

## BASIC PURPOSES OF STATE PARKS

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A clear definition of the basic purposes of state parks is vital to the success of any individual state park, any system of state parks and any state park program. Your conception of what the basic purposes of state parks are is the foundation upon which you base all your work and the compass which guides all your activities. If your conception of the basic purposes of state parks isn't clear, and especially if your knowledge of the basic purposes of the state park you are responsible for isn't crystal clear, your activities and efforts will fall short of making your state park as useful and valuable as it should be.

I suppose every individual in state park work and every state park visitor has his own idea as to what the basic purposes of state parks are — certainly there has been a great deal of discussion on the subject and some difference of opinion. This emphasizes that one of the most important needs in the state park field today is a clear, generally accepted definition of the basic purposes of state parks.

After many years of observation, study and analysis of state park systems and programs in North Carolina and a number of other states, I believe state parks have but ONE basic purpose. That one basic purpose is: TO SERVE PEOPLE.

Turn those words — to serve people — over in your mind. Think about them. Ask yourself, "Isn't the only basic purpose of state parks to serve people?" I think you'll agree that it is.

Obviously, state parks serve people in certain specific ways and are not all things to all men. If state parks are to render the very best service, the ways in which they are to serve people must be clearly defined and kept clearly in mind.

State parks should serve people in these four ways:

1. By preserving and protecting natural areas of unique or exceptional scenic value not only for the present generation but for generations to come. This is THE most basic service of state parks and it should never be lost sight of.

2. By providing opportunities for recreational use of natural resources and for outdoor recreation and outdoor living in natural surroundings. Recreation that makes use of natural resources in the outdoors is a definite responsibility of any state park system. Opportunities for camping, fishing, boating, swimming, picnicking and similar types of recreation are a major concern of state park systems. State parks should provide facilities and oppor-

tunities primarily for recreational use of the great outdoors and should leave the more highly organized and intensive recreational pursuits to municipal and other agencies.

3. By portraying and explaining plant and animal life, geology and all other natural features included in the various areas in the state park system. In an age when we are faced with ever-dwindling natural resources, this service is very important, because an enlightened public is essential for intelligent use of natural resources.

4. By preserving, protecting and portraying historic and scientific areas of state-wide importance. One of the very important services of a state park system is the preservation of the physical aspects of the state's history and the interpretation and portrayal of the historical events connected with them. It is always important to thus keep our historical heritage before us because "the past is prologue." Today, faced with bombardment from all sorts of "ologies" and "isms", it is more important than ever for us to keep clearly in mind the things for which our forefathers stood.

Before we go any further, let's make sure we are all thinking of the same sort of thing when we use the words "state park". To begin with, what is the definition of the word "park"?

The word "park" is of very ancient origin. It occurs in the Teutonic, Romance and Celtic tongues and is probably derived from the Latin, PARCUS, a park or enclosure for animals, which in turn is derived from the Latin, PARCERE, to spare, the literal meaning being a piece of land spared from materialistic use and reserved for pleasure and enjoyment.

In modern usage, the word "park" nearly always denotes a publicly-owned area. Dictionaries include such definitions as a "tract of ground kept in its natural state. . . ."; "a tract of land set aside to be preserved as nearly in its natural state as possible, to which the public have access for enjoyment or recreation"; "a piece of ground in or near a city or town kept for amusement or recreation." Note that the first two definitions speak of keeping areas in a natural state and for public enjoyment or recreation, while the third definition, which obviously is meant for municipal parks, does not use the words "natural state" and speaks of amusement or recreation.

