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Interpretation

LECTURER

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EXTENSION

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RECREATION MGMT. INSTITUTE

Lon Garrison, N.P.S.

Potpourri ---

MEXICO CITY FIELDTRIP — Fourteen Recreation and Park Department students and faculty, led by Dr Richard L. BURY endured a twenty-six hour train ride to Mexico City for the 1969 Senior tour of parks and recreation facilities. The students, RAY DABNEY, J.T. REYNOLDS, JOE PAT PLOCLK, RAY ARMOUR, WALT DABNEY, JOHN SHEEK, DARREL JOHNSON, GEORGE HARKER and TOM WOOD were accompanied by faculty members BOB COUCH, JIM STRIBLING, DAN KAMP and LOU HODGES.

Chapultepec Park, with its varied facilities, was a prime attraction. Observations we made of the interpretive displays of Chapultepec Castle and the National Museum of Anthropology, and both were compared with developments in the States. The restored pyramids of Teotihuacan were impressive monuments of a past civilization, and the light and sound show was an unusual method of presenting the history and mythology of the site. The Ballet Folklorico provided a colorful interpretation of the traditional Mexican way of life and the regional dances were performed by a highly talented cast.

While interpretive methods and techniques rank high in the memories of the trip, they did not constitute the entire focus of the group. Considerable attention was given to the types of use characteristic of the various parks. At most hours of the day the parks were occupied by shoe-shine boys, sidewalk vendors, musicians, athletic gatherings, chess games and people seated on the lawn or benches reading books, talking or merely resting. Late afternoon and evening use was dominated by strollers and couples with romantic interests.

The tour combined outstanding examples of good and inadequate park design; facilities for recreation and athletic events; major tourist attractions; and historical reconstructions. The exposure to a culture and a way of life quite different from our own was considered tremendously valuable to those who made the trip. The students gained a greater sense of understanding of their fellow men, a first-hand exposure to the problems of the tourist and a greater appreciation for their own country and culture. So -- if the guitar strings produce a Mexican tune at the next R&P Club Meeting -- it will be from memories and experiences of the first departmental expedition south of the border.

THE SOUTHWEST PARK AND RECREATION TRAINING INSTITUTE was another tremendous success. This was the 14th annual meeting, sponsored by the American Park and Recreation Society, National Recreation and Park Association and the Oklahoma Industrial Development and Park Department. The program was conducted by the Department of Park Administration and Horticulture, Texas Technological college and very capably directed by Professor E. J. URBANOVSKY.

Approximately four hundred participants were attracted to Lake Texoma, Kingston, Oklahoma for the three-day program. Chairman for the annual meeting was WILLAM J. LANDAHL, Director, Jackson County Missouri Parks. Keynote speaker was Dr. GEORGE W. THOMAS, University of Texas, who discussed "Environmental Planning -- the International Challenge." Mr. B. DAN KAMP assisted on a panel discussing "Sumner Intern Programs"; Dr. CLARE A. GUNN chaired a panel discussing Visitor Damage to Recreation Resources." He was assisted by Dr. J. LAMAR TEATE and BEN D. MAHAFFEY.

"OUTDOOR INTERPRETATION AND THE MACHINE AGE" was the title of a paper presented by BEN D. MAHAFFEY at the annual meeting of the American Nature Society at Section I of the American Association for the Advancement of Science conclave in Dallas, December 27. The paper emphasized effective interpretation as a key in becoming acquainted with our environment. The primary objective of outdoor interpretation is to create a personal awareness with the natural surroundings. This may be difficult to do in our present age, but is necessary if we wish to preserve and enhance our most valuable heritage -- the land.

The meeting was climaxed by an all-day fieldtrip to read the landscape in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Program Chairman Mrs. RUTH SCOTT, Co-director, Bioscience Center, Powder--mill Nature Reserve of Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh should be complimented on the fine program that she arranged.

OCCUPANCY OF THE NEW RECREATION AND PARKS BUILDING now a fact, is continuing, although nearly six months behind schedule. Approximately half of the faculty and staff has moved into the remodeled, attractive, pleasant offices. Hopefully, in the next few weeks, all of the RP "family" will be together under one roof, for the first time since the department was initiated, three years ago. Classrooms, laboratories and seminar rooms are nearing completion. A sigh of relief will be breathed by both students and instructors when these badly needed facilities are available. If you are traveling in this vicinity, a sincere and hearty Texas WELCOME. is awaiting you to tour our new home and spend some time visiting with our faculty and staff.

