Pausing at the River Styx:

MARVELOUS creations of Nature await you in the mysterious caverns and grottos of the Oregon Caves. Winding corridors connect countless underground chambers, deep in the heart of the Siskiyous. Electric illumination reveals the rare beauty of the caves—named with such vividly descriptive titles as Dragon's Mouth, Heavenly Boudoir, Petrified Garden, Dante's Inferno, King's Palace, River Styx. A superb scenic highway takes you right to the mouth of the caves.

"I had no idea of the enchanting beauty of the Oregon Caves."

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Pausing at the River Styx:

An Administrative History of Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve

Stephen R. Mark

2019

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service Region 9--Columbia--Pacific Northwest
Location of Oregon Caves in a 1923 U.S. Forest Service booklet on the Siskiyou National Forest. The solid black line is the paved Pacific Highway. Other roads indicated were surfaced with gravel.

Front cover: Two women looking into the River Styx, 1937. Photograph by Ralph Gifford, "Cameraman" of the Oregon State Highway Department; courtesy of the Greg Walter Collections.

Frontispiece: Portion of an Oregon State Highway Commission tourist advertisement, of 1937.

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“In the distance was to be heard the sound of rushing water, and soon we crossed a well-lighted bridge and peered down into the canyon of the River Styx, made awesome by cleverly concealed blue lights. It seems that the government had retired old Charon some time before, not only because of his age, but also for the reason that he refused to run his ferry on a round trip basis. When relatives and friends of passengers set up such a hue and cry because their loved ones failed to return, it was decided to build a bridge and rescind the ferry charter. Now a safe return is quite the ordinary thing.”

Wayland Dunham, *Enchanted Corridors* (1939)
Map of the Cave Entrance Area in 1951, from *Vacation Travel Study of Crater Lake National Park and Oregon Caves National Monument* conducted by the National Park Service in 1950.
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Acknowledgments

There is a certain amount of truth to saying that this project was twenty years in the making. Despite a task directive signed in 1997, the early years of my endeavor constituted both a search for direction and for the key ingredient that often gets a narrative to its finish line, that of funding. Over the first decade I collected source material and generated a succession of outlines, all of which did not lead to drafts, inspired or otherwise. There seemed to be little in the way of a deadline during that period, or any sort of project funding of the kind encountered as part of my work to write a historic resource study titled Domain of the Cavemen from 2004 to 2006. What finally served as a catalyst to do more than photocopying and get beyond some very tentative starts to writing came in 2012. Superintendent Vicki Snitzler asked me for a chapter about the long-simmering park expansion proposal, which at that point appeared to have a chance to come to fruition. It quickly became evident to me that the resulting draft could exceed 50,000 words plus end notes, so the “chapter” became three before it reached an initial round of review in 2013.

Another request from her followed during the summer of 2015, this time to be focused on forces that have most shaped the newly-expanded park most over the past two decades. The National Park Service taking over cave tours in 2001 made for an obvious choice, with control over interpretation of the primary resource at Oregon Caves being so central to experiencing it. This topic also mirrored the first one, where an initial aim for one chapter eventually had to be expanded to three. Providing adequate context in this type of historical writing is largely left to the writer’s judgment, so it is with this in mind that I limited the administrative history to these two centerpiece issues. There is also a considerable amount of material related to the management of natural resources, but it is more resistant to being compressed into a “master narrative,” where a theme remains readily apparent and actions over time produce identifiable results.
With this in mind, an appendix labeled “Nature Notes” is aimed at representing parts of natural resources management. Each of them appeared in an annual publication centered on Crater Lake from 1994 to 1996, but have been updated to some degree with information supplied by John Roth, who originally wrote three of the four pieces. The first part of the appendix concerns various types of inventories conducted at Oregon Caves, followed by an article on conservation of the Port Orford-cedar, a tree that is probably the most emblematic terrestrial species in the park. The third highlights “moonmilk” and microbes as examples of ongoing processes in the cave. Roth contributed “Fossil Finds and the Age of Oregon Caves,” what might be his most important writing for readers to consider what geologists call “deep time” and its meaning for management efforts.

By way of acknowledgment, I benefitted greatly from access to a large amount of material over a long period, but also by conducting formal and informal interviews beginning in the 1990s. I should begin by thanking a long list of people for their time and willingness to answer my questions. Starting with superintendents Al Hendricks, Craig Ackerman, and Vicki Snitzler, I am grateful for the assistance of current and former members of the permanent park staff: John Roth, Roger Brandt, George Herring, Roger Contor, John Miele, Bruce Black, Don Spalding, Pat Fine, and Tom Baker. Those who held seasonal appointments with the NPS or worked for concessioners at Oregon Caves are no less deserving of my gratitude: Charles “Chas” Davis, Ron Reed, Larry Cosby, Jay Swofford, Kelly Droge, and Mike Sublett. Further afield, two staff members at the NPS office in Seattle lent me a hand at critical times (Gretchen Luxenberg and Nancy Hori), as did former U.S. Forest Service employees (Lee Webb, Janet Joyer, and Jerry Williams), along with archivists at the National Archives branch in Seattle (Patty McNamee and Ken House). Finally, no one opened up a new world more during the interview process more than industrial designer Charles “Chuck” Harrison when we sat down to discuss his team’s updating of Viewmaster, as well as other work.

Greg Walter and Roger Brandt deserve special thanks for periodically locating important source material that previously escaped my notice, especially in the realm of photographs and maps. Al Hendricks, John Roth, and George Herring took the time necessary for providing me with helpful review comments and copy editing. My supervisors at Crater Lake National Park (Kent Taylor, Marsha McCabe, Scott Burch, and Sean Denniston) allowed me time to periodically visit the monument and preserve area over the course of three decades and perhaps more importantly, allowed a flexible schedule so that I could complete the writing of this document. Mary Hyde did the layout of Pausing at the River Styx, just as she had with Domain of the Cavemen in 2006. For employees at Crater Lake or other units administered by the National Park Service who never found the time to see the Oregon Caves,
Acknowledgments

you have indeed missed something special. *Pausing at the River Styx* is dedicated to those park supporters who might initially have gone on a cave tour, but decided to return for more encounters with a stunning array of scenery and resources. Elaine Jackson-Retondo, manager of NPS preservation partnerships and history programs at the Pacific West Regional Office in San Francisco, also came to my aid. She supplied critical funding so that this project could finally enter its last stage.

Stephen R. Mark
November 2018

On the way to Oregon Caves, about 1916. H.C. Tibbits photo, courtesy of Lee Webb.
Introduction:

At the Wrong End of a Telescope

Administrative history, at least for the National Park Service, is usually organized around key issues that have confronted managers. This is, however, a deceptively definitive statement of purpose, since park units come in many configurations, vary in age, or are so diffuse that an “issue” can be a difficult thing to pin down. In the case of Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve, this administrative history is organized around two focal points: park expansion and interpretative services. This is partly due to the national monument’s modest size, but also because it is largely perceived by visitors as a place for only one type of interpretive activity—that of cave tours. If nothing else, the challenge in writing this type of document has been to provide readers with something like the perspective gained when looking through the wrong end of a telescope, which is to find that the image beyond the other end appears both very distant yet very clear.

No matter how skilled the interpreters, parks like Oregon Caves pose fundamental challenges in having visitors make emotional connections (shown to be the best way to facilitate long-term memory) with deep time and evolutionary processes. Even though the NPS has acknowledged in one of its foundational documents that the cave system constitutes an “inside-out” display of regional geology, adequately explaining why this is the case in a succinct, yet compelling, way poses a formidable problem for interpreters, or any resource specialist, for that matter. It is thus little wonder why most tour leaders favor identifying rock types and unraveling the processes behind cave formation, usually in response to the way visitors see beauty and diversity in subterranean forms.

Not that being on the surface necessarily simplifies what visitors might experience in an old growth mixed conifer forest. The 480 acre national monument alone contains some 400 different plant species, with much of the diversity being the product of a complex set of climatic, geologic, and other environmental variables.
The monument’s built setting is also much more consciously designed—at least along road and trail corridors—than the much larger (and more recent, from an administrative standpoint) national preserve. The latter also lacks good bedrock exposures, so biological processes there are more generally evident than ones generally perceived as lithic, but the preserve is not totally devoid of evidence linked to past and present cultural patterns.

As far as the scope of this administrative history goes, agency planning and past management actions fit squarely within a sometimes shifting landscape of culturally-conditioned values. This document does, of course, proceed chronologically—but the first part of it concerns what presently constitutes Oregon Caves as a park unit. The rectangular national monument of 480 acres proclaimed by President Taft in 1909 centered on protection and public access to a show cave, but some of its supporters wanted something more than a park that could be likened to a postage stamp. What form a larger park might take gave rise to sporadic expansion proposals, some of them for vastly different reasons, but more than a century elapsed before one of them finally became reality in December, 2014. If nothing else, the many proposals for expansion illustrate a tension between the paradigm of show cave and appreciation of its larger setting.

Natural areas administered by the NPS are often sorted into what some scholars have labeled a “scenic hierarchy,” (where budget and staffing levels usually bear some semblance to the unit’s annual visitation), but there is also much emphasis placed on thematic distinctions: the oldest, largest, deepest, only one in North America, and so forth. What is now called the “Oregon Caves National Preserve” of 4,070 acres possesses some features of interest to casual visitors, but its distinctive qualities are more fine-grained and mostly predicated on erudite ideas or concepts arising from finding six individual rock types, a diverse array of plants, as well as ways of understanding what drives adaptation or evolution among organisms. Most of the preserve’s recreational use is meanwhile centered either at Cave Creek Campground located several miles below the national monument on State Highway 46, or in the upper reaches of Lake Creek, an area that includes Mount Elijah and the Bigelow Lakes, situated roughly two miles from the cave system that forms the monument’s heart.

As something of a twin to park expansion efforts, the second issue concerns who should present the cave to visitors, and how that might be connected to the monument’s broader setting. Oregon Caves furnishes one of the better case studies of how far federal agencies have gone in assigning management responsibility to a concessioner for an extended period, and what might be required to change this regulatory relationship. Having NPS guides lead cave tours since 2001 has not
completely destroyed long-established patterns, and some of these are still evident in the limitations affecting interpretive programs at Oregon Caves, even at the present time. Interpretation and its infrastructure is one of the few distinctions that the NPS possesses relative to other agencies that manage federal land, so much of the second part of this document attempts to put forth the reasons why an extended struggle was needed for cave guides to become agency employees and what needed to happen before this could occur.

My rationale for including the appendices is largely that of linking another operational area, one of natural resources management, with interpretation. "Nature Notes," of the kind where readers might have the chance to verify what is interpreted within the article, draw upon natural history as a way to explain parts of the park environment, and by extension, the world that lies beyond it. Their abbreviated form, with a reliance on elements that occur in stories, is probably the best approach to articulating the link between interpretation and natural resources at Oregon Caves.2
The place of Oregon Caves within the larger organizational framework of the NPS has shifted only slightly from a near-bottom position in the old Pacific Northwest Region’s “scenic hierarchy” among units assigned to it (from 1971 until slowly being subsumed by a larger regional office based in San Francisco, beginning in 1995), even with some publicized successes in natural resources management. It could just be the fate of small parks, especially when this one is located in a state containing comparatively little land administered by the agency. Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve is located about halfway between two areas (Crater Lake National Park and the Redwood National and State Parks), and thus in almost perfect position to be a satellite to a larger unit. Apart from brief periods of administrative “independence,” it is thus no accident that line supervision of managers at the monument has generally been assigned to the superintendent at Crater Lake, though lately (since 2012 or so) this has shifted to the superintendent at Redwood. Although such reporting arrangements can be attributed to the monument’s comparatively small size in terms of budget and staffing, it is also a legacy of perception even from park supporters—as indicated in an issue of National Parks Magazine from 1952. The author, who chaired a key committee in the National Speleological Society, described Oregon Caves as “ideal for being placed under the care of a concessioner,” as such an arrangement would “obviate the necessity of enlarging the present ranger staff.”

This legacy is, of course, not static but began for the NPS as an inheritance from U.S. Forest Service administration of Oregon Caves. Just as visitors could finally count on reaching the monument by road for the first time, a company based in Grants Pass called the Oregon Caves Resort was granted two permits by the USFS to encourage private investment in the operation of a show cave. It had been ensconced at the monument for a decade by the time administration of Oregon Caves was transferred to the NPS, with the company’s position made even stronger by promotional efforts conducted through the Grants Pass Chamber of Commerce, most notably by a booster organization called the Oregon Cavemen.

Only when both the Oregon Caves Resort and its booster organization began to fade from view during the early 1970s did the NPS slowly start to assert itself at the monument. A divergence in goals between the agency and its concessioner started as a trickle once the company sold their interests to the Canteen Company of Oregon (or what later became the Estey Corporation) in late 1976, but became more pronounced and almost white hot at times during the 1990s. Approval of the monument’s general management plan in 1999 represented a more transparent watershed moment, not only because it paved the way for cave guiding to finally become NPS responsibility, but also triggered a latent development of facilities and expansion of staff—though this process is far from complete.
FIGURE 3. The Oregon Cavemen only half-jokingly thought of themselves as having a truly global reach. Photographer unknown; image obtained from the Josephine County Historical Society, Grants Pass.
Setting and park significance

Consisting of only 480 acres, Oregon Caves National Monument remained the second smallest natural area in the National Park System for decades, even after legislation passed by Congress in 1978 authorized the addition of another eight acres in Cave Junction, Oregon. Four of those eight acres that had never been federally acquired were officially deleted from the monument through an omnibus act approved in 2014, at the same time that 4,070 acres in the adjacent Cave Creek watershed were added to the park from the adjacent Rogue River – Siskiyou National Forest. The enacted legislation labeled this addition a “national preserve,” where hunting was allowed with some restrictions. Its broader geographic setting has been described in a number of commercial publications and government documents, both of which have steadily increased in number since the late 1970s.

A few writers have tried to pin down the most important aspects of the cave and why it should be conserved. Perhaps the most articulate appeared in May 1986, following the first season of cave restoration. Tom Aley, who provided much of the project’s scientific justification at that time, ventured the following statement in regard to the cave’s significance:

“Caves are a reflection of the landscape in which they are located. This creates difficulties in comparing caves in regions where they are common with caves in regions where they are rare features. Caves are not common features in the Pacific Coast states. Oregon Caves, which has some of the most extensive cave passage development in the far western United States, is thus a very uncommon natural feature.

“Much of the historical information on Oregon Caves refers to the caves as Oregon’s marble halls. This is correct since Oregon Caves is developed in highly banded crystalline marble. It is not only the cave formations (speleothems) which are crystalline, but the rock as well.

“Most caves are developed in limestone; some are in dolomite, lava, or gypsum. A few caves developed in marble. Marble is certainly not the most “favorable” rock for the solutional development of cave systems. In the United States, Oregon Caves is the longest known cave development in marble which is open to the public as a show cave. The toured portion of the cave is but a fraction of the total extent of passages in Oregon Caves.

“Oregon Caves displays many common natural features uncommonly well. The Caves are extensively decorated with stalactites, stalagnmites, columns, draperies, and rimstone dams. They contain many passages which are obviously derived from the action of underground streams. The Caves also contain numerous vertical shafts (such as the highly decorated Paradise Lost chamber); many of these shafts are currently hydrologically active. Oregon Caves provides an extremely clear and visual depiction of the role of underground waters in the development and modification of caves; there are few caves in the United States which rival this depiction.
“Many of the passages in Oregon Caves are located fairly close to the surface. This provides a unique depiction of the interaction of surface biological communities with the underlying rock. Tree roots are common within the Oregon Caves; I have seen them in dozens of areas. The most spectacular tree roots lie along the tour route and are an excellent interpretive feature. Oregon Caves provides the opportunity to take a tour beneath the floor of a Douglas Fir forest; where else but at Oregon Caves can you do that? Oregon Caves [thus] provides a “deeper look” at the magnificent Pacific Coast forests.”

Subsequent discoveries of fossils and cave endemics have served to make the case presented by Aley even more compelling, yet the above-ground environment of Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve is a more difficult sell to visitors. Relatively few of them linger beyond the time it takes to go on the cave tour, but there is much to interest hikers, historians, botanists and geologists on the surface. Pinpointing the national or regional significance of above-ground natural or cultural resources has proven to be more challenging and uneven than in the cave. Geological mapping, for example, is excellent—at least on the 480 acre national monument. It can be contrasted to the paucity of stand-level data on keystone species like Port Orford-cedar, the tree that once served as justification to expand Oregon Caves, or even create a new national monument in its own right. Similarly, in the realm of cultural resources, rustic architecture and naturalistic landscape design at the monument are well documented within the existing historic district, yet in archaeological terms, Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve is virtually a terra incognita.

Moreover, as Superintendent Craig Ackerman explained to the Director of the National Park Service in early 1995:

“All of the world’s major rock types exist within Oregon Caves. Of all NPS units, this Monument may be the only area where all [six] rock types can easily be seen by visitors above and below ground. It may best expose a back-arc basin and what were some of the world’s deepest rocks. The underground passageways are decorated with an extraordinary array of formations. Some, like stalactites, are familiar to most marble and limestone caves. Others, such as hard clay “worms,” calcified moonmilk, flexible flowstone, and mosaic coralloids, may be unique to the Monument...Although not noted for large, cave-adapted animals, these caves do support some threatened species such as Townsend’s big-eared bat and some cave adapted insects that are endemic to the Monument.

Features on the surface affect the cave and are significant in their own right. The Monument preserves an excellent example of primeval forest; this bio-region of the Klamath/Siskiyou Mountains contains one of the highest concentrations of endemic plants in the United States, as well as some of the world’s most diverse [temperate] coniferous forest. This ancient forest, made of up trees hundreds of years old, are amazingly complex and provide a wide variety of habitats...The small size of the unit [Oregon Caves National Monument] well portrays speciation, extinction, and edge effects.
The Monument contains a National Historic District and the “Chateau,” a six story, cedar-barked building, which is a designated National Historic Landmark. This district comprises some of the best preserved and original examples of rustic architecture in the National Park system. Oregon Caves also has perhaps the best recorded sequence of cave exploration, development and restoration in the National Park Service...”

Readers will notice a distinct absence of narrative on the multi-faceted operational aspects of the NPS (and for that matter, the concessioner) at Oregon Caves, apart from those concerning interpretation, and to a lesser extent, natural resources management. This is because away from the appearance of infrastructure (much of which is covered in the monument’s historic resource study, *Domain of the Cavemen*, that appeared in 2006), park operations are fundamentally episodic. This means that operations rarely constitute a key issue in or of themselves, unless the one writing historical narrative can see a larger pattern at work. My intent is not to ignore functional areas like maintenance, administration, or resource protection, but instead identify and illuminate what has governed or influenced their existence at Oregon Caves.

In a Classical sense (meaning that of Ancient Greece), this *history* is an attempt to illuminate the word’s original meaning, that of enquiry. The resulting method is mostly *diachronic* (narration of events over time), but in several places takes a stab at the *synchronic* (or study of things that change slowly or not at all) is made to explain events. Like the work of...
Herodotus, the “father” of history, this search tries to combine description with analysis. There are also multiple aims, beginning with an impulse to maintain a factual record—in this case, one ordered around two achievements—yet any explanation (as that other progenitor of history, Thucydides, first made his readers aware) about causation can take two forms: one immediate and the other underlying.

As a way of trying to tie parts one (expansion) and two (interpretation) together, the question of just what to do with the recently-established national preserve is posed. Part of the rationale for so doing is to better unify the narrative, but this will likely remain open-ended. At a park that has evolved to present and manage a show cave, more than 90 percent of its land area tells a related (in that the subterranean is linked with the above-ground), yet distinct, story. Integration of the preserve with the smaller monument will require additional infrastructure and perhaps a changed perspective. While the predominate visitor use pattern at Oregon Caves (that of a short stay focused on an underground tour route) shows no sign of shifting, campers no longer leave the park when they stay at Cave Creek Campground. Some hikers spend a half day exploring Mount Elijah and the Bigelow Lakes, and a few long-term residents in this part of Oregon have long known that the monument can also serve as a launching point for treks to the Red Buttes Wilderness, or even the Williams area, due to a trail network largely established by the U.S. Forest Service.

The somewhat subtle, or possibly understated, theme of “intersection” throughout the chapters that follow gave rise to the short title of Pausing at the River Styx. Most visitors who have taken a cave tour know the crossing point where guides shut off the lights to provide visitors with a sense of the cave environment, or total darkness. This stream is the underground portion of Cave Creek, but its name arises in Classical thought as the boundary between a conscious state symbolized by a living Earth and an Underworld populated by the dead. Passage on the River Styx was not free, since a boatman called Charon required a coin as payment for the departed to cross, much as a guide is paid for the cave tour. Names such as this along the cave tour not only impart a sense of orientation, but also that of control, yet the River Styx also played an important role in the cave restoration project of 1985 through 1992. It is currently the only underground watercourse in the National Wild and Scenic River System. That crossing also represents a nexus early in the cave tour between what is above and below ground. Immediately before it visitors can see a Douglas-fir root (from a tree no longer living), and once the River Styx is crossed, they can almost instantly experience the Passageway of the Whale, where an imaginary belly of the leviathan is oriented along a joint seen as a crack in the ceiling. Few places in such a short distance can illustrate the intersection of the geological, biological, and mythological so well.
FIGURE 5. The visitors photographed by Ralph Gifford in 1937 about to cross the River Styx. Oregon State Highway Commission image courtesy of the Oregon State University, Valley Library Special Collections.
Beyond the subterranean tour route, Oregon Caves National Preserve is configured according to the watershed that contains both Cave Creek and Lake Creek, with the latter also supplying drinking water for visitors and staff concentrated near the cave entrance. Signage and boundary patrols are a tangible start in the larger effort to build a distinction in public perception between the preserve as administered by the NPS and surrounding national forest lands. The longer term goal is, however, to impart the values associated with stewardship to visitors and the local community that reflect the preserve’s overarching significance.

FIGURE 6: Aerial photo of the cave entrance area down to main parking area at Oregon Caves National Monument, 1954. Photo courtesy of Roger Brandt.
FIGURE 7: The “chandeliers” of Paradise Lost. Oregon Department of Transportation, photo 8333, Salem.
Notes to the Introduction

1 How “monumental” a site might be in relation to its perceived importance is more difficult to quantify. For some background about scenic hierarchies in the NPS, with use of Crater Lake as an example, see Stephen R. Mark, “Natural Heritage and the Maintenance of Iconic Stature: Crater Lake, Oregon, USA,” in C. Michael Hall and Tuija Härkönen (eds.), Lake Tourism: An Integrated Approach to Lacustrine Tourism Systems: Aspects of Tourism 32 (Clevedon: Channel View Publications, 2006), 45-66.

2 An alternative format, such as distilling the key points made by Richard West Sellars in Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997) and relating them to this national monument and preserve would very likely have failed. Apart from inventories and cave mapping by volunteers, resource management efforts at Oregon Caves were very sporadic and not all that successful until the “cave restoration” program that began in 1985.


4 The smallest is Timpanogos Cave National Monument in Utah, at 250 acres. Like Oregon Caves, it and 14 other national monuments were transferred from Forest Service administration to the NPS by executive order in August 1933.

5 The writer credits John Hart, Hiking the Bigfoot Country: The Wildlands of Northern California and Southern Oregon (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1975) and David Rains Wallace, The Klamath Knot: Explorations of Myth and Evolution (Covelo, California: Yolla Bolly Press, 1983) for his literary introduction to the region, but only after more than a few hikes.


7 Craig Ackerman to Director, National Park Service, Significance Statement for Oregon Caves National Monument, February 10, 1995, A2623.

8 Richard Jenkyns, Classical Literature: An Epic Journey from Homer to Virgil and Beyond (New York: Basic Books, 2016), 59-60. Both Herodotus and Thucydides accepted three kinds of evidence: what the writer has personally witnessed, supplemented by what he has been told—but reflecting a more modern perception of history, most of the weight remains placed on the archival record—or what is read.

9 There is generally little or no evidence to suggest that institutional or behavioral patterns once set ever change in any fundamental way. This implies the impossibility of leopards changing their spots, especially when the overall trend over the past 35 years has been one of visitation slowly arcing downward, this despite attempts to cooperate in joint projects with the Forest Service, the existence of an Illinois Valley Visitor Center largely shaped by the NPS, or reaching increasing numbers of children in the Illinois Valley with an environmental education program. Some types of incremental change, however, are possible with the preserve’s addition to the park. Although the day use pattern is likely to persist, an abundance of trails and a campground close at hand can help to augment longer visitor stays, provided that the information about these facilities is readily available.

10 The River Styx is an example of “instant” designation, achieved in December, 2014, which was added to the National Wild and Scenic River System through legislation enacted by Congress, but without benefit of a prior study of the kind outlined in NPS Director’s Order 46 or the Special Directive 90-4, as amended, that preceded it. At least a portion of the study components were conducted by park staff once the bill containing language about the Wild and Scenic River System and streams at Oregon Caves had passed.
OREGON CAVES NATIONAL MONUMENT
OREGON

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

WHEREAS, certain natural caves, known as the OREGON CAVES, which are situated upon unsurveyed land within the Siskiyou National Forest in the State of Oregon, are of unusual scientific interest and importance, and it appears that the public interests will be promoted by reserving these caves with as much land as may be necessary for the proper protection thereof, as a National Monument;

Now, therefore, I, WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the power in me vested by section two of the Act of Congress, approved June eighth, nineteen hundred and six, entitled, “An Act For the preservation of American antiquities,” do proclaim that there are hereby reserved from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, subject to all prior valid adverse claims, and set apart as a National Monument, all the tracts of land in the State of Oregon shown as the OREGON CAVES NATIONAL MONUMENT on the diagram forming a part hereof.

The reservation made by this proclamation is not intended to prevent the use of the lands for National Forest purposes under the proclamations and Executive Order establishing the Siskiyou National Forest, but the two reservations shall both be effective on the land withdrawn, but the National Monument hereby established shall be the dominant reservation, and any use of the land which interferes with its preservation or protection as a National Monument is hereby forbidden.

Warning is hereby given to all unauthorized persons not to appropriate, injure, remove, or destroy any feature of this National Monument, or to locate or settle on any of the lands reserved by this proclamation.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

DONE At the City of Washington this 12th day of July in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and nine, and of the Independence of the United States the one hundred and thirty-fourth.

WM H TAFT

By the President;

P C KNOX
Secretary of State.

[No. 876.]

FIGURE 8. National monument proclamation made by President William Howard Taft under the Antiquities Act on July 12, 1909.
Chapter One

Monument Establishment and First Attempts at Expansion, 1903-1945

Oregon Caves took form as a national monument through a process that can be termed “administrative fiat.” In this case, an administrative agency or bureau (the United States Forest Service) made a recommendation that in turn became a presidential proclamation stemming from the Antiquities Act passed by Congress on June 8, 1906. It joined a group of five other national monument proclamations made during 1909 and formed the twenty-first such reservation made under the Chief Executive’s authority. The field of national monuments created by such proclamations expanded to 112 by the end of 2000 to embrace 81,579,527 acres. Of that total, Oregon Caves National Monument comprised just 488 acres at that time.

The national monument designation is a nebulous one, as several scholars have noted. As early as 1921, the prominent landscape architect Frank Waugh commented,

“A National Monument is a piece of land, containing from 1 to 1,000,000 acres, either flat or rough, timbered or bare...But the most clearly outstanding character of the National Monument is its complete inconsistency.”

Of the 112 national monument proclamations made in the twentieth century, the monument designation proved to be a staging ground for 28 cases where the unit was subsequently re-designated (and often expanded to encompass more acreage) as a national park. On the other hand, Congress later abolished 11 national monuments, while others had their designations changed into “national historical park,” “national historic site,” “national battleground,” “national preserve,” or even “national wildlife refuge.” National monuments can also be authorized and established by Congress, as in the case of John Day Fossil Beds National Monument.
in eastern Oregon, sometimes as part of omnibus bills aimed at creating several park units at once. And yet not all national monuments are managed under one roof, as presidential proclamations since 1978 for units administered by the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have generally not been followed by land transfers. President Bill Clinton’s proclamation in 2000 of the Cascade Siskiyou National Monument in southern Oregon is but one example.

Oregon Caves National Monument was one of the 16 national monuments transferred to the National Park Service from the U.S. Forest Service in 1934. An even greater number of sites, consisting primarily of Civil War battlefields, were transferred to the NPS from the War Department at the same time. It reflected an effort by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to consolidate the management and administration of all existing national monuments under one agency in the interest of efficiency. It had the important result of changing the NPS from primarily a manager of natural areas to one having the single greatest role in protecting the nation’s historical heritage as well. With its primary features of “unusual scientific interest and importance” being subterranean, (as opposed to proclamations made to protect ancient ruins, fossils, tall trees, battlefields, rock formations, large animals, volcanoes, as well as other types of landmarks) Oregon Caves has affinities with Jewel Cave in South Dakota (proclaimed in 1908), the Lehman Caves of eastern Nevada and Utah’s Timpanogos Cave (both proclaimed in 1922). With the exception of Lehman Caves (where the 640 acre national monument was incorporated into the 77,100 acres comprising Great Basin National Park in 1986), these units have remained at their original size possibly because of the perception that only underground caves rose to the level of being nationally significant. Certainly the Forest Service adhered strictly to the provision in the Antiquities Act limiting the reservations to only the amount of land necessary for their “proper protection,” such that Jewel Cave’s extent is only 1,274 acres, while Oregon Caves (488) and Timpanogos Cave (250) came in even smaller.

Efforts to make Oregon Caves National Monument considerably larger began within five years of its establishment and have continued intermittently to the present time. Curiously, the first attempt arose from the thinking that a national park designation represented the most expedient way to develop a show case, rather than the idea that terrestrial features surrounding the monument might also be important enough to bring into a larger reservation. A second, rather half-hearted expansion effort, came from NPS staff acquainted with botanical features of the surrounding national forest lands once the monument had been transferred to the NPS in 1934. A much more serious attempt to legislate a larger national monument started in 1940, with a planning team engaged to review the options for saving the native Port Orford-cedar.
Chapter One: First Attempts at Expansion

FIGURE 9. Stand of Port Orford-cedar near Oregon Caves, 1941. Photo by George Grant, National Park Service.
This chapter is aimed at tracing efforts made toward the goal of expanding the monument by recasting the park experience as possibly more than touring a show cave in the years prior to American entry into World War II. It begins by summarizing the land withdrawals leading to the monument’s proclamation, but then turns to a national park proposal made before any road reached Oregon Caves. Transfer of the monument to the NPS in 1934 sparked the next attempts to expand, especially as logging the steep and difficult terrain of the Siskiyou Mountains became feasible by the late 1930s.

_Land withdrawals, proclamation, and early administration, 1903-1911_

Partition of the Oregon Country with Great Britain occurred by treaty in 1846, leaving the United States with the task of extinguishing aboriginal title before lands entered the public domain and could thus open to Euro-American settlement. The area proclaimed as “Oregon Caves National Monument” on July 12, 1909 was thus ceded by a treaty with certain Indian nations of November 18, 1854, and then ratified by the United States Senate on March 3, 1855.2 The 480 acres reserved by the proclamation also fell beyond the limits of the Oregon & California Railroad land grant affecting 3.7 million acres made by Congress in 1866. The land area that was to become the monument remained part of the unallocated public domain until 1903, but the process of reservation for specific purposes, which eventually culminated in the Oregon Caves being proclaimed as a national monument, began in 1891. This was when Congress passed an appropriations bill that contained a rider allowing the President to proclaim “forest reserves” from unallocated land within the public domain. Congress did not provide the legal basis to spend appropriated funds for management of the forest reserves until passage of another appropriations bill containing a rider to that effect in 1897.3

Any prior claim made on the cave or its immediate surroundings had to that point been frustrated by the lack of a bona fide survey (as required for homesteads) or the knowledge needed to perfect an entry made on the basis of “preemption.”4 The land could still be claimed by private parties through rights to minerals or timber until parts of Josephine, Curry, Douglas, and Coos counties in southwestern Oregon were temporarily withdrawn from settlement, entry, sale or other disposal in April 1903. This order from the Acting Secretary of the Interior to one of the department’s bureaus, the General Land Office, was made so that the GLO might have time to report on which lands could be included in a proposed “Rogue River Forest Reserve.”5 The withdrawal order came with boundaries tentatively drawn along township lines, effectively halting any new claims within them until a finalized forest reservation could be made by proclamation from the President.6
Temporary withdrawals were just that, temporary, a response to a need in places like Oregon where public domain land still made up much of the state. The idea was to include lands primarily valuable for purposes apart from agriculture and mining within a forest reserve (or “national forest,” as they became known after 1907) and return lands found unsuitable for a forest reserve to entry. Withdrawals allowed for surveys to be conducted as well as reports on the status of lands (such as public or private, already subject to prior reservation, and so forth) to be made, with special emphasis on anything that might complicate their future administration as a forest reserve. A special agent with the GLO started the process that led to the Rogue River withdrawal by recommending in 1898 that some 12 townships be reserved where Curry, Coos, Douglas, and Josephine counties converge. Officials with the U.S. Geological Survey, another bureau in the Department of the Interior, took a more expansive view by recommending a larger reserve in 1901, one that also extended south to Oregon’s border with California. Action in the form of withdrawing these lands from entry was delayed by the question of whether to exchange railroad grant lands with the holder at that time (the Southern Pacific Railroad), but a report by one of the government’s forest inspectors (H.D. Langille) spurred the acting Secretary of the Interior to order the temporary withdrawal.

More than three years passed between the initial temporary withdrawal and proclamation of the Siskiyou Forest Reserve by President Theodore Roosevelt on October 5, 1906, under the authority granted to him by the 1891 legislation. During this period, the temporary Rogue River withdrawal acted as a de facto reserve in the sense that it prevented any further entry, but vigorous protests resulted in a reduction so that no lands from Curry County were included in the 1906 forest reserve proclamation. Roosevelt’s action that created the Siskiyou Forest Reserve embraced more than 700,000 acres, or roughly 31 townships between the southern end of Douglas County and the state line.

He swallowed a bitter pill by signing legislation on March 4, 1907 that, among other things, ended his power to create or enlarge forest reserves in Oregon and other western states without congressional approval. This was somewhat offset by a flurry of proclamations issued just days beforehand, where a total of 21 new “midnight reserves” were established in the western United States, covering a large area within Oregon. Roosevelt’s action on March 2, 1907, added more than four million acres to the national forest “system” in Oregon, making for a total of some 16.5 million acres (or roughly one quarter) of the state’s area of 62 million acres. One of the proclamations stipulated that 446,000 acres were to be added to the existing Siskiyou Forest Reserve. Much of the addition included land in Curry and Coos counties, though the nascent national forest was also reduced when, on
May 6, a “release” of some lands temporarily withdrawn in 1903 became effective. The release of these lands back to the public domain, thus making them subject to claims by private parties, included sections forming a block south and west of Williams, within as few as four miles to the northeast of Oregon Caves.¹³

![FIGURE 10. Pack horses and would-be visitors on the trail to Oregon Caves from Williams, 1913. Photograph by A.M. Weister, courtesy of the Greg Walter Collections.](image)

Reserving the lands around Oregon Caves as national forest and under the administration of the United States Forest Service did not mean they were totally exempt from further entry. The Mining Law of 1872 allowed for claims established on federally owned forest lands to go to “patent,” becoming privately owned parcels. The Forest Homestead Act of 1906 permitted bona fide settlers to obtain a patented agricultural inholding within national forest boundaries. The supposed intention of a man named Robert Veach to file a mining claim on a tract containing the Oregon Caves triggered another temporary withdrawal of four sections on August 12, 1907. It came at the request of Forest Supervisor M.J. Anderson, who
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in a telegram to Chief Forester Gifford Pinchot requested the withdrawal for a proposed national monument. He knew the President could proclaim this type of reservation under legislation titled “An Act for the preservation of American antiquities” passed into law on June 8, 1906.

This withdrawal had the effect of preventing “appropriation and use of all kinds under the public land laws, including the mineral laws,” in order to give Anderson a chance to report on the tract. In spite of a request from the Forest Service’s lands division in Washington for a report in late October, all Anderson did in reply was send Pinchot a signed application from Veach and another party for a permit to build a hotel at the Oregon Caves and light a tour route in them. The four sections had not yet been surveyed, but Anderson pointed to the advantages of granting operational control of the cave to the applicants “for a term of years,” in that their furnishing of guides might curtail a situation where the “outer rooms are being destroyed by [visitors] breaking off specimens.”

What appeared to trigger a sudden interest in the Oregon Caves on Anderson’s part came from some publicity generated by an Ashland resident, attorney Chandler B. Watson, about a prospective trip there. As a long time promoter of Oregon’s scenic attractions, Watson visited Crater Lake as early as 1874 and had more recently talked of a trip to the “famous Josephine county caves” in the company of writer Joaquin Miller, who still (according to at least one newspaper report) fancied a run for the United States Senate. They met in Grants Pass on August 3, along with Jefferson Myers of Portland, while Anderson telegraphed Pinchot about the need for a withdrawal. His telegram from Grants Pass that Saturday stated that the withdrawal was needed “to prevent mineral entry of Oregon Caves until I can locate exact” and added the sentence, “Have sent men today to locate as National Monument, Danger.” The only other men mentioned as being at the cave when the trio visited, at least in the two subsequent published accounts of this trip, were John H. Kincaid (their packer) and Frank Nickerson, a resident of Kerbyville.

In any event, the survey finally came in October 1908, when Robert A. Dean, surveyor and forest guard, located four corners for an “Oregon Caves National Monument.” He could readily do this because draftsmen had already placed protracted section lines over unsurveyed townships on maps used by the Forest Service, in order to establish jurisdictional boundaries. Merely making grids across planimetric maps, however, did not provide the precision needed for accurate ground surveys, especially if township and range has to be adjusted to account for the earth’s curvature, survey errors, or simply situations where two surveys approach
the same line from different directions—something that becomes more evident when different surveys in Oregon (as opposed to California) meet at the state line. Fortunately for Dean, the township located immediately north of the one containing the unsurveyed sections surrounding Oregon Caves had been surveyed by the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey in 1904-05. The U.S. Geological Survey 1:125,000 topographic sheet of the Grants Pass quadrangle that first appeared in 1908 showed the location of section corners established by this survey. Dean could locate the actual (on the ground) survey corners to the north and use his equipment to go from a known point (the southern corner of two sections that met east of

Buck Peak) to survey cross country about two miles to establish a northeast corner of the future monument, then run a line of 80 chains west to establish a northwest corner. From there the line ran 60 chains south to a third corner, back 80 chains east, then 60 chains north to the original corner, encompassing (at least theoretically) a total area of 480 acres.\textsuperscript{21}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Fig12.png}
\caption{This diagram accompanied the monument’s proclamation in 1909. Reproduced in USDA National Park Service, Master Plan, Oregon Caves National Monument, Oregon, May 1975, page 30.}
\end{figure}
At only one-fifth of the 2,560 acres withdrawn for the monument, Dean had no way of knowing whether his survey of the 480 acres actually encompassed the entirety of the cave system below him. He applied, perhaps overzealously, the Antiquity Act’s provision that the limits of such monuments “shall in all cases be confined to the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected.” The possibility of a discrepancy may be why the Forest Service made no move to rescind the withdrawal, even after the monument’s proclamation.23

At any rate, the Forest Service did not press for immediate action on the matter of promulgating a proclamation. As Anderson explained to his supervisor in February 1909, District Forester E.T. Allen, he had mistakenly given the impression of the Oregon Caves area being permanently withdrawn (instead of only temporarily) in order to obtain a survey.24 Less than three weeks later on March 1, Allen submitted a draft proclamation and supporting documentation to Pinchot in order for the chief forester, in turn, to submit the package to the Commissioner of the General Land Office (GLO). It came with a note in the transmittal letter from Allen that arrangements were being made for a special use permit authorizing construction of a hotel near the “mouth” of the caves. Against the backdrop of Anderson reporting vandalism at the Oregon Caves “during the last year or two,” the permittees were to prevent any mutilation by their employees and notify all visitors about the prohibition of such acts, and that any violations would be reported to the Forest Service for action.25

In following what seems to have been the administrative protocol in regard to proclaiming national monuments, the Forest Service documents went to the GLO’s chief clerk, Frank Bond. He wrote all 28 proclamations for establishing national monuments between 1906 and 1911, providing some order to a process that some observers labeled “haphazard” by trying to sort out which proposals should go forward and rejecting others.26 The Forest Service made its case for a proclamation at Oregon Caves largely by citing the threat of impending vandalism and giving something of a possible solution through a special use permit, yet the GLO did not immediately forward the proclamation to the Secretary of the Interior, who might then recommend that the newly elected President, William Howard Taft, sign it. With no word on the proclamation by June, Anderson decided to send three photographs and a two-page description of the proposed national monument to Allen, who then conveyed the material to Pinchot. In describing the cave’s extent, the forest supervisor inadvertently threw doubt on the adequacy of Dean’s survey in October 1908:
"These caves contain a series of Galleries then [sic] of rooms [in] caverns; though many beautiful rooms have been discovered, while miles of galleries have been visited; but there are thousands of passageways leading all directions—partly closed stalactites—that have never been opened, and with the distant and unexplored openings on the opposite side of the mountain the magnitude of the Oregon Caves can be said to be practically unknown."27

Anderson repeated his earlier warning about vandalism spurring the need to set aside the cave as a national monument, but also added that the Forest Service rebuilt and improved the trails leading to it. The latter more easily protected the "valuable forest surroundings" and made the "cave" more accessible to tourists.28 As if to reiterate the point Anderson attempted to make, the chairman of the "Oregon Conservation Commission" wrote to Pinchot about Oregon Caves just several days later, on June 21. Joseph N. Teal drew from what Watson, who was also a member of the commission, told him about the cave’s beauty and the threat posed by "pitchwood" torches as well as vandalism.29
Members of the commission held particular sway with the administration, and Pinchot in particular. The idea came directly from Roosevelt, whose speech at the National Governors Conference in Washington, DC on May 13, 1908, highlighted the need for developing a dialogue with the states on conservation of natural resources. Governor George Chamberlain of Oregon, a Roosevelt supporter, immediately appointed a group of 15 prominent citizens as the state’s conservation commission. They lacked a budget, but pledged their assistance toward steering Oregon on a course of orderly development, using parts of the “Declaration” signed by the governor in the national meeting of 1908 as an epigraph in the commission’s first annual report covering the remainder of the calendar year. Once this report prompted the legislature to overhaul Oregon’s existing water law, they became an officially appointed commission of seven members by state statute in February 1909.

Even if Roosevelt was no longer President, he had hand picked his successor, William Howard Taft. The newly inaugurated Taft retained Pinchot as his chief of the Forest Service, at least initially, so proclamation of Oregon Caves as a national monument could proceed swiftly now that it had an official endorsement by the Oregon Conservation Commission. One of Pinchot’s subordinates in Washington wrote to Teal on July 6 that a proclamation had already been submitted to the President, all the while Forest Service officials were alerted to measures needed for protecting the cave. As such, Taft’s proclamation made reference to unsurveyed land within the Siskiyou National Forest with all tracts shown on an attached diagram derived from Dean’s work to locate corners for the monument. In creating overlapping reservations, Taft made the monument dominant, with the proviso that any use of the [national forest] land “which interferes with its preservation or protection as a national monument is hereby forbidden.” It did not expressly spell out what fell into the category of forbidden, stating only in the next paragraph:

“Warning is hereby given to all unauthorized persons not to appropriate, injure, remove, or destroy any feature of this National Monument, or to locate or settle on any lands reserved by this proclamation.”

Joaquin Miller’s article titled “Oregon’s Marble Halls” was clearly intended to celebrate the establishment of Oregon Caves National Monument in the September 1909 issue of the popular Sunset magazine, yet it also came at the heels of a heavily publicized accidental shooting death in the cave during the first week of August. At that point the Forest Service had no staff posted at the cave and this did not change until the summer of 1911, when the agency hired its first seasonal guard to be stationed there. While the shooting raised concerns about public safety and generated more publicity than the monument’s proclamation on July 12, 1909, the
Forest Service initiated a free guide service by the guard as his time permitted because one visitor documented vandalism in the cave during the summer of 1910. Rodney L. Glisan, a prominent dentist and outdoorsman from Portland, notified the conservation commission’s chairman, J. N. Teal, about how souvenir hunters had badly splintered one formation so that pieces of it lay on the cave floor. Teal forwarded Glisan’s letter on to the Forest Service, which publicly responded with a stated intention to hire a guard for the following summer.38

While the guard’s duties included guiding, they also more directly focused on protection in the form of installing new ladders inside the cave, trail improvements, and the posting of warning signs.39 These measures were aimed at ensuring better compliance with provisions of the Antiquities Act, but no road passable for wagons, let alone automobiles, came within several miles of the monument. This limited visitation to 300 or fewer during the entire season of 1910, and there seemed to be no way of inducing anyone to make improvements such as a lighting plant or hotel that might entice more people to Oregon Caves and make it a paying proposition. Granting a lease to private parties, who might then fund these facilities, simply was not viable without a road and closer connection to population centers. Although Grants Pass was situated on the main railway line between Oregon and California, several attempts to bring trains closer to the Illinois Valley fizzled during this period. Private road building schemes, both in the valley and near Williams also failed, during an era when Oregon had yet to appoint and empower a state highway commission to do what its counties could rarely do on their own. For the moment, Oregon remained “in the mud,” and the Forest Service stalled on granting any permit that might give an exclusive privilege to private parties whom might provide visitor amenities at the monument. They balked specifically on the question of whether national monuments could be developed privately, even under rules promulgated by the Secretary of Agriculture.40

The Oregon Caves National Park Proposal, 1913-1915

Nothing more than a simple tent camp appeared at Oregon Caves for the first guard appeared in 1913, though the Forest Service did allow his wife to furnish visitors with meals and tent lodgings on national forest land just outside the monument that season.41 By July, however, former forest supervisor Anderson and his allies in the Grants Pass Commercial Club (forerunner to its chamber of commerce) petitioned Oregon’s congressional delegation for a national park on land surrounding the monument in order for private capital to develop a lighting system and build a hotel through a lease arrangement.42 This took place as supporters of the existing Crater Lake National Park introduced and eventually succeeded in obtaining an
appropriation to build a system of roads and trails there, starting in 1913. With a privately funded lodge at Crater Lake still under construction and national park proposals for two other areas in Oregon introduced, but stuck in committee, it seemed like the right time for supporters of developing Oregon Caves to launch their own park proposal.

The national park proposal appeared in two drastically different forms when introduced in January 1913. The Senate bill came first on January 4, when Jonathon Bourne of Oregon called for transferring an entire township surrounding the monument to the Department of the Interior, because its head (the Secretary) administered all of the national parks. As part of reporting on the bill by the department, however, the General Land Office objected to reserving a whole township for this purpose and suggested that the monument could be enlarged with a smaller area added through a supplemental proclamation made under the Antiquities Act. The Forest Service, through the supervisor of the Siskiyou National Forest, objected to the loss of grazing allotments and future stumpage value. He discounted the proposed park’s scenic values, stating that Oregon Caves was greatly overrated, as the past summer season had seen only 250 visitors—with many of those attracted more for the pleasure of camping than touring the cavern. Representative W.C. Hawley introduced a bill that took an almost opposite approach, one where the monument’s 480 acres could be transferred to the Secretary of the Interior. The Secretary could then issue leases of no greater than ten acres in any one place for the accommodation of visitors, light the Oregon Caves, and possibly build roads. The Department of the Interior, however, reported adversely on the bill, with the contention that the Department of Agriculture could adequately care for Oregon Caves without the added expense of maintaining a staff for the proposed national park.

The Forest Service did not actively oppose Hawley’s bill, since it permitted the sale of “such matured or dead or down timber.” Forest Supervisor Nelson Macduff even suggested that a withdrawal [for a park] of some 1,600 acres be made to cover more than the 480 acres proclaimed as a national monument since “openings” to the cave system had been found south of the existing boundary. Less than five months later, the Mazamas (a mountaineering group based in Portland, among whose members included Glisan and other prominent Oregonians) visited the monument. Responding to an invitation by the Grants Pass Commercial Club, they succeeded in keeping development of Oregon Caves on the minds of Forest Service officials. One of the latter, District Forester George H. Cecil, wrote to his chief in Washington, Henry S. Graves, about areas in Oregon and Washington that might ultimately be made into national parks. Among the six happened to be Oregon
Caves, whose area (Cecil recommended to be “segregated for administration”) corresponded to Macduff’s suggested boundaries.\textsuperscript{51}

Graves responded to Cecil in September 1913, stating that he doubted Congress might act on any bill establishing a national park at Oregon Caves, mainly because key members balked at the “large number” of requests for such reservations throughout the western states. He wanted Congress to instead revoke the proclamation creating the monument and then allow for the Forest Service to issue permits authorizing private parties to build a hotel and light the cave. With viable timber sales on the Siskiyou National Forest sometime in the future, Graves believed that developing Oregon Caves could enhance the agency’s image and generate local support.\textsuperscript{52} Macduff took the chief forester’s plan to the commercial club in Grants Pass, which then provided an endorsement, even though others in the Forest Service remained wary of mining claims if the proclamation was rescinded.\textsuperscript{53}
A committee from the commercial club subsequently approached one of the senators from Oregon with the idea of designating the monument as both a national park and a game refuge, with the reasoning that this action could lead to building roads, as well as hotels and other improvements. That idea prompted the senator’s query to the Secretary of the Interior, concerning whether his department had ever reported on the proposition of making Oregon Caves into a national park. When this question reached the Assistant Commissioner of the GLO, he replied by summarizing his bureau’s comments on the two national park bills earlier in January. With the proposal effectively moribund, Congressman Hawley switched tactics and embraced the Graves plan. He claimed to have a bill written to this effect before the House Committee on Agriculture, but the legislation never surfaced for a vote.

The Grants Pass Commercial Club continued to promote the monument, even if the improvements it wanted were nowhere in sight. It staged a “Cave Day” that featured a trek to the monument in June 1914 and filled the need for printed information aimed at prospective visitors by publishing a ten page illustrated pamphlet. Left with few other options in the meantime, the commercial club and
the Forest Service continued to push for a road to the monument as a necessary precursor to development there. Macduff pointed out that tourists had to arrange their own transportation after arriving by rail at Grants Pass as the 1915 travel seasonal approached. They could possibly make connections if auto stages regularly reached either Williams or Holland, since tourist camps had been established further afield at a ranch located a few miles beyond Williams, and at the confluence of Grayback and Sucker Creeks less than 10 miles above Holland on the Illinois Valley side of the drainage divide. With property tax revenues inadequate for building roads any further into the hinterland of Josephine County, and federal financing of thoroughfares largely unavailable in the national forests, Forest Service officials doubted that monument visitation could go much higher than the total of approximately 1,000 people who reached Oregon Caves in 1915. Hawley remained optimistic that something on the federal side could be done, since the state’s newly formed highway commission still remained advisory and lacked even the authority to sell bonds for financing road construction.

Forest Service improvements, 1916-1933

Boosters in Grants Pass maintained the pressure for a wagon road to the monument by petitioning Graves in July 1916. They knew about a “Shackleton Bill,” whose purpose was to provide federal aid for highway construction through the national forests under certain conditions. They also had knowledge of another bill, one on the verge of passing, aimed at creating a bureau for managing the national parks and monuments and sent a query to the Secretary of the Interior along with a pamphlet on Oregon Caves they had printed in 1914. Assistant to the Secretary of the Interior Stephen T. Mather sent the request to the Department of Agriculture, which responded that the Forest Service was at work preparing rules and regulations under section 8 of the Federal Road Act (“Shackleton Bill”) so that a list of recommended road projects could be forwarded to Washington, D.C.

A road to Oregon Caves did not come, at least directly, from passage of the Federal Aid Road Act in 1916, but it created incentives for Oregon to form a state highway commission the following year. At this point District Forester George H. Cecil requested a “preliminary investigation” (reconnaissance survey) for a road with a maximum grade of six percent, minimum curvature of 15 feet radius, and a width of 12 feet. Thus began a process of survey, design, bidding, and ultimately construction through a contract for an “Oregon Caves Highway” that opened for the summer season of 1922. The final located line shortened the distance in Section 1 (between the monument and a confluence of Grayback and Sucker creeks) to eight miles, with a parking lot built shy of the cave entrance so that an eight foot
FIGURE 16. Mazamas and their entourage at the Stevens Ranch, which represented the point where travelers had to park their automobiles and utilize a pack trail toward Oregon Caves from Williams in 1913. Photograph courtesy of the Greg Walter Collections.

“trail” could serve as the connecting route. Traffic volumes increased sufficiently for a widening project, one aimed at allowing for consistent passing of oncoming traffic, to be undertaken by the federal government’s Bureau of Public Roads beginning in 1927 on a day labor basis. It amounted to reconstruction of the highway over the next four seasons, with the width over its entire length finally meeting the federal standard of two nine-foot travel lanes by 1931.

The new road surface, which included paving, brought an increased number of visitors to the monument and prompted a number of improvements to infrastructure—whether paid for by the Forest Service, or its concessionaire, the Oregon Caves Company. Businessmen from Grants Pass controlled the company, which invested in a “Chalet” (containing both a lunch room and staff quarters) guest cottages, guide dormitory, and began building a hotel at the monument during the fall of 1931. Agency appropriations from the Forest Service meanwhile funded a power plant for lights in the cave, as well as an exit tunnel that allowed for more visitors to take the company’s cave tours. With development proceeding apace, there seemed to be little reason for anyone to call for a larger monument or
FIGURE 17. A Forest Service map of 1923 shows the road to Oregon Caves with bold dashes, whereas trails for pack trains and access to fight forest fires are indicated by lighter and smaller dashes. Map courtesy of the National Archives, Seattle.

its transfer to any other government bureau. Yet the agency created by Congress in 1916 to “promote and regulate” the federal areas known as national parks, monuments, and “reservations” had steadily insisted, sometimes publicly, that all national monuments be administered under one roof.64
While the NPS periodically pressed the case for consolidating administration of the national monuments from its first year of operations in 1917 and throughout the following decade, the interagency rivalry with the Forest Service ultimately centered more on which entity should control recreation on federal land. With new national parks established or expanded by Congress transferring already reserved national forest land, the need for a “coordinating commission” became apparent in the fallout over extending Sequoia National Park in 1926. Disagreements between the NPS and the USFS over which bureau should administer certain federal lands sometimes led to congressionally authorized studies, but the number of proposed national parks and monuments that the NPS unilaterally deemed worthy of study exceeded 100 by 1931. Its director at that time, Horace Albright, appointed his successor as superintendent of Yellowstone National Park, Roger Toll, to conduct the majority of investigations under regular rather than special appropriations from Congress.

Toll could report on only 18 of the proposals in the fiscal year of 1931, while the “docket” [as Albright put it] of these investigations increased to 125 the following year. He included Oregon Caves on his itinerary for October 19, 1931, while traveling between Crater Lake and the redwoods of northern California. His report did not contain a recommendation as to whether Oregon Caves should be administered by the NPS or whether it met “standards” of the time in order to be considered, but Toll provided something of a ranking among limestone caverns he had visited. As Assistant Director Conrad Wirth subsequently stated, this was done to compare it with caves in the system of units administered by the NPS.

The Oregon Caves report from Toll could not be categorized as an official study, such as the ones undertaken in response to a proponent in Congress or a group formed to support a new or expanded park. It did, however, give the NPS current information about one in a group of national monuments that the agency had long wanted to acquire from the Forest Service. That opportunity came in 1933, as part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s response to enacted legislation that mandated an examination of how reorganization of federal agencies could make the executive branch of government more efficient. Among the actions the President took was transfer of all national monuments administered by the departments of War and Agriculture to Interior, and thus the NPS. When the NPS assumed control of Oregon Caves in April 1934, Forest Service officials expressed their displeasure with the change of administration internally. After all, the agency had expended considerable effort in order to make Oregon Caves a viable draw for automobile tourists. Agency staff members considered the monument to be an important demonstration of how they could develop an significant site for...
recreational use as part of a larger “system” of resorts, campgrounds, as well as a few places devoid of development called “primitive areas.” Losing Oregon Caves to the NPS represented a blow, albeit a small one, to Forest Service prestige in the Pacific Northwest.\textsuperscript{71}

*Proposed enlargements by the NPS, 1934-39*

While the Forest Service had little choice but to accept the transfer, they remained opposed to any enlargement of the monument. With the hotel at Oregon Caves open for business starting in May, the monument’s concessioner needed a steady stream of overnight guests, some of whom they hoped might stay longer than one night. When the new NPS director, Arno B. Cammerer, visited in August, he told the company manager, George Sabin, that the monument seemed simply too small to warrant an increase to the rather modest annual appropriations for Oregon Caves. Sabin thus began trumpeting the idea of a park embracing Bolan Lake and peaks such as Grayback and Lake Mountain as part of “holding” visitors longer at the Chateau.\textsuperscript{72} The secretary of the Grants Pass Chamber of Commerce, meanwhile, talked of an area of 30,000 acres that had been included in the state’s game refuge surrounding the monument.\textsuperscript{73}

\textbf{FIGURE 18.} A Forest Service photo of Bolan Lake, about 1927, located about five air miles southwest of Oregon Caves. From a Siskiyou National Forest photograph album, courtesy of Lee Webb.
These sentiments mirrored those of the seasonal ranger stationed at Oregon Caves, B.R. Finch. Although Finch cautioned that his report constituted a mere “sketch” of the surrounding country, with no attempt made to study an enlarged monument, he felt strongly enough to propose an area of more than 30,000 acres. It encompassed both “high and low country, streams and lakes, and the very best of the Siskiyou Mountain scenery.” Starting at Grayback Creek in the north, its boundary more or less followed the divide from Grayback Mountain south past Lake Mountain and Swan Mountain to the California line, then west along the border to Althouse Mountain and north along Bolan and Sucker creeks to the Grayback Guard Station. 74
Both Sabin and the chamber soon detected opposition from the Forest Service and farmers in the Illinois Valley. The principal objection seemed to be the prohibition placed on grazing in an enlarged monument or national park, but Cammerer wrote back to say his principal interest in an “extension” was to take in “the largest Douglas fir of proven dimensions [in Oregon],” when he heard that this specimen was within a half mile walk from the cave.\textsuperscript{75} When it emerged that the “Big Tree” was indeed within the existing monument, the question of expanding Oregon Caves lay dormant until David Canfield, the superintendent of Crater Lake National Monument (under whose administrative jurisdiction it fell) raised the issue again in September 1935.\textsuperscript{76} Canfield asked one of the NPS wildlife biologists supervised by George M. Wright about whether expanding the monument could be the right instrument for providing game animals with greater protection than what they enjoyed in the virtually invisible game refuge, or if establishing a federal refuge in the area might be a better means of accomplishing that end.\textsuperscript{77}

This led to a report about wildlife in the vicinity of Oregon Caves by Richard Bond, a specialist hired through the Emergency Conservation Work program (known principally for its job training branch, the Civilian Conservation Corps), who visited the area for several days the following summer and again in October 1936. Bond put to the sword any hope of a viable refuge under NPS auspices for large mammals like elk, since the bottom lands were already converted for agricultural use, but held out some prospects for an enlarged monument to embrace a representative biotic cross-section of the Siskiyou Mountains. He based his recommendation of some 5,400 acres on life zones rather than plant associations. Bond’s map included sinuous lines follow ridges and thus captured much of Cave and Lake creeks down to the newly re-built Grayback (or “Cedar”) Guard Station, a facility located next to the Oregon Caves Civilian Conservation Corps camp. The upper portion of this proposed extension, by contrast, included Mount Elijah, Lake Mountain, and the Bigelow Lakes within boundaries akin to a rectangle.\textsuperscript{78}

Canfield sent Bond’s report to his park botanist at Crater Lake, Elmer Applegate, who during the school year, ran the Dudley Herbarium at Stanford University. Applegate concurred with Bond’s conclusions and recommendations in early February 1937, but differed with him in the extent of an enlarged monument. By proposing that the extension encompass only 1,220 acres, Applegate felt that the purpose suggested by Bond could be served, but without complications like private ownership or vested rights of any kind, as well as possible Forest Service opposition.\textsuperscript{79} His enlargement focused on plant distribution by adding portions of
the sections lying south and east of the monument, something Applegate contended might double the number of species known to occur at Oregon Caves, while also allowing for a trail loop to be built that could traverse much of the 2,600 feet of relief within the extension. Canfield called for further study in forwarding Bond’s report to Cammerer, so Applegate had a chance to revisit his recommendation in
the field during the latter part of June. At that point Applegate reduced his recommendation still further, to 780 acres, so that his proposed extension lay between the existing monument and Lake Mountain. By trimming much of the northern fringe from his earlier recommendation, Applegate still left enough space in the extension to allow a new trail to be constructed east of Big Tree toward the Bigelow Lakes so that it could join an existing Forest Service trail below Lake Mountain.  

The NPS took no further action on Applegate’s recommendation once Canfield transferred to Rocky Mountain National Park at the end of July 1937. His successor as superintendent, Ernest P. Leavitt, wrote to Cammerer in September to convey the gist of a meeting he had with Applegate at Oregon Caves earlier in the
month. The upshot, based on recommendations from NPS assistant director Harold C. Bryant, was that any proposal aimed at enlarging the monument had to be carefully crafted so that friendly relations with the Forest Service could be maintained. What this really meant (since it involved a land transfer) was that Leavitt lacked the time for making a field investigation to that point, and he remained wary of Applegate’s proposal as being too small—thus requiring the NPS to go back for more acreage at a later date.

It took Leavitt almost two years before he returned to Oregon Caves and made that investigation, this time in the company of his chief park naturalist at Crater Lake and the monument’s long-time head guide, R.W. “Dick” Rowley. His report of August 1939 followed what was by then a standard NPS format to evaluate new park proposals and enlargements of existing areas. It recommended that an additional 2,400 acres of national forest land be added to Oregon Caves National Monument, with the major justification being to protect the monument’s water supply in the upper Lake Creek watershed. Like Applegate’s recommendation, most of the proposed extension ran east of the monument, but went along section lines to encompass all or part of sections 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16. Leavitt also made vague reference to the proposed extension lending itself to hiking and equestrian use, thus enhancing the recreational value of Oregon Caves. He closed a cover memorandum to Cammerer by stating that such an extension contained outstanding scientific and scenic values “worthy of National Park Service jurisdiction…” Leavitt identified the former as a “blend” of geological and botanical features, while the latter boasted superb views of the rugged Siskiyou Mountains. He went on to make his case for conserving Lake Creek as a water supply in the body of his report, but also added a new justification in doing so. This one involved saving an “excellent stand” of Port Orford-cedar, the subject of an entirely separate NPS investigation until that point, though a reason destined to eventually serve as the main purpose for attempting to expand Oregon Caves National Monument over the next two decades.

The proposed Port Orford Cedar National Monument, 1935-1945

Among the approximately 400 plant species at Oregon Caves National Monument is a tree whose native range is confined to only several counties in southwestern Oregon and northwestern California. It almost never develops into pure stands that dominate the tree’s immediate surroundings, but became emblematic of the monument while the Oregon Caves Company developed a resort there. This stemmed from a workman’s suggestion to concession manager George Sabin that bark from Port Orford (or “white”) cedar made an excellent and distinctive
port orford-cedar (Chamaecyparis lawsoniana, or POC) is also highly prized as timber since its tight, straight grain allows for a variety of uses. Lumber companies have exported it since 1866, though the current price of POC logs (many times higher than the value of Douglas-fir) is largely because of demand for this timber from Japan. There it serves as a substitute for a close relative (Chamaecyparis obtusa, the hinoki cypress) in temples and shrines. In addition to logging, the main threat to remaining stands of POC is a non-native root fungus called Phytophthora lateralis, which has killed the tree throughout its native range.  

The tree has long been recognized for its beauty, as horticulturalists have generated more cultivars from Port Orford-cedar than any other conifer. The tree has long been recognized for its beauty, as horticulturalists have generated more cultivars from Port Orford-cedar than any other conifer.  

FIGURE 23. Superintendent E.P. Leavitt's proposed extension of 2,400 acres, made in 1939, using a Siskiyou National Forest map of the time as a base. The map was included in a National Park Service report of 1940.
FIGURE 24. The native range approximated for Port Orford-cedar, about the end of World War I. This appeared in *Port Orford Cedar: Its Properties and Uses* (Coos Bay: Port Orford Cedar Products Company, 1919).

Original growth (that is, its range prior to 1855) could have reached a total of four billion board feet, with localized stands found on alluvial terraces and coastal dunes, but also subalpine forests inland. Major forest fires in 1867, 1868, and 1936 reduced the volume of POC, as did logging, which began on a large scale in 1908,
so that the merchantable amount shrank to 1.14 billion board feet in 1938.  
Logging accelerated during and after World War I, responding to the combination of a growing Japanese export market and home-grown promotion of POC for uses such as bridge decking, paneling, and battery separators. Demand was such that while prices for Douglas-fir remained constant from 1925 to 1935 (at $1.75 per thousand board feet), POC commanded at least four times that amount and increased still further (to $9 per thousand) in the wake of widespread destruction caused by the Bandon fire of September 1936 in Coos County.

Even before this fire, the Forest Service was concerned about how an annual average cut of some 48 million board feet could be sustained, a figure that prevailed from 1914 to 1933. In a national report on timber supply (one that the Forest Service wanted to use as a catalyst for reforming the industry), a number of the findings discussed ways in which prices and employment could be stabilized to avoid contractions in the market. Forest Service officials in Oregon thought that the POC situation needed more intensive study, but waited until July 1935 to assign one of their foresters who had prior experience surveying stands around Coos Bay. The resulting treatise could substantiate what Regional Forester C.J. Buck projected regarding continuance of the average annual cut; with some 40 percent of POC already taken, it meant exhaustion of the world’s entire supply in 25 years. For context, Buck compared the situation with the only west coast species fetching anywhere close to a similar price, the coast redwood. During the same eight year period, loggers cut 381 million board feet per year of redwood, so its supply at that rate could last another 150 years.

Buck concluded his brief report to the Oregon State Planning Board (OSPB) by recommending purchase of more than 58,000 acres of private land, on which stood 287 million board feet of POC timber, or about a quarter of what remained in 1935. The state’s planning board, funded under the umbrella of the National Resources Planning Board during President Roosevelt’s New Deal, could serve as a conduit for policy decisions to travel upward from its advisory committees to the President’s cabinet. Short of purchasing private holdings, something which required congressional approval, Buck wanted to prohibit sales of POC on the revested Oregon and California Railroad grant lands. Managed by the General Land Office within the Department of the Interior, the O&C lands held roughly half of the publicly owned POC, or 16 percent of the total. The OSPB had Governor Charles H. Martin sign a letter addressed to the Secretary of the Interior asking for such a ban in January 1937.
Figure 25. Team members measure the largest Port Orford-cedar found on the NPS study trip of 1940. With a diameter of 82 inches, the tree was found in the Squaw Basin area of the Coquille River’s south fork, in Coos County.
On its end, the Forest Service created a “Port Orford Cedar Experimental Forest” of some 9,000 acres on the Siskiyou National Forest in May 1936. Located within the drainage of the Coquille River’s south fork, this area contained some of the finest cedar stands remaining in public ownership. The Forest Service also began logging in a portion of the experimental forest that summer, taking roughly two million board feet from units in the Rock Creek tributary, a move that netted only $6,000 for the federal treasury. It also produced criticism from some conservationists who advocated preserving the cedar. The Forest Service set aside part of its experimental forest (1,122 acres) “to be kept forever in its natural condition for scientific and educational use” in 1937, yet this move hardly put a lid on the still nascent efforts toward preserving disappearing forest types like POC as national monuments or state parks.

Sam Boardman, the state parks superintendent in Oregon, mourned the loss of what he termed “an excellent demonstration site,” where 200 acres of Port Orford-cedar re-growth and a small amount of old growth burned in September 1936. He acquired the Port Orford Cedar Forest Wayside, located eight miles north of Port Orford along the Oregon Coast Highway (U.S. 101), with the idea of allowing motorists traveling along this corridor a chance to see the effectiveness of replanting this tree. Boardman pinned any hope of saving old growth POC on the Forest Service, but also suggested some steps that the federal government could take to prevent its complete disappearance in Oregon. The state eventually retained only 32 acres of its former wayside, though another of Boardman’s acquisitions located about three miles to the west of it contains some Port Orford-cedar.

NPS officials remained only indirectly aware of the controversy surrounding POC until two activists, Irving Brant and Willard G. Van Name, went to see the Secretary of the Interior about establishing a national monument to protect the best remaining stand in September 1938. Brant and Van Name afterward related that Secretary Harold Ickes wanted to have a field investigation made for this purpose, so NPS Director Arno B. Cammerer asked Regional Director Frank Kittredge in San Francisco for a report on the best stand of POC and the various factors weighing on its suitability as a national monument. In the months that followed, NPS officials made contacts with the Forest Service and the Oregon & California Lands Administration to gather file material and obtain advice as to which stands to examine during their field study set for the summer of 1939. Visits to POC stands got started in a tentative way by late June, with areas chosen based on a Forest Service survey conducted by the Pacific Northwest Forest and Experiment Station in Portland. A preliminary report followed in July, one where the authors recommended a tract of some 2,000 to 3,000 acres in the south fork of the Coquille River basin.
When the O & C Lands Administration's chief forester Walter Horning pointed out some problems with the sections recommended in the preliminary report, NPS forester Jack B. Dodd returned to visit a total of 14 areas located in Coos, Curry, and Douglas counties. In contrast to the earlier report, Dodd's study contained a narrative description of each area, along with maps, charts detailing ownership, timber values, and estimated volumes. He ended up recommending a tributary basin in the Coquille's south fork drainage, that of Squaw Creek, a tract located adjacent to the Port Orford Cedar Experimental Forest. The acting regional director, B.F. Manbey, endorsed Dodd's findings and forwarded the report to Cammerer, noting that further study of the South Fork drainage was needed by the NPS in order to recommend boundaries and investigate possible complications posed by mineral entries, grazing allotments, and wildlife problems.

Previous submittal of a Presidential proclamation drafted to extend the boundaries of Oregon Caves National Monument coincided with further review by a NPS committee charged with recommending the best tract for a proposed Port Orford Cedar National Monument. Composed of Dodd, the regional geologist, an
engineer, and chaired by NPS landscape architect Ernest A. Davidson, the committee took Horning's suggestion to inspect areas with POC located adjacent to the monument in March 1940. Using multiple criteria, they gave a proposed extension containing 8,520 acres located next to the existing monument a slight edge over a tract of 10,116 acres in the vicinity of Squaw Basin in Coos County. Regional office staff still considered the committee's report to be a preliminary one, since they wanted to investigate several additional tracts before completing a final report, but the chief of NPS land planning in Washington wrote to Van Name in early May 1940 and made a tentative endorsement of Squaw Basin as the best area.

When two members of the committee finally took to the field in late August, they reiterated the earlier finding that the area adjacent to Oregon Caves still won over Squaw Basin and yet another tract. In particular, they pointed to "good typical examples" of POC located in the watersheds of Panther, Lake, and Grayback creeks. In contrast to an extension holding some typical specimens, the Squaw Basin stands struck them as located along "a very scenic road, paralleling a beautiful river," and useful as a benchmark when comparing the other tracts they visited. In other words, Squaw Basin set the standard for the POC remaining on federal land yet somehow fell below the Oregon Caves extension in terms of recreational appeal. Still, it rated high enough as a potential unit of the national monument in case two areas could be acquired.

Boundaries drawn by the committee for the Oregon Caves extension were not really final because the chairman recognized the need for both the Forest Service and the O & C Lands Administration to participate in another study for this purpose. Davidson urged that a definite date should be arranged for field study by representatives from all three agencies, but stressed that while the search for the "best" POC stand had become something of a "will-o-the-wisp affair," the NPS reports had their basis in previous Forest Service surveys. What hung like a cloud over the proposed monument extension (or Squaw Basin, for that matter) was the jurisdictional question of whether the selected POC stands fell within the "indemnity strip," of the O & C railroad grant and since recovered by the government. Both the Forest Service and the O & C Lands Administration (one of the forerunners to the Bureau of Land Management) claimed these sections, and it seemed doubtful to some officials that revested lands could be transferred to the NPS by presidential proclamation without an Act of Congress.
FIGURE 27. This proposed extension of Oregon Caves National Monument included some of the Grayback Creek drainage as an indication of where the best Port Orford-cedar stands were located in 1940. It also took in some of the high country, as in Leavitt’s proposed extension. NPS map produced for the Port Orford Cedar National Monument study.

