

# TRENDS

Volume 33, Number 1, 1996



*Accessibility and  
Outdoor Recreation*



## TRENDS

Volume 33, Number 1, 1996

### A Park Practice Program Publication

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 publications TRENDS, GRIST AND DESIGN, plus the yearly Index, are printed on recycled paper.

# Contents

## Accessibility and Outdoor Recreation

2. Outdoor Recreation and Access for People with Disabilities: Issues and Trends  
by David Park and Gary M. Robb
8. Accessibility: A Personal Perspective  
by Don Rogers
14. Universal Design and the Recreation Environment  
by John P.S. Salmen, AIA
20. Status of Design Standards for Accessible Recreation Facilities and Outdoor Developed Recreation Areas  
by John N. McGovern, J.D., C.T.R.S.
24. Golfers with Disabilities: Access and Obstacles  
by Gary M. Robb
29. Universal Interpretation  
by Edward J. Hamilton, Ph.D., and Raymond W. Bloomer
33. Trends in Accessibility at Historic Sites  
by Sharon C. Park, AIA
38. Disability and Wilderness: Future Trends  
by Gregory J. Lais
43. The Americans With Disabilities Act and Public Recreation: Fact, Fiction and Common Sense  
by Julee Quarve-Peterson
47. Who Can You Turn To?

# Outdoor Recreation and Access for People with Disabilities: Issues and Trends

by David Park and Gary M. Robb

Photo: Ricardo Lewis, NPS

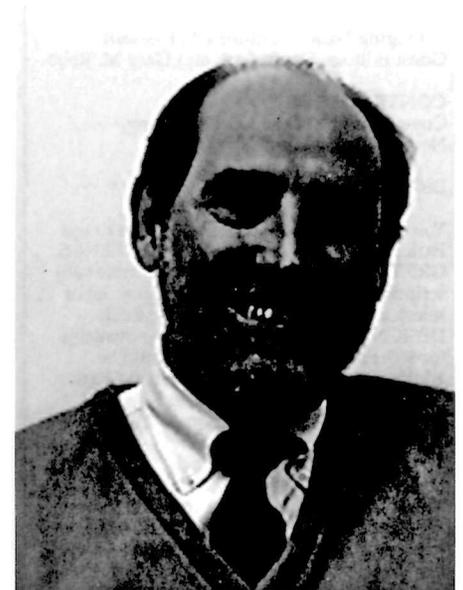
In 1933, when Horace M. Albright resigned as the second Director of the National Park Service, he tried to put his thoughts about the future of the Service into a farewell message. In that message he called particular attention to the mandate of the National Park Service Act of 1916 which enjoins the Service to keep the national parks in their natural condition. He went on in that paper to urge the future managers to give great attention to finding that proper balance between increasing visitation and preservation and protection of the resources. Achieving that balance has been the most difficult management decision facing all managers of outdoor recreation areas throughout this century. In that paper however, Albright stated, "Certain comforts, such as safe roads, sanitary facilities, water, food and modest lodging, should be available. Also extra care must be taken for the children, the elderly and the incapacitated to enjoy the beauty of the parks." Even as early as 1933, it was recognized that elderly and disabled citizens wanted and deserved the right to enjoy and participate in the wonders of the national parks, and other recreation opportunities of our nation!

Over the past several years much attention has been given to the subject of improved and expanded access for people with disabilities in all areas of endeavor, including the great outdoors. Federal laws such as the Architectural Barriers Act enacted

in 1968, the Education for Handicapped Children's Act in the late 1960s, the Rehabilitation Act in 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 have created great strides in providing equal opportunities for people with disabilities, and access to recreation facilities and programs has been included in those mandates.

In light of Mr. Albright's charge in 1933, and as we near the end of this century, it is appropriate to assess the current status of equal accessibility to park and recreation experiences and to evaluate where we have been, where we are now and what needs to happen to enable us to move forward. In a nutshell, it would be safe to say that we, the park and recreation profession, have made rather significant progress when measured from where we started. But when measured from where we need to be, to truly offer "equal opportunity" in park, recreation and leisure experiences, we have barely scratched the surface!

This issue of TRENDS will examine the trends and issues related to full participation by people with disabilities in park and recreation experiences. It will explore the progress made over the past few decades, the status of equal access today and the trends for greater opportunity in the future. It will also identify and discuss the issues impacting, both positively and negatively, on the achievement of optimal opportunity for the nation's 65 million citizens with disabilities.



David Park

## From Past to Present

It is interesting to note that Horace Albright mentioned access for people with disabilities as early as 1933, because from all appearances very little was done to provide access until sometime in the early 1970s. In fact, one of the first national conferences on the subject of access for people with disabilities to park and recreation was the National Forum convened by the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities and the National Recreation and Park Association in 1974. That forum brought together over 100 individu-



Gary M. Robb

als representing two major constituencies. One group of participants included representatives from the portion of the public who happened to have some kind of disability, and the other included providers of park and recreation services. A review of the final report of that forum will support the contention that at that time, park and recreation providers knew very little about people with disabilities, and that very few, other than segregated, "special" programs and opportunities were being provided.

Following that forum, other national meetings began to explore the subject. In 1976 the U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board convened a National Hearing on Access to Recreation, and in 1977 the White House Conference on Persons with Disabilities included recreation as one of the critical areas of concern in the lives of disabled citizens. Clearly, the decade of the '70s was the beginning of the awareness that a sizable number of the nation's citizens were people with disabilities, and the beginning of the realization that the

public park and recreation profession had a responsibility for meeting the needs of that population.

If the decade of the '70s was the decade of awareness, then the decade of the '80s should have been the time of substantial improvement of opportunities. In many areas this was indeed the case. During this decade, most municipal park and recreation agencies established units to serve the needs of disabled citizens. Most of these programs were "special" and separate in nature and were established to serve the more severely disabled groups with a strong emphasis on children but they did signal the realization that public recreation agencies had a responsibility for serving citizens with disabilities. In 1980 the National Park Service created a special office to oversee the implementation of increased access in programs and facilities, and this effort was matched in other federal land managing agencies and in many state park systems. Finally, many individual agencies and groups began to emerge that were providing outdoor and adventure opportunities for people with disabilities in both segregated and integrated settings. The end of the decade found a significantly increased visibility of people with disabilities participating in a wide variety of activities including backpacking, hiking, mountain climbing and white water rafting. During this time period there also seemed to be a distinct movement away from separate and special facilities and toward the integration of people with disabilities into ongoing, mainstreamed programs.

The decade of the '90s ushered in rather phenomenal changes in the provision of recreation accessibility. Probably the most significant cause of these changes was the passage, in 1990, of the monumental **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**. Prior to the passage of the ADA, only facilities and programs funded by federal dollars were required to be accessi-

ble. The ADA, which is referred to as the omnibus civil rights act for people with disabilities, required accessibility in all employment programs, all state and local governmental programs and in all places of public accommodation regardless of whether federal funds were involved. The latter area, "public accommodations" was very broadly defined to include virtually all places that provide services to the public, but specifically included, among other things, shopping centers, restaurants, hotels, movie theaters and "places of recreation."

Passage of the ADA has set in motion a chain reaction of events and activities that has already significantly improved equal opportunities for people with disabilities in all phases of life, and in the recreation and park environment as well. Some of these actions are only in their infancy and will take several more years to be fully implemented, but they will cause major changes in the way all recreation and park facilities are designed and the way in which programs and services will be offered. Some of those changes include the following.

- All public park and recreation agencies are required to conduct a comprehensive self-evaluation to assess the degree to which their programs and facilities are or are not, accessible; and to develop an action plan for how they will be improved.
- Enforcement of the legal requirements has in some ways been strengthened. The Department of Justice, which has enforcement authority for the ADA, has been told that if they are going to enforce the requirements on the private sector, then they also have to do a better job of enforcing them on the federal sector.
- A major project has been initiated to develop comprehensive standards and guidelines for the

design of recreation facilities. This project has taken a very broad and comprehensive approach to recreation participation and standards are being developed for sport facilities; play areas, amusement parks and attractions; water-based facilities; golf courses; and outdoor areas such as trails, campsites, picnic areas and ski facilities.

- People with disabilities are becoming more universally aware of their right to expect facilities and programs to be accessible to and usable by them and are utilizing the legal remedies to assure those rights. For instance, in the past two years the Department of the Interior, which has ADA complaint processing responsibilities in the park and recreation area, has received over 125 complaints filed against state and local park and recreation agencies.

All professionals in the park, recreation, tourism, hospitality and related fields are currently under intense pressure to assure that they clearly understand what is required and to take constructive action to provide necessary opportunities.

### Trends and Issues

As opportunities for people with disabilities have expanded over the past several years, some definite trends and issues have emerged. Some of the more significant trends are discussed here.

**The importance and significance of recreation participation is greater than it has ever been and is increasing.**

Over the past several years, the professional publications and the public media have been filled with information regarding people with disabilities participating in various park and recreation activities. A couple of years ago, a disabled man, writing a letter to the editor of one maga-

zine, spoke to the increase in information on access to outdoor recreation. The writer commented that the increase in attention being given to recreation participation was a reflection of other advances in opportunities for citizens with disabilities. He stated that for many years, people with disabilities were primarily concerned with getting an education and finding gainful employment. As educational opportunities and job opportunities have increased, more and more people with disabilities were earning salaries, and consequently had the means and the desire for opportunities for recreation. He went on to state that he thought the next "new frontier" for people with disabilities was going to be in the area of recreation.

This increased visibility and importance is accentuated by the specific inclusion of recreation in various sections of the ADA, by the National Advisory Committee on Recreation created by the U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, by the further activities to complete national standards for the design and construction of accessible recreation facilities, and by the growing numbers of people with disabilities showing up at public recreation events and areas with their families and friends. Access is rapidly becoming an issue of meeting the expressed desires of people with disabilities and not just simply meeting the letter of the law.

**More people with disabilities are participating in park and recreation experiences and the scope and variety are enormously increasing.**

As the society in which we live becomes more architecturally accessible, people with disabilities are more visible in all walks of life, including the recreation environment. Thirty years ago, due to attitudinal barriers, lack of accessible transportation, few accessible parking places and inaccessible buildings and facilities, very

few people with disabilities were visible in society. This meant that people who utilize wheelchairs for mobility, people who had severe vision loss and people who had difficulties in hearing or understanding the spoken word were unable, or unwilling, to venture out into mainstream society. Consequently they were not seen in movie theaters, bowling alleys, museums, sport facilities or other recreation venues. However, over the past several years, as access design standards have become more prevalent in national, state and local building codes, these barriers have begun to disappear. At the present time, people with disabilities do go to theaters, restaurants and shopping malls, and do utilize trains, airlines, buses, rental cars and other modes of transportation. As the implementation of the ADA has progressed, curb ramps on public sidewalks, accessible parking spaces, accessible entrance ramps and accessible public toilets have become commonplace rather than the exception.

Another spinoff of this increased accessibility of the environment has been the desire on the part of people with disabilities to continue to participate in the same kind of activities they enjoyed before they became disabled, or to become active in new activities. As the National Advisory Committee on Access to Recreation was being formed, the scope of areas and environments that needed to be represented was astounding. The committee that was eventually created was comprised of six subcommittees and covered an extremely wide variety of play and recreation areas. Presently, much increased activity is occurring in more active recreation pursuits such as backcountry access, golf access, sports access, boating, fishing, hunting, mountain climbing, skydiving and access to playgrounds and amusement areas. In the past it was unusual to see people with disabilities involved in the wide spectrum of recreational activities along



*Separate and "special" facilities, such as this, are giving way to universally designed ones that serve everyone in an integrated way.*

with their non-disabled families and friends. Today it is a very common place experience.

**Old design concepts that focused on "separate" or "special" design for access are rapidly giving way to concepts of universal design.**

For centuries traditional design in our society has been based on meeting the needs of that hypothetical average individual who happens to be approximately five feet, seven inches tall, and ambulatory. Anyone taller or shorter than that, or non-ambulatory, is severely inconvenienced. The chairs we sit on, the tables or desks on which we work or eat, the doorways and entrances to

our buildings and many other elements of our society are designed for this hypothetical person. When access was first advocated, the focus was on the addition of separate areas that were accessible for "those people" or, on the addition of special features that could be added to provide access. In more recent years, the concept of "universal design" or "designing for the life span" has emerged, and there is evidence that these concepts are rapidly becoming incorporated into everyday design.

Universal design considers the great diversity of individuals that exist in society and begins to incorporate design features that enable a

broader cross section of that diverse population to use the environment. These design features such as ramps, as well as stairs, wider door ways, elevators in multistory buildings, curb ramps at all intersections, accessible parking spaces and attention to the height of displays, exhibits and operating mechanisms are all examples of designing for everyone. Such design negates, in most instances, the necessity for extra or "special" features. Universal design has unique implications for park and recreation areas because it eliminates or significantly decreases the need for special facilities (such as "Braille trails") for individuals who are blind or mobili-

ty impaired, and eliminates the need for "extra" accessible picnic tables, porta toilets or other facilities. One type of picnic table, campsite or porta toilet, if designed properly, can be used equally as well by all users.

**Many myths, stereotypes and misconceptions about making outdoor recreation accessible are being publicly addressed, and in many instances are being dispelled.**

When accessibility standards and programs were first initiated, they largely focused on the construction of buildings and facilities and primarily on those that existed in the highly developed, urban environments. Efforts to make the recreation environment more accessible were slow in developing due to many misconceptions, stereotypes and false assumptions held by a large percentage of park and recreation managers. Slowly, over the past two decades, awareness and education have begun to erode the resistance and significant progress is becoming evident. Some of the misconceptions are as follows.

- "Disabled people cannot or are not interested in participating in recreation activities."

Early perceptions of people with disabilities were that they were sick, or fragile and thus couldn't possibly be able to participate in sports or active recreation activities such as boating, hiking, camping or golf. Over the past several years, much visibility has been given to national and international sports competitions for people with disabilities and most periodicals for and about people with disabilities are demonstrating the wide variety of things in which their members engage.

- "The cost of access is too high, and most agencies cannot possibly afford it!"

The perception that access is enormously expensive has probably been one of the most significant barriers to improved opportunities. In fact, that perception is very prevalent even

now in the media reports of the implementation of the ADA. Much of this concern can be alleviated if managers seek to more fully understand what is actually required and how to provide it. The primary premise of access requirements is to make sure that all new construction, and all renovations to existing facilities be designed to be accessible to everyone. Studies have shown that if access is included at the design stage, the cost of an accessible structure is, in most cases, not any more expensive than one designed in the traditional way. There are some instances where providing access might be very costly, but many of the costly projects that have been reported by the media are the exception, rather than the rule.

- "The number of people with disabilities that will use the facility is too small to justify the cost."

As has already been stated, people with disabilities were not visible in mainstream society in large numbers until the last decade. Consequently,

the perceptions regarding the number of people who can benefit from accessible design has been skewed. The Americans with Disabilities Act, when passed in 1990, stated that 43 million Americans were classified as having some kind of permanent disability. If one adds to that figure the increasing number of people with cardiac or respiratory difficulties, those with temporary disabilities such as a broken limb, and the growing percentage of individuals who are part of the aging population, it is estimated that over 50 percent of the population can benefit from what is now being referred to as "universal design." Also, since most people with disabilities visit parks and recreation areas with families and friends, it can be argued that those individuals benefit also. With those numbers, embracing the concept of universal design simply makes good, economic sense.

