

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR • NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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Golden Anniversary

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
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FIFTY ANNIVERSARY

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50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The National Park Service beckons the people of the nation to come and visit the National Park System in 1966, the 50th Anniversary of the Park Service. You will be welcome visitors. And you will enjoy your visit all the more if you know more about the history and the objectives of your National Park Service. The 226 areas administered by the Service include 32 national parks, 77 national monuments, 6 national seashores, 4 national recreation areas, as well as historic sites, battlefields, parkways, and other areas. This System embraces a vast variety of areas ranging from the rock-bound coast of Maine, to the Olympic rain forest in Washington, to Hawaii and Alaska. Alaska contains the largest unit in the System: Katmai National Monument, consisting of over 2 and one-half million acres and home of the world's largest bear, the big Alaskan brown bear.

The National Park Service was established on August 25, 1916, to manage the national parks and monuments which had been established by the Congress and by executive action of the President and were then being administered by a number of bureaus throughout the Government, some by the Department of the Army, some by Agriculture, and some by the Department of the Interior.

The first Director of the National Park Service was Mr. Stephen Tyng Mather, a distinguished man who had left his business interests in 1915 to come to work as a special assistant to Secretary of the Interior

Franklin K. Lane to manage the parks which were then assigned to the Department of the Interior.

Mr. Mather created the conceptual framework of the Park Service. He established the code and criteria of the high standard of service which has marked the National Park Service as a key Bureau of the Federal Government since its inception in 1916. He served as Director of the National Park Service for 12 years, ably assisted by Mr. Horace M. Albright, his field assistant director and first Superintendent at Yellowstone National Park. Mr. George B. Hartzog, Jr. is the present Director. Mr. Hartzog's service spans approximately 20 years, and he has said that "the directorship of the National Park Service has consistently been from its inception a career opportunity for the employees within the National Park Service. This has been one of the hallmarks of the Service and one of its great strengths, as a people-serving agency of our Government."

Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall has identified three principal categories of areas now included within the National Park System. They are: Natural; Historical; and Recreational Areas.

The first category includes the national parks and monuments which were created because of their outstanding natural values--geological, biological, and scenic. The second includes those units of the System which were created to preserve historic and archeological structures and sites. The possibilities of the third major category, recreation areas, are

myriad and include not only recreation based on nature and appropriate to it, but is being extended to include many kinds of wholesome outdoor recreational activities.

The mission assigned to the National Park Service by the Congress is one of the most vital and stimulating in all Government. The Park Service is the people-serving agency which manages the natural, historical, and recreational areas for the continuing benefit of this and future generations.

From parks of history and prehistory, Americans young and old can gain a deeper understanding of the great events which have influenced the history of the United States. In natural parks, visitors are inspired by the superlative beauty and scenic grandeur of the land, and in the recreational areas of the park system there are growing opportunities for healthful outdoor recreation.

Working with the Service in providing for the needs of the more than 117 million visitors expected in the National Park System in 1966, there are 195 concessioners who have invested more than \$73 million of their private capital to provide for food, lodging, and other visitor services.

The Service is managed from Washington, D. C. and also has six regional offices. The Service functions fall into six broad categories: administration, operation, resource studies, cooperative activities, design and construction, and specialized services.

The national parks can be established only by congressional enactment. The national seashores, the national riverways, and national monuments have been established by the Congress and also by the President through Presidential Proclamation under the authority of the Act of 1906 sometimes called the Antiquities Act.

In 1935, in response to the need to preserve a part of America's great historical heritage, the Congress passed the Historic Sites Act which provided for the establishment of the sites and made historic preservation a national policy. As a result of that Act, a great many national historic sites have been established and recognized.

The whole breadth of the National Park System took another step forward in connection with the Park, Parkway, and Recreation Study Act of 1936 which, for the first time, laid a basis for establishing a number of the national seashores which have recently come into being.

The first one of these was Cape Hatteras, authorized in 1937.

Interestingly, all of these areas that have come into the national park system have come in either from Federal lands or through private or public philanthropy on the part of the States. The Federal Government had never authorized appropriations for the initial acquisition of large natural areas until 1961 when the Cape Cod National Seashore legislation was passed.

Sometimes, a confusion arises as to the difference between the recreation areas and the national parks administered by the National Park Service,

and the 50th Anniversary Year is a good time to try to clear up this confusion.

