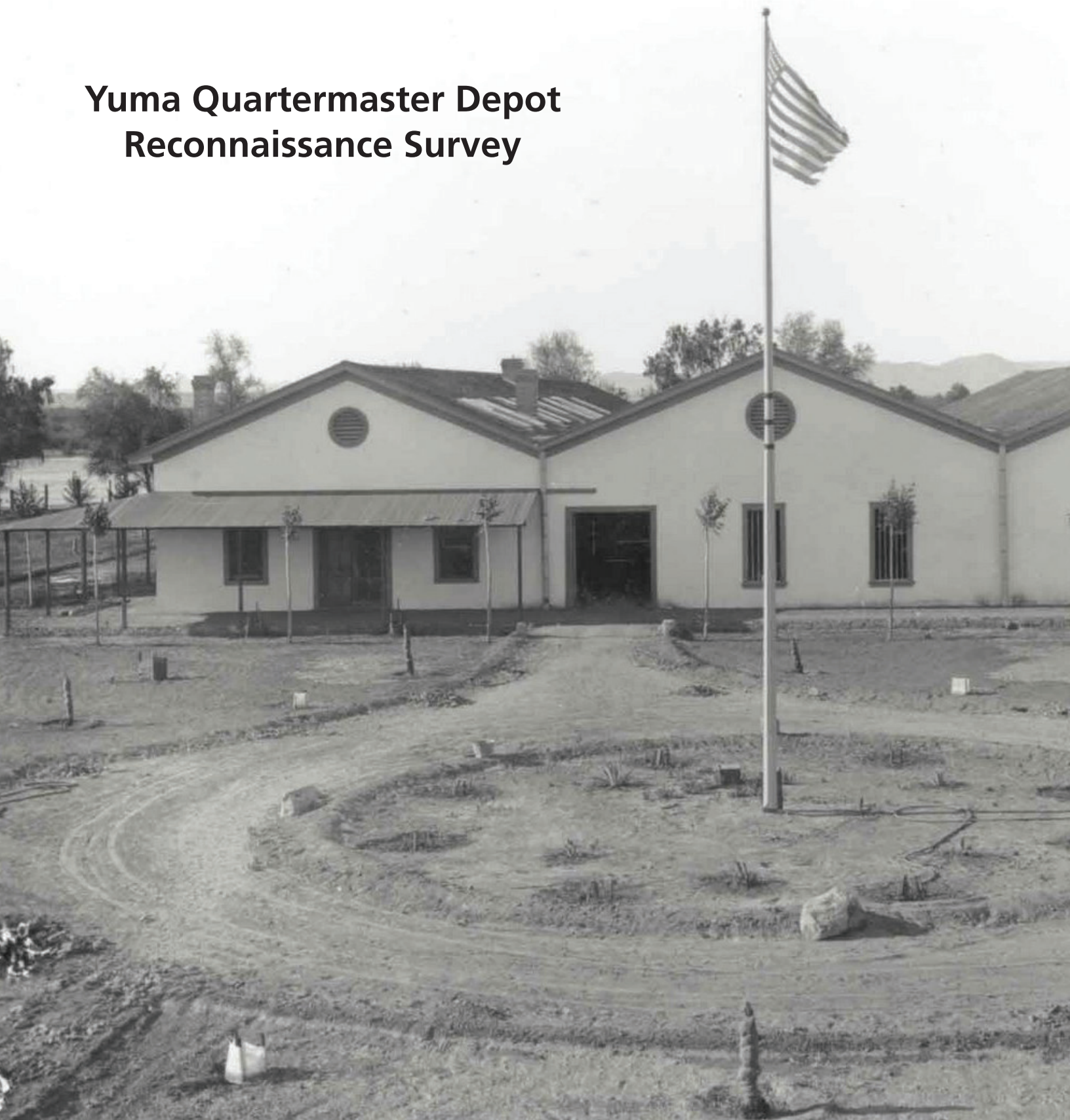




Yuma Quartermaster Depot Reconnaissance Survey



APRIL 2019

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Front matter disclaimer: This reconnaissance survey was requested and has been prepared to explore specific resources and advise on whether these resources merit further consideration as a potential addition to the National Park System. Publication or transmittal of this report should not be considered an endorsement or a commitment by the National Park Service to seek or support specific legislative authorization for the project or its implementation. The United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Intermountain Region prepared this reconnaissance survey.

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Cover: Bureau of Reclamation storehouse, circa 1904. (National Archives and Records Administration)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Park Service (NPS) prepared this reconnaissance survey at the request of the late U.S. Senator John McCain (Arizona) to evaluate the Yuma Quartermaster Depot in Yuma, Arizona, as a potential unit of the National Park System.¹ The purpose of a reconnaissance survey is to provide a preliminary evaluation of a resource and to recommend whether an authorization for a Special Resource Study fully evaluating the resource should be considered by the U.S. Congress.

The Yuma Quartermaster Depot was established in 1864 by the United States military for offloading supplies shipped from San Francisco to be transported to forts throughout the Southwest. After the construction of the railroad in 1877, the depot was made obsolete; however, the Bureau of Reclamation used this site as its headquarters in the early 1900s to build the first series of dams and canals on the Colorado River.

The site, owned by the State of Arizona, is known as the Colorado River State Historic Park. The site is a contributing resource to the Yuma Crossing and Associated Sites National Historic Landmark, and is part of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area (NHA).

A team from the National Park Service visited Yuma, Arizona, on March 29, 2017, to tour the site and meet with representatives of the state, the City of Yuma, and the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area.

To meet the criteria for inclusion in the National Park System, a proposed addition to the National Park System must (1) possess nationally significant natural or cultural resources; (2) be a suitable addition to the system; (3) be a feasible addition to the system; and (4) require direct NPS management instead of alternative protection by other public agencies or the private sector. It is beyond the scope of this survey to produce final conclusions or recommendations to Congress with regard to the establishment of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot as a unit of the National Park System. Conclusive evaluation can only be done by a Special Resource Study.

This reconnaissance survey report discusses national significance and provides a preliminary assessment of the new unit criteria. Additionally, in response to a special request from Senator McCain, the survey also provides a preliminary analysis of the interpretive approach outlined in the *Master Plan for the Yuma Quartermaster Depot State Historic Park & Yuma Territorial Prison State Historic Park* (2015), prepared by the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area.

1 See Appendix C.

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INTRODUCTION

This reconnaissance survey is a preliminary resource assessment of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot, part of the Yuma Crossing and Associated Sites National Historic Landmark District, in Yuma, Arizona. The assessment is based on congressionally established criteria for inclusion of new park units in the National Park System. In a March 2016 letter to National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis, Arizona Senator John McCain asked that the National Park Service conduct a reconnaissance survey of Yuma Quartermaster Depot and assess the interpretive approach that the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area suggested for the site.² The survey provides a cursory review and analysis of available information to determine whether a Special Resource Study is warranted.

Studies for potential new units of the National Park System, called Special Resource Studies, are conducted by the National Park Service only when authorized by Congress and signed into law by the President. The Special Resource Study process is designed to provide definitive findings of a site's significance, suitability, feasibility, and the need for direct NPS management; and, if those criteria are met, identify and evaluate potential resource protection strategies, boundaries, and management alternatives.

RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY PROCESS

While specific authorization from Congress would be necessary to conduct a Special Resource Study, the National Park Service is authorized to conduct preliminary resource assessments and gather data on potential study areas or sites. The term "reconnaissance survey" is used to describe this type of assessment. Its conclusions are not considered final or definitive, assessing only the likelihood that the resources analyzed would meet the established criteria.

² See Appendix C. When this request was made, the site was officially known as the Yuma Quartermaster Depot State Historic Park. While conducting this survey, the site name was changed to the Colorado River State Historic Park. This report will refer to the site as the Yuma Quartermaster Depot.

A reconnaissance survey examines the resources in a study area to provide a preliminary evaluation of their significance, the suitability and feasibility of protecting those resources as a park unit, and the need for direct NPS management.

If a study area appears potentially eligible for inclusion in the National Park System, then the National Park Service may recommend that Congress consider authorizing a Special Resource Study.

The *Yuma Crossing Quartermaster Depot Reconnaissance Survey* examines the resources of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot. The reconnaissance survey summarizes the historic context of the site, describes the existing conditions, and identifies those entities involved in existing preservation and interpretation efforts. The criteria for inclusion of these areas in the National Park System are preliminarily assessed. The reconnaissance survey briefly summarizes and assesses the interpretive plans for the site prepared by the managing entity, Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area. The reconnaissance survey concludes with recommendations for whether further study is warranted.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

The NPS core values are a framework in which the National Park Service, both individually and collectively, pursues and accomplishes its mission. The NPS core values are:

- **Shared stewardship:** We share a commitment to resource stewardship with the global preservation community.
- **Excellence:** We strive continually to learn and improve so that we may achieve the highest ideals of public service.
- **Integrity:** We deal honestly and fairly with the public and one another.
- **Tradition:** We are proud of it; we learn from it; we are not bound by it.
- **Respect:** We embrace each other's differences so that we may enrich the well-being of everyone.

The National Park Service is a bureau within the Department of the Interior. While numerous National Park System units were created prior to 1916, it was not until August 25, 1916, that President Woodrow Wilson signed the National Park Service Organic Act formally establishing the National Park Service.

The National Park System continues to grow and comprises more than 400 park units covering more than 84 million acres in every state, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. These units include, but are not limited to, national parks, monuments, battlefields, military parks, historical parks, historic sites, lakeshores, seashores, recreation areas, scenic rivers and trails, and the White House. The variety and diversity of park units throughout the nation require a strong commitment to resource stewardship and management to ensure both the protection and enjoyment of these resources for future generations.

Units of the National Park System are established by legislation passed by Congress and signed by the President, or are designated national monuments through presidential proclamation. Designation as a unit of the National Park System assumes NPS management of a site or NPS management of part of a site paired with close partnerships with other entities within the established park boundaries. This designation entails NPS financial and personnel support of park management and the adherence to applicable laws and policies for NPS owned properties and NPS actions.

CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION IN THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

The following are the criteria a site must meet to be recommended for inclusion in the National Park System.³

1. **National Significance:** Determinations of an area's national significance are made by NPS professionals, in consultation with scholars, subject-matter experts, and scientists following specific criteria. The National Park Service has adopted four criteria to evaluate the national significance of proposed areas. These criteria, listed in NPS Management Policies 2006, Section 1.3 "Criteria for Inclusion," state that a resource will be considered nationally significant if it meets all of the following conditions:
 - » It is an outstanding example of a particular type of resource.
 - » It possesses exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the natural or cultural themes of our nation's heritage.
 - » It offers superlative opportunities for public enjoyment or for scientific study.
 - » It retains a high degree of integrity as a true, accurate, and relatively unspoiled example of a resource.

National significance for cultural resources will be evaluated by applying the National Historic Landmark (NHL) criteria contained in 36 CFR Part 65.4 (*Code of Federal Regulations*). See Appendix B for the full text of 36 CFR Part 65.4 "National Historic Landmark criteria."

2. **Suitability:** A property is considered suitable if it represents a resource type that is not currently represented in the National Park System or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by another agency or entity. Adequacy of representation is determined on a case-by-case basis by comparing the type, quality, quantity, combination of resources present, and opportunities for public enjoyment.

