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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Mount McKinley NATIONAL PARK

FILE NO.

SUPERINTENDANT'S

REPORT

for the month of

DECEMBER, 1925.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
MOUNT MCKINLEY NATIONAL PARK.

January 5, 1926.

Dear Sir;

I herewith respectfully submit a report on Mount McKinley National Park, for the month of December, 1925, in accordance with instructions received from the National Park Service, Washington, D. C., dated December 10, 1925;

000 - General

In view of the fact that the winters are so cold usually, the steamship companies not advertising tourist travel in the winter months, and that the present facilities and development of this Park does not warrant visitors at this time of year, there were no visitors recorded for this month.

With exception of the general routine work and the patrol work of the rangers and personnel of this Park, the most exciting event which occurred, was the rumored eruption of Mount McKinley. Upon investigation, there proved to be no evidences of any disturbances. I am attaching to this report, copies of newspaper items as they appeared in the local publications.

100 - Administration

The administration of the Park is now vested in a superintendent, clerk and 3 temporary rangers. On December 28, Ranger Armstrong submitted his resignation, dated the 18th, from this Service, to take effect upon his replacement being filled. Same was forwarded to the Service for approval.

110 - Status of Work

Practically all the accounts and files are now in good shape and official order. Superintendent Karstens has been endeavoring to record and submit his monthly reports that are overdue. It has been a very difficult matter to catch up with these for the reason the current work takes a good deal of time and in the Fall, when headquarters camp was moved, something had to be neglected and in order that the personnel be comfortably housed before the winter arrived, the had to be the office work that was delayed. The complete rendition of these reports will occur in the near future.

Going to the fact that both the superintendent and the clerk have to do their own chores, care for the stock in the absence of the rangers,

get the mail from the post-office which is two miles away from camp, haul their own coal and water, it makes it impossible to devote a full day to their respective duties.

120 Park Inspections by:

121 - Superintendent

On December 31, Superintendent Karstens, left headquarters camp, on snowshoes, to investigate the rumor of the supposed eruption of Mount McKinley. He travelled along First Creek, crossing over the flats and ascended the ridge of mountains north of the camp. With the use of high-powered glasses, he gave the mountain a good observation but failed to find any evidences of disturbances of any nature. The cause of the rumor, no doubt, was the sun's rays beating down on the snow clad peaks, making a vapor arise, which was mistaken for smoke and steam.

130 - Finance and Accounts

Status of Appropriations

The following is a status of the two accounts applicable to this Park and handled by the S.D.A.:

	Appropriation No. 46426, Mt. McKinley National Park.		
	Allotment	Expended	Unexpended Bal.
Previously reported.	\$ 13,524.00	\$5,569.62	\$ 7,954.38
December, 1925.		1,085.49	
Total.	\$ 13,524.00	\$6,655.11	\$ 6,868.89

	Donations (Roads & Trails) Mt. McKinley Nat'l Park.		
	Donated	Expended	Unexpended Bal.
Previously reported.	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 700.25	\$ 299.75

140 - Labor Situation

I would like to mention a few facts under this heading which I consider of vital value to the readers of this report for it gives an insight of the difficult problem one has to contend with here in regards to procuring rangers. Most of the men, from whom one would care to choose rangers, have a very peculiar disposition in this country. They are of a transient nature - desiring to accumulate a few hundred dollars and then prospect or travel to other parts of the country. This is mostly applicable to young men who have come to the country during the last year or two. The older men, who know this country well only in a few cases desire to settle down to a job for the year round. They would rather work in the summer and hibernate into their cabins in the winter. This latter type of man is by far the more preferable in the capacity of rangers.

It takes too much time to be continually breaking in young men to such dogs, to keep warm in the open spaces and familiarize them with the use of a saw and square and the caring of stock. The older men understand these things, in the majority, are more welcome than the young men. This Park is too big and requires too much patrolling to have Ranger Hyberg or Superintendent Karstens continually with them (the initiates) showing them how everything is done, for each has his own duty to perform and if too much time is spent on other things, something has to suffer for lack of attention.

These facts are mentioned in support of the many charges of rangers which may be noted on the records. It will be our policy here to have appointed men to the position of rangers, try them out and give them thorough instructions how to care for themselves and their dogs and to carry out the ideals of the Service, and then if they do not prove to be men of the calibre desired, they will be required to resign.

150 - Equipment

Only a small amount of supplies and equipment were purchased this month due to the fact that there must be the strictest economy in the expenditures in order to have sufficient funds to meet contingent expenses during the coming Spring. About 50% of the forage for horses has already been consumed and about 70% of the dog-feed.

170 - Plans, Maps and Surveys.

A preliminary survey was made of headquarters camp during the month of October, 1925 and plans were completed during this month, blue-printed by the generosity of the Alaska Railroad and submitted to the Service at Washington, D.C., for approval.

A copy of these plans were also forwarded to Governor Geo. A. Parks, at Juneau, Alaska, with explanatory letter, recommending a certain portion of the reserve, set aside by Executive Order, be taken into and made a part thereof of the Mount McKinley National Park. He had already given his verbal consent to such acquisition.

