

Parkway Anniversary

(Continued from page one)

aren't even hiking trails through much of the rugged terrain which in the past has kept Waterrock beyond the reach of all visitors except the hardiest woodsmen.

This year, on a 13-mile stretch of Parkway between Balsam Gap on U. S. 19A-23 and Soco Gap on U. S. 19, sightseers are driving up to Waterrock overlook with the greatest of ease. Enroute, they enjoy other views from other overlooks. But, although resorts, farmlands and highways can be identified in the distance, verdant wilderness borders this section of the Parkway.

Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, Secretary of Commerce Luther H. Hodges, Director Conrad Wirth of the National Park Service, and Congressman Roy A. Taylor of North Carolina head the list of visitors who will see the views from Waterrock during the Parkway anniversary on August 18. The program begins at 10 a. m., with Secretary Udall making the principal address.

Celebrating 25 years in which the Parkway has blazed new trails for public recreation and become the most visited of all National Park Service features, the anniversary also focuses attention on the Parkway's future.

Legislation introduced by Congressman Taylor this year authorizes surveying the possibilities of a 170-mile extension of the Parkway from the Balsam Mountains to Georgia via North Carolina's waterfountain country southeast of the Great Smokies.

Of the 477 miles along the Parkway's present right-of-way in Virginia and North Carolina, 407 are paved. Thirty-two are now under construction in the vicinity of Asheville, North Carolina, and west through the Pisgah and Balsam ranges.

The Blue Ridge Parkway met the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in 1950, when 11 miles of construction between Soco Gap and U. S. 441 was opened on June 25. That same year, travel experts of the National Association of Travel Organizations voted the Parkway "the most scenic major highway in America."

In 1956, the Parkway's annual visitor count topped the five-million mark for the first time. In 1960, the Parkway drew 5,503,231 visitors. From January 1 through July 31 of this year, the Parkway drew 3,192,913 people—an increase of 21.8 per cent over the same period in 1960.

The first annual travel count for the Parkway, in 1939, was 291,273. Construction of the Parkway was started in September, 1935. Since 1956, it has been accelerated through the 10-year "Mission 66" program of the National Park Service.

Paralleling the building of the motor road has been the development of other Parkway features interpreting the history, geology and culture of the Southern Appalachians and providing hiking, picnicking, camping, fishing and boating.

The Parkway is designed and maintained solely for vacation use. The toll-free road and its high, wide and handsome right-of-way form an elongated park which is both a scenic and recreational ad-

venture in its own right and an access to a host of other attractions and resorts. The right-of-way is a botanical and wildlife sanctuary. No billboards or commercial vehicles are permitted, and there are no congested traffic areas. Maximum speed is 45 mph;

lower at many localities. These features, together with engineering providing for super elevated curves and a maximum grade of 8 per cent, make the Parkway a relaxing road to travel. It is for the leisurely motorist who enjoys beautiful country. And it's cool,

because of its altitude, even in mid-summer. Peak visitation is from May and June, when the upland flower parade culminates in laurel, flame azalea and rhododendron blossoms, through October, when autumn foliage succeeds the cool green of

Parkway recreational areas and special exhibits are open from May through October. The motor road, with the exception of highest-altitude sections which are closed from mid-November until mid-April, is available for travel year around.

Use a small brush to clean food graters and parers. You will save wear and tear on hands and dish cloth.

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