

The National Conference on State Parks: Reflections on Organizational Genealogy

“On the morning of Monday, January 10, in the capacious rooms of the splendid Fort Des Moines Hotel, at 11 o'clock, [a] far-fetched assembly, representing twenty-five states ... got down to business and made history with definite and precisioned step.” Edgar R. Harlan, curator of the Iowa State Historical Department, wrote these words to mark what he intuitively understood was a historic occasion: the organizational meeting of what would become the National Conference on State Parks, convened in Des Moines, Iowa, in 1921. Harlan also was secretary of the Iowa Board of Conservation and, in this capacity, served as Iowa's point-person for organizing the meeting.

In the decade following that initial meeting of minds, the National Conference on State Parks (NCSP) emerged as the most important forum for debating ideological as well as administrative issues of park development and management. It provided a broader framework for discussion than other organizations concerned with park development and management at the time, notably the American Institute of Park Executives, the American Society of Landscape Architects, and the Playground and Recreation Association of America. However, during the late 1930s a process of institutional transmigration began, a process that would lead the NCSP into a complexly linked set of organizations, the very nature of which reflected continuing ambivalence in society about the purpose and functions of parks.

In 1974, the National Conference on State Parks ceased to exist by that name, but two organizations claim its legacy. One is the National Association of State Park Directors, organized within the NCSP in 1962. The other is the National Society for Park Resources, which functions as a section of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), a non-profit consortium organized in 1965 and dedicated to advancing parks for human leisure. The significance of this bifurcation is as subtle as it is complex. Reflecting on the motives that brought approximately two hundred people together in January of 1921 and that animated debate within the NCSP during the next decade illuminates the issues and concerns that still bind as well as distinguish those who influence the management of public lands.



Banquet at the Hotel Fort Des Moines, January 11, 1921
Des Moines, Iowa

Two hundred men and women assembled in Des Moines, but this overstates the magnitude of the 1921 conference since more than half of those in attendance were Iowans, even through the invitation list numbered more than 1,500 people drawn from all forty-eight states, plus Washington, D.C., and Canada. Moreover, the Des Moines gathering was billed as the first National Conference on Parks, not the first national conference on *state* parks. This discrepancy caused no little confusion for about two years. Nonetheless, the first conference drew an eclectic group, and this was the source of its strength as a forum for debate. The crowd included representatives from a handful of existing state depart-

ments of conservation or state park boards; municipal park administrators; prominent natural scientists and landscape architects; and representatives from the Sierra Club, the National Municipal League, the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the Garden Club of America, the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey, the Federal Highway Council, and the National Park to Park Highway Association. Delegates also included a wide range of local and state organizations: birding clubs, historical societies, farm and garden associations, wildflower preservation societies, commercial clubs, civic leagues, nature study groups, and the like. In addition, there were a

few publishers of outdoor magazines, although press coverage of the event was minimal.

The assembly of 1921 was, as Harlan claimed, a historic occasion, but the history as it unfolded was not exactly made with the same "definite and precisioned step" that apparently brought conferees to Des Moines. The first few years of the NCSP went by more like a high school marching band, each row marching to its own beat and the whole unified only by forward momentum. As a case in point, Harlan captured something of the early confusion in a letter to former Secretary of the Interior John Barton Payne, who served as the first NCSP president and chairman of the board. "[N]otwithstanding the immeasurable benefits I have received from the two meetings with which I have been connected," Harlan wrote, referring to the 1921 and 1922 conferences, "I have never yet caught the fundamental purpose nor the source or inspiration of the enterprise." To another correspondent Harlan wrote: "I do not quite gather the source of the influences that are, or were behind the meeting, nor the objects and purposes. I feel that it is almost wholly the creature of Mr. Mather of the National Park Service, and that *that* service is intended to be beneficial."

Stephen Mather, the ambitious first director of the National Park Service, was indeed the instigator, although he either never tried or was unable to dictate completely the direction the National Conference on

State Parks would take during the 1920s. Mather's reason for promoting a state park organization was fairly transparent. The Park Service was inundated with requests for creating national parks in areas that he and his staff felt were "more of local interest." National park designation was to be reserved for areas of "supreme and distinctive quality" or containing "some natural feature so unique as to be of national importance." Mather thus saw state parks as a medium for protecting and preserving places that were less than "supreme" in their scenic quality or rarity.