- "Creating access in outdoor areas will change the 'fundamental nature' of the area."  
One comment heard frequently in the past, and to some extent even

*Photo: NPS*



*An appropriately designed picnic table can be used by everyone, including people with disabilities.*

today, is that access cannot be applied to outdoor recreation because it would mean that we have to "pave the wilderness." Correspondingly, people have stated that it will be impossible to make historic properties accessible because it will destroy the historic significance of the building. The issue of how to provide access while at the same time preserving and protecting the natural and historical significance of the resource is a very complex and serious one. However, experiences over the past few years have shown that by using a great deal of common sense and by recognizing the importance of the two goals, access and preservation, reasonable solutions can be found. The National Advisory Committee on Access to Recreation focused a great deal of attention on this important issue, and has articulated some very workable solutions to finding the proper balance between access and preservation, and has offered some guidelines on how to make decisions regarding which areas should be fully accessible and which should be left in their more natural state. Similar discussions and dialogue have also taken place in the area of historic preservation. As these issues are further developed and articulated we can expect to see much of the anxiety regarding access to diminish.

These trends and issues and more are discussed in detail in the articles that follow. Significant progress has been made in allowing people with disabilities to have equal opportunity in life in general, and in park and recreation in specific. However, much more needs to be done to achieve the ultimate goal of equality. The managers and providers of park and recreation services need to continue to work with citizens with disabilities to better understand their wishes and needs. At the same time they need to continue to seek solutions to many of the issues and concerns involved in providing those

services. Likewise, people with disabilities need to continue to seek out opportunities and when those opportunities are not readily available, they need to work with the providers to find ways of meeting the needs. Most recreation and park managers will work diligently to solve problems once they are convinced that there is a constituency that cares about that problem. Finally, continued efforts need to be given to the economic side of providing more services. We are living in a time of serious reductions in fiscal resources for public services in general and in recreation and park opportunities in particular. Improving opportunities in an under-served area such as access at the time of serious reductions will be difficult, but efforts must be made to assure that even with cutbacks in total resources, an equitable share of what is available go to serving this sizable and growing population of citizens. ■

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# Accessibility: A Personal Perspective

by Don Rogers

It seems fitting that at this point in my life, and even on this day, I am writing about accessibility from the perspective of a "consumer." I say this day because I awoke to the first snow of the season. I remember as a child being filled with wonder and excitement when looking out the window in the morning and seeing freshly fallen snow. I still feel that pang of wonder over the discovery. However, it is tempered with discouragement at the thought of having to negotiate the icy white stuff in my wheelchair. Snow and ice removal in the Midwest, particularly from accessible parking spaces, curb cuts and pathways, has achieved no high level of success. I think those responsible for snow and ice removal are in denial about the whole phenomena.

There is another reason for my feeling that this is a timely opportunity. In a few months I will quietly, and with no sense of celebration, observe the twentieth anniversary of my becoming a person who uses a wheelchair, a person with a disability. At the age of 21, I had no grand destiny in mind. I was uncommitted, opportunistic and indestructible. Little did I realize what waited in the wings. I think on that first morning after the accident, some freshly fallen snow would have been good medicine.

There may be no adequate way to describe how it feels to transition, in the blink of an eye, from a non-disabled, mainstream citizen to a member of a highly stigmatized minority.

I felt like some kind of alien. It was clear how I had changed and how different I was from others. Though I knew I was essentially the same person inside, my identity as a person with a disability and all the stigma that carries seemed to overshadow my attempts at reentry into mainstream society.

My first forays into the community were very frustrating experiences. There were so many places that I could not go because of physical barriers. This was in 1977, well before the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Community accessibility was limited to voluntary compliance which typically did not amount to much. Soon after completing my rehabilitation program, I got involved with wheelchair sports. With renewed spirit and confidence, I approached accessibility challenges like a climber facing his next mountain. It was a matter of life quality. Do I face the physical barriers head-on, or do I turn back and accept the narrow range of options that remain? Fortunately, I was able to use the former strategy given my high level of mobility and my high tolerance for adversity. However, much like the snow, the battles with access have become more frustrating over time and have eroded my tolerance.

## Importance of Attitudes

I must say that with passage of the ADA and what appears to be generally heightened awareness in our

society of persons with disabilities, there is reason for much hope that the state of accessibility in this country will continue to improve. It has become painfully clear to me at the same time that while legislation may affect the degree of physical access in this country, attitudinal barriers remain firmly entrenched.

Consider an example taken from *The New York Times*. In an editorial dated March 18, 1979, the *Times* printed a response to the broadened scope of the Rehabilitation Act. The editorial said, "Going to incredible expense to remodel trains and buses would be justifiable only if the handicapped, as some insist, have a fundamental legal, even constitutional right to use public facilities without difficulty." It goes on to say, "Where such a right might be found in the Constitution, or even in logic is not immediately apparent." These statements go beyond the issue of cost. They tilt to the surface deeply held feelings of discrimination against people with disabilities. More recently, I have been told by one proprietor that he will wait to be sued over noncompliance with the ADA and then fight for minimal compliance in the end. Another told me that \$200 for a small ramp was too much to spend on accessibility. Based on what I hear from other people with disabilities, my experiences are not isolated. The ADA is a tool, and as a tool it must be wielded skillfully in conjunction with education and training. In addition,

people with disabilities must find ways of building collaborative relationships with all other members of the community.

I am not of the mind that conflicts over accessibility have to become battles between people with disabilities and all covered entities of the ADA. At the same time I am not naive.

There now are and will continue to be many conflicts over interpretation and application of accessibility laws and regulations. Most serious discussions I have had about accessibility become emotional and complicated. Disability and accessibility are complex social, psychological and political realities. For me there are issues of discrimination and quality of life at stake. For the person struggling with compliance, many times the issues are monetary concerns complicated by ambiguity about what is required of them from the ADA and discrepancies in the demands being made by people with disabilities. Regardless of the difficulties, we should not shy away from the negotiations. Non-adversarial conflict and honest dialogue are healthy means toward understanding and trust. Growth in these areas is ultimately more important than any architectural adjustments we can make. My feeling is that physical changes in the environment must be accompanied by attitudinal changes in society for the long term good of relationships between people with disabilities and the rest of the community.

An area that has tremendous impact on society and how they perceive people with disabilities is the media. Though the situation has improved, there are still many instances where print and broadcast media struggle with appropriate terminology and the images they portray. Only in the past few years have athletes with disabilities been recognized for their athletic accomplishments instead of finding themselves in the human interest section. There are also examples of people with dis-

abilities on television, primarily in commercials, being depicted as legitimate consumers, athletes, playmates and employees. This trend needs to continue and it needs to cross over more often into real-world roles. This cross over will be greatly facilitated by continued development of accessible public and private recreation opportunities.

### **The Importance of the Americans with Disabilities Act**

Fortunately, it appears that people in the community with and without disabilities are finally coming together and speaking about issues related to access and attitudes. This dialogue seems to be the next logical step in the process. The many years of work by the important few individuals that led to passage of the ADA has delivered the issues to the public. The increase in public awareness over the past few years can be attributed to the ADA, demonstrating its potential as a powerful tool for advocacy. With such a tool available, it is essential that individuals with disabilities learn about the ADA, the issues surrounding it, and begin taking a more active role in advocating for their own accessibility needs. If the ADA is to be effective, we (i.e., people with disabilities) need to take the lead in generating awareness and pressing for compliance. We need to become the gatekeepers of accessibility in our own communities from the standpoint of identifying needs, interpreting the guidelines and mediating the debate.

A recent Harris poll indicated that only 40 percent of people with disabilities have substantial knowledge of the ADA. Lack of awareness among people with disabilities is a problem, though I would guess we know more about it in general than people without disabilities. Either way, there is certainly a need for more education on the subject for

everyone. The need for education should be addressed at a grassroots level, which could mean going from facility to facility and program to program, with leadership being provided by people with disabilities. Much more than physical access will be gained from our efforts if we show initiative and do not present ourselves as people wanting charity or needing others to act on our behalf. In fact, the defining characteristics of these negotiations should be mutual respect and cooperation. These kinds of relationships will lay the foundation for inclusion in the future.

### **The Importance of Recreation Participation**

Over the past twenty years, my most rewarding experiences have been related to sports and recreation activities. Through these activities I have developed lasting friendships and a healthy self-concept. I always enjoyed competitive sports when I was young and was pleased to find so many opportunities available to someone using a wheelchair. About two months after being discharged from a five-month rehabilitation program, I entered a wheelchair track meet and won two events. It was a very exciting experience that helped re-establish a link between who I was before my accident, who I was then and who I could hope to be in the future. Over the years, with the support of community-based recreation programs, I was able to continue my growth through competitive wheelchair sports.

My rehabilitation program did little to prepare me for involvement in community activities, though that has changed substantially in the past twenty years. Today, rehabilitation is commonly linked with community sports and recreation activities, outpatient activities and early skill development through community reintegration programs. Community reintegration training is usually part



*Donald E. Rogers at work.*

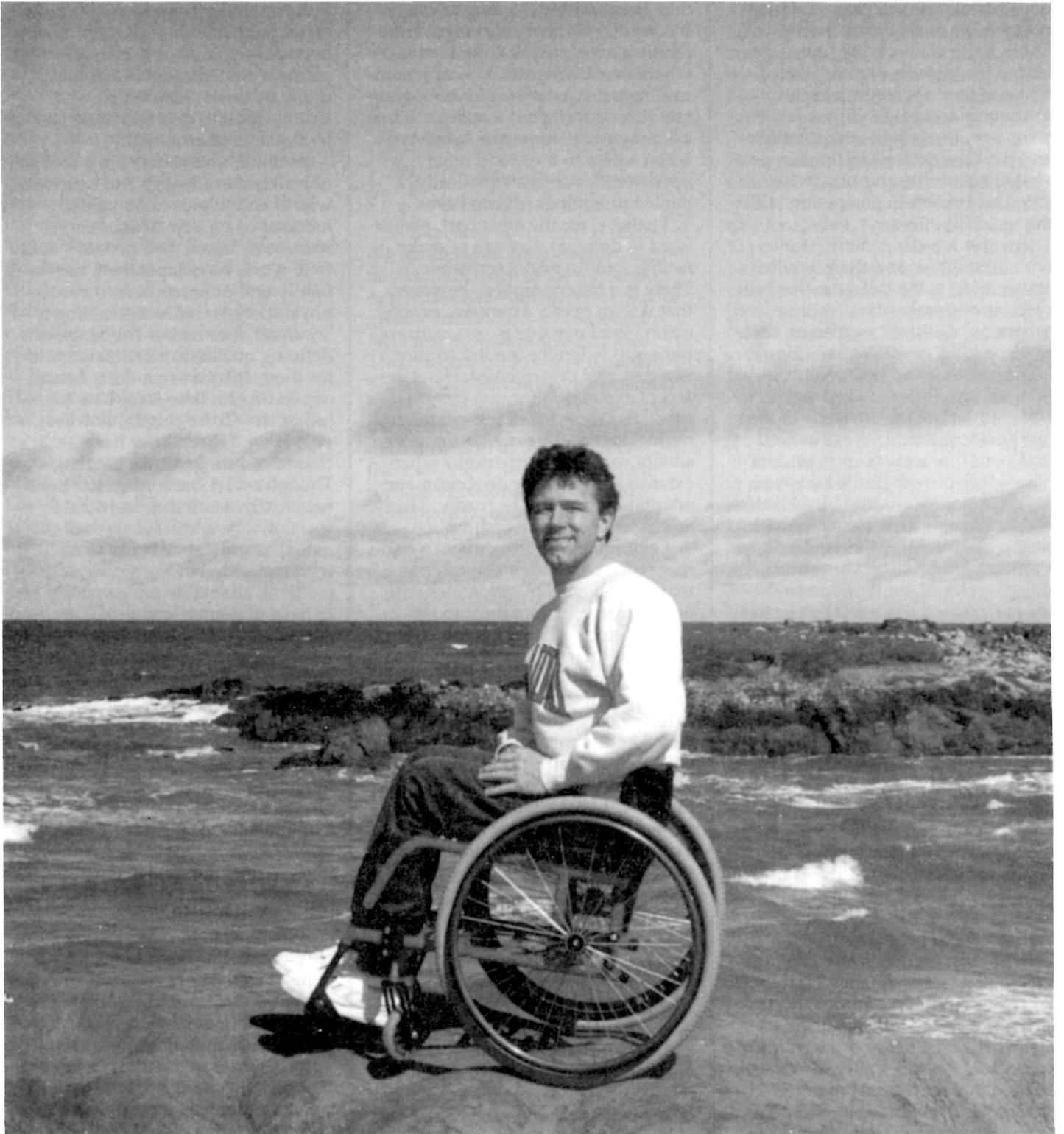
of a patient's treatment plan. It typically includes specific skill development and education about community recreation and leisure resources. It is designed to prepare clients to transition back into their community ready to independently pursue the leisure lifestyle of their choice while continuing to work on advanced rehabilitation goals. Recreation therapy is largely responsible for the development of community reintegration as an integral part of comprehensive rehabilitation protocols. The field of recreation therapy has also experienced widespread growth and recreation therapists are typically responsible for the design and implementation of community reintegra-

tion programs both in and outside of clinical settings.

Another major advancement has been in the area of recreation and sports equipment technology. The advances made in sports and racing wheelchairs have made it possible for the tremendous growth of wheelchair basketball, tennis, racing, football and racquetball. Other activities would not even exist or be as accessible without the development of specialized and adapted equipment such as water skiing, snow skiing, fishing, bowling and sailing. In some activities it's as simple as an adapted seating system that makes it accessible, as with sailing, while with others it's an entirely new piece of equipment

such as the mono-ski for people with physical disabilities who want to go alpine skiing. Most of the usable adaptive sports and recreation equipment has been developed by people with disabilities for their own use and for others with similar needs.

The commercial viability of disabled sports has also been developed. There are numerous individuals with disabilities who now make a living designing and marketing adaptive recreation equipment. There are also disabled athletes who are sponsored by some of these equipment companies as well as by more well known corporations who also sponsor nondisabled professional athletes. Currently, all of the pre-



*Donald E. Rogers at play.*

mier wheelchair road races and tennis matches award prize money. Though the amounts are not equivalent to those given to nondisabled athletes, they are respectable and graciously accepted. Only a few years ago, the lack of sponsorship and durable, custom equipment prevented some elite and otherwise talented athletes from competing with the rest of the field.

An area affecting many people with disabilities, and their families and friends, is the lack of accessibility to outdoor recreation facilities and programs. Outdoor recreation, such as picnicking, camping, hunting, hiking, fishing and boating are very popular activities in this country. Unfortunately, they are some of the most inaccessible activities as well. Some outdoor recreation providers have applied, with limited success, the ADA guidelines to their facilities and programs. This seems to work well enough with the more developed areas such as visitor centers, inns, developed trails and some historic attractions. When it comes to activities that occur in less developed settings, there have been limited guidelines available to address issues of accessibility.

### **Cost of Accessibility**

Accessibility in undeveloped areas has not been a matter of simply developing standards. There have been debates raging for years about the impact accessibility would have on the environment, the rights of people with disabilities to access these areas and the degree of access that should be provided. Consistently, there has also been the excuse of a lack of financial resources for many outdoor programs, particularly state and federal agencies, to make their facilities and programs accessible. I heard a federal employee state that for the cost of one "accessible" cooking grill, he could afford three nonaccessible grills.

Sure, accessibility is going to cost money. It will probably cost more than we are accustomed to in areas where development is typically minimal, as with camping, picnic, boating and fishing facilities. Consider, however, the price we pay as a society when access to these and other opportunities are systematically denied to millions of Americans.

I believe, for the most part, people want to do what they can to make facilities and services accessible. There is a misconception, however, that it is an overly expensive proposition. For large businesses, corporations and federally-funded entities expense, real or perceived, is not an acceptable reason for non-compliance. For some small businesses and municipalities the expense for accessibility could be burdensome when extensive physical or programmatic adaptations need to be made. That seems to be a logical assumption.

Legitimate cost concerns fit a narrow scope of situations. We know that following ADA guidelines with new construction amounts to less than 1 percent of total construction costs, but this is where compliance is clearly mandated and cost cannot be an issue. If it is an issue, then there is a design flaw which needs to be corrected before construction is completed. Costs for retrofitting existing facilities will understandably be higher, yet I have seen no data to support that retrofitting has to be expensive. I have seen numerous situations where the willingness to accommodate mixed with a little creative thinking and effort was the bulk of the investment.

