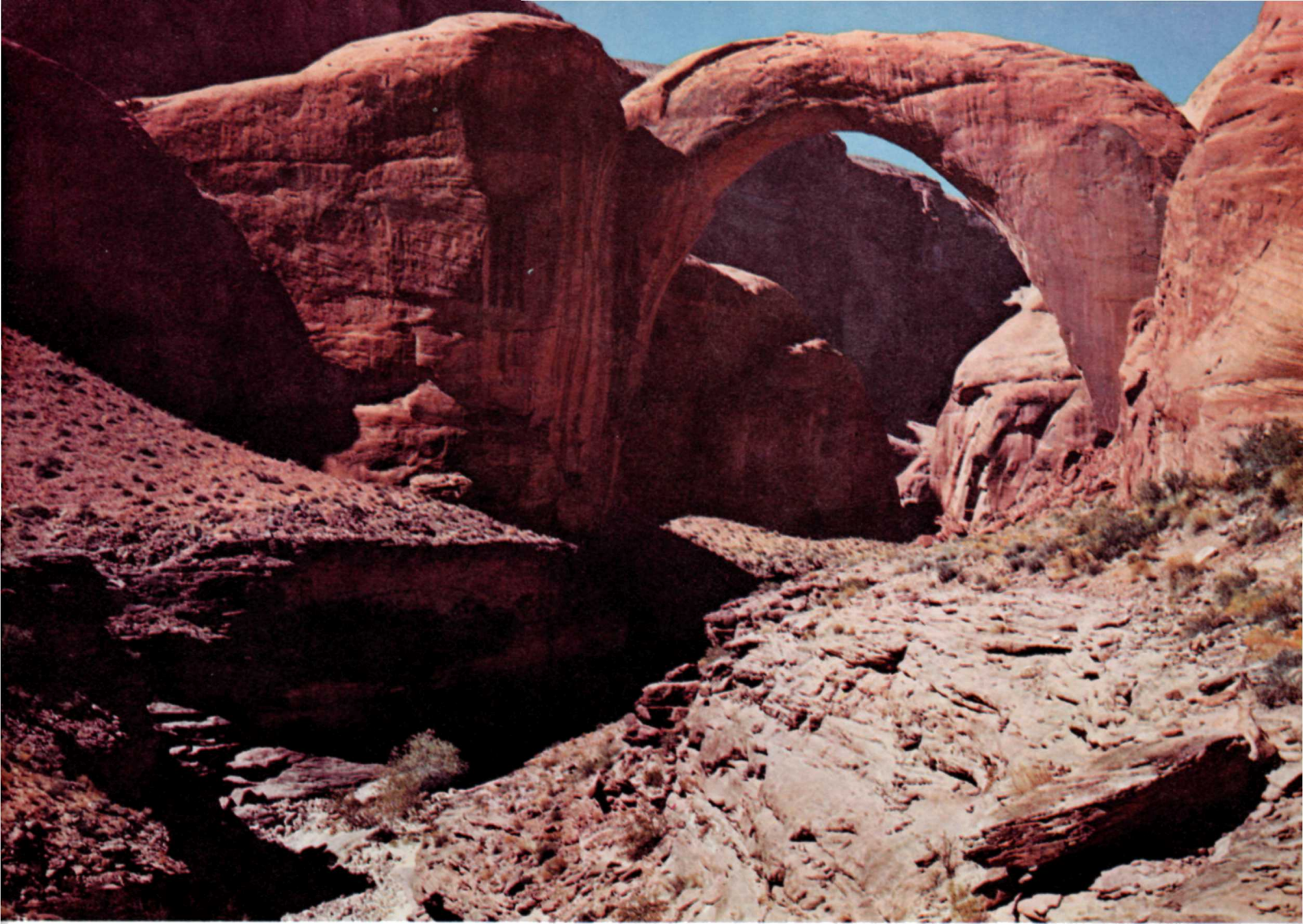


THE NATIONAL PARK *wilderness*





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U.S. Department of Interior — FRED A. SEATON • *secretary*

