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THE IMPACT OF CONCESSION OPERATIONS ON HERITAGE
RESOURCE INTERPRETATION IN THE STATE PARKS OF
ALASKA AND THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

by
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A THESIS

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Robert Z. Melnick

Since passage of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966, the state park systems of Alaska and the Pacific Northwest have made efforts to acquire, preserve and interpret heritage resources which contribute significantly to public understanding of the history and development of this region. Legislative funding specifically allocated for restoration and maintenance of historic buildings and landscapes has been relatively minimal, however, forcing administrators to seek alternative revenue sources.

Several parks have been able to generate additional income by leasing historic buildings to private businesses which provide goods and services to park visitors. Some of these operations have introduced visual elements

which compromise the historic character of heritage resources. This occurs because of the differing purpose and goals of private enterprise and state parks.

This paper will evaluate eight concessions using a single criterion: Is visitor recognition and understanding of the parks' historic resources eroded or enhanced by commercial operations?

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As first envisioned, preservation meant restoring a building as a historic object. Increasingly, it means finding a new use for pieces of our cultural environment. New materials for rehabilitation alone will not be preservation panaceas; good planning and the need to make new uses consistent with the fabric of the past will become ever more important. A major loss of historic . . . character is caused by introducing incompatible new uses in existing buildings. Because buildings must be used if they are to survive, the uses to which they are subjected are of critical importance.¹

E. Blaine Cliver, 1992

Past Meets Future: Saving America's Historic Environments

Since passage of the Historic Preservation Act of 1966, state park agencies have become increasingly committed to their role in the preservation of America's heritage resources. In Alaska and the Pacific Northwest, this has resulted in the acquisition of historic properties for new park units, in addition to Parks' restoration, reconstruction or rehabilitation of historic buildings in existing parks, formerly unacknowledged as significant. The adaptive uses of the historic buildings examined in this study have been determined in varying degrees by the heritage preservation goals of the individual park systems, Parks' budgetary constraints, and practical considerations dictated by the condition, configuration, and location of each building.

In certain respects, these buildings have benefited from their occupation by private enterprise: it has protected them from vandalism and theft, prevented

the extremes in temperature which often damage historic interiors, and in several cases provided needed revenue for building maintenance. These vernacular buildings were originally used for commercial or utilitarian purposes, and are representative of the changing emphasis of historic preservation: "attention has shifted from things and places of high architectural merit or unique historical consequence to those that have played a part in the lives of ordinary people."² Given their original function, decreases in legislated funding for park operations and maintenance, the need to provide services to park visitors, and the fact that "saving old structures often costs less in materials, energy and capital than replacing them with new buildings," park agencies decided to adaptively use a number of these historic buildings for park concessions operated by private contractors.³ This decision was based on the assumption that "historic preservation and economic development can be consistent and mutually beneficial public and private goals."⁴

This assumption has proved itself only partially correct, however. Although the historic fabric of the buildings has remained relatively protected (by contract provisions which prohibit physical alteration by concessionaires), the presentation of these buildings to the public as significant historic resources has often been compromised. This has been caused by the failure of concessionaires to acknowledge the visual aspects of these buildings which are integral to their historic character: "feelings conveyed by . . . sense of time and place."⁵ Perception of a building as historic is related to "surface qualities of the materials . . . because they impart the very sense of craftsmanship and age that distinguishes historic buildings from other buildings."⁶ Especially in "more modest buildings, the plainness of surface materials and finishes may be an aspect of their historic character."⁷

Conflict between State Parks' mission to "protect and enhance sites . . . of outstanding historic value for the . . . education of present and future generations"⁸ and the profitable operation of commercial enterprises has occurred at these sites as a result of several relatively common business practices. Although certain techniques of advertising, merchandise selection, and merchandise display have proven effective for the park contractor in terms of product sales, these practices have often camouflaged the building's historic character. This in turn has undermined State Parks' interpretive mission: presentation of the building to visitors as a significant heritage resource. Interpretation, an integral component of historic preservation in state parks, has long been recognized as a necessary function of visitor service in order to engender visitor appreciation of these public lands.

Concessionaires, because their operations are highly visible and accessible to park visitors, play a functional role in resource interpretation. Although some of the concessions examined in this study were not intended by state park management to be interpretive in nature, they nonetheless constitute a passive representation of the building's importance to the state park: "what [park management] encourages . . . visitors to do in a park is a statement to visitors . . . [of] what that park really stands for."⁹ If the appearance of the park concession resembles a commercial enterprise in a shopping center or city park, it is difficult for visitors to apprehend the unique purpose of state parks or the intrinsic value of the historic building and surrounding landscape.

Examination of over one hundred years of concession operation by the private sector in the national parks reveals an extensive history of property misuse.¹⁰

Many of these problems resulted from the tendency of commercial

operations to promote their profit objectives over Parks' preservation goals. For this reason, the practice of utilizing historic buildings to house privately operated state park concessions requires critical re-evaluation, based on this history, the resource stewardship role of State Parks, and the lack of existing contract provisions which address preservation of historic resource character.

The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of commercial operations on Parks' presentation of concession buildings as significant heritage resources. The key issue is: how is visitor understanding of building significance and the resource conservation purpose of state parks enhanced or eroded by existing concession operations? Visitor recognition and appreciation of historic buildings is crucial in order to gain public support for the funding necessary to protect them. As an educator at the 1991 National Trust Conference observed, "if we want people to get involved in protecting their historic and cultural resources, we must help them recognize these places as part of their heritage."¹¹

Determination of the impact of concession operations on historic buildings in selected state parks is based on the following:

1. Examination of the history of privately operated concessions in national parks from 1884 to 1992.
2. Presentation of selected issues relating to the purpose and development of state park systems.
3. Overview of the history, organization, funding, and heritage preservation goals of the park systems of Alaska, Washington, Idaho, and Oregon.
4. Findings from site visits to eight concessions.
5. Examination of provisions in the concession contracts for these eight commercial operations which address resource interpretation issues.

State park concessions in Alaska and the Pacific Northwest were selected

as a study region based on similarities of architectural style, original function, and current adaptive use of the historic buildings. The geographic and financial limitations of the researcher were also a determinant. Methodology employed in the assessment of concession impact involved a review of literature pertaining to national and state park concessions, review of the transcripts of congressional hearings on concession policy reform in the national parks, examination of state park department files in Alaska, Washington, Idaho and Oregon, an inquiry letter sent to forty-six state park agencies, and interviews with state park department administrators, district and regional managers, on-site park managers, park rangers, and concessionaires. Eight concession contracts (representing the *total* number of concessions operating in historic buildings in Alaska, Washington, Idaho, and Oregon state parks as of January 1991) were also examined, and each concession was visited twice.¹²

This study is presented in eight chapters, beginning with a history of private contracting in public parks and ending with recommendations for improving the quality of contractor-provided visitor service as it relates to interpretation of the park's significant resources.

Chapter II of this paper chronicles the operation of concessions in the national parks from the late nineteenth century through the final decade of the twentieth century. This history is offered to provide a context for examination and comparison of similar commercial operations in state parks. The focus of Chapter III is a discussion of selected issues pertaining to the purpose of state parks, and how various definitions of this purpose affected both their recreational development and their resource preservation goals. Chapter IV gives the history, organization and funding sources for the park systems of the study region. It also provides a brief biography of each of the historic buildings

examined in this study and the parks in which they are located. All but one of the buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.¹³

Chapter V examines specific provisions in the concession contracts for each park which relate to the preservation and interpretation of historic buildings. It also details the process used to select park contractors and the inherent limitations of these procedures. Visits to each of the concession operations are described in Chapter VI. Site visits were conducted for the purpose of evaluating three aspects of commercial operation: advertising and signage, merchandise selection and display, and verbal and written information provided to visitors.

Chapter VII provides an appraisal of the impact of the concessionaire's business practices on the building's presentation to visitors as a significant historic resource. Operations were evaluated to determine which aspects of advertising, merchandising and information distribution promoted visitor understanding of the concession building's historic significance. The conclusion of this study, Chapter VIII, offers an assessment of the limitations and difficulties associated with the use of historic buildings by State Parks for provision of visitor goods and services. It also suggests ways in which the operation of these concessions may be improved in order to provide a basic level of resource interpretation for park visitors.

There are a number of limitations to this study. The first of these is the lack of a data base pertaining to the history of concessions in state parks as an aggregate body. There is, however, a vast amount of information available which documents the history of commercial operations in the national parks. This history will be used to illustrate the difficulties inherent when a government agency entrusted with resource stewardship allows the private sector (motivated

by profit) to define the goods and services necessary for public enjoyment of the parks.

Secondly, this study examines concessions only in the context of heritage resource interpretation. Legal and economic issues of concession management are not discussed except as they relate to this focus. Concession operations in general (those located in non-historic buildings) were not investigated. This study also does not directly compare or evaluate the resource preservation and private contracting policies of Alaska, Washington, Idaho and Oregon State Parks. Finally, this paper does not propose solutions to the financial challenges associated with historic resource preservation in state parks, nor to the economic difficulties that concessionaires face in their provision of visitor services. Specific terms (and their usage) are defined as follows: "Contractor," "private contractor," "park contractor," "service provider," "concessioner," and "concessionaire," all denote individuals or groups of individuals not affiliated with national and state parks who provide visitor services in the parks. "Concessioner" is the preferred spelling used by the National Park Service (NPS), and "concessionaire" the spelling that is favored by most state park systems. Within the text, "concessioner" will be used when referring to contractors in national parks and "concessionaire" when discussing contractors in state parks. "Resource conservation," "historic preservation" and "heritage resource management" are used interchangeably to describe one of the primary mandates of state park systems. A basic premise of this study is the assumption that a certain degree of interpretation is inherent in State Parks' conservation of historic objects, structures, buildings and landscapes. "Necessary visitor goods and services" refers to any items or services which a state park system has decided are necessary for the visitors' enjoyment of a specific park. "Merchandise"

generally denotes non-food items. The terms "contract," "lease," and "leasehold agreement" are used interchangeably to identify the legal document that lays out the terms governing the contractor's provision of visitor service in the park.

"Parks" (capitalized) denotes the administrative agency for a state park system, and "parks" (uncapitalized) refers to more than one state park unit.

State parks have experienced many of the same problems as national parks in their role as trustees of the parks' historic resources. As the assistant director for Cultural Resources in the National Park Service observed in 1979:

the historical parks have not enjoyed the vociferous and dedicated constituency that the natural . . . parks have had. There are pressures on our smaller parks — almost all of which are historical and archeological — pressures to . . . permit various kinds of commercial exploitation of their resources.¹⁴

It is hoped that this study will serve as an information base for further research on concessions and state parks, and raise the questions necessary for a re-evaluation of concession contracting in historic buildings.

Notes

¹E. Blaine Cliver, "Revisiting Past Rehabilitation Practices," in Past Meets Future: Saving America's Historic Environments, ed. Antoinette Lee (Washington, D.C. : Preservation Press, 1992) , 177-178.

²David Lowenthal and Marcus Binney, ed., Our Past Before Us: Why Do We Save It? (London: Maurice Temple Smith Ltd, 1985) , 220.

³*Ibid*, 227.

⁴Donovan D. Rypkema, "Rethinking Economic Value," in Past Meets Future: Saving America's Historic Environments, ed. Antoinette Lee (Washington, D.C.: Preservation Press, 1992) , 205.

⁵Lee H. Nelson, FAIA, Preservation Brief 17, Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character (Washington, D.C. : National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior, undated) , 1.

⁶*Ibid*, 2.

⁷*Ibid*, 10.

⁸Linda Lopez and Martin Wheeler, "Start Up Notebook for Friends Groups" (Salem: Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department, 1991) , Chap. 4, 2, photocopied.

⁹Dr. Harry Butowsky, "Recreation and the Historical Park," CRM Bulletin 2 (December: 1979) : 5.

¹⁰Alfred Runte, National Parks: The American Experience, 2nd ed.rev. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987) , 162-169; William C. Everhart, The National Park Service (Boulder: Westview Press, 1983) , 110-116; Earl Pomeroy, In Search of the Golden West: The Tourist in Western America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957) , 164; Charles Stevenson "Shocking Truth About Our Natural Parks," Landscape Architecture 45 (January 1955) : 57-59; Gladwin Hill, "Pristine Preserves or Popcorn Playgrounds?," Saturday Review January 1972, 40; and Jack Anderson, "Yosemite: Another Disneyland?," The Washington Post, 15 September 1974, 2.

¹¹Kathleen A. Hunter, "Tangible Texts for Heritage Education," in Past Meets Future: Saving America's Historic Environments, ed. Antoinette Lee (Washington, D.C. : Preservation Press, 1992) , 233.

¹²The only exception is Rocky Point Lodge in Heyburn State Park, Idaho, which was visited only once.

¹³Rocky Point Lodge, Heyburn State Park, Idaho.

¹⁴Russ Holland Jr., "The Park Service as Curator," National Parks and Conservation Magazine 53 (August 1979) : 15.

CHAPTER II

TOURISM AND CONCESSION OPERATIONS IN THE NATIONAL PARKS: 1884 – 1992

What is fundamentally idealistic cannot fail to be eventually economic. Idealism and economics are inalienably related by virtue of the former's tremendous commercial value.

Mark R. Daniels, landscape engineer, Department of the Interior, address before the American Civic Association, December 3, 1914¹

Since 1872, when two million acres of wilderness land in northwest Wyoming, southern Montana and eastern Idaho were designated by Congress as Yellowstone National Park, the Secretary of the Interior has had the power to "grant leases 'at such places as shall require the erection of buildings for the accommodation of visitors.' "² This provision for visitor services was based upon the precedent set by the Yosemite Act of 1864 which deeded the Yosemite Valley to the State of California, specifying that "basic accommodations and visitor services in the parks would be provided by private concessioners."³ It can be argued, however, that both parks were established to protect the land *from* American private enterprise. William C. Everhart, in his book The National Park Service, related that during the hearings which led to the establishment of Yellowstone as public park land, one senator expressed the fear that "if Yellowstone were not protected, some chiseler would 'plant himself right across the path that leads to these wonders, and charge every man that passes along between the gorges of these mountains a fee of a dollar or five dollars.' "⁴

This illustrates a basic dilemma that has troubled park systems in the United States since the late nineteenth century: what does stewardship for the nation's natural and cultural resources entail, and to what degree does private enterprise hinder or implement Park's stewardship role? The history of both the National Park Service and state park systems shows that this question has been asked many times in the past seventy-six years, and that a proper balance between provision of necessary visitor services and profit of private interests at the expense of resource integrity has yet to be fully realized.

This chapter will provide a context for examination of current visitor-service contracting in the state park systems of the Pacific Northwest and Alaska by tracing the history of tourism and concession operations in the national parks from the late 1800s to 1993. Most state park systems were established several decades after the National Park Service, and used the federal system as a model. For this reason, an understanding of how visitor service contracting developed in the National Parks and the affect which it has had on protection and interpretation of the parks' natural resources is relevant to understanding the relationship between commercial contracting and heritage resource preservation in state parks.

Commercial Operations in the National Parks: 1864 – 1915

Frederick Law Olmsted and The National Park Ideal

In the mid-nineteenth century, Frederick Law Olmsted, noted landscape architect and one of the original members of the Yosemite Park Commission, had a clear vision of the preservation ethic for National Parks, and repeatedly expressed his misgivings about commercial enterprises in the parks. Although Olmsted acknowledged that visitor access through the park was necessary, he

maintained that keeping the park reserves in as natural a state as possible should always take precedence over visitor services designed merely to replicate the comforts and familiarity synonymous with urban existence.⁵ In an 1865 report prepared for the California legislature, "The Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Big Tree Grove," Olmsted outlined the policy recommendations he believed necessary for the wise management of this reserve. His report included specific governmental injunctions "against the obstacles . . . which the selfishness of individuals or combinations of individuals is liable to interpose . . ."⁶ on this land.

In this report, Olmsted made a number of important observations regarding commercial activities within the national parks. First, he recounted a centuries-old practice of Europe's ruling classes: the provision of "artificial pleasures . . . [for] the large mass of human[s] who . . . spent their lives in almost constant labor."⁷ These government leaders considered it beyond the capacity "of . . . humble toilers . . . to cultivate . . . the facilities [necessary] for enjoying . . . beauty either of nature or of art in any high degree." [Therefore,] "it was thought better to provide recreation for [the] masses by providing . . . theatres, parades, and promenades where they will be amused . . ."⁸ Clearly, Olmsted felt that such a paternalistic philosophy was anathema to the democratic purpose of American national parks.

Regarding the nature of governmental stewardship appropriate for the newly established Yosemite reserve, Olmsted maintained that

the first point to be kept in mind . . . is the preservation and maintenance as exactly as is possible of the natural scenery . . ., [the very reason] which has caused Congress to treat it differently from other parts of the public domain."⁹

Responsible management of this area, wrote Olmsted,

mandates "restriction . . . within the narrowest limits consistent with the necessary accommodation of visitors, of all artificial constructions and the prevention of all constructions markedly inharmonious with the scenery or which would unnecessarily obscure, distort or detract from the dignity of the scenery."¹⁰

Olmsted's report, however, disappeared mysteriously and "never reached the [California] legislature. Had it done so and received favorable action," wrote his biographer Laura Roper, "the future of the valley would not have been jeopardized as it was in the next few years."¹¹

Following Olmsted's resignation from the Commission in 1865, the influence of political interests rather than resource protection effected a transformation of the valley. By 1890, entrepreneurs providing transportation into Yosemite had erected a collection of "sheds, stables and fences" for their livestock.¹² Much of the original vegetation was cleared to accommodate these structures, giving this portion of Yosemite the appearance of "a run-down farm."¹³ The impetus for such development stemmed from the fact that spectacular land forms and other 'oddities of nature' were eminently marketable commodities. Runte described this attitude toward park resources as a mind set which valued national parks as "wonderland[s] to enthrall, rather than instruct, the visitor."¹⁴ It was upon such an attitude that the pattern and character of tourism in the national parks evolved.

Early Visitor Services: Yosemite and Yellowstone

During the late nineteenth century, concessioners in Yosemite created a carnival atmosphere amid the wilderness backdrop. In 1870, one contractor provided entertainment for tourists by flinging a live chicken over the edge of the 3,200 foot Glacier Point Promontory.¹⁵ This spectacle eventually gave way to a display known as the "firefall, . . . where burning embers . . . would tumble to the

valley floor"¹⁶ A later concessioner continued this ritual, adding the accompaniment of a violin to the firefall.¹⁷ Another entrepreneur provided novelty and enjoyment for visitors by cutting huge holes in the bases of Sierra Redwood trees so that carriages could drive through.¹⁸

Initially the only way to reach the newly established national parks was by horse and pack mule. Both Yellowstone and Yosemite were remote from existing transportation lines, and early journeys to these areas took many days.¹⁹ Although stagecoaches soon replaced pack teams as the principal means of transportation, these trips were particularly arduous, even by the standards of the time. Visitors to Yosemite, wrote Olmsted, arrived "quite overcome with the fatigue and unaccustomed hardship of the journey."²⁰ In 1894, one writer termed Yosemite "the most exhausting, expensive, and impressive excursion which the tourist can make . . ."²¹

By 1916, tourism in the Yosemite Valley supported twenty-four private businesses which offered lodging, meals, and access through the park.²² One of the most enduring and financially successful of these operations was established in 1894 by the Curry family. Before its consolidation and expansion in later years, this early concession provided visitors with tours of the park, tent lodging and simple dining facilities.

Concessions in Yellowstone, prior to the founding of the National Park Service, were characterized by Everhart as "disruptive and uneconomical" businesses which compromised both the natural resources of the park and the safety of visitors.²³

Horace Albright, the first National Park Service superintendent of Yellowstone, reported after a 1919 park inspection that one contractor "was cutting away large sections of forests surrounding his hotels to fuel their

fireplaces," as well as selling trout caught in park lakes and rivers at his dining halls.²⁴ He also noted that ptomaine poisoning was a common occurrence, and that "all facilities were badly overcrowded and in need of extensive repairs."²⁵ Everhart asserts that the basic business philosophy of this concessioner "established a precedent much favored by his successors: . . . put as little money as possible into the operation, while extracting the maximum profit."²⁶

Esthetic Conservation: Tourism as a Vehicle for Resource Protection

Tourism, as promoted by preservationists during the first decades of the twentieth century, was seen as the key to protecting scenic areas. Conservationists, therefore, considered it imperative that private citizens be provided with convenient access to and accommodations within the park lands. Early park advocates believed that after a strong base of public support was generated, legislators could be convinced that preservation of scenic beauty "for public recreation and esthetic enjoyment constituted a legitimate use of the land."²⁷ These early park proponents realized "that the survival of the reserves clearly hinged on the number of people who claimed direct benefits from scenic preservation."²⁸ A differing view of responsible land use was advocated by those who supported the practice of utilitarian conservation. Utilitarian interests saw natural resources on public land, such as timber, as commodities to be nurtured primarily for harvest. It is important to note that in the last decade of the nineteenth century "there was no clear distinction between national forest 'reserves' and national 'parks' . . ."²⁹ Despite utilitarian belief that landscape protection "should be on a minimum scale only," some esthetic conservationists contended that utilitarian philosophy provided a useful rationalization for

resource protection: economic gain via tourism.³⁰

Alliance between proponents of utilitarian conservation and those of scenic conservation, however, soon proved unwieldy. Although tourism could serve the economic ends of utilitarianism, it could not perpetuate itself without emphasis on the principles of scenic conservation. Gifford Pinchot of the Forest Service and John Muir, a founder of the Sierra Club, embodied the polarization of the commercial use and the scenic preservation philosophies, as well as the debate which still continues today over appropriate use of park resources.

The 1913 flooding of Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park in order to provide drinking water for residents of San Francisco represented the triumph of "the economic concept of conservation based on Pinchot's idea of beneficial use."³¹ It also confirmed one of Muir's deepest fears:

If [land] which lay within the boundaries of a national park could be flooded and used for extraneous purposes, then no park in the country would be safe from similar exploitation, commercial and otherwise, by would-be developers.³²

After the damming of the Hetch Hetchy, preservationists realized that "unless the national parks were under the unified administration of a single agency willing to fight for their integrity, the parks could fall to development schemes one at a time."³³ Sierra Club members began the task of securing such a national governing agency in 1910. After forming an alliance with other public interest groups, such as the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the National Federation of Audubon Clubs, and the Save-the-Redwoods League, the Sierra Club organized national parks conferences in 1911 and 1912. The result of these conferences was a formal recommendation by the Sierra Club that "a parks bureau [be established] within the Interior Department, where there would be organizational distance between it and the Forest Service."³⁴ President Taft

approved of this proposal, and recommended that Congress establish such a bureau.³⁵

The Changing Definition of Park Tourism: 1916 – 1941

In 1915, Secretary of the Interior Franklin Lane recruited his friend Stephen T. Mather to “help bring some order into the management of Interior’s national parks.”³⁶ Mather soon became aware that before an administrative bureau for the national parks could be established,

it was necessary to arouse the interest of Congress and the general public. Mather began by initiating a program to publicize the parks and promote tourism. He realized that Congress would not give adequate support to the parks until the American people demanded it and that the American people would not do much demanding until they had been introduced to the parks.³⁷

One year after Mather arrived in Washington D.C., Congress established the National Park Service, and Mather was appointed its first director. The enabling legislation, known as the National Park Act of 1916 or The Organic Act, directed the newly created bureau:

to administer areas of the National Park System in accordance with the fundamental purpose of preserving their scenery, wildlife, natural and historic objects, and providing for their enjoyment in a manner that will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations³⁸

The problems which faced the newly-created Park Service were formidable. Peter J. Blodgett, in “Managing Concessions in the National Parks, 1916-33,” states that “one of the most vexing challenges . . . in 1917 and thereafter sprang from the service’s obligation to oversee the conduct of the private concessionaires within the national parks.”³⁹

The purpose clause of the Organic Act, as interpreted by Mather and his assistant Horace Albright, specifically directed the bureau to implement

enjoyment of the parks by making them accessible to the general public. The challenge of this mandate was to effect "a proper balance between the rights of private enterprise and the responsibilities of public management."⁴⁰ To this end,

Mather and Albright sought out allies in business by portraying national parks as good opportunities . . . for the tourist business. [They] realized that . . . those whose livelihoods came to depend on the existence of the parks could be counted on to defend them. Mather pointed out to businessmen the great profits to be made in expanding facilities in national park concessions.⁴¹

The powerful ally which both the nascent Park administration and the scenic preservationist organizations needed to promote visitation of the national parks was the western railroad companies.

The Railroad Era of National Park Tourism: 1883 – 1920

The railroads' investment in the national parks began well before Mather's tourism campaign. Since 1883, the Northern Pacific Railroad had been providing access to Yellowstone, and in 1907 the Yosemite Valley Railroad began operations in California. In the first decades of the twentieth century, investment by private corporations was absolutely crucial if accommodations for park visitors were to be provided, because the newly formed Park Service

had very little in the way of operating funds, equipment, or personnel. Its budget was meager, about \$30,000 a year for each of the parks . . . and only \$166 for each of the monuments. [It] badly needed funds for facilities development. Compared to other agencies, the Park Service was barely operational.⁴²

Railroad Hotels

The hotels and lodges constructed in the western national parks by the Santa Fe, Northern Pacific, Great Northern and Southern Pacific Railroads — the Wawona, Ahwahnee, Le Conte, El Tovar, and Grand Canyon — were all

superbly crafted with careful attention to visitor comfort. These buildings, many designed in a romanticized style of Rustic-Classicism, projected a sense of grandeur derived from their setting and from the scale of building materials, much of it harvested from the parks with the consent of Park administration. Elements which comprised the Rustic Style were "log construction, steeply pitched gabled roofs and casement sashes; sapling and barreled balustrading, decorative shingling, carved wooden detailing and hickory furniture."⁴³

The luxurious image which the buildings represented was all-important, for the railroads sought to portray civilized living amidst the wilderness.⁴⁴ Their hotels provided conveniences such as "telephones, modern plumbing, steam heat, . . . barbering [and] gourmet dining" for those who could afford the rail excursions.⁴⁵ Although concessions of this type proved extremely successful in increasing park tourism, the buildings themselves often became destinations, supplanting the parks' natural features as the focus of visitor attention. A writer in 1920 commented that the El Tovar Hotel, located on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon, was

. . . far too beguiling. From that comfortable quarter you look out and perhaps indolently come to the conclusion that you are seeing the whole Canyon. Nine people out of ten rest content with that view and that conclusion. They get no farther than the benches along the Rim . . . When the evening train goes out they go with it, rather glad that they came, and quite satisfied perhaps that they have seen the Canyon.⁴⁶

Laura Soulliere, an architectural historian with the National Park Service, observed in the 1986 Architecture in the Parks: National Historic Landmark Theme Study that "the natural wonders of the National Parks drew more visitors when the scenic beauty was enhanced by significant architecture worthy of writing home about."⁴⁷ Luxury hotels, such as The Ahwahnee in Yosemite

National Park, were seen by Park Service management

as . . . drawing card[s] not only to increase tourism . . . — at a time [when] park appropriations were directly related to numbers of visitors — but undoubtedly as a special haven for the important and influential whose backing of national parks was always welcome.⁴⁸

Rodd L. Wheaton, a regional historical architect for the National Park Service, wrote that these concessions, “wilderness stage sets, adorned literally with the trappings of the frontier,” imparted to the visitor “a basic preconceived, if not contrived, park experience.”⁴⁹ Earl Pomeroy, author of In Search of the Golden West: The Tourist in Western America, substantiates this assertion in his description of Glacier National Park Hotel, circa 1908:

Guests arrived in jinrikishas, entered through a Chinese pagoda . . . and chose between Swiss-costumed waitresses in the dining room or geisha-girl waitresses in the grill room; they ate to the sound of tom-toms beaten by Blackfoot Indians. The furnishings included bear skins and Navajo rugs on the floors and pelts and skulls on the walls.⁵⁰

Automobiles in the Parks: Changes in Concession Facilities

Although railroad companies provided the initial means of transport for visitors en masse to the remote western parks, their era of influence, from 1892 through 1929, was relatively brief. Soon after the first Ford Model Ts were marketed to the American public in 1908, automobiles began a transformation of park touring. Since auto travel was less costly than travel by rail, park visitation was no longer limited primarily to a segment of the population who could afford expensive rail excursions and lavish hotel accommodations. Significantly, many of the new tourists were families, and they did not desire the services that existed in the parks. Even if they could afford to stay in the park hotels,

auto tourists shied away from them. Hotels, whether . . . big or small, prestigious or sleazy, . . . made middle-class travelers feel awkward and ill at ease. Motoring in the open touring cars was a dusty business [and] respectable people did not feel comfortable entering a lobby in dirty touring clothes.⁵¹

The self-sufficient auto travelers that entered the national parks in 1911 (Crater Lake), 1913 (Yosemite) and 1915 (Yellowstone), were greatly resented by the concessioners.⁵² Popularly referred to as 'sagebrushers', they "flood[ed] the roads, stores, and campgrounds, . . . spoil[ing] the contained and profitable railroad-hotel business."⁵³ According to an often-cited 1924 description, the sagebrusher, in marked contrast to the sedate rail tourist,

. . . cuts loose from all effeteness, bringing clothes and furniture and house and food — even the family pup — and lets his adventurous pioneering spirit riot . . . in the mountain air.⁵⁴

Despite the fact that by 1916 automobile travelers had begun to outnumber railroad excursionists,⁵⁵ concessioners "lagged . . . at building facilities catering to automobiles."⁵⁶ Although in 1924, thirty-five percent of the visitors to Yellowstone still came by rail, four years later this number had dropped to just under seven percent.⁵⁷

It took several more years for railroad companies to come to terms with the realization that the era of genteel park travel, limited to the select wealthy few, was drawing to a close.

The transition to motorized vehicles forced many existing contractors, such as the stagecoach concession at Glacier National Park, out of business. In 1916 this concessioner was informed by the Park Service that his contract would not be renewed because "automobiles and horses could never coexist on the same roads, and . . . automobiles . . . would move travelers from one point to another more efficiently."⁵⁸ Blodgett points out that by this decision the

Park Service:

established a fundamental principal to which it would return time and again: In managing park concessions, the service would insist upon 'businesslike' operations that devoted every effort to satisfying the needs and wants of park visitors. As in the past, the federal government would accept private enterprises, but not *free* enterprise, within the parks.⁵⁹

This precept was a crucial one, because it emphasized that national parks were separate from open-market commerce. For businesses operating in the parks, unlimited capitalization was not intended to guarantee unlimited financial opportunity.

Being able to drive through the parks gave visitors a degree of personal control over their "park experience," autonomy previously absent in the regimented sightseeing excursions of the railroad companies. Visitor independence changed the parks in several ways. The concession operations of the railroad companies had helped to prevent "rampant despoliation" of the park "by controlling the movements of thousands of tourists . . . by stagecoach from one hostelry to another."⁶⁰ Automobile travelers, however, were not so easily restrained. In addition, because automobiles enabled a broader spectrum of Americans to visit the parks, concessioners perceived that profit margin depended on catering to a wider diversity of vacationer needs and tastes. New visitor services also reflected changes in the purpose of park tourism, a pursuit no longer proscribed by the conventions of nineteenth century Romanticism. Rather than the concessioner setting the standard for the quintessential or "proper" park tour, auto travelers set their own agendas and timetables for a self-directed visit. Concessioner profit now seemed to depend on catering to the actual requirements of park travel, instead of maintaining contrived enclaves of luxury.

Initially, the services that auto travelers required seemed relatively modest: gasoline stations, grocery stores, small cafes and sleeping accommodations. Overnight facilities for the first auto travelers were of three basic types: public campgrounds, "crude, half-cabin/half-tent structures as had been built in earlier years ('permanent camps')," and "rustic, inferior hostelryes."⁶¹

Significantly, the automobile had changed the pace of travel within the park, making it possible for vacationers to see many more "sights" in a shorter period of time. Given the new emphasis on velocity, different marketing techniques were required to entice people first to stop, and then to stay long enough to spend their money at concession facilities.

Although many preservationists heralded automobiles as the "convenient transportation [necessary for] the public . . . [to] support scenic preservation," not everyone was enthusiastic about motorized traffic in the parks.⁶² The naturalist Victor Cahalane deplored the "processions of automobiles, clumps of filling stations, gasoline smells, restaurants and hot dog stands," predicting that their proliferation would destroy the very reason for the parks' existence: their value as natural 'islands' in an expanding nation rapidly swallowing up its wilderness.⁶³ The automobile, observed one historian, ". . . accelerated the confrontation between those who viewed the national parks as playgrounds, and those who . . . saw them as sanctuaries."⁶⁴

Concessions Consolidation: Regulated Monopolies, Public Utilities

When Mather began the task of improving and standardizing the quality of service offered by park concessioners, he discovered many operations that were poorly run and exploitative. Besides the obvious hazards to human health

and resource preservation, Mather worried that these unprofessionally operated services would cause visitors to remember their park visit with displeasure, thereby "tarnishing the park's reputation . . . and weakening the popular support necessary for more parks and bigger budgets."⁶⁵ To correct this situation, Mather set about creating a system of visitor services known as "regulated monopolies."⁶⁶ Mather believed that this system would prevent:

unrestrained competition among park concessionaires, [which] drained off the patronage necessary to earn a return upon investment, threatened the economic well-being of all competitors . . . and subjected . . . the public to . . . poor service and unscrupulous tactics.⁶⁷

To implement his policy of regulated monopolies, Mather forced most of the existing park concessions into mergers, and by this process eliminated businesses run by "notably incompetent operators."⁶⁸ Although the forced mergers were bitterly opposed by many contractors, and some small businesses managed to survive by exception,⁶⁹ by 1918 this course of action had achieved "success . . . [in] improving tourist facilities in all the parks."⁷⁰ The Secretary of the Interior subsequently institutionalized this concession management strategy.

In 1928, Park administration gave concessioners permission "to use their franchises as collateral against which to raise money for 'installing, enlarging or improving . . . facilities for the accommodation of the public. '"⁷¹ The intention of this provision was to encourage the stability of existing businesses and provide an incentive for their continued improvement. In addition to the franchise-as-collateral policy, the Park Service also had instituted in 1924 the policy of preferential rights, which virtually guaranteed routine renewal of existing leases, provided the contractor had fulfilled visitor service obligations in a satisfactory manner.⁷² A former park concessioner, Don Hummel, wrote that "concessioners regard this [provision] as the cornerstone of concession policy."⁷³

While providing a measure of security for existing park concessioners, the preferential rights provision severely limited the opportunity of other businesses who were interested in providing visitor services for the parks. Potential bidders, even if their proposed operations appeared of better quality than existing concessions, stood little chance of being awarded a lease unless the current contractor had performed abysmally.

Preferential rights and the use of franchises as collateral were a response by Park administration to years of contractor insistence that the unique business risks inherent in operating park concessions — the short visitor season, the effect of weather conditions on park visitation, and the expense involved in transporting supplies to remote areas — deserved compensation. For the National Park Service, the preferential rights principle

shifted the emphasis of policy from extracting the finest service possible from the best possible operators to extracting the best possible service from the operators available. To achieve this more modest goal, the [Park] service focused on ensuring that the operators then in the parks would have every means and every opportunity to combine good service with a fair profit.⁷⁴

The contracts of 1926 park concessioners contained a significant provision (Article IX) which specified that “all buildings, fixtures, and appurtenances whether now on the land or hereafter placed thereon shall at all times be part of the realty and property of the United States.”⁷⁵ Although extremely unpopular with concessioners, this provision prevented creditors from seizing buildings in the parks for non-payment of debt by concessioners. It also reaffirmed the precept that private enterprise in the parks, although allowed, was not the same as commercial business operating in the private sector. Private business was allowed to operate in the parks only under the control of the federal government. In December of 1929, representatives of the twenty-nine major concession

operations in the parks met for a conference convened by NPS Director, Horace Albright. As a result of this meeting, concessioners in the western national parks (whose operations were now referred to as "public utilities" by the Park Service) formed an association, The National Park Operators Conference,⁷⁶ According to its Statement of Purpose, this organization was designed

To provide a mechanism by which . . . Park Operators could . . . present or consider questions of policy affecting all concerned.

To encourage better understanding and closer affiliations among the Operators themselves in the interests of better service, greater operating economies . . .

To cooperate with the National Park Service in placing the contractual status of the Operators on a more logical, uniform, and secure basis.⁷⁷

Despite the Conference's goals of cooperation, conflict between commercial enterprise and the Park Service continued. In Yellowstone, the period from 1921 through World War II was characterized by one historian as a "litany of continual [contract] cancellation and renegotiation."⁷⁸ The difficulties in this park, wrote Bartlett, seemed to stem from "a lack of research and planning by both sides prior to the signing of contracts, and too little respect by both parties for the sanctity of the contractual term."⁷⁹ Despite these problems, however, the relationship between the Park Service and its single-operator public utilities was generally "a workable one."⁸⁰

On another level, however, a fundamental conflict continued to characterize the relationship of the Park Service to its regulated monopolies. This conflict existed because of the inherent contradiction in providing "public pleasuring grounds"⁸¹ while mandating preservation of resources so as to "leave them unimpaired."⁸² Although the Park Service was instructed:

to oppose commercialism in the parks resolutely, it exempted commercial use 'incidental to the accommodation and entertainment of visitors'. It emphasized that the public should have every opportunity 'wherever possible, to enjoy the national parks in the manner that best satisfies the individual taste.'⁸³

A focus on catering to individual tastes of park visitors set the stage for increasing compromise of the essential character of the National Parks, areas intended to be distinct from the mainstream of urban America. Efforts to accommodate diverse expectations of what constituted "necessary" services encouraged a generic definition of the park experience based on popular taste and the economic goals of private enterprise. The sanctity of the American free-enterprise system provided a further rationale for diversification and expansion of concession operations. Although an article in a 1921 issue of The Ladies Home Journal described the national parks as "the last national resource the American people have withheld from commercial exploitation,"⁸⁴ this distinction was tenuous at best. Commercial exploitation had, in fact, existed since the inception of the national park system and was checked only temporarily by the Great Depression of the 1930s and by World War II.

Park Visitation During The Depression

Opinions vary on the affect that the Depression had on park visitation and concession operations. Runte maintains that the Depression did not decrease tourism in the national parks:

in fact, just the reverse was true. Visitation . . . climbed steadily from approximately three million in 1929 to more than twelve million immediately prior to World War II. Yosemite and Yellowstone averaged between 400,000 and 500,000 visitors annually, an all-time high.⁸⁵

Everhart, however, writes that only a "relatively wealthy few . . . [were]

able to travel during the doldrums of the Depression."⁸⁶ Blodgett likewise states that as the national economy worsened in 1930, businesses failed and unemployment increased, so that "the flow of tourists [to the parks] was shut off at the tap."⁸⁷ The result was that "many [concessioners] were obliged to drop plans for expansion, and some had to curtail service or . . . close down [entirely]."⁸⁸ Even when park attendance began a slow recovery in the summer of 1930,

concessionaires discovered that increasing numbers of visitors did not spell renewed prosperity. Those tourists who did come often preferred cheaper accommodations outside the parks to the more expensive official concessions within park boundaries. The tastes of the traveling public had changed so drastically that some concessionaires never completely recovered.⁸⁹

The declining park attendance of the Depression "reinforced a practical alliance [between concessioners and Park administration] of long standing."⁹⁰ Their shared emphasis was no longer "planning for the future," but instead, how "to get people into the parks."⁹¹ The methods suggested by the concessioners to achieve this end were focused, understandably, on how to shore up their lagging businesses. One group of contractors proposed that the Park Service partially subsidize their operations by "divert[ing] all of the money that [Parks] spent on roads or on educational programs for one or two years into advertising designed to promote park travel."⁹² Another concessioner urged "more flexibility within leases [in order] to 'make such changes in rates or such concessions as [the contractors] feel are in the interest of good merchandising of what they have to sell.' "⁹³ These suggestions were rejected, however, by both the Assistant Interior Secretary and by Albright, who "opposed unlimited flexibility in pricing or other matters of merchandising."⁹⁴ Albright argued that although "the interests of commerce . . . [were] undeniably important, [they] were subservient

to . . . the responsibility of the Park Service to protect the public interest."⁹⁵

The Civilian Conservation Corps

The Emergency Conservation Work Act of 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's response to the massive unemployment of the Depression, had a profound impact on the development of tourist accommodations in the parks. This act created the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which employed men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five to work on projects in the national forests, national parks, state parks and elsewhere which ranged from flood and erosion control, fire suppression, and reforestation, to construction of campgrounds and support services buildings.⁹⁶

Although thousands of structures were built in a relatively short span of time (nine years) by the CCC, each building proposed for the national parks first underwent a mandatory project review.⁹⁷ This review process helped to mitigate some of the apprehensions of park superintendents, who feared that "a result of the CCC program would . . . [be] park overdevelopment and . . . irretrievable losses of natural and cultural resources."⁹⁸ Strict guidelines charged Park Service engineers and architects "to study every change, every proposed 'improvement', weighing its benefits against its potential for disrupting the landscape."⁹⁹ Improvements were then to be made within the context of a master plan formulated "with special reference to the preservation of the landscape."¹⁰⁰ The regulations which governed construction of improvements such as concession buildings often emphasized the building's form and siting above its practical use by contractors:

Although a park structure exists solely for the use of the public, it is not required to be seen from a distance. In its most satisfying expression, the park structure is designed with a view to subordinating it to its environment, and is located so that it may profit from any natural screening that may exist.¹⁰¹

This viewpoint did not take into consideration the very different priorities of commercial enterprise, and stood in marked contrast to a basic marketing principle: utilizing the visibility of a business to attract potential customers. Thus, many of these concession buildings, although aesthetically pleasing, did not necessarily serve the needs of the park concessioners. The use of these buildings by state park contractors and the significance of the CCC architecture will be discussed in Chapters IV and VI.

Historic Preservation Legislation and the National Parks

"Protecting the public interest" in the national parks with an emphasis on the nation's cultural heritage was an ethic that evolved during the 1930s, a decade pivotal for the historic preservation movement in the United States.¹⁰²

During the 1930s, "historic preservation emerged as a legitimate component of the Service's mission."¹⁰³ This interest in America's cultural resources indicated that the national parks were beginning to be understood as more than simply wilderness reserves or public playgrounds.

The Historic Sites Act (1935) directed that historic sites, buildings, and objects were to be "preserved for public use . . . for the inspiration and benefit of the people of the United States."¹⁰⁴ Section 2h of this law, providing for the operation and management of historic properties, authorized competitive bidding for leases to provide accommodations for the public at such locations. The relationship of these services with Park Service interpretation efforts however, was not addressed in depth. The law specified only that "such

concessions . . . shall be let at competitive bidding, to the person making the highest and best bid."¹⁰⁵ What constituted the "best bid" for privately operated services at historic national park properties was not precisely defined.

Issues of Appropriate Use and Development in the National Parks

The National Parks Association,¹⁰⁶ a non-profit public advocacy group for national parks which Mather was instrumental in establishing, was founded in 1919. Since its inception, this association had been critical of commercial development in the parks.¹⁰⁷ In response to the Park Service's ever-present dilemma of "reconciling [its] role as the preserver of the great scenic places with its role as a provider of recreation opportunities"¹⁰⁸ the association declared its objective, "to defend the National Parks and Monuments fearlessly against assaults of private interests and aggressive commercialism,"¹⁰⁹ and adopted a position favoring "minimal development and preservation-oriented management" for national parks.¹¹⁰ Inappropriate function and siting of visitor service buildings were of particular concern to NPA president Wallace Attwood. In 1931, Attwood observed that many "hotels and other buildings [were located] too near the objects of interest," and also recommended that "no building should be erected in the parks solely for amusement purposes."¹¹¹

Although the Park Service, by the mid-1930s, had in place a program "designed to remove 'artificial intrusions' that impaired the attractiveness of [a park's] natural features," enforcing this policy proved difficult.¹¹² Concessioners protested any attempts to relocate their operations, citing financial hardship, and the Park Service tolerated their non-compliance. The Old Faithful Bathhouse at Yellowstone provides one example of this situation. The location of

this building, sited in conjunction with "a swimming pool, a . . . photo shop, a . . . store and service station and the government sewage disposal site" created a situation where "visitors . . . frequently got their first view of the eruption of Old Faithful over the roof of the concessioner's bathhouse and swimming pool."¹¹³ Although Park Director Albright "ordered, in 1933, the removal of [the bathhouse] within a year to a new location," it remained standing until 1957.¹¹⁴

Criticism regarding the appropriate use of the parks by the public was leveled at many of Yosemite's concessions in 1936. Albert W. Atwood, a writer for the Saturday Evening Post, decried the existence of entertainments in this park such as

dance halls, movies, bear pit shows, . . . baseball, golf, swimming pools . . . and barbeques, . . . asserting that although these diversions were not in themselves bad, . . . none had 'any relation whatever to the purpose for which the national parks were established.'¹¹⁵

A similar viewpoint was expressed two years later by a professor of landscape architecture at the University of Illinois, Henry Baldwin Ward. Ward suggested that "tourists seeking pure entertainment [in the parks] might be wisely diverted to areas of less unique and supreme value."¹¹⁶

Concern that the parks were losing their unique qualities because of excessive commercialism prompted Interior Secretary Harold L. Ickes to propose a policy of government owned and operated concessions:

we do not want any Coney Islands: the parks are for those who will appreciate them and not merely for hordes of tourists who dash through them at break-neck speed.¹¹⁷

Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. , writing for Landscape Architecture in 1934, expressed a similar conservative management philosophy. In his article "Amusements and Related Artificial Conveniences in the National Forests,"

Olmsted strongly denounced "the introduction of any artificial elements not clearly necessary for, or directly and clearly tending to enhance, enjoyment of the natural features peculiar to Kings River Canyon."¹¹⁸ The presence of such elements, warned Olmsted, had already "endangered the essential values of Yosemite" by facilitating the "successive introduction of similar activities and conveniences of all kinds into the Valley."¹¹⁹ Such artificial conveniences, he asserted, had an "aggregate effect," and shaped "development of the valley in a direction ultimately and basically inconsistent "with the essential value of its natural features."¹²⁰ Olmsted believed that the ultimate result of this progression would be an "urban pleasure resort."¹²¹

Although Calahane concurred with Olmsted's warning, he was pessimistic about the ability of parks to withstand such development pressure from private enterprise and visitors. As park visitation increased, Calahane predicted in 1940, "demands for all kinds of . . . elaborate structures and big-city amusements" would proliferate.¹²²

Further debate over appropriate use and development of the national parks was interrupted by the United States' involvement in World War II. When attention was once again focused on this issue in the late 1960s, many of the parks had become firmly imbedded with the "urban resort facilities" which Calahane and Olmsted had foretold.

Growth of Concession Operations in the National Parks: 1942 – 1970

The Effect of World War II on Park Tourism and Concessions

In 1941, visits to the national parks reached 21,236,000, the highest number in twenty-five years.¹²³ A year later, after the United States entered World War II, park tourism had dropped to less than half this amount.¹²⁴ For the next four

years park management and private sector contractors struggled to keep the parks operational as the federal government drafted many park employees for military service and reduced park appropriations by over fifty percent.¹²⁵ With funds and personnel unavailable for routine maintenance, park facilities sustained marked deterioration during the period from 1940 through 1945, a condition made worse by an increased incidence of vandalism.¹²⁶ Other changes in the parks due to the War were the closing of the CCC camps, the curtailment of road and trail construction, and government use of a number of concession buildings to accommodate military personnel.¹²⁷

During these years, concessioners were often unable to secure financing for either day-to-day operation or expansion of their businesses. Discouraged by this difficulty, the drastic drop in park visitation, and the problems of obtaining supplies due to war rationing,¹²⁸ "many concessioners would have been glad to unload their properties onto the government, but . . . Congress could not see the wisdom of buying them."¹²⁹ An example of this occurred in 1944 when the Yosemite Valley Railroad was auctioned off in pieces, based on its only market value: as scrap metal.¹³⁰

Post-War Pressures on Parks and Concessioners

At the end of World War II, people began to visit the national parks again, and in record numbers. Everhart attributed this tremendous influx, which began in 1946, to the end of gasoline and tire rationing together with increased economic prosperity.¹³¹ Many facilities, however, had lain virtually dormant for over five years and concessioners now found themselves ill-prepared to provide adequate service to the deluge of park visitors. Tourists outnumbered available cabins and dining facilities, and many restaurants closed entirely due to the

difficulty of obtaining supplies such as meat.¹³² Visitor services at Yellowstone were particularly taxed, which resulted in numerous complaints. Bartlett recounted in Yellowstone: A Wilderness Besieged that “protests streamed into Congressional offices and appeared in newspapers. Soon the whole nation was aware of Yellowstone’s poor food, wretched housing, surly clerks, and inadequate management.”¹³³ This situation came about for reasons beyond merely an increase in the number of park visitors. One cause was “the concessioner’s reluctance to upgrade facilities in the late 1930s,” leaving the operation “totally unprepared for the tide of humanity expecting service . . . in the post World War II years.”¹³⁴ Another was the fact that “the owners of the principal park concession had lost interest in the business, had no desire to sink more money into it, and in fact wanted to sell — but at what buyers considered an absurdly inflated price.”¹³⁵

A former contractor at Lassen National Park, Don Hummel, wrote that these conditions existed because concessioners were still unable, even after the end of the War, to borrow the capital or obtain the building materials for needed improvements.¹³⁶ According to Hummel, several other factors also contributed to the concessioners’ lack of enthusiasm. One of these was a recommendation by the Solicitor’s Office to the Interior Department in 1946 that the twenty-year contract term for concessioners be reduced, and franchise fees raised to five percent.¹³⁷ Also of concern to contractors were various proposals that called for the government to construct and operate concession facilities.¹³⁸ John Ise, in his book Our National Park Policy (1961), observed that:

businessmen must feel confidence in the future to do their best. Unless there is a definite and realizable plan [for] government ownership of facilities, it is unwise to agitate for [this]. Ickes' and Krug's [Interior Secretary Julius Krug] talk of government ownership had such an effect on the private concessioners of the forties.¹³⁹

In an effort to provide concessioners with an incentive for investing in their businesses when funds became available, the National Park Service, in 1948, instituted a policy of possessory interest, which entitled private contractors

to the sound value of improvements . . . they made to fixtures on park land. The NPS defined the "sound value" as the replacement cost of the improvement, less observed depreciation. This effectively allowed the concessioner's investment in improving the facilities to appreciate over time.¹⁴⁰

Despite the urgent need, expansion of visitor service facilities proceeded slowly during the early 1950s, a situation which worsened as use of the parks escalated while park appropriations, cut drastically during the war years and remaining at a minimum level, were reduced even further with the outbreak of the Korean War. Unlike World War II, however, U.S. involvement in the Korean War had little perceptible impact on national park visitation. "By 1954," wrote Everhart, "the parks were receiving 54 million visitors, using the same run-down facilities that had served only 15 million visitors before the war."¹⁴¹

Mission 66

The National Park Service's response to this crisis was Mission 66, a proposal introduced in 1955 by National Park Service Director Conrad L. Wirth. This ten-year plan, with a completion date intended to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the National Park Service, was financed by a Congressional appropriation of over one billion dollars, and designed "to expand . . . the carrying capacity of the national parks by reconstructing roads . . . and increasing

overnight accommodations.”¹⁴² It also established two NPS training centers and approximately 150 museums and interpretive centers, in addition to providing new housing for NPS employees. One million dollars per year for the duration of the program was budgeted for reconstruction and stabilization of historic structures.¹⁴³ Wirth, in his Foreword to Mission 66 for the U.S. National Park Service (1956), wrote that “the first requirement of the Mission 66 program . . . is to consider anew the purpose for which the parks exist, [and] its objective is to . . . improve the quality of [visitor] experience.”¹⁴⁴ The report went on to state that:

the values of an area do not derive from lodges [or] coffee shops, but from the recreational use of park resources. Concession facilities shall be developed in the parks only when they are necessary for appropriate enjoyment of the areas by the visiting public.¹⁴⁵

Another NPS publication, Our Heritage, A Plan for Its Protection and Use:

"Mission 66" (1956), reinforced this stipulation by including a recommendation that:

operating and public use facilities of both government and concessioners which encroach upon important park features should be eliminated or relocated at sites of lesser importance, either within or outside the park.¹⁴⁶

According to the original report, however, the *type* of concessions that operated in 1955, food service, gas stations, “retail stores and other services,”

offer[ed] no particular problem. The concessions problem is almost wholly one of lodgings and it arises principally from the difficulty of recovering original investment and making a fair profit on investments when construction costs are high, seasons are short, and the public is seeking low-rental accommodations. Concessioners find it difficult to obtain capital from private lenders because accommodations are on Government lands.¹⁴⁷

To relieve these financial difficulties, the NPS advocated “extending the

authority of the Small Business Administration to guarantee loans to concessioners."¹⁴⁸

Mission 66 significantly broadened the definition of "necessary visitor services" beyond "food, lodging, and transportation," to include "a number of other services dictated by present-day travel habits and requirements."¹⁴⁹ These "other services" were not specifically defined in either of the Mission 66 overviews, however, which seemed to indicate that popular taste and consumer habit would be influential in determining what concessions would be allowed in the parks. Thus, the objectives of Mission 66 -- to restore historic buildings on a broad scale while providing for visitor comfort and concessioner profitability -- temporarily diverted attention away from the more fundamental issue: what visitor services were truly necessary as well as appropriate to the setting and values of national parks?

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, articles in American Forests, Landscape Architecture, and Changing Times criticized many of the commercial enterprises in the national parks as unnecessary for visitor enjoyment and contradictory to the fundamental purpose of the parks. Activities deemed particularly objectionable were those which "obstructed famous views" and diverted visitor attention from natural landscape features.¹⁵⁰ Another concern of the writers was that the parks, already overcrowded, would be further inundated by visitors attracted solely by resort entertainments such as dances and shopping centers.¹⁵¹ The interests who promoted such "synthetic attractions," warned one writer, were "relentless," constantly seeking new opportunities to expand their operations at the expense of the "harmony and beauty" of these lands.¹⁵² Inappropriate merchandise was the focus of an article that charged park concessioners with basically "ignoring Interior Department policy that souvenirs

must be craft items indigenous to the area.”¹⁵³

Efforts designed to eliminate inadequate visitor accommodations of the early post-war years had, by the mid 1960s, created a backlash effect which promoted a wide array of products, services, and entertainment as a necessary and desirable aspect of visiting the national parks. A 1958 amendment to the Organic Act (1916) increased the twenty-year concession contract term to thirty years, and Federal legislation enacted in 1965, the Concessions Policy Act, further entrenched the facilities-development point of view.¹⁵⁴

The Concessions Policy Act (1965)

In 1964, Congressional hearings were held to evaluate testimony regarding HR2091, a bill which specified the legal obligations of the federal government toward private-sector contractors in the national parks. The proposed act addressed three key provisions. The first of these mandated preferential right of contract renewal for current park concessions and the sole right of the current concessioner “to provide new or additional accommodations, facilities or services for the accommodation and convenience of the public.”¹⁵⁵ Another provision amended the 1935 Historical Sites Act to permit the Secretary of the Interior to grant concessions “without advertising and without securing competitive bids.”¹⁵⁶ The most important provision of this bill, however, was Section 6, a statutory acknowledgment of the 1948 NPS policy which specified the possessory interest of concessioners in all existing and future contractor-financed structures, fixtures or improvements.¹⁵⁷ Possessory interest could not be “extinguished by the expiration or . . . termination of the contract [nor] taken for public use without just compensation,” and the contractor was allowed to assign or transfer this interest when he sold the business.¹⁵⁸ Compensation for

the concessioner's possessory interest was calculated essentially as it had been in 1948, "an amount equal to the sound value of such structure, fixture, or improvement at the time of taking by the United States, [and] determined upon the basis of reconstruction cost less depreciation . . . not to exceed fair market value."¹⁵⁹ The Concessions Policy Act became law on October 9, 1965.

