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NATIONAL PARKS AND TOURISM

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Introduction

It is rather interesting that the title of this paper is what it is, with the two items in that sequence. I did not choose the title, so may be permitted, as an unbiased observer, to speculate upon the choice which was made by the Organizing Committee of the Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation. Was it for the sake of euphony or a desire to have the two concepts in correct chronological sequence? Whatever the reason, there is little doubt that, by today's standards, we would regard the Garden of Eden as the first national park. It is unfortunate that fifty-per cent of the total population, not long after being settled in this idyllic spot, yielded to her emotions and, without having first obtained a permit to collect, plucked a fine botanical specimen for her personal adornment. The other half of the population was not slow to exploit the opportunities which developed within that first national park and thus began the conflict which has not ended, even today.

But it is not my purpose to be pessimistic about this situation; rather do I hope to show, as others have done before me, the interdependence of the two concepts. And it is important to establish immediately that both national parks and tourism have long since passed beyond the concept stage - they are now real and significant services within the total economy - whatever the country under consideration.

Early History

There have been tourists from time immemorial, but their purpose was not that of the modern tourist. The early tourists represented a comparatively small proportion of the total population and the fact that they were invariably bent on plunder for personal gain probably did not seriously affect either the bird and animal populations or the environment. But as technology improved man's mobility and the number of tourists increased, even before the automobile industry had begun to move, the last Passenger Pigeon had gone from the face of the earth. This was in September 1914. Seventy years earlier the Great Auk had become extinct, and before the end of the 7th century the Dodo had gone - all because of man's destructive interference.

The settlement of this country in the late 18th century paved the way for the development of the sealing industry in Bass Strait and it was considered by many that early in the 19th century "the industry was done". Still, as late as 1878, tourists found good sport in visiting the Anser Islands off Wilson's Promontory where they could engage in clubbing and shooting seals as a diversion during a cruise on the good ship "Victoria".

The Governments of the day, wherever they might be, did not seem unduly concerned. The supply of animals and birds and the wide open spaces seemed inexhaustible.

The idea that wildlife might serve some more useful purpose than providing sport for the hunter or clothing for man was certainly not uppermost in people's minds. Yet in 1858 Thoreau wrote "the Kings of England formerly had their forests to hold the King's game, for sport and food" and he went on to say "I think that they were impelled by true instinct. Why should not we, who have renounced the King's authority, have our national preserves ... in which the bear and the panther, and some even of the hunter race, may still exist, and not be civilized off the face of the earth - our forests, not to hold the King's game merely, but to hold and preserve the King himself also, the lord of creation - not for idle sport or food, but for inspiration, and our own true recreation. Or shall we, like villains, grub them all up, poaching on our own national domains?"

It was George Catlin, an American who devoted his life to studying the American Indian and recording his life in drawings and paintings, as Audubon had done with the birds and animals, who first proposed, in order to preserve the native fauna of America and a remnant of the Indian race, that the Government should set apart, in some suitable locality of the west, a large tract of land, to be preserved forever as a "Nation's Park", containing man and beast, "in all the wildness and freshness of their nature's beauty".

Yet it was not until 1870, nearly forty years later, that the plan to establish a national park really took definite shape. It is a matter of history now that the idea was put forward at a campfire discussion near the junction of the Gibbon and Firehole Rivers in northern Wyoming.

The passing by Congress of the Yellowstone Act in 1872 established the first national park in America - indeed, in the world - and set the pattern for later developments. In the years that followed, many other national parks were declared in America, but it was not until 1916 that the U.S. National Parks Service was established. From its modest beginning, it has now grown into a major service.

For many years after Yellowstone was first declared a national park, the Superintendent worked without salary or appropriations. In 1916, when the Service was established, the appropriation for staff was \$19,500. As an indication of the growth of the Service since that time, it may here be stated that the National Parks Service Budget has advanced over the past 10 years from \$79,417,000 to \$102,980,000. This is a sizeable amount of money and we may be sure that the U.S. Government has a good reason for spending it on national parks.

