10-23
(June 1941)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Yellowstone NATIONAL PARK

	MOORE	
✓	ADAMSON	
✓	COPPS	
✓	SHELE	
	ALBERTS	
	SCHMIDT	
	QUIST	
	CONNELLY	
✓	PAULE	
✓	FARRELL	
✓	ELLIOTT	
✓	EVANS	
	CHAPMAN	
	WOHLBRANDT	
	ROBINSON	

FILE NO. 287-02.3

MONTHLY REPORT

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

MARCH
1944

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IMPORTANT

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NEWTON B. DRURY,
Director.

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 16—22371

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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK
YELLOWSTONE PARK, WYO.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

April 6, 1944.

[illegible] for the Director.

Following is the report of activities for Yellowstone National Park for the month of March 1944:

Weather Conditions. The stormy weather of February continued throughout most of March and heavy winds prevailed a good part of the time. It was not until the end of the month that warm weather set in and there was a heavy run-off. The precipitation of February and March greatly improved the snow conditions in the high country and by the end of the month a near normal snowfall had been recorded for the entire winter. The maximum temperature for March was 48° on the 29th, and the minimum -13° on the 1[illegible]th. Only on 3 days were sub-zero temperatures recorded. The total precipitation for March was 1.[illegible] inches with a total snowfall of 25.5 inches, as against 1.[illegible] inches of precipitation for March 1943 and 23.[illegible] inches of snowfall. There were a total of [illegible] clear, 10 partly cloudy and 16 cloudy days during the month.

The report of the observer for the Bureau of Reclamation shows that the March survey over the Jackson Lake watershed indicated that snow was 7[illegible]% of normal and water was 6[illegible]% of normal which showed a good increase over the last survey when the water was only 5[illegible]% of normal. The Reclamation Service report further stated "soil moisture over Jackson Lake watershed is better than normal, while the ground at the lower elevations is frozen to greater than normal depths; therefore, more of the early runoff will reach the streams, thus increasing early natural flow".

The snow depths for some of the main points in the park covering a period of ten years follows:

Location	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Lamar	68	24	19	20	6	[illegible]	3	11	[illegible]	[illegible]
Bechler	61	81.1	68	81.1	19	56	[illegible]	57.[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Northeast	34	40	12	32	25	[illegible]	17	29	[illegible]	[illegible]
Gallatin	36	36	?	?	12	10	[illegible]	24	16	[illegible]
Lake	36	53	35	68	27	[illegible]	32	[illegible]	[illegible].5	[illegible].7
Lewis River Divide	?	?	92	1[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	195	[illegible].5
Mammoth	6.8	10.9	1.8	2.[illegible]	?	0	0	[illegible]	10	19
Old Faithful	52	72.5	?	51	21	28	16	37	70	[illegible]
Snake River	54	80	54	69	16	36	22	19	70	16
Tower Falls	12	26	17	21	10	6	3	13.[illegible]	35	22
West Yellowstone	41	52	39	51	23	24	30	30	56	29
Canyon	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	[illegible]
Norris	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	[illegible]

Special Activities. Superintendent Bowers spent the entire month in the park and made no trips outside the boundaries.

Assistant to the Superintendent Joffe and Assistant Chief Ranger Young attended a meeting of the Absaroka Wildlife Conservation Committee in Livingston on March 3. The grazing of sheep in the primitive area north of the park above the Slough Creek region was the main subject of discussion. Opinion was later taken from the various organizations present and the report to the U. S. Forest Service to deny the request for the grazing of sheep in the primitive area.

There was considerable concern manifested in the park because of the possibility of losing several employees through Selective Service. Purchasing Clerk Ladd Sherey, District Ranger Hugh Ghent and Assistant Chief Ranger William S. Chapman all passed their pre-induction physicals and had received orders by the end of the month to report for induction. Chief Ranger Barrows, District Ranger Crowell and Park Ranger Reynolds reported for pre-induction physicals and were rejected for active service. Several other employees, including Property Clerk Anderson, District Ranger Astle and Foreman-Mechanic Sewing have all passed their pre-induction physicals and will probably be called within the next month or so. Foreman-Electrician Sexton transferred to critical work with the Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company. The taking of so many men at this time, just before the opening of the park season, will seriously cripple our organization.

On March 25 the park received instructions that the motor vehicle license fee would be collected during the 1944 season.

