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Assistant Director, Resource Studies

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Chief, Division of History Studies

California Mining Sites

This refers to the Director's notes of June 23 and December 10 regarding Congressman Bizz Johnson's interest in California mining sites.

The following sites in California with primary values relating to the mining era have been designated Registered National Historic Landmarks and, from the standpoint of national significance, might be further studied for addition to the National Park System:

Bodie: Located in Mono County, this is one of the best surviving ghost towns in the West. It is a State Historical Monument.

Coloma: Located in El Dorado County, this was the site of the California gold discovery in 1849. Included in a State Historical Monument are the 18-foot James Marshall Monument and Marshall Cabin, a Chinese bank, a store, and several other structures.

Columbia: Another gold rush town, Columbia (in Tuolumne County) boasts 39 important structures surviving from the mining era, most now included in a State Historical Monument.

New Almaden: Located in Santa Clara County, this was the first California mine and a leading world source of quick-silver. Numerous historic structures still stand.

San Francisco Mint: Although classified for its architectural values, its mining associations are obvious, and it might well be partly used to interpret the mining story. There has been a recent revival of activity on this issue, and I understand the Secretary may have made some statement about it recently.

On two occasions within the past year, I have heard of ill-defined proposals to create a National Park Service area that would encompass the old Sacramento Historic District, Sutter's Fort, the Coloma gold site, and perhaps other related sites in a national historical park

on the Nez Perce model. I have not heard of any such proposal crystallizing and, given the welter of conflicting interests involved, I doubt that the Service should take any public initiative. But these sites represent a rare concentration of some of the most significant historical values in the entire nation, and such a park would be an outstanding feature of the National Park System.

SIGNED

Robert M. Utley

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Mr. Swen
Mr. Utley

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