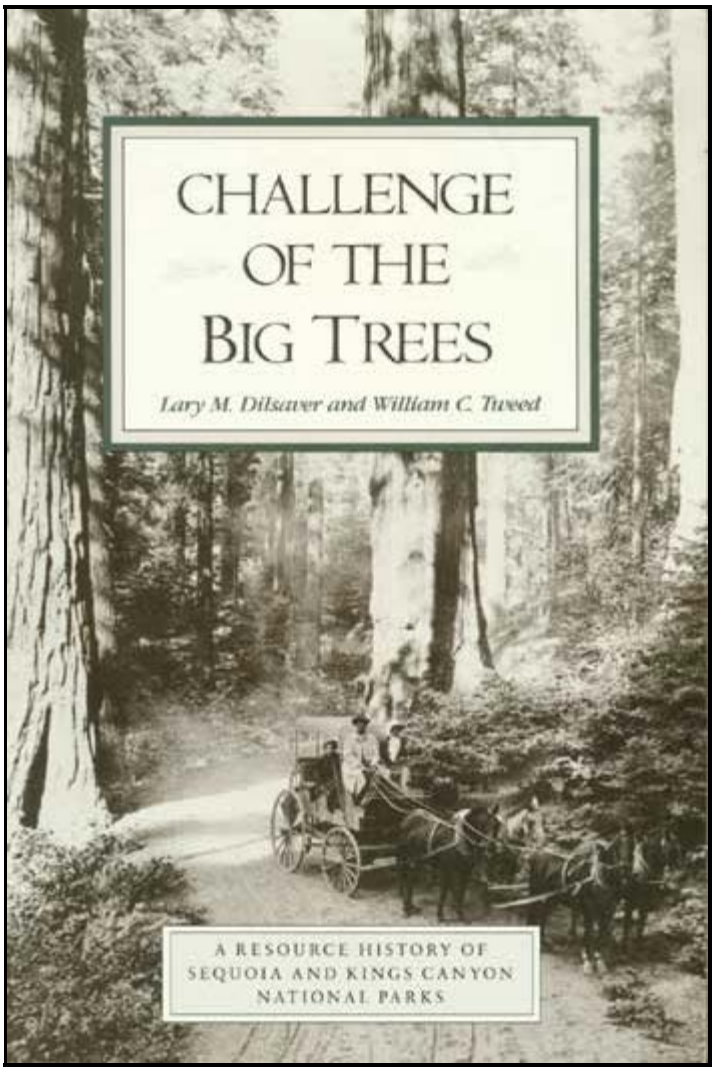
Challenge of the Big Trees



CHALLENGE OF THE BIG TREES

Lary M. Dilsaver and William C. Tweed

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CONTENTS NEXT >>>

Challenge of the Big Trees

Table of Contents

COVER

LIST OF MAPS

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

FOREWORD

PREFACE

CHAPTER ONE: The Natural World of the Southern Sierra

CHAPTER TWO: The Native Americans and the Land

CHAPTER THREE: Exploration and Exploitation (1850-1885)

CHAPTER FOUR: Parks and Forests: Protection Begins (1885-1916)

CHAPTER FIVE: Selling Sequoia: The Early Park Service Years (1916-1931)

CHAPTER SIX: Colonel John White and Preservation in Sequoia National Park (1931-1947)

CHAPTER SEVEN: Two Battles For Kings Canyon (1931-1947)

CHAPTER EIGHT: Controlling Development: How Much is Too Much? (1947-1972)

CHAPTER NINE: New Directions and A Second Century (1972-1990)

APPENDIX A: Visitation Statistics, 1891-1988

APPENDIX B: Superintendents of Sequoia, General Grant, and Kings Canyon National Parks

NOTES TO CHAPTERS

PUBLISHED SOURCES

ARCHIVAL RESOURCES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INDEX *(omitted from online edition)*

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

List of Maps

1. Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks and Vicinity
2. Important Place Names of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
3. Physical Features of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
4. Natural Vegetation Zones of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
5. Topographic Cross Sections of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
6. Regional Distribution of Native American Groups Circa 1700
7. Pioneer Trails of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
8. Explorations of the California Geological Survey, 1864
9. Mining-Related Development in the Mineral King Area, 1870—1890
10. The Kaweah Colony, 1886—1892
11. Senator John E Miller's 1881 National Park Proposal
12. Sequoia and General Grant National Parks as Established in 1890
13. Sequoia and General Grant National Parks Circa 1910
14. Federal Land Acquisition in Giant Forest, 1916—1921
15. Reproduction of Early National Park Service Proposal to Enlarge Sequoia National Park
16. Sequoia National Park as Enlarged in 1926
17. Sequoia National Park, Major Roads and Trails Circa 1930
18. Giant Forest Development Area, Early 1930s
19. Civilian Conservation Corps Camps, Sequoia National Park, 1933—1942
20. Giant Forest and Vicinity, Late 1930s
21. Highways: Actual and Proposed, 1930s
22. Reproduction of 1920 Los Angeles Proposal for Kings Canyon Hydroelectric Development
23. Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks after Act of March 4, 1940 and Presidential Proclamation of June 21, 1940
24. Reproduction of 1947 National Park Service Alternatives for Copper Creek Development
25. Development Proposals for Kings Canyon, 1953
26. Giant Forest Development Area, 1972
27. Wilderness Proposals of 1966 and 1971
28. Proposed Mineral King Ski Resort, 1965—1978
29. Giant Forest/Lodgepole Development Concept Plan, Approved 1980
30. 1976 Development Plan for Kings Canyon
31. National Park Land Acquisition in the Grant Grove Area, 1890—1984
32. Sequoia and Kings Canyon Wilderness as Enacted September 28, 1984

List of Photographs

1. Aerial View of the Giant Forest
2. Early Protection of the General Grant Tree
3. Early Sierra Club Group
4. Cavalry Troops at General Sherman Tree
5. Early Ranger-Guided Nature Walk
6. The First Giant Forest Village
7. Parks Superintendent John Roberts White
8. Opening the Potwisha Civilian Conservation Corps Camp
9. Bear Feeding at Bear Hill

10. Concessions Manager George Mauger
11. Congestion at Giant Forest Village
12. Biologist Lowell Sumner
13. Backcountry Stock Use
14. Park Service Officials in Backcountry
15. Proposed Mineral King Ski Resort Village (omitted from the online edition)

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Three Rivers,
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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Dilsaver, Lary M.
Challenge of the big trees : a resource history of Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks / Lary M. Dilsaver and William C. Tweed.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references.
1. Sequoia National Park (Calif.)—History. 2. Kings Canyon National Park (Calif.)—History. I. Tweed, William C. II. title.

F868,S4D55 1990
979.4'86—dc20
89-70076 CIP

ISBN-1-878441-00-0—Hardcover
ISBN-1-878441-01-9—Paper

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

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dilsaver-tweed/foreword.htm — 12-Jul-2004

Challenge of the Big Trees

Preface

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 know 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.

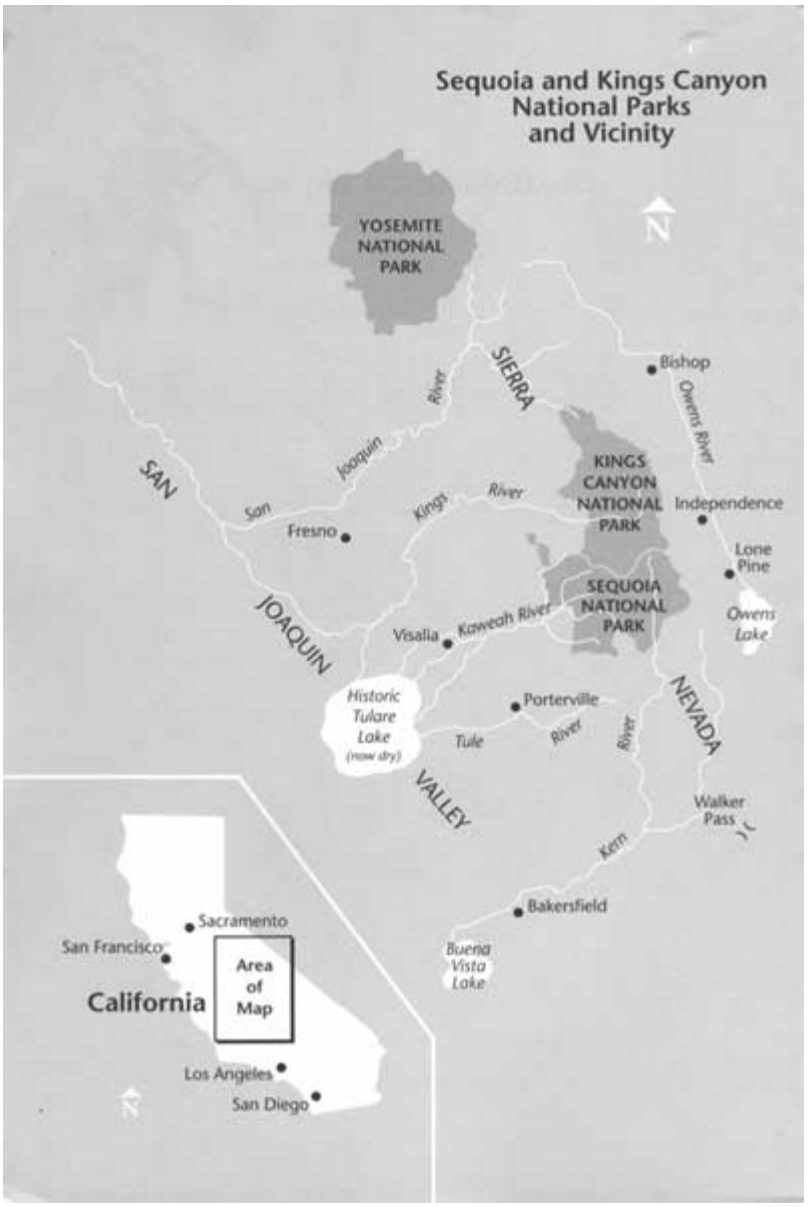
If the critical question about national parks is "how has humanity perceived and modified the land according to its evolving values," then the state of the land itself becomes the primary historical record. Thus, in this book we shall describe through time the changing state of the lands and ecosystems 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.



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<<< PREVIOUS **CONTENTS** **NEXT >>>**

Challenge of the Big Trees
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Challenge of the Big Trees

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 succesively 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.



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<<< PREVIOUS **CONTENTS** **NEXT >>>**

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dilsaver-tweed/chap1.htm — 12-Jul-2004

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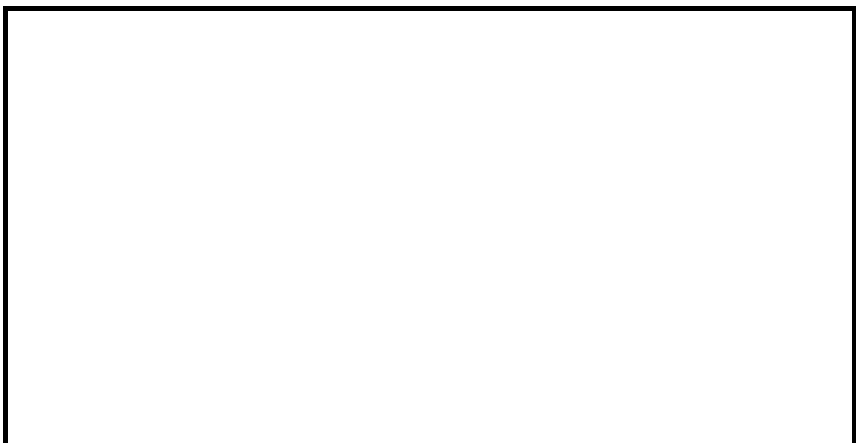
Chapter Two:
The Native Americans and the Land

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. Every where 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 Terminous 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.





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<<< PREVIOUS **CONTENTS** **NEXT >>>**

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Challenge of the Big Trees

Chapter Three:
Exploration and Exploitation (1850-1885)

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 rio 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.

<<< PREVIOUS **CONTENTS** **NEXT >>>**

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Challenge of the Big Trees

Chapter Four:

Parks and Forests: Protection Begins (1885-1916)

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.

<<< PREVIOUS CONTENTS NEXT >>>

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Challenge of the Big Trees

Chapter Five:

Selling Sequoia: The Early Park Service Years (1916-1931)

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.

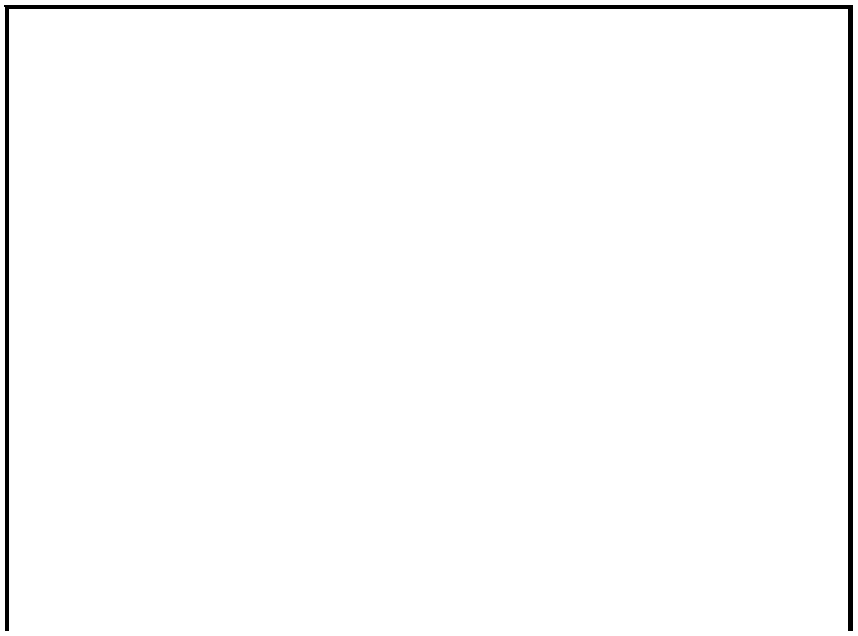
The letter went on to give twenty-three specific directives on various issues ranging from grazing permits to concession activities. The general tenor of the letter reflected the limited knowledge of ecology at the time but made a strong statement toward object and scenery preservation both still novelties 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 superintendency 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.





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<<< PREVIOUS **CONTENTS** **NEXT >>>**

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Challenge of the Big Trees

Chapter Six:

Colonel John White and Preservation in Sequoia National Park (1931-1947)

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)*

<<< PREVIOUS **CONTENTS** **NEXT >>>**

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Challenge of the Big Trees

Chapter Seven:
Two Battles for Kings Canyon
(1931-1947)

> *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.

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Challenge of the Big Trees

Chapter Eight:

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

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.



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<<< PREVIOUS **CONTENTS** **NEXT >>>**

Challenge of the Big Trees

Chapter Nine:

New Directions and a Second Century (1972-1990)

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. [1] 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.

<<< PREVIOUS CONTENTS NEXT >>>

Challenge of the Big Trees
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dilsaver-tweed/chap9.htm — 12-Jul-2004

Challenge of the Big Trees

Appendix A:
Visitation Statistics, 1891-1988

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

YEAR	GENERAL GRANT	SEQUOIA	YEAR	GENERAL GRANT	SEQUOIA
1890-1905	7,000	6,000	1923	46,230	30,158
1906	900	700	1924	35,032	34,468
1907	1,100	900	1925	40,517	46,677
1908	1,773	1,251	1926	50,597	89,404
1909	798	854	1927	47,996	100,684
1910	1,178	2,407	1928	51,988	98,035
1911	2,160	3,114	1929	44,783	111,385
1912	2,240	2,923	1930	43,547	129,221
1913	2,756	3,823	1931	51,995	143,573
1914	3,735	4,667	1932	40,806	131,398
1915	10,523	7,647	1933	50,081	126,464
1916	15,360	10,780	1934	56,024	147,533
1917	17,390	18,510	1935	116,729	205,783
1918	15,496	15,001	1936	148,565	230,714
1919	21,574	30,443	1937	157,810	234,661
1920	19,661	31,508	1938	145,750	260,139
1921	30,312	28,263	1939	161,080	272,329
1922	50,456	27,514			

YEAR	KINGS CANYON	SEQUOIA	YEAR	KINGS CANYON	SEQUOIA
1940	201,454	282,198	1965	848,890	877,270
1941	172,271	300,012	1966	923,360	797,840
1942	113,949	166,964	1967	909,950	746,810
1943	63,100	70,240	1968	1,064,000	874,300
1944	36,771	54,066	1969	945,990	919,310
1945	62,710	126,221	1970	1,018,990	875,670
1946	219,855	312,556	1971	896,670	881,980
1947	230,468	370,197	1972	1,058,040	869,600
1948	274,437	392,472	1973	906,780	846,280

1949	295,093	376,375	1974	887,410	686,940
1950	330,913	379,699	1975	1,124,655	1,067,411
1951	446,795	447,888	1976	1,127,902	1,040,575
1952	444,644	468,371	1977	1,046,614	978,573
1953	435,548	501,259	1978	869,877	973,448
1954	551,541	484,653	1979	809,292	799,950
1955	556,139	517,995	1980	823,795	862,762
1956	669,801	538,080	1981	782,472	1,095,064
1957	638,543	535,846	1982	831,044	1,020,500
1958	683,910	512,183	1983	765,755	854,233
1959	701,384	528,074	1984	938,262	979,632
1960	740,260	592,359	1985	874,456	939,468
1961	731,544	592,801	1986	1,028,785	1,056,527
1962	809,609	676,369	1987	1,081,172	1,139,389
1963	745,199	625,570	1988	1,007,695	1,031,129
1964	802,000	648,570	1989	1,056,020	1,037,349

<<< PREVIOUS CONTENTS NEXT >>>

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Challenge of the Big Trees

Appendix B:
Superintendents

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.

Acting Superintendents Under The War Department

CAPTAIN JOSEPH H. DORST,	1891, 1892
CAPTAIN JAMES PARKER,	1893
LIEUTENANT ALEXANDER TRACY DEAN,	1984
CAPTAIN JAMES LOCKETT,	1895
CAPTAIN GEORGE HENRY GOODWIN,	1896, 1897
GEORGE LANGENBERG (CIVILIAN *APPOINTEE IN LIEU OF MILITARY PERSONNEL DURING SPANISH AMERICAN WAR),*	1898
CAPTAIN BENNENT X. SMITH,	1898 *(REPLACED LANGENBERG* LATE IN SEASON)
LIEUTENANT JAMES ALFRED MOSS,	1899
SECOND LIEUTENANT HENRY BENJAMIN CLARK,	1899
CAPTAIN FRANK WEST,	1900
ERNEST BRITTEN, (WINTER) RANGER IN CHARGE,	1900—1904
CAPTAIN LINCOLN CLARKE ANDREWS,	1901
CAPTAIN FRANK ARTHUR BARTON,	1902
LIEUTENANT GEORGE BLANCHARD COMPLY,	1902

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

JOHN ROBERTS WHITE,	10/1/43—10/10/47
EIVIND T. SCOYEN,	11/23/47—1/16/56
GEORGE A. WALKER, (ACTING),	1/16/56—5/6/56
THOMAS J. ALLEN,	5/6/56—11/1/59
JOHN M. DAVIS,	11/1/59—2/27/66
FRANK KOWSKI,	3/13/66—9/24/67
JOHN S. MCLAUGHLIN,	10/8/67—11/25/72
HENRY G. SCHMIDT,	11/26/72—7/31/75
GENE V. DAUGHERTY (ACTING),	7/31/75—10/30/75
STANLEY T. ALBRIGHT,	10/31/75—9/11/77
DAVID D. THOMPSON, JR.,	10/9/77—3/31/80
JAMES J. MCLAUGHLIN (ACTING),	4/1/80—8/9/80
QUINCY BOYD EVISON,	8/10/80—8/3/85
JOHN H. DAVIS,	9/29/85—1/14/89
J. THOMAS RITTER,	1/15/89—

<<< PREVIOUS CONTENTS NEXT >>>

Challenge of the Big Trees
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dilsaver-tweed/appendixb.htm — 12-Jul-2004

Challenge of the Big Trees

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Challenge of the Big Trees

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Challenge of the Big Trees

Published Sources

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 McLauren 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

eccentric figures, William C. Tweed's *Shorty Lovelace, Kings Canyon Fur Trapper* (Three Rivers: Sequoia Natural History Association, 1980), and Gene Rose, *High Odyssey* (Fresno: Panorama West Publishing, 1987), which tells the story of Orland Bartholomew and the first ski trip from Mt. Whitney to Yosemite in 1928-29.

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.

<<< PREVIOUS CONTENTS NEXT >>>

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dilsaver-tweed/bibliography.htm — 12-Jul-2004

Challenge of the Big Trees

Acknowledgments

THE AUTHORS wish to gratefully acknowledge assistance and support from many sources. From Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks came an enormous amount of support, including unlimited access to records, free use of copying facilities, housing for Lary Dilsaver during several long periods of archival research, and, most important, genuine interest in the project. Particular thanks go to then-Superintendent John H. Davis, to Sylvia Nichols, Anne Shepherd, Larry Bancroft, Tom Nichols, David Parsons, and especially, for her constant, unwavering support and encouragement, to Betty Knight. Special thanks also go to National Park Service Western Regional Historian Gordon Chappell, who brought together the two authors.

Financial assistance for the research came from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the University of South Alabama. The university also supplied research release time, clerical assistance, and technical help without which this book might never have been completed. At the university special thanks go to Vice-President Jeral Williams, Dean S. Gene Crossley, Geology and Geography Department Chairman Glenn Sebastian, and to Debbie Hopkins. Assistance also came from Joyce Quinn at California State University, Fresno, and Stephen Jett at the University of California, Davis.

Extremely critical was the support of John J. Palmer, first as chief park interpreter for Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks, and, after May 1987, as Executive Director of the Sequoia Natural History Association. His vision brought the book to fruition.

Special thanks also go to Sylvia Haultain-Tweed, who provided excellent editorial advice and endured all the frustrations inherent in a project of this sort.

To these individuals and institutions, and to many, many others too numerous to list, the authors give their thanks.

<<< PREVIOUS **CONTENTS** **NEXT >>>**

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Challenge of the Big Trees

About the Authors

Dr. Lary Dilsaver

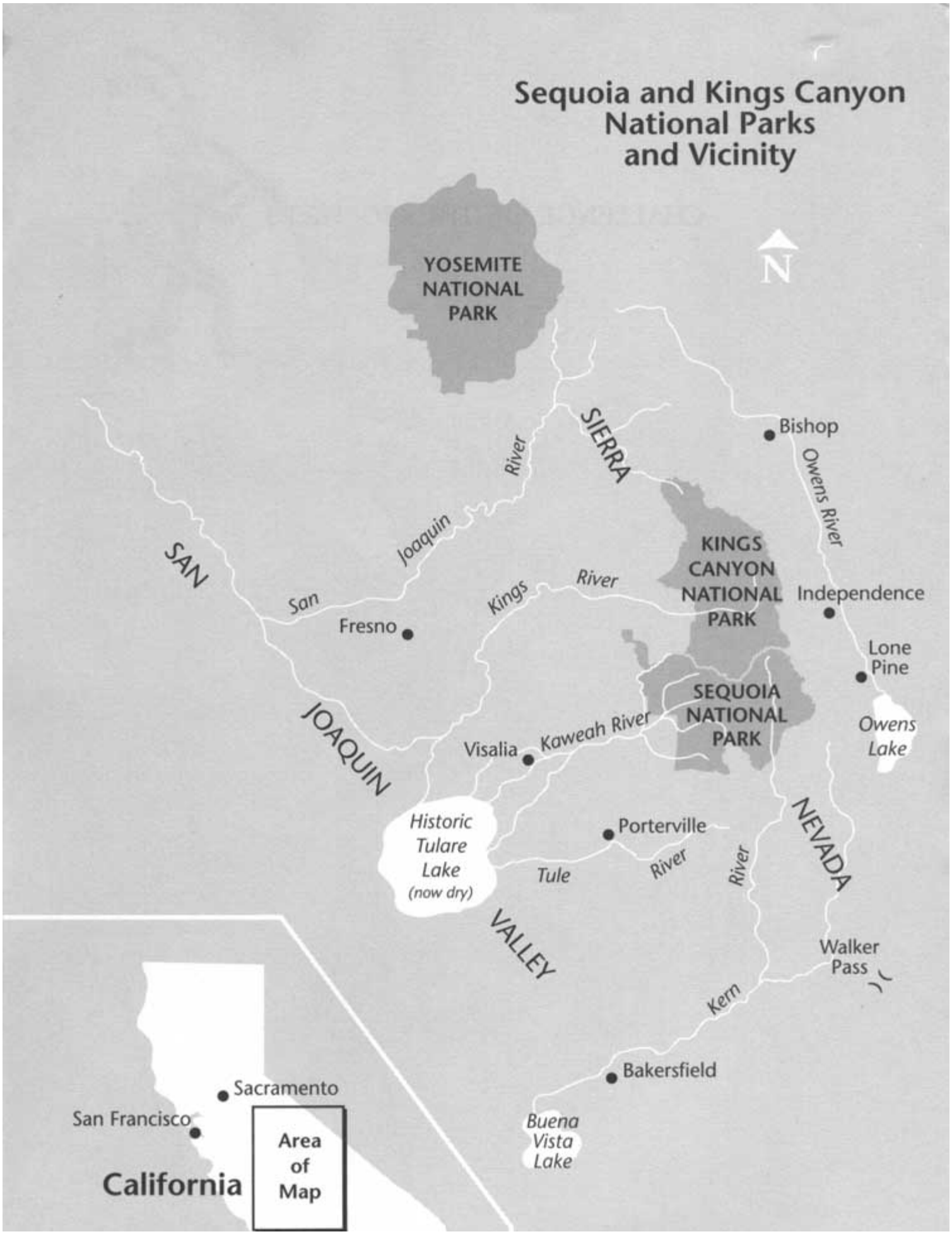
Lary Dilsaver is a native of the San Francisco Bay area and received his Ph.D. from Louisiana State University. He is currently Associate Professor of historical geography at the University of South Alabama and an environmental history researcher for the National Park Service. Previous publications include articles on the California Gold Rush, tourism and federal environmental management.

