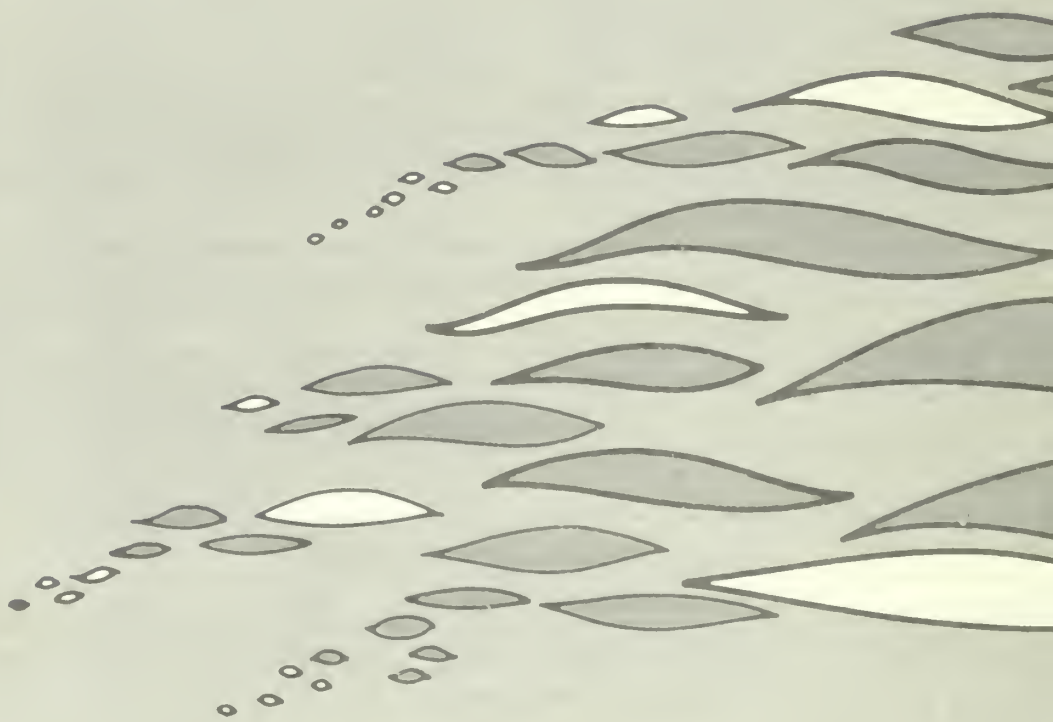


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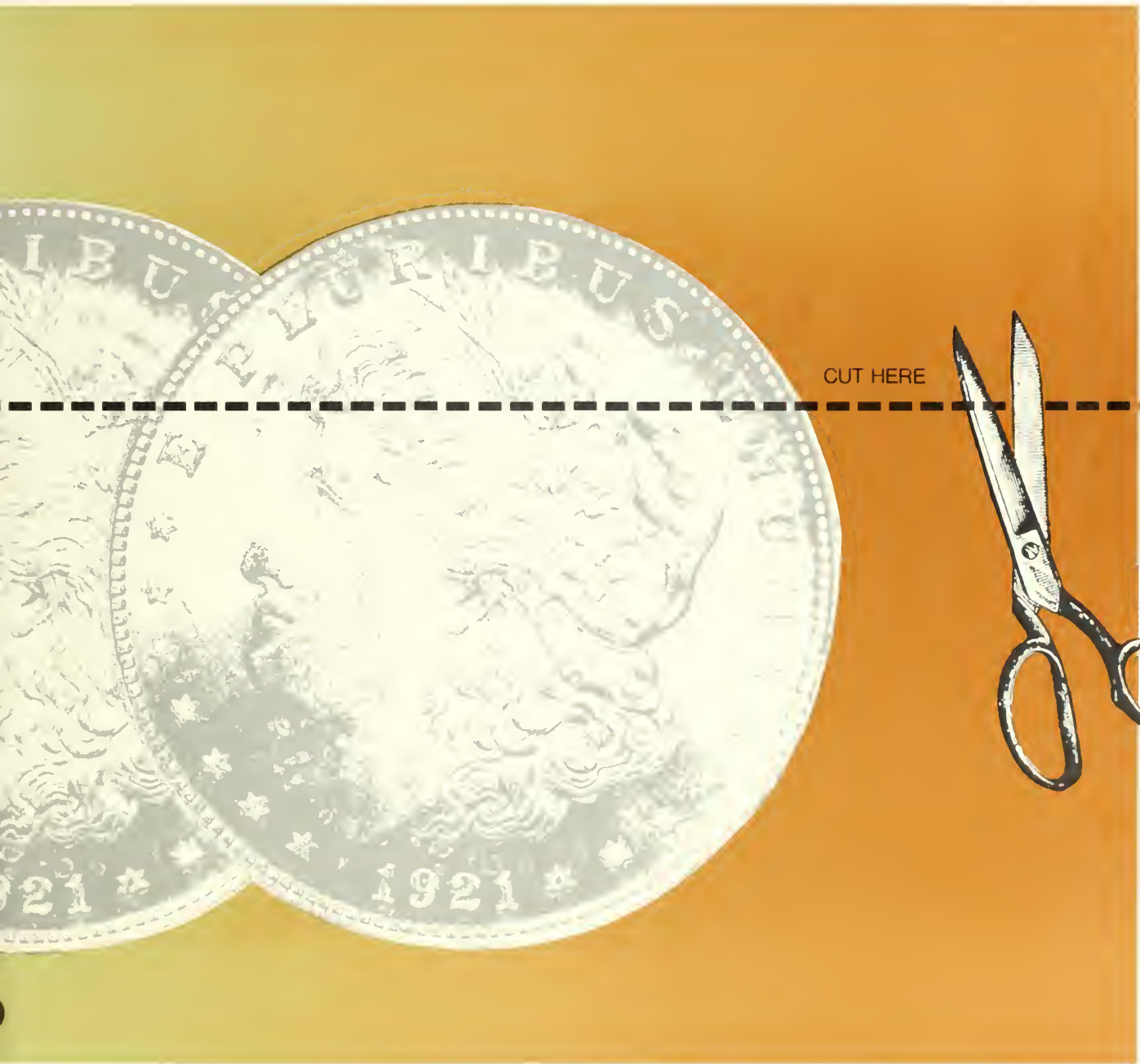
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# Trends

1981  
Number 2  
Volume 18

## Coping with Cutbacks



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## Trends in Coping with Cutbacks

### A publication of the Park Practice Program

The Park Practice Program is a cooperative effort of the National Park Service and the National Recreation and Park Association

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The program includes *Trends*, a quarterly publication on topics of general interest in park and recreation management and programming, *Grist*, a bimonthly publication on practical solutions to everyday problems in park and recreation operations, and *Design*, a quarterly compendium of plans for park and recreation structures which demonstrate quality design and intelligent use of materials

Membership in the Park Practice Program includes a subscription to all three publications and selected back issues in vinyl binders with indices and all publications for the calendar year.

The initial membership fee is \$80, annual renewal is \$20. A separate subscription to *Trends* is \$15 initially, and \$10 on renewal. Subscription application and fees, and membership inquiries should be sent *only* to: National Recreation and Park Association, 1601 N. Kent Street, Arlington, Va. 22209

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This issue of *Trends* deals with approaches to managing budget cutbacks in park and recreation agencies. Over the last 30 years, park and recreation administrators have been making decisions in a climate of growth, prosperity, and expansion. But conditions changed in the late 1970s. High inflation and lower tax receipts due to slower economic growth tightened slack resources. Tax cuts and spending limitations, prompted by the taxpayers' growing rejection of high government spending, compounded the problem. Meanwhile, demand for park and recreation services increased.

This dilemma of increasing demand and declining resources has forced public managers to rethink the way they do business and has necessitated a new set of political and administrative procedures oriented towards allocating scarce resources. The set of processes used to manage organizational change towards lower levels of resource consumption and organizational activity can be called cutback management.

The need for new management approaches is evident throughout the public sector. It is especially critical, however, in the field of parks and recreation, which is viewed by many as relatively "nonessential" compared to essentials such as police and fire services.

To date, over 60 tax cut and spending limitation initiatives have been enacted by states nationwide. Most visible was California's Proposition 13, passed in June 1978. Proposition 13 limited property taxes to 1 percent of assessed valuation, required a two-thirds vote of the legislature to increase state taxes, and two-thirds approval by voters before local governments could impose certain nonproperty taxes. Local park and recreation providers were hit hard. A study of Proposition 13's impact on local government, completed by the California Department of Finance, showed that budgeted spending for parks and recreation during fiscal year 1978-1979 declined 18 percent for counties, 8 percent for cities, and 26 percent for special districts. Without state bailout monies, funneled to local government



*Making budget cuts does not have to be an exercise in crisis management.*

from the state's budget surplus, the impacts would have been worse. Clearly, many hard decisions had to be made in a very short period.

The effects of such tax cuts and the high rate of inflation are forcing park and recreation managers nationwide to cope with cutbacks. A number of themes recur in the collective experience of practitioners who have succeeded in cutting back.

1) *Making budget cutbacks does not have to be an exercise in crisis management.* Even though many tough decisions must be made to cope with immediate budget reductions, most park and recreation agencies have the information and knowledge available to make cuts in an orderly, rational fashion. The key is to pull information together, utilizing existing management systems, into a cohesive package that sheds light on where the department is today and where it is going.

2) *Differentiate between budget cuts that reduce service levels and those that do not.* Service level reductions refer to cuts that actually eliminate a segment of a service without replacing it, such as closing a recreation

center or discontinuing routine maintenance. Nonservice level reductions refer to cuts in public support for a service without reducing its ultimate provision. For example, identifying a community based organization to manage a recreation center instead of closing it may result in public cost savings without service reduction. Keep in mind that nonservice cuts do impact the park and recreation agency's operations; it is often painful to change service delivery methods. In general, you should look at nonservice reductions and cost savings before considering service reduction strategies.

3) *There is no singular "cutback process."* One good way to begin cutbacks is to comprehensively assess available options. This exercise should assemble information that indicates:

- What activities are mandated or required?
- What activities can you stop doing?
- What functions can others perform?
- What can you do more efficiently?
- Where can you utilize lower-cost labor?





*Lines of communication with agency staff should be kept open during cutbacks.*

- Where can you install and improve methods for making effective decisions?
- What programs can be made more self-supporting?
- How can you increase your revenue base?

Based upon the information the exercise generates, you can develop strategies to cut costs or generate additional revenue where needed. This assures that you don't make painful cuts before exhausting relatively painless cutback options. If these measures cannot remedy the revenue deficiency, you will have to consider hard service level reductions.

4) *The cutback process should be relatively "open."* The manager should make a conscientious effort to communicate with agency staff (including unions), top decisionmakers, elected officials, and citizens of the

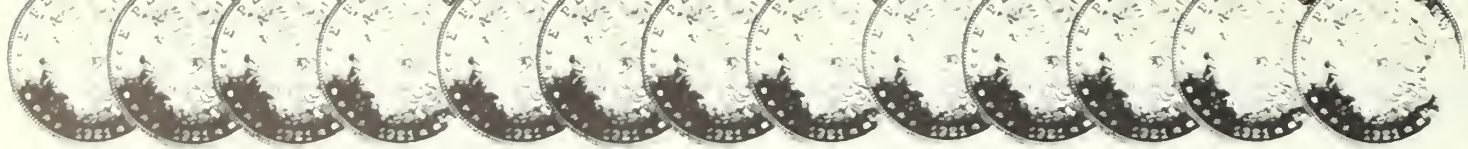
community throughout the cutback process. Involving these groups at each stage helps ensure that the ultimate product of cutbacks is well considered and can be implemented. Here are some hints.

- Open lines of communication with *agency* staff are especially critical. Uncertainties over possible reorganizations, changes in duties, or layoffs, can cripple staff morale and effectiveness. Be upfront on the changing situation to minimize uncertainty and its impact. Also, recognize your staff as your most important resource for recommendations on where and when to cut with minimal disruptions. Staffers know the nuts and bolts of the delivery system more intimately than top managers.
- Communication with *unions* is essential, particularly in the event of personnel cuts. Correct implementa-

tion of memoranda of understanding related to layoff procedures that were negotiated with the union can be assured. The chances of a crippling employee strike can be minimized by presenting the agency's point of view to union officials while actively soliciting and listening to the union's concerns.

- *Top decisionmakers and elected officials* should be kept apprised of the cutback process since they have the final authority to approve or disapprove budget reductions. Provide such officials with a full range of alternatives and complete information. They will be quick to criticize if any obvious alternatives are left out. Identify their special concerns and interests and deal with those concerns at the beginning of the process.
- *Citizens* should have input into the cutback process. They are both "cli-





ents" and supporters of public agency programs either through tax dollars or user fees. In spite of restrictive taxpayer initiatives, most citizens support park and recreation services. To keep that support, public agencies should provide citizens with ample opportunities to understand the need for cutbacks, what options are available, and what functions are most and least preferable.