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

CONRAD L. WIRTH • DIRECTOR

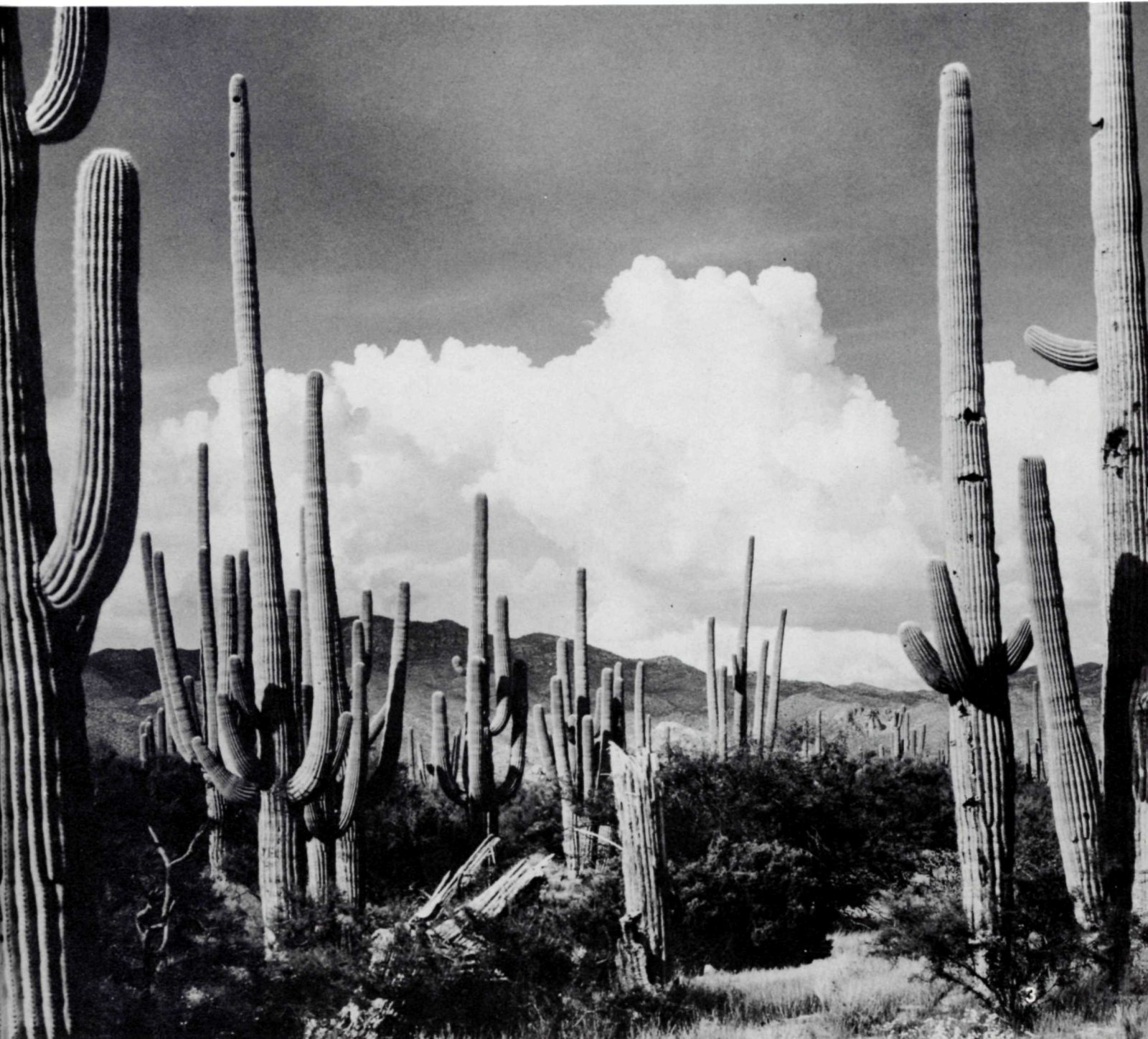
wilderness is expanse



*and each fixed or fleeting form
reflects the artistry of nature.*



*wilderness is a whole
environment of living things . . .*



*and the prosperity of
its native wildlife*



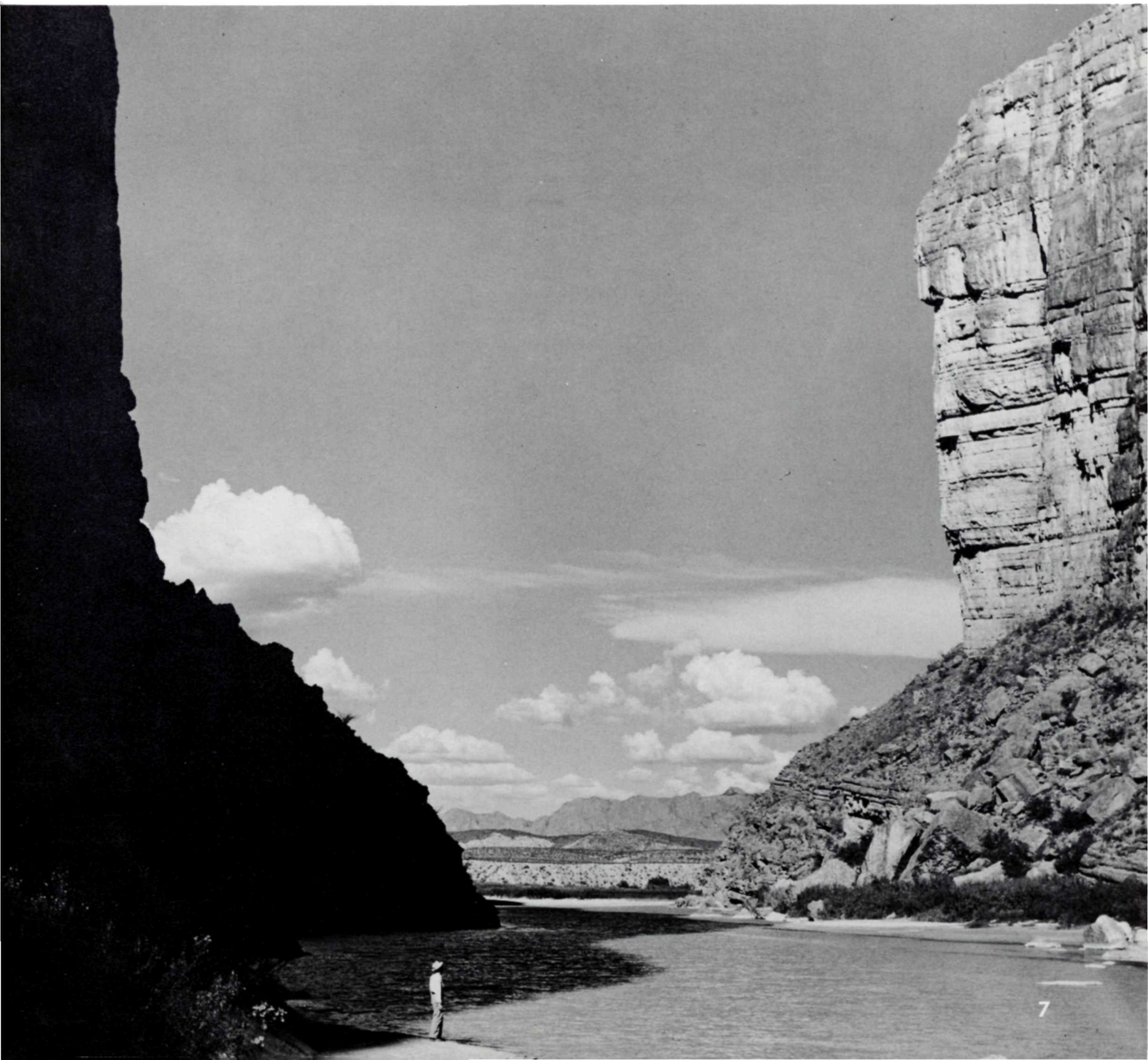
*measures the perfection of
its waters and floral mantle.*



wilderness is the beauty of nature,



solitude, and the music of stillness.



*wilderness invites man to
adventure, refreshment, and wonder.*



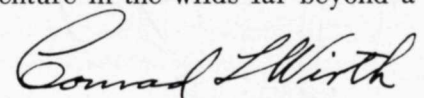
When we started our basic studies for the program we now call MISSION 66, our first step was to review the laws which form the foundation and provide the guidelines for management and development of the Nation's National Parks. All of these laws emphasize the preservation of wilderness values. Clearly it is the will of the American people, as expressed by many acts of Congress, that the Secretary of the Interior through the National Park Service shall preserve the wilderness values of the National Park System for the enjoyment of the people.

How well has this been done? This booklet is a brief summary of our intensive study of the 85-year record. In this we recognize some mistakes which, in most instances, we now judge from the position of a "Monday morning quarterback." However, the fact remains that over all these years those who had the responsibility for directing the destinies of the parks demonstrated keen appreciation of the importance of preserving the Nation's scenic heritage. Their devotion to principle and purpose merits honor to their names. I have in mind, particularly, the Directors of the National Park Service during the first 35 years of development and growth.

Today, as the National Park Service enters its 42nd year, there is much serious public concern with the problem of preserving the Nation's remaining wilderness regions. Therefore, as custodian of the superlative wild lands of the United States, I feel that a statement on the subject is timely. In the pages which follow we attempt to define our particular concept of wilderness. This is necessary because the word means many things to different people and as applied to various classifications of lands. As our lands are "dedicated and set apart," we must judge as nonconforming such uses as hunting, mining, grazing, logging, water and power developments, and other commercial exploitation. I am convinced that the fundamental concept of National Park wilderness has never been more clearly defined than in this publication.

The future will present many and difficult problems. However, I know that the same major factors which have governed the writing of a fine record in the past will also control the future. First, there is every indication that the public attitude in favor of preservation of the parks will become stronger. This firm intent will certainly be reflected in Congress. I also am confident that the many men and women, acting individually and through organizations, will be willing to give as freely of themselves and their means for protection of our Nation's parks in the years ahead as in the past. Finally, the Service employee today is as dedicated to his job as those who established our traditions and wrote our history and in many respects is better trained and equipped to meet the problems of management. There is every assurance that the future will find the men and women of this Service capable of the wise judgments necessary for the preservation of this heritage of ours.

May the public interest in America's remaining wilderness areas continue to grow in the years ahead, and may the National Parks forever be able to provide an outlet for those who would adventure in the wilds far beyond a road's end.



Conrad L. Wirth
Director

Without knowing quite why, most people have a warm feeling for the word "wilderness." Part of this accord reflects adventurous times, personally experienced, amid scenes of grandeur and natural beauty. The feeling has some basis, too, in racial antiquity, deriving from early man's intimacy with the land and the forest.

