

GRIST

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Manual for Museums

Parks, more than most people would guess, are intimately involved in museum work. All too often the public thinks of park work in terms of grass, trees and picnic areas, when in fact, museum technology has been refined and developed by Federal, state and local park officials for many, many years.

In recognition of the great interest and involvement that park people have in museum operation, the National Park Service has recently published an important *Manual for Museums* by Ralph H. Lewis, one of the Park Service's most outstanding museum administrators and curators.

The book is relevant both to park museums and to museums operating independent of park systems. It is a whole catalogue of day-to-day hints on operations from acquisition to maintenance.

This important document is a reflection of the National Park Service's continuing interest in museum work. In the mid-1930's, Carl P. Russell, of the Park Service, set a pattern for the agency's involvement in this area by organizing centralized laboratories staffed by curators and preparators to help parks with exhibition and preservation expertise. Dr. Russell, a park interpreter, recognized that park superintendents were rarely equipped with all the skills required of a museum specialist. Dr. Russell commissioned Ned J. Burns, former chief of the Division of Museums, to set down the Service's first manual on the subject, which continues, despite the years that have passed, to be a fascinating reference on museum technology.

The new manual by Dr. Lewis updates the Burns' effort with references to pertinent contemporary literature in the field and with an eye toward the practical. Lewis takes great pains to make his manual a handy reference. Discussions are not theoretical, but practical. For example, in the first chapter on "What to Acquire,"

Lewis discusses the whole question of the scope of a museum collection. He then goes on to discuss the importance of guidelines for acquisition of specimens for exhibit and study purposes. He covers natural areas, historical areas and recreation areas in his suggested guidelines for each type of museum or collection. Similarly, he goes into great detail about the care necessary to maintain a collection—security precautions, climate control and the proper storage container for each type of collection.

Says Lewis in his introduction to the book, "Museums are a distinctive kind of institution. They have developed in response to certain enduring needs of

civilized communities. . . . A museum needs a valid purpose to justify its existence, and the public has a right to know what that purpose is. Every museum should, therefore, define specific needs in its community that it aims to meet by the exercise of those functions that make it a museum."

And so it is that the *Manual for Museums* identifies specific needs in the museum community and tries to meet them with sound practical advice.

Manual for Museums is available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Gov't Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 for \$4.70 (Stock No. 024-005-00643-5).



Ingenuity

GRIST

A Publication of the Park Practice Program

The Park Practice Program is a cooperative effort of the National Park Service and the National Recreation and Park Association.

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The Park Practice Program includes: *Trends*, a quarterly publication on topics of general interest in park and recreation management and programming; *Grist*, a bimonthly publication on practical solutions to everyday problems in park and recreation operations including energy conservation, cost reduction, safety, maintenance, and designs for small structures; *Design*, a quarterly compendium of plans for park and recreation structures which demonstrate quality design and intelligent use of materials.

Membership in the Park Practice Program includes a subscription to all three publications and a library of back issues arranged in binders with indices and all publications for the remainder of the calendar year. The initial membership fee is \$80; annual renewal is \$20. A separate subscription to *Grist* is \$15 initially and \$7.50 on renewal. Subscription applications and fees, and membership inquiries should be sent only to: National Recreation and Park Association, 1601 North Kent Street, Arlington, VA 22209.

The information presented in any of the publications of the Park Practice Program does not reflect an endorsement by the agencies sponsoring the program or the editors.

Articles, suggestions, ideas, and comments are invited and should be sent to: Park Practice Program, Division of Federal and State Liaison, National Park Service, Washington, DC 20240.

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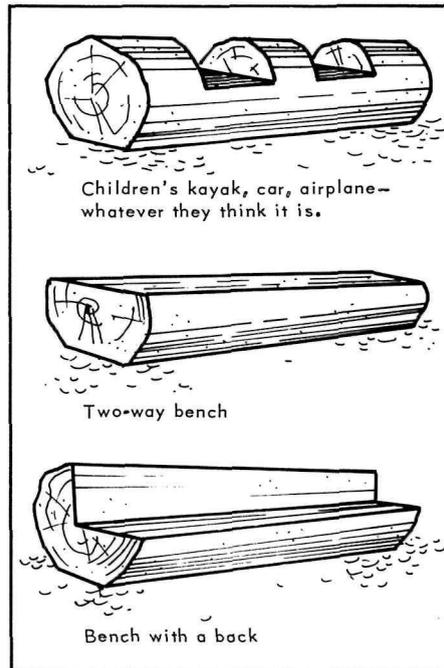
Maureen Finnerty, Editorial Assistant

The following helpful hints will make your job a little simpler, a little more efficient. Send in your ideas to us at *Grist!*

Go Sit on a Log

Gretchen Shaw, a park technician at Rock Creek Nature Center in Washington, D.C., suggests cutting logs from trees that have fallen to make them into benches. The logs could be strategically placed along trails and near picnic areas.

Her ideas, pictured here, could be done with a good chain saw. She won a \$50 incentive award for her suggestion.