Dr. William C. Tweed

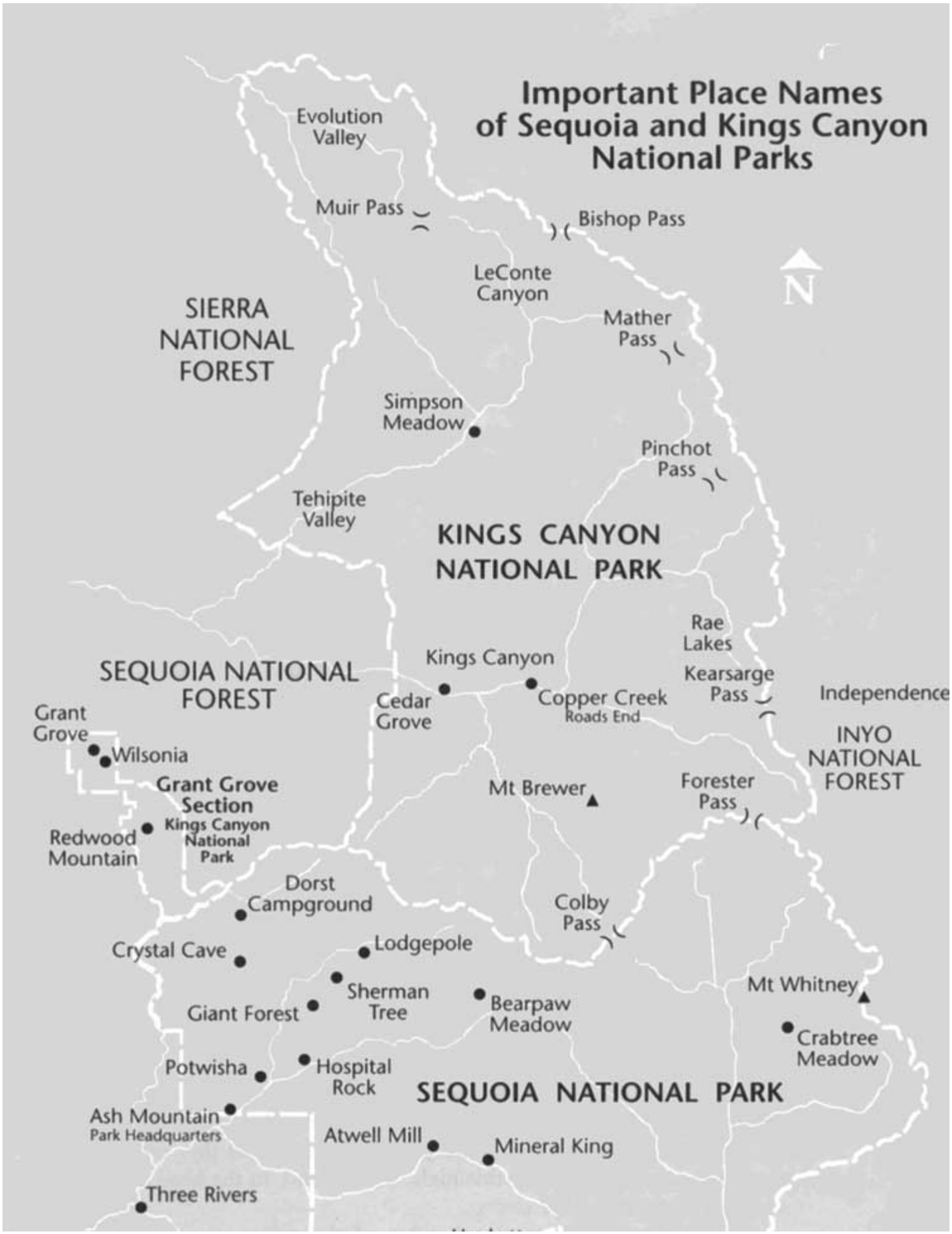
William C. Tweed has studied and explored Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks for mroe than twenty years. Since 1978, he has been a part of the parks' permanent staff, filing both interpretive and general management positions. In 1975 he received a Ph.D. in history from Texas Christian University in Fort Worth.

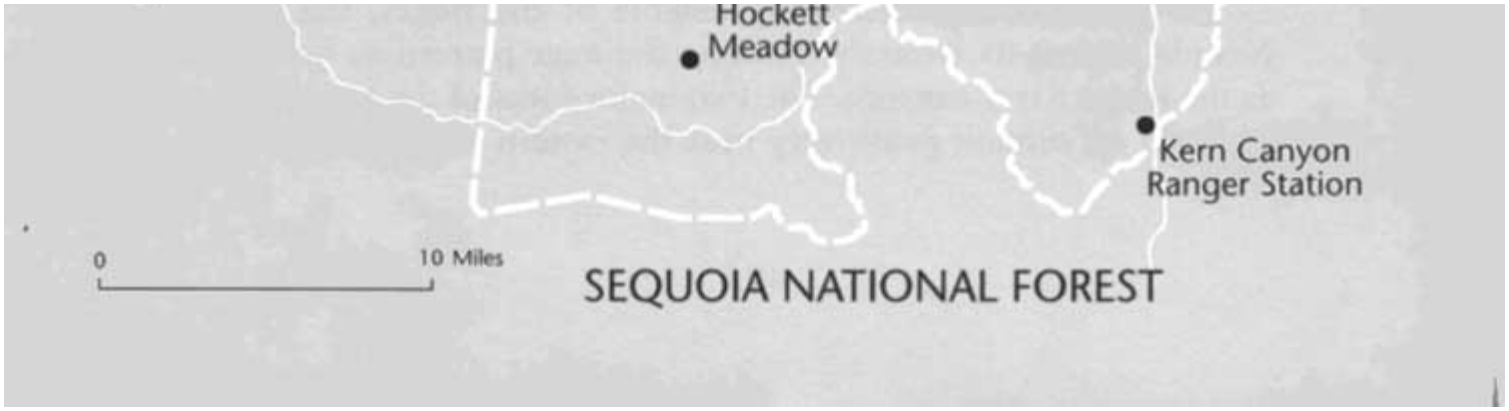
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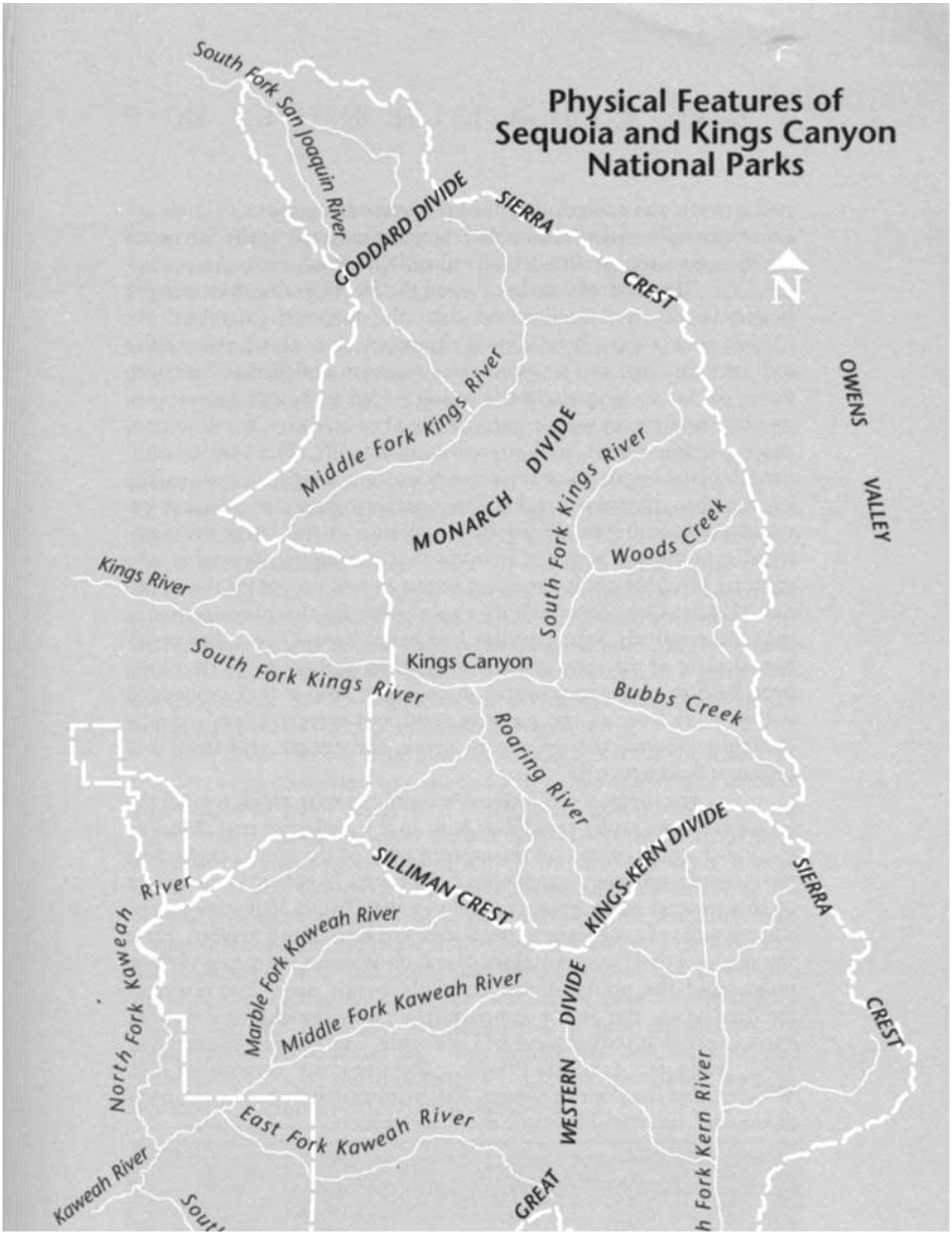
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Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks and Vicinity
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK
N
SIERRA
NEVADA
SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY
San Joaquin River
Kings River
Kaweah River
Tule River
Owens River
KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARK
SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK
Bishop
Independence
Lone Pine
Owens Lake
Fresno
Visalia
Porterville
Historic Tulare Lake (now dry)
Walker Pass
Kern
Bakersfield
Buena Vista Lake
Sacramento
San Francisco
California
Area of Map

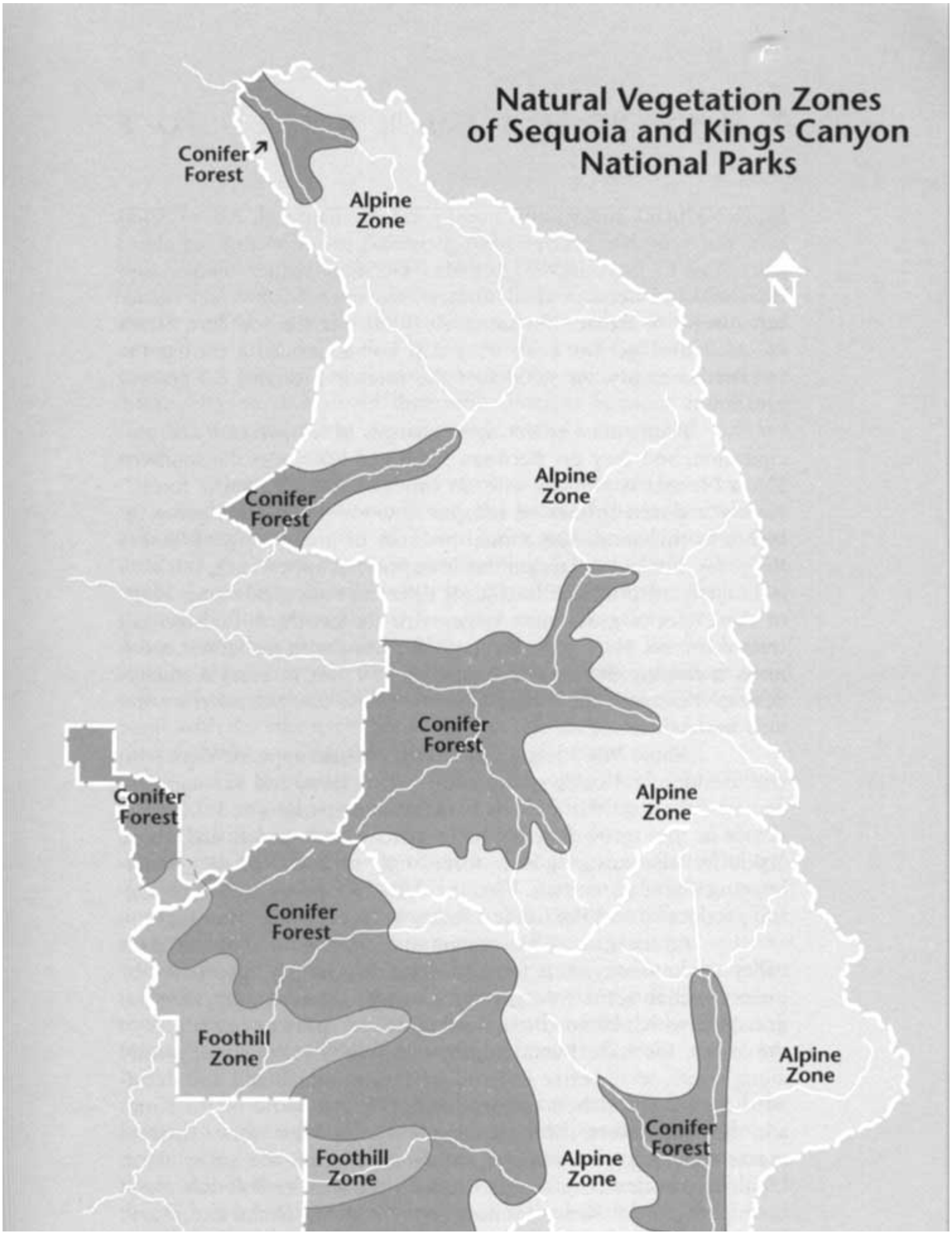

Los Angeles
San Diego
N

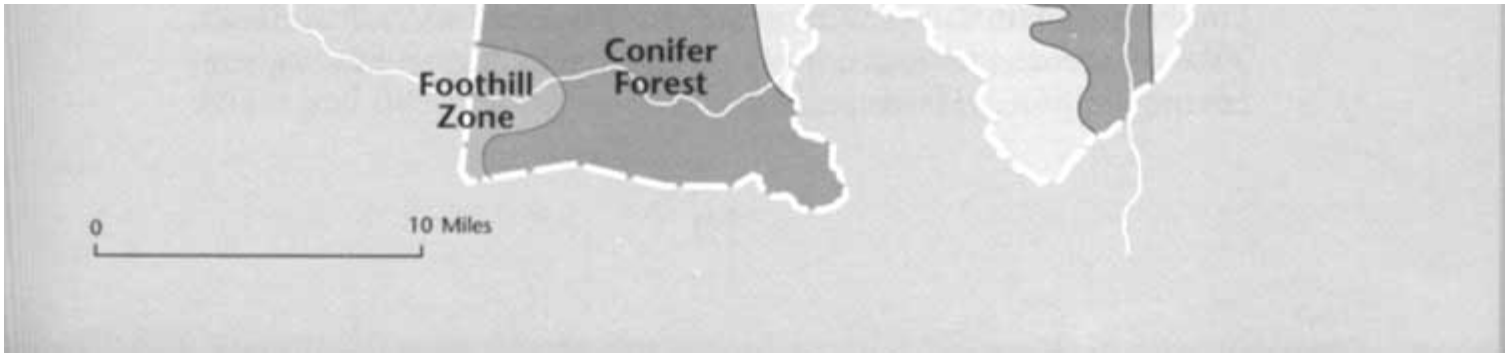

Important Place Names of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
Evolution Valley
Muir Pass
Bishop Pass
LeConte Canyon
N
SIERRA NATIONAL FOREST
Mather Pass
Simpson Meadow
Pinchot Pass
Tehipite Valley
KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARK
Rae Lakes
Kings Canyon
SEQUOIA NATIONAL FOREST
Kearsarge Pass
Independence
Cedar Grove
Copper Creek
Roads End
Grant Grove
Wilsonia
INYO NATIONAL FOREST
Grant Grove Section
Kings Canyon National Park
Mt Brewer
Forester Pass
Redwood Mountain
Dorst Campground
Colby Pass
Crystal Cave
Lodgepole
Sherman Tree
Mt Whitney
Giant Forest
Bearpaw Meadow
Crabtree Meadow
Potwisha
Hospital Rock
SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK
Ash Mountain
Park Headquarters
Atwell Mill
Mineral King
Three Rivers

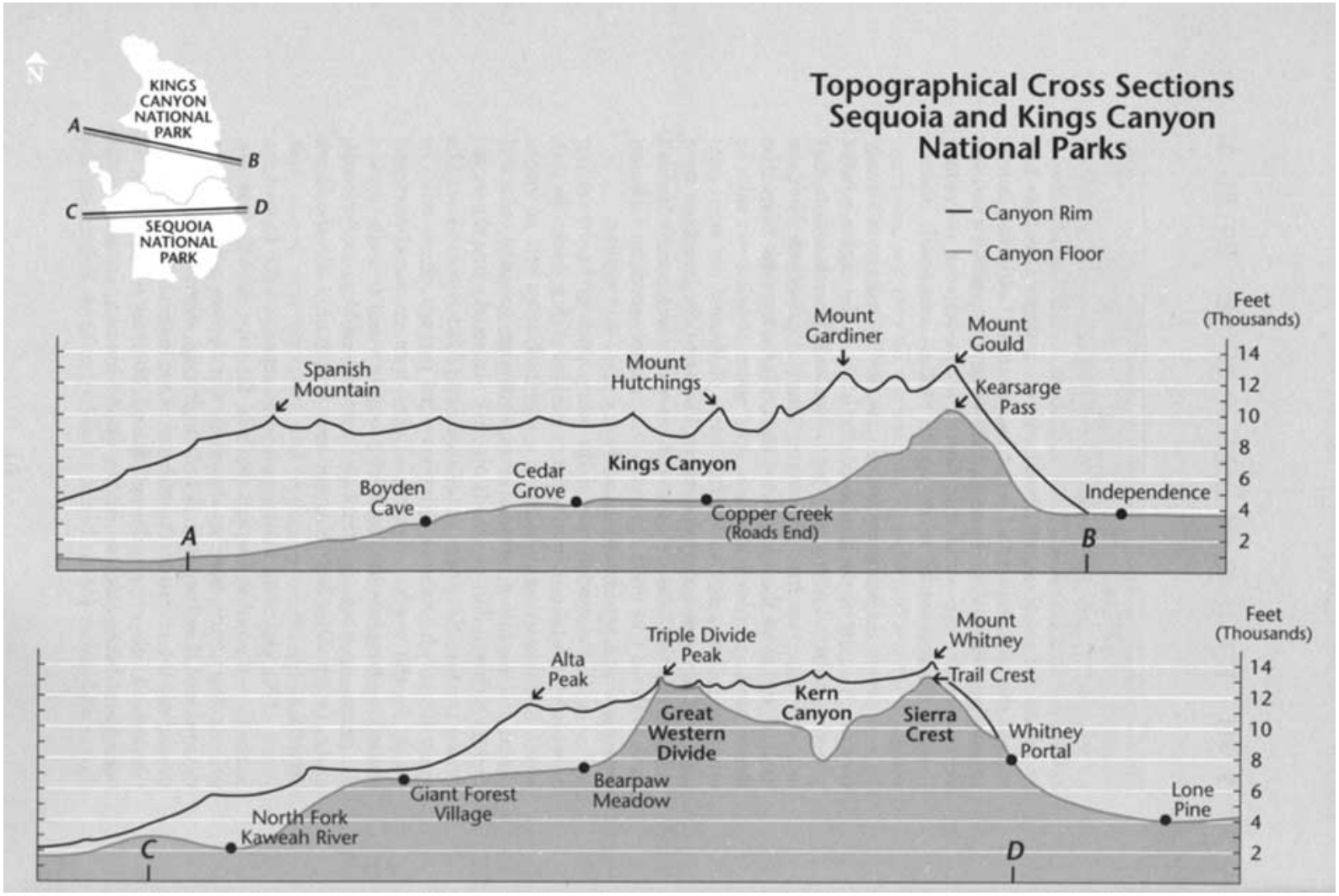

Hockett
Meadow
Kern Canyon
Ranger Station
0
10 Miles
SEQUOIA NATIONAL FOREST

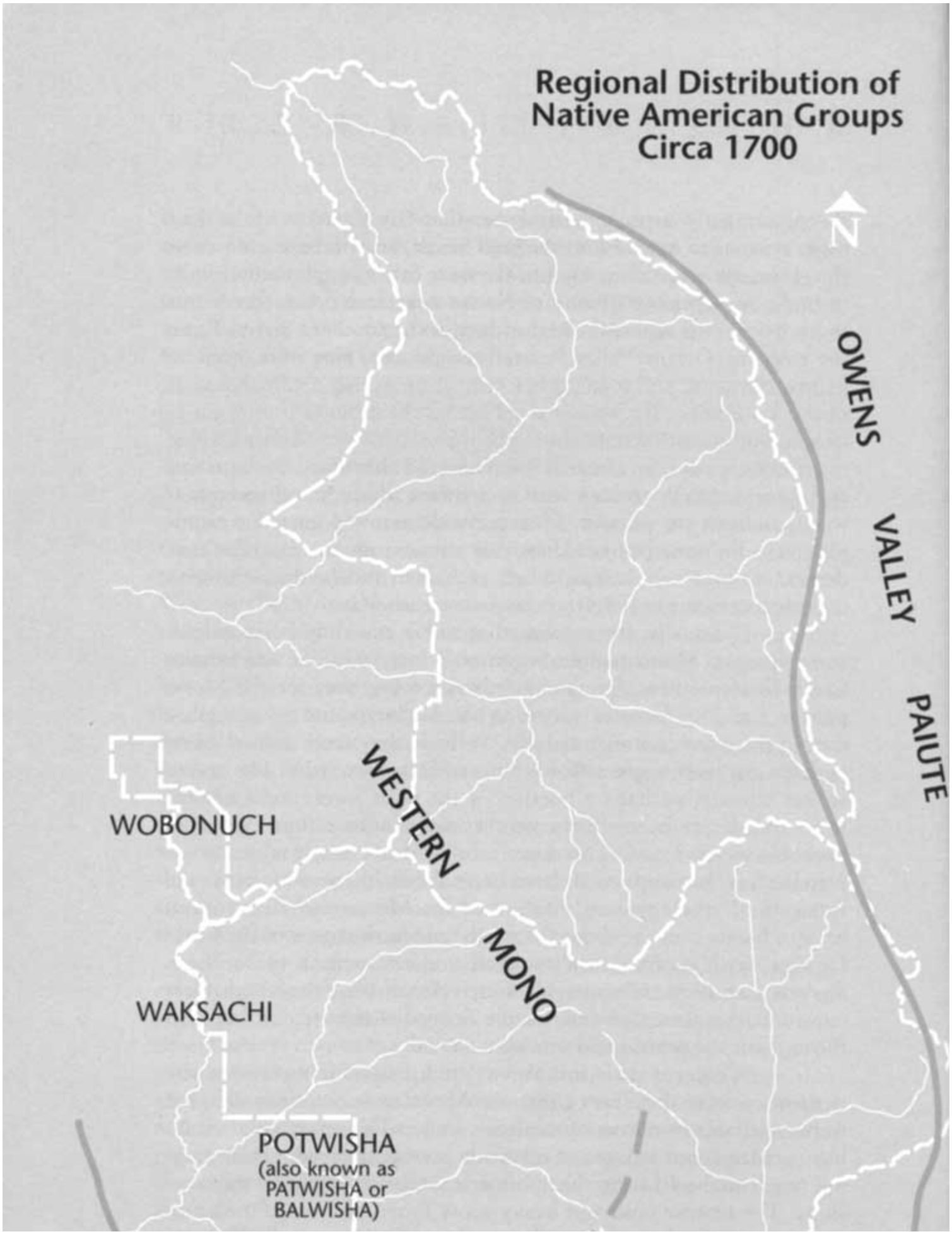

Physical Features of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
South Fork San Joaquin River
GODDARD DIVIDE
SIERRA CREST
N
OWENS VALLEY
Middle Fork Kings River
MONARCH DIVIDE
South Fork Kings River
Woods Creek
Kings River
South Fork Kings River
Kings Canyon
Bubbs Creek
Roaring River
SILLIMAN CREST
KINGS-KERN DIVIDE
SIERRA CREST
North Fork Kaweah River
Marble Fork Kaweah River
Middle Fork Kaweah River
WESTERN DIVIDE
East Fork Kaweah River
Kaweah River
GREAT


n Fork Kaweah River
Nort
0
10 Miles

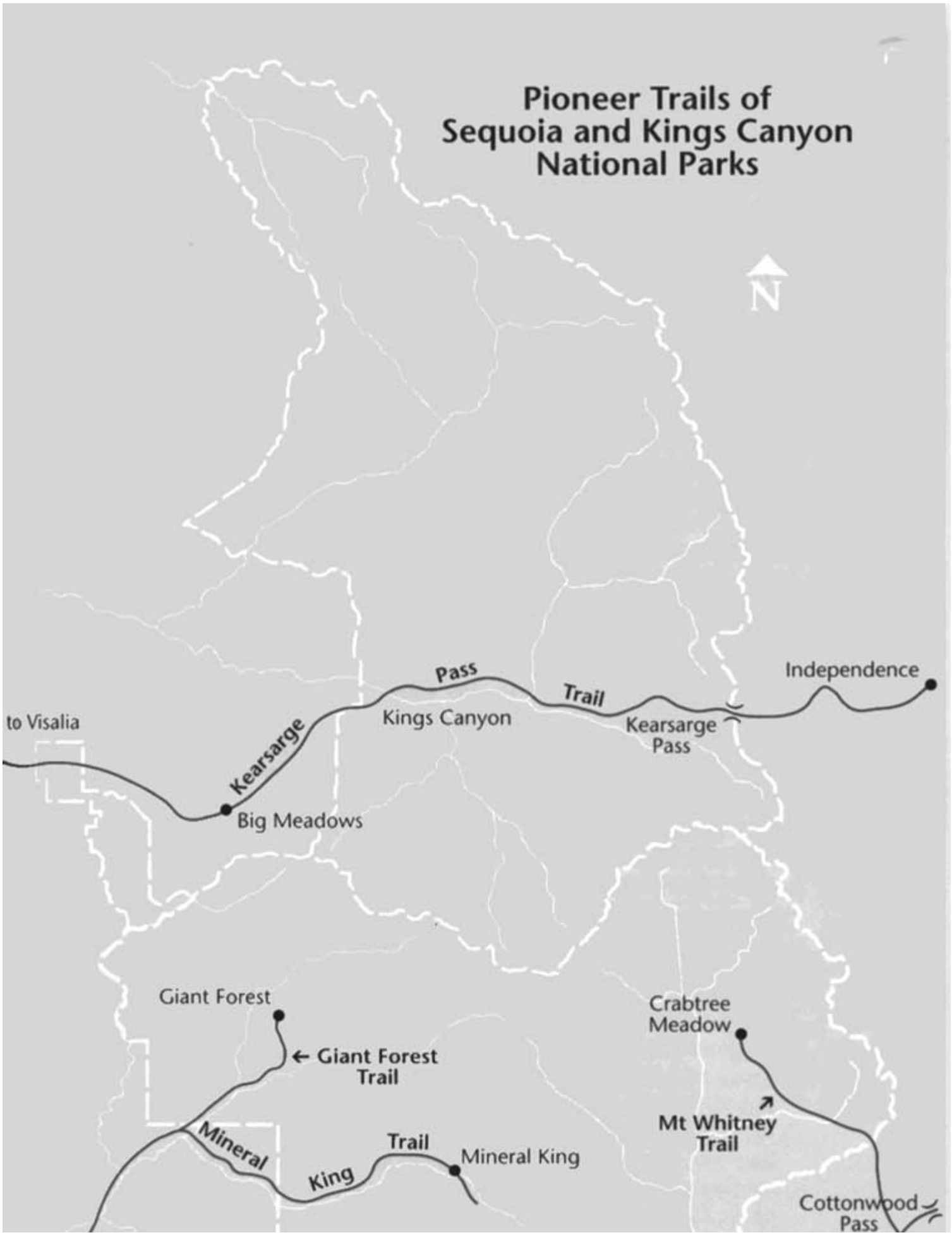

Natural Vegetation Zones
of Sequoia and Kings Canyon
National Parks
Conifer
Forest
Alpine
Zone
N
Conifer
Forest
Alpine
Zone
Conifer
Forest
Conifer
Forest
Alpine
Zone
Conifer
Forest
Foothill
Zone
Alpine
Zone
Conifer
Forest
Foothill
Zone
Alpine
Zone