### **The Challenge to Mainstream Society**

Of all the issues related to my disability that challenged me twenty years ago, the one today that has changed the least and bothers me the most are the attitudes and behavior of others in response to my disability.

I understand that society's attitudes about people with disabilities have been perpetuated over centuries and across continents and are defined today by these stereotypes. Understanding does not make the living any easier though.

In this country there are a core set of beliefs that identify and sanction who is and who is not a valued member of society. These criteria seem to be based on a person's ability to work, be independent, raise a family and maintain an outward physical appearance resembling a "normal" American. The range of defining qualities or characteristics for these criteria seem fairly broad, depending on who is making the judgment. To be certain, however, people with disabilities have little chance of fitting within the range. Though social Darwinism has been repeatedly rejected as legitimate social theory, it still seems to dominate the landscape. It fits so well with the notion of the strong, independent, adaptable image people like to have of themselves and of an American. Unfortunately, for people with disabilities, it establishes an unfair paradigm for comparison and evaluation, and offers scarce chance for competing.

Technology is providing people with disabilities incredible opportunities in areas of transportation, communication, recreation, accessibility and employment. At the same time, while technology expands at exponential rates, human nature remains steady with its slow rate of change and adaptation. Science is able to devise techno-standards for accessibility and society even accepts them as the "right thing" to do. However, at an emotional level, society does not seem ready to embrace or operationalize inclusion of people with disabilities.

Inclusion is not synonymous with integration, just like universal design is not the same as accessible design. With integration, people are juxtaposed in the same place at the same

time. With inclusion there is an added component of meaningful interaction that occurs between those people. Legislation, like the ADA, can effectively orchestrate integration, i.e., bring people together in the same place at the same time, but it cannot force the leap to relationship building. Hopefully, this age of accessibility and integration is shaping our society for universal design and inclusion. How do we continue this trend toward inclusion? Guidelines have been developed for ramps, yet not for the bridges that need to be built across ideological, political and social divides.

I mentioned universal design. This is a very important concept that has evolved out of the accessibility movement. It does speak to inclusion with its de-emphasis on environmental adaptation for those with disabilities. It accomplishes this by omitting labels; by not creating specialized, high profile adaptations; and by accommodating for the needs of as many people as possible with each design element. The intent is a physical mainstream of universal proportions.

However important it may be, I do not believe universal design is the foundation for inclusion. Instead, it appears to be a product of the kind of beliefs that will form the foundation, making universal design an important part of the framework. In order to believe in inclusion, it is important to value diversity and accept that a diverse community is a richer, more stable and less stressful community.

In an already overly complex world, the demands of accessibility could be seen as another complicating factor. When viewed from the perspective of universal design, that would not be the case. Universal design helps bring order to the world around us. It further facilitates everyone's interactions with each other, the built environment and services being offered. It seems that part of the reason for complexity and stress in

everyone's lives can be attributed to poorly organized environmental systems that lack the ability to adjust to changing social needs. Universal design has the potential to bring order and flexibility to the physical aspects of our social environmental systems.

### **The Challenge for People with Disabilities**

A final area of concern is related to the readiness of people with disabilities to participate in the increased opportunities available as a result of greater accessibility to community facilities, programs and services. This concern puts into perspective the role that accessibility legislation plays in the total process of improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities. In addition to access, there are other needs that include social and communication skills development, education and training, overcoming social stigma, expanded family support, excessive health care and related equipment costs, and expanded employment opportunities. All of these factors, including accessibility, are interrelated. If a person is not able to thrive in an environment, there is not much reason to be there.

I do not feel that this concern should in any way effect continued development and implementation of accessibility guidelines in all areas of American life. There should not be the expectation, however, that people with disabilities will follow right on the heels of accessibility and start functioning in the mainstream of society. That expectation would constitute unrealistic and unfair criteria for evaluating the success of accessibility efforts. Certainly I would expect the numbers of people with disabilities in the mainstream to increase over time, but until then there are many more unseen, less tangible barriers to overcome. Therefore, when considering accessibility, it is important to realize that access is only part of the big picture.

If people with disabilities are to take on roles of advocates, leaders and gatekeepers, then we must accept the challenges of increased responsibility, accountability and freedom. Erich Fromm, in *Escape from Freedom* (1965), suggests that humans fear freedom because it fosters individuality and independence which are associated with isolation and loneliness. Freedom does not have to result in loneliness. We can have independent identities while being valued members of our families, communities and society at large. At the same time, there are risks to be accepted as well. There is the risk of failure, of not being accepted and of not being "special" anymore. ■

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# Universal Design and the Recreation Environment

by John P.S. Salmen, AIA

Universal Design is the effort to develop environments and products that fit the widest possible range of users. Similar terms are Transgenerational Design; Design for the Lifespan; Real Life Design and Accessible, or Barrier Free Design. While the term Universal Design may be new to many recreation planners and designers, its concept and beginnings are relatively old and well known. The first federal regulation that mandated the accessibility requirements for people with disabilities, that we now think of as the basis of Universal Design, was the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (ABA). This law required that buildings and facilities constructed with federal funding be useable by all taxpayers, including those with disabilities. It was the first instance of mandating accessibility at the time of building construction or renovation. The next important milestone was the passage of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, with its Sections 501 and 504. Section 501 required federal agencies and employers with federal contracts to provide "reasonable accommodations" for employees with disabilities. Section 504 required all programs that received federal funding to provide "program accessibility." This meant that the facility in which the program was housed may not necessarily have to be renovated to be accessible, as long as the program or service that was being funded could be accessed by people with

disabilities. The years following the enactment of the ABA and the Rehabilitation Act showed that these concepts could be implemented in a very cost effective manner and greatly increase the availability of services and employment opportunities for people with disabilities. These concepts were subsequently adopted to form the conceptual foundation for the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Not long after the passage of these laws activists and advocates realized that the civil rights nature of these rules could require adherence to a strict set of design criteria, but true acceptance, much less enthusiastic support, would be difficult because accessibility was seen to benefit a small minority, and sometimes at a seemingly unjustifiable cost.

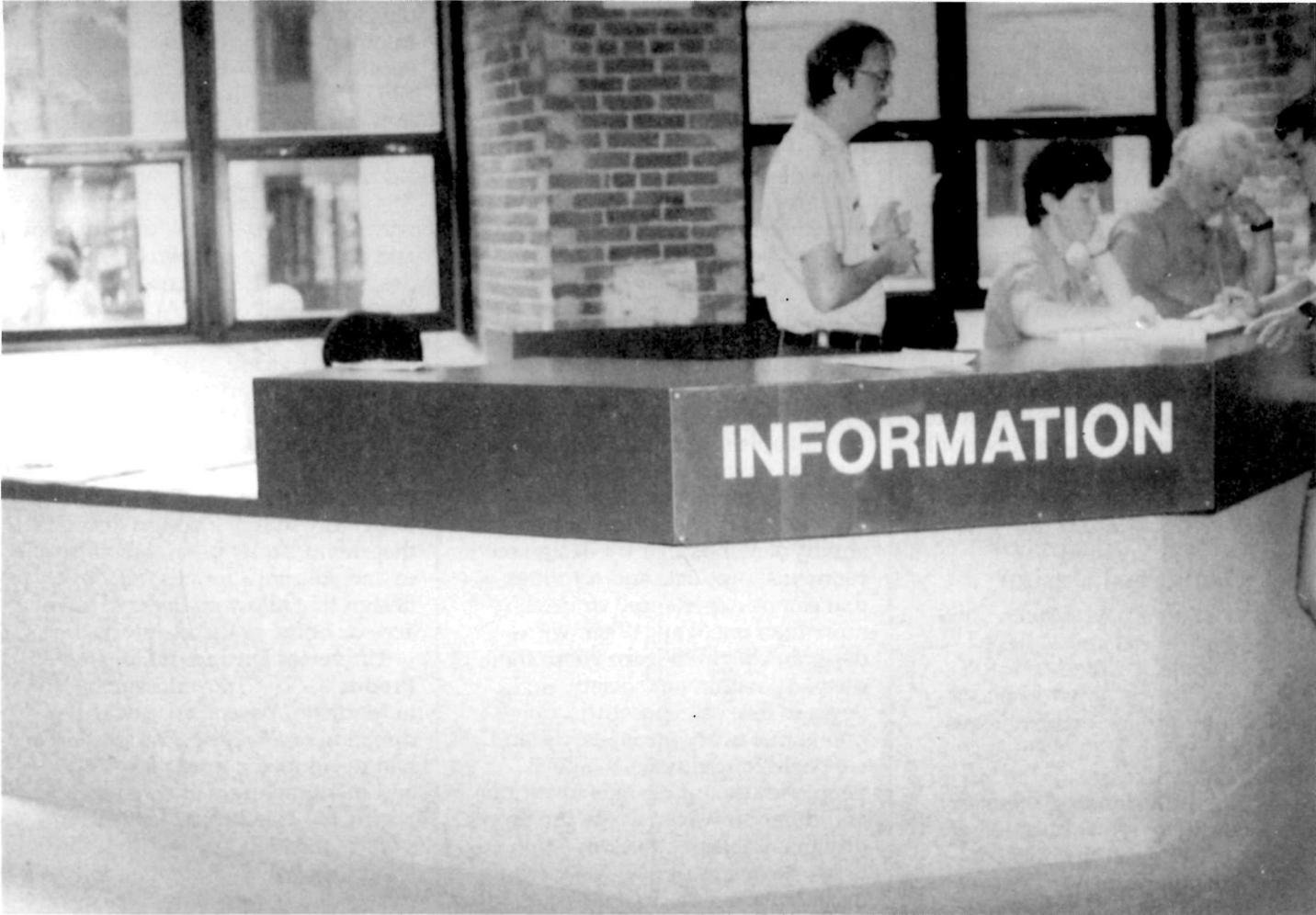
In the late 1980s, accessibility specialists and design advocates began to recognize that accessible design was good not only for this group of people with disabilities, but really for everyone. It was also recognized that it was especially beneficial for the growing population of elderly people. This realization brought about a recognition that there was a market of consumers who would benefit from, and be willing to pay for designs that fit their needs and abilities as they experienced the natural disabling conditions of aging. But to do this, the designs had to go beyond the static minimums defined in the design standards and provide beauty, quality and value as well as

accessible function. It was at this time that the concept of Universal Design was born and began to diverge from accessibility.

## ADA Compliance vs. Universal Design

Accessibility has come to be understood as the effort to comply with the design standards found in such documents as the CABO/ANSI A117.1 Standard (ANSI), the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS) and the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). All of these standards are minimum criteria required for the compliance with the law and efforts are underway to amend these documents by adding criteria for the design of picnic areas, campgrounds, trails and other outdoor facilities. Universal Design, on the other hand, is an effort to meet the needs of the entire population of users to the greatest extent possible. Universal Design uses accessibility standards as a starting point and goes further, to consider issues such as perception, social and environmental relationships, cost effectiveness and aesthetics. The very nature of these issues puts them beyond the range of what could be mandated by minimum design criteria found in the accessibility codes, and squarely within the concerns of people in their every day lives.

While the accessibility codes mandate the design of facilities within the built environment, they have a diffi-



*Universally designed information desk at Lowell National Historical Park, Mass.*

cult time dealing with the activities, issues and features found in natural environments, especially when the environment poses a challenge to an individual's physical skills and abilities. For many people, recreation is no fun if it is too easy! Codes and standards, with strict minimums are at a loss to address the complexity and richness of recreational activities, especially in natural environments. Using the codes within the broader concepts of Universal Design, on the other hand, could be a natural solution because it can take "radical steps" to maximize the positive attributes of users and environments, while minimizing the fear of compliance with a rigid set of design standards.

### Major Concepts of Universal Design

For most mortal designers, however, these "radical steps" have to be based on some accepted concepts. A framework is necessary to act as a foundation for these creative leaps. Those concepts can be gleaned from the accessibility efforts of the last 30 years and understanding them can greatly facilitate the application of Universal Design in the outdoor recreation environment. These concepts include the following:

**Accessible Routes** - Paths of travel that meet the accessibility criteria for width, clearances, changes in elevation, etc., must be used to connect the various elements, activities and facilities in a recreation environment. An accessible picnic site is of little use if the person with a disability can't get to it.

**Range of Reach** - The human species conforms to a fairly limited variety of sizes, ranging from children and people of short stature to people who are considered to be very tall. There is a horizontal band between three and four feet above the ground that is reachable by the vast majority of people. By placing anything that people are expected to reach, or manipulate, in this univer-

sal range, it is possible to allow everyone to have access to the object.

**Orientation and Mobility** - This is a technique taught to people with visual impairments for finding one's present position and moving to any other desired location. It is based on the traveler's ability to locate and identify elements in the environment that can be used as landmarks and guides. By understanding the nature of these wayfinding techniques, designers can create environments that are understandable and easy for everyone to use.

**Alternative Choices** - The diversity of people within the human race, especially when we include those whom we consider to be at the extremes of the spectrum of human ability, demands that we design environments, products and activities that can be experienced or used in more than one way. When we as designers begin to learn about the diversity within our society, we begin to lose our egocentric viewpoints that everyone is like us, and we begin to find ways to allow people to use our designs in various and different ways. Every time we design an object or building with only one means of use, we are limiting the market place of users, and the ultimate value of our project. The more flexibility that we can build in, the more likely it is that the design will be of use and value to a wide range of users.

**Spectrum of Recreation Opportunities** - The recent efforts by the U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board to develop accessible recreation criteria has generated an intriguing concept that may be a starting point for many "universally designed" recreation projects. The Developed Outdoor Recreation Facilities Subcommittee, of the Access Boards' Recreation Advisory Committee, has proposed the use of a range of accessibility, depending on the expected level of difficulty and

development of any particular area. In other words, downtown parks would be expected to be very accessible, but campsites for backpackers in wilderness areas would be expected to offer much fewer modifications for accessibility. The challenge in this area is to develop a responsible way for applying these designations and not to use a contrived process to designate levels of accessibility that skirt the intent of the ADA for full access to all types of facilities, activities and services.