Mather's purpose gave rise to the perception of state parks as simply the second tier of a nationwide park system. However, in Iowa, NCSP's birthplace, the creators of the state park system neither intended it to be a smaller-scale model of the national system, nor did they entirely appreciate the National Park Service trying to impose standards and guidelines for the development and administration of state parks. An important goal of those who framed Iowa's 1917 State Park Act was to use state parks as a vehicle for creating a central state agency that could address interrelated resource conservation problems: reforestation, lake preservation, water quality, soil conservation, wildlife protection, the preservation of rare plant species and unusual geologic formations, and the preservation of historic and prehistoric sites. Recreational use was considered one function of state parks, but not the reason for being. For that matter, the 1916

legislation creating the National Park Service did not mention recreation. Mather, however, being a pragmatist, cultivated public support for the new federal park system by emphasizing tourism. Texans thought in a similar mode. Governor Pat Neff and D. E. Colp, the long-time chairman of the Texas State Parks Board (1923-1935), unabashedly promoted state parks adjacent to principal highways as a means to increase automobile tourism within the state and thereby stimulate the state economy. Likewise, Governor Arthur Hyde of Missouri, envisioned a "chain of parks" that would attract tourists to drive Missouri's new highway system.

In retrospect, there seems to have been *no* common mission among those who participated in the National Conference on State Parks, which had formally adopted that name by the 1922 conference. Instead of fostering a common mission, NCSP provided a venue for seeking "common ground" as state park administrators and activists grappled with a host of issues that came wrapped up in the designation of "state parks." At one extreme, J. Horace McFarland, president of the American Civic Association, saw state parks as a recreational "square deal"—outdoor playgrounds for families who did not have the means to travel to far-away national parks. At the other extreme was Thomas Macbride, the source of inspiration for Iowa's state parks. Macbride, a botanist at the University of Iowa, argued that "real" state parks should be

construed as "conservation parks." But beyond distinguishing "conservation parks" from baseball parks and auto parks, Macbride, like others, resorted to vague language when he tried to define his terms. The difficulty that state park advocates had in defining their territory was underscored when the NCSP committee charged with drafting a uniform state park law reported at the second annual conference that, after a year of study, it did not think the task possible.

If an agreed-upon definition of "state park" remained elusive, there were still concrete issues to deal with. One issue agitating many people was "the transportation question," a euphemism for the weekend "nature lovers" who stripped park roads of their wildflowers while motoring through and the automobile campers who found state parks a convenient place to gather firewood and leave their trash. On this issue, common ground was hard to find, yet E. R. Harlan, for one, considered the transportation question "vital" to any serious discussion of state parks.

As the first secretary of the NCSP, Harlan corresponded with many people. Therefore, he was in a position to know how eager commercial interests were to be central figures in the state park movement. Among those attending the Des Moines conference was Charles Hatfield, general manager of the St. Louis Convention, Publicity and Tourist Bureau; also president of the Associated Advertising Clubs, president of the National

Association of Convention Bureaus, and an officer in the national Chamber of Commerce. Several months after the Des Moines gathering, Hatfield proposed that St. Louis host the second conference, and that he and his staff of sixteen *stage* the event. By this time Harlan was growing weary of trying to find the means to clear up a stack of unpaid bills from the 1921 meeting and to publish the conference proceedings—which never were published in their entirety, only in abstract form in *Iowa Conservation*, a short-lived quarterly published by the Iowa Conservation Association. Nevertheless, an exchange of letters between Harlan and Hatfield indicates that Harlan, even though he was anxious to have someone with administrative talent take charge of the fledgling organization, was politely skeptical of Hatfield's motives.

