

COOPERATIVE PARK STUDIES UNIT

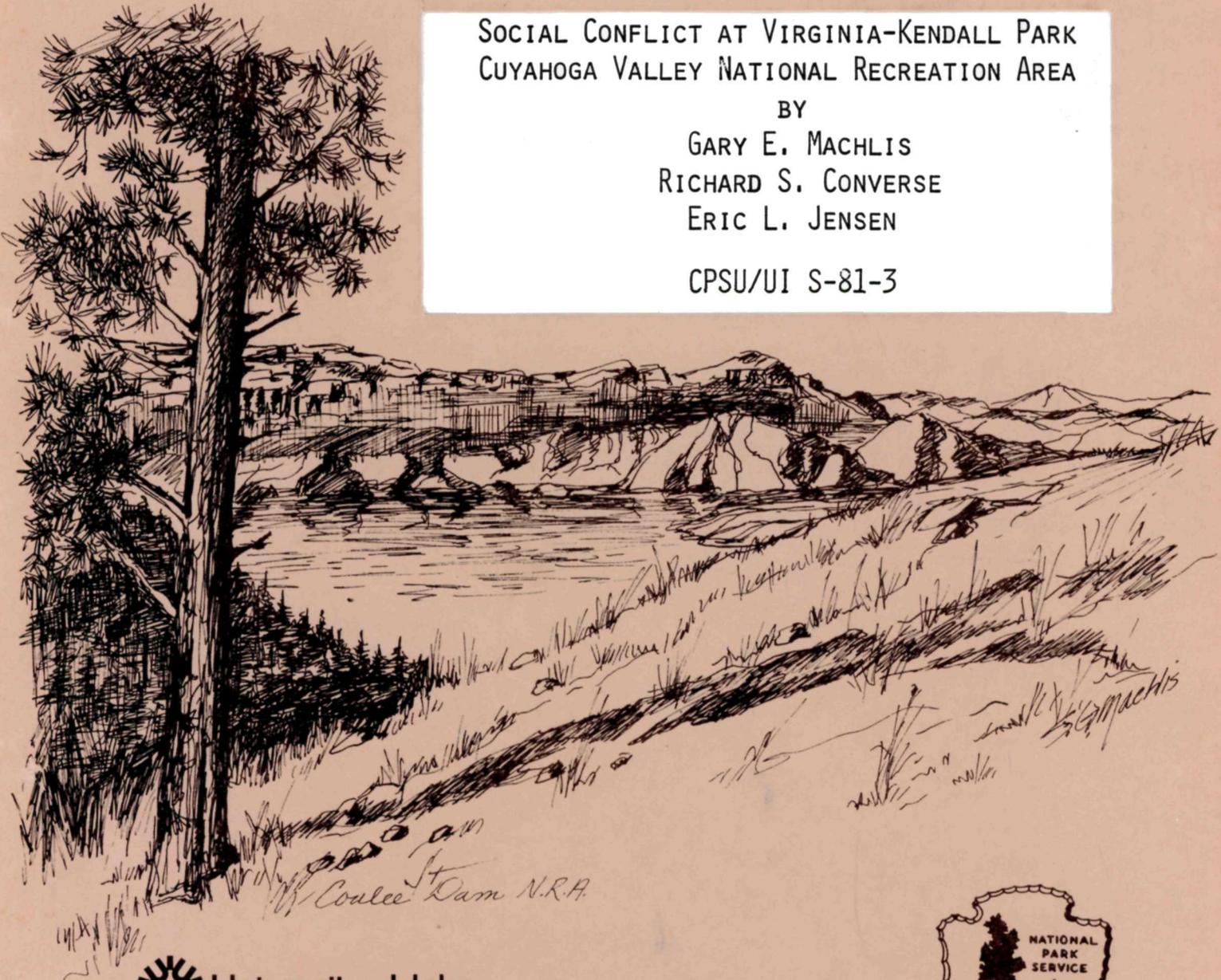
UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO

SOCIAL CONFLICT AT VIRGINIA-KENDALL PARK
CUYAHOGA VALLEY NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

BY

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CPSU/UI S-81-3



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Introduction

This report is about social conflict at the Virginia-Kendall unit of Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area (CUVA). Its purpose is to describe 1) how the area is used by visitors, 2) the kinds of conflicts that are occurring, and 3) the possible consequences of various options for managing the area.

The report is divided into several sections. This Introduction outlines the report and describes the methods used in gathering information. A Literature Review summarizes the sociological literature relevant to conflict in parks, particularly urban parks like CUVA. A Findings section describes the basic conflicts at Virginia-Kendall, and the groups involved. An Assessment is then made of the likely consequences certain management actions might have on the Virginia-Kendall area. Finally, certain specific Recommendations are presented.

