



Foundation Document Overview

Tule Lake Unit, WWII Valor in the Pacific National Monument California



UNIT—KADOKI—YTERFAS—NAMTBEA3

The Tule Lake Segregation Center, c. 1942–43. Photo: Library of Congress.

Contact Information

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Park Description

World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument was established by presidential proclamation on December 5, 2008, and includes nine historic sites in Hawai'i, Alaska, and California. The monument preserves and interprets the tangible historical resources and the intangible memories, attitudes, and traditions associated with the December 7, 1941, attack in Hawai'i and the ensuing Pacific War. Eight sites are battle sites between the United States military and Imperial Japanese military. Five of these sites are located in the Pearl Harbor area of Hawai'i and are largely managed by the National Park Service. Three sites are located in the Aleutian Islands of Alaska and are managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The Tule Lake Unit is the ninth site, located within both Modoc and Siskiyou counties, near Tulelake, California, and Klamath Falls, Oregon.

The Tule Lake Unit contains three areas where Nikkei were incarcerated during World War II: 1) a portion of the Tule Lake Segregation Center (37 acres), 2) the Peninsula known as "Castle Rock" (1,293 acres), and 3) Camp Tulelake (66 acres). The Tule Lake Segregation Center area is owned and administered by the National Park Service. The Peninsula/Castle Rock and Camp Tulelake are owned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Camp Tulelake is managed by the National Park Service while the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages the Peninsula/Castle Rock.

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942, which allowed the government to forcibly remove more than 110,000 Nikkei from their homes and communities. Nikkei—or U.S. citizens of Japanese descent and resident immigrants of Japanese ancestry, ineligible for American citizenship—were rounded up, transported, and imprisoned in remote areas under primitive and overcrowded conditions.

Tule Lake was one of the 10 camps operated by the War Relocation Authority (WRA) from May 27, 1942, to March 20, 1946. Tule Lake became the largest of the 10 WRA camps, with a peak incarcerated population of 18,789 people, and a total of 29,840 individuals were incarcerated at Tule Lake over the lifetime of the camp's operation. It comprised 7,400 acres and contained more than 1,700 structures. Nikkei were housed in more than 1,000 barracks, served by latrines, mess halls, and other communal buildings. The camp also contained a post office, a high school, a hospital, a cemetery, factories, railroad sidings, two sewage treatment plants, hog and chicken farms, water wells, and more than 3,500 acres of irrigated farmland. WRA facilities included 144 administration and support buildings. A prison-like atmosphere and lack of freedom was apparent with the 28 guard towers, multiple security fences, a military police compound, and a high-security stockade and jail.

In 1943 the U.S. government developed a "loyalty" questionnaire that was administered to each incarcerated individual over the age of 17, whether born in the United States or Japan. Question 27 concerned the person's willingness to serve in the U.S. armed forces. Question 28 asked for a disavowal of allegiance to the Japanese Emperor or other foreign governments. Faced with difficult choices with unknown consequences, each individual's responses to the questionnaire were tempered by a variety of personal and cultural values and factors. Those who refused to answer the questionnaire or answered "no" to the loyalty questions were labeled "disloyal." However, many of the so-called "disloyals" were protesting the injustice of their forced confinement and denial of civil liberties. At Tule Lake more than 40% of respondents were labeled "disloyal," the highest number of all the camps. As a result, Tule Lake was converted to a high-security "segregation center," beginning on July 15, 1943. Of the 10 WRA camps, Tule Lake was also the primary site where 6,000 Japanese Americans renounced their U.S. citizenship.

Tule Lake was the last WRA camp to close, remaining in operation seven months after World War II ended. The administration of the center was returned to the Bureau of Reclamation on May 5, 1946. The dismantling of the segregation center occurred quickly. Barrack buildings were given and sold to new homesteaders in the Tule Lake Basin. In the early 1950s, plots of land within the camp boundary were auctioned by the Bureau of Reclamation to establish the town of Newell.