Storing for Keeps

Keeping plastic wood, paint or varnish in usable condition is often a difficult problem. These materials dry up rapidly despite the care taken to reseal a top or cap a tube.

Millard W. Wilcox, a civil engineer at the Denver Service Center, suggests wrapping the opened cans in plastic bags. A double wrap of plastic with a tight seal of rubber bands will help keep air out and keep these supplies in usable condition longer.

Trailer for Fire Water

To avoid using a pick-up truck for carrying a 100-gallon (380.0 l) capacity fire pumping unit, William T. Cunningham, the facility manager at Buffalo National River in Harrison, Arizona, suggests mounting the fire pumping unit on a trailer.

"This eliminates the use of a truck being used solely for the purpose of fire suppression," says Cunningham. He also points out that if a vehicle has trouble starting, the unit could be attached to any available truck and hauled to the scene. The trailer is a more efficient solution than a slide-on unit; especially, if only one individual were available to load the unit.

"By using a trailer," concludes Cunningham, "mechanical repairs to vehicles can be made and the fire fighting unit never leaves the area."

Cunningham received a \$63 incentive award for his life and money-saving suggestion.

Hook a Weed

Thomas Giles and James French, landscape gardeners in National Capital Region, suggest that a hook be made of an old weeding hoe to clean grass, weeds, and debris from cracks and joints in sidewalks and curbs.

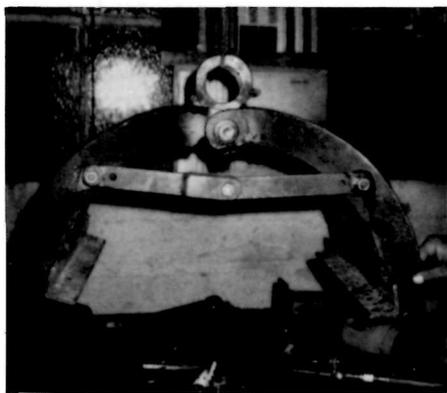
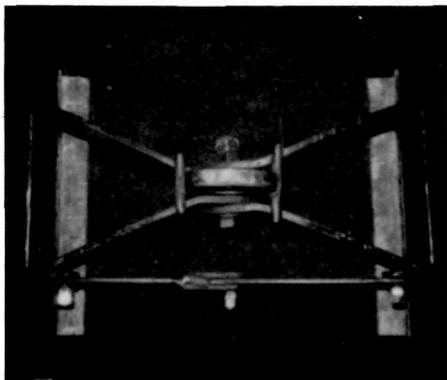
Other methods, by hand or by chemicals are both costly and time consuming. The tool has been adopted throughout the NCR parks system and the two men won a \$50 award for their idea.



New Design for Log Tongs

Moving concrete half logs often requires two men—one to serve as a signal man to the crane operator while the other spreads the tongs. Sydney M. Carter, an automotive and heavy equipment specialist at Yosemite National Park, has designed a new set of tongs which can be locked in an open position leaving one hand free to signal.

Carter received a \$125 incentive award for his invention.



Picnic Table Picker-Upper

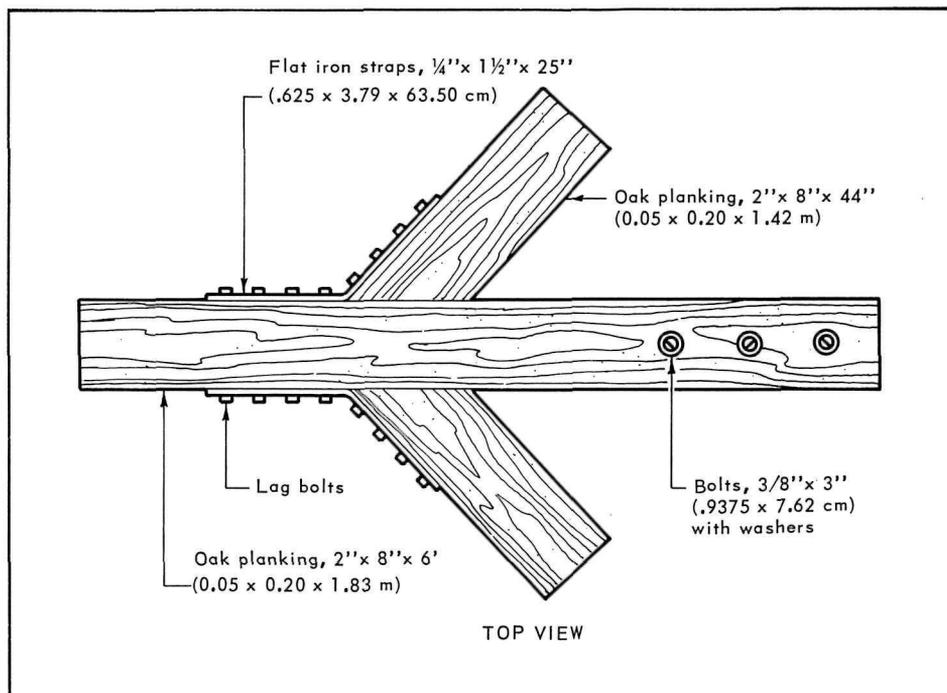
Moving picnic tables in a large park can be a difficult and time-consuming task.