5) *Making service level reductions requires the setting of program priorities to determine what functions are most or least important.* Some departments use "zero-base budgeting" to establish the relative impacts of differential service level cuts. Other departments hold extensive public hearings to establish citizen's service priorities. Still other agencies use survey teams to establish jurisdiction-wide priorities. The key is developing a defensible, rational approach, which implies doing advance work.

6) *Any manager faced with budget cutbacks encounters staff morale problems.* Where personnel cuts are made, remaining employees must meet an increasing demand for recreation services with fewer staff resources. When "job enlargement" is necessary, "job enrichment" techniques can improve staff morale and productivity. Job enrichment involves:

- Increasing the responsibility and challenges of the employee's work;
- Engendering a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment on the job;
- Creating a more stimulating work environment.

These techniques can be both monetary (output-oriented merit increases, performance bonuses) and non-monetary (variations in working hours, recognition awards).

7) *After the initial round of cutbacks, strive to ensure the long-term viability of the organization so that it can continue to fulfill its objectives.* Efforts should focus on ways to make the park and recreation department more resistant to cutbacks while maintaining flexibility and accountability. A diverse approach is needed. Strategies to consider include:

- Utilizing improved revenue/expenditure projection system;
- Implementing budgeting tools that consider priorities (zero-base budgeting, management-by-objectives);
- Improving labor and capital equipment productivity;
- Developing systematic approaches to design for low maintenance costs and energy usage;
- Periodically assessing recreation program "life-cycles" with an eye towards eliminating or demarketing programs that are out-of-date or under-attended;
- Sharing the cost for park and recreation services with the private sector.

Cutbacks do not have to be viewed in a totally negative light. They provide the opportunity and rationale for the manager to strengthen and diversify the park and recreation service delivery system that might have been impossible under normal situations.

This issue of *Trends* contains a cross-section of case studies on how park and recreation agencies nationwide are coping with budget cutbacks. A number of articles focus on efforts to cut costs in the face of tightening budgets. Don Olson, Ohio State Parks Director, describes various energy conservation measures that enable the department to trim costs; William Murphy of the University of Nebraska and Eddie Hueston of Dallas Park and Recreation department review methods for better fuel resource management in maintenance operations; Bill Sontag, with the Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, discusses how cooperating associations can help local park and recreation agencies by creating interpretive materials that can be sold for a profit to augment the local agency's revenue base. Bob Feeny of the Revere, Massachusetts, Office of Planning and Community Development focuses on how his city hopes to cut maintenance costs through transferring maintenance responsibility for five parks to the Senior Citizens Park Maintenance Corps. Assistant City Manager Dan Hobbs shares the technique used by

Rockville, Maryland, to increase productivity; dollar savings from staff productivity improvements are shared, 50 percent going to the city, 50 percent to the employee. Linda Pierce of the Minnesota State Planning Agency, discusses long-term approaches to managing revenue reductions. She outlines the planning process her state uses to cut operation and maintenance expenses of park and recreation facilities.

Three additional articles illustrate the range of techniques used to adapt to the cutback environment. Darrell Winslow, Executive Director of the Northern Virginia Regional Park District, shares some of his agency's innovations including the use of "quality" part-time staff and emphasis on revenue producing projects. Dick Trudeau, Director of the East Bay Regional Park District in California, reviews his department's response to Proposition 13 and offers valuable pointers. And Bud Girtch of the Seattle, Washington, Department of Parks and Recreation, outlines that city's use of 40 advisory councils to assist with the programming of services.

We hope this issue of *Trends* opens your eyes to the wide variety of approaches available to the park and recreation manager in coping with cutbacks.

*George Turnbull is with the Division of Park and Recreation Technical Services of the San Francisco Regional Office, National Park Service. He is principal author of a cutback management handbook.*

# Minnesota Saves Through Careful Planning

by Linda Pierce, Laurie Young, and Mike Miller

In 1975 the Minnesota Legislature passed the Outdoor Recreation Act which incorporated all state-managed recreation lands into a state outdoor recreation system. The system consists of state parks, state trails, state forests, wild and scenic rivers, and six other types of areas. The act contains management guidelines for each type of area and requires the managing agency to prepare a comprehensive management plan for each individual area of the system. The State Planning Agency (SPA) reviews each plan to ensure 1) its consistency with the act and other pertinent statutes, and 2) cooperation among state agencies and other levels of government in administering the area.

There are 65 state parks in Minnesota, many of which were never comprehensively planned before 1975. Many of the park buildings, sewers, and utilities were antiquated. Operations and maintenance (O&M) were costly and park use was increasing.

To deal with these problems, ensure protection of park resources, and comply with the Outdoor Recreation Act, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) mounted a major effort to prepare plans for all 65 parks. A planning process has been developed that involves planners, park managers, and all effected DNR divisions, as well as the public. Area management plans include long-range goals and objectives for resource management and recreational development. Specific actions are recommended to fulfill the goals and objectives. Actions are scheduled so that critical needs receive priority. The SPA reviews the plans at each step of preparation so that it, too, fully participates in the process.

One of the most important aspects of this planning process is evaluating each proposed development to determine its long-range operation and maintenance requirements in comparison to initial development costs. Since O&M remains a state-funded item in park budgets, and state funding has not increased for many years in Minnesota, new park facilities must be planned and designed with minimal



Management plans often recommend issuing permits to local loggers and individuals for thinning certain trees from a specific area. Photo: Linda Magozzi

O&M needs. Here are some techniques Minnesota has used to cut O&M costs.

## Vegetation Management

The goal of vegetation management in Minnesota state parks is to reestablish the plant communities that were present before European settlement. Accomplishing this goal in 65 state parks is an expensive undertaking. Using private logging companies and issuing firewood permits to private companies and individuals are two methods of accomplishing the desired results with almost no cost to the state.

In some plant communities, certain tree species must be removed in small clearcuts to promote the growth of desired species. Private logging companies can do this under contract.

At Itasca State Park, which contains the source of the Mississippi River and is Minnesota's largest state park, the management plan recommended that the over-mature jack pine be removed in small 3-10-acre (1-4-hectare) clearcuts by a contractor. Burning the slash and opening the area resulted in good seed bed for jack pine regeneration.

In Crow Wing State Park, located at the confluence of the Mississippi and Crow Wing rivers, thinning of

oak was recommended for approximately 450 acres (182 hectares). To implement this, the management recommended issuing firewood permits.

Both of these techniques require coordination with foresters to ensure that the proper trees are cut. But they can bring great savings to the state and benefits to private industry and the public.

Another vegetation management technique that reduces O&M costs is decreasing the amount of landscaping on development sites. Allowing buffers of native plants to grow between campsites and picnic areas decreases mowing, and increases erosion control.

## Interagency Coordination

Many state parks are located adjacent to other publicly administered lands. Coordination among managing agencies can reduce duplication of services, encourage the promotion and use of each agency's facilities, and allow the sharing of maintenance equipment and personnel. Minnesota's management plans identify areas where such coordination can occur to the mutual benefit of both agencies. Then memoranda of agreement are developed to establish the formal commitment.



The plan for Charles A. Lindbergh State Park illustrates this type of cooperation. In this park, the DNR administers trails, a campground, a boat/canoe access, and a picnic area. Within the park, the Minnesota Historical Society administers Charles Lindbergh's boyhood home and an interpretive center. Adjacent to the park is a county historical museum. Memoranda of agreement were developed by the planners to coordinate operations, programs, and maintenance among these three agencies.

Another example of coordination exists between our DNR and a private organization, The Nature Conservancy, which owns prairie land within and south of Buffalo River State Park. Because both agencies strive to preserve, manage, and interpret prairie, the vegetation management section of the park's plan was written in cooperation with The Nature Conservancy. The prairie will be managed by both as one unit, even though it is separately owned.

### Employee Housing

Park managers are provided houses in many Minnesota state parks. Often these houses are old and make inefficient use of energy, requiring costly repairs and remodeling. As an alternative, new earth sheltered houses have been constructed in three state parks as part of the Solar/Earth Sheltered Demonstration Housing Program. This program is sponsored by the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, which was directed by the state legislature to demonstrate model homes with various energy conserving techniques.

The three park houses exhibit a variety of passive and active solar systems and earth sheltered construction techniques. One house with active solar heating and a woodburning stove also uses a conventional heating system as a back-up when the manager is away. All three houses are being closely monitored to determine their absolute savings. They are open to the public during scheduled periods and are included as part of the parks' interpretive programs.



*Passive solar and earth shelter design of this employee house at St. Croix Wild River State Park has brought considerable energy savings, while serving as a model for new energy conserving building technology.* Photo: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

### Multiple-Use Buildings

Before cutback management became necessary, planners usually proposed constructing a separate building for each identified need. Trail centers were proposed when demand justified development. Interpretive centers, picnic shelters, contact stations, and bathhouses were all considered as separate facilities. A plan could recommend construction of several separate buildings for a single park.

Now, park plans recommend buildings designed to accommodate more than one use. This promotes efficient use of energy, operating funds, and staff. During the planning process, uses that can be combined into one building are identified and a suitable site for the building is chosen. Planners establish guidelines to ensure the architect will design the building to accommodate all necessary functions.

One example of a building that can be used both as a trail and interpretive center is proposed for Crow Wing State Park. Peak use of the interpretive center would be in the summer; peak use of the trail center would be in the winter for warming cross-country skiers and snowmobilers. A development site suitable for both trail and interpretive uses was chosen.

The following criteria for the building design were included in the plan as guidelines for the architect:

- Display room (a separate room which can be locked);
- Storage space for historical and natural displays (preparation space and sink should be included);
- Toilet facilities;
- Observation deck;
- Naturalist's office;
- Area for audiovisual presentations;
- Wood stove and warming area.

Other multiple-use buildings proposed for Minnesota state parks include a picnic shelter/interpretive center; a picnic shelter bathhouse; a contact station/park office; and a contact station/interpretive center.

### Practical Uses for Historic Buildings

A number of Minnesota state parks were established in the late 1930s. Initial development of these parks was done by Works Progress Administration (WPA) and Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) work crews. For the most part, buildings constructed by these crews demonstrate a high degree of craftsmanship and have served the public well for over 40 years with few maintenance require-



Once headquarters for a WPA camp, this historic log structure may be remodelled for current use. Photo: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

ments. However, because of the modernization of park support systems or the discontinuation of original building functions, many of these structures currently are underused. Their physical condition is still good and many are historically significant structures, which the Minnesota Historical Society has recommended for preservation. Planners and park personnel must find good uses for these buildings—uses that both ensure preservation of the buildings and fulfill recreational demands or service needs.

Two recent management plans addressed this challenge. The first involves a large, single-story building of log construction in Itasca State Park, which originally served as headquarters for a WPA camp. In recent years, the building has been used for storage and as housing for a few seasonal park employees. Park planners recommended remodeling this structure into a dormitory for seasonal employees and exploring the possibility of operating the building as a youth hostel during the winter. (The present staff dormitory is in poor condition.)

The second example involves a building originally constructed to house a water storage tank. The structure is two stories high; the first story is made of stone, the second of plank lumber enclosing the water tank. The building has not been used to store water for several years, but serves only as miscellaneous storage space. Planners recommended that the structure be converted to a winter warming shelter for visitors who cross-country ski, sled, and ice fish in the park. They suggested that the sec-

ond story be used as a viewing area, because of the building's scenic location.

### Concessionaires

In many instances, the provision of a recreational facility or a user service seems impossible because of funding shortages. To overcome this problem, planners sometimes recommended using private concessionaires.

Itasca is a very popular Minnesota state park, and has a serious traffic problem. The principal interior circulation route is a narrow two-lane road with no shoulders and steep drop-offs on one side. Because it is the major access road, bicyclists also use it. To alleviate this safety problem, the park planners recommended a separate bicycle trail and the development of a shuttle bus service to encourage visitors to leave their cars in peripheral parking lots. A privately owned bus company would provide buses and drivers. It is hoped that operating costs would be met through user fees and funds provided by a Minnesota Department of Transportation grant program.

### Higher Development Costs/Lower O&M Costs

Sometimes facilities have been constructed inexpensively to save on development costs. Other times, when a facility is needed and there is no development money, park managers do the best they can with what money and materials they have on hand. Often a facility that is inexpensive to build, yet costly to maintain results. Hiking trails are a good example. Overuse or inadequate construction can result in erosion and damage to surrounding vegetation. Some of the

more traditional repair and maintenance methods may work for a short time, but such work soon becomes costly, requiring a great deal of staff time.

At Whitewater State Park, there is a popular overlook that was accessible only by a steep footpath. The heavily used path was badly eroded in places. Several shortcuts to the overlook had been established by hikers, damaging surrounding vegetation. For years, various attempts were made to repair the damage, but none succeeded.

