Branch of Forestry and Vegetation Management Records

Kylie Harris and Taylor Hayes
Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks
47050 Generals Highway
Three Rivers, CA 93271-9700
Phone: (559) 565-3133
Fax: (559) 565-3133
Email: Ward_Eldrege@nps.gov
URL: http://www.nps.gov/seqi

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Branch of Forestry and Vegetation Management Records

Collection number: SEKI 22368

Museum and Archives
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Processed by:
Kylie Harris and Taylor Hayes

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Descriptive Summary
Title: Branch of Forestry and Vegetation Management records
Dates: 1897-2005
Bulk Dates: 1987-2002
Collection number: SEKI 22368
Creator: Sequoia National Park (Calif.). Division of Forestry and Vegetation Management
Collection Size: 13 linear feet
Repository: Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks, Museum and Archives.

Abstract: Records generated within the organizational divisions of Sequoia Kings Canyon National Park concerning the branch of Forestry and Vegetation Management.

Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English

Access
Collection is open for research by appointment.

Publication Rights
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Preferred Citation
Branch of Forestry and Vegetation Management records, SEKI 22368.Courtesy of the National Park Service, Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks.

Acquisition Information
The collection came from the files of Tom Warner, the park forester for Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park, and covers the years 1897–2005 with the bulk of the files dating from 1987–2002.

Biography / Administrative History
Sequoia and Kings Canyon were the second and fourth national parks to be established by the federal government, in 1890 and 1940 respectively. The park’s superintendent began dealing with the intricacies of park resource management by the 1930s. Sequoia National Park, under the direction of park superintendent John R. White, was one of the first parks to face issues associated with the collective effects of development and visitation on the park ecosystems. The federal government established Kings Canyon National Park as a separate park from Sequoia, but for the bulk of its history, it has been administered jointly.

Originally the park services were split into three divisions: administration, maintenance, and rangers. Rangers were trained how to do just about everything; their responsibilities were very general. Then in the later half of the 20th century the park
service began refining the ranger division by pulling off groups of people with increasingly specialized and professionalized skills into separate divisions. Interpretation and resource management were two such divisions spun off from the ranger division. It was not until 1976 that work functions drawn from throughout the park’s administration were consolidated to officially establish the Division of Natural Resources Management, including the Branch of Forestry and Vegetation Management.

In 1926, the major fire that broke out in Glacier National Park inspired the park service to create a forestry office, which was “the first formal organizational designation specifically for natural resource management” (Sellars 1997, 83). Given that Sequoia National Park was created to protect a species of trees, forestry has been an important aspect of park operations. The primary functions of the Forestry and Vegetation Management Branch are supervising tree crews in cutting down hazard trees, coordinating timber sales, managing forest health projects, such as the attempted eradication of dwarf mistletoe and white pine blister rust, supervising soil and moisture crews in the preservation of meadows and the management of grazing, coordinating crews in the construction and maintenance of fences, and supporting revegetation and restoration projects.

The records amassed here were collected by Thomas E. Warner. Tom Warner has worked as the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park forester since the late 1970s. The forestry program has waxed and waned over the years, and with it, Tom Warner’s responsibilities have fluctuated. The Forestry Division has continued to grow since the first park forester was hired, but the principle responsibilities have remained mostly intact.

Major projects included in this collection are the restoration of Giant Forest, hazard tree mitigation, and forest health projects, such as dwarf mistletoe and white pine blister rust.

**Scope and Content of Collection**

Overall, the collection is organized by various operational groups within the Forestry and Vegetation Management Branch and individual files contain a full range of record types. Such record types include: correspondence, reports, planning documents, proposals, evaluations, contracts, guides, manuals, field data, surveys, accomplishments, expenditures, photographs, negatives, and slides. Important topics contained within this collection are the restoration of Giant Forest, hazard tree mitigation, and forest health projects, such as dwarf mistletoe and white pine blister rust.

