

GRIST

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Alleys: A Hidden Resource

Here's where park planning can literally begin in your own backyard! In your disused, underdeveloped, and unloved city alleys.

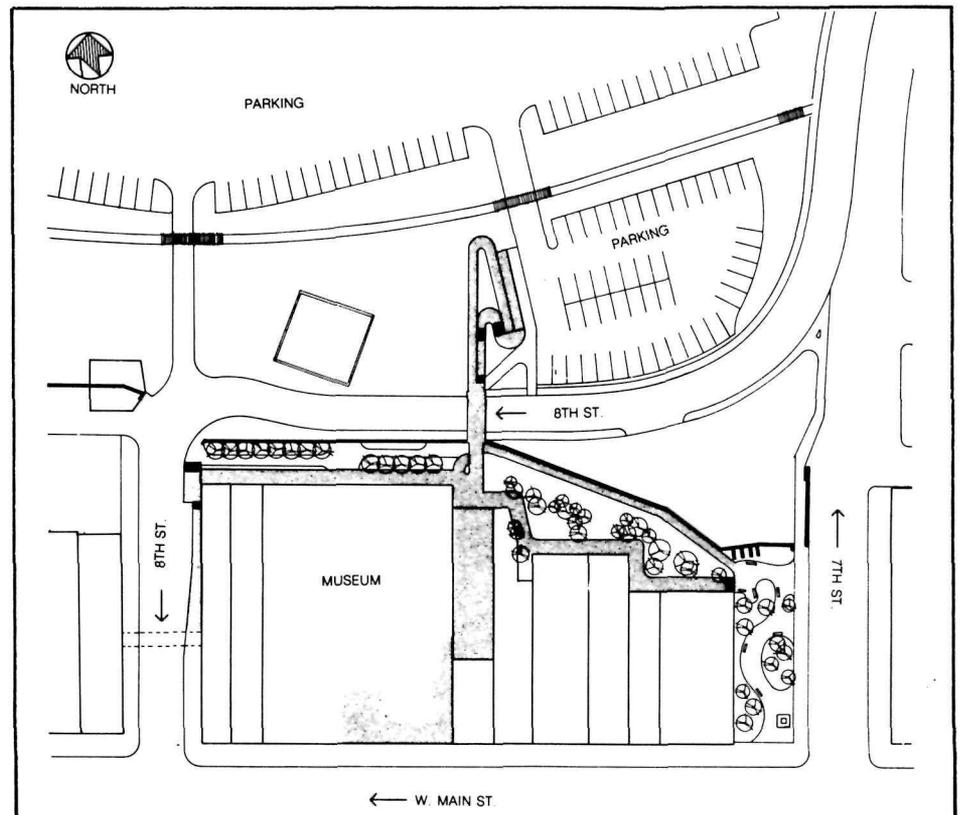
Once practical access to horses, stables, and barns, alleys have become functionally obsolete in the motor age. During the boom of exuberant land speculation in the 1920s, thousands of lots were laid out in the cheapest form possible, without alleys. This no-alley trend was reinforced by the search for cost-cutting layouts during the Depression, and by the Federal Housing Administration's "spartan layouts" of the 1940s. Thus, many children growing up in the postwar suburbs never saw an alley and never played in one. Alleys gradually came to be associated with old, decayed, crime-ridden districts.

Now the tide has turned as urban planners search for new open space possibilities to enhance life for city-dwellers.

Forward-thinking urban residents and planners are offering new and positive directions for unique alley sites. Planner Grady Clay has gone further—he has written a fascinating book, *Alleys: A Hidden Resource* that should be of interest and use to all people considering urban park and open space possibilities.

The book results from research prepared for the Louisville (KY) Community Development Cabinet under a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. This study was a joint product of Clay, New York City architect and planner Jonathan Barnett, and the Louisville Community Design Center. Research revealed many ways in which the interiors of older residential blocks could be redesigned to keep public traffic out and enable property-owners

(Continued on p.40)



Ingenuity

GRIST

A Publication of the Park Practice Program

The Park Practice Program is a cooperative effort of the National Park Service and the National Recreation and Park Association.

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The Park Practice Program includes: *Trends*, a quarterly publication on topics of general interest in park and recreation management and programming; *Grist*, a bimonthly publication on practical solutions to everyday problems in park and recreation operations including energy conservation, cost reduction, safety, maintenance, and designs for small structures; *Design*, a quarterly compendium of plans for park and recreation structures which demonstrate quality design and intelligent use of materials.

Membership in the Park Practice Program includes a subscription to all three publications and a library of back issues arranged in binders with indices and all publications for the remainder of the calendar year. The initial membership fee is \$80; annual renewal is \$20. A separate subscription to *Grist* is \$15 initially and \$7.50 on renewal. Subscription applications and fees, and membership inquiries should be sent only to: National Recreation and Park Association, 1601 North Kent Street, Arlington, VA 22209.

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Articles, suggestions, ideas, and comments are invited and should be sent to: Park Practice Program, Division of Federal and State Liaison, National Park Service, Washington, DC 20240.

