

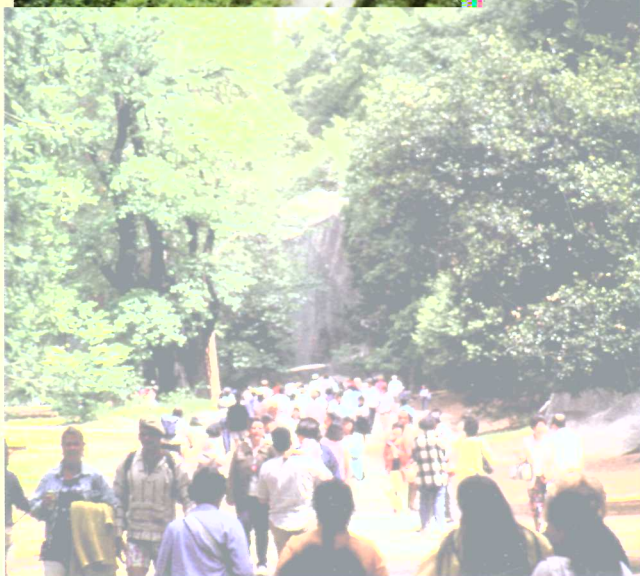
THE GEORGE WRIGHT

FORUM

Volume 15

❖ 1998 ❖

Number 1



*Published by the Association, Preservation, and Management
of Historic and Natural Sites and Resources
(Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter)*

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- P. O. Box 65, Hancock, Michigan 49930-0065 USA
☎ 906-487-9722; fax 906-487-9722
gws@mail.portup.com ■ <http://www.portup.com/~gws/>
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The George Wright Society is a member of
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ISSN 0732-4715

Editorial guidelines may be found on the inside back cover.
Text paper is made of 50% recycled fibers.
Printing is by the Book Concern Printers, Hancock, Michigan

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On the Cover: Crowds of people at Yosemite Falls.

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NPS Photo by B. Grogan, 1988.

Society News, Notes & Mail

Nominations Open for Two GWS Board Seats 1999-2001

The 1998 board election, which will take place this October, will be for the seats of two retiring board members, Russ Dickenson and Jon Jarvis. At the end of this year Russ and Jon will have reached the conclusion of their second three-year terms, and so are ineligible to run again. We are accepting nominations from those who wish to seek these open seats. The term of office runs from 1 January 1999 through 31 December 2001. Nominations are open through July 1, 1998. To be eligible, the nominator and nominee must both be GWS members in good standing. The nominee must be willing to travel to board meetings, which usually occur once a year; help prepare for and carry out the biennial conferences; and serve on board committees and do other work associated with the Society. Travel costs and per diem for the board meetings are paid by the Society; otherwise there is no remuneration. The procedure is: members make nominations for the ballot to the board's nominating committee, which makes a selection from these nominations to determine the final ballot. (It is also possible for members to place candidates directly on the ballot through petition; for details, contact the GWS office.) To propose someone for candidacy (and it's perfectly acceptable to nominate one's self), send his or her name, mailing and e-mail addresses, and telephone and fax numbers to: Nominating Committee, The George Wright Society, P.O. Box

65, U.S. 4000, USA. All nominees will be contacted by the nominating committee to get background information before the ballot is determined. Again, the deadline for nominations is July 1, 1998.

Bernard Charles Lief, 1942-1997

Canada's foremost ecosystem management experts, Dr. Bernie Lief, Victoria, British Columbia, on October 25, 1997. For the better part of a year he put up a courageous fight against Multiple Myeloma, a cancer with no cure. Even during this period he maintained an active life style, both at Parks Canada and in his leisure activities, taking every opportunity to enjoy the outdoors that he so loved.

is particularly well remembered for his contribution in obtaining reserve status for Waterton Lakes National Park in the early 1980s as superintendent. He was a strong believer in working with other agencies to achieve broader conservation values. He was honoured by both the United States and Canadian Man and the Biosphere committees along with the Superintendent of Glacier National Park (USA) for advancing the biosphere

One of the best people I ever knew died in Victoria a year before he put up a courageous fight against Multiple Myeloma, a cancer with no cure. Even during this period he maintained an active life style, both at Parks Canada and in his leisure activities, taking every opportunity to enjoy the outdoors that he so loved.

Bernie Lief was a superb manager of the biosphere reserve while he was superintendent. He was a strong believer in working with other agencies to achieve broader conservation values. He was honoured by both the United States and Canadian Man and the Biosphere committees along with the Superintendent of Glacier National Park (USA) for advancing the biosphere

reserve program in North America. The ideas embodied in the biosphere reserve concept were expanded to consider a broader ecosystem concept of sustainable and protected areas land use in the "Crown of the Continent" concept. This concept has evolved even further, being superseded by the "Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative." There is little doubt that discussions leading to the biosphere reserve designation set the foundation for the development of the broader continental ecosystem approach—a significant evolution in protected areas management.

Bernie was born May 31, 1942, in Victoria, B.C., and moved to Ontario where he completed his secondary and university education. He received his undergraduate degree in biology from Carleton University in Ottawa. He then moved to London to undertake his MSc in zoology at the University of Western Ontario in 1967 and, in 1971, a PhD in ecology. He was particularly interested in the behavior, composition, and reproductive efficiency of blue and Canada geese and their dependency on the vegetation of the feeding grounds. As a consequence of this interest he spent four months each year, during his university studies, under canvas, where he came to love the North. He was located in the tundra, at the McConnell River, one of the largest goose colonies (400,000 birds) in the Arctic.

Upon completion of his PhD he joined Parks Canada. Over the following 26 years he pursued his passion and love for the national parks. He first worked in Ottawa and then spent over three years in the Ontario Regional Office in Cornwall, 12 years as a park superintendent at Pukaskwa (Ontario), Wood Buffalo (Northwest Territories), and Waterton Lakes. Thereafter he spent his time working out of the Calgary Regional Office, first as chief of visitor activities, then as chief of park science, and, most recently, as the regional chief of ecosystem management. He was a key catalyst in the development of "Research Links," a science newsletter for the western Canadian national parks. During 1997 he served as the co-chair of the Third International Conference on Science and the Management of Protected Areas (SAMPAs III), held in Calgary. Here he was honoured for his significant contributions, both in the conference organization and to the advancement of ecosystem science and management. The Science and Management of Protected Areas Association, Waterton Lakes National Park, Glacier National Park (USA), and a group of his peers all made presentations in tribute. Upon his return to British Columbia last summer, he worked on discussions relating to the possible setting up of a biosphere reserve at Clayquot Sound on Vancouver Island.

During his time with Parks Canada he nurtured many friendships and became a mentor for many, both domestically and overseas. He was an adjunct professor at the University of Calgary where he not only provided guest lectures but hours of counsel and guidance to graduate students who had a particular interest (or a thesis to complete) on protected areas. He also had some consid-

erable success in asserting and convincing other university peers of the importance of applied science in the field of protected areas studies. His knowledge, expertise, and ability to work well with others was also recognized by the World Commission on Protected Areas, where he served as a consultant in the ecological assessment of protected areas in Pakistan, Russia, and, more recently, Sweden. He was an advocate for world heritage designation for two of the Swedish national parks.

At all times Bernie performed as a true professional with his strong grounding in science while unequivocally committed to the ideals, values, and principles of national parks. He was admired and respected for his foresight and pragmatic approach to dealing with major conservation issues by his both peers and those he mentored. His energy, enthusiasm, commitment, and dedication to the communicating and understanding of the importance of science in management is a legacy he leaves with us all. To further this legacy and in honour of Bernie's contribution to the advancement of ecosystem management, and as a result of his close association with the university community, his family and colleagues have established an award in his name. This award has been established through the assistance of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. Donations to this award would be most welcomed to enable us to realize this goal. Contributions should be sent to: The Bernie Lief Fund, c/o Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, 401 Richmond Street West, Suite 380, Toronto, Ontario M5V 3A8, Canada.

— Neil Munro

46 New Sites Added to World Heritage List

At its 21st session, held December 1997 in Naples, the World Heritage Committee inscribed 46 sites to the World Heritage List: 7 natural, 38 cultural, and 1 mixed. This brings the total number of sites on the World Heritage List to 552 (418 cultural, 114 natural and 20 mixed) in 112 countries. Four States Parties have sites on the World Heritage List for the first time: Dominica, Estonia, Kenya, and Latvia. Some of the new sites are the Sunderbans mangrove forest in Bangladesh; the Classical Gardens of Suzhou, China; Cocos Island National Park, Costa Rica; Morne Trosi Pitons National Park, Dominica; the archaeological areas of Pompei, Italy; Mount Kenya National Park, Kenya; the historic city center of Riga, Latvia; and the gardens at Lumbini, Nepal, the birthplace of the lord Buddha. Brief descriptions of all the new sites are on the Web at <http://www.unesco.org/whc/97briefs.htm>.

25th Annual Natural Areas Conference Scheduled "Planning for the Seventh Generation"

The silver anniversary conference of the Natural Areas Association will be held October 6-10, 1998, at the Mission Point Resort on Mackinac Island,

Michigan—in view of the Mackinac Bridge connecting Michigan’s Upper and Lower Peninsulas and located between Lakes Michigan and Huron. Conferees will come together on what was historically the country’s second national park and first state park to consider the actions we may, and perhaps must, take now to be *Planning for the Seventh Generation*. This theme reflects the participation of Native Peoples representing several Great Lakes and other tribes. Primary topics will include a discussion on the past, present, and future of natural areas and the role of natural areas in conservation planning and sustainable development. The conference will showcase conservation efforts of highly successful land trusts, including the Little Traverse Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy. Field trips to nearby natural areas will feature the coasts of Lake Superior, Lake Huron, and Lake Michigan, with Great Lakes marshes, interdunal wetlands, freshwater sand dunes, and limestone bedrock communities, as well as providing an opportunity to visit inland natural communities. For more information: Great Lakes Natural Areas Conference, P.O. Box 30180, Lansing, MI 48909-7680; telephone 1-517-241-2974.

http://wildlife.dnr.state.mi.us/HomePages/Meetings/Natural_Areas_1998.



Box 65: Commentary from the GWS Office and Our Members**“To Provide for the Enjoyment”:
Recreation Management in the National Parks****Introduction**

Perhaps no congressional mandate has created such an apparent dilemma as the Organic Act of the U.S. National Park Service (NPS). The operative and familiar passage mandates that national parks be managed “to conserve the scenery and the natural historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.” Clearly the national parks are to be preserved, but just as clearly, they are to be made available for public use and enjoyment. The question of how much and what type of public use is the heart of the NPS dilemma.

In the early years of the Park Service, this dual, but seemingly conflicting, mission was less troubling. Most of the national parks were virtually inaccessible. The work of Stephen Mather, Horace Albright, and others to open the national parks to public use is legend. Roads, railroads, hotels, campgrounds, and other facilities were constructed to attract the public to the fledgling national parks. A clientele for the national parks was needed. In the “middle” or post-World War II years, overwhelming public demand for outdoor recreation dictated a renewed emphasis on facility development. Additional roads, lodges, campgrounds, visitor centers, and other facilities were constructed to meet exponentially growing public use. The Mission 66 Program is emblematic of this period. In recent years, the Park Service has become more reticent in providing

recreation opportunities. Enhanced understanding of park ecology, along with growing public environmental appreciation, has demonstrated many of the potentially negative implications of large-scale or otherwise inappropriate public use of the national parks. As a consequence, facilities for public use are generally not expanding and limitations on public use have been enacted or are being considered in many parks. But the demand for public use of the national parks continues to grow. The current situation has only intensified the inherent dilemma of the NPS.

The purpose of this essay is to offer some observations on how the NPS might best fulfill its mission “to provide for the enjoyment” of the national parks. The essay is organized from the general to the specific. It begins with a brief examination of some basic concepts of outdoor

recreation drawn from the scientific literature and concludes with recommendations on how these concepts might be applied specifically to the national parks through a series of goals and policies.

Concepts of Recreational Management

The study of outdoor recreation is a relatively young field of academic endeavor. Nevertheless, an expanding body of literature, both conceptual and empirical, has developed. A number of basic concepts of recreation management emanate from this literature.

These concepts provide a theoretical foundation upon which to build a recreation management policy and program for the national parks.

Carrying capacity. The question of how much and what type of public use is appropriate in a park is often framed in terms of carrying capacity. Indeed, much has been written about carrying capacity of the national parks. The concept of carrying capacity has a rich history in the natural resource professions. In particular, it has proven a useful concept in wildlife and range management, where it refers to the number of animals that can be maintained in a given habitat. Carrying capacity has obvious parallels and intuitive appeal in the field of recreation management.

In fact, it was first suggested in the mid-1930s as a recreation management concept in the context of the national parks. However, the first rigorous applications of carrying capacity to park and recreation management did not occur until the 1960s.

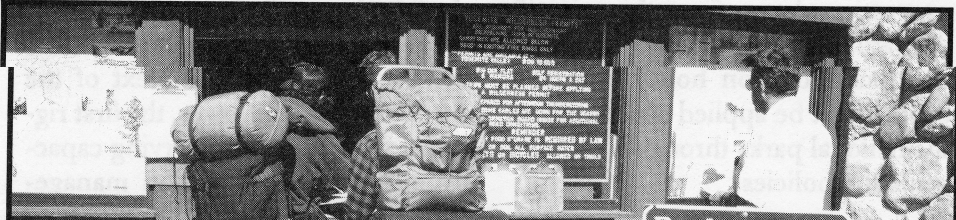
These initial, scientific applications of carrying capacity to outdoor recreation suggested the concept was more complex in this new management context. At first, as might be expected,

the focus was placed on the relationship between outdoor recreation activity and environmental conditions. The hypothesis was that

**Recreation carrying
capacity can be
determined only
in light of
well-formulated
management objectives.**

increasing outdoor recreation activity causes greater environmental impact, as measured by soil compaction, destruction of vegetation, disturbance of wildlife, and other variables. It soon became apparent, however, that there was another dimension of carrying capacity dealing with social aspects of the recreation experience. Again, the hypothesis was that increasing outdoor recreation activity causes greater social impacts as measured by crowding, conflicting uses, dissatisfaction, and other variables. Thus, as applied to park and recreation management, carrying capacity has two components: environmental and social.

Considerable empirical work has gone into testing variations of the above hypotheses. While both hy-



tives.

Recreation management objectives. From the above discussion, it is clear that management objectives are needed to guide provision of appropriate recreation opportunities. But how are such recreation management objectives formulated? The answer is that they are an artful blend of science and management judgment.

Science can provide helpful, even vital inputs into the formulation of recreation management objectives. Empirical relationships between recreation activity and environmental and social impacts provide an important, factual base of information. Without such knowledge, we are unaware of the ways in which alternative types and levels of recreation activity might influence environmental and social conditions. Research should be conducted on a variety of factors which will influence the formulation of appropriate management objectives. These factors can be grouped into three broad categories:

- *Environmental factors.* The biophysical characteristics of the environment determine in large part the degree of environmental impacts that result from recreation activity. Some environments are inherently more fragile than others. The environmental characteristics of the area in question should be studied and may influence the formulation of management objectives.
- *Social factors.* People vary in their desire for recreation activities and

their sensitivity to both environmental and social impacts of recreation. Park visitors should be the focus of studies to determine the types of recreation opportunities desired. This information should help guide formulation of management objectives.

- *Management factors.* The NPS operates in an institutional environment. Legal directives and agency mission statements, for example, provide some guidance in formulating management objectives. The preservation mission of the NPS dictates considerable emphasis on protection of park resources, and this will influence formulation of appropriate management objectives. Availability of personnel and financial resources may also influence choice among competing management objectives. For example, intensive recreation use is generally not feasible or sustainable without the ability to provide comparably intensive management.

While the information described above is necessary, it is not sufficient for the formulation of recreation management objectives. An important element of management judgment must ultimately be applied. As noted earlier, the relationships between recreation and resulting environmental and social impacts are, at best, suggestive of the level at which such impacts are appropriate or acceptable. Likewise, information on the environmental, social, and man-

agement factors described above may offer guidance about appropriate management objectives, but several feasible alternatives are likely. In the end, some management judgment is inescapable in the formulation of recreation management objectives.

Crowding in outdoor recreation.

The emergence of a social component of carrying capacity has focused considerable attention on the issue of crowding in outdoor recreation. Crowding is usually seen as the most direct, physical manifestation of increasing recreation and is

**...management judgment
is inescapable in the
formulation of recreation**

normative concept. Norms are personal beliefs or standards about appropriate behaviors or conditions. Thus crowding norms are personal beliefs or standards about appropriate recreation use levels. Normative theory makes an important distinction between recreation use level and crowding. Use level is a purely mathematical concept relating number of people per unit of space; as such it has no psychological or experiential meaning. Crowding, on the other hand, has a definitive psychological or experiential meaning; it

and solitude, more environmentally "purist" attitudes toward recreation management, and increased recreation experience result in greater sensitivity to recreation use levels and, therefore, lower crowding norms.