³ See Appendix A for the full text of NPS *Management Policies 2006*, Section 1.3 "Criteria for Inclusion."



The Yuma Quartermaster Depot today with the Quartermaster's Office, the Officer's Quarters, and the Kitchen in the background (NPS photo, March 2017).

In addition to resource conservation, the fundamental purpose of all parks is to provide for the enjoyment of park resources and values by the people of the United States. Public enjoyment of national park units are preferably those forms of enjoyment that are "uniquely suited to the superlative natural and cultural resources found in the parks and that (1) foster an understanding of and appreciation for park resources and values, or (2) promote enjoyment through a direct association with, interaction with, or relation to park resources."⁴

3. **Feasibility:** To be considered feasible, an area must be of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure long-term protection of the resources and to accommodate public use. The area must have potential for efficient administration at a reasonable cost. Other important feasibility factors include land ownership, acquisition costs, current and potential use, access, level of local and general public support, and staff or development requirements.
4. **Direct NPS Management:** Even if a resource meets the criteria of national significance, suitability, and feasibility, it will not always be recommended that the resource be added to the National Park System. There are many excellent examples of important natural and cultural resources managed by other federal agencies, other levels of government, and private entities.

⁴ NPS *Management Policies* 2006, Section 8.1.1 "Appropriate Use."

A proposed addition must require direct NPS management instead of protection by other public agencies or the private sector, and the evaluation of management options must show NPS management is the clearly superior alternative. Because a reconnaissance survey does not propose management alternatives, there will be only a cursory discussion of need for direct NPS management presented here.

As noted above, the reconnaissance survey process allows for only a preliminary evaluation of the criteria for inclusion, assessing the likelihood that they would be met should a Special Resource Study be undertaken.

RESOURCES ANALYZED IN THIS SURVEY

The request letter from Senator McCain asked that the National Park Service conduct a reconnaissance survey of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot, a complex of six buildings that comprise a component of the Yuma Crossing and Associated Sites National Historic Landmark District. Though the Yuma Quartermaster Depot and an assessment of the suggested interpretive approach is the focus of this reconnaissance survey, this study discusses the Yuma Crossing and Associated Sites National Historic Landmark District in order to provide historical and current context of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The Yuma Quartermaster Depot was established in 1864 in Yuma, Arizona, to distribute supplies to military posts in the Southwest. Located on the Colorado River, supplies were brought to the depot by steamboat for overland distribution to inland forts. The Yuma Quartermaster Depot was used for this purpose until the early 1880s. The facility later housed other federal offices, including the U.S. Weather Service and the headquarters for the Bureau of Reclamation's Yuma Project.

By the time the depot was established, Yuma had become a bustling crossing point and connection between California cities and the frontier. The depot's establishment, function, and importance are best understood in the context of the history of the Yuma Crossing, a key Colorado River crossing site.

The Yuma Crossing of the Colorado River was used by the Quechan (pronounced Kwatsáan) Tribe (officially known as the Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe) prior to European arrival in the area, and their use continued after contact with the Spanish and, later, Mexicans who claimed the land as their territory. Because the territory that became Arizona was largely under American Indian control and only sparsely populated by Anglos, the United States had little trouble seizing it from Mexico in the Mexican-American War. America's claim to the territory was formalized in 1848. But American Indian control of the region would prove difficult for the American government to unseat even as Anglo and European American migration across Arizona, and Anglo settlement broadly around the Southwest, increased in the ensuing years. Traffic to and through Yuma boomed with the discovery of gold in California in 1849, and both Anglo settlement and an army presence were established at the crossing.⁵ Estimates are that 6,000 to 9,000 European Americans and 15,000 Mexicans passed through Quechan land in 1849 alone.

5 Eugene P. Moehring, *Urbanism and Empire in the Far West, 1840–1890* (Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press, 2004), p.279.

Initially, the migrants presented both a threat to Quechan tribal sovereignty and an opportunity for the Quechan, whose population was estimated to be about 1,700.⁶ Establishing a ferry service, members of the Quechan Tribe would swim travelers and their animals across the river in exchange for goods. Anglo invasion of their lands became more galling to many Quechan when migrants began permanent settlement and with it, ferry operations of their own.⁷ Hostilities between the settlers and Quechan ensued.

Established military presence came in late 1849, when the War Department established Camp Calhoun on the California side of the river, superseded by Fort Yuma, which was continuously garrisoned starting in 1852.⁸ Conflict between the U.S. Army, the Quechan, and Anglo settlers made Yuma a tumultuous place. But this conflict, and wider conflict in Arizona between settlers and other tribes like the Apaches, eventually benefited Yuma's economic development when it was made the distribution point for supplies for other posts throughout the region.⁹

The settlement, first called Colorado City, then Arizona City, and finally Yuma, continued to grow. In the early 1850s, Congress appropriated funds for western wagon roads, including a route from El Paso, Texas, to Yuma, facilitating travel.¹⁰ Mining in the area, most locally a gold find at Gila City in 1858, and successive booms in the region increased business opportunities for Yuma.¹¹

6 Robert A. Sauder, *The Yuma Reclamation Project: Irrigation, Indian Allotment, and Settlement Along the Lower Colorado River* (Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press, 2009), p.35. Estimate in 1850s.

7 Moehring, p.279.

8 Moehring, p.279 and p.281.

9 Moehring, p.279.

10 Michael L. Tate, *The Frontier Army in the Settlement of the West* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), p.56.

11 Moehring, pp.282–283.



The Quartersmaster's Office (NPS photo, March 2017).

Steamboat traffic to Yuma on the Colorado River began soon after the establishment of Fort Yuma. In 1857, an expedition by the U.S. Army's Topographical Engineers found that improvements along the river to facilitate boat traffic would be favorable, and federal money was spent to this end in the coming decades.¹² The steamboats would unload at Fort Yuma on the river's west side (north of the City of Yuma), but for overland distribution supplies they had to be ferried to the east (south) side of the river.¹³ To supply inland forts without the expense of ferrying supplies as demand for supplies increased, the Yuma Quartermaster Depot was established on the south side of the river in 1864.¹⁴

¹² Tate, pp.73–74.

¹³ http://www.arizonahistoricalsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/library_Army-Quartermaster-Depot.pdf

¹⁴ Yuma Crossing and Associated Sites National Historic Landmark nomination (1966), Section 8, p.2.

YUMA QUARTERMASTER DEPOT

While Yuma's importance as a logistical and communications link for the military during the Civil War had mostly ceased between 1863–1864, activities in relation to the operations of Gen. J.H. Carleton's California Column led to the establishment of a large quartermaster depot at Jaeger's Landing, a ferry crossing at Yuma, in 1864. Despite the drawdown of the Civil War activity in the region, a military presence remained active across the Southwest to protect westward migration, and these military installations needed to be supplied. An important depot, comparable to New Mexico's Fort Union, the depot at Yuma drew supplies from California by steamboat and distributed them by freight wagon to the frontier forts of Arizona and beyond. Nearly destroyed by fire in 1867, much of the depot was immediately rebuilt and functioned until the late 1880s. Finally in 1908, it became a custom house and served as an immigration checkpoint until 1954.¹⁵

¹⁵ Yuma Crossing and Associated Sites National Historic Landmark nomination (1966), Section 8, p.2.

The ferry maintained the connection between Fort Yuma on the northern shoreline of the river and the depot on the southern shoreline, which between them employed about 70 civilians in craftsmen and labor jobs, in addition to military personnel. The depot was part of the Fort Yuma military reservation, which covered more than 5,000 acres on both sides of the Colorado River.

Most of the early buildings of the depot were destroyed in a fire in 1867. The Officer's Quarters and Officer's Kitchen were most likely constructed in 1859 and were spared by the fire. The Quartermaster's Office dates to 1872. The Reservoir to store water for use and fire suppression was constructed after the 1867 fire. The Storehouse was rebuilt by 1868, and the Granary, identified now as the Corral House, was built in 1867 and modified in 1906 and 1925 for later uses after the U.S. Army left the site.¹⁶

An 1874 law transferred select property, most notably riverfront property, from the Secretary of War to the Secretary of the Interior for sale at public auction.¹⁷ The ferry crossing contained within this property was released from the military reservation, and privatization opened up opportunities for riverfront development. Importantly, land released from the military reservation was also the location of the Yuma Territorial Prison, which opened in 1876, and the land on which the Southern Pacific Railroad crossed the Colorado River in 1877. Thus the Yuma Quartermaster Depot witnessed the growth of the City of Yuma from a crossing and military outpost to an established town.

16 Following the designation of the Yuma Crossing and Associated Sites National Historic Landmark in 1966, archeological deposits at the Yuma Quartermaster Depot were identified—features include 19th century middens, buried posts, the east bay of the Storehouse, the Shop House/Repair Shop, and the Gate House/Guard House. This information came from the Yuma Crossing National Historic Landmark Nomination Update (DRAFT) (2004), p.8. [Note: The draft nomination update was not completed and is still in draft form].

17 Yuma Crossing National Historic Landmark Nomination Update (DRAFT) (2004), pp.34–36, 43rd Congress, Act of June 22, 1874, Chapter 415.

The only practical railroad crossings of the Colorado River in the Southwest were at Yuma and upriver at Needles. Yuma was the first to be crossed by the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1877. A crossing at Needles followed in 1883.¹⁸ The U.S. Army continued to operate the Yuma Quartermaster Depot until 1883, at which point the buildings were put into service for a number of other federal agencies.¹⁹ The Bureau of Reclamation, the Signal Service and Weather Bureau, and the Customs Service all used buildings of the former Yuma Quartermaster Depot, making some changes to the site in the process. Of these occupants, the most notable is the Bureau of Reclamation, which used the site as the headquarters for the first major Colorado River control project, the Yuma Project.

COLORADO RIVER CONTROL AND LATER USE OF THE YUMA QUARTERMASTER DEPOT

Generally, dams serve one or more of three major functions: flood control, power generation, and water diversion/retention for irrigation. Most of the country's lands that could be irrigated by individuals and corporations were already under cultivation by the beginning of the 20th century, and the federal government recognized that a national irrigation policy was needed to develop remaining irrigable lands.

Authorized in 1904, the Yuma Project was the first authorized federal irrigation project on the Colorado River, and one of the earliest in the West.²⁰ The Yuma Project at the arid intersection of California, Arizona, and Mexico, originally encompassed 90,000 acres of land.²¹ The Reclamation Service (today's Bureau of Reclamation) placed the Yuma Project offices at the Yuma Quartermaster Depot, which by that time was no longer in use by the U.S. Army. Difficulties both environmental and socioeconomic dogged the project in its first years, but by the 1920s the project began to find success. The centerpiece of the Yuma Project infrastructure was the Laguna Dam.

18 Moehring, p.73.

19 Yuma Crossing National Historic Landmark Nomination Update (DRAFT) (2004), p.6.

20 Sauder, p.1.

21 Sauder, p.1.



The offices of the Yuma Project as they look today as part of the Quartermaster Depot (NPS photo, March 2017).

Construction of the Laguna Dam, the first dam on the Colorado River, began in 1905. The dam went into service in March 1909.²² The dam was a diversion dam, designed to divert Colorado River water into irrigation canals, not to impound water into a reservoir like later, more famous dams on the Colorado River including the Hoover Dam completed in 1936 and the Glen Canyon Dam of 1966. In 1939, the Laguna Dam was superseded by the Imperial Dam a few miles upstream, which diverts water to the Imperial and Coachella Valleys in California in addition to the Yuma Project. Though the arrival of the railroad eventually rendered boat traffic on the Colorado River obsolete, the completion of the Laguna Dam was what definitively brought about the transition from the Colorado River as a navigable waterway to water source.