Presumably, others shared Harlan's skepticism, since Hatfield issued a "special bulletin" that went out with invitations to attend the first meeting of the National Federation of Outdoor Clubs, which *was* held in St. Louis in April 1922. Hatfield's bulletin emphatically stated that this new federation was not being organized in opposition to the National Park Service. At the same time, the invitation itself made it clear that no federal or state officials were welcome. The proposed National Federation of Outdoor Clubs was to be a meeting of park and playground associations, rod and gun clubs, garden clubs, floral protective societies, wildlife protective associations, good roads pro-

motors, boys' and girls' clubs, and other privately sponsored groups. A month later, the second gathering of the National Conference on State Parks met separately at Bear Mountain Inn, located in New York's Palisades Interstate Park. From that point on, there was greater distance between those who were concerned with the purposes, development, and administration of state parks, *per se*, and those who were more focused on promoting recreation and automobile tourism in general.

Despite this sifting of what might be loosely termed public and private interests, the genius of the state park movement is that it attracted, and managed to hold, remarkably diverse interests. One powerful constituency considered outdoor recreation to be the primary function of state parks. In large part this view was shaped not only to the increasing affordability of automobiles, but to the increasing availability of leisure time among a growing middle class. At the 1921 meeting, William G. Howard, assistant superintendent of New York's state forest, noted that the Adirondack and Catskill state parks were "within twelve hours' journey of twenty million people.... From this point of view, they are accordingly the most important vacation grounds in the United States."

Others saw in state parks a way to link natural resource conservation with social reform. President Theodore Roosevelt laid the groundwork for this linkage at the 1908 National Conservation Con-

gress, when he advocated a federal public health program for the "conservation of human health." Contemporary writers thereafter began to speak of "human conservation," an idea that struck a responsive chord in women especially. Women became willing campaigners for state parks as a means to address multiple social concerns. By promoting parks and conservation, women felt they were promoting better public health, especially among children, and instilling in youth, through such activities as nature education, a love of country. In this way, state parks became part and parcel of the grand experiments in social engineering associated with the progressive era.

The quest for human conservation, however, did not belong exclusively to women. The Indiana contingent appealed to the 1921 assembly to think of state parks as "social safety valves on the seething and strained boilers of humanity..." Richard Lieber, the first director of the Indiana Department of Conservation, who also served as both the president and chair of the NCSP board for many years in the 1930s and 1940s, believed firmly that human conservation was the primary function of parks. W. O. Filley of the State Park Commission of Connecticut also extolled the restorative value of parks at the 1921 meeting. After quoting a bit from the 22nd Psalm, he announced his belief that restoring the "soul of man is the fundamental principle of all park work."

The preservation of rare or disap-

pearing natural resources—plant species, wildlife species, and landform types—motivated a third component, which included many natural scientists. Landscape architect Jens Jensen of Chicago made an eloquent plea for state parks as preserves of natural areas at the 1921 conference. Like others who were driven by preservationist motives, Jensen attached moral, even spiritual, value to state parks. "Their value," in his words, "isn't the matter of play or sport, it is not the matter of just camping and having some fun with your friends. It is something deeper. It means building up the character of the people.... Because the one who understands the message of the wayside flower and the one who feels the beauty of whatever is left of the flowers that once covered the prairies of Iowa and the bluffs of Illinois, that one learns tolerance and love."

Conservation and park advocates also tended to conceive of natural history and cultural history as two sides of the same coin. If coming generations were to understand and appreciate their heritage, the legacy must encompass a tangible, cultural history as well as a natural history. From this perspective, state parks were another means to preserve "places of historic interest," although that term must be understood within the context of the time. Prehistoric sites, such as Indian mounds, represented cultures past, so everyone agreed on their significance. Beyond that, definitions of "historic place" tended to fuse with a desire to foster

nationalism, or at least a distinctive national identity.

Since historic sites came to be considered afterthoughts of most state parks systems as the years rolled by, it is worth remembering that the creation of historical parks actually predated the setting aside of public land for scenic, scientific, and recreational purposes. New York established the first state historical park in 1849, when it purchased the site in Newburgh where George Washington had headquartered during the Revolutionary War. After the Civil War, states began to acquire battlefield sites. Sites associated with the Indian Wars followed. When the NCSP published its first survey of state parks in 1922, ten states reported a total of thirty-four state parks established for the principal purpose of preserving a historic site. Most of the state parks in North Dakota, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Texas were, in fact, historic sites.