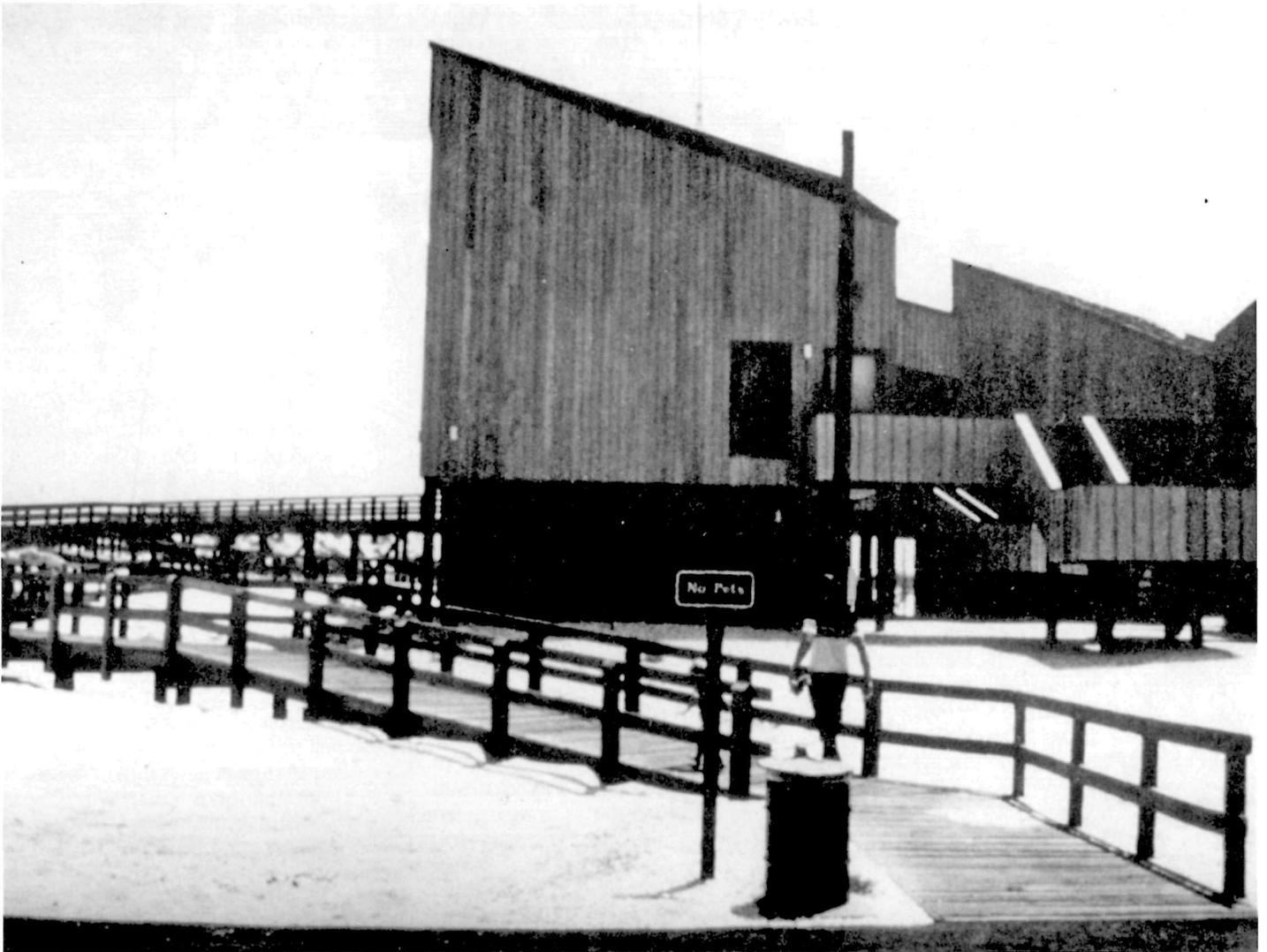
### Integrated Nature of Other Design Disciplines and Developments -

While the art of Universal Design of Recreation Facilities is still very young, there are parallel efforts underway in other design disciplines that demonstrate potential approaches and solutions for cost effective design that allow all users to have access. Some of these efforts are:

**Universal Design of Consumer Products** - The Trace Research Center in Madison, Wisconsin, under the direction of Dr. Gregg Vanderheiden, had developed a guide for designers and manufacturers of consumer products. This project, funded in part by the National Institute of Disability Rehabilitation and Research (NIDRR), has carried the concepts of architectural and facility access to the detail level of equipment, appliances and hardware that interfaces with the built environment. By understanding and evaluating the Output/Displays, Input/Controls, Manipulations, Documentation and Safety in terms of the potential users, including those with limited mobility, reach, range, hand function, vision, hearing, perception or cognition, they have established guidelines that can make any piece of equipment easier for everyone to use. For example: their guidelines tell us that variable control knobs or dials like those found on faucets, stereos or laundry equipment are much easier to use if they have grippable finger indentations



*Examples of good design usable by everyone.*



Beach access.

(for people with limited hand dexterity), large numerals or setting characters (for people with limited vision), click stops rather than smooth operation (again for people with limited vision), and numerals or setting characters located around the outside of the dial with an arrow on the dial that can be pointed to the selected setting, rather than having the settings located on the dial itself with a selection point at some arbitrary position around the outside of the dial (for people with limited perception and cognition). While these guidelines are still in the developmental stage, they seem to offer a means of analyzing the function and designing a level of the environment that most designers have struggled with or simply ignored in the past.

**Availability of Universally Designed Products** - The advent of the ADA has caused a huge increase in the number and type of products aimed at creating an accessible environment. These universally designed products are being developed by small cottage industry manufacturers to meet the needs of the small but growing number of people who want or need to modify their homes, businesses or recreation facilities. These are often the perfect solution for a design problem that would otherwise require costly custom fabrication. The problem with many of these manufacturers is that they are hard to find because they do not have huge marketing budgets. A new product guide to these types of manufacturers has recently been published by John Wiley and Sons, and lists over 650 products in over 100 categories for recreational, commercial and residential facilities.

**Universal Design of Information Systems** - As our recreation facilities become increasingly dependent on information systems, it is concurrently important that these information systems are accessible to people with disabilities. On-line reservation systems for campsites, electronic event

and program schedules, and interactive telephone skiing condition reports are but a few examples of the types of information that should be available to all recreationists. Most existing electronic information systems, however, are very difficult if not impossible to use by people with limited vision or cognition. In addition, free standing information kiosks have been notoriously difficult for people of short stature, or limited reach and hand dexterity to use. The ANSI A117 committee has recently proposed a set of design criteria for Automated Transaction Machines (ATM's) that are found at most banks. The concepts and criteria found in these standards can be a starting point for information systems. By testing proposed systems with a wide range of potential users, including those who have vision, dexterity and cognition limitations, a recreation designer can establish whether or not the system creates problems for users with disabilities.

**Experiences of Architects and Interior Designers** - Finally, recreation designers should learn an important lesson from the early history of the accessibility movement in the United States. Originally, disability advocates concentrated their efforts on educating architects and interior designers on the technical criteria of accessibility and in advocating for accessibility criteria in building codes. This effort began in the late 1960s and was seen as a way of working at the grass roots level in every state and municipality to promote a form of voluntary compliance. After 20 years of at best mediocre success, advocates decided that progress was too slow and sporadic, and was not creating the "critical mass" of facilities and infrastructure necessary to allow people with disabilities to get out and be productive members of society. For that reason, disability advocates decided to marshal their support into an effort to pass a national civil rights law to require accessibility across the board.

Had the design professions better shouldered their responsibility, it is very possible that the detailed accessibility regulations that we now have would never have been required. There are presently very few requirements for recreation accessibility, and now is the time when recreation designers can either voluntarily develop designs that work for everyone or wait to be regulated.

**Changing expectations of consumers** - But regulations or no regulations, the fact is that Americans are coming to expect accessibility in every aspect of their lives — and they are complaining when they don't get it. Consumers don't recognize or care whether or not the specific criteria and details of the regulations covering a certain facility demand accessibility. They just know they can't go camping with their cousin who uses a wheelchair, or they can't hear the interpretive program because of the lack of an assistive listening system. Americans have come to expect that our nation is a sea of accessibility, and the little islands of accessibility barriers stand out like a sore thumb. Recreation designers must realize that they can either learn to swim with the strokes of Universal Design, or sink under the waves of consumer demands for universally designed recreation facilities. ■

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# Status of Design Standards for Accessible Recreation Facilities and Outdoor Developed Recreation Areas

by John N. McGovern, J.D., C.T.R.S.

Are there design standards for accessible recreation areas and facilities? Are these standards enforceable in a court of law or administrative hearing? Are more standards being developed, and if so, by whom? Will shifting political winds erode access guidelines in place today? Will those in development be "blown away" by the changing climate in Washington? This article will address these questions and more.

It is important to acknowledge the affect of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on this issue. Before the adoption of the ADA by Congress in 1990, there were limited federal requirements for accessibility, as well as some state requirements. While the ADA catches all state and local governments, whether or not federal funds have been received, that only accounts for a small part of the tremendous increase in demand for accessible design. This author believes the public awareness surrounding the fight for the ADA has triggered a surge in demand for accessibility in all environments. And that includes recreation environments.

## Design Standards Today

There are design standards for accessible buildings and facilities. These guidelines were prepared by the Access Board, the federal agency responsible for developing accessible design requirements. In 1991, the Access Board published ADAAG, the

Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities. ADAAG was published as an appendix to a regulation issued by the U.S. Department of Justice. ADAAG applies to new construction and the alteration of existing sites. The basic message of the Department of Justice regulation: follow these minimum guidelines called ADAAG.

The 86,000 or more units of state and local government have a choice when selecting a design guideline. An earlier guideline, the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS), may also be followed for new construction and when altering an existing site.

And, in today's "states rights" environment, let's not forget the states. California, New Jersey and Illinois all have codes or statutes which impose design conditions or requirements on newly constructed recreation facilities and areas, and outdoor developed recreation areas. These requirements can be vague, such as Illinois' which only requires that certain types of facilities be on an "accessible route," and that a certain number of campsites be "accessible." This illustrates the chief problem with accessible recreation site requirements today: they are not specific. Does "on an accessible route" mean within 6 inches of the route? Adjacent to the route? Surrounded by the route? Regarding accessible design, if a state has a more stringent

design requirement than a federal standard, the state standard shall be followed, according to the ADA.

What's the catch? Neither ADAAG nor UFAS were written for recreation facilities and outdoor recreation areas. A design guideline which works in a constructed environment, like an office, won't always easily transfer to a recreation center, bowling alley, playground, campsite, scenic overlook, golf course or beach. But, Rome wasn't built in a day, so the creation of design guidelines has been a process over time.

## Are Today's Design Guidelines Enforceable for Recreation Sites?

Yes and no. While no single guideline or standard is designed specifically for recreation, those existing guidelines may be applied **where appropriate** to a recreation facility or site. A simple example is the already mentioned accessible route. ADAAG, which is preferred by this author because it is more current than UFAS and addresses communication better than UFAS, describes what makes up an accessible route and when an accessible route is required. These requirements are applied easily to a bank or movie theater. These requirements may also be applied to most built recreation facilities. An accessible route through a health and fitness center should look just like an accessible route through a bank.

## The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum and Universal Design



Federal Advisory Committee recommendations regarding degree of accessibility.

However, should an accessible route through a playground or beach look the same as an accessible route through a bank? No. But perhaps width, surface characteristics, running slope and cross slope, edge treatment and other elements should be the same.

Some courts and administrative bodies agree on this subject. An important administrative decision comes from a complaint filed under the ADA against the City of Green Bay, Wisconsin. This 1993 complaint claimed that the surface of wood chip would not be adequate for an accessible route in a playground. Filed with the Department of the Interior, since that Department

enforces recreation complaints under the ADA, this 1993 complaint was decided in favor of the claimant. Interior ruled that wood chip was not an acceptable accessible surface because it failed to meet existing design requirements. Those design requirements are that the surface be "firm, stable and slip resistant." When applied to a sidewalk or building hallway, these make perfect sense. Interior recognized that playground surfaces are not typical routes though, and added a requirement for resiliency where the route is in a playground equipment use zone.

And, courts have applied existing ADAAG to recreation areas. In Tyler v. Manhattan, a 1994 complaint filed

against the City of Manhattan, Kansas, the claimant alleged that an accessible route into one of the city's softball complexes was not accessible. Applying ADAAG, the court agreed and ordered relief in the form of an accessible route before the fields could be used for any city function.

In summary, while we would prefer design guidelines for recreation sites, the existing guidelines are being applied when complaints arise in recreation settings. The message here is that even in the absence of an enforceable design requirement for recreation sites, existing requirements will be applied.

## Are More Standards Being Developed?

In 1993, the Access Board appointed a federal advisory committee to provide advice and information to the Access Board regarding accessible design in new and altered recreation facilities and areas. The 27-member committee worked for one year and had more than 50,000 staff-hours of effort. Those on the committee included design professionals, people with disabilities, state and federal recreation agencies, local recreation agencies, manufacturers, professional associations and others interested in access. The committee's final report was presented in July, 1994, to the Access Board.

The 200-page report has recommendations for accessible design in six areas: sports facilities; amusement parks; golf; recreational fishing & boating; playgrounds and outdoor developed recreation areas which includes trails, campsites, ski areas, beaches and scenic overlooks. The report was issued with an accompanying Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM), in effect providing the operators and using public with another opportunity to comment on and shape the guidelines.

The Access Board published the report and invited comment. More than 700 comments were received and the Access Board now has plans for four recreation projects.

- The Access Board has awarded a grant to the National Center for Accessibility in Indiana to develop access guidelines for swimming pools.
- The Access Board is working on a proposed guideline for four areas: sports facilities, amusement parks, golf and recreational fishing and boating. This should be completed in late 1996.
- The Access Board will invite nominees to serve on a regulatory negotiation committee on playgrounds. These people

with diverse interests will negotiate a guideline acceptable to manufacturers, agencies and people with disabilities. The first meeting is tentatively set for early March, 1996. The committee will meet for about one year, publishing its final report as a proposed guideline. Along with the playground NPRM, proposed guidelines for golf, sports facilities, amusement parks, and recreational fishing and boating will be published.

Readers of TRENDS should comment on these proposed guidelines. After comment, a final guideline will be approved. Then, the Department of Justice issues an implementing regulation. Following public comment, the Access Board will write a final guideline, to be followed by an implementing regulation from the Department of Justice. When? Best guess is mid-1997.

- After the work of the playground regulatory negotiation committee, the Access Board will invite nominees to serve on a regulatory negotiation committee on the final area, outdoor recreation. This committee will address ski areas, scenic overlooks, trails, campsites and beaches. It, too, will include a wide range of people with an interest in the area. The committee will negotiate a guideline acceptable to manufacturers, agencies and people with disabilities. The committee will likely meet for one year, publishing its final report as a proposed guideline. Following public comment, the Access Board will write a final guideline, to be followed by an implementing regulation from the Department of Justice.

When? Best guess is mid-1999.

The regulatory negotiation, or "reg neg" approach, is different than tra-

ditional rulemaking. Traditional rulemaking starts with federal agency staff preparing what they believe are the most efficient and effective guidelines. Then, public comment serves to question or challenge the assumptions made by the federal agency, and usually not much is changed in the final guideline.

In a "reg neg," public users of recreation sites, owners and operators of these sites, and designers and manufacturers of these sites will shape the guideline. This is a much more inclusive process.

## What's Going On in Washington, and Will it Affect Access Guidelines?

It is clear that Washington, D.C., is a changing place today. New groups are in power. New principles of government are coming to the forefront. The old way of legislating and regulating is under heavy criticism.

What's not clear is where it will end. When Congress considered a moratorium on regulations, it exempted civil rights legislation. The ADA is a civil rights law. So, regulations pending under the ADA in theory would not be affected by a moratorium.

The unfunded mandate issue has attracted a lot of attention. States and local governments are chafing at the requirements faced under federal legislation. Nearly every national association of states, counties and local governments has named the ADA as one of the "top ten" unfunded mandates. However, few if any local governments have shown that compliance has stopped other developments, or that any disadvantage caused by compliance is not outweighed by the advantage of compliance.

In addition, there is still substantial support in Congress and in the White House for the ADA. Tony Coelho, former Congressman from California and now Chair of the President's Committee on

Employment of People with Disabilities, says in the December 1, 1995, edition of **Disability Funding NEWS** that both Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich and Senate Majority Leader and presidential candidate Bob Dole have in recent discussions made assurances that the ADA will not be repealed. While a conversational assurance is inadequate at times, these commitments are certainly evidence of how the leadership sees the ADA.

Where might there be change? Perhaps a tightening of the definition of disability. Perhaps the addition of dollar amounts or percentages to clarify undue burden. Perhaps in the area of employment, where small business is complaining loudly. Perhaps in an extension of the short timeframe allowed for physical compliance regarding existing sites.

To some extent, we see this in a proposed rule issued by the Department of Justice on November 27, 1995. The proposal modifies current ADA requirements for units of state and local government. Arguably, all curb cuts in sidewalks had to be made by January 26, 1995. There was great confusion on this, and many feel the requirements were at best vague and at worst contradictory.

The Justice Department's proposal extends the date for curb cut completion on streets where units of local government and health care facilities are located to the year 2000. The deadline for other curb cuts, such as in residential areas, would be extended to the year 2005.

