RESERVOIR RECREATION POLICY AND PROBLEMS

Outdoor recreation in the United States has become big business and it continues to grow by leaps and bounds. People are turning to the wide open spaces of outdoors in ever increasing numbers and it is reported that two-thirds of the Nation's public recreation areas include or are adjacent to a body of water. It is obvious that water-oriented outdoor recreation has an especial attraction to the American public.

The rapid growth in such recreation seems to parallel or even exceed the growth in American prosperity. The United States is among the most affluent nations of the world and its devotion to outdoor water-oriented recreation is also among the greatest in the world.

In many of the so-called under-developed or developing nations I have seen beautiful waterways, lakes, and reservoirs with virtually no use for recreational purposes, although they are vital means of transportation and sources of food. The vast majority of people of those countries lack the access, transportation, equipment, finances, and time to indulge in recreation. The seeming lack of interest is natural since concern over the necessities of life is paramount and requires full-time effort on the part of the people.

It was somewhat like that in the United States only a few decades ago. I have become conscious of recreational growth relationships because I have had the opportunity to watch the recreational use of Reclamation constructed waterways and reservoirs grow from very modest proportions 30 years ago to nearly 60 million visitor-days in 1971.
Dr. Foss suggested that I focus my remarks on reservoir recreation policy and problems. Obviously, such policy has evolved with time. In fact, evolved is hardly the word because it implies a gradual, continuous process, while Federal policy more often comes in spurts and jumps.

The interest of society usually develops in the evolutionary sense, while Federal policy lags behind until the pressures and demands of society become sufficiently strong to stir action. Catch-up legislation is then enacted which is intended to close the gap, fully or partially, at least for a time.

The original Reclamation Act of 1902 launched a water resource development program designed primarily to supply irrigation water to new settlers on public lands in the arid and semiarid western half of the United States. From time to time thereafter the scope of the program was broadened through supplemental and amendatory legislation.

The functions of water development now include hydroelectric power production, municipal and industrial water supply, flood control, fish and wildlife enhancement, recreation, water quality control, and environmental protection and preservation.

The usual pattern over the years has been for the Congress to recognize a new function in a few specific cases of project authorization before general legislative authority relating to the function is enacted. For example, Section 8 of the Colorado River Storage Project Act of April 11, 1956, authorized the Secretary of the Interior to plan, construct, operate, and maintain public recreational facilities, with costs to be nonreimbursable. The Fryingpan-Arkansas Project Act of August 16, 1962, provided authorization similar to that of the Storage Project.

The Trinity River Division of the Central Valley Project, authorized by Act of August 12, 1955, provided only for minimum basic facilities to maintain public health and safety and protection of property. Later, recognizing the tremendous recreation potential, the Congress on November 8, 1965, authorized the Whiskeytown-Shasta-Trinity National Recreation Area.

The first general recreation authority available to the Bureau of Reclamation is contained in the Federal Water Project Recreation Act of July 9, 1965 (Public Law 89-72). It favors the policy of non-Federal administration and requires cost-sharing. Without cost-sharing, only minimum basic facilities are authorized. For existing reservoirs, it provides for limited development on a 50/50 cost-sharing basis with a $100,000 ceiling on the Federal contribution.

Although Reclamation's 245 storage reservoirs offer widespread outdoor recreation to many millions of people annually, most of the structures and projects were authorized and built with no recognition
of recreation as an authorized project function. Thus, both facilities and management have been limited and are grossly inadequate to cope with the mounting public demands.

Even though Reclamation's 3.7 million acres of land, 1.6 million acres of water surface, and 11,400 miles of shoreline are equipped with 600 campgrounds, 26,700 tent and trailer spaces, 722 picnic areas, 209 swimming beaches, 579 boat ramps, and parking for 109,500 cars, many areas are virtually barren of facilities and a great deal more development is necessary to make the full potential available to the public. Nevertheless, many Bureau of Reclamation reservoirs, despite this inattention, are among the best "fishing holes" in the West and have been so used for many years.

