

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**  
**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

**THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE RESPONSE  
TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF  
THE NATIONAL PARKS CENTENNIAL COMMISSION**



**APRIL 1974**

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## INTRODUCTION

The National Parks Centennial Commission was established by the Congress of the United States on January 19, 1970 (H. J. Res. 546-2) to prepare, in cooperation with others, a suitable plan for the 100th anniversary of Yellowstone National Park; to coordinate the activities of the plan; and to provide host services for a world conference on national parks in 1972.

The National Park Service wishes to extend its deepest thanks to the National Parks Centennial Commission for its tireless and dedicated actions in commemorating the 100th anniversary of Yellowstone, the world's first national park. During 1972 a tremendous amount of work went into the Centennial commemoration, including the 100th anniversary banquet in Washington, D.C.; the Conservation Foundation Symposium at Yosemite and the Foundation's ensuing report, "National Parks for the Future"; the commemorative programs in numerous parks; and the highly successful Second World Conference on National Parks.

As its concluding act, the Commission submitted its report of the Centennial, entitled, "Preserving a Heritage," to the President and the Congress in December of 1973. A major portion of that report consists of the Commission's recommendations concerning the National Park System. This is a thoughtful and penetrating look at the problems facing the System and of suggested means for coping with those problems. Though the Commission no longer exists, its members deserve an official response by the National Park Service to their dedicated work. This paper contains that response.

## SUMMARY

The recommendations of the National Parks Centennial Commission deal with eleven major areas of National Park Service concern:

- Duality of Purpose
- The Role of the National Park System
- Acquisition
- Development and Maintenance
- Natural and Cultural Heritage
- Park Management and Preservation
- Accessibility and Use
- Concessions
- Interpretation and Education
- Information and Reservation Centers
- Committees, Commissions, and Boards
- National Capital Parks

In addition, they include a section on Wilderness without recommendations.

The Service is in general agreement with most of the Commission's recommendations. In its responses to the Commission, the Service has qualified its agreements as necessary and has supplied information to indicate how a number of recommendations are already being carried out.

### Duality of Purpose

In briefest summary, and without elucidation, the Service agrees that preservation and use remain the guiding principles of Service activity.

### The Role of the National Park System

The role of the National Park Service is defined by the Congress in the various authorities affecting the Service. The Service and the Department have strong advisory responsibilities in defining the System's role. The Service believes that any initiative regarding divestiture of properties should come from the appropriate Congressional committees.

### Acquisition

The Service believes that many areas of national significance are already protected by a *de facto* national preservation system for both natural and historic areas outside the National Park System, and the Service would not move to acquire such properties unless they were threatened with loss. The Department has recommended the addition of 32.26 million acres of land, in 11 areas, to the System in Alaska, meeting the Commission's recommendation in this regard. Inholdings are being phased out on a willing-seller/willing-buyer basis, with condemnation being used only when irreparable damage would result in changed use of these private properties. The Service has a National Park System Plan to guide it in developing a representative National Park System. This plan identifies the major historic and natural themes of the country and the extent to which each is presently represented in the System. An increase of offshore funds for the Land and Water Conservation Fund merits careful study, particularly in view of the energy problem.

### Development and Maintenance

The Service recognizes the need for adequate development funding and is making a careful study of its development needs preparatory to submitting its 1976 FY budget request to Congress.

#### Natural and Cultural Heritage

The Service agrees that it should continue to manage historic areas as part of the National Park System. Regarding preservation of globally significant natural and historic resources, the United States was the first country to sign the World Cultural and Natural Heritage Convention, and the National Park Service looks forward to playing an active part in carrying out various provisions of the convention.

#### Park Management and Preservation

The Service manages all natural lands as nature preserves and regeneration areas, in effect, and nature is allowed to run its course in such areas, except where specific sub-climax plant communities must be maintained by management programs. The Service's policies encourage placing only those facilities required for visitor use and park management within park boundaries. Facilities now in parks which do not meet this criterion can be identified through individual park master plans and subsequently phased out.

