
National Park Standards

A Declaration of Policy

Issued by

THE NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION
GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
700 Twentieth Street, N. W., Washington, D. C.

Prepared by Conservation Committee
CAMP FIRE CLUB OF AMERICA
38 Park Row, New York

National Park Standards has been endorsed by nearly one hundred associations interested in the function, use, and preservation of the National Parks, including the National Parks Association.

The National Park Standards was first issued by the Conservation Committee of the Camp Fire Club of America. It was worked out through a subcommittee on Parks composed of Caspar W. Hodgson, chairman, T. Gilbert Pearson, Robert L. Loughran, Frank R. Oastler, and O. K. Davis. It was approved by the entire Conservation Committee of the Camp Fire Club including the following men: William B. Greeley, chairman, David T. Abercrombie, Carlos Avery, Arthur J. Bauer, William N. Beach, Daniel C. Beard, John B. Burnham, James L. Clark, Gardner Cornett, Clarkson Cowl, Karl T. Frederick, Prentiss Gray, Fred R. Hoisington, Ray P. Holland, Augustus S. Houghton, Joseph P. Howe, W. R. Jelliffe, Marshall McLean, George D. Pratt, Parker Syms, Albert Tilt, Ottomar H. Van Norden, Frederick K. Vreeland, Alexander D. Walker.

You can promote these Standards for the sound up-building of our National Park System by sending a check for membership to the National Parks Association, 700 Twentieth Street, N. W., Washington, D. C.—an organization of public spirited citizens, dedicated to the promotion of the highest development, use, and protection of the National Parks.

Annual Membership: \$4; Contributing Membership: \$10; Sustaining Membership: \$25; Active Membership: \$50; Conservation Membership: \$100.

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I DEFINITION

National Parks are spacious land areas essentially in their primeval condition and so outstandingly superior in quality and beauty to average examples of their several types as to demand their preservation intact and in their entirety for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of all the people for all time.

It follows:

- 1 That park areas must be of national interest to warrant their commitment to national care.
- 2 That the area of each park must be a logical unit, embracing all territory required for effective administration and for rounding out the life zones of its flora and fauna.
- 3 That each park area shall be a sanctuary for the scientific care, study, and preservation of all wild plant and animal life within its limits, to the end that no species shall become extinct.
- 4 That wilderness features within any park shall be kept absolutely unmodified.
- 5 That with respect to any unique geological formations or historic or prehistoric remains within its confines each park shall be regarded as an outdoor museum, the preservation of whose treasures is a sacred trust.
- 6 That the existence of the parks is justified and insured by the educational and spiritual benefits to be derived from contact with pristine wilderness.
- 7 That parks must be kept free from all industrial use, and that sanctuary, scientific, and primitive values must always take precedence over recreational or other values.

II SYSTEM

National Parks must be considered from two points of view: as a system, and individually.

The National Park System should be perfected: (1) by elimination of units that fail to meet its standards; (2) by addition of units that will fully maintain or increase its supreme scenic magnifi-

cence, its scientific and educational superiority, and its character as a unique national institution; and (3) by withdrawal of existing legislation authorizing in certain parks the utilization of resources in a manner inconsistent with National Park Standards.

National Parks should differ as widely as possible from one another in their physical aspects, and the National Park System should represent a wide range of typical areas of supreme quality.

To preserve the National Park System, it must be recognized: (1) that any infraction of standards in any park constitutes an invasion of the system; and (2) that the addition to the system of any park below standard lowers the standard of the system. Every proposed use of any park in defiance of National Park Standards and the admission to the system of any park falling short of the standards must be resisted. Areas essentially of state-park caliber or primarily of local interest must not be admitted to the National Park System.

III LEGISLATION

The first official step toward National Park creation by Congress is usually the introduction of a bill. According to Congressional precedent since the beginning of the system in 1872, the bill is referred to the Committee on Public Lands, which in turn refers it to the Secretary of the Interior for a report on the standards and availability of the proposed park.

The Secretary of the Interior refers the bill to the National Park Service for examination of the area and for report back to him. Such examination should be made at the expense of the Federal government, not of the local community which would profit by the park's creation.

Exact metes and bounds from studies made by the National Park Service should be established

by Congress in the organic act of every new park.

In choosing new National Parks or determining their contents and boundaries the Government should rely upon the National Park Service, which alone possesses the requisite knowledge, tradition, and experience, united with responsibility to the people.

Committees to consider boundary problems should be strictly advisory to the Federal administration, to which alone they should be empowered to report.

Land offered for creation of a new National Park, whether in national or private possession, should not be considered by Congress, nor should the proposed park be promoted, until it is thoroughly studied by the National Park Service and found fully up to standard.