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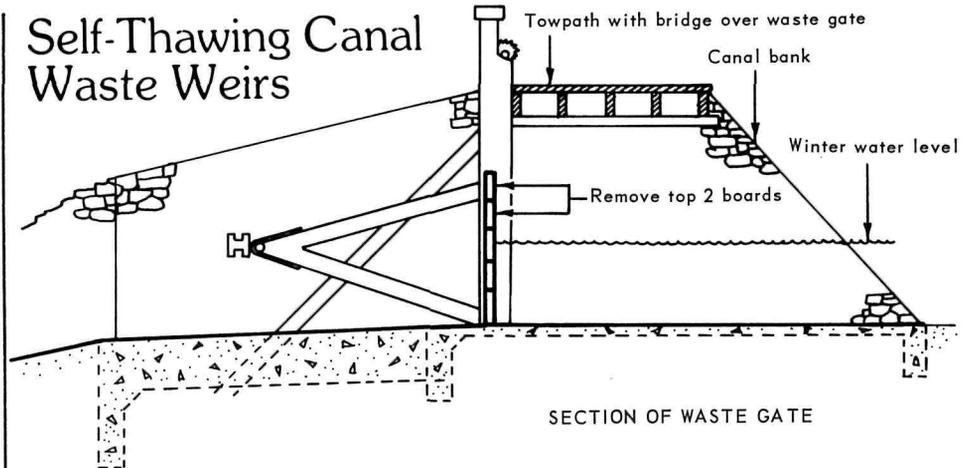
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For Safety's Sake

All ideas and suggestions shared in the pages of *GRIST* are presented as guidelines, not final working blueprints. Be sure to check any device or plan you want to adapt for compliance with national, state, and local safety codes.

Self-Thawing Canal Waste Weirs



Many of our historic parks around the country support scenic and recreational canals. These gracious waterways provide year-round recreation . . . but also present unique maintenance problems. One of these problems is with the waste weirs (sluiceways).

E.V. Giza, park superintendent at Roosevelt State Park, Harrisburg (PA), suggests a practical means to deal with the hazards of frozen waste weirs. On

the Delaware Division Canal, severe winters have tended to clog the gates, preventing the opening of these weirs. This can result in bad flood damage. By simply removing several waste weir boards prior to bad weather, water is permitted to flow over the structure which results in the thawing of the gate. This clever solution can save hundreds of dollars in damages and repairs!

Welding Plastic or Plexiglass

Making repairs on broken or cracked windshields on snowmobiles or on foul weather cabs on tractors is usually a waste of time and effort. Most often there is nothing to be done but to order a new part.

But Park Foreman Les Travis, Parker

Dam State Park (PA), has suggested that an electric soldering gun with a wide tip be used to "weld" plastic or plexiglass. Care must be taken not to concentrate the heat in one area. Also, the thinner the plastic material, the more care must be taken—just like in welding steel.

One other observation. The "weld" will be opaque, or not optically clear, so only breaks not in a vital line of vision can be repaired this way.

Fire Fighting Aid

Fire is an ever-present danger in parks, especially with the advent of new trailers and motor-homes. At the Willow Beach Campground, Lake Mead National Recreation Area (AZ, NV), Ranger Peter Bonnell and Maintenance Workers James Gale and Gary Jensen have come up with a unique system for improving existing fire fighting equipment.

Up until now, fire suppression capability consisted of garden hose, spigots and two trailer-mounted fire pumps. Previous employees had the idea of attaching fire hoses to the

irrigation system outlets, but were unable to find the correct adapters to interface 2" (5cm) iron-pipe to 1½" (3.75cm) American Standard threads.

The new system uses a fabricated adapter made by brazing a discarded male A-S hose fitting to a male 2" (5cm) I-P fitting, thereby permitting the connection of 2½" (6.25cm) or 1½" (3.75cm) A-S fire hoses to the existing 2" (5cm) I-P valves of the irrigation system. The adapter has been constructed and tested and, in the opinion of the Subdistrict Ranger, greatly increases the fire suppression capability of the Willow Beach Campground.