However, this author does not see substantial change ahead, especially for the portions of the Act and regulations which affect public parks and recreation services and sites. The clarifications and extensions discussed above are likely to happen, and if carefully planned, can be very effective in ensuring compliance.

Of course, the increased attention to regulation of any type will slow down guidelines now being devel-

oped. That will include the recreation regulations mentioned in this article. It may be prudent to add as much as a year to each of the completion dates suggested here.

### Conclusion

The public with disabilities is using recreation areas and facilities more frequently than ever before, and has high expectations for access. The public and private agencies which own and operate playgrounds, hiking trails, campsites, ski areas, swimming pools, sports facilities and other recreation areas have acknowledged the need to include opportunities for people with disabilities. And designs exist today to solve most of the thorny access problems of ten years ago. If they don't exist, someone's research and development department is working on a prototype. The confluence of these three points will yield a safe, fair, accessible design guideline for every type of recreation area within the next several years. ■

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# Golfers with Disabilities: Access and Obstacles

by Gary M. Robb

National Golf Foundation research indicates that approximately 12 percent of the American public plays golf. The popularity of the sport as a lifetime pursuit is growing annually as evidenced by the tremendous expansion in golf and golf-related industries. There are currently over 15,000 golf courses in the United States (not including miniature golf). This number is growing by approximately 200 courses each year.

Golfers who have disabilities represent a very small but growing number of those participating in the game. While there have been specific organizations created for specific categories of disability, the recent trend, in keeping with the intent of accessibility legislation, is to focus on the opportunities and obstacles that face **individual golfers** with disabilities in accessing the game.

## Recent Developments and Issues

The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 did little to perk the attention of the golf industry relative to issues around access to the game by those with disabilities. However, the creation of the Recreation Access Advisory Committee in 1993 and subsequent golf subcommittee did result in both widespread interest and concern about how the ADA would impact on the game of golf and the operation of golf facilities. It is clear, and

specified, that golf is a covered entity under the ADA (private clubs excluded). As a result of Department of Justice interpretations as to what constitutes a private club, a high percentage of golf courses in the United States would be subject to the provisions of the ADA.

## Recommended Accessibility Guidelines for Golf Courses

The United States Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board published the recommendations of the Recreation Access Advisory Committee in September, 1994. The golf subcommittee included Advisory Committee members representing the PGA of America and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. The Committee received significant input from the National Forum on Accessible Golf, sponsored by the National Center on Accessibility/Indiana University and Clemson University. The Forum, which included representatives of the golf industry, organizations serving golfers with disabilities, golfers with disabilities and other organizations and universities, actually provided the major input that was finally included in the Access Board report. The following summarizes the committee's recommendations for the construction and alteration of new and existing golf courses:

1. A golf course would not be required to have an accessible

- route for play of the game through the green.
2. "Toilet rooms" shall be accessible from golf car paths, where such paths are provided.
3. Most amenities on the golf course would be required to be accessible from the golf car path, or golf car parking area, if paths or parking areas are provided.
4. Golf car paths should not be considered part of an accessible route, using the ADAAG definition.
5. At least one teeing ground on each hole, and as many as possible, shall be accessible.
6. Hazards (bunkers and water hazards) on a golf course are not required to be accessible.
7. All putting greens on a golf course would have to have at least one accessible route, except where extreme safety and terrain issues are involved.
8. There should not be any design issues for greens.
9. Where practice bunkers, and/or practice putting and chipping greens are provided, at least one should be accessible.
10. Where practice teeing grounds are provided, at least one will be accessible.
11. There should not be special design issues for bunkers on a golf course.



*New technology allows golfers with mobility impairments full access to the golf course.*

12. Practice areas (where provided) shall be accessible from golf car paths or car parking areas, where paths or parking areas are provided.

### **Programmatic Access**

The above recommendations consider only design and golf course alteration issues. While the design of new golf courses and the alteration of existing golf courses to provide better access to golfers with mobility impairments is important, they pale in comparison to the importance of "programmatic access." Programmatic access includes everything from golf course policies to education and

training of golf course personnel. It includes provisions in local rules to accommodate golfers with disabilities and issues such as pace of play and golf course etiquette on the part of golfers with disabilities. Programmatic access also includes the development of specific research that will assist the golf industry and the golfer with a disability in making the game a win-win situation for everyone.

Several organizations are taking the leadership in addressing these programmatic issues. The National Forum on Accessible Golf has focused its last two meetings on various issues identified above. Organizations such as the National

Center on Accessibility, the Association of Disabled American Golfers and Clemson University have been actively involved in educational and research efforts on programmatic access issues. The United States Golf Association, the PGA of America, the National Golf Foundation and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America have also been supportive and active in working on programmatic issues. Following is an itemization of some of the activities and projects that are in progress which address the myriad programmatic issues in making the game of golf more accessible to everyone.

*Photo: National Center on Accessibility*



*Access to all of the golf course facilities is important.*

## Education and Service

1. The National Forum on Accessible Golf: an annual forum focusing on specific issues. Includes approximately 40 invited individuals representing golf organizations, organizations serving persons with disabilities and golfers with disabilities. Sponsored by the National Center on Accessibility and Clemson University, proceedings are published and are available on each of the forums held since 1993.
2. The National Center on Accessibility has conducted a seminar on golf etiquette and an instructional clinic for golfers with disabilities in conjunction with the ADAG. An introductory brochure that provides information to golf course operators and a proceedings on the Etiquette Seminar have been printed and are available free of charge (single copies).
3. The Association of Disabled American Golfers (ADAG) conducts national and regional integrated golf tournaments, publishes a quarterly newsletter and is generally available to provide consultation and technical assistance to both the golf industry and golfers with disabilities.
4. The National Association of Amputee Golfers and the United States Blind Golfers Association conduct local, regional and national tournaments for their members. NAGA, with support from the PGA of America, offers instruction for therapists, golf professionals and golfers with disabilities.
5. The PGA of America and Special Olympics, Inc., offers instruction and tournaments for "Special Olympians."
6. The United States Golf Association is reviewing the Rules of Golf to determine possible suggestions to provide to

its membership which would more fully include golfers with disabilities into local golf competitions.

7. Numerous adaptive golf programs that are affiliated with rehabilitation recreation programs are being developed. A few of these include Edwin Shaw Hospital and Fore Hope (Ohio) and the Fairfax County Park Authority (Virginia).
8. PGA and LPGA golf professionals are now offering instructional programs and clinics for golfers with disabilities. Some of these professionals include Judy Alvarez, LPGA/PGA Golf Professional (Florida), Jaro Jones, PGA Golf Professional and Martha Yeary (Texas); Conrad Rehling Master PGA Golf Professional (Alabama) and Marcia Bailey, Master LPGA Golf Professional (Colorado).

## Technology Developments

1. Single Rider Golf Cars with modifications for golfers with disabilities (Electric Mobility)
2. Wheel chair adaptations (Hi-rider, Quickie)
3. Club modifications (Swing-Sync and the Professional Club Makers Society)

## Research

1. The National Golf Foundation Market facts survey included questions regarding golfers with disabilities.
2. The USGA/GCSAA/PGA Greens Research Project. Funded to Rutgers University. This two-year study is focusing on the impact of assistive devices on turf, characterizing surface hardness, developing reliable procedures for turf damage susceptibility and to relate surface characteristics and wear susceptibility to assist device data for golf

course decision making on course accessibility.

3. The National Center on Accessibility and Clemson University have collaborated on surveys identifying persons with disabilities interested in or who play golf.
4. The NCA and the University of Utah conducted a pilot Pace of Play study in 1994 which was followed up by an additional study conducted by the NCA in 1995. Both studies were conducted at the ADAG National Tournament in Colorado.
5. The NCA with assistance from the ADAG conducted a survey of golf operators relative to their perceptions of golfers with disabilities.

## Conclusions

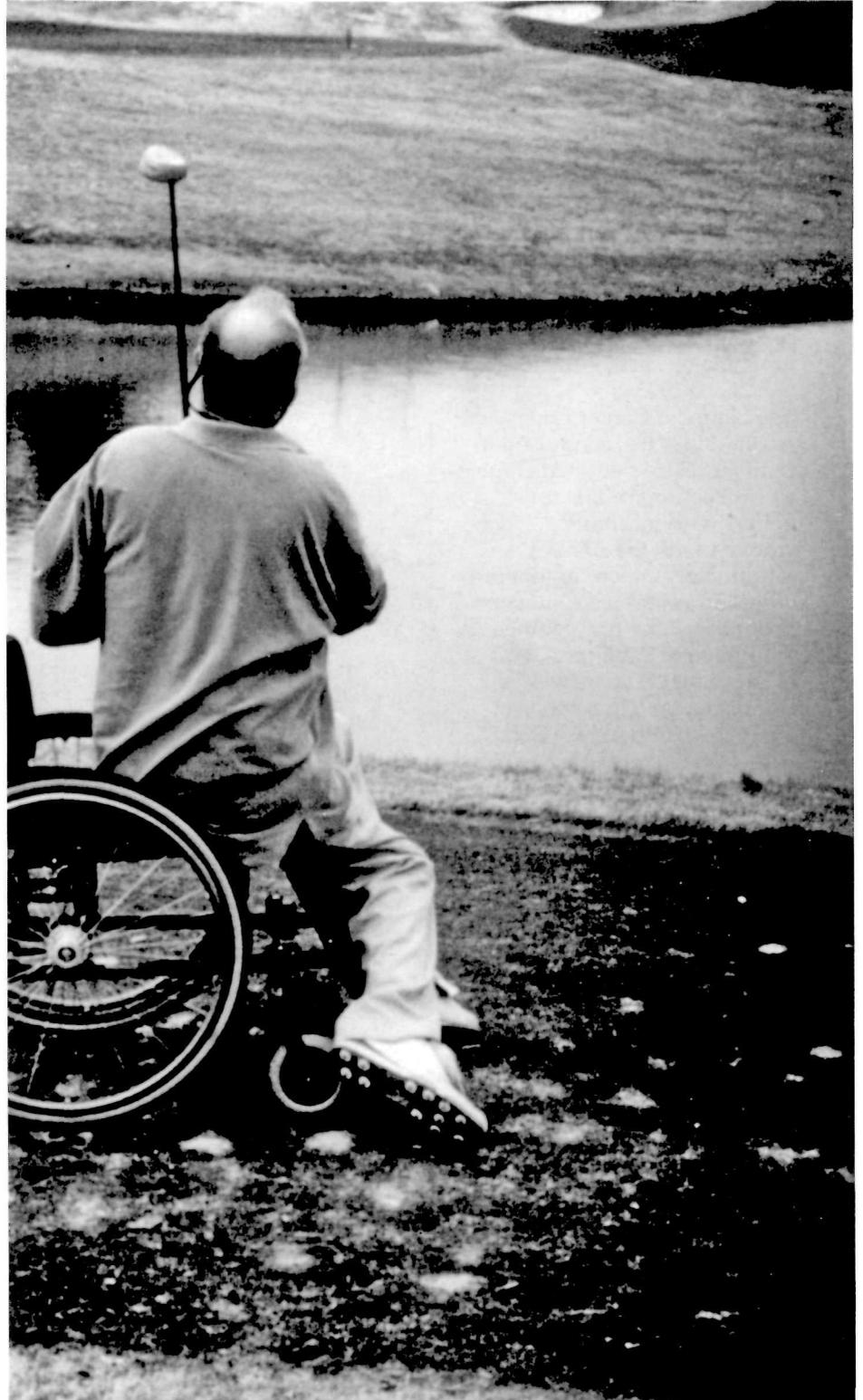
Interest in actively participating in the game of golf is at a record high in America. People with disabilities are just beginning to realize that opportunities exist in the game of golf, in many cases with the assistance of emerging technologies. The golf industry views the disabled golfer both as an opportunity and as a potential problem. Interest and educational opportunities for golf industry personnel are growing. Numerous articles are appearing in golf magazine and journals. More and more golf course superintendents and golf professionals are recognizing the need to learn more about the potentials and opportunities that golfers with disabilities represent. They also recognize that research and information on issues related to golfers with disabilities will better prepare them to effectively incorporate golfers with disabilities into their daily operations.

There remains many unanswered questions, including policies on single rider golf cars, access to greens by those using assistive devices, development of policies that are fair and non-discriminatory, modification or adjustment of rules that would fairly

accommodate golfers with disabilities interested in participating in local competitions. With the cooperation of all persons interested in the game of golf, these issues will be resolved in the best interests of the game and for ALL those who play it. ■

**Author note: Additional information on resources, research and activities cited in this article may be received from the National Center on Accessibility, phone: 800-424-1877 (voicelty)**

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Some golfers prefer to play in their own wheelchairs.

# Universal Interpretation

by Edward J. Hamilton, Ph.D., and Raymond W. Bloomer

Interpreters are forging new paths that lead beyond the paved trails of physical accessibility to the more varied and interesting paths of program access. Traditional efforts to include people with disabilities have taken a segregated or "special" approach to interpretive programs. The development of Braille trails, separate sign language tours and isolated "handicapped seating" areas were well-intentioned efforts to include people with disabilities that, in fact, separated them from other visitors and their families. These segregated program efforts have often been costly and underused by the people for whom they were intended. The trend of interpretive programs is to take a different approach, a universal approach.

The idea of universal design originated in the construction of buildings and facilities. Rather than focus on construction of separate facilities or building components to accommodate people with disabilities, architects and engineers began to search for designs that included as wide a range of people as possible. Universal design provides areas and facilities that are usable by the broadest spectrum of people in a single design that accommodates their varied needs. To do this requires moving away from designs for the mythical "average" person, away from designs for people who use wheelchairs, and toward designs that consider all degrees of sensory function, all types of locomotion

and all levels of physical and intellectual function. It also means moving away from an attitude of "What do I *have* to do to make my facilities accessible to people with disabilities?" and toward an attitude of "What *can* I do to make my facilities more usable by everyone?"

A universal approach to interpretation is based on the same assumptions. It attempts to enhance the experience for all users through a single, multifaceted program design rather than duplicate programs that segregate and isolate groups. The following basic principles clarify the universal approach to interpretation.

**Principle 1.** A universal approach ensures that each visitor has the same opportunity to benefit from the programs and services offered. At the very core of the universal approach is the desire for all visitors to participate fully. That is, each visitor must be able to get to the program and have it presented in ways understandable and usable by that individual. Having the same opportunity to benefit does not mean that each person will participate in the same manner or benefit in the same way. For example, several times each day, a nature center shows a video on the ecosystem of the native environment. The video incorporates scenes of plants and animals found in the area and describes their relationships. To provide all visitors the same opportunity, video graphics and uncomplicated language make difficult ideas understandable to ele-

mentary school children who regularly visit; a transmitting system describes the video's scenes to the teacher who is blind, amplifies the soundtrack for an older woman who is hard-of-hearing and offers the soundtrack in Spanish for the Argentine family on vacation. The video is captioned to enable a deaf man and his hearing child to enjoy it together. Each person will experience the program in ways that are different from everyone else, but each person will have an opportunity to experience it with everyone else.

**Principle 2.** A universal approach facilitates each visitor's independent participation to the maximum extent possible. Americans have always cherished independence. It connotes human dignity, perceived worth and freedom of choice. Creating environments and programs that facilitate visitors' independent functioning reduces demand on staff. It avoids placing visitors in a position of having to ask permission for even the most basic services such as keys to open bathrooms, wheelchair lifts turned on and video captioning activated. Independent environments and programs allow visitors greater choice in what they explore and what they ignore. Independence also enables everyone to share interests and knowledge with others.

For instance, people who are blind, like most visitors, frequently visit museums with a companion. However, the companion of the person who is blind may not share

Photo: NPS



*Interpretive exhibits designed to meet the needs of disabled people oftentimes result in better exhibits for everyone!*

common interests, be comfortable reading text aloud, describe well or desire to assist the person who is blind. Also, the person who is blind may wish to be alone. The use of audio description, tactile orientation techniques and other audio and tactile experiences facilitate more independence by these visitors.

