

Up In Arms! The Struggle to Preserve the Legacy of the National Park Service During Wartime

JADELYN J. MONIZ NAKAMURA

IN 1916 CONGRESS established the National Park Service (NPS) to “conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife 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 future generations.”¹ Never has it been more of a challenge for the NPS to balance this dual mandate of conservation and recreation than during World War II. National Parks are created to protect and preserve natural and cultural resources for future generations. In the years leading up to and during the war the Park Service was seriously challenged because of the overriding concern for the defense of the nation. Across the country, national parks and other federal lands were used to support the nation’s overall war effort; their land and the resources on them were considered convenient and expendable. Numerous conflicts arose between the parks and the military over access and use.² The National Park Service, its mission, and culture, were in essence under an internal attack, and parks

Dr. Jadelyn Moniz Nakamura is the Integrated Resources Manager/Archaeologist at Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park. Born and raised in Hilo, she has worked at the park for the past 13 years. She holds a B.A. in History and Anthropology (double major), an M.A. in Anthropology (with an emphasis in archaeology), and a Ph.D. in Archaeology, all from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. She has conducted several historical research projects on the development of Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park.

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found it necessary to defend strenuously their values and resources while delicately balancing the demands of a nation at war.

Like many national parks across the country, Hawaii National Park was used as an Army headquarters, a rest and rehabilitation center, a bombing range, a training and maneuver area, a camp for Japanese internees and Korean and Okinawan prisoners of war, and as grazing land. This article discusses the often challenging role the National Park Service played in the defense of the nation during World War II at the Kīlauea section of what was then called Hawaii National Park. This article begins with a brief history of military involvement at Kīlauea before the establishment of the park, delves into the role the park played in preparing for hostilities in the years leading up to the war, and finally, discusses the enormous responsibility placed on the park and staff to balance management of its resources while supporting the troops during and immediately after hostilities.

EARLY HISTORY OF MILITARY INVOLVEMENT AT KĪLAUEA

Hawaii National Park was established in 1916. When it was created, the park encompassed the lands of Mauna Loa, Kīlauea and Haleakalā—three of the most important places on the islands of Hawai‘i and Maui (Figure 1). In 1960 the park was split into two units, and in 1961 they were designated Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park, on the island of Hawai‘i, and Haleakalā National Park on the island of Maui. These park lands were set aside by the United States government to provide for their protection and for the “benefit and enjoyment of the people.”³ Here, park visitors are amazed by the geological wonders, awed by the natural beauty, and inspired by the rich cultural heritage.

Among the millions of visitors who have come to Kīlauea and Mauna Loa, those with ties to the U.S. military have left a lasting imprint on the land (Figure 2 and 3). The early history of the military and Hawaii National Park was generally one of mutual benefit. Military personnel came to the park as scientists and visitors, and they also helped to build the infrastructure. One of the first documented military projects within park land dates to December 1840, when for five days Navy Lieutenant Charles Wilkes and crew from the U.S. Exploring Expedition ascended Mauna Loa to measure its height and establish a station at Pendulum Peak.⁴ Seventy-five years after Wilkes, the Buffalo Soldiers, an African American military unit, arrived in the

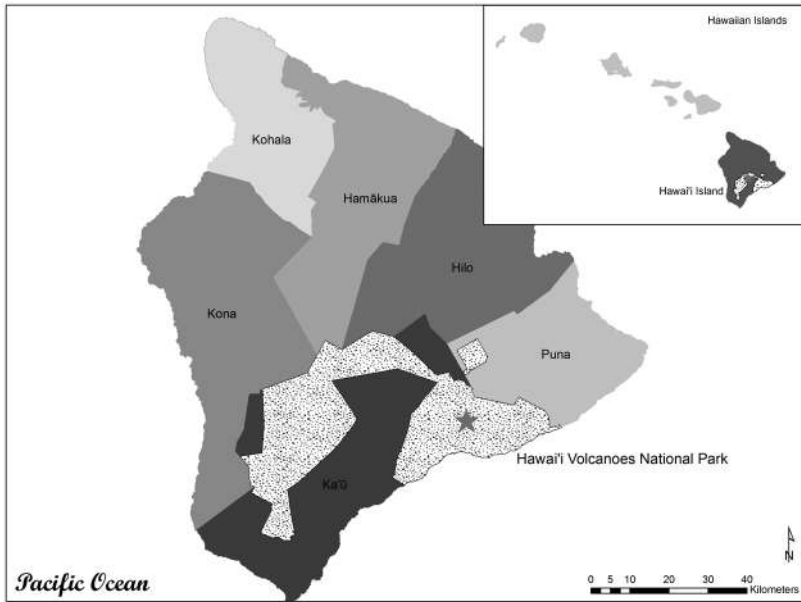


FIGURE 1. Location of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park.

park to help build a critical trail connecting the summit of Kīlauea to the summit of Mauna Loa. While at Kīlauea, the men visited the volcano and enjoyed the beauty of the area.

Hawaii National Park and its volcanoes were a popular destination for both enlisted men and officers stationed in Hawai'i who came to view spectacular volcanic eruptions (Figure 4). Interest in Kīlauea as a training and rest area began in September 1911, when Companies A and F, Twentieth Infantry, arrived. They were followed two years later by one hundred men from Company D, First Infantry, who camped near the Volcano House.⁵ Recognizing the benefit that military tourists could provide to local businesses, Lorrin Thurston, a politician and businessman, tried to encourage more military visitation through the establishment of a recreational camp and maneuver ground at Kīlauea for soldiers and sailors. By the fall of 1916 the Kīlauea Military Camp (KMC) was up and running within the boundaries of Hawaii National Park. The establishment of KMC has resulted in the most long-standing and visible representation of the military in the park. It has been an important place for soldiers and their families to go for