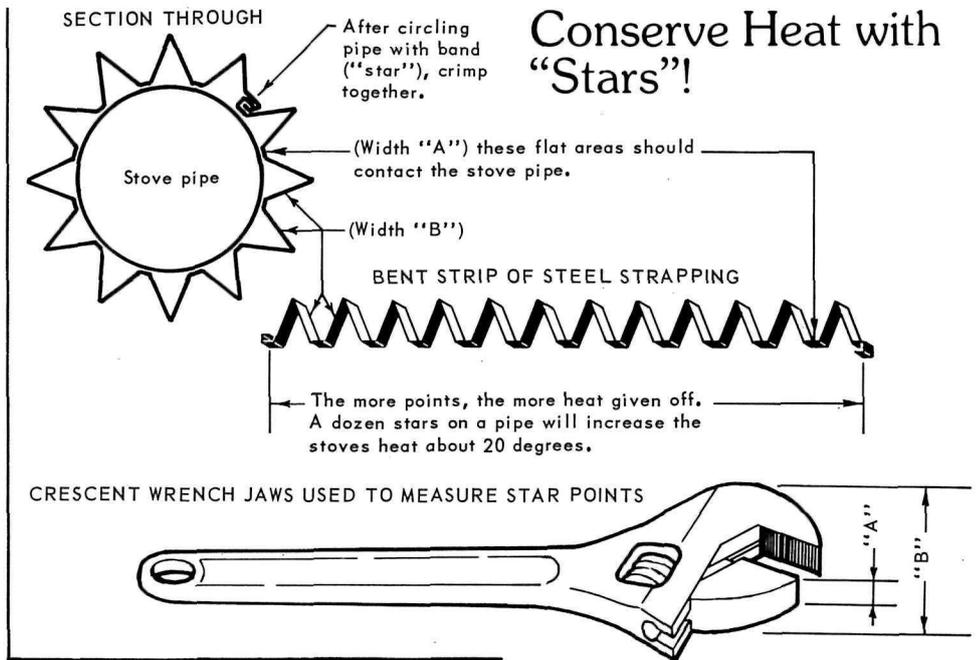
Conservation & Energy Saving

Saving Cents on News Releases

Conserving money is always a major concern for parks, and Roger Giddings, management assistant at Grand Canyon National Park (AZ), suggests both a time- and money-saving idea for mailing news releases.

Instead of sending out your release in pre-printed envelopes, use the self-mailer technique. This simply involves having the reverse or blank side of your present release forms printed with your return address and indicia (postage and fees paid information). Then for mailing, just fold the release form into thirds (to expose label information), staple or glue the form closed, and affix the appropriate addressing labels.

Self-mailers will reduce the number of operations and amount of time involved in sending out your releases. It will also save buying envelopes and, therefore, save money.



Conserve Heat with "Stars"!

The increasing concern for saving energy while heating buildings has brought about many inventions. Park Interpreter Fred Tyszka, of Proud Lake Recreation Area (MI), offers his inexpensive method to capture some of the heat going through a stovepipe and radiate it into a room.

"Stars" are made from the steel strapping used to bundle large items—usually available free, from your local lumber yards. A length of strapping is crimped on one end, bent according to the diagram and, when finished, crimped on the other end. When bending, Mr. Tyszka uses a pair of channel locks and a crescent wrench. The width of the crescent jaws were used for "A" dimensions and the depth of its head for "B" dimensions; this allows for a uniform product.

A whole strip is bent first and then cut down to size. The strips expand enough so that getting the proper length to go around a pipe isn't that critical. Any short pieces can be crimped together to give a full piece.

When used on the potbelly stovepipe in his home, Mr. Tyszka found a heat increase of 20 degrees Fahrenheit (11 degrees Celsius) over the stove area. The "stars" can also be adapted for use on the stovepipes that run from a gas or oil furnace or water heater to the chimney.

NEWS RELEASE u.s. department of the interior
national park service

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE WASHINGTON, D. C. 20240 OFFICIAL BUSINESS PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE \$300

POSTAGE AND FEES PAID U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR INT-417

