

**A Classic Western Quarrel:
A History of the Road Controversy at
Colorado National Monument**

by

Lisa Schoch-Roberts



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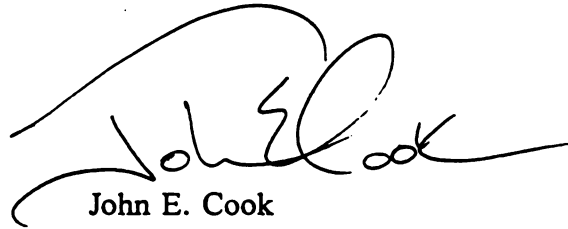
Lisa Schoch-Roberts

U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Intermountain Region
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FOREWORD

As a part of the National Park Service's mission to protect and interpret its resources, it is important to make valuable, historical information readily available. To further that goal, I am pleased to present this volume in our occasional series of publications on the Intermountain Region's past.

This history is the first volume of Colorado National Monument's Administrative History. Other volumes relating to the creation of the monument and additional pertinent issues will be published over the next few years. The history, written by Lisa Schoch-Roberts as her Master's Thesis from Colorado State University, addresses many issues related to the development of the monument and its roads, the use of the roads and the importance the roads have played in the history of the monument and the surrounding area. The comprehensive coverage of the subject will aid present and future managers to protect the valuable resources at Colorado National Monument and will introduce new employees to the rich history of the monument's past.



John E. Cook
Director
Intermountain Region

Mission: As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally-owned public lands and natural and cultural resources. This includes fostering wise use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also promotes the goals of the Take Pride in America campaign by encouraging stewardship and citizen responsibility for the public lands and promoting citizen participation in their care. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. Administration. NPS-D52. 1997.

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS
"A CLASSIC WESTERN QUARREL:" A HISTORY OF THE
ROAD CONTROVERSY AT COLORADO
NATIONAL MONUMENT

Between 1981 and 1986, Park Service officials at Colorado National Monument, Mesa County officials, and Glade Park property owner John R. Wilkenson were embroiled in a legal dispute over the use of the park's scenic road, Rim Rock Drive. Presiding Judge Richard Matsch's 1986 decision in favor of the county and Wilkenson was based on pertinent laws as well as the unique history of the park's creation and development. In an effort to explain the outcome of the 1986 lawsuit, this study traces the evolution of the conflict that developed between the communities of the Grand Valley and the National Park Service from 1911 to 1986.

The conflict was the result of a variety of factors: 1) local residents' involvement in the park's creation and management led to a proprietary attitude toward the park that conflicted with the Park Service once that agency was established; 2) shifts in Park Service administration and inconsistent Park Service policies allowed local residents to develop unrealistic expectations of the park's role and how they could use the area; 3) mutual community and Park Service interests in road building through the park led to an inevitable conflict over road use; 4) the local attitude toward land use and resistance to the federal government in general contrasted with National Park Service ideology.

This study attempts to accomplish several things. In a local context, it provides a history of Colorado National Monument and the community's involvement in that park's development. In the context of the National Park Service, this study reveals the extent to which local needs influenced park administration and ultimately, the park itself.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Since I began the research for this project in the Spring of 1992, numerous people have provided varying degrees of academic advice, research assistance, and emotional support. Because this was originally my Master's thesis, I extend thanks to those who struggled with me during my graduate school years and those who assisted me in revising it for publication. My greatest appreciation is extended to the members of my thesis committee from the Colorado State University history department who took time from their busy schedules to work with me. I would first like to thank Dr. Dan Tyler, who was my academic advisor for the duration. His guidance, support, patience and the personal time he invested throughout my years as a graduate student and through the rough spots of the thesis are much appreciated. Mr. John Albright also deserves my deepest thanks for his encouragement, guidance, and firsthand knowledge of the National Park Service. His insights were very valuable to me during the writing and editing of the thesis. Mr. Albright has also provided sound advice and motivation since its completion.

During the course of the original research, I was assisted by numerous people. Mary Shivers Culpin enthusiastically embraced this project from the moment of its inception, and guided me through the revision and publication process. For her research advice, encouragement and personal time I am grateful. The staff at Colorado National Monument accommodated my needs and took a genuine interest in the project. I thank former Superintendent Jimmy Taylor, former administrative clerk Paul Menard (for his computer skills), Secretary Barbara Harger, Supervisory Park Ranger Ron Young, Park Ranger Bill Row, Fee Collectors Michelle Berry and Joel Barnett, Interpreter Georgia Heinz, and all the members of the summer of 1992 maintenance crew who dropped by frequently to swap stories and see how the research was going. Thanks as well to those who read the manuscript and provided critical remarks for publication: Park Service Bureau Historian Barry Mackintosh, Dick Young, Jimmy Taylor and of course, Mary Shivers Culpin.

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Most importantly, I would like to thank my family and friends for their support and love during some of the most challenging moments of the original thesis writing process. I

especially want to thank my friend and fellow graduate student Greg Silkensen for his support, empathy and tolerance throughout graduate school. My brothers Dave and Doug Schoch and my sister-in-law Mary Schoch were there through thick and thin as well. Even my grandparents, James and Alice Benvie, enquired about the thesis on the phone from Cincinnati!! I extend heartfelt thanks to my husband John Roberts. His love and support carried me through the roughest times. He did all of the computer formatting for the original thesis, spent long hours in the computer lab printing with me, and was a good sport throughout.

I dedicate this document to my parents, Hank and Judy Schoch. I thank dad for everything he has done in the past three years. Not only did he encourage me to take on the project, but his seventeen years as Chief Ranger of Colorado National Monument was invaluable to me in the research and writing of the thesis. He made it possible for me to access the park's records and eventually transport them to Fort Collins. His firsthand knowledge of the Monument's history as well as his involvement in the road controversy were very helpful in shaping my perspective of that event. Dad also read and edited the entire thesis manuscript, writing important comments on nearly every page!! My mom's emotional involvement during the thesis writing kept me on my toes. She, more than anyone, anxiously awaited the day I would finally call to tell her "I'm done." Actually, when I did finish, I think she was more relieved than I was! I thank both my parents for convincing me to continue when I had already quit.

PREFACE

A prevalent theme in the history of the American West is the conflict between westerners and the federal government over public land policy. The conflict stems from changes in the federal government's nineteenth-century public land policies and the way in which these changes affected westerners accustomed to unrestricted use of that land. Throughout the late nineteenth century, incentives such as the Homestead Act of 1862, the Timber Culture Act of 1873, and the Desert Land Act of 1876 were used to entice people to settle the West and to facilitate private ownership of the land. Not yet equipped to handle the management of the public domain, the government instead disposed of the land through legislation.¹

In 1872, when Yellowstone National Park was established, the government's role shifted from temporary custodianship to "permanent land management."² As the conservation movement emerged in the early twentieth century, the federal government withdrew millions of acres from the public domain. Government agencies, including the Forest Service in 1905, National Park Service in 1916, and the product of the Grazing Service and General Land Office—the Bureau of Land Management in 1946—were formed to administer these lands. By 1909, there were 159 national forests encompassing 151 million acres of western land. Conservation-minded President Theodore Roosevelt established five national parks, sixteen national monuments and fifty-one wildlife sanctuaries and withdrew 50 million acres of coal lands during his term in office. Shortly after Roosevelt's presidency, the federal government began to regulate and charge fees for grazing.³

Responses to the conservation movement indicated that many Westerners were concerned about the increasingly restrictive nature of federal land policies. Between 1907 and 1915, six public land conferences were held in the western states, providing ranchers the opportunity to voice their opinions over the news that grazing fees might be charged in national forest lands. A generation later, between 1940 and 1943, Nevada Senator Patrick McCarran held committee hearings to discuss transferring control of grazing lands to state ownership.⁴ By the 1970s, a pattern of local resistance to federal land policies was well established.

A more radical form of resistance, the "Sagebrush Rebellion" briefly emerged from 1979 to 1981. Considered more symbolic than substantive, the "rebellion" effectively began in

¹Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987), p. 70; for general information on these three Acts see Benjamin Horace Hibbard, *A History of the Public Land Policies* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1924).

²Limerick, *A Legacy of Conquest*, p. 70.

³Michael P. Malone and Richard W. Etulain, *The American West: A Twentieth Century History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), pp. 69, 220; R. McGregor Cawley, "The Sagebrush Rebellion" (Ph.D. Diss., Colorado State University, 1981), p. 120.

⁴C. Brant Short, *Ronald Reagan and the Public Lands: America's Conservation Debate, 1979-1984* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1989), pp. 10-11.

1979 with the passage of Assembly Bill 413 by the sixty-member Nevada Legislature. Assembly Bill 413 was a public land act in which the state of Nevada called for state control of "certain lands within the state boundaries" under the administration of the Bureau of Land Management.⁵ Totalling 48 million acres, this BLM land comprised 79 percent of the state of Nevada. According to the authors of AB 413, the Sagebrush Rebellion was fueled by the perception that the federal government was both ignorant and unsympathetic to the impact of its policies on the West.⁶ Supporting the movement's inherently anti-government rhetoric, Utah, Wyoming, and New Mexico soon joined in the "rebellion." In the fall of 1979, Utah Senator Orrin Hatch introduced legislation proposing the transfer from federal to state ownership of 544 million acres of land in thirteen western states.⁷

Proposed "Sagebrush" legislation revealed the percentage of western lands administered by the federal government. More than half of the land mass of the western United States is federally managed. Individual state percentages appear startling: Utah was 64 percent federally managed, Idaho 63 percent, Wyoming 47 percent, Arizona 42 percent, and Colorado 36 percent. In contrast, no more than 12 percent of any state east of Colorado is federally managed.⁸ Historically, however, the United States has always held the title to more land in the west than in the east.⁹ Three "superbureaus" administer the majority of western land: the National Park Service administers 20,000,000 acres, the Forest Service manages 163,420,000, and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) oversees 174 million acres.¹⁰

Of the three superbureaus, the National Park Service exercises the most restrictive land use policies. Unlike the Forest Service and BLM, the Park Service generally does not allow multiple use activities in its parks and monuments. Its 1916 mission "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of the future generations" created conflicts from the moment of its inception.¹¹ During first Park Service Director Stephen Mather's administration, dams, stockmen, miners, fires, wildlife

⁵Cawley, "The Sagebrush Rebellion," p. 95.

⁶Ibid., p. 96.

⁷Malone and Etulain, *The American West: A Twentieth Century History*, pp. 69, 220.

⁸Richard Lamm and Michael McCarthy, *The Angry West: A Vulnerable Land and its Future* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982), pp. 237-238.

⁹Robert Sterling Yard, *Our Federal Lands: A Romance of American Development* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), p. 10.

¹⁰Lamm and McCarthy, *The Angry West*, p. 238.

¹¹Barry Mackintosh, *The National Parks: Shaping the System* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1991), p. 19.

disease, and World War I threatened the Park Service's land use policies.¹² By the late 1970s, threats included "residential development, energy extraction, and industrial development" as well as air and water pollution.¹³

Historically, the National Park Service has encountered one of its biggest challenges in the western attitude toward public land use. The commonly held belief that all public lands, including national parks, were meant for private and public use, created numerous conflicts between local communities and the National Park Service. The history of the Colorado National Monument and its adjacent communities in many ways exemplifies the conflict over public land use in the West. The scenario is a familiar one. Prior to the creation of Colorado National Monument, the communities of the Grand Valley built roads, trails, stock driveways, and water pipelines through the future park. When the Colorado National Monument was established, these uses were either restricted or prohibited. As the years passed, relations between Park Service employees and the local population became increasingly tense.

At the heart of the conflict was the issue of public access to and through the park. Road building before and after the Monument's creation was an important element of early and later interaction between the local communities and the National Park Service. Early efforts to build a local road to Glade Park via the Monument coincided with efforts to build a scenic road through the Monument. In fact, the first adequate route to Glade Park—Serpents Trail—was also the first scenic road through the park. The dual purpose of this road fueled later controversy over the Park Service's replacement road—Rim Rock Drive.

Interwoven into this story of conflict is also one of cooperation between the local community and the National Park Service. Local civic groups were instrumental in the creation, early development, and initial administration of Colorado National Monument. During the depression, communities of the Grand Valley provided labor and some financial support to the Park Service for the construction of Rim Rock Drive. At the same time these communities benefitted greatly from federal funding for the road project.

The evolving relationship (1911-1986) between the Colorado National Monument and its adjacent communities embodies many of the elements of western public land conflicts. At Colorado National Monument, road building and road use served as the medium through which the conflict was expressed. The local attitude toward land use and the changing economic needs of the Grand Valley contrasted with Park Service ideology, increased regulations, and frequent changes in the administration of the park.

¹²John Ise, *Our National Park Policy: A Critical History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1961), p. 207.

¹³John C. Freemuth, *Islands Under Siege: National Parks and the Politics of External Threats* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1991), pp. 16, 18-19, 22.

Chapter One

The Landscape / The Setting

The landscape of the Colorado National Monument is one of constant change. A simple drive, run, or biking trip across the Rim Rock Drive, which hugs the edges of the canyons in some places and winds for twenty-eight miles between the park's western and eastern entrances, reveals a legacy of billions of years of extreme geologic and climatic change. Evidence of these extremes is most notable in the deeply cut canyons, multi-colored rock layers, and strange, almost otherworldly monoliths rising arbitrarily from the canyon floors. Aesthetically, change is perceived each day when the sunrise and sunset turn the sandstone a brilliant orange. The canyon walls are often dramatically spattered with desert varnish, an iron and manganese oxide that darkens the sandstone as if it had been rubbed with giant pieces of charcoal.¹⁴ Even the monoliths, seemingly sturdy and one-dimensional, change shape depending on the angle from which they are viewed.¹⁵ In comparison to the Grand Valley, which runs along the northern edge of the Monument, and the Grand Mesa at the valley's eastern end, the Colorado National Monument resembles a different planet, and in fact, has been likened to the landscape of the moon and Mars.¹⁶

A semi-arid climate dominates the Colorado National Monument and the Grand Valley below. Rain is scarce, except for summer cloudbursts whose intensity has been known to wash out entire sections of the park's road and create temporary waterfalls that tumble from the canyon rims. Average yearly rainfall measures around 6 to 10 inches. The winters are mild, with an average temperature of 40 degrees, and moderate snowfall.¹⁷ The wildlife is suited to the harsh environment. Lizards, canyon wrens, nighthawks, varieties of snakes, deer, and even occasional golden eagles and peregrine falcons comprise only a fraction of the creatures that inhabit the Monument each day. The present climate makes it difficult to believe that millions of years ago the area was covered by a vast sea and inhabited by the dinosaurs.

The Colorado National Monument is part of the northeastern section of the canyon lands of the Colorado Plateau Province, an area that covers 150,000 square miles in portions of Colorado, Arizona, Utah, and New Mexico. The Monument occupies approximately 20,457 acres of this province with canyons that expose layers of rocks with a long and colorful history

¹⁴Stanley W. Lohman, *The Geologic Story of Colorado National Monument* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1981), p. 32.

¹⁵Information taken from Bookcliff overlook exhibit, Colorado National Monument.

¹⁶Information taken from Coors International Bicycle Classic promotional literature.

¹⁷Steven F. Mehls, *The Valley of Opportunity: A History of West-Central Colorado* (Denver: Bureau of Land Management Colorado State Office, 1982), p. 4.

of geologic activity.¹⁸ At its rough faulted and folded edge lies the Grand Valley, the largest in western Colorado, bordered by the Bookcliffs to the north and the Grand Mesa to the east.¹⁹ The Monument is separated from the Grand Valley by the Colorado River, which stretches through the Valley, running north of the park's boundary.

Colorado National Monument contains nine canyons. Kodels, Fruita and Lizard canyons are located near the west entrance of the park, approximately one and a half miles from the town of Fruita. Next in the procession is the two-forked Monument Canyon, famous for its towering monoliths. Its northern and eastern entrances spill out into the Redlands residential area. Gold Star Canyon, much smaller than Monument Canyon, also opens up into the Redlands. Ute Canyon—formerly known as Lime Kiln Canyon—and Red Canyon dominate a great portion of the area just east of Monument Mesa. Finally, Columbus and No Thoroughfare canyons surround the park's east entrance, approximately four miles from Grand Junction. The mouths of all of these canyons open into the Grand Valley.²⁰ Prior to and during the development of the Colorado National Monument, Fruita, Monument, and No Thoroughfare canyons were the most frequently used. As both thoroughfares and scenic curiosities, these canyons played an important role in defining relations between local residents and officials of the National Park Service.²¹

The canyons are composed of multi-colored layers of rock, the oldest of which date back 1.5 billion years. Each layer—from the dark twisted Precambrian rock of the canyon floors, to the erosion-resistant Kayenta caprock that preserves the canyon rims and the monoliths—formed during different periods of geologic time. Millions of years of alternating wet and arid climates, shallow seas, the presence of dinosaurs, and sand dunes created a turbulent setting for the formation of these rock layers. Erosion, freezing, pressure, and heat determined the rocks' color and resilience.²²

The actual cutting of the Monument's canyons began in the Quaternary Period, approximately 2 million years ago, with the majority of this activity occurring around one hundred thousand years ago. The ancestral Colorado River was responsible for this cutting. At first the canyons were steep and V-shaped, but as erosional forces combined with the action of the water, the canyons took on their present U-shaped appearance. Erosion also shaped the monoliths. Independence Monument, one of the more imposing of the monoliths, used to be

¹⁸Lohman, *The Geologic Story of Colorado National Monument*, pp. 15-16.

¹⁹Mehls, *The Valley of Opportunity*, p. 2.

²⁰United States Department of the Interior, Geological Survey, Topographic Map of the Colorado National Monument Quadrangle, 7.5 Minute Series, 1962, revised 1973.

²¹See Figure 1.1.

²²Lohman, *The Geologic Story of Colorado National Monument*, pp. 17-60.

part of a canyon wall until erosion slowly wore down and broke apart the wall. The remaining structure, Independence Monument, will eventually succumb to erosion as well.²³

The geology of the Colorado National Monument is its most outstanding feature. The layers of rocks exposed in the canyons tell, as early park promoter John Otto once remarked, a "story without end."²⁴ Each year visitors flock to the park to admire its unusual beauty, driving along its impressive highway, and hiking its many trails. Rarely, however, do visitors consider the human element behind the park's history. Colorado National Monument has been the setting for human interaction, triumph, and conflict nearly as turbulent as its geologic beginnings.

The Roots of Conflict 1881-1911

Prior to the arrival of white settlers, the Grand Valley was what historian Dave Fishell referred to as "one of the last, wild, unsettled frontiers in the lower forty-eight states."²⁵ Over the course of 500 years the area was the intermittent home to bands of Ute Indians who lived along the Grand Mesa, the Uncompahgre Plateau and the Bookcliffs. From the late eighteenth to the nineteenth century, the area served as a thoroughfare to a variety of explorers. Among the most famous of these were Fathers Dominguez and Escalante, who skirted the Grand Valley in 1776-77 on their unsuccessful trip from Santa Fe to a mission in Monterey, California. In the 1840s and 1850s, groups of army explorers, including John C. Fremont and Captain John Gunnison, made several trips through the Grand Valley while searching for an adequate mountain railroad course. In the 1870s, the government's Hayden and Wheeler survey groups explored and mapped the area. Their data was eventually compiled in the "Atlas of Colorado" complete with photos by William Henry Jackson.²⁶

The Ute Indian removal of 1880 was instrumental in facilitating permanent white settlement in the Grand Valley. Additionally, the removal contributed to the incorporation of Grand Junction on September 26, 1881, by the Grand Junction Town Company.²⁷ The growth of mining and a series of treaties from 1863 to 1880 led to the removal of the Utes from the

²³Ibid., pp. 29, 79.

²⁴Alan Kania, *John Otto of Colorado National Monument* (Boulder: Roberts, Rinehart, Inc. Publishers, 1984), p. 38.

²⁵Dave Fishell, *The Grand Heritage: A Photographic History of Grand Junction, Colorado*, 2nd ed., (Norfolk/Virginia Beach: The Donning Company/Publishers, 1994), p. 12.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 18, 30, 32-33.

²⁷"Grand Valley: Its Resources and Advantages," *Grand Junction News*, 2 December 1882.

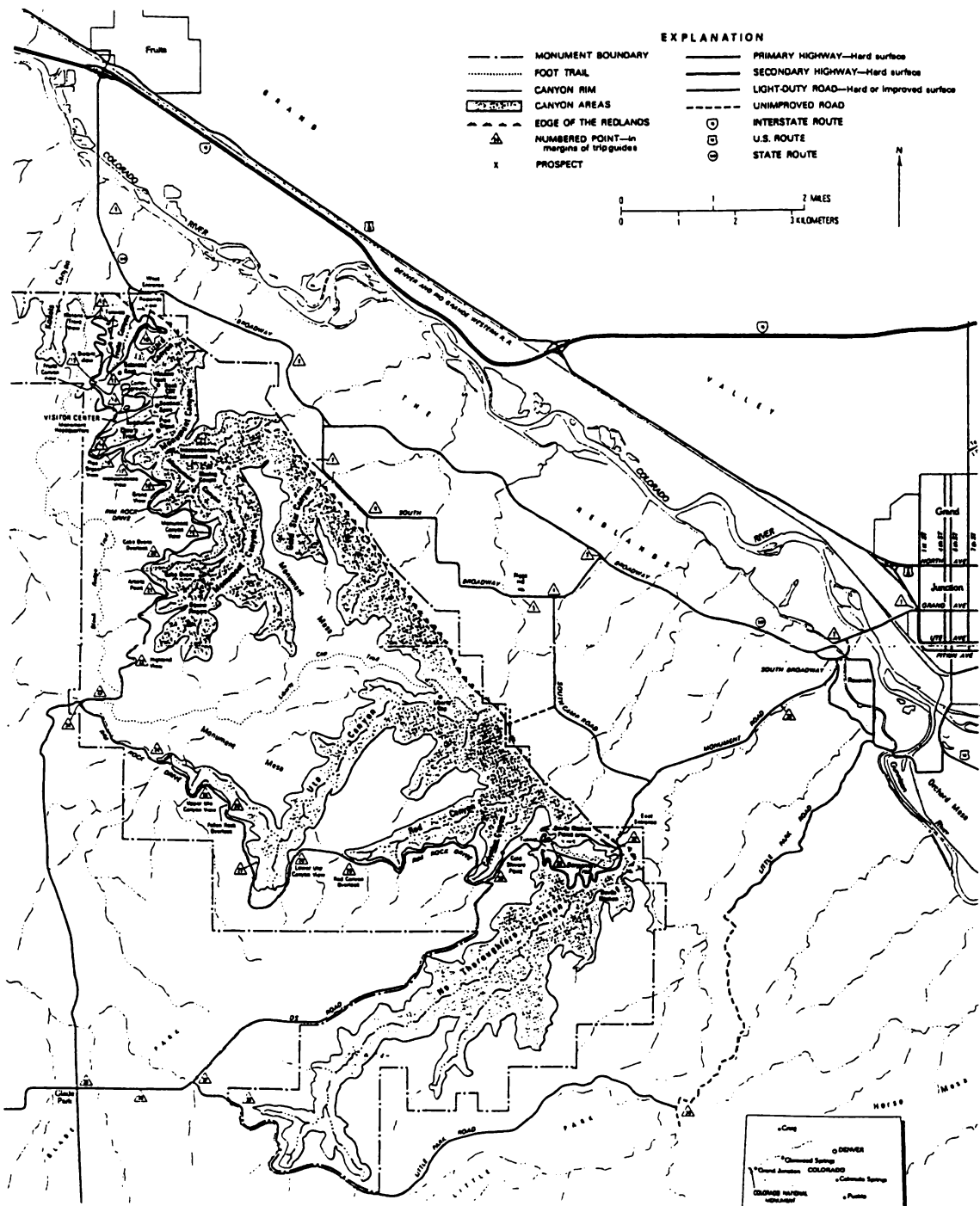


Figure 1.1. Colorado National Monument and Surrounding Communities. From Stanley Lohman, *The Geologic Story of Colorado National Monument* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1981).

San Luis Valley to reservations in various portions of the Western Slope. When whites decided they needed more land, they pushed farther into the Western Slope.²⁸ Slogans such as "The Utes Must Go" and early newspaper headlines such as "The Utes are gone and the white man is here" reflected the general sentiment of white settlers, and fueled more interest in the area.²⁹ After the Meeker Massacre in 1879, which began when Utes murdered Indian Agent Nathan Meeker at the White River Agency, the removal of all Utes, including the Southern, White River, and Uncompahgre bands, was inevitable. By September 1881, the last of the Ute bands left the Western Slope via the Grand Valley.³⁰ Located at the confluence of the Colorado and Gunnison rivers, the Grand Valley attracted people even before it was open for settlement. In fact, even though the land ceded in the August 1880 treaty with the Utes would not be available for 10 months, within days of the treaty settlers poured into the area.³¹

Land use conflicts involving Colorado National Monument originated in 1881, when whites first settled the Grand Valley. Early in their development the communities of Grand Junction, Glade Park, and Fruita grew accustomed to unrestricted use of the area that would become Colorado National Monument. Sandwiched between the Grand Valley and Glade Park, the Monument served as a natural thoroughfare for these three communities.³²

The early growth of Grand Junction was remarkable. Only four years after the Ute removal, more than 850 people resided in Grand Junction, where seventy businesses, five churches, and many voluntary groups already existed.³³ In 1882, work began on irrigation canals in the Valley.³⁴ The Pioneer Ditch and the Pacific Slope Ditch provided water for both agricultural and household use. The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad arrived in 1882, and the Midland Railroad in 1890. Both were instrumental in promoting the town through the

²⁸Carl Ubbelohde, Maxine Benson, and Duane A. Smith, *A Colorado History* (Boulder: Pruett Publishing Company, 1988), pp. 183-88.

²⁹"Grand Valley: Its Resources and Advantages"; Fishell, *The Grand Heritage*, p. 26.

³⁰Ubbelohde, Benson & Smith, *A Colorado History*, pp. 188-192.

³¹Kathleen Underwood, *Town Building on the Colorado Frontier: Grand Junction* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987), pp. 4-5.

³²See Figure 1.2.

³³Underwood, *Town Building on the Colorado Frontier*, p. 13.

³⁴Duane Vandenbusche and Duane A. Smith, *A Land Alone: Colorado's Western Slope* (Boulder: Pruett Publishing Company, 1981), p. 147.

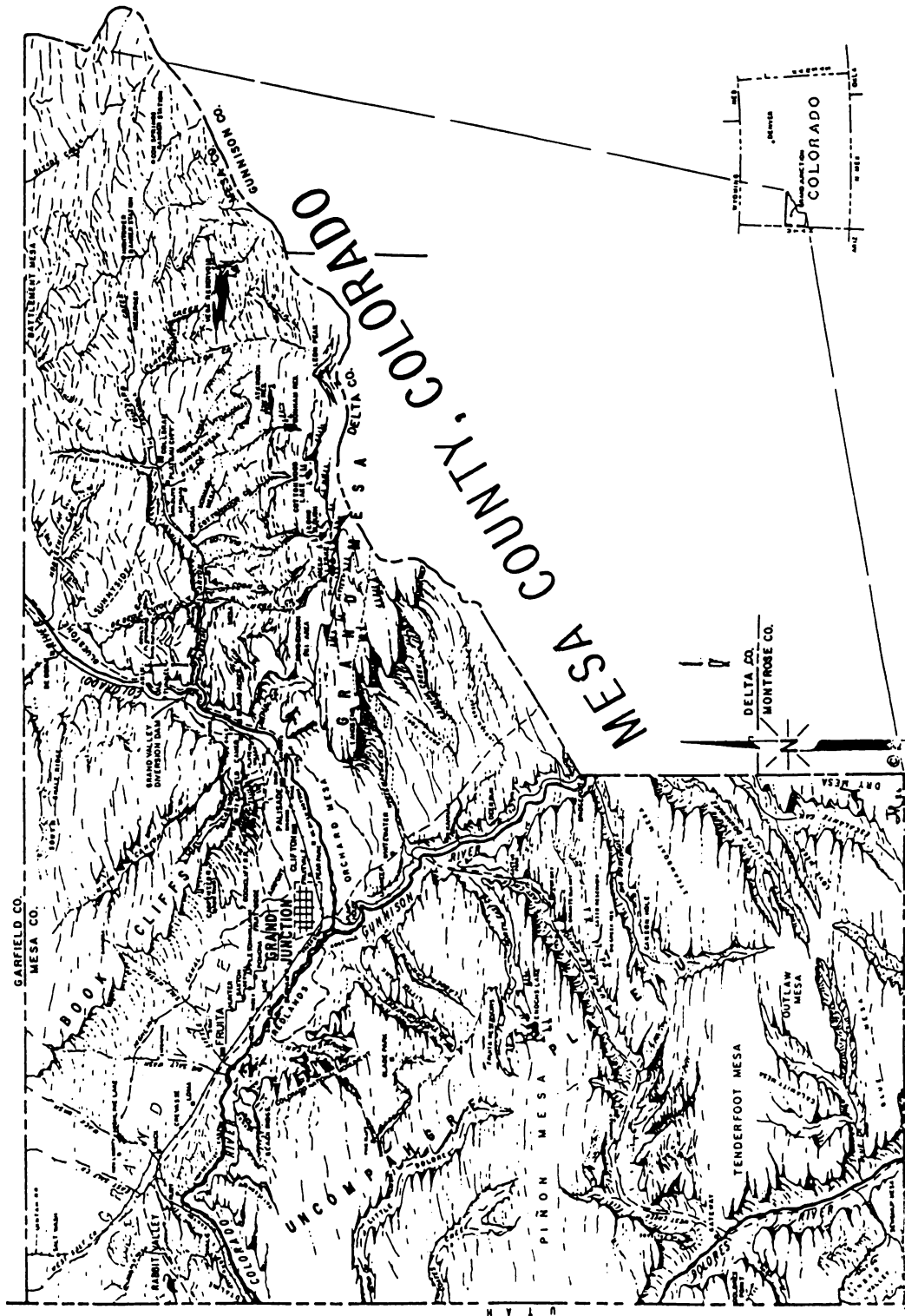


Figure 1.2. Topography of Mesa County, Colorado. From Emma McCreanor, *Mesa County, Colorado: A 100 Year History 1883-1983*, edited by Lani Duke (Grand Junction: Museum of Western Colorado Press, 1986).

transportation of settlers and goods, "providing jobs," and making Grand Junction an important commercial center.³⁵ Between 1883 and 1900, the number of businesses in Grand Junction tripled.³⁶ In addition to publishing three newspapers by 1884, Grand Junction also had a volunteer fire department and numerous other public services.³⁷

The rise of the fruit and sugar industries sparked potential residents' interest in the community. In 1883, Elam Blaine introduced fruit trees to the Grand Valley. Highly adaptable to the climate and irrigation, peach and apple trees produced profitable cash crops. Orchards quickly spread across the valley.³⁸ Publicity linked to the fruit industry, such as annual "Peach Days" was easily marketed on a national level. The sugar industry started when the state's first sugar factory was built in Grand Junction by the Colorado Sugar Manufacturing Company at the turn of the century. Soon sugar beet fields dotted the Grand Valley.³⁹

An important element in the early growth of the Grand Valley, and more specifically, Grand Junction, was the work of boosters in promoting the area. After it was established in 1903, the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce waged a campaign to promote the Grand Valley, emphasizing everything from the area's agricultural potential to the quality of Grand Junction's citizens. A booklet entitled "Valley of the Grand: The Place for You," issued by the chamber after 1906 exaggerated about the area's climate, fruit industry, and social institutions. For instance, the Grand Valley was the "garden spot of the country," the fruit "unequaled," the climate "without extremes of temperatures."⁴⁰ In addition, it had "a good society, its citizenship being made up of intelligent, sociable progressive people from the East and Central West."⁴¹

Toward the end of 1906, the promotional campaign entered a new phase. Once centered on attracting settlers, the campaign eventually focused on tourism. Efforts to establish the "Monument National Park" out of the canyons of the Colorado Plateau running along the valley's southern edge characterized this trend. At first, descriptions of the area highlighted Monument Canyon. A booklet distributed by the Fruita Bureau of Information stated that "for a more general outing place, Monument Cañon, Fruita Park, Devil's Cañon etc. all within two

³⁵Emma McCreanor, *Mesa County, Colorado: A 100 Year History 1883-1983*, edited by Lani Duke (Grand Junction: Museum of Western Colorado Press, 1986), p. 3; Underwood, *Town Building on the Colorado Frontier*, p. 27.

³⁶Underwood, *Town Building on the Colorado Frontier*, p. 27.

³⁷McCreanor, *Mesa County Colorado*, pp. 3-4.

³⁸Mehls, *The Valley of Opportunity*, p. 138.

³⁹Vandenbusche and Smith, *A Land Alone*, p. 151.

⁴⁰Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, "The Valley of the Grand, The Place for You," (Denver: Smith-Brooks Press, no date), courtesy Colorado Historical Society.

⁴¹*Ibid.*

hours ride, afford places of recreation and scenes of grandeur, rivaling the "Garden of the Gods."⁴² Photographs of the Monument in this booklet were captioned with phrases such as "scenes from Monument Cañon" and "Nature Freak Near Fruita," describing what is now known as the "Kissing Couple" monolith in Monument Canyon.⁴³ Even then, descriptions of Monument Canyon emphasized its unusual landscape. The fact that it was part of the promotional literature for both Grand Junction and Fruita indicated that the community realized its potential as a tourist attraction. Public awareness fostered a local campaign to have the area set aside as a national park. The Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce developed a vested interest in the creation of the Colorado National Monument that cultivated its almost "proprietary attitude" toward the park's establishment, and later its administration.⁴⁴

Glade Park was another community with interests in the Monument prior to its creation. Early ranchers at Glade Park enjoyed squatters' rights in the Colorado National Monument region. A vast mesa located west and south of Grand Junction above the Colorado National Monument, Glade Park was divided into seven sections prior to 1910: Glade Park, Little Park, Piñon Mesa, West End, Beezer Creek, Coates Creek and Little Dolores.⁴⁵ Between 1883 and 1910, the proliferation of cattle and sheep ranches, and dry farms at Glade Park led to permanent settlement of the region.

Cattle ranching commenced in 1883 when C.W. Sleeper and Wendell Ela, both originally from New Hampshire, organized the 2V Ranch on the Little Dolores Creek. They raised 6,000 head of cattle there. In 1885, Charles Sieber settled in Glade Park. He brought in 10,000 head of cattle and started a retail meat market business in Grand Junction. Sieber drove 8,000 head of cattle from Kansas and Texas to Glade Park in 1888. In 1897, he organized the Sieber Cattle Company. By this time, Sieber had begun buying ranches along the Little Dolores, Coates Creek and Piñon Mesa. Before he was shot from his horse over a branding dispute in 1902, Sieber ran 30,000 head of cattle from the Sieber Cattle Company.⁴⁶

Ranches flourished throughout the late 1880s and 1890s. Settlers poured into the region, hoping to try their luck raising cattle. Most of the Grand Valley was an ideal area for winter range, while the plateaus of Glade Park provided good summer range, so cattlemen began looking for ways to transport their livestock to the Grand Valley.⁴⁷ Until 1908, Glade Park

⁴²Fruita Bureau of Information, "Fruita, Colorado" (Fruita Bureau of Information, ca. 1910), p. 55, courtesy Colorado Historical Society.

⁴³Ibid., 55-57.

⁴⁴Memorandum, Breyton R. Finch to Coordinating Superintendent Mesa Verde National Park, 21 September 1946.

⁴⁵McCreanor, *Mesa County, Colorado*, p. 5.

⁴⁶Catherine S. Moore, "Original History of Glade Park, 1962," [photocopy] pp. 2, 4, 6, Museum of Western Colorado Manuscripts, F-886 Progress of Glade Park, Grand Junction, Colorado.

⁴⁷Mehls, *The Valley of Opportunity*, p. 108.

was primarily "cattle country," as evidenced by the following from a history compiled by one of Glade Park's early settlers:

There were very few fences. Everyone's cattle went where they pleased, in the summer on Piñon Mesa, and all over the area known as Glade Park. In the winter they were pushed down on the benches toward the river.⁴⁸

Although ranchers had sheep prior to this time, widespread sheep ranching began around 1908, when 40,000 sheep from the Goslin Sheep Company traversed a bridge over the Grand River from Utah and moved into the Glade Park region.⁴⁹ The conflict between sheep and cattle ranchers was especially troublesome in Glade Park from 1903 to 1915. Cattlemen believed that sheep ruined the range and the water, and that their odor repulsed the cattle. A likely reason for the disagreements between sheep and cattle owners, however, was the competition for good grazing lands. It is not exactly clear what started the problems in Glade Park, but by 1903 cattlemen had initiated a series of violent attacks on sheepmen. In that year, Glade Park cattlemen drove 100 head of sheep off a cliff in Piñon Mesa, and two years later, in 1905, a \$1500 bounty was raised to kill a local sheepman. The plan failed when only \$1000 was raised. The violence finally diminished after 1915, when Mrs. Nancy Irving's Angora goats were driven off a rim of No Thoroughfare Canyon. Violence was not unusual in Glade Park. In fact, the area often served as a hideout for "outlaws." Glade Park ranchers were frequently victimized by John Dalley, a train robber and cattle rustler, who continued his crimes until the start of World War I.⁵⁰

Dry farmers faced a less perilous reception from cattlemen, but their attempts to grow produce on Glade Park were far from successful. Corn, small grains, wheat, rye, and potatoes were the primary crops. Most farmers sold their produce in Grand Junction.⁵¹ In 1907, Charles DuVall built the first dry farming homestead. After the Glade Park post office opened in 1910, more families moved into the region to try dry farming. Because dry farmers were at the mercy of the weather, they rarely experienced consistent success with crops. Typically settlers shifted between dry farming and cattle ranching, hoping to find some sort of economic security.⁵²

Glade Park's development reached a turning point in 1912, when the first schools were established. Because parents paid for their children to attend, these early educational facilities were known as "subscription schools." In 1912, seven schools, one for each section of Glade

⁴⁸Moore, *Original History of Glade Park*, p. 6.

⁴⁹McCreanor, *Mesa County, Colorado*, p. 5.

⁵⁰Mehls, *The Valley of Opportunity*, p. 115.

⁵¹Vern Woods, Interview by Maria Baldi, 10 June 1976, p. 6, transcript, Oral History Collection, Colorado National Monument Museum and Archive, Fruita, Colorado.

⁵²Mehls, *The Valley of Opportunity*, p. 150.

Park, accepted students. Even though only three pupils were needed to maintain a school, the institutions indicated that the Glade Park area had become a permanent community despite its isolation from the Grand Valley. Originally, the only roads were foot trails that were nearly impassible in bad weather. Even in good weather, the trip from the Little Dolores region of Glade Park down to the Valley required an entire day.⁵³ With the demand for roads on which to transport stock to winter range, and the need for farmers and settlers to travel to Grand Junction, better roads became a necessity.