Section 6 of this Act created a management situation that proved extremely difficult for park administrators. As Dyan Zaslowsky observed in These American Lands:

In a sense there was little difference between "possessory interest" and outright ownership. If Park Service administrators were dissatisfied with a concessioner, the agency could not cancel the agreement without simultaneously buying out all concessioner-owned capital improvements at current market value. The act was intended to protect concessioners from capricious rule changes, but instead made it much more difficult and expensive to rid the parks of genuinely bad management.¹⁶⁰

Interpretive Values

The throngs of tourists who clogged the roadways, parking lots, and campgrounds of the national parks during the early post-war years seemed not to have been particularly impressed with the inspirational or educational qualities of the parks. Instead, many of these visitors remembered facilities badly in need of repair or simply too small and few in number to adequately accommodate them. Their letters to the NPS during the 1950s complained of poor service and unappetizing food, in addition to lodging which was often overpriced, dilapidated, or simply unavailable.¹⁶¹ The experiences of these park users gave testimony to Stephen Mather's much-quoted phrase about the importance of providing adequate visitor accommodations: "scenery is a hollow enjoyment to a tourist who sets out in the morning after an indigestible breakfast

and a fitful sleep on an impossible bed.”¹⁶² Concessioners would use this quote often in the coming decades to defend the scale and character of new visitor service facilities constructed in response to this crisis.

A more expansive definition of park tourism evolved as larger and more elaborate visitor facilities were constructed in the post-war period. The character of these businesses reflected, to a certain degree, the optimism of an economy eager to discard wartime standards that had restricted personal freedom and material goods consumption, and consumerism became an integral component of the park visit. Concessions which offered familiar distractions and comforts were welcomed by many tourists, for these services provided assurance that a national park visit need not be characterized by lack of any kind.

By the early 1970s, however, the expanded definition of needed visitor services, together with the scale of the commercial enterprises which provided them, became the target of increasing criticism. Environmental groups charged that businesses such as cocktail lounges and gift shops were “unsuitable” to areas significant because of their natural resources, and represented a misapplication of the private enterprise system in national parks.¹⁶³ For-profit business owners, long directed by the NPS to “devote every effort to satisfying the needs and wants of park visitors,”¹⁶⁴ protested that such criticism represented the feelings of an elite minority of park users who sought to limit the rights of convenience and comfort for the majority of visitors.¹⁶⁵ The polarity of these viewpoints led to a reassessment of the purpose of concessions in the national parks, beginning in the early 1970s with an NPS review of its concessions management practices.¹⁶⁶ Senate hearings were conducted in the years to follow in an effort to determine an appropriate balance between the visitor enjoyment and resource preservation mandates for the national parks.

Redefining the Purpose and Scope of National Park Visitor
Services: 1970 – 1993

The year 1972 marked the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the first national park, and in honor of this event, a World Conference on National Parks was held at Yellowstone. Writers for Saturday Review and National Parks and Conservation Magazine commemorated this occasion with articles expressing concern for what they viewed as an erosion of the national park ideal. One author observed that “Yellowstone’s future is no more certain today than it was in 1872. . . nor are the other national parks safe from future development if some use for their lands can be found.”¹⁶⁷ Given this situation and “the present ecological crisis,” he hoped that more people would be “encouraged to protect their natural heritage, regardless of economic considerations.”¹⁶⁸ Verne Huser warned that

the great need in the parks today is to protect the scenery, the natural and historical objects, and the wildlife. We can build motels and service stations, cafes, and curio shops almost everywhere, but we cannot find everywhere the values for which the parks were set aside.¹⁶⁹

Huser suggested that visitor services be located outside of park boundaries, and stated that politicians and private contractors, in addition to “those members of the public who demand luxury living within the park,” were responsible for the exploitation of Yellowstone.¹⁷⁰ In “Pristine Preserves or Popcorn Playgrounds?,” Gladwin Hill deplored “the questionable facilities expansion of Mission 66” which had resulted in a “mass of real estate leaning more toward the ambiance of a maladjusted Disneyland than the pristine natural areas that Presidents from Grant to Teddy Roosevelt had sought to preserve.”¹⁷¹ Hill credited the environmental revolution with putting pressure on the NPS “to get the schlock out of the national parks and not let their use eclipse

preservation.”¹⁷²

National Parks for the Future

In 1972, The Conservation Foundation published National Parks for the Future, an assessment of the critical issues facing the national parks in the coming decades. A major focus of this report was the necessity of re-establishing the purpose for which national parks were created, and using this philosophy as a guide for management decisions. The Foundation observed that visitor use of the national parks had become “a casual thing — of little more significance to many than a visit to any other place that provides a scenic backdrop for everyone’s outdoor thing . . . one of a dozen vacation stops . . . one more place for comparing . . . [the] variety of souvenirs.”¹⁷³

The report also criticized the lack of emphasis given to interpretation of the parks, and urged the “American public and its political leaders [to] reject the notion that the parks can be all things to all people.”¹⁷⁴ Instead, “each park unit should be examined and planned according to its own values and carrying capacities.”¹⁷⁵ Adherence to this principal would eliminate inappropriate accommodations such as “plush resort hotels, souvenir and trinket shops, swimming pools . . . and tennis courts.”¹⁷⁶ To this end, the Foundation recommended that “recreational facilities and programs clearly inconsistent with the preservation function . . . be divested or transferred.”¹⁷⁷ The Foundation proposed that operation of visitor facilities within park boundaries by private enterprise be replaced with “non-profit, quasi-public corporations whose primary allegiance is to appropriate public use of the parks.”¹⁷⁸

The Foundation also objected to the manner in which concessioners advertised the national parks. These advertisements “emphasized concessioner

foci, not indigenous park uses [and therefore] tended to attract people to the concessioners rather than to the [national] parks themselves."¹⁷⁹

Recreational use of the national parks, stated the report, "should not be an end in itself."¹⁸⁰ Instead, park activities "should serve an interpretive function," providing a way for visitors "to relate to the values for which the park was established."¹⁸¹ Gift shops were appropriate only if merchandise augmented "the purpose of the park. Gift-shop material not related to the park or the region detracts from the park experience. There is no need to sell junk in a national park."¹⁸²

The report concluded by suggesting that many of the difficulties associated with the provision of visitor services were inherent in the private enterprise concession system. The necessity of making a fair profit, warned the Foundation, "can lead [concessioners] to ventures with higher net margins, some of which may be inimical to park objectives and purposes."¹⁸³ Based on this conflict, the Conservation Foundation recommended that if park facilities were to be privately operated, they should be publicly owned and government subsidized, if necessary, to ensure that park values, not profit margin, motivated these operations.¹⁸⁴

The Conglomerates

Beginning in the late 1960s, ownership of park concessions began to change from family-run or "Mom & Pop" businesses to enterprises run by large corporations, frequently referred to as conglomerates. The most publicized of these acquisitions was the buy-out of Yellowstone Park Company in 1966 by General Host (originally Goldfield Company), and the purchase of Yosemite Park and Curry Company by Music Corporation of America (MCA) in 1973.¹⁸⁵

Critics charged that these concessions represented only "capital investments" to the corporations, instead of "substantive business operations with special responsibilities to the public."¹⁸⁶ A Congressional Report issued in 1976 noted that Park Service concessions policy which had been satisfactory for managing small business operations was no longer adequate to "effectively deal with the expertise and powers of the conglomerates. Concessions management has become very complex."¹⁸⁷

Music Corporation of America (MCA): Yosemite National Park

Soon after it purchased the Yosemite concession for 13.2 million dollars, MCA set about developing a "new image" for the park. A 1974 editorial in the Washington Post described MCA's promotional brochures: "100 orange plastic chairs nestled in a green field beneath the . . . High Sierras" with the caption "Yosemite — Nature's Eloquent Answer to Convention City."¹⁸⁸ Several of the many new developments which MCA proposed for Yosemite were "replacement of rustic cabins with modern motel units, construction of an aerial tramway from the valley floor to Glacier Point, . . . and stocking park streams with non-native trout."¹⁸⁹ These and other recommendations, which MCA termed "an aesthetic improvement over the present environment,"¹⁹⁰ and columnist Jack Anderson called an attempt to change the park "into a vast, outdoor Disneyland,"¹⁹¹ appeared in a subsequent NPS Master Plan for the park. Although this plan was never adopted, due to "public outcry and a series of sharply critical Congressional hearings (1974),"¹⁹² the appearance of these proposed changes in a park management plan demonstrated the powerful influence of the conglomerates.¹⁹³ It also provided an explicit illustration that "a corporate concessioner . . . is motivated by a different set of values than the Park

Service.”¹⁹⁴

These charges provided the impetus for federal examinations of concession operations in several national parks during the early 1970s, beginning with Yellowstone.

General Host: Yellowstone National Park

The Yellowstone Park Company, established in 1901 and incorporated in 1936, provided visitor services to the park as a family-owned and operated business until 1966. During the post WW II period, however, the concessioner failed to adequately maintain the visitor facilities, and the buildings were badly in need of repair when Yellowstone Park Company was sold to the Goldfield Corporation in 1966. The Goldfield Corporation (which subsequently became General Host Corporation) continued to operate visitor services much as Yellowstone Company had during its last decade, concentrating on profit at the expense of facility maintenance and quality service.¹⁹⁵

According to a 1976 federal report, “by 1969 the NPS began to have serious doubts that the Yellowstone Park Company would be able to fulfill its contractual obligations.”¹⁹⁶ Prompted by the findings of the 1974 Congressional Hearings on NPS Concession Policies, the Regional Director of the NPS ordered that a concessions management review be conducted for Yellowstone.

A nine-month investigation conducted by the NPS concessions study team revealed sub-standard and dirty facilities, employees who were “inadequately trained, underpaid, and rude, and a general atmosphere of tawdry exploitation and decay.”¹⁹⁷ In addition to General Host’s failure to comply with contract terms calling for ten million dollars to be spent on maintenance and repair of visitor facilities,¹⁹⁸ the concessions study report charged that the company’s

management "could not respond to visitor needs because the company is not oriented to service to the public, but only to the generation of profit dollars."¹⁹⁹

With regard to General Host's merchandising practices, however, the concessions study team was relatively uncritical. Recommendations for this aspect of visitor services concentrated on upgrading lighting, sales fixtures, and displays, in addition to improving the methods for ordering and stocking supplies.²⁰⁰

The report stated that "there are always exceptions and personal preferences as to the appropriateness of individual items or lines of merchandise [and] the study team does not feel this is a big issue in [the concessioner's] shops."²⁰¹ Instead of evaluating the relationship of merchandise to the purposes of the park, the study team made recommendations "that would enhance visitor participation in 'shopping for pleasure' activities and also the gross sales and net income of the company."²⁰² These recommendations were based on the premise that "retail gift sales are an extremely important source of income . . . and [since there is] a great need for dollars to improve facilities, every effort should be made to increase gift sales."²⁰³

As a result of the study and the negative publicity which it generated, the NPS canceled its concession contract with General Host in 1980. General Host sold the concession to TWA, which operated the concession on a trial basis until 1982, when the NPS awarded TWA a thirty-year contract.

Congressional Hearings and House Report, 1976:
NPS Concessions Management Policy

In 1976, Congressional hearings were convened in an attempt to determine the appropriate role of concession operations in the national parks,

critically examine the Concessions Policy Act (1965), and “determine what, if any, changes in [this] law might be warranted.”²⁰⁴ During the course of the four-day Hearings, Congress heard statements from concessioners, NPS personnel, and a representative from the National Parks and Conservation Association (NPCA) in addition to comments from members of the House of Representatives.

Possessory Interest

Concessioner testimony emphasized the public service aspect of private enterprise in the parks: “providing the required facilities at a range of prices, [and] also the ‘luxury things’ which people demand today.”²⁰⁵ The position of the Conference of National Park Concessioners was that the provisions of the 1965 Concessions Policy Act were reasonable and just, vital to the democratic system of free enterprise. A report submitted by this organization stated that possessory interest was crucial for concessioners to secure financing from lending institutions,²⁰⁶ long-term contracts were necessary for contractors to realize their financial investments, and preferential right of contract renewal was reasonable compensation for the many business risks inherent in the operation of park visitor services.²⁰⁷

These findings were disputed, however, by the report of the Concessions Management Task Force. On the issue of possessory interest, the Task Force determined that it allowed concessions:

to build up a large vested interest in each national park . . . resulting in aggressive profiteering, often at the expense of public service. [This] badly handicapped the NPS in managing concessions because [their] directives could be disregarded by concessioners unless the NPS showed the unlikely capability of buying out possessory interests. [This provision] discouraged the NPS from terminating concession contracts where large possessory interests were at stake because . . . new contractors may not be prepared to come forward due to the operation's history of unprofitability.²⁰⁸

The Task Force also stated that the effect of possessory interest was "the sale of part of our parklands for the sake of financing visitor facilities. The consequent loss is proper governmental control over the concession operations."²⁰⁹ Based on this finding, the Task Force recommended "the implementation of a long-term program to buy out existing possessory interests . . . to eventually return control of the parklands to the public."²¹⁰

Concessions Management and Resource Protection

During the course of the Hearings, NPS director Gary Everhardt, members of Congress, representatives from the NPCA, and the Concessions Management Task Force voiced a number of apprehensions about the inappropriate affect which park concessioners appeared to be exerting on the character of the national parks. Everhart stated that the primary challenge for park management was

balancing preservation and use in a fashion that will protect [the] resource and still make the visit a memorable experience for park visitors. [Although] private industry prefers to be left alone in pursuit of profit, . . . [it] must be regulated in the interest of the visiting public and protection of the resource. The thinking that disturbs me most is that . . . a lot of people think that a park was created just to establish a concession or visitor facility.²¹¹

Members of the Congressional sub-committee on National Parks and Recreation stated their concern that the profit motive of concessioners was not in

keeping with the purpose of park visitor services, and did not serve the best financial interest of the federal government:

The concessions do not exist to enrich the concessioners, the concessions exist to provide service to the public at a fair compensation. Big business and traditional family owned operations [however]. . . are both . . . motivated by profit: that is the goal of any businessman who invests his money. The wrong people, the [corporate] giants, are making too much money.²¹²

T. Destry Jarvis of the NPCA agreed with this testimony, and observed that “concessioners must be continually reminded that conservation of park resources takes precedence [over their business interests].”²¹³ Jarvis also stated that the NPCA believed that “the major deficiency . . . in the present Concessions Policy Act is the total lack of any formalized method for evaluation of concession performance.”²¹⁴

In addition to the Concessions Task Force’s opinion that possessory interest should be eliminated and preferential right of contract renewal discontinued, the General Accounting Office report concurred with the NPCA criticism regarding concession evaluation, and recommended that regulations be instituted which “establish standards and criteria for annually evaluating the performance of concessioners operating in the National Park System.”²¹⁵ Congressman B.F. Sisk observed that these recommendations dictated “a need for professional concessions management in the NPS to look out for the best interest of the visitor, the concessioner, and the federal government.”²¹⁶

Although the 1976 Hearings brought to light many of the crucial issues concerning national park concessions, and may have been partially responsible for the NPS decision to cancel General Host’s visitor service contract in Yellowstone, no fundamental changes in the existing concession contract system resulted.²¹⁷ A new presidential administration effectively ignored a proposed

bill which called for changes to the existing NPS concessions policy,²¹⁸ and concessioners were subsequently assured by the new Secretary of the Interior, James Watt, that they would “play a tremendously important . . . and growing role in the administration of [the] national parks.”²¹⁹

Continuing Status Quo, Continuing Criticism: Commercialism and the Parks During the 1980s

While some measure of public attention during the late 1970s and early 1980s still focused on the disproportionately low franchise fees paid by national park concessioners, other critics concentrated on the effect of commercialism on the visual integrity of park resources. A 1979 article in National Parks and Conservation Magazine deplored the distracting and anachronistic presence of a three-hundred-foot metal observation tower bordering Gettysburg National Battlefield Park, and stated that such “obtrusive commercial development [was] the most serious threat to . . . Civil War battlefield parks.”²²⁰ Parks “established to protect distinctive and vulnerable resources,” argued the author, did not lend themselves to recreational uses which were “incompatible with the primary purpose of these parks — preservation of the sites and [their] interpretation.”²²¹

A subsequent article in this magazine described the problems associated with commercial tourism and warned that “the sense of beauty and history our parks preserve will be lost if profit motive is allowed to dominate [their management].”²²² Author Michael Frome described the critical need of

each park [for] a deliberate design to preserve the fundamental values of its natural ecosystem and historic integrity. Otherwise, the inroads of cumulative damage are inevitable [and], piece by piece, historical landscapes are supplanted by visitor centers.²²³

These observations, however, did little to influence an administration whose Secretary of the Interior supported greater recreational development of

the national parks. According to one historian, Watt believed that

the greatest problem facing the parks was the deterioration of their physical plant. [The] park budget . . . would be spent on access [and] comfort . . . of park visitors rather than on the sanctity of park resources."²²⁴

Addressing the annual Conference of National Park Concessioners in March 1981, Watt made his views on the "balancing act" mandated by the NPS charter — resource preservation and public use — unequivocal:

I make lots of mistakes, cause I make a lot of decisions. But we're in a hurry and we're willing to take risks . . . We have a bias for private enterprise [and] we need an aggressive program with the private entrepreneurs who are willing to invest and manage resources in the National Park Service for people . . . I will try to find the balance that everyone has sought in the past [and] I will err on the side of public use versus preservation.²²⁵

Watt's remarks stood in sharp contrast to the operational philosophy which NPS Director Everhardt had suggested at the Congressional Hearings five years earlier:

All of us make mistakes, and if we do so, let us do so on the side of over-protection of our valuable resources, for if we are wrong, then we or our successors can always make corrections. But if we err on the side of under-protection, irreparable damage may occur, an irreversible error from which the resource may never recover.²²⁶

With regard to further development of parks for public use, Watt explained that the administration intended "to put money first and foremost into the developed parks to salvage what is there."²²⁷ Describing the way in which concessioners would participate in this effort, Watt assured the Conference that "business arrangements . . . would allow the private sector to do it at their time frame rather than a centralist planning office time schedule. So take that as motivation to do what you want to do."²²⁸

1990 Congressional Hearings: Concessions Policy of
the National Park Service

In 1990, hearings were once again convened by Congress to re-examine concession management in the national parks and to review two reports prepared by the Inspector General and the Task Force on Park Service Concession Activities.²²⁹ Once again, attention focused on franchise fees, possessory interest, preferential right of contract renewal, and length of contract term, what one senator termed "the basic building blocks" of the NPS concession policy.²³⁰

A second purpose of the Hearings was a review of the changes to existing NPS concession policy recommended by Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan. The proposed revisions were established, according to Lujan, upon the following principles:

First, . . . to protect the park natural and historic resources above all other goals; provide quality visitor services at reasonable cost; provide concessioners with a reasonable opportunity for profit; provide a fair return on fees . . . and services to the government; promote competition in concession contracting.²³¹

One of the major findings of the Department of the Interior reports was that "capital improvements made in parks generally benefited the concession revenue-producing facilities rather than preserving the natural and cultural resources of the parks."²³² Other conclusions were basically the same as those reached at the 1976 Hearings:

franchise fees paid to the federal government were too low and did not adequately reflect the value of doing business in a national park, the preferential right [of] renewal . . . was . . . often anti-competitive, [and] the possessory interest clause [placed] a huge burden of payment on the government, limited competition for contracts, and made removal of [concessioner-constructed] facilities almost prohibitively expensive.²³³

In light of these findings, Lujan proposed a number of changes to the existing NPS concessions policy that would "increase revenues to the parks, improve service to the park visitor, ensure a fair return on concessioner investment, use . . . private-sector professionals to assist the NPS, [and]. . . upgrade business skills of NPS employees on concession management."²³⁴

Predictably, the Conference of National Park Concessioners strongly opposed any modification of the 1965 concession legislation. President of the Conference, G.B. Hanson, predicted "reduced services, deterioration of park facilities, and a lessened experience for park visitors"²³⁵ if the basic tenets of the Concessions Policy Act were changed. Another Conference spokesperson, Rex Maughan, protested that most of the "540 concessioners in the national parks . . . are making a very low return on investments: some are not even making a profit."²³⁶ Several senators, including Malcolm Wallop of Wyoming and Frank Murkowski of Alaska, also defended thirty-year contract terms and private contractor investment in park facilities, policies they viewed as necessary for the expansion of the tourism industry in their states.²³⁷

Although the 1990 Hearings could be viewed as continued progress in NPS attempts to protect park resources, improve the quality of visitor services, and provide an equitable financial return to the federal government, they also side-stepped "one of the most important issues" concerning national park concessions, "the issue of necessary and appropriate."²³⁸ According to Paul Pritchard, president of the NPCA, "the real basis of concern . . . was: are the [existing] facilities necessary to the operations of the park system, and are they appropriately located?"²³⁹ In order to make this determination, Pritchard urged Congress to establish "a stronger definition of what 'necessary and appropriate' does, in fact, mean."²⁴⁰ Such a definition was not produced by the 1990

Hearings, however, since the agenda focused almost exclusively on economic concerns of the participants. Moreover, this phrase did not lend itself to consensus definition. Given the varying ages, physical capabilities, recreational interests, finances, and physical comfort requirements of park visitors, "necessary and appropriate" seemed open to unlimited interpretation when the visitor enjoyment portion of the NPS charter was used as a primary criterion for definition. As service providers for such a broadly defined consumer group, concessioners asserted that it was their responsibility to provide all the conveniences and services demanded (or at least readily purchased) by the many categories of park users.

Such an all-inclusive definition of "necessary and appropriate" was not acceptable to conservation groups, however. The NPCA asserted in the 1976 House Report on NPS Concessions Policy that a limited definition of this phrase was indeed *required* by the NPS charter:

In actuality, the Service is simply mandated to preserve the scenery, the natural and historic objects, and the wildlife in our national parks, and to provide for enjoyment of those resources without impairing their intrinsic values. Enjoyment is thus dictated by what national parks can provide — namely, natural, scenic, wilderness, and historic values — and the Service cannot and should not be expected to compromise park values or resources by allowing concessioners to accommodate all levels of taste.²⁴¹

Further discussion of "necessary and appropriate" seemed relegated to the editorial page of conservation publications as the NPS turned its attention to the sale of the Yosemite concession owned by MCA, Inc., to a foreign corporation.

Sale of MCA, Inc. to Matsushita Electric Industrial Company

When MCA was acquired by Matsushita Electric Industrial Company for \$6.6 billion dollars in December 1990, the sale included MCA's interest in the

visitor service concession at Yosemite National Park. The official reaction of the NPS to this sale was outrage, a reaction which seemed to "reflect U.S. anxiety over increasing foreign ownership."²⁴² Lujan objected not only to a foreign interest controlling the visitor service concession in an American national park, but also to the fact that MCA had failed to secure NPS approval prior to the contract's transfer.²⁴³ For these reasons, the Secretary of the Interior requested that MCA donate the Curry Company Concession to the NPS.²⁴⁴ Subsequently, a settlement was reached between MCA and the Department of the Interior whereby MCA agreed to sell the Yosemite Park and Curry Company to the National Park Foundation (NPF), "a non-profit group chartered by Congress to accept private support for national parks," for \$49.5 million dollars, a price which MCA claimed was less than one-half the estimated \$100 million worth of the business.²⁴⁵ In September 1993, the NPF will donate the concession buildings to the NPS, giving the Park Service greater control over the future of Yosemite.²⁴⁶

The sale/donation of the Yosemite concession also provided the NPS with the opportunity to address an issue which many considered more important than equitable franchise fees: "excessive commercialization of the . . . parks."²⁴⁷ In an effort to mitigate this problem, Yosemite Restoration Trust, a preservationist coalition, subsequently bid on the Yosemite contract,²⁴⁸ but the concession contract was awarded instead to Delaware North Companies (the bidder who "budgeted the most for environmental cleanup") in December 1992.²⁴⁹

In January 1991, two residents of Eugene, Oregon, Kip and Sally Keller, wrote to their local newspaper in support of the efforts of the Yosemite Restoration Trust:

The issue [stated the Kellers] is not one of where should the dollars [from the concessions] . . . be flowing [but] rather . . . who is in control of our parks The Yosemite and Curry Co. has been primarily responsible for interpreting the Yosemite Park Master Plan in a way that maximizes commercialization, localized overuse and abuse and urbanization at the expense of the natural splendor and integrity of the park It makes a great difference which companies run these concessions Clearly, political and economic clout cannot be the major factors in deciding the fate of our national parks.²⁵⁰

Several months later in a March 1991, the publisher of National Parks magazine reiterated the Kellers' observation, calling for

new [concession] legislation . . . [which would] assure Americans that [park] services would be provided by businesses that saw themselves as not just operating another motel or selling another roll of film, but as trustees of the park visitors' experience. Responsible concessioners . . . must ally themselves with the conservation ethic of protecting the parks.²⁵¹

The legislation which the NPCA advocated was introduced in September 1991 by Arkansas senator Dale Bumpers as the National Park Service Concessions Policy Reform Act (S1755).

National Park Service Concessions Policy Reform Act of 1991

Intended as a major revision of the 1965 Concessions Policy Act, S1755 proposed fundamental changes in this law with regard to possessory interest, preferential right of contract renewal, and amount and allocation of franchise fees. Although the emphasis of these provisions centered on greater NPS control of the parks, an equitable financial return to the U.S. Treasury, and upgrade of existing concessions through an improved competitive bidding process, several clauses also addressed preservationists' concerns with the issue of what visitor services were "necessary and appropriate" for national parks. Section 2.2 of the bill acknowledged the importance of "protecting the aesthetic values of the park"

by requiring that "public facilities or services provided within a park area . . . shall be consistent with the highest degree of resource preservation."²⁵² Section 8.2 designated that a minimum of twenty-five percent of the franchise fees collected at each park unit be allocated for the "protection, maintenance, interpretation and research" of the park.²⁵³

These sections were significant because they acknowledged preservation of the park's natural and historic resources as the basic criterion for appropriate visitor facilities provision, rather than the broad range of visitors' recreational preferences, or the seemingly limitless development capacities of corporate concessioners. Although visitor needs were to be provided for, such facilities were to be limited by a more stringent definition of "necessary," as well as a definition of "appropriate " which incorporated visual harmony with park resources as a requirement.

NPS 1991 (Draft) Master Plan for Yosemite

By December 1991, the NPS had prepared a draft of a new master plan for Yosemite. Although one environmental group charged that the NPS "made only a half-hearted effort" to solicit public comments prior to its preparation, the new plan outlined specific steps to reduce the commercialization of the park.²⁵⁴ Besides relocating the "concessioner's headquarters from [Yosemite] valley," the draft plan called for "removal of the ice rink, . . . tennis courts . . . and beauty salon, [and] required gift shop items to have a 'relationship to Yosemite.'"²⁵⁵ The Wilderness Society termed this plan "a good start," but stated that too much of the plan was "still focused on corporate profits."²⁵⁶

S1755: 1992 Congressional Hearings

Throughout the course of the two-day March hearings, representatives from environmental groups repeatedly stressed that the size of franchise fees paid to the government should not be the deciding factor in awarding national park concession contracts. Such an emphasis, stated Donald Green of Yosemite Restoration Trust, inevitably encouraged contractors to "maximize revenues with no offsetting incentive to provide for park preservation."²⁵⁷ Green suggested reducing the franchise fees of concessioners who "took action to preserve the park and to provide a superior visitor experience."²⁵⁸ This reduced fee, argued the Trust, would "provide an incentive mechanism . . . [for] the concessioner to preserve the park rather than increase the level of commercial activity."²⁵⁹

Green also suggested that the "quality of service" definition in the proposed legislation not be limited to only the "quality of food, lodging, and other services," but also require that the overall service provided by the concessioner "ensure a visitor experience based on the unique features of the area."²⁶⁰

A large proportion of the discussion, however, concentrated on concessioner defense of the existing legislation, objections of several senators to S1755, and Lujan's forceful denial of any plans for the federal government to undertake the operation of concessions in the national parks.²⁶¹

James D. Santini, representative of the Conference of National Park Concessioners, and George Campsen, Jr., a park concessioner, protested that the service currently offered to national park visitors by private concessions was good, and warned that "any attempt to rip the heart and soul out of Public Law 89-249 could substantially and seriously deter that service."²⁶² Campsen further charged that the members of various environmental groups were "militant

extremists" who wanted to destroy the rights of the private sector to operate in the national parks and "deny ordinary people the enjoyment of visiting their parks in the traditional manner . . . under the guise of . . . saving our parks from overuse and abuse."²⁶³

Senator Wallop concurred with the concessioners' predictions of deteriorated service should S 1755 pass, and Senator Murkowski stated that the provisions of the current legislation were necessary for "helping to develop a viable tourist industry in Alaska's parks . . . by enticing private capital to do what needs to be done."²⁶⁴

These discussions did little to address the fundamental issue of appropriate commercial services in the parks, and served instead as an illustration of the core problem with commercially operated park concessions: profitability, not a desire to interpret the unique features of the park for visitors, was the primary motivation of these businesses. Because of this, any attempt to limit concessioner profits by curtailing retail operations would be met with resistance.

S1755 was re-introduced in 1993 as S208, and similar legislation, the National Park Revitalization Act (HR 743), introduced in the House of Representatives. Discussions are still ongoing on both bills.²⁶⁵ The NPCA has urged passage of this bill for reasons beyond its provisions for fair competition and equitable financial return to the parks. Elizabeth Hedstrom, news editor of National Parks Magazine, observed that S208 is a significant attempt to "uphold NPS standards meant to prevent overcommercialization of the parks."²⁶⁶ The reforms proposed by the bill would "put the brakes on overcommercialization, so that parks are not pushed into becoming tourist traps at the expense of natural and historic preservation."²⁶⁷

1993 and Beyond: Restoration of the National Park Ideal

A recent Op-Ed column in The New York Times expressed hope that the current Secretary of the Interior, Bruce Babbitt, would help the American people "reclaim their national parks."²⁶⁸ This change would be difficult to address, however, until the public realized that

[although] overcrowding is the most visible threat to the park system, the most insidious threats arise from widespread ignorance about the very purpose of the national parks. They are not simply a random collection of landscapes or historic shrines. Each unit is meant to exemplify a unique landscape, an ecosystem or some vital phase of our nation's historical experience and aspirations.²⁶⁹

To this end, the author, Robin Winks, urged that the NPS no longer "encourage artificial and recreational forms of 'enjoyment' in the parks, turning them into mere tourist destinations."²⁷⁰ In addition to following this precept, Winks recommended that the NPS restructure its financial priorities, which currently permitted allocation of ninety percent of its funds to visitor service provision and ten percent to resource preservation.²⁷¹

There are several indications that the past two decades of questioning visitor service priorities in the national parks will prove worthwhile. In April 1993, the NPS "scrapped plans to build a new year-round lodge on the scenic rim overlooking Crater Lake," requiring instead that any new visitor facilities be located at least seven miles from the rim of the caldera.²⁷² The NPCA, which had protested the original hotel plans, commented that only "a few hundred people [would be] able to stay in luxury rooms . . . [while] a few thousand people [would be] looking at the hotel, which isn't exactly what a national park is set up for."²⁷³

In Yellowstone National Park, the NPS has been working in partnership with the park concessioner, TW Services, to restore the 1889 Lake Hotel. The

contractor's involvement in the restoration, according to one project manager, has been characterized by their "concern for quality and . . . appreciation for . . . design."²⁷⁴ The project itself was made possible by a contract that specified a set percentage of the concessioner's earnings be set aside in a "repair-and-maintenance fund."²⁷⁵ One NPS architect commented that the most pleasing aspect of the project was "the combined effort of government and private concerns. We worked together well."²⁷⁶ Another NPS architect was amazed at the results of the NPS-concessioner collaboration, and impressed "by the care that TW takes in preserving the historic character of the Lake Hotel."²⁷⁷

These examples represent progress in the efforts to mitigate commercial emphasis in national parks. They are, however, isolated incidents. For visible change to occur with regard to visitor services, a fundamental shift of perception of the parks' purpose will need to take place: within the agency charged with their stewardship, in the business policies of the contractors responsible for visitor service provision, and in the attitudes of national park visitors. As the Conservation Foundation observed in its 1972 report, the value of the national parks derives from their uniqueness:

In contrast to an increasingly urbanized, mechanized, noisy, and crowded society, the parks stand out as quiet, natural, open and wild places. As such, they represent a chance for different kinds of experiences — for diversity. To the extent to which parks are maintained as places which contrast sharply with the rest of our society, diversity will be maximized. If, however, they become more like every place else . . . diversity will be lost over-all and our lives would be poorer.²⁷⁸

Conclusion

In their long history of operation within the national parks, concessions have enabled millions of visitors to enjoy these areas by providing basic

accommodations. Few critics have objected to this provision, although with the extreme overcrowding of the parks in recent years, many have advocated that only foot and bus travel be allowed within park boundaries. What has angered environmental organizations as well as private citizens, however, is the way the national parks have been marketed to the public. When every service and product available outside park boundaries is replicated within the park, the reason for protection of these significant areas is obscured.

Although the NPS has been fortunate to retain many concessioners who are motivated to provide visitor services which augment and enrich the visitor's park experience, history has shown that many more do not share this focus. The proliferation of poor quality non-interpretive souvenirs and lack of facilities maintenance in the 1950s, the construction during the 1960s and 1970s of buildings not in keeping with the aesthetic values of the parks, and the promotion of inappropriate recreational use of the parks in the past five decades have combined to move national parks far from the original resource protection ideal. Restoration of this ideal is possible, but only if the profit motivation of private business is recognized and strictly regulated. A relatively recent emphasis on ecologically compatible business practices has showcased the efforts of a number of companies which are motivated by more than profit margins. In selecting responsible concessioners for the parks, the government has the opportunity to learn from its past history, and require that a commitment to resource preservation be demonstrated by the businesses operating within America's national parks.

As a context for examining private contracting in state park systems, the history of concession operations in the national parks provides numerous examples of the failure of private enterprise to support the purpose for which the

national parks were established. These examples include commercial goods and services incompatible with the unique natural and cultural resources of the parks, provision of these goods and services in a manner reminiscent of suburban shopping malls, the unwillingness or inability of contractors to perform necessary building maintenance and repair, and the accumulation by concessioners of vested interest in the parks due to long-term contracts and the right of possessory interest in contractor-financed structures and improvements.

In an effort to eliminate similar problems with contractors, administrators of state park systems have tightened contract provisions and shortened the length of contract terms. What has often been conspicuously absent, however, are definitions and guidelines for the type of services and merchandise actually necessary at individual state parks, and also the provision of these services in a manner that does not make the concession itself the focus of the park.

The following chapter will show the similarities between the establishing purpose of state and national parks, in addition to the caution which early state park administrators expressed in their contracting with the private sector. This hesitancy was based on their awareness of the many problems experienced by the National Park Service in its allowance of commercial enterprise on publically owned lands.

Notes

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¹⁶⁹Verne Huser, "Yellowstone National Park: Use, Overuse and Misuse," National Parks and Conservation Magazine March 1972, 16.

¹⁷⁰Ibid.

¹⁷¹Gladwin Hill, "Pristine Preserves or Popcorn Playgrounds?," Saturday Review 1 (1 January 1972) : 41.

¹⁷²Ibid.

¹⁷³The Conservation Foundation, National Parks for the Future (Washington D. C. : The Conservation Foundation, 1972) : 6-7.

¹⁷⁴Ibid, 10.

¹⁷⁵Ibid, 15.

¹⁷⁶Ibid, 22.

¹⁷⁷Ibid, 11.

¹⁷⁸Ibid, 22.

¹⁷⁹Ibid, 50.

¹⁸⁰Ibid, 161.

¹⁸¹Ibid.

¹⁸²Ibid, 50.

¹⁸³Ibid, 153.

¹⁸⁴Ibid.

¹⁸⁵Other acquisitions were the Grand Canyon National Park concession contract by AMFAC, and the purchase of concessions in Bryce Canyon, Zion and Death Valley National Parks by Transworld Corporation. Everhart, National Park Service, 114.

¹⁸⁶Congress, House, Joint Report by Committee on Government Operations, National Park Service Concession Policies Discourage Competition, Give Concessioners Too Great A Voice in Concession Management: Oversight Hearings Before the Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation Vol. 2 and 3 94th cong., 2nd sess., 21, 24 and 25 May and June 1976, 18.

¹⁸⁷Ibid.

¹⁸⁸Jack Anderson, "Yosemite: Another Disneyland?," Washington Post, 15 September 1974, B-7.

¹⁸⁹Sax, Mountains Without Handrails, 73.

¹⁹⁰Anderson, "Yosemite: Another Disneyland?," B-7.

¹⁹¹Sax, Mountains Without Handrails, 73.

¹⁹²Ibid.

¹⁹³Everhart, National Park Service, 115.

¹⁹⁴Ibid.

¹⁹⁵Yellowstone Concessions Study Team, Yellowstone National Park Concessions, 7.

¹⁹⁶Ibid, 8.

¹⁹⁷Everhart, National Park Service, 116.

¹⁹⁸Ibid, 117.

¹⁹⁹Yellowstone Concessions Study Team, Yellowstone National Park Concessions, 11.

²⁰⁰Yellowstone Concessions Study Team, Yellowstone National Park Concessions, 60.

²⁰¹Ibid.

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²⁰³Ibid.

²⁰⁴Congress, House, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Concession Operations in the National Park System.: Oversight Hearings Before the Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation, 94th cong., 2nd sess., 21, 24-25 May and June 1976, 2.

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²⁰⁷Terrence Cullinand and Barbara Mathews, Stanford Research Institute, "The Concession System in the United States National Parks: Background, Services Performed, Public Attitude Toward and Future Considerations," Congress, House Concession Operations in the National Park System: Oversight Hearings Before the Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation, 94th Cong., 2d sess., 21, 24-25 May and 7 June 1976, 119-127.

²⁰⁸Congress, Senate, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation, Concessions Management Task Force, Oversight Hearings on Concession Operations in the National Park System, 94th cong., 2nd sess., 21, 24-25 May and June 1976, 352.

²⁰⁹*Ibid.*

²¹⁰*Ibid.*

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²¹²Congress, Senate, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation, Oversight Hearings on Concession Operations in the National Park System, 94th cong., 2nd sess., 21, 24-25 May and June 1976, 40, John D. Dingle) and 361, Allan T. Howe.

²¹³*Ibid.*, 356.

²¹⁴*Ibid.*, 353.

²¹⁵*Ibid.*, 25.

²¹⁶*Ibid.*, 58.

²¹⁷Bartlett, Yellowstone, 375.

²¹⁸Everhart, National Park Service, 116.

²¹⁹James G. Watt, Secretary of the Interior, unpublished transcript of address before the annual meeting of The Conference of National Park Concessioners, Washington D. C., 9 March 1981, School of Architecture and Allied Arts, University of Oregon, 3.

²²⁰Robert W. Meinhard, "Battlefields Under Fire," National Parks and Conservation 53 (October 1979): 9.

²²¹Ibid.

²²²Michael Frome, "Playgrounds or Preserves: Park Tourism as Big Business," National Parks and Conservation 58 (November/December 1979): 16.

²²³Ibid, 17.

²²⁴Runte, National Parks, 259.

²²⁵Watt, "Address," 9, 7-8, 6.

²²⁶Congress, Senate, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation, Oversight Hearings on Concession Operations in the National Park System, 94th cong., 2nd sess., 21, 24-25 May and June 1976, Gary Everhardt, Director of the National Park Service, 424.

²²⁷Watt, "Address," 16.

²²⁸Ibid, 16-17.

²²⁹Congress, Senate, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, Concessions Policy of the National Park Service: Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Public Lands, National Parks and Forests, 101st Cong., 2nd sess., 25 and 31 July 1990, Senator Dale Bumpers, 1.

²³⁰Ibid, Senator James A. McClure, 6-7.

²³¹Ibid, Manel Lujan, Secretary of the Interior, 147.

²³²Ibid, James R. Richard, Inspector General, 33.

²³³Congress, Senate, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, Concessions Policy of the National Park Service: Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Public Lands, National Parks and Forests, 101st Cong., 2nd sess., 25 and 31 July 1990, 1.

²³⁴Ibid, 19.

²³⁵Ibid, 88.

²³⁶Ibid, 126-127.

²³⁷Ibid, Senator Malcolm Wallop, 12 and Senator Frank Murkowski, 16-17.

²³⁸Ibid, Paul Pritchard, President of National Parks and Conservation Association, 90.

²³⁹Ibid.

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²⁴¹Congress, Senate, Joint Report by the Committee on Government Operations and the Committee on Small Business, National Park Service Policies Discourage Competition, Give Concessioners Too Great a Voice in Concession Management, 99th Cong., 2nd sess., Toby Cooper, NPCA, 33.

²⁴²The Associated Press, "Lujan Hopes to End Pact at Yosemite," Eugene (Oregon) Register-Guard, 2 January 1991, A3.

²⁴³Robert Reinhold, "Park Concessions: MCA Deal May Force the Issue," The New York Times, 27 December 1990, A11; Maura Dolan, "Lujan Pressures Matsushita on Yosemite Pact," Los Angeles Times, 1 January 1991, A1, A31.

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²⁴⁶Ibid.

²⁴⁷Reinhold, "Park Concessions," A11.

²⁴⁸Jeanne McDowell, "Fighting for Yosemite's Future," Time Magazine, 14 January 1991, 46.

²⁴⁹The Washington Post, "Sports Giant Gets Yosemite Rights," reprinted in the Eugene (Oregon) Register Guard, 12 December 1992, n.p.

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²⁵¹Paul Pritchard, "Concessions," National Parks and Conservation Magazine, March/April 1991, 4.

²⁵²Congress, Senate, National Park Service Concessions Policy Reform Act of 1991, 102nd Cong., 1st sess., S1755, Congressional Record, vol. 137, no. 135, daily ed. (26 September 1991), S13831.

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²⁵⁴Michelle Locke, The Associated Press, "Plan to Revive Yosemite Grandeur Will Trim Spots for Overnight Stays," The Oregonian, 18 December 1991, D12.

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²⁵⁷Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on Public Lands, National Parks and Forests of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, S1755, To Reform the Concessions Policies of the National Park Service, 100 Cong., 2nd sess., 3 and 5 March 1992, 86.

²⁵⁸*Ibid.*

²⁵⁹*Ibid.*

²⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 86.

²⁶¹*Ibid.*, 62, 19, 39.

²⁶²*Ibid.*, 62.

²⁶³*Ibid.*, 73.

²⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 23.

²⁶⁵Janice Kelly, (Oregon) Congressman Peter DeFazio's office, reported that S208 had been in Congressional subcommittee since February 1993: telephone call to author, 14 May 1993.

²⁶⁶Elizabeth Hedstrom, "Preservation or Profit," National Parks Magazine, January/February 1992, 18.

²⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 20.

²⁶⁸Robin Winks, "National Parks Aren't Disneyland," The New York Times, 19 April 1993, A-19.

²⁶⁹Ibid.

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²⁷¹Ibid.

²⁷²The Associated Press, "Crater Lake Lodge Won't Be on Rim," Eugene (Oregon) Register Guard, 19 April 1993, n.p.

²⁷³Ibid.

²⁷⁴Douglas E. Gordon and Stephanie Stubbs, "On Yellowstone Lake," Historic Preservation 45 (May/June 1993) : 22.

²⁷⁵Ibid.

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CHAPTER III

STATE PARKS: SELECTED ISSUES OF

PURPOSE AND DEVELOPMENT

The State Parks, like the national parks, are never free from threats of adverse uses that would destroy, or at least impair, the very qualities which led to their preservation for recreation purposes; rather . . . the State parks . . . are much more vulnerable to attack. The national parks have behind them a great body of ardent conservationists . . . There is no such solidarity in the defense of State areas.¹

Freeman Tilden, 1962

The State Parks: Their Meaning in American Life

Modeled on the national park mandate, state parks incorporate many of the original principles and purposes of the National Park system.² Although land for the first state park was deeded to the State of California in 1864, and several more state parks had been created in other areas of the country by the late 1880s, the great majority of state park systems were not established until the 1920s.

The momentum behind the state parks movement in the 20th century can be traced to three predominant influences: popular use of the automobile,³ the ideals of the Progressive Era (1900 - 1914)⁴ and the efforts of NPS director Stephen Mather.⁵ Activists who championed the state park idea confronted problems such as pollution, urban congestion, and the relentless pressures of a mechanized workplace⁶ with the assertion (as had national park conservationists before them) that undeveloped land could serve an important purpose beyond

its utilitarian value for timber farms, private housing, or future industrial sites. The real value and best use of lands significant for their natural beauty, scientific, or historic interest, park proponents maintained, was their restorative, educational, and inspirational benefit to the public.⁷ Such lands, warned a writer in 1921, "ought not be left to the vicissitudes of private ownership . . . but acquired [instead] for the use of the people at large, who alone can possess and protect it for the common good. Under private ownership it is never safe from injury for private advantage."⁸

Since the 1950s, state parks, like national parks, have faced problems caused by increased visitation: vandalism, overburdening of resource carrying capacities, and the pressure to provide visitors with the kinds of services and conveniences commonly available in the private sector. While certain modifications, such as provision of handicap access, have been necessary and consistent with the purpose of state parks, other changes, such as the proliferation of certain types of souvenir merchandise and visitor services unrelated to the purpose of the parks, have not. Concurrent with the difficulties caused by increased visitation are the challenges imposed by a decrease in public revenue available for park operation and expansion.

Just as the National Park Service turned to the railroad companies to finance the development of visitor facilities in the first national parks, state park systems in Alaska and the Pacific Northwest have, in recent years, relied on concessionaire investment in certain parks which might otherwise be closed to the public. Determining the success of this arrangement is problematic, however, because it depends on which criterion is used for evaluation: concessionaire profitability (which can also provide revenue for building maintenance), or increased visitor understanding and appreciation of the individual park unit and

the purpose of state parks in general. Since the former criterion lends itself more easily to definitive measurement, it has usually prevailed.

This chapter will discuss issues relevant to the purpose and development of state park systems in order to provide a context for evaluation of their concession operations in Chapter VII. Chapter IV will provide a brief introduction to the state park systems of Alaska and the Pacific Northwest in addition to descriptions of the eight parks in the study region.

Nineteenth Century Beginnings: the State Park Concept

The Adirondack State Forest Preserve

Established prior to organization of the National Park Service, New York's Adirondack State Forest Preserve, set aside in 1885, is significant as a predecessor to the nation's state park systems. Although an initial objective for the 2,500,000 acre tract⁹ was preservation of timber supply,¹⁰ its practical application was to prevent "forest exploitation . . . and the spectacle of terrible fires [like those] in the cutover forests of Michigan and Wisconsin."¹¹ These concerns, shared by legislators, businessmen and private landowners, were instrumental in "producing a reaction known as the Conservation movement."¹² The establishment of the Preserve also acknowledged the role of state government in managing natural resources for the welfare of state.

By 1890, however, the wisdom of using the Adirondack Forest Preserve as a nurturing ground for lumber was being questioned, especially by those who owned private summer homes or operated expensive wilderness lodges in the region. This attitude was due, in part, to a change in public perception of commercial use as the unquestioned best use of forested land. During the latter

part of the nineteenth century, the concept of recreation had slowly gained increased acceptance as a legitimate component of modern life. Since a primary focus of recreation during this period was on the therapeutic and restorative benefits of natural scenery,¹³ attention was directed to where such recreation could be provided. Competition with commercial interests for available land of this type was often intense. Although Catskill Park was established in 1889 and Adirondack Park in 1892,¹⁴ one year later the legislature granted the Forest Commission "discretionary powers in the selling of state-owned [timber]," and those who valued the land for its esthetic qualities once again faced the possibility of "losing the one protective device they had against forest fire."¹⁵

In 1894, an amendment was added to the New York state constitution which "prohibited the removal or destruction of timber [in the Adirondack Forest Preserve] by any corporation, public or private."¹⁶ This amendment, by its definition of "wild forest lands" and its implicit injunction against their manipulation¹⁷ also demonstrated how valuable state resources faced constant challenges from those who could profit financially by their use.

State Parks: 1864 – 1895

As discussed in Chapter II, the first state park was established in 1864 by the federal government when it granted the land known as the Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Grove to the citizens of the State of California "for public use and recreation."¹⁸ The state's active role in management of this land was relatively brief, however, as it was delayed for the first nine years by the "claims of settlers [who filed suit] in the Federal Supreme Court,"¹⁹ and relinquished altogether in 1905 when the land was deeded back to the federal government by act of retrocession.²⁰ The decision to enlarge the boundaries of Yosemite (1890) and

redesignate both the newly acquired land and the original acreage as a national park was in response to the protests of many Conservationists, notably John Muir, who objected to the relatively small area of land protected by the original grant and to the lack of preservation-oriented management by the State of California.²¹

Niagara Falls State Park

Prior to its designation as a state park in 1885, Niagara Falls exemplified freedom of private enterprise at its worst. By 1834, instead of inspiring pride as one "of the nation's most magnificent natural spectacles," it provoked the anger and disparagement of visitors whose enjoyment of the falls was spoiled by the snarl of "gatehouses and fences . . . curio hawkers and hackmen, . . . hucksters of every kind. [This] onslaught of commercialism robbed the cataract of credibility as a cultural legacy."²²

Although the establishment of Niagara State Reservation enabled the State to remove many of the physical barriers which had prevented visitors from having an unobstructed view of the falls, "prior development and unsettled claims" continued to cause problems in the park's management.²³ These issues, as well as subsequent disputes with hydroelectric companies made Niagara "a classic example of the futility of trying to reverse exploitation once the process was well underway."²⁴

The designation of the Falls as state park land and the subsequent restoration of many of its scenic qualities, however, was also a powerful testimonial for the state parks movement: Niagara demonstrated the philosophical difference between management of park land by individuals and management by government, for in the former case the motive was profit, while

in the latter it was public benefit.

Michigan, Minnesota, New York, and New Jersey State Parks

Mackinac Island, established the same year as Niagara, was one of the first state historical parks. A deed of 2,000 acres from the Federal Government to the State of Michigan mandated protection of the British Fort Machilimackinac, constructed in 1780.²⁵

Four years later, Minnesota's first state park, Birch Coulee, was created to commemorate an 1862 battlefield of the Sioux War, and by 1895, Minnesota had designated three additional parks: Camp Release, also the site of a battle between white settlers and Indians, Itasca, "the source of the Mississippi River," and Interstate Park, located on the St. Croix River.²⁶

A state park which many considered a model for those that followed was the Palisades Interstate Park of New York and New Jersey. Designated as park land in 1895, these fifteen miles of steep cliffs on the Hudson River were saved from further quarry blasting through the combined efforts and funding of private citizens (\$11,000,000) and state government (\$12,000,000) who eventually purchased 40,000 acres for the park.²⁷ In 1926, the Field Secretary for the National Conference on State Parks, commenting on the Palisades, noted that "no other park development in the country has done more to stimulate the extension of State parks and similar areas for outdoor recreation under State agencies."²⁸

All of these early parks, aside from their scenic value, offered visible reassurance to state residents who realized that in its transformation from a rural to an urban society, the United States was losing many tangible vestiges of its cultural memory. The creation of state parks offered a reassurance that some reminders of former lifeways, significant historical events, and the disappearing

frontier would be protected against commercial development.

Preservation Societies

Some fifty years before the formation of numerous preservation societies in the last decade of the nineteenth century, patriotic societies were established to preserve sites important in the Revolutionary War.²⁹ State governments were not involved in these early efforts, but the historic properties obtained by the societies were open to the public and managed for the education and benefit of all. Gradually these organizations acquired battlefields of Indian wars and the Civil War, and some of the sites were eventually given National Park designation.