29 Grand Canyon Arizona 86023

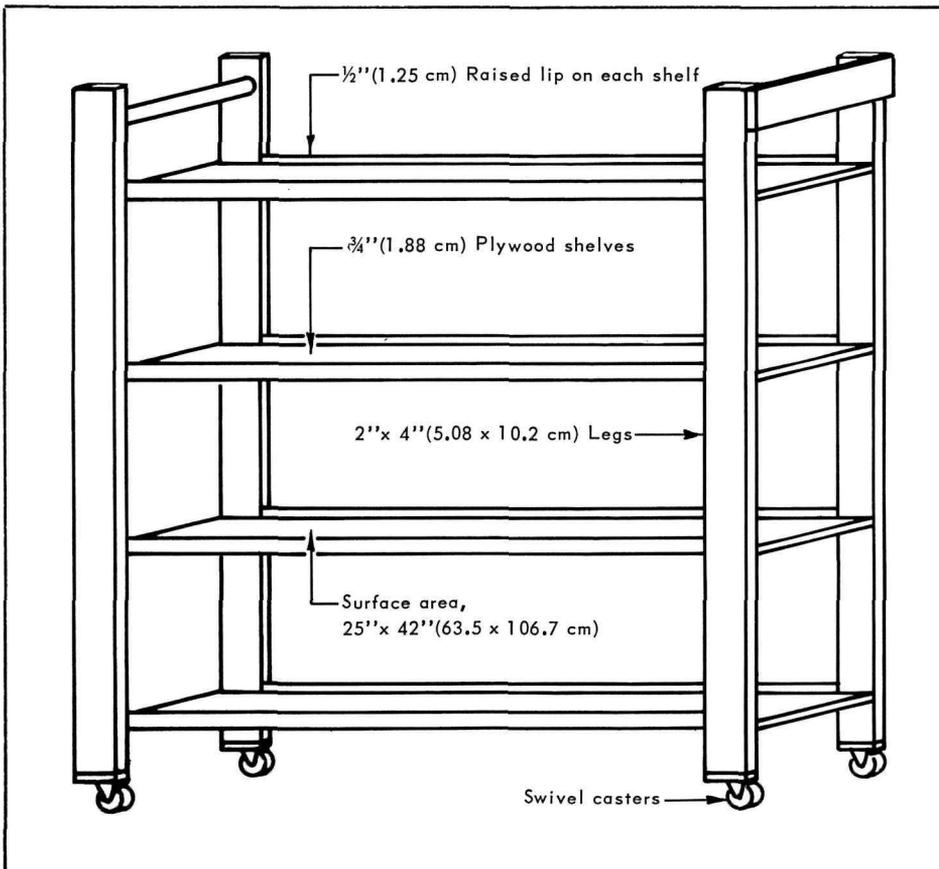
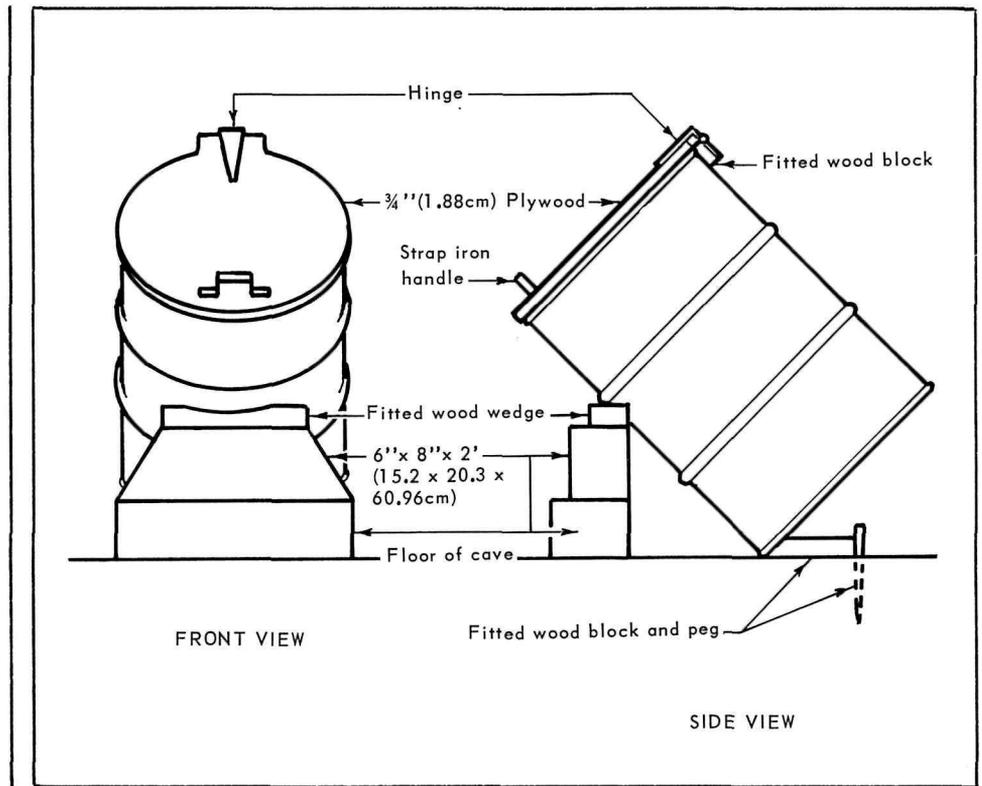
Storage . . .

Rack for Barrels Storing Calcium Chloride and Sand

Presently, many parks store their barrels of calcium chloride and sand in tunnels in a horizontal position with an opening cut on the top side of the barrel. This does not give a good seal and many times permits water to accumulate in the barrel.

Lloyd D. Huskins, a laborer at Blue Ridge Parkway (NC, VA, GA), has constructed a rack that will prevent these problems and allow the barrels to be moved easily for refilling. It also takes up less storage space when not in use.

A rack can be constructed from 6" x 8" (15 x 20cm) timbers to hold these barrels. (You can make it from used guard rail timbers.) Hinges to the barrel lid are welded in place without making cuts in the lid; this makes the barrel waterproof. This rack will reduce the cost of converting used paint barrels and the initial construction of racks.



Mylar Map Cart

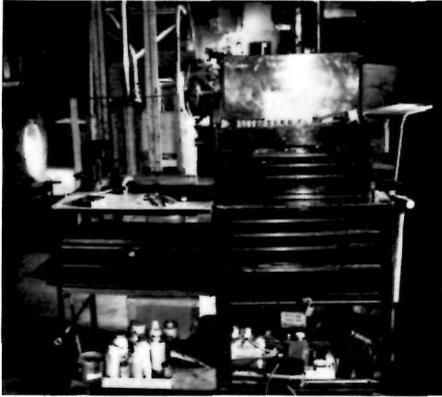
Mylars are easily damaged or destroyed if not given the proper handling when being moved from one place to another. But Paul J. Denning, cartographer, of Big Cypress National Preserve (FL), has come up with a special cart that prevents mylars from being folded, creased or dropped.

This cart, 4 feet high (1.2m), 25" x 42" (63 x 105cm) in area, will be mounted on rollers for easy pushing on carpeted floors. It will be divided into 4 sections to carry over 100 mylars at a time, lying flat and covered. A little molding on each section will prevent the mylars from moving or sliding. Furthermore, these sections may be used as a table top to receive the paper print product.

