

The Superior Advantages of a National Forest for the Smokies:

Wherein An Expert Opinion Is Reviewed: A National Park OR A Smokey National FOREST--Study This Opinion.

NATIONAL PARKS.

United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service.
Washington, D. C., Jan. 29th, 1925.
Major Barrington Moore,
233 Broadway,
New York City.

Dear Major Moore:

In response to your letter of January 22nd, I am glad to give you my viewpoint regarding the proposed National Parks in the Southern Appalachian Mountains.

I am anxious that the study of the conditions and future requirements of the Appalachian region may lead to a more definite crystallization, both in public opinion and in federal policy, of the principles which should govern the application of the two forms of federal land management namely, National Parks and National Forests. An agreement upon these principles ought to precede a decision as to the best use of specific areas, not only in this region, but in order that our whole federal land program may be soundly executed.

National Forests represent the broader and more generalized form of federal administration of forest lands. It is mainly utilitarian in character, seeking the fullest practicable utilization of forest, water, and other economic resources consistent with their perpetuation. At the same time it aims to accomplish the greatest good public service of federal lands on the principle that each acre shall have its highest form of use in accordance with this principle. It is made for the preservation of areas having special natural interest and value, not as the primary service of the public, but as one of the public services in the administration and management of the lands.

National Parks, on the other hand, represent a specialized form of administration designed for the preservation of natural museums or recreational opportunities of a highly developed character for the sole purpose of National Parks exclude any and all economic resources and exist solely for the preservation of natural conditions for their inspiration and recreational value. It follows in my judgment, that forest areas should be placed in National Parks where their scenic and inspirational value outweighs their utility for economic uses and where this value is sufficiently outstanding and important to the country as a whole to require a specialized form of public land administration, organized especially to conserve it and to make it available for public enjoyment. Where these elements are not present, the more generalized form of public forest administration, as National Forests, should be provided.

Without attempting to set forth in detail the principles which I believe should govern the creation of National Parks and National Forests (and you are of course familiar with them from former discussions), I want to stress the point that we cannot develop a co-ordinated public land policy until such principles have been defined and accepted as its basis. Without such a policy, we are in danger, in the Southern Appalachians, of creating a bad competitive situation between two different and unco-ordinated federal land programs. I believe this to be the most important question in connection with the Southern Appalachian development.

From the standpoint of creating National Parks, the Southern Appalachians present a situation to tally different from the conditions in the west where our present National Parks large occur. Aside from the fact that at least a very large proportion of any Park area must be acquired by purchase, we are dealing here with an old and well settled region, with a large population in mountain farms, rural communities, and industrial towns. The commercial value, both actual and intrinsic, of the greater part of the mountain areas is high. Many established industries depend upon their timber resources. There is a rapidly growing demand for water power. A relatively large local population is to a considerable degree dependent upon these mountain areas for economic employment. There is also a growing and more clearly recognized local, and in part national, need for facilities for outdoor recreation.

I cannot avoid the belief that, in the main the most effective development and use of the mountain resources of the south will be secured under the National Forest type of public land administration. There are dozens of small areas all through the Southern Appalachians which have exceptional value for special scenery, natural beauties, or opportunities for recreation. Under the generalized scheme of land use contemplated by National Forests, these many small areas can be protected and devoted to inspirational and recreational service. At the same time the larger areas surrounding them which are more valuable for timber, water power, and other economic resources, can be developed and used for such forms of public service. The administration of the White Mountain National Forest today, wherein all of these forms of public service have been combined and more or less effectively balanced, presents to my mind a picture of the sort of development which the Southern Appalachians, by and large, require. Under the policy expressed in the Weeks Law the Government has acquired approximately 1,800,000 acres of forest lands in this region and to complete the original Weeks Law program, should acquire not less than 3,000,000 acres more. In other words, we have an established and operating federal land policy as to the Southern Appalachian, still but partially carried out. If this established land policy is to be supplemented by a second form of specialized administration in the form of National Parks, it is certainly essential that this proposed development be carefully co-ordinated with that already under way.

As far as the proposed Shenandoah National Park by itself is concerned, such co-ordination would not be difficult. Because of the very large distribution of ownership, the number of mountain farms, and the high value of the land, influenced in part by its recreational use under private auspices, the Forest Service has never contemplated the establishment of a National Forest in this area. We certainly don't want to play the rule of the dog in the manger; and while I am in some doubt as to whether the principles of a sound federal land policy would justify making a National Park of this area, I have been disposed to waive the point and offer no objection to the acquisition of this area as a National Park. I have been influenced by the argument that the country should retain at some point in the southern mountains a natural museum of impressive proportions, showing the virgin forests of the region in an undisturbed condition. This area contains an unusually large proportion of virgin timber; and its acquisition for Park purposes apparently would involve less interference with industrial uses of the mountains and needed development of their economic resources than would be true of most other areas.