You have a classic example of the economic and social impacts of reservoir recreation right here in your front yard. The Colorado-Big Thompson Project was authorized by a Secretarial finding of feasibility in 1937 and after a wartime halt in all construction activities, was finally completed in 1959. Recreation was not included as a project function.

It was designed primarily to divert excess spring runoff water from the western to the eastern slope of the Continental Divide for domestic and irrigation use, and in the process, is an important producer of hydroelectric power. However, it includes several reservoirs on each side of the divide, three of which were made the subject of a recreational study in 1969 by the Denver Research Institute of the University of Denver.

I will not go into detail since copies of the study are available at this conference for those of you who are not familiar with it. Let it suffice to say that the recreational aspects of the Colorado-Big Thompson Project are far reaching, both economically and socially, and are improving every year even though there was no recognition of this function in the authorization.

One aspect not mentioned in the survey, but equally applicable to all major Bureau of Reclamation reservoirs, is the manner in which those facilities are taking the pressure off of national parks, wilderness areas, and other natural scenic sections of our great land. The population growth in the West, and the ease of travel by improved Interstate highways and jet airways are threatening to deluge these areas with humanity to the point where there is concern over preservation of their pristine natural beauty as dictated by law. President Nixon has expressed concern and is urging greater efforts to protect these areas while at the same time, fulfilling the recreational needs of the people in other ways.

The great demand for use of Reclamation's waterways and impoundments, the constant pressure for more and better use facilities such as boat ramps, boat slips, day-use facilities, overnight cabins, access roads, parking areas, camp and trailer sites, all come at a time, paradoxically, when a substantial element of our society is opposing future water developments and management programs.
Even though the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 urges productive harmony between man and nature in the use of our natural resources, there are organizations and individuals who seek to halt all such work.

Articulate and with a highly emotional appeal, they ignore the recreational benefits for man from management of our streams and rivers, just as they ignore man's needs for water for physical and economic survival.

One well known television personality who is currently plugging the sale of--of all things--a well known brand of automobile, told a Congressional committee not too long ago that not only should no more dams be constructed but existing ones should be torn out. He believes the spring and summer flood waters should roll to the sea unhindered, as nature planned it leaving destruction in their wake. Erratic tributary streams should be permitted to dry up or reduce to a trickle in the fall months of low flows as nature dictates.

This comes in face of the obvious fact that to use the precipitation provided by nature to supply the needs of modern man, river flows must be controlled, regulated, diverted, stored, treated, and delivered to taps and turnouts. Particularly in the arid areas of the West, the surplus flows of spring must be stored for release during the subsequent low flow periods. Otherwise, people could not survive in many of those areas.

Then there are those who would insist that people move to water rather than move water to where the people need it. While there is no question that land use planning is needed, it is not the democratic way to force population movement by controlling the water supply.

Despite zero population growth goals, our numbers are increasing and will continue to do so during the remainder of this century. It required nearly 300 years for the population of the new world to reach the 100 million mark. It required only 50 years for that number in the United States to double, becoming 200 million people. In approximately 30 years, it is estimated that the third 100 million will be added to our population. It is already built into the pipeline by the bulge of young people born since World War II.

Only a nationwide catastrophe or complete success of the "population zero" crusade can alter this forecast substantially.

Thus within the next 30 years we will need more of everything than we have today including food, clothing, shelter, other necessities, luxuries and recreational opportunities. In developing resources to meet growing demands we obviously must require more efficiency in their use and certainly will need to pay much more attention to the preservation or restoration of all the elements of nature that contribute to an acceptable total environment for the health and enjoyment of present and future generations.
Storage of surplus riverflows for the benefit of mankind to meet his physical requirements also makes available a type of water facility which obviously has great recreational appeal to society generally. This is indicated by the nearly 60 million visitor days of use related to Reclamation's storage facilities alone. When recreational use of controlled streams and constructed waterways for hunting and fishing is included, another 25 million visitor-days per year are added.

These figures relate only to Reclamation's works. Add to that the facilities of the Army Corps of Engineers, the public and private utilities, municipalities, and other non-Federal impoundments and the number becomes fantastic.