The long list of resolutions passed at the close of the 1921 conference reflected the range of concerns and issues that energized those in attendance. Among other things, the delegates professed a common belief that:

- Public parks were necessary for the best development of patriotism, of efficient manhood and womanhood, and of business and civic life in the United States;
- Parks should include not only ample and organized provision for recreation, but also preserve areas embracing the varied types of

prairie, forest, lake, river, and mountain scenery;

- The preservation of wildlife, without and within parks, was one of the great duties of the current generation;
- Either as public parks or monuments, important historic sites and trails should be preserved, marked, and maintained for instruction and inspiration;
- Public parks should be within easy access of all people; and
- A great system of inter-city, interstate, and national park highways was desirable, lined on either side with characteristic trees and wildflowers "to serve as memorials of the past."

Conspicuously missing from the resolutions was the transportation question E. R. Harlan raised in his 1922 letter to John Barton Payne. The omission suggests how deeply divided park advocates were on this subject. Stephen Mather, however, was not so conflicted. In his formal address to the Des Moines assembly, Mather extolled the virtues of campgrounds in state parks to aid the "development of motor tourist travel." A year later he introduced the goal of establishing a state park every hundred miles from coast to coast, an idea that soon became the NCSP slogan.

By the third conference, held at Turkey Run State Park in Indiana in 1923, there was frank disagreement about the fundamental purposes of state parks. Barrington Moore,

speaking on behalf of the Ecological Society of America, forerunner of The Nature Conservancy, observed that, by this time, "the primary incentive" for creating state parks seemed to be "outdoor recreation, to supply public playgrounds for the congested populations of the cities; often ... scenic features are unimportant."

Lengthy discussion that year over the wording of Article II of the proposed Constitution underscored Moore's point. As initially drafted, Article II began: "The objects [of the NCSP] shall be to urge upon our governments, local, county, state and national, the acquisition of sites suitable for recreation and preservation of wild life...." However, after three sessions of debate that focused, in large part, on the relationship between forest reserves and parks, the delegates finally accepted a much broader statement that read: "The objects shall be to urge upon our governments, local, county, state and national, the acquisition of land and water areas suitable for recreation, and preservation of wild life, as a form of the conservation of our national resources, until eventually there shall be public parks, forests, and preserves within easy access of all the people of our Nation...."

Richard Lieber, among others, argued forcefully in favor of keeping park work and forestry separate. In the end, however, Barrington Moore persuaded his colleagues to adopt the broader perspective. "[W]e are pulling apart," he noted, "and that is why we have not gotten any further.

We must work together.... With your forestry you get recreation as a part of it. If you drop out forestry you make recreation the sole thing...." Ultimately, the differences of opinion that might have factionalized the state park movement seem to have been smoothed over in three ways: (1) by allowing the definition of a state park to remain fluid and expansive; (2) by elevating "scenic quality" to the status of "natural resource"; and (3) by urging that the threats posed by outdoor recreational use be curbed through educational campaigns and programs.

For the remainder of the decade, state park directors, boards, and commissions increasingly turned their attention to discussing administrative matters and spent relatively less time debating potentially divisive issues. In this regard, *A State Park Anthology*, a collection of conference addresses and articles from the 1920s, is revealing because it provides a bird's-eye view of how the inner circle conceived the mission of state parks at the end of the decade—just a few years before federal conservation and work relief programs would vastly alter the landscape of state parks. Biologist Stanley Coulter of Purdue University, who chaired the Indiana Conservation Commission for a time in the 1920s, defined scenery as a "natural resource" in an article of the same title. In words that evoked the sentimentality of Jens Jensen, he claimed that the "creative silences" and the "vastness" of nature gave "new values to life." "We long to

push back horizons," he wrote, "to escape from the littlenesses which have starved our souls.... Scenery is a natural resource beyond compare, if through its vastnesses it touches our souls and makes them more eager for greater and better work."