For Americans, wilderness has an added meaning. This Nation is but a few generations away from the wilderness. The prairie schooner, the beaver trap, the gold pan, the long rifle, the axe, and the sod-breaker—weapons of wilderness conquest—are a part of American tradition. The most cherished branch of the family tree is often the one representing an American pioneer—a first colonist, a great-grandfather who moved westward across the Appalachians, or a grandmother who handled the reins along the Oregon Trail. Somehow, Americans think of wilderness as tied to all that is strong and good in their Country's and their own family history.

This booklet is about wilderness of a special kind—the superlative wilderness areas and wilderness qualities preserved in the National Parks.

To provide background for exploring the problem of wilderness, we shall consider the purpose of National Parks. We shall review the history of preservation practice in those parks. Then we'll take a look ahead to anticipate major problems of the future, and to consider how the wilderness and the wilderness qualities may be preserved while preparing the National Parks to serve better their increasing millions of visitors.

introduction



The National Park Service is now engaged in a 10-year improvement program called MISSION 66. It includes protection and preservation, park use and management, and, compared with very meager improvements of recent years, a sizeable development program.

Will this development impair the quality or reduce the area of park wilderness?

Does wilderness preservation mean discarding the tradition of National Park hospitality and require rationing of visitors, elimination of lodges and campgrounds, or other radical changes?

Both questions are being asked seriously by friends of the National Parks. The points of view involved are not irreconcilable, and the National Park Service seeks a sane and practical middle ground, with no compromise whatsoever with the basic and traditional purpose of the National Parks.

To come up with the right answers we must have some idea of what a wilderness area is, and what benefits it provides. Yet 10 people will give you 10 different answers to the question. Some will say it is an area affording exceptionally good hunting and fishing. For some it is a vast natural area where a hiker can lose himself for days out of sight and sound of civilization. Others say that a wilderness is an area, regardless of size, that retains a wild character.

Unless we are content to say merely that wilderness is wilderness, probably no one can define the term precisely. However, we must try to develop a brief definition if only to be sure that the word means the same thing to all who read this booklet.

There are two ways of defining wilderness, and we need both. Here is one way:

A wilderness is an area whose predominant character is the result of the interplay of natural processes, large enough and so situated as to be unaffected, except in minor ways, by what takes place in the non-wilderness around it.

We accept the idea of man using the wilderness for recreation; and we accept a trail, a simple campsite, or even a short fence or fire lookout, so long as the *predominant* character of wilderness remains. We also accept certain management and protection practices, when the object is to minimize the influence of man, without interfering with the normal interplay of natural processes.

The definition is sufficiently flexible to adapt to peculiar local conditions, and it recognizes that natural processes, in time, can restore to wilderness, areas previously abused and impaired. This kind of definition, based upon the physical characteristics of the area, is, perhaps, the best basis for determining management, use, and protection practices.

But wilderness also needs to be regarded as a quality—defined in terms of *personal experience*, feelings, or benefits. This is even more difficult to define in exact terms that will satisfy everybody. But, certain qualities must be present to provide that type of experience which the National Parks were established to perpetuate. These include:

- A scene or vista of unusual natural interest or beauty.
- An area secluded or removed from the sight, sounds, and odors of mechanization and man-made intrusions.
- A spot where one can feel personally removed from modern civilization.
- A place where one can experience a feeling of adventure such as the pioneer might have felt in conquering the frontiers.
- A condition where full enjoyment depends upon one's own perception, physical skill, and self-reliance.

* * *

Wilderness is a physical condition. Wilderness is also a state of mind. Both concepts are important—the *former* in matters of protection and management, the *latter* in evaluating the benefits of wilderness, *both* in planning for the intelligent and beneficial use of this important cultural and recreational heritage.



The ideas we hold today about wilderness preservation in National Parks are the result of many years of growth. The seed was planted long ago by those men who worked for the establishment of the first National Parks. They saw a goal and pointed out a direction—but the entire concept did not emerge full grown at once.

Congress strengthened this movement and gave approval to it in the laws establishing National Parks and the National Park Service. These laws, and accompanying tradition, form the firm base for the policies of today. However, the strength of the National Park preservation movement derives less from them than from attitudes and beliefs that have evolved through the years among people concerned with National Park matters. This includes a very substantial body of American citizens and their Congress, as well as the National Park Service itself.

The best safeguard of a principle is the peoples' understanding and appreciation of it, their conviction about it, and their dedication to it.

*the
single
national
park
purpose*

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL PARK IDEA

What is this modern preservation philosophy, and how has it developed?

In 1864, Congress established a new pattern of public land use when it ceded Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Big Tree Grove to the State of California, to be held inviolable for all time “for public use, resort, and recreation.” But an event 6 years later marked the real beginning of the new pattern of thinking that set the destiny of the National Park System.



For 6 weeks, in 1870, a party of Montana citizens had been exploring with increasing awe, the remarkable country which today is known as Yellowstone National Park. At the end of the trail, they sat around a campfire, talking of what should happen to this land in the future. And that group of practical-minded private citizens were so moved by the sight of strange natural wonders and the impact of primeval wilderness that they put aside all thought of personal gain. They then and there resolved that this wonderland should be forever preserved in public ownership, set apart as a National Park for the use of all the people of America.

Three things in the establishment of Yellowstone are especially worth remembering. The first is that Yellowstone was envisioned as a *public* park, for public use and enjoyment. This was not a place to be locked up, isolated, and held from the people.



The second is this: The *public* park proposal came as a counter-proposal *after* private ownership was considered and rejected. Preservation then meant primarily preservation against private control and commercial exploitation. The founders could hardly have foreseen that the natural wonders and the wilderness quality of this vast area could ever be endangered by the mere fact of public use; that preservation would come to mean preservation against overuse, inappropriate use, or overdevelopment; or that the park would need to be defended against competing kinds of public use. But, these are the major problems of the National Park Service today.

Thirdly, Congress set aside the *whole* of Yellowstone, reserving not merely a geyser, a canyon, or a spectacular waterfall, but the total scene in all its vastness and variety. The men who defined the first National Park were thinking in wilderness terms.

Other National Parks followed, and again, much of the moving force came from individuals who were inspired by their experiences in the wilderness they sought to preserve. We associate Colonel George Stewart and Gustavus Eisen with Sequoia and John Muir with Yosemite. So, too, do we associate William Gladstone Steele with Crater Lake, Enos Mills with Rocky Mountain, George B. Doerr with Acadia, Mark Squire and Dave Chapman with Great Smoky Mountains, and Ernest F. Coe with the Everglades. Thus, to a very large degree, the motivation for the establishment of many National Parks was a product of wilderness experience and wilderness appreciation.

Today, broad direction comes from a national office, but, for the development and protection of each individual National Park or Monument, specific plans are made by the men who are closest to the natural scene—the Superintendent of each park, his staff and professional aides. The inspiration of the wilderness continues to motivate the management of the National Parks.

THE LEGAL BASIS FOR NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT

The laws which are, in effect, the Constitution of the National Parks, are:

The separate Acts of Congress establishing and pertaining to each of the National Parks.

The Antiquities Act of 1906 authorizing the establishment of National Monuments by Presidential proclamation.

The Act of 1916 that established the National Park Service.

While this Constitution may be subject to interpretation in the light of new knowledge and changing circumstances, its broad principles cannot be changed: That National Parks are special areas—"dedicated and set apart . . . as public pleasuring grounds" to be retained in a "natural condition." Such words are found in the law establishing the first and all subsequent National Parks.