Virtually everything in life is involved in tradeoffs. Water developments are not exempt. Today there is no such thing as a single purpose water development project. For years, the Bureau of Reclamation in its project formulation process has looked at all the functions that could be served to arrive at a multiple function proposal that would incorporate as many functions as were feasible under existing statutory authority.

Every element, however, is subject to competitive uses and resulting differences of opinion. This is true not only in allocating cost and space to various functions but also to operating criteria. The irrigator is primarily interested in a full reservoir to meet his irrigation requirements. The flood control function is served best by empty space in the reservoir in order to maximize flood control. The power manager is interested in operating the hydro-plants to meet peak power demands because that maximizes revenue. The recreationist is interested in stabilized lake levels and operation of reservoirs for maximum sport fish production.

Among individuals, there are those who prefer white water or a meandering stream to placid lakes. There are also those who prefer to wade the creeks with their fly rods in search of the illusive Rainbow trout than to troll leisurely from a slow moving boat. On the other hand, there are those who like to sail, to water ski, to swim, or simply to cruise for pleasure, all of which can be done conveniently on a reservoir but seldom if at all in the natural streams. The reservoir also can frequently be operated to improve the downstream flows for the benefit of fish and fishermen.

Recognizing then that water development and management involve multiple functions and conflicting interest, it is not surprising that recreational policy has emerged over a long tough road, fraught with difference of opinion and conflicts of interest, but nevertheless evolving toward meeting the desires and demands of society.

No longer is recreation a stepchild in project evaluations and operations. Recreation has become a full fledged member of the family and receives fully equitable consideration along with other family functions in new project formulation.
The next link in the chain of progress is to obtain authority and funds to provide older projects with much needed physical works to accommodate the public and to establish more adequate means for management.

Many have asked why the Bureau of Reclamation has not constructed more recreational facilities at its existing structures and also why the required recreational facilities have not been provided by private capital if the use demand is as heavy as the figures indicate.

First, let me explain that the Reclamation program is primarily reimbursable. All costs allocated to irrigation, municipal and industrial water supply, and power are fully reimbursable by the users with interest except for irrigation which, by law, is interest-free. Because of the reimbursable requirement, any expenditures for recreational facilities which are not specifically authorized by the Congress must be charged to the remaining functions of the projects.

Thus, in the case of older reservoirs which were constructed solely for irrigation, the farmers using the water would be required to pay the cost of recreational facilities if they were to be built, unless a non-Federal source of capital could be found. Obviously it is not a fair nor a practical solution to charge such costs to the farmers.

Because of the long-time lack of authority and funds to provide recreational facilities at Reclamation reservoirs the Bureau of Reclamation adopted the policy many years ago of transferring recreational administration of reservoirs to other qualified agencies and organizations. For example, reservoirs geographically located within or adjacent to National Forests have been transferred to the U.S. Forest Service for recreational administration. National Recreation Areas built around a number of the more spectacular Bureau of Reclamation dams and reservoirs are administered by the National Park Service.

Although many such transfers were made under that policy, many others were not transferred to anyone for lack of there being suitable entities willing and able to assume the responsibility. Under limited authority in recent years, the Bureau of Reclamation has provided minimum basic facilities required to protect the health and safety of the visiting public. With a little imagination, the definition could be stretched somewhat beyond fences and sanitary facilities but not enough even to come close to meeting the obvious needs.

Public Law 89-72, enacted July 9, 1965, was intended to provide reasonably adequate general authority to meet the long prevailing deficiencies. However, with respect to existing projects, our experience is that the Act has failed to meet expectations for several reasons. Cost ceilings have proven to be inadequate, required matching funds are unavailable, and eligible operating entities are unwilling to assume the obligations.
Beyond this, our continuing problem of inadequate construction and management of recreation facilities under local or State agency control has become critical. The State of Colorado, for example, recently cancelled its agreement for management of recreation facilities at Green Mountain and Willow Creek Reservoirs effective June 30. Proper management of these reservoirs is necessary in the interests of public safety, pollution abatement, protection of grounds and structures, and other related environmental factors. Reclamation has no choice but to assume management, even though adequate legislative provision therefore is lacking. Other equally distressing cases could be cited.