Defining "scenery" as a natural resource did two things. It offered a democratically broad concept that captured everything from spectacular redwood forests to generically picturesque topography. Nature may not have distributed superlative landscapes equally or evenly across the land, but every state could claim "natural scenery." It also sidestepped the overtones of academic elitism inherent in assertions that state parks should be "used" to preserve unique, rare, and threatened resources—be they plant, animal, geologic, or cultural—for their scientific and educational value alone.

Preserving natural scenery and providing for outdoor recreation thus became the agreed-upon twin functions of state parks during the latter 1920s. By the end of the decade, this rationale was so widely accepted that landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., son of the more famous landscape architect who designed Central Park and the Biltmore Estate gardens, created a typology of ways in which people expressed "the intrinsic value they placed on natural scenery and outdoor recreation," as if state parks were simply the inevitable result of commonly shared values. His typology included: (1) automobile tourism, which Olmsted called "one

of the 'major sports' of California"; (2) the acquisition of private vacation cabins; and (3) the frequenting of commercially operated hotels, resorts, camps, and restaurants. Olmsted was no sentimentalist. As he saw it, scenic and recreational lands were "the final things which economic prosperity enable[d] people to buy." In his no-nonsense view, states had a dual role to play in conserving scenic and recreational resources for public use. One of these was public education—to teach the public how to use scenic and recreational areas. The second responsibility, in his estimation, was to take direct measures to prevent the unwarranted destruction and exploitation of resources, either by proprietary control—i.e., acquiring parks and other public landholdings—or by regulation under the police power.

During the latter 1920s, the National Conference became increasingly pragmatic, although at the fifth annual conference, held at Skyland in Virginia, landscape architect James Greenleaf was still trying to stifle the energy of outdoor recreation boosters and automobile enthusiasts. In pointed remarks aimed at Texas Governor Pat Neff, he warned against the "vulgarizing" of state parks, and suggested replacing the slogan "A state park every hundred miles" with "A State Park wherever Nature smiles: a motor camp every hundred miles." Nevertheless, by the late 1920s the debate over defining the term "state park" had given way to prescriptive guidelines for selecting

lands that were suitable for state parks. Geologist Wilbur Nelson, who also was a member of the NCSP board of directors, was among those who offered a list of “fundamental” criteria. In Nelson’s opinion, the three most essential factors to consider in the selection of state park land were: (1) a population without space to play; (2) an unpopulated area; and (3) transportation facilities between them. “Without a large population,” Nelson flatly stated, “there would be no use for State Parks.”

Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. was less blunt in his 1929 recommendations to the state of California, but no less pragmatic. Olmsted offered four “chief criteria for determining what areas should be included in an ‘ultimate, comprehensive State park system’.”

- First, “[t]hey should be sufficiently distinctive and notable to interest people from comparatively distant parts of the State..., not merely good enough to attract people from the region in which they are situated.”
- Second, “[t]hey should be characterized by scenic and recreational resources of kinds which are unlikely to be ... conserved and made available for enjoyment under private ownership.”
- Third, according to Olmsted, state parks “should be as nearly as possible just sufficient in number and extent and kind” to fill public demand that could not be supplied through local parks, national

parks, national forests, and scenic highways.

- Fourth, state parks “should be geographically distributed with a view to securing a wide and representative variety of types for the State as a whole.”

Prescriptions for developing state parks went hand-in-hand with guidelines for selecting state parks. Here, too, the balance was delicate, but public demand for recreational uses was often the controlling factor. Albert M. Turner, who undertook one of the first state park surveys in the United States for the Connecticut Park and Forest Commission, offered common sense as the rule-of-thumb. To the question of “How far shall we develop a State Park?”, Turner answered: “Just so far as its anticipated use in the immediate future seems to demand; and if any doubt exists about the anticipated use, wait and see.” Continuing, he reported that “[i]n Connecticut ... we like to start with the best natural features we can get title to, and keep such work as must be done in harmony with the picture. There are no rules for such work; it is an art.”