National Parks in Other Countries

It is not the purpose of this paper to trace the history of national park developments throughout the world, but it seems worthwhile to record here that national parks have now been established in numerous countries, if not in every one. As a matter of interest,

those countries in which the area of the national parks system is 1 per cent or more of the total area are as follows:

New Zealand	8%	Madagascar	2%
Dahomey	7%	Sweden	2%
Rhodesia	6%	Surinam	2%
Zambia	6%	Thailand	2%
Japan	5%	Venezuela	2%
Kenya	5%	Canada	1%
Tanzania	5%	Argentina	1%
Italy	4%	Congo Kinshasa	1%
Uganda	4%	Gabon	1%
Ivory Coast	3%	South Africa	1%
U.S.A.	3%	Yugoslavia	1%
Ceylon	2%		

National Parks in Canada

It is of interest that a national parks service was established in Canada in 1910, and the late T.B. Harkin, the man who played the major part in creating and developing the service, has been referred to as "The Father of National Parks", and also as "The Father of Tourism" (in Canada).

Shortly after his appointment as the first Commissioner of National Parks in Canada, Harkin wisely observed that it is axiomatic that "no society will pay for something it does not value". His problem was to persuade the hard-headed members of the House of Commons that the appropriations for parks should be increased. Many of these men, he said, knew very little about the parks, and some regarded them as luxuries. How was he to convince them and win their support?

Casting around for weapons and ammunition for his armoury, he came across an article in "Review of Reviews" which stated that much of the wealth of France, Italy and Switzerland came from foreign tourists. He thereupon wrote to the Governments of these countries and to California, Florida and Maine, to obtain estimates of the value of the tourist business in these countries and States. The replies, he says, were astonishing. A further inquiry revealed that the C.P.R. estimated that \$50,000,000 was derived from the fame of the Rockies. That was over fifty years ago. I do not have the current figures, but a factor of 50 would not seem too great to bring this figure to its present value.

He used this information to prepare a case for higher appropriations for national parks and was successful.

It is common knowledge that the national parks play a very important part in the burgeoning tourist industry of Canada, just as they do in the United States.

National Parks in New Zealand

No discussion on the relationship between national parks and tourism could be complete without reference to New Zealand. Here the Government has recognized the national parks as the cornerstone of their tourist industry and has been very active in promoting this partnership. However, it may be preferable to look more closely at conditions within Australia, particularly Victoria.

National Parks in Australia

The first national park to be declared in Australia was the one now known as "The Royal National Park" and this was in 1879. Since then many areas, some large and some small, have been reserved in the several States and it is generally recognized that national parks play some part in supporting the tourist industry; but, if we are to be honest (at least as far as my knowledge goes) we would have to admit that, while tourism is accepted as a major industry, national parks have not yet achieved that status. At best, they constitute an "emerging" service and their real value has yet to be recognized.

The relationship between the two partners, national parks and tourism, may be likened to that between a wife and a husband in which only the husband has the vote. Presumably this is because the husband is recognized as having some economic value while the wife is merely a serving maid. Yet, in time, women did get the vote and nowadays even take their place in Parliament and on Boards of Directors; and the case for equal pay is making good progress.

Tourism : Sales and Promotion

Why does tourism enjoy a higher status in this country than national parks? The answer I think is fairly clear. Tourism is concerned with the sales and promotion side of the business in which the national parks function as the production department. In the commercial world, it is always the sales and advertising department which throws the parties to promote the products produced in the factories and, although the factory operatives may even be invited to the party, the glamour and prestige reside all too often with the distribution boys. These are the ones who bring in the money - production is frequently bogged down with obsolete plant, maintenance problems, rising costs and, even when it "delivers the goods", it is doing only what it is expected to do. It's like that with national parks.

Surely it is about time we began to re-think the whole problem and get the two partners in this enterprise in proper perspective.

National Parks : The Basis of the Tourist Industry

What is the real basis of the tourist industry? Not the masses of concrete, steel, bricks and glass which comprise our smog-drenched cities where the people squeeze one another off the pavements? Surely not; though some of the human activities which flourish in the more densely populated areas do play an important part. In general, tourists don't come here to study our factories, our road systems, our churches, our schools, our business methods - though some do. They come to see the things they can't see in their own countries - our birds and animals. And since these creatures cannot live except in their own peculiar environments, they see also, but probably incidentally, our forests, our landscapes, our seascapes, our fern gullies and the whole range of our outdoor life.