This excellent idea will save many mylars from costly damage when being moved from file room to reproduction room.

and Security

Extension on Mobile Tool Boxes



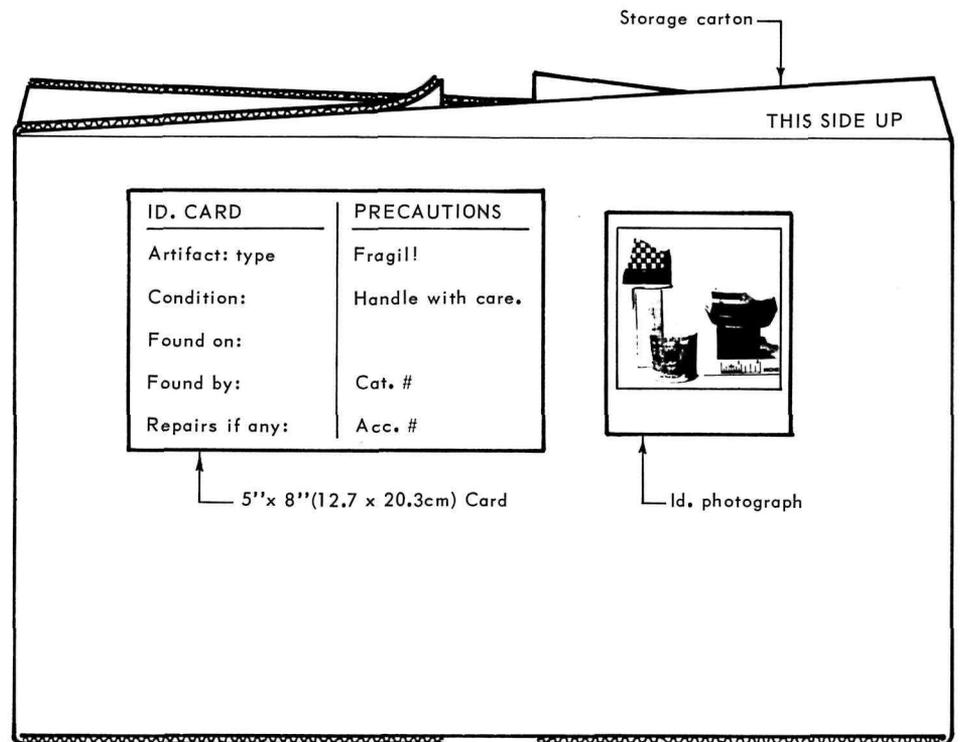
In his job as highway mobile equipment mechanic Donald L. Marston, Yosemite National Park (CA), has found that there is no place in old tool boxes to store items used every day in every job—items like glass cleaner, oil cans, spray lubricants, etc. Vises, for example, are generally found across the shop, instead of next to the vehicle being worked on.

Mr. Marston suggests constructing an extension to each tool box, using 1" (2.5cm) angle iron. This can be done in about 2 to 3 hours. The top of the extension has a vise attached, and provides a good work space, especially for small parts and/or paperwork. The shelves underneath hold the miscellaneous supplies and materials needed for each job. The cost of material for each extension is only about \$4.00.

This extension will cut down on the number of trips each man has to make across the shop to use a vise or pick up supplies—consequently saving time and money.



Easy Identification of Valuable Stored Objects



Unattended Property Check Tag

Unattended and unsecured personal property of park visitors can pose a number of problems for park personnel. Regardless of whether items are accidentally left behind, simply abandoned, or left in an effort to reserve a choice camp or picnic site in a developed area, they are perfect invitations for a thief.

At the suggestion of the late Park Ranger James P. Fleetwood, fluorescent orange adhesive-backed tags marked "Unattended Property Check" have been used at Lake Mead National Recreation Area. These tags, which have space for noting time and date, are attached to the unattended property.

The tags serve several purposes. If the property is lost or abandoned, the park personnel can impound it after an appropriate time has elapsed. The bright tags will remind park visitors that no personal property should be left unsecured. It will also deter the potential thief by indicating that the property is under observation.

Many parks have valuable artifacts that must be stored away from public view for security reasons. Unfortunately, the methods for storing these items are usually haphazard at best. Park Aid Marilyn V. Mabery of Canyonlands National Park (UT), shares an idea that will prevent these artifacts from being mislaid or otherwise damaged.

A photo identification system can be used on each container. Take the example of artifacts kept in cardboard storage boxes (where identification usually means handling fragile objects). Ms. Mabery would attach a black and white or color print of the objects to the outside of the box, plus a 3" x 5" (7.5 x 12.5cm) card listing the Catalogue Number and the Accession Number. The condition (fragile, etc.) of the item would also be included in this information. This eliminates unnecessary handling of the objects, and helps preserve the valuable and fragile specimens.

