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REMARKS BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR JOHN A. CARVER, JR., AT THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CONFERENCE OF CHALLENGES, YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, OCTOBER 14, 1963

On a beautiful Sunday last mid-August, my family and I hiked a trail route in Shenandoah National Park. Starting at Hoover Camp, climbing to Laurel Gap, then along the Appalachian trail to Milam Gap and back to Hoover Camp--maybe 12 or 13 miles. In one of our most visited parks, on a week-end at the top of the season, on well-designed and attractive trails, we met not another hiker the whole day. Neither had we the day before, although then we hadn't expected to, as we were on more remote trails.

Later that month Superintendent Fred Bussey gave me a quick tour through his Colorado National Monument. He pointed to the take-off point of a downhill, one-way trail which led to the highway on the valley floor. It was, he said, a worthwhile trip which would add greatly to an understanding of the park. And, he said, not twenty-five people a year used it.

These two experiences made me think of the ill-fated and much publicized Park Service contract with a psychological research firm to study why people liked parks. There are things we ought to know about the reaction of users to our parks. But there are better ways of laying the groundwork for contracts of that kind.

Precise data on why people do or don't use trails presumably helps us to make decisions. Or does it? Some hikers feel their experience is spoiled if another hiker is seen on the trail. Having data is desirable, even necessary; but it helps in making only those decisions or choices which are within a previously charted spectrum of the possible.

The outer limits of the possible may be legislative or budget limits. But the limits I'm talking of are more esoteric. Suppose, for example, that a study should disclose that more than 80 percent of park users would like to have swimming pools in the park? Would you then plan swimming pools, assuming no law or budget restriction inhibited you? I think not.

Or suppose the converse--that fewer than one percent of park users utilized the trails. Would you then abandon the trail program?

Last summer I attended (and participated in as guest lecturer) a program of the Center for Public Administration of the University of Wisconsin. Another lecturer, an industrial psychologist, developed the idea that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are not opposite poles of one continuum of job attitude,

but really are on two separate continuums. Dissatisfaction, on a separate scale, is found mainly in the environmental or hygienic factors of the job--the physical discomfort, attitude of management, pay, hours, etc. Satisfaction's scale plots intrinsic factors--the opportunity to make a contribution, the challenge, the feeling of accomplishment, or the feeling of being involved in important and meaningful service.

I think of this thesis as I review the mail which complains of park experiences. One type of letters, on the dissatisfaction scale, deals almost exclusively with the environmental or hygienic aspects of a park visit--the meals, the prices, the accommodations, the crowded conditions. The other type of letter singles out the devotion of the rangers, the excellence of the interpretive programs, the quality of the experience. Many letters express both ideas.

If park dissatisfaction is a separate continuum, bringing the minus factors up to be plus factors is not equivalent to a positive rating on the park satisfaction continuum. Our main concern, it seems to me, is the quality of the park experience. I have the feeling that on this scale, we enjoy a high rating with the Congress and the public.

But the environmental factors for a park experience--the meals and accommodations and the like--are also our concern, because they relate to being not dissatisfied in a park. Perhaps it helps our understanding of what to do about them if we remember that that is quite different than being concerned with them for their own sake.

Criticism for not having accommodations within a national park is not as frequent or as virulent as criticism for having bad accommodations, but removal of the cause of the criticism may not be the answer, either. Many of our problems are historical, but history can't be wiped out.

I've presented you with a metaphor, which might well be assisted by a visual aid. In essence, I've suggested that if you asked visitors to divide themselves in two groups, based upon whether on balance they had been more satisfied or dissatisfied and then asked each group to specify what had made them satisfied or dissatisfied, the factors showing upon the two scales would probably not be the same. I think the satisfaction scale would be dominated by "quality" factors, and the dissatisfaction scale by "environmental" factors. It is because we ask most people to specify both what they dislike and what they like in their experience that we tend to confuse "quality" experiences with "creature-comfort" experiences.

