

SUGGESTED CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING AREAS PROPOSED FOR INCLUSION IN STATE PARK SYSTEMS

This report, prepared by a Committee appointed by President Flickinger, consisting of K. R. Cougill, Chairman, George Albrecht, Ernest Allen, Charles H. Flory, H. W. Groth, U. W. Hella, Leonard L. Huttleston, Thomas Morse, Charles G. Sauers, was adopted by the Board of Directors at the 1954 annual meeting of the National Conference on State Parks and it is here presented in the belief that the criteria may serve as standards for use by the States.

State park systems are usually comprised of areas of scenic, scientific, historical, archeological, or other recreation significance of state-wide importance, or at least of sufficient importance to attract visitors from a large section of the State. (In some of the States, the historical and archeological areas are not administered by the State park agency; however, since they are included in the majority of the State park systems, criteria concerning them are covered in this statement.) Each area should possess unique or high quality of interest. Each system, as a whole, should (1) conserve outstanding examples of the State's natural and cultural resources for the inspiration and benefit of the public, and (2) provide non-urban recreation opportunities for the State's citizens and visitors that are normally beyond the responsibility of the State's political subdivisions.

There is no uniformly accepted classification of state park areas. Some States use the term "state park" generically, and apply it to all areas of their systems. Most of the States, however, use a number of classifications based upon considerations such as character, use, custom, and statutory provision, and these vary from State to State, with some 60 odd classifications currently in use. For the purpose of evaluation, as set forth in this statement, these areas are grouped into six classifications (parks, monuments, recreation areas, beaches, parkways and waysides) defined as follows:

1. State Parks – Relatively spacious areas of outstanding scenic or wilderness character, oftentimes containing also significant historical, archeological, ecological, geological, and other scientific values, preserved as nearly as possible in their original or natural condition and providing opportunity for appropriate types of recreation where such will not destroy or impair the features and values to be preserved. Commercial exploitation of resources is prohibited.

2. State Monuments – Areas, usually limited in size, established primarily to preserve objects of historic and scientific interest, and places commemorating important persons or historic events. The only facilities usually provided are those required for the safety and comfort of the visitors such as access, parking, water, sanitation, interpretive devices, and sometimes facilities for

picnicking and other recreation facilities.

3. **State Recreation Areas** - Areas selected and developed primarily to provide non-urban outdoor recreation opportunities to meet other than purely local needs but having the best available scenic quality. Hunting and some other recreation activities not usually associated with State parks may be permitted. Commercial exploitation of resources is usually prohibited.

4. **State Beaches** - Areas with frontage on the oceans, lakes, and streams designed primarily to provide swimming, boating, fishing, and other waterfront activities. Other costal areas acquired primarily for the scenic and scientific values, such as Point Lobos Preserve in California, are included in the classification "state parks."

5. **State Parkways** - elongated or "ribbon" parks featuring a motor road for non-commercial traffic, connecting parks, monuments, beaches, and recreation areas or otherwise affording an opportunity for pleasant and safe driving. Access is controlled by the administering agency and is provided only at designated intervals and roadside developments are controlled to prevent undesirable uses. As an adjunct to the motor road, appropriate facilities such as turnouts, picnic areas, and other recreation developments are frequently provided where space permits.

6. **State Waysides** - Relatively small areas along highways selected for their scenic or historical significance and providing opportunity for the traveler to relax, enjoy a scenic view, read a historic marker, or have a picnic lunch. These areas should be administered by a highway department; however, the larger and more scenic waysides may sometimes be administered as units of state park systems.

Criteria For The Selection Of State Parks

1. **Quality.** State significance exists in (a) inspirational landscape and wilderness values that would attract visitors from all sections of the State, and perhaps outside of the State, or which would in the foreseeable future possess such qualities and attractiveness if adequate protection and access were made available, and (b) areas that are adjudged by competent authority as best exemplifying the natural landscapes of the major physiographic divisions and provinces of the State as shown by accepted classifications.

2. **Adaptability to Effective Treatment.** An important factor is adequacy of area and boundaries to include reasonably consolidated physiographic units to permit proper protection, development, and administration. In many cases an important factor may be a determination of whether there are present scenic elements requiring the kind of protection that park status can give or whether, in the main, the scenic elements can be preserved and used more profitably by some other form of public reservation, or device such as zoning. Another important factor may be the practicability of developing facilities required for health, safety, and comfort of the visitors.

Criteria for the Selection of State Historical and Archeological Park Sites or Monuments

Criteria for historical and archeological areas have been adapted from *Criteria for Evaluating Historic Sites and Buildings* which have been adopted by The National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States and the National Council for Historic Sites and Buildings.