Long before the Colorado National Monument was established, Glade Park ranchers used parts of that area to access the Grand Valley. The first roads from Glade Park to Grand Junction led through the eastern end of what is now the Colorado National Monument. In 1883, Mesa County initiated the construction of a road from Grand Junction to East Creek Divide on Glade Park. A road petition submitted to the Mesa County Commissioners by local residents, requested construction of a "public highway or road" between these two termini. As a result, the County Commissioners appointed J.M. Russell, C.C. Hammond, and Charles F. Shanks to view the proposed road site.⁵⁴ The campaign for this road lasted into 1884. In his report to the County Commissioners in January 1884, Deputy County Engineer J.D. Robinson described the route "from the terminus of the present 'county road' on the west side of the Grand River in a southern direction to point on the north side of the 'East Creek Divide.'" ⁵⁵ Robinson noted that "the greater portion of this route has already been opened for travel," but that it needed refinement.⁵⁶ His report also included a map of the route that eventually became Little Park Road. Skirting the eastern edge of the Monument, Little Park Road was one of several roads from Glade Park to the Grand Valley.

Other lesser quality roads and trails crisscrossed the region as well. Gordon's Toll Road came up through Little Park behind where the east entrance of the Colorado National Monument is today.⁵⁷ When ranchers complained that the toll was too high given the road's poor, they surveyed their own route. This led through "Deer Pass," which was a trail used by deer ascending through the rim rocks.⁵⁸ Another road, known as Jacob's Ladder, extended from Little Park to Piñon Mesa by way of Monument Springs.⁵⁹ The Billy Goat Trail ascended the

⁵³McCreanor, *Mesa County, Colorado*, p. 6.

⁵⁴Road Petition for the Board of County Commissioners, filed at the Office of the County Clerk, 13 November 1883, p. 8.

⁵⁵Report of J.D. Robinson, Deputy County Surveyor on Road From End of Present County Road to East Creek Divide, 30 January 1884, pp. 122-124, submitted to the Mesa County Commissioners.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Moore, *Original History of Glade Park*, p. 8.

⁵⁸Lucy Ela, Interview by Sally Crum, 25 March 1976, p. 1, transcript, Oral History Collection, Colorado National Monument Museum and Archive Collection.

⁵⁹Moore, *Original History of Glade Park*, p. 7.

entrance to No Thoroughfare Canyon near the present start of Rim Rock Drive.⁶⁰ On the other end of the valley, near the present site of the west entrance of Colorado National Monument, a road known as the Fruita Dugway was built. It stretched from Fruita through Fruita Canyon, toward Glade Park. The Fruita Dugway was built during the 1907 construction of the Fruita Water Pipeline, which delivered water from reservoirs on Piñon Mesa to the city of Fruita.⁶¹ Both Glade Park and Grand Valley ranchers used the Dugway to drive their cattle to and from summer and winter range on Glade Park and the Valley.⁶²

Another community in close proximity to the Colorado National Monument is Fruita. Its interests in the land of the Colorado National Monument were also quite apparent prior to the park's establishment. Located on the main line of the Denver and Rio Grand Railroad, Fruita lies 12 miles west of Grand Junction. William E. Pabor established the town in May 1884. Shortly thereafter, he formed the Fruita Town and Land Company, which purchased 520 acres of land and enough water rights to irrigate the tract. By 1886, five-acre plots of this tract were sold for \$500.⁶³ Fruita continued its growth throughout the early 1900s. A variety of advancements contributed to this growth. The first school was organized in 1884, the first telephone used in 1900, and electricity came to Fruita in 1910.⁶⁴

Fruita was an agricultural community where diversified farming with potatoes, sugar beets, and winter wheat was common, but fruit was the most profitable crop. Pabor believed the soil around Fruita was ideal for fruit growing, and as early as 1883, he planted orchards in the Lower Valley (Fruita's location in the Grand Valley). Apples were particularly successful, although other fruit crops were grown. By 1910, Fruita shipped its crops by rail to various markets outside the Grand Valley.⁶⁵ Difficulties with irrigation and coddling moths led to the decline of the fruit industry, which nonetheless remained central to the economy of the Grand Valley until around 1911.⁶⁶

Until 1907 Fruita did not have an efficient water system. Water was hauled from the river or from nearby irrigation ditches, presenting the danger of using contaminated waters. As a result, the Fruita and Redlands districts decided to construct a pipeline from the "Fruita Forest

⁶⁰Ela, Interview by Sally Crum, 25 March 1976, p. 5.

⁶¹Moore, *Original History of Glade Park*, p. 8.

⁶²Memorandum, Finch to Mesa Verde, 21 September 1946.

⁶³Mehls, *The Valley of Opportunity*, p. 139.

⁶⁴McCreanor, *Mesa County, Colorado*, p. 5.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, p. 14.

Reserve" on Piñon Mesa where there were several reservoirs.⁶⁷ In February, 1906, the Fruita Forest Reserve was established by presidential proclamation. Located approximately 20 miles south of Fruita, this area promised to provide ample supplies of water for municipal use.⁶⁸ The construction of the pipe, however, proved difficult. There were 23 miles of "mountains and precipitous cliffs," including what is now Colorado National Monument, between Piñon Mesa and Fruita.⁶⁹ Pipe had to be hauled from the railroad in Fruita, across the river by ferry, and up to Fruita Canyon. The Fruita Dugway, which had served as a stock driveway since the 1880s, was blasted out of rock and built up through this canyon to accommodate lifting 40-50 carloads of pipe from the valley over the canyon walls. The Fruita bridge, which crosses the Colorado River, was also built in 1906 to facilitate the transportation of construction materials. In 1907, the pipeline was completed.⁷⁰ The wooden pipe, known as the Fruita aqueduct, stretched from the reservoirs on Piñon Mesa, down to the Glade Park cutoff, through the present park campground. Eventually it terminated in the reservoir at the base of the Colorado National Monument via Fruita Canyon.⁷¹ Water was obtained from two 20-million-gallon reservoirs in the Fruita Reserve and one smaller reservoir in Fruita Canyon. Thirty years after its construction, the system delivered 750,000 gallons of water in 24 hours.⁷²

The water pipeline linked Fruita to the Colorado National Monument. After the park's establishment, the presence of the pipeline formed an association between Fruita and officials of the National Park Service. During the depression, when Rim Rock Drive was built through the park, the pipeline supplied water to the CCC camps. In addition, National Park Service camps were supplied with 10 percent of the flow in return for replacing the original wooden water line with cast iron pipes.⁷³

The development of these three communities — Fruita, Grand Junction, and Glade Park — reveals that interest in, and use of, the Monument had already surfaced by the time the park was officially established. Adjacent community use of the area created a framework for a relationship with the National Park Service that from 1911 to 1986 became increasingly conflictive. Park Service conflicts with local residents are not unusual. As John C. Freemuth points out in his book *Islands Under Siege*, today's national parks have been confronted with the threat of adjacent land activity for many years. On the other hand, adjacent landowners often

⁶⁷Merton Berger, "The Development of Fruita and the Lower Valley of the Colorado River From 1884 to 1937" (M.A. thesis, University of Colorado, 1937), p. 64.

⁶⁸Congress, Senate, Committee on Public Lands, *Grant of Certain Lands to Fruita, Colo.*, report submitted by Mr. Hansborough, 59th Cong., 1st sess., May 16, 1906, Senate Report No. 3620, pp. 1-2.

⁶⁹Berger, "The Development of Fruita and the Lower Valley of the Colorado River," p. 64.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

⁷¹Frank Nisley, *Appraisal of Present Market Value of Fruita Pipeline property*, pp. 2-3.

⁷²Berger, "The Development of Fruita and the Lower Valley of the Colorado River," p. 65.

⁷³*Ibid.*

see the parks as threats to their freedom. Relations between officials of the Colorado National Monument and its adjacent communities reflected a combination of these two perceptions. Prior to the park's establishment, however, there was no Park Service, so the community's perception was that the land was there to be used. The establishment of the Colorado National Monument transformed and restricted these uses indefinitely. Over the years, the expectations of local communities and the willingness of the National Park Service to meet those expectations became problematic.

Chapter Two

"The Nationalization of a Cañon": The Local Park Movement: 1906-1911

Local interest and involvement in the area of the Colorado National Monument entered a new phase between 1906 and 1911, when the park was finally established. During those years individuals and organizations worked to set the area aside as a scenic attraction. Because the National Park Service was not in existence until 1916, there was no federal agency to lobby for the park's creation. As a result, local efforts were necessary to establish the proposed "Monument Park."

The passage of the Antiquities Act in 1906 facilitated local park movements by providing a legal mechanism for the creation of national monuments. In effect, it enabled the President to protect unique scenic areas by proclamation. The idea of national monuments first appeared in legislation introduced to protect archaeological ruins in the American Southwest. Widespread vandalism and "wholesale commercial looting" of ruins in places such as Mesa Verde commenced soon after their discovery.⁷⁴ Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the Smithsonian Institution, the Bureau of American Ethnology, the Colorado Cliff Dwellers Association, the Geological Survey, and the Office of Indian Affairs actively sought protection against vandalism. Representative John F. Lacey of Iowa, chairman of the House Public Lands Committee, was instrumental in introducing and passing a number of bills concerning conservation. While his early bills related to the protection of wildlife, he also pushed for the protection of ruins. In 1900, Representative Jonathan Dolliver of Iowa introduced a bill authorizing the President, the Secretary of the Interior and the General Land Office Commissioner to set aside, among other things, "monuments" for the purposes of "a public park or reservation."⁷⁵

With the passage of the Antiquities Act on June 8, 1906, a new level of land use and protection commenced. Emerging at a time when the idea of national parks was relatively new, and the Park Service was not yet created, the Antiquities Act anticipated problems with people either not familiar with, or simply not interested in, the idea of preserving land for park purposes. Section one imposed a fine of \$500 or a ninety-day prison term on anyone responsible for the destruction of any "prehistoric ruin or monument or any object of antiquity" on government land.⁷⁶ Section two enabled the President by proclamation to set aside land "to

⁷⁴Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, p. 145.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 147, 149.

⁷⁶*An Act For the Preservation of American Antiquities, Statutes at Large*, 34, sec. 1, 225 (1906).

be national monuments."⁷⁷ Section three allowed for the "examination," "excavation" and "gathering" of objects on these lands by authorized institutions for the purpose of expanding knowledge.⁷⁸

The Antiquities Act provided a great deal of latitude regarding the types of areas that might become "national monuments." The term itself did little to describe the diversity of areas set aside.⁷⁹ One facetious definition pointed out the "inconsistency" of national monuments:

A National Monument is a piece of land containing from 1 to 1,000,000 acres, either flat or rough, timbered or bare ... But the most clearly outstanding character of the National Monument is its complete inconsistency.⁸⁰

Despite this type of criticism, the Antiquities Act and the idea of national monuments achieved immediate success. In September, 1906, Devil's Tower, the first national monument, was established in Wyoming. In December of that same year, El Morro in New Mexico, and Montezuma Castle and Petrified Forest in Arizona, were set aside. At the same time, however, Westerners began to realize that setting aside many of these areas posed "a threat to the economic 'development' of their states."⁸¹ Several bills were introduced to amend the Antiquities Act, including some that attempted to eradicate the President's ability to set national monuments aside. Although none of these bills passed, it was clear that Westerners felt threatened by this new act. Between 1906 and 1978, however, ninety-nine areas became national monuments. Presently, about 20 percent of all National Park Service sites are national monuments.⁸²

Colorado National Monument was established by a proclamation of President William H. Taft on May 24, 1911. As with many national parks and monuments of this time period, local economic conditions and the work of individuals and civic organizations influenced the park's creation. Not all local residents were involved. In fact, there was a clear distinction between ideas of land use expressed by local ranchers and those espoused by park promoters. Noticeably absent in the park movement were those local residents for whom national parks were the most threatening. With little knowledge of, or interest in, national parks or the ideas behind their creation, many Grand Valley ranchers and farmers did not actively support the campaign to establish Colorado National Monument. Years of unrestricted use of the area led many ranchers to believe that they could continue those uses even after the park was

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, p. 154.

⁸⁰Frank Waugh quoted in Ise, p. 155.

⁸¹Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, p. 160.

⁸²Mackintosh, *The National Parks: Shaping the System*, p. 14.

established. Local park promoters developed a different attitude toward the region. They were interested in using the park's scenery to promote their cities and to attract tourists. As they became more involved in the campaign to establish the Monument, park promoters began to believe that they had earned a certain amount of authority over the proposed park.

The most memorable, and certainly one of the most colorful, promoters of Colorado National Monument was John Otto. Otto was a powder monkey—he worked with explosives—on the Fruita water pipeline around 1906. While working, he became intrigued by the sandstone canyons near the town. When his work on the water line was completed, he moved into Monument Canyon, the best known and larger of the canyons in that area.⁸⁵ Current speculation focuses on whether Otto was a visionary or a crackpot. Most people concede that he was a little of both. Those who actually knew him admit that he was happiest when he was in the canyons, building trails.⁸⁶

Prior to his arrival in Grand Junction, Otto lived in Denver. Even then he led a peculiar life. In 1903 he was accused of harassing Colorado Governor James H. Peabody with a series of letters and of trying to harm him with a candlestick he insisted was not a weapon. In their investigation, the Pinkerton Detective Agency discovered that Otto had previously spent brief stints in asylums. Instead of incarcerating him, however, Denver officials sent him back to his family in Illinois.⁸⁵

Despite his problems in Denver, Otto returned to Colorado in 1906 to work on the Fruita pipeline. Soon his unusual behavior led people to believe that he was crazy. A hearing was held in Grand Junction to determine his mental state. The *Daily Sentinel* described him as "the man who lived alone for several years in Monument Cañon and who is mentally deranged."⁸⁶ The newspaper concluded its coverage of the hearing, by stating that, although Otto was "given his freedom," he was "not strong mentally."⁸⁷ Nevertheless, Otto managed to gain local support for his efforts to set aside Monument Canyon as a park. Over the years, his reputation earned him folk-hero status in the community.

The publicity over Otto's insanity trial did not seem to influence local opinion negatively. The Grand Junction City Charter recognized him as the "pathfinder of Western

⁸⁵Kania, *John Otto of Colorado National Monument*, p. 25.

⁸⁶Al Look, "Who Was John Otto?" [photocopy], p. 1, Museum of Western Colorado Manuscripts, F-675 Al Look Manuscripts, Grand Junction, Colorado.

⁸⁷Kania, *John Otto of the Colorado Monument*, pp. 14-15, 21, 23, 24.

⁸⁸"John Otto Released," *Daily Sentinel*, 24 February 1906.

⁸⁹Ibid.

Colorado."⁸⁸ He was also considered the "original booster of the Monument Canyon as a park," whose work was "noble and self-sacrificing."⁸⁹ The *Daily Sentinel* contributed to this image. Very often it described Otto as "heroic," a "hero of nature," and a "patriot to the core."⁹⁰ The perception that he was patriotic was supported by his efforts to celebrate the Fourth of July in Monument Canyon. In 1909, he planned to fly a flag on the Liberty Cap summit. In 1910, he organized the Independence Day celebration in Fruita. There was also a celebration at the base of Independence Monument, the 550-foot monolith on which he planned to plant a 6 x 12-foot flag.⁹¹

At the same time, Otto's admission—"As you know I'm up in the Monument Park. I live in a tent and pay no rent"—made him a somewhat mysterious figure to many people.⁹² There was something distinctly unusual about this man who lived in tents and spent all of his time building trails and promoting the Monument Canyon. Those who knew him remember him as a "virtual pest," who stopped people on the streets to discuss the Monument and annoyed the editors of the *Daily Sentinel* with endless letters regarding the park proposition, as well as other local and national events.⁹³ He was most notable for the eccentric side of his life and was often referred to as "the hermit of Monument Cañon."⁹⁴ In one of his many letters to the editor of the *Daily Sentinel*, Otto rejected this label:

Once upon a time I was dubbed (however in a friendly way) a hermit. A hermit means a recluse. Not so, however, am I a hermit. I have not retired from the world: you would have to retire the whole Monument Park proposition as far as it already goes to make that stick.⁹⁵

Otto was also involved in the original land withdrawals for the park. By 1907, he and the local community submitted petitions requesting a national park. Although Otto collected

⁸⁸*The Charter of the City of Grand Junction, Colorado* (Grand Junction: Merrill Printing Co., 14 September 1909), p. 46, courtesy of Colorado Historical Society.

⁸⁹"John Otto Determined to Build Scenic Road," *Daily Sentinel*, 6 February 1909; "Early Experiences in Life of the Great Grand Valley Trail Builder," *Daily Sentinel*, 7 June 1911.

⁹⁰*Daily Sentinel*, 7 June 1911; "To Hoist Flag On Independence Rock," *Daily Sentinel*, 2 July 1910.

⁹¹"Otto Unfurls Flag off Peak," *Daily Sentinel*, 9 July 1909; "Otto Plans Big Celebration on Independence Day," *Daily Sentinel*, 17 June 1910.

⁹²"John Otto Comments on Some Fiery Themes," *Daily Sentinel*, 30 March 1910; *Daily Sentinel* 7 June 1911.

⁹³Look, "Who Was John Otto," p. 2.

⁹⁴"Investigation Made of Great Scenic Spot Near This City," *Daily Sentinel*, 19 April 1909.

⁹⁵"John Otto Comments. . . ." *Daily Sentinel*, 30 March 1910.

300 signatures, it is not known to whom he submitted his proposal.⁹⁶ In June, Mesa County Judge Walter Sullivan submitted a petition asking the Department of the Interior to "set aside certain lands for a public park" in Mesa County.⁹⁷ Within a week, the petition was submitted to the General Land Office in Montrose, Colorado for review. By mid-July, temporary withdrawals for nine and a half sections of land had been approved by the General Land Office in Washington, D.C.:

the vacant unappropriated public lands within the following described areas are withdrawn from all forms of disposal under the public land laws, subject to all prior valid adverse claims, for the proposed Monument Canyon National Monument or Park.⁹⁸

On December 24, 1909, more land was temporarily withdrawn in accordance with public land laws, "pending action by Congress to reserve the lands, with other lands withdrawn by this Department on July 15, 1907, as a national park."⁹⁹ These land withdrawals encouraged local promoters to focus on the park's money-making potential. The *Grand Junction City Charter* of 1909, for instance, recognized the rewards of a national park in the area. It noted that "Grand Junction has the national Monument Park, set apart by the Government and regarded as one of the scenic wonders of the great West."¹⁰⁰

Otto also promoted the Monument area with an energetic letter-writing campaign to the local newspaper and government officials in Washington. Otto's letters reveal that his motivations for creating a national park fluctuated between the economic benefits and the inspiring scenery. As early as 1909, he wrote to President Taft, inviting him to visit the Grand Valley and the "Monument Park" as it was then called.¹⁰¹ Taft attended the Valley's Peach Festival in September 1909, but he made no further response regarding what Otto often referred to as his "park proposition."¹⁰² The majority of Otto's letters were written to the editor of the *Daily Sentinel*. One of these, dated October 17, 1910, revealed that the development of the park was an economic venture that was important to the growth of the Grand Valley:

⁹⁶Al Look, *John Otto and the Colorado National Monument* (Denver: Denver Westerners Inc., 1961; reprint, Grand Junction: Sandstone Publishing Co., 1962), p. 25.

⁹⁷Letter, Walter Sullivan, Mesa County Judge, to Bryson P. Blair, 5 June 1907.

⁹⁸Letter, Fred Bennett, Acting Commissioner, General Land Office to Register and Receiver, United States Land Office, Montrose, Colorado, 15 July 1907.

⁹⁹Letter, Fred Bennet, Commissioner General Land Office, to Senator Simon Guggenheim, 27 December 1909.

¹⁰⁰*The Charter of the City of Grand Junction, Colorado*, p. 39.

¹⁰¹"Otto Receives Letter From President Taft," *Daily Sentinel*, 27 May 1909.

¹⁰²Kania, *John Otto of Colorado National Monument*, p. 33.

I should be glad to be able to do something for the upbuilding of Grand Valley! I hope to stay with the Monument Park proposition and make that spot known (someday) all over the world. Isn't it in the first place also a business proposition, that the people of the Grand Valley get their scenic spots made accessible? So they can take their friends that may come here to visit out in the hills and have a place for themselves to go on Sunday.¹⁰³

Otto indicated the Monument's economic potential again when he stated that he wanted "to not only make Monument park a local play ground, but to make it a world's famous place. Such was my intention from the start... ." ¹⁰⁴ Another letter to the *Daily Sentinel* editor reflected Otto's personal investment and his increasingly proprietary attitude toward the Monument:

I don't know what success the Chamber of Commerce of Grand Junction will have in getting Monument National Park established: I call it already the Monument National Park and am doing what I can to advertise it and a great cause connected with it ...¹⁰⁵

While Otto's letters to the *Daily Sentinel* heightened awareness of the park proposition, his trail building in the canyons provided people the opportunity to explore the region. More adventurous visitors to the park, such as climbers, still rely on Otto's foot and hand holds when scaling the 550-foot Independence Monument. Although the work was difficult and dangerous, Otto drilled holes and placed short pieces of pipe into the rock of the monolith. He then moved up and built a "pipe ladder" on which to climb. At one point, he nearly fell to his death trying to climb over the cap rock of Independence Monument, and frequently drilled holes at the same time that he tried to grasp the slick sandstone surface of the monolith.¹⁰⁶ Few people were as daring as Otto.¹⁰⁷ In 1907, when he began collecting names for a petition to set aside the area as a national park, of the 300 people that signed, only Otto had ever been to Monument Canyon, and the only way to reach that area was by foot.¹⁰⁸

Otto began building the first trails in Monument Canyon in 1909. County commissioners and members of the chamber of commerce often came to watch him work and marvelled at some of the impossible feats he accomplished. His "trailwork extended through the rock walls, getting through places many sceptics deemed impassible."¹⁰⁹ One of the more

¹⁰³"John Otto Has Narrow Escape From Death From Explosion," *Daily Sentinel*, 17 October 1910.

¹⁰⁴"Up to People to Boost the Park," *Daily Sentinel*, December 1909.

¹⁰⁵"Otto, Monument Cañon Hermit, Speaks On Resort," *Daily Sentinel*, 25 July 1908.

¹⁰⁶Kania, *John Otto of Colorado National Monument*, p. 43.

¹⁰⁷See Figures 2.1 and 2.2.

¹⁰⁸Look, *John Otto and the Colorado National Monument*, p. 9.

¹⁰⁹Kania, *John Otto of Colorado National Monument*, p. 71.

publicized of Otto's efforts, known as the "Corkscrew" or "Otto's Trail," was visited by local businessmen who were impressed by the "grandeur of the scenes which met their eyes."¹¹⁰ The work that they observed was of "the self-sacrificing hermit who, they say, has performed the work of five men since he began the building of the winding, twisting, and rugged trail."¹¹¹ This particular trail was costly. Otto requested a dollar from subscribers to a "trail fund" that eventually totaled \$154.¹¹² Local responses to Otto's plea for funds were an encouraging sign that some people were willing to support development of the Monument. Another trail completed in July of 1909 led to the Liberty Cap and consisted of "five miles of his remarkable and beautiful scenic roadway."¹¹³



Figure 2.1. Historic photo of John Otto at what appears to be mouth of Fruita Canyon. Colorado National Monument Museum and Archive Collection.

¹¹⁰"Otto's Trail Completed," *Daily Sentinel*, 27 September 1909.

¹¹¹*Ibid.*

¹¹²Kania, *John Otto of Colorado National Monument*, p. 73.

¹¹³"Otto Unfurls Flag off Peak," *Daily Sentinel*, 25 April 1909.



Figure 2.2. Historic photo of John Otto (top) and Whipple Chester ascending the 550-foot Independence Monument. ▶ ▶ ▶

Road building was another of Otto's activities. From the very start of the park promotion, road building was a mutual interest for ranchers, farmers and park promoters. Part of Otto's "great cause" in Monument Canyon was his desire to build a "road around the rimrock of the canyon."¹¹⁴ Otto was actually the first to suggest a scenic route through the park, an idea that coincided with the local effort to build a road to Glade Park.¹¹⁵ Just as he collected money for his trail fund, Otto also mustered support for his road building by asking one dollar of each member of the Fruita, Palisade and Grand Junction chambers of commerce to aid in construction costs. Otto even did some of his own "crude survey and engineering" of the canyons for the purpose of "marking out rude lines and courses for a foot trail and also for

¹¹⁴"John Otto Determined to Build Scenic Road," *Daily Sentinel*, 6 February 1909.

¹¹⁵Look, "Who Was John Otto?", p. 3.

a wagon road."¹¹⁶ Believing that Grand Junction would eventually be the "hub of the West," Otto proposed that all the nation's roads be built so that they ran through the Monument.¹¹⁷

On April 26, 1910, the *Daily Sentinel* reported local efforts to build a scenic road:

A number of public-spirited people are going to organize the Monument Park, Health and Pleasure Drive appropriation to build the Grand Rimrock Boulevard, the world's greatest driveway.¹¹⁸

This road was supposed to start in Grand Junction at the Main Street Bridge, proceed up to the "granite bench in Monument Cañon," follow the rimrocks past Liberty Cap to "Big Park" (Glade Park) and skirt the rims of the "forks" of Monument Canyon. The road would end with a connection to the Fruita road.¹¹⁹ Not surprisingly, the economic potential of the road was disguised as a "scenic driveway." Efforts to build a road intensified after the park's establishment in May, 1911. Until then, there were more road proposals than actual construction.

Conflict over road building was inevitable, especially since roads served more than one purpose. In the context of the community, roads fulfilled business and residential needs. When Otto's "road fever" was first publicized in the *Daily Sentinel* in 1910, local communities were interested in improving roads throughout the Grand Valley.¹²⁰ Fruita's interest in a road to Glade Park for the purpose of building a business relationship, and Glade Park's interest in improving its route to the Grand Valley, characterized the local road campaign. All parties involved in road promotion were equally enthusiastic about the possibility of connecting their communities to one another via the Monument. For Otto and the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, this enthusiasm translated into more than a local endeavor to improve transportation. Their interest in building a road through Monument Canyon was yet another step in the process of making their proposed park accessible to visitors. Outside interest in the development of a park road emerged as well. In 1910, Senator Simon Guggenheim introduced the first of two bills for "Creating the Monument National Park," which included a section proposing a \$20,000 appropriation for the construction of a road "to and through" the park.¹²¹

¹¹⁶"Investigation Made of Great Scenic. . . ." *Daily Sentinel*, 19 April 1909.

¹¹⁷Kania, *John Otto of Colorado National Monument*, pp. 70, 78.

¹¹⁸"Organize to Build Road," *Daily Sentinel*, 26 April 1910.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*

¹²⁰Kania, *John Otto of Colorado National Park*, p. 78.

¹²¹U.S. Congress, House, *Creating the Monument National Park*, 61st Congress., 2nd sess., S. 4934, (6 January 1910).

The Grand Junction chamber of Commerce was an equally important element in the success of the "park proposition," and like Otto, it soon developed a proprietary attitude toward the Monument. In December 1908, Otto approached members of the chamber, hoping to interest them in a tour of his "Monument Cañon proposition."¹²² They declined due to bad weather. In June, he again extended his offer and was once more rejected because the weather "was rather too hot."¹²³ Otto was still hopeful when he expressed these sentiments:

When I return this fall I'll call again for I'm a stayer. I hope then it will be neither too cold or too hot nor too wet or too dry—but just right. There is a whole lot of work in sight and by working together much can be accomplished. For the people, the people at home and the people that come—they must see the natural national monuments.¹²⁴

Once the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce finally agreed to "work together" with Otto, the promotion of Monument Canyon acquired a new energy and a voice that most people probably trusted more than that of Otto. Part of the chamber's initial involvement in the promotion came in the form of "inspections" and "investigations," which usually resulted in flowery write-ups in the *Daily Sentinel* about Otto's tireless devotion to the Monument Canyon. One such headline illustrated that the chamber's primary interest in Colorado National Monument was economically motivated:

Investigation Made of Great Scenic Spot Near This City: Wonderful Sights Viewed by Committee from Chamber of Commerce—Grand Junction Asleep to Possibilities of Opening to the World of One of the Greatest Paradises of Natural Beauties to be Found in the West—Right at the Gates of the City.¹²⁵

Each of the chamber's inspections were described in terms of the "possibilities" for Grand Junction, a city that the chamber of commerce believed had "a golden opportunity to be nationally known for the scenic wonders that are at its door as well as nationally known for its fruit and its climate."¹²⁶ Referring to the Monument as "a wealth of scenic beauty so near the city," also reinforced the idea that the scenery could somehow translate into an economic gain for the city.¹²⁷

While descriptions of the chamber's trips to Monument Canyon were certainly important in building interest in the area, public access was the key to serious development of the park. In April of 1909, the chamber began its campaign to advertise the Monument Park's scenic

¹²²"Otto Tells of Grand Mesa," *Daily Sentinel*, 7 August 1908.

¹²³*Ibid.*

¹²⁴*Ibid.*

¹²⁵"Investigation Made of Great Scenic Spot. . . ." *Daily Sentinel*, 19 April 1909.

¹²⁶*Ibid.*

¹²⁷"To Photograph the Monument," *Daily Sentinel*, 23 April 1909.

wonders. Part of this effort included a meeting between Secretary Mahoney of the chamber of commerce and an agent from the Colorado Midland Railroad. The chamber wanted to convince railroad agents of the scenic beauty of the area. Colorado Midland promised to have an official photographer take pictures of the area and to provide a unique publicity opportunity for Grand Junction. Soon thereafter, the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad expressed an interest in photographing and inspecting the Monument as well.¹²⁸ With Otto serving as a guide to these photographers, the chamber of commerce hoped to advertise the Monument Park as "one of the most popular scenic sections in Colorado."¹²⁹ Another part of the promotional campaign included a visit from Enos Mills who was known for his support of national parks. In 1911, he visited the valley to boost Monument Canyon and to create an interest amongst his "friends in Washington to get the park set aside as a national playground."¹³⁰ Reference to national and local playgrounds indicated that revenue generated by tourism was a high priority for many park promoters.

The relationship between the chamber of commerce and Otto was important. In May, 1910, the *Daily Sentinel* reported that the chamber of commerce had proposed the creation of a national park and Otto "made known the scenic wonders" but had only "assisted the Chamber of Commerce in every possible way."¹³¹ This is only partially true. While Otto provided the inspiration and the physical labor to develop the park, the chamber of commerce used its credibility to garner the community support and political assistance necessary for withdrawal of the land. In either case, because both Otto and the chamber were the primary local promoters, they naturally felt that the Monument was there for the local community. The chamber saw its economic potential; Otto saw it as his personal project. When the National Park Service's ideology that parks were "national treasures" was established six years later, local residents still felt that the park somehow belonged to them.

Some of the chamber's early efforts to draw attention to the park proposal involved writing letter and sending resolutions to the Governor of Colorado.¹³² Gradually, Colorado politicians became involved in the park movement. In November, 1909, the *Daily Sentinel* reported Congressman Edward Taylor's interest in introducing a bill that would set aside land in various cities in Colorado "for park purposes."¹³³ One of these cities was Grand Junction. Taylor commented that its businessmen were anxious to have the bill passed to set aside the Monument Park. During the following month, the land office in Montrose received a resolution

¹²⁸Ibid.

¹²⁹Ibid.

¹³⁰"Will Boost for Monument Park," *Daily Sentinel*, 21 April 1911.

¹³¹"Almost Sure To Get a Park," *Daily Sentinel*, 23 May 1910.

¹³²Letter, Fred Bennett, Commissioner General Land Office to Senator Simon Guggenheim, 27 December 1909.

¹³³"Means Much to This City," *Daily Sentinel*, 20 November 1909.

from the chamber, along with a letter from Simon Guggenheim, proposing withdrawal of the lands.¹³⁴ By January, 1910, these lands had been set aside under the direction of Secretary of Interior Richard Ballinger. The *Daily Sentinel* attributed the land withdrawal to the "dream" of Otto and listed the *Daily Sentinel*, the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, Senator Guggenheim and Congressman Taylor as "enthusiastic champions" of Monument Canyon.¹³⁵

The local media also had a hand in the Monument's creation. The *Daily Sentinel* was the local newspaper that reported the park promotion with regularity, although it had originally printed plenty of stories on Otto's earlier problems with "insanity." In addition to providing coverage of Otto's and the chamber's efforts, it chronicled local responses to the park, and became what John Otto referred to as the "official paper of our national park proposition."¹³⁶ Through the use of descriptive language, the *Daily Sentinel* created a mental picture of Monument Canyon's landscape. The Monument was known as "a world of natural beauty," a place of "sublime grandeur and awe-inspiring massiveness," and a "marvelous scenic Beauty Paradise."¹³⁷ In reference to the monoliths, the paper stated that there was "an almost endless array of magnificent masterpieces of nature that make the world-famed Garden of the Gods at Colorado Springs sink into insignificance when a comparison is made."¹³⁸ While most of the descriptions did very little to accurately portray the landscape, they made the area sound especially attractive to potential tourists.

The *Daily Sentinel* also chronicled local efforts to support and establish the park. The newspaper once printed the names of people who contributed to Otto's trail building efforts with the headline, "Is Your Name On This List?"¹³⁹ Another article described local support to the Otto Trail Fund, and commented on the "continuation of local interest" in Otto's work for "present and future generations."¹⁴⁰ In numerous ways the *Daily Sentinel* enlivened and perpetuated the efforts to establish the park. The text of Senator Guggenheim's April 6, 1911 bill, "creating the National Monument Park," was published in full.¹⁴¹ Numerous articles about Representative Taylor's interest in local and regional national parks were printed as well.

Once the local commitment to the establishment of a park was evident, state politicians joined more seriously the movement to create a park. In 1906, Simon Guggenheim was elected

¹³⁴Letter, Bennett to Guggenheim, 27 December 1909.

¹³⁵"Grand Junction Gets Lands Set Apart for a Great National Park," *Daily Sentinel*, 1 January 1910.

¹³⁶"Up to People to Boost Park," *Daily Sentinel*, December 1909.

¹³⁷"Investigation Made of Great Scenic. . . ." *Daily Sentinel*, 19 April 1909.

¹³⁸Ibid.

¹³⁹"Is Your Name On This List?" *Daily Sentinel*, 15 February 1910.

¹⁴⁰"More Subscribers to Otto Trail Fund," *Daily Sentinel*, 7 June 1910.

¹⁴¹"Almost Sure to Get a Park," *Daily Sentinel*, 23 May 1910.

to the Senate, where he served on mining, agriculture, forestry, conservation of natural resources and public lands committees.¹⁴² He was responsible for initiating two bills regarding the Monument park. The first of these, "A Bill Creating the Monument National Park," was introduced on January 6, 1910 to the Public Lands Committee during the second session of the 61st Congress.¹⁴³

Although the bill did not pass, it outlined expectations for the development and management of the park, and provided a definition of the park's role as a public attraction. The first section of the bill listed the 17,000 acres already withdrawn to be "set apart as a public reservation or pleasuring ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people."¹⁴⁴ Section two of the bill stated that the "park shall be known as the Monument National Park."¹⁴⁵ It would be under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior who would establish and enforce the rules for the area. The bill further stated that the Secretary could "grant leases for building purposes," sections of land that might be necessary for the construction of buildings for visitors, and that the revenues from such land leases would go toward "the construction of roads, bridges, and bridle paths therein."¹⁴⁶ Section three outlined punishment for anyone found guilty of destroying property within the park. The crime would be considered a misdemeanor and if convicted, the defendant faced a fine of no more than \$1000, a jail term of no more than 12 months, or both. Section four requested an appropriation of \$20,000 for the purpose of constructing "roads and bridges from Grand Junction, Colorado leading into and through the said park."¹⁴⁷ Senator Guggenheim introduced the exact bill again on April 6, 1911, which was, in turn, referred to the Senate Committee on Public Lands during the first session of the 62nd Congress.

Edward T. Taylor's involvement in the establishment of the Colorado National Monument was important as well. First elected congressman for Colorado in 1908, Taylor was re-elected in 1910 and 1912. For his first 12 years in office, he was a member of the House Public Lands Committee and was involved in water rights issues in Colorado. He was also a member of the Interior Department Subcommittee that appropriated money for the Interior Department and all bureaus under its jurisdiction. These included the "public Domain, reclamation projects, national parks, and all western matters."¹⁴⁸

¹⁴²"Former Senator of Colorado Dies," *Denver Post*, 3 November 1941.

¹⁴³U.S. Congress, House, *Creating the Monument National Park*, 61st Congress, 2nd sess., S. 4934 (6 January 1910).

¹⁴⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁴⁸"Biographical Sketch of Congressman Edward T. Taylor, 4th District of Colorado," *Montrose Daily Press*, 27 October 1926, 3. Courtesy Denver Public Library, Western History Department.

Taylor had a strong interest in national parks. In November, 1909, he wrote to the mayors of 100 towns in the hopes of creating an awareness of the park idea. He also pledged to introduce a series of bills in Congress for the purpose of securing park lands for various Colorado cities.¹⁴⁹ In 1909, he expressed his beliefs regarding the importance of parks in an interview with the *Denver Post* reprinted in the *Daily Sentinel*:

There is not a town or city in the mountain section of the state that is not blessed with scenic beauties which, if set aside for park purposes, would make them better known, and if Colorado is to be the playground of the country, as we have been told by ex-President Roosevelt, we must provide the playgrounds and keep them in such shape that they will never fall out of the ownership of the towns and cities of the state.¹⁵⁰

In February, 1911, Taylor wrote to President William Howard Taft, enclosing a petition for the "establishment of the Monument Park in Mesa County" signed by 300 citizens of Grand Junction and the surrounding areas. In his letter, Taylor described the Monument as a "picturesque cañon" whose formations are like those of the Garden of the Gods. He then explained the process by which he and the community worked to create a park:

The people have been trying to have it set aside as a national park and Senator Guggenheim and I have had bills in Congress for that purpose. But Congress does not seem to be disposed to create national parks, especially small tracts like this one, and after numerous personal interviews with the Secretary of the Interior and correspondence with him and the citizens of Mesa County, Colorado, they have determined to ask the President of the United States to create a National Monument out of this land.¹⁵¹

Both Guggenheim and Taylor initiated some of the earliest legislation toward the creation of Colorado National Monument. In doing so, they supported the idea of setting aside and protecting large portions of public lands, an ideology that conflicted with the way in which local residents were already using the area: for stock drives and water lines.

On April 26, 1911, two mineral inspectors from the General Land Office, Charles L. Duer and J. Golden, submitted a report to their commissioner regarding the location, geology, and history of the proposed Monument National Park. The report reflected how closely local needs influenced plans for the park. Focusing on both the transportation needs of the local population and the park, the report proposed that a bridge and a road were necessary to reach the park from Grand Junction. The existing wagon road from Grand Junction was such that "eight miles over rough hilly roads is necessary in order to reach the Park."¹⁵² Construction of a bridge across the Grand (Colorado) River would decrease mileage so that a "straight road

¹⁴⁹"Means Much to This City," *Daily Sentinel*, 20 November 1909.

¹⁵⁰Ibid.

¹⁵¹Letter, Edward T. Taylor, to William Howard Taft, President of the United States, 25 February 1911.