This may seem a little abstruse, maybe too much so. But it ought not seem so to this crowd; your job, in its organic fundamental, is to accommodate between a dichotomous single purpose--in the language of the 1916 Act "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

Is conservation of scenery and natural values on a different scale or continuum than providing for their enjoyment? There is no question but that as forces they pull in opposite directions, and your task is one of accommodation and reconciliation. In its nature, such a task is not merely difficult, it is impossible, if you look upon it as capable of being made certain.

The units of value, the scale markings, are neither uniform nor constant. If you imagine the two ideas as subject to a formula to point the way to a successful balance of one against the other, you are either blind or conceited; the fulcrum of the balance is subject to being shifted by forces outside your control and independent of formulas--the Congress, for example.

The paradox of the 1916 Act is great, but it does not destroy our morale. We retain confidence because in a free government we cannot be dissatisfied with decisions of our elected representatives.

But confidence and moral do tend to erode when we are drawn into situations wherein other social values are weighed against park values. Each one of you could name a dozen or a hundred situations where standing for park quality of park values or park conservation has subjected you to the calumny of being anti-education, anti-church, anti-transportation, and even anti-government.

Why shouldn't a Water Institute be built on park land--are we anti-water? A football field and a tennis court promote physical fitness, and who can be against physical fitness?

This is the story of your lives, of the lives of us. The conflicting social values bear down upon you, even within the Department itself. Water development at Grand Canyon, Indian villages at Everglades, irrigation water drawdown at Grand Teton.

I won't fall into my own trap, and suggest formulas for avoiding or resolving these dilemmas. But I am going to dare to make some suggestions concerning the conduct of your business which might, if followed, ease some of the friction.

Let me start with a restatement of a favorite theme--that all government administrators, including park executives, might well refresh themselves on the nature of the American system of government, and the relative and respective roles of the administrators and the legislators.

For example, national parks are legislative creatures. Because we play such an important role in the process of legislative submittals and reporting, we sometimes get a little imprecise in the way we announce our conclusions. We talk about what we will accept on such matters as acreages, continuance of commercial uses, protection of existing rights, condemnation, and other factors of parks, when we could as easily phrase our objections in terms of the attitude we will express in our report. We understand our limitations, and we understand the role of Congress; but the public we are talking to sometimes could validly conclude that creation of national parks is an administrative or executive action, rather than legislative.

So get, and stay better informed on the nature of the legislative process (both substantive and appropriations) as parks are affected, so that your discussions with the public will accurately reflect where the ultimate responsibility lies.

Another general suggestion is related. Developments within your own Department related to your work, whether you like them or not, ought to be a part of your stock of information.

I sometimes have the feeling that the entire Park Service is resolutely shutting its eyes to the fact of the creation of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, and to the nature of the functions assigned to it. Particularly do I have the feeling that the Secretary's order creating the Bureau, and the subsequent act of Congress (not to say the specific directions of the appropriations committees contained in their reports) are regarded as idle conversation. Perhaps if you don't think about such things they will go away. But I don't think so.

At this conference, you are going to discuss the Long Range Plan. I would advise you constantly to bear in mind that you can't bootstrap your way into ascendancy in functions which have by Secretarial order and by law been transferred to another bureau.

Which leads to my third point. When all else falls, the Park Service seems always able to fall back upon mysticism, its own private mystique. Listen to this sentence: "The primary qualification requirement of the Division Chief position, and most of the subordinate positions . . . is that the employees be . . . imbued with strong convictions as to the 'rightness' of National Park Service philosophy, policy, and purpose, and who have demonstrated enthusiasm and ability to promote effectively the achievement of National Park Service goals."

This has the mystic, quasi-religious sound of a manual for the Hitler Youth Movement. Such nonsense is simply intolerable. The National Park Service is a bureau of the Department of the Interior, which is a Department of the United States government's executive branch--it isn't a religion, and it should not be thought of as such.

Of course you should have strong convictions, but you are expected also to have discipline. The sentence I've read is from a proposed submission to be made to the Civil Service Commission, which reached my desk last month. Taken by itself, it might be interpreted not to have the connotation I've given it.