Because of the popularity of the site and its high level of use, the park planners recommended installing stone steps. Stone steps could withstand substantially more use without requiring frequent maintenance. Also, planners felt that the attractive appearance of the steps would encourage their use and keep hikers from using shortcuts to the overlook. The steps were built of native limestone, to fit into the face of the cliff and resemble CCC work in the park. Although the construction required a significantly greater initial expenditure than timbered steps, the planners felt that the more durable stone construction and minimal O&M requirements justified the cost.

These are only a few examples of how careful, creative park planning can lower O&M costs. Since park budgets are unlikely to increase substantially in the 1980s, planners will have to carefully weigh development costs against O&M requirements, and recommend actions that are the most cost effective on a long-term basis.

*Laurie Young and Mike Miller are park planners for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Linda Pierce is the Outdoor Recreation Coordinator at the State Planning Agency and previously worked for the National Park Service.*



## Quality Interpretation Through Citizen Involvement

by William H. Sontag

### Adventure Seminars Unravel Mysteries of San Francisco Bay

### Michener's *Chesapeake* Adds Depth to Blackwater Refuge Experience

### Colorful Brochures Illuminate Natural History of Wichita Mountains

### Topo Maps Ensure Safety of Okefenokee Swamp Canoeists

The headlines may never achieve front-page status, but neither do they deserve relegation to the "coffin-corner" of the classified ads. "Cooperating association" is the appropriate generic reference for the unique group of organizations to which the headline credits are due.

In a nutshell, a cooperating association is a private, nonprofit, tax-exempt citizen group that aims to improve the quality and extent of resource interpretation through the sale of educational materials to an interested public. The profits from these sales are donated periodically to the resource management agencies who host the sales outlets and who cooperate in the transactions. Thus, the nonprofit status of the association is retained. The Internal Revenue Service does permit the association to recoup administrative and overhead costs of operation from the annual "gross margin," and some of that profit also may be reinvested in development and production of additional educational materials to be marketed at the sales outlets.

Gaps in information and services available to visitors gave rise to the association movement 55 years ago at Yosemite National Park. Deepening of the gaps, caused by federal printing and binding restrictions, prohibition of on-site sale of materials needed by visitors, and similar regulations, accelerated the growth and proliferation of cooperating associations in the last 2 decades. Eliminating such frustrations may not be a universal need throughout the recreation and resource management community, but other potential benefits certainly exceed the current scope of activities.



*An otherwise unused corner can become an educational and profitable book nook. Photo: San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge.*

### Structure

A typical cooperating association may include an unpaid board of directors which collectively and periodically determines how profits will be used and resolves other issues facing the organization. Such decisions are transformed into instructions for implementation by an executive secretary, also frequently a volunteer. Many associations perform numerous services and transactions sufficient to require the employment of a paid business manager and clerical assistants.

An association is incorporated, usually in the state in which its headquarters are located. The incorporated organization then is bonded loosely to the appropriate resource management agency on the strength of a cooperative agreement, a contract of sorts that can be terminated expeditiously should either the association or the host agency sustain unforeseen hardships as a result of the relationship.

Essentially, the cooperative agreement creates a formal relationship between the two by detailing basic duties and responsibilities of both the agency and the association, while making it clear that the agency will not "call the shots" on association business nor will the association tell the agency how to manage resources. The result is an atmosphere and spirit of *cooperation*. For example, associations do not attempt to market products that cannot be approved by the

agency, and agencies do not dictate the manner in which profits from sales are used.

### Impact

More than 60 cooperating associations currently provide their distinctive brand of public service within national wildlife refuges, national parks, national forests, and a variety of other resource management units. The magnitude of their individual operations is as diverse as the resources they interpret, with annual gross sales ranging from \$5,000 to more than \$2.6 million. Donations totaling approximately \$2 million per year have been bestowed on the hosting agencies through the associations' collective efforts.

The half-century precedent for these public spirited activities was established by persons interested in national parks and by national park *visitors*, so most of the monetary impact described above currently is felt by that agency. In recent years, many associations have broadened their scope of interest and operations, and have purposefully fostered an inter-agency, interdisciplinary emphasis on resource interpretation.

In 1978, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service authorized the initiation of cooperating association sales on national wildlife refuges and national fish hatcheries. Cooperative agreements were signed, and "pilot" field stations were selected for participation and subsequent activity evaluation.





Sales and bookkeeping do mean more work for visitor center personnel, but the service is needed, and often expected, by the public. Photo: Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge.

Currently, about a dozen national wildlife refuges and the National Aquarium in Washington, DC, are affiliated with associations that have accumulated years of experience in this "new" dimension of public service. Some Fish and Wildlife Service field stations will "splinter off" from their current affiliations, as fledgling associations are created that are more attuned to site-specific needs or inter-agency operations. Other field stations anticipate long-standing and gratifying relationships under present agreements.

The availability of financial and/or technical assistance from "sister" organizations has enabled two new cooperating associations to be incorporated within the last year—both important to national wildlife refuge visitors. The Midwest Interpretive Association in Missouri Valley, Iowa, will simultaneously initiate sales and service at DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge and open a new visitor center there. Thus, Midwest will materially assist the Fish and Wildlife Service efforts to interpret the exciting waterfowl resources and steamboat era history of the Missouri River's DeSoto Bend region. The Southwest Natural and Cultural Heritage Association in Albuquerque, New Mexico, has set ambitious goals characterized by the

breadth and diversity of services of the participating host agencies. Ultimately, this group will be sponsoring interpretive efforts on national forests, national wildlife refuges, state parks, Bureau of Land Management resources, and the National Radio Astronomy Laboratory.

#### Supplying Publications

Making high quality, resource-related publications available to the public is the name of the game for cooperating associations. While their activities are far more extensive, publishing and marketing literature on pertinent subject matter is the starting point, and an enlightened, more aware citizenry is the finishing line.

Stock inventory selections for a particular sales outlet are made from every conceivable source, after association members have consulted with agency representatives for theme, subject, and title suggestions. Publishers, remainder houses, university presses, retailers, the Government Printing Office—all are potential sources from which wholesale purchases may be made. As a result, such useful publications as Roger Tory Peterson's *A Field Guide to the Birds of Eastern and Central North America*, Jane and John Perry's *Guide to Natural Areas of the Eastern*



For maximum sales potential, publications must be directly accessible to visitors' examination. Photo: Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge.

*United States*, Aldo Leopold's *Sand County Almanac*, Bruce Catton's *Stillness at Appomattox*, and hundreds of other titles are made available to visitors.

#### Publishing Ventures

Another important role for associations, however, is noting and filling obvious gaps in appropriate literature. Many cooperating associations identify specific publications that are needed to illuminate the resources of particular refuges, parks, hatcheries, or forests, and publish the needed book, brochure, leaflet, or poster.

Training and experience prepare association members for occupying this important niche. Most have a working familiarity with creative writing, successful graphic treatments, printing techniques, marketing procedures, contracting, copyright law, and so on. Only two parameters constrain the level of quality that may be pumped into a proposed publication: 1) willingness of the host agency to allow sale of the piece, and 2) available money for preparation and production. Frequent involvement by representatives of the agency ensures the former, and timely budgeting maximizes the latter.

Cooperating association biennial conferences are punctuated with awards for excellence in several publication categories. The friendly competition among the several associations has stimulated a creativity and

quality that visitors have come to expect, but which host agencies usually cannot provide under budgetary constraints and legal restrictions. *The Mountain Lying Down*, a large-format brochure featuring beautiful color photographs and a prosaic, but informative text, was published in 1980 by the Grand Canyon Natural History Association. Publication competition judges and visitors alike have found it to be an attractive and exciting reference to be kept and enjoyed. The National Park Service "Director's Award" last year went to the Alaska Natural History Association's *Carved History*. The distinction was conferred not for a dramatic display of photography and format gimmicks, but rather for the simplicity and tastefulness of its embossed rust-colored cover, straightforward text, and clear type set on heavy buff paper. Keeping visitor needs uppermost in format planning, Southwest Parks and Monuments Association recently published *On the Wichitas*, a unique selection of leaflets covering a variety of subjects pertinent to this national wildlife refuge in southwestern Oklahoma. Visitors may choose between individual leaflets of specific subject interest or the entire collection colorfully boxed for ease in handling or mailing. And many more trail leaflets, books, posters, and postcards are published each year by cooperating associations.

#### Donations of Goods and Services

We have examined two elements of the association cycle of service—the formal cooperative relationship with a host agency and the generation of capital through the production and sale of educational materials. A third and vital element, donations and use of accumulated profits, is perhaps the most interesting, because of an incredible diversity of tasks that may be accomplished. A few examples merely begin to illustrate.

The donation of basic goods and services is the foundation and cornerstone of a cooperating association's operational base and benevolence. The National Aquarium in Washington, DC, did not have funds for improved audiovisual equipment last



*Californians learn more about their unique relationships to resources, history, and each other through Coastal Parks and Monuments Association's Bay Adventure Seminars.*  
Photo: San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge

year. The Parks and History Association assisted by providing 35-mm slide projectors, since the aquarium bookstore is one of the association's sales outlets. The Mesa Verde Natural History Association donated necessary darkroom components to improve the rapid photographic documentation and display capabilities of Mesa Verde National Park. Exhibits crucial to interpretation of the Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site lacked adequate models of boats and engines employed in the portage operation; outstanding, hand-carved scale replicas were secured and donated by Eastern National Park and Monument Association.

The colonial glassblowing demonstration at Jamestown National His-

toric Site in Virginia combines classical interpretation, volunteerism, and profit generation for still more interpretive activity. Working in an open shed, artisans in period costumes heat raw materials in a brick oven and craft authentic, bubble-filled glass candlesticks and pitchers. As they work, the craftsmen interpret their art and answer questions for visitors. The objects produced may be purchased directly from the workers as a firsthand illustration of an educational experience. The "colonials" are well-trained, paid employees of the Eastern National Park and Monument Association. Sale of their handiwork ensures continuation of the demonstrations and support of other association ventures.





San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge is the host, and Coastal Parks Association the sponsor, for a series of workshops entitled Bay Adventure Seminars. Tuition charged for each 2-day session covers administrative and material costs and ensures top-quality instructors. The seminars are open to the public for educational use of leisure time; college credit may be arranged for many of them through local universities. The 15 seminars include courses in natural and cultural history, techniques for environmental education of young people, and perceptual skill development. Because of San Francisco Bay Refuge's proximity to urban book sales sources and expected high level of repeat visitation, extensive and ambitious on-site publi-

cation sales are not likely to be successful. The combination of modest sales and interesting seminars yields association service appropriately tailored to visitor needs.

Historically, many resource management agencies have been patronized by a narrow clientele, attracted solely by what the organization could physically, fiscally, or legally provide. Such inhibitions limit services to a portion of the visitor spectrum far smaller than benefits of overall management efforts warrant. Cooperating associations can broaden that spectrum by broadening our ability to provide service. Association capabilities can be as exceptional and extensive as the unfulfilled needs of our visitors indicate, while providing a businesslike approach to the provision of goods and services.

*William H. Sontag is an interpretive specialist in the Division of Refuge Management of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.*

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by Don Olson

Numerous factors affect outdoor recreation today. Managers have to recognize changing age distributions in our populations, changes in average household size, various lifestyles and values, as well as reduced mobility caused by gasoline shortages and the lessening of discretionary income by inflation. Any organization that ignores the total picture will be less than effective in serving the public's needs. Energy, however, is a mandatory concern because it affects every aspect of modern living including the bare necessities. It is well documented that demand is a function of two factors—taste and preference versus cost.

Human nature generally guides us to demand what we prefer until cost limits its consumption; at that point we become disillusioned and negative. It is imperative that we as public servants offer positive, affordable options to the public. By forecasting the needs of the people as well as limitations of our natural resources, we can guide public recreation opportunities in a wise and energy-conscious manner. Everyday operations in our park system need to reflect a recognition and respect for our resources; we must demonstrate good practices on a large scale and show the public how to apply these practices to their individual lives. This learning must be incorporated into the recreational process so that it becomes painless, even enjoyable.

Ohio offers the visitor 71 diverse parks from which to choose. There are over 8,000 campsites statewide that are either Class "A" (flush toilets, showers, electricity) or Class "B" (well water, vault latrines, wastewater drains). There are over 400 cabins, over 500 lodge rooms in 6 resort lodges, 110 horseman's campsites, 500 primitive campsites, 32 parks with group campsites, 4,600 boat docks, 30 marinas, and 5 golf courses. The park system features over 198,027 acres (79,211 hectares) of land with natural features ranging from forests and sandstone gorges to gentle valleys and plains. Some parks are in urban areas, while others are hidden in vast expanses of wilderness. This diversity provides built-in flexibility that enables us to meet visitors' needs.