**Arrangement**

Organized into VII Series: Series I Branch Wide Correspondence and Reports; Series II Vegetation Management; Series III Hazard Tree Mitigation; Series IV Forest Health; Series V Timber Sales; Series VI Meadow Preservation; and Series VII Photographs, Negatives, Slides and Aerial Photos.

**Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.
Sequoia National Park (Calif.). Branch of Forestry and Vegetation Management
Vegetation management
Forestry management
Timber sales

**Related Material**

Central Files 1935 - 2001  
[Finding aid for Branch of Forestry and Vegetation Management]
Series I  
Branch Wide Correspondence and Reports 1950-2002 1987-1995  
Subseries A Correspondence 1984-2002

Subseries A  Correspondence 1984-2002  
Subseries Scope and Content Summary  
The subseries consists of correspondence addressing all aspects of the Forestry and  
Vegetation Management Branch. The last two files contain Tom Warner’s phone logs.  
Arrangement  
The subseries is separated into two sections: correspondence and phone logs. Each  
category is arranged chronologically.

Subseries B Plans and Reports 1950-2001  
Subseries Scope and Content Summary  
The subseries consists of annual forestry reports, evaluations, accomplishment reports,  
and project plans.  
Arrangement  
Chronological.


Series Scope and Content Summary  
One of the Forestry Branch’s principle functions was to undertake ecological restoration.  
From 1947 – 1972 there was a revolutionary change in priorities of management in the  
national parks. Science became the leading voice, replacing landscape architecture as the  
new motivator. This both stemmed from and caused the park’s reappraisal of resource  
management. The priority became ecosystem preservation and moved away from visitor  
use. In Giant Forest, visitor use was taking a toll on the big trees, causing rapid deterioration  
of the delicate sequoia ecosystem. These large resource threats and issues came into  
question and heated debates began. Giant Forest had been a major concession site, with  
over 400 structures, and many did not believe that visitors would be satisfied if the  
concessioners were removed. Studies of the negative impacts of development and visitor  
use on vegetation within national parks date back to the 1920s. Despite these studies,  
development within the parks continued. In the 1950s, there were breakthrough scientific  
studies done on sequoia trees finding that buildings, sewage and power lines, roads and  
human compaction of soil harms the big trees’ root systems. The only recommendation was  
to remove the paths and structures. Superintendent John Davis called a conference in 1960  
to discuss this evidence and decide on the best path forward. They decided that commercial  
activity and concessions would be moved to Lodgepole and that Giant Forest should be  
allowed to recover. The question of perhaps relocating all overnight lodging in Giant Forest  
was again brought up but undecided. The passing of the National Environmental Policy Act  
(NEPA) in 1969 by Congress required the evaluation of all major federal actions and their  
environmental consequences mitigated. The National Park Service produced a Development  
Concept Plan (DCP) for Giant Forest. The DCP called for significant reductions in the  
development of Giant Forest. The plan called for a full removal of all overnight visitor  
facilities from the grove. New lodging was to be built at Clover Creek as a substitute.  
Implementation of the plan began in the early 1980s. The park forester and park ecologists  
were fundamental in the implementation of the long planned restoration of Giant Forest.  
Restoring this grove of giant sequoias to as near its natural state as possible involved the  
demolition of buildings in the area, the relocation of concession facilities, and the  
construction of new buildings at Clover Creek.  
The series consists of broad vegetation management plans and reports, records pertaining  
to specific restoration projects within the park, files concerning vegetation mapping and  
sensitive plant projects, and a small section relating to research on Sequoia trees.  
Arrangement  
The series is organized into four subseries: Subseries A, Plans and Reports; Subseries B,  
Restoration Projects; Subseries C, Vegetation Mapping and Sensitive Plant Projects; and  
Subseries D, Sequoia Research.
Subseries A Plans and Reports 1970-1999
Subseries Scope and Content Summary
The subseries consists of general vegetation management operations guides, reports and accomplishments, revegetation plans and programs, drafts of plans, funding plans, and vegetation workshops. There are also a few files on the work that the Youth Conservation Corp (YCC) participated in during the mid 1980s.
Arrangement
Chronological.

