

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
HORACE M. ALBRIGHT TRAINING CENTER
Grand Canyon, Arizona

P&VP-77

WATER USE POLICY IN NATIONAL RECREATION AREAS
THAT ARE PRINCIPALLY WATER IMPOUNDMENTS

The waters of the National Recreation Areas which are primarily water impoundments shall be conserved, protected and interpreted with regulated use in accordance with the primary purposes for which such recreation areas were established.

WATER USE POLICY IN NATIONAL PARKS

The waters of the National Parks must be used in such a manner that no single activity or use of water resources will impair or seriously conflict with other basic park values. Zoning is authorized. Only designated National Park waters will be open to boating.

Particular attention in National Parks should be given to an appraisal of the situation as it relates to protection of water related values and to reducing conflicts and competition of motor powered boats with other important park values.

(The above is a partial quote from a memorandum from Assistant Director Jackson Price, dated February 6, 1961.)

WATER SAFETY IN THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

I. Introduction

For the years 1950 through 1963 drownings have led the list of accidental deaths to visitors throughout the National Park System. During that time over 230 lives have been lost due to water accidents. This country is now entering the greatest surge toward water-use activities in our history. The only trend we'll see for several years will be upward. Are we going to be ready to meet the many problems which will arise with this heavy impact on our parks? If so, we need to start preparing now.

A. The Problem

The many water problems are well known to most of us and are listed only for reference:

1. Swimming - becoming a more popular sport yearly. Swimming areas require careful selection, administration, and control. Not only pools, but lakes, ponds, rivers, and even small streams now have swimming activity.
2. Boating - getting to be a major industry in the United States. The boat trailer behind a 60 m.p.h. automobile gives every boat a wide range of operation. Rangers need to "know" boats, know their construction, capabilities, load capacities, stability, and must also "know" motors of every description. Rangers must be familiar with all boating regulations and laws relating to boating. Every Ranger must know safety equipment and be qualified to preach safety afloat. He must know the Rules of the Road and be able to interpret them to visitors. The "Cowboy" needs prompt regulatory action.
3. Water Skiing - rapidly gaining in popularity and presenting untold problems from the safety standpoint. Where allowed, strict regulation is required to prevent skiers from infringing on swimming and fishing areas, and vice versa. All required safeguards must be enforced:
 - a. Life belt.
 - b. Copilot in boat (not required in some states).
4. Skin or SCUBA Diving - a relatively recent innovation which has attracted many devoted followers. An extremely hazardous undertaking that requires the utmost in physical

stamina and exacting training. Become thoroughly familiar with equipment and procedures before undertaking this sport--one error will cost you your life.

a. The Virgin Islands National Park has instituted the Service's first Underwater Self-guided Nature Trail which is similar to other such nature trails only under water.

b. SCUBA teams have proven very helpful for recovery of bodies. Many rescue squads connected to metropolitan or county police or fire departments have their own SCUBA crews. Keep this in mind for future search and rescue emergencies.

c. The National Park Service has some SCUBA divers among our permanent and seasonal personnel who have taken up the sport on their own. We urge and advise that our employees obtain the very best training possible and buy the best available equipment before venturing into SCUBA activities. The Scripps Institute of Oceanography, La Jolla, California, and the Navy Diving School at Washington, D. C., and San Diego, California, are acclaimed as the foremost schools for training SCUBA devotees. The Government has provided SCUBA training for a few of its qualified men assigned to strategic water-use areas.

5. Surf or Salt Water Use - with the addition to the Service of more Seashore Areas will come a preponderance of unusual circumstances arising from incidents caused by visitors' lack of knowledge of surf conditions. We need trained personnel who can cope with this problem. There is no agency at present conducting training in surf and salt water rescue.

B. History of Water Safety Training

1. Too little time has been devoted to water safety training.

2. Some areas have recognized the need and have instituted training sessions: These include Acadia, Lake Mead, and Glen Canyon.

3. First National Park Service Water Safety Seminar was held at Everglades National Park in April 1960.

a. Agenda of Seminar

(1) First two days:

U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary presented its eight-lesson course on Basic Seamanship and Safe Boat-handling.

(2) Next two days:

American National Red Cross presented Personal Skill Development, Survival Swimming, Life Saving, and Underwater Swimming Techniques (SCUBA).

(3) Last day:

Salt Water Safety and Rescue, and general summary of entire course by National Park Service.

b. Some Lessons or Recommendations Resulting from the Seminar

(1) We must start preparing now for intensive water safety and rescue training at all of our parks with any water use.