In the face of continuing inflation and rising gasoline costs, Ohioans continue to engage in outdoor recreation, but participate closer to home. This means a greater demand upon local, areawide, and state facilities. In the future, it appears that Ohioans will recreate still more within their state.

Already there are fewer large recreational vehicles and boats. More small units are being sold, and the overall sales of recreational equipment that uses little or no energy are up. Overnight stays are being restricted to longer trips, with fewer people taking short trips on several weekends. Single-trip patterns replace day and short outing excursions. Short trips requiring minimal consumption of fuel are the primary choice, and group travel is growing.

Thus it becomes critical for the Ohio State Parks Department to acquire new facilities close to urban areas, to review the possibilities of mass transportation to facilities, and to encourage low-energy activities at both existing and new parks. Publicity also becomes a major factor in informing the public about the close-to-home, inexpensive, low-energy recreation available at their state parks in Ohio.

### New Ways of Analyzing Attendance

At some point in all studies of recreational facilities, the attendance factor comes into play. During the mid- and late 1970s, attendance at Ohio's state parks stabilized at around 40,000 visitors per year. Fluctuations of about 3 percent have occurred in the past 4 or 5 years, but it appears now that the recreational attendance for our state parks has become fairly well defined.

But recent studies indicate that a redistribution of the attendance is occurring. Ten major metropolitan areas in Ohio were singled out and all the parks within a 60-mile (96-kilometer) radius—"just one tankful away"—were examined. Although statewide attendance for camping was then up some 7 percent, certain individual parks expressed a much higher percent of increase and some much lower.

When parks were evaluated as a cluster around a major metropolitan area, the percentage of increase presented some interesting results. One of the highest increases was found for the Youngstown area. This year Youngstown has been plagued by layoffs and unemployment from difficulties in its steel industry. Yet, our facilities realized an increase of 18.8 percent.

Another example is Columbus, Ohio. Our headquarters are located in Columbus, so naturally there is more publicity for Columbus residents. This year, the major newspaper added a weekly column spotlighting a facility or event for Columbus readers. We have also worked extensively with the media and provided our materials to numerous Columbus agencies. A jump of 12.8 percent was seen for this major metropolitan area. On the other hand, Cincinnati, a city of similar proportions and income, showed only 1.8 percent increase.

Although this process of analyzing attendance on the basis of major metropolitan areas is new and all the factors have not been fully determined, it appears to be a valid tool for both publicity and analysis for the 1980s. We feel that our increase in camping attendance in 1980 indicates we are doing something right!

We have implemented a two-pronged approach to energy conservation in the Ohio state parks. The first consists of activities, projects, and designs that alter and decrease our consumption of energy. These include policy changes, use of alternative energy sources, and modification of existing and future equipment and facilities. The second consists of education, publicity, and public awareness. Effective public awareness translates our energy conservation program into opportunities for the public to apply similar techniques to their everyday living. It also prompts use of recreational outlets that are close to home.

Aiming to operate in an energy-efficient manner, Ohio state parks have begun an extensive program to review and alter their current energy usage.

Every aspect of energy usage is under scrutiny, with both short-term and long-term plans being formulated.

### Fleet Conversions

One of the first projects involves fleet vehicle conversion. Ohio state parks own and operate approximately 107 passenger vehicles and 445 maintenance vehicles. Revised purchasing has markedly reduced our total annual consumption of gas. New vehicles now have 4 or 6 cylinder engines instead of 8. To date, this has resulted in a savings of 5.5 gallons (20.9 liters) per vehicle each month compared to 1979 consumption. We also try to consolidate trips made in passenger vehicles, and to closely monitor and analyze equipment usage.

In some cases, the type of equipment used for a job has been changed. For example, small utility-type vehicles such as Cushman's have replaced 8-cylinder pickup trucks as toilet cleaning vehicles. Diesel engines also are becoming a part of the picture. All state park tractors now use diesel fuel, which costs less and runs more efficiently by providing more power for less fuel.

Some potential energy cuts are not available to the state government. Import cars often are cheaper and achieve better mileage, but we are required by law to go to the lowest bidder of American-made cars. Also, we must constantly monitor such long-term factors as dependability and maintenance costs.

Our energy conservation measures have affected law enforcement and ranger patrols. Patrol cars have been changed from 8 to 6 cylinders. Use of motorcycles is being tested in some parks, and there is a return to horseback patrol. Foot patrol is used where possible, and the positive public relations achieved from this have been an added bonus to the energy savings.

### Mowing and Trash Collection

Many state parks have implemented a new mowing policy that eliminates most "golf course style" mowing and results in less overall gas consumption. Only areas by the roadways are mowed, and the effec-



*In Ohio's state parks altering energy usage is a goal, and some parks have returned to rangers patrolling on horseback.*

tive size of picnic areas has been reduced within reason. In campgrounds, only the site is mowed; the spacing in between, if not already natural, is allowed to go through succession.

A publicity program was tested last summer and will be expanded next year to inform the public of the habitat improvement that will result from this mowing policy. People do not like the unexpected; it is essential to educate them so they can respect the ideals and goals of the project and assimilate them as their own. We do this through news releases, brochures, and the daily contact of the park staff.

Another source of energy conservation is our centralized trash program, through which multiple trash barrels have been removed from individual campsites and replaced by higher capacity dumpsters strategically located throughout the campgrounds. This enables the parks to reduce both gas usage and staffing levels. Al-

though these two projects seem like simple, common-sense approaches, they have significantly improved energy-consciousness in Ohio's state parks and have provided major cost reductions.

### Insulation

We have implemented an insulation review of all buildings in the state parks. So far we have invested more than \$100,000 in insulation and expect to spend more before the project is complete.

### Alternative Energy Sources

Solar energy as an alternative source has been tested. We have constructed several solar maintenance buildings, but to date, they have been less efficient than expected. The problems seem to involve adjusting systems and some limitations inherent in building use.

Conversion of buildings to other alternate sources of energy has been extremely effective. Past experiences with wood heat had indicated considerable potential savings in many buildings. During the past winter, over 60 woodburning units were used in 27 parks; the number of units will multiply in upcoming winters. Generally barrel stove units are used in service buildings and nonpublic areas. A single barrel kit costs approximately \$29.95; a double barrel, \$36. The barrel itself costs about \$16 more (salvage price).

Public areas, such as nature centers, use commercial brands of stoves to supplement heat sources in an aesthetic way. Again, it is crucial to interpret energy conservation to the public, and the visible wood stove acts as a reminder that the park system is being energy conscious. It also affords an opportunity for interpreters to teach the public about wood heat and home applications.

Savings per park vary due to stove size, type of building, and functions performed in the building, but the overall savings reported last winter was almost 50 percent of the fuel costs for the year before. Weather variations from year to year influence cost and savings estimates significantly, but the use of wood fuel still





*A federal grant enabled the state to place an active solar system on the 10,000 square-foot sloping roof of Deer Creek State Park Lodge.*

lessens the consumption of precious petroleum products and can be extremely efficient if wood is available locally.

Any agency considering the use of wood should carefully document its present energy usage. This type of audit should figure the cost per unit of the main energy source (electrical, gas, oil) so that a later analysis can compute savings. Cost savings will vary because prices fluctuate on utilities.

To operate an energy-conscious park, we recommend a 3-step process:

- Make an energy audit to document all energy being used. Show the quantity used in relationship to the

type of facility. Document projected energy usage, too.

- Make recommendations to minimize present energy usage and implement them.
- Conduct a financial audit on all present and projected energy costs. This data base will be an invaluable tool in examining alternate energy sources.

#### **Energy Parks**

To increase public awareness, Ohio plans to feature two key energy parks in the 1980s:

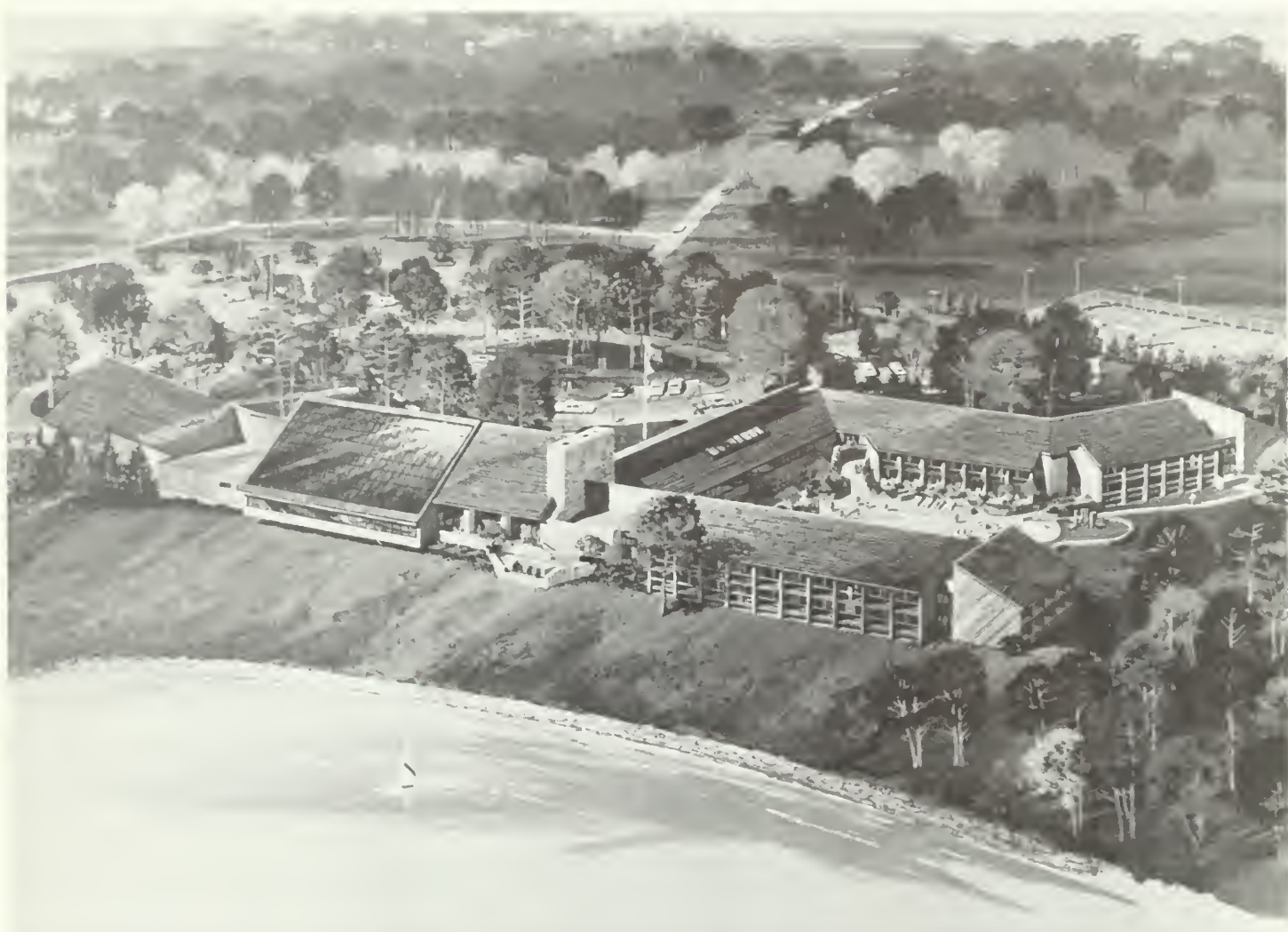
*Deer Creek State Park* will set an example for major resort recreational facilities. Located in southwestern central Ohio, the park in 1981 will

feature a new 110-room lodge and 25 new cabins. Already in existence is a 232-site Class "A" (shower and electric) campground.

A wood crop program will operate in conjunction with a parkwide wood stove program. In addition, all new facilities are being built in an energy-conscious fashion.

The wood crop proposal was integrated into the planning of the park. The potential woodburning facilities have been identified as the lodge (with 2 fireplaces); the Harding cabin (with 1 fireplace), a historic cabin that can be rented by families; the maintenance area (with 1 stove); the park office (with 1 stove); and 25 house-keeping cabins (with 25 stoves). The





*One of the first of its kind in the world, this recently opened Deer Creek State Park Lodge was designed totally around its solar aspect.*

wood needed this winter for the total of 30 woodburning units was estimated at 120 cords. This was based on the assumption that the fires in the lodge and the historic cabin will be primarily ornamental. The stove in the maintenance area should produce the greatest percentage of necessary heat at the facility, but supplemental heat may be desirable. The park office and cabins will be totally heated by wood.