Little formal preservation occurred on the site until the first organized pilgrimage to Tule Lake by Japanese American survivors and their descendants in 1974. Thirty-seven acres of the Tule Lake Segregation Center were designated a California State Historical Landmark in 1972. In 1988, the Civil Liberties Act was passed in which the U.S. government formally apologized to each individual incarcerated during World War II based on the determination that the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II was the result of "race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership" (*Personal Justice Denied* 1983, p. 18). The Tule Lake Segregation Center was designated a national historic landmark in 2006.

Tule Lake survivors and their family members were ostracized and stigmatized as being "disloyal" by the general public and within Japanese American communities long after World War II. Deep rifts continue today among individuals and organizations within the Japanese American community due to the loyalty questionnaire. There is strong consensus among scholars that Tule Lake's history is the "untold story" of the incarceration during World War II.

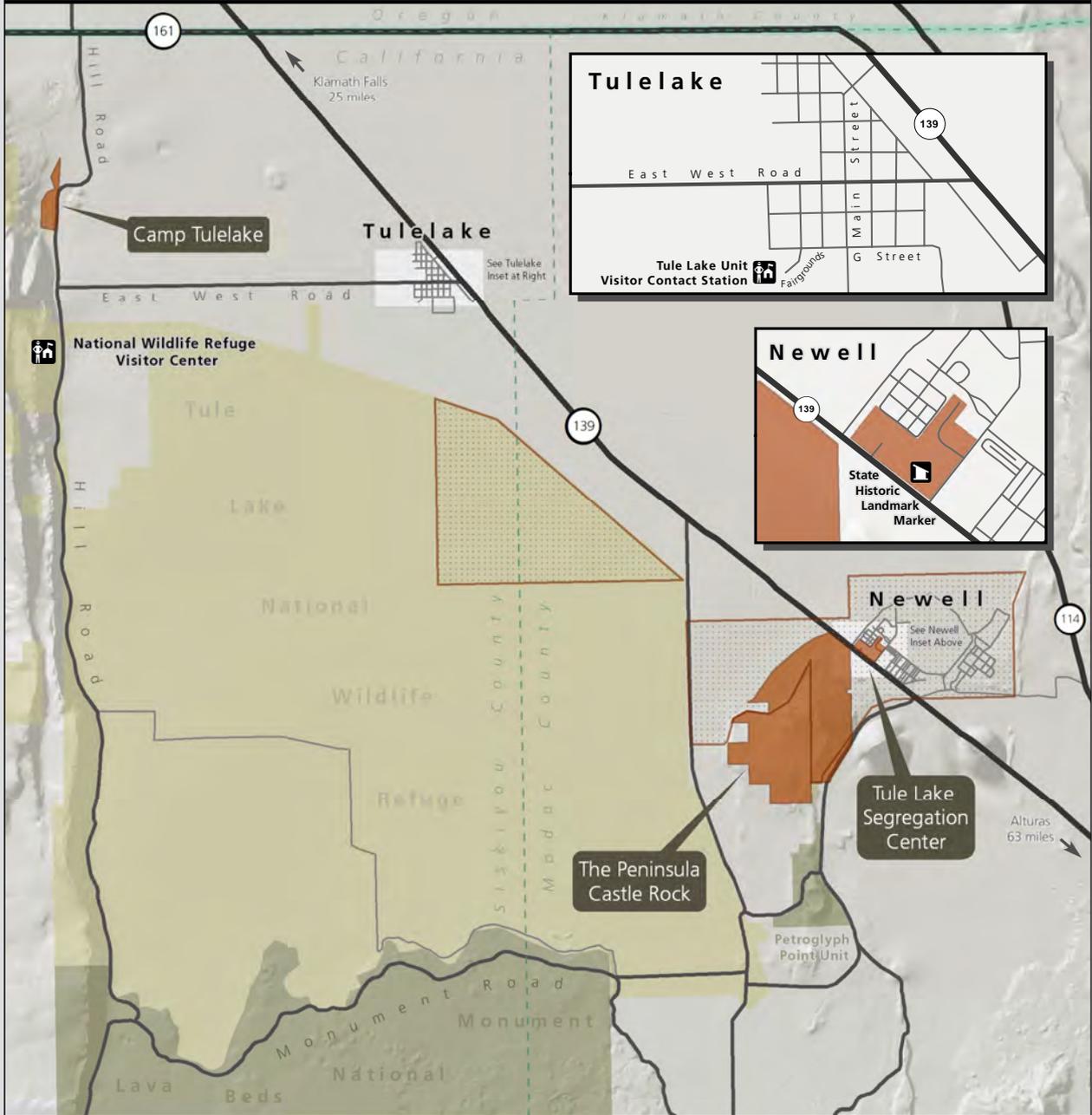
Park Map

Tule Lake Unit, WWII Valor in the Pacific National Monument
California

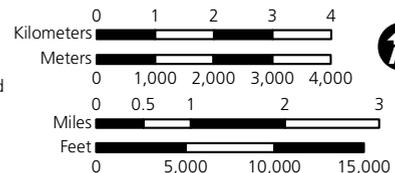
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Tule Lake Unit, WWII Valor in the Pacific National Monument



- Tule Lake Unit - WWII Valor in the Pacific National Monument
- Historic Boundary of Tule Lake Segregation Center
- Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge
- Lava Beds National Monument
- County Boundary
- Highway
- Important Local Road
- Other Road



Map Produced by National Park Service - Tule Lake Unit GIS Program - February 2014

Purpose



View of Tule Lake Segregation Center with Castle Rock in the background, c. 1944–46. Photo: R. H. Ross, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