But read on with me: Later in the report there is singled out a truly classic case, admirably suited to emphasize the mystical nature of your jobs. That was famous "hunting in the parks" statement of September 14, 1961, issued without Departmental clearance, and leading to a crisis in public relations the like of which had not been seen up to that time. The Secretary was made to look foolish; I was caught in a vicious cross-fire, and the whole thing was a fiasco.

Out of it, eventually, came the Leopold Report, and solid backing for a good position, but to credit the Park Service with the Leopold Report is like crediting a collision at sea for a dramatic rescue effort--the captain of the offending ship is hardly likely to get a medal for making the rescue effort possible.

Blandly, this job justification document I've referred to bestows the medal. It starts by crediting the official with assuming the proposition to be proved--that park hunting is detrimental. The key sentence in the document says that "After approval of the statement by the Director, it was given wide distribution to the conservation interests." That is exactly what happened. But among the conservation interests not favored in the distribution of the document was the Secretary of the Interior or the Assistant Secretary for Public Land Management, in the direct chain of command, or the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife who had been commissioned by the Secretary to carry out a Secretarial review of the question.

Obviously Park Service people must be loyal to park ideals, but they have to function in the real world of a disciplined bureaucracy. Mysticism which expresses itself in conviction of the "rightness" of NPS philosophy, policy and purpose it seems to me can easily get out of hand. I tried, with the help of Bob Mangan, to state a decent standard in this difficult area, in a speech I gave to a Federal executives training seminar. Here it is:

"Obviously, you can't operate on the basis of a spoils system--if for no other reason than the chaos it would create. But more than that, we are in an age of technology and specialization. Government must have the hard core of continuous experience that makes up the career bureaucracy.

"Herein lies the problem. Who runs the establishment? Policy-making political appointee or career bureaucrat? I suppose the answer in large part is that they both play significant roles and must recognize this in order to make it work.

"So where are the moral issues in this set-up? It seems to me that the whole system is founded on an ethical assumption--loyalty. But loyalty to what--to a program, to an organization--or what? It seems to me that we must have as the basic ingredient loyalty to the principle of policy direction from the Chief Executive and his cabinet officers. No one asks that a career professional vow unswerving fealty and devotion to each succeeding administration. To do so would convert him into a pinwheel!

"But we do require and expect a kind of enthusiastic neutrality--a commitment to the policy direction of the period to the extent of applying his skills and his experience with maximum effectiveness. Anything less than this is a disservice to the public. The antithesis, of course, is sabotage."

The last point I want to make is the most general of all, and that is that you ought to reread your correspondence before you sign it with one question in the forefront of your mind--will it make sense to the recipient. If it doesn't, do it over.

One man sent back one of your letters which said he couldn't take pictures in the monument because of fire hazard. There were good reasons, too, but that throwback to the days of magnesium flares made nonsense of the whole letter.

We almost wrote to a physician who complained of bad food, referring in our letter to "the illness which you regard as the fault of the meal you ate." The effect of such language is to convert the argument from a legitimate one over park facilities to an irrelevant one of whether the doctor is more or less qualified than an NPS bureaucrat to diagnose the cause of illness. On the latter ground we're bound to lose.

Not strictly letter-writing, but high on my list of pointless or thoughtless conduct, was our giving a traffic ticket to the U. S. Post Office Department drivers who were wheeling their mail across Memorial Bridge. Did we think we were going to settle an argument with the Postmaster General in the U. S. Commissioner's office?

I could go on. I've probably already gone too far, and left the general impression that I am universally critical and negative about the Park Service.

Assuredly that is not so. I doubt that anyone could associate with the Park Service people and not develop great respect and fondness for them and their program. Some of you at least can furnish the documentation of my effective support and backstopping which has made your job easier, and helped toward solid accomplishment. We are all in this thing together. We have a big job to do which requires an awareness of each other's problems. I have chosen to use my part of the program to be critical in what I hope is in a constructive way.

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