The National Park Act of 1916 extends these same principles equally to the National Monuments. There is no difference between a National Park and a National Monument in this regard—both are dedicated areas to be preserved for public enjoyment.

THE NATIONAL PARKS HAVE A SINGLE PURPOSE

Because the Act of 1916 is the basic authority and basic guide for the administration, protection, and use of all areas within the National Park System, it is worth our special attention. What does it really mean, and how does it apply to modern circumstances?

The key part of the act reads:

“The service thus established shall promote and regulate the use of the Federal areas known as national parks, monuments, and reservations hereinafter specified by such means and measures as conform to the fundamental purpose of the said parks, monuments, and reservations, which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife 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.”

This basic act uses the singular form of the word “purpose”—a single objective, not several. That single purpose inseparably combines *use* with *preservation*!

To isolate and emphasize either use or preservation to the exclusion of the other can seriously distort park planning, confuse park management, and imperil the validity of the whole National Park concept. What, then, is the nature of this amalgam of use and preservation which we seek to define?

The National Park System is a national resource—a natural resource, a historical resource, a cultural resource. Like minerals, water, timber and soil, it has value to man only when it is made useful to man.

Parks differ from other resources, chiefly in the nature of their products. Mines, timber, and cattle yield material products required by the Nation. Parks yield the products of knowledge, refreshment, and esthetic enjoyment equally required by all people. The direct way, and essentially the only way, these products are obtained is through the intelligent and appropriate use of park resources by people.

Does this mean that the primary purpose of a National Park System is to provide pleasure, enjoyment, knowledge, and inspiration? Is this all?



PROPER USE DEPENDS UPON AN UNIMPAIRED NATURAL SCENE

How does preservation fit into this picture?

It fits in a most fundamental way, for the 1916 act is a clear recognition of a basic principle—the recreational, cultural, and inspirational products of parks are supplied by the natural scene, undamaged and unimpaired. To change the character of the park scene, or to modify or impair the natural environment, destroys a part of its capacity to yield those benefits to the human mind and spirit.

Preservation is not an end in itself, but a means to the kind and quality of enjoyment which the National Parks were established to provide.

The problem of today is not one of striking a balance between preservation on the one hand, and use, on the other. The basic problem concerns use itself. What is appropriate park use? The answer to this question not only determines what a park visitor may do, and what developments are required, but gives the whole concept of preservation meaning and purpose. Can wilderness prevail indefinitely against all of the varied demands of an expanding economy? Yes, when wilderness contributes its proper part in meeting those demands, when the use benefits that flow from its unimpaired natural scene are sufficient to justify its continuation. The National Parks are evidence of this fact.

WILDERNESS—A BASIC PARK RESOURCE, AN ESSENTIAL FACTOR IN PARK USE

The natural environment is the essential resource of a scenic park or monument, the resource from which appropriate and beneficial enjoyment directly emanates.

This is the law, the tradition, and the philosophy which must guide all planning for each area, whether its distinction lies in a particular feature of scenic or scientific interest, or in an expansive wilderness.

The wilderness proper serves all park visitors. Those who penetrate it gain its fullest rewards. But, it is the part of a National Park that is not intensively used that makes it a park, and the undeveloped wilderness beyond the roads furnishes the setting and the background. Take away the background, and the park atmosphere of the whole disappears, and with it a very large part of the pleasure of those whose only contact with wilderness is experienced as they look outward over it from the roadside.

Wilderness areas, and the quality of wilderness which must pervade the most visited part of a National Park, are a primary resource—a resource to be cherished and guarded, a resource whose benefits each park visitor is entitled to enjoy.



Today, more people than ever before take a personal interest in conservation, National Parks, and wilderness. This is easy to understand—it coincides with the phenomenal increase in outdoor recreation and the shrinkage of available open spaces. In the National Parks people find something they like, can understand, and want to keep. As an example of conservation in action, National Parks have contributed in no small measure to the attitudes and convictions that prevail among the public today.

This favorable circumstance did not always prevail—it is of quite recent origin. During the formative years of National Park development, the wilderness beyond the Nation's frontiers appeared limitless. Those who could foresee its shrinkage and who proposed to do something about it were generally regarded as alarmists and impractical dreamers. National Parks were established through sufferance rather than in response to widespread public demand, and, once established, had no ready-made pattern to follow in their management. To a very large degree, the policies and direction of these new areas had to originate with those who administered them.

The process was not without difficulty, nor without error. Problems which are clearly evident now could then be only dimly perceived, and the means to cope with them were largely absent. It took a clear head and a firm hand on their part to start the National Parks in the right direction.

*the
record
of
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park
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Time tends to paint our memory in rosy hues, and we forget how dusty and rough and narrow the first park roads were, that developments for public use were practically nonexistent, and interpretive services completely lacking. Camps were pitched on the most convenient, often the most beautiful sites, and public accommodations were built according to the builders' individual notions, without regard to architectural fitness, landscape values, or long-range planning. Frequently, hotels and camps usurped the most scenic and the most strategic sites in the park. Roadsides sometimes were burned to improve the view, and in Sequoia a colony of private summer homes intruded on the Giant Forest.

Trespass was common—20,000 sheep were driven out of Yosemite one year. Overgrazing during World War I left serious scars on Mount

Rainier. Yellowstone's buffalo were brought near to extinction. Hunting trespass was common. Predators were sought out and killed. An early report from Yosemite tells us that *any* bird or animal unfortunate enough to enter the valley was at once pursued, captured, or killed.

Many parks inherited abused lands, the results of years of misuse and injurious practice. The Kern drainage in Sequoia was so completely denuded by sheep grazing, many years before it was added to the park, that it was hard to find enough forage for a saddle horse. The establishment of Joshua Tree, Big Bend, and other areas halted depletion of their grasslands.

The last California grizzly was shot in a spot that 20 years later became part of Kings Canyon National Park. The elk were gone from Rocky Mountain and Glacier, the bighorn from Big Bend and Mesa Verde, and the rare birdlife of Everglades was seriously threatened before these areas were established.

We cite these few examples so that we may avoid the common error of using only the *best* from the past for comparison with the total picture of today. Generally speaking, conditions have improved greatly through the years—sometimes through the mere circumstance of the establishment of a park, always accompanied by practical acts of management, correction, and protection. Progress along many avenues of park conservation has been steady and sure.

GROWTH OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

Since its establishment in 1916, the National Park System has expanded greatly to encompass many kinds of areas—historic, archeologic, and recreational, as well as scenic nature preserves.

Fifteen National Parks and 18 National Monuments comprised the System in 1916. Today, the National Park Service administers 29 National Parks, 84 National Monuments, and 69 other kinds of areas. We are here concerned primarily with those of scenic-scientific interest. Twenty-two of the areas of 1916 were in this category—about 5 million acres. Today, over 22 million acres—88 per cent of all lands administered by the Service—are contained in the 66 scenic-scientific parks, monuments, and other areas.

Except for those transferred to the National Park System, most of the new areas were established after extensive study by the National Park Service, and upon Department of the Interior recommendations and representations before Congress. At the same time, numerous proposals for areas found to be of less than national importance have been rejected.

While seeking out needed and suitable areas to complete the System, the Service has maintained the standards of quality that were established in the earlier National Parks.

PRESERVATION ON THE MAJOR FRONT

Certain laws concerning National Park areas prohibit settlement, hunting, mining, lumbering, and like commercial activities. Where such



activities are permitted, Congress has expressly provided for them. The whole body of law is clear in intent, and establishes a firm safeguard against the exploitation of the resources of the National Parks for commercial products. Congress reserves to itself the right of final decision on such matters—dams, power development, or pipelines, for example.

