

9-3-1979

bury to deal decisively with the potential danger," Graham said. Red Cross agencies established

near the coast about 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. morning," said Sgt. Lee Pinder of the Monroe County sheriff's department.

Graham's evacuation order was effective for the same area.

...Hurricane David is expected to hit Florida coast on Monday morning

'The Stinking Desert' new area attraction

By Valerie Sullivan
Sentinel staff writer

First there was a Christmas tree, and now there's — well, the Stinking Desert, actually.

The Stinking Desert National Monument, for your information, is headquartered at a rest-stop about 17 miles north of Delta on Highway 50. The rest stop sits several hundred yards away from a holiday-weekend safety stop, and a lone evergreen, known as the Christmas tree, which is decorated every December.

A Stinking Desert National Monument pamphlet is available at the rest stop. The pamphlet says the monument is not sponsored by any branch of the state or federal government. It is sponsored by "Friends of the Desert" and was named after Father Francisco Dominguez who, according to the pamphlet, is purported to have

said, "No one in their right mind would live in this stinking desert."

"Do Not Hike Alone — You May Never Be Seen Again," the pamphlet warns. "Never Throw Rocks Unless You Want Them Thrown Back At You."

The Stinking Desert was established by a "non-act of Congress" April 1, 1979, according to the brochure.

"The lack of spectacular scenery and geology have already set this land apart. You can help keep it that way by leaving as soon as possible!"

The monument presumably was erected over the weekend, by persons as yet unknown. The vast, dry, yellow expanse of "national monument" land officially begins about six miles south of Whitewater for travelers coming from Grand Junction.

There, a green and white sign,

which looks remarkably like an official highway sign, informs travelers they are entering the Stinking Desert. Several miles down the road, another sign beckons travelers into the rest stop with an arrow: "National Monument headquarters."

"I can't imagine any place being called that," said Jim Webster, a seasonal park ranger for the Colorado National Monument.

Webster said national park signs are usually brown with white lettering. "It's 100 percent spoof. I would say," he said.

"I think this is just a big spoof, myself," said Carol Helmick, one of several Odd Fellow and Rebekah Lodge volunteers to pass out cold drinks and cookies to weary travelers Sunday. "But it's kind of cute, isn't it?" she asked.

Mrs. Helmick said only one person

Sunday had asked her about the new 'national monument.' She just handed him the brochure she had found, she said. "There wasn't too much we could tell him because we didn't know too much about it."

"It couldn't be the same person who decorates that Christmas tree, could it?" she asked.

Bob Hopping of Grand Junction was on his way to Olathe Sunday when car trouble forced him to stop at the rest area. There, he noticed the national monument sign.

"I think it's wierd, whoever's done it," he said. "It's kind of a wierd practical joke."

James and Paula Chervenka of Corpus Christi, Tex., stopped to change their child's diapers and get a cold drink. "I'd never heard of it. It's not on my map," said Chervenka, who said he noticed the sign outside the rest stop.

"Is it environmentalists or something?" asked one puzzled traveler.

Nobody knows who exactly is behind the Stinking Desert. But at least one group of tourists stopped at the sign at the entrance of the new monument, presumably to have their picture taken beside the funny-looking name.

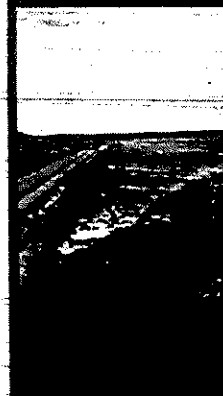
Another tourist, Mary Bellar of Sudan, Tex., said she had never been to Colorado before.

She and her husband were on their way to Las Vegas when they stopped at the rest stop and noticed the sign. "I was wondering where it got its name," she confessed.

Mrs. Bellar was surprised to learn Coloradans were asking the same question.

"In other words, that's not the name of this?" she asked. "Well, I declare."

STINKING DESERT
NATIONAL MONUMENT



Charlie's 106,

in general...