

REPORT

OF THE

ACTING SUPERINTENDENT OF THE SEQUOIA AND GENERAL GRANT NATIONAL PARKS

TO THE

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

1906.

WASHINGTON:
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.
1906.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Introduction	5
Guarding the parks	5
Forest fires	6
Park rangers	7
Establishment of telephone system	7
The giant forest road	8
Construction of trails	8
Patented Lands, purchase of by Government recommended	9
Fish and game	9
Meteorological conditions	10
Tourists	11
Sequoia trees	11
Map of Sequoia and General Grant National Parks and portion of the abutting Sierra and Forest Reserve	12

REPORT OF THE ACTING SUPERINTENDENT OF THE SEQUOIA AND GENERAL GRANT NATIONAL PARKS.

OFFICE OF THE ACTING SUPERINTENDENT,
Camp at Kaweah, Cal., October 1, 1906.

SIR: In compliance with instructions contained in letter from your office, dated June 30, 1906, I have the honor to submit the following report of the condition of affairs and of the management of the Sequoia and General Grant national parks:

The troops detailed by the War Department for duty in the Sequoia and General Grant National parks, consisting of Troop F, Fourteenth Cavalry, and a detachment of the Hospital Corps, U. S. Army, left the Presidio of Monterey, Cal., May 20, 1906, and after a march of 260 miles arrived, on June 3, 1906, at Kaweah, Cal., where camp was established on the North Fork of the Kaweah River. At this time there was no camp in Sequoia Park convenient and available for use. The Giant Forest road was blocked by landslides and the Mineral King road by fallen timber, and most of the trails were impassable on account of snow and fallen trees. The preceding winter had been exceptional in the amount of snow and rainfall, and considerable damage to roads and trails resulted thereby. As a consequence but little work could be done in the parks until the latter part of June, and the command remained in camp at Kaweah, occasional patrols being made into the park. A letter of instructions from the Secretary of the Interior was found awaiting me at Threerivers, Cal. Park Rangers Fry and Blossom reported to me on the day of arrival and Park Ranger Davis reported to me on June 5.

The headquarters camp was established 2 miles from Giant Forest on Sequoia Creek, on June 25, and on account of the probability of early snows and rains there, was reestablished at Kaweah on September 24. The camp site on Sequoia Creek was an excellent one in every respect, and its location was considered by me to be the best available for the proper administration of the parks.

GUARDING THE PARKS.

The duty of the troops being the preservation and protection against injury of the flora, trees, animals, birds, fishes, and wonders of nature on the Government lands within the parks, and the carrying out of such rules and regulations as the Interior Department might see fit to issue, permanent detachments were stationed as follows: On June 21, 1 noncommissioned officer and 3 privates, at Clough Cave; on June 23, 1 noncommissioned officer and 2 privates, at Cold Springs; on June 24, 1 noncommissioned officer and 2 privates, at Atwell Mill; on June 25, 1 noncommissioned officer and 2 privates, at Rocky Gulch; on July

16, 1 noncommissioned officer and 2 privates, at Alta Meadows; on August 2, 1 noncommissioned officer and 1 private, at General Grant Park.

All of these detachments were mounted and received instructions in the proper performance of their duties. The detachments at Clough Cave on the Hockett Meadow trail, at Cold Springs on the Mineral King road, and at Rocky Gulch on the Giant Forest road guarded the three entrances to the Sequoia Park from the west; the detachments at Alta Meadows and at Atwell Mill on the Mineral King road guarded the entrances on the east park line; the detachment at General Grant Park guarded that park. All of these detachments made patrols in the vicinity of their stations and patrols were made to various parts of the parks from the headquarters camp. Ranger Blossom was assigned to duty in the central and southern portions of Sequoia Park; Ranger Fry to the central and northern portions of Sequoia Park, and Ranger Davis to General Grant Park. On July 23 Mr. Harry F. Britten was appointed a park ranger and assigned to duty in the southern part of Sequoia Park, a part of the park which had not been satisfactorily guarded previous to this time, and which could not well be reached by the detachment at Clough Cave, and by Ranger Blossom only at intervals. The rifles of the soldiers were kept at the headquarters camp, their use at the detachment camps not being considered necessary.