To learn about CUVA and, specifically, Virginia-Kendall, two trips were made to the park. The first was from May 21-25 (Memorial Day Weekend) and the second from July 24-26. Approximately 14 hours were spent observing activities at the park, with field notes recorded on site. Observations were made at the Ledges, Octagon and Lake areas. Interviews were held with 17 park staff, including visitor protection, interpretation and administrative personnel. These interviews were informal, and lasted from 15 minutes to one hour. In addition, 12 informal interviews were held with park visitors.

A draft was submitted to the park staff for a review. A third trip was made to CUVA December 15-17, to discuss the draft report and recommendations. The final report was then prepared.

Limitations

This report has several limitations. No systematic sample of park activities was observed, nor were very many visitors interviewed. While most of the visitor protection staff was contacted, some were not, due to logistical problems. Nevertheless, an attempt is made to blend interviews and observations into a factual description of social conflict at the Virginia-Kendall unit of CUVA. All errors of interpretation are, of course, the responsibility of the authors.

Review of Literature

This literature review summarizes the sociological literature relevant to conflict in parks, particularly urban parks like CUVA. Its purpose is to show what is generally known about this issue; not all findings will be directly applicable to CUVA's situation.

Parks, like other public places, are often areas for many kinds of social conflict. Conflicts may occur between different user groups, users and agency personnel, local residents and agency personnel, among others. Furthermore, these conflicts can occur in a variety of settings, such as wilderness areas, river corridors, desert recreation areas and urban parks.

The essence of social conflict is often the struggle over controlling resources. The sociologist Max Weber notes:

A social relationship will be referred to as "conflict" insofar as action is oriented intentionally to carrying out the actor's own will against the resistance of the other party or parties... A peaceful conflict is "competition" insofar as it consists in a formally peaceful attempt to attain control over opportunities and advantages which are also desired by others. (1978:38).

While a gang fight would be an example of conscious and direct conflict, the early arrival of picnickers "to beat the crowds" is an example of indirect competition over limited facilities. In this report, both kinds of conflict relations are called social conflict.

There is a modest amount of literature on social conflict within recreation areas (Westover and Chubb 1979). This review focuses on conflict in urban parks. Its purpose is to provide examples of literature which may be helpful in understanding and dealing with such issues in urban recreation areas like CUVA.

Relevant Types of Behavior

Since urban parks are by definition in close proximity to large population centers, almost any type of crime which occurs in the city is apt to be present in the urban park (Lawrence et al. 1981). Such anti-social behavior may be broadly grouped as follows:

1. Violent crime - murder, rape, assault.
2. Non-violent crime - theft, drug traffic, littering, vandalism, and other depreciative behavior.
3. Conflicts among users - arguments and confrontations over excessive noise, incompatible activities, and so forth.

This review deals mainly with non-violent crime and user conflicts, since these are the most common types of anti-social behavior.

Extent of the Problem

In 1978 national parks as a whole recorded 283,090,000 user-days and 8,251 reported felonies for a crime rate of 2.9 per 100,000 user-days (Westover and Chubb 1979). This is well below the national average for serious crime. For the United States in 1978, the rate for just robbery was 589 per 100,000 persons (Hindelang et al. 1981). Comparing the "user-days" of a transient population like park visitors and the resident population of cities has several problems. While the two are not strictly comparable, the numbers are suggestive of large differences in crime rates. Hence, parks seem to provide a relatively safe environment. Less serious offenses occur more frequently than felonies in national parks. Table 1 shows the eight parks with the highest recorded incidents of Part II offenses in 1977.¹

¹Part I offenses are serious crimes including homicide, forcible rape, aggravated assault, robbery, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. Part II offenses involve less serious crimes such as vandalism, prostitution, drunkenness, disorderly conduct, status offenses, and so forth. Status offenses are acts committed by children which would not be considered crimes if committed by adults.

Table 1. Part II Offenses and Number of Visitor Days for Eight National Parks. 1977 Data.

Park	1977 User Days ^a (millions)	1977 Part II Offenses ^a	Part II Offenses per 100,000 User Days
National Capital Parks	12.5	10,538	84.3
Golden Gate NRA	6.3	2,174	34.5
Lake Mead NRA	6.5	7,072	108.8
Great Smoky Mountains	11.6	2,898	24.9
Gateway East	9.2	3,055	33.2
Shenandoah	3.0	5,882	196.0
Sequoia-Kings Canyon	2.0	2,775	138.8
Rocky Mountain	2.9	2,571	88.7

^aSource: Westover and Chubb (1979). Compiled from National Park Service Statistics.

There is no clear relation between the number of user-days a park receives and the number of Part II offenses recorded. The National Capital Parks recorded 12.5 million user-days in 1977 and 10,538 offenses for a Part II crime rate of 84.3 per 100,000 user-days. During the same period, Great Smoky Mountains National Park had the second highest number of visitor-days (11.6 million), and the lowest crime rate (24.9 Part II offenses per 100,000 user-days) of the eight parks listed. Of course, the type of patrol policies a park uses, the extent to which regulations are enforced, and personal judgement all affect the number of offenses recorded. It seems that the amount of crime occurring in parks is determined by other factors in addition to level of use.