#### Accessibility and Use

The Service recognizes the value of determining carrying capacities for the parks and is committed to developing an effective means of measuring capacity. Capacity is being regulated in a number of parks through a variety of pilot programs in public transportation, campground reservation, backcountry use, and use of the Colorado River. The Service agrees that no new campgrounds should be built in the parks when they can be provided by others outside of the parks. Public transit studies are being made on a priority basis in a number of parks where conditions indicate a need.

#### Concessions

The Service is initiating a study of concession policy and procedures. The Service agrees that well-performed concession operations which supply a public need should be retained and upgraded, and those which have outlived their usefulness eliminated. The Service is actively committed to encouraging land use controls in areas adjacent to parks, bringing them into harmony with park character.

#### Interpretation and Education

The Service has established a new Office of Interpretation in its Washington headquarters, and corresponding offices in each Region, for the purpose of strengthening the interpretation and visitor use programs.

#### Information and Reservation Centers

The Service agrees that better pre-trip information is necessary before visiting the parks and is studying means of making this available to park users. Regional Offices can play a larger role. The National Visitor Center could be a pilot project for an urban information center; Congressional approval would be required for centers in other urban areas.

#### Commissions, Committees, Boards

The Service agrees that public participation is desirable in the planning and management process, and that means to encourage this presently exist. However, these citizen groups serve in an advisory capacity and do not relieve the Service of its management decision responsibility.

#### National Capital Parks

The Service agrees that areas designated for Federal jurisdiction be retained under NPS management when D.C. receives home rule.

### Wilderness

The Service supports the Wilderness Act and is moving rapidly to complete necessary wilderness studies and make recommendations to the President and Congress by September 1974.

## DUALITY OF PURPOSE

*In keeping with the 1916 Organic Act and the tradition of the Service, the Commission strongly recommends that the dual purposes of PRESERVATION and USE be maintained as the dynamic undergirding of the National Park System.*

The National Park Service agrees with the Commission's recommendation. As pointed out, both preservation and use are required by the 1916 Organic Act establishing the Service. This dual purpose has characterized Service activity throughout its history and will continue to be the touchstone of its park management activities.

It is necessary in carrying out our mandate to place great stress on preservation if the parks are to be left unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. We view the need for preservation as an imperative and the need for use as relative. Accordingly, when and where we deem it necessary, based on research and study, we will curtail use in the interest of preservation. At the same time, when there is no clear reason not to permit use, appropriate uses will be encouraged. This is the delicate balance we will strive to maintain, and we are confident that, if we are willing to face the issues of preservation and use squarely and deal with the controversies they engender, we can maintain this balance.

## THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

### SERVICE SHOULD IDENTIFY ROLE

*The Commission recommends that the National Park Service identify its role and function in the total outdoor recreation use spectrum and formulate such operating policies as to coordinate its unique resources with those of all other agencies of Federal, State, and local government, and the private sector.*

The role of the National Park Service is identified by Congress and is the sum of the various acts establishing the parks, the National Park Service, and the various functions of the National Park Service beyond the parks. The Service and various Administrations have played a strong advisory part in the development of this role, but in the final analysis the decisions lie with the Congress. Interpretation of Service authorities change from time to time, and there have been significant increments of new authority over the years; but our role—viewed in the large context of the total outdoor recreation spectrum—is primarily one of preserving and providing for the use of natural and historic properties of national significance.

This is accomplished primarily through management of the National Park System, but we also assist others in this endeavor through grants-in-aid for historic preservation; through the National Register of Historic Places; through the Natural and Historic Landmarks program; and through the archeological salvage program.

The National Park System includes a number of parks in the recreation management category, but in these—as well as in the natural and historic management categories—preservation of natural and historic features is usually mandated by law and always observed in practice.

The Service also manages the National Capital Parks of Washington, D.C., and environs, representing a blend of national shrines, city recreational facilities, natural and historic area preservation, and cultural facilities. We believe this is an important Service function in the Nation's Capital.