The purpose of the TULE LAKE UNIT, A PART OF WORLD WAR II VALOR IN THE PACIFIC NATIONAL MONUMENT, is to preserve, study, and interpret the history and setting of the incarceration and later segregation of Nikkei at Tule Lake during World War II.



Prisoners in the Tule Lake stockade are searched by border guards and WRA wardens, June 1945. Photo: NARA.

Significance

Significance statements express why Tule Lake Unit, WWII Valor in the Pacific National Monument resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- 1. Injustice:** The Tule Lake experience represents the injustice of uprooting and imprisoning 110,000 Nikkei by presidential order during World War II. The Tule Lake Unit illustrates the violation of human, civil, and constitutional rights and hardships suffered from forced removal and incarceration. The unit offers a compelling venue for engaging in a dialogue concerning racism and discrimination, war hysteria, failure of political leadership, and the fragility of democracy in times of crisis.
- 2. Loyal or Disloyal:** The Tule Lake Unit explores the issues of loyalty and disloyalty in the context of a chaotic and unjust incarceration. The government segregated persons it deemed “disloyal” and subjected them to special hardships that define the Tule Lake experience. Being labeled “disloyal” stigmatized individuals, families, and their descendants and had long-lasting impacts in the Nikkei community.
- 3. Renunciation:** The Tule Lake Unit preserves the primary site where almost 6,000 Japanese Americans renounced their U.S. citizenship and examines the context and reasons for their renunciation. The mass renunciation at Tule Lake was the largest renunciation of citizenship in U.S. history.



WWII-era fence, Tule Lake. Photo: NPS 2012.

Significance



Memorial model dedicated to those who passed away while incarcerated at the Tule Lake Segregation Center. Photo: NPS 2012.