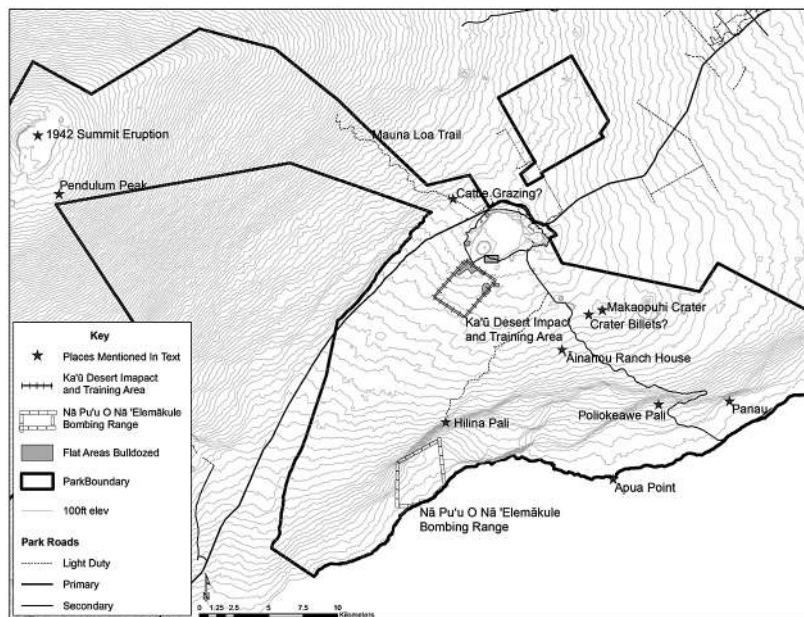


FIGURE 2. Map of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park with places mentioned in text noted.

rest and relaxation, an oasis from the stresses and conflict of war. KMC would play a prominent role during World War II; its establishment, along with other pre-war projects and programs, would help set the stage for direct military involvement in the park.

While KMC is the most visible military presence in the park, the military had other lasting impacts that forever altered the natural and cultural landscape. Many of these early changes, which occurred prior to World War II, were welcomed by the young park in its efforts to build its infrastructure. In 1923 General Charles P. Summerall, who commanded the Hawaiian Department, requested an airfield be constructed on Hawai'i island. Thomas Boles, who was then park superintendent, suggested and approved construction of the Kīlauea Landing Field to the south of Halema'ūma'u crater (Figure 5). The next year the airfield was damaged by an eruptive event, and the military requested a second airfield be constructed. In 1925 Boles Field was approved and built closer to KMC so it could be readily used by military personnel stationed there.

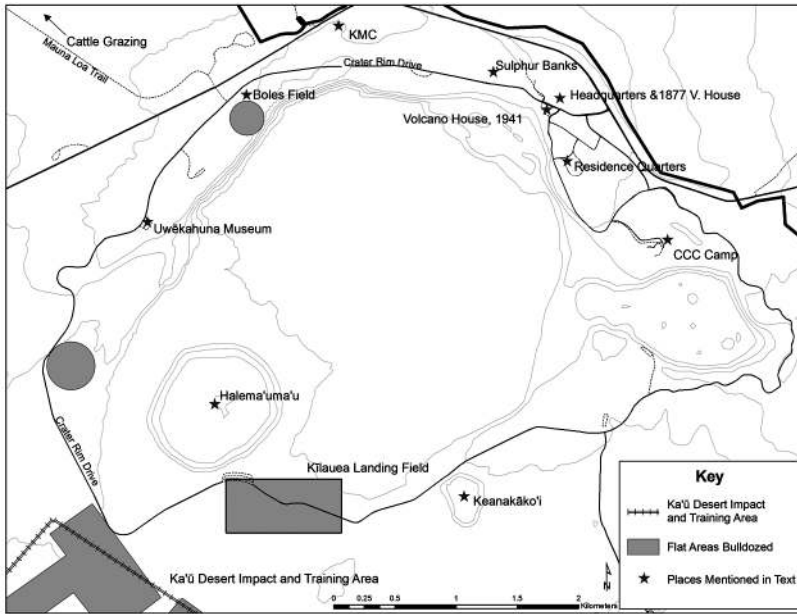


FIGURE 3. Map of Kilauea Caldera with places mentioned in text noted.

Other welcome additions to the park were carried out by the men of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), a quasi-military outfit established by the United States government during the Great Depression. Known as the “Tree Army,” the CCC provided jobs for the unemployed primarily in conservation programs on public lands. The CCC established a large camp at Kilauea, where it built or reinforced much of the park’s existing infrastructure, including buildings, roads, trails, and water systems. Many of these facilities are still used by visitors and park staff.

PREWAR MILITARY BUILDUP

By 1939 most of the world was engulfed in war, but the United States had stayed out. Despite America’s neutrality there was tension, especially with Japan. Government leaders knew that sooner or later the U.S. would be involved in the war in some capacity, and the military and other federal agencies began to focus on national security. In

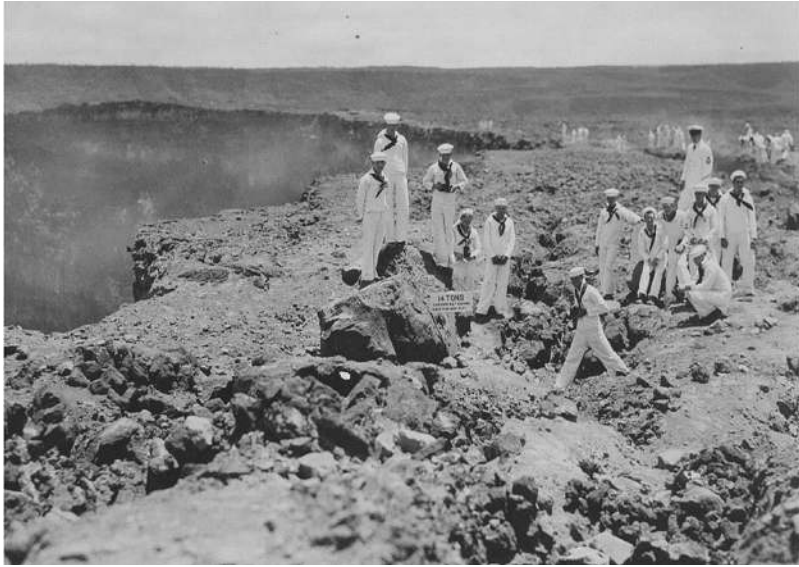


FIGURE 4. Sailors at Kilauea, post-1924 explosive eruption (note “14 Ton” sign). Photo National Park Service, Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park, Historic Photo Collection, Accession HAVO-554.