200 - Maintenance, Improvements and New Construction

210 - Maintenance

Due to the warm weather, the snow and ice on the highway, melted considerably and thereby caused great difficulty in transporting materials and supplies from the depot. There is a steady grade of 10% for a distance of $\frac{1}{2}$ mile and it is impossible to run the motor truck until the cold weather again settles down.

The hauling of coal, from the coal bunker on the railroad, to headquarters, with horses, is a very slow and expensive method as it takes the time of a ranger who might otherwise be on patrol. Still we have to use horses until the colder weather prevails.

Maintenance work, accomplished by the personnel, is always of a very varied nature. When the rangers are not on patrol, they repair their sleds and harness, assist in the construction of buildings and their maintenance and do general routine work around the camp.

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These facts are mentioned in support of the many changes of rangers which may be noticed on the records. It will be our policy here to have appointed men to the position of rangers, try them out and give them thorough instructions how to care for themselves and their dogs and to carry out the ideals of the Service, and then if they do not prove to be men of the calibre desired, they will be required to resign.

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An inspection trip was made by Mr. Mackie, during the month, over the telephone line, between headquarters and the Alaska Railroad depot at McKinley Park Station. This was occasioned when the line went out of order at 3.30 P.M. on December 24th. The inspection trip was made on December 25th. No breaks of any nature was found in our line and upon further inquiry found that the Railroad main line had been damaged, owing to the melting snow and ice, and a fairly strong wind which was prevalent at that time.

220 - Improvements - Roads

As a close co-operation exists between the National Park Service and the Alaska Road Commission, the latter organization are doing all the new construction and improvement.

Due to the hard winters and the short working season in this section, there has been no work done for the last two months and it is not anticipated that any such work will commence before the first of March, 1926. Preliminary work will then begin and camps put in shape for the crews who will begin work about April 15th.

Buildings

On December 1st, there was a temporary garage erected at headquarters camp. This was constructed out of reclaimed old canvas and poles and is about 20 ft. by 26 ft. and about 8 ft. high. A large drum stove was installed, in which coal will be burned. This garage is only in the nature of a protection against the snow and the extreme cold, to enable the starting-up of the engine and will be removed in the Spring, when cold weather conditions cease.

313 - Schedule of Rates

On December 22nd, Superintendent Kerstens made a trip to Fairbanks to confer with the officials of the McKinley Park Transportation Company relative to their schedule of rates for the coming season, 1926. They stated that they would submit their report as soon as possible.

400 - Flora, Fauna and Natural Phenomena

Due to the efforts of the Biological Survey, Mr. G. J. Murie, assistant Biologist, has compiled and classified records relative to the flora, fauna and natural phenomena of this Park. This publication, I understand, is now on record at Washington, D.C. and request will be made that a copy of same be forwarded to this Park, for their files.

471 - Animals

471 - Caribou

During the month, there has been a scarcity of caribou in the main eastern section, there being only a few hundred having been seen by the rangers on patrol. This, no doubt, is caused by the presence of wolves, and the large amount of snow on the ground. The warm weather also will have a tendency to keep them in the higher ranges.

472 - Sheep

Numerous bands of sheep are to be seen in the vicinity of Savage River and while making trips from headquarters camp to Savage River Ranger Station, many bands, of about 50 in each band, may be seen on the range that is north of the Park highway. This is about a distance of a mile and a half from the road. In as much, as there have been no extensive patrols into the central section of the Park, it is difficult to state just what conditions exist there. Ranger Hyberg is patrolling the Toklat River Section, but will not report at headquarters until the early Spring. If there is any hunting there, he will make it his duty to return to this camp and report the excessive hunting or any other unusual occurrence.

473 - Moose

There have been no moose seen by any of the Park personnel this month.

474 - Bears

As all the species of "Bruin" are now taking their winter's sleep, and their appearance is not expected until the Spring.

475 - Porcupine

Owing to the warmer weather than usual, it has caused the porcupine to come from out of their holes and go in search of a little additional food. Many are seen through the woods and they even come into camp in search of forage. They even come up onto the back porches of the cabins and try and make their entry into the meat boxes and other receptacles of food.

476 - Fox

Many foxes are seen by the rangers on patrol and oft-times, they are seen while travelling between headquarters and the post office at McKinley Park. While the woods are full of their tracks. The red fox is the most predominant species at present, with a sprinkling of the cross species.

477 - Rabbits

One would require the use of a rapid calculating machine to estimate the numbers of "snow-shoe" rabbits that are in this vicinity. Of course, their fur is pure white now, and they are very tame. One can see them, at any time, running through the camp and stopping to eat a little morsel of vegetation or refuse.

520 - Weather Conditions - General

Throughout this section of the country, there has been an unusual warm spell prevalent. It has been accompanied by the steady blowing and of

a "Chonook" wind. Snowfall has been light this month, though heavy last month.