The suggested boundary study did not take place until July 1941 because the Washington office of the NPS delayed its endorsement of the committee’s recommendations until June. In the meantime Crater Lake superintendent E.P. Leavitt wanted to enlarge the monument by 2,000 acres in accordance with the extension proposal of 1939 and acquire a detached unit containing Port Orford-cedar along Grayback Creek in the four sections located east of the Grayback Guard Station. The team consisted of two committee members (Davidson and Dodd), Leavitt and his chief park naturalist (George Ruhle), two Forest Service representatives (Supervisor of the Siskiyou National Forest Edward P. Cliff and David T. Mason from the regional office in Portland) as well as one from the O & C Lands Administration (District Ranger Otto Krueger). As the regional chief of planning, Davidson wrote the report, which appeared on August 1 and contained a curious “four stage consideration” for the boundary extension. The first stage consisted of Leavitt’s 1939 proposal, except that the proposed extension followed topography in the Lake Creek watershed. This area also included two small groves of POC, but the team focused on a “second stage” addition on the more
representative cedar forest located along Grayback Creek. Even if a portion of the Greyback POC forest had already been logged, the team agreed that the tracts totaling 4,480 acres exhibited a pleasing range of forest conditions and was somewhat intermixed among federal, county, and private ownership, but could be further developed for recreation. A “third stage” expansion of 1,270 acres might link the existing monument with the tributary headwaters of Grayback Creek on Lake Mountain. Finally, a “fourth stage” addition of 2,580 acres along Cave Creek might “round out and solidify” the existing monument by giving the NPS complete control of the existing approach road.\textsuperscript{118}

Leavitt, Ruhle, Dodd, Krueger, and two other NPS foresters returned to Oregon Caves in late August to have another look at the stage 2, 3, and 4 additions. He noted numerous problems in the stage 2 addition, beginning with private lands (1,960 acres) where the NPS might have to resort to condemnation. Timber prices had jumped by this time to record levels, which could have made the Josephine County authorities (who controlled 1,440 acres in the stage 2 addition) even more reluctant to part with their lands. The dispute over jurisdiction of the O & C grant sections further clouded the prospects of an extension, as did Forest Service reticence to parting with its holdings as well as the developed campground and guard station at Grayback. Leavitt concluded his memorandum of the trip by observing that the complications of acquiring the Stage 2 addition along Grayback Creek made further consideration of it, as well as stages 3 and 4, unwise. He thus recommended only working toward the Stage 1 addition, since it could provide the NPS with control of the monument’s water supply in addition to POC stands on Lake Creek and Panther Creek.\textsuperscript{119}

Dodd had a somewhat different idea than simply defaulting to only the Stage 1 addition of 1,700 acres, as Leavitt had done. He made the argument that a somewhat larger extension to the north and east, one adding a total of 5,180 acres to the monument, could meet multiple NPS objectives. Dodd wanted to go beyond the Stage 1 addition for the monument extension, and centered his proposal on establishing a new administrative site near Lake Creek and controlling construction of a new road approach from Williams Creek.\textsuperscript{120} When the regional committee still headed by Davidson made its “final” recommendation in October, they endorsed Dodd’s proposed extension and advised that the name “Oregon Caves National Monument” be retained, supposedly because the POC did not possess “outstanding” character like the giant sequoia or coast redwood. They feared visitors might be disappointed if the name “Port Orford Cedar” was too strongly emphasized.\textsuperscript{121}
If nothing else, Director Newton B. Drury finally had a recommendation from the region on Port Orford-cedar, one that dove-tailed with expanding Oregon Caves National Monument. Chief Consul George Moskey then wrote a memorandum to Drury, responding to the director's note about which bills the NPS might introduce in February 1942 for new legislation in Congress. Moskey agreed with the rationale for monument expansion, but recommended shelving the project. Leavitt expressed his displeasure at the decision and attempted to appeal to Drury's sympathies, since the latter had previously served as acquisition officer for California State Parks and secretary of the Save-the-Redwoods League.

By October Leavitt fumed that the Commissioner of the General Land Office had thrown up an obstacle to monument expansion by demanding the sum of $250.00 per acre for sections claimed by the O & C Lands Administration, plus appraised value of the timber. To determine the latter, Chief Forester Walter H. Horning of the O & C Lands Administration orchestrated a cruise of the sections claimed (something which amounted to almost half of the expansion area), yet found POC there to be less than five percent of the total number of trees. Large-diameter POC clustered in two "groves," one in part of section 3 (located just north of Pepper Camp), and the other shared between sections 2 and 11 about a mile northeast of the existing monument, with both being in township 40 south.

With the NPS expecting to receive no funding anywhere on the horizon to purchase these sections, Assistant Director and Chief of Lands Conrad Wirth wrote to State Parks Superintendent Sam Boardman in the fall of 1943. He informally suggested an exchange of O & C land containing POC for state lands of equal value, so that a state park containing some showcase stands might be established. Despite having expressed an avowed interest in saving some POC, Boardman did not pursue Wirth's idea for several reasons. One was the lack of "trading stock" under his direct control, as Boardman tended to acquire small areas without tracts that could be used for exchange or eventual expansion of the developed footprint. State forest lands of the period were administered under a different authority and generally consisted of cutover parcels that had reverted to public ownership for unpaid taxes—or had been so badly burned they possessed little or no value. In any event, there was virtually no precedent for state foresters to exchange lands with the highway department (which controlled state parks) for primarily recreational purposes. Perhaps more importantly, Boardman felt hung out to dry by the NPS in regard to a proposed national park along the coast in Curry County a couple of years earlier. He went to great lengths to obtain local support for a 30,000 acre park consisting of mostly private lands that could be purchased from willing sellers at depressed prices, given the lack of road access at the time. The NPS study of the
Oregon coast largely failed to endorse the proposed national park, and the agency instead started to purchase privately held coastal tracts through condemnation proceedings on the Olympic Peninsula in Washington without having conducted a formal study.¹²⁷

FIGURE 28. One of the images produced to promote the Oregon Coast National Park proposal from 1938 to 1940. Oregon State Highway Department photo, made available through the National Archives digital collection.

Unlike the Oregon Coast National Park proposal, the Oregon Caves extension still clung to life—even if it remained in a sort of limbo for the duration of World War II. The NPS considered purchase of 2,300 acres claimed by the O & C Lands Administration the biggest hurdle to monument expansion in 1945, the same year Superintendent Leavitt supplied some perspective on how his agency had grown during the 1930s on some master plan documentation.¹²⁸ Even if the NPS now had control of 27 national parks and 83 national monuments, these areas occupied considerably less than one percent of the nation’s land base. At the same time, the agency investigated 353 areas proposed for national park or related status between 1933 and 1940. Its planners rejected the majority of these proposals and could not study another 420 areas due to lack of funds or personnel.¹²⁹ Given these formidable numbers, having to put an expanded Oregon Caves “on the shelf” frustrated Leavitt, though he and Director Drury expressed a guarded optimism that something along these lines could be achieved once the war was over.
Notes to Chapter One


4 See Kay Atwood, *Chaining Oregon: Surveying the Public Lands of the Pacific Northwest, 1851-1855* (Blacksburg, Virginia: McDonald and Woodward, 2008) for this happened during part of the antebellum period, prior to the railroad grants and passage of various land laws beginning with the Homestead Act in 1862 that expedited transfer of tracts from public to private ownership. Preemption is the term used for settlers claiming land without first having a valid survey. Under certain circumstances, the claim was upheld upon receipt of fees mandated by law and title transferred. During the period of 1851-55, most entries were perfected under the provisions of the Oregon Donation Law of 1850, whose provisions expired in 1855.

5 W.A. Richards, Commissioner, GLO, to Registrar and Receiver, Roseburg (Oregon) Land Office, temporary withdrawal dated April 29, 1903. The lines were shown in the Portland Oregonian, March 3, 1903. This proposed reserve did not include the area around Oregon Caves, but encompassed 1.25 million acres. It was reduced and modified in the early stages of inspection, with one of the changes made to include the Oregon Caves vicinity, as shown in the Grants Pass Oregon Observer, May 30, 1903. The withdrawal order and other documents are generally filed in Record Group 48, Records of the GLO, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland. A copy of the Rogue River withdrawal was supplied by Greg Walter of Ashland and is in the writer’s possession.

6 By this time GLO inspectors were wise to a source of fraud, whereby speculators made claims immediately prior to withdrawal orders and then had the right to select “lieu lands” within existing reserves, generally tracts having valuable timber. Having to check for this type of entry and bona fide ones already granted title often accounted for much of the lag between withdrawal and proclamation. Theodore Roosevelt thus proclaimed the Siskiyou Forest Reserve on October 5, 1906, under the provisions of the legislation passed in 1891.


8 Portland Oregonian, October 6, 1903, 7; as cited in Glicemae, Forestry Legislation, 30. The agent presumably restricted his recommendation to this area due to the “checkerboard” imposed by the Oregon and California Railroad grant further east.

9 Glicemae, Forestry Legislation, 31-32. Much of the information in this part of her thesis was drawn from the Portland Oregonian, October 13, 1903, page 14. The report by Langille came as the result of his work on inventorying the forests of Oregon; see the USGS Professional Paper No. 2 (1902) with this title.

10 Glicemae, Forestry Legislation, 54 and 63. The fear of land fraud, which seemed to engulf the state over the intervening period, provided most of the reason for the delay in making proclamations. The
release of land from the Rogue River withdrawal on October 21, 1904 also included sections as close to Oregon Caves as nine miles away to the west; Siskiyou Forest Reserve map dated November 1908, included in the Glicemae thesis.

11 This still left, as of July 1, 1908, almost 17 million acres in Oregon’s public domain lands subject to entry under various land laws; J.N. Teal, Chairman, Report of the Oregon Conservation Commission (Salem: State Printer, 1908), 87.

12 Glicemae, Forestry Legislation, 64-65; citing numbers from the Portland Oregonian, March 6, 1907, 1.

13 Siskiyou Forest Reserve map of November 1908, op. cit.

14 J.H. Billingslea to the Regional Forester, January 27, 1931, copy from the Oregon Caves files, Siskiyou National Forest, Grants Pass. This letter cites a secondary source, Assistant Forest Supervisor M.M. Lewis, who believed Anderson was prompted to request the withdrawal to prevent a mining claim being filed by Veach.

15 Transcription of Withdrawal dated August 12, 1907 attached as Exhibit A to Memorandum from C. Richard Neely, Assistant Regional Solicitor, USDI Solicitor’s Office, Portland, to Regional Director, Pacific Northwest Region, NPS, May 26, 1976, 13 copy in ORCA files. As stated in the withdrawal order, it was made upon the recommendation of the Acting Secretary of Agriculture on August 5, then approved by the Acting Secretary of the Interior on August 12 and conveyed immediately to the Acting Commissioner of the Government Land Office the same day, who then wired the Registrar and Receiver of the GLO in Roseburg.

16 G.W. Pollock, Chief, to Anderson, October 30, 1907; Anderson to the Forester, December 16, 1907, with attached application for a Special Use Agreement, copies of Siskiyou National Forest correspondence in ORCA files.

17 “Joaquin Miller Off for the Caves,” Ashland Tidings, August 1, 1907. Watson had once been the business partner of W.G. Steel in Portland (before Steel took up his crusade to have Crater Lake designated a national park) and Watson later led the effort to establish what became known as “Lithia Park” in Ashland.

18 Billingslea to the Regional Forester, op. cit. This letter came from an earlier inquiry by Myers, requesting information about the establishment of Oregon Caves National Monument. Myers had previously been the lead organizer of the world’s fair (Lewis and Clark Exposition) held in Portland in 1905.


20 The Siskiyou Forest Reserve map November 1908 is but one example, and includes the four sections withdrawn in anticipation of establishing the monument. Boundaries of Oregon Caves National Monument were retraced and resurveyed between July 15, 1922 and June 25, 1923; Lincoln E. Wilkes, U.S. Cadastral Engineer, Field Notes of the Survey of the Subdivision, Retracement, and Resurvey of North Boundary, Retracement of T40S, R6W and Retracement of the Boundaries of Oregon Caves National Monument, accessed through http://www.blm.gov/or/landrecords/survey/yNoteView2 2.php, copy from Greg Walter.

21 Dean, Description of Survey, Oregon Caves National Monument, Siskiyou National Forest, Oregon, October 23, 1908, copy of SNF document is in ORCA files. It is graphically represented on a USFS map sheet for T40S R6W filed by Dean that was included within the monument’s proclamation in 1909. The Grants Pass Quadrangle of that time was one of only a few available in Oregon; see diagram in Joseph Teal, Report of the Oregon Conservation Commission (Salem: State Printer, 1908), 88. Quadrangles are literally one of four quarters as delineated by individual degrees of latitude on one axis and those of
longitude on the other. See Dean, Report on Proposed National Monument, October 31, 1908, Approved December 15, 1908 with Description of Survey and diagram attached; the “Tie Line” is noted on a “map sheet” attached to correspondence from R.L. Frome, Forest Supervisor, to District Forester, September 5, 1911.

22 Aided, no doubt, by a letter to Anderson from the Forest Service’s chief of lands in Washington on this point, something cited in both the legislation and the agency’s “use book” that detailed operational procedures; G.W. Pollock to Anderson, October 30, 1907, ORCA file.

23 C. Richard Neely to the Regional Director, Pacific Northwest Region, NPS, May 26, 1976, 1, op. cit.

24 Anderson to Allen, February 10, 1909, ORCA file. The position of district forester was later renamed “regional forester” at the same office in Portland.

25 Allen to the Forester, March 1, 1909, ORCA file.


27 Anderson to Allen, June 18, 1909; Allen to the Forester, June 19, 1909, both in ORCA file; quote from page 1 of “Oregon Caves National Monument” by Anderson.


29 Teal to Pinchot, June 21, 1909, ORCA file.


33 Taft fired Pinchot in January 1910, once the latter had clashed with Taft’s appointed secretary of the interior, Richard Ballinger over the propriety of some coal leases in Alaska. The first warning sign that Taft started to deviate from Roosevelt’s conservation policies came almost immediately, in March 1909, when Taft replaced Roosevelt’s appointed secretary of the interior, James Garfield (son of the assassinated president) with Ballinger; Harold K. Steen, *The U.S. Forest Service: A History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976), 101-105. He also pardoned a number of individuals convicted during the Oregon Land Fraud trials conducted when Roosevelt was President.

34 Overton W. Price, Associate Forester, to J.N. Teal, July 6, 1909, copy in ORCA file.

35 Proclamation 876, By the President of the United States of America, Oregon Caves National Monument, Oregon, July 12, 1909.

36 Ibid.

37 Miller, “Oregon’s Marble Halls,” *Sunset* 23:3 (September 1909), 227-235; it was drawn from his visit with Watson two years earlier.
Notes to Chapter One

38 Glisan to Teal, September 24, 1910; Teal to District Forester, September 26, 1910; Charles H. Flory, Acting Forester, to R. L. Frome, Forest Supervisor, October 27, 1910; C.S. Chapman, District Forester, to Teal, November 26, 1910; “Siskiyou Caves to be Protected,” Portland Oregonian, December 4, 1910. Glisan’s trip was mentioned in “Oregon Caves,” Portland Sunday Oregonian, January 29, 1911.


40 For more about this question, see Domain of the Cavemen: A Historic Resource Study of Oregon Caves National Monument (Seattle: USDI-NPS, 2006), 55-66, by the writer.


42 “National Park Projected,” Portland Oregonian, July 8, 1912; R. L. Fromme [Forest Supervisor] to District Forester, July 9, 1912.


44 “Hotel Men Want Road to Cave,” Rogue River Courier, November 22, 1912, page 3. The other two national park proposals of the time were Saddle Mountain in Clatsop County and Humbug Mountain in Curry County.

45 The bill (S. 7945) called for reserving T40S, R6E as a national park. Its language was borrowed directly from legislation used to establish Crater Lake National Park in 1902.

46 Clement S. Ucker, Chief Clerk (USDI) to Commissioner of the GLO, January 7, 1913; Fred Deanett, Commissioner of the GLO to the Secretary of the Interior, January 11, 1913; park proposal records are largely from RG 79, Stack 150 (32:24:16), Box 603, File 207 Oregon Caves, NA College Park.

47 George H. Cecil, District Forester, to Forest Supervisor, January 13, 1913; Nelson F. Macduff to District Forester, January 19, 1913.

48 H.R. 27782, introduced January 7, 1913. This came in response to reports from the departments of agriculture and interior and was affirming that national monuments should be developed by private parties; H.S. Graves, Forester, to Hawley, July 30, 1912. One view of Hawley’s effectiveness in Congress (or lack thereof) was prompted by the Crater Lake road provisions; “Hawley’s Sounding Brass,” Medford Mail Tribune, May 10, 1913.

49 Samuel Adams, Acting Secretary, USDI, to Scott Ferris, Chairman, House Committee on Public Lands, January 29, 1913. The Secretary of Agriculture also reported adversely on the bill, stating that a national park bureau, were it to be created, could better fix the boundaries of the proposed park; James Wilson, Secretary, to Reed Smoot, Chairman, Senate Committee on Public Lands, January 18, 1913.

50 Macduff to District Forester, January 18, 1913. The suggested withdrawal covered sections 15 and 16, as well as the south half of sections 9 and 10 of T40S, R6W. This would also have meant rescinding the withdrawal of the 1907 order covering all four sections.

51 This came as the first attempt to create a bureau to administer national parks took place in Congress. Cecil named Glacier Peak, Mount Adams, Mount Baker, and Mount Olympus in Washington, as well as Oregon Caves and Mount Hood in Oregon; Cecil to the Forester, June 19, 1913.

52 “Mazamas Resolve,” Rogue River Courier, July 18, 1913; Graves to District Forester, September 4, 1913. F.W. Reed, Acting Assistant Forester, to E.C. Sammons, Secretary of the Mazamas, October 28, 1913. The most complete account of the trip is Mary Henthorne, “The Oregon Caves,” Mazama 4:2 (December 1913), 57-60.
53 C.J. Buck, Acting District Forester, to the Forester, October 22, 1913.

54 Joseph Moss, Grants Pass Commercial Club, to Senator Harry Lane, November 29, 1913; Lane to the Secretary of the Interior, December 5, 1913; L.M. Bruce, Assistant Commissioner of the GLO, to the Secretary, December 12, 1913; Adolph C. Miller, Assistant Secretary of the Interior, to Lane, December 16, 1913.


57 Macduff to District Forester, May 20, 1914. The Caves Camp Company initiated a tent “city” near the future site of the Grayback Guard Station in 1914, to be followed by one on the Williams side a year later; Grants Pass Courier, July 31, 1914, and July 16, 1915. Mention of “Williams Camp” is in a contemporary Southern Pacific Railroad brochure, MS-501, Southern Oregon Historical Society, Medford; see also “Oregon’s Wonderland,” Rogue River Argus, June 10, 1915.

58 “Hawley working for Oregon Caves,” Medford Mail Tribune, December 29, 1915; for more detail about where Oregon Caves fits into the early efforts to build roads in Oregon, see the writer’s Domain of the Cavemen, op. cit., 58-67.

59 Robert E. Twohy, President, California and Oregon Coast Railroad Company, to Secretary of the Interior, July 12, 1916; Mather to the Secretary of Agriculture, July 16, 1916; C.W. Marvin, Acting Secretary of Agriculture, to the Secretary of the Interior, July 18, 1916; all in RG 79, Stack 150 (32:24:16), Box 603, File 20706, NA College Park.

60 The Federal Aid Roads Act was passed on July 11, 1916. It is no accident that the Portland Automobile Club widened its scope sufficiently to incorporate as the “Oregon State Motor Association,” and then become an affiliate with the American Automobile Association by this time.

61 Specifics of design, and building the initial road are in “Final Report on Oregon Caves Sections One and Two, National Forest Road in the State of Oregon 1923,” RG 95, Accession 31473, Box E-47, Final Report on Oregon Caves Highway 1923, NA Seattle. Supporting material is in RG 95, Accession 54C0104 Roads, Oregon Caves Highway #13 and Oregon Caves 1915-22 files at NA Seattle. See also RG 30, Accession 43514, Box 97, NA Seattle. The road opened officially on June 25, 1922; “Opening of Road to Marble Caves to be Celebrated,” Medford Mail Tribune, June 21, 1922, 8.

62 “Final Report on Oregon Caves,” op. cit., 4. Funding was shared by the Oregon State Highway Commission and the Department of Agriculture, with the total cost of Section 1 initially being $205,000; “Oregon Caves Forest Road Project,” in the Fifth Biennial Report of the Oregon State Highway Commission, 1921-22 (Salem: State Printer, 1922), 338-339. The Federal Highway Act of 1921 also established the 50-50 matching principle for highway construction.

63 Project correspondence for the period of 1927-28 is in RG 30, Accession 43514, Box 98 Oregon Caves, NA Seattle. The 18 foot standard is indicated in “Caves Road Shovel Progressing Rapidly,” Grants Pass Courier, April 6, 1928, 6. See also photos attached in letter from Dennis A. Stephens, Maintenance Coordinator, State Highway Division Maintenance Section, to Superintendent John Miele, May 4, 1984.

64 An example is in the Annual Report of the Director of the National Park Service to the Secretary of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1917 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office 1917), 5-7. It assisted with producing the pamphlet Glimpses of Our National Monuments (something that covered all national monuments, whether administered by the Department of the Interior or not) as a
companion to the popular *Glimpses of Our National Parks* as a part of promoting the areas under its charge to visitors. There is frequent mention of the various park proposals, with less on consolidating national monuments under one agency in the annual report by the NPS to the Secretary, perhaps because there was less to be gained politically at a time when the bureau's survival depended upon its relevance to constituents. At the time of the report, the NPS had existed as a federal agency for less than one year.

65 Report of the Director of the National Park Service to the Secretary of the Interior 1926 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1926), 3-5. Director Stephen T. Mather justified unilateral studies of proposed park areas (often on national forest land) on the basis that each had to be investigated thoroughly if the majority might not live up to the "high standards of national parks and monument establishment."


67 Albright, *Report of the Director of the National Park Service 1932* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1932), 21. Toll had earlier reported on several caves of federal land (in 1929) stating at that time that if a "national scenic survey" were available, it could supersede the present "method" of presenting areas one at a time by intrepid chambers of commerce, or on account of political influence, can hardly be expected to produce national parks of exceptional merit, nor those that would be valuable to round out the system." Toll to Albright, December 13, 1929, 2, RG 79, Stack 150 (33:24:6), Box 603, folder 207, Oregon Caves general 1927-32, NA College Park. Some biographical information on Toll, with a summary of his studies, is in John L. Crompton, *Twentieth Century Champions of Parks and Conservation, Volume I* (Urbana, Illinois: Sagamore Publishing, 2007), 231-232.

68 Toll to the Director, February 6, 1932, memo with attached inspection report of October 19, 1931; Wirth review and recommendation, February 11, 1932 as approved by Albright, RG 79, Stack 150 (32:24:6), Box 603, File 207, NA College Park.


70 More detail about the circumstances of this transfer appears in *Domain of the Cavemen*, op. cit., 86-88.

71 It did not help that the USFS and NPS engaged in a much broader fight over which agency might emerge as the preeminent one in the field of federal recreational development throughout the 1930s; see Hal Rothman, " 'A Regular Ding-Dong Fight' Agency Culture in the NPS – USFS Dispute, 1916-1937," *Western Historical Quarterly* 20:2 (May 1989), 141-161. The USFS highlighted the Oregon Caves in its publications promoting the recreational use of the national forests throughout the Pacific Northwest. One of them is USDA-Forest Service, *An Ideal Vacationland: The National Forests of Oregon* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1923), 28-29. Oregon Caves also had its own USFS brochure during this period, updated annually.

72 G.E. Mitchell, Forest Supervisor, to Regional Forester, September 5, 1934; C.J. Buck, Regional Forester, to the Forester, September 24, 1934.

73 The refuge represented little more than a zoning designation from the time of its creation in 1926. It existed for the next 22 years as lines on a map, with its effectiveness questionable. Oregon seemed to have borrowed the idea from California, in that the refuge was intended to safeguard against extreme depletion of breeding wildlife. The change in law enforcement from having game wardens to the state police seems to have begun its demise; V.L. Sexton, Oregon's Wildlife Resource, typescript prepared by the Oregon State Planning Board, November 1936 (see summary and pages 83-87); the state refuge took in much of the Lake Creek and Grayback Creek watersheds.
Finch, Proposed Monument Enlargement, in Part III, the Area Surrounding the Caves, in his annual report for the monument in 1934; RG 35, OCNM folders, NA College Park.


Canfield had earlier reported on a survey to Cammerer, one that definitively located the Big Tree within the boundaries of the monument. At that point, he expressed no great urgency to extend the boundaries of Oregon Caves; Canfield to Cammerer, June 4, 1935, cited in Ernest P. Leavitt, Recommendations for Extensions to Oregon Caves National Monument, August 25, 1939, in binder, Oregon Caves National Monument Museum and Archives Collections.

Canfield to Joseph S. Dixon, September 24, 1935, RG 79, 67A16, Box 4318, File 720 Protection and Care of Wildlife, NA Seattle.

Bond, Special Report on the Wildlife of Oregon Caves National Monument and Adjacent Territory, December 4, 1936, Box 7, ORCA 215 of the Oregon Caves Museum and Archives Collections. The map is in Box 7, ORCA 210. The life zones (named for an idea advanced by biologist C. Hart Merriam about the topographic and other controls on plant and animal life in North America, began to go out of favor in the 1940s with work by plant ecologists W.B. Daubenmire and Victor Shelford. Bond named the Dry Transition, Humid Transition, Canadian, and Hudsonian zones in his report and indicated them on the map.

Canfield to Applegate, February 1, 1937; Applegate to Canfield, February 5, 1937. This proposal included parts of sections 13, 14, 15, and 16, all within T40S, R6W. See attached map; RG 79, Central Classified Files – Region IV, Box 338, File 201 Oregon Caves administration, NA San Bruno.

Applegate to Canfield, July 1, 1937, with diagram attached.

Leavitt to Cammerer, September 20, 1937. The group also included Chief Park Naturalist John Doerr, who worked at Crater Lake.

Ibid. Leavitt noted that having to go for future extensions after getting a foot in the door “constituted the main Forest Service objection in disapproving our applications.”

Although reports by Toll and others furnished precedent for reporting on these areas, two subsequent pieces of legislation greatly expanded NPS authority to study possible additions to the National Park System. What were called the Historic Sites Act of 1935 (49 Stat. 666) and the Park, Parkway and Recreation Act of 1936 (49 Stat. 1894) put the number of NPS area studies well over 1,000 by 1940.

Leavitt, Memorandum for the Director, August 25, 1939.

Leavitt, Recommendations for Extensions to Oregon Caves National Monument, Oregon, August 25, 1939, 4. The NPS wildlife division had no problems with concurrence, since Leavitt’s report included Applegate’s recommendation; E. Lowell Sumner, Jr., Regional Wildlife Technician, September 6, 1939.


These number more than 200; see Frank Lang, “Port Orford Cedar,” Jefferson Monthly (July 2010), 18-19. For more on why so many were cultivated, see Aljos Farjon, A Natural History of Conifers (Portland: Timber Press, 2008), 227-228. It was introduced to Britain in 1854 and exhibits the greatest variation in cultivation of any imported tree species; Graham Stuart Thomas, Trees in the Landscape (Sagaponach, New York: Saga Press, 1983), 100. In cultivation this species allows for extreme variation, in that they can be partly seedlings, mutations, or witches brooms; D.M. van Gelderen and J.R.P. van
Hoey Smith, *Conifers: The Illustrated Encyclopedia, Volume I: A-K* (Portland: Timber Press, 1996), 112-157. Like coast redwood, Port Orford-cedar is a living fossil—though one younger (at ~50 million years) than the more ancient redwood. It once could be found over a much wider area, which included parts of Idaho, Montana, California, Oregon, and as far east as Nebraska; Thomas M. Jimerson and Max Creasy, “Port-Orford-Cedar-Pine Associations in Northern California,” pp. 60-67 in Jennifer Reigel, et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the First Conference on Siskiyou Ecology, May 30-June 1, 1997* (Portland: The Nature Conservancy, through the Siskiyou Regional Education Project, 1997). The POC’s native range is Coos, Curry, and Josephine counties in Oregon, and Del Norte, Humboldt, Trinity, Shasta and Siskiyou counties in California. It is by no means continuous over that range, but rather spotty.

*Phytophthora* is a water borne pathogen and was introduced to North America from Asia in the 1920s. The spores begin by digesting POC roots and then working up to the base of the tree. Found in the cedar’s native range of Coos County in Oregon during the 1950s, the root rot fungus reached the Klamath River within four decades; Ronald Lanner, *Conifers of California* (Los Olivos, California: Cachuma Press, 1999), 202-205. This and other threats are summarized in “POC remains center of controversy,” *Portland Oregonian*, May 31, 1994; see also John Kliejunas, “Port Orford Cedar Root Disease,” *Fremontia* 22:3 (1995), 3-11. There is some cause for optimism, given more recent efforts at producing root stock found to be immune from *Phytophthora*, Jeff Bernard, “Cedar making comeback in Northwest,” *Corvallis Gazette-Times*, December 1, 2007, A3.


90 A summary of how POC was marketed during the interwar period appeared in *Port Orford Cedar: Its Properties and Uses* (Portland: Dent and Russell, 1929), ORCA file on POC.

92 Information attached to letters between Samuel Boardman, [Oregon] State Parks Superintendent, and G.E. Nichols, Professor of Botany, Yale University, April 5 and 17, 1937, Boardman Papers, Box 1, Oregon State Archives, Salem.


95 H.L. Plumb, Assistant Regional Forester, Memorandum for Regional Forester [Port Orford Cedar Management Plan], November 13, 1935, Oregon State Planning Board, file 4/10/04/05, Box 11, Forestry, Port Orford Cedar file, Oregon State Archives. C. Weldon Kline, author of the report, which appeared as a bulletin in late 1935. He described Coos and Curry counties of the time as centered on the manufacture of POC, but speculation that took place from 1920 to 1930 meant that most private owners (who controlled two-thirds of the cedar supply) were selling maximum volumes even while prices deflated in 1930 and afterward. Furthermore, it grew in mixed stands with old growth Douglas-fir, which was worth next to nothing by comparison, so fir stands were clear cut to get at POC or exposed to fire hazard by leaving the cedar slash amid the uncut fir; Buck, *A Brief Report*, op. cit., 1.

Buck estimated such a purchase with federal funds might cost between $3 and $5 million, but would also include two billion board feet of Douglas-fir.

V.B. Stanbery, Executive Director, OSPB, to J.W. Biggs, August 17, 1936; C.J. Buck, Memorandum for Mr. Stanbery, September 11, 1936; Martin to Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, January 20, 1937; all OSPB, file 4/10/04/05, Box 11 Forestry, POC file, Oregon State Archives.

Carl R. Dion, “This was the Forest Primeval: Port Orford cedar, one of several diminishing specimens meriting reservations,” Nature 31 (January 1938), 47-48; G.E. Nichols, Professor of Botany, Yale University, to Sam Boardman, State Parks Superintendent, April 5, 1937, with excerpts of letter received by Nichols regarding the POC (C. Lawsoniana). The letter to Nichols was likely from Willard G. Van Name, an associate curator at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. Van Name had earlier published a book, Vanishing Forest Reserves in 1929, about the problem of preserving pristine examples of the remaining forest types in the United States. Dion was a young protégé, and Van Name later remarked to biologist Ben Thompson (formerly with the NPS) that “the mutilation of the splendid stand [of POC] along Rock Creek in the South Fork watershed in 1935-36 was one of the most regrettable examples of vandalism that I have seen for a long time.” (Van Name to Thompson, April 11, 1940, RG 79, Stack 150 (34:14:4), Box 3007, file 0-35 Proposed National Monuments, Misc., NA College Park).

Gerald W. Williams, The U.S. Forest Service in the Pacific Northwest (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2009), 164-165. The Coquille River Research Natural Area of some 500 acres was added sometime later near the mouth of the Rock Creek drainage; the headquarters of the Port Orford Cedar Experimental Forest was acquired by the Pacific Northwest Forest and Range Experiment Station in 1935 through purchase; USDA-Forest Service, History of the Siskiyou National Forest, IV-73, events of 1936.

Boardman to G.E. Nichols, April 17, 1937, but see also appended pages; Boardman Papers, Box 1, Oregon State Archives. Information on the Port Orford Cedar Forest Wayside is in Chester Armstrong, History of the Oregon State Parks (Salem: State Printer, 1965), 174-175, and Lawrence C. Merriam, Jr., Oregon’s Highway Park System, 1921-1989: An Administrative History (Salem: State Printer, 1992), 213.

This is in Floras Lake State Park; Merriam, Oregon’s Highway Park System, op. cit., 181. During this period Boardman completed a number of key acquisitions on the Oregon coast, his first priority. Each had to be approved through the Oregon State Highway Commission, which controlled state parks. Despite having a number of his park proposals were rejected by the commissioners, he persisted, and eventually acquired a number of small areas having some rare or disappearing plant species near U.S. 101 or inland from it. Examples include a Darlingtonia bog in Lane County and numerous myrtle groves in Curry, Douglas, and Coos counties. The Oregon State Planning Board continued to press the case for preserving POC during its short existence; an example is the report titled “Port Orford Cedar – A Rare Tree” in Oregon Looks Ahead (November 1938), 38.

They initially contacted Charles Eliot II and Frederic Delano (the uncle of President Roosevelt) in June 1938 to express concern about the remaining POC. Eliot and Delano were members of the Natural Resources Commission, a subsidiary group of planners under the President’s influential Natural Resource Planning Board. Copies of this correspondence, along with Eliot’s attempts to collect information, went to the NPS; C.J. Buck, Regional Forester, to George Brewer, June 11, 1938; Eliot to R.F. Bessey, Counselor, Pacific Northwest Regional Planning Commission, June 27, 1938, Bessey to Eliot, July 5, 1938; W.H. Horning, Chief Forester, Oregon & California Lands Administration, to Bessey, September 15, 1938; Bessey to Eliot, September 28, 1938; all RG 79, Stack 150 (34:31:4), Box 3007, folder 0-35 Proposed National Monuments, Misc (Oregon), NA College Park. For context regarding the tie between planning and executive policy during the New Deal, see Patrick D. Reagan, Designing a New America: The Origins of New Deal Planning, 1890-1943 (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999).

Deputy Assistant Director [George A. Moskey], to the Director, September 22, 1938; Cammerer to the Regional Director, Region IV, September 23, 1938.
W.H. Horning, Chief Forester, O & C Lands Administration, to the Commissioner, General Land Office, October 6, 1938; Horning to the [NPS] Director, October 13, 1938; Cammerer to Horning, October 18, 1938; Horning to John D. Coffman, Chief Forester, NPS, October 31, 1938; Perry R. Gage, Acting Regional Director, Memorandum for the [NPS] Director, January 13, 1939.

L.F. Cook, Assistant Chief of Forestry, Memorandum for the Regional Director, Region IV, July 10, 1939. The report was based on an examination by Cook and Jack B. Dodd of the NPS, along with O & C Lands Administration Forester Mark J. Pike, who reviewed only four areas in Coos and Douglas counties. Cook remarked that prices for POC were down and the market slack, making it an opportune time to acquire an area.

Dodd, A Report of the Available Areas of Port Orford Cedar in the State of Oregon which may be suitable for inclusion in the National Park System, November 1939: 1-2, 51-58, 95; RG 79, Stack 150 (34:31:4), Box 3009, file Port Orford Cedar, NA College Park. The problems with Cook’s preliminary report are listed by W.H. Horning, Chief Forester, O & C Lands Administration, to [NPS] Regional Director, Region 4, August 10, 1939, RG 79, CCF – Region IV, Box 339, Oregon Caves, File 602 Boundaries, Part I, NA San Bruno. One of the difficulties he mentioned was that the Forest Service claimed public lands within the boundaries reserved by the national forest proclamations of 1906, whereas the GLO maintained that the revested grant land (which covered each alternate section throughout a corridor stretching 30 miles each side of tracks between Roseburg and Redding) belonged to the Department of the Interior.

Manbey, Memorandum for the Director, January 4, 1940.

G.A. Moskey, Acting Director, Memorandum for the Commissioner, General Land Office, September 13, 1939, with attached proclamation, RG 79, CCF – Region IV, Box 339, File 602-01 Boundaries, Oregon Caves, NA San Bruno. Horning to Kittredge, [NPS] Regional Director, March 20, 1940; Herbert Maier, Acting Regional Director, Memorandum for Superintendent Leavitt, March 27, 1940.

Davidson, et al., Field Report of Committee, Proposed Port Orford Cedar National Monument, April 1940, RG 79, Stack 150 (34:28:7), Box 2950, folder 0-32, Proposed parks, Port Orford Cedar Areas, 1940, NA College Park. The criteria named were the stand size, scenic value, availability, accessibility, recreational possibilities, ease of administration and protection (p. 2). The Oregon Caves extension ran along section lines or subdivisions thereof, taking in all of sections 30, 29, 28, 27, as well as half of sections 26, 31, 32, 33, and 35 in T39S. In T40S, it covered sections 3, 10, and 11, in addition to half of sections 2, 4, 12, 14, and 15, but also upper quarters of sections 13 and 16. The frontispiece of the report, however, had a photo of committee members measuring a large POC in the Squaw Basin area that had a 82 inch diameter, which is the image reproduced on page 44.

Ben Thompson, Chief, Land Planning Division, to Van Name, May 8, 1940, in answer to Van Name’s latter of April 11, 1940; RG 79, Stack 150 (34:31:4), Box 3007, file 0-35, NA College Park. Herbert Maier, Associate Regional Director, Memorandum for the Director, May 23, 1940, RG 79, Stack 150 (34:32:4) Box 3056, file 0-32 Proposed Beach Parks, Oregon, 1934-43, NA College Park, and RG 79, Stack 150 (34:30:6), Box 2976, file 0-33 state parks - Oregon, NA College Park.

Homer Crawley, Engineer, and Lester Anderson, Assistant Landscape Architect, Memorandum for the Regional Director, September 16, 1940, RG 79, CCF – Region IV, Box 339, File 602-01 Boundaries of Oregon Caves, NA San Bruno.

Crowley and Anderson, op. cit., page 3. They also examined a tract called “Cow Creek” in Douglas and Coos counties, but it remained third choice due to the large amount of private land. They looked at Hunter Creek in Curry County for the first time in addition to re-examining Squaw Basin and portions of a large area known as the Coos Bay Lumber Company tract.
62 PAUSING AT THE RIVER STYX

114 Ernest A. Davidson, Chairman, Memorandum for the Regional Director, Region IV, September 7, 1940, RG 79, Stack 150 (34:28:7), Box 2950, file 0-32 Proposed parks, POC areas 1940, NA College Park. Other regional staff members began to coalesce around the endorsement of an Oregon Caves extension, even if some of them worried about whether O & C Lands could legally be transferred to an expanded monument.

115 J.D. Coffman, [NPS] Chief of Forestry, Memorandum for the Director [Newton B. Drury], October 17, 1940; W.H. Horning, Chief Forester, O & C Lands Administration, Memorandum Concerning the Report and Recommendations Relating to the Proposed Port Orford Cedar National Monument, October 24, 1940; Jack B. Dodd, Associate Forester, Memorandum for the Regional Director, December 16, 1940. This could effectively nullify efforts to expand the monument by a single proclamation under the Antiquities Act, per the draft of September 1939. The O & C Lands Administration interpreted a federal court decision of September 15, 1925 to mean that the President did not have authority to reserve O & C grant land for national forest purposes; Horning, Memorandum, op. cit., RG 79, Entry 10, CCF 1933-49, Box 2313, Special folders, NA College Park.

116 E.P. Leavitt, Superintendent, Memorandum for the Regional Director, June 25, 1941. The attached map showing the 8,500 acre extension had hatched lines indicating ownership and from his standpoint, the most desirable stands of POC lay in the Panther, Lake, and Grayback creek drainages; Darwin K. Burgher, Ranger, Superintendent’s Monthly Report, July 31, 1941, 1. This was during a period when the single day record for visits to Oregon Caves fell twice in one month, both on the July 4 weekend, when 1,249 visited one day and 1,506 the day after; ibid., 3.

117 Leavitt, Memorandum for the Director, February 19, 1941. Davidson noted on the region’s copy of this memo that he was willing to let ‘POC die a natural death, but advise regional officials of the need for an endorsement from Washington before starting the recommended boundary study.

118 Davidson, Memorandum for the Regional Director: Port Orford Cedar Investigation (Boundary Extensions – Oregon Caves National Monument, August 1, 1941. Team members are identified by Leavitt in the Superintendent’s Monthly Report, August 7, 1941, 2. He also noted accompanying Director Newton Drury on an overnight visit to Oregon Caves on July 17. A map of the four stages was attached to at least one copy of the Davidson draft report; RG 79, 67A419, Box 15861, File 602 Boundary Extensions, NA Seattle. The first stage addition included all of section 10 and parts of sections 9, 11, 14, and 15—all in T40S, R6W.

119 Leavitt, Memorandum for the Regional Director, August 26, 1941. The names of those who accompanied him are in the Superintendent’s Monthly Report, September 8, 1941, 1.

120 Leavitt, Memorandum for the Regional Director, September 30, 1941. He referenced Dodd’s memorandum of September 8, along with his map of September 2 showing the larger extension. This was the first mention of the Lake Creek site as well as a road that eventually connected Oregon Caves with Williams.

121 E.A. Davidson, et al., Memorandum for the Regional Director, October 7, 1941, 1. Their proposal contained 5,500 acres, including as it did 320 acres of private land in T39S R6W, Section 36. NPS employees in the Washington Office lobbied to drop the privately held acreage; A.W. Burney, Acting Chief of Engineering, Memorandum for the Director, November 28, 1941. Others such as Chief Naturalist John Doerr wanted a concise statement of values for Oregon Caves National Monument now that the extension proposal had been finalized; Doerr, Memorandum for Dr. [Carl] Russell, November 13, 1941, RG 79, CCF 1933-49, Entry 10, Box 2314, NA College Park.

122 Moskey, Memorandum for the Director, February 17, 1942, RG 79, 67A419, Box 15861, File 602 Boundary Extensions – Oregon Caves, NA Seattle.

123 Leavitt, Memorandum for the Director, April 1, 1942. Drury became NPS director on August 9, 1940, after previously working as the executive secretary of the Save-the-Redwoods League and on a part-time basis, as acquisition officer for the state parks. He was publicly identified with having saved valuable stands of old growth coast redwood and Monterey cypress in this capacity.
Leavitt, Annual Report of the Oregon Caves National Monument for the Fiscal Year 1942, October 28, 1942, 2. Travel to the monument meanwhile nose-dived from 57,704 in 1941 to only 19,574 the following year.

L.H. DeGroote, Assistant Timber Expert, Cruise Summary of the Oregon Caves Area, in his “Description of Timber in the Oregon Caves Area.” There is some narrative indicating that the POC in section 3 was the equal of stands in Coos County; see the POC type map for locations. The POC along Panther and Lake creeks is indicated as scattered, while that in Cave Creek was shown as young; DeGroote, n.d. [November 1942], RG 79, 67A419, Box 15861, File 602 O.C. Boundary Extensions, NA Seattle.

Wirth to Boardman, September 6, 1943, RG 79, 67A612, Box 4418, File 0-33, State Parks – Oregon, NA Seattle.

On the latter point, Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes represented the main reason why the Olympic coastal strip won out over the Curry County proposal, which was also undermined by a split among conservation groups and private land owners. The all-important funding to secure private land for a park came through the use of Public Works Administration money controlled by Ickes (as PWA administrator), a move that seemed to have President Roosevelt’s approval, supposedly justified by plans to build a parkway from Ruby Beach to Lake Ozette; David Louter, Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington’s National Parks (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), 92-93. Another complication in Curry County was that the state would not condemn the land over that coastal stretch because the highway department was not building a road there, or at least not at the time. Some of the acreage (1,500, or about five percent of the national park proposal) later became Sam Boardman State Park; Lawrence C. Merriam, Jr., Oregon’s Highway Park System, op. cit., 221.


Leavitt, Statement of Value of National Parks and Monuments as Wilderness Areas, March 22, 1945, 2. An overview on how the NPS expanded during the period is in Harlan D. Unrau and G. Frank Willis, Expansion of the National Park Service in the 1930s (Denver: USDI-NPS, Denver Service Center, 1983).
FIGURE 29. A pool on Lake Creek, located in the proposed extension of Oregon Caves National Monument. NPS Photo by George Grant, 1941.
Chapter Two
Expansion and Protection Efforts after World War II to 1978

The end of the Second World War in August, 1945, did not harken an immediate return to conditions that prevailed before the United States entered the conflict less than four years earlier. Visitation to areas managed by the National Park Service increased markedly over the levels reported when Americans faced travel restrictions and gasoline rationing during the war, but civilian agencies still faced severe budget constraints in the face of deficit reduction ordered by Congress. Consequently, NPS assistant director Hillory Tolson reported to Director Newton B. Drury in 1946 that

"The reason we do not receive separate monthly narrative reports from Oregon Caves is that we do not have any personnel there, except two seasonal rangers who, we hope, will be appointed for this summer. The concessioner operates the monument for us. I hope that, eventually, we can take over the Oregon Caves development and run it as we do Mammoth Cave."  

This situation still prevailed in the spring of 1948, when the NPS refused to allow its concessioner to rent rooms above the second story of its hotel at Oregon Caves without a fire sprinkler system installed. The company contended that such a system had to have an auxiliary water supply, something not in existence at the monument, and normally the responsibility of the NPS to provide. Amid this operational concern came an announcement, included almost as an afterthought, about the proposed addition to Oregon Caves being “brought back to life again.” Superintendent Leavitt added that “the matter is now receiving the attention of the Service,” but he had sporadically advised his regional director in San Francisco (Owen Tomlinson) of any developments taking place in the area proposed for monument expansion since the spring of 1945.

Leavitt had long suspected that a proposed route from Williams pioneered by enrollees from two Civilian Conservation Corps camps might impact the proposed
extension, especially since the Forest Service estimated 350 million board feet of merchantable timber could be removed once a completed road made it more accessible. His initial concern for the timber in the proposed expansion area was triggered by learning of a tract containing 30 million board feet of timber having been sold by the Forest Service somewhere in the vicinity. He did not follow up, evidently satisfied that the area proposed for expansion had escaped unscathed. In August 1947, however, Leavitt quoted from a report by one of the seasonal rangers at Oregon Caves in his memo to Tomlinson about the fate of the Port Orford-cedar stand located along Grayback Creek. Judging by the logs he saw at one local mill, the Forest Service had recently sold at least one million board feet of cedar near the creek and there were plans to cut another million over the coming winter.

None of the timber cut along Grayback Creek during this period came from the proposed extension, but its adjacent location had Leavitt worried. Not only had an estimated three million board feet of Port Orford-cedar in the vicinity disappeared within the past year, the nation’s merchantable supply of this species had dropped from 1.14 billion board feet in 1938 to only 745 million board feet in just nine years. Leavitt meanwhile urged Tomlinson to find some way of acquiring the O&C lands in the proposed extension, even though Chief Forester W.H. Horning of what was now the Bureau of Land Management assured the superintendent that no logging had occurred in those areas. Horning included a map showing where cutting had occurred, as well as pending sales in what BLM officials called the “Sucker Creek Sustained Yield Unit,” which was enough for Leavitt to strongly urge Tomlinson to revive the proposed monument extension and give it new life.

Although Director Drury granted Leavitt’s request in June, the BLM refused to take quick action in regard to the 2,300 acres it claimed within the proposed extension. For one thing, Congress failed to resolve the jurisdictional dispute between BLM and the Forest Service over the O&C Lands supposedly included within the boundaries of national forests in western Oregon. BLM director Marion Clawson acknowledged the overcrowding of existing facilities at Oregon Caves and how the extension offered distinct recreational possibilities, especially since it contained areas of old-growth Port Orford cedar. Nevertheless, he pointed to a need to resolve the jurisdictional dispute first, as well as obtain a favorable response from the O&C counties, before BLM could recommend a land transfer.

The boundary study of 1949 and a memorandum of understanding

In re-opening discussions with the Forest Service about the proposed extension, Tomlinson and two members of his regional office staff found reluctance, but no outright opposition. Drury started by stating the reasons why the NPS wanted to
expand the monument in a letter to Chief Forester Lyle Watts in December 1948, a precursor to the meeting in Portland less than two months later between subordinates so that another field examination could follow. Watts, however, waited to answer Drury until March—at which time he pointed to three “natural areas” the Forest Service established to preserve Port Orford-cedar. With a copy of the letter from Watts in hand, Tomlinson responded to Drury that the NPS did not wish to establish a Port Orford Cedar National Monument, but instead increase the size of Oregon Caves National Monument. As an intensively used area “of 480 acres entirely surrounded by forest subject to logging,” it made more sense than ever to Tomlinson and others in the NPS to obtain protection for the monument’s watershed, secure a tract where an administrative headquarters could be built, and to “broaden the story” by including representative stands of Port Orford-cedar.

FIGURE 30. NPS photo of the Port Orford Cedar Experimental Forest’s headquarters area in 1940. This unit remained the largest “set aside” by the Forest Service for Port Orford-cedar, at 1,133 acres, even after a name change to “research natural area.” By 1948 it had been joined by the Coquille River Falls Research Natural Area about two miles southeast and another area in Curry County.

The proposed field meeting of representatives from the NPS, BLM, and Forest Service finally came on July 11-12, 1949. It resulted in no real commitments or endorsements from either the Forest Service or BLM, but allowed four of the NPS employees in attendance to report on the proposed extension individually. These were subsequently bundled, along with some photographs, into a “Report of Regional Office Committee on Boundary Adjustment of Oregon Caves National Monument” dated August 1. It included some findings and recommendations in a
cover memo, as well as a map that showed the proposed extension to have changed only slightly from the one of 1941. In sending the committee’s report to the Forest Service, Tomlinson noted that the NPS proposed expansion of Oregon Caves National Monument to include a total of 6,035 acres. He called another meeting for October 26 in Portland to try and obtain some sort of tripartite agreement about the extension. The NPS found it hard sledding. Apart from achieving consensus about having an administrative area sited on level ground and that the monument’s water supply should be protected, it adjourned without much more than a pledge from the Forest Service to check its figures on the extension’s timber volume; this was initially estimated to be 100 million board feet, valued at roughly $1 million.

Less than three months later, in January 1950, three NPS officials met informally with three of their counterparts in the BLM at the latter’s Portland office. The BLM had no objection to the proposed boundary, but stressed that resolutions from all 18 O&C counties in western Oregon would likely be needed to help trigger a land transfer. A meeting with two Forest Service officials, also in Portland, came the following day. Forest Service resistance to the extension stiffened over including sections 3, 4, 5, and 6, even when the NPS explained how impractical it could be to administer the remaining half alone, now that BLM had agreed to provide the NPS with a special use permit for a headquarters on Grayback Creek. Forest Service opposition to the northern half of the proposed extension was supposedly centered on losing 1.25 million board feet of the proposed annual cut if the entire Cave Creek watershed were removed from the “Grants Pass Working Circle.” Whether this projection had any real substance to it is debatable, but the northern half of the proposed extension disappeared after Drury and Watts met in Washington on May 16. They ordered another meeting among agency representatives be held during the summer of 1950, with the resulting memorandum of understanding to come from the regional level of both agencies. With the proposed extension now reduced to roughly 2,800 acres, the field meeting took place on July 17 to negotiate the location and width of a “scenic strip” lying along Highway 46 outside the extension, and toward the proposed monument headquarters on Grayback Creek.

Tomlinson reported to Drury on the key points in the field negotiations with the Forest Service, with the most important being a compromise where the NPS gave up on a quarter section lying north of the line drawn to indicate the extension’s northern boundary in exchange for a half section lying west of Cave Creek. He warned that the “cutting circle” might soon start in the Cave Creek and hoped that the Forest Service could move quickly to get the MOU ready for his signature. Another two months elapsed before H. G. Andrews and Tomlinson signed the document, but by this time the BLM called for an agreement to include all three parties since it still claimed authority over the O&C sections.
Drury acknowledged the need for a three way agreement, but also for concurrence from the O&C counties before the NPS could proceed with either a proclamation or legislation. Despite Drury’s belief that Forest Service officials in their Washington office agreed on the need for a tripartite memorandum of understanding, Watts disputed BLM’s claim that odd numbered sections within the extension were in fact revested O&C lands. The Forest Service thus refused to participate in such an agreement, so the NPS settled for an almost identical
two-party MOU signed by Drury and Watts in January 1951. At this point Drury wrote to his new regional director in San Francisco, Lawrence Merriam, that the Washington office hoped to obtain the extension by proclamation, but with a provision that any O&C lands within it could not become an actual part of the monument without legislation to this effect. He asked Merriam for a boundary description, indicated with an attached map in the MOU, in addition to concurrence from the Association of the Oregon and California Land Grant Counties.

If the NPS ever forgot the need for local support on expanding the monument, this lasted only for a few weeks. A letter from Herb Watts, President of the Illinois Valley Stock Association, protested the proposed extension—now reduced to 2,747 acres. Watts contended that the extension amounted to

"...the end to all free range in the mountains as the consensus of opinion among cattlemen is that they [the NPS] will keep extending the area [of Oregon Caves National Monument] to take in all the little lakes and meadows which extend into northern California and make it a sportsmen's paradise and exclude all grazing in the area."

The resulting protest generated letters from a congressman and both senators from Oregon, but the NPS eventually won the public relations battle with help from the Forest Service. Both the district ranger (Harold Bowerman) and forest supervisor (Herschel Obye) refuted Watts at meetings with the cattlemen, so that their opposition disappeared. This response and an article in the Grants Pass Daily Courier allowed the NPS to obtain endorsements of the proposed extension, first from the Josephine County Court (which consisted of a county judge and two elected commissioners), and then from the Association of Oregon and California Land Grant Counties. With most of the groundwork seemingly complete, newly appointed NPS director Conrad L. Wirth could reply to the congressman within whose district the monument was situated and both senators from Oregon. The NPS now sought a proclamation from the President to expand the monument, but one subject to a future settlement of the O&C lands issue.

Master plans and prospects for "Mission 66"

With monument expansion on the horizon, several NPS staff members updated the master plan for Oregon Caves. It initially consisted of several large sheets drawn in plan view to depict existing and proposed development by the NPS through work relief programs like the Civilian Conservation Corps during the 1930s. Less than two decades later, however, the drawings shrank in size and number in favor of
FIGURE 33. US 199, the Redwood Highway, also served as the main street of Cave Junction, shown here about the time of its incorporation in 1948. Art-Ray photo courtesy of Greg Walter.

narratives about park significance, development, operations, interpretation, and resource fields like forestry. The introductory section pitched an expanded monument that included the cave, as well as surrounding forests alleged to be

"...on a grand scale, with flowers of unusual beauty, many plants of lightly restricted distribution, and trees of beauty and rarity, especially the exceptional weeping spruce, *Picea breweriana*; the most graceful Port Orford cedar, *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*, rapidly being depleted in natural stands, everywhere in its small range."²⁷

Antiquity, both from its geological and ecological dimensions, furnished the third and most important part of the significance attached to Oregon Caves and its surroundings. The plan narrative also went on to assert that the cave fell short of the “interest” needed to warrant the status of national monument.²⁸

As a remedy, the proposed extension could provide better administrative control by protecting the monument’s water supply on the one hand, and allow for construction of a new headquarters so that the monument could serve an increasing number of visitors by providing infrastructure for new staff. On the other hand, the extension should be large enough for a “well-developed” trail system and provide for new picnicking facilities and overnight camping. The extension possessed “inspirational, scientific, and interpretational “values” sufficient to elevate an expanded Oregon Caves National Monument to “true” national significance. Only three scientific values were further identified in this introduction to the master plan,
and they consisted of the cave, “distinctive and important ecological aspects” (where
the reader was referred to the section on interpretation), in addition to preserving a
representative stand of Port Orford-cedar—for some of the best groves “of this
valuable but vanishing and relatively rare tree are in the immediate vicinity.”29 The
only problem with including the latter scientific value within what was essentially an
in-house planning document came upon checking the unofficial cruise of timber
within the monument and its proposed extension. Port Orford-cedar made up less
than one percent of estimated volume and less than one percent of the timber’s
aggregated market value, even if it still commanded the best price per board foot.30

Congressional action in 1954 removed one big administrative hurdle to expanding
the monument by arranging a partial land exchange between the Forest Service and
BLM in western Oregon. This allowed the Forest Service to control all the
“controverted” O&C land within the Siskiyou National Forest’s boundaries and
allowed both agencies to “block up” sections in a number of mountainous areas.31
With BLM effectively removed from the picture and no action taken by the
President to enlarge Oregon Caves National Monument by proclamation,
Representative Harris Ellsworth of Oregon introduced a bill for this purpose on July
18, 1955.32 It called for the monument to grow from 480 acres to 2,910 acres, in
accordance with the MOU of 1951, but also directed the NPS through the
Secretary of the Interior to sell or dispose of timber in order to control insect attacks
or diseases.33 The latter section of the bill reflected some concern about an
infestation of bark beetles within the proposed extension, located mostly west of
Cave Creek. In any event, the bill never made it far enough to muster either
hearings or reports on it.

It meanwhile seemed as if NPS officials closest to the monument had given up hope
on the extension once Leavitt retired in March 1952 and was succeeded by two
superintendents whose combined tenure at Crater Lake amounted to just over two
years.34 The chief ranger at Death Valley National Monument, Thomas J. Williams,
became superintendent at Crater Lake National Park in September 1954 and seven
months later responded to a request from the NPS office in Washington for an
appraisal of Crater Lake and its satellite, Oregon Caves National Monument. This
came as part of the foundation work for “Mission 66,” Director Conrad Wirth’s
signature ten-year program of infrastructure improvements that aimed to mark the
fiftieth anniversary of the NPS in 1966 with developments that kept pace with
continued increases in visitation.35

Superintendent Williams admitted to departing from the Mission 66 questionnaire’s
format and responded to the Washington office that Oregon Caves lacked national
significance and should, therefore, be a state or county park. He wanted the NPS to
Chapter Two: Expansion and Protection Efforts after World War II to 1978

FIGURE 34. State money to promote tourism went to the Oregon State Highway Commission, who produced free road maps and placed advertisements in magazines until the 1970s. What might have been achieved by visitors to Oregon in 1939 was considerably more difficult a decade later in the wake of a postwar spike in lumber prices, especially those for species like Douglas-fir and Port Orford-cedar.

dispose of the area, but failing that, it should have at least a uniformed ranger with sufficient time to contact visitors and interpret the monument’s surface features. As
it stood, the lone seasonal park ranger enjoyed almost no time with visitors to the monument, and concession employees did 99 percent of public contact—though Williams saw this changing if Congress took action on Ellsworth’s bill. 36

In the meantime, Williams proposed to abolish the monument and garnered some backing in the NPS directorate. As for submitting a “prospectus” for the programming of Mission 66 development at Oregon Caves, Williams formulated two documents. Recommendations in “Prospectus No. 1” consisted of two pages that Merriam characterized as being of “a holding nature,” in that transfer of the monument to another agency with a recommendation that the extension nevertheless be “consummated.” In the slightly larger “Prospectus No. 2,” Williams assumed that the expanded monument possessed national significance and drew language from the 1952 master plan. His biggest complaint about Oregon Caves, however, involved having to accomplish maintenance activities from Crater Lake since staff and equipment “cannot be hired closer by reason of the surrounding logging activity that engages practically the entire population.” 37 By the time a final prospectus for Mission 66 at Oregon Caves appeared in 1956, the document read much like the master plan of four years earlier. Yet it did not mention the proposed extension, but only “a residence and related utilities” to be constructed on lands administered by the Forest Service in order to house the one permanent NPS employee. 38

Oregon Caves remained at the periphery of Mission 66 throughout the decade that followed, even though one retired NPS historian saw it as bringing

“...all of the individual areas, regardless of origin or type, up to a consistently high standard of preservation, staffing, and carefully controlled physical development, and to consolidate them fully into one National Park System.” 39

Even if the employee residence built on national forest land in the Lake Creek drainage resulted from funds appropriated for Mission 66, the monument remained in a kind of limbo, with the fact that the NPS arrowhead made its debut there more ironic than anything else. 40 Mission 66 mostly provided funding for small (and sometimes destructive) projects at Oregon Caves, like the asphalt paving of the cave tour route, but hardly made the impression that the NPS administered the area to most visitors. Agency appropriations over the decade leading to 1966 failed to provide what the prospectus deemed to be the “most needed facility” at Oregon Caves (that of a visitor center), but neither was Oregon anywhere near the hub of where the NPS expanded during that period. 41
What Williams actually accomplished with his proposal to dispose of Oregon Caves was to bring about the first permanent NPS position at the monument. The superintendent at Crater Lake now supervised a “ranger in charge” at the monument who arrived in the fall of 1956 and had authority over seasonal employees. Since the location of an existing ranger residence above the Chalet did not allow for reasonable access during periods of heavy snowfall, the quarters assigned to the ranger consisted of a trailer located in the main parking lot. This led to another memorandum of understanding between Forest Supervisor Herschel Obye and Superintendent Williams in June 1958, one that authorized construction of a residence and related facilities on national forest land not far from the Oregon Caves Highway near Lake Creek.\textsuperscript{42}

The “proposed ranger station” was to be only part of what the NPS had planned for the Mission 66 program, but like the proposed extension, remained largely hidden from the public. Its origins can be traced to 1942, when Superintendent Leavitt first endorsed a plan for the NPS to establish a monument headquarters away from the cave entrance. As part of revising the monument’s master plan, he asserted a need for the NPS to have a quarters and some utilities at Lake Creek, irrespective of whether a monument expansion included the site or not.\textsuperscript{43} There remained some
FIGURE 37. NPS planners periodically fiddled with various development schemes at the forest boundary along the Caves Highway for more than 25 years, mainly as a means to obtain a "holding area" in the face of the monument's increased popularity among visitors wishing to go on a cave tour. This drawing presents one potential solution in an ever-evolving NPS master plan of 1962.

ambivalence about whether a tract near the Grayback Guard Station further down the highway might be better, but by 1953, the Lake Creek site garnered the endorsement of both Superintendent John B. Wosky at Crater Lake and Regional Director Lawrence C. Merriam. Plans for Lake Creek remained conceptual apart
from a single residence that was placed on hold as late as February 1957, when Williams (with some backing from regional staff members in San Francisco) proposed a “temporary development” at Grayback.\textsuperscript{45} Merriam eventually intervened, albeit diplomatically, and committed some Mission 66 funding to build a residence at Lake Creek in 1959 from standardized plans.\textsuperscript{46}

\textit{Timber management and salvage logging in the proposed extension}

If Oregon Caves occupied a position at the outer margin of NPS planning and appropriations during the Mission 66 years, it sat much closer to the center of Forest Service operations. The period after World War II provided an opportunity for the Forest Service to accelerate road building, timber production, and (to a lesser extent) meet increased demand for recreational facilities in particular national forests throughout the Pacific Northwest. Developments on the Siskiyou National Forest, especially the Illinois Valley Ranger District (which administered much of the area surrounding Oregon Caves) reflected these general trends.\textsuperscript{47} At the end of 1957, Forest Supervisor H.C. Obye announced the agency’s goal of increasing timber production on the Siskiyou to the annual allowable cut of 153 million board feet. The allowable cut supposedly reflected what the forest could produce on a sustainable basis, but log production on the Siskiyou that year only reached 62 percent of the target.\textsuperscript{48} This changed abruptly in 1958, when the forest slightly exceeded its allowable cut figure, and then produced a volume of logs 80 percent in excess of that figure in 1959.\textsuperscript{49}

Many Illinois Valley residents depended on logging for their livelihoods, as Superintendent Williams noted in his second Mission 66 prospectus for Oregon Caves in 1955. As timber production on national forest land in Josephine County jumped from less than 10 percent of the county’s annual total of some 300 million board feet maintained throughout the first half of the 1950s to a new high of 81 mmbf in 1959 as the county total declined to 241 mmbf that year, local interest in the monument’s proposed extension seemed to wane.\textsuperscript{50} When a new congressman from Oregon’s fourth district (which included Oregon Caves), Charles O. Porter, re-introduced the Ellsworth bill in July 1958, the permanent NPS employee at the monument wrote to Superintendent Williams that he had heard logging interests in the vicinity of Cave Junction now opposed the extension.\textsuperscript{51} An editorial in the Cave Junction paper pointed to how the extension might counter flagging visitation at the existing monument, especially since the NPS plans for Mission 66 called for spending nearly $200,000 for increased facilities at Oregon Caves. The editor wondered if sufficient local support could be mustered for the proposed extension, especially since some lumbermen opposed it on the basis of a known beetle infestation along Cave Creek, as well as the resulting reduction in the allowable cut in the event of a land transfer.\textsuperscript{52}
PAUSING AT THE RIVER STYX

Like Ellsworth’s bill of three years earlier, H.R. 13529 was introduced relatively late in the congressional session and went to committee, where it did not emerge for a vote. Porter visited Oregon Caves in late September 1958, accompanied by Obye, who pointed out that some of the heaviest beetle infestation occurred within the proposed extension. Obye had previously announced plans to salvage infested timber throughout the Sucker Creek drainage, with small sales to occur next to existing roads. Porter and Obye contacted a park ranger while at the monument, someone who Porter asked what recreational developments were planned in the proposed extension. After being stationed at Oregon Caves for less than a month, the ranger responded that he knew of none around the immediate vicinity of the cave, but that a campground or picnic area was to be developed around Bigelow Lakes—something that would have required three or four miles of new road construction.

The beetle infestation was of such proportions that Williams and two other NPS officials voiced no objections to Forest Service plans for logging three units in the proposed extension upon touring the area with USFS personnel and local residents at the end of October. Porter then contacted NPS director Conrad Wirth in late
November, stating that the three main purposes for which the interagency MOU had been signed in 1951 could best be served by leaving the proposed extension under Forest Service administration. He also blamed the “great diminution in patronage over the last ten years” at Oregon Caves on the lack of adequate camping facilities. It thus appeared to him that additional camping should be provided nearer to the monument instead of seeking to enlarge it. Porter also did not like the prospect of reducing the forest’s allowable cut by one million board feet per year, but invited Wirth or one of his representatives to discuss the situation once the congressman returned to Washington in December.56

Assistant Secretary of the Interior Roger Ernst replied some six weeks later to say that salvage logging would detract from the proposed extension by resulting in the need for logging roads and clear cuts in some areas. For that reason, Ernst and the NPS leadership thought any legislative effort to enlarge the monument should be tabled until more could be known about the full impact of logging on the extension.57 Porter contacted one of his aides about a week later to find out why the NPS had yet to make contact with his office, as he wanted a meeting with agency representatives and the Forest Service in order to get additional campsites around Oregon Caves and increase visitation.58

The NPS eventually responded with a plan aimed at salvaging the proposed extension by eliminating almost a quarter of it, or all lands west of Cave Creek. In addition, planners put a “picnic – campground site” just north of the existing monument, in a relatively flat area, which at the time was accessible only from the Big Tree Trail.59 Planners still shaded portions of the eastern side of Cave Creek along with the riparian areas in Panther Creek and part of Lake Creek to indicate the locations of Port Orford-cedar areas, something mentioned as a justification for the extension in an article written as part of a series on sightseeing around the state.60 Merriam still wanted Williams’ views on the Lake Creek site in April 1959, given how a dwarf mistletoe infestation on Douglas-fir within the adjacent national forest posed yet another threat to the proposed extension, and served as a pretext for the Forest Service to plan for more salvage logging. This request gave Williams an excuse to “reopen” the question of whether Oregon Caves belonged under NPS administration, as opposed to turning it over to the Forest Service or making the monument into a state park. Williams previously recommended, in the wake of no congressional action on Porter’s bill, that any move to obtain the proposed extension be deferred until salvage logging of the beetle-infested timber had been completed. At that point the NPS could determine if the area might make a suitable addition, even if Williams already labeled that section of the national forest as “weakened” and “not outstanding or even typical” of the stands found throughout the Siskiyou Mountains. The only remedy for an infestation of dwarf mistletoe was
FIGURE 39. "Recommended Boundary Extension, Oregon Caves National Monument," as of 1959, showing the western elimination as well as plans for a "picnic/campground site" on the Big Tree Trail and a viewpoint along the highway. The shaded areas of Panther Creek and Lake Creek contained some Port Orford-cedar.

FIGURE 40. Aerial view of the proposed extension, albeit reduced, looking southeast, 1959.
removal of the host tree, and Williams ventured that reproduction in this kind of "decadent" forest might also be weakened and deformed.\textsuperscript{61}

This may have seemed moot in the wake of Richard McArdle, Chief of the Forest Service, having unilaterally cancelled the interagency MOU signed by his predecessor, in a letter to Wirth of January 26, 1959.\textsuperscript{62} There may have been one or more reasons why McArdle took such a step, but Wirth refused to budge on the proposed extension until he could obtain formal recommendations from Merriam and Otto M. Brown, the new superintendent at Crater Lake.\textsuperscript{63} Although Brown advised the regional director to abandon further consideration of the extension after a meeting with Forest Supervisor J.R. Philbrick and Timber Management Assistant Vince Olsen in July 1960, Merriam wanted additional information about the number and extent of timber sales before making any recommendation to Wirth. Merriam had pointed out that regional office staff members acquainted with the area had reached agreement on how the proposed extension made for a desirable buffer zone if the NPS retained Oregon Caves as a national monument, provided it escaped being heavily damaged by logging.\textsuperscript{64}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image.png}
\caption{Contractor salvaging logs below the main cave entrance with the Chateau at right, January 1962. Removal was aimed at controlling infestations of western pine beetle and dwarf mistletoe. NPS photo.}
\end{figure}
The permanent NPS employee stationed at Oregon Caves, Management Assistant Roger J. Contor, reported on logging within the proposed extension in the fall of 1960. In addition to an area near his residence at Lake Creek, the 1.8 miles of highway corridor between that tract and the monument had been selectively logged. He also indicated that work had begun in the first three units located west of Cave Creek and outside the extension, but areas inside of it were flagged for clear cutting. Contor also raised the possibility that cattle under a Forest Service grazing permit could pollute the monument’s water supply on Lake Creek after observing the herd spent much of its time a mile or so above the intake. Contor submitted a draft “Boundary Status Report” six months later to a new superintendent at Crater Lake, W. Ward Yeager. It showed that the NPS could persist with the proposed extension, even if Yeager reduced its size to 2,260 acres when he sent the report by Contor to the regional director.

Merriam returned Contor’s report to Yeager in December 1961, but only after a meeting with regional officials in San Francisco, where the group rallied around the extension proposal of a decade earlier. Their thought was that natural reproduction in the areas to be clear cut west of Cave Creek could ensure “another fine stand of trees there in future years,” so including the 650 acres Yeager had proposed for deletion might assure long-term protection for the area. In the meantime, however, two new problems appeared on the horizon. One had to do with mining claims held by two Grants Pass residents on Lake and Panther creeks, who stated they wanted to set up a crusher for lime in commercial fertilizer. The other centered on Forest Service plans to build a road into the upper Lake Creek basin for recreational use and logging, news that emerged from a meeting between Contor and the district ranger.

When Contor resubmitted the Boundary Status Report through Yeager in March 1962, the superintendent added that he thought the clear cut section west of Cave Creek endangered what little chance the NPS had of obtaining the entire area proposed for extension, since the Forest Service included those 650 acres in its “continuous yield program.” NPS officials in Washington nevertheless approved Contor’s report that summer and asked through Merriam how the Forest Service might be approached to implement the proposed extension. Yeager replied that negotiations should proceed at the Washington level, due to the precedent set by the MOU in 1951 and what he expected to be resistance at the field level. Just two months later, however, the new management assistant alerted Yeager that the Forest Service planned a timber sale around the Bigelow Lakes. Vernon Hennesey told the superintendent that the plan called for selling 6 million board feet of timber in five units covering 170 acres, something he perceived as endangering the monument’s water supply and creating a protection problem due to a new road accessing this part of the proposed extension.
Figure 42. One of the Bigelow Lakes, August 1963. NPS photo.

The acting regional director expressed no great alarm in advising Wirth of the impending Lakes Basin sale and recommending that it be delayed, but Yeager wrote to Merriam on October 15 and enclosed a letter from Philbrick stating that the Forest Service did not recognize any obligation to honor the MOU of 1951. Philbrick instead described a project aimed at meeting a portion of the forest's allowable cut whereby the road to be built could also provide access to "planned recreational development of the Bigelow Lakes area." The Forest Service moved ahead with the sale, one advertised to include 6.4 million board feet of Douglas-fir, 3.9 million board feet of white fir "and other species," along with 500,000 board feet of Port Orford-cedar. Three of the five units sold to Cabax Lumber Company of Kerby on December 28, 1962, fell inside of the proposed extension, whereas the remaining two had once been within the larger extension proposed by the NPS as late as 1949.

With logging set for the summer of 1963, time appeared to be running out on the vision that some NPS officials had for an expanded monument. One representative
from a consortium of conservation groups, J. Michael McCloskey, wrote to Congressman Robert B. Duncan of Oregon that the Ellsworth and Porter bills could be re-introduced with improved prospects for passage, now that the threats from logging had become “clearly and dramatically evident.” He warned that any hope of bringing about a nature trail from the proposed campground north of the existing monument through Port Orford-cedar stands on Lake Creek, as well as offering the Bigelow Lakes as a roadless area for backpacking might disappear without some type of immediate action.

