



## NATIONAL PARKS AND NEW WORLD IDEALISM

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The recreational resource is not something that stands apart from the other resources; it is composed of them and is usually the total of them all. When it is conserved and utilized properly, there is strong probability that all the component resources are treated properly. Likewise, when the component resources have been squandered, the recreational resource has vanished. Recreational utility is rightly becoming the criterion of good land management, and parks are strongly indicated as the apex of a national conservation program.

Parks are not a type of scenery; they are a type of public reservation. That type of reservation could be applied to an acre of grassland in the plains as well as to an acre of mountain summit in the Andes or the Rockies. Park standards refer therefore, not to the kind of natural scenery that may be selected for park status, but to the use that is made of it. ...

No matter what type of physiography may be chosen, or what biologic, geologic, historic, or archeologic exhibit, the purposes are the same: the areas are set apart to be preserved and enjoyed without impairment. While the 158 reservations in the national park system are grouped into 11 descriptive categories--such as parks, monuments, historical parks, historic sites, battlefield parks, memorials, etc.--they are all the same type of reservation. Generically all are parks.

When someone attempts to break through one of these reservations and exploit its resources for private gain,



that is a threat to park standards and should be a matter of public concern. Such attempts usually are piecemeal, and each is made by its proponents to appear reasonably insignificant. But the parkman knows from hard experience that all such invasions are cumulative, and that the toxin, if permitted, will in time become lethal.

In the national parks we are trying to preserve the land whole, not that human use of the areas should be subordinated to nature protection, and not that in the parks we think more of wildlife or other objects than of people. Parks are for the people to use and there is no other reason for their existence. But, if a car is to transport us, we must keep its mechanism in running order. If parks are to serve us we must protect their natural machinery. ...

Recognizing these facts in our plans and developments, we can increase the utility of our parks, and if our feet are on the ground, we can develop almost any kind of park. To do so, however, our purposes must be clearly in mind. These statements seem obvious, but in fact they are not. There is frequent conflict between parkmen, one faction charging that the other would lock up the parks and keep people out of them, the other asserting that the first would make city playgrounds of all parks. Would not both factions be nearer the truth if they agreed that there is no conflict --that we should, so to speak, render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's? That we should not try to treat Jones Beach as we would the back country of Yellowstone or make Yellowstone serve as Jones Beach? Countless thousands may play on the beach and the tide comes and washes their tracks away. Countless thousands trampling the roots and packing the soil around a giant Sequoia tree will kill the tree that they come to see. Both the wilderness park and the heavily used beach have their places, and there is no legitimate conflict between them. Management of any park must partake of common sense and good taste so that development will not defeat the purpose for which it was established and that purpose will not be confused with the purpose of some other park.

Park management is more, of course, than common sense and good taste. It is a profession and a career in actuality, and the time is ripe for its techniques to be professionalized academically. The breadth of its activities, its intense absorption with people and nature, its concern with the physical evidences of history and prehistory, their preservation and interpretation, the host of practical



skills required in construction, operation and maintenance and the ever-guiding objective of preserving the best and making it available--all these make the park profession one of the most attractive and stimulating of all careers.

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If lands are no longer good for one use, it seems only common sense that we put them to another use. If lands are no longer needed for growing timber, for instance, or for some other industrial purpose, and they are of outstanding scenic and recreational character, would it not be simple wisdom to reserve them for recreation? The answer would be in the affirmative more often if it were not that there is a widespread tendency to try to do too many things for too many people on every acre of public land.

This policy is referred to as a multiple use. Under it we are told that the resources of a proposed park are so intertwined and are of such great importance that the only way the area can be properly managed is to use all the resources simultaneously and equally, and, that if this is done, the recreational resource will receive full consideration along with the rest.

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Multiple use is a common, and often a good, feature of land management. As it is commonly accepted, however, it means the specific brand of land management that I have described, which sets multiplicity as its objective and permits a mediocre rating of every resource in a given area.

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Nobody could have any quarrel with multiple use as a descriptive term, provided it is only an incidental aspect of optimum use. A national park, for instance, which the multiple use exponents usually refer to as a single use form of land management, actually may provide several uses. It may provide vital watershed protection; serve as a wildlife sanctuary, as a natural and historic museum and place of public education; it may serve as a source of employment for local labor and a market for local products; increase the value of adjacent and tributary property, and, at the same time, serve as a stimulus to national and international travel, which in turn stimulates a host of other industries. All these are incidental to the dominant use of the land for



recreation. In such case, the optimum use of the land includes several uses, but multiplicity is not the objective: it is an incidental, and even accidental, aspect.

I sincerely believe that the exponents of multiple use really have optimum use in mind, and that they have no thought but that the natural resources should be appraised with intelligent selectivity. If that is the case, then we should recognize it by all means and admit that we do not hold multiple use either as a formula of land management or as an objective. Such action would revolutionize public land management. It would lead to the classification of lands according to their best uses. It would mean, for example, as G. A. Pearson says, that "Livestock production like timber production would profit immensely, if instead of trying to utilize all lands regardless of quality, the range industry were concentrated on lands really suited to it by climate, soil, and water facilities." It would mean that a national conservation program, insofar as the public lands are concerned, would be rational and flexible and that recreational lands would be classified as recreational lands rather than as forest or range or some other category for which they are largely useless. It would mean, in time, that lands classified according to their dominant use would be managed by agencies especially skilled in providing those uses, and that incidental uses would be permitted in accordance with their relative importance.

In such a conservation program there might be more parks or there might not be, depending upon the classification of the resources. It might be found that recreational areas, so classified for their dominant use but subject to certain subordinate uses, would be a useful complement to the park systems. Such areas would be more apt to retain their distinguishing characteristics, and to render their maximum usefulness, if they were so recognized, but parks would remain the apex of the conservation program because they are the irreducible treasures.

--Excerpts from an address given May 13, 1940, before the Eighth American Scientific Congress, Washington, D. C.