

1950

STATEMENT OF CONTROLLING DEVELOPMENT POLICIES1. General

The Olympic National Park was created by Act of the 75th Congress on June 29, 1938, to be administered and protected under the general provisions of the National Park Service Act of August 25, 1916, "for the benefit and enjoyment of the people." Congress created a park of approximately 1,000 square miles, with the additional provision that the President may after eight months from date of the Act, add areas as he may consider desirable, after consultation with Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture and the Governor of the State of Washington, to a total of approximately 400 additional square miles. Additional acres have been added, bringing the present total to 856,411 acres.

There are three basic reasons for creation of the park: (1) Preservation of a substantial area of the dense, virgin, Rain Forests of the Northwest Coast type; (2) Protection and preservation of interesting fauna, notably the rare Roosevelt Elk, with sufficient range areas to perpetuate the species under natural conditions; (3) Protection of one of the finest remaining scenic and wilderness areas of the nation, with emphasis on maintenance of wilderness conditions for the benefit of future generations. For some years past, when the area was under monument status, much thought has been given by officials in charge as to formation and establishment of development policies which will afford maximum protection, with use, and which will preserve the underlying reasons for the creation of the park. During one of the first surveys of the new park, July 1938, a group of men charged with administration and protection of the area attempted to outline certain policies of development and use which could be written down as guiding policy. This group consisted of:

Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior (present for one day)

Irving Brant, Representative of the Secretary
Owen A. Tomlinson, Superintendent, Mt. Rainier National Park, and in charge of administrative organization

Preston P. Macy, Acting Superintendent of the new park
David Madsen, Supervisor of Fish Resources, NPS
E. Lowell Sumner, Regional Wildlife Technician
E. A. Davidson, Regional Landscape Architect

The following statement of development policy is not the expression of any one, two, or three of the above group, but is written in as clear a statement as is possible of the many ideas expressed at different times by the above group, which ideas seemed acceptable and good to the entire group.

2. Headquarters Area Policy

It was agreed as advisable that the headquarters be established in or near the town of Port Angeles. It was agreed that upon this tract should be constructed a self-contained headquarters which would provide administration building, warehouse, repair shop, storage sheds, residences for permanent personnel stationed at headquarters, dormitory space for temporary or emergency help, gas and oil storage and service, with necessary water supply, sewage system, power and light, and communication system, together with road and walk systems and landscaping sufficient to produce an attractive area befitting a United States property.

3. Road Policy

At the present time some twelve different roads give access to the four sides of the park area. Most of these roads are not of high standard but are travelable by reasonably careful driving, throughout all or nearly all of the year. The roads are distributed quite uniformly about the park to give access to the different sides. Some eight of them extend into the present park area. The others approach within a very short distance of the boundaries and will probably extend within the boundaries when and if certain additions contemplated are made.

With this condition in mind, it was the consensus that more access roads are entirely unnecessary to provide what may be called "reasonable access." Some--probably the majority--of these stub roads which now reach the area will need additional work to make them safe and passable during bad weather to drivers unaccustomed to mountain highways. It was, however, the consensus that no attempt should be made to reconstruct these roads or to urge their reconstruction by other agencies, to a high standard.

It was believed imperative that every effort should be made to maintain a WILDERNESS POLICY in any and all improvements. With this in mind, all roads reaching the area (aside from the loop-highway) should remain WILDERNESS ROADS in all essential features, making them safe at slow or moderate speeds at all seasons in low elevations, but not attempting to guarantee all season usability at higher altitudes.

One project for new construction was agreed upon. This is the approximately seven-mile length connection between Hurricane Ridge Road and the Deer Park Road. Construction of this connecting link will permit a loop road, contemplated for one way use for at least a trial period, which will permit excellent views of the high interior country of the park,

which will provide access, with possibly some closed periods, to good winter skiing territory, and which will guarantee to all people, even invalids, an opportunity to see the beauties of the park, and to actually pass through it. It was agreed that no other projects for roads within the park be considered for at least some years.

With this type of program in mind, it is thought desirable and necessary that all agencies furnishing any information on road or development conditions at the park, emphasize that it is a WILDERNESS PARK within which it is proposed to maintain WILDERNESS conditions. Other parks, and many other national areas, provide "cushion" travel to the people.

4. Trail Policy

The terrain of the park is such that travel without trails is very difficult, either in the higher elevations above timberline or in the lower areas having dense forest cover. The only exceptions are perhaps within the wider river valleys where grazing or browsing over a period of years has eliminated much undergrowth.

Therefore, it is necessary to maintain a large mileage of passable trails if reasonably complete access is to be provided for foot or horse travelers. It is proposed to maintain the park for a principal use as a trail park. Owing to the extremely uneven, broken, precipitous topography, a system of trails becomes necessary, which will probably appear to a casual observer of the park map as almost a gridiron of tortuous trails; yet, in fact, such a trail system will not become in any sense an overdevelopment until years have passed with far more trail construction than is now anticipated.