Reality demands that a wood supply of sufficient acreage be available on site, to provide the wood heat units with enough fuel for their long-term needs. Locust trees have been identified as the fastest growing trees with acceptable heat production. A

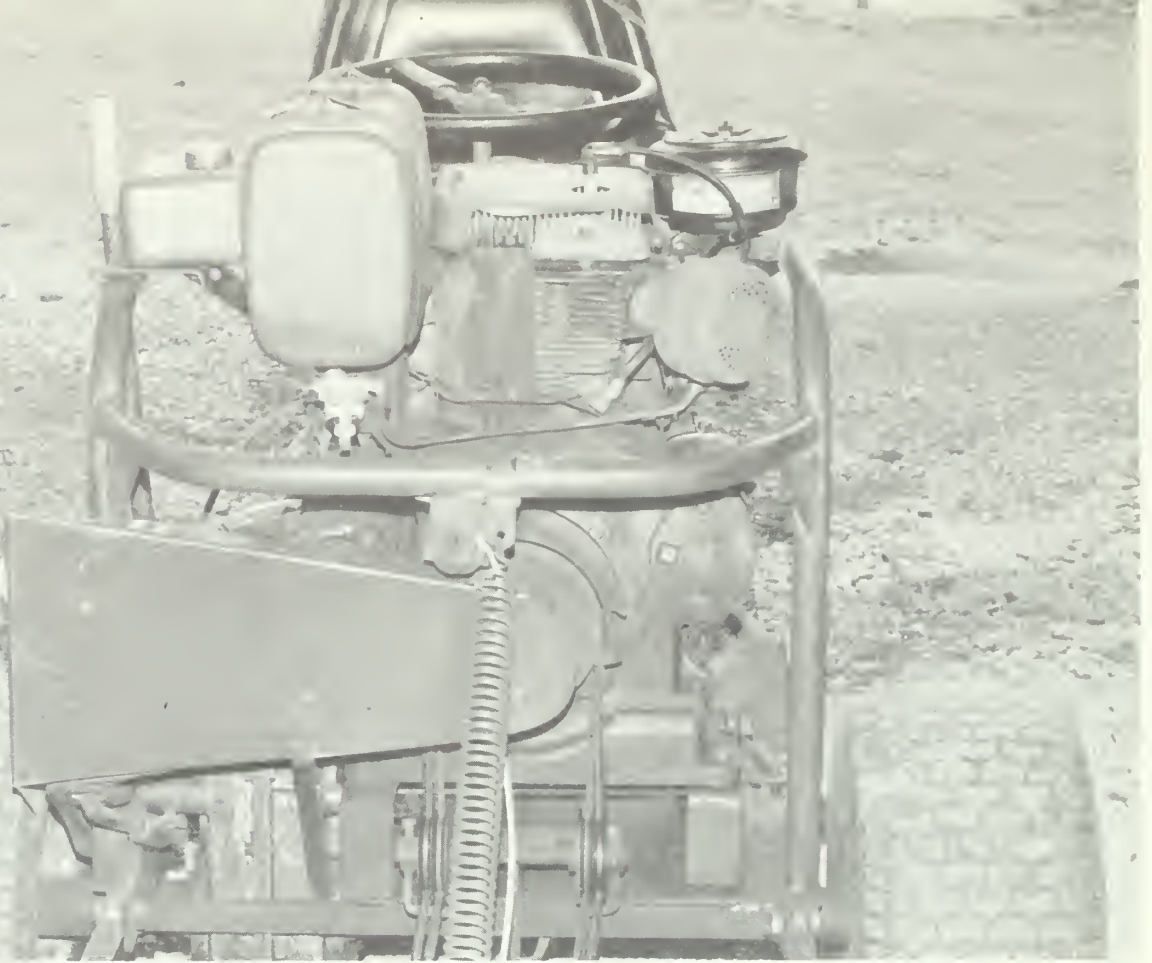
crop of these trees can be available for harvesting in 15 years. With six cords of wood being produced per acre (0.4 hectares) of ground, it would take a total of 300 acres (120 hectares) to handle the necessary wood crop rotation.

Wood heat is only one facet of the total picture of Deer Creek State Park as an energy park. The new lodge will be built into a hillside, overlooking the 1,277-acre (495-hectare) lake and will have a solar-supplemented system. The lodge design is centered around its solar aspect. It is expected to be one of the first of its kind in the country.

The cabin area will feature a demonstration cabin with a woodburning

stove, windmill generator, geothermal heat pump, solar hot water supply, and insulated windows and walls, and will be accessible to the handicapped. This energy-efficient system will act as a role model for future park development.

A windmill will be tested for irrigation on the golf course. The park office and maintenance area will feature a solar hot water supply. An on-land wastewater treatment system along Deer Creek will prevent wastewater from damaging the lake and causing premature eutrophication. This system uses the land as a living filter to remove and utilize nutrient materials, and results in a low-cost, efficient use of energy to process sewage.



*The grain alcohol produced at Malabar Farm is used to fuel machinery such as this converted 12 hp mower.*

*Malabar Farm State Park* is the other energy park in the system. Malabar Farm offers 912 acres (365 hectares) of rural farmland and forest and features the home of famous author and novelist, Louis Bromfield. The 32-room mansion known as the Big House is a historic attraction. The park is operated as a living farm utilizing agricultural practices and attitudes that Bromfield advocated. The farm is operated in the manner that Bromfield would have run it were he still alive.

All the farming operations use time-honored methods such as contour plowing, draft horses, organic gardening, as well as such innovations as no-till farming and gasohol to power farm equipment.

Malabar demonstrates energy projects geared to farm operators and homeowners. Such projects as reconstruction of the hydroelectric operation below the pond, a windmill generator, geothermal heat pump, and

solar hydrothermal generator are all earmarked for Malabar's future. Improvement of the operation and output of the gasohol still, and documentation of the acreage needed to supply the necessary grain, continue to increase the educational value of the farm.

The major importance of Malabar Farm is its role in educating the public through its daily operation of the farm, workshops, and programs. Last year, attendance for Malabar was 81,000; however, this year the farm drew 61,000 for Ohio Heritage Days celebration weekend alone. This is impressive since the park features no overnight facilities; its drawing card is the learning experience it offers visitors. The following illustrate the diverse experiences offered visitors in Malabar Farm programs: sawmill, spinning and weaving, maple syrup, woodlot management, farming with draft horses, steam threshing demonstrations, beekeeping, wildlife man-

agement, wood heat workshop, wild foods, natural Christmas, harvest and food preservation, organic gardening, and Ohio heritage days.

#### **Building Public Awareness**

Of necessity, much of the energy program in state parks is a behind-the-scenes operation involving little or no public exposure. Publicity explains these invisible projects to the visitors and helps them understand some of the visible projects.

Publicity can make or break proposed alterations of the services and standards that the public receives in a park system. An effective rapport with the media and the public is not achieved overnight; a second foundation must be carefully laid. Ohio state parks is forbidden by law to pay for advertising, so all of our publicity is by public service, employee-public contact, and word-of-mouth.

As inflation increases and gasoline prices skyrocket, families begin to feel





*A theme at Malabar Farm State Park is to demonstrate energy production, and how it may be applied to uses by farm operators and homeowners alike. This gasohol still is used in making federally approved grain alcohol from grain grown at the farm.*

that recreation is totally beyond their grasp. The other function of our publicity has been to counter this negative feeling and to make people aware of nearby recreational resources.

Our "just one tankful away" program responds to the public's growing interest in gasoline. In showing the inhabitants of Ohio's 10 major metropolitan areas just which parks were closest to them and what each had to offer, this publicity campaign opened people's eyes and presented a viable, positive outlook for recreation. High interest in the program was expressed by both the public and the media. We will integrate this theme into all of

our new programs so the public can see us as an ally in meeting their recreational goals.

#### **Rent-a-Camp**

The Division of Parks and Recreation actively promotes energy-free or low-energy recreation. For example, we recognize the future of tent camping and are prepared to offer not only more campsites but also ones designated for tents. It would be unrealistic to expect tent campers to use many of the gravel pads in campgrounds that presently accommodate trailers.

Ohio State Parks pioneered the innovative Rent-a-Camp program. This

program, started in 1973, offers the park visitor a large tent and dining fly already set up, with cots, sleeping pads, a lantern, cooler, camp stove, fire-ring, picnic table, broom, door mat, and fire extinguisher. This program allows people with no equipment to experience tent camping. It also gives trailer owners a chance to try a tent before switching over, benefits those who trade the station wagon for an economy car that holds the family but (alas!) no camping equipment, and proves invaluable to campers who travel on motorcycles or bicycles. Through recognizing such changing camping trends and visitor needs, Ohio State Parks can offer a wealth of low-energy outdoor experience.

#### **Winter Recreation**

Winter activities present managers with additional challenges. Ohioans demand winter activities such as ice skating, ice boating, ice fishing, winter camping, winter hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling. We must provide people not only with information on which parks offer these activities, but on which of those parks are closest to home.

With the possible exception of snowmobiling, winter activities use human energy, not petroleum. Therefore they are recommended activities. Facility requirements of winter recreation, however, are complex and require much alteration and innovation in both staffing and equipment. We hope to offer diverse winter activities at selected key parks in our system, minimizing energy use through this consolidation of user, park staff, and equipment.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Recreation recognizes its role as a leader in energy conservation in Ohio. Energy and inflation are factors that mold the profile of the park visitor. There will never be a final statement on energy and its effect on our park system for it is a dynamic factor. Only constant analysis and concern will enable us to assume and maintain our role as a leader and an educator for the people of Ohio.

*Don Olson is the Ohio State Parks Director.*

by Richard C. Trudeau

"Revolutions are not about trifles," said Aristotle. "But they are produced by trifles." The Jarvis-Gann Initiative in California—Proposition 13—was not a trifle, but it was only one action in what can be termed a social upheaval in this nation. The severe reduction in the property tax approach of Proposition 13 was echoed in only two other states, but it is significant that there were limitations imposed on governmental spending in 14 states and that property tax reform has been an issue in 39 of the 50 states. Today our rapidly escalating inflation and increasing taxes (about 42 cents of every dollar goes to all levels of government for taxes) have brought about renewed efforts to reform the tax structure and a national campaign to call a constitutional convention on the question of a limit to government spending at the federal level.

In essence the simple message of Jarvis-Gann and other spending limitation proposals is that runaway inflation must be stopped, that taxes to support government services must be scaled back, and that government must become more concerned with efficiency and productivity.

At the same time that we are in the "eye" of this hurricane of budget cutting, we are also in an era of leisure undreamed of 50 years ago. This has resulted in an ever increasing demand for more park and recreation services. Since the passage of Proposition 13 and the inevitable higher fees and reduced hours of service, the number of people flocking to park and recreation facilities has increased in most areas of California. Within our district, we served 500,000 more visitors last year than in the year before Proposition 13.

What are the implications for us in the park and recreation field? Some see Proposition 13 as a mandate to do nothing, to "bow out" of government service, while some take the message to mean cutting public services to the level of tax support given. Others see it as a challenge that creativity can overcome.

Faced with the twin realities of budget reductions and the demand for



*A district staff member, trained as a blacksmith, teaches interpretive classes to school children in the barn at Garin Regional Park in Hayward. Photo: EBRPD.*

more recreation services, we must learn to cut costs creatively and find alternate sources of funding.

### Internal Economics

Thomas Jefferson said it well and succinctly, "The time to start economizing is before you run out of money." We all can become more efficient and effective if we try. Under this heading I will offer a dozen suggestions, but the list could be virtually endless.

- Invest temporarily idle funds at the highest going rate of interest.
- Consider self-insuring your agency's liability coverage or using the pooling concept in your insurance coverage.
- Try construction management techniques in developing recreational facilities and speed up projects by incorporating "fast tracking" in your construction programs.
- Use a modified zero-base budget with its priority ranking of decision packages.

- Use outside contractors where private operators can do a job better and with less cost than you can with your own staff. This includes contracting maintenance if it will cut costs.

- Hire qualified outside specialists for short periods to augment staff rather than hire additional permanent employees.

- Lease your own trained specialists to other agencies where this will help them and bring your agency some extra revenue at the same time.

- Reduce your staffing levels in the off season and encourage 9-month and 6-month jobs, as well as leaves of absence without pay where this can be done without diminishing services.

- Reassign responsibilities of staff members so that they can do more things; give one person in each park the power to cite minor violations.





*Volunteers have long been a valuable source of assistance to the district. Here volunteers regularly help care for native California plants at the Botanic Garden in Tilden Regional Park in the Berkeley hills. Photo: EBRPD.*

- Design park and recreational facilities less expensively, making them more passive and maintenance-free, and make your maintenance classification systems and standards more effective.
- Lease rather than purchase your park lights.
- Use volunteers to do jobs that your staff cannot do.

#### Using Volunteer Services

Let me make a few points about the last item. Volunteerism is undergoing a revival with over 37 million

people a year volunteering their time and energy to help solve today's problems. As one example, during the first 6 months of 1978, some 6,000 volunteers contributed 428,000 hours to the Los Angeles City Parks and Recreation Department. This labor would have cost \$1.1 million at the minimum wage.