Nevertheless, there have been numerous attempts, well organized and powerfully supported, to despoil the National Parks of their forests, wildlife, minerals, grasslands, and free-flowing streams. We have only to recall Sequoia, Kings Canyon, Glacier, Olympic, Grand Teton, Yellowstone, or Death Valley, to bring some of them to mind.

The National Park Service quite properly assumes the leadership in vigorously resisting such invasions. The majority of such attacks are dispelled by the Service and the Department before becoming subjects of public controversy or Congressional action. The more dramatic episodes, however, quickly capture public attention and enlist the defensive efforts of many. Private citizens, numerous organizations, and congressional leaders—all have shared in preserving the integrity of the National Parks. There have been a few reversals, but the history of the parks has been one of repeated victories in such contests.

The National Park Service is a public agency. It investigates, plans, and recommends. Frequently it is called upon to harmonize widely divergent interests. Within the scope of its authority, it decides; but in larger issues, matters that go beyond internal park management, it must look to the Department of the Interior and to the Congress, reflecting the consensus of the public, for guidance, decision, and direction.

On the broad front, preservation of park and wilderness values depends, therefore, quite as much upon public awareness as it does upon any specific decision that may be made independently by the National Park Service. One of the most encouraging developments over the past 20 years has been the strengthening of conservation education in the public schools—first through the interest of individual teachers, followed by the integration of conservation into the school curriculum. An informed public is the best safeguard of the integrity of the National Parks. The cause of wilderness preservation is best advanced when the Service, conservation organizations, and the informed public present a united front on major issues.

INAPPROPRIATE PARK USE

Some strange proposals find their way to the National Park Service, often suggesting activities completely inappropriate to the best use of the parks. Going back in the files only 3 years, for instance, we can find requests for gambling concessions, helicopter sightseeing service, summer theater, pocket billiard concession, miniature golf course, bowling alley, miniature train for sightseeing, cable car into Grand Canyon, gunnery range, lands for farms and summer homes, private airports, as well as requests for stock grazing, lumbering, prospecting and mining, and hundreds more.



The National Park Service immediately rejects such proposals, and it requires no rare understanding of park objectives to make the decisions. Such matters are usually settled within the Service, and rarely become subjects of public controversy.

All proposals, however, are not so clear cut, and there is room for many honest differences on some questions of proper park use. Each such case is considered on its own merits in accordance with the following general principles: (1) that the activity result in no impairment of significant natural or scenic values, (2) that it does not itself become a primary attraction, and (3) that it does not lessen the opportunity for others to enjoy the park for what it is.

The rapid increase in park attendance has brought with it ever closer application of the principle of appropriate and beneficial use. The refinement of use standards and close adherence to them are reflected in the very high quality of park use that prevails today.

PRIVATE LANDS

The existence of privately owned lands within a park is an obstacle to satisfactory management and protection. Adverse use, unsightly developments, and difficult protection and long-range management problems are the result. New areas always add temporarily to the total of such lands within the System. Acquisition, by purchase, donation, or exchange, is a lengthy process, but over the years there has been definite progress.

The 33 areas that comprised the National Park System in 1916 contained well over a million acres of private "inholdings"—more than one-fifth of all lands within the authorized boundaries of that day. By 1956, nearly 90 percent of this land had been acquired, leaving less than 150,000 acres within the original 33 areas. Comparable progress has been made in areas added since 1916, but the problem remains a big one, with over 700,000 acres of private lands remaining within the 25 million acres now in the System.

GRAZING

It is important not only to hold an area as a National Park, and to defend it against threats from without, but also to so order its internal affairs that it does not deteriorate. The problem of grazing will illustrate the point.

Elimination of commercial grazing has been an important goal since the establishment of the National Park Service. In 8 of 11 wilderness parks in the System in 1916, commercial grazing of sheep, cattle, and horses was practiced. Only one of these areas is so used today; more than 64,000 animal grazing months have been eliminated. Comparable gains are evident throughout the System even though the establishment of new areas usually provides that existing grazing privileges be continued for the lifetime of the permittee. The important facts are that, while progress is slow, the ultimate elimination of all grazing has remained the objective, progress is evident, and there has been no regression.



PROTECTION OF VEGETATION

Over the years, certain basic policies have evolved concerning the maintenance of natural conditions of vegetation. In brief, these are:

Retention of natural forest conditions.

Control of all wildfire; prevention and as complete control as possible of man-caused fires.

Eradication of all exotic pests, and control of epidemic outbreaks of native pests.

Eradication of exotic plants.

Restoration of areas damaged by man-accelerated erosion or depletion of plant cover.

Two aspects of this program have special interest—control of introduced disease, and protection of non-commercial forest species.

An old Spanish saying tells us that “All trees are wood, but the pine is not mahogany.” In the National Parks, all trees are mahogany! Natural and scenic beauty is the justification for forest protection in the National Parks; park forests and plant species are regarded as exhibits, as museum specimens, valuable for their natural beauty and their interest as a part of a natural association. Many agencies give good protection to commercially valuable forests, but the National Parks alone regularly protect non-commercial species from fire, insect, and disease.

WILDLIFE

Wildlife, present in variety and in normal abundance, is a major ingredient of wilderness.

Fortunately, many areas were established soon enough, and protection afforded early enough, to preserve species that otherwise might have perished; but preservation entails more than the establishment of a wildlife sanctuary.

The past 40 years have witnessed the elimination of poaching as a factor of consequence; the reversal of the practice of killing predators, the recognition of the place of the predator as a part of a natural fauna; an encouraging degree of recovery of the once endangered trumpeter swan, grizzly bear, bighorn, and bison; the restoration of elk, bison, bighorn, Merriam's turkey, and antelope in some parks from which they had disappeared; and the elimination or partial control of exotic animals in other National Parks. Today all forms of native wildlife find sanctuary in the National Parks. Most important, the natural environment upon which the wildlife depends has been preserved and restored.

The welfare of park wildlife today and in the future requires much more than the setting aside of adequate range, or protection from injury by man. Limitations of range in even the largest parks, coupled with the continuing pressure of intensive land use in adjacent areas, is perhaps the basic problem; but the relation of man to the native fauna—man using the National Parks and traveling into the wilderness in increasing numbers—is also a factor of no mean proportions.

Wildlife in the National Parks deserves and will continue to get a full measure of attention. This means continued protection, restoration



of species that have disappeared, where possible, and management where required to neutralize the influence of man. It means education, so that people, aware of delicate natural balances, will adjust their behavior and expectations to reality. It means research to reveal the facts upon which a sound program of management, protection, and use must be based.

The wildlife program in the National Parks is the only major effort in this country to preserve a complete fauna, in a natural habitat, with minimum disturbance and control.

INTERPRETATION

Education has a great deal to do with man's understanding and enjoyment of wilderness, his wise use and management of it, and his acceptance of the idea of its preservation. The National Park Service recognized this very early and led in the development of an effective interpretive program.

The idea of outdoor nature study in the National Parks, tested through trial by a public-minded couple, Mr. and Mrs. C. M. Goethe, was launched toward its final success in Yosemite in 1920. This program not only has been expanded throughout the areas in the National Park System, but has served as a pattern for similar programs in many State and municipal parks, and other outdoor establishments. Within the National Parks in 1956, the interpretive program served over 26 million visitors at talks, on conducted trips, and in museums and visitor centers. Nearly as many used exhibits and other self-help facilities.