Chartered by the State of New York in 1895, The American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society was formed "to acquire by purchase, gift or bequest, historic objects or memorable or picturesque places for state and historical parks."³⁰ Land obtained by the Society was tax-exempt, and the organization was required to improve the properties and admit the public free of charge.³¹ In addition to enlarging the holdings of New York's state park system, the work of the Society was significant because it "stimulated interest in the [state] park idea when it was new and without the general support of later years."³²

Several other organizations similar in purpose to The American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society were also formed in the 1890s. These agencies included the Trustees of Public Reservations (Massachusetts), the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, and the Historical and Archeological Society of Ohio. Although the work of the early preservation societies was limited by available funding and size of membership, they represented a

significant repudiation of the utilitarian view of land management which had long dominated American culture. Their efforts affirmed that land had value beyond the revenue it could generate, and that this value should be shared with all state residents. Their work had lasting benefit, for many of the properties acquired by these organizations eventually became state parks.³³

State Park Systems in the Twentieth Century

Despite the initial efforts of private citizens and government officials to establish state parks in New York, Minnesota and Michigan during the nineteenth century, the concept of state-administered public parks did not begin to gain public interest and favor on a nation-wide scale until the twentieth century, soon after the National Park Service was established.³⁴ As new areas of land were acquired and developed by the NPS, residents of the states in which the new parks were established observed a dramatic increase in tourism, and experienced the positive effects this visitation made on local and state-wide economy.³⁵ As popular use of the automobile increased, "the national park concept . . . caught the public imagination [after 1916] . . . only too ardently [and] the . . . possession of a national park . . . [became] a plume in the crest of any state."³⁶

For rural landowners, however, the popularity of national park visitation caused a number of problems. Although auto touring had quickly become "a major national sport," there existed few overnight accommodations for motorists.³⁷ Finding no commercial facilities en route, travelers often set up their campsites on private land, and as the number of tourists increased so did the incidence of littering and damage to private property.³⁸

Although many state officials urged that state parks be quickly established

to provide travelers with reasonably priced and convenient accommodations (and prevent further damage to private property), other state park proponents, such as landscape architect James L. Greenleaf, disagreed with this emphasis. Greenleaf maintained that there should be a distinct difference in purpose between state parks and land set aside simply to accommodate auto tourists. In an address given at the fifth annual meeting of the National Conference on State Parks in 1925, he advised the assembly that:

The primary purpose of State Parks [is] preservation of scenery for the sheer value of it. Motor . . . camping . . . is not the State Park idea in origin or in truth, [and] we should not confuse the . . . motor camp movement with the State Park movement. It is always possible to locate motor camping-grounds so that they do not detract [from the scenery]. It is not possible to uphold scenic values thus violated.³⁹

The National Conference on State Parks

Seeing the economic benefits to be gained from national park tourism, governors from states across the nation requested that the NPS establish national parks within their borders. Stephen Mather, the newly appointed director of the NPS, recognized that such action would be self-defeating to the founding philosophy of the national parks, since most of the lands that state officials proposed for inclusion, although significant on a local or state level, "did not seem to have national significance."⁴⁰

The solution which Mather employed to relieve the pressure on the NPS and promote state-generated "outdoor recreational opportunities" was organization of a meeting which brought together two hundred conservationists from twenty-five states.⁴¹ During this three-day meeting, convened in Des Moines, Iowa in January 1921, The National Conference on State Parks was

established, for the purpose of creating

systems of recreation areas within the states that would be comparable in purpose, in choice, in administration, and in resultant benefits to what on the national scale was the purpose and achievement of the National Park System.⁴²

The Conference met again the following year, "attended by one hundred and fifty delegates representing nearly every state in the Union."⁴³ At the second meeting, state delegates wrestled with such issues as the distinction between state forests and state parks, how best to furnish "adequate and inexpensive overnight camping facilities for tourists," and the urgent responsibility of states "to provide places where people may spend their leisure in a wholesome manner."⁴⁴

Such concerns, and the fervent energy which propelled them, reflected the recent influence of the Progressive Era. Proponents of Progressivism maintained that America could not be considered a fit and decent place to live until the government took responsibility for improving the quality of life of all of its citizens.⁴⁵ In addition to advocating improvements in child education and labor, food quality, and standards of conduct for corporations and trade unions, Progressives championed conservation of natural resources to such a degree that by the 1920s "park building [had] become a virtual crusade."⁴⁶

The 1920s: Defining State Park Purpose and Management

A primary question addressed at the second meeting of the Conference was the advisability of a uniform or model park law for all states. Based on the results of a year-long study, the Conference concluded that such a law would be "inadvisable because of [the] vastly different . . . requirements of [each] state due to geography, population and size."⁴⁷ Because of this finding, the Conference

decided instead to develop uniform ideas and principles governing the acquisition and administration of park lands which could be used as guidelines by the newly forming state park systems.⁴⁸

By the third meeting of the Conference in 1923, delegates voted to make it "a permanent year-round working organization, . . . a clearing house for information on State Parks which can be utilized by various states in fostering park plans . . . until eventually there shall be parks, forests and preserves within easy access of all people of our nation."⁴⁹

The state parks which were established during this decade were administered by a diverse assortment of agencies: State Forestry, Agriculture and Public Works Departments, Fish and Game, Park, Conservation, Land and Highway Commissions, and Historical and Archaeological Societies.⁵⁰ Methods used to acquire park land were similarly varied: bond issues, legislative appropriations, funds from hunting, fishing and trapping licenses, direct tax levies, transfers of Federal property, withholding State lands from sale, lands held as Public Trusts by historical and conservation societies, and gifts from businesses and private individuals.⁵¹

Attempts to define the nature of public recreation development appropriate for state parks were being made by Conference delegates throughout the 1920s. The necessity of cooperative planning was stressed by Gilmore D. Clark, a New York landscape architect.⁵² Using Westchester County Park as a prototype, Clark advised members of the Conference that this park, "although developed only part at a time, was being planned twenty-five years ahead [with] a definite plan used as a guide . . . by [a team consisting of an] engineer, lawyer, land purchase man, and landscape architect. Every building in the system must be planned as a part of the park."⁵³

Conference participants in 1927 put forward various principles for the management and use of state parks. One delegate asserted that because of the enormous increase in leisure time available to Americans, their culture was beginning to resemble that of ancient Rome. State parks, were therefore vital to "preserving civilization in the United States by restoring both children and adults to normalcy."⁵⁴ This task, explained the speaker, was to be accomplished by utilizing the educational opportunities provided by the great variety of natural resources in the parks. Another participant, president of the American Game Protective Association, advanced a somewhat different thesis. State parks, he argued, could perform a great and necessary public service by functioning as hunting preserves for those men who "given no opportunity to hunt animals . . . tended to become lawbreakers and even difficult criminals."⁵⁵

By 1929, arguments for managing parks either primarily for conservation or primarily for public recreation had emerged at the Conference. Such either/or viewpoints resembled the conflict inherent in the national park mandate, and an example of this polarity can be seen in the remarks of Conference speakers Barrington Moore, Secretary of the National Parks Committee, and P. J. Hoffmaster, Superintendent of Michigan State Parks. At the third Conference, Moore urged participants to consider a definition for state parks which went beyond providing the "material, measurable needs [of visitors for] food and shelter," and incorporated "the intangible spiritual needs of visitors" as a goal of public recreation planning.⁵⁶ Hoffmaster, however, viewed the development of state parks more pragmatically. "The primary purpose of state parks," he stated in 1929, "is recreation, although [parks] may [also] have scientific and historic value."⁵⁷ Hoffmaster believed that recreation "should be defined very broadly, and . . . [park planners] be willing to sacrifice nature to a considerable degree if

necessary.”⁵⁸

Other park proponents expressed management philosophies more equally balanced between resource preservation and public use. Two individuals influential in establishing this foundation for future state park management were Dr. Charles C. Adams, director of the New York State Museum, and Richard Lieber, director of the Indiana Department of Conservation. Adams observed at the 1927 Conference that although “the recreational motive will . . . predominate in [state] parks, the educational must also be present. The latter must be maintained because, during times of industrial depression, the recreational argument alone will not be sufficient to retain public support.”⁵⁹ Lieber’s views, expressed in a letter to the Indiana Historical Commission, spoke of the purpose and value of Indiana’s recently established state park system:

Established upon a broad and substantial basis, [these parks] memorialize the past but build for the future by [demonstrating] . . . a great public lesson in conservation. [This] system would bring recreation ground close home to practically all our people . . . [for] the chief purpose . . . [of] refreshing, strengthening, and renewing [them].⁶⁰

Lieber also noted that “there is a cash value in scenery. Income derived from excursionists . . . and commercial concessions . . . can be turned toward the cost of maintenance.”⁶¹

Provisions for Park Concessions

One of the guidelines established at the second Conference was the recommendation that each state park system “be administered by a State Board of Park Commissioners which would have the care, charge, control, supervision and management of all parks acquired.”⁶² The Board would be specifically authorized “to grant concessions upon a rental or fee percentage basis.”⁶³

Although the possibility of state-operated concessions was probably discussed at some of the first Conferences, professional journals in the early years of state park planning do not mention this as a proposed alternative to privately-operated concessions.

A state park survey published in 1926 and a state park anthology published in 1930 by the National Conference on State Parks give selected examples of the types of visitor services provided by concessionaires.⁶⁴ Connecticut's concessions included "gas and oil stations, bathhouse lockers and bathing suits, restaurants, canvas bungalows, guarded parking spaces, refreshment stands, and camping facilities."⁶⁵ Concessionaires in New York and New Jersey's Palisades Interstate Park offered "excursion steamboats, sight-seeing buses, a restaurant and cafeteria . . . [and] rented snowshoes and skis."⁶⁶

Indiana, where a park commission was established in 1917, provided concession-operated "hotels, refreshment stands, commissaries and restaurants" for state park visitors. These concessions were described as having "moderate rates, excellent service, and . . . [a] character [which] has attracted much favorable notice and interest by other State park administrations."⁶⁷ The Indiana Park Commission forbade any services or entertainments such as "amusement devices and dance halls, which [they feared would] attract a rowdy element."⁶⁸

The Eighth Annual Report of the Indiana Department of Conservation set forth the State Park Commission's policy on private commercial operations:

State park inns are let to carefully chosen concessionaires on a rental basis of 10 to 15 per cent of the capital outlay. The leases provide that the Department shall have complete control of the prices to be charged; the right of criticism of service is also reserved. Under [this] system, all buildings and equipment belong to the State, with the exception of kitchen pantry equipment and [towels and bed linens].⁶⁹

The management philosophy which shaped these regulations was based on Indiana's previous experience with concessions in city parks:

The principal of letting concessions to the highest bidders is unsatisfactory. The bidder often pays more for his concession than it is really worth, and the public is bound to suffer, for the concessionaire will resort to gouging, both as to prices and service. Constant vigilance and admonition on the part of State authorities is required . . . [to maintain] high standards.⁷⁰

Maintaining high standards for concessions was extremely important to the newly forming state park systems, for the state park concept had not as yet gained broad popular support. The Report of the Connecticut State Park Commission (1917) explained one of the reasons for the lack of public understanding:

In many minds, the word *park* is so closely associated with the word *city* that a very considerable effort is required to substitute the new idea contained in the words *state park*. The idea of the state park is much more closely allied to the idea of a *national park*, and . . . the Connecticut State Park Commission [has designated] the purposes of [state parks for] public recreation, preservation of natural beauty, [and] historic association.⁷¹

State Parks and State Economy

As with the national parks, one of the challenges facing the newly-created state park systems was publicity, and many of those attending the Conferences of the 1920s urged that a concerted effort be made to gain private business as an ally of the state parks. One Conference delegate, the editor of the Louisville Times, observed in 1927 that the publicity which could be provided by the private sector was critical for public acceptance of state parks. The average businessman would not become interested in the idea of state parks, he maintained, "until he is educated to [their] economic advantage."⁷²

The "tourist's business," suggested a delegate of the 1928 Conference, is "one of the surest cash revenues a state can develop."⁷³ Although conservationists and educators still held that the primary purpose of state parks was preservation of significant natural and historic resources, by the end of the decade park planners and Progressives advanced a slightly different rationale for these public lands. They maintained that the function of state parks was provision of convenient, affordable and wholesome areas for public recreation which, they maintained, "depleted the population of hospitals, reformatories, sanitariums and penitentiaries."⁷⁴ The "economic opportunity" rationale justifying the creation of state parks received much support from private commercial interests and many government administrators. State parks were seen by these groups as vehicles which could provide a continuous source of private and state revenue, limited only by the ability of each state to "tell the world" about its unique "attractions," develop them within a well-designed system, and make them easily accessible by automobile.⁷⁵ "Although later generations . . . might worry about the impact of throngs of visitors on natural settings," observed Thomas R. Cox, "the emphasis [of state park proponents] in the early twentieth century was just the opposite."⁷⁶

State Park Development: 1930 – 1949

The Civilian Conservation Corps

As in the national parks, the work of the CCC in the state parks allowed the development and use of parks "which would have otherwise remained undeveloped or underdeveloped" because of drastically reduced budget allocations.⁷⁷ In Oregon alone, "improvements were carried out in forty-five

state parks."⁷⁸

Although the architectural style of the Civilian Conservation Corps constructions was similar in state and national parks, the mandate for public recreation was interpreted differently for state parks. Consequently, certain improvements which the NPS did not allow in national parks, such as "outdoor amphitheaters, artificial lakes and swimming pools," were approved for the state parks.⁷⁹ This development decision created a conflict "between [state park proponents] who wanted to increase the recreational use of parks, and those who would protect them [as nearly] as possible in their natural state."⁸⁰ The Wilderness Society charged in 1935 that the CCC sought to "barber and manicure wild America as smartly as the modern girl," and Nature Magazine accused the program of a "wild orgy of road building," which would ultimately lead to the "annihilation" of the wilderness areas in state parks.⁸¹ These and other concerns led to the project review system for parks described in Chapter II.

Use of Rustic Style architecture for park buildings was eventually discontinued since this design was difficult to maintain and expensive to replicate, and the significance of these constructions did not become widely acknowledged until the 1970s.⁸² As they reached the fifty-year mark in the 1980s, however, the value of the CCC structures and buildings began to be documented in National Register nominations. Although a 1937 publication observed that "projects of architectural importance were rarely justifiable in the mass of early depression-born development in newly established parks,"⁸³ these constructions have recently been described as a blending of "aesthetic values with sound engineering . . . a high standard of workmanship . . . [which will] never again be achieved on such a broad scale."⁸⁴ Representing both a design philosophy and a political period unique to American history, CCC architecture

is now recognized by the NPS as having "exceptional importance."⁸⁵

A Study of the Park and Recreation Problem of the United States

In 1936, Congress enacted a bill authorizing the Park, Parkway and Recreational Area Programs Study, and directed the NPS to undertake a comprehensive study of lands not under the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture which would be suitable for park development.⁸⁶ The objective of this study, conducted in 1937, was formulation of a plan "for coordinated and adequate public park, parkway, and recreational-area facilities" nationwide.⁸⁷

The results of this study, published in 1941, included a foreword by Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes which acknowledged that although "present war effort must take precedence over all other activities," recreational activities were "vital to the welfare of the people. The inspiration experienced through visiting the Nation's scenic wonders and historic shrines," wrote Ickes, "instills a love of country and maintains morale."⁸⁸

After providing a generic definition of "recreation" as "refreshment of body or mind after toil; diversion; amusement,"⁸⁹ the authors of the report described how they "had endeavored to use the word in the broad rather than the narrow sense . . . which connotes only physical exertion."⁹⁰ A central point of this study involved the relationship in purpose between national parks and state parks:

The enjoyment envisioned in creating the [National Park] Service was surely "refreshment" not only "of body and mind" but of the spirit as well . . . That purpose could be accomplished with the utmost satisfaction only if the inspirational qualities of the areas it administered, whether based upon natural scenery, or scientific, historic or prehistoric values, were safeguarded to the utmost; and that provision of physical recreation was permissible only to the extent that it did not impair those qualities.

That this purpose shall be invariably dominant is the basic distinguishing characteristic of the National Park and Monument System; . . . Physical recreation is a byproduct of the parks, though by the very nature of the areas it is an important and valuable one.

This concern with preservation of natural or other qualities is by no means limited to the National Park Service, nor is its application limited to the areas it administers. *Chiefly in State park systems. . .* [italics added] is this concern manifested toward virgin forest, lake and stream, mountain and sea coast, as well as sites of historic and prehistoric significance which have been entrusted to their care. The part played by the States in this has been an important and significant one.⁹¹

With regard to the question of privately operated concessions in the state parks, the Study offered an example the state park policy developed by the New York State Council of Parks in 1930:

With the possible exception of catering and hotel operation, it is believed to be the best policy for all other facilities to be the direct responsibility of the park staff; under such an arrangement, the public interest, rather than the urge for profit is more likely to dominate.

From the public standpoint . . . the procedure of letting . . . concessions simply to the person or corporation that is willing to pay the most for the privilege appears to have almost nothing to recommend it . . . [Instead], a choice of operator made on the basis of character and experience . . . appears to be the best solution . . .

It is highly important, however, that fixed facilities — buildings and their permanent contents, water supply and sewage disposal system — be publicly owned rather than owned by the operator. Operator ownership cannot help involving additional difficulties.⁹²

The author of an article which appeared in the 1940 Yearbook: Park and Recreation Progress believed, however, that the risk of corruption in a state-operated concession outweighed the benefits, and expressed conditional approval of privately-operated concessions:

[Although] it might appear that a State should operate its park concessions, I am opposed to that because it would be practically impossible to control political patronage and the personnel at the same time. However, a compromise could be reached whereby the State might furnish its concessions with the proper equipment, and so protect itself with lease agreements that the concessionaire would constantly be aware . . . that a misstep in operating procedure or a letting down in personal service would terminate the lease.

It is necessary . . . to find the right type of concessionaire who, in spite of his primary desire to make money, is willing to recognize the parkman's point of view and to respect it . . . It is equally as necessary for the State to give due consideration to [the concessionaire's] problems.⁹³

World War II and the Early Post-War Years

For the same reasons that national park tourism dropped sharply during World War II — gas and tire rationing combined with the lack of supplies and personnel required to operate the parks — state park tourism also fell to minimal levels. Another factor in the decline was that “touring the country became a sign of lax patriotism.”⁹⁴ As indicated by Ickes' Foreword in the Park and Recreation Problem Study, the war effort necessarily took precedence over the states' plans for park development. Consequently all work on parks was suspended during the early 1940s. Non-recreational use increased, however, for as a result of the wartime housing shortage state parks (as well as national parks) were used by trailer and tent dwellers as temporary homesites.⁹⁵

As soon as the War ended, state parks experienced an upsurge in visitation, and state park agencies began to acquire new areas, construct new facilities and plan for future expansion.⁹⁶ In the nine years since the NPS' Recreation Study had been published, however, a different definition of state park recreation had evolved, at least from the management standpoint of New

York State Parks. In a Recreation journal article entitled "Philosophy of a Park System," the author, Chairman of New York State Council of Parks, expressed the Council's disparaging attitude toward the value of historic and scientific resources in state parks:

Some states still cling to the idea that historical sites . . . or some remarkable geological disturbance or freak are . . . appropriate state parks. They usually are of little value from the recreational standpoint, and should be completely divorced from the state park service and maintained by educational or historical agencies interested and skilled in restoration and exhibition of historic relics and scientific marvels.

Long and painful experience has taught state park commissioners and executives that, in most cases, the only sensible thing to do with a mansion . . . in a . . . state park area is to tear it down before you are trapped into conversions and adaptation to public use. You can't turn a Chippendale dining room into a successful cafeteria or a boudoir into an office for a park foreman.

When [the objectives of] fun and recreation [for] a state park..are confused [with the conservation of historic sites], . . . neither objective is met. Historic shrines are overrun and tramped down by numbers of people, most of whom want a day in the open and no lessons in history.⁹⁷

State Parks in the Post-War Decades: 1950 - 1969

The 1950s: "How to Have a Free Vacation"⁹⁸

Two predominant changes characterized the use and development of state parks in the 1950s. First, the concept of state park development and management was no longer espoused primarily by "dedicated private individuals," but instead "had become a generally accepted function of state governments, . . . [of] parks professionals, bureaucrats [and] politicians."⁹⁹ Concurrently, "the pace of recreational activity accelerated . . . leaving the leisurely ambiance of the

Depression-era [camp] setting an anachronism."¹⁰⁰

With the abrupt rise in the post-war birth rate and the ensuing emphasis on family recreation, state parks were viewed by many as the ideal destination (or stop en route) for family vacations: wholesome, affordable, and easier to reach by automobile than the national parks. A 1951 Parents' Magazine article characterized state park campgrounds as a thoroughly civilized and cost-saving alternative to motels, featuring "store[s] with moderate prices, . . . electric outlets and flush toilets."¹⁰¹ State park regulations, assured the author, did not tolerate "unbecoming or rough language."¹⁰²

A similar article, appearing in the May 1951 issue of The Saturday Evening Post, stated that "there are millions of vacationers who have never even heard of the state park setup. Most people . . . have no idea that the states are eager to provide the cheapest vacation possible . . . to watch tenderly over them as they camp under the stars . . . and to make sure they aren't gouged on [the price of] food."¹⁰³ An idyllic portrait of Fish Creek Ponds State Park in New York State featured photographs of various recreational activities, from relaxing on the beach to trout fishing to an accordion-accompanied communal sing-a-long around a campfire.¹⁰⁴ This campground was described as a "clean, orderly and quiet place, . . . at ten o'clock all noises cease," and pesky insects were not a problem, "because the thoughtful state sends airplanes regularly to spray the entire camp area with DDT."¹⁰⁵ States, by their operation of campsites and parks, concluded the author, are "the No. 1 hosts of the nation . . . in the resort-and-recreation business, . . . at rates that amount to near benevolence."¹⁰⁶

The Recreation Journal, however, disputed the argument that "millions of vacationers had never heard of the state parks,"¹⁰⁷ reporting that since the end of the war, "state park authorities [have] found that their areas and facilities [are]

seriously overtaxed."¹⁰⁸ The author of an article which appeared in the June 1950 issue contended that the "serious over-utilization problem" which faced California State Parks had caused the Division to question their definition of appropriate recreational use of state parks. As a result, a change in policy had been proposed which excluded recreational uses such as "conducted athletic activities," uses which "did not emphasize the natural attractions of the parks."¹⁰⁹

Although the major emphasis of state park recreation during the 1950s and early 1960s was on family camping, magazines and newspapers occasionally made brief reference to the importance of historic buildings and sites in the state parks of the Pacific Northwest. A July 1958 article in Travel magazine noted that "many of Oregon's state parks commemorate pioneer events and several of them are revered historic shrines," and a subsequent article which profiled Washington's state parks observed that many sites "memorialize events of historical significance."¹¹⁰ In Idaho, a Coeur d'Alene newspaper asserted that the vacationing public was "interested in scenery, history, geology and plants, in that order . . . [and] Idaho had 'tremendous assets' in all four categories."¹¹¹

By the end of the decade, however, state park expenditures had "doubled, tripled, and quadrupled . . . yet most state park agencies continued to limp along with sky-rocketing work loads but Lilliputian budgets."¹¹² The combination of limited financial resources and the emphasis of the Interstate Highway Program in the 1950s caused "states to choose between a new park or a mile of new highway with difficulty."¹¹³ State officials, asserted a writer for American Forests in 1960, risked public censure if they "postponed a stretch of highway in order to pay for . . . park land."¹¹⁴ Even more difficult than obtaining approval for park acquisitions, however, was securing publicly-approved bonds for

maintenance and operation of facilities which, in many cases, had not been updated since the CCC improvements of the 1930s, facilities often “woefully inadequate and desperately in need of repair.”¹¹⁵ Two of the conditions which made state parks valuable, “peace and privacy,” maintained one writer, were threatened “by the ‘slum’ park conditions” which prevailed by the end of the 1950s.¹¹⁶ The approach which the author suggested to remedy this situation was emphasizing to politicians and voters the economic value of state parks — “stimulating tourism, increasing tax values and commercial development” —, rather than extolling the importance of their “psychic and aesthetic benefits.”¹¹⁷

The commercial development boom of the 1950s and its ensuing repercussions for state parks was of particular concern to the National Conference of State Parks. In an article entitled “Here Today - Gone Tomorrow?,” a staff member of Recreation Journal described a nationwide battle being waged by states “to prevent their parks from being despoiled and encroached upon by a multitude of interests.”¹¹⁸ Quoting from The Vallejo Times Herald and The New York Times, the author cited several examples of highway improvements, changing recreational use, and commercial recreation development which threatened the preservation of state parks of both natural and historic significance. One of these parks, Walden Pond, “visited by thousands . . . as a literary shrine,” had, by 1959, “become increasingly popular as a summer bathing resort.”¹¹⁹ The resulting conflict pitted “Walden the ‘shrine,’ ” against “Walden the ‘recreational facility,’ ” with the Save Walden Committee taking the sponsors of a “\$54,000 beach-enlargement program” to court.¹²⁰

Thus by the beginning of the 1960s, the publicity objectives of the State Parks Movement had succeeded far too well, and the definition of recreation in state parks had undergone profound change. Leaving behind their original role

as wellsprings of emotional and physical health, state parks in the 1950s appeared to have been recast as economical motels. The importance of historic resources in the state parks was seldom mentioned in Recreation during this decade, although it was briefly noted that Conrad Wirth of the NPS urged the thirtieth National Conference on State Parks (1951) "to give more recognition to historic sites."¹²¹ Such recognition, one of the founding purposes of state park systems, was not to characterize park management, however, for another two decades.

The 1960s: "Souvenir Shopping is Right and Proper"¹²²

In 1960, Changing Times magazine warned its readers that "if you think the parks . . . were mobbed this year, just wait. The worst is yet to come . . . In a mere decade or so, the U.S. may face a crisis in meeting the recreational needs of its citizens."¹²³ State parks, observed the editorial, were particularly vulnerable, for although they had "only about one-fifth the space [of] national parks, . . . three times as many people used facilities in state parks as in national ones."¹²⁴

The overcrowding in many of the state parks during the post-war decades resulted in campgrounds that resembled impoverished rural landscapes, with access roads and parking lots reminiscent of the approach to busy urban shopping centers. In these parks, such conditions did little to promote a visitor experience of contemplation, renewal, and refreshment as originally envisioned by state park planners. With little to contemplate besides the noise from another campsite only several feet away, or the long lines at restroom facilities, some campers may have welcomed the distraction provided by the varied assortment of non-interpretive items sold at the park concession.

Fueled by this consumer "demand," many entrepreneurs sought to supply

park visitors with items such as imprinted felt pennants, foam-rubber dice, and miniature china teacups. Like the garish collection of "gatehouses, fences, and curio hawkers"¹²⁵ which surrounded Niagara Falls in the mid-nineteenth century, generic souvenirs of the 1950s and 1960s had little or no connection to the purposes of state parks.

In an attempt to explain the proliferation of this type of merchandise in the national and state parks, the author of "Basic Rules for Souvenir Shoppers" (1961) concluded that "some purveyors believe the great mass of Americans suffer from low mentality and shallow taste."¹²⁶ Souvenirs selected according to this standard, "prominently displayed, and sold in . . . National Parks and elsewhere" were also condemned by a Vermont store owner.¹²⁷ He termed items of this genre a "blight," and maintained that this type of merchandise "was not what the public wanted at all, [but rather] what shortsighted entrepreneurs, who lack confidence in the intelligence of the American people, conceive the public will buy — at a high profit of course."¹²⁸

A counterbalance to the commercialism which came to be associated with park gift shops during the 1950s and 1960s was the work of Freeman Tilden, a former journalist who became an interpretive consultant to the NPS in 1943.¹²⁹ In the course of his career with the NPS, Tilden wrote several books about national and state park interpretation, and many of the principles he formulated comprise the foundation of modern interpretive programs in the parks.¹³⁰ Interpreting Our Heritage (1957) is regarded as "a classic work, widely acclaimed as expressing the 'ideology' of interpretation."¹³¹ Park interpretation, defined by one of Tilden's contemporaries as "the effort to make real and vivid to . . . people our common heritage in history, science, and nature," was the avenue by which Tilden sought to make the unique resources of each park understandable and

accessible to all visitors, thereby creating an appreciation for the specific purpose of both state and national parks.¹³² Tilden believed that such appreciation was a prime factor leading to successful recreation-area management and "improved quality of public use."¹³³

Several marketing practices common in park gift shops during the 1950s and 1960s stood in marked contrast to Tilden's vision. Two examples were the crowded displays of generic merchandise imprinted with the park's name, and postcards with caricatures or cartoons of wildlife. Such commercial activity, although not officially recognized as interpretation, contributed nonetheless to the formation of visitors' overall perceptions of the parks, and contradicted two of Tilden's interpretive principles: "Nothing in excess: let us cultivate the power that lies in understatement," [and] "Interpretation should capitalize mere curiosity for the enrichment of the human mind and spirit."¹³⁴ Tilden also specified that interpretation for any given park not lessen the dignity of its significant resources: "If we are showing the majesty of [a mountain] range, we must not do or say anything that would make a toy of this experience."¹³⁵

In 1962, Conrad Wirth, director of the NPS, acknowledged Tilden's book State Parks: Their Meaning in American Life as a long-needed and "up-to-date authoritative account of state parks, which would serve as a guide in state planning and development, in the establishment of appropriate policies and practices, and in the winning of public support [for state parks]."¹³⁶ Wirth expressed hope that the understanding of state parks which resulted from this book "would encourage the public to use and cherish its extensive recreation estate."¹³⁷

As to the desirability of a state park department entrusted to manage both historic and non-historic properties, Tilden was somewhat oblique, saying only

that "what might prove successful in one state might not be suitable to another state."¹³⁸ His answer reflected the inherent difficulty in formulating a uniform approach to historic resource management by state parks nation-wide: the kinds of historic resources, their number, the amount of available funding for state park agencies, and the commitment of park departments to historic preservation all varied from state to state.

State Parks Since 1970: Quality of Use Issues for Heritage Resources

The State Park Concept: Reappraisal of Purpose

The December 1970 issue of Parks and Recreation, commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the National Conference on State Parks, announced that this anniversary was also a benchmark which signaled "the beginning of a whole new era for state parks."¹³⁹ "The role of state park systems in America, " observed the editors, needed "new and far-reaching appraisals."¹⁴⁰

The re-appraisal process was an issue of key importance. Questioning the accepted definition of public recreation in state parks, a 1970 Parks and Recreation editorial urged that state park systems assume an "educational role as environmental communication centers"¹⁴¹ in the coming decade, a position strikingly similar to Richard Lieber's hope in 1916 that Indiana's state park system would "build for the future by [demonstrating] . . . a great public lesson in conservation."¹⁴² The re-emphasis on an educational role for these public lands suggested a shift of focus away from recreation in state parks as a *commodity* (i.e.: a cheap vacation) towards recreation as a *result* of the visitor's appreciation of the resources *unique to each park*.¹⁴³

The re-evaluation process also involved examination of the function of

state parks within the broad context of government-administered recreational facilities. By the 1970s, Park's role as conservator of heritage resources for the public's benefit had been strengthened and further legitimized by the passage of the Historic Preservation Act of 1966. This legislation defined historic preservation as

the protection, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, or culture,¹⁴⁴

and authorized the Secretary of the Interior

to establish a program of matching grants-in-aid to States for projects having as their purpose the preservation for public benefit of properties that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, and culture.¹⁴⁵

Adaptive Use of Historic Resources

In the decades following the passage of the Historic Preservation Act, a number of federal grants were awarded to state park systems for the purpose of partially funding the restoration, reconstruction, or rehabilitation of historic buildings. One example in the Pacific Northwest was the 1980–1981 restoration/rehabilitation of the CCC-constructed bathhouse (1938) in Oregon's Jessie M. Honeyman Memorial State Park, for use as a concession-operated grocery store/cafe. A grant from the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service paid for half of the total cost (\$118,000) of the project.¹⁴⁶

Between 1972 and 1985, Alaska, Washington and Oregon acquired five historic properties for their state park systems, and five of the buildings located on these properties were then specifically adapted to provide concession-operated lodging and/or food services for park visitors. The decisions to use the buildings for this purpose were based on the need for visitor services in these

parks and also on the budgetary requirements of the park agencies that the buildings contribute toward the cost of their maintenance. Although interpretive displays were incorporated into several of the buildings, their use strictly as visitor centers or museums was deemed unfeasible due to financial and/or spatial constraints.

Statistical information on the number of historic buildings used for concession services in state parks on a regional or nationwide level does not currently exist. Replies to a letter of inquiry sent to state park systems in January 1992 seem to indicate, however, that adaptive use of historic buildings for concession-operated visitor services is primarily confined to state park systems on the west coast.¹⁴⁷

Historic Resource Management

During the 1970s, articles about state parks in park management journals focused primarily on environmental concerns and the ever-increasing specialization of outdoor recreation. No articles on concessions appear in the Parks and Recreation journal, and there are only occasional references to historic preservation. Between 1983 and 1993, no articles addressing state parks in general are listed under the heading of "State Parks" in The Readers Guide to Periodicals. One probable reason for the lack of general information articles on state parks after 1982 is that by the 1980s, the National Conference on State Parks seems to have been fulfilled its purpose of helping states to develop their own state park systems. Several states, including California and Oregon, now publish magazines (California State Parks: The State Parks Magazine, Oregon Parks) which focus specifically on issues relevant to their individual state park systems.

One of the first references in the 1970s to the role of state parks in historic

resource conservation was an observation made by Horace Marden Albright, former director of the NPS (1929-1933). When asked to comment on what he “envisioned for the future of State Parks,” Albright replied that they were “bound to be the prime areas for the protection of natural and historic resources.”¹⁴⁸

The management of New Hampshire’s state park system during the 1970s provides an example of Albright’s vision. Adopting a strategy which incorporated the mandate for historic resource preservation and also questioned the prevailing definition of recreational management, New Hampshire decided to “shift from the acquisition of large, natural tracts to acquisition of unusual and historic sites.”¹⁴⁹ Observing that the state’s growing population would eventually need “more golf courses, ski resorts, riding trails, [and] campgrounds,” the governor explained that these “intensive-use features” could just as easily be provided by private enterprise.¹⁵⁰ Conservation of the state’s heritage resources by the private sector, however, was not mentioned. Although another journal article in 1970 commented that “many states devote considerable resources” to heritage resource preservation, subsequent references illustrate the somewhat ill-defined position of historic preservation in state park management during this decade.¹⁵¹ One example is a photograph caption which refers to historic sites as “an *integral element* [italics added] of many state park systems,” while a subsequent portion of text subtitled “Historical Sites Receive Attention,” states that “historical events — and the persons and sites associated with them represent another major dimension *closely related to* [italics added] state park and recreation services.”¹⁵²

Visitor Services and Preservation of Resource Character

At the beginning of the decade, the executive secretary of the National Conference on State Parks observed that "state park systems . . . are being challenged as never before . . . to review their concepts, programs, facilities, and service."¹⁵³ The 1972 master plan for Minnewaska State Park in New York State presented a well-planned solution to these challenges: an interdisciplinary approach to park management which incorporated several basic guidelines with particular relevance to concession services. This plan stressed the importance of comprehensive planning in order to limit the introduction of commercial facilities, allowing only those which "avoided undue noise, visual disturbances and over-concentration of people" in order to preserve the essential character of the park's significant resources.¹⁵⁴ It also emphasized that "only those services and facilities required by visitors *for use of the resources* [italics added] should be provided."¹⁵⁵ The planning team noted, however, that "wanting people to come and enjoy the park and limiting . . . [certain] activities to prevent destruction of its . . . character . . . was an admittedly difficult balance" to achieve.¹⁵⁶ Application of Tilden's axiom that successful park interpretation depended on establishing a "mood or atmosphere sympathetic" to the park's aesthetic values¹⁵⁷ was one of the components necessary to establishing this balance.

An article in the November 1982 issue of Esquire criticized concessions for their detrimental affect on visitor enjoyment of state park land. Noting that the newly created Harriman State Park in southeastern Idaho "must generate enough revenue to pay for its maintenance," Geoffrey Norman observed that "the most obvious way to do this is to attract visitors, which will probably mean concessions. Certainly it will mean pressure for concessions."¹⁵⁸ Norman

questioned, however, the reasoning which mandated concessions as necessary for enjoyment of the park. In his opinion, the property's most significant feature was a particular fork of the Snake River which afforded excellent trout fishing, a primary visitor use which required no constructed facilities. Commercial additions such as "horseback riding [stables], restaurants, and souvenir concessions," Norman asserted, would compromise the character of this land unnecessarily, since these services "already existed elsewhere. You can ride a horse, get a meal, and buy a souvenir in plenty of places . . . [but] you can fish the Henry's Fork only on the Henry's Fork."¹⁵⁹ The efforts of state park systems to "try to satisfy everyone who might possibly want to use the land" was a concept which the author mistrusted:

There is a doctrine for this kind of compromise. It is called multiple use. According to the doctrine of multiple use, it is possible to have it all. Proponents of multiple use would put a bowling alley in the basement of the Taj Mahal and say that everything is jake, nothing is harmed.¹⁶⁰

Multiple use, concluded the article, is "sincere . . . in its very American belief that all things are possible [but] when it comes to land use, . . . [it is] utopian. Access for all and for all purposes *with no loss of quality* [italics added] . . . doesn't work."¹⁶¹

Prior to the 1970s, (as Tilden observed in 1962) state parks had no citizen groups which functioned as advocates for quality of visitor experience and resource preservation on these public lands. This changed with the formation of "Friends Of " groups for individual state parks. Founded specifically to "encourage management policies that protect park . . . resources and . . . values" and to "educate the public about the park [through] interpretation,"¹⁶² these volunteer, nonprofit organizations can strengthen state parks' commitment to

preservation in a manner that for-profit businesses cannot afford. As such, they represent an alternative to traditional concession operations in many state parks. They may also play an important role in the future of state parks by helping to implement the management goals advocated by Harold A. Caparn at the 1924 meeting of the National Conference on State Parks:

We should try to interpret and display [a state park]; . . . make it approachable, usable and understandable to as many people of present and future generations as possible; . . . take nothing out of it that would be seriously missed, [and] put nothing into it that would seem an intrusion.¹⁶³

Conclusion

Since their introduction in the late nineteenth century, state parks have been characterized by a pattern of repeated re-definition of purpose and use. From a growing conviction in the 1890s that undeveloped natural areas served more than utilitarian ends, to a realization in the 1970s that State Parks played a crucial role in developing the environmental awareness of the American public, the perceived purpose of these lands has fluctuated in a manner similar to that of the national parks: weighted alternately towards resource conservation or recreational use. Concurrently, the role of heritage resource preservation in the enrichment of American culture has progressed from the enshrinement of military sites and the homes of famous men to incorporate the conservation and interpretation of a wide diversity of structures, buildings and landscapes. As the purpose of historic preservation developed in application and scope, so also has its place within the management of public recreational lands.

Since the state park concept began to gain public favor in the 1920s, private enterprise has consistently been viewed as the most expedient means to

provide visitors with the goods and services necessary for their enjoyment of the parks. From the beginning, however, members of the National Conference on State Parks expressed concern that such enterprises be closely regulated to prevent the excessive commercialism which characterized many privately-operated concessions in city and national parks.

While state park agencies seem to have had generalized success in controlling the price of goods and the customer-service aspects of concessions, they have been less successful in limiting the visual impact of these operations so that they are compatible with interpretation of the park's significant resources. There are a number of reasons for this. First, without clear interpretive standards for concession merchandise as part of the park's Master Plan, decisions concerning item appropriateness usually depend on the definition of merchandise specified by concession contracts, definitions which have tended to be somewhat vague. Such decisions may also be relegated indefinitely to the back burner while the park manager deals with more immediate and pressing concerns such as visitor safety or financial issues. Secondly, it is often difficult for park management to curtail marketing practices once established, because in doing so concessionaire profit is also curtailed, a situation which can be perceived as state interference with freedom of private enterprise.

In all state parks, the balance between heritage resource preservation and visitor recreation must be defined within certain parameters. As trustees of public land, state park agencies have a responsibility to the public to manage these areas in a manner that encourages public awareness and appreciation of their significant resources. When privately-operated park concessions are characterized by the kind of visual merchandising common to tourist shops or convenience stores, the park's significance and the significance of its special

resources can become dilute and generic.

The position of Massachusetts Division of Forests and Parks on allowable non-food items provides one example of concession services which have been evaluated according to a pre-determined standard of appropriate recreational use:

To date [1992] we do not allow the sale of any item not directly related to the area. We have turned down requests to sell such items as 'airbrushed T-shirts,' but would allow sun glasses and suntan lotion to be sold at our beaches. Our intent in allowing concessions is to enhance the services to the people using our parks but not to compromise the basic intent of the quiet enjoyment of the park.¹⁶⁴

Achieving this balance between provision of visitor services and maintaining the essential character of the park's historic resources is an issue which continues to challenge state parks in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska as it has for the past twenty-one years.

Notes

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⁴³The Playground, "The Second National Conference on State Parks," The Playground (September 1922): 273.

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¹⁴⁶"Historic Bathhouse Gets Complete Facelift," (Eugene) Register-Guard, unidentified clipping from Oregon State Park Department files, 25 January 1981.

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CHAPTER IV

STATE PARKS: A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Although the original functions of several historic buildings in Alaska, Washington, Idaho and Oregon state parks were similar, the management approach which has shaped their adaptive use has varied from state to state. This chapter will explain basic elements of the history, organization, and development policies of these state park agencies to create a framework for better understanding decisions made regarding the preservation and recreational use of these historic properties (Fig. 1). This information is also offered to provide a context for evaluating each concession in terms of its conformance with the state's heritage conservation goals. A brief profile — history, physical description, and evaluation of significance — is included for each park and concession building examined in this study. Evaluations of building significance are derived primarily from the National Register nominations.

For readers wishing further information about the history and development of state parks in the Pacific Northwest, The Park Builders (1988), an analysis and comparison of the park systems of Oregon, Washington and Idaho by Thomas Cox, is recommended.

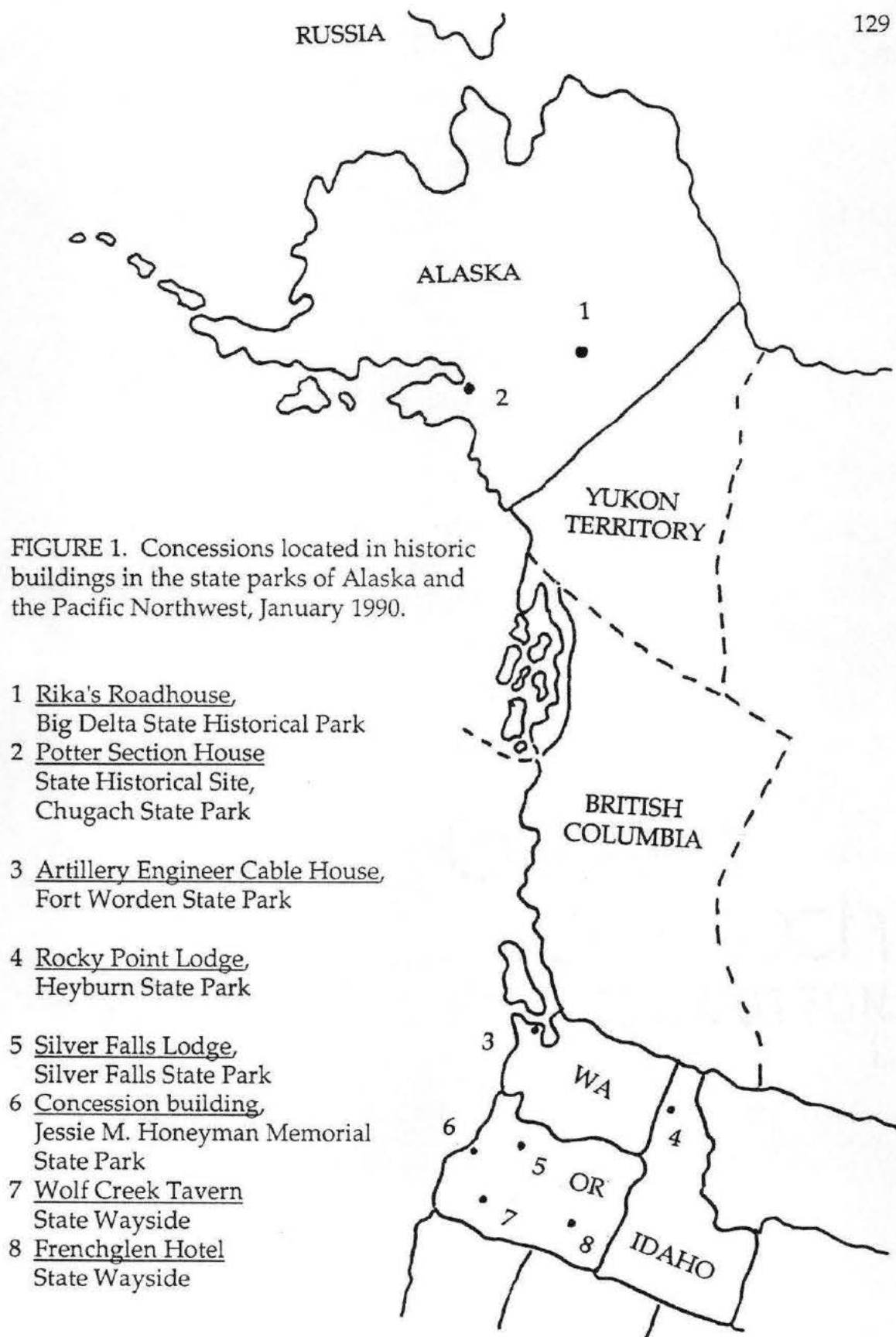


FIGURE 1. Concessions located in historic buildings in the state parks of Alaska and the Pacific Northwest, January 1990.

State Park Systems of Alaska and the Pacific Northwest

Alaska Department of Natural Resources,
Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

History

Although Alaska's first State Recreation Area was not established until 1966 (Nancy Lake State Recreation Area) and its first state park until 1970, (Kachemak Bay State Park) initial organization of an agency charged with administering Alaska's public lands for the purposes of natural resource conservation and public recreation began in 1935, with the creation of the Alaska Planning Council, a nine-member body appointed by the territorial governor.¹ The operation of this Council was relatively short-lived, due to lack of appropriated funds, and management of Alaska's public lands was assumed in 1953 by the Territorial Department of Public Lands and later by the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM).² Government development of recreational facilities for territorial residents did not begin until 1957, however, when the BLM was granted authority and appropriations "to develop and operate a system of roadside campgrounds."³ Two years later when Alaska became a state, the Alaska Legislature passed the Alaska Land Act, establishing a state-wide "system of parks, recreational areas and monuments."⁴ The foundation of this system was thirty-two units of federal land transferred to State ownership via the 1959 Omnibus Act, and administration of this park land passed from the BLM to the Department of Natural Resources.

During the first eight years of statehood, Alaska's park agency was minimally funded, and it was not until 1970 that significant expansion and development of the park system began. Much of the impetus for this

development stemmed from the availability of state matching grants from the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund. These funds, together with \$900,000 worth of state bonds allowed expansion of Alaska's state park system to include 40,000 acres by 1969.⁵

Although the federal government transferred Baranof Castle Hill Historic Site (Sitka) to the territory in 1956, specific legislation providing for the protection and conservation of this and subsequently designated heritage resources was not enacted until 1966. The state's historic preservation program, with an initial appropriation of \$20,000, commenced operation in 1968.⁶ By 1968, Alaska's state park system included four historic properties: Baranof Castle Hill, Fort Abercrombie, Totem Bight, and Old Sitka.

In 1970, Parks and Outdoor Recreation, formerly a section in the Division of Lands, was established as a Division within the Department of Natural Resources. Alaska's state parks are funded by legislative appropriation, park user fees, and a percentage of the revenue from the Big Delta State Historical Park concession. As of June 1990, the Alaska State Park system, comprising "nearly one-third of America's state park acreage," contained 116 park units totaling over three million acres.⁷

Purpose and Organization

Alaska's state park system is divided into six management districts which encompass approximately one-third of Alaska's total land mass. There are no state parks in the northern two-thirds of the state, due to extreme climatic conditions, lack of an improved road system and the fact that the majority of state residents live south of Fairbanks.

Management of individual park units is shared by the district

superintendent, rangers assigned to specific portions of the district, and at certain parks, an on-site park manager. Although all parks are monitored by rangers, not all have on-site managers. Basic day-to-day enforcement of visitor regulations and concession contracts is handled by rangers and on-site managers, while long-range planning goals and more problematic concession contract issues are referred to the district superintendent or Parks administrative offices in Anchorage.

The Alaska State Park system includes nine types of management units: park, historical park, historic site, recreation area, recreation site, state trail, wilderness park, marine park, and public use facility. The purposes of this system are expressed in five goals and six policies. In addition to "providing for the outdoor recreational needs of . . . Alaskans and visitors to the state, preserving areas of natural significance, and protecting and managing areas of significant scientific or educational value,"⁸ goals three and five detail the System's Cultural Heritage and Tourism objectives. They charge State Parks with:

Preserving and interpreting Alaska's cultural heritage through the acquisition, development, and management of State Park system units [Goal 3] and . . . Providing support to the State's tourism industry through the acquisition, development and management of State Park system units for residents and visitors [Goal 5].⁹

Policy 10, which details the use of concessions, specifies that privately operated concessions in park units are desirable when they "provide for an appropriate level of service to the public . . . and provide for more cost-effective management of park units [10.1]."¹⁰ The Alaska State Parks Statutes further stipulate that park concession contracts are to be "based on a need and desire of the public."¹¹

Heritage Conservation Goals

All units in the Alaska State Park system are managed and developed according to their primary land-use zone classification: recreational, natural, wilderness, or cultural. Most parks are a combination of zones. Although state historic sites and state historical parks comprise the cultural zone classification, some, like Independence Mine State Historical Park, are also used extensively for recreational activities such as hiking and cross-country skiing. Despite secondary use classifications, cultural zone properties are intended to be managed primarily with a resource preservation emphasis rather than an intensive public use emphasis.¹²

At state historical parks and state historical sites (defined as “area/s containing . . . significant historical, cultural, archaeological, or anthropological resources”), the “dominant management objective [is] preserving and interpreting the historic resources for Alaskans and visitors to the state.”¹³ For this reason, the Alaska State Park System: Statewide Framework specifies that developments and activities within historic sites and historical parks maintain visitor-use levels “that do not diminish the historical, cultural, archaeological, or anthropological values for which the unit was established.”¹⁴ Two significant directives for implementing this management state that “development should involve minimal introduction of objects . . . not in context with the historical period the park was established to represent,” and that commercial activities must provide not only a needed public service but also “enhance the historical scene.”¹⁵

Contextual objects and enhancement of the historical scene, defined in various ways by the private contractors in two of Alaska’s state historical parks

and sites, will be discussed in Chapter VII.

Rika's Roadhouse: Big Delta Historic District
Big Delta State Historical Park

Sited near the banks of the Tanana River and surrounded by deciduous forest, Rika's Roadhouse, in the Big Delta Historic District ninety miles south of Fairbanks (Fig. 2), has been a familiar landmark for travelers in Alaska's interior since it was constructed circa 1908. It is one of the primary contributing properties in the 10.26 acre historic district which incorporates out-buildings associated with the Roadhouse, as well as structures of the Washington-Alaska Military Cable and Telegraph System (1906–1923) and the Alaska Road Commission. The park also contains a portion of a trail originally used by gold prospectors, hunters, and trappers. A few yards northwest of the Roadhouse is the site where a small ferry once crossed the Tanana River (Fig. 3 and 4). The Roadhouse, constructed of spruce logs with hemp rope and cloth chinking, is a two and one-half story L-plan building, seventy-five feet by forty feet.¹⁶ The exterior was reconstructed and stabilized by Alaska State Parks in 1984, and the interior rehabilitated to meet modern building codes.

The Roadhouse was one in a series of roadhouses built along the Richardson Highway (originally the Valdez - Fairbanks Trail) which provided meals and lodging for travelers. (Fig. 5 and 6). In 1923, the building was purchased by Lovisa Erika Jakobson from Wallen, Sweden, (known as Rika Wallen) who operated it until 1947. After closing the Roadhouse, Wallen continued to live on the property until her death in 1969 at age ninety-four. She is buried on a small hill overlooking the park.

By 1974, the uninhabited Roadhouse and surrounding buildings had

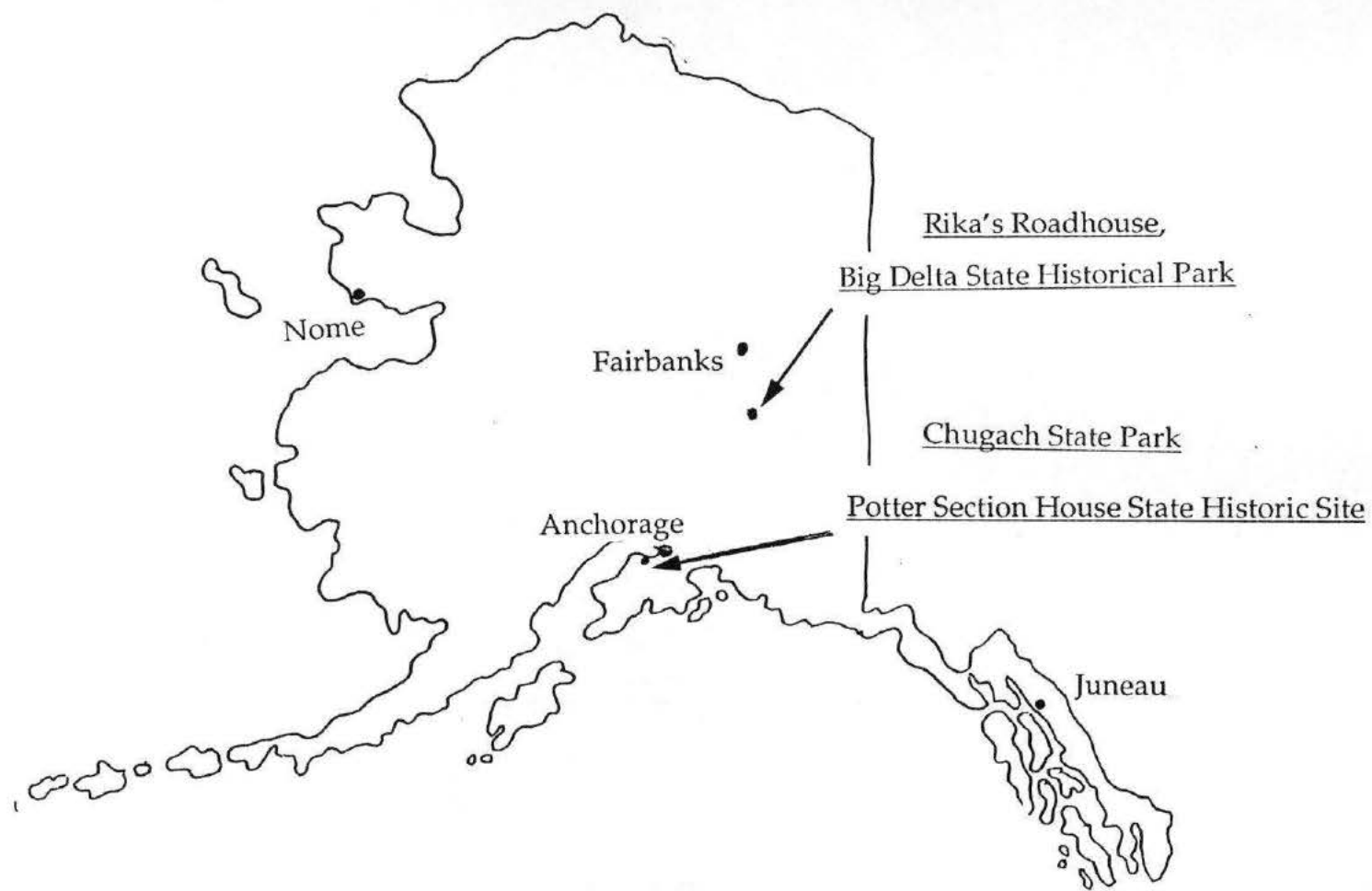


Figure 2. Two Alaska State Parks with Concessions located in historic buildings, 1990.

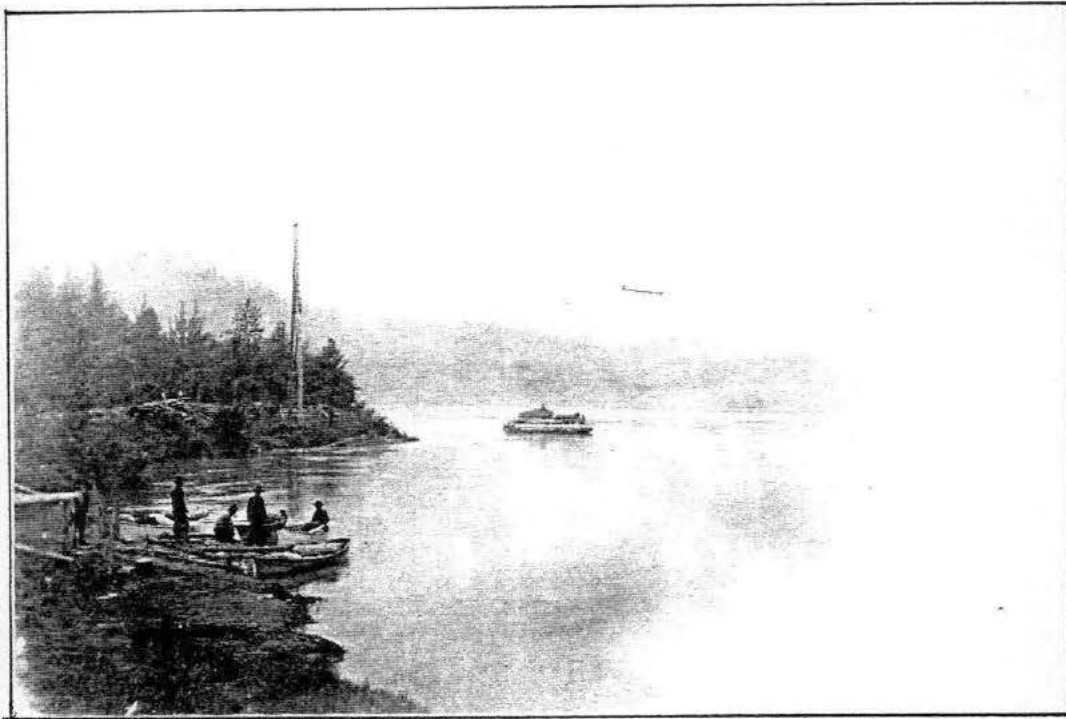


Figure 3. Ferry crossing Tanana River at Big Delta, Alaska, ca. 1914.
Rita Cottnair Collection, University of Alaska Fairbanks.