Russell C. Breeden, tractor operator at Shenandoah National Park, has designed a one-man picnic table mover and loader. Fashioned from oak boards, flat iron and bolts, the loader is

attached to a tractor and makes mowing picnic areas a relatively rapid task.

"I mow in an area where there are fifteen tables to be moved once a week, and most of the time I am by myself," reports Breeden, who used to have to rely on a crew of three men to assist him in moving the tables.

Breeden received a \$160 incentive award for his idea.



Hang onto that Chainsaw

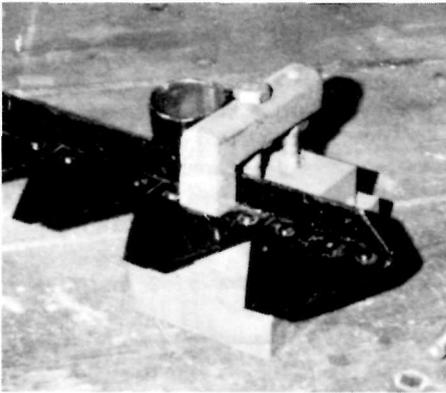
To help increase the operator's control of a chain saw, Richard D. Cundall, a mechanic at Grand Teton National Park suggests using a 3/4" (1.875 cm) heater hose stretched over the handle of the chainsaw, and taped at both ends.

Cundall says that in addition to better control, it reduces vibration which should decrease accidents and reduce operator fatigue.

Cundall won a \$25 incentive award for his idea.



Maintenance and Safety



Portable Vise for Fire Rake Blades

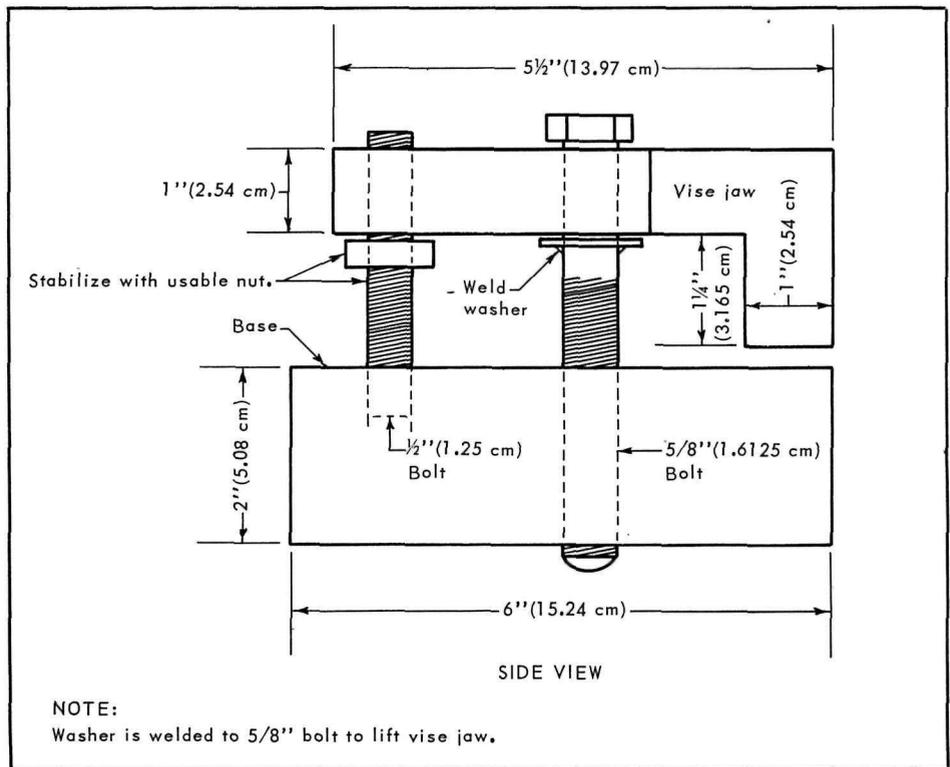
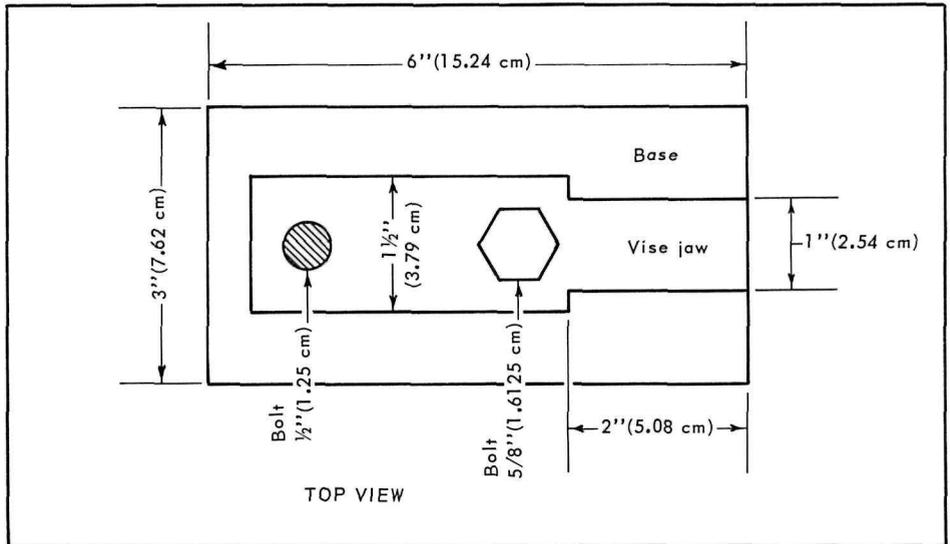
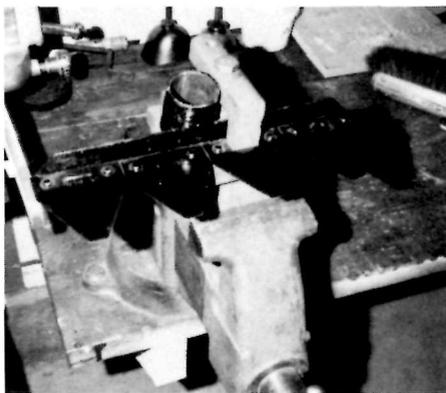
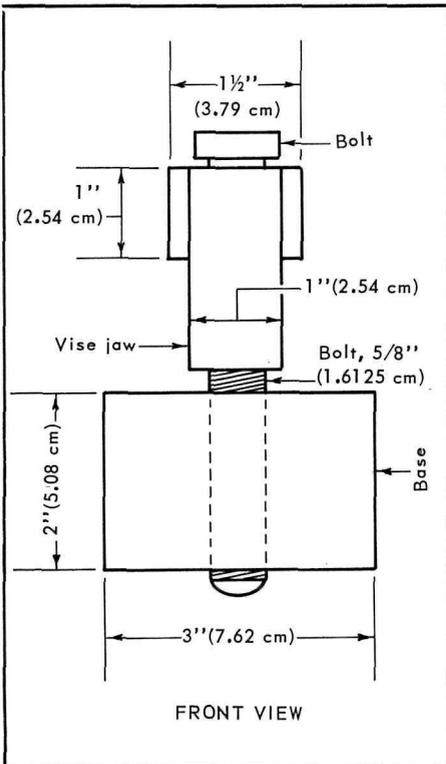
When fire rake blades needed to be replaced or repaired, the task was often difficult and cumbersome, resulting in cut hands, bent blades and rivets that were easily destroyed.