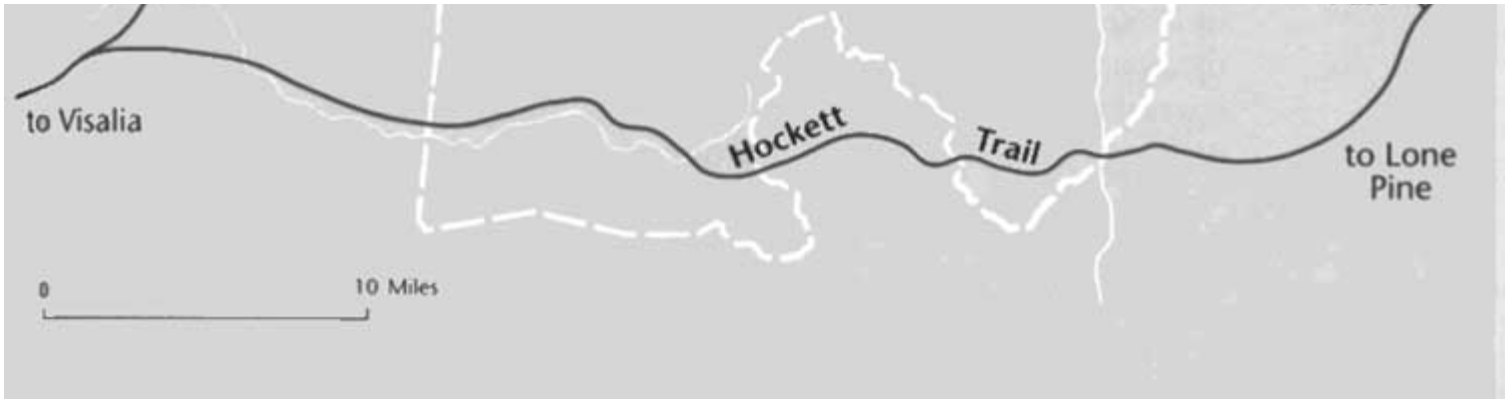

Foothill
Zone
Conifer
Forest
0
10 Miles


Topographical Cross Sections
Sequoia and Kings Canyon
National Parks
KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARK
SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK
A
B
C
D
Canyon Rim
Canyon Floor
Feet (Thousands)
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
Spanish Mountain
Mount Hutchings
Mount Gardiner
Mount Gould
Kearsarge Pass
Kings Canyon
Cedar Grove
Boyden Cave
Copper Creek (Roads End)
Independence
Triple Divide Peak
Mount Whitney
Alta Peak
Trail Crest
Kern Canyon
Great Western Divide
Sierra Crest
Whitney Portal
Giant Forest Village
Bearpaw Meadow
Lone Pine
North Fork Kaweah River


Regional Distribution of
Native American Groups
Circa 1700
N
OWENS
VALLEY
PAIUTE
WESTERN
MONO
WOBONUCH
WAKSACHI
POTWISHA
(also known as
PATWISHA or
BALWISHA)

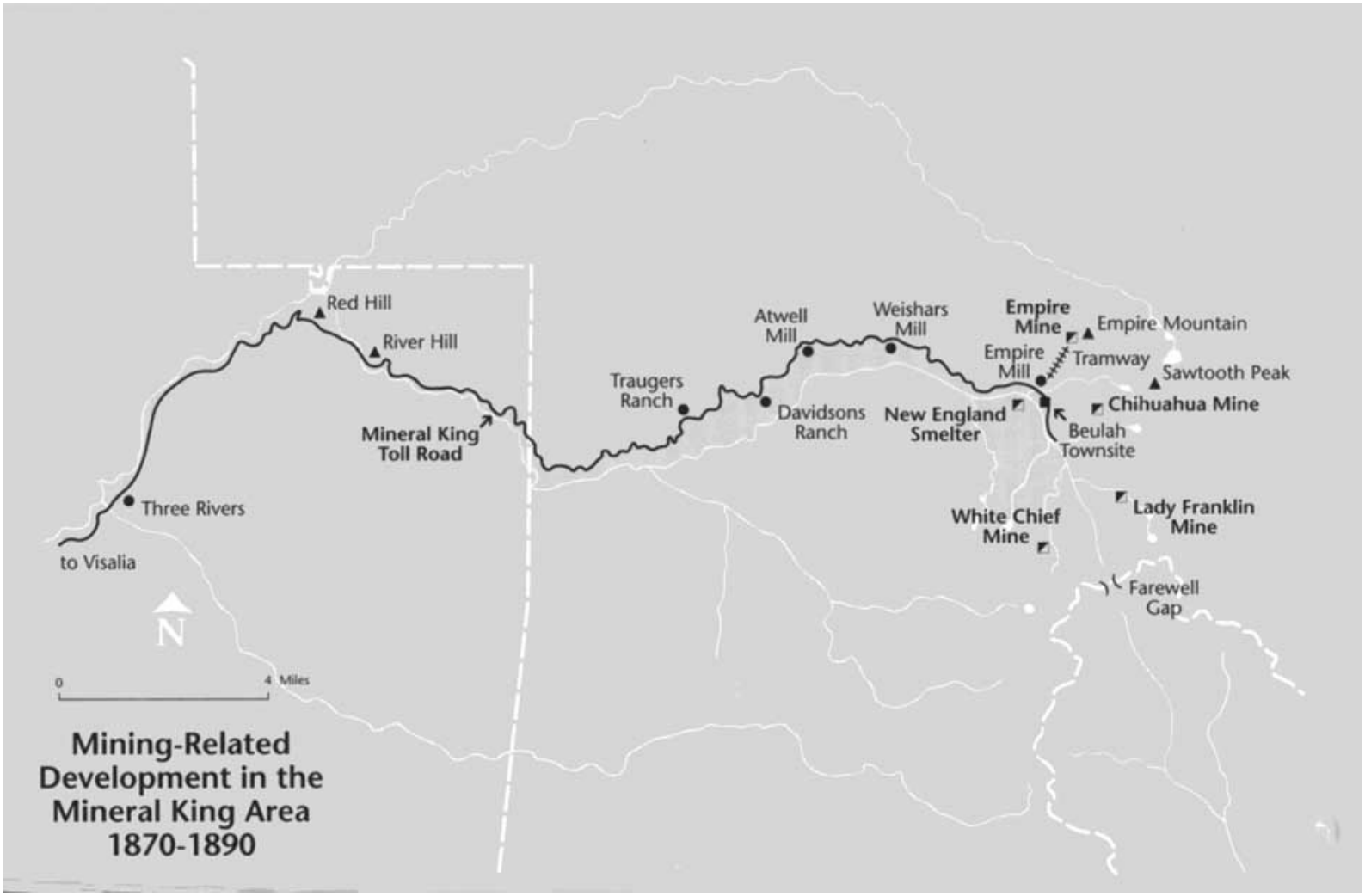

TUBUTULABAL
YOKUTS


Pioneer Trails of
Sequoia and Kings Canyon
National Parks
N
Pass
Trail
Independence
to Visalia
Kearsarge
Kings Canyon
Kearsarge
Pass
Big Meadows
Giant Forest
Crabtree
Meadow
← Giant Forest
Trail
Mt Whitney
Trail
Mineral
King
Trail
Mineral King
Cottonwood
Pass

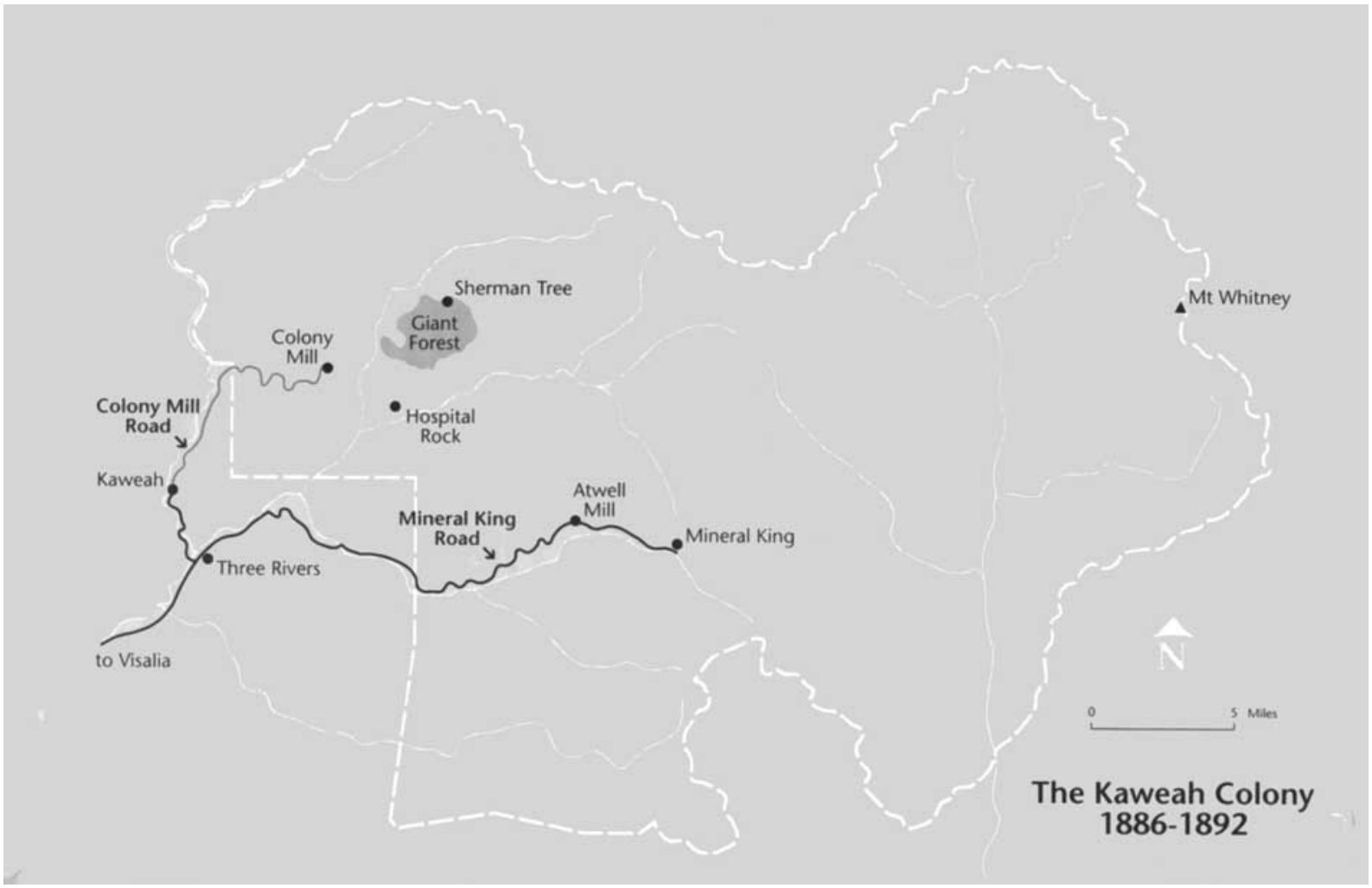

to Visalia
Hockett
Trail
to Lone Pine
0
10 Miles

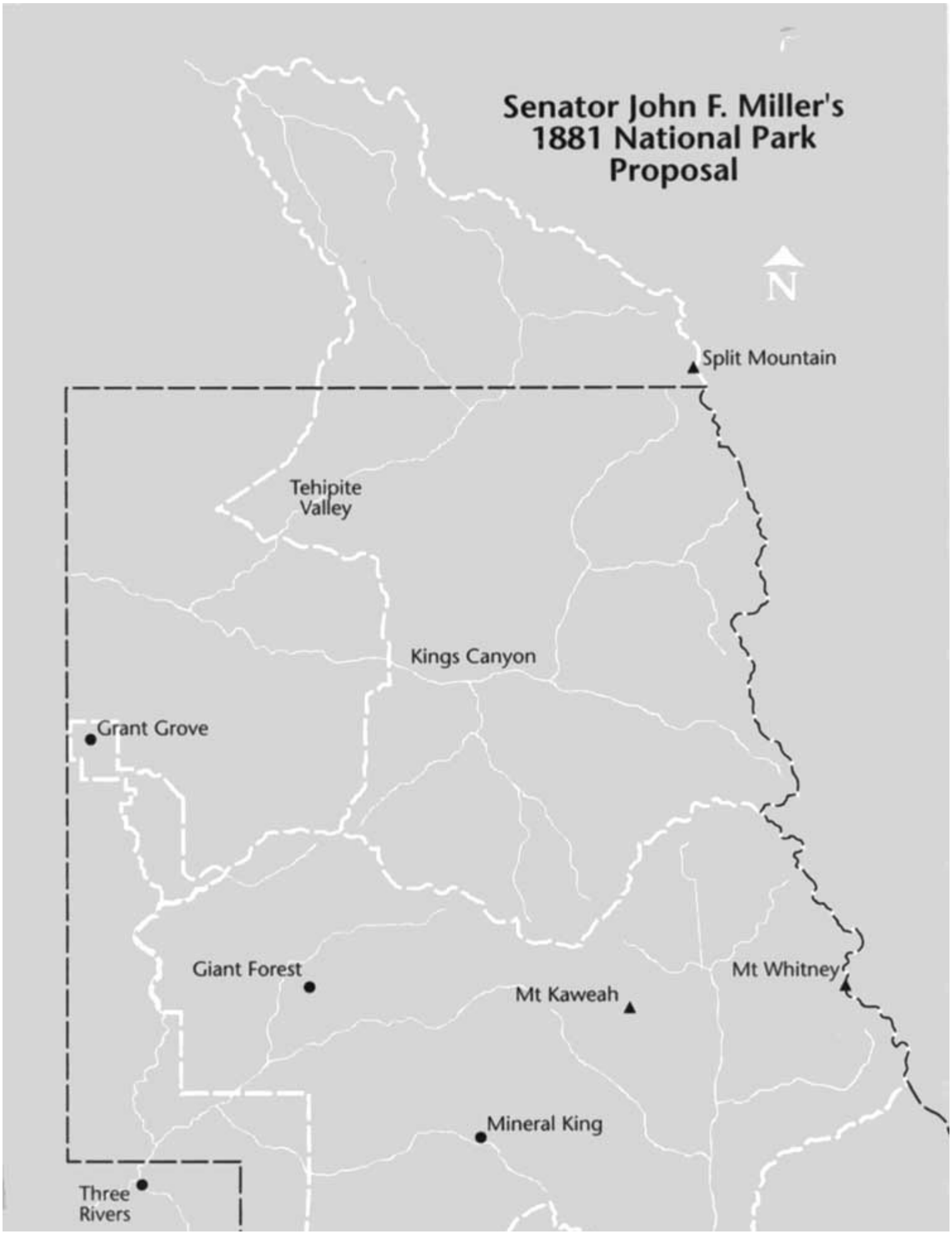

Explorations of the California Geological Survey 1864
Mt Goddard
N
Tehipite Valley
Mt Clarence King
Route of Main Party
Kings Canyon
Kearsarge Pass
Independence
Grant Grove
Mt Brewer
Mt Silliman
King's first attempt to climb Mt Whitney
Mt Tyndall
Giant Forest
Mt Whitney
Mt Langley
King's second attempt to climb

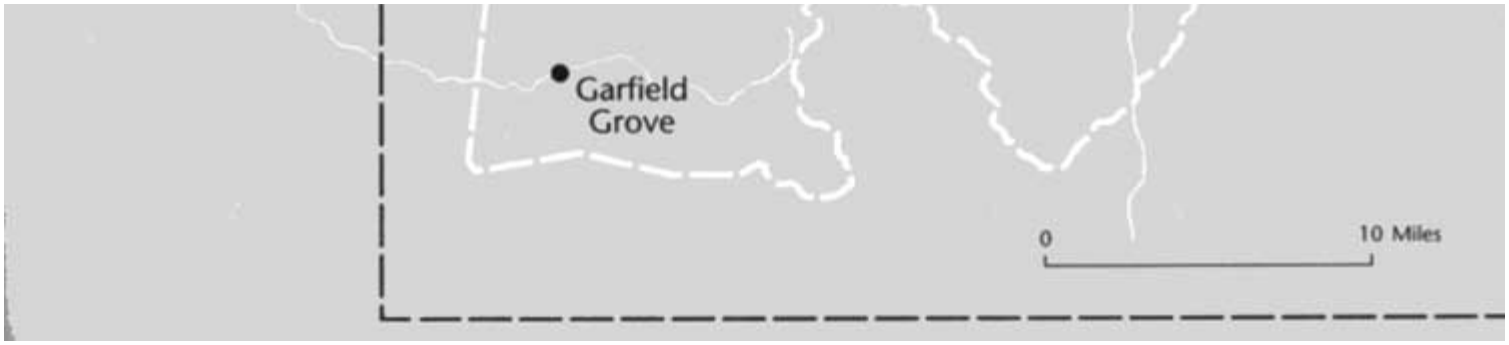

Mt Whitney
0
10 Miles

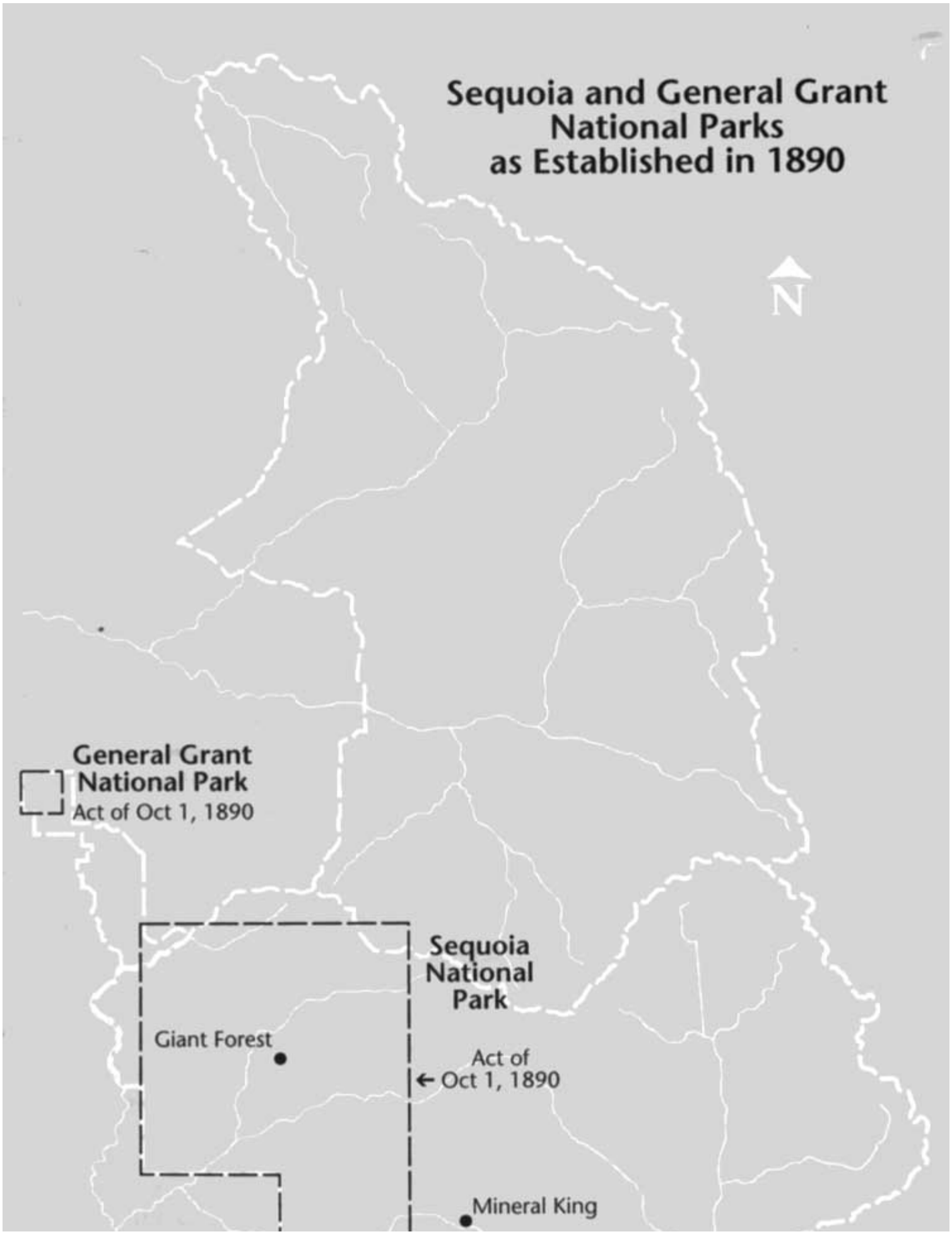


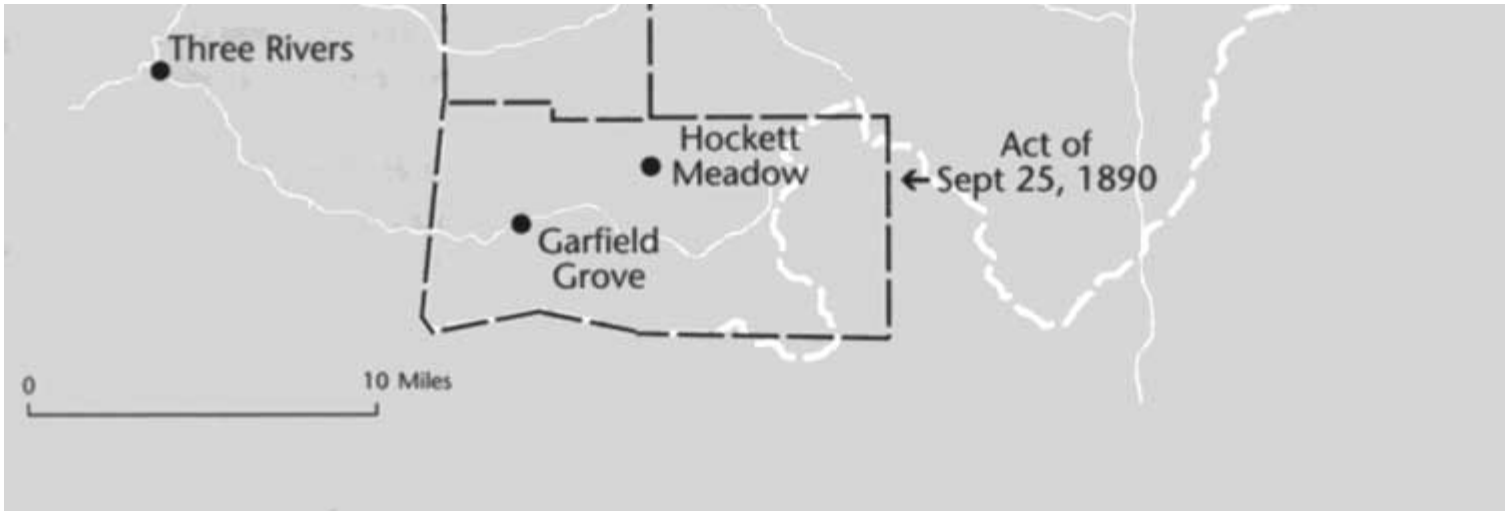
Mining-Related Development in the Mineral King Area 1870-1890