Subseries Scope and Content Summary
The subseries consists of plans, projects, guidelines, data, photography, correspondence and memoranda corresponding to various specific restoration projects that took place within Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park. The park records cover most comprehensively the restoration of Giant Forest, due to its high level of significance within the park. Other project locations include: the Ash Mountain nursery, Clover Creek, Dorst campground, Generals Highway, and Wuksachi Village. There are also various invasive species mitigation projects described in the records.
Arrangement
The subseries begins with two folders of general revegetation management plans and charts, and then continues with specific projects associated with different geographic areas of the park arranged chronologically.

Subseries C Vegetation Mapping and Sensitive Plant Projects 1968-1990
Subseries Scope and Content Summary
The subseries consists of records and correspondence regarding vegetation type mapping projects throughout the park, records pertaining to the aerial photography project, which was done specifically to comprehensively map the park’s vegetation, and files containing sensitive plant monitoring data. Some of the species monitored are the Midget Milk-vetch Plant, the Purple Mountain Parsley Plant, the Pine Foot Plant, the Lupine Plant, etc.
Arrangement
Chronological.

Subseries D Sequoia Research 1963-1992
Subseries Scope and Content Summary
The subseries consists of sequoia tree studies, surveys, evaluations and correspondence on various topics related to Sequoia trees.
Arrangement
Arranged by record type.
Series III Hazard Tree Mitigation 1933-2002

Series Scope and Content Summary
The series consists of general hazard tree correspondence and memoranda and records pertaining to more specific hazard tree mitigation projects. When trees are identified as hazardous to people or property within the park, foresters may decide to cut them down depending on the circumstances.

Cutting down trees in a national park may seem to contradict park values, but in reality it has been a common function of the Forestry and Vegetation Management Branches of national parks when trees become hazardous to people and park property. Series III, Hazard Tree Mitigation, documents such occurrences. Within the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park, sequoia trees are no longer cut down. In 1967, the felling by the park service of a sequoia tree threatening concession housing in Giant Forest was a major factor in the movement towards the restoration of Giant Forest and the relocation of concessions and overnight lodging. Instead of cutting down sequoias, as happened in 1950 and 1967, now people and property are moved instead. But in cases of non-Sequoia trees becoming hazardous to people and park property, they may be monitored or cut down by tree crews.

Of note, there are also related materials within Series 11 of the Central Files 1935 – 2001 collection. Tom Warner pulled records from the central files for his purposes as park forester. Some of these files predate Tom Warner’s work in the park. They have been returned to the central files and can be found there.

Arrangement
Organized into two subseries: Subseries A, Correspondence and Memoranda; and Subseries B, Projects.

Subseries A Correspondence and Memoranda 1933-2002
Subseries Scope and Content Summary
The first section of the subseries consists of correspondence, memoranda, planning documents, reports, field notes, data, reviews and evaluations. Tom Warner kept all these different forms of records together, typically separated only by year, not by record type. For this reason, they are gathered here in the general correspondence and memoranda section of the hazard tree series. The second section of files contains documents that define hazard trees. They pertain to the hazard tree rating system, which describes the characteristics that designate a hazard tree. The rating system also determines how dangerous these trees might be on a scale.

Arrangement
The subseries begins with general correspondence and memoranda and follows with records pertaining to the hazard tree rating system. Both are arranged chronologically within their own section.

Subseries Scope and Content Summary
The subseries consists of records pertaining to specific hazard tree mitigation projects throughout Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park. The locations of the projects include: Buckeye housing, Cedar Grove, Dorst campground, Generals Highway, Giant Forest, Grant Grove, and Mineral King.

Arrangement
Projects are arranged alphabetically by geographic location. The files about hazard trees located on Generals Highway are organized numerically by road unit.