The best places in which to see these creatures of the wild are the national parks. True, the same birds and animals frequently exist in greater numbers in the forests, but it is not yet a prime function of forest management to provide for tourists. It has always been a prime function of national parks management to do just that.

The Partnership

So the national parks serve as the production departments producing the products which the tourist industry "sells" through its various distribution media.

The techniques of the two departments are different. In the case of national parks, conservation is the golden thread which runs through every activity and indeed it is the very stuff of which the national parks organization is made, whereas tourism is much more concerned with the exploitative side of the enterprise.

It is here that the two functions are likely to find themselves in conflict. To understand the interplay of natural forces which regularly produce the desired products of a national park - birds, animals, landscapes, seascapes, waterfalls, wildflowers, trees, shrubs etc. - requires a strong scientific background. To promote the "sale" of such products requires rather different attributes - salesmanship, and a degree of extroversion which may be lacking in the scientist guarding the national park. This is not to suggest of course that salesmanship is not essential in selling the conservation concept.

On the one hand, there may be a tendency to over-protect; while on the other there is frequently a tendency to over-exploit. Somewhere the two types must meet and agree on what is reasonable. In particular, it is necessary for the tourist industry to remember always that the national parks cannot indefinitely "produce the goods" if the pressures on the national parks (production units) are consistently too great.

In days long past it did not matter much whether a fire ravaged a substantial area (as it no doubt did), because there were still vast areas into which birds and animals could retreat while the damaged area was recovering. However, now that the national parks, in this State anyway, are virtually islands within developed areas, it has become imperative to protect the parks from destructive elements. The national parks (and equivalent areas, where they exist) have become the last strongholds of our vanishing fauna and must be protected, if they are to survive.

National Parks Undervalued

There is little doubt that the reason why national parks are not in a stronger position in this country than they are is that they are not adequately valued. When it comes to a question of what allocations should be made for national parks or what should be done with a particular area of land, the question inevitably arises: what are the parks worth to the economy?

It is difficult, if not impossible, to answer this question. That is the real crux of the problem. An area of land for agricultural purposes may be valued at so many bushels of wheat or so many bales of wool or pounds of beef. It takes a long time for a country which has become accustomed to expressing its national wealth in terms of bushels of wheat or bales of wool to recognize that in these changing times, there are other saleable products expressed in other currency. How do you express the value of a national park in terms of modern currency?

National Parks and Tourism in Victoria

It may be instructive to have a closer look at the relationship between national parks and tourism in Victoria.

The National Parks Act of 1958 imposes three principal duties upon the National Parks Authority, viz:

- (a) Unless inconsistent with any special purpose for which a national park has been proclaimed, to maintain every national park in its natural condition and to conserve therein ecological associations and species of native plants and animals and protect the special features of the park and as far as practicable to exterminate exotic plants and animals therein;
- (b) To encourage and regulate the use of national parks by the public and to provide for the enjoyment thereof by the people in such a way as to leave parks unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations;
- (c) To protect national parks from injury by fire.

In yet another section of the Act provision is made for the granting of leases to private individuals or groups of individuals in order to provide accommodations and other services necessary to enable the objects of the Act to be achieved.

Visitor Statistics

The National Parks Authority has been careful, whilst endeavouring at all times to preserve the environment, to provide facilities to enable the parks to be used by the people. The numbers of visitors recorded in the principal national parks over the past few years are as follows:

National Park	1958/59	1960/61	1962/63	1964/65	1966/67	1967/68
Fern Tree Gully (est.)	65,000	65,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000
Fraser	NR	1,500	7,000	10,700	19,000	19,000
Glenaladale	*(1)	*(1)	*(1)	2,000	3,000	3,000
Hattah Lakes	*(2)	*(2)	3,000	7,900	9,000	9,000
Kinglake	16,000	21,000	35,000	45,000	60,000	71,000
Mount Buffalo	36,000	37,000	35,000	40,000	40,000	45,000
Mount Eccles	*(2)	*(2)	5,400	7,300	7,000	8,000
Port Campbell	*(3)	*(3)	*(3)	NR	10,000	10,000
Wilson's Promontory	28,000	39,000	59,000	74,000	80,000	85,000
Wyperfeld	1,000	2,000	4,000	5,650	6,000	6,600
	146,000	165,500	218,400	261,200	304,000	326,500

Note: NR = No Record Available
 *(1) = Proclaimed November 1963
 *(2) = Proclaimed 1960
 *(3) = Proclaimed May 1964

Park Revenue

Because of collection problems, fees are not charged in all national parks, but the following summary indicates the growth of revenue from park services, where fees are paid.