Interpretation gives the visitor a basis for added enjoyment, greater interest and awareness of the natural scene around him, some ideas about conservation, and a clearer idea of his responsibility as a user and protector of the park. The cumulative results over the many years are impressive.



PARK DEVELOPMENT

Generally speaking, in a National Park only those developments are justified which are required in order for visitors to use the park beneficially, and to enjoy and understand the natural scene. This means reasonable access by road and by trail to the area and to selected places within it that will give the visitor a good example of its major qualities. In some parks, it also means campgrounds, accommodations, and other facilities to provide the creature comforts.

Most of the road work of the past 25 years has been reconstruction on or near the location of older roads, bringing the system up to a standard required to handle the travel of the day. In Yellowstone, for example, most of the roads have been rebuilt during the last 30 years, but there have been virtually no new roads into new areas in the past 50 years.

Once reasonable access was provided, there was remarkably little extension of roads in any of the older National Parks. In fact, the National Park Service began to pull back on new road construction

before it was generally recognized outside the Service that roads—too many of them, or in the wrong places—could impair park and wilderness values.

Roads have been constructed into new areas, and more will be needed, but only to the degree necessary to provide a comparable amount of reasonable access and opportunity in new or in underdeveloped park areas.

Good taste and good judgment are important in the placement and treatment of a park road or developed area, but the practical factors of economics and engineering must be taken into account, too. Some compromise with perfection is unavoidable, but efforts to hold road standards to acceptable limits, to preserve natural conditions along roadsides, to fit park roads to topography while providing scenic and interpretive opportunity, and to achieve appropriateness in design and location of developments, have met with considerable success.

More fundamental, however, is the over-all development and use plan for a park, having to do with road and developed area locations and their integration. Circumstance, rather than a well-conceived plan, controlled the earliest developments in many National Parks. Poorly located and ill-planned to start with, their expansion to accommodate mounting travel has created serious problems of overcrowding, impairment of values, and impaired enjoyment. Fortunately, for the first time in the history of the National Park Service, the opportunity to rectify these conditions is now at hand.

* * *

Anyone who seeks wilderness can find it in the National Parks. It is no problem for those who follow the trails, finding solitude, beauty, and adventure far removed from roads and lodges. Even those who never venture far from roads, experience the quality of wilderness. For them the wilderness may lie but 10 minutes' walk from most park roads, or they may sense it looking outward from such places as Trail Ridge Road, Going-to-the-Sun Highway, Blue Ridge Parkway, or even from the plaza of Bright Angel Lodge. Whether or not their impression coincides with any definition we may formulate, the visitors see, sense, and react to wilderness, often without leaving the roadside.

This is no accident—it is the result of many years of planned progress along many avenues of park conservation. It reflects discrimination in the selection of superlative scenic, scientific, wilderness areas for inclusion in the System; consistent conformity to the sound concept of use and preservation upon which the National Parks are founded; a successful history of resistance to threats of despoilment, impairment, and adverse use; and an internal management program that not only has protected the physical resources but, in many cases, has brought about the recovery of large areas once abused and misused. The growing public awareness of wilderness values, a source of great strength to the conservation movement, is itself in part a product of beneficial use and preservation unimpaired of these areas of great natural beauty.

The wilderness is there; consciously or unconsciously, people respond to it.



*looking
to
the
future*

For the first time in its history, the National Park Service has in action a program broad enough to permit effective long-range planning, on a scale large enough to overtake today's problems and to prepare for future ones before they develop. This is MISSION 66. It contains nothing new except a broader outlook and the element of scale. It emphasizes a firm determination to carry out without compromise the purpose of National Parks as defined by law and strengthened by tradition.

How does the wilderness idea fit into this program?

We may look for the answer in the development plans for roads and developed areas, in plans for the management of the wilderness area proper, and we shall, later, comment upon the several separate parts of the MISSION 66 program as they pertain to wilderness. But, the real answer lies in the precepts that give direction to park planning right from the start, and govern every step of the process.

How does one plan for a National Park?

The process requires these steps:

Inventory of the significant and distinctive resources of the park or monument. What does the area have?

Evaluation of the human benefits which should derive from those resources. What should people get out of a visit to the area?

Definition of the activities and experiences, the facilities and services required to bring forth those benefits. What must the visitor do, and what must be done for him?

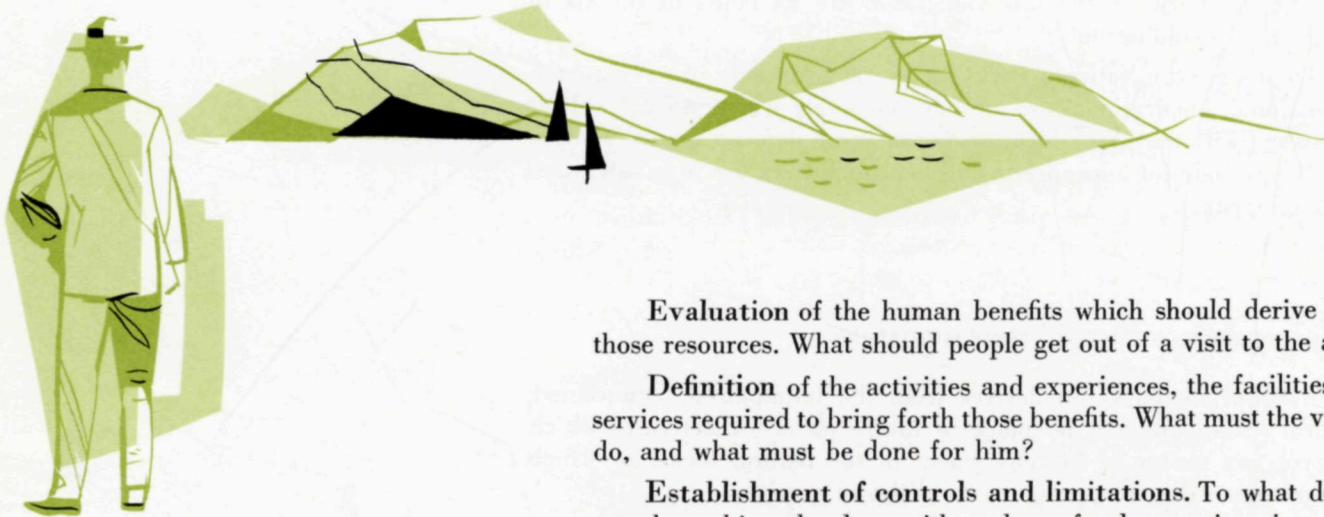
Establishment of controls and limitations. To what degree can these things be done without loss of values or impairment of the resource?

The answers to these four questions are the basis for area planning, for they define the area objective, identify the legitimate needs of the visitor, and establish the controls necessary to perpetuate both the resource and the opportunity to enjoy it.

Saving the details for later, we can apply this line of reasoning, for example, to such areas as Mount Rainier or the Everglades, to Joshua Tree, or Dinosaur, and come up with some fundamental conclusions:

Wilderness—without in any way discounting the value of specific features of high visitor interest such as a geyser or a grove of Sequoias—wilderness is the significant resource of such areas.

Every person who visits such areas is entitled to and should have a wilderness experience.



Plans for such areas must preserve large, undeveloped wilderness, and as well the wilderness atmosphere of the park as a whole—the roadsides and the environment of developed areas.

