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THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA NEWS LETTER

Published Weekly by the University of North Carolina for the University Extension Division.

MARCH 17, 1926

CHAPEL HILL, N. C.
THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PRESS

VOL. XII, NO. 18

Editorial Board: E. C. Branson, S. H. Hobbs, Jr., L. R. Wilson, E. W. Knight, D. D. Carroll, J. B. Bullitt, H. W. Odum.

Entered as second-class matter November 14, 1914, at the Postoffice at Chapel Hill, N. C., under the act of August 24, 1912

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS PARK

WOULD BE A GREAT ASSET TO THE STATE

North Carolina has the opportunity of seeing a great national park established in the Great Smoky Mountains of the western counties of the state. A commission, appointed by the Secretary of the Interior to search all the Appalachian range for sites suitable for national park purposes, has reported to Congress that of all the possible sites the Great Smoky Mountains easily stood first, and has recommended the creation of a park there. All that is required is that private citizens make available the lands, or the money with which to purchase them. Realizing that the states of North Carolina and Tennessee, in which states the proposed park lies in part, are not able to raise by personal subscriptions the necessary funds to purchase this immense tract of land, the federal park commission has suggested that these two states raise the first million dollars toward the purchase fund, and has announced that, once this first million dollars is raised, the people of the nation as a whole will be called on to contribute the balance.

Must Raise Million Dollars

As the situation stands, then, until the states of North Carolina and Tennessee through private subscription contribute the first million dollars to this fund to purchase the Great Smoky Mountains tract, Congress will not act towards the creation of the national park there, nor will the balance of the purchase fund be forthcoming. It is necessary, in the opinion of the federal park commission, that the people of these states should first show their material interest in the creation of this national park, before Congress be asked to officially create this national park, or the general public be asked to contribute to the purchase fund.

To date the people of the two states have contributed more than \$500,000 to this purchase fund, and the campaign for funds is going on in all sections of Western North Carolina, where in the neighborhood of \$325,000 has been raised, and throughout Eastern Tennessee, where more than \$250,000 has been pledged. The cities of Asheville, North Carolina, and Knoxville, Tennessee, have so far borne the brunt of the campaign. Asheville and Buncombe County has pledged more than \$200,000, and Knoxville has raised \$220,000. Unless the other sections of North Carolina come to the aid of Western North Carolina, the possibility of raising the half million asked of this state will be slight.

The Campaign Committee

The campaign for the half million dollars in North Carolina is of a semi-official character. The canvass of the state is being carried on by the North Carolina Park Commission, a commission created by the North Carolina General Assembly of 1924 for the purpose of cooperating with the federal government in obtaining a national park in this state. The bill calling for the creation of this commission was introduced by Senator Mark Squires, of Caldwell county, and he was named as its chairman. The other members of the commission are D. M. Buck, Bald Mountain; Dr. H. W. Chase, Chapel Hill; John G. Dawson, Kinston; Plato D. Ebbs, Asheville; J. H. Dillard, Murphy; A. M. Kistler, Morganton; Frank Linney, Boone; Harry Nettles, Biltmore; E. S. Parker, Jr., Greensboro, and Dr. E. C. Brooks, Raleigh, who is the commission's secretary.

The commission, which has taken the lead in the raising of this state's share in the purchase price of the park, organized itself at once into a holding company, incorporated under the laws of the state. This holding company, known as the Great Smoky Mountains, Inc., handles the business details and accepts the money contributed to the park fund, and offers of land in the proposed park area. Senator Squires is its chairman or president; Charles A. Webb, publisher of the Asheville Citizen, is vice-president; F. Roger Miller, secretary of the Asheville Chamber of Commerce, is the treasurer, and the following persons make up the company: Eugene Adams, of Asheville; Dr. D. R. Bryson, of Bryson City; D. M. Buck, of Bald Mountain; Plato D. Ebbs, of Asheville;

Dan Tompkins, of Sylva, and T. S. Rollins, of Asheville. It is this organization that has successfully raised to date virtually two-thirds of the fund necessary for the securing of this national park for North Carolina.