(2) At future seminars schedule only one major topic each year. Swimming and water safety one year; boats and boating the next year.

(3) Suggest that parks step up the news release, radio announcements, civic group talks, etc., to emphasize the importance of practicing water safety during the summer vacation months.

(4) Each park should evolve a detailed published plan of attack to be followed in event of a water rescue emergency. Plan should be similar to the fire step-up plans.

(5) Each park should set up a grid map system for its water areas. Grid maps have proved their value when conducting coordinated aerial and surface searches for lost boats.

(6) Suggest that water-use areas adopt a Boating Accident Report keeping track of all types of boating accidents.

(7) Give consideration to establishing an Annual Water Incident Report.

(8) Suggest that an account be established comparable to the 123 account which is usable for financing rescues or other emergencies. Not to be a portion of Appropriated M&P Funds.

(9) Suggest that parks give more concentrated thought to utilization of aircraft for rescue searches. This would include marking Park boats so that they could be readily identified from the air.

(10) Suggest that parks print up pocket-sized folders containing boat and water regulations and a list of safety hints for visitor distribution.

(11) Suggest that parks set up poles on which to fly small craft warnings when weather warrants.

(12) Suggest that arrangements be made to have concessioners question each incoming boat during an active search mission. Much vital time might be saved from information thus gained.

(13) Equip rescue boats and aerial units with portable loud speaker systems to permit air to ground and water to shore communication.

(14) Suggest that parks contact outside sources for skin and SCUBA divers to assist in search activities if they do not already have their own rescue team within the park.

(15) Suggest that WASO analyze the Boating and Water-Use Problem by compiling the totals resulting from reports submitted by the field. Items to be listed include: number of incidents, deaths, number of successful rescues, number of false searches. Include listings of staffing and equipment available and needed.

(16) Suggest that the National Park Service consider having an examination for Rangers to operate boats. List qualifications on U.S. Government Driver's License.

(17) Request a written statement from each National Park Service area as to its specific water-use problems. WASO to publish one report summarizing all problems.

(18) Give serious consideration to training National Park Service personnel in SCUBA techniques.

II. Available Assistance for Training

A. U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Districts

1. First District: New England
Boston, Massachusetts

Second District: Central United States (22 States)
St. Louis, Missouri

Third District: New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey
Southern - New York, New York
Northern - Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Fifth District: Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina
Norfolk, Virginia

Seventh District: Florida, Georgia, South Carolina
Miami, Florida

Eighth District: Gulf States
New Orleans, Louisiana

Ninth District: Great Lakes Area
Cleveland, Ohio

Eleventh District: Southern California, Arizona, New Mexico
Long Beach, California

Twelfth District: Northern California, Nevada, Utah
San Francisco, California

Thirteenth District: Northwest Coast, Oregon, Washington,
Idaho, Montana
Seattle, Washington

Fourteenth District: Hawaii
Honolulu, Hawaii

Seventeenth District: Alaska
Juneau, Alaska

2. Address: Commandant
United States Coast Guard Auxiliary

City, _____ District
State

B. The American National Red Cross

1. National Headquarters
17th and "D" Streets, N.W.
Washington 6, D. C.

Also: Canal Zone, Guam, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Samoa,
and Virgin Islands

2. Eastern Area
615 North St. Asaph Street
Alexandria, Virginia

States of Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia,
Indian, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts,
New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania,
Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia

3. Southeastern Area
1955 Monroe Drive, N.E.
Atlanta 9, Georgia

States of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi,
North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee

4. Midwestern Area
4050 Lindell Boulevard
St. Louis 8, Missouri

States of Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas,
Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico,
North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Wisconsin,
and Wyoming

5. Pacific Area
1550 Sutter Street
San Francisco 1, California

States of Alaska, Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana,
Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington

C. Training Aids

1. Refer to mimeographed publication put out by United States Coast Guard entitled Training Aids and Reference Materials for the Public Instruction Courses (1959 Supplement to Instructor Guide).
2. Directory of Boating Films compiled by Outboard Boating Club of America, 307 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago 1, Illinois.
3. The Boatman's Manual, by Carl D. Lane
W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., New York - \$5.95
4. Swimming and Diving Textbook
American National Red Cross - 75¢ each
5. Life Saving and Water Safety Textbook
American National Red Cross - 75¢ each
6. Teaching Johnny to Swim
American National Red Cross - 25¢ each