Figure 4. Tanana River at Big Delta State Historical Park, Alaska, 1991.

become badly deteriorated due to vandalism and lack of maintenance. The following year, the property was donated to Alaska State Parks by Alyeska Pipeline Service Company for use as an historical park.¹⁷ In 1976, Rika's Roadhouse was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and in 1990 the assemblage of buildings, structures and objects associated with this property was designated as the Big Delta Historic District. The primary significance of this property is "its association with the development of transportation, communications, and commerce in interior Alaska, [from] 1904 . . . until World War II."¹⁸

The adaptive-use plan initially proposed by Alaska State Parks for the Roadhouse was an operation approximating the building's original function: meals and lodging for travelers. These services, in addition to operation and maintenance of the rest of the park, were put out to bid in 1986 for private contracting. The concessionaire selected, a corporation of approximately 100 individuals, was the only contractor to submit a bid. Although they have offered limited food service since 1988 (in a non-historic building within the park), the concessionaire has not implemented Parks' plan for meals and lodging in the Roadhouse. The current uses of Rika's Roadhouse include historical displays, gift shop, fur salon, concessionaire business offices, and product storage.



Figure 5. Fairbanks-Valdez Stage, ca. 1911.
John Zug Album, University of Alaska Fairbanks.



Figure 6. Roadhouse at Big Delta, Alaska, ca. 1912.
Reuel Griffin Collection, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Potter Section House State Historic Site: Chugach State Park

Established in 1970, Chugach State Park (495,204 acres) in Southcentral Alaska is the largest unit in the state park system and “one of the four largest state parks in the United States.”¹⁹ Named for the Native inhabitants of Southcentral Alaska, Chugach (Chew-gach) encompasses a large portion of the Municipality of Anchorage and contains three designated land-use zones: recreational development, natural environment, and wilderness. Vegetation in the park is diverse: Sitka spruce and mountain hemlock (most common), Alaska paper birch, balsam poplar, black cottonwood, aspen, and alder. Above 6000 feet, alpine tundra plants predominate. The park serves as habitat to eighty species of birds including golden and bald eagles, owls, grouse, and ducks. Wildlife such as moose, Dall sheep, mountain goat, grizzly and black bear, weasel, marmot, red fox, lynx, wolverine and porcupine range throughout the park. Visitor recreational use includes hiking, camping, dog mushing, cross-country skiing, snowmachining, wildlife viewing, berry picking, and rock climbing.

The 1.3 acre property designated as Potter Section House State Historic Site is located approximately ten miles south of downtown Anchorage (Fig. 7). It overlooks the shoreline of Cook Inlet, and is one of thirty-five historic and archaeological sites in Chugach State Park. The Potter Section House, a twenty-eight by thirty-six foot one and one-half story frame building with shiplap siding, was constructed by the Alaska Railroad in 1929 as one in a series of fourteen section houses along the railroad between Moraine and Eklutna.²⁰ Of these, only four are still extant, and Potter is the only one located near its original site (Fig. 8).²¹ Besides serving as a flag stop, the building functioned as the living

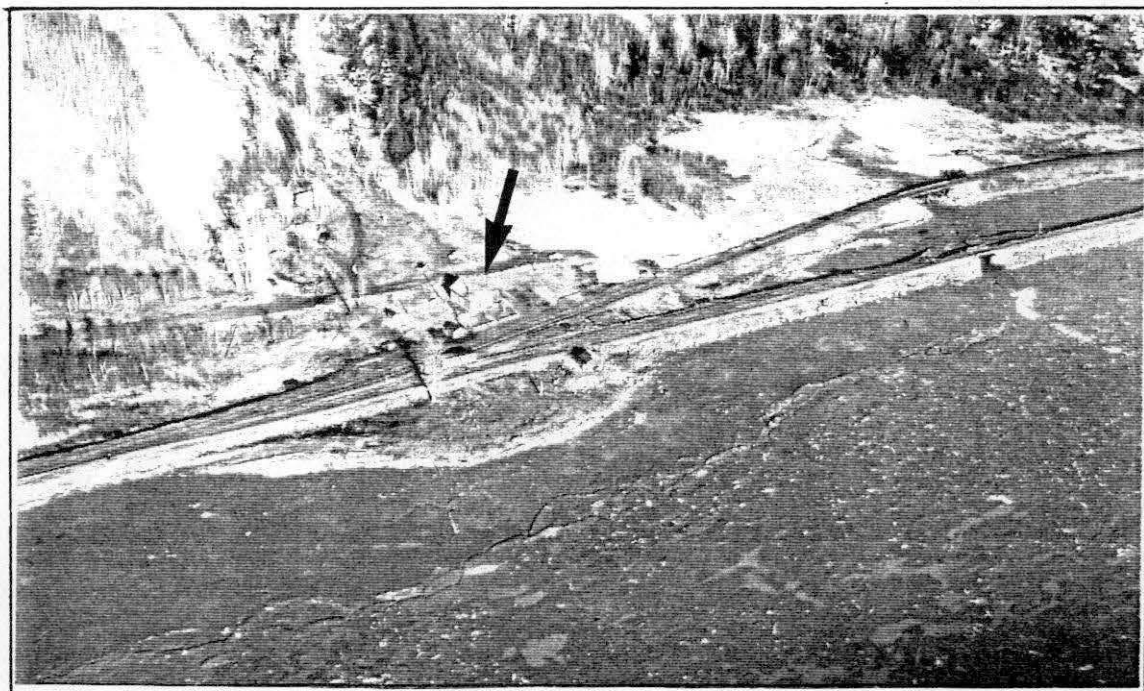


Figure 7. Potter Section House on the shore of Cook Inlet, aerial, 1951.
Alaska Railroad Collection, The Anchorage Museum of History and Art

quarters for a crew of approximately eight railroad workers responsible for maintaining a specific section of track. Potter ceased operation as a section house in the 1950s, and was closed by the Railroad in 1978 (Fig. 9) .

The primary significance of the property is threefold: "its historic association with railroad development, . . . its importance as the only remaining section house of its type, [and its] unique setting."²² This site "has served as a landmark, delineating the end of the flatlands of the Anchorage bowl and the start of the sheer cliffs that characterize Turnagain Arm, . . . [and] the house remains as evidence of [the] . . . advancement of railroad maintenance from the manual to the machine age."²³

Potter was listed on the National Register and acquired by the Division of

Parks in 1985. In 1986, Parks restored the Section House (Fig. 10) and installed interpretive exhibits of Alaska Railroad history in several of the first floor rooms. Several outbuildings were also reconstructed. In accordance with Parks plan for the site to be operated by a private contractor, a Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued in September 1986. By December 1986 a concessionaire for the site had been selected from several proposals received, and a contract signed. The concessionaire operated a gift shop in the Section House from summer 1987 until April 1991, at which time the contract was terminated by mutual agreement.²⁴ After the contractor had vacated the premises, the interpretive exhibits were removed. The building is currently used as a regional park office.



Figure 8. Potter Section House, Indian, Alaska, 1952.
The Anchorage Museum of History and Art.

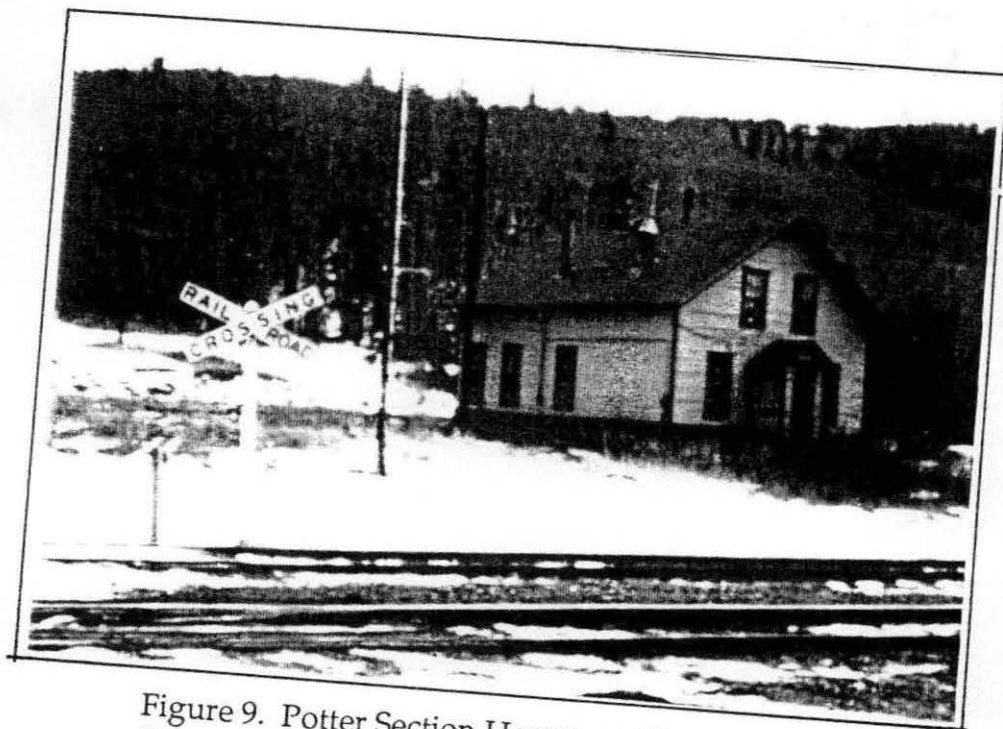


Figure 9. Potter Section House, ca. 1975.
State of Alaska, Office of History and Archaeology.

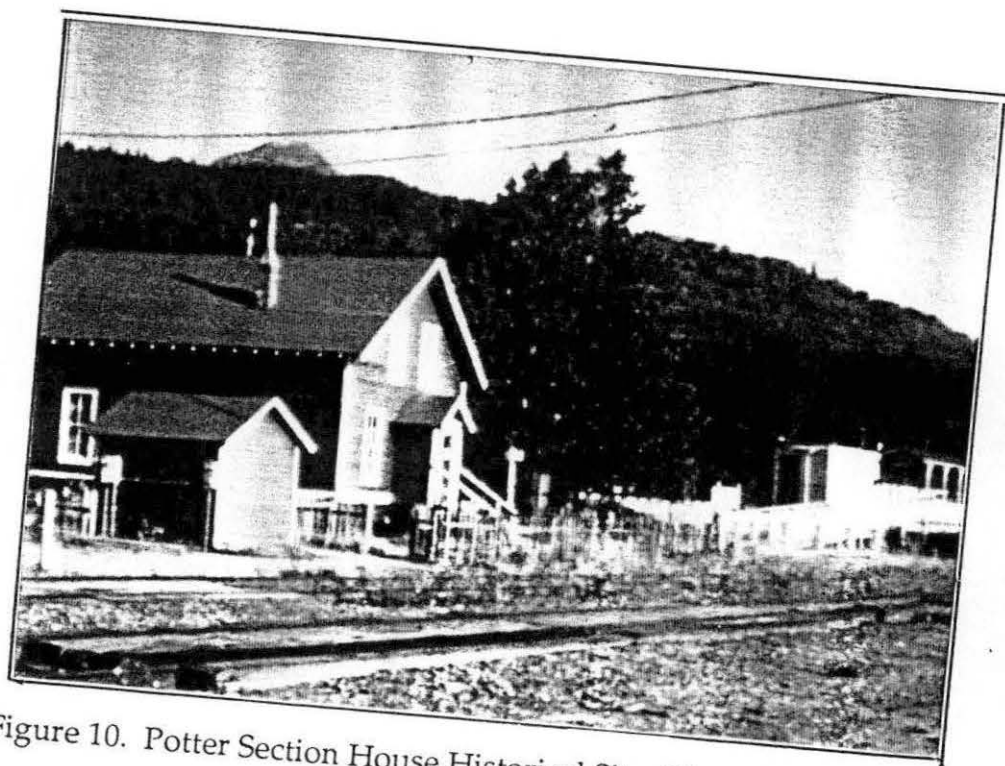


Figure 10. Potter Section House Historical Site, Chugach State Park, 1991.

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

History

When Washington became a state in 1899 no provisions for the recreational needs of residents were made, but the influence of the Progressive movement soon impelled state lawmakers to reconsider their priorities for the use of undeveloped land.²⁵ Rapid settlement and growth of cities began to reveal a growing scarcity of the nearby "open, unoccupied spaces" previously used by state residents for recreation.²⁶ Progressive supporters, determined that Washington's many natural, scientific, and historic resources not be destroyed to increase the profits of businesses and land developers, lobbied successfully for the creation of the State Board of Park Commissioners in 1913. Although the Board initially received no state funds for operation, it received its first two donated properties, the John R. Jackson house and the land which became Larabee State Park, in 1915. Within seven years, the Commission had established eighteen park units of geological, natural, and historic significance.²⁷

In 1921 a bill which granted the Commission the "care, charge, control, and supervision of all parks" was passed by the state legislature.²⁸ Included in this bill was the authorization to "grant concessions in the parks," and a provision which changed the name of the board to the State Parks Committee.²⁹

Although the holdings of the state park system had increased to twenty-eight by 1928 and received enthusiastic visitation (150,000 visitors in 1929), Parks still lacked appropriated funding.³⁰ Expenses were paid instead by a combination of camper fees, concession rentals and twenty-five percent of the fines collected by the State for traffic code violations.³¹

The Parks Committee was later restructured to form the governor-

appointed Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, and efforts concentrated on preventing the logging of scenic roadside areas.³² From 1929 through 1932, state parks were closed entirely, due to a veto by Governor Roland Hartley in 1928. The veto action, prohibiting all state funding for parks during the remainder of Hartley's term in office, may have stemmed from what he perceived as the inappropriate development and use of public lands. He wrote in 1929:

These parks were set aside in order to preserve some of the natural beauty spots untouched by civilization and the greed of man. They were never intended for tourist camps and amusement parks . . . There are already plenty of [these] which are privately owned and operated.³³

As in the rest of the Pacific Northwest, the Civilian Conservation Corps was instrumental in the development of Washington's state parks, repairing much of the vandalism and forced neglect which had damaged park properties during Hartley's governorship (1929–1932).³⁴ By 1949, new park properties were once more being actively acquired, due to legislative action providing for additional state park funding.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Washington's parks received heavy visitation, and additional funding sources made it possible for the Commission to purchase historic properties such as former military forts.³⁵ Parks of scientific interest, such as Ginkgo State Park, were frequently featured in periodicals such as Sunset Magazine.³⁶

In the early 1970s, funding for preservation of historic sites and buildings was approved by state residents, and projects utilizing federal Land and Water Conservation funds were also initiated.³⁷ Administration of state park lands was further codified in 1984 with the adoption of RWC 43.51.395. With regard to

Washington's heritage resources, this policy charged the Commission to "maintain and enhance ecological, aesthetic and recreational values [and] to protect cultural and historical resources, locations and artifacts."³⁸

From 1978 through 1988, however, funding again became scarce, resulting in postponed maintenance and development of existing units.³⁹ Despite these limitations the system has continued to grow, and in 1990, Washington appropriated "\$53 million for statewide land acquisition."⁴⁰

In addition to legislative allocations, Washington State Parks is currently funded by "campsite and other facility fee charges" and a percentage of the revenue from park concessions.⁴¹ The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission estimates that "almost forty percent of the total state population are state park users."⁴²

Organization and Purpose

The administering body for Washington's state parks, the State Parks and Recreation Commission, consists of seven members who are appointed by the governor for terms of six years. The Director, Deputy Director, and three assistant directors oversee the planning and operations for five regional districts. Park managers assisted by park rangers are responsible for management of the individual park units, including concessions, records maintenance, public information services, and enforcement of visitor regulations.

Private contracting in the state parks is regulated by the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) Chapter 352-24 which sets forth Lease and Concession policies, and administered by the contracts specialist at Commission Headquarters. Amplification of these policies is detailed in the Concession Guide 1990, a booklet produced by the Commission. This guide does not make

reference to provision of concession services in historic buildings except to note that "Fort Worden procedures are covered in the Fort Worden Management Plan."⁴³

Heritage Conservation Goals

The mission statement of the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission gives its management purpose for these public lands as follows:

to contribute toward providing people an opportunity to enhance their lives through recreational leisure time experiences, and to cause our environment to be protected, our heritage preserved, and our natural resources conserved.⁴⁴

To implement these objectives, state park lands are divided into nine classifications: recreation areas, natural areas, heritage areas, launch areas (boats), conservation areas, ocean beach access areas, environmental learning centers, natural forest areas, and natural area preserves. Heritage areas are defined as:

sites which preserve and interpret unique or unusual geological, paleontological, archaeological, historical, scientific and cultural features . . . which are of statewide or national significance."⁴⁵

Many of Washington's parks contain historic buildings and structures, such as picnic shelters constructed by the CCC. In addition, Washington's cultural resources are represented by six historic house museums and nineteen interpretive centers.

Artillery Engineer Cable House: Fort Worden Historic District, Fort Worden State Park, Port Townsend

Fort Worden, located on the eastern shore of Admiralty Inlet near the town of Port Townsend (Fig. 11), was constructed by the U.S. Army between

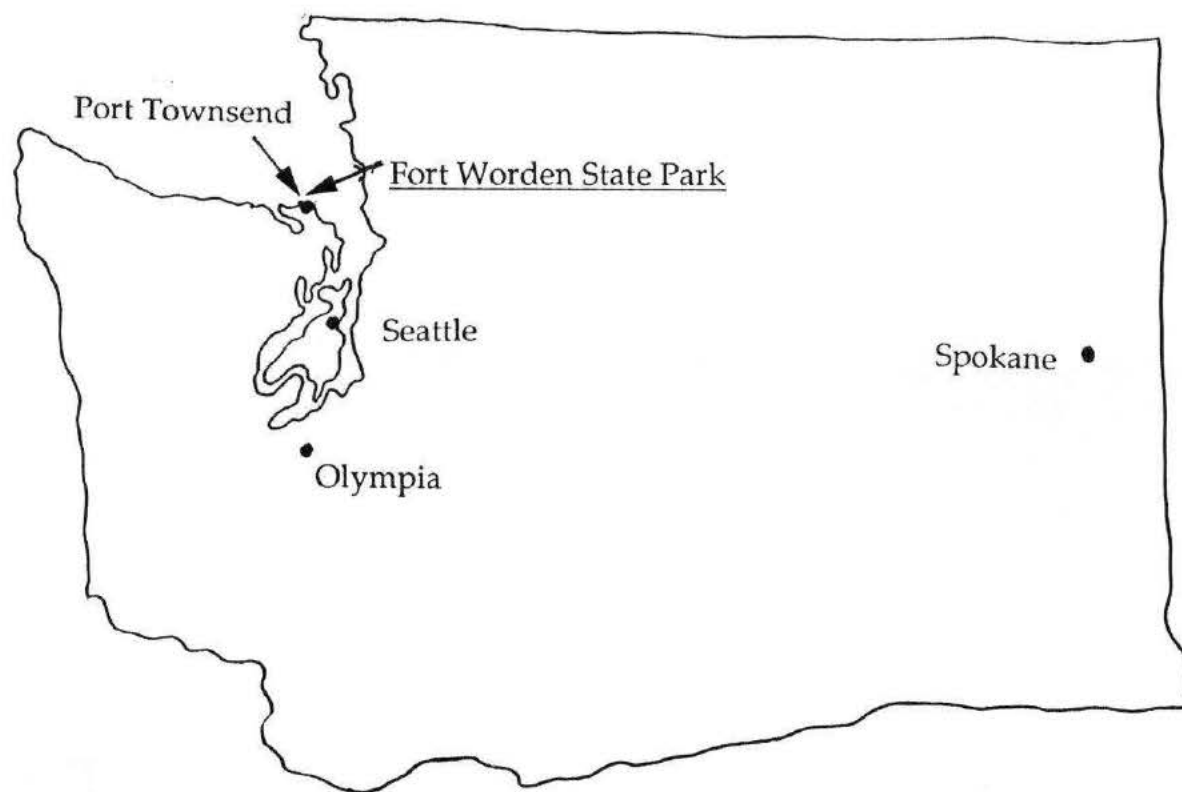


Figure 11. Fort Worden State Park on Washington's Olympic Penninsula.

1904 and 1912 (Fig. 12) . Intended as a “first line of defense for the cities of Puget Sound and the . . . naval shipyard at Bremerton,” it was one of a triad of coastal fortifications which included Fort Casey and Fort Flagler.⁴⁶ Recognized as “one of the largest coastal forts” operating in the United States in the early twentieth century, Fort Worden was also “one of the most novel and thorough fortification systems ever developed.”⁴⁷ In addition to twelve batteries mounted with forty-one cannons, the Fort contained a balloon hangar, hospital, PX and gymnasium, six Enlisted Mens’ barracks, nine NCO and family quarters, ten Field Officers and family quarters, four administrative and office buildings and numerous support services buildings.

By the end of World War I, however, advances in weaponry technology and the advent of the airplane rendered the fortifications of Fort Worden (as well as those of Fort Casey and Fort Flagler) obsolete.⁴⁸ Although the Fort continued to be used as a training facility for heavy artillery units, by the end of World War II the guns had been removed and the batteries deactivated. In 1953 the Army designated Fort Worden as surplus, and transferred it to the State of Washington.

After it was acquired by the State, the property functioned as a juvenile treatment center until 1971. The following year, the former Fort was transferred to the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission to establish Fort Worden State Park. The 1990 Management and Development Plan for Fort Worden State Park states that the mission of this park is to provide a “multi-purpose facility . . . [for] extremely diverse individual users and user groups.”⁴⁹ One significant aspect of the park is its arts program, established and administered by a nonprofit organization, Centrum, which sponsors instructional programs, concerts, and other arts events. Other uses of the park include camping, swimming, hiking, picnicking, conferences and vacation housing

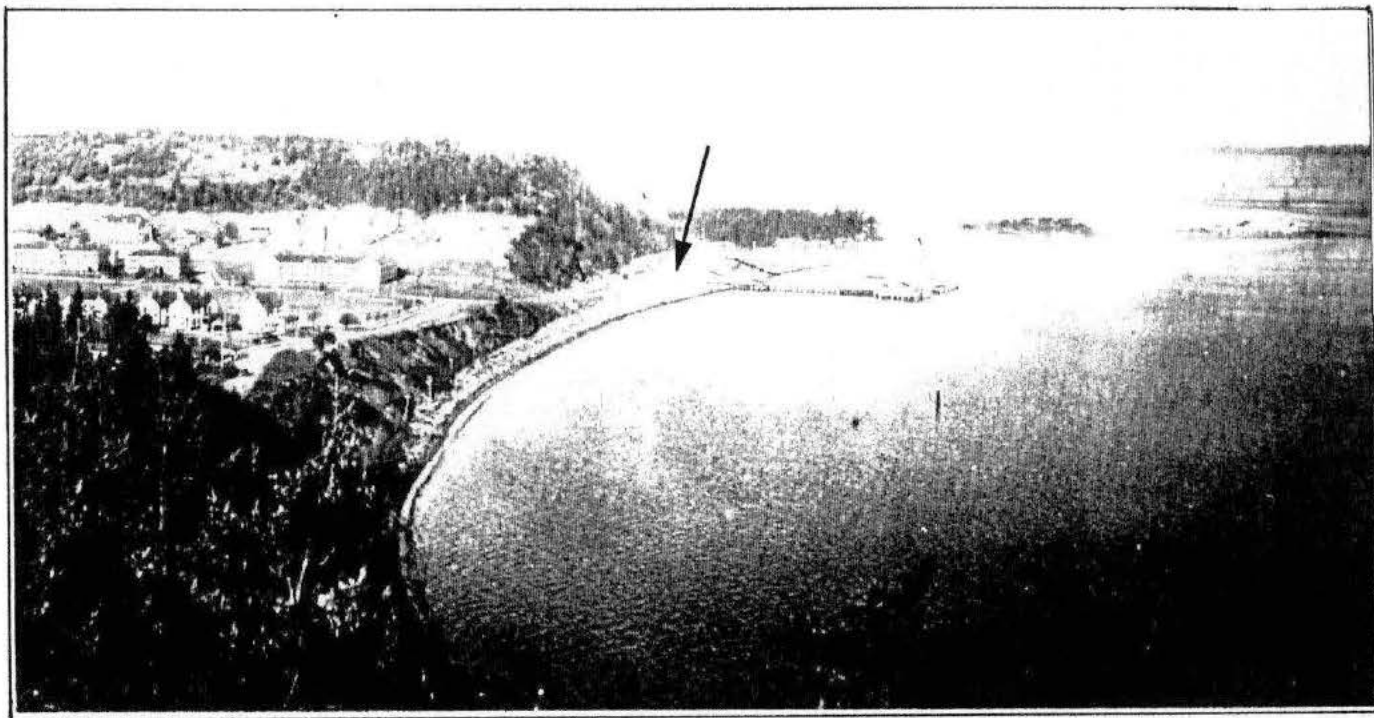


Figure 12. Fort Worden, Port Townsend, Washington, aerial, ca. 1905.
Jefferson County Historical Society.

(rental of former officers' quarters). A self-guided walking tour brochure encourages visitors to tour the Commanding Officer's House (museum), the Coast Artillery Museum, and other historic buildings in addition to the Marine Science Center.

Fort Worden was listed on the National Register in 1973 as an historic district, and subsequently also designated a National Historic Landmark. Treatment of the buildings for adaptive recreational use ranges from restoration (Commanding Officer's House), restoration/rehabilitation (the former Balloon Hanger, now McCurdy Pavilion), and stabilization/rehabilitation (Artillery Engineer Cable House).

Building 501, the Artillery Engineer Cable House, was constructed circa 1905 for ship cable storage. The Cable House and a nearby warehouse of similar appearance (Ordnance Machine Shop) retain their original siting near the waterfront (Fig. 13), and are two of only four historic buildings remaining in this area.⁵⁰ Constructed of concrete with a hipped slate roof, the single story Cable House measures fifty feet by twenty-five feet with tall double wooden doors on the north entrance.⁵¹ Other features which characterize the building include galvanized iron ventilators on the roof ridge and small windows on the east and west facades.⁵²

For the past eighteen years, the Cable House has been used to provide visitor services, first as a scuba diving supply shop (1975) and later (1983 to present) as a concessionaire-operated convenience store for campers. Public restrooms were installed in the northern half of the building in 1989. Despite its classification in the National Register as a "key structure having primary importance to the Fort Worden Historic District,"⁵³ a former park manager stated



Figure 13. Waterfront, (Admiralty Inlet) Fort Worden, Port Townsend, Washington, ca. 1905. Courtesy, Coast Artillery Museum, Fort Worden.

that the value of the Cable House to the park is primarily economic: its historic value is secondary.⁵⁴

Idaho State Parks and Recreation Department

History

Idaho, which has less state park acreage and fewer individual park units than Alaska, Washington or Oregon, has the distinction of having established the first state park in the Pacific Northwest, Heyburn State Park, in 1911 (Fig. 14). For the next thirty-nine years, however, development of an agency to acquire, conserve, and manage public lands for the recreational use of state residents essentially lay dormant. As Cox observed, "while parks burgeoned in Oregon and developed slowly in Washington, they remained almost unheard of in Idaho."⁵⁵ This lack of state park development in Idaho stemmed from the "distrust [of residents] in all kinds of conservation and conservationists. Conservation was associated with locking up of [natural] resources" thus hindering economic development.⁵⁶ Contributing factors included federal ownership of sixty-five percent of Idaho's land (including "most of its scenic and recreational sites") and an "absence in the [Rocky] mountain states . . . of leaders in . . . the State Parks movement."⁵⁷

During the 1930s, Idaho did not utilize CCC workers to develop a state park system as did Washington and Oregon, but chose instead to use these workers for forest fire suppression and insect control.⁵⁸ The exception was CCC Company #1995, stationed at Camp SP-1 in Heyburn State Park from 1933 through 1938. During these years Company #1995 constructed numerous improvements in the park, such as trails, day-use structures, a bathhouse, a

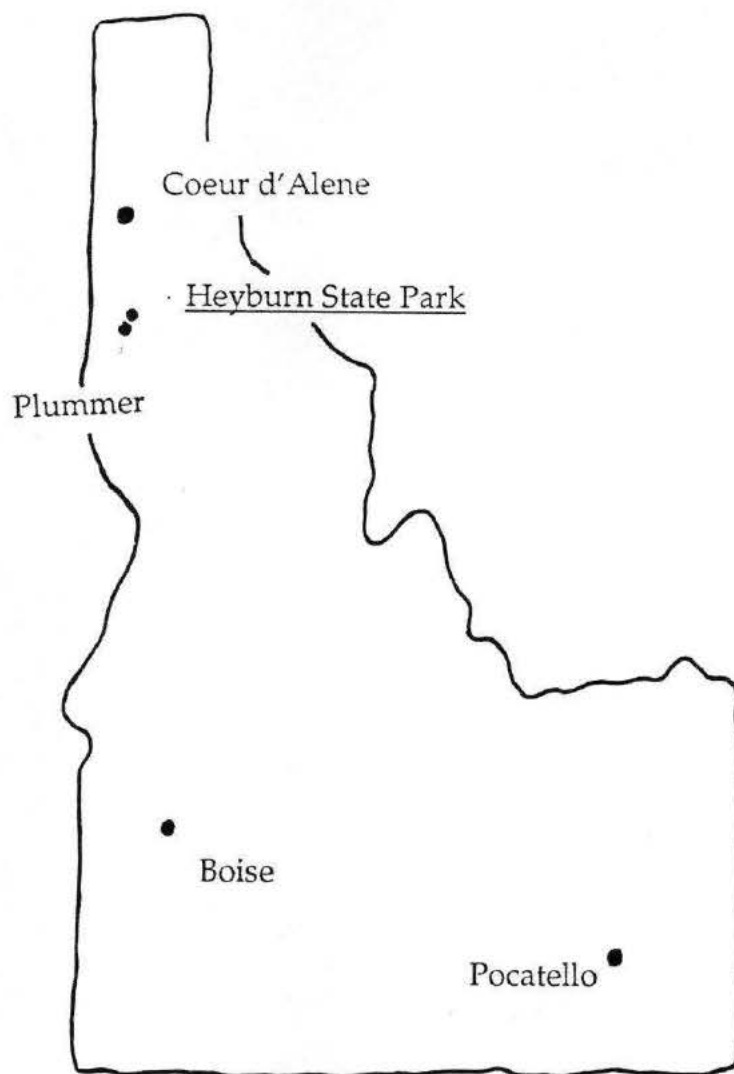


Figure 14. Heyburn State Park in northwestern Idaho

lodge, and a camp manager residence.⁵⁹

According to an Idaho State Parks report, "records concerning the Idaho state park system prior to 1949 are sketchy and incomplete,"⁶⁰ although the system consisted of only four units.⁶¹ 1953 marks the turning point in the development of Idaho State Parks when, "for the first time in the state's history, funds for general parks use" (\$25,000) were appropriated by Idaho's legislature, and a Parks Division created by the State Land Board.⁶² The first "survey of [Idaho's] . . . recreational resources and [formulation] of a 'comprehensive overall plan' for their 'preservation and development' " soon followed, begun in 1955 under the direction of the University of Idaho.⁶³ Three years later, the first director of Idaho State Parks, John W. Emmert, was appointed by the governor, and in 1965, at the urging of the governor, the state legislature finally authorized creation of the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation.⁶⁴

Organization, Purpose, and Heritage Conservation Goals

A Board of Directors representing each of Idaho's six park districts administers the State Parks and Recreation Department, each member appointed by the governor for a term of six years. The Director, chosen by the Board, oversees four departmental bureaus: Park Operations, Development, Recreation Resources, and Administrative Services. A policy adopted in 1981 provides a uniform standard for concession agreements made with private contractors. As part of its Statewide Goals and Objectives, Parks is directed "to ensure a standard of highest quality in the operation of existing and future concessions."⁶⁵

The Mission Statement of the Department, adopted in 1984, designates the Idaho Department of Park and Recreation as "the conscience and advocate agency for parks . . . in the state . . . [providing] professional leadership [and]

technical assistance."⁶⁶ It also directs Idaho's state park system to:

be the perfect host . . . in providing quality recreational experiences for Idahoans and guests . . . [which is] in keeping with our role as an integral part of Idaho's growing tourism industry.⁶⁷

With regard to state park resources, the Department is further instructed to:

aggressively create a legacy for future generations of the unique features of Idaho: our waters, geologic features, biological and botanical communities and unique historical features.⁶⁸

Idaho's goals and objectives for conservation and visitor enjoyment of the State's heritage resources are:

interpretation, protection, and preservation of Idaho's outstanding natural, cultural and historical heritage . . . to provide the state park visitor with an understanding and appreciation of their surroundings.⁶⁹

Rocky Point Lodge: Heyburn State Park

Originally part of the Coeur d'Alene Indian Reservation, the land surrounding Lake Chatcolet in Northwestern Idaho was originally proposed for national park status in 1907, but designated instead as Heyburn State Park in 1911. Named for Idaho senator Weldon B. Heyburn, this area had been used for many years by both Idaho and Washington residents for picnicking, fishing and camping. Before automobile travel, visitors reached Lake Chatcolet (Fig. 15) by railroad and by steamship from Lake Coeur d'Alene .

Initial park improvements such as roads were financed by the sale of lumber from two sections of the park, and concessions established in the early years of Heyburn's operation helped to pay basic maintenance expenses.⁷⁰ By 1925, these enterprises consisted of a hotel, store, and rental cottages, providing approximately \$2,000 per year annual income for the park.⁷¹

Because no money was allocated for basic park maintenance during World War II, many of the improvements constructed by the CCC during the 1930s suffered marked deterioration during the 1940s.⁷² Given this history of little or no operational funding, management of the park in the following decades concentrated on making Heyburn primarily "self-sustaining from [the income] produced . . . by concessions and fees."⁷³ Much of this income, however, was derived from the leasing of "summer homes and float houses" within the state park, a direct violation of the original deed of land from the federal government which "specified that failure to use it as a public park could result in repossession."⁷⁴

In 1975, the Coeur d'Alene tribe brought suit against the State of Idaho to regain control of the land which they had been forced to give up in 1911 without financial compensation.⁷⁵ The suit charged that the State of Idaho had been negligent in managing the park, citing both the illegality of the summer homesite leasing and the "sewage and garbage pollution" resulting from this use.⁷⁶ Although the federal district and appeals court ruled in favor of the State, the practice of "private leaseholds in the park" ended.⁷⁷

Heyburn State Park, encompassing 7838 acres and providing habitat for a rich diversity of vegetation, fish, and wildlife, is classified as a natural park. Visitor use includes camping, hiking, wildlife viewing, picnicking, swimming, fishing and boating, activities considered appropriate for this park. The purpose of a Natural Park, according to Heyburn's 1990 Management Plan, is to:

protect and perpetuate . . . [its] exceptional resources which illustrate [Idaho's] natural heritage . . . and to provide for the use and enjoyment of these resources in . . . a manner which will enhance [the visitor's] understanding and appreciation of [their value] .⁷⁸

Two related objectives of the Management Plan promote visitor understanding and appreciation of the park. These call for "provision of facilities which are compatible with the natural characteristics of the site and do not result in any environmental degradation," and recommend that "an architectural theme reflecting the existing CCC construction within Heyburn be used in any future facility design throughout the park."⁷⁹

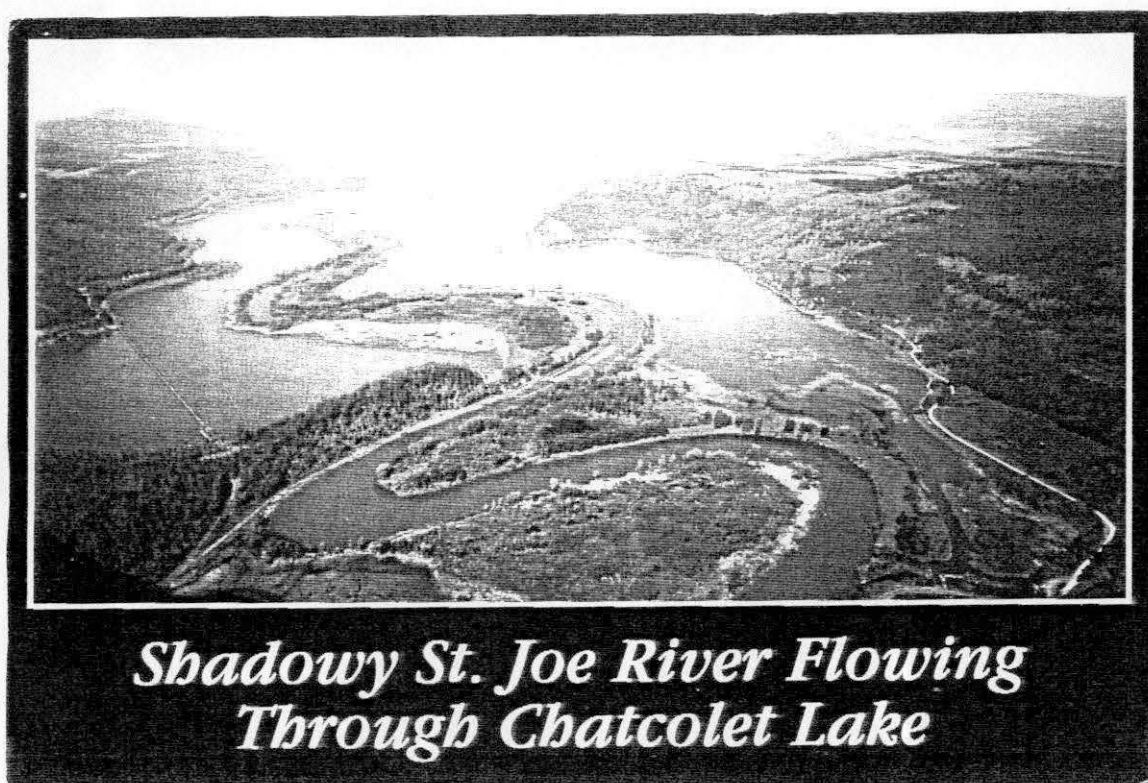


Figure 15. Postcard, Chatcolet Lake, Heyburn State Park, Idaho.
Photographer unknown.

Sited on Rocky Point overlooking Lake Chatcolet, amid a forest of Douglas fir, grand fir, and western red cedar, Rocky Point Lodge (Fig. 16) is in the center of "the most intensely used area of the park."⁸⁰ Construction of the Lodge was begun in 1933 by the CCC, using stone quarried on the property and pine and cedar logs which were cut in the park. Its styling reflects the predominant

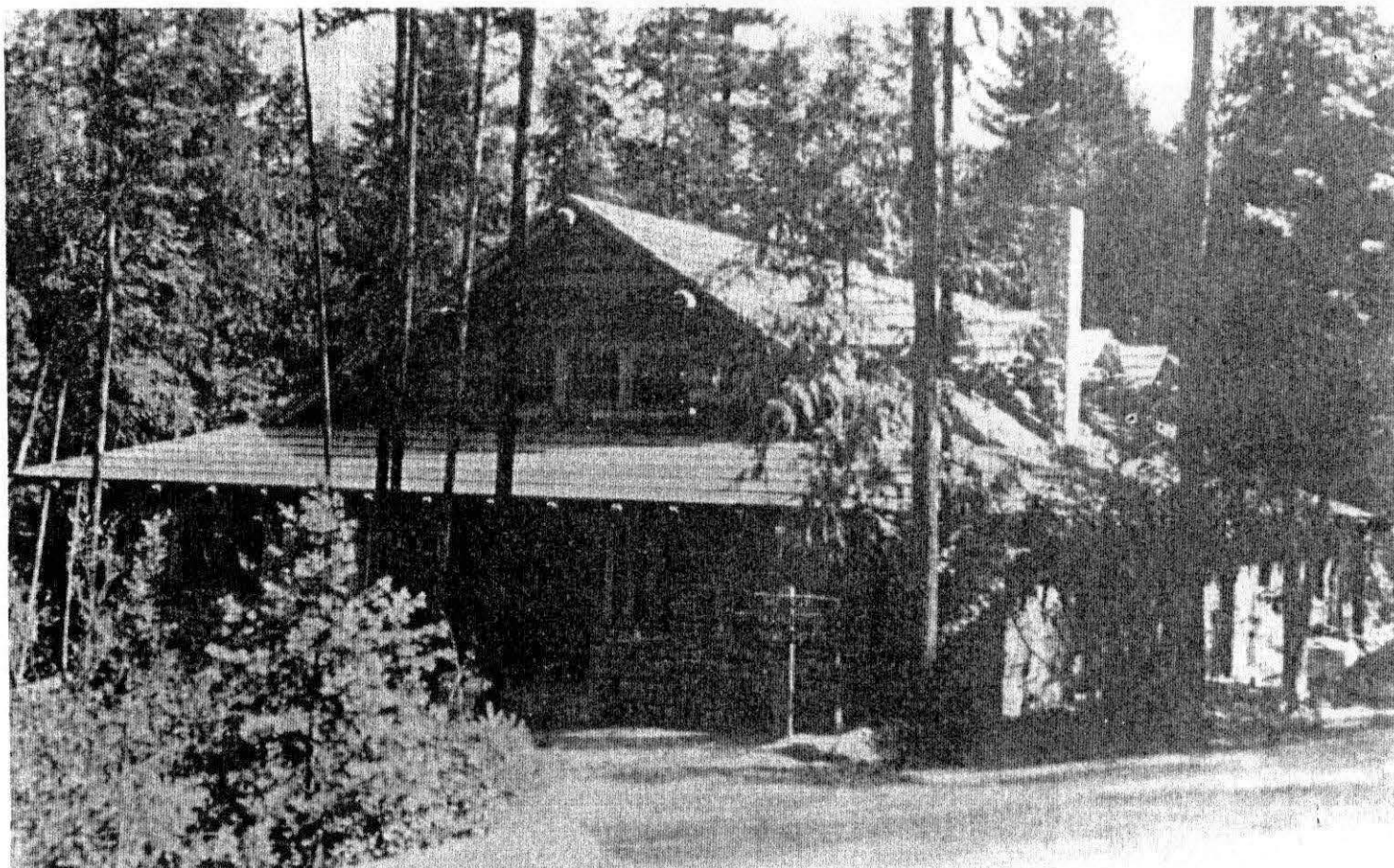


Figure 16. Rocky Point Lodge, Heyburn State Park, Idaho, ca. 1945.
Courtesy of Interpretive Center, Heyburn State Park.

features of the Rustic or National Park Style which was specified for park buildings during the 1930s. Oriented to the east on a sloping site, the one and one-half story Lodge measures approximately fifty-two by thirty-six feet. The exterior walls are irregularly coursed ashlar, combined with logs on the east and west facades. Windows are multi-pane in a variety of sizes. The gable roof is clad in cedar shingles and has four symmetrical dormers on each side. Both the color and massing of the Lodge conform to the guidelines for park structures advocated by NPS architect Albert Good in 1938:

park structures are less conspicuous and more readily subordinated to their settings when horizontal lines predominate and the silhouette is low. Where . . . conditions . . . permit, any feeling of verticality will be avoided by adopting a roof low in pitch.⁸¹

The interior remains relatively intact. The main area of the first floor has a low ceiling supported by massive peeled-log beams, and posts set on ashlar footings. This room, originally the kitchen and dining area, contains individual built-in booths with log tables and benches (Fig. 17). A number of the original globe light fixtures also remain (Fig. 18). A floor- to-ceiling stone fireplace is located near the northwest corner of the building. Walls in the six bedrooms upstairs are clad with pine boarding, and the doors feature decorative iron strapwork.

Although Rocky Point Lodge is an excellent example of Rustic Style architecture, certain aspects of its configuration caused difficulties for the commercial enterprises which leased the building, resulting in various modifications by a succession of contractors. These alterations and the current use of the building are described in Chapters VI and VII.

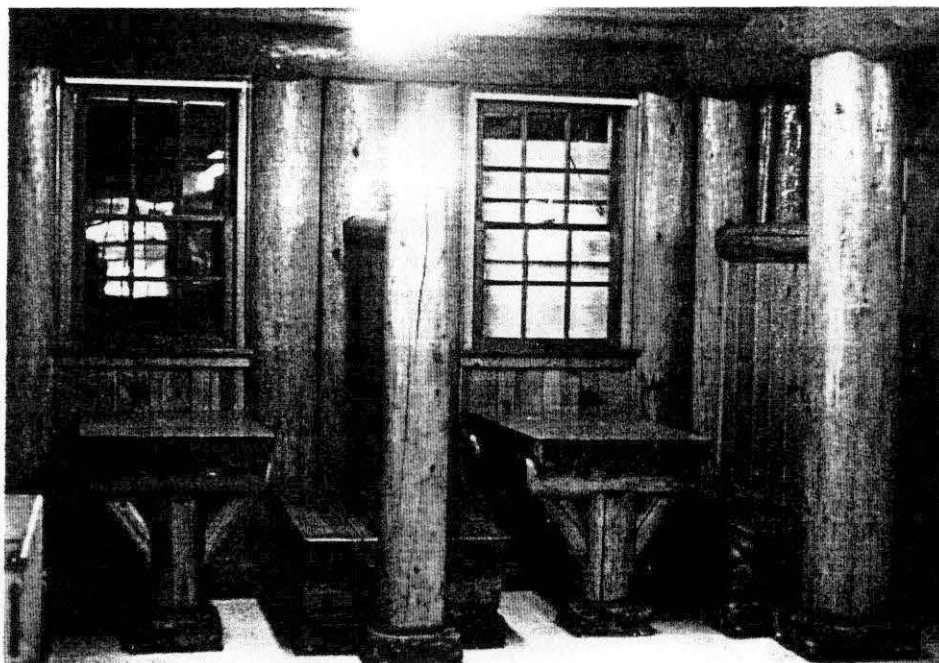


Figure 17. Dining room, Rocky Point Lodge, Heyburn State Park 1991.



Figure 18. Dining booths with original light fixtures, Rocky Point Lodge, Heyburn State Park, ca. 1989. Courtesy, Leonard Watt.

Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department

History

Oregon's state park system, which benefited from the foresight of legislators and governors, the dedication of private citizens and park personnel, and the drawing power of Oregon tourism, has experienced both steady and prolific growth since its establishment in 1921. Its foundation was the preservation of 90,000 acres of land for public use and enjoyment, secured in 1913 by Governor Oswald West, who called upon the state legislature to designate Oregon's beaches as a public highway. Acting on West's proposal, the legislature "amended existing laws to include all ocean shore tideland from the Columbia River to the California state line."⁸²

A primary impetus for subsequent scenic preservation legislation was the widespread practice of logging forest land along the coast highway, which state officials feared would discourage Oregon tourism. In 1921, due largely to the efforts of Governor Ben Olcott, the legislature passed a two- part "scenic preservation package" which forbade "the destructive cutting of trees along state highways," and "empowered the State Highway Commission to acquire rights of way along state highways for the maintenance and preservation of scenic beauty."⁸³

Using the acquisition power authorized by this legislation, the Highway Commission established Oregon's first state park, Sarah Helmick State Park, in 1922 with land donated by a private citizen. Within five years, forty-five more roadside parks and waysides (4,070 acres) had been added to the park system.⁸⁴ Legislation enacted in 1925 enabled the State Highway Commission to expand their acquisition of park land in addition to "spending highway funds for park

improvements and maintenance."⁸⁵

Oregon's first superintendent of State Parks, Samuel Boardman, was appointed in 1929. During his tenure, the state's first historical park, Champoeg, was established in 1943. Designation of other historic properties as state park units, however, was not generally favored by the Highway Commission, whose focus was on providing visitors with scenic attractions adjacent to the existing highway system.⁸⁶ Boardman's management philosophy for Oregon's park system during the years between 1929 and 1950 emphasized the vigorous acquisition of property for parks, while preserving the acquired land in its natural state with a minimum of recreational development.⁸⁷ This practice effectively precluded use of park land for public camping, which Boardman opposed as non-compatible with Parks' conservation mission. When his directorship ended in 1950, the number of units in the state's park system had grown to 161, encompassing 57,195 acres.⁸⁸

By the post-war era, tourism had become Oregon's third largest industry, and park management concentrated on facilities development to prevent visitor "desecration [of the parks] through unregulated use."⁸⁹ This emphasis, under the ten-year superintendency of Chester H. Armstrong (1950–1960), opened the parks to overnight camping and established several new parks whose function was "almost wholly recreational."⁹⁰ The decade from 1950 to 1960 was also a transitional period for Oregon State Parks "from the dominance of the founding superintendent to broader, more equal participation by management specialists."⁹¹

Oregon's 1973 Land Use Law enlarged the scope of state park planning, providing a systematic and far-reaching basis for resource management of public lands. This law created the Land Conservation and Development Commission

(LCDC) whose function was to coordinate state land use by “identifying . . . critical areas of statewide concern [and] establishing . . . standards for land use planning by state and local agencies.”⁹²

State parks management was directly addressed in Goal Five of the LCDC planning guidelines, which “concerned open space, scenic and historic areas, and natural resources,” and also in Goal Eight which provided for “state-wide comprehensive outdoor recreation planning.”⁹³

In 1987, the 2010 Citizen Advisory Committee (established by the Oregon Transportation Commission) sought the opinions and suggestions of Oregon residents on their state park system. The Committee’s report, Oregon State Parks 2010 Plan, offered recommendations for land acquisition, facilities rehabilitation and development, interpretive services, marketing and funding as part of a twenty-year development plan for Oregon’s state parks.⁹⁴ A six-year plan for implementing the Committee’s recommendations was detailed in a subsequent report, Protect the Best of Oregon, 2010 Plan Phase I, 1991 - 1997. This document, which suggested five strategies for enhancing the mission of Oregon State Parks and detailed the desired objectives for each of the programs within the agency, has functioned as a short-term planning guide for Parks.

In 1990, after sixty-eight years within the State Highway Department and (then) the Department of Transportation, the Division of State Parks and Recreation became the Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department. The restructuring was a response to “the agency’s broad responsibilities and the need for a single agency to develop and coordinate outdoor recreation policy for Oregon.”⁹⁵

Organization and Funding

Administration of the Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department is provided by a seven-member State Parks and Recreation Committee appointed by the Governor. The department director is designated by the Commission.

Oregon's five state park regions are subdivided into districts, each of which is administered by the district park manager. Individual units, in some cases, are overseen by a park manager with assistance from park rangers. Many of the smaller units, however, do not have on-site managers and are monitored by the district manager by means of phone calls and weekly or semi-monthly visits. Contracting with the private sector to provide visitor services in individual park units (Fig. 19) is handled through the Department's administrative office by the Parks Land Supervisor. Enforcement of day-to-day contract compliance at specific park units is the responsibility of the district and/or on-site manager.

Prior to 1980, Parks' operational budget was provided by allocations from the Department of Transportation's Highway Fund. When it was restructured as an individual department in 1980, however, State Parks became dependent on allotments from the General Fund. Since this date, "General Fund allocations [have] proved inadequate to meet State Parks maintenance and improvement needs."⁹⁶ A February 1991 newspaper editorial further asserted that the result of State Parks having to compete "with all the other general fund agencies for money . . . [has been] a gradual erosion of the parks system."⁹⁷ Parks' current funding sources (in addition to General Fund monies) include dedicated funds from "park user fees, recreation vehicle (RV) fees, federal funds," concessions, and land sales.⁹⁸ A 1992 ballot measure which asked voters to approve an

amendment to Oregon's constitution allowing the State "to issue up to \$250 million in general obligation bonds for the State Parks and Recreation Development Fund . . . to be used for the purchase and development of . . . outstanding natural, scenic, cultural, historical or recreational sites [and] wildlife habitat and viewing areas"⁹⁹ was defeated, 436,726 to 335,992.¹⁰⁰

Purpose and Heritage Conservation Goals

The Mission Statement which Oregon has adopted for its state park system assigns the Department

to provide, protect and enhance sites and areas of outstanding natural, scenic, cultural, historic or recreational value for the enjoyment and education of present and future generations of Oregonians and their visitors.¹⁰¹

With regard to the "preservation . . . of Oregon's scenic, natural, cultural, and historical heritage," Parks states that

while increased recreational opportunities may result from such protection, the impetus comes from the values inherent in the scenic, natural, cultural, or historic site or area that makes it worth preserving for 'its own sake.'¹⁰²

To fulfill Parks' commitment to heritage resource preservation, the 2010 Plan Phase One suggested the implementation of a "comprehensive interpretive program statewide."¹⁰³ One goal of such a program is the enhanced "development [of] historic themes . . . throughout the . . . park system."¹⁰⁴ Public awareness of heritage resources would be generated through a education program provided by the "development of major visitor centers" at selected park units and "installation of smaller interpretive facilities" at others.¹⁰⁵ Related preservation objectives include "developing maintenance guidelines for historic structures, . . . providing more printed material about park history . . . [and]

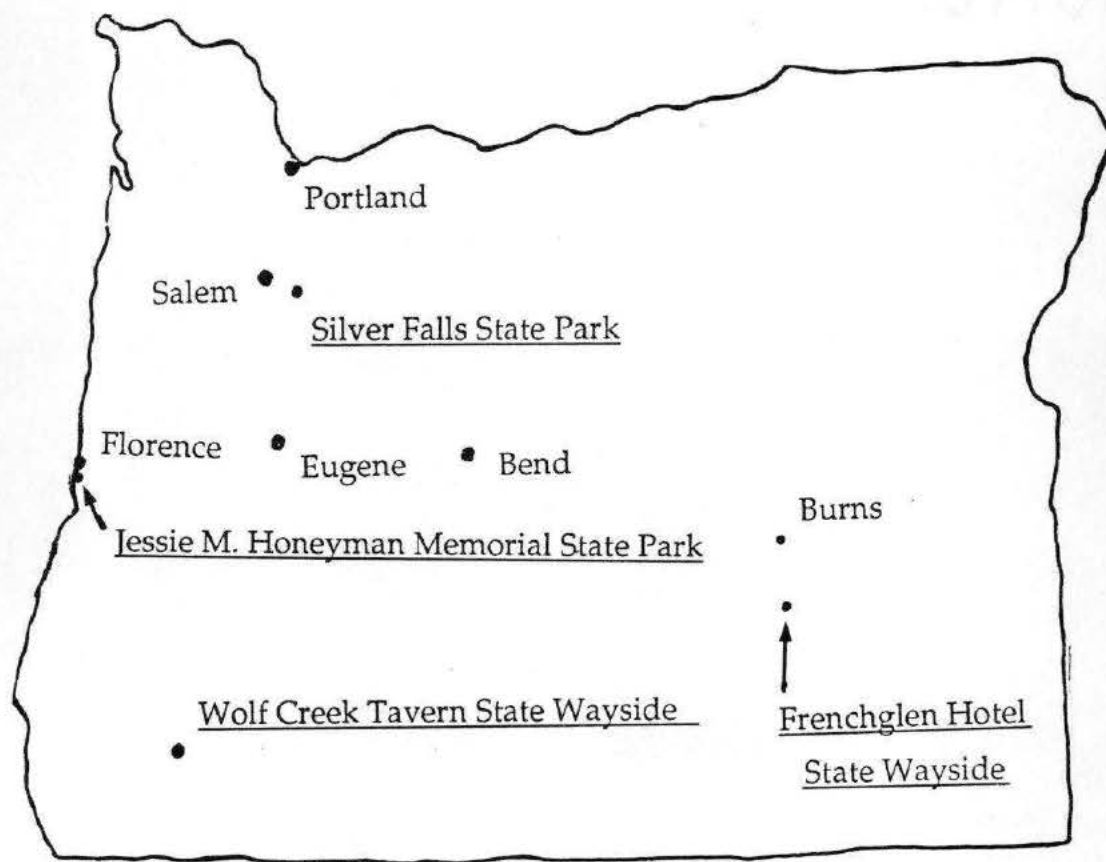


Figure 19. Four Oregon Parks with concessions located in historic buildings, 1993.

hiring a history planner (a position currently not funded)."¹⁰⁶

Despite existing resource interpretation at several parks and the proposed goals and objectives of the 2010 Plan, the Citizen Advisory Committee's assessment of State Parks' interpretation services was somewhat critical. It found that

In comparison to other states, the interpretive services of Oregon State Parks are quite limited. The division's current program is decentralized, and much of what is done is now the result of personal interest and commitment by district park managers and their staff. The scope and manner of the interpretation varies considerably within the system because there is no program manager to develop a comprehensive interpretive program. The division also lacks a centralized biennial budget for interpretive purposes.¹⁰⁷

This assessment suggested a somewhat utilitarian approach and emphasis in Oregon's management of its parks: that formulation of an interpretive ethic for individual historic resources, in some cases, was dependent on extra funding or interest, and not an integral part of management plans.