“In the process of furnishing water to 30 million people and 3.7 million acres of farmland in seven western states and northern Mexico, the Colorado has become one of the most dammed, diverted, and (over)regulated rivers in the land...”²³ a transformation that began with the Yuma Project and the Laguna Dam. The growth in area agriculture led to growth in the City of Yuma.

²² Sauder, p.89.

²³ Sauder, p.205.

By the 1950s, the Yuma Quartermaster Depot was used as an operations center by the Yuma County Water Users Association to manage its canal system.

The control of the Colorado River by the Laguna Dam and subsequent projects led to changes in the setting of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot. The Colorado River, once wide and navigable, had its flow greatly reduced. In 1912, completed construction of the Yuma Main Canal and the Colorado River Siphon brought water from the California side under the Colorado River to irrigate the Arizona side. This caused further changes to the setting of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot and its relationship to the site of the crossing as well as the other important landmarks of Yuma’s early days, Fort Yuma and the Yuma Territorial Prison. As dramatic as the changes to the Colorado River were, so were the new methods for crossing it beginning with the 1877 Southern Pacific Railroad bridge (no longer extant) and followed by the 1915 Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Bridge, the 1924 Southern Pacific Railroad bridge, and the 1978 Interstate Highway 8 bridge. Today, the setting of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot is dominated more by the crossings of the Colorado River than by the river itself.



Aerial photograph showing the location of Fort Yuma, Yuma Quatermaster Depot, Yuma Territorial Prison, Colorado River, Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Bridge, Interstate 8 bridge, Southern Pacific Railroad bridge, and the City of Yuma (City of Yuma photo, March 2018; photo courtesy of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area).

EXISTING CONDITIONS



Site map of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot (Colorado River State Historic Park).

Nestled in the corner of southwestern Arizona, near the borders of California and Mexico, the City of Yuma is home to 94,906 people.²⁴ Yuma is surrounded by the Fort Yuma–Quechan Indian Reservation in California to the north, Mexico to the south and west, and Barry M. Goldwater Air Force Range to the east. Due to its rich history in westward expansion, Yuma is known as the “Gateway of the Great Southwest.”

The once mighty Colorado River historically stretched 15 miles across a silty bottom in the area except where two granite outcroppings squeezed the river into a narrow channel.²⁵ This area, known as Yuma Crossing, is where present-day Yuma is located. As a result of water use, diversions, dam construction, and drought, the river now flows through only a small portion of its original stream bed.

²⁴ U.S. Census Bureau 2016, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/yumacityarizona,yumacountyarizona/PST045216>.

²⁵ City of Yuma, <http://www.yumaaz.gov/city-administration/about-yuma.html>.

YUMA QUARTERMASTER DEPOT LAND OWNERSHIP

The depot remained property of the federal government under the auspices of a variety of agencies until the City of Yuma eventually secured ownership of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot in the 1950s and the Yuma County Water Users Association (YCWUA) used the site to manage the canal system operations. In 1969, the City of Yuma deeded the Yuma Quartermaster Depot offices and Officer's Quarters to the State of Arizona. Arizona State Parks operated these historic buildings even while YCWUA continued operations on other sections of the property. In the 1980s, local community groups in Yuma led efforts to relocate the operations of the YCWUA, and the remaining property was transferred by quitclaim deed to Arizona State Parks in the late 1990s with an agreement to ensure historic covenants and establish an approved Program of Preservation and Utilization. Construction of the state park and associated improvements to the property were completed in accordance with this mandate.²⁶ The park opened and operated as the Yuma Crossing State Historic Park in 1997.²⁷ In January of 2010, Arizona State Parks announced that it would be closing the park due to budget cuts. After this announcement, the local community raised \$70,000 and, with funds from a variety of sources through the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area²⁸, funding was in place to operate the facility as a state park. The City of Yuma leased the Yuma Quartermaster Depot, and to this day, operates it as a state park under the local management of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Corporation Board of Directors. In 2017, the Arizona State Parks board agreed to change the name to the Colorado River State Historic Park to better reflect the original nature of the site and its interpretive focus as a state park.

26 Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area, *Master Plan for the Yuma Quartermaster Depot State Historic Park & Yuma Territorial Prison State Historic Park* (2015), pp. 2–5.

27 <https://azstateparks.com/colorado-river/about-the-depot/park-history>

28 Congressionally authorized in 2000 to preserve and enhance the natural, historical, and cultural resources of a community through voluntary and dynamic partnerships.

YUMA CROSSING AND ASSOCIATED SITES NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

Designated in 1966, the Yuma Crossing and Associated Sites National Historic Landmark was one of the earliest nominations for National Historic Landmark status. The nomination tells the story of the Yuma Crossing and those who lived around and passed through it, as well as how the landscape evolved over time. The granite outcroppings at Yuma Crossing still dominate the landscape while the three historic government building complexes located on high ground define the crossing area: Fort Yuma, Yuma Quartermaster Depot, and the Yuma Territorial Prison. The location of the Yuma Crossing today is a variety of historic and modern crossings and buildings and the NHL maintains its national significance for its important link in the 19th century westward expansion of the United States as a transportation and communication gateway.²⁹ For the purpose of context, all contributing resources of the NHL are described below, but this reconnaissance survey pertains specifically to the Quartermaster Depot.

The contributing resources of the National Historic Landmark district include the Yuma Crossing on the Colorado River, Yuma Quartermaster Depot, Fort Yuma, and the Yuma Territorial Prison. While not formally defined in the original nomination, the period of significance generally focuses on the period 1849–1909. The boundary of the National Historic Landmark is contiguous, comprising approximately 149 acres. As such, modern development exists within the boundary including a hotel and the Yuma Water Treatment Plant. The National Historic Landmark's status was listed as "threatened" in the 1990s as a result of increased development in the area and the blighted riverfront; however, cleanup and restoration efforts on the riverfront over the past two decades resulted in a change to that status.³⁰ Still, ongoing development within the boundary of the NHL poses potential impacts to the integrity of the district. An update to the 1966 NHL nomination expanding on the original historical information began in the early 2000s but was not completed.³¹

29 Yuma Crossing and Associated Sites National Historic Landmark nomination (1966), Section 8, p.3.

30 Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area, *Master Plan* (2015), p.4.

31 Yuma Crossing National Historic Landmark Nomination Update (DRAFT) (2004).



The Yuma Crossing and Associated Sites National Historic Landmark boundary location map (map courtesy of the National Park Service Intermountain Region Geographic Resources Division, October 2017).

Yuma Quartermaster Depot

The 1966 NHL nomination states, “Several buildings that once served as units of the Quartermaster Depot are located just downstream from the Yuma Crossing. Of adobe and plaster, part are unoccupied and owned by the City of Yuma, the rest are in use as offices by the Bureau of Reclamation. The city-owned Officer’s Quarters is sound structurally, though in need of clean-up and maintenance.”³² The Quartermaster Depot site has six buildings that contribute to the significance of the NHL as documented in 1966: 1) Officer’s Quarters, 2) Officer’s Kitchen, 3) Office, 4) Reservoir, 5) Storehouse, and 6) Granary (also called the Corral House).³³

River Crossing

Dramatic changes to technology and transportation that occurred throughout the 20th century, after the general period of significance for the Yuma Crossing and Associated Sites National Historic Landmark, have had considerable impact to the appearance of the area. The river crossing is the location where the river narrowed to allow for crossing, though the setting of the crossing and the river itself have changed significantly since the period of its national significance.

The crossing initially was a dirt trail, leading to the river, which was then crossed by raft or ferry. As importance of the crossing grew along with the military presence and the use as a transportation corridor, the crossing began to change. However, the most dramatic change came with the development of water management systems in the region. Completion of the Laguna Dam in 1909 signaled the decline of the Colorado River as a transportation system due to the lowered water levels resulting from diversion from the river to irrigable farmlands. Each new dam and diversion led to further declines in river flows. With the Colorado River itself being reduced to little more than a creek because of a series of upriver dams and diversions, the banks of the Colorado River are now exposed to more than what was historically visible. These reduced flows and floods have significantly impacted the native vegetation in the area for which restoration efforts are underway by the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area. Three later crossings, the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Bridge (1915), the Southern Pacific Railroad (SPRR) Steel Truss Bridge (1924), and the Interstate 8 Bridge (1978), along with the construction of the Colorado River Siphon (1912) continue to convey the importance of the Yuma Crossing area as a transportation gateway.³⁴

³² Yuma Crossing and Associated Sites National Historic Landmark nomination (1966), Section 8, p.1.

³³ Yuma Crossing and Associated Sites National Historic Landmark nomination (1966), Section 10, p.1.

³⁴ Yuma Crossing National Historic Landmark Nomination Update (DRAFT) (2004), pp.9–10.

The Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Bridge and the Southern Pacific Railroad Steel Truss Bridge (NPS photo, March 2017).





The one remaining guard tower at the Yuma Territorial Prison (NPS photo, March 2017).

Yuma Territorial Prison

The prison complex, designated as the Yuma Territorial Prison State Historic Park, sits atop the granite bluff of the Colorado River. The prison was city-owned property until it was deeded to the state in 1961 as one of the first state parks. It has since remained state-owned property, although, starting in 2010, it was leased back to the City of Yuma.³⁵ It is operated as a historic site by the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area.

The prison operated from 1875 to 1909 when it was abandoned for a new location due to overpopulation. During operation, the prison was constantly under construction to accommodate the large number of prisoners housed there.

It was used as the Yuma High School from 1910 to 1914. Through the 1930s people displaced from their homes due to the Great Depression and “hobos” traveling the nearby rail lines occupied the old prison. In 1940, the City of Yuma began to operate a museum about the prison and did so until it became the state park. Over the years, many changes have taken place to the structures that made up the original prison including fires, disassembling of buildings, reuse of materials from the site, and significant preservation and reconstruction work as well.³⁶

³⁵ Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area, *Master Plan* (2015), pp. 3–5.

³⁶ Yuma Crossing National Historic Landmark Nomination Update (DRAFT) (2004), pp.11–14.

Fort Yuma

On the crest of the northern granite bluff overlooking the crossing on the California side is the location of Fort Yuma/Quechan Tribal Headquarters. This complex has been the headquarters of the Fort Yuma Indian Reservation of the Quechan Tribe since approximately 1895.