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COMPUTERIZED REGISTRATION PROVES SUCCESSFUL -- although not without frustration, the first semester of using complete automation has been accomplished. Overall, it has been considered a tremendous success and improvement over the manual method of registering. A committee has been formed to investigate inadequacies and to continue to improve the new system.

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NEW LECTURER APPOINTED -- JAMES E. O'ROURKE has joined the Department of Recreation and Parks staff as Lecturer for the 1969 Spring Semester. Commuting from Houston, he is teaching a senior-level course in Park Planning and Design. Presently he is employed by Marmon, Nor and Green, Inc. of Houston. The firm is involved in landscape architecture and planning, with specialization in park planning, apartment site planning and urban comprehensive planning.

O'Rourke was formerly employed by the City of Houston, from 1956—1968, in the City Planning Department and then in the Parks Department. He served as Superintendent of Parks from 1959—1969. During that period he was responsible for a ten million dollar capital improvement program which included 165 park sites, 168 miles of esplanade and a zoo. We welcome Jim to our staff and we know that the wealth of information and experience that he brings will be tremendously valuable to the students and faculty

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THE BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE Annual Refuge Managers' Conference was held in Atlanta, Georgia, January 13—17. Graduate Student BILL SONTAG and BEN D. MAHAFFEY participated in the meeting by presenting a morning's session titled "Interpretation and the Refuge Manager." One of the highlights of attending the conference was an opportunity of touring Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, Alabama. Thanks and appreciation go to LARRY GIVENS and KEN BUTTS of the Southeast Regional Office for the invitation and to TOM ADKISSON, EMMITT WALDRIP and HARVIE FOWLER of Wheeler NWR for the personally conducted tour.

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"NEW COUNTIES' ROLE IN RECREATION DEVELOPMENT" was the topic of one session of the annual meeting of the Texas County Judges and Commissioners Conference, held in College Station. JAMES STRIBLING served as speaker and moderator and was assisted by MAURICE "RED" ARNOLD, Director, Denver Regional Office of the BOR, ALLEN MOORE, National Association of Counties, Washington, D.C. and MORGAN KOPP, Head, Grants and Aid Division, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

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NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY will be the new home of DICK CRYSDALE, who has accepted the 'position of Administrative Assistant to GORDON HAMMON of the Recreation Resources Department. Dick will be assisting with a water resources study. With financial and agency assistance from federal and state governments, the Hammon and Crysdale team and other specialists hope to develop a system of determining the capacity of water resources to support various types and combinations of recreation use.

The study team describes the approach as "unique and refreshing" and has approximately 18 months to unscramble the recreation capacity of water resources. Crysdale hopes to develop a dissertation topic on water skiing from the project to complete the requirements for his Ph.D. Our best wishes go with Dick and his family for a successful and challenging new project.

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DURING THE WINTER MONTHS of January and February, Texas A&M was treated to sunshine and generally fair weather. The Recreation and Parks Department received an ample number of out-of-state visitors who will attest to this fact. Among the individuals visiting the campus were:

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE --IVAN PARKER, Assistant Director for Personnel, Washington, D.C ; CARL WICKSTROM, Personnel Director, Southwest Region, Santo Fe. New Mexico.

THE BUREAU OF OUTDOOR RECREATION ---. MAURICE "RED" ARNOLD, Regional Director, Midcontinent Region, Denver, Colorado.

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES -- ALIEN MOORE. Director of Research, Washington, D.C.

THE FEDERAL EXTENSION SERVICE -- HAROLD. OWENS, Federal Extension Coordinator for Resource Conservation and Development Projects, Washington, D.C.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI -- TOM DAVIS, Extension Specialist in Recreation

THE TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT -- JAMES ARCHER, Personnel Director' John Buck, Assistant Director in charge of Park Operations; MORGAN KOPP, Head, Division of Grants-in Aid,

SYMPOSIUM ON OUTDOOR RECREATION AND EDUCATION --convened on February 26-28 at the Statler-Hilton Hotel in Washington, D.C. The successful meeting was attended by 350—400 delegates from across the nation in various phases of recreation and education. The meeting was sponsored by the American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation and the National Recreation and Park Association.