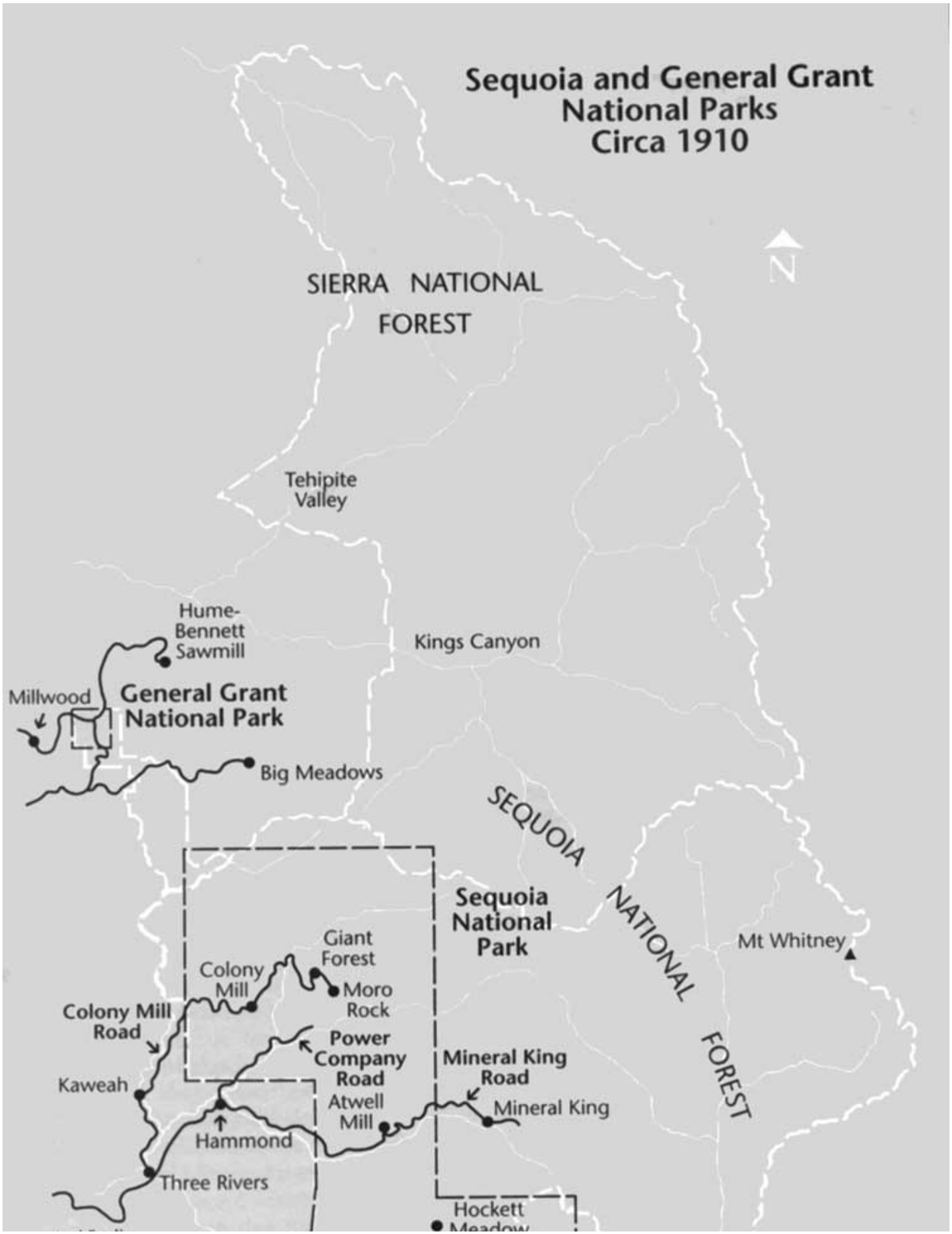

Sherman Tree
Giant Forest
Mt Whitney
Colony Mill
Colony Mill Road
Hospital Rock
Kaweah
Atwell Mill
Mineral King Road
Mineral King
Three Rivers
to Visalia
N
0
5 Miles
The Kaweah Colony
1886-1892


Senator John F. Miller's
1881 National Park
Proposal
N
Split Mountain
Tehipite
Valley
Kings Canyon
Grant Grove
Giant Forest
Mt Kaweah
Mt Whitney
Mineral King
Three
Rivers

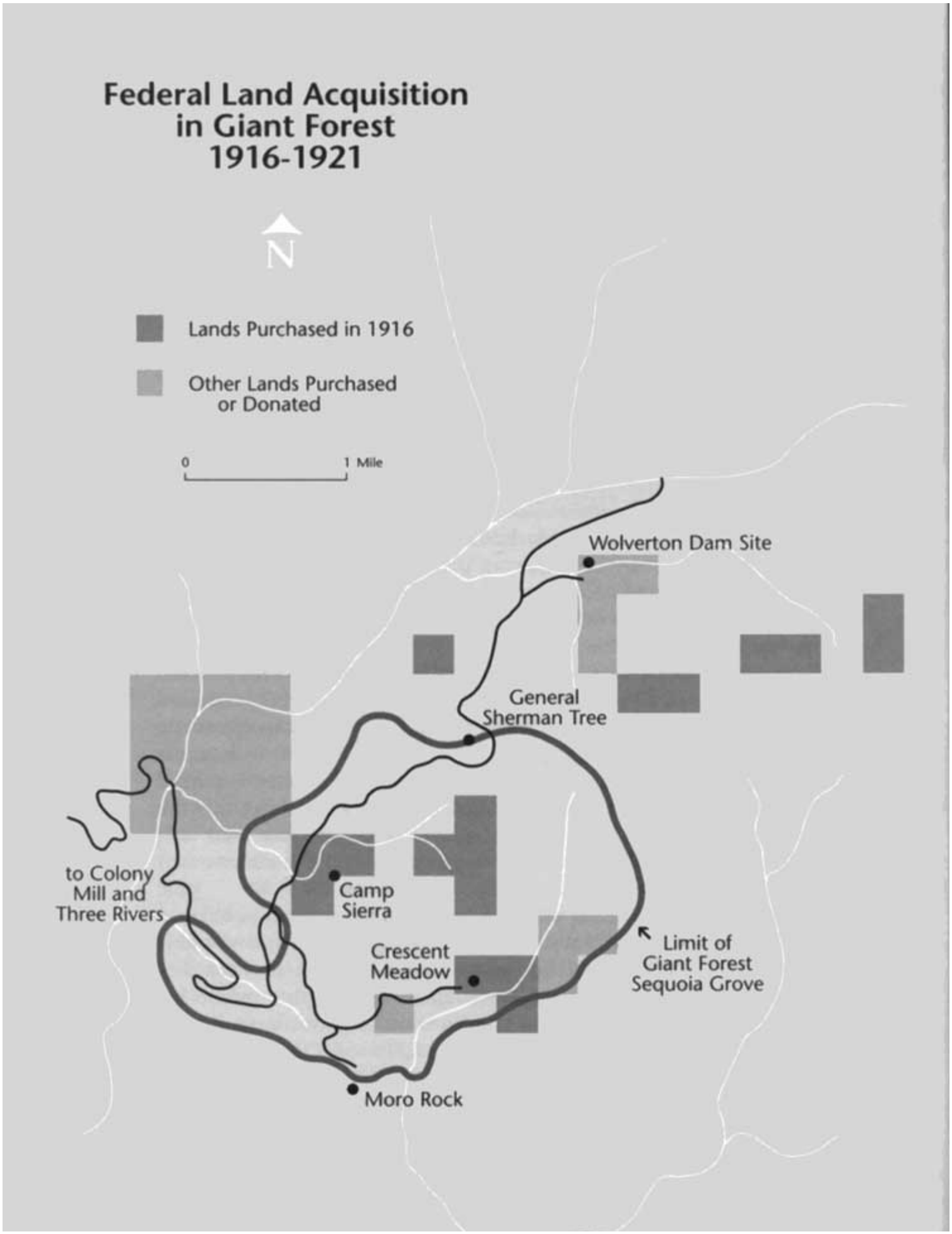

Garfield
Grove
0
10 Miles


Sequoia and General Grant
National Parks
as Established in 1890
N
General Grant
National Park
Act of Oct 1, 1890
Sequoia
National
Park
Giant Forest
Act of
← Oct 1, 1890
Mineral King

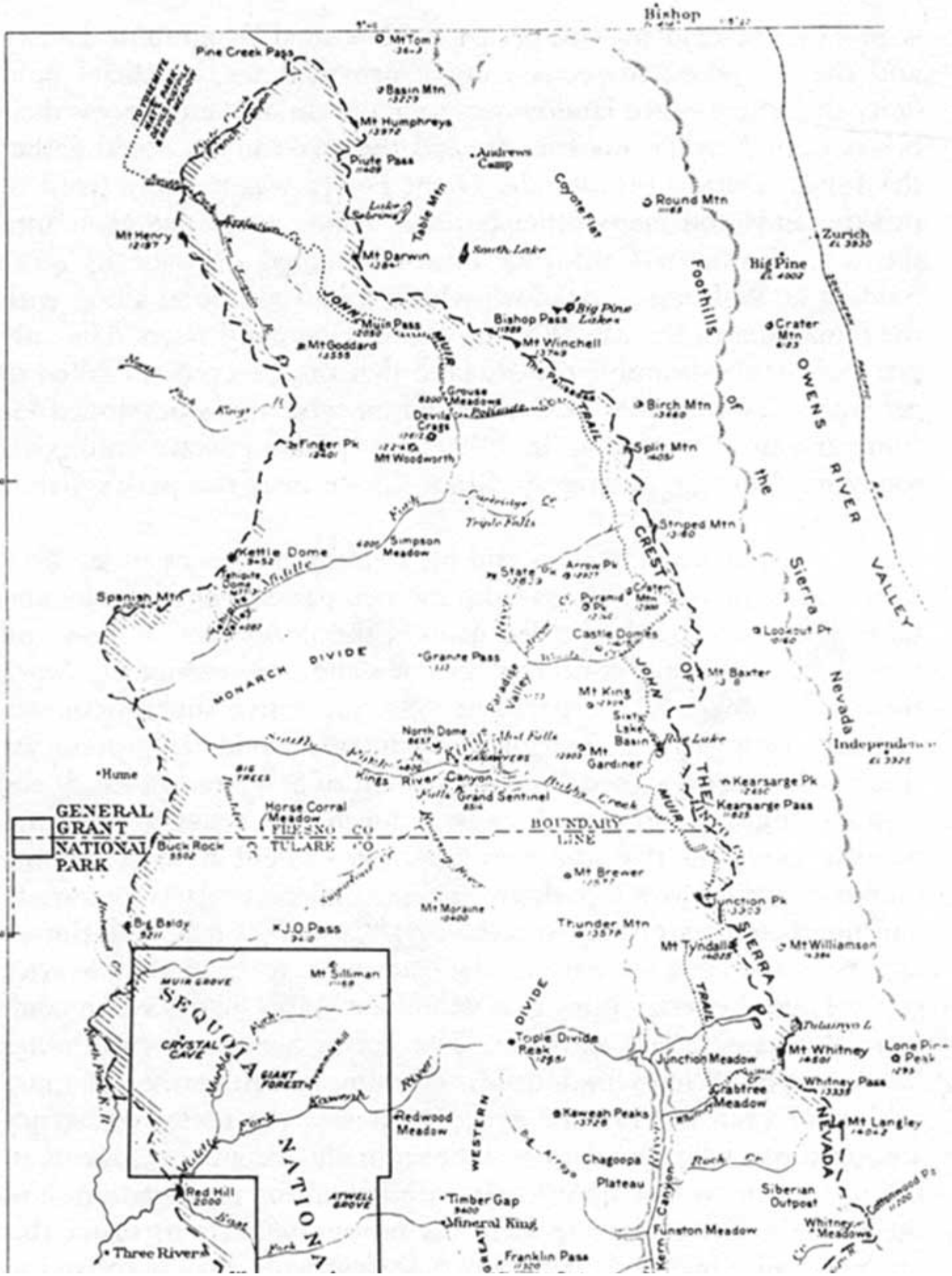

Three Rivers
Hockett Meadow
Act of Sept 25, 1890
Garfield Grove
0
10 Miles

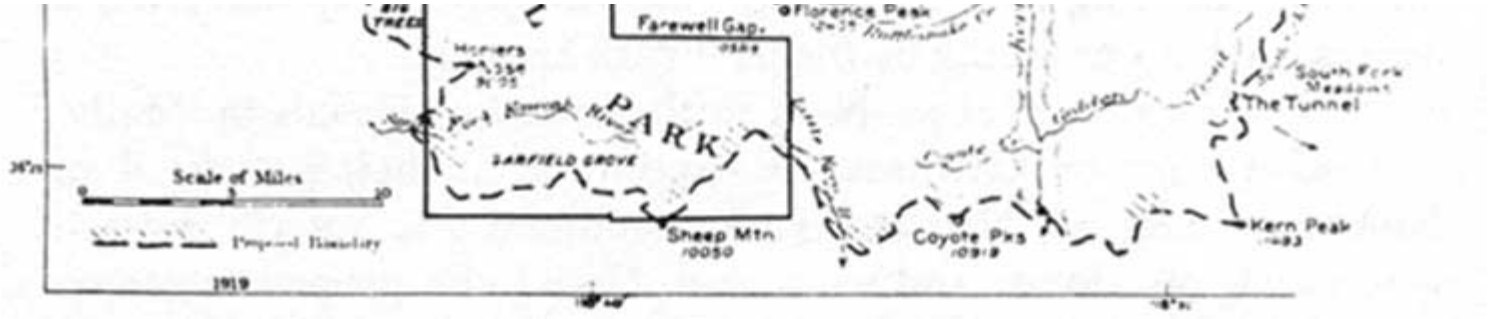

Sequoia and General Grant
National Parks
Circa 1910
N
SIERRA NATIONAL
FOREST
Tehipite
Valley
Hume-
Bennett
Sawmill
Kings Canyon
Millwood
General Grant
National Park
Big Meadows
SEQUOIA
NATIONAL
FOREST
Sequoia
National
Park
Giant
Forest
Colony
Mill
Moro
Rock
Mt Whitney
Colony Mill
Road
Power
Company
Road
Mineral King
Road
Kaweah
Atwell
Mill
Mineral King
Hammond
Three Rivers
Hockett

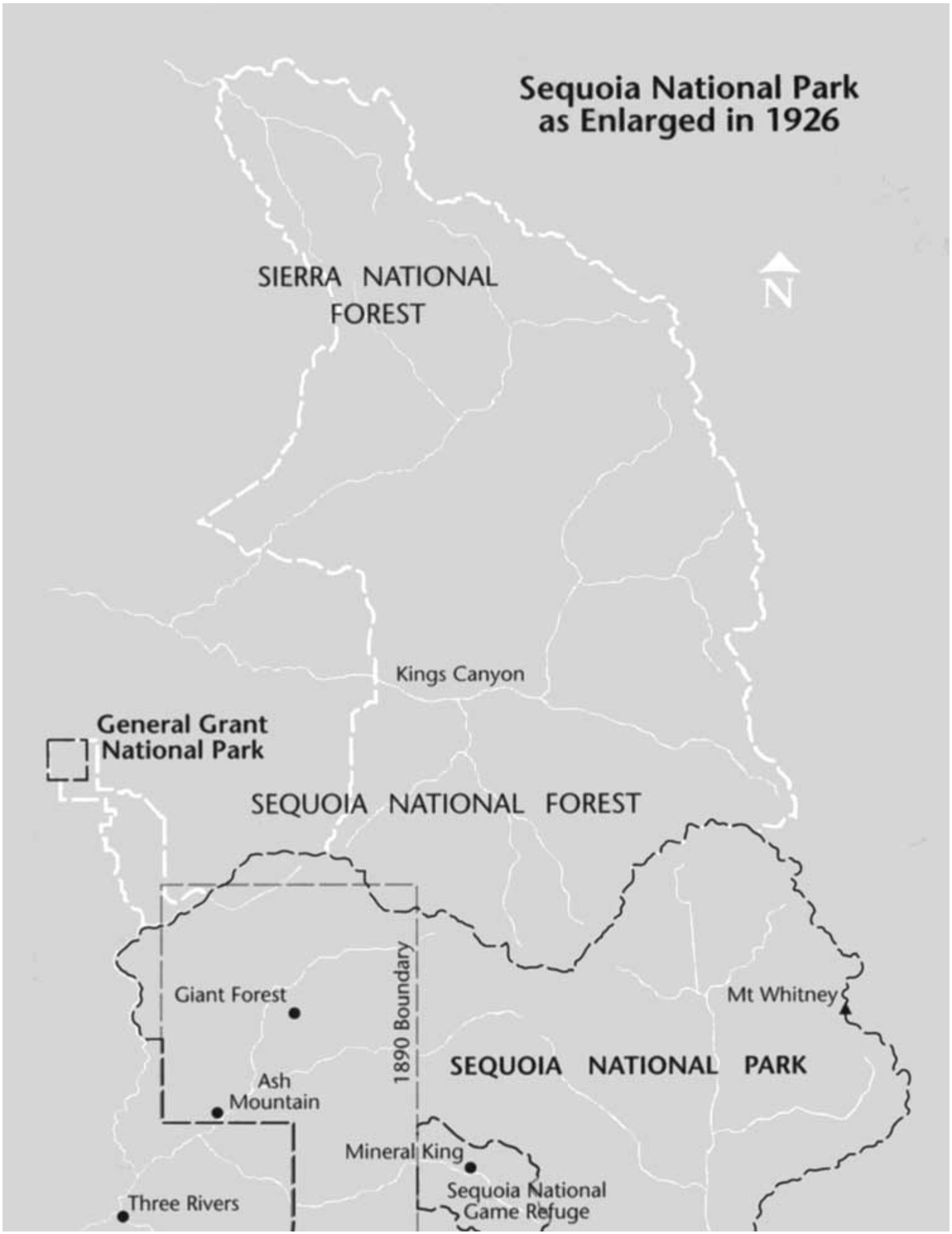

to Visalia
Garfield
Grove
0
10 Miles


Federal Land Acquisition
in Giant Forest
1916-1921
N
Lands Purchased in 1916
Other Lands Purchased
or Donated
0
1 Mile
Wolverton Dam Site
General
Sherman Tree
to Colony
Mill and
Three Rivers
Camp
Sierra
Crescent
Meadow
Limit of
Giant Forest
Sequoia Grove
Moro Rock

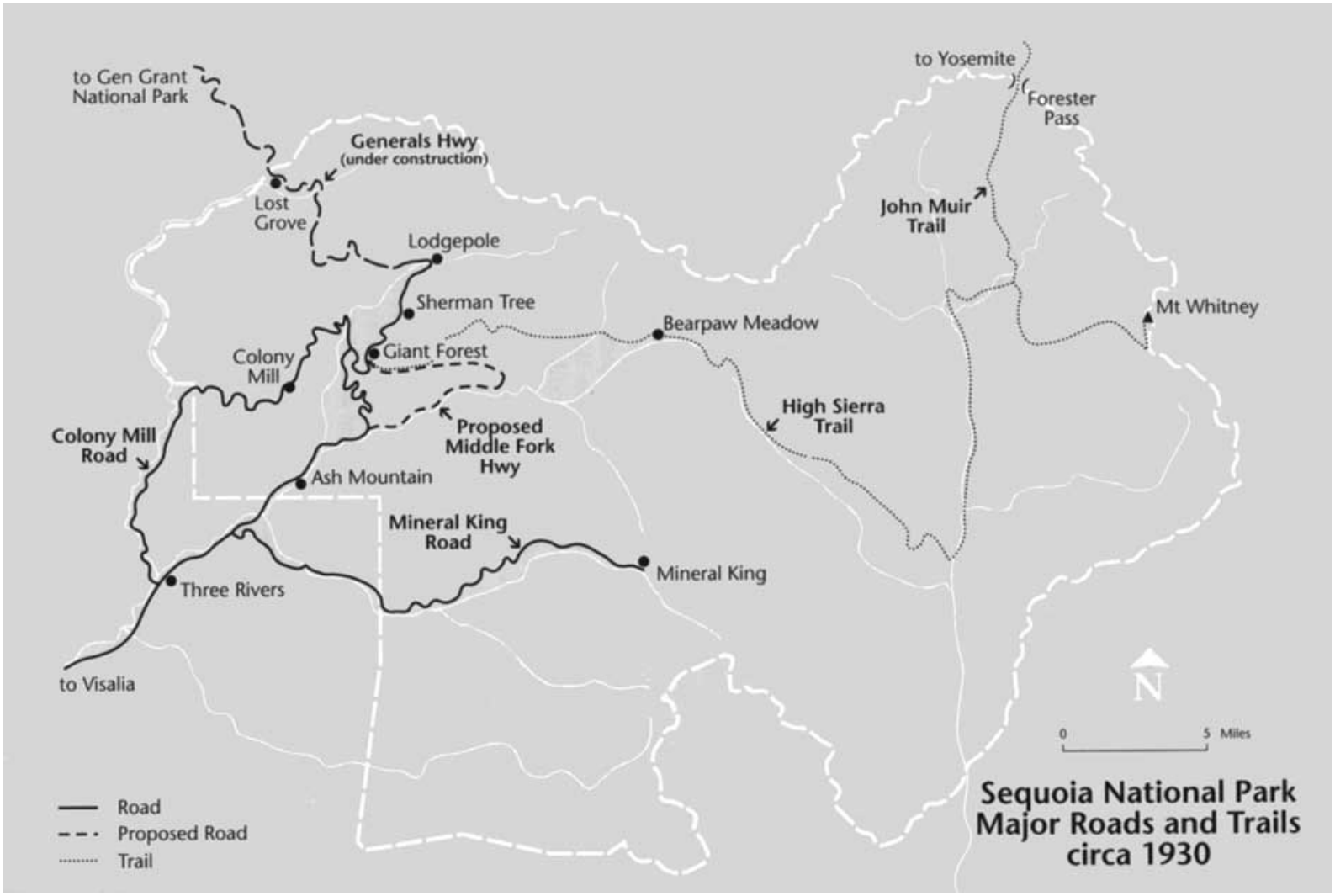


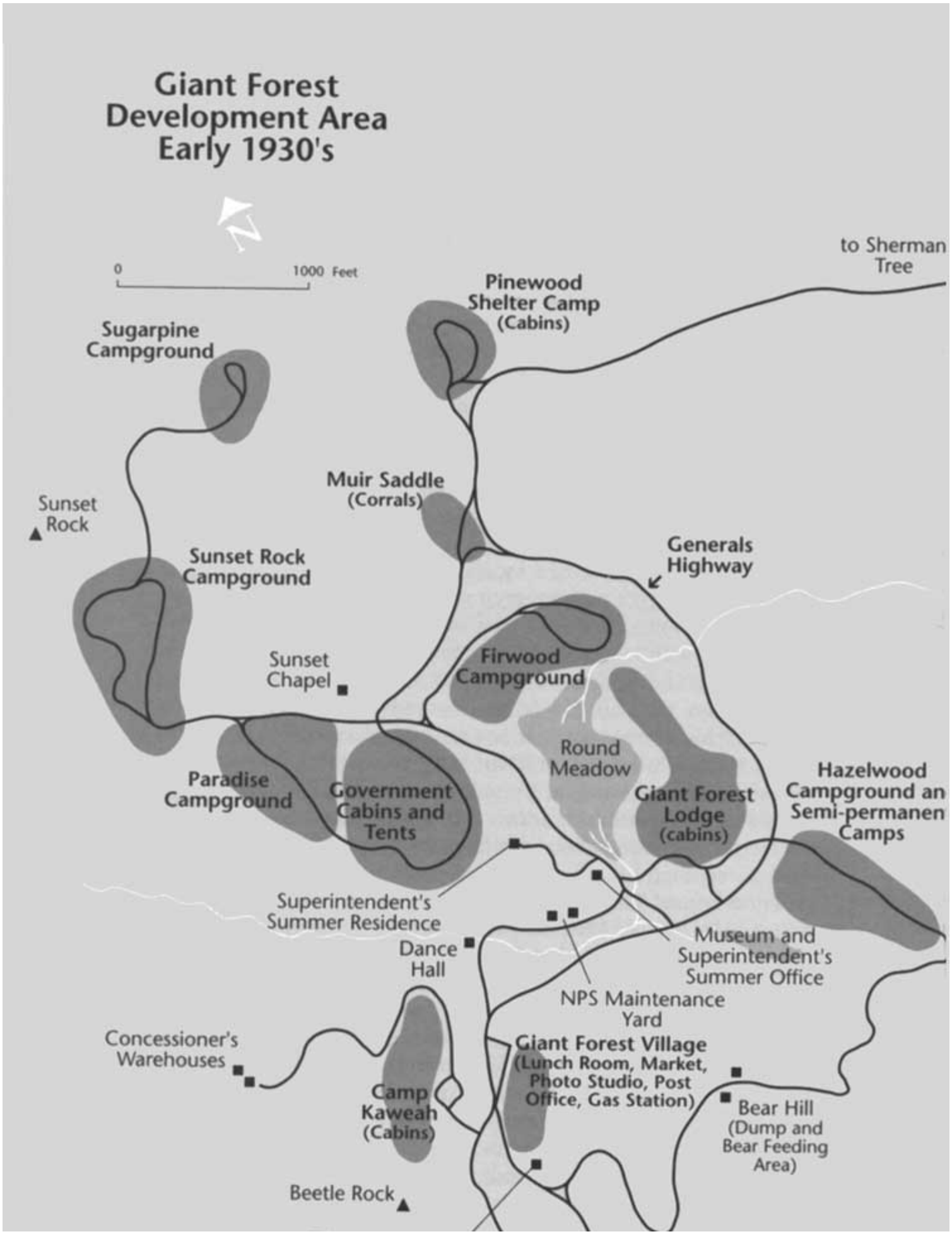

Bishop
Mt Tom
Pine Creek Pass
Basin Mtn
Mt Humphreys
Piute Pass
Andrews Camp
Table Mtn
Coyote Flat
Round Mtn
Zurich
Big Pine
Mt Henry
Mt Darwin
South Lake
Foothills of the Sierra
OWENS RIVER VALLEY
JOHN MUIR TRAIL
Muir Pass
Bishop Pass
Big Pine Lakes
Mt Goddard
Mt Winchell
Crater Mtn
Birch Mtn
Grouse Meadows
Devils Crags
Mt Woodworth
Finger Pk
Split Mtn
Striped Mtn
Kettle Dome
Simpson Meadow
Spanish Mtn
State Pk
Arrow Pk
Pyramid Pk
Crater Mtn
Castle Domes
Lookout Pt
CREST
Granite Pass
MONARCH DIVIDE
Paradise Valley
Mt Baxter
Mt King
Sixty Lake Basin
Rae Lakes
North Dome
Kings River Canyon
Grand Sentinel
Mt Gardiner
Kearsarge Pk
Kearsarge Pass
Hume
BIG TREES
Horse Corral Meadow
FRESNO CO
TULARE CO
BOUNDARY LINE
GENERAL GRANT NATIONAL PARK
Buck Rock
Mt Brewer
Mt Moraine
Big Baldy
J.O Pass
Thunder Mtn
Mt Tyndall
Mt Williamson
Junction Pk
SIERRA CREST
SEQUOIA
MUIR GROVE
Mt Silliman
CRYSTAL CAVE
GIANT FOREST
Kaweah
Redwood Meadow
Topic Divide Peak
Junction Meadow
Mt Whitney
Whitney Pass
Crabtree Meadow
Kaweah Peaks
Mt Langley
Chagoopa Plateau
Siberian Outpost
Red Hill 2000
Three Rivers
Timber Gap
Mineral King
ATWELL GROVE
Funston Meadow
Franklin Pass
Whitney Meadows
WESTERN DIVIDE
GREAT WESTERN DIVIDE
Kern Canyon
NEVADA