Originally occupied by the Quechan Tribe, a Spanish mission was built on the site in 1780. It was destroyed during an uprising of the Quechan Tribe a year later. Sketches from 1850–1852 depict Fort Yuma on the hill overlooking the Colorado River. An 1875 U.S. Army report officially described the fort as it reached the height of its development and was nearing the end of its usefulness to the military. It was officially abandoned by the U.S. Army in 1883 and transferred to the Department of the Interior.³⁷

This area is the only historic government installation within the Yuma Crossing and Associated Sites National Historic Landmark District that is not preserved as a state historic park. Located within the Fort Yuma Quechan Reservation, the historic building complex remains in active use by the Quechan Tribe as their administrative headquarters. The Fort Yuma complex retains integrity to its historic design, workmanship, materials, and feeling.³⁸

YUMA CROSSING NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

The Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area received congressional authorization in 2000. National heritage areas are designed to preserve and enhance the natural, historical, and cultural resources of a community through voluntary and dynamic partnerships. The Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area adopted a management plan in 2002, approved by the Secretary of Interior, which focused on the revitalization of the Lower Colorado River through environmental restoration, riverfront park and trail development, and enhancement of the NHL, including the state parks. The management plan reiterates the authorizing legislation for the national heritage area that, "... a locally based, citizen-led, private non-profit corporation entitled the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Corporation will serve

as the 'management entity' of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area."³⁹ The Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area encompasses 22 square miles with multiple jurisdictions that include the City of Yuma, Yuma County, the State of Arizona, and the multi-jurisdictional Colorado River. The Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area was established as a non-profit organization and while the City of Yuma is a key partner, the corporation is structured to benefit from private donations, foundation assistance, and volunteer involvement. "Experience in other heritage areas indicates that foundations, private philanthropists and ordinary citizens will be more forthcoming if the heritage organization is perceived as a citizen-based, not governmental, organization."⁴⁰ As a partner to the national heritage area, the National Park Service provides funding and technical assistance, as well as administrative assistance, as needed.

Ambitious wetland restoration of portions of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area resulted in restoration of 1,500 acres of wetlands. The City of Yuma, the Quechan Tribe, Arizona Game and Fish Department, and the Bureau of Reclamation have partnered together to complete the East Wetlands project; a project in which each partner agrees to maintain 350 acres of wetlands in the Multi-Species Conservation Program (MCSP).⁴¹

In 2010 after the state announced it would close the sites due to budget cuts, public support for the sites' preservation and local fundraising efforts led to the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area assuming management of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot and Yuma Territorial Prison State Historic Park. While the Yuma Territorial Prison has achieved operational self-sufficiency, the Yuma Quartermaster Depot does not have similar visitor appeal and does not generate admission revenue needed to operate. The City of Yuma, the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area, and the Yuma Visitors Bureau fund the operation of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot.⁴²

39 Deardorff Design Resources / inc., *Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Management Plan* (2002), p.67. <http://www.yumaheritage.com/docs/YCNHA-Final-Management-Plan.pdf>

40 Deardorff Design Resources / inc., *Management Plan* (2002), p.67.

41 <https://www.nps.gov/articles/national-heritage-areas-healthy-environment-healthy-people.htm>

42 Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area, *Master Plan* (2015), p.29.

37 Yuma Crossing National Historic Landmark Nomination Update (DRAFT) (2004), pp.16, 18.

38 Yuma Crossing National Historic Landmark Nomination Update (DRAFT) (2004), pp.16-20.

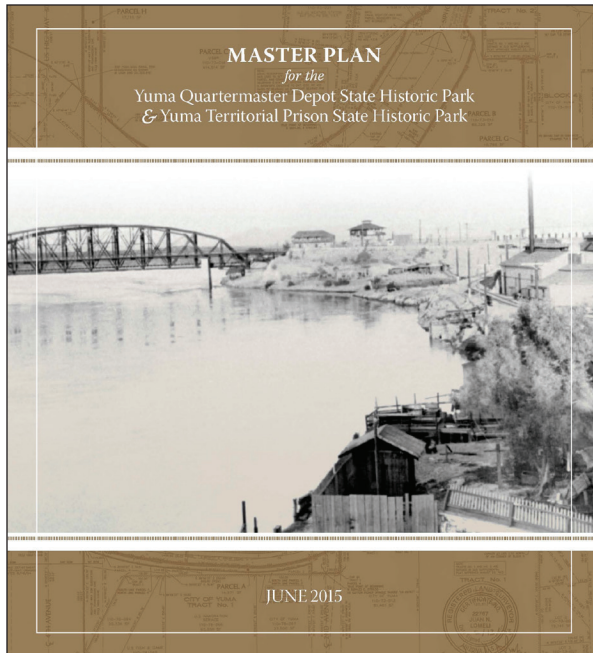


Image of the Master Plan cover prepared for the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area in 2015.

Yuma State Historic Parks Master Plan

The *Master Plan for the Yuma Quartermaster Depot State Historic Park & Yuma Territorial Prison State Historic Park* (2015) was created to align the thinking of the local, state, and federal governments and local community concerning major improvements to the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area. The master plan discusses the history of the region and the general history of the sites that make up the national heritage area, along with the specific history, ownership, and operation of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot and territorial prison. It discusses previous planning efforts around the two state parks, including describing the restoration efforts and interpretive evolution that took place over the last two decades at both the depot and prison. The master plan states, “While this flurry of activity has certainly brought the facility back to life, all parties . . . are concerned that these ‘ad hoc’ changes, often forced by budget constraints, pressing maintenance needs, and economic circumstances, were not the best way to shape the long-term future of these parks. Thus, the commitment to complete this new master plan.”⁴³

⁴³ Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area, *Master Plan* (2015), pp.6–7.

The ultimate goal of the master plan is to ensure sustainable parks going forward despite the budget and economic realities under which the parks operate. The plan acknowledges three primary concepts around which it was developed: 1) that because the depot and prison are part of the key elements of the NHL, the highest priority of the master plan is the preservation and interpretation of the historic assets within each park, 2) the plan acknowledges that given today’s budget realities, governmental resources will be constrained and insufficient to meet the parks’ operating and capital needs, and 3) the parks must generate operating revenues to supplement public funds, and the master plan dictates that the parks must become dedicated attractions in order to be able to operate in a sustainable way.⁴⁴

YUMA AND NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAILS

Yuma’s location and geography meant that it was an ideal location for crossing the river. This drew humans to the area for thousands of years, including those passing through on well-established routes that are recognized today as part of the National Trails System. The system, established in 1968 upon passage of the National Trails System Act, provides for outdoor recreation and promotes the preservation of, public access to, travel within, and enjoyment and appreciation of open-air, outdoor areas, and historic resources in the United States. National Historic Trails are those that recognize original trails or routes of travel of national historic significance, including past routes of exploration, migration, and military action.⁴⁵ The **Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail** commemorates the 1775–1776 journey of Juan Bautista de Anza along with 240 men, women, and children traveling from Nogales, Arizona, with the goal of establishing the first non-Native settlement at San Francisco Bay. The expedition reached the area of modern-day Yuma in November of 1775, traveling along the Gila River until reaching the area of Yuma crossing. The Quechan and Maricopa people entertained the expedition at night and helped them cross the Colorado River safely. Prison Hill, just north of the site of the quartermaster depot, overlooks three of the campsites of the expedition.

⁴⁴ Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area, *Master Plan* (2015), p. 8.

⁴⁵ <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationaltrailssystem/index.htm>

The Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area interprets the Anza trail along the river and in the state historic park.⁴⁶ Additionally, the Butterfield Overland Trail, which was studied for potential National Historic Trail designation, passes through Yuma. If designated by Congress, the Butterfield Overland National Historic Trail would commemorate the routes used by the Butterfield Overland Mail Company to operate the first transcontinental stage route as a congressionally authorized postal route during the years 1858–1861.

46 <https://www.nps.gov/juba/learn/historyculture/arizona-anza-trail-sites.htm>

The line ran twice each week in each direction between the eastern termini of St. Louis, Missouri, and Memphis, Tennessee, and the western terminus of San Francisco, California. The route went through Yuma because of the protection provided by the army fort located there. To ensure the safety of employees and passengers from possible Indian attacks (particularly from Comanche and Apache raiding parties) the railroad took advantage of military facilities in west Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and into California.⁴⁷

47 Butterfield Overland Trail National Historical Trail Special Resources Study (2018), pp. 8-29.

A view of the Colorado River and some of the restored wetlands in the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area (NPS photo, March 2017).



RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY CRITERIA AND ANALYSIS

This reconnaissance survey is a preliminary resource assessment of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot, part of the Yuma Crossing and Associated Sites National Historic Landmark District, in Yuma, Arizona. A reconnaissance survey undertakes only a preliminary analysis of resources based on congressionally established criteria for inclusion of new park units in the National Park System. Conclusions in this reconnaissance survey will summarize the potential or likelihood that the resources would meet the established criteria. The criteria are national significance, suitability, feasibility, and need for NPS management. (See Appendix A for the full text of the “Criteria for Inclusion” from *NPS Management Policies 2006*.)

NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

An area is considered nationally significant if it is an outstanding example of a particular type of resource, possesses exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the natural or cultural themes of our nation’s heritage, has superlative opportunities for public enjoyment or for scientific study, and retains a high degree of integrity as a true, accurate, and relatively unspoiled example of a resource.

In applying these criteria to cultural resources, a cultural resource is considered “nationally significant” if it qualifies for designation as a National Historic Landmark. National Historic Landmarks are cultural properties designated by the Secretary of the Interior as possessing national significance under at least one of six criteria, and are acknowledged as among the nation’s most significant historic places. Comparative analysis is used to determine relative significance. The resources must also retain a high degree of historic integrity, which is composed of key characteristics of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Preliminary Analysis

The Yuma Crossing and Associated Sites was designated a National Historic Landmark on November 13, 1966. The National Historic Landmark district consists of four elements: the river crossing, Fort Yuma, the Yuma Quartermaster Depot, and the Yuma Territorial Prison. As the NHL nomination states, “the prime significance of the Yuma Crossing lies in its role as a transportation and communication gateway, significant both as a crossing point between New Spain and Alta California during the Spanish colonial period and between the American Southwest and California during the period of the American westward movement.”⁴⁸ The crossing itself, however, is only a location, and the relationship of the fort, quartermaster depot, and prison to the crossing illustrate the crossing and the Yuma story.⁴⁹ It is the combination of the four elements of the National Historic Landmark district that completes the picture of the significance of Yuma Crossing.

Yuma Quartermaster Depot is part of the National Historic Landmark district.⁵⁰ The 1966 NHL nomination addresses the relationship of the four elements of the National Historic Landmark district specifically at several points:

*None of these sites is regarded individually as nationally significant and all have suffered various but not disqualifying impairment of integrity. Collectively the complex of sites possesses high historical significance.*⁵¹

48 Yuma Crossing and Associated Sites National Historic Landmark nomination (1966), Section 8, p.3.

49 Yuma Crossing and Associated Sites National Historic Landmark nomination (1966), Section 8, p.3.

50 The NHL nomination notes that the following six buildings at the depot contribute to the significance of the NHL: Officer’s Quarters, Officer’s Kitchen, Office, Reservoir, Storehouse, and Granary.

51 Yuma Crossing and Associated Sites National Historic Landmark nomination (1966), Section 8, p.1.



The Storehouse from the Quartermaster Depot, part of the National Historic Landmark district. Today the building houses exhibits about the history of the site and the activities that took place there (NPS photo, March 2017).

Individually the other Yuma sites do not possess sufficient importance to merit classification in any one of the themes in which they figure . . . The intimate association in history of the [four] sites composing the Yuma complex, together with their close physical proximity, suggest that, for purposes of evaluation, they should be treated as a unit . . . The Yuma Crossing itself is the focal point and the most significant site. But aside from the impairment of its integrity, it is merely a location. The relationship of the historic buildings to the Crossing, however, is sufficiently close to permit them to be recognized as illustrative of the Crossing and its role in the larger Yuma story.⁵²

The NHL nomination specifically states that no single element of the National Historic Landmark district can be considered significant in its own right, even the crossing site itself, but that the collection of elements at the Yuma Crossing together illustrate the importance of Yuma.

