Natural Resource Management Records

Finding aid created by Yosemite National Park Archives staff using RecordEXPRESS
Yosemite National Park Archives
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http://www.nps.gov/yose/historyculture/collections.htm
2016
Descriptive Summary

Title: Natural Resource Management Records

Dates: 1912-2012

Collection Number: YCN: 1011 (YOSE 218601)

Creator/Collector:

Extent: 125.1 LF (258 boxes of textual material, 27 slides, 42 floppy disks, 10 Hi-8 video tape cassettes, one reel of computer tape, 671 index cards, approximately 200 Polaroid photographs, and approximately 255 oversize maps, drawings, architectural plans, and data spreadsheets)

Online items available
https://voro.cdlib.org/user-pdf-dav/yosnpa/NRM_FindingAid_Accretion_edits_%20Final%202014_08.pdf

Repository: Yosemite National Park Archives
El Portal, California 95318

Abstract: The collection is comprised of records generated by National Park Service staff, primarily duty-stationed at Yosemite National Park, concerning the management of natural resources in the park during the years 1912 to 2012, with the bulk occurring between 1960 and 2000. The material consists of reports, surveys, studies, research data, correspondence, study proposals, articles, administrative documents, plans, maps, research papers, journals, photographs, computer disks, and memorandum relating to natural resources management. Topics include deer and bear management, contaminated lands, air and water quality, planning and compliance, threatened and endangered species, and program administrative records. The majority of materials are reports and data relating to physical science and landscape ecology, wildlife management, and records generated by the office of the division chief during oversight of division functions.

Language of Material: English

Access

While this collection is open to the public, sensitive materials have been flagged and require appropriate permission through the Yosemite archivist to access.

Preferred Citation

Natural Resource Management Records. Yosemite National Park Archives

Acquisition Information

The collection was principally created by staff responsible for natural resources management between 1966 and 2011, of which many functions are now situated as natural resource branches of the Resources Management and Science Division (RMS). The materials were deposited in the archives in small batches with the majority of the later accessions received from the Physical Science Branch of RMS. The initial deposits were first sent to the records center in the Research Library, accessioned, and then later sent to the archives in El Portal. One of the accessions, YOSE-06826, was donated by a Yosemite staff member after retirement. Another accession was sent from the National Park Service (NPS) Division of Natural Science in Washington DC, and contains research documentation regarding resources in Yosemite that was incorporated and managed in the park divisional records. The collection has a total of 22 accessions.

Biography/Administrative History

The management of natural resources at Yosemite has evolved as public perception of the environment and National Park Service (NPS) management philosophies changed from management of parks as scenic vistas and recreational areas to management of parks as ecosystems. Beginning in the 1960s, park administration began to view management of natural resources as necessary to restore the ecosystems needed to maintain and preserve the natural resources of Yosemite National Park. From the 1880s and into the 1950s, early park custodians concentrated their efforts on protecting the large and “showy” mammals, such as deer and bears, as well as ensuring the rivers and lakes were stocked with fish. The NPS increased research studies in Yosemite National Park during the 1920s as scientists sought to understand the park resources, particularly the biological resources. By the 1950s, a shift in natural resources management within the NPS was beginning to occur. The release of the Leopold Report in 1963 suggested the importance of managing parks as “vignettes of primitive America” rather than large scale scenery preservation. As a result, Yosemite launched a wildlife management program which addressed the pressing issues at hand: mounting deer populations, effects of stocking fish, and the food habituation of bears. The passing of the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) in 1969 created a legal mandate for federal agencies to consider the effects on the environment for projects on federal lands or projects undertaken with federal monies. This further prompted the NPS to think about and manage the natural and cultural resources in its custody. By 1972, the Division of Natural Resources Management was created at Yosemite with Richard (Dick) Riegelhuth as division chief. The first natural resources management plan was approved in 1977 and was concerned with four main topics: vegetation resources management, forest pest control, wildlife and fisheries management and the research program. The
branch of Planning, Compliance and Physical Science was established in the Natural Resources Management Division around 1980, headed by Mark Butler. This branch was responsible not only for planning and compliance but also for air resources, water resources, environmental contamination, and integrated pest management activities. The Planning and Compliance Program was placed under the branch of Planning and Compliance around 1994, under the Division of Project Management. At this time, the retitled Physical Science and Landscape Ecology branch, headed by Branch Chief Robert Howard, added the Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and Geology Programs to the Division of Resources Management. In 1990, park management made a major commitment to establish a comprehensive cultural and natural resource management program to achieve well-defined park goals and resource management objectives. The Resources Management Division was split into two programs: 1) programs responsible for natural resources management, which included vegetation, threatened and endangered species, wildlife and aquatic, planning, compliance, and physical science, and 2) programs responsible for cultural resources management, which included historical, archeological, and architectural functions. Around 2003, the Resource Management Division was reorganized into the Resources Management and Science Division consisting of six branches. These branches, which include anthropology; history, architecture, and landscapes; physical sciences and landscape ecology; vegetation and ecological restoration; visitor use and social sciences; and wildlife management, provide leadership in managing the natural and cultural resources of the park. While many external influences have affected the change in attitude, philosophy, and approach to NPS resource management during the last century, the overall goal of NPS managers has been to preserve and protect the park resources for the enjoyment of future generations.

Scope and Content of Collection
The Natural Resource Management Records are arranged to reflect the order in which the files were created and maintained as well as the changing organization of the Resources Management Division. The arrangement of the records is by office of origin, record function, and subject (scientific discipline). Four series reflect records of the office/staff member who created and organized the material. Successive series mirror the current organizational structure of Yosemite’s Resource Management and Science Division (RMS). Consequently, the series are: Records of the Office of the Division Chief, Wildlife Management, Physical Science and Landscape Ecology, and Vegetation, (the current branches of the RMS Division that create natural resource documentation), Environmental Compliance, Threatened and Endangered Species, and Scientific Reports and Studies.