521 - Weather in the Park

During the first 10 days, there was a continual light snowfall, the total precipitation of which was 3.88 ins. There was about two weeks of absolutely clear and beautiful weather, though a little warm for this time of year. The mean maximum temperature for the month was 19.77°, the mean minimum 15.77°, with a mean of 19.37°. The highest temperature of the month was 47° on December 28th, and the lowest temperature was 38° below zero which occurred on December 12th. The greatest daily range occurred on December 14th, from 25° above to 25° below zero, a range of 51°. Weather Bureau Form No. 1009 is attached to this report.

600 - Extinction

640 - Predatory Animals

On several occasions in the night, during the past month, wolves have approached quite near to headquarters camp and have howled for hours. This distance has been within 400 feet. It is to be feared that the amount of wolves are on the increase for rangers on patrol, usually in the vicinity of Savage River, have reported seeing one or two, in the distance, on many patrols.

On Dec. 9th, Ranger Armstrong, while on patrol, assisting Ranger Nyberg to freight his supplies into the Toklat River section, was followed by a wolf for a distance of about 11 miles. He stopped when he (Armstrong) arrived at Sanctuary River and allowed him to approach within 100 feet. Armstrong shot twice at the wolf but missed his target. The short distances to within which these wolves will approach a human being conveys the idea that they are becoming very bold for the reason that they have not been shot at, except at those times which have already been cited and of which will be spoken shortly.

On Dec. 29th, about 8.30 A.M. the camp was aroused by the sound of a continual howling, on the Park highway, about two hundred feet from camp. Superintendent Karstens got his gun and walked up the road and just after he left camp, saw a large wolf sitting in the middle of the road, surrounding us, as mentioned. He shot and killed him. It was of a grayish-yellow color, commonly known as a gray wolf; and after being skinned, his hide measured 6 feet 8 inches from tip to tip.

Numerous reports are coming in from Healy, a few miles north of the north-east corner of the Park, that coyotes are to be seen quite frequently in that district. A number have been successful in trapping some of them.

On Dec. 23rd, Mr. William H. Greene, of Healy, donated a coyote's skull, which he had killed, to this Park. This specimen will be thoroughly cleaned and will be sent to the Biological Survey in Washington, for analysis.

On the eastern boundary, about mile 342, on the Alaska Railroad, a trapper succeeded in trapping 2 wolves, during the last month.

All these instances help to convince one that predatory animals are going to prove a problem to the Park force. Although there have been no indications of any pack being formed, it is to be feared that eventually those present in the hills will breed and will become a menace to travellers. A strict watch will be kept and the killing of both coyotes and wolves will be kept in abeyance until such a time as they become dangerous - then a drastic action will be taken by all concerned.

900 - Miscellaneous

901 - Ranger Patrol

During the past month, many patrols were made by the 3 rangers, now on the force.

On December 3rd, Ranger Hyberg, accompanied by Ranger Armstrong, left headquarters camp for the Toklat River section. Ranger Hyberg intends to make his winter camp in that section and will not return to headquarters until the early Spring. This is a part of the Park where promiscuous hunting is done very extensively and needs the constant patrol of a conscientious man to keep it in abatement. After relaying most of his winter supplies over to the Teklinetka River, Ranger Armstrong parted with Ranger Hyberg, and returned to headquarters on the 16th. He stated that both of them had had a very hard trip over there on account of the slush ice and deep snow and "nigger-heads", a name given to stumps and mounds of grass and low bushes in this country.

On December 1st, Ranger Sinclair entered on duty and assisted Rangers Armstrong and Hyberg in hauling his (Hyberg's) winter supplies to Savage River Ranger Station from headquarters camp.

Constant patrols were made from headquarters to Healy, over the northern boundary, and return also to Winly and Cantwell, on the eastern boundary. No extensive evidences of illegal hunting was found. It is to be assumed that residents, adjacent to the Park, are fast becoming familiar with the Park rules and regulations and are confining their hunting activities to other sections of the country, outside the Park area. This, of course, can only be said of the eastern and part of the northern boundaries, for on the other boundaries, hunting for game in the Park still continues, although no reports have been given the Park personnel to this effect.

It is only by the dint of having rangers constantly on patrol, that this respect for Park authority can be held. A short let-up on patrol would very likely prove to have disastrous results.

Patrol Mileage

Mount McKinley National Park, Alaska.

Officer or Ranger	This Month.	Last Month.	Fiscal Year to Date.
Rangers (2)	464	352	1115
Ranger (1) See note.			

Regarding this rangers patrol mileage, this covers Hanger Hyberg's patrol in the Toklat River section. In view of the fact that he will not, in all probability, report to this office before early Spring, it is impossible to give his mileage but same will be incorporated in the monthly report of the date on which he arrives back.

Very truly yours,

Henry P. Karstens,
Superintendent.

The Director,
National Park Service,
Washington, D.C.

HPK/rpa.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

STATUS OF PERSONNEL

Mount McKinley National Park for the Month of December, 1925.

	This Month	This Month Last Year
Number of employees beginning of month,	5	4
Number of additions, ...	1	-
Total, ...	6	4
Number of separations, ...	-	1
Number of employees close of month, . . .	6	3
Number of promotions during month	-	-
Aggregate amount of annual leave taken,	-	-
Aggregate amount of sick leave taken,	-	-
Aggregate amount of leave without pay,	-	-