Characteristics of those encountered. The characteristics of other visitors encountered during the recreation experience, such as type and size of group and overt behavior, can also influence crowding norms. Encounters with large groups and those traveling by motorized vehicles or pack stock are often found to lower crowding norms. The same is true for groups who behave in ways which are viewed as somehow inappropriate.

Situational variables. The environment in which encounters with others occur, including type of recreation area, location within an area, facility design, and environmental quality, can influence crowding norms. Crowding norms are generally lower in areas, such as wilderness, which are obviously intended for experiences high in naturalness and solitude.

lower where the perceived quality of the environment is poorer, particularly where environmental degradation is linked to the impacts of recreation, as is the case with litter.

**...it is possible
to manage crowding
in ways other
than limiting use levels.**

The second explanation for the lack of strong relationships between use level, perceived crowding, and satisfaction is found in the process called displacement. Park visitors who are sensitive to high use levels (i.e., have low crowding norms) may alter their recreation activity patterns, ultimately seeking out new areas or times with lower use levels. Thus visitor studies conducted at relatively high-use areas or times may find a predominance of visitors with high crowding norms.

A third explanation concerns the use of visitor satisfaction as a measure of recreation quality. Research has shown that visitor satisfaction is a global, multidimensional concept; that is, satisfaction is a function of

Crowding norms are often lower at campsites than along trails, and are generally lower in the interior of recreation areas as opposed to periphery locations such as trailheads. Poor facility design can also lower crowding norms through lack of privacy and insufficient number and quality of facilities. Finally, crowding norms may be

many variables. It may be unreasonable to expect one variable, such as level of perceived crowding, to explain all or even a substantial proportion of the variation in such an all-encompassing measure as visitor satisfaction.

Several management implications arise from the literature on crowding. First, it is apparent that, for some



This is true of recreation as well.

Research suggests that human experiences sought through recreation can be wide-ranging. Examples include developing and applying skills,

methods of these studies have been highly variable, at least one general finding can be concluded with certainty: public tastes in outdoor recreation are diverse. The brief

should be viewed as part of a larger system. This system may be local, regional, national, or international depending upon the significance of the area in question. Then, considering appropriate environmental, social, and management factors (as described above) a determination should be made about the type or types of opportunities that might best serve the diverse recreation needs of the public.

The notion of diversity in outdoor recreation has been formalized in the management framework known as the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS). Perhaps the most significant contribution of ROS is that recreation opportunities can be defined and described by the three broad categories of factors referenced above: environmental (e.g., the degree of naturalness), social (e.g., the level of use), and managerial (e.g., the type of management). Alternative combinations of these factors produce a range of recreation opportunities. The specific provisions of ROS need not be adopted formally, but its conceptual foundation provides a useful perspective in planning and managing recreation opportunities for a diversity of public tastes.

Quality in outdoor recreation. As in most areas of life, "quality" is the underlying goal of those involved in outdoor recreation. Managers want to provide high-quality outdoor recreation opportunities, and visitors want to have high-quality outdoor recreation experiences. But what determines quality in outdoor recre-

ation?

The traditional measure of quality in outdoor recreation has been visitor satisfaction. The focus on satisfaction arises out of the need for some evaluative communication between visitors and managers. Because outdoor recreation in the public sector is traditionally free or priced at a nominal level, managers generally lack the clear feedback mechanism available in the private sector in the form of consumption rates and price signals. Visitor satisfaction is designed to provide this feedback.

But experience has suggested that visitor satisfaction is not a fully adequate measure of recreation quality. First, it is inadequate from the visitors' point of view. From the earlier discussion of crowding, it was noted that satisfaction is a multidimensional concept; that is, it is affected by a number of parameters. High overall satisfaction with a recreation experience does not mean that every aspect of the experience was satisfactory or that there were not aspects of the experience which could have been improved upon. More specific measures of satisfaction are usually called for.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, visitor satisfaction is an insufficient measure of quality for park and recreation managers. As described earlier, recreation visitors are a highly diverse group. A given recreation opportunity may be highly satisfactory to some visitors but unsatisfactory to others. Thus, measures of visitor satisfaction may depend as much on the type of visitor present as the type of

opportunity offered. Again, more specific measures are needed.

Recognition of these shortcomings in visitor satisfaction has lead to a new thrust in defining, measuring, and managing quality in outdoor recreation. For the visitor, quality might best be defined as the degree to which the experiences sought are fulfilled. For the manager, quality might best be defined as the degree to which recreation opportunities fulfill the experiences for which they were designed.

Two important corollaries are apparent from the preceding discussion. First, there can be no inherent distinction between type and quality of recreation opportunities. For individuals—both visitors and managers—it is common to associate only certain types of recreation opportunities as high in quality. But from a broader perspective, high quality can and should be found among all types of recreation opportunities. Second, from a societal perspective, many types of recreation opportunities must be offered. Only in this way can the diversity of outdoor recreation tastes be fulfilled and a truly high-quality park and outdoor recreation system be attained.

Recreation Management in the National Parks

The second half of this essay suggests some ways in which recreation might best be managed in the U.S. national parks. It draws on the pre-

ceding discussion of basic concepts of recreation management and applies these findings specifically to the national parks. It begins with a brief statement of the goal for recreation management, then suggests a number of policies needed to bring this goal to fruition.

The goal of recreation management in the national parks. In accordance with the legal mandate of the NPS, the primary recreation goal of the national parks should be to offer a diversity of high-quality recreation opportunities which focus upon and are compatible with preservation of the

...high quality can and should be found among all types of recreation opportunities.

important natural and cultural resources within the parks. Despite the seeming simplicity of this statement, it has an underlying logic and a series of management implications. A closer examination of this goal statement is appropriate.

First, it is a given that the national parks are to provide recreation opportunities to the public. This has been confirmed and reconfirmed in organic legislation from the earliest national parks to the latest. Yellowstone National Park was created as a “public park or pleasuring ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people” while Great Basin National Park is to be managed “for the enjoyment and inspiration of the people.” The recreation mission is a constant within the National Park System.

Second, there is great diversity in public tastes in recreation, and this suggests a wide diversity in opportunities. It is unreasonable to expect any one national park or even the entire National Park System to provide a full spectrum of recreation opportunities. However, with nearly 400 park units comprising more than 80 million acres, substantial diversity is possible and desirable.

Third, all recreation opportunities within the national parks should be of high quality. It will be remembered that quality in recreation is defined as the degree to which recreation opportunities fulfill the experiences for which they were designed. High quality can and should be found within all types of recreation opportunities offered.

Fourth, recreation opportunities are most appropriately thought of in terms of human experiences, not simply activities. Recreation opportunities are created by providing settings which are composed of environmental, social, and managerial attributes. These settings should be designed to encourage fulfillment of selected human experiences.

Finally, the human experiences to be fulfilled through recreation are, most appropriately, those that focus on and are compatible with preservation of important natural and cultural resources within the parks. Two considerations dictate this focus. First, it will be remembered from the discussion of carrying capacity and related issues that management objectives are needed to determine ap-

propriate types and levels of recreation activity. Recreation management objectives should be determined on the basis of a number of considerations, including legal directives and agency mission statements. In the case of national parks, preservation of important natural and cultural resources is required. Thus, recreation activity must be compatible with this preservation mandate. Second, national parks, like all recreation resources, should contribute as best they can to the entire system of recreation opportunities available to society. By definition, the national parks contain many of the most significant natural and cultural resources of the nation. By focusing recreation experiences on appreciation of these resources, the national parks can make their most unique and valuable contribution to society.

Recreation policy in the national parks. Policy is needed to guide recreation management in the national parks and to attain the goal described above. Many recreation policies, explicit or implicit, are already in effect and many of these should be continued. The following policy recommendations are designed to augment the current state of recreation management.

1. *The National Park Service should consider its recreation mission to be a full and equal partner with its preservation mission.* Recreation in the national parks is sometimes considered a necessary evil. Visitors to national parks are often thought of as threats rather than

opportunities to fulfill an agency mission and serve the needs of society. Recreation and preservation need not be mutually exclusive. In fact, these two missions can be mutually reinforcing. Preservation of natural and cultural resources assures the continued availability of recreation opportunities into the future. And public appreciation of these resources through appropriate recreation experiences builds a powerful constituency for preservation.

Moreover, careful attention to the recreation program of the NPS can help ensure that the types and

...a strong recreation program in the NPS will contribute to both the recreation and preservation missions of the national parks.

levels of public use within the national parks are fully compatible with resource protection. In the end, a strong recreation program in the NPS will contribute to both the recreation and preservation missions of the national parks.

2. *Clear and explicit recreation management objectives should be developed for all units of the National Park System.* Management objectives describe the type of recreation experience to be provided. In so doing, they help determine the limits of acceptable change which will be allowed in key environmental and social variables. In this way, management objectives help make the concept of recreation carrying capacity operational and help ensure that recreation opportunities are compatible with the protection of park re-

sources. They also provide a standard by which the quality of the recreation experience can be measured.

Recreation management objectives should ultimately be expressed in terms of indicators and standards of quality. Indicators of quality are discrete, measurable variables which can be used to define recreation opportunities. Examples of environmental indicators might include soil compaction along trails or percentage

of ground-cover vegetation at campsites. Examples of social indicators might include encounters with others along trails or

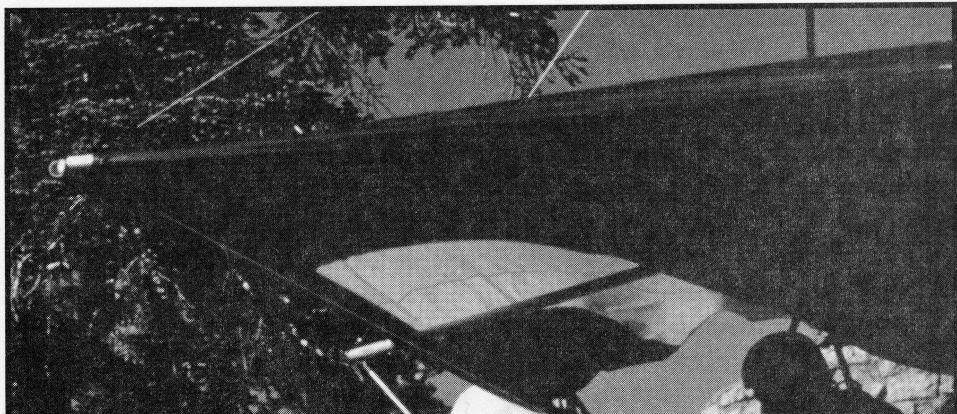
number of other persons camped within sight or sound. Standards of quality express the acceptable condition of each indicator variable. Examples would include the maximum degree of soil compaction and ground-cover disturbance to be allowed and the highest number of trail and camp encounters to be permitted. The NPS's new carrying capacity framework, Visitor Experience and Resource Protection, is founded on the formulation of management objectives and establishment, monitoring, and management of indicators and standards of quality.

3. *More research emphasis should be placed on visitors to the national parks.* It is well accepted that the parks are complex ecosystems and that research is needed to understand, manage, and protect these

ecosystems. It is less well understood that the parks are complex social systems as well. In fact, national parks are social institutions established to serve the needs of society. This requires a better understanding of so-

vague, and appropriate indicators and standards of recreation quality are not well developed.

5. *Intensive recreation use of the national parks will require equally intensive management. Providing*



cus on appreciation of these significant resources. This is the single most important criterion in determining the types of recreation appropriate in the national parks. Recreation experiences which do not focus on appreciation of the parks' natural and cultural resources should be accommodated outside the national parks.

7. *The National Park Service should place management emphasis on the quality as well as the quantity of recreation in the national parks.* Historically, the principal measure of recreation is the number of visits. These data suggest little about the quality of visitor

experiences. Little is known in any systematic or comprehensive way about the degree to which visitors are finding the experiences they seek, the extent to which recreation opportunities fulfill the purposes for which they were designed, or the extent to

Recreation experiences which do not focus on appreciation of the parks' natural and cultural resources should be accommodated outside the national parks.

which the national parks are providing for recreation experiences which are in keeping with their purpose.

8. *The National Park Service must become more pro-active in carrying out its recreation mission.* Recreation should receive the emphasis ascribed to it by the congressional mandate for the NPS. This will require a more pro-active, aggressive program of recreation planning, management, and research. It will

also require creation and exercise of a stronger philosophy of recreation service in the national parks. By definition, the national parks represent

recreation resources of national and even international significance. However, without a strong recreation philosophy and program, this potential will not be fully realized.

Robert E. Manning is a professor at the University of Vermont's School of Natural Resources. He is currently on sabbatical, doing research in Yosemite National Park.

Reminder: this column is open to all GWS members. We welcome lively, provocative, informed opinion on anything in the world of parks and protected areas. The submission guidelines are the same as for other GEORGE WRIGHT FORUM articles—please refer to the inside back cover of any issue. The views in "Box 65" are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position of The George Wright Society.

The Business Connection: An Introduction

Our times are a repeat of times past, times when the virtues of commercial business were held by many leaders and followers to be the highest of virtues. Commercial thinking is increasingly reaching the parks in old and new ways. The connection is tightening. Great issues are at stake. The issues deserve a great deal more vigorous and more widespread examination and illumination. Commercialism at the end of this century is once again becoming the dominant force in our society that it was at the end of the previous century. Until the next Theodore Roosevelt arrives, we must marshal our thinking and planning to protect the parks from a new and more pernicious level of threat. As Bill Brown reminded us in his "Letter from Gustavus" of April 3, 1995 (THE GEORGE WRIGHT FORUM, Vol. 12, No. 2), Adam Smith prescribed the preservation of national monuments as one of the three principal functions of national governments.

While the National Park Service observes many of the best modern business principles and processes, no doubt it could observe more with benefit. Alternatively, a great many business organizations would benefit were they to apply some of the Park Service's principles and processes. An example is the superior service manner of park rangers who regularly come in close contact with visitors.

Given room for improvement by the National Park Service based on business models, the questions become which and how much. Both business and the Park Service observe limits to the best of principles. A prime example on the business side is the limit that a business places on catering to a customer. If a customer approaches an automobile dealer seeking to buy a camping tent to place in the trunk of his new car, the dealer

has to decline because selling tents is no part of her business. On the Park Service side, no national park will permit its otherwise proper visitors to drive off-road vehicles wherever they choose. Limits are necessary. The business customer and the park visitor can both be wrong. "The customer is always right" is a fine guiding principle—no less always subject to limits.

The six articles in this series begin above and then sweep across the spectrum of the business connection. The first of the six is a broad-gauged philosophical review of the roots and growth of the parks so as to place the business connection in perspective. The second considers "the business of the parks" from the point of view of their economic consequences, a vital, very broad, multi-faceted partition of the business connection. It provides

another perspective on the business connection.

Al Runte is the author of several significant books on the parks, notably his *National Parks: The American Experience*. He is a frequent spokesperson on major national park issues. He has ably concentrated 25-plus years of studying, thinking, and writing about the national parks in his article "The Foundations of the National Parks: Ideals and Realities," written expressly for the FORUM. His purpose is to review the conceptual foundations of the birth and evolution of the parks. He provides a philosophical overview that sets the stage for our discussions on the business connection. One of the very relevant specifics of his article is his statement that "once again, the more that any national park is turned into a business, the more its environmental base erodes."

Tom Power enriches our understanding of the economic role of America's national parks by taking us well past the generally accepted, but narrowly defined, central role of the effect of tourist expenditures on a park's local economy. He combines an unusually pragmatic knowledge of the parks—as individual entities and as members of a complex system with many subsystems—with equally pragmatic economic analysis. His article deals with the business connection from the point of view of the broad sweep of economic impacts of the parks, very importantly upon business as well as upon people and

their communities. His view of the explicit business connection concentrates on impacts on business rather than on business practices within the parks—a very different but no less meaningful partition of the business connection than that examined by the remaining four articles.

Given the two foundation articles, those four articles then deal in increasingly specific fashion with the challenge of "running them like a business." Destry Jarvis, now a senior officer of the National Park Service after varied executive experiences in environmental organizations, makes no bones in denying the meaningfulness of "running them like a business." Running them better by adopting selected business practices is quite legitimate. But "law and policy, as well as the inherent separation of powers in the U.S. Constitution between the agencies of the administration and the committees of Congress, make it impossible for the Park Service to act like a business in many important regards." Moreover, budgetary practices, decision-making, and policies and regulations that govern routine operations are simply vastly different. His conclusion is:

The next time someone tells those of us in the Park Service that 'You should run the parks more like a business,' we should just tell them that we would be happy to be more business-like: give us a multi-year budget, a far shorter planning process, diminish the influence of politics on decision-

making, remove burdensome but mandated regulatory red tape, etc., etc. It might be nice to try, but it isn't going to happen.

