

Conservation of Recreational and Scenic Resources

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Introduction

The concept of preservation of a natural area for recreational use, or for its scenic value, seems a paradox to many people. Natural resources are commonly thought of only in the sense that they yield material products. That state and national parks should remain inviolate, its forests uncut, its wildlife protected,—in fact, all commercial exploitation to be forbidden is not universally appreciated.

It is true that our civilization thrives on effective use of material resources. But the need for satisfying spiritual values is just as great. Recreational lands set aside as parks yield the great cultural and inspirational products of knowledge, refreshment, and esthetic enjoyment equally needed by all people.

Mission 66, a name applied to a long-range plan for the National Parks, describes the function of the parks as follows:

"As our vacation lands, they bring enjoyment and refreshment of mind, body, and spirit to millions of Americans each year.

"It is the history of America and if its youngsters could but journey through the whole system from site to site, they would gain a deep understanding of the history of their country; of the natural processes which have given form to our land, and of men's actions upon it from distant prehistoric times."

For those who must ascribe an economic value to all resources, parks do contribute materially to the national economy. The American Automobile Association calls the parks the primary touring objective of the American public. The unique situation of the National Parks is that while we preserve them and use them for their inherent, non-commercial values, they are contributing directly to the economic life of the Nation.

It is a lasting tribute to the far-sighted individuals of Indiana who recognized these same values in establishing our system of state parks. The general philosophy regarding natural and scenic areas permeated the policies for administration of parks from the outset. In spite of the vicissitudes of Indiana politics we are fortunate that these policies have been fundamentally adhered to in forty years of park history.

Colonel Richard Lieber, first director of the Indiana Department of Conservation, in an address delivered to the Ohio Valley Regional Park Conference, Wheeling, West Virginia, in 1928, defined a state park as "a typical portion of the States' original domain; a tract of adequate size, preserved in primeval, unspoilt, 'unimproved,' or 'beautified' condition. It is a physical expression of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

"A state park must have either scenic or historic value or both, . . . and is dedicated to the public for the intelligent use of its leisure time."

"No, our parks and preserves are not mere picnicking places. They are rich store-houses of memories and reveries. They are guides and counsels to the weary and faltering in spirit. They are bearers of wonderful tales to him who will listen; a solace to the aged and an inspiration to the young."

"And if all that is true of the present, what will it not be in the future? When the congestion of an ever-increasing population in those days has changed everything but these primitive places, our state parks will be one of the most priceless possessions of our people."

Colonel Lieber steadfastly held to his original policies of charging a modest admission, protecting the natural terrain and values, developing wisely and providing necessary facilities as funds became available. He believed the parks should be as nearly self-supporting as possible without becoming a burden to the taxpayer. Likewise, he was strongly in favor of providing facilities for camping, accommodations for families in cabins and inns. He firmly believed that it was desirable for families to enjoy vacations together and that the cost of facilities should be cheap enough to serve all who wished to enjoy the out-of-doors.

The 1925 annual report of the Indiana Department of Conservation published a talk entitled, "What Is A State Park?", presented to the first Regional Conference for State Parks at Clifty Falls, by Col. Lieber. He said, "State Parks offer much to all classes of citizens. To the city dweller they bring the solace of quiet and solitude. In the same place the rural people may find the pleasure of crowds and intercourse with strangers, the student finds much to study in the flora, fauna, and geologic structure, the artist finds beauty, the young find the sport of swimming, hiking, and fishing and the beneficence of nature gives to each who comes what he wishes. Likewise, the park demands of its visitors that they do not destroy or mutilate its beauty and wealth, that they only take away with them the impression received."

History of Early Park Acquisition

The original agitation for setting aside areas for state parks was part of a national movement. Stephen T. Mather, Director of the National Park Service, 1915-1928, was subjected to pressures from many quarters to endorse areas for national parks. In a single year, 1916, sixteen bills for new national parks went before Congress. Mather knew what national parks should be,—he favored only areas large enough, primitive enough, and/or unique enough. He wanted to add suitable sites but also to keep out unsuitable ones.