1940, a survey of Park Service programs was undertaken to identify the best role for the agency to play in the nation’s defense. The study, completed by the Bureau of the Budget and congressional committees, concluded that the Park Service was best suited to impart “the fundamental principles of American democracy” and prepare the “national mind to defend democracy.” This meant boosting morale and inspiring the citizenship for the “love of country.”⁶ Despite this assessment, the military viewed Park Service land in a different light. As the buildup to war increased and national defense became a priority, parks were viewed as good places to establish new training areas and defensive sites, and the resources within park lands were considered to be available and exploitable.

Because of the atmosphere of impending war, and the desire to support America’s security policy, Park Service leaders, including then-superintendent of Hawaii National Park Edward Wingate, tried to balance the desires (sometimes demands) of the military with their mission to preserve park resources. This would become a common



FIGURE 5. Kilauea Landing Field, 1923. Photo Wriston Aerial Collection, 74-30-4, Plate 19, Lyman Museum.

approach for Park Service leaders as they sought to defend the ideals and principles of the agency. They argued that the values of the Service and its mission were essential for the morale of the country and that these areas must be preserved for the future when the war was won.⁷

Edward Wingate was well suited to guide Hawaii National Park through this turbulent time. He knew the park, its adjacent lands, and the local community well. Wingate was appointed superintendent of Hawaii National Park on November 16, 1933, and held that post for 13 years. Born in North Carolina, he came to Hawai'i at the age of 23 and worked as a topographical engineer for the United States Geological Survey (USGS) in the uplands of Kahuku, the S.E. flank of Mauna Loa, the forests of Kilauea, and in Kapa'ahu region of Puna. Wingate also worked on the east and southeast side of Maui as well as in Kaupō. As superintendent he strongly defended the Park Service mission as he tried to buffer the effects of military incursion and the loss of staff and resources.

Military impacts started even before the United State entered the war, when a number of bills were introduced in Congress to transfer land from the NPS to the War Department.⁸ Hawaii National Park did not escape this trend. In 1938, the Army Air Corps needed an airplane bombing range for training. The Corps decided that the Ka'ū coast of Hawaii National Park met training needs and was the most suitable place to establish the range.⁹ The area under consideration, which was to be called the Nāpu'uonā'elemākule Bombing Range, had been added to the park only ten years earlier (Figure 6). If the training range was established in the park, the public would no longer be able to access and use the land because the dangers associated with bombing and unexploded ordnance would be too risky.

Wingate was forced to walk a delicate balance, not wanting to object forcefully to the military's plans to defend the nation, yet required to uphold the mission of the National Park Service and preserve the integrity of the land. Wingate tried to negotiate the best deal for the park in regard to the withdrawal of the 'Elemākule lands. He requested that no permanent structures be built in the area and that the Army make every effort to locate another site for the bombing range.¹⁰ In a meeting in November 1938, the Army stated that Ka'ū was the only suitable location for the new bombing range, and Wingate agreed to the use of the land.¹¹ Two years later, in March 1940, the Army applied for the use of 6,450 acres in the park. This was consid-



FIGURE 6. Nāpu'uonā'elemākule Bombing Range, 1938. Photo Stearns Collection, Edwin H. Mookini Library, University of Hawai'i at Hilo.

erably more land than was first requested. Protests were filed by local groups as well as the superintendent's office. Wingate made one last attempt to lessen the impact and secure the best deal for the National Park Service. He made several more requests: (1) that the Army use no more than six square miles of park land; (2) that the land be removed from the park only after the Army had considered all other suitable places; (3) that the Army give good reason for wanting the Ka'ū piece; and (4) the Ka'ū land be swapped for land in Kalapana.¹²

Public reaction to the removal of the Ka'ū lands reflected Wingate's stance. Across the nation, many individuals and conservation groups were against the removal of park land and voiced their objection. In 1940 Richard W. Westwood wrote to the magazine *Nature* in defense of keeping the Ka'ū lands in the park:

With all the terrific destruction going on in the world today, the still small voice of conservation is going to have a more and more difficult time making itself heard.¹³

The Audubon Society, the Isaak Walton League, and other conservation groups protested the bill as well. They all felt that even if the nation was close to war, removal of park land for military purposes would set a dangerous precedent. The overall mood, however, was one of reluctant resignation. Many felt that protection of the park's lands was beyond their control and that the government's priority was national security and defense, not preservation.¹⁴

On May 23, 1940, the Isaak Walton League wrote to the Secretary of the Interior:

While in principal [*sic*], of course, we are opposed to any withdrawal from national parks, we hesitate to oppose this particular bill as we do not want to be in the position of opposing any needed national defense measures.¹⁵

In the spring of 1940, over moderate protests, Senator J. Morris Shepard introduced a bill requesting nine square miles (5,760 acres) plus a number of park roads, trails, and the Hilina Pali be removed from Hawaii National Park for use by the Army. On July 16, 1940, withdrawal of the area went into effect after revisions to the original bill. In its final form, bills H.R. 9171 and S. 3676 decreased the

area of withdrawal to just over four and a half square miles (2,880 acres). In addition, the commanding officer of the Hawaiian Department, General Charles Herron, agreed that if the Army did not use, or abandoned the area, the land would revert to its previous owner (the National Park Service).¹⁶

Two years after the 'Elemākule Range request, on July 18, 1940, the commanding general of the Hawaiian Department again looked at land within the park for additional training. He requested a survey of park land near the Mauna Loa truck trail "for [the] eventual use of the Mauna Loa site for road construction and erection of certain unspecified defense works." Although Wingate approved the surveys on July 20, 1940, it is not clear what became of the project, and park records show no further discussion.¹⁷

PREPARING PERSONNEL

By 1940 the prospect of the United States being drawn into the global conflict was increasing and the involvement of Hawaii National Park in the prewar preparations went far beyond the establishment of the 'Elemākule Range. Park staff began to prepare for war and participated in a number of territory-wide blackout exercises. The first exercise occurred at 8:30 p.m. on May 23, 1940. The second took place nearly a year later on May 20, 1941, and the final exercise between 8:02 and 8:22 p.m. on August 24, 1941, less than four months before Pearl Harbor was attacked.¹⁸