¹⁵²Report, Charles L. Duer and J.P. Golden, Mineral Inspectors, to Commissioner General Land Office, 26 April 1911, 2.

from Grand Junction" could be built to access the park.¹⁵³ Because the Colorado River separated the Colorado National Monument from Grand Junction, a bridge would serve several purposes. For residents of Grand Junction, a bridge would provide an easier route to the Colorado National Monument. For Glade Park residents, the bridge would create an easier route to the Grand Valley.

Transportation to the park was important, but the report's geologic descriptions reinforced the original purpose of the park. The name "Monument Park" derived from the presence of the "great monoliths of sandstone" in the Monument and Shackleton canyons.¹⁵⁴ The most imposing of these monoliths, Independence Rock, was described as follows: "500 feet high, 250 feet long and 100 feet wide at the base" with a cap rock resembling "a gigantic rock like the hat on a man, it forms one of the features of the entire Park."¹⁵⁵ The Liberty Cap, another of the monoliths, was not as large as Independence Rock, but showed "the wonderful effect of Time's Erosion upon the massive beds of sandstone."¹⁵⁶ Finally, the report explained that the "magnificent views" from the rim rocks afforded views of the Grand Valley a "thousand or more feet below and extending for about thirty miles."¹⁵⁷ After it described agricultural lands deemed unnecessary "to preserve the monuments," the report made its recommendation:

In view of the above facts, we therefore recommend with the approval of M.D. McEniry, Chief of Field Division, that the following sections be immediately set aside by proclamation of the President under provisions of Section 2 of the Act of June 8, 1906 (Chapter 3060), to be known as the Monument National Park, and that proper steps be taken for the management and care of the same: embracing 13,967.22 acres, according to the Government Survey, exclusive of Sections 31 and 32, Tp. 1 S., R. 1 W. Ute Meridian, which have not been subdivided and contain approximately 1280 acres, making 15,247.22 in all.¹⁵⁸

Not long after this report was submitted, a controversy over naming the park developed. The Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce suggested "Hooper National Park" in honor of Major S.K. Hooper, who for 30 years had served as the head of the passenger department for

¹⁵³Ibid.

¹⁵⁴According to Kania's *John Otto of Colorado National Monument*, this canyon was also known as Chackleton Canyon. Kania's book features an early article in the *Daily Sentinel* which indicates that John Otto took people up to a point where they could view both Monument and Chackleton Canyons simultaneously. Former Chief Ranger Hank Schoch stated that only Devils Canyon (not part of Colorado National Monument) or possibly Lizard Canyon could be viewed simultaneously with Monument Canyon. Clearly Shackleton/Chackleton was renamed, but it is not known when this occurred or which of the canyons acquired a new name. See Kania, *John Otto of Colorado National Monument*, p. 6.

¹⁵⁵Report, Duer and Golden, Mineral Inspectors to President Taft, 25 February 1911, p. 4.

¹⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 4-5.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 7-9.

the Rio Grande Railroad and was instrumental in attracting tourists to the state.¹⁵⁹ Residents of Fruita vehemently opposed this name on the grounds that it was "not sufficient in its scope" and failed "to comprehend the intention to make it a great national reserve."¹⁶⁰ The Fruita Chamber of Commerce filed a complaint with Congressman Taylor, suggesting "the National Monument Park" or the "Centennial Monument Park" as possible names.¹⁶¹ In response, the secretary of the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce wrote that "there is no controversy here over the matter. We are more interested in having the place set aside as a National Park or National Monument than in selecting the name for it."¹⁶² His letter further stated that the "Fruita people" could easily have suggested a name, and that John Otto should be consulted before a choice was made.

Once again, the chamber of commerce supplied a list of suggestions for Congressman Taylor. Included were 18 potential names. Among them: "Otto National Monument," "Dinosaur National Monument," "Grand River National Monument," "Escalante National Monument," "Mile-High National Monument," and "Mesa Rojo National Monument."¹⁶³ Otto, whose bizarre sense of humor puzzled many people, suggested "Smith National Monument Park," as that would account for the many Smiths living in the Grand Valley and around the country.¹⁶⁴ Eventually Congressman Taylor's wife suggested "Colorado National Monument"; by then no national monument existed yet at all in Colorado, and Taylor reasoned that, because he was also planning to have the name of the Grand River changed to the Colorado River, this seemed a fitting name for the park.¹⁶⁵ Taylor submitted the name to the Secretary of the Interior and, upon approval, the presidential proclamation presented "Colorado National Monument" as the official name for the park.

On May 23, 1911, Secretary of the Interior Walter L. Fisher, a man "devoted to park preservation," submitted a proclamation "creating the Colorado National Monument" to President William H. Taft.¹⁶⁶ The Secretary described the Monument's unusual landscape, and referred to the General Land Office's report, which explained that the lands were "not valuable for agriculture, and in part only produce a very scant growth of native grasses which are of

¹⁵⁹"Hooper National Park," *Daily Sentinel*, 10 May 1911.

¹⁶⁰"Do Not Approve Name of Park," *Daily Sentinel*, 10 May 1911.

¹⁶¹*Ibid.*

¹⁶²Letter, Thomas F. Mahoney, Secretary, Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, to Edward T. Taylor, 15 May 1911.

¹⁶³*Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴Kania, *John Otto of Colorado National Monument*, pp. 36-37.

¹⁶⁵"Taylor Tells of Naming the Park," *Daily Sentinel*, 27 June 1911.

¹⁶⁶Letter, Walter L. Fisher, Secretary of Interior, to William H. Taft, President of the United States, 23 May 1911; Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, p. 89.

little value for grazing."¹⁶⁷ He also stated that the "people of Colorado" were "unanimous in their approval" of the "permanent reservation of the tract."¹⁶⁸ On May 24, 1911, William Howard Taft signed the proclamation setting aside approximately 13,883.6 acres for the purpose of establishing the Colorado National Monument. The introductory paragraph of the proclamation detailed the reason for the park's establishment, recognizing the importance of the park to the community:

Whereas, in Mesa County, Colorado, the extraordinary examples of erosion are of great scientific interest and it appears that the public interest would be promoted by reserving these natural formations as a National Monument, together with as much public land as may be necessary for the proper protection thereof.¹⁶⁹

At last the efforts of individuals and organizations in the Grand Valley made what the *Daily Sentinel* referred to as the "nationalization of a cañon," a reality.

¹⁶⁷Fisher to Taft, 23 May 1911.

¹⁶⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹President, Proclamation, "Colorado National Monument, Establishment, Proclamation 1126," *Statutes at Large* (24 May 1911) Vol. 37, p. 156.

Chapter Three

The Otto Years: 1911-30

The impact of the Colorado National Monument's establishment was not immediately understood by its adjacent communities. For most of the park's first nineteen years—1911 to 1930—local populations continued to use the area for recreational and non-recreational purposes with little or no knowledge of how national monument status changed the area. Even with the National Park Service's establishment in 1916, federal guidance in the administration and development of the park was limited. In fact, the Park Service's indifference to the park's needs was often frustrating to local park promoters. Consequently, community leaders in Grand Junction and Fruita took an active role in promoting and eventually administering the park. Frustrations over Park Service regulations and general cynicism toward the federal government emerged for the first time during these years.

Otto's Agenda

An important influence on the early development of the park was, not surprisingly, John Otto. The formal establishment of the Colorado National Monument did not exhaust Otto's enthusiasm for the project. After 1911, his early energy for the "park proposition" metamorphosed into a concerted effort to develop the park. His plans for the park, and the manner in which he pursued those plans, were pivotal to the way in which the community reacted to the park and eventually to the Park Service. Otto's years as custodian reflected a typical western frustration with the federal government in general. As the sole caretaker for the park, he was often left to enforce the rules of an absentee Park Service. This necessarily created resentment in Otto and eventually in those local residents who helped to develop the park.

Representative Taylor suggested Otto for the custodian position shortly after the establishment of the Colorado National Monument. Otto's nominal salary of one dollar a month came from a government contingency fund, which made him an official federal employee, and authorized him to run the park.¹⁷⁰ Despite the meager salary, he took the job very seriously. Aided by his letter-writing skills, Otto worked to improve roads and trails, waged a relentless campaign to achieve national park status for the Monument, and even established a game preserve complete with elk and buffalo.

In terms of developing the relationship with the local community, however, Otto's attempt to enforce regulations in the park was his most important contribution. Technically, he should have been enforcing the Antiquities Act; instead he created his own form of law

¹⁷⁰Kania, *John Otto of Colorado National Park*, p. 38.

enforcement. Otto's interpretation of park regulations included a wide variety of restrictions. In one of his fliers, entitled "The Colorado National Monument: Regulations," he outlined his interpretation of the law in this way:

No Guns of any kind permitted. No Posts, Christmas Trees or Green Stuff of any kind to be cut. No Wood to be taken without a permit. The marking of autographs, dates, initials, drawings, or other pencilings or carvings of any kind whatsoever, and the painting or posting of advertising signs on the rimrock walls or rocks or trees, is prohibited. Do not set fire to growing trees or roll rocks down the sides of the canon. Be careful in selecting the spot for your camp fire so as not to scorch the surrounding trees, rock, etc. Assist in keeping the park clean. Wherever you camp or eat your lunch, clean up all waste paper, boxes, plates, tin cans, etc. Leave no refuse.¹⁷¹

In his attempt to restrict local use of the park, John Otto bore the burden of enforcing regulations single-handedly. More importantly, these rules created a chasm between Otto and those local residents not interested in park development of any kind. His attempts to enforce the regulations also indicated that some local residents, especially ranchers from Glade Park, felt that the Monument was like any other part of the public domain and should be similarly used.

Most of Otto's efforts to protect the park were aggravated by its location, insufficient manpower, and local residents either unfamiliar with, or resistant to, the regulations. Because portions of the park were still used for stock drives, Otto frequently charged ranchers with trespassing. On several occasions he became quite aggressive. As early as 1913, Otto complained that some "half-witted cowpunchers" known as the Smithy brothers continued to drive their cattle over the park's trails, despite warnings that the trails were for horses and people only. According to Otto, "other cow people have never attempted to drive stock over these trails," so it seems that Otto previously tried to familiarize people with park policy. He eventually requested that a federal court address the matter of convicting these men.¹⁷² The General Land Office notified the "cow outfit" that continued illegal use would result in a hearing before the U.S. District Attorney.¹⁷³ Otto did his best to enforce regulations on his own, but often sought advice from the General Land Office, and later, the Park Service.

Another far more colorful trespassing case began in the winter of 1914-15, when what Otto referred to as a "Kaiser-worshiping, Hun-principled sheep man" named Gus Bullerdick brought his sheep to the mouth of the Monument Canyon. It is not clear how Otto issued warnings regarding trespassing, but his relations with Bullerdick indicate that he was not diplomatic. In fact, Otto admitted that Bullerdick was the only person he "ever had to pack a

¹⁷¹John Otto, Flier of Regulations, Colorado National Monument, no date.

¹⁷²Letter, John Otto to M.D. McEniry, Chief General Land Office, 12 November 1913.

¹⁷³Letter, M.D. McEniry, General Land Office, to the Smithy Brothers, 18 November 1913.

gun for."¹⁷⁴ On one occasion, Bullerdick threatened to split Otto's head with an axe.¹⁷⁵ In the winter of 1918, Bullerdick again tested Otto's patience, when he and his sheep broke through the fence across the mouth of Monument Canyon. Later that year, he allowed his sheep to graze near the intake of the Fruita water system near the park's west entrance. In January, 1919, Bullerdick brought his herd of more than 1,000 sheep to the upper rim rocks of the park.¹⁷⁶ For Otto this was the final straw. He appealed to Stephen Mather, then Director of the National Park Service, for advice.

Mather's response to Otto indicated that regulations regarding national park lands were quite specific, and that it was important for local people to understand their significance. He advised Otto to enlighten Bullerdick regarding Section 56 of the Criminal Code which stated the following:

Whoever shall drive any cattle, horses, hogs, or other livestock upon any such lands (that is, any lands of the United States in pursuance of any law that have been reserved or purchased by the United States for any public use) for the purpose of destroying the grass or trees on said lands, or where they may destroy the said grass or trees shall be fined not more than \$500, or imprisoned not more than one year, or both.¹⁷⁷

Bullerdick was warned that if he continued to ignore regulations, criminal proceedings would be brought against him. Otto's hope that the Park Service would "prosecute him good and right" was an indication that an authority other than Otto was needed to oversee problems of this nature.¹⁷⁸ The Smithy brothers, and the Bullerdick case reveal that some individuals were either not aware or were openly defiant of regulations within the park. These situations also reflect the kind of attitude that many local residents held toward the park—that public lands were to be used, not preserved.

Problems with trespassing plagued Otto's years as custodian, but enforcement of regulations extended into other areas as well. In some cases, individuals were so incensed by these regulations that they appealed to the Secretary of the Interior. This occurred when Otto started a wood hauling business in the park. With the proceeds he hoped to finance the completion of a scenic road through the park. Otto initiated the enterprise during World War I when economically depressed conditions characterized the Grand Valley. Thinking he could alleviate some of the hardship, Otto wrote to the Department of the Interior, requesting permission to supply dead wood from the park for people to heat their homes. At the end of

¹⁷⁴Letter, John Otto to Franklin Lane, Secretary of the Interior, 17 January 1919.

¹⁷⁵Ibid.

¹⁷⁶Ibid.

¹⁷⁷Letter, Stephen Mather, Director National Park Service, to John Otto, 18 February 1919.

¹⁷⁸Letter, John Otto to Director National Park Service, 4 March 1919, (photocopy), National Archives Record Group 79, Colorado National Monument Museum and Archive Collection.

the war, Otto decided to issue permits for 50 cents a load for anyone willing to haul his own wood out of the park. When one resident took wood without a permit, Otto promptly obtained a search warrant, and went to the man's home to collect the money.¹⁷⁹ Another resident, W.H. Post, appealed to the Secretary of the Interior, claiming that it was "unamerican to make old timers" pay for wood "taken from any Park or from the public domain."¹⁸⁰ Although Post's comment was directed at Otto's wood business, it also symbolizes the overall feeling among many westerners: that the public domain, even when a national park was involved, was for public use. Otto frequently encountered this attitude.

The wood hauling business was equally frustrating to Otto, who originally hoped to use the funds to finance his road. His repeated requests for Park Service appropriations over the years were denied. To make matters worse, once the National Park Service learned that he was making money off the wood business, they demanded that he send them every dime. Otto set up an account worth \$35.05 in the Bank of Grand Junction. He agreed to send it to the Park Service but hoped to keep 10 percent of the money as commission. The Park Service refused him that as well.¹⁸¹ This interaction typified Otto's relationship with the National Park Service, which was absent during the first years of the park's development.

As the park's first custodian, Otto naturally shaped local views of the new park. Unfortunately, he was in a position where he gained little support from Park Service officials and increasingly alienated himself from local residents. Nevertheless, other aspects of Otto's agenda for the park were beneficial to local interests. His involvement in road building efforts throughout the Grand Valley and in the Colorado National Monument, for example, allowed him to work cooperatively with local communities.

Road Building, 1911-1927

Road building continued to be a mutual interest for park promoters and non-promoters after Colorado National Monument was established. The communities of Grand Junction, Glade Park and Fruita pushed to build a road to Glade Park, while Otto and the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce worked for a scenic route through the park. The nature of road building to and through the park revealed that local and park transportation needs were closely linked.

Each of the Grand Valley's communities had practical and economically motivated transportation needs. In 1909, the newly formed State Highway Commission accepted plans for two state roads in Mesa County: a route from Grand Junction to the Utah state line and one

¹⁷⁹Kania, *John Otto of Colorado National Park*, pp. 101-102.

¹⁸⁰Letter, W.H. Post to Secretary of Interior, 15 May 1922.

¹⁸¹Letter, Arno B. Cammerer, Acting Director National Park Service, to John Otto, 20 June 1922; Letter, Arno B. Cammerer to John Otto, 20 July 1922.

from Grand Junction to Montrose.¹⁸² The county commissioners and Grand Valley automobile owners backed the Midland Trail (today's I-70), the desert route from Grand Junction to Utah that competed with Otto's Union Trail. In 1912, a portion of the Midland Trail from Mack to Utah was completed, thus eliminating the Grand Valley's isolation from the rest of the country.¹⁸³

Other road proposals were less dramatic in scope. Citizens of Fruita met in December, 1911, to discuss the possibility of building a better road from Fruita to Glade Park for the purpose of generating business relations with that area.¹⁸⁴ In April, 1912, Glade Park residents petitioned the county commissioners for a "road through No Thoroughfare Canyon and also submitted a survey showing the location of the road."¹⁸⁵ Glade Park was still working to find a better route to Grand Junction on which to drive cattle and transport farm goods.¹⁸⁶ In December 1912, Otto joined the effort to construct a road to Glade Park, when he, John G. McKinney, and William C. Hermann formed the Colorado River Auto Transportation and Toll Road Company. Its purpose was to "build, construct, operate, and maintain a toll road" from Grand Junction, through No Thoroughfare Canyon, and up the rim rocks toward Glade Park.¹⁸⁷

Developing transportation in the Grand Valley was intertwined with the effort to build a scenic road through the Colorado National Monument, a fact that became problematic as the park developed, and as the communities grew and their needs changed. Due to its location, the Monument was a natural thoroughfare between Grand Junction and Glade Park, so it was logical to build roads that served both as scenic routes for the park and as access to the Grand Valley.

The original promoters of the Monument—Representative Taylor, John Otto, and the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce—were instrumental in working to build a road through the park. Taylor introduced a bill on June 8, 1911, "for the construction of a National Road from Grand Junction, Colorado to and through the Colorado National Monument."¹⁸⁸ Although the bill did not pass, it requested an appropriation of \$20,000 for the construction of

¹⁸²McCreanor, *Mesa County, Colorado*, p. 24.

¹⁸³Kania, *John Otto of Colorado National Monument*, pp. 79, 85; McCreanor, *Mesa County, Colorado*, p. 24.

¹⁸⁴"Fruita After a Road from Glade Park," *Daily Sentinel*, 6 December 1911.

¹⁸⁵Mesa County, *Proceedings of the Board of County Commissioners*, Book 5, 1 April 1912, p. 86, Mesa County Courthouse, Grand Junction, Colorado.

¹⁸⁶Kania, *John Otto of Colorado National Monument*, p. 79.

¹⁸⁷John Otto, John G. McKinney, and William C. Hermann, "Articles of Incorporation of the Colorado River Auto Transportation and Toll Road Company," 12 December 1912, pp. 1-2.

¹⁸⁸U.S. Congress, House, *For the Construction of a National Road from Grand Junction, Colorado, to and through the Colorado National Monument*, 62d Congress., 1st sess., H.R. 11379 (8 June 1911).

the road to be "built under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior."¹⁸⁹ Response to the bill indicated that the economic potential of the road was important:

The construction of this road will mean much to Grand Junction in that it will mean a way of reaching the park by a good road by automobile. This means that thousands of visitors will see the park where only hundreds would in other large parks of natural wonders, tourist traffic is a prominent feature of summer traffic.¹⁹⁰

Taylor introduced the same bill in every session of Congress between 1911 and 1917. The final attempt in April 1917 also failed. The rejection of Taylor's bills reflected governmental and congressional attitudes toward national parks in general. Prior to the creation of the National Park Service in 1916, Congress had little interest in developing the parks.¹⁹¹ In fact, Congress did not appropriate any money for national monuments until 1916—ten years after the Antiquities Act passed.¹⁹²

Despite the lack of legislative support, the campaign for a road continued. The first substantive efforts toward building a road through the Colorado National Monument were part of Otto's plans to include the Monument in a transcontinental highway known as the Union Trail. The Union Trail was designed to stretch from Grand Junction's Main Street Bridge, through the Colorado National Monument and the plateau country of Pinon Mesa, toward Moab, Utah. The section of the road that would eventually traverse the park essentially followed the same route but acquired several names: Rimrock Route, Otto's Road, Glade Park Road, and the Grand Rimrock Boulevard.¹⁹³

More commonly referred to as Glade Park Road or Rimrock Route, this section of road was supposed to perform numerous functions: a route to Glade Park, a scenic drive, and a stretch of the transcontinental highway. Otto estimated that \$1000 would be needed to construct it, but the \$100 he had already raised would be a good start. He also took the time to challenge any engineer to survey a better route.¹⁹⁴ Mesa County Engineer James Fisk surveyed and approved of Otto's proposed route just days later. In his description of the road, Fisk commented that "there is one place where the traveler looks straight down for 400 feet into the depths of the Monument Park."¹⁹⁵ He estimated that for \$6500 it could be built and would be an "important step toward development for this city" as well as a road of the "greatest scenic

¹⁸⁹Ibid.

¹⁹⁰"Taylor Asks \$25,000 for Road to National Monolithic Park," *Daily Sentinel*, 10 June 1911.

¹⁹¹Letter, Commissioner General Land Office to John Otto, 30 January 1913.

¹⁹²Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, p. 160.

¹⁹³Kania, *John Otto of Colorado National Monument*, p. 78.

¹⁹⁴"Raise Money For Highway to Utah Line," *Daily Sentinel*, circa 1911.

¹⁹⁵"Glade Park Road One of Scenic Grandeur," *Daily Sentinel*, 26 December 1911.

beauty," indicating that, from the start, the road served a dual purpose.¹⁹⁶ Although Otto started blasting for the road in January, 1912, it was not clear how much construction could take place before the limited funding ran out.¹⁹⁷

In January, 1913, Otto wrote to the Commissioner of the General Land Office hoping to secure money for additional construction:

The world's greatest driveway shall be built on the top of the shelfrocks overlooking the National Monuments named after our great men in history. We hope that the department can recommend to congress an appropriation be made; Congressman E.T. Taylor has a bill on the calendar I believe.¹⁹⁸

A report filed by the General Land Office echoed Otto's belief about the importance of a road through the park. General Land Office employee J.E. Connolly stated that, "unless some money is expended on the building of such a road or trail as will enable the ordinary citizen to wander at some convenience through it," the Colorado National Monument would probably not "become of great public interest" any time soon.¹⁹⁹ Connolly concluded his report by suggesting an appropriation of \$300 for a caretaker's residence, and \$800 for the "purpose of constructing roads or trails to the monument."²⁰⁰ The request appears to have been denied.

The politics of road building had a strong impact on the success of this road proposal. Otto and the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce maintained a stormy relationship during these years. Competition between Otto's Union Trail, which the chamber felt was a "hopeless" endeavor, and the chamber's Midland Trail created a rift in the relationship. Otto believed that his route through the plateau country of Pinon Mesa was far more scenic than the chamber's Midland route that ran from Grand Junction through the desert to Utah. The chamber at first supported Otto's route, and then publicly denounced it. In Otto's assessment, the chamber was a "tin-horn road organization, automobile crazy beyond all hope."²⁰¹ At one point he even threatened to quit his work on the Rimrock Route.

Despite these differences, the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce took an active interest in constructing a scenic route through the park. When Otto's exhaustive requests for appropriations continually failed, the chamber began its own campaign to gain support from the General Land Office and the Secretary of the Interior via Congressman Taylor. In January,

¹⁹⁶"Says Road Can be Built for \$6500," *Daily Sentinel*, 25 January 1912.

¹⁹⁷"Otto Ready to Start Work on Park Highway," *Daily Sentinel*, 15 December 1911.

¹⁹⁸Letter, John Otto to Commissioner General Land Office, 22 January 1913.

¹⁹⁹Letter, J.E. Connolly, Special Agent General Land Office, to Commissioner General Land Office, 22 November 1913.

²⁰⁰Ibid.

²⁰¹Kania, *John Otto of Colorado National Monument*, p. 87.

1915, the chamber wrote to Taylor requesting an appropriation for the construction of a 25-mile road through the park "that would surpass in scenic attractions any other road in Colorado."²⁰² Whether or not the plans for this road extended beyond Otto's route for the Glade Park/Rimrock Road is not known. The chamber estimated that \$25,000 "would complete it fit for motor travel."²⁰³ A "national park committee" consisting of people appointed to "have charge of the affairs of the park" who planned to "assist the government and the community" in developing the Colorado National Monument, was also created by the chamber.²⁰⁴ Taylor's response was not positive. His attempts to acquire appropriations had failed, and he knew that it would be impossible to obtain any money from Congress for road building.

The *Daily Sentinel* also joined in the "road fever" by waging a fierce campaign during the fall of 1916 to promote the park and raise money for its development. Offering \$25 toward park improvements, the *Sentinel* appealed to citizens of Mesa County to do their part:

If our people would take hold of this proposition, properly fence it, add some conveniences, widen and strengthen John Otto's wonderful trails, improve the roads from the city to the canyon and do a consistent and effective amount of advertising, we believe that in a comparatively short time the Monument Park would attract as many tourists each summer as the Garden of the Gods.²⁰⁵

The Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, the local women's club, the county commissioners, and even the Rio Grande Railroad responded to the newspaper's plea by organizing fund raisers, publicity opportunities, and actively improving the park. May 2, 1916, was declared "Good Roads Day," a time for local "businessmen, professional men, laborers, and everybody else" to work on an approach road to the Colorado National Monument's east end.²⁰⁶ In early November, 1916, a meeting was called in which George Bullock, chairman of the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, was put in charge of the "Monument Park Development." With a donation of \$100 to \$200 from the *Sentinel*, this group hoped to "develop the park, trim the trees, erect a small rest room, [and] place benches under the trees."²⁰⁷

The road through the park was the most important element of the committee's proposed development plan. By December, 1916, the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce Monument

²⁰²Letter, L. Antles, Secretary Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, to Edward T. Taylor, 23 January 1915.

²⁰³Ibid.

²⁰⁴Ibid.

²⁰⁵"Monument Park Should be Developed; Let's Do It Now," *Daily Sentinel*, 10 November 1916.

²⁰⁶"Work Roads on May 2 Scheme," *Daily Sentinel*, 25 April 1916.

²⁰⁷"Monument Park Development to be Considered at Meeting," *Daily Sentinel*, 11 November 1916.

Park Road committee had mapped a route through the park that, again, was most likely parallel to, or part of, Otto's earlier survey for the Glade Park/Rimrock Road.²⁰⁸

Other groups joined the push for the road as well. The general passenger agent of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, Frank Wadleigh, commented that a road through the park would attract more tourists.²⁰⁹ The Mesa County commissioners were approached by a committee including John Otto and other promoters to request that the approach roads to the park be maintained.²¹⁰ Glade Park ranchers even agreed to pledge \$1500 for the construction of "John Otto's Rimrock" provided the county commissioners would also supply funds. Tired of the poor road conditions from Glade Park to Grand Junction, they were willing to contribute labor and money for an improved route, even if it happened to be a scenic road.²¹¹ By this time, George Bullock of the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce planned to travel to Washington to "plea for aid for the Monument National Park" with National Park Service Director Stephen Mather.²¹² Unfortunately, like most attempts to acquire funds for park improvements, this too was unsuccessful.

In June, 1917, the United States entered World War I, a conflict that interrupted local financing of road projects in the park but eventually contributed to road building efforts in the Grand Valley. Throughout 1917 and 1918, there was very little newspaper publicity regarding the road. The Grand Junction *Daily Sentinel* reported on a few of Otto's schemes, but its campaign to develop the park was nonexistent. By the middle of 1918, however, western Colorado was suggested as an appropriate spot for an internment camp for German prisoners-of-war. The Germans housed there would be an ideal labor force for the building of roads throughout the Grand Valley. Roads were needed to "help the government win the war" by providing routes for the transportation of produce and other goods from the Grand Valley to other regions.²¹³ In support of the idea of prisoner-of-war labor, Otto wrote to Congressman Taylor and revived the issue of a road through the park: "what good will a national park be to us unless there are the proper highways to connect up to it?"²¹⁴

After the war, the community revived its efforts to build a decent route to Glade Park that would also serve as a scenic road through the park. Years of unsuccessful road proposals and failed attempts to acquire government support for the road prompted community members

²⁰⁸"Map Monument Park Road Out," *Daily Sentinel*, 16 December 1916.

²⁰⁹"Monument Park Campaign Given Boost by Wadleigh," *Daily Sentinel*, 2 December 1916.

²¹⁰"Monument Park Development Work Gaining Impetus Daily," *Daily Sentinel*, 16 November 1916.

²¹¹"Can Raise \$1500 for Park Road," *Daily Sentinel*, 18 December 1916.

²¹²"Monument Plea is Taken to Washington," *Daily Sentinel*, 13 December 1916.

²¹³"Teller Institute Should be Alien Detention Camp," *Grand Junction Daily News*, 10 June 1918.

²¹⁴*Ibid.*

to take matters into their own hands. In July, 1919, G.F. Hinton approached the Mesa County commissioners with a petition signed by 60 residents of Glade Park who offered nearly \$800 for the construction of a road. Clearly not interested in the proposal, the commissioners did not address the road idea until July, 1920, when Glade Park residents submitted yet another petition. This time, however, the residents stated that they would furnish \$5200 for the construction. The county agreed to this, provided that it was not obligated to begin the road until the money was raised.²¹⁵

A series of meetings between the county commissioners and local residents led to the eventual construction of a road, that probably began where construction on the original Glade Park Road had ended. In September, 1920, Glade Park rancher and engineer Bruce Claybaugh agreed to survey No Thoroughfare Canyon's road-building potential. Otto met with the county commissioners to suggest his Union Trail as a possible route. Eventually, the commissioners requested that Claybaugh survey both No Thoroughfare and the Union Trail. In November, the commissioners advertised bids for road construction on both routes. No one responded to the advertisement until December, and even then, only two contractors submitted bids. Contractor W. Wear proposed to construct the road for two dollars per cubic yard of material, while J.S. Shaw stated that he could build the road for an overall sum of \$14,500, or for one-and-a-third dollars per cubic yard of material. On December 10, the county awarded the contract to J.S. Shaw.²¹⁶

Even though it hired Shaw, the county still insisted that Glade Park raise \$5200, or its equivalent in escrow, before construction began. In January Glade Park residents collected \$5,375, and promised an additional \$200 to \$300. In February, the county directed the road supervisor to assemble a volunteer work force from Glade Park.²¹⁷ The county worked on the lower end of the proposed road and the ranchers started work in the higher elevations.²¹⁸ The road itself wound through difficult terrain:

The man who does not understand engineering may well take off his hat to the engineer who has the possibility of an auto road to such a spot. It is about 300 ft. straight up in the air from the bottom to the rimrock and underneath the foot there is nothing but solid rock with great canons on either side.²¹⁹

Local volunteers proceeded to work on the road. Work on the road was carried out by local volunteers. A "gang of men" under the direction of Claybaugh began blasting despite concerns about the route's difficulty. Claybaugh dismissed these concerns by stating that most

²¹⁵Tom Hutchins, "A History of the Glade Park Road Controversy," *Fruita Times*, 3 October 1984, p. 29.

²¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 32.

²¹⁷*Ibid.*

²¹⁸"New Glade Park Road," *Daily Sentinel*, 13 January 1921.

²¹⁹*Ibid.*

of the work would be done on sandstone that yielded easily to dynamite. The total estimated cost of the road was \$12,000.²²⁰ All of the work on the road—drilling, blasting, rock hauling—was done by hand.²²¹ The county formally organized the Glade Park ranchers and paid them \$2.50 a day until April, when poor economic conditions forced wages down to 40 cents a day. The final cost of the road was \$3,165, which the county paid to J.S. Shaw in July, 1921.²²²

Known as the Serpents Trail, the road was significant for a number of reasons. With its 52 switchbacks, the physical reality of the road was awesome.²²³ It was 19 feet wide, with room for two cars to pass, and only one blind turn. By 1925, when it was done, hundreds of people had driven up and down its winding "serpentine" path.²²⁴ At this time, only the upper 2½-mile portion of the road lay within park boundaries; the rest of the road was eventually considered a county route.

The Serpents Trail, like most of the early road proposals, served a dual purpose. It was used twice a year by Glade Park ranchers as a stock driveway to Grand Junction, and as a general transportation route between Glade Park and Grand Junction.²²⁵ The road considerably shortened the distance between the Pinon Mesa/Glade Park region and the stockyards in Grand Junction. To Otto and the future of the Colorado National Monument, however, the Serpents Trail was more than just a county road. It represented the first successful attempt to make the wonders of the park accessible to visitors. Otto already envisioned that the Serpents Trail would continue "around all the rims of the various canons of the Colorado National Monument and beyond."²²⁶ Neither Otto nor local residents could envision, however, that this narrow road would cause the trouble it did once the park was fully developed, and community needs shifted.

Additionally, the construction of Serpents Trail shaped local perceptions of the National Park Service. Even though a portion of it ran through the national monument, the road was entirely funded by private and county dollars. The Park Service contributed nothing to this project. Consequently, local residents felt that the Park Service was not doing its part to develop the park, which was true. W.M Wood of the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce

²²⁰Ibid.

²²¹Loyd Files, Interview by Lisa M. Schoch, 19 August 1992, Grand Junction.

²²²Hutchins, "A History of the Glade Park Controversy," p. 32.

²²³See Figures 3.1 and 3.2.

²²⁴Kania, *John Otto of Colorado National Monument*, p. 93.

²²⁵Memorandum, Breyton Finch, 21 September 1946.

²²⁶Kania, *John Otto of Colorado National Monument*, pp. 91, 93.

wrote to the Director of the National Park Service in 1923, clearly disgusted with government inaction:

All money spent on this Monument to date, with the exception of a very small amount, has been raised by public subscription and from the Chamber of Commerce funds and we feel that we have developed it to such a stage that the Government should be willing to pay something toward its maintenance and upkeep.²²⁷

The construction of Serpents Trail served as a catalyst for continued road building through the park. In 1926, the idea for a road connecting the western and eastern ends of Colorado National Monument emerged. Fruita's mayor, Frank Merriell, requested Park Service aid in constructing a road from town to Fruita Canyon. Because 2½ miles of this road remained outside park boundaries, the Park Service replied that it could only fund the stretch of road within the park provided an estimate was sent.²²⁸ The Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce developed this Fruita road proposal further by suggesting to the Park Service that the road be extended through the park to connect with the Serpent's Trail to create a complete "highway around the rim."²²⁹ A road between Fruita Canyon on the far western end of the park and the Serpent's Trail on the eastern end would span the entire park. In August 1926, A.E. Demaray, Acting Director of the National Park Service, arranged for an inspection of the proposed road so that a "recommendation could be made to the Director regarding inclusion of it as a project in a further National Park Service road program."²³⁰ By this time, however, citizens of Fruita were exasperated with bureaucracy. They did not support Merriell's road around the rimrocks, believing that the continued push for roads up to Fruita Canyon was a waste of time and money. More effort, they stated, should be directed toward enlarging the Fruita reservoirs and repairing the Fruita water pipeline on Pinon Mesa that supplied the city's water.²³¹ Yet, despite the initial lack of enthusiasm, this road idea eventually gained both local and federal support.

²²⁷Letter, W.M. Wood, Secretary of Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, to Director National Park Service, 10 March 1923.

²²⁸Letter, A.E. Demaray, Acting Director National Park Service, to Frank Merriell, 7 May 1926.

²²⁹Letter, W.M. Wood, Secretary Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce to A.E. Demaray, Acting Director National Park Service, 15 May 1926.

²³⁰Letter, A.E. Demaray, to L.I. Howes, Chief Engineer Bureau, 24 August 1926.

²³¹"Endorsed For Custodian," *Daily Sentinel*, February 1927.



Figure 3.1. Aerial view of Serpent's Trail (right) and Rimrock Drive (left). Colorado National Monument Museum and Archive Collection.



Figure 3.2. Car ascending Serpents Trail. Colorado National Monument Museum and Archive Collection.

Park Administration and Otto's Ouster

The way in which the Colorado National Monument was administered increased frustrations in local park promoters and in those local residents resistant to park regulations. Otto, the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, and the National Park Service had responsibility at one time or another for running the park. Nevertheless, it seemed as if the local community actually administered the park, while the Park Service exercised an absentee role in the park's administration. Otto and the chamber of commerce inspired people to contribute time and money for the park's development, while the General Land Office and eventually the National Park Service advised Otto and the chamber of commerce regarding law enforcement, appropriations and the overall development of the park as a tourist attraction. What emerged was the feeling that the local community, because of its tireless contribution to the roads and other park projects, had earned the right to a certain amount of authority over park activities.

The dynamics between Otto, the chamber of commerce and the National Park Service reveal that, during most of the "Otto Years," local disenchantment increased. As early as 1913, a report submitted to the General Land Office indicated that the park's future did not look bright:

Under instructions of Chief Field Division, while in Grand Junction in October 1913, I made an examination of the Colorado National Monument, interviewed John Otto, the caretaker, and have the honor to report that since the establishment of this monument by proclamation May 24, 1911, practically nothing has been done there.²³²

Nothing had been done, because at that time there was no single agency to administer the national parks. When the Colorado National Monument was established in 1911, different government agencies, including the General Land Office and the War Department administered national park lands. Consequently, a consistent park policy failed to emerge. This made it easy for each Secretary of the Interior—who exercised ultimate authority over each park—to implement his own agenda. Inconsistent park policy eventually inclined park advocates to push for the organization of an agency that assured a standard of regulations for all parks.²³³ The Antiquities Act of 1906 frustrated attempts to administer national monuments in any uniform manner. Instead of assigning one agency to administer all national monuments, Congress simply left the parks under the authority of the bureaus originally in control of those areas. In 1911, of the 28 national monuments, 13 were administered by the Forest Service, and 15 were under the auspices of the Department of the Interior. As a result, many national monuments, such as the one in Colorado, suffered from inadequate and poor management.²³⁴

Unfortunately, even after the National Park Service Act was signed in August, 1916 by Woodrow Wilson, the status of national monuments remained the same. The Park Service was a "separate government agency committed solely to park management and protection."²³⁵ This meant that it remained under the control of the Department of the Interior but that the Secretary of the Interior no longer had direct control over each park. Many national monuments, however, were still left under the authority of the Forest Service and the War Department until the 1930s.²³⁶ This, along with the fact that the newly established Park Service had only a \$20,000 appropriation with which to work, aggravated any local attempts to develop the national monuments.²³⁷

Between 1911 and 1927, the chamber of commerce, the county, and other local sources had invested \$40,000-\$45,000 in the Colorado National Monument. This included financing road proposals, the purchase of elk and bison for the game preserve, and subsidizing Otto's

²³²Letter, Connolly to Commissioner General Land Office, 22 November 1913.

²³³Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience*, 2d ed., (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), p. 97.

²³⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.

²³⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 95-96.

²³⁶*Ibid.*, p. 102.

²³⁷Jenks Cameron, *The National Park Service: Its History, Activities, and Organizations* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1922), p. 43.

monthly \$1 salary with an extra \$25 per month.²³⁸ Between 1920 and 1928, the chamber alone contributed \$2500 to the park's needs. W.M. Wood, Secretary of the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, referred to the Monument as "perhaps the most unique of Government properties in that it has been financed almost entirely by local capital."²³⁹ Cynicism toward the federal government, specifically the National Park Service, already infused the local attitude. One of the Park Service's biggest mistakes at this time was either its inability or lack of interest in becoming more involved in the Colorado National Monument. The Park Service's absentee role only reinforced the belief that the local community was in charge of the park.