The situation has become much more complicated however, by the proposal in the revised Temple bill which contemplates a second National Park in the Smokey Mountains. This proposal also includes general provisions for applying still other National Parks in areas unnamed. The proposal in other words, is taking the shape of a general park program of possibly far reaching proportions in the Southern Appalachian Mountains; apparently to be laid down on top of the existing National Forest policy without any basis of co-ordination. It is this development of the Appalachian Park idea which leads me to emphasize the necessity of first agreeing upon the principles which should govern the federal land policy and then apply these principles as fairly as practicable in co-ordinating the park program with the existing National Forest program.

I am in doubt about the Smokey Mountain area. In topography, scenic features and wealth of virgin forest, it is undoubtedly superior to the Shenandoah area and probably as fine as any portion of the Southern Appalachians. On the other hand its industrial values are high, being surrounded by the most important group of forest industries in the whole region. These industries are working up into and towards the Smokey Mountains at a number of points. There will undoubtedly be a strong future demand for water power developments. I am somewhat doubtful whether, on account of this industrial situation, a National Park in this region could be permanently maintained. Furthermore, the purchase of the Great Smokies would be very expensive, curtailing doubtless for six to eight million dollars; and the inclusion of this project makes the

accomplishment of the program from the fiscal standpoint much more dubious. Added to the cost of acquisition is the very large expenditure that would be entailed for road construction to make the Smokey Mountains accessible for general park purposes.

A purchase unit covering the Smokey Mountains was established by the National Forest Reservation Commission many years ago. No purchases in that unit have yet been made. The holding of the Little River Lumber Company would have been acquired by the Commission a number of years ago had their land titles not been so defective. The company has now perfected its titles and re-offered its lands to the commission last spring. Action on their offer has been deferred on account of the interjection of a proposal to acquire this property by the State of Tennessee, the Forest Service taking the position that since the state desires to acquire the land we would co-operate with the state rather than follow any course that might interfere with its project. Our future policy as to the Smokey Mountain unit has of course been rendered doubtful by the National Park proposal. I will not initiate any steps that would forestall or in any wise block the National Park project, as long as it is pending in some reasonably definite form. This situation illustrates the need for a co-ordinated policy. Undoubtedly portions of the Smokies should be preserved for their scenic value and devoted to recreation whatever the form of public ownership. My own opinion is that the requirements of this section as a whole would be better served by a National Forest, and I am wholly prepared to cooperate in working out the best future course on this area if some plan of co-ordination can be established.

It is of course impossible to make any accurate forecast on the point which you raise, as to whether the purchase of National Park areas would result in reducing the fund made available for the purchase of National Forests and so retard the rate at which the National Forests are extended. In my judgment, the institution of park purchases would tend to have that result. I base this upon the very definite economy program of the administration and the specific goal set up by the President of accomplishing further reductions in the expenditures of the federal government. In accordance with this policy, the Bureau of the Budget is compelled to disapprove of curtailment of most projected expenditures which contemplate an expansion of existing federal activities or programs. I see no prospect of any change in the fiscal program of the government for a number of years to come. Hence it seems probable that no large increase in the appropriations for federal land purchases as a whole can be expected; and that if a new form of land purchase for park purposes is launched, the general tendency will be to carry it to the extent it may be authorized by reducing the amount that might otherwise be available for buying National Forests. This is not an objection to the purchase of National Parks that I am disposed to stress, since I believe that if the public interest requires the purchase of National Parks as part of the Federal land policy, provision should be made for them no less than for National Forests. Of course I would hope that the Park purchase program whatever it may be, would be regarded as supplemental to the purchase of National Forests under the Weeks Law and the Clarke-McNary Law rather than as a substitute. I am more concerned, however, with what I believe to be the essential point in this whole question, that of a proper co-ordination between the two programs.