Non-Violent Crime

Park personnel are apt to encounter three types of non-violent crime: littering, vandalism and visitor conflicts. While these have a variety of legal and administrative definitions, the following discussion uses a sociological perspective. That is, we focus on the social consequences of such behavior.

Cleaning up litter involves a large amount of time and expense — over \$18,000 during 1975 on one Forest Service ranger district alone (Blake 1976). Campbell et al. (1968) report that recreationists seem to make an effort to clean their campsites when they arrive but often leave them full of trash upon departure.

All segments of the population litter, and traditional approaches to litter control such as fines have little effect, because the chance of getting caught is too remote. Burgess et al. (1971) found that an immediate positive reinforcer, such as monetary reward for proper trash disposal, was most effective in promoting anti-litter behavior.

Vandalism is often defined as the willful destruction of another's property. For the park employee, the problem with this definition is that it is not always possible to tell if property has been damaged purposefully or broken through improper, although not malicious, use. In this case perhaps vandalism is better defined as the result of any act, intentional or unintentional, which damages either natural or man-made features of the environment.

Vandalism is a pressing problem for all natural resource agencies. The National Park Service estimated losses due to vandalism amounted to \$288,095 in 1978 (Westover and Chubb 1979), while the Forest Service

calculated 1974 losses of \$3 million as a result of vandalistic acts (Clark 1976).

In spite of the magnitude of this problem, our knowledge of vandalism is limited, and the majority of work tends to consist of rhetoric and opinion rather than being based on theory and research (Clark 1978). Consequently, the user of vandalism literature must carefully assess recommendations made to see if they are sound and applicable to particular situations.

Although some sources attribute vandalism to a particular group, adolescent males (Samp 1976), the more insightful work reports that vandalistic acts are performed by a wide range of persons, or in different stages over a period of time (Lichter 1978). A classic study of crime in parks (Campbell et al. 1968), found incidents of vandalism that could be attributed to groups ranging from preteenage children engaged in destructive play to unthinking though well-meaning adults. This and other examples (Kenline 1976) tend to discount the view that there is a "vandal type" which is responsible for all sorts of vandalism.

Conflicts between various groups in outdoor recreation settings may be more prevalent than existing literature would suggest. The reason is that conflict is often difficult to detect and measure. Dramatic and violent events such as the 1970 Yosemite riots or the American Indians' occupation of Alcatraz Island provide glaring examples, but many events are not usually perceived as indicators of conflict. Table 2 provides several conflict indicators, and suggests that decreased attendance, vandalistic acts, confrontations and lawsuits may sometimes be linked to social conflict within urban parks.

Table 2. Potential Indicators of Conflict in Parks, Possible Conflicting Groups and Reasons for the Conflict.

Indicator	Possible Conflicting Groups	Possible Reasons for Conflict
A. vandalistic acts	between user groups and agency	restricted use of an area
B. decreased park attendance	between user groups	one group objects to presence or conduct of another group and stops coming to a particular area
C. riots and other confrontations	a. between user groups	a. one group perceives another group's presence as an intrusion
	b. between users and agency	b. users protesting agency regulations
D. law suits and other legal action	between permanent park residents and agency	action taken by residents as a result of agency control of land use through condemnation, easements or other restrictions

Perhaps the most common type of conflict is between different user groups in a park. Such conflict often results from contrasting attitudes, values and lifestyles (Goodrich 1980). For example, some people feel that parks are appropriate for social gatherings, which may interfere with users with strong environmental and weaker social orientations toward park use (Burch and Wenger 1967; Hendee *et al.* 1968; Clark *et al.* 1971). Conflicts may also occur between experienced and inexperienced participants in a given activity (Bryan 1979), and when one group feels its "home turf" has been invaded by outsiders (Lee 1972).

Urban parks, given their ready accessibility to diverse social groups, are particularly prone to user conflict, especially between older and

younger park users (Westover *et al.* 1980). When this happens, urban parks often receive reputations as places where boisterous behavior, drunkenness, and illicit sexual activity prevail. Increased police surveillance may help improve the park's reputation among older users, but the more youthful users are often resentful of such intrusion (Lee 1972). After a period of time, conflicts may decrease as the conflicting groups find mutually agreeable territories or times of park use (Lee 1972; Westover and Chubb 1979).

Another source of conflict is between managers and users. Clark *et al.* (1971) found managers and campers at Forest Service campgrounds to have differing opinions on a number of issues related to use and management of campgrounds (Table 3). In addition, the managers frequently misjudged user's views on these issues. In a study of crime in Ohio State Parks, Flichenger (1976) reported that, while only 20 percent of the park visitors interviewed felt crime was increasing in Ohio State Parks, almost 76 percent of the park managers interviewed felt crime was becoming more of a problem.