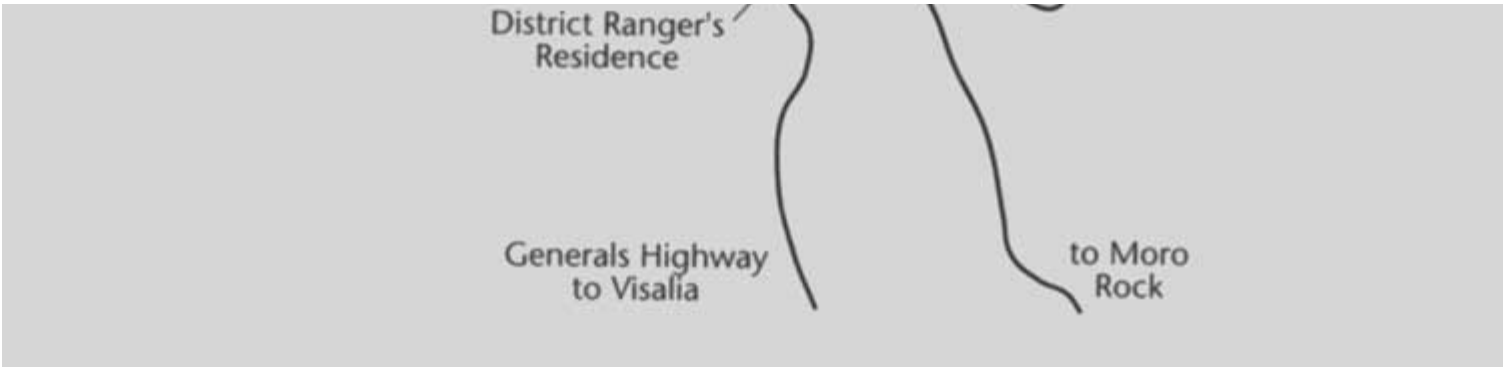

Farewell Gap
Florence Peak
PARK
GARFIELD GROVE
Scale of Miles
Sheep Mtn
10050
Coyote Pks
10919
Kern Peak
The Tunnel
1919

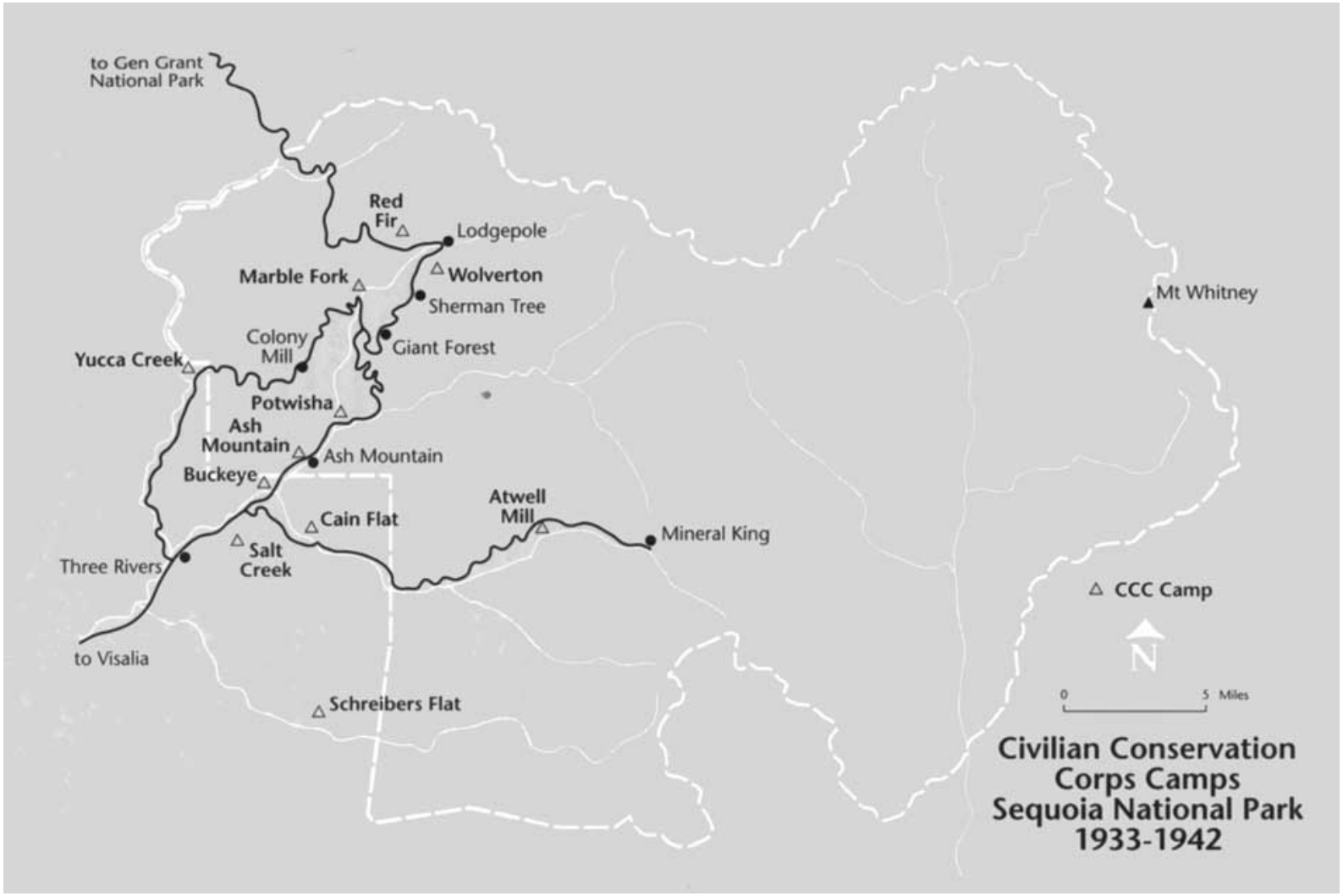

Sequoia National Park
as Enlarged in 1926
SIERRA NATIONAL
FOREST
N
Kings Canyon
General Grant
National Park
SEQUOIA NATIONAL FOREST
1890 Boundary
Giant Forest
Mt Whitney
SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK
Ash
Mountain
Mineral King
Sequoia National
Game Refuge
Three Rivers

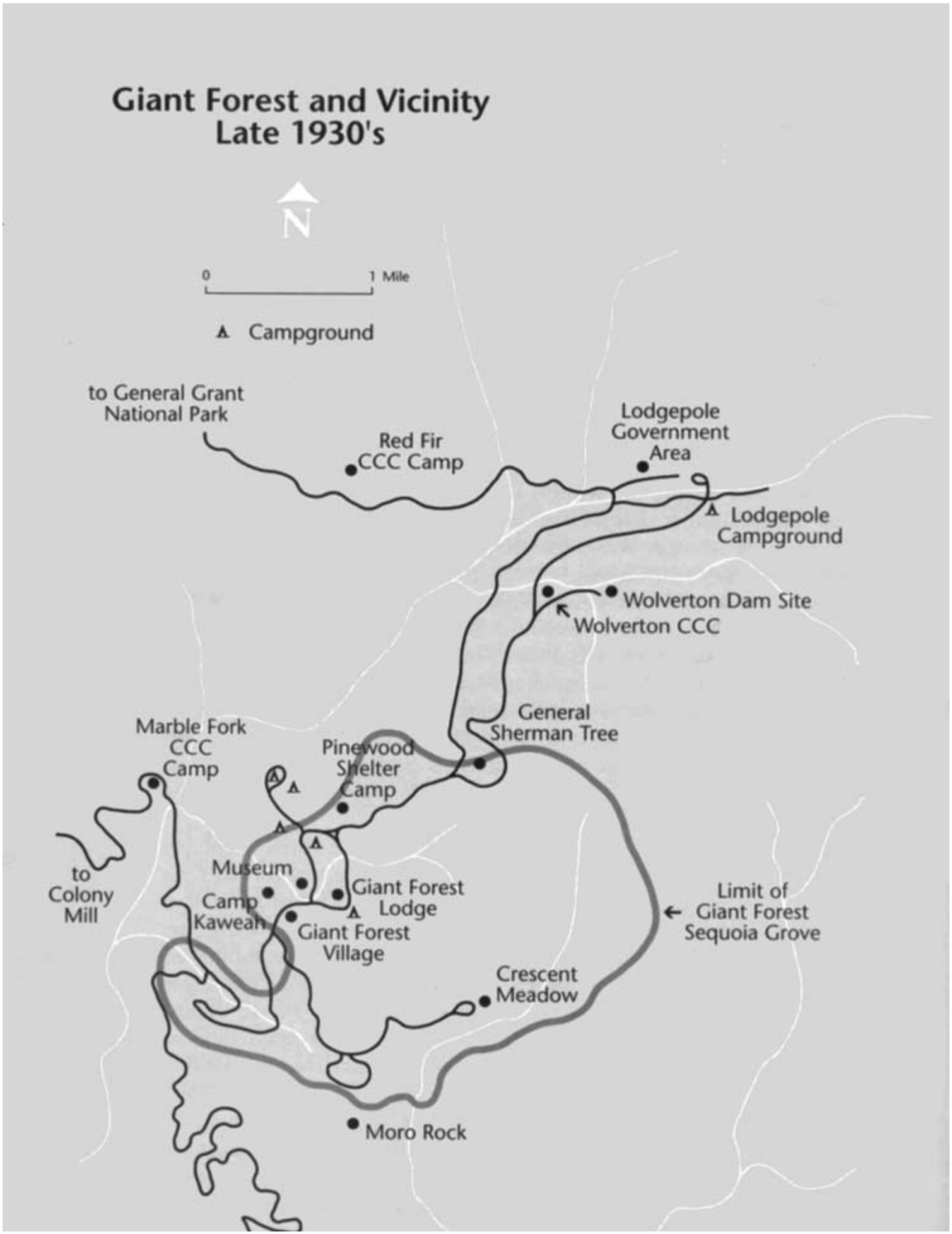

0
10 Miles
SEQUOIA NATIONAL FOREST


to Gen Grant National Park
Generals Hwy (under construction)
Lost Grove
Lodgepole
Sherman Tree
Giant Forest
Colony Mill
Colony Mill Road
Ash Mountain
Proposed Middle Fork Hwy
Mineral King Road
Mineral King
Three Rivers
to Visalia
to Yosemite
Forester Pass
John Muir Trail
Bearpaw Meadow
High Sierra Trail
Mt Whitney
N
0
5 Miles
Road
Proposed Road
Trail
Sequoia National Park
Major Roads and Trails
circa 1930

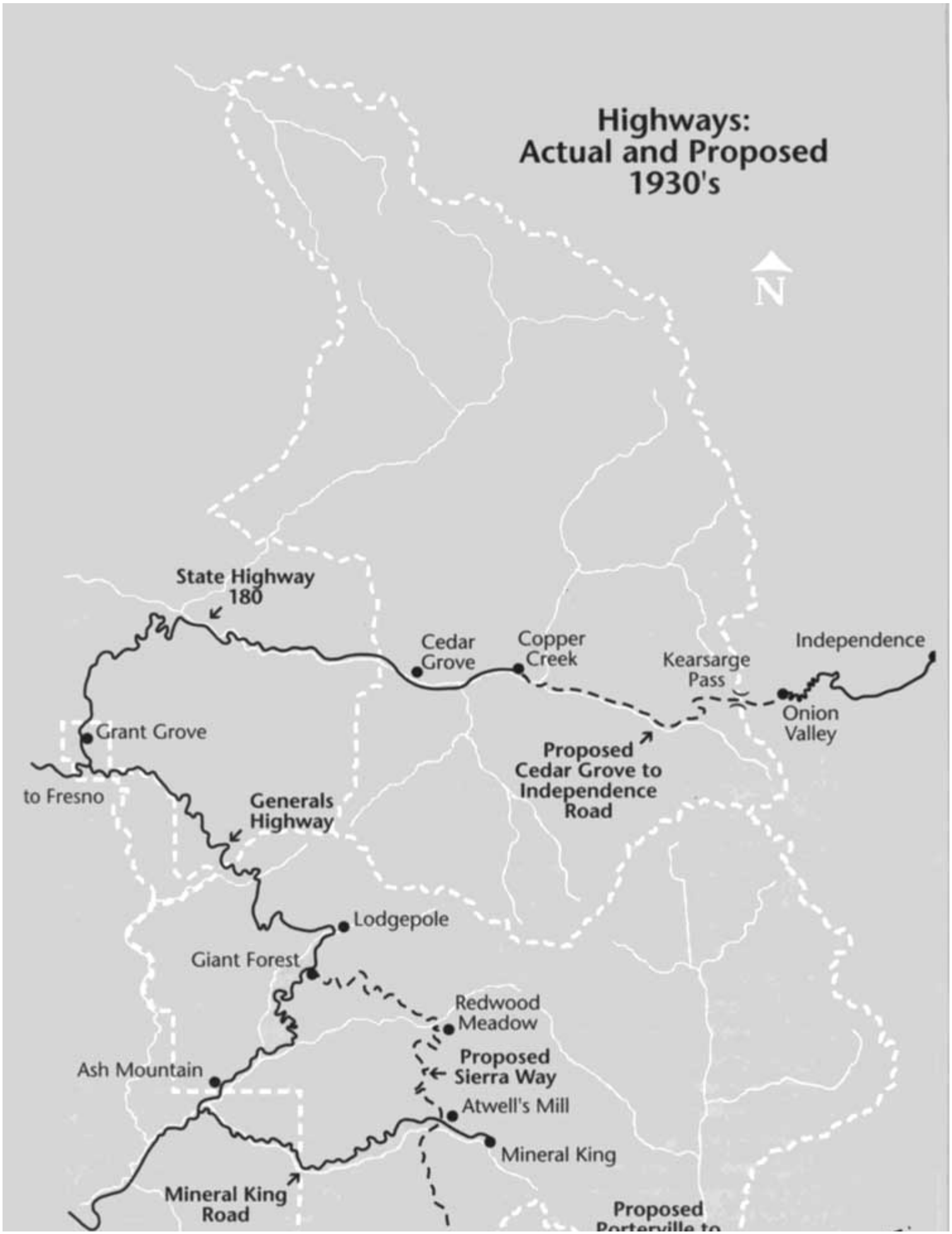

Giant Forest
Development Area
Early 1930's
N
0
1000 Feet
to Sherman
Tree
Pinewood
Shelter Camp
(Cabins)
Sugarpine
Campground
Muir Saddle
(Corrals)
Sunset
Rock
Generals
Highway
Sunset Rock
Campground
Sunset
Chapel
Firwood
Campground
Round
Meadow
Paradise
Campground
Government
Cabins and
Tents
Giant Forest
Lodge
(cabins)
Hazelwood
Campground an
Semi-permanen
Camps
Superintendent's
Summer Residence
Dance
Hall
Museum and
Superintendent's
Summer Office
NPS Maintenance
Yard
Concessioner's
Warehouses
Giant Forest Village
(Lunch Room, Market,
Photo Studio, Post
Office, Gas Station)
Camp
Kaweah
(Cabins)
Bear Hill
(Dump and
Bear Feeding
Area)
Beetle Rock

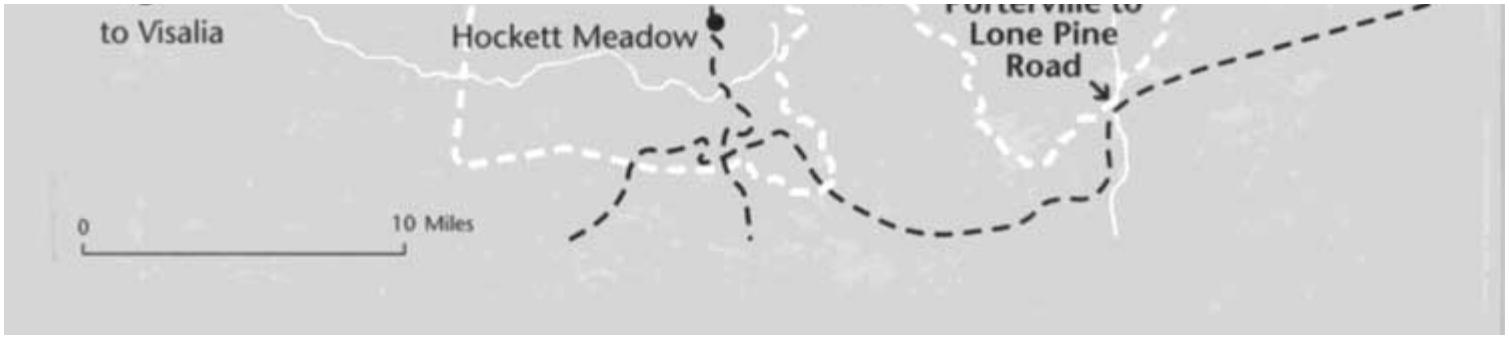

District Ranger's
Residence
Generals Highway
to Visalia
to Moro
Rock

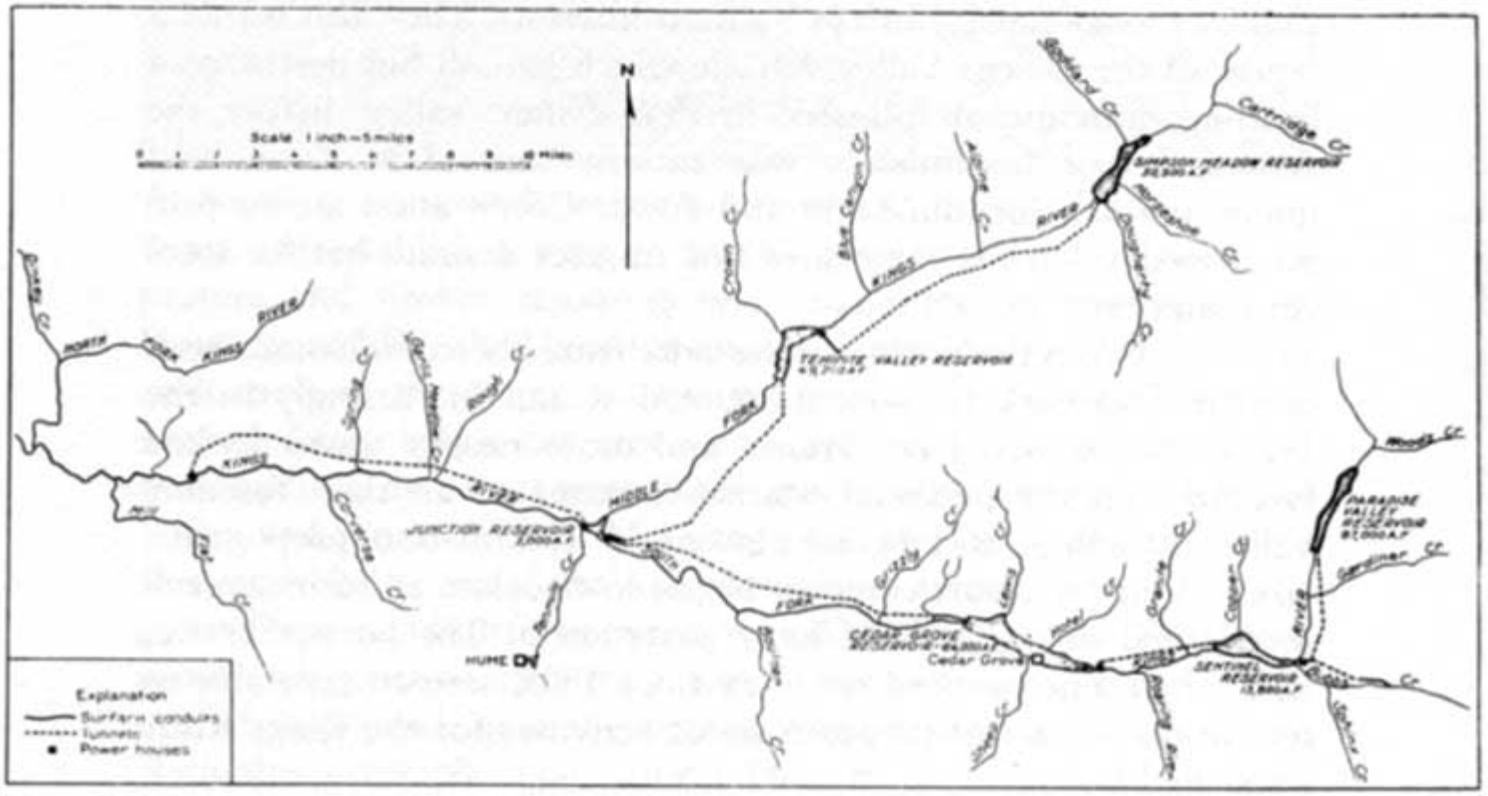

to Gen Grant National Park
Red Fir
Lodgepole
Wolverton
Marble Fork
Sherman Tree
Mt Whitney
Colony Mill
Giant Forest
Yucca Creek
Potwisha
Ash Mountain
Ash Mountain
Buckeye
Atwell Mill
Cain Flat
Mineral King
Salt Creek
Three Rivers
CCC Camp
N
0
5 Miles
to Visalia
Schreibers Flat
Civilian Conservation Corps Camps Sequoia National Park 1933-1942


Giant Forest and Vicinity
Late 1930's
N
0
1 Mile
Campground
to General Grant
National Park
Red Fir
CCC Camp
Lodgepole
Government
Area
Lodgepole
Campground
Wolverton Dam Site
Wolverton CCC
General
Sherman Tree
Marble Fork
CCC
Camp
Pinewood
Shelter
Camp
to
Colony
Mill
Museum
Camp
Kaweah
Giant Forest
Lodge
Giant Forest
Village
Limit of
Giant Forest
Sequoia Grove
Crescent
Meadow
Moro Rock

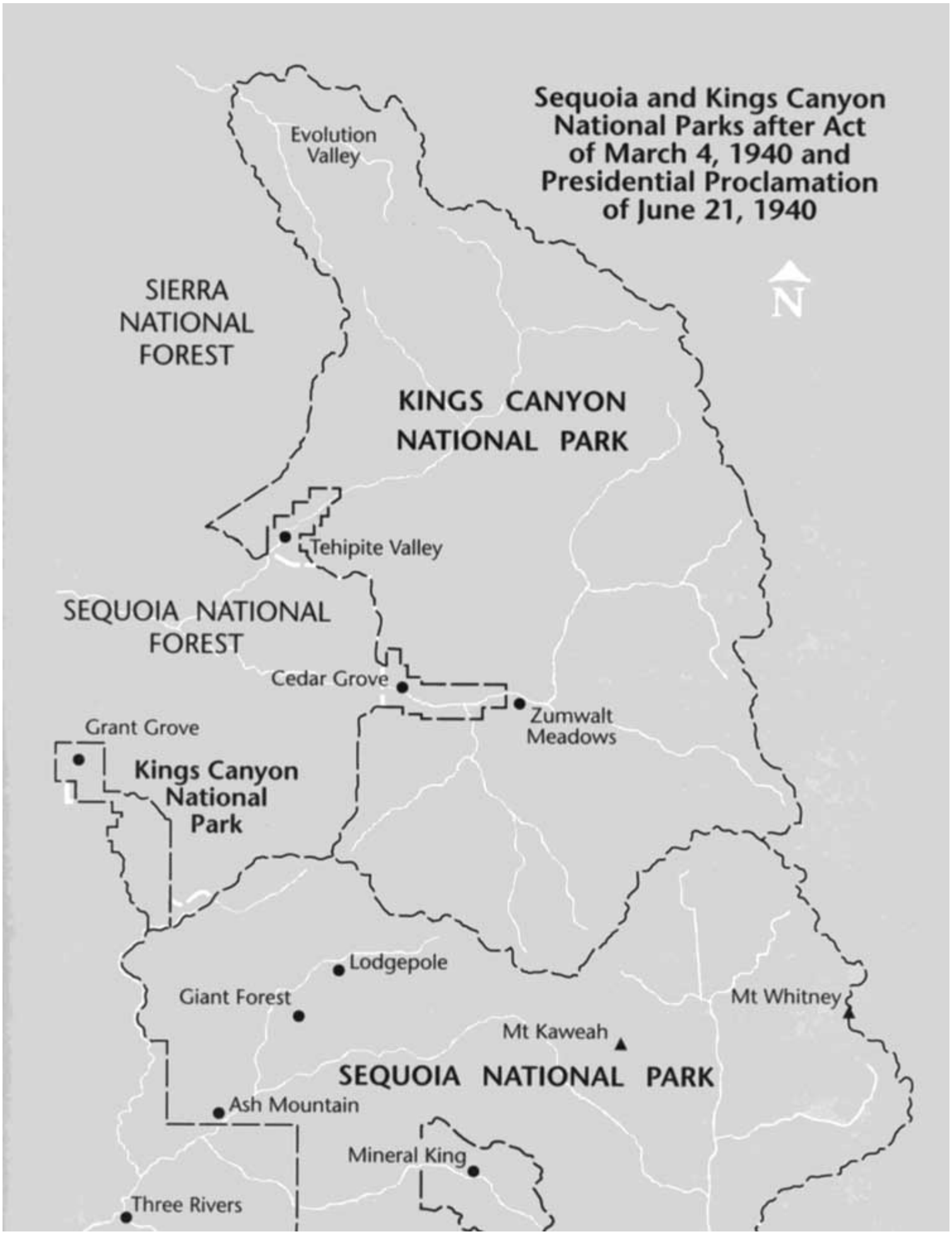

to Ash
Mountain


Highways:
Actual and Proposed
1930's
N
State Highway
180
Cedar
Grove
Copper
Creek
Kearsarge
Pass
Independence
Onion
Valley
Grant Grove
to Fresno
Generals
Highway
Proposed
Cedar Grove to
Independence
Road
Lodgepole
Giant Forest
Redwood
Meadow
Proposed
Sierra Way
Ash Mountain
Atwell's Mill
Mineral King
Mineral King
Road
Proposed