In addition to blackout exercises, park staff and the neighboring community began to organize themselves. In 1940 park rangers and men from the "general vicinity" of the park formed a group called the Volcano District Emergency Police Guard, which was made up of about eighty members of the park, CCC, hotel staff, and neighboring farmers and laborers. Members of this group participated in target practice and trained with the Red Cross in first aid (Figure 7). They also salvaged scrap aluminum and copper from local dumps. At the park, staff members cross-trained in other divisions to prevent personnel shortages during emergencies.¹⁹ A second group called the Superintendent's Advisory Committee on National Defense was formed. This group had formerly been called the Committee on Food Production, but its name changed when its duties were broadened

to cover “review and recommendation” on national defense issues that related to the park or the nearby community.²⁰ One goal of both groups was to identify ways to extend the service of the park to Army units stationed on Hawai‘i island. Part of this service was to be prepared for any emergency. At 10:00 p.m. on November 29, 1941, just a week before the attack on Pearl Harbor, the superintendent decided to put all of their training to the test. He called a surprise alert of the Police Guard, and 100 percent of the staff participated in eight hours of guard and patrol duty in the cold rain. Others who reported for duty included the CCC staff, hotel personnel, and civilian residents within a three-mile radius of the park.²¹

In addition to the active defensive training, a number of other small but important activities were being undertaken in preparation for war. The park women knitted clothes for the Red Cross, and park staff was ordered to reduce the purchase of aluminum and copper items. The park also created small vegetable gardens at individual quarters as well as a larger community garden for park employees, and they began ordering and stockpiling cases of staple food supplies for emergency use.²²



FIGURE 7. Hawaii National Park, Small Arms Firing Range in the 1930s. Photo Kilauea Military Camp.

“THERE COULD BE NO DOUBT”

A week before the attack on Pearl Harbor, the information park staff received over the radio had not been reassuring, and it looked like the country was edging closer to war. Although the park had been through extensive training, nothing could fully prepare them for the upheaval, challenges, and changes soon to be brought by war. Like many in the islands on December 7, 1941, Superintendent Wingate first heard news of the attack on the morning radio. Wanting to confirm what he was hearing, Wingate phoned several people, including Park Ranger Charles W. Miller, who was on switchboard duty that day. No one at the park could confirm the attack. Wingate then called the Hilo police, who were on standby, but had no other information for the park. Wingate decided to put his staff on standby as well, because he was not sure that what he was hearing on the radio was accurate. His uncertainties continued until the announcer stated that “the Rising Sun had been seen on the wings of the attacking planes. There could be no doubt then.”²³ The park finally received official word of the attack when the Federal Communications Commission office called and confirmed it. Wingate immediately went over to the “Army Recreation Camp (KMC) and conferred with Colonel Bonham who was in charge there.”²⁴ The Emergency Police Guard “assumed duty stations as rapidly as arms and identification arm bands—rushed through by the park women could be issued.”²⁵ It was now their job to prevent vital facilities from being sabotaged.²⁶

The attack on Pearl Harbor marked the start of the war for America and a radical change in everyday life, especially for those living in Hawai‘i. Superintendent Wingate was about to enter a very challenging period of his tenure, including the eventual loss of the CCC staff, drastic cuts in regular park staff and funding, damage to park resources, and a virtual takeover of park facilities and resources by the military under the order of martial law.

MARTIAL LAW GOES INTO EFFECT

At 11:30 a.m., a mere three-and-a-half hours after the attack on Pearl Harbor, territorial governor Joseph B. Poindexter invoked the Hawaii Defense Act. At 3:30 p.m. Lieutenant General Walter C. Short

declared himself military governor of Hawai'i and martial law went into effect for the islands.²⁷ The military command would begin to rely heavily on the infrastructure, staff, and equipment in the national parks to help defend the homeland. All key park personnel were placed on twenty-four-hour duty while others were assigned to work eight-hour shifts daily. Nightly blackout rules immediately went into effect and all cars and trucks that did not have a military pass were ordered off the road both day and night. Schools were closed, alcohol was prohibited, and no one was allowed to travel between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. Bicycles became more common, and home gardens were started.²⁸

The staff at Hawaii National Park cooperated fully with the Army and the county police department after the initial outbreak of war. Nine days after the attack, Superintendent Wingate was appointed deputy sheriff for the island of Hawai'i, and other staff members and park volunteers were commissioned as special deputies for the Puna and Ka'ū districts. The superintendent was also appointed to represent the provost marshal and was given the responsibility of issuing military passes, gasoline and kerosene permits, and permits for alien travel for the park and the Twenty-nine Mile (just outside of the park) and Glenwood areas.²⁹ In the immediate days following the attack, armed park rangers were busy checking on reports of strange lights, behavior, and noises, while armed volunteers from the park and Volcano area guarded intersections, roads, and public utilities. The park women were not to be outdone by the men. They knitted fifty-eight sweaters, four scarves, one shawl and twenty pairs of socks by the end of 1941—less than a month!³⁰ As the war progressed, the park women took over tasks the men had been assigned, including jobs at the warehouses, making bandages, and issuing and delivery of firewood and kerosene so the men could perform other duties.³¹

DEFENDING THE HOMELAND

From the moment Pearl Harbor was attacked until late spring, when the defenses of the island were strengthened, the focus of the park staff was to assist the Army.³² All personnel and facilities were drawn into the war effort. Despite their conflicting mandates, the NPS staff felt that they went above and beyond to help facilitate the Army in

every way possible. The Army was committed to fighting the war, and although it tried to respect the Park Service's preservation mandate, martial law and the immense need for training took priority. Park operations were set aside, and in the first year of the war the staff devoted almost its entire time to aiding the Army and defending the home front. In the months and years ahead, many conflicts arose between the two agencies, whose missions and operations were fundamentally different.

Less than a month after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Army was having an immense impact on the park's landscape and operations. With a ready infrastructure available, the Army took over much of the park for training and used its buildings to house staff. Superintendent Wingate had very good relations with Major General Ralph Pennel, who assumed command of the District of Hawaii. When General Pennel needed a headquarters and command post, the superintendent ordered a rush to complete construction of the Volcano Observatory and Naturalist building (currently serving as the park headquarters and visitor center). The job, which had been 60 percent complete, was finished four days later on March 4, 1942 by the CCC (20 enrollees), park staff (three men), and semi-skilled labor from the U.S. Engineers (16 men).³³ Other park structures, facilities, equipment, and land were used by the Army, including the historic 1877 Volcano House, which was rented from the concessioner and used as officer and staff quarters (see Table 1).