Thus it is obvious that broad general authority is highly desirable under which the Bureau of Reclamation can provide directly for development and management of recreational facilities required to meet public needs.

As to why recreational facilities have not been provided by private capital, our experience is that providing day-use recreational facilities for the masses is not profitable and therefore does not attract private capital. Construction of a sewer system, water system, sanitary facilities, access roads, parking areas, boat ramps, camp sites, etc., costs millions of dollars at a well-run reservoir shoreline concession.

A concessionaire is not willing nor able to justify such an expense unless he can make it pay. To make it pay he must have a long-term lease and must cater to the minority who are able and willing to pay special rates on a monthly or annual basis for special services and facilities. That type of concessionaire operation tends to restrict access of the day-user. Any number of land developers would dearly love to have exclusive access rights to a Bureau of Reclamation reservoir, but we are flatly opposed to any such policy.

To serve the masses,—the day-users, the sightseers, and the picnickers,—necessitates subsidy and therefore requires public participation of some sort.

The foregoing discussion of "Reservoir Recreation Policy and Problems," would indicate that policy and problems are closely related. More specifically, lack of adequate statutory authority to finance, develop, and manage basic public recreational resources so as to protect the public interest and to meet the public demands has been the primary source of our principal problems. With the growing concern of society for development and use of all resources in a manner compatible with today's conservation objectives and so as to provide protection and preservation of the environment for the maximum benefit of present and future generations, it seems clear that coordination, clarification, and extension of policy is needed.

It is equally clear that only the Congress can set the stage for accomplishment of these objectives. We expect to call these needs to the
attention of the appropriate committees of the Congress. If legislative proposals develop therefrom, very likely all concerned elements of society will have full opportunity to express their opinions and recommendations.
THE 14TH ANNUAL
Western Resources Conference
JULY 5 - 6 - 7, 1972
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
FORT COLLINS, COLORADO
Fourteenth Annual Western Resources Conference
July 5, 6, 7, 1972
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, Colorado

Conference Theme: "Outdoor Recreation and Environmental Quality"

Sponsored by: Colorado State University, Colorado School of Mines, the University of Denver, and the University of Colorado

In cooperation with: the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, U.S. Department of the Interior

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general information

LOCATION: All sessions of the conference will be held in the Student Center building on the Colorado State University campus in Fort Collins, Colorado.

REGISTRATION: Conference registration will be held on Wednesday, July 5 from 1 - 5 p.m. in the second floor lobby of the Student Center.

Pre-registrations are encouraged to avoid delay and confusion when conference members arrive on campus. A registration form and description of facilities is included with this brochure for your convenience. Please return this form to the Western Resources Conference, Room C-346, Social Science Building, Colorado State University. A list of motels will be sent to those indicating a preference for that type of accommodation.

PARKING: For persons staying on campus, parking will be available at no charge in lots near the dormitories. Commuters may park in the Visitors Lot immediately south of the Student Center.

RECREATION AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES: All types of outdoor recreation are available in and around Fort Collins. The University sponsors many cultural activities, most of which are open to the public.

program

WEDNESDAY, JULY 5, 1972
1:00 REGISTRATION
Student Center Second Floor Lobby

5:00 RECEPTION
Room C-102, Rockwell Hall

THURSDAY, JULY 6, 1972
9:00 WELCOME
Charles O. Neidt, Academic Vice President, Colorado State University

KEYNOTE ADDRESS
Honorable John W. Larson, Assistant Secretary, United States Department of the Interior
East Ballroom, Student Center

10:15 PANEL: RESERVOIR-BASED RECREATION
East Ballroom, Student Center
Chairman: Henry P. Caulfield, Jr., Professor of Political Science, Colorado State University

C. Grant Ash, Chief, Recreation and Environment Branch, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Robert M. Howes, Manager, Land Between the Lakes Project, Tennessee Valley Authority
Gilbert G. Stamm, Assistant Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Department of the Interior

12:30 LUNCHEON
North Ballroom, Student Center
Presiding: Daniel M. Ogden, Jr., Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Colorado State University
Speaker: Honorable Wayne N. Aspinall, Member of Congress, Colorado