Table 3. Response to the Question, "Do You Feel the Following are Major Problems in Campgrounds Such as This?"^a

	(N)	Not Now a Problem	Becoming More of a Problem	Now a Major Problem
----Percent----				
Theft				
Campers' views	(1,823)	70.1	28.2	1.7
Managers' perception of camper views	(261)	26.7	55.0	18.3
Managers' own views	(262)	15.3	67.8	16.9
Nuisance behavior				
Campers' views	(1,831)	63.1	33.9	3.0
Managers' perception of camper views	(261)	20.7	55.9	23.4
Managers' own views	(261)	11.9	72.8	15.3

Table 3. Response to the Question, "Do You Feel the Following are Major Problems in Campgrounds Such as This?"^a (continued...)

	(N)	Not Now a Problem	Becoming More of a Problem	Now a Major Problem
----Percent----				
Excessive noise				
Campers' views	(1,838)	59.1	35.1	5.9
Managers' perception of camper views	(259)	23.2	46.7	30.1
Managers' own views	(259)	18.1	62.9	18.9
Littering				
Campers' views	(1,844)	48.8	41.2	9.9
Managers' perception of camper views	(261)	21.1	31.9	46.9
Managers' own views	(260)	9.2	47.5	43.3
Rule violations				
Campers' views	(1,820)	55.5	39.1	5.3
Managers' perception of camper views	(261)	30.2	43.9	26.0
Managers' own views	(262)	11.5	59.4	29.1
Vandalism				
Campers' views	(1,819)	62.2	31.3	6.5
Managers' perception of camper views	(260)	20.0	36.2	43.9
Managers' own views	(260)	10.4	57.3	32.3
Trouble in general				
Campers' views	(1,808)	78.2	20.4	1.4
Managers' perception of camper views	(260)	41.4	45.6	13.0
Managers' own views	(261)	23.8	69.6	6.5
Improper management				
Campers' views	(1,828)	90.0	8.6	1.4
Managers' perception of camper views	(258)	68.9	21.2	10.0
Managers' own views	(260)	59.7	32.6	7.8

^aSource: Clark *et al.* 1971.

These results suggest that park managers, who are concerned with increasing crime rates in parks, are likely to see the need for rules and regulations to control this and other problems. Some park visitors, not familiar with the day-to-day problems in the park, may see these rules as imposing unfairly on their park experience, and conflicts may result.

Findings

Social Conflict at Virginia-Kendall Park

At the Ledges area a variety of activities take place. People picnic, play volleyball and baseball, hike the trails and sunbathe. Others relax in the parking area, listen to music, and visit with friends. Park rangers patrol the area, and interpreters occasionally provide programs. Conflict occurs when visitors play music too loudly, are drunk and disorderly, or are involved in status offenses (under-age drinking and so forth). Conflict also occurs when park rangers question visitors, check for identification and vehicle registration, and direct traffic.

In quantitative terms, the area is the location for a large proportion of certain CUVA law violations. Table 4 shows the number of Part I and Part II offenses at the Kendall unit, and for the CUVA as a whole. For Part II offenses, the Kendall unit had 80% of the 1980 recorded violations and 69% of the 1981 violations through July.

Table 4. General Crime Statistics at CUVA.

	<u>Part I</u>		<u>Part II</u>	
	1980	1981 ^a	1980	1981 ^a
Kendall ^b	27	18	1,013	925
Other	150	37	251	411
CUVA	177	55	1,264	1,336

^aonly through 31 July 1981.

^bThe Kendall unit includes locations other than the Ledges.

For specific offenses, the concentration of enforcement activity is even more pronounced. Table 5 shows the courtesy tags and citations given at CUVA for liquor law violations. According to CUVA records, the Kendall unit has been the location for all citations in 1981.

Table 5. Liquor Law Violations at CUVA.

	Courtesy Tags		Citations	
	1980	1981 ^a	1980	1981 ^a
Kendall ^b	582	610	113	98
Other	9	20	0	0
CUVA	591	630	113	98

^aonly through 31 July 1980.

^bThe Kendall unit includes locations other than the Ledges.

There are several reasons for this high concentration of offenses within the Kendall unit, and at the Ledges: 1) it is one of the few developed areas in the park and draws a high percentage of CUVA's visitors, 2) the area is often patrolled by park rangers, 3) many of the offenses are not park-related (lack of vehicle registration, for example). Yet the number of violations, and the comments expressed by visitors and park staff alike, suggest that several groups are involved in serious social conflict.

The Groups Involved

There are at least four social groups in conflict at the Ledges. By "social group" we mean a collection of individuals that roughly share a set of values, attitudes and behaviors. To understand the situation at the Ledges, a brief profile is useful.