Many challenging topics were introduced and discussed from all aspects. Dr. RAYMOND F. DASMANN, Director of Environmental Studies. The Conservation Foundation, discussed “An Environment Fit for People”; Dr. SAMUEL KLAUSNER, Department of Sociology, University of Pennsylvania suggested those attending to see things the way they actually are as he developed the theme “Challenge by the People.” Other topics were “Challenge of the Land” developed by CHARLES E. LITTLE, Executive Director, Open Space Action Institute and Dr. ROSS NETHERTON, Chief Division of Research and Education, BOR.

“Response of the Systems -- Education and Parks and Recreation” was viewed by Dr. WILLIAM STAPP, School of Natural Resource, University of Michigan, JAMES J. TRUNCER, Director, County Parks and Recreation, Monmouth, New Jersey and WILLIAM J. HART, Vice President, Harold F. Wise and Associates, Inc., Washington, D.C. Overall, the symposium was successful in assembling leaders in the recreation and education field and candidly discussing the more pressing problems and potential solutions, in this, our most dynamic and challenging period of time,

-- Report on Research --

The following information is a thumb--nail sketch of some of the activity in research that is currently being investigated by faculty and graduate students of the Department of Recreation and Parks.

THE FIRST PHASE OF A RESEARCH STUDY of the Gulf Coast of Texas for the Interagency Council for Natural Resources, one of three councils attached to the Governor’s Office, is now in progress. The long range effort will be the assessment of problems and creation of solutions pertaining to resource use in all the bays and estuarine areas of the Texas Gulf Coast.

The scope of this project is not restricted to recreation or parks -- it involves all resources and all uses. This is a demonstration of interest in broad resource development as well as park, travel and tourism development. For study purposes, categories have been determined for the resource base as consisting of seven main groups of elements: water and waterlife, space and location, wildlife, vegetative cover, topography—minerals-soils, climate and air, and cultural resources, such as historic sites, archeological sites, landscape aesthetics, and natural amenities.

The concern is over the status of these resources. As settlement expands , as industrialization increases and as more people wish to use the area for pleasure, the quality and quantity of these resource assets becomes more and more critical. The question arises regarding the responsibility for assuring the quantity and quality of these resources. In response to this, the subcommittee of the Interagency Council on Natural Resources, the Gulf Coast Study Committee has been formed and has outlined the growing need for greater knowledge and control of this region. They have identified the state’s responsibility and therefore have requested further study-

This first phase consists of identifying the present and past research efforts. The breadth of concern spreads ever all economic and cultural decision-making groups. The categories to be included are agriculture, mining, manufacturing, fishing, recreation and tourists, transportation, water supply, waste, electrical power, -wholesale and retail trade, finance and construction, federal, state and local governments as investors, nonprofit organizations and land developers.

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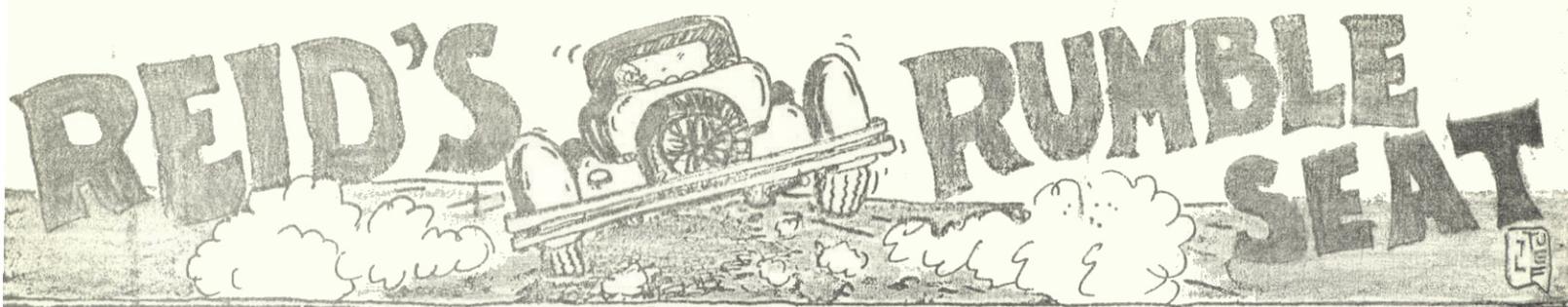
AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIVE EFFECTIVENESS AND VISITOR PREFERENCE for selected interpretive audio-visual media is currently being finished and will be published in the next few months. Various kinds of interpretive audio-visual media are being used for historical and natural interpretation without being field tested for user preference or efficiency in terms of perception and retention of correct factual information,