New postal regulations were put into effect on March 26. The new regulations call particularly for an increase in the air mail service from 5¢ to 6¢ and in local mail from 2¢ to 3¢.

Yellowstone Park residents responded early and generously to the Red Cross Drive under way this month and contributed $[illegible].61 to the Park County, Montana Chapter, as a part of their quota. One hundred forty-nine adults contributed and the school children subscribed $[illegible]. Assistant Chief Ranger Albert E. Elliott was chairman of the Yellowstone Red Cross Drive.

Inspections. Arnold E. Cover, Engineer Aide, U. S. Geological Survey, Boise, Idaho, in March 20 to take stream gage measurements.

Plans, Maps and Surveys. The Project Construction Program was revised to agree with the new ruling separating the major and minor roads and adding a super priority list. Considerable time was spent on the deferred maintenance program, collecting and indexing all available data. A report on boundary marking was worked up for Yellowstone and coordinated areas. The preparation of the road maintenance report for 1943 was completed. When the shuttle cards are returned from the Director's Office they will be brought up to date.

General Publicity. No press releases were sent out during the month [illegible], several park pictures were furnished for use in Yellowstone articles. Copies of the special annual edition of the Casper Tribune-Herald, Casper, Wyoming, were received, containing two Yellowstone articles by Assistant to the Superintendent Jeffe and several park pictures.

Road Maintenance. Most of the month was stormy, with considerable snowfall, which resulted in much road opening work around Mammoth, between Gardiner and Mammoth and between Mammoth and Cooke. It was necessary to use the Snoco for the first time this winter in keeping the road from Gardiner to Cooke open. This was caused by the high winds drifting snow rather than from the amount of snow which fell. The push type plows were also used for several trips to Cooke.

Culverts were opened from Gardiner to Cooke. The ice formed in two culverts near the Buffalo Ranch and resulted in considerable work to keep them open.

Thawing weather is causing large numbers of rocks to fall on the road in the Gardiner Canyon and daily inspections are required.

All maintenance was handled by the permanent personnel.

Other Maintenance. The regular maintenance work on buildings at Mammoth was carried on by the carpenters, plumbers and painters.

Park Operators. Mrs. Anne K. Pryor returned to the park from California on March 22. Mr. J. E. Haynes made a trip to the park from Dakota on March 30. A meeting of the Western Conference of National Park Operators is scheduled to be held in the Director's Office in Chicago on April 17 and 18, and the Park Superintendent has been ordered to attend.

Increase or Decrease in Travel. One hundred sixty-eight persons entered the park during March as compared with 185 for the same month in 1943. The total persons entering the park for the travel year is 1,[illegible] as compared to 5,966 persons for 1943, a decrease of 34.6%.

Thirty cars entered the park in March as compared with 31 for the same month in 1943. The total cars for this travel year [illegible] as compared with 1,730 for 1943, or a decrease of 13.6%.

Visitors. There were no special visitors during the month.

Ranger Service. A bison count was made during the month. All trips into the more inaccessible areas were made to count [illegible] and time to several regular patrols for game observations.

A number of rangers were assigned to various duties such as [illegible] of tools, maintenance of saddle and pack equipment and repair of the water system at Northeast Gate.

A Park Ranger made a trip to Norris, Canyon and Lake by snowplane on the last two days of the month for the purpose of making Federal and Joint Cooperative Snow Surveys.

Police Protection. No law enforcement cases were [illegible] during the month.

Accidents. No automobile accidents occurred during March.

Wildlife Administration.

ELK. Warm weather featured the first three days of March causing the snow to settle considerably. On March 4, a series of storms commenced and continued through March 25. High winds also contributed to the formation of a hard icing crust on the snow over considerable areas and this greatly restricted the amount of available range. Elk in large numbers moved to lower elevations where the forage had been but lightly used this winter until March. Moderate utilization of the lower ranges occurred until the last few days of the month when the weather became mild and the animals began moving back again. Utilization of browse species was generally light and there is little evidence of over use of any part of the winter range this year. Ticks made their appearance in late February and the degree of infestation of elk increased considerably by the end of March. No winter losses of elk have been noted thus far.