Silver Falls Lodge: Concession Building Area Historic District
Silver Falls State Park

Established in 1931 with an initial acquisition of ninety acres, Silver Falls State Park, located in the Willamette Valley twenty-eight miles east of Salem, is often referred to as "the crowning jewel of Oregon's state park system."¹⁰⁸ As Oregon's largest park, it encompasses 8,546 acres, and its predominant visitor attraction are "fourteen waterfalls, five of which drop over one hundred feet."¹⁰⁹ The falls (Fig. 20) are reached on foot by a system of hiking trails which wind through a forest of western hemlock, western red cedar, and old-growth Douglas fir. Recreational use of the park includes such activities as horseback riding,

hiking, nature study, photography, swimming, picnicking, fishing, overnight camping, and summer youth camps. A 1982 management plan specified only fourteen percent (1,888 acres) of the park's total acreage as "areas where recreation facilities may be allowed."¹¹⁰

Constructed in 1940 by CCC workers, Silver Falls Lodge was one of many improvements carried out in Oregon's state parks from 1935 to 1942 under the direction of the NPS for the Works Progress Administration. In addition to housing two (consecutive) CCC camps, the acreage of Silver Falls was also a federal Recreational Demonstration Project (RDP) site. Besides the Lodge, CCC



Figure 20. CCC trail below South Falls in Silver Falls State Park, Oregon, 1991.



Figure 21. Rock steps with railing, CCC trail below South Falls in Silver Falls State Park, Oregon, 1991.

and RDP crews constructed trails (Fig. 21), walls, bridges, youth camp buildings, a stone picnic shelter, stone latrines, and a park manager's residence. Custom-designed myrtle-wood furniture for Silver Falls Lodge was also built.

Silver Falls Lodge (Fig. 22) is sited in the forest above South Falls and measures sixty-five feet by one hundred twelve feet. It was designed by J. Elwood Istead as a concession building to provide food service for park visitors. The walls are constructed of random-range ashlar, and a roof of split cedar shakes is supported by peeled log rafters and hewn timber trusses.¹¹¹ The gable ends of the building are "clad with board and batten siding . . . pierced by paired multi-paned casement windows."¹¹² Stone chimneys are located at both ends of the building, and a striking feature of the exterior is the veranda supported by "massive peeled log posts" which encompasses the southwest perimeter.¹¹³ The



Figure 22. Silver Falls Lodge, Silver Falls State Park, Oregon, 1942.
Oregon Historical Society

interior of the Lodge is characterized by an enormous floor-to-ceiling stone fireplace in the entry and dining room, "wrought iron hardware, [a] stone and wood parquet floor . . . [and] tongue and groove herringbone wall panels."¹¹⁴

A restoration and repair project on a portion of the Lodge's exterior was completed in 1980 by Oregon State Parks. Listed on the National Register in 1983 as the centerpiece of the Concession Building Area Historic District, Silver Falls Lodge "possesses exceptional artistic value and embodies the distinctive characteristics of the National Park style."¹¹⁵ This building also represents "the best design, the most comprehensive planning and the highest degree of integrity among National Park Style buildings erected by the Civilian Conservation Corps in Oregon State Parks."¹¹⁶

Concession Building (Former Bathhouse),
Jessie M. Honeyman Memorial State Park Historic District,
Jessie M. Honeyman Memorial State Park

Located on the coast two miles south of Florence, Jessie M. Honeyman Memorial State Park was established in 1930 with an initial purchase by the State of 163 acres. An 359 additional 359 acres were acquired, and planning and construction in the 522-acre park was carried out by the CCC between 1936 and 1941. The park was named for the president of the Oregon Roadside Council, Jessie M. Honeyman, who spearheaded efforts to save the scenic roadsides of the Oregon coast from logging and development prior to World War II.

The park contains three vegetation zones: lakeshores and bogs, transition forest, and shore pine forest. Typical plant species include rhododendron, huckleberry, salal, sword and bracken ferns, Labrador tea, and skunk cabbage. Forested areas are primarily shore pine with hemlock, Douglas fir, Sitka spruce and western red cedar. One of the most dramatic and environmentally sensitive

areas of the park is the sand dunes area above Lake Cleawox. Wildlife within the park includes many species of waterfowl such as ringneck and ruddy ducks, widgeons, mergansers, blue herons, and gulls. Mink, beaver, muskrat, and weasel also inhabit certain areas of Honeyman. The two lakes in the park contain several species of trout and salmon. Primary recreational uses of the park include camping, picnicking, swimming, hiking, fishing and boating.

The Concession Building, built by the CCC in 1938, is the largest building in the Jessie M. Honeyman Memorial State Park Historic District. Originally designed as a bathhouse by J. Elwood Isted, it overlooks the west shore of Lake Cleawox and for approximately twenty-five years offered showers and dressing room facilities for swimmers. The building is one-story and measures approximately eighty-eight feet by twenty-three feet and thirty-two feet by twenty-one feet (T-shape) .¹¹⁷ The walls are constructed of "hand-hewn random ashlar approximately eighteen inches thick with board and batten gables."¹¹⁸ Like Silver Falls Lodge, its roof is cedar shakes and "six 12 inch peeled columns support a covered porch" on the building's south facade.¹¹⁹ A flagstone terrace and steps lead to the beach (Fig. 23).

By the 1970s, showers in the bathhouse had become inoperable due to repeated incidents of vandalism, and the roof was badly in need of repair.¹²⁰ Since the building could no longer serve its original function, Parks made the decision to restore the exterior and rehabilitate the interior for food service use. This work was accomplished with partial funding from the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, and in 1980 the Bathhouse was listed on the National Register as part of the ensemble of CCC constructions in the park. Other significant buildings, structures, and objects in the historic district include kitchen shelters, stone entry posts, a pumphouse, a garage, and the caretaker's



Figure 23. Bathhouse, Lake Cleawox, Jessie M. Honeyman Memorial State Park, Oregon, ca. 1950s. Oregon Historical Society.

house (which now functions as the park's administration building).

The significance of the Concession Building is similar to that of Silver Falls Lodge: the quality of its National Park/Rustic Style craftsmanship is representative of "the best design, most comprehensive planning, and highest degree of integrity of CCC/State park projects."¹²¹

Wolf Creek Tavern State Wayside

Acquired as a state park property in 1975, Wolf Creek Tavern has the distinction of nearly one hundred years of almost continuous use providing food and lodging to travelers. Its construction, circa 1873 - 1880, is attributed to Henry

Smith for the purpose of a hostelry for stagecoach passengers traveling between Sacramento, California and Portland, Oregon.¹²² The two-story frame building was originally L-shaped in plan and the detail of its double porch is derived from the Classical Revival style (Fig. 24).¹²³ A south wing was added in 1927 by a subsequent owner. Following its listing by the Historic American Buildings Survey (1934), Wolf Creek Tavern "became the most frequently published example of territorial Oregon architecture."¹²⁴ In addition to its architectural value, it is culturally significant as "representative of the stagecoach inns and hostelries associated with the early roads and trails of Oregon."¹²⁵ Wolf Creek has also been "consistently identified as one of the two or three single most important historical resources in the state."¹²⁶ The inn was listed on the National Register in 1972.

The three-acre Wayside is located in the town of Wolf Creek, twenty miles north of Grants Pass in Southwest Oregon. White settlers were originally drawn to this area when gold was discovered in the creeks, and placer mining flourished for a number of years after the California Gold Rush of 1849. Subsequently, logging became the primary industry. Over the years, much of the town's tourism publicity has centered on "a certain amount of romantic tradition and misinformation" which became attached to the Tavern.¹²⁷ Central to these stories are claims that a number of "celebrated figures [were] guests of the hostel," including Presidents U. S. Grant and Rutherford B. Hayes and author Jack London.¹²⁸

Six years prior to its date of purchase, an Oregon State Parks' historian described Wolf Creek Tavern as "barely holding its own against visual encroachment" from the seemingly unregulated appearance of Wolf Creek's residential and commercial buildings.¹²⁹ The State Historic Preservation Office

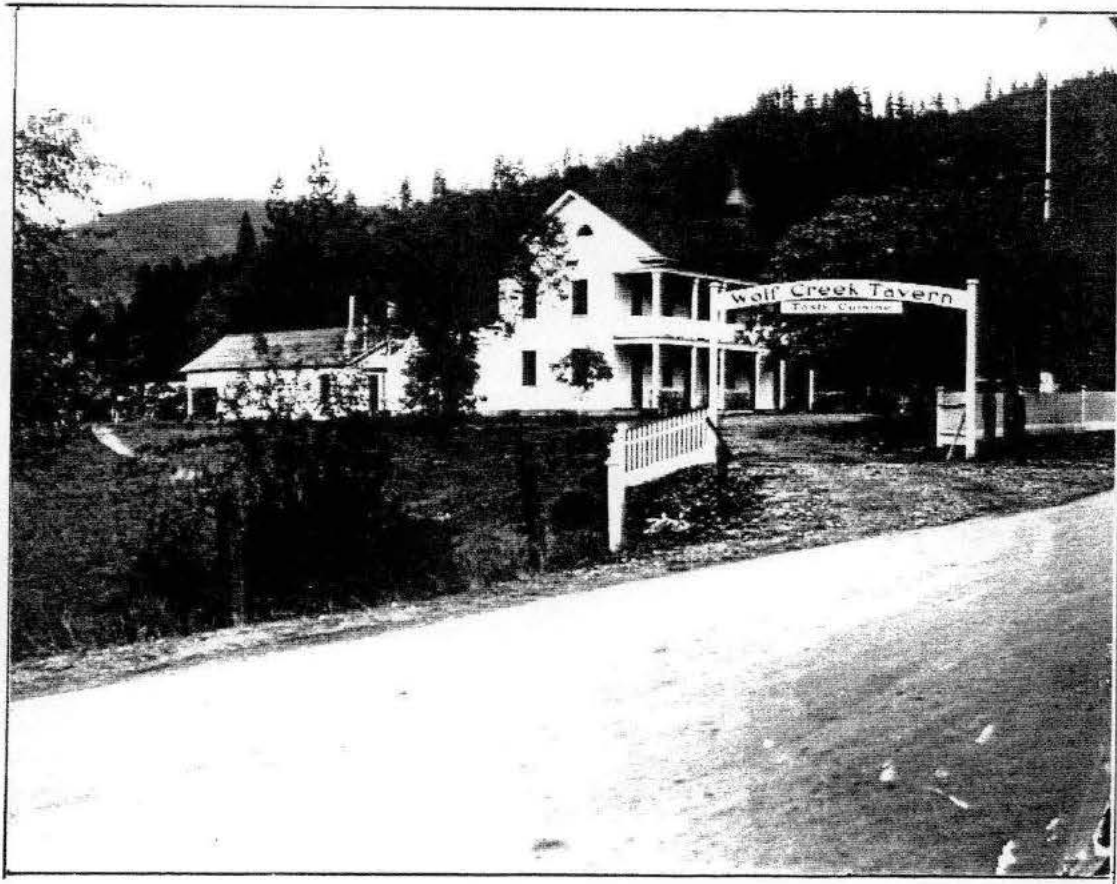


Figure 24. Wolf Creek Tavern, Wolf Creek, Oregon, ca. 1920s.
Oregon Historical Society.

was also concerned because the Tavern had undergone some remodeling by owners who had painted the hand-hewn beams and converted the dining room fireplace into a barbecue pit.¹³⁰ During the early 1970s, "a communal family [of] at least a dozen persons or more" moved into the Tavern and began remodeling portions of the interior in preparation for opening a restaurant in the building.¹³¹ At this time, Parks renewed its efforts to acquire the property it now considered endangered, a situation recounted by the former Superintendent of Parks:

Wolf Creek had become partly a counter-culture community in the 1970s. Although the group of people living at the Inn had the best intentions and were highly motivated, their lifestyle [was in] contrast to the lifestyle [of the area]. The concern [Parks] had was 'would the loggers burn the place down some night after having a beer too many and going after the hippies?' We were afraid we might lose a rare gem.¹³²

Parks' goal when it purchased Wolf Creek Tavern was "to authentically restore [it] to an operating inn, retaining its architectural and historical qualities while maintaining a degree of consistency with modern-day operational economics and uses."¹³³ What was not intended was creation of an historic house museum.¹³⁴ In order to achieve a practical adaptive use sympathetic to the building's original use, the furnishing plan called for "a portrayal of the period and its atmosphere rather than an exact historical representation."¹³⁵ The purpose of this effort, according to the interpretive plans, was "to contribute in a positive manner to the visitor's understanding and appreciation of the state's rich cultural heritage by combining and integrating the visitor's recreational and educational experiences."¹³⁶ To this end, the history and furnishings of the Tavern were carefully researched, historic finishes replicated, and proposed structural modifications evaluated by a preservation architect. The Inn re-opened to the public in 1979, and has since been operated by a succession of private contractors. The current (third) concessionaire has provided hotel and meal service since 1990. In 1989, the Superintendent of Parks commented that Wolf Creek Tavern State Wayside "has worked exceedingly well as a self-sustaining addition to the parks system."¹³⁷

Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside

Frenchglen Hotel, located sixty miles south of Burns in southeastern Oregon, is the oldest building in the town of Frenchglen (pop. 10), and unquestionably its most well known. Since its construction circa 1924, the Hotel has provided almost continuous food and lodging service to travelers in a manner reminiscent of its original purpose, a guest house for visitors to the nearby P Ranch. The P Ranch was established in the 1870s by Peter French in joint ownership with his father-in-law Dr. High Glenn, and named after the P brand of the local cattleman and prospector from whom French purchased the land.¹³⁸ A traditional custom in nineteenth and early twentieth century ranching communities was to offer travelers lodging on "any ranch that was close at the end of a day's travel, as the ranches were so huge and settlements so remote."¹³⁹ To accommodate the growing number of travelers who stopped at the P Ranch, a guest house was constructed in 1916. After it burned, Frenchglen Hotel was built as a replacement. By 1938, this portion of the P Ranch had been added to the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, and the building continued to be leased to concessionaires as it had since it was first constructed. Oregon State Parks acquired Frenchglen Hotel (a 2.37-acre site) in 1973, and after extensive repairs and restoration, re-opened it to the public in 1975 as a State Wayside. The hotel has been operated by three successive contractors since 1975. The landscape surrounding the historic P Ranch and the town of Frenchglen supports a diversity of vegetation including sagebrush, bitterbrush, bunchgrass, poplar, willow, and cottonwood, in addition to reeds and water grasses along the sloughs and creeks feeding from the Blitzen River. Animals common to this area

of Harney County are mule deer, pronghorn antelope, and coyote. Two dominant land features shape tourism in this isolated area: Steens Mountain (9,670 feet) approximately twenty-five miles to the southeast, and the 185,000-acre Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. This basin "has been a major nesting and migration stop-over area for migratory birds since prehistoric time."¹⁴⁰ Established in 1908 by President Theodore Roosevelt to "halt the slaughter of swans, egrets, herons, and grebes for feathers for the millinery trade," the Malheur Refuge is famous among bird-watchers for both the tremendous diversity of species and for their sheer number.¹⁴¹ Other birds which inhabit this area include the great horned owl, golden eagle, killdeer, and common snipe.

In addition to the Hotel, the town of Frenchglen (Fig. 25) consists of a post office/grocery store, gas station, school, and four private residences, most constructed in the 1920s. These buildings are modest in scale and adornment, and this (together with the town's geographic isolation) has allowed the architectural character of the town to remain essentially the same for the past fifty years.¹⁴² The National Register Nomination for the Hotel notes that an electric power line was not available to Frenchglen until 1957, dial telephones until 1969, and a paved road until 1972.

Frenchglen Hotel (Fig. 26) is representative of the American Foursquare style with Craftsman detailing, a type of construction common from 1900 to 1920.¹⁴³ The original builder has never been identified, but was "most likely a local carpenter, possibly using some materials salvaged from the demolition of nearby farm buildings."¹⁴⁴ The wood frame building is two stories in height and measures twenty-four feet by fifty-one feet, and its large screened front porch is a primary distinguishing feature. A twenty-foot rear addition, a stone wellhouse, and a metal stairway rail (interior) were built by the CCC in 1938 (Fig. 27).



Figure 25. "Aerial view of Frenchglen in the 1950s."
Postcard, Geneva Publishing Company.



Figure 26. Frenchglen Hotel, Frenchglen, Oregon, ca. 1930s.
Postcard, Geneva Publishing Company.

At this time, the CCC also changed the Hotel's original hipped roof to a gable roof.¹⁴⁵ Frenchglen Hotel was listed on the National Register in 1985.

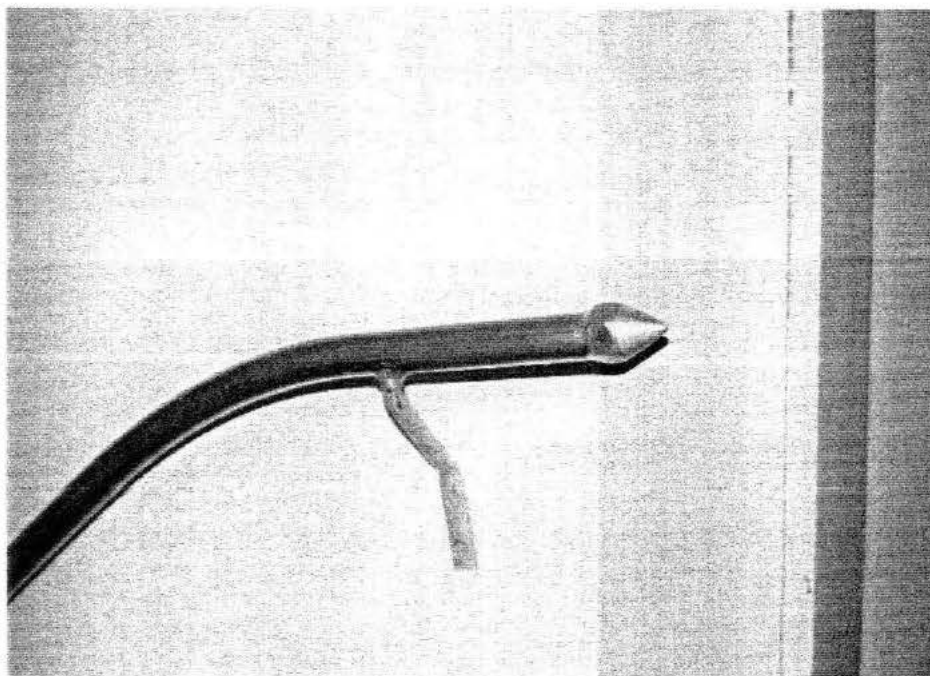


Figure 27. Metal stair rail, Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside, Oregon, 1991.

Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside receives heavy visitation during the summer months. A writer for The Oregonian observed that what makes this Wayside such a popular place is that

above all else, the Frenchglen Hotel offers refuge. [It] is a place so far away from the stress of urban life it actually is possible to forget. The surroundings are simple, the food substantial and the people are friendly. The feeling is more home than hotel.¹⁴⁶

For guests who have never lived in a rural area, a stay at the Frenchglen Hotel is a unique experience (Fig. 28 and 29). Although the National Register has deemed the Hotel significant because it is "the oldest and most important surviving building in Frenchglen,"¹⁴⁷ its value can also be gauged by the way that the building relates to the landscape. Unlike the railroad-financed National

Park hotels of the early nineteenth century, Frenchglen Hotel is unobtrusive and lacks self-promotion, thus allowing guests to concentrate on the character of the surrounding country: listen to roosters crow at 4:00 a.m., watch cattle roam the street, and gaze at land reaching far off into the distance, unobstructed by vertical barriers.

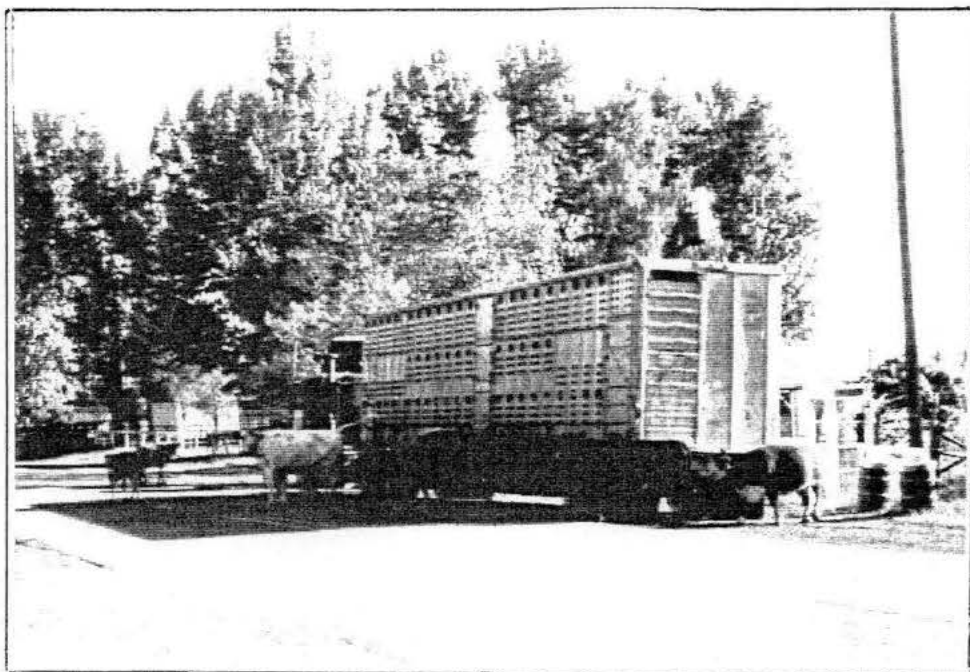


Figure 28. Cattle on street in Frenchglen, Oregon, 1991.

Conclusion

Although the four park systems represented in this study have certain general similarities with regard to their organization, funding, and resource preservation missions, their implementation of adaptive use strategies has varied considerably. Some of this variation is linked to whether the historic resource has been promoted specifically for its value to the state's economy by tourism or

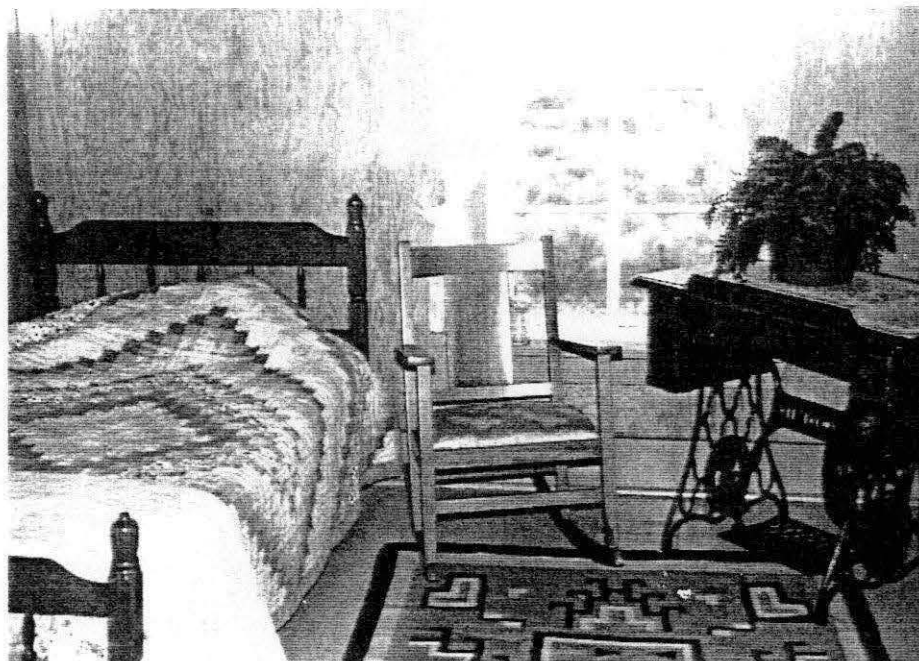


Figure 29. Guest room, Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside, Oregon, 1991.

if it has been managed as a heritage resource with the primary purpose of educating park visitors.

Due to the diversity of locations and the visitor-use classification of the parks in which they are located, the eight concession buildings presented in this chapter are somewhat difficult to compare (Table 1). Still, some commonalities emerge. All (with the exception of Wolf Creek Tavern) were built during the twentieth century, making them relatively young compared to the architecture of the eastern and southern United States. Due to their relatively recent dates of construction (five of the buildings are less than seventy-five years old), they face an added difficulty common to many culturally significant buildings in the West:

many people fail (or refuse) to recognize them as historic because they are not primarily associated with a famous person or event. All, however, are representative of an historic era (the CCC-constructed buildings), patterns of technological development (Artillery Engineer Cable House, Potter Section House), or the evolution of transportation in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska (Wolf Creek Tavern, Frenchglen Hotel, Rika's Roadhouse, Potter Section House). As physical remnants of significant eras and developments in our history, the value of these buildings lies in the cultural memory which they provide for both residents and out-of-state visitors. This value cannot be overstated, given the countless remnants of earlier decades that have rapidly disappeared in the wake of residential housing developments, highway construction, and commercial complexes.

Because of the current adaptive uses of these concession buildings, it is often difficult for the general public to appreciate their value unless these buildings are at least minimally interpreted. Although park agencies have sought to physically protect the buildings through contractual agreements, certain aspects of historic significance cannot be preserved through legal documents alone. The next chapter will examine the limitations of contracts and contracting procedures in fulfilling Parks' mission of promoting visitor awareness of the significance of heritage resources in the state parks.

TABLE 1. Comparison of State Park Systems in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska

	Oregon	Idaho	Washington	Alaska
Park Acreage	90,000	47,000	232,000	3,000,000+
Number of Units	223	26	110	116
Parks or Sites Acquired or Developed for their Historic Value*	13	2	25	10
Attendance: (millions)	39.0 (FY '89 - '90)	2.1 (FY '89 - '90)	40.6 (FY '89 - '90)	5.4, 5.7 (1989, 1990)
Operating Budget: (millions)	19.4 (FY '89 - '90)	3.0 (FY '89 - '90)	25.0 (FY '89 - '90)	4.2, 4.3 (1989, 1990)
Concession Operations, total	7	5	21	1
Concessions Operating in Historic Buildings	4	0	1	1

* Many other park units not specifically designated as heritage or historical contain heritage resources.

SOURCES:

"Comparison of Western State Park Systems: Fiscal Year 1989 - 1990" from the National Association of State Park Directors: Annual Information Exchange, as printed in "Oregon State Parks Fact Sheet"

A History of Washington State Parks: 1913 - 1988

Notes

¹Flavel Shurtleff, Digest of Laws Relating to State Parks, (Washington D.C. : National Conference on State Parks, 1955) , 250.

²By 1955 the Alaska Planning Council was inoperative: no money had been appropriated since 1941. Shurtleff, Digest of Laws, 250.

³The impetus for this development was wildfires accidentally started by campers. Park Planning Section, Division of Parks, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Alaska State Park System: Statewide Framework, (Anchorage: Department of Natural Resources, 1982) , 38.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶R. K. Alman, "History of the Division of Parks," (Anchorage: Division of Parks, 1974) , 2-9708.

⁷Alaska Division of Parks, "Alaska State Parks," visitor brochure, (Anchorage: Department of Natural Resources, 1990) .

⁸Park Planning Section, Alaska State Park System, 24-26.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid, 33-34.

¹¹Alaska State Park Statutes, (1988) title 41, chapter 21, sec. 41.21.027, b5 28.

¹²Park Planning Section, Alaska State Park System, 16.

¹³Ibid, 8.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Janet F. Clemens, Office of History and Archaeology, Alaska Division of Parks, "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Big Delta Historic District," (Washington D.C. : National Park Service, 1990) , 5.

¹⁷Kathryn Koutsky Cohen, "Rika's --An Historic Roadhouse Park on the Richardson Trail," chap. in Transportation in Alaska's Past Alaska Historical Society, (Anchorage: State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources), 142.

¹⁸Clemens, "Big Delta Historic," 12.

¹⁹Alaska Division of Parks, Department of Natural Resources, Chugach State Park Master Plan, (February 1990) , 3.

²⁰Michael E. Carberry, Municipality of Anchorage, "National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: The Potter Section House," (Washington D. C. : National Park Service, 1985) , 2.

²¹In 1985 the section house was moved thirty feet away from its original location "to remove it from the highway right-of-way and traffic flow." Alaska State Park files, "Potter Section House Historic Site," 6.

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²³Ibid.

²⁴"Mutual Rescission of Contract ATN-87-0080," between the State of Alaska and Restaurant Associates, Ltd., 17 April 1991, 1.

²⁵Cox, The Park Builders, 5, 12.

²⁶Ibid, 7.

²⁷Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, A History of Washington State Parks: 1913-1988, (Olympia: Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, 1988) , 2, 9.

²⁸Ibid, 10.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid, 11.

³¹Ibid, 10.

³²Ibid, 13, 19, 25.

³³Ibid, 13.

³⁴Ibid, 14.

³⁵Ibid, 32.

³⁶Sunset Magazine, "Fossil Forest on the Columbia," Sunset Magazine, May 1954.

³⁷Referendum 28, 1972; Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, Washington State Parks: An Overview (Olympia: Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, 1991), 15.

³⁸Ibid, 9.

³⁹Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, A History, 35.

⁴⁰Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, Washington State Parks, 15.

⁴¹Ibid, 16.

⁴²Ibid, 17.

⁴³Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, "Concession Guide 1990," (Olympia: Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, 1990), A-16.

⁴⁴Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, Washington State Parks, 3-4.

⁴⁵Ibid, 5.

⁴⁶Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, A History, A4-37.

⁴⁷Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form: Fort Worden Historic District," 4, 22.

⁴⁸Ibid, 29-30.

⁴⁹Economics Research Associates, Management and Development Plan for Fort Worden State Park, (Los Angeles: Economic Research Associates, 1990) III-9.

⁵⁰This figure does not include deteriorated historic structures such as the Searchlight Tower and the Battery Kinzie.

⁵¹Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Washington State Parks, "Nomination Form: Fort Worden Historic District," 21.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid, 6, 21.

⁵⁴Glen Bellerud, former manager of Fort Worden State Park, interview by author, 8 November 1991, Washington State Parks and Recreation Office, Olympia.

⁵⁵Cox, The Park Builders, 104.

⁵⁶Ibid, 106.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Idaho Parks and Recreation Department, "CCC Nature Trail, Heyburn State Park," brochure, 1990.

⁶⁰"Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation: Parks in Progress," undated photocopy in Idaho State Park files, Boise, 1.

⁶¹Cox, The Park Builders, 108.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid, 110.

⁶⁴Ibid, 111, 117.

⁶⁵Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Heyburn State Park: General Development Plan, (Boise: Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, January 1990), 7.

⁶⁶Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, "Parks in Progress," 1-2.

⁶⁷Ibid, 2.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Heyburn State Park, 7.

⁷⁰Torrey, State Parks, 91.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Heyburn State Park, 5.

⁷³Cox, The Park Builders, 108.

⁷⁴Ibid, 118.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid, 119.

⁷⁸Idaho Dept. of Parks, Heyburn State Park, 30.

⁷⁹Ibid, 52.

⁸⁰Ibid, 30.

⁸¹Albert H. Good, Park and Recreation Structures, Vol. I: Administration and Basic Service Facilities (Washington D.C. : National Park Service, 1938) , 6.

⁸²The protection of public access to Oregon's beaches was further expanded by subsequent legislation in 1967. Lawrence C. Merriam, Jr., Oregon's Highway Park System 1921-1989: An Administrative History (Salem: State of Oregon, Department of Parks and Recreation, 1992) , 17, 97-98.

⁸³Ibid, 19.

⁸⁴Ibid, 34.

⁸⁵Ibid, 20.

⁸⁶Cox, The Park Builders, 98.

⁸⁷Merriam, Oregon's Highway Park System, 28.

⁸⁸Cox, The Park Builders, 102.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Merriam, Oregon's Highway Park System, 39.

⁹²Ibid, 61.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴2010 Citizen Advisory Committee, Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department, Protect the Best of Oregon, 2010 Plan Phase I, 1991-1997 (Salem: Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department, 1990) .

⁹⁵Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department, "Fact Sheet" (Salem: Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department, n.d.) , 1.

⁹⁶Ibid, 5.

⁹⁷Editorial, "A Better Way For Parks," (Eugene) Register-Guard, 20 February 1991, 10A.

⁹⁸Merriam, Oregon's Highway Park System, 61.

⁹⁹Secretary of State, State of Oregon, "Voters' Pamphlet" (Salem: State of Oregon, November 1992) , 6.

¹⁰⁰"Election '92," Oregon Daily Emerald, 4 November 1992, 1.

¹⁰¹Citizen Advisory Committee, Protect the Best of Oregon, 4.

¹⁰²Ibid, 34.

¹⁰³Ibid, 9.

¹⁰⁴Ibid, 23.

¹⁰⁵Citizen Advisory Committee, Protect the Best of Oregon, 24.

¹⁰⁶Ibid, 23, 83, 42.

¹⁰⁷Ibid, 47-48.

¹⁰⁸Division of State Parks, State of Oregon, "Management Plan for Silver Falls State Park," 29 October 1982, 1.1.

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¹¹³Ibid, 7.2.

¹¹⁴Ibid, 8.2.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Ibid, 8.1.

¹¹⁷Allen T. Denison, (Oregon) State Historic Preservation Office, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form: Jessie M. Honeyman Memorial State Park Historic District," (Washington D.C. : National Park Service, 1984) , 7.2.

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¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰Joseph Davis, Manager, Jessie M. Honeyman Memorial State Park, interview by author, 2 January 1992, Jessie M. Honeyman Memorial State Park, Oregon.

¹²¹Denison, National Register Nomination, Jessie M. Honeyman, 8.1.

¹²²Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department, "Wolf Creek Tavern," brochure, (Salem: Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department, rev. December 1990) .

¹²³Elisabeth Walton, (Oregon) State Historic Preservation Office, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form: Wolf Creek Tavern," (Washington D.C. : National Park Service, 23 March 1972) , 8.1.

¹²⁴Jeanette Gue, "Wolf Creek Tavern Interpretive Plans," unpublished report in State of Oregon, Department of Parks files, n.d. 1.

¹²⁵Gue, "Wolf Creek Tavern," 1-2.

¹²⁶Elisabeth Walton, memorandum, State of Oregon, Department of Transportation, Division of Parks files, 12 March 1973.

¹²⁷Walton, "National Register Nomination for Wolf Creek Tavern," 8.1.

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¹²⁹Elisabeth Walton, memorandum to files, State of Oregon, Department of Transportation, Division of Parks, 30 April 1969.

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¹³²Dave Talbot, "Development of the State Parks and Recreation Program: 1962 - 1989, A Personal View," chap. in Oregon's Highway Park System, Merriam, 142.

¹³³Gue, "Wolf Creek Tavern," 4.

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¹³⁵Ibid, 9.

¹³⁶Ibid, 4.

¹³⁷Merriam, Oregon's Highway Park System, 142.

¹³⁸Lewis A. McArthur, "Oregon Geographic Names," Oregon Historical Quarterly XLIV (September 1943) : 295-296.

¹³⁹Allen T. Denison, (Oregon) State Historic Preservation Office, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory -- Nomination Form: Frenchglen Hotel" (Washington D.C. : National Park Service, 1984) , 8.1.

¹⁴⁰U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, "Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, Oregon," brochure, (Washington D. C. : U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1989) .

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¹⁴³Ibid, 8.2.

¹⁴⁴Ibid.

¹⁴⁵Ibid, 7.1.

¹⁴⁶Janis Miglavs, "Simplicity and Style in Frenchglen," Northwest Magazine, undated clipping in State of Oregon, Department of Parks files.

¹⁴⁷Denison, "National Register Nomination: Frenchglen Hotel," 8.1.

CHAPTER V

CONTRACTING FOR VISITOR SERVICES:

PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

In the early decades of the twentieth century when state park operations were still in the formative stages, private contractors "were selected primarily on the basis of the . . . state managing authority's respect for the operator's integrity."¹ By the 1950s, however, this management style had been replaced with one that emphasized bureaucratic procedure, and during this decade, park officials sought to impose needed uniformity on their stewardship of public lands.²

Current legal agreements between private contractors and state park management reflect the increasing complexity of providing necessary goods and services for park visitors. Concern with issues such as recycling, preservation of aging park structures, and definition of state liability in cases of contract default necessitate legal agreements substantially more detailed than in years past. This concern is well-founded, according to the findings of the Wisconsin State Parks Concessions Task Force. Their 1988 report stated that "the most frequently reported problem of state park systems [with concessionaires] is liability insurance."³

To adequately protect state park systems from damage or accidents which occur in concession areas while providing high quality services for park visitors, "completely detailed and practical specifications for bids . . . are

essential [in addition to] a contract . . . [Bid specifications] protect both parties [and] include as many phases of the operation as possible."⁴ The length of service-provider contracts (including appendices) for three parks in the study region illustrate the degree of comprehensiveness that has become the norm for many of these agreements: the concession agreements for Fort Worden State Park, Big Delta State Historical Park and Potter Section House Historic Site are forty-six pages, over one-hundred pages and over one-hundred pages, respectively.

Overview Comparison: National Park and State Park Contracting and Lease Procedures

Despite certain similarities between the contracting processes and lease agreements used by the state park systems and those of the National Park Service, a fundamental difference is the comprehensive codes which govern leasing procedures for the national parks. Depending on the size of the commercial operation and the significance of the building being leased, preparation of contracts is influenced by stipulations of either the Concessions Policy Act (1965) or Section 11 of the National Historic Preservation Act (1966).⁵ By comparison, the park systems of Alaska and the Pacific Northwest administer relatively few concessions (Table 1). For this reason, Oregon and Alaska formulate their concession contracts on a park-by-park basis. Although Washington has an administrative code (1970) which regulates all concessions within its park system,⁶ and Idaho has a model Concessions Agreement (1981) which serves "as the standard against which the negotiating processes may be conducted,"⁷ neither of these documents differentiate between procedures for the lease or exchange of historic

structures and those for non-historic structures, as do federal regulations.⁸

This is of crucial importance with regard to leasing of historic park buildings, for if their specialized maintenance and repair needs are not differentiated from the standards common for non-historic buildings, improper treatment may be applied or methods used which damage historic fabric. When maintenance and repair specifications are included as an attachment or appendix to the contract, they serve as a reminder that the concession building must be managed with a specific objective in mind: retaining its historic integrity by careful attention to specialized maintenance and repair procedures. This information is valuable to Parks as well as the contractor, for in the absence of specific documentation, it is relatively easy for either the administering agency or the lessee to overlook basic conservation requirements. An example of this occurred at Silver Falls Lodge prior to 1983 when the building exterior "was misguidedly painted with standard park maintenance green enamel paint, which caused moisture build up on the interior."⁹

Both state and federal systems mandate concessionaire selection by competitive bid, using relatively comparable processes. In addition, both systems specify initial public advertisement of the concession, but subsequent public advertisement after the contract term expires is left to the discretion of each agency. Under National Park Service guidelines, an existing contractor who has provided satisfactory service has a Preferential Right of Renewal, but may not "assign or otherwise sell or transfer . . . a controlling interest in [the] operation . . . without the prior written approval of the Secretary of the Interior."¹⁰

Concessionaires who have fulfilled contract obligations to the

satisfaction of State Parks are also given the option of renewing their contracts. In Washington State Parks

once a concession has been established, it rarely opens up for bid again. This is because State Parks recognizes the investments which existing concessionaires have made in their concession operations, and grants them preferential rights to renew their contracts provided that they continue to perform in a satisfactory manner. Most concessions are acquired by sale and assignment from one operator to another after approval by State Parks.¹¹

Idaho State Parks has taken a similar approach to its concession operations, as illustrated in the history of operations at Rocky Point Lodge in Heyburn State Park. Here, ownership of the business (but not the land and building) was transferred through six different concessionaires from 1951 through 1984.¹² Each new contractor required the approval of the Idaho Department of Parks, and assumed the responsibilities and obligations of the existing lease. Oregon State Parks and Alaska State Parks prohibit assignment or delegation of the contract by the concessionaire "without the prior written consent of the State."¹³

Procedures for Establishing State Park Concessions

The competitive bid process used by each of the state park systems in Oregon, Idaho, Washington and Alaska is similar in its basic organization. This contracting system can be divided into four major phases, three of which incorporate a review process as part of the procedure:

1. Evaluation of the need for the concession and its impact on the nearby community
2. Advertisement of the concession opportunity to the general public: Request for Letters of Interest and Request for Proposals or Bids (RFP), (RFB)

3. Evaluation of submitted proposals and selection of concessionaire
4. Preparation, evaluation, and signing of the contract

One of the benefits of this four-step procedure is that it serves as a system of checks and balances to ensure that the proposed concession operation is reviewed several times by a variety of people before the contract is signed.

Evaluation of Proposed Concession and Its Impact on the Surrounding Community

Before the director of the state park department or division can approve a plan to allow privately operated visitor services in a particular park, a need for these services must be shown in addition to the reason why it is not practical or possible for Parks to operate the concession. As mentioned in Chapter III, the primary reasons that the State looks to the private sector for operation of concessions are the limited operations budget of Parks, and also a desire to provide high quality visitor service by utilizing contractors with professional expertise in food, lodging and retail services.

The information used to determine the feasibility of a proposed concession is generally supplied by an economic market and development analysis conducted by the park department or a private consulting firm.¹⁴ Although a feasibility study can indicate "a high degree of desirability and interest, [it can also identify] serious obstacles that may deter success"¹⁵ for the proposed concession. A feasibility study conducted in 1975 before Wolf Creek Tavern State Wayside opened to the public concluded that

restoring the inn as a self-sustaining operation . . . would stimulate the local community's economy and development . . . [as well as] offer a multitude of [other] benefits: preservation of an historic landmark; creation of an operating Old Oregon inn for public enjoyment; and needed employment opportunities.¹⁶

Similar studies were also conducted for the roadhouse in Big Delta State Historical Park, and for the buildings at Fort Worden State Park.¹⁷

The General Development Plan for a proposed concession utilizes the information gathered in the concession feasibility study.¹⁸ Seeking the opinions and ideas of local residents is important at this stage of the contracting process, because the financial success of a concession can hinge on a base of local support during seasons of low tourism. Town meetings at which a representative from State Parks asks community members for their opinions and ideas about the proposed concession is one of the ways that support for the commercial venture is sought. One concern of Wolf Creek residents was the possibility that a building which they considered the "centerpiece" of the town would become "too slick, institutionalized, 'statified', or expensive for local individuals or families to . . . use freely as a part of the community."¹⁹

Despite the fact that a goal of the General Development Plan is to utilize suggestions from a technical advisory group as well as a local citizen's advisory group, "one failing of this [approach] is that frequently neither advisory group represents the ultimate user, who is either transient, or a repeat visitor from a locale removed from the vicinity of the park."²⁰

Another difficulty connected with the review process is that modifications may occur in the concept development of the concession, or the interaction of the concessionaire with local residents may cause opinions

to change regarding the perceived impact of the concession on the community. This situation occurred in Delta Junction, Alaska. Although the public review process for the proposed concession at Big Delta State Historical Park "was extensive . . . [and] public comments during the planning and development process were favorable toward the concept of a working roadhouse,"²¹ after three seasons of operation (limited at the concessionaire's request to a gift shop and snack bar) , local support for returning the roadhouse to its original use had disappeared. In the fall of 1990, the Museum Coordinator for the Delta Historical Society, with the support of the the Citizens Advisory Board, wrote the concessionaire that use of the roadhouse as "a bed and breakfast . . . [would be] absurd . . . the park should not become a threat to the hotels, motels, and dining facilities in the local community."²² This withdrawal of support may have occurred because the concession offered no employment opportunities for the citizens of Delta Junction. All personnel required to operate the concession were supplied by the contractor, Whitestone Farms, Inc., a communal organization of approximately 125 individuals.

Criticism of a different kind was expressed during the planning stage of the Potter Section House Historical Site in Chugach State Park near Anchorage. Here, the Economic Programs Manager for Parks expressed concern over "the lack of concession-related . . . input into the construction and site-design concepts."²³ His questioning of the project development centered on "operational concerns [that could] severely affect the revenue-producing potential of the site."²⁴ Specifically, the design being considered for the Section House site would accommodate only a "minor gift shop type operation, . . . [a] design that would severely limit . . . concession

opportunities that could otherwise be available at the site."²⁵

These comments indicate that a primary objective of Alaska State Parks for the historic site was that it be self-supporting, although "very few historic sites in the nation are able to pay for themselves: most are operated by means of an endowment or subsidy."²⁶ Given the site's small size (1.3 acres), the historic designation of the property, and the relative lack of services actually *necessary* for visitors to the Section House (other than public toilets and interpretive brochures), the manager's concern was well founded. It reflected the advice of an Illinois State Parks architect who observed in 1940 that:

it is better not to have a concession at all than to have one which results in loss of money to the concessionaire because of bad concession location, a low per capita spending patronage [or] an improperly designed building.²⁷

The impact of the brief period of concession operations on Potter Section House will be discussed in Chapter VII.

Letters of Interest, Request for Proposals

After Parks has made the determination that privately operated visitor services are necessary and appropriate in a given park, the next step in the contracting process is advertisement of the concession opportunity to the public. Announcements are also sent via mailing lists to potential contractors who have made their commercial interests known to the State. Request for Letters of Interest and RFPs or RFBs are then used by Parks to determine the level of public interest, and also to gather ideas for the proposed operation (Fig. 30). The advertisement is normally placed in newspapers throughout the state, but if a substantial investment is required

of the contractor ads are also placed in out-of-state periodicals. The proposal packet or Prospectus is prepared specifically for the individual park, and outlines the responsibilities of the concessionaire with regard to historic interpretation, scope of visitor service required, insurance, capital improvements, and term of the contract. Typically, submitted proposals contain interpretive and operating plans for the concession, the respondent's experience and qualifications, and a financial statement. Public response to the RFP is the determinant for Parks' continuation of the contracting process, which can take from several months to a year. For the three year Frenchglen Hotel contract which commenced 20 December 1990, Oregon State Parks "received about seventy to eighty requests for bid packets following one month of advertising for new innkeepers."²⁸ Subsequently, sixteen bids were received prior to the 12 October 1990 deadline for submission of bid proposals, five finalists were interviewed on 8 November, and the new concessionaire was selected by 14 November 1990.²⁹ By comparison, only one proposal was submitted in 1986 for operation of Big Delta State Historical Park, despite several months of advertisement in Seattle, Los Angeles and New York newspapers.³⁰ According to the park manager, it was the amount of initial investment required, the location, and the proposed scale of operation for Big Delta State Historical Park that likely discouraged many potential bidders.³¹

Evaluation of Submitted Proposals, Selection of Concessionaire

The best qualified contractor is determined by a selection committee which evaluates the submitted proposals. Members of one committee which met to select a concessionaire for Oregon State Parks consisted of the Parks

OREGON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
CONCESSION OPPORTUNITY



**WOLF
CREEK
TAVERN**

FOOD & LODGING

On September 30, 1990, the current concession agreement for the operation of the Wolf Creek Tavern expires. This original stage coach stop has been fully restored by Oregon State Parks and features fine dining and overnight accommodations for the public. The structure is located 20 miles north of Grants Pass, Oregon, and just a short distance west of Interstate Highway 5.

The concession opportunity consists of an exclusive contract to operate the Wolf Creek Tavern as a state park facility for an initial period of three years beginning October 1, 1990. A financial investment (approx. \$30,000) is required of the operator. Bid proposals must be submitted to State Parks by May 18, 1990.

For prospectus and bid proposal forms, write or phone Oregon State Parks, 525 Trade St. SE, Salem, Oregon, 97310; phone (503) 378-6289.



Figure 30. RFP for Wolf Creek Tavern State Wayside concession. Oregon State Parks advertisement.

Land Supervisor, a District Park Manager, a local businessperson, a former park concessionaire, and a member of the State Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.³² Proposals were then evaluated using the following criteria:

1. Ability and experience in hotel and restaurant operations; maintenance abilities
2. Financial capability
3. Understanding of the existing operation and a well thought out plan of operation
4. Public relations skills and experience
5. Operator expectation: realistic operation and goals
6. Attitude: Positive, excited
7. General demeanor: evaluator's perception of how bidder will get along with public and with Park's staff³³

Alaska State Parks weights each criterion for their selection of park concessionaires with the following percentages:

- 25%: Contractor's experience in business of comparable size and management responsibilities; does the offerer have experience in doing the work called for in the RFP? How much of the contractor's previous experience was in Alaska?
- 20%: Program proposed by offerer at the park site, improvements required, contract term
- 20%: Understanding of the purpose and nature of the site; integration of the concession operation into that purpose
- 10%: Maintenance plan in addition to that specified in the RFP
- 10%: Major Maintenance and Improvements plan
- 10%: Personnel to be assigned to project -- do the key personnel have the educational background and related experience to perform

the work required in this RFP?

5%: Percentage payment to the state³⁴

Realistic expectations on the part of the applicant about what percentage of their proposed business will be under their autonomous control, what percentage is dictated by the nature and location of the historic building, and what portion is directly regulated by State Parks is often a predictor of the concession's success in terms of management and interpretive considerations. Comparison of the evaluations of three bidders for a State Parks concession in a rural area of southeastern Oregon (1985) revealed that the applicants who were selected as contractor

had an interest in local history, spoke the language and vernacular of the area, wanted to live a way of life they liked, did not plan fancy improvements, were honest, dependable and experienced [and] did not kid themselves about getting rich off the business.³⁵

The other respondents expressed imaginative ideas for the concession, but did not demonstrate an accurate understanding of the historic property, or of the kind of operation necessary to appeal to a wide range of park visitors. One of these proposals described a concession concept at the rural historic site using the terms "cuisine" and "decor."³⁶ Another applicant described plans for roasting meat in the ground and singing cowboy ballads to guests.³⁷ Neither of these concepts were in keeping with Parks intended management concept for the property: a low-key, informal atmosphere which encouraged visitor enjoyment of the surrounding area while reflecting the professional standards of the State Parks system. One respondent also expressed a strong personal attachment to the site, a quality that Parks may have viewed with some apprehension in terms of property management and contract compliance.³⁸

Although State Parks desires contractors who are genuinely interested in the concession and surrounding area, who express understanding of Parks' management concept, and demonstrate a sense of stewardship toward the property, strong possessory feelings indicate a potential for ignoring or altering Parks' directives regarding hours of operation, building maintenance, or allowable commercial activities.³⁹ This is a particular concern when Parks relies on the contractor to provide an on-site presence representing Parks, or if the concessionaire staff outnumbers Parks' staff at the site.⁴⁰ When the interpretive concept for the park is left to the concessionaire's design, the efforts of Parks to correct or modify interpretive products or programs can lead to either resentment or disregard for Park policy.

The Concession Contract

Using the format of a standard legal contract, lease agreements for service providers are tailored by Parks' Contract Specialist to meet the general statutes of the State as well as the specific requirements of each park. One noticeable difference between National Park Service and State Park system lease agreements for historic buildings is the type of language used in federal concession contracts. In 1985, the National Park Service found that "the combined historic leasing/concession arrangement necessitated modification of the standard language concession contract," and subsequently required that "contracts . . . contain terms and conditions . . . necessary or appropriate to . . . insure adequate preservation of historic property."⁴¹ An example of this phrasing is found in NPS Guideline No. 48:

Whereas the Secretary [of the Interior] has consulted with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and determined that the lease of said property will insure the preservation of the historic property.⁴²

Concession contracts of the Alaska State Park system use language similar to the NPS guideline in their concession contracts. The state park systems of Oregon, Idaho and Washington use terminology specific to historic preservation sparingly or not at all in their lease agreements for historic buildings.

State park system contracts generally replicate or closely follow the provisions of the RFP, with the park manager designated as the contract manager. The exception to this arrangement is Fort Worden State Park, where a stipulation of the 1991 contract is that the concessionaire "will provide a professional business manager [to function as] the primary liaison representing the concessionaire in day-to-day operations with the Conference Center director [who is] the designated liaison representing Parks."⁴³ This new requirement took effect when Parks consolidated several independently operated concessions under one contractor. The requirement for a business manager was designed to provide a "contact point for Parks to coordinate services . . . a liaison who could interact with park management on a business-like level."⁴⁴ In addition, the contractor was no longer expected to continually shuffle "two hats: cook and business manager."⁴⁵ One of the benefits for both concessionaire and park manager has been added time to focus more effectively on their respective jobs.⁴⁶

In addition to clauses specifying term of contract, furnishings and equipment provision, subcontracting by the concessionaire, liability, and breach of contract, the concession contracts for the buildings in the study

region contain a number of sections relevant to preservation of historic buildings, which includes how they are presented to the public. Clauses specifying maintenance/repair and modifications/improvements deal primarily with the physical preservation of the building, but also influence its visual presentation. Two other categories, "Statement of Purpose" and "Percentage of Gross Sales and Fees Paid to the State," pertain directly to the visual presentation and preservation of the building's historic character. As an ensemble, these four sections have the potential to clarify and re-emphasize the State's attitude toward and purpose for historic buildings in the parks. Taken individually, however, they are less forceful for this application, which could make it difficult for the contractor to discern why management and operation of a business in an historic building should be different than one located in a non-historic structure.

Statement of Purpose

While all parts of the contract are crafted to protect the interests of both State Parks and concessionaire, the Statement of Purpose (Intent) clause has specific application to preservation of the park's historic resources. When positioned at the beginning of the document, this clause establishes the significance of the building and the park, and underscores that the concession is to be operated in a manner consistent with the park's main purpose. This paragraph also provides the foundation for other contract stipulations which follow. The contracts for Big Delta State Historical Park and Potter Section House Historic Site each clearly state both the purpose of the park and the historic importance of the concession building:

Whereas, the State manages Big Delta State Historical Park [and Potter Section House Historic Site] for the purposes of preserving it for public viewing and access, interpreting the site, its buildings, and its structures as representative of important periods and themes in Alaska's history.

