

CRISIS, LAW ENFORCEMENT

by

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Law enforcement operations today in many National Park Service areas have assumed paramount importance due to the increase in lawlessness throughout the nation and the consequent spillover of crime into many of our National Parks.

Before I present an examination of the increase in crime presently experienced in many of our national park and recreation areas, I would like to describe some of the problems currently being encountered and dealt with in the large recreation area which is my duty-station--Ozark National Scenic Riverways, the nation's first National Scenic Riverway, which was authorized by Congress in 1964. My interest in describing such problems is to acquaint conference participants with law enforcement problems experienced in an area of this type.

The boundaries of Ozark National Scenic Riverways encompass approximately 87,000 acres of land and 147 miles of free-flowing river. During 1970, approximately four hundred violations of law were prosecuted in local courts by National Park Rangers. Rangers at Ozark Riverways serve as deputy sheriffs in the four counties within which the Riverways is located, and also are appointed by the Missouri Department of Conservation as Conservation Agents. Arrests were made by Rangers for numerous types of violations of law including burglary, disorderly conduct, assault, liquor law violations, traffic offenses, hunting and fishing violations, possession and use of narcotics, plus numerous other infractions of law. Over two million persons visited Ozark Riverways during 1970. Traffic studies completed by the University of Missouri and the Missouri Highway Department indicate that visitors to the area will number 19 million persons by 1990. Our greatest law enforcement problem during the past year has come about as the result of the formation of an association made up of persons who believe in freely violating the wildlife laws and escaping judgement for their acts. The members of this association contribute \$12 - \$15 to a central "pot" which is then deposited in a bank to draw interest. This money is used to retain an unethical attorney who represents members arrested and charged with violating wildlife laws. A "not guilty" plea is entered for the defendant and a jury trial requested by the attorney in the defendant's behalf. In Missouri's magistrate courts where misdemeanor offenses are heard, a jury numbers six persons. After the jury has been selected and prior to the trial, the numerous members of the association informally advise jurors through the "grapevine" that it would be sad indeed, should the jurors suffer losses of livestock or should their buildings burn. The result in most cases is a verdict of not guilty. To date we have twice arrested the Presiding Judge of a local county court (this court has no judicial authority but instead administers county funds, road programs, and tax collections) for violations of wildlife regulations. This man has strong ties with the association. We will in the very near future, begin handling most prosecutions in the Federal Magistrate's Court. A Federal Magistrate will

very shortly be appointed to serve Ozark Riverways. Through the federal judicial system we hope to curb the activities of the association of wildlife law violators. I have two classified ads with me which, though representing opposing points of view, probably indicate that we are at least striking a "happy medium" in our law enforcement efforts:

"To poachers: This is to request that after you have killed a deer that you remove such things as the skin, tail and legs from the proximity of our farm as we do not like for our dogs to bring them in and cast suspicion upon us. Mr. and Mrs. V. T. Smith."

"Farm for Sale -- Hunter's paradise. 300 acres adjoining 800,000 acres of government and state land. Is spotlighted from 0 - 5 different bunches per night, about 100 nights per year. Is dogged at least two days a week, about 6 months out of the year. Is hunted at night all fall until January. Will sell to the highest bidder. Mrs. T. L. Kendall."

These ads were taken from the classified section of the "Current Local" a weekly newspaper published in Van Buren, Missouri where the headquarters of Ozark Riverways is located.

Law enforcement officers are spread very thin in the Ozark region. Basically, in each county the law is enforced by one highway patrolman, one sheriff with no paid deputies, and one conservation agent. Though our rangers serve as deputy sheriffs in several counties and conservation agents, our policy is to function as such only within our boundaries. Of necessity however, we find ourselves quite often assisting other officers with serious law enforcement emergencies outside of our own boundaries since law enforcement officers are so few in the Ozark region. We have been instrumental in helping the sheriffs in the four county Riverways' area to obtain grants for the purchase of radio systems. Our dispatch center now contains radio facilities which link Ozark Riverways with the Missouri State Highway Patrol, the Missouri Department of Conservation, and the various county sheriffs.

Law enforcement problems over the National Park System as a whole have increased astronomically during the past five years. The increase in felonies in the National Parks has exceeded the nationwide average each year since 1965.

Public attendance in the National Parks has increased steadily throughout the years. In 1941, there were 21,000,000 visits to the National Parks; in 1956, there were 55,000,000, in 1962, there were 97,000,000; and in 1969, there were 164,000,000. During the last decade, the attendance rate has increased by approximately 8% per annum. Neither the training, nor the actual number of park rangers assigned to law enforcement and public safety duties has been sufficient to cope with the increases in attendance and crime within the parks.

FACTS

(1) History PART I - OFFENSES (Felonies)

<u>Field Areas</u>	<u>National Capitol Region Park Areas</u>
1967 - 2,307	1967 - 1,092
1968 - 3,125	1968 - 1,274
1969 - 4,117	1969 - 1,368

(Including 11 criminal homicides, 10 forcible rapes, 12 armed robberies, 400 burglaries, 3,525 larcenies, 78 assaults, 80 auto thefts).

