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Roger Toll, Superintendent
Yellowstone National Park
Denver, Colorado.

Dear Mr. Toll:

I have become extremely interested in the work of the National Park Service during the past few years, and especially in the foresight that the Service has shown urging the establishment of National Monuments and Parks in those areas that have exceptional educational and recreational possibilities. I realize that the present value of an area as a National Monument or Park is not always appreciated by the public, which looks upon certain projects as a waste of money, and a needless withdrawal of the public domain, where public lands are involved, however, I feel that the foresight used by the National Park Service will be greatly appreciated by the public in years to come.

During the period from 1920 to 1930, I spent considerable time on geological exploration work in the area surrounding the "Four Corners" of Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado. I worked in all of the out of the way places, and saw many areas of interest, which comparatively few white men have visited. The scenic value, the geology involved, and the educational and recreational possibilities of many of the areas which I visited in southeastern Utah and northwestern Arizona appear to be almost limitless.

I would like to propose the investigation of several areas in the southwest, which I think have wonderful possibilities as either National Parks or Monuments, and would appreciate your referring these proposals to the proper authorities.

MUFFIN BUTTE AREA

LOCATION: Section 7, Township 28 South, Range 19 East.
San Juan County, Utah.

DESCRIPTION: The southern end of a high plateau area between the Colorado and Green Rivers in San Juan County, Utah.

DETAILS: The view from Muffin Butte and the adjacent cliffs involves the entire region south to the Henry Mountains. The area is about 2500 feet above the Colorado and Green Rivers and gives a wonderful view of the area south towards the confluence of the two rivers.

The geological and physiographic studies in the area are almost unlimited, and present many interesting problems. The

Alhambra Rock, a large igneous plug, can be seen south of the San Juan River. This plug rises to a height of several hundred feet and is a land mark for the surrounding country.

**CHARACTER
OF AREA:**

The area is a part of the high Colorado Plateau Region, and is partially barren and sandy, with many outcrops of sedimentary rocks forming high cliffs and ledges, or deeply eroded canyons of highly colored sediments.

**STATUS
OF LANDS:**

All the lands involved in the area are either State owned or public domain.

ACCESSIBILITY:

A crude road from Mexican Hat, Utah, has been built into this area. This road is about four miles in length, to this point and could be made into a splendid highway with comparatively little work. This road is a branch of the Bluff-Mexican Hat-Kayenta road through the area.

CONCLUSION:

This is a wonderful observation point for the study of geology and physiography, and is but a short distance from a main road through the area. A journey through this area is replete with interesting history and scenic effects, and would be a constant source of wonderment to the public.

DARK CANYON AND WOODENSHOE CANYONS

LOCATION:

Township 34 and 35 South, Ranges 17, 18, and 19 East.

DESCRIPTION:

Dark Canyon and Woodenshoe Canyon are two drainage systems starting on Elk Mountain on the West side of the Blue Mts. in San Juan County, Utah. The canyons merge into Dark Canyon which in turn empties into the Colorado River from the southeast.

DETAILS:

Dark Canyon and Woodenshoe Canyon are deeply eroded canyons on the West side of Elk Mountain. They are both extremely picturesque and contain numerous natural bridges. Woodenshoe Canyon contains a number of cliff dwellers ruins located high up on the cliffs of the canyon.

**CHARACTER
OF COUNTRY:**

The area is a high plateau region with deeply dissected canyons. A heavy growth of large timber covers the higher plateau and the canyons as well. Numerous springs are available. In 1926 the Midwest Refining Company of Denver, Colorado, built a road into Dark Canyon from near Kigalia Ranger Station and improved the road from Blanding to that point. This road has not been kept in repair since a well has been drilled and abandoned in Dark Canyon.

**CHARACTER
OF COUNTRY:**

The country is a high anticlinal region, the surface of the area being covered with hard gray-blue limestone, which plunges to the east, north and west from the point in question.

**STATUS OF
LANDS:**

All the lands involved in the area are either State owned or public domain.

ACCESSIBILITY: A road could easily be constructed from the Bluff-Mexican Hat Kayenta road to this point, and would involve between two and three miles of construction work, which could be made on to the limestone surface at small cost.

A new road is being built from Cortez, Colorado (near the Mesaverde National Park), down McElmo Canyon to the Colorado-Utah line, and will ultimately be continued by the State of Utah, to the town of Bluff, Utah. The road from Bluff to Mexican Hat and on southwest to Kayenta, connects at Flagstaff all towns in Arizona. This road system is the only one passing through the area.

CONCLUSION:

This point on the north side of the San Juan River Canyon through East Anticline, is a wonderful observation point for the study of geology and physiography, while the entire road through the area is one of recurrence after another of interesting scenery, history, and nature study of all kinds.