Coordination of the System's unique resources with other Federal, State, and local agencies and the private sector is a growing concern of the Service. The Nationwide Outdoor Recreation Plan, issued by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation in December 1973, goes far in establishing roles and cooperative policies for recreation management at all levels.

The Service also recently issued a comprehensive policy, and implementing guidelines, for regional cooperation and land use planning. Implementation of this policy will, we believe, meet the intent of the Commission's recommendation.

#### ANNUAL REVIEW OF PROPERTIES AND RECOMMENDED DIVESTITURE

*The Commission recommends that a review of national park properties be made by the Director of the National Park Service on an annual basis, and the Director shall make appropriate recommendations for reclassification or divestiture of those properties which do not meet the criteria of uniqueness and national significance. Such properties so designated for divestiture shall be referred to the Congress for authorized transfer to another Federal, State, or local government agency.*

Inasmuch as the Congress, directly or indirectly, establishes National Park System areas, such a review should be initiated by the appropriate Congressional committees. Congressional approval would ordinarily be required for divestiture. We would be happy to provide them with our findings for their consideration and appropriate action. The Nationwide Outdoor Recreation Plan, recently issued by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, contains a similar recommendation regarding divestiture.

### AQUISITION

#### ACQUISITION OF PROPERTIES OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

*The Commission recommends that immediate steps be taken to acquire the properties already designated by the Service as unique and of national significance.*

Beginning with the Historic Sites Act of August 21, 1935, the Congress has recognized that not all areas of national significance need be operated by the National Park Service so long as they are afforded ample protection. On the other hand, it has long been accepted that a National Park System of superlative and outstanding areas, representing the Nation's principal natural and historic themes, is desirable. The Service continue to work toward this goal. For example, the Service is supporting legislation for the establishment of Big Thicket in Texas and Big Cypress in Florida.

Today, the Service recognizes the existence of a *de facto* national preservation system, of which the National Park System is a primary but not exclusive element. This system includes the National Wilderness Preservation System, the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, the National Wildlife Refuge System, and other Federal lands administratively designated for preservation such as Bureau of Land Management primitive areas and scientific areas. It also includes a number of important State parks and land in private ownership. As long as these areas are afforded protection, the Service would not ordinarily recommend their inclusion in the National Park System.

Under the Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the Service administers a grants-in-aid program for historic preservation, designed to help others preserve nationally significant historic areas, thus



relieving the Federal Government of shouldering the entire burden. The Natural Landmarks programs identifies important natural areas that should be preserved, though not necessarily by the Federal Government. States can acquire these, if they so choose, using monies from the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

### ALASKAN AREAS

*The Commission recommends that every effort be made to add all that is appropriate in Alaska to the National Park System, and that there be no haste in trying to decide exactly how such additions be used and developed.*

Secretary Morton recommended 32.26 million acres of parklands in Alaska on December 18, 1973, culminating two years of study mandated by Section 17(c) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. This includes:

Three new national parks: Gates of the Arctic; Lake Clark; and Wrangell-St. Elias  
Doubling the size of Mount McKinley National Park  
Enlarging and upgrading Katmai National Monument to national park status  
Four new national monuments: Kobuk Valley; Cape Krusenstern Aniakchak Caldera; Harding Icefield-Kenai Fjords  
Charley National River  
Chukchi-Imuruk National Reserve, administered jointly with Fish and Wildlife Service

The National Park Service, of course, supports these proposals and hopes to see quick legislative action on them. It also agrees that the immediate need is for preservation, with decisions regarding use being subservient to that need.

### ELIMINATION OF INHOLDINGS

*The Commission strongly recommends that all inholdings gradually be eliminated, with priority acquisition being given to those properties exhibiting non-conforming use and those which are likely to be subdivided or receive adverse development.*

The National Park Service made a major breakthrough in its efforts to acquire inholdings in 1969, when, in coordination with the appropriations committees of the Congress, an inholding program was established to be conducted on an opportunity basis, using willing-buyer/willing-seller concept only, except where there was an immediate threat of irreparable damage.

To accomplish this, an opportunity purchase program was authorized, enabling the Service to acquire lands without delays and without the gradual increases in cost brought about through delayed negotiations.