1. Park Service Employees

There are approximately 20 park employees that have at least weekly contact with the Ledges area. They are mostly college-educated white males, and have been highly trained by the National Park Service. Some have extensive law enforcement backgrounds. While great differences in values and attitudes separate the individuals involved, and even divisions

of the organization, there are many such values and attitudes they share: concern for the resource, an interest in helping visitors, a belief that national parks are important places. More importantly, they share a common class background.³ Their beliefs toward fundamental values such as the need for social order, a respect for private property, and so forth are similar.

Many of the employees, particularly commissioned law officers, are seriously concerned with the conflict at the Ledges. At least weekly, they are confronted with difficult and tiring law enforcement situations, and with visitors that hold very different values than their own.

2. Conventional Visitors

It is difficult to define conventional visitors, since the kinds of people that visit parks have changed dramatically over time (see Gilles [1981] for a history of visitors in the parks). Defining a conventional visitor to urban parks is especially difficult, for the main characteristic of urban park-goers is their diversity. At CUVA, conventional visitors are defined as those that share values and behaviors consistent with middle-class society. Most are employed in blue- and white-collar jobs in the Cleveland-Akron metropolitan region. Most come to the Ledges in family groups — couples, small family groups, large reunions. They obey most regulations, respect and admire the park staff, and use the park quietly. Typical activities include picnicking, games, hiking and sun-bathing. They use the open fields, the wooded picnic area, the shelter

³Defining social class is always difficult. A social class is comprised of persons who have a similar level and source of income and type of occupation, and a similar share of societal wealth, power and authority.

area and the trails. A major motivation for coming to the park is to be with family and friends.

Several of the interviews suggested that such visitors are offended by other social groups, concerned with law violations in the area, and sometimes avoided the Ledges. While observations did not confirm this, it is likely that some portion of the conventional visitors are in conflict with the more non-conventional groups. Undoubtedly, some conventional visitors avoid the area.

3. Youthful Non-Conventional Visitors

The Ledges has, for a long time, been a popular place for high school youths to congregate. In fact, several older visitors remarked they had visited the Ledges as teenagers. On "skip days," large numbers of teens go to the Ledges instead of school, to visit with friends and drink beer. These groups will often use the fields and parking lot. They are loosely organized, with leaders, scouts (who "check the park out") and schedules. Illegal activities such as underage drinking, marijuana smoking and drug use are common; an occasional fight occurs; no serious Part I felonies have been reported with these events.

On other days, teenage visitors come in smaller groups (carloads) and use the parking lot. They play music, talk with friends, and drink beer. The park is merely a setting for social contact, and not an active part in their experiences. The parking lot serves as a kind of "commons;" their cars serve as park benches. Some go to the Ledges (there are regular accidents in which drunken visitors fall off the cliffs); only a few use the fields and hiking trails.

These visitors are mostly local, from blue-collar families, and white. They neither admire nor respect the NPS, though their attitudes toward local

law enforcement agencies were even more negative. Their attitudes toward the resource, rules and regulations, and the rights of others differ from the park staff and conventional visitors. Table 6 shows the number of liquor law violations by age. The majority of offenses are committed by youths 17-19 years old. There is some suggestion (from the interviews) that "drinking at the Ledges" is merely a stage in leisure life styles. It is possible that some non-conventional visitors alter their use of the park as they go through the life cycle, conforming to the conventional norms for behavior as they become adults.

Table 6. 1980 Liquor Law Violations
by Age.

Age	Number of Offenses
13-14	1
15	0
16	3
17	30
18	28
19	33
20	16
21	4
22	4
23	1
24	1
25-29	3

4. Non-Conventional Adults

The last major group of visitors can be called non-conventional adults. They are approximately 20-30 years old, and for the most part residents of the region. A large number are unemployed, though most have

job experience and many have simply been laid off. They are white, high school educated, and from blue collar-families.

These visitors use the park on a regular basis; it is an important locale for their recreation. During certain parts of the year they often come to the Ledges daily, to meet friends, play music and drink beer. For some, "hassling" the law enforcement officers is part of the activity.

This group does not share the attitudes and behaviors of the other social groups that use the Ledges. They neither admire nor respect the NPS, though their attitudes toward individual park employees range from tolerance and curiosity to anger and distrust. They understand park regulations but choose to ignore them where inconvenient. A significant portion bring weapons (clubs, knives, brass knuckles), though they are not used in the park. Fights occur infrequently; confrontations with park staff are commonplace.

In addition to these four kinds of visitors, other social groups use the park: school outings bring young children, a day group is operated by the NPS, and so forth. They play only a small role in the social conflict occurring at the Ledges.

The Conflicts Involved

There are three major conflicts occurring at the Ledges area:

- 1) Conflict between conventional and non-conventional visitors.
- 2) Conflict between law enforcement personnel and non-conventional visitors.
- 3) Conflict within CUVA staff.

