



The COUNCIL RING

PRESENTING MONTHLY, CURRENT VIEWS ON
CONSERVATION AND PLANNING, WITH
EMPHASIS ON PARKS AND RECREATION,
FOR THE INFORMATION OF NATIONAL
PARK SERVICE PEOPLE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR - NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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POLICY STATEMENTS

The Washington State Planning Council, the United States Forest Service, and the National Park Service are conducting a cooperative land-use study of the Cascade Range in Washington to determine the suitability of a portion of it for national park status. Mr. P. Heatherton, executive officer of the Council, has asked the Director for a statement of policy governing the establishment of proposed national parks. The following letters are Mr. Cammerer's replies:

"Superintendent Tomlinson has sent me a copy of your letter to him of September 21, on the subject 'Cascade Ridge' with the request that I give you a statement on the policies of this Service with reference to the selection of new areas, and recreation."

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"The establishment of national parks is a prerogative of the Congress. Congress may establish any area as a national park that it so chooses. Actually, however, Congress has in nearly all cases selected for national park status those areas only that are of outstanding scenic character, and that have the approval of the Department. While there may be individual differences of opinion regarding the merits of a particular area, there is a general appreciation of the standards that have been set for national parks by Congress during the last sixty-five years. An indication of this general acceptance of national park standards is found, I believe, in the slogan of 'The Wenatchee Daily World,' which is:

"A few miles to the west and northwest in the Cascades, fifty miles wide, and a hundred miles long, extends the PREMIER SCENIC WONDERLAND OF WESTERN AMERICA - challenging in grandeur any and all national parks in the United States."

"This generally accepted standard for national parks is

about the same today as it was in 1872 when the Yellowstone was established. I can think of no national park project today that was not recommended many years ago and many of them were proposed even before the National Park Service was created. If there has been any change with respect to the establishment of national parks, the only significant change is in the increased public interest in them and the increased public demand for the proper use and preservation of great scenic areas.

"When this Service studies an area for the purpose of reporting upon its suitability for national park status, it does so from the land use point of view. It does just about as the Washburn-Langford-Doane party of explorers did in the Yellowstone in 1870, when the members of the party decided whether the area could be best used by private and piecemeal exploitation or by being dedicated as a national park for the benefit and enjoyment of the people. The Yellowstone is a superlative natural area and the decision was in favor of park status.

"The distinction between national parks and other types of Federal reservations was aptly expressed by Chief Forester Silcox, when he testified recently concerning the proposed Kings Canyon National Park, California. Mr. Silcox said:

"'Where an area like this area is outstanding scenically, and large enough to constitute a complete administrative unit, and the use is primarily recreational, I mean where timber is purely incidental and there is practically no grazing - I, personally, would rather prefer to see the Park Service manage it. I would rather spend time, from the Forest Service standpoint, on timber areas, with recreation, grazing and all other uses incidental to the timber use . . .'

"This, I believe, is merely another way of saying that when an area is of more value nationally for recreation than for other use, it should be included in the Federal park system.

"In speaking of parks as 'recreational' areas, I use the term generically, or broadly, connoting the inspirational and educational factors, as well as the active and social forms of entertainment. Recreational use of such areas may vary all the way from individual contemplation of the wilderness to the sports of an organized camp. The Service holds no brief for any particular form of outdoor recreation. It seeks, merely, as a result of careful study of each area under its jurisdiction, to administer the area in such manner as to make available the inherent qualities of the area in relation to public needs. One park may have a

well developed road system, for example; another park may have only access roads, and a third may be kept roadless.

"Other developmental factors vary likewise, according to the character of the area and its use requirements. Lodging facilities, for instance, vary all the way from the public camp ground to the deluxe hotel.

"I believe that, as a Nation, we have only begun to appreciate the implications of national parks as a wise and profitable form of land use, capable of sustained public benefits and financial returns."

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"I appreciate your letter of October 23, requesting additional information about national park policies.

"I note that you inquire particularly whether there has been a change in policy. I do not believe that there has been. While opinions may vary on the merits of a particular area, or subsequent information may lead to the re-examination of an old problem under new light, the general policies are essentially the same broad concepts that started the national park movement on its way.

"While there may be a superficial resemblance between two given areas, I am inclined to question any statement that they are duplicates of each other. Students of nature and outdoor enthusiasts are aware of the almost infinite variety that exists in nature. But, if there were two Mount Rainiers, would we refuse to use one of them?

"I am not so concerned with the question whether our policies fall in this category or that; I am more concerned with the question whether they are broad enough and good enough to meet human needs.

"With reference to the policy of accommodating visitors, we have been trying for years, within the limits of obtainable appropriations, to keep abreast of the requirements of the lowest income groups. In Yosemite Valley, for example, while there may be 150 people staying at the Ahwahnee Hotel there will be 1,500 people at Camp Curry and 8,000 people in the public campgrounds.

"It seems to us that this is a more democratic use of the resources than could be attained by the granting of special privilege permits, such as for private summer homes or for camps and lodges constructed by special interest groups. Roads, trails, and public campgrounds have been built in national parks primarily to make them more accessible to the person of limited means. They were quite accessible to the person of wealth, prior to our construction programs, because he could well afford the time and cost of a guided

pack trip into remote country. It is this very democracy of the national parks that has lead some individuals and special interest groups to oppose the establishment of new parks, because these individuals and groups wanted to keep the superlative areas for their own exclusive pleasure.

"We expect to increase the winter use of the parks. We want that use to be a public use. We want to construct ski lodges and trail shelters at public expense and we believe that this type of Federal expenditure is justified. Winter sports groups and mountaineering clubs will benefit by the added facilities and opportunities presented, and we believe that they will not want or need special privilege permits to do so. However, where permits are already issued at the time a new park is established, it has been the policy of the Service to continue those permits for a period of many years, the decision in each case resting upon recognition of the rights of the persons or organizations involved. Our policy in this respect has purposely been kept flexible so that adjustments could be made fairly and without hardship.

"I trust that this answers your questions. I am anxious to be of whatever help I can in clarifying these problems."

The threat of a timber famine in the United States is passing. The public and industrial efforts in fire prevention and other essentials to forestry are bringing about a growth of timber more than adequate to supply all present requirements of consumption. The economic problem of forestry in the United States hereafter will not be how to supply enough timber for our requirements--but how to find sufficient markets for the timber crops that these great areas of land will increasingly produce. The forest problem, like the wheat problem or the cotton problem, is fundamentally one of markets.

--Excerpt from "A Forest Policy That Goes All The Way Through," by William B. Greely, secretary-manager, West Coast Lumberman's Association and former chief forester of the U. S. Forest Service, in American Forests, November 1939.