In addition to park buildings and equipment, the military relied on park staff to help prepare the island's defense. Staff guarded the park entrances, and law enforcement rangers were tasked to teach the Emergency Police Guard proper handling and shooting of firearms, using donated guns and ammunition.³⁴ A few days after the attack, the job of the Emergency Police Guard turned to maintaining and building the defensive infrastructure within the park. The Guard supervised construction projects, enforced the nightly blackouts, and set up defensive sites that consisted of sand containers placed at the front and rear of homes and buildings. If there was an air raid, the sand would be used to fight incendiary bomb fires. The Guard also assigned two park staff to man three seacoast observation posts at strategic points (Hilina Pali, Pānau, and Poliokeawe Pali) and a fourth at Uwēkahuna Museum. The observation posts were equipped with map-

TABLE 1. Selected List of Army Requests Approved by the NPS.⁴⁴

Request	Date Approved
Surveys for proposed installations, road improvements, and extensions on Mauna Loa	July 20, 1940
Use of Uwēkahuna Museum as observation post	March 17, 1942
Use of brand new Volcano Observatory and Naturalist Building for offices	March 19, 1942
Use of Quarters #27-1 for officers residence	April 1, 1942
Reopen 6,418 acres to cattle grazing	June 3, 1942
Use of parcel of land at 'Āpuā for defense installation	July 9, 1942
Use of 1 acre of land at end of Chain of Craters Road for defense installation (Crater Billets)	July 14, 1942
Use of house to station small detachment of men	August 15, 1942
Use of house to station small detachment of men	October 12, 1942
Use of part of a building to operate radio equipment	April 1942
Use of CCC camp to quarter troops and construction of additional temporary buildings	May 13, 1942
Use of parcel of land for storage supplies	June 5, 1942
Train six mules for transport of food, water, and staff to remote locations	December 1943
Operated five observation posts, shore patrol along 25 miles of shore line, guarded utilities and water supply, patrolled roads within and outside park	1941-1942
Plough several thousand acres of flat land and parking areas to render them useless to the enemy in accordance with a request from military governor	1942
Established Ka'ū Desert Impact and Training Area	1943
Use of tools, maps, plans, reports; carpenter, paint, and machine shops for emergency work and routine repairs for units stationed in vicinity	Throughout war
Loan of two dump trucks, a pickup truck, a tractor and a grader, typewriter, Dictaphone, and other office equipment	Throughout war
Take several hundred tons of gravel with much more taken without permission	Throughout war
Talks given by park naturalist at various Army posts on the island showing movies of the park and volcanoes.	Throughout war
Made water supply available	Throughout war
Participation of staff in purchasing war bonds (100 percent participation and 12.5 percent payroll deduction) and turned in 5,980 pounds of scrap rubber (50 lbs per person).	Unknown

ping instruments, maps, and a forty-power telescope. Those assigned to the observation posts were tasked to locate planes or ships at sea, determine their bearings, and transmit that information to the Army. Park staff traveled on horseback to these remote sites where they erected simple shelters and camping facilities. Staff also “frequently patrolled” the seacoasts to the south and east.³⁵ Outside of the park, the Emergency Police Guard worked as far as Glenwood where they assisted with establishing “First Aid Casualty Stations, air raid shelters, fire protection brigades and instructing personnel and residents” in these activities.³⁶

The CCC was integral to the development of the park, and especially important in the opening months of World War II. It completed many of the emergency projects that were needed by the military to establish its presence at Kīlauea, including construction of six-and-a-half miles of telephone line from the observation post at Makapūhi to the one at Pānau, and a mile-and-half of telephone line from ‘Āinahou Ranch House to the observation post at Poliokeawe Pali. Other changes to the telephone system were made so that there would be instant communication with guard stations. The CCC also spent considerable time in February 1942 constructing underground air raid shelters throughout the park headquarters area.³⁷ The enrollees also took national defense vocational training classes in welding, carpentry and auto mechanics to help establish a ready workforce.³⁸ Despite their contribution to the park and the war effort, the federal government disbanded the program at the end of fiscal year 1942.

In the early months of the war, the military requested use of several parcels of park land and buildings (Table 1). The military encroached upon many other areas in the park and used equipment and supplies without the agreement of the NPS. These included the use of motor vehicles, breaking of fences in Kīpukapuāulu, widening of several miles of trail into a truck trail through the forest, the erection of small buildings near Hilina Pali shelter, and the use of crushed rock and firewood without permission, to mention just a few.³⁹

Not long after the initial attack and declaration of war, life in the park took on an established routine. Some duties were dropped altogether, but as many park tasks as possible were resumed after military assignments were completed. The Observatory staff was also impacted with key staff being pulled for war duty. This left the volcanologist

able to complete only routine tasks and seismograph measurements; much of his time was taken up with police guard duties.⁴⁰ By the end of the fiscal year, a skeleton crew was left to carry on only essential park duties, including protection, maintenance and research.⁴¹ Despite this, the superintendent commented that not only was the park functioning better than other organizations on the island, but it was also better prepared because park personnel had “generally tried to foresee and prepare for what might come.”⁴² The park’s goal was to do everything possible to prevent an attack on its facilities. Assistant Chief Ranger Gunder Olson remarked in January 1942 that the “work subsequent to December 7 has been toward preventing Hawaii National Park from becoming a possible Hawaii National Battlefield Park.”⁴³

FROM R&R TO INTERNMENT CAMP

KMC served as both a training facility for the National Guard of Hawaii and recreational facility for Army and Navy personnel in the years preceding World War II. In 1941 it became an important staging ground for the war. From March to October 1942, KMC became the headquarters for the Twenty-seventh Division of the Army. The troops used the buildings at KMC for quarters and the grounds for training. During the first five months of the war, KMC also served as a temporary facility for the internment of local Japanese Americans (Figure 8).