Perhaps the communities of Grand Junction, Fruita, and Glade Park were not aware that, although the Park Service became an agency in 1916, it was not equipped to appropriate vast sums of money for all parks. Between 1917 and 1922, only \$75,500 was expended on all national monuments. The Colorado National Monument received very little of this.²⁴⁰ The government was only able to supply two appropriations of \$400 each for fencing between 1920 and 1928.²⁴¹ The Park Service's lack of support for Colorado National Monument during its first decade was not a sign of its apathy; rather, it was indicative of the Park Service's lack of funding in general.

Lack of Park Service funds was not the only local frustration. Over the years, Otto's and the chamber's efforts to convince officials in Washington to visit the Colorado National Monument were unsuccessful. Otto had written numerous letters to various officials, including the Director of the National Park Service, Stephen Mather, and his assistant Horace Albright, urging them to visit the park. His attempts were largely unsuccessful.

Otto's role in the development of the Monument, however, was soon to be extinguished. As early as 1924, officials in Washington, tired of his incessant letters, began to put them into "files unanswered."²⁴² In July, 1926, Otto's relations with local officials worsened as well. Fruita's Mayor Merriell wrote to the Acting Assistant Director of the National Park Service, A.E. Demaray, to express a common complaint with Otto and his ideas:

²³⁸Letter, R.A. Ross, President Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce to A.E. Demaray, Acting Director National Park Service, 7 January 1927.

²³⁹Letter, W.M. Wood, Secretary of Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, to Senator Lawrence Phipps, 13 December 1928.

²⁴⁰Cameron, *The National Park Service*, p. 43.

²⁴¹Letter, Wood to Phipps, 13 December 1928.

²⁴²Letter, A.E. Demaray, Administrative Assistant National Park Service, to Frank Pinkley, Superintendent Southwestern Monuments, 22 October 1924.

Mr. Otto has a great many ideas some of them good about the Monument, but I am sorry to say that the rest of us do not always understand all of them and frequently do not agree with them when we do.²⁴³

Merriell also explained that Otto had been subsidized by the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce at \$25 per month but had shown few signs of actually making progress with his projects. Despite Otto's obvious dedication to the park, Merriell suggested that it was time for a "new program."²⁴⁴

The Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce joined the effort to relieve Otto of his duties. In January, 1927, the president of the chamber wrote to the National Park Service stating that Otto had "served his purpose as custodian" and that his poor judgement threatened the future of the Colorado National Monument. He also explained that the chamber had a "very deep interest in this Monument" and that it recommended Merriell to replace Otto.²⁴⁵ Park Service officials began to heed the chamber's advice, and they agreed that Otto was "certainly not the type of man we should have representing the National Park Service."²⁴⁶

On January 22, 1927, Merriell was offered the custodianship and the ouster of Otto was complete. When Otto learned of this, he reacted with indignation:

I heard this moment that I am to be supplanted by another man. You can't send him along any too quick. I don't give a whoop whom you do appoint.²⁴⁷

Otto's bitterness grew when he learned that Merriell, who he felt had "no national park kick in him" was offered the custodianship. Otto resented Merriell for his endorsement of the Midland Trail, which competed with Otto's Union Trail. He also lashed out at Fruita, a town that had not "contributed a cent in the last ten years toward this monument."²⁴⁸ On February 23, 1927, the Park Service officially terminated Otto as custodian of the Colorado National Monument. Otto did what he could to fight the decision. He continued to protest Merriell's appointment: "I've done my own engineering on all my trails, fences, etc., and I didn't need him over me whatever ... he is not very popular among his own people in Fruita"²⁴⁹ When Otto finally

²⁴³Letter, Frank C. Merriell, to A.E. Demaray, Acting Assistant Director National Park Service, 1 July 1926.

²⁴⁴Kania, *John Otto of Colorado National Monument*, p. 119.

²⁴⁵Letter, Ross to Demaray, 7 January 1927.

²⁴⁶Letter, A.E. Demaray to A.B. Cammerer, 12 January 1927.

²⁴⁷Letter, John Otto to Arno B. Cammerer, Acting Director National Park Service, 10 February 1927.

²⁴⁸Letter, John Otto to Arno B. Cammerer, Acting Director National Park Service, 14 February 1927; Letter, John Otto to Arno B. Cammerer, Acting Director National Park Service, 19 February 1927.

²⁴⁹Letter, John Otto to A.E. Demaray, 2 April 1927.

decided to abandon his crusade against the Park Service, he insisted that he did not have time for government positions anyway because he was "going into politics." He then organized his own "Colorado River Basin Chamber of Commerce" to further develop his interests in the Grand Valley.²⁵⁰ His final assessment of his contribution to the park was, as always, to the point: "I believe it is safe to say that if it hadn't been for me the Colorado National Monument would today be a 'stinking sheep dump'—I have saved this much for humanity so far."²⁵¹

By the end of Otto's custodianship, the National Park Service and the local community enjoyed a cooperative relationship. Even the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce established a working relationship with the Park Service. Both the chamber and the mayor of Fruita asserted enough control to convince National Park officials that Otto was unfit to serve as custodian. At the same time they emphasized their "deep interest" in the park. It was evident that a shift from the visionary plans of John Otto to the "new program" of Grand Junction community leaders was taking place. The role of the Monument was changing as well. With the construction of the Serpent's Trail, and new plans for a more extensive route across the park, public use of the Colorado National Monument was sure to increase.

The Chamber of Commerce and its New Program, 1927-1931

Between 1927 and 1930, the Colorado National Monument underwent a number of significant administrative changes that signalled increased National Park Service involvement. Although Otto stated that he had no further interest in the Colorado National Monument, he continued to grace the National Park Service with his opinions and suggestions. In the meantime, the National Park Service searched for a suitable custodian for the Colorado National Monument. After all of the turbulence surrounding Otto's dismissal, Frank Merriell was not appointed custodian. Park Service officials seemed to think that he would accept the position right after Otto's ouster. Merriell, however, expressed on several occasions that, before he accepted the job, he wanted members of the chamber of commerce to meet with Otto and "tactfully bring to his attention the need for a change."²⁵² The problem of actually eliminating Otto's interference seemed to exacerbate the effort to hire a new custodian. It is not clear if Merriell felt threatened by Otto, but the fact that he never accepted the position indicates that this was a possibility.

By April, 1927, Grand Junction businessman A.T. Gormley had been offered the custodianship with the assurance that Otto was no longer affiliated with the Monument.²⁵³ Otto seemed satisfied with this choice, and had at an earlier point even recommended Gormley as a

²⁵⁰Letter, John Otto to Arno B. Cammerer, Acting Director National Park Service, 12 February 1927.

²⁵¹Letter, John Otto to Stephen Mather, Director National Park Service, 1 March 1927.

²⁵²Letter, Arno B. Cammerer, Acting Director National Park Service to R.A. Ross, President Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, 11 February 1927.

²⁵³Letter, Arno B. Cammerer, Acting Director National Park Service, to A.T. Gormley, 29 April 1927.

possible candidate for the job.²⁵⁴ Gormley accepted, and attempted to resume Otto's interrupted plans for fencing the park. The National Park Service appropriated \$400 for fencing materials. In August of that year, however, plans for the park were once again interrupted when Gormley resigned. Otto took the opportunity to remind the Park Service that since he had been "bucked out" nothing had been done to improve the Colorado National Monument. He also pointed out that Gormley had been too impatient and ill-prepared to handle some of the physical tasks necessary for the custodianship.²⁵⁵

The resignation of Gormley left the National Park Service and local park promoters in a familiar quandry. Park Service officials were faced with the challenge of finding a "local representative" to manage the Monument's affairs, since it still was not able to finance a full-time employee at the park. Otto expressed his interest in the position, but the Park Service was not willing to reappoint him. Instead, they suggested that perhaps Otto, working under the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, might manage the park.²⁵⁶ By late October, 1927, the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce had officially accepted the responsibility of administering the Colorado National Monument. Of course the Park Service still exercised ultimate authority over the park's development.²⁵⁷

The chamber's new position of authority persuaded Park Service officials and politicians to consider constructing a road through the Colorado National Monument. While the Serpents Trail was certainly better than no road at all, it did not access some of the park's more outstanding features. Due to increasing tourist levels and the chamber's increasing embarrassment over the Monument's lack of facilities, it requested an appropriation of \$5,000 from Colorado Senator Lawrence Phipps for the construction of a smaller road from the edge of Monument Canyon to Independence Monument.²⁵⁸ It was hoped that a road across the park could also be constructed eventually. The larger road spanning the park would cost an estimated \$50,000, and was necessary if the Colorado National Monument was ever to reach its potential as a tourist attraction:

The difficulty in making available the features of the area has been the lack of a highway leading into it. People come here from all sections of the United States with the object

²⁵⁴Letter, John Otto to A.E. Demaray, Acting Assistant Director National Park Service, 10 May 1927.

²⁵⁵Letter, John Otto to Stephen Mather, Director National Park Service, 17 October 1927; Letter, John Otto to Arno B. Cammerer, Assistant Director National Park Service, 20 October 1927.

²⁵⁶Letter, A.E. Demaray, Acting Director National Park Service, to W.M. Wood, Secretary Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, 24 October 1927.

²⁵⁷Letter, A.E. Demaray, Acting Director National Park Service, to W.M. Wood, Secretary Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, 3 November 1927.

²⁵⁸Letter, W.M. Wood, Secretary Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, to A.E. Demaray Acting Director National Park Service, 1 March 1928.

of seeing the Monument, only to find that although good roads lead to its boundary at various places, to actually see it requires an uncomfortable trip by horseback or foot.²⁵⁹

Senator Phipps responded by urging the National Park Service to consider the road proposals.²⁶⁰ In March, 1928, the Park Service requested that its Chief Engineer, F.A. Kittredge, visit the Monument to survey the proposed road plans for both the trans-Monument route and the shorter road through Monument Canyon.²⁶¹ Kittredge eventually inspected the Colorado National Monument twice. The second inspection, in August, 1930, was the most beneficial to the park's road development plan. A tentative appropriation of \$2500 was offered after Kittredge made his inspection and recommended that contract work commence on the road around the rim of the park.²⁶² The money would only be available, however, if the road was built according to National Park guidelines and if the county was willing to build approach roads to the park.²⁶³

In the summer of 1930, the local community conducted some of its own surveys of the road proposal. In June, the chamber of commerce sent two engineers to survey a proposed "auto trail from the top of the Trail of the Serpent leading northward to take in as many of the canyons as possible."²⁶⁴ Another group, including W.M. Wood of the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, and Al Look of the *Daily Sentinel* conducted an inspection of the road site in August. The result of this inspection was a local commitment to planning and financing the new road. The \$2500 appropriation encouraged the chamber of commerce and the county to provide the additional expenses necessary for construction. The chamber agreed to conduct a proper survey, and to open construction to competitive bidding with the expectation that the county would be the low bidder.²⁶⁵

The \$2500 appropriation symbolized progress to the local community. Ever since the chamber began its most recent campaign for a scenic route through the park, the hope for

²⁵⁹Letter, W.M. Wood, Secretary Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, to Senator Lawrence Phipps, 13 December 1928.

²⁶⁰Senator Lawrence Phipps (issued by), "Improve Colorado National Monument," *Washington Weekly Newsletter*, 10 March 1928.

²⁶¹Letter, A.E. Demaray, Acting Director National Park Service, to Chief Engineer National Park Service, 5 March 1928.

²⁶²Telegram, A.E. Demaray to W.M. Wood, 14 August 1930.

²⁶³"\$2500 Available For Scenic Road in National Monument West of City," November 1930, (photocopy), National Archives Record Group 79, Colorado National Monument Museum and Archive Collection.

²⁶⁴Letter, W.M. Wood, Secretary Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, to A.E. Demaray, Acting Associate, 27 June 1930.

²⁶⁵F.A. Kittredge, Chief Engineer National Park Service, "Conference and Inspection of Proposed Road Activities, Colorado National Monument, Grand Junction, Colorado," 13 August 1930.

government funding had been slim. Park Service officials had originally planned for an appropriation from the 1930 budget.²⁶⁶ This hope was dashed when in April, 1929, the Director of the National Park Service, Horace Albright, advised Senator Phipps that the 1930 Interior Department Appropriation Bill for national park and monument roads and trails had been cut.²⁶⁷ Albright underestimated available funds. It is not clear if the money was left over from the 1930 appropriation, but \$2500 was allotted and authorized by Albright for the proposed road. By April, 1931, another \$5000 had been allocated by the National Park Service for the Colorado National Monument.²⁶⁸

Despite the appropriation, the uncertain relationship between the chamber and the county threatened to obstruct plans to start the road through the park. A disagreement arose when the county officials decided to expend less than the chamber of commerce had thought it would on the road. In his assessment of the situation, Park Service Engineer Kittredge stated that, because of the seriousness of this misunderstanding, the appropriation might be more productively used elsewhere. He also suggested that the Park Service make a "reconnaissance" of the possible routes in the spring of 1931, and complete a survey of the stretch of road to be constructed. Kittredge felt that Park Service involvement might appease both local factions, although he knew that the county's willingness to construct an approach road to the park was essential to the project.²⁶⁹

By late 1930, it was evident that, while the local management of Colorado National Monument was still strong, the National Park Service had begun to involve itself more heavily in the affairs of the park. The chamber of commerce still managed the park with the aid of Otto, who had ostensibly been working for the chamber and claimed to have been the "acting custodian" since his "resignation" in January 1927.²⁷⁰ He resented the fact that the chamber received so much of the credit for the Monument's development, and still believed that his contribution to the park was more important.²⁷¹ With or without Otto's help, the chamber had effectively convinced National Park officials and politicians of the need for a road through the park, and in doing so had increased Park Service involvement. Both the National Park Service and the local communities of the Grand Valley were entering a new phase of their relationship.

²⁶⁶Ibid.

²⁶⁷Letter, Horace Albright, Director National Park Service, to Senator Lawrence Phipps, 9 February 1929.

²⁶⁸Letter, Arno B. Cammerer, Associate Director National Park Service, to John Otto, 20 May 1931.

²⁶⁹Letter, F.A. Kittredge, Chief Engineer National Park Service, to Director National Park Service, 5 November 1930.

²⁷⁰Letter, John Otto to A.E. Demaray, Acting Director National Park Service, 21 June 1929.

²⁷¹Letter, John Otto to A.E. Demaray, Acting Associate Director National Park Service, 1 April 1930.

Chapter Four

Construction of Rim Rock Drive: 1931-1950

The initial years of road construction in the Colorado National Monument occurred during the Great Depression. The 1929 collapse of the nation's economy affected nearly every aspect of American life. Businesses failed, farms were lost, unemployment increased and the average income decreased.²⁷⁰ In Colorado the depression developed more slowly. Because its economy was primarily based on agriculture, Colorado felt less of the economic downturn until after 1930. Unemployment increased and agricultural prices fell more slowly than elsewhere. Yet, by 1931, cities such as Denver and Pueblo experienced more unemployment. Rural Coloradans suffered and as agricultural prices dropped, they headed for the cities when they lost their farms. The environmental impact of the dust bowl and the decline of the economy, combined to force farmers to leave for the city.²⁷¹

The depression had a surprisingly less dismal effect on the National Park Service and congressional appropriations for park development. In 1930, appropriations increased by \$3 million. Tourist levels remained steady. Road construction was the one aspect of park development that received the most attention during the depression. Across the nation, various national parks, such as Rocky Mountain and the Grand Canyon, received grants for road construction. Road appropriations in 1931 expanded to include the improvement of approach roads to parks as well. That year, approximately \$100 million was appropriated for roads to and through national parks and monuments, including \$75000 for the Colorado National Monument.²⁷²

Road Construction, 1931-1933

Between 1931 and 1933, local and federal involvement in the Colorado National Monument occurred simultaneously. Once the \$7500 appropriation was available to the Colorado National Monument, the National Park Service and the local community immediately planned for the initial construction of the road through the park. In the first week of November 1931, Park Service engineer T.W. Secrest conducted a reconnaissance of the Colorado National Monument in which he developed and submitted road surveys to the Washington office for

²⁷⁰Richard S. Kirkendall, *The United States 1929-1945: Years of Crisis and Change* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1974), pp. 5-12.

²⁷¹Mark Waldman, "1930 Employment 1980," in *1930 Employment 1980: Humanistic Perspectives On The Civilian Conservation Corps In Colorado*, ed. Thomas Lyons, (Boulder: Colorado Humanities Program, 1981), pp. 61-64.

²⁷²Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, pp. 326-27.

approval.²⁷³ The reconnaissance consisted of eight days spent "studying and traversing the monument and approach roads."²⁷⁴ Part of this survey included the pipe line road leading up to Fruita Canyon on the park's west side. County officials stated that they would improve this road, "thus making a connection with a county highway leading from the trail of the Serpent."²⁷⁵ County officials also offered to "furnish any equipment they had idle" for the construction of the road.²⁷⁶

The Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce influenced the course chosen for the road. It wanted a road from which people could view the more impressive of the park's features from their automobiles. This route was more expensive because it required cutting through more cliffs, but eventually the Park Service agreed to it.²⁷⁷ The ultimate goal was to construct a complete loop from Grand Junction to Fruita via the Monument. The route stretched from the Serpents Trail through the Monument and eventually emerged in Fruita Canyon on the western end of the park. The original plan entailed construction of a "single-width highway of about twenty-four miles," which followed the approximate route of today's Rim Rock Drive.²⁷⁸

In addition to suggesting possible routes for the road, the chamber of commerce contributed funds and some labor to the National Park Service. Local funding of the road project, combined with Park Service appropriations, enabled early construction. The Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, working in conjunction with a presidential committee, expended funds acquired from local sources. Although the amount of funding was relatively small, it did contribute to the construction effort.²⁷⁹ The chamber requested federal emergency relief funds to reduce unemployment in the Grand Valley. It also suggested that the Park Service choose Secrest to head the road project.²⁸⁰ Taylor discussed the chamber's requests with Horace Albright. He tried to convince Albright that the initial construction should begin not just for the "expeditious development of the Monument" but also to "relieve

²⁷³Informal Memorandum, Jesse L. Nusbaum, Superintendent Colorado National Monument, to Mr. A.H. Furr, 22 November 1937.

²⁷⁴Monthly Report, T.W. Secrest to F.A. Kittredge, Chief Engineer National Park Service, 5 December 1931.

²⁷⁵Ibid.

²⁷⁶Ibid.

²⁷⁷Letter, F.A. Kittredge to Horace Albright, 9 November 1931.

²⁷⁸Informal Memorandum, Nusbaum to Furr, 22 November 1937, p. 1.

²⁷⁹Letter, L.W. Burgess, President of Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, to F.A. Kittredge, 21 November 1931.

²⁸⁰Telegram, W.M. Wood of Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce to Horace Albright, National Park Service Director, 7 November 1931.

unemployment."²⁸¹ Albright responded by stating that funds were not available for the construction of the entire road but that he would authorize funds for the first section of construction.²⁸²

Just weeks before construction began, the Park Service's plans were interrupted. During the second week of November, 1931, the chamber of commerce and county commissioners, anxious to start construction, authorized the beginning of work on the road to the Monument boundary. They even donated equipment to the cause.²⁸³ The National Park Service, however, wanted to postpone construction until a landscape architect evaluated the proposed routes. The Park Service also wanted a full description of the road project to be approved by its offices in San Francisco.²⁸⁴ When these issues were resolved, construction officially began on November 21, 1931.

The first section of construction, from Station 0+00 Section 1B to Station 83+00 Section 1B, was chosen for a number of reasons.²⁸⁵ The construction began near the center of the present Rim Rock Road, and headed west toward Fruita Canyon. The goal was to make the scenery of the Monument Canyon accessible to tourists as soon as possible, so construction started near the canyon rim. Monument Canyon contained the park's most outstanding physical features—the monoliths—but access to it was limited. Initiating the construction in this section was also important because it completed the loop from Grand Junction to Fruita. Because the Serpents Trail was already built on the east side of the park, it made sense to start where this road ended. According to this construction plan, part of the loop was already completed.²⁸⁶ During the first phase of construction, about 50 men from all over Mesa County were employed by the project, which provided some of the only work to the county's unemployed. The project benefitted local businesses, because workers had money to spend on goods and project officials purchased construction supplies from local stores.²⁸⁷

²⁸¹Telegram, Edward Taylor to Horace Albright, 8 November 1931.

²⁸²Telegram, Horace Albright to Edward Taylor, 9 November 1931.

²⁸³Telegram, A.E. Demaray to F.A. Kittredge, 10 November 1931.

²⁸⁴Telegram, Horace Albright to F.A. Kittredge, 12 November 1931.

²⁸⁵See Figure 4.1.

²⁸⁶T.W. Secrest, *Final Construction Report on Scenic Rim Rock Road Stations 210+00 to 370+00 Section 1B Account F.P. 95.8* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 15 March 1937), pp. 1-3.

²⁸⁷*News Aids—Warnings*, (Grand Junction: Chamber of Commerce, 15 December 1932), p. 2.

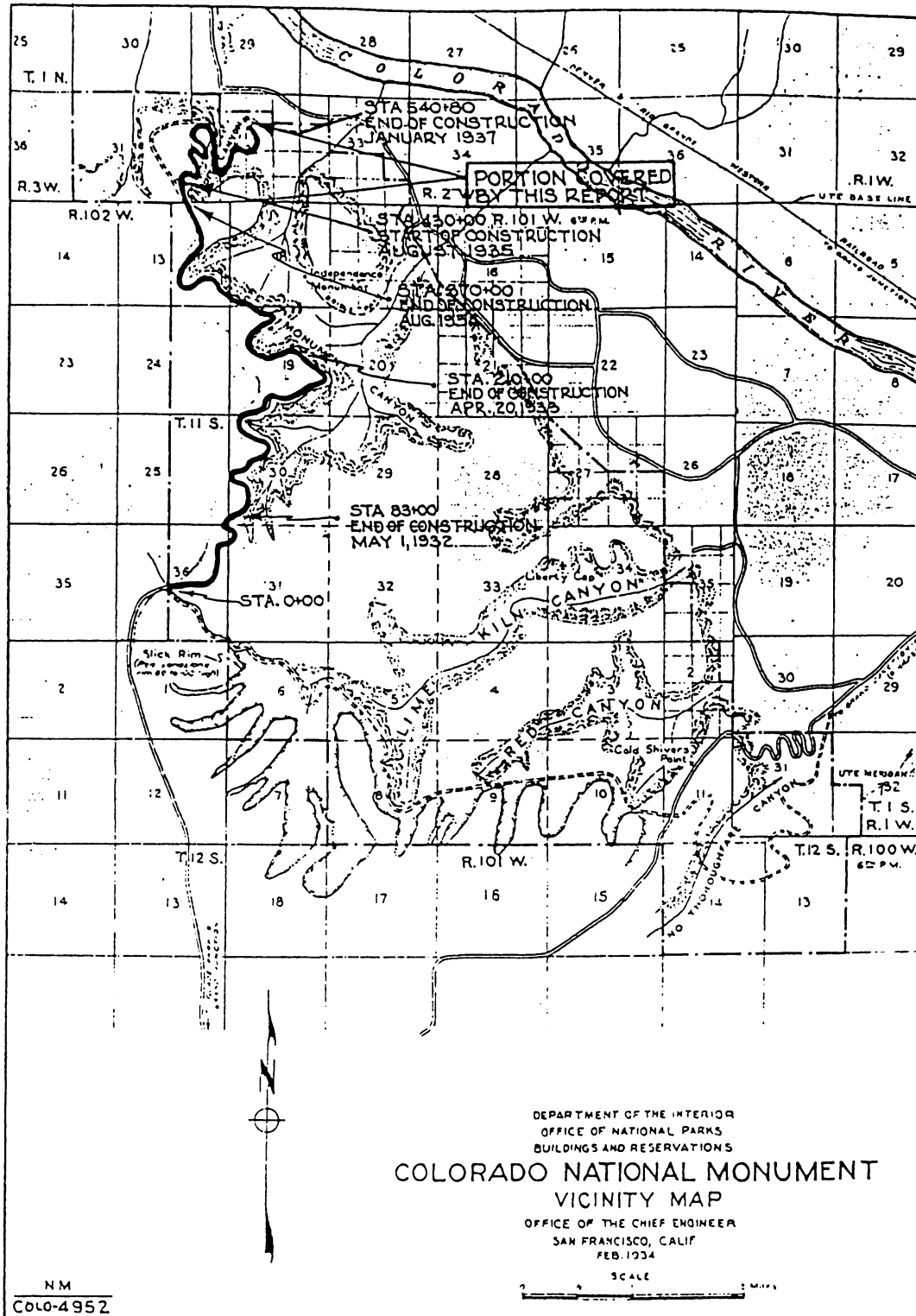


Figure 4.1. Progress of Construction on Rim Rock Drive. From T.W. Secret, "Final Construction Report on Scenic Rim Rock Road," 12 July 1937. Colorado National Monument Archive and Museum Collection.

Not everyone supported what was happening. Almost from the moment construction began, Otto found reasons to protest. He felt that the chosen route was a "half mile off course," and that construction should be halted until improvements were made. He was also concerned that the road would not conform with the scenery of the park.²⁸⁸ Otto intimated that local supporters of the Monument were kept in the dark regarding the use of funds.²⁸⁹ His real complaint seemed to be that the chosen route would damage the landscape in the Monument:

There is a shameful misuse of federal funds at the Colorado National Monument. Your tinhorn landscape engineers and the wild construction engineer (T.W. Secrest) and your Chief Engineer F.A. Kittredge should have the steam shovel around their necks and get sunk in the Pacific. You never went over and studied this project and the engineers did not either, and naturally things just 'went haywire'. Come here and 'face the music'! When you throw a rock through a plate glass window it is ruined-spoiled-wrecked, but you can send to the factory and get a new one. But real elegant fine scenery once torn into like they did here at this high class scenic project—makes it bad.²⁹⁰

Not surprisingly, Otto's complaints were disregarded by the local park promoters and by Park Service officials, who were pleased with how construction was progressing. When Secretary of the Interior Ray Lyman Wilbur responded to Otto, he explained that the Rim Rock Road project had been carefully planned according to Park Service regulations, and that one of the engineers' primary objectives was to consider the landscape during construction. He pointed out the importance of the road project to the local economy.²⁹¹ Thomas Vint, the Chief Landscape Architect of the project, was less diplomatic in his opinion of Otto. He contended that Otto's letters were "the work of the hand of a fanatic."²⁹²

Despite overwhelming disapproval, Otto continued to harass officials until the spring of 1933, when he left for Yreka, California. He never returned to the Colorado National Monument. A combination of factors contributed to his departure, but perhaps the most compelling of these was that during the 27 years that he had resided in the Grand Valley, his credibility with the local community and with the National Park Service had diminished. When he left, the Colorado National Monument was no longer the place he originally boosted. It was now officially recognized by the Park Service, and its development was taken seriously by that agency for the first time in its history.²⁹³

²⁸⁸Telegram, John Otto to Horace Albright, 25 November 1931.

²⁸⁹Letter, John Otto to Horace Albright, December 1931.

²⁹⁰Letter, John Otto to Horace Albright, 12 October 1932.

²⁹¹Letter, Ray Lyman Wilbur, Secretary of the Interior, to John Otto, 28 November 1932.

²⁹²Letter, Thomas C. Vint to A.E. Demaray, 14 December 1932.

²⁹³Kania, *John Otto of Colorado National Monument*, p. 135.

Along with Otto's complaints, the initial phase of road construction raised the more serious question of future funding—never a reliable factor. Between 1931 and 1933, financial support for the road was contingent upon yearly congressional appropriations. In February, 1932, Albright, anxious to supply funds for unemployment relief in the Grand Valley, assured the chamber that the National Park Service would secure an additional \$4000 to carry the project until the 1933 appropriation. After that, he wasn't sure if Congress would allot money out of the \$950,000 available for road construction.²⁹⁴ In March, 1932, Albright wrote to Congressman Taylor to discuss future funding. Estimating that it would take an additional \$192,000 to construct the remaining sections of road, he told Taylor that he thought he might be able to allot another \$15,000 to extend the road to the Coke Ovens area, but that money for the next section of road depended on the Roads and Trails appropriations for the year.²⁹⁵ Between November 21, 1931, and May 1, 1932, a total of \$17,474.52 was allotted by National Park Roads and Trails funds for the construction of the road. This amount included the initial allotment of \$7500 from the Park Service and \$1500 from the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce. In July, 1932, the additional \$15,000 was appropriated, followed by \$50,000 from an Emergency Relief Fund in August, 1932.²⁹⁶

Local funds also contributed to the road project. By June, 1932, the Mesa County Commissioners had expended a total of \$10,000 on the improvement of Serpents Trail and the construction of four miles of roadway from the Glade Park store to the Monument boundary where Secrest's road survey began. In a letter to the Park Service, the Chairman of the local Monument Park Committee, L.W. Burgess, observed that enthusiasm for the road project was widespread:

Hundreds of people are driving to the end of the road each week and it is our belief that when the road is completed the drive will be one of the most popular in any of your parks.²⁹⁷

Local and Park Service perspectives of the road project were similar. Both saw the importance of the project to unemployment, although the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce was more nervous about the possibility of interrupting the project due to lack of funds. Shortly after construction on the first section began, the chamber had already established its own "Emergency Committee for Employment," which contained a list of 700 potential workers. Members of the chamber often visited the project site, and had already begun a

²⁹⁴Letter, Horace Albright to L.W. Burgess, President Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, 29 February 1932.

²⁹⁵Letter, Horace Albright, Director National Park Service, to Edward T. Taylor, 16 March 1932.

²⁹⁶T.W. Secrest, *Final Construction Report Stations 210+00 to 370+00*, p. 1.

²⁹⁷Letter, L.W. Burgess, Chairman Monument Park Committee, to A.W. Burney, Acting Chief Engineer, National Park Service, 7 June 1932.

campaign urging local residents to "come here for the Monument Drive."²⁹⁸ The chamber of commerce estimated that in 1932 there were 18,000 visitors, and in 1933 there were 20,000 to the Colorado National Monument. Estimates such as these convinced both the local community and the National Park Service of the importance of continuing the road project.²⁹⁹

Support for the road project, however, extended beyond the chamber of commerce. Grand Junction lawyer Samuel McMullin wrote to Congressman Taylor in early 1933, expressing his appreciation for the road project's influence on economic conditions in the Grand Valley. He was especially impressed with T.W. Secrest's work:

... he has exercised a great deal of care in giving local destitute people employment on this work, going to the extent of staggering the work around so as to benefit the most number of people. Unfortunate and destitute ranchmen have been enabled through this work, to provide for the necessities in a considerable number and a good portion of the expenditures have been for labor. This has resulted in helping the small storekeeper, who is as necessary and needs as much assistance as anyone in these times.³⁰⁰

The Park Service also recognized the importance of the project, and appreciated the local attitude toward it, as is evidenced in a letter from Horace Albright to Congressman Taylor in early 1932:

Of course when we started this project this winter to help relieve conditions around Grand Junction we did not expect to go into it on such a large scale although I knew that we could not build roads in that country for the small amount of money which the local people were claiming the road would cost. However, we have such splendid cooperation from the local people and the road work has helped so tremendously in tiding men over this winter that we have felt obligated to go along with it just as far as we possibly could.³⁰¹

From 1931 to 1933, the local role in land acquisition for the park indicated that in addition to supporting the road project, local residents were also interested in expanding the park. There were two instances in which acquisition of lands outside Monument boundaries was deemed necessary to continue construction as planned. The first of these was the land surrounding the Fruita water pipeline that ran through Fruita Canyon to several reservoirs on Glade Park and provided the municipal water supply for Fruita. In late October, 1932, the town of Fruita agreed to supply water to the Monument during the construction for an annual

²⁹⁸Letter, W.M. Wood, Secretary Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, to F.A. Kittredge, Chief Engineer National Park Service, 16 February 1932.

²⁹⁹Telegram, W.M. Wood, Secretary Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, to National Park Service, 6 October 1932; Telegram, W.M. Wood, Secretary Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, to A.B. Cammerer, Director National Park Service, 5 October 1933.

³⁰⁰Letter, Samuel G. McMullin to Edward T. Taylor, 13 January 1933.

³⁰¹Letter, Horace Albright, Director National Park Service, to Edward T. Taylor, 16 March 1932.

fee of \$10.³⁰² In January, 1933, Fruita officials agreed to grant free use of water during the construction. They realized the importance of the project to their town and the surrounding communities and the necessity of their water to the project's success.³⁰³ Perhaps the pipeline's proximity to the Rim Rock Road prompted Fruita's eventual decision to donate the pipeline land to the Colorado National Monument. In a deed dated September 5, 1933, Fruita transferred the land but reserved "an easement for the maintenance and operation of a reservoir." The deed stated that the easement would not "interfere with the operations of the Monument."³⁰⁴

The community also acquired property in Fruita Canyon and No Thoroughfare Canyon that was considered necessary for road construction. Congressman Taylor was actively involved in this endeavor, and encouraged the Park Service to survey these lands. In an inspection of the Monument, Taylor found that in order to ensure proper grading for the road, portions of it would have to be constructed outside the boundary.³⁰⁵ Taylor felt a presidential proclamation was all that was needed to acquire the lands. Nevertheless, he feared that once people learned of this, they might file on it in order to sell it later for a high price.³⁰⁶

The Park Service agreed to submit a presidential proclamation for the land. In the meantime, the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce attempted to purchase certain privately owned portions of the property.³⁰⁷ One section of land that the chamber sought to acquire, owned by William Streb, was part of No Thoroughfare Canyon.³⁰⁸ The chamber stated that it would raise \$400 and requested that the Park Service pay the other half of the \$800 purchase price. The Park Service replied that it could not supply federal funds until a presidential proclamation was secured to include the Streb lands.³⁰⁹

³⁰²Letter, W.M. Wood, Secretary Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, to A.E. Demaray, Acting Director National Park Service, 6 October 1932.

³⁰³Letter, A.W. Burney, Assistant Chief Engineer, to Horace Albright, Director National Park Service, 9 January 1933.

³⁰⁴Memorandum, A.B. Cammerer, Director of National Park Service, to the Assistant Secretary of the Interior, 13 October 1933.

³⁰⁵Letter, Representative Edward Taylor to Horace Albright, Director of National Park Service, 20 October 1932.

³⁰⁶Letter, L.W. Burgess, Chairman Park Committee to Horace Albright, Director of National Park Service, 19 October 1932.

³⁰⁷Letter, A.B. Cammerer to Representative Edward Taylor, 26 October 1932; Letter, W.M. Wood Secretary Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, to Horace Albright, Director of National Park Service, 18 November 1932.

³⁰⁸Telegram, Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce to Horace Albright, Director of National Park Service, 18 November 1932.

³⁰⁹Letter, Horace Albright, Director of National Park Service, to W.M. Wood, Secretary Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, 26 November 1932.

While the National Park Service compromised with the chamber regarding privately owned lands, it also devised a plan to acquire former Ute treaty lands. Portions of the land that the Park Service wanted to acquire had once belonged to the Utes. Under the Ute Indian Treaty of 1880, this land was subject to a fee of \$1.25 per acre to be paid to the Ute Indians.³¹⁰ Congressman Taylor offered to introduce a bill in Congress that requested the \$1.25 per acre payment. This bill, and the chamber's purchases, were expected to convince officials in Washington of the need for a presidential proclamation.³¹¹ On March 1, 1933, the Secretary of the Interior, Ray Lyman Wilbur, submitted to the President of the United States a proclamation that suggested the following boundary changes:

This proposed proclamation amends the description of the Colorado National Monument so as to include additional scenic and scientific and other features. Also it extends the boundaries so as to include the Rim Road and other land to facilitate the administration of the monument. This proposed proclamation would add to the present monument approximately 3,800 acres. Of this area 3,089.74 acres are public lands and 200 acres are owned by the Town of Fruita for park purposes. The remaining land, approximately 500 acres, are in private ownership. However, the proclamation is made subject to all valid existing rights.³¹²

On March 3, 1933, President Herbert Hoover signed the proclamation, thus changing the Monument's boundaries. In the preface to the proclamation "the protection of the Rim Road" was cited as one of the reasons for the additions to the park.³¹³

From 1931 to 1933, the National Park Service benefitted from, and even relied on, local involvement in order to coordinate the first construction phase. Mutual local and Park Service needs resulted in cooperative interaction between these two parties. Yet, for the first time since the park was established, the Park Service had a physical presence in Colorado National Monument that began to erode direct local involvement in the park's planning and development.

Road Construction, 1933-1942

Between 1933 and 1942, a new phase of construction began with the establishment of the Civilian Conservation Corps and other federal work camps in and near Colorado National Monument. Overall, the CCC had an extraordinary impact on the National Park System. Plans for this work program began during the depression when unemployment rose 22 percent between 1929 and 1933. Unemployment among the nation's young men increased faster than overall unemployment. The "dust bowl" convinced many people that the nation's natural

³¹⁰Letter, A.E. Demaray, National Park Service, to F.A. Kittredge, Chief Engineer, 10 February 1933.

³¹¹Memorandum for the Director of the National Park Service, 23 February 1933.

³¹²Letter, Ray Lyman Wilbur, Secretary of Interior, to President Herbert Hoover, 1 March 1933.

³¹³President, Proclamation, "A Proclamation by the President of the United States," *Statutes at Large*, (3 March 1933), 47 *Stat.*, 158.

resources were being abused. Conservation programs had been instituted in some states already. While he was governor of New York, Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1929 convinced state legislators to pass county and state reforestation laws. By 1931, New York state legislators established an emergency relief administration, in which the unemployed were hired to do reforestation work, fight fires, construct roads and trails, and complete other jobs. In August, 1932, the Society of American Foresters discussed a similar program, in which men would work in national and state parks on various problems, including soil erosion, watershed protection, and road and trail construction. After Roosevelt's election in November, 1932, he requested that Chief Forester, Robert Y. Stuart, design a plan for the employment of 25,000 men in federally owned forests. The plan was never approved, but Roosevelt used it to design the CCC.³¹⁴

During his inaugural address on March 4, 1933, Roosevelt discussed the importance of preserving both human and natural resources in the country. By March 9, 1933, he had called a conference with members of his cabinet to discuss a program, in which the Army would recruit and supervise 500,000 men in work camps throughout the United States. According to this plan, the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior would oversee work projects assigned to the camps. A bill was drafted but was withdrawn from congressional consideration due to overall opposition and weaknesses in the plan. In March, 1933, the Roosevelt administration formulated a more precise bill, in which states received grants for relief, a broad public works program was initiated, and soil erosion and forestry programs were planned. Once the bill was submitted, Congress added its own conditions; in return for forest fire prevention, construction of roads and other work, men would receive room, board, a salary, and other benefits. Under this bill, which eventually became the Federal Unemployment Relief Act, enlistment of men was set at one year, workers earned \$30 per month, and part of that salary was sent home to dependents.³¹⁵

The bill was signed on April 3, 1933. On that day, Roosevelt gathered his cabinet members and assigned duties. The Department of Labor started nationwide recruitment; the Army trained and transported enrollees to camps; and the Park and Forest Services supervised the work and the camps. Later, the Army supervised the camps while the Park Service coordinated work assignments. The April 3 meeting produced more changes in the program; enrollees had to be between the ages of 18 and 25, and they had to send at least \$25 of their salary home each month. Roosevelt stipulated that each camp be composed of 200 men with enrollment periods of six months. He also personally approved camps and work assignments. The workforce varied. The Park Service often hired a certain percentage of locally employed men (LEMs) but most of the workers were from larger urban regions.³¹⁶

³¹⁴John C. Paige, *The Civilian Conservation Corps and The National Park Service, 1933-1942: An Administrative History* (National Park Service: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1985), pp. 1-5.

