

'In the developing countries, everyone is anxious to develop tourism, but if they don't protect their resources, they could have a very short-lived industry.' — Tabata

**Biologists
strive for
balance
in park**

Visiting a new Yellowstone

Profiteering in the Parks?

**FOREST SERVICE
PERSPECTIVES**

**Crowd Figures
Rile Readers**

*Dollar Value Can't Be Placed
on Wilderness Areas*

**Americans Are Willing
To Sacrifice to Reduce
Pollution**

**Jackson runway extension
sparks clash of opinions**

**Travel Prices Expected to
Resist Usual Summer Rise**

Popularity of parks threatens to pave them over



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United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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JUN 22 1990

June 21, 1990

Memorandum

To: Park Superintendents

From: Assistant to the Director for Science and Technology

Subject: Forest Service Plans: Recreation and Wilderness Management

Under provisions of the 1974 Resource Planning Act, the Forest Service is required to provide an update every 10 years of the status of the Nation's renewable resources. This assessment includes "an analysis of present and anticipated uses, demand for, and supply of the renewable resources of forest, range, and other associated lands with consideration for the international resource situation..." for both public and private lands.

The 1989 Forest Service update contains a Section dealing with outdoor recreation and wilderness. A copy of the highlights from this Section is attached. I think you will find the observations, demand projections and conclusions as seen from the Forest Service perspective to be quite interesting.

Although not discussed in this part of the Forest Service study, it should be noted that logging activities are to be reduced significantly in the National Forests in the years immediately ahead, and that much greater emphasis will be placed on recreation activities. For example, by 1995, it is projected that skiing, fishing, hunting and other leisure activities on Forest Service lands will generate some \$5 billion annually in revenue, while logging will generate only about \$1 billion. These changes suggest a greater interaction in the future between NPS and FS interests.

Richard H. Briceland



Outdoor Recreation and Wilderness

The number of people participating in outdoor recreation will increase in the future as population increases. People will recreate more often, but they will travel shorter distances. Growth in incomes will increase demands for more costly forms of recreation such as downhill skiing and boating. The growth in recreation opportunities varies across the United States. Private lands are becoming less accessible; for example, only 21 percent of them are now available for free use. This will place more pressure on public lands, especially those near population centers.

Current Resource Situation

Lands available for recreation and the willingness of landowners to provide recreation differ significantly across the Nation.

- State and local governments manage over 54 million acres of recreation lands; 55 percent of these lands are in the East.
- The Federal Government manages 690 million acres of recreation lands; 95 percent of these lands are in the West.
- Nonindustrial, privately owned, rural lands open for recreation are declining because of conversion to other uses and restrictions on access. Only about 21 percent of these lands are open (free to the public) for recreation.

The National Wilderness Preservation System contains 89 million acres of Federal lands open for recreation: 57 million acres are in Alaska and 32 million acres are in the lower 48 States. Of the total 89 million acres, 32 million are managed by the Forest Service, 27 million of which are in the lower 48 States. The rate of increase in wilderness recreation visits has been slowing in recent years to the point where it has leveled off or even declined in some areas. Recognition of the nonrecreational uses of wilderness, such as education, scientific study, habitat preservation, and ecosystem preservation, is increasing.

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System comprises more than 7,000 miles of rivers and streams, of which more than 85 percent are in the West. Sixty thousand miles have been identified by States as significant and, of those, 6,000 miles have been designated as "State system wild and scenic rivers" and are thus managed and protected.

Nationally, about one-third of downhill ski areas are on National Forest System lands. In the West, the percentage is higher – 83 percent in the Rocky Mountain region and 78 percent in the Pacific Coast region. Over 67 percent of the Nation's cross-country ski areas are located in the Northeast.

Federal agencies are actively encouraging private investment in and operation of sites, facilities, and services on public lands. These partnerships between the public and private sectors have stimulated a healthy expansion of opportunities on public lands.

Projected Demands and Supplies to 2040

The demand for recreation continues to rise, but the rapid rate of increase in outdoor recreation has slowed in recent years. At present, the rate of increase in the use of public recreation areas largely matches the rate of increase in population.

Extended long-distance vacations, especially by automobile, are being replaced by more frequent, close-to-home trips. Consequently, providing recreation opportunities close to population centers will become much more important in the future. Sites within 100 miles of major population centers will experience much heavier use.

Management, resource availability, access, and facility needs are projected to become more acute in the East than in the West. In the East, recreation opportunities near population centers are much more limited, crowding is greater, and private land closures have greater impact. Increasingly important limitations to outdoor recreation are lack of access to private lands and waters and of easements across private lands to reach public lands and waters.

Gaps between the demand for activities and the supply of available sites are much larger for land-based activities than for water-based activities. The largest shortages appear to be for dispersed activities such as day hiking, sightseeing, and backpacking because of the location of the population relative to the resource. Water-based activities with the largest projected shortages are swimming in pools and such nonmotorized lake and river activities as sailing, canoeing, and kayaking. The largest shortages of snow- and ice-based recreation are for dispersed activities, such as cross-country skiing.

Effects

In general, Americans who are city dwellers, elderly, less educated, economically disadvantaged, or disabled or belong to a racial minority have fewer opportunities to participate in resource-based recreation than do others.

Increased economic opportunities for the private sector are projected as sites are developed and associated goods and services are provided. Increased government revenue generated by user fees is expected to be offset by higher management costs for dispersed recreation.

Opportunities

There are opportunities to satisfy many recreation demands through:

- Improving public-private partnerships and interagency cooperation among public agencies at all levels.
- Improving efficiency in the management of recreation sites through improved maintenance and separation of uses.
- Improving the plans and designs of facilities to protect existing environments and resources.
- Providing types of recreation that match public demands and preferences.

Challenges to Improving Recreation Management

The principal obstacle to providing more recreation from Federal lands is the fact that appropriate lands are primarily located in the West and most of the population lives in the East.

The location of private lands relative to population will provide substantial opportunities for private recreation development.

Private landowners may be hesitant about opening their lands for public use, given the liability risks.

Public agencies need to cooperate and coordinate resource management activities at levels necessary to meet projected demands.

Implications for Recreation and Wilderness Management

Managers of public lands could manage recreation sites intensively, provide for resource interpretation for visitors, and conduct outreach programs to potential user groups.

Managers of public lands could also support access to both public and private lands and waters. Exchanges, easements, acquisition, and partnerships need to become more prevalent to provide for more access.

Maintaining the level of visual quality expected by users will be a significant management challenge. Quality, safety, and convenience will become increasingly important aspects of recreation management on public lands.

To provide recreation services to more segments of the public, recreation managers could expand and accelerate recreation and wilderness research programs. Particular research needs include improved techniques for handling more people at existing sites, for providing a broader array of sites and activities at reasonable costs, for monitoring wilderness uses and values, and for recreation planning and marketing.

Enhancing the opportunities for nonrecreational use of designated wildernesses and primitive areas could make a significant contribution toward the study of how ecosystems respond to outside influences, such as atmospheric deposition.