It was largely because of the pressures for new National Parks at this time that Mather plugged for state parks. It was through the organization of the National Parks Conference that he became acquainted with many state leaders who were prominent at the time in the state park movement. He held in high esteem such men as Colonel Lieber and Tom Wallace, editor of the Louisville Times. Mr. Wallace was a

member of the Board of Directors of the National Conference on State Parks, and with Colonel Lieber, founded the Ohio Valley Regional Conference on State Parks in 1924.

Many other prominent Indiana citizens joined in the action to establish park areas. Edward Barrett, State Geologist, in the annual report of the Indiana Department of Geology in 1916 said that he had been advocating the preservation of natural areas for state parks for more than six years. He also stated that he had delivered more than one hundred illustrated lectures on areas that should be preserved for their picturesque, scenic value. In 1915, Honorable Samuel M. Ralston, Governor of Indiana, appointed a State Park Commission and in 1916 they took over two tracts of land on behalf of the State of Indiana, namely, "The Canyon of McCormick's Creek," and "Turkey Run."

This marked the beginning of state parks for Indiana. Dean Stanley Coulter, eminent scientist and Dean of the Science School at Purdue University, was a member of the first Conservation Commission appointed in 1919. Dean Coulter was a prominent figure in the early park development and in an address to the first Ohio Valley Regional Conference on State Parks at Clifty Falls in 1925, his feeling for parks was revealed in these words:

"Whether it was wrought out by abstract reasoning, or was a feat of intuition, or sounded deep in some primal instinct, the park system, State and National, was inaugurated; and soon, startlingly soon indeed, we began to realize that scenery—our rivers and lakes, our hills and mountains, our fertile plains and forests, our peaks of privilege, whence we could see great vistas and glowing sunsets and myriad stars—is our greatest natural resource."

The acquisition of parks was not without a struggle. The battle for Turkey Run was a bitter first engagement and was won only because of the patient plodding of a group of men and women whose heroic efforts served to usher in a new epoch in conservation.

In 1915, a small but determined group, composed of Richard Lieber, Juliette Strauss, Dr. Frank B. Wynn, Sol S. Kiser, and Leo M. Rappaport, conceived the idea of raising a fund by popular subscription to be used for the purchase of Turkey Run and to present the property to the State of Indiana the following year as a centennial gift. The estate, it was known, was in the process of settlement and would be offered at public auction the following spring.

In spite of the efforts to interest people throughout the state, it was soon found that it would be necessary to start the process of fund raising in Indianapolis. The project was presented to a group of business and professional men called together at a luncheon at the Commercial Club of Indianapolis. Due to a lack of immediate response one of the members of the original group made the first offer to subscribe \$100. The offer was criticized by another man in the group as setting a pace too high. After considerable debate, Mr. J. D. Adams who had been reared near Turkey Run, stated that under all circumstances the property should be acquired and that he was willing to contribute \$500.

Thus, the ice was broken and the committee with this start eventually succeeded in raising \$20,000.

The auction was conducted in April, 1916. Lumber dealers had been requested to withhold bidding. The Committee felt that they had a clear course and would have sufficient funds to pay for the property. However, such was not the case, and after spirited bidding the property was sold for \$30,200 to an individual representing a lumber company who wanted it solely for commercial use of the valuable timber.

Undaunted, the Committee began immediate negotiations with the purchaser, who offered to surrender it after it had been stripped of its good timber. This offer was naturally rejected. Later, the company offered to sell the property intact, at an advance of \$10,000.

The Committee set to work immediately to raise more funds. In October, 1916, the Committee succeeded in interesting Mr. Carl Fischer to spend a day visiting the area. Mr. Fischer was tremendously impressed and very generously offered to donate \$5,000. Moreover, he was successful later as a member of the Board of Directors of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, to persuade them to donate ten percent of the proceeds of the next Memorial Day Race. Furthermore, Mr. Arthur Newby, another member of the Board of Directors, made a personal contribution of \$5,000.