There are all kinds of parks, some worthy of the name, many not. But, since you and I are concerned with state parks, let's confine ourselves here to publicly-owned parks. These can be classified in any of a number of ways but to arrive at a definition of state parks, let's classify them as:

1. Local parks
2. National Parks
3. State parks

Local parks include all municipal and county parks and many regional parks. Basically, it is the responsibility of local parks to provide the facilities for close at hand, frequently used leisure time activities. In most local parks great emphasis is placed on facilities for active physical recreation or organized activities. The facilities range from playground apparatus for children to sports arenas, the emphasis being on FACILITIES. Local parks are often amusement parks too. Many local parks

have open spaces and provide opportunities for being outdoors and relaxing but only rarely are these open spaces in a NATURAL state and even more rarely do they possess outstanding scenic or natural values or provide for recreational use of natural resources.

National parks are areas having the most spectacular and majestic natural beauty in the country and sites on which the most important events in the history of our nation took place. The primary function of the National Park System is to serve the public by administering these federally-owned areas of superlative scenery and of outstanding historic, pre-historic and scientific importance with the two fold objective of preserving the principal features of these areas and of providing for the public enjoyment of them in such a manner as to leave them unimpaired for future generations.

State parks are in many respects very similar to national parks, but their values are judged on a state-wide instead of a nation-wide basis. Areas within a state park system should be limited to four types, as follows:

1. State parks which, evaluated on a state-wide basis, possess unique or exceptional scenic value.

By exceptional scenic value is meant rare natural scenery, which is unlikely to be preserved for the benefit and enjoyment of the public in this and future generations if the property remains in private ownership, and which is sufficiently distinctive to attract and interest people from distant parts of the state as well as local people.

2. State parks which possess distinctive scenic values and excellent opportunities for the development of facilities for active recreational use of natural resources and excellent opportunities for the study of natural history. It is highly important that these areas have distinctive scenic character because the final test of such areas is the possession of a natural appeal which will make park users eager to return. Areas lacking such natural appeal are not justifiable as units of the state park system.

3. State historic sites which possess state-wide historic, pre-historic or archaeological importance because they are: (1) sites of events of state-wide historical importance; or (2) sites closely connected with a person who was of outstanding importance in the history of the state; or (3) sites containing man-made features of state-wide historical importance.

4. State scientific sites which, evaluated on a state-wide basis, have unique natural scientific features.

A state park site (other than historic or scientific sites) should possess both scenic and recreational values. In some sites, exceptional scenic values may be sufficient to overcome the lack of recreational possibilities, and in some other sites, usual recreation possibilities may make up for a lack of scenic values. By unusual recreational value is meant features such as topography, trees, vegetation, streams, lakes or ocean shore offering recreational possibilities which would attract and interest people of a wide surrounding area and would not be available to the public if the property remained in private ownership.

An even geographical distribution of state parks at arbitrary distances, for example every fifty miles, or state parks for

every county, is manifestly impossible on any reasonable theory of scenic and recreational standards, because it is fundamentally unscientific, and because it would be unnecessary and prohibitively expensive.

A state park should be of sufficient size to (a) completely include the features the area is established to protect and preserve, whether these features be the unique or exceptional scenic and natural values of the first type of state park, the distinctive scenic features of the second type of state park, or the historic, archaeological or scientific features of historic or scientific sites; (b) provide sufficient buffer area to protect these features from outside influences or encroachments; (c) provide, in both types of state parks, a reasonably satisfactory habitat for indigenous wildlife; and (d) amply accommodate whatever public use facilities are needed to carry out the primary purpose for which the area is established to preserve.

Briefly, then, a state park is a state-owned area of land, sufficient in size to adequately protect the outstanding features it contains and also provide for justifiable public use, and established to serve people in one or more of four ways; namely, by preserving and protecting unique or exceptional scenic and natural values, or by providing recreational use of natural resources and outdoor recreation in natural surroundings, or portraying and interpreting plant and animal life and other natural features, or preserving, protecting and portraying historic and scientific sites of state-wide importance.

A state park is NOT just any tract of land acquired simply for the purpose of having land on which to erect public use facilities.