PART II - OFFENSES (Misdemeanors)

<u>Field Areas</u>	<u>National Capitol Region Park Areas</u>
1967 - 20,504	
1968 - 27,756	1968 - 40,635
1969 - 37,855	1969 - 59,771

(Including traffice offenses, disorderly conduct, hunting & fishing offenses, liquor offenses, sex offenses, etc.).

TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

<u>Field Areas</u>	<u>National Capitol Region Park Areas</u>
1968 - 3,017 (58 persons killed)	1968 - 3,053 (32 persons killed)
1969 - 3,218 (68 persons killed)	1969 - 3,357 (31 persons killed)

Present Situation

The traditional ranger in many areas today is primarily a lawman; he must fill the role of beat officer, traffic officer, game warden, and narcotics and homicide detective. During the past summer, rangers dealt with group confrontations and disturbances in Yosemite, an invasion of outlaw motorcyclists in the Black Hills, dope pushing in numerous park campgrounds, and a summer crime rate in Yosemite which equalled that of a city of 70,000 people.

In diagnosing the problem, several statements must be considered:

- (1) "The single abiding purpose of National Parks is to bring man and his environment into closer harmony. It is therefore the quality of the park experience - and not the statistics of travel - which must be the primary concern".
- (2) "We cannot continue to compound people on top of people or we will destroy the very thing we are here to protect".
- (3) "Protecting the parks from man in many areas is almost more than the rangers can do; now we find we must protect man from man".

We must now ask ourselves - "How far can we stretch a ranger"? It is apparent that the interpretation function and the law enforcement function require individuals with completely different attitudes, abilities, interests, and academic and training preparation. The interpreter is very much oriented toward the natural sciences. The law enforcement officer is more people-oriented and social science-oriented. Finding an individual who can function effectively in both roles is extremely difficult, yet some historians, naturalists, and interpreters are supervising the law enforcement function (out of necessity) due to lack of personnel and funds. In some cases they contribute to the problem rather than the solution. The International Association of Chiefs of Police has recently completed an in-depth review of the law enforcement posture of the National Park Service which has resulted in the reorganization of various law enforcement operations, training programs, and related activities such as the recruiting of law enforcement personnel.

Various alternatives have been examined in seeking a solution to our law enforcement problems:

- (1) Maintaining the present system
 - (a) It is an inconsistent program at best.
 - (b) Law enforcement procedures differ widely from area to area.
 - (c) Many law enforcement functions and duties are performed by the seasonal rangers who possess the least formal law enforcement and academic preparation and training experience.

- (d) With all divisions in basically the same uniform it is difficult for the public to recognize the law enforcement officer or to distinguish between the maintenance men and the rangers.
- (2) Could local cooperating agencies take over law enforcement in the parks?
 - (a) No tax money is received by the States or Counties from government lands.
 - (b) The U. S. Forest Service is able to claim some local law enforcement assistance when desired since 25% of timber sale money is returned to the county in which the timber was cut.
 - (3) Should we create a separate and independent police agency within the National Park Service to police all NPS areas?
 - (a) Such a large police organization with a separate organization structure and support systems would be extremely costly.
 - (b) Responsibility for law enforcement and public safety under such a system would be removed from the Superintendent and Rangers.
 - (4) Creating a special law enforcement career service within the present ranger series.
 - (a) Public safety rangers would specialize in law enforcement and would have a strong police science or criminology background reinforced by extensive training at the National Park Service Law Enforcement Training Academy in Washington.
 - (b) This proposal was particularly favored by the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

During the past several months, law enforcement training has been stepped up considerably and a comprehensive law enforcement training program initiated. Rangers assigned to law enforcement activities will receive 560 hours of law enforcement training at the National Park Service Law Enforcement Training Academy in Washington. Such training will be reinforced through seminars and specialized training courses in such fields as narcotics investigation, riot control, and other allied subjects which will be presented in the field rather than in Washington. Human relations training will be stepped up and law enforcement management seminars with heavy emphasis on the social sciences will be attended by rangers who supervise law enforcement operations.

Rangers are currently participating in numerous training schools in the law enforcement field such as the National Park Service Law Enforcement Training Academy, various State, County and City Police Academies,

the U. S. Army Civil Disturbance School, the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs Training School, and the F.B.I. National Academy.

Technology has been increased and rangers have at their disposal, relatively sophisticated law enforcement equipment. The National Crime Information Center (NCIC) is utilized as is the Law Enforcement Teletype System (LETS). Joint radio communications are maintained also with adjoining police departments.

Hopefully, with the increased emphasis on law enforcement training and the recruiting of personnel with academic preparation in not only the biological sciences, but also police science, law, or criminology we will be able to effectively stem the rapidly increasing crime rate.

Our training must heavily emphasize human relations and reinforce the fact that the law enforcement officer must remain impartial and open-minded regardless of the mode of dress, hairstyle, or beliefs of the persons with whom he is interacting. The following comment from the International Association of Chiefs of Police publication - "Police and Their Opinions" describes the dilemma of the modern day officer:

"The impersonal and impartial conduct which officers are officially expected to display often seems unsuited to the realities of human interaction under stressfull street conditions. A sympathetic observer can easily understand the frustrations felt by officers under these trying conditions and circumstances. Perhaps we are asking police officers to do something that is beyond the capacity of ordinary mortals".

Thank you.