Rick Barton also considers "macro" issues of the business connection, except from a state park vantage point. Reading his critique of the business connection, we have no difficulty in bridging from the state park experience to the national park experience. In comparing the reality of revenue-driven state park management with resource-protection-driven state park management, he finds that the mercenary influence of the revenue driver severely diminishes the influence of the resource management driver: "[A]s profit speaks the loudest in state capitols, park agencies have become increasingly revenue-driven." Alternatively:

Development should support the primary purpose of state parks: to bring resource values to the public through education and passive recreation. In that manner, minimal negative intrusion is brought upon the natural, cultural, and historic resources that were set aside in the first place. Resource management then becomes dominant, with facilities designed to enable people to visit and appreciate the qualities of what lies upon those properties. In our present-day mercenary management culture, resource management flounders....

Shane Miller heads a team of younger people from the recently established not-for-profit organization Free Our Parks and Forests in scanning the horizon of whether or not to charge fees and, if so, how much. They have not attempted to invent new aspects of the manifold issue of fees; rather, they have succeeded in summarizing in a few words the cases for and against fees for various purposes in national parks. We all need to step back once in awhile and look very hard at familiar concepts in order to ensure that we have not lost touch. They have facilitated our doing that. Because the devil is in the details, the Miller article is appropriately more nearly "micro" in comparison with the "macro" character of the preceding articles. Given their commitment to free parks, we must admire the objectivity the author and his team have achieved in their article prepared for the FORUM.

Philip Voorhees and Eileen Woodford close this series with an analysis of a special linkage to business practices and business decisions for the National Park Service to consider closely. In setting forth the issues of the expensive privies at Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and Glacier National Park, they point out how inadequate treatment of a rather narrow class of business decision-making and business communicating generates a huge impact. In tracing the public impacts of those recent embarrassing experiences, they point up a lesson

for future business management efforts in the NPS.

Their considerations range from the need at the level of individual parks for line managers to include in their project management responsibilities communications with the

public on unusual issues, to the sweeping idea of the Park Service as a whole focusing on “changing the culture of line management to include a new, subjective management tool: public perception.”

Maurice H. Schwartz, The Blue Ridge Institute, P.O. Box 12220, Silver Spring, Maryland 20908



The Foundations of the National Parks: Ideals and Realities

In the popular rhetoric of American environmentalism, the survival of the national parks depends on everyone's commitment to the highest standards of preservation. The common value of national parks asserts that the environment should always be our first priority. In reality, the long-term security of the national parks today is no more certain than it was a century ago. Now, as then, every conflict can still be traced to some level of disagreement that a national park exists primarily for the preservation of its natural environment.

Avowed friends of the national parks may also espouse the principle, but are no less tempted to ignore it. Even the magazines of environmental organizations accept advertisements for sport-utility vehicles, mountain bikes, and alcohol, for example. Environmentalism itself, it would appear, has become just another business. Indeed, the Marlboro Man represents more than a single product; rather, he epitomizes the persuasiveness of an entire mind-set, a culture still bent on economic growth and consumerism more than saving the natural world.

In part, the problem lies with history. When national parks were first established, protection of the environment as now defined was the least of preservationists' aims. Rather, the emotions of nature were distinctly cultural, upholding a long tradition in the United States of asserting that natural wonders were themselves a con-

tribution to world civilization. The giant sequoias were compared to the pyramids and Yosemite Valley to the cathedrals of western Europe, for example. Similarly, basaltic formations in the canyon of the Yellowstone River were hailed as the equivalent of ancient castles and storied ruins.

Obviously, if national parks were cultural icons, they had to be opened for all to see. Yellowstone Lake, for example, convinced the explorer Nathaniel Pitt Langford that America would one day enjoy the equivalent of Lake Como, in the Italian Alps. He, too, looked forward not to preserving Yellowstone Lake as wilderness, but rather "to the march of civil improvements that will reclaim this delightful solitude, and garnish it with all the attractions of cultivated taste and refinement."

The National Park Service, established in 1916, inherited that 50-year tradition of extolling the parks pri-

marily as repositories of cultural identity. More, it took important cues from the railroads—and later from Detroit—that the “fundamental purpose” of the national parks, “to conserve the scenery and the natural and the historic objects and the wild life therein,” could be appropriately bent to accommodate visitation. Gradually, planners and landscape architects—no less than concessionaires, contractors, and other business interests—sided with the popular mood of American tourism, locating so-called villages, roads, and parking lots adjacent to the parks’ principal natural features.

The erosion of public transportation, as underscored by the demise of rail passenger service in the United States, further translated—both outside and inside the parks—into promoting the use of automobiles. The stage had been set for a myriad of contradictions, from congestion and the death of wildlife to drunken driving and urban crime.

Originally in August 1865, a distinguished student of American culture, Frederick Law Olmsted, called attention to the problem, noting that the preservation of natural environments was no less immune to human greed and self-indulgence. For every voice of conscience there would always be its counterpart, pleading that preservation had somehow gone too far. On June 30, 1864, President Abraham Lincoln had signed legislation protecting Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of giant sequoias “for public use, resort, and recre-

ation,” to be held “inalienable for all time.” Addressing the Yosemite Board of Park Commissioners, Olmsted both summarized the act’s significance and the likely threats to its integrity. For the moment, he readily conceded that visitation to Yosemite Valley then totaled only several hundred people annually. Yet “before many years,” he predicted with amazing foresight, “these hundreds will become thousands, and in a century the whole number of visitors will be counted in the millions.” The significance of those figures should be obvious to anyone. “An injury to the scenery so slight that it may be unheeded by any visitor now,” he noted, “will be one of deplorable magnitude when its effect upon each visitor’s enjoyment is multiplied by these millions.” The duty of Yosemite’s guardians was clear and unmistakable. Management must protect “the rights of posterity as well as of contemporary visitors.” After all, “the millions who are hereafter to benefit by the Act have the largest interest in it, and the largest interest should be first and most strenuously guarded.”

Olmsted’s insistence on responsibility to the natural environment ultimately proved too demanding and exacting. The dictates of American commerce resisted impositions over the enjoyment of park visitors. Inevitably, a regimen of development took hold in the parks, as underscored by a growing emphasis on rustic lodges and grand hotels. Gradually, the flagship national parks, among them Yellowstone, Yosemite,

Glacier, and Grand Canyon, lost their original sense of wilderness, taking on many of the characteristics of eastern spas and summer resorts.

Fortunately, preservationists were vindicated in their fears about too much development in the fate of Niagara Falls, which, by the 1860s, had totally succumbed to commercialization. To be sure, Frederick Law Olmsted was thinking about Niagara when he enumerated his warnings about the future of Yosemite Valley. For two hundred years, the falls had epitomized the grandeur and freshness of nature in North America. Suddenly, the smoke of adjacent mills drifted skyward along with Niagara's mists, while tourist sharks of every persuasion importuned its disillusioned and harried visitors.

In the West, such deep-seated prejudices for commercial pursuits were momentarily tempered by the excitement of discovery. The point is that Congress was no less insistent on the privilege of later reflection and reassessment. "At some future time," noted Senator Lyman Trumbull of Illinois, characterizing the debates leading to the establishment of Yellowstone National Park, "if we desire to do so, we can repeal this law if it is in anybody's way, but now I think it a very appropriate bill to pass." In the House, it remained for Representative Henry Dawes of Massachusetts to make the promise no less forcefully or sincerely. "This bill reserves the control over Yellowstone," he clarified, "and preserves the control over it to the United States, so that at any time

when it shall appear that it will be better to devote it to any other purpose it will be perfectly within the control of the United States to do it." And still his qualifications continued. "If upon a more minute survey it shall be found that Yellowstone can be made useful for settlers, and not depredators, it will be perfectly proper this bill should pass" [in other words, be repealed]. "We part with no control; we put no obstacle in the way of any other disposition of it; we but interfere with ... those who are attracted by the wonderful descriptions of it ... and who are going there to plunder this wonderful manifestation of nature."

Yellowstone escaped the ax, its alleged worthlessness perennially supported by Dawes's closing words of reassurance. Not only was the region "rocky, mountainous, and full of gorges," he maintained; why, even "the Indians," he added for emphasis, "can no more live there than they can upon the precipitous sides of the Yosemite Valley."

In contrast, Yosemite National Park, established in 1890 surrounding the 1864 grant to California, materially suffered from preservationists' inability to make the same analogy. Originally, the national park included 1,512 square miles, extending from the peaks of the High Sierra well across its belt of encircling foothills. Cavalry officers patrolling the park reported that the foothills were no less important than its fabled scenery, especially for wildlife populations seeking winter refuge. However, in

the late 1880s settlers and speculators had rushed to claim the region, anticipating the success of preservation efforts. Consequently, more than 60,000 acres within the boundaries of Yosemite National Park had already fallen into private ownership, and thus were still open to logging, mining, and grazing. Observant military officers consistently urged Congress through the secretary of the Interior that these threats should be eliminated, ultimately by purchasing all of the private lands for further maintenance within the boundaries of the reserve.

Instead, in 1904 a special commission sided with state economic interests, recommending to Congress that all private or commercially valuable lands be excluded from the park. Congress agreed, and the next year readjusted Yosemite's boundaries, deleting 542 square miles, regardless of their alleged importance as scenic buffers or wildlife habitat.

As John Muir confessed, America's evolving commitment to scenic preservation had in no way diluted the nation's preoccupation with extracting every possible resource from the public domain. "Nothing dollarable is safe," he bitterly concluded, "however guarded." Merely the size of a national park, in other words, was no guarantee of the nation's pledge to hold it "inalienable for all time." More likely, the larger the national park, the more susceptible it was to being challenged as excessive.

To be sure, well into the 20th century, both the survival and ex-

pansion of the National Park System rested not on dramatic instances of statesmanship, but rather on the compatibility of the nation's long-held cultural biases. In the nation's eagerness to seek out its boldest, most "monumental" landscapes, park enthusiasts invariably idolized those features—mountains, canyons, glaciers, volcanoes—whose potential to be exploited was highly doubtful in the first place. It took a later generation of Americans, specifically, preservationists educated about such concepts as "ecological interdependence" and "biological diversity," to demand that the National Park System protect all elements of the natural world, including endangered species of flora and fauna.

Credit for that reappraisal in large part belongs to the scientific community, and especially to Joseph Grinnell, the distinguished director of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at the University of California at Berkeley. As early as the 1910s, he urged fellow scientists, government officials, and the general public to consider that the national parks should protect more than scenic "wonders." Finally, in 1933, the National Park Service released a precedent-breaking report acknowledging the parks' biological limitations, *Fauna of the National Parks of the United States*. Its authors, all protégés of Grinnell's, were George M. Wright, Joseph S. Dixon, and Ben H. Thompson. Experts in the evolving field of wildlife management, they concluded that the national parks

lacked sufficient territory. "The preponderance of unfavorable wildlife conditions confronting superintendents," they wrote, setting the principal theme of their study, "is traceable to the insufficiency of park areas as self-contained biological units.... At present, not one park is large enough to provide year-round sanctuary for adequate populations of all resident species." And that assessment included Yellowstone, still the nation's most renowned and expansive park.

The solution—enlarging the existing national parks to reflect ecological boundaries—depended on how rapidly science might break down existing perceptions and prejudices, most notably, that national parks should protect only representative examples of superlative natural features. In most instances, the wildlife habitat Wright, Dixon, and Thompson had singled out as desirable for addition to the national parks consisted of foothills and lowlands, terrain traditionally considered too "commonplace" or "monotonous" for national park status. Moreover, it was here, in the shadow of mountain peaks, that economic interests, particularly loggers, miners, and ranchers, had staked out their claims. These, then, were the two major hurdles working against park science: first, that neither park managers nor the American public considered general topography sufficiently important, and second, that economic necessity pre-empted any consideration of adding so-called productive lands to the national parks.

The enlargement to Grand Teton National Park in 1950 to include farm and ranch lands in Jackson Hole, coupled with the dedication in 1947 of Everglades National Park, Florida, testified to the weakening of historical perceptions that parks should be confined to both rugged and marginally productive lands. Still, it was one thing to propose national parks with enough territory to protect their biological integrity, and yet another to achieve that philosophy in fact as well as in theory. Even today, continuing threats to the Everglades from powerful agricultural interests recall the traditional limitations imposed on biological conservation. Nor should we forget the lesson of Redwood National Park, whose virgin stands in Redwood Creek were virtually eliminated prior to its establishment and subsequent enlargement, in 1968 and 1978, respectively.

Urbanization, pollution, and population growth still add immeasurably to the problem, pressing in, as never before, to upset the delicate balance between development and conservation. Criticism of the national parks is also common among conservative political interests, much as minorities see little value in protecting lands they allege their members will never get to see.

The problem, quite simply, is that any system restricting nature to "reservations" may no longer be effective. Notably, in the Progressive Era (1890-1920), preservation was more inclusive, insisting on the need

to protect America the Beautiful, not just those lands designated as city, state, or national parks. Ultimately, preservationists looked to the countryside close at hand as the barometer of their success. If the city and its immediate environs were no less healthful and pleasing to the eye, then preservation had indeed fulfilled its mission. But if those “everyday” landscapes also succumbed to ugliness, then saving the parks alone was hardly an achievement in itself.

Carrying the argument for America the Beautiful beyond aesthetics to biology, progressive scientists like Joseph Grinnell further emphasized the thrill of “living” landscapes. Granted, in the tradition of Frederick Law Olmsted a landscape should be picturesque, that is, visually pleasing and inspirational. No less important, however, preservationists should secure every landscape’s ability to provide habitat for indigenous plants and animals. In that vein, Grinnell credited his students with “fieldwork” if they led bird-watching classes, for example, and indeed reveled in their reports confirming the participation of the Bay Area’s leading citizens. Ignoring a common charge in academe today, that he had merely “popularized” his subject, Grinnell looked beyond the university. Sharing the larger vision of progressive conservationists, he believed education should embrace the entire populace. Consequently, introducing the natural world to the citizens of Berkeley, Oakland, and San Francisco was no less important than en-

suring the protection of distant wonders like Yosemite.

There was just no escaping the realities of the modern, industrial world. Within another half century, the population of the United States had doubled yet again, and a new machine, the automobile, was loosed all across the countryside. Increasingly, preservationists found themselves defending the leftovers, once again, the nation’s public lands. For national parks, the future was especially ominous. At Grand Canyon, the Bureau of Reclamation proposed two major reservoirs. On the boundary of Everglades National Park, a jetport intended for supersonic passenger aircraft had been speedily cleared and graded. Although the jetport was not completed, and the dams in Grand Canyon were defeated in 1968, no one doubted that the future of conservation would be very different from its past.

Increasingly, the challenge of the 1970s and 1980s was to restore the integrity of progressive conservation, renewing its insistence on the preservation of a national landscape rather than just its spectacular bits and pieces. In the private sector, groups such as the Nature Conservancy and the Trust for Public Land picked up where traditional environmentalism still preferred not to tread—asking Americans as a whole, not merely the federal government, to secure and protect natural beauty. Grassroots environmentalism similarly enlisted the support of tens of thousands of volunteers, focusing on campaigns

for local and regional landscapes. In that larger estimation of national need, farmlands and wetlands, for example, enjoyed renewed importance as the ecological equivalent of the national parks, if not obviously their scenic rivals.

More subtle, but no less significant, is the battle still raging inside the national parks over appropriate means of access. The ecological priorities of the 1980s and 1990s have obviously clashed with the traditional view of national parks, extolling scenery as their primary feature. In Yellowstone, for example, winter use has skyrocketed, thanks to the widespread use of snowmobiles. Historically, extending the visitor season would have been considered positive, benefiting both the parks and their concessionaires. Now even the Park Service is not so sure. Rent by criticism from the environmental community, the NPS admits the excessive costs of winter management. Once again, the more that any national park is turned into a business, the more its environmental base erodes.

It is critical that the United States now decide what it wants from the remainder of its public lands. The argument that the parks contribute to tourism is itself utilitarian, alarmingly suggestive that Americans still dare not protect what they cannot turn into a profit. In that vein, pressures to develop the parks solely to accommodate tourism are themselves no less ominous than threats from external forces. It is not just air pollution, de-

clining water quality, and neighboring development that affect the national parks. It is also what people do when they enter the parks, what they expect and then demand. If they demand more than the privilege of entry, the parks are ultimately doomed to fail, for it is only through discipline, not indulgence, that preservation can ever hope to reign supreme.

Too often, the Park Service itself has argued that the American people expect modern conveniences, especially straighter, wider, and faster roads. Such roads are not only the prerequisite of comfort and convenience, but also the safety of park visitors. Historically, Frederick Law Olmsted argued for roads and vehicles that accommodated the environment, and not the other way around. If that concept is still so alien to the American people, again, there can hardly be hope for the permanence of the national parks. For it is only in the giving up, not the giving in, that any standard of preservation can be upheld.

No, rhetoric and good intentions are no longer adequate to secure the future of any of America's national parks. Their survival now depends solely on a renewed commitment to civic duty and public discipline, which, however elusive and resistant to definition, stand for something larger than one's self. True enough, it is evident that most Americans still believe in the *ideal* of their national parks. It is in translating the ideal into reality—upholding the integrity of preservation while accommodating

daily pressures and demands—that filled with conflict as distinct from re-
park management is still so visibly newal and consensus.