⁵² Yuma Crossing and Associated Sites National Historic Landmark nomination (1966) Section 8, p.3. The text says "five sites" but this is an error; there are only four sites described in the NHL nomination.

The NHL nomination for Yuma Crossing has not been formally updated since 1966. It is possible that a more comprehensive exploration of historic context that was not considered in 1966 upon designation of the National Historic Landmark district may support significance of individual components of the site. Such research would also need to evaluate integrity of each of the four elements of the National Historic Landmark district as well as the district as a whole.

The period of significance in the NHL nomination is not explicitly stated, but the documentation does not include the period following the departure of the U.S. Army at the Yuma Quartermaster Depot, other than briefly mentioning its use for a custom house starting in 1908 and as an immigration checkpoint until 1954. Notably, the 1966 NHL nomination did not consider the site's role as headquarters of the Bureau of Reclamation's Yuma Project nor the theme of changes to the Colorado River that may apply to all of the sites that make up the National Historic Landmark district. It is possible that an updated NHL nomination may establish that the historic context of the use of the depot by the Bureau of Reclamation in combination with the remaining resources of the district, specifically those of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot, contributes to the national significance of the National Historic Landmark district.

Conclusion

The Yuma Quartermaster Depot contributes to the national significance of the Yuma Crossing and Associated Sites National Historic Landmark District. The NHL nomination, however, states that the individual sites that comprise the National Historic Landmark district cannot be considered nationally significant on their own, but rather, the designation of the district considers Yuma Crossing and Associated Sites for their interrelated significance. Further research and documentation may establish expanded areas of national significance, such as the history of Colorado River control or the individual significance of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot. Completion of an updated NHL nomination could provide such research and documentation, but is outside the scope of this reconnaissance survey. At this time, based on current documentation, it is not likely that the Yuma Quartermaster Depot would be found to be independently nationally significant in a Special Resource Study.

SUITABILITY

To qualify as a potential addition to the National Park System, an area that is nationally significant must also meet the criterion for suitability. Though the analysis of national significance above shows that at this time the likelihood of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot being found in a Special Resource Study to be nationally significant is low, a preliminary analysis of suitability is included in this reconnaissance survey.

NPS *Management Policies* 2006, Section 1.3.2 states that:

An area is considered suitable for addition to the National Park System if it represents a natural or cultural resource type that is not already adequately represented in the National Park System, or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by other federal agencies; tribal, state, or local governments; or the private sector.

Adequacy of representation is determined on a case-by-case basis by comparing the potential addition to other comparably managed areas representing the same resource type, while considering differences or similarities in the character, quality, quantity, or combination of resource values. The comparative analysis also addresses rarity of the resources, interpretive and educational potential, and similar resources already protected in the National Park System or in other public or private ownership. The comparison results in a determination of whether the proposed new area would expand, enhance, or duplicate resource protection or visitor use opportunities found in other comparably managed areas.

A reconnaissance survey provides a preliminary evaluation of the study area's suitability for inclusion in the National Park System by a comparative analysis of similarly themed sites managed by the National Park Service and others. Considering the finding of "not likely to be found nationally significant," for this reconnaissance survey the preliminary analysis will focus on similar resources within the National Park System. Comparable sites have the following themes/ characteristics that relate to the contribution the Yuma Quartermaster Depot makes to the national significance of the Yuma Crossing and Associated Sites National Historic Landmark District: 1) quartermaster depots, 2) Colorado River crossings, and 3) western migration and military installations. Additionally, though not stated in the NHL nomination, this preliminary analysis will consider sites preserving resources and telling the story of the Colorado River and water in the West.



The Officer's Quarters (NPS photo, March 2017).

Quartermaster Depots

The Yuma Quartermaster Depot contributes to the significance of the Yuma Crossing and Associated Sites National Historic Landmark District because of its resources and history of use as a distribution point at the Yuma Crossing for supplies brought by river destined for military forts in the southwestern interior. Comparable sites that protect quartermaster depots and storehouses within the National Park System include:

- **Fort Union National Monument (Watrous, New Mexico).** Located in northeastern New Mexico, Fort Union National Monument was established in part to preserve the historic remains and setting of Fort Union and its inextricable link to the Santa Fe Trail and to interpret Fort Union's role in westward expansion in the Southwest. During its 40-year lifespan (1851–1891), Fort Union—with its garrison, depot, arsenal, and hospital—became one of the largest, most important forts that strengthened U.S. rule, presence, and influence in the American Southwest. Most prominent among Fort Union National Monument's resources are the stabilized ruins of the third fort, whose first building was the quartermaster storehouse built in 1862, followed closely by a set of quartermaster corrals.⁵³

⁵³ Oliva, Leo E. *Fort Union and the Frontier Army in the Southwest: A Historic Resource Study* (Santa Fe, NM: Southwest Cultural Resources Center, Division of History, National Park Service, 1993), pp.71-72.

- **Fort Scott National Historic Site (Fort Scott, Kansas).** Fort Scott National Historic Site is in southeastern Kansas near the Missouri border. The historic site preserves, commemorates, and interprets Fort Scott and its role in a sequence of pivotal events that transformed the nation—the Permanent Indian Frontier, the opening of the West, Bleeding Kansas, and the Civil War. Due to its strategic location, the town of Fort Scott became a major military center that provided the necessary supplies, materials, and manpower critical to the survival and success of Union forces in Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, and Indian Territory. The fort was first established in 1842, and Fort Scott—both the fort and the town that grew up around it—served as a supply depot and staging area, refugee center, and general hospital. The quartermaster's storehouse is one of the restored buildings at the site.
- **Fort Larned National Historic Site (Larned, Kansas).** Fort Larned National Historic Site is 6 miles west of Larned in Pawnee County, Kansas, and was established to commemorate the significant role Fort Larned played on the Santa Fe Trail in the opening of the West. The park preserves, protects, and interprets the original and reconstructed fort buildings, central parade ground, and the fort's surrounding cultural landscape/setting and natural resources. The time period preserved and interpreted, circa 1860 to 1884, includes the American Civil War and “Western Front Indian Wars” eras. The restored quartermaster's storehouse is furnished and interpreted for visitors.

In addition to the comparable sites above, other sites in the National Park System that have a strong connection to quartermaster and supply depot history include Fort Hancock, part of **Gateway National Recreation Area** (Sandy Hook, New Jersey), Fort Mason, part of **Golden Gate National Recreation Area** (San Francisco, California), City Point, part of **Petersburg National Battlefield** (City Point, Virginia), and **Fort Vancouver National Historic Site** (Vancouver, Washington).

Colorado River Crossings

The Yuma Quartermaster Depot is one of four sites that together illustrate the history and significance of the Yuma Crossing. The following crossing points of the Colorado River are protected and interpreted within the National Park System:

- **Dominguez Escalante Expedition, Dinosaur National Monument (Utah) and Crossing of Our Fathers, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (Utah).** A small stone marker in the entrance sign at Dinosaur National Monument signifies the first known European expedition through what is now the Uinta Basin. Dinosaur National Monument interprets the expedition, of which the details are known from a journal written enroute that is the best known document describing the landscapes and people of western Colorado, Utah, northern Arizona, and New Mexico from that time period. The expedition set out from Santa Fe, New Mexico, with the goal of establishing a northern route to the missions in Monterey, California. The expedition crossed into the current boundaries of the national monument on September 13, 1776, and described the area in great detail. They camped on the bank of the Green River and ultimately crossed the river within sight of the current Quarry Visitor Center where Escalante accurately described the Mancos shale bluffs that visitors see when they approach the Quarry entrance to the national monument.⁵⁴ Ultimately, the expedition encountered difficulty and decided to turn around, rather than continue to Monterey. Without a guide, they had to navigate mazes of canyons along the Colorado River in order to find a place to cross the river. After two weeks of searching, on November 7, 1776, they finally found a location to ford the river, but it was treacherous. The members of the expedition had to chisel steps into the canyon wall to descend to the river; these steps could be seen until the completion of the Glen Canyon dam submerged the site beneath Lake Powell. The crossing became known as the “Crossing of the Fathers” and is interpreted at Glen Canyon National Recreation Area.⁵⁵

- **Lees Ferry, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (Arizona).** In March of 1864, Mormon pioneer Jacob Hamblin and his men built a raft at the mouth of the Paria and made the first successful crossing at the point of the Colorado River that would become Lees Ferry, transporting all fifteen men, their supplies, and horses.⁵⁶ Different ferryboats and pioneers, miners, Indians, and tourists crossed at Lees Ferry from 1872 until 1928. Two stone buildings, a steam boiler, and the remains of a sunken paddlewheel steamboat are among the historic resources at the crossing point, which is today used as a launch for river trips.
- **Halls Crossing, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (Utah).** A scouting party, assembled by the Mormon Church and under the direction of Silas S. Smith, left Paragonah, Utah, in April 1879 to determine a route and search for a suitable location to establish a new colony on the east side of the Colorado River.⁵⁷ This party found a “Hole-in-the-Rock” which they thought would be a shortcut; however, it proved to be more challenging than they thought. By January 1880, the expedition made its way slowly down the precarious road. They then used a ferry, built by Charles Hall, to cross the river. Charles Hall, later to found Halls Crossing about 30 miles upstream, had to build a ferry to cross the Colorado River.

Westward Migration and Military Installations

Yuma Crossing was a point for westward migration as colonists and ultimately Anglos moved both north and west to explore and settle the West. Prior to the establishment of America, the Yuma Quartermaster Depot was at the intersection of westward migration and the military infrastructure deemed necessary to secure that migration and expansion of American influence. Many sites in the American Southwest and Midwest protect resources and interpret the history of both westward migration and military installations.

54 <https://www.nps.gov/dino/learn/historyculture/the-dominguez-and-escalante-expedition.htm>

55 https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/explorers/sitea28.htm

56 <https://www.nps.gov/glca/learn/historyculture/leesferryhistory.htm>

57 <https://www.nps.gov/glca/learn/historyculture/holeintherock.htm>

Within the National Park System, examples dating to approximately the same time period as the Yuma Quartermaster Depot include **Fort Larned National Historic Site** in Kansas (a fort established on the Santa Fe National Historic Trail, discussed above), **Fort Union National Monument** in New Mexico (on the Santa Fe National Historic Trail, discussed above), **Fort Laramie National Historic Site** in Wyoming (on the Mormon Pioneer, California, Oregon, and Pony Express National Historic Trails), **Fort Bowie National Historic Site** in Arizona (on the Butterfield Overland Stage and Mail Route), and **Fort Davis National Historic Site** in Texas (on the Trans-Pecos portion of the San Antonio–El Paso Road and on the Chihuahua Trail).