DEER. These animals have come through the winter in comparatively good condition, but losses through coyote kills appear to be well above normal. Eighteen losses positively identified as coyote kills were reported for the Mammoth District where most of the deer winter. This probably represents but a small fraction of the total loss to coyotes as little remains of a carcass within twelve hours after the kill is made and a light fall of new snow or wind which drifts the snow will erase the evidence of the kill in a short time. No attempt has been made to determine the extent of deer losses through coyote depredations, but they probably have been excessive.

Only five deer have been seen at Old Faithful this winter and none at Lower there and Madison Junction. This is worthy of note as hardly [illegible] than 100 deer were known to winter in these areas until 1956-57. The herd formerly wintered in the Lamar Canyon has disappeared completely. Only 3 deer were seen in the Lower Falls District during March despite the fact that intensive and frequent patrols were made over the winter range areas. The numbers along the Yellowstone River from Cottonwood to Gardiner have shown a very sharp decrease from the number observed during other winters.

PRONGHORN. Due to the mildness of the winter, the pronghorn have benefitted from having more winter range than is normally available. They move into and out of the park near the Old Yellowstone ranch but do not appear to have

moved more than six or seven miles below the park boundary. Conditions were most unfavorable for counting, no attempt was made to secure a complete census, but [illegible] were counted between Mt. Everts and the Gardiner Ranch on March [illegible]. Six antelope are known to have been killed by coyotes this winter, and as in the case of deer, the actual losses are probably far greater.

BISON. A complete census of the bison in the park was secured during February and March. The results are as follows:

Pelican Valley and adjacent areas, February [illegible], [illegible] and [illegible] .... [illegible]
Fountain, Nez Perce Creek, [illegible] adjacent areas, March [illegible] - [illegible] .... [illegible]
Hayden Valley and Mary Mountain..... 176
Lamar Herd, Cottonwood to Slat Creek..... [illegible]

Efforts to secure a census of the Lamar herd were continued through the entire month of March. Counts were made over the entire winter range and on the feeding grounds. On March 29, the 297 bison on the feeding grounds consisted of 1[illegible] cows, 107 bulls and [illegible] calves.

BISON, Feeding Operations. In accordance with the practices of recent years, feeding of bison at Lamar was deferred as long as possible. A brief period of warm weather followed by strong winds and considerable snowfall during the early part of the month crusted and compacted the snow and resulted in sharp restriction of the available range. It became necessary to commence feeding on March 1[illegible]. The bison were fed on 1[illegible] days and the feeding discontinued after March 31. A total of 13 tons of hay was used during that period and the average number of animals on the feeding grounds was 1[illegible].

COYOTES. Large numbers of coyotes are regularly seen in the park and particularly on the northern winter range. These animals exhibit a strong tendency to travel and hunt in packs and show little fear of man. On March 1[illegible], 27 coyotes were counted within a one-mile radius of the Lamar station. During December, the District Ranger counted 26 coyotes between Yellowstone and the Gardiner Ranch, a distance of nine miles. A permanent truck driver reported seeing 1[illegible] coyotes at one time feeding on the remains of a deer which they had killed. Winter visitors frequently express amazement and considerable concern over the numerous coyotes observed. There is sufficient evidence to support the contention that coyotes now inhabit the park in far greater numbers than can be considered normal for this area.

Forestry. Numerous applications have been received for fire patrol positions during this season, the majority being from boys sixteen and seventeen years of age and from the middle western states. All applications received have been tabulated and reviewed.

Two members of the Protection Division devoted about two weeks time working in the Mammoth fire cache, servicing equipment, improving fire equipment storage facilities and improving the fire cache area and office facilities. All flashlight headsets were checked for serviceability. All flashlight

batteries on hand were tested. [illegible] equipment at Mammoth were repaired the grinding wheels found in them [illegible] badly worn. Unserviceable wheels were replaced with [illegible].

Miscellaneous. The regular monthly meeting of [illegible] No. 145 was held in the Canteen on March [illegible]. [illegible] pictures of wildlife in Mt. McKinley National Park were shown by park naturalist Hauer.

Roy C. Brown, former Yellowstone Park Ranger, from December [illegible], 1920 to September 30, 1933, died at Park Springs, [illegible], on March [illegible]. Mr. Brown had retired when he reached the age of 65. He was [illegible] years of age at the time of his death.

Edmund B. Fowler,
Superintendent.

cc: Region Two

JJ/cws