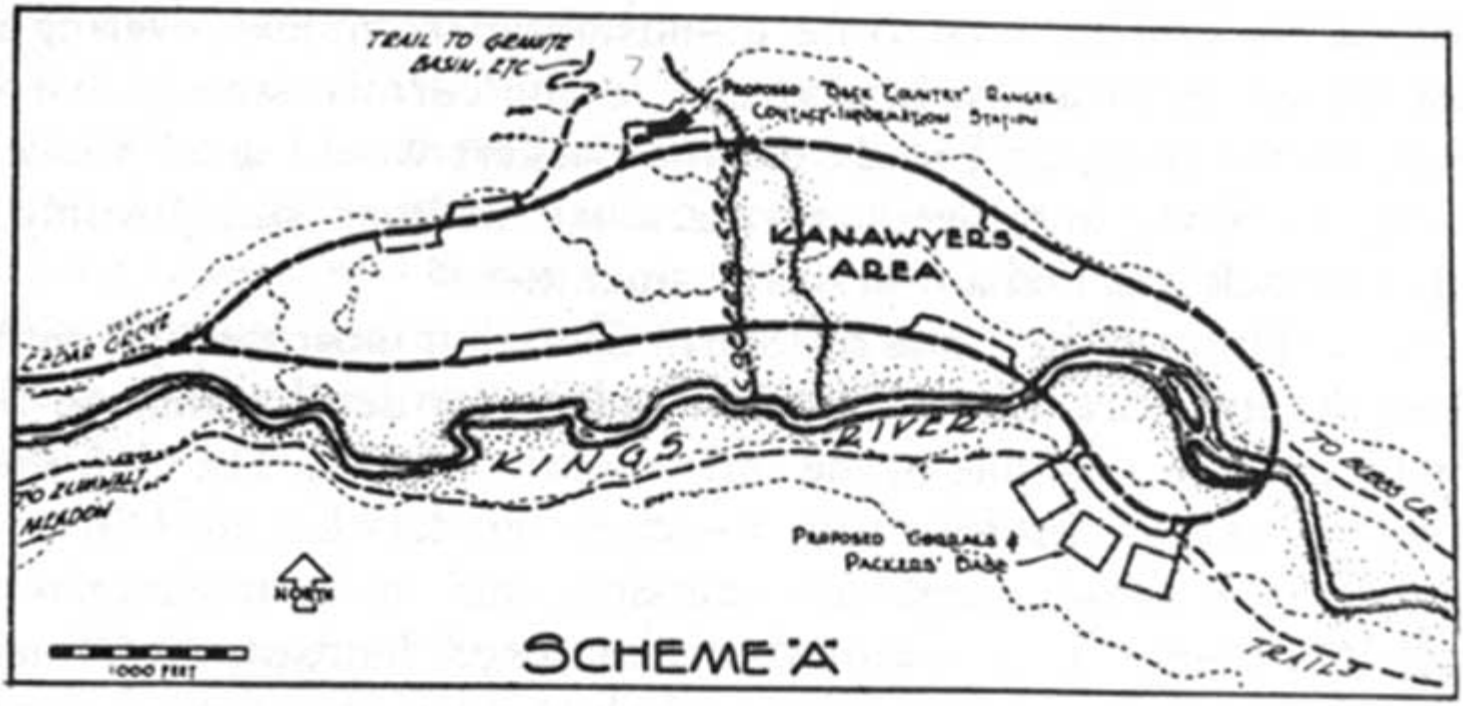

to Visalia
Hockett Meadow
Lone Pine
Road
0
10 Miles

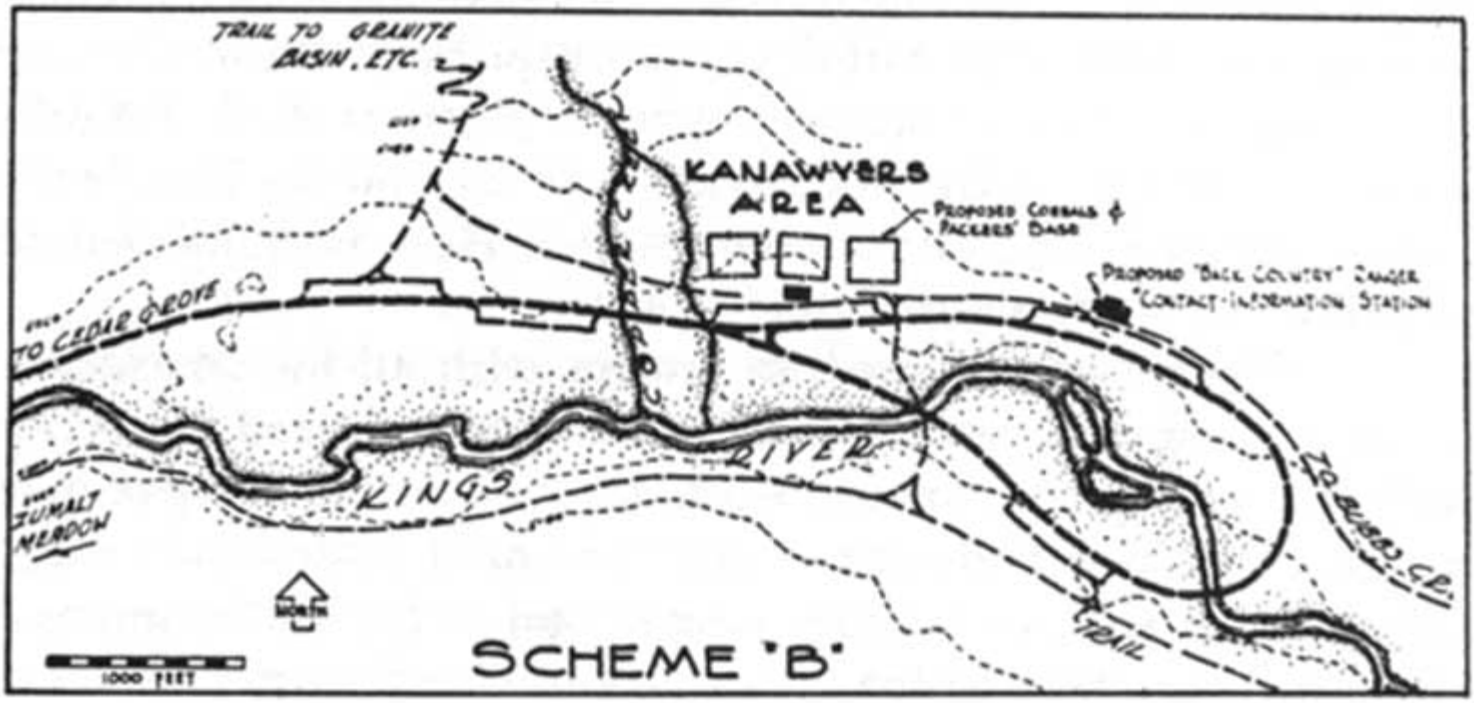


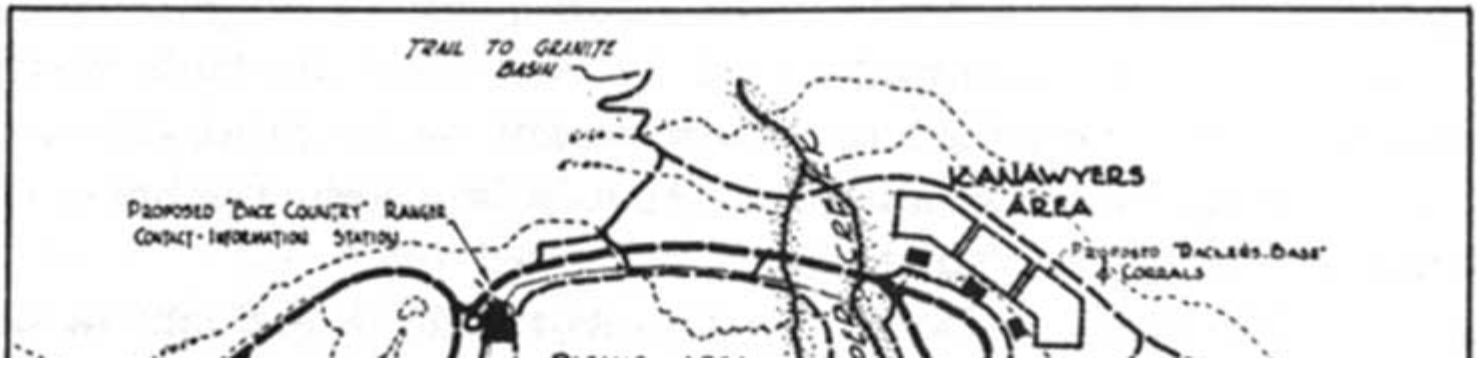
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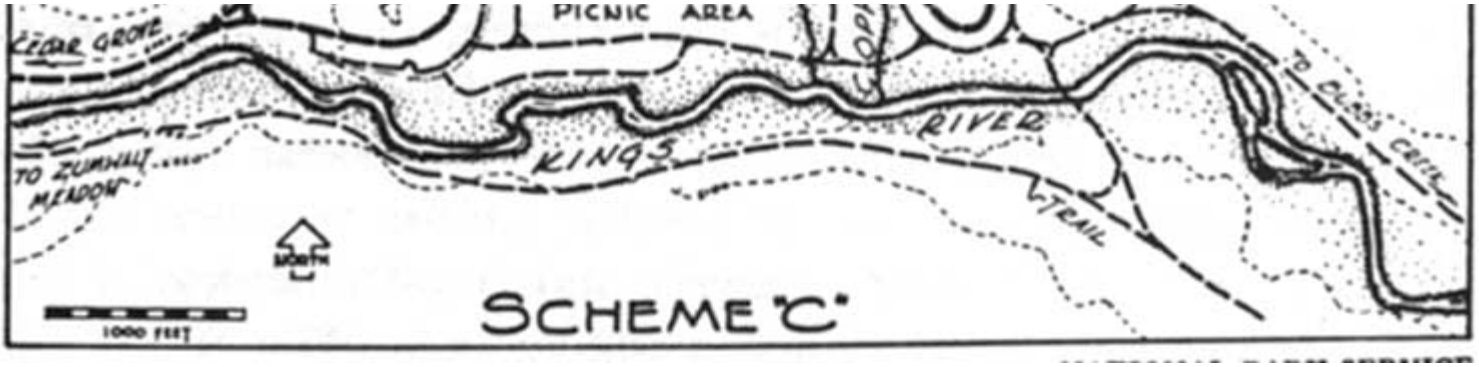

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks after Act of March 4, 1940 and Presidential Proclamation of June 21, 1940
Evolution Valley
SIERRA NATIONAL FOREST
N
KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARK
Tehipite Valley
SEQUOIA NATIONAL FOREST
Cedar Grove
Zumwalt Meadows
Grant Grove
Kings Canyon National Park
Lodgepole
Giant Forest
Mt Whitney
Mt Kaweah
SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK
Ash Mountain
Mineral King
Three Rivers

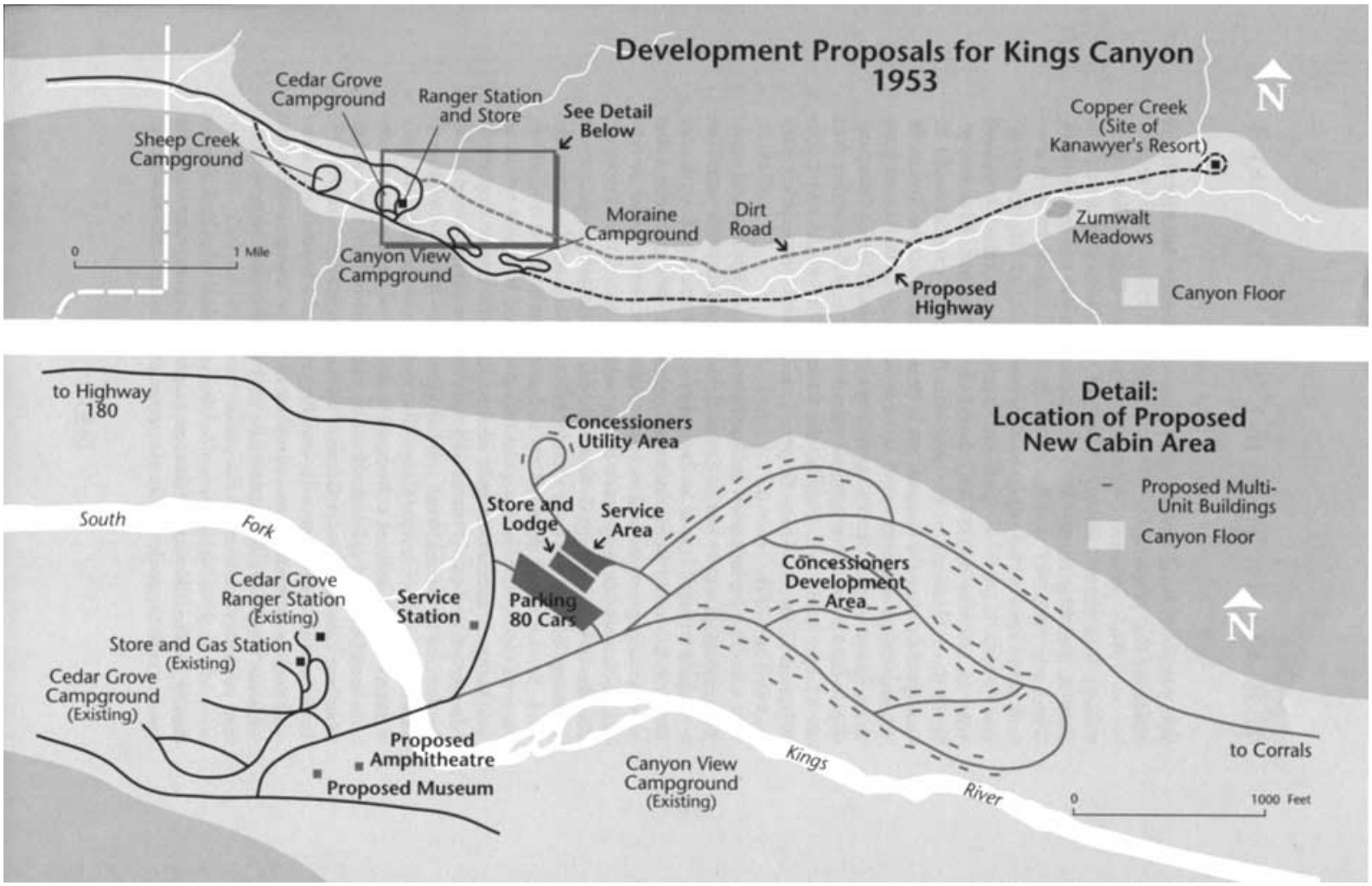

0
10 Miles
SEQUOIA NATIONAL FOREST

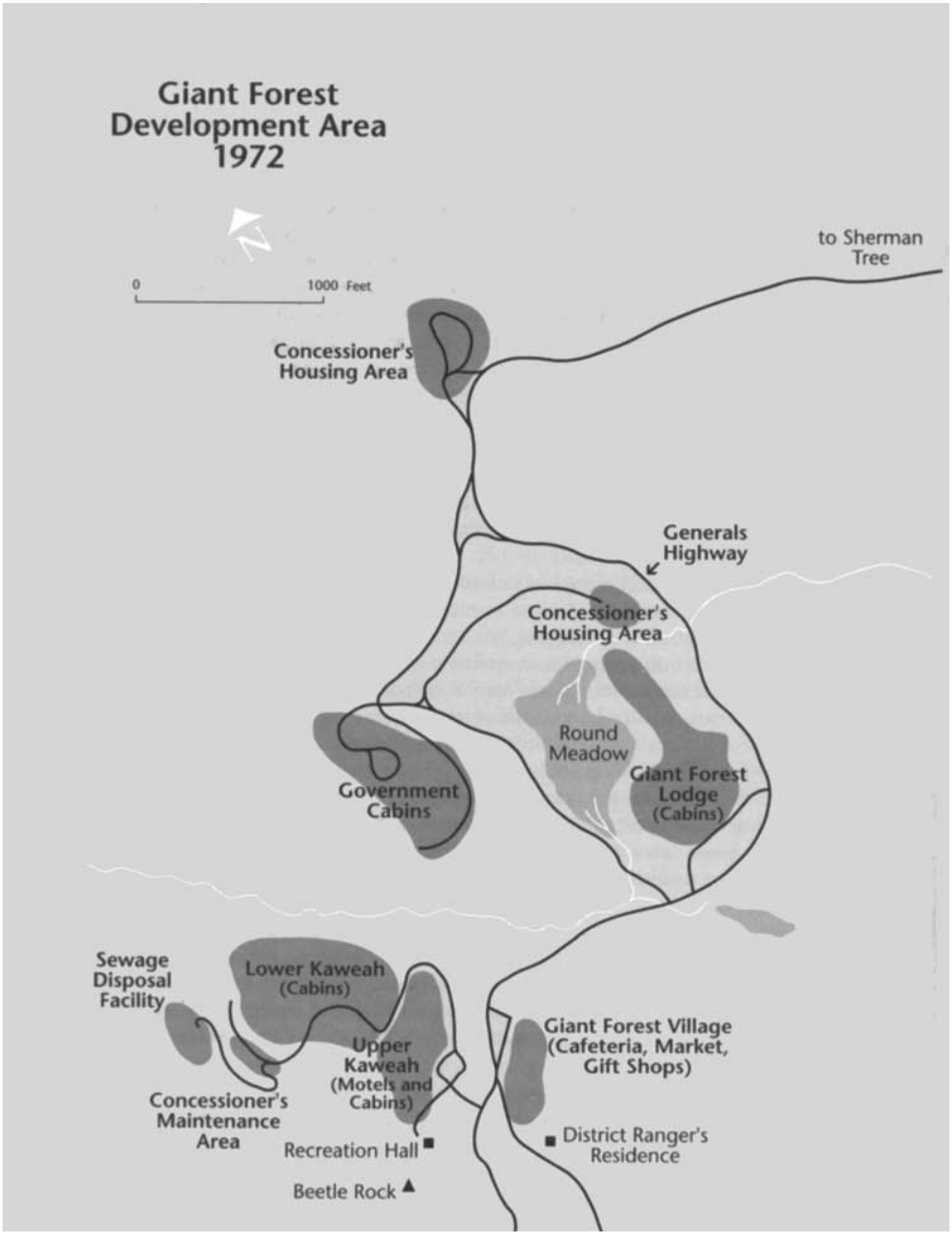

TRAIL TO GRANITE BASIN, ETC.
PROPOSED "BACK COUNTRY" RANGER CONTACT-INFORMATION STATION
KANAWYERS AREA
CEDAR GROVE
KINGS RIVER
TO ZUMWALT MEADOW
TO BUBBS CR.
PROPOSED CORRALS & PACKERS' BASE
TRAILS
NORTH
1000 FEET
SCHEME "A"

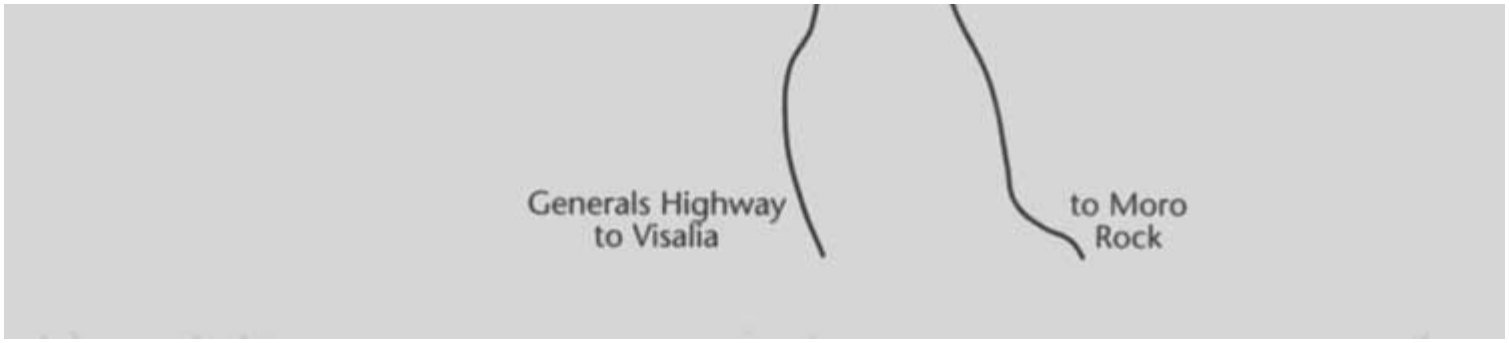

TRAIL TO GRANITE BASIN, ETC.
KANAWYERS AREA
PROPOSED CORRALS & PACKERS' BASE
PROPOSED "BACK COUNTRY" RANGER CONTACT-INFORMATION STATION
TO CEDAR GROVE
KINGS RIVER
TO ZUMWALT MEADOW
TO BUBBS CR.
TRAIL
NORTH
1000 FEET
SCHEME "B"


TRAIL TO GRANITE BASIN
KANAWYERS AREA
PROPOSED "BACK COUNTRY" RANGER CONTACT-INFORMATION STATION
PROPOSED "PACKERS BASE" & CORRALS

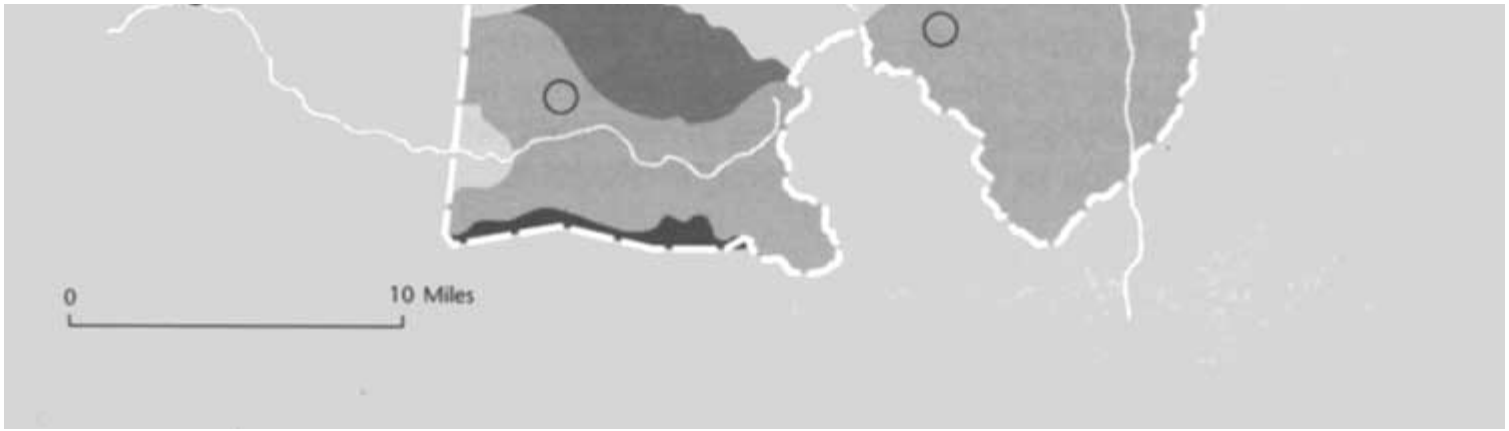

PICNIC AREA
CEDAR GROVE
TO ZUMWALT MEADOW
KINGS
RIVER
TRAIL
TO BUBBS CREEK
NORTH
1000 FEET
SCHEME "C"


Development Proposals for Kings Canyon
1953
Cedar Grove Campground
Ranger Station and Store
See Detail Below
Sheep Creek Campground
Copper Creek (Site of Kanawyer's Resort)
N
Moraine Campground
Dirt Road
Zumwalt Meadows
0
1 Mile
Canyon View Campground
Proposed Highway
Canyon Floor
to Highway 180
Concessioners Utility Area
Detail: Location of Proposed New Cabin Area
Proposed Multi-Unit Buildings
Canyon Floor
South Fork
Store and Lodge
Service Area
Concessioners Development Area
Cedar Grove Ranger Station (Existing)
Service Station
Parking 80 Cars
N
Store and Gas Station (Existing)
Cedar Grove Campground (Existing)
Proposed Amphitheatre
Proposed Museum
Canyon View Campground (Existing)
Kings River
to Corrals
0
1000 Feet

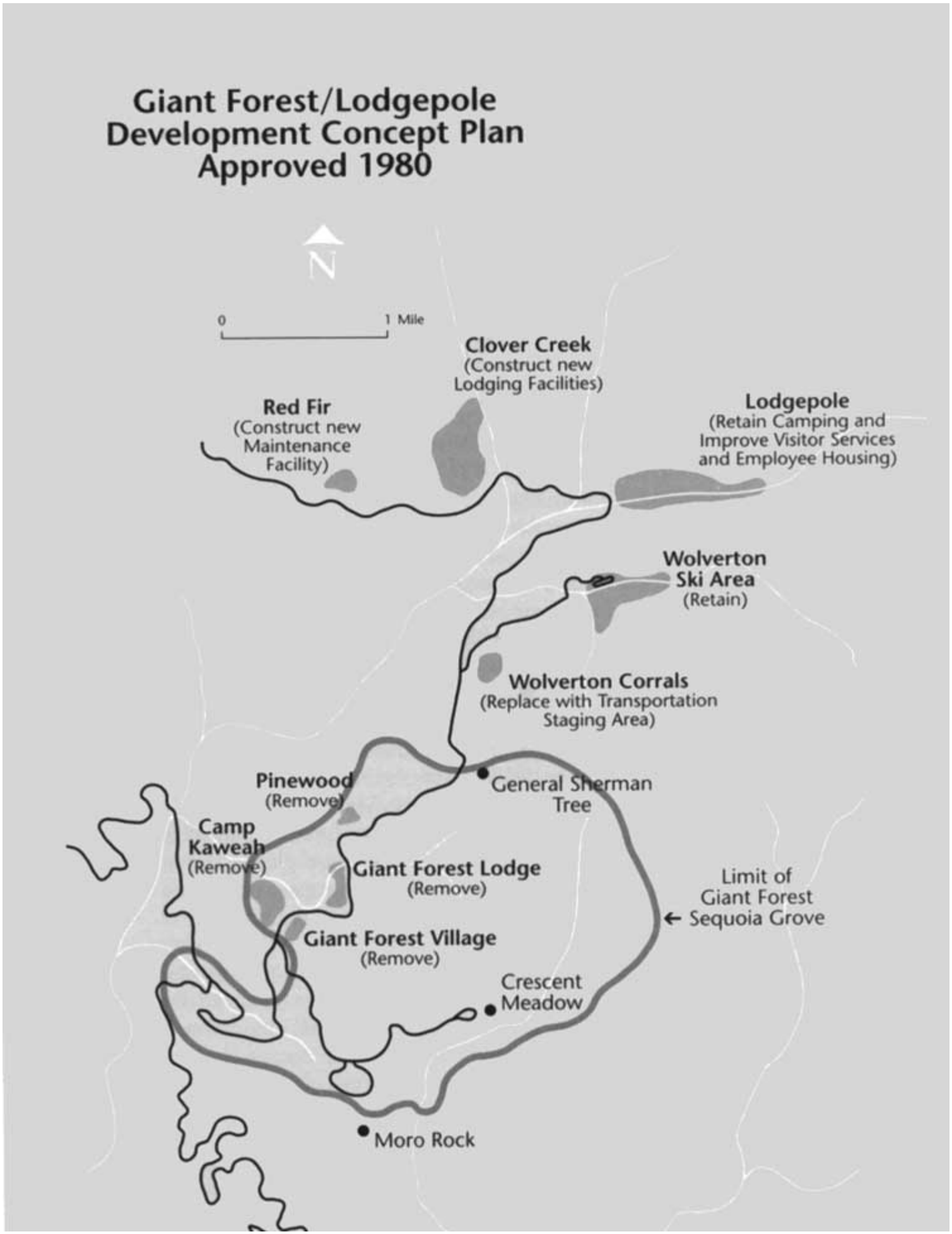

Giant Forest
Development Area
1972
N
0
1000 Feet
to Sherman
Tree
Concessioner's
Housing Area
Generals
Highway
Concessioner's
Housing Area
Round
Meadow
Giant Forest
Lodge
(Cabins)
Government
Cabins
Sewage
Disposal
Facility
Lower Kaweah
(Cabins)
Upper
Kaweah
(Motels and
Cabins)
Giant Forest Village
(Cafeteria, Market,
Gift Shops)
Concessioner's
Maintenance
Area
Recreation Hall
District Ranger's
Residence
Beetle Rock