The Colorado River and Water in the West

The story of water in the arid west and southwest, and specifically the story of the Colorado River, is integral to the ecology, biology, ethnography, history, and archeology of a variety of National Park Service units along the river corridor. Interpretive themes for National Park Service units, key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park, are the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. At **Dinosaur National Monument**, one of the interpretive themes is “The Green and Yampa Rivers serve as living laboratories in the Colorado River system to demonstrate the difference between controlled and natural-flowing rivers and their effects on ecosystems and their inhabitants. These rivers illustrate the past, present, and future struggles over how to manage life-sustaining water in the arid West.”⁵⁸

58 National Park Service, *Dinosaur National Monument Foundation Document* (2015), p.11. Every unit of the national park system will have a foundational document to provide basic guidance for planning and management decisions. The core components of a foundation document include a brief description of the park as well as the park’s purpose, significance, fundamental resources and values, other important resources and values, and interpretive themes. The foundation document also includes special mandates and administrative commitments, an assessment of planning and data needs that identifies planning issues, planning products to be developed, and the associated studies and data required for park planning. This survey consulted interpretive themes in foundation documents from parks along the Colorado River to determine the extent to which this theme is already being explored by the National Park Service.

At **Canyonlands National Park**, an interpretive theme around rivers proclaims the “... Green and Colorado rivers are the lifeblood of the region, and provide a stage upon which the history of exploration and development of the American West unfold.”⁵⁹ At **Glen Canyon National Recreation Area**, the story of water permeates every aspect of the foundation of that park from the park’s purpose, significance, fundamental resources, through to the interpretive themes told to visitors.⁶⁰ At **Grand Canyon National Park**, the story of the Colorado River is the foundation for the creation of the park. Besides being a standalone fundamental resource for the park, the Colorado River is mentioned as a critical component of all but one of the resources fundamental to the park. The interpretive theme around the Colorado River states, “Water is Grand Canyon’s lifeblood—a force of erosion, sustainer of scarce riparian habitat in a desert environment, spiritual element for native peoples, provider of recreation, and central factor in the exploration, development, and politics of the American West.”⁶¹ Similarly, at **Lake Mead National Recreation Area**, the story of the Colorado River is in nearly every interpretive product the park delivers. There is significant interpretation about the history of the Colorado River as it flowed freely through the area. Additionally, much of the focus on interpretation today revolves around water management and the Hoover and Davis Dams that create Lakes Mead and Mohave. One interpretive theme for the park reads, “Water is life in the desert, creating diversity and prosperity that has long attracted people to this area. Over the long continuum of human activity at Lake Mead National Recreation Area, interaction with the river changed the people, changed the river, and changed the desert. This relationship continues today and into the future as new opportunities and challenges emerge.”⁶²

59 National Park Service, *Canyonlands National Park Foundation Document* (2013), p.10.

60 National Park Service, *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area Foundation Document* (2014).

61 National Park Service, *Grand Canyon National Park Foundation Document* (2017), p.9.

62 National Park Service, *Lake Mead National Recreation Area Foundation Document* (2015), p.11.



The water reservoir near what would have been the historic shoreline of the Colorado River (NPS photo, March 2017).

The Colorado River itself is a critical resource to the parks adjacent to it. It is also intrinsically tied to related natural and cultural resources of these parks. Currently, there are a number of National Park Service units preserving Colorado River resources and interpreting the stories of the past, present, and future of the river.

Preliminary Analysis

An area is considered suitable for addition to the National Park System if it represents a natural or cultural resource type that is not already adequately represented in the National Park System, or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by other federal agencies; tribal, state, or local governments; or the private sector. Adequacy of representation is determined on a case-by-case basis through the comparison of the proposed area to other similar resources.

In considering enjoyment in the context of national parks, *NPS Management Policies 2006* states that preferred forms of enjoyment are those that are uniquely suited to the superlative natural and cultural resources found in the parks and that 1) foster an understanding of and appreciation for park resources and values, or 2) promote enjoyment through a direct association with, interaction with, or relation to park resources.⁶³

⁶³ *NPS Management Policies 2006*, Section 1.5
"Appropriate Use of the Parks."

Therefore, this suitability analysis considers the facets of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot that are inherent in the resource and directly associated with the site. The Yuma Quartermaster Depot contributes to the national significance of the Yuma Crossing and Associated Sites National Historic Landmark District as a site that highlights the importance of the Colorado River crossing through its function as a quartermaster depot, representing the intersection of western migration and military installations.

Considering the resource types of quartermaster depots, Colorado River crossings, western migration and military installations, and the Colorado River and water in the West, this preliminary analysis finds numerous examples in those four categories that are protected and interpreted within the National Park System.

Fort Union was the location of facilities for the department (later district) quartermaster and commissary depots during the same period as Yuma Quartermaster Depot was in use.⁶⁴ Like the quartermaster depot at Yuma, that function declined and ceased after the arrival of the railroad—the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad in 1879. But unlike Yuma, the buildings did not find new government uses because of Fort Union's remote location. Forts Scott and Larned served as quartermaster depots and include restored and historically staged quartermaster facilities.

⁶⁴ Oliva, 106-117.

In addition to Forts Union, Scott, and Larned, the story of quartermaster depots and their role in history, military life, and military infrastructure is told at the U.S. Army Quartermaster Museum at Fort Lee, Virginia. Though it does not preserve a historic quartermaster or supply depot building, the U.S. Army Quartermaster Museum preserves thousands of artifacts relating to the Quartermaster Corps history and has assembled thousands of documents relating to quartermasters. The mission of the museum is to collect, preserve, exhibit, and interpret the history of the Quartermaster Corps from 1775 to the present.

Because many units of the National Park System are situated on the Colorado River, several parks preserve and interpret crossing points. None of the Colorado River crossings within the National Park System were as heavily used as Yuma Crossing, but each speaks to the history of westward migration and the challenges that the river presented migrants along its length.

As noted above, several sites in the American Southwest and Midwest dating to the period of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot protect resources and interpret the history of both westward migration and military installations, including several units of the National Park System.

As noted in the analysis of national significance, the importance of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot's later use as a headquarters for the Yuma Project and as a site representative of the history of Colorado River control has not been formally evaluated for its national significance, and therefore is not considered in this analysis of suitability, but the broader theme of the Colorado River and water in the West is widely interpreted by National Park Service units in its watershed.

Conclusion

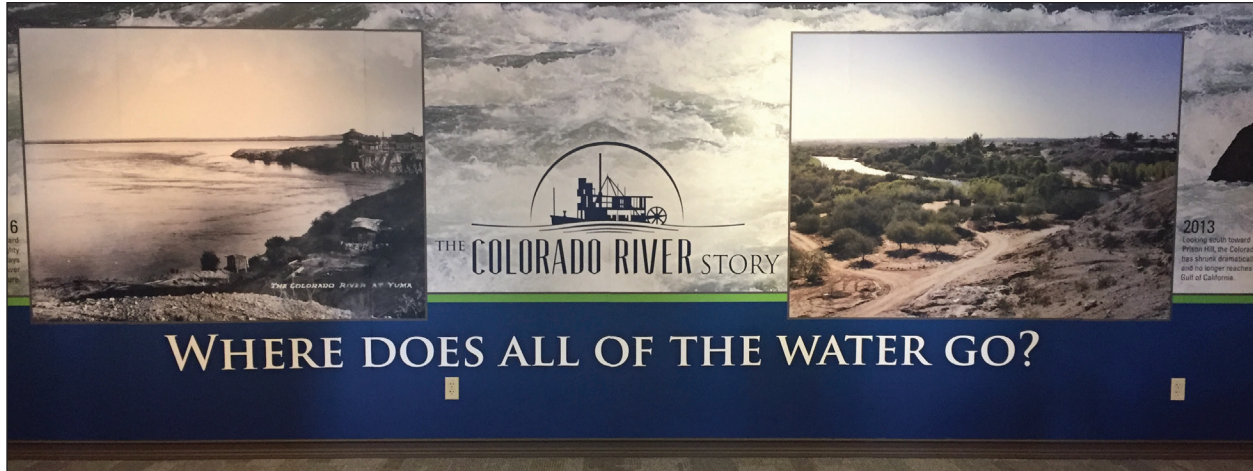
Based on an inventory of sites protecting similar resources within the National Park System and a preliminary analysis of suitability, the resources and themes of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot are both adequately and comparably represented. This reconnaissance survey concludes that it is unlikely that the Yuma Quartermaster Depot would be found to be suitable for inclusion in the National Park System by a comparative analysis of similarly themed sites managed by the National Park Service and others in a Special Resource Study.

FEASIBILITY

To be feasible as a new unit of the National Park System, an area found to be nationally significant and suitable must be of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure long-term protection of the resources and to accommodate public use. It must have potential for efficient administration at a reasonable cost. Important feasibility factors include landownership, acquisition and operational costs, staff and development requirements, access, existing degradation or threats to the resources, the socioeconomic impacts of designation, and public support. The evaluation also considers the ability of the NPS to undertake new management responsibilities in light of current and projected constraints on funding and personnel. (See Appendix A for the full text of the feasibility criteria.) Reconnaissance surveys do not develop specific proposals for management, undertake detailed analysis of acquisition/operational costs, nor do they include a public comment process, therefore, potential levels of public support cannot be assessed.

Conclusion

The preliminary national significance and suitability analysis above found that there is a low likelihood that the Yuma Quartermaster Depot would be found to meet those criteria in a Special Resource Study. Therefore, feasibility is not evaluated in this reconnaissance survey. Landownership, access, planned future use of the study area, and resource conditions are described above in Existing Conditions.



A wall at the Yuma Visitors Bureau, which provides photographs comparing the site of the Quartermaster Depot historically along the Colorado River to today, indicating the realignment of the river due to water management (NPS photo, March 2017).

DIRECT NPS MANAGEMENT

The final criterion for potential new park units is the need for direct NPS management. To be recommended as a unit of the National Park System, an area must require direct NPS management, and NPS management must be clearly superior to other possible management options. National Park Service *Management Policies* 2006 states:

There are many excellent examples of the successful management of important natural and cultural resources by other public agencies, private conservation organizations, and individuals. The National Park Service applauds these accomplishments and actively encourages the expansion of conservation activities by state, local, and private entities and by other federal agencies. Unless direct NPS management of a studied area is identified as the clearly superior alternative, the Service will recommend that one or more of these other entities assume a lead management role, and that the area not receive National Park System status.⁶⁵

The Yuma Quartermaster Depot is owned by Arizona State Parks with a historic covenant and approved program of preservation and utilization.

This requirement to maintain historic preservation on the land is monitored and maintained by the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service. After considerable site improvements funded by the City of Yuma and Arizona State Parks, the Yuma Quartermaster Depot opened as the Yuma Crossing State Historic Park in 1997. The City of Yuma provided operational assistance to Arizona State Parks from 1997 through 2009. During that time, the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area was established, with the main focus for the Yuma Crossing State Park (and later the Colorado River State Historic Park) to tell the stories of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot in the 19th century and Reclamation in the 20th century. In 2009, the local community took over management of the park to avoid closure.

The city continued to provide operating assistance and the National Heritage Area used its federally appropriated funding through the National Park Service and other funding sources to assist with addressing deferred maintenance on the state park site and more fully develop the interpretation of the Reclamation story. The Yuma Visitors Bureau now operates its Arizona Welcome Center out of the entrance building to the state park, increasing the number of visitors to the site.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ See Appendix A for the full text of NPS *Management Policies* 2006, Section 1.3 "Criteria for Inclusion."

⁶⁶ Deardorff Design Resources / inc., *Management Plan* (2002), pp.5–7.