This program is working very well. For instance, in Yosemite National Park, the Service acquired 25 tracts of land, totaling 746.34 acres, for \$1,510,540. In the Everglades, all but 12,295 acres of 55,552 acres of inholdings had been acquired as of December 31, 1973.

We have every intention of following up vigorously with our inholding program.

### ACQUISITION PLAN TO BALANCE SYSTEM

*The Commission recommends that the National Park Service develop and publish a plan for the acquisition of new properties augmenting and balancing those natural,*

*historic, and recreation areas already in the National Park System—balancing not as to numbers of properties or acres, but rather as to unique and significant types representing the broad spectrum of natural and recreation areas throughout the United States and its territories and the full chronology of our country's 197 years of history.*

The National Park Service published its two-part National Park System Plan in 1970. Part One deals with history; Part Two treats natural features. These documents identify the primary historic and natural themes that should be represented in the System and indicate the extent to which each theme is presently represented in the System. The Plan does not include a listing of specific desirable areas to fill the present gaps in the System; rather, it provides a framework for evaluating proposed areas. However, the natural and historic theme studies, carried out by the National Park Service or under contract with various universities, provide information on various sites representative of the various themes. These studies are ongoing; and, as regards history, there will always be new themes and sites as history continues to be made.

#### INCREASED OFF-SHORE OIL FUNDS FOR L.W.C.F.

*The Commission recommends a greater portion of the funds that accrue to the Federal Government from off-shore oil properties should go into the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and that those monies be made available to the National Park Service for acquisition purposes.*

The Service would not be opposed to increased funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, but we realize that this would be a complex problem, particularly in view of the energy crisis, requiring a thorough study in the Department and, of course, Congressional legislation.

Our present acquisition needs are \$242 million, with approximately another \$242 million required for areas presently proposed for addition to the System. Generally, our acquisition program has been proceeding satisfactorily. Our real problem is with adequate development and operating funds following acquisition.

#### DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

*The Commission recommends that the National Park Service seek favorable action by the Congress to fund appropriate development needs in more rapid order.*

During the period 1960-1972, there are 94 new parks added to the System. During the Congressional hearings on new park proposals, hopes were often held out for early development to meet burgeoning recreation needs. However, more was offered than could be delivered within the specified time frame. A program for periodic replacement of facilities and improved maintenance is required at older established parks, as well as in improved program for the preservation of many historic structures. Today we have an estimated development backlog of \$2.3 billion, a figure which, at present rates of funding, would take over two generations to provide. We are now in the process of making a searching, Systemwide analysis of our development backlog. We intend to eliminate projects that are environmentally unsound and those that can be effectively provided by others in the park region.

Our development concepts must be environmentally sound and must be tied in with park and regional transportation systems; and our planning must be in the context of a wider regional recreation plan.

The National Park Service cannot continue to try to meet all visitor service needs in the park. The private sector outside the park must play a larger role.

The most critical factor in our present development planning is the energy shortage, which is expected to last from 5 years to a decade. Although we are uncertain about its long-term implications, it may have the effect of altering visitation patterns to the parks, with sizable increases at accessible park areas and a leveling off of use at more remote parks. We must consider this in our planning. Many recently authorized parks needing development for adequate use are in the readily accessible category, giving us a double incentive to begin developing them.

Development needs will be a major concern of the Service in preparing its 1976 FY budget. Development in FY74 and FY75 is already largely devoted to the 23 parks in the Bicentennial program.

## NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

### CONTINUED NPS ADMINISTRATION OF HISTORIC AREAS

*The Commission strongly recommends the continuation of the long-standing policy, as established by Congress, that the National Park Service continue to administer unique and nationally significant historic areas, including structures, monuments, memorials, battlefields, and prehistoric archeological remains. Special recognition is given to the need for maintenance and, in some cases, for improved interpretation of these nationally significant historic treasures.*

We agree with this recommendation fully. Beginning with the Antiquities Act of 1906, historic areas have been in integral part of the National Park System.