Whereas, Rika's Roadhouse [and Potter Section House] is a historic structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places in which the State of Alaska has invested substantial funding to authentically restore it to interpret its history.⁴⁷

The first paragraph of the concession agreement for Wolf Creek Tavern (Oregon) identifies the building as historic, and states the purpose of the Wayside: to provide "year-around . . . fine dining, meeting and overnight accommodations for the public at reasonable prices."⁴⁸ The contract for Frenchglen Hotel, although it specifies the purpose of the concession -- "to continue services as was [the hotel's] original purpose" -- does not mention the building's historic significance.⁴⁹ Heyburn, Silver Falls, Jessie M. Honeyman and Fort Worden State Parks do not include Statements of Purpose in their contracts nor mention that the concession buildings (with the exception of Rocky Point Lodge) are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Although the function of these buildings is utilitarian, their value is historic, and as such they provide many interpretive opportunities. If Parks does not acknowledge this value, however, the contractor will have little incentive to make his or her operation compatible with the building's historic character.

Maintenance and Repairs

In six of the parks, exterior maintenance and repair of the concession buildings, such as painting and repair of septic system and roof, is the responsibility of the State. The concessionaire takes care of interior maintenance and repair, which in the contracts for Wolf Creek Tavern and Frenchglen Hotel, includes "electrical, plumbing, drywall repairs, painting, furniture repairs and other fixtures" as well as grounds maintenance.⁵⁰ At Big Delta State Historical Park and also at Potter Section House State Historic Site, the state assigned both interior and exterior maintenance and repair of all park structures to the concessionaire.⁵¹

Because maintenance and repair of historic structures often requires methods and products different from those for non-historic structures, implementing this component of preservation (cleaning by the gentlest means possible and replacing building materials in kind) can be both costly and more time consuming than standard park building repair and maintenance.⁵² Maintenance and repair of historic structures in National Park Service contracts is mandated by the following requirements:

All rehabilitations and repairs will be undertaken only in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. Maintenance of the leased historic structure shall be done by qualified technicians in accordance with the Historic Preservation Guide.⁵³

Protection of historic surface materials for the concession buildings in the study has been addressed either indirectly or not at all in contracts. Agreements for the historic buildings in two of Alaska's state parks specify that prior to structural maintenance and repair, "the contractor and [park] manager shall meet and agree on necessary and appropriate repairs."⁵⁴ To

assist park managers and concessionaires with implementation of this contract stipulation, the Alaska State Historic Preservation Office compiled and distributed a notebook in 1990-1991 that provides information on maintenance and repair of historic structures.⁵⁵ The 1984 contract for Rocky Point Lodge (Idaho) specified that "the state and concessionaire will develop a cooperative agreement detailing each party's responsibilities in the maintenance of the . . . Lodge."⁵⁶ It further stated that the contractor was required to perform maintenance and repairs of the concession premises, both interior and exterior, " . . . in good order . . . at his own expense."⁵⁷ No mention was made, however, of the specialized maintenance and repair requirements of this building.

Lease agreements for the historic buildings in Oregon's state park system do not specify the manner in which repair and maintenance of building interiors, exteriors or grounds are to be performed by the concessionaire, except that it shall be done "to keep the building . . . clean and in a sanitary condition satisfactory to the District Park Manager."⁵⁸ The contract for operation of the beach concession in Washington's Fort Worden State Park specifies only that interior maintenance to the former artillery engineer cable building be done so that the building is in "safe, sanitary, and useable condition."⁵⁹ It should be noted here that the interiors of Rika's Roadhouse (Big Delta State Historical Park) and the Jessie M. Honeyman Concession Building (former bathhouse) contain only a small amount of the original building materials.

Modifications and Improvements
to the Site by Concessionaire

This section of the contract is applicable to preservation concerns in two ways. First, it addresses issues of compatibility of new buildings with existing historic structures. This clause also pertains to the concessionaire's installation of non-structural additions on park grounds, as well as interior cabinets, shelving and fixtures: elements which can alter the character of the historic building. Contracts for several parks illustrate this stipulation. The Rocky Point Lodge lease agreement stated that

all utilities, including electrical wiring, shall be underground, . . . any construction, alteration, or modification of concession facilities shall be subject to review and prior written approval of the State; [and] all buildings and improvements must be similar in material and style to the existing park buildings.⁶⁰

A separate agreement for the Lodge, however, stated that the concessionaire was "responsible for all remodeling improvements . . . required to operate the lodge in a productive manner,"⁶¹ a sentence which did little to indicate that the building had historic significance.

The contract for Big Delta State Historical Park mandates protection of the park's archaeological resources by specifying that the concept plan for a concessionaire-constructed pavilion "be approved by the project [park] manager and the State Historic Preservation Officer . . . [and] not . . . be located on the footprint of historically significant structures; detail construction plans . . . must be approved by the project manager."⁶² The contracts for Wolf Creek Tavern, Frenchglen Hotel and Silver Falls Lodge each state that the "concessionaire shall not erect or construct any buildings or any additions to said building or make any changes, additions or modifications to the premises

without the written consent of State."⁶³

Concessionaire's Obligations

This portion of the contract contains two categories, Advertising and Merchandise, which both relate to historic preservation because of their affect on the visitor's perception of the historic resource. Advertising for the historic site or building falls under the heading of site interpretation because it forms a pre-visit impression: the "words and pictures . . . chosen [for the printed material] . . . express what is primarily significant about the historic building."⁶⁴ The kind of merchandise sold in the historic building also serves to form visitor opinions about the building's significance.

All of the contracts for concession buildings in the study region contain clauses which specify that "signing placed by the Concessionaire within [the] . . . park shall require the prior written approval of State Parks."⁶⁵ Oregon State Parks further defines this restriction to include loudspeakers. Alaska State Parks requires that the contractor submit a plan detailing the content and location of all advertising, and tour signs in Big Delta State Historical Park "must be approved by the Delta Historical Society, the Project Manager, and the SHPO."⁶⁶

The clause in state park contracts which specifies state control over merchandise is comparable to that of National Park Service contracts which "reserves the right to determine and control the nature, type and quality of the merchandise and services."⁶⁷ Seven of the state parks whose concession operations were evaluated for this study require that a list of items for sale be submitted to Parks for approval. Although Idaho State Parks did not require this prior approval at Rocky Point Lodge, it did require that items be "of first

class quality [and] . . . prices charged by the concessionaire for [these] goods . . . shall be subject to prior approval of the state."⁶⁸ The State of Idaho also "reserved the right to prohibit the sale of any item that it deemed objectionable."⁶⁹ Oregon State Parks prohibits "punchboards, pinball games or other gambling devices," as well as vending machines located either in or outside the historic building.⁷⁰ At Fort Worden State Park, the concessionaire is required by contract to provide vending machines at the Beach Concession (Artillery Engineer Cable Building).⁷¹ It should also be noted here that vending machines, because they are designed for high visibility, constitute advertising as well as merchandise. The difference in regulation between the two Oregon concessions and the concession at Fort Worden reflects the differing value attributed to these buildings by the two state park systems. Although the Cable House has been identified as a significant building in the Fort Worden Historic District, the park itself is designated primarily for recreational use and managed accordingly.

The merchandise clause in the contracts for the two Alaska parks begins with a reiteration of the interpretive purpose of each park before specifying that "gifts and souvenirs may be sold as well as other items necessary for visitor services."⁷²

Another clause listed under "Concessionaire Obligations" is the "no smoking" stipulation in the contract for Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside.⁷³ This is an important regulation, as fire is one of the leading causes of destruction for historic structures. It is possible that this clause was inserted in the new contract in response to a complaint received by Parks in 1986 from a hotel guest. This individual wrote that during her stay, "the common room was unusable . . . because of the smoking of cigarettes by staff and visitors."⁷⁴

Percentage of Gross Receipts, Rental Fees
and Maintenance Accounts

The percentage of gross receipts that a state park contractor is required to pay is generally higher than that required for contractors operating in National Parks. An examination of the fifteen largest concessionaires in the National Park system revealed that the percentage range of gross receipts paid in 1988 was from .8% to 10%.⁷⁵ The "combined total percentage of gross [receipts paid] to the National Park Service was 2.5%."⁷⁶ A survey conducted by the National Parks and Conservation Association in 1990 showed that franchise fees charged by twenty-nine state park systems averaged 9.94%.⁷⁷ This information included a 26% franchise fee for Maryland and a 17% fee for New York.⁷⁸ A comparison of the percentage of gross receipts paid by the contractors in the state parks of Alaska, Washington, Idaho and Oregon is shown in Table 2.

The percentage of gross receipts received from park concessions in the study region state parks does not go directly to the individual parks, but is instead deposited into either a Park Revenue or Receipts account, (Oregon and Idaho), or into the state's General Fund (Washington and Alaska). At the beginning of each fiscal year, Parks is allocated a yearly budget which is distributed between the individual parks. Since this amount is not always adequate for the maintenance, repair, and restoration of historic structures, Parks must often seek additional sources of funding, such as federal grants, to meet these needs. Restoration of Wolf Creek Tavern was financed by the combination of a state appropriation and a federal grant from the Historic Preservation Grants-in-Aid program.⁷⁹ The exterior restoration and interior

TABLE 2. Concession Agreements and Contracts: Fees and Percentage of Gross Receipts Paid by Contractor to State

Park	State	Year	Percentage, Gross Receipts	Annual Rental Fee	Capital Improvements Account (park)	Routine Maintenance Account (park)
Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside	Oregon	1990	5%	None	None	None
Wolf Creek Hotel State Wayside	Oregon	1990	5%	None	None	None
Silver Falls State Park	Oregon	1991	8%	None	None	None
Jessie M. Honeyman Memorial State Park (Bathhouse)	Oregon	1987	11% (up to \$60,000) 5 1/2% (over \$60,000)	None	None	None
Heyburn State Park (Rocky Point Lodge)	Idaho	1984	2 1/2% general sales 10% boat slip rentals	\$600	None	None
Fort Worden State Park 1. One contractor, five concession locations (includes Artillery Engineer Cable House)	Washington	1991	7.5% (\$425,000 to (\$500,000) 8.5% (over \$500,000)	\$25,000	None	None
Fort Worden State Park 2. One contractor, beach concession (Artillery Engineer Cable House)	Washington	1986	0% to 7%, April 1 – Sept. 30 (\$2500 to \$25,000+) 0% to 6%, Oct. 1 – Mar. 31 (\$5000 to \$25,000+)	\$50 to \$1175 (April 1 – Sept. 30) \$50 to \$900 (Oct. 1 – Mar. 31)	None	None
Big Delta State Historical Park (Rika's Roadhouse)	Alaska	1987	3%	None	6%	\$3000
Chugach State Park (Potter Section House Historic Site)	Alaska	1986	3%	None	6%	\$2400

rehabilitation of the Honeyman bathhouse (as mentioned in Chapter IV) was subsidized by a federal grant from the Land and Water Conservation Fund.⁸⁰

Alaska State Parks has structured its concession agreements so that only a portion of contractor profits accrue to the state's General Fund. At Big Delta Historical Park and (formerly at) Potter Section House Historic Site, the concessionaire pays for both routine maintenance and capital improvements by depositing a set monthly amount into a maintenance account, and six percent of the gross receipts into an account used for park improvements. Since maintenance and improvements are the obligation of the contractor, the purpose of these accounts is to insure that both contract requirements will be adequately funded. This provision is valuable for the preservation of the buildings' physical appearance. It does not, however, affect the way in which the buildings are interpreted for visitors by the concessionaire, as the maintenance and improvement account is not part of a master interpretive plan developed by Parks.

Contract Evaluation

After terms and conditions for the commercial operation are agreed upon by the prospective contractor and by the state park system (Idaho, Washington and Oregon), the agreement is reviewed by the Deputy Attorney General prior to signature. Additionally, the State of Alaska requires that each concession contract be examined by the Law Department and by the Department of Natural Resources Commissioner to determine if the contract meets the following criteria:

1. Will implement the purposes of the park unit and is authorized in the park's master plan

2. Will enhance public use and enjoyment of the park unit while maintaining a high quality environment
3. Will provide services or facilities that are not feasible or affordable for the state to provide directly
4. Will not create unacceptable adverse environmental effects
5. Is based on a need and desire of the public
6. Provides the state with a fair and equitable portion in money or services of the contractor's receipts
7. Will accommodate visitors with special circumstances: handicapped persons, senior citizens and school children⁸¹

Although the preceding criteria is relevant to the purpose of state parks as well as the State's role as conservator of these public lands, it cannot serve as a predictor that the contractor will operate the concession in a manner which promotes the integrity of park resources above commercial products and services.

Conclusion

Despite multiple-page contracts and their careful evaluation, detailed RFPs, and extensive interviewing procedures, existing concessionaire selection processes offer only partial assurance of responsible stewardship for historic, archaeological, and cultural resources. Even when all phases of the contracting process proceed according to Parks' proscribed plan, there are no guarantees that the chosen service-provider will view their role as that of a partner with Parks or share the values necessary for the responsible conservation of the park's historic resources.

Although a certain level of compromise is often necessary to temper

interpretive plans which prove unworkable, or provide needed assistance to commercial ventures struggling to survive their first year of business, the primary reason for the park's existence must always be kept in mind. Ideally, contract compliance seems to be most forthcoming when based upon a feeling of partnership, and motivated by an understanding of and agreement with Parks' interpretive mission. This should include an awareness on the part of the concessionaire that routine business operations such as building maintenance, advertising, and merchandise selection and display all have a cumulative and synergistic impact upon how effectively the significance of historic resources is conveyed to park visitors.

The following chapter will provide examples of how two specific contract provisions -- merchandise and advertising -- have been interpreted by the concessionaires in the study region parks. The contractors' definitions of what items and services are necessary for visitor enjoyment of each park have much in common, even though the significant resources of each park are unique.

This homogeneity of interpretation by park concessionaires sends a powerful visual message to visitors that can negate the buildings' significance as National Register properties and the State's role as trustee for these historic resources. The merchandising techniques employed by the concessionaires, however, are well within the specified terms of their contracts. Thus, the quality of interpretation for significant resources in many of the parks stems from Parks' tolerance of the typical and familiar rather than a requirement for the specific and relevant: an interpretation by default.

Notes

¹Thomas I. Hines, Revenue Sources Management in Parks and Recreation (Arlington: National Recreation and Park Association, 1974) , 100.

²Thomas R. Cox, The Park Builders (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986) , xi.

³State of Wisconsin, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks, Wisconsin State Parks Concession Task Force, "Final Report," 31 May 1988, 11.

⁴Hines, Revenue Sources, 100.

⁵U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Park Service Guideline No. 48, "Leasing of Historic Structures," (Washington D.C. : U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, n.d.) , 2.

⁶Washington Administrative Code (WAC), Chapter 352-24: Concessions and Leases.

⁷State of Idaho, Department of Parks, "Memorandum from Deputy Attorney General to Idaho Park and Recreation Board," 4 November 1981.

⁸Concessions Policy Act, Statutes at Large, 79, U.S. Code 16, Ammendment No. 4: "Lease or Exchange of Historic Property," sec. 470-3h, n.p. (1965).

⁹Ed Schoaps and Elisabeth Potter, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form: Silver Falls State Park Concession Building Area," (Salem: Oregon State Parks, 1983) , 8.2.

¹⁰Concessions Policy Act, Statutes at Large, 79 U.S. Code 16, Ammendment No. 4: "Lease or Exchange of Historic Property," sec. 470-3h, 20-21 (1965).

¹¹Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, "Washington State Parks Concessions," (Olympia: Washington State Parks, 1985).

¹²State of Idaho, Department of Parks, note to files, "Rocky Point Area: Transfer of Lease," n.d.

¹³State of Oregon, Department of Parks, "Oregon State Parks: Wolf Creek Tavern State Wayside Agreement," 21 August 1990, Article 19, 12; State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, "Concession Contract for Potter Section House Historic Site in Chugach State Park," December 1986, Article 25, 7.

¹⁴State of Oregon, Department of Parks, "Fact Sheet: Wolf Creek Tavern," n.d., 3.

¹⁵Hines, Revenue Sources, 95.

¹⁶State of Oregon, Department of Parks, "Fact Sheet: Wolf Creek Tavern," n.d., 3.

¹⁷Ralph Nestor and students in the Travel Industry Management Program at University of Alaska, Fairbanks, "Feasibility Study for Rika's Roadhouse in Big Delta State Historical Park," Spring 1985; Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, "Prospectus: Fort Worden State Park," 1972, 5.

¹⁸Of the eight parks in the study region, management or development plans exist for all but Wolf Creek Tavern and Frenchglen Hotel State Waysides.

¹⁹State of Oregon, Department of Transportation, Division of Parks, memorandum, "Wolf Creek Tavern," 13 May 1976, 2.

²⁰State of Idaho, Department of Parks and Recreation, letter from Assistant Attorney General to author, 8 July 1992.

²¹State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, "Commissioner's Finding Under AS 41.21.027(b) for Big Delta State Historical Park Concession Contract," 10 August 1987.

²²State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, files, letter from Museum Coordinator, Big Delta Historical Society to Whitestone Farms, Inc., 10 October 1990.

²³State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, files, memorandum from Fred Vreeman to Pete Panarese, 7 October 1985.

²⁴State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, memorandum from Economic Programs Manager to District Superintendent, 7 October 1985, 1.

²⁵Ibid, 2.

²⁶Judith Bittner, Alaska SHPO, interview by author, Anchorage, Alaska, 5 August 1991.

²⁷Ross Caldwell, "State Park Concession Architecture," chap in 1940 Yearbook: Park and Recreation Progress, (Washington D.C. : National Park Service, 1940) , 58.

²⁸Judith Hector, "Frenchglen Hotel Lease Bid Process to Begin," Burns (Oregon) Times-Herald, 3 October 1990, 1.

²⁹State of Oregon, Department of Parks, letter, Talbot to Urie; "Memorandum, Wright to Talbot," 14 November 1990.

³⁰State of Oregon, Department of Parks, Memorandum, Ray Wilson, 15 March 1985; Fred Vreeman, District Manager, Northern Region, Alaska State Parks, interview by author, 13 August 1991.

³¹Ibid.

³²State of Oregon, Department of Transportation, Division of Parks, "1985 Selection Committee for Frenchglen Hotel Contractor," Ray Wilson, 15 March 1985.

³³State of Oregon, Department of Transportation, Division of Parks, "Interviews for Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside Concession," February 20-21 1985.

³⁴State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, verbatim from files, "Criteria for Selection of Best Responsible Bidder," n.d.

³⁵State of Oregon, Department of Transportation, Division of Parks, "Interviews for Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside Concession," February 20-21 1985.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Letters from concession applicants to State of Oregon, Department of Parks, 27 November 1990 and 29 November 1990.

³⁸State of Oregon, Department of Transportation, Division of Parks, "Interviews for Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside Concession," February 20-21 1985.

³⁹Fred Vreeman, District Manager, Northern Region, Alaska State Parks, interview by author, 13 August 1991.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Park Service Guideline No. 48, "Lease or Exchange of Historic Structures," (Washington D.C. : U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, n.d.) , 2 and 1.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³State of Washington, "Fort Worden State Park Concession Contract," 17 December 1991, 1.

⁴⁴Wayne McLaughlin, Contract Specialist, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, telephone interview by author, 6 October 1992.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Concession Contract between State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation and Whitestone Farms, Inc., for Big Delta State Historical Park, 1 August 1987, 1; Concession contract between State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation and Restaurant Associates, Ltd, for Potter Section House Historic Site in Chugach State Park, 10 December 1986, 1.

⁴⁸State of Oregon, "Concession Agreement for Wolf Creek Tavern State Wayside," 27 July 1990, 1.

⁴⁹State of Oregon, "Concession Agreement for Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside," 20 December 1990, 1.

⁵⁰State of Oregon, "Concession Agreement for Wolf Creek Tavern State Wayside," 27 July 1990, 1.

⁵¹State of Alaska, "Concession Contract, Big Delta State Historical Park," 1 August 1987, 19.

⁵²Preservation Assistance Division, The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, Rev. 1983, "Standards 6 and 7," (Washington D.C. : U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1983) .

⁵³U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Park Service Guideline No. 48, "Leasing of Historic Structures," (Washington D. C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, n.d.) , 5, 11

⁵⁴State of Alaska "Potter Section House Historical Site Concession Contract," 10 December 1986, Appendix C, 4; "Big Delta State Historical Park Concession Contract," 1 August 1987, Appendix C, 15.

⁵⁵Notebook distributed in January 1991.

⁵⁶State of Idaho, Department of Parks and Recreation, "Concession Agreement Located in Benewah County, Idaho," 7 May 1984, 2.

⁵⁷Ibid, 7.

⁵⁸State of Oregon, Department of Transportation, Division of Parks and Recreation, "Jessie M. Honeyman Memorial State Park, Lane County, Oregon Concession Agreement," 9 March 1987, 6.

⁵⁹"Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, Clallam Jefferson Community Action Council, Fort Worden State Park, Concession Contract," 17 December 1991, 5.

⁶⁰State of Idaho, "Concession Agreement, Benewah County," 1984, 6-7.

⁶¹Ibid, 1.

⁶²State of Alaska, "Concession Contract, Big Delta State Historical Park," 1 August 1987, Appendix F, 1-2.

⁶³State of Oregon, "Wolf Creek Tavern State Wayside Agreement," 21 August 1990, Article 19, 12.

⁶⁴Ralph H. Lewis, Manual for Museums, (Washington D.C. : National Park Service, 1976) , 306.

⁶⁵Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, "Fort Worden State Park, Concession Contract," 17 December 1991, 7.

⁶⁶State of Alaska "Concession Contract, Big Delta State Historical Park," 1 August 1987, Appendix A, Article 11, 3.

⁶⁷National Park Service, NPS Guideline No. 48, 6.

⁶⁸State of Idaho, "Concession Agreement, Benewah County," 1984, Items 10 and 11, 5.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰State of Oregon, "Concession Agreement, Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside," 20 December 1990, 2.

⁷¹Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, "Fort Worden State Park, Concession Contract," 17 December 1991, 4.

⁷²State of Alaska, "Concession Contract, Potter Section House Historical Site," 10 December 1986, Appendix C, B1.

⁷³State of Oregon, "Concession Agreement, Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside," 20 December 1990, Item 18, 5.

⁷⁴State of Oregon, Department of Parks, files, "Visitor Evaluation Card for Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside," 6 January 1986.

⁷⁵"National Park Service Franchise Fee Chart," letter to author from National Parks and Conservation Association, 10 February 1992.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹State of Oregon, Department of Transportation, Division of Parks, files, letter from Talbot to Mehring, 11 April 1975.

⁸⁰State of Oregon, Department of Transportation, Division of Parks, files, letter from Lundy to Wall, 21 October 1980.

⁸¹State of Alaska, "Commissioner's Finding Under AS41.21.027b: Big Delta State Historical Park Concession Contract," 10 August 1987, seven of eleven criteria, verbatim.

CHAPTER VI

CONCESSION OPERATIONS IN EIGHT HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Methodology

Site visits to the concessions used as case studies for this thesis were conducted in July and August 1990, May through October 1991, March 1992, and August 1992.¹ Concessionaires at Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside, Wolf Creek Tavern State Wayside, and Big Delta State Historical Park were interviewed to gain an understanding of the contractor's interpretive goals for the historic building and of the specific challenges they encountered as service providers for the park. Park managers, district managers, and park rangers were also interviewed to determine the predominant issues facing administrators of concessions.

The primary goal of the site visits was an evaluation of how the historic significance of each park was presented to visitors by the concessionaire. It was not appropriate in all cases to compare the level of interpretation from park to park, however, because of differences in the adaptive use of the historic resources, the amount of interpretation required by contract of the concessionaire, and the designated purpose of each park. Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside, Wolf Creek Tavern State Wayside, Potter Section House Historic Site, and Big Delta State Historical Park were established specifically to preserve and protect their historic buildings. The remainder of the parks used in this study, including Chugach, are designated natural or recreational parks. Concessions

were not evaluated, therefore, using fixed standards of interpretation designed for equal application to all heritage resources in state parks. Instead, a single criterion was used: to what degree does the commercial enterprise further visitor understanding of both the historic building and the park? To determine this, the following elements were considered:

1. Signage and Advertising

This category includes signs erected by the contractor to identify the building, contractor-designed promotional brochures, and advertisements of specific products sold by the contractor in the historic building. The latter category encompasses beverage vending machines and merchandise displayed in windows. It also covers logos, drawings, photographs, and written descriptions of the historic resource and the park. It is reasonable to assume that visitors gain a better understanding of the park when such depictions are accurate, properly attributed and well designed.

2. Souvenirs

Aspects of merchandising which influence visitor perception of the historic building and the state park are selection, quality and display of items offered for sale. Merchandise was evaluated by asking the following questions: Do merchandise display shelves, racks and counters obscure or overwhelm the primary architectural features of the room? Does the merchandise itself become the focal point of the room or building? Are the items carefully selected for the purpose of furthering visitor understanding of the park? Is their workmanship of high quality, reflecting the professional standards of the park department?

3. Verbal and Written Representation of the Heritage Resource:

If the concessionaire provides formal interpretative services for park visitors, are docent presentations accurate and informative, reflecting thorough and

professional research? When interpretation is informal, what is the innkeeper's or store owner's general level of knowledge about the historic resource? How was this information acquired? Does the contractor furnish written material interpretive of the building, park, or surrounding area for the visitor to read? Is this quality of this material commensurate with State Park standards?

This chapter describes site visits to the eight state parks of Alaska, Washington, Idaho and Oregon where concessions operated in historic buildings as of January 1991. Data obtained from the site visits and interviews is organized and presented in three groupings, according to the building's original function: Visitor Service Buildings Constructed by the CCC for State Parks, (Table 3) Buildings Privately Constructed to Provide Meals and Lodging for Travelers (Table 4) , and Federal Government Support Services Buildings (Table 5) . This method of organization is used to allow comparison of the current uses of buildings originally constructed for the same purpose. Charts are provided to aid in this comparison.

The adaptive uses of the historic buildings discussed in this chapter fall into three primary categories: grocery store/cafe, fast food/souvenirs, and meals/lodging. In most instances, the building's current function provides a practical adaptive use for the historic resource, a use which helps protect the building against vandalism, neglect, and environmental damage. Several of the commercial operations, however, have not furthered the "... enhancement of [the site's] historic value for the education of present and future generations,"² the ultimate goal of historic preservation, and a stated goal of the State Park systems of Oregon, Idaho, Washington and Alaska.

TABLE 3. Visitor Service Buildings Constructed for State Parks by the Civilian Conservation Corps

Park	State	Location	Park Established	Size of Park	Concession Building's Date of Construction	Primary Construction Materials	Original Function	Date of Most Recent Restoration or Rehab.	Date Listed on National Register	Building's Significance	Currently Operated by Concessionaire?	Current Functions of Building
Heyburn State Park : <i>Rocky Point Lodge</i>	Idaho	40 miles south of Coeur d'Alene	1908	5505 acres (land), 2333 acres (water)	1933	hewn log and stone	lodge and restaurant	1992	not listed	architectural: Rustic/Natl. Park style	no	visitor center
Jessie M. Honeyman Memorial State Park: <i>Concession Building</i>	Oregon	2.5 miles south of Florence	1936	522 acres	1938	hewn log and stone	bathhouse	1981	1980	architectural: Rustic/Natl. Park style	yes	camper supply store, cafe; public restrooms
Silver Falls State Park: <i>Silver Falls Lodge</i>	Oregon	Sublimity, 22 miles east of Salem	1933	8546 acres	1940	hewn log and stone	concession building with dining hall	1980	1983-84	architectural: Rustic/Natl. Park style	yes	food & souvenir concession, park interpretive store, visitor day lodge

Visitor Service Buildings Constructed by the CCC for State Parks

Rocky Point Lodge, Heyburn State Park
Plummer, Idaho

As discussed in Chapter II, state park systems, unlike the National Park Service, have typically owned the buildings in which concessions operate. For this reason, and because structural and cosmetic alterations to the interior and exterior of these buildings are strictly regulated by contract, changes in the historic fabric due to concession occupancy have been, for the most part, minimal. The exception to this occurred at Rocky Point Lodge before the building was designated as a heritage resource by park administrators. A succession of contractors, prompted by security concerns, lack of natural daylighting, and lack of an adequate food storage area, made a number of alterations to the Lodge over a period of several decades.³ These changes were allowable by contract under the heading of "remodeling improvements. . . required to operate the lodge in a productive manner."⁴ For this reason, and because the concession was no longer operating when the site visit was conducted, the concession at Rocky Point Lodge was not evaluated using the criteria of Signage/ Advertising, Souvenirs, and Verbal/ Written Interpretation. Instead, a description of alterations made to the building by contractors from approximately 1950 through 1980 follows, and a description and analysis of the lodge's current use by Idaho State Parks will be presented in Chapter VII. One of several changes which compromised the architectural integrity of Rocky Point Lodge was infill of the north facade windows with logs (Fig. 31), a security precaution designed to prevent theft of stock from the retail grocery section of the building. Other building modifications included installation of black

wrought iron grill-work at the bottom of an interior stairway (to prevent overnight guests from having direct access to the rest of the lodge), replacement of the wooden exterior doors with doors of metal and plate glass (which could be locked more securely) (Fig. 32) , and removal of a sizable portion of the kitchen wall on the south facade to accommodate a walk-in cooler (Fig. 33 and 34), which protruded beyond the exterior wall.⁵ Chinking in the southwest corner of the building had also been replaced with what appeared to be orange urethane insulation, presumably a heat conservation measure. The appearance of the kitchen and dining area was altered by the replacement of the original custom-designed incandescent lights with rectangular fluorescent fixtures.

When the concessionaire declared bankruptcy in 1990 and his equipment and furnishings were removed from the premises, park management began repairs to the building. They discovered that the contractor had ignored much of the basic maintenance,⁶ and the building was, in the words of Idaho's Deputy Attorney General,

... a real mess ... the kitchen was completely dilapidated and looked like the inside of a submarine ... there were bare electrical wires hanging on the walls, and black marks where electrical boxes had caught on fire ... ⁷

Some of the most serious damage caused by contractors, however, was to the historic landscape. In 1971, the concessionaire⁸ installed three 500 gallon-capacity gasoline storage tanks several yards northwest of Rocky Point Lodge, near the shore of Lake Chatcolet. In the spring of 1991, the Department of Environmental Quality required that tests be conducted in order to determine if any leakage from these tanks had occurred during the intervening twenty years. The tanks were all found to be leaking severely, contaminating both subsoil and groundwater.⁹ The tanks and the contaminated soil were subsequently



Figure 31. Log infill of windows, north facade, Rocky Point Lodge, Heyburn State Park, 1991.



Figure 32. Metal and glass door, west entrance, Rocky Point Lodge, Heyburn State Park, 1991.



Figure 33. Door to walk-in cooler for kitchen at Rocky Point Lodge, Heyburn State Park, Idaho, 1991.

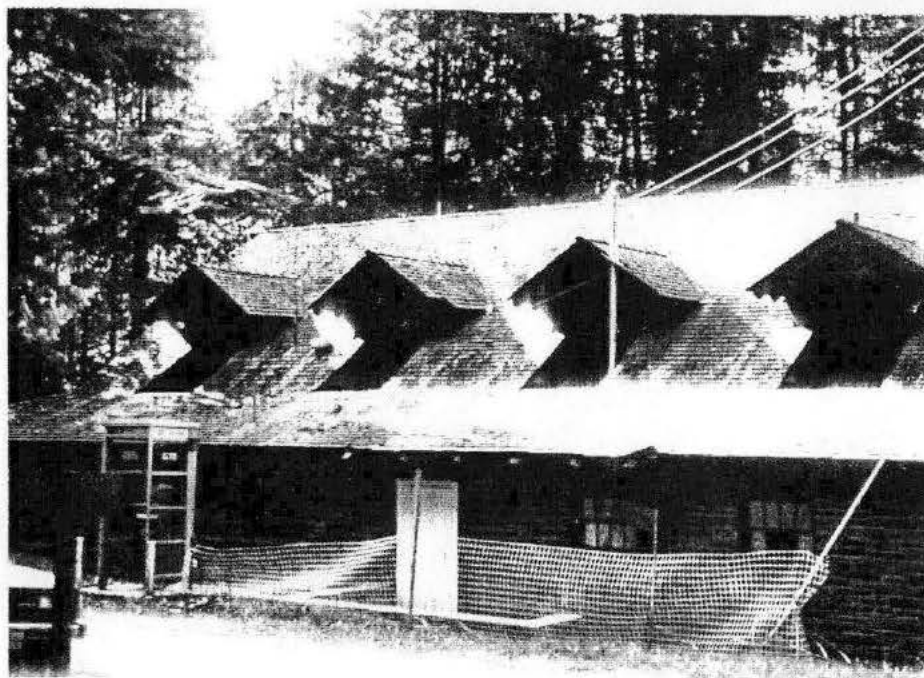


Figure 34. South facade, cooler door, Rocky Point Lodge, Heyburn State Park, 1991.

removed, at a cost to the State of Idaho of \$63,000.¹⁰

Because Rocky Point Lodge had not been designated as an historic resource by Idaho State Parks during its occupancy by private enterprise, there were no regulations in place which functioned to protect the structural or visual character of this building. Decisions by park management over the years regarding the concessionaires' proposed modifications to the Lodge appeared to have been made using general criteria such as business viability, improved visitor service, or general (non-historic) building maintenance. Although these standards were not of themselves unreasonable, their application to Rocky Point Lodge did little to promote appropriate care of the historic building and surrounding landscape.

Silver Falls Lodge, Silver Falls State Park
Sublimity, Oregon

Signage and Advertising

Prohibited by contract, there are no signs on either Oregon Highway 214 or within Silver Falls State Park to inform visitors of the snack food and souvenir concession within the park, and brochures designed by Oregon State Parks do not mention it. To advertise the business which she has operated in Silver Falls Lodge for the past fifteen years (Fig. 35 and 36) , the contractor has relied primarily on word-of-mouth, souvenir items imprinted with "Silver Falls State Park," and open-back window display¹¹ Near the main entrance to the Lodge, a snow cone machine, ceramic mugs, and small souvenir items were visible through three windows of the concession area, communicating to visitors walking past the building that commercial services are available inside.

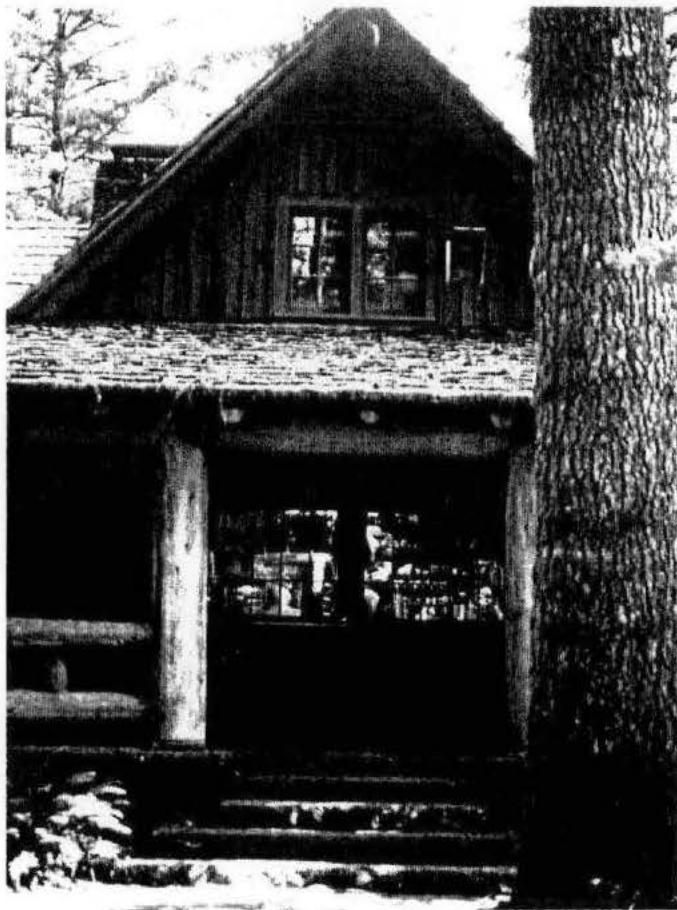


Figure 35. Concession merchandise displayed in windows, west entrance, Silver Falls Lodge, 1991.



Figure 36. West entrance near concession area, Silver Falls Lodge, Silver Falls State Park, 1991.

Souvenirs

In addition to the window display of merchandise, t-shirts were displayed beyond the concession area on a portion of the interior stone wall of the Lodge (Fig. 37 and 38) . Because of their bright colors, these t-shirts are the first thing that the visitor's eye is drawn to upon entering the building. Other souvenir items included mesh baseball caps, commemorative spoons, sunglasses, a toy sheriff's badge affixed with a "Silver Falls Oregon" logo, enamel jewelry, postcards, and ceramic pigs. The merchandise was equivalent in quality to that offered for sale at variety stores and state fair midways. Postcards featuring photos of the park's waterfalls and a mug imprinted with "Silver Falls Oregon" and a trail map of the falls were the only items which pertained specifically to the park.

Verbal and Written Representation

The fast-food pace and nature of this concession does not encourage visitor inquiries about the building, and there is no expectation on the part of park management that the contractor provide interpretive services for the park. Interpretation of the park is provided by plant and animal exhibits in the main area of the lodge and by the Friends of Silver Falls State Park Interpretive Store located in the northeast corner of the Lodge.

Although concessionaire occupancy has caused no damage to the physical structure of the Lodge, it has not contributed to the visual integrity of the building, supported the unique character of the surrounding park land nor communicated to visitors the vital conservation purpose of Oregon State Parks.



Figure 37. Interior, concession area, west entrance to Silver Falls Lodge, 1991.

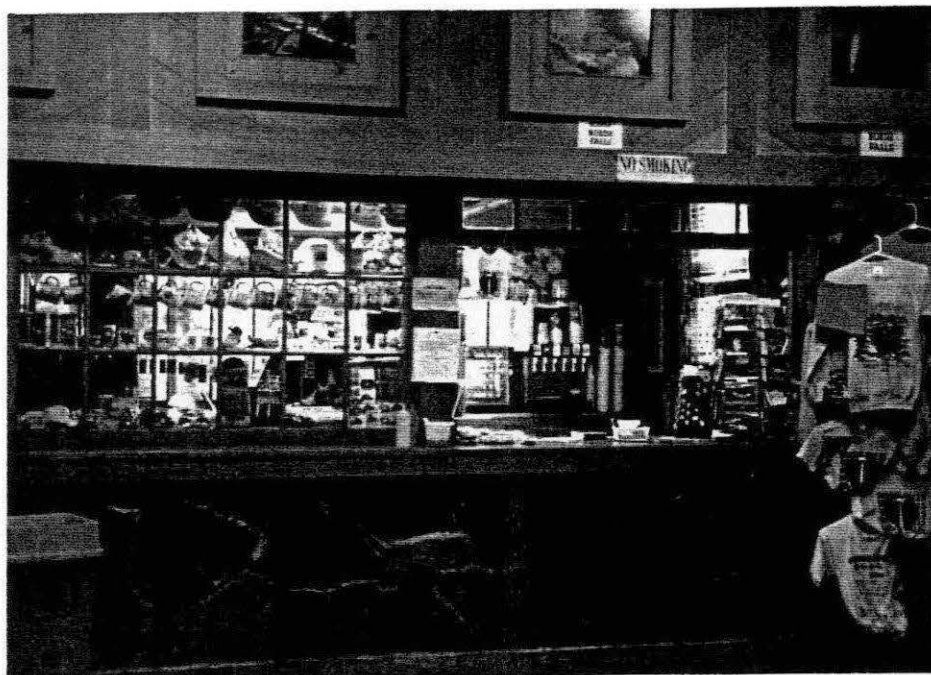


Figure 38. Concession area in west entryway to Silver Falls Lodge, Silver Falls State Park, 1991.

Concession Building (Former Bathhouse),
Jessie M. Honeyman Memorial State Park
Florence, Oregon

Signage and Advertising

The Honeyman Park Lodge, a camper supply store and cafe which operates in the rehabilitated CCC bathhouse, is identified only by a regulation brown and white sign, "Concessions" . Despite the relatively modest identification of the store, advertising is unnecessary during the busy summer season. From Memorial Day through Labor Day the parking lot in front of the building is constantly full, according to the park manager, and the store-cafe is open seven days a week, from seven a.m. until 9 p.m.¹² The Concession Building's location near the shore of Lake Cleawox, a nearby display of brightly colored rental boats, the "Restrooms Inside" sign, and two newspaper vending machines by the entrance appear to successfully direct tourists to the store. (Fig. 39 and 40) . During the slower months of fall and spring, the concessionaire offers Florence area residents a discount card for the cafe.¹³

Souvenirs

The short order cafe comprised approximately one-third of the building's interior space. The remaining two-thirds was filled with the fully-stocked shelves, counters, glass cases and revolving racks of the general store (Fig. 41 and 42). The merchandise ranged from recreational and camping supplies such as firewood, bait, film, sunglasses, mosquito repellent, used paperback books, and food, to personal health items such as diapers, toothpaste, aspirin and band-aids. A plentiful assortment of generic souvenirs, similar to those offered at Silver Falls Lodge, was also offered for sale: refrigerator magnets, ceramic animals, stuffed



Figure 39. South entrance, concession building (former bathhouse), Jessie M. Honeyman Memorial State Park, Oregon, 1991.



Figure 40. North entrance, concession building, Jessie M. Honeyman Memorial State Park, 1991.

toys, a commemorative thimble affixed with the "Honeyman State Park" logo, T-shirts, key chains, costume jewelry, mesh baseball caps, myrtlewood wall clocks, troll doll pencils and post cards. Besides photo post cards depicting the sand dunes and lakes of the park, (in addition to seashells, birds, animals and panoramic views of the Oregon coast) souvenir items interpretive of the general area included jelly made from elderberry blossoms, a series of paperback books on the pioneer history of Oregon, and seashells (although most of these shells are not indigenous to the Oregon coast).

Verbal and Written Representation

Oregon State Parks has chosen not to interpret the Concession Building other than a small plaque on the building's exterior, and the concessionaire is not expected to provide interpretive information for visitors.

Although this concession appears to have successfully provided for the basic camping needs of park users, it makes no attempt to promote visitor understanding and appreciation of the historic building in which it is located nor of the unique natural resources of Jessie M. Honeyman Memorial State Park.

Food and Lodging for Travelers

Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside
Frenchglen, Oregon

Signage and Advertising

Identification of this park wayside (Fig. 43) is minimal, (an 18" x 36" rectangular wood sign on the front porch) but further signage is unnecessary since the town of Frenchglen consists of only a few buildings. The current

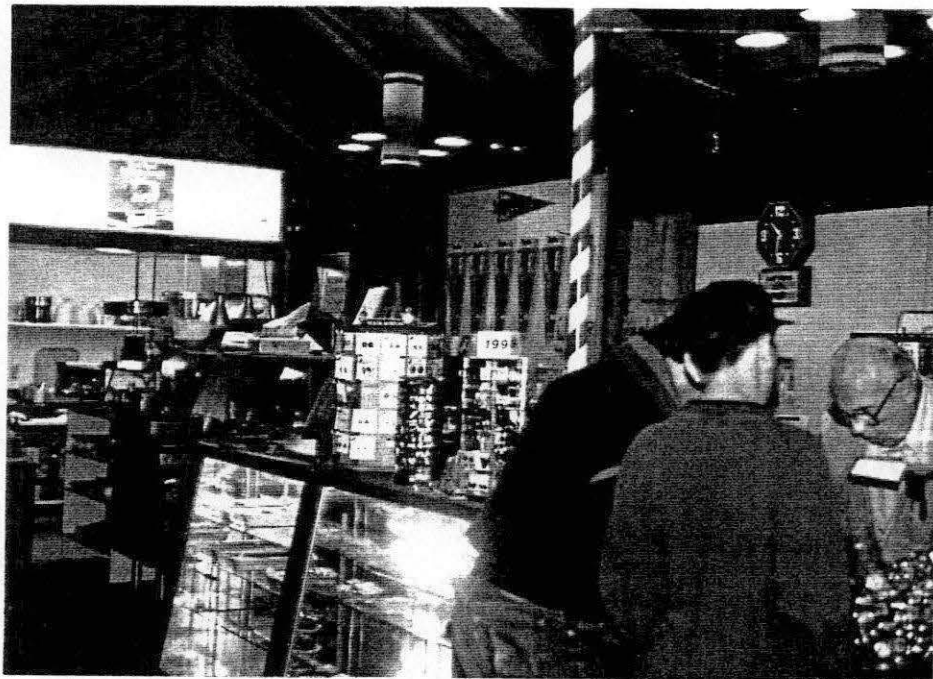


Figure 41. Interior, concession building, Jessie M. Honeyman Memorial State Park, 1991.



Figure 42. Souvenir merchandise, concession building, Jessie M. Honeyman Memorial State Park, 1991.

TABLE 4. Buildings Constructed to Provide Meals and Lodging for Travelers

Park	State	Location	Park Established	Size of Park	Concession Building's Date of Construction	Primary Construction Materials	Original Function	Date of Most Recent Restoration or Rehab.	Date Listed on National Register	Building's Significance	Currently Operated by Concessionaire?	Current Functions of Building
<i>Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside</i>	Oregon	Frenchglen, 60 miles south of Burns	1973	2.37 acres	1924	wood	meals, lodging	1973	1984	American Forsquare; oldest building in Frenchglen; almost continuous use providing meals and lodging for travelers since 1924	yes	meals, lodging
<i>Wolf Creek Tavern State Wayside</i>	Oregon	Wolf Creek, 22 miles north of Grants Pass	1975	3 acres	ca. 1880	wood	meals, lodging	1977	1972	one of the oldest Classical Revival style buildings in Oregon; almost continuous use providing meals and lodging for travelers since circa 1880	yes	meals, lodging
<i>Big Delta State Historical Park: Rika's Roadhouse</i>	Alaska	90 miles southeast of Fairbanks, just north of Delta Junction	1976	10.26 acres	ca. 1909	log	meals, lodging	1984	1976, 1991	two-story log building; meals and lodging for travelers; trade and supply center for interior Alaska, early 1900s	yes	gift shop, fur salon, historic exhibits

concessionaire has used Frenchglen's relatively isolated location and the hotel's lack of luxury "extras" as a selling point in the brochures that are sent to people who call for information:

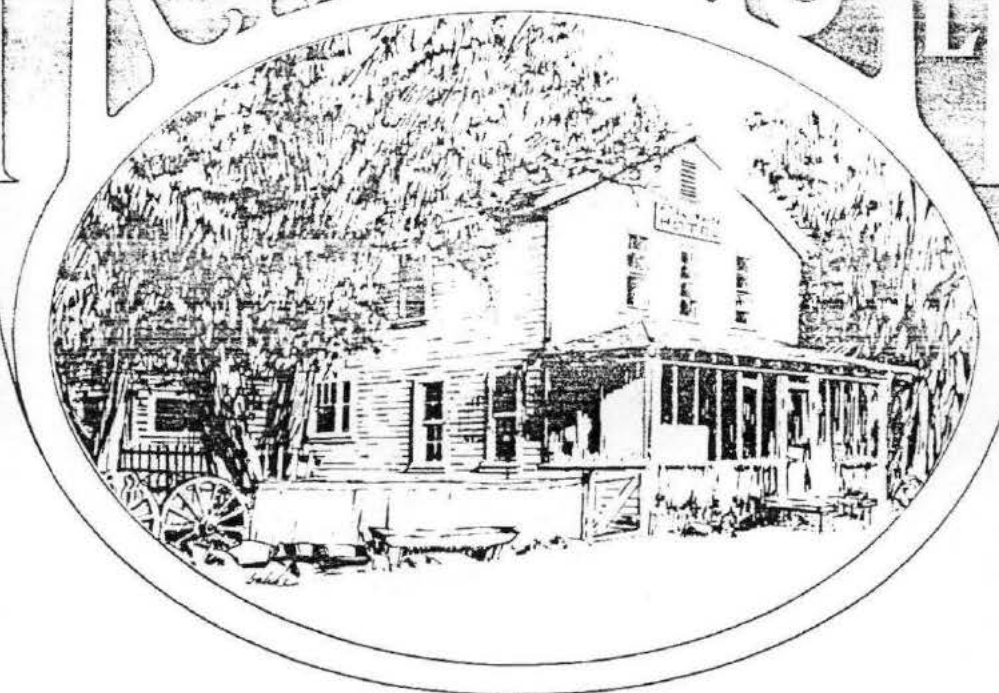
We have no jacuzzi, swimming pool, color T.V . . . or any T.V. for that matter! What we have to offer is peace and quiet. Leave your alarm clock at home and wake up to roosters crowing and the aroma of coffee brewing and bacon sizzling . . . Our meals will remind you of visiting Grandma's house.¹⁴



Figure 43. Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside, Frenchglen, Oregon, 1991.

The brochure, printed on a single 8 1/2" x 11" sheet of paper, was designed by Oregon State Parks (incorporating suggestions from the contractor), and features a logo sketch of the hotel, a map, and the price of rooms and meals (Fig. 44). This brochure, a one-paragraph description of the wayside in the "Oregon State Parks Guide," articles about the wayside which appear frequently in Oregon newspapers,¹⁵ and word-of-mouth promotion by former hotel guests

FRENCHGLEN HOTEL



STATE WAYSIDE HARNEY COUNTY, ORE.

The Oregon State Parks system invites you to visit historic Frenchglen Hotel for overnight accommodations and food service. Now operated by Karla Litzenberger and John Ross, the hotel is an excellent place to make your headquarters while exploring the nearby Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and the beautiful Steens Mountain, or for your hunting, fishing, and rockhounding activities. Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside is located 60 miles south of Burns, Oregon on paved Highway 205. To make reservations for meals or rooms, phone (503) 493-2825.

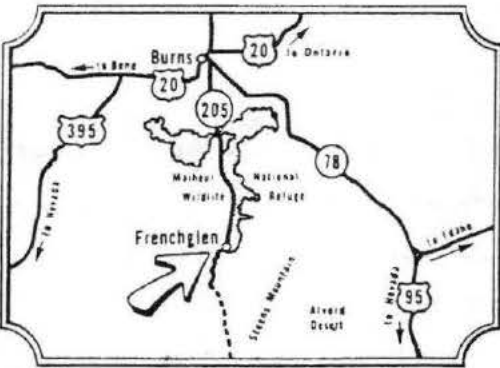


Figure 44. Brochure, Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside, 1991.
Courtesy, Oregon State Parks.

all seem to serve as sufficient advertising to make Frenchglen Hotel a popular destination park for travelers during the summer months. T-shirts with the Frenchglen Hotel logo and post cards featuring a photograph of the hotel also serve as advertisements.

Souvenirs

Merchandise was displayed in three areas of the hotel lobby: on the hallway wall at the bottom of the stairs (T-shirts), below the cash register (note cards in a wood and glass display case), and on the wall by the front entrance (post cards in a brown wicker basket). With the exception of the T-shirts, the displays were understated and did not detract from the room's simple furnishings, allowing a focus on the building itself. The note cards featured a reprint of a pencil sketch of the hotel by a local artist.¹⁶ All of the postcards for sale were either color photos of the landscape, animals and birds of Harney County, or reprints of historic photographs of the area.

Verbal and Written Representation

While serving the family-style meals traditional of the hotel, and between various other tasks, the concessionaire answered numerous visitor inquiries about the building, the town of Frenchglen, P Ranch, and Steens Mountain.¹⁷ The contractors learned about the history and geography of the area by talking to local residents and former Frenchglen Hotel concessionaires, and by reading several books about Harney County.¹⁸ The hotel proprietors encouraged guests to sit in the lobby and browse through these books and also through pamphlets on the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and Steens Mountain (Fig. 45) . Enlargements of historic photographs of eastern Oregon hung on the walls

throughout the hotel. Although a plaque on the building's exterior notes that the hotel is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Oregon State Parks provides no written or photographic interpretation of the wayside for visitors.

Careful attention to detail and a thoughtful evaluation of the relationship of souvenir items to the significance of the hotel as an historic landmark of Harney County characterized the merchandising efforts of the hotel proprietors. In their choice of written material provided for hotel visitors, the concessionaires furnished an accurate basic introduction to the history, geography, and wildlife of southeast Oregon.



Figure 45. Lobby and dining room, Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside, 1991.

Wolf Creek Tavern State Wayside
Wolf Creek, Oregon

Signage and Advertising

All signage for the inn is prepared by Oregon State Parks. In addition to a sign near the entrance to the wayside (Fig. 46), this park is well marked with freeway exit signs on Interstate 5. A color photograph of the Tavern's dining room and a one paragraph description of the wayside is featured in the "Oregon State Parks Guide". An interpretive brochure published by Oregon State Parks (available free of charge to park visitors) also serves as advertising for the wayside.

The contractor stated that she is "very choosy about what [publications] she advertises in" and concentrates on two types of advertising: ads in Oregon Lodging Association magazines directed at out-of-state tourists, and ads in Douglas County papers which target the patronage of local residents.¹⁹ During the slow winter season, weekend specials are offered for residents of Medford, Roseburg, and Grants Pass. These specials include "Murder Mystery WeekWeekend," photo "Meet Jack London Weekend," and "Gold Mining Weekend".²⁰ Word-of-mouth advertising also brings new business from friends and relatives of satisfied hotel guests.

From the contractor's point of view, the inn's historic name, Wolf Creek Tavern, is a misleading advertisement which sometimes causes problems for the hotel's proprietors. According to the concessionaire, "a high percentage" of customers ask "Where's the bar?," having driven up to Wolf Creek in the belief that it is a real tavern.²¹ The concessionaire believes that the word "tavern" is unnecessarily confusing to visitors, and would prefer that it be deleted from the

name of the wayside.²²

Souvenirs

Display of Souvenirs was confined to one corner of one room of the inn, the coffee shop (historic Ladies Parlor). A white apron (the same as worn by the waitresses) was tacked to the south wall and effectively drew visitor attention to this corner (Fig. 47). Because of the apron's contrast with the muted colors of the room's furnishings, it functioned as a visual focus of the room. Interspersed with framed pictures and a clock, it was unclear if the apron was for sale or merely decorative. Two T-shirts with the Wolf Creek Tavern logo were also pinned to the wall.

Some of the smaller souvenirs, displayed on the counter and in a glass case below the cash register, (Fig. 47) were gold nugget earrings, beaded earrings, a wild game cook book, and a booklet entitled "How to Find Indian Arrowheads." Several site-specific souvenirs were offered: a 27" by 12" black and white pencil rendering of the Tavern with the caption "Est. 1851,"²³ photo post cards of the Tavern, T-shirts and ceramic mugs imprinted with the Tavern logo (a snarling wolf), and small bedside lamps like those in the guest rooms. Miscellaneous items for sale included cartoon post cards and cassette tapes of Celtic music.

Verbal and Written Representation

The contractor's knowledge of the historic inn and the Wolf Creek area was gained by "reading and studying," becoming familiar with the contents of Parks' interpretive brochure, and talking with local residents.²⁴ The concessionaire requires her permanent staff of ten employees as well as her



Figure 46. Wolf Creek Tavern State Wayside, Wolf Creek Oregon, 1991.

temporary summer workers to be familiar with the history of Wolf Creek in order to answer visitor questions about the wayside.²⁵ Waitresses and waiters wear costumes designed by the contractor to represent the 1870s.

The concessionaire stated that her visitor service ethic for Wolf Creek Tavern was making sure that the inn was "a warm and welcoming place to visit."²⁶ Both site visits to the wayside affirmed this intention: the innkeeper and hotel staff were friendly and personable, reflecting the contractor's commitment to high quality customer service. This ethic, however, did not necessarily carry through, however, in the selection and display of the contractor's souvenir merchandise.



Figure 47. Souvenir display in coffee shop, Wolf Creek Tavern State Wayside, 1991.