Merriam viewed the letter to Duncan as badly timed, being coincident with Oregon Dunes National Seashore legislation having entered a “hopeful but critical stage.” Given how the letter might force the NPS to revise its plans to expand the monument, especially in view of even more logging within the proposed extension, Merriam asked Yeager whether the agency should continue to favor expansion. Yeager replied affirmatively, a position that the regional office communicated to Wirth in June 1963, but he also conveyed word from Duncan that the congressman preferred to do nothing about monument expansion at the present time. By the time Merriam retired in July, the proposed extension remained alive only in name, but Duncan expressed an interest in future Forest Service development of more recreational facilities near the existing monument.

Although the Siskiyou National Forest reached its high water mark in timber production during 1963 by supplying almost half (102.8 million board feet) of the total cut in Josephine County that year, it still funded recreation—albeit at a considerably lower level than its main commodity program. Taking the country as a whole, recreation visits to the national forests more than tripled between 1950 and 1960, during which the Forest Service commanded a greater overall share than did the NPS. A funding initiative, “Operation Outdoors,” had been launched in June 1957 by the Forest Service, which modeled it after Wirth’s “Mission 66.” Both Democrats and Republicans in Washington responded to the prospect of an outdoor recreation “crisis,” one that meant substantial increases for federal land management agency budgets during the Kennedy Administration. Money for recreation even outpaced timber receipts in 1963 (for the only time that decade), though it still amounted to less than half of the amount allotted for roads in the national forests. To put this spending in a somewhat local perspective for that time, the Forest Service still maintained more miles of trails (390) than roads (240), on the Siskiyou National Forest, given that rugged terrain dictated higher road building costs relative to prices paid for merchantable timber.
At the district level, the Forest Service could point to how Grayback Campground had been rehabilitated with funding from Operation Outdoors in 1958, with expansion of facilities there scheduled for the following year. A proposed reclamation project on Sucker Creek, however, meant flooding the campground area, as well as the tract that contained the guard station and site of the CCC camp. The reservoir remained controversial through the first half of the 1960s, but never really got off the ground. Plenty of questions about how to adequately replace the
campground, as well as where to relocate Highway 46 remained, in addition to whether the advertised benefits of irrigation and flood control really outweighed the project costs.\textsuperscript{81}

In any event, one of the ways that the Forest Service could at least create the perception of planning for additional recreation facilities in the face of steadily
increasing visitation at Oregon Caves was to take the initial step of making mineral withdrawals through BLM. This move, made in August 1963 without informing the NPS, had the stated intention of protecting and developing campgrounds, recreation areas, and administrative sites from entry under the mining laws. It covered 13 localities and 608 acres on the Siskiyou National Forest, of which three (Cave Creek Campground, an Oregon Caves National Monument Buffer Strip, and Bigelow Lakes Campground) fell inside the proposed extension. Those three withdrawals covered 411 acres and became final in December, so the Forest Service could appear responsive to Duncan’s wishes for more recreational development around the existing monument. The move did not necessarily preclude future timber sales and, best of all from the Forest Service vantage point, appeared to finally kill any NPS willingness to persist with the proposed extension.

Although Chief McArdle told Congressman Porter in 1959 that the Forest Service intended to develop 11 potential campgrounds and/or picnic areas on the national forest around Oregon Caves at the earliest opportunity, he gave priority to four sites already accessible by road. Of those, only one of the four materialized, the 18 site Cave Creek Campground built by contractors in 1964. Duncan wrote to Yeager in late November 1963 after speaking with the new Chief of the Forest Service, Edward P. Cliff, about developing the recreation site originally identified by the NPS and located north of the monument. Yeager responded by stating that this constituted a Forest Service responsibility, as were any nature trails to be built outside the existing monument—ones that the NPS initially pitched as connecting campers with the remnant groves of Port Orford-cedar. Cliff had already “deferred until later” any decision on a nature trail, and Philbrick subsequently informed the
superintendent that the Forest Service received no funding to build a road to the future "Monument Campground."\footnote{85}

Yeager also fielded a query from the NPS regional office about whether an interagency agreement covered removing timber and access in the buffer strip that the Forest Service had withdrawn below the monument. He responded in early March of 1964, reiterating that the Forest Service did not consult him prior to making the withdrawal, but that they intended to administer the strip much like "high country wilderness." It seemed to be an odd statement, especially since Yeager described the withdrawal as carrying "no special provisions for protection," something that became evident when the Forest Service began to plan a timber sale in the northeastern part of the buffer strip.\footnote{86}

A stem route created to access the five units of the Lakes Basin Timber Sale, "the Bigelow Lakes Road," eventually allowed for a connection to be made from Pepper Camp—once a stop on the old trail to Williams, but now surrounded by clear cuts. This spur could then access future sale units next to the existing monument and perhaps the proposed "monument campground," on its way to an intersection at the main parking lot of Oregon Caves.\footnote{87} For the present, however, the new NPS management assistant, Robert H. Viklund, could only report on how the clear cuts slowly encircled the monument. In August 1964, he commented on the McCloskey memorandum of 16 months earlier, which came in the form of an update. No longer could the Bigelow Lakes basin serve as a backcountry attraction for hikers and wilderness enthusiasts, as the road below the lakes was passable for trucks and jeeps to a point less than half a mile from the monument. Logging had been completed on all but one unit of the Lakes Basin sale, with the remaining one (45 acres located northwest of the two Bigelow Lakes) slated for cutting in 1965. Loggers completed their work in the two units next to the monument's water intake with no apparent "disruptions," though Viklund feared what might ococur if plans to build a campground in the lake basin went forward.\footnote{88}

Viklund also mentioned logging on the monument's southwest corner, something he related to future Forest Service plans involving additional units to be cut along a road punched along a crest to terminate within one mile of Mount Elijah.\footnote{89} When the NPS landscape architect serving a group of parks that included Oregon Caves filled out an inventory form of existing outdoor recreation areas and facilities as part of a coordinated national effort, his comment on special problems encountered in administering the monument read:

"Logging operations on adjacent U.S. Forest Service lands is responsible for unsightly appearance within day-use area of Monument."\footnote{90}
It represented barely more than muted criticism, but also portended effects of a century flood on the monument in 1964. What happened when a plug of mud and debris came crashing through the Chalet’s breezeway to knock the Chateau off its foundation could not be tied to logging (at least directly), but it did bring change. Cleanup involved some repairs and replacement of materials in the hotel by the time it reopened again in May 1965, but never again could the NPS or its concessioner pretend that the operation at Oregon Caves could remain unaffected while the world changed around it.

Wirth retired before Mission 66 ran its course because he and the NPS had fallen out of step with Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, who saw his “New Conservation” as playing an important part in the Great Society of both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Mission 66 in some parks, coupled with Wirth’s opposition to legislation that eventually became the Wilderness Act in 1964, alienated increasingly powerful environmental groups—some of whom acquired national constituencies by the end of the decade. At the same time, the NPS could count on less support from the nation’s business and professional leaders than it once had (partly because Udall weakened the traditionally strong ties between the agency and the department’s advisory board on national parks), due to the parks having more competition from other nonprofits for philanthropic funds. Congress also took a more direct interest in the national parks during the 1960s, something that undercut the NPS ability to serve as gatekeeper.
for the system it administered. Finally, Udall and his assistants exerted greater direct control on upper echelons of the NPS by sometimes taking matters and responsibilities completely away from the agency.  

As director, George B. Hartzog embodied the notion that change equated with progress. Organizational structures in the NPS, particularly at the Washington level, seemed to be in constant flux. The changes eventually cascaded down to the field; sometimes in response to legislation creating new park units or departmental directives, but more often, they resulted from studies authorized by the director, or simply what amounted to one of his whims. A declining budget in real terms underlay a large portion of Hartzog's moves, since he failed to replace a substantial funding stream for capital projects from Mission 66 with something he called "Parkscape, U.S.A." The government's commitment to fighting the Vietnam War without raising taxes cast a long shadow on the director's eight year tenure, but the NPS still reflected many of the changes Hartzog instituted even decades after his dismissal in 1972.  

One of the smaller and more ephemeral moves came upon the death of Crater Lake superintendent Richard Nelson in April 1965. For the most part since Leavitt's
retirement in 1952, the job had been filled by long-time chief rangers who wished to serve as a superintendent before their retirement. Starting with J. Leonard Volz, who arrived at Crater Lake in late June of 1965, the position did double-duty as “keyman” for NPS planning and preliminary work conducted prior to the establishment of Redwood National Park on October 2, 1968. Volz left for Washington on a special assignment (to implement what Hartzog called the “Field Operations Study Team”) in April 1967. The director then appointed Donald M. Spalding as superintendent at Crater Lake, mainly for his expertise in planning new areas like Redwood.94

With Redwood established by the fall of 1968, Spalding suggested to Hartzog that a “cluster” or “group” office be organized to manage Crater Lake, Lava Beds, and Oregon Caves from a headquarters in Klamath Falls. As Spalding put it, the idea came from a Field Operations Study Team (FOST) recommendation about more widespread adoption of a model based on sharing resources, one that had long been in use in a number of smaller park units in the southwestern United States.95 Hartzog created the Klamath Falls group office on July 1, 1969, with Spalding as “general superintendent,” who supervised an acting superintendent at Crater Lake, a “full” superintendent at Lava Beds National Monument, and the management assistant stationed at Oregon Caves. John Rutter, Spalding’s direct supervisor, meanwhile had moved from heading the Western Region in San Francisco to a “district” office in Seattle, something that quickly evolved to a new regional office as of December 31, 1969.96

The immediate upshot of all this realignment and activity was that permanent staff in all three parks had been reduced beginning in 1966, and they could count on virtually no funds for projects or construction. Managers at Crater Lake, for example, declined to submit any funding proposals in the summer of 1969, while the one for Oregon Caves consisted of a sketch meant to convey a need for the monument’s boundary to be formally surveyed.97 The Forest Service, by contrast, enjoyed what seems to be a far more generous operating budget with national figures indicating continued increases for road building, timber sales, and recreation over funding granted by Congress earlier in the decade. Timber management staff made sure that the Siskiyou kept its place among the top dozen or so saw log-producing national forests, while the recreation staff officer in Grants Pass called for more urgently needed “bedroom space” to accommodate visitors attracted by the Oregon Caves. He stated that Forest Service plans could not be finalized until the NPS decided on whether to promote new “motel-like accommodations” on the approach road, with shuttle-bus transportation to the monument. In the meantime, however, one of the local papers reported that government contracts had been let for campgrounds at Bigelow Lakes and in the Grayback Mountain area, with a new trail providing access from the lakes to surrounding “peaks.”98
What brought Forest Service officials and Spalding to the negotiating table initially was a NPS proposal for a “holding area” at the old CCC camp adjacent to the Grayback Guard Station. The idea arose from Hartzog’s visit in September 1966, which came in response to the congestion in the monument’s main parking lot arising from extended waiting times for cave tours during long summer days. Visitors on cave tours exceeded 107,000 and overall attendance at the monument set a new record of 160,000 in 1970, with no sign of stopping there. Meanwhile, the Forest Service wanted to do a “land study” of the Grayback tract before talks about issuing a special use permit began. Later that autumn, word from the monument came to to Spalding about the Forest Service also needing a timetable for the development and some specific plans before they agreed to grant approval for the holding area.

Atwood also mentioned to Spalding that a miner named Wayne “Jiggs” Morris planned to give up claims filed on Lake Creek and along the monument’s northern boundary for a new operation near Williams. Morris and his wife crushed lime for fertilizer at a site near the NPS residence at Lake Creek in 1963, but it did not prove profitable and they stopped production. None of the claims filed between 1954 and 1962 went to patent, but in August 1970, a subsidiary of the parent firm “California Time Petroleum” bought them and filed seven additional claims on adjacent national forest land. NPS officials believed that the latter group included the monument’s water intake, so the Forest Service moved to request a mineral withdrawal in December on all land on or near the administrative site not already claimed, in order to protect it from future mineral location or entry.

This came after the U.S. Geological Survey tested and evaluated alternatives concerning the safety of the monument’s water supply. Two investigators from the Water Resources Branch of the USGS in Portland ruled out any use of Lake Creek without treatment due to excessive concentration of coliform bacteria, presumably due to cattle grazing. They also noted that the spring serving the NPS residence on national forest land was inadequate and could fail entirely. The existing water intake for this residence sat squarely within the area affected by the new claims. Forest Supervisor W.P. Ronayne tried to assure Spalding that Forest Service mining engineers questioned whether the company’s proposal to extract and process limestone at the site had merit, but the subsidiary called “Oregon Calcite” poured a slab for a furnace and built a holding bin for crushed limestone to feed it in the summer of 1971.

Extraction involved blasting and the furnace Morris designed was purely experimental, so questions remained about whether tailings and debris from the mining operation might pollute Lake Creek. This came at a time of heightened
environmental awareness in Oregon, when Governor Tom McCall won reelection in November 1970 with a campaign that focused on the state’s “livability” and the things he could do to enhance it. The Oregon Environmental Council, a nonprofit group, made the mining issue on Lake Creek a public one during the first half of 1971. Spalding preferred to stay out of the lime light, but still needed information, which seemed slow in coming from the company. He elevated his query to L.B. Day, the Department of the Interior’s regional environmental coordinator in Portland, at the end of July. Day expressed his concern about the impact of mining on Lake Creek, as did officials from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.106
McCall ordered DEQ to delay issuing state permits to Oregon Calcite in August 1971, also calling on the federal Environmental Protection Agency to intervene in the controversy. While the state commission for environmental quality imposed a 60 day waiting period on the start of any mining operation, the news media revealed that the company’s plans called for an open pit measuring approximately 550 feet by 100 feet. This convinced Day to join McCall in publicly opposing the project, but William Ruckelshaus, head of the federal EPA, explained that the Mining Law of 1872 allowed the operation to go ahead. A vice president with the mining company nevertheless cited “delaying tactics” stemming from McCall’s “emotional outburst” for why Oregon Calcite planned to go no further. The real impetus behind the company’s decision to suspend its operation came from Day, who acted on a tip and had BLM track down the 1907 withdrawal of four sections surrounding Oregon Caves. It had never been rescinded, so BLM voided all of the claims. The company appealed the BLM decision, but the Interior Board of Land Appeals dismissed the case.

Just to make certain that a mining operation could not threaten the administrative site or the spring serving as its water supply, the NPS sought another 40 acre withdrawal immediately following the BLM order. The NPS secured a Public Land Order to that effect in July 1972, but BLM still viewed land adjoining the monument as still subject to logging and other activities. Passage of the National Environmental Policy Act in 1969 brought about the formal NPS review of timber sales proposed by the Forest Service where they might have an effect on land and resources at Oregon Caves and other areas of the National Park System. Two such units planned for cutting since 1969 lay along the monument’s northern boundary, where dwarf mistletoe infested Douglas-fir—as it had along Cave Creek and within the monument above the Chalet. Spalding’s successor as group superintendent, Ernest J. Borgman, and the new superintendent for the monument, Richard Sims, thus made a field inspection of the two sales in November 1973. Both timber sales were slated for helicopter logging, since the units were near streams and on limestone as bedrock, and Borgman observed that the Forest Service marked only dead or mistletoe infested trees for cutting. He and Sims had been impressed with the environmental analysis document prepared by the Forest Service, but asked that some additional measures to be taken as part of mitigating the visual effects of logging near the Big Tree Trail.

After Sims transferred to Crater Lake in the fall of 1973, his replacement John Miele objected to Borgman about what had become a combined sale—due to one of the units being so close to the monument. The Forest Service awarded what it called the “Upper Caves” sale consisting of some 12 million board feet of Douglas-fir, white fir, and Port Orford-cedar in July 1974. Miele worried that the logging
operation, which the Forest Service promoted as a model one since helicopters could reduce the impact on soils, might contaminate the water that he and his family used in the NPS residence near Lake Creek. Miele’s assistant, Park Ranger Ted Davis, asked the biologist working from the Klamath Falls Group Office in early 1975 for studies on how dwarf mistletoe led to replacement of Douglas-fir with white fir, as well as how the cumulative effects of logging around Oregon Caves might affect future water supply, erosion, fire danger, animal habitat, and visitor use.\textsuperscript{114}

The apprehension of both Miele and Davis likely stemmed from a considerable surge in sale volume (the quantity of timber that is merchantable) between the time that Borgman and Sims made their field inspection of 1973 and when the sale went to bid in June 1974. In any event, Miele characterized the sale area boundaries as not containing many trees to be left standing after the planned logging operations ceased, commenting to Borgman that a buffer around the monument was needed to protect its water supply and what remained of the hiking trails. He asked Borgman to approach the Department of the Interior’s regional solicitor in Portland for an opinion on the status of lands withdrawn in 1907, but not included in Oregon Caves National Monument as proclaimed in 1909. The solicitor saw the NPS as having authority to require the Forest Service to modify management plans on these lands, where undertakings could interfere with the preservation and protection of the monument. Logging might be permitted on the withdrawn lands (sections 9, 10, 15, and 16) if the NPS superintendent believed that it would not injure monument lands or the purpose for which it was established.\textsuperscript{115}

Miele and Borgman decided not to test the solicitor’s opinion on this sale, and chose instead to enlist faculty from Oregon State University in a study of how the proposed logging might affect the monument’s water supply on Lake Creek, as well as the stream drainage that provided water for the NPS residence.\textsuperscript{116} The study findings recommended some additional contract stipulations, since the logging was expected to bring about some adverse impacts on drinking water quality.\textsuperscript{117} Miele wrote to Borgman, expressing his view that the sale should be cancelled based on the 1907 withdrawal, as most of the area to be logged lay within sections 9 and 10. Short of that, he wanted a 500 foot buffer strip (instead of the 100 feet provided by the Forest Service’s sale contract) on both sides of Lake Creek as part of safeguarding the monument’s water supply. Moreover, any logging operation just 100 feet from the Big Tree Trail posed visitor safety problems and could disrupt the activity of two northern spotted owls in the vicinity. He also wanted Panther Creek better protected, partly for its recreational value and partly because the water line from Lake Creek ran through this area.\textsuperscript{118}
Borgman responded by arranging a meeting between NPS representatives and Forest Service personnel at the regional forester’s office in Portland on June 30, 1976. Attended by Miele, Borgman, and Regional Director Russell Dickenson on the NPS side, the Forest Service had a full complement of staff, starting with Regional Forester Ted Schlapfer, Forest Supervisor Bill Ronayne, and District Ranger John Hughes. The two agencies politely pledged to work toward the protection of domestic water sources, but ran short on specifics. Shortly thereafter, an attorney representing the monument’s concessionaire wrote to the logging contractor that two logs had been felled across the main water line, so that their removal might cause the line to break and deprive monument staff and visitors of their water supply. The attorney warned the logging company (Cabax Mills of Grants Pass) that removal of those logs prior to September 13 would result in legal action.

The fact that northern spotted owls, designated by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife as a threatened species in 1974, were found after the Forest Service
FIGURE 50. A northern spotted owl found near the monument, 1982. NPS photo.
sold the timber indicated there were some problems with following procedures stipulated by recently enacted environmental legislation. At one point during August 1976, Forest Supervisor Ronayne wrote to District Ranger Hughes about exchanging a five acre “triangle” within the sale area near the center of the spotted owl nesting site for trees outside of it. Ronayne stipulated that the purchaser had to agree with this proposal to exchange the timber, something Cabax was willing to do, provided there was no reduction in overall volume. The main source of disagreement, however, centered on having wider buffer strips along Lake Creek that were needed to safeguard the monument’s water supply. A memorandum from the sanitarian stationed in the Klamath Falls Group Office furnished a basis for the NPS position, but the Forest Service balked at imposing even a 100 foot stream buffer, so that initial fallback for the agency involved drilling an exploratory well near Lake Creek for the purpose of replacing the current surface drinking water supply used at the monument.

Another long-standing threat to the monument’s water supply resurfaced in the summer of 1977, at a time when the number of annual visitors reached the second highest total ever at 181,000. Cattle from a grazing allotment had moved into the Bigelow Lakes that August, just two years after sewage had contaminated the water supply at Crater Lake, leading to the park’s closure for three weeks in August 1975 and a barrage of negative publicity. While the editor of Cave Junction’s weekly newspaper made light of the situation (cows deposited their feces along the banks of Lake Creek downstream from the Bigelow Lakes), Forest Service personnel made no commitment to building a fence aimed at keeping livestock out of the watershed. Meanwhile, District Ranger James A. Schelhaas tried to foster some goodwill with the NPS by making modifications to the Upper Caves sale as the intermittent logging entered its third year. He nevertheless notified Miele that loggers planned to remove trees in the unit containing the water line and intake in the spring of 1978.

In the near term, one of the associate regional directors at the NPS office in Seattle, James Thompson, attempted to sum up the agency’s predicament after a meeting in the Supervisor’s Office of the Siskiyou National Forest. Thompson provided some context for Regional Director Russell Dickenson by writing that the forest’s “allowable cut” did not mean the maximum to ensure “sustained yield,” but a numerical goal that had to be met. NPS officials at the meeting did not dispute the timber “targets” of the time, but took the tact of expressing their interest in assisting the Forest Service with future planning in the Lake Creek drainage, since they had an indication that yet another timber sale was planned for this watershed within the next five years. They noted a certain defensiveness on the part of Forest Supervisor Bill Covey, who referred to a “lack of confidence” in the Forest Service
when NPS officials brought up the subject of contract compliance with measures aimed at protecting the watershed. At any rate, Thompson agreed with Borgman and Miele not to force the issue of on-site supervision of the contractor any further and instead settled for more frequently monitoring the stream as well as trying to maintain relationships between Miele and Forest Service staff on the ranger district.\textsuperscript{125}

The NPS did not completely capitulate, as Borgman and Miele arranged for an engineering geologist from Redwood National Park to provide them with a detailed assessment of what measures could be taken to ensure better water quality in Lake Creek. Bill Weaver reviewed more than a hundred logging plans in northern California during the previous ten years, so he came well prepared to recommend ways to keep trees out of the stream and burned slash from producing increased sediment loads.\textsuperscript{126} Weaver urged the Forest Service to adopt a basin-wide plan that placed severe limits on any new road activities, tractor and cable yarding of logs, in addition to the broadcast burning of slash. He questioned the need for logging next to the monument (units 2 and 3 were situated adjacent to the northern boundary and northeast corner, respectively), suggesting that a 500 foot buffer of forest be left uncut around an 80 acre patch of old-growth to reduce wind throw and other edge effects.\textsuperscript{127}

Even with relatively recent passage of the National Forest Management Act in 1976 (legislation that required the Forest Service to formulate plans for the management of national forest lands), a need to meet congressionally-imposed targets for timber production on the Siskiyou seemed to preclude the measures Weaver recommended near the Oregon Caves. The Forest Service instead turned logging operations into an opportunity for visitors to see helicopter yarding in progress through the use of guided tours. Miele invited NPS and concession staff on one such tour in late August 1978, when a sanitation consultant from Seattle reported on the monument’s water supply in the wake of loggers resuming work on the Upper Caves Timber Sale.\textsuperscript{128} The consultant could find no adverse effects on water quality, but warned of possible increased turbidity in Lake Creek once the fall rains began. He also wrote that enrollees in the Young Adult Conservation Corps (YACC), a federally-funded work job training program, were building a fence to keep cattle away from the creek and Bigelow Lakes. It came from YACC funds, so the Forest Service had no objections to the project, especially since a fence could help minimize any negative publicity over the timber sale.\textsuperscript{129}
The monument expansion of 1978

Despite all of the NPS concern expressed over the preceding two decades about the safety of its water supply or the potential of areas identified since 1934 as possibly suited to be added to Oregon Caves National Monument, expansion finally came only in the form of eight acres in Cave Junction. This "staging area" for visitors, aimed at providing parking and interpretation, originated with Director George Hartzog's visit in 1966, when he ruled out any further expansion of the monument's main lot. Like the NPS residence eventually built near Lake Creek, where to put a staging area and how to do it produced more than one alternative. Authorizing legislation in the form of an omnibus bill then provided an avenue for purchasing land, but lacked any appropriations for developing it. The monument expanded slightly, but without any immediate effect on relieving the congestion plaguing Oregon Caves during the summer months.

Immediately prior to Hartzog's 1966 visit, Superintendent J. Leonard Volz wrote to Regional Director Edward A. Hummel about the consequences of expanding the monument's main parking lot by another 65 spaces. He saw such a proposal as ineffective, given the existing demands of summer visitors, many of whom received only a "hurried hike" through the cave from guides hired by the concessioner. Volz mentioned the idea of providing shuttle bus service from Cave Junction by the concession as potentially viable once visitor cars filled up the lot, or at least controlling access to the lot through radio communication with Cave Junction. Other ideas aimed to reduce congestion in the main parking lot and included stationing guides at fixed points along the tour route so that visitor circulation might be continuous in the cave, while another proposed a new exit from Paradise Lost, and still another scheme located a visitor center between the parking lot and cave entrance and included the NPS operating a "bedroom" campground such as the one proposed by the Forest Service (one dubbed "Monument," and proposed for the north boundary near the Big Tree Trail) in its land withdrawals of 1963.130

Donald Spalding, Volz's successor at Crater Lake, responded to a master plan draft less than two years later by endorsing a scheme to transport visitors to Oregon Caves in shuttle buses from Cave Junction in June, July, and August. By June of 1971, however, the resident area manager (formerly management assistant), Thomas E. Atwood, proposed a 15 acre site north of the Grayback Guard Station as a "vehicle holding area," one developed to include a parking lot, information station, picnic tables, and "other improvements."131 The Forest Service, however, could not take a position on the proposal prior to public hearings on an overarching master plan for Oregon Caves National Monument set for December 1971. Spalding unveiled the plan in Cave Junction, one that projected 317,000 visitors at the
FIGURE 51. For more than four decades after 1937, the monument's concessionaire maintained a presence along SR 46 in Cave Junction. NPS photo.

monument for the season of 1977, given how attendance had increased from 161,000 in 1970 to 178,000 for the first eleven months of the following year.

This put the infrastructure at odds with determinations of carrying capacity for the cave, something for which Spalding had no good answers. Part of the problem, as concession manager Harry Christiansen observed, was that visitors appeared to resist stopping in Cave Junction for tourist information. The Oregon Caves Company had operated a summer information booth near the junction of US 199 and SR 46 since 1937, but Christiansen reported that only “one out of a hundred [cars] stop for the information.”

Researchers at Oregon State University found that indeed 17 percent of visitors they sampled at the monument over an August weekend in 1973 had stopped at the concessionaire’s information booth in Cave Junction. They also found that 12.6 percent of all visitors who wanted to go on a cave tour turned around without having done so because of the waiting time; this occurred in Cave Junction, or at the monument’s main parking lot, or in front of the ticket window. A majority of visitors (62.8 percent) voiced a preference for using a visitor center if it eliminated the wait for parking, so from their vantage point, any such facility would best be located in Cave Junction. This eliminated the need for a “holding area” if a complete visitor center, located on the valley floor, could present people with the
benefits of a cave tour as well as the trade-offs. They recommended the NPS provide a "full information system," staffed by agency personnel who could provide travel and waiting times, as well as the rules associated with being on a cave tour.

The proposal for a visitor contact station in Cave Junction quickly found its way into an Oregon Caves master plan draft in November 1974. One newspaper account in June 1975 explained it could be sited on about two acres located as close to the highway junction in town as possible. This might have the effect of lessening the congestion resulting from "traffic at the parking lot of the Caves" and provide trailer parking. It soon became the "key feature" in a NPS master plan approved that year, but an interpretive planning team gave parameters for the facility, one originally intended as a mandatory stop for visitors. No funding yet existed to build the facility, much less acquire the land needed for it, but a local banker and an investor took the first step in that direction by securing eight acres near the junction of US 199 and SR 46 in 1976. When they expressed a willingness to make it available to the NPS and wanted to work with the Oregon congressional delegation to make this happen, Borgman and Miele went toward the goal of park expansion rather than negotiate a long-term lease through the General Services Administration. By February 1977, the NPS decided on the former course, since Congressman Jim Weaver and Senator Mark Hatfield expressed interest for first acquiring the property, and then going after a separate appropriation to build the visitor center.

While Borgman estimated that a visitor center might cost between $300,000 and $400,000 to build, with construction in a best case scenario finished by the summer of 1978, Miele concluded that the project enjoyed widespread local support. Miele told the city council of Cave Junction, which unanimously endorsed it, that a nearly eight-acre facility could provide restrooms, parking for 100 cars, and still have 1500 square feet of building devoted to visitor reception. Efforts to acquire the land got quickly underway, and by early March, the NPS secured offers on two parcels totaling almost eight acres. Regional Director Russell Dickenson approached the National Park Foundation to hold an option to buy one of them (7.55 acres) while the agency waited for legislation authorizing monument expansion to 488 acres. When the editor of the Illinois Valley News in Cave Junction, Bob Grant, objected to the project, on grounds that the federal government owned most of Josephine County already, Dickenson provided a memorandum to Miele explaining that Congress had just passed an act allowing for payment to local governments in lieu of taxes for certain lands in the National Park System.
Grant's objection had an unsettling effect on some local residents, who complained about other types of potential effects other than the possibility of losing tax revenue. This prospect presupposed viable businesses locating on the land, which at that time sat vacant, apart from a disused church. At any rate, fears about vandalism if the project was scuttled helped Miele’s reception when he appeared once more in front of the chamber of commerce in mid-March. Miele seemed to weather the storm, one where none of the opponents had coalesced around a single objection to the project, but by May, a Cave Junction “Citizens Advisory Committee” polled some 200 residents in an “attitude survey.” Most of the 117 property owners who responded at that point indicated a preference for a shopping center on the site where the NPS planned its Oregon Caves Information Center. By midsummer,

Miele thought he found a way to diffuse the opposition, by offering to reduce the acreage needed for the information center. This eliminated a proposed nature trail and the turning area for trailers, resulting in a four acre parcel projected for the information center and associated parking.

Just before Labor Day, during a year when visitation to the monument reached its second highest annual total (at 181,000), Miele continued to stump for the project’s two remaining elements. He spoke to a reporter from the Grants Pass newspaper, and projected the number of parking spaces to go as high as 133, but
that some 3-4 acres could be leased free for "any valid recreation program" facilitated through the local authorities.\textsuperscript{147} This conciliatory approach to the opposition developed into a way to provide the Cave Junction Chamber of Commerce a home, once The Trust for Public Land purchased a smaller parcel consisting of .43 acre in expectation of authorizing legislation during January 1978. The chamber paid nominal rent as part of a lease agreement to occupy the former church on the smaller parcel, which represented a considerable improvement over using a travel trailer located nearby to dispense tourist information over the previous summer.\textsuperscript{148}

Having the chamber on site represented an interim step, one designed to neutralize local opposition while providing visitors with information that might lessen the rigors of long waits during busy summer days at the monument. In the meantime, Congress could act to authorize land acquisition by the NPS through omnibus legislation, with the aim of reimbursing the Trust for Public Land as an intermediary. Like other information centers run by local chambers around Oregon, the Cave Junction office pointed the way to other tourist attractions in the area and included some exhibits about the Illinois Valley.\textsuperscript{149} Word came in October that $107,000 for the land acquisition had been included in an omnibus package called "The National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978," and all Grant could do was complain that "so much land so close in" had been wasted on the project.\textsuperscript{150} Miele explained that the legislation merely authorized the funding, which now could come from a source like the Land and Water Conservation Fund instead of a direct appropriation. For now, the eight acres authorized for acquisition consisted of two parcels, one held by the Trust for Public Land (.43 acre) and another of 7.55 acres by the National Park Foundation. The superintendent estimated that a transaction involving the government's purchase of the smaller parcel and 3.60 acres of the NPF holding could be completed in four to six months, leaving 3.95 acres as an inholding within the monument's authorized boundary. Miele believed that construction of the information center might be scheduled as early as 1982, presumably as part of a line item project requested by the NPS.\textsuperscript{151}
FIGURE 53. For much of the 1940s commercial bus service reached Oregon Caves, at least during the summer season. Oregon State Highway Department photo.
Notes to Chapter 2

1 Tolson to Mr. Hagen and Mr. Drury, January 21, 1946, RG 79, Stack 150 (34:11:5), Box 2315, File 207-02, NARA II, College Park.

2 E.P. Leavitt, Coordinating Superintendent, Memorandum for the Director, June 14, 1948, 1-2. This additional capacity was added in 1950 to the reservoir originally built by the Civilian Conservation Corps, but not faced with stone as the former had been.

3 Ibid.

4 Leavitt, Memorandum for the Regional Director, Region Four, May 28, 1945. The Oregon Caves Camp at the confluence of Grayback and Sucker creeks had started a one lane “truck trail” on Grayback Creek, while an Oregon & California Lands Administration CCC camp on Williams Creek built several miles of road from the other direction.


6 Leavitt, Memorandum to the Regional Director, Region Four, November 7, 1947. The national figures pertaining to the volume of Port Orford-cedar are in Donald Culross Peattie, A Natural History of Western Trees (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1953), 258.

7 W.H. Horning, Regional Administrator, BLM, to Leavitt, December 30, 1947, with map attached.

8 Leavitt, Memorandum for the Regional Director, Region Four, February 12, 1948. Horning later wrote to BLM director Marion Clawson more or less endorsing the NPS position and recounted developments that took place regarding the Port Orford Cedar National Monument before the war forced a hiatus; Horning to the Director, BLM, August 16, 1948. NPS forester Jack Dodd visited the Forest Service and BLM offices in Portland and obtained a copy, but his aim was to get estimated timber volumes in the proposed extension for planning purposes; Dodd, Memorandum for the Regional Director, July 9, 1948. He found that the existing monument to have 6.3 million board feet of Douglas fir in comparison to just 95,000 board feet of Port Orford cedar, 37,000 board feet of sugar pine, and just over 1.1 million board feet of Shasta red fir, so the total volume was estimated to be around 7.8 million board feet. The extension, by contrast, was estimated to contain some 68.5 million board feet of Douglas fir, 1.1 million board feet of Port Orford cedar, 4.8 million board feet of sugar pine, and 5.4 million board feet of Shasta red fir, so that the total volume exceeded 80 million board feet.

9 Marion Clawson, Director, BLM, to Director, NPS, November 12, 1948. Clawson told Drury that the bill designed to resolve the dispute (S. 580) passed the Senate and was reported favorably in the House, but did not leave the latter before adjournment. Drury stressed a need for local support if what the BLM claimed as O&C sections could be transferred by Congress with sponsorship by one of the senators from Oregon; Drury, Memorandum for the Regional Director, Region Four, April 15, 1948. Leavitt suggested approaching directors of the Oregon Caves Company to get the ball rolling for an extension; Raymond E. Hoyt, Regional Chief of Planning, Memorandum for the Regional Director, Region Four, April 30, 1948. This course was also recommended by Associate Director Herbert Maier, May 3, 1948. The lack of opposition from Clawson was evidently a key to reviving the proposed extension; Drury to Clawson, June 16, 1948.

10 Clawson to Drury, November 12, 1948. With the acceleration of logging on revested Oregon and California Railroad grant lands after World War II, these western Oregon counties quickly became
11 Drury to Watts, December 28, 1948; Tomlinson to Horace J. Andrews, Regional Forester, February 24, 1949; Herbert Maier, Associate Regional Director, Memorandum for the Regional Director, February 25, 1949, Watts to Drury, March 11, 1949. The natural areas included the Port Orford Cedar Research Natural Area [no longer an experimental forest] at 1,133 acres and the Coquille River Falls Research Natural Area at 500 acres, both in Coos County. An additional 1,340 acres in Curry County, an area not reviewed by NPS forester Jack Dodd in 1940, the Lobster Creek drainage, was also cited (T34S, R13W, parts of sections 28, 29, 32, and 33) but later traded away from national forest ownership and became private timberland.

12 Tomlinson, Memorandum for the Director, March 23, 1949. Also included was the need for a picnic area and the possibility to establish a campground at Pepper Camp. There also needed to be a trail to the stands of Port Orford-cedar identified in 1941.

13 George C. Ruhle, Park Naturalist, to Superintendent, Crater Lake National Park, July 17, 1949, who contended that its scientific and aesthetic value gave the extension national significance. Sanford Hill predicted that Oregon Caves “will soon be an island in the midst of logged over land,” and without the extension, the monument should be returned to the Forest Service or transferred to the state park system; Sanford Hill, Regional Landscape Architect, to Regional Director, Region Four, July 21, 1949. Lowell Sumner made an urgent plea for the extension based on how mills in the vicinity since the war had multiplied ‘tenfold’ while at the same time making the pitch that the extension was worth more to the nation uncut than what logs could bring on a stumpage basis; E. Lowell Sumner, Biologist, Memorandum for the Regional Director, July 18, 1949. M.E. Thede saw the extension as valuable for its representation of the Port Orford-cedar timber type, but also as protection for the existing monument from fire. He saw contemporary fire protection as supplied by the Forest Service and BLM as nil, making the point that the Chateau could not be in a worse position (being “at the top of a chimney” as he put it), were major fires to start; Thede, Associate Regional Forester, to Regional Director, Region Four, July 29, 1949.

14 Oregon Caves Study Committee, to Regional Director, Region Four, August 17, 1949. The committee consisted of Raymond E. Hoyt (Chair, Regional Chief of Planning), Hill, Landscape Architect Homer L. Crowley, Sumner, and Thede. Except for its northern end, the boundaries more closely followed ridgelines to encompass the Lake Creek and upper Cave Creek drainages. In the cover memo, Ruhle named the two Forest Service representatives (K. Wolfe, Assistant Regional Chief of Recreation and Lands, and Herschel Obye, Supervisor, Siskiyou National Forest) and the two BLM representatives (Medford District Forester Eugene Peterson and his assistant, Francis P. Jacquemin).

15 Tomlinson to H.J. Andrews, Regional Forester, August 29, 1949, RG 79, Central Classified Files (CCF-Region IV), Box 340, File 602, Oregon Caves Boundaries, Part 2, NARA San Bruno.

16 Raymond E. Hoyt to Files, November 4, 1949, and Hoyt, Proposed Extension of Oregon Caves National Monument, n.d. [November 1949]. In the latter he stated that the monument’s visitation totaled 82,069 in 1948, up more than 10,000 from the previous year and listed the five primary reasons for the extension. These included having the area around Grayback Guard Station at milepost 12 of the Oregon Caves Highway as an administrative area, protecting upper Lake Creek as a water supply (especially in the face of increased demand from visitors and a prospective sprinkler system at the Chateau), logging brought increased fire danger, the prospect of having one “fine specimen grove of Port Orford cedar,” and having an uncut approach to the monument for both sides of the highway from Grayback.

17 Hoyt to Files, January 23, 1950. In a follow up memo, Tomlinson wrote Drury about moving ahead with plans to build a ranger residence on the Grayback site, but Drury deferred on construction plans.
since the land was still under dispute between the Forest Service and BLM. He wanted Tomlinson to stand firm on getting the entire 6,035 acre extension; Tomlinson to the Director, January 30, 1950, and Drury to the Regional Director, Region Four, March 20, 1950. The administrative site was tentatively planned for section 31, T39S, R6W.

18 Tomlinson had no choice but to give the matter over to Drury since the Forest Service representatives in Portland could not look past their economic arguments; Tomlinson to the Director, April 19, 1950. The Forest Service position was explained in a memo from Watts, May 19, 1950; others present at the Washington meeting were Granger and Hopkins (USFS), as well as Wirth, Coffman, and Richey (NPS). The resulting agreement to eliminate these sections was included within a letter from Andrews to Tomlinson, June 23, 1950.

19 The acreage total and description of the headquarters site is in Robert E. Moore, Forester, to the Regional Director, July 20, 1950. Leavitt wanted the CCC camp as the headquarters site, suggesting that the buildings could be salvaged for this purpose instead of being used by organizations, as the Forest Service allowed by permit; Leavitt to the Regional Director, Region Four, September 28, 1950. Some of the buildings were moved to the Illinois Valley airport in 1948 and used until 1954, while others remained at the site; Roger Brandt, Cave Junction, to the writer, e-mail of November 5, 2013.

20 Tomlinson to the Director, August 8, 1950. The NPS and Forest Service agreed that the slice of Section 15 lying in the Limestone Creek drainage be returned to national forest status. Grazing within the extension was also to continue for the life of the permittees.

21 Drury to Regional Director, Region Four, November 28, 1950; Howard Hopkins (for Watts) to Director, NPS, December 14, 1950; Andrews to Lawrence C. Merriam, Regional Director, December 27, 1950; Memorandum of Understanding, signed by Drury, January 17, 1951, and Watts, January 24, 1951.

22 Drury to Regional Director, Region Four, February 16, 1951.

23 Herb Watts to Darmon Turner, Secretary, Oregon Cattlemens Association, March 12, 1951. His "consensus" was far from unanimous, as a local meeting of the cattlemen demonstrated; Harold Bowerman, District Ranger [USFS] to Forest Supervisor, May 4, 1951.

24 Harris Ellsworth, House of Representatives, to A.E. Demaray, Associate Director, NPS, April 13, 1951; C.L. Wirth, Associate Director, to Ellsworth, May 1, 1951; Guy Cordon, U.S. Senate, to A.E. Demaray, Director, May 9, 1951; Demaray to Cordon, May 17, 1951; Wayne Morse, U.S. Senate, to the Secretary of the Interior, May 8, 1951; Demaray to Morse, May 18, 1951. Forest Service help was critical, given their closer proximity to local organizations than the NPS staff at Crater Lake during the winter months. Drury, meanwhile, resigned as NPS director in March, while Tomlinson retired as regional director and was replaced by Merriam. Regional Forester Andrews died and Watts retired as Chief Forester in 1952.

25 Bowerman to Forest Supervisor, Siskiyou National Forest, May 4, 1951; Leavitt to Regional Director, Region Four (about Obye's meeting with the Illinois Valley Stockmen's Association), June 27, 1951; Hillary A. Tolson, Acting Director, NPS, to the Josephine County Court, July 3, 1951; Leavitt to Obye, July 12, 1951. Efforts by the O&C association also helped within the county; Merriam to Superintendent, Crater Lake National Park, June 11, 1951. "Expansion of OC Monument Proposed," Grants Pass Daily Courier, July 14, 1951; Leavitt to Obye, July 25, 1951; Raymond Lathrop, County Judge, to Leavitt, July 27, 1951 (County court resolution supporting the expansion); Frank S. Seyer [attorney for the Association of Oregon and California Land Grant Counties] to A.E. Demaray, Director, NPS, January 9, 1952, endorsing the proposed extension.


30 M.J.P. to Horning, BLM, March 30, 1951. The BLM stressed that these figures, which were dominated by Douglas-fir (12.5 million board feet, or $250,000 of the $374,000 that the tract was estimated to contain) were unofficial and preliminary. The NPS nevertheless transmitted them, broken down by species, to the county court; Hillory Tolson to the Josephine County Court, July 30, 1951. Port Orford-cedar there also trailed sugar pine, white fir, incense cedar, and Shasta red fir.

31 The exchange formally occurred in June 1956 and involved the transfer of 248,000 acres of national forest land in exchange for 243,000 acres of revested O&C grant lands; G.W. Williams, *The Forest Service in the Pacific Northwest: A History* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2009), 272. One potential avenue of transfer was also closed as the Recreation and Public Purposes Act of June 14, 1926 was amended on June 14, 1954 (68 Stat. 173) to prohibit the transfer of O&C Lands from BLM to state, county, or municipal governments.

32 H.R. 7441, referred to the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, which took no action.

33 The bill also directed that any revenues from timber sales obtained from what was formerly O&C sections would be distributed in accordance with laws governing the sale of timber on those lands (section 3).

34 These were John B. Wosky (1952-53) and Fred T. Johnston (1953-54). Long-time Chief Park Naturalist George C. Ruhle also transferred in 1953. The NPS also called a hiatus on any plans to develop facilities in section 31 near the Grayback Guard Station. Regional Director Merriam advanced the following reasons: 1. Very little flat land in the area away from the flood plain; 2. A need for the few NPS personnel to be closer to what now was only half of the acreage proposed in 1949; 3. Any camping needs could be accommodated at the USFS Grayback Campground; and 4. Previous concession operations at the Grayback site (a store that lasted through the 1920s) had ended in failure; Lawrence C. Merriam to the Director, September 30, 1953, RG 79, 67A419, Box 15861, File 602 Boundary Extensions, NA Seattle.


36 Williams, Memorandum for the Director, April 7, 1955, 3-4, RG 79, 67A63, Box 9, File A98 Mission 66, NA Seattle. He estimated visitation could exceed 120,000 in 1966, a more or less correct figure, in that attendance that year reached 150,284.

37 Williams, "Prospectus No. 1" and "Prospectus No. 2," both July 29, 1955; Merriam to Superintendent, Crater Lake, August 15, 1955; Williams, Memorandum for the Director, April 20, 1956, with quotation from Associate Director E.T. Scoyen, "You should continue to attempt to work out your proposal to abolish the area."


Exhausting the supply of brochures for the monument in 1952 coincided with first introducing the logo initially developed in the regional office at San Francisco. Within two years the logo had spread from park brochures to park entrance signs and uniforms.

During Mission 66 the NPS built 114 visitor centers in units it administered in 1966. The visitor center figure is in Ronald A. Foresta, America’s National Parks and Their Keepers (Washington, DC: Resources for the Future, 1984), 54. Of the 78 areas added to the National Park System from 1956 to 1966, only one was in Oregon (Fort Clatsop), which received a visitor center, employee residence, and utility shop by the start of 1963; Kelly Cannon, Administrative History: Fort Clatsop National Memorial (Seattle: USDI-NPS, 1995), 90-92. Visitor centers, as one landscape architect described them, “were predicated on the same assumptions as contemporary shopping centers: that large numbers of customers would be arriving by private car, and that both they and their vehicles needed to be efficiently handled as they shifted from the automotive realm to a strictly pedestrian environment, where they could find all services conveniently clustered together; Ethan Carr, Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park System (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 142-143. For a short contemporary summary on how they figured into agency planning, see USDI-NPS, Our Heritage: A Plan for its Protection and Use (Washington, DC: Creative Arts Studio, n.d. [1956]). It was no accident that this program followed in the wake of a massive increase in spending to build the interstate highway system. This was not mentioned in NPS director Wirth’s account of his career, especially that spent leading the Mission 66 program, though he did include a chart showing the growth in the number of areas and increased appropriations; see Wirth, Parks, Politics, and the People (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 260-262.

MOU signed by Obye, June 12, 1958, and Williams, June 28, 1958, ORCA Lake Creek files.

[Leavitt], Oregon Caves – Future Government Administrative Area, October 21, 1942, RG 79, CCF-Region IV, Box 340, file 600-01, ORCA Lake Creek files.

Wosky to Regional Director, Region Four, September 1, 1953, D1815.

Williams to Chief, West Office, Division of Design and Construction, February 7, 1957, RG 79, 67A442, 77289, Box 2, file D34, NA Seattle.

Merriam to Chief, Washington Office, Division of Design and Construction, March 13, 1959, RG 79, 67A442, 77289, Box 2, file D22, NA Seattle. A disapproved plan (OC-2062) from 1962 showed the site with three other residences in addition to the one built in 1959 (building 5). Regional staff did not see the need for them (buildings 6, 9, and 10) so no further action was taken.

The factors affecting national forest management at the regional level are summarized in a number of scholarly works. These include David A. Clary, Timber and the Forest Service (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986), Paul Hirt, A Conspiracy of Optimism: Management of the National Forests since World War II (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), Herbert Kaufman, The Forest Ranger: A Study in Administrative Behavior (Washington, DC: Resources for the Future, 1960; 2006), Marion Clawson,
48 This was partially due to the timber market collapsing in 1956 due to overproduction; in any event, logs from the Siskiyou National Forest accounted for only 14 percent of the volume produced in Coos, Curry, and Josephine counties that year. Obye quoted in USFS [news] release of December 3, 1957; RG 95, 678-0248, Box 6, Siskiyou National Forest, Information Circulars CY57. The figure of 94.4 million board feet is derived from the table in Stephen Dow Beckham, *Cultural Resources Overview of the Siskiyou National Forest* (USDA-Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region, Siskiyou National Forest, 1978), 153.

49 Even at the height of the timber boom, the Siskiyou National Forest never challenged the Willamette or Siuslaw national forests for supremacy in Oregon. Only once during the 1960s did national forest timber production in Josephine County even approach half of the county's annual total (in 1963, when the Siskiyou cut almost 103 million board feet of 213 mmbf of timber logged in Josephine County) and it never came close to that percentage in Coos or Curry counties.

50 See the table in the Beckham overview for more exact annual production figures. They appear on page 153, along with those of Coos and Curry counties.


52 Allan L. Markley, “Caves Monument Anniversary,” Cave Junction *Illinois Valley News*, October 9, 1958, 2. The visitation figures cited in the editorial were somewhat deceptive in that the 1947 total reached 98,790, another high of 98,000 in 1949 before fluctuating between 80,000 (in 1958) and 95,000 (in 1951) throughout the decade of the 1950s. The only reference to an extension in a Medford newspaper article on Mission 66 consisted of an oblique statement about an expanded trail system; “National Park Service 41 Years Old Today,” Medford *Mail Tribune*, August 25, 1957.


54 Salvage sales announced by Obye in a news release of August 28, 1958. Concerning Porter’s visit; Obye to Regional Forester, October 15, 1958, RG 95, 67B-0248, Box 6, Siskiyou National Forest, Show-me trip file, NA Seattle. The permanent ranger, Robert Smith, departed the monument for Yosemite on September 7. The position remained unfilled that fall and winter due to declinations by other permanent rangers; Superintendent’s Monthly Report, page 2. Chief Ranger Jack Broadbent had meanwhile briefed seasonal ranger Ray Albright at Crater Lake on the winter operation at Oregon Caves on August 25, prior to Albright’s temporary posting at Oregon Caves. What possessed Albright to reply as he did is unknown, since no NPS plan had ever depicted a recreational facility in the vicinity of Bigelow Lakes.

55 John M. Mahoney, Forester, NPS, to Regional Director, Region Four, November 4, 1958. Williams requested that copies of the final logging plan be sent to him in order to coordinate NPS review. He noted that the Forest Service had marked more than 1,000 trees for removal along a narrow strip on both sides of the highway between the monument boundary and Grayback Campground; Superintendent’s Monthly Report, November 12, 1958, page 6. Obye, meanwhile, announced that the Siskiyou National Forest had placed under contract more than 243 million board feet of timber to be cut during that calendar year alone, for a price of $3.6 million; USDA-Forest Service press release, “National Forest receipts hit the billion dollar mark,” November 13, 1958; RG 95, 67B-0248, Box 6, Information circulars CY58 file, NA Seattle.
56 Porter to Wirth, November 24, 1958; Ax 88, Porter Papers, Box 26, OCNM file, Special Collections, University of Oregon Libraries.

57 Ernst to Porter, January 7, 1959, Porter Papers.

58 Memo from COP, January 16, 1959, Porter Papers.

59 “Recommended Boundary Extension, Oregon Caves National Monument,” hand drawn as overlay on a 1954 USGS quadrangle map, Oregon Caves National Monument Museum and Archives Collections (OCNMMAC). The picnic area– campground was drawn as an overlay on a master plan base map, “General Development,” NMOC 3109, one sheet, December 1957. It was placed near where the microwave repeater was subsequently sited.

60 Port Orford-cedar as the main reason for a proposed expansion appeared in Hulen, “Oregon Caves to Increase Parking Area, Build More Walks,” op. cit. The article was written as part of the newspaper marking the state’s centennial year with driving tours. The deadly *Phytophthora* _lateralis_ root rot fungus had become well known to Forest Service researchers by this time, having spread throughout much of Coos and Curry counties by 1957. It had taken much of the remaining Port Orford-cedar in coastal areas between Lakeside on the north and Port Orford on the south, then spread 8-10 miles inland. *Phytophthora* had also spread from coastal areas up the Coquille River’s south fork to Gaylord. It also infected the Elk and Sixes river basins, but most alarmingly, made it into Port Orford-cedar stands on the Siskiyou National Forest, away from the coastal shelf and above river bottoms at the McGribble Guard Station; John Hunt, Associate Pathologist to [SNF] files, October 9, 1957, RG 95, 67B-0248, Box 6, Forest Diseases, Siskiyou, NA Seattle. Forest Service researchers were encouraged by reports of possibly resistant cedar stands near Bandon in early 1959; William E. Hallin, Leader, Siskiyou-Cascade Research Center, to R.W. Erwin, March 16, 1959.

61 Williams to Merriam, N.D. [Autumn 1958]. It was at this time that the NPS embarked on its own salvage program, removing diseased trees from along several trails at the monument.

62 Cited by W. Ward Yeager, Superintendent, Crater Lake National Park, to Regional Director, Region Four, in a memorandum dated October 16, 1961; subsequently elsewhere by officials in the NPS and USFS. Yeager made reference to a copy received more than two years later along with a memo from Herbert Maier, Assistant Regional Director, dated March 31, 1961.

63 Brown to Director, Memorandum on Decisions by Director Wirth, Boundary Status, Oregon Caves, July 13, 1960, file A3219, fiche 26, Crater Lake archival files, NA Seattle. Chief McArdle may have acted because he thought Porter had lost interest in the extension, though this might have been part of a larger antipathy toward the NPS whose Pacific Coast Recreation Survey of 1958 (page 89) had been used by Senator Richard Neuberger of Oregon to introduce legislation designating part of the Siuslaw National Forest as the “Oregon Dunes National Seashore Recreation Area” in early 1959, presumably with Wirth’s blessing; Robert A. Smith, “Creating National Park on Oregon Coast Stretch Expected to Gain Federal Park Service’s Support,” Medford Mail Tribune, March 22, 1959. Hearings on a proposed “Wilderness Act” in 1958 pointed to potential subtractions from land foresters regarded as subject to sustained yield may have also been a factor.

64 Brown to Regional Director, Region Four, August 3, 1960; Merriam to Superintendent, Crater Lake, August 23, 1960. Merriam became regional director in San Francisco on November 1, 1950, after having had a professional background in forestry and prior to being hired by the NPS in 1933, had worked in consulting. The firm of Mason and Stevens employed him from 1923 to manage their business in California. The firm’s principal, David T. Mason, became the leading proponent of sustained yield forestry in the United States; Elmo Richardson, *David T. Mason: Forestry Advocate* (Santa Cruz, California: Forest History Society, 1983), 18-21. Merriam was also the oldest son of John C. Merriam, long-time president of the Save-the-Redwoods League and probably the leading advocate of interpretation in the national parks.
Contor to Superintendent, Crater Lake, October 28, 1960. This meant the lakes basin, and on two occasions cattle had trespassed inside the monument boundaries along Waterwhelp (Panther) Creek and around the Big Tree. Contor expressed to Brown that it seemed questionable to him that a few months grazing for 12 head justified the pollution and trespassing problems that arose. The problem was again noted in the Superintendent's Monthly Report for July 1961, page 6.

Contor included all of the previous justifications made in the 1951 MOU, but added new ones—such as providing additional parking, sites for picnicking and camping, protection of Siskiyou flora, adding subalpine meadows, and a protective buffer zone between Highway 46 and logging operations on Cave Creek; Contor, draft Boundary Status Report, April 24, 1961, along with a cover memorandum to Yeager of the same date; Yeager to Regional Director, Region Four, July 10, 1961, as a cover memorandum to the Boundary Status Report of July 7, 1961, copied verbatim from Contor's draft in April. Contor remembered an "element of spite" in the Forest Service timber sales of the period within the extension; Contor interview, February 24, 1999.

Merriam to Superintendent, Crater Lake, December 12, 1961.

Yeager to Regional Director, Region Four, July 10, 1961, page 1; Contor noted that the ranger seemed unaware that the NPS still wanted to enlarge the monument; Superintendent's Monthly Report, July 1961, page 5. Yeager subsequently planned to visit the Forest Supervisor in Grants Pass; Yeager to Contor, August 7, 1961. Consequently, the superintendent told Merriam that the Forest Service would likely resist efforts to expand the monument; Yeager to Regional Director, Region Four, October 16, 1961.

Yeager to Regional Director, Region Four, March 29, 1962, with the Boundary Status Report by Contor. By this time, the Forest Service had sustained yield enshrined in law through passage of the Multiple Use - Sustained Yield Act of 1960. Provisions in the act did not give timber primacy in the list of uses, which included it among outdoor recreation, range, watershed, wildlife, and fish. In addition, user groups lobbying Congress made sure that hunting and mining were protected on the national forests and that wilderness was made consistent with multiple use; Richard E. McArdle in Harold K. Steen, *The Chiefs Remember: The Forest Service, 1952-2001* (Durham, NC: Forest History Society, 2004), 13-19.

Vernon E. Hennesey, Management Assistant, to Superintendent, Crater Lake, September 19, 1962. Approval of the Boundary Status Report is in a memo from Jackson E. Price, Acting Director, to Regional Director, Region Four, July 9, 1962. It included the offer to conduct negotiations at the Washington level, given how both the NPS and Forest Service each had representatives appointed for this purpose. Yeager's reply to Merriam was dated July 19, 1962, with it forwarded to Washington on July 26, 1962. Yeager informed Merriam of the impending timber sale by memo on September 24, 1962.

Philbrick to Yeager, September 27, 1962. The Forest Service intended that one unit (of some 30 acres) was to be located above the NPS water intake, whereas the proposed road was to cross both forks of Lake Creek and include culverts. The regional notification to the Washington office was by memo from Robert S. Luntley, acting assistant regional director, to Director, October 1, 1962. The Forest Service position in regard to not recognizing the MOU is in Yeager's memo to the Regional Director, Region Four, October 15, 1962.


McCloskey to Duncan, op. cit., 3.
Yeager viewed McCloskey's letter to Duncan as "accurate and factual," but insisted that the NPS had no plans for developing the proposed extension; Yeager to J.M. McCloskey, April 9, 1963. For some background about the organizations McCloskey represented at that time, see Michael McCloskey, *In the Thick Of It: My Life In the Sierra Club* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2005), 19-37.

Merriam to Superintendent, Crater Lake, May 3, 1963. His reference to a hopeful but critical stage corresponded to Senate hearings on S. 1137 in May 1963. The bill failed to pass, as did bills introduced to authorize the seashore in 1966. Congress eventually established the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area, to be administered by the Forest Service, in 1972.

Yeager to Regional Director, Western Region, May 17, 1963. He still endorsed the Boundary Status Report of March 29, 1962; the information about Duncan's position is in a memo from Yeager to Merriam, May 6, 1963. Yeager's stance on Oregon Caves went to Wirth through the regional office; Keith Nelson, Acting Regional Director, to Director, June 3, 1963.


These statistics are for the year 1961; RG 95, 67-B0248, Box 6 Siskiyou National Forest, U (improvements), roads file, NARA Seattle.

Richard E. McArdle, Chief (USFS), to Hon. Charles O. Porter, February 19, 1959; Ax 88, Porter Papers, Box 26, OCNM file. In a follow up letter, McArdle remained vague about what the Forest Service planned to do in accommodating campers, stating that private enterprise would undoubtedly pick up some of the slack along Highway 46 closer to Cave Junction; McArdle to Porter, March 24, 1959. Regional Forester J. Herbert Stone reiterated that the Forest Service could not determine priorities assigned to new facilities near Oregon Caves as against other locations in Oregon. He did, however, divulge that the Forest Service spent $800 on rehabilitation of Grayback Campground in 1958 and $2,000 to improve the road through it. Another $1,300 was allocated to complete the rehabilitation and expand the campground by three family units in 1959, with a new water system set for 1960; Stone to Porter, April 8, 1959.

Yeager raised some of these issues in early 1962, when the Bureau of Reclamation began to seek agency input; Yeager to Chief, Columbia River Recreation Survey Branch (NPS), March 14, 1962; Neal G. Guse, Assistant Superintendent, to Superintendent, Crater Lake, August 9, 1962. Questions persisted after the "century flood" of December 1964; "Sucker Creek Meeting Draws Crowd," Cave Junction Illinois Valley News, April 8, 1965, 1.

The applications for withdrawals are from the *Federal Register*, August 29, 1963, page 9482, along with a statement of purpose, attached memo from Leo J. Diedrich, Assistant Regional Director, Western Region, to Director, NPS, on September 25, 1963. Notations on the attachment calculate the Bigelow Lakes withdrawal as 67.5 acres, whereas the Forest Service figured the Cave Creek Campground to be 55 acres, and the Oregon Caves Buffer as 289.19 acres. Five of the 13 withdrawals on the national forest were for prospective fire lookouts, including one for Buck Peak, a site included in the extension proposed by the NPS in 1949. The withdrawals became final on December 3, per the published notice in the *Federal Register*, December 7, 1963, page 13308. An additional mineral withdrawal occurred on June 10, 1965, for a "Monument Campground," believed originally to have been located within the buffer strip; *Federal Register*, June 16, 1965, page 39952.

McArdle wrote that some 75 acres in the 11 areas could accommodate 140 "family camp and picnic units, with a capacity of 700 people per day." Half of those units (70) were already accessible by highway, but still needed funding for construction; McArdle to Porter, February 19, 1959, Porter Papers.
The others included a tract opposite the Grayback Campground on Highway 46, another located east of the old CCC camp above the Grayback Guard Station, and one that became the NPS administrative site near Lake Creek. The Cave Creek Campground site was within the extension proposed by the NPS in 1949. Development of the so-called “Powder House” site (across from Grayback Campground) had been proposed as early as 1959, in response to potential flooding of the extant campground of 35 campsites by the Sucker Creek reclamation project. At that time Regional Forester J. Herbert Stone estimated that development of recreation sites on upper Sucker Creek and Bigelow Lakes was still six to ten years away due to their inaccessibility by road; Press release from the office of Charles O. Porter, June 16, 1959, Porter Papers.

When the Forest Service subsequently conveyed plans for the road to the NPS, Park Landscape Architect Paul Fritz critiqued the idea of connecting the road with the monument at the main parking lot, pointing to problems with disrupting vehicular circulation; Fritz to Superintendent, Crater Lake, May 28, 1964, RG 79, 46953, Box 13, D18 Master Plan Narrative correspondence, 1964-65, NA Seattle. In retrospect, Duncan came off as rather naïve in expecting the Forest Service to accomplish what the NPS was prevented from doing. The agencies were well-known functional rivals, especially in recreation, with local expressions of their competition sometimes becoming quite bitter, as in the battle over the Oregon Dunes National Seashore.

The BLM plat map of T40S, R6W made this evident if used in conjunction with the USFS Fireman Map of 1969, which has a 1963 base. More detail is on the Lakes Basin sale map of 1963.

This had the effect of virtually eliminating the roadless area that had once almost completely surrounded the monument, at least as far as any study for wilderness designation was concerned, once the Wilderness Act had been signed into law on September 3, 1964. Mount Elijah had once been known as “Sand Mountain” for the decomposed granite evident there.

Paul Fritz, Inventory, Classification, and Evaluation form submitted to USDI, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, October 12, 1964, through Superintendent, Crater Lake, to Regional Director, Western Region, with transmittal memo of October 13, 1964.

This is the only book-length study of the NPS as a bureaucracy, and as such, charts the agency’s reaction to societal changes and the niches where it focused its growth.
January 3, 1967, included among the *NPS Newsletter* issues of the time. Among his goals was to complete the National Park System by 1972, at the centennial of Yellowstone National Park’s establishment.


95 Luis A. Gastellum, Deputy Assistant Director, and Harry Elsey, Chief, Branch of Financial Management, WASO Operations, to the Director, October 14, 1968, 10; John A. Rutter, Regional Director, Western Region, to Chief, Office of Resource Planning, SSC, November 14, 1968, 1-2. Several park staff members at Crater Lake of the time have strongly hinted that Spalding’s main reason for proposing this change had more to do with getting away from heavy winter snowfall at Crater Lake than any other reason; Bill Donati interview, April 1, 1992.


97 Thomas J. Adams, Acting General Superintendent, Klamath Falls Cluster Office, to Regional Director, Western Region, August 12, 1969.


99 Hartzog, along with Regional Director Ed Hummel, visited Oregon Caves on September 4, 1966, Superintendent’s Monthly Report, October 5, 1966, page 7. At that time, a proposal to widen the parking lot still further was rejected in favor of the holding area; John Miele interview, January 21, 1998.

100 Stanley E. Schlegel, Acting Area Manager, Oregon Caves, to General Superintendent, Klamath Falls Group, n.d. [fall 1969], L1417.

101 “Limestone Mine – Oregon Caves information brief,” n.d. [fall 1970], along with sketch showing claim locations relative to Oregon Caves National Monument; Luther E. Eggersen and George B. Guillotte, Locator, “Notice of Mining Location,” August 7, 1970. Details of the Morris operation are in Milvoy M. Suchy, Mining Engineer, to the Records, July 30, 1971, USDA-Forest Service Regional Office, Portland, 2810 Mining. The only previous claim noted in NPS records anywhere near Oregon Caves is the Ow Yuen claim, which seemed to interfere with the state highway department’s stockpile at milepost 15 of the Caves Highway. At one point two other claims in the Sucker (Cave) Creek vicinity appeared to require moving the power line serving the monument; M.M. Nelson, District Forest Ranger, to Messrs. Montich and Ulrich, February 1, 1938, RG 79, 67A616, Box 10003, File 609 Leases, NA Seattle; E.P. Leavitt, Superintendent, to Regional Director, Region Four, May 25, 1945, RG 79, CCF-Region IV, Box 340, File 609-01 Oregon Caves mining claims, NA San Bruno. The Ow Yuen claim is noted on the Mineral Locality Map of Josephine County (1979), #387; see also Len Ramp and Norman V. Peterson, *Geological and Mineral Resources of Josephine County, Oregon*, Bulletin 100 (Salem: Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, 1979).

102 W.P. Ronayne, Forest Supervisor, to Spalding, December 7, 1970. Morris had a special use permit to access his claims; Memorandum of Understanding between the Forest Service, USDA, and the National Park Service, USDI, for the use of lands within the Siskiyou National Forest for construction and maintenance of a permanent park ranger residence and related facilities, signed by Spalding, October 30, 1969, and Ronayne, November 5, 1969.
103 E.A. Oster and E.R. Hampton, *Water Supply for Oregon Caves National Monument, Southwestern Oregon*, open-file report, April 1967, 11. This also applied to Cave Creek and the spring serving the NPS ranger residence. Only a sample collected in the cave (on the River Styx) did not test in excess of allowable limits under the 1962 Public Health Service Drinking Water Standards.

104 Richard Lee Huff, Civil Engineer, Western Service Center, to Ed Blair, Assistant Chief, WSC, November 4, 1970 (with attachment); Blair to Spalding, November 10, 1970.

105 Ronayne to Spalding, March 2, 1971. Milvoy M. Suchy, Mining Engineer, memorandum for the record, July 30, 1971, in ORCA Lake Creek file. The best Ronayne could do, however, was a right of way for the waterline since the Forest Service withdrawals came too late in relation to the mining locations; Ronayne to Spalding, May 4, 1971.


110 Virgil O. Seisner, Acting Chief, Branch of Lands and Mineral Operations, Memorandum for the Record, November 4, 1971, noting the IBLA decision 72-82 to dismiss OR 8520 on October 26, 1971.


112 Borgman to Regional Director, PNR, and Borgman draft comments to John O. Hoffman, District Ranger, Illinois Valley Ranger District, November 30, 1973. The measures suggested included flush cutting of stumps, which could also be covered by duff and small debris.

113 Miele to Borgman, July 5, 1974, with a clipping from the Cave Junction *Illinois Valley News*, July 4, 1974, included. Cabax Mills of Grants Pass was the successful bidder. Units were located in T40S, R6W, sections 3, 4, 9, 10, and 11.
Miele to General Superintendent, Klamath Falls Group, November 27, 1974; Davis to Research Biologist, Klamath Falls Group, January 18, 1975; James Blaisdell was the biologist. Miele also responded to a request from the Forest Service about a joint boundary study for the monument, stating that the boundary monuments placed by GLO in 1922 could be used to run straight lines for marking the rectangle embracing the 480 acres; Miele to Borgman, October 30, 1974.

Miele to General Superintendent, Klamath Falls Group, April 7, 1976. C. Richard Neely, Assistant Regional Solicitor, to Regional Director, PNR, May 26, 1976, 3. Whether District Ranger John O. Hoffman “moved the goalposts” after Borgman and Sims did their review may be open to question. Hoffman left Cave Junction for a post as the timber management staff officer on the Siuslaw National Forest immediately after the Upper Caves sale had been awarded; “New I.V. Ranger,” Cave Junction Illinois Valley News, July 6, 1974. He was replaced by John M. Hughes, who had been on the Siuslaw since 1970.

The study was facilitated by Ed Starkey, head of the Cooperating Park Study Unit in Corvallis and involved two hydrologists from the Department of Forest Engineering at OSU.


Miele to General Superintendent, Klamath Falls Group, June 24, 1976, 1-3.

Borgman to Regional Director, PNR, July 28, 1976.


Ronayne to District Ranger, Illinois Valley Ranger District, August 20, 1976, 2450 Timber Sale Contracts; [Ronayne] to the Record, September 7, 1976, 2450. The center of this “triangle” was located on the Big Tree Trail just outside the monument and located a half mile west of Panther Creek.

Leroy H. Fisk, Sanitarian, Klamath Falls Group, to General Superintendent, August 30, 1976, L1419; Donald C. Barrett, Regional Hydrologist, PNR, to Associate Regional Director, Planning and Resource Preservation, PNR, December 10, 1976; Ronayne memorandum on meeting with the National Park Service, December 8, 1976; Borgman to Regional Director, PNR, January 6, 1977; James A. Schelhaas, District Ranger, and John Miele, Superintendent, memorandum of understanding for exploratory drilling, May 9, 1977 [MOU between the Forest Service, USDA, and the National Park Service, USDI, for the use of lands within the Siskiyou National Forest for exploratory drilling and testing for a water well for domestic use at the Oregon Caves and related facilities.

Cave Junction Illinois Valley News, August 18, 1977. A related item was “Lake Creek Water Supply,” handwritten chronology supporting “Contamination Probing,” August – September 1977, NPS files. The NPS appointed the chairman of the environmental sciences department at the Oregon Institute of Technology, Leroy Fisk, as park sanitarian. For background, see “Sanitarian Keeps Folks Healthy at Oregon Caves,” Grants Pass Daily Courier, September 24, 1977, 2. This was aimed at more regular water testing than what the Public Health Service could do on an annual basis.

Schelhaas to Miele, March 16, 1978, with a map of units attached.
125 Thompson to Regional Director, PNR, March 29, 1978. The forest supervisor’s take on the meeting reached somewhat different conclusions; Covey to the Files, March 31, 1978, 2450 Timber Sale Contracts and Permits.

126 Borgman to Superintendent, Redwood National Park, April 4, 1978, attached to William Weaver’s field reconnaissance of proposed helicopter logging operation near Oregon Caves National Monument water intake on Lake Creek, March 24, 1978, handwritten memo.

127 Weaver, Field Reconnaissance Report, 14-15.


129 Roger D. Lee, Report on Environmental Sanitation Survey, Oregon Caves National Monument, August 14-15, 1978, 1-2. The genesis of this fencing project may have come from NPS regional hydrologist Donald C. Barrett, who expressed his dissatisfaction about Forest Service reticence to take steps to prevent contamination of the monument’s water supply by cattle in a memo to the associate regional director for planning and resource preservation in Seattle on April 18, 1978, something that stated the NPS had to demand that a fence be installed.

130 Volz to Regional Director, Western Region, August 23, 1966, D18 x C3823; this idea apparently came from an even earlier depiction of a holding “tank,” to include an information station, parking lots, picnic area, and exhibit shelters, as conceived by the park landscape architect, Joseph T. Clark. It was titled “Caves Developed Area, Part of the Master Plan, Drawing OC 3008-J, 1 sheet, January 2, 1962, as shown on page 76.

131 Spalding to Regional Director, Western Region, July 12, 1968, D18; this master plan iteration had “holding tanks” at the still-undeveloped Monument campground site and/or one at milepost 5 of SR 46. Atwood to William Ronayne, U.S. Forest Service, Siskiyou National Forest, June 7, 1971; Stanley E. Schlegel, Acting Park Manager, to General Superintendent, Klamath Falls Group, n.d. [summer 1971], L1417.

132 “Park Service Seeks Limit on Number of Visitors to Caves,” Grants Pass Daily Courier, December 3, 1971, 2. Unlike the concession booth, the NPS information station was to broaden its scope to informing visitors about “the many recreational opportunities surrounding Oregon Caves and the recreational areas and facilities within several hours drive as an alternative should the waiting period for the cave tour be excessively long for him or his family.” The exchange between the Forest Service and NPS about the holding area is in Spalding to Ronayne, October 12, 1971, and Ronayne to Spalding, October 29, 1971. The concession booth had its origin in the registration office for out of state motorists in Caves “City,” which operated until 1941, when registration was dropped; “Valley Chamber to begin check of tourist cars,” Grants Pass Daily Courier, June 27, 1937. The Oregon Caves Company had a booth for itself in Cave Junction by 1948; Lucy James, “Caves Echoes,” Grants Pass Daily Courier, May 31, 1948.