An attempt to co-ordinate simply upon a written statement of principles, however clearly it may be drawn, cannot be very effective because of differences in viewpoint in the application of principles to particular areas. In the last analysis we have got to get co-ordination by joint consideration of areas. To this end it would seem to me desirable to get legislative action creating a co-ordinating body, in order at least to insure joint consideration of conflicting projects by men identified with both federal programs and bring to such joint consideration the viewpoints and aims contemplated in both programs. To be specific, I would suggest the creation of a National Forest and National Park board, containing two representatives from the De-

partment of Agriculture (let us say from the Forest Service and the Biological Survey) and two representatives from the Interior Department (let us say from the National Park Service and Geological Survey). To these departmental members I would add three representatives of the general public, to be designated by the President from names submitted jointly by the secretaries of the two departments. I would make it the function of this board to investigate all proposed National Park or National Forest extension where possible conflict between the two federal land policies may be involved. This would include park projects or boundary changes in the west as well as those in the eastern states. Let the board study each area carefully from all standpoints, using all the data available in the two departments and supplementing it by personal examinations in the field. Let their findings be submitted to the secretaries of the departments, who would then be free to make their own recommendations. This would not circumscribe or limit the authority and responsibility of the secretaries of Interior and Agriculture, but would provide for a joint and authoritative consideration of all projects. I believe that it would bring into the study of these projects at their inception, the joint viewpoint that is essential to get practical co-ordination. Such a scheme doubtless would not bring about uniformity of departmental recommendations in all cases, but it would at least provide means for co-ordination or a much more effective adjustment than we have at present.

Another phase of co-ordination I believe to be essential, namely, the banking of all purchases for National Parks as well as National Forests through the National Forest Reservation Commission. This commission is a very representative body, including three members of the Cabinet and four members of Congress. It has functioned efficiently thirteen years and has expended over \$14,000,000 in buying land for federal use. It has built up a large mass of data and information on land values in the Southern Appalachian region, as well as in New England and Pennsylvania. It has developed the methods and machinery for appraisals, options, and the examination of titles. In carrying out its work, for example, an experienced organization is now functioning under the solicitor of the Department of Agriculture and in accordance with the procedure prescribed by the Department of Justice, on the determination of titles, which has proven to be one of the most costly and difficult steps in buying lands in the Southern Appalachians. Our records to date show that on the average purchase a cost of about 35 cents per acre has been entailed in order to very titles, vary through condemnation suits necessary in many cases, and secure titles acceptable to the government.

It would certainly be futile to duplicate this specific organization; and I think it would be equally futile to create a new purchasing agency parallel to the National Forest Reservation Commission. A duplication of agency would be almost certain to develop different policies and different standards of land values, and to result in a competitive situation between forest and park purchases that would not only be unbusinesslike, but detrimental to the interests of the government as a land buyer. I would not advocate that field examinations and appraisals, in the acquisitions of park lands, be made by the Forest Service. They should be made by the National Park Service. But I do believe that the purchase work for both purposes should be co-ordinated, in passing upon options and values, through utilizing the agency already created and functioning effectively for the particular purposes; and I believe strongly that the title organization already created should be used for park purchases as well as forest purchases. This would be a distinct economy.

Very sincerely yours,
(Signed) W. B. GRELEY,
Forester.

1. The recognition of recreational use as a form of National Forest land service of great public value and importance, which shall be systematically co-ordinated with other forms of land use such as timber production, streamflow protection, and forage production.
2. The recognition of recreation management within the National Forest as a function of the Forest Service, which in discharging that func-

tion may apply to areas of recreational value the methods required for their best development, to the extent compatible with other National Forest requirements and within the limits set by Congress.

3. The retention under National Forest management of all areas of recreational value, except where Congress considers that the value so completely transcends all others and is of such public importance as to require a special and specialized management.

4. The systematic extension of recreation plans to all areas of National Forest land possessing recreational value.

5. The continuation of present plans for the establishment upon National Forest lands of county, municipal, semi-public and private outdoor camps, schools, resorts, hotels, etc.

6. The encouragement of simple, inexpensive forms of mass recreation, including the extension and improvement of public camp grounds upon National Forest lands.

7. The continuation of the present policy of making no charge for recreational use of the National Forest except where the land is used for commercial purposes or exclusive use of specific tracts or other special privileges are granted.

8. The continuation of the policy authorized by Congress of issuing permits for individual summer homes or cabins where they will not interfere with more general forms of recreation.

9. The encouragement, through equitable permit provisions, reasonable rental charges, and minimum restrictions, of the establishment upon Forest lands of the various utilities or forms of service needed for the convenience of the public.

10. The regulation of recreational use of National Forest lands to, but only to, the extent necessary to protect public health and property, to secure reasonably full development and utilization of recreational resources, and to avoid undue conflict with other uses of the forests.

PARK WILL BE DETRIMENTAL TO INTERESTS OF WAYNESVILLE.

(Continued from first page.)