Rika's Roadhouse, Big Delta State Historical Park
Big Delta, Alaska

Signage and Advertising

Although Big Delta Historical Park is located just off a major highway, it is not visible from the road. This circumstance was a cause of some concern to the concessionaire when the park first opened. They believed that many motorists expected a sign directing them to Rika's Roadhouse and became confused by the Alaska State Parks' sign for Big Delta State Historical Park, bypassing the site entirely.²⁷ To remedy this situation, the contractor requested that Alaska State Parks replace its regulation signage on the Richardson Highway with "bigger, eye-catching signs."²⁸

The concessionaire for this park has focused much of their advertising efforts on the tour-bus companies who transport tourists between Valdez and Fairbanks via the Richardson Highway. Ads directed towards individual travelers are placed in The Milepost, a guide for motorists. A full page color ad for Rika's Roadhouse & Landing in the Spring 1993 edition (Fig. 48) described the Roadhouse Gift Shop, Alaskan Ranch-Raised Furs, and the Packhorse Restaurant, in addition to a sentence that reads "Roadhouse & Historical Buildings clustered in 10-acre Park".²⁹ Other printed advertisements included post cards featuring products sold in the concessionaire's fur salon, (Fig. 49 and Fig. 50), and a shipping decal displayed in the window by the main entrance to the Roadhouse.

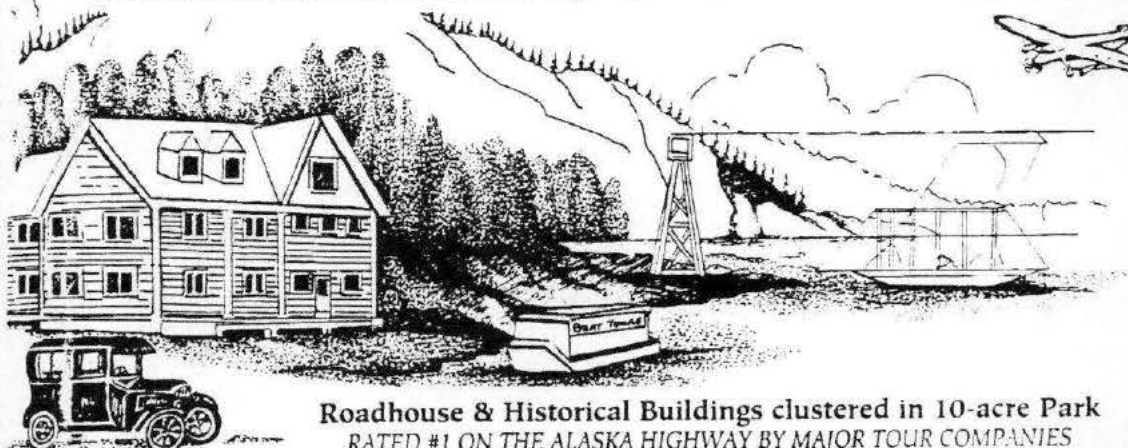
Souvenirs

The concessionaire provides meals, baked goods, and some souvenir items in the Packhorse Pavilion, a building constructed, owned, and operated by the contractor.³⁰ Most of the merchandise sold by the concessionaire, however, is located in the Roadhouse (Fig. 51). The overwhelming emphasis of this building (over one-third of the square footage) is on retail sales. A dizzying array of merchandise is displayed by means of hanging racks, revolving racks, free-standing shelves, wall shelves, structural support posts, glass display cases, and cabinets. Souvenirs varied in price from thirty-five cents (post cards) to \$375.00 (amethyst geode). According to the concessionaire, the criteria for selecting which items to carry favors Alaskan-made products as much as possible.³¹ Alaska souvenir items included gold nugget jewelry, jade jewelry, porcupine quill earrings, fossilized mammoth-tusk jewelry, caribou hoof bracelets, birch bark baskets, smoked salmon, miniature plastic totem poles, ulu knives, "Official

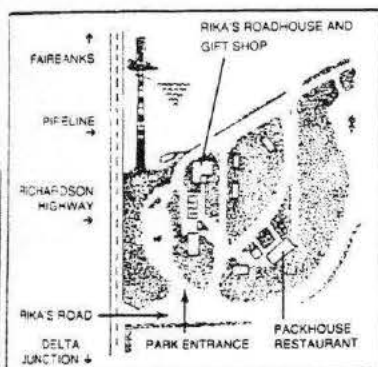
On the banks of the Tanana River at **BIG DELTA STATE HISTORICAL PARK**, enjoy

RIKA'S ROADHOUSE & LANDING

"Best food in all 1,488 miles of the Alaska Highway . . ." *Seattle Times-Seattle Post-Intelligencer*



Roadhouse & Historical Buildings clustered in 10-acre Park
RATED #1 ON THE ALASKA HIGHWAY BY MAJOR TOUR COMPANIES



Park Hours 8-8 Daily
 Restaurant 9-5 Daily

Mile 275 Richardson/Alaska Highway

Just upstream from the Trans-Alaska Pipeline Tanana River Crossing

Call (907) 895-4201 or (907) 895-4938 Anytime

P.O. Box 1229, Delta Junction, Alaska 99737

See our log ad at Mile 275 Richardson/Alaska Highway • Brochure Available

Tour Buses Welcome
 Free Admission, Parking and Tours

THE ROADHOUSE GIFT SHOP
 Specializing in Alaskan-made gifts of
 Gold Nugget Jewelry, Fossil Ivory,
 Finished Fur Apparel & Diamond Willow,
 Souvenir Shirts, Cards & Postcards

WORLDWIDE POSTAL SERVICE

ALASKAN RANCH-RAISED FURS
 from **Whitestone Furs of Alaska**
 featured in The Roadhouse Gift Shop
 Coats, Jackets, Stoles,
 Flings, Clings & Collars,
 Hats, Hand Muffs & Ear Muffs
 Fur Items Made To Order

PACKHOUSE RESTAURANT

- Seating for over 150
 for Breakfast and Lunch
 (Dinners for Special Functions)
- Homemade Soups
- Fresh Salads & Sandwiches
- Fresh Baked Pies, Breads & Cookies
 from The Alaska Baking Company



Figure 48. Milepost advertisement for Big Delta State Historical Park, Alaska, designed by concessionaire, 1993.

Alaska Mosquito Trap," diamond willow walking sticks, Eskimo dolls and burl wood wall clocks. Generic merchandise included T-shirts, mesh baseball caps, ceramic mugs, stuffed toy animals, refrigerator magnets, decorative china, plastic Christmas ornaments, calendars, and animal figurines. Roadhouse-related products were two coloring books, a ceramic mug imprinted with a 1940 sketch of the Roadhouse (Rika Wallen's letterhead), two postcards of the Roadhouse, jars of honey, and flower seeds. The concessionaire has chosen not to offer more items interpretive of the historic site because "visitors are not at the park long enough to become interested in the Roadhouse."³²

A large room on the second floor of the Roadhouse showcases Whitestone Furs of Alaska (Fig. 52). This contractor enterprise sells fur accessories and coats at prices ranging from \$5.95 (silver fox key chain) to \$1830.00 (ranch mink jacket).³³

Verbal and Written Representation

Most visitors who take the fifteen-minute walking tour of Big Delta State Historical Park are traveling through Alaska by tour bus. These buses limit their stop at the park to approximately one-half hour. When the park was visited in August 1991, the fifteen minute concessionaire-guided walking tour of the park began at the Packhorse Pavilion and continued through the central portion of the park as the docent related information about the Prospectors' Trail, the McCarty Telegraph Station site, and the former owner of the Roadhouse, Rika Wallen. The buildings' method of construction and architectural details were not described. The tour ended at the Roadhouse, where the tour guide told visitors that "rumor has it that Rika kept a liquor store beneath her bed."³⁴ This story, and a glimpse of three rooms furnished to represent a circa 1930 parlor, bedroom

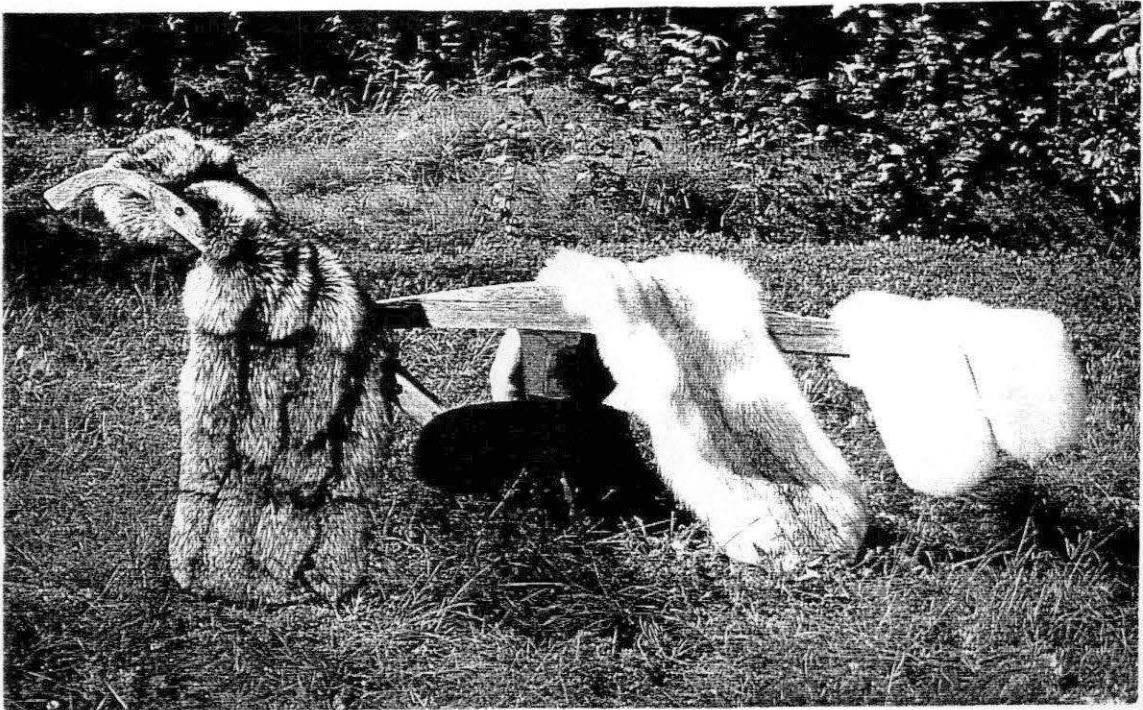


Figure 49. Fur stoles: postcard advertisement for Whitestone Furs of Alaska in Big Delta State Historical Park. Whitestone Furs of Alaska.



Figure 50. Fur accessories: Big Delta State Historical Park, 1991. Postcard, Whitestone Furs of Alaska.



Figure 51. Rika's Roadhouse, Big Delta State Historical Park, Alaska, 1991.



Figure 52. Concessionaire's fur salon, second floor of Rika's Roadhouse, Big Delta State Historical Park, Alaska, 1991.



Figure 53. Interpretive display (kitchen) by concessionaire, Rika's Roadhouse, Big Delta State Historical Park, 1991.



Figure 54. Souvenir display in concessionaire gift shop, Rika's Roadhouse, Big Delta State Historical Park, 1991.

and kitchen,³⁵ (Fig. 53) ended the interpretive tour. Tourists were then invited to browse in the gift shop (Fig. 54) and visit the fur salon upstairs.

Female members of the concession staff wore dresses designed to be reminiscent of the 1920s era, and several also wore fur items sold in the Roadhouse. During one site visit, a member of the concessionaire staff provided entertainment for gift shop customers by pretending to be a mannequin (Fig. 55). His performance elicited delighted squeals of astonishment from several visitors.

In 1990, an Alaska State Parks volunteer in conjunction with the State Office of History and Archaeology, the Delta Historical Society, and the concessionaire, designed and produced a self-guided walking tour pamphlet. This informative and well-designed pamphlet describes nineteen historic sites and structures, and encourages visitors to walk through the park at an individual pace.

Like the proprietor of Wolf Creek Tavern State Wayside, the concessionaire at Big Delta State Historical Park takes pride in the service their staff provides to visitors. This was evident during both site visits: the staff was courteous and friendly, the food of good quality, and the buildings clean. What was also evident, however, was an emphasis on merchandising, not visitor understanding of the site's significance, as the primary purpose of the park.

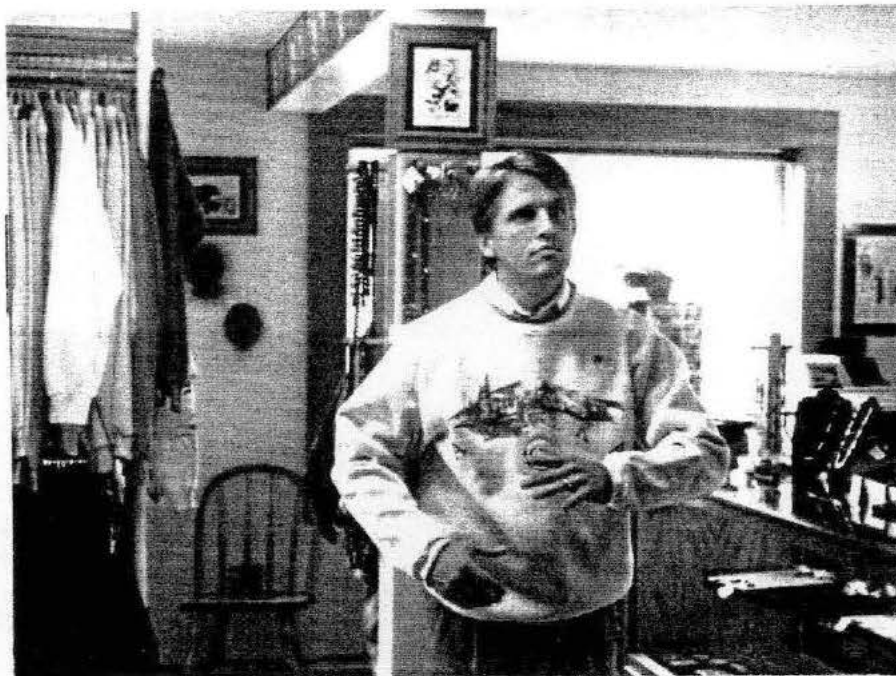


Figure 55. Member of concessionaire staff posing as live mannequin, gift shop, Rika's Roadhouse, Big Delta State Historical Park, 1991.

Federal Government Support Services Buildings

Potter Section House State Historic Site, Chugach State Park
Indian, Alaska

Signage and Advertising

Visibility of the concession building to the public is of vital importance for contractors who must make their year's profit during a four to five month tourist season. Potter Section House is located just beyond a grove of trees left by Alaska State Parks as a buffer zone to screen both the noise and view of highway traffic from the historic site. Although highway signage informs motorists of the upcoming historic site, traffic on the Seward Highway often travels at speeds in

excess of fifty-five miles per hour, and entrance to the site is an abrupt turn off of the highway, not an exit. Successful promotion of this site was, therefore, crucial to the viability of the contractor's business enterprise.

In the "Project and Operation Proposal" which he submitted in response to Alaska State Parks' "Request for Proposals," the contractor stated that:

Emphasis will be placed on the park as an educational and historically important site. Commercial operations will be conducted in as subtle a way as possible. They should compliment rather than detract from the site.³⁶

This philosophy was belied by one of the concessionaire's first advertising endeavors, undertaken without prior authorization from Alaska Division of Parks: the concessionaire's grand opening celebration for Potter Section House Historic Site featured "the world's longest dog sled," a live reindeer, a food-vending trailer, and a large plastic soft drink banner.³⁷ Park management quickly ended this unauthorized celebration.

Other forms of concessionaire advertising for the site were post cards of the site (Fig. 56) and printed 4" by 9" handouts containing a location map and the site's hours of operation (Fig. 57). In addition, the contractor tried unsuccessfully to convince the tour bus companies that operated between Anchorage and Portage Glacier to stop at the site.³⁸

Souvenirs

The concessionaire's sales area, the first room visitors saw upon entering the Section House, gave little indication that the interior of the building had been restored or that historic interpretation was a function of the building. Instead, this room resembled a souvenir shop similar to any found in downtown Anchorage. Generic Alaska mementos were crowded together on walls,

TABLE 5. Federal Government: Support Services Buildings

Park	State	Location	Park Established	Size of Park	Concession Building's Date of Construction	Primary Construction Materials	Original Function	Date of Most Recent Restoration or Rehab.	Date Listed on National Register	Building's Significance	Currently Operated by Concessionaire?	Current Functions of Building
Fort Worden State Park: <i>Artillery Engineer Cable House</i>	Wash.	Port Townsend	1972	340.56 acres	1905	concrete, wood, slate	cable storage	1992	1974	military	yes	food & souvenir concession; public restroom
Chugach State Park: Potter Section House Historic Site	Alaska	Indian, 10 miles south of Anchorage	park: 1970; site: 1985	park: 495,204 acres; site: 1.3 acres	1929	wood	railroad section house	1985	1985	transportation and commerce; only remaining section house of its type	no	state park office

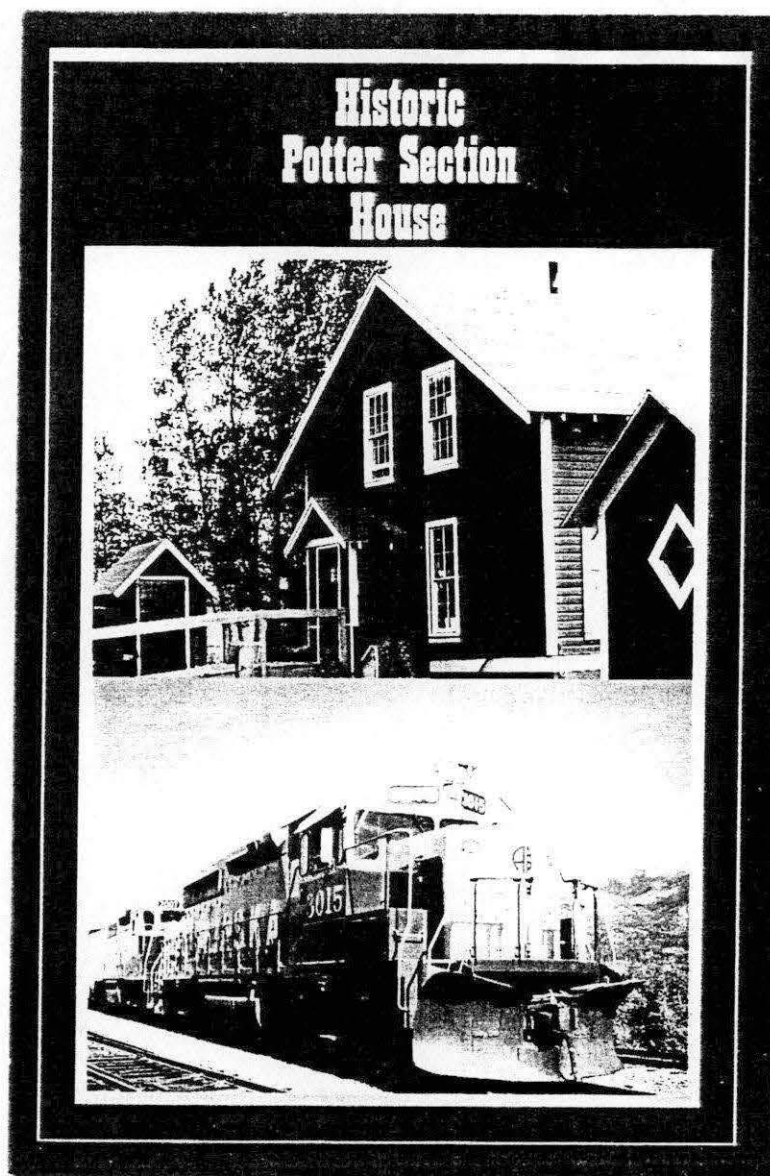
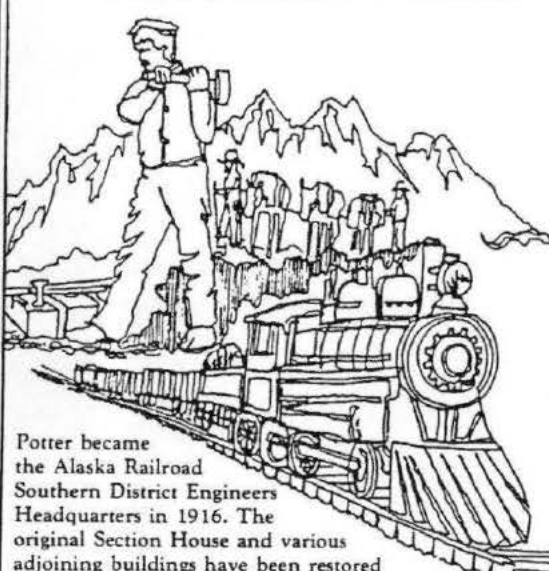


Figure 56. Postcard, "Historic Potter Section House," Chugach State Park. Dennis Freeman and Kathy Snitker, Arctic Circle Enterprises.

counters, racks and cabinets. Two particularly prominent displays in the northwest corner of the room were a potbelly stove covered with brightly-colored refrigerator magnets, and mesh baseball caps hung from floor to ceiling on a post. Interpretive features of the room, such as a wall map and an example of the paint cratering technique used to determine the historic paint colors

POTTER SECTION HOUSE AND HISTORIC PARK



Potter became the Alaska Railroad Southern District Engineers Headquarters in 1916. The original Section House and various adjoining buildings have been restored to near 1900's condition, and occupy their original location within this National Historic Site.

- Open 7 days a week, May-September
Open Thursday-Sunday, October-April
- Just South of Anchorage and
Potter Marsh, Mile 115 Seward Hwy.
- View of Scenic Turnagain Arm
 - Chugach State Park Ranger Headquarters
 - Gandy Dancer Gallery
- Tours • Gandy Dancer Gift Shop
 - Museum • Refreshments
- Interpretive Displays and Exhibits

For information call 345-2631 or 345-2621

Everyone invited!
Children under 12 Free

POTTER SECTION HOUSE AND HISTORIC PARK

SCHEDULE

Summer	M	T	W	T	F	Sa	Su
May	10-8	10-8	10-8	10-8	10-8	10-8	10-8
June, July, August	8-8	8-8	8-8	8-8	8-9	8-9	8-9
September	10-8	10-8	10-8	10-8	10-8	10-8	10-8

Winter	M	T	W	T	F	Sa	Su
October-April 30	—	—	—	10-4	10-4	10-4	10-4

Guided Tours
Tours will be provided on a daily scheduled basis.
Prearranged and special tours are available.

Museum entrance fee \$1.00



approx. 11.5 miles from downtown on Seward Highway



Member of

- Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Alaska Visitors Association

**POTTER SECTION HOUSE
AND
HISTORIC PARK**

Operated by
RESTAURANT ASSOCIATES, LTD.
P.O. Box 220587, Anchorage, Alaska 99522-0587
Telephone (907) 345-2631, (907) 345-2621 (Recorded Information)

Figure 57. Concessionaire's brochure for Potter Section House State Historic Site, Chugach State Park, 1990.

(Fig. 58), were overwhelmed by the sheer volume of merchandise and by the ponderous scale, dark color, and poor quality of the display shelves and cabinets. Interpretive and merchandise displays were intermingled, such as a plastic photo-wood revolving rack placed next to 1930s kitchen objects on the original kitchen counter (Fig. 59).

A wide variety of souvenirs was offered for sale, from plastic placemats to gold nugget jewelry. Items interpretive of the Section House, the Alaska Railroad, and Southcentral Alaska were post cards, wildflower note cards, a cassette tape of train sounds, a silkscreen print of Potter Section House, books about berries, mammals and glaciers, ceramic mugs with a picture of a train, railroad engineer caps, commemorative silver railroad medallions, gold nugget jewelry, and a concessionaire-produced videotape.

Examples of merchandise which did not promote visitor understanding of the historic site included stuffed toy bears in a can, woven wood baskets, woven grass baskets, Eskimo dolls, generic Alaska T-shirts, wallets, placemats, mesh baseball caps, ceramic Christmas tree ornaments imprinted with Tlingit and Haida motifs, ivory jewelry, crocheted Tootsie Roll Pop covers, refrigerator magnets, and cat toys.

Verbal and Written Representation

The site visit did not yield information about the concessionaire's verbal representation of the historic site, and there were no interpretive brochures. A videotape produced by the contractor in accordance with the terms of the concession contract featured color footage of the Section House Site, the Alaska Railroad, and Turnagain Arm. It was played continuously for visitors and sold for \$29.95.

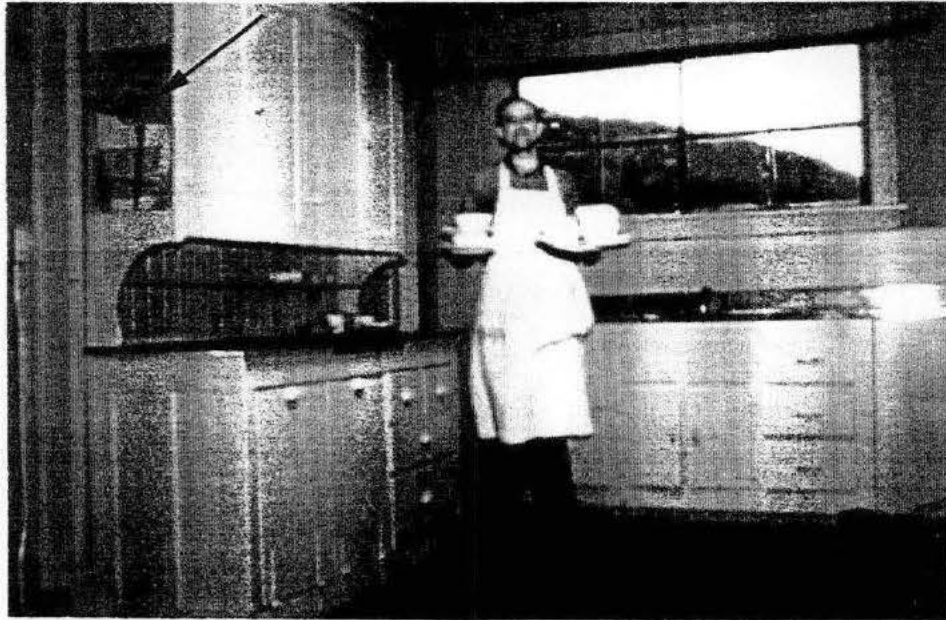


Figure 58. Paint cratering in kitchen of Potter Section House, prior to opening of gift shop. State of AK, Office of History and Archaeology.



Figure 59. Souvenirs in concessionaire's gift shop (kitchen), Potter Section House, Chugach State Park, 1990.

Although certain items offered for sale at the Section House, such as books on the wildlife and geography of southcentral Alaska and pictures of the Alaska Railroad, were compatible with the purpose of the site, these items were overshadowed by the plethora of non-interpretive items. This merchandising technique effectively directed visitor attention away from both the architectural features of the building and its significance as a state historic site. Judging from the quality and content of the advertising, the contractor did not appear to have a clear understanding of the site's purpose or of the market demand for memorabilia from this type of park unit.

Artillery Engineer Cable House, Fort Worden State Park
Port Townsend, Washington

Signage and Advertising

The contractor who operated the beach concession from 1986 through 1991 appeared to have experienced difficulty identifying the Cable House to visitors as a grocery and cafe: multi-colored plastic triangle banners were strung below the eaves, encircling the building (Fig. 60). Other advertising and signage in evidence during the September 1991 site visit was a relatively small wooden sign above the door with the store's name ("The Picnic Basket"), a soft drink machine, and a white plastic table and chairs facing the nearby parking lot. A new contractor took over operation of the beach concession in January 1992, and opened for business as "The Cable House Canteen." The new concessionaire described his operating philosophy for the grocery-cafe as an effort to make the building "more user-friendly without getting too commercial about it."³⁹ When the Cable House was visited again in August 1992, the plastic banners were no longer in use, and a larger sign with the business name hung above the door. In

addition to the soft drink machine and two metal tables with plastic chairs, the Cable House was identified as a visitor services building by the presence of an ice vending machine, a newspaper box, and a small vending cart with umbrella by the store's entrance (Fig. 61).

Two forms of print advertising for the park store are the menus given to visitors at the park's information center, and ads placed in the local newspaper inviting residents of Port Townsend to spend their lunch hour at the beach.⁴⁰ The logo used in the advertising shows a tower-like structure and two trees, with "Cable House Canteen" printed above and below the drawing (Fig. 62). The structure in the logo is not, however, the Cable House. It is the Searchlight Tower located farther down the beach, at Point Wilson (Fig. 63). The contractor's use of this logo has been approved by Washington State Parks, and Parks' logo appears just below it on the "Cable House Canteen" menus.

Souvenirs

Food items comprised the bulk of the merchandise offered for sale in the "Cable House Canteen." Some souvenirs and children's toys were also stocked. These items included postcards, a Fort Worden coloring book, T-shirts, sweatshirts, mesh baseball caps, and plastic buckets imprinted with the concession logo (Fig. 64).

Verbal and Written Representation

Although the National Register has identified the Artillery Engineer Cable House as "a key structure having primary importance to the Fort Worden Historic District,"⁴¹ Washington State Parks has chosen to minimally interpret this building: the only indication to visitors that the Cable House is historic is its



Figure 60. "The Picnic Basket," concession located in Artillery Engineer Cable House, Fort Worden State Park, Washington, 1991.



Figure 61. "Cable House Canteen" beach concession, (Artillery Engineer Cable House), Fort Worden State Park, Washington, 1992.

CABLE HOUSE



CANTEEN

**AT FORT WORDEN
STATE PARK BEACH**

-Seafood Menu -

Fish & Fries.....	\$4.25
Fish Sandwich.....	\$4.25
Chicken Sandwich & Fries.....	\$4.25
Prawns & Fries.....	\$5.25
Clam Strips & Fries.....	\$4.75

- Made To Order Menu -

Hamburgers & Fries.....	\$3.50
Hot Dogs.....	\$1.50
Corn Dogs.....	\$1.50
Slice O'Pizza.....	\$1.60
Kielbasa Dog.....	\$2.50

Hot Fresh Coffee All Day
Soda Pop • Snacks • Candy

Phone orders - Call ahead:
7 am - 8 pm daily
385-9951



Figure 62. Concessionaire-designed menu/brochure, "Cable House Canteen," Fort Worden State Park, Washington, 1992.



Figure 63. Searchlight tower (ca. 1898) at Point Wilson, Fort Worden State Park, 1992.

designation as "historic building" on a site map of the park. By contract, the concessionaire is not required to provide visitor interpretation for this building. The logo chosen by the concessionaire is, however, a form of written interpretation of the building: it uses a portion of the building's name to represent the business located in the Cable House.

Occupancy of the Artillery Engineer Cable house by commercial enterprise does not appear to have caused any physical damage to the building,

and has quite likely extended its life. Use of the Cable House to provide a necessary visitor service (food) is also in keeping with practical adaptive use ethics. The concessionaire's exterior treatment of the building and advertising efforts, however, do not promote visitor understanding of the building's historic significance. As with the Honeyman concession, the absence of any interpretive effort for the Cable House represents a missed opportunity for Washington State Parks to implement its educational mission.



Figure 64. Interior, "Cable House Canteen," souvenir T-shirts with concession logo, 1992.

Conclusion

The concessions in the eight parks examined for this study have experienced varying degrees financial stability based to some extent on the contractors' ability to anticipate and provide for the actual or perceived needs of park visitors. Two of the businesses, those operating in the Potter Section House and Rocky Point Lodge were not successful in this regard and could not meet their financial obligations, forcing termination of their contracts. Others, such as the commercial operations at Wolf Creek Tavern State Wayside, Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside, and Big Delta State Historical Park appear financially solvent, due in part to the contractor's ability to identify specific user groups of the park (motorists traveling the Interstate, birdwatchers and backcountry hikers, or tour bus travelers from out-of-state), and tailor marketing strategies to accommodate these visitors.

The financial solvency of several of these concessions, however, has not necessarily proved synonymous with an accurate or appropriate interpretation for the historic building in which the business is located. Chapter VII will analyze the information which has been presented in this chapter to determine what affects the concessionaire's signage/advertising, souvenirs/souvenir display, and verbal/written representation of the park have had on the presentation of these historic buildings to park visitors.

Notes

¹All parks with the exception of Heyburn State Park were visited twice.

²2010 Citizen Advisory Committee and Oregon Parks and Recreation Division, Oregon State Parks: 2010 Plan, 4.

³Fred Bear, Manager, Heyburn State Park, telephone interview by author, 23 March 1992.

⁴Idaho Department of Parks, "Cooperative Agreement for Rocky Point Lodge, Heyburn State Park," 7 May 1984, 1, photocopied.

⁵Site visit by author to Heyburn State Park, 9 September 1991.

⁶It should be noted here that no maintenance or repairs were allowed for the building from 1976 through 1986, pending the outcome of a lawsuit brought against the State of Idaho by the Coeur d'Alene Indian tribe.

⁷Rinda Just, Deputy Attorney General, State of Idaho, interview by author, Boise, ID, 15 November 1991.

⁸This was a previous contractor, not the same one who declared bankruptcy in 1991.

⁹Idaho Department of State Parks, files, 16 May 1991 and 20 May 1991; Rinda Just, interview by author, Boise, ID, 15 November 1991.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹Open-back window display describes an advertising technique in which the store interior is arranged to face the windows. The store itself then becomes a display that presents an inviting view of merchandise to passersby. Karen R. Gillespie and Joseph C. Hecht, ed., Retail Business Management, (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1977), 309.

¹²Joseph Davis, Manager, Jessie M. Honeyman Memorial State Park, interview by author, 2 January 1992.

¹³Dwain Howard, concessionaire for Jessie M. Honeyman Memorial State Park, phone interview by author, 20 March 1992.

¹⁴Oregon State Parks, visitor brochure for Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside, 1991.

¹⁵The Mail Tribune, Medford, OR, 2 July 1992, 1C; Statesman Journal, Salem, OR, 9 Oct. 1989, n.p; What's Happening, Eugene, OR, 23 May 1991, 11, 24.

¹⁶Frank Tuning, Burns, OR, 1986.

¹⁷Site visit by author to Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside, 10 June 1991.

¹⁸John Ross and Karla Litzenberger, concessionaire for Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside, Frenchglen, OR, interview by author, 13 November 1991.

¹⁹Joy Carter, concessionaire for Wolf Creek Tavern State Wayside, telephone interview by author, 24 March 1992.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³Phillip Walker, 1990.

²⁴Joy Carter, telephone interview by author, 24 March 1992.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Whitestone Farms, Inc., letter to State of Alaska, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, 21 September 1988.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Kris Valencia Graef, ed., The Milepost, 45th Edition, Spring 1993-Spring 1994, 161.

³⁰Alaska State Parks has designated this building a temporary structure, requiring that the contractor remove it from the park at the end of the contract term.

³¹Lael Sturgis, Whitestone Farms, Inc., interview by author, Big Delta Historical Park, Big Delta, AK, 4 August 1991.

³²Ibid.

³³Site visit to Big Delta State Historical Park by author, 3 August 1991.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵The contract stipulates that the concessionaire provide an interpretation of several rooms in the Roadhouse.

³⁶Response of Restaurant Associates Ltd. to RFP#87-0080 for Potter Section House Historic Site, 5 November 1986, 1.

³⁷Alan H. Meiners, Southcentral Regional Manager, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, State of Alaska, telephone interview by author, 7 April 1992.

³⁸State of Alaska, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, files, letter from Restaurant Associates, Ltd. to Gray Line of Alaska, 8 July 1987.

³⁹Peter Simpson, Community Enterprises, Inc., concessionaire for Fort Worden State Park, telephone interview by author, 22 March 1992.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, "National Register Nomination: Fort Worden Historic District," 19 December 1973, 6, 21.

CHAPTER VII

STATE PARK CONCESSIONS: THEIR FUNCTIONAL ROLE IN
HERITAGE RESOURCE INTERPRETATION

... interpretation seeks to identify and translate the intangibles of a place. It embraces the beginning and end of a visit. It includes transportation to a place [and] ... previsit information. It is the atmosphere of a place. It is the options open to the visitor during the visit. It is the set of impressions absorbed.

Carole T. Scanlon, "Interpretation: The Language of the Visitor"¹

Advertising and signage, the selection of merchandise and its display, and the verbal and written information which concessionaires provide for visitors all send powerful messages about the significance of an historic building. These components of visitor service are also components of interpretation, and can enhance or detract from the state's financial investment in the accurate representation of a heritage resource. Use of private enterprise to provide visitor services in these buildings should, therefore, be approached cautiously and justified by more than economic rationale. In 1942, the Washington State Parks Committee expressed a belief that state parks had a purpose beyond offering the public recreational opportunities. The biennial report for that year stated that "It would be hard to compute in dollars and cents how much educational and inspirational experience add to ... the enrichment of society ... for such values have no measuring stick."² David Lowenthal reiterated this philosophy several decades later when he observed that "the ultimate rationale for historic

preservation lies beyond . . . economic benefits . . . It is the less tangible realms of national identity and personal connection with the past which give our material heritage its major value. These attributes cannot be quantified."³

Stewardship of a state's natural and heritage resources for the benefit of the public was a founding purpose of state parks. As trustees for these resources, state parks have

an ethical commitment to accuracy in restoration, truth in interpretation, and protection for the next generation. . . . that obligation is not [met] just by saving and restoring an historic site. Only when the essential meaning of the site and of the people and events associated with it is communicated to the visitor can we say that we have met our responsibilities.⁴

The type of interpretation used for historic house museums, however, has limited application for heritage resources in the state parks. This is due in part to budget considerations and because many parks in which the historic buildings are located are managed primarily with a recreational or natural resource emphasis. For buildings such as CCC lodges for example, an appropriate interpretation can often be achieved by using the building in a manner compatible with its historic use. Such adaptive use is the most beneficial when it acknowledges the value of the historic resource, which includes the building's educational potential for park visitors.

The concessions examined for this study have either enhanced or obscured the significance of the historic buildings in varying degrees, due to a number of factors: the budget of the state park system, the budget of the individual park unit, the value which the park manager or district superintendent places upon resource interpretation, the appropriateness of the building for its current use, contract stipulations, compliance, and enforcement, educational materials and training available to the concessionaire, and the concessionaire's own

interpretive philosophy and financial goals. To study each of these variables in depth is beyond the scope of this thesis. Examination of three aspects of commercial operation, however, – advertising/signage, merchandise selection/display, and written/verbal information offered by the private contractor – provide ample illustration of how each of these particular visitor service components also comprise a portion of the site's overall interpretive message. These factors were chosen for analysis because they are observable, and because they are common to all the parks in this study.

This chapter will first discuss the influence which advertising/signage, merchandise selection/display, and written/verbal information have upon resource interpretation in general. The remainder of the chapter will examine how the concessionaire's implementation of each of these factors have influenced the State's presentation of resource significance to visitors at each of the parks.

Accurate and appropriate interpretation is ultimately as significant as building restoration, for it affects visitor perception of the property's significance. Accurate perception of the significance and value of heritage resources is crucial for continued public support of their preservation.

Advertising and Signage

Applying Scanlon's definition of historic interpretation as inclusive of pre-visit information, a visitor's first impression of a site is often formed from advertisements read prior to the actual visit. This image can be influenced by devices such as typeface size, color, and the use of familiar symbols or logos. Signage on or near a building also provides visual clues for the visitor, and "even the least conspicuous sign on the most dramatic site affects how history is experienced."⁵ Modern signage, when juxtaposed with historic materials, can

create a dissonance between the site's actual significance and its current usage. The visitor makes value judgments about the relative importance of a site based on which aspects – modern or historic – are emphasized in the signage and advertising. As geographer Yi-Fu Tuan noted, “our eyes explore the broad visual field and abstract from it a limited number of objects, points of focus and perspectives. The visitor's evaluation of environment is essentially aesthetic.”⁶

Merchandise Selection and Display

The acquisition of souvenirs has characterized the tourist experience at national and state parks since the late nineteenth century, when tourists routinely chipped away their own personal fragments from mineral formations surrounding the hot springs and geysers at Yellowstone.⁷ Such collecting continued relatively unabated well into the twentieth century as significant archaeological sites in the national parks of the southwest, such as Cliff Palace, were virtually decimated by the desire for mementos.⁸ As late as 1943, visitors were able to purchase bits of petrified ginkgo wood from the concession at Ginkgo State Park in eastern Washington.⁹ That same year, the Parks Board adopted a resolution that “no concessions will be permitted in any of the state parks with the exception of selling postcards.”¹⁰

The many knick-knacks such as cartoon T-shirts and plastic “craft” items which proliferated in national park concessions during the 1950s and 1960s are often associated with souvenirs in general, and this perception has caused state park management a certain amount of uneasiness. Prior to the restoration of Wolf Creek Tavern, a Parks memo expressed concern that “souvenir sales in the building would be disastrous in terms of long-term quality operation.”¹¹ The current manager for this wayside adamantly stated that he “is not interested in

this inn becoming a Five and Dime store."¹² Following a site inspection of Big Delta State Historical Park in 1989, State Parks' architectural historian noted that "the majority of sale items are typical . . . tourist things. We would like to see a greater emphasis on items unique to the site and . . . specifically appropriate to parks and historic sites."¹³

Attempts by state park systems to regulate souvenirs have generally been expressed as provisions in concession agreements requiring that merchandise be of good quality, appropriate to the park, and necessary for visitor enjoyment of the park. The administrative policies of New York and Wisconsin state parks provide examples of these quality-control efforts:

All souvenirs and other merchandise offered for sale to visitors must be in good taste. (New York, 1985)¹⁴

Sale of 'cheap' items will not be allowed. Ten cent items - such as pinball games [and] puzzles . . . tend to give the area a carnival atmosphere. The property superintendent will determine those items . . . considered 'cheap.' (Wisconsin, 1988)¹⁵

Despite their intent, clauses such as these are vague and difficult to interpret, since no clear standard or description of quality and appropriateness has yet been formulated for non-utilitarian items sold in state parks.

Contractors face a two-fold dilemma in their decision over what type of souvenir items to offer. Generic items of marginal quality and low to medium price (commemorative spoons, cartoon postcards, and imprinted mesh baseball caps) are relatively inexpensive to order in bulk, and tourists readily purchase these items. By contrast, sources for site-specific items may be more difficult to locate, and not able to offer the same discounts available from large souvenir wholesalers. In addition, the salability of site-specific interpretive items may not be as high because these items appeal to a more limited consumer group, and the

contractor must sell this merchandise at higher prices in order to make the same kind of profit margin as on generic merchandise.

Souvenirs, as tangible remembrances of a park visit, can encourage increased appreciation of a park's unique heritage resources or underscore an impression that state parks are little different than theme or amusement parks. As educational tools, souvenirs have the potential to stimulate a child's interest in history and material culture, engendering support for preservation efforts in years to come, not only for the specific site, but for heritage resources in general. Interpretive items, well-made and carefully chosen to represent various aspects of an historical site, reflect positively on the high standards and founding purposes of state parks.

Written and Verbal Information

In addition to being influenced by advertisements, signage and merchandise, visitor opinions about the significance of a park's historic resources are also formed from verbal and written information given to them by park managers and concessionaires. This category of information includes visitors' questions, guided tours, logos and brochures which represent the site. It also comprises reference books or periodicals about the historic property which the concessionaire provides for the visitor's on-site use, but are not for sale. Because the concessionaire's contact with the public is far more frequent than management's, the contractor is particularly influential in site interpretation.

The concessionaires at Silver Falls Lodge, Jessie M. Honeyman Concession Building, Rocky Point Lodge (Heyburn), and the Artillery Engineer Cable House (Fort Worden), have not been required by management to provide interpretive information. In each of these parks, interpretation has been limited to restoration

and maintenance.¹⁶ In two other park units, Frenchglen Hotel Wayside and Wolf Creek Tavern Wayside, each contractor is vital to visitors' understanding of the buildings' original function. They perform this interpretive function, however, without specific interpretive training or direction from Parks. At Potter Section House Historic Site (Chugach State Park) and Big Delta State Historical Park, concessionaires have been required by contract to provide historic interpretation.

Interpretation, by definition, is dynamic and does not end with the restoration of an historic building, although this is the stage where Parks' funding for interpretation has typically ceased.¹⁷ Nation-wide, professional guidance by Parks for site interpreters has also been minimal. As Scanlon noted, "in public preservation, there is little interaction between those in the agency who theorize about or allocate funds for interpretation, and those at the site who practice it."¹⁸ For this reason, the quality of verbal and written visitor information at the parks in this study has generally been dependent on the concessionaire's personal interest in the building, their understanding of resource interpretation, the quality of their research, the specific interpretive functions required by contract, and their individual operating budgets. No specialized interpretive training is provided to concessionaires by the state park systems of Alaska, Washington, Idaho and Oregon.

The ensemble of signage, advertising, merchandise and site information exerts a very real, though often underestimated, influence on the effective presentation of an historic site to the public. Even if Parks chooses not to formally interpret the historic site, site interpretation exists nonetheless by the presence of one or more of these elements. Where a building has been accurately restored and information about the site provided for visitors, these preservation efforts are only partially effective if overshadowed by familiar and compelling

contemporary distractions. Successful incorporation of needed visitor services with the important historic features of a site is a challenge of many dimensions. A first step is understanding the interpretive influence of commercial operations on the historic property.

Federal Government Support Services Buildings

Artillery Engineer Cable House, Fort Worden State Park
Port Townsend, Washington

Both the nondescript color and unassuming architectural configuration of this building exemplify one of the dilemmas faced by state parks with regard to concession services: how to offer these services in a building and location which is easily recognizable to visitors yet still in harmony with the rest of the park? Architectural consultant Albert Good recognized this conflict in 1938 when he observed

Other park structures may exist by virtue of subsidy, but the concession is called upon to pay its way. Since . . . it must proclaim itself to the public, it cannot be exactly the shy violet among park buildings. . . . It must announce its commercial traffic unmistakably, yet with a certain subtlety.¹⁹

Signage and Advertising

The advertising and signage methods employed by concessionaires at the Cable House during the past two years appear to have been a response to the difficulties noted by Good. These advertising techniques, common for non-historic structures located in urban shopping areas, have done little to enhance recognition of this park building as historic. The brightly-colored plastic triangle banner is a device distinctly connected with used car lots, convenience stores and

carnivals. Since these banners also have a connotation of being temporary and are associated with cheapness, their use on the Cable House contradicted the building's age, type of construction, and National Register listing.

The visitor conveniences placed in front of the building (soft drink machine, molded plastic chairs and metal tables, ice machine, newspaper box, and covered vending cart) are both signage and advertising, as they identify the building's current function while promoting specific products. The shiny surfaces and bright colors of the vending machines, however, are incongruent with the organic materials and subdued colors of the Cable House, and also conceal most of the building's south facade, including two distinctive 10' x 4' diagonal batten doors.²⁰

The attachment of signage directly onto the building (business name sign above the door and menu signs on the wooden doors) is inappropriate for an historic building, regardless of its adaptive use.²¹ The overall effect of contractor signage on the Cable House is, unfortunately, one of disorder and depreciation.

Perhaps more significant than the appearance and attachment of signage is the concessionaire's use of the Searchlight Tower as a logo for the convenience store/fast food operation in the Cable House. This arbitrary use of artistic license is a deliberate misrepresentation of two historic buildings in the Fort Worden Historic District and unnecessarily confusing to visitors. It is also an impediment to Park's visitor education goals, because the Parks logo is displayed in conjunction with an inaccurate interpretation. The inaccuracy is multiplied by each souvenir item sold that displays a picture of the Searchlight Tower and the words "Cable House".

Impact on Resource Interpretation

Although museum display interpretation does not seem appropriate for this building, given its minimal square footage and the existing park museum, (Coast Artillery Museum) the Cable House does have significance beyond its current commercial use. It is one of only two original buildings (in addition to two structures and the Point Wilson Lighthouse) remaining near the waterfront, and is important because it retains its original siting and basic exterior appearance.

Provision of visitor services seems a logical use for the Cable House since the waterfront area of the park is managed primarily for recreational use and the building is located near a camping area. Although its exterior appearance does indicate an industrial/military rather than a commercial use, the signage indicating that public restrooms are located in a portion of the building assures that visitors will somehow find their way to the Cable House.

A primary conflict which characterizes the adaptive use of the Cable House is the polarity between the contractor's commercial requirements and retention of the building's historic appearance as a National Register property. It is not surprising that the operator of a convenience store would seek to identify his business beyond a simple "Concessions" sign, for clearly recognizable signage and strong visual display are crucial to the success of retail ventures.²² The exterior siting of merchandise such as a soft drink machine,²³ for example, often "sparks the customer's desire to buy."²⁴ Unfortunately, the commercial signage and merchandise display arranged in front of the Cable House "obtrude both as objects and as linguistic symbols" in the visitor's first glimpse of the historic building.²⁵ This apparent impasse between commercial and interpretive

priorities appears to typify the reason for a portion of the Concession Policy of the New York State Parks System:

... restrictions may limit services and merchandising that if rendered would provide a greater profit for the Concessioner. In other cases, certain services that are not profitable might be required, to serve the public.²⁶

Although Fort Worden State Park is managed primarily as a recreational park, the buildings significant in its historic district deserve a minimum level of interpretation: an uncamouflaged exterior appearance.

Potter Section House State Historic Site,
Chugach State Park, Indian, Alaska

A fundamental difficulty for the Section House concessionaire was that actual need for visitor goods and services at this site is minimal. Less than ten miles from downtown Anchorage and only a ten minute drive from the nearest shopping center, the Section House site did not function either as a destination park or as a logical rest and lunch stop for travelers heading south. For travelers returning to Anchorage from the south after a four to six hour drive, the site was located too close to the end of a long trip to make it a convenient stopping point.²⁷ In addition to the site's location, an additional problem for the concessionaire was the unwillingness of tour bus companies to make the Section House a regular stop.²⁸ The uneven visitation which resulted from these two circumstances was likely discouraging to the contractor, and may provide a partial explanation for the indifferent selection, mediocre quality, and stolid display of the merchandise offered to Section House visitors.

Merchandise

Instead of merchandise chosen specifically to enhance visitor understanding of the history of the Alaska Railroad and the state's Southcentral region, the majority of souvenir items in the Section House were generic "Alaskana" items. Their quality and selection seemed to be based on little else than margin of profit. The effect which this merchandise had on the Section House was to transform the historic building into simply another store peddling curios to tourists. The sheer volume and cluttered arrangement of these items created what Tilden referred to as "excess, leading to diffusion of interest. You have seen nothing because you have seen everything. This is the numbness of diffusion."²⁹ The few site-specific items that were offered (train engineer hats, cassette tapes of train sounds, wildflower note cards, postcards, and silkscreen prints of the Section House), were effectively obscured by the profusion of generic merchandise. Particularly incompatible with the interpretive purpose of the historic site were souvenirs representative of the Eskimo, Tlingit, and Haida cultures, populations not indigenous to the portion of the state served by the Alaska Railroad. The use of Tlingit and Haida symbols on Christmas tree ornaments is also contradictory to appropriate heritage interpretation.

Plastic wallets, crocheted Tootsie Roll Pop covers, and cat toys are unnecessary to enhance visitor enjoyment of any state park, historic or non-historic.

Impact on Resource Interpretation

The concessionaire's unsatisfactory interpretation of the Potter Section House was the result of a number of factors, several of which are beyond the

scope of this research. A partial explanation however, is provided by the contractor's response to Parks' RFP for operation of the historic site (1986).

The expectation of both Parks and the concessionaire was that operation of this site could be funded entirely from profits generated by a concession.³⁰ This premise seems to have been based largely on the economic need of both Parks and the contractor, and less on the intrinsic interpretive requirements of a state park historic property. The distinction should again be made here that although tourism is vital to the economy of all states, commercial activities in state parks are necessarily governed by different standards than entrepreneurial activities in the private sector, because of Parks' resource stewardship role for natural and cultural resources.

Examination of the contractor's response to the RFP reveals a strong inclination toward a theme park method of interpretation, based on proposed additions to the site, references to craft fairs and gold panning demonstrations, and the use of a site entrance fee as credit toward the purchase of souvenirs.³¹ Sketches of the proposed concession operation show umbrella-covered vending carts, craft fair booths, and costumed employees.³² The respondent also stated that "the indoor concession area is not sufficient alone to generate adequate revenue to support full park costs; we propose other revenue generating programs."³³

Although originally planned to include cooperative efforts with "universities, historical societies, and museums," the concessionaire's interpretation of the Potter Section House became that of a failing business, due to expectations that exceeded the physical and interpretive limitations of the historic building.³⁴

Food and Lodging for Travelers

Rika's Roadhouse, Big Delta State Historical Park
Big Delta, Alaska

It is reasonable to expect that a contractor who has invested substantially in a business will look for ways not only recover this investment, but to generate a steadily increasing level of profit as well. Creative and aggressive entrepreneurship is a necessity in the highly competitive private-sector tourist industry, and crucial if a business is to survive the initial start-up period. The difficulty of aggressive entrepreneurship in state parks, however, is that commercial enterprise profit goals can fundamentally conflict with heritage interpretation goals. The successful marketing strategies of tourist destinations such as Frontier Town (Disneyland) and Knott's Berry Farm, do not stress accuracy, but rather mystique combined with a simple and dramatic "larger-than-life" portrayal of the frontier in nineteenth and early twentieth century America. The virtually unlimited selection of souvenirs and their eye-catching display leave little doubt as to the primary purpose (profit) of these sites. Such methods, although proven to be lucrative, have very limited application to accurate historic site interpretation in state parks, because of Park's role as resource conservator of land owned by the public. This role necessarily dictates that Parks' not conform to the popular but inaccurate stereotypes of history firmly imbedded in popular culture, but rather provide visitors with an alternative to these depictions. As demonstrated by each of the parks in this study, reconciling the conservation/interpretation objective of Parks with the profit goal of commercial enterprise has involved various degrees of compromise

Advertising

The contractor-generated advertising for Big Delta State Historical Park in the 1993 Milepost focuses almost exclusively on food and gifts. This emphasis, while understandable from an entrepreneurial point of view, nevertheless suggests that food and souvenirs are the *reason* for the park's existence. In the advertisement, the park's historic buildings appear to serve merely as atmosphere or backdrop for the commercial services. Although the Alaska State Parks logo is displayed in the ad (presumably to identify the site as a state park), this logo is interspersed with credit card symbols and the Whitestone Furs logo, raising some doubt as to the primary purpose of this state park unit.

The postcards produced by the concessionaire to advertise the furs sold in Rika's Roadhouse is an example of a relatively minor portion of a site's history being transformed into a commodity. Although the captions on these cards do not carry the name or address of the park, the concessionaire's use of the park's historic artifacts and buildings as display props is questionable, as it resembles advertising more characteristic of theme parks than State Parks.

Merchandise and Display

The few site-specific souvenirs offered by the concessionaire are creative and thoughtful interpretations of the historic site. The honey (from several hives on the property, tended by the contractor) is a particularly appropriate item as it represents a long-standing and primary use of the property: providing food for travelers. The coloring books are also a credible effort, as they furnish information to children about the natural resources of interior Alaska and the history of the Roadhouse. Although not necessarily site-specific, the birch bark

baskets, diamond willow walking sticks, and flower seed packets are interpretive of local crafts, as well as plants native to interior Alaska. The postcards of the roadhouse and mugs imprinted with a circa 1930s sketch of the property are also compatible with the purposes of the park, although the artwork should be attributed or identified. Unfortunately, these few interpretive items are intermingled with and virtually buried amidst the mass of non-interpretive merchandise offered in the Roadhouse gift shop.