With these funds and an appropriation of the General Assembly of 1917, the Committee was able to complete the purchase of the property, and on November 11, 1916, signed the papers for 288 acres which constituted the original acreage at Turkey Run.

Such were the beginnings of the highly competitive struggle for land to be used by the people of our state for recreational use.

A Long-Range Program for Parks

In 1944, Charles A. DeTurk, Director of the Division of State Parks of Indiana said, "In all probability the State Parks of the future in Indiana will follow the pattern set by the last twenty-eight years of experience in this field."

This statement served as an introduction to a proposed plan for future park development and a re-appraisal of past policies. Following the original concept of state parks, the plan set forth definite standards, applicable to the establishment and development of new areas. These were:

- (1) To preserve and protect for present and future generations areas of the finest remaining, natural, unspoiled scenery of the state.

- (2) To provide outdoor recreation,—opportunity for the public to enjoy, use and live for a while upon the land that is, in the truest sense, their own.

- (3) To preserve or commemorate some of the state's historical background, or some of its people whose lives have affected the history or culture of the state. So, in this way to create respect and pride in our state, as well as encouragement and inspiration to future generations.

The meaning of outdoor recreation as related to the parks was defined. Its true meaning was to recreate the body, mind, and spirit of man. The popular meaning of organized exercise through games was not intended. Appreciation of scenic values was emphasized as subjective,—inspirational because of the spiritual value of the scenic features of the parks.

In order to follow the standards set forth in the plan it was necessary to recognize first that prominent scenic or historic areas had to be acquired where they existed, regardless of geographic location. Secondly, true recreation areas had to be planned with geographical and population factors as paramount considerations. Consequently, if the plan was to be based on these premises, it was important to give careful consideration to the natural features of the state which could meet the necessary requirements. The following is a brief resume of that portion of the plan which suggested special areas for consideration:

(1) To determine the prominent scenic areas available that would include representative Hoosier geographical and physical types of landscape that should be preserved. It was suggested that all areas to be considered should be at least 1,000 acres in extent and should be surrounded by buffer strips for protection in which good forestry and wildlife practices could be maintained. Areas suggested included:

- a. An unspoiled natural lake area in north central Indiana.
- b. Fifty to one hundred miles of outstanding Indiana waterways, including both banks, and sufficient acreage to constitute an administrative unit. Rivers mentioned were the Tippecanoe, Mississinewa, Wabash, Whitewater, and Sugar Creek.
- c. An area in the upland, glaciated, gently rolling land between Fort Wayne and Richmond east of Indianapolis.
- d. An area on the bluffs of the lower Wabash river, preferably in connection with the New Harmony Memorial.
- e. The superb hill and timberland and caves in the Wyandotte Cave area.
- f. One typical and natural prairie area in northwest Indiana in Lake, Newton, or Benton Counties.

(2) To determine by geographical and population maps the need for recreational areas to better serve the Indiana public in its heavily populated centers. The plan visualized a state park located within easy driving range of every community of the state. Population concentration centers mentioned included: the Calumet area, the South Bend area, the Logansport-Peru-Rochester area, the Fort Wayne area, the Lafayette area, the Marion-Muncie-Anderson area, the Indianapolis area, the Richmond area, the Evansville area, the Vincennes-Washington area, and the Louisville-New Albany-Jeffersonville area.

(3) To determine the historical areas, buildings or communities that have a definite, significant and important effect in the progress and development of Indiana and its people which are in present or ultimate danger of destruction. Examples of state-wide significance mentioned were: the New Harmony Community; old canal systems such as the Whitewater and Wabash-Erie; residences of historical

importance included the Gene Stratton Porter, James Whitcomb Riley, and William Henry Harrison homes; structures in Vincennes of the Indiana territory era; an original tavern, the Halfway House, on old pioneer road 40; the Bright Angel Mounds near Evansville, representing an area of outstanding Mound Builder culture; the Frances Slocum area as an example of Indian culture; and the development of a "Trading Post" center.

