

**The federal role in outdoor recreation**

**Lack of data hampering scientists**

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**Americans pummel parks with conflicting goals**

**Trampling the natural ecology**

**BLUE RIDGE PKWY SOCIO-ECON PLANNING**

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

**Park begins two-year visitor use study**

**'Random samples are becoming impossible to obtain.'**

**Do you like the way the national parks are run?**

**Rhetoric Easier Than Action on Environment**

**The American Pursuit of Time**

**Tons of trampling tourists**



# United States Department of the Interior



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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IN REPLY REFER TO:

December 10, 1990

Memorandum

To: Park Superintendents

From: Assistant to the Director for Science and Technology

Subject: SOCIO-ECONOMIC COMPONENTS OF THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY'S  
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

One of the things I have been trying to accomplish through this Superintendents' Memorandum Series is to show the relevance of socio-economic work in day-to-day park management activities.

A case in point is the Resource Management Plan prepared recently for the Blue Ridge Parkway. This document explicitly calls for development of a Human Resources Management Plan that deals with fundamental management questions such as:

- What new recreational opportunities should be provided for visitors in the future?
- What constraints on visitor use should be applied to avoid unacceptable visitor conflicts?
- What kinds and levels of visitor services, facilities and transportation systems are needed?

Clearly the Park will require baseline visitor data and other socio-economic information to answer such questions. In this regard, the Parkway's Resource Management Plan proposes a number of new park-specific socio-economic studies, such as the following:

- . Evaluate the effects of increased recreational use upon the experiences of other visitors. Determine what factors affect social carrying capacity limits.
- . Establish visitor baseline data for the Parkway. . . . demographic data; services and facilities utilized; length of stay; recreational preferences; visitor values and attitudes; visitor satisfaction achieved; etc.
- . Assess visitor expectations for recreation opportunities. Learn more about how visitor interests and needs are changing; use this information to develop and market new recreational opportunities for the public.

- . Measure visitor values associated with scenic vistas along the Parkway, and determine the need for new management actions to protect those vistas.
- . Identify special visitor populations (older adults, minority visitors, etc.) and assess their unique needs and interests.
- . Assess the economic impacts and marketing of Parkway visitation. Learn more about how park activities affect tourist sensitive economies.

What the Blue Ridge Parkway's Resource Management Plan does that is both unique and forward looking is, first, to recognize the need for socio-economic data as an integral part of resource management planning; and second, to identify specific projects and studies that need to be carried out to provide that socio-economic information. As the Resource Management Plan so aptly puts it: "These sociological and behavioral project efforts will yield important data and background for more efficient and effective Parkway management."

Those who have an interest in the socio-economic aspects of the Blue Ridge Parkway's Resource Management Plan, or who may wish to see copies of the Park's socio-economic Project Statement Sheets, should contact Dr. Frank Noe, Regional Sociologist, in the SERO.



Richard H. Briceland