Trail standards should be kept at the lowest possible point consistent with safe passage and grades such as will be passable for horse travel. There will, of course, be certain trails at high peaks which will not be designed for horse passage. It is not considered feasible to set up definite standard for trail construction, for the reason that it will be desirable to use, in many instances, varying standards on a single trail. Such a trail may be very narrow, perhaps only 12 to 18 inches, across topography where there are no obstacles to passage, and there may also be, on the same trail, wider treads desirable up to perhaps as much as 6 feet, where steep, rocky cliff sections must be traversed. A few very dangerous cliff sections may even require construction of stone guard rails or parapet walls, but this type of construction is to be held in absolute minimum consistent with safety. In certain places grades will necessarily be held down to prevent erosion, but, on the whole, there is no effort to make trails "easy" at the expense of additional length unless problems of maintenance are so serious as to make mandatory the flat gradient. Drainage, and types of travel surface, will require much study and careful construction work.

It is necessary that some areas be preserved free of any trails so the youths of future generations, too, may enjoy and exercise their "sense of direction" while exercising their legs and lungs in traveling across country where only elk and deer trails now are found.

The headwaters of the Quocets River should have no further trail development than will be afforded by the Bailey Range trail passing just at its upper edge and the river trail extending up to Hee Hee Creek where it now ends. The Seattle Creek trail follows the ridge above Hee Hee Creek so the Quocets basin and watershed are available to hikers.

It is highly desirable that trail standards be kept in accordance with the nearest possible primitive condition with assurance of safety. Instructions have been consistently issued from this office to train foremen to refrain from grading trail through flat or open meadows, and where topography or drainage does not demand grading. They are instructed to make these routes with rock cairns or stakes so they may be followed - although, as a rule, the route through wooded areas may be followed by cuts through down logs.

If the above policy is followed, it will be only a matter of a few years until a well-defined trail is worn by the travel, and the wilderness values will be thus enhanced.

5. Trailside Shelter Policy

Owing to the contemplated usage as a trail park, with particular attention being paid to pedestrian travel, it will be necessary to provide many more trailside shelters than now exist. In the more popular overnight camping places it may become necessary to construct a number of trailside shelters within a single area, or to design shelters which may care for larger number of people than the average capacity of five or six people. Very careful planning should go into the design of trailside shelters so that they may be most practical and efficient types, yet give no impression of sophistication. Use of native materials which may be obtained at the site is, of course, most desirable. Careful design of fireplaces becomes necessary.

Whenever mankind comes into the scene, our problems of wilderness preservation are naturally increased. Shelters must be provided, and in order to prevent mutilation of living trees and vegetation it is necessary that cutting of boughs be stopped. To alleviate this, we must provide bunks in shelters. Springs of any sort should be avoided; in their place the bunks can be fitted with split cedar or, preferably, spruce because it is stronger and more flexible. Bottoms of bunks so equipped will provide considerable spring and be far warmer than any spring without a mattress--and mattresses or substitutes should not be installed.

The matter of fuel around some shelters has already become something of a problem and will become more so as time goes on. Live trees are being cut at Echo Lake, and other areas, for fuel. We, of course, can pack in wood or drag in dead logs, if such are available, and require the traveler to exert his woodsman ability in chopping. This practice will seriously interfere with the primitive condition of the surrounding woods besides marring the alpine meadows and forest floor by our miniature logging methods.

Artificial fuel is the only solution. It is true that artificial fuel of any sort is not in keeping with the wilderness aspect, but it would more nearly allow the maintenance of that aspect. It is possible to conceal this method to a degree. Any plan will require a great deal of supervision as travel increases.

It is deemed advisable to have water piped to the more popular areas, preferably in such manner that it may be constantly allowed to run, yet may be shut off and placed under pressure for emergency use. Sinks, plumbing, water taps, etc., are to be discouraged, and provided only when a definite emergency requiring such is demonstrated.

6. Grazing Policy

The time has arrived when it will be necessary to pack hay into some areas. During the past summer grass became so scarce around Elkhorn that horses could not find sufficient forage.

In alpine areas it will be necessary to remove horses some distance from campgrounds in order to insure preservation of the flora. If this is done the concentration of grazing will be avoided, for it is a known fact that the livestock invariably stay near camp. Hitch racks and managers will of necessity be built and screened.

If the above plan is instituted at once, there will be no need for curtailment of horse travel, and it becomes our duty to carry this plan into effect.

7. Hotels - Lodges - Concessions Policy

There seems to be no necessity for establishment of any such accommodations within the park area, since roadways leading to the boundaries will provide suitable sites for such developments, one or more of which will ordinarily be within a day's walk from principal points of interest within the park. Such sites, where automotive transportation is available, will be more economical of maintenance and construction than will sites within the park. By keeping such developments outside boundaries, a multitude of administrative and protective problems will be avoided. Existing resorts within boundaries must, of course, be continued for the present, but should opportunity arise for their elimination by purchase or otherwise it is deemed advisable to adopt a program for their eventual elimination.