Generals Highway
to Visalia
to Moro
Rock

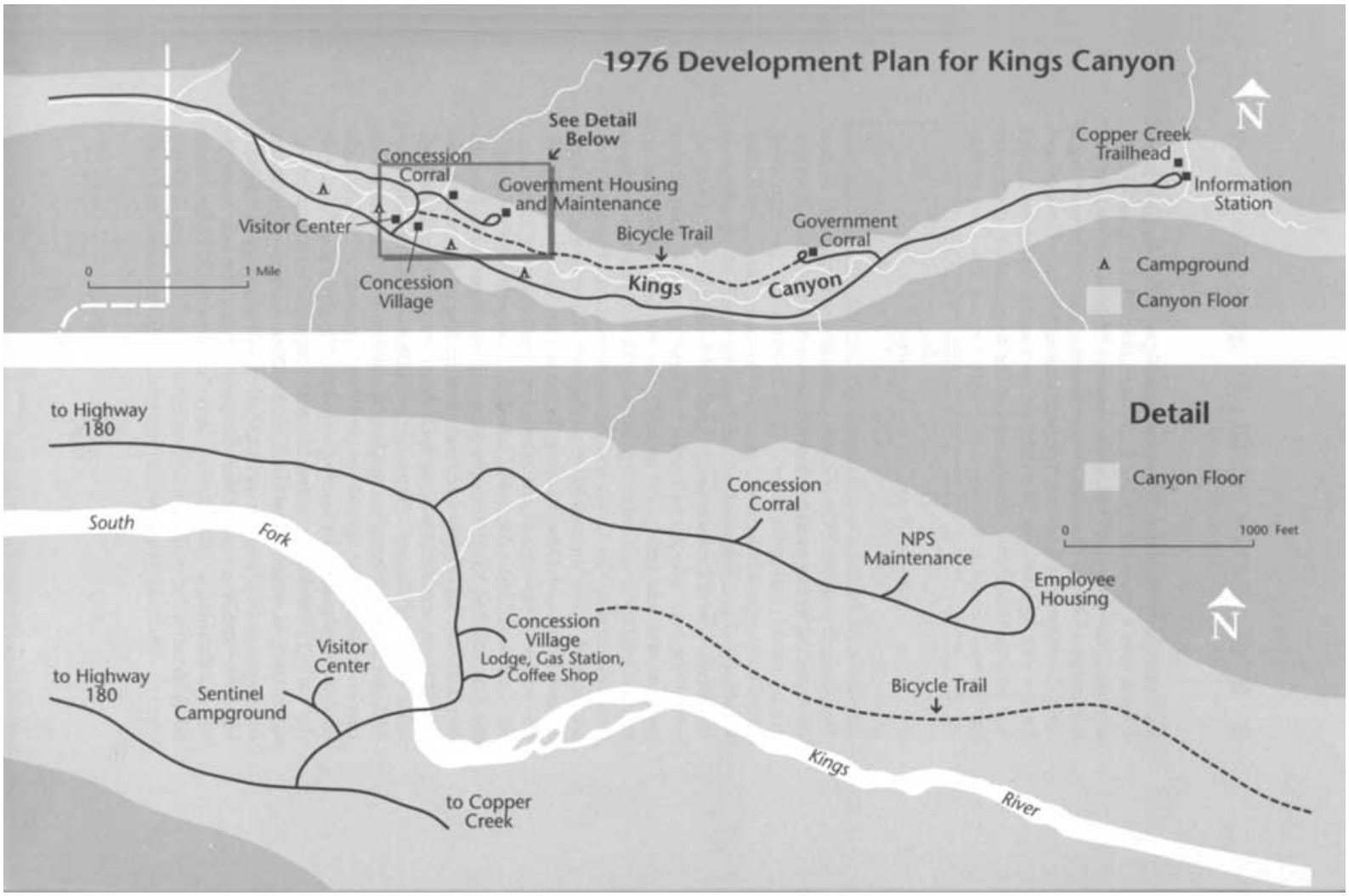

Wilderness Proposals of 1966 and 1971
Areas Proposed for Wilderness in 1966 and 1971
Areas Proposed in 1971 Only
Areas Proposed in 1966 Only
Exclusions from 1971 Proposal
N
KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARK
Tehipite Valley
Cedar Grove
Rae Lakes Loop Trail
Grant Grove
Kings Canyon National Park
Lodgepole
Giant Forest
SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK
Ash Mountain
Mineral King
Three Rivers

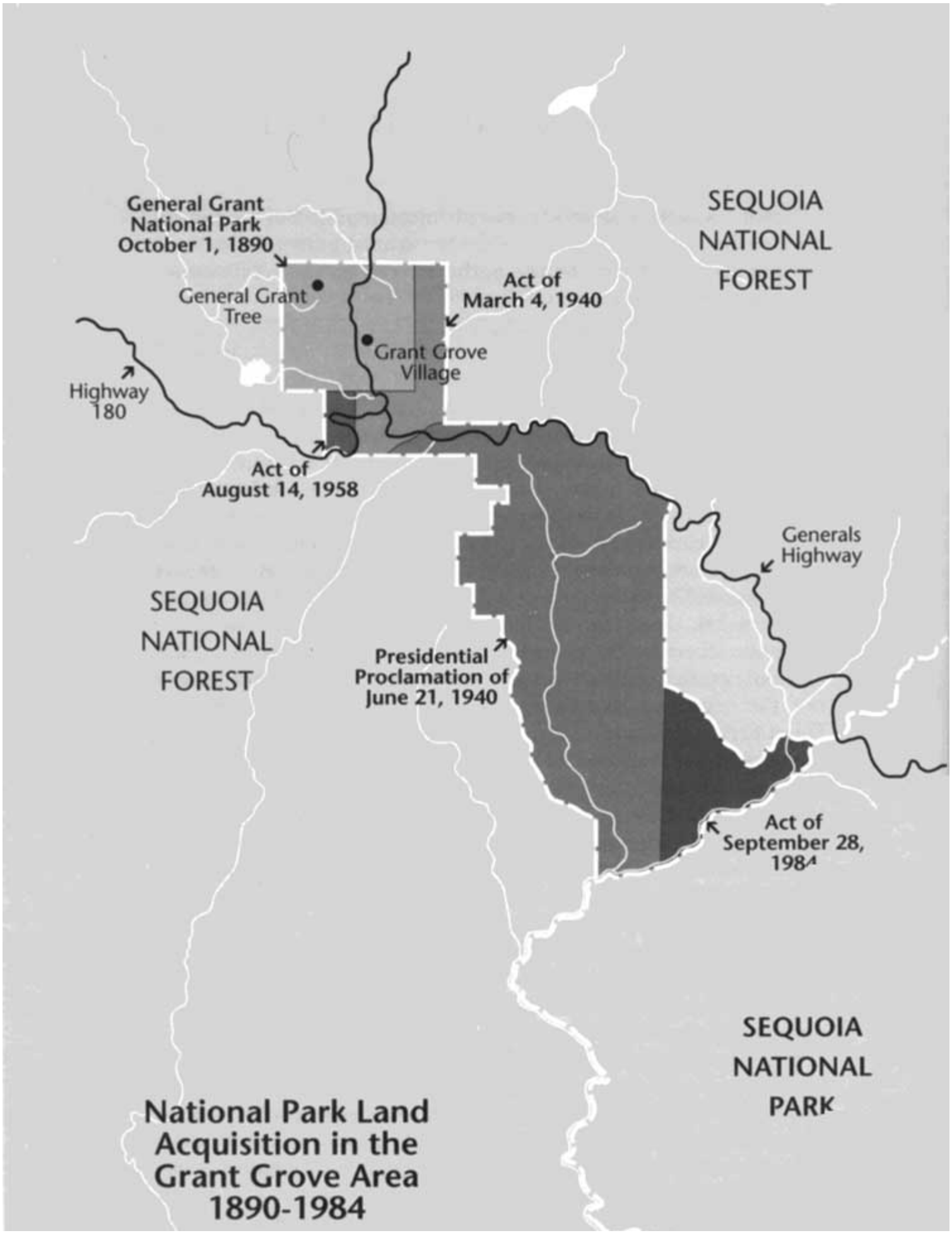

0
10 Miles

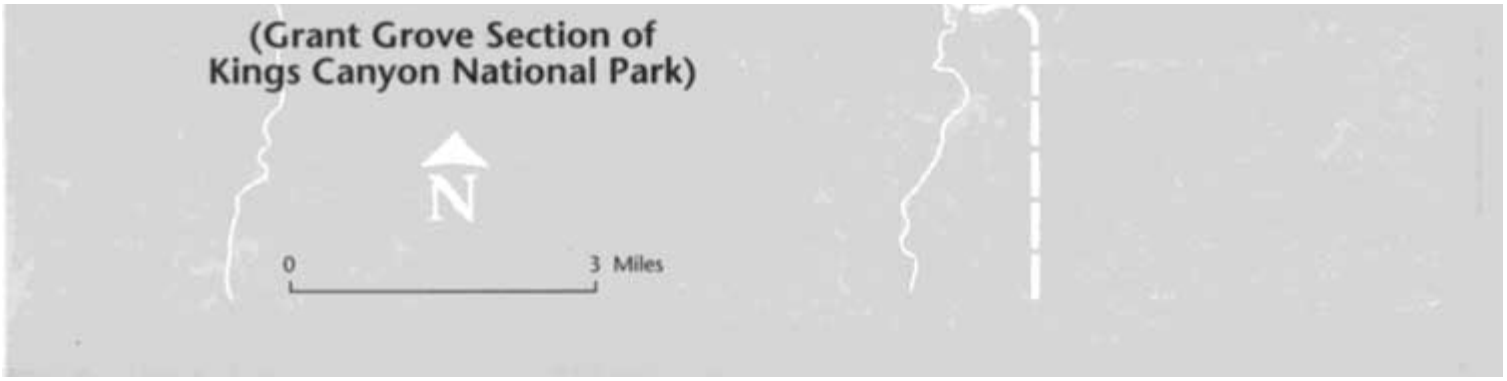

to Giant Forest
Generals Highway
SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK
Ash Mountain
ORIOLE GROVE
Silver City
Highway 198
Mineral King Road
Proposed Highway 276
ATWELL GROVE
Proposed Resort Village
Sawtooth Peak
Mineral King
EAST FORK GROVE
Sequoia National Game Refuge
(Administered by Sequoia National Forest)
Proposed Ski Lifts
HORSE CREEK GROVE
EDEN CREEK GROVE
to Visalia
Farewell Gap
HOMERS NOSE GROVE
Proposed Mineral King Ski Resort 1965-1978
SEQUOIA NATIONAL FOREST
0
4 Miles
N
Giant Sequoia Grove


Giant Forest/Lodgepole
Development Concept Plan
Approved 1980
N
0
1 Mile
Clover Creek
(Construct new
Lodging Facilities)
Red Fir
(Construct new
Maintenance
Facility)
Lodgepole
(Retain Camping and
Improve Visitor Services
and Employee Housing)
Wolverton
Ski Area
(Retain)
Wolverton Corrals
(Replace with Transportation
Staging Area)
Pinewood
(Remove)
General Sherman
Tree
Camp
Kaweah
(Remove)
Giant Forest Lodge
(Remove)
Limit of
Giant Forest
Sequoia Grove
Giant Forest Village
(Remove)
Crescent
Meadow
Moro Rock




1976 Development Plan for Kings Canyon
See Detail Below
Concession Corral
Government Housing and Maintenance
Visitor Center
Concession Village
Bicycle Trail
Government Corral
Copper Creek Trailhead
Information Station
Kings Canyon
0
1 Mile
N
Campground
Canyon Floor
to Highway 180
Detail
Canyon Floor
Concession Corral
South Fork
NPS Maintenance
0
1000 Feet
Employee Housing
N
Concession Village
Lodge, Gas Station, Coffee Shop
Visitor Center
to Highway 180
Sentinel Campground
Bicycle Trail
Kings River
to Copper Creek


General Grant
National Park
October 1, 1890
General Grant
Tree
Act of
March 4, 1940
Grant Grove
Village
Highway
180
Act of
August 14, 1958
SEQUOIA
NATIONAL
FOREST
Generals
Highway
SEQUOIA
NATIONAL
FOREST
Presidential
Proclamation of
June 21, 1940
Act of
September 28,
1984
SEQUOIA
NATIONAL
PARK
National Park Land
Acquisition in the
Grant Grove Area
1890-1984


(Grant Grove Section of
Kings Canyon National Park)
N
0
3 Miles


Sequoia and Kings Canyon
Wilderness as Enacted
September 28, 1984
N
KINGS CANYON
NATIONAL PARK
Tehipite
Valley
Cedar Grove
Grant Grove
Kings Canyon
National
Park
Lodgepole
Giant Forest
SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK
Ash Mountain
Mineral King
Three Rivers


0
10 Miles





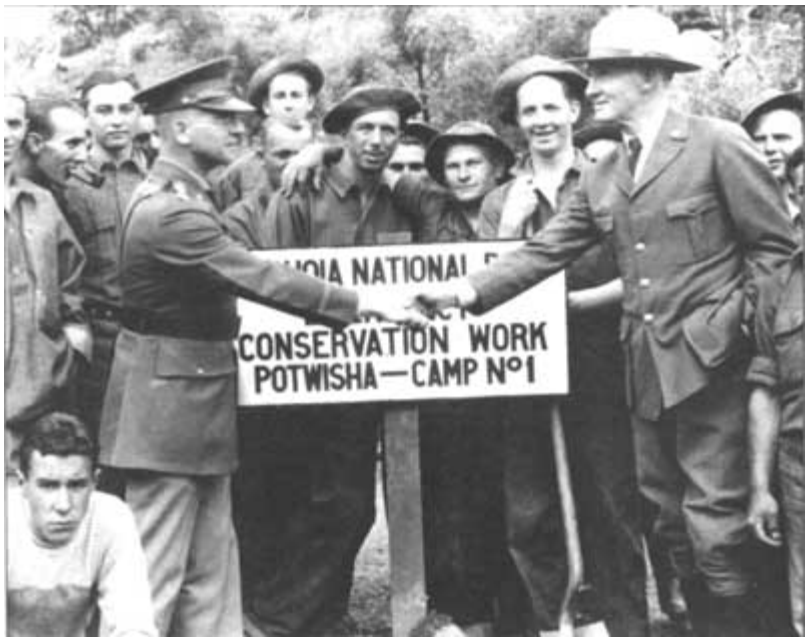


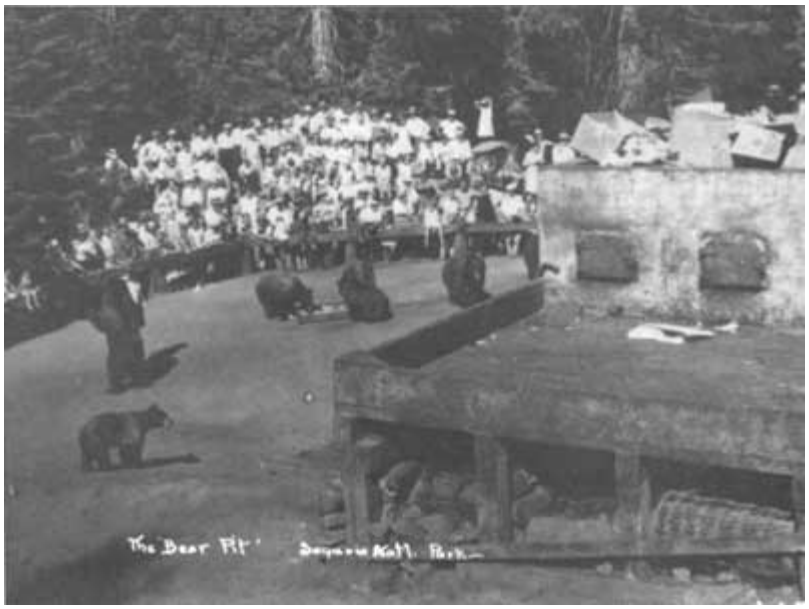






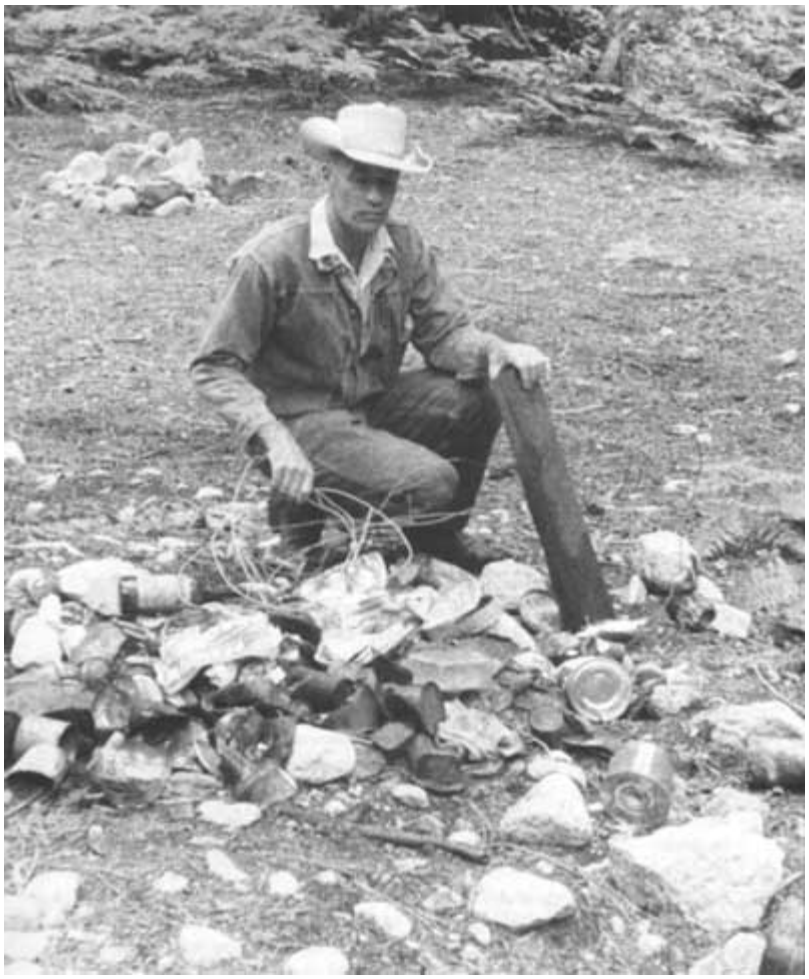

MUSEUM


CONSERVATION WORK
POTWISHA—CAMP N°1


The Bear Pit











Challenge of the Big Trees

Chapter One:

The Natural World of the Southern Sierra

(continued)

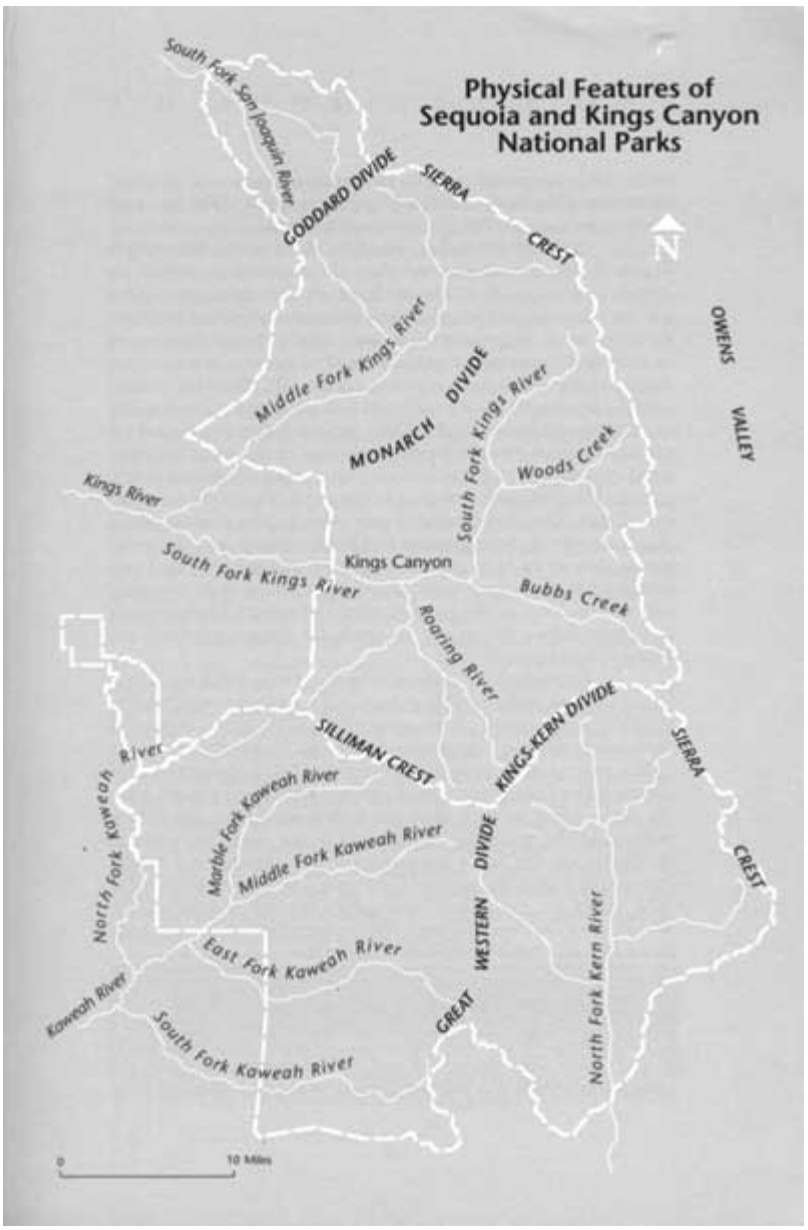
Geological Background

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.



(click on image for an enlargement in a new window)

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.

<<< PREVIOUS **CONTENTS** **NEXT >>>**

Challenge of the Big Trees
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dilsaver-tweed/chap1a.htm — 12-Jul-2004

Challenge of the Big Trees

Chapter One:

The Natural World of the Southern Sierra

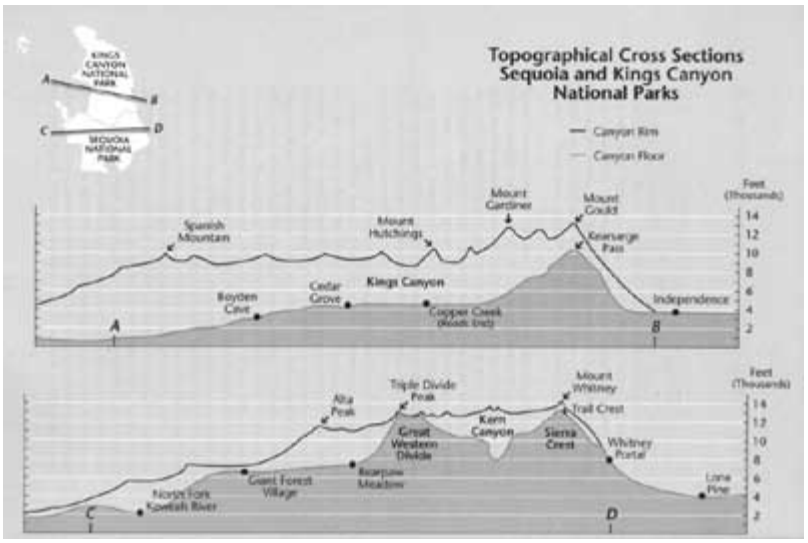
(continued)

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.



(click on image for an enlargement in a new window)

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.

<<< PREVIOUS **CONTENTS** **NEXT >>>**

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Challenge of the Big Trees

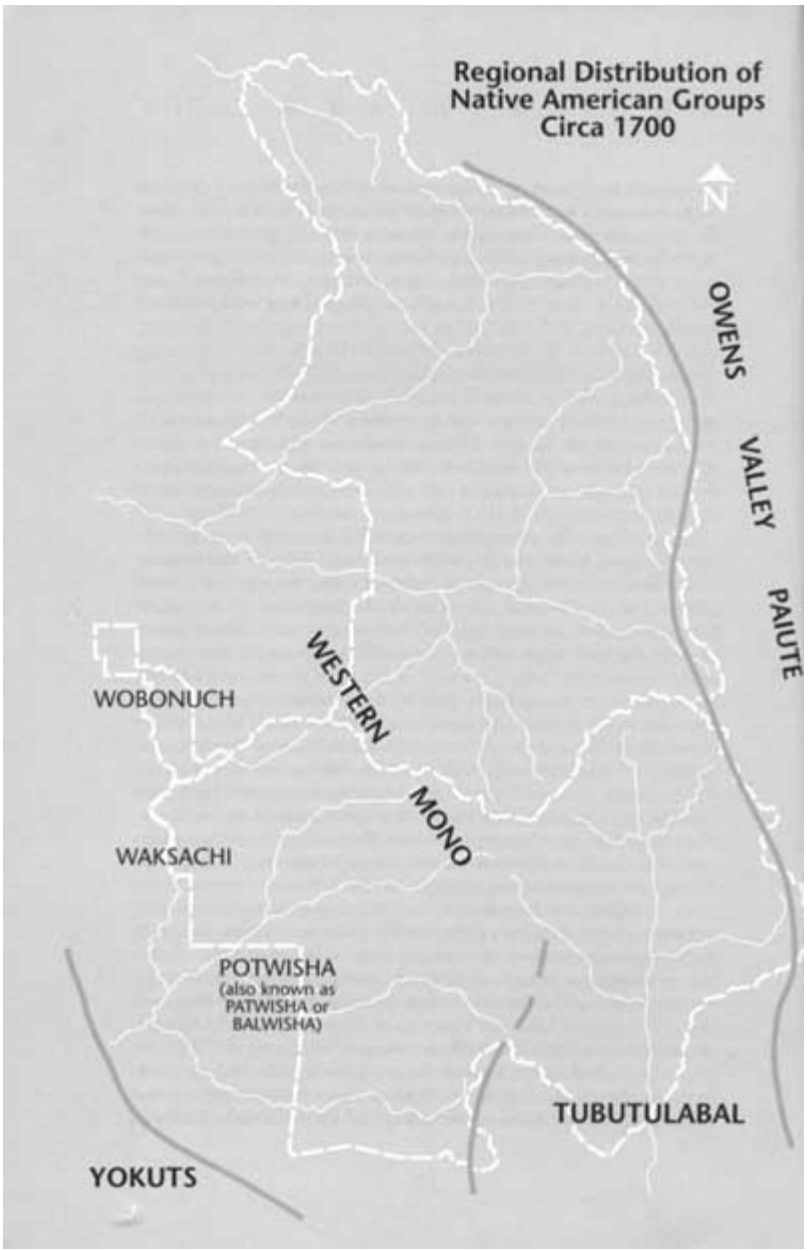
Chapter Two:

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.