Kinglake National Park

1958/59	1960/61	1962/63	1964/65	1966/67	1967/68
\$825	\$1,574	\$2,068	\$2,088	\$3,519	\$6,400

Wilson's Promontory National Park

1959/60	1961/62	1963/64	1965/66	1966/67	1967/68
\$23,772	\$46,570	\$70,800	\$78,600	\$94,200	\$95,000

Mount Buffalo National Park

1963/64	1964/65	1965/66	1966/67	1967/68
\$4,644	\$5,922	\$4,533	\$8,700	\$8,700

Tarra Valley National Park

1964/65	1965/66	1966/67	1967/68
\$194	\$207	\$228	\$450

Fraser National Park

1962/63	1963/64	1964/65	1965/66	1966/67	1967/68
\$626	\$640	\$844	\$2,300	\$4,700	\$5,033

Port Campbell National Park

1966/67	1967/68
\$4,066	\$4,300

Total Expenditure in National Parks

The total expenditure in national parks, (i.e. government allocations from Loan Funds together with park revenue), along with total park revenue from services provided, as shown below:

Year	Total Revenue from all Parks	Total Expenditure from Loan Fund	Total Expenditure in all Parks, from Park Revenue and Loan Fund
1958/58	\$31,856	\$44,999	\$94,626
1959/60	34,296	69,794	117,930
1960/61	41,114	127,168	174,026
1961/62	57,492	131,462	190,094
1962/63	69,972	132,470	195,990
1963/64	80,778	163,348	217,712
1964/65	88,532	157,972	273,404
1965/66	96,626	189,384	273,731
1966/67	119,856	206,922	274,495
1967/68	123,518	267,058	402,479
1968/69	-	314,781	-
Total	744,040	1,805,358	2,214,487

Economic Value of National Parks

After an exhaustive survey, Dr. Ernst Swanson, Emeritus Professor of Economics at North Carolina State University, has come up with some astounding figures, relating to the economic value of national parks in U.S.A. The purpose of his study was to investigate the economic impact of the U.S. National Park System on the national economy. The report states that "the computations made show that national parks contribute as much as \$6.4 billion to the sales of a multitude of

firms throughout the Nation. From this amount, personal income of \$4,762,500,000 is generated. Another major contribution of the National Park System to the national economy lies in the Federal taxes accruing from park visits. The U.S. Federal Treasury makes a rough estimate that 20% of total personal income goes into Federal taxes. At this rate, travel to the U.S. National Park System resulted in \$952,000,000 in taxes for the Federal government in 1967. Recognition is here given to both direct and indirect effects upon personal income formation".

"These results do not represent the further indirect effects upon regions in which national parks are located. Over a period other spending results from expansion of local activities directed towards creating attractions in addition to the natural beauties and wonders of the region".

Dr. Swanson's analysis shows that income generated from travel to the U.S. national park system contributes about \$5.71 billion to gross national income. And further, that the business which generates \$4,762,530,000 of personal income is worth approximately \$142,750,000,000 (this assumes a capitalization factor of 25, i.e. 4% interest).

The U.S. national park system with appropriations around \$102 million contributes about 45 times this amount to the gross national income. Dr. Swanson sees the U.S. national park system as an asset few other systems may eclipse.

It has been calculated that the annual value of the tourist industry in Australia is of the order of \$2,000,000,000 and that of this, Victoria may claim \$157,500,000. Let's be conservative and say \$150,000,000. How do we relate this to national parks? If we assume that national parks contribute 1, 2 and 3% of the total, the contributions from national parks are 1.5 million, 3 million and 4.5 million dollars.

This represents a return of approximately 4, 8 and 12 times the total amount spent on national parks during the year, i.e. a yield of 400-, 800- and 1,200 per cent respectively. Of course these amounts are not returned directly to the government, but to the various organizations and services which comprise the tourist industry.