More specific examples include the advertising and public relations firm that has worked with our district on the production of TV spots and the design and printing of brochures as a public service. Their work for us has

been valued at \$15,000 to \$20,000 annually. We also have used topflight realtor volunteers who have negotiated land options for us without cost, or for expenses only.

Phoenix, Arizona and Galveston, Texas have utilized union-sponsored apprentice training programs for on-the-job work in parks, valued at \$250,000 in labor and equipment contributed. In Phoenix, the union assistance was also used as the local match for a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant.

#### Enterprise Funding

Next let us consider the creative use of outside capital, more broadly termed enterprise funding. Most of us are familiar with this concept and use it to some degree.

When California provided "bail-out" funds after Proposition 13, it termed "enterprise districts" those which received 50 percent of their budgets from outside sources. There were few park agencies in this category; most of us were far from 50 percent. In my mind the outstanding progenitor of this idea is Charles Spears, who for many years was director of the Metropolitan Board of Parks and Recreation in Nashville, Tennessee, and is now the director of Parks and Recreation in Minneapolis.

In 1974 the Metropolitan Nashville-Davidson County Board of Parks and Recreation instituted an enterprise fund that included all revenue producing facilities such as golf courses, concessions, tennis courts, swimming pools, pedal boats, souvenir and art sales, stables, and so forth. These revenue producing facilities were placed under a trained special service administrator. The goal was to become 50 percent funded through enterprise funding. Spears said at the time he began this program that it would be a good selling point with the taxpayers. Imagine how warmly this idea would be received today. All new facilities planned under this enterprise fund were either constructed with revenue bonds or built from profits, according to Spears.

The former county administrator of one of the two counties we serve is working with us on a variety of en-





*Tilden Golf Course, located in Tilden Regional Park in Berkeley, California, is operated by a concessionaire. The district shares a percentage of the operation's gross profits.  
Photo: EBRPD.*

terprise activities and has suggested several ways for us to use the private sector in developing new facilities.

*Private development and operation of public golf courses.*

*Funding from youth groups and others for special facilities, with public use of facilities at other than specially reserved times.*

*Multiple use of resources.* A good example of this is the program undertaken by the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County, Illinois, to raise \$10 million over a 19-year period. The district owns two sites which are prime landfill areas. By contract, solid waste disposal firms are depositing solid waste at the sites over a 19-year period, paying the Forest Preserve District 10 percent of gross royalties over the first 10 years, with the percentage increased thereafter, going up 1 percent every 2 years. Over the 19-year period, the district expects to realize in excess of \$10 million in royalties. In addition, the site was master planned by the private operator for further park development, with the firms creating lakes at each location and naturally shaping the hills.



*Wildcat View Youth Camping Shelter, located in Tilden Regional Park in Berkeley, California, was built in 1966 and financed largely by the Camp Fire organization.  
Photo: EBRPD.*





*Joe DiMaggio, along with elected city and state officials, presided at a gala dedication ceremony at Martinez Regional Shoreline. The shoreline has been a joint venture between the city of Martinez and the park district. Photo: EBRPD.*

*Public-commercial joint ventures.* The key element here is the degree of involvement of the public agency.

In today's budget reducing circumstances, the public agency may well be interested in a minimum investment risk and a maximum revenue return. Among the ideas to consider:

- *Borrow yourself, then lease.* This involves the ability of the public agency to borrow funds for capital outlay programs. Funds can be borrowed from lending institutions at interest rates less than the increase in labor and construction costs. Interest to the lender is tax-free.
- *Use revenue bonds.* Floating revenue bonds can totally finance revenue producing facilities. These are limited liability bonds, with the income from the facility used to pay for the operation of the facility as well as to pay off the revenue bonds.

There are good reasons for issuing revenue bonds. They do not generally count against an agency's debt capacity, nor do they require voter approval. Revenue bonds encourage economical projects and effective management. Users of the facility pay for it in proportion to their use. Finally, there are no resident versus nonresident problems involved.

There may be problems, however, such as a higher rate of interest. Under present circumstances in California, it may be more difficult to get investors to buy revenue bonds. But under normal circumstances, the advantages usually outweigh the disadvantages.

- *Set up a nonprofit corporation that may float tax-exempt bonds secured by long-term lease revenues that can be used in building stadiums and developing other recreational facilities.*

- *Use small amounts of public funds as "seed money" to stimulate investment of a larger amount of private funds.*

- *Purchase a recreational facility with public funds and lease it back to a private operator.*

- *Sell nondedicated public land and restrict contemplated uses to those compatible with the park. This method is more common in other countries than here.*

### **Interagency Cooperation**

The concept of interagency cooperation on new projects can get so complicated that I hesitate to capsule it. The guiding principle in our use of this idea, however, is that as one agency we can do only so much and that we are both connected to and dependent upon our cities and county governments, as well as other special districts. Thus, we have found new ways of working together in the creation of new parks, with both the district and the other governmental entities joining the funding. A few examples will help to illustrate this point.

- Together with the Alameda County Water District, we jointly purchased an abandoned quarry, each making use of it for our own special purpose —ours, of course, for recreational uses such as swimming, boating, and fishing, and the Water District principally as a part of its ground water replenishment program.

- In the city of Martinez, we worked with a group of interested citizens and some state legislators to create a joint regional-city park on a 4-mile (6.4 kilometer) shoreline of some 308 acres (123.2 hectares). One of the major problems overcome by state legislation was clearing up title to lands on the shoreline. The venture also involved dividing the 308 acres into appropriate regional and city park segments, with funding coming from the general funds of both agencies, plus grants. That's a simple statement of a complicated project.

- Several cities have provided the district with part of the proceeds from their share of the 1974 and 1976 State Park Bond measures to accelerate some projects in the district's master plan targeted for their areas. These include funds for a trail, which ultimately will connect three regional parks, plus funds to help develop two other water-oriented regional parks. We also will get title to some of the city land involved in one case and have a long-term lease arrangement on city property in another.

- In the hiring of consultants to do our master plan, we joined forces with the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and OVERVIEW, the planning firm of former Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, which then did both our master plan and the Open Space Study for ABAG. We supplied the basic funds, with ABAG able to get section 701 planning funds from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to match our allocation plus theirs. We applied the same technique in a joint study with the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) on a proposed trails program going from transit stations to regional parks, with BART matching our seed funds with a Department of Trans-

portation grant. Citizen committees were a vital part of both studies.

- We also initiated a unique study of our Ridgeland area, which encompasses thousands of acres. In this study, which included potential uses of the land such as farming, cattle grazing, housing, mining, and open space, we were joined by three county governments, the former federal Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, and ABAG, each of which put up \$15,000 in cash or services to fund the study.

In coming years there will be many more of these innovative interagency agreements, complicated as they are.

### Foundations

Your own foundations or those of others can provide you with seed money for innovative projects. Community foundations can be a good source of help. Cleveland Metropolitan Park District, for example, has solicited funds from the Cleveland Foundation with great success. Last year, the park district received a matching grant of \$30,000 for a traffic study of transportation within the park district, including the impact of automobiles on air pollution within the parks. Two years ago the agency received \$16,000 with which to buy a parkmobile for exhibits that can be taken into the inner city. Earlier it was granted \$30,000 for solar heating of a park building.

Some foundations will collect funds designated for your agency by donors and let you draw on those funds as needed. For example, the Columbus, Ohio, Metropolitan Park District has \$125,000 in the Columbus Foundation which is available when needed.

Many private foundations make allocations annually. Most, however, have specific purposes in mind since this is the reason they were set up initially. Others will accept your proposals. Obviously, it is well to know as much as possible about the foundation and its purposes before you submit a proposal. Six years ago our district received a number of grants from private foundations totaling \$250,000. These funds were designated to assist us in acquiring a unique 3½-mile (5.6-kilometer) shoreline park of 1,000 acres (400 hectares).



*Visitors brave the cold to visit Hayward Regional Shoreline on its dedication day. This is the largest marsh restoration project on the West Coast and will provide diverse wildlife and plant habitat, educational, and recreational opportunities.*

*Photo: EBRPD.*

In terms of dollar amounts, the Mott Foundation probably is tops. It recently gave the Genesee County Parks Department in Michigan \$1.2 million for the construction of Crossroads Village in one of that county's parks.

Ten years ago we set up an Inter-County Parks Foundation, which was qualified by the Internal Revenue Service to accept gifts of land and money on a tax-free basis. The development administrator on our staff, whose job is to pursue private gifts and grants, also administers the foundation. Many park agencies have since followed suit.

While having your own foundation isn't essential to receiving tax-free funds, it can be a helpful vehicle for getting community leaders involved. It also takes the onus off of giving to a public agency that is tax-supported.

If you do not want to start your own park foundation, perhaps a state organization to which you belong might start one and dispense funds to

you on a designated basis similar to the United Funds around the country. It wouldn't be difficult to work out an appropriate method of helping park and recreation departments that need assistance, either with a specific project or with a loan.

The California State Parks Foundation, established 9 years ago, has turned over to the State Park and Recreation Department more than \$15 million in gifts and 13,000 acres (5,200 hectares) of new parklands. This foundation is a voluntary, non-profit, tax-exempt California corporation whose sole purpose is to receive bequests, cash gifts, securities, real estate, and other property for the California State Park System. The foundation has an influential board of trustees, advisory council, and a cooperating council of organizations. It also has a staff, including an executive director who coordinates the entire program. A broader-based foundation that could assist all park and recreation departments and districts is an idea whose time has come.



## Bequests, Donations, and Other-Than-Fee Acquisitions

Wills and bequests can provide funding benefits for the future. One of the founders of our district willed us property valued at more than \$60,000 plus \$10,000 in cash. We also are included in the will of an estate valued at \$150,000 or more. A little effort can go a long way here.

There are many ways to acquire land for parks without resorting to outright purchase. Among suggested tools for your use are:

- Reserved life estates;
- Bargain sales;
- Charitable deductions;
- Saving on capital gains tax;
- Tax advantages on wills;
- Scenic easements;
- Natural resource protection zoning;
- Natural areas assessment programs;
- Opportunity zoning variances;
- Land swaps;
- Creation of foundation or trust under IRS 501 C-3;
- Reclaim landfills, rights-of-way, water rights, and so forth for park use;
- Flood plain protection laws.

Donations have been a major source of parkland in many areas. The St. Louis County park system began with a gift of 429 acres (172 hectares) in 1944, and other gifts of land or money have accounted for more than half of the 7,000 acres (2,800 hectares) in county ownership. Over 80 percent of the 5,600 acres (2,240 hectares) operated by the Peoria, Illinois, Park District have been obtained by will, gift, or some kind of management agreement.

## Membership Campaigns and Fundraising

Your staff, your board members, and friends all can participate in a membership campaign. This is a common source of funding for universities and colleges, hospitals, youth organizations, and others. It builds slowly but can lead to some large gifts. And membership lists can be most helpful



to you when you need to go to the voters for tax overrides.

Immediately following the passage of Proposition 13 we began a park membership program. After 2 years, our list showed 1,157 active members for a 2-year total of \$67,179.

Today, private fundraising is a fertile field for the park and recreation business since it is people and service oriented. There are all kinds of programs that will interest potential donors. Many agencies are preparing "gifts catalogues" from which citizens or organizations may choose exactly what they wish to support. Adopt-an-Animal, Feed-a-Friend, Plant-a-Tree are all ideas that have met with great success.

It is sometimes amazing how resourceful agencies can be and how generously citizens respond when asked to help. The Fairfax, California, Recreation Department sponsors a weekly "Disco night" which thus far has averaged \$9,000 per week. The LaHabra, California, Park and Recreation Department set up a "Jog-A-Thon" with pledges of \$31,000.

The cardinal point to remember is that no one person has the panacea for locating the "golden treasure" that can keep park and recreation pro-

*Employees of Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Corporation volunteering their time to install a play structure in Roberts Regional Park located in the Oakland hills. Photo: EBRPD.*

grams on an even keel financially. Staff, board members, friends, important citizens in the community, businessmen, legislators, and virtually everyone can assist you in finding sources of financing.

## Corporate Giving

Corporate giving also looms larger on the horizon for us if we are prepared to encourage such gifts. Recently, industry has donated some \$2.3 billion of its profits annually to the arts and other fields of endeavor. The majority of shareholders of public corporations approve of such corporate support.

Successful courting of corporate patrons requires the know-how of dealing with business leaders plus a great deal of persistence and patience. Of major importance is the public agency's image and its chief executive's reputation in the eyes of the corporate world. These must be

developed carefully over time.

Our Adopt-A-Park program actively solicits industry to adopt one of our facilities by underwriting some of the costs of maintaining, operating, or improving that facility over several years. What the company's funds are used for is decided after joint consultation between industry representatives and our staff. Crucial to the concept is that the corporation derive some benefit from its generosity.