The actual conflict between conventional and non-conventional visitors is minimal. There have been no assaults upon visitors, and face-to-face

confrontations (shouting, throwing beer cans, insults, etc.) are uncommon. Essentially, these groups compete for defining the Ledges area. The "atmosphere" of the Ledges is crucial for conventional and non-conventional visitors alike. They differ in their view of the kind of place the Ledges should be. Both groups will avoid the area if the other is in a clear majority, and both minimize contact if possible.

The conflict between law enforcement personnel and non-conventional visitors is more widespread. Until recently, the NPS had a "high law enforcement posture." Non-conventional visitors were often checked for identification, armed patrols walked the parking lot, and a high number of warnings and citations were handed out for minor offenses (such as loud music). Visitor contact was primarily for law enforcement purposes. Officers acted on discretion, often without complaints from other visitors. More fundamentally, several commissioned officers made clear their disapproval of the non-conventional visitors' lifestyle. Derogatory comments among officers (not to visitors), and a belligerent demeanor expressed real conflict over attitudes and values.

Likewise, the non-conventional visitors held little regard for the NPS staff. The teenagers' general response to park staff was grudging compliance; the non-conventional adults' was belligerence and threat of violence. Contact over minor offenses quickly escalated to confrontation; those visitors that were drunk or on drugs reacting the most explosively. "Hassling" rangers was a way to gain respect among peers; with regular visitors, personal animosities toward specific NPS individuals heightened the tension.

Conflict within the CUVA staff is relevant to the Ledges' problems if it alters the balance between the groups that use the area. Recent staff changes, a management style not conducive to input from below, and

a reversal in law enforcement policy all contribute to a lack of consensus within the CUVA staff as to what is appropriate behavior at the Ledges — for visitors and for park personnel. The political nature of the park adds to the confusion. This confusion in purpose has led to a lack of NPS presence at the Ledges, a sharp reduction in warnings and citations, and a temporary lull in confrontations at the area.

While difficult to document, it is the potential for violent conflict at the Ledges that is the serious problem. Compared to many urban parks, the Ledges is relatively calm. There are no gang wars over park turf, only minimal racial tension, and little major drug dealing. Yet the combination of non-conventional adults, drug and alcohol use, and weapons means the potential for violence is present. The adversary role of the NPS suggests that such violence would be directed at commissioned NPS officers.

Processes

The conflicts at the Ledges occur in a fairly predictable pattern, with daily and seasonal cycles in the amount of conflict and the number of violations.

Daily Cycles

There is a distinct daily cycle to visitation at the Ledges. As Figure 1 shows, the Ledges area is little used in the morning. A few conventional visitors may come before 10:00 a.m.; they often are the first arrivals of a reunion planned for the afternoon. Use increases during the early afternoon, with the youthful non-conventional visitors occupying the parking lot. By late afternoon the adult non-conventional visitors arrive

and the conventional visitors begin to leave. The NPS presence is varied, and depends upon management strategies.