Prior to the outbreak of war, the FBI had developed a custodial detention list. On the day Pearl Harbor was attacked, the War Department, working under the authority of martial law, ordered that everyone on the list be interned.⁴⁵ The FBI and Army Intelligence immediately began to arrest Japanese on Hawai‘i island who had been identified as “enemy aliens.” These individuals were detained at KMC, which was transformed overnight from an R&R facility to a prison. The first detainees arrived at KMC in the afternoon of December 7, 1941. They did not stay at KMC for long, however, because under international law interned aliens could not be held in a combat zone and had to be taken to a place where hostilities were unlikely.⁴⁶ The first group of 106 detainees transferred from KMC to Sand Island, O‘ahu, on March 6, 1942. The last group of twenty-five detainees was

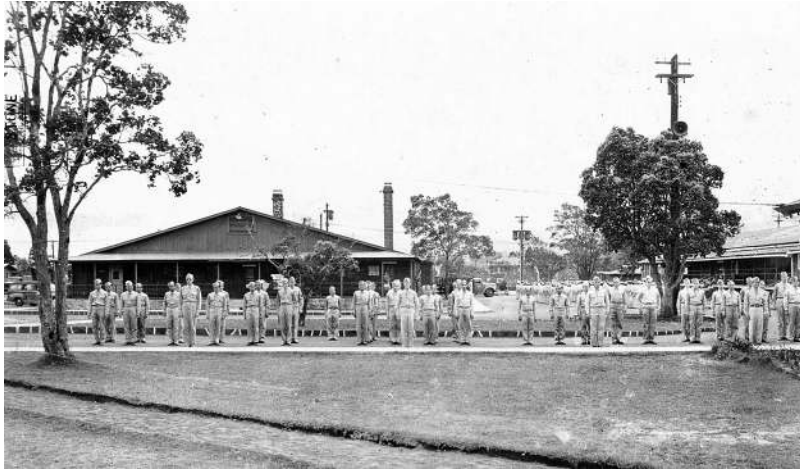


FIGURE 8. U.S. Army Signal Corps Formation, 1940s. Building 34 in background was used to intern Japanese Americans. Photo Kilauea Military Camp.

transferred on May 12, 1942. While at KMC, detainees were confined to their barracks and were only allowed to march to the adjacent cafeteria for meals.⁴⁷ While at KMC they were surrounded by guard towers and machine gun positions that had been erected after the attack.⁴⁸

Local Japanese farmers and concessioners who had worked for the park were also affected. One Japanese concessioner who had been operating a photographic business in the park prior to the war had his contract cancelled on December 31, 1941. He was interned by the authorities and found to have failed to “comply with several orders of the military governor and to have violated certain park regulations.”⁴⁹ Many others, however, quietly continued to support their government. Superintendent Wingate wrote that fifteen Japanese truck farmers from the Twenty-nine Mile area had “faithfully [served] without murmur through long days and nights of rain and cold, knowing that there is slight possibility of paying them for their faithful and diligent services.”⁵⁰

In June 1942 the Battle of Midway changed the tide of the war, and KMC was again re-activated as a rest and recreation camp, but it also continued to support tactical training of troops. In October 1943 the decision to return the facility to a fully recreational one

was made, and priority was given to troops who had seen combat.⁵¹ In June 1944, an addition to KMC was built on the west side, in the area that is now the motor pool. These facilities would serve as a prisoner of war (POW) camp for Koreans and Okinawans who had been brought to the United States from islands captured from the Japanese. The POW camp was established without the permission of Superintendent Wingate while he was away on business.⁵² At the camp, the POWs performed maintenance and upkeep.⁵³ At the end of the war, about 80 to 140 prisoners remained and continued to work. The last of the group returned to their country of origin on December 5, 1946.⁵⁴

“A SPECTACULAR BUT ILL-TIMED EVENT”

With the initial war effort on Hawai‘i Island centered at the park, and an internment camp springing up overnight, park staff had a lot to deal with. They did not need another monumental event—but that is exactly what they got. Four months after Pearl Harbor was attacked, Mauna Loa began erupting on April 26, 1942 (Figure 9). The erup-



FIGURE 9. Mauna Loa Eruption, 1942. Photo National Park Service, Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park, Historic Photo Collection, Accession HAVO-554.

tion first began at the summit crater Moku'āweoweo and then broke out on the northeast rift. The eruption was not unexpected, but in the superintendent's opinion, though "spectacular" it was "ill-timed." Martial law resulted in nightly blackouts, but the glow from Pele illuminated the sky. The military government feared the Japanese would use the light from the eruption as a beacon to guide their warplanes under the cover of darkness for another attack on Hawai'i. They declared the eruption a "secret" and did not allow the news media to cover it. Two days after the eruption began, Tokyo Rose broadcast a message congratulating the islands on its spectacular volcanic display, showing the futility of the efforts to control such information. As the flow headed toward Hilo, it threatened to cut off Saddle Road. This would have had serious impacts on the war effort. The decision was made to have the Army bomb the flow, as it had in 1935 in an effort to try to stop its advance. When the eruption did finally stop naturally on May 10 (fourteen days after it began), it had come within almost seven miles of Upper Waiākea Uka.⁵⁵

TOURISM

The new Volcano House opened in November 1941 and was immediately popular with the public. Just one month later, war broke out and the hotel went from being crowded to almost empty. Seven months after the war began there was "little or no business," and almost the only guests were Army personnel who were there for meals and "club-room refreshments."⁵⁶ Civilian travel to and from Hawai'i and the mainland was restricted and the cause of many empty rooms. While these restrictions and a lack of other recreational activities and accommodations on the island encouraged some visits by locals, overall very few people were coming to the park for recreation. In the first week of December 1941 there were 50,000 visitors to the Kilauea section of the park. In the month and a half after the attack non-military visitors to the park "declined to almost nothing."⁵⁷ In fiscal year 1941, there were 306,881 visitors—103,804 of them military personnel. In fiscal year 1942 visitation totaled 386,680—226,256 of them military. Although civilian travel resumed in July 1942, it took three years for the Volcano House to again be filled to capacity.⁵⁸

MISSION CONFLICTS

The challenges for Hawaii National Park and its staff went far beyond dealing with issues of internees and prisoners of war, dropping visitor counts, and an untimely eruption. As the war dragged on, mission conflicts arose and soon the park was struggling to maintain its core values and protect its resources. The initial months of the war saw a surge in military use of the park. For the most part, the park was able to accommodate the requests by lending out buildings, tools, water tanks, a gas station, and animal stock. But even as the Army headquarters in the park relocated to Hilo in October 1942, the use of the park for training purposes increased. By 1943 the continued impact on the park's natural landscape, its infrastructure, and supplies was becoming more than an inconvenience. Numerous complaints from the park staff were received by the superintendent, who continuously appealed to the Army for restraint. Wingate was balancing a difficult role—martial law still existed and there was not much he could legally do to keep the military from going where it wanted to go and using what it wanted to use. He continued to keep the channels of communication with the Army open and tried to strike a balance.