During the 1930s, the art and artifice of state park development became much more standardized. Federal aid through various New Deal agencies—especially the Civilian Conservation Corps—stimulated an unprecedented level of park development throughout the United States. Thirty-seven states acquired new lands and expanded their park sys-

tems. The CCC program prompted another eight states to establish their first state parks. New Deal work-relief and conservation programs brought state park agencies into much closer cooperation with the National Park Service. Most certainly, the network of contacts established by the National Conference facilitated cooperation. Additionally, the NCSP's executive secretary, Herbert Evison, moved to the National Park Service, where he coordinated work with state park agencies.

New Deal programs also firmly established the National Park Service as the arbiter of park design at all levels: national, state, and local. As a result, state parks began to look much more like national parks because rustic-style buildings constructed of native materials and sited in naturalistic settings became *the* park aesthetic. And most of that new construction was designed to accommodate, enhance, and stimulate outdoor recreation.

If Iowa's history is any guide, New Deal funds for park development also generated an undercurrent of resentment. This was because federal aid vastly expanded the recreational potential of state parks and, in the process, undermined the resource protection goals that had been an important component of Iowa's state park management in the 1920s. Thus, while state parks may have looked more like smaller-scale national parks when the New Deal came to an end on the eve of World War II, it is not clear just how many state park agen-

cies thought their park systems should function like national parks. That assessment awaits additional studies of state park administration.

In any case, NCSP became much less visible after 1935, when it became loosely federated with the American Civic Association, the National Conference on City Planning, the American Institute of Park Executives, and the American Park Society. At the same time, NCSP maintained its strong ties with the National Park Service. NCSP became the pipeline for gathering statistical data on state parks, published annually by NPS under the general title of *State Park Statistics*. More structure was added to the relationship in 1956, when NCSP and NPS implemented a program known as Park Practice, which resulted in a series of publications: *Design; Grist; Guidelines; and Trends*.

A new wave of demand for outdoor recreation in the 1950s and 1960s, together with new federal funding initiatives designed to meet that demand—especially the 1964 Land and Water Conservation Fund Act—caused members of NCSP to re-examine the organization's relationship with the National Park Service as well as its goals in relation to other professional organizations. State park directors, in particular, expressed concern that NPS and other federal agencies were beginning to dominate the organization and that, as NCSP affiliated with other park and conservation groups, the organization's long-standing focus on state

parks was beginning to fade. As a result, state park directors formed the National Association of State Park Directors in 1962 as an independent organization but still affiliated with NCSP.

With state park directors semi-detached from NCSP, the organization quickly moved into closer alliance with other organizations and with the National Park Service. In 1965, NCSP joined with three other organizations—the National Recreation Association, the American Recreation Society, and the American Institute of Park Executives—to form the core of the National Recreation and Park Association. The fiftieth anniversary of NCSP, celebrated by reconvening in Des Moines in 1971, marked another turning point. By that time, the emphasis on state parks no longer reflected the organization's "breadth of mission, especially in light of the new national emphasis on conservation and the environment." Consequently, in 1974 NCSP abandoned its long-standing name in favor of the National Society for Park Resources—NSPR). Today, NSPR functions as one of eleven affiliates of the National Recreation and Park Association. Their common goal is to promote recreation and leisure services in park and recreation agencies at all levels.

The broad forum for debate constructed in the 1920s thus dissolved in the 1960s and early 1970s. The National Association of State Park Directors preserved NCSP's comprehensive focus on the mix of devel-

opment and management issues as they pertained specifically to state parks, while the National Society for Park Resources continued to advance support for providing recreation in state as well as national and local parks. In this sense, NSPR carried on the mission of those who, like Richard Lieber, J. Horace McFarland, and W. O. Filley, emphasized the restorative value of parks. While their modern counterparts prefer the term "human leisure" to "human conservation," the underlying concern remains essentially the same: to improve society by encouraging individuals to make constructive use of leisure time in outdoor activities.