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Alfred Runte, 7716 34th Avenue NE, Seattle, Washington 98115



The Economic Role of America's National Parks: Moving Beyond a Tourist Perspective

Introduction

Typically, when the words "economic" and "national parks" are linked together, it is tourist impacts on the local economy that are the focus. The National Park Service (NPS) itself links economics and national parks primarily in this manner. When budget conflicts led to most national parks being shut down in 1995-1996, NPS had economists estimate the "economic impact" of the shutdown by studying the impact of the decline in visitor spending on communities adjacent to the affected national parks. NPS uses an economic model called the Money Generation Model that allows any given national park to use a small amount of park-specific data to estimate the contribution that park visitation makes to the local economy. Both the introduction of wolves into Yellowstone as well as the flood damage to Yosemite have been analyzed by NPS economists in these terms. The economic role of parks is, in general, the local tourist impact attributable to the national park. As will be discussed below, this is a terribly incomplete way of looking at the economic role of America's national parks.

The Economic Consequences of a National Park

The existence of a national park and the visitation it supports have a broad range of economic consequences that confer net benefits on various economic actors. There are at least three important but quite different sets of such economic benefits. First, there are the benefits enjoyed by those who actively make use of the national park or the environment it creates or protects. It is the direct benefit to the visitor, not the visitor's spending, that is the focus for this economic value. Second, there is the set of impacts that the existence of the park has on the economic opportunities (employment, earnings, invest-

ments, etc.) available in adjacent communities. It is in this category that visitor spending would fall. A third set of economic consequences are the economic benefits enjoyed by citizens because of the existence of the park that are not associated with the direct *use* of the park by anyone. These values have been labeled intrinsic, passive use, or non-use values by economists. The evidence for the existence of this class of economic values is the willingness of Americans to make sacrifices to create and protect parks that they never expect to visit.

The tourist approach to national park economic values focuses on *part* of the second set of economic conse-

quences while not directly dealing with either the first or third sets. It is important to understand the economic limitations of this particular focus. The primary objective for establishing the national parks was not usually the stimulation of local economic activity in particular communities. Rather, they were established to allow citizens to enjoy the benefits of visiting unique natural and cultural. In addition, they were established to protect the intrinsic values associated with those sites, values that are independent of actual visitation—preservation values, if you will. Both of these dominant public policy purposes of the national parks *could* be given expression, at least partially, as economic values. That is what the first and third set of economic consequences discussed above represent. The tourist approach, however, focuses elsewhere. In doing so, some very important, if not dominant, economic consequences of the national parks are ignored. But that is not all that gets ignored. One of the most important local economic impacts gets ignored too.

Non-Visitor Impacts of National Parks on the Local Economy

The tourist approach to national park economics focuses upon the impact that visitation to the park has on local spending, earnings, employment, and tax revenues. These are clearly economic impacts of considerable interest to communities adjacent to national parks. Visitor spending, however, is not the only

way in which the existence of national parks affects the range and intensity of commercial economic activity in the local area. To the extent that the national park provides ongoing protection to the flow of valued environmental goods and services to local residents, national parks may draw new residents to adjacent areas and the economic activity that supports them. The scenic beauty, outdoor recreation, wildlife, water quality, etc. associated with protected natural areas such as national parks may stimulate local economic activity by attracting new permanent residents as opposed to or in addition to temporary visitors.

Population growth in counties adjacent to national parks reflects this attractive role of the amenities protected by the parks. For the last half-century, growth in national park counties has been two to three times that found in metropolitan counties and three to six times the growth found in nonmetropolitan counties in general (Rudzitis 1994; Harmon 1995). Statistical analysis of residential real estate activity also indicates that national parks serve as “magnets” for new economic activity in the Northern Rockies (Jackson and Wall 1995).

The tourist approach focuses only upon *non-resident* users drawn to an area. Implicitly it dismisses as “derivative” or “secondary” all resident-related economic activity. This is both a conceptual and empirical error that distorts the economic discussion of national parks and usually

leads to a significant understatement of the impact of the existence of the national park on the local economy. Temporary visitors' spending is not the only way the national park stimulates the local economy.

The Full Range of National Park Economic Values

The establishment and protection of national parks is usually defended in ethical or aesthetic terms against claims that those preservation efforts are in some sense "anti-economic" because they purposely ban most commercial activities. When an economic response is offered, it is in terms of the positive tourist impacts. As argued above, this is seriously incomplete. Lands with national park qualities are a relatively scarce resource that have significant alternative uses that satisfy important human needs and desires. In that sense the creation of national parks represents a "classic" economic decision to allocate scarce resources to the pursuit of important human objectives. national parks provide a broad range of benefits that make the lives of people more satisfying and fulfilling in at least the same way that people's purchases in commercial markets do. One way of looking at those positive benefits of parkland preservation is outlined in Figure 1.

The figure divides the economic values associated with national parks into several categories:

- on-site vs. off-site values
- use vs. non-use (or passive use) values

- recreational vs. non-recreational value
- dollar expenditures vs. non-market economic values
- present vs. future values

Each of these distinctions is important in evaluating the economics of national park protection. Often, most of these values are ignored in economic discussions of parklands. When economic analysts do consider positive economic values for parklands, they tend to focus exclusively upon the expenditures associated with non-resident visitor spending. As the figure suggests, this represents a relatively small part of the "on-site" "use" values and an even smaller part of the total set of values that need to be considered.

The Source of the Problem: How We Think About the Local Economy

The focus upon tourism in economic discussions of the role of national parks is the direct result of the widespread use of a misleading approach to thinking about the local economy: the economic base approach. This way of thinking about the local economy assumes that the only economic activities that really matter are those that inject income into the local economy. This income is seen as being spent and re-spent within the local economy, putting people to work in locally oriented economic activities. Without that income being injected into the local economy from the outside, no one would be able to live in the local area

Non-Use Values

Use Values

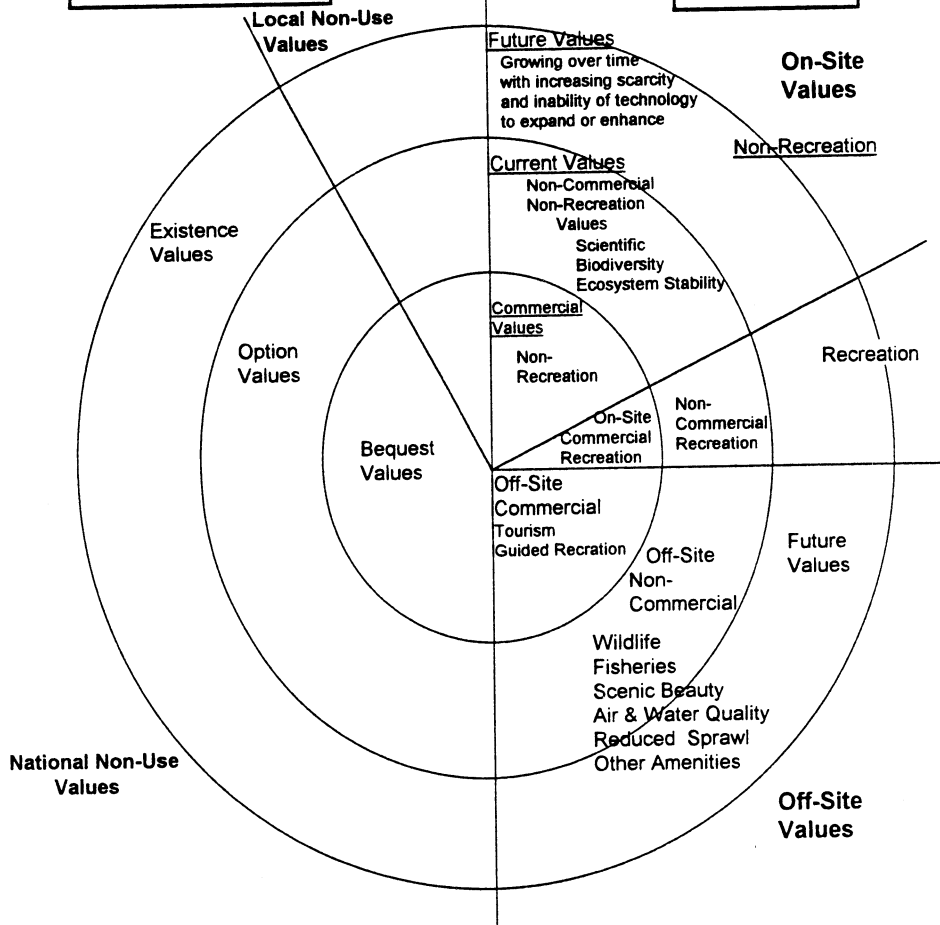


Figure 1. National park economic values

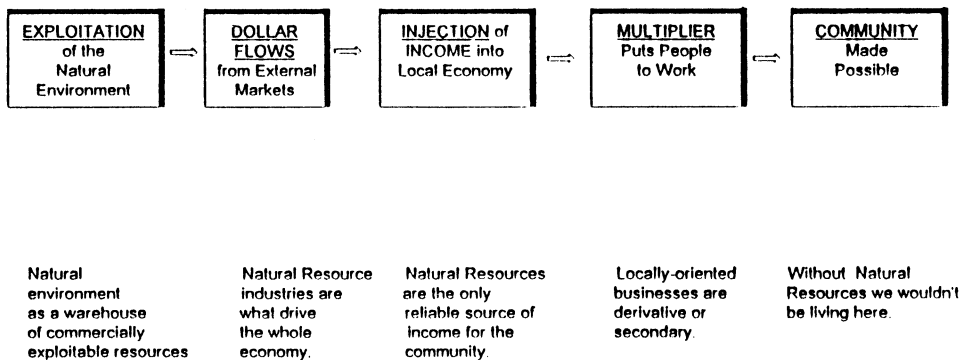
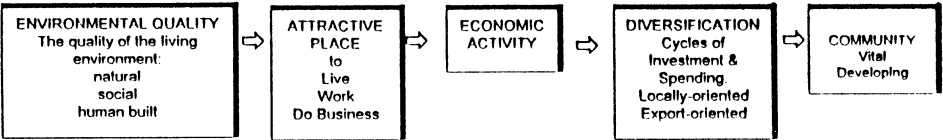


Figure 2. The economic base view of the economic role of national parks

because there would be no income available to support them. See Figure 2.

Despite its popularity, the problem with this approach is that it assumes that economic forces operate only in selected, narrow ways: businesses locate at sites where natural resources are available and people follow these businesses, moving to where the jobs are. Although these assumptions may sound plausible, they are not. Stated slightly differently, they assume that people do not care where they live and businesses do not care where people choose to reside. But we know that people *do* care where they live and act on those preferences (taking costs into account). We also know that businesses pay close attention to where people choose to live because that is what determines the location of both the labor supply and markets for products.

When we recognize these aspects of economic reality, a quite different picture of the forces driving the local economy emerge. The ability of an area to attract and hold residents is central to its economic vitality. In that context, those locally specific qualities that make a particular area an attractive place to live, work, and do business are not just of aesthetic interest, they are part of the local area's economic base. High-quality living environments attract and hold people and businesses. That in turn triggers a series of dynamic changes that supports ongoing local economic vitality. The quality of the social and natural environments have profound economic implications. For that reason, I have labeled this set of economic forces the "environmental model" of the local economy (Power 1996a, 1996b). See Figure 3.



Natural environment
Recreation Opportunities
Cultural Richness
Cost of Living
Community/Neighborhood
Security
Quality of Public Services

Seeking to Live & Work
Enhanced Labor Force
high quality
lower cost
attracts business
Retirement Income

On-going Economic
Development

Figure 3. An environmental view of the economy

Natural and social environments *do* play an important role in the ongoing transformation of our non-metropolitan economies, but that role is *not* primarily through tourism. Tourism is just *one* of the economic links between natural and social amenities and the new economic vitality found through much of non-metropolitan America. Those amenities contribute to local economic well-being in three ways:

- Those amenities contribute directly to the well-being of existing local residents because they are directly enjoyed by them.
- Those amenities tend to attract new residents and businesses and the economic activity they stimulate.
- Those amenities can be the basis for a wide variety of “tourist” businesses. Mass “industrial-grade” tourism is just one potential. Adventure recreation, ecotourism, working ranches, cultural tourism, and so forth represent visitor-oriented businesses that may have quite different impacts.

Note that tourism is purposely put third in the list and the variety of different types of travel industry activities is emphasized. This is important if distorted economic analysis is going to be avoided.

Looking Beyond Commercial Recreation and Tourism

The impact of landscapes preserved in their natural state by national parks extends far beyond the physical boundaries of those areas

and far beyond the commercial recreation that may take place there. Natural landscapes tend to define the character and quality of the surrounding physical and social environment. This is clear when natural area preservation protects water quality that then supports off-site fisheries or protects habitat that then supports off-site wildlife populations. But the range of influence is greater than this. Protected natural areas preserve the landscape that influences everything from scenic vistas to recreational patterns to patterns of human settlement.

This can be put very directly: People care where they live. They care about the qualities of the natural and social environment that make up the living environment. They are willing to make sacrifices to obtain access to these natural amenities. High-quality natural environments draw people and businesses to areas even when economic opportunities are otherwise quite limited (Power 1996a, 1996b).

This is not an insupportable sweeping generalization. It is a fact that has had a dramatic impact on the pattern of settlement and economic activity in this country. If, for instance, one looks at the pattern of economic change in nonmetropolitan America over the last decade, one finds natural amenities playing a very positive role. During the 1980s, the only group of nonmetropolitan counties that had above-average population growth rates were “amenity” counties in which the nat-

ural and social environments supported both recreation and retirement development. During the 1990s, the fastest growth was also found in these amenity counties (Deavers 1989; Beale and Fuguitt 1990; Cook and Mizer 1994; Johnson and Beale 1995).

This assertion that the quality of the living environment is important in the economic development of a local area is neither new nor should it be controversial. Clearly the climate and desert environment of Arizona has been important in attracting and holding population. In fact, the use of the term "amenity" to capture the role played by local environmental qualities in economic development was first coined by an economist seeking to explain the rapid growth of desert Southern California in the 1950s (Ullmann 1954, 1955). As with Arizona, people were moving to where there was no obvious "industry" in the pursuit of particular environmental qualities, and then industry was following the population. The shift of our urban populations from center cities to suburbs also can only be explained in terms of the pursuit of higher quality living environment than urban centers were capable of providing. In fact, the distribution of attractive natural qualities across the landscape is a major determinant of the distribution of residential development across that landscape (Mueller-Wille 1990). The point is that people care where they live and make location decisions on the basis of those preferences for living envi-

ronments.

This is important to the future development of our nonmetropolitan areas. In the competition to attract both new residents and new businesses, the quality of the natural and social environment are going to be important. Landscape preservation such as that associated with the creation and protection of national parks, by granting protection to those landscapes that are most unique in a region, can be seen as an integral part of such an economic development strategy *not* because it attracts tourists but because it attracts new permanent residents and supportive economic activity. This view of the economic role of national parks allows us to move beyond a dangerously exploitative commercial tourism emphasis. It also allows us to begin to incorporate into the economic discussion the ways in which natural landscapes directly support our well-being by protecting the flow of environmental services that sustain and enrich our lives, making them satisfying, challenging, and inspirational. This type of economic analysis is far more appropriate to the purposes for which our national parks were created.

Of course, the amenity-driven economic development that is taking place within previously minimally developed natural landscapes is not necessarily a good thing for those natural landscapes. Increasing populations living adjacent to the national parks and wilderness areas directly add pressure on the very nat-

ural systems we are trying to protect. They do this in two ways. First, the intensity of use of the parks themselves may be greater among residents who were attracted by the high-quality natural environment protected by the park. Second, the new residences, commercial and public infrastructure supporting them, and the additional human activity tend to cut off the parks from the surrounding natural landscapes and increase the parks' "island" characteristics. These negative impacts of economic development around the parks should not be ignored. It should be noted, however, that *any* economic development in gateway communities and the surrounding area will have this impact, whether it is tied to park tourism or to permanent residents drawn by the existence of the park. In that sense this is a problem implicit in the NPS's "bragging" about the positive economic impact it has on the local community. To the extent that the park commits itself to supporting ongoing economic development in the region surrounding the park, it may ultimately be putting the park's natural integrity at risk.

Implications for Park Managers

National park managers, like almost all public officials, regularly face decisions that are cast in an "economics versus the environment" form. For park managers the dilemma is presented in a way that suggests that actions to protect the park will have a negative impact on the local

economy because those actions will constrain commercially related recreation opportunities. To the extent that the national parks have depicted their economic value in terms of the support the parks provide to local businesses, the national parks will have painted themselves into a corner from which it will be hard to extract themselves without compromising their preservation mission.

This is a fairly common dilemma for the national parks: Yellowstone with snowmobiles, Grand Canyon with scenic over-flights, Yosemite and Glacier with traffic management. If the national parks are going to protect themselves against these commercial pressures as they try to pursue their joint missions of protecting unique natural landscapes and allowing public access, the parks are going to have to be more sophisticated about how they describe the economic aspects of the values they create and preserve. For instance, to the extent that the national parks have articulated the economic role they play in protecting the quality of life and economic vitality within geographic areas far larger than the parks themselves and their gateway communities, the national parks will have reached out to a constituency far larger than the local chambers of commerce. That will provide an important counter-balance to the narrow commercial pressures which constantly demand unconstrained access. To the extent that the national parks include in their economic analysis the direct value of the visitor's

experience (not just the visitor's spending) and the non-use values enjoyed by all Americans, the economic analysis will help support preservation efforts rather than undermining them.

