

Editorial:

"We are concerned with an agency whose soul is an unattainable ideal, and whose life is dependent upon creative, organic evolution, both ecological and bureaucratic."

With these words, Paul Schullery presented his thoughts on the up-dating of the Leopold Report to the National Parks and Conservation Association's Commission on Science and Resource Management Policy in the National Park System at the Commission's first meeting April 18, 1988, in Washington, D.C.

The paper, which will be carried in its entirety in a future issue of the George Wright Society's FORUM, is entitled "Feral Fish and Kayak Tracks: thoughts on the writing of a new Leopold Report." It was brought to our attention by Doug Houston, research scientist at Olympic NP, and it deals with the problems posed by a thousand specific questions arising from as many unique Park System situations.

Said Schullery (a former associate editor of *Country Journal*, free lance writer and consultant on NPS matters, and now a technical writer on natural resource topics at Yellowstone NP):

"National parks, like all natural areas, still have their vacancy signs out. They are in no sense ecologically finished, and thus pose certain problems for the creative manager . . . for example, the basin of Yellowstone Lake is tilting; in a few years the nesting islands of white pelicans may be submerged, drowning one of the great nesting sites in North America. Should we be hauling gravel out there, or celebrating the imponderable power of natural processes? As you prepare to consider questions like that, I would like to leave you with two thoughts about the original Leopold Report.

"First," Schullery said, "like most great and enduring documents, it dealt in main principles. It is still at its best in its generalizations and at its most dated when it addresses specific management issues in specific parks. Ever since the idea of writing a 'new' Leopold Report surfaced, I've thought of how important it is that the document deal in the grand scale. . . ."

Schullery's second thought dealt with "the peculiar felicity of expression" (as John Adams phrased it) that marked Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence – "that most enduring of all American documents, that masterpiece of balance and principle," and Schullery's hope that that quality from the original Leopold Report might endure in its re-writing.

And finally, Schullery urged the commission to exercise "the sensitivity that will come from some compromise between telling the Park Service what it should do in every situation – something nobody knows – and telling it so little that we leave it on its own. . . . We must strike a balance that gets both the best of the agency's powers and the collective wisdom of the agency's friends and watchdogs. Only in that way," Schullery concluded, "lies any hope of success."