³¹⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 7-10.

³¹⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 10-12.

Emergency Conservation Work (ECW), precursor to the CCC, officially began on April 5, 1933. The program started with an initial enrollment of 25,000 men. At first, the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service were overwhelmed by large numbers of enrollees, problems with work projects, and the impact of restrictions on work camp locations. Yet, by May of 1933, the Park Service was ready to employ 12,600 men in 63 camps located in national parks and monuments across the country.³¹⁷

Colorado benefitted a great deal from the CCC. By the spring of 1933, 30 to 35 camps were established in the Colorado District. The Grand Junction District had 20 camps.³¹⁸ Enrollees were organized and trained by Colonel Sherwood A. Cheney at a reconditioning camp set up at Fort Logan, Colorado. By mid-May, 1933, workers were shipped from Fort Logan to posts across the state, and Colorado's CCC officially began its work.³¹⁹ The CCC in Colorado ultimately had a positive impact on nearby communities. While some communities were not in favor of the camps, most found that the CCC not only provided jobs, but was also a social outlet. The relationship was reciprocal. Many CCC camps relied upon local communities to achieve success in completing projects. In the Colorado National Monument, for instance, the camps' water supply came from the Fruita water pipeline. When drought hit the Grand Valley in November, 1934, camp water mains were closed, and water was shipped from Grand Junction.³²⁰ In addition, it was not at all unusual for the CCC to become involved in community activities. In some instances, camps were responsible for flood relief, and even participated in search parties for missing persons from the community.³²¹

The CCC and Federal Work Camps at Colorado National Monument, 1933-1942

The original federal work camps were established in the Colorado National Monument to ease poor economic conditions in the Grand Valley, and to provide more labor on the Rim Rock Drive project. In spring 1933, local business leaders urged government officials to assist in acquiring emergency employment relief for the Grand Valley. The Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce appealed to the Secretary of the Interior, Harold L. Ickes, to include in the next

³¹⁷Tbid., pp. 12-15.

³¹⁸Michael McCarthy, "History of the CCC in Colorado," in *1930 Employment 1980: Humanistic Perspectives on the Civilian Conservation Corps in Colorado*, ed. Thomas Lyons (Boulder: Colorado Humanities Program, 1981), pp. 1-5.

³¹⁹L.A. Gleyre and C.N. Alleger, eds. *History of the Civilian Conservation Corps in Colorado: That the Work of Young America May Be Recorded* (Denver: Press of the Western Newspaper Union, 1936), Colonel Harold Booth Collection, Museum of Western Colorado, p. 10.

³²⁰Clifford Anderson, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for November 1934" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1 November 1934), p. 1.

³²¹Leonard Pinto, "The CCC in Colorado: The Enrichment of Social Life: The Gift of a People to Themselves," in *1930 Employment 1980: Humanistic Perspectives on the Civilian Conservation Corps in Colorado*, ed. Thomas Lyons (Boulder: Colorado Humanities Program, 1981), pp. 99-107.

emergency relief bill funding to extend the Rim Rock project through the year. The chamber stated that the project had been "immensely valuable in relieving unemployment" and that the completed road would accommodate the local region in addition to opening up a "magnificent scenic area."³²² Grand Junction's mayor, F.R. Hall, requested Albright's help in securing emergency employment relief. Hall argued that the Rim Rock project was "one of [few] Colorado projects which affords year around employment under ideal conditions."³²³ In a letter to Congressman Taylor, the secretary of the Grand Junction Rotary Club, George A. Marsh, also expressed his views regarding the Monument project:

We are of the opinion that no work in Colorado could be more practical or constructive than the Colorado National Monument project, and although we would welcome forest work, we believe that there is little if any such work that could compare or surpass in economic value that of the Monument. ... Probably few government projects have been given financial aid by local communities comparable with that of our Monument.³²⁴

Colorado National Monument's first 200-man camp was approved in April, 1933, and was a sign that heavy federal involvement in the road project had begun. Although local park promoters still contributed funds to the road project, once the federal work camps were established, most of the major decisions about the park and the road were made by the National Park Service. Because funding was not yet available, the Park Service decided that it wanted T.W. Secrest to serve as superintendent of the camp.³²⁵ On May 20, 1933, Company 824, consisting of a commanding officer, a medical officer, a staff sergeant, two corporals, a private, and four enrollees, was organized at Fort Logan and sent to start a camp for the Colorado National Monument. This camp was designated NM-1-C.³²⁶ When officers arrived, mess and barrack tents were already set up in anticipation of 220 men. Water was supplied by the Fruita pipeline, and necessities were transported over newly cut roads. During the next few days, 26 LEMs and 50 Colorado Juniors from Mesa County were hired. That summer an additional 12 LEMs and 113 Colorado Juniors were employed. Camp NM-1-C was originally set up near the Coke Ovens on the rim of Monument Canyon. Due to cramped conditions, it moved to a permanent location at Camp NM-2-C at the Saddle Horn near the present site of the Visitor Center. Company 825, known as NM-3-C, was originally set up near Glade Park in November 1933. Eventually this camp moved to the base of Fruita Canyon in June 1934. Enrollees from these camps worked on sections of the Rim Rock Drive under the direction of T.W. Secrest.³²⁷

³²²Telegram, Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce to Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of Interior, 24 March 1933.

³²³Telegram, F.R. Hall, Mayor of Grand Junction, to Horace Albright, Director of National Park Service, 5 April 1933.

³²⁴Letter, George A. Marsh, Secretary Grand Junction Rotary Club, to Edward Taylor, 7 April 1933.

³²⁵Letter, A.E. Demaray, National Park Service, to F.R. Hall, Mayor of Grand Junction, 22 April 1933.

³²⁶See Figures 4.2 and 4.3.

³²⁷Gleyre and Alleger, *History of the CCC in Colorado*, pp. 132-135.

Life in the work camps at the Colorado National Monument included a variety of elements: army discipline, educational benefits, and work experience. The U.S. Army and the Park Service split the responsibility of camp management. The army supplied materials, uniforms, and personnel needed to train, feed, and organize social and recreational events for the enrollees.³²⁸

After December 1, 1933, regular army officers returned to their duties, and reserve officers supervised the majority of camps in the Colorado district.³²⁹ While in camp, enrollees were under the authority of an army commanding officer. In some cases LEMs and other enrollees served as barracks leaders. The Park Service, on the other hand, supervised the work projects in the park. It hired a foreman and an engineer to supervise the LEMs and the enrollees while they worked on projects throughout the park.³³⁰

Along with the discipline, enrollees were introduced to educational and recreational opportunities. Camp NM-2-C provided classes in typing, bookkeeping and accounting in addition to woodworking and photography. It also boasted a library of 400 volumes. At one point, 80 percent of the workers were involved in aspects of the educational program in NM-2-C. Camp NM-3-C produced its own newspaper, known as *Monument Murmurs*, which was printed every two weeks. A stone recreation facility was built for the enrollees of NM-2-C to enjoy in their free time. Enrollees from both camps also participated in numerous intercamp athletic events.³³¹ In fact, a baseball diamond was constructed in Camp NM-2-C—now the Saddlehorn parking lot—in May 1934.³³²

Construction was an enormous undertaking financially and physically. Between 1932 and 1937, funding from a variety of sources fueled the road project. Among those providing funds were the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, the Civilian Works Administration, the Emergency Conservation Works, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, the National Park Service Emergency Roads and Trails, and regular National Park Service appropriations.³³³ The road project was constructed in sections. Each camp worked on different sections, which were built as funding became available. Between July 1932 and July 1937, the sum of \$528,772.27 was allotted for the construction of Rim Rock Road. Construction included rough grading of sections 1A, 1B, 1C, and 1D, as well as completion of two tunnels on the park's

³²⁸Tyrone Farrell, "The Civilian Conservation Corps on The Colorado National Monument," *Journal of the Western Slope* Vol. 6, No. 4 (Summer 1991):7-8.

³²⁹Gleyre and Alleger, *History of the CCC in Colorado*, p. 11.

³³⁰Farrell, "The CCC on The Colorado National Monument," pp. 7-8.

³³¹Gleyre and Alleger, *History of the Civilian Conservation Corps in Colorado*, pp. 133 and 136.

³³²Clifford Anderson, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for May 1934" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 4 June 1934), p. 2.

³³³Informal Memorandum, Nusbaum to A.H. Furr, 22 November 1937.

western end.³³⁴ By July 1937, approximately 20 gravel miles of the eventually 23-mile gravel road were completed.³³⁵ Between September 1937 and April 1940, another \$39,111.87 was allotted for construction.³³⁶

Laborers for the Rim Rock Road project represented federal and local labor sources. Along with the CCC, the WPA, the Public Works Administration (PWA), the Emergency Relief Administration (ERA), LEMs, and National Park camps contributed to numerous aspects of the road project. Each work group was responsible for different elements of construction and overall park development.³³⁷ Construction and employment possibilities were contingent on the availability of funds. When funding ran out, projects were temporarily stopped and layoffs occurred. Monthly totals of men at work in the park indicated the precarious nature of employment on the project. In December 1933, for instance, there was a total of 689 men working, but in January 1934, 814 men were accounted for.³³⁸ These monthly totals varied markedly between 1933 and 1942. Construction was also disrupted by CCC enrollment periods, which generally lasted six months before new enrollees replaced those who were dismissed.

³³⁴See construction maps in Figures 4.1 and 4.9.

³³⁵T. W. Secrest, *Final Construction on Scenic Rim Rock Road Acct. No. 507-14-1010* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 3 August 1937), pp. 1-5.

³³⁶Horace Miller, *Final Construction Report on Scenic Rim Rock Road Sections A,B,C,D Account 508, 1937-1940* (United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1940).

³³⁷See Figures 4.4 and 4.5.

³³⁸Clifford Anderson, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for December 1933" (Washington: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2 January 1934), p. 1; Clifford Anderson, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for January 1934" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 3 February 1934), p. 1.



Figure 4.2. CCC camp NM-1-C at present site of Monument Canyon Trail parking area. Colorado National Monument Museum and Archive Collection.



Figure 4.3. Portion of group photo of CCC enrollees and army personnel at Colorado National Monument. Colorado National Monument Museum and Archive Collection.

The Road Project and the Community

Community support of the road project was challenged on December 12, 1933, when the so-called "half-tunnel accident" took place. On that day, 20 Glade Park men recently hired by the CWA worked to cut part of the road into a cliff face in the shape of a half-tunnel. They had been blasting small sections of rock and then clearing by hand the debris from under the newly formed overhang of rock. Newspaper accounts stated that after the final shots were fired, supervisors of the project made the men wait 20 minutes before they went in to clear rocks. The men were working in what appeared to be a safe area when a powder charge fired by another work group on the opposite side of the canyon supposedly dislodged the cliff.³³⁹ Three men actually jumped over the 300-foot cliff to escape, six men were instantly crushed, and one man was partially buried, living only through that night. The victims ranged in age from 19 to 60 years.³⁴⁰

The tragedy immediately raised a host of questions regarding the safety of workers and the competency of supervisors. The morning after the incident, the coroner arranged an inquest in which witnesses to the event testified. After all the testimony was heard, officials concluded that what had occurred had been an unavoidable accident.³⁴¹ Yet, only three days after the accident, about thirty workers from the road project circulated a petition for a grand jury investigation and informed the District Attorney, William F. Haywood, that proper precautions for worker safety had not been taken prior to the accident or at any other time during the road construction. The workers also submitted statements to the *Daily Sentinel* that openly stated that not enough time had elapsed between the final blast and when the men continued work, and that the entire cliff face had not been investigated properly before the accident.³⁴² Finally on December 18, the same delegation of workers insisted on holding a public hearing at which the Chamber of Commerce, T.W. Secrest, and William Haywood were present. Most of the men agreed that the supervisors and foremen were blameless as far as the accident was concerned, although they unanimously stated that the chief powder man (explosives expert), Mr. McEwan, had not always been careful in his work.³⁴³

³³⁹See Figures 4.6, 4.7, and 4.8.

³⁴⁰Noland Norgaard, "Nine Killed by Slide on Monument Road," *Daily Sentinel*, 13 December 1933, p. 1.

³⁴¹William F. Haywood, Report on Fatal Accident, 13 December 1933.

³⁴²"Greater Precaution to Protect Men on Rimrock Road asked by Employees," *Daily Sentinel*, 16 December 1933.

³⁴³Haywood, Report on Fatal Accident, pp. 1-3.



Figure 4.4. View from cliff above the south portal of tunnel #3 (bottom right) and east side road and switchbacks. Colorado National Monument Museum and Archive Collection. ▶ ▶ ▶



Figure 4.5. Men working at Cold Shivers Point on east Rim Rock Drive. Most of the work on the road was done by hand. Colorado National Monument Museum and Archive Collection.

Figure 4.6. Blasting at Half-Tunnel site (not actual accident blast). Colorado National Monument Museum and Archive Collection.

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Figure 4.7. Blasting at Half-Tunnel site (not actual accident blast). Colorado National Monument Museum and Archive Collection.

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Figure 4.8. Half-Tunnel site after the December 12, 1933 accident. Colorado National Monument Museum and Archive Collection.

In the meantime, Congressman Taylor received a telegram on December 15 from Robert N. Moreland, the father of one of the accident victims. Moreland requested another investigation, which Taylor assured him had been ordered by the Park Service.³⁴⁴ E.B. Rogers, then superintendent of Rocky Mountain National Park, carried out the second investigation. On December 21, he met with local officials, including the chamber of commerce, the district attorney, the county certifying officer for CWA, and workers in the park. He concluded that the community generally agreed that the accident was unavoidable and that local residents still had faith in Secrest's abilities as supervisor of the road project. The workmen, however, were critical of W. Liddle, the foreman in charge of the workers involved in the accident, and C.E. McEwan, the explosives foreman. Finally, Rogers concluded that the controversy about the accident had been needlessly kept alive by people who were not directly involved in the incident, and that for the most part, the situation was finally settling down.³⁴⁵

The Half-Tunnel accident established a lasting connection between the road project and surrounding communities. Because only local men were killed, the accident was an especially sensitive issue. Nevertheless, the accident indicated that local interest in the park was still strong, and that the Park Service considered community support of the road project necessary. Congressman Taylor's intervention on behalf of Robert Moreland, which resulted in a second

³⁴⁴"Investigation by Competent Engineer," *Daily Sentinel*, ca. 15 December 1933.

³⁴⁵Letter, E.B. Rogers to Director National Park Service, 27 December 1933.

investigation, was a sign that public support of the road project was considered important to higher level officials. In the second investigation, E.B. Rogers emphasized the importance of community opinion as well. While his report included interviews with workmen, it was primarily an effort to measure the community's support of the road project. Finally, two editorials appearing in the *Daily Sentinel* expressed sympathy toward the victims' families, but also highlighted the road project's economic importance to the Grand Valley.³⁴⁶ Ultimately, the Half-Tunnel accident was another example of the role that the community played in the Colorado National Monument's development. Because of nine local deaths and years of interest and money invested in the park, the people were naturally affected by the first major fatality on the road project. As the years passed, however, and Park Service road policy changed, many local residents pointed to the half-tunnel to indicate the sacrifice the community made for the road.

The availability of labor was an important gauge of local perceptions of the road project as well. Local employment levels varied. The original rosters for CCC camps 824 and 825 reveal that the majority of workers were from outside Colorado. The National Park Service was allowed to employ a certain percentage of LEMs, whose principal task was to train new enrollees. In 1934, restrictions were relaxed on the amount of LEMs hired.³⁴⁷ Local men were also hired by relief groups other than the CCC. In December 1933, for instance, 50 unemployed men from Glade Park were hired by a federal civil works program to work on the road project.³⁴⁸ Nevertheless, it is not clear just what percentage of workers in the Colorado National Monument was from the local area.

The community often panicked when projects were temporarily stopped due to lack of funding. Throughout the years of heavy construction, layoffs were common. In January 1934, for instance, there were 816 unemployed with 2100 dependents in Mesa County. The labor bureau urged the park to hire more workers despite already filled quotas. The park certainly could have used more labor but was not able to enroll any more men.³⁴⁹ In March 1935, the closing of a Public Works project in the park put 165 men out of work. When families poured into the area from the dust-ravaged areas in Kansas and Nebraska, the already critical unemployment situation in the Grand Valley worsened.³⁵⁰ The temporary closing of a CCC camp and a PWA camp in April 1935 prompted daily inquiries from local men seeking employment. Eventually 26 former employees of the camps went to the local relief office to

³⁴⁶"The Rimrock Tragedy," *Daily Sentinel*, 17 December 1933.

³⁴⁷Paige, *The CCC and the National Park Service*, p. 19.

³⁴⁸Norgaard, "Nine Killed by Slide. . . .," *Daily Sentinel*, 13 December 1933, 1.

³⁴⁹Clifford Anderson, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for January 1934" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 3 February 1934), p. 2.

³⁵⁰Clifford Anderson, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for March 1935" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2 April 1935), p. 3.

convince officials to continue funding for the projects.³⁵¹ It is not clear if this appeal was successful, but it indicates that the local economic situation was such that the community relied upon the road project.

Roosevelt's attempt to make a permanent agency of the ECW in 1935 resulted in the closure of camps and reduction of enrollees in the Colorado National Monument and other parks. In September 1935, Roosevelt instructed ECW director Robert Fechner to reduce the ECW from its peak enrollment of 600,000 to 300,000 men by June 1936. In May 1936, he instructed the National Park Service to reduce its state and National Park camps by 20, and the number of enrollees per camp from 200 to 160.³⁵² Enrollment levels in CCC camps at Colorado National Monument averaged 160 as early as March 1936, and the custodian reported that "work projects suffered, because of the low company strength."³⁵³

Roosevelt continued his push for a smaller, permanent agency in January 1937 when he presented his annual budget message to Congress. He eventually hoped to decrease the ECW to 300,000 men and war veterans, 10,000 Native Americans, and 7,000 from U.S. territories. Congressional input was necessary because the ECW had only been authorized until June 1937. Roosevelt again pitched for a permanent agency in March 1937; under this plan the CCC would be an independent agency, new employees would be subject to Civil Service guidelines, and enrollees would be between the ages of 17 and 23 with evidence of proven need. Instead of creating a permanent agency, however, Congress passed a bill in which the ECW officially became the CCC and was extended until 1940. Despite the obvious changes in his plans for the CCC, Roosevelt signed the bill.³⁵⁴

This bill signaled a turning point for the CCC. Cuts in the program continued through 1937 and 1938. As more camps closed, officials in Washington received complaints from park superintendents who felt that certain projects and necessary park functions were interrupted and postponed. A measure to stabilize the CCC passed both the House and the Senate in 1938. In an effort to prevent the closure of 300 camps, \$50 million was allotted to work relief programs. In addition, the number of National Park camps increased to 77 and state programs increased to 245.³⁵⁵ Even after this effort, the CCC increasingly lost its effectiveness. By the time the U.S. entered World War II, its termination was inevitable.

³⁵¹Clifford Anderson, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Reports for Colorado National Monument for April 1935" (Washington: U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, 3 May 1935), p. 1.

³⁵²Paige, *The CCC and the National Park Service*, pp. 21-23.

³⁵³Jesse L. Nusbaum, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for March 1936" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2 April 1936), p. 1.

³⁵⁴Paige, *The CCC and the National Park Service*, pp. 23-24.

³⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 25-26.

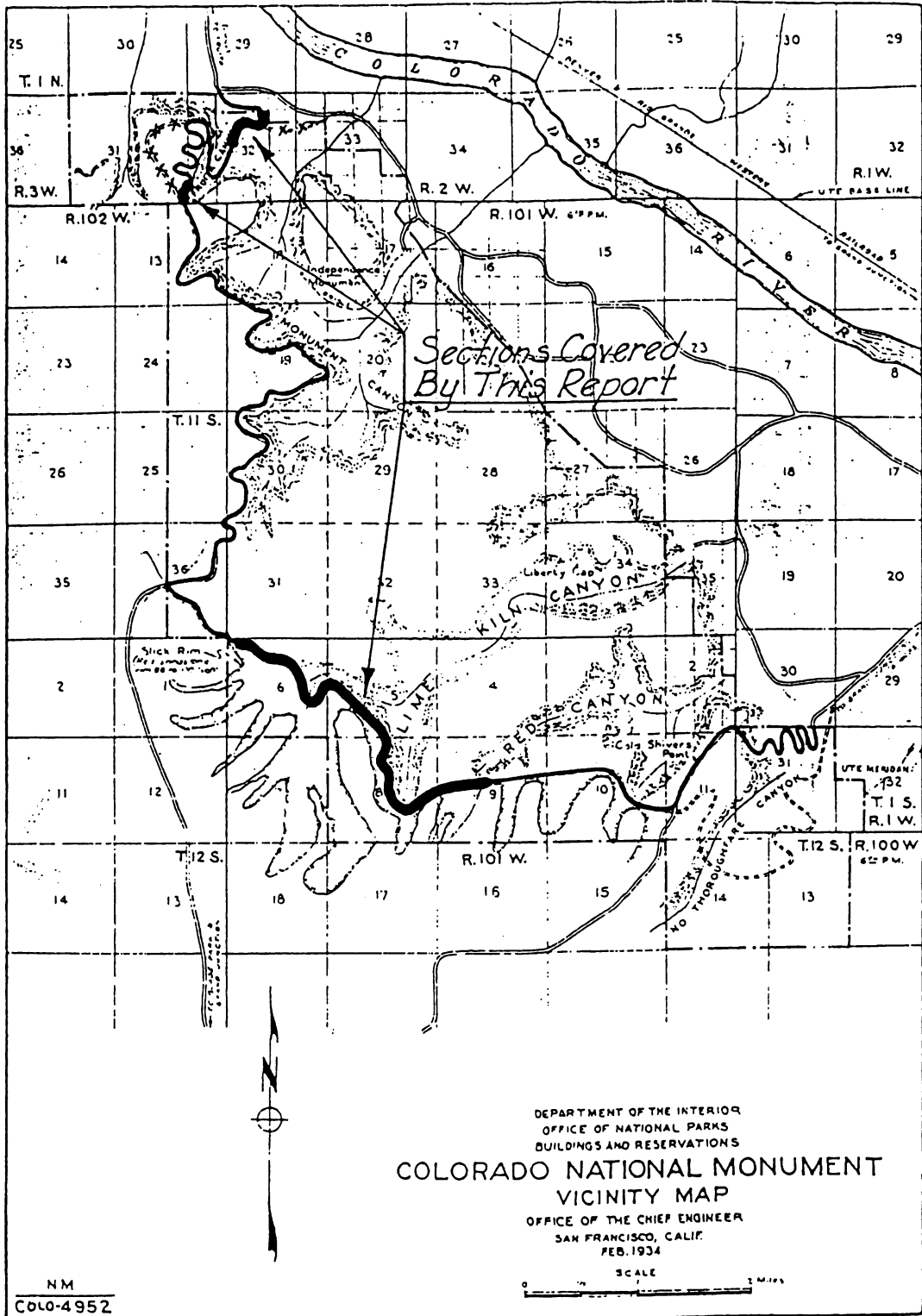


Figure 4.9. Progress of Construction on Rim Rock Drive. From T.W. Secret, "Final Construction Report on Scenic Rim Rock Drive," 3 August 1937. Colorado National Monument Museum and Archive Collection.

Figure 4.10. Workers remove blast rubble from coyote hole or pilot bore in one of the road's three tunnels. Colorado National Monument Museum and Archive Collection. ▶ ▶ ▶

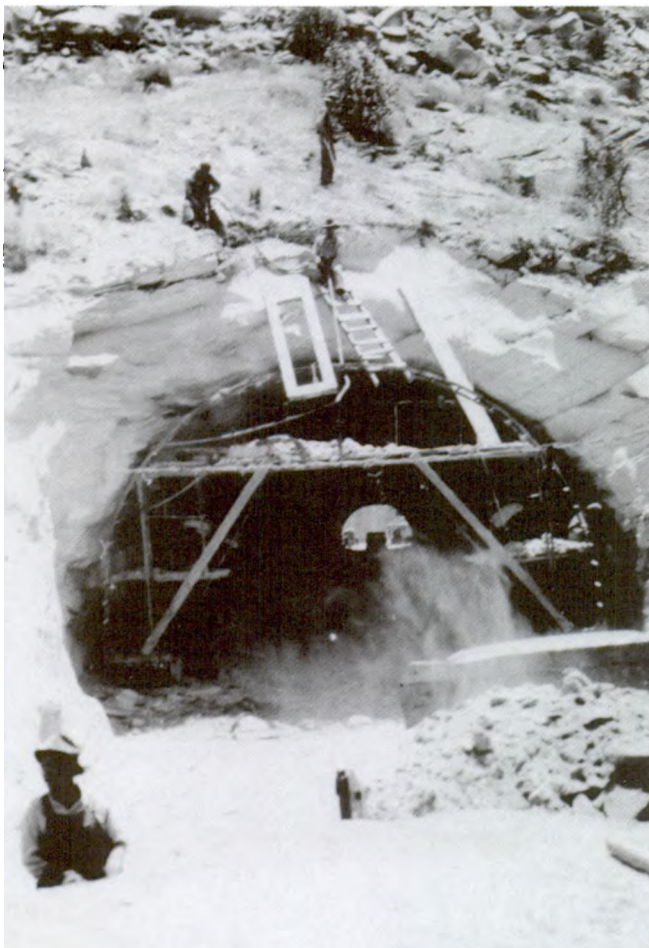


Figure 4.11. North portal of tunnel #3 on east Rim Rock Drive. Colorado National Monument Museum and Archive Collection.

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Despite the uncertainty of the CCC's future, work camps in the Colorado National Monument accomplished a great deal. The years from 1937 to 1942 reflected not only the problems associated with labor cuts, but also the effectiveness that the work camps were capable of displaying. By June 7, 1937, 20 miles of Rim Rock Drive, including two tunnels, were opened for visitor use.³⁵⁶ Numerous other projects were completed as well. The work camps built visitor facilities, an employee residence, and planned an administration area. Acting custodian Jesse Nusbaum commented in his monthly report for the park that "Colorado National Monument is beginning to shape up and looks more like a monument should. There is a far better spirit of cooperation between all agencies working on the Monument."³⁵⁷

Nevertheless, once the attack on Pearl Harbor occurred on December 7, 1941, work strength in the CCC decreased as national defense needs increased. In February 1942, all CCC projects were terminated but were picked up by the WPA until June 1942, when construction in the camp ended. Even the custodian and rangers at the park were called to active duty.³⁵⁸

Administration of Colorado National Monument, 1933-1942

Throughout the construction years, shifts in the management of Colorado National Monument significantly influenced local opinion of the Park Service and local use of the park. For the first time in its history, the Monument was supervised by superintendents, each of whom had his agenda for the park and his own idea of how to implement regulations. As each superintendent instituted more stringent regulations, local residents acquired the classic symptoms of Westerners who reject federal control as much as they rely upon it. At the same time that local residents accepted the employment supplied by the road project, they resented the government's control of the road once it was completed.

On November 14, 1933, Clifford Anderson arrived from Yellowstone to assume custodial responsibilities at Colorado National Monument. He immediately met with the secretary of the chamber of commerce W.M. Wood for a briefing on the park.³⁵⁹ One of his first objectives was to educate the local populous about proper behavior in the park. He noted to National Park Service Director Arno Cammerer that in the past the Monument had been "abused terribly" and that he did not believe "people realize what these natural features mean

³⁵⁶See Figures 4.9, 4.10, and 4.11.

³⁵⁷Jesse Nusbaum, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for October 1937" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1 November 1937), p. 6.

³⁵⁸B.W. Finch, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for February 1942" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1 March 1942), p. 1; B.W. Finch, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for June 1942" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1 July 1942), p. 2.

³⁵⁹Letter, Clifford Anderson to Director National Park Service, 15 November 1933.

to us and our future generations."³⁶⁰ One of the worst problems was name-carving in the sandstone around the Devils Kitchen picnic area and Cold Shivers Point. To prevent further damage, Anderson planned to put up a boundary line sign, warning against "disfiguring or defacing" park property. He also worked to prevent rampant wood hauling from the park by commencing daily patrols.³⁶¹

Anderson initiated many changes during his short time as custodian of the Colorado National Monument. Many of his policies conformed to the Park Service mission but were also shaped by local conditions and activities taking place in the park. His decision to restrict visitor access to the park was a response to heavy construction on Rim Rock Road. The section of road in Fruita Canyon involved some of the heaviest construction on Rim Rock Drive and was also a magnet for curious visitors eager for a glimpse of the work being done there. On February 18, 1934, there were over 600 visitors watching as charges of powder blasted the walls of the canyon.³⁶² By June 1934, Anderson's fears that the presence of tourists endangered both visitors and workmen had compelled him to restrict visitor access to the park. He also decided to install a box to register visitors.³⁶³

Anderson's custodianship exemplified a new level of Park Service presence in the Colorado National Monument. In addition to his campaign against vandalism and his efforts to monitor visitation of the park, he also conducted daily inspections of work projects in the park and maintained relations with the chamber of commerce. By August 1934, the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument was placed under the jurisdiction of Colorado National Monument. Anderson began periodic inspection trips there as well. In June 1935, his idea for a registration box was expanded into a checking station, by which he hoped to provide information for visitors in addition to checking levels of visitation. He placed two iron pipe gates "to control travel from entering from Glade Park and Cold Shivers during the nights."³⁶⁴ He was determined to control local access to the park during construction and probably planned to extend this policy once the road was completed.

Anderson's departure from the Colorado National Monument in July 1935 resulted from an administrative conflict that arose between himself, Secrest, and the landscape architects over

³⁶⁰Letter, Clifford Anderson, Custodian Colorado National Monument, to A.B. Cammerer, Director National Park Service, 30 November 1933.

³⁶¹Ibid.

³⁶²Clifford Anderson, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for February 1934," (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, March 1934), p. 2.

³⁶³Clifford Anderson, "Superintendent Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for June 1934" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, July 1, 1934), p. 3.

³⁶⁴Clifford Anderson, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for June 1935" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 3 July 1935), p. 1.

the construction of the road.³⁶⁵ According to Secrest, Anderson had become too involved in the engineering of the road for which he had no experience or qualifications. When he was appointed custodian, he was expected to carry on relations with local organizations and attend to the overall protection of the park. Secrest was responsible for road construction and supervision. Although the two men maintained a cooperative relationship, Secrest commented that "it was unfortunate and unfair for both Mr. Anderson and the Government that a policy exists whereby authority and control of expensive Government works are vested in an administrative head as such, regardless of the experience or ability. Mr. Anderson cannot be blamed too severely—he was a victim."³⁶⁶ Anderson felt that, in light of this conflict, his services would be of greater use in another park. He left the Colorado National Monument on good terms with the community and with Secrest.³⁶⁷ Secrest was designated acting custodian until a replacement was selected.³⁶⁸

In August 1935, Mesa Verde National Park assumed authority of the Colorado National Monument and the Black Canyon of the Gunnison. Ernest P. Leavitt became acting superintendent of the Monument and Black Canyon on August 13.³⁶⁹ On October 4, 1935, Paul R. Franke, Assistant Park Naturalist at Mesa Verde, assumed Leavitt's duties as acting superintendent.³⁷⁰ During that same month, Park Service officials decided to "kill all plans for a permanent ranger or custodian at this time," and to "continue having the superintendent of Mesa Verde in charge as acting custodian." They felt that, because vandalism had not worsened since Otto's days, a resident custodian was unnecessary. Furthermore, the road project was the first priority: "the big job is to push the road ahead with all force."³⁷¹

In May 1936, the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce expressed its displeasure with this decision, once again illustrating that it still affected Park Service policy to a certain degree:

³⁶⁵Memorandum, Arno B. Cammerer, Director of National Park Service to Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, 13 July 1936.

³⁶⁶Letter, T.W. Secrest to F.A. Kittredge, Chief Engineer National Park Service, 30 January 1936.

³⁶⁷Letter, Clifford Anderson to A.B. Cammerer, Director of National Park Service, 13 July 1935.

³⁶⁸Letter, Hillory A. Tolson, Acting Director of National Park Service, to F.W. Bocking, President Fruita Chamber of Commerce, 20 July 1935.

³⁶⁹Memorandum for the Washington Office by Hillory A. Tolson, Acting Director, 15 August 1935.

³⁷⁰Memorandum for the Washington Office by Hillory A. Tolson, Acting Associate Director of National Park Service, 4 October 1935.

³⁷¹Letter, Arno B. Cammerer to A.E. Demaray, 4 October 1935.

There is no relation between Mesa Verde and the Colorado National Monument, nor has the Superintendent the least interest in or conception of how a project should be carried on.³⁷²

The National Park Service considered the chamber's opinions, but eventually decided it was best to have a permanent national park superintendent in charge of the Monument as Secrest was only a temporary ECW employee.³⁷³ As late as December 1937, however, the Mesa County Commissioners adopted and passed a resolution in which they stated that, because of the differences between Colorado National Monument and Mesa Verde, the "joint administration" of the parks was "incompatible with the best interest, proper development, and fullest utilization of Colorado National Monument in which the people of Grand Junction and the surrounding territory are vitally interested...".³⁷⁴ A copy of the resolution sent to Congressman Taylor indicated the local community's continuing proprietary attitude about the park; they requested that a separate administration and custodian be acquired for Colorado National Monument for the sake of the "large public investment."³⁷⁵

In early 1936, the management of Colorado National Monument shifted once again as Jesse Nusbaum, superintendent of Mesa Verde, became the acting superintendent of the Monument. At first, administration under Mesa Verde consisted of a series of bi-monthly inspections by the acting superintendent. Usually the inspections lasted a day or more and then the acting superintendent returned to Mesa Verde. For the most part, the acting superintendent umpired the relationship between the various federal agencies working on the road and the local community. Many of Nusbaum's policies, like those of his predecessor, were shaped by local conditions. He realized that due to the diversity of work camps in the park an interruption in the work program would endanger at least 600 jobs. To prevent such an event, he devised a plan that included the following: improvement of worker morale, definition of community needs, transfer of a resident ranger, and pushing the work so that more visitors could access the park. He transferred all Colorado National Monument funding, fiscal, and accounting records to Mesa Verde National Park as well.³⁷⁶

In September 1937, a resident ranger, James Luther, arrived at Colorado National Monument to serve as the "resident representative" for Mesa Verde.³⁷⁷ Luther came to the Monument at the same time that Rim Rock Drive opened for visitor use. The road opening changed ranger duties markedly. Previously, visitors were limited by heavy construction, but

³⁷²Letter, W.M. Wood, Secretary Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, to A.R. Nowels, 29 May 1936.

³⁷³Memorandum, Arno B. Cammerer, Director of National Park Service, to Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, 13 June 1936.

³⁷⁴Mesa County, Proceedings of the Board of County Commissioners, Book 10, 2 December 1937, p. 155.

³⁷⁵Ibid.

³⁷⁶Informal Memorandum, Nusbaum to Furr, 22 November 1937.

³⁷⁷Ibid.

by 1937 they were able to access most of the park. Increased access created new challenges. Although two CCC enrollees registered visitors at the checking station and two enrollees guarded the entrances, it was difficult to monitor visitor activity once they entered the park. Attempts were made to stop picnickers from driving off the road. By October 1937, 25-mile speed limit signs were placed at each entrance of the park. Actual tests concluded that this was the safest speed by which one could drive the road. Stop signs were also placed at the checking station.³⁷⁸

Other regulatory measures were taken as well. An entrance sign was placed at the Glade Park boundary, caution signs were put up on the Fruita Canyon road and larger boundary signs were placed at the four entrances to the Monument in the hope that wood-hauling, firearm use, grazing and hunting would be discouraged.³⁷⁹ It was evident after the anniversary of the road's opening that local use presented more problems than regular tourist use:

Most of the March travel was local travel, either Grand Junction people out for an afternoon drive or Glade Park residents traveling back and forth to town. This local travel does a great deal of damage to the road in negotiating it during muddy or wet conditions. This condition will be removed when the road is hard surfaced. And the hauling of coal and other heavy supplies over the road by residents of Glade Park area cuts ruts badly during wet weather. One entrance to the Glade Park area certainly ought to be eliminated; and this would save many hundreds of dollars annually in road maintenance.³⁸⁰

In July 1938, seventy-five to eighty people were stopped for speeding; Luther reported that "the worst trouble is still with the local people, especially the residents adjacent to the Glade Park store."³⁸¹ He felt that educating local residents was the key to preventing abuse of the park and National Park Service regulations.³⁸²

Despite Luther's efforts, there were still elements of the local population who disregarded Park Service regulations. In April 1938, for instance, sheep herds were ordered off

³⁷⁸Jesse Nusbaum, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for October 1937" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1 November 1937), pp. 3-5.

³⁷⁹Jesse Nusbaum, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for November 1937" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 30 November 1937), p. 2.

³⁸⁰James Luther, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for March 1938" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1 April 1938), p. 3.

³⁸¹James Luther, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative for Colorado National Monument for July 1938" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1 August 1938), p. 4.

³⁸²Jesse Nusbaum, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report of Colorado National Monument for August 1938" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 5 September 1938), p. 3.

both the Fruita Canyon road (the old Dugway) and the Serpents Trail. When confronted with this, sheepmen responded that they had used these roads for 30 years.³⁸³ By 1940, a "consistent, determined effort" was made to eliminate the running of stock across the Monument. Monument officials worked with the Grazing Service to prevent further problems with stockmen. Nevertheless, on several occasions throughout the year, fines were assessed for breaking park regulations and for violating "trail permits" issued by the Grazing Service.³⁸⁴ The attitude of local ranchers had not changed much since Otto's custodianship. As a result, it was difficult for current superintendents to implement new rules. Inefficiencies in early park management allowed many violations to go unchecked, so that when new regulations were enforced, local ranchers simply reverted to their old ways.

The Monument under James Luther's superintendency experienced many challenges to Park Service regulations. The major source of these challenges involved the newly opened Rim Rock Drive, and the use of the park by local residents. Before he left the Monument near the end of 1940, Luther initiated regular patrols of the road. In March 1940 alone, 19 patrol trips were made over the Rim Rock Drive.³⁸⁵ Fee collection also became an issue during Luther's custodianship. On May 12, 1939, he used enrollees to collect fees from "cars, trailers, and motorcycles" who passed through headquarters 7 A.M. to 9 P.M. daily. Luther was instructed to pass without charge anyone he knew to be a resident of the Glade Park-Pinyon Mesa region whose sole access to their homes was over the Rim Rock Drive. The same policy was afforded Grand Valley residents with farming or stock interests in Glade Park.³⁸⁶ At that time, preferential treatment of local residents seemed the best way to balance fee collection for park use and residential traffic to Glade Park via Rim Rock Drive. In an effort to maintain good relations or just for the sake of convenience, Luther implemented an open-ended fee policy that was bound to create conflicts once the population of that region became too large for park officials to recognize. Luther's efforts to maintain a cooperative relationship with local residents extended into other areas as well. He even attended the monthly Mesa County Coordinating Committee meetings in order to keep abreast of community activities and needs.³⁸⁷

Between 1941 and 1942, the Monument underwent yet another series of administrative changes. In January 1941, the new custodian, ranger Breyton Finch, arrived at the park to replace Luther. Like Luther, Finch was conscientious of local opinion. He not only attended

³⁸³James Luther, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative for Colorado National Monument for April 1938" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1 May 1938), p. 4.