East Anticline is but one interesting point of many which lie along the road through this area.

THE GOOSE NECKS

OF THE

SAN JUAN RIVER

LOCATION:

Section 34, Township 41 South, Range 18 East.
San Juan County, Utah.

DESCRIPTION:

This area is on the north rim of the San Juan River where it cuts through West Anticline, a well known geological feature west of Mexican Hat and Goodridge, Utah.

DETAILS:

The San Juan River has taken a meandering course in cutting through West Anticline and has eroded four (4) loops or meanders, all of which can be seen from the same point. The canyon at this point is 1250 feet deep, and the river can be reached by "Honaker Trail" where a study of the entire geology of the canyon can be made.

STATUS OF

LANDS:

All lands involved in the area are Stated owned or public domain. Part of the area is within the boundaries of the La Sal National Forest.

ACCESSIBILITY: The Dark and Woodenshoe Canyon area can be reached by taking the Blanding-Natural Bridges road to a point one mile east of Kigalia Ranger Station and then turning north on the Dark Canyon Road. Woodenshoe Canyon can be reached by pack trail only, but is easily accessible. The Natural Bridges and the Dark Canyon-Woodenshoe Canyon area can both be made in one trip.

CONCLUSION: I believe this area is well worth setting aside as a National Monument or Park in connection with the Natural Bridges Monument.

MONUMENTAL VALLEY

LOCATION: Northern Apache and Navajo Counties, Arizona.

DESCRIPTION: Monumental Valley is a broad, comparatively flat, sandy area encircled on the southwest, south and east sides by cliffs or escarpments of massive sandstones (DeChelly sandstone). This sandstone has been eroded into needle and spire like shafts, and other odd shapes. These erosion remnants can be seen from considerable distances when viewed from the northwest, north and northeast. Many individual remnants have been named and are well known as land marks.

This area lies in the extreme northern part of Apache and Navajo Counties, Arizona. (see professional Paper #93, U.S. Geological Survey)

STATUS OF

LANDS:

The land in this area is Executive Order land, a part of the Navajo Indian Reservation. The area is now used for grazing by the Navajo Indians. Cattle men from Utah graze cattle in this area at intermittent periods.

ACCESSIBILITY: Monumental Valley is not entirely inaccessible to automobile travel. One road follows up Gypsum Creek into the center of the valley, and the road from Mexican Hat, Utah, to Kayenta, Arizona; crosses the northwest corner of the valley. Drifting sand may cover roads built into the area if the roads are not properly placed or located. Splendid views of the valley may be obtained from certain advantageously chosen points. The building of the roads can be accomplished at an extremely low cost.

CONCLUSION: I believe that several short roads could be built into this area at small expense. I believe that a traveler

between Bluff and Kayenta can see a sufficient portion of Monumental Valley to appreciate its scenic beauties and that no great expenditure is justified in the connection of road construction. The fact that the area is Executive Order Land and that it is not readily accessible, makes it one that can be appreciated from the near distance without its being made into a National Park or Monument at the present time. If the public demands for roads into the area become great in the future, the fact that it is Executive Order Land always makes it possible to set it aside as a National Park.

KAIPAROWITS PLATEAU

LOCATION: Kane County, Utah.

DISCUSSION: The region known as the Kaiparowits Plateau in Kane County, Utah, should be investigated as a possible area for a National Park. The area shows great possibilities from scenic, geological, botany, and biological standpoints.

STATUS OF LANDS: The area involves both State land and public domain.

NOTE: See discussion - Kaiparowits Plateau-Professional Paper #164 United States Geological Survey.

SUMMARY

The Muffin Butte Area if established as a National Park or Monument and opened to the public by the construction of a road into the area, would be easily accessible from U. S. Highway #50 and Utah Highway #450. Travelers passing through Grand Junction, Colorado, en route to southwest Utah, would find the area readily accessible. Travelers from Grand Junction, Colorado, en route to southeast Utah, would also find the area accessible and of real interest.

Parties visiting the Mesaverde National Park will, in a short time, be able to leave that area, travel over a good road to Bluff, Utah, see the East Anticline, Goose Necks, Monumental Valley, and reach Kayenta, Arizona, that evening.

The establishment of the Kaiparowits Plateau Area as a National Park area, and the building of a road into that area, would ultimately result in the building of a bridge over the Colorado River, and linking up of National Parks and Monuments in Southern Utah, with Rainbow Bridge, Navajo Mountain, Keet Seel, Betatakin, Monument Valley, the Goose Necks, East Anticline, Natural Bridges and the Mesaverde National Park, into a succession of scenic, educational and recreational centers.

I will be only too glad to furnish the National Park Service with any data, maps or pictures, which I may have in my possession, regarding the areas discussed in this letter.

Respectfully submitted,
(signed) HARRY A. AURAND.