The task that Wingate took on was large. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, fear of sabotage and invasion was very real in Hawai'i. This fear prompted the park to take actions that under normal conditions would be considered drastic in a national park. Hawai'i was eyed by Japan as a launching site for invasion of the mainland United States and a number of invasion scenarios had been drawn up. One plan designed by the commander of the Second Carrier Division of the Japanese Combined Fleet called for the invasion of Hawai'i island first. Japan felt that because the island was sparsely populated and weakly defended, it could be "transformed into an aircraft carrier" from which further attacks on the islands and eventually the United States mainland could occur. Cleared cane fields and old lava flows could be turned into airfields that would support Japanese units on Midway, Johnston, and Palmyra.⁵⁹ Fear of invasion after Pearl Harbor led the commanding general of the Hawaiian Department to order all flat areas in the park be made unusable to enemy aircraft "by blocking with boulders or plowing, or erecting rails and posts."⁶⁰ The areas

bulldozed surrounded Kīlauea caldera and included the existing airfields and other cultural and natural features. In addition to the bulldozing, one lane of the road leading to Halema'uma'u crater and its parking lot was closed. By 1943 Wingate warned of a possible crater eruption and bemoaned the "excessive wear and tear . . . through use of only one lane and shoulder" that was occurring.⁶¹ Citing the remote chance that Japan would attack and use this road, he pleaded for it to be opened.

The adverse treatment of the landscape did not stop with the disabling of the airfields, roads, and lands around the caldera. During the war, Hawai'i experienced a beef shortage. In response to this shortage and in cooperation with the food production program of the territory, the secretary of interior authorized the park to re-open land to cattle grazing. The park approved a permit for C. Brewer and Company in 1943 for 6,418 acres of land on the slopes of Mauna Loa at a cost of \$2,500 per annum. The NPS tried to minimize the impact of grazing cattle on park lands by limiting the permit to open "meadow lands," outside of kīpuka [pockets of vegetation] and koa groves. The superintendent gave final approval on condition the ranch fence in (at its expense) three koa groves.⁶²

TRAINING AREAS EXPAND

The removal of the 'Elemākule Range land in 1938 was a big pill to swallow for the NPS, and it seemed at the time that the military would focus all training there. As the war raged on, however, the 'Elemākule Range was not enough. In the first six months of 1944 alone, 25,000 troops used the Kīlauea area for training.⁶³ The Army desired more land for maneuvers and live fire exercises and continued to spread out in the park. The park approved the dragging of a portion of Kīlauea Landing Field for a landing strip for light artillery fire observation planes, and gave permission to use a portion of a temporary road into the Ka'ū desert from a point just south of Keanakāko'i crater to set up a gun emplacement.⁶⁴ This expansion ultimately led to increasing conflicts with park operations and complaints from park staff as the Army moved outside of these areas without permission. The military set tripwires across patrol and public trails without park knowledge, endangering hikers and staff. Army troops also failed to clear boul-

ders set up for defensive purposes from roads that were used as evacuation routes during volcanic eruptions.⁶⁵ Shell craters and fragments were found west of the Cone Peaks below Halema‘um‘au; at Sulphur Banks an Army truck drove across the lower slopes of the sulphur formations north of the gas house, which had been broken into.⁶⁶ A spatter cone on Mauna Iki was destroyed.⁶⁷ On January 9, 1943, a company was seen shooting toward the Chain of Craters Road.⁶⁸ There were several incidents of bombing and strafing of ‘Āpua Point, and soldiers were seen bivouacking and setting up firing points at the base of the Mauna Loa road. Park roads, which were never built to handle large military vehicles, were being degraded and park tools were left unusable. A network of truck trails, tracks, parking areas, and bivouac sites had been set up by the military. The park was being used extensively by the Army for training, and considerable damage was being done to forests and the landscape. The natural and cultural resources of the park were being impaired, and Wingate felt that at a minimum, cleanup would cost \$10,000, but continued use would make restoration impossible.⁶⁹

By 1943, the superintendent wanted the military to leave the park, but the Army continued to assert that Kilauea offered the best terrain for combined maneuvers, was within its necessary travel time radius from its bases, and by training there they were saving on gas and wear and tear on equipment. Wingate disputed this claim and argued that there were other suitable areas on the island that could be used for training, including the “waste lands west of Kalapana—the 1840 lava flow and the Puna Forest Reserve” and the “waste lands between Mauna Loa and Mauna Kea . . . [and] portions of the Waimea and South Kohala tablelands and the plains above South Point.”⁷⁰

KA‘Ū DESERT IMPACT AND TRAINING AREA

Wingate’s arguments fell on deaf ears. So, he settled on a plan to negotiate with the Army to confine its training to a specific area of the park without approval from the Department of Interior. In an attempt to contain the increasing spread and destruction of the native landscape by the troops, Wingate and the Army agreed to an area in the Ka‘ū desert where the Army could train. Known informally as the Ka‘ū Desert Impact and Training Area, the Army demarcated a

specific area on a map south of Kilauea caldera where maneuvers and troops would be confined in Hawaii National Park. The Department of Interior never formally agreed to this site, and it was never removed from the National Park Service as the 'Elemākule Range had been.⁷¹ Wingate had several conditions for the use of this area: (1) the area would be used only if absolutely necessary and use would end once that necessity passed (end of hostilities); (2) the Army would make every effort to find somewhere else to train; (3) units would be instructed to avoid unnecessary damage to vegetation and other natural features; and (4) no new access roads or structures would be built without the superintendent's approval. Explicit training assignments were given to ensure safety and compliance by the military. The military also provided a memo that instructed personnel training in the Impact Area on standard operating procedures (SOP) for its use. These SOPs included: (1) weapons could be placed outside of the Impact Area only for the purpose of firing into it; (2) the firing positions were limited to those that were already in use; (3) there would be no cutting of vegetation of any kind, and the koa grove was out of bounds; (4) latrine screens would be erected and the area would be policed; (5) range guards would be posted on all roads and trails leading to the Impact Area when firing was being conducted; (6) request to fire would be submitted to Army headquarters seventy-two hours prior to scheduled time; and (7) a schedule for training and firing was: Mondays and Tuesdays—infantry engineers; Thursdays and Fridays—tank and tank destroyers.⁷²

Despite these seemingly successful negotiations, the military continued to train outside of the newly assigned area, impacting the natural landscape. There were reports of units training one and a half miles southwest of Uwēkahuna and other units operating south of Kilauea caldera. The military randomly closed the Chain of Craters Road to accommodate soldiers firing both machine and thirty-seven millimeter guns into the Ka'ū desert.⁷³ Warning signs had been set up beyond the Impact Area, and damage to the forest was noted, including vehicle tracks, which were observed in the off-limits koa grove. Vegetation had been destroyed and cut down for use as camouflage, and a number of access roads had been made along Halema'uma'u even though the agreement with the Army and memoranda explicitly prohibited those actions.⁷⁴ Wingate complained to

military commanders that the Army was using an area twice the size agreed upon.