The National Park Service has employed the Money Generation Model in order to pursue political support from business interests for park operations. That economic approach, however, is so narrow that it

ultimately is quite dangerous to the agency's long-run mission. It is very important for the NPS to move well beyond this type of primitive, commercially oriented, economic analysis and employ instead the type of analysis that modern economics would recommend. That is the only way to try to safely harness economic analysis in the support of the Park Service's full mission.

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Thomas Michael Power, Economics Department, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana 59812

The Business of the Parks

Introduction

From time to time, members of Congress, the news media, and the public find reasons to complain about the management of the national parks by the National Park Service (NPS). Generally when they do, it is with statements like “the parks should be run like a business” or “the National Park Service should adopt standard business practices” or “the parks should raise all of their revenue from fees, just like a business.” What they mean is that, for example, the NPS should charge far higher prices in the most heavily visited parks as a way to reduce visitation; or that entrance fees generally should be high enough so that the parks can be self-supporting on the revenue they generate; or that NPS should build cheaply, using off-the-shelf designs, to save money, regardless of the fact that the structures would not last.

For reasons set out below, none of these suggestions are possible, or desirable. However, there are some standard business practices which are espoused by the private sector (though not always practiced), like multi-year budgeting, long-range planning, measuring accomplishments, improving efficiency, eliminating waste, and utilizing sustainable practices that can and should be fully embraced by the NPS.

Finally, law and policy, as well as the inherent separation of powers in the U.S. Constitution between the agencies of the administration and the committees of Congress, make it impossible for the Park Service to act like a business in many important regards.

Why National Parks and Private Business Cannot be Compared Budgets: A one-year horizon is all NPS gets. It is a common practice

in the business world to work with multi-year budgets, which allow the business a great deal of flexibility and enable it to respond rapidly to external changes. Certainly businesses must know their bottom line, but they also can plan for growth, retrenchment, or other major changes, on a multi-year basis. The NPS cannot.

In late January, when the president's budget for all agencies in the federal government is submitted to Congress, the Park Service certainly knows what funds for which programs have been requested. This knowledge is of little use, however, until nine or ten months later, when Congress passes, and the president signs into law, the bill making appropriations for the Department of the Interior. Far more often than not, the bill finally approved for the NPS contains many millions of dollars for projects, particularly construction

and land acquisition, that the NPS did not request. Often the bill contains specific programmatic directions and policy directives, as well. Such direction is often frustrating, sometimes debilitating, to specific programs, occasionally brings a windfall to a particular activity of the agency, and generally has a few really big surprises. Nevertheless, such control by the Congress is a standard part of the way the federal government goes about *its business*, and is accepted, if not enjoyed, by the Park Service.

The situation could be vastly improved, however, simply by appropriating more of the NPS funds on a no-year or multi-year basis. Park operations, the largest, most flexible, and least tampered-with portion of the appropriation to the NPS, should be handled both on a no-year and a multi-year basis. With no-year money, there would be no reason to scramble to spend leftover operating funds as the end of the fiscal year approaches. Often, at present, funds are wasted or, at best, not spent on the highest priorities during the last weeks of the fiscal year. Usually this scramble to spend is driven out of a fear that if all funds are not spent, someone in Congress or at a higher level of the NPS will think that all of the funds are not needed, and will reduce or reallocate the money to another park or another part of the federal budget.

Multi-year appropriations for park operations (at least three-year, and preferably five-year) would vastly

improve the ability of the park superintendent to hire and manage staff, and carry out serious natural and cultural resource management projects in particular.

Until now, Congress has been unwilling to approve multi-year funding for park operations out of a fear that the NPS would no longer be accountable to the Congress for its actions. However, with passage of the Government Performance and Results Act and the development of the NPS's first strategic plan under the act, this plan rather than an annual appropriation can and should be used to judge the Park Service's accomplishments, and to hold it accountable both for its expenditures and its actions.

Planning and decision-making: Everyone has a say. Of course, with one-year funding it is virtually impossible to do multi-year planning and priority-setting. With one-year funding, the NPS does not set its own priorities—they are set for it by others. The funding cycle and the planning cycle are inextricably linked. They don't need to be decoupled, but both need to be set on a multi-year basis so that decisions and their implementation can be more consistent, rational, and understandable.

Such a multi-year process, if generally accepted, might also have the unanticipated beneficial effect of slowing the growth of the National Park System. If members of Congress knew that a park that they wanted to have authorized for addition to the system could not get funded for five

years, they might hesitate to seek immediate authorization.

In fact, the haphazard growth of the system, through individual acts of Congress, often of sites that have not been fully studied by the NPS (if at all), is another common practice which is unlike anything in private business. In the private sector, acquisitions and mergers are typically planned carefully and often secretly. When an acquisition occurs in the private sector, they will have already taken into account the budget adjustments needed, and personnel changes will have been planned. At present, when new parks are added to the system, they are typically funded at the expense of budget increases for existing parks.

Unlike corporate decision-making, where virtually all major decisions are either made by the chief executive officer or the board of directors, NPS decision-making within the agency takes place with full public involvement. Virtually no decision, however small, can be made without some public involvement, and most decisions, especially park management plans and Servicewide regulations, elicit a huge outpouring of opinion. The individuals who make up the general public are the "stockholders" of the NPS, and have far more control on a routine basis than do the stockholders of any corporation in America.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), arguably the single most important environmental law ever enacted, certainly revolu-

tionized the way decisions are made inside the federal government, and assures that NPS decision-making can never be comparable with that of business. In 1978, the draft general management plan for Yosemite National Park drew nearly 80,000 individual comments. Currently, the Yosemite Valley implementation plan is likely to draw as many if not more. The intense feelings being exhibited over use of personal watercraft—"jet skis"—in the parks will no doubt result in similarly large numbers of public comments before the national rule is made final.

Day-to-day management: Whose rules? Another area of major difference between the NPS and private business is in the policy and regulations that govern the normal, routine, day-to-day decisions that make each organization function. NEPA defines the manner in which NPS must involve the public in its decisions, as has been mentioned. The Occupational Safety and Health Act, the Davis-Bacon Wage Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and other laws apply disproportionately to federal agencies over private businesses, and, taken together, make any attempt at direct comparison an impossibility.

If a business finds that overtime, a rule, or a regulation which it imposes on itself or its employees is out of date and should be revised, it simply revises it, usually with little fanfare, certainly without public involvement. Even if its employee union, when there is one, is concerned, resolution of the issue between management and

the union is often accomplished in private; if it hits the news media, it still is settled without regard to public opinion in most instances. With the parks, policy and regulations—whether applicable to the park visitor or to the agency employees—are not set internally but always involve the public, the news media, and often other federal agencies.

For example, a regulation was adopted into the Department of Interior manual during the Johnson administration which forbids the NPS from charging location fees to a movie company; the NPS may charge only the actual costs it incurs in overseeing the work of a film company while filming in a park. A typical film company pays far more to film on any street corner in America than it does in national parks. From “North by Northwest” to “Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade” to “Amistad,” movie scenes filmed in parks are visible to all who enjoy movies, but the NPS cannot charge a fair market value for making the park available.

What the NPS Can Learn from Business Practices

Observing and learning from the world around us. No business can survive for long without taking careful stock of what’s going on around it: its competition, its customers, and its neighbors. For too long, the NPS operated with a feudal lord mentality. Superintendents customarily paid little attention to activities in the Forest Service or the Bureau of Land Management, not to mention in state,

county, or local parks. Superintendents acted as if the park’s boundary was its castle wall, complete with moat, and did not care what went on outside this line, so long as they controlled everything that took place within it. Today, while some still cling by their fingernails to the old mentality, most progressive superintendents both realize the necessity and accept the challenge of working with both other agencies and with surrounding communities. A few of the best even realize that they can carry out the mission of the NPS *better* by doing so with enthusiasm and energy. These few also realize that doing all of the things that private business would refer to as being entrepreneurial isn’t just a necessity of the times, but a better way. Establishing partnerships builds understanding, understanding brings support, support builds constituency, and a broad and deep constituency will lead to political and public support for the mission of the Park Service.

More and more park superintendents understand the value of partnerships, and the NPS has embraced this approach. Another aspect of being entrepreneurial, that of taking risks, is still less well-accepted in the NPS, and is often mentioned within the agency as a sure way to a dead-end career. Too often the Sam Rayburn approach—“go along to get along”—is still the path of choice for NPS employees.

The eyes of the Park Service are on the superintendents of Colorado National Monument and Capitol Reef

National Park to see if their risk-taking in standing up for park purposes against local demands will help or hurt their advancement in the agency. Similarly, folks throughout the NPS are watching to see the outcome of the controversy over excessively priced construction. Park housing and outhouses have been singled out in the news media because the public knows the cost of a decent house and of toilets. Some superintendents have condoned \$500,000 houses while others have found alternative means to get park housing for a more reasonable-looking \$150,000 apiece. Some parks have \$300,000 outhouses, and others have insisted on \$10,000 "sweet-smelling toilets."

Eliminating waste, cutting costs, improving efficiency, measuring the bottom line, being accountable, justifying accomplishments—all of these are common terms and phrases in the business world. They are not always adhered to there, to be sure, but are certainly applicable to the way in which the national parks ought to be managed.

What NPS Needs to Know to Work with Business —And What It Can Teach

Advance notice to meet planning horizons. Some more modest actions, based on lessons learned from the private sector, could be taken by the NPS. Businesses tell us all the time that they can conform to almost any park rule or regulation (short of a ban), or any reasonable fee increase, *if they have enough advance notice*. So

for some at least, timing is everything.

Not unlike treaty negotiations, the mere fact of sitting down together around a table to discuss the problem and the need to develop an effective solution will often produce a workable solution, where no amount of the old "decide-announce-defend" approach to decision-making on public policy will ever work. While there is still a problem with "paralysis by analysis," there can be no question that engaging with our interested constituencies, including the private businesses that have a vested interest in parks, is more effective and expedient than trying to ignore them.

The commercial tour bus fee is a good example of the benefit of consultation. Tour industry opposition to the fee announced abruptly in 1995 was instantaneous, loud, and extensive. After some intense meetings at the highest levels of the Park Service and the Department of Interior, it was agreed that such instant application of fee increases on the tour industry had a disproportionately greater adverse impact that it did on the private individual or family. Most tour groups are packaged and often paid for 12-18 months in advance. At least the price is published in tour industry advertising that far in advance. Advance notice, rather than the amount of the fee, thus emerged as the real issue.

After reconsideration of public comments, the Service then agreed to provide 12 months advance notice of any fee increases applicable to the tour industry for the Fee Demonstra-

tion Programs increases, and for the future. As a direct consequence, both of the process and the decision, the tour industry has been a very strong supporter of the fee program, both in the news media and to the Congress, ever since. Flexibility and reasonableness, and the resultant support of the tour industry, are essential to convincing Congress, when it passes permanent fee authority, to grant the NPS the flexibility to make adjustments in the fees, and to keep the funds.

Running concessions like a business. Where park concessions are concerned, there are some standard business practices that we should apply to the companies who contract with us, and we should apply some standard business practices to how we manage and oversee their operations.

Competition is the single term most commonly used in America's free-enterprise system. The most basic methods and fundamental practices of private business depend on it. However, because of the out-dated Concessions Policy Act of 1965, there is little or no competition in the park concessions business. The NPS and the several administrations, including the Clinton administration, along with a bipartisan group of members of the House of Representatives and Senate, have been trying to amend the act as far back as 1971. All of the amendments being sought have had one simple goal: to make park concessionaires have to compete just like any other business in the private

sector does every day of their business lives.

However, if the NPS is to rely on competition in the concession business as a means of getting better service to the visitor and a better financial return to the government, then we need to embrace competition's effects fully. For example, the Park Service should get away from the need to review menus, weigh food portions served, dictate what can and can't be sold in concession stores, and similar overbearing controls. The NPS should generally broaden and lighten the government's heavy-handed approach to determining "comparability" to similar services and prices outside the parks. The market will determine whether the concessionaire succeeds or fails at enticing the visitor to buy.

Sustainability. Much is being said—and a little is actually being done—about sustainable practices these days, both in the NPS and in the private business sector. It seems almost as though there is a dynamic convergence of interests. However, private industry can naturally move faster than the government can. In 1995, the Denver Service Center's Bob Lopinski, then-deputy director John Reynolds, and many others around the agency developed a wonderful manual on sustainable design and sustainable facility construction practices. These principles have been embraced widely throughout the NPS, and are in use with all new design and construction. However, most of the facilities that the Park

Service has to work out of were built long before these principles were developed, and much effort will have to be undertaken to adapt, modify, re-configure, or otherwise apply these sustainability standards to the vast existing infrastructure of the National Park System.

Numerous major corporations have already implemented sustainable practices for the simple reason that they can readily show that full utilization of such practices improves the bottom line—saving money, time and energy. Even some park concessionaires, notably AMFAC in Yellowstone, are ahead of the Park Service. Each guest room in Mammoth Hotel, for example, contains a card urging visitors to conserve water and electricity and reduce paper wastes. The guest is urged to hang up bath towels to dry and be used again, and to not request to have sheets changed for multiple-night stays in the same room. A tastefully written message urges the guest to turn off the water and lights when leaving the room.

Many international companies, both in the travel industry (including airlines and hotels) as well as manufacturing companies, have adopted the international environmental management standards known as ISO 14000. The International Standards Organization (ISO) adopted a set of function-specific environmental management standards as one of the tangible results of the 1992 Rio environmental summit.

If the NPS truly wants to “walk the walk, and not just talk the talk” about

sustainability, then it should begin by selecting a few sample parks to serve as ISO 14000 Guinea pigs. Effective use of the ISO 14000 standards by the NPS will not only result in actual improvements in park sustainability, but will allow the agency to continue to be a world leader in environmental management. At present, we are running the risk of being just another follower, and not the environmental leader we consider ourselves to be.

Ecosystem management. One of the most important things that the NPS can teach to the business sector is that ecosystem management is not some new evil plot by the federal government to take over more control, but actually is far more compatible with the principles that business likes to say it believes in than either we or they have been willing to openly discuss.

To begin with, ecosystem management principles are dependent upon working both with larger spatial and longer temporal scales than has been commonly done in government land management. But private industry routinely does its planning, budgeting, expansions, marketing, and future development for long periods into the future and covering larger regions. Industry already thinks in ecosystem terms.

Unquestionably the two most important changes which “ecosystem management” practices have brought to federal land management is the fundamental principle that humans are the key to ecosystem management, and that ecosystem manage-

ment can be achieved only through the full integration of ecological, social, and economic factors.

At the risk of being overly simplistic, heretofore NPS has managed primarily with ecological factors in mind, and industry has managed primarily with economic factors at work. Neither of us can hope to succeed without application of the factors that the other is best at. Perhaps the time has come to try working together?

Conclusion

The next time someone tells those of us in the Park Service that “You should run the parks more like a business,” we should just tell them

that we would be happy to be more business-like: give us a multi-year budget, a far shorter planning process, diminish the influence of politics on decision-making, remove burdensome but mandated regulatory red tape, etc., etc. It might be nice to try, but it isn’t going to happen.

Instead, the National Park Service must expand communication, be more receptive to new ideas, accept change as inevitable, embrace the human factor in ecosystem management, and adopt the ISO 14000 environmental management standards. Only then can we say that we can handle the business of the parks for present and future generations.

T. Destry Jarvis, National Park Service, 1849 C Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20240



The Management Implications of Revenue Parks

Amid the even character of a plains environment all things seem relatively equal. Slight landscape variations blend into a flat line along the horizon. Shrubby trees fade into one vague wall of dense forest. Distant mountain peaks assume one elevation in the context of our eye's view. Yet, the illusion of a plains environment rests purely within the interpretation of our vision. Objects close to us assume shapes of great clarity. Distance presents the optical confusion.

Such is the case with our collective understanding of the issues related to managing the natural environment. That which lays close to us remains clear. Those objects which remain far away fade into a complex relationship of time, distance, and various human influences. Stated more simply, it seems that human nature precludes meaningful observation, and ultimately focused management, of our vast natural and cultural resources. A case in point is represented by the dynamics of a conflict regarding the proper financial management of America's state park resources and facilities. Unfortunately, most citizens and many park professionals do not recognize the threat which lies amid that conflict.

As a culture we seem to value the existence of state parks, otherwise we would not devote the financial and policy energy necessary to establish such places. Unfortunately, the commitment often ends shortly after the

ribbon from the ceremonial cutting hits the ground following the acquisition and development of a new park. Once the glamour vanishes, so does the financial support for projects that no longer cause a twinkle in the eye of a state's elected officials and appointed bureaucrats. The burden of support eventually falls into the sometimes less-than-able hands of the state park agency. Their strategy to develop funding mechanisms creates conflicting objectives.