Civilians have in the past accused soldiers of shooting game within the limits of the parks or in other ways of violating the park regulations. I have been unable to discover any violations by soldiers of the park rules, and I am of the opinion that the men of the detachments have performed their duties this year in a thoro, zealous, and satisfactory manner. The visitors to the parks were disposed to obey without question those in authority, and the residents in the vicinity of the parks seem to be interested in having the regulations obeyed. Practically no violations of the rules and regulations occurred during the tourist season. One man brought a pistol into Sequoia Park without having it sealed at the detachment camp. It was taken from him and will be held until the close of the season. Another man was found hunting in the southern part of Sequoia Park. His gun was taken from him and he was ejected from the park by Ranger Britten. Noncommissioned officers were kept on duty at the camps where first stationed during the entire season, while the privates were changed from time to time.

There being practically no tourists in either park after September 15, the detachments were relieved and returned to the headquarters camp as follows: From Alta Meadows, September 14; from General Grant Park, September 17; from Rocky Gulch, September 22; from Clough Cave, September 26; from Cold Springs and Atwell Mill, September 27. There being some probability that hunters might go into the parks soon after the detachments and troop left, the rangers were especially vigilant during this time.

FOREST FIRES.

Forest fires are the greatest calamities that can happen to the parks. If a fire should become well started in Sequoia Park incalculable damage would result. The means of fighting fire are meager and the dis-

tances to be traveled to get to the vicinity of a fire are in most cases large. For example, to reach a fire in the valley of the Middle Fork of Kaweah River from headquarters camp, it would be necessary to proceed by way of Threerivers, a distance of from 38 to 52 miles, altho the air-line distance might be less than 4 miles.

More trails and better trails are a safeguard against fire. The trails should serve the purpose not only of trails but also of fire lines, and all underbrush and other inflammable material should be cleared from their immediate vicinity. Fires are not always the result of carelessness on the part of campers or hunters, but are often known to be caused by lightning. Therefore, the cause of fires can not always be guarded against, no matter how vigilant care takers may be. Sequoia and General Grant parks have been particularly fortunate in not having forest fires of any importance during the past few years. There have been none this year. Several small fires were reported in the forest reserve east and south of Sequoia Park during the season.

RANGERS.

The park rangers now employed are Walter Fry, C. W. Blossom, and Harry F. Britten, all residing at Threerivers, near Sequoia Park, and L. L. Davis, of Millwood. The first three are on duty in Sequoia Park, and Ranger Davis lives in Grant Park during the whole year. They are all good, reliable men, well fitted for the duty of rangers, and faithful and energetic in the performance of their duties. They should be retained in the service. Mr. Ralph Hopping, one of the firm of Broder & Hopping, which has authority to conduct tourists thru Sequoia Park, was appointed by me deputy park ranger, without pay, and has materially assisted in compelling the observance of the rules and regulations governing the park.

There are two ranger cabins in Sequoia Park, one at Rocky Gulch and one at Colony Mill, both on the Giant Forest road. Another one is being built this year at Hockett Meadows and is now almost completed. There should be one in the Black Oak country, one at Giant Forest, one at Clough Cave, one at Quinn's Horse Camp, and as more trails are built the necessity for them at other points will arise. These cabins serve as shelter during inclement weather for the rangers and detachments of soldiers, as a storage place for provisions, forage, and tools, and as a central point from which to patrol. By their use rangers can more effectively and rapidly perform their duties.

TELEPHONE SYSTEM.

In the administration of park affairs a telephone system connecting the detachment camps with headquarters camp and with Threerivers would be of material assistance. In the event of fire, for example, instant communication could be had with neighboring detachments and headquarters camp and help rendered in the most expeditious manner. From headquarters camp the nearest telephone station is Threerivers, 31 miles, and the nearest telegraph station is Exeter, 52 miles. Telegrams are sent by mail from Exeter or Threerivers and are often three days in reaching headquarters camp. The troops, tourists, and others would be greatly benefited by the establishment of a telephone system. An estimate for 98 miles of line has already been submitted.

· THE GIANT FOREST ROAD.

This road extends from the west park line up a good grade to the principal point of interest in Sequoia Park—the Giant Forest—a distance of 21 miles, and in that distance rises about 4,000 feet. On account of the large amount of snow and rainfall during the last winter season more than 140 landslides were found along this road between headquarters camp and the west park line. About \$2,100 were expended in removing the landslides, in widening the road in places to allow more passing places for teams, in straightening the road, and in putting in culverts. Altho this road is in good condition now I would earnestly urge that it be still further improved. The number of tourists visiting this park is increasing rapidly. The scenic beauties to be found here, the charm of its forest life, its animal life, and its many other attractions, are just beginning to be known and appreciated. The more visitors there are the greater will be the need of means of transportation for them.