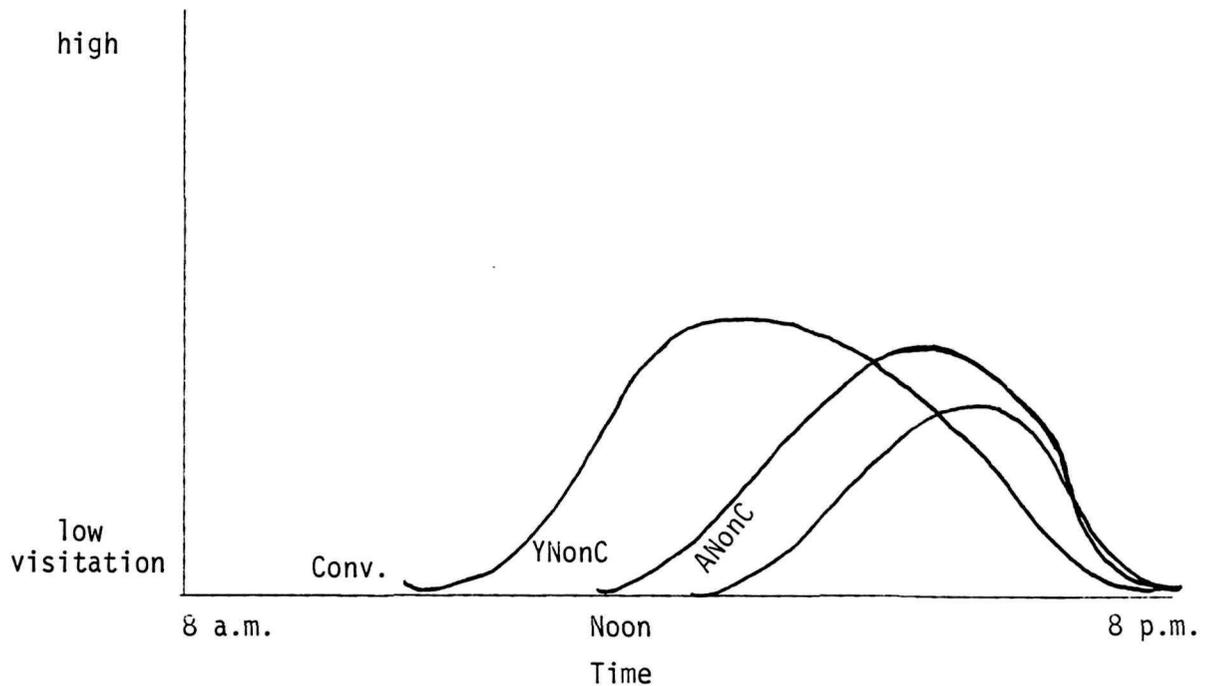


Figure 1. Daily Cycles at the Ledges.

Weekly Cycles

Saturdays and Sundays are busy days at the Ledges, but surprisingly, midweek afternoons seem to have almost similar levels of use. Weather is a major factor: rain, wind and humidity can lower participation on a weekend; sun and moderate temperatures can increase participation on weekdays. Most reunions use the area on weekends. Table 7 shows that the shelter area was reserved and used on 88% of the summer and fall weekend days.

Table 7. 1980 Use of Shelter at the Ledges Area.

Month	Total Requests	Cancellations	Weekend Days Used	Cancellations
June	14	5	3	1
July	25	4	8	0
August	23	7	9	1
September	18	3	8	0
October	<u>7</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	87	21	32	4

Seasonal Cycles

Strong seasonal cycles also occur at the Ledges. Figure 2 gives a crude estimate of these trends. Non-conventional visitors use the park when the climate is conducive to sitting, talking and so forth: early fall, the spring and early summer. Conventional visitors have higher winter use and more consistent use during the summer. (Again, this information is based on only a few interviews with visitors and park staff. Actual visitation trends may be somewhat different.) Until recently, the NPS presence at the Ledges corresponded to peak usage by non-conventional visitors.

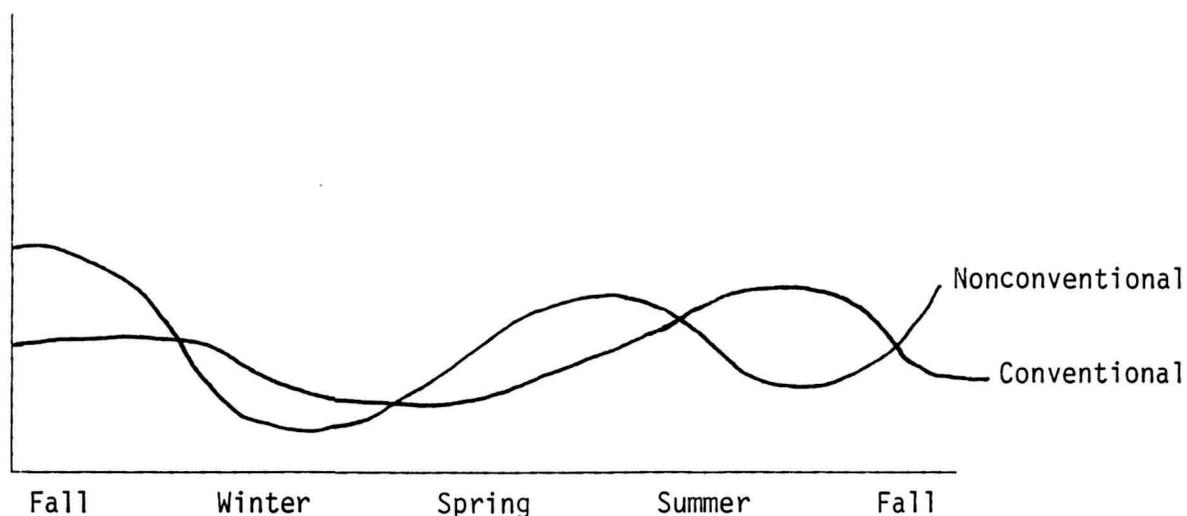


Figure 2. Seasonal Cycles at the Ledges.

Assessment of Management Alternatives

To deal with the Ledges situation, there are a variety of management alternatives available to CUVA staff. Each is likely to have consequences, or impacts, that can be considered in choosing a management strategy. The major alternatives and their likely consequences are discussed below.

1. Facility Design Changes

Facility design changes could include redesigning the parking area, construction of landscaped dividers and barriers, addition of more picnic tables, and increased signs and interpretive displays.

Altering the parking lot is likely to alter its use as a "commons" by non-conventional visitors. Dividing the lot into smaller, landscaped sections may reduce the potential for confrontation by isolating incidents from view. Conventional and non-conventional visitors may be better able to co-exist, as distinct boundaries become possible.