Allen T. Moyer, a park technician at Shenandoah National Park in Luray, Va., has designed a vise to help install blades quickly and securely with a rivet

punch. The vise cuts the time needed for repair in half and can be transported easily to the field.

The new vise, pictured here, makes it possible to install rivets uniformly and securely, making frequent repairs and accidents a thing of the past.

Says Moyer, "Before, the blade could easily slip while hammering the rivets; hands and fingers could be severely lacerated. Now, held securely in place by my vise, the blade cannot move, greatly reducing the possibility of serious injury."



Barrier Free Facilities

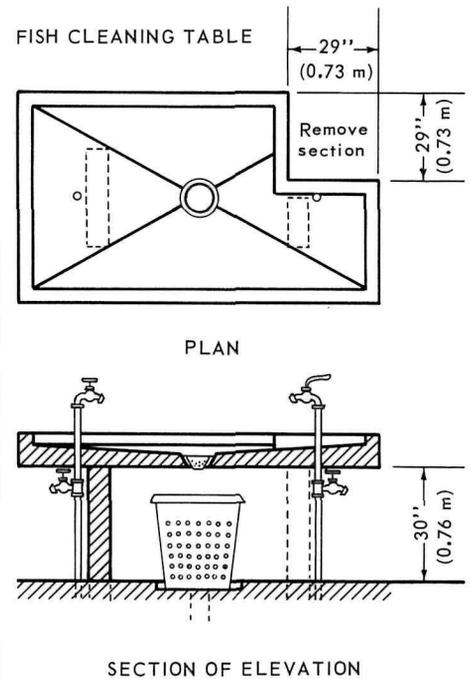
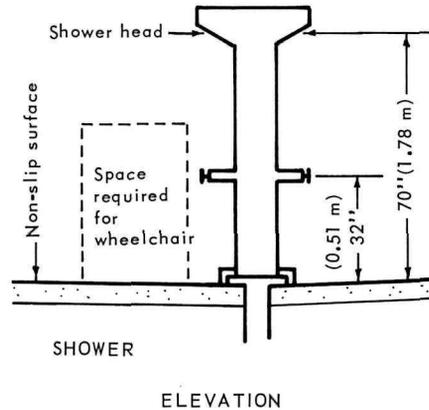
Most park officials have become sensitized to the need for walkways and restrooms designed to be accessible to the handicapped. Yet, architectural barriers exist well beyond trails and toilet facilities.