The context of capability is not a critique of the management talent residing within state agencies. On the contrary, state park agencies presently provide the breeding ground for creative adaptability in the professional field of park management. For example, while national parks struggle to adopt sound policies regarding charges for services, states have mastered fee management for decades. State park systems have also taken a thoughtful lead in numerous func-

tions, including: the use of hunting for effective resource management, timber management, self-operated concessions, and reasonable corporate partnerships. For all of the shortcomings of state park operations, they abound in talent and innovation.

Capability in this context rests much more with the ability of state parks to shoulder the financial burden of managing complex facilities and the people who visit such places. State park agencies simply do not receive sufficient tax-generated dollars to adequately support the management of the facilities and the people who visit. Among the nation's state park agencies, only a handful receive the majority of their funding from general tax sources. In every case, there exists a clear policy, and therefore the public expectation, that the parks shall attain a measure of financial self support. There begins the dilemma.

In the best sense, state parks under financial pressure shall seek efficiency. They logically evolve into lean agencies which gradually emphasize financial security. As survival remains paramount, such agencies minimize costs and maximize revenue. From a tax-paying perspective, park agencies contribute to the cause by attaining revenue, by reducing the burden upon the state budget. From that specific view, nothing could be better than an agency which contributes revenue rather than simply spends money. Imagine a government full of agencies that constantly

seek greater efficiency while also dreaming up realistic sources for revenue.

In the worst sense, we created a mercenary structure, far from the objective of the visionary citizens who sought to create a complimentary array of state parks available equally to all who sought such leisure. In this mercenary culture, entrepreneurial skill becomes pre-eminent and visitor services thrive in the arena of best business practice. Since paying customers return only when treated well, and clients expect sanitary facilities, park agencies focused on such services. As a result, visitor service becomes a focus of state park agencies, creating the illusion that the management policy was appropriate because the state government enjoyed the financial implications of revenue parks. Meanwhile, as profit speaks the loudest in state capitols, park agencies have become increasingly revenue-driven.

Across the country, state parks generate approximately \$600 million annually from fees, charges, and various other enterprises. Visitors expect to pay for services in parks, and agencies continue to push that willingness to the limit. Beyond maximizing profits, the revenue-driven priority results in new enterprises which encourage new revenue.

As financial reality rules the kingdom of state parks, such logic leads to the development of more revenue-producing facilities. At first camp-

grounds and beaches satisfied the financial appetite. In time, as public demand shifted, development intensified as the pressure for more revenue created a new objective for state parks. Economic development generated more cabins, expansive luxury lodges, golf courses, convention centers, and full-service marinas. Private operators entered the scene as professional business enterprise took center stage in state park management.

Camping still represents the backbone of state park financing, providing about one-third of annual revenue nationwide. Day-use service charges or "entrance fees" rank second but continues to diminish in importance as other revenue sources accelerate. Cabins evolved as part of the park culture and remain a good revenue producer. Yet today, golf courses, restaurants, and lodges each contribute as much revenue as cabins in state parks. Taken as a collective group, development-oriented facilities generate more funds for state parks than the traditional day-use revenue. A park with a golf course, lodge, and restaurant provides more financial support than the day-use gate.

The merits of this evolution depends upon the perspective of the observer. The creation of more recreation enterprise presents great value to society in a number of realms. Local communities reap the economic value of tourism, with an increased flow of money into an area, and in-

creased employment opportunities. Beyond the financial value, additional facilities provide more recreation opportunities than more traditional state parks. Who could reasonably argue with the provision of increased outdoor recreation to an increased client base while providing local economic impact and budgetary support to the government entity? The evolution seemed too good to be true.

The consideration of the question above does not consider the implications of business management upon park resources. In comparison, development pales in consideration of the priceless quality of natural and cultural resource values. Development should support the primary purpose of state parks: to bring resource values to the public through education and passive recreation. In that manner, minimal negative intrusion is brought upon the natural, cultural, and historic resources that were set aside in the first place. Resource management then becomes dominant, with facilities designed to enable people to visit and appreciate the qualities of what lies upon those properties. In our present-day mercenary management culture, resource management flounders while relegated to the realm of those necessary evils.

Land should be acquired to preserve some specific values, and the management should reflect those simple qualities. A lodge and golf course present a quality in them-

selves, regardless of the significance of the property in which they lie. Such a development has nothing to do with a property which was established to preserve something of statewide significance.

State parks in the Northeast have continued along the time-honored tradition of relatively low development with an emphasis upon preservation of open space. There are virtually no resort state parks in New England. Those park systems have struggled to survive during the past decade amid the high competition for scarce tax dollars. Unlike their New England neighbors, the New York state park system features many highly developed facilities which contribute nearly \$50 million to their annual revenue operations. Ohio state parks include the operation of more than thirty marinas. In contrast, Kentucky state parks include numerous lodges, restaurants, golf courses, and marinas which generate considerable revenue. Many of the southeastern states feature a number of lodges and other resort-style facilities.

While resort operations do not always provide a balanced budget, the influence of economic impact may generate adequate political support to maintain budget health. The funding policy in Kentucky reflects the philosophy that the park system not only generates revenue but contributes greatly to the state's tourism economy. With a mentality that the budget contribution is an investment in the state's economy, park systems with

high development tend to receive consistent budget support from elected leadership. By contrast, in Maryland an explicit formal statement came jointly from both the legislative body and the executive leadership in the 1960s that the state parks would remain relatively undeveloped. Their successors honored that commitment over the years, but Maryland's state park system has suffered from budget erosion comparable to its New England counterparts. With no great revenue impact from resort parks, Maryland's park agency struggles to compete for tax dollar support.

The philosophy central to the revenue argument remains a matter of vision. Such discussion centers on a prediction of what shall yet occur. Creating a more self-funding park system may indeed present a more stable future. A financially healthy park system may not only survive a future financial crisis, but may also be able to support those sites which offer great value to society without the ability to generate revenue. In that vision, the money-generating facilities become the cash cow which finances the rest of the park system.

Beyond the practical value of such vision, a harsh reality comes into focus. Park systems which emphasize the production of revenue lose their creative souls. When money motivates creative enterprise in parks, the top managers place the zeal of their emphasis upon those aspects that generate revenue. The importance of

the dollar outweighs everything else, no matter how hard park executives may argue the purity of the intentions. Creative energy, staff interest and objectives, and the focus of thoughtful discussion centers upon those sites and those initiatives which maximize profit. Park managers who honestly reflect for a thoughtful moment eventually recognize the hazardous reality of a profit-driven park agency.

The practical reality of managing complex recreational facilities offers daily evidence of a park executive's focus. The simple fact remains that developed park attractions demand constant attention from managers. Facilities require diligence both in response to a crisis or the daily proactive grind of maintenance and visitor service. Handling of cash, supervision of staff, and troubleshooting problems all increase the burden upon managers.

Resource management, if done properly, likewise requires both dili-

gence and constant attention. While resource management may involve controversy, attention to immediate customer concerns always consumes a manager's attention. The emphasis and creativity eventually shifts toward the profit centers, toward the people services. Resource management becomes something else that has to be done, and may be put off until later. Resource management becomes an afterthought or perhaps even just a necessary evil.

Like so many other aspects of our society, the resolution of conflict between enterprise development and resource-valued park management lies in the realm of compromise. State park recreation resources require the tempering of financial reality. Revenue generation must reside within the soul of thoughtful park preservation. The balance remains a question of vision, matching the clarity of what lies close to us with the uncertainty of the horizon.

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Rick Barton, Maryland State Forests and Parks Service, Annapolis, Maryland 21401



A Walk in the Park: Fee or Free?

The propriety of charging recreational user fees on U.S. federal lands, particularly national parks, is highly debated at present. Yet it has always been a source of contention. "The historic debate ... has been between how much should users pay and how much should the general tax base pay" (Galvin 1997:18). This question is often expressed as two opposing viewpoints. One states that specific beneficiaries of parks can be identified, and therefore it is fairer to assess from them a greater responsibility for funding the parks. The other claims that parks benefit all of society, and that user fees are therefore unfair and counterproductive. Corollary arguments also arise, in part because user fees for public lands actually fundamentally change the nature of those public lands.

The general argument for the user fees is that more money is needed, and that out of fairness this money should come from recipients of benefits when it is possible to define specific recipients. Another general argument is that user fees encourage a better allocation of resources and enhance efficient government. In addition, supporters argue that fees reduce visitation, thereby alleviating overuse problems. Furthermore, fees reduce anti-social behavior and encourage respect for the parks because people are more likely to value that for which they must pay.

Fairness in the collection of revenue is a fundamental purpose for user fees. In the 1950s and 1960s legislation was enacted specifying guidelines for the assessment of fees, to wit: "[F]ees should be fair ... they should be based on the cost to the government of providing the service; the value of benefits to the recipient;

public policy, and 'other relevant facts'" (Gillette 1988:20). These loosely written guidelines required clarification, at least in regard to recreational fees. The clarification came through several subsequent congressional acts. Consistent efforts were made to authorize recreational fees specifically when there were identifiable, isolated groups of consumers, in accordance with recommendations:

Public agencies should adopt a system of user fees designed to recapture a least a significant portion of the operation and maintenance costs of providing outdoor recreation activities that involve the exclusive use of a facility, or require special facilities (Mackintosh 1987).

Despite subsequent authorization, however, there were few increases in fee revenues. This changed last year,

with the implementation of the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program (RFDP). The RFDP specifies that a significant portion of fee revenue collected under the program is returned to the collecting agency, to be used for maintenance and other purposes. This legislation is different because it provides revenue enhancement as an incentive for administrators to charge fees, while cultivating public favor by specifying maintenance at the collecting site as a purpose of revenue collection. Many new fee programs have resulted.

The RFDP fees apply to a much broader range of services than previous fees, including backcountry use. Such collection is just and proper, proponents argue, because the additional burden on resources imposed by visitors ought to be paid for by the visitors. In fact, the failure to charge a user fee for visitation effectively distributes the cost of visitation across the entire tax base. This burdens those who do not visit the parks, without regard to their ability or inability to pay. So, proponents argue that not only are user fees more just, but their absence is actually an injustice. Those who use parks are those with leisure time and money. They should pay for the additional burdens imposed by their use.

Another argument is that user fees encourage administrative efficiency and better allocation of resources—essentially, better government. User fees attach economic values to specific services, and since an agency's funding is at least in part dependent

on the fees, the agency will respond positively to public demand. The agency will allocate resources to the services that command the highest price, and will do so in an efficient manner, because its fiscal health is partly dependent on that efficiency. "One of the strongest arguments that a government program is worthwhile occurs when it has a user fee, and the user fee covers the cost" (Miller 1988:38). Furthermore, the presence of a fee enhances "allocative efficiency by ensuring that those who desire governmental resources use only as much of those resources as they are willing to pay for" (Gillette 1988:19). Essentially, this argument states that public availability of government services, without user fees, creates an artificial situation in which the allocation of burdens and resources becomes an arduous administrative task. The assessment of user fees, which impose charges commensurate with value, introduces the invisible hand of the market economy. This mechanism simplifies administration, thereby increasing efficiency.

Another benefit commonly proclaimed on behalf of user fees is the reduction of visitation. Fees, the argument goes, reduce visitation because they limit usage to those who are willing to pay. This serves the dual purpose of enhancing the park experience by reducing overcrowding, while encouraging preservation and conservation in areas that are threatened by overuse.

Finally, it is argued that user fees bestow respect upon the resource.

Quite simply, one is less likely to take a service for granted when one has paid for the service. This respect is befitting an important part of our heritage that combines scenic wonder with environmental and cultural preservation, interpretation, and conservation. It also decreases the likelihood of lawlessness and tomfoolery. Finally, it helps to further the interests of the National Park Service because people are more likely to respond positively to impending legislation and other matters which may effect the agency.

To summarize, then, the primary advantage of recreational user fees is that they are the fairest source of revenue. Furthermore, they improve the efficiency and responsiveness of the Park Service by introducing a context of market economy. In addition they alleviate problems with overcrowding. Finally, it is argued that fees increase public appreciation of the parks.

These arguments bring up several valid points. Parks need revenue, and a device that collects revenues while bestowing additional advantages is indeed worthy of consideration. "Lack of adequate funds for outdoor recreation is a common problem around the country" (Wettstone 1963:6). However, opponents of the

argue that it is too impractical to quantitatively correlate costs and burdens and establish a workable formula for the determination of fees. Such difficulties, they further claim, when coupled with the precedent of fee collection, will have the result of rapidly and irreversibly accelerating fees beyond acceptable limits. Additionally, they claim that nobody should be excluded from using parks on the basis of income, and user fees invariably exclude some percentage of potential users. It is also argued that it is precisely the absence of conventions such as user fees which gives some parks their distinctive value. Finally, opponents claim that overcrowding is controllable with devices more appropriate than user fees.

The argument that parks benefit all of society has two facets. One concerns the preservation and conservation functions of national parks. The other asserts that the recreational opportunities provided by parks generally benefit society as a whole. The purpose of the Park Service as defined in its Organic Act of 1916, and as reaffirmed in later legislation, is to "conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them

more, the stipulation that parks must provide for future generations explicitly confers benefits upon future generations.

The second facet of this argument pertains to the capacity for enjoyment. Some fee opponents claim that the recreational opportunities created by parks benefit society as a whole. They claim that everybody benefits simply by having the opportunity for recreation, regardless of whether or not they use that opportunity. Having the option is itself a benefit. Furthermore, those who take advantage of the opportunities develop qualities that are socially desirable, thereby improving the community as a whole. This is a somewhat intangible argument, but it can be clarified by comparison with parks that are not part of the National Park System. Baseball diamonds are a good example. Baseball diamonds do not provide conservation or preservation. They are usually frequented only by a small percentage of the community. However, they are usually free. The presence of the diamond, and its use by limited numbers of community members, still enhances the community as a whole.

Further complicating matters, fee opponents argue, is the extreme difficulty of deciding how to formulate fees that accurately correlate benefits conferred with additional costs imposed. So, it is not only difficult to determine the relative degree to which a specific use benefits society as a whole versus isolated beneficiaries, it is also a challenge to determine

precisely how the increased burden caused by that particular use is distributed through the system. Even further complicating matters, opponents argue, is the wide discrepancy between the economic value of a use and the actual cost of providing the use. The end result, fee opponents argue, is a virtually unresolvable administrative and moral quandary. It is best to clarify with a hypothetical example. Participation in an interpretive walk led by a naturalist consumes resources that are not consumed by others who do not go on the walk. This would seem to imply a clearly isolated beneficiary, and therefore a situation in which a use fee is appropriate. However, the interpretive walk bestows a bit of education and perhaps even wonder, which is likely to increase the participant's understanding of and appreciation for the resource the Park was created to protect.

This is a positive affirmation, and it benefits society as a whole. With backcountry use, on the other hand, a visitor may hike into a remote area and never make use of a trail or any other developed resource. It is likely that such a visitor would never encounter a ranger or other park employee. The degree to which this use benefits the rest of society is still difficult, if not impossible, to quantify. Moreover, in this example there is a wide discrepancy between the value of the resource as commanded by the marketplace, and the cost of providing the resource, since no specific services are directly utilized. The dif-

ficulty of generating a satisfactory formula, through which user fees can be calculated, is demonstrated in the shifting history of policy regarding the fees.

Backcountry use is clearly a situation that, before the RFDP, did not meet guidelines for the imposition of fees. For example, the Park Service in its 1988 management policies proclaimed: "Basic services will be available to all visitors free of charge. These services include protection, information and orientation, and interpretation to foster an understanding and appreciation of each park's resources..." (National Park Service 1988:[8]7). Whether or not the interpretive walk ought to be free according to this standard is itself subject to interpretation; however, backcountry use clearly does not justify a user fee under this policy. Likewise, the vast majority of other guidelines and recommendations specify that use which does not take advantage of developed resources should be available to all, free of charge. This precept dates back at least to the time of the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (active in the late 1950s and early 1960s), for whom the distinction was critical: "The keynote of the commission's recommendations is that user charges are not meant to hinder the use and enjoyment of the basic outdoor recreational opportunities for people who desire merely to commune with nature and wildlife" (Wettstone 1963:7). Although precise articulation of how the mere existence of

wilderness as a recreational opportunity benefits society at large is lacking, the importance of free availability of this opportunity is a long-standing tradition. The RFDP is setting a precedent in breaking that tradition.

Fee opponents further argue that as the impracticality of determining formulas for user fees becomes increasingly manifest, the eventual outcome will be a total reliance on fees for funding. They argue that any effort to base fees on a critical evaluation correlating costs and benefits will ultimately collapse under the weight of its own administrative overhead. The next logical step will be a complete reliance on fees for all funding, they argue, because the administrative and operational devices for such collection will already exist. Therefore the marginal cost for dismantling such fees will be higher than the marginal cost for simply increasing them. The end result, fee opponents claim, is a system of fees which are much more expensive than anyone is envisioning now. In essence, then, fee opponents claim that once fees are widely implemented, they will rapidly accelerate to levels which are beyond what is considered acceptable even to fee supporters, but which would be very difficult to reverse.