Series Scope and Content Summary
In 1927, the park service joined the Forest Protection Board (FPB), an interagency organization that promoted cooperative fire suppression. The FPB also helped plan the fight of forest diseases and pest infestations. The Department of Agriculture’s Bureau of Plant Industry had the main task of supporting the park service in disease control. The early 1930s ushered in major scientific studies on forest health, primarily on insect control techniques, such as with the bark beetle, and blister rust control techniques. White pine blister rust, a non-native fungus, was a primary concern at the time. The endeavors of these allied organizations led to widespread control efforts in the 1930s. Programs to eliminate blister rust based on the results of studies from the early 1930s began in earnest in 1938. Blister rust also lives in the genus of plants called ribes, which includes one hundred and fifty different species. The primary technique of blister rust control was to eliminate any species of ribes. These plants are native and given the large number of species included in this genus, there were a lot of them within the parks. Efforts to eliminate them were difficult and time consuming. Eventually the efforts were given up in the 1950s when they proved futile. The primary program to eliminate dwarf mistletoe infestations occurred in Cedar Grove. This program was primarily a local initiative. The strategy was to prune trees' limbs carrying mistletoe. They attempted to invigorate the vegetation in Cedar Grove by eliminating this forest pest. The program eventually ceased to be a priority. The year 1941 marked the first major efforts by the park service towards eliminating forest pests. Foresters used chemical sprays and felled trees infested with insects, often by peeling the bark and burning them. The park service primarily focused its efforts on areas important to visitors. It was often a cooperative mission among all public lands, of which the park service’s forestry office was more than willing to participate in. The publication of the Leopold Report in 1963 discontinued the spraying of insecticide in attempts to eradicate forest pests and diseases. The report raised questions about the negative consequences of spraying harsh chemicals to the forests’ delicate ecosystems. These consequences could be more harmful to the management of the national park’s natural resources than the forest diseases and pests.

Arrangement
The series is organized into four subseries: Subseries A, Program Project Proposals and Accomplishments; Subseries B, Forest Pest Control; Subseries C, Blister Rust Control; and Subseries D, Dwarf Mistletoe Control.

The series consists of records documenting issues associated with forest health. The first subseries includes records relating to all of the forest health issues. For this reason, they are not separated into separate topics but organized into their own section of program project proposals and accomplishments. The second subseries documents forest pest control, primarily insects that cause damage to native plants within the park. The third subseries documents the control of white pine blister rust outbreaks. The final subseries includes records regarding the management of dwarf mistletoe infestations.


Subseries Scope and Content Summary
The subseries contains materials regarding major forest health concerns, such as issues with forest pests, white pine blister rust, and dwarf mistletoe. The materials included are program project proposals, accomplishments, expenditures, summaries, pesticide use reports, funding reports, and correspondence. The folders address multiple forest health issues and thus are not separated into respective categories like the rest of Series IV.

Arrangement
Chronological.

Subseries Scope and Content Summary
The subseries consists of three main sections. The first section contains correspondence, programs, reports, proposals, data, inventories, bulletins, and a few publications documenting forest pest control. The second section contains reports, updates, correspondence, and articles regarding bark beetle, gypsy moth, and tussock moth infestations. And finally there is a section of field data. This includes scouting data sheets and maps from Cedar Grove, the Devil's Postpile National Monument, Generals Highway, Giant Forest, Grant Grove, and Lodgepole.

Arrangement
The subseries is organized into three sections: correspondence, insect pests and field data. The first is arranged chronologically. The second section is arranged alphabetically by pest. The final section of field data is arranged alphabetically by geographic location.


Subseries Scope and Content Summary
The subseries contains two sections. The first section, of only 6 folders, contains blister rust control and maintenance training aids, handbooks, articles, and leaflets. The second section contains blister rust control annual statistical summaries, project plans and proposals, scouting contracts, reports, accomplishments, expenditures, infection center maps, correspondence, field notebooks, surveys, and field notes. The second section has a run of folders titled “Blister Rust Control,” followed by a 3-part number. These are treated differently in their arrangement because in their case the 3-part number representing location is what distinguishes them, not their date. This 3-part number indicates their location: township, range, and section. This Public Land Survey System was the geographic system that predated longitude and latitude.