**Principle 3.** A universal approach incorporates multisensory techniques. People have different sensory abilities and learning styles that enable information to be processed and understood. Presenting themes and ideas using as many senses as possible allows each visitor to interact with the material in ways that are most enjoyable and usable for that person. The result is interpretation that engages all visitors more effectively.

**Principle 4.** A universal approach presents information at multiple levels. Presenting information at multiple levels allows all visitors with their varied interests and abilities to interact effectively with information. Some visitors will have only a limited interest in a specific topic. Consequently, they will seek only general information on that topic. Other visitors will have an avid interest in the topic and desire the most minute details. By presenting information at multiple levels, we can satisfy the curiosity of the casual viewer and the enthusiast.

Some visitors can understand and interact with complex ideas, others need more basic ideas presented. Multiple level information presents the ideas in ways that are understandable for each person. For example, a presentation of the guns aboard the U.S.S. *Constitution*, a 44-gun frigate, might be presented at two levels. At one level the various cannons might be identified with their sizes and ranges. At another level the presentation might include the various shot (e.g., round, star, chain, etc.), purposes and timing of fuses, and the battle strategies under

which the combination of shots and fuses might be employed.

**Principle 5.** Integrate all visitors to the maximum extent possible. This is central to the concept of universal design, so begin with the assumption that all visitors can participate together. Only when all other options have been exhausted should design that separates be considered.

During the restoration of the Statue of Liberty, plans were made to make the statue and museum more accessible to people with limited vision. Instead of providing separate tours or exhibits, the planners wisely chose to have full-scale reproductions of Lady Liberty's face and foot displayed in the museum. The result was an exhibit that allowed all visitors to gain a greater perspective of the size and detail of the statue.

**Principle 6.** Always keep in mind how and why visitors use a facility or program. It is common to find designs in which 90 percent of a facility or program is accessible, yet the most important aspect, the primary attraction for the visitor is not accessible. Visitors will focus on many features other than that intended by the designers, nevertheless, we must assure that the intended purpose of a facility or program is available to all visitors. An interpretive program at a beach area spends a considerable amount of money to make the beach area accessible to people with disabilities. Parking, paths, concessions and a boardwalk overlooking the beach are made accessible. Unfortunately, the boardwalk ends at a long staircase leading down to the beach and water, effectively separating people who use wheelchairs from the primary interpretive area. When staff is questioned about the design, the response is "we didn't think people with disabilities would want to use the sand and water." They have lost sight of the primary attraction to their visitors.

**Principle 7.** Consider the social context within which visitors will

participate. Most people participate in programs as a part of a social group: friends, family, a class or a club. They usually want to participate as part of that social group, not social isolation. When we create environments that separate people, we fail to consider their social context.

In a fixed-seat auditorium, seating is often provided in the last row for people who use wheelchairs with no adjacent seating for companions who do not use wheelchairs. This design fails to consider social context and separates people. The trend toward the universal approach to interpretation is reflected in existing applications such as open captioning, tactile experiences, audio description and interactive video. In the past, many interpreters have been reluctant to use open caption audiovisual materials because viewers might find the captions distracting. Experience has shown a different trend. Several parks and museums have established a policy of showing their films and videos with open captions and only turning off the captions on request. These requests have been quite rare. Open captioning benefits not only those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing but also foreign visitors and those who are in noisy viewing areas.

To give visitors with visual impairments an experience that is similar to that of sighted visitors, tactile components are being incorporated into exhibit designs. Three-dimensional maps are orienting visitors to the layout and topography of various sites. Building models are giving visitors a better perspective of architectural features and scale. Mounted specimens, reproductions and demonstrations are providing a sense of shape, scale and texture. Each of these tactile elements contributes to a richer, multi-sensory learning experience for all visitors.

Audio description, "the art of talking pictorially," verbally re-creates visual information essential to under-

standing and enjoyment of various media. Trained describers provide details of action, colors, settings, costumes, physical characteristics and body language that would not otherwise be available to people with visual impairments. This technique increasingly is used in films, videos, slide shows and for walking tours through historic sites, nature trails and in exhibits.

In the 1970s many sites used photograph albums as a program alternative when a person with a physical disability was unable reach the upper floor of an historic building or the bowels of a cave. In the 1980s these alternatives were provided through video tape. Today, interactive video has enriched these program alternatives by offering users choices of what to view, for how long and in what depth. Undoubtedly, the next wave will be the use of virtual reality to give those with even the most involved disabilities opportunities to experience programs never before imagined.

Though the term universal design is relatively new, Freeman Tilden seemed to be telling us nearly 40 years ago that good interpretation is universal. Written well before the concept of universal design was developed and at a time when there was virtually no thought of including people with disabilities, older people and international visitors, Tilden's seminal work advocated a universal approach to interpretation. According to Tilden, information must be presented in a form, or forms, that is understandable and enlightening to the "universal man." He suggested that it may be an analogy, a metaphor, a picture, a model or more likely a combination of these, that provides meaning to all visitors. Tilden captured the very essence of the universal approach. ■

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Photo: NPS



*Exhibits accessible to everyone including children and people with disabilities.*

*Accessibility. Committed to the full participation in parks, recreation and tourism by people with disabilities, Dr. Hamilton heads the NCA Research Program. His research has focused on the leisure behavior of people with disabilities as well as access to beaches, trails, golf and pools. In addition to coordinating the Center's Research Program, Ed is an Assistant Professor at Indiana University where he lectures on inclusive recreation services and therapeutic recreation. Ed received his Ph.D. in Human Performance in Leisure Behavior from Indiana University in 1989. He received his Undergraduate and Masters Degrees from the University of Maryland. Ed has also served as the Director of Recreation for the Virginia State Easter Seal Society and the Assistant Director of Bradford Woods Outdoor Education Center. He can be reached at: NCA, 5040 State Road 67 North, Martinsville, IN 46151. Telephone: (800) 424-1877 or (317) 349-9240, Fax (317) 342-6658. E-mail: hamilto@indiana.edu.*

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# Trends in Accessibility at Historic Sites

by Sharon C. Park, AIA

The trend toward greater access for persons with disabilities to historic buildings and at historic sites is certainly good news. Greater numbers of visitors are now traveling the universal path to a primary entrance. The result is that more people can visit historic sites with their families and other visitors without being relegated to the "back door" which was typical of earlier attempts to provide access to persons unable to ascend steps, pass through narrow doorways or navigate sloped walkways. With careful planning and a knowledge of appropriate materials and technologies, more accessibility solutions are being sensitively integrated into our historic resources. And so we are not only seeing more principal entrance solutions, but we are also getting rid of the ugly wooden ramps that have been a visual blight for many historic buildings.

The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) not only had an immediate effect on state and local governments who were required to assess publicly owned buildings and plan for the removal of accessibility barriers, but it *de facto* forced federal agencies to revisit their own properties and programs. The federal government, not covered by the ADA, has been covered by legislation going back to the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1974. While most of these provisions affected new construction and renovations using federal funds, it is probably fair to say that accessibility in

these earlier times, if addressed at all, was rarely comprehensive. As identified in other articles in this issue of TRENDS, it is no longer acceptable to avoid making readily achievable modifications or to forego reasonable changes when renovation work is planned by asking for waivers for historic buildings. While the ADA is not a retrofit law requiring all buildings to be made accessible, the ADA does require that for most buildings and sites open to the public and undergoing renovation, that the needs of persons with disabilities have to be considered. This includes historic properties. This article will illustrate a number of successful solutions to provide access to historic buildings and sites through entrances that can be used by all visitors.

Historic buildings, however, have been placed in a special category by the Department of Justice in order to protect them from insensitive changes. The Department of Justice, aware that there are laws that require preservation of historic properties, specifically the Historic Preservation Act of 1966, acknowledged in both earlier federal legislation and in the ADA that it would be difficult to make existing historic buildings as accessible as new buildings. Compliance with the law to make historic buildings fully accessible during renovation or planned physical improvements would probably "threaten or destroy" the significance of the building or resource. This protective language was put into the

ADA to ensure that every effort would be made to make the buildings as accessible as possible while recognizing that physical and structural changes such as modifying entrances, widening doors and corridors, eliminating level changes, reconfiguring bathrooms and installing elevators — if cumulatively incorporated — could have a major negative impact on the historic character of the resource. And so the Department of Justice identified minimum requirements for access to historic buildings when work is planned with the stated goal that improving access over time should be a continuing effort by the owner. For buildings not undergoing rehabilitation, the ADA encourages making readily achievable changes to remove physical barriers to the extent possible. Even if physical modifications are not possible because they would "threaten or destroy" significant features, actions are required to assure that the "program" is made available in some other way.

The ADA expects, at a minimum, that there is access to a historic building through a public entrance. In addition, site access to the building and access within the building to primary spaces, services and amenities are to be achieved, if possible. Whenever feasible, access to upper spaces should be included. To protect historic buildings from insensitive alterations, it is important to understand what elements of the

Photo: Sharon C. Park



The Castle Building, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. The use of automatic door openers can save historic materials, such as the narrow double-leaf doorways. Neither leaf meets the 32" clear dimension for entrances, but the installation of the electronic eye over the doorway allows both leaves to open automatically providing a generous amount of clear space.



Cuyahoga Visitor's Center, OH. The adaptive use of this lock house provided access to both the front entrance bookstore and information center as well as to the lower level auditorium reached by the sloping path on the side of the building. The topographic changes were minor and did not impact the historic resource.

Photo: Carol R. Johnson & Associates



Houghton Chapel, Wellesley, MA. This chapel used a temporary ramp which was steep and detracted from the historic appearance of the front entrance. After careful study and evaluation, it was determined that the adjacent landscape was not so significant as to preclude changes.

Photo: Sharon C. Park



Arts and Industries Building, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. Site conditions often allow the integration of a new walk without removing existing steps. Using a combination ramp with rails and an inclined sidewalk, the plaza in front of this building can be reached by all.

Photo: Carol R. Johnson & Associates



The grade was raised, burying steps intact, to provide an integrated entrance for all. No historic material was destroyed, the treatment is reversible, and the scale and historic character of the entrance was not destroyed by the alteration.

Photo: NPS files



*House Museum Interior. When changes are not planned, for instance at a house museum, the path of travel can often be improved by removing an unessential door or by using off-set hinges to swing the door panel out of the clear opening of the frame. Most wheelchairs are not wider than 27" and so 32" is the minimum width for clearing an opening.*

Photo: NPS files



Photo: Courtesy of Everhard Company, KY



*Charlestown Navy Yard, MA. New elements or features can be added to buildings to help eliminate barriers without seriously altering the historic appearance of a building. In this case, small nondescript steps were removed and replaced with a simple contemporary fabricated metal combination stair and ramp. It is clearly contemporary, it does not remove or damage historic wall or door materials, and it is an appropriate material for the historic dockyard district in which it is located.*

*Rose Cliff Mansion, Newport, RI. There are a number of new technologies being developed to help overcome different level changes when ramps are not feasible or desirable. In this case, a retracting lift element, housed under the first floor, can be automatically activated to lift a wheelchair to the lobby level. When not in use, the only visible feature is the metal cover plate that in fact is the top rail of the lift.*

Photo: Sharon C. Park



Photo: Courtesy of Everhard Company, KY



*Calvary Baptist Church, Washington, DC. Sometimes it is necessary to redesign existing features to incorporate ramps or lifts. In most cases, the rebuilding of steps to raise the platform flush with the entrance door, to provide a turning radius for a wheelchair, and to make a transition to a ramp will not alter the entrance to destroy its character. In this large church building the flanking ramps on each side of the rebuilt steps provide a dignified, symmetrical entrance which can be used by all.*

*When activated, the railing emerges to form the sides of the lift and a hydraulic piston lifts the platform to the upper level. These heavy duty lifts have also been successfully used in exterior applications.*

Photo: Courtesy of GSA



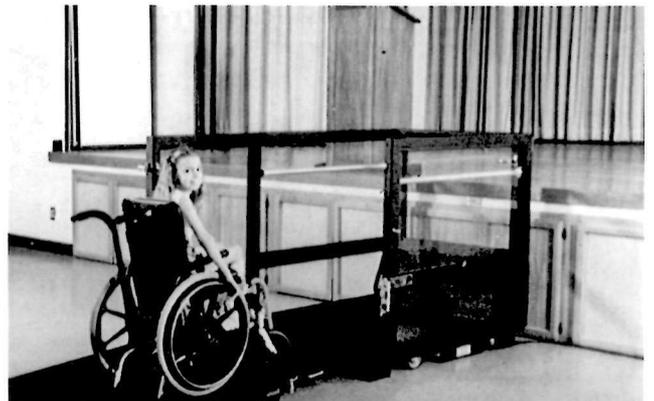
Department of Agriculture, South Building, Washington, DC. New technologies can be incorporated into buildings undergoing substantial rehabilitation to provide integrated access. If the front monumental steps had been removed, it would have destroyed a major prominent architectural feature of the building. Instead, an elevator was installed into a new shaft just inside an existing opening immediately adjacent to the front steps.

Photo: Courtesy of GSA



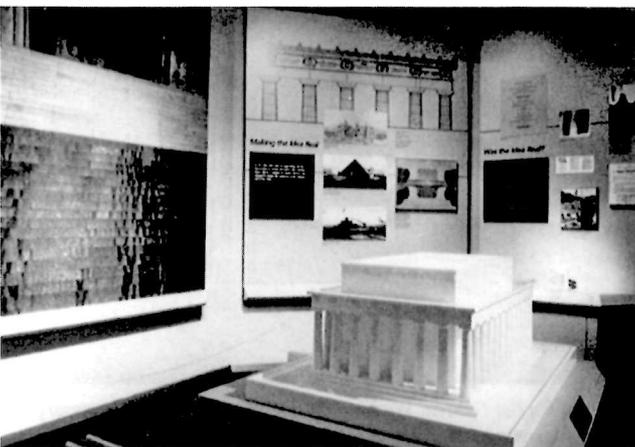
The elevator is called by pushing a call button which activates the automatic door and notifies the security guard in the lobby. The passenger is taken directly to the lobby on the floor above.

Photo: Courtesy Massachusetts Historical Commission



School Auditorium. The list of new products addressing access and overcoming physical barriers is dramatically increasing. Pictured here is a portable wheelchair lift designed for schools and auditoriums. The lightweight lift can also be housed in a supply closet or under a stage area and brought out when needed. The electrical motor, integral to the unit, runs on regular current.

Photos: NPS files



Exhibits. Alternative experiences for visitors who cannot visit all parts of a resource can and should be provided at a nearby accessible location. It is important to consult the design guidelines for the height of exhibits, letter sizes, contrasting colors, tactile models and other aids for persons with visual and hearing impairments as well as those with limited mobility.

Photo: Sharon C. Park



Mayflower Hotel, Washington, DC. For larger buildings, it is often possible to incorporate a ramp to make a smooth transition between levels. In this case, the cascading staircase was modified to incorporate a ramp against the edge. The staircase still has a grand, spacious feeling while allowing independent access between the lobby and the dining areas by visitors with disabilities.

building are historic and need protection and what design tools and techniques are available to modify the building or site while preserving those elements that impart the historic significance to the resource.

With careful planning, it is generally possible to incorporate sensitively designed and integrated solutions to provide the highest level of access for persons with disabilities with the lowest level of impact to the historic resource. A 3-step evaluation and consultation process is recommended and this is more fully described in *Preservation Briefs 32: Making Historic Properties Accessible* available from the National Park Service, Heritage Preservation Services Office in Washington, D.C. Briefly outlined, however, this 3-step process starts with an evaluation of the historic property itself and sets out a priority list of what is significant about a building that must be kept and which features could possibly be modified. For example, a front entrance with monumental stairs might be considered absolutely essential to remain unaltered, but an adjacent area might be less significant and could sustain some modification to provide an accessible entrance.