Why should we have state parks? The answer is that we must have state parks to help satisfy certain basic human needs beyond those of food, shelter and clothing. These basic human needs are physical fitness, mental well-being, spiritual strength, growth of aesthetic appreciation, increased awareness of man's place in nature, development of a sound knowledge of our nation's history, and ability to work together for the common good. The human race will never rise to its ultimate heights until these basic human needs are fulfilled.

State parks are a very important feature of any state's conservation program. Our very existence depends on natural resources. Our soils provide food and clothing; our forests provide shelter and clothing; water provides power and life itself since without water we die; our minerals provide transportation, national security, heat and power. Our economic well-being depends on natural resources.

But our dependence on natural resources goes beyond our material needs and our economic needs. We are dependent on our natural resources for our non-material needs as well.

Today, as always, about 12 of every 24 hours are taken up in eating, sleeping and other items of personal maintenance. The remaining 12 hours are available to satisfy basic human needs, both material and non-material. In 1900, the average man had to spend 70% of those 12 hours on earning a living, in satisfying his material needs. Today, the average man spends only about 46% of his time earning a living and satisfying his material needs. In 1900, only 30% of a man's time was leisure time.

Today, more than 54% of his time is leisure time. For the first time in history, a man's leisure time is greater than the time he must spend earning a living and leisure time is increasing and will continue to increase. It is now widely predicted that, within the next ten years, the forty hour week will be replaced by the thirty hour week. Think of the implications the thirty hour week has for state parks!

The value of leisure time has been increased by two other products of the machine age - increased mobility and higher incomes. The automobile and the highway have enormously increased the geographic area we can encompass in our daily lives. Today, the average person can reach areas that were once inaccessible to him. He can travel much more frequently than he ever could before. This greatly increased mobility is a very potent factor in increasing opportunities for satisfying basic human non-material needs. Higher wages enable us to take advantage of this increased mobility and to have more money for leisure time use.

It is leisure time that man must use to satisfy his basic human needs beyond those for food, shelter and clothing. One of the most important social problems of our times is the use of leisure. Few, if any, phases of modern living are so fraught with possibilities for man's benefit or detriment. Intelligently used, leisure time is a definite social and cultural asset; misused, it is a great liability.

These factors make it mandatory that state conservation programs - programs for the wise use of natural resources - include adequate provision for the recreational use of natural resources so that we may meet both our material and our non-material needs. No conservation program - state, national, or local - can possibly be successful unless it places the same emphasis on recreational use of natural resources as on forest management, wildlife protection, water conservation and intelligent practices in harvesting nature resources.

In this phase of wisely using natural resources, the state park system plays a very important part - a part that is doubly important since the state parks make possible the use of NATURAL resources to conserve HUMAN resources. The state parks provide a broad range of opportunities for wise and wholesome use of leisure time and thus provide lasting social benefits. State parks promote physical fitness through providing for a wide range of physical activities from swimming to hiking. They bring mental health, spiritual strength and the growth of aesthetic appreciation by bringing people into close contact with the beauties and the mysteries of the natural world. They help develop increased appreciation of man's place in nature through the opportunities they offer for the study of natural history. They help build the ability to work with others for the common good through such programs as youth camping and family camping.

How do we go about carrying out our basic purpose of serving people by preserving and protecting natural areas of unique and exceptional scenic value; establishing and operating state parks which provide recreational use of natural resources and outdoor recreation in natural surroundings; portraying and inter-

preting plant and animal life and other natural features; and preserving, protecting and portraying historic and scientific sites of state-wide importance?

First of all, we must analyze the different types of work involved in carrying out our basic purposes. These different types of work, listed in the order that we should carry them out, are:

1. Personal administration which includes selecting and training and organizing the employees necessary to achieve our basic purpose.
2. Planning, Development and Construction which includes selection of areas and acquisition of land.
3. Protection and Law Enforcement.
4. Operation for Public Use.
5. Interpretive and Public Use Programs.
6. Maintenance.
7. Information and Education.
8. Business Management.