Today the National Park System contains hundreds of the Nation's most important historic properties, dating from prehistoric times to the present. Many of these have not had adequate upkeep and maintenance. Some are in danger of loss. To remedy this situation, we need a thorough review of the preservation needs of these priceless structures and an action program developing ways and means of assuring adequate preservation.

Improved interpretation of historic areas is a very active reality through our "living history" and other programs. Major emphasis during the Service's 1973 reorganization was given to improving interpretation programs through adequate organization, staffing, funding, and imaginative new programs.

### PARK LODGES ON NATIONAL REGISTER

*The Commission recommends that some of the old lodges and other structures in national parks be preserved and restored, where practical, for their unique architectural design and historic significance, and that consideration be given to according them National Register status.*

Executive Order 11593 required all Federal agencies to inventory and nominate to the Secretary of the Interior all sites, buildings, districts, and objects under their jurisdiction or control that appear to qualify for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The National Park Service is implementing the Executive Order by having each Regional Office inventory eligible properties,

record them on the list of Classified Structures, and nominate them to the National Register. NPS properties listed on the National Register will be administered as Class VI lands.

#### WORLD NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

*The Commission recommends that the National Park Service move aggressively forward on furthering the adoption and expansion of the concept of a World Heritage Trust.*

The United States was the first country to sign the convention passed by the United Nations last fall. The National Park Service expects to be called upon to nominate U.S. areas for the Heritage list. We would welcome an expanded role in working with other countries on park planning and management concerns, and would like to learn from their experience as well. With park systems in over 90 countries, there is much we can learn from others.

### PARK MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

#### NATURE RESERVES AND RESERVATION AREAS

*It is recommended that a strictly natural area be set aside within each natural park as a "nature preserve" as a "regeneration area" to serve as an example of the unique flora and fauna of that park.*

All natural, backcountry, and wilderness lands in the parks fall essentially into the recommended categories. Few parks are so large or so unaffected by the activities of humankind that a completely natural biota exists or can be completely restored. Nonetheless, our policy fosters such a state where possible. Our research program is actively providing us with the ecological knowledge to accomplish this goal.

Outside the National Park System, our Natural Landmark program encourages others to preserve significant natural areas.

#### NATURE ALLOWED TO RUN ITS COURSE

*The Commission recommends that in the natural parks of the System the forces of nature be permitted to run their natural course uninhibited, except for limited instances where such deviations must be supported by stated management objectives.*

This is conformable with our policies, including those instances where exceptions must be supported by stated management objectives for such things as the perpetuation of sub-climax and successional ecosystems and selective reduction of ungulate herds.

#### DEVELOPMENT BEYOND PARK BOUNDARIES

*The Commission recommends that, in considering new facilities, development which can be adequately supplied outside the park boundary be so provided but that the basic needs of the visitor not be sacrificed in so doing.*

This is conformable with our policies. In smaller parks, such as Cape Cod National Seashore, Acadia National Park, Cape Hatteras National Seashore, there is no need to provide overnight facilities for the great majority of visitors in the parks.

#### MOVE SERVICE'S FACILITIES OUTSIDE OF PARKS

*The Commission recommends the National Park Service appraise all existing facilities and move outside the park boundaries all administrative, maintenance, concession, and housing facilities not related to the direct protection of the resources and the visitor's enjoyment of the park.*

This recommendation poses a number of questions and problems that can only be responded to in the context of planning for each particular park. Generally, we could agree with the spirit of the recommendation but find compliance with the letter difficult. For instance, housing for park employees is not always available in the environs of many remote parks. If some housing were adjudged not necessary for resource protection and visitor use, it would almost need to be built at Federal expense to replace the housing removed from the park. The same could apply to administrative facilities. In view of the \$2.3 billion development backlog of construction needs for the National Park System, it does not seem wise to add new development costs to replace serviceable structures. Nonetheless, such an objective could be achieved selectively and gradually over time. We do need to re-examine our thinking on this entire matter of providing visitor and administrative facilities outside of park boundaries.