Not all bird-watchers are starry-eyed, of course, but you don't need to be a starry-eyed bird-watcher, in any case, to recognize that national parks represent a sound investment of government funds. And it must be remembered that we have not really begun to try, yet.

Local Problems

There is a general tendency for people interested in development - or conservation - to look at American practices and extrapolate to the local scene. It is known for example that the number of visitors to the Great Smoky Mountains in U.S.A. is of the order of 6 millions per year; also that, at Gatlinburg, on the fringe of the Great Smoky Mountain National Park, the annual revenue from tourism considerably exceeds \$45,000,000. Four years ago the capital invested here was \$40,000,000(+). So why can't we do the same at Wilson's Promontory? Or at least something really spectacular? So the developers ask.

What is overlooked is the fact that within 50 miles of the Great Smoky Mountain National Park there is a resident population of 50 70,000,000 people, which is approximately 20 times the entire population of Victoria, and comparatively few Victorians live within 50 miles of the Promontory. 70

We are at a disadvantage in Victoria in that our population and those of the relatively remote neighbouring States are as yet very low. There just aren't enough paying customers within range of the park. But there is no doubt that as time passes, the situation will improve, though we may never achieve the results obtained at the Great Smoky Mountains.

As is well known, the Authority has granted a lease in Mount Buffalo National Park to enable the snow fields in the Cresta Valley to be developed and made available to skiers. At the best of times, ski-ing is dependent upon the availability of snow and the business is seasonal and subject to fluctuations. This poses problems for the entrepreneur and the controlling authority alike and there is a danger that, in the interests of tourism and putting the business on a sounder financial basis, the business will need to be diversified in such a way that the national park values suffer. In America of course, in many parks, the season lasts only 120-130 days; but the volume of business during that period is adequate to cover the losses during the period when the business is closed. There is no place in this field for the entrepreneur who is "out to make a quick buck", but with mutual understanding and co-operation most problems can be solved.

National Parks and Recreation

The trend throughout the world is towards more and more leisure. The consequences of this trend, which is really a component of the sociological revolution in which we are involved and from which there is no escape, are of profound significance for governments all over, and no less here.

It is fortunate that for five days of the week, the general populace is engaged in occupations which contribute directly and indirectly to the national economy. In the various activities which are involved, both private enterprise and governments play their parts. But the growing amount of leisure which is everybody's lot today imposes a special responsibility on the government to ensure that man is gainfully occupied during these periods, because man is a restless individual and unless he is doing something useful there is a strong tendency for him to become involved in some activity which is not in the interests of his fellow men.

The Government services may fairly be looked upon as collectively comprising a major enterprise, the successful administration of which is essential to the well-being of the State. In this sphere, the Government is concerned with such services as fuel, power, education, water supply, transport, health, forestry, etc., to select but a few important items at random.

To meet the challenge presented by the changing world in which we live, with leisure becoming such an important part of the life of every citizen, the Government will need to diversify and intensify its functions. There could be no more profitable way of doing this than by promoting the national park-tourist partnership. In effect, this means improving the output of some of the existing production units (national Parks) and by setting new ones in selected areas and developing them to advantage.

Need for Survey

How can this be done? Well, there is still a considerable amount of Crown land still available and it would seem advisable to examine this, not from the aspect of its agricultural potential, but from the aspect of its suitability for national parks purposes or other forms of recreation related to conservation (e.g. wildlife reserves, etc.).

It is not suggested that every area of land should become a national park, but certainly the time is ripe for a bold look at the future needs of the State and national parks and other reservations should be made now, as a top priority, because of the tremendous potential for the "production" of products for which there is a rapidly expanding market and of which there are at present too few. I refer, of course, to the products which are generated in national parks - our natural heritage.

There are still some outstanding areas available which could become national parks of world standard.

If this were done, the tourist industry, working in close concert with the national parks service, could extend its range of services on an enduring basis and with resounding benefits to the entire economy. And what is more, it could keep on doing this, year after year, if only the means were provided of maintaining the national parks in a healthy condition. As will be seen from the foregoing a great deal has been achieved in Victoria during the past decade and it is hoped that this will encourage the Government to accelerate developments to promote still further the national parks-tourism partnership.

For Further Reading

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5. The National Parks Act 1958, No. 6326.

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