Secondly, a physical evaluation of the property must be made to identify barriers to access to both public spaces within a building and the services provided in those spaces. Usually an historic preservation architect familiar with both The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and the Americans with Disabilities Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) can undertake the first two types of evaluation.

The consultation process, the third step, is often the most important. It requires the input of persons with a variety of experience and viewpoints. When evaluating options for making an historic building or site more accessible, it is important to include the architect, consultants, persons

with disabilities, local preservation specialists and most specifically, if consensus cannot be achieved, the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). The SHPO has been identified by the Department of Justice as the source for consultation to determine if certain proposed treatments would "threaten or destroy" the resource and if special alternative access provisions can be applied to historic properties which cannot be made accessible. Often looking at various options in consultation with all parties can lead to practical solutions that do not impact the historic qualities of a building while still providing access through a public entrance.

When it is not possible to make the minimum number of physical changes required for access due to the rare historic nature of the resource or technical or economic considerations, at least a programmatic solution is required that provides the service to the public in an alternate way. The primary reason that historic sites and museums have been looking for ways to make themselves more accessible to the public is that when the visitation of the building or the site is "the program", it is difficult to move it to an alternative site. Visiting a famous national park feature or a president's home is a specific activity that only happens at that place, which makes substituting an alternate experience disappointing to the visitor. What the ADA is asking for is that, to the greatest extent possible, without destroying the significance of the resource, efforts be made to integrate access into everyone's experience. While access to the second floor of an historic building, such as a President's home, may not be feasible without threatening or destroying the resource with modern intrusion, certainly the first floor must be made accessible if at all possible. For those areas of a building or site not accessible, there are some excellent examples of video and other media that can be used to make

the experience for the visitors not able to go up stairs as close as possible to the real experience.

You have seen, on previous pages, several examples of buildings made accessible after careful planning that achieved independent access at primary entrances. Some represent simple changes while others are major rehabilitations that involve substantial financial investment, but all exhibit a systematic approach using a positive proactive attitude and a willingness to seek the appropriate balance that still preserves the resource. Historic buildings can be made more accessible to all. Universal access and appropriately designed features are clearly achievable in historic buildings and is a positive trend for all. ■

*Preservation Briefs 32: Making Historic Properties Accessible*, by Thomas C. Jester and Sharon C. Park, AIA. This 14-page publication with 43 illustrations introduces the complex issue of providing access to historic properties for persons with disabilities. Available from the Government Printing Office for \$1.50 per copy, the Stock Number is 024-005-01121-8. Send check payable to the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, PO Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954 or call GPO information with questions at (202) 512-1800.

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# Disability and Wilderness: Future Trends

by Gregory J. Lais

*"This experience in the wilderness has helped me to grow stronger. This feeling of accomplishment is wonderful. I also saw others with disabilities share their skills, participate and grow as people this summer. We all paddled, set up camp, portaged, cooked and got to know each other. Before my trip, I knew people with disabilities could do challenging things, but I didn't really believe it. Now I know and believe. I feel much more comfortable with myself and my disabilities..."*

Patricia S., participant on a Wilderness Inquiry trip

Most people do not think of wilderness as a hospitable place for people with disabilities. Rugged terrain, a lack of any support services and general remoteness are not consistent with the views commonly associated with accessible environments—ramps, wide doors and adapted equipment. In fact, some people who are opposed to wilderness designations for public lands claim that wilderness unfairly discriminates against people with disabilities.

Yet, people with disabilities are venturing into wilderness areas in growing numbers. Most visit the wilderness by the same methods and for the same reasons as people who do not have disabilities (Lais, McAvoy, Fredrickson: 1991).

In the past 20 years, numerous programs that serve people with disabilities have evolved. These include Wilderness Inquiry, Environmental Traveling Companions, S'PLORE and several others. Public land managers, outfitters and other players in the outdoor recreation industry at all levels have witnessed a growing demand for backcountry travel by

persons with disabilities. This article looks at why this trend exists, and what the future of persons with disabilities in wilderness areas is likely to be.

## More Persons with Disabilities Today

No one disputes the fact that more people with disabilities are alive today than at any other time in our planet's history. The survival rate of traumatic injuries has increased exponentially since even World War II. This fact, combined with the good news that people with disabilities are enjoying a higher standard of living than, say, their medieval counterparts, explains a large part of the trend. Simply put, there are more people with disabilities who have the desire and the means to pursue "normalized" life experiences—including wilderness.

People who were wilderness users prior to a disabling injury generally want to enjoy wilderness after their injury, and once they discover it is still possible, they do. These people understand wilderness and they want true wilderness experiences

including solitude, risk and natural beauty. They are not afraid of a few challenges to get there. As the number of people with disabilities grows as a percentage of our population, so too will the number of people with disabilities who want to use and enjoy wilderness.

This trend is likely to continue, as baby boomers age, have strokes, blow out their knees and generally cope with failing bodies. Those who currently enjoy wilderness will still want to enjoy wilderness. This trend is underway now as wilderness and adventure travel organizations will tell you that older folks are making up a larger percentage of their business. With these population demographics looming on the horizon, we can expect a huge surge in the use of wilderness by people with disabilities in the next 25 years.

## Changing Attitudes

Compared with 20 years ago, fear that persons with disabilities are fragile and therefore incapable of outdoor recreation pursuits is receding within the medical profession and the general population. The

attention surrounding the Americans with Disabilities Act, the recognition of the potential market for persons with disabilities and the positive accomplishments of persons with disabilities themselves have improved "society's" vision of what persons with disabilities are capable.

This shift in attitude is also occurring within the outdoor recreation industry, including public land managers, manufacturers, retailers and service delivery providers such as outfitters. What was once thought to be a nagging, "compliance driven" nuisance is now considered a new

marketing opportunity to attract persons with disabilities as customers (Quinn, 1995).

In addition to the realization of a marketing opportunity, there is increased interest in employment of persons with disabilities. For example, Wilderness Inquiry, in coopera-

*Photo: Wilderness Inquiry*



*Big Salmon River, Yukon.*

*Photo: Wilderness Inquiry*



*The number of persons with disabilities who want to use and enjoy the wilderness continues to grow.*

*Photo: Wilderness Inquiry*



*Photo: Wilderness Inquiry*



*Grand Canyon climb.*

*Photo: Wilderness Inquiry*



tion with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, REI (Recreation Equipment Inc.) and several other organizations is conducting a two-year project to train people with disabilities in various outdoor recreation pursuits. The goal of this training is to assist persons with dis-

abilities to find jobs in the outdoor recreation industry.

Two recent developments further illustrate this shift in attitudes in the outdoor recreation industry. America Outdoors, a trade association for outfitters, teamed up with Wilderness Inquiry to produce a "how-to" man-

ual for outfitters and guides who want to serve people with disabilities and other non-traditional users of wilderness. This effort was supported by the USDA Forest Service and is gaining wide acceptance within the outfitter industry.

*Photo: Wilderness Inquiry*



*Visually-impaired participant.*

*Photo: Wilderness Inquiry*



*Photo: Wilderness Inquiry*



*Photo: Wilderness Inquiry*



*Photo: Wilderness Inquiry*



The second development also involves Wilderness Inquiry, the Forest Service, the USDI Bureau of Land Management and other groups. In the past five years federal wilderness managers have been faced with numerous requests by persons with disabilities to gain access to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Some of these requests involve issues that federal land managers are unfamiliar with. In response, the above mentioned groups have developed a Wilderness Access Decision Tool consisting of a series of questions land managers should ask when considering requests. The purpose of this tool is to assist these managers in making decisions that are appropriate for the wilderness resource while providing the highest level of access consistent with the Wilderness Act of 1964.

Finally, perhaps the most significant example of a change in attitudes is that a major insurance company, Connecticut-based ITT Hartford, has embraced the positive life-changing potentials of wilderness by offering wilderness experiences for claimants of long-term disability benefits. The goal of these experiences is to prove that normalized life pursuits is possible to people who have sustained a disability.

Some of the initiatives mentioned above are the result of passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, but regardless of the motivation they certainly underscore a broad ranging change of attitudes about disability and wilderness. This attitude factor alone has and will continue to empower persons with disabilities to do the things they did prior to a disability, as well as trying new things.

### **Technological Advancements Facilitate Use of Wilderness**

Twenty years ago a woman named Marilyn Hamilton broke her back while hang-gliding. As if being paralyzed wasn't bad enough, Marilyn

discovered that the wheelchair she had to use was made out of stainless steel and weighed upwards of 50 pounds. Refusing to settle for this "stainless steel dinosaur," Marilyn got some of her high tech hang-gliding buddies together and developed a new, light weight wheelchair that dramatically improved her mobility. This new chair, dubbed a "Quickie," was to Marilyn the equivalent of the difference between wearing lead boots and running shoes on a 26-mile marathon.

Marilyn formed a company, called Quickie Wheelchairs, and the new design took off. Today, Quickie, a division of Sunrise Medical, is the world's largest manufacturer of wheelchairs. More important than the success of this company, however, is the fact that this simple technological advancement opened new horizons to thousands of people who use wheelchairs. They became better able to play tennis, compete in field events and visit wilderness areas.

This highlights only one area where technology has significantly improved the odds of successful participation in wilderness adventures by persons with disabilities. There are other examples, many of them unrelated to equipment used by persons with disabilities.

For example, a company named "Thermarest" manufactures a foam core, inflatable sleeping mattress. One version of this, the ultra-thick "Camp-Rest" solves one of the nagging problems of people who lack sensation—decubitus ulcers or "pressure sores." Sleeping on the ground or on a thin pad is not a good idea if you are susceptible to pressure sores. Though it is not intended for such, the Camp-Rest significantly reduces the odds of an individual getting a pressure sore. Technological improvements will continue, and this will make it even easier for people with disabilities to enjoy wilderness.

### **Wilderness Experiences Provide Numerous Benefits**

A major factor driving increased use of wilderness by persons with disabilities is that wilderness experiences offer significant benefits. These benefits include recreational enjoyment of the resource, but they also include deeper, life-changing experiences.

A recent issue of TRENDS contained a review of research pertaining to wilderness and persons with disabilities (McAvoy and Lais, 1995). Stringer and McAvoy (1992) found these benefits included:

- common spirit between and among people.

Wilderness Inquiry programs state that their experiences produced a sense of freedom they had not previously experienced. As one participant put it, "In wilderness I am most alive. My disability does not matter anymore."

Other studies show that these general beliefs and feelings are shared by persons without disabilities who experience wilderness. It is no surprise that, when provided the opportunity, people with disabilities experience them too. It is this author's belief that these feelings can be intensified among people with disabilities because they have fewer opportunities in every day life to experience them.

### **More Examples of Persons with Disabilities in Wilderness**

Who can forget the picture of Mark Wellman, a park ranger who is also paraplegic, climbing to the top of El Capitan? Also, of Erin Broadbent, another Park Service employee, rappelling down a cliff (see cover of this issue). These and other images of people with disabilities doing outdoor activities are more frequently seen than ever before.

In addition to these images, more and more people with disabilities are

experiencing wilderness and coming home to tell their friends about it. There is virtually no way to estimate the number of persons with disabilities who have visited wilderness, but Wilderness Inquiry, one of the largest and oldest programs serving people with disabilities in wilderness areas, has served over 30,000 people to date. When you consider all of the other programs serving people with disabilities in wilderness areas, it is not unfeasible to project that over 75,000 people with disabilities have enjoyed wilderness experiences in organized programs alone!

### **Barriers to Greater Wilderness Access**

Although some people still claim that wilderness designations discriminate against people with disabilities, this is simply not true. Those who make these claims fail to understand that what makes wilderness wilderness is solitude, silence and general lack of human presence. To motorize and pave wilderness in the name of access is to destroy the very resource people seek to visit.

The biggest barriers to use of wilderness areas by people with disabilities are:

- 1) Lack of money
- 2) Lack of awareness
- 3) Increased pressure on the wilderness resource

The financial barrier is a big one that includes many people, not just persons with disabilities. While there are few, if any, fees involved to enter wilderness areas, many people lack the resources to obtain the equipment and training necessary to safely and comfortably visit wilderness. They also may lack the transportation since most wilderness areas are located far from where people live.

The barrier of awareness has more to do with what individuals value than anything to do with disability. A 1995 State of the Industry report by the Outdoor Recreation Coalition

of America (ORCA) states that the single biggest variable in whether a person enjoys outdoor activities is whether they were introduced to outdoor pursuits as a child (ORCA, 1995). Adults who never participated in outdoor recreation rarely get a sudden urge to do so.

The last factor, increased pressure on the wilderness resource, has many ramifications for everyone who enjoys wilderness. These pressures have resulted in quota systems, group size limitations and various other regulatory issues intended to protect wilderness. While all of these measures have wilderness protection as the primary goal, some, such as group size limitations, may have an adverse effect on the ability of persons with disabilities to enjoy these resources.

### **Conclusion**

Many factors point toward increased use of wilderness areas by people with disabilities. These factors include changing attitudes, technological advancements, recognition of the benefits of wilderness experience to name a few. Add these factors to the demographic trend of aging "baby boomers" and it seems clear that despite the barriers of resources and awareness, we can expect more use of wilderness areas by people with disabilities. ■

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*An expert in design and implementation of integrated outdoor programs, Mr. Lais has developed outdoor policies, written staff training manuals, adapted outdoor curriculum, developed adapted equipment and published several articles on integrated programming. He has personally instructed over 75 wilderness canoeing adventures involving persons with physical, cognitive and emotional disabilities.*

*Under the direction of Mr. Lais, Wilderness Inquiry has received many awards including the Organization of the Year Award from the National Therapeutic Recreation Society (1988) and special recognition from the White House (1989). Mr. Lais has a B.A. in Psychology from St. John's University (Minnesota) and a Masters in Business Administration from the University of Minnesota. He received the Distinguished Service Award from the Minnesota State Council on Disability in 1992. Send correspondence to: Greg Lais, Wilderness Inquiry, 1313 Fifth St. SE, Box 84, Minneapolis, MN 55414, telephone: (612) 379-3858, Fax (612) 379-5972. E-mail address: glais@aol.com.*

***"I have just had the most meaningful event of my life for the past 18 years. Eighteen, because that is my life span as a physically disabled adult. It is unfortunate that I had to become disabled to enjoy outdoor activities on such a magnificent scale..."***

Lorene K., participant on a Wilderness Inquiry trip

# The Americans With Disabilities Act and Public Recreation: Fact, Fiction and Common Sense

by Julee Quarve-Peterson

Despite the fact that the Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA] has been law for more than five years, there are still accessibility challenges and confusion with respect to parks and outdoor recreation. Since its passage in July 1990, the 47 million Americans who benefit from this civil rights law, and the people responding to the ADA, have been learning and occasionally stumbling through its interpretation and application. The park and recreation profession has been part of this development and much progress has been made in improving opportunities. However, as efforts have been made, several controversies and issues have been raised that are the subject of ongoing research and discussion.

This article is organized in three sections:

1. The dilemma that park professionals face with respect to the ADA and accessibility requirements.
2. Fact and fiction about the ADA.
3. When actions must be taken to conform to the accessibility requirements.

## THE DILEMMA AND THE OPPORTUNITY

Accessibility issues frequently pose a major dilemma for park professionals. The problem is that managers are responsible and liable for a host of accessibility challenges. There are two topics at issue. One is the

Americans with Disabilities Act. The other is a host of accessibility regulations and guidelines. Both of these matter, but they are different and should not be confused. The ADA is a civil rights law. Accessibility regulations are just that — regulations. Recreation facilities and programs are subject to both.

