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Post Office Box No. 1711

Santa Fe, New Mexico.

July 1, 1937

Third Regional Officer  
National Park Service  
517 Braniff Building  
Oklahoma City, Okla.

Attention: E. H. Wirt.

Subject: Soil Conservation Service --  
Forest Stand Improvement Work  
near Sandelier National Monument.

Dear Mr. Wirt:

Reference is made to your letter of June 28, 1937 on the above subject.

*Ramon Vigil Grant*  
*Thinning PP*

I am familiar with the Soil Conservation Service work of forest stand improvement on the Ramon Vigil Grant near Sandelier National Monument in so far as the work may influence forest protection at Sandelier. That is the increase in the fire hazard, fire protection and cooperation and also observations are made at every opportunity for any increase in insect or fungi infestation that may originate in the area.

The area on which thinning has been done is approximately three sections. The work was done as improvement thinning on dense yellow pine reproduction. Slash from this thinning has increased the combustible material on the ground. I understand that all poles, four inch or over top diameter and eight feet or over in length, removed during thinning have been salvaged and removed from the forest. The slash now remaining is the small tops and branches which have been lopped and scattered evenly over the ground. The present fire hazard is of course above normal but after two winters this hazard will be much reduced and should not be above normal for the area.

The Soil Conservation Service, under Forester Walling, are very much aware of the present fire hazard here. They maintain a work camp of from eight to ten men in the area. They have a telephone operator on continuous duty during the fire season and are provided with tools and transportation at all times. Truck travel ways, or trails unimproved, exist over the area in such a way that any fire on the area can be reached from their camp in less than thirty minutes.

Men responsible for the forest protection of this area were present at a fire training school held near there April 13 and 14, 1937. The Forest Service, National Park Service and the Soil Conservation were all represented. These three government agencies are all prepared to give prompt action for any fire reported in the vicinity of this thinning operation. I am not acquainted with the details of fire detection for the area but I do know that one Forest Service lookout can observe the area and that the Soil Conservation Service have a fire patrolman in the area.

Natural conditions help protect Bandelier National Monument from a fire that might originate in the area. Prevailing wind is from Bandelier to the area and the slope of the ground is from the area toward Bandelier. Actual suppression of a fire threatening Bandelier from here would thus be more easily controlled.

Also I am concerned about a possible increase of insect or fungi infestation originating from this area. Activity in this way are limited to observation but observations will be made at every opportunity.

The area is a very definite added fire hazard to Bandelier National Monument but I am satisfied that all agencies concerned are prepared to meet such emergencies as may arise.

I expect to visit Bandelier soon for further fire detection studies and will make special notice of the detection given to the Ramon Vigil Grant area.

Yours truly,

W. Ward Jaeger  
Asst. Forester.

cc: Cook  
Pinkley  
Harkins ✓