Notwithstanding the various difficulties inherent in actually assessing user fees, some opponents argue the fees are not compatible with public parks because they exclude on the basis of income. Although fees may exclude a percentage of potential users so small that it appears trivial, it

is nonetheless the case that someone will be unable to pay the fee, and will not visit the Park because of inability to pay. Furthermore, even those who can afford to pay will visit less often because they cannot afford to pay multiple times. Some fee supporters claim the fees are too insignificant to exclude anyone. This claim is a patent contradiction to arguments that fees are good because they reduce overcrowding. The vast majority of fee guidelines state that fees should not preclude use. Indeed, it is tragic when a family of modest means cannot go for a walk in the woods because they are priced out. However, to claim that a system of mandatory fees may be implemented which does not exclude on the basis of income, is to fundamentally contradict the nature of user fees. One of the distinct qualities of user fees is that they encourage "allocative efficiency" by ensuring only those willing to pay consume the resources. Although a system of waivers may be applied to theoretically eliminate such exclusion, the waivers will further increase administrative burden while eliminating some of the key benefits of fees: allocative efficiency is dependent on the enforcement of fees, and waived fees require additional overhead but do not bring in revenue. Furthermore the process of applying for a waiver is stigmatizing. Stigmatization diminishes the positive nature of the Park experience.

Stigmatizing waivers are only an additional negative impact if it is true, as some fee opponents argue, that fees

themselves negatively alter the experience of using the Park. Thoreau, Emerson, and others are well-known for proclaiming the importance of nature as a setting for self-discovery, illumination, and even spiritual revelation. The symbolic restriction of this space endangers the transcendental viability of the space. It is the lack of clumsy conventions, such as user fees, which makes some parks valuable as a source of spiritual nourishment and emotional health. The importance of this argument, however, potentially extends beyond the experience of the Park visitor.

Some argue that the presence of open space within a society is essential to the health of that society. Just like fine architecture embodies space as part of structure, so too a society is imperiled if there is no room for solitude. Solitude implies more than quiet in a busy place. It is the experience of being in a place that is not ruled by the law of humans, but rather by the wild of nature. As society becomes more crowded, and true wilderness comes to an end, the importance of symbolic wilderness created through the architecture of legislation becomes even more tantamount.

Open space that is natural wilderness is also a cultural void, providing the absence of encultured social context and the tribulations of socially constructed day-to-day living. This encourages perspicacity and a temporary, socially acceptable outlet. As such it is an invaluable social resource. The U.S. National Park Sys-

tem is a particularly apropos manifestation of this argument. American land was itself an alternative provided by nature, that provided refuge from the religious persecution of European ancestors. Of course the space was in fact occupied, and the lack of cultural respect paid to Native Americans upon the arrival of the settlers was a tragedy, an understanding of which the National Park Service is helping to foster through its programs of cultural interpretation and preservation. Nonetheless, the primary significance of the New World to the first settlers as they arrived was as a better alternative to their existing lives and restricted religious freedom. The continent is explored now, and in reality there is no more terra incognita, but this only heightens the importance of creating wilderness space through planned legislation. We can still preserve the wonder of nature untouched by humans and the spiritual benefits such wilderness can provide. Thinkers such as Rousseau knew the importance of solitude in meaningful contrast with social order. In *The Social Contract*, Rousseau explored the reasons people come together to form societies. The implication, of course, is that some alternative exists. There is no alternative. Yet parks can function as a symbolic wilderness, into which the socially constructed architecture of obligations and pedigrees does not extend. While parks are structures within our society, they serve various purposes, and one of those purposes is the provision of space. However one prefers to think

of it—"getting away from it all," spiritual communion, enjoyment of nature—by preserving a window into a wilderness that is bigger than humanity, we are in fact preserving our own humanity. To appropriate this space and reduce it to a commodity, fee opponents claim, is to close the window and harm one of our most valuable opportunities for learning more about ourselves.

Furthermore, fee opponents argue that overcrowding is also destructive of that experience, but that solutions better than user fees are available to alleviate the problem. They claim that it is not necessary to exclude on the basis of income. Numerous solutions such as quotas and mandatory reservation systems are already in place. While these systems also reduce the wilderness feel of the park experience, they are a more equitable solution to overcrowding than user fees.

So, opponents of recreational user fees on public lands argue that fees are improper because preservation and conservation, as well as the recreational opportunities provided by parks, benefit all of society. They also argue that it is too impractical to administer user fees fairly, because the complexity of the factors involved precludes a formulation which accurately correlates benefits and costs. In addition, they argue that once fees become widespread, they will rapidly increase to levels the public would find unacceptable but difficult to reverse. Furthermore, fee opponents argue that the absence of social con-

ventions such as fees helps give parks their value, both to individuals and society as a whole. Finally, they claim that user fees are inappropriate because fees limit access on the basis of income, and other methods are available which do not.

The debate concerning recreational user fees for parklands involves several complex lines of argument. The key issue, whether parks ought to be funded from the general

tax base or through user fees, is difficult to mediate because compromises tend to be fundamentally incompatible with either one position or the other. These funding issues affect the basic character of the parklands in a manner that is difficult to reverse, if the claims of fee opponents are to be believed. Therefore, a closer examination and a more premeditated course of action may be in order.

Acknowledgments

The author wishes to acknowledge the substantial contributions made by Amy Howells and Cody Strauss in the development of this essay. Their assistance was invaluable, and formative in the development of the ideas expressed. Numerous others helped in a variety of ways, for which the author is grateful and indebted.

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Shane Miller, Free Our Parks and Forests, 4739 University Way NE, #1312, Seattle, Washington 98105

NPS and the \$300,000 Privy: A Parable for Management

During the fall of 1997, the first headline about the new outhouse at Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area hit the streets. The message to the reading public? Park Service Builds Gold-Plated Privy. This was followed by a cascade of similar stories from around the nation. ("Outhouse Outrage," *The Washington Times*, 17 October; "Congrats, taxpayers, on your \$333,000 outhouse," *USA Today* editorial, 14 October; "Flush with Money," *Newsweek*, 9 October; "Primo Privy," *U.S. News & World Report*, 20 October). Two months later the venue changed to Glacier National Park with more headlines in the vein of "High-priced Privies" (*USA Today*, 15 December). The new NPS director responded to the ensuing public outrage with a communication committing to personally review and approve every construction line-item for new facilities. On its face, this would seem to reflect a progressive, take-charge response to a relatively small problem: after all, the projects at issue together cost only \$1.3 million out of a construction budget for that year alone of \$109 million, and, in the instance at Glacier, reflected a direct congressional request. Is the case closed? From an outsider's perspective, unfortunately for the NPS, the answer is "no." The case of the Delaware Water Gap and Glacier privies underscores the price management can pay for ignoring a central factor in business decision-making: public opinion.

The problems that underlie the decisions as Delaware Water Gap and Glacier have little to do with good management. In the first case, the privy was designed to local standards, used environmentally sensitive materials, reflected the culture and feel of the park, and relied on life-cycle costing in an attempt to minimize the cost of maintaining the structure in years to come. In the second case, all of the above was true, and the

project was built at the specific direction of a member of the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee and had the support of both Montana senators. Total cover from a basic management perspective. The problem is that public perception was left out of the equation in both cases, and, in the end, NPS was not covered at all, but totally exposed. Compounding this exposure is a variety of hints floated by the Park

Service that a few more such projects might emerge because they were too far under construction to stop or substantially change.

Public relations professionals say if you have bad news, get it out, get it all out, and get it out in a hurry. Limit the press exposure to a few news days and move on. Hints that there may be more projects coming out only guarantees that the Park Service's exposure will remain long after park management announced that new cost-control systems are in place. Instead of getting all of the bad news out and moving on, the bad news will trickle out slowly enough so that the story will repeat itself several times and in a variety of new outlets. More taxpayers will hear that the National Park Service is wasting tax dollars on million-dollar toilets and \$700 bags of grass seed while at the same time NPS complains about a steadily growing multi-billion-dollar backlog of so-called needs. And in the public mind, the issue changes from anger at a few isolated incidents of waste to a new and far more corrosive skepticism that the Park Service cannot be trusted to spend taxpayer money on the kind of infrastructure problems visitors see every day.

This conversion from isolated anger to corrosive skepticism was reflected by House appropriators when the NPS director was called on to explain the Delaware Water Gap privy on October 29, 1997. Criticisms and words of disbelief were passed from member to member, fi-

nally getting to Appropriations Committee Chairman Bob Livingston, whose expression of disappointment also included a promise that this incident will be a factor when considering next year's budget request. While a layperson may take the chairman's remarks as soft criticism, on Capitol Hill it translates to an outright threat from the man who holds the NPS purse strings in his hands.

It may be too late to contain the damage from the Delaware Water Gap and Glacier privies, especially if more examples emerge. The government waste angle has been covered by the ABC, NBC, and CBS television networks, both in evening news coverage and in news magazines. If more examples emerge, they will return to the story with retrospectives showing that NPS has learned little from its earlier problems. Fair or not, this is the perspective the American public will most likely be presented with. While the Park Service may be forced once again to focus on damage control, a better long-term solution may be to focus on changing the culture of line management to include a new, subjective management tool: public perception. Adding this tool can begin by educating line managers to ask themselves a series of questions: (1) Can I explain the costs to my satisfaction? (2) Can I explain the costs in terminology and using concepts the lay public understands? (3) Can I explain the costs to a friend outside of the federal government without gen-

erating skepticism? If the answer to any one of these questions is "no," re-evaluate the project. Danger—especially the danger of public and congressional outrage—may lie ahead.

Public perception is subjective, over-simplified, occasionally based on erroneous assumptions, and tends to change over time. It is not the kind of measurable, objective tool that business schools teach. Nonetheless, in a climate where press outlets feed a public response to exposés and Congress responds to both, positive public perception may prove equally or more valuable than standard precepts of objective, good project management.

Using public perception as a tool for measuring management decisions stands in apparent conflict with a number of the standards that were used to complete the Delaware Water Gap project. Life-cycle costing, use of environmentally sensitive materials, use of contextually appropriate architectural design, use of native grasses and planting—all of these add up to what should have been a model project. Except that the project is not perceived as a success, but as an example of government waste.

The conflict is more apparent than it is real. The case of the Delaware Water Gap privy shows some objective problems of over-design and excessive project supervision. Still, even without these excesses, the project would have cost \$200,000 or more. Is it possible that the American public simply is not ready for a primitive rest

room with this price tag, no matter the cost of maintaining a similar, less-expensive structure over 25 years? If rejected in the case of Delaware Water Gap and Glacier, does this mean that the public is unprepared for life-cycle costing, sustainable design, and other progressive building principles when applied to other types of structures?

A real problem facing all government agencies is that the public's familiarity with construction costs is limited to the cost of residential construction and home improvements. What the public understands even less is that the per-item costs for a small-scale project, such as a privy, can cost more than a large-scale project. Further, most people do not know what sustainable design is, while some who do know view it negatively as a fringe eco-philosophy. Given this, testing public acceptability of a project's costs, especially those of a small project, only makes sense.

At stake here is not only the agency's policy of implementing sustainable design and building practices, but the credibility of the National Park Service. The potential for further congressional micromanagement of NPS construction projects, an area where Congress has already proven itself meddlesome, could lead to pressure to abandon or greatly curtail this policy. While sating public anger over a few relatively small projects, the overall effect would be unfortunate not only for the Park

Service, which has sought to be a leader in this area, but for the very resources of parks and their long-term protection.

Gauging public opinion, when not required by environmental review, does not have to be an exhaustive, expensive, or even a formal exercise. Park managers have access to any number of groups—advisory councils, friends groups, civic groups—or members within these groups that can serve as indicators of public receptivity or skepticism. Indeed, these groups or individuals within them are often a park manager's toughest critics.

Retaining broad public support for NPS projects goes beyond just reading an often-fickle litmus test of public opinion. If NPS believes that sustainable construction practices are of value, then it has to embark on a continuous education campaign, both at the national level and at the park level. The policy of sustainable practices is not an obvious part of the NPS's mission, and is impossible to explain in the midst of hostile press coverage or congressional hearings. The Park Service has to change public perception if it doesn't want negative reaction to force it to undercut its ability to carry out its legitimate stewardship responsibilities. At the national level, NPS needs to make explicit to a broader audience the goals of its sustainable practices policy and the desired outcomes and costs associated with implementing that policy, while at the same time giving evi-

dence of revamping project management practices to reduce overall costs.

At the park level, shaping public opinion before the press exposés begin is a task that line managers will have to include in their project management responsibilities. Even a well-structured press campaign to explain the nature of the project, its design particulars, and associated costs may be worth the effort if it results in there not being a story to expose. Continuous discussions with local constituencies may help to blunt criticism or questioning by national press. The goal of public education is not to justify all construction costs, but to develop a constituency that understands the value of sustainable practices. It is up to the Park Service as an agency and to individual park managers to ensure that all costs are reasonable and justifiable.

There will be times, even after discovering that a project fails the public perception test, that the Park Service will choose to carry out the project because the agency believes that it addresses a critical resource protection or visitor services need. The Park Service should not be a weathervane and manage parks solely according to public opinion. Yet it should be aware, as we have witnessed with Delaware Water Gap and with Glacier, that negative public perception over small projects can have disproportionately large ramifications for the entire agency. What the Park Service has to ask itself is: Are these

projects worth risking the public's anger at what it sees as a breach of public trust? Think twice about it. Managing national parks is difficult enough. The National Park Service doesn't need to alienate the parks' largest and most supportive constituency—the American public.

Phil Voorhees, National Parks and Conservation Association, 1776 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20036

Eileen Woodford, National Parks and Conservation Association, Northeast Regional Office, P.O. Box 382372, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02238-2372



In Praise of Platt

Or, What is a 'Real' National Park?

Subtlety, patience, and quietude are ... qualities not often exercised by most [NPS] visitors. In Platt, however, breathtaking vistas and dramatic phenomena have in their stead quiet, pleasant vignettes of nature's ageless ways which can only be appreciated through the cultivation of these qualities of mind and methods of observation.

— Ballard M. Barker & William Carl Jameson,
Platt National Park: Environment and Ecology (1975)

When we entered the park, we lost all stress. There is nothing like the natural beauty of this place and the water. I can't mention the water enough, it is so soothing.

— From a 1997 interview with a family who has visited the springs since 1902

Introduction

In 1928, Horace Albright was asked to succeed an ailing Stephen Mather in the position of National Park Service (NPS) director. Albright was reluctant; he wanted to stay at Yellowstone. But Hubert Work, secretary of the Interior, admonished:

Don't you realize that if you stay in Yellowstone ... you can be moved[?] You think you can just stay in Yellowstone the rest of your life ... but you can't. The next Director of the Park Service could move you from Yellowstone down to Platt National Park. How would you like that? (Albright 1985:223)

Albright reinforced these derogatory sentiments about Platt in his book on the NPS, saying that the national park "was a travesty—a tiny mineral springs in southern Oklahoma, well below national park standards, and we have been trying to get rid of it for years" (Albright 1985: 223). This paper discusses the philosophies, ideals, and criteria through the years pertaining to what

constitutes a national park—and their effects on Platt, once a small but popular national park gem in south-central Oklahoma, now relegated to a district in the larger Chickasaw National Recreation Area.

Establishment of Platt National Park

In the late 1890s, the town site of Sulphur was established by white en-

trepreneurs on Chickasaw and Choctaw Indian land located around numerous mineral and freshwater springs near the Arbuckle Mountains of south-central Oklahoma (Figure 1). Subsequently, efforts were made to set the springs aside as a federal reserve, and to move nearby Sulphur up slope to protect the quality of the waters (Ryan 1901). On November 19, 1902, Congress set aside the Sulphur Springs Reservation and established its boundaries expressly to preserve and protect the springs from contamination, preserve and protect Sulphur and Rock creeks, reserve space for public passage and comfort in connection with the waters, and preserve the beauty of the surrounding grounds, forest, and landscape (USDI 1902). This was accomplished through an agreement between the United States and the Choctaws and Chickasaws, which outlined allotment procedures for these two Indian nations, and also

conveyed 629 acres of their land to the federal government for the reserve and compensated them in the amount of \$20 an acre. In 1904, the Sulphur Springs Reservation was expanded to 848 acres, with the Chickasaw and Choctaw Indian Nations compensated in the amount of \$60 an acre.

In 1906, Congress passed a joint resolution to change the name from Sulphur Springs Reservation to Platt National Park. The name of America's seventh national park (June 29, 1906, 34th Stat. 837) honored deceased Connecticut senator Orville Hitchcock Platt for his membership on the Committee on Indian Affairs and for his contributions to create the reserve (Platt 1901; Brown 1954:25; Arbuckle Historical Society 1984 [1913]; Brown 1937:81). The new national park was managed by the Indian Department, under the direction of the secretary of Interior, and continued to be until 1916, when the NPS was established.