Arrangement
The subseries is organized into two sections: manuals and reference and field data and reports. The manuals and reference materials (6 folders) are arranged chronologically. The field data and reports are primarily arranged chronologically. The only exception is the large section of folders titled “Blister Rust Control,” followed by a 3-part number. These folders are from around the same years and are instead arranged by the 3-part number. The rest are arranged chronologically.


Subseries Scope and Content Summary
The subseries documents the projects attempting to control dwarf mistletoe outbreaks throughout Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park. The types of materials included are studies, memos, project proposals, symposium proceedings, data sheets, surveys, rating systems, reports, evaluations, summary reports, field maps, slides, photo logs, plans, management programs, guidelines, correspondence, field notes, and funding requests.

Arrangement
Chronological.

Series Scope and Content Summary
The series consists of records regarding timber sales within the park. There are both general protocols for the sale of timber and documentation of specific timber sale projects.

Before the establishment of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park, logging often took place, as the area was seen as a bountiful place to harvest lumber. Nowadays, it is not normal practice for the park to sell its timber. Only under certain circumstances does the timber from the park become available for sale. Commercial logging has never been allowed within the park because it causes harm to the forest’s health and composition, and goes against the park’s purpose. Even trees that are removed for safety are not sold, simply because the sheer amount of trees deemed hazard trees is not enough to warrant a contractor. Only under extreme circumstances during the park’s history has it been necessary to enter a contract, such as the devastating tussock moth outbreaks or large restoration efforts.

Arrangement
Organized into two subseries: Subseries A, General Protocols; and Subseries B, Projects.

Subseries A: General Protocols 1982-2001
Subseries Scope and Content Summary
The subseries consists of timber appraisal handbooks, guidelines, photo logs, harvesting plans, hazard surveillance, government property sales, field notes, correspondence, and floppy disks. These general records relate to all aspects of timber sales within the park; they do not focus on specific projects.

Arrangement
Arranged chronologically. The only exception being the three folders at the front, which are not strictly in chronological order. They are kept together because they are sections of a 3-part handbook.

Subseries Scope and Content Summary
The subseries consists of more specific timber sale projects. The record types include: contracts, field notes, surveys, appraisal reports, data, proposals, predevelopment monitoring, correspondence, slash burn monitoring, summaries, sale area maps, observations, memoranda, and studies. The projects referenced in these records are Cedar Grove, Clover Creek, Dorst Creek campground, Grant Grove, and Wuksachi.

Arrangement
Chronological.

Series Scope and Content Summary
The series consists of general correspondence and records specific to particular projects associated with meadow preservation. These records document use that may have affected meadow preservation, and most importantly, the park service's efforts towards the continued preservation of meadows within Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park. The documentation of soil and moisture control, snow surveys, forestry and range conservation, and fences and gates, play important roles in the continued preservation of meadows.

The park's meadows are an important natural resource and this collection contains a substantial amount of material documenting both the use of these meadows as well as their continued preservation. Soil and moisture control was a backcountry program that attempted to correct trail erosion and protect the park's meadows. One technique to preserve meadows was cutting down pine saplings encroaching on the meadows. An important factor regarding the use of meadows was the prevalence of livestock grazing within the parks. Livestock grazing of the area that would later become Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park began in the 1850s and 1860s. For a substantial amount of time grazing of livestock was allowed, even after its establishment as a national park in support of concessioner's activities, or in the case of Kings Canyon, the grandfathering of previous forest service area permits for a limited number of years. The Organic Act authorized livestock grazing, but Secretary Lane's policy letter defined more specific regulations. The policy letter declared that sheep would not be allowed to graze in the parks and cattle were only allowed to graze in areas not typically visited by the public. The park service's management of meadows began as a result of Lowell Sumner, a biologist, joining the park staff and evidence of swiftly increasing use of the park's backcountry. Sumner conducted investigations of the effects of livestock grazing on the backcountry and recommended that some areas be closed to stock use. Records of fences built to keep livestock out of certain areas within the park are also important to the preservation of meadows. Livestock grazing ended in the early 1960s.