Addition of picnic tables near the parking lot may draw non-conventional visitors away from their cars, but this is not likely to do more than expand the area where conflict is occurring. Increased NPS signs and interpretive displays may help define the area as appropriate for conventional visitors, and posting of regulations may have a slight effect on violations (especially among conventional and young non-conventional visitors).

2. Regulation and Policy Changes

Regulations and policies that govern the use of Virginia-Kendall Park are undergoing major changes. During the short span of this study, the law enforcement presence in the area changed dramatically, along with

policies governing the procedures used by park staff. It is difficult to assess the effectiveness of current levels of enforcement, for there is not a consensus among park staff as to management objectives for the area. If visitor safety is the sole criterion, then the relative lack of Part I offenses at the Ledges indicates current policies are adequate. If management's goals are more complex ("a quality experience for visitors," "protecting the resource," and so forth), then assessment is difficult. Under such conditions, regulation and policy changes seem likely.

More lenient regulations might include a tolerance policy on certain nuisance offenses (i.e. loud music that has led to no complaints), an enforcement procedure that relies on verbal and written warnings rather than citations, and a reduced law enforcement presence.

More restrictive regulations and policies might include a ban on alcohol (either park-wide or specific to VK), a policy of citations for all nuisance and status offenses, strict parking control on high-use days, and an increased law enforcement presence.

Generally, the more lenient regulations are likely to increase certain conflicts at the Ledges. While these actions can be imposed upon CUVA staff by administrative fiat, some conflict within the staff may result unless management objectives are made clear.

An increase in nuisance and status offenses is a possible consequence of any tolerance policy, and the result may be increased conflict between conventional and non-conventional visitors. If managers and conventional visitors begin to disagree over such lenient policies, a new element of conflict is possible.

More restrictive regulations and policies are likely to cause major changes at the Ledges. A ban on alcohol (coupled with vigorous enforcement) is likely to disperse non-conventional visitors from the parking lot, and redefine the area as appropriate to conventional visitors. The number of status offenses is likely to drop, along with related nuisance problems. Such a ban would not be totally effective, and status offenses would likely increase somewhat on the trails, in the picnic areas, and in other areas of the park. Depending upon how it is implemented, a period of confrontation with, and education of, park visitors is likely.

Other than the ban on alcohol, stricter regulations and policy are likely to have a "chilling" effect on use at Virginia-Kendall. Citations for all nuisance and status offenses is likely to escalate conflict between managers and non-conventional visitors, and the increased law enforcement presence may actually deter some conventional visitors from using the area.

3. Training

Training programs are an alternative strategy that focuses on changing individual NPS personnel: altering their attitudes toward visitors, increasing their skill, and contributing to their professionalism. Such programs could include material on visitor contact and effective communication, stress among law enforcement personnel, techniques for dealing with confrontation and so forth.

Training programs are likely to improve manager-visitor relations and reduce conflict if they are 1) of sufficient quality and relevance to interest employees, and 2) if they deal realistically with the situation at the Ledges. Effective training may sharpen managers' skills at dealing with non-conventional visitors, violent confrontation, and personal stress,

which in turn may reduce the intensity of conflict at the Ledges. Such programs could also be used by administrators to build a consensus regarding NPS posture at the Ledges.

General Recommendations

It is not the purpose of this report to recommend specific management alternatives for dealing with social conflict at Virginia-Kendall Park. The previous section illustrates that each alternative is likely to have advantages and disadvantages, and that the social impact of a particular strategy ought to be considered. The following recommendations are general in nature, and apply to any strategy taken by management.

1. A multi-dimensional approach should be used. The problem at the Ledges cannot be effectively resolved by law enforcement, resource protection, or interpretive personnel alone. By combining design, enforcement, policy and program changes, the CUVA staff can deal with conflict in ways that improve the area for visitors and fulfill the responsibilities of the NPS.
2. An intra-park task force should be created. Its job would be to reduce conflict at the Ledges area. Representatives from administration, maintenance, visitor services, resource protection and law enforcement should be included. This group could provide valuable information to the superintendent and be helpful in building a consensus within the CUVA staff as to how to deal with the situation at the Ledges. Such a consensus, along with explicit management objectives for the area, are critical to resolving many of the conflicts.

Each division, of course, has its particular responsibilities and expertise. Nevertheless, a variety of cooperative efforts seem plausible.

The task force could coordinate a program of law enforcement, design alternatives and interpretive programming. Duplication of effort could be reduced, and inter-divisional cooperation increased. Such a task force can be disbanded when successful.

- 3) A basic element of the conflict at the Ledges is a lack of knowledge about visitors' backgrounds, attitudes, and behaviors. A survey of visitors should be conducted. It should focus on basic demographic information, participation rates, perceptions of current problems, and attitudes toward management policies. Such a survey could be used in training sessions for NPS personnel, and in the planning of increased programming for the Ledges area. As CUVA is a relatively new and complex park, a visitor survey would have several benefits beyond the Ledges situation: increased knowledge about visitors is a valuable asset to managers.

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