³⁸⁴James Luther "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for April 1940" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1 May 1940), p. 2.

³⁸⁵James Luther, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for March 1940" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 8 April 1940).

³⁸⁶Memorandum for the Director by Jesse L. Nusbaum, 27 May 1939.

³⁸⁷Luther, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report Colorado National Monument for April 1940," p. 2.

meetings of the Mesa County Coordinating Committee, he went to the Piñon Mesa Stock-growers' Association meeting to discuss realignment of existing stock drives in the park. Unlike Luther, however, Finch had some assistance in his work. Another ranger, Charles E. Smith, transferred to the park in March of that year.³⁸⁸ In April 1941, ranger Homer Carson came to the Monument. For a while everything ran more smoothly than it had in years. Work on construction accelerated, the road was prepared for oiling, and the additional rangers alleviated many of the stresses of park management.³⁸⁹

The United States' entrance into World War II in December 1941 necessarily interrupted both the construction of the road and the administration of the park. CCC camp strength weakened as enrollees enlisted for active duty, and eventually all construction ended in the park. The checking station closed and fee collection ended in November 1941. Eventually, Park Service personnel were called to active duty. Ranger Charles E. Smith left for military service, and even though new rangers replaced him, park activities were at an all-time low.³⁹⁰

The Postwar Years

The postwar years were characterized by a revitalization of the Colorado National Monument. Park activities abandoned during the war resumed; the checking station reopened in June 1946, and road maintenance once more became a priority.³⁹¹ At the same time, some of the older CCC buildings were removed and restoration of those areas commenced.³⁹² The most noticeable change was increased tourism. In March 1946, custodian Finch reported a 151 percent increase in the travel year to date, and in August 1946, a 785 percent increase was noted.³⁹³ These phenomenal increases, however, were the source of conflict between rangers and visitors. One of the largest problems was that there were far more visitors than the limited personnel at the Monument could monitor. In 1946, it was estimated that about 75 percent of the visitor travel never reached the checking stations, which were located 4 miles from the

³⁸⁸B.M. Finch, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for March 1941" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1 April 1941), pp. 1-3.

³⁸⁹B.M. Finch, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for April 1941" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1 May 1941), p. 3.

³⁹⁰B.R. Finch, "Superintendent's Monthly Reports for Colorado National Monument for 1942" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1942).

³⁹¹B.R. Finch, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for June 1946" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1 July 1946).

³⁹²B.R. Finch, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for March 1946" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1 April 1946), pp. 1-2.

³⁹³B.R. Finch, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for March 1946" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1 April 1946), p. 1; B.R. Finch, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for August 1946" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2 September 1946), p. 1.

Fruita entrance and 18 miles from the Grand Junction entrance to the park. There were no actual entrance stations in the park at this time. Most visitors entered and used the park without making contact with a ranger who could explain park regulations. Consequently, visitors' dogs ran leashless and people removed rocks, flowers, trees and other objects. Night travel became popular as people realized what a spectacular view of the Grand Valley the Monument afforded. Use of the park at night increased the probability of campfires in restricted areas. With rangers only able to make two complete loops of the park in an eight-hour period, much of the park was left unprotected.³⁹⁴

Local violations of park regulations during these years were prevalent. When local stockmen learned that Monument personnel were going to relocate their stock drives outside the park boundary, they were prepared to resist. Stock had originally been driven over the old Fruita Dugway and the Serpents Trail from Glade Park and Pinyon Mesa. When the Serpents Trail became part of the Rim Rock Drive, and the Dugway was obliterated during road construction, stockmen were without a road. The park's expansion in 1933 further exacerbated the situation because the proclamation made both access roads to Glade Park and Pinyon Mesa a part of the park. Eventually, an alternate road through the south end of No Thoroughfare Canyon was provided, but it was long, and often stock was held there overnight. Even though there was no water on this route, stockmen seemed temporarily satisfied. When park personnel suggested a road outside the park, a conflict arose. Although this plan was halted, both park officials and stockmen were left with unfavorable circumstances. Containing all the elements of a western conflict over land use, the situation included Park officials who did not want a permanent stock driveway through their Monument, and stockmen who wanted their old stock drives back.³⁹⁵ For the time being, the situation remained static.

A relationship that was bound to become volatile was that between the Park Service and residents of the Glade Park region. The stock drive problem, and heavy trucking on Rim Rock Drive by landowners in Glade Park and Pinyon Mesa were issues that needed to be resolved. In spite of Park Service regulations to the contrary, marketable stock and wood were hauled over Rim Rock Drive by Glade Park residents. Both the county and the Forest Service used the road to haul heavy equipment from Pinyon Mesa, and by 1946, there was a rumor that a mining company planned to start a copper mine and haul ore from the Glade Park region. Park officials maintained that engineers never designed the road for this type of use.³⁹⁶ Ironically, while many Glade Park residents began to resent the Park Service, many had also benefitted a great deal from the employment opportunities provided by the road project.

Despite some conflict, local initiatives also helped the park. A new road between Fruita and Grand Junction in June 1948 decreased the distance from Monument headquarters to Grand

³⁹⁴Memorandum, B.R. Finch, Custodian Colorado National Monument, to the Coordinating Superintendent of Mesa Verde National Park, 21 September 1946.

³⁹⁵Ibid.

³⁹⁶Ibid.

Junction from 23 to roughly 17 miles. Additionally, the town of Fruita and the State Highway Department put up new signs near the approach roads to the park.³⁹⁷ Throughout road construction, Mesa County had improved approach roads to the park. During the postwar years, however, the county was often hired to maintain Rim Rock Drive. After the Park Service purchased the oil, the Mesa County Road Department applied it to the Rim Rock Drive in May 1948.³⁹⁸

While Mesa Verde still maintained its authority, Colorado National Monument personnel began to develop their own understanding of the Park Service and their duties. Breyton Finch was custodian of the park until February 1949, at which time the two rangers on duty took over that responsibility. In April 1949, Russell Mahan became superintendent. Mahan continued the important job of maintaining good relations with the community by attending Rotary Club meetings in both Grand Junction and Fruita.³⁹⁹ The idea of "interpretive services" in which rangers kept track of the number of "contacts"—questions or discussions—they had with visitors or local residents, began during the postwar administration as well. "Contacts" also constituted speeches or meetings with local organizations. As always, the local factor played a role in Park Service activity on the Colorado National Monument.⁴⁰⁰

By 1950, the Colorado National Monument had entered a new phase in both its development as a tourist attraction and its relationship with the community. The cooperative relationship between the National Park Service and the communities adjacent to the Colorado National Monument was tested by Park Service attempts to regulate use of Monument facilities. After the road construction, the National Park Service controlled all aspects of park management. While the Park Service still recognized the importance of community support, it found that local use of the park accounted for most of the park's problems. Many of these difficulties resulted from the opening of Rim Rock Drive, but many of them, such as the stock driveways, had been developing since the park was set aside in 1911. Unlike the Otto years, however, the postwar years reflected far more use of the park by tourists and by local residents for recreational and nonrecreational uses. Relations with the local community were no longer as simple to define. Whereas it had once been important to keep the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce and other local business groups happy, by 1950, the protection of the Colorado National Monument had become the first priority.

³⁹⁷B.R. Finch, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for June 1948" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1 July 1948), p. 2.

³⁹⁸B.R. Finch, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for May 1948" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1 June 1948), p. 1.

³⁹⁹William D. Guillet, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for April 1949" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1 May 1949), p. 1.

⁴⁰⁰B.R. Finch, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for July 1948" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service 2 August 1948), 1.

Chapter Five

Origins of the Road Controversy: 1951-1980

Administration of Colorado National Monument, 1951-1980

Between 1951 and 1953, Colorado National Monument was on the verge of another administrative shift. Since 1935, it had been officially run by a coordinating superintendent at Mesa Verde National Park, although the real work of managing the park belonged to the resident ranger and two assistant rangers. Personnel by 1951 had not changed very much. There was still a resident ranger, referred to as superintendent, and two rangers on duty in the park. Officials from Mesa Verde continued to conduct inspections. By 1952 the staff had expanded and began more specialized training. Rangers attended fire and personnel training conferences and, in May 1952, the first seasonal rangers were hired for the summer.⁴⁰¹

While the boom in post-World War II tourism generated more interpretive and protective duties on the part of the rangers, the bulk of activity in Colorado National Monument between 1951 and 1953 centered on the maintenance of Rim Rock Drive. Russell Mahan, who became superintendent of the Monument in 1949, believed that national monuments and parks were "for the people's use and enjoyment."⁴⁰² As a result, the improvement of facilities and roads was first priority during his years as superintendent. Approximately 16 miles of road seal-coating was completed during Mahan's first two years as superintendent.⁴⁰³ A maintenance crew was employed throughout the year to work on other aspects of road upkeep. One of the issues that kept park officials in contact with local officials was the status of approach roads to the park. Both the Fruita and Grand Junction roads needed repair and it was determined that the status of these roads had "an adverse effect" on visitation levels by the summer of 1951.⁴⁰⁴ The improvement of other park facilities, including a group picnic area, also took place.⁴⁰⁵ In

⁴⁰¹Russell Mahan, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for 1952" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service.

⁴⁰²"Not Yet Fully Appreciated," *Daily Sentinel*, 10 October 1951.

⁴⁰³*Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁴Russell Mahan, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for July 1951" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 27 July 1951), p. 1.

⁴⁰⁵Russell Mahan, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for April 1951" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 27 April 1951), p. 2.

March of that year, a new checking station was installed near the Saddlehorn just west of the current visitor center.⁴⁰⁶

Interpretive services, although seemingly overshadowed by the attention given to the development of the park's road and facilities, also had an important place in the park's agenda. Like his predecessors, Mahan established a strong rapport with local clubs and organizations.⁴⁰⁷ In a 1952 speech to the Grand Junction Rotary Club, Mahan disclosed elements of the Monument's master plan: expanded camping facilities, a museum, a ranger residence, a new checking station at the Grand Junction entrance and more road oiling.⁴⁰⁸ Keeping local residents abreast of the park's plans was an integral part of Mahan's superintendency.

The Monument was also entering a period when it was the subject of a different kind of media attention. Stories about the park had always regularly appeared in the *Daily Sentinel*, which covered everything from John Otto's early letters to the editor to information on the construction of Rim Rock Drive. By the 1950s, however, the historical significance of the park had become a popular topic. Ironically, one of the first feature articles appeared in *Empire Magazine* in September 1951 and told the story of "early pioneer" John Otto. Otto himself died less than a year later in June 1952, his legacy and dedication to the park only beginning to be appreciated.⁴⁰⁹

Park officials were surprised to learn in June 1953 that the Colorado National Monument and the Black Canyon had been removed from Mesa Verde's administration. Instead, both areas were placed under the Monument's jurisdiction. Mahan pointed out the disadvantages to the Monument: "It will mean quite a load with no clerical help but we will carry on with 'business as usual.'"⁴¹⁰ For the most part, activity in the park remained essentially what it had been before the change. Development of facilities continued to be the main goal of Monument officials. The additional responsibility of Black Canyon included inspections of that park, which was in the midst of facility improvement and construction. Management of Black Canyon, however, never interfered with the development of Colorado National Monument.

In 1955, Colorado National Monument was included in a nationwide plan to improve and expand facilities throughout the National Park System. Known as Mission 66, this plan

⁴⁰⁶Ibid., p. 1.

⁴⁰⁷Russell Mahan, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for June 1949" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 3 July 1949), 3.

⁴⁰⁸"Monument Superintendent Tells Rotarians of Colorado Monument Development Since 1911," *Daily Sentinel*, 20 February 1952.

⁴⁰⁹Russell Mahan, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for June 1952" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 27 June 1952), p. 2.

⁴¹⁰Russell Mahan, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for June 1953" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 30 June 1953), p. 1.

responded to the overwhelming increase in tourism that had arisen in the post-World War II years and to the projected 80 million visitors estimated to descend upon the parks in 1966. The program was set to begin in 1956 and to end during the 50th anniversary of the National Park Service in 1966. Mission 66 had several goals: to conduct a "study of the national park problem"; to develop the parks so they could accommodate visitor needs; to construct employee housing; and to provide more convenient and often longer hours for maximum visitor use and enjoyment.⁴¹¹ Congress expressed its support by allotting \$48,866,300 for fiscal year 1956 and made comparable, if not larger, appropriations each year thereafter. The estimated total cost reached \$786 million.⁴¹²

The prospectus for Mission 66 in Colorado National Monument and Black Canyon was completed in June 1956 and approved in February 1957.⁴¹³ In Colorado National Monument, Mission 66 brought about numerous changes in the development and administration of the park. First, it modernized the Monument's facilities and increased the park staff. The construction of new hiking trails, interpretive signs, ranger residences, and a new visitor center provided permanent facilities not only for visitors, but also for personnel. Mission 66 was also a great public relations tool for park officials. Reports and presentations about the progress of Mission 66 projects were regularly given to a variety of local organizations, including the Grand Junction and Fruita chambers of commerce. Frequent "indoctrination trips" were made to Denver, Ouray, Montrose, and Delta, to create interest in Monument activities.⁴¹⁴ In this way the Park Service maintained its link to the community and continued to gain support for the park. In addition, park officials implemented new regulations in response to the increase in both local park use and out-of-state tourism.

According to the Monument prospectus, the biggest problem facing the park was the "inadequacy of present developments and services for visitors."⁴¹⁵ In the first quarter of 1955, the Monument was the second most popular attraction in Colorado, with a visitor draw rivaled only by Rocky Mountain National Park.⁴¹⁶ At an estimated cost of \$743,920, Mission 66 developments for the Monument were in full swing by the spring of 1957. A museum prospectus was completed in April 1957, and in May 1957 a geologic history of the park was

⁴¹¹Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, pp. 546-547.

⁴¹²Ibid.

⁴¹³Homer Robinson, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for June 1956" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 6 July 1956), p. 5; Homer Robinson, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for February 1957" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 8 March 1957), p. 4.

⁴¹⁴Fred Bussey, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for April 1958" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 9 May 1958), p. 3.

⁴¹⁵"Mission 66 for Colorado National Monument" (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, ca. 1956), Mesa County Public Library Clipping File, p. 2.

⁴¹⁶"National Monument 2nd Most Popular Park in Colorado," *Daily Sentinel*, 27 May 1956.

planned. Bids for the construction of three employee residences were taken as well.⁴¹⁷ In November 1958, the first sites for the proposed visitor center were considered and, in May 1963, it was completed and open to the public.⁴¹⁸ Other improvements included road and trail work, roadside exhibits, and the movement of the Fruita entrance station to its present location.

Civic organizations contributed to the improvements in the park as well. A highway sign contributed by the Fruita Chamber of Commerce was constructed in July 1956.⁴¹⁹ In 1960 the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce constructed a 10-foot by 40-foot sign at the junction of Highways 6 and 50 and Colorado Highway 340 near Fruita. People not familiar with the park were confused by its name; they thought it was a manmade monument commemorating the state or the river. In order to clarify its identity and better advertise the Monument, the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce decided to put up the sign.⁴²⁰

Personnel also shifted during the Mission 66 years. The most significant changes were increases in ranger and maintenance positions and the frequency of employee turnover. By July 1955, a new superintendent, Homer Robinson, had replaced Mahan. Other personnel included one permanent ranger, two seasonals, one seasonal naturalist, four maintenance men, and a new chief ranger.⁴²¹ In 1958, an almost entirely new staff worked at the park when Fred Bussey entered as the new superintendent.⁴²² Bussey was active in the promotion and planning of Mission 66 projects during his six years at the Monument (1958-1964).

Local perceptions regarding Mission 66 varied over the years. Park Service officials made every effort to educate and include local organizations in the Mission 66 process, but by 1959 not everyone was convinced that Mission 66 was in the best interest of the local community. In July 1959, the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce Tourist Committee criticized Mission 66 and accused the Monument of being "poor relatives" to the National Park

⁴¹⁷Homer Robinson, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for 1957" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Jan.-Dec. 1957).

⁴¹⁸Homer Robinson, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for November 1958" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 12 December 1958), p. 1; Fred Bussey, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for May 1963" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 13 June 1963), p. 3.

⁴¹⁹Homer Robinson, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for July 1956" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 6 August 1956), p. 3.

⁴²⁰Fred Bussey, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for April 1960" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 11 May 1960), p. 5.

⁴²¹Homer Robinson, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for July 1955" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 4 August 1955), p. 2.

⁴²²"New Monument Chief Begins; Native Coloradan; Experienced," *Daily Sentinel*, 19 March 1958.

Service.⁴²³ By September 1959, the Monument was once again the subject of negative publicity regarding Mission 66. This time it involved a conflict over whose needs were more important in determining Mission 66 projects: local residents or out-of-state visitors. Local residents felt that access to the lower canyons and jeep roads was important and that these improvements should be addressed by the Park Service. In his monthly report Bussey summarized Park Service beliefs regarding Mission 66:

Since most of the demands appear to be of special interest to local rather than out of state visitors, efforts have been made to point out the importance of first taking care of the needs of out-of-state visitors, such as more campground facilities, improved roads, additional interpretive facilities, turnouts, and overlooks under the Mission 66 program. Local needs are recognized, but are in lower priority on the Mission 66 program.⁴²⁴

Despite this, Superintendent Bussey continued to make Mission 66 presentations to local organizations and the *Daily Sentinel* continued its coverage of Mission 66 projects. It was clear that Bussey's interpretation of Mission 66 reflected the Park Service's original purpose in creating the program: to accommodate tourism. In August 1959, Monument officials continued to emphasize the importance of the out-of-state visitor. A presentation to the Lions Club, and contact with the *Daily Sentinel*, Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, and the chamber's Tourist Committee were part of the campaign to make local residents understand why out-of-state visitor needs were important to Mission 66.⁴²⁵

Another element of the Mission 66 program that drew negative responses from the community was that of fee collection. In June 1960, the new east entrance station opened. Glade Park landowners, worried that they would be inconvenienced by fee payment, were reassured by Bussey that they would not be required to pay. They would instead receive "season gate passes" that enabled residents to access the "shortest, most direct route to and from the Glade Park area" but did not allow them to use any other Monument facilities.⁴²⁶ Anyone visiting Glade Park residents was required to use the east entrance and go directly to Glade Park without any stops, except in cases of emergency.⁴²⁷ A modification of James Luther's 1939 fee collection, this policy became problematic once population levels in Glade Park increased. For the time being, however, it appeased fretful local residents, who were beginning to realize the disadvantages of having a national park in close proximity.

⁴²³Fred Bussey, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for July 1959" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 12 August 1959), p. 3.

⁴²⁴Fred Bussey, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for August 1959" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 11 September 1959), p. 3.

⁴²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴²⁶"Junction Entrance to Monument to be in Operation By July 1," *The Morning Sun*, 20 June 1960.

⁴²⁷*Ibid.*

The Mission 66 years also marked more boundary changes for the Monument. The draft for presidential proclamation 3307 was submitted in November 1958. It eliminated 211 acres of unwanted land from the park, and added 120 acres necessary for development of administrative facilities at the park entrances.⁴²⁸ It was accepted on August 7, 1959. Additionally, in November 1959, the county and the Park Service finally agreed upon the future of the old Serpents Trail. The status of the trail had been in question since 1937, when the Park Service was about to construct the final section of the Rim Rock Drive. Higher level Park Service officials and residents of adjacent communities felt that the trail was the logical route for the last portion of the road. Engineers F.A. Kittredge and T.W. Secrest, however, disagreed. At that time, the county ceased its periodic maintenance of the trail, leaving the Park Service to determine whether to maintain the old trail, include it as part of the new Rim Rock Drive, or simply construct the final segment along a different route.⁴²⁹ Eventually, the final segment of Rim Rock Drive was constructed through No Thoroughfare Canyon. By 1941, the Park Service had begun proceedings for the county to abandon the Serpents Trail.⁴³⁰ In 1950, the Serpents Trail was closed to vehicular traffic and was essentially dormant.⁴³¹ Finally in November 1959, the Mesa County Commissioners adopted a resolution for the abandonment of the old Serpents Trail road. According to the resolution, Mesa County claimed it had no interest in the trail, and officially vacated it. As a result, the trail was declared unnecessary for public ingress or egress on the Monument.⁴³²

By June 1961, the section of the Serpents Trail from the east side tunnel to the floor of No Thoroughfare Canyon had been rehabilitated as a hiking trail within the Monument.⁴³³ Once the product of a fervent community desire for a more direct route to Glade Park and the first scenic drive into the Monument, the Serpents Trail became a simple footpath. Its abandonment and subsequent refurbishment symbolized the changes that had taken place in the park during the Mission 66 years.

Most of the major Mission 66 projects within Colorado National Monument had been completed by 1965. A new visitor center, employee residences, trails, roadside exhibits,

⁴²⁸Fred Bussey, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for November 1958" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 12 December 1958), pp. 2-3.

⁴²⁹Letter, Jesse L. Nusbaum, Superintendent Colorado National Monument, to J.A. Elliot, District Engineer Bureau of Public Roads, 29 September 1937.

⁴³⁰Memorandum, G.A. Moskey, Chief Counsel National Park Service, to Acting Chief of Engineering National Park Service, 8 December 1941.

⁴³¹"Another Old Timer, Trail of the Serpent, Gets Retirement Papers after 28 Scary Years," *Daily Sentinel*, 18 April 1950.

⁴³²Mesa County, Proceedings of the Board of County Commissioners, November 23, 1959, Records of the Mesa County Courthouse, Grand Junction, Colorado.

⁴³³Fred Bussey, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for June 1961" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, 14 July 1961), p. 5.

directional signs on the highway, expanded camping facilities, and an increased staff brought to the Monument the kinds of things it needed in order to function as a tourist attraction. More importantly, these facilities indicated a break from how the park was managed and used in its early years. Rim Rock Drive was the Monument's first step toward modernity, but the Mission 66 facilities significantly contributed to the growing popularity of the park.

The year 1965 also marked another administrative shift. In April 1965 three national park areas—Colorado National Monument, Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument, and Curecanti National Recreational Area—became part of the Curecanti Group and were administered by a general superintendent.⁴³⁴ Because the three parks were small and underdeveloped, officials reasoned that it was easier to administer them from a central office.⁴³⁵ Headquarters for the Curecanti Group, or Colorado West Group, as it was eventually called, were located in Montrose, Colorado. The Colorado West Group was seemingly a step away from what had been efficient leadership by individual superintendents in the park. Yet, toward the end of this administration, some of the strongest and most controversial policy decisions were made. Between 1965 and 1975, when the Colorado West Group eventually dissolved, the Monument had three different managers: Paul Ellis (1965-1969), Robert Powell (1969-1972), and Robert Benton (1972-1980). While these men essentially fulfilled the same duties, they acquired different titles over the years: Ellis as Management Assistant, Powell as District Ranger, and Benton as Superintendent. Each of these managers inherited the problems of accessibility that surfaced shortly after Rim Rock Drive opened.

Local Use of Colorado National Monument, 1951-1980

Local use of the park between 1951 and 1980 created significant challenges to the Park Service. As local residents exercised what they felt were their rights to use the Monument, park officials became increasingly inflexible in their implementation of regulations. Although Mission 66 increased tourism, the Park Service's restrictive attitude was largely a result of local use of the park. After years of cooperation, local residents grew to resent both the Park Service and what they perceived as inconsistency in the Park Service's enforcement of regulations. They also felt that their past contributions to park development entitled them to a certain amount of freedom in their use of the park.

Use of the park by local residents included various types of activities. Much of the activity conformed with regulations, and was traditionally expected in National Park areas: picnicking, hiking, sightseeing, and camping. Other potentially damaging activities, however, were equally prevalent in the Monument. Between 1951 and 1959, vandalism, poaching, hunting, and littering occurred on a regular basis. In 1955, the prevalence of vandalism

⁴³⁴W. Paul Ellis, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for April 1965" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 10 May 1965), p. 1.

⁴³⁵Robert Benton, Telephone interview by Lisa M. Schoch, 23 January 1994.

prompted park officials to remove a wayside exhibit at Cold Shivers Point.⁴³⁶ In May 1956 vandalism occurred so frequently that a special article about it was printed in the *Daily Sentinel*. Part of the destruction appeared to be the result of ignorance, as local homeowners hauled dirt from the park to plant their new lawns. The majority of the acts, however, were "plain vandalism": cutting the boundary fences, carving initials on rocks significant for their ancient Indian petroglyphs, and shooting locks off picnic area gates.⁴³⁷

Activity on the Monument's boundaries was also cause for concern. Due to the uranium boom in Grand Junction during the 1950s, uranium mining was prevalent throughout the Grand Valley. In January 1955, patrols were made along the west boundaries of the park to check on reports of uranium mining.⁴³⁸ By March 1955, the manager of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) in Grand Junction was contacted by park officials about possible ore production on the west end of the park. Already a mining company on Glade Park regularly shipped ore over Rim Rock Drive. The locally based Atomic Power Uranium Company started unauthorized construction of a road in No Thoroughfare Canyon to access its claims in the portion of that canyon not yet included within park boundaries. When the local F.B.I. confronted the company, its owners agreed to destroy the road at their own expense.⁴³⁹ Nevertheless, park officials afterward felt even more vulnerable to outside threats to the park.

Some of the activities that took place in the park had happened before the Monument was even established. The installation of cattle guards at the Grand Junction entrance in 1954 and at the Glade Park entrance in 1956 indicated that the issue of stock drives through the park had not been resolved.⁴⁴⁰ In 1960 there were reports of stock being moved through the Monument to Glade Park. In May 1963, the western stock drive through the park was used on three different occasions.⁴⁴¹ Park officials tolerated this activity until an agreement could be reached.

⁴³⁶Russell L. Mahan, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for January 1955" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 4 February 1955), p. 1.

⁴³⁷Mary Louise Giblin, "Visitors Speed Work on Nature in Eroding National Monument," *Daily Sentinel* (?), 2 May 1956.

⁴³⁸Russell Mahan, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for January 1955" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 4 February 1955), p. 1.

⁴³⁹Russell Mahan, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for March 1955" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 6 April 1955), p. 3.

⁴⁴⁰Russell Mahan, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Reports for Colorado National Monument for June 1954 and June 1956" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, July 1954, 6 July 1956), pp. 1, 5.

⁴⁴¹Fred Bussey, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Reports for Colorado National Monument for April 1960, April 1963" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 11 May 1960, 13 May 1963), pp. 6, 4.

Other uses of the park, most of them not locally initiated, revealed both the popularity of the park's scenery and the Park Service's willingness to remain open-minded and flexible to unusual requests. In 1953, for instance, MGM requested permission to spend two days shooting scenes in the Monument for an upcoming movie. Park officials advised them that permission would be granted only after they had an opportunity to discuss the project with the filmmakers. Eventually, the plans were postponed.⁴² Nevertheless, the Monument continued to hold fascination for moviemakers. Nearly 30 years later, in the summer of 1984, sequences for the Warner Brothers film "American Flyers" were filmed in the Monument.

The Park Service response to violations involved increased implementation and enforcement of regulations. By 1961, park officials recognized the need to begin "special law enforcement practices."⁴³ Additionally, Colorado National Monument through the 1950s and early 1970s reduced its reliance on community input. While past decision-making was often based on advice from the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, the more recent years reflected an administration that frequently made decisions that were unpopular with the community. The relationship that had developed between local residents and Park Service officials at Colorado National Monument was now characterized by the Park Service's willingness or unwillingness to meet the needs and expectations of the communities adjacent to Colorado National Monument without compromising the integrity of the park itself.

The Commercial Vehicle Issue, 1955-1978

No community felt more restricted by Park Service policies than Glade Park. At the center of the conflict was Rim Rock Drive, the main thoroughfare for Glade Park's residential and commercial traffic by the 1950s. The only other access to Glade Park from Grand Junction was Little Park Road, which had been constructed in 1884. Due to its gravel surface, Little Park Road was nearly impassable when wet.

When commercial traffic on Rim Rock Drive became more prevalent in 1955, park officials were still adjusting to the enormous impact of that road's construction on the park. With mounting threats to the Monument—vandalism, hunting, adjacent land activity—it was not surprising that heavy commercial traffic along Rim Rock alarmed Monument employees. In the Park Service's opinion, commercial traffic presented a threefold dilemma: it was a safety hazard, it inflicted long-term damage to the road, and it did not fit the philosophical premise of the Park Service mission. For Mesa County the commercial vehicle issue posed a financial risk because building new roads and improving existing roads was costly. Glade Park residents, on the other hand, viewed the issue as simply another restriction imposed by the Park Service. Eventually, efforts to restrict the use of Rim Rock Drive prompted a local backlash against the policies of the National Park Service.

⁴²Russell Mahan, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for June 1953" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 30 June 1953), p. 3.

⁴³Fred Bussey, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for January 1961" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 10 February 1961), p. 4.

Over the years, commercial vehicle use on Rim Rock Drive had taken many forms. In March 1955 park officials, already alerted by uranium mining activity near the west boundary, also became concerned by one mine company's regular shipments of ore over Rim Rock Drive.⁴⁴⁴ By 1960, Superintendent Bussey, concerned over damage incurred by heavy truck use on Rim Rock Drive, established that vehicles going to Glade Park with a gross weight of eight tons or more were required to enter and leave the east entrance.⁴⁴⁵ In 1963, Park Service concern prompted officials to attend the annual picnic of Glade Park Pinyon Mesa Stockmen's Association to discuss the mutual problems associated with commercial trucking.⁴⁴⁶ In October 1963, a loaded three-decker semi-trailer stock truck obstructed a portion of Rim Rock for nearly two hours when it overturned to avoid a passenger car. This ordeal convinced park officials that commercial traffic was both dangerous and unsuited to Rim Rock's narrow lanes and numerous curves. Such large vehicles simply could not traverse the tight curves without crossing the center line.⁴⁴⁷

Early policy toward commercial vehicle use was inconsistent and indicated that decision-making at Colorado National Monument was weakened by its inclusion in the Curecanti Group. In July 1972, Park Service officials in Washington directed the Superintendent of the Curecanti Group, of which Colorado National Monument was a part, to reach an agreement with the Commander of the Defense Nuclear Agency (Department of Defense) regarding the use of 4.8 miles of Rim Rock Drive from the east entrance to the Glade Park turnoff. This stretch of road allowed the Department of Defense and its associate Mixed Company to access a nuclear test site at Glade Park. Under the conditions of the agreement, the Park Service allowed the Department of Defense to use the road, provided personnel to conduct inspections of the road, kept records of road repair costs and billed the Department of Defense for those repairs. The Department of Defense agreed to plan its deliveries of high explosives so as to avoid extensive damage to the road, provided personnel to jointly inspect the road, notified the Park Service of oversized loads and agreed not to cross Monument property without a Park Service escort. They also agreed to reimburse the Park Service for repair costs. The terms of the agreement were to extend until January 1974 barring any unexpected changes.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁴Homer Robinson, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for March 1955" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 6 April 1955), p. 3.

⁴⁴⁵"Junction Entrance to Monument to be in Operation by July 1," *The Morning Sun*, 20 June 1960.

⁴⁴⁶Fred Bussey, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for August 1963" (Washington: U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, 11 September 1963), p. 7.

⁴⁴⁷Fred Bussey, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for October 1963" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 12 November 1963), p. 2.

⁴⁴⁸Memorandum of Understanding Between the Superintendent, Curecanti Group, National Park Service, Department of Interior, and the Commander, Field Command, Defense Nuclear Agency, Department of Defense, For Use of Road in the Colorado National Monument, 1972. Note: It is not clear if the terms of the contract were ever fulfilled. Other documentation regarding this agreement between the Department of Defense and the National Park Service was not found.

By December 1972, however, Superintendent Robert Benton arrived at Colorado National Monument and the policy toward commercial traffic on Rim Rock Drive became more restrictive. Although the Monument was still under the authority of the Curecanti Group, Benton asserted his management style on the park. Like his predecessors, he maintained strong involvement in community organizations and events. At the same time, however, he often made decisions that were not popular with the community. Prior to his arrival at the park, Benton received an informal directive from the Colorado West Group's Superintendent Karl Gilbert, and the Midwest Regional Office in Omaha, Nebraska, to improve the Monument's mediocre status. Suffering from a lack of interpretive services, poor administration, and an increasingly lax attitude toward regulations, the Monument had fallen into disrepair during the Colorado West Group years.⁴⁹

In July 1973, the "constant pressure" to allow heavy vehicles to access Glade Park via Rim Rock Drive compelled Benton to institute a number of "safety preventive measures."⁴⁹ The west entrance was to deny access to all commercial vehicles over one ton. A tentative meeting was arranged with the Glade Park Stockmen's Association to discuss road control and safety issues on the east side of the park. In addition, the Chief Ranger and the Superintendent traveled up Little Park Road to inspect it, and to determine whether it was capable of handling some diverted commercial traffic from Rim Rock Drive. Finally, Benton contacted Mesa County and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) concerning the possible improvement of Little Park Road. Both the BLM and Mesa County believed that such improvements were possible. In fact, at that time, even though officials knew the work would take several years, Mesa County "agree[d] in principle" to improve Little Park Road.⁴⁹ In August 1973 final plans for "signing and control" of the commercial traffic to Glade Park commenced. In December, Benton attended a meeting with the BLM and the Mesa County Road Department, in which Mesa County officials discussed their "intention" to improve Little Park Road to accommodate driving speeds of 45 to 50 miles per hour.⁴⁹

A series of meetings in June and July 1974 revealed the extent to which the Park Service and local conflict had grown. In June 1974, Benton instituted new regulations on Rim Rock Drive. Trucks longer than 25 feet were restricted to using the road only between the hours of 9:00 P.M. and 6:00 A.M. and trucks over eight feet in width required a permit or a ranger escort.⁴⁹ Local stockmen vigorously protested the restrictions. In a meeting on June 16,

⁴⁹Robert Benton, Telephone interview by Lisa M. Schoch, 23 January 1994.

⁴⁹Robert Benton, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for July 1973" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2 August 1973), p. 2.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁴⁹Robert Benton, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Reports for August and December 1973" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 5 September 1973, 2 January 1974), pp. 1, 2.

⁴⁹"Commercial Vehicle Regulation Established at National Monument," *Fruita Times*, 13 June 1974.

1974, the Mesa County Commissioners, Glade Park ranchers, and Benton presented their sides of the issue. Commissioner Ed Lamm pointed out that a great deal of county money had been contributed to Rim Rock Drive in the past. The stockmen argued that the alternate routes were more dangerous than Rim Rock for transporting stock. Benton discussed the issue of safety on a road that was not built to handle such large trucks. The meeting resolved nothing, as Glade Park residents essentially stated that they would not adhere to the regulations and Benton stated that he would stand by his decision.⁴⁵⁴

A well-attended public meeting held on June 25 resulted in modification of the restrictions. Park Service officials, including Deputy Regional Director Glen Bean, the general superintendent of the Curecanti Group, Karl Gilbert, and Park Service Regional Safety Officer Jim Dempsey were present. Non-Park Service officials included District Highway Engineer Dick Prosenec representing the governor's office, Bill Cleary of Representative Jim Johnson's office and representatives for Senators Floyd Haskell and Peter Dominick. The modifications included the condition that trucks over 30 feet long were subject to restrictions between Memorial Day and Labor Day from 8:30 A.M. to 9:00 P.M. with the hours between 1:00 P.M. and 4:00 P.M. reserved for Park Service escorts. Logging trucks, however, were not subject to any restrictions as long as they did not cross the double yellow line. Glade Park stockmen were pleased with the changes, while the Park Service still expressed its concern over safety. The Park Service was primarily concerned about tourists who were unfamiliar with the road, rather than commercial drivers' ability to handle the road. The topic of constructing an alternate route was discussed briefly but not taken seriously.⁴⁵⁵

A meeting was held in July in which Benton explained to the Mesa County Commissioners that, while the Park Service was trying to remain flexible, the Monument simply did not have the "manpower" to provide escorts daily.⁴⁵⁶ While he maintained that the limited access had been successful so far, in a six-day period the Park Service provided escorts to fifteen livestock trucks and eleven logging trucks. During this period the escorts took three hours per day away from visitor needs in the park, a fact that influenced Benton's decision to expand escort hours between 8:30 A.M. and 9:00 P.M. each day.⁴⁵⁷ From 1974 to 1976, the escorts continued, and the superintendent made frequent trips to inspect the work being done on Little Park Road, which Mesa County had begun to upgrade.⁴⁵⁸

Opposition to the Park Service's regulations was not limited to the ranchers of Glade Park. The *Daily Sentinel*, once considered a great booster for the park, printed several

⁴⁵⁴"Stockmen Protest Closing of Glade Park Road," *Daily Sentinel*, 16 June 1974.

⁴⁵⁵"Truck Traffic Restrictions on Monument Road Eased," *Daily Sentinel* 25 June 1974.

⁴⁵⁶Mary Louise Giblin, "Road Hassle Subject of Meeting," *Daily Sentinel*, 21 July 1974.

⁴⁵⁷"Truckers Gain 24-Hour Access Through Monument," *Daily Sentinel*, 24 July 1974.

⁴⁵⁸Robert Benton, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for 1974-1976" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service).

editorials in the summer of 1974 that inflamed already negative local opinion of the Park Service. In one editorial, entitled "Senseless Order," the *Sentinel* pointed out how the commercial vehicle ban threatened the livelihoods of many Glade Park residents. Its author also questioned the authority of the Park to close the road, and stated that the road closure was simply a "power play, to make the Monument road—the only decent access to Glade Park—into a tourist road only."⁴⁵⁹ The article concluded that Benton could easily reverse the "senseless restrictions" so that a court action would not be necessary.⁴⁶⁰ Another editorial, entitled "New Road a Must," presented the idea that the road controversy could easily have been avoided had the Park Service not employed such "arbitrary" regulations:

... we blame the Park Service's bulldozing tactics for much of the trouble because National Park Service officials were dealing with a part of the West that doesn't bulldoze easily⁴⁶¹

Such sentiments touched on a common theme that had been growing in the Grand Valley for years—western resentment of government intervention.

Despite increased local resentment toward the Park Service's road policy, the park itself continued to grow in area. In January 1977, plans for the expansion of the park's boundaries were underway as congressional authorization and a promise of \$490,000 for land acquisition had already been assured. Included in the proposed 2,797 acres was the upper end of No Thoroughfare Canyon, a 145-acre tract near Red Canyon, over four acres that would correct a boundary fence error, thirteen acres of private land near the Fruita entrance, and close to 1,000 acres of other private tracts owned by the Fletchers, the Miracle Land Company, the Landing family, and Robert Burford. Two-thirds of the new acreage was under Bureau of Land Management administration.⁴⁶²

Superintendent Benton was especially pleased with the county commissioners' and the chamber of commerce's support of Senator Floyd Haskell and Representative Jim Johnson; both men led the congressional campaign to expand the park. Concerns over the original boundary revision, which would have traversed the county's Little Park and DS Roads, stemmed from the ongoing commercial vehicle conflict. Benton surmised that if those boundaries had been kept, the Park Service would have had to restrict commercial traffic on those roads as well. Fortunately, the boundaries were adjusted so that they only bordered the two roads.⁴⁶³ In

⁴⁵⁹"Senseless Order," *Daily Sentinel*, 19 June 1974.