Arrangement
Organized into two subseries: Subseries A, General Correspondence; and Subseries B, Projects.

Subseries A General Correspondence 1954-1983
Subseries Scope and Content Summary
The subseries consists of general correspondence, reports, and photos regarding meadow preservation.
Arrangement
Chronological.

Subseries B Projects 1948-1991
Subseries Scope and Content Summary
The subseries consists of materials regarding specific meadow preservation projects. The types of records included are: photos, outlines, annotated maps, fence and gate specifications, project notes, work records, diagrams, descriptions, funding documentation, accomplishments, and memoranda.
Arrangement
Chronological.

Series Scope and Content Summary
The series contains most of the visual documentation of the functions and activities of the Forestry and Vegetation Management Branch. Many of the slides, photographs, and negatives have been funneled out of their respective series placed into their own subseries within Series VII. Some of the visual material has been dated and titled, but most of it is unlabeled.

Arrangement
The series is comprised of subseries that parallels the organization of the entire collection, with two additional subjects at the end. It is organized into seven subseries: Subseries A, Vegetation Management; Subseries B, Hazard Tree Mitigation; Subseries C, Forest Health; Subseries D, Timber Sales; Subseries E, Meadow Preservation; Subseries F, Camera Points; and Subseries G, Aerial photos.

Subseries A Vegetation Management 1965-1986
Subseries Scope and Content Summary
The subseries contains imagery that focuses on vegetation and revegetation projects. Subjects include: prescribed burns, revegetation sites, and general forestry. The media of the subseries includes negatives, photographs, and slides. Field notes for the meadow and well study are also included in the subseries.

Arrangement
Chronological.

Subseries B Hazard Tree Mitigation 1964-1997
Subseries Scope and Content Summary
This subseries contains imagery that focuses on hazard trees: including the identification, removal, and the impacts of the trees' removal. The subseries consists of photographs, negatives, and numerous packets of slides. Other topics present are photographs of specific areas and projects: such as visuals of tree safety, hazard mitigation, and program strategies.

Arrangement
Chronological.

Subseries C Forest Health 1953-1988
Subseries Scope and Content Summary
The subseries contains imagery that pertains to research on forest health projects that were taking place during the time. The subseries is comprised of packets of photographs and negatives—many with dates and locations.

Arrangement
Organization is project based: with images from the dwarf mistletoe mitigation projects, followed by forest pest control projects, and ending with slides from the blister rust control programs.

Subseries D Timber Sales no date
Subseries Scope and Content Summary
This subseries is comprised of a single un-dated file that holds one movie. It is a VHS of the Grant Grove timber sale.
Subseries E  Meadow Preservation 1956-1973
Subseries Scope and Content Summary
This subseries contains imagery of research focused on soil and moisture. The subseries contains mostly photos and slides. Many images have locations and dates.
Arrangement
Chronological.

Subseries F  Camera Points 1897-1979
Subseries Scope and Content Summary
This subseries contains permanent camera points, volumes one through three, of Cedar Grove in 1967. The focus is on the landscape and flora, and their change over time. In addition, one of the folders contains images from Dr. Hartesveldt’s south study.
Arrangement
The subseries starts with folders that are more descriptive and leads to general Cedar Grove camera points organized by volume.

Subseries G  Aerial Photos no date
Subseries Scope and Content Summary
This subseries contains three rolls of aerial photographs. Each reel has been labeled with a location. The rolls have been placed in enclosures designed to keep them safe.
Locations include: Inyo Forest areas, south of Hume Lake District, and Inyo National Forest.