We should not wish to encourage our visitors to become "Tarzans" and thus live off the land; neither would we wish to encourage them to lose their native ability of properly planning their menu for whatever period of time their vacation allows.

Emergency stores appeal to us as a measure desirable in helping our visitors to enjoy their stay, and the writer has looked rather favorably upon such a plan; however, after analyzing the matter more fully, it was decided that any plan whereby our employees would be permitted to carry supplies, for resale, should be religiously avoided. Concentrated foods of today make it possible for any hiker to plan his stock for a prolonged trip.

Should this plan be instituted as an emergency measure, it would be only a matter of time until most hikers planned emergencies.

We have no means by which to pay the packing charges for this food, and to add this charge to the price of the food would make it prohibitive. The handling of even a small supply of goods would demand the time of fire guards and rangers which should be spent at more important and necessary duties.

8. Ranger and Patrol Stations Policy

Additional structures will be necessary for proper protection and administration of the area. In the main, these structures will be located near ends of roads or near travel lanes. Further study and perhaps several years of experience in operation will be necessary to work out the best system.

9. Telephone and Power Lines Policy

At the present time most of the main trails are disfigured by paralleling telephone wires which cross and recross the trail above the traveler's head. In some instances they are so low as to constitute a definite travel hazard to equestrians traveling in twilight or dim daylight, and in many cases these wires interfere with the taking of pictures or the mere observation of the fine scenery.

It is proposed to eliminate all possible wires, using radio for communication where such is possible. Where wires must be maintained, it is proposed to place them at some distance from the trails, sufficient that they be inconspicuous at all times and completely out of vision where scenery is to be viewed. At or near developed areas, it is proposed to place all such wires underground. Where power wires are required, the same treatment is advised wherever it may be possible to eliminate them from the picture. Funds have been requested to place telephone wires, especially along Lake Crescent, underground, or to otherwise render them invisible to regular travel.

10. Forestry Policy

In keeping with the mandate of Congress that the national parks be maintained in their natural condition so far as is consistent with public use and enjoyment, it will be the aim of the Branch of Forestry, in cooperation with all other branches and divisions of the National Park Service, to retain the primeval and natural forest conditions so far as use and safety of the forest will permit. The maintenance of natural conditions excludes these practices of commercial forestry such as pruning and thinning, and discrimination against so-called inferior species, which are designed to produce the most valuable crops or commercial products but which are foreign to the purpose for which the national parks were set aside. Within the national parks all native species have a proper place in the natural picture and should not be disturbed where it is necessary for essential development or for essential protection. Any modifications for protection purposes shall be made only under competent technical supervision, and in all cases there must be careful cooperation with the representatives of other branches so that there will be a complete correlation of all interests involved.

11. Forest Protection Policy

As stated in the introductory paragraphs, preservation of a substantial area of the dense, virgin rain-forests of the Northwest Coast type was one of the three basic reasons for the creation of the park. If, after removal of this superb forest growth from commercial utilization against the protests of the lumber interests of the state, it should be exposed unnecessarily to damage by fire or abnormal injury due to insect infestations or tree diseases, the Service would be subject to severe criticism and censure.

During a normal season the fire danger on the west side of the park is not usually severe, but the results of past forest fires--both from lightning and man-caused--are numerous on all sides of the park, and an adequate system of lookouts and patrols must be maintained to insure proper fire protection. A careful survey of the park to map vegetative types and fire hazards and their resistance to control of forest fires, and visibility studies to determine what, if any, additional lookout stations are essential, must be made before an adequate fire protection program can be definitely and scientifically arrived at.

It is believed that the trail system for recreational and administrative travel will very largely, if not entirely, fill the needs for fire protection as well. This will likewise be determined by the surveys and studies noted above. It is not contemplated there will be need for any truck trails or firebreaks for fire protection, unless firebreaks might be needed along the boundary of private or natural forest lands on which unusual hazards exist as a result of logging operations.

There are at present no known infestations by insects or epidemics of tree diseases requiring control, and in the development of plans for fire protection improvements as well as any future plans which may be deemed essential in connection with insect epidemics or tree diseases, the utmost consideration will be given to the maintenance of wilderness conditions. Inasmuch as it is planned to maintain strict wilderness conditions within the area, it is felt no attempts should be made to control tree diseases or insect infestations unless unusual conditions develop in a distinctly abnormal manner, threatening widespread damage to forests or other flora of the park.

12. Game and Fish Policy

Further study will be necessary to work out a program of game management which will provide complete protection within natural ranges, which will make available for sport such surpluses as may overflow park lands. Likewise, further study will be necessary to establish a program of stocking and fish use and protection. The fact that all streams reach salt water within comparatively few miles, makes this "fish problem" of unusual interest.

Fortunately, there remain some virgin lakes and, possibly, streams. Every effort should be made to maintain these without stocking, so that if future facts and conditions prove established methods and species not best adapted, we may have no difficulty in making the desired change.