Thus, the guidelines for a park are established, and within them, detailed planning can proceed. With this brief background, we can now look at MISSION 66 item by item, and understand how each part fits together, and contributes, not only to better park use, but to the preservation of natural and wilderness values.

The National Parks, to review briefly, are beset by four kinds of problems:

1. Competition for the use of park resources—park recreation versus exploitation for commercial or other public purposes.

Today, the National Parks are endangered less by the demands of industry for raw materials, than by other forms of public use, such as water and power developments, pipelines, and the like. How such conflicts are resolved depends, as much as any other factor, upon public understanding, and acceptance of the National Park objective. Favorable attitudes are generated through beneficial and appropriate park experience. The more a National Park is used, profitably and beneficially, for its intended purpose, the less vulnerable are its lands to threats of commercial exploitation.

To prepare the National Parks for as full a measure of recreational, educational, inspirational use as they can safely withstand not only is consistent with the park objective, but is also a defense against adverse use. To provide for appropriate and beneficial park use is to safeguard park integrity.

2. Inappropriate or harmful recreational use.

Appropriate park use derives from the unimpaired, unmodified, natural scene. There is no place in future plans for activities which deprive any visitor of full enjoyment of the natural scene, or which require unusual or inappropriate facilities or services.

3. Destruction of the physical resources of a park by man-caused or natural agents.

We have reviewed the record of progress in protecting park resources from fire, pests, erosion, and the like. Adequate funds, personnel, and facilities will strengthen the protection program all along the line. Equally important, protection will be backed up by continuous observation and research, to better harmonize protection practice, both as to method and degree, with the wilderness principle.

4. Problems attending increased visitation—damage, intrusion, impairment by people and by the facilities they require.



This is the basic subject upon which MISSION 66 bears most directly, and attacks from several directions.

The MISSION 66 plan coordinates all aspects of park operation—management, protection, development, and use. It continues the policies and strengthens the practices of all aspects of park preservation.

As for development, here, too, is a new opportunity to contribute to preservation while improving the quality of park use. The major contribution of this program to conservation stems from the fact that it is comprehensive and long-range. Many of today's problems of congestion, impairment, and incomplete enjoyment were brought on by piecemeal development controlled by expediency and the limitations of the moment. For the first time, it is now possible to plan intelligently to meet future problems, with reasonable assurance that those plans will be carried out. MISSION 66 is in a position to use development as a means of better preservation.

There will be no radical departures from past practice in carrying out the details of MISSION 66 development. Being a complete and comprehensive plan, does, however, give new emphasis and new force to the following:

PARK ROADS

Only two things about the MISSION 66 road program need be said: (1) Roads will not be extended into any area now considered park wilderness; the rebuilding of existing roads to bring them to a standard required today, and the completion of roads on a comparable scale in newer areas, constitute most of the road construction program; (2) the road system for a park is considered to be a basic instrument of park presentation and interpretation, and this principle will influence future road plans.

DEVELOPED AREAS

The most significant scenic, scientific, or historical areas within a park shall be reserved exclusively for esthetic, interpretive, and recreational enjoyment. Other developments—accommodations and administrative facilities—when they are necessary in a park, shall be restricted, and, if necessary, relocated, in the less scenic and less vital portions of the parks. This is the principle behind the development of Colter Bay in Grand Teton, for instance; the New Canyon Village to replace intrusive facilities now on the rim of Yellowstone Canyon; the proposal to move the headquarters for Mount Rainier out of the park; to transfer developments from Spruce Tree Point to a less vital area in Mesa Verde; to limit accommodations in Everglades; to eliminate accommodations in Rocky Mountain; and to limit public use development in Yosemite Valley and to transfer all possible administrative and utility facilities outside that park.

This is the direction in which we will move in future planning for other areas, but it will take longer than the lifetime of MISSION 66 to complete the job. The pattern is set, and the way is clear to save the



most precious areas and features for the purpose for which they are best suited—refreshment of the body, mind, and spirit.

THE WILDERNESS PROPER

Almost every problem and every principle discussed has counterparts in the problems of use and preservation of those extensive, undeveloped, natural areas we call wilderness. The wilderness, too, will be used by people—not intensively, for remoteness and the difficulty of travel and subsistence will remain a relatively effective safeguard against mass use. Nevertheless, use by people is recognized whenever we evaluate wilderness in terms of human experience—solitude, remoteness, quietude, beauty, sense of adventure.

Wilderness areas are most enjoyed by those who penetrate them. But, they also benefit every person who travels through a park. It is the undeveloped wild land beyond the roads that provide the setting and the background. Wilderness areas are preserved, not alone for the hiker, but equally for the benefit of all.

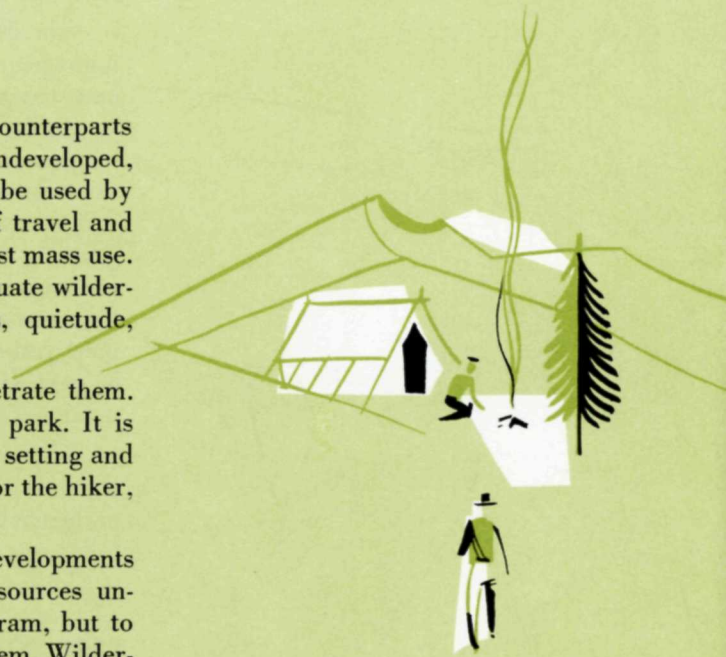
Wilderness areas are preserved by excluding roads and developments for permanent occupancy, and by leaving the natural resources unexploited. All of this is inherent in the MISSION 66 program, but to stop at this point would be an oversimplification of the problem. Wilderness, as it exists today, cannot long endure without attention—let us call it management, by which we mean only this: to correct and neutralize the influence of man. It does not mean control of natural forces or management of the environment for the purpose of creating a better wilderness.

As a consequence, we extinguish fires in the wilderness, control pests and disease, and repair damage resulting from man's activities. Trails are provided—to permit access and legitimate use, but also to minimize and localize the impact of feet and hoofs. When the number of wilderness users becomes significant we may, justifiably, prepare sites for camps, or for campfires, and arrange for the disposal of refuse to minimize and localize the effects of use. Regulation may be needed—limiting numbers, length of stay, the man-to-horse ratio, fishing, or other recreation practices. Each wilderness area is a special case, and any combination of these or other management practices may be called for to minimize the effects of man's presence.