### ACCESSIBILITY AND USE

#### CARRYING CAPACITY

*The Commission recommends that the National Park Service address its research regarding carrying capacity to a fundamental concept of finding means to increase the protection of fragile park areas while, at the same time, increasing the number of citizens who may see and use them.*

The Service is committed to developing an effective means of determining park capacity through its research and planning process. It seems clear, however, that we are in an area where informed judgment is required as to what degree of use and kinds of facilities are compatible with protecting the park resource, providing for orderly use, and maintaining a quality park experience for the visitor.

What degree of use is compatible with preservation of alpine tundra, and how is that use to be channeled and controlled? How much use can an historic house receive without harm to its irreplaceable fabric, loss of valuable items, or dilution of the quality of the visitor experience? What methods are required to channel and direct this use?

These and related problems face us in every park, but we are—in each area—getting a clearer idea of what kinds of use and how much use is appropriate. Fortunately, few parks are being used in excess of their installed capacity. For those that are, the overuse is often localized or highly seasonal. Nonetheless, such overuse represents a problem that we are correcting through proper management.

## IMPLEMENTING CARRYING CAPACITY

*The Commission recommends that the concept of carrying capacity be promptly implemented as the underlying base for management of visitor use and activity within all units of the National Park System, that this concept be infused in the master plan for each park in the form of stated capacity limits, and that the plan include the carrying capacity for the many diverse types of usage.*

The Service is moving in the direction of the Commission's recommendations through a variety of pilot programs designed to regulate use. These are designed to deal with critical areas of concern, give us an opportunity to analyze their effectiveness, and, if desirable, expand them to other areas of the System.

Transportation. We are particularly pleased with our transportation program, begun originally to keep cars and recreation vehicles from inundating the parks, and now doing double duty in the conservation of energy. Systems of various sorts and sizes are now operating in several parks, with other projects in the planning stage, either under contract with outside firms or being conducted by NPS planners. Transportation planning is now becoming an integral part of our master planning process.

Campground Reservation System. In 1973, campgrounds in six parks were put on a computerized, nationwide reservation system. This pilot project was not without problems, but the success was such that we plan to extend it to 20 parks in 1974. We believe this program is on the main track to the future.

Backcountry Protection Plan. Seventy parks have prepared, or are preparing, backcountry management plans for resource protection and visitor use of over 3/4 of the land and water area in the System. Many of these plans were operational in 1973. Begun as a three-park pilot program in 1972, the backcountry permit and registration method of managing backcountry use was extended to 17 parks in 1973 and, with modifications and improvements, will become a permanent aspect of park management.

Colorado River Float Trips. A difficult and controversial program of regulating the numbers and activities of commercial float trips on the Colorado River within park areas is well underway. The commercial operators involved provide a useful and desirable service to the visiting public, and we wish it to continue. At the same time, we must exercise our mandate to regulate and protect park resources and the unspoiled environment of the Colorado River.

## CAMPGROUNDS OUT OF PARKS

*The Commission recommends, that the development of private campgrounds outside of park properties be encouraged, especially for smaller parks and for the tent/car, trailer/car, and recreational vehicle.*

The Service began implementing this policy as early as 1964, and much progress has been made in this direction. We support the recommendation; but, again, we need to work with others to assure desirable campground sites outside of the parks. Good State and local standards and regulations regarding design, health, safety, etc., would help.

## PARK TRANSIT STUDY AND POLICY STATEMENT

*The Commission recommends that separate transportation studies be made and policy statements issued for each park.*

While we don't believe such studies and statements are needed in every one of the 299 units of the System, we have identified a large number of parks where transit studies seem desirable, and studies on a number of projects are progressing, in addition to the several parks where public transportation systems have already been installed.

## CONCESSIONS

The Centennial Commission has five recommendations on concessions, the most important regarding a special concession task force study. The Service will undertake such a study, and consequently our response to the other four recommendations may be tempered or changed once the study is complete.