Areas required to round out existing National Parks should be added at the earliest opportunity, but only if recommended by the National Park Service; and wherever possible, park areas should be extended so as to include feeding grounds for the wild life found therein.

It has been the policy of the Federal government to purchase no land for new National Parks; but it should purchase at once alienated areas within the boundaries of existing parks and areas necessary to round out such parks.

All existing National Parks now up to the standards set forth should remain as created, subject to modification only upon the favorable recommendation of the Secretary of the Interior and the Director of the National Park Service, based upon expert investigation.

National Parks not up to National Park Standards should be transferred to some other classification in the national domain or turned over to states for local care and use.

Appropriations should be adequate to enable the National Park Service to protect existing parks and their forests against fire, vandalism, and any other agencies of destruction, and to maintain the system in accordance with National Park Standards.

IV ADMINISTRATION

In administering National Parks and keeping the system up to standard, it is important:

- 1 That development of parks as units be planned with a view to their coördination as parts of the system.
- 2 That each park be administered individually for the development of its highest usefulness to the people of the nation and not primarily for the people of its neighborhood.
- 3 That no industrial use be permitted. For example, no logging should be permitted on park lands, by exchange or otherwise.
- 4 That scientific, educational, and inspirational values dictate the major uses of parks.
- 5 That cultivation of crowds for the sake of records or profits, and the introduction of the pleasures of ordinary roadside and mountain resorts be regarded as violations of National Park Standards.
- 6 That scientific administration be applied to the maintenance of every park standard, and particularly to the preservation of wilderness, wild-life, and geological features.
- 7 That a suitable educational program be developed, using the natural features of the parks as instructional material. The National Park Service should inform the public concerning park aims and emphasize the necessity of caring for irreplaceable objects of natural and scientific interest.
- 8 That roads be developed in each National Park only for the purpose of protection and to bring the public in touch with the principal features of the park. In no case should they be built where they would in any way impair natural features. Wilderness and sanctuary areas should be reached by trail only,—such areas to remain undeveloped.

- 9 That airplane landing fields, as well as railroad stations, be located outside park boundaries. Landing fields should be considered only for the needs of interpark flights. Flying across National Park areas should be closely regulated.
- 10 That any park buildings be as unobtrusive as possible, harmonizing with their surroundings. They should be erected only where necessary for the protection of the parks and the comfort of the public, and at the locations where they will least interfere with natural conditions.
- 11 That concessions be granted only for such business as is necessary for the care and comfort of visitors, and then in definitely localized areas. Such concessions should not interfere with the rights of individuals under park rules to provide for themselves while visiting the parks.
- 12 That recreational use of any park be confined to roads, concentration locations, and trails so chosen as to interfere as little as possible with major uses and not at all with the rights of future generations to enjoy nature unmodified.

“My thought is that National Parks—the parks within the responsibility of the Federal government—should be those of outstanding scientific and spiritual appeal, those that are unique in their stimulation and inspiration.”

HERBERT HOOVER

“The educational and inspirational value of the National Parks is far greater than any material gain that might be derived through industrial utilization of their natural resources.”

RAY LYMAN WILBUR

“In studying new park projects, we should seek to find scenery of supreme and distinct quality, or some natural feature so extraordinary or unique as to be of national interest and importance. We should seek distinguished examples of typical forms of world architecture.”

FRANKLIN K. LANE

"Proposed parks are measured by the standards set by the major National Parks of the system; hence the requirements are exacting. As long as these standards shall prevail, there is no danger of too many National Parks being established, or of the excellence of the present system being lowered."

STEPHEN T. MATHER

"While the National Parks serve in an important sense as recreation areas, their primary uses extend far into that fundamental education which concerns real appreciation of nature. Here beauty in its truest sense receives expression and exerts its influence along with recreation and formal education. To me the parks are not merely places to rest and exercise and learn. They are regions where one looks through the veil to meet the realities of nature and of the unfathomable power behind it."

JOHN C. MERRIAM

"RESOLVED, That the American Association for the Advancement of Science recognizes the National Parks as the means of preserving unique representations of the primitive and majestic in nature, and wishes to record its protests against additions to the National Park System, or change in policy, which may tend to lessen in fact or in public estimation their present high value as natural museums, their complete conservation from industrial uses, and their effectiveness as a national education institution."

"RESOLVED, That the National Parks Association, in annual meeting assembled, reaffirms its belief that the unique spiritual, scientific, and educational uses inherent in our National Parks constitute the best obtainable opportunity for the enjoyment of these values in nature; and that, realizing the beneficent influence such examples have upon the thought and life of the people, this association again pledges its utmost endeavor to protect them against whatever may tend to disturb their continuity of natural conditions or to diminish their effectiveness as supreme expressions of majesty and beauty."