I have been informed that the railroad with terminus now at Lemon Cove will be extended to Threerivers within a year and later will extend to the park line, thus affording an easier method than now exists to reach the points of interest. The road should be widened to 18 or 20 feet, so that teams could pass anywhere. A system of drainage contemplating the use of drain tiling or concrete should be used, and finally the road should be oiled, as there is practically no rain here during the tourist season. An estimate calling for \$28,500 for the accomplishment of this work has been submitted, and it is to be hoped that amount will be obtained. Automobiles could travel this road if it were widened, but at present their use would be dangerous to teams. This road can be made one of the finest mountain roads to be found anywhere and at a nominal cost.

The road should be extended from Moro Rock around Giant Forest, coming into the road again at a point near Bird's-eye View, a distance of about 8 miles. This extension could be made without touching patented lands and at an estimated cost of \$9,600.

TRAILS.

More trails are needed in Sequoia Park. Many parts of the park are now inaccessible and roundabout means are used to go from one section to another. As stated in another place, the trails would be of value as fire lines as well as a means to get to the vicinity of a fire. Points of interest are denied to the ordinary tourist on account of the difficulty of getting to them. The following-named trails are among some of those that should be built: One from Kings River trail to Mount Silliman; one from Alta Meadows to Alta Peak, from which there is a magnificent view; one from Buena Vista to Marble Fork Falls (a foot trail); from Cold Springs to Salt Creek Grove; from Clough Cave to the southwestern portion of the park; from Atwell Mill to Tar Gap, and from Cliff Creek to Atwell Mill. Last year about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles of the Seven-mile Hill trail was built; this year a little more than 6 miles was added, completing the trail to the east park line near Redwood Meadows, where it connects with the Forest Reserve trail to Mineral King. This trail shortens the distance to Mineral King from headquarters camp by about 8 miles. However, this statement does

not represent the real value of the new trail, as the old one, known as the Buck Canon trail, was exceedingly bad, even for a mountain trail.

The Tar Gap and South Fork trails, as well as part of the trail to Quinn's Horse Camp, were repaired. About 3 miles of the Black Oak trail was finished last year; about 6 miles more have been added this year up to date. This trail will be completed to the northern line of the park about October 10, opening up a country that could not well be reached before, and shortening the distance to General Grant Park over a much better grade than that of the Halstead Meadow trail formerly used. This is one of the best trails in Sequoia Park. A trail connecting the Giant Forest road at a point near Colony Mill with the valley of the Middle Fork of Kaweah River will soon be started.

PATENTED LANDS.

I renew the recommendation that all patented or private lands in both parks be purchased by the Government.

FISH.

Most of the waters of Sequoia Park are fairly well stocked with trout, and good fishing may be had, altho traveling along the banks of a great many streams is a rather difficult matter on account of the rugged nature of the country. During the latter part of June, 1906, 17,300 fish were liberated in the waters of Sequoia Park. These fish were donated by the California board of fish commissioners, and were delivered at Lemon Cove by the Southern Pacific Railroad Company and Visalia Electric Railroad Company free of charge. From Lemon Cove they were carried by wagon, pack mule, sled, and by hand, distances varying from 20 to 65 miles, to the points of liberation, over a mountainous country covered by snow and traversed by many torrents. The difficult task was accomplished with a loss of less than 2 per cent of the fish. Four thousand Rainbow trout were liberated in Colony Mill Creek, 4,000 in the South Fork of Kaweah River, and 8,000 in the Middle Fork of Kaweah River. The remainder, consisting of 1,300 yearlings and adults of the Lock Leven and Eastern Brook trout varieties, were placed in the headwaters of the South Fork, in Hockett Lakes, in Wolverton Creek, in Log Meadows Creek, in the headwaters of the Marble Fork, and in Dorst Creek.

GAME.

Deer are plentiful and are reasonably tame, being a source of pleasure and gratification to tourists who have never seen wild game. A number of bears were seen in Sequoia Park, some by tourists in Broder & Hopping's camp, where the beef cattle were butchered. Quail are very numerous, and grouse, I believe, are increasing in numbers. There are a few mountain lions and wild cats in the parks, and the rangers are instructed to kill them whenever possible. There are large numbers of the smaller birds and animals usually found in mountains and forests. A pair of Japanese pheasants, donated to Sequoia Park and liberated at Colony Mill, have increased to a family of eight.