133 Of the 83 percent who had not stopped at Cave Junction, one third did not realize that such a facility existed. While one quarter felt that it was not an official booth (p. 14), the research was conducted during the national gasoline shortage that followed an oil embargo in 1973-74. This reduced monument visitation 13 percent from an all-time high attendance in 1972 of 199,000; R.N. Shulstad and H.H. Stoever, “Visitor Congestion at Oregon Caves National Monument,” Special Report 421, Agricultural Experiment Station, Oregon State University, Corvallis, October 1974, 11.

134 Ibid., 18.
135 Ibid., 20. The researchers added that having picnic facilities in a pleasant setting would help decrease the number of visitors who turned around once they knew what lay ahead at the monument. The expressed preference for a visitor center that eliminated the time spent waiting for parking was on page 15, and again on page 20.

136 Shulstad and Stoever also recommended that the NPS train all tour guides hired by the concessionaire, more signs along SR 46 indicating distance to the monument, a ban on all trailer travel beyond milepost 12, and the normal distribution of waiting times be included in the monument's NPS brochure. The researchers also acknowledged the study's limitations, in that fear of gas shortages affected travel to Oregon Caves since service stations in Cave Junction closed when their daily allotments of fuel were exhausted. The Oregon Caves Company also did considerably less roadside advertising than in the previous year, something that could have affected visitation.


140 Package 102, Information Center and Parking Area, form 10-238, signed by Miele on February 9, 1976, and Borgman, February 15, 1976; Borgman to Regional Director, PNR, September 24, 1976, L1425 x D18.


142 “Oregon Caves may build visitor center,” Medford Mail Tribune, February 8, 1977; Miele to Regional Director, PNR, February 11, 1977.

143 “Council Approves Grant for City Hall,” Cave Junction Illinois Valley News, February 10, 1977; “Visitor Center planned for C-J,” Grants Pass Daily Courier, February 16, 1977; Dickenson to John Bryant, President, National Park Foundation, March 1, 1977. The two parcels were 7.55 acres from Mr. and Mrs. Randall A. Palmer and .43 acres from Green Valley Investment Company of Cave Junction.


147 Joan Howlett, “They'll Remember the Caves Trip, Good and Bad,” Grants Pass Daily Courier, September 2, 1977, 6-7.
Keith Watkins, Chief, Land Acquisition Division, PNR, to Phil Wallin, Director of Operations, Trust for Public Land, January 10, 1978; Robert Prior, Vice President, Illinois Chamber of Commerce, to Barry Flint, Trust for Public Land, April 27, 1978; Miele to Flint, April 28, 1978; “C-J Chamber Gets New Home,” Grants Pass *Daily Courier*, May 5, 1978. The lease came with conditions directing that the chamber obtain approval from the NPS before erecting signs or making any exterior modification to the building.


FIGURES 55 and 56. The first NPS brochure for Oregon Caves in 1936 featured images befitting a resort, in highlighting the cave entrance and a hotel located across from it. Those line drawings by CCC artist L. Howard Crawford contrast markedly with one first issued in 1977, which remained in print for more than a decade. The cover photo focused on the Siskiyou Mountains beyond Oregon Caves, some of which were situated in what had been proposed as an extension of the monument.
Chapter Three

Plans for Protecting and Expanding the Monument, 1979-2014

Although the only legislative authorization to expand the monument since efforts began in 1913 had finally secured passage in 1978, it only applied to a total of eight acres in Cave Junction rather than lands adjacent to the existing monument. Friction between the NPS and USFS over what the former considered to be incompatible uses in the vicinity of Oregon Caves did not abate, and instead led to revival of an earlier proposal to expand the national monument in 1998. This one came in the form of the first approved general management plan for this park unit, but NPS officials still lacked the means to effect a land transfer, something that could be accomplished either by presidential proclamation under the Antiquities Act or by legislative means. Both methods encountered opposition, not only from the Forest Service but also other quarters, for a variety of reasons.

Ultimate success came once the Forest Service dropped its opposition to expansion, and authorizing legislation for a 4,070 acre “national preserve” finally became reality in late 2014. In most respects, the Oregon Caves National Preserve is a monument to perseverance, not only by members of Oregon’s congressional delegation, but also can be attributed to officials in the NPS. They pursued it with the delegation because expansion became the agency’s official position once a general management plan for the monument was approved. Representative Peter DeFazio and Senator Ron Wyden attached the provision for expansion to House and Senate versions of a larger omnibus bill (H.R. 3979) enacted at the end of 2014. Their move insured that all legislative changes to provisions for public lands embedded in what was ostensibly a defense appropriations bill met only token or rhetorical opposition on its way to passage.
Opposition to an earlier expansion of Oregon Caves in 1978 stirred in the local Illinois Valley News, but the addition of eight acres to the monument in Cave Junction went through due to efforts by Superintendent John Miele and other supporters, though that addition was quickly cut in half. Congressman Jim Weaver felt the need to keep four acres of it on the tax rolls, so Regional Director Russell Dickenson made a commitment to divestiture. This meant that the proposed nature trail and a portion of the vehicle parking fell out of the site plan. Meanwhile, with no construction funding on the immediate horizon, Superintendent Miele proposed an interim plan to make use of the church building as an information station, do some minor site development for parking, and renovate one of the two small structures to serve as a bus depot.¹ At first Miele seemed to favor initiating bus service to the Oregon Caves on a trial basis, but then questioned its feasibility as a host of potential problems quickly became apparent. Staff in the regional office agreed to defer operation of a bus service.²

Miele then turned his attention to orchestrating a possible land exchange in order to acquire a vacant lot between the church (0.43 acres of land purchased by the Trust for Public Lands, TPL) and the Standard Oil Company’s gas station at the intersection of US 199 and SR 46. He wanted to use the four acres identified as excess to NPS needs in the National Park Foundation’s parcel as trading stock, but the regional office demurred—mainly because the government had not yet acquired any property in Cave Junction.³ An appraisal of the TPL parcel came first, and the appraiser considered the former church not worth moving. It was followed by a functional analysis by NPS landscape architect Geoff Swan, who provided some options for future development in Cave Junction, as well as the monument proper in regard to possibly building an amphitheater.⁴

Swan concluded that the information station could not by itself resolve the traffic backups nearer Oregon Caves, but neither could voluntary busing. Miele switched his position to support voluntary busing after Group Superintendent Borgman questioned the feasibility of a major (mandatory) operation.⁵ The only, and albeit small, progress in that direction came when the Kiwanis Club of Illinois Valley erected a sign board in front of the old church in June.⁶

Any reduction in the potential staging area was, at least for the moment, put on hold as language that reduced the authorization for the NPS to acquire property (from eight acres down to four) somehow slipped out of omnibus legislation intended to amend the National Parks and Recreation Act, both in 1979 and 1980.⁷ This became a moot point once the National Park Foundation sold 3.95 acres
deemed excess by the NPS to private parties in July 1981. By that time, annual visitation had dropped to under 130,000 for two years running and the backups on SR 46 (the only paved route into the monument) during busy summer days became less frequent. Funding for a new information center in Cave Junction seemed even less likely, so the urgency to further develop the 4.03 acres authorized by legislation largely seemed to vanish.

The expansion proposal of 1981-82

A combination of new timber sales planned for areas near the monument, as well as proposed aerial application of herbicides in the vicinity of Lake Creek, a tributary of Cave Creek, led directly to briefly reviving the expansion proposal. During the 20 year surge in selling national forest timber near the monument, the merchantable volume in the 3,088 acre proposed expansion area had shrunk to just 67 million board feet, but somewhat inflated timber prices of the period meant this could translate (at least in the view of one timber industry group) to more than $20 million. The Forest Service had long since placed all of the national forest immediately surrounding Oregon Caves into its “base” of commercial forest land, even though it had yet to release the Siskiyou National Forest Plan, as mandated by the National Forest Management Act of 1976. What differed from the two previous decades was that demographics in southwestern Oregon had shifted to a point where the Forest Service encountered increasingly hostile opposition, while preservation groups had become more numerous and willing to lend the NPS their support.

Much of the reforestation efforts associated with the Lakes Basin Sale of the early 1960s had either failed completely, or plantings that survived were slow to grow when faced with herbaceous competition or herbicides that may have killed what little mycorhizal fungi that accompanied the seedlings. The Forest Service proposed spraying a product from the Monsanto Corporation called “Roundup” in the Lake Creek watershed and prepared an environmental assessment that they hoped could lead to an application in April 1980. At virtually the same time, Forest Service planners had initiated yet another timber sale next to the monument. They called the closest one “Lost Cave,” while another one further afield was dubbed “Horse Caves.” When Miele and the superintendent at Crater Lake, James Rouse, reviewed these proposals on the ground in August, Forest Service officials offered to extend an existing road numbered 4611-960 into the monument so as to connect it with the main parking lot. This would complete the route from Williams that Superintendent Leavitt described as “likely” in 1945, yet could be forestalled by expanding the monument, but Miele was inclined to have the road connection made as a potential escape route in the event of a catastrophic fire event, especially if one blocked the only paved road access to the monument.
It represented a strange sort of olive branch, as the Forest Service expected the NPS to pay an estimated $20,000 for constructing 600 feet of road in the monument, plus survey and design costs.\textsuperscript{13} This figure doubled by 1984, the summer of its construction, two years after the Forest Service advertised the Lost Cave Timber Sale.\textsuperscript{14} The latter contained almost 13 million board feet, or about a fifth of the volume that timber staff on the Illinois Valley Ranger District estimated to remain in the expansion area. In April 1981, Miele sent Regional Director Daniel J. Tobin, Jr., the boundary extension proposal submitted by Ward Yeager in 1961, and stated that the proposed "ridge top boundary" could solve most of the resource management problems at Oregon Caves, especially the one involving protection of domestic water sources. Tobin responded by writing that he appreciated the information from two decades earlier, but the regional director also ended any
further discussion with the comment “I consider public advocacy of an expanded boundary for Oregon Caves inappropriate at this time.”

The Forest Service’s plans for aerial spraying of herbicide in the Lake Creek watershed nevertheless served as the unintended precursor for a public airing of a new proposal to expand the monument. This occurred as some local residents took an increasingly active role in protests over the use of 2,4 D and other herbicides used in vegetation management on national forest lands in western Oregon. By May 1980, shouting matches had developed between residents of the nearby community of Takilma and Forest Service employees. One concession employee at the monument even obtained a note from her doctor requesting that she not be exposed to herbicide spraying due to the “definite possibility” of spontaneous abortion and/or fetal anomalies. The doctor’s note came in response to notification from Forest Supervisor Bill Covey that areas in the Lake Creek watershed were slated for hand spraying of the herbicide “Roundup” containing some 41 percent glyphosphate. By September 1981, however, the Forest Service proposed using aerial application of “Roundup” in one of the Lake Basin sale units.

In a meeting in Cave Junction on November 18, District Ranger Dennis Holthus and another Forest Service staff member assured Miele that the proposed spraying posed no threat to the monument’s water supply because of some protection measures that they outlined. These included maintenance of one hundred foot buffers between the sprayed units and stream courses, regular water monitoring by the forest hydrologist, and notification to the NPS prior to spraying so that the water intake on Lake Creek could be closed. The actual catalyst for debate about monument expansion came when a new problem emerged on December 22, as stream turbidity forced closure of the water system at Oregon Caves for more than three weeks. According to Miele and hydrologists from Redwood National Park, a mudslide originating from a clear cut along with a washed out section of logging road caused the turbidity. It prompted Miele to call the National Guard unit in Ashland and ask to borrow a tank trailer, something that might supply potable water to the nine employees living at Oregon Caves.

FIGURE 58. NPS photo of water intake on Lake Creek, October 1968.
The situation received enough publicity for members of the Umpqua Valley Audubon Society in Roseburg to contact one of Oregon’s U.S. senators, Mark Hatfield, about expanding the monument on December 30. Hatfield had played the key role in transferring about 22,000 acres of largely roadless national forest lands surrounding Crater Lake National Park to NPS administration just over a year earlier. His primary justification for the move was that these tracts better served the purpose for which the park had been established than as new and individually designated wilderness areas. The Audubon letter recommended a monument expansion to 4,300 acres, arguing that this afforded greater recreational opportunity by giving the NPS control of Cave Creek Campground and more trails. It could also minimize conflicts in the form of herbicide use in the surrounding watershed and visual denigration in the form of logging visible from the upper part of Caves Highway and the monument’s main parking lot.

While Miele and the monument’s small staff were occupied with the water problem, Hatfield sent the Audubon letter to the respective regional offices of both the NPS and the Forest Service, as part of preparing his response. Regional Director Tobin begged off, stating that any expansion had to be based on a “careful study of area needs,” and there was no money for this purpose. He reiterated priorities expressed by the NPS director (and former regional director of the Pacific Northwest Region) Russell Dickenson, who wanted to “concentrate on enhancing the protection and administration of existing resources rather than to seek new responsibility.” Tobin closed by stating that the NPS management of Oregon Caves and Forest Service management of surrounding lands was being “closely coordinated,” something reiterated in a response to Hatfield from Regional Forester Jeff M. Sirmon. The latter was more than double the length of Tobin’s response on behalf of the NPS, and went into why agency missions differed, as well as the reasons behind how the Forest Service could be both a recreation provider and timber producer.

It might have ended there, had not a locally produced television program in Medford called “Evening Magazine” aired on February 16, 1982. The host, Cheewa James, worked seasonally for the NPS and invited Miele and activist Bill Ashworth on the program, but interviewed them independently. James asked Miele first about the water contamination issue and then about the proposed expansion. Miele responded by not mincing words about his concern for how the watershed should be managed and what led to the contamination, but dodged every attempt by James to secure an endorsement for the expansion. Ashworth, by contrast, provided a more strident view of the situation, combining the threats posed by herbicides and additional timber sales to make a case for expanding the monument. Timber industry groups responded to the show by drawing a distinction between expanding Crater Lake as opposed to Oregon Caves, but also
charged that Miele had overstepped his authority. This accusation of personal impropriety had the effect of clouding the issue of expansion, as proposed by the Sierra Club and one or two other environmental groups, effectively rendering it a dead letter.

FIGURE 59. Oregon Caves National Monument lies barely four air miles from the northern boundary of the newly designated Red Buttes Wilderness Area, as shown on the Siskiyou National Forest map of 1984. A hike linking the two is considerably longer; most would use the Lake Mountain Trail #1206 and Boundary Trail #1207.
To their credit, NPS officials at the regional office in Seattle successfully defended Miele's statements but they also never made a case for expansion. One of the timber industry groups took the Audubon proposal seriously enough to label it as something advanced by "wilderness proponents" who aimed to take "commercial timberland" out of production, and then described to their membership what that might mean (a loss of 67 mmbf) to the local economy, but only in terms of potentially lost revenue. Ashworth wrote to Hatfield in April about the logic of bringing the upper Lake Creek and Cave Creek watersheds under NPS control before the Lost Caves Timber Sale went to bid. He wanted to give Hatfield first crack at crafting an expansion bill, claiming that Congressman Jim Weaver wanted the monument's boundaries enlarged so that it might be contiguous with the proposed Red Buttes Wilderness located to the east of Oregon Caves. Ashworth garnered support from the Sierra Club's Oregon Chapter for the expansion, but any momentum it may have had promptly dissipated.

Weaver had earlier (in 1979) championed a House bill aimed at designating as wilderness an area of 84,500 acres that went from Cook and Green Pass at its eastern edge, to Tannen Lakes on the western limit. Introduced in the spring of 1982, this proposed Red Buttes Wilderness took in Sugarloaf (near Grayback Mountain) on the north, and took in an area that embraced national forest lands to just shy of the Klamath River as its southern limit. The bill went nowhere, at least in part because Hatfield decided to pass on introducing companion legislation. Instead, Hatfield's support was directed elsewhere, and proved critical in Congressional passage of the Oregon Forest Wilderness Act in 1984, in which Congress designated 16,150 acres as the Red Buttes Wilderness among other areas. By that time, the only mention of expansion, at least from Miele, came in a memo to Tobin about his visit with Clay Peters, Director of the National Parks Program with The Wilderness Society in late August. Peters, who had previously worked with Hatfield's staff to expand Crater Lake National Park in 1980, came to see Miele at Oregon Caves—something Miele characterized as a "briefing." It included the Red Buttes wilderness proposal, the Sierra Club's proposal to extend the monument's boundaries, and threats to resources at Oregon Caves. Peters left a note after taking a cave tour, expressing interest and concern about the boundary "situation." Peters ended with telling Miele to call any time.

Forest planning around Oregon Caves

Irrespective of any expansion proposal, Miele continued to work toward protecting the monument's water supply. He again called on staff at Redwood National Park for technical advice about what caused excessive turbidity in December 1981 and again in February of the following year. Miele also asked the three member team to
recommend immediate solutions to the problem and propose longer term measures to ensure a safe water supply for the monument. They responded by confirming what Miele had been saying about a debris slide originating from a clear cut left by the Lakes Basin Timber Sale of the 1960s, something triggered by the building of a road to reach one of the sale units.\textsuperscript{33} The slope failure meant that a new water intake should be located upstream above the debris flow, in concert with measures borrowed from the watershed rehabilitation program at Redwood National Park, something initiated once that park expanded in 1978.\textsuperscript{34} They underlined a desperate need for a real watershed management plan, something that went far beyond the “Oregon Caves Zone Management Objectives” of 1979, a vaguely worded document that Sirmon and the Forest Service trumpeted as “cooperation” with the NPS in the response to Hatfield about expanding the monument. Within the scope of such a plan, the team urged adoption of strictly maintained stream buffers where no logging would be allowed, as well as sharp restrictions on new road construction, the addition of culverts sufficient to pass runoff from larger rainfall events, shelterwood (leaving part of the overstory) and selective logging rather than clear cuts, in addition to either skyline cabling or helicopter yarding to minimize ground disturbance.\textsuperscript{35}

While the Forest Service could hardly expect the “Oregon Caves Zone Management Objectives” to last very long in an increasingly litigious climate surrounding the mandated forest plans, which the Siskiyou (like all other national forests in western Oregon) had yet to complete, they at least furnished a start for planning in this portion of the Illinois Valley Ranger District. The document stated that water quality represented a key value under the multiple use doctrine, if only in the vicinity of the water intake on Lake Creek. The Forest Service also stated that timber around the monument had to be “managed” by meeting watershed, visual, and silvicultural “objectives,” while any logging operations were to be planned so that impact, hazards, and distractions could be minimized for visitors to the monument. Cattle also had to remain on their allotment and off the monument.\textsuperscript{36}

As the timber management staff prepared the “Lost Cave” sale to go to bid in the summer of 1982, Forest Wildlife Biologist Lee Webb prepared a list and descriptions for potential “botanical interest areas” for inclusion with the draft forest plan document. Consisting of 496 acres, and all upslope of the road numbered as 4045, the Bigelow Lakes Botanical Interest Area lay closest to the monument. Webb characterized almost 70 percent of this unit as land unsuitable as commercial forest, while 66 of the remaining 156 acres possessed only low commercial potential. This made the proposals for spraying herbicides in the upper Lake Creek watershed appear ridiculous, since only 90 acres had what he termed medium potential as commercial forest, and whose total output would be limited to only 2,700 board feet.\textsuperscript{37}
This apparent shift (to at least acknowledging that some of the upper Lake Creek basin could never be sustainable commercial forest) did not apply to many areas of national forest near Oregon Caves that contained old growth timber. In terms of what the timber management staff on the Siskiyou at that time understood, a botanical interest area simply subtracted (as did other non-commercial designations such as wilderness area, proposed wilderness, scenic area, proposed wild and scenic river, or simply unproductive timber land) from commercial uses of the total district acreage of 303,730 acres. Of that, only 115,000 acres was supposedly commercial forest as of March 1982 and available for logging—so that timber management staff and industry groups opposed further “set-asides.” Although logging on the national forests had never comprised even half of Oregon’s annual total output at any time, Hatfield and others in Congress imposed “timber targets” as a way to ensure continued political support from the industry. Many Forest Service employees doubted that the targets could be sustained, at least according to the provisions of the Multiple Use and Sustained Yield Act of 1960, or in any district-wide analysis as part of the forest planning process mandated by the National Forest Management Act of 1976. The potential to sustain commercial forest land in western Oregon had long since been mapped through site classes, which ranged in rank between 1 (best) and 5 (worst/unsustainable). Foresters rated virtually all of southern Oregon between that of 3 and 5, with a high incidence (from their standpoint) on the unsustainable side of the scale in the western Siskiyou Mountains. This rang true especially where stands were located on high elevation sites (at 4,500 feet or greater), the dominant aspect was southwest, or if steep terrain and shallow soils predominated.

Silvicultural knowledge that clear cutting at high elevation spelled trouble for regeneration went back to the 1960s at various localities in northern California. A task force of silviculturists from various national forests throughout Oregon in 1979 described a report made six years earlier on past regeneration failures throughout the Illinois Valley Ranger District as an excellent analysis—in that the author identified where clear cutting should not be attempted (above 5,000 feet) or only used with extreme care (between 1,400 and 4,500 feet in elevation). Staff at the Siskiyou National Forest nevertheless wrote an environmental assessment with a finding of no significant impact, and issued a notice of decision during 1983 to sell 12 million board feet of timber in proposed clear cut units near Oregon Caves. It could be accessed by new road construction, to take place a couple of miles north and east of the monument, in what previously had been called the Kangaroo Roadless Area and proposed as wilderness in the failed Weaver bill.

Although no appeals were filed, the Forest Service did not award the Sugarloaf Timber Sale for several reasons. One was a timber glut brought by sharply declining
prices in the early 1980s, something compounded by a drop in housing construction. Meanwhile, bidding on national forest timber sales remained extremely high, so much so that firms had to ask Hatfield (as chairman of the Senate’s appropriations committee) and others in Congress for a bailout. At the same time, the Forest Service faced increasing public scrutiny over its planning processes, whether for the forest as a whole, or on individual projects. Staff on the Siskiyou National Forest felt all these pressures, including those by the timber industry. When the new forest supervisor, Ronald McCormick, arrived in 1983, he granted environmentalists access to the policy making process through a number of public meetings and workshops. This helped produce a volume of mail during comment periods for draft and final environmental impact statements (documents that responded to requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969) that reached 28,000 for one post-fire project and amounted to more than five times what an average national forest plan document received.

Environmental groups also proved increasingly willing to file appeals in order to stop or delay clear cutting, especially where regeneration (a legal requirement) was suspect or had a history of failure. A number of environmental assessments prepared in the early 1980s became the subject of lawsuits, particularly where the Forest Service issued “supplements,” in response to when an undertaking changed from its original scope. No one filed an appeal to the Lost Cave, Upper Horse Caves, and Four Pepper timber sales near the monument, so loggers created a patchwork of 35 new clear cuts covering 291 acres in 1986. This changed when units of the Deep Left Timber Sale, proposed for the vicinity of the monument’s southwest corner prompted the Oregon Natural Resources Council to file an appeal. They based it on the contention that the Forest Service failed to fully consider recreational values as represented by trails connecting Oregon Caves with the surrounding national forest. This came in late 1988, after the Forest Service tried to use a supplemental environmental assessment to allow for more clear cuts along the monument’s boundary.

**The Siskiyou National Park proposal**

Filing appeals to timber sales bought time for environmental groups to pursue litigation, but this constituted a last-ditch and usually defensive tactic. Some took the offensive, even after the wilderness question on the Siskiyou National Forest had supposedly been “settled” by passage of the Oregon Forest Wilderness Act in 1984, legislation that established the Red Buttes, Siskiyou, and Grassy Knob wilderness areas on the forest. The national park proposal initially came as the Forest Service readied a draft Siskiyou National Forest management plan for release to the public in the spring of 1986. It surfaced through the efforts of former Illinois Valley
resident David Atkin, then a law student at the University of Oregon, and who enlisted the aid of the Oregon Natural Resources Council (ONRC). Together they called for a study of what really was a reaction to the Forest Service planning timber sales in roadless areas of the Siskiyou National Forest. The proposal varied between 600,000 and one million acres, though Forest Service officials believed the core issue to be preservation of the North Kalmiopsis Roadless Area that totaled some 110,000 acres.

In its original form, the proposal had nothing to do with Oregon Caves, since the land in question was located west of US 199, but the acting regional director William J. Briggle and other NPS officials in Seattle looked to the superintendent at Crater Lake about it in early 1987. Briggle had taken over for Tobin after the latter’s death in September 1985, and then dissolved the superintendent position at Oregon Caves, in favor of putting the monument under control of Superintendent Robert E. Benton at Crater Lake. Miele became Benton’s management assistant stationed at Crater Lake, while a new “area manager” (NPS district ranger) slot located at Oregon Caves was filled by Ted Davis on an acting basis, then Terry Darby beginning in 1986. In any event, the NPS quickly distanced itself from the park proposal, and showed little interest in it even when a subsequent Siskiyou National Park over an even larger land area that included Oregon Caves was unveiled by environmentalists in 1990. By then the Siskiyou National Park proposal had become moribund, with no progress having been made toward obtaining the congressionally sanctioned feasibility study as a precursor.

Even if its proponents just wanted to push the forest plan toward preserving roadless areas, the Siskiyou National Park proposal had been taken seriously enough during 1987 and early 1988 to generate considerable public debate, both for and against it. Environmentalists wanted a “national park alternative” added to the forest plan and delivered 9,000 responses supporting the idea to the Forest Service on January 25, 1988, the deadline for comments on the draft forest plan. Release of the final forest plan for the Siskiyou in 1989 came amid a spate of Forest Service plans and environmental impact statements for individual forests, projects such as rehabilitation of burned areas, and regional approaches to managing forest habitat as part of conserving sensitive biota such as the northern spotted owl. The Siskiyou National Forest’s management plan made several provisions for the area around Oregon Caves, though it fell far short of creating a watershed management plan for the upper Lake Creek drainage.

Planners proposed a botanical area around the Bigelow Lakes of some 971 acres, though 296 of those remained available and suitable for timber production. They also made a case for 197 acres on the western flank of Grayback Mountain to be
withheld completely from timber management, but could offer only a vaguely worded prescription of "Retention Visual" for some 3,660 acres immediately adjacent to the monument. While acknowledging that this prescription applied to "land that is immediately adjacent and visible from major travel routes" and is the land most seen by the public, it could still be subject to a "wide range of activities." Most of the acreage "will be in some stage of timber management, exhibiting an equal distribution of age classes," with some blocks that might remain "unharvested to camouflage the visual effects of management activities."\textsuperscript{52}

\begin{figure}
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\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure60.png}
\caption{Part of the Bigelow Lakes Botanical Area map that the Forest Service included in the Siskiyou National Forest Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement, 1990.}
\end{figure}

Regional Director Charles H. Odegaard referred directly to the Siskiyou National Park proposal in his letter to the Southern Oregon Timber Industry Association on October 2, 1987. In it he wrote:

"The Forest Service has done a thorough job of planning for their management actions in the Siskiyou area and I now see no need to pursue any additional studies."\textsuperscript{53}
This position likely accounted for the lukewarm response that the National Parks and Conservation Association gave to the Oregon Caves portion of its National Park System Plan project of the period. NCPA staff led by Vice President for Conservation Destry Jarvis proposed a modest 600 acre expansion of the monument in February 1988, something largely aimed at protecting the portions of both the Big Tree and No Name trails that went into the Siskiyou National Forest, but also to better aligning the boundaries of Oregon Caves National Monument with topographic features.54

FIGURE 61. An undated drawing from the mid-1980s showing proposed circulation, vegetation, and locations of existing features such as the former church used as a visitor contact station, to be demolished in favor of a “future building,” and parking reminiscent of a highway rest area.

Developing the Cave Junction property

During the mid-1980s, officials at the NPS regional office in Seattle took more interest in what might be done with what they considered to be undeveloped property in Cave Junction than in any national park proposal spun by local environmentalists or, for that matter, a modest expansion of the monument proper. When Regional Director Tobin returned, unfunded, Superintendent Miele’s request to expand the monument’s main parking lot in 1983, he declined to program such a move until visitation could justify it.55 The Illinois Valley Chamber of Commerce still occupied the only building on the Cave Junction property (a former church) at a rental rate of $600 per year, something chamber officials wanted to renegotiate by the middle of 1984. They sought a new lease in view of their work performed on
the structure, something that led to the NPS reassessing what could be done with the property, and for a short time, the monument itself.56

At first, this reassessment took the form of examining options for what could be accomplished with the property, especially if the NPS could streamline its operations. Miele expressed a willingness to act on some suggestions from Associate Regional Director Ron Sarff, who proposed that the NPS administer Oregon Caves from Cave Junction, and look into jointly operating an information center.57 Alternatively, Miele also reviewed the option of selling the four acre parcel since it seemed unlikely that the NPS could fund (at least by itself) construction of a new building. In the end, however, he thought that selling could damage the agency’s credibility and recommended renewal of the special use permit for two years, meanwhile evaluating the need for an information center in Cave Junction.58 In the near term, Miele set off to explore the Forest Service’s willingness to jointly operate what he now called an “information station,” and met with mixed results. Illinois Valley District Ranger Dennis Holthus showed Miele several structures in the Forest Service’s compound that could be used for office space after declining to commit any funds or staff to the NPS property, even if Miele could swing money to cover initial costs. Miele concluded that the best option was staying with the NPS property, even if it meant remaining in the former church building.59

Tobin thereby approved a cooperative agreement with the chamber in late May 1985, less than a week after Miele announced that the NPS office could be moving from the monument to Cave Junction. He set no timetable for such a shift, adding that about half of the seven NPS employees at the monument would remain there.60 As it turned out, Miele was reassigned to Crater Lake in September as a management assistant following Tobin’s death from a heart attack. Deputy Regional Director William J. Briggle, now acting in Tobin’s place, orchestrated the change, but left other employees to work from a small office at the monument. At this point Briggle approached the Forest Service about moving management and operations for Oregon Caves to the Siskiyou National Forest.61

Nothing came of Briggle’s query, nor did any part of NPS operations move to Cave Junction during this period. Instead, Superintendent Robert E. Benton at Crater Lake and the chamber extended the cooperative agreement for use of the church building again in May 1988. Regional officials did a cursory review of whether a NPS presence in Cave Junction could be justified in September 1988 and called on Benton for background.62 After Benton conveyed Miele’s thoughts about the Cave Junction property, an operations evaluation team from Seattle in November pointed out that a more final decision needed to be made.63 What came from their visit sprung from a meeting with the ranger district’s resource assistant, Don McLennan,
who indicated that the Forest Service had lately considered developing an interpretive area at Grayback Campground and might be willing to pursue a "cooperative venture" with the NPS at the property in Cave Junction. The NPS lost little time in pursuing this lead, contacting the Forest Service in late November to indicate interest in plans that might yield a new information center in place of the church building.

FIGURE 62. The Illinois Valley Visitor Center, as viewed from the Caves Highway in 2002. NPS photo courtesy of Roger Brandt.

Sarff called a meeting of potential partners in Cave Junction on December 20 and afterwards provided several recommendations that arose from the gathering. These translated into strategy for building support for the project and ultimately a new structure on the property in less than 11 months. Area Manager Terry Darby took the lead locally for the NPS, backed by Sarff in the regional office, so that the Forest Service could tap state money for the information center and use the property at no cost. This effectively ended Josephine County’s plans for a “port of entry complex” at the Illinois Valley Airport (something that stirred up a minor local controversy) but county officials made $50,000 available for building at the Cave Junction property, as did the Forest Service. For its “fair share,” the NPS committed only $10,000 (more than half of that came from “base” funding.
allocated to Crater Lake and Oregon Caves), yet the project went forward with county approval with the Forest Service taking the lead through a challenge cost-share agreement. In the months prior to ground breaking, the NPS took a somewhat silent role as one of the partners, while an interagency agreement allowed the Forest Service to build a visitor center on the property and manage the site.

Work on the new visitor center and its parking lot began in November 1989, with the lion’s share of funding derived from the state lottery. Both the Forest Service and Josephine County added chunks of money over the following six months so that the $200,000 project could be substantially completed halfway through 1990. By that time, the church building had been razed and a parking lot for 42 vehicles finished so that a full time manager hired by the Forest Service could open the building on July 16. This took place as a shuttle bus linking Lake Selmac with Oregon Caves entered its final ten days of a one month trial. During the period a vehicle with space for 50 passengers took in less than $250, but incurred $4,000 in expenses. Although the economic viability of riding a shuttle to Oregon Caves did not pan out, at least early returns on visitors to the center were encouraging. With the monument’s visitation for all of 1990 at just under 100,000, meanwhile the new visitor center attracted 10,585 during its first six months of operation.

More timber sales, 1989-1996

While opening the Illinois Valley Visitor Center showed how interagency cooperation could work in conjunction with some funding from willing partners, providing visitor information about the area did little to address the persistent question of monument expansion. Three unrelated events occurred within a year or so of the Siskiyou National Forest management plan’s release in 1989 that did little to bolster confidence in the idea that interagency cooperation represented the best way to protect the area around Oregon Caves from additional logging. The first showed what legislation could do for the Smith River National Recreation Area in California, less than 20 air miles away from the monument.

NPS director William Penn Mott had once been head of the California state parks when Ronald Reagan served as governor, and served in somewhat the same capacity under President Reagan from 1985 to 1989. Mott floated the idea of preserving one undammed river system in California as part of the National Park System in 1986. This led to introducing legislation in 1987 of a bill directing the NPS to study the Smith River watershed for its suitability as a national park. Despite having 35 co-sponsors in Congress by the spring of 1988, the bill stalled and supporters settled on creation of a national recreation area of some 305,000 acres. Established on November 16, 1990, the Smith River National Recreation Area (SRNRA)
remained under Forest Service administration, with most of the land originating from within the Six Rivers National Forest, but it also included transfer of 20 acres from the Bureau of Land Management. According to the legislation, SRNRA management was tied to the forest plan on the Six Rivers, with a number of restrictions on logging similar to what proponents of the Siskiyou National Park had sought. While Congress enacted a bill establishing the SRNRA, the Siskiyou proposal remained simply an idea with evidently little backing in the political arena.

FIGURE 63. The number of roads and past timber sales around the monument made the likelihood of seeing a pack train “to Oregon Caves” like this one of the 1930s increasingly unlikely half a century later. Photo courtesy of the Josephine County Historical Society, Grants Pass.

The second, and arguably most contentious, event in relation to logging on federal lands showed how legislation could short circuit the Forest Service planning process and environmentalist attempts to appeal timber sales as a way of forestalling the chainsaws until some better deal could be reached. An appropriations bill for fiscal year 1990 contained a rider sponsored by Hatfield that suspended judicial review of
certain timber sales containing critical habitat for species such as the northern spotted owl. It also set timber targets in board feet, with much of it to come from the national forests of western Oregon, yet at the same time supposedly minimize fragmentation of ecologically significant old-growth forests. Federal judges held that the rider constituted a temporary modification of environmental laws, rather than an unconstitutional violation of the separation of powers (between the legislative and judiciary branches) by prescribing a rule of decision in pending cases. In any event, the rider was later used by the Forest Service to go forward with two controversial timber sales near the monument. None of the units planned for cutting in parts of the Sugarloaf or China Left sales actually lay within the area proposed for monument expansion three decades earlier, but pieces of other sales did.

What seemed to be the worst of the latter, in regard to its potential impact on natural resources within the proposed expansion area, had to be the Deep Left Timber Sale. It represented something of a continuation of what timber planners started in the 1960s, when the Forest Service punched a road around the monument’s southern flank, to a place called Cedar Camp. The planners hung a number of sale units from the road, and they planned another on a portion of the Limestone Trail that leads away from Sand Ridge inside the monument. After Forest Service staff wrote an environmental assessment as far back as 1979, a crew nine years later marked timber for cutting, but some of it was squarely on land administered by the NPS. The Oregon Natural Resources Council cited obliteration of the trail by a new spur road as well as the visual effects of the sale (involving 13.5 million board feet on 446 acres) as its main reasons for filing their appeal in late 1988. Area Manager Darby reacted by telling newspapers that the NPS had no objection to the sale, and made nothing other than a vague allusion to “possible boundary encroachment” (the marked trees for cutting inside the monument) and a desire to learn more about subsurface streams that could be possibly connected to those within the cave.

While the possibility of invoking the “dominant reservation” clause of the monument’s proclamation never seemed to occur to Darby, ONRC spokesman Wendell Wood staked the group’s appeal on what they claimed were the cumulative effects of clear cutting in close proximity to the Oregon Caves. Like most appeals, ONRC hoped to convince the courts that the Forest Service had not considered this in its new supplement to the original environmental assessment for Deep Left. In addition, Wood made the point that the sale might serve to disqualify the nearby Kangaroo Roadless Area from further consideration as wilderness. He also challenged the Forest Service to take a hard look at its reforestation mandate under the National Forest Management Act since old clear cuts near the monument on
dry, south-facing slopes were still covered in dense brush. The one called “Cedar Camp” lay at the road’s end (4614-048), less than a half mile from the monument’s southeast corner, and later became a case study of reforestation failure on the Siskiyou National Forest.  

Planning for Deep Left began to unravel once the northern spotted owl had been listed as a threatened species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in June 1990. The sale would have meant cutting within the habitat for a confirmed pair of spotted owls nesting on the monument, even if the prescriptions called for mostly thinning with cables rather than tractors, though Forest Service planners also proposed small clear cut components. Passage of the Federal Cave Resources Protection Act on November 18, 1988, provided the NPS with another justification to express its concerns to the Forest Service about how the sale might affect the monument’s subsurface resources. Aside from the possibility of Deep Left disrupting the monument’s subsurface hydrology, there was the likelihood of increased foot traffic, damage to the only area of peridotite and serpentinite (igneous rock types high in magnesium and iron, rarely found on the earth’s surface), on the monument and a cornerstone for interpreting the complex geological setting of Oregon Caves and the Siskiyou Mountains.

While the Forest Service still seemed disinclined to suspend Deep Left during the summer of 1990, Darby’s transfer to Whitman Mission National Historic Site in May led to the NPS staff at Oregon Caves to shift away from acquiescence to the status quo. They became more vocal with their objections, at least internally with reports to Benton about the slow rate of stand growth in the clear cuts surrounding the monument. At least one of them pointed to how Deep Left might affect the main cave’s watershed, though the specifics could not be furnished until study of its sources could be completed. Less than eight weeks after the new area manager, Craig Ackerman, arrived in mid-October, he signed a letter to the now retired Roger Contor, ostensibly asking for information that might be useful in compiling an administrative history of Oregon Caves. Contor, who finished his NPS career as regional director in Alaska, recalled the reasoning for the agency wanting to add upper Lake Creek to the monument in 1961. It was “the fine stand of Port Orford cedar, and, overall, a pristine area having characteristics which would provide a great interpretive hike…”

What Ackerman referenced was Contor’s draft Boundary Status Report of April 24, 1961. The report described the recommended adjustment and listed nine justifications for why the NPS should pursue monument expansion, but had no immediate relevance to Deep Left or any other timber sale planned near Oregon
Caves. Ackerman instead tried to work with Forest Service staff on the Illinois Valley Ranger District to mitigate Deep Left’s impacts with a proposal to relocate the Limestone Trail away from the rare and fragile serpentine soils, and, failing this, establishing buffers along the trail and withdrawing small segments. By January 1992, however, Ackerman wanted to discuss “reopening a proposal to expand monument boundaries to at least encompass the possible cave watershed areas” with his new supervisor, Crater Lake superintendent David K. Morris. Ackerman reasoned that such a proposal might not result in boundary changes, but could “provide impetus to USFS to re-evaluate the forest plan with respect to activities along our boundaries.”

Over the next five months, Ackerman worked with a natural resources specialist in the Seattle office, Kathy Jope, to devise an effective way to approach the Forest Service about Deep Left. ONRC did not want to take the lead on it again, especially after the NPS had provided no support more than three years earlier. Jope advised that the NPS should express its concerns about the sale’s cumulative effects on subsurface hydrology of the main cave. A key objective, she wrote, was to get the Forest Service to do hydrological studies for an environmental impact statement on the sale, rather than accept more limited study in an environmental assessment or related supplements. In the face of this effort and other aforementioned resource impacts, the Forest Service quietly shelved the sale by the end of 1993.
Another source of NPS concern came in the form of a new timber sale, “Buck’s Whiskers,” that entered its initial scoping phase in 1992. The Forest Service identified five potential units to be cut within the Lake Creek drainage, but pulled them from further consideration in July 1993 because they did not meet the visual quality objectives consistent with the forest plan. Nevertheless, a letter written by Ackerman and signed by Morris to the new Illinois Valley district ranger Mary Zuschlag in June 1993 stressed the need for a comprehensive approach to ecosystem management of the monument and surrounding area for two reasons. One was tied directly to two proposed sale units that could affect the monument’s water supply from Lake Creek, and pointed out how the road failure of 1982 caused a shutdown at Oregon Caves due to elevated turbidity levels. The second focused on cumulative effects from past timber sales around the monument, as well as those represented by units in Buck’s Whiskers, Deep Left, and China Left still planned for cutting at that point.

When contractors finally cut a portion of Buck’s Whiskers in 1996, the sale consisted of a commercial thinning treatment of 48 acres in a single unit—one not listed by the NPS as among the most sensitive. The other cutting took place on a unit of China Left, also in 1996, and located southwest of the monument before that sale was suspended late the following year. Most of China Left had been cut by the time Rough and Ready Lumber Company of Cave Junction agreed to accept $411,000 from the Forest Service for not logging 60 acres of old growth forest in the Sucker Creek drainage. This came after the Forest Service had to spend $100,000 in emergency funding to repair roads, ostensibly to protect anadromous fish from sediment loads from wash outs caused by storms the previous winter.

One particular rainfall event that occurred around New Year’s Day of 1997 represented a ten to twenty year flood event throughout the region. Its only direct effect in the vicinity of Oregon Caves was to convince the Forest Service to finally close a portion of the road originally built during the early 1960s to access a unit of the Lakes Basin Timber Sale located almost adjacent to the monument’s eastern boundary.

The third event that occurred a little more than a year after release of the forest plan related to the departure of Ron McCormick as forest supervisor and his replacement by Michael Lunn in December 1990. Although some might claim that Lunn had little choice, he awarded the Sugarloaf Timber Sale in 1994, followed by China Left a year later. Both were highly controversial “Section 318” sales, awarded only after several lawsuits were settled and the President’s Forest Plan Record of Decision allowed them to proceed if they met requirements of the Endangered Species Act.

Logging of both timber sales was met by protests, with a number of arrests made...
after Lunn had closed large areas of the national forest around Oregon Caves to public entry. By early 1996, with a polarized situation near the monument set to continue for at least another year, Ackerman briefed NPS regional director Stan Albright on the situation. He reported that a number of environmental groups in Oregon had expressed interest in proposing an expanded monument during an upcoming process aimed at producing a general management plan for Oregon Caves.


More than three decades of official NPS acquiescence concerning the logging activity on and near the monument’s boundaries came to an end through a process aimed officially at updating and revising the Oregon Caves master plan of 1975. The master plan of that period represented one of the last of its kind, focusing on a small amount of site development and possessing little in the way of analysis or research, while subject to the barest level of public input. A provision in the omnibus legislation authorizing the NPS to acquire the Cave Junction property in 1978 also directed the agency to prepare general management plans for all of the 300 or so units it administered. Funding for this purpose finally arrived at Oregon Caves in early 1996, though the total of $60,000 dictated that the planning team members had to come either from the park or what was now a support office in Seattle. Agency reorganization in 1994-95 folded the old Pacific Northwest Region into a “Pacific West Field Area” based largely in San Francisco, with a stated objective of shifting more power from the regional office to park superintendents so as to initiate operational changes.

Albert J. Hendricks, as superintendent of Crater Lake, became Ackerman’s immediate supervisor in February 1995. Hendricks had prior experience with land transfers from the Forest Service, having been superintendent of Lehman Caves National Monument when Great Basin National Park was established in 1986, incorporating about 120 square miles of national forest land and the one square mile national monument. Perhaps more importantly, as superintendent of Great Basin National Park, he had successfully completed the new park’s first general management planning process, redirecting land and public use objectives from the previous multiple use approach of the Forest Service, toward the more restrictive mandate of the NPS. At about the same time, John J. Reynolds became the regional director of the new Pacific West Region. He had once been superintendent (in 1984-88) of North Cascades National Park, established in 1968, the last national park created largely through land transfers from the Forest Service in the lower 48 states prior to Great Basin.
Listing monument expansion as a possible general management plan priority can be traced to the spring of 1992, when Ackerman submitted a list of management concerns not addressed in the 1975 master plan through Crater Lake superintendent Morris and the regional director to planner Keith Dunbar in the Seattle office. The first of six concerns listed made reference to the cumulative impact of clear cuts and partial cuts surrounding Oregon Caves by highlighting the “possibilities” for expanding the monument in order to protect the watershed for the main cave system. When the plan’s scoping period arrived four years later, during which the NPS sought public input concerning the management issues that should be addressed in the plan, the NPS emphasis shifted (at least publicly) to how outdated the master plan was, with Ackerman using the visitation projection of 317,000 in 1977 (compared to the actual figure of roughly 100,000 visitors who arrived at the monument annually since 1990) as a case in point. Nevertheless, a scoping newsletter mentioned a study concerning the adequacy of the monument’s existing boundaries were as one of the “issues and concerns” prior to public meetings held in Cave Junction and Grants Pass. How to protect the monument’s watershed surfaced at both meetings, after which several environmental groups urged their constituents to write letters supporting an expansion.

One of these organizations, the Sierra Club’s Rogue Group, began to draft proposed boundaries after the scoping phase’s comment period ended on April 30. They sent it to Ackerman in December with seven bulleted justifications for proposing an Oregon Caves National Monument of 4,160 acres at its core and with another 1,220 acres as an “optional” parcel. This core unit included all four sections withdrawn from public entry (homestead, mineral claims, etc.) in 1907 plus most of the upper Lake Creek watershed to form a polygon, through use of straight lines to Lake Mountain and Buck Peak from corners of the originally withdrawn sections. The initial NPS proposed action, in a draft GMP for internal review during 1997, recommended 3,310 acres be added to the monument, for a total of 3,794 acres. The difference was largely that the NPS recommendation followed topographic lines to a much greater extent, so as to omit parts of the 1907 withdrawal south of the existing monument and took in only the upper Cave Creek and Lake Creek watersheds.

A draft GMP for public review included the proposed 3,310 acre addition and awaited comments during a 60 day period that commenced in January 1998. At this point the Forest Service signaled a willingness to become involved with the GMP, after having ignored an earlier overture from the NPS. After holding the public meetings on this draft plan in Cave Junction and Grants Pass, a small contingent of NPS and USFS employees convened in Portland to discuss the framework for interagency dialogue about the plan and its four alternatives.
stated that while the Forest Service had no position on the preferred alternative (C) at that point, he and other staff members critiqued the draft EIS as one where issues needed to be clearly presented, so that effects could then be tracked through the alternatives. In a general way, at least from a Forest Service viewpoint, finalizing the plan in its current form would have made it difficult to operate in this part of the Illinois Valley Ranger District, especially where the Forest Service needed road access, though NPS planner Keith Dunbar indicated that the plan’s timeline permitted another four months in order to allow for conducting joint agency review of the draft. There seemed to be an agreement that what the expansion proposal amounted to, if carried through in a record of decision, was a recommendation to Congress for a land transfer.\(^{108}\)

**FIGURE 65.** Aerial photo of the Oregon Caves area indicating past timber sale activities, undated. The rectangle at center indicates National Monument boundaries.

When the Forest Service officially commented on the draft two weeks later, Lunn repeated the agency’s stance of taking no position on the preferred alternative. Yet the letter also tried to poke holes in what the NPS had used to substantiate the need for a land transfer by adopting the position that its management was somehow more science-based. After all, the National Forest Management Act directed that USFS plans had to be dynamic, changing in response to new information and societal needs, whereas the NPS was “locked in” unless changed by legislation.\(^ {109}\) The NPS response, which came through the comment document released with the final GMP
in November 1998, acknowledged the correction of factual errors in coordination with staff members on the Siskiyou National Forest. It disputed, however, Lunn’s contention that NPS management was “locked-in” and somehow unresponsive to the “best scientific and sociological information available.”

In the meantime NPS staff addressed the draft’s factual errors and removed speculation about the cumulative climate impacts from logging through a meeting with Forest Planner Joel King and Forest Wildlife Biologist Lee Webb on May 12. This made the final document tighter, in conjunction with comments from the monument’s chief of resource management John Roth and the NPS representative in the Regional Ecosystem Office (established in support of the Northwest Forest Plan advocated by the Clinton Administration) Jim Milestone. Semi-quantitative analyses of potential impacts were retained, like those of viewsheds affected by logging and the botanical edge effects on the 480 acre monument produced from past logging activity. Dunbar drafted a legislative proposal for the expansion in early July, one that called for transferring 3,400 acres to the monument, since the NPS planning team coalesced around adding another 90 to 100 acres along its southern boundary that had been omitted at the plan’s draft stage.

By that time, Dunbar could report that public comment on the draft GMP generated over 900 individual responses, though a small number of them expressed negative views about the proposed expansion. He wrote about “broad support for the boundary change of some 3,400 acres from the Siskiyou National Forest,” and mentioned “several hundred” (with prompting from environmental groups) requesting consideration of a 48,000 acre expansion “to protect more of the Siskiyou Region ecosystem.” The latter idea corresponded with what environmentalists called “wilderness” or “wilderness recovery” lands around the former Kangaroo Roadless Area. In fact, a total of 575 responses called for a larger expansion than the 3,410 acres identified in the finalized alternative C, with a majority of those calling for a 48,000 acre addition. This was countered somewhat by a petition bearing 102 signatures opposing any expansion. In the end, however, the NPS backed its preferred alternative C with the 3,410 acre proposed addition. This became “final,” when Regional Director John J. Reynolds signed the record of decision for the GMP’s environmental impact statement on December 23, 1998.

Over the following year, finalizing the GMP meant drafting a “legislative support data package” for the boundary adjustment, among other things. This was aimed at informing the NPS Washington office as part of formulating a possible omnibus bill that might include transfer of 3,410 acres from the Forest Service and deletion of the 3.95 acres never acquired in Cave Junction adjacent to the visitor center.
It seemed to stir little interest from NPS officials in the capital, however, even while the bureau's legislative affairs office prepared to launch a bill aimed at formally designating wilderness in a number of western national parks. One problem was that the Secretary of the Interior, Bruce Babbitt, voiced opposition to land transfers
between two federal departments, or even within Interior. This became a huge obstacle if the NPS hoped to accomplish monument expansion through a proclamation as President Bill Clinton neared the end of his second term. Another problem lay in the positions (or lack thereof) by key members of Oregon’s congressional delegation on the expansion. Staffers with Senator Ron Wyden, a Democrat, stated that expansion had Wyden’s “unconditional support.” Senator Gordon Smith, a Republican, provided no official position on it and Representative Greg Walden, also a Republican in whose district the monument lay, did not oppose the idea, either. Local support, in the form of an endorsement from the governor’s office or a resolution from the Josephine County commissioners, was also absent.

As President Clinton’s second term came to a close over the summer of 2000, a coalition of environmentalists sought to recast the Siskiyou National Park proposal by urging that one million acres around the Kalmiopsis Wilderness be declared a national monument. It became known as the Siskiyou Wild Rivers National Monument proposal and quickly attracted opposition, even when the Siskiyou Project and other groups called for its administration to remain with the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. Using his authority under the Antiquities Act, Clinton issued a number of proclamations before the year ended.
One of them in Oregon would stay with BLM, the 52,000 acre “Cascade – Siskiyou National Monument” near Ashland, but the President declined to touch the Wild Rivers proposal. Senator Gordon Smith, who had been involved with a successful effort to protect Steens Mountain in southeastern Oregon without the President having to issue a national monument proclamation, called for an end to any further designations without public involvement. Clinton left office without a proclamation for Wild Rivers, to the dismay of its supporters, yet no one from either side seemed to remember the Oregon Caves expansion included in the general management plan’s record of decision just two years earlier. By virtue of its inclusion in a public decision document (GMP/EIS/ROD) the NPS position favoring Oregon Caves expansion remained on the books, even though it did not resurface for almost another decade.

Relations with the Forest Service, 2001-2008

The dramatic decline in national forest timber sales that had its beginnings during the late 1980s continued into the new millennium, which accelerated trends toward consolidating Forest Service administration, staffing cuts, and declining revenue for virtually all commodity or resource programs. NPS infrastructure and services at Oregon Caves, by contrast, expanded after approval of the monument’s general management plan in 1998, even without the larger boundaries recommended in the document. Not all increases stemmed from the plan, however, as some (such as law enforcement) came about in part due to cuts in Forest Service funding for what had been known as the Illinois Valley Ranger District. Some areas of interagency conflict persisted, though grazing replaced logging as the leading source of NPS complaints.

Although the Forest Service had reduced the numbers of cattle permitted on its Big Grayback Allotment from 200 in 1937 to 70 some seven decades later, the agency’s actions toward fencing the Lake Creek drainage were either ineffective or nonexistent. Part of the problem lay in the fact that the Forest Service administered this allotment from a ranger district located along the upper Applegate River on the Rogue River National Forest. Its forest plan appeared in 1990 and called for the regulation of grazing to be a largely optional tool, even where it could impact botanical areas zoned as part of the forest planning process. The botanical areas in question (Bigelow Lakes and Grayback Mountain) were situated on the Siskiyou National Forest, where grazing was prohibited except where it had become part of an existing allotment. Even then, promises to minimize stock intrusions into Lake Creek had largely gone unfulfilled, despite several pledges about fencing selected areas or after the Siskiyou and Rogue River national forests were combined in 1999. By 2007, the best that the Forest Service could do through its decision process for the Big Grayback Allotment was to require reconstruction of a drift
fence first built in 1980 at Upper Bigelow Lake and prohibit all grazing within 150 feet of the water intake on Lake Creek. At least the Forest Service used its planning process to reduce the allotment to 56 head, but by then the permittee agreed to a buyout orchestrated by local environmentalists and temporarily ceased using the allotment in anticipation of eventually being paid the full amount of the buyout. The final installment put the need to fence Bigelow Lakes and the water intake to rest.
The amicable planned retirement of this 19,703 acre allotment possessed more drama, in that non-governmental parties forged a solution, than did other interactions with the Forest Service during the period. One involved transfer of all Forest Service interest in the Illinois Valley Visitor Center building to the NPS in 2006, something largely done through expediting a property form.\textsuperscript{127} This transaction represented part of a larger regional move by the Forest Service to reduce the number of properties under its management throughout Oregon and Washington, but also solidified the NPS role at the IVVC, where it and the BLM had provided the only federal funds for operations since 2003.\textsuperscript{128} Ackerman responded to the transfer by assigning the building to the monument’s concessionaire, as an amendment to the existing contract. The move obviated any need for NPS staffing, but also provided a way to regulate service and maintenance.\textsuperscript{129}

One other interaction simply had Ackerman and a Forest Service official acting under authority of the forest supervisor sign a special use permit for continued occupancy of the Lake Creek tract in 2004. This iteration allowed the NPS to build and occupy a new administrative building, along with a duplex housing unit, in addition to the single family residence erected in 1959.\textsuperscript{130} Signing the special use permit masked all the work that went into design and funding the new structures, which began in 1993 when Crater Lake superintendent David Morris urged the
regional director at that time to provide relief for the NPS, given the dire state of office facilities and housing at the monument. The staff had long since outgrown the portable office trucked from Crater Lake to Oregon Caves in 1964, though crews did not remove it from the main parking lot until early 1997. That occurred after storms reactivated a subsurface slide that slowly began to send the structure downslope toward Cave Creek. A large trailer took its place for the next seven years, until design and funding finally aligned so that a new administration building could be erected as the centerpiece of the new Park Headquarters at the Lake Creek tract.

One of the justifications for the new facility was that museum collections could be moved from the Ranger Residence above the Chalet. Items in storage, meanwhile, might no longer be subject to water and rodent damage. For more than 30 years much of the collection had resided in a Quonset hut located at Lake Creek across the access road from the single family residence. In place of the hut rose a duplex housing unit, one initially intended to restore seasonal quarters lost when two dilapidated trailers had to be hauled away in 1994 and not replaced. When the new development took shape a decade later, it gave the still-secluded site the appearance of being a permanent park headquarters, even if parking remained in short supply due to the relatively steep topography. The park headquarters that took more than 60 years to realize still remained 1.5 miles away by road from the monument proper, with no indication that it might ever be surrounded by lands entirely under NPS administration.

Legislation for monument expansion, 2008-2014

What represented the greatest flurry of bills aimed at a legislative remedy for expansion of Oregon Caves National Monument began in June 2008 and ran for more than six years. Members of the Oregon congressional delegation persisted with provisions to designate a monument with larger boundaries, new designations for wilderness areas elsewhere in Oregon, as well as segments of wild and scenic rivers in the state. It did not take long for the proposed legislation to recast the expanded monument as a national preserve (a designation aimed at muting opposition from user groups by allowing for hunting), with the underground portion of Cave Creek (the River Styx) slated to join the Wild and Scenic River System.

A catalyst for reviving the delegation’s interest in monument expansion came, not surprisingly, from an environmental group. NPS staff aided the effort, mostly by supplying testimony when some of the bills had committee hearings. This occurred even when a few of the personalities had shifted since the Secretary of the Interior,
Bruce Babbitt, had ruled out land transfers for possible Presidential proclamations made under the Antiquities Act in 2000. The most important local change occurred in the spring of 2008, when Craig Ackerman transferred to Crater Lake National Park as superintendent, to be replaced by Vicki Snitzler—formerly a management assistant at Wrangell-St. Elias National Park in Alaska. Snitzler’s background provided for a smooth transition at the monument, along with needed continuity during a period when a total of seven bills prompted numerous requests for information from congressional staffers, as well as those from government officials at the Washington level.  

Revival of the efforts to expand the monument, this time through legislation rather than proclamation, came during the second term of President George W. Bush. A “case statement” from the Klamath Siskiyou Wildlands Center of Ashland (KS Wild) titled “Oregon Caves National Monument Drinking Water Source Protection and Boundary Expansion” somehow caught the attention of congressional staffers in the Oregon delegation. Proponents at KS Wild argued that buying out grazing permits and expanding the monument’s boundaries made economic sense and could provide rural economic development opportunities. Specifically, allotments regulated by the Forest Service containing 350 AUMs (animal unit month, the amount of forage needed to sustain one cow and calf for 30 days) could be purchased and thus eliminate trespass into the Bigelow Lakes Botanical Area. KS Wild also made the point that taxpayers lost an average of $8,000 annually on allotments that paid the government only $118 in grazing fees each year, and most importantly, the lone permittee appeared willing to take a buyout. KS Wild added monument expansion to their case statement, again concentrating on some ecological and economic reasons for effecting this change; the economic rationale centered on the idea that if the monument were bigger, visitors might stay longer and spend more money.

Members of the Oregon congressional delegation (Senator Ron Wyden and Representative Peter DeFazio) introduced similar bills aimed at expanding Oregon Caves National Monument on the same day in 2008. Wyden’s bill, S. 3148, made reference to the general management plan of 1998 in proposing that 4,070 acres (an increase from 3,410 proposed in the GMP) be transferred from the surrounding national forest to the monument, while four acres in Cave Junction be deleted. The additional 660 acres consisted of national forest lands added northwest of those proposed in the GMP in order to form a corridor in the Cave Creek drainage that also included the campground near milepost 16 of SR 46.
FIGURE 70. Map indicating the proposed Oregon Caves expansion in relation to the grazing allotment buyout orchestrated by KS Wild, which also included the campground near milepost 16 of SR 46.

FIGURE 71. NPS map of proposed national monument expansion, June 2008.
The bill also contained a provision for voluntary surrender of grazing permits, as well as some unusual designation of streams both within and just outside of the 480 acre monument as wild, scenic, or recreational rivers. Its companion legislation, H.R. 6291, introduced by DeFazio (who represented this part of Josephine County in the House) differed only in that the congressman added numerous segments of the Rogue River and its tributaries that he wished to see added as Wild and Scenic River Act designations.

Only Wyden’s bill went to a committee hearing, something set for July 30, 2008. Although the grazing permittee sent a statement indicating his willingness to give up the Big Grayback allotment in exchange for reasonable compensation, the deputy chief of the Forest Service (Joel Holtrop) opposed the land transfer and requested the Senate committee defer any action on the bill pending “further coordination on the proposed action between the Forest Service and the National Park Service.” Deputy Chief Holtrop then went into more detail about how the lack of joint study between the two bureaus resulted in legislative language in this bill that might create more problems. As Deputy Director of the NPS, Daniel N. Wenk provided a statement for the Department of the Interior, and recommended deferring action on the bill in order to provide “the opportunity to explore ways to maintain continuity and interagency coordination on issues related to forest health and recreational opportunities.”

This left Wyden and other members of the Oregon congressional delegation in an odd place, having to accept a deferral of action on the legislation after representatives from both departments affected by the bill could not endorse it. They had no choice but to send Holtrop’s statement to the Supervisor’s Office of Rogue River Siskiyou National Forest in Medford for more information and ask for comment by monument staff, a process that consumed another six weeks, but which shaped supplemental testimony on the almost identical House bill in mid September. DeFazio’s staff prepared the latter as something of a launch point for an expansion bill he planned to introduce after the November general election, once a new Congress convened in 2009.

Prospects of some movement toward passage of legislation authorizing monument expansion seemed brighter in light of a Democratic majority in both houses of Congress following the general election of 2008, an event that also brought Democrat Barack Obama to the White House. Although no Republican (particularly those in the Oregon delegation) expressed opposition to such a bill, the problem now seemed to be the perceived importance of the legislation in light of competing congressional priorities. Both senators from Oregon, Ron Wyden and the newly-elected Jeff Merkley, introduced the “Oregon Caves National Monument
OREGON CAVES NATIONAL MONUMENT BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT ACT OF 2010

MAY 28, 2010.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. RAHALL, from the Committee on Natural Resources, submitted the following

REPORT

together with

DISSENTING VIEWS

[To accompany H.R. 2889]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Natural Resources, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 2889) to modify the boundary of the Oregon Caves National Monument, and for other purposes, having considered the same, report favorably thereon with an amendment and recommend that the bill as amended do pass.

FIGURE 72. Cover page of report that accompanied HR 2889 in 2010, something that referenced a map identical to one produced in 2008, differing only in that a national preserve was proposed instead of an expanded national monument.

Boundary Adjustment Act of 2009” on June 16, on the same day that DeFazio introduced a companion bill, H.R. 2889. The only substantive change from the bills of 2008 came in the form of a “national preserve” designation for the 4,070 acres of national forest land proposed for transfer. This was aimed at minimizing any objections over the loss of hunting, since the transferred acreage under that designation would remain open for that purpose.144

As a member of the subcommittee on Public Lands and Forests, a body connected to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources in the Senate, Wyden could initiate a hearing on S. 1270, set for July 22. Holtrop testified again, re-emphasizing how cooperative management between the Forest Service and
NPS—not a land transfer—could better meet the bill’s purpose to enhance protection of monument resources and increase recreational opportunities. He took issue with the termination of grazing outside the proposed preserve and disputed how four of the rivers located within the proposed preserve could meet established criteria for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. More surprising was Wenk’s testimony, now given as acting NPS director, in support of several technical amendments (including one aimed at ending hunting in the preserve after five years) but then insisting on recommending that the Senate defer action on the bill so the NPS could continue exploring ways to maintain interagency cooperation. This dumbfounded Wyden, who accused both the Forest Service and NPS of foot-dragging and noted that he had seen nothing in any interagency agreement thus far that contained any “teeth” in it for effective cooperative management.

Both departments, Agriculture and Interior, nevertheless made a commitment to report to the subcommittee within six months of the hearing on “interagency coordination regarding the lands surrounding the monument.” It was left to the NPS staff at Oregon Caves to initiate a memorandum of understanding with the Wild Rivers (formerly Illinois Valley) Ranger District of the Rogue River Siskiyou National Forest. They did so by modeling the draft on a similar MOU between the NPS and BLM at Craters of the Moon National Monument that existed before legislation expanding that national monument was enacted. Forest Service officials at the local level provided comments on the draft, whose intent centered on “codifying” the existing relationship, providing for an exchange of information, and identifying activities of mutual interest.

In any event, work toward a signed MOU proceeded while storm clouds started to appear on the legislative horizon. The first had nothing directly to do with Oregon Caves, though it fueled a local perception that somehow the monument’s proposed expansion could be tied with a proposal from KS Wild for the “Siskiyou Crest National Monument.” At least one proponent of the latter described such a monument as “an ambitious vision that will be made real by the efforts of many dedicated people over a period of years,” and in its initial form, stretched over an area of some 600,000 acres along the Oregon-California border. Although officials with the NPS and the Department of the Interior tried to distance themselves from such a proposal, their efforts were not helped by the fact that KS Wild had included Oregon Caves and its surroundings within the Siskiyou Crest proposal, leading to a number of signs placed on private property throughout the Illinois Valley by early 2010 that read “No Monument.”
A hearing took place on DeFazio’s Oregon Caves expansion bill (H.R. 2889) in the House of Representatives on September 9, during which the NPS and Forest Service representatives submitted similar comments to those of the Senate hearing on July 22. The only real difference in terms of support for the House version, as opposed to the Senate, came in the limited amount of non-federal testimony taken by the House Subcommittee on National Parks. The monument’s concession company supported the bill, mainly because the proposed expansion represented better “branding” for Oregon Caves and a chance to increase visitation that had fallen to 73,744 in 2008. By contrast, the ranking Republican on the subcommittee, Rob Bishop of Utah, opposed the bill for “substantive policy reasons.” His main ammunition came in the form of a letter from an executive vice president of the Southern Oregon Timber Industry Association, who objected to the expansion because it supposedly prevented management of forest lands surrounding Oregon Caves. He also blamed environmentalists for promoting efforts to place more public lands “off limits,” by attempting to expand already established national monuments like Oregon Caves and the Cascade-Siskiyou near Ashland.

Several days prior to another House subcommittee hearing in November 2009 on DeFazio’s bill, the Department of the Interior shifted its position on S. 1270 from “exploring ways to maintain interagency coordination” to supporting Wyden’s bill with some technical amendments. In backing the land transfer, the department also supported the draft MOU, but considered the latter “limited in what it can achieve.” At the House hearing, the Forest Service representative reiterated the Department of Agriculture’s commitment to interagency cooperation and soft-pedaled its opposition to the land transfer by reporting on joint efforts to reduce hazardous fuels accumulation as well as problems with how the bill addressed the retirement of grazing permits around Oregon Caves. When the six-month period previously requested by both the Forest Service and NPS at the Senate hearing expired in January 2010, a MOU had been drafted, but not signed. A letter to Wyden had been written by the Forest Service in December and eventually signed in early February by representatives of the two departments, yet the most concrete action item to emerge from all the “interagency coordination” was that the Forest Service finally agreed to permanently retire the grazing lease affecting the Lake Creek watershed.

DeFazio’s bill, H.R. 2889, went to a vote by the full committee first in May 2010, where it was then marked-up, but with only minor changes. Wyden’s legislation followed in June, so that the bills emerged with the same elements and could thus be rolled into an omnibus package without creating difficulties for a hypothetical conference committee, should such a package be passed by both the House and
Senate. This did not occur before the 111th Congress adjourned, so the sponsors re-introduced their bills in the next congressional session. Senators Wyden and Merkley brought S. 765, almost identical with its predecessor, to committee on February 17, 2011 so that another hearing could be set for May 11. On the House side, DeFazio introduced H.R. 1414 on April 7. While the House bill remained lodged in the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands, the Senate bill eventually received a favorable report from the full Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on November 10, 2011.

S. 765 even made that chamber’s legislative calendar on January 13, 2012, but proceeded no further during the second session of the 112th Congress. In the meantime, KS Wild had struck a buyout deal with the grazing permittee using private funds, and in the interim, paid him not to run cattle on the Big Grayback allotment. Although this move represented progress toward resolving the water quality problem, both Wyden and DeFazio reintroduced their bills in the 113th Congress. Wyden and Merkley brought S. 354, a bill with virtually identical wording to the earlier S. 765, to the Senate on February 14, 2013, amid a number of other pieces of legislation they sponsored that session. The full committee reported S. 354 a month later, on March 14, and recommended passage. While it awaited a floor vote, DeFazio introduced a companion bill, H.R. 2489, on June 25. While the House bill lay in abeyance for most of the following year, at least one of the legislation tracking services rated its chances of enactment as very poor.

The prospects of H.R. 2489 began to improve dramatically once a floor vote in the Senate unanimously approved transfer of 4,070 acres to the NPS, as well as the measure’s other provisions on July 9, 2014. By the following day the legislation had been referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources, where DeFazio sat as its ranking minority member. H.R. 2489 then went to the Subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation on July 14, where it was favorably reported and approved unanimously by the full committee on July 30. DeFazio laid the groundwork for these actions with a May 20 subcommittee hearing on H.R. 2489, where both NPS and Forest Service representatives testified for their respective departments.

DeFazio’s bill (and presumably Wyden’s companion measure in the Senate) received a ringing endorsement from Comptroller Bruce Sheaffer, stating that the Department of the Interior supported this legislation. The Deputy Chief of Business Operations for the Forest Service, Lenise Lago, presented a somewhat terse outline of its effects, then concluded that the bill might be modified to be “self-executing,” observing that the “expansion boundary could be adjusted in places so that the new boundary better facilitated future management by both Agencies.”
Her statement indicated that Department of Agriculture, while not excited by the proposed national preserve to be managed by the NPS, did not oppose it.  

H.R. 2489 became part of a large omnibus package by December, one titled “Carl Levin and Howard P. “Buck” McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015,” or H.R. 3979. It contained all of the provisions in both S. 354 and H.R. 2489, as Section 3041. These included the boundary adjustments of transferring 4,070 acres of national forest land to a national preserve administered by the NPS, and deletion of four acres in Cave Junction that had previously been authorized in 1978. There were also stipulations to uphold previously existing Forest Service contracts and continuance of grazing permits (along with authority to accept voluntary buyouts), as well as hunting and fishing subject to applicable regulations within the national preserve. The River Styx (as a subterranean portion of Cave Creek) also became part of the Wild and Scenic River System, with five segments of surface streams within the monument proper to be studied for their inclusion to the system within three years of funds being appropriated for this purpose. 

FIGURE 73. The cave entrance as it appeared in September, 1975. This is where the River Styx reemerges as Cave Creek. NPS photo.
H.R. 3979 passed the House on December 4 and went to the Senate, which approved it December 12. President Obama signed Public Law 113-291 on December 19, 2014. It authorized the largest expansion of the National Park System since 1978 and contained the Oregon Caves provisions. This legislation thus assigned management of 4,554 acres to the NPS and designated it "Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve." It became a reality 102 years after supporters first proposed a larger park, albeit for different reasons. Persistence with pursuing the legislative route on the part of Wyden and DeFazio eventually paid dividends with an expansion, while the general management plan approved in December 1998 represented a catalyst. The enacted legislation that eventually followed is, of course, only an initial step toward making the new national preserve into a functioning part of the park unit first established in 1909.

FIGURE 74. Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve, as it appeared on the map of Wild Rivers Ranger District, 2015. The Forest Service map was the first government publication showing this designation.
Notes to Chapter 3

1 Miele to Regional Director, Pacific Northwest Region, January 4, 1979, D22; Weaver to Dickenson, January 5, 1979; Dickenson to Weaver, January 16, 1979, L1425; “Congressman Weaver suggests Parks cut ‘pen’ in half,” Cave Junction Illinois Valley News, January 11, 1979. Reference to ‘pen’ meant the holding area proposed for visitors to Oregon Caves during periods of great demand for tours. Editor Bob Grant claimed that the proposed visitor center “had factions lined up on both sides, with the majority opposing the plan.” The scope of the interim operation is in Miele, Detail of Annual Operating Requirements, form 10-237, signed February 14, 1979.

2 Miele to Regional Director, PNR, January 4, 1979, C3817; typescript titled “Bus Transportation,” n.d., and another titled “Bus System,” paginated as 5-7, also n.d. Phil Parker, Concessions Manager, PNR, to Associate Regional Director, Management and Operations, PNR, January 25, 1979, with “Comments on Bus Service, Cave Junction to Oregon Caves.” Miele then pushed the possible starting date to the spring of 1980; Parker to files, February 12, 1979.