### SERVICE OWNERSHIP OF ALL CONCESSION FACILITIES

*The Commission recommends that the National Park Service commence a long-term program to buy up existing concessioner-owned facilities and asks the Congress to review Public Law 89-249 and make appropriate amendments.*

Such a course of action would be complex, expensive, and fraught with numerous difficulties. Any study of concessions should include a thorough analysis of this matter.

### CONCESSIONS TASK FORCE

*The Commission recommends that, for the purpose of formulating new concession policies and operational procedures, the Secretary of the Interior appoint a task force (including outside expertise) to: (1) make a thorough study and analysis of existing private and quasi-public concession operations within the National Park System to determine which type of operation provides for the higher quality of service as related to the fees charged the park visitor and the operating costs to the government; (2) make an analysis of the feasibility of self-operation by the Service; and (3) report its findings and recommendations to the Secretary within one year of the date of its establishment.*

The Service does plan to begin a comprehensive study, using professional outside help, to review its existing concessions policies and procedures and to recommend changes and modifications. This study responds not only to the Commission's recommendation but also to those of the special committee of the Secretary of the Interior's Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments.

### CONCESSIONER FEES FOR MAINTENANCE OF THE PARKS

*The Commission recommends that concession income and all other sources of income, outside of taxes, earned within the national parks be credited to the National Park Service for the general maintenance and improvement of the parks.*

This should be an element of the special study. Entrance and user fees are now placed in a special development fund for use in providing park facilities.

Fees from concessions, however, still go to the general fund of the U.S. Treasury. Legislation would be required to place this money in the special park development fund. Also, the goal of our concession program is not to realize income but to serve the visitor's needs.

#### CONCESSION POLICY FOR EACH PARK

*The Commission recommends that the National Park Service develop for each of its properties a concession management policy which is sensitive to the unique problems of serving the public at each specific park.*

The Service already does this, in effect, through its master planning process.

#### WELL PERFORMED CONCESSION OPERATIONS

*The Commission recommends that, when a needed service is being well performed through a concession operation in the national parks, the concession operation be continued and upgraded, and that facilities and services that have outlived their usefulness be eliminated.*

The Service agrees with the logic of this recommendation, which is conformable with Service policy.

#### FACILITIES OUT OF PARKS

*The Commission recommends that the National Park Service investigate and seek to implement mechanisms whereby cooperative efforts and legal constraints and controls may be utilized to assure that development outside of the parks and adjacent to the boundaries is of a character that does not adversely affect the integrity of the parks themselves.*

The Service recently issued a comprehensive policy and policy guidelines on regional cooperation and land use planning designed to achieve the intent of this recommendation. The Service also supports passage of the Land Use Planning Act by the Congress, which will give States a stronger regulatory role over use of lands. Public sentiment, and State and local government actions, are increasingly sympathetic to the avoidance of unfortunate developments that impinge on the environment of the parks.

### INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION

#### INNOVATIVE, REPERSONALIZED INTERPRETATION

*The Commission recommends that the National Park Service be more innovative, intensify and repersonalize its interpretive programs, and expand the "program ranger" concept.*

In our recent organization, we established an Assistant Director for Interpretation and corresponding offices in each Region, in order to strengthen our interpretive program. The new emphasis



on interpretation and improved visitor use programs is already showing results. Both Everglades and Yosemite National Parks have outstanding and varied programs which may well become prototypes for other park areas. Cumberland Gap increased its weekly programs from 55 in 1972 to 123 in 1973. At Ocmulgee National Monument in Georgia, living history programs brought people back as repeat visitors to join activities, such as pottery making, dancing, and cooking, which involve them as participants in the interpretive program of the park. Many other parks have begun placing greater emphasis on "experiential" programs, giving the visitor direct participation in activities and closer interaction with the park environment.

Unfortunately, a number of parks reported inability to carry out full programs because of inadequate staffing—a condition we hope to improve. We have placed emphasis on environmental education at the park level, that is, on active, cooperative programs with schools of the park region.