1. The prime requisite is historical or archeological significance.

The chief determining factor is that the area or structure must possess either certain important historical associations which entitle it to a position of high rank in the history of the nation, state, or region in which it lies; or, in the case of a structure, be in itself of sufficient antiquity and artistic or architectural significance to deserve a position of high rank, even though not having other important historical associations. These qualities exist in:

(a) such historic structures or sites as are naturally the points or bases in which the broad political, social, or cultural history of the nation, state, or region is best exemplified and from which the visitor can grasp the larger patterns of national, state, or regional history such as Drake Well Memorial Park in Pennsylvania where the story of oil discovery and the development of the "oil age" can logically be told, or Campus Martius State Memorial at Marietta, Ohio which is significant in connection with westward migration and establishment of new States in the Northwest Territory;

(b) such monuments and areas as are significant because of their associations with key figures or important events in national, state, or regional limits or because of their relationship to other monuments or areas such as Butler State Park in Kentucky which is named for General William Orlando Butler and the Butler family of generals or Valley Forge State Park in Pennsylvania which is associated with the devotion and suffering of Washington's troops during the dark days of the Revolution.

(c) structures or sites exemplifying in a high degree the history and achievements of aboriginal man in America or of outstanding scientific importance for the light that they shed on this subject as Serpent Mound State Memorial in Ohio.

NOTE: Structures or sites of recent historical importance relating to events and persons within the last fifty years will not, as a rule, be eligible for consideration under the standards set forth above.

2. Suitability, as measured by the following standards, will be an important consideration.

(a) Surviving historic remains. While it is sometimes possible to justify the preservation of an historic site even though no physical remains have survived, the deciding factor in most cases will be the presence of important original structures or other physical remains.

(b) Other physical characteristics. The encroachments of

business, industry, housing, and traffic upon a structure or site must be considered if historical values are thereby seriously impaired and public use and appreciation inhibited.

(c) Location with respect to accessibility, necessary utilities, and protection is a factor to be considered.

(d) The adaptability of the historic property to effective treatment in the interests of public use and enjoyment will be considered. The cost of necessary treatment and development must not be beyond the means of the sponsoring agency or individual undertaking the project.

(e) The extent to which the integrity of the historic structure or site has been preserved will be an important consideration. Integrity is a composite quality connoting original workmanship, original location, and intangible elements of feeling and association. Generally speaking, it is better to preserve than repair, better to repair than restore, better to restore than to construct. However, when a project calls for the restoration or reconstruction of historic structures which have long been destroyed, it is important that such work be done in accordance with scientific methods and with principles of good taste.

(f) Closely allied to (c) is the question of reasonableness of the cost of proper maintenance of the area and its developed features.

(g) The proposed boundaries of the historic monument project should be adequate to ensure proper preservation of historic features and public appreciation of their historic significance.

(h) It is desirable for the project to have a place in national, state, or regional plans for the preservation of historic sites and monuments.

(i) The proposed program of public use for historic structures and sites should be consistent with their proper and dignified preservation and with reasonable public access to them.

3. In the case of historic or prehistoric areas which are to be operated for the State by cooperating societies or groups, consideration should be given to the responsibility of the proposed administering agency as determined by (a) legal authority, (b) adequacy of financing, and (c) competency of staff.

Criteria For The Selection Of State Monuments Of Scientific Interest

1. **Quality.** State significance exists in (a) areas which best portray the natural processes that have formed the earth and its plant and animal life, (b) areas which portray some specific natural process so dramatically and arrestingly as to be unique or of sufficient importance to be worthy of state-wide interest, and (c) areas which contain the best remaining examples of native plant and animal species, ecological relationships, and other rare natural objects and conditions.

2. **Adaptability to Effective Treatment.** Areas should be chosen in individual instances on practical grounds as well as on

the basis of scientific considerations. The most important factor in many cases may be susceptibility of the object or phenomena of scientific interest to preservation within practical limits of the state park program. The preservation of phenomena of scientific interest which may not be practicable because of lack of spectacular or dramatic aspects, however, may be found to be practicable by the selection of a site that may also possess a sufficient number of other attractions to arouse the necessary public support. It is improbable, for instance, that the scenic quality, the geological significance or the wildlife, taken alone or separately, would be sufficient to bring about the establishment of Dunes State Park on the shore of Lake Michigan in Indiana. However, the combination of these three interests, together with outstanding recreation potential has proven to be adequate justification for the establishment and preservation of the park.

Supplemental Criteria For The Selection of State Parks And State Monuments Of Historic and Scientific Interest

1. **Distribution of Areas in the State Plan.** Since natural scenery and objects of historic or scientific interest are where you find them, selection of such areas on a geographical basis may not be possible. Areas that best portray exhibits of the various types of natural scenery, objects, phenomena, plant and animal life, historical objects, or places commemorating important persons or historic events should be selected unless they are otherwise adequately protected and made available for appropriate public use.

2. **Balance.** Logical balance among the various scenic, scientific, and historical types should be sought so that a well-rounded pageant of the State's natural and cultural heritage may be preserved and presented to the public. Areas of extraordinary value, however, should be selected regardless of balance.

3. **Accessibility.** Preservation of areas of unique or unusual scenic, scientific, or historical interest is justifiable even when they are remote and difficult to reach. It should be recognized, however, that the element of use by the people is one of the principal considerations and the selection of a site that will be visited by thousands of people each year is to be preferred to one that is so remote that only a few people will be able to visit it.

4. **Availability.** If the best areas are not available because of practical and insuperable obstacles, the best available areas should then be chosen.