⁴⁶⁰*Ibid.*

⁴⁶¹"New Road a Must," *Daily Sentinel*, 27 June 1974.

⁴⁶²Alice Wright, "Colorado National Monument Growing," *Westworld*, 13 January 1977, Mesa County Library Clipping File.

⁴⁶³*Ibid.*

January 1978, 2,739.65 acres of land were added to the Monument.⁴⁶⁴ Symbolic of the park's renewal under Benton, the additional land also signified that the local community could still be an important force in park development.

Between 1977 and 1979, Park Service concerns over the commercial vehicle issue deepened. In 1978, an estimated 200 heavy vehicles used Rim Rock Drive; of those, 107 were formally escorted by Park Service officials.⁴⁶⁵ In a meeting including Superintendent Benton, Glade Park representatives, county commissioners, and state representative Bob Burford in February 1978, the Mesa County Commissioners committed themselves to "accelerating" the improvement of Little Park Road. Benton was particularly active in maintaining a dialogue with Glade Park residents and Mesa County officials. One of his main goals was to ensure that Mesa County would follow through on its promise to improve Little Park Road.⁴⁶⁶

By 1979, it was evident that no amount of compromise would resolve the commercial traffic issue any time soon. The Park Service aggressively worked to develop a policy that it believed would please all those involved. When the Cougar Mining Company, which was part of the W. W. Lang Company, approached the Monument about transporting shipments of barium ore across Rim Rock Drive from a mine located near the Utah state line, the Park Service denied the request until an assessment of the impacts could be made.⁴⁶⁷ In April 1979, park officials conducted an experiment to support an environmental assessment that presented alternatives to the use of commercial vehicles on Rim Rock Drive. They hired a belly dump-truck from the local Corn Construction Company to drive Little Park Road and assess its potential as an access road. While Chief Ranger Hank Schoch videotaped the truck's progress on the road, Ranger Bob Randall rode in the truck. The driver of the truck determined that it was better than most mining roads he had driven.⁴⁶⁸

In the summer of 1979, the Park Service finalized an environmental review and list of four alternatives to the commercial vehicle issue: maintain the status quo, increase commercial

⁴⁶⁴Secretary of Interior, Boundary Revision, "National Park Service Colorado National Monument," *Federal Register* (19 January 1978) vol. 43, no. 20, 4310-4311.

⁴⁶⁵Robert B. Kasparek, Henry A. Schoch, and Robert L. Randall, "Environmental Assessment: Commercial Vehicle Use in the Colorado National Monument," Colorado National Monument, Rocky Mountain Regional Office, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, p. 1.

⁴⁶⁶Robert Benton, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for February 1978" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 10 March 1978); Robert Benton, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for August 1977" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service 6 September 1977).

⁴⁶⁷Kasparek, Schoch, and Randall, "Environmental Assessment," p. 1.

⁴⁶⁸Bob Randall, Case Incident Record, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 9 April 1979.

vehicle use, decrease use, or eliminate it altogether.⁴⁶⁹ Four hundred copies of the assessment were distributed to the community in the hopes that the regional director would make a decision regarding the issue by September.⁴⁷⁰ Park officials were surprised that "reaction from Glade Park focuses on NPS rather than Mesa County."⁴⁷¹ Assuming that local residents were looking to the county for improvements, the Park Service underestimated local frustration with the federal government.

The Park Service preferred a combination of alternatives that included the complete elimination of commercial traffic by January 1, 1982. Until 1982, any commercial vehicles crossing the Monument would be required to provide their own escorts. In addition, Mesa County was expected to complete any extra improvements necessary on Little Park Road. While the Park Service was unable to provide any financial assistance, it did encourage Mesa County to apply for federal assistance. The Park Service alternative was deemed the most advantageous to the park itself: "Damage to the resources will be lessened, air quality improved and most pollution reduced."⁴⁷²

Local opposition to the Park Service alternative was prevalent. Numerous meetings between the Park Service, Mesa County, and residents of Glade Park indicated that the stagnancy of the situation had taken its toll on local patience. The county commissioners, after assessing the Park Service's authority to close the road, began to consider their alternatives, which included construction of another road to Glade Park and pursuit of federal legislation that would make that segment of Rim Rock Drive a county road.⁴⁷³ One of the county's biggest obstacles, not surprisingly, was its budget. With nearly 500 miles of county roads to maintain, and other road projects besides the Glade Park road to consider, County Commissioner Maxine Albers expressed the local community's lack of patience with the Park Service:

The county will never be in a position to finance the road. The feds need to finance it. They caused the problem.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁶⁹Robert Benton, "Environmental Review and Selected Alternative Concerning Commercial Vehicle Use In Colorado National Monument," 24 August 1979.

⁴⁷⁰Robert Benton, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for July 1979" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 7 August 1979), p. 4.

⁴⁷¹Robert Benton, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for Colorado National Monument for June 1979" (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 5 July 1979), p. 4.

⁴⁷²Robert Benton, "Environmental Review and Selected Alternative. ..." 24 August 1979.

⁴⁷³"County Investigates Glade Park Access," *Daily Sentinel*, 25 September 1979; "Alternate Road Plan Outlined for Glade Park," *Daily Sentinel*, 14 November 1979.

⁴⁷⁴Mary Louise GIBLIN, "Lack of Funds Stopping Roads," *Daily Sentinel*, November 1979; "County Officials Term Road Damage Major," *Daily Sentinel*, 11 March 1980.

By this time, the conflict between the Park Service and the local community had begun to echo some of the ideas generated by the "Sagebrush Rebellion." The "Sagebrush Rebellion" was originally a bill passed by the Nevada legislature which demanded state control of 49 million acres of federally held lands in that state.⁴⁷⁵ Although the "Sagebrush Rebellion" ran its course in about two years, its powerful rhetoric was felt and understood throughout the Rocky Mountain West. Originally led by western ranchers, the rebellion appealed to Westerners' sense of rugged individualism and their historical "deep distrust of the federal government."⁴⁷⁶ It pointed out the historical relationship between Westerners and what they viewed as their "distant landlord"—the federal government. It revealed Western resentment over the fact that most of the West was run by non-Westerners.⁴⁷⁷ Community opposition to the Park Service's road policy exhibited the same frustrations.

By January 1980, the Park Service responded to opposition when it agreed to delay its earlier plan for "phased restrictions" until the three sides could find the best way to handle the problem of commercial vehicles. The Park Service granted Mesa County two 30-day postponements. The county and private individuals used this time to appeal to state congressmen and senators regarding the road issue.⁴⁷⁸ Senators William Armstrong and Gary Hart received a barrage of letters protesting the Park Service's decision. Most of the writers were Glade Park residents, many of whom mentioned relatives who helped build Rim Rock Drive. A letter to Senator Hart from Jay and George Van Loan stated that the road controversy was a "moral issue." The Van Loans' grandfather, four of their uncles and their father helped to construct the road, and one uncle perished in the 1933 Half-Tunnel accident. They felt that their family, who had lived on Glade Park for sixty years, had "paid its dues" and should not be "denied the right" to use the road.⁴⁷⁹ This was a typical attitude among local residents, especially those who had direct ties to the construction of Rim Rock Drive.

Despite opposition, the restrictions were upheld. As a result, escorts were still necessary, but the Park Service refused to provide that service.⁴⁸⁰ In March 1980, the Park Service requested cost estimates for improving the existing Rim Rock Drive and Little Park Road and for the construction of a bypass route at the upper part of the Little Park Road. It also considered the idea of installing a traffic system in the park that would regulate commercial

⁴⁷⁵Cawley, "The Sagebrush Rebellion," p. 95.

⁴⁷⁶Short, *Ronald Reagan and the Public Lands*, pp. 10, 13; Lamm and McCarthy, *The Angry West*, p. 153.

⁴⁷⁷Lamm and McCarthy, *The Angry West*, p. 238.

⁴⁷⁸"County Seeks Congress Aid on Monument Road," *Daily Sentinel*, January 1980.

⁴⁷⁹Letter, Jay and George Van Loan, to Senator Gary Hart, 19 January 1980, Gary Hart Papers, Courtesy Western Historical Collections, University of Colorado at Boulder.

⁴⁸⁰Letter, Daniel J. Tobin Jr., Associate Director National Park Service, to the Honorable Ken Kramer, House of Representatives, 25 February 1980.

vehicle traffic.⁴⁸¹ In April 1980, when these estimates were available, the most cost-effective alternative was the improvement of Rim Rock Drive to accommodate heavy traffic. Yet, the assessment stated that such improvements would "destroy much of the scenic beauty the Monument was created to preserve."⁴⁸² The other alternatives, improving Little Park Road or constructing a two mile bypass from Little Park Road, far exceeded the costs of improving Rim Rock Drive.⁴⁸³

Each side of the issue held its own reasons for opposing the Park Service's original alternatives. Mesa County officials argued that the cost of improving Little Park Road (\$2.7 million) was too high. They questioned the Park Service's authority over the 4.8 miles of road on the park's east side that led to Glade Park. The county believed that this portion of the road was "part of the county network for the benefit of the community."⁴⁸⁴

Glade Park residents, on the other hand, opposed the alternatives for both practical and emotional reasons. They felt that Park Service restrictions would "interfere with their future options as landowners".⁴⁸⁵ Past contributions of labor and money to Rim Rock led Glade Park residents to believe that they were entitled to use the road however they pleased. This attitude was evident in Glade Park residents Doug King and Doug Jones at an August 1980 meeting between the Mesa County Commissioners, Glade Park residents, and Park Service representatives from the Monument. King and Jones felt that it was the Park Service's responsibility to provide the escorts for commercial vehicles since the Park Service was "kicking them off the road" anyway.⁴⁸⁶

In the midst of all of this turmoil, Colorado National Monument's administration underwent another shift when Superintendent Dennis Huffman arrived in 1980. Facing an already "rocky" relationship between local residents and the National Park Service, Huffman launched a campaign to change the community's attitude toward the Monument. Through regular involvement in civic groups and the local media, Huffman worked to inform people of the park's plans and to advertise its role as a resource to the community.⁴⁸⁷ Huffman, like

⁴⁸¹Memorandum, Richard A. Strait, Associate Director Planning and Resource Preservation Rocky Mountain Region, to Assistant Manager Midwest/Rocky Mountain Team, Denver Service Center, 19 March 1980.

⁴⁸²Acting Assistant Manager, Midwest/Rocky Mountain Team, Denver Service Center, "Truck Route Study of Route 1 Colorado National Monument," 28 April 1980.

⁴⁸³Ibid.

⁴⁸⁴Letter, Mesa County Commissioners to Cecil Andrus, Secretary of the Interior, 25 January 1980.

⁴⁸⁵Memorandum, Henry A. Schoch, Chief Ranger to Dennis Huffman, Superintendent, 31 July 1980.

⁴⁸⁶Memorandum, Dennis Huffman, Superintendent, for Files regarding Meeting with Mesa County Board of Commissioners and Glade Park Residents, 1 August 1980.

⁴⁸⁷Dennis Huffman, Telephone interview by Lisa M. Schoch, 6 February 1994.

Benton, faced the challenge of local resentment. He too often made unpopular decisions, including his continuance of Benton's road policy.

The result of the 1980 meetings was Mesa County's agreement to seek funding for the construction of a bypass from the Little Park Road to the community of Rosedale. The Park Service supported this by agreeing to inform various agencies of the county's need for funding. It also stated that it would create regulations that would "alleviate" problems with 36 C.F.R. 5.6(b)—the federal code governing park operations—until the construction was completed. Finally, the Park Service once again asserted that any commercial vehicles using Rim Rock would have to provide their own escorts.⁴⁸⁸

The issue of escorts raised some important points regarding the Park Service's overall road policy. While Mesa County officials and Glade Park residents believed that it was the Park Service's responsibility to fund whatever facilities were necessary to ensure the safety of its visitors, the Park Service stated that it was not funding that was at issue. Park Service Regional Director Lorraine Mintzmyer made it very clear that it was "inappropriate" for the federal government to subsidize commercial interests, and that Rim Rock Drive was not constructed for that kind of use in the first place.⁴⁸⁹ This was true. Despite what many local residents believed, Rim Rock Drive was built to accommodate tourist traffic through the park, not to carry heavy commercial vehicles.

In the meantime, local and state politicians worked to ensure that the Park Service would take responsibility for the road issue. Colorado Senator Bill Armstrong and his aides felt the Park Service was inflexible in its policy toward escorts.⁴⁹⁰ A letter to Armstrong from Mesa County Commissioner Rick Enstrom may have prompted the senator's interest in the issue. In the letter, Enstrom stated that Mesa County had pledged \$600,000 for the construction of half the bypass agreed to in the July 1980 meeting. He also asked Armstrong's help in funding escorts until the road was completed. Armstrong apparently felt so strongly that he negotiated a deal with Senator Stevens of the Appropriations Committee to include language in the Interior Department Appropriations bill that required the Park Service to fund escorts.⁴⁹¹ This topic lasted an unusually long period of forty-five minutes during the committee meeting.⁴⁹² The

⁴⁸⁸Memorandum, Lorraine Mintzmyer, Regional Director Rocky Mountain Region, to Dennis Huffman, Superintendent, 27 August 1980.

⁴⁸⁹Lorraine Mintzmyer, Regional Director Rocky Mountain Region, "Briefing Statement: Escort Service Colorado National Monument," 29 September 1980.

⁴⁹⁰National Park Service Message Record, Phone Call, Dave Jensen and Dennis Huffman, Superintendent, 23 September 1980.

⁴⁹¹National Park Service Message Record, Phone Call, David Jensen to Dennis Huffman, Superintendent, 23 September 1980; "Making Appropriations for the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies," 96th Congress, 2d Session, Senate Report # 96-1470, May 16

⁴⁹²National Park Service Message Record, Phone Call, between Dave Jensen and Dennis Huffman, Superintendent, 24 December 1980.

committee eventually approved an amendment that would require the Park Service to continue escorting large vehicles. Armstrong thought that if this were accepted into the Interior Department's 1981 appropriation bill, the commercial vehicle issue at the Monument might be resolved. The appropriations bill would then go to a House-Senate Conference committee for review.⁴⁹³ Monument officials, on the other hand, were disappointed by the congressional language as it created "much less flexibility in administering the escort problem."⁴⁹⁴

The year 1981 represented a turning point in the commercial traffic issue. In April, the Monument issued a draft of its commercial vehicle regulations which prohibited all trucks from using any part of Rim Rock Drive except the portion from Grand Junction to Glade Park. Escorts were required, with Park Service escorts costing a fee. The operation of the vehicles was limited to daylight hours only, with Park Service escorts available only between 9:00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M. Vehicles were not allowed to stop on the road unless it was an emergency. Trucking permits were available for ten dollars per vehicle.⁴⁹⁵

Even more disturbing to Glade Park residents, however, was the Park Service's 1981 decision to require all Glade Park residents to sign an affidavit indicating their residence and ownership of land on Glade Park.⁴⁹⁶ The increase in population at Glade Park prompted the Park Service to change its past policy of granting free access to residents. According to the 1939 fee policy, residents had been able to simply tell the fee collector that they were going to Glade Park, but it became difficult for the Park Service to keep track of who really did reside in Glade Park and who did not. Park officials noticed that many non-Glade Park residents had begun to abuse the agreement with residents and believed that a new policy needed to be initiated.⁴⁹⁷ In May 1981, Superintendent Dennis Huffman announced at a public meeting in Glade Park that the Monument would be issuing free windshield stickers to vehicles owned by Glade Park Residents.⁴⁹⁸ No fee was assessed but affidavits were required. In addition, while visitors to Glade Park had once been admitted free, they were now assessed a fee.⁴⁹⁹ The new policy only helped to fuel the already volatile road controversy.

Glade Park residents were infuriated by the newest road policy. In a letter from the Piñon Mesa Stockgrowers Association to Superintendent Huffman, Doug Jones stated that the

⁴⁹³"Park Escort Amendment is Approved," *Rocky Mountain News*, 26 September 1980.

⁴⁹⁴Ibid.

⁴⁹⁵Memorandum, "Draft Special Regulation for Inclusion in 36 CFR, Chapter 1, Part 7," Dennis Huffman to Lorraine Mintzmyer, 8 April 1981.

⁴⁹⁶Letter, Douglas L. Jones, Secretary Piñon Mesa Livestock Association, to Dennis Huffman, Superintendent, 15 June 1981.

⁴⁹⁷Mindy Pratt, "Monument Fee Prompts Brouhaha," *Daily Sentinel*, 9 July 1980.

⁴⁹⁸Letter, Ira. J. Hutchison, Director National Park Service, to Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Brent, 9 July 1981.

⁴⁹⁹"Glade Park Residents See Inequities in Rim Rock Fees," *Fruita Times*, 20 October 1982.

restrictions were "only another step in attempting to deny us complete use of the road."⁵⁰⁰ Glade Park frustrations had finally reached a breaking point:

We can no longer accept the continuing changes and apparent harassment. It seems we have had to fight this problem with each new change of local or regional Park administration. It is our decision to submit application to the Mountain States Legal Foundation to represent us in this matter.⁵⁰¹

Residents of Glade Park did file a complaint with the Mountain States Legal Foundation, asking for legal representation. The Foundation was once headed by the controversial James Watt—Secretary of the Interior at the time—and was a non-profit, public interest firm formed by businessmen to fight "excessive bureaucratic regulation." The ranchers stated that if the Foundation would not handle the case, they were considering filing their own suit against the Park Service.⁵⁰²

The conflict over commercial vehicle traffic on Rim Rock Drive was the product of the most significant shifts in the Monument's administration and development from the 1950s to the 1970s. Accustomed to a certain level of cooperation from the Park Service, local residents grew impatient when traffic restrictions appeared to threaten their livelihoods and their freedom. Park officials, on the other hand, responded to commercial traffic according to the needs of the park, including environmental considerations and the safety of increasing amounts of visitors. Eventually, the commercial vehicle issue fueled a far more complex conflict between local residents and the Park Service. Still centered on road use, this conflict ultimately ended in a lawsuit between the Park Service, Mesa County, and a landowner in Glade Park.

⁵⁰⁰Letter, Douglas A. Jones, Secretary of Piñon Mesa Livestock Association, to Dennis Huffman, Superintendent, 15 June 1981.

⁵⁰¹Ibid.

⁵⁰²Mary Louise Giblin, "Rancher Heads to Court over Fee on Monument Road," *Daily Sentinel*, 1 August 1981.

Chapter Six

The Lawsuit: 1981-1986

Talk of lawsuits was nothing new regarding the controversy over Rim Rock Drive. Rick Enstrom, one of the more outspoken of the Mesa County Commissioners, mentioned in June 1980 that he thought that the only solution to the problem was to give the road back to the county. Enstrom suggested that the county might even file a civil suit to determine to whom the road really belonged.⁵⁰³ In June 1981, however, the prospect of a lawsuit became more of a reality for the Park Service. During this month, Glade Park property owner John Wilkenson began his five-year crusade against the Park Service's affidavit policy. Wilkenson had purchased property in Glade Park from his brother in May 1981.⁵⁰⁴ When he learned of the Park Service's affidavit policy, he began to conduct extensive research regarding both the road's history and the law. What he found convinced him that the Park Service was acting outside its jurisdiction regarding the use of Rim Rock Drive.⁵⁰⁵

Wilkenson spent the summer of 1981 trying to prove to the Park Service that, because a public right-of-way had been established before the Monument was established, the affidavit policy was illegal. Moreover, the language of the affidavits and the windshield stickers incensed many Glade Park residents. In addition to providing a legal description of their property, residents were required to agree to the specific conditions as follows:

I understand and agree that any privilege granted me by the National Park Service for free access across Colorado National Monument is restricted to one short line route of my choice, and that I am otherwise obligated to pay any recreational fees that may be charged in accordance with the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, as amended, and with Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations.⁵⁰⁶

Wilkenson contended that by signing the document he was essentially agreeing that he "had no right to use the road" and that the Park Service would give residents the "privilege to use the road."⁵⁰⁷ This affidavit was used for the first two weeks of June 1981. Then the Park Service

⁵⁰³"Glade Park Road Plan Fails to Please Enstrom," *Daily Sentinel*, 21 June 1980.

⁵⁰⁴Deed, David Wilkenson to John R. Wilkenson, Reception No. 1257437, Book 1314, Mesa County, Colorado, 19 May 1981, p. 296.

⁵⁰⁵John R. Wilkenson, Interview by Lisa M. Schoch, 17 August 1992, Orchard Mesa, Colorado.

⁵⁰⁶Copy of Application and Affidavit for Glade Park Permit, Colorado National Monument.

⁵⁰⁷John R. Wilkenson, Interview by Lisa M. Schoch, 17 August 1992.

issued a second version of the application that did not include the aforementioned section. Whether the language was removed to mollify local residents is not known.

Wilkenson also believed that the Park Service lacked the authority to control free public access over Rim Rock Drive.⁵⁰⁸ His argument was based on his belief that section 1227.3 of Title 36 prohibits the Park Service from collecting recreational fees for nonrecreational purposes. For Glade Park residents, accessing their homes was considered "non-recreational," since they were not using any of the park's facilities.⁵⁰⁹ Park Service officials, on the other hand, explained that they would continue to collect entrance fees in accordance with the Land & Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 as amended, and with applicable sections of Title 36 Code of Federal Regulations.⁵¹⁰ Yet, they made it very clear that they did not require Glade Park residents to pay any fees. Instead they wanted residents to simply sign the affidavits.

Wilkenson's references to federal regulations indicated that the regulations themselves were easily misinterpreted. The Park Service, however, staunchly upheld these rules. Parts one through seven of Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations is the framework "used by the National Park Service to protect the natural and cultural resources of the parks and to protect visitors and property within the parks."⁵¹¹ More specifically, parts one through six are general regulations for all park areas, while part seven includes special regulations that often serve to supplement the general rules. Revisions in these regulations occurred in 1966 and in 1980 in response to widespread changes in the National Park system. The revisions were also made in order to simplify the regulations for the public.⁵¹² Wilkenson focused his attention on Section 6, "Miscellaneous Fees: Recreation Fees; Entrance and User Fees." He specifically pointed to the section about fee exemptions to support his claims.

On the surface, Wilkenson seemed to exhibit the characteristics of a "Sagebrush rebel." Initially, however, he was not anti-government. He wanted the government to be accountable for its mistakes. One of Wilkenson's first actions against the Park Service was his refusal to cooperate with the new fee policy. Case reports for the summer of 1981 kept by fee collectors and law enforcement officers at the Monument indicate that he would not pay or submit to an affidavit on numerous occasions.⁵¹³ As a result he was issued citations under Section 6.5 of

⁵⁰⁸Letter, John R. Wilkenson to Henry Schoch, Chief Ranger, and Dennis Huffman, Superintendent, 4 June 1981.

⁵⁰⁹Letter, John Wilkenson to Henry Schoch, Chief Ranger, and Dennis Huffman, Superintendent, 18 June 1981.

⁵¹⁰Letter, Henry Schoch, Chief Ranger, to John R. Wilkenson, 22 June 1981.

⁵¹¹*Federal Register* (14 March 1982) Vol. 47, No. 52, p. 11598.

⁵¹²*Ibid.*

⁵¹³Raymond Skiles, Supplementary Case/Incident Record, Colorado National Monument, 25 August 1981.

Title 36, which states in part that "No person shall enter or use park areas ... without paying the required fees and possessing the applicable permits."⁵¹⁴

Throughout the summer of 1981, Wilkenson also bombarded Park officials with letters demanding that the Park Service state its position on various elements of the road controversy.⁵¹⁵ In what Wilkenson deemed one of his "pre-action letters," he asked that Superintendent Huffman provide a "yes" or "no" answer to four questions regarding the Park Service's authority to control use of Rim Rock Drive.⁵¹⁶ The Park Service concluded that it was "inappropriate" to respond to what they perceived as "loaded questions" regarding the controversy. When his frequent correspondence regarding the road issue became what Chief Ranger Schoch deemed "unnecessarily coercive," relations between the two sides deteriorated.⁵¹⁷ As the weeks passed and as the Park Service refused to respond to Wilkenson's demands, he increasingly discussed the possibility of settling the matter in court. By this time, Wilkenson was convinced that it had been illegal for the Park Service to issue citations to him for refusal to sign the affidavit or pay a fee:

It is true that a major court action is a hassle, and that I am a very busy person. However, I am not too busy to defend myself against your illegal and unjust attacks.⁵¹⁸

The Lawsuit

On July 13, 1981, Wilkenson decided to file a civil suit against the Park Service. In a letter he explained his decision to Superintendent Dennis Huffman: "It is with regret that I inform you that you have caused me to anticipate litigation between us to resolve our differences."⁵¹⁹ By August 1, 1981, Wilkenson formally filed a motion in the Mesa County District Court against Superintendent Huffman and Chief Ranger Schoch. District Court Judge William Ela set the hearing for September 1. Huffman's response indicated that the Park Service was ready to resolve the issue one way or another:

It's time the situation was clarified. What comes out in court we can live with. The only place to make a resolution will be in court. For the last 30 years there has been a question of the status of the road. That is the real issue.⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁴*Federal Register* (13 February 1972) Vol. 37, No. 31.

⁵¹⁵Letter, John R. Wilkenson to Superintendent Dennis Huffman, 24 June 1981.

⁵¹⁶*Ibid.*

⁵¹⁷Letter, Chief Ranger Henry Schoch to John R. Wilkenson, 1 July 1981.

⁵¹⁸Letter, John R. Wilkenson to Superintendent Dennis Huffman, 9 July 1981.

⁵¹⁹Letter, John R. Wilkenson to Superintendent Dennis Huffman, 13 July 1981.

⁵²⁰Mary Louise Giblin, "Rancher Heads to Court over Fee on Monument Road," *Daily Sentinel*, 1 August 1981.

Wilkenson's case against the Park Service was unusual for a number of reasons. In the first place, he represented himself. Even before he filed his complaint in Mesa County District Court, he advised Park officials that he was "quite capable" of representing himself.⁵²¹ Yet, this caused some problems for Wilkenson. Because he was not formally trained as a lawyer, many of his actions delayed the case's progress in the courts.

Wilkenson's most time-consuming error involved the way in which he filed his suit. His complaint was filed in Mesa County District Court in September 1981. By late October, Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard Jost, who represented Chief Ranger Schoch and Superintendent Huffman, had filed a motion requesting dismissal of Wilkenson's suit on the grounds that the county court did not have the jurisdiction over a federal case.⁵²² District Court Judge William Ela eventually ruled that he did not have the authority to try the case. Since it involved federal lands, he decided the case should be tried in U.S. District Court. Wilkenson tried to prevent these changes by stating that federal rules did not apply in a state court, but his argument failed to convince the court. The case was removed to federal court where a hearing was set for November 25, 1981.⁵²³

In the meantime, Wilkenson was also fighting criminal charges filed against him by the Park Service. His interpretation of the events indicated that because he was not willing to sign the affidavit, Park officials wanted him to pay the \$1 entrance fee. When he refused, he was issued a citation. He found it ironic that the Park Service stated that there was no fee for traveling between Grand Junction and Glade Park, but when he did not sign the affidavit, they expected him to pay the fee anyway or face violation of Title 36 CFR, Section 6.5.⁵²⁴ He pleaded not guilty to two criminal charges that he entered the Colorado National Monument without paying the required fee. Although the charges were petty offenses, they could amount to fines of up to \$500 and a maximum sentence of six months in jail.

When he appeared before Federal Magistrate Royce Sickler, Wilkenson found that his criminal case would have to be tried either by a magistrate or a federal judge. Sickler's job was to "hold pretrial hearings in an attempt to dispose of cases before they go to trial."⁵²⁵ In his assessment of the case, Sickler decided that he would transfer the case to Judge Matsch, but advised Wilkenson that he should "give a little bit and conform to the regulations."⁵²⁶

⁵²¹Letter, Wilkenson to Schoch and Huffman, 18 June 1981.

⁵²²"U.S. Attorney Files for Dismissal of Suit on Monument Road," *Daily Sentinel*, 20 October 1981.

⁵²³Mary Louise Giblin, "Glade Park Access Case Moved to Federal Court," *Daily Sentinel*, 23 October 1981.

⁵²⁴John Wilkenson, "Glade Park: Jury or Jail? The Truth Behind the Glade Park Controversy," *Palisade Tribune*, 19 January 1984, p. 4.

⁵²⁵"Glade Park Man Seeks Trial Before Federal Judge," *Daily Sentinel*, 19 November 1981.

⁵²⁶*Ibid.*

Wilkenson eventually stated that he would not be tried by "the government" for these criminal charges because it was the government that was accusing him. He wanted a Mesa County jury to try him.⁵²⁷

The hearing before U.S. District Court Judge Richard Matsch in late November proved to be bittersweet for Wilkenson. Matsch dismissed Wilkenson's case because he filed a suit against specific park employees (Schoch and Huffman), who he claimed "violated his rights" to use Rim Rock Drive. According to Matsch, Wilkenson should have filed his case against the United States government, which maintains the Monument, rather than against its employees. Instead of making him start all over with a new suit, Matsch gave Wilkenson 20 days to amend his complaint and refile the suit, which he believed raised some important issues. Wilkenson planned to alter his original complaint to include the secretary of the interior, the director of the National Park Service and the Park Service's Rocky Mountain regional director.⁵²⁸

By this time Wilkenson had already written to various government officials requesting their position regarding the lawsuit. Between September and November 1981, he wrote letters to NPS Regional Director Lorraine Mintzmyer, Secretary of the Interior James Watt, Acting Deputy NPS Director Stanley Albright and even President Ronald Reagan. Each of these government officials declined to comment on the case as it was currently in litigation. In early September, Wilkenson wrote to County Commissioner Rick Enstrom and requested more information about the case that the county planned to file. At that time, Wilkenson told Enstrom that he would gladly "fade into the woodwork" if Mesa County was interested in filing a suit:

I really do not like the feeling of being alone in this jurisdictional dispute. I wish the commissioners would actually do something to protect me and other Mesa County citizens in this matter.⁵²⁹

Wilkenson had tried to include the county in his case when he issued an official "Memorandum in Support of Plaintiff's Motion to Include the Mesa County Commissioners as Parties" in late September. The motion stated that because the county had proved its role in the Glade Park access case at its meeting with Glade Park residents that the court should include it in the case. In it he stated that in his opinion, the county had failed to get involved in the case for "political reasons."⁵³⁰ At the time that Wilkenson filed this memorandum, the county had not yet filed a complaint. Wilkenson felt that "the controversy is the same, whether in this ongoing action or an action potentially to be filed by the Board of Mesa County

⁵²⁷Wilkenson, "Jury or Jail," *Palisade Tribune*, 19 January 1984.

⁵²⁸Mary Louise Giblin, "Glade Park Man to name Watt, Interior Department in Lawsuit," *Daily Sentinel*, 27 November 1981.

⁵²⁹Letter, John R. Wilkenson to Rick Enstrom, 10 September 1981.

⁵³⁰John R. Wilkenson, "Memorandum in Support of Plaintiff's Motion to Include Mesa County Commissioners as Parties," 29 September 1982, p. 1, in *John R. Wilkenson v. Department of the Interior, et al.*

Commissioners."⁵³¹ Wilkenson stated that he had been unable to reach any agreement with the county regarding its position on the case. He also promised to supply the court with a copy of the August 1982 county commissioner's meeting with Glade Park residents, which in his opinion reflected the county's intent to join the case.⁵³²

Mesa County's involvement in the lawsuit officially began in August of 1982, when it made the decision to sue the Park Service over the issue of access to Glade Park.⁵³³ In September, County Commissioner Rick Enstrom and Pueblo land use lawyer Eric Damian Kelly facilitated a meeting with Glade Park residents to determine the local perspective on the history of Rim Rock Drive. What they discovered at this meeting was that local contribution to the construction of Serpents Trail and Rim Rock Drive had been significant. During the meeting Enstrom expressed some typically anti-government sentiments:

We've got one recourse to find out whose road that is and I think you all believe as we do that it's a county road. He who has the most information at that court case is going to get that road. I intend for that to be the citizens of Mesa County.⁵³⁴

In December 1982, Mesa County filed a summons and complaint against the National Park Service in U.S. District Court in Denver. The county's suit reflected the eight years it spent fighting the Park Service over commercial vehicle use on Rim Rock Drive. Represented by Eric Damian Kelly, the county requested that escort costs for use of the road be eliminated, and that restrictions on commercial vehicles be lifted. The county based its suit on the belief that Rim Rock Drive was "part of the county network" of roads.⁵³⁵ Because the Park Service had once allowed "free and unrestricted access to Glade Park," the county did not believe that the Park Service should have changed that policy simply because Rim Rock Drive was opened. They suggested that an easy solution was to move the East Entrance station to the Glade Park cutoff, or simply return to trust the word of residents traveling to Glade Park. They stated that they were not going to join Wilkenson because "the suit is a complex one and Wilkenson is acting as his own lawyer."⁵³⁶ Ironically, when the Park Service first enacted its affidavit policy, the county provided tax rolls to park officials to aid in verifying property claims of Glade Park residents wishing to use the road.⁵³⁷

⁵³¹Ibid., p. 2.

⁵³²Ibid.

⁵³³"It's Official: County to Sue Park Service," *Daily Sentinel*, 18 August 1982.

⁵³⁴Minutes of County Commissioners' Meeting with Glade Park Residents Regarding the Possible Rim Rock Drive Lawsuit, 7 September 1982.

⁵³⁵Mary Louise Giblin, "County Sues Park Service on Glade Park Access Fee," *Daily Sentinel*, 27 December 1982.

⁵³⁶Ibid.

⁵³⁷Henry A. Schoch, Telephone interview by Lisa M. Schoch, 27 April 1994.

Local perspectives of both Wilkenson's case and Mesa County's case varied. The Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, for instance, issued its position on the Glade Park access issue in August 1982:

The Chamber continues its support of the Mesa County Commissioners in the conflict with the U.S. National Park Service regarding free access to the Glade Park area through the Colorado National Monument. The Chamber has long believed that until the U.S. Government provides a suitable alternate route, all citizens should be able to use the Monument access.⁵³⁸

County Commissioner George White referred to the county's "friendly lawsuit" against the Park Service and stated that the county did not have a problem with park officials. Instead, the county found fault with "people up the ladder who are not aware of the local situation."⁵³⁹ Surprisingly, even Glade Park ranchers seemed split on the issue. Rancher Bob Gobbo thought that commercial vehicle restrictions had harmed the economy of Glade Park, and that the Park Service should upgrade Rim Rock Drive. Eugene Vories stated that he had never had problems with the Park Service's affidavits but did question the inconsistency of its fee policy.⁵⁴⁰

The Park Service, on the other hand, defended its position regarding fee collection and commercial vehicle traffic. In an October 1982 interview with the *Fruita Times*, Superintendent Huffman evoked the Park Service's original mission to explain the Park Service's actions. The original mission emphasized both protection of natural resources and public enjoyment of those resources. He felt that the attitude that all public lands, including national parks, were meant for local and private use, was part of the problem. The increase in visitation (800,000 in 1981) coupled with population growth in Glade Park and Mesa County also contributed to the conflict. When pressed to discuss solutions to the conflict, Huffman answered that the upgrading of Little Park Road was the best alternative. He emphasized that the Park Service had helped to acquire funding for such a project, but that it was told it could only fund a road built within park boundaries. Huffman also stated that the problem of determining for whom the road exists—visitors or commuters travelling to Glade Park—was at the heart of the conflict.⁵⁴¹

By 1983, the complexion of the lawsuit had changed considerably. In March, it was clear that the case was, in the words of Eric Kelly "snagged in bureaucracy."⁵⁴² Kelly claimed that the county's case was slowed by a mistake in mailing summonses without postage to

⁵³⁸"Longtime Chamber Support for Access to Glade Park Continues," *News and Views*, Issue #80-CUPS 112-870, August 1982.

⁵³⁹"Lawsuit Overshadows Park, County Neighbor Cooperation," *Fruita Times*, 27 October 1982.

⁵⁴⁰"Glade Park Residents See Inequities in Rim Rock Fees," *Fruita Times*, 20 October 1982.

⁵⁴¹"Park Service Mission said to Protect Lands for All: Monument Superintendent Huffman Grapples with Protection versus Road Use Problem," *Fruita Times*, 6 October 1982, p. 3.

⁵⁴²Mary Louise Giblin, "Glade Park Access Lawsuit 'Snagged in Bureaucracy,'" *Daily Sentinel*, 10 March 1983.

Secretary of Interior Watt and Director of the Park Service Russell Dickinson. The summonses ended up in the dead letter office and delayed any response from these officials. Wilkenson's case, on the other hand, was still in the pre-trial stages.⁵³

Wilkenson himself had become increasingly militant in his efforts to fight the Park Service. Whereas he had once stated that he would welcome a county lawsuit so that he could "fade into the woodwork," now he was determined to win his case against the U.S. government. Wilkenson's attitude toward the road controversy changed when it became clear to him that:

The park was not the issue, the road was not even the issue. At a certain point and time with me, the system itself became the issue.⁵⁴

His newly acquired knowledge of the law coupled with his experiences with local politicians, park officials, and government in general soured Wilkenson toward "the system." In March 1983, for example, he joined 25 citizens who decided to form a watchdog group for local government. The group's goal was to publicize government activities, and as Wilkenson put it, promote "accountability in government."⁵⁵ Yet, his more noteworthy actions were directed at the Park Service. In addition to increased numbers of letters to the editor of the *Daily Sentinel*, and his usual letters to park officials, Wilkenson also led a series of protests at the east entrance of the Monument during that summer.

The east entrance protest in June 1983 revealed the extent of government resentment harbored by Wilkenson and his supporters. It also indicated to the Park Service that Wilkenson was hungry for any kind of publicity regarding the road issue. A local television station alerted park officials of a possible protest on June 4 that never occurred. On June 5, however, twenty vehicles led by John Wilkenson held up traffic at the east entrance station for nearly thirty minutes. The protesters refused to pay the fee and many of them thrust tape recorders into the faces of fee collectors. Finally, park officials called the Mesa County Sheriff for back-up since the vehicles blocking the approach road leading to the Monument were violating state laws. By the time the sheriff arrived, most of the protesters had either proceeded to Glade Park (citations were issued) or had gone back to Grand Junction.⁵⁶

Up to this point park officials had taken Wilkenson's antics and the lawsuits in stride. They tried to maintain normal park management while preparing for the trial. When each fee-collecting season arrived (May through September), they informed their seasonal fee collectors of the lawsuit and Wilkenson. They continued to collect fees from visitors and to require the affidavits of Glade Park residents. Through Department of the Interior news

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴John R. Wilkenson, Interview by Lisa Schoch, 17 August 1992.