The Yuma Quartermaster Depot benefits from technical and financial assistance from the National Park Service because of its National Historic Landmark designation and inclusion as part of a National Heritage Area. The Yuma Quartermaster Depot qualifies for Technical Preservation Services and assistance/information through the National Park Service. The depot also qualifies for limited federal grants through the Historic Preservation Fund, along with some limited tax incentives.⁶⁷

According to the enabling legislation for the national heritage area, “The Secretary [of the Interior] may, upon request of the management entity, provide technical and financial assistance to the management entity to develop and implement the management plan.”⁶⁸ In addition, the Yuma Quartermaster Depot is able to apply for and receive funding through private grants and/or from donors that it would not be eligible to receive as a unit of the National Park Service.

Part of transferring the property of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot from the federal government to the State of Arizona required that the property maintain a historic covenant and maintain operation under a program of protection; therefore, state ownership binds the state to conserve the Yuma Quartermaster Depot. As a state park, it is currently open for public enjoyment and the resources are protected from imminent threat. In addition, as part of the National Heritage Area, there is a detailed and comprehensive master plan that outlines future plans for the development and interpretation of the site.

Conclusion

Based upon this preliminary evaluation, there is no indication that the National Park Service could provide a clearly superior alternative to the current management of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot. It is unlikely that a Special Resource Study would find direct NPS management to be clearly superior to current management or other possible management options.

INTERPRETIVE APPROACH ANALYSIS

Description

Senator McCain’s letter requested an NPS evaluation of the interpretive approach for the Yuma Quartermaster Depot, stating “Yuma [Crossing National Heritage Area] has now developed a plan to re-imagine the site to tell the story of the past, present, and future of the Colorado River. I believe it is worth exploring this concept, and I request that the National Park Service undertake an assessment of the historic resources as well as the interpretive approach Yuma [Crossing National Heritage Area] has suggested.” While this is not typically included as part of a reconnaissance survey, a basic analysis of the interpretive approach through the lens of National Park Service interpreters is provided as a response to Senator McCain’s request.

The Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area’s interpretive approach for the site is outlined in the 2015 master plan, which is pending Arizona State Parks approval for implementation. The master plan is driven by a singular emphasis of making the state parks, both the prison and the depot, “attractions” by evaluating both in four ways: business planning around market appeal, conservation and preservation needs, defining the interpretive goals and updates to the exhibits, and upgrading buildings and infrastructure for operational efficiency and public safety.⁶⁹

The master plan acknowledges several times throughout the document that neither the Yuma Quartermaster Depot operational history, nor that of the 20th century Reclamation use are compelling enough to draw the necessary number of visitors for the property to be financially viable. In addition, the physical changes to the site and the resulting loss of historic context remove the depot from the Colorado River, making it even harder to tell the story of the depot’s past. As a result, the interpretive concept developed for the Yuma Quartermaster Depot in the master plan states:

⁶⁷ <https://www.nps.gov/nhl/learn/benefits.htm>

⁶⁸ Public Law 106-319, 114 Stat 1284, Sec 6a (October 19, 2000).

⁶⁹ Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area, *Master Plan* (2015), p.8.

The recommendation is to change the overarching theme to “the Colorado River: its past, present and future,” and propose a name change to “The Colorado River State Historic Park.” By so doing, the theme subsumes both the Quartermaster Depot and Reclamation stories, and can use these two eras to trace the evolution of the river. The park can also become a forum for an ongoing dialogue about the future of the Colorado River, a very critical and timely subject.

This evolution of the river can also be reflected in the preservation philosophy and interpretation of the historic resources. There will be no attempt to bring the historic resources to one era or one point in time. Instead, the approach throughout will be interpret the evolution of the Colorado River — and how the site responded to and affected those changes over time — not only through exhibits but with the buildings themselves.⁷⁰

This master plan is a change from the 2007 interpretive master plan developed by the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area and Arizona State Parks, which focused primarily on telling the story of the military and Bureau of Reclamation uses of the site.

Analysis

Interpretive planning is a process that identifies and describes significant visitor experiences in a park, forest, zoo, or other resource-based recreation area; and recommends ways to provide, encourage, sustain, facilitate, or otherwise assist those experiences. Specific to the National Park Service, *Management Policies 2006* states:

Appropriate visitor enjoyment is often associated with the inspirational qualities of the parks. As a general matter, preferred forms of enjoyment are those that are uniquely suited to the superlative natural and cultural resources found in the parks and that (1) foster an understanding of and appreciation for park resources and values, or (2) promote enjoyment through a direct association with, interaction with, or relation to park resources.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area, *Master Plan* (2015), p.9.

⁷¹ NPS *Management Policies 2006*, Section 1.5 “Appropriate Use of the Parks.”

The NPS policy clearly delineates that the goal of interpretation is to provide an environment in which visitors are able to connect with and enjoy the resources and values of a park. A critical point to understand in this analysis is the differing approaches to interpretation taken by the National Park Service and a National Heritage Area. Concerning the resources of the site, the master plan states, “With these facilities being the key elements of the National Historic Landmark, the highest priority of the master plan should be the preservation and interpretation of the historic assets contained within the parks.”⁷² Additionally, throughout the document, the master plan emphasizes that the entire interpretive framework is built around the idea of creating attractions through interpretation. This suggests that the resources themselves are not the attractions, but rather will be adapted through interpretive concepts and exhibits to become attractions, which then tell the story of the site. The National Park Service focuses on enabling visitors to create a personal connection to the resources and values through interpretive moments. National Heritage Areas, working with the National Park Service, have been directed by Congress to create a sustainable revenue source as part of organizational and financial sustainability planning.

Overall, given the location of Yuma and the site on the Colorado River, taking a holistic approach to interpreting the past, present, and future of the Colorado River is a valuable way of connecting the various stories that can be told from the Yuma Quartermaster Depot. The master plan consistently acknowledges and builds upon the fact that the river is the central story tying the people and activities together through the long history of the region. The master plan is a unique mix of planning providing both a high-level overview for the site, while also attempting to be specific in developing exhibits; but overall, the master plan lacks specificity in detailing explicit interpretive goals for the site.

Because the site is within a National Historic Landmark district, there are concerns about the cultural landscape treatments being prescribed, particularly in relation to the appropriateness of alterations and intrusions to a site with NHL status and the cumulative effects on the site’s overall integrity.

⁷² Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area, *Master Plan* (2015), p.8.

Beyond just the physical alterations and modifications to the site, changes such as these are critical when evaluating the interpretive experience of visitors and the cultural landscapes that enable them to understand and connect to the site. The layout of the site with regards to existing resources, as highlighted in the master plan, provides a valuable opportunity for comprehensive interpretation without overreaching alterations. Significant changes to the site would impact opportunities for creating a valuable visitor experience around the resources of the actual Yuma Quartermaster Depot. At the same time, some elements of the plan, like a steamboat in the former river course, would be unobtrusive and provide context for the dramatic physical changes to the site.

In terms of the specific content of the exhibits, the master plan outlines ideas that have great potential to provide a valuable visitor experience. The stories to be told by the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area are critical to understanding the role of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot specifically, and Yuma generally, in the region. Examining a wide swath of information ranging from geology and ecology to history and socioeconomics, if done so in a strategic and thoughtful way, will be incredibly meaningful for visitors. The attempts at placing the actual stories of human activity into the buildings where those activities originally occurred will create realism for visitors to understand the resources in their actual context. Using the physical features of the site to tell the stories may provide visitors with intellectual and emotional ties to those resources. Additionally, linking visitors' personal experiences to the stories being told by the resources has the power to create life-long connections between visitors and the site. For instance, in conveying the role of the site to transportation through the region, a visitor passing through might connect to that interpretive concept and that connection gives the site value. There is also value in the messaging encouraging visitors to become stewards of resources in their own communities. Exploring the implementation of conservation measures, taking personal responsibility, and thinking about the future of water, not just along the Colorado River, but in visitors' own communities, provides serious and impactful messaging.

While some of the specific concepts for exhibits and messaging have great potential, they are inconsistent with the perspective used by the National Park Service to develop interpretive messaging. Because of the pressure to create attractions, some of the messaging will do so at the cost of interpreting the actual resources of the site. Several times throughout the exhibits, the master plan suggests methods of conveying messages that seem to sensationalize the history of the region and will detract from the actual resources of the site, rather than contribute to their meaning. This is especially true with regards to the emphasis put on John Wesley Powell, and to some extent, Kit Carson. These two historical figures have indirect connections to the site through the Colorado River, but no specific connections to the resources of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot. The National Park Service philosophy is that interpretation should be based on the resources and values that are directly related to the site. Creating heroes out of historic figures indirectly related to the site diminishes the stories of those who actually impacted the area, marginalizes the valuable stories of those who were really there at the site, and puts great value and importance on indirect history. The master plan suggests minimal interpretation of the history and ethnography of the Quechan Tribe. While acknowledging that the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area plans to consult with the tribe, the seemingly diminutive space allotted to explore this theme marginalizes the significance of the river to the Quechan Tribe and the presence of the native people of the area. Evaluating the evolution of the river specific to the impacts to indigenous lifeways has the ability to touch on how impacted the habitats and ecosystems were, and continue to be. This message is critical to understand the full ramifications of westward expansion on indigenous cultures and should be forefront to the interpretation.

In addition to expanding upon the indigenous story, there are additional themes that could be bolstered in the current interpretive plan. From an environmental standpoint, the exhibits overlook the past, present, and future of the ecosystems of the region. There appears to be little mention of wildlife. There should be a stronger case made using a comparison of the 400,000 acres of native forest to the 400 acres of wetland restoration.

There is also a missed opportunity in introducing visitors to the high-value importance of the archeological record of the site and region. In general, the exhibits appear to have insufficient activities for all age groups, specifically educational elements for younger visitors. The master plan does not suggest a sufficient level of interactive exhibits. The images and descriptions, both of the Storehouse and the Corral House suggest that planners anticipate a significant amount of information going into those spaces, which might make them cluttered, detracting from the interpretive value. It is important to spread out the messaging throughout the site, rather than trying to concentrate heavy concepts into limited space.⁷³

Overall, the broad concepts for telling the stories of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot and Yuma have great potential to provide visitors with a meaningful connection to the resources, if done so strategically and thoughtfully. The interpretive approach of the National Park Service is unique and differs greatly from that of a national heritage area, and therefore this cursory analysis is just that, and should not be seen as a commentary on the opportunities the national heritage area should embrace given its mission and the flexibility it is afforded to attract both funding and visitors to sustain operations.

⁷³ Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area, Master Plan (2015), pp. 51, 54-58.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Reconnaissance surveys are preliminary resource assessments, and in this particular case, in response to the late Senator McCain's request, includes an analysis of the planned interpretive approach of the current management entities. The conclusions of reconnaissance surveys are not considered final or definitive, assessing only the likelihood that the resources analyzed would meet the established Special Resource Study criteria for inclusion in the National Park System. Given the determination in the existing NHL nomination, this survey finds that it is unlikely that the Yuma Quartermaster Depot would meet the criteria for national significance in a Special Resource Study independent of the other sites that make up the Yuma Crossing and Associated Sites National Historic Landmark District. The preliminary analysis of suitability also finds that resources with similar characteristics to those resources of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot that contribute to the national significance of the National Historic Landmark district are already preserved and interpreted within the National Park System. Feasibility was not evaluated as part of this survey because of the preliminary findings for national significance and suitability. Finally, there are no indications that National Park Service management would be a clearly superior alternative to the current management of the site. Therefore, this reconnaissance survey does not recommend a Special Resource Study be authorized to fully analyze the Yuma Quartermaster Depot as a potential unit of the National Park System.