The research is primarily involved with comparing leaflets, stationary signs, and audio repeaters in relation to use for self-guiding interpretive devices. Various socio-economic correlations were determined between preferred and most effective medium,

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GRADUATE STUDENTS ARE ENGAGED IN A WIDE RANGE OF INTERESTS -- JIM MERTES has been appointed to a Corps of Engineer Intern Fellowship position to investigate the possibility of a composite model of public benefits derived from environmental design features employed in the development of reservoir recreation sites . LARRY SIMONSON is currently working on industrial plant tours -- social and economic analysis as a travel-tourism resource . JIM WATERS is investigating the attitudes of east Texas landowners and their policy towards public recreation use. GEORGE HARKER is taking on a new topic concerned with remote sensing and the use of satellite and high altitude aerial reconnaissance for regional coverage and use density patterns of reservoirs.

Other general areas of interest and research activity are: optimum capacity for reservoir recreation; climatic influences upon reservoir use; a preference study to determine college students’ desires for university recreation complexes; interpretation progress and demand on National Wildlife Refuges and implications of the growth of recreation subdivisions in the overall regional recreation demand.



Occasionally an article comes across my desk that has special meaning. The following message prefaced a recent greeting from Dean H. O. Kunkel to his College of Agriculture faculty here at Texas A&M University. It strikes me as such a simple, yet positive, injunction that I want to pass it along to you as each of us begins a new year of professional activities.

“Go placidly amid the noise and the haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible without surrender be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even the dull and ignorant; they too have their story. Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexations to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others you may become vain and bitter; for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals; and everywhere life is full of heroism. Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is as perennial as the grass. Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness. You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be, and whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life keep peace with your soul. With all its shame, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Strive to be happy.” (Found in Old Saint Paul’s Church, Baltimore, 1692)

FACULTY FORUM

THAT NEBULOUS WORD “CONSERVATION” -- by Dr. Richard L. Bury

The word “conservation” should be eliminated from our vocabularies as having outlived its usefulness – and I speak as one who has a master’s degree in conservation. The difficulty lies in its definition and image.

Many definitions have been proposed and are in current use, but the most widely used definition – almost always unspoken -- equates conservation with preservation of natural resources. Unfortunately, most persons who call themselves “conservationists” have accepted this definition implicitly. Their opinions concerning resource management decisions are usually limited by two major weaknesses -- a narrow view of resource management objectives, and a lack of technical education in natural resource management. Often, their views concerning conservation usually are a nostalgic longing for the relatively undeveloped resource conditions of the past, or about maintenance of a status quo condition. In itself, nothing is inherently incorrect about maintenance of a status quo condition, nor about an attempt to preserve or restore some particular natural resource or condition to an earlier stage of our national development. However, many preservationists cannot judge the technical feasibility of such proposals, and they commit the further error of assuming that preservation is the only aspect of conservation.

In contrast, most professionals in natural resource management would define conservation as “wise use of natural resources.” But what constitutes “wise”? In the last analysis, wisdom in this case depends on a) the effects that a proposed action would have on Earth’s ecologic system, and in turn on our environment and economic resource base, b) the economic implications of using resources today as compared with preserving them either forever or for use tomorrow, and c) the general wishes of the owners of the resource in question. In many cases, of course, resource managers are concerned with issues involving resources owned by the general public of the United States.

In some cases, we may find that “wise” use means preservation forever. This judgment should apply only when the resource is truly unique or when we wish an unmanaged primitive areas for scientific study or for inspiration. In other cases, we may believe that a resource should be preserved today so that our children may harvest it tomorrow. But such judgments should be approached carefully because the future usefulness -- and economic feasibility -- of resources is always in doubt. Finally, we may find that “wise” use permits or even dictates use of natural resources today -- as, for example, when a current use of resources is becoming obsolete due to new manufacturing processes. Clearly, the concept of conservation involves both preservation and utilization. As professionals, I suggest that we refrain from using the word “conservation” whenever possible since its meaning is not precise. Instead, I suggest that we use the words “resource management” when we wish a broad term. This encompasses both preservation and utilization of natural resources. The words “resource use” can then stand for the activities wherein resources are modified or harvested, and “preservation” can be used in its own specific way.