⁵⁵Jim Sullivan, "Group Forms to Oversee Government," *Daily Sentinel*, 2 March 1983.

⁵⁶Henry Schoch, "Narrative of Events: Protest at East Entrance Colorado National Monument," 5 June 1983.

releases and personal letters, park officials reminded Glade Park residents of the upcoming fee season and told them where new permits could be acquired. They made sure that residents were given plenty of advance notice regarding the permits.⁵⁴⁷

At the same time, Chief Ranger Schoch and Superintendent Huffman began gathering information for the trial. In an effort to establish consistency in fee collection, letters requesting information on the park's past fee policies were sent to former employees. Three of these employees—Robert Powell, Jerry Banta, and Duncan Burchard—indicated in correspondence with Dennis Huffman that between 1970 and 1975, Monument officials had not charged Glade Park residents for access, but had issued special window stickers. All three men stated that the system had been badly abused.⁵⁴⁸

Trying to balance trial preparation with everyday park operations proved to be a challenge. The June protest alarmed the Monument officials for a number of reasons. In his report regarding the incident, Chief Ranger Schoch indicated that the protest was somewhat of a turning point in Wilkenson's conflict with the Park Service. In addition to the fact that the protest was carefully planned—even the media were informed before the Park Service—it was clear that those involved were seeking publicity. Seeking publicity was nothing new to Wilkenson. He had already established himself as a prolific letterwriter; when he was not writing to government officials, his letters were found in the *Daily Sentinel*, and other local papers. Schoch was also concerned that the protesters would seek out nationally publicized events, such as the annual Coors International Bicycle Classic, which was held in part on Rim Rock Drive, for future protests. More importantly, the protest had "disrupted normal park operations."⁵⁴⁹

Two more protests were staged at the east entrance again in July. During the protest held in late July, Wilkenson distributed flyers to the fee collectors in which he stated that Schoch and Huffman were committing a felony by asking their employees to issue tickets. He said that the tickets were a violation of Code of Federal Regulations 36, Section 6.5, and that Colorado National Monument was acting out of its legal authority. He warned the fee collectors: "Do not be swayed by any attempts at coercion and/or intimidation that may be perpetrated against you by your superiors."⁵⁵⁰

Wilkenson also wrote a letter to Superintendent Huffman in July. Referring to his letter as a "final notice" of Huffman's "criminal activities," Wilkenson stated that the superintendent

⁵⁴⁷Henry Schoch, "News Release, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service," 19 May 1983.

⁵⁴⁸Memorandum, Robert Powell to Superintendent Dennis Huffman, 22 October 1982; Memorandum, Jerry Banta to Superintendent Dennis Huffman, ca. 1982; Memorandum, Duncan Burchard to Superintendent Dennis Huffman, 20 October 1982.

⁵⁴⁹Henry Schoch, "Protest at East Entrance...," 5 June 1983.

⁵⁵⁰T. Michael Crowell, "Monument Gate Crashers Face Citations," *Daily Sentinel*, 26 July 1983; John Wilkenson, "Legal Notice Attention Colorado National Monument Employee," 24 July 1983.

had "persecuted" him by misinterpreting Code of Federal Regulations 36 Section 6.5. He also told Huffman that if Assistant U.S. Attorneys Richard Jost and Bruce Black continued to represent Huffman and Schoch, then they too were part of the "conspiracy to deny" his rights. Wilkenson's concluding remarks indicated how deeply involved in the lawsuit he had become and how radical his rhetoric had become:

If you want to establish exclusive jurisdiction over the road segment at issue, then I suggest you follow proper procedure and talk to the Colorado Legislature, or go into court against Mesa County and Colorado and fight for it. It would seem that your smug and arrogant criminal persecution of me is nearing the failure that has been its destiny since its inception. Nevertheless, I request that you stop your criminal activities on your own volition before the court stops them for you.⁵⁵¹

Not long after this letter was written, even Wilkenson began to doubt the court system. In October 1983, he wrote a letter to the editor of the *Daily Sentinel*, explaining his frustrations with the delay in his trial. He stated that he had "exhausted all possible avenues for obtaining administrative relief," and that he had "work[ed] diligently" in the court system for two years in the hopes that the lawsuit would be resolved.⁵⁵² It had been two years since Wilkenson filed his suit and, while the newspapers only discussed the more important events of the case, a great deal of interaction took place in court that was never reported. Between August 1981, when Wilkenson filed a Notice of Citations and January 4, 1984, when Assistant U.S. District Attorney Bruce Black filed the Government's Omnibus Reply, there were 103 separate filings regarding Wilkenson's criminal and civil cases, and the county's civil case.⁵⁵³

By January 1984, the lawsuit became even more complex when Assistant U.S. Attorney Bruce Black asked that the county's case be consolidated with Wilkenson's case. In his "proposal for the orderly litigation of issues," submitted to the court in December 1983, Black requested "an order restructuring these cases and providing for a schedule for discovery, motions and trial of all issues."⁵⁵⁴ The request further suggested "alternative solutions for the resolution of the procedural logjam that has stalled these cases and proposes alternative methods for the expeditious resolution of legitimate substantive issues."⁵⁵⁵ The "logjam" was the result

⁵⁵¹Letter, John R. Wilkenson to Superintendent Dennis Huffman, 22 July 1983.

⁵⁵²John Wilkenson, "Speaking the Public Mind: Unconscionable Trial Delay," *Daily Sentinel*, 13 October 1983.

⁵⁵³Index of Filings Regarding the Road Controversy on the East End of Colorado National Monument's Rim Rock Drive, Colorado National Monument Archive and Museum Collection.

⁵⁵⁴Bruce Black, "Proposal for the Orderly Litigation of Issues," Filed in the United States District Court for the District of Colorado, 9 December 1983, pp. 1-2, in *United States of America v. John R. Wilkenson* (Case No. 81-CR-210); *United States of America v. John R. Wilkenson, et al.* (Case No. 83-CR-388); *John R. Wilkenson v. Department of the Interior of the United States et al.* (Case No. 81-M-1825); *Board of County Commissioners of Mesa County, Colorado, et al. v. James Watt, et al.* (Case No. 82-Z-2171).

⁵⁵⁵*Ibid.*

of numerous events occurring simultaneously throughout the duration of the suite: Wilkenson's civil suit in Federal District Court (81-M-1825) filed in December 1981, the criminal case against Wilkenson (81-CR-210) filed in August 1981, the consolidation of those two cases in February 1982, an additional criminal case against those involved in the June 1983 protest (83-CR-388), and Mesa County's civil case (82-Z-2171) in December 1982.⁵⁵⁶

Black suggested that the best solution to the trial delay was to consolidate all criminal and civil cases, since they all dealt with essentially the same issue—"the authority of the Park Service to regulate Rim Rock Drive."⁵⁵⁷ The county's lawyer, Eric Kelly, agreed to the proposal, with the stipulation that the "case can be structured so that the board and the other plaintiffs in this case remain separate from the criminal defendants."⁵⁵⁸ Kelly stated at that time that the county "abhorred" the "tactics" of Wilkenson.⁵⁵⁹

Wilkenson did not favor Black's proposal; instead, he felt that the criminal cases should be tried first, and then the civil cases.⁵⁶⁰ He felt so strongly that he issued an official response to the defendants' "proposal for the orderly litigation of issues." In Wilkenson's opinion, the "logjam" was not attributable to what Assistant United States District Attorney Bruce Black referred to as the "delay in procedural requirements of the criminal and civil processes," but to the "continuing bad faith of the civil defendants."⁵⁶¹ The basis of Wilkenson's argument was that the Park Service displayed a "contempt for justice, the Constitution, the law, and this Court by their ongoing efforts to misstate the truth and deceive the Court."⁵⁶² Along with his usual accusations against the Park Service, Wilkenson also pointed out that "the Glade Park Access controversy is a no-win situation for the civil defendants" since "everyone in Mesa County knows it is not a crime to drive between Grand Junction and Glade Park over the road segment

⁵⁵⁶Ibid., p. 3.

⁵⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 7-8.

⁵⁵⁸Mary Louise Giblin, "Lawyers Want Merger in Glade Park Road Case," *Daily Sentinel*, 14 January 1984.

⁵⁵⁹Ibid.

⁵⁶⁰Ibid.

⁵⁶¹John R. Wilkenson, "Response to Civil Defendants/Criminal Plaintiff's Motion for Order to Restructure; and Response to Summons in 83-CR-388; and Civil Plaintiff's/Criminal Defendant's Counter Proposal for the Orderly Litigation of the Issues" in United States District Court for the District of Colorado, 19 December 1983, p. 1, in *John R. Wilkenson v. Department of the Interior of the United States, et al.* (Case no. 81-M-1825); *United States of America v. John R. Wilkenson* (Case no. 81-CR-210); *United States of America v. John R. Wilkenson* (Case no. 83-CR-388); *Board of County Commissioners of Mesa County, Colorado, et al. v. James Watt, et al.*

⁵⁶²Ibid.

at issue.⁵⁶³ He also stated that the case should be tried in Mesa County with a Mesa County jury.⁵⁶⁴

By July 1984, when Federal District Court Judge Richard Matsch issued his "pre-trial order," the cases had been consolidated, and the trial was set for August 28, 29 and 30, 1984, in the Federal Courthouse in Grand Junction, Colorado.⁵⁶⁵ The "pre-trial order" also outlined the arguments that would be presented by the plaintiffs (the county and Wilkenson) and the defendants (the Park Service). In his assessment of the "claims and defenses" of the county, Matsch stated that the county's case was based on three claims for relief. The first of these was 43 U.S.C. Section 932, under which "the United States granted rights-of-way to the public lands not reserved for public use."⁵⁶⁶ Essentially, the county contended that the Park Service's policies represented "an arbitrary and unreasonable invasion" of the county's "property rights" to Rim Rock Drive. This assertion was based on the county's contribution of money and labor to road building in the Monument before and after its establishment, and its "understanding" with the Park Service that it could enjoy "unrestricted access" to Glade Park via Rim Rock Drive after the 1959 vacation of Serpents Trail.⁵⁶⁷

The county's second claim for relief stated that it "acquired an enforceable property right" both because of its contribution to the road's construction and because of its use of the road. The third claim for relief asserted that the Park Service had overstepped the authority conferred to it through statutes and regulations.⁵⁶⁸ The basis of the county's case was the doctrine of equitable estoppel, which states:

when any one by words, acts or abstentions, has induced someone to act as though a situation or relationship existed or had a certain character, this existence or character may not thereafter be legally denied, if to do so will cause detriment to the person who relied on it.⁵⁶⁹

The defendants (Park Service) addressed each of the county's claims. In defense of the county's first claim, the Park Service stated that no right-of-way existed under 43 U.S.C section

⁵⁶³Ibid., p. 4.

⁵⁶⁴Ibid.

⁵⁶⁵Judge Richard P. Matsch, "Pre-Trial Order in the United States District Court, District of Colorado," 12 July 1984, in *Board of County Commissioners of Mesa County, Colorado v. James Watt et al.* (Civil Action No. 82-M-2171).

⁵⁶⁶Ibid., p. 2.

⁵⁶⁷Ibid., p. 3.

⁵⁶⁸Ibid., pp. 3-4.

⁵⁶⁹Max Radin, *Radin Law Dictionary*, 2d ed. (Dobbs Ferry: Oceana Publications, Incorporated, 1970), p. 115.

932, and that it had not taken any property rights from the county. To the county's second claim, the Park Service stated that "estoppel and adverse possession do not run against the government."⁵⁷⁰ Past court decisions established that estoppel was not applicable in cases where the U.S. government and one of its agents were involved in litigation. Finally, in response to the third claim, the Park Service stated that no "procedural or constitutional defect" existed in the statutes and regulations. The Park Service also contended that the plaintiffs did not succeed in stating a claim that could be granted and that the court still lacked the jurisdiction to try the case. The Park Service asserted that, even if the County did acquire a right-of-way on Rim Rock Drive, in 1959 they formally vacated Serpents Trail. For the Park Service, the 1959 vacation order signalled an abandonment of that right.⁵⁷¹

In late August 1984, Assistant U.S. Attorney Bruce Black filed a motion to dismiss the criminal cases against Wilkenson and the protesters. Both the U.S. Attorney's office and the Park Service believed that the issues raised in the criminal cases would be resolved in the civil cases.⁵⁷² Earlier that summer, the Park Service received an "interim order" from Judge Matsch to continue the fee/affidavit policy for the summer of 1984 in order to "preserve the rights of the parties and protect the public peace."⁵⁷³

On August 21, 1984, the plaintiffs submitted a 73-page trial brief to Judge Matsch. The document outlined in full the county's claims against the National Park Service. Beginning with a detailed history of roads between Grand Junction and Glade Park before and after the Monument's establishment, the brief stated that the "unifying theme underlying the whole history of the Glade Park Road is access."⁵⁷⁴ Although this statement is true, it is ironic that the county chose to refer to Rim Rock Drive as the Glade Park Road. This only reinforced how the Park Service and the county held vastly different views of the purpose of Rim Rock Drive. The document then discussed the development of the county's right-of-way over Rim Rock Drive and the necessary laws upholding this right. The county asserted that roads existed even before John Otto began to build trails and that the existence of such roads was evidence of an established right-of-way before the Monument was formed.⁵⁷⁵ The county also stated

⁵⁷⁰Matsch, "Pre-Trial Order," p. 4.

⁵⁷¹Ibid., pp. 5-6.

⁵⁷²Bruce Black, Assistant U.S. Attorney, "Motion to Dismiss, In the United States District Court, For the District of Colorado," in *United States v. John R. Wilkenson*, 24 August 1984, p. 2. (Criminal Case No. 81-CR-210).

⁵⁷³Judge Richard Matsch, "Proposed Order In the United States District Court for the District of Colorado," 15 May 1984.

⁵⁷⁴"Trial Brief of Board of County Commissioners, et al.," 21 August 1984, p. 5, in the U.S. District Court, District of Colorado, *Board of County Commissioners of Mesa County, Colorado et al. v. James Watt et al.* (Civil Action No. 82 M 2171) and *John R. Wilkenson v. Department of the Interior of the United States et al.* (Civil Action No. 81 M 1825).

⁵⁷⁵Ibid., p. 6.

that, while Little Park Road was built in 1884 and should have been a sufficient route to Glade Park, "residents of Mesa County needed the same thing 80 years ago that they need now—decent access between Grand Junction and Glade Park."⁵⁷⁶ Why Mesa County was not willing to finance the construction of a road remains to be seen. Undoubtedly the Park Service wondered the same thing.

Testimony was to be completed late on August 30, 1984, after which time Judge Matsch stated that he would return to Grand Junction to hear more oral testimony before writing his decision.⁵⁷⁷ The official decision was not presented until May 2, 1986. Until then, each side of the controversy formed its own opinions regarding the outcome. Eric Kelly, representing the county, felt that the lawsuit could have national significance. In an order issued in March of 1985 (after the trial), Judge Matsch focused on whether the Park Service should be able to charge fees at all. Kelly noted that Matsch's questions regarding the fees had little to do with the history of the road, which the county and Wilkenson had used in their arguments. Matsch addressed several questions: if fees were valid; if it is valid to charge fees for people driving through the park without stopping; and whether it is valid to charge fees of people or commercial traffic travelling to Glade Park. Kelly said that, if the judge determined that the collection of fees was void, he could avoid the more complex issue of road ownership. If Matsch decided that fees were invalid, collection of fees in all national park areas could be endangered.⁵⁷⁸

Assistant U.S. District Attorney Bruce Black would not comment on the judge's order publicly, stating it was inappropriate.⁵⁷⁹ In the meantime, until Monument officials received news of a court decision, they continued to collect fees and require affidavits.⁵⁸⁰ Wilkenson, on the other hand, was more impatient regarding the pending decision. In December 1985, he wrote a letter to Judge Matsch reminding him that the road controversy "remains unresolved" and that the lack of decision had affected his life:

Personally I need to know whether I can relax and get on with the rest of my life, or whether I must gear up to defend myself in a political confrontation with the government. I would appreciate a decision before sufficient time has passed to politically justify applying to the Circuit Court for a remedial writ ...⁵⁸¹

⁵⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 9-10.

⁵⁷⁷Mary Louise Giblin, "No Fast Judgement Expected on Road," *Daily Sentinel*, 30 August 1984.

⁵⁷⁸Mary Louise Giblin, "Road Suit Could Affect Nation," *Daily Sentinel*, 4 April 1985.

⁵⁷⁹Ibid.

⁵⁸⁰Mary Louise Giblin, "Glade Park Dwellers Need Access Permits," *Daily Sentinel*, 5 June 1985.

⁵⁸¹Letter, John R. Wilkenson to Judge Richard P. Matsch, 9 December 1985.

The Decision

On May 2, 1986, Judge Matsch issued his 32-page decision regarding the road controversy. After a brief overview of the facts of the case, Matsch summarized the heart of the conflict between local residents and the National Park Service that had existed in the Monument since its creation:

The conflict has followed the progress of development of the Monument as a recreational facility and the residential growth in Glade Park and the Grand Junction community. It is a classic Western quarrel over the use of public land in which the early years were characterized by cooperation in pursuit of common interests and where now the parties have sharply conflicting interests and claims. The government's policy has gone from indulgence, through tolerance, to rigid regulation.⁵⁸²

Ultimately, Matsch's decision favored the plaintiffs. It was shaped by several factors: the history of the Monument and its fee policy, and the laws regarding the establishment of public rights-of-way. Although the case seemingly dealt with a combination of issues, and was complicated by the merging of the county's and Wilkenson's cases, it focused on one question: whether a public right-of-way existed on the segment of Rim Rock Drive from the east entrance station to the Glade Park cutoff.

In his decision Matsch examined both the history of the Monument's development and its fee policy. This section focused mainly on the history of road-building in the area and Otto's role in publicizing the park. It also discussed briefly the construction of Rim Rock Drive, the 1959 Serpents Trail vacation order, and land added to the Monument in 1933, 1959, and 1976. Matsch's intent was to establish that prior to Otto's work the area that would become the park was used by people for recreation, and by ranchers from Glade Park to transport livestock to the Grand Valley. In addition, he emphasized the strong local role in the park's establishment and in road-building.⁵⁸³

Matsch's analysis of the Monument's fee system attempted to show the Park Service's inconsistency in its fee policy from 1937 to the 1980s. He outlined the 1939 policy toward Glade Park residents, in which they were not required to pay a fee. He also traced the policy's development until the Park Service began to restrict commercial vehicle use in the 1970s.⁵⁸⁴

Matsch pointed to the original law regarding public rights-of-way to further support his decision. In 1866, Congress passed a statute that was later codified as 43 U.S.C. Section 932,

⁵⁸²Judge Richard P. Matsch, "Memorandum Opinion and Order In the United States District Court for the District of Colorado," 2 May 1986, p. 3, in *John R. Wilkenson v. Department of the Interior of the United States, et al.* (Civil Action No. 81-M-1825) and *Board of County Commissioners of Mesa County, Colorado, et al., v. James Watt, et al.* (Civil Action No. 82-M-2171).

⁵⁸³*Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁵⁸⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

stating that: "The right of way for the construction of highways over public land, not reserved for public uses, is hereby granted."⁵⁸⁵ Matsch thought that the "difference between concepts of a right of way" was at the center of the case. The plaintiffs understood right-of-way to mean "access to the land for the purpose of traversing it," while the defendants believed that "a right-of-way for a public highway must be limited to a constructed roadway over a reasonably definite and specific route."⁵⁸⁶ Matsch discussed the history of each segment of Rim Rock Drive, and denied the defendants' claim that the 1959 Serpents Trail vacation order did not have any "legal significance" to the present case.⁵⁸⁷ Stating that it had to be considered in context, he said that although the Serpents Trail was abandoned, it must have been the understanding of the county commissioners at that time that they could still use the Rim Rock Drive (often referred to as the New Serpents Trail) as a travel route.⁵⁸⁸

Once Matsch established that a public right-of-way existed, the other elements of the case, such as fee collection and the commercial vehicle issue, were quickly resolved. In his analysis of fee policy, Judge Matsch questioned whether an entrance fee should have been collected from people who were only interested in using Rim Rock Drive to access Glade Park. The Park Service responded that the collection of fees was part of its effort to raise revenue, and that entrance fees are collected in national parks regardless of the intent of the person entering the park. Matsch concluded, however, that the legislation dictating fee collection specifically excluded both commercial traffic and other nonrecreational activities and that the Park Service misinterpreted those statutes.⁵⁸⁹

In his assessment of the commercial vehicle issue, Matsch stated that, while there was a "rational basis for the regulation" regarding commercial vehicle restrictions, the Park Service "misapplied their own regulation."⁵⁹⁰ Based on the evidence, Matsch determined that Rim Rock Drive was the only all-weather access to Glade Park and Piñon Mesa and that it was "wholly impracticable" to daily assess the condition of Little Park Road. Matsch decided that, because the court already recognized the public right-of-way in that region, the Park Service's imposition of commercial vehicle restrictions was "contrary to the public's right-of-way."⁵⁹¹ Right of access, according to the Matsch, applied to commercial traffic as much as it did to Glade Park residents.⁵⁹²

⁵⁸⁵Ibid., p. 12.

⁵⁸⁶Ibid.

⁵⁸⁷Ibid., p. 18.

⁵⁸⁸Ibid.

⁵⁸⁹Ibid., pp. 21-26.

⁵⁹⁰Ibid., p. 30.

⁵⁹¹Ibid., 31-31.

⁵⁹²Ibid., p. 30.

Matsch's summary revealed that, while there was no legal precedent for his decision, the "unique factual history of the development of the Colorado National Monument" obligated the Park Service to permit public access of the 3.3-mile segment of Rim Rock Drive on the park's east side.⁵⁹³ Charging fees was both an "unlawful interference" with the public right-of-way, and a violation of 36 C.F.R. section 71.13(d).⁵⁹⁴ Matsch then issued his formal decision:

Ordered, adjudged, and decreed, that a public right-of-way exists in the portion of Rim Rock Drive extending from the East entrance of the Colorado National Monument to the Glade Park Cut-Off, connecting the DS Road in Glade Park with the Monument Road to Highway 340, and the use of that road for the purpose of continuous travel through the Monument is a non-recreational use for which no entrance fee may lawfully be charged, and the defendants are enjoined from charging any such fee or otherwise preventing such non-recreational use of the roadways.⁵⁹⁵

Not surprisingly, reaction to the decision was mixed. In an interview with the *Daily Sentinel*, Superintendent Huffman stated that the ruling probably would not affect the Monument's normal operations. He also discussed alternatives for fee collection: the popular idea of moving the fee booth up near the Glade Park Cutoff was one way to satisfy the judge's decision and to maintain good relations with the local residents. Both Huffman and Assistant U.S. Attorney Bruce Black felt that the ruling "left many questions unanswered."⁵⁹⁶ Their primary concern involved the issue of road ownership. Huffman stated that, if Rim Rock was considered a county road, then the county should pay for its maintenance. At that time, the Park Service was considering appealing the decision.⁵⁹⁷ The Park Service also felt that Judge Matsch's decision was historically weak regarding the right-of-way issue. According to Matsch, a road through No Thoroughfare Canyon existed and was used prior to the park's establishment. The Park Service, however, researched the history of the area and was unable to find the road to which he referred.⁵⁹⁸

Wilkenson's reaction was tentative. Shortly after the decision was made, he told the *Daily Sentinel*: "If we get to use the road I will be happy."⁵⁹⁹ Nevertheless, he later admitted that the judge had bypassed the real issue of the case. While the decision seemed to favor

⁵⁹³Ibid., p. 31.

⁵⁹⁴Ibid.

⁵⁹⁵Ibid.

⁵⁹⁶"Judge Nixes Monument Segment Fee," *Daily Sentinel*, 3 May 1986, p. 4A.

⁵⁹⁷Ibid.

⁵⁹⁸Dennis Huffman, Telephone interview by Lisa M. Schoch, 6 February 1994.

⁵⁹⁹Ibid.

Wilkenson, he felt that "it was somewhat of a compromise."⁶⁰⁰ The judge's decision centered on the issue of right-of-way. Wilkenson thought that the decision should have focused on the regulations and statutes. Even though the regulations clearly stated that the Park Service could not collect recreational fees for nonrecreational use, Park Service employees proceeded to collect anyway. In his opinion, the overall issue, that of "government disobedience to the law" was never addressed.⁶⁰¹ In addition, Wilkenson contended that he should be compensated for the time he spent on the case. Judge Matsch disagreed.⁶⁰²

By November, the road controversy had officially ended. The Park Service's decision not to appeal Matsch's ruling contributed to the finality of the situation. Jim Harpster, the Rocky Mountain Regional Chief of Public Affairs, cited several possible reasons for the Park Service's decision:

I can only assume that the question of whether to appeal hinged on the likelihood of success and the impact of the ruling as issued by Judge Matsch, as well as the legal correctness of that ruling. I think there's a tangible here; the desire of the park and the park staff to be recognized as good neighbors to the people of the community.⁶⁰³

Perhaps Harpster's assessment was accurate. The Monument's history indicates that local involvement was important to the park's early development. As the administration of the Monument shifted, park managers were careful to maintain good relations with local residents, civic organizations, and government officials. The road controversy, however, illustrates that park officials did not base their decisions on the needs of the local community, but on the needs of the park itself. The Monument's early fee policy, toward Glade Park residents was based on good faith. It was never an institutionalized policy. An increase in Glade Park's population, and abuse of the fee policy prompted the Park Service's implementation of a new system. Unfortunately, changes in policy were perceived as arbitrary and inconsistent by local residents who had a heightened sense of their past contribution to the park. This contribution, and the simple proximity of the Monument initiated a strong local influence on park policy—an influence that former Superintendent Huffman identifies as both important and somewhat unavoidable.⁶⁰⁴

A more viable reason for the Park Service's reluctance to appeal Matsch's decision was political in nature. The lawsuit and the eventual decision took place during the presidency of Ronald Reagan. His choice of James Watt as secretary of the interior in 1980 reflected a

⁶⁰⁰John Wilkenson, Interview by Lisa M. Schoch, 17 August 1992.

⁶⁰¹Ibid.

⁶⁰²Ibid.

⁶⁰³Quoted by Bob Silbernagel, "Government Drops Glade Park Appeal," *Daily Sentinel*, 21 November 1986, p. 1B.

⁶⁰⁴Dennis Huffman, Telephone interview by Lisa M. Schoch, 6 February 1994.

careless and limited knowledge of the Park Service and its history. Prior to his appointment to the position, Watt had expressed his "hostility" toward conservationists, and proposed that the Interior Department "unleash" private industry by opening park lands for development.⁶⁰⁵ Although the Watt years were short-lived, they left a legacy of poor policy toward the Park Service. Future Secretary of the Interior William Clark and his successor Donald Hodel felt that existing legislation regarding the protection of parks from external threats was satisfactory.⁶⁰⁶ In order for the Justice Department to pursue an appeal of Matsch's decision, Secretary of the Interior Hodel had to request such an action. Despite the Justice Department's belief that the case carried a significant precedent for the region and should be appealed, Hodel did not do so.⁶⁰⁷ This left Monument officials with a court decision that they did not believe was necessarily accurate, but that they were obligated to uphold.

⁶⁰⁵William C. Everhart, *The National Park Service* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1983), p. 142.

⁶⁰⁶Freemuth, *Islands Under Siege*, p. 8.

⁶⁰⁷Dennis Huffman, Telephone interview by Lisa M. Schoch, 6 February 1994.

Conclusion

The road controversy in the Colorado National Monument indicates that local conflicts are often the result of years of interaction between adjacent communities and the National Park Service. Former Superintendent Robert Benton observed that the road conflict was inevitable because the administration of the park over the years shifted from "laissez-faire" to restrictive as the park gained more prestige. People accustomed to a certain degree of freedom when using the park's facilities were irritated by Benton's more restrictive stance.⁶⁰⁸ Former Superintendent Dennis Huffman perceived the road conflict on a wider scale. He noted that local conflicts often obstruct protective legislation for national parks. Echoing a problem that was evident throughout the Monument's history, Huffman observed that because the superintendent's role is not clear to local residents, friction develops between those communities and the National Park Service, especially in the West.⁶⁰⁹

Surprisingly, the road controversy did not affect Monument operations in any significant manner. Fee collection returned to what it had been prior to the affidavit policy.⁶¹⁰ The road controversy was significant, however, in terms of the interaction between local residents and the Park Service. As this study has indicated, the development of the Monument was unique. Local involvement was prevalent in both the park's establishment and in the construction of Rim Rock Drive. The location of the Monument is also somewhat unique. Because Colorado National Monument, unlike most Western national parks, is surrounded by several well-populated communities, the local element forms an integral part of the park's daily management. The lawsuit revealed that the conflict between local residents and the Park Service was inevitable. No one can dispute the importance of the local role in the creation of the Monument in 1911. The result of this contribution, however, was unrealistic expectations once the park was fully developed. For example, throughout the lawsuit, local residents appeared to have forgotten that they took full advantage of the benefits of the federal funding supporting the road project during the depression era. Local residents supported the park when it was convenient for them, but once the Park Service regulated use of the park, their needs became unreasonable. Why, for instance, should the Park Service be responsible for maintaining a federal road for the county's use? The lawsuit revealed that the nature of the local role in Colorado National Monument's history led to such an arrangement. The lawsuit also revealed that the local population's needs and perceptions of the federal government had changed a great deal between 1911 and 1986. Whereas once the community worked desperately

⁶⁰⁸Robert Benton, Telephone interview by Lisa M. Schoch, 23 January 1994.

⁶⁰⁹Dennis Huffman, Telephone interview by Lisa M. Schoch, 6 February 1994.

⁶¹⁰*Ibid.*

to create the Monument, recent populations often displayed a contempt for Park Service regulations and policy that threatened the future development of the Monument.

Park Service officials, on the other hand, are not without fault. For the first few decades of the Monument's existence, the Park Service played a cursory role in its management and development. So, from the very start, local park promoters were left with the responsibility of managing the park, which included a crude form of law enforcement and development of trails, a road, and other facilities. Once the Park Service did become involved in the Monument, its policies were often shaped by local conditions. The Park Service was responsible for allowing wood-hauling (in Otto's time), stock drives, and commercial traffic on Rim Rock Drive to take place. In addition, it instituted a fee policy based on the good faith of its adjacent neighbors. Unfortunately, Park Service attempts to accommodate local needs with a flexible fee policy backfired.

Conflicts at the Monument during the 1980s and early 1990s continued to reflect elements of the typical western attitude toward the federal government. In 1986, Superintendent Huffman made the unpopular decision to ban the "Tour of the Moon," a stage of the Coors International Bicycle Classic held annually in the Monument. Unruly race fans, and the fact that the park was closed for a half-day were some of the reasons Huffman chose to cancel the race. His explanation indicated that many local residents still exhibited the proprietary attitude toward the park that had existed since Otto's time: "I realize that the park is here in Grand Junction's backyard. But people from Tennessee have just as much claim to it."⁶¹¹ Deemed one of the most popular events on the Western Slope, the bike race was a natural moneymaker for the Grand Valley at the height of tourist season. Many local residents were enraged by Huffman's decision, but he stood by it.⁶¹²

Another local/Park Service conflict emerged in 1987, when the Park Service solicited the aid of then Congressman Ben Nighthorse Campbell regarding the possible expansion of the Colorado National Monument.⁶¹³ Encompassing 32,460 additional acres west of the present park, the expansion was expected to redesignate the Monument into a National Park.⁶¹⁴ In 1989, Congress directed the Park Service to conduct a study of the proposed addition, which included Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness Study Area and other lands west of the park. The study essentially focused on two areas: "natural, cultural, and recreational resources", and "possible boundary and management alternatives." It presented four alternatives: two that proposed expansion of the Monument, and two that envisioned continued Bureau of Land

⁶¹¹Quoted by Don Knox, "Monument Chief Holds Steady to Stand on Coors Bike Race," *Rocky Mountain News*, 13 February 1986, p. 30.

⁶¹²Ibid.

⁶¹³Bob Silbernagel, "Park's Expansion Fuels BLM Battle," *Daily Sentinel*, 19 November 1989.

⁶¹⁴Drew Munro, "Expansion of National Monument Draws Support of GJ Councilmen," *Daily Sentinel*, 16 November 1989.

Management control over the area.⁶¹⁵ During the week of January 23, 1989, public meetings were held in Montrose, Grand Junction, Delta and Glade Park to discuss the expansion alternatives. In preparation for the meeting, the Park Service distributed over 1,400 brochures and 200 news releases to both the public and the media.⁶¹⁶

Even the Park Service's report anticipated opposition when it included a section describing the local attitude toward federal involvement: "Many residents resent control of land or any kind of outside interference. Government participation in projects is generally solicited only when problems cannot be resolved locally."⁶¹⁷ Local opposition was widespread. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) was perhaps the most vociferous in its opposition, since the land in question was under its authority at that time. BLM chief, Delos "Cy" Jamison, promised to fight the expansion, as he felt that the BLM's land-use policy offered more flexibility to visitors.⁶¹⁸ Other groups, such as Ducks Unlimited, the Colorado Bowhunters Association, Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep Society, and the Colorado Wildlife Federation also fought the expansion.⁶¹⁹ Glade Park residents were concerned that if the Park Service acquired the land, recreational use of the area would be too restrictive.⁶²⁰

While the BLM and local residents worried that their recreational freedom was threatened, Park Service officials countered that resources, including some archaeological, might not be protected as well under the BLM.⁶²¹ Local proponents of the expansion, such as the Concerned Citizens Resource Association and the chamber of commerce, believed that expansion would increase tourism.⁶²² To date, this issue has not been resolved. Nevertheless, it serves as another instance in which strong local opposition has played a role in Park Service decision-making.

Between 1989 and 1990, a long-standing conflict—that of the stock driveway through the park—finally climaxed. In use long before the park was established, stock drives through portions of the park had been tolerated by the Park Service for years. In November 1989, ranchers Dahl Aubert and Jim Young asked the Park Service if they could use the stock

⁶¹⁵Department of the Interior/National Park Service, "Draft, Resource /Boundary Evaluation for Lands Adjacent to Colorado National Monument, Colorado," September 1989, pp. 1-2.

⁶¹⁶Ibid, p. 2.

⁶¹⁷Ibid., p. 37.

⁶¹⁸Associated Press, "Agency Set to Battle For Lands," *Daily Sentinel*, 7 November 1989.

⁶¹⁹Bob Silbernagel, "4 Groups Fight Monument Plan for Expansion," *Daily Sentinel*, 13 November 1989.

⁶²⁰Gary Harmon, "Neighbors Wary of Park Proposal," *Daily Sentinel*, 28 January 1989.

⁶²¹Bob Silbernagel, "Regulation Differences Pointed Out," *Daily Sentinel*, 19 November 1989.

⁶²²Bob Silbernagel, "Groups Oppose Monument Expansion," *Daily Sentinel*, 26 January 1989; Bob Silbernagel, "4 Groups Fight Monument Plan...," *Daily Sentinel*, 13 November 1989.

driveway, which had not been in use for a number of years. Originating north of the Glade Park Store, the trail cut across the park and eventually descended into the valley just north of Fruita. When Superintendent Jimmy Taylor researched the issue, he found that a right-of-way was never formally granted for the driveway. As a result, he told the ranchers that he would not authorize their request. Aubert and Young promptly hired a lawyer.⁶²³

Although Superintendent Taylor's decision was upheld by the Rocky Mountain Regional Office, the ranchers turned to Washington D.C. for guidance; the offices of both Senator Bill Armstrong and U.S. Representative Ben Nighthorse Campbell began working to resolve the matter. Baird Brown, attorney for the ranchers, observed that the stock driveway was simply another example of the Park Service's increasing trend toward "walling themselves off from the community" ⁶²⁴ By May 1990, Superintendent Taylor was advised by the Rocky Mountain Regional Office to honor Aubert's and Young's requests for stock trail use. Although Taylor was not told why the change in policy was made, Congressman Campbell's influence was most likely a part of the explanation. Campbell notified one of the ranchers by mail of the revised decision.⁶²⁵ Pleased with the new policy and with Taylor's willingness to cooperate, the ranchers planned to make a drive only days after the decision was reversed.⁶²⁶

Each of these conflicts reveals that local opinion continues to be a factor in the Monument's activities and policy. As two of these examples (the expansion and the stock driveway) indicate, local opposition toward the federal government in general often challenges park policy. Currently, events in other national parks indicate that local conflicts have become increasingly threatening to the future of both the parks and the Park Service in general. A perfect example is the recent battle between various Native American tribes and the National Park Service over the issue of historical treaty rights on certain park lands. Among the more notable of these conflicts: the Blackfoot Tribe of northern Montana filed a lawsuit against the federal government, seeking "all hunting, logging, fishing and spiritual worship rights restored in eastern Glacier National Park, which abuts their reservation."⁶²⁷ Twelve different tribes have treaties or historic claims in six different western parks.⁶²⁸ Above and beyond the political correctness of mending the mistakes of the past, when will the needs of the resource be recognized in these situations? If every historical claim to national parks—whether from

⁶²³Bob Silbernagel, "Stock Trail Shutdown Spurs Feud," *Daily Sentinel*, 30 November 1989.

⁶²⁴Ginger Rice, "Cattlemen Press for Trail Drive," *Daily Sentinel*, 4 December 1989.

⁶²⁵Bob Silbernagel, "Head 'em Out: Ranchers Get OK to Use Monument Cattle Trail," *Daily Sentinel*, 3 May 1990.

⁶²⁶Bob Silbernagel, "Get Along Little Doggies: Cowpokes Herd 200 Head of Cattle Across Monument," *Daily Sentinel*, 8 May 1990.

⁶²⁷Todd Wilkinson, "Tribes Assert their Rights to Use National Parks," *Denver Post*, 13 December 1992.

⁶²⁸Ibid.

European-descended Americans or Native Americans—were honored, how long would it be before there were no more parks?

The parks face other challenges as well. A 1992 congressional underfunding of \$2 million dollars forced the nation's 367 national parks, historic sites, battlefields and other areas to cut back. Reduced hours, maintenance, and patrols, hiring freezes, closure of certain areas, and fewer interpretive services represent a sampling of what most parks face.⁶²⁹ Former superintendent of Rocky Mountain National Park Jim Thompson observed yet another problem confronting the parks today: the visitor. In Thompson's opinion, more park visitors have adopted the attitude that they should be able to do what they want in the parks with few restrictions.⁶³⁰

The problems facing the National Park Service today are vast. While the road controversy at Colorado National Monument is only one of many conflicts facing the entire park system, it represents the attitude that seems to prevail regarding national parks. Judge Matsch's assertion that the development of the road controversy was a "classic western quarrel" accurately portrays the evolution of the relationship between the local community and the Park Service and how this relationship eventually climaxed during the lawsuit. The road controversy reflects the cooperation and conflict prevalent throughout the history of Colorado National Monument. It also exemplifies the unique quality of these western Colorado communities and their recent history of resistance toward the federal government.

⁶²⁹Deborah Frazier, "Cuts Force National Parks to Adopt Austerity Plans," *Rocky Mountain News*, 3 December 1992, 10, 13.

⁶³⁰Kevin McCullen, "Some Parks Could Close, Retiring Officials Warns," *Rocky Mountain News*, 1992.

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