2:30 PANELS
MULTI-OBJECTIVE RECREATION PLANNING
Room 202, Student Center
Chairman: Thomas W. Ten Eyck, Executive Director, Colorado Department of Natural Resources
Maurice D. Arnold, Regional Director, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, U.S. Department of the Interior
Eldon F. Holmes, Chief, Division of Recreation, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior
Leslie M. Reid, Professor and Head, Department of Recreation and Parks, Texas A & M University

LAND USE CONTROLS AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
Room 203, Student Center
R. Burnell Held, Professor of Recreation Resources and Economics, Colorado State University
Claude Peters, Staff Director, Colorado Land Use Commission
Stephen C. Smith, Associate Dean, School of Natural Resources, University of Wisconsin

ECONOMICS OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
Room 207, Student Center
Chairman: Kenneth C. Nobe, Professor and Chairman, Department of Economics, Colorado State University
Ralph d'Arge, Resource Economist, Resources for the Future
Robert K. Davis, Staff Economist, National Audubon Society
William J. Donovan, Principal Economist, Corps of Engineers, Department of the Army
6:30 BANQUET
West Ballroom, Student Center
Presiding: Phillip O. Foss, Chairman, Department of Political Science and Chairman, Western Resources Conference, Colorado State University
Speaker: Dwight F. Rettie, Executive Director, National Recreation and Park Association

FRIDAY, JULY 7, 1972
8:15 PANELS
RATIONING RECREATION RESOURCES
Room 202, Student Center
Chairman: J. Russell Penney, California State Director, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior
James Dunning, Colorado State Coordinator, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior
Patrick J. Gallavan, Superintendent, Denver City Parks
William J. Lucas, Regional Forester, U.S. Forest Service

LEGAL PROCESSES AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
Room 203, Student Center
Chairman: Ronald H. Strahle, Attorney and Member of the Colorado State Legislature
Panelists to be announced

SYSTEMS FOR ANALYZING IMPACTS OF OUTDOOR RECREATION PROGRAMS ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
Room 207, Student Center
Chairman: Donald F. Dubois, Deputy Regional Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency
Howard R. Alden, Professor of Recreation Resources, Colorado State University
J. Allan Wagar, Professor of Forestry and Leader, Cooperative Recreation Research Unit, University of Washington

10:30 PANEL: OUTDOOR RECREATION ON FEDERAL LANDS: POLICIES AND PROBLEMS
East Ballroom, Student Center
Chairman: Edward C. Crafts, Conservation Consultant
Edward W. Schultz, Deputy Chief, U.S. Forest Service
Burton W. Silcock, Director, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior

12:30 LUNCHEON
North Ballroom, Student Center
Presiding: Norman A. Evans, Director, Environmental Resources Center, Colorado State University
Speaker: Honorable John W. Neuberger, Chairman, Missouri River Basin Commission

2:30 PANEL: NATIONAL PARKS FOR THE FUTURE
East Ballroom, Student Center
Chairman: Arthur T. Wilcox, Professor and Head, Department of Recreation Resources, Colorado State University
Robert T. Dennis, Coordinator, National Parks for the Future, The Conservation Foundation

Commentators:
Wendell Beardsley, Professor of Forestry, Iowa State University
William C. Everhart, Director, Harper's Ferry Center, National Park Service

PROGRAM CHANGES
FRIDAY, JULY 7, 1972
8:15 PANEL
LEGAL PROCESSES AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
Room 203, Student Center
Chairman: Ronald H. Strahle, Attorney and Member of the Colorado State Legislature
P. T. Barrows, Chief, Environmental Resources Section, State of Colorado, Division of Game, Fish, and Parks
Roger D. Hoadley, Director, Legal Services, Rocky Mountain Center on Environment
Louis Streigel, Counsel, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

FRIDAY, JULY 7, 1972
2:30 PANEL
NATIONAL PARKS FOR THE FUTURE
Change commentator from
William C. Everhart to
J. Leonard Volz, Director
Mid-West Region
National Park Service