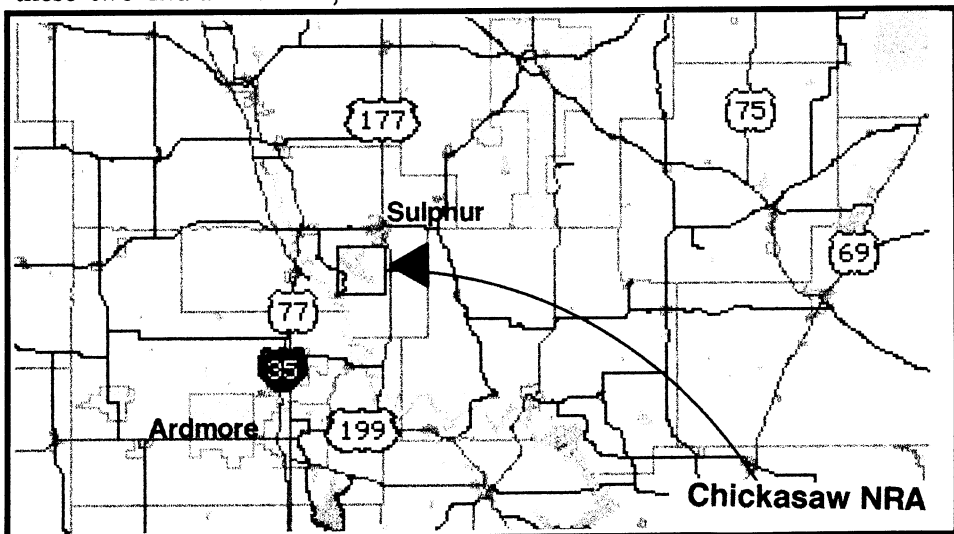


Figure 1. Location map.

According to historian John Ise, “the new park was not highly regarded by the Department of Interior” (Ise 1961:141). This may be an understatement, for Ise mentions that, in 1921, a “great deal of sarcasm and merriment” was exhibited by the appropriation committee at Platt’s expense (Ise 1961:141). The *Congressional Record* shows that Representative Mondell of Wyoming “had taken a shot” at Platt (U.S. House of Representatives 1921:1594). But Representative Swank of Oklahoma heartily defended the park, stating that he wished that

the gentleman from Wyoming could visit Platt National Park ... and partake of the health giving qualities of the water there.... I wish he could see the beautiful scenery in that park.... If he could only bathe in the pools ... and see the many wonderful results achieved from the use of the water he would never again advocate giving away Platt National Park.... Platt National Park belongs to the Nation (U.S. House of Representatives 1921:1594-95).

One retired Platt ranger, interviewed by the authors in 1996, felt that “Platt was one of the older areas, therefore, it didn’t grow up with the rest of them.... [I]t was kind of left there....”

But it wasn’t left there for long. Despite the seemingly valid purposes for which the park was established, and its demonstrated popularity, Platt regularly continued to be threatened with removal from federal protection

by both non-Oklahoma members of Congress and NPS administrators. Concerted efforts were made to disestablish Platt in 1910 and 1913, and they continued at fairly close intervals after the 1916 establishment of the Park Service: in 1924, 1927, 1928, 1930, 1932, 1938, 1941, 1957, and 1958.

For instance, in 1910, only four years after Platt’s establishment, Secretary of the Interior Ballinger indicated his interest in having it ceded back to the state of Oklahoma. Oklahoma members of Congress fought the move, praising the “health giving and invigorating waters of the springs, and above all pointed to the numbers of visitors—more than were registered at some of the worthy parks” (Ise 1961:141-42).

To rub salt into the expanding wound, in 1921, while Platt continued to be beleaguered by threats of removal from the National Park System because of the perception that it did not meet national park standards, NPS Director Stephen T. Mather encouraged Congress to designate Hot Springs Reservation in Arkansas a national park. (Platt and Hot Springs were both renowned as healing mineral springs—although Platt’s waters are cold). Hot Springs was a favorite of Mather’s, and he wanted to increase public awareness of its healthful qualities (Shankland 1951: 82). The reservation’s superintendent, Dr. William P. Parks, claimed that the health-giving waters were a significant factor in the promotion of the health of the nation (Parks 1918).

Representative Taylor from Arkansas boasted that "Hot Springs is one of the seven wonders of the world" with "at least 15,000 people" seeking relief from disease here. "The people of the nation own these waters ... [and] we feel that it should be dignified at least to the extent of being called a national park." Hot Springs became America's eighteenth national park on March 4, 1921 (Norsworthy 1970: 43). After visiting Hot Springs, Secretary of the Interior Hubert Work "seemed to be changing from his former rather hostile attitude toward Hot Springs to one of open-mindedness" (USDI 1923). Representative Mann of Illinois opposed national park status for Hot Springs, but he was unclear as to exactly why. "I will confess that the term 'national park' to me means, perhaps not a definite thing, but a great piece of scenic ground" (Norsworthy 1970: 42). Perhaps his uncertainty was due to the same varying park standards that clouded Platt's status until its national park title was revoked in 1976. John Ise wrote, many years after Hot Springs became a national park, that "there may well be some question as to the wisdom of this [park establishment], for Hot Springs was just hot springs, supposed to have great curative powers in baths, but with no particular scenic merit" (Ise 1961:244). Precisely why Mather and others chose to endorse Hot Springs as a national park, but not Platt, remains unclear to this day.

The attacks against Platt continued. In January 1930, Representative

Louis Cramton of Michigan presented two bills to Congress. The first was designed to change Platt from a national park to a national monument; if that did not work, a second would have transferred Platt to the state for use as a state park (H.R. 8283 and H.R. 8284). (This was the same Cramton who, after visiting Hot Springs years earlier, stated "that he had no idea of the scenic beauty of this little park" (USDI 1923).)

In the late 1930s, there was an attempt to enlarge Platt National Park in an effort to protect all of the unique geological features of the Arbuckle uplift. This resulted in a 1938 study and proposal to add Veteran's Lake to Platt, and change the status from a national park to a national recreation area (USDI 1958b). This plan was strongly opposed by local residents, who feared that the loss of national park status would result in Platt's transfer to the state.

Once a National Park, Always a National Park?

Although the importance of Platt was appreciated by its many local users and constituents, its small size and the efforts of Oklahoma representatives to receive funding for the park led others to believe that Platt was draining federal support from the more important parks (Ise 1961: 186), which further fueled the movement to disestablish Platt as a national park.

The thrust to remove national park status from Platt culminated in a proposal to add the Arbuckle Reservoir



Figure 2. Outing at Platt National Park, early 20th century (photo und

to the NPS management of Platt in 1958, and its significance as a national park again came to the forefront. In the study proposal for the recreation area, it was stated that although the Arbuckle Reservoir would not qualify as a national recreation area, it might offer an opportunity to combine it with Platt National Park and transfer it to the state of Oklahoma. There were no standards and criteria for the evaluation of national recreation areas at that time (USDI 1958a).

When asked by the authors (in a 1996 interview) how the change in status from park to recreation area came about, one Sulphur resident stated that local advocates had believed that if Platt were redesignated as a recreation area, they would receive more funding. Unfortunately, when the change in status occurred, the reason the park had been established as a national park was downplayed: “[W]hen the lakes came along, the springs went by the wayside.... [They] shouldn’t have dropped why the area was created to start with.” In a companion interview, another local resident discussed the widespread confusion regarding the possibility of designating Platt as a national recreation area, and what “recreation area” meant. It seemed many people rationalized that, because Platt was an area where picnicking occurred, as well as swimming in Travertine Creek’s swimming holes, and because picnicking and swimming fall under the heading of recreation, then the place must be a

recreation area. The same resident said that she didn’t feel the name change made any difference in the use of the original acreage of Platt, but there was concern by long-time residents who felt that the loss of its status as a national park was merely a stepping stone to the future conveyance of both areas to the state of Oklahoma. “It was a genuine heartfelt concern,” she believed, for the community felt a great sense of pride about the park.

Nonetheless, in 1976 Platt was redesignated Chickasaw National Recreation Area by Congress. They did so at least partly on the advice of the chairman of the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments. In a memorandum of October 6, 1971, to the secretary of the Interior, he spoke of criteria for national parks that had been developed after the initial authorization of Platt, criteria “that area does not meet” (USDI 1971b).¹ This represented a reversal of the Advisory Board’s previous recommendation, made in 1966, which stated that the status of Platt National Park should remain unchanged.

At a 1975 hearing before the House Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation to establish

¹ Dwight Rettie makes an important point that could be used to counter this argument when he says that he sees “no reason why parks that were brought into the System in 1925 (but pick any year) should be required to meet the same criteria intended to serve as a filter for new parks.... ‘There ought not be any “lesser” parks in the National Park System’” (Rettie 1996).

Chickasaw National Recreation Area, Representative M. Taylor asked, "What would be the difference in management of this park if it were changed to become a recreation area?" Douglas Wheeler, the deputy assistant secretary of the Interior for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, responded that "it is a difference in degree and emphasis ... from natural preservation to a more intensive recreation use by the visitors" (USDI 1975). In the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs Report of March 3, 1976, concerning the proposed recreation area, the committee described Platt as an "anomaly arising from the early conservation movement prior to the creation of the National Park Service" (USDI 1976:1).

Even with all the statewide support for Platt's national park status—and despite the fact that the Advisory Board had once recommended that Platt's status should remain unchanged—after all was said and done, in 1976 Platt lost its national park status and its name was changed to Chickasaw National Recreation Area.² The name "Chickasaw" was suggested by the Chickasaw tribe, which had requested several years earlier to change the name of the national park to memorialize the cession of their former lands for the reserve in 1902 (Chickasaw Historical Society of Southern Oklahoma 1968). The use of "Chickasaw" was

positively received in Oklahoma; however, the change in status was not.

But What Is a 'Real' National Park?

Before Platt National Park was established in 1906, there were neither federal policies nor firm criteria for the establishment of national parks, nor was there yet any National Park Service to manage or protect them. Although Platt's small size was often one of the reasons it was targeted for removal as a national park, the underlying issue was not size, but rather *differing standards concerning what national parks should be*, based on individual ideals of what constitutes a national park at given points in time.

For instance, in 1924, Director Mather wrote:

In general the policy of considering and admitting to the system only those areas giving expression to the highest types of scenery has been quite consistently followed. The national park system has been developed along wise and sane lines and it will take wise and sane judgment to resist the demand for inclusion of areas that do not measure up in the highest terms to the high standard that has been set for that system (USDI 1924).

In 1931, the annual report of the director of the National Park Service addressed NPS standards and stated:

Our ideals contemplate a national park system of primitive lands free from all present and

² In the process more acreage and the Bureau of Reclamation's Arbuckle Recreation Area (USDI 1966) were added as well.

future commercial utilization, but, like all ideals, they can not be uniformly attained in this day and age (USDI 1931:6).

It should be noted that, during the period of the 1920s and 1930s, there existed an elitist attitude that only areas having spectacular *beauty* ("beauty is in the eye of the beholder" notwithstanding) and vast size deserved to be national parks (Rothman 1989). Prior to the Antiquities Act of 1906, which allowed for the establishment of national monuments, many areas that should have been preserved "did not meet the amorphous standards for national parks.... A problem of semantics plagued such areas" if they did not have the *scenery* that characterized the national park class at the time (Rothman 1989:58).

In 1932, Louis Cramton, who had become the special attorney to the secretary of the Interior, was asked to make a careful study of the *Congressional Record* and all other legislative documents relating to Yellowstone National Park, to determine what Congress, in initiating the National Park System, intended the national parks to be, and what policies it expected would govern their administration.

Some of the key criteria for parks that Cramton identified, as summarized here, indicate that they should:

- Be dedicated and set apart for the benefit and enjoyment of the people and be of national interest because of their value from a scenic, scientific, or historical point of

view.

- Possess variety and have widespread interest, appealing to many individuals, regardless of residence, because of outstanding merit in their class of park.
- Be enjoyed and used by the present generation, with their preservation unspoiled for the future; to conserve the scenery, the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein.
- Provide inspiration.
- Relate development to their inherent values to promote beneficial use by the people (USDI 1932).

Note that there are no references to "grand expanses" of land here. And, although national parks continued to frequently be endowed with scenic grandeur, no reference back to the 1916 National Park Service Organic Act indicated any requirement for great expanses of scenic land. In point of fact, the 1918 administrative policy directive of the NPS (known as the Lane letter) specifically states that "it is not necessary that a national park should have a large area" (Albright 1985:72). This policy does recommend that "new park projects ... should seek to find scenery of supreme and distinctive quality or some natural feature so extraordinary or unique as to be of national interest and importance" (Albright 1985:72). It seems unfair that Platt was discriminated against on this basis of some unstated requirement for "large expanses of scenic lands." Platt's scenic beauty is unquestionable, and its nat-

ural features are undoubtedly of national interest.

Moreover, if the issue of *visitation* had at the time been a measure of park worthiness, Platt could easily have set the standard for such a criterion. In 1914, Platt National Park's visitation was second to Hot Springs Reservation, and ranked above Yosemite and Yellowstone (USDI 1916). By 1919—the same year that a visitation figure of 64,000 was used as a basis for evaluating the successful change in the status of Maine's Sieur de Monts National Monument to Lafayette National Park³ (Rothman 1989:105-106)—Platt's visitation was 107,976.

In the 1971 publication *National Park Service Criteria for Parklands*, the criteria for natural areas are cited as outstanding geological formations, biota of relative stability maintaining itself under natural conditions, and an ecological community significantly illustrating the process of succession and restoration to a natural condition following disruptive change. Platt met all of these essential criteria—and then some. Not only does Platt retain natural significance “following disruptive change” due to the removal of the original town site of Sulphur, it also possesses unique cultural significance: it is a National Park Service-designed landscape, with extensive elements constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) under the park's master plan.

³ The park's name was changed again, to Acadia National Park, in January 1929.

Furthermore, its history as a hydrotherapy resort at a time before medicines such as penicillin had been discovered fits the criterion for national significance related to the concept of historical areas as “[s]tructures or sites associated significantly with an important event that outstandingly represents some great idea or ideal of the American people” (USDI 1971a:13).

In sum, it appears that Platt National Park lost its national park status during a struggle on all fronts to understand *what national parks should be*.

In Praise of Platt

Looking back, it seems clear that Platt qualified as a “real national park” because of its pre-eminent value for *people*. Although the original park area is now the Platt District of Chickasaw National Recreation Area, for those visitors who enjoy and love this area it will always retain the dignity and qualities that it was recognized for from the very beginning.

In 1949, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., author of the NPS Organic Act statement of purpose, wrote to Conrad Wirth, expressing the philosophies of both men's fathers regarding the deep and true role of the National Park Service:

[There is] something of much more profound importance in park work than is generally recognized Constant and compelling interest in and sympathy with, the *people* [emphasis

added] using the parks—on finding one's chief satisfaction in appreciative friendly observation and study of the ways in which those people actually use, and derive pleasure and benefit from any given park, and in helping and guiding them by every available means to get the best values from their use of it ... that are made possible by the inherent characteristics of that particular park and by the widely various personal characteristics of the people themselves (Wirth 1980:21).

Platt seems to exemplify this view. At its heart, Platt *is* people. It is a place that excels in providing a healthful, relaxing natural environment where people come to drink curative waters, enjoy an early morning breakfast cooked on an open fire in a CCC-constructed picnic area, contemplate the sunset from Bromide Hill, view the purest waters emanat-

ing from the earth, and swim in the cool, naturally formed (and CCC-augmented) pools of Travertine Creek. Platt is a place rich in *tradition*, where people can experience a preserved natural area and cultural landscape as their families did for decades before them.

Perhaps what Horace Albright and others of his time in the late 1920s did not understand or acknowledge was this value that *people* placed on Platt—and value to people, after all, is what makes national parks important in the first place. Indeed, Oklahomans prized and respected Platt's national park status, and fought for decades to retain it as a national park, and to protect the qualities for which it was established. The Platt District continues to be a prime example of what all national parks strive to accomplish, which is not only protecting natural and cultural values, but also providing an environment where people understand and experience these values.

Acknowledgments

This paper was initiated in the process of conducting a special emphasis ethnographic study at Chickasaw National Recreation Area with funding provided by the NPS ethnography program. The authors would like to thank the following people for their assistance in locating sources or their interest and support of this project: Retha Condriff, Muriel Crespi, Paul Gleeson, David Harmon, Jane Harvey, Nancy Hori, Rosalind Jones, Barry Mackintosh, Gail McCurry, David Nathanson, Judy Reeder, Ken Ruhnke, Kay Sallee, Richard Sellars, Lonnie Shaffer, Sharon Shugart, Laura Soullière, Susie Staples, Phyllis Stromme, John Welch, and, Don Wollenhaupt. The authors would like to particularly acknowledge the editorial work of Jane Harvey in the preparation of this article.

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Jacilee Wray, Olympic National Park, 600 E. Park Avenue, Port Angeles, Washington 98362

Alexa Roberts, National Park Service, P.O. Box 728, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504-0728



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