Richard L. Austin, assistant professor of Landscape Architecture at Kansas State University, in Manhattan, Kansas, sends *Grist* two handsome designs made to accommodate both those in wheelchairs as well as the larger user population: a fish cleaning table and an outdoor shower.

Austin's design for a fish cleaning table is not unlike many which already exist in parks throughout the country. The 30" (0.76 m) table is low enough, however, for a wheelchair to pull up beside it, and the cut out corner

enables wheelchair-bound people adequate access to the table and the water.

Similarly, the outdoor shower, with the non-slip surface, allows a person in a wheelchair to shower as easily as someone standing upright.

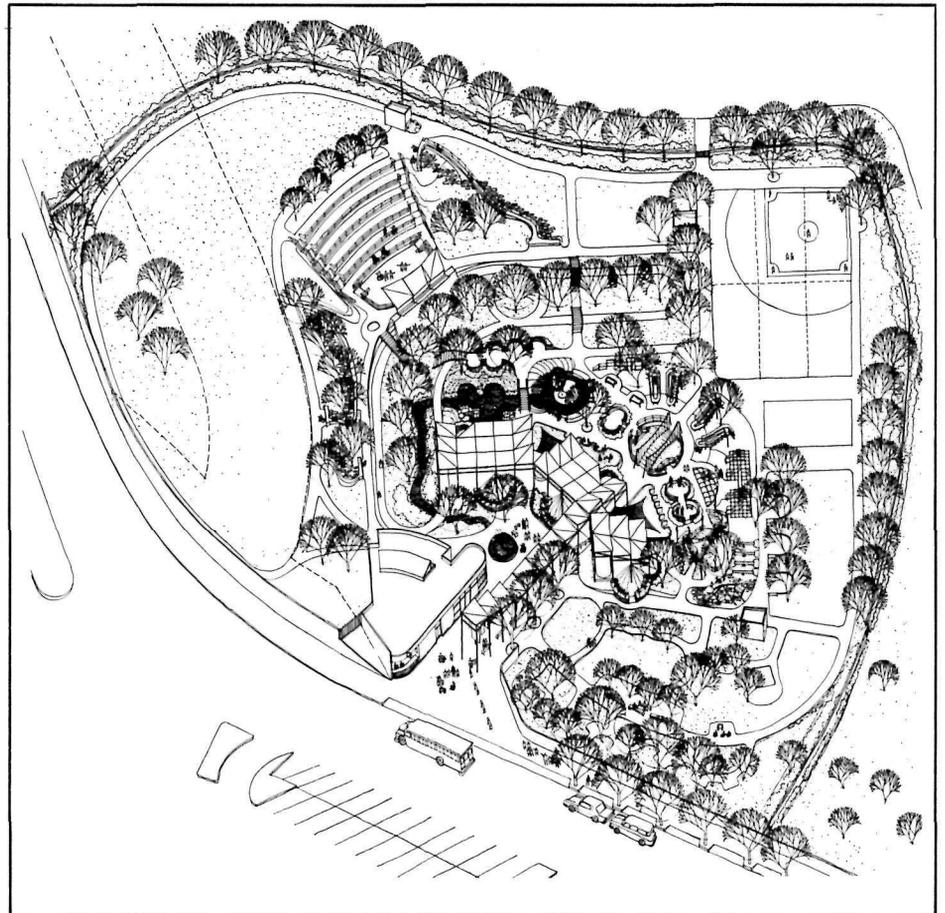


Playground Designed for the Disabled

The nation's first playground designed exclusively for the disabled will be built by 1978 in Flushing Meadow Park in Queens, New York, reports *The New York Times*.

A competition, sponsored by the City Planning Commission and the Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association resulted in four \$10,000 grants to architects for a series of specially designed games for the disabled, reports *The Times*.

Each design is for both handicapped and normal children, creating an innovative play environment where each can participate equally. The games include a modified version of a 19th-century railroad handcar and several ball net and broom games. One of the designs involves animals racing on a track propelled by hoses attached to air balls in the hands of the competitors.



A winning design including original play forms for the handicapped by Hishan N. Ashkouri and James Charnisky, architects and urban planners of Cambridge, MA.

Grist Seeks New Contributions

Everyone has ways of making his or her job easier, more interesting. *Grist* is looking for new ideas, new ways to cut time and money, to use existing materials anew.

It's rewarding to come up with an idea that can be used by others—why not send your ideas to us so we can share them with others.

Grist was founded some 20 years ago to provide practical ideas to everyday problems in parks and recreation. Our readers come from all over the country—the little guy in the shop and the park superintendent, the manager of a wildlife area, the foreman of a road crew. We sincerely believe that everyone who cares about his or her job has something worthwhile to contribute.