3 Miele to Regional Director, PNR, January 17, 1979, D22.

4 Rex Daugherty, Chief Appraiser, to Chief, Land Acquisition Division, PNR, March 15, 1979. In the appraisal by J.B. Fulton, the author provided some context for his conclusions and a figure of $31,800, about $10,000 more than what TPL paid for the property. Fulton characterized Josephine County as having 60,000 residents as compared to 41,500 in 1972. The county was rapidly growing, with some 11,000 of those residents located in the Illinois Valley. The City of Cave Junction had a population of 622 in 1979, but the prevailing demographic of the Illinois Valley largely consisted of former California residents, whose average age was higher than the national average, but whose income was slightly lower. Fulton estimated between 50 and 60 residential building starts per year in Cave Junction, and an additional 20 to 30 mobile home sales, with more to come in future years. The church had been built sometime in the early 1930s by Seventh Day Adventists, who made several additions to attain 2,386 square feet. He rated its condition as fair to poor, and not worth saving, citing an example of costs associated with moving a church building in nearby Selma during February 1979. Swan made his field inspection accompanied by Miele, Borgman, and the group office’s maintenance chief, Jeff Adams; Swan to Regional Director, PNR, May 11, 1979.

5 Miele to Regional Director, PNR, May 25, 1979, D22; and Borgman to Regional Director, PNR, May 29, 1979, D3415.

6 A photo appeared in the Cave Junction Illinois Valley News of June 28, 1979. The wording bore some resemblance to those labeled as “Oregon History” that appeared on state highways during the 1930s.


10 This figure appeared in a “Summary of Issues” from the Southern Oregon Resources Alliance [March 1982] and was derived by somehow equating the bid price per thousand board feet of Port Orford-cedar ($320.91 in early 1982) with that of Douglas-fir ($32) and pine species such as sugar and Jeffrey ($214.51) to arrive at a total of $20 million. Bid prices appeared in the Lost Cave Timber Sale, prepared by the Forest Service in early 1982 and offered for bid on August 2, 1982.

11 Roger D. Lee, Sanitarian (PNR), to William Mullen, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, January 3, 1980, D5031. The figures on what timber volumes might be sacrificed in the event of monument expansion by some 3,000 acres are in “Summary of Issues,” ORCA files.
Chapter Three Notes

12 Miele to Regional Director, PNR, August 18, 1980, A76. The offer first came up in January 1980; James Agee, Research Biologist, University of Washington Cooperative Park Studies Unit, Regional Director, PNR, memorandum of January 9, 1980.

13 This estimate was from 1980; Miele to Regional Director, PNR, August 18, 1980, A76; the NPS paid some $900 for the Forest Service to do reconnaissance, survey, and design the road segment; Daniel R. Kuehn, Associate Regional Director, Management and Operations, PNR, to Gerald Barrowcliff, Administrative Officer, Siskiyou National Forest, August 27, 1981, A76. Compliance consisted of a rudimentary archaeological survey and an environmental assessment; Daniel J. Tobin, Jr., to Superintendent, OCNM, August 13, 1981, L7617.

14 An interagency agreement authorized up to $35,000 for building the road segment, plus another $5,000 to administer the construction contract; IA9000-4-0010, signed by Ronald J. McCormick, Forest Supervisor, August 6, 1984, and Barbara J. Riggs, NPS contracting officer, August 21, 1984. The Lost Caves sale was advertised for bid on August 2, 1982.

15 Tobin to Superintendent, OCNM, April 9, 1981; in response to Miele’s memorandum about the boundary extension proposal originally submitted by Yeager, April 1, 1981, L1417.


17 Miele to Regional Director, PNR, September 24, 1981, N36, enclosing notice from Dennis C. Holthus, District Ranger to OCNM, September 15, 1981, 2470. The figure cited in the composition of Roundup is from Miele to William Mullen, U.S. EPA, January 3, 1980, D5031. The compliance documentation was used to arrive at a finding of no significant impact on the environment assessment, but was not specific enough with respect to detailing the methods used in proposed treatments; William H. Covey, Forest Supervisor, to USDI NPS, April 4, 1980. A letter from Covey to Miele on April 25, 1980 may have prompted the doctor’s note for his patient. Miele had previously urged Covey to pursue alternative vegetation management techniques around Oregon Caves; Miele to Covey, March 13, 1980.

18 Miele to Regional Director, PNR, December 2, 1981, N16; and Miele to Regional Director, PNR, December 3, 1981, N36. These measures differed somewhat from what Forest Service officials agreed to 18 months earlier. At that time the buffer was the same, but was to extend 200 feet from one of the Bigelow Lakes; Miele to files, May 13, 1980, to note the meeting with the forest hydrologist and the forest silviculturist.

19 Miele to Regional Director, PNR, March 9, 1982, D5038, page 2 (concerning the turbidity and its cause). Miele to Commander, First Battalion, 186th Infantry [Oregon National Guard], January 5, 1982; his concern also presumably extended to visitors, as cave tours continued through the winter period at that time.

20 Section 1, PL. 96-553, enacted December 19, 1980. Most of the tracts were evaluated by the Forest Service for their wilderness character under the Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II) program, but implementation of RARE II had been halted by a federal court decision in 1979. Most of the acreage around Crater Lake qualified to be designated as wilderness, and many environmental groups believed that Hatfield acted to show his even handedness at a time when he worked to set timber targets for the Forest Service and have roadless areas that did not qualify under RARE II “released” to become part of the timber “base” in each of Oregon’s national forests.

21 Board of Directors, Umpqua Valley Audubon Society to Hatfield, December 30, 1981.

22 Hatfield to Tobin, January 18, 1982; Tobin to Hatfield, January 26, 1982, LS9, ORCA files. Tobin’s response reflected how the NPS attitude toward expansion had shifted in the wake of Ronald Reagan’s election as President and his naming of James Watt as the Secretary of the Interior. For background see Richard W. Sellars, Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 270-272; John C. Miles, Guardians of the Parks: A History of the National Parks and
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23 Sirmon to Hatfield, n.d. [February 1982], copy in ORCA files.

24 James had previously lived at Crater Lake and worked at Lava Beds National Monument as an interpreter. Ashworth worked as a county librarian in Ashland, but represented the Rogue Group, Sierra Club on the show.

25 Channel 5 KOBI Medford, transcript of television interview by Cheewa James with John Miele, January 26 or 27 [1982], three pages, ORCA files.


27 D.R. Kuehn to John L. Smith, drafts of March 17, 1982 and May 5, 1982, A3615, which eventually translated as a response from Under Secretary Don Hodel to Smith, June 30, 1982, A3615. Hatfield made Smith’s and Felghour’s letters public enough so that excerpts appeared (along with some from the Audubon Society, Forest Supervisor Covey, and an interview with Miele) in “Miele – F.S. in conflict over Caves expansion,” Cave Junction Illinois Valley News, April 1, 1982, p. 1. Miele ended up drafting the final version of the letter to Smith under Hodel’s signature; Miele to Regional Director, PNR, May 5, 1982, A3615.

28 Patrick J. Kelly, Executive Director, and Don Johnson, Timber Committee Chairman, to Board (of the Southern Oregon Resources Alliance) and Committee Members, March 9, 1982, with attached “Summary of Issues,” ORCA files.

29 Ashworth to Hatfield, April 14, 1982, copy in ORCA files. He told Hatfield that an expansion sponsored by the senator was preferable to one from Weaver, in that it would not carry the “preservationist” tag so distinctly. Weaver had been the main sponsor of the Endangered American Wilderness Act of 1978, something that passed over Forest Service objections. It expanded the Kalmiopsis and created two new wilderness areas (Wild Rogue and French Pete) in Oregon.

30 Ashworth had enough local celebrity as a noted author of books on several environmental topics (though these focused on areas away from southern Oregon) to have his position paper titled “Oregon Caves National Monument: The Case for Expansion” adopted by the chapter, the first located outside of California, and begun in the 1950s. They adopted it as policy according to a note he wrote at the top of a page typescript with maps, copy sent to Miele, ca. April 1982, ORCA files.

31 The closest point of the designated wilderness to Oregon Caves National Monument is four air miles, even though a roadless corridor connects the two areas, with access possible by trail along the crest through the Rogue River – Siskiyou National Forest. Weaver’s legislation was announced as “Bill urges Red Buttes wilderness,” Medford Mail Tribune n.d. [June 18, 1979].

32 Miele to Regional Director, PNR, August 30, 1984. Peters’ handwritten and undated note to Miele [August 29, 1984], both are in ORCA files.

33 L. Lee Purkerson, Chief of Technical Services, et al., to Superintendent, Oregon Caves, July 7, 1982, N3043, 2-3. The road was identified as 4045D, a spur from 4045; later re-numbered as 969, branching from 070 that stemmed from FS road 4611. This conclusion validated what Miele had contended was the cause of the debris slide; Miele to Regional Director, PNR, April 6, 1982, L1417.

34 Ibid., see pages 4-7. At the time of writing, most of the information about this program is most likely in an administrative history of RNP by Mark Spence, though this document remains in draft and is not
publicly accessible. The team from Redwood consisted of Purkerson, Engineering Geologist William E. Weaver, and Geologist Danny K. Hagans.

35 Ibid., see pages 8-9. For good measure, Miele requested the U.S. Geological Survey to assess the entire monument, in particular the developed area, for debris flow hazards; John Friday, Debris Flow Hazard for the Oregon Caves National Monument (Portland: USDI-Geological Survey, Water Resources Investigative Report 83-4100, 1983), 1. Weaver and Hagans visited the monument at least once and reported that the corrective actions promised by the Forest Service were incomplete, so that Miele initiated funding requests to improve the water system according to their recommendations; Miele, Rehabilitation Lake Creek Water System #62, form 10-238, signed November 25, 1983. More detail about the intake is in Roger D. Lee, Environmental Sanitation Consultant, PNR, to Superintendent, Oregon Caves National Monument, January 15, 1985, D5031; a follow up visit by Weaver and Hagans is noted in Miele to Regional Director, PNR, June 9, 1985, W3043.

36 USDA-Forest Service, Siskiyou National Forest, Oregon Caves Zone Management Objectives [1979], 1-2, ORCA files. NPS input on the objectives was limited and Miele preferred to press the Forest Service for a basin-wide watershed management plan on Lake Creek; Miele, Statement for Management, Oregon Caves National Monument, June 2, 1983, Watershed Protection Section, signed by Charles H. Odegaard, acting Regional Director, PNR, June 8, 1983, D18.


40 Excerpted from History of the Sugarloaf Timber Sale and attached to Sugarloaf Timber Sale, Siskiyou National Forest, Executive Summary [fall 1994], ORCA files.

41 This is summarized in Paul W. Hirt, A Conspiracy of Optimism, op. cit., 269; and Joe P. Matty, The Timber Bubble that Burst (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 3-7.

42 Hirt, A Conspiracy of Optimism, 267-278.


44 This took place in T40S, R6E, sections 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17. A majority of the sections had once been included in proposals to expand the monument. An estimated 9.34 million board feet was removed, 411,000 of it Port Orford-cedar; Valerie Graham (IVRD) to Wayne Hill, PNR, n.d., ORCA files. Not all of the units were clear cut, as 334 acres in the Four Pepper sale received other treatments such as shelterwood removal or thinning.

ONRC initially saw a Siskiyou National Park as including the Wild and Scenic portion of the lower Rogue River, as well as much of the Illinois, Chetco, and Smith drainages; ONRC staff, “A Second National Park for Oregon,” Wild Oregon (Spring 1986), 24.


Regional Director Charles Odegaard somewhat contradicted his sentiments expressed several days earlier, in that he told another newspaper about wanting to wait on any decision about the feasibility study until after release of the draft Siskiyou National Forest management plan; Robert Sterling, “Siskiyou park rejected,” Medford Mail Tribune, October 18, 1987.

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“Forest park idea goes nowhere,” Medford Mail Tribune, October 12, 1991. The “Klamath – Siskiyou National Park Study Area Proposal” came about through efforts of a Portland-based activist, Bruce Amsbary, in “Draft #1” that included more than a million acres of federal land in parts of Curry, Josephine, and Jackson counties in Oregon, as well as Del Norte and Siskiyou counties in California. This took place after Atkin stepped away from the proposal, between the draft and final versions of the Siskiyou National Forest management plan; Lee Juillerat, “Siskiyou park notion gathers more steam,” Klamath Falls Herald and News, January 6, 1989. The Wilderness Society later backed the park idea, but dodged specifics such as boundaries; Bill Manny, “Wilderness Society puts Siskiyou park on priority list,” Medford Mail Tribune, May 23, 1991, 5A.

“Park backers turn in 9,000 pro letters,” Medford Mail Tribune, January 26, 1988. Discussion of whether to add such an alternative resurfaced once Norman Johnson, a member of Governor Neil Goldschmidt’s staff, called the Forest Service to task in not analyzing the park proposal in one of its 13 alternatives; Robert Sterling, “State says park deserves study,” Medford Mail Tribune, December 13, 1987. The governor later modified his stance to say that the park proposal did not necessarily merit a separate alternative in the plan; Bill Manny, “Governor backs off park study option,” Medford Mail Tribune, February 2, 1988. This countered earlier reports about a separate alternative; Paul Fattig, “National Park could be added to Siskiyou plan,” Central Point Central Valley Times, December 31, 1987.


Ibid., IV-131. The reference to Grayback Mountain appeared in Appendix F, page F-88. Bolan Lake was also proposed as a botanical area. Most mention of Port Orford-cedar in the plan was confined to two existing research natural areas in Coos County (pages F-149 and F-151).

Odegaard to Sue Joerger, Executive Vice President, SOTIA, October 2, 1987, L58. This was copied to the Regional Forester James Torrence of the Forest Service.

It also included “the small cave located on a ridge northwest of the monument,” NPCA Boundary Study of the Oregon Caves National Monument, Oregon,” page 496 with a map following as attachments to Jarvis transmittal to Park Superintendent,” July 11, 1988, D18.

The Chamber wanted a yearly rental rate of $1.00; Tony Betchick, “Chamber Making Plans for next Moon Tree Run,” in the Cave Junction Illinois Valley News, June 7, 1984. The chamber operated there on a special use permit covering the period from December 1, 1979 to November 30, 1984; Leonard Frick, President, Illinois Valley Chamber of Commerce, to Miele, June 28, 1984.

57 The superintendent made reference to Sarff’s visit of February 14-15, 1985; Miele to Regional Director, PNR, February 26, 1985, PNR-D.

58 Miele to Regional Director, PNR, n.d. [November 1984] and again n.d. [March 1985], file PNR-DD. A memorandum of agreement with the chamber became a cooperative agreement by April 1985; William J. Briggle, Deputy Regional Director, to Miele, January 10, 1985, L30; Lawrence E. Cox, Acting Regional Solicitor, to Regional Chief, Contracting and Property Management Division, PNR, NPS, April 3, 1985, NPS Property #0082, ORCA files.

61 Tobin died of a heart attack on September 7, 1985. Briggle’s query summarized in “Questions for the Record for Joel Holtrop following July 30, 2008 hearing [on] S. 3148, page 1, September 2, 2008. It is part of legislative documents pertaining to monument expansion on compact disk from Vicki Snitzler in possession of the author. This move may have had more to do with cutting off any legal recourse that Miele might have wanted to take as part of a directed reassignment, in order to make such a change appear to be part of a reorganization. A decision about Oregon Caves becoming a satellite area to Crater Lake had been made by October, thus dissolving the superintendency at the monument in favor of an area ranger position; R.E. Benton, Statement of Relationship between Crater Lake National Park and Oregon Caves National Monument, October 4, 1985, CRLA files.

62 Charles H. Odegaard, Regional Director, PNR, to Superintendent, Crater Lake National Park, September 9, 1988, K1817/L3215, ORCA files. The consensus from the Seattle office was that the NPS presence was better focused on the monument than in Cave Junction.

63 Benton to Regional Director, PNR, Attention: Deputy Regional Director, September 26, 1988, D18. Ronald E. Sarff and Reed Jarvis, Operations Evaluation Review Summary, Chapter II, page 1 of 3, November 12, 1988, ORCA files; see also Sarff and Jarvis to Briggle, draft [November 1988], A5483.

64 Jarvis and Sarff, draft “comments,” 3-5; McLennan also indicated that Josephine County was considering an information center to be located at the Illinois Valley Airport south of town.

65 Charles H. Odegaard, Regional Director, to Dennis Holthus, District Ranger, Illinois Valley Ranger District, November 25, 1988, L3215.
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66 Sarff to Superintendent, Crater Lake National Park, December 28, 1988, attached to a memo about the “Meeting on National Park Service-owned land (Cave Junction, Oregon), December 27, 1988, L3215, 1-4, ORCA files.


68 “Visitors center set: Caves Highway,” Cave Junction Illinois Valley News, March 13, 1989. This had the effect of the Forest Service having to negotiate operational costs with four other partners. These were the county’s chamber of commerce, the city of Cave Junction, and the Rough and Ready Lumber Company. For its part, the NPS set to the task of razing the old church building, something that had to first be expedited by determination that the structure built in 1936 was not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places; Odegaard to Superintendent, Crater Lake National Park, March 28, 1989, H4217.

69 Sarff to Bill [William J. Briggle], July 18, 1989, no file code. The NPS, however, agreed to assume maintenance costs on a cyclic basis; meanwhile, the county hired an architectural firm even before the interagency agreement was signed. Some of the building materials were supplied by Rough and Ready Lumber Company of Cave Junction. Final plans were in place by September; Benton to Regional Director, PNR, Attention: Deputy Regional Director, September 15, 1989, L3215.


74 P.L. 101-612, see especially section 460(d) Transfer. The park study bill, H.R. 3588, was introduced in October 1987, with supporters including the Save the Redwoods League, National Audubon Society, Sierra Club, National Parks and Conservation Association, Garden Club of America, and the California State Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The Save the Redwoods League issued a circular in 1988 titled “Smith Wild River National Park: A Quick Guide to the Issues,” providing some detail about the original idea. See also “Smith River National Park: A Progress Report” in the Spring 1988 Bulletin of the Save the Redwoods League. It came as another area of some 50,000 acres along the Salmon River of northern California was proposed as “Green World National Park,” some 45 miles southwest of Yreka; Robert Sterling, “Group favors park for area alongside the Salmon and Klamath,” Medford Mail Tribune, August 24, 1988, 4A. The Salmon – Klamath proposal later resurfaced briefly as a considerably larger “Ancient Forest National Park,” aimed at linking six designated wilderness areas
lying near the border of California and Oregon; Alden Moffatt, “A Plea for an Ancient Forest National Park,” Arcata Econews, May 1993, 16.

75 Mike Wyatt, “Tomorrow’s Parks,” Backpacker; December 1990, 50. Emblematic of this was the erection of “Siskiyou National Park” signs by members of the group “Earth First!” in July 1988; “Forest officials tear down ‘national park’ signs,” Medford Mail Tribune, July 27, 1988, 4A.

76 Section 318 of the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 1990, P.L. 101-121. The northern spotted owl was listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act on June 26, 1990, though the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service failed to designate critical habitat at that time, sparking another lawsuit. The USFWS responded to a court order to do this on January 15, 1992.

77 Hatfield spun the rider as a “timber compromise,” whereas the Oregon Natural Resources Council dubbed it “the rider from hell.” Specifics are in Michael C. Blumm, “Ancient Forests and the Supreme Court: A Blank Check for Appropriation Riders,” Journal of Urban and Contemporary Law 43:35 (1993), 35-48; see note 39 for its origin.


79 Ibid. See also “Appeal raises several queries,” and “ONRC announces timber sale objection,” in Cave Junction Illinois Valley News, January 5, 1989. Darby claimed that a large portion of the Illinois Valley Ranger District was visible from the monument, and said that attempting to prevent any visible logging activity would “amount to closing down the cutting on the entire forest.” Larry Cosby, a seasonal NPS employee in resource management, informed Darby of the marked trees; per John Roth interview, January 28, 2013. In the Illinois Valley News article, the environmental assessment for Deep Left was described as finalized in 1982.

80 “ONRC announces timber sale objection,” op. cit. The NFMA of 1976 mandated that evidence of reforestation had to be present within five years of logging, which in the case of Cedar Camp took place after 1969 and before 1976. Cedar Camp was used by Professor David Perry of Oregon State University as representative of “many other unforested clearcuts at high elevation throughout the western United States,” in his article in Conservation Biology 4:3 (September 1990), 269, cited in “The History of Headwaters’ Investigation of High Elevation Reforestation Failures in the Siskiyou National Forest,” Headwaters Journal (Summer 1992), 13. Photos in the latter article show failures on Buck Peak north of Oregon Caves and a boundary point in the expansion area proposed in 1949, as well as a 20 acre clear cut unit located on the road south of the monument that had also failed. Headwaters explained in the caption of the latter that it was located next to a unit of the Deep Left sale and had falsely been reported as stocked with 210 trees per acre. Multiple applications of herbicides did nothing to help Cedar Camp or Buck Peak clear cuts and may have made the problem worse by killing root fungi. As something of a postscript to the Cedar Camp failure, Forest Service chief Mike Dombeck recalled how one of the planning team members on the Siskiyou National Forest, Mike Amaranthus, used soil from older trees to inoculate younger trees with truffles (fruiting bodies of mycorrhizal fungi), so that suddenly a high proportion of seedlings could survive late summer drought. Even though this led to a better understanding of complex soil communities, and the critical role that hardwoods and soil invertebrates play in maintaining high elevation forests, the antidote is so labor intensive that it has not been widely implemented on the forest; Michael P. Dombeck, et al., From Conquest to Conservation: Our Public Lands Legacy (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2003), 151-152.

81 Craig Ackerman, conversation record about review, Deep Left Timber Sale with USFS representatives Dennis Holthus and Dwight Fickus, October 2, 1991, ORCA files.

82 See especially Section 4 (c) of P.L. 100-691. “Low Hopes Cave” is the one identified by Chief of Resource Management John Roth as being in the closest proximity to the monument; telephone interview, January 28, 2013.
Roth interview; the area where the Limestone Trail connects with the Lake Mountain Trail on Sand Ridge also furnishes a superb view of the surroundings.


Contor, Boundary Status Report, “Draft RJC, 4-24-61,” three pages, L1417. The proposed expansion would have included 2,260 acres.

Ackerman, in Oregon Caves National Monument Activities Recap, Reporting period through January 5, 1992, page 1, ORCA files.

Jope to Ackerman, June 15, 1992, e-mail on “Deep Left” Sale, ORCA files. Stepping up the requirements to an EIS for key timber sales (in roadless or other sensitive areas) is something referenced in other literature of the time, given legal precedents established in the courts; “The History of Headwaters...” op. cit., 13-14.


Morris to Zuschlag, June 28, 1993, L7619. Resource Management Specialist John Roth pointed to additional effects of the sale as proposed, in that one unit (#9) could affect subsurface water flow in the northwestern part of the monument. Concern that removing one of the last remaining corridors for northern spotted owls was another point, especially since that the amount of suitable habitat within the monument was not sufficient. Roth also pointed to generalized effects from Buck Whiskers [c. 1994], logging vertical file, ORCA library. For some broader context about the internal pressures affecting Forest Service employees and agency operations of the time, see Hirt, A Conspiracy of Optimism, op. cit., 285-292.

The total cut was 340,000 board feet in a unit identified as Buck’s Whiskers #6; Valerie Graham to Wayne Hill, “Ten Year – 1986 to 1996 [timber sale program] on Sections 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17,” page 1.

China Left consisted of 16 units covering 530 acres and involving 12.7 million board feet of timber. The unit closest to the monument involved 32 acres of clear cut, though some seed trees were reserved. Another unit lay one mile south of the monument in section 22.

“Forest Service cancels last of China Left sale,” Medford Mail Tribune, October 16, 1997. The sale was suspended after 10. 8 of the 12.7 million board feet had been cut, with logging completed in 11 of the 16 units; Debbie Lukas, “Chainsaws Halt at China Left,” Arcata Eacon, 27:10 (November 1997), 5. Logging stopped at the sale sites on June 5, 1997, when wild coho salmon were listed as threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Bill Kettler, “China Left logging may resume,” Medford Mail Tribune, June 12, 1997.
94 This is a portion of the 4611-070 road before it crosses the outlet streams of both Bigelow Lakes. Apart from stacking boulders across the road, no other work was done to decommission or restore the route.

95 USDA-Forest Service, History [chronology] of the Sugarloaf Timber Sale, following the “Executive Summary of the Sugarloaf Timber Sale,” pages 2-3. Lunn actively seemed to fuel a public relations disaster for the Forest Service by appearing to be unyielding and strident, not only to protesters, but to members of his own staff; J. Michael Lunn, Forest Supervisor, to Regional Forester, Region 6, May 5, 1994, 2410, and Joel King, Sugarloaf Timber Sale briefing, August 5, 1994. Not only did a number of prominent environmentalists join in protest, but also political candidates such as Harry Lonsdale, the challenger to Hatfield in the Senate race of 1996; Barbara Hahn, “Marquee names join Sugarloaf protest,” Grants Pass Daily Courier, October 30, 1995. The group Headwaters alleged that contractor Boise Cascade emerged with almost a million board feet more than what Forest Service timber cruisers had estimated at Sugarloaf; Robert Brothers, “Sugarloaf After,” Headwaters Journal (Spring 1996), 54. Sugarloaf spanned 667 acres in three units along Forest Road 4611 between Oregon Caves and Williams.

96 The link between Sugarloaf and China Left as virtual copies of each other had been made very early, especially by environmentalists; Beth Howell, “China Left as the next Sugarloaf,” Voice of the Wild Siskiyou (Spring 1996), 7. The tension between environmentalists and law enforcement was made worse by an arrangement the Forest Service made with laid-off deputies of the Josephine County Sheriff's Office, whereby Boise Cascade reimbursed half of law enforcement expenses through the agency; Cindy Lons, “Siskiyou Forest closes China Left to public,” Grants Pass Daily Courier, August 13, 1996.

97 Ackerman, NPS Briefing Paper for Field Director Albright, January 26, 1996, ORCA files.


99 P.L. 99-565, approved October 27, 1986. Like Oregon Caves, Lehman Caves was originally transferred from the Forest Service in 1933 and consisted of 640 acres. Creation of the national park in 1986 involved a land transfer from the Humboldt National Forest, so that the acreage of Great Basin National Park totaled 77,100. An additional 80 acres of BLM land were added several years later as a detached administrative site. Hendricks became superintendent at Lehman Caves in 1981 and assumed the role of superintendent at Great Basin when it was established in 1986, then transferred from Great Basin to Crater Lake in February 1995. The figure cited for the GMP is derived from Keith Dunbar's estimate in a Draft Project Agreement for the GMP and environmental impact statement, Package ORCA 9540-7005-409, December 1995, page 1.

100 North Cascades National Park, 82 Stat. 926, approved October 2, 1968. Similar to Lehman Caves/Great Basin, this was a straight transfer of national forest lands to create a national park under NPS administration. Ross Lake and Lake Chelan national recreation areas were established at the same time as North Cascades, with an interagency headquarters at Sedro Woolley, Washington.

101 Item #1 on an attached list for Oregon Caves National Monument on a transmittal memo from Morris to Dunbar via the Regional Director, PNR, March 6, 1992, D18/W42.


Myra Erwin, Conservation Chair, Rogue Group Sierra Club, to NPS, Columbia Cascades System Support Office, Seattle, June 13, 1996; “Oregon Caves Monument Boundary Progress Report,” by Valdomar Swanson, Project Chairman with maps [December 1, 1996], attached to letter from Swanson to Ackerman, December 5, 1996, ORCA files.

USDI-NPS, Draft, Chapter 3 (for In-house Review only) of Oregon Caves National Monument General Management Plan, 27-32, and map for Boundary Modifications: Alternative C.


Hendricks and Ackerman believed that the regional forester encouraged Lunn and his staff to get involved once the NPS deputy regional director Bill Walters mentioned the need for Forest Service input over lunch. From the Siskiyou National Forest came Lunn, Forest Staff Officers Mike Cooley and Bob Ettner, District Ranger Mary Zuschlag, Information Officer Liz Apgar, Wildlife Biologist Lee Webb, Ecologist Tom Atzet, and Forest Planner Joel Page. Two planners from Region 6 also attended, chief Lisa Friedman and NEPA coordinator Dick Carkin. On the NPS side were Hendricks, Ackerman, Regional Chief of Lands Rick Wagner, Regional Ecosystem Office representative Jim Milestone, Historian Steve Mark, as well as John Roth and Roger Brandt from the monument, in addition to planners Keith Dunbar and Cheryl Teague from the support office in Seattle; handwritten notes by S.R. Mark from the meeting of February 27, 1998, ORCA GMP file. The public meeting in Cave Junction was summarized by Mary Wertz, “Caves Site expansion, renovation of facilities in plan; views sought,” Cave Junction Illinois Valley News, February 18, 1998.

Ibid. In an earlier communication from Hendricks to the writer, the superintendent furnished an e-mail from Ackerman, which summarized an earlier conversation with Forest Planner Joel King, who felt that the NPS was guilty of “bad process” and inadequately supported the analysis presented by the draft; Ackerman to Hendricks, February 15, 1998. In addition the USFS saw NPS commentary and observations in the document as not supported by science in addition to being inconsistent with guidance in the Northwest Forest Plan of 1994. Furthermore, they thought that too much of the material in the draft came from environmental groups whose findings were not subject to peer review; Hendricks to Mark, e-mail of February 15, 1998, ORCA GMP file.


Ibid.

Comments and recommended editing changes in GMP from 5/12 meeting with Siskiyou National Forest representatives (King and Webb), ORCA GMP file.

Dunbar to Hendricks and Ackerman, July 8, 1998, e-mail attached to “Draft Legislative Proposal for Oregon Caves National Monument,” ORCA GMP files. Unfortunately the mapping was not updated in the final GMP document, though it is likely the addition of 100 acres is in Section 15.
113 Dunbar, Project Report, July 9, 1998; see “Status” heading. He also made the point that the GMP was some $10,000 under budget, with some funds likely to be needed in FY99 to finalize a record of decision and help the park prepare funding requests stemming from the approved GMP. Most of the 982 responses came the final two weeks of the comment period, since as of March 6, only 246 comments had been received; Summary of the Written Comment [March 6, 1998], A3823/D18, GMP file. The 48,000 acre idea seems to have stemmed from Robert Brothers, “Should Unprotected Wilderness and Wilderness Recovery Areas be added to the Oregon Caves National Monument?” Voice of the Wild Siskiyou (Winter 1996-97), 29. This translated into a form letter from the Siskiyou Project of February 10, 1998, calling for a 48,000 acre expansion, ORCA GMP file. The Kangaroo Roadless Area is shown on the map, Figure C1 in RARE II area 6703, in Appendix C, page 218 of the Siskiyou National Forest Plan of 1989.


115 USDI-NPS, Record of Decision, Final Environmental Impact Statement, General Management Plan, Oregon Caves National Monument, Oregon, signed by Reynolds, as recommended by Ackerman, with concurrence by Deputy Regional Director William C. Walters. Hendricks had transferred to Capitol Reef National Park in November 1998, and his successor Charles V. Lundy requested that the monument no longer be managed from Crater Lake. Ackerman later notified those who commented on the GMP, many of whose letters were reproduced in volume 2.


117 This related to parks like Crater Lake, which had “recommended wilderness,” (through the Department of the Interior and then transmitted by the President to Congress) but nothing formally designated per the Wilderness Act of 1964. The effort did not succeed.

118 According to Ackerman, this became a political hot potato once President Bill Clinton made monument proclamations affecting national forest lands located adjacent to Sequoia National Park in 2000; Ackerman interview June 5, 2000.

119 Legislative Support Data Package, op. cit., page 1. It also noted that while both the Regional Forester and the Forest Supervisor of the Siskiyou National Forest declined to take a position on the proposed monument expansion, both had retired at the end of 1999. Lunn spent little of his time on Oregon Caves after 1998, having been charged with merging the staffs of the Siskiyou and the Rogue River national forests into one operation; Paul Fattig, “Forest official faces combined task,” Medford Mail Tribune, May 14, 1999.

120 Paul Fattig, “Monumental effort,” Medford Mail Tribune, July 7, 2000, 1A and 9A.


The pledges began in 1978, with an agreement to erect a fence over 2.5 miles to keep cattle away from the water intake, as well as .75 mile upstream on Lake Creek; James A. Schelhaas, District Ranger, Illinois Valley Ranger District, to Miele, July 14, 1978, 2150 Cooperation, ORCA files. This was reduced to the USFS building .75 mile of fence in 1980, but a cattle guard failed on the Lake Mountain Trail, allowing some cattle to reach the monument that summer, while others came to Oregon Caves by way of Cave Creek Campground; Don L. McLennan, Resource Assistant, to Participants, Illinois Valley Coordinated Resource Plan, February 25, 1981, 2200 Range Management. This led to new promises to replace the cattle guard on the Lake Mountain Trail, to build new drift fence above Cave Creek Campground, and to install a cattle guard on the Sucker Creek (#4612) road; USFS-Siskiyou National Forest, Illinois Valley Coordinated Resource Plan, Seventh Annual Meeting, February 23, 1982, with attachment listing basic measures (Miele also transcribed these by hand during the sixth annual meeting, February 25, 1981). Monument staff recorded no incidents of livestock trespass between 1986 and 1994; John Roth to Mario [Mamone], Star Ranger District, Rogue River National Forest, August 31, 1994, Y1819. Earlier Forest Service meeting notes indicated why the drift fence above Bigelow Lakes failed; Chris Friend, Big Grayback Allotment Interdisciplinary Team Meeting: Alternatives Development, September 15, 1993, 2. Ackerman noted another pledge by the USFS to minimize stock intrusions during a 1996 meeting with the Applegate District Ranger, Mary Smelcer. She identified fencing Bigelow Lakes as the key water quality protection strategy, but no measures were taken to implement it; Smelcer to Ackerman, October 21, 1996, 1950/2210; and Ackerman to Phil Pollard, U.S. Public Health Service Consultant, October 31, 1996, N3043. This meeting resulted because the NPS kept pressing the issue over possible Cryptosporidium contamination; Ackerman to Smelcer, August 17, 1996, L7619. The theme was repeated after the storms of late 1996 and early 1997 caused the NPS to rehabilitate the monument’s water intake.


Paul Fattig, “Giving Up Grazing,” Medford Mail Tribune, March 11, 2007. According to the article, permittee Phil Krouse agreed to the $265,000 buyout offered through the Klamath Siskiyou Wildland Center of Ashland. Specifics of the fencing are in Duffy, Decision Notice, op. cit., 4-5.

Scott D. Conroy, Forest Supervisor, to Rick Wagner, Columbia Cascades Land Resources Program Center, NPS, April 10, 2006, 7310, with AD-107 form attached; ORCA file through e-mail from Ackerman, April 11, 2006.

Interagency Agreement between the USDI, National Park Service – Oregon Caves National Monument and Bureau of Land Management – Medford District, and USDA, Forest Service, draft of May 12, 2003, ORCA files. The Forest Service had staffed the IWC with a site manager, Dennis Strayer, who had been funded by all three agencies; “Dennis Strayer, man of three hats,” Rogue River Currents (Winter 2000), 3, 14.

Ackerman to Robert Schumacher, Executive Director, Illinois Valley Community Development Organization, May 26, 2006, C38, with attached Exhibit C, assigned Land and Real Property Improvements (Concession Facilities) with map, ORCA files.

Special Use Permit signed by Ackerman and Rob Shull for Scott D. Conroy, attached to V. Grilley, Deputy Forest Supervisor to Ackerman, April 2, 2004, 2720 in ORCA file.
In 1976 Miele wanted to replace the portable office (which came to only 216 square feet) and the kiosk/comfort station built in 1941 by the Civilian Conservation Corps with one structure, to be located in the parking lot, but the funding request never went beyond the draft stage. The portable office was located near the site for the concessionaire's gas station and restroom that were destroyed by slope movement in 1942. The portable office was removed once an ominous crack from that slide reappeared in the pavement following the rain event of 1996-97.

Although initial design resulted in a “Title I” final report at the end of 1996, a number of sticking points resulted in further design modifications and review so that construction was delayed for another seven years; Zaik/Miller/Dibenedetto Architects, Title I Final Report Oregon Caves: Trailer Replacement, Housing, Collections Storage, and Administrative Offices, December 31, 1996, ORCA building files. The prospective redevelopment of the Lake Creek tract also prompted a review of water supply to the site; Larry Martin, Hydrogeologist, NPS Water Operations Branch, to Superintendent, Oregon Caves National Monument, trip report to Oregon Caves National Monument on March 31 and April 3, 1997.

As a study in contrast to rustic architecture, Quonset huts came into being in the spring of 1941 and became synonymous with cheap, temporary wartime housing and storage; T. Luke Young, “The Unassuming Quonset: Survival of Semi-Circular Significance,” _CRM4_ (1996), 7-10. The one at Lake Creek slipped into an appalling state so that no museum or archive item could be stored in it without an absolute certainty of damage. This led to a dispersal of items beyond the Ranger Residence, to Illinois Valley High School (herbarium) and to Crater Lake National Park for most photo negatives and prints, until all of it could be reunited in the new administration building.

See chapter 2 for more detail about the origins of the Lake Creek site for a park headquarters, beginning with Ernest P. Leavitt's endorsement of the site in 1942, followed by John B. Wosky and Lawrence C. Merriam in 1953.

Ackerman continued to play an advisory role from his new post, at least in the opening stages, when the bills of 2008 and 2009 were introduced. He continued to maintain his residence in Grants Pass, as did Snitzler and her husband Marshall Neeck, who served as the chief ranger at Crater Lake until transferring to Redwood National Park in late 2009.

Revenue and cost figures are for both allotments that the permittee (Phil Krouse) grazed; KS Wild, Case Statement, 3.

KS Wild, Case Statement, 9.

It would have designated 2.6 miles of Cave Creek a recreational river, 3.6 miles of Lake Creek a scenic river, 0.6 miles of No Name Creek a wild river, 0.8 miles of Panther Creek a scenic river, the subterranean River Styx and upper Cave Creek above it as recreational rivers (Section 5). These were meant to coincide with the fortieth anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act’s passage in 1968.

Section 3 of H.R. 6291, short titled as the “Oregon Treasures Act of 2008,” whereas S. 3148 was short titled “Oregon Caves National Monument Boundary Adjustment Act of 2008.”

PAUSING AT THE RIVER STYX

142 Statement of Daniel N. Wenk, Deputy Director, NPS, USDI, Before the Subcommittee on National Parks of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources Concerning S. 3148, to modify the Boundary of the Oregon Caves National Monument and for other purposes, July 30, 2008, page 1.

143 The Forest Service prepared responses to “Questions for the Record” (Holtrop testimony) on September 2, 2008, followed by the NPS comments (15 pages in draft). The writer was requested to comment on this document by John Roth, something that was subsequently incorporated into supplemental testimony by Susan Jane Brown, Natural Resources Counsel to DeFazio (e-mail of September 19, 2008, answered September 30, 2008, expansion file). KS Wild, meanwhile, took an overly optimistic view of how both bills had progressed; “Congress Moves to Safeguard Oregon Treasures,” press release, September 11, 2008, copy in ORCA file.

144 Paul Fattig, “Bill expands Oregon Caves, protects Rogue tributaries,” Medford Mail Tribune, June 17, 2009. Explanation of the national preserve designation is in section 9 of both S. 1270 and H.R. 2889; a number of other NPS units have such provisions, an example being at Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve in Idaho. The expansion bills were summarized by Snitzler in a briefing statement of June 19, 2009, ORCA files.


146 Statement of Daniel N. Wenk, Acting Director, NPS, USDI, Before the Subcommittee on National Parks of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources Concerning S. 1270, To modify the boundary of the Oregon Caves National Monument, and for other purposes. The recommendation to defer action on the bill differed from draft versions of the testimony prepared for Wenk.


148 Undated briefing statement from NPS files [2009] about the draft MOU; mention of the timeline and purpose is in a joint letter from Harris Sherman, Undersecretary of Agriculture, and Thomas Strickland, Assistant Secretary of the Interior, to Wyden, February 5, 2010, ORCA files.


150 This lasted at least into 2011; see “Monuments and oranges,” Medford Mail Tribune, February 3, 2011, op-ed, written to separate the Siskiyou Crest proposal and an order from the Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, directing BLM to protect wilderness characteristics on lands it managed. This perception that somehow the two things were connected was further confused by another Oregon congressman, Greg Walden, who addressed a group of protestors in Medford, accusing the Secretary of overstepping his authority. See also “The Siskiyou Crest Campaign Overview” at http://www.siskiyou-crest.org/campaign, accessed February 1, 2013.

151 Robert Schumacher, [Executive Director], Illinois Valley Community Development Organization, [September 2009], 4-5. Schumacher made the point that attendance at Oregon Caves in 2008 was roughly the same as 1946, or less than half of the 1978 figure.

152 David R. Schott to Representative Hastings, Re: HR 2889 [no date], attached to “Dissenting views on HR 2889, Oregon Caves National Monument Boundary Adjustment Act of 2009, the Honorable Rob Bishop (R-UT), Ranking Member [September 2009]. In Schott’s case, he confused the [Cascade]
Siskiyou National Monument established by President Clinton’s proclamation in 2000 with the KS Wild proposal for a 600,000 acre Siskiyou Crest National Monument. The Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument was expanded from 52,000 to 86,744 acres in 2009.

153 Thomas L. Strickland, Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, to Mark Udall, Chairman, Subcommittee on National Parks, [November 2009], copy in ORCA files. The letter was noted in Paul Fattig, “Parks Service backs Oregon Caves expansion,” Medford Mail Tribune, November 15, 2009.

154 Statement of Lenise Lago, Deputy Regional Forester, Pacific Northwest Region, National Forest System, USFS, USDA, House Natural Resources Committee, Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands. The shift in the Department of the Interior’s position was also reflected in the Statement of Steve Whitesell, Associate Director, Park Planning, Facilities, NPS, USDI, before the House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands, Concerning HR2889, to modify the boundary of Oregon Caves National Monument, and for other purposes, November 17, 2009, ORCA file.

155 Oregon Caves National Monument, December 2009, Issues of Concern, with draft letter from the USFS attached, ORCA files; both agencies apparently interpreted the MOU as a general framework for cooperation and not something that allowed the exchange of services. The letter from Sherman and Strickland went to Wyden on February 5, 2010, op. cit. The statement about retiring the grazing permit is in a briefing statement about the Oregon Caves National Monument Boundary Adjustment Proposal to DeFazio, Merkley, and Wyden, with Vicki Snitzler as the contact, date of January 8, 2010, ORCA file.

156 The bills were “Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to HR2889, Offered by Mr. DeFazio of Oregon,” version of May 4, 2010, and “In the Senate of the United States—111th Congress, 2nd Session, S. 1270” [June 2010]. Both reference map 150/80,023 of May 2010, which was virtually identical to the 2008 map. Legislative actions were summarized in National Park Service, 112th Congress, Legislative Proposal, n.d. [June 2010], 2. The minor changes included providing time frames for studying the streams mentioned in the monument and proposed expansion area as possible additions to the Wild and Scenic River System, allowing the USFS to administer any fuel reduction contracts in the expansion area, and eliminating trapping from the proposed national preserve; in other words, the 4,070 acre addition.

157 The DeFazio bill appeared to be among the victims of a shifting landscape in the House; after the mid-term elections of November 2010, the chamber was controlled by Republicans. His bill was therefore referred to the House subcommittee on April 14, where it remained for the duration of the 112th Congress. What made things seem to lurch backward during the May hearing was the Department of the Interior having to re-adopt an official position of exploring ways to maintain interagency coordination” even though it supported the bill. The reason was due to not being able “to reach closure on this issue with the Forest Service,” David J. Hays, Deputy Secretary of the Interior, to Jacob J. Lew, Director, Office of Management and Budget, July 26, 2011. This made no difference in the full Senate committee’s report on S. 765.

158 Calendar No. 276 under General Orders.

159 “Protecting a historic jewel,” editorial in the Medford Mail Tribune, June 19, 2011.

160 Senate Report 113-29, April 22, 2013, text available on the website beta.Congress.gov, see hashtag “Congressional-report/113th-congress/senate-report/29/1,” accessed November 22, 2013. The “Oregon Caves Revitalization Act of 2013” came with related legislation such as the Oregon Treasures Act of 2013, which combined two wilderness expansions with a proposed increase in more Wild and Scenic River designations in the state, along with another bill creating a new wilderness area on the Siuslaw National Forest.
The prognosis in the House was based on eleven percent of bills made it past this committee in 2011 through 2013, with only three percent of them enacted; whereas during the same period, twenty-three percent of bills made it through the full Senate committee were enacted. See https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113 (H.R. 2489 or S. 354), accessed November 22, 2013.


Summarized from sections (b), (c), and (e) of Section 3041, H.R. 3979.


FIGURE 75. Tour party at the first Chalet, most in coveralls, about 1923. Frank Patterson photo, courtesy of Lee Webb.
Chapter Four
An Unenviable Distinction

Nature guiding, or "interpretation," as it came to be called, represents an outgrowth of natural history. As a creature of the eighteenth century Enlightenment, the main thrust of this study of how the natural world works is the faith that an average person possesses enough potential to appreciate and understand nature, and by extension, the universe. It also reflected the belief that creation could be ordered, since natural history sought to arrange all life into a single system, such as the Linnaean, one that might illuminate patterns among all of Earth's forms. Natural history reinforced a belief in an underlying unity (one frequently seen as divinely inspired) while also fueling a search for beauty and significance in sublime or even ordinary landscapes.¹

Trained scientists and self-styled naturalists provided the occasional (and usually unpaid) lecture or campfire talk throughout the United States during much of the nineteenth century. In such settings, interpretation of the natural world could be seen as edification for the relatively few who had leisure time to spend outside, as well as optional. Amid the opening of a vast continent through better transportation networks in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, came the discovery of places both unusual and aesthetic enough to spur development of infrastructure as tourist attractions. Caves, if sufficiently close to railheads or roads accessible to stages and wagons, might prove viable enough to their proprietors seeking to develop tour routes. These might entice guests who might pay to visit an underground world, one where show caves usually featured some variety (formations, pools, and fauna adapted for life in the dark) and allowed their human visitors access with a minimum of crawling. Since they controlled entry, owners of show caves could charge admission and provide guides. Given how disorienting the cave environment might well be for most visitors, guides often relied on a mix of mirth, explanations based on understanding arising from popular culture, as well as Greco-Roman mythology for directing what paying guests might perceive while
underground. Perhaps more so than any other category of tourist attraction, science seemed to provide relatively little in the way of alternative explanation until the 1960s.²

Forest Service administration at Oregon Caves, 1911-1933

What became the norm of cave tours (rather than independent exploration of Oregon Caves) began under Forest Service administration. It partly stemmed from the accidental, but self-inflicted, shooting death of Frank Ellis in August 1909, whose party lacked a guide. Despite the Ellis shooting being the subject of statewide publicity, concerns about vandalism expressed more than a year later by an important constituent probably had more to do with the Forest Service hiring a seasonal employee to be stationed at the monument.³ His main responsibility involved reporting and fighting wildfires, but the newly-hired forest guard also provided a free guide service in the cave when not otherwise occupied with fire suppression. This development largely removed the need for visitors to hire a guide on either end of the road network (usually in Williams or Kerby) as many did prior to the Ellis incident, but this arrangement could only work if annual visitation remained at a level of 1,000 or fewer. Guiding thus commenced in 1911, at a fairly unusual stage of park development, in that the monument could only be accessed by one of two trails—each extending eight miles or more from the closest road in the vicinity of Oregon Caves.

The first two forest guards at Oregon Caves, Vickers Smith and Richard Sowell, served during the summers of 1911 and 1912, respectively. Both of them made improvements along what then constituted the tour route, mostly by installing and maintaining ladders or removing obstructions along the route. No one captured the content of either man’s tour, or how they delivered it visitors. Starting in the 1913 season, however, cave guiding gained continuity due to the hiring of Richard W. “Dick” Rowley. As the only forest guard for the next nine seasons, Rowley played a pivotal role in naming (or re-naming) formations and rooms in the cave, but also perpetuated monikers given by Elijah or Carter Davidson, Walter Burch, Homer Harkness, Frank Nickerson, and John Kincaid.

Rowley made an easy transition from forest guard to head guide once a company run by businessmen from Grants Pass, the Oregon Caves Resort, became the monument’s concessioner in 1923. The concession (whose name changed to the Oregon Caves Company in 1953 after some nudging by the National Park Service) controlled cave guiding for more than a half century, and Rowley, who did not retire until 1950, exerted the greatest influence over the content of its tour. Nevertheless, tour content did not remain static, even though two generations of
FIGURE 77. Rowley (at right) in Miller’s Chapel; the man at left is a Forest Service employee. Undated photo courtesy of Lee Webb.

guides used names that Rowley affixed to rooms and formations, as well as an oral tradition emphasizing humorous stories and entertainment. To some extent, at least
through the 1940s, these tours filled a vacuum created by the paucity of scientific knowledge about caves, whether in southwest Oregon or anywhere else.

His tour formed the heart of what almost became a script for guides hired by the company, so that conspicuous formations acquired names as both navigation points and what their appearance might suggest to a guide, usually in the realm of a funny story, or in some cases, an allusion to renowned geographic features located above ground. N.F. MacDuff, Supervisor of the Siskiyou National Forest in 1917, found that Rowley had named no fewer than 52 points of interest along a winding tour route that still required back-tracking once visitors reached the Ghost Room. His tour began at “Davidson’s” or the lower, entrance to the first room (Watson’s Grotto), to an underground stretch of Cave Creek called the River Styx, and back to Watson’s Grotto. From there the parties climbed via the “Wigwam” (later known as the Imagination Room) to the “Upper (110’ Exit) Entrance,” then down to “Adam’s Tomb” and over the “Grand Column,” with a side trip to “Paradise Alley” and back to “Joaquin Miller’s Chapel.” The tour continued through the “Ghost Room,” reaching “Paradise Lost” by ladder, and then returning to the Upper Entrance by the route taken to the Ghost Room.

MacDuff provided some indication of a tour’s “tenor” under Forest Service auspices in the following extract from his report to the regional office in Portland:

“From Watson’s Grotto the main passage leads over a rough, narrow ridge which bears the euphonious name of Satan’s Backbone, [then] past a formation resembling some prehistoric monster and to which the guide informs the visitor is a Gatawampus, we come to Little Bush Lake, a clear water pond of Lilliputian dimensions, and thence past the Prison Cells to the Royal Gorge. Overhead, on the cliff-like walls of the Gorge, the guide calls attention to a peculiar formation which, under proper lighting, resembles a rude plaster plaque of an Indian head and known as Rain-in-the-Face. At the end of the Royal Gorge is the chamber known as Judicial Hall, in which the guide points out the formation resembling the judge and jury, and then passes into the grotto called the Beehive, where the formation approaches nearest to spotless white of any chamber in the Caves.

“We are next guided down through the three levels to the lowest point in the Caves, a large sepulchral room called Adam’s Tomb, at which point the guide informs the visitors that they are almost directly under the Government Camp [site of the future Chalet] in the ravine. Among notable formations pointed out by the guide in the descent of Adam’s Tomb may be mentioned, the Kneeling Camel, Ostrich Head, Mt. Pitt, Adam’s Resting Place and Jacob’s Well. The guide may even send the younger, more slender and ambitious members of the party on a strenuous and sometimes exciting trip around Cape Horn.

“Leaving Adam’s Tomb, the party ascends to the main passage through the Upper Caves and, just before starting into the upper chambers, a glimpse of daylight is seen near the upper entrance.”
The first modification to Rowley’s initial tour came in anticipation of a road reaching the monument in 1922, and the greatly increased visitation expected to follow. It involved widening of some passages, and resulted in a great quantity of rubble filling others, located either on or away from the tour route. This occurred mostly in 1921, but removing the rubble and taking it away from the cave happened much later, so that these “improvements” later served as a focal point of “restoration” beginning in 1985. 

![Figure 78. Concession manager George Sabin greeting a tour party, many dressed in coveralls, with most holding carbide lamps, about 1928. Lacking a lighting system, the tour route had to be traversed with lamp in hand. The building at top right was both a storage facility for the lamps and a sales point for souvenir images produced by scenic photographer Fred Kiser. Forest Service photo courtesy of Lee Webb.](image)

The greatest number of changes to the tour, at least while the Forest Service administered the monument, happened from 1929 to 1931. This began with a water pipe system for washing mud from cave formations, something that spurred the concessioner to provide an opportunity for visitors to rent overalls for their tour, a service that lasted for another 40 years. More important to the tour route was the completion of an exit tunnel, one measured by Rowley at 512 feet long, which connected to a trail on the surface that led visitors a quarter mile downhill to the main (lower) cave entrance. A third change, that of having electric lighting in the cave as of 1931, also exerted a profound effect on the tour. According to Rowley, not only did the lights bring out interesting features that otherwise proved impossible to show visitors previously, but “red, blue and other colors” could
produce effects on “rough and rugged wall formations” such as those at Paradise Lost, or other places in the Ghost Room—where the “River of Fire” and “Dante’s Inferno” quickly became staples on the tour.9

These federally-funded improvements should not be seen in isolation, as they coincided with widening and paving the Oregon Caves Highway with federal aid money, as part of a contract supervised by the Bureau of Public Roads from 1928 to 1931. The concession, for their part, provided guides and saw the cave tours as its main revenue source. It was still obligated, however, to invest in the monument’s infrastructure—such as new buildings near the cave entrance and a gas station located in the lower, or day-use, parking lot. Forest Service officials publicly expressed approval of their public-private partnership with the concessioner, but the Assistant District [regional] Forester, Clarence J. Buck, still articulated some reservations to Forest Supervisor A.H. Wright about the style of guiding.

FIGURE 79. The Ghost Room, as it appeared about 1930. The lights at right produced “Dante’s Inferno,” which consisted of red and blue colors, something accompanied by smoke in its unexpurgated form in order to create a contrasting effect after “total darkness” had been experienced here by visitors. Photo courtesy of Roger Brandt.

Buck paid due deference to Rowley, telling Wright that “his humorous remarks only serve to lighten the trip without detracting from one’s appreciation of nature’s wonders in the caves,” but he expressed doubts about the “flippancy” of other guides, who too often resorted to “kidding in their comments” about cave
formations. He wanted education to be stressed, stating that visitors “should afterwards remember more of the scientific geology and beauty of the formations” than of the banter akin to a “laughing house at a seaside resort.”

Buck mentioned that only a few complaints about the concessioner’s approach to guiding had been heard in Portland, but reiterated his feelings to a new forest supervisor, J.H. Billingslea, almost five years after the first letter. After yet another inspection trip in September 1929, he told Billingslea that the guide service appeared to be “poorer than it was two or three years ago.” Buck mentioned that the concessioner’s special use permit required guides to be satisfactory to the Forest Service, yet in practice, they were chosen by the company alone, with the main requirement being an ability to play musical instruments for the few overnight guests staying in the Chalet or seven rental cottages. Since the public interest required “the best guiding ability obtainable at a reasonable price,” he did not want to see it continue to deteriorate due to the concessioner’s inability to set the right priorities.
Transfer of Oregon Caves to the National Park Service

Latent concerns about the quality of cave tours played no role in the transfer of the monument from the Forest Service to its fiercest rival, the National Park Service. Instead, an executive order by President Franklin D. Roosevelt that served as the basis for this action has to be seen against a larger geopolitical context of interagency rivalry that flared many times during the 1930s. For the most part, the USFS beat back most of the NPS-initiated attempts to successfully acquire national forest acreage for new or expanded park units. The transfer of 16 national monuments (Oregon Caves being one of them) and establishment of Olympic National Park in 1938, that incorporated thousands of acres of land previously administered by the USFS, represented virtually the only exceptions in a largely successful defensive effort. What played out locally with Oregon Caves mostly had to do with Forest Service frustration at having lost its only national monument in Oregon, especially after the agency had spearheaded a significant amount of federal investment to develop the aforementioned infrastructure.12

Perhaps the best thing that could be said about the prevailing NPS attitude toward Oregon Caves of the time is that it amounted to cautious resignation in some quarters, with an optimism that came with an expanded system of national parks, monuments, and battlefields in others.13 In terms of administration, Oregon Caves went from an area treated as a special part of one national forest whose supervisor initiated or stayed abreast of all decisions affecting the monument, to essentially a district under the authority of a superintendent stationed at Crater Lake National Park. Its geopolitical importance to the NPS resembled that of Lava Beds National Monument, which also fell under NPS administration at Crater Lake. Like several other national monuments managed by the agency, Oregon Caves and Lava Beds were positioned roughly midway between much larger national parks or a national park and an equivalent reserve.

In the case of Lava Beds, the Forest Service made a critical land acquisition so that the monument’s proclamation could occur in 1925. It had, however, done little in the way of development and any sort of concession operation seemed out of the question, due to the monument’s comparatively remote location. Lava Beds simply lacked the infrastructure in the years before work relief programs like the Civilian Conservation Corps could be deployed (mostly in the winter since the same companies of enrollees spent summers at Crater Lake) and its few visitors could explore the lava tubes on their own. NPS presence until the post-war years was usually restricted to one ranger, Don Fisher, who became a full-time “custodian” (a designation of those managing national monuments before and immediately after World War II) at Lava Beds in 1938, an indication of the beginning of a break from the aegis of Crater Lake.14
FIGURES 81 and 82. Lava Beds made a similar transition to Oregon Caves, as far as the U.S. Forest Service administration giving way to the National Park Service in 1934. It still lacked critical infrastructure, however, apart from a rudimentary road system that came into being under the Forest Service. The NPS added most of the prewar facilities through Civilian Conservation Corps labor and project funding from Emergency Conservation Work (ECW). Photos courtesy of the Klamath County Museum, Klamath Falls.

Oregon Caves, by contrast, boasted paved roads, federally-funded infrastructure like electric lighting in the cave, and a bona fide resort developed by its concessioner even before the advent of work-relief projects. Naturalization efforts there continued apace after 1933, as designs from NPS landscape architects came to fruition through the CCC and enhanced the resort even further, making it a well-known stop between Crater Lake and a chain of state parks, whether they were
those in the redwoods of California or situated along the Oregon coast. Unlike Lava Beds, where the need for permanent and seasonal staffing was perceived to be greater, just one seasonal ranger spent the summer at Oregon Caves. Staff accommodations at the monument consisted of a CCC-built residence after 1935, but the presence of a full-fledged concession operation meant that the NPS position did not evolve to that of a custodian or its equivalent until much later. The lack of NPS staff at national monuments in general, and especially in the smaller ones, did not allow for anything more than sporadic interpretive programs—if presented at all—by agency personnel before World War II. Due mostly to staffing constraints, the prominence achieved by NPS interpretation was simply reserved for the big parks such as Crater Lake, Mount Rainier, Yosemite, Sequoia, Glacier, and Yellowstone, to name a few.15

One historian has applied the label, “second class sites,” to national monuments as a category between the two world wars, something partially explained by their often diminutive size, their establishment typically owing to Presidential proclamation rather than passage of legislation, generally less infrastructure than national parks, smaller staff size, and, of course, less complex operations.16 Before the tremendous upsurge in timber sales on the national forests that followed World War II, both the USFS and NPS had been called “custodial” with respect to their operations, but agency-conducted interpretation in the national parks represented an important and very conscious distinction between the two rivals. NPS officials in Washington, D.C., beginning with the first director, Stephen T. Mather, knew they had to publicize the parks during those first years after the agency’s creation in 1916 or risk consolidation or even abolishment as a distinct governmental entity. They initially enlisted park concessioners, railroads, and highway boosters in the Good Roads Movement as allies in promoting the national parks to potential visitors, which might then translate to support in Congress. NPS-sponsored interpretation represented an avenue for drawing people to the parks and keeping a steadily growing constituency interested in returning. It took time to institutionalize interpretation, even on a seasonal basis, with there being no program at all in parks such as Crater Lake, until 1926. By 1931, however, funding from Congress allowed the NPS to hire permanent naturalists in some of the national parks who were assisted by an advisory “Branch of Education and Research” in Washington, D.C.17

Although the NPS hired its first “chief park naturalist” at Crater Lake in 1931, the three incumbents over the ensuing decade had virtually no impact at Oregon Caves. The chief supervised a cadre of seasonal interpreters called “ranger naturalists” during this period, but also began to organize study collections, a library, and compiled a “manual of information” that helped to serve as a basis for formal interpretive programs. There was also a minor amount of overlap between those
involved with educational projects aimed primarily at enrollees in the CCC. For example, L. Howard Crawford, an artist hired by the CCC for the camps established at Crater Lake and Oregon Caves, also illustrated *Nature Notes from Crater Lake*, a free newsletter for park visitors from 1934 to 1936. His talent for graphic design became obvious enough that it constituted a short step to designing the first NPS brochure for visitors to Oregon Caves during that period.\(^\text{18}\)

What probably represented the CCC’s greatest influence on visitors to the monument came inside the cave. Enrollees continued with what Rowley and the Forest Service crews had periodically accomplished with widening passages and removing “headache” rocks. More conspicuous changes from the CCC included a low wall and benches at the “terrace” overlooking the Ghost Room, but their most significant contribution to circulation for tour groups proved to be completion of a “connecting tunnel” between the Passageway of the Whale and Natural Bridge in 1937. Consisting of only 80 feet in excavation all told, the tunnel took roughly a month to complete through careful drilling and controlled blasting.\(^\text{19}\) At roughly the same time, the first of several upgrades to the cave’s lighting system occurred, mainly because the CCC orchestrated extension of a power line to the nearest

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**FIGURE 83.** A publicity photo of the “annual spring cleaning” where CCC enrollees made the tour route “spic and span,” April, 1936. Courtesy of Greg Walter.
commercial source at the national forest boundary near a new campground they developed called “Grayback.” The lighting system, however, was still so weak that it required the supplement of carbide lamps handed to every fourth visitor in each party. Improvement in the lighting eventually came with upgrades in 1946 and 1956, but the main tour route has remained essentially the same since the CCC finished the connecting tunnel that eliminated the last of any backtracking required by guides and their parties.20

Even in the earliest days of 1939 some in the NPS believed that guiding at Oregon Caves belonged in the hands of park staff rather than employees of the concessioner, echoing what District Forester George H. Cecil had expressed to the Chief of the Forest Service as long ago as January, 1923.21 What the NPS actually inherited from the USFS in financial terms of a concession “contract” consisted of a “dual permit system,” whereby the concessioner’s guiding formed the basis for one special use permit, and the company’s investment in real property made up the other permit. NPS officials in the Washington office wanted to make the dual permit into a single concession contract, as Superintendent David Canfield at Crater Lake pointed to how the company’s investment was directly linked to the revenue generated by cave tours. Writing in June 1936, Canfield did not think that guiding by the NPS could be done “nearly as cheaply, nor any more efficiently than it is being handled under the operator at present.”22

This assumption became an integral part of the contract signed by the concessioner and NPS in August 1936, though the onset of American involvement in World War II after December 1941 prompted the company to ask for renegotiated terms on several occasions during the war, given how the conflict caused a precipitous decline in their revenue. With the contract not due to expire until the end of 1950, the concessioner cited the financial hardships of the war years in wanting its first increase to what it had charged adult visitors since 1923, having proposed an additional 25 cents to the basic rate of 50 cents admission for the cave tour. The NPS balked at the request, yet lacked sufficient leverage and the willingness to effectively push for improvements in the quality of guiding. Part of the problem lay in the contract’s vague language, but this would have also meant assuming a more regulatory role at Oregon Caves. That potential course of action, however, constituted a bridge too far, one where the NPS lacked the staff and will to take the place of what the concessioner did at the monument, settling instead for channeling work relief funds for the CCC into developing additional infrastructure.
FIGURES 84 and 85. The Forest Service contributed infrastructure projects at Oregon Caves like steel stairways, the first electric lights, and an exit tunnel. Undertakings by the NPS were more multi-faceted, especially in the category of landscape improvements. At left is a photo by Frank Patterson taken in the Ghost Room, whereas above are CCC enrollees working on the retaining wall of the Chateau’s courtyard; in the foreground are wood blocks installed as paving material around the pond.

**Interpretation during the postwar years**

What oversight the NPS had at what amounted to a satellite park largely came through a seasonal ranger hired for the summer while Canfield served as superintendent (1934-37). His successor, Ernest P. Leavitt (1937-52), eventually made the case for a permanent “ranger-in-charge,” but this change did not happen until after the war. With peace restored, the ranger resumed spending three months at Oregon Caves each summer as his seasonal predecessor had, but now on a sort of annual detail away from Crater Lake. While this permanent position at Oregon Caves furnished something of a ceremonial presence at the monument over the summer, the ranger performed numerous tasks and monitored the concession operation, but did little to counter a dominant perception that Oregon Caves had long been placed under the company’s control. Indeed, as late as 1950, Leavitt stalled on even requesting funds to build and install interpretive exhibits at Oregon Caves, citing a lack of space in the few facilities assigned to the NPS, as well as a dearth of staff trained in education or interpretation.
It took a memorandum from Regional Director Lawrence C. Merriam before Leavitt even considered any type of change to the status quo. Stemming from a visit by regional office staff to the monument in August 1951, this document captured some remarks by cave guides, by which Merriam took to mean that the concessioner fell well short of NPS interpretive standards. Even though Merriam remained in San Francisco at this point, he informed Leavitt that the chief park naturalist at Crater Lake should review more critically the story told by guides at Oregon Caves, in addition to periodically monitoring the tours. The regional director even suggested that a seasonal naturalist from Crater Lake be assigned to the monument each summer so that introductory talks to visitors could be given before parties were turned over to concession guides for the cave tour. Leavitt retired in April 1952 without taking action, having served the longest of any superintendent at Crater Lake to that time (14 years, 8 months), and was succeeded by two superintendents (John Wosky and Fred Johnston) whose combined tenures totaled just 28 months. These appointments coincided with developments at Oregon Caves, some of which signaled that the NPS might finally emerge from the shadows and adopt a more active management stance. Reporting by the ranger-in-charge to Crater Lake continued, as did periodic work undertaken to improve the main parking lot for day use by visitors, and expansion of utilities such as the water system as part of providing readiness in case of a structure catching fire.

FIGURE 86. Newly-completed water tank with stone veneer, near the Big Tree Trail, 1935. Photo courtesy of Francis G. Lange.
Although Rowley had retired as head guide by this time, he continued to conduct training for cave guides on an annual basis early in the summer until the start of the 1955 season.\textsuperscript{27} The NPS acquiesced about actually managing the guide “school,” though the Ranger-in-Charge, Paul Turner, continued to deliver an opening message each evening at the musical program that the concessioner’s employees gave near a campfire below the Chalet. Beyond that, the tide toward giving more protection for caves under NPS administration finally began to turn in the spring of 1952, when Director Conrad Wirth issued a memorandum restricting subterranean exploration only to those organizations possessing bona fide scientific or educational credentials, and in all cases, they had to be accompanied by a NPS employee, who could discontinue any activity considered injurious to cave resources.\textsuperscript{28}

Superintendent Wosky commented that he thought the policy statement should be adopted “as is” at Oregon Caves. Turner used it as a pretext to report on unofficial cave entrances used by concession employees for after hours and unauthorized “wiggle parties” led by some of the guides in June.\textsuperscript{29} Turner asked about sealing those entrances, but the NPS lacked evidence of any damage associated with the wiggle parties and thereby acquiesced. What first appeared to be a more serious incident occurred several weeks later, when several guides reported to Turner about the actions of another concession employee who had “flooded” parts of the tour route on company orders, primarily (as it appeared) to enhance rentals of coveralls and overshoes to visitors.\textsuperscript{30}

\textit{More interpretive assistance}

Merriam, meanwhile, had lost none of his enthusiasm for exploring ways to help concession guides deliver better tours. He wanted the NPS to prepare a manual containing a “nucleus of information” for guides to use in conducting visitors through the cave, but also to have on hand a NPS interpreter during the “training school” held by the company each spring. Merriam also suggested that NPS naturalists audit tours, and endorsed creation of an interpretive position funded by the agency at Oregon Caves. Others in the NPS hoped that with a good manual available, much of the “trivial chatter that now goes with the trip will be replaced by the type of interpretation we like to see in the National Park System.”\textsuperscript{31}

Since the manual had both internal support (that of the superintendent and regional director) as well as apparent interest from the concession manager (Richard Sabin), Chief Park Naturalist Harry C. Parker began compiling a document for the 1953 season.\textsuperscript{32} It represented something that possessed ample precedent in the national parks, as the NPS had begun the practice of generating reference guides for ranger staff assigned to the areas of education and protection in the early 1930s. The first
“provisional” (so called due to an understanding that frequent updates might be needed) manual of information for Oregon Caves thus appeared as a mimeographed and stapled typescript. In an indirect way, it seemed to complement a new brochure aimed at informing visitors about the monument. The new brochure, issued by the NPS in 1952, was the first to use the agency’s new arrowhead logo. The biggest difference was that the printed brochure contained only summary information and a map, while the manual was intended for internal use and as a reference guide—one where previous versions could be quickly superseded by new editions. Although the 1953 issue lacked “the geological details for which the public asks the guides,” Sabin found it and the guide school to be of considerable value to his employees.

Meanwhile, Turner remained at Oregon Caves for three months over the summer of 1953 without assistance. He tried to make a case for the NPS to hire a seasonal naturalist, in accordance with language contained in the monument’s master plan, since this might work to prevent forest fires and malicious defacement of unspecified resources. A naturalist could, Turner contended, conduct short nature hikes outside the cave, give daily talks about the monument and the surrounding region, but also perhaps do an “entrance speech” for each party of visitors before they and their guide entered the cave. He concluded the memo by pointing to the absence of written material on the monument’s geology, as well as its flora and fauna.
The hiring of a seasonal naturalist, as Turner had recommended, finally occurred for the summer of 1954. Edward Melton’s arrival on June 26 was preceded by a second edition of the manual in May. It contained three pages of simplified narrative about geological processes as they pertained to the cave and then focused on what to impart at stops along the tour instead of providing any material about cave life. At least the company’s “training school” for the guides had the benefit of both the chief park naturalist from Crater Lake and the regional naturalist being in attendance. Melton and a seasonal ranger (whose primary duties were in protection) went to work helping Turner with installing plant labels at various points along the monument’s most heavily used trails (Cliff, Big Tree, Lake Mountain, and No Name), apart from counting a pedestrian route that connected the cave exit with the Chalet. In addition to roving in the cave entrance area, Melton also initiated nature walks at sunset five nights a week, but a lack of funds terminated the nascent NPS interpretive program on August 12.

The Mission 66 Period

Even with this somewhat tentative beginning, NPS officials planned for the seasonal naturalist position to continue during the summer of 1955 and, presumably, successive seasons. Yet a new superintendent, Thomas J. Williams, had arrived at Crater Lake in the middle of 1954. He quickly came to greatly dislike the park operation at Oregon Caves. Writing in early April 1955, Williams responded to a questionnaire from Director Conrad Wirth about infrastructure that might follow from a prospective ten-year funding initiative called “Mission 66.” The superintendent commented in the section concerning Crater Lake that he believed education to be “our biggest and most basic means of protecting, preserving, and developing the parks,” but the lack of what he perceived to be national significance suggested to him that the NPS should work to dispose of the Oregon Caves. If that was not feasible, Williams contended, agency employees ought to be at the monument all year round, “with sufficient time and assistance (given presumably by staff at Crater Lake) to contact the visitors and interpret the surface features of the area.” He described the NPS presence there as consisting of only a few signs and an occasional glimpse of the permanent park ranger (Turner) as the latter went about his myriad protection and maintenance duties. Not only did the ranger-in-charge lack the time to contact many people, but the concession employees did some 99 percent of all public contact. Williams also characterized concession interpretation as being of dubious quality, even with efforts made by the NPS to “attain a reasonably high standard within the cave.”

The superintendent’s perceptions of concession guiding at Oregon Caves hardly improved over the course of three seasons, though he avoided comment on the
area’s relative merits in a memo to Wirth in early 1957. Williams told the director that little of substance had changed since the NPS assumed administration of the monument in 1934, though attempts had been made to make headway in the field of interpretation. These had been handicapped by there being no publications available about Oregon Caves, and what assistance the skeleton staff representing the NPS might otherwise obtain from what only very generously could be called a museum collection for the monument lay in storage at Crater Lake due to the lack of space at the monument.