There are now 18 head of elk—12 males, 5 females, and 1 calf, sex unknown—in Sequoia Park, in the portion known as the “elk park,” which extends from the west park line along the valley of the Middle Fork of Kaweah River, and contains an area of more than 40 square miles. Where the mountains do not form natural barriers wire fences have been built, making it difficult for an elk to escape from this valley. The elk were obtained from Miller & Lux’s ranch in Kern County, Cal. The first attempt, made in the fall of 1904, resulted in 2 elk reaching the park, 1 of which died afterwards. In October, 1905, better success was had, 20 head being landed in the park. The task of capturing them and transporting them proved to be a difficult one. It was found necessary to dehorn them before placing them in the cars, and several were injured by fighting each other or by dashing themselves against the sides of the cars. After reaching their destination 5 of the 20 died from injuries received. The others rapidly recovered from the effects of their trying trip, and when seen at numerous times during the last eight months have shown themselves to be in first-class condition. I have no doubt but that this herd will increase and that it will be a valuable addition to the game of the park.

Within a few years there has been found to exist a strong sentiment in favor of the preservation and propagation of the buffalo, or American bison. Many individuals and several societies are interested in this matter. For example, the American Bison Society, recently organized, has entered deliberately into a campaign for the preservation of the bison, thru national cooperation and maintenance. I wish to call the attention of the Secretary of the Interior to the desirability of establishing a herd of buffaloes in that portion of the Sequoia Park in which the elk are now located. This area contains more than 40 square miles, is fenced where necessary, and rises from an altitude of about 1,100 feet to that of about 7,000 feet. Snow rarely falls in this valley below an altitude of about 4,000 feet. The valley was at a time before the park was established used as a cattle range. In the lower altitudes are found wild oats, wild rye, Indian wheat, and bunch grasses; in the the upper altitudes meadow grass is abundant; and bushes and shrubs are found everywhere. This area contains a large salt spring.

So far as I am able to learn, this location possesses the climatic and other conditions necessary for the preservation of the buffalo, and I am of the opinion that a herd once placed could maintain itself by grazing, and that there would be no maintenance expense to be considered. Buffaloes, male and female, can be obtained from the Allard herd in Montana at a cost of about \$350 or \$400 per head, including transportation. I do not know of any individuals or societies that could be relied upon to make gifts of buffaloes to this park or to the Government, and I therefore earnestly recommend that an effort be made to obtain an appropriation from Congress of \$10,000 for the purchase, preservation, and propagation of the buffalo in the Sequoia National Park.

METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS.

The elevation above sea level at the headquarters camp is about 5,600 feet. Average daily record of temperatures taken at this camp at 6 o’clock a. m., at 12 o’clock noon, and at 6 o’clock p. m., for the month of July, 1906, was 60°, 81°, and 68° F., respectively; for the

month of August, 56° , 79° , and 69° ; for the month of September, 49° , 70° , and 59° . The highest temperature recorded during these months was 88° , and the lowest 37° . During this time there were only five or six cloudy days and two insignificant rains. It is to be noted that this record pertains to the headquarters camp on Sequoia Creek. At the Alta Meadows there were cold rains and snow in the early part of September.

TOURISTS.

An attempt was made to count the tourists visiting both parks, but the number could not be obtained accurately. About 700 tourists visited Sequoia Park and about 900 General Grant Park. The tourist season extends from about July 1 to about September 15. These numbers will undoubtedly be increased in the future. I have noted that the interested railroads are beginning to advertise the many attractions of the parks and contiguous territory.

SEQUOIA TREES.

The Sequoia seedlings sent to Yellowstone National Park, Wyo., last year died during the winter. About 100 seedlings will be sent this year from General Grant Park to the Stanislaus Forest Reserve, Sonora, Cal., for transplanting and propagation. The experiment will be watched with interest.

So far as known, there have been no acts of vandalism in connection with the Sequoia trees this year, and it is now generally understood by visitors that none will be permitted.

