

Nation's Outdoor Areas Expected To Get Progressively Overcrowded

Editor's note: On paper, the United States has plenty of recreational land. But the nation's parks are becoming overcrowded as Times Square. In the following dispatch, the head of a new government agency designed to solve the problem says the trouble is that most of the land is where the people are not. He explains how his agency hopes to overcome this "people pressure" on the parks.

By LOUIS CASSELS

Washington - (UPI) - America's outdoor playgrounds are desperately overcrowded this summer.

The situation will get progressively worse in the years ahead unless the nation moves swiftly to provide more parks, picnic grounds and swimming holes for a growing population with a growing amount of leisure time.

So says Dr. Edward C. Crafts, director of the U. S. government's new Bureau of Outdoor Recreation.

Crafts' bureau was established in the Interior Department for the express purpose of promoting more and better facilities for camping, hiking, fishing, swimming, boating, and other outdoor recreation, including pleasure driving along scenic highways.

Crafts said in an interview

that Americans, who now live mostly in cities, are becoming more avid every year in their pursuit of a patch of nature in which to picnic, swim, take a walk or just look at the scenery. During the 1950's, while the U.S. population grew 15 per cent, visits to national parks rose 86 per cent.

Increased mobility because of better cars and highways, and the additional leisure time provided by a shorter average work week, have contributed to the mounting demand for outdoor recreation facilities.

Parks Crowded

The result, said Crafts, is that "some of our more popular parks now look like Times Square at the peak of the tourist season."

Moreover, projections of present trends show that the "people pressure" on recreation facilities is likely to triple by the end of this century.

On paper it looks as though America should have abundant space for outdoor recreation. More than 250 million acres are publicly designated for that purpose, including 25 million acres of national parks, 6 million acres of state parks, and 180 million acres of national forests.

But, Crafts pointed out, "most of this land is where

the people are not." Specifically, 72 per cent of the public recreational acreage is in Western states, where 13 per

cent of the population lives. The northeastern states, with 15 per cent of the people, have only 2 per cent of the

park lands. Providing more outdoor recreation opportunities within easy reach of major popula-

tion centers in the east is a major goal of the new bureau.

It will not build or operate any facilities itself. Its main jobs are (1) to coordinate the activities of the 20 or more federal agencies which are already involved directly or incidentally in the management of lands which can be used for outdoor recreation; and (2) to stimulate greater efforts by state and local governments, and private enterprise, to meet the rising demand for open-air playgrounds.

Several pieces of legislation now pending in Congress are needed for furthering this program, Crafts said.

He expressed hope that Congress will complete action soon on a bill authorizing his bureau to distribute \$50 million in matching grants to encourage states to develop

plans for outdoor recreation programs. A few states, such as New York, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, California, New Jersey, Massachusetts and Michigan, already are moving ahead in this area. But many are dragging their feet.

Crafts said private enterprise also can and should play a big part in providing outdoor recreation facilities. His bureau plans to stimulate such action by pointing out that such undertakings have proved highly profitable.

"There is a great opportunity here for some of the nation's rural depressed areas," he said.

"Development of their natural scenic assets could give a tremendous economic boost to many areas, northern Minnesota and West Virginia, for example."