Maintenance

Oil Lifters Alternative

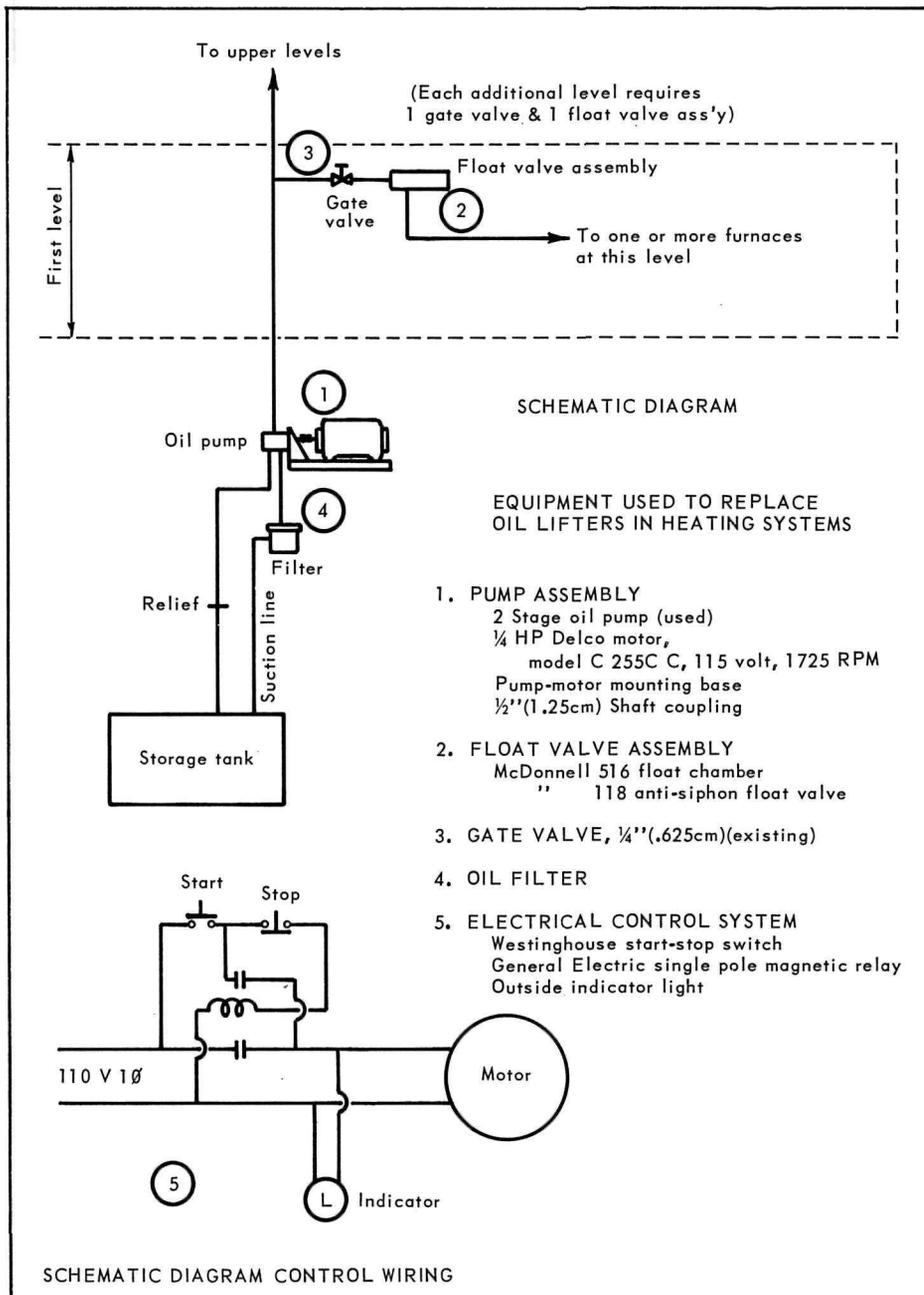
Herschel L. Watson, of Yellowstone National Park (WY, MT, ID), has sent in this schematic diagram for the purpose of replacing oil lifters now used in many parks across the country.

Since parks can no longer purchase new oil lifters or their parts, the change-over suggested is not only practical but very necessary. The change can be made by using existing piping and can be employed to supply fuel to any floor level

by the use of one pump for several heating units. Several heating units may be used by adding one float chamber for one or more heating units, using one pump for all float chambers.

Each float chamber holds about one quart (.9 l) of fuel, and one or more heating units can be supplied by one float chamber as the chamber is supplied by the pump on the amount of fuel required by each heating unit attached to it.

The change-over cost is about equal to the cost of one oil lifter and is much more efficient in operation.



New Drain Guard

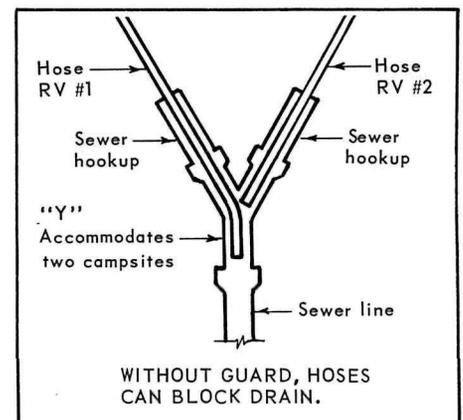


To eliminate costly pump outs and digging up sewer lines to remove foreign objects from the openings, parks should consider installing this new drain guard manufactured by RV Group One.

Easily inserted into campground sewer line risers, this guard will prevent line blockage by solid objects. It features a heavy gauge zinc plated anticorrosive steel frame and a neoprene collar that seals the sewer hose to prevent odor and gas from escaping. The guard is easily removed for routine maintenance.

The guard can be used at each campsite terminal and at dumping stations, and may be installed with existing caps and closures.

To order this improved guard, or to obtain more information, please write Valko, 87 Pequannock Ave., Pequannock, NJ 07440 or RV, Group One, 12129 Roxie Dr., Round Rock, TX, 78664.