Space for the ranger-in-charge (Paul Turner had been replaced by Robert J. Smith in the summer of 1956) consisted of a kiosk in the main parking lot, in a somewhat unusual building where restrooms flanked a small office on either side. The NPS brochure for Oregon Caves could be distributed there, and the seasonal naturalist positioned nearer to the cave entrance continued to make roving contacts throughout the summer season, in addition to conducting an early evening hike on the Cliff Trail. Williams wrote to Wirth in January 1957 about how he expected the naturalist to prepare at least one self-guiding leaflet for hikers over the coming summer, but also looked forward to the use of slides as illustrations in evening talks for the first time. As part of supporting interpretation at monument, permanent staff at Crater Lake continued to update the provisional manual of information and conducted one training session for the concessioner’s guides in June, in addition to doing several periodic audits of cave tours as they had during the season of 1956.
By the summer of 1957, NPS records indicated that a slide projector had been acquired so that an illustrated campfire talk could be given from July 12 until August 30. Also noted was a two hour session held by the chief park naturalist from Crater Lake with concession guides on June 23, where expectations about “compliance with the Guide Manual spiel” were articulated, as well as the “scientific facts” concerning the monument’s plant and animal life.41 Considerably less scientific was implementation of a Mission 66 project that began in the fall: one involving the paving of the tour route with asphalt, an undertaking followed by installation of the first gates aimed at restricting access to the cave in the spring of 1959. Not only did asphalt leach hydrocarbons into the cave environment, the project also effectively destroyed part of a rimstone dam called the “Devil’s Washboard” or “Atlantic Ocean.” The first gates proved to be deadly to migrating bats, due to the configuration of bars across them.42

NPS staffing at Oregon Caves underwent some changes during this period, as the ranger-in-charge remained at the monument during the winter months by the end of 1956. The position (first held by Smith and then Ray Albright) subsequently evolved into a post called the “management assistant,” one intended to be stationed at Oregon Caves on a year round basis and have the status equivalent to that of a Crater Lake division chief. John Townsley thereby entered on duty in the position during the spring of 1959.43 Townsley did not linger at the monument, leaving for good in August, after having been accepted in the Department of the Interior’s management training program.44 A seasonal ranger hired for general duties, James T. Jack, a geography instructor at Oregon State College in Corvallis during the off-season, substituted as the “ranger-in-charge” after Townsley left and provided token supervision of the seasonal naturalist along with two seasonal laborers.45
Despite Townsley’s short tenure, the new superintendent at Crater Lake, Otto Brown, pledged to continue what amounted to an experiment with the management assistant position at Oregon Caves. By this time, at the beginning of 1960, NPS interpretation at the monument had acquired enough duties and associated expectations for a set of guidelines to be issued for the seasonal naturalist position through the permanent assistant naturalist at Crater Lake, Richard M. “Dick” Brown. The seasonal naturalist continued to function at the periphery of what visitors to Oregon Caves usually experienced, but could engage in a relatively heady mix of campfire programs, photography (thus building the file of slides aimed at future programs), maintenance of small exhibits in the Chateau lobby, bat studies, placement of plant labels along trails, preparation of text for self-guiding nature walks, mentoring concession guides, and informal public contacts. As potentially engaging as the duties of any seasonal naturalist might be, the position furnished only an adjunct to what concession guides offered during the busiest three months of summer. The management assistant’s term of residence, by contrast, spanned a full calendar year at the monument and, of course, possessed considerably more time for working on both small and large projects.

Roger Contor arrived at Oregon Caves in July 1960, later crediting his previous acquaintance with Superintendent Otto Brown for his appointment as the management assistant. He arrived at a time when annual visitation crossed the 100,000 mark for the first time, with cave tours accounting for just over two-thirds of that figure. One year after his arrival, Contor had 200 questionnaires returned by visitors in order to obtain what he called a “quantitative index” of views about the cave tour. They showed that 80 percent of respondents had visited the monument for the first time, and many of those visitors expressed a desire for more geology to be presented on the tour. Filling this gap could be problematic, given how geology seemed to be the most deficient part of the provisional manual of information, then in its sixth edition.

Contor had begun making small changes to the tour operation at Oregon Caves shortly after his arrival, modifying the practice of “sound tapping” formations with the use of fists or flashlights in favor of locating wooden batons near two resounding stalactites. He also worked with the interpreters at Crater Lake to have the herbarium for the monument moved permanently to where a seasonal naturalist could use the collection as reference, so that the project to produce labels for tagging plants along some of the trails might finally be completed. Although Contor wrote that guiding could be called “above average” in 1960, his views about the tour operation had soured within a year of his arrival. He found the concession manager, Richard Sabin, to be adversarial in the wake of his being admonished due to concession employees persistently entering the cave after hours. The NPS
thereby adopted the practice of double-locking cave gates at night and prohibited anyone from being in the cave between the hours of 9 p.m. and 8 a.m. These measures may have been a factor in the guides protesting another change, that of moving the demonstration of "total darkness" on the tour from the Ghost Room to Joaquin Miller's Chapel in 1961.⁵³
When asked for comment about revisions to the monument’s master plan and a related prospectus for continued park development during Mission 66, Contor made a number of site-specific recommendations, but saved the most potentially consequential one for last. It concerned building a proposed visitor center and exhibits near the cave entrance, something he recommended deleting from the Mission 66 program. This was primarily because its justification was that of working to counteract “the basic problems inherent in a concessioner operated guide service,” and Contor expressed the view to the new superintendent of Crater Lake, W. Ward Yeager, that a visitor center appeared to be “a feeble way to camouflage an undesirable situation.”

Contor unknowingly reiterated what Regional Director Lawrence Merriam expressed less than nine years earlier, albeit a little differently. Merriam identified the perceived problem (a low standard of interpretation from concession guides) and that the situation at Oregon Caves had the distinction of being the only NPS area where cave trips as a primary function of interpretation were conducted by an entity other than the agency’s employees. He wondered about the NPS ever being satisfied with the situation, “unless the cave trips are handled as a part of the interpretive activities of the Service,” but acknowledged the potential complications of reaching that goal—the main one being the concessioner’s investment at Oregon Caves having been tied to its main revenue source, one derived from guiding. As an interim step, however, Merriam decided to try mentoring the guides through a combination of training conducted by interpreters at Crater Lake, a guide manual, and auditing tours.

Unlike his regional director, Contor wanted to use the monument’s master plan as the means to define “the long range objective of providing uniformed NPS tour leaders.” He stated what had become increasingly clear—that despite NPS attempts to help its concessioner, the guides were generally young men and boys possessing “mediocre educational levels, who receive little in the way of inspiration toward higher performance from a concessioner [Manager Richard Sabin] who hasn’t been in the cave for years.” His closing paragraph cited the $70,000 that the company collected as revenue from cave tours in 1960. In reasoning that this amount represented a sufficient sum to pay “a staff of seasonal tour leaders,” Contor wanted the NPS to declare its intention to assume the guide service upon expiration of the concession contract in 1971 and “organize our Master Plan accordingly.”

In the meantime, however, Contor started work on what he initially called a “geological booklet” for the cave in October, 1961, making considerable progress on it by the year’s end. This was accomplished largely by consulting two general works on caves, then drawing from the provisional manual of information and a
couple of technical sources specific to Oregon Caves. By the time he departed for a new post at Rocky Mountain National Park in February 1962, a manuscript titled “The Underground World of Oregon Caves” had been delivered to Regional Director Merriam in San Francisco. The manuscript might have remained there had it not been for the efforts Dick Brown, who had served as Contor’s chief advisor for the project. Brown was promoted to chief park naturalist once Bruce Black transferred from Crater Lake in 1963; this promotion also made Brown the executive secretary in the Crater Lake Natural History Association. This change allowed him to secure funding for layout and printing of *The Underground World of Oregon Caves*, which finally filled the long-standing void of there being no interpretive publications for the monument.

Once Contor departed, however, the monument’s master plan (as updated in April 1963 by his successor, Vernon Hennesay) contained nothing about a proposed shift of cave tours from the concessioner to a NPS responsibility. It merely stated that “the cave guide program is operated by the concessioner, with the Service having only indirect influence upon its activities.” The NPS interpretive function, moreover, could be accomplished by a short talk at the nightly campfire program, displays of flora and fauna in the hotel lobby, some bulletin board displays and a self-guiding nature trail system—all responsibilities of a seasonal naturalist who reported to the management assistant. Hennesay made a pitch for hiring an additional seasonal naturalist, but only because more interpretive exhibits required possible revisions and maintenance, though the most compelling reason might have been that the seasonal protection ranger had to assist with staffing at the kiosk during times when his interpreter colleague conducted guided walks and made informal public contacts near the cave entrance.
Robert Viklund replaced Hennesay in September 1963, and arrived in time to experience the first of two small changes to the NPS interpretive operation. It consisted of having an office for both the management assistant and seasonal naturalist in the same structure for the first time. As Hennesay prepared to depart in July 1963, a “temporary” ranger station arrived by truck from Crater Lake. The structure was situated along the fringe of the main parking lot, close to where the concession gas station had once been located, and sheathed in Port Orford-cedar bark like other structures at Oregon Caves. This addition allowed the Crater Lake Natural History Association to finally obtain space for sales items at the monument, by occupying what had been an office for the naturalist in the kiosk during the summer months.64 Another change came in the form of display panels erected in the Chalet’s breezeway and in the main parking lot near the ranger station. These were erected (or rather rebuilt) once storm damage associated with a debris flow that rolled through the breezeway and into the Chateau during a December 1964 flood event had been repaired the following spring.65

Like Hennesay, Viklund contributed to a master plan for the monument, updating the previous version in time for the arrival of another new superintendent at Crater Lake, Richard Nelson, in August 1964. Viklund and co-author Paul Fritz, a landscape architect serving both areas, made no mention of any contemplated changes in the guide service, even if the NPS saw the cave as its primary interpretive “theme” at the monument and aimed “to train service and concessioner interpretive personnel in the improvement of knowledge and techniques of cave lore.”66 The NPS nevertheless saw itself as playing a supporting role, working largely “to
supplement personal interpretation [of the concession guides] inside the cave by exhibits, displays, and self-guiding devices outside." 67 Viklund and Fritz also acknowledged that the new ranger station could provide only “limited visitor service and information” to anyone arriving at the main parking lot, the building being too small for housing exhibits or other interpretive devices. Their intention was to provide justification for a future visitor center or museum, since upon reaching the cave entrance area, “the visitor is under the jurisdiction of the concessioner who provides the cave guide service and facilities.” 68

Although largely relegated to the periphery, employment of NPS seasonal naturalists largely continued to follow an established pattern of completing one season, only to be replaced by another naturalist in that role for the following summer. One member of this group, Wilfred Wasson, made at least a tentative start to a research investigation in the cave during July 1964, when he discovered some bones belonging to an extinct species of bear. Wasson also prepared a brief geological paper on the Siskiyou Mountains for inclusion in the provisional manual of information. 69 Like Contor, management assistants stayed for a year or two as annual visitation continued to climb upward during this period, reaching a new record of more than 150,000 in 1966, with cave tours accounting for just under two-thirds of visitor use. 70 Leonard Frank replaced Viklund by the time Mission 66 (whose name derived from the fiftieth anniversary of the NPS in 1966) reached its end point. A visit by Director George Hartzog and Regional Director Edward Hummel on September 4, 1966, produced more high-level concern about the inadequate size of the monument’s main parking lot and the traffic congestion near the monument than any aspect of interpretation at Oregon Caves. 71

More planning and a few changes, 1967-1974

As a sometimes bombastic leader of the NPS from 1964 to 1972, at a time of increased environmental awareness, George Hartzog touted “public involvement” to be at the heart of agency planning. Since their beginnings in the late 1920s, NPS master plans had been developed and updated as internal documents, mostly as justification for proposals involving development of facilities in parks. With visitation expected to continue climbing upward, especially in the category of day use, Hartzog ordered an overhaul of the master plan at Oregon Caves in early 1967 to reflect this trend. Meanwhile, the superintendent at Crater Lake, J. Leonard Volz, foresaw a time when the monument’s overnight accommodations could be phased out, and employee housing retrofitted to take its place alongside a visitor center built on top of the site presently occupied by the Oregon Caves Chalet.
Volz also thought that the problem of visitor vehicles waiting for parking on busy summer days at the monument might also be alleviated by establishing “holding areas” located further down the Caves Highway or even by shuttle buses operating from Cave Junction. What would subsequently be dubbed “carrying capacity”
became the primary thrust of planning for Oregon Caves, with latent concerns about the quality of concession interpretation shoved to the side in both working drafts of the monument's master plan of 1968 and 1969. The prospect of dramatic shifts in the existing circulation patterns and need for facilities proved especially vexing to the planners, whose interpretive focus continued to be limited to a visitor center. With funding for such a facility far less probable than it had been during Mission 66 (due to escalation of the armed conflict in Vietnam and the Nixon Administration’s reluctance to raise taxes to support the war effort and domestic spending), and with no real solution to the parking dilemma during July and August at Oregon Caves, the public hearing on a new master plan for the monument was delayed until December, 1971. Visitation at the monument that year set another record (a total just over 178,000), yet planners still saw few clear ways to implement any of the master plan components, even with considerable revision once the second draft became available to NPS management in March, 1969. The hearing in Cave Junction more than two and a half years later amounted to little more than a question and answer session about various aspects of the plan, but NPS officials offered no timetable for its implementation.\(^7\)

With no end in sight to the planning process at Oregon Caves, NPS officials could at least be decisive in one respect: they granted the Oregon Caves Company another 15 year contract by the end of 1971. The main change from the contract let in 1956 consisted of stipulating improvements to the Chateau and Chalet, enlargement of the Guide Dormitory, and building a new garage located some 500 feet west of the cave entrance. What rightly could be called the key financial piece, one maintaining the concession’s exclusive guiding privilege, was limited to just one sentence. It charged the company to “employ and furnish competent guides for conducting visitors through the caverns within Oregon Caves National Monument on such standards and under such practices as may be satisfactory to the Secretary [of the Interior, with the NPS as his representative].”\(^7\)

Visitation at the monument hit an all-time high in 1972, at just under 199,000. Demand for cave tours was such in late July and throughout August that each guide could do as many as eight per day, and by the early afternoon hours, a guide could expect to bid goodbye to their parties at the cave exit, only to walk down the trail to meet their next group of visitors at the Chalet. As something of a precursor to executing the new contract in late 1971, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the concessioner and NPS officials had been signed on June 8, 1970, as part of clarifying expectations about their respective roles. The MOU reiterated that guides were subject to NPS approval, and stipulated tours had to be conducted in accordance with what was now called the “Provisional Guide Manual.” It also made the concessioner’s head guide accountable, at least theoretically, for “sub-quality”
tours given by subordinates and allowed for up to 18 visitors per party when “pressures demand a greater flow [of visitors] through the cave.”

The signed MOU seemed to indicate that the NPS role in cave tours had, by this time, gradually shifted in less than two decades from that of a largely advisory one with some mentoring, toward a role having more direct oversight. Yet much of this proved illusory, since the MOU came about while the NPS experienced few real gains in staffing. For one thing, interpretive support from Crater Lake withered after 1966, leaving Management Assistant Thomas A. Atwood and his successor, Richard H. Sims, with only a second seasonal naturalist position to compensate for that loss. Not that Crater Lake begrudged NPS personnel at Oregon Caves staff that assistance, but the park was forced into staffing reductions of its own due to shrinking budgets, experiencing a decline that beset NPS interpretation system-wide after 1968.

Whether it took the form of coaching, or assuming a more officious stance in how cave tours might be conducted, the effectiveness of a management assistant and his representatives (the two seasonal naturalists) still hinged on knowing something about caves. Short of having direct experience in the still fledgling field of speleology, Atwood and Sims had to depend on the rather sparse amount of published literature that pertained directly to the monument. At a time when the NPS possessed a dearth of technical expertise, Contor's book represented at least a beginner’s reference to Oregon Caves. On a more technical plane, volunteer parties affiliated with the National Speleological Society had also begun a long-term mapping project at the monument in 1959, producing regular reports and the occasional paper. NSS groups produced enough data for their leader, William R. Halliday, to write a tentative speleological introduction to the cave by 1963 through a bulletin that developed into something of a journal article three years later.

Halliday arguably reached a larger audience as co-author (with Frank K. Walsh) of a booklet titled *Discovery and Exploration of the Oregon Caves*, something produced through a local printer. *Discovery and Exploration* became a popular Crater Lake Natural History Association sales item at Oregon Caves, as a complement to Contor’s book, but the association’s financial support also proved critical for bringing a culmination of the NSS mapping effort to guides and visitors alike. It consisted of one letter-sized sheet with very small type, at least in its original print run in 1974. The map evolved from a Forest Service transit survey of 1930, with NSS additions to it coming through painstaking efforts made with compass and tape in two phases: an initial one led by Halliday from 1959 to 1966, then another starting in 1970 led by Steve Knutson and members of the Oregon Grotto. With a reliable base map in hand, guides could finally know the size and extent of the cave they showed to visitors, even if the tour route allowed them to view between one
third and two fifths of it. NPS employees now also had an accurate reference for future management of the cave, and perhaps a starting point for understanding how surface conditions affected the world underneath.⁸⁰
Notes to Chapter 4

1 Thomas R. Dunlap, *Nature and the English Diaspora: Environment and History in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 21-45. It should be said that most naturalists depended on observations, structured or not, rather than experimental methods. Naturalists and their offspring, such as “interpreters” have generally left aesthetics to be appreciated by individual visitors or audience members, with precious few exceptions—apart from studies conducted at Crater Lake National Park during the 1930s, as well as a few other places.

2 The National Speleological Society was founded as recently as 1941 to advance the science of caves. Despite what some believe about the National Park Service being bereft of guidance in its management of cave during the formative years of existence as a federal bureau, the Emergency Conservation Work program provided funding for print and distribution of a document by the NPS titled *Caves and their Conservation* (Geological Memorandum No. 2, March 1937), copy in vertical files, Crater Lake National Park Library. Nevertheless, the study of caves lagged well behind the investigations of terrestrial surface features, and sometimes went through dramatic reassessments.

3 R.L. Glisan, a prominent Portland dentist and member of the Mazamas climbing organization, wrote to J.N. Teal, chairman of the quasi-public Oregon Conservation Commission, about vandalism in September 1910. Teal forwarded the letter to the Forest Service, which then publicized its intention to hire someone to protect the new national monument; see Stephen R. Mark, *Domain of the Cavemen* (Seattle: Government Printing Office, 2006), page 53 (along with note 76 on page 183) for more detail. Glisan’s letter also coincided with a summer of large wildfires throughout the western states, including the Siskiyou Mountains.

4 MacDuff, “Summary,” with diagrams by Dick Rowley [ca. 1917] in ORCA chronological files. The narrative, complete with formation names, is in “Historical Copy,” typescript made of Rowley’s 1916 tour. Another dictation from Rowley, this one from August 1934, has a notation in the copy produced by Bruce Muirhead in July 1984, has a preface dedicated to Rowley by a “B.R.P.,” who presumably made the transcription. It differs to some degree from the 1916 document, mostly in how the lighting system of 1931 affected the tour. This is evident in Rowley’s mention of colored lighting in the Ghost Room.


6 MacDuff to the District Forester, January 26, 1917, 3-4, ORCA chronological files. His supervisor was later known as the regional forester, whose headquarters were in Portland.

7 One of the measures implemented during that period involved handing out candles to tour parties, with some of the evidence remaining smeared on the stalagmites. These were previously tallow, though it is uncertain whether they did as much damage as earlier visitors did with torches prior to the proclamation of Oregon Caves as a national monument; C.J. Buck, Assistant District Forester to E.H. MacDaniels, Forest Supervisor, October 26, 1921, ORCA chronological files.

8 Typescript of Dick Rowley, Head Guide, The Oregon Caves, Oregon, July 20, 1934, 3. The changes to passages prior to the road reaching the monument are not well documented, with only a few public references found in the archival record; one is “Forestry Officials Make Winter Trip to Josephine Caves and Plan Improvements,” Grants Pass Oregon Observer, January 21, 1920.

9 Ibid., the Ghost Room was also where guides had visitors experience “total darkness,” though this could become a problem if multiple parties were in this part of the cave. The light initially was generated by a diesel plant located in the canyon of Cave Creek. This site can still be readily located, even though the plant (a small brick building faced with cedar bark) was demolished in 1976. Resource Management Specialist John Roth points out that the main effects of colored lights were those of aesthetic enjoyment—this being artificial in reference to cave formations, whose coloration is shades of brown, tan, or white.

10 Buck to Forest Supervisor, November 22, 1924, ORCA chronological files.
11 Buck to Forest Supervisor, September 20, 1929, ORCA chronological files.

12 For the specifics, see Mark, Domain of the Cavemen, 86-88. The USFS also lost a second monument in Region 6 (the national forests of Oregon and Washington), this being on Mount Olympus National Monument, established under Forest Service administration on March 2, 1909, prior to establishment of Olympic National Park in 1938.

13 The tone of how top officials in the NPS viewed Oregon Caves is captured by Roger Toll, appointed by Director Horace Albright to evaluate potential new units somewhat preemptively. Toll described the monument as “well preserved, well developed, well operated, readily accessible, and in a beautifully scenic setting of heavily forested mountains. The number of visitors per year is large. The entrance fee is moderate. The trip is an interesting one and is a desirable scenic feature of the Redwood Highway [US 199, between the recently dedicated Humboldt Redwoods State Park and Crater Lake National Park]. No cave in this country can compare with Carlsbad Caverns in national interest, but every cave will draw some visitors,” Toll to Albright, February 6, 1932, transmitting a somewhat noncommittal report on Oregon Caves to the NPS Directorate in Washington, D.C. Toll's visit occurred on October 19, 1931.


17 Stephen R. Mark, Preserving the Living Past: John C. Merriam’s Legacy in the State and National Parks (Berkeley: University of California Press), 102-114.

18 Part of it is displayed on page vi of Mark, Domain of the Cavemen, which in its original printing came with a bookmark that included another part of Crawford’s brochure. It was not the first promotional brochure for the monument, however, as the Forest Service included Oregon Caves within a larger one aimed at advertising the recreational aspects of the national forests in Oregon and Washington to residents in 1923. The monument’s concessioner also produced a brochure, one that it updated annually, by roughly that time.


20 Muirhead, A History of the Development of the Oregon Caves Tour Route. At that time the tour resumed visits to Adam’s Tomb, Jacob’s Well, and the Dry Room, along with including the King and Queen’s Throne Room, Lake Michigan, and the White Formation Passage; Ernest W. Peterson, “Underground Caverns Made More Beautiful by Scientific Lighting,” Portland Oregon Journal, March 15, 1938. There were, of course, other minor changes such as elimination of the Devil’s or Satan’s Backbone, described by NPS landscape architect Francis Lange as a “projecting stone that rises two feet from the floor of the trail for a distance of fifteen feet. It causes an inconvenience to the traveler as he attempts to pass along the side of it;” Lange, Report to the Chief Architect through the Superintendent of Crater Lake National Park, January 9, 1935, page 4; “CCC Men Improve Interior of Caves, Hazards Removed,” Portland Oregon Journal, February 2, 1935. As stated in note 9, the diesel plant built in 1930 was retained as a backup generator for the cave lighting system until being demolished in 1976. As one of the few (albeit short) realignments, the trail was moved away from the Rimstone dams in 1991-92.

21 Mr. Gable, Chief, Park Operators Division, Branch of Operations, Memorandum for Superintendent Leavitt, January 4, 1939, RG 79, 67A419, Box 15861, File 900-01 Buildings, NARA Seattle. Cecil’s thoughts about the concession guiding are significant because he expressed them before the Forest Service
awarded special use permits to the Oregon Caves Resort, but in the end, the agency succeeded in restricting individual party size to 16 at that time; Cecil to William B. Greeley, January 13, 1923, page 3, ORCA chronological files.

22 Canfield to the Director [Arno B. Cammerer], June 9, 1936, RG 79, 67A419, Box 15861, File 900-15 Post War Plans, NARA Seattle. The contract went from January 1, 1936 to December 31, 1950, and was extended several times on an annual basis to the end of 1955. The only language referencing the cave tour came in Article I(d), which charged the concessioner to “employ and furnish competent guides for conducting visitors through the caverns within Oregon Caves National Monument,” Agreement between the Secretary of the Interior and the Oregon Caves Resort, [August 28, 1936], page 2. This occurred despite quasi-official statements coming from the nation’s capital that NPS rangers conducted visitors through all [national] park caverns open to the public; American Planning and Civic Association, Facilities and Services: Portfolio on the National Park and Monument System, Part Four (Washington, DC: APCA, n.d. [1936], page 8, top caption.

23 This was articulated by William J. Stephenson, “Caves of the National Parks,” National Parks Magazine 26:110 (July-September 1952), 104. The first documented use of the agency’s “arrowhead” logo on the monument’s brochure that spring represented something of a feeble effort to counter the overriding perception that the concessioner managed Oregon Caves. This was reinforced in many news articles of the time, including one on Dick Rowley that appeared in 1950; Kay Johnson, “His Early Exploring Unearthed Beauties of Famous Caverns,” Portland Oregonian Magazine, November 16, 1950, 14-15.

24 Leavitt to Regional Naturalist, July 21, 1950, RG 79, 67A616, Box 10003, File 620-21 Museum and Contact Building (Proposed), NARA Seattle. His rationale was supposedly the long-standing NPS proposal to expand the monument that supposedly was close to being resolved, such that the siting of a visitor contact facility could be finalized.

25 Marlow Glenn, Business Economist, to Merriam, August 29, 1951; Merriam to Leavitt, September 25, 1951. Leavitt did not inform the company’s manager (Richard L. Sabin) of Glenn’s memorandum until October 17, 1951, RG 79, 67-A612, Box 4418, File 204 Inspections, NARA Seattle. A somewhat retrospective counterpoint to Merriam’s view came in an e-mail from one of the guides in 1951 to a reporter working for the Portland Oregonian in 2001, objecting to the NPS focus in the cave as “educate, not entertain the people.” The writer, Clete Webb of Forest Grove, Oregon, recounted how a few years before, he made it known about his past as an “old guide” while on a “new” tour. Webb described what happened on that occasion as “...no contest, even the new tour guide preferred the old version of the entertaining tour, over the newer no nonsense version.” Webb to Beth Quinn, with a copy forwarded to Craig Ackerman, Roger Brandt, and then to Steve Mark, April 19, 2001, copy in concession guiding file.

26 The NPS master plan approved in 1952 noted that no permanent or seasonal naturalists were regularly assigned to the monument, and the one ranger stationed there during the summer had only enough information to give a short introductory lecture at the nightly musical production given around the campfire between the Chalet and Chateau. Chief Park Naturalist Harry C. Parker had participated in guide training, but only on an annual basis; Master Plan Development Outline, Operations Prospectus, page 2, RG 79, 67A419, Box 15861, File 600-01, NARA Seattle. The main maintenance project of the time included a slight expansion of the parking lot and another water tank (located next to the one built by the CCC above the Big Tree Trail in 1935) aimed at better provision for life safety in case of fire at the Chateau or other buildings.

27 Rowley’s retirement date, along with his post-retirement participation in training guides, was given in a death notice that appeared in the weekly Illinois Valley News of March 12, 1964.

28 Wirth to Regional Directors, April 18, 1952, file code N3015, ORCA chronological files.

29 Turner to Wosky, June 28, 1952. Turner also reported a week later about an accident that befell one of the guides involving burns sustained by mishandling carbide lanterns, recommending their discontinuance and using battery operated flashlights instead. An interview by Douglas Henson with
Everett Robert Cox, Jr., who worked as a guide in 1948, confirmed that “wiggle parties” went back at least to that summer, if not before; Henson, Cox interview transcript of August 6, 2017, page 4, ORCA Interpretation files via e-mail from George Herring to the writer, November 8, 2017.

30 Turner to Chief Ranger [Lou] Hallock, July 15, 1952, conveying statements by guides Frederick Rodkey and David Smith to him; Wosky to Merriam, July 24, 1952, about giving Turner the power to decide about the guides and future “washings;” RG 79, 67A419, Box 15861, NARA Seattle.

31 D.S. Farner, Assistant Park Naturalist, August 29, 1952, page 2, RG 79, Central Classified Files—Region IV, Box 341, File 732 Geology, NARA San Bruno. Farner spoke with some authority on this issue, in that he held an academic post at Washington State College in Pullman, but also had recently published the first book through the Crater Lake Natural History Association called The Birds of Crater Lake National Park.

32 Herbert L. Maier, Acting Regional Director, to Wosky, October 17, 1952; Parker to Wosky, November 24, 1952; and Merriam to Wosky, December 11, 1952, all RG 79, Central Classified Files—Region IV, Box 341, File 830 Service to the Public, NARA San Bruno.

33 See Mark, Domain of the Cavemen, 130. The most direct antecedent to the provisional manual, at least according to Merriam, was a manual provided to concession employees at Glacier National Park by the former chief park naturalist at Crater Lake, George Ruhle. He developed one for drivers employed by the Glacier Park Transportation Company and the NPS made it required reading; Merriam to Files, October 6, 1952, page 3, RG 79, Central Classified Files—Region IV, Box 341, File 732 Geology, NARA San Bruno.

34 Turner to Chief Ranger, Crater Lake National Park, August 18, 1953, RG 79, 67A16, Box 4318, File 800 Protection, Service to the Public, NARA Seattle. At that point, just about the only thing readily obtainable in print about the monument’s natural history was self-published and avoided, for the most part, those fields of study. It was Wayland A. Dunham, Enchanted Corridors (Portland: Dunham Printing, 1939).


36 The plant labels originated in 1951, when Ranger Naturalist James Kezer (a professor at the University of Oregon) was sent by Chief Park Naturalist George Ruhle to place identification tags on representative plants along the trails at Oregon Caves. Kezer also gave several talks there and subsequently worked with Don Farner on salamander research at Bigelow Lakes; Kezer, Crater Lake National Park Oral History Series, November 26, 1997, 2-4.

37 The summer season ended rather ingloriously when, less than a month after Melton departed, someone on a cave tour broke off a popular formation, the Wishing Post, leaving Turner with having to have it cemented back into place; Thomas J. Williams, SMR, September 1954, page 6. Turner had no direct evidence as to the culprit; the incident was mentioned by one of the guides that summer (Arthur Clawson) to Bruce Muirhead, September 11, 1984, 2-3, ORCA chronological files.

38 Williams to the Director, April 7, 1955, page 3, RG 79, 67A63, Box 9, A98 Mission 66, NARA Seattle.

39 The office is positioned to view the lot, with one of its original purposes to discourage visitors intent on day use from driving toward the cave entrance, where parking was intended for overnight guests and employees; Mark, Domain of the Cavemen, 101.

40 Williams to the Director, January 24, 1957, 1-2, RG 79, 67A63, Box 9, File K1819, NARA Seattle.

41 Williams, SMR, July 1957, page 6. At this point the fourth Provisional Manual of Information had changed only slightly from the second edition of 1954. John H. Wirtz served as the seasonal naturalist in 1957; Williams, SMR, August 1957, page 8.
Not only did asphalt leach hydrocarbons into the cave environment, the project also effectively destroyed part of a rimstone dam called the “Atlantic Ocean.” The tour route was repaved in 1973, before finally being removed in 1997. NPS personnel also initiated the banding of bats over the summer of 1958, through the ranger-in-charge, Ray Albright.

This appears to have had the intention of accommodating the aspirations of Townsley, son of the long-time chief ranger at Yosemite, Forrest Townsley, even though Crater Lake already had an assistant superintendent (Ray Rundell), who served directly under Williams.

This program accelerated a candidate’s entry into the ranks of NPS superintendents and others in management posts. John Townsley retired as the superintendent of Yellowstone in 1982.

Townsley, Monthly Narrative Report, June 1959, page 3; J.A. Townsley, Management Assistant to Superintendent (Williams), MNR—July 1959, page 4; Jack, MNR, August 1959, page 2; and Jack, MNR, September 1959, page 2. One of the laborers remained at Oregon Caves as something of a caretaker that winter. Meanwhile, a promotion for Williams brought Otto Brown, formerly a chief ranger, to Crater Lake as superintendent by October 1959.

[Brown], Guidelines for the Seasonal Naturalist at Oregon Caves National Monument, undated (c. 1960), Naturalist Vertical files, in ORCA Library. Unfortunately, none of the texts for self-guided nature trails seem to have survived, nor are there program scripts.

Williams, SMR, August 1956, page 6. Housing consisted of a trailer located in the main parking lot until the residence at Lake Creek could be completed under the Mission 66 program in early 1960; Mark, Domain of the Cavemen, 130-31. Unlike the ranger-in-charge, whose office was in the kiosk between the two restrooms, the management assistant occupied space set up for an office in a garage built by the CCC in 1935, located near the upper end of the No Name Trail loop.

Contor interview, February 24, 1999.

Table of “Oregon Caves, N.M. Travel,” in USDI-NPS, Draft Master Plan, Oregon Caves National Monument (1968), 38.

Contor to Superintendent, Crater Lake [W. Ward Yeager], August 2, 1961, RG 79, 62A442, Acc 77289, Box 2, K18 Interpretation, NARA Seattle. An earlier summary of the 1959 interpretive programs also pointed to having no interpretive publications available to visitors, though the naturalist staff at Crater Lake supported Oregon Caves, conducting training sessions with the guides, supplying copies of the manuals of information, and doing some, admittedly advisory, audits of tours; Superintendent to the Director [Wirth], January 26, 1960, RG 79, 62A442, Box 77289, Box 2, K18 Interpretive Activities, NARA Seattle.


Contor also organized a “clean up” of the cave in early 1961, which removed old phone wire and other disused items with assistance from a National Speleological Society party who was mapping the cave; Contor, SMR (MNR), March 1961, page 3.


This distinction can become somewhat fine-grained, and represented Oregon Caves as the only park unit in which the main natural resource was interpreted by a concessioner. Other parks, however, have natural or cultural resources interpreted primarily by cooperating associations (Crystal Cave in Sequoia National Park is one example) or by non-profit institutes.
Merriam to Files, October 6, 1952, 2-3, RG 79, Central Classified Files—Region IV, Box 341, File 732 Geology, NARA San Bruno. With the contract signed in 1936 due to run out in 1956, Merriam may have decided upon the interim step, fearing that a dramatic change of taking over the tours at Oregon Caves might quickly fail. At the time, he wrote that the NPS still suffered from minimal postwar budgets in the parks, with the likelihood of an increase to appropriations thought to be dim. Merriam thought the interim measures could address the most glaring problems: those of the guides pointing to formations resembling animals and the “wisecracking” that seemed to pervade the tour.

Contor to Yeager, June 6, 1961, page 3.

Contor to Yeager, June 6, 1961, page 3. He also commented that “if the concessioner cannot afford to operate without this revenue (from cave tours), then there is little justification for the existence of a concession.” Company revenue increased during the 1961 season, with 74,000 cave tour tickets sold, something which prompted internal NPS discussion of raising the franchise fee from 2.5 percent (generating only $2,606 for the government) to 3 percent, now that the company enjoyed a net increase of $16,000; Yeager to Merriam, October 11, 1961; Regional Chief of Concessions to Regional Chief of Operations, January 15, 1962, page 2. Alternatively, Merriam suggested to Director Wirth on February 23, 1962, that a reduction of ticket prices might be considered, but there is no record of any action on the request. Instead, the franchise fee went to 3 percent; Yeager to James Christiansen, Manager, Oregon Caves Company, July 10, 1962, File C3823 Concessions.


Contor interview, February 24, 1999.

Contor, MNR, January 1962, page 2. He did not completely give himself over to writing during this period. After Superintendent Yeager’s visit to Oregon Caves in December 1961, they agreed on a number of relatively small changes to the cave tour, with the only operational ones affecting the tour being the first attempt to control algae growing near the lights and eliminating the name “Dante’s Inferno” (and presumably the show that accompanied it) from the guide manual, but leaving a brief presentation under colored lights of the “River of Fire” (on the Ghost Room floor), some soda straw stalactites under blue lighting as well as red and blue lights at Paradise Lost; Contor to Yeager, December 15, 1961, file A9815.


Hennesay, Master Plan for the Protection and Use of Oregon Caves National Monument, Volume 1, Section E, Interpretation Activities, April 1963, 4-5, copy in Planning file, ORCA library. In the years before passage of the National Environmental Policy Act, the master plans were approved by the superintendent at Crater Lake (in this case Yeager), who supervised the management assistant (Contor and Hennesay).


One panel was devoted to the “geological history of Oregon Caves” and the other to the monument’s wildlife, positioned so as to reduce the noise from flushing toilets in order for tickets to be sold in the breezeway and guides to collect their parties on the way to the cave entrance; USDI-NPS, Fixed Property Record, January 11, 1965, Signs System: Outdoor Interpretive Devices, ORCA Maintenance Records. The panels replaced displays showing maps of the cave and the monument’s trail system that were installed in early 1964; Viklund, MNR, January 1964, page 2.


68 Viklund and Fritz, Master Plan, August 1964, Chapter 3, Page 1.


72 Volz to Harry Christiansen, Manager, Oregon Caves Company, March 3, 1967, page 1, file D18, ORCA Planning file. Some employees openly called the holding areas “pens.” Ironically, the concessioner terminated bus service to the monument from Cave Junction in 1969, a part of the company’s operation since 1937 though there was a hiatus during the years of World War II. One proposal to have a holding area in Cave Junction was put forth by James Rouse in the new Pacific Northwest Regional Office in Seattle, but this depended upon a communications system big enough to handle the radio traffic, something still years away; Rouse interview, Crater Lake National Park Oral History Series, September 18, 1997, page 31.

73 [USDI-NPS], Proceedings of Public Hearing, Oregon Caves National Monument Master Plan, December 4, 1971. The hearing came close to being a public admission by the NPS that chances of the plan’s implementation were very slender, something indicated by at least one reporter beforehand; Jim Kadera, “Limited use urged for Oregon Caves to save caverns from tourist hordes,” Portland Oregonian, November 7, 1971.

74 USDI-NPS, Oregon Caves Co., Oregon Caves National Monument, Contract No. 9900C20010, page 4. The franchise fee was set at 2.75 percent of the concessioner’s gross receipts of each preceding year.


76 William C. Everhart, A Report on National Park Service Interpretation, March 1973, 10-21. In the larger picture, what amounted to a decline in funding for the parks (when adjusted for inflation) was made worse by Congress adding new units to the National Park System almost continuously during this period. Emblematic of interpretation’s decline in the NPS was the loss of its professional job series during those years, to be replaced by what was originally considered a new park management series for the NPS, the GS-025, something to be stratified simply by making park technicians in the GS-026 series. It did not help the cause of interpretation that some parks adopted organizational structures like one called “Interpretation and Resource Management” based on recommendations from a group called the Field Operations Study Team. Led by former Crater Lake superintendent J. Leonard Volz, but at Hartzog’s behest, FOST is considered by many in the NPS to have done a lot of damage, especially to interpretation. As a type of park organization structure, “I&RM” featured little in the way of what would later be recognized as resource management, while often removing what little remained of line authority from interpreters, with division chiefs often coming from the ranks of law enforcement.

77 NSS interest, namely that of William R. Halliday, a surgeon living in Seattle, was fueled after he contacted Superintendent Thomas J. Williams in 1956, though it took another three years before Halliday could lead a group to Oregon Caves under the NSS aegis. Halliday produced “Basic Speleological Considerations of Oregon Cave” as Bulletin 11, Miscellaneous Series, Western Speleological Survey serial 31, December 1963. Much of it subsequently appeared in the mimeographed Western Cave Quarterly (1:3, Winter 1966-67), 2-16.
Halliday’s section, “The Speleologist,” appeared in *Discovery and Exploration of the Oregon Caves* (Grants Pass: Te-cum-tom Enterprises, 1971), 19-23, and was reprinted with a copy of the NSS map through the same publisher in 1976.

A possible independent cooperating association for Oregon Caves was mentioned by Management Assistant Leonard Frank in 1967, but evidently the advantages of scale in becoming an arm of the CLNHA won out; Robert G. Bruce to Ronald Lamb, May 24, 1967, page 1, file K1815 Crater Lake Natural History Association, Park Historian’s office, Crater Lake.

The updated NSS map of the cave started with Halliday, who copyrighted an early version, one attributed to the efforts of the Western Speleological Survey and titled “Oregon Cave,” one sheet, 1966. Further work by Knutson and the Oregon Grotto beginning in 1970 eventually resulted in the version printed by the CLNHA; “Oregon Caves, Oregon Caves National Monument,” one sheet, 1974. In regard to what the tour route reveals to visitors, it should be noted that the length of cave passages is calculated by transects around rooms rather than straight through them.

Like several other features along the tour route, questions had been raised about the appropriateness of this name by the 1970s. Photo by Frank Patterson, 1923.
Chapter Five

Transitional Times

Institutional change, no matter how obviously needed that it appears in retrospect, involves a convergence of forces—at least some of which can be understood historically. A change made at the monument in March 2001, that of the National Park Service displacing the concessioner’s guides in leading cave tours, resulted from a slow increase in staffing and NPS presence at Oregon Caves beginning around 1970, followed by a “restoration” project in the cave that started in 1985 and reached its final phase 12 years later. Those were largely preconditions for a planning process for the monument, one guided by actors in the agency who had the transfer of cave tours as a main objective in reshaping how the NPS administered Oregon Caves. In attempting to take over the tours, some agency officials (most notably Craig Ackerman, Al Hendricks, and John Reynolds) could confidently assert that the information provided by NPS interpreters as part of doing personal interpretation in the cave would surpass that of the concessioner, especially if a theme could be developed and sustained throughout what is essentially a guided hike. At no point, however, were aims such as revelation or inspiration identified before or after this transition, nor was integration of non-personal interpretation (through wayside exhibits, printed media, or audio devices) with the cave tour undertaken at Oregon Caves.

If interpretative activities at the monument can be labeled “transitional” in the twenty year period following 1974, it follows that a narrative summarizing changes over those two decades is necessarily progressive toward some better end result. From the standpoint of interpretation fostered by the NPS, knowledge of the cave and its resources improved—not only because of the National Speleological Society mapping project, but also because a “restoration” project began in late 1985 and continued with agency funding (mostly through its Natural Resources Preservation Program) earmarked for that purpose through 1992, all the while supplemented with the efforts of volunteers. Probably just as important to interpretation from 1986 onward was finally having resource management expertise on staff, albeit on a
seasonal basis at first. John Roth arrived at Oregon Caves in late 1988 as a permanent cave specialist having a geologist's perspective, and supervised several seasonal interpreters until 1992, when the first permanent position devoted solely to interpretation was created by the NPS. That year also marked the start of planning for a "transition" aimed at the NPS taking over the cave tours, though it might be called only a seed at first.

In order to sprout, the seed had to acquire nutrients in the form of support from park management at Crater Lake, and perhaps more importantly, the NPS regional office. This backing eventually came in two forms, the first being commitment to a formal planning effort that started in 1996, where a preferred alternative calling for the agency to take over the tours was incorporated in a general management plan and upheld by the regional director through a record of decision. Even more critical was the institutional will needed to follow through with the direction articulated in the GMP. The second step amounted to subtracting the cave tours from a scope of concession services, and meant not simply renewing the concession contract at Oregon Caves, but having to find a new concessioner once their largest single source of revenue (conducting the tours) had disappeared. Such a change also required the NPS to buy the concessioner's leasehold interest in some facilities, while the agency also had to provide operating increases to bolster staffing at Oregon Caves once the NPS conducted the tours.

Change usually happens incrementally, and profound moves like taking over the tours are the product of converging forces that are usually larger than their local manifestations. Trajectories can sometimes appear to go backward before the stars align for the larger event to occur, and are usually accompanied by some false starts. This chapter attempts to summarize the precursors to the aforementioned general management plan, and begins with arrival of the monument's first superintendent at a time when the prospect of NPS employees leading the cave tours still seemed remote, if not impossible. Perhaps more important to what happened later was a transition from one concessioner to another, with the sale of Oregon Caves Company assets beginning in late 1976 to the Canteen Company of Oregon, or what later became known as the Estey Corporation. This occurred less than a year after Canteen made a similar move with another concessioner at Crater Lake and provided some advantages to them in terms of scale, with the result being two park concession operations under one ownership located 150 miles apart.
FIGURE 101. NPS photo of a tour party in the Ghost Room, about 1970.
Shifts in the basic structure of cave tours and their content were remarkably few in number from 1974 to 1994, yet what might have been accomplished seamlessly in terms of improved working conditions and advances in the use of interpretive techniques elsewhere occasionally boiled over to open conflicts between guides and company management. One example of underlying tension in living and working conditions manifesting itself as a potential flashpoint took place in the summer of 1970 and resulted in the first woman to serve as cave guide. What served as the trigger came that June, when the concessioner hired two college students who were also members of the NSS. The couple reportedly had more coursework in geology than any of the guides on staff, yet one of them (Dennis Marquering) was hired as a guide and the other (Louise Reinsch) went to work in “registration,” which centered on selling tickets to visitors for the tours.

When one of the male guides quit abruptly that summer, Reinsch asked Harry Christiansen, the company manager, about being hired to fill that vacancy. Christiansen flatly refused, offering two spurious excuses as to why this was not possible. Management Assistant Tom Atwood, who had hired women in both of the NPS seasonal naturalist positions (ostensibly to certify the guides and audit their tours) invited Reinsch to write a letter about what happened. The letter and testimony from Reinsch eventually led to the company paying a $400 settlement of the claim once the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission became involved with the case. By that time Christiansen had dismissed both Reinsch and Marquering, but the other guides were so incensed at the company’s treatment of their colleagues that they organized the first recorded slowdown in tours—an action condoned by Atwood, who Reinsch later saw as embroiled in a power struggle for control of the monument with Christiansen. Meanwhile, the EEOC case spurred Christiansen to relent on the subject of female guides, in that he quietly hired one of the remaining female employees as a guide that fall, several months before the hearing that resulted in a settlement with Reinsch.¹

As is almost always the case, open conflict at a work place results from more than actions affecting one individual. At least some of the company’s paternalism faded over the following six years, even with Christiansen remaining at the helm. While the number of women employed as guides slowly grew, other positions with the concession remained strictly separated along gender lines. Restrictions concerning an employee’s free time, such as not being permitted to bring an automobile to the monument and the 10 p.m. curfew, went by the wayside.² When the new concessioner finally displaced the Oregon Caves Company, however, working conditions for guides had not changed—the basic terms dictated by management remained minimum wage minus room and board, six days worked per week with overtime paid once the guide had exceeded 56 hours on the clock. Overtime was
difficult to obtain, given how the guide was paid only for time giving tours. Guides also had to be certified by the NPS, yet they had access to only very limited source material (the guide manual and Contor's book in most cases), so it is not surprising that many chose to simply imitate tours conducted by more experienced colleagues. This accounts for why parts of Rowley's tour persisted in a sometimes conflated form, while nominalism (the use of names affixed to rooms and formations) as the tour's primary feature proved so difficult to reverse, even when access to vastly more scientific information improved as the cave restoration project unfolded.

_A False Dawn, 1974-1985_

Management assistants at Oregon Caves enjoyed increasing independence from being tethered to Crater Lake starting in 1965, when Superintendent Richard Nelson decided to vacate the park's Medford office as winter headquarters on its fiftieth anniversary, choosing to remain the entire twelve months at the summer headquarters in Munson Valley. This made it more difficult to meet his management assistant face to face, as either party now had to travel the full 150 miles between Crater Lake and Oregon Caves, as opposed to the almost equidistant location of Medford at only 75 miles. Meanwhile the last chief park naturalist at Crater Lake, Robert G. “Bob” Bruce, transferred to Great Smokey Mountains National Park after the season of 1968. At that point one of the protection rangers took responsibility for interpretation at the park, now ensconced within a division of “Interpretation and Resource Management” headed by the chief ranger at Crater Lake, Paul Larson. The chief ranger frequently served as acting superintendent of a depleted park staff, especially once Director George Hartzog created an office for Crater Lake, Oregon Caves, and Lava Beds in Klamath Falls headed by Group Superintendent Don Spalding.³

Creation of the Klamath Falls Group in 1969 prompted Atwood to begin signing correspondence as “park manager” (rather than management assistant), something continued by Richard Sims during his two-year stint at Oregon Caves between the fall of 1971 and late October 1973. It took another seven months for the next NPS manager for Oregon Caves to take the reins, this time officially as a superintendent. John R. Miele served as the superintendent at Fort Clatsop National Memorial near Astoria for less than a year before he transferred to Oregon Caves, where he reported to Spalding's successor in Klamath Falls, Ernest Borgman.

The latest iteration of a master plan for Oregon Caves became one of Miele's initial priorities, even if it backed away from boldly embracing some of the concepts discussed at the public hearing at Cave Junction by Spalding and other NPS officials in 1971. Relieving congestion at the monument, and along the upper end of the
Caves Highway that served it, still served as the plan’s main focus, yet there seemed to be little chance of relief, given how establishing a visitor contact station in Cave Junction might help only if there was a viable telephone service connected to the monument instead of an expensive radio phone. The NPS met what it considered to be the compliance requirements imposed by passage of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in 1969, through an “environmental statement,” just in case funding for a new lighting system in the cave became available. Its master plan also saw the quality of interpretation in the cave as one of four “dominant concerns at Oregon Caves,” but this could largely be addressed by assigning a seasonal NPS naturalist each summer “to carry out the responsibilities of training and monitoring the cave guides.”

If nothing else, the master plan that finally assumed printed form in the spring of 1975 furnished a snapshot of visitation patterns at Oregon Caves, just as annual attendance at the monument declined from its peak of 197,800 in 1972. The declines of 1973 (166,400) and 1974 (151,500) were primarily due to visitor uncertainty about whether gas stations had fuel anywhere near Oregon Caves in the wake of an international oil embargo, but also because congestion problems near the monument had become better known among the traveling public. In response, the master plan focused on parking and facilities, though less ambitiously than the preceding drafts of 1968 and 1969. It also largely left concern over cave tours and their content to subsidiary documents. A new “manual for cave guides” expanded the provisional manual of information to include an outline of the cave tour that specified mandatory content for guides to impart to visitors, at least theoretically. The printed version appeared in time for the 1976 season, with more technical information about caves and area geology than had been the case previously. Much more conceptual in its approach was the “final interpretive prospectus,” where NPS planners avoided the cave tour entirely and instead concentrated on what the agency could contribute to visitor experience in the form of signage, above-ground media for visitor orientation, program topics by NPS employees, as well as static exhibits to be located in a redeveloped site near the main cave entrance and along the Cliff Nature Trail.

Agency planning often dwells on a plane of the ideal, sometimes missing entirely those factors that lead to incremental changes in a place like Oregon Caves, or conversely those that stubbornly persist in stasis. The planners generated conceptual site plans for an admittedly small site at a time when NPS budgets remained flat throughout the national park system, something that could, and often did seem, chimerical to observers outside the NPS, but components such as a visitor contact station in Cave Junction eventually took form some years later. Its authorization
FIGURES 102 and 103. Cover photo of the cave guide manual, 1975 (above). Note the female guide. One of the conceptual drawings in plan view for exhibit panels that visitors could study while waiting for their tour party’s number to be called (right).

through a large omnibus bill called the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 furnished a starting point, if only a hopeful one at the time, since construction funding still seemed far away. Without what the planners considered to be full control of interpretation on the monument, they avoided any re-imagining of the cave tour. By approaching it merely as a regulatory situation, this maintained the agency’s peripheral role in presenting Oregon Caves to visitors.

Virtually all tours of that era lacked a coherent, overarching theme because progression through the cave consisted of roughly 30 stops. Even if the guide could adequately describe geological processes and phenomena for visitors throughout the trip, it might be easily muddled with details about the nineteenth century discovery and subsequent cave exploration. More damaging still to thematic development was the anthropomorphizing of formations and continual, if not hackneyed, quips aimed at “lightening the mood” imposed by the subterranean environment. The cave manual printed in 1976 prescribed more factual content than had ever been the case previously, though an examination of the printed manual and its mimeographed antecedents made it obvious that guides still exercised some discretion over where they took their parties and the content of their tours. The Memorandum of Understanding in 1970 also brought about guide certification, where new hires were audited—at least initially—by one of the NPS seasonal naturalists. The latter’s task involved determining whether a guide
possessed sufficient ability, as judged by the tour’s factual content, to be included on the concessioner’s duty roster. Few, if any, training sessions were conducted about actual interpretive principles or techniques, mainly because the NPS employees either lacked these skills or were uncomfortable in the role of mentor.¹⁰

As for changes along the tour route during this period, the repeat visitors most often noticed aspects of cave lighting. The NPS became concerned enough about how conventional light bulbs, given the damp cave environment, rusted into their receptacles and made replacement both difficult and expensive. By the late 1960s, agency staff proposed replacing the existing system with one having better waterproofing and greater illumination. When finally installed in 1975, the fluorescent lights controlled by motion detectors and timers were supposed to come with those advantages, while also counteracting the algae stains on formations and the so-called “fern gardens” often found where the cave was left illuminated for extended periods.¹¹

How far to go in the realm of using colored lights periodically sparked the articulation of divergent views, though Spalding commented on the initial master plan draft of 1968, that discontinuance should be an administrative decision. At that point colored lights illuminated the Devils Washboard (a name changed to the
Atlantic Ocean when the red light disappeared from the rimstone), Paradise Lost (where blue and red lights were retained until the early 1980s), and on the Ghost Room floor where the stop was known as the River of Fire. Spalding refused to take a position on them, but within the next eight years, those three stops had been reduced to one.\textsuperscript{12}

Alterations of a more subtle sort can be quicker and more lasting, especially if they respond to changing sensitivities. A narrow place on the tour previously known as the Fat Lady’s Squeeze during the 1950s, had, for example, been shortened to “the Squeeze” during the late 1950s, if guides referred to it at all.\textsuperscript{13} The “Squeeze” could be reached by climbing a ladder from a room dubbed by Rowley as the “Wigwam.” That name, along with the moniker for a spitting stone formation called “Chief-Rain-in-the-Face,” changed abruptly in the wake of a nationally publicized standoff between the Federal Bureau of Investigation and members of the American Indian Movement in Wounded Knee, South Dakota, during the first half of 1973. The “Wigwam” became the “Imagination Room” early in 1974, a place where the cave manual instructed guides to point out the “Old Man of the Mountain” (instead of what it had been called formerly) and several other formations suggesting a camel, a soft drink bottle, and an “inside out gopher hole.”\textsuperscript{14}

\textbf{FIGURE 105.} The “Wigwam,” as captured by Frank Patterson in 1923. The NPS changed its name in 1974 to the “Imagination Room.” Courtesy of the Southern Oregon Historical Society, Medford.
Names, particularly those given to cave formations, can be relatively fluid creations of human imagination, whether used as a spatial reference point, or as a means to impart some level of control over an unfamiliar place. They can also be used as a crutch in the absence or unwillingness to interpret the cave with nomenclature based on either scientific or historical method. The change to “Imagination Room” came as a way for the NPS to avoid embarrassment, but no one during this period ever seemed to ask why names along the tour had to be used at all. Instead of restructuring the tour in accordance with what was then known about interpreting caves, the relationship between guides employed by the concessioner and NPS oversight became more rigid and prescriptive.

Purchase of the Oregon Caves Company’s assets at the monument by the Canteen Company of Oregon in November 1976 (something not announced officially until six months later, when NPS officials in Washington, D.C. formally approved assignment of the contract executed in 1971) led to another memorandum of understanding between the NPS and its concessioner. This time, at least on paper, the guides had to complete training that consisted of eight steps leading to certification, but also strictly adhere to the mandatory facts as delineated in the printed cave manual so that tours could be restricted to 75 minutes in length during the summer months.15

Passing the torch between the Oregon Caves Company and Canteen involved a curious transition, in that Manager Harry Christiansen (an OCC stockholder) started the season of 1977 by hiring employees and managing operations as he had since February 1964.16 Christiansen expected to complete the season so that he could officially retire in September, but instead departed a month early due to friction with the incoming manager employed by Canteen, Chuck Quigley, who arrived at the monument in June. Uncertainty about who was actually in charge of the concession seemed to fuel labor unrest that summer, with employee turnover exceeding 60 percent by early August. Increased visitation played a role in fueling discontent among the 90 concession employees in June, of whom 14 were guides. They and others who served as parts of the frontline operation (such as selling tickets and announcing tours, along with employees in the Chalet gift shop) felt the effects of additional cave tours more keenly than those working in the lodging sector, since the Chateau and cottages had a combined total of fewer than 40 rooms.

Attendance at Oregon Caves in 1977 exceeded 180,000 for only the second time, with most of it again centered on the cave tours. As with most of the concession employees, Christiansen hired guides at minimum wage ($2.30 per hour at that time) minus room and board (calculated by management to be $1.15 an hour), with
FIGURE 106. The monument's summer season traditionally "opened" with an appearance by the Oregon Cavemen. This "ritual" was staged for the last time in late May 1977, which coincided with the Oregon Caves Company selling its holdings at the monument to Canteen. This image is from 1929 and was taken below the cave entrance. Earl Dibble photo courtesy of Jay Swofford.
a $50.00 bonus if the guide stayed over the entire summer season. All employees worked a six day week, with overtime starting once they exceeded 56 hours. Most quickly discovered that receiving overtime pay (at the time and a half rate, or $4.45 per hour) was almost impossible, due to how the company subtracted time the guides spent “on call.”

What many employees perceived as the paternalism of Christiansen and other concession supervisors harkened to an earlier time, when the Oregon Caves Company operated in a similar fashion to a country estate, but in 1977 this served only to heighten labor tensions as June gave way to July. Miele found himself in the middle and responded by offering to arrange meetings for both sides to talk, but neither Christiansen nor Quigley agreed to re-negotiate the terms of employment. By early August, several guides had resigned, but others realized how difficult it might be for the new concession to replace certified guides who were leading up to eight tours per day. Sporadic slowdowns became the tactic of choice, usually during the busiest time of day, and likely contributed to Christiansen’s earlier than anticipated departure from the monument.

![Figure 107. Concession employees on “tour,” summer 1977.](image)


Few, if any, concession employees of 1977 returned the following season. Yet Canteen made minor adjustments and slight improvements to the terms of their employment, so that the summer of 1978 appeared to be less fraught with conflict.

The NPS wanted to refocus on its interpretive efforts, thus shifting away from the prior fixation on monitoring concession guides and their parties by offering some
nature walks on summer afternoons, when wait times for cave tours could be several hours. Seasonal naturalists also included lectures on various topics for visitors not wanting to hike, but also provided short activities for children.\textsuperscript{20}

Attempts to implement ideas pitched in the \textit{Final Interpretive Prospectus} of 1976 enjoyed only mixed success, partly because NPS “project money” generally meant major undertakings in construction or land acquisition, rather than funding development of new interpretive programs. Operational areas in the NPS like interpretation continued to receive tiny allotments beyond salaries for seasonal employees and the scant number of permanent positions, so that money for films, exhibits, or publications often had to be found from sources beyond the NPS.\textsuperscript{21} The agency, as opposed to individual units like Oregon Caves, picked up the cost of producing and printing park brochures through its design and interpretive center in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. It was there that NPS planners collaborated with a private firm, Vignelli and Associates, to introduce a new graphic format, the “unigrid system,” in 1977.\textsuperscript{22} To some degree analogous to 1952, when a brochure produced for the monument featured use of a NPS logo (the arrowhead), Oregon Caves also became the subject of one of the first unigrid brochures. All of its interpretive content originated from a contracted nature writer and photographer, Vern Crawford, who had previously completed a number of projects for the NPS Division of Publications located at Harpers Ferry. The NPS then solicited a proposal from Crawford for what the prospectus called an “in-depth illustrated ecological handbook” for the monument.\textsuperscript{23}

Handbooks came into existence as NPS-produced brochures evolved away from stapled leaflets consisting of multiple pages to single sheets folded to follow a standard format. Designed to fill a perceived need for “in depth” treatment of park resources, NPS handbooks as such originated in 1949, but did not follow any prescribed format until the agency adopted unigrid as a system of graphic design almost three decades later.\textsuperscript{24} Crawford’s proposal for an Oregon Caves handbook in June 1977 to officials at Harpers Ferry summarized what he planned to provide the agency: some 15,000 words of text, a plan for line art with rough illustrations, as well as 50 color transparencies.\textsuperscript{25} Most of the funding for this project, however, had to come from the NPS regional office in Seattle. Although Crawford produced a first draft of the handbook in October 1978, further progress on it seemed to halt after initial review by interpretive specialists at both the regional office and group office in Klamath Falls.\textsuperscript{26} Undeterred, Crawford sent a revised draft to a contact at the Harpers Ferry Center in 1979, but at this point the interest in a handbook for Oregon Caves had evaporated.\textsuperscript{27}
Whatever the specifics that lay behind the handbook’s demise, it may have simply been a case of a bridge too far, one that seemed to lack the basic ground support needed to turn an ambitious idea into reality.\textsuperscript{28} The only thing that actually materialized from the monument’s interpretive prospectus came in the form of some modest wayside exhibits installed at points along the Cliff Nature Trail, ones intended to make visitors more aware of physical connections between surface features and the cave beneath them. Made of “modulate,” the panels formed stations for visitors who paused along a route that represented a scenic and contemplative alternative to the paved cave exit trail.

![Image](image.jpg)


Although these panels represented a small measure of success, they could also be seen as emblematic of the NPS presence at Oregon Caves—akin to frosting on a cake, one baked and sold by the concessioner. Most visitors did not hike, but
instead took the company’s cave tour and then departed by way of the exit trail. The NPS half-heartedly tried to encourage visitors to reach beyond the tour and experience the forest environment shaped by a complex geological story, but with only a couple of seasonal employees, precious little literature that might serve as a guide to the park story, and only a few on-site exhibit panels to show them the way. It could even be charged in the late 1970s that the NPS contributed to publicity that represented something of a false front, especially when one of its uniformed employees “led” a cave tour for the director of the state tourism division as part of a photo shoot aimed at promoting the monument as one of Oregon’s many attractions.29

Not only did the concessioner still operate the cave tours, but even John Miele openly questioned which of the two entities actually ran the park. Indeed, it could be argued that calling Miele’s position a “superintendent” was similarly deceiving, in that he wielded no more authority than his predecessors had as management assistants—since both positions were not directly supervised by the regional director, and instead made use of an intermediary either at Crater Lake or the group office in Klamath Falls.30 When Borgman retired as group superintendent in Klamath Falls during the early part of 1980, the superintendent of Crater Lake National Park (James S. Rouse) became Miele’s direct supervisor. It was a fairly benign arrangement that lasted one year, but then the regional director (Daniel J. Tobin, Jr.) placed Miele under his direct supervision in April 1981.31 At that point Miele’s position at Oregon Caves started to become shaky, since change in reporting arrangements also coincided with the start of a bureaucratic reshuffling in the regional office. By the end of September 1985, Miele found himself involuntarily reassigned to Crater Lake since the job of superintendent at Oregon Caves abolished (by an acting regional director) in favor of a lower-graded area ranger.32

**Back to the Future, 1986-1996**

Annual visitation began to slip at Oregon Caves during the first half of the 1980s by as much as a full third over the three year totals of 1976-78. A nationwide recession, one that hit the timber-dependent states of Oregon and Washington particularly hard, probably furnished the main reason. The visitor numbers still exceeded 110,000 for each of the four years between 1981 and the end of 1984, though Regional Director Daniel J. Tobin, Jr., initiated a discussion with his counterpart in the U.S. Forest Service (Regional Forester Jeff Sirmon) about whether “efficiency of management” and “economy of operation” might dictate that the Siskiyou National Forest administer Oregon Caves. In laying out alternatives to be studied, Tobin played down talk of returning the monument to the Forest Service, but directed Miele to prepare an analysis of options stemming
from the “proposal,” as part of making a recommendation to Sirmon and Tobin by September 1, 1985.\textsuperscript{38}

With only a small amount of admittedly hypothetical cost savings accruing to either agency if a land transfer was implemented, the NPS shelved Miele’s analysis report and moved ahead on assigning management responsibility for the monument to Superintendent Robert E. “Bob” Benton at Crater Lake National Park.\textsuperscript{34} The ability or means to deliver interpretation at Oregon Caves, either by the NPS or its concessioner, never entered into the “discussion” that resulted in Miele packing his bags for a new position as management assistant to Benton. Despite all of the uncertainty surrounding Miele’s move, new opportunities began to appear for reappraising interpretation’s potential as perhaps something more than static plant labels along trails throughout the monument, or more centrally, addressing the cave tour “spiel.”\textsuperscript{35} One of the permanent park technicians (Bruce Muirhead), for example, focused on how the tour route through the cave developed through time and had compiled a “history reader” for Oregon Caves as an aid to NPS interpretation by the first part of 1986.\textsuperscript{36}

As part of NPS responsibilities in historic preservation, the author of a National Historic Landmark theme study called “Architecture in the Parks” visited Oregon Caves in August 1985. She subsequently nominated the Chateau for National Historic Landmark status, along with properties located in a number of other national park units.\textsuperscript{37} Efforts to manage cultural resources, much less interpret them, seemed destined to remain in the background—seen, for the most part by park staff, as an unfunded mandate. When, for example, the Chateau was formally designated by the Secretary of the Interior as a National Historic Landmark in June 1987, Area Ranger Terry Darby observed that the monument had thus joined the “Triple X Club.” Darby referenced a NPS form that served as compliance documentation that the concessioner had to complete before projects proposed and funded at the hotel could be approved and implemented.\textsuperscript{38}

Like the National Historic Landmark theme study before it, a documentation effort by a team hired through the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) consumed virtually no NPS base operating funds at Oregon Caves, having been arranged by Regional Historian Stephanie Toothman and underwritten by the Washington office of the NPS. In contrast to the theme study, the HABS team produced more potentially interpretive materials, with the package assembled in 1989-90 including a set of measured drawings, extended historical narrative, and archival photographs.\textsuperscript{39} A nomination of the Oregon Caves Historic District (consisting of the Chateau, Chalet, Guide Dormitory, Ranger Residence, and Checking Kiosk as contributing resources) to the National Register of Historic Places followed suit,
and was listed by the Keeper in February 1992. The nomination followed a
designed cultural landscape format, one of the first district nominations to do so,
and complemented some nascent cultural landscape work written and illustrated by
historical landscape architects in the regional office.⁴⁰

![Figure 109. Cover sheet in a series of measured drawings produced by the Historic American Buildings Survey team in 1989-90.](image)

Although only of a relatively short duration, increases to park and regional operating
(base) funds as well as project dollars began to fuel the lasting growth of resource
management programs starting in the mid-1980s. Much of the cultural and natural
resources project money went directly to regional offices, where newly hired
specialists could channel it to selected parks. Some units as small as Oregon Caves
fared better than they ever had previously, with funding for natural resources far
outstripping programs in cultural resources, at least in the Pacific Northwest
Region, for several reasons. One was the general perception of the region
containing mostly “natural areas,” while perceived needs furnished another—
especially if these could be furthered by ample publicity in local and regional
newspapers. Concern as to whether a project might augment interpretation in a
park unit generally did not enter into how projects fared in competing for funding.⁴¹

By far the biggest boon to interpretation, and the monument in general, had to be a
group of projects collectively called “cave restoration.” What little the NPS had
attempted in natural resources management to that point often turned out to be
destructive (bat banding in the late 1950s and early 1960s) or inconclusive (such as the actions that followed from studying the cave’s non-native algae and moss during the 1970s).42 On the other hand, what could be called the pedigree of cave restoration mostly originated from the National Speleological Society exploration and mapping effort that started in the late 1950s. A member of the Oregon Grotto of the NSS, Steve Knutson, submitted a research proposal for a series of meteorological and hydrographic studies aimed at a better understanding of the cave environment in the wake of Oregon Grotto exploration and mapping efforts that continued through the mid 1970s. A small amount of NPS funding, mostly through its volunteer program, started in 1977 and helped Michael Sims of the NSS reach some tentative conclusions about how temperatures, relative humidity, water flow, and air flow in the cave affected its microclimate as well as a relationship to environmental variation on the surface.43

The catalyst, at least in the opening round of “restoration,” came from the concessioner. Charles “Chas” Davis started work at Oregon Caves giving cave tours in 1981 and quickly rose to the position of head guide by December of the following year. He began redesigning the cave tour during March 1983, with collaboration with NPS park technicians Ted Davis and Bruce Muirhead, mainly to try and make the guided walk more thematically driven. By the fall of 1984 Davis had documented damage to formations from what he suspected was an artificial redirection of air flow through the connecting tunnel built with Civilian Conservation Corps labor in 1937.44 Davis initially wrote to Miele with the aim of getting the NPS to lead and finance more cave studies, but as the company’s assistant manager, he played a key role in furnishing concession support for removing rubble over the first third of the tour route from November 1985 to March 1986. This “restoration” went from the main cave entrance to the Beehive Room, located near the cave’s upper entrance, or “110 Exit,” according to data gathered by the NPS project foreman Gary Bickford.45

With the pilot undertaking judged a success, removal of rubble from along the tour route had an almost immediate visual impact, especially on the perceptions of returning visitors.46 NPS officials at the regional office responded by initially allocating $50,000 annually for three years to what was billed as a “clean up,” to be quantified by cubic yards of rubble removed from the cave. For the most part performed by hand, costs increased as the work proceeded further away from cave entrances. The spike in costs roughly corresponded to a second phase of the project, this one funded at $100,000 per year, which ran from the middle of 1988 through 1992.47 Removing the rubble helped to restore natural air flow and stream drainage patterns, as well as expose cave features that had been covered for more than 50 years.
FIGURE 110. Principal managers at Oregon Caves, in early 1985. From left are Ted Davis (NPS), “Chas” Davis (concession), John Miele (NPS), Jeff Parmer (concession), and Gary Bickford (NPS). Photo courtesy of Chas Davis.

FIGURE 111. Ice damaged flowstone in the Petrified Garden in 1985. Photo by Chas Davis.
FIGURE 112. Most of the early “restoration” efforts centered on rubble removal, as depicted near the main cave entrance in December 1985. Photo by Chas Davis.

FIGURE 113. Perhaps the only true restoration component of the multi-year undertaking centered on resurrection of the rimstone dam near the Ghost Room, a feature called the “Devil’s Washboard” or “Atlantic Ocean.” Photo courtesy of John Roth.
Yet restoration involved more than hauling rocks in buckets from inside the cave. It had been guided by research conducted by cave scientists, in that Thomas and Catherine Aley took up the work begun by Sims, and their findings served as guidance for the installation of air lock doors (intended to restore air flow through the cave) in 1990, as well as lighting and a trail system having less impact on the tour route. Perhaps less dramatic, but equally important, were the NPS protocols implemented in 1989 that were aimed at better managing the cave. These included measures to reduce organics caused by developing the tour route, such as leaching of asphalt from the trail, collection of lint from clothing, and eliminating algae and moss near cave lights. It also included a program of cave inventory and the monitoring of temperature, humidity and evaporation rates throughout the cave.\

The total expenditure of some $750,000 for restoration, as well as replacement of the lights and trail surface, corresponded nicely with the rise of NPS natural resource management by the middle of the 1980s. It also produced an opportunity to reinvigorate the cave tour, especially once geologist John Roth filled a newly-created permanent position to lead resource management and interpretation at the monument in late 1988. While Roth’s background in cave science made for a great leap forward as far as acquisition of new reference material to support NPS interpretation at Oregon Caves, the agency only regulated (rather than operated) the concession-guided cave tours. Indeed, the NPS failed to obtain direct control of the tour operation by granting Canteen another ten year contract (until the end of 1996) for cave tours and other services at the monument in the summer of 1987, ostensibly because Superintendent Benton and regional NPS officials in the Seattle office believed the highest priority with interpretation lay in visitor services and orientation from a contact station located in Cave Junction. Rather than focus on cave tours—mention of which still came in only a single sentence—the contract focused on a facility program aimed at improving the Chateau and Chalet, while also directing the razing of seven duplex cabins built by the Oregon Caves Company in 1926.

Less than two weeks after execution of the new contract, the chief of interpretation at Crater Lake made a follow up review of Canteen’s cave tour operation as part of the annual concession evaluation by the NPS. It indicated that interpretive problems noted during the previous concession contract period (1971-1986) had not disappeared, even while cave restoration captured the imagination of NPS employees, company management (namely Davis), and visitors. As the area ranger at that point, Terry Darby, put it to Superintendent Benton:

“The depth of knowledge [of the concession guides] reported in the follow up review is a real problem. There are several factors that influence this. Not all are in our ability to control. The Park Service can, should and will take a more active role in auditing tours.
FIGURE 114. A filtered view of three cottages located behind the Chalet during the late 1920s. At that point an old-growth Douglas-fir forest comprised the overstory. USDA Forest Service photo.

This will provide a greater opportunity to coach and encourage the guide staff. The audit standard set by the park was not met...”

Darby went on to surmise that guiding deficiencies were simply indicators of a larger structural problem:

“One aspect of depth of knowledge has to do with age, maturity and interest of the guides. Most guides have not more than 1 year of college, some have been right out of high school. The concession [sic] is paying minimum wage to these guides and that is only when they are actively conducting a tour. These factors combine to produce low morale and little incentive to study to acquire much more than the minimum knowledge to get by.”

With virtually no way of addressing the larger problem directly, short of giving the concession an “unsatisfactory” rating (and thus trigger a major disruption in operations at Oregon Caves), the NPS tried coaching. As a first step, it augmented the printed guide manual with the first “Statement for Interpretation” ever generated for the monument. Although the document largely served as an annual report to the regional office in most parks, the Statement produced at Crater Lake in 1988 began by acknowledging that the monument had a distinction of being the only unit in the National Park System where “the primary resource is interpreted almost entirely by a concession.” The Statement’s overview of “primary themes and objectives” listed eight topics, each captured in one sentence, followed by an updated bibliography, an inventory of facilities and services (each with a short description of a “minimum interpretive program”), but one given in an inverse order. These started with the intermittently staffed kiosk located in the monument’s main parking lot, then “roving interpretation” near the cave entrance and on the Cliff Nature Trail by NPS seasonal employees, who also gave evening programs in the Chateau and Grayback Campground, with cave tours by concession guides pulling up the rear.