Further research and subsequent updates to NHL documentation may establish the national significance of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot independent of the other sites that make up the Yuma Crossing and Associated Sites National Historic Landmark District, or may establish a facet of importance not documented in the 1966 NHL nomination. A research undertaking and NHL nomination update of this kind is outside the scope of a reconnaissance survey, but would be a useful exercise for future management and interpretation of the site from a variety of perspectives, irrespective of the findings of this survey.

The Yuma Quartermaster Depot, however, is an important site locally and in the region to tell the story of westward expansion and the role of the Colorado River as a transportation corridor and lifeline in the West. Due in no small part to the successful partnership of the local community with the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area and the City of Yuma as managers of the site, visitors to the site benefit greatly from the continuing preservation and interpretation of the site. The National Park Service commends the current management entities and collaborators on the success of the site and encourages ongoing preservation and interpretation as a critical component of the history of Yuma and the region.

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APPENDIX A: CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION

National Park Service Management Policies 2006, Section 1.3 “Criteria for Inclusion”

Congress declared in the National Park System General Authorities Act of 1970 that areas comprising the national park system are cumulative expressions of a single national heritage. Potential additions to the national park system should therefore contribute in their own special way to a system that fully represents the broad spectrum of natural and cultural resources that characterize our nation. The National Park Service is responsible for conducting professional studies of potential additions to the national park system when specifically authorized by an act of Congress, and for making recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior, the President, and Congress. Several laws outline criteria for units of the national park system and for additions to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System and the National Trails System.

To receive a favorable recommendation from the Service, a proposed addition to the national park system must (1) possess nationally significant natural or cultural resources, (2) be a suitable addition to the system, (3) be a feasible addition to the system, and (4) require direct NPS management instead of protection by other public agencies or the private sector. These criteria are designed to ensure that the national park system includes only the most outstanding examples of the nation’s natural and cultural resources. These criteria also recognize that there are other management alternatives for preserving the nation’s outstanding resources.

1.3.1 National Significance

NPS professionals, in consultation with subject-matter experts, scholars, and scientists, will determine whether a resource is nationally significant. An area will be considered nationally significant if it meets all of the following criteria:

- It is an outstanding example of a particular type of resource.
- It possesses exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the natural or cultural themes of our nation’s heritage.
- It offers superlative opportunities for public enjoyment or for scientific study.
- It retains a high degree of integrity as a true, accurate, and relatively unspoiled example of a resource.

National significance for cultural resources will be evaluated by applying the National Historic Landmarks criteria contained in 36 CFR Part 65 (*Code of Federal Regulations*).

1.3.2 Suitability

An area is considered suitable for addition to the national park system if it represents a natural or cultural resource type that is not already adequately represented in the national park system, or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by other federal agencies; tribal, state, or local governments; or the private sector.

Adequacy of representation is determined on a case-by-case basis by comparing the potential addition to other comparably managed areas representing the same resource type, while considering differences or similarities in the character, quality, quantity, or combination of resource values. The comparative analysis also addresses rarity of the resources, interpretive and educational potential, and similar resources already protected in the national park system or in other public or private ownership. The comparison results in a determination of whether the proposed new area would expand, enhance, or duplicate resource protection or visitor use opportunities found in other comparably managed areas.

1.3.3 Feasibility

To be feasible as a new unit of the national park system, an area must be (1) of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure sustainable resource protection and visitor enjoyment (taking into account current and potential impacts from sources beyond proposed park boundaries), and (2) capable of efficient administration by the Service at a reasonable cost.

In evaluating feasibility, the Service considers a variety of factors for a study area, such as the following:

- size
- boundary configurations
- current and potential uses of the study area and surrounding lands
- landownership patterns
- public enjoyment potential
- costs associated with acquisition, development, restoration, and operation
- access
- current and potential threats to the resources
- existing degradation of resources
- staffing requirements
- local planning and zoning
- the level of local and general public support (including landowners)
- the economic/socioeconomic impacts of designation as a unit of the national park system

The feasibility evaluation also considers the ability of the National Park Service to undertake new management responsibilities in light of current and projected availability of funding and personnel.

An overall evaluation of feasibility will be made after taking into account all of the above factors. However, evaluations may sometimes identify concerns or conditions, rather than simply reach a yes or no conclusion. For example, some new areas may be feasible additions to the national park system only if landowners are willing to sell, or the boundary encompasses specific areas necessary for visitor access, or state or local governments will provide appropriate assurances that adjacent land uses will remain compatible with the study area's resources and values.

1.3.4 Direct NPS Management

There are many excellent examples of the successful management of important natural and cultural resources by other public agencies, private conservation organizations, and individuals. The National Park Service applauds these accomplishments and actively encourages the expansion of conservation activities by state, local, and private entities and by other federal agencies. Unless direct NPS management of a studied area is identified as the clearly superior alternative, the Service will recommend that one or more of these other entities assume a lead management role, and that the area not receive national park system status.

Studies will evaluate an appropriate range of management alternatives and will identify which alternative or combination of alternatives would, in the professional judgment of the Director, be most effective and efficient in protecting significant resources and providing opportunities for appropriate public enjoyment. Alternatives for NPS management will not be developed for study areas that fail to meet any one of the four criteria for inclusion listed in section 1.3.

In cases where a study area's resources meet criteria for national significance but do not meet other criteria for inclusion in the national park system, the Service may instead recommend an alternative status, such as "affiliated area." To be eligible for affiliated area status, the area's resources must (1) meet the same standards for significance and suitability that apply to units of the national park system; (2) require some special recognition or technical assistance beyond what is available through existing NPS programs; (3) be managed in accordance with the policies and standards that apply to units of the national park system; and (4) be assured of sustained resource protection, as documented in a formal agreement between the Service and the nonfederal management entity. Designation as a "heritage area" is another option that may be recommended. Heritage areas have a nationally important, distinctive assemblage of resources that is best managed for conservation, recreation, education, and continued use through partnerships among public and private entities at the local or regional level. Either of these two alternatives (and others as well) would recognize an area's importance to the nation without requiring or implying management by the National Park Service.

APPENDIX B: NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CRITERIA

36 CFR 65.4 National Historic Landmark criteria

The criteria applied to evaluate properties for possible designation as National Historic Landmarks or possible determination of eligibility for National Historic Landmark designation are listed below. These criteria shall be used by NPS in the preparation, review and evaluation of National Historic Landmark studies. They shall be used by the Advisory Board in reviewing National Historic Landmark studies and preparing recommendations to the Secretary. Properties shall be designated National Historic Landmarks only if they are nationally significant. Although assessments of national significance should reflect both public perceptions and professional judgments, the evaluations of properties being considered for landmark designation are undertaken by professionals, including historians, architectural historians, archeologists and anthropologists familiar with the broad range of the nation's resources and historical themes. The criteria applied by these specialists to potential landmarks do not define significance nor set a rigid standard for quality. Rather, the criteria establish the qualitative framework in which a comparative professional analysis of national significance can occur. The final decision on whether a property possesses national significance is made by the Secretary on the basis of documentation including the comments and recommendations of the public who participate in the designation process.

- a.) Specific Criteria of National Significance: The quality of national significance is ascribed to districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States in history, architecture, archeology, engineering and culture and that possess a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and:
- 1.) That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to, and are identified with, or that outstandingly represent, the broad national patterns of United States history and from which an understanding and appreciation of those patterns may be gained; or
 - 2.) That are associated importantly with the lives of persons nationally significant in the history of the United States; or
 - 3.) That represent some great idea or ideal of the American people; or
 - 4.) That embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen exceptionally valuable for a study of a period, style or method of construction, or that represent a significant, distinctive and exceptional entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
 - 5.) That are composed of integral parts of the environment not sufficiently significant by reason of historical association or artistic merit to warrant individual recognition but collectively compose an entity of exceptional historical or artistic significance, or outstandingly commemorate or illustrate a way of life or culture; or
 - 6.) That have yielded or may be likely to yield information of major scientific importance by revealing new cultures, or by shedding light upon periods of occupation over large areas of the United States. Such sites are those which have yielded, or which may reasonably be expected to yield, data affecting theories, concepts and ideas to a major degree.
- b.) Ordinarily, cemeteries, birthplaces, graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years are not eligible for designation. Such properties, however, will qualify if they fall within the following categories:

- 1.) A religious property deriving its primary national significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or
- 2.) A building or structure removed from its original location but which is nationally significant primarily for its architectural merit, or for association with persons or events of transcendent importance in the nation's history and the association consequential; or
- 3.) A site of a building or structure no longer standing but the person or event associated with it is of transcendent importance in the nation's history and the association consequential; or
- 4.) A birthplace, grave or burial if it is of a historical figure of transcendent national significance and no other appropriate site, building or structure directly associated with the productive life of that person exists; or
- 5.) A cemetery that derives its primary national significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, or from an exceptionally distinctive design or from an exceptionally significant event; or
- 6.) A reconstructed building or ensemble of buildings of extraordinary national significance when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other buildings or structures with the same association have survived; or
- 7.) A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own national historical significance; or
- 8.) A property achieving national significance within the past 50 years if it is of extraordinary national importance.

APPENDIX C: REQUEST LETTER FROM SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN

JOHN MCCAIN
ARIZONA

CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

United States Senate

March 24, 2016

The Honorable Jon Jarvis
Director
National Park Service
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

225 RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0303
(202) 224-2235

2201 EAST CAMELBACK ROAD
SUITE 115
PHOENIX, AZ 85016
(602) 952-2410

122 NORTH CORTEZ STREET
SUITE 108
PRESCOTT, AZ 86301
(928) 445-0833

407 WEST CONGRESS STREET
SUITE 103
TUCSON, AZ 85701
(520) 670-6334

TELEPHONE FOR HEARING IMPAIRED
(602) 952-0170

Dear Director Jarvis:

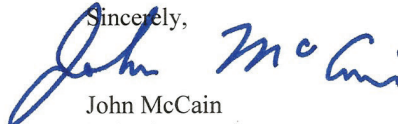
I am writing to request that you conduct a Reconnaissance Survey of the Yuma Quartermaster Depot located in Yuma, Arizona. This site played a pivotal role in the development of the West and in its relationship with the Colorado River.

The site contains significant historic resources, which were and are central to the designation in 1966 of the Yuma Crossing National Historic Landmark and Associated Sites. In the 19th Century, it served the US military, where steamboat shipments of supplies were off-loaded here for forts throughout the Southwest. In the 20th Century, the Bureau of Reclamation used it as its headquarters for the building of dams and canals that have so shaped the Southwest.

The Yuma Quartermaster Depot is on federal land that was granted to the State of Arizona for use as a State Park in 1997. In 2009, Arizona State Parks announced it would close the park due to budget cuts, but the City of Yuma quickly stepped in to lease the Depot and turned over operational responsibility to the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Board, which is working to improve the visitor experience at the site.

Yuma has now developed a plan to re-imagine the site to tell the story of the past, present and future of the Colorado River. I believe it is worth exploring this concept, and I request that the National Park Service undertake an assessment of the historic resources as well as the interpretive approach Yuma has suggested.

Sincerely,



John McCain
United States Senate



As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historic places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

WASO xxx/xxxxxx (pending document number)
April 2019



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