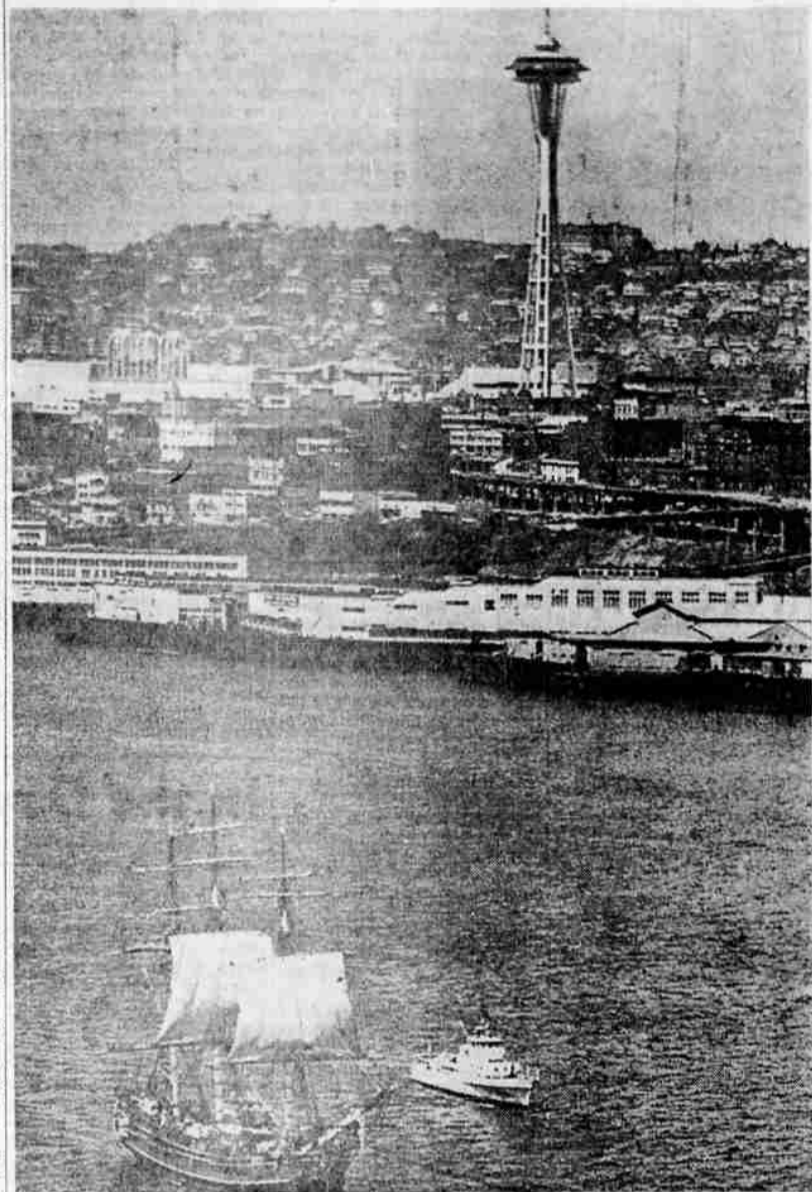
Another bill before Congress would set up a land acquisition fund to be financed by proceeds from admission fees at federal recreation areas, motorboat gasoline taxes and other charges. This money would be used to buy new lands for national parks and seashores.

Expenditures for new recreation facilities are not frivolous, Crafts said, but an overdue national investment in

assuring all Americans "permanent access to their outdoor heritage."

The opportunity to spend a few hours or days among

the beauties of nature, he said, "is essential to the cultural, physical, moral and spiritual well-being of the American people."



BOUNTY EXHIBIT—The H. M. S. Bounty, a Hollywood reproduction of the famed sailing ship, passes the Space Needle at the Seattle World's Fair as she enters Elliott Bay. The Bounty arrived in Seattle last week from Vancouver, B. C., and will be on public display for one week. Metro Goldwin Mayer is sailing the Bounty around the world as part of the buildup for their new movie, "Mutiny on the Bounty," starring Marlon Brando. The movie will be released in the fall. (UPI)

Log Shift Causes Accident Friday

A shifting load on a logging truck on an S curve Friday resulted in a power pole being knocked down, falling telephone lines and starting a small fire in a pear orchard on Modoc rd. and Table Rock rd., state police said.

Gerrel Norman Kirklind, 35, of 1112 East Main st., was carrying one large log on his truck when the log slipped, caused the truck to turn over and the log hit a power pole.

The power pole broke off and fell across telephone lines and knocked the lines into pear trees which started a small fire, which was quickly extinguished. A crew from Pacific Power and Light company repaired the power pole, state police said.

The driver was uninjured, but there was some damage to the truck and trailer owned by R. A. Ross, Medford.

A rear-end collision occurred on the Crater Lake highway five miles out of Medford Friday afternoon, state police said. No injuries resulted.

Vehicles involved were operated by William Herbert Millhoan, 44, of 3043 Delta Waters rd., and Victor Adolph Royston, 2093 College Way, Medford.

Outdoor Recreation Director Hopeful of Dunes Agreement

Washington - (UPI) - Dr. Edward C. Crafts, director of the new U. S. Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, said today he is "hopeful that some agreement can be worked out soon" to resolve the controversy over the future of the Oregon Dunes.

But he declined in an interview to speculate about the possible nature of the agreement.

"It would be premature at this time for me to express a view except to say that we're working on it," he said.

Acceptable Plan Sought

He said the secretaries of Interior and Agriculture, and members of the Oregon congressional delegation, are engaged in "consultations" on the matter, with a view to arriving at a plan that "will be acceptable to all sides, including the local people of the Dunes area."

The Oregon Dunes, on the central coastline of Oregon

north of Coos Bay, are an area of natural beauty whose preservation for outdoor recreational use has been the subject of wide concern.

Two different approaches to the problem are represented in bills which have been introduced in Congress by Sen. Maurine Neuberger (D-Ore.) and Rep. Edwin R. Durno (R-Ore.).

The Neuberger bill would create an Oregon Dunes National Seashore, under the administration of the interior department's national park service. It would embrace land now included in a national forest, plus additional lands owned by state and local governments and private property holders, including some inland lakes.

The Durno bill would create a national shoreline area, to be administered by the agriculture department's forest service, and including mainly lands already in public ownership.

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