The "adoption" of one of our regional parks by Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Corporation has received widespread publicity and is our most conspicuous success. It is especially significant that many of Kaiser's top people, including the chief executive officer, are actively involved in the project. Kaiser also hosted an invitational luncheon for corporate leaders on the occasion of our district's 45th birthday. Out of this luncheon came a dozen more prospects for corporate assistance.

#### Alternate Tax Sources

"Taxation is the price of civilization," said Oliver Wendell Holmes. Nationwide we may well have reached the limits of our support from the property tax. Other tax sources must be found if this area is not to dry up. In California, the governor's Commission on Government Reform recommended a sharing by the state of more of the sales tax with local government. There are, however, a number of other alternate tax sources being considered in California which warrant your further exploration. Among them:

- *State revenue sharing for parks.* A now deceased state assemblyman proposed this a few years ago, with funds to come from an increase in the gas tax, a sales tax on sporting goods, and an admission tax on sports events. More recently it has been suggested that such a state revenue sharing program for parks might come from a portion of the off-shore oil lease funds. Another innovative legislative measure now up for a committee hearing is the designation of a \$5 deduction on the state income tax for linear parks or trails.



*On summer weekends youngsters arrive at Roberts Regional Park aboard special public buses from downtown directly to the park. The cost for this special bus service is shared by the district and Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Corporation. Photo: EBRPD.*

- *Vehicle license fees.* Drivers license fees in California haven't changed in 26 years so this offers a potential, with the increase going in part for park and recreation programs statewide.

- *An operations and maintenance fee.* If we imposed a broadly based fee (not a tax) to all parcels of property in the 2 counties we serve, at approximately \$7.50 per parcel, we could raise \$4 million for our park operations. We do have the authority to impose fees, and a precedent exists with the city of Inglewood, which recently imposed a fee on each household for fire protection, a service formerly supported by the property tax bill. Along the same line, the Orange County Sanitation District, which serves 23 of 26 cities in the county, instituted a user fee to make up for \$9 million lost because of Proposition 13. The user fee cost homeowners \$30-\$60 per year.

- *Special assessment districts.* Such districts are difficult but not impossible to form. For example, under California law, if 60 percent of the owners and 60 percent of the households approve, and if they constitute 60 percent of the assessed value represented

in the area, then a special assessment district can be created. Assessment laws vary in each state, so check into your particular situation before pursuing or discounting this idea.

- *Zone of influence levy.* This concept provides for a surtax to be levied on property made more valuable by its proximity to parkland. The concept was explored in a study done for our district by Steven Spickard of the University of California.

It still may be possible to pass legislation in some states to provide tax funds for parks. Missouri voters have approved a constitutional amendment that adds 1/8 of 1 percent sales tax (1¢ for each \$8 purchased) to finance state conservation programs dedicated to "bird, fish, game, forestry, and wildlife." This new tax generates some \$18-\$20 million annually.

#### Conclusion

Out of adversity can come constructive and creative efforts. We are unlikely to ever again see the days of "easy" funding. But through creativity, dedication, and hard work, our situation ultimately can improve if we involve ourselves in partnerships with industry and cultivate the kind of broad-based public support we really haven't had.

When we react to challenge in a bold and innovative fashion, we not only provide for a continuation of park and recreation services, we also help to refute the cynicism that many feel toward local government. By our commitment of performance we also affirm our faith in the American way.

It is a challenge worthy of our best efforts.

*Richard C. Trudeau is General Manager of the East Bay Regional Park District in California. This article was adapted from remarks Mr. Trudeau made at a recent seminar on finance at Oglebay Park in Wheeling, West Virginia.*



# Senior Citizen Park Maintenance Corps

by Bob Feeney

In the face of ever increasing costs of park maintenance and threatened service cuts mandated by taxpayers, many cities and towns have been searching for successful cost-effective ways of delivering better service with fewer dollars. The city of Revere, Massachusetts, has developed a program to help address this problem.

The idea was conceived by the Mayor of Revere, George Colella, who wanted to take advantage of a valuable but sometimes neglected natural resource, the city's elderly population. Mayor Colella suggested that the city hire senior citizens to help maintain and care for the parks and playgrounds.

The program, appropriately titled the Senior Citizen Park Maintenance Corps (SCPMC), will provide innovative park maintenance with dual benefits. It will increase employment opportunities for Revere's elderly population, and will supply the city's parks and playgrounds with a new type of cost-effective maintenance. The work will be done by experienced workers who take pride in their jobs.

## Background of City

Revere is a small city of 42,256 people living in 5.95 square miles (15.45 square kilometers) of varied topography bordering Boston to the south and the Atlantic Ocean to the east.

Established as a city in 1915, it was a popular summer vacation spot at the turn of the century. Visitors from all over the eastern United States were attracted to the hotels and amusements located along the 3-mile (4.8-kilometer) crescent-shaped stretch of beautiful, sandy beach. Revere Beach housed Wonderland Amusement Park, one of the first amusement theme parks in the United States, and it contributed significantly to the city's development in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Today, a passive park has replaced the hotels and amusements. The beach still attracts thousands of seasonal visitors, but it no longer adds a great deal to the city's economy.

Revere offers its residents many parks, playgrounds, and other recreational opportunities besides the



Mayor George V. Colella meets with some of Revere's senior citizens to review guidelines for the city's innovative program. Photo: Bob Feeney



The Senior Citizen Park Maintenance Corps will care for five designated park areas of the oceanfront city of Revere. Photo: C. E. Maguire, Inc.

beach, but it faces common problems in delivering adequate park maintenance.

The city has begun a recreation revitalization using funds from the Department of the Interior's Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery program. This has prompted local officials to seek an innovative and cost-effective method of maintaining these new and reconstructed parks and open spaces.

## Idea for Program

Mayor Colella's idea for this project grew from his recollection of an elderly gentleman who, years ago, cared for the Revere Little League field. The field was always in beautiful condition, reflecting the skill and pride this man placed in his work. It was his feeling that when something is done, it should be done well. This philosophy motivates many of Revere's senior citizens. This sense of



*Regular mowing and landscape work are part of the senior citizens' duties.* Photo: Bob Feeny

pride is a major theme in the Senior Citizen Park Maintenance Corps—the pride in doing work and doing it well.

The next step was to take advantage of this ready and willing work force by forming a pilot Senior Citizen Park Maintenance Program. Mayor Colella consulted with his director of Parks and Recreation, the Council on Elderly Affairs, and the Department of Planning and Community Development to discuss the program. With a limited amount of funds available for the next budget, the city needed an outside funding source for the pilot program.

It found the answer in an Urban

Parks and Recreation Recovery innovative program grant. This is a 70-percent federal and 30-percent local matching grant, which allows Revere to operate a demonstration model to determine whether the Senior Citizen Park Maintenance Corps is a feasible project.

#### **Scope of Project**

Revere's demonstration project will target a coordinated maintenance effort to a relatively small defined urban area and provide close-to-home employment opportunities for senior citizens.

Twenty-five senior citizens will be chosen by lottery. After passing a

simple physical examination, each will work 20 hours a week for a total of 25 weeks beginning at the end of April and continuing into October of 1981.

The senior citizens will maintain five designated park sites in five separate neighborhoods. A team of five workers will be responsible for each of the parks and possibly other municipal open spaces located in their neighborhood.

Responsibilities of these workers will include cutting grass; planting, watering, and pruning plants; painting; making minor repairs; and undertaking related general light maintenance and landscaping tasks.



Most important, the senior citizens will establish themselves as people who care about and place pride in their neighborhood parks, hopefully generating a caring attitude among neighborhood residents.

The senior citizen workers will not perform heavy lifting or other strenuous activities. Parks and recreation personnel, along with public works personnel, will assist in any physically difficult task.

### Training in Proper Technique

Prior to the beginning of work, members of the Senior Citizen Park Maintenance Corps will attend several workshops to review proper planting techniques and current landscaping principles. The workers, however, will perform their work the way they know best—as if they were working in their own backyards.

The city landscaper/gardener will be field supervisor for the program. Since he now has the almost impossible task of caring for almost all planting in the city, he is quite excited about the project and sure of its success.

### Volunteers

To further enhance the program, assistance in organizing gardening workshops and greenhouse planting will be sought from local nurseries, garden supply firms, hardware stores, and other small businesses. Donations of flowers, shrubs, and gardening tools will also be solicited from these local gardening businesses.

Additional financial assistance will be necessary. Funds are being sought from the larger local businesses and from private and corporate sources for some of the tools and expendable items necessary for successful implementation of the project.

### Evaluation

As a national demonstration model for cost-effective park maintenance, the Senior Citizen Park Maintenance Corps will be monitored by many local governments for possible replication.

The grant includes setting aside funds for private consultants to moni-

tor and evaluate the progress and benefits to both the city and the participants. Two men affiliated with the Harvard Medical School's Division on Aging were selected on the basis of their proposal and background in the field of gerontology.

The consultants will monitor the program by analyzing the impact of several factors upon the senior workers and the parks, including:

- | <i>Senior Workers</i>                   | <i>City</i>                              |
|---|--|
| • Extra income                          | • Better maintained facilities and parks |
| • Increased physical activity           | • Reduced costs for park maintenance     |
| • Improved morale                       | • Increased pride in the city's parks    |
| • Increased pride in self and community |  |

Questionnaires will be used to determine the participants' attitudes before and after the 6-month working period.

### Lottery

Twenty-five jobs are available in the first year of the Senior Citizen Park Maintenance Corps program. In keeping with the innovative content of the project, the city of Revere has decided to sponsor a lottery for the purpose of selecting applicants.

Employment ads will be placed in the local newspapers, the senior citizens' newsletter, and local places of business. Applications will be available at several locations throughout the city. The applicants must be residents of the city and be physically capable of working in an active outdoor environment.

The first 25 applicants selected will constitute the 1981 Senior Citizen Park Maintenance Corps. Further selections will be made for an alternate list in the event that any of the original selectees refuse or quit the job, or are not physically able to perform the work. New equipment will be purchased with funds supplied by the grant and the workers will be responsible for maintaining and cleaning their own equipment.

### Summary

This program provides benefit opportunities to both the city and its senior citizens. The maintenance work will be demonstrated in a cost-

effective manner, offering a number of citizens with limited income an opportunity to increase their financial resources. The program also will provide the seniors with a chance to show the younger generation what can be accomplished when pride and caring is incorporated into one's work.

The concept of the Senior Citizen Park Maintenance Corps is relevant. It comes at a time when taxpayers are demanding cutbacks in local government spending and the need for cost-effective services is growing.

In demonstrating the Senior Citizen Park Maintenance Corps, Revere has the opportunity to prove that this type of program can be accomplished with pride and enthusiasm that is synonymous with the city's "experienced generation."

*Bob Feeney is a recreational and staff planner for the Department of Planning and Community Development in Revere, Massachusetts. He is a graduate of Salem State College, Salem, Massachusetts, with a B.S. in Urban and Environmental Geography.*

## District Cuts Costs

by Darrell G. Winslow

The Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA), which is supported by the cities of Falls Church, Fairfax, and Alexandria, and the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, and Loudoun, does not have a tax base. It depends on voluntary contributions from these six political subdivisions, plus income derived from revenue producing facilities and gifts. In order to try to fight inflation and cut costs, the staff has implemented a number of innovations that other agencies might consider.

### Better Qualified Part-time Help

Over a period of 48 months we have cut our permanent staff by 31 percent while increasing our number of part-time employees by more than 50 percent. Programs, facilities, and other operations have more than doubled at the same time.



The woodburning stove in the lobby of NVRPA headquarters is one of 11 now in operation in various regional parks. Photo: Carl Zitzmann



BULL RUN COUNTRY JAMBOREE  
AUG. 17, 1980

The Ralph Case "Hee Haw" Dancers appeared at the country jamboree that brought in \$47,000. Photo: Carl Zitzmann



NVRPA now places more emphasis on part-time employees with high credentials. For example, one of our part-time employees at the skeet and trap range is a full-time university coach. He has all the knowledge needed to promote tournaments and to project our public image in a most favorable manner.

#### Woodburning Stoves

New sources of revenue and ways to save money are of major concern to us. After scheduling brainstorming sessions with our staff last year, two new ideas emerged. One was to lower our utility bills by installing woodburning stoves in various park buildings, such as the clubhouses at our golf course and skeet and trap center, nature centers, and maintenance buildings. We burn our own wood (dead wood and other residue of forest management) from the 8,000 acres (3,200 hectares) of regional parkland; we *do not* cut live trees indiscriminately.

#### Country Jamboree

The second idea was to plan and promote a large 1-day country jamboree that would generate additional revenue. After exploring the risks and potential liability of putting on such a show, we decided to gamble. The staff's hard work and careful planning resulted in a total success. We brought in five top country music performers, led by Mel Tillis. The total income for the day was \$47,000, with expenses of \$40,000.