The national parks are set aside primarily to preserve a part of America's scenic and scientific heritage. The National Park Service has a mandate from the Congress to make them available for use and to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. This poses some very delicate decisions from time to time as to what public use should be allowed consistent with preservation.

Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane, who brought Stephen T. Mather to Washington, D. C. to run the parks, set out the management principles for national parks:

1. The national parks must be maintained in absolutely unimpaired form for use of future generations as well as those of our own time;
2. They are set apart for use, observation, health, and pleasure of the people;
3. The national interest must dictate all decisions affecting public or private enterprise.

On the other hand, the national recreation areas are set aside and are managed for outdoor recreation, including public hunting, consistent with the maintenance of a quality natural environment. Quality is the key word--the National Park Service does not want a recreational area to become a natural slum, in a manner of speaking, because then it does not contribute

to continuing outdoor recreational opportunities. There is considerably more flexibility in the management policies and the kinds of development that would distinguish a recreational area from a national park. But both kinds of areas serve the broad purposes of preservation and recreation.

At some of the seashores, which fall under the broad category of recreation areas, the Congress has also set certain standards which contribute to preservation. For example, the Cape Cod National Seashore legislation says the area shall be managed particularly with reference to the natural values and the preservation of those natural values. This can be done and still provide the many forms of seashore recreation.

The United States is a nation of 195 million, and more and more of those 195 million are seeking outdoor recreation, whether it is fishing, boating, swimming, hunting, skiing, rock hunting, or hiking. This great need for outdoor recreation is the reason for understanding just what the national parks are and what they are not. Public use of the national parks is restricted to those activities which are compatible with the purposes for which they were established. Assistant Secretary of the Interior Dr. Stanley A. Cain, an internationally known ecologist, has said:

Because some segments of the public clamor for extensive road systems in parks and wilderness areas is not sufficient justification for uninhibited development. The consequences of yielding to these pressures would lead to a lower standard of quality in these natural areas. Because some people cannot walk and climb, or will not do so, does not justify building a road to every scenic overlook. Because some people like to ride in fast

motorboats and to water ski is not a justification for permission to enjoy these activities everywhere. Because some people want to ride motorcycles, mechanized carts and jeeps on foot-paths and horse trails is no reason to allow them to do so on every trail. Because some people like to see wilderness from the veranda of a modern hotel is not sufficient justification for building hotels within National Parks when their location outside a park would provide necessary accommodations without encroaching on the natural scene. These facilities and enjoyments are entirely appropriate to certain areas, but not to all areas. Tourism is wonderful...but the spirit of tourism should not, in my opinion, be the guiding principle of national park management.

In other words, the national parks are recreational areas but they are special kinds of recreation areas where preservation of the total environment is fundamental to the opportunity of man to re-create his mind and spirit in an undisturbed scene of natural splendor. If people understand why there are certain regulations and practices in a national park, they become defenders of national parks against thoughtless encroachments. National parks need to be protected. The conservation battle is never over. It must be fought and fought again.

The future of national parks "for the benefit and enjoyment of the people" looks bright. The national parks, although providing superlative opportunities for outdoor recreation, also have other "people-serving" values. They can provide an experience in conservation education for the young people of the country, enrich our artistic consciousness, help create social values, contribute to our civic consciousness, and remind us of our debt to the land of our fathers.

Men of vision are coming to believe that necessary progress does not require the destruction of every last vestige of the natural world. Or

as President Johnson said in his landmark message on Natural Beauty, February 8, 1965: "The beauty of our land is a natural resource. Its preservation is linked to the inner prosperity of the human spirit." The job of salvaging the American heritage of a beautiful country is a prime concern of the National Park Service. And in order to leave a heritage of beauty, in 1966 the Park Service will move ahead with the support of the Congress with a new program which will continue to improve the facilities in the parks but, more importantly, will be geared to meet the many changes and new demands for fulfilling leisure time in a rewarding and enriching way. In the last four years alone 30 major areas have been added to the National Park System. The three broad objectives of our new program will be growth in response to human need, cooperation with all concerned, and innovation in ways to achieve the new conservation requested by President Johnson.

The National Park Service extends to you a cordial invitation to visit your National Park System--whether it be the natural, historical, or recreational areas. Come and see your national heritage in 1966.

TEXT BY:

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