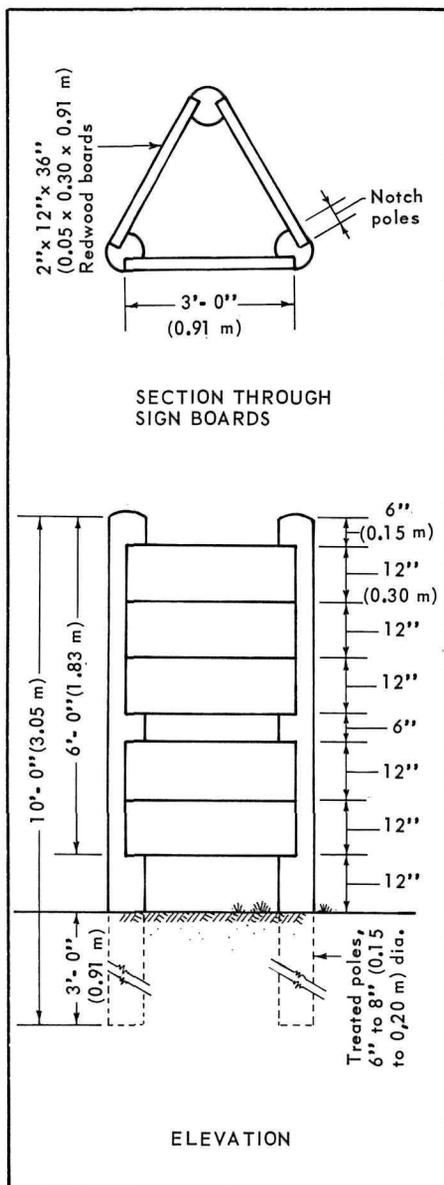


Signage

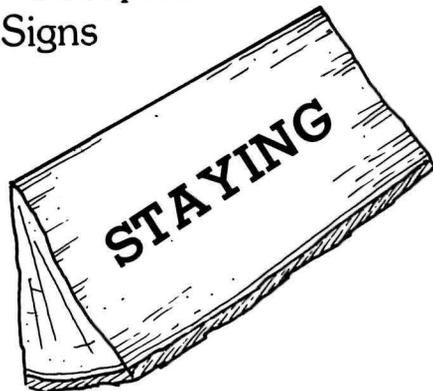
Triangular-Form Directional Sign

For safety and informational reasons, directional signs in parks must be clear and indestructible. This sign for park interiors submitted by Park Project Manager Thomas Felak, Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation, Eight Four, PA, accomplishes these goals.

The sign is designed for an island in the center of the roadway where visibility is limited to three sides. Materials are generally inexpensive, and the man hours required for construction are minimal. Here's a good idea that can be adopted by all parks.



"Occupied" Signs



Many campgrounds fill up early in the day, although user fees are not collected until late afternoon or evening. This poses a problem for the camper who wants to reserve a space but spend the day at the beach or out touring. Often he leaves a piece of

personal property at a camp site to signal its occupancy.

Increasingly this has proved an unwise thing to do, especially in busier campgrounds where theft can be a problem. Not only does the absent camper stand to lose his hat, shirt, or whatever—he also can lose his campsite.

J.W. Moore, district superintendent for the Okanagan District of the British Columbia Provincial Parks, suggests using split logs as "occupied" signs. "Staying" or some other suitable message can be stenciled on one of the split faces of the log. Moore cautions that the signs be kept rustic so the campers are not tempted to keep them as mementos.

This idea originally came from park users themselves who first used pieces of firewood and wrote their message with burnt twigs.

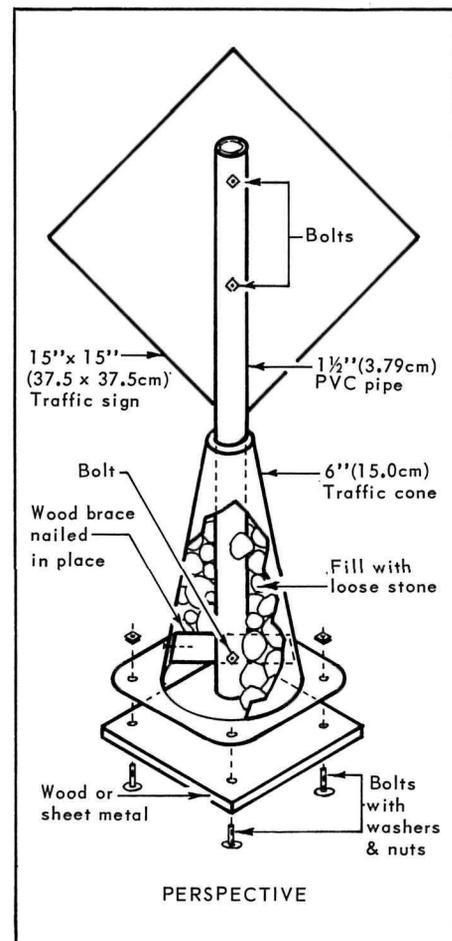
Portable "Slow" Signs for Safety

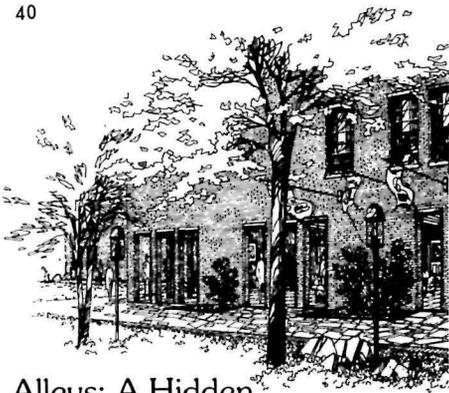
Park Service patrols must frequently warn park traffic of emergency situations on the roads. In the past, most have relied on flares, hand-held signs, or standard "Hazard" signs which are unstable and can easily be knocked over by the wind.