Why Fund Must Be Raised

The question is often asked: Why should the federal government expect the people of these states and their neighboring states to give money out of their own pockets for the purchase of land for a national park? The answer is that there being no precedent in Congress for the purchase of lands for national parks, and there being considerable doubt as to the constitutionality of such an appropriation, Congress does not feel that such a precedent should be created, nor should the question of constitutionality be argued at this juncture. Getting Congress to set up such a precedent at this time would mean untold delays, and if there is any considerable delay in the acquisition of this land, the invasion of the lumber interests which are cutting in this section of the state (and which own much of this land) will ruin it altogether for park purposes.

If the people of North Carolina are interested in having this great national park created within the borders of the state, they must act promptly, for the matter must come up for consideration at the present session of Congress, and it is the intention of the Secretary of the Interior to have the bill creating the Great Smoky Mountains National Park drawn for presentation shortly after April 1; but this action cannot be taken until at least one million dollars for the purchase fund is available.

In order to simplify the making of contributions to this fund, the payments are being accepted over a period of three years. To facilitate immediate action in the acquisition of lands within the park area, contributors are being asked to pay 20 percent of their pledge within thirty days. The balance is collectible in three annual payments, which fall due on or before January 1, 1927, January 1, 1928, and January 1, 1929. If, by any chance, the park plan fails, the three annual payments will not be called for, and the money paid will be returned on a pro rata basis when the expenses of the campaign have been met.

Subscriptions made payable to F. Roger Miller, treasurer, The Great Smoky Mountains, Inc., Asheville Chamber of Commerce, Asheville, N. C.

PARK AND AGRICULTURE

With the coming of more and more tourists each year to North Carolina, the agricultural life of the state is undergoing, and will continue to undergo, a striking change. This observation was made recently by Major William A. Welch, a member of the Southern Appalachian National Park Commission and a nationally known park authority, who declared that not only would the type of produce grown on the farms of this state change, but the methods of marketing this produce would be materially altered by the influx of tourists.

Visitors are flocking southward every year by the hundreds of thousands, and when the proposed Great Smoky Mountains National Park is created in the mountains of Western North Carolina and Eastern Tennessee, and the national park in the Shenandoah Valley is opened, there will be, Major Welch estimates, at least a million visitors to this state every year. Many of these will be auto tourists and campers, who will seek along the route fresh fruits, vegetables, butter, milk, eggs, chickens, and other fresh meats. This demand must in time lead to a considerable diversification of crops on farms that are now entirely given over to corn, cotton, tobacco, and grain, for these tourists must be fed; they are willing to pay good prices for these farm products, and they are always cash customers.

New Source of Income

North Carolina will undergo much the same experience as New England has undergone since the popularization of the automobile. The rural section of

SOME IMPORTANT FACTS

The following are a few of the important facts concerning the Great Smoky Mountains National Park:

Size

At least 450,000 acres of mountain land and foot-hills.

Location

Approximately half in Western Tennessee, lying within the counties of Swain, Haywood, and Graham in North Carolina, and Sevier, Blount, and Cooke in Tennessee, and including the range of the Great Smokies from the Pigeon river on the northeast to the Little Tennessee river on the southwest.

Principal Characteristics

High range of mountains, 40 miles long, in which are 18 peaks more than 6,000 feet above sea-level, and in which many of the principal power-producing rivers of Tennessee and North Carolina have their source. Variety of trees, flowers, and shrubs is said by botanists to be unexampled anywhere else on earth. Greatest stand of deciduous trees in Eastern America, one-quarter of the park area being covered with virgin forests, many of whose trees are more than a thousand years old.

Acquisition

To be purchased from present owners by funds the first million of which is to be subscribed by the people of North Carolina and Tennessee, and the remainder by the people of the nation at large.