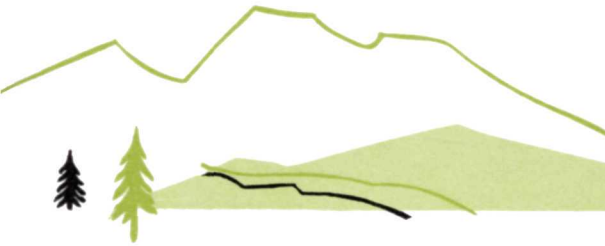
Wilderness areas must be protected as well from impairment resulting from conditions existing outside their boundaries. Park streams whose headwaters drain from disturbed lands become silted; wildlife problems are created in the parks because of predator control, and the like beyond their borders; and epidemic insect infestations are generated in nearby burns or logging operations. These are but a few of many examples that might be cited.

Wilderness today is but a fragment of the wilderness that was. Wilderness has been reduced and divided; this, too, is man's doing, much of it inescapable.

When wilderness spanned the continent, wildfire, insect and disease were natural, normal factors in its ecology. The result was a varied environment, comprised of many plant types, many overlapping generations and stages of succession.



Today, wildfire and insect and disease infestations still occur, but now they have the capacity to change a much reduced wilderness area to a one-stage condition. It is our purpose to preserve a true sample of wilderness. This requires that natural forces be regulated to the degree necessary to keep them in scale with the reduced size of the wilderness that remains today.



BETTER USE OF THE WHOLE PARK

MISSION 66 seeks to make those parts of a park that are already developed more effective in meeting visitor needs for refreshment, enjoyment, understanding, and inspiration. To move accommodations to less vital places is one step in the direction of dispersal of use. But more is planned.

Park roads will be utilized as an interpretive device, with roadside exhibits, markers, and signs as required. A journey through a park will become a continuous experience in seeing, understanding, and appreciating the natural scene, with many places for the visitor to pause for a spectacular view, to see a roadside exhibit, to walk a park trail. The objective of all is three-fold: to relieve the impact of multiple use of the climax scenic areas, to make more of the park usable, interesting, and enjoyable, and to emphasize the natural scene as the true climax element of a park experience.

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

To present and interpret a park in its most meaningful, most interesting, and most attractive light is the key idea behind all planning for visitor use, and to a very great degree it determines what developments and what services visitors require. The ultimate National Park System will provide a full representation of America—its scenic lands and natural features, and its history. It goes a long way toward doing so now. It is most important for that scene and that history to be so presented and so interpreted that it will have full meaning for Americans. To understand and appreciate wilderness is the first step in its preservation.

RESEARCH

MISSION 66 proposes a much strengthened program of research and observation. Increased park use has introduced an element that year by year renders the problems of protection and preservation of the natural scene more complex. The normal pace of nature is slow, and the influence of man upon an environment is often indirect, obscure, and delayed, and often not recognized in time to take preventive action. Our use, management, and protection practices must be guided by accurate knowledge, secured through continuous observation and study of the natural scene and of man's effect upon it. This portion of MISSION 66, although small, is extremely important. Guesswork, rule-of-thumb, and intuition are not good enough—the preservation of this irreplaceable resource requires precise knowledge and scientific procedure.

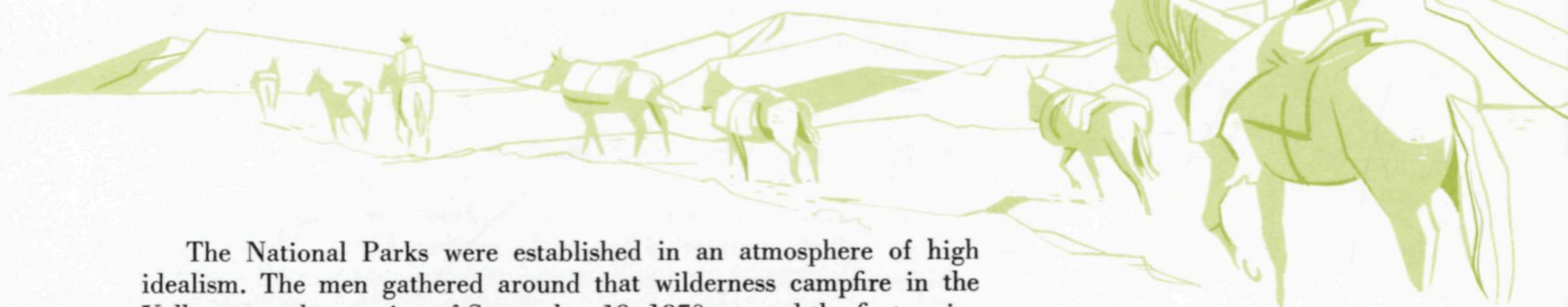
A RECREATION PLAN FOR AMERICA

In 1936 the National Park Service started a study of the recreational needs, and an inventory of the potential recreation areas, of the Nation. Interrupted by the war, this study is again under way as a part of MISSION 66. Already a survey of the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts is completed, and studies of the Pacific Coast and Great Lake regions have started. The object of the National Recreation Plan is to point the way, and to stimulate the establishment of outdoor recreation areas by all levels of government—Federal, State and municipal.

What has this to do with National Parks?

This, for one thing—when enough other outdoor areas are developed to serve the growing need for recreation, pressure to expand developments and extend roads in the National Parks will diminish.

Leisure time is rapidly expanding, much more rapidly than the Nation is providing for its worthwhile use. There is no time to lose if the people of the States and of the Nation are to retain seashores and mountains, forests, rivers, and lakes for their own refreshment and enjoyment. The good use of leisure—use that will strengthen the moral fibre of America—is a responsibility of every level of government. To provide leadership in this direction is the real objective of this program.



The National Parks were established in an atmosphere of high idealism. The men gathered around that wilderness campfire in the Yellowstone the evening of September 19, 1870, started the first major conservation movement in the United States. It was an act of unselfish citizenship that has become an American guidepost to the world in conservation.

It is now 85 years since the idea of National Parks became a reality, and was clearly defined by law. Today, it is fair to claim that nine-tenths of the area within the National Parks can be included under a reasonable definition of wilderness, that the admonition to preserve for the benefit of the people and to pass on unimpaired to future generations has been faithfully carried out.

For the future, we take assurance from the tradition of National Park conservation and the laws which give it strength, from the record of protective management, from the dedication of an alert and loyal group of park employees, from the devotion to the cause of an ever-growing body of citizens, and from the promise of MISSION 66.

The National Parks occupy an incomparable position among the scenic wonders of the world. Americans have inherited a collection of masterpieces. With that heritage is this obligation: To conserve the Nation's scenic and historic treasures, and to prepare the areas of the National Park System for their task—the enjoyment and inspiration of this and future generations.

conclusion

*the Nation's most treasured wilderness
lands are set apart and dedicated
as National Parks and Monuments*



*distance, ruggedness, and
climate often are their
most effective guardians*



*and time can restore
wilderness, and heal
an abused landscape.*



*wilderness persists where
nature is free and only
man's actions are disciplined.*



*man is a part of
the scene—wilderness
has little human value without him.*



*man's enjoyment springs from the
quality of wilderness that invests even the
most visited spectacles and reveals
itself to all who regard it*



*and wilderness
reaches outward from
the roadside to be experienced
fully by those who penetrate it.*



*the laws of the Nation require preservation
of wilderness in National Parks and Monuments:*

CONSERVE the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein
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.



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photographs

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<i>8</i>	Longs Peak from Trail Ridge, Rocky Mountain National Park Albert Razum, National Park Service
<i>9</i>	Mount Rainier from Mazama Ridge, Mount Rainier National Park Asahel Curtis photo courtesy Washington State Historical Society
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THE NATIONAL PARK *wilderness*