The remainder of the plan was devoted to a general development scheme that would provide facilities for access and use-areas to accommodate public enjoyment compatible with the objectives for properly preserving the natural, cultural, esthetic and historical values inherent in the properties.

Present Status of State Parks as Recreational Areas

From a modest beginning of two state parks in 1916, the present system under the Division of State Parks, Lands and Waters includes sixteen state parks, two state beaches, and one state recreation area. Many of the proposed additions outlined in the 1944 plan have been acquired. The properties added during the last ten years are Cataract Lake State Recreation Area (1956), Kankakee River State Park (1947), Scales Lake State Beach (1951), Shades State Park (1947), and White-water State Park (1949).

The present acreage of the state parks and memorials in Indiana is 49,801 acres. An appraisal of the total land value of state parks, estimated as of June 30, 1955, was \$4,959,049.66, and the value of improvements and structures was \$13,533,922.24, making a total of \$18,492,971.90 in the estimated value of the state park system. This figure was increased by approximately \$500,000 in 1956, bringing the total evaluation to nearly \$19,000,000.

The importance of parks as a recreational and economic asset to the people of our state cannot be denied. Mr. Kenneth R. Cougill, Director of the Division of State Parks, Lands and Waters, in an article in *Outdoor Indiana*, August, 1951, said, "Administrators throughout the thirty-five years of Indiana State Park history have adhered to sound basic policies of management. Perhaps the most important of these is the recognition that state parks are for all the people and no special interests are served."

Due to effective planning and setting high standards the parks have served Indiana citizens well. The fact that parks have charged a nominal admission fee since 1919 has proven a sound practice for helping to provide suitable facilities for recreational use. It has also abetted a fundamental conservation principle that the areas must be maintained without deterioration through use. That use has not been discouraged because of it, is proven by attendance figures. Paid admissions have steadily increased from 1919 with a total of 33,144 initially collected at Turkey Run to a total of 2,003,718 during the fiscal year 1955-1956 derived from admissions to our parks, beaches and recreation areas.

Future Plans for Additions of Land and Facilities

Because of an expanding population and more abundant means of transportation, the pressure for recreational areas is constantly increasing. New locations and facilities will be needed and planning must attempt to keep ahead of the public demand.

New properties now under consideration include a Chain O' Lakes State Park in Noble County, south of Albion, which will provide swimming, fishing, boating and picnicking. The Mansfield Flood-Control Project, now under construction in Park County on Raccoon Creek, is expected to make available a 2,000 acre area to be known as the Raccoon Creek State Recreation Area.

New campgrounds are planned for Whitewater and Lincoln State Parks and for the Cataract Lake State Recreation Area.

Conservation Values of State Parks

One of the basic rules of state parks is that "No person shall injure, destroy, remove, mutilate or deface any building, structure, sign, rock, tree, shrub, vine, or property whatsoever, nor pick any flowers, nor take, kill, injure, pursue, hunt or molest or rifle the nest of any bird, or the den, nest or abode of any wild animal: Provided, that flowers and leaves may be gathered in small quantities for scientific and educational purposes upon written permission of the Indiana Department of Conservation."

Our parks have, in keeping with the original concept, preserved areas in primeval, "unspoilt" condition, in spite of extensive use. They have provided scientists these many years with areas of untold value for the study of flora, fauna and geological structures. An abundance of literature pertaining to the state parks has added significantly to the scientific knowledge of the state.

The conservation of scenic and recreational areas as state parks in Indiana can be strongly justified for the spiritual and cultural satisfaction alone which they have offered to our people. While they also contribute economic benefits to the local communities by way of tourist's trade, their intangible values in outdoor education and recreation are immeasurable. These are the treasures that we as conservationists must esteem above all else.