Organizational evolution underscores the enduring nature of fundamental and sometimes conflictive issues in park development and management, although they may be manifest in modern forms. As trends in outdoor recreation change, for instance, the debate over appropriate park development continues. At one time, children's playgrounds generally were considered inappropriate in state parks; today, many state parks provide not only playgrounds but swimming pools and other recreational facilities designed specifically for youth or for families with young children. During the early years, some administrators grudgingly admitted golf courses into their state parks. Today, that same apprehension may be directed at equestrians demanding miles of riding trails and horse camps. The transportation question, of course, has been an-

swered by successive compromises. The environmental impact of the 1920s flivver pales in comparison with that of motor homes, all-terrain vehicles, mountain bikes, snowmobiles, wave runners, and high-powered motor boats.

Behind issues such as these is the central and timeless dilemma of public access versus resource protection. It is the maintaining of this delicate balance that stimulated much of the debate for which the National Conference on State Parks provided a forum in the 1920s, and that became part of the rationale for an independent association of state park directors in the 1960s. Through the decades, "the public" has claimed rights to ever-intensive uses in order to enjoy public lands. People have every right to enjoy access to public lands, but unregulated access to common resources also invites their destruction. Thus, parks must function both as recreation areas and as resource banks.

The inherent dualism of parks is, of course, reflected in the ways they have been, and are, managed. The Progressive-era idea of "wise use," which meant balancing resource use with resource protection in order to achieve orderly development, gradually evolved into "multiple use," another broad concept that opened the way for maximizing the recreational potential of public lands, sometimes with little regard for resource carrying capacity.

The names of organizations may change again as the future of state parks unfolds and new challenges to park management arise. There is a need, for example, to re-examine the role of state parks in relation to vast demographic changes taking place in the United States. Although the Civil Rights movement eliminated segregated state parks in the South, the stigma lingers, and the profile of park users still does not include minority groups to any great extent. In addition, as urban development reaches farther and farther into the countryside, and as rural lands are subjected to more intensive production modes, parks and preserves will become more and more valued as depositories of the past; their scientific and educational values will assume greater importance vis-à-vis the reworked landscape around them. The fundamental issues that gave life to the National Conference on State Parks in 1921 most assuredly will provide the thread of continuity that links future park directors with their predecessors. A common vision of parks as special places, whether they be they valued for their scenic quality, their recreational amenities, their scientific attributes, or their educational potential, makes it incumbent that public land management agencies serve as society's fulcrum to balance demands of "the public" who would enjoy parks to environmental ruin with those of "the public" who would unnecessarily limit access to them.

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Endnotes

[George Bennett], "The National Park Conference at Des Moines, Iowa, January 10-11-12, 1921," *Iowa Conservation* 5 (January-March 1921), 14.

The American Institute of Park Executives was founded in 1898 as the New England Association of Park Superintendents. The American Society of Landscape Architects organized in 1899. The Playground and Recreation Association of America, founded in 1906, became the National Recreation Association in 1930.

Harlan to Payne, 29 November 1922, Harlan Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines.

Harlan to Mrs. H.S. Vincent, 27 July 1922, Harlan Papers.

Stephen T. Mather, "The National State Park Conference," undated announcement of the 1922 NCSP, Palisades Interstate Park, 1922; Harlan to Dr. H. R. Francis and Major W.A. Welch, 1 September 1922, Harlan Papers; Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience*, 2nd edition (Lincoln: Univ. Nebraska Press, 1987), 217; Robert Shankland, *Steve Mather of the National Parks*, 3rd edition (New York: Knopf, 1970), Chapter 14.

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Proceedings of the Second National Conference on State Parks (Washington, D.C.: NCSP, 1923), 56-57.

Thomas H. Macbride, "Parks and Parks," *Bulletin: Iowa State Parks* 2 (1922), 13-14. *Proceedings of the Second National Conference on State Parks*, 147.

Harlan to Payne, 19 November 1922.

Hatfield to Harlan, 20 September 1921; Harlan to Hatfield, 3 October 1921; Hatfield to Harlan, 31 December 1921; Harlan to Hatfield, 31 December 1921; Arthur Carhart to Harlan, 11 March 1922; Charles F. Hatfield, "Special Bulletin from Organization Committee, National Federation of Outdoor Clubs, St. Louis, Mo.," n.d.; "An Invitation to attend the first meeting of the National Federation of Outdoor Clubs, April 24-27 [1922], Harlan Papers.