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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. [4]

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.

<<< PREVIOUS CONTENTS NEXT >>>

Challenge of the Big Trees

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Challenge of the Big Trees

Chapter Two:

The Native Americans and the Land

(continued)

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 known 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.

<<< PREVIOUS **CONTENTS** **NEXT >>>**

Challenge of the Big Trees
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dilsaver-tweed/chap2c.htm — 12-Jul-2004

Challenge of the Big Trees

Chapter Three:

Exploration and Exploitation
(1850-1885)
(continued)

Arrival of the Anglo-Americans

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. [2]

In 1832-33 a party that included Ewing Young and J. J. Warner trapped the Kings River "some distance into the mountains." [3] 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. [4]

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. [5]

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.

<<< PREVIOUS CONTENTS NEXT >>>

Challenge of the Big Trees
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dilsaver-tweed/chap3a.htm — 12-Jul-2004

Challenge of the Big Trees

Chapter Three:

Exploration and Exploitation
(1850-1885)
(continued)

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.

<<< PREVIOUS CONTENTS NEXT >>>

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Challenge of the Big Trees

Chapter Four:

Parks and Forests: Protection Begins
(1885-1916)
(continued)

George Stewart Campaigns to Protect the Mountains

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 assumed the position of city editor. [2] In that same year, 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. [3] Nothing concrete came of the suggestion, but Stewart had chosen sides in a battle that was just beginning. As a native Californian, he had convinced himself that Big Trees had higher uses than being converted into fence posts and shingles.

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. [4]

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. [5] Within a few short years Stewart had moved from trying to protect certain species of

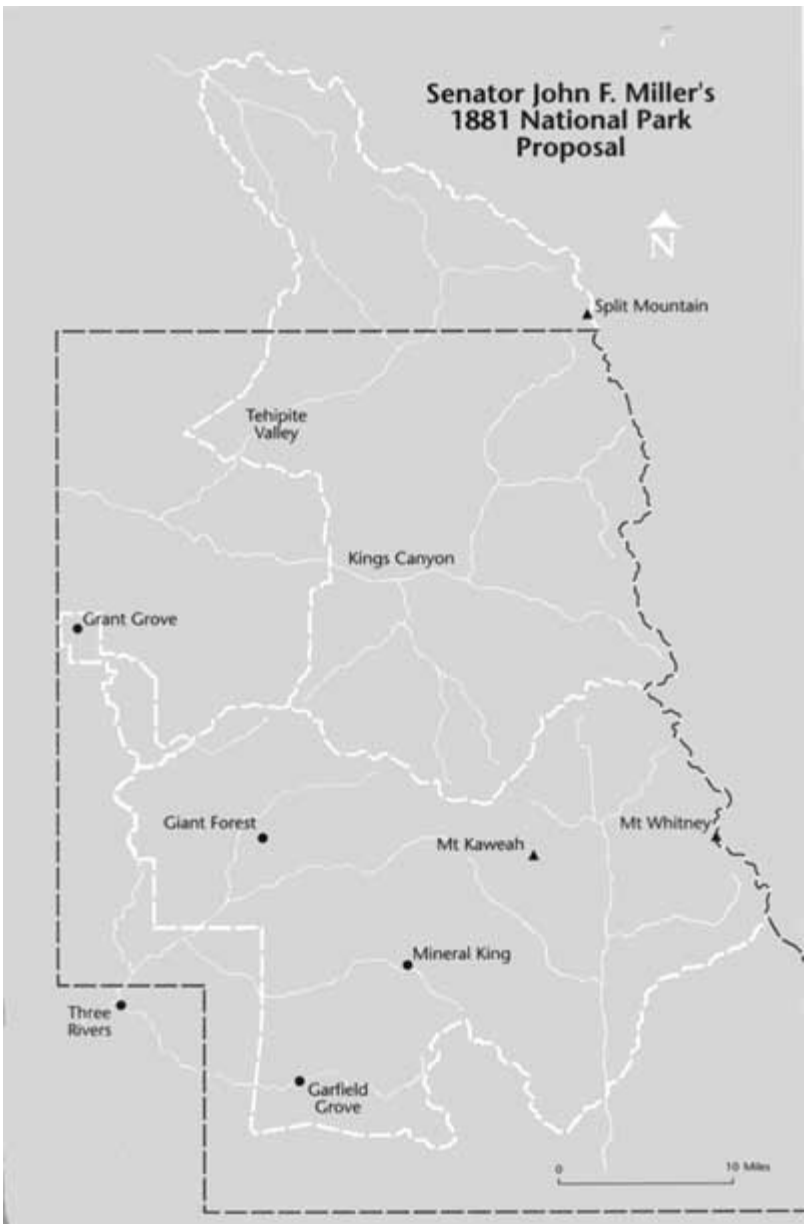
Sierran trees through state law to attempting protection of the entire southern Sierra through federal action.

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. [6]

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]



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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. [8]

<<< PREVIOUS CONTENTS NEXT >>>

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Challenge of the Big Trees

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. [79] 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.

<<< PREVIOUS CONTENTS NEXT >>>

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Challenge of the Big Trees

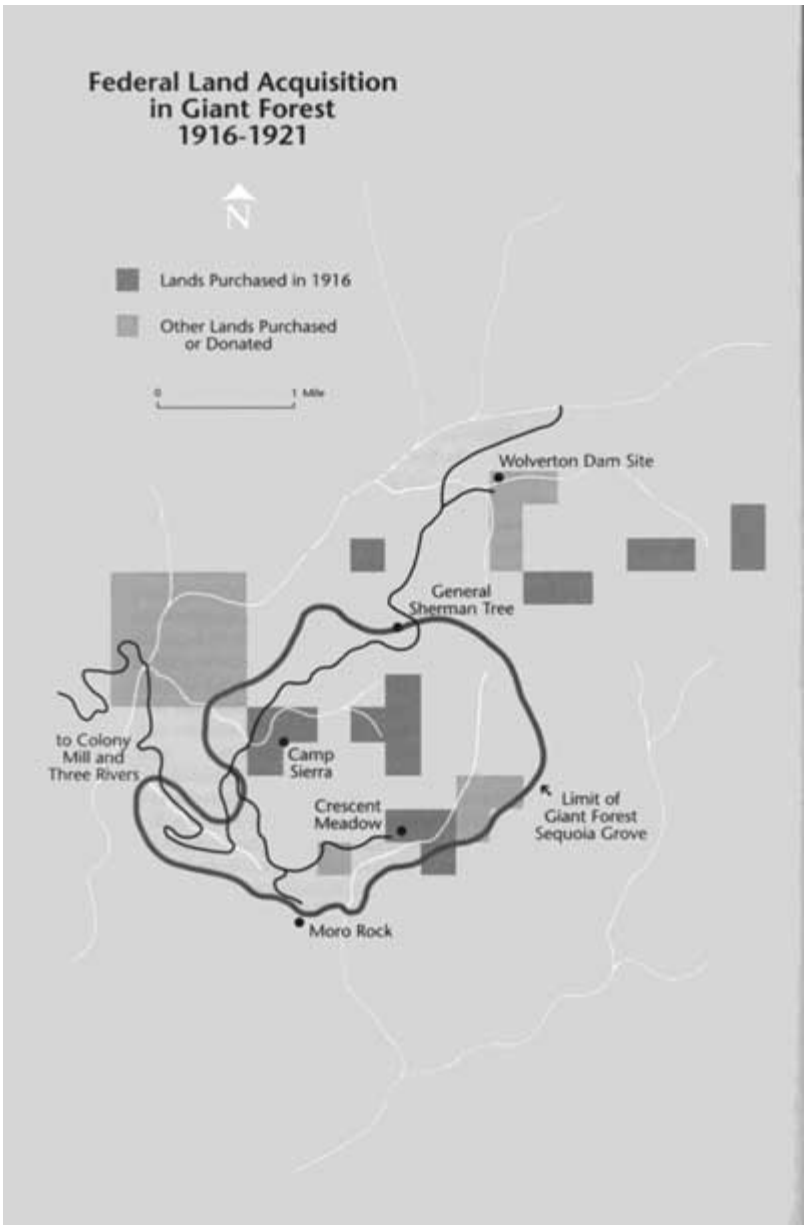
Chapter Five:

Selling Sequoia: The Early Park Service Years
(1916-1931)
(continued)

Use: Gaining Park Territory From Within and Without

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]

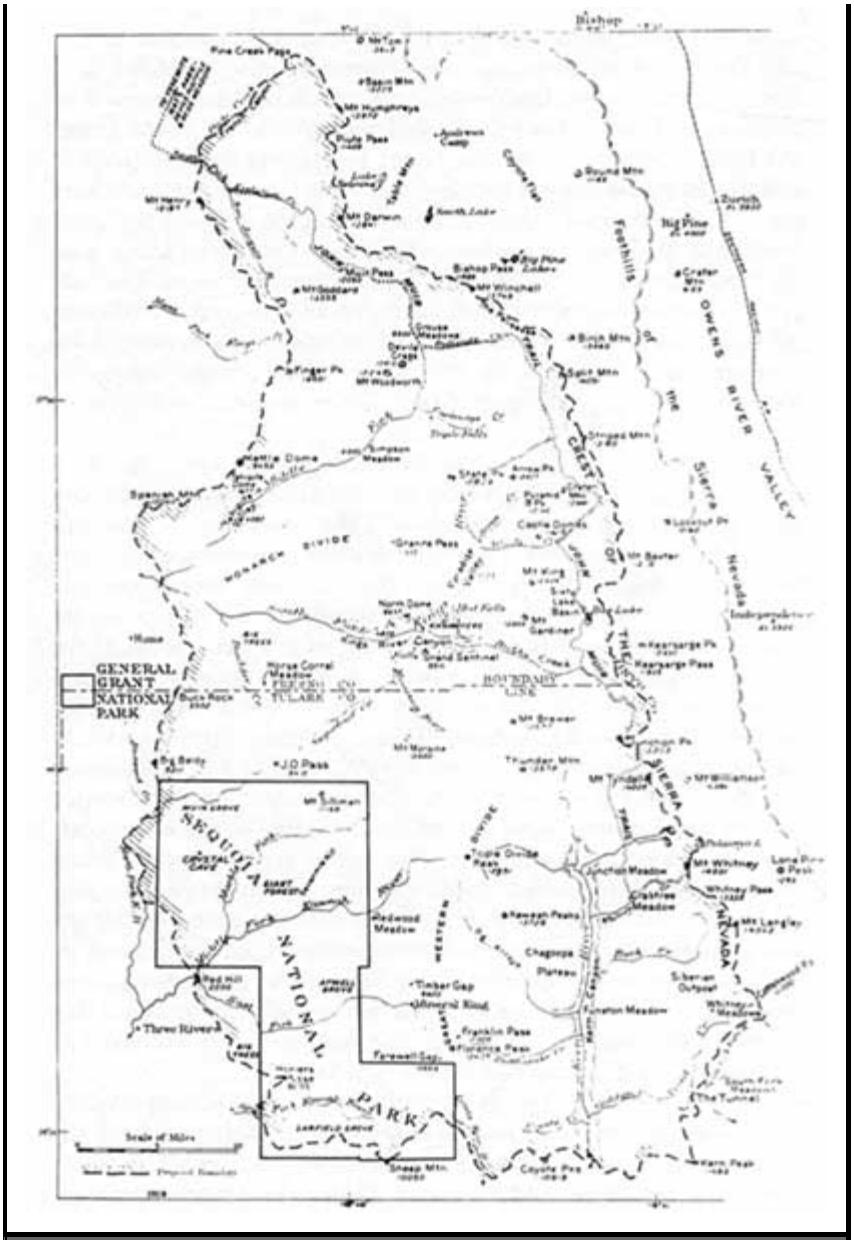


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As Stephen Mather and his wealthy associates endeavored to eliminate private holdings from the two parks, a much larger and more important battle swirled around the floors of Congress and the meeting rooms of local businessmen and preservationists. 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.

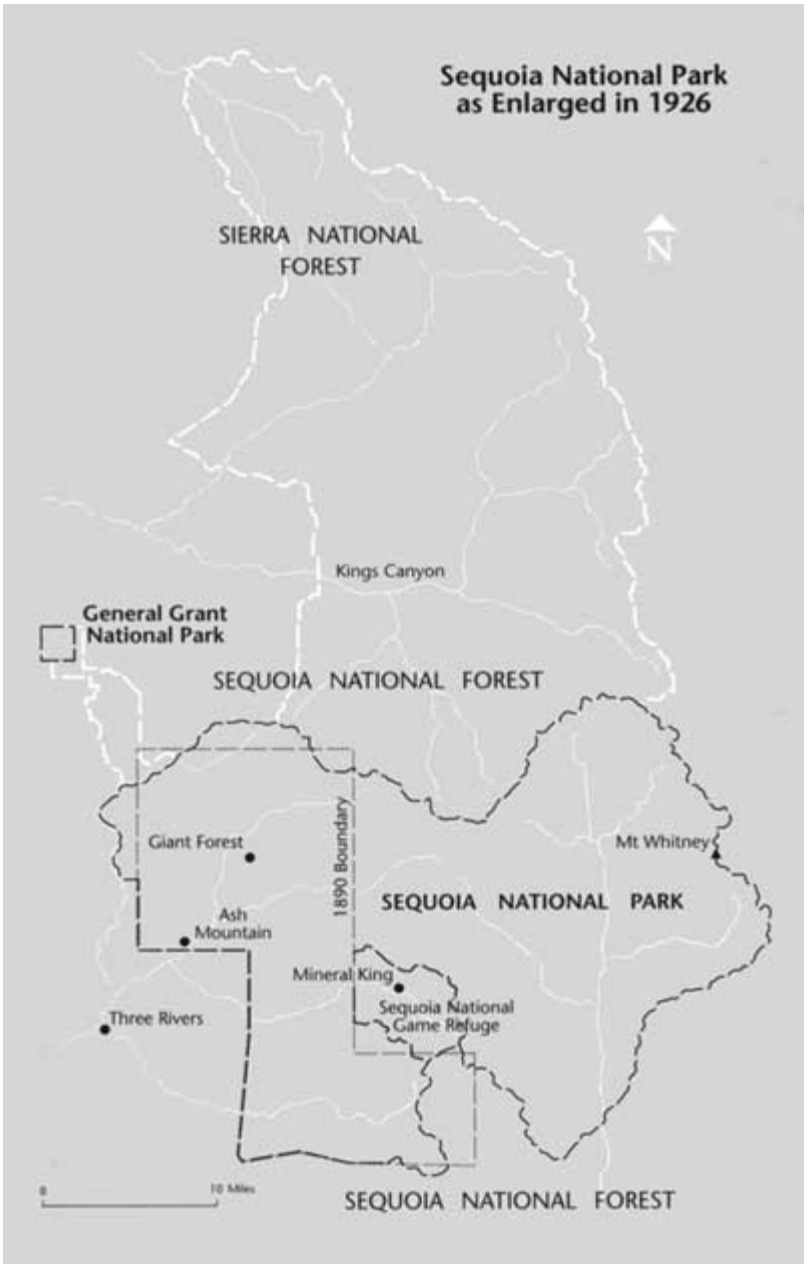
Mather initiated efforts to enlarge the park immediately upon his appointment. As director of the new Park Service, he engaged in a series of meetings with Chief Foresters Henry Graves and William Greeley aimed at hammering out some sort of compromise. Both Forest Service men drove hard bargains, but 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.



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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]



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<<< PREVIOUS **CONTENTS** **NEXT >>>**

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Challenge of the Big Trees

Chapter Five:

Selling Sequoia: The Early Park Service Years
(1916-1931)
(continued)

1916-1931: Development and Reconsideration

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 parks.

<<< PREVIOUS **CONTENTS** **NEXT >>>**

Challenge of the Big Trees
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Challenge of the Big Trees

Chapter Six:

Colonel John White and Preservation in Sequoia National Park (1931-1947)

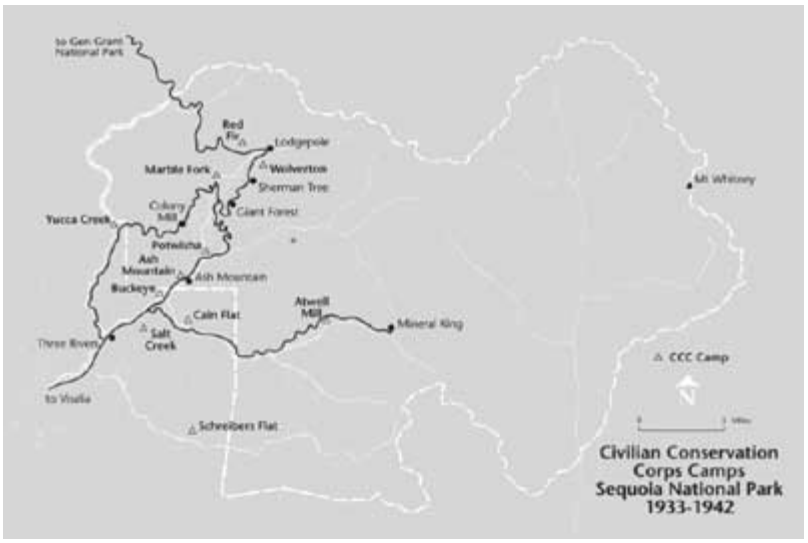
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The CCC: Almost Too Much of a Good Thing

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]



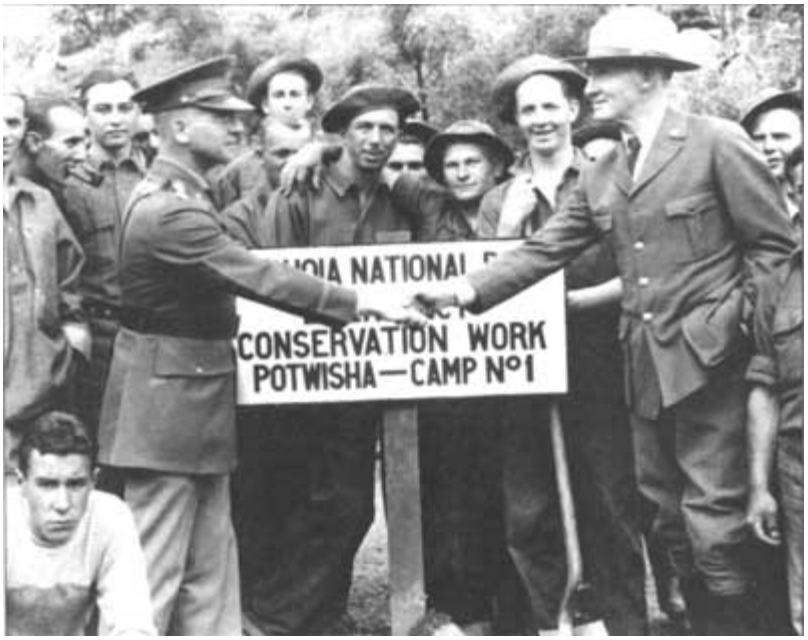
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At times there was friction between the camp commanders and park superintendents, largely owing to the attempts of one to interfere with the duties of the other. Sequoia had up to five camps operating at a time, and each army officer in charge naturally 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, a 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. [5]

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.

<<< PREVIOUS CONTENTS NEXT >>>

Challenge of the Big Trees
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Challenge of the Big Trees

Chapter Six:

Colonel John White and Preservation in Sequoia National Park (1931-1947)

(continued)

The Contribution of John Roberts White

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 wild life, 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.

<<< PREVIOUS CONTENTS NEXT >>>

Challenge of the Big Trees
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Challenge of the Big Trees

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. [4] 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. [5] 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. [6]

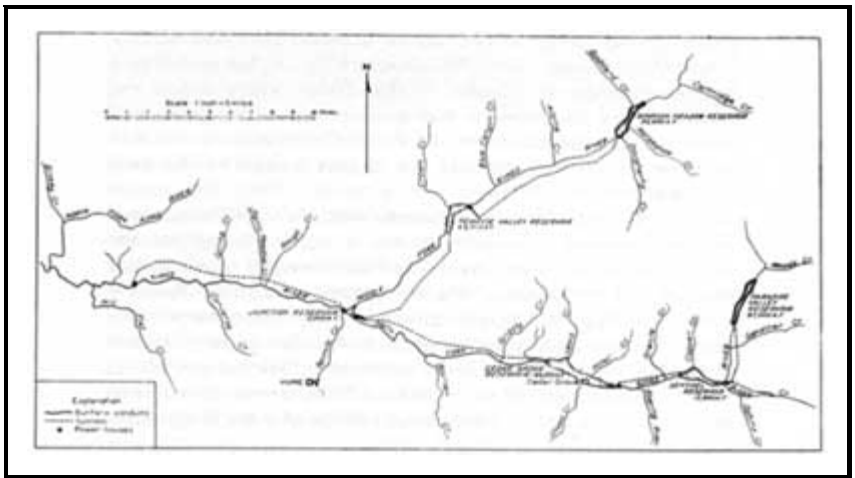
In June 1920, the Federal Power Act touched off the real action by creating a commission to be headed by the secretaries of Agriculture, Interior, and War, which could license water and power projects on government lands, including national forest lands. Several months later Los Angeles seized the initiative 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. [7]

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]



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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]

<<< PREVIOUS CONTENTS NEXT >>>

Challenge of the Big Trees
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Challenge of the Big Trees

Chapter Seven:

Two Battles for Kings Canyon
(1931-1947)
(continued)

Retrospect on Kings Canyon

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.

<<< PREVIOUS CONTENTS NEXT >>>

Challenge of the Big Trees
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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. [1]

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. [2] 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." [3]

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]

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Challenge of the Big Trees

Chapter Eight:

Controlling Development: How Much Is Too Much?
(1947-1972)
(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.

<<< PREVIOUS CONTENTS NEXT >>>

Challenge of the Big Trees

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dilsaver-tweed/chap8h.htm — 12-Jul-2004

Challenge of the Big Trees

Chapter Nine:

New Directions and a Second Century
(1972-1990)
(continued)

Giant Forest Reconsidered

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. [6] 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." [7] 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. [8] 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. [9] 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." [10] 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.

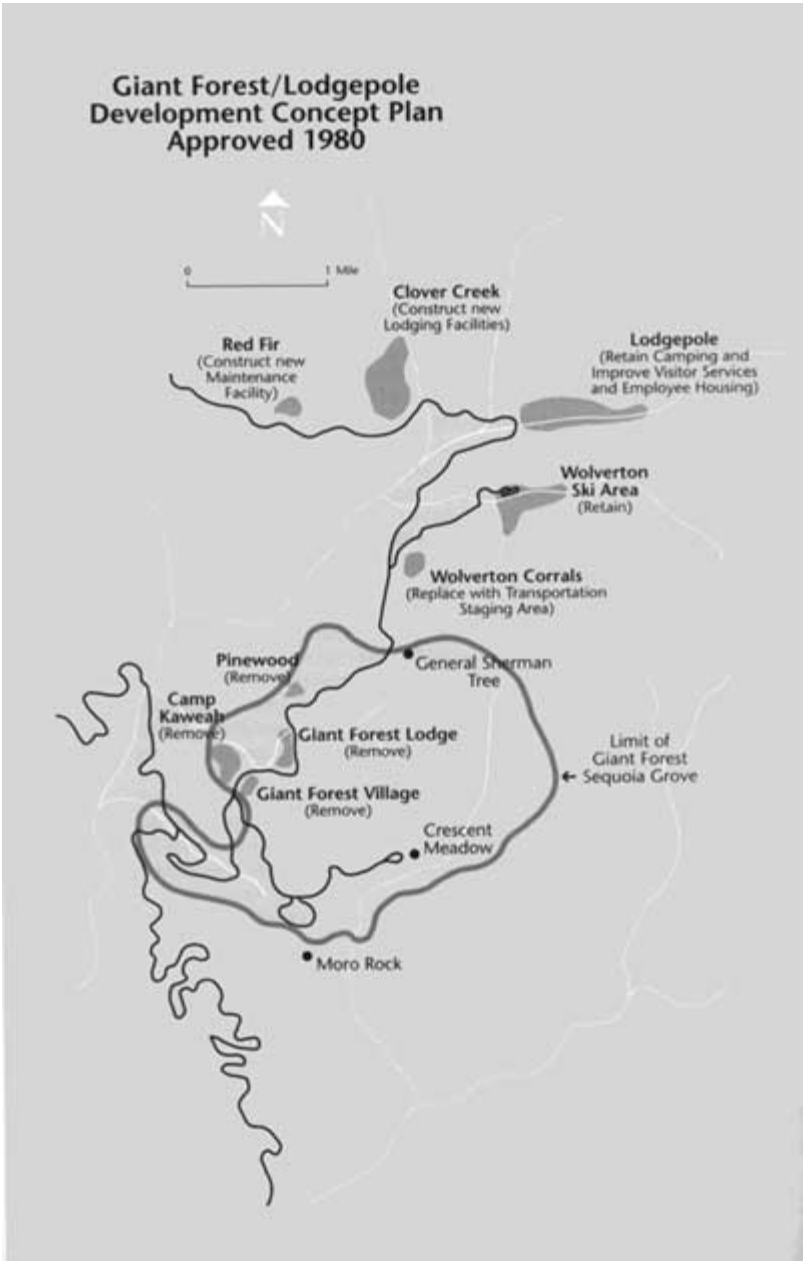
In November 1979, still moving slowly and deliberately, the Service issued the final *Environmental Assessment* for the project, and on December 31, 1979, the last public comment period for that plan passed without additional surprises. NPS Regional Director Howard Chapman quietly approved the final *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.





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<<< PREVIOUS **CONTENTS** **NEXT >>>**

Challenge of the Big Trees

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dilsaver-tweed/chap9a.htm — 12-Jul-2004

Challenge of the Big Trees

Chapter Nine:

New Directions and a Second Century
(1972-1990)
(continued)

Postscript

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.

<<< PREVIOUS **CONTENTS** **NEXT >>>**

Challenge of the Big Trees
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