We're looking for ideas in the area of maintenance and safety, ways to recycle materials, clever ideas that might save a minute or two, a dollar or two. We're looking for designs for small structures, original methods, helpful equipment and new management concepts.

Grist is the nitty gritty publication in the Park Practice Program. It reflects the many experiences and ideas of our readers.

Surely you or your fellow worker have something to contribute. Write and tell us about it—see your name in print and help us make all our jobs a little better, a little more efficient.

Write: *Grist*, Division of Federal and State Liaison, National Park Service, Washington, D.C. 20240.

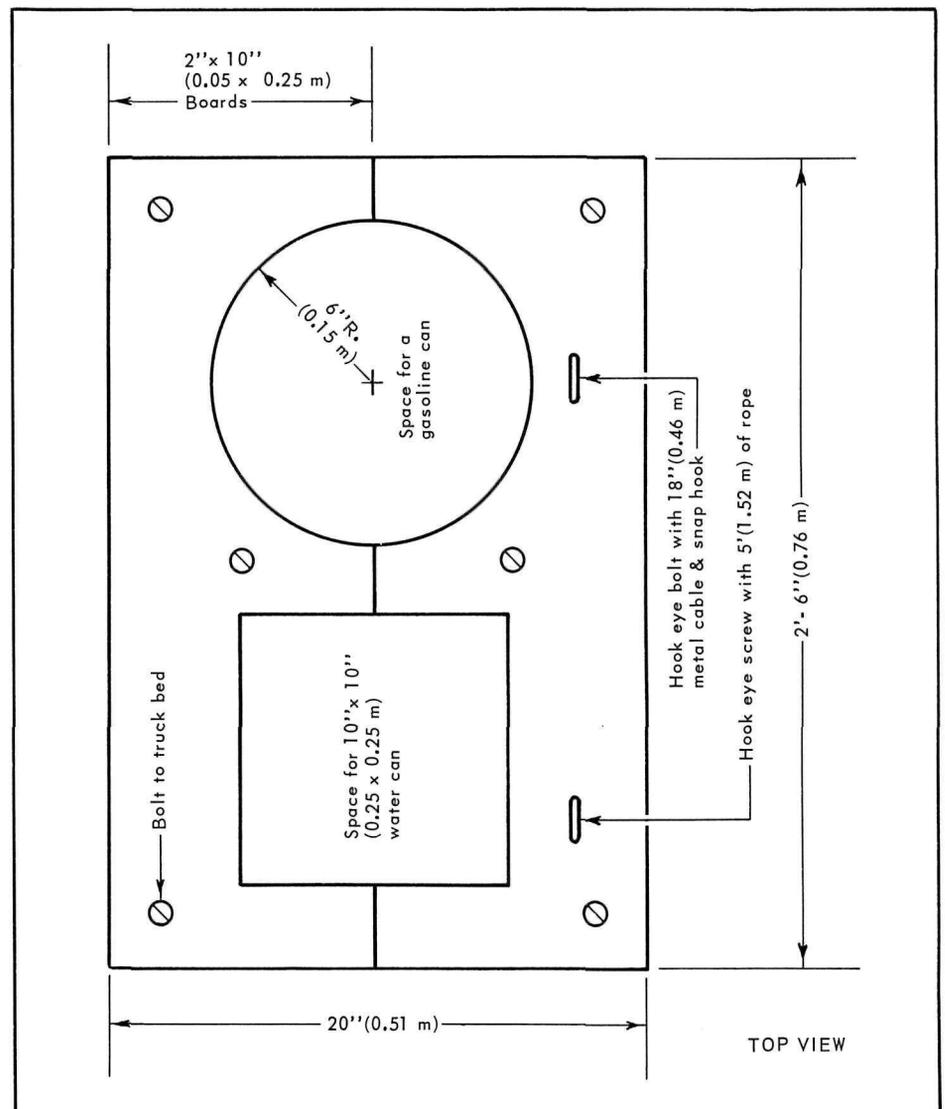
Holder for Pickup Truck

How many times have you seen a pickup truck bumping down a park road only to accidentally drop a water can, paint can or other objects? If they don't fall out, they often spill in the truck bed and by the time the problem is discovered, it's often a mess.

Roy C. Sullivan, park ranger at Shenandoah National Park, suggests constructing special holders for gasoline and water cans to fit in the back of pickup trucks. Along with the holders, Sullivan suggests that two leashes, one of cable or chain and one of rope, be installed permanently to secure stray animals on their way to the pound. The metal leash should have a snap on the end to attach to a collar, the other rope leash should not have a snap lock, so

that a collar could be fashioned from the leash itself.

The holders prevent loss from upsetting or spilling, as well as damage to the vessels and the back of the truck. The leashes eliminate the danger of an animal falling or leaping from a moving vehicle. By placing them near the cab of the truck, the animals are also somewhat protected from the wind as well.



Photographing Historic Firearms

When conducting inventory of historic firearms, the problem of photographing each object usually requires the photographer to set the camera above the object with a scale lying beside the firearm to give an idea of length.