Supervisory Park Ranger Walter L. Mayer, Blue Ridge Parkway (NC, VA, GA), has devised portable "slow" signs which will warn oncoming traffic at either end of an emergency road situation, accident, slide, etc.

These 15" (37.5cm) signs, mounted above 6" (15cm) traffic cones, are colored International Orange with 4" (10cm) black letters. They can be placed on roadsides or on centerlines. They're highly visible in daylight and by carlight or with a flare in dense fog. The two signs will easily overlap and lay on top of a spare tire—out of the way of the rest of the equipment in the trunk of most vehicles.

With these signs, one person can usually handle traffic at the scene when the traffic is so pre-warned . . . thereby eliminating hazards, saving manpower, and preventing accidents.





Alleys: A Hidden Resource (Continued from p. 33)

(including municipal agencies) and planners to begin fixing up alley sites for new uses.

In his book, Clay examines five typical alley situations in Louisville and offers concrete suggestions on their development possibilities.

One important conclusion of Clay's studies was that "most of the problems associated with the alley were caused by its in-between status: it was public space in a private location. As public space, it was open to drag racers, weekend mechanics, winos and dumpers. Everybody's problem and nobody's child, it was near enough to see, but not close enough to supervise."

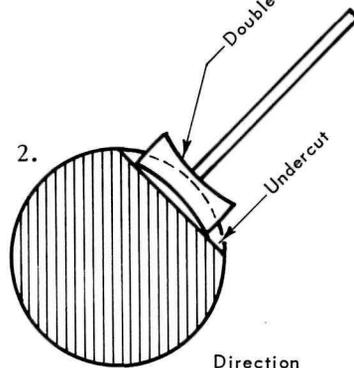
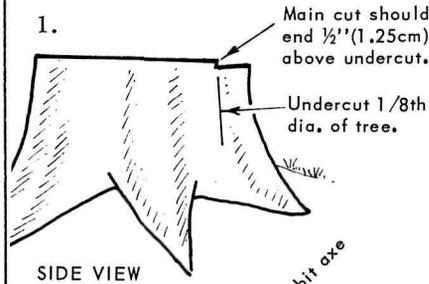
Solutions proposed range from cheap sets of new rear fence-and-garbage-holders to a totally renewed block park with parking at the fringes and a neighborhood swim club. Also recommended are low-cost cover crops, such as thorny flowering rose which, when planted on a vacant city lot, help prevent local dumping and other misuse.

These alleys, in addition to providing space for new development, both residential and commercial, can blossom into much-needed open space in highly industrialized cities. These "private parks" for urban dwellers can be developed through the cooperation of local residents, city planners, and park planners.

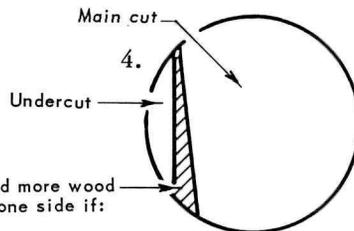
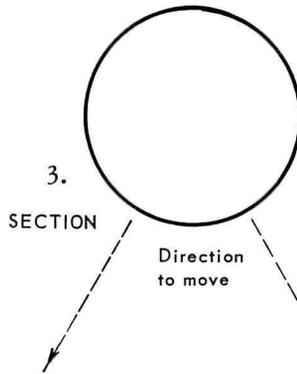
The variety of shapes and sizes of city alleys present ready-made variety for creative space. From playground to sylvan areas . . . community services (tennis courts, swimming pools) to commercial malls . . . alleys present an untapped resource just waiting for utilization.

To learn more about the rehabilitation possibilities of city alleys, send for *Alleys: A Hidden Resource*, 1190 East Broadway, Louisville, KY 40204. The price of this excellent, well-illustrated reference is only \$4.95. A small investment for an unusual guide to city park planning in existing environments!

Tips on Falling Trees



Direction of tree fall



- (a.) Your tree is leaning the opposite way.
- (b.) If a strong wind is blowing against that side.
- (c.) If you wish to pull your tree slightly that way.

Harold F. Mathews of Ralph Stover State Park, Point Pleasant, PA has submitted some valuable methods used for tree cutting in the logging camps of the Idaho Panhandle in the 1930s. It's interesting to note how up-to-date these time-honored tips are today!

In illustration #1, your double bit axe can pin-point the direction the tree will fall by placing it in an undercut as shown. Also, your double bit axe can be used as a plumb bob, to check a tree for lean. Simply stand a few feet away from the tree and hold the end of the axe handle high between your thumb and finger. Then eye it with the tree.

With reference to illustration #5, if you are cutting a large tree with a forward lean, there's a good chance it may "barber chair" as shown. This vertical splitting may go 30 feet (76.2cm) up before snapping off. The bottom of the tree may end up many feet behind the "barber chair" and several feet on either side. When cutting trees of this type, the instant it starts to fall, move quickly back on a 45 degree angle as shown.

Once a tree starts falling and you are back at a safe distance, watch for falling branches from above.