Maintenance

Once the park is created by Act of Congress, funds for the improvement of the park, building of roads, rest-camps, and other conveniences for the visitors will be made available by Congress. The park, when open to the public, will be administered by the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior, which directs the other nineteen national parks of the country, and the entire cost of maintenance will be borne by the federal government.

Accessibility

Both in North Carolina and Tennessee several state highways, already open to traffic or in course of construction, lead into the proposed confines of the park. These state roads will be linked up with other highways within the park, which will be built and maintained by the federal government, thus making the park easily accessible.

New England has become prosperous during the last few years by trafficking with the tourists, who visit that region every summer in countless numbers. Along every well-travelled highway in New England today are prosperous farms, whose produce is sold almost exclusively to the auto tourists. Stands with neat displays of fruit, vegetables, jars of honey, and so on are placed by the roadside in front of the farmhouses, and the passing motorists, attracted by the produce, stop to do their trading. Such a system of marketing is bound to come into vogue in North Carolina, Major Welch believes, once the stream of tourists begins to flow over the highways of the state, leading to the national park or other natural wonderlands of the mountains and plains.

Vermont, Major Welch pointed out during a recent speaking tour of the state in the interest of the proposed national park in the Great Smokies, netted in 1925 more than \$170,000,000 from its tourist trade, and New Hampshire and Maine did fully as well. The mountains of these states, it is admitted, possess neither the majesty nor the extent of the mountains of North Carolina; the roads of these northern states are not sufficiently improved to make

motoring the pleasure it is in this state, and the season in those northern states is short. With the advantages that North Carolina has in these respects over the states to the north, the tide of tourist traffic, once it has turned southward, will flow with undiminished energy. With the coming of these travelers there will come a change, which is already noticeable in the character of the agricultural life of the state, particularly along the main highways of travel to the mountains.

PARK AND WATER SUPPLY

Regulation of the flow of the rivers that rise in the Great Smoky Mountains of Western North Carolina, or are fed by streams rising in these mountains, will be guaranteed by the creation of a national park in that section, according to Thorndike Saville, chief of the water resources division of the North Carolina Department of Conservation and Development. Such regulation, obviating as it will the danger of floods during the rainy seasons and droughts in dry times, is a priceless asset to the communities that depend on these rivers for their water supply and the industries that find in these streams the source of their hydro-electric energy.

But regulation is only one major benefit that will accrue from the preservation of the forests of these mountains. In the opinion of Professor Saville, the danger of silting will be largely avoided if the trees in the watersheds are allowed to stand. If the trees along the water courses, however, are cut, erosion will set in, the soil from the banks will be washed down into the streams by the violent rains, and in time the river beds and the impounding basins of the hydro-electric plants will be choked with silt. Such damage from erosion is an ever-increasing danger in this state, Professor Saville stated, and in the Western states has resulted in marked lessening of the efficiency of some hydro-electric projects.

Pure Water and Industry

It is a determined fact that the stream waters of Western North Carolina are the purest to be found in any section of the United States east of the Rocky Mountains. It is to the advantage of industry that these streams be kept unpolluted, and in the opinion of Professor Saville the creation of the proposed national park in the headwaters of these rivers will be an important factor in the protection of these streams. The interest of industry in the protection of these streams rests on the fact that the waters of these Western North Carolina rivers are clear, virtually colorless and soft. They are peculiarly free from any suspended matter, and their chemical character makes them particularly available for use in certain manufacturing processes, particularly those involving dyeing, tanning, bleaching, and paper-making.

Preservation of the purity of these streams will be assured, Professor Saville believes, by the creation of a national preserve in their headwaters. Pollution of the streams would be prevented, and, while the waters within the confines of the park could not be utilized for manufacturing or other commercial purposes, the utilization of the streams would be possible outside the park limits.

HOW PARK PROJECT STANDS

Curiously, it was through the efforts of a Massachusetts organization, the Appalachian Club, that the movement for a national park in the South began a quarter of a century ago.