Display of souvenirs in the Roadhouse gift shop utilizes several standard merchandising techniques which appear to have proven highly successful for the contractor. These techniques include novelty to catch the visitor's attention ("mosquito traps," cartoon postcards, entertainment by a "live mannequin"), selection display (a wide selection of items which visitors may pick up and examine), and a variety of shapes, textures, colors and prices to maintain the visitor's interest.³⁵ The interest created, however, is not in the park itself, but in merchandise predominately unrelated to the purpose of the park or interpretive of the surrounding area. Thus, instead of reinforcing the park's primary purpose, the gift shop makes use of the park's purpose as a marketing tool. As the contractor observed in 1988,

history is but a segment of the park . . . very few visitors who come through are only interested in history. The idea of something historical to see draws them, the beauty of the site holds them, the excellent food satisfies them, the superior hospitality and service refreshes them, and this whole picture is what persuades them to spend in the gift shop.³⁶

The contractor has justified use of the Roadhouse to showcase their line of fur products by associating this merchandise with a relatively short-lived enterprise of the former Roadhouse owner. Although Wallen at one time raised foxes, this venture represents only a minor aspect of Roadhouse history.³⁷ The

emphasis on fur as interpretive of the park diverts the visitor's attention from the actual significance of the historic property: "the development of transportation, communications, and commerce in interior Alaska, (from) 1904 . . . until World War II."³⁸ The Roadhouse is the key structure in the Big Delta Historic District, and the hub of the park. As a fur salon, however, the Roadhouse becomes simply a novelty, and one of many tourist shops which sell "authentic" Alaska souvenirs, instead of a building which had significant influence on daily life in early twentieth century Alaska.

The location of the fur salon in the Roadhouse illustrates the reasoning behind one of the clauses in the Concessions Management Policy of Nebraska State Parks:

Services, facilities, and merchandise shall be limited to those that are necessary and appropriate for public use and enjoyment of the park area in which they are located. The concessionaire shall not be permitted to take advantage of having a fruitful place in which to do business simply to establish profitable lines of service or sales.³⁹

Verbal Representation

Freeman Tilden, whose writing forms the basis of many current interpretive practices, noted that the ability of visitors to understand and appreciate the significance of any given site was linked to their "three limitations: time, absorptive capacity, and money."⁴⁰ This dictum is particularly true for visitors who arrive at Big Delta State Historical Park via tour bus: the park is simply one of many brief stops on their long tour, one of many places proclaiming itself to be the "real Alaska." Mindful of the competitiveness of the tourism industry for visitor dollars, and required by contract to provide an guided walking tour of the park, the concessionaire has chosen an approach

which attempts to satisfy their commercial priorities and Parks' requirements for park interpretation.

The success of this strategy has been mixed. Tours given in 1990 and 1991 were characterized by a striking degree of congeniality and attentiveness displayed toward visitors, and what appeared to be genuine interest and enthusiasm on the part of the visitors.⁴¹ In earlier years, however, site reports filed by Parks' architectural historian criticized the factual content of these tours, their brevity, and their minimal interpretation of Big Delta's historic significance.⁴² Notable in a 1990 report was the concessionaire's request for a tour outline, and the response of the Office of History and Archaeology: "while [there is no] staff time available to accomplish this, it could be done by an intern working in this office [if] you would be willing to fund such an effort."⁴³ This comment indicates that specific funds were not allocated by Alaska State Parks for professional interpretive planning at Big Delta. Professional quality research and interpretation were, however, expected by Parks from a contractor untrained in these specialties.

The guided walking tour of the park, according to a member of the concessionaire staff, was designed with the perspective that travelers:

are not interested in dry history. They want stories of human interest . . . [peoples'] foibles and strengths, with some facts inserted. This differs from most parks programs.⁴⁴

This anecdotal approach to interpretation is controversial, but similar to one view of heritage interpretation which suggests that:

historical sites . . . may be viewed not only as cultural resources, but also as stage sets and props which, when combined with the visitor's imagination and willingness to fantasize, can raise the visitor's experiential level to a heightened realization of the past.⁴⁵

National Park Service interpretive specialist Sandra Weber disagrees with

this dramatic orientation, however, because it does not impart to visitors:

[a] clear sense of what produced these sites or how they relate to our lives today: visitors are inclined to view [the historic sites] primarily as sources of entertainment. They often leave the park with pleasant memories, perhaps a few new facts, but seldom with any compelling sense of how the things they have just seen relate to their lives.⁴⁶

From a preservation standpoint, the principal concern with entertainment-oriented interpretation is that its focus on amusement neglects a fundamental purpose of resource interpretation: explaining the site's significance to visitors so that they may understand the importance of historic preservation.⁴⁷

Impact on Resource Interpretation

Judging simply by the gross receipts of the concession, Big Delta State Historical Park is an unqualified success.⁴⁸ In addition to the sale of gift items, much of reason for the concessionaire's profitability is their aggressive promotion of the site, as well as courteous and attentive visitor service and quality food service. What has been conspicuously absent at Big Delta Historical Park, however, is frequent visitation of the site by Alaska residents. According to the concessionaire, ninety percent of the people who visit the park are traveling by tour bus.⁴⁹ Lack of resident visitation is not particularly surprising, considering that the concessionaire's marketing strategy emphasizes the historic site as an attraction, where a costumed staff sells Alaska souvenirs and fur coats, offering tourists a taste of the "real Alaska" in much the same way as businesses which specialize in gold panning, glacier viewing, and salmon barbeques. Such an emphasis does not stress why the site's preservation should be important to Alaska residents, other than tourist entertainment and concessionaire profitability.

Several recommendations have been made to Parks to move the concessionaire's gift shop out of the Roadhouse so that the building could assume its original function: lodging and meals.⁵⁰ This use was specified in the Request for Proposals and was also required in the original contract.⁵¹ The contractor is adamant in their refusal to move, however, citing a potential loss of income for the park without the historic Roadhouse to draw visitors to the gift shop.⁵²

In 1991, the concessionaire petitioned Parks to remove one of the interior walls of the Roadhouse so that retail sales space could be increased. Parks denied their request because:

too much of the roadhouse is now committed to retail sales or their maintenance and administration. The emphasis needs to be on more interpretation. Removal of a wall would alter the historical fiber of the Roadhouse beyond acceptable limits.⁵³

Appropriate site interpretation for the Roadhouse at Big Delta Historical Park will likely remain a difficult situation for Parks as long as the continued operation and maintenance of this site is dependent on concession receipts.

Wolf Creek Tavern State Wayside
Wolf Creek, Oregon

The growth of Bed & Breakfast establishments in recent years, and their acceptance by the traveling public, may indicate the desire of some travelers to experience and savor a more personalized hospitality, one that frequently characterized hostelrys in years past. Beyond a desire for overnight accommodations and curiosity about historic buildings, this is the appeal of lodging at Wolf Creek Tavern. For this reason, the innkeepers and staff are as important to visitor understanding of the wayside as the physical restoration of

the building.

Judging from the comment cards received by Parks, the contractor's efforts to make the historic inn "a warm and welcoming place to visit"⁵⁴ have been appreciated by visitors:

We really enjoyed the touch of history as well as the good food.⁵⁵

Enjoyed the food - great service! Did not feel rushed to enjoy the restored areas of the building. ⁵⁶

I visited the Wolf Creek Tavern on two separate occasions, the food and service were wonderful. I could never have imagined a better service that could be provided by the building and staff. ⁵⁷

Merchandise

Several souvenirs offered for sale at this wayside seemed to be a sincere attempt by the concessionaire to carry items representative of the history of the hotel (photo postcards of the hotel, sketch of Wolf Creek Tavern) and southwestern Oregon (wild game cookbook), in addition to items made by local craftspeople (beaded earrings). Other merchandise had no connection at all to the area or historic building (cassette tapes, cartoon postcards). Although the size of the souvenir sales area was relatively small in proportion to the entire hotel, the somewhat haphazard and cluttered display of merchandise in a corner of the coffee shop contradicted the attention to detail and efforts to create an historic atmosphere that characterizes the rest of the hotel. One example of this was the apron and T-shirt pinned to the wall behind the cash register. Due to their contrast with the simple furnishings and the low level of light in the coffee shop, these items became inappropriate attention points in the room. Ralph Lewis, author of Manual for Museums, notes that when furnishings or decorations in an historic building individually become centers of interest, the

visitor may "lose sight of the significant concepts the total setting is intended to express."⁵⁸

The appropriateness of three souvenirs in particular, offered for sale at the time of the site visits, merits reconsideration by Oregon State Parks. The first of these was an interpretive poster of Wolf Creek Tavern. Although the poster was of good quality and appeared relatively accurate in other aspects, the date of construction was listed as 1851, instead of circa 1873 -1880 as noted in the park interpretive brochure.⁵⁹ This oversight could be easily corrected by either contacting the artist so that a change could be made on subsequent prints, or by simply attaching a small printed date correction to each poster sold.

The second item was a series of cartoon postcards. Their artistic quality was poor, the subject matter tasteless, and they did not contribute to visitor understanding of the historic inn. These cards should be removed, as they do not reflect well on the high standards of the Oregon State Park system.

A third item, the booklet entitled "How to Find Indian Arrowheads," was particularly inappropriate as a souvenir item offered at a state park wayside. Although collecting Indian arrowheads has been a fairly common pastime in many rural areas, searching for these and similar artifacts in a systematic way is also an illegal activity, and the sale of this booklet in Wolf Creek Tavern conveys a mixed message to visitors. Under both Oregon state law ORS 358.920 and Federal Law 96-95, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (1979), "the systematic removal of archaeological objects located on public lands" is prohibited.⁶⁰ Although the booklet (privately published in 1966 by an amateur collector) states that looting gravesites is illegal, the author does not mention this until page 29 (of 31 pages), and the booklet has not been updated to include state and federal statutes.

Impact on Resource Interpretation

Despite the questionable nature of several souvenirs and their method of display, the attentive service and substantial meals⁶¹ offered by the concessionaire at Wolf Creek Tavern seem to encourage visitors to relax and observe their surroundings. This is perhaps the overriding benefit of private commercial operation in this historic building: it allows visitors the opportunity to experience Wolf Creek Tavern in a manner similar to its original use. Although it would be impractical (and in violation of modern safety codes) to re-create every aspect of the inn's operation from years past, certain reminders of the difference between historic and contemporary hostelries remain (the absence of TV and telephone is one notable feature). The personable service of the contractor and staff encourages visitors to evaluate these differences in the context of their own visit to Wolf Creek Tavern: Was their experience at the state wayside different from an overnight stay at a privately owned hotel or motel? Was the quality of their visit enhanced by the building's historic furnishings and the attitude of the innkeeper? Is a stay at Wolf Creek Tavern reminiscent of travel in another era? Are other historic buildings in the state used for similar purposes? If visitors to this park unit ask themselves any of these questions, the mission of Oregon State Parks, "to enhance sites of outstanding historic value for the education of present and future generations,"⁶² is furthered by commercial operation of this wayside.

Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside
Frenchglen, Oregon

The interpretive style of the innkeepers at the Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside affords visitors an opportunity for a self-directed discovery of the

history and natural resources of this rural and relatively isolated region of eastern Oregon. This quality of visitation is partially made possible by the way in which the concessionaire presents the historic building to visitors: comfortable and unpretentious, a place where friendly assistance is provided and exploration of the park and surrounding countryside encouraged. The opportunity furnished for visitors at this state wayside is similar to the kind of visitor experience which Olmsted described at Niagara Falls, prior to its inundation with commercial services:

a visit to the Falls was a series of expeditions, and in each expedition hours were occupied in wandering slowly . . . with many intervals of rest . . . There was not only a much greater degree of enjoyment, there was a different kind of enjoyment . . . People were then loath to leave the place; many lingered on from day to day . . . revisiting ground they had gone over before, turning and returning.⁶³

Merchandise and Verbal/Written Representation

Like Wolf Creek Tavern, visitor perception of Frenchglen Hotel as a unique and significant historic building is augmented by the information about the hotel and surrounding countryside which the contractor shares with hotel guests. The innkeepers set the tone for the visitor's experience of this wayside by their helpful attitude, (directions on how to reach Steens Mountain, what animals are native to the area, who built the hotel) informality, (meals served family style) and personal interest in the area. The contractors' verbal representation of the wayside is complimented by the books (Oregon's Big Country, Steens Mountain in Oregon's High Desert Country, Buckaroo), magazines (Audubon, National Wildlife, Range) and informational pamphlets ("Malheur National Wildlife Refuge", U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service) about southeastern Oregon which

they have made available in the lobby for visitors to read.⁶⁴ The general lack of emphasis on merchandising is a major factor which has contributed to the interpretive success of this wayside. The site-specific souvenir items offered, post cards and note cards, reinforce the contractor's representation of the wayside because the subject matter of these cards is limited to the hotel, wildlife native to the region, and reprints of historic photographs of Harney County. Their display in wicker baskets, instead of the typical metal revolving rack, is consistent with the lobby's interior finishes. These souvenirs provide a needed visitor service in a way that is understated and does not give unnecessary prominence to commercial activity. Two displays, however, T-shirts hanging on the wall at the foot of the stairs (Fig. 65) and a collection of soft drink cans above the kitchen door, create unnecessary areas of visual attention (because of their contrast with the colors and surface textures of the Hotel's interior). For the most part, however, the concessionaire's souvenirs reinforce the uniqueness of the hotel and the continuity of its operation, rather than diluting it by the promotion of generic non-interpretive items that exist solely to fill the visitor's "need" for mementos.

Impact on Resource Interpretation

The result of the concessionaire's merchandising and verbal/written representation of the historic hotel is both subtle and striking: the concession at Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside provides necessary visitor services in addition to supplying accurate and appropriate interpretation of the historic resource. This quality of service has not gone unnoticed by wayside visitors, as evidenced by the comment cards received by Parks:

4 stars for hospitality [and] decor. For food . . . superb. We'll be back.⁶⁵

I enjoyed my stay at Frenchglen Hotel. The place does have a homey atmosphere & [the concessionaire] lends an even better ambiance. Their cooking is superior. I would be delighted to stop by again.⁶⁶

Food was great & I'm pleased to see this scale of concession rather than the "Curry Company" type stuff within some of the national parks.⁶⁷



Figure 65. Souvenir T-shirts, Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside, 1991.

Since Parks has not provided written interpretation for Frenchglen Hotel similar to that offered at Wolf Creek Tavern, it is fortunate to have chosen

contractors with an interest in promoting visitor understanding of Frenchglen and the Harney County area. The quality of the concession operation at this state wayside has enabled Oregon State Parks to offer a unique alternative to the commercial hotel or resort , where “crowding, commercialism, . . . and inducements to participate in planned and structured entertainments” are the norm.⁶⁸

Visitor Service Buildings Constructed by the CCC for State Parks

Silver Falls Lodge, Silver Falls State Park Sublimity, Oregon

Designed to blend with the coniferous forest and crafted with extraordinary skill by apprentice workers, Silver Falls Lodge is an outstanding example of the architectural legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corps in Oregon. On a practical level, the Lodge continues to provide visitor services, the purpose for which it was originally constructed.

Parks has sited visitor parking one-hundred yards from the Lodge: screened from view by a stand of western hemlock and Douglas fir, the building is approached on foot via a narrow path. Given this landscape treatment, it seems logical that the visitor’s initial view of the Lodge would exclude modern distractions, allowing an unobstructed focus on the historic building. This, however, is not the case. One of the first things visible to the visitor upon reaching the Lodge from the southwest entrance is a bright blue Sno-Cone machine shining through the window.

Advertising and Merchandising

Although Parks did not intend for the Silver Falls Lodge concession to

provide interpretation for the building or the park, the merchandise and window-display advertising of the contractor project an unmistakable interpretive message to visitors. It is a message which exemplifies both the familiarity and relentlessness of commercial intrusion into rural and forested landscapes. Since the non-food items offered by the Lodge concession do not provide information either about the building or the natural resources of the park, they fail to reinforce the conservation and recreation purpose for which the park was established. Resembling a convenience store in appearance, the concession functions as a compelling distraction which vies with the building's historic features and the park itself for the visitor's attention.

This occurs for several reasons. Foremost is the shiny and colorful display of souvenirs and food preparation equipment through the windows, which commands the viewer's attention more effectively than the dark and massive log porch. The T-shirts hung on an interior masonry wall of the Lodge exert a similar demand as a visual focus. Due to the contrast of the bright fabric against the dark stone, T-shirts are the first thing that the visitor's eye is drawn to upon entering the building. Both of these displays utilize color "as a powerful 'stopper' . . . the element in visual selling . . . most likely to gain the shopper's attention."⁶⁹ Few, if any, of the souvenirs offered by the concession are compatible with the park's natural resource emphasis or the building's rustic interior and exterior finishes.

Impact on Resource Interpretation

Although interpretation of the park's natural resources is provided both in the main area of the Lodge and in the small non-profit store operated by Friends of Silver Falls State Park, the concession area, since it is adjacent to the main

visitor entrance, provides the visitor's first impression of the historic building. Unfortunately, one of the strongest initial images of the Lodge is the juxtaposition of historic materials and finishes with modern commercial activity. This circumstance draws attention away from distinctive building features, thus working against the desired interpretation of the Lodge as a significant example of CCC architecture. As Lewis notes, successful interpretation of an historic resource is dependent on

the elimination of as many intrusions as possible, [such as] . . . sales equipment or activity inside the historic structure, especially near the entrance. The thoughts and feelings which make a room come alive get diverted whenever a visitor becomes conscious of something incongruous or anachronistic.⁷⁰

The lack of contractor storage space in the concession area (which contributes to its somewhat cluttered appearance) is a reminder of one aspect of park planning which was not implemented for Silver Falls Lodge. Good (1938) stated that a practical need often underestimated when constructing concession buildings was "the requirement for working space and storage of supplies. [This requirement] eventually forces the building of an addition or enclosure to screen . . . unsightly debris from public view."⁷¹

In 1943, State Park Historian W.A. Langille made a recommendation for Silver Falls Lodge (referred to as the Concession Building) based on Good's reference:

The following new project should be considered at an early date: A two-story building to supplement the Concession Building, the lower floor to be used for park picnic goods such as ice cream, hot dogs, etc. The sale of these goods should never clutter the Concession Building.⁷²

From a management standpoint, the current contractor has provided dependable food service to Silver Falls State Park for many years, working to

establish this business without benefit of printed advertisement, through seasons when park visitation barely covered operating expenses.⁷³ Although the concession was originally established to provide only food, park management allowed expansion of the operation to include souvenir items when it became apparent that food sales alone could not generate the profit necessary for the contractor to stay in business.⁷⁴ The most recent concession agreement, renewed in part as an acknowledgment of the contractor's dependable service, has been designed with more stringent requirements pertaining to management review of souvenir merchandise.⁷⁵

Although the Friends of Silver Falls State Park store sells interpretive items, it does not sell food. Since the nearest cafe is over twenty-five miles away, food remains a necessary visitor service for this park. After the current contractor retires, it may be possible to utilize the present concession area for this purpose if a limited selection of prepared food (cookies, chips, cold sandwiches) and beverages could be served without displaying the items in the windows or on the counters outside of the concession area. If food display could be contained and the sale of souvenirs items restricted to the interpretive store, a more unified and appropriate interpretation could be achieved for the entire building.

Concession Building (Former Bathhouse),
Jessie M. Honeyman Memorial State Park
Florence, Oregon

Despite its adaptive use as a store and cafe, the Concession Building at this park has maintained an exterior appearance which contributes to its historic integrity. The reason for this can be attributed not only to its careful restoration and maintenance, but also to the fact that vending machines, food carts, signage

or other concession related merchandise and equipment are not displayed beyond the interior of the building.⁷⁶ (The one exception is a newspaper vending machine.) The location of a park store in the former Bathhouse is compatible with the building's original use, providing necessary visitor goods and services, in addition to building security and maintenance.

Merchandise

In his operation of the store and cafe, the concessionaire utilizes the interior of the former Bathhouse to provide the maximum amount of merchandise display. In addition to food and toiletries, approximately one-fourth of the interior space is devoted to souvenirs. Most of these items (with the exception of the postcards and Elderberry blossom jelly) are decorative, not interpretive, and resemble souvenirs available in nearby coastal tourist shops. Although their visual impact on the building's interior is negligible (since the original interior has been extensively remodeled), most of these goods are unnecessary for visitors' enjoyment of this park. Similar to the souvenirs offered by the Silver Falls concession, the non-interpretive items at Jessie M. Honeyman Memorial State Park convey an inappropriate message to visitors regarding the purpose of state parks. Although recreational use is an important component of Honeyman State Park, this allowed use does not require that Parks furnish visitors with the same material diversions available in municipal or commercial parks in urban areas. To do so disregards the value of Parks' stewardship of these public lands. This stewardship charges Parks to provide recreational opportunities compatible with the specific natural and historic resources of each park. A fundamental aspect of compatibility involves enhancing the educational values of these resources, not diverting visitor attention from them.

It is also questionable if merchandise such as myrtle-wood clocks, costume jewelry, and troll-doll pencils would be missed, assuming campers want these items at all. A 1987 survey of Wisconsin state park users, conducted by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the University of Wisconsin, found that "only three percent of DNR campers said gift or curio shops were important [to them]."⁷⁷ At four public forums held in conjunction with this survey, one of the most frequently expressed comments was "Don't commercialize the parks."⁷⁸

Impact on Resource Interpretation

Perhaps more importantly, non-interpretive souvenirs and the space which they occupy in the Concession Building represent a missed opportunity for Oregon State Parks: offering visitors to Honeyman a chance to learn about the original inhabitants of Oregon's central coast, the important natural resources of the park, the significance of the CCC's contribution to Oregon State Parks, and the scenic conservation efforts of Jessie M. Honeyman, the woman for whom the park is named. Although Parks' 1981 Master Plan for Honeyman recommended rehabilitation of the Bathhouse for an adaptive use, it stated that the *reason* for preserving the building was that it provided "one of Oregon's best examples of the original rustic stonework [and] excellent workmanship [of] the CCC."⁷⁹ Interpretation of the building was specifically recommended as a component of its preservation: "a central area of the building will provide space for interpretive and display usage."⁸⁰

Historical interpretation of the Bathhouse as suggested in the master plan has not been implemented,⁸¹ presumably due to state budget constraints. Interpretation has, nonetheless, occurred: the concession's emphasis on novelties

and knickknacks instead of site-specific items implies that the value of the historic building is similar to that of a tourist shop or variety store. Although this condition is not irreversible, only minimal visitor understanding of the significance of CCC architecture in Honeyman Park is likely to occur until the concession's functional role in resource interpretation is acknowledged.

Rocky Point Lodge, Heyburn State Park, Plummer, Idaho: Current Adaptive Use

After thirty-nine years as a concessionaire-operated lodge and restaurant, Rocky Point Lodge became a park interpretive center in summer 1992. Funding for this adaptive use was provided by the park's operating budget, in addition to donations from the Coeur d'Alene tribe, the City of Chatcolet, and park visitors. A park interpreter for the Lodge (seasonal, during the summer only) is jointly funded by Heyburn State Park and the Coeur d'Alene tribe. The interpretive center is also applying for a grant from the Idaho Heritage Trust to fund new displays.

In addition to basic interior repairs to the Lodge, park management removed the fluorescent light fixtures and exterior glass doors, replacing them with the building's original doors (new deadbolts) and light fixtures which were stored in the basement.⁸² The log infill which covered the windows on the building's north facade for several decades, (added by an early concessionaire) is being dismantled, restoring this side of the building to its original appearance. The Lodge has also been re-plumbed, and the three interpretive display areas on the main floor carpeted. A new heating system for the Lodge will be installed in June or July. The second floor of the building is not open to the public, and will be used as either office space or as housing for seasonal park aides.

The National Register nomination for Heyburn State Park Historic District is currently being prepared by one of Heyburn's park rangers. This nomination will include Rocky Point Lodge, the park manager's residence, and the many day-use structures built in the park by the CCC during the 1930s

Resource Interpretation⁸³

The interpretive center at Rocky Point provides visitors to Heyburn State Park with interpretive information on the customs and history of the region's indigenous inhabitants, the Coeur d'Alene tribe, the vegetation and wildlife of northern Idaho, and an historical perspective of the park from 1908 to 1940. The former kitchen-dining area of the Lodge houses the largest display area, that of the Coeur d'Alene tribe. Working under the direction of the tribal archivist and cultural committee, the tribe designed and installed all displays. Several displays are set up in the hewn-log dining booths on the north and west walls.

The room which previously functioned as a concession grocery has been converted to an audio-visual room where visitors can watch slide programs on the wildlife of the park and videos of tribal dances. A corner of the room ("Discovery Corner") features latex casts of animal tracks.

The concessionaire's former living quarters now contain exhibits portraying the history of the park. Among the displays are photographs, tools, and uniforms of the CCC, donated by CCC alumni organizations. Tools and photographs also illustrate early logging operations. The room is furnished with circa 1930s and 1940s furniture and artifacts, and mounted bird and animal specimens are planned for a future display, "Watchable Wildlife of the Marshes and Uplands". One corner of the room is set up as a campsite from the 1930 - 1940 era, with pup tent and sleeping bag.

The restoration and adaptive use of Rocky Point Lodge provides an example of how the definition of "visitor need" has been enlarged by Idaho State Parks to include knowledge of Idaho's history and significant natural resources. Parks' preservation of the Lodge, an acknowledgement of its importance to Idaho's citizens, is an investment that will provide the public education necessary to engender support for further preservation efforts throughout the state.

Impact of Interpretive Center

Many of the visitor services formerly provided by the Rocky Point concessionaire are now offered at the Rocky Point Marina, located just west of the Lodge. Owned and operated by Parks, the marina sells boat fuel and a limited selection of grocery items. This shift in building functions from the Lodge to the Marina has allowed management of the Lodge to focus on a use more compatible with the building's configuration. Although appropriate for the needs of campers when it was constructed in 1933, the building soon proved inadequate to handle the high-volume but erratic park visitation which became prevalent after the 1950s. Modifications made to the Lodge by a succession of contractors ultimately proved insufficient to accommodate modern visitation patterns (limited overnight stays, boaters' brief fuel and groceries stops dependent on clear weather), and also compromised the character and physical integrity of the Lodge.

According to two of Heyburn's park rangers, the response of visitors and area residents to the new use of Rocky Point Lodge has been "excellent."⁸⁴ Residents of Chatcolet have been particularly enthusiastic, donating artifacts and building materials for displays, and the new interpretive center has also "opened the door for better communication between the park and the Coeur d'Alene

tribe."⁸⁵

Increased visitor awareness of Heyburn's natural and heritage resources, in addition to improved cooperation between park management and area residents are two significant benefits which have resulted from the recent restoration and adaptive use of Rocky Point Lodge. Such benefits, attributable to the dedication and hard work of park management and staff, together with the Coeur d'Alene tribe, provide tangible evidence of the "quality of life" value of historic preservation. The current management of the Lodge also illustrates how well Idaho State Parks has realized the importance of Good's 1938 dictum:

Any natural park worthy of its name will not jeopardize its standards and expose itself to misuse by admitting within its boundaries commercial enterprise that is not dedicated to serving the fundamental purpose and best interests of the park.⁸⁶

Conclusion

Structurally, each of the historic buildings in this study have benefited to some degree from the presence of a commercial business. Even Rocky Point Lodge, despite various modifications made by three decades of contractors, retained its basic appearance and character in part because the physical presence of a concessionaire discouraged vandalism and provided a minimum level of basic maintenance for the building.

Most of these state park concessions have not contributed to recognition of the building's historic significance, however, for several reasons. As demonstrated by the advertising style and merchandise selection of the concessions at Potter Section House Historic Site and Big Delta Historical Park, the financial goals of private enterprise often take precedence over Parks' interpretive goals. This is not surprising given that a primary goal of private

enterprise is to generate increasing amounts of profit. Familiar generic items often appeal to a wider range of visitor tastes, and thus sell more readily than site-specific interpretive souvenirs. Evaluation of each piece of merchandise sold by the concession has been impractical for park management, to implement, since no clear description of appropriate souvenir items exists. This situation is particularly difficult when the park is dependent on a percentage of concessionaire gross profit to maintain its operation. A district ranger described the profit/interpretive dilemma in his observation that

Parks must realize . . . private enterprise will always be motivated by money in order to stay in business and operate at a reasonable profit level. On the other hand, Parks must be the advocate for maintaining the integrity of park resources, whether they be natural attractions or historic sites.⁸⁷

Another conflict between the requirements of commercial business and park resource interpretation occurs when the configuration of an historic building is only partially suitable for the needs of private enterprise. This situation existed at Rocky Point Lodge, where concessionaires made a number of structural modifications incompatible with building's architectural design in order to accommodate requirements for lighting, food storage and building security. The Artillery Engineer Cable House and Silver Falls Lodge also provide examples of the contractor's promotional vision exceeding the physical limitations imposed by the building. In each case, the building's historic appearance did not promote its current retail use, which prompted the concessionaires to employ standard advertising and merchandising techniques to draw visitor attention. Although open-back window displays and creative logos may be appropriate for retail businesses in the private sector, the use of such methods in state parks can make visitor recognition of a building's cultural

significance difficult. Nebraska State Parks acknowledges this aspect of resource management in their concessions policy, which states that "it is important to maintain the integrity of the visual environment for the enjoyment of the visitor and the protection of the resources. Advertising . . . should be accurate [and] signs shall be subdued in appearance."⁸⁸ An historical architect for Alaska State Parks also expressed concern about the emphasis of adaptive use requirements over historic integrity: "We would do well to keep in mind that the building, as an historical property should be utilized in ways which show primary respect to the building geometry rather than . . . the convenience of the user."⁸⁹

Many visitors do not make a distinction between park management and the private contractor who provides services for the park.⁹⁰ For this reason, it is crucial that Parks carefully evaluate the interpretive message projected by the concession. If the concession's influence is not acknowledged and directed, visitors may develop a distorted understanding of Parks' stewardship mission, equating historic resource preservation with pervasive commercialism instead of cultural heritage. Such a situation can occur when the contractor's financial limitations, financial goals, and lack of understanding of the resource combine in a way that camouflages or ignores the building's significance. To effectively communicate to visitors the significance of historic buildings, private contractors must be willing to tailor their operations to support Parks' basic interpretive goals. Even if the concessionaire is not directly responsible for implementing this interpretation, operation of the concession should not conflict with it.

At the park units where private enterprise has contributed to visitor understanding of historic resources, such as Frenchglen Hotel and Wolf Creek Tavern, compatibility between Parks' interpretive goals and the concessionaire's interpretation of the park can be attributed to a minimal emphasis on retail sales,

the contractor's personal interest in the history of the building and region, a willingness to cooperate with park management, and pride in the quality of their operation. When these conditions are present, the impact of commercial operations on state park heritage resources is a beneficial one, contributing to visitor understanding of their significance and public support for historic preservation.

Notes

¹Carole T. Scanlon, "Interpretation: The Language of the Visitor," Historic Preservation October - December 1974, 36.

²Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, A History of Washington State Parks: 1913-1988 (Olympia: Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, 1991) , 23.

³David Lowenthal, "The Future of Our Heritage," in Our Past Before Us: Why Do We Save It?, ed. David Lowenthal, (London: Maurice Temple Smith, Ltd., 1981) , 176.

⁴William T. Alderson and Shirley Payne Low, Interpretation of Historic Sites (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1976) , 6.

⁵David Lowenthal, The Past is a Foreign Country (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) , 269.

⁶Yi-Fu Tuan, "Visual Blight: Exercises in Interpretation," in Peirce F. Lewis, David Lowenthal, and Yi-Fu Tuan, Visual Blight in America, (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Geographers, 1973) , 23-24.

⁷John Ise, Our National Park Policy (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1961) , 26.

⁸Ibid, 145.

⁹Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, Olympia, WA, minutes of Washington State Park Board Meeting, 21 August 1943.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department, Salem, OR, memorandum from Preservation Specialist/ Architect to Historical Programs Coordinator, 10 March 1976.

¹²Larry Miller, District Manager, Oregon State Parks, interview by author, Wolf Creek Tavern, Wolf Creek, OR, 20 September 1991.

¹³Office of History and Archaeology, Division of State Parks, Anchorage, Alaska, memorandum from Architectural Historian to Northern Regional Manager, 3 October 1989.

¹⁴"Concession Policy for the State Park System," (Albany: State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, 1965) , 4.

¹⁵"Concession Agreements," (Madison: Department of Natural Resources, 1973) , 6.

¹⁶An exception was the 1983 interpretive exhibit at Silver Falls Lodge, initiated by Oregon State Parks Volunteer Coordinator and designed and installed by the Oregon State University School of Forestry. Preservation Specialist to Volunteer Coordinator, letter, 31 July 1983, State Parks and Recreation Department, Salem, Oregon.

¹⁷Reference is specific to Alaska, Washington, Idaho, and Oregon state parks.

¹⁸Scanlon, "Interpretation," 36.

¹⁹Albert H. Good, Park and Recreation Structures, Part II: Recreational and Cultural Facilities, (Washington D.C.: National Park Service, 1938) , 73.

²⁰The National Park Service design guidelines for new construction contiguous to historic buildings note three essential elements for compatibility: scale, texture, and continuity. Rodd L. Wheaton and John Albright, "Scale, Texture, Continuity: Design Compatibility in Historic Preservation," CRM Bulletin 2 (June 1979) : 1.

²¹Ralph H. Lewis, Manual for Museums, (Washington D.C. : National Park Service) , 309.

²²Karen R. Gillespie and Joseph C. Hecht, ed., Retail Business Management, (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1977) , 301.

²³The current concession contract requires that a soft drink machine be located at the beach concession. The contract does not specify if this machine is to be located indoors or outdoors.

²⁴Gillespie, Retail Business, 301.

²⁵Lowenthal, The Past, 268.

²⁶New York State Parks Department, "Concessions Policy," April 1965,
1.

²⁷Alan H. Meiners, Southcentral Regional Manager, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, State of Alaska, telephone interview by author, 7 April 1992.

²⁸This was due to the site's relatively small size and the proximity of the Section House to other scheduled stops. In a 28 June 1987 letter to the Potter Section House contractor, Gray Line Tours expressed a safety concern regarding the parking lot's exit onto the highway. The company also observed that the Section House could not easily accommodate two bus loads of passengers at once, particularly on rainy days. Files, State of Alaska, Division of Parks, Anchorage, AK.

²⁹Freeman Tilden, Interpreting Our Heritage: Principles and Practices for Visitor Services in Museums, Parks, and Historic Places, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1957), 81.

³⁰State of Alaska, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Southcentral Region, "Scope of Service," in Request for Proposals, (RFP) ARN 87-0080, for Concession Opportunities at Potter Section House Historic Site, Chugach State Park, 24 September 1986, 26; Contractor response to RFP, "Program Operational Highlights," 2.

³¹Contractor response to Request for Proposals, Potter Section House Historic Site, October 1986, 2-3.

³²*Ibid*, 23, 28, 30.

³³*Ibid*, 2.

³⁴*Ibid*, 1.

³⁵Gillespie, Retail Business, 301, 304, 311.

³⁶State of Alaska, Division of Parks, letter from concessionaire to Division of Parks, 8 November 1988.

³⁷Janet F. Clemens, "National Register of Historic Places, Registration Form, Big Delta Historic District," Office of History and Archaeology, Division of Parks, Department of Natural Resources, State of Alaska, 20 March 1990, 12-14.

³⁸*Ibid.*

³⁹Nebraska State Parks, "Administrative Policy, General Operation," May 1988, 1-4.

⁴⁰Tilden, Interpreting Our Heritage, 40.

⁴¹Site visits by author, Big Delta State Historical Park, Big Delta, AK, July 1990 and August 1991.

⁴²State of Alaska, Div. of State Parks, memoranda, Architectural Historian to Regional Manager, 3 October 1989 and 17 July, 1990.

⁴³*Ibid.*

⁴⁴Lael Sturgis, Whitestone Farm, interview by author, Big Delta State Historical Park, Big Delta, AK, 4 August 1991.

⁴⁵Bruce Craig, "Interpreting the Historic Scene: The Power of Imagination in Creating a Sense of Historic Place," in Heritage Interpretation: The Natural and Built Environment, ed. David Uzzell, (London: Belhaven Press, 1989), 109.

⁴⁶Sandra Weber, "Interpreting Our Cultural Ecosystem," CRM Bulletin 13 (1990): 1.

⁴⁷Don Aldridge, "How the Ship of Interpretation Was Blown Off Course in the Tempest: Some Philosophical Thoughts," in Heritage Interpretation Vol. 1, ed. David Uzzell, 64.

⁴⁸In 1991, the concession reported a gross income of \$700,000. Telephone call by author to Alan Meiners, Southcentral Regional Manager, Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, 7 April 1992.

⁴⁹The concessionaire stated in a 8 November 1988 letter to the Alaska Division of State Parks that two percent of the visitation to Big Delta Historical Park was from the local area, four percent from Fairbanks, four percent were independent travelers, and ninety percent were out-of-state tourists traveling by tour bus.

⁵⁰Memorandum, Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, 11 September 1984; Site visit report of Architectural Historian, Division of Parks, 3 October 1989.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Whitestone Farms, Inc., A Cursory Review of the Feasibility of Lodging in Rika's Roadhouse, Big Delta State Historical Park, 18 October 1990, 8.

⁵³Northern Regional Manager to concessionaire, letter, State of Alaska, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, 22 April 1991.

⁵⁴Joy Carter, Wolf Creek Tavern concessionaire, telephone interview by author, Wolf Creek, OR, 24 March 1992.

⁵⁵Visitor Comment card received by Oregon Department of Parks, March 1991.

⁵⁶Ibid, April 1991.

⁵⁷Ibid, March 1991.

⁵⁸Lewis, Manual for Museums, 300.

⁵⁹Confusion has existed for over forty years regarding the construction date of Wolf Creek Tavern. Early newspaper stories and subsequent historical references listed 1851 as the date of construction. Research conducted by preservation architect Philip Dole in the mid 1970s, however, indicates that the Tavern was built circa 1880.

⁶⁰Archaeological Resources Protection Act, Section 6, Oregon State Law ORS 358.920, (1979).

⁶¹Site visit by author to Wolf Creek Tavern State Wayside, 20 September 1991.

⁶²2010 Citizen Advisory Committee and Oregon Parks and Recreation Division, Oregon State Parks: 2010 Plan, 4.

⁶³Frederick L. Olmsted, " 'Notes by Olmsted,' Special Report of the New York State Survey on the Preservation of the Scenery of Niagara Falls and Fourth Annual Report of the Triangulation of the State for the Year 1879," Joseph L. Sax, Mountains Without Handrails, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989) 23-24.

⁶⁴Raymond R. Hatton, Oregon's Big Country, E. R. Jackman and John Scharff, Steens Mountain in Oregon's High Desert Country, Kurt Markus, Buckaroo.

⁶⁵Visitor Comment card received by Oregon Department of Parks, April 1991.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*

⁶⁷*Ibid.*

⁶⁸Sax, Mountains Without Handrails, 22.

⁶⁹Gillespie, Retail Business, 304.

⁷⁰Lewis, Manual for Museums, 301.

⁷¹Good, Park and Recreation, 73.

⁷²W.A. Langille, "Report on Silver Falls State Park," 18 August 1943, Chester H. Armstrong, Oregon State Parks History: 1917 - 1963, 1 July 1965.

⁷³Gary Schmidt, District Manager, and Claude Crocker, Assistant District Manager, Oregon State Parks, interview by author, Silver Falls State Park, 18 December 1991.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*

⁷⁵*Ibid.*

⁷⁶Except for regulations prohibiting concessionaire signage, this appearance is not specified by contract.

⁷⁷Wisconsin State Parks Concessions Task Force, "Final Report," (Madison: Department of Natural Resources, State of Wisconsin, 31 May 1988) , 13, photocopied.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Oregon State Parks and Recreation Division, Master Planning Unit, "Jessie M. Honeyman Memorial State Park: Master Plan," (Salem: Oregon State Parks and Recreation Division, January 1981) , 23 , photocopied.

⁸⁰Oregon State Parks and Recreation Division, files, announcement of historic bathhouse restoration, Jessie M. Honeyman Memorial State Park, 15 January 1981, photocopied.

⁸¹Except for a small brass plaque affixed to an exterior wall: "This building was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1938. In 1980, the interior was remodeled and the exterior was restored to the original condition."

⁸²Fred Bear, Manager, Heyburn State Park, telephone interview by author, 23 March 1992.

⁸³Teresa Perry and Ken Paulsen, Park Rangers, Heyburn State Park, telephone interview by author, 29 April 1993.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Good, Park Structures Vol. II, 57.

⁸⁷Claire Holland, District Ranger, Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, letter to author, 27 January 1992.

⁸⁸Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, "Administrative Policy: Concessions Management," (Omaha: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, May 1988) , I-5, photocopied.

⁸⁹T. Young, Chief, Park Design and Construction and B. Mitchell, Historical Architect, Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, memorandum, 9 January 1986.

⁹⁰Claire Holland, District Ranger, Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, letter to author, 27 January 1992; Joy Carter, interview by author, 20 September 1991.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

While private contracting remains the favored method of many state park systems for providing visitor services, a number of factors indicate that this practice requires additional evaluation when concession operations are located in historic buildings. The problems encountered by the National Park Service throughout one hundred years of negotiating with private enterprise illustrate that the motivations of concessioners often differ fundamentally from the resource conservation objectives of Parks. Although specialized services and non-interpretive merchandise sometimes proved profitable for park contractors, non-essential items and accommodations often eroded the unique purpose of national parks, rendering visitor service areas indistinguishable from suburban shopping centers. Where this has occurred, the values for which the parks were established are compromised, and visitors to these parks may develop the tendency to regard the park's cultural, natural and historic resources as merely attractions to be visited rather than a heritage to be understood and appreciated.

When most state park systems were first being established during the 1920s, park proponents were acutely aware of the many difficulties that national parks had experienced with private contractors. Consequently, they were somewhat cautious in implementing concession contracting in the state parks. During the past twenty years, state park administrators have likewise

observed the continuing pitfalls of concession contracting in national parks, attempting to avoid these difficulties by formulating detailed leasehold agreements which prohibit allowances such as possessory interest. While these documents provide a measure of legal protection for Parks in their dealings with private contractors, the experiences of several state park systems in Alaska and the Pacific Northwest have shown that concession contracts alone cannot ensure the provision of visitor goods and services in a manner compatible with State Parks' mandate to enhance and preserve heritage resources.

Problems associated with the changing nature of state park visitor services arose at Rocky Point Lodge, where a succession of concessionaires found the building inappropriate for their commercial needs. Character-defining building features which the contractors were allowed to alter included windows, doors, light fixtures, and an exterior facade. All were retrofitted in order to provide additional building security, light, and food preparation/storage areas. Each concessionaire maintained that such alterations were necessary for the profitable operation of a modern restaurant and grocery.

The concession history of Rocky Point Lodge also provides an illustration of the differing objectives of private enterprise and heritage resource conservation. Ideally, State Parks' function as trustee for these valuable public lands should be guided by the principles inherent in responsible resource stewardship, even when such management is not necessarily financially profitable. The fundamental goal of business, however, is to operate at a profit, and this objective is often achieved by providing goods and services which are familiar and have a demonstrated popularity

with consumers.

The unsuitability of applying commercial methods to visitor services in historic buildings is evidenced by the transformation of the exterior appearance of the Artillery Engineer Cable House, and the interior appearance of Rika's Roadhouse, Potter Section House, and Silver Falls Lodge. The effect of the contractors' presentation of services and merchandise in (or outside of) these historic buildings was a visual rendering of their many character-defining components into simply another generic tourist shop. The sheer quantity of items such as refrigerator magnets, key chains, costume jewelry, and miniature spoons indicates that Parks allowed contractors to define necessary visitor goods and services by a profit criteria, rather than requiring that visitor services and merchandise be compatible with the purpose and interpretation of individual parks.

Reversing this practice is difficult, however. Concessionaires at Silver Falls Lodge and Potter Section House were not able to survive financially when limited to offering only *necessary* visitor items and services. This presented management with the dilemma of choosing between no visitor services or services which were more expansive than Parks originally intended. Compromises that allowed the sale of non-essential and non-interpretive items, however, also compromised the integrity of heritage resources at these parks. Character-defining features of historic buildings were effectively obscured by the placement of advertising and merchandise, and the distractions which non-interpretive items introduce have diverted the visitors' attention from the significance of specific historic resources (as well as the parks in general). As David Lowenthal noted,

buildings derive absolute historical importance not [only] from their creation in a particular period or from their established aesthetic and stylistic value, but also from the social context in which they [are] used, the functions they fulfill . . . and the historical experiences associated with them.¹

Unfortunately, emphasis on cash flow results in a merchandise selection that is developed only for its generic souvenir value, a practice which the manager of the visitor store at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) termed "typical of the commercial mentality that goes for the lowest common denominator."² This comment parallels Olmsted's assertion that "the best use of highly scenic areas is not to *serve* popular taste, but to *elevate* it."³

This is the primary impact of privately operated concessions in the state parks of the study region: their ability to either communicate or obscure the significance of the historic building to park visitors. The concessions at Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside and Wolf Creek Tavern State Wayside have, for the most part, provided necessary visitor services in a manner which appears to promote visitor appreciation of the historic significance of these parks. Two other concession operations, however, those at Fort Worden and Jessie M. Honeyman Memorial State Parks, do not attempt (nor does Parks) to acknowledge the historic significance of the buildings in which they operate. This lack of recognition effectively disguises the reason for the listing of these buildings on the National Register of Historic Places. The commercial enterprises at Potter Section House State Historic Site and Big Delta State Historical Park, while providing some interpretive merchandise, offered many more items which detracted from the purpose for which these parks were established.

Because the mission of State Parks requires that its managing agency "protect and enhance sites and areas of outstanding . . . historic value for the enjoyment and education of present and future generations,"⁴ an accurate presentation of these resources to the public is essential. As author David Uzzell noted, "to display a thing of significance to the public without attempting to communicate some of its values is irresponsible . . . because it puts that thing at risk."⁵

By virtue of their visibility and accessibility to the public, state and national park concessionaires are an integral part of heritage resource interpretation. Bill Winkler, a concessioner for Mesa Verde National Park affirmed this role: "We feel we're interpreters, that's where our greatest satisfaction and services lie."⁶ Gary Everhardt, former director of the NPS, agreed with this assertion: "Concession employees . . . have the greatest opportunity to make a visitor aware of what a park is all about, more so maybe than even our own interpretive people."⁷

Although the state parks provide important revenue to state economies by encouraging tourism, "state parks [were] not established as tourist attractions."⁸ For this reason, "the underlying motivation which must control the practice of using revenue producing facilities in the public arena is the desire to offer a comprehensive, high quality public service."⁹ As Paul Prichard (NPCA) observed in 1990, a strong and concise definition of comprehensive and high quality service is critical to establishing concessions geared to the promotion of the unique resources of each park.¹⁰ The definition of comprehensive and high quality service is necessarily more involved when visitor services are located in an historic building, because of Parks' stated mission to protect and enhance these sites.

Due to limited funding, many park agencies have encouraged private citizens to volunteer as volunteer campground hosts and to join "Friends Of (the specific park)" organizations. Friends groups provide one alternative to privately operated concessions at certain parks. Authorized by all the state park systems in Alaska and the Pacific Northwest, these groups are non-profit and the merchandise they sell is carefully evaluated for its interpretive value to the specific park. Revenue from the sale of this souvenir merchandise accrues to the Friends organization and/or the individual park, and is used for interpretive purposes. The guidelines developed for individual Friends groups by the State Parks Interpretive Stores Committee (Oregon) gives the following criteria for merchandise selection:

For an item to be educational or interpretive, it must inform, instruct, or tell about the park it represents. [Therefore] it must relate to the park's . . . culture, natural features or history. . . [and] provide information about the park. A product [must be of] high quality: durable, well-made and reflect the good judgement used to select it.¹¹

Similar guidelines for California State Park concessionaires are produced by Parks' Office of Interpretive Services. These guidelines are in the form of a booklet which contains historical photographs and drawings of the architecture, interior furnishings, and objects associated with interpretation of individual parks.¹²

Although Friends groups make significant contributions to interpretation of heritage resources in the state parks, they cannot be used at every park in place of a concession.¹³ As one volunteer coordinator noted, "consistent staffing is a problem at non-urban areas, which includes most all of Oregon's parks."¹⁴

Friends groups, while highly effective in helping to augment Parks'

visitor enjoyment and resource conservation missions, should only be auxiliary to Parks' formulation of a comprehensive resource interpretation plan. Without such a plan, it is tempting to gauge the success of parks containing heritage resources by visitation counts and revenue generated, rather than by the heritage value communicated to residents of the state. A similar concern was expressed by a former mayor in his assessment of tourist development efforts in downtown Anchorage:

Although Knowles credits tourism for saving downtown . . . he worries that if things go too far, the one-time heart of the city will become a theme park for travelers that will offer even less to the people who live here.¹⁵

The former director of the National Park Service, Idaho's deputy attorney general, the former architectural historian for the State of Alaska, and Alaska's State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) have all offered valuable suggestions for improving the quality of resource interpretation at existing parks. The first of these recommendations is creation of a property manager position specifically related to concessions management.¹⁶ The property manager, representing Parks' interests but knowledgeable of the concessionaire's concerns, would function as a liaison between the park manager and the park's contractor. The need for such a position has been recognized by the NPS since the 1976 Oversight Hearings on Concession Operations: "the ranger is expected to incorporate concession management duties into an already overloaded schedule [in which] other duties are more pressing."¹⁷ One example of "more pressing duties" occurs in Chugach State Park, where park management must deal with visitor safety as a primary concern: "the single greatest danger to [Chugach State] park visitors is avalanches."¹⁸

Of particular relevance to parks in the study region is the recommendation for "a full-time historian/interpretive specialist . . . to address [the] issues and needs of [an] historic park."¹⁹ This suggestion also reflects a concern of Alaska's SHPO, who stated that the expertise of the State's Historic Preservation Office has not been significantly utilized by Parks' because they are unwilling to fund such efforts.²⁰

A useful tool in assessing visitors' opinions about the quality of concession operations in historic buildings is the pre-addressed and postage-paid card currently used by Oregon State Parks at Wolf Creek Tavern and Frenchglen Hotel Waysides (Fig. 66). Parks has received these cards from

FRENCHGLEN HOTEL

Thank you for visiting Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside. This facility is operated for Oregon State Parks under a concession lease as a service to the public. State Parks would be pleased to receive any comments you wish to provide regarding the services offered. Just drop this postage-paid card in the mail.

Comments: _____



Thank you!

Oregon State Parks

Figure 66. Visitor opinion card for Frenchglen Hotel State Wayside, Oregon State Parks.

visitors on a consistent basis, and they provide the state park office, district managers, and contractors with valuable feedback regarding the concessions.

Finally, concession contracts for historic buildings could be strengthened by the use of terminology which specifically relates to their preservation and interpretation. National Park Service Guideline 48 addresses the "modification of the standard language concession contract" to meet the needs of an "historic leasing/concession arrangement."²¹

Concessionaires in state park historic buildings have the opportunity to promote visitor understanding of heritage resources in a way that park management cannot, because of their constant presence and high visibility. The managing agency for state parks, however, must share equally in this responsibility by providing direction for resource interpretation. Such direction is crucial, for "if we want Americans to truly care about preserving historic places, we must explain why they are important."²² A speaker at the 1991 National Trust Conference affirmed that the public's motivation for resource protection is the result of "instilling an appreciation for the historical and cultural significance of a site [through] heritage education."²³ This education is the direct result of the accurate and engaging interpretation of the park's heritage resources.

It is the responsibility of park management to choose individuals for the highly influential position of park concessionaire who express interest in the park itself, beyond its capacity to generate a profit for their business. Parks must also provide interpretive standards for state park concessions so that contractors can implement at least a minimum level of interpretation: visitor recognition that the building has importance beyond its adaptive use. As Freeman Tilden observed in 1957:

Not the least of the fruits of adequate interpretation is the certainty that it leads directly toward the very preservation of the treasure itself, whether it be a national park, a prehistoric ruin, historic battlefield, or a monument of our . . . ancestors. Such a result may be the most important end of our interpretation, for what we can not protect we are destined to lose.²⁴

Notes

¹David Lowenthal and Marcus Binney, ed., Our Past Before Us: Why Do We Save It? (London: Maurice Temple Smith Ltd., 1985), 119.

²Annie L. Osburn, "The OMSI Science Store," Museum Store Winter 1991, 61.

³Joseph Sax, Mountains Without Handrails: Reflections on the National Parks (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1980), 25.

⁴Linda Lopez and Martin Wheeler, "Start Up Notebook for Friends Groups" (Salem: Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, 1991), 2.

⁵David Uzzell, ed., Heritage Interpretation: The Natural and Built Environment, Vol. 1 (London: Belhaven Press, 1989), 64.

⁶William C. Everhart, The National Park Service (Boulder: Westview Press, 1983), 121.

⁷Congress, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Oversight Hearings Before the Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation, 94th Cong., 2nd sess., 21 24 25 May and 7 June 1976, 850-851.

⁸Freeman Tilden, The State Parks: Their Meaning in American Life (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 26.

⁹Thomas I. Hines, Revenue Sources Management in Parks and Recreation (Arlington: National Recreation and Park Association, 1974), 94.

¹⁰Congress, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Public Lands, National Parks and Forests, 101st Cong., 2nd sess., 25, 31 July 1990, 90.

¹¹Linda Lopez, Volunteer Coordinator, Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department. memorandum, "Interpretive Store Guidelines," 4, 4 June 1991.

¹²Mary A. Helmich and Pauline G. Spear, A Gold Rush Merchant's Manual (Sacramento: Office of Interpretive Services, California Department of Parks and Recreation, 1989), Appendix C.

¹³Of the eight parks examined for this study, Friends groups operate at Heyburn, Fort Worden, Silver Falls, and Chugach State Parks.

¹⁴Linda Lopez, Volunteer Coordinator, Oregon State Parks Dept., interview by author, 3 January 1992.

¹⁵Bruce Melzer, "Urban Renewal," Anchorage Daily News, 6 December 1992, D7.

¹⁶Rinda Just, Deputy Attorney General, State of Idaho, interview by author, 15 November 1991.

¹⁷Congress, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Oversight Hearings Before the Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation, 94th Cong., 2nd sess., 21 24 25 May and 7 June 1976, 817.

¹⁸State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, "Chugach State Park Master Plan," (Anchorage: State of Alaska, Division of Parks, 1980) , 16, photocopied.

¹⁹Paul W. Chattey, Architectural Historian, memorandum to State Historic Preservation Officer, 10 September 1987, State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Anchorage, Alaska.

²⁰Judith E. Bittner, Alaska State Historic Preservation Officer, interview by author, 5 August 1991.

²¹National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior, "Leasing of Historic Structures," (Washington, D. C. : National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1988) , 2, photocopied.

²²Carol D. Shull, "Creating a Partnership," CRM Bulletin 16 (1993): 4.

²³Kathleen A. Hunter, "Tangible Texts for Heritage Education," in Past Meets Future: Saving America's Historic Environments, ed. Antoinette Lee (Washington, D. C. : Preservation Press, 1992) , 233.

²⁴Freeman Tilden, Interpreting Our Heritage: Principles and Practices for Visitor Services in Museums, Parks and Historic Places (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1957) , 37-38.

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