The only other reference to what concession employees did appeared in the statement’s annual operations plan under “tour guide professionalism.” This emphasized NPS taking responsibility for interpretive content in training cave guides, which mentioned that candidates for this work had to pass a written test for their certification, but described it as consisting mostly of “word recall” rather than addressing the monument’s “main themes and concepts.” To correct this deficiency, the statement’s authors suggested the NPS revise its test in addition to providing guides with more access to interpretive information—something that might also be achieved by reorganizing NPS files and, most importantly, by training the concession’s head guide.
FIGURE 116. The “Wishing Post” in the early 1980s. Making a wish there had been part of the Rowley tour, something used most famously as the inspiration behind View Master in 1938. Vandalized in 1954, but cemented back in place shortly thereafter, it remained the one formation that visitors were allowed to touch. NPS photo.

Roth’s arrival in late 1988 not only coincided with the ongoing cave restoration, but also represented a period of unusual alignment in concession management. Not only had Chas Davis been promoted to general manager, a position from which he hired Jay Swofford as head guide. Swofford made a significant contribution to a
greatly expanded cave guide manual initiated by Roth that first appeared during the first half of 1990.\textsuperscript{58}

Not surprisingly, the NPS evaluation (by the same chief of interpretation at Crater Lake, Kent Taylor) of the concession's cave guide operation that summer improved from what had been case three years earlier. Noticeable strides had been made with access to information and the five tours observed differed in theme and topic. Morale among the guides seemed to have increased, as had the quality of tours, even if they lacked interpretive skills training and rarely continued reading the materials amassed by Roth (and to some degree, Swofford) after being certified.\textsuperscript{59}

NPS audits indicated more improvement in cave tours during 1991, but complaint letters from visitors became more numerous the next summer. Visitor comments about tours filled with rote memorization also increased during 1992, as did unexplained delays in guides meeting their parties at a time when annual visitation at Oregon Caves fell to less than half (86,097) of what it had been in 1977. Auditors characterized the factual information presented on tours as “minimally adequate,” but poor in relation to interpretive themes and technique.\textsuperscript{60} The NPS annual review even contained what was perhaps a first-ever warning to its concessioner about continued substandard performance would result in a marginal or unsatisfactory rating, or what amounted to a violation of the contract serious enough to trigger a termination and the company’s removal from the monument.\textsuperscript{61}

Whether such deficiencies ever might provide sufficient cause to terminate the concession contract is debatable, since there are few (if any) precedents for such action. Audits from interpretive rangers stationed at Crater Lake continued in 1993, with cave guides found to be “inconsistent” with how they presented themes but also often stumbled with their conclusions, while support from concession management remained weak.\textsuperscript{62} By that time, a rather shaky alignment of interest in the cave, one that seemed to represent a turning point in concession guiding during 1990, had since crumbled. It did so largely because of personality conflicts, but also due to realignments in duties on the concession side, as well as job opportunities that lay elsewhere. Swofford had long since left the head guide position and Chas Davis departed for a new post with the company at Crater Lake in March 1993.\textsuperscript{63} The arrival of Craig Ackerman as the new area ranger in August 1990 not only coincided with the halcyon days of cave restoration, it also came during comparatively small, but significant, increases to NPS base funding for operations at the monument. One of these allowed Ackerman to carve out the first full-time position devoted solely to interpretation while simultaneously upgrading Roth’s position as a ranger to that of resource management specialist.\textsuperscript{64}
Roth took on a more focused role in natural resources as project funding for the removal of rubble ran dry, but he served as a vital cog in planning for a new trail through the cave. Most of this latter undertaking was completed by contract, phased over a four-year period, beginning in 1994 once Roth completed the monument’s first environmental assessment. This represented a precursor to complete replacement of the asphalt trail with more environmentally friendly materials.\textsuperscript{65} Although somewhat secondary by comparison, Roth still found time to devote to interpretation, going well beyond expansion of the cave tour manual. He sporadically gave tours, often as part of training concession guides, but also landed special funding for a teacher’s guide to the cave and its geology. Printed in 1992, the 290 page text constituted the first NPS educational outreach effort at Oregon Caves, something targeted at seventh and eighth grade science classes in the local schools.

\textbf{FIGURE 117. New trail surface adjacent to the Grand Column, located between Niagara Falls and Miller’s Chapel, 1995. NPS photo courtesy of Roger Brandt.}

The formal split between resource management and interpretive duties brought Sally King, an interpreter from Carlsbad Caverns National Park, to the monument in the last half of 1992. Ackerman described the results as “measureable” in an improved interpretive program at Oregon Caves, one where concession guides had been placed under “greater auditing scrutiny,” but with a revised and somewhat simplified cave tour manual that also had more accessible references.\textsuperscript{66} King
nevertheless departed during the last days of 1993, to be replaced by Sheri Forbes in a newly upgraded position on May 1, 1994. As chief of interpretation at Oregon Caves, Forbes contended with the same long-standing institutional difficulties that resulted in only limited success in making concession cave tours anything more than marginal in Ackerman’s estimation. Part of the problem lay in the turnover among guides and that little had changed in the conditions of their employment since the 1930s: minimum wage minus room and board, the “per tour” payment (or what amounted to piece work since the time spent “on call” went unpaid at Oregon Caves) and reliance upon younger employees with limited education.

These factors worked against updated auditing standards, any training in the techniques of interpretation, or recertification of returning guides—as did a climate of increasing hostility between the concession’s general manager, Norm Heyden, and Ackerman. Forbes found that a grant from the National Park Foundation for preparing an environmental education curriculum to be a more welcoming avenue, along with supervision of one subject-to-furlough permanent employee and two seasonal employees. These duties were combined with revising various exhibit panels prior to their replacement outside the cave, and producing “site bulletins” that highlighted aspects of natural resources management at Oregon Caves.

With the concession contract due to lapse at the end of 1996, NPS representatives (most notably Ackerman and his supervisor at Crater Lake, Superintendent Al Hendricks) convened two meetings with the company in order to discuss stipulations that could be made contingent for annual extensions. This came as Congress began to consider legislation intended to overhaul the terms of concession contracts, with further delays almost certain between passage of any bill and the writing of new regulations. At the first meeting in July 1996, the two parties agreed to an annual mid-winter closure of at least three months between November and March, but concession management initially balked at a NPS proposal to lower the number of visitors per tour (to 14) and reduce the frequency of tours. The parties came to something of a compromise at a follow up meeting in September, but the amiable tenor of that agreement began to dissipate in the face of the concession’s lower annual rating than in the previous two years, especially for the cave tours.
Notes to Chapter Five

1 Louise (Reinsch) Marquering to John Roth, August 17, 1995, page 2, Concession Guiding file in author’s possession.

2 Marquering to Roth, page 3.

3 Spalding interview, Crater Lake National Park Oral History Series, April 2, 1991; Harold P. Danz, et al. (comps.), Historic Listing of National Park Service Officials (Denver: Government Printing Office, 1991), 133. Lava Beds dropped out of the group in 1974, but by then John Day Fossil Beds National Monument had been authorized through passage of omnibus legislation. Spalding came to Crater Lake in 1967, ostensibly by Hartzog to serve as “keyman” (NPS coordinator) to orchestrate future administration of Redwood National Park, which was created in October 1968. Spalding was able to convince Hartzog to adopt a management model prevalent in the southwestern states for the three NPS units, so the office in Klamath Falls was established in 1969.

4 Negative Declaration, Master Plan, Oregon Caves National Monument, Oregon, October 30, 1974, 1-2, 16-17. With so few issues on the table, only five people appeared at a public meeting on the master plan held in Cave Junction on November 4, 1974; Robert J. Luntey and James S. Rouse to Regional Director, Pacific Northwest Region, November 12, 1974, D18, Planning Files.


6 USDI-NPS, Master Plan, Oregon Caves National Monument, Oregon, May 1975; objectives are summarized on page 2. Curiously, it dropped the ideas of “holding areas” altogether, and planners hoped that visitors might dodge the congestion by spreading their arrivals throughout the day, or at least spending the midday hours in Cave Junction as an alternative (page 14). This required educating prospective visitors about what might lie ahead at the monument, even if the concession had supported Volz’s idea of a full conversion to day use; Volz to Christiansen, March 3, 1967, D18, with something of an extended response from Christiansen to Spalding about the idea on May 26, 1968, with a transmittal from company board president James Christiansen, July 18, 1968, D18/C58. By the time that the final master plan appeared in 1975, this type of planning was being challenged in the legal arena; David A. Williams, “The National Park Service Master Plan: An Unconstitutional Delegation of Legislative Power?” New England Law Review 11:1 (1975), 7-24.


8 USDI-NPS, Final Interpretive Prospectus, Oregon Caves National Monument, Oregon, September 1976 (Denver: Government Printing Office, 1976), 20-28. Without a visitor center on site, NPS interpretation at the monument was to center on an outdoor area developed for visitors to view an orientation film and study fabricated exhibits while waiting for their tour to start. Called the “cave mall,” it was to be located where the campfire circle is located below the Chalet and main cave entrance; Eva Hamilton, “Improvements [to be] made at Caves,” Medford Mail Tribune, May 16, 1976.


10 The only mention of technique in the guide manual came on page 12, about how to address groups as part of an epistle to “step out of the guiding rut!” Principles and techniques are articulated in Freeman Tilden’s classic Interpreting Our Heritage (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1957). The bar set by Tilden was admittedly high, and especially difficult to translate to Oregon Caves, partly because the Rowley tour set the original baseline narrative, one where scientific and historical details formed accretions to the narrative, rather than replaced it. The NPS naturalist program, once the domain of
college professors and graduate students (many of whom enjoyed new sources of research funding in the wake of Congress creating the National Science Foundation), lost its professional job series by 1968 and was lumped in the non-professional park ranger or technician series. Seasonal hires were placed in Park Technician (026) series, where NPS qualifications usually did not include research or teaching credentials. These positions were hired at the GS-4 and GS-5 grade levels in 1975; USDI-NPS, Final Interpretive Prospectus, Oregon Caves National Monument, September 1976, page 32.

11 USDI-NPS, Oregon Caves 1968 Fiscal Year Program, Project U-25, Reconstruct Cave Lighting and Telephones, RG 79, 73A-805, Box 14, File D22 Construction Program, NARA Seattle. Extended illumination often occurred during the peak summer season, when tours were supposed to be spaced six minutes apart, but often this was less.

12 He wrote Regional Director John Rutter that “It might be said that any light [in a cave] is unnatural. Colored lights, in some instances, create an effect pleasing on natural formations.” Spalding to Rutter, July 12, 1968, page 2, master plan file.

13 USDI-NPS, Oregon Caves National Monument, Provisional Manual of Information, Fourth Edition (1954), page 14. Some names lingered in the vernacular; one example is “fat man’s squeeze” that remained in use by NPS maintenance workers as late as 1997; Chief of Maintenance to Superintendent for entry in Annual Narrative Report, FY 97, page 1, file code A2621, Central Files.

14 Gregory T. Evans and David G. Lescalleet, Oregon Caves National Monument: A Manual for Cave Guides (Seattle: Government Printing Office, 1976), 21, 33. The name “Wigwam” is attributed to Rowley by Bruce Muirhead in two typescripts generated in September 1985; see the “Imagination Room” entry in A History of Names Used in the Past and Present along the Present Tour Route, page 2, and Part II of Names “Created” by Dick Rowley. This is also substantiated in Dunham’s 1939 publication, Enchanted Corridors, on page 24. Changing the room’s name on the NSS map did not occur until the spring of 1976. By then a rift in the membership of the Oregon Grotto had occurred and directly involved Knutson, who was expelled. Miele reacted by denying Knutson a permit for further cave exploration, ruling that the NSS project begun by Halliday in 1959 had been completed; Miele to Borgman, February 16, 1976, and draft of letter to Knutson with the same date; Chief Ranger, Oregon Caves, to Miele, n.d. (March 5, 1976) about the rift.

15 Memorandum of Agreement between the Oregon Caves Company and National Park Service, Oregon Caves National Monument, May 1977, 2-5. It even contained a provision that allowed certification of NPS employees, who could conduct tours for the concessioner while not on duty with the NPS. Canteen’s acquisition of OCC holdings at the monument came in concert with their purchase of the concession at Crater Lake, where Sims had been superintendent, but sewage had contaminated the park’s water supply in the summer of 1975, necessitating a full closure lasting for three weeks. In the resulting litigation and congressional inquiry, much of the NPS staff was transferred and its concessioner, the Crater Lake Lodge Company, sold its holdings to Canteen.


17 This meant that the guides were only paid for time actually spent in the cave on training or giving tours. Time spent in uniform waiting for the public address system to call their party was not compensated, nor was the time needed for walking down the exit trail once the tour had concluded. The telephones mounted in the cave served multiple purposes; one was for emergencies or to inform the registration booth as to how many visitors left the tour at the 110 Exit, but the most frequent use was to “clock out” at the main cave exit. No “on call” provision was included in the employment contracts of that time. It amounted to piece work and elicited very little comment or concern from the NPS. Only when General Manager Jeff Parmer attempted to make a case for raising the rates for tours in 1986 did some distinctions at Oregon Caves come to forefront in correspondence with Superintendent Robert Benton at Crater Lake. What had been the case was that comparable tour prices at other show caves were averaged and then reduced by 10 percent since the NPS paid for overhead expenses such as lights and trail maintenance. Benton objected to the company’s proposal because comparable cave operations paid
their guides on a per hour basis rather than “tour by tour.” Parmer countered with the fact that commercial tours had larger party sizes; Parmer to Benton, February 17, 1986; Darby to Benton, February 19, 1986, C50; Benton to Parmer, March 10, 1986, C50; Parmer to Benton, March 29, 1986, Concession Files, ORCA.

18 Miele got involved once the two seasonal naturalists, Ann Cordero and Dorothy Karamatsu, urged him to find a way to diffuse tensions, some of which had been created by Head Guide Will Hughes, who presumably acted on Christiansen’s or Quigley’s orders. Slowdowns were adopted by the guides for several reasons: they were virtually impossible to blame on any one employee, having the effect of prolonging tours (and possibly the interpretive content), which lengthened the guide’s time in the cave, and thus their paycheck. Paternalism is, of course, relative to the time period. The employees of 1977, for example, might be taken aback by the Oregon Caves Company’s rather more totalitarian application procedures and rules from 1950; Oregon Caves Resort, General Instructions to Employees, with attachments for the application, supplemented by questions for interviews, and instructions for individual departments including guide service, kitchen, and hotel.

19 With visitation exceeding 172,000 and an approved increase in ticket prices, Canteen actually made more money than they had the previous summer. Rates for the cave tour in 1977 were $2.50 for those aged 16 and older, $1.75 for children between 12 and 16, and $1.25 for those between 6 and 12; the rates for 1978 were $2.75 for anyone older than 12 and $1.50 for visitors between 6 and 11; “Trained Guides lead visitors through Oregon Caves,” Medford Mail Tribune, May 23, 1977; “Monument Season Longer,” Medford Mail Tribune, May 18, 1978. The programs for children took place in the presence of their parents while waiting for a cave tour. Those not old enough for a tour were placed in the nursery called “Kiddy Kave” at the Chalet while their parents were in the cave.


21 What little funding available for these purposes generally came through the recommendations of specialists located in the ten NPS regional offices. It probably did not help that the Klamath Falls Group Office formed an additional bureaucratic layer within the Pacific Northwest Region, headquartered in Seattle, and among the three smallest regions in terms of numbers of parks served.

22 More detail about unigrid’s development is available from mostly on-line sources, with varying levels of detail; see, for example, “Massimo Vignelli’s Unigrid System,” May 10, 2010, reached via www.aisleone.net, accessed October 27, 2017. It merits a mention in Philip B. Meggs, et al., Meggs’ History of Graphic Design (New York: Wiley, 2016), 454. The NPS still requires that all of its official brochures use the unigrid format and has issued extensive guidance such as “Glimpses of Park Brochures,” see www.nps.gov/parkhistory and go to “online_books/brochures,” accessed March 15, 2017.

23 USDI-NPS, Final Interpretive Prospectus, 29. All the prospectus said about the folder was that the brochure should include maps of the monument’s four hiking trails on it (three were not labeled) in relation to the cave. HFC supplied a regional map, one for the monument, and a simplified cross-section of the cave tour route; USDI-NPS, Oregon Caves, undated [1977]. Unlike the brochures, complete adoption of unigrid for handbooks did not come across the NPS until 1983. For a list with dates, see www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/handbooks, accessed March 15, 2017.

24 A somewhat continuous series of handbooks started in 1949, with one on Montezuma Castle first appearing in unigrid in 1977. The sporadic appearance of NPS handbooks reflected the often disjointed
process of finding authors, then funds for production and printing. Once printed, their main point of
sale was the individual park units, where NPS managers and cooperating associations had to assume
responsibility for distributing them as sales items.

25 Crawford, Proposal for Publication, June 1, 1977, OCNM Interpretive Files. The Final Interpretive
Prospectus of 1976 (page 20) stated that the proposed handbook would be funded by the Crater Lake
Natural History Association. This handbook was to cost a total of $7,000, to be paid with installments
during successive phases of writing and production.

26 Crawford, Oregon Caves National Monument [first draft], typescript of October 1978; John Davis
through Ernest J. Borgman to Regional Director, Pacific Northwest Region, February 23, 1979, K38;
also Richard G. Littlefield to Regional Director, PNR, July 23, 1979, K38. Crawford noted that
contracts for this type of work began to fizzle out by 1980, though he also made the point that Miele
wanted Crawford to avoid use of the term “evolution” in the text; Crawford interview by telephone with
the author, March 16, 2017. NPS handbooks originally aimed to fill a need for information about
individual parks, but by 1980, privately published guidebooks had begun to fill this void. One example
was the “Story Behind the Scenery” series from K.C. Dendooven in Las Vegas, though handbooks have,
evertheless, continued to be published by the NPS on a sporadic basis.

27 When the question of a rewrite arose seven years later, the head of publications at HFC recommended
that the handbook not be published in a separate memorandum to PNR chief of interpretation Rocky
Richardson; Crawford to Bruce Hopkins, Chief, Branch of Natural History Publications, October 5,
1979; Hopkins to Richardson, April 3, 1986, K38; and Archie Satterfield to Richardson, May 2, 1986,
concerning a possible re-write.

28 The monument, with virtually no interpretive infrastructure devoted to supporting NPS efforts there,
was also handicapped by being within the Pacific Northwest Region, whose small size (around 20 units at
that time) dictated a tiny budget to supplement the interpretive part of park operations.

29 Park Technician Ted Davis led tourism director Frank Howard and a companion on the tour route,
implying that the NPS (not the concessioner) gave the tours; copies of the images are in park files and in
the Oregon Department of Transportation archives in Salem.

30 Although permanent and seasonal staffing had increased slightly during Miele’s tenure, none of his
subordinates ranked above a park technician or wage grade laborer, a situation that harkened back to the
days when national monuments were most frequently run by “custodians” supervised by a superintendent
of a larger park. At that time Miele had no division chiefs and was left to supervise seasonal employees
(including those in interpretation) by himself.

31 Charles Odegaard, Acting Regional Director, to Borgman, January 28, 1980, A64; Daniel J. Tobin,
Regional Director, PNR, to Superintendents, Crater Lake and Oregon Caves, April 20, 1981, A64.

32 William J. Briggle to Superintendent, Crater Lake National Park, September 27, 1985, A64 ORCA in
relationship to CRLA file. As deputy regional director and head of position review in the PWR as of
April 1984, Briggle appointed one of his proteges, Robert E. “Bob” Benton, superintendent at Crater
Lake when he assumed this role. Briggle became the acting regional director on September 8, 1985,
upon the death of Tobin and remained there until the appointment of Charles H. Odegaard in mid-
February 1987. In the acting role, Briggle moved quickly to implement what he called “organizational
changes,” which included downgrading what had been a GS-11 superintendent at Oregon Caves (Miele)
to a GS-9 park ranger. In subsequent correspondence, the area ranger was even referred to as a “ranger
in charge” as they had been 30 years previously; Ivan Miller, et al., Operations Evaluation Review

33 Tobin to Miele, April 19, 1985, no file code. Miele has since contended that this was nothing but a
smokescreen, where Tobin was something of Briggle’s puppet in order to effect changes desired by
Briggle at Oregon Caves; Miele interview, April 24, 1998. Benton discussed some of the thinking about
the possibility of Forest Service management of the monument at that time in an interview for the Crater
Miele attributed the realignment in responsibility for Oregon Caves to the nefarious actions of Deputy Regional Director Briggle, who took over as acting regional director the day after Tobin died in Seattle, on September 7, 1985. At that point could give Miele a directed reassignment (essentially a lateral transfer at the same grade), but he was hardly the first employee to run afoul of Briggle, whose ascendancy in the NPS during the 1960s was tied to being Director George Hartzog's "hit man," and left a long line of "admirers" in his wake over a career that lasted more than 50 years.

Park operations at Oregon Caves in the fall of 1985 included seven NPS employees with permanent appointments (even if three of those were subject to furlough that could consume as much as a third of the fiscal year), and by October, one of them (Park Technician Ted Davis) floated the idea of community outreach to the new area manager (Walt Graham). Davis suggested that a first-ever open house for community leaders might be held at the monument in early 1986, if only to correct erroneous information based on rumors. The idea proved to be a non-starter because Graham transferred to another park by the end of 1985; Davis to Graham, October 8, 1985, A38. Davis was also well aware of the regional director's memorandum of April 1985, the meetings with Forest Service officials, as well as the uncertainty surrounding whether he or anyone else would continue to be employed at Oregon Caves. An organizational chart was appended as Figure 4 to discussion of a USFS operation at the monument; Analysis Report, June 11, 1985. When asked, however, the Forest Service saw few advantages to administering the monument, even highlighting a "worst possible outcome" in a memorandum from Don McLennan, Resource Assistant, to District Ranger Dennis C. Holthus, May 23, 1985, attachment 3 to the Analysis Report.

Muirhead's tenure spanned two years, starting in the summer of 1984. He used a variety of sources, including what became known as the "chronological files," that contained copies of archival documents to produce summaries of his research. Examples have been cited in chapter 4 and include "CCC Connecting Tunnel—Historical Notes," [1984], "A History of the Development of the Oregon Caves Tour Route," "Names 'Created' by Dick Rowley," and "Lost' Names (Historical Names where the location is not known exactly)," all of September 1985.

Laura Soulliere Harrison, Architectural Historian, Southwest Regional Office, Trip Report: Mount Rainier, Oregon Caves, and Crater Lake, August 26, 1985, page 3, A34 (CRLA); Harrison, Architecture in the Parks: National Historic Landmark Theme Study, November 1986 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1987), 383-395. Another part of cultural resources management was the rapidly evolving field of museum curation, where the first "scope of collection statement" for Oregon Caves was approved through the regional office in March 1986. It linked the themes from the monument's first "Statement for Interpretation" to justify maintaining collections at the monument, including those pertaining to "the human history and development of Oregon Caves from 1874 to present;" Kent Bush, Scope of Collection Statement, approved March 4, 1986, 1-3. He also cited the statement for interpretation to identify how the collections would serve both interpretation and natural resources management, identifying the themes of geological and environmental forces that created the caverns and the natural systems operating in the cave today, as well as the interrelationship between the underground cave environment and life on the surface. Although the documents called for a "representative natural history collection to be maintained for the reference and training of NPS staff, it was stored at Illinois Valley High School in Cave Junction under the custody of a biology teacher there. Melanie Smith, a museum technician at Crater Lake, began work on accessioning the monument's museum collection in the fall of that year.

Darby, Monthly Report (to the Superintendent, Crater Lake National Park), June 1987, page 2, A2615. The Chateau's formal designation, however, hardly constituted a surprise; its significance to "architecture in the parks" had been noted by more than just the theme study's author by that time; see, for example, F.M. Hinkhouse, "The Oregon Caves: An Enchanted Place," Portland Oregonian, July 30, 1978, in Northwest Magazine, 5-6. The number of XXX forms (something referenced only in the NPS because the form was not "official" in the sense of being approved by the Office of Management and Budget) proved to be precious few in number over the first decade of its designation, partly because Darby and some regional office staff saw the hotel as wholly owned by the company in fee simple, rather
than having its title vested in the United States since it occupies federal land. The latter had been established between the NPS and its concessioner as early as 1941; E.P. Leavitt, Superintendent, to R.L. Sabin, Oregon Caves Resort, October 16, 1941, RG 79, 67A418, Box 15861, File 100-04, National Archives, Seattle.

39 Historic American Buildings Survey OR-145, OR-146, and OR-149. A team consisting of two architects (Kurt Klimt and Belinda Sosa) and two landscape architects (Michael Egan and John Nicely) produced the measured drawings, with photographs having been generated in 1984 by Cheryl Martin at the University of Oregon. The writer did the building descriptions and historical context narratives. The HABS work was noted in one sentence of Benton’s annual report of 1990 for Crater Lake and Oregon Caves, page 4.

40 Stephen R. Mark, Oregon Caves Historic District, NRIS #92000058, listed February 25, 1992. Delineated by a somewhat oddly shaped polygon drawn to avoid cave features, the district boundaries were modified to a degree 20 years later by a boundary increase listed in early 2012. In the meantime, the subsequent appearance of Cultural Landscape Recommendations: Cultural Landscape Inventory of Oregon Caves National Monument, Oregon by Marsha Tolon and Cathy Gilbert (Seattle: USDI-NPS, Pacific Northwest Region, Cultural Resources Division, 1992) better followed topographic features. Neither the listed historic properties nor the cultural landscape work was mentioned in annual reports for 1992 by NPS management at the monument or Crater Lake.

41 Not until the advent of setting aside portions of research projects funded by the National Science Foundation for education was this even considered by federal agencies like the NPS, and only well after 2005 or so. Not that the cultural resource side of the ledger was completely ignored at Oregon Caves, as concession manager Charles “Chas” Davis hosted a local history seminar in the Chateau during June 1992; David Morris, Superintendent’s Annual Report 1992, page 15.

42 Although begun with great optimism by the seasonal ranger in charge (Ray Albright) until 1959, bat banding had been discontinued by Roger Contor several years later due to declining numbers and no reports concerning the whereabouts of bats with the bands. Bat studies resumed during the 1970s under a biology professor at Southern Oregon State College in Ashland, Steve Cross. The NPS research biologist stationed at the group office in Klamath Falls, James Blaisdell, initiated some studies of plant growth in the cave around 1973, with follow up investigation by Herbert Curl of Oregon State University. Miele described installation of green fluorescent lights in the cave during January 1976 as inconclusive; Miele to Superintendent of Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains, August 29, 1977, N3023.


44 The example he provided in February 1985 showed ice damage (delamination of flowstone) on the trail to Petrified Gardens (see page 239); Davis to Miele, October 31, 1984, 1-2, copy provided to the writer by Davis. Biographical details came from an interview with Davis on August 27, 1995.

45 Appended to a transmittal from Davis to Area Ranger Terry Darby, December 3, 1986, where Davis attached a paper he wrote titled “1985/6 Oregon Caves Restoration” accompanied by photos. Davis also wrote an informational brochure about the cave that was funded by the company, “Oregon Caves National Monument Information,” where the figure of 550 tons of rubble was cited as having been removed during a four month period that winter.

46 The rubble was generated over several periods of the tour route’s development. While NPS officials made somewhat vague references to the 1930s as the main cause, it is more likely that much of it was due to the period of 1921-22, when the Forest Service widened the route in anticipation of the Oregon Caves Highway reaching the monument.
Rubble removal was funded in both phases from the Natural Resources Preservation Program of the NPS, with the pilot portion of 1985-86 presumably from contingency funds supplied by the regional office in Seattle; Terry Darby to Ed Menning, Resource Management and Science, PNR, April 10, 1986, D18; Jim Milestone, Development/Study Package Proposal [form 10-238], August 5, 1987, with attachment. Funding with the corresponding measurements of the rubble removed is in USDI-NPS, Summary of Cave Restoration Project as of August 1992, Cave Restoration File, ORCA Library.

Work by the Aleys is summarized in their Final Report, Restoration of Natural Cave Features, Oregon Caves National Monument, Oregon, March 1987. It also appeared in an abbreviated preliminary form as “'Green Sickness' Prevention and Control in Oregon Caves,” Park Science 6:2 (Winter 1986), 9. The Aleys also completed Restoration of Natural Microclimate in Oregon Caves, Oregon Caves National Monument, Final Report, July 1988, as part of their contract with the NPS. Discussion of how to coordinate cave restoration with the installation of new lights and a new trail surface started in the spring of 1988; Michael J. Tollefson, Associate Regional Director, Operations, PNR, to Darby, April 15, 1988, D18. Estimating the amount of rubble to be removed could only be the subject of guesswork ahead of time, with Thomas Aley's original estimate having doubled in actuality by the summer of 1987; Edgar P. Menning, RMS, PNR, to files, September 8, 1987, page 3, N16. More detail about the complexities of restoration is in USDI-NPS, Resource Management Plan, Oregon Caves National Monument, [1990], Project Statement N-6, Cave Restoration, six pages. A summary of measures implemented to reduce organics is John E. Roth, in Highlights of Natural Resources Management, 1989 NRR-90/02 (Denver: NPS Natural Resources Publications Office, 1990), 16.

Volunteers had supplemented the paid work in restoration since it began in 1985, and constituted almost the sole source of removing rubble after 1992, something that spanned at least a decade. The figure of $750,000 was cited in the context of keeping costs down through use of in-house labor (as opposed to a contract) and “thousands of hours” of volunteer labor; “The 1990s bring a new look for the Oregon Caves; Medford Mail Tribune, March 7, 1997. The decline in rubble removal after 1992 is charted in USDI-NPS, Summary of Oregon Caves Restoration Project as of January 1994, Cave Restoration File, ORCA Library.

A seasonal position in natural resource management had been established in 1986 and held by Larry Cosby until Roth’s arrival, but did not include interpretation.

William J. Briggle, Acting Regional Director, to Manager, [NPS] Harpers Ferry Center, February 17, 1987, D2215, with attached 10-238 form to plan and produce interpretive media. This component never got off the ground, given how the USFS and NPS agreed to “joint” operations of the station in Cave Junction, where a former NPS employee (Glenna Sheveland) was hired by the Forest Service in 1990. In 1987, however, the contact station there had yet to materialize, though the NPS placed a “traveler's information station” (TIS, or what amounted to a low frequency radio transmitter) into operation at the junction of SR 46 and US 199; Ted Davis, Park Ranger, Monthly Report to Superintendent, Crater Lake National Park, March 1987, A2615.

USDI-NPS, Oregon Caves, Oregon Caves National Monument Contract No. CC-ORCAOP1-87, executed August 17, 1987. Mention of cave tours appeared on page 3 (of 24) under scope of concession services: Sales of tours including a guide service for visitors within the Oregon Caves Caverns on such standards and under such practices as may be satisfactory to the Secretary.” The facility program could be remembered largely for two things: 1) application of a fire retardant to interior walls of the Chateau, thus changing the color of the fiberboard and 2) demolishing the seven cabins in March 1988, thus removing over half the structures that could have made up a nominated historic district. A sewer line from one of the cabins leaked into the cave a year earlier and the concession had ceased renting the cabins to visitors in the mid-1970s, so their loss did not affect revenue.

system of lights, but acknowledged that themes were lightly constructed (if apparent at all) and emphasized how concession management and supervision needed to take a direct and active role in motivating guides to continuously improve their tours.


55 Statement for Interpretation, 2-5. Of the eight topics, only one (where visitors could see the world’s six major rock types both on the surface and in the cave, along with all major geological processes) fit what Freeman Tilden meant by “theme” in his classic Interpreting Our Heritage (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1957).

56 Statement for Interpretation, page 9. The author quoted a nonexistent portion of the Concession Contract as a preface to the suggested remedies. For the annual guide training program, the author expressed the goal “to have interpretation of the cave by “concession guide[s] comparable to NPS professional standards” (page 15). The Statement also implied a need for annual reporting by NPS employees, even if they happened to be seasonal; for example Ron Reed, A Brief Summary of Park Rangers Contact with the Visiting Public at Oregon Caves National Monument during the Summer of 1988, November 26, 1988, no filecode.


58 One example was Swofford and Roth, Names of Oregon Caves National Monument, pages 304-333 in Volume III of Oregon Caves Tour Guide Manual, vertical file in ORCA Library.

59 Kent J. Taylor, Oregon Caves National Monument Concession Tour Operations Evaluation, September 1990, 1-3, extracted from concession oversight files, ORCA. By the time the NPS had developed written performance standards for tour guides as part of auditing and had incorporated approved themes for the tours as presented in the 1988 Statement for Interpretation. They were listed in Appendix B (page 10) of a document incorporated into the guide manual.

60 [Craig Ackerman], Oregon Caves National Monument 1992 Concession Annual Review, page 1, C38.

61 Ibid. Although the NPS laid much of the blame on faulty oversight and lack of training given to the guides, as well as the company’s reluctance to provide paid time for the guides to maintain their skills and knowledge, the situation occurs all too often in guiding visitors through show caves. A research paper of the time expressed it this way: “Two basic elements of cave guiding are almost universally flawed. Most guides appear to possess little more than superficial knowledge of the cave they show. The information is generally presented to customers in a manner indicating the guide had either learned his spiel by rote or that he had given it so long that he had ceased to actively think about it. These flaws grow out of a universal system of guide training which employs imitation as its basic technique,” in W.T. Austin and Tom Chaney, “Boredom in Paradise: A Hard Look at Cave Guide Training,” page 54. This paper appeared in the American Cave Conservation Association, National Cave Management Seminar, Proceedings from a meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico, March 12-16, 1990. This is often the legacy of commercial cave tours, but other units in the National Park System had experienced success with following different approaches to guiding, such as the tours given at Wind Cave National Park; Katherine Rohde, “Underground Themes,” pages 7-14 in the same volume.
Marianne Mills, Supervisory Park Ranger, and Roger Brandt, Park Ranger, Oregon Caves National Monument Concession Tour Operations, August 18-19, 1993, 1-6. The Superintendent’s Annual Narrative Report for both park units in 1993 (page 15) commented that the NPS had some success with conducting the training for concession guides that year, but overall performance was uneven when measured by NPS interpretive standards, though no mention of the difference in working conditions was made.


Superintendent’s Annual Narrative Report, 1992, Crater Lake National Park and Oregon Caves National Monument, page 12. Ackerman, Oregon Caves National Monument Activity Recap, Period ending February 1, 1992, page 1. He submitted a request to reclassify Roth’s position as a GS-9; it took place as the region notified the monument that Roth’s proposal for an inventory of cave macroinvertebrates had been selected as one of four small park resource projects submitted to the Washington office for special funding; Roth, “Taking Inventory at Oregon Caves,” Nature Notes from Crater Lake 25 (1994), 18. This proposal was no doubt helped by previous discovery of a new species “cave cricket,” in the genus Glyllloblattia) during rubble removal in 1990; Randy Hill, “Natural look returns to caves,” Medford Mail Tribune, November 9, 1990.

Roth, Environmental Assessment of Cave Trail Rehabilitation at Oregon Caves National Monument, May 10, 1993, Cave Restoration File. Much of the planning was based on Aley’s report of 1988. Most of the construction activity took place during a four month period each winter until early 1998, when cave tours were suspended in order to complete the final components; “Oregon Caves suspending tours,” Klamath Falls Herald and News, November 25, 1997. Much of the trail consisted of a mix of concrete laced with an aluminum oxide grit to create a non-slip surface, with the first 330 feet of the trail featuring a fiberglass grating system to expose the River Styx. The new surface between the cave entrance and Watson’s Grotto supposedly allowed those in wheelchairs to at least obtain a glimpse of the cave; Ray Moore, Maintenance Supervisor, to Superintendent, Oregon Caves, October 25, 1994; Barbara Hahn, “Digging in at Oregon Caves,” Grants Pass Daily Courier, March 18, 1995.

Ackerman noted that King had started the monument’s first junior ranger program (for children in elementary school) before she left Oregon Caves; Ackerman, Oregon Caves National Monument Activities Highlights, Period ending January 31, 1994, A2615.

Even a new NPS auditing strategy, one with greater involvement of the head guide for the 1996 season, did little to increase the overall scores given to concession tours; Ackerman, Oregon Caves National Monument Annual Narrative Report, October 1, 1995 – September 30, 1996, page 5, A2621. The acrimony between Heyden developed slowly over three years and probably had its root in Heyden’s inexperience with a setting like Oregon Caves. The circumstances of his arrival are summarized in Barbara Hahn, “Caves concessionaire cleans up,” Grants Pass Daily Courier, June 26, 1993, and “National Monument ‘a gold mine,’” Cave Junction Illinois Valley News n.d. [late October 1993]. Correspondence between Ackerman and Heyden is in NPS file C38, with some in C36. Hendricks recalled that the wording on Heyden’s business card was especially objectionable to Ackerman. On it, Heyden listed his occupation as “Manager, Oregon Caves National Monument,” something that Ackerman repeatedly requested be changed. Heyden’s tenure was marked by concession revenue during this time remaining stubbornly flat, with cave tours accounting for just over a third of gross sales. During those years (1993-96) visitor complaints surged, and many (if not most) of Heyden’s ideas to market the monument were not well received by the NPS. With annual visitation hovering around the 100,000 mark and pressure from the upper echelons of the Canteen Company of Oregon (now called the Estey Corporation) to maximize profits, Heyden was fired by his supervisor Dick Gordon; “Caves Lodge loses Heyden as manager,” Cave Junction Illinois Valley News, October 30, 1996.

Grant funding totaled $12,500 and allowed Forbes to develop 22 activities called “Troglobuddies,” and based on results from a focus group workshop in 1995; Pacific Northwest Region Quarterly Congressional Report (January – March, 1995), page 10, and Barbara Hahn, “An Underground Classroom,” Grants Pass Daily Courier, June 10, 1995; Ackerman, Oregon Caves Annual Narrative Report,
October 1, 1995, to September 30, 1996, page 6. The report also contains figures of the NPS staff size on the same page. The arrival of Forbes coincided with the early retirement of long-time park ranger Ted Davis on May 3, 1994. Forbes' earliest interpretive activities are also summarized in Ackerman's Oregon Caves National Monument Activity Highlights for July 31, August 31, and September 30, 1994. Site bulletins are mentioned in “Sheri's Work Summary, November 1 – December 22, 1995,” page 1, no file code; the resulting printed sheets were funded by the Crater Lake Natural History Association and adopted a modified unigrid format and four of them appeared on different colors of paper.

What became the National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-391), had a provision for extending concession contracts “to avoid interruption of service to the public until December 31, 2000 in Title IV, Section 403 (11)(A); Bob Stanton, NPS Director, to Regional Directors, November 1, 1999, C3823. The company’s opposition to lowering the tour size to 14 prompted a brief study by NPS staff—Thoughts and Observations on Tour Dynamics at Oregon Caves, undated [1996], one page with attached diagrams. It found that parties of six to eight visitors had a different dynamic than larger ones, in that of the two thousand feet traversed between the CCC connecting tunnel and exit, guides could adequately supervise parties exceeding eight in only a quarter of that distance.

Minutes from both meetings were captured in “Oregon Caves National Monument, Concession Meeting, 10 a.m., July 17, 1996,” and “Concession Contract Extension Meeting, Oregon Caves National Monument, 7:00 a.m., September 12, 1996.” The compromise appears on page 5 of the latter, and it was thought at that point an extension would only be needed for one year, as a new contract “would be in place on January 1, 1998.” A letter disputing the audit scores for cave tours came from Dick Gordon, who managed concession operations for the Estey Corporation at both Crater Lake and Oregon Caves. He disputed both the scoring and what the NPS alleged were security lapses in the cave, prompting a rebuttal from the NPS permanent subject-to-furlough employee, Phyllis Cremonini; Gordon to Ackerman, January 8, 1997; Cremonini to Ackerman, January 30, 1997, no file code [C38].

FIGURE 118. Accommodations at “Government Camp,” 1922. This became the site of the Chalet and Cottages at Oregon Caves. Fred Kiser photo, courtesy of Lee Webb.
FIGURE 119. "Government Camp," which represented an end point of the new Oregon Caves Road, 1922. The trail to Williams can be seen above the road connection to a main parking area, on the other side of a tent. USDA Forest Service photo.
Much like park areas that are labeled "archaeological" or "paleontological,"
caves constitute a distinct category among those represented in the National
Park System. All three types of areas require some prior knowledge from travelers
and often mystify uninitiated visitors. Prehistory and/or the geological timescale
pose especially difficult challenges for making connections with audiences, but
interpreters can stimulate curiosity in visitors. With curiosity as a starting point, it
then becomes possible to have emotional impact on people, and thus feed retention
and long-term memory.¹ This has to be done carefully with a thematic focus, so
even if the National Park Service had controlled the tours at Oregon Caves, effective
replacement of cave guiding based on imitating the style and content of colleagues
amounted to a tall order. Seen in contrast to a type of guiding which amounted to
an often incoherent mix of light humor, pointing to imaginary shapes in cave
formations, but perhaps seasoned with some identification of overarching geological
processes—thematic interpretation might offer what natural history had always
promised, a solution to dissonance through story.² It is, however, something
difficult to achieve on a hike led by poorly paid guides with limited education. The
aims of thematic interpretation were probably achieved in just a few cases, but
imitation has usually proved to be an impediment to structural change in guiding,
particularly in caves.

Charting a different course, 1997-2000

What made an already strained relationship between the NPS and its concessioner at
Oregon Caves increasingly fractious was the planning process officially initiated in
January 1996. Its origin can be traced at least to 1992, when Craig Ackerman
drafted some priorities for a hypothetical general management plan according to
criteria utilized by the Pacific Northwest Regional Office in Seattle. He wanted
clarification concerning a number of questions: possible expansion of monument
boundaries to prevent “edge effects” of clear-cut logging in the surrounding national forest, guidance on how to protect all of the caves located within the monument, and since the concession contract was due to expire at the end of 1996, whether cave tours might be conducted by a cooperating association or other parties to bring up the level of interpretation. Nothing came of it until a new superintendent at Crater Lake, Al Hendricks, arrived in early 1995. Not only was Hendricks a great believer in how a planning process could affect positive change in park operations, but ever since the beginning of his NPS career in the early 1970s, had known of Oregon Caves’ distinction as the only unit in the entire National Park System where interpretation of its primary resource was conducted by a concessioner. He also seemed to be less shackled by previous management conventions than his predecessors, since nationwide NPS reorganization in 1994 had replaced the Pacific Northwest Region with a “system support office” (SSO), something overseen by a larger regional organization headquartered in San Francisco. The SSO remained in Seattle, at least for the time being, and still proffered specialties like planning to Oregon Caves and other parks that previously formed the PNR.

With a general management plan for Oregon Caves not scheduled as a national priority (and thus undertaken by planners at the agency’s Denver Service Center) until well after the year 2000, the monument was selected for a “within region” undertaking, which meant planners from the SSO in Seattle coordinated the process. Once the planners produced a newsletter about the upcoming GMP, public scoping sessions were initiated in February 1996, along with separate stakeholder meetings, so that development of draft alternatives could occur throughout the summer. Not surprisingly, a preferred alternative emerged by the end of 1996 that had NPS employees conducting the cave tours in concert with adaptive use of the Chalet as both a visitor center and employee housing for guides hired under seasonal appointments. The key piece in such a shift became linked to the cave restoration project, where a new lighting system and trail for the tour route were to be completed in 1997. These were successfully built through phased construction, with most of the money provided through the NPS repair and rehabilitation program, but $750,000 of additional line-item funding had been provided by Congress through the efforts of Oregon’s senior senator Mark Hatfield in 1994.

Since the period prescribed by the existing concession contract was coming to an end, NPS officials directed an independent firm to appraise the facilities in which the concessioner held a possessory interest in order to meet the existing legal requirements in Public Law 89-249. It totaled $825,000 at the end of 1995, a
FIGURES 120 and 121. Once the Oregon Caves Company became the monument concessioner in 1923, the Chalet became their first construction project under the direction of Gust Lium. It reflected the site’s strategic importance to the cave guiding operation. USDA Forest Service photo. Lium also took charge of building a larger chalet in 1942 (at right) and reused many of the materials in the earlier structure; NPS photo.

figure the company contested as too low. Hendricks and Ackerman hoped to seek reprogramming of the $750,000 appropriated for the lighting and trail project, but they also faced several other hurdles if the plan’s preferred alternative stood a chance of being implemented. Even with a buyout, the NPS still had to reap sufficient funding from increases to its operating base at Oregon Caves, as well as additional receipts from cave tours in order to hire seasonal employees as guides and new permanent staff members to supervise them.

The most immediate need, however, involved Hendricks convincing his immediate supervisors in the new Pacific West Region to support the preferred alternative. Although public meetings had been held in Cave Junction and Grants Pass as part of scoping in March 1996, much work by planners in the regional office and park staff was needed to develop a draft plan with an environmental impact statement. Furthermore, the plan required the support of Regional Director John J. Reynolds and Deputy Regional Director Bill Walters for the preferred alternative of the GMP to prevail. Both men visited the monument on June 18, 1997, as part of an inspection trip to the monument, with their lunch in the Chateau’s coffee shop proving to be pivotal. The company delivered what Ackerman described as an “unsatisfactory performance,” where it took almost two hours to deliver what he called “mediocre food,” served by an untrained staff.

A much more publicized event that occurred shortly after the visit by Reynolds and Walters pointed to problems with cave security that park staff members believed had been caused by concession employees. These culminated in theft of a well-known formation, the Bird of Paradise, which happened sometime between the evening of July 22 and the morning of July 23. Security lapses began over the summer of 1996 with several instances of unlocked gates, including at least one case of unauthorized
entry followed by vandalism at the 110’ Exit, so that the NPS responded in June 1997 with a magnetic card system for locking the gates.\textsuperscript{11} Ackerman stated that, given the feature’s location, it would be nearly impossible for a visitor to slip away from a tour and remove it, but the theft remained unsolved.\textsuperscript{12} The incident’s greatest importance to the planning effort came roughly a month later, when Reynolds received a letter from Jay Swofford, the former head guide, who had visited the monument twice that summer. Not only did he witness a measurable decline from the standards set less than a decade earlier (something described in

FIGURE 122. A formation known as the “Bird of Paradise” hung above the Ghost Room until 1996. Frank Patterson photo, courtesy of Greg Walter.
detail), but also a dramatic increase in vandalism (both signatures and broken formations along the tour route), which Swofford attributed to guides not managing their groups of visitors. Consequently, concession manager Mike Romick promised an internal audit of the operation to Ackerman, who reported only a marginal improvement in overall audit scores by the year’s end. As superintendent, Ackerman noted the same weaknesses in the concession’s guide operation as described by Swofford: lack of thematic interpretation, dissemination of inaccurate information, as well as failure to adequately manage visitors for resource protection and safety.

Publicly, however, discussion of such deficiencies remained muted. Despite repeated marginal ratings given to the operation, and problems identified throughout years of auditing (as well as a seeming inability to limit resource damage along the tour route), the draft GMP document refrained from criticizing concession guides directly. NPS planners offered only peripheral and sometimes vague evidence for proposing that the agency take over the tours. They cited simply a need “to provide for the protection of cave resources and an optimal visitor experience,” contending that a greater net return of “monies to the government and taxpayer could result,” with more benefit to the local area through higher wages paid by the NPS as compared to what the company paid its employees. Such a move highlighted the longstanding NPS desire for a visitor center near the main cave entrance, to be located in the Chalet. This would provide a place where rangers could assemble school groups as part of curriculum focused on the monument, but also allow visitors to view exhibits and audio-visual programs, in addition to asking questions of park staff.

Fearing that regional support for the preferred alternative might waver while a draft GMP and environmental impact statement was being prepared by the planning team, Roth utilized data collected over a ten year period in July 1997 to compare concession-led cave tours with NPS interpretation at Oregon Caves, but also referenced the agency’s operations in five other “cave” parks. Although not cited in the draft or final GMP document, he made a convincing case for the NPS taking over tours at the monument, using demographic data and audit results to dispel lingering doubts about the proper course of action. Over 300 copies of a draft GMP document containing the preferred alternative (where NPS interpreters conducted the tours and the monument was expanded) went to the public for comment in January 1998. The comment period generated an astounding total of 982 written responses on the draft GMP, with 844 of those indicating support for the preferred alternative. Comments about who was best suited to run the tours came with roughly a third of the correspondence generated by the draft GMP, enough to assert that the NPS conducting cave tours garnered public support by a comfortable 4:1 ratio.
Responding to comments and assembling a final document consumed much of the planning team’s time for the next six months, but these steps did not constitute an end point in the process. The NPS still had to determine whether implementation of its preferred alternative might be economically feasible for a future concession contract at Oregon Caves. Employees in the NPS Concessions Program Center studied a number of financial components and made assumptions based on historical trends to conclude that implementation of the preferred alternative should proceed, provided that purchase of the Estey Corporation’s possessory interest went forward.19 With this endorsement in hand, Regional Director John J. Reynolds still had to approve the final general management plan and environmental impact statement by signing a record of decision to complete the last step, thus authorizing implementation of the selected alternative of the GMP. Reynolds did so on December 23, 1998, once Ackerman sent him something of an exclamation point in the form of Roger Contor’s comments from June 1961—about the need for NPS interpretation of the cave.20

As Ackerman cautioned in an open letter that accompanied the final printed plan and environmental impact statement, their completion only signified a beginning of the implementation phase. Without the buyout of concession facilities and legislation to authorize monument expansion, implementing the GMP simply had to be held in abeyance. With the concession contract’s term having concluded at the end of 1996, the NPS could only negotiate a series of annual extensions with the Estey Corporation. New regulations tied to the passage of Public Law 105-391 on January 13, 1998, needed to be promulgated before a new prospectus for concession services could be written based on those regulations and the approved GMP. As a precursor, the buyout of Estey’s possessory interest in park facilities became a necessity, since that allowed the Chalet to become a visitor center and housing for future NPS staff employed as guides.

In the interim, however, concession guiding at Oregon Caves continued to flounder, according to Ackerman and other key NPS staff at the monument.21 Mike Romick, who had been hired to replace Norm Heyden in November 1996, faced some the same challenge as his predecessor (to make the monument’s concession business more profitable for the Estey Corporation) but with perhaps more backing from his supervisor (Dick Gordon) at Crater Lake.22

The company’s public opposition to the GMP’s preferred alternative also worked to sour relations over the course of 1998, as did a 60 percent increase in visitor comment forms that centered on complaints about concession operations at the monument.23 This was even more pronounced on the cave tour, where inaccuracies and the lack of progress toward thematic interpretation seemed more acute than
ever before, even when the NPS offered the company use of a standardized script so that new and inexperienced guides could provide a minimally acceptable program for visitors. The stipulation was that the agency expected guides to advance beyond the entry level tour over the course of a summer season, but Chief of Interpretation Roger Brandt found in September that all of the guides adopted the standardized tour and never advanced beyond it. Consequently, Ackerman described the situation in the following way:

“...all guides have similar problems with accuracy and none audited displayed any developing knowledge of thematic programming techniques and goals.”24

Romick and Gordon objected to guides moving away from the standardized tour in late July, complaining of mixed messages from the NPS and moving targets that appeared to them as “another way the NPS is setting us up to fail.” They dismissed Brandt’s efforts to convey a thematic approach to the concession guides, as articulated through the monument’s “Interpretive Guide Book,” as not what “average citizens on vacation looking to be entertained” wanted from a cave tour. To them, the NPS had erred when the story of plate tectonics and meanings behind the different rock types found in the cave were made mandatory additions to the tour. For Gordon and Romick,

“...this is only going to decrease the enjoyment for 90% of visitors because the information is going right over their heads, especially when the only things they are going to remember anyway [are] the strange stories and cool formations.”25

The position of both company managers might appear strange indeed, given how interpretation at the monument had been seemingly bolstered by a series of recent developments. These began with discovery of fossil evidence in the cave during August 1995, with recovery of fragments identified as Pleistocene (two million years ago to 10,000 years ago). Additional discoveries of jaguars, bears, a mountain beaver, bats, and other small mammals continued over the ensuing three years. One of the finds, bones from an extinct species of bear, could even be viewed by tour parties in their original location.26 Several flowstone segments placed the oldest dated formations in the cave as far back as 1.2 million years before the present. Guides could use to advantage the new incandescent lighting that helped to illuminate growth patterns in cave formations that highlighted changes in climate that occurred over thousands of years. The NPS even added a black light at one location (Angel Falls, situated above the Ghost Room near a stairway) to show visitors the luminescence of calcite.27 Mapping and inventory by NPS crews under Roth’s supervision garnered additional funding from the National Park Foundation and the Canon Corporation. This grant was specifically aimed producing a CD-ROM of features and formations, work that Ackerman estimated to be 80 percent completed at the end of 1998.28
Even if concession guides did not avail themselves of the vast amount of technical information generated by NPS resource management, they could reach beyond the elemental “standardized” tour, if only by using a script emphasizing the cave’s geological features that had been structured according to a tour consisting of 21 stops. If not “entertaining,” this kind of source material could be easily transformed into the type of thematic interpretation that the auditors saw as an achievable goal for the guides.29

While the heightened tension between concession management and the NPS over the preferred alternative in the monument’s GMP could give rise to something of a siege mentality among the guides, Brandt and one of his seasonal hires (none other than the concession’s former manager at Oregon Caves, “Chas” Davis) worked on a program aimed at highlighting the Chateau and cave entrance area. They made contact with writers undertaking a book on the history of View-Master, a device where photographic reels allowed for the user to see images through stereo transparencies. View-Master enjoyed widespread popularity for more than a half century, and a critical part of its invention and subsequent development came at Oregon Caves. Brandt and Davis quickly realized that the story represented more than an aside involving a material culture item, but instead became a compelling way to interpret the monument’s human use and development during the six decades after the inventor of View-Master visited Oregon Caves in 1938.30
Chapter Six: A New Beginning?

What the NATIONAL PARK SERVICE DOESN’T TELL YOU

In the “NEW” Oregon Caves National Monument draft General Management Plan

Josephine County will lose $43,966 in property taxes. From 1995-1997 the Oregon Caves Company paid to Josephine County $43,966 in property taxes. In the Park Services preferred alternative “C” most of all of that tax money would not be paid in the future because the U.S. government would operate the cave tours, the chalet and the guide shack.

The U.S. Government will lose over $320,000 in franchise fees. From 1994 to 1997 the Oregon Caves Company paid the U.S. Government an average of $19,000 a year in cash franchise fees and paid additional franchise fees by paying excessive water and sewage payments. Plus we are required to charge an average of $1 less for every adult cave tour ticket sold annually or 150,000 per year.

The Oregon Caves Company will lose $360,378.40 in cave tour revenue. Annual operational gross revenues from 1993 to 1997 average $952,594. Without the cave tours, the Oregon Caves Company would lose an average of $360,378.40 in revenue each year. From our calculations, based on 20-year experience at the Oregon Caves National Monument, the concessionaire would not have a reasonable opportunity to realize a profit without the cave tour revenue. Public Law 99-249 states “The Secretary shall exercise his authority in a manner consistent with a reasonable opportunity for the concessionaire to realize a profit.” Preferred alternative “C” fails to project the concessionaire’s ability to realize a profit with out the cave tour operation.

Loss of $80,000 income tax payments. From 1993 to 1997 the Oregon Caves Company realized an annual average pretax profit of $55,678. We were in a tax bracket where we paid, or will pay, approximately $16,000 in state and federal taxes annually, or about $80,000 over five years. All or most of that $80,000 would not be paid if the Park Service’s preferred alternative “C” plan is implemented.

The Concession Overall Annual Rating issued by the Park Service shows we are doing a good job. Every year the Park Service rates the concession a “overall rating determination” for the previous season. Each time we have received the Park Service’s highest rating.

There will be less jobs available for residents in the Illinois Valley because of the Park Service’s new system for hiring and assigning jobs. Every single employee in Illinois Valley will qualify for an interpretive job with the Park Service. Currently the Oregon Caves Company has 30-40% of its work force including management from the Illinois Valley.

There will be a decrease in visitation to the Monument. The Park service is preparing to limit the number of people going through the cave to 760 visitors per day by adding a reservations system and decreasing the number of people per tour. What this means is that fewer people will be able to go through the cave during the peak hours of operations. Currently tours can enter the cave every 8 minutes. Under the preferred alternative “C” tours would enter no closer than 15 minutes which is going to cause longer waiting for a tour and cause thousands of visitors to be unable to visit the monument because their schedules don’t allow them to come back for an available ticket.

The Park Service will not market the Oregon Caves as well as the Concession does. The preferred alternative “C” lets an opportunity of inter departmental cooperation for an important project to promote the “new” Oregon Caves National Monument. There are no other marketing strategies listed. The information will be out there but no one will be actively promoting the fact that the caves are available. It will be more like stumbling upon it rather than seeking it out. The Oregon Caves Company spend $50,000 per year to market southern Oregon by advertising trade shows and tour operator conventions, distributing brochures from Sacramento, California, to Seattle, Washington, and internationally as well. We spend money in the local communities sponsoring youth athletic teams, events, and donating to charity. All of this will stop if the Park Service takes over the cave tours.

With approval of the preferred alternative looking increasingly more likely, Brandt convened the first public workshop devoted solely to interpretive planning at the monument. Held on December 1, 1998, its unstated intention was to supersede the interpretive prospectus of 1976, but shifted focus from NPS efforts at Oregon Caves specifically toward better integration with interpretive efforts made by other federal agencies and non-governmental entities in the Illinois Valley. It failed to bring about consensus concerning what themes might drive interpretation at the Illinois Valley Visitor Center in Cave Junction, but showed that theme statements at Oregon Caves could be developed with community support.

Like a couple headed for divorce, the contentious nature of NPS and concession relations flared up once again as another annual contract extension began in 1999. An unauthorized party involving concession employees in the Chateau led to a letter from Ackerman, who cited a violation of federal regulations and a breach of both the contract and operating agreements. Gordon met with him two days later, but not to show any contrition. Gordon said that the company wanted to improve relations. He blamed the management of Hendricks (who had transferred to the position of Superintendent at Capitol Reef National Park in November, 1998) for problems beleaguering the concession at Oregon Caves as a convenient scapegoat, now that he was no longer at Crater Lake. Gordon was reminded by Ackerman that the company had contributed greatly to deteriorating communications with the NPS, in particular with their caustic local advertisements and written comments on the draft GMP document less than a year earlier. Gordon then attempted to take the high road, by trumpeting how the company would increase guide pay, provide new training opportunities for them, and demand better qualifications—if the NPS allowed the concession to charge higher prices for visitors to enter the cave. Virtually in the same breadth, however, Gordon criticized what the NPS had in mind for tour operations and finished the meeting with Ackerman by squabbling about utility rates.

As clear as Ackerman tried to make the rules governing operations, he noted a pattern in almost all of Romick’s communications with the NPS, that somehow the directives were either misunderstood or received in an ambiguous way. For the most part, Romick would preemptively make arrangements with a visitor or park user and then tell the NPS after the fact, so it could not have come as a surprise that the company received an overall performance rating in 1998 of “marginal.” Ackerman pledged, however, that the NPS “will continue to work with concession managers and staff under another [contract] extension in 1999 to develop better understanding of NPS policies, procedures and expectations and improve performance in service to the public.” Gordon’s response to the rating came
almost three months later, and contested virtually every point in Ackerman’s narrative, focusing more than anywhere else on the cave tour, and especially on auditing procedures.\textsuperscript{37}

Brandt attempted to remove what mystery remained in the auditing procedures, having developed an “information sheet” to help guides pass tests required for certification. The sheet contained a list of “significant or critical information,” along with the “weight” assigned to each component, it being designed to be used in conjunction with the cave tour manual and the room by room geological tour.\textsuperscript{38}

Some improvement became evident among the guides, but the old problem with themes not being easily discernable persisted, as did periodic problems with controlling visitors on tours.\textsuperscript{39}

Hendricks and Ackerman believed that Oregon Caves could best be served if its operations were autonomous to those at Crater Lake, by essentially removing the monument’s satellite status and affording it an equal position among the parks in the far-flung Pacific West Region. With the arrival of a new superintendent (Chuck Lundy) at Crater Lake in 1998, they were also concerned that the management of the Estey Corporation (which had operated in both parks since 1977) might again attempt to play one superintendent against the other, something that had been attempted, but had not worked, when both Hendricks and Ackerman were in place. The growth of NPS staff at Oregon Caves had mostly eliminated the need for administrative support from Crater Lake, so Reynolds restored the monument’s “independence” on April 1, 1999, after Lundy made a cursory study of the situation.\textsuperscript{40}

The monument’s newly granted autonomy from Crater Lake removed an intervening bureaucratic layer of approval required before issues at Oregon Caves could be acted upon by managers in the regional or Washington offices of the NPS. It also avoided a dilemma faced by superintendents in both parks, which shared the same concessioner at that time. Hendricks pointed to how “parent” park managers generally viewed their issues as more significant than those at the satellite park, so that priority in solving problems usually went to the former at the expense of the latter. With possessory interest held by the concessioner being far greater at Crater Lake than at Oregon Caves, this could put a single manager in the position of having the sole input in matters involving a shared concessioner. Having two superintendents on equal footing to make their cases before the regional director removed this temptation.\textsuperscript{41}

Progress toward achieving the agency’s goal of gaining full control of the cave tours had, meanwhile, encountered two obstacles. One centered on a buyout of
possessory interest held by the concessioner. With the latest appraisal setting the interest figure at $975,000, a full buyout needed more than the previously appropriated $750,000 for the cave trail and lighting system. On top of the NPS having to go to Congress for authorization to reprogram that initial line item appropriation, staff in the agency’s Washington office estimated that another $500,000 (to be obtained from a contingency fund in the bureau’s general line-item appropriation for construction) would be needed to produce the full buyout. The funding formula changed along the way, however, when both houses of Congress appropriated $1 million for the buyout in November 1999 to the delight of NPS officials. This development provided a green light for the NPS to proceed with negotiations aimed at fixing a final price, but with yet another appraisal in the offering. A second obstacle, that of the cave tour operation under NPS auspices generating sufficient revenue to pay for itself in the absence of increases to the monument’s base operating funds, was left in abeyance.

**Oregon Caves Visitor Center**

![Diagram of Oregon Caves Visitor Center]

FIGURE 126. A preliminary plan for converting the Chalet’s gift shop into a visitor center, by Roger Brandt, February 2000. Gift sales were subsequently moved to the Chateau in 2002, but the visitor center renovation languished for another decade.

With another appraisal set for the following spring, Ackerman had no choice but to extend the expired contract once again, though he also began negotiating an amendment for the year 2000. The amendment was calculated to bring the
concessioner an additional $5,000 in gross revenues, even with an increase in the annual franchise fee paid by the company.\textsuperscript{46} A decision by officials in the NPS regional office in San Francisco not to go forward with the amendment that summer came with word that a prospectus for a new contract was in the making.\textsuperscript{37} As a preliminary step, the same contracted firm conducted an appraisal for the possessory interest buyout as the previous two occasions, arriving at a “sound value” figure of $1.15 million in early October.\textsuperscript{48} Since the new millennium started the NPS staff at Oregon Caves hoped that the change signaled by a buyout might actually occur. Brandt, therefore, took a first step by preparing a preliminary plan for transforming the company’s gift shop at the Chalet into a visitor center. Assuming that any such facility would be confined to the ground floor of the building, the plan contained a list of how the operational changes could be accommodated within the existing structural envelope so that the NPS might conduct tours, but did not broach the subject of housing for its employees.\textsuperscript{49}

For that summer at least, the concessioner still operated the cave tours. Deficiencies in thematic interpretation once again surfaced in the audits, something made worse by company management routinely scheduling the same guide to conduct consecutive tours. Although this was possible to do during the shoulder seasons with a minimum of inconvenience to visitors, having guides give consecutive tours over the summer caused them to show up late given the distance between the cave exit and Chalet breezeway, so that another concession employee had to provide orientation for visitors on the next cave tour.\textsuperscript{50} Guiding by the concession ended in November after more than 75 years, and only because the NPS announced its intention to offer a temporary concession contract without the tours in its scope of services.\textsuperscript{51} The company declined, but only after some additional sniping over an offer on December 15 to buy out its possessory interest at both Oregon Caves and Crater Lake; the NPS also had to reiterate that the temporary contract did not include cave tours.\textsuperscript{52}

Ackerman formally announced through a press release dated February 12, 2001, that cave tours were due to resume on March 16, but to be conducted by the NPS. As if to heighten the sense of occasion, he also mentioned that the change went beyond “basic” tours, as interpreters planned to add special excursions in the cave throughout the year. Apart from those aimed at young children, the other two ironically enough (off-trail exploration and candlelight tours) were first floated by the former concession manager Norm Heyden.\textsuperscript{53} As the big day approached, however, the NPS found itself without a concessioner to run food service and lodging at the monument, but more importantly, a hiring freeze prevented it from filling between 16 and 20 seasonal guide positions.\textsuperscript{54} The former challenge was resolved, at least for the 2001 season, when the NPS awarded Delaware North
Corporation with a temporary contract for food services and lodging at Oregon Caves in late March.\(^5^5\) The new administration eventually lifted the federal hiring freeze, but the lag meant that both Brandt and Roth had to be pressed into service as part of the NPS conducting its initial cave tours.\(^5^6\)

**Cave tours and other focal points, 2001-2016**

The euphoria surrounding NPS finally exerting direct control of cave tours appeared to last well into June of 2001, when the agency staged a first-ever “Community Appreciation Day” and offered free tours for local residents and park visitors. A similar event hosted again a year later proved to be “a rousing success,” according to Chas Davis, who returned as concession general manager when the community based and non-profit Oregon Caves Outfitters were awarded temporary contracts for food service, lodging, and gift sales in 2002 and 2003.\(^5^7\) Although free tours drew additional visitors on a relatively few days, the shift to NPS guides had little or no effect on annual attendance, which remained stubbornly flat at Oregon Caves. It exceeded 90,000 only once (in 2003) since the dawn of a new millennium, and resisted national trends seen in data from Crater Lake as well as other areas managed by the NPS, which often showed substantial increases, or at least an upward trend.\(^5^8\)

Most, if not all, observers who could compare a NPS-led cave tour with what they had formerly experienced on a concession-led tour agreed that the NPS tours were
more factually consistent, with less reliance on mirth or anthropomorphizing formations in relating to their audiences. Along the way, a guide is supposed to sustain a theme, include messages about preservation, both ideally in a way that utilizes techniques associated with progressive revelation. Seasonal employees hired by the NPS were older, on average, and had attained higher educational levels than the concession guides, but an entrenched way of presenting their tours did not completely disappear with higher wages and somewhat better working conditions. Placement of the concession’s head guide during the 2000 season into a similar role for the NPS in 2001 set an important precedent in limiting how far Brandt could go with imparting thematic interpretation to the new seasonal staff, as did a refusal or reluctance by some of those employees to develop programs that could be delivered outside of the cave.59

Although Ackerman had long maintained that NPS cave tours could be operated on the revenue generated by ticket sales, Brandt quickly found that the salaried guides had to be supplemented by interns hired through the Student Conservation Association or recruitments of volunteers in order to keep the park budget balanced.60 Frequent turnover among the guides diminished continuity from one season to the next, with guides leaving for higher grades or pay rates offered in other national park areas.61 Brandt could work around these problems, having become accustomed to the short-term nature of interns, volunteers, and seasonal hiring in a previous NPS job. This allowed the monument’s environmental education program to continue with either volunteers or paid staff. His division even showed a budget surplus at times, but progress toward a having a real visitor center for orientation purposes at the monument proved to be painfully slow. Little or no momentum was generated in this direction, even after ticket sales shifted from the Chateau to the Chalet in 2002, a move that opened the possibility of producing some temporary exhibits in what had been the concession’s gift shop. The apparent inertia highlighted a larger problem, in that agency funding for permanent exhibits and audio-visual productions had begun to wither in the first years of the new millennium.62

In the relative absence of alternative funding sources for exhibits or a film, Brandt devoted considerable attention to a series of “site bulletins” for interpreting resources at the monument as well as printed trail guides. Now that the NPS assumed full control of the cave tour, interpretation seemed to attract less attention from management, since Ackerman still had to finish buying the concession’s possessory interest in order for the NPS to issue a prospectus for the new contract. The watershed moment was finally achieved in March 2003, after a sequence of bargaining that resulted in payment by the NPS of $1.54 million to the Estey Corporation.63 He further divided his energies between planning for a construction
project aimed at building an administrative structure on the Lake Creek parcel, as well as finding an alternative that would keep the Illinois Valley Visitor Center operating in the wake of budget problems that beset one of the major partners (the U.S. Forest Service), which caused it to withdraw from staffing it and paying a portion of the utilities. A new initiative, one aimed at complete rehabilitation of the Chateau, also promised to be a major undertaking, given how it was linked to the continued viability of concession operations at Oregon Caves. As a first step, the award of a ten year concession contract occurred in November, 2003. It went to the Illinois Valley Community Response Team (IVCRT), the non-profit that had previously filled this role for two seasons once Delaware North left the monument at the end of 2001.

If interpretation’s star seemed to wane, or at least flicker somewhat among management’s priorities, it could count on having a record $472,000 in operational (base) funding in 2003—a figure that underwrote two permanent full time positions in the division, two permanent subject to furlough interpretive rangers, two others on term appointments, and 22 seasonal guides. The comparatively robust staffing resulted from an increase in the total NPS operating budget at Oregon Caves in 2002, but the agency’s interpretative program there needed to be supplemented in ways that effectively “stretched” its funding, mostly by recruiting relatively large numbers of volunteers and interns. This resulted in the wherewithal to conduct
4,310 “general” (regular) cave tours during fiscal 2003, something that served 55,467 visitors. Another 826 “family tours” (a designation for groups with disabled members, or children too small to accompany regular tours) were given for 2,283 participants.67 Meanwhile, assistance to area schools that year took several forms: the NPS continued its environmental education (EE) program (464 presentations serving 7,835 participants in 2003) but agency employees also presented to schools outside of the EE program (93 times that year) and established a curriculum based education (CBE) scheme consisting of five distinct steps.68 Other types of programs included nature walks, formal presentations highlighting the monument’s natural resources, and periodic tours of the Chateau.

As is the case in so many “natural areas,” concerted effort aimed at interpreting cultural resources or history generally remained confined to a few wayside or visitor center exhibits in addition to touring the hotel, which slowly became something of a house museum. The latter began only in 2001, initiated as a way to diversify interpretive offerings available to the public during the first “Community Appreciation Day.”69 Not that the monument’s interpretive staff has been starved for material, as two research efforts fed by regional project funding from the NPS started in the fall of 2003, and resulted in publications over the next five years. The first, a historic resource study of Oregon Caves, was titled “Domain of the Cavemen” and included a section on interpreting historic properties there, as well as
considerable context for the monument's history more generally when it appeared in late 2006. The other began as a cultural affiliation study and flowered into “Homelands of the Siskiyou Divide,” an ethnohistorical document printed in 2008 that placed the ties of park-associated American Indians squarely into context at Oregon Caves, but has largely since failed to stir any effort by NPS management to forge government-to-government relationships with the tribes claiming association or interest in the monument.

FIGURE 130. Although the Indians of the Illinois Valley were largely removed to distant reservations such as the Grand Ronde and Siletz in the middle of the nineteenth century, other native peoples persisted along the Klamath and other river basins near Oregon Caves. Tribes such as the Karuk and Shasta have depended upon salmon in their subsistence practices, sometimes building small scaffolds from which they could spear or net fish, often within 20 air miles of the monument and preserve. Photo courtesy of the Siskiyou County Museum in Yreka, California.
Although the realm of cultural resources has remained squarely in the shadow of natural resources at the monument, Brandt began to use history as a form of outreach even before the printer finished work on “Domain of the Cavemen.” He began with some writing related to the sesquicentennial celebration of Josephine County in early 2006 and continued well beyond his retirement from the NPS in 2008. Most directly related to the monument was the notoriety accorded the Oregon Cavemen, something newspapers took up briefly when the club dissolved its charter from the state in November 2005. His most publicized effort in the Illinois Valley, however, involved leading a movement to save the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base near the airport south of Cave Junction. It took place away from the job, as did participation in the state’s heritage tree program, and promotion of the Thomas J. Howell Scenic Byway, but outreach—even when supported by the NPS—seemed to generate little more than a small amount of newspaper publicity. Brandt’s goal of integrating park resources into the local or regional community remained only partially and perhaps imperfectly realized as the monument’s centennial dawned in 2009.

By that time a new superintendent, Vicki Snitzler, had arrived at Oregon Caves, to be followed shortly by a new chief of interpretation, George Herring.