The woodburning stoves/country jamboree ideas certainly have not solved all our concerns, but together they have improved our operation budget by more than \$15,000. Another benefit of the country jamboree was that it attracted a new segment of the population that had never heard of the Regional Park Authority or its many facilities.

#### Renting Space

Two of our major parks, the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad Regional Park and the Occoquan Regional Park, are unique in their abilities to provide revenue.

A number of businesses are located on or adjacent to the W&OD right-



Rents from businesses along the Washington and Old Dominion Regional Hiking/Biking Trail generate revenue for the park authority. Photo: Carl Zitzmann

of-way, which was acquired to provide a linear hiking/biking/bridle path 100 feet (30 meters) wide and 42 miles (67.2 kilometers) long. If the businesses did not interfere with the trail development and operation, we continued to rent them the space they occupied before NVRPA acquired the property. As a result, the trail now nets a small profit of about \$20,000 annually. We anticipate in coming years that we will need to assign additional staff to patrol and police the trail; this probably will diminish the net profit.

#### Money from Dumping

Occoquan Regional Park constitutes approximately 400 acres (160 hectares) of undisturbed land, 280 acres (112 hectares) of sanitary landfill, and 113 acres (45.2 hectares) of buffer zone and resource recovery area. At the present time, NVRPA receives 25 cents per ton for all refuse dumped there. The initial development will take place within the 400-acre (160-hectare) area along the Occoquan River. The entire facility will be operated by the Regional Park Authority, with guidance from the I-95 Policy Committee, which includes representatives of the Mayor/Commissioner of the District of Columbia, the Metropolitan Waste Management Agency, and the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, in accordance with an agreement between NVRPA and the District of Columbia Department of Environmental Services.

The Occoquan park was planned after much research and a series of public hearings, presentations, and in-

terpretation of gathered data. Its facilities are expected to supplement other park and recreation needs not only of those citizens residing in the member communities of NVRPA, but also those in the District of Columbia. The park is expected to generate about \$100,000 per year for NVRPA, to be used exclusively for the park's development and operation.

As a direct result of our planning to augment revenue in all our parks, we have increased the percentage of our operating budget derived through revenue from 37 percent to 63 percent in 4 years. We plan even greater increases in revenues during the next few years.

Historically, parks have always had periods when adequate support and operational funds were available; however, there also have been times when the necessary support and funds were inadequate. Among the possible solutions to inadequate funds, NVRPA sees more revenue producing programs, gifts, support from foundations, careful choice of facilities, flexibility in defining our mission, and close contact with our public.

Because the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority has no tax base, we feel we must continue to be innovative in developing new operational concepts. The future seems to be one of challenges, and NVRPA, like many other agencies, must assume some risks in order to overcome inflation and other financial concerns.

*Darrell G. Winslow is Executive Director of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority.*

# Strategies for Managing Fuel Cutbacks

by William D. Murphy and Eddie Hueston

Even the most cynical observers of the American scene, by this time, must admit the reality of the energy crisis and the need to cut back on fuel use. Stringent federal regulations regarding seasonal temperatures in certain types of buildings, serious questions related to heating oil for winter use, increases in the cost of petroleum-based products, and the inflationary influence of rising petroleum costs in this country are but a few indicators. The cost and availability of gasoline needed to operate various kinds of machines figure prominently in this energy crisis.

The summer of 1979 witnessed spot shortages of gasoline in varying degrees of severity around the country; the 1980s probably will see more of the same in spite of talk of an "oil glut" from some quarters. Problems of fuel supply will affect all segments of our society, but park and recreation maintenance operations will probably suffer to a greater degree than many other segments.

Obviously maintenance operations are affected by the vagaries of weather, intensity and frequency of user activities, availability of workers, and other factors. No doubt the future will add at least three more influences: uncertainty of fuel supply; increased fuel costs; and fallout from tax cuts, spending lids, and other manifestations of the general public's frustration over spiraling inflation.

Based upon what has occurred during past difficulties, it seems safe to predict a curtailment in the level of maintenance operations by many park and recreation departments. When municipalities are faced with reductions in their supply of gasoline, with which they must provide the normal range of city services, they must make decisions regarding fuel

allocations to their various departments. Inevitably, some departments are more severely impacted than others. Historically, park and recreation departments have not fared well. Within park and recreation departments further allocation decisions must be made. Maintenance activities are the major consumers of fuel in most park and recreation departments. It seems likely, therefore, that reduced levels of park maintenance will follow reductions in municipal fuel supplies.

Park and recreation departments faced with this possibility can employ two basic strategies. One is to amass all the data possible to support a justifiable argument for more equitable allocation of gasoline. The other strategy is to plan carefully how to operate with a reduced fuel supply. Obviously, departments need to predetermine their own priorities in fuel consumption before a shortage occurs.

## Setting Priorities

During the summer of 1979 the Dallas municipal authorities were informed by their petroleum supplier, a major oil company, that it would be unable to deliver the normal allotment of gasoline for certain months. Municipal administrators thus were forced to cut back on fuel allocations to their various departments. Fuel for the Dallas Park and Recreation Department was reduced in excess of 50 percent for the months of June and July. Because maintenance operations consumed a bulk of the department's gasoline, a set of general guidelines for maintenance fuel use had to be established.

The department carefully considered what maintenance services

were most important to its operation and to its constituents. Then it adopted the following priorities for the use of precious fuel.

- Maintenance activities that were essential to public health and safety were assigned top priority. There would be no curtailment of services that could result in hazards to the health and safety of park users or the general public. Keeping restroom facilities clean was regarded as an important factor to health and safety.
- Formal landscaped areas were assigned the next priority because of their high public visibility, sizable investment, and irreversible deterioration if neglected.
- Programmed recreation areas were given third priority. This category included heavily scheduled athletic fields and playfields. The tremendous popularity of these fields demanded a certain level of maintenance, but there was a considerable reduction of services.
- Non-programmed intensive use areas were fourth in priority. Among these were popular park sites where people gathered for a wide variety of informal recreation and play activities.
- Passive recreation areas were assigned a low priority. It simply could not be argued that they deserved a higher ranking. They accommodated few people and supported types of recreation that did not need a high level of maintenance.
- Traffic medians also were given a low priority—with two major exceptions. Maintenance services were continued on medians where excessive growth of vegetation constituted a hazard to motorized and/or pedestrian traffic. Maintenance was also



continued on medians that were irrigated or had landscaped beds.

With few exceptions, the maintenance activities of the Dallas department were guided by these priorities. A fuel reduction of more than 50 percent is bound to have a severe impact on the operations of any department and Dallas was no exception. Many adjustments had to be made, some more difficult than others. An obvious adjustment involved attitudes of department personnel who had operated with a more abundant fuel supply in the past. Maintenance crews, supervisory staff, and administrators who were directly concerned with maintenance services adjusted remarkably well. Some personnel not directly concerned with maintenance, took a little longer to fully comprehend the new facts of life. But generally, the new guidelines worked quite well.

#### **Public Relations Efforts**

Once a set of operating priorities are established, other factors related to the management of fuel cutbacks must be considered. For example, any reduction in maintenance services should be accompanied by an intensive, well-planned public relations and educational effort. The public needs to know what services will be reduced and why. This effort should utilize all the normal public relations channels, but special emphasis should be placed on communicating with the specific groups that are directly affected, such as athletic leagues, community organizations, and so forth.

#### **Donations and Volunteer Services**

Another issue, the acquisition of new areas and facilities, requires careful thought regarding maintenance

cutbacks. When these acquisitions result from long-range planning, provisions generally have been made for their orderly development, operation, and maintenance.

However, well-intentioned individuals or groups sometimes wish to donate areas and/or facilities to park and recreation departments to manifest their civic spirit and goodwill. If these areas are not particularly functional, they can be more of a burden than a blessing. Park and recreation departments should be tactful but discriminating when considering the acceptance of such gifts, which inevitably add to the maintenance responsibilities of the department. Unless special provisions are made, the gift may stretch an already thin capability beyond its effective limits.

Offers of maintenance assistance from the private sector demand similar close analysis. Property owners near a traffic median on a residential street may offer to perform basic mowing service, or athletic leagues may offer to help maintain their playing field. Numerous factors, including the question of liability, need to be considered in preparing a reasoned response to such offers.

#### **Labor Intensive Maintenance**

Agencies may wish to consider converting certain maintenance tasks from gasoline intensive to labor intensive. Can certain tasks be accomplished efficiently by increasing the use of manpower or physical labor and decreasing the use of gasoline-powered machines? Determine whether there are routine tasks that currently use energy derived from gasoline-driven machines that could be done with people. This does not imply a return to chain-gang mentality; it

simply indicates an area where some gasoline may be saved.

#### **Contracting**

Maintenance by contract also deserves careful thought. Some departments already have arranged for private firms to carry out specified maintenance operations using their own fuel in return for a specified sum of money.

The Dallas Park and Recreation Department tripled its maintenance contracts for the summer of 1980. It also has made a point of placing on contract all nonpark properties for which it has maintenance responsibilities such as libraries, police stations, health centers, and so forth. The hope is that those agencies will assume responsibility for their own contracts in the future as budget and/or fuel cutbacks continue. Departments that have not yet considered contracting as a means of conserving their own gasoline supplies may wish to examine the possibility.

The reality of fuel supply limitations is here. The need for more efficient management of fuel resources by park and recreation departments increases daily. Many departments have proven themselves to be ingenious when faced with difficulties. Now is the time to reconsider current maintenance practices and to regard the impending cutbacks as offering challenge and opportunity rather than adversity.

*William D. Murphy is Assistant Professor of Recreation at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. Eddie Hueston is Superintendent of Park Maintenance in the Park and Recreation Department of Dallas, Texas.*

Well-directed citizen involvement can stretch park and recreation resources a long way and bring untold public relations' benefits to agencies forced to cope with cutbacks. Seattle's advisory councils have become an organized and invaluable adjunct to our park department. Politics, however, thwarted initial efforts of the advisory councils, and their evolution has not always gone smoothly. Nonetheless, we hope other park and recreation departments can benefit from our experience and can use community resources in a similar way.

For 55 to 60 years, the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation has benefitted from citizen involvement in the planning of activities at its clubhouses, field houses, and community centers. Early involvement ebbed and flowed as people's interests and park leadership at the local field house changed.

In 1964, Willard Shumard became Superintendent of Recreation for the Seattle Park Department. Willard felt strongly that the groups at the various field houses and community centers should be formally organized and recognized by both the department and the city fathers. Accordingly, the department and its staff helped organize a formal advisory council with constitution and by-laws for each community center, other facility, and citywide special activity.

As these groups started to function, dealing with money became a problem. If an advisory council had a fundraising event or charged a fee for some special activity, the question arose: "Whose funds actually are these—the park department's or the advisory council's?" The park board, an administrative body at that time, resolved the question by establishing a separate fund whose monies could be spent only by the advisory councils, not by the park board or its staff.

In the 1968 elections, the administrative park board was abolished by the electorate and a new park board was created. The new board was appointed by the mayor, confirmed by the city council, and served strictly in an advisory capacity.



By this time, the advisory councils had started to sponsor a few educational programs themselves. The park department authorized the councils to charge a fee for those classes and to use the revenue to offset costs of supplies and instruction.

In 1971, the city comptroller and the Office of Management and Budget became aware of the special fund that had been established by the park board, and indicated that there was no desire on the part of the current city administration to have such an identified special-use fund. Much to the ire of the advisory councils, the fund was abolished. The advisory councils not only lost the funds that were in the special account, they also were expected to place any future revenue raised through advisory council programs in the city's general park fund, to be appropriated each year as the city council saw fit regardless of where the funds had originated.

### Programs Grow as Advisory Councils Manage their Own Money

As a result of the ensuing furor, the superintendent of parks and recreation allowed the advisory councils to establish their own bank accounts and manage their funds themselves. From this point on, the number and types of programs offered by advisory councils grew by leaps and bounds. By 1974, the advisory coun-

*Ceramics programs at City Art Works are sponsored by the Seward Park Advisory Council and the Pratt Fine Arts Center Advisory Council. The advisory councils hire professional artists to teach programs ranging from ceramics and glass art to painting, drawing, and photography. Photo: Seattle Parks and Recreation.*

cils for each of the community centers, performing and visual arts centers, and other program areas were sponsoring the vast majority, if not all, of the programs.

In 1974 and 1975, the state auditor was openly informed of the advisory councils during a regular audit of the parks department. An opinion was formulated that it was inappropriate for the advisory councils to keep such funds, that they belonged to the parks department, and should be deposited in the city treasury to be appropriated by the city council at its discretion.

By this time the advisory councils had gained some political clout and weren't going to be ripped off as they had been 5 years earlier by city officials. Together, the park department and advisory councils established a committee to try to resolve the problem to the satisfaction of the department and the city council.

### Associated Recreation Council Evolves

What evolved in about a year was an official Associated Recreation





*Judge Charles V. Johnson, left, Chairman