- 4. Relevancy:** The Tule Lake Unit provides opportunities for our nation to examine the history of incarceration during World War II and its lessons for upholding constitutional and human rights.
- 5. Stories and Perspectives:** The Tule Lake Unit preserves a mosaic of stories related to Tule Lake War Relocation Center, Tule Lake Segregation Center, and Camp Tulelake told from multiple perspectives.
- 6. Individuals and Communities:** The Tule Lake Unit recognizes and interprets the diverse experiences of individuals and communities affected by Tule Lake, including Nikkei incarcerated at Tule Lake, civilian and military personnel who worked at Tule Lake, area residents, and many more people throughout the U.S. and abroad.
- 7. Segregation Center:** The Tule Lake Unit preserves the site of the only WRA center that was converted to a high-security segregation center. After segregation, it became the most populated and militarized of the 10 WRA camps. Tule Lake may be the best example of what President Roosevelt called concentration camps in the United States during World War II.
- 8. Historic Setting and Resources:** The Tule Lake Basin, including the Tule Lake Segregation Center National Historic Landmark and Camp Tulelake, contains the largest and most diverse collection of buildings and features associated with the incarceration of Nikkei during World War II. The Tule Lake Unit promotes the preservation of the historic fabric and landscape, which provide a greater understanding for present and future generations.
- 9. Tule Lake Landscape:** The Tule Lake Segregation Center was set within a remote setting, unfamiliar environment, and surrounded by distinct landforms and vistas. These environmental conditions contributed to an atmosphere of isolation and harsh living conditions for Nikkei at Tule Lake.
- 10. World War II:** The Tule Lake Unit represents a controversial and significant part of the events that took place on the American home front during World War II.

Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Historic Sites, Archeological Features, and Artifacts:**

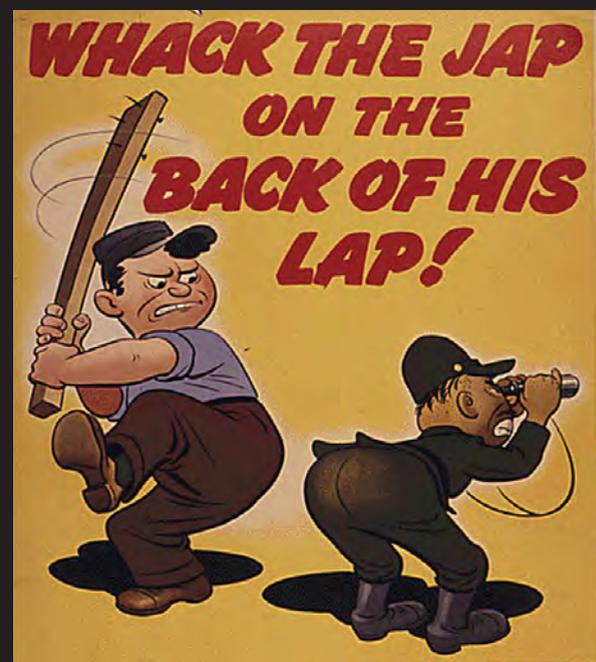
The Tule Lake Unit contains many cultural landscape features, viewsheds, structures, and artifacts associated with the wartime incarceration at Tule Lake. These features presently include, but are not limited to, the segregation center's jail, the carpenter's shop, and sites of the stockade, motor pool, post engineer's yard, cross on Castle Rock, and Camp Tulelake.

- **Setting and Landscape:** The Tule Lake Unit and adjacent areas include landforms and natural features that provide opportunities to experience and comprehend the daily environmental conditions that Nikkei experienced at Tule Lake during World War II. The expansive desert landscape, surrounding mountains, and unfamiliar climate influenced the daily feelings of remoteness, desolation, and isolation. The iconic broad, high desert vistas within and surrounding the Tule Lake Unit, represented by Abalone/Horse Mountain, Castle Rock/the Peninsula, Mount Shasta, and distant geologic features, provide important connections to the physical landscape by those who were incarcerated during World War II and contemporary visitors.



Mother and child awaiting processing, Tule Lake Segregation Center. Source unknown.

- **Collections, Archives, Documents, and Inventories:** The Tule Lake Unit maintains and collects oral histories, artifacts, manuscripts, literature, and other associated records related to the Tule Lake WRA Center and Camp Tulelake. These materials provide important insight and information, as well as research material, about the multidisciplinary implications of the incarceration and its effect on Nikkei and the larger American society.