Criteria For The Selection Of State Recreation Areas

1. **Quality.** Adaptability for provision of recreational opportunities and location with respect to population distribution are primary factors in selection of recreation areas. However,

within the limitations imposed by these two considerations. scenic and inspirational values should be given every consideration. (Most reservoir areas would fall within this category.)

2. Distribution. Selection of areas should be determined primarily on the basis of providing adequate, non-urban recreation opportunities accessible to the people. Geographical distribution and relationship to concentrations of population are paramount. In some instances, however, exceptional and extraordinary recreational potentialities may warrant the selection of more remote and inaccessible areas.

3. Balance. Logical balance among areas providing opportunities for various kinds of recreational activities and the relation of these areas to population distribution should be sought so as to provide a well-rounded system to meet the recreational needs of the people. In doing so, consideration should be given to the other kinds of areas in the system and to areas and programs of other agencies at all levels of Government.

4. Adaptability to Development. Selection should be dependent upon the suitability of an area for the kinds of recreational uses intended and the practicability of developing required facilities. For example, water supply should be investigated for quality and adequacy for the provision of swimming facilities.

Criteria For The Selection Of State Beaches

1. Quality. State significance exists in fine stretches of beach lands, especially on the oceans, Gulf of Mexico, Great Lakes and other major lakes and rivers that will attract visitors from a considerable section of a state or region for recreation as well as scientific interest. These areas may or may not possess other important features such as dunes or interesting vegetation. Stability of the beach, a gradual and safe slope under water, and freedom from undertow or riptide are important.

2. Distribution of Areas in the State Park System. A direct relationship exists between the location of population concentrations and the need for beaches intended primarily for recreational use. However, because of the present and future need for public beaches and because remaining suitable beach lands are being rapidly acquired and developed by private interests, almost any available, sizeable beach on the oceans or Great Lakes should be considered.

3. Adaptability to Development and Use. Preference should be given to the selection of areas that not only provide a good beach but also adequate space for parking, picnicking, structures for service and visitor use, and perhaps camping.

4. Accessibility and Access. Areas that are readily accessible to concentrations of population are usually given preference because of their proximity to users and existence of developed highways—other factors being approximately equal. Because of the scarcity of suitable beach lands and the fact that they will attract unusually large numbers of people, construction of expensive access roads and causeways is often justified.

Criteria For The Selection Of State Parkways

1. Location. Since only a considerable volume of pleasure vehicle traffic can justify establishment of a parkway, location should be directly related to (a) pleasure traffic requirements of a general nature, or (b) necessity for reaching or connecting established or proposed units of the park system. This usually means proximity to, or connection with, large concentrations of population.

2. Quality and Adaptability to Development. Within limits of the general location determined, the parkway route should be selected that will provide the greatest interest to the traveler in the way of scenic attraction and places of historic and scientific interest. The parkway is characterized by (a) adequate protection against undesirable roadside developments, (b) safe and pleasant alignment and profile, (c) access and border roads, (d) preservation of the existing character and quality of the countryside, (e) effective roadside grading and planting, (f) turnouts for observation of especially interesting scenes, or car repairs, (g) wayside developments for picnicking and relaxation and, on occasion, more elaborate park and recreation developments, and (h) necessary service structures such as gasoline stations, restaurants, utility buildings, and police stations.

3. Right-of-way. Except in most limited and unusual circumstances, 200 feet is generally considered a minimum width for a parkway and then only in metropolitan sections. The standard for national parkways of 125 acres per mile, or an average width of 1000 feet, is extreme for most state parkways because of their frequent location in more urban surroundings. Something between these two extremes would seem desirable for state parkways, depending upon character of the terrain, proximity to urban developments, and land values.

4. Availability. In rural sections, where there is usually considerable freedom of choice of location, land values and willingness of owners to sell at reasonable prices are important considerations. In urban sections there is usually less latitude in choice of location and here the avoiding of condemnation should carry less weight in determining location.

Criteria For The Selection Of State Waysides

1. Quality, Location and Size. Areas along the highway may be selected for their unusual and interesting scenic, scientific or historic features regardless of location or interval. Other areas, which are designed primarily to provide places to picnic or to rest and relax to avoid road fatigue or "sleeping at the wheel", are usually selected on some mileage basis, say at 30 mile intervals. Within a distance of 5 miles of the desired interval, unless there are overriding factors, the more scenic areas or areas from which good views may be obtained, should be selected. Existence of mature trees and other vegetation is highly desirable. Availability of sufficient space to permit desired developments without crowding—usually from 3 to 5 acres—is important. Occasionally, the selection of much larger areas, perhaps up to 500 acres, may

be warranted because of exceptional scenic values, availability of the site, or other unusual considerations; however, such an area would normally be included in one of the other categories.

2. Adaptability to Development. Small scenic overlooks and places of historic interest seldom present much difficulty in the simple development required. Larger areas intended for picnicking and sometimes camping present problems of more parking space, water supply, sanitation, and a greater degree of separation from the highway. The availability of space, water, and possibilities of providing sanitary facilities at minimum cost are essential considerations.

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