Anthony M. Kohajda, a maintenance man at Fort McHenry National Monument suggests constructing a

special firearm measuring and photographic fixture. The bore of the pistol barrel is placed over a wooden pin. A horizontal adjustable clamp is set against the outside of the barrel and tightened. The clamp has two different type clamp blocks and either can be used to the best advantage of the pistol type.

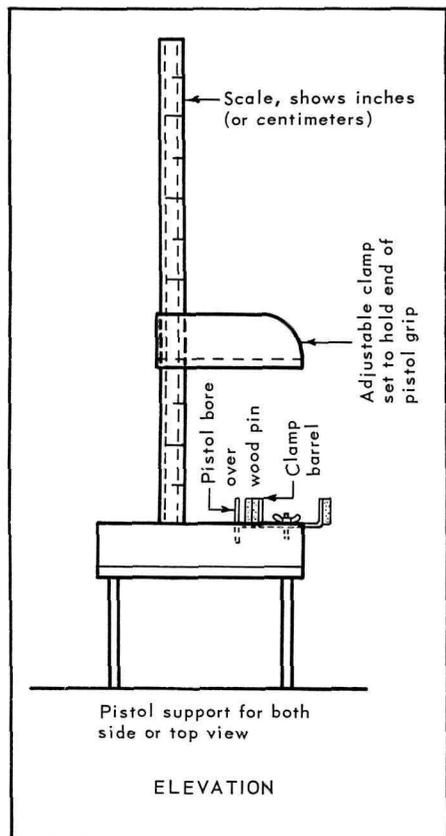
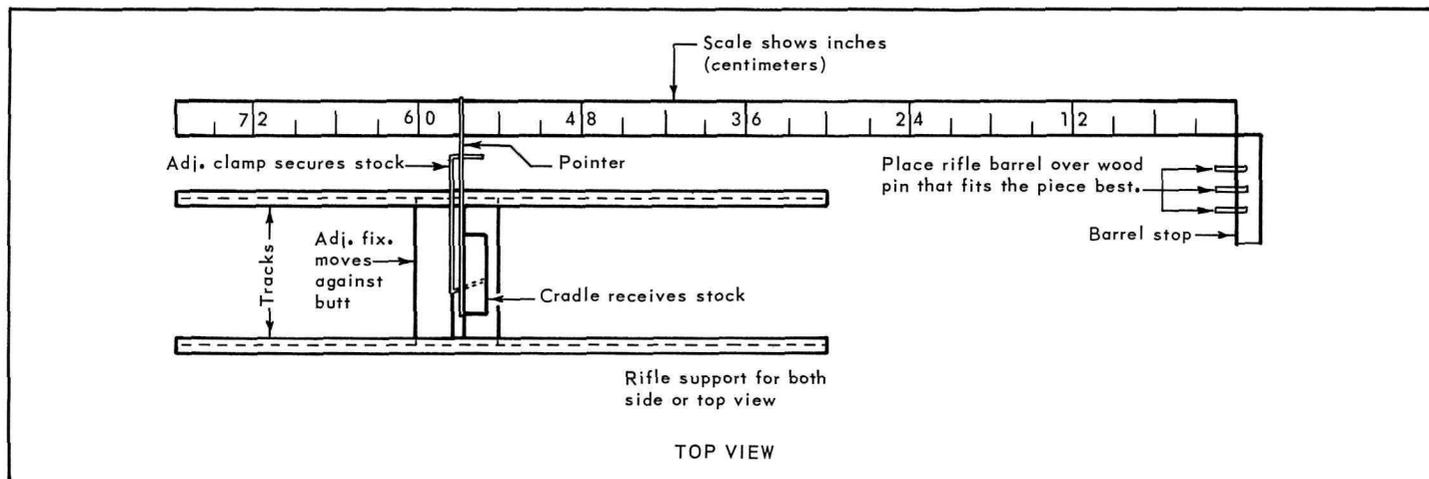
One adjustable clamp is set on the end of the pistol grip. The underside of the clamp will give the length of the pistol and the fixture supports the fire-

arm for both the side and top views.

The fixture enables the photograph to show specific relationships of parts of the firearm so that if a valuable piece is stolen from a collection and an inferior piece substituted, subtle differences would be immediately apparent by examining the photograph.

The photographs can double as both teaching tools and cataloguing devices.

Kohajda received a \$150 award for his design.



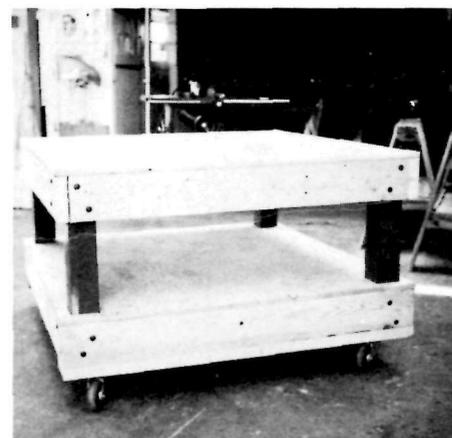
Engine Stand

Instead of purchasing a commercially made engine stand to do heavy repair work, Harry Heitzman, a maintenance mechanic foreman at Bighorn Canyon NRA, has designed this rolling stand with a lower, wider center of gravity.