[top] Racist "license" to hunt Japanese, reflecting the atmosphere of fear and hatred that incited the incarceration of Nikkei during WWII. Photo: Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience.

[bottom] War Production Board poster, c. 1942–43. Photo: NARA.

Fundamental Resources and Values



Nursery school children, September 1942. Photo: NARA.

- **Personal Stories:** Personal stories relate the complexity of the history from both inside and outside the concentration camp. These first person recollections include oral interviews and hearsay accounts reported by scholars, diaries, autobiographies, memoirs, print and broadcast media, artwork, and photos.
- **Cultural Traditions:** Nikkei cultural traditions, values, and attitudes are essential to understanding how Nikkei experienced and reacted to incarceration and life within the segregation center. These include the concepts of *Gaman* (perseverance), *Shikata ga nai* (it cannot be helped), honor, family, loyalty, and nationalism.
- **Public Understanding, Education, and Involvement:** Visitors to the Tule Lake Unit have the opportunity to learn about the history and experience resources within the local and regional setting from the National Park Service and its partners, including through events such as the Tule Lake Pilgrimage and reunions. These opportunities, along with the research necessary to support them, help to ensure the resources' long-term conservation and public awareness about this history.



Protesters at Tule Lake Segregation Center are sent to the Department of Justice prison in Santa Fe, NM, January 1945. Photo: R. H. Ross, NARA.

Tule Lake Unit, WWII Valor in the Pacific National Monument contains other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.

- **Natural Resources:** The grasslands, agricultural fields, hills, wetlands, and rocky mountain tops provide habitat for an array of wildlife species, including waterfowl, within and surrounding the Tule Lake Unit. The Tule Lake Unit contains an assemblage of natural resources that include such items as shells and sagebrush that were once used by Nikkei as an outlet for creativity.



View toward Castle Rock, with the jail in the foreground. Photo: NPS 2013.

Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from, and should reflect, park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- **Injustice:** The mass incarceration of Nikkei during World War II resulted from a complex mix of economic, political, and social factors, fueled by racial prejudice, wartime hysteria, and a failure of political leadership.
- **Tule Lake War Relocation Center to Segregation Center:** Tule Lake was the only WRA concentration camp that was converted to a high-security segregation center. After segregation, it became the most populated and militarized of the 10 WRA camps.
- **Stories and Perspectives, Individuals and Communities:** The Tule Lake Unit preserves the mosaic of stories about life at Tule Lake War Relocation Center, Tule Lake Segregation Center, and Camp Tulelake told from multiple perspectives. The operation of these camps subjected individuals, families, and communities to short- and long-term impacts.
- **“Loyal” or “Disloyal”:** The loyalty questionnaire subjected individuals and families to difficult and unfair decisions about citizenship and national allegiance and instigated many acts of sacrifice and patriotism. Peoples’ rationales for their responses to the loyalty questionnaire varied widely, and the results of their decisions had lasting personal and social impacts. During and after the incarceration, many people questioned the meaning and value of constitutional rights, loyalty, cultural pride, honor, and disgrace.
- **Renunciation:** The decision of nearly 6,000 Japanese Americans to renounce their U.S. citizenship resulted from a storm of government policies, community pressures, and personal fears that brewed in the Tule Lake Segregation Center and continue to challenge our understanding of what it means to be a U.S. citizen today.
- **Relevancy:** The Tule Lake Unit acts as a forum for discussing the meaning of citizenship and justice in the United States. The Tule Lake Unit illustrates the need to be ever diligent in the protection of human and constitutional rights for all Americans.



Guards and prisoners inside the Tule Lake Segregation Center jail, June 1945. Photo: NARA.



Camp Tulelake barrack. Photo: NPS 2012.



Tule Lake Pilgrimage. Photo NPS 2012.