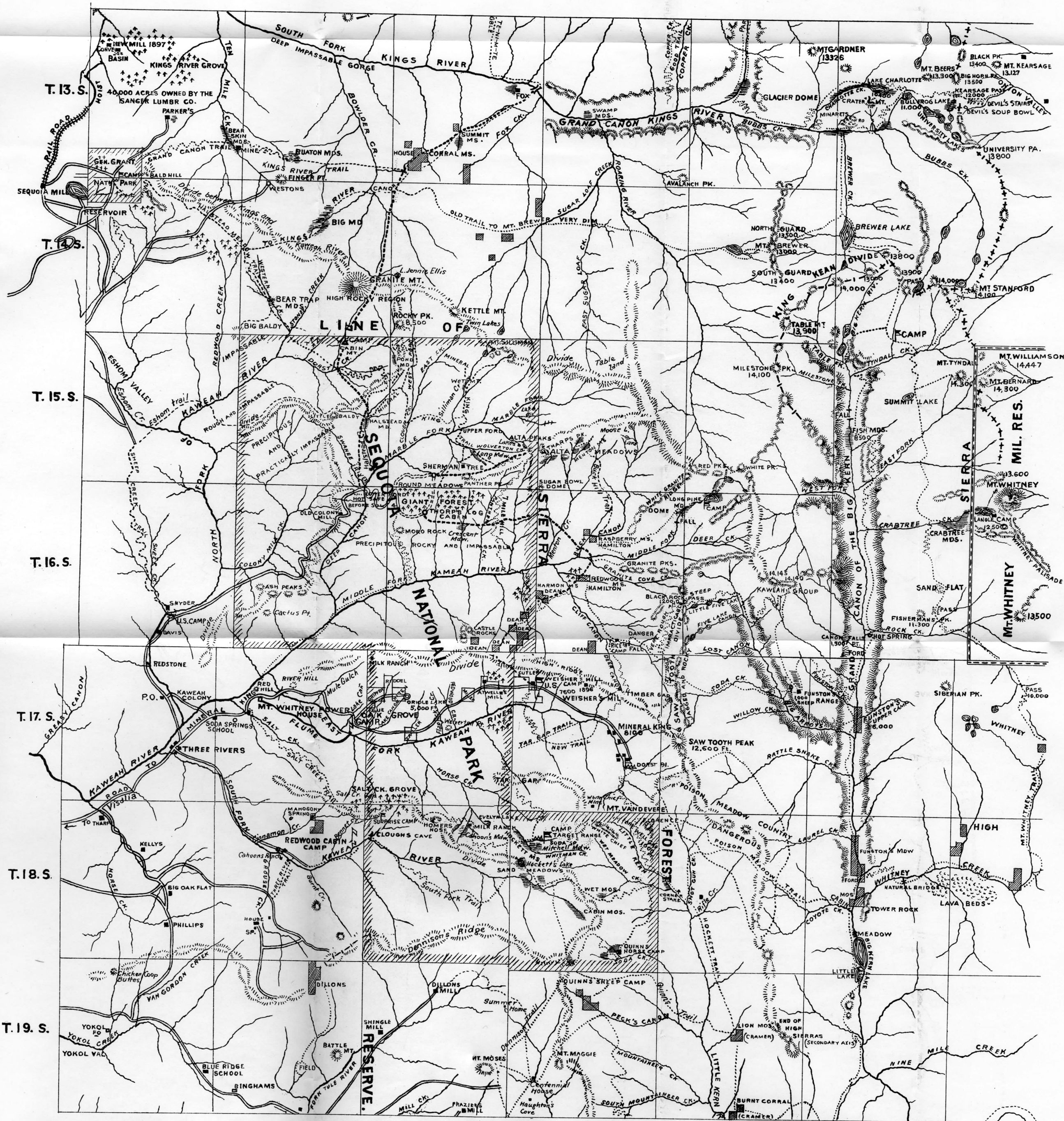
With due regard for the opinions of others, I hope I may be permitted to question the taste or propriety employed in attaching the names of men or women, either living or dead, to individual Sequoia trees. To me this practice seems particularly inappropriate.

Very respectfully,

KIRBY WALKER,
*Captain, Fourteenth Cavalry, Acting Superintendent
Sequoia and General Grant National Parks.*

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, D. C.

O



SKETCH OF THE
SEQUOIA AND GENERAL GRANT NATIONAL PARKS
 and the
SIERRA FOREST RESERVE
 In their Immediate Vicinity

To Accompany Report of the
 Acting Superintendent of Sequoia and General Grant National Parks
 1906