Let's assume that we have selected, trained and organized the employees necessary for the work of planning, development and construction. Since the individual state park which can serve people in all four of the ways we've been talking about is extremely rare, it is obvious that in our overall planning to achieve our basic purposes, we must think in terms of a SYSTEM of state parks composed of various types of areas. Our first step in planning and development and construction must be the careful selection of these various areas.

Reminding ourselves that our first responsibility is to serve people by preserving and protecting natural areas of unique or exceptional scenic value for the benefit and inspiration of this and future generations, we must first make a careful state-wide survey to locate and evaluate all possible areas of this type and take the necessary steps for acquiring them.

Areas or sites with unique scenic values will be relatively rare, and very few superintendents and rangers are responsible for such areas, so let's without in any way minimizing how essential it is that areas with unique scenic values be included in the state park system, turn our attention to other types of areas.

As a practical demonstration, let's apply all I've said about basic purposes to an actual state park. Suppose that among the areas brought to our attention during the course of the state-wide survey is an area in Stanley County. Upon careful examination of the area, we find it includes a part of the most easterly range of hills in the state, a very good forest cover including some fairly large hardwood stands, some good small streams, fine views and vistas, and that it borders on the Pee Dee River. All in all, it is very scenic. However, evaluated on a state-wide basis, it definitely does not possess unique scenic values and we have even some hesitancy in classing it as having exceptional scenic values on a state-wide basis.

We do find it has distinctive scenic values, and for quite a large section of the state, exceptional scenic values, and we are therefore justified in evaluating its suitability for recreational use of natural resources and outdoor recreation. Close examination reveals its topography and other features make it

very suitable for this purpose as well as for the portrayal and interpretation of natural features. Careful study also shows that it is well located with respect to population since almost a million people live within 60 miles of it.

We, therefore, select the area as a state park whose basic purpose is to serve people by:

- (1) Protecting and preserving highly distinctive natural features and scenic values.
- (2) Providing recreational use of natural resources and outdoor recreation in natural surroundings, and
- (3) Portraying and interpreting the plant and animal life and natural features of the area.

We find that in order to carry out this basic purpose the area must contain approximately 5,000 acres and this acreage is acquired. From now on, everything we do about this area, from planning and construction work to maintenance work and publicity, should be aimed at achieving this basic purpose and nothing should be done that detracts from it.

Our next job is to make a general development plan of the state park and, in doing so, answer the question, "What facilities should be provided to carry out the basic purpose of this state park?" We answer this question by listing the facilities to be provided in this order:

1. Facilities required to preserve and protect the area and the wildlife in it including fire trails, communications, fire protection and fire detection facilities, housing for protecting personnel and so forth.
2. Facilities required to provide public access including roads, parking areas, and foot trails.
3. Facilities required to protect public health including safe water supply and safe sewage and garbage disposal.
4. Facilities required for operation and maintenance including workshops, storage buildings, housing for park personnel and so forth.
5. Facilities for recreational use. And here we should think carefully because we must exercise every precaution to include only those facilities that carry out the basic purpose of the state park. After careful thought, we include these facilities.
  - a. Picnicking because we know that facilities for picnicking are essential for a considerable percentage of park users to use and enjoy the park itself and because we know that picnicking, especially for family groups, is a good outdoor activity.
  - b. Facilities for recreational use of water including swimming, boating and fishing because such facilities provide for recreational use of a natural resource of this area.
  - c. Facilities for hiking, including trails and trailside shelters because hiking is a recreation use of natural resources. We have already included most of the trails under public access facilities.
  - d. Facilities for camping, including tent and trailer camping, organized camping and rough camping, because camping is not only a recreational use of natural resources but enables park users to actually live in, and enjoy for days at

time, natural resources.

e. Vacation cabins because this state park is sufficiently attractive to make people wish to spend a week or more in it and thus make longer and fuller use of the natural resources of the park.