[Bennett], "The National Park Conference," 20.

15 Samuel P. Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: The Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), 176; see for instance, Charles R. Van Hise, *The Conservation of Natural Resources in the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1910); Richard T. Ely, et al., *The Foundations of National Prosperity: Studies in the Conservation of Permanent Natural Resources* (New York: Macmillan, 1917). The National Conservation Congress even made “the conservation of human life” its theme in 1913.

16 Although the number of women delegates to the 1921 conference was relatively small, their influence was significant. Mrs. Charles Hutchinson of Chicago, Mrs. Wm. H. MacDonald of Wisconsin—both of them representing the Garden Club of America—and Mrs. Cora Call Whitley of Iowa—representing the General Federation of Women’s Clubs—called for a “National Conservation Day” as a means of promoting outdoor nature study for youth. Their suggestion became one of the resolutions passed at the end of the conference.

17 [Bennett], “National Park Conference,” 22.

18 Ibid.

19 At this point, Jensen slipped over into hyperbole. Without missing a beat, he continued, “[I]f we can get love and tolerance into every American, we shall have no more war and we shall have no more criminals.” In Bennett, “The National Park Conference,” 18.

20 *Proceedings of the Second NCSP*, passim. See also Raymond H. Torrey, *State Parks and Recreational Uses of State Forests in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: National Conference on State Parks, 1926), 21-24, 94-96, 235-36; Beatrice Ward Nelson, *State Recreation: Parks, Forests and Game Reservations* (Washington, D.C.: National Conference on State Parks, 1928), 205-208.

21 [Bennett], “National Park Conference,” 24.

22 Stephen T. Mather, “The United States of America and Its Parks,” *Iowa Conservation* 5 (1921), 13.

23 Stephen T. Mather, “State Parks—Their Relation to the National Park System,” *Proceedings of the Second NCSP*, 83.

24 As quoted in L. H. Pammel’s report on “The Third Conference on State Parks, Turkey Run State Park, Indiana,” Harlan Papers.

25 *Proceedings of the Third National Conference on State Parks* (Washington, D.C.: NCSP, 1923), 20, 24-27, 30-35.

26 *Proceedings of the Third NCSP*, 34-35.

27 Stanley Coulter, “Scenery—A Natural Resource,” in Herbert Evison, ed., *A State Park Anthology* (Washington, D.C.: National Conference on State Parks, 1930), 14.

28 Frederick Law Olmsted, [Jr.], “Present-Day Outdoor Recreation and the Relation of State Parks to It,” (from *California Park Survey*, 1929), in *A State Park Anthology*, 18-22; Olmsted is erroneously identified as his father.

29 James L. Greenleaf, “The Study and Selection of Sites for State Parks,” in *A State Park Anthology*, 75-76. Jim Steely adds: “This bears much more debate, but [Neff] sincerely wanted the populace to benefit from nature, and saw the automobile as the democratic way for most people to access nature. Colp was much more motivated by commercial benefits of automobile services, but he, too, loved the outdoors and hoped to present it to the public.” Steely to author, 19 May 1997.

30 Wilbur A. Nelson, “What Lands are Suitable for State Parks?” in *A State Park Anthology*, 83-84.

- 31 Frederick Law Olmsted, [Jr.], "Bases for the Selection of State Parks," in *A State Park Anthology*, 67-69.
- 32 Albert M. Turner, "How Far Shall We 'Develop' State Parks?" in *A State Park Anthology*, 117-118.
- 33 Colorado, Mississippi, Montana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia; see Linda Flint McClelland, *Presenting Nature: The Historic Landscape Design of the National Park Service, 1916 to 1942* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1993), 252-253.
- 34 Maxwell Ramsey, "The National Society for Park Resources, What's in a Name? 75 Years Toward a National Cause," *Trends* 33:2 (1996), 5.
- 35 Ramsey, 6. *Design, Grist, and Trends* are now jointly produced by the National Recreation and Park Association and the National Park Service.
- 36 Ramsey, 6-7.
- 37 Ramsey, 7.

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