### The ADA is Not a Code!

You are responsible for more than meeting a prescribed set of codes and regulations. If it was just a matter of regulatory compliance, such as adhering to a building code, the job would be easier. The ADA is not a code. It defines a set of civil rights that may cause you or your agency to be liable if a person's accessibility rights are denied. At the same time, you are also responsible for meeting certain regulations that do exist. These include ADAAG (Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines) and applicable State and City Accessibility Codes and Guidelines. An increasing number of government entities are drafting accessibility regulations, so check with your local authorities. Most important for park professionals, you are responsible for making sure that recreation facilities such as picnic areas, trails and campsites are accessible and usable by people with disabilities, even though official standards for such facilities do not exist yet.

### The Rules are Changing and Standards and Guidelines are Evolving!

Accessibility requirements are being defined in two areas — court decisions and administrative rules. Court decisions are one basis for defining what actions you will need to take to minimize accessibility liability. Regulations are also evolving, especially those that affect outdoor recreation and developed areas. Do not count on "existing condition" or "grandfathering" protections. The ADA does require you to provide access for pre-existing programs and facilities even if standards for those facilities do not exist. Efforts are underway to finalize recreation facility standards, and it is suggested that the **Recommendations for Accessibility Guidelines: Recreational Facilities and Outdoor Developed Areas**, developed by a national advisory committee be utilized until final standards are available. These guidelines are very comprehensive but will probably not be finalized until sometime in 1997. Utilizing them now, along with a lot of common sense, will go a long way in providing accessibility and will significantly decrease the possibility of being in violation of the law.

### Expectations are Changing!

As a result of the ADA, and of changing social attitudes toward disabilities, an increasing number of persons will expect to find your facilities accessible. Accessibility has

Photos: Julee Quarve-Peterson



*The ADA requires park and recreation facilities and related elements to be accessible.*



been a design and programmatic concern for over 20 years for agencies using federal funds. Much early emphasis on access focused primarily on employment and education. The time has now come for persons with disabilities to participate in all areas of society, including recreation and leisure. The numbers of individuals concerned with access includes the 47 million Americans with disabilities, their families and friends, and the significant percentage of the population who are over the age of 65 which is increasing and living longer. That amounts to a sizable percentage of the population. So, if we make our facilities accessible, "they will come"; and if we don't, "they will come anyway," and may not come back, or they may file a complaint!

With much work over the past few years in consulting with municipalities, discussions often focus on "what should we address first"? Many clients are deciding that the likelihood of disabled citizens wanting to access their parks and playgrounds is far greater than those wanting to access the fire station or police station. The result is access to recreation facilities often times receives very high priority in the expenditure of public funds for access.

### Is There a Silver Lining?

Yes. The opportunity you receive from providing fully accessible facilities and programs is more than freedom from liability. It is more than an increased number of persons visiting your facility. It is even more than doing the right thing. You will get safer and better conditions for all visitors, not just individuals with disabilities. When you make a building, a path or a picnic area safer for a person with disabilities, you have made it safer for all persons. Most important, you will increase the possibilities for persons with disabilities to not only have access to that opportunity, but to do so along side their

nondisabled family and friends. Opening opportunities for recreational experiences for all persons, including those who happen to have a disability, is a major accomplishment.

### FACT AND FICTION ABOUT ACCESSIBILITY

We will try to clear up some misconceptions about accessibility with a "fact versus fiction" discussion on frequently misunderstood topics.

**Fact:** *The Americans with Disabilities Act is not entirely new legislation.* It is the most recent in a series of civil rights laws and design guidelines that address the needs of persons with disabilities. Many providers of recreation have already been covered by other accessibility requirements, including the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards; and various state and municipal building codes. The ADA simply extends accessibility requirements to sections of society that have not been covered in the past.

**Fact:** *The Americans with Disabilities Act protects 47 million Americans with a variety of disabilities.* There are persons who may use mobility devices such as wheelchairs, canes, crutches and walkers. There are persons with perceptual disabilities — individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or who have visual impairments. There are persons with cognitive disabilities such as learning disabilities and mental retardation. Focusing accessibility improvements only on individuals who use wheelchairs serves less than ten percent of the population with disabilities. Clear signage, informational brochures, well-trained site staff and such simple things as a bench for resting are all important elements in first-step responses.

**Fact:** *The ADA does not always require architectural solutions to problems.* It does require that all new construction and all renovations be

designed to be accessible according to established standards. And, in many instances, making architectural modifications will be the most effective solution. However, the law allows and encourages a broad range of alternatives. These include relocation of programs, provision of information or use of equivalent services to achieve program access when that is possible. A recent headline in a newspaper stated that the ADA required a city to spend \$25,000 to install a platform lift to an announcer's box at a public athletic facility. Indeed, the booth was up 18 inches on an inaccessible level. Other options, not mentioned in the article, were to build an 18-foot ramp or purchase a \$200 portable microphone to allow a disabled person to announce the game from another accessible location. The point is that there are options ... some architectural, others not. Furthermore, some are very expensive while others are reasonable and cost effective.

**Fiction:** *When the Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law, all other access related codes and legislation were superseded.* This is untrue. You are responsible for complying with all applicable design guidelines and laws. The ADA guidelines are the most recent and the most comprehensive standards and in most cases will be the most stringent. However, other pre-existing standards such as the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards are still legal requirements and in some isolated areas are more demanding than ADAAG.

**Fiction:** *Providing accessibility is extremely and unreasonably costly!* The media has provided us with several examples of access, apparently costing significant dollars. Facts and experience, however, demonstrate much to the contrary. National experts have found that less than one half of one percent additional cost is necessary for new general building construction that fully meets accessibility design guidelines. While alter-

ing existing facilities to provide access does entail some cost, it frequently is not as expensive as is often reported. For instance, a recent legal case included a cost of \$50,000 for making a parking lot accessible. Closer review of the proposal showed that the cost was for paving the entire multi-car lot. The law only requires that the specified number of spaces be paved, which in this case could be accomplished for the cost of about \$500. A full understanding of the requirements and the standards, along with some good common sense, can result, in most instances, in reasonable expenditures, particularly in light of the large number of people who can benefit.

### WHEN MUST YOU TAKE ACTION TO CONFORM TO THE ACCESSIBILITY REQUIREMENT?

Here are some examples of situations when you must take actions to conform to the accessibility requirements.

**New Construction.** All new facilities including recreation facilities must be accessible. All elements of buildings, parking and site must comply fully with existing ADA Design Guidelines [ADAAG], published July 1991, or other applicable codes. All elements covered under the draft Outdoor Recreation Design Guidelines are to be accessible, utilizing the best information available. At this point in time, the best information available is found in the National Advisory Committee recommendations and related documents.

**When remodeling occurs.** When remodeling occurs, those areas being remodeled must comply fully with the appropriate standards and guidelines, when technically feasible and when the design solutions do not significantly alter the experience.

**Any time you offer programs and services to the public.** If you offer

programs or services to the public, they must be accessible to everyone. Some kinds of programs are relatively simple to make accessible. For example, you must provide accessible picnic tables, camp sites and trails. Not all tables and sites need to be accessible, but a reasonable percentage must be. Some programs are inherently fraught with challenges. Even donkey tours of the Grand Canyon and whitewater rafting programs have to be accessible, as long as they can be made so without "undue financial burden," without "changing the fundamental nature of the activity" and the disabled participant is deemed to be "an otherwise qualified individual."

In situations where access cannot be provided, alternative ways of providing program access are sometimes permissible. For example, a recycling program in southern Minnesota offered public tours of its facility. When accessibility became an issue, and the required modifications were considered extreme, the agency stopped offering public tours. In contrast, another recycling center continued its public tours and made them accessible. Some parts of the tour were difficult to make accessible. Those areas were made accessible through videotape presentations and by using mirrors that were strategically located with viewing windows. Agencies do have options regarding how the programs will be made accessible. Consulting with representatives of groups of people with disabilities and with technical experts will assist in choosing the best and most cost-effect option.

### Conclusion

It is easy to feel overwhelmed by the potential complexity of complying with accessibility regulations. Certainly the media has tended to focus on those situations that apparently cost a significant amount of money. A closer look at many of

those examples, however, will show that more effective options were not considered or that the excess cost was an exception rather than the rule. Experience over the past few years has shown that access to recreation opportunities can, in most instances, be provided in a reasonable and cost effective way, if people take the time to fully understand what is required and use a heavy dose of common sense.

You may take comfort by looking at the task as a means to increase your "customer base" — the number of persons who can enjoy the recreation opportunities your park offers. There are many resources available to you. You may find answers by networking or through publications like this one. There may be a point where you will want to find professional help. Be sure to evaluate the experience and references of accessibility consultants. You may find referrals through your professional organization or by calling the local or state office of the American Institute of Architects. ■

*Julee Quarve-Peterson is an accessibility specialist at RSP Architects in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She is a nationally recognized authority who has presented at several National Park Service conferences and workshops. Julee is active in outdoor recreation issues, and has conducted accessibility surveys of over 40 million square feet of public and private facilities. Julee has developed survey instruments, taught accessibility courses and has served as an expert witness in numerous legal cases. Currently Julee leads the Accessibility Work Group for RSP Architects, a 90-member architectural and interiors firm.*

# Who Can You Turn To?

## **Golfers with Disabilities**

(The following list is not exhaustive. Listings are known to be actively involved in golf for persons with disabilities).

## **National Organizations**

### **Association of Disabled American Golfers**

Greg Jones, Executive Director  
7700 E. Arapahoe Road, Suite 150  
Englewood, Colorado 80112  
Phone: 303-220-0921  
Fax: 303-843-9284

### **National Amputee Golf Association**

Jim Coombs, Executive Director  
PO Box 5801  
Coralville, Iowa 52441-5801  
Phone: 800-633-6242

### **United States Blind Golfers Association**

Robert Andrews, President  
3094 Shamrock St., N.  
Tallahassee, Florida 32308  
Phone/Fax: 904-893-4511

### **National Center on Accessibility**

Gary Robb, Director  
5040 State Road 67 N.  
Martinsville, Indiana 46151  
Phone: 1-800-424-1877  
Fax: 317-349-1086

## **Rehabilitation & Recreational Golf Programs**

### **Fore Hope, Inc.**

Mindy Derr, Director  
1270 Old Henderson Road  
Columbus, Ohio 43220  
Phone: 614-459-4673  
Fax: 614-457-2250

### **Edwin Shaw Hospital**

Ron Tristano, Director &  
PGA Golf Professional  
Challenge Golf Program  
1621 Flickinger Road  
Akron, Ohio 44312-4495  
Phone: 216-784-1271

### **Fairfax County Park Authority Recreation Authority**

Cindy Walsh, Access &  
Volunteer Supervisor  
3701 Pender Drive  
Fairfax, Virginia 22030  
Phone: 703-246-5563  
Fax: 703-691-7926

### **Instructors**

#### **Judy Alvarez, PGA/LPGA Golf Professional**

Alvarez and Associates, Inc.  
3921 Crystal Lake Drive, #121  
Pompano, Florida 33064  
Phone: 305-946-5958  
Fax: 305-753-6706

#### **JaRo Jones, PGA Golf Professional**

GOLF RX  
1703 E. James  
Baytown, Texas 77520  
Phone: 713-420-2414

#### **Marcia Bailey, LPGA Golf Professional**

PO Box 234  
Eastlake, Colorado 80614  
Phone: 303-452-7704

#### **Conrad Rehling, PGA Master Professional**

1330 Lynn Haven  
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35404  
Phone: 205-556-1455

## **Assistive Technology**

### **Falcon Rehabilitation Products, Inc. (Hi-Rider)**

4404 E. 60th Avenue  
Commerce City, Colorado 80022  
Contact: Tom Houston, Sr.  
Phone: 303-287-6808  
Fax: 303-287-6434

### **Electric Mobility, Inc. (The Golf Express)**

# 1 Mobility Plaza  
Sewell, New Jersey 08080  
Contact: Mark Marquardt  
Phone: 800-662-4548  
Fax: 609-468-3426

### **Bravo Golf Carts, Inc.**

28277 Dequinore  
Madison Heights, Michigan 48071  
Contact: Susan Jaeger or  
Roger Wirth  
Phone: 810-398-7444  
Fax: 810-548-5447

### **Solo Golf Car (flexipad wheel)**

Contact: Charles W. Stine  
Executive Director  
Florida Golf Foundation  
27 Cyprus Run  
Haines City, Florida 33844-9698  
Phone: 813-439-3381  
Fax: 813-439-4286

### **The Professional Clubmaker's Society**

70 Persimmon Ridge Road  
Louisville, Kentucky 40245  
Contact: Diane Ogle, Executive  
Director  
Phone: 502-241-2816  
Fax: 502-241-2817

### **Swing-sync**

2131 Pinehurst Street  
Aberdeen, N.C. 28315  
Contact: Michael A. Atkinson,  
President  
Phone: 910-295-9500  
Fax: 910-295-9502

## **Golf Courses (designed for accessibility)**

### **Fox Hollow at Lakewood**

13410 West Morrison Road  
Lakewood, Colorado 80228  
Contact: Don Tolson, Golf Course  
Superintendent  
Phone: 303-986-7888

### **Clemson University Golf Course**

Contact: Dr. Larry Allen  
Clemson University  
263 Lehotsky Hall  
Clemson, SC 29634-1005  
Phone: 803-656-3036  
Fax: 803-656-2226

*Architects (knowledgeable of accessible golf course design)*

Dick Phelps (Colorado)  
Denis Griffiths (Georgia)  
Michael Hurzdan (Ohio)  
Victor Langham (Georgia)

Additional information may be received from the National Center on Accessibility, phone: 800-424-1877 (voice/tty).

### Disability and Wilderness

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### Organizations

**ALBEDATA**  
(A catalog of 17,000 accessibility products on computer. )

### National Rehabilitation Information Center

8455 Colesville Rd, Suite 935  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910  
301/588-9284 [Voice and TDB]  
800/227-0216 [Voice and TDB]

### Accent on Information

309/378-2961

### American Institute of Architects

Washington, DC  
202/626-7300 [voice]

### U. S. Department of Justice

Disability Rights Section  
Civil Rights Division  
PO Box 66118  
Washington, DC 20035-6118  
202/514-0301 [voice]  
202/514-0381 [TTY]

### Job Accommodation Network [JAN]

Workplace products  
800/ADA-WORK

### National Council on Disability

Washington, DC  
202/267-3846 [voice]  
202/267-3846 [voice]

### State Technology Assistance Projects

202/732-5066 [voice]  
202/732-5079 [TDD]

### Regional Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers [Ten regional centers]

800/949-4232 [voice]

### U. S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board

1331 F Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20004-1111  
202/ 272-5434 [voice]  
202/ 272-5449 [TDD]

### American Association of Museums

1225 Eye Street, NW  
Suite 200  
Washington, D. C. 20005  
202/ 289-1818

### Independent Living Research Utilization Program

2323 South Shepard Street  
Suite 1000  
Houston, Texas 77019

### National Center on Accessibility

Bradford Woods/Dept. of Park and Recreation Administration  
Indiana University  
5020 State Road, 67 North  
Martinsville, Indiana 46151  
800/ 424-1877 [voice and TDD]

### National Endowment for the Arts

Office for Special Constituencies  
1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, D. C. 20506  
202/682-5532 [voice]  
202/ 682-5496

### National Park Service

Office on Accessibility  
P. O. Box 37127  
Washington, D. C. 20013-7127  
202/343-3674 [voice]  
202/343-3679 [TDD]

### Publications

#### The 1995 Accessible Building Product Guide

by John Salmen and Julee Quarve-Peterson, with James DiLuigi  
John Wiley & Sons, New York  
800/879-4539

#### Universal Access to Outdoor Recreation: A Design Guide

by USDA Forest Service and PLAE Inc.  
MIG Communications  
1802 Fifth Street  
Berkley, CA 95710  
800/790-8444

#### Recommendations for Accessibility Guidelines: Recreation Facilities and Outdoor Developed Areas

Recreation Access National Advisory Committee  
U. S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board  
202/272/5434