Of course, interested persons will offer many suggestions for other facilities including, perhaps, a baseball diamond, a well developed playground for children, and a dance floor complete with juke box. Do any of these facilities help carry out the basic purpose of the state park? The baseball diamond could be provided on any plat of ground anywhere and is primarily a recreational use of equipment rather than of natural resources. It does not help carry out the basic purpose of the state park, so we do not include it in our list of facilities. The dance floor does not in any way assist in carrying out the basic purpose, and we may even find ourselves spending a great deal of time on this activity to the detriment of other more necessary ones. We therefore do not include the dance floor.

6. Facilities which, while they do not provide for recreational use themselves, are necessary conveniences must also be considered. Among such facilities we would probably include:

- a. Refreshment stand if there is sufficient demand for it to operate profitably or at least not at a loss, and if this service is provided in response to a need and not merely as a money making proposition.
- b. Restaurant ONLY if it is actually needed by the park users to assist them to enjoy the basic purpose of the state park.
- c. Hotel ONLY if it is actually needed by park users to assist them in enjoying the basic purpose of the state park

7. Facilities required for interpretive programs including park museum, outdoor exhibits, labeled nature trails and so forth.

Once this list is furnished, we next prepare a general development plan that will locate these facilities in the park in such a way as to do the least possible damage to natural conditions and at the same time provide a layout that can be operated and maintained economically and efficiently. Then the detailed plans are made, the facilities are built, and the park superintendent and his rangers take full charge of the state park. From this point on, the success or failure of the state park depends mostly on the park superintendent and his rangers because it is they who directly serve the public.

It should be every park superintendent and park ranger's duty to apply to operation, maintenance, information and education, protection and law enforcement and all else he does exactly the same reasoning as I have outlined for planning and development. He should test all he does against the question, "Does this carry out the basic purpose of this state park?" He should do everything he possibly can to carry out the basic purpose and do nothing that detracts from it. Neither a development nor an activity should be forced on the state park that doesn't carry out its basic purpose.

As a park superintendent or a park ranger, this conception of the basic purpose of state parks will not restrict your activities.

To the contrary, it will focus and intensify them in the right channels. Deviation from these basic purposes results in lost time, money and effort and may lead you into a blind alley from which you cannot escape and in which there is no future.

We must all raise our eyes and take the long range view of the values and services of state parks. State Park systems will continue to expand in response to public demand and the opportunities in state park work will be what we make them. Here in the South, despite the growth in state parks in the last twenty years, we are still pioneering in the state park field. It is therefore, highly important that we follow good policies. It is up to us as to whether state parks provide lasting enrichment of the lives of our people, or whether they merely provide short-lived amusement. We must guard carefully against placing too much emphasis on man-made facilities and not enough on natural resources. We must avoid promoting too much use of man-made facilities and too little of the parks themselves.

You are in work you can be very proud of. You are helping to satisfy basic human needs. You are in one of the finest public service fields that anyone can enter. Your opportunities for service will continue to grow - constantly increasing leisure time, constantly increasing standards of living, and constantly increasing population make that inevitable. The quality of service rendered by state parks depends on us state park workers and especially on park superintendents and park rangers. The one test above all others that state parks and state park workers must stand is the test of time and the one sure way of standing the test of time is through high quality state parks and high quality services to the public. Only through high quality public service can we fulfill our duty.

High quality state parks and public service must be based on a sound definition of the basic purposes of state parks. We must, therefore, keep firmly in mind that the basic purpose of state parks is TO SERVE PEOPLE BY

1. Preserving and protecting natural areas of unique or exceptional scenic value not only for the inspiration and benefit of the present generation, but, also for generations to come.
2. Establishing and operating state parks that provide recreational use of natural resources and outdoor recreation in natural surroundings.
3. Portraying and interpreting plant and animal life, geology, and all other natural features and processes included in the various state parks.
4. Preserving, protecting and portraying historic and scientific sites of state-wide importance.