If travel patterns change in response to the gasoline shortage, we may expect that our visitor use programs will need to change. If people begin making repeat visits to nearby parks, if they begin staying longer once there, we may expect they will desire a wider range of options for valid park use. Our information services will need to be expanded to give visitors a better understanding of their options and the conditions and times of park use opportunities. Increasingly, we must recognize that visitor use programs are a high priority item and fund them accordingly.

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

*The Commission recommends that the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, the President, and the Congress encourage and, indeed, initiate a system of environmental education—in our schools at all levels—to augment that which the National Park Service is doing in its interpretive programs.*

This recommendation is not addressed to the National Park Service. However, there is the Environmental Education Act of 1970, and thus the potential for expanded environmental education programs exists.

## INFORMATION AND RESERVATION CENTER

### URBAN INFORMATION CENTERS

*The Commission recommends that the National Park Service establish public Information Centers in major metropolitan areas of the United States. These Centers should also have the capability of providing a reservation service to the public in those parks where reservations may be required.*

The Service subscribes to the concept of better pre-trip information to park visitors, the majority of whom come from metropolitan areas. We do not yet know the best way to accomplish this. We have the capability of establishing such centers immediately in those cities where we have regional offices, simply by an enlargement of our present information service. We could do the same on a somewhat expanded basis at the National Visitor Center in Washington, D.C. With modest staffing increases, good service could be provided initially by using existing publications and press releases, combined with a basic information library.

Campground reservation systems will be handled under contract, but it would be easy to refer potential campers to the contractor's reservation services. Such centers in other metropolitan areas would require Congressional approval, either specifically by law or through the appropriation process.

We are also interested in the concept of regional information centers to help coordinate recreational use of a total park region—not just that on park lands. These might be managed jointly with Federal, State, and local governmental agencies and the private sector.

## COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS, BOARDS

### CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN POLICY FORMULATION

*The Commission recommends greater emphasis placed on citizen participation in policy formation at all levels of the Nation's Park System.*

Over the past few years, a number of Congressional actions have encouraged public participation in the decision-making process. Better access to public files, the National Wilderness Preservation System Act of 1964, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the Federal Advisory Committee Act of October 6, 1972, and provisions for advisory boards for specific parks are some major examples. Also, the Service has been actively encouraging public participation in decision making through its administrative policy guidelines. All master plans are open to public participation. Our policies are presently being revised and will be open to public review. Regional advisory boards have also been appointed to give us private sector input, and, of course, the Secretary of the Interior's Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments provides the Secretary with the advice of a distinguished group of private citizens on park matters.

### ADVISORY SYSTEM FOR SUPERINTENDENTS

*The Commission recommends that an advisory system be devised by the National Park Service and taught to its superintendents with mandatory instructions to implement the system through all channels pertinent to the problem areas facing that specific property.*

This recommendation is not very explicit but again suggests that Superintendents seek out public views. By and large, this is done. We also hire expertise from outside the Service to help us on a variety of matters.

## NATIONAL CAPITAL PARKS

*Should the District receive home rule, the Commission strongly recommends that those areas designated for Federal jurisdiction be reclaimed for management by the Federal Government.*

The Service agrees and sees no reason why this will not be done.

## WILDERNESS

(The Commission did not have a specific recommendation on Wilderness; however, inasmuch as nearly four pages were devoted to the subject, it is desirable for the Service to state its position on Wilderness.)

Wilderness-type land has always characterized the natural areas of the National Park System. The Service has consistently voiced its dedication to the preservation of wilderness values. It is important to point out that wilderness can also be enjoyed by the visitor who views it from park roads and overlooks. The unspoiled wilderness scene is at the heart of much of the park experience, whether enjoyed within or from outside the wilderness boundary. The Service supports the Wilderness Act and its requirements that we study and report to the Congress on the suitability or unsuitability of all roadless areas of 5,000 acres or more as wilderness. These studies will be completed this year.

We do have, and accept, the responsibility of providing for the use and enjoyment of wilderness. We do not view it as a "lock-up" resource but one which is to be used and actively managed for use. All parks with potential wilderness lands have developed, or are developing, backcountry management plans for the use and protection of this irreplaceable resource.

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