I come now to the root of the matters. Local boarding houses, hotels, and camps, will be unable to compete with like facilities within the park. The capital investment of the park concessionaire will be only the cost of his buildings and his furniture. The capital investment of similar outside enterprises will be the cost of the building and furniture, plus the cost of the ground. And the higher the cost of the land outside the greater the disproportion will be. This one fact alone will have a tendency to hold down the value of the land outside the park. But that is not the worst of it. The outside enterprises will pay a property tax, a franchise tax, and if they make any money, a state income tax. The park enterprises will pay none of these. They will only be required to pay a nominal rental based on their earning ability which will be fixed with a view to enable the park enterprises to give their guests the cheapest rates possible. The hotels and boarding houses will be strictly supervised by Government agents; their profits will be scrutinized in order that the visitors may have the benefit; no rates will be raised at overflow times and every guest will be assured of the best possible treatment at the lowest possible price. These are admirable features, sure to enlist the enthusiasm of the guests, certain to keep them against an outside rabble, but I pause for somebody to tell me how it will redound to the benefit of our hotels and boarding houses. The tax handicap alone is sufficient to give the inside hotels and boarding houses a heavy advantage, but when it is further considered that the inside facilities will be in the park itself (the supposed attraction); that they will probably be under one ownership with all the advantage that concentrated power has over scattered power; that the concessionaire will be required to furnish quarters to fit the poorest as well as the fattest pocket book, I think I am safe in saying that outside concerns will not be able to compete with the inside.

The Government requires visitors to its parks to come in by the front gate so that they can be properly counted and ticketed, and otherwise messed up. This means that there will probably be no more than two entrances and there may be only one. Some of the parks now have only

one gate. Wouldn't it be a great joke on us if the Government made only one entrance and that on the Tennessee side. Anything is possible in politics and I point out the fact that Tennessee went Republican in 1920. Make your own deductions.

But I will be reasonable, or at least hopeful, and after looking at the map, I will assume that the Government will open a gate near Bryson City. Now, if I shall prove to be mistaken in my argument, and the nearby towns do profit instead of losing, I predict that Bryson City will be the chief beneficiary if not the only one. As far as Haywood county is concerned, all the little roads and trails that now lead into the area which we propose to cede will be forever closed, except to moonshiners and poachers, of whom more hereafter. There is a real tragedy in the thought that we shall raise a wall in our own county against ourselves. And not a day; not for a year; not for a century; but forever. Think of it, forever removed from productive enterprise, forever barred to entrance, except to trespassers. Even a cemetery is more hospitable.

One of the main talking points of the park proponents is that it will preserve the trees and conserve the watershed. Some of them talk as if the forests were the cause of rain and not the result of it. They actually confuse the effect with the cause. High mountains dry the clouds as they pass over them. That is the reason why the west side of the Sierras is wooded and the east side entirely barren. That is why the clouds, as they come up from the south, are gradually dried as they pass over the mountains from Highlands to Asheville producing in the former twice as much rain as they do in the latter. That is why Sylva has 25% more rain than Waynesville. This condition will not be changed by anything we can do. The rains will still fall. But forests do prevent the water from running off too speedily, and the proposed park will conserve the watershed. But conserve for whom? For the outside towns? Not on your life; it will conserve for the park, and the very moment that vast area is ceded for park purposes we will be deprived of any opportunity to use the Great Smokies to collect water for municipal purposes. But this is a question of more interest to other sections than it is to us. We could not use the proposed area for a watershed whether there is a park or no park. And besides that, we do not need to do so.

The park will be a game preserve in which "the birds to their nests and the beasts to their lairs may slink" in perfect safety. It will be patrolled by rangers whose principal duty it will be to protect the game, and this they will do with vengeance. Every farmer boy, who in the order of the chase, inadvertently pursues a rabbit across the long and invisible boundary line, if caught, be taken to Asheville and there tried before an august Federal judge.

But there is some balm in Gilead after all. The park should be a moonshiner's paradise. In those deep solitudes, amidst the thick primeval woods, where no little deputy sheriff, or constable, or policeman, may pursue him, the moonshiner should be able to brew a better brew with a more contented mind. Even if he is taken by the rangers he will be certain of a lighter sentence than in the State court, and in no event will he have to work the roads.

JOS. E. JOHNSON.

SNAP JUDGMENT.

A luncheon club in Tampa led the way in asking the City Health Officer and the newspapers to suppress news about less than two score cases of smallpox in the city. It was most likely snap judgment by the members of the club, a question brought up on the spur of the moment and voted on with little time for consideration or debate. Later one of the commissioners asked his associate to join him in firing Dr. Levy for conducting an open campaign for vaccination.

Very probably the club and the commissioner did not represent majority opinion in Tampa. At any rate, the news was not suppressed and the Tampa Health Department has the smallpox situation well under control. Civic clubs everywhere are becoming wary about adopting resolutions affecting the public welfare without plenty of time for deliberation. It is a wise rule to let such questions go over to the next meeting.