Shortly thereafter came the beginnings of a similar movement in Asheville, North Carolina, followed twenty-three years later by the creation of the Great Smoky Mountain Conservation Association in Knoxville, Tennessee, which today cooperates with the North Carolina Park Commission.

Early last year, Dr. Hubert Work, Secretary of the Interior, responded to these overtures from North and South by appointing the Southern Appalachian Park Committee, consisting of Representative Henry Wilson Temple, Pennsylvania, chairman; William C. Gregg, New Jersey; Harlan P. Kelsey, Massachusetts; Col. Glenn S. Smith, U. S. Geological Survey, Washington, D. C.; and Major William A. Welch, General Manager, Palisades Interstate Park, New York.

Without salary and at their own expense, these gentlemen thoroughly explored the Southern highlands, devoting eight months to the task. On December 12, 1924, they reported to Secretary Work, recommending two parks, the Shenandoah National Park in Virginia and the Great Smoky Mountain National Park in Tennessee and North Carolina. In their report the committee said:

"We have found many areas which could well be chosen, but the committee was charged with the responsibility of selecting the best, all things considered. Of these several possible sites the Great Smoky Mountains easily stand first because of the height of mountains, depth of valleys, ruggedness of the area, and the unexampled variety of trees, shrubs, and plants. The region includes Mt. Guyot, Mt. LeConte, Clingmans Dome, and Gregory Bald, and may be extended in several directions to include other splendid mountain regions adjacent thereto."

Last February, Congress authorized and directed the Secretary of the Interior to appoint a commission to determine the area and boundaries of both parks, to receive definite offers of donations of lands and moneys, and to secure such options as in his judgment might be considered reasonable and just for the purchase of lands within said boundaries.

Secretary Work appointed the same commissioners who had made the initial survey. At the same time he made it clear that the people must buy lands and give them to the Government, as there is no precedent in Congress for the purchase of park property with federal money. If the people fail to present the Government with the lands, Secretary Work may find it inconsistent with public policy to recommend the creation of these parks.

The Virginians are now seeking to raise a fund of \$1,000,000 for the purchase of the Shenandoah Area. North Carolina and Tennessee have set out to raise a similar amount for the Great Smoky Mountain National Park. Upon their success depends the attitude of Secretary Work in his report to Congress next winter. Upon their success depends also the attitude of Congress towards the whole project.—The Great Smoky Mountains National Park Campaign Headquarters.

AUTOS AND TELEPHONES

There are three times as many automobiles as there are telephones on farms in the South Atlantic seaboard states, according to a farm survey of the American Research Foundation.

Farm-owned automobiles in the states in this section total 367,526, compared with 123,594 farm telephones, a bulletin issued by the foundation shows. Virginia ranks first among the states in rural telephones with a total of 33,482. Farm-owned automobiles in the state number 73,677. North Carolina is second in rural 'phones with 33,029, while its farm cars total 89,293. Then comes Georgia with 29,861 'phones and 69,169 cars, South Carolina with 10,943 rural 'phones and 52,179 cars, and Florida with 4,524 rural 'phones and 31,805 farm-owned automobiles.

For the entire United States, the figures show, there are 1,333,014 more automobiles on farms than there are telephones. The totals are 3,831,507 farm cars and 2,498,493 farm telephones.

Preponderance of automobiles over telephones on farms, the bulletin points out, is due to the fact that automobiles have become an indispensable part of the average farm equipment. Cars are used for all sorts of farm labor, including hauling, furnishing power for machinery, and doing farm errands. That farms now enjoy most of the conveniences that were formerly exclusive to the city is indicated by sales statistics of Montgomery Ward & Company which show increased sales of automobile equipment, lighting and heating plants, radios, musical instruments, and home equipment in rural districts. But automobiles are regarded as the most important, for the survey showed that many farms reported automobiles where the farm house had no bath tub, running water, or electric light.—Lexington Dispatch.