The stand is set on casters and made with plywood and 4 x 4's (0.10 x 0.10 m). Because it is used for an engine stand, the top is covered with 1/8" (.3125 cm) metal.

Its design makes it adaptable for sign layout, moving heavy equipment and even storage of tools or parts (the lower shelf particularly).

Heitzman estimates the stand can be made for about \$65 in materials. He received a \$50 incentive award for the design.

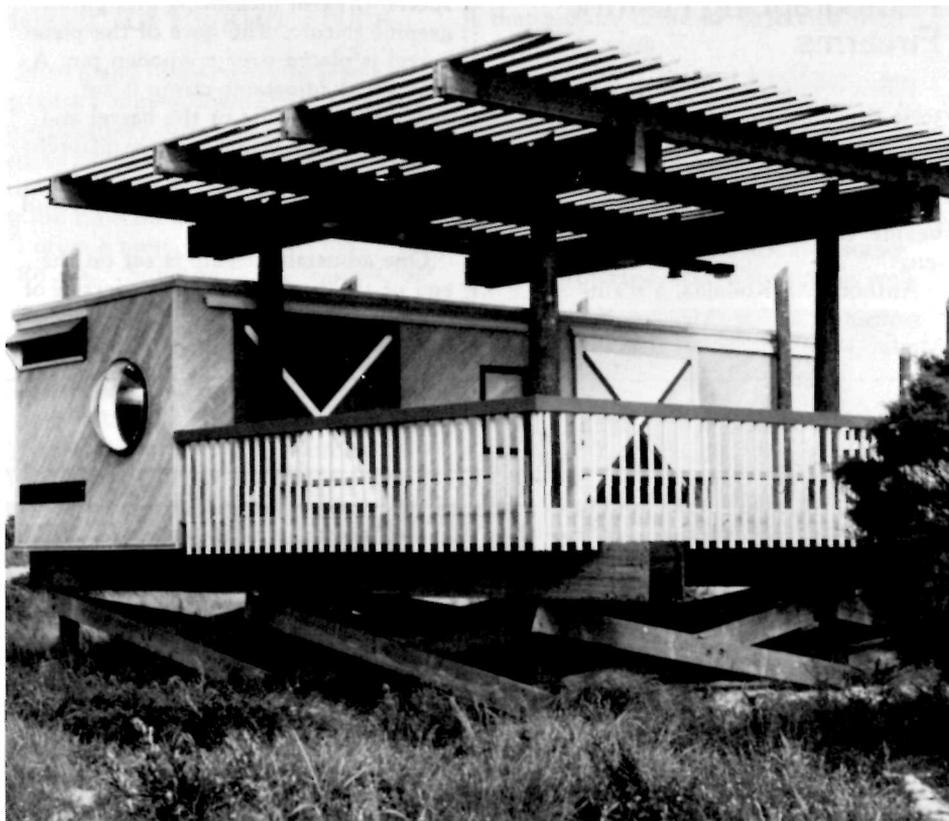


NPS Awards of Excellence

Three outstanding articles, submitted by National Park Service personnel, have been cited for their contribution to park and recreation management. An advisory committee to the Park Practice Program reviewed all three publications: *Trends*, *Grist*, and *Design*. Based on their recommendations, the following Awards of Excellence have been made.



Dr. Paul A. Buckley and Francine Buckley for their article, "Protecting Waterbirds," guidelines for protecting colonially nesting waterbirds. The article appeared in the July/August/September, 1976 issue of *Trends*. Paul A. Buckley is chief scientist, NPS, North Atlantic Region. Francine G. Buckley is a research associate at Monomet Bird Observatory.



Eugene P. Krug for his article, "Energy Conservation in the Park," indicating the lasting impression energy conservation has made on management of park and recreation areas. The article appeared in the January/February/March, 1976 issue of *Trends*. Eugene P. Krug is a mechanical engineer (Energy Conservation) with the Maintenance Division, NPS, Washington, DC.

Richard Kusek for his design for a beach facility in the October/November/December, 1976 issue of *Design*. Mr. Kusek's award winning design is located at Nags Head, North Carolina. Richard Kusek is an architect at the NPS Denver Service Center in Denver, Colorado.

In announcing the awards, Frank Goodell, managing editor of the Park Practice Program and acting chief of the Division of Federal and State Liaison, NPS, noted that the decision was particularly difficult this year because the level of submission was so high. "I think National Park Service people set an important example by their active support and interest in the Park Practice Program. Through this medium, the Park Service shares its experience and knowledge with the many thousands of readers who are working in other Federal agencies and with state and local programs in park and recreation. In doing so the Service is carrying out the great messages of needed cooperation and assistance in the Park, Parkway, and Recreational-Area Study Act of 1936 and the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act of 1968."