WITHDRAWAL OF TROOPS

When martial law was lifted on October 24, 1944, Superintendent Wingate made a strong case for the removal of troops from the park. The military remained, however, and tensions continued between the two agencies. The Army used the Impact Area until January 1945, giving it up only eight months before the war ended in August. The park was able to re-open the interpretive trail to Footprints and the area was once again accessible to the public.⁷⁵ Unfortunately, the military held on to the 'Elemākule Bombing Range for ten years, returning it to the park only after many requests. 'Elemākule was never used by the Army, but it was used by the Navy—a violation of the original agreement. The exercises by the Navy, especially those outside of the designated area caused a lot of trouble for the park. One particularly dangerous incident occurred on March 25, 1945, when a plane strafed four fishermen at 'Āpua, slightly injuring two of the men. Although complaints were made to the Army about the training abuses, the Navy was ultimately responsible for the damage. Army commander Muller sent a memo to the Navy requesting it stop all noncompliant training activities. A halt to such flagrant violations was not enough for the Park Service. The NPS requested a complete return of the land. In December 1945 the Army relinquished two acres at 'Āpua Point but the 'Elemākule Range was not returned. In the spring of 1946 Acting Superintendent Baldwin again resurrected the issue of land return. Baldwin pointed out that if the Army was not using it, the land should revert to the NPS, not the Navy. He also complained that the NPS was routinely denied access to the area to do goat drives, and when they were allowed in they were shot at.⁷⁶

It took another two years, but finally in April 1948 the Army said it had no more objections to removing the 'Elemākule Range from its list of active training sites. The Navy did not share the Army's sentiment and continued to use the range. On September 30, 1948, it bombed the site with no prior warning to the park. When the NPS asked the Army why the area was being used again, the commanding officer at Hickam said the Army was not responsible for this action,

but that the Navy had posted a newspaper notice of possible use. Following this incident, General Robert Travis, in a memo dated October 5, 1948, finally put an end to all military use of the ‘Elemākule Range. Within a year, the Army began clearing the land of unexploded ordnance. In May 1950, the secretaries of war and interior revoked the order of withdrawal, and on June 14, 1950, the ‘Elemākule Range was officially returned to the Park Service.⁷⁷ Despite all of the negative impacts caused by the military in the park, and the tremendous effort to get the land back, the Navy submitted a new request in March 1957 to re-use the Ka‘ū land. It proposed creating a 30,000-acre jet bombing range, but was strongly discouraged from this venture, and no further requests were made.⁷⁸

AFTERMATH—A LEGACY OF IMPACT

Regrettably, the impact of the military on Hawaii National Park as a result of World War II did not disappear with the removal of troops from its boundaries. Warning signs were kept up for months, and many areas were damaged beyond repair. Koa groves had been blasted, nēnē nesting sites were gone, and in the desert intensive use had broken the fragile crust of volcanic ash beds.⁷⁹ Feeling the pressure from the Park Service, the Army restored some of the damage done outside of the desert area in April 1946. In 1949 and 1950 a team from Schofield Barracks on O‘ahu removed unexploded ordnance including several 500-pound “general purpose” bombs and many other smaller bombs and shells. Some ordnance was found near the headquarters area, and a 150 mm Japanese artillery shell was found within half a mile of the main crater road. Unfortunately, this cleanup did not remove all munitions from the park. Ordnance from the World War II era was still being discovered in the Ka‘ū desert well into the twenty-first century.

The impact of the war also went far beyond the affected natural and cultural resources. Permanent staff declined from 35 prior to December 7, 1941, to 12 in 1945 (Figure 10). Funding for maintenance of buildings was non-existent except for emergency repairs, and by 1945 these repairs were considered “urgent.” Park road equipment that was “borrowed” by the Army was left unusable, leading the park to maintain its roads through hand labor. Both the Mauna Loa



FIGURE 10. Public contact personnel of the park, July 3, 1940; Front row, left to right – Bernard Waltzen; clerk-telephone operator Winifred Tada; Paul Schultz; Geologist Dr. Thomas Jaggar; Seasonal Ranger Willard Eller; Chisato Fujimoto, Burton Loucks, Constance Hewitt, Sadaichi Kawasaki. Back row, left to right – William Elderts, John Hauni’o Sr., Charles Kauhi, Superintendent Edward Wingate, Joseph Christ, Arthur Jess, Ralph Shaver, Benjamin Moomaw, Park Naturalist Gunner Fagerlund, Ranger Gunder Olson, James Higashida. Photo National Park Service, Hawai’i Volcanoes National Park, Historic Photo Collection, Accession HAVO-554.

truck trail and the Hilina Pali auto trail (both gravel) were not maintained at all. It has taken years for the park to recover from the impact of the military. How long it will take for the land to heal and for the scars to fade remains to be seen. The physical marks of bulldozing around the heart of Hawai’i Volcanoes National Park—Kilauea caldera—still remain, and park staff still battle the legacy left by cattle grazing on the slopes of Mauna Loa. It has taken eighty-eight years and thousands of man hours for the park to rehabilitate the land that was grazed by cattle. The set-back from the war, including a total disbandment of the nursery program from 1941 to 1945, broken fences

and incursion by cattle into protected areas only made the task more difficult.⁸⁰

Despite these many challenges, Hawaii National Park welcomed visitors returning to the park after the war. In time, a sense of normalcy came over the park, and visitors were able to again enjoy the freedom the United States had fought so hard for. Park staff returned to return to their regular duties of leading walks, giving talks, and protecting the resources—able to once again carry out the legislative mandate of the National Park Service—to preserve and protect its resources for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.

NOTES

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