These changes in the monument’s staff came as annual visitation continued along a largely downward arc, falling from 94,745 in 2003 to just 73,774 in 2008—a level last recorded in 1957. It has since dipped lower (69,405 visitors were counted in 2014), but then rebounded to over 80,000 for 2016, when the NPS marked its centennial year. Meanwhile, Herring began his tenure by addressing the content of cave tours, which he noticed relied heavily on the discovery by Elijah Davidson in 1874, as well as other historical events instead of geological or speleological processes. Science-based tours eventually won out, but only after much persistence combined with tour guide attrition over a period of three years. Herring made it a top priority that programs were to contain a central relevant idea (theme), something that supposedly happened when the NPS took over the tours in 2001, but in reality had not been uniformly achieved among seasonal hires. Another problem affecting visitor satisfaction had also reemerged, even with attendance that never exceeded 88,500 in any one year. It consisted of long wait times (as much as three hours) for tours, something that could be lessened by adjustments to the duty schedule for guides, but also through reducing the permanent staff and hiring more seasonal employees.

Revenue from the cave tours had produced a backlog of what amounted to entrance fees since the NPS assumed direct control of them in 2001, with a set percentage retained by the NPS at Oregon Caves under a congressionally-mandated “Rec Fee” program. Too large a backlog could lead to punitive measures from officials in the
NPS regional office, so Snitzler ordered Herring to spend it in ways that visitors could see and appreciate—most conspicuously at the monument’s visitor center in the Chalet. Starting in 2009, for example, Herring created and oversaw a cooperative agreement with the public television station in Medford to produce videos that could be screened as park films in the visitor center. This undertaking also included a “blow up cave maze house,” temporary exhibit panels, and an online virtual cave tour. A permanent exhibit, representing a first for the monument, also stemmed from having to spend down Rec Fee funds. Herring wrote a scope of work for the exhibit in 2010 and had the assistance of Marylou Herlihy in the regional office in the quest to find a contractor for its design, projected for 2011. By the time it opened in the Chalet four years later, the exhibit featured an “immersive cave experience,” as a centerpiece and included a number of interactive components.  

FIGURE 131. Leaflets are an inexpensive form of non-personal interpretation. These leaflet covers were produced as part of the Junior Ranger program around the dawn of a new millennium by Roger Brandt.

Research has long since established that the most enduring interpretive programs are those with strong central themes, which are both engaging to visitors and relevant. What makes them most memorable in the long-term are stimuli derived from these
central themes, ones that trigger emotional responses from visitors and maximize
the forming of cognitive connections.\textsuperscript{79} This link became the basis for what was a
controlled survey by a graduate student, Krista Reynolds, who subsequently
generated a thesis titled “Evaluating the Effectiveness of the General Cave Tour at
Oregon Caves National Monument” in 2012. She pointed to how the NPS
previously [in 2006] possessed “very little scientifically valid information about the
direct outcomes and impact of interpretation and educational programs.”\textsuperscript{80}
Reynolds thus embarked on a project aimed at three questions: 1) Are NPS
interpreters presenting a tour that allows visitors to make intellectual and emotional
connections with the cave, while providing an enjoyable experience, which also
contained information on the monument’s significance? 2) Are visitors not only
enjoying themselves, but also gaining an understanding of the monument’s
significance, while making intellectual and emotional connections? and 3) Does a
sense of enjoyment, the understanding of significance and those connections persist
several months after the tour?

Data generated by the thesis project largely consisted of self-assessments through
surveys of interpreters (a pool of 11 seasonal NPS employees) and a considerably
greater number of visitors (479). Tours tested occurred in June 2011, with the
follow-up taking place in October and November of that year, something that
generated 88 valid responses.\textsuperscript{81} The most significant findings suggested that a
majority of visitors made “great” intellectual connections with the cave, but a much
smaller number indicated that the tour produced an emotional connection.
Interpreters, furthermore, had made fairly accurate predictions that visitors could
make intellectual connections with the cave more than emotional ones. Her
findings also indicated that the cave’s rock formations and “aesthetics” were the
tour’s most enjoyable aspects for visitors, both immediately and roughly four to five
months later. What proved to be the most memorable for them, especially over this
period, were the interpreter’s stories.\textsuperscript{82} Reynolds thus concluded that interpreters
should focus on stories that reinforce the significance of cave formations and
aesthetic features of the tour, given how intellectual connections decreased and
emotional connections increased four to five months after the tour.\textsuperscript{83}

Another question came to the forefront once a national “preserve” had been added
to the monument in late 2014, thereby expanding park acreage by roughly nine
times. It centered on how to interpret what had been referred to as the “expansion
area” and then connect it through use of strong thematic statements and
appropriate media to the cave and 480 acre national monument. What emerged as
the most promising idea involved building a trail for geological interpretation as
something of an “outside” or “above ground” cave tour. The area’s relatively high
botanical diversity in a temperate coniferous forest, as well as abundant evidence of
past earth movements, also appeared to be candidates for further planning and eventual development through wayside exhibits or other interpretive devices.  

Although there has been little progress made toward interpreting the preserve to date, possibly because it lacks (as of this writing) adequate boundary signage, something of a starting point appeared in October 2016. A multi-authored volume edited by John Roth about the natural history of the rugged mountains known as “Siskiyou” north of the state line between Oregon and California, and “Klamath” to the south located Oregon Caves as its center point. The volume developed from an idea for a book on plants of the region first advanced by Roth some 25 years earlier, yet might still play a pivotal role in the development of interpretation that aims to unify a story of cave, forest, and the surrounding landscape for residents and visitors alike.  

How the interpretation of cultural resources might move beyond touring the Chateau and the gestation of View Master is a more vexing and open-ended question. The prevailing emphasis on cave processes and terrestrial flora will likely persist, with some allusions to European discovery and early development of the tour route. There may yet be some potential in moving toward a more nuanced view of the monument and preserve’s cultural landscape, but just as in the cave tour, sustaining a theme through stories and emotional connections that visitors can readily grasp will be an enduring challenge.

FIGURE 132. The River Styx became the first underground addition to the federal Wild and Scenic River System upon passage of omnibus legislation in late 2014. An upstream portion of it, discovered in December 1985 by means of a new passage found near the CCC connecting tunnel of 1937, is shown here. Photo courtesy of Chas Davis.
Notes to Chapter Six


2 Humans have a difficult time operating out of story, especially where “myth” is part of an evolutionary drive to find unity. Consequently many authors, including theologians, grant “myth” a central place in stories: “The illusion that there is some final story that is eternally true is given expression by replacing appearances with some ultimate reality...the basic function of myth is not the particular reconciliation established by individual myths; rather, its purpose is to establish that reconciliation is possible.” Robert W. Funk, foreword to John Dominic Crossan, *The Dark Interval: Toward a Theology of Story* (Santa Rosa, California: Polebridge Press, 1988), page xi.

3 Ackerman in David K. Morris, Superintendent, Crater Lake National Park and Oregon Caves National Monument, March 6, 1992, W42. Oddly enough, talk of a general management plan disappeared (at least officially) 17 months later, after Ackerman had been made “superintendent” at Oregon Caves, though he still reported to Morris; Ackerman, Outline of Planning Requirements, PNR, Oregon Caves National Monument, August 1994, [D18]. Shortly thereafter, however, an Operations Evaluation conducted by the region recommended that options for conducting cave tours be evaluated prior to expiration of the existing concession contract. It was to examine three alternatives for providing guide service: continuation of concession-led tours, having tours provided by the NPS, and those conducted by a non-profit like the Crater Lake Natural History Association. Need for the study was obviated by the GMP process; Ackerman, Task Directive, Visitor Services Study, Environmental Assessment, Oregon Caves National Monument, An Evaluation of Cave Tour Options and Commercial Services, November 7, 1994, no file code.

4 Ackerman, Oregon Caves National Monument, Annual Narrative Report, October 1, 1995 – September 30, 1996, page 2, A2621. At that time the NPS also undertook a “limited” development concept plan for replacing the trailer housing and Quonset hut at the Lake Creek parcel, where Ackerman hoped to have a new administration building and additional housing built. The portable ranger station of 1964 had been rendered unsafe when a flood event in late 1996 reactivated a slide underneath the main parking lot (the same one that destroyed the picnic area and concession gas station in 1942), thus dictating a trailer situated in the main lot to house administrative functions for the next seven years.

5 Hendricks remembered that at the earliest stages of the planning process, while discussions were still internal, he had to convince planner Keith Dunbar that an alternative of the NPS controlling tour operations should even be included in the plan. This was seen as highly controversial and likely to result in open conflict with the concessioner. SSO staff thought that NPS tour operations were unlikely to be feasible, due to the grip that the concessioner had on the monument through possessory interest holdings. Hendricks argued that leaving out the option of NPS-provided tours would not meet the National Environmental Policy Act requirement of offering a full range of alternatives. He saw getting the NPS control of tours as an alternative in the draft GMP as the first critical success in the planning process; Hendricks, review comment, July 8, 2018.

6 USDI-NPS, Talking Points—Oregon Caves N.M., Trail and Lighting Rehabilitation Project and Potential Reprogramming of Funds for Buyout of Concessionaire’s Possessory Interest, undated [late 1996], C40.

7 Ibid. Hatfield chaired the Senate Appropriations Committee at that time.

8 This provision of the legislation was further clarified by Guidelines Issued for Estimation of Concessioner Possessory Interest Compensation, issued by the NPS on April 15, 1994, in compliance with a Federal Register notice of January 4, 1993, mandating that prospectuses issued for all future concession contracts include an estimate of the amount a new concessioner must pay on existing concession possessory interest.
The company authorized this appraisal in August 1995; Dick Gordon to Al Hendricks, August 1, 1995, C40; Rex E. Daugherty, Chief Appraiser, Review Statement, January 26, 1996; Ackerman to Gordon enclosing a copy of the appraisal, February 22, 1996; Gordon to Ackerman, April 2, 1996; Ackerman to Gordon, April 17, 1996, C40. The company’s lawyers convinced the NPS to conduct a second appraisal in December 1997, something that increased the possessory interest to $975,000; Gordon to Ackerman, August 2, 1996; USDI-NPS, Concession Program Center, Draft Economic Feasibility Analysis, General Management Plan, Oregon Caves National Monument [1998], 11.

A rough timeline for GMP milestones is in the Summary of Public Involvement, in USDI-NPS, Oregon Caves National Monument, General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 2 (Seattle: Government Printing Office, 1998), 1-2. The lunch is the center of a subsequent letter from Ackerman to Mike Romick, General Manager, Oregon Caves Company, June 24, 1997, C36. This allowed Ackerman to press his point about the necessity of a buyout; Ackerman to Walters, June 26, 1997, C38.


Swofford’s credibility, even years after being head guide, was enhanced by his position in computer security for Intel in Hillsboro, Oregon. During his second visit to the monument, when serving as a volunteer-in-park, Swofford spoke to Dick Gordon personally about his findings—made on the strength of personally conducting some 4,000 tours at Oregon Caves—to little or no avail. Swofford, who was aware of the preferred alternative in the GMP, then endorsed the NPS taking over tours at the monument; Swofford to Reynolds, August 26, 1997; Romick to Ackerman, August 28, 1997.

Ackerman, Oregon Caves National Monument, 1997, Annual Narrative Report, 3-4, under “Visitor Services” and “Concessions” headings.


USDI-NPS, draft GMP/EIS, Volume 1, page 102. The document cited only two studies in reference to the cave tours. One, a technical memorandum, was invoked to justify smaller tour sizes (14 in each party); John Roth and Steve Knutson, Effect of Tour Size on Cave Resources at Oregon Caves, September 28, 1996. The regional office previously commissioned a visitor study of the monument (one of a continuing number of reports done throughout the country in NPS units) to gauge visitor satisfaction. A mail back survey of visitors taking the cave tour resulted in an 85 percent response that their guide covered all the “topics of interest,” with the remaining 15 percent wanting more information on “cave geology and history” (page 23). The pace and duration of the tour were generally given positive marks, as was the cost (pages 27, 30), but the major flaw in studies of this type is that they lack any basis to compare one park with another, nor where alternative management scenarios come into play. The authors admitted they had limited ability to assess the success of resource education and interpretation at Oregon Caves, and noted that 35 percent of visitors could not name the NPS as the monument’s managing agency; David Rolloff, et al., Oregon Caves National Monument, 1995 Visitor Study, April 1996, NPS, Pacific West Field Area, page 41.

Roth used the period of 1987 onward to compare concession interpretation with that by the NPS at Oregon Caves, but furnished a separate category for NPS interpretation at five “cave” parks: Mammoth, Carlsbad, Timpanogos, Wind, and Jewel. He compared the average age of guides, their educational level, experience, returnee rates, startup training, audit score, and written test scores. Lastly, he also addressed the reasons for differences in quality, both economic and historic; Roth, Comparing Concession and National Park Service Interpretation [July 1997], 1-4, in GMP file, ORCA.
18 USDI-NPS, Oregon Caves National Monument, Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, Volume II (Seattle: Government Printing Office, November 1998), 7-8. The proposed monument expansion received the most public comments, with the cave tour issue second. NPS control of tours maintained a clear lead throughout, despite a publicity campaign by the concessioner aimed at maintaining the status quo. The comment period was open for about ten weeks.

19 After another appraisal conducted in late 1997, the possessory interest increased to $975,000, so the center’s analysis factored in a total of $1,033,500 into the purchase price; R. Bruce Wadlington, Manager, Concessions Program Center, to Ackerman, transmittal of October 13, 1998 and December 4, 1998 with attached Economic Feasibility Analysis, Oregon Caves Company, Oregon Caves National Monument, Oregon, [1998], 11-13, C40. The “Oregon Caves Company” was the local name used by the Estey Corporation for their interests and role at the monument.

20 The writer located Contor’s memorandum in October 1998 and alerted Ackerman, who initially sent it to Hendricks. The Crater Lake superintendent conveyed the memo to Walters and Reynolds, who both expressed their appreciation. Reynolds also noted Contor’s role as the first superintendent of North Cascades National Park (Reynolds served in that capacity before becoming Deputy Director of the NPS during the mid-1990s) and wrote back “Let’s commit ourselves to putting some action behind his leadership… and if we succeed, let’s be sure to let him know…” Reynolds to Ackerman, December 9, 1998, e-mail forwarded to the writer. As cited in an earlier chapter, the memo from Contor was to W. Ward Yeager, Superintendent, Crater Lake National Park, June 6, 1961, page 3, stated “We should declare our intent to assume the guide service upon expiration of the present contract in 1971 and organize our Master Plan accordingly.”

21 Ackerman, Oregon Caves National Monument, 1997 Annual Narrative Report, 3-4; Ackerman, Oregon Caves National Monument, FY 1998 Annual Narrative Report, 5-6. Others such as John Roth and Chief of Interpretation Roger Brandt continued to express their frustration in trying to lift the level of interpretive service provided by the concession guides in interviews conducted by the writer during this period.


24 Ibid. Parts of the standardized tour were recounted and summarized in one given during that spring and described by Kathy Brock, “The Southern Oregon Trail,” The Business Journal, May 22, 1998, page 4. Brock recounted disparate elements such as cave processes that produced “soda straws,” the eating habits of bats, what constituted a troglobolite (cave dependent, eyeless creatures such as an albino millipede) and some anthropomorphized formations in the Imagination Room.

25 Romick to Ackerman, July 27, 1998, page 2; followed by Gordon to Ackerman, via e-mail, July 31, 1998, both in response to audit scores in July. They characterized thematic interpretation as a “moving target,” to which Ackerman responded on August 6 by reiterating the requirement for thematic interpretation contained in a letter to Romick of November 12, 1997, C38. The guidebook, which represented another revision of the cave manual (one intended to provide guides with additional geological context) appeared as a full draft in October 1998 and reiterated the stipulation for using a standardized tour; Ackerman to Romick, June 10, 1998, and Brandt to Romick, same date, both C38. The writer admits seizing on the last five words of the quotation from Romick to title his talk on the struggle between thematic interpretation and the entertainment approach at Oregon Caves during the biennial meeting of the George Wright Society on Parks and Protected Areas, held in Asheville, North Carolina in May 1999.
26 Ackerman, Oregon Caves National Monument, FY 1998 Annual Narrative Report, 3-4. The exhibit, highlighting a discovery made by members of the NPS maintenance crew in March 1997, happened to be adjacent to the existing tour route and became evident during work on the new cave trail. Its importance, along with that of the jaguars, to the age of Oregon Caves was described by Roth in “Fossil Finds and the Age of Oregon Caves,” Nature Notes from Crater Lake 27 (1996), 29-31.


29 Formatted like a geological field trip, but without a title or measured distances between stops, it summarized how cave features could be seen in terms of process and why materials differed from each other; [John Roth], “Geology, Oregon Caves,” in vertical file box, ORCA Library. NPS employees also inventoried two newly discovered caves on or near the monument in 1997, including one dubbed “the cave next door,” in that it was located adjacent to the monument on the Siskiyou National Forest. This information, especially their locations, was largely withheld from the concessioner for fear that visitors might want to make unauthorized (and dangerous) exploration for themselves; discovery and inventory was noted by Ackerman, Oregon Caves National Monument, 1997 Annual Narrative Report, page 2.

30 Mary Ann and Wolfgang Sell to Brandt; and Brandt to the writer, July 23, 1998 via e-mail, with a 14 page typescript titled “The Man behind the magic, the Inventor William Gruber,” attached. Their initial impetus came from John Dennis, “Seven Billion Windows on the World: View-Master Then and Now,” which appeared in Stereo World (March/April 1984), no pagination. The link between View-Master and Oregon Caves was initially publicized by Barbara Hahn, “View-Master, Oregon Caves linked,” Grants Pass Daily Courier, August 20, 1998.

31 Unlike the prospectus, which was solely the product of a NPS planning team, this effort involved community outreach; Brandt to the writer, November 28, 1998, via e-mail. The “Interpretive Statement” generated by park employees was an internal document, meant as part of the periodic reporting package to regional staff stationed at the support office in Seattle.

32 Meeting notes by the writer, December 1, 1998. For example, theme statements could be condensed into one sentence each: 1. The interaction of life forms and all known rock types can be seen within the cave and surrounding area; 2. Perpetuation of the cave and its biota is dependent in what happens on the surface; and 3. Design with nature is an attempt to express the essence of a place, transforming the landscape into an artistic expression. Ironically, it was the company, rather than the NPS, which expanded its presence in the Illinois Valley at that point in time. Forest Service employees in Grants Pass and Cave Junction responded to a regional directive and tried to contract operation of their campgrounds on the Siskiyou National Forest. Only two were feasible, and the contract was let over the objections of staff working at the district and supervisor’s offices. The Estey Corporation thus controlled both the Grayback and Cave Creek campgrounds as of May 1995, where rates for camping went from $7 to $12, then $13, and $5 to $8 respectively, with a mere one percent return to the government as a franchise fee; Craig Ackerman interview, September 15, 1998.


34 Ackerman to Romick, January 5, 1999, C38; Ackerman, Notes to Concession Administration File (C38) meeting with Dick Gordon, January 7, 1999. The company had been paying guides $6.25 an hour on the “tour by tour” basis in 1998, but with a new minimum wage in Oregon, introducing a new scale of $7.50, with $8.50 due for new guides once they were trained and certified; returning certified guides would receive $9.40. They hoped for a work force having at least two years of college with backgrounds in geology or some kind of natural science.
Gordon harped about delays in certification and auditing of guides as he had the previous two years, then alleged a “double standard” where the NPS did tours for schoolchildren as part of environmental education program, charging them nothing, while children on a concession tour would generate $3.50 each. As for utilities, the company was already paying the lower of comparability versus cost for its water and sewer rates, so no pass through was possible. This reflected Gordon’s frustration more than anything, since he already knew the answers before asking the question. Ackerman, Notes to Concession Administration File, 2-3; Ackerman’s meeting with Romick about two weeks later amounted to something of a tag team event after Gordon’s complaints. The gripes from him were more diffuse and mostly concerned NPS operations, with the only real result being clarification about NPS issuance of “free passes” on cave tours; Ackerman, Notes on Meeting with Mike Romick, January 20, 1999, C38; Ackerman to All Employees, Memo on issuance of passes for cave tours, January 22, 1999, C38.

Romick to Ackerman, February 3, 1999; Ackerman to Romick, February 5, 1999. The Concessioner Annual Report was attached to a transmittal sent by Ackerman to Dick Gordon, February 19, 1999, C2621, quote from the second page of the annual overall narrative assessment.

Gordon to Ackerman, May 12, 1999. In prefacing his letter, Gordon said he believed that “both of us are committed to improving relations this year,” but continued with “because of conflict [over the GMP] in 1998, it made it very difficult for us to operate at the Oregon Caves National Monument, some of your staff at times made it very difficult for us to function. Their comments and through their uncooperative behavior made working in the Park difficult.” Memorandum to Craig Ackerman, May 11, 1999, page 1.

One episode, involving the disturbance of roosting bats near the 110’ Exit, became serious enough (after repeated warnings) for Brandt to threaten decertifying the next guide whose party violated NPS orders to leave them alone; Brandt to Romick, August 19, 1999, C38. A sample taken from July 1999 audits showed that the problems with guides having identifiable themes persisted, even if a tour taken by Deputy Regional Director Bill Walters merited high praise of the guide; Walters to Ackerman, July 9, 1999, A6019, and Walters to Gordon, July 9, 1999, C14.

Hendricks to Reynolds and Walters, October 23, 1998, A64. Lundy’s report endorsing the proposal to Walters was evidently decisive though Reynolds did not announce the change for another two months; Crater Lake National Park Squad Meeting, January 19, 1999, page 1; Reynolds to Lundy and Ackerman, April 1, 1999, P8815. Even then, the change did not receive news coverage for another six weeks; Paul Fattig, “Caves get own spot on park roster,” Medford Mail Tribune, May 16, 1999, and “Oregon Caves cut loose from Crater Lake,” Klamath Falls Herald and News, May 17, 1999. Cultural resources staff at Crater Lake (the curator and the historian) continued to serve the monument as they had prior to this change.

Hendricks, review comment to the author, July 8, 2018.

John Berry, Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget, Department of the Interior, to Ralph Regula, House Committee on Appropriations (undated draft), D22, attached to a skeptical e-mail from Ary Rumbaitis to Ackerman, et al., July 9, 1998.

Bruce Sheaffer [NPS Comptroller, in Washington, DC] to Patty Neubacher [NPS Associate Regional Director in San Francisco] by e-mail, November 18, 1999. The appropriations subcommittees of both houses agreed to the figure, with the balance of $250,000 coming from a newly established concessions franchise fee account aimed at aiding small parks.

Shaeffer to Neubacher, November 18, 1999, by e-mail, forwarded to Ackerman on the same date. The superintendent had previously requested a figure not to exceed $25,000 for the appraisal, which was to come from the park’s concession franchise fee money. A previous appraisal of $975,000 only considered the buildings without furniture and fixtures, both of which added significant value to the Chateau, not to mention contributing to the significance of a national historic landmark. The region’s chief of cultural resources, Stephanie Toothman, thought the purchase could be covered by future park entrance...
(cave tour) revenue through a Fee Demonstration Program account; Toothman to Cheryl Teague, et al., November 18, 1999, by e-mail.

45 The figures of $300,000 per year (used in the draft letter to Regula) and $400,000 (mentioned by Ackerman in a meeting with the Crater Lake Natural History Association on March 6, 1999, page 4) had been tossed about, but there was no way at that point to realistically calculate a more exact figure.

46 There were also the complications posed by passage of Public Law 105-391, which governed national park concessions, but had not yet been translated into the Code of Federal Regulations, as well as standardized contract language; NPS Director Robert Stanton to Regional Directors, December 1, 1999, C3823; Reynolds to Richard Estey, President, Canteen Company of Oregon, November 22, 1999, C3823; Ackerman to Walters, December 9, 1999, C3823A. The amendment’s rejection came as a surprise to Ackerman, who had prepared documents for Gordon’s signature as late as June 12, 2000, that reflected negotiations with the company to that point; Ackerman to Gordon, May 4, 2000, and three letters intended as clarification, all dated June 12, C3823.

47 James R. Shevock, Acting Regional Director, memo to PWR superintendents, July 18, 2000, C3825. In a follow up letter to the company, Bill Walters stated that the proposed amendment did not allow for “an adequate review of our ability to be able to issue a new concession prospectus consistent with the GMP” for the park; Walters to Gordon, August 29, 2000, C3825.

48 The appraisal came on April 3; Ackerman to Gordon, March 15, 2000, C40. A two page transmittal contained a summary and was attached to a scope of work; Trey Kniper of Kniper Janoush Kniper to Kent Stevens, NPS Concessions Program Center, October 2, 2000.

49 Brandt, Preliminary Plan, Oregon Caves Visitor Center, Oregon Caves Chalet, February 2000, three pages plus two ground floor configurations (existing and proposed) both in plan view. Strangely enough, the monument’s strategic plan, “prepared in response to the Government Performance and Results Act of 1994 (for the fiscal years of 1998 through 2002)” read like a NPS master plan narrative from 1975 and before, but without a section of “desired conditions.” Apart from Brandt’s narrative about a visitor center, the NPS had done little if any planning for an operational change represented by conducting cave tours. Staffing for interpretation and visitor services was still limited to a GS-9 chief position, a subject-to-furlough ranger who did both law enforcement and interpretation, two GS-5 seasonal positions, and one GS-4 seasonal hire; USDI-NPS, Oregon Caves National Monument, Strategic Plan, FY 1998-2002, page 49.

50 Ackerman to Gordon, September 1, 2000, C38, in response to an e-mail from Gordon to Ackerman, August 29, 2000, about audits conducted in July. One could surmise that the higher wage rates for guides led the company to hire fewer of them in order to save money. Tour intervals presumably got longer, given the time it took to conduct one in accordance with NPS requirements (a minimum of 75 minutes) plus the unpaid time needed to walk from the cave exit to the Chalet, where the guide met the next party. Brandt still conducted the audits that summer, but evidently Ackerman felt the need to complete the concession operations evaluation himself in conjunction with interpreters from other NPS units.

51 The advent of tours in 2000 hardly began auspiciously in regard to the company embracing thematic interpretation, as an article that appeared in an American Automobile Association magazine highlighting Oregon Caves quoted the assistant head guide (Mike McCullough) as including a child’s observation involving the fictional subject, E.T. or “extra-terrestrial” in a popular film of the early 1980s as part of his tour. “One young man,” the guide said, “pointed out a formation he thought looked like E.T. spanking a baby. Now I include it on all my tours because it really looks like that.” Hilda Anderson, “3 Adventures Under Land,” Via-AAA (May – June 2000), 31.

52 The company’s reply to the offer of a temporary contract was peppered with questions about concession operations for the upcoming 2001 season, along with the vain hope that the NPS might relent about taking over cave tours; Heidi Estey-John, Vice President, Estey Corporation to Reynolds, December 29, 2000. The company considered the NPS offer of $1.15 million to be low, and stated that they were obtaining an independent appraisal at that time; Estey-John to Reynolds, same date. This may have been bluff, as the company repeated its desire to see the NPS appraisal, something that the agency refused to
share; Ackerman to Gordon, March 28, 2001, page 1, C3823 (reference to the offer of buying possessory interest in both parks appeared on page 2; this came in response to a letter from Gordon to Ackerman, March 5, 2001). A reply to the company’s operational questions came in a letter from Reynolds to Estey-John, January 11, 2001, C3823. The company’s decision not to accept the NPS offer of a temporary contract came by letter on February 5 upon receiving a letter from the deputy regional solicitor at the Department of the Interior’s office in Portland, one that stated the NPS had the right to implement the change about who conducted cave tours, as well as make the necessary adjustments to support it in regard to the use and function of buildings on the monument; William Back to Jack B. Schwarz (consult to the Estey Corporation), February 2, 2001, no file code. The declination is noted in a letter from Martha K. Leicester (for Reynolds) to John Jansen, Chief Finance Officer, Estey Corporation, February 7, 2001.

53 USDI-NPS, “Ranger Guided Tours to Commence in March, National Park Passes Passes Accepted for Tour Fees,” press release of February 12, 2001; the press release became the basis for Paul Fattig, “Rangers to lead Oregon Caves Tours,” Medford Mail Tribune, February 13, 2001. The two types of tours arose in Heyden to Ackerman, March 8, 1995, and January 11, 1996, C38. Neither idea for concession-led tours ever went beyond conceptual stage; under NPS auspices, the off-trail tours required some NEPA analysis, which Roth completed on a “Categorical Exclusion” form, “Public Caving Tours at Oregon Caves, June 22, 2001, Natural Resources compliance file, ORCA. Resuming candlelight tours was questionable in light of comments from C.J. Buck in 1921, “It appears from photographs taken in the Oregon Caves this summer that candle drippings are continually smearing the stalagmites. It is believed that this practice should be discontinued. Perhaps some arrangement can be made whereby miners’ lamps (carbide lanterns) will be furnished and each person entering the caves required to use one of these lamps instead of candles...It is my understanding, of course, that the candle drippings are actually detrimental to the beauty of the caves.” Buck, Assistant District Forester, to Forest Supervisor MacDaniels, October 26, 1921. Direction to investigate these types of tours stemmed from the final GMP/EIS document (Preferred Alternative, Interpretation and Visitor Use section), page 40.

54 Barbara Hahn, “Rangers to take over Oregon Caves tours,” Grants Pass Daily Courier, February 17, 2001. The freeze was due to the new administration of George W. Bush, something made more acute whenever control of the Executive Branch shifts from one party to the other. The number of guides needed was optimistic, as visitation in 2001 (87,175) was the lowest at Oregon Caves since 1959.

55 Dennis J. Szefel, President, Delaware North Parks Services, to Tony Sisto, Regional Chief of Concessions, NPS, March 2, 2001, C3823; Sisto to Mike Gallagher, Delaware North Parks Services, March 13, 2001, C3823. A public announcement did not come until April; Barbara Hahn, “New York firm named concessionaire at Oregon Caves,” Grants Pass Daily Courier, April 9, 2001. The change of concession operations was completed on April 12; Dick Gordon, President, Estey Hospitality Group, to Bruce Fears, Vice President of Operations, Delaware North Parks Services, April 12, 2001, C3823. According to Ackerman, DNC appeared on the scene as part of expressing its interest in the contract to be let at Crater Lake, which was subsequently awarded to AmFac (subsequently called Xanterra Corporation) in early 2002. This was not mentioned publicly; “Native Oregonian returns to lead new concessionaire at Oregon Caves,” Delaware North Companies press release, May 22, 2001.

56 The writer happened to be on the third tour given on March 16, one conducted by Roger Brandt during the first day of guiding operations. Brandt anticipated the new seasonal hires needing uniform parts two months beforehand by issuing a region-wide appeal; Brandt to various electronic bulletin boards via e-mail, January 10, 2001.

57 Davis to Ackerman, June 19, 2002, C38. The OCO were really a branch of the Illinois Valley Community Response Team, an organization founded during the early 1990s that landed a ten year government contract aimed at economic development in 1994, in the face of dislocation of workers due to roll backs in cutting timber on the national forests and other federal lands.

58 The downward arc from levels seen around 1977 began around 1980, with consistent numbers below 100,000 each year coming after 1990. At one point monument staff tried to attribute declining numbers to a shift in visitor point of origin from 1974 (when supposedly 16 percent of visitors came from California and Oregon, as opposed to 80 percent from other states) to 1990 (when 70 percent came from
With annual visitation in the range of 80,000 to 90,000, the workforce had time that could have mixed cave tours with guided terrestrial hikes on park trails, or talks that could be presented on the monument or nearby venues as part of a duty roster having some diversity in program topics or approaches, something that Head Guide Leslie Brodhead actively discouraged; Brandt interview, April 13, 2017. Tom Siewert eventually succeeded Brodhead as head guide, in a permanent, subject to furlough position.

Cave tours brought the concessioner just under $391,000 in 1998 and almost $415,000 in 1999 with similar visitor numbers to when the NPS ran the tours in 2001 and 2002; Cave Revenue summaries, Oregon Caves National Monument, C26.

Ackerman thought that $400,000 in revenue was achievable, for example, in 1999; Crater Lake Natural History Association meeting minutes, March 16, 1999, page 4. This figure was attained by the concessioner that season, but the hourly rates of even GS-4 seasonal guides—let alone higher overhead needed from permanent employees—quickly led to budget constraints without interns or volunteers.

Brandt interview, April 13, 2017; he had previously worked at Death Valley during the period when it was re-designated from a national monument to a national park. Both NPS service centers (Denver for construction and planning, Harpers Ferry for interpretive media) underwent reductions in force during this period, while the agency’s operating budget remained almost flat for a decade. Services from both Denver and Harpers Ferry increasingly became limited to brokering contracted work; parks that could not afford their overhead had to turn to regional office staff for help. Ticket sales for cave tours in 2001 occurred on the third floor (next to the courtyard) of the Chateau, where gift sales were moved adjacent to fine dining; John R. Reynolds to Heidi Estey-John, January 11, 2001, C3823. Meanwhile the environmental education program continued to include an activity packet, a visit by NPS staff or volunteers to the classroom, but also a cave tour and forest walk at no cost to the students when the class visited Oregon Caves; USDI-NPS, Oregon Caves Fall 2001 environmental education program flyer. Class visits there had the effect of reducing potential fee revenue, since the concession company’s policy did not offer an education waiver for students on tours.

Notes from a report by Craig Ackerman to a meeting of the Crater Lake Natural History Association [board] at Brookings, Oregon, by the writer, April 12, 2003; the buyout was achieved through negotiation separate from a payment to Delaware North, who had acquired furniture and fixtures from Estey for $196,000. The NPS paid 80 percent of the agreed price to Estey on March 31, 2003.

Ackerman to Laurin Huffman, Historical Architect, Pacific West Region, via e-mail, July 24, 1992; Ackerman to Stephanie Toothman, Chief, Cultural Resources, PWR, via e-mail, September 25, 2003. The initial project estimates for the Chateau rehabilitation ($13.9 million) “does tend to take one’s breath away,” Ackerman to Roth, et al., October 28, 2003. Completion of the administration building at Lake Creek allowed park staff to have the trailer occupying the monument’s main parking lot hauled away after seven years of occupancy. It also provided the monument with dedicated curatorial storage for the first time, even if the park library continued to be housed in the Chalet. The project also included additional housing for park employees at the site, and demolition of a Quonset hut used for storage over several decades that had been invaded by rodents.


This included oversight of the Volunteers-in-Parks (VIP) program, as well as interns secured through the Student Conservation Association or a similar Geocorps program, or enrollees in the Youth Conservation Corps (with some 6,000 volunteer hours contributed by YCC at Oregon Caves in 2003; Ackerman, Annual Narrative Report 2003); page 11.

The numbers for general tours were similar to those in 2001, but the family tour category doubled over what it had been in 2002.
The CBE program’s five steps consisted of sending an activity packet to the schools, followed by a ranger presentation in the classroom, then the field trip to Oregon Caves that included a cave tour, a forest walk on the monument, and finally a follow up activity after the field trip; Ackerman, Annual Narrative Report 2003, page 12.

The idea of tours through the Chateau seems to have had its genesis from NPS historians in a “Western-area historians workshop” held at Oregon Caves in October 1993; Ackerman to Gretchen Luxenberg, Regional Historian, Pacific Northwest Region, December 7, 1993, page 2, A5427, in response to a memo by Luxenberg, October 28, 1993, pages 4-5, A5427. It was some seven years later that they were initiated by Brandt, after first eliciting advice from the writer.

Stephen R. Mark, Domain of the Cavemen: A Historic Resource Study of Oregon Caves National Monument (Seattle: Government Printing Office, 2006), see especially pages 158-162 for interpretation, pages 220-223 for the Chateau tour, pages 224-228 for an essay on the perception of caves by John Roth. Material on pages 149-153 became the basis to nominate most of the monument’s trail system (as a boundary increase to the existing historic district) to the National Register of Historic Places. Listed in early 2012, this constitutes virtually the only such system in Oregon that is on the National Register. As for interpreting the Chateau, a historic structure report by Alex McMurry aided the technical aspects of researching such a tour and appeared in 1999 as a terminal project in the Historic Preservation Program at the University of Oregon.


This began in 2004 and Brandt wrote a nomination for it to the National Register of Historic Places, which resulted in the base being initially listed on November 17, 2006, with a boundary increase to the historic property subsequently being submitted to the Keeper of the National Register on October 3, 2014. He received an award from the state for his volunteer efforts at the base in 2009; Jeff Deuwel, “Brandt receives Oregon Heritage Excellence Award,” Grants Pass Daily Courier (n.d., 2009).

The Snitzler appointment was announced in the local media on June 12, 2008. She replaced Craig Ackerman, who had moved to Crater Lake National Park as superintendent in May. Herring arrived at Oregon Caves in November 2008.

Herring, e-mail response to interview questions from the writer, April 18, 2017. He mentioned that being on his first tour as an observer, one that served as an eye-opening introduction to the job. It was given by a seasonal employee (who had been a critical needs hire) and had received just one day of training before giving his first tour.

This problem has been reduced to an average of two hours in the afternoon during peak season, but inflation has nibbled away at what has been essentially a static operating (“base”) budget since 2003.

Ibid. This visitor center projects could be considered as ending happily, another interpretive endeavor (this one involving cultural resources), did not. The writer supported Archaeologist Janet Joyer’s application through the Rogue River Siskiyou National Forest for a $115,000 grant from the Federal Highway Administration. It was to go for interpretation and site restoration along SR 46, the Caves Highway, in three specific areas: 1) interpretive signage at the Illinois Valley Visitor Center, mile markers based on rustic examples from the 1930s, and interpretive exhibits at the Grayback Guard Station near milepost 12. The latter building was designed by Gust Lium based on precedents he set at Oregon Caves. Site restoration at Grayback was to come later, when more funding appeared, and could be based on a condition assessment by Ted Shriro at the University of Oregon, who the writer contacted in 2009 as part of an internship. Once Joyer retired in May 2013, however, the cooperation between agencies ceased and the only result were some faux...
rustic signs at Grayback Campground, the guard station, and plastic mile markers placed between the forest boundary and the monument proper. Far more successful is a project led by Greg Walter, who has collected and assessed maps pertaining to the road and trail system surrounding Oregon Caves in several reports; see also the report by Justin D. Rohde, Williams Trail to Oregon Caves, September 2017, copy in author's possession.


81 Reynolds, Evaluating the Effectiveness, page 6. Somewhat later, in the discussion section (page 21), she extrapolated a finding made at Gettsyburg that rangers could develop programs promoting visitor connections and moreover, could recognize those opportunities for connections within a program.


83 According to Reynolds, they give “narrative scaffolding” to features that visitors are on the tour to enjoy (pp. 24-25). The finding constitutes something of an ironic twist, but without the lampooning of formations and cave features that too often characterized concession guiding, to what Dick Gordon and Mike Romick expressed in their letter to Ackerman of July 1998 about visitors only remembering “strange stories and cool formations.”

84 The “outside” or “above ground” cave tour idea was first mentioned by Roth in an interview with the writer on October 20, 1998. Potential for interpreting endemic plants around the Bigelow Lakes came up in another interview on January 5, 1998, as did the cave's endemics in comparison with Mammoth Cave on January 6 of that year. The possibility of reworking what remains of the trail “system” in the preserve was also previously discussed in an interview with Ackerman on June 7, 2000. Evidence of earth movement, or interpreting “rapid” change on the geological timescale was a point raised by Brandt in the writer’s interview with him on April 13, 2017. None of these ideas are related to unauthorized trail segments added within the monument in 2008, between the tenures of Ackerman and Snitzler. They not only compromised the National Register nomination made to expand the existing historic district, but could endanger standing Port Orford-cedar located on the No Name Trail and Lake Mountain Trail by making the trees more susceptible to water borne spores of a non-native root fungus.

85 The visitor center exhibits, funding for The Klamath-Siskiyous: Timely Treasures of an Iconic Bioregion came from the Rec Fee program. The writer made sporadic contributions to earlier iterations in the book’s rather slow development; an e-mail to Roth of April 5, 2007 about its scope is one of many examples.

86 Acquisition of what is arguably the greatest single collection pertaining to Oregon Caves in 2015 from former head guide Jay Swofford will certainly help anyone interested in the development of the tour route, as well as how the resort evolved. It provides greater depth on both of these subjects than does my historic resource study, Domain of the Cavemen, but without the interpretation.
FIGURE 133. Simplified boundaries of Oregon Caves National Preserve in relation to Oregon Caves National Monument. The upper portion of the Caves Highway (SR 46, MP 15 – MP 19) is included, as are main trails and surfaced roads in the preserve. Courtesy of the National Park Service.
FIGURE 134. Speleothems are cave features produced by deposition of mineral, in this case calcite, which is a crystalline form of calcium carbonate. Several "soda straws" or small, hollow stalactites, develop where drops of water descend inside these formations. NPS photo courtesy of Roger Brandt.
Taking Inventory at Oregon Caves

*John Roth*

Effective monitoring, mitigation, and restoration of important resources can be done only if good inventories exist. Few caves, however, have good inventories. This is because many of them are very diverse, often difficult to access, and represent an alien environment to most people.

To close this gap, volunteers from EARTHWATCH helped the National Park Service staff at Oregon Caves complete the first comprehensive inventory of any large federal cave in the United States. One of the difficulties in conducting inventories is that definitions sometimes set arbitrary limits, but this one is flexible enough for use in other caves. As a result, inventory items for Oregon Caves were developed from a standardized 400 word glossary that caters to site-specific needs, yet allows for comparisons of those features that many caves have in common.

Several important correlations became apparent during the inventory. One of them involved finding the largest passages corresponding with fault directions and the direction water flows the fastest, or steepest hydraulic gradient. This helps explain why Oregon Caves is so big in comparison to nearby caves.

Inventory teams also found marked breaks between the dimensions of some cave features which allow more sophisticated comparisons to be made. Similar features, such as parallel ridges among microgours (a cave formation in the form of a stone dam) in vertically-oriented flowstone and those occurring in horizontal rimstone dams, can be separated by breaks in averaged measurements or by different distributions. For example, microgours usually range up to one quarter of an inch in size on flowstone, while the low end measurements of rimstone dams are about one inch. Consequently, flowstone and rimstone can be better indicators of localized differences in the cave’s hydrology. This is possible because flowstone is formed by water slowly seeping between rock layers in contrast to rimstone dams following stream flow.
More information is now at hand concerning the magnitude of direct human impacts on cave formations. “Cave slime” is *actinomycetes* bacteria, which appear as small white spots on walls. This bacteria is less evident along the tour route, leading to the supposition that bacteria feeding on lint from clothing may be outcompeting cave slime. Skin oils, as well as smoke from torches decades ago, have certainly contributed to this situation.

Now that the inventory has provided some insight on human impacts at Oregon Caves, cleaning and repair of formations has begun. Tons of rubble from previous trail building efforts has already been removed. These measures are part of a restoration effort and will enhance future visits to the cave. Until monitoring of vital signs begins to yield useful information, the NPS has relied mainly on using the literature on caves in general to establish what anthropogenic impacts were occurring at Oregon Caves and ways, if any, to mitigate those impacts.

The heyday of inventories on the national monument was during the late 1990s and extended into the first few years of the new millennium. For example, a general inventory of invertebrates within the cave produced two previously known species and, evidently, seven previously undescribed species—all thought to be endemic to Oregon Caves at that time. There are now three described endemic species within the cave (a grylloblattid, or “ice crawler,” a fungus beetle, *Speodytes orca*, and a spider with long legs called Sylvester’s harvestman). Four other endemics remain undescribed, but can be categorized as a springtail, centipede, and two flies. There is still much to accomplish with inventory and studies on the surface, especially since Congress added 4,070 acres of national preserve to the existing 484 acres of Oregon Caves National Monument in late 2014.
An Overlooked Legacy at Oregon Caves

Steve Mark

Virtually all of the structures at Oregon Caves National Monument are sheathed in bark of the Port Orford-cedar, *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*. This architectural detail is part of a site design aimed at blending buildings with their surroundings. Port Orford-cedar (the name is hyphenated because it is not a member of the genus *Cedrus*, or true cedar) occurs from the eastern Siskiyou Mountains to the coast. Although its relative abundance at one time has been greatly reduced by disease, fire, and logging, a number of stream drainages in the vicinity of Oregon Caves contain enough of this “false cedar” to draw tree lovers.

Below the cave entrance area, Port Orford-cedar can be seen as you leave the Chateau and follow the trail toward Cave Creek Campground. The remaining trees are situated along the fringe of several clear cuts, but there are enough of them to make it a worthwhile walk. In this part of Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve, Port Orford-cedar is found in riparian areas or places where seepage is a foot or less below the surface. The tree can be identified by elegantly sweeping boughs and lacy foliage, as well as by a red brown fluted bark that can weather to a slight silver tinge with age. In this setting, the tree is often associated with an attractive understory of Pacific rhododendron, *Rhododendron macrophyllum*, and western azalea, *R. occidentale*.

Many visitors to Oregon Caves are unaware that they can see Port Orford-cedar on the trail to Big Tree. The “cedar” occurs throughout this part of the national monument’s mixed conifer forest, though many people focus on the large Douglas-fir, *Pseudotsuga menziesii*, or the venerable sugar pine, *Pinus lambertiana*. A young stand of cedar can be seen amid the Douglas-fir and Bigleaf maple, *Acer macrophyllum*, in Panther Creek downslope of Big Tree with some off-trail hiking. More impressive stands of cedar can be located by taking the longer segment of the loop trail to Big Tree. Although sometimes steep, this route also provides access to Mount Elijah or a return to the cave entrance area.
The most serious threat to Port Orford-cedar's survival throughout its range is the pathogen *Phytophthora lateralis*, a root rot fungus. It has infected several stands just three miles from Oregon Caves, killing a number of trees. The cedar is particularly susceptible to the waterborne spores of *P. lateralis* because its roots intermingle with those of other trees in drainages downslope of where infection has occurred. Researchers hope that Port Orford-cedar’s genetic variability may allow for some resistance to the disease, even in heavily infected areas. This prospect may be put to the test in the Cave Creek Campground, now part of the national preserve, which contains some obvious oomycete infestations (water molds that bring about fungal infections in trees and other plants). Western red cedar chips were applied as a barrier between the infected cedar stands and campsites or trails as a way to neutralize the water mold. Cedar saplings were also cut to reduce the spore inoculums, with disease resistant saplings planted in their place.

Other than small numbers occurring in Redwood National Park, no unit of the National Park System perpetuates Port Orford-cedar apart from Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve. The cedar population in the 480 acre national monument is close enough to infected areas that measures are needed to prevent the root rot’s spread. One preventative measure is to keep hikers and vehicles out of places where the fungus spores can be transported into uninfected areas. This is especially important in the spring, when wet boots and tires can become agents for transmitting the fungus.

*Phytophthora* has considerably less chance of infecting Port Orford-cedar in the summer, but another threat—wildfire—increases as fuel moisture levels drop. Catastrophic fires can occur throughout the cedar’s range wherever the explosive combination of low fuel moisture, high winds, extremely high fuel loads, and an ignition source occurs. Although mature Port Orford-cedar can survive low intensity fire because of its thick bark, it was only prompt action by fire crews that stopped the Caves Fire of 1989 from engulfing what is now the national monument and preserve.

If the Caves Fire had not been contained, more than the commercial and aesthetic qualities of a forest with some Port Orford-cedar component would have been lost. Oregon Caves has some of the finest rustic architecture in the National Park System; one structure, the Chateau, is a national historic landmark. It and four other buildings are contributing resources in a district listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The bark on these and other structures has proven to be exceptionally durable, requiring only sporadic replacement after 80 or more years. Port Orford-cedar’s durability and availability in the past are also factors in the
FIGURE 136. The Oregon Caves Chateau, arguably the most famous building sheathed in Port Orford-cedar bark, is shown here in 1940. Oregon State Highway Department photo.

survival of some pioneer cabins located in the Illinois Valley. With age, the wood bleaches white and is why the tree is sometimes called “white cedar.” Several examples of cabins that utilized white cedar are on display at the Kerbyville Museum.

Interestingly enough, the landscape architect (Arthur L. Peck) who proposed that the buildings at Oregon Caves make use of cedar bark was also concerned about the rapid cutting of Port Orford-cedar on the Oregon coast as early as 1925. He and other proponents of a state park thought that Port Orford-cedar to be as distinctive and worthy of preservation as coast redwood, *Sequoia sempervirens*, and knew that the cedar shares some similar attributes with redwood. A state park was established north of Port Orford, but destroyed by a large wildfire in 1936, so the U.S. Forest Service set aside two areas along the south fork of the Coquille River in Coos County as “natural areas.”

Feasibility studies for a “Port Orford Cedar National Monument” were the impetus for attempts to expand Oregon Caves National Monument in the 1940s. A fine sample of large Port Orford-cedar existed along the ridgeline from the national
FIGURE 137. A stand of Port Orford-cedar located near the Oregon Caves. NPS photo by George Grant, 1941.
monument to Grayback Campground, but logging on national forest land during the 1960s and 1970s dealt a severe blow to immediate hopes for a larger park that contained the cedar as its centerpiece. Nevertheless, both Grayback Creek and several other drainages are still lined with some Port Orford-cedar, as any adventurous motorist will discover if they take the road toward Low Divide and Williams.

Cedar stands that Elijah Davidson would have seen on his way from Williams to discover Oregon Caves in 1874 persist, but in dwindling numbers. The cumulative impacts of disease, fire, and logging are compounded by the past practice of replacing Port Orford-cedar in managed forest with monocultures of Douglas-fir. Consequently, the perpetuation of the cedar in its native habitat will be challenging because its standing volume has been reduced to less than 15 percent of what it was estimated to be in 1850.

Although timber cruisers are quick to recognize Port Orford-cedar's market value because it has commanded the highest stumpage price of any commercial softwood for the past 60 years or so, it remains relatively unknown to the public. Unlike coast redwood, Port Orford-cedar does not dwarf surrounding trees and rarely occurs in pure stands. In addition, Port Orford-cedar and Incense-cedar, *Calocedrus decurrens*, are often confused with each other. Indeed, the Port Orford-cedar is so highly imitative in adapting to a range of environments that many tree lovers do not suspect that it occurs among the coast redwood of Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park in northern California. As a result, Port Orford-cedar's significance can be overlooked, even if horticulturists know it to have the greatest number of cultivars among the conifers. It can only be hoped, however, that the tree does not become a lost legacy.
Moonmilk and Cave-dwelling Microbes

*John Roth*

Microbes lie as far from charismatic megafauna such as deer, bears, and bobcats as you can get. Studying these "forsaken fauna" is difficult because you cannot see them. Their geologic equivalent is mud, but even with x-ray diffraction and other high tech methods, the small particle size of muds can challenge the most dedicated researcher. When combined in caves, however, microbes and muds can form sediments known as "moonmilk."

![Figure 138](image_url) Moonmilk can be seen on cave formations in the Imagination Room. NPS photo.
Even the name *moonmilk* has the allure of mystery. Its origin is from the German *Mannlimilch*, meaning "little earth-man." European peasants used moonmilk for centuries to heal infected cuts in livestock. Some believed that gnomes put this substance in caves for people to use. The white mud appeared to kill infections and speed healing at supernatural rates. Like much of what is in folklore, there is more than a germ of truth in these tales. Much of the calcite moonmilk sampled by investigators contains *actinomycetes* bacteria, which are the key component of antibiotics.

Moonmilk is a textural term for a very fine, white cave material that absorbs a lot of water. Wet moonmilk looks and feels soft and pasty, somewhat like white cream cheese, when rubbed between the fingers. Dry moonmilk resembles talcum powder, in that it feels hard and crumbly. Moonmilk often contains 40 to 70 percent water, while organic material may make it even more plastic and slippery.

It is likely that organic activity plays a role in the buildup of some moonmilk, especially the calcite kind found in the Oregon Caves. Calcite moonmilk can contain such bacteria as *Macromonas bipunctata*, along with cyanobacteria, fungi, and green algae. This microflora probably assists in breaking down minerals in the wall rock and adding them to the moonmilk. Moreover, researchers have found that the longer it takes water to reach the cave, the more likely it is that some of the organics will be consumed *en route*. In general, water dripping into the deeper part of Oregon Caves has less organic content than water reaching shallower parts.

Humans have impacted bacteria in moonmilk, as well as other microbe populations in Oregon Caves. An inventory done around every survey point in the caves shows a marked decrease in native "cave slime" (mostly *actinomycetes* bacteria) growing on walls near the cave trail. Decline in these organisms could well be the result of lint and other visitor-induced organics that find their way to cave walls. As a result, non-native bacteria adapted to a high energy food source outgrow and out-compete the slow growing cave slime adapted to low energy foods. Native cave slime may also have suffered further adverse effects by visitors touching the cave walls or the introduction of exotic such as moss and algae.

As an example of their value to resource management in the park, microbes have been utilized to reconstruct the size and shape of prehistoric entrances at Oregon Caves. Since the natural openings are now highly modified, an inventory of the directional orientation of popcorn-shaped speleothems was needed so that gates could be built with partial restoration of those conditions resembling prehistoric air flow. The cave inventory also showed that exotic microbes contributing to the presence of rounded vermiculations (or "clay worms") are more common along
the main trail, but more complex forms of these lines on cave walls are prevalent further from the trail. Analysis of the rounded vermiculations shows high amounts of lint and exotic cyanobacteria. The rounded clay worms will be removed, as they appear to be largely caused by lint and artificial lights.

Although lights allow human visitors to maneuver through the cave, they also led to a proliferation of non-native moss and algae, along with exotic cyanobacteria. Treatments to remove most of the non-native algae and moss began in 1963, but more regular eradication efforts commenced some 20 years later through the careful use of bleach around lights situated along the tour route. This treatment occurred several times a year by 1987 and has continued ever since once it was determined that the bleach solution would not unduly affect water quality of the River Styx.

Deposition of lint, skin flakes, and hair in Oregon Caves does not appear to impact native microbes as much as in some other caves administered by the National Park Service. Knowing this has allowed for flexibility in design of the current cave trail built in 1994. Rather than having "settling ponds" and a foot-high, lint-trapping curb on both sides of the trail along its entire length, only certain areas in the cave need to be curbed. If these areas continue to trap a substantial amount of lint, then additional curbs, drains, and settling ponds may be added and these places cleaned more frequently. This system will allow for a more natural flow of water and air across the trail, yet will also trap lint and other human-induced organics where they might threaten cave biota. The result should be a better balance between allowing for visitor use and preservation of the park's primary resource.
Appendix 1: Nature Notes

Fossil Finds and the Age of Oregon Caves

John Roth

How old is a hole in the ground? How do you pin a date on what has dissolved away? Geologists have had a hard time figuring out when Oregon Caves formed. To dissolve marble made of calcite, all you need is a weak acid, such as carbon dioxide dissolved in water, which is the fizz in soft drinks. Yet understanding how something works does not always help in knowing how fast it works.

For example, the yearly amount of dissolved calcite exiting by way of Cave Creek is known. The entire cave could have been dissolved out in ten thousand years if the same concentration of dissolved calcite exited the cavern every year. That is a very big if! Water leaving the cave during its birth probably had less calcium in it. The size of stream gravels and horizontal notches dissolved on cave walls indicate massive flooding at one time and this resulted in a faster enlargement of Oregon Caves.

Another way to estimate the age of Oregon Caves is to compare it with similar mountain caves that have been better dated. Most caves on steep slopes form close to the earth’s surface. Since mountains erode relatively fast, geologically speaking, most such caves do not survive long before they are breached by erosion and destroyed. These caves usually are older than ten thousand years but rarely last more than a hundred thousand. Such comparisons, however, are dangerous. There may have been geological or hydrological factors affecting Oregon Caves that differed substantially from those in superficially similar topography that sped up or slowed down cave formation.

Geologists can fix the minimum age of Oregon Caves because of what it has preserved. An example is the jaguar, Panthera onca, found in Oregon Caves during August of 1995. The size of its bones compare favorably with jaguars living in North America between 15,000 and 40,000 years ago. As the last Ice Age ended roughly 10,000 years ago, the size of jaguars decreased. This seems to have happened because being smaller and thinner helped jaguars survive in an increasingly warmer climate.
The jaguar’s bones could have been buried and then later washed into a much younger Oregon Caves. The fact that this may be the most complete jaguar fossil ever found, however, is strong evidence against this possibility. It would thus seem reasonable to assert that the cave must be at least as old as the jaguar.

FIGURE 139. An artist’s rendering of a Pleistocene jaguar.

Comparing evidence of past life (fossils) and erosion rates with similar examples usually give scientists only approximate dates. To be more precise, methods which hinge on changes occurring at a uniform rate are needed. Uranium atoms are consistently unstable and “overweight,” but release particles at constant rates. This process eventually changes the uranium into another element called thorium. One of the best materials to use for this dating method is calcite, such as the crystal layer left by water on the jaguar skull in Oregon Caves.

Since uranium is soluble in water, whereas thorium is not, the layer of calcite that formed on the jaguar skull at first contained uranium but no thorium. As time passed, uranium decayed to thorium. The thorium to uranium ratio thus increases over time at a constant rate and can be dated. Unlike most calcite formed on the earth’s surface, calcite in caves tends to be very dense and waterproof. Therefore, compared to surface calcite, cave calcite is much less likely to have uranium leach out and thus give a wrong calculation for the calcite’s age.

Other ways exist that can independently confirm the accuracy of dates determined by uranium/thorium ratios. Natural radiation traps free electrons situated in calcite crystals. The rate of trapping is determined by background radiation. The energy of the trapped electrons can be measured and a date derived from the ratio between this figure and the trapping rate.
There is yet another way to get a more precise age for the jaguar. Carbon 14, like uranium, is also composed of "fat" atoms that release particles at constant rates. Since carbon 14 only forms in the earth’s atmosphere and becomes part of the protein of live animals, the ratio of it and more stable carbon starts to change when the animal dies. If the age of the skull is 45,000 years old or younger, there is likely to be enough carbon 14 remaining in the skull for a fairly precise age to be calculated. The uranium-thorium date of the calcite will help determine whether it is worthwhile to obtain a carbon 14 date on the skull.

More fossil bones, such as those from another jaguar and two types of bears, have also been found in Oregon Caves during the 1990s. One of the specimens, that of a grizzly bear (Ursus horribilis) was carbon 14 dated to be more than 45,000 years old. With only about one percent of the original protein remaining in the bones, investigators could determine that no carbon 14 was left. The age of these bones and the cave, therefore, must be at least 45,000 years old.

Why should we be concerned with how old things are? An important part of the answer has to do with park managers being able to better protect, preserve, and restore ecological processes if they know how fast and how often events occur. We may also find that our understanding of time is highly relative. A person’s emphasis on man-made things might change when they can perceive time as going beyond human experience and forming part of a broader history. Since we have been around for a very short period, relatively speaking, it may be difficult sometimes to accept that there is far more to the past than one life form’s view of itself as the goal of time. All species are kin if you go back far enough in time; all rocks come from the same source.
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*Sources:* George Sabin (1921-22); NPS Master Plan file (1923-66); NPS Visitor Statistics (1967-2016). The latter source posted an aggregate total of 7.86 million visitors to Oregon Caves from 1934 to 2016.

**FIGURE 141.** Townsend's big-eared bats in the cave, 1970. NPS photo.
A “Monumental” Mythology and its Landscape

Steve Mark

The word *myth* possesses multiple meanings, but the most compelling is that of a widely-shared story. Its character serves to explain some practice, belief, institution, or natural phenomenon. They are especially associated with religious rites or doctrines, but myths can also arise as veiled explanations of a “truth.” Among the classes of myths are those pertaining to *culture* (usually involving a hero who imparts the arts of life to people); *nature* (such as the origin of various phenomena); *theogonic* (relating to how various gods or spirit beings originated); and *etiological* (fictive events used as causes of rites or customs). The point here is that *myth* goes well beyond the literal into underlying motivations and yearnings, rather than being rejected out of hand as false.

In front of the cave entrance is a perfect place to ponder how mythology can shape the way people leave their mark on the landscape in different ways. Not only is this done for functional reasons (food gathering, to support dwellings, or activities like recreation and industry) but for symbolic ones. Function and symbolism are usually mixed together and can yield information about how a culture perceives its surroundings by the way it attempts to change them.

Oregon Caves National Monument is rich in symbols from European cultural tradition. This expression is so dominant at the monument that any others (such as those from the region’s indigenous peoples) hardly register to visitors and the staff working there. Although it cannot be known specifically how hunter-gatherer cultures perceived the cave and surrounding lands before the 1850s (when the first miners arrived and caused great upheaval among tribes in the area), it is safe to say that native groups organized their surroundings very differently than the gold seekers. And for that matter, the farmers and tourists who eventually followed them.

From what can be reconstructed about pre-contact uses of the region around Oregon Caves by indigenous peoples, the high ridges served as travel routes to link tribal communities. Their trails also provided access to camps, places where plant materials were procured, hunting territories, and ceremonial sites. Caves could be
used for ritual purposes, many times to acquire certain knowledge or powers. This type of visit might take the form of a "vision quest," something centered on the idea of finding a spirit guardian. If successful, the guardian could confer power associated with animals such as grizzly bears, to name only one potent example.

Using nature to find totemic power is just one way of exerting some form of control over it. A very different type of control is expressed around the cave entrance, starting with a plaque stating that a past president of the United States proclaimed the national monument. It reflects a culture where land can be measured and treated as a commodity, but also zoned or classified for some uses while excluding others. The proclamation of July 12, 1909, came from a man living 3,000 miles away who had never seen the Oregon Caves. President William Howard Taft invoked his authority under the Antiquities Act, legislation passed by the United States Congress in 1906 that allowed him to declare national monuments on land that had not passed into private ownership, where title to the land had previously passed from Indian tribes to the federal government.
“Unusual scientific interest” served as the reason cited for reserving Oregon Caves from settlement by private parties or uses such as mining which were thought to be incompatible with the public’s perpetual enjoyment of them. What amounts to zoning the land around the cave for the greater good of the United States is really an extension of a perception reaching back to Ancient Greece and Rome of singling out caves and places seen as unusual or mysterious to be distinct from more mundane ones. So is the need to make certain things emblematic of those distinctive places. This tendency was once called the genius loci, or “spirit of the place” and led to the idea of designing facilities in parks, forests and estates surrounding them to be inspired by their individual setting.

Design at Oregon Caves National Monument is, of course, a cultural expression whether it extends to something as large as the Chateau or as small and ubiquitous as marble steps along the tour route. Caves are arguably the most culturally “constructed” among the features in any larger landscape, partly because they involve an intersection between what is above and below the surface. Because cave formations and rooms are in a sense “other-worldly” to most visitors, they inspired a host of names so that any tour through them became a succession of “scenes” originating from myth, gothic gloom, early exploration, or pure fancy. The cave guide was presumably in charge of lighting, pace, and general direction, but also a scripted experience starting at the entrance. Successive stops en route ordered their presentation, whether it depended on strange stories or science for its unifying thread.

Once the party emerged from the exit tunnel to the surface, visitors have had the option of experiencing more of the monument by hiking on forested trails. Names are less evident outside, but like the cave tour, the landscapes encountered give an impression that one can acquire new information by traveling deeper into the scene. Good trail layout accentuates mystery and features a winding path, where constantly shifting views sustain interest and pique the desire to go further. Old growth forests, mountain meadows, and lush stream courses also reinforce perceptions of serenity, rest, and connection with nature. Unlike the cave with its myriad passages and constant darkness, trails should have “legibility” which allows the hiker to explore an environment that looks easy to discern and reduce anxiety about getting lost.

Trails have also been part of a conscious effort to fit park facilities into their setting, and in so doing, make a small piece of earth over into an image of heaven. Other components of landscape design like steps, railings, plantings, retaining walls, signs, benches, and buildings needed to look as if their materials originated at the national monument, but also seem subservient to it. At the same time these materials might
FIGURES 143 and 144. Pictured at left is a typical section of the Big Tree Trail above the Chalet, August 2010. This and most of the monument’s trail system was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in January 2012. At right are individually carved trail signs by CCC enrollees, which were accentuated by wooden bollards behind the Chalet, about 1940. Photo courtesy of Bud Breitmeyer.

 evoke a feeling of having escaped from the pressures of work and responsibility if used in the right scale, balance, form, color, and texture. As a way of unifying design at Oregon Caves, some pervasive yet distinctive materials could also serve as a means to attract more visitors and increase demand for cave tours, meals, and overnight stays. In that respect, those who developed this national monument made extensive use of marble and bark from Port Orford-cedar to express the *genius loci*.

Marble caves are not common in the western United States, especially ones large enough to allow for a commercial tour operation. The type of marble at Oregon Caves is durable, works fairly well, and conveys the permanence of rock features like steps, retaining walls, or a hotel fireplace. Widening and improving the cave tour route during the 1920s and 30s provided marble used for structures both inside and outside of the cave at that time, as did other sources nearby. A catchphrase (one first coined even before the President’s proclamation in 1909), “The Marble Halls of Oregon,” finally took hold as part of creating a commercially viable show cave once a narrow automobile road reached the monument in 1922. At that point, U.S. Forest Service officials (who administered Oregon Caves until its transfer to the National Park Service in 1934) reached agreement with businessmen to operate the guide service and provide amenities like food service and accommodation.

Construction of the first Chalet building followed a year later, marking the start of developing a resort along the same lines as others established in what the Forest Service called “recreation centers” on national forest land in Oregon and elsewhere. Officials generally stipulated that only “rustic” facilities be erected at these resorts,
FIGURE 145. The first Chalet overlooked much of a landscape garden created through the combined efforts of the U.S. Forest Service, Oregon Caves Company, the National Park Service, and Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees. NPS photo, about 1938.

each built according to approved plans. The “style” of rustic architecture varied among the resorts, with log cabins of various kinds being the most common. Intended to evoke rural harmony and simplicity, but with utilities and conventional wood framing, there was only a vague allusion to a frontier by then laid sentimentally to rest in the past. The idea of unifying resort development through use of similar architectural features throughout came from precedents set on private estates and then adopted for use in public parks. Developers at Oregon Caves rejected log cabins in favor of structures having an “alpine” look, where wood shingles covered the roofs and walls sheathed in Port Orford-cedar bark supplied a distinctive but visually unifying element which linked the Chalet with other buildings which followed.

Not only durable, the bark also serves to blend wooden structures at Oregon Caves with the surrounding coniferous forest. As a native to parts of southwestern Oregon and northwestern California, Port Orford-cedar occurs in and around the monument along stream drainages or wet areas. Representative specimens can be seen on a couple of trails not too distant from the cave entrance, but the species does not occur in pure stands and is not numerous in comparison to the more dominant Douglas-fir. Perhaps the tree’s greatest distinction away from Oregon Caves lies in its popularity as an ornamental, as nurseries have produced more varieties of it from cultivation than any other conifer in the world.
No manipulation of Port Orford-cedar has occurred within the 480 acres of Oregon Caves National Monument, though transplanting of ferns, flowers, shrubs, and other tree species took place around the cave entrance. Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees created the most obvious example, creating and then planting a courtyard next to the Chateau in the years that followed the hotel’s opening in 1934. From the gushing stream that pours forth from the cave they made two pools, each fed by a waterfall since the roadway passes between them. Water can even be diverted into the Chateau’s dining room and then out again through pipes channeling Cave Creek into the hotel or, for the most part, around it so that the stream reemerges in the canyon below.

What presents itself in the vicinity of the Chateau and cave entrance is a garden. Started by the concessionaire, furthered by the CCC, and maintained by the National Park Service, it is linked to a cultural predisposition traceable over several centuries of making certain landscapes into a composition. Resorts are linked historically with the design of private estates, and the aim of making nature into art gave rise to “landscape gardens,” as they were called by the eighteenth century. Functionally, the garden at Oregon Caves needs to allow people and vehicles to pass through it, yet also provide a hub for services despite the otherwise steep and somewhat restrictive terrain.

In presenting nature as inviting and restful, the garden’s designers made use of existing biological and geological diversity of the site to create a landscape (the word is derived from painters enhancing natural “scenes” to make art; people then manipulated their gardens and parks to make them appear “wild”). At 4,000 feet elevation, the cave entrance area is characterized by differences in slope, aspect, and underlying substrate that produce an interesting mix of native vegetation which also forms a potential palette for further enhancement. Plantings are part of the transition from ground to structure, something that can be seen readily in the Chateau’s courtyard, but also present elsewhere in more subtle ways. Ferns have been lodged in the joints of hand laid retaining walls to soften their appearance, while transplanted shrubs and trees close by are “naturalistic.” This refers to a design or its components meant to mimic, yet enhance or improve on what nature might do on its own.

There is an element of illusion in developing gardens and parks this way, but it can also allow visitors to navigate the site successfully. Places where people concentrate or disperse are part of “circulation,” a term used for systematically moving through an area. Good circulation minimizes confusion about where visitors should park a vehicle, take the cave tour, find a building entrance, or hike the mountain trails.
Successful navigation at Oregon Caves and elsewhere depends in no small measure on people comprehending cues, many (if not most) of them nonverbal and cultural in their origin. One circulation device frequently used in a park setting which harkens back to the Renaissance is a circuit or “loop.” It is functional (in that the avoidance of backtracking decreases potential congestion), yet also can sustain interest and infuse variety in a walk or drive.

The ability to utilize loops at the monument pervades much of its circulation system, partly because of the area’s small size. Loops such as the cave tour or the Big Tree hike can make the site seem larger than it really is, yet also bewilder visitors in the absence of orientation devices such as signs or maps. Orientation is thus usually part of circulation, and can serve to lessen problems associated with visitor use if it includes rules or expectations for behavior.

Orientation does not always have to be overt, as some devices are more subtle in what they impart. An example lies next to the cave entrance in the form of a monument to Elijah Davidson. The story of his discovery in 1874 has served as a
FIGURE 147. Elijah Davidson, as he appeared in 1926. Courtesy of the Josephine County Historial Society, Grants Pass.
launching point on most cave tours given over the past century for several reasons. One is simply that it begins the guide’s presentation on a human time scale, presumably because this can be easier for visitors to fathom than geological time. Another relates to the need for a progenitor or ancestor whose actions in a different time led to the anticipated experience of the present. This is particularly true at places considered so unusual or disorienting that they merit protection and development in order to remain “authentic.” A discovery story can also work on multiple levels, where it is remembered literally because much older symbolic elements subconsciously perpetuate its popularity.

The story began with a hunter and his dog tracking a deer which Davidson, after being aided by the dog, killed. This dog, however, caught the scent of a bear and chased it once Davidson gave the command. After both animals ran into the cave, a struggle between them ensued. The hunter, concerned for the dog, followed but eventually exhausted his matches in the pursuit. He found his way back to the entrance in darkness by listening to the stream. The dog soon returned with only minor wounds and Davidson placed the deer at the cave entrance as bait. This worked as intended the next day, so that he shot the bear, which had fallen asleep by gorging itself on the carcass.

Davidson lived about ten miles northeast of the cave, near Williams, but the steep and rugged terrain between the two made much of the area into a *terra incognita* at the time of its discovery. He fit a profile of a lone white male inadvertently finding wonders as had happened elsewhere in the newly settled American West, but accompanied by a useful, courageous, and loyal dog. Deer classically symbolize goodness and even paradise, yet in the story it became a necessary sacrifice. The bear, by contrast, has represented harmonious nature but also fear and untamed strength of the wild. Together, the interaction of all four brought about a triumphal end to the story for Davidson as well as a first glimpse into the mysterious underworld of Oregon Caves.

He died in 1927, but not before authoring a short account of the discovery which appeared in the Oregon Historical Society’s quarterly journal five years earlier. Its publication coincided with the road finally having reached the national monument, some 48 years after Davidson’s hunting trip, yet at the beginning of commercial cave tours. Placement of a monument to Davidson’s discovery at the cave entrance by residents of Williams in 1929 represented one way to reinforce the story, whose importance centers on attempting to shape how visitors experience the cave, or for that matter, the larger cultural construction of Oregon Caves National Monument.
What distinguishes the national monument from national forest remains unclear, at least above ground where the profuse fauna and flora of the Siskiyou Mountains have little regard for lines on a map. The landscape garden at Oregon Caves provides a harmonious setting for entry into the cave, yet it can also signal how the national monument is supposed to differ from what lies beyond. “Rustic” buildings covered in the bark of Port Orford-cedar also appear at three separate localities in the national forest, though in a much more limited degree. Oregon Caves National Monument can nevertheless continue to function like a window, one which allows people to see nature as something framed by cultural perceptions, but also understood in diverse and subtle ways.
FIGURE 149. The cave tour route in relation to selected surface features, by Kurt Klimt. The HABS team focused on producing measured drawings of the Chateau, Chalet, and Ranger Residence over the summers of 1989 and 1990. Drawing is courtesy of the Library of Congress.
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The tradition of an evening program at Oregon Caves goes back to the park's concessionaire having built a "chalet" near the cave entrance in 1923. A Portland company produced this postcard in the 1950s of one such event. Above it are two hikers on the "Oregon Caves" (Big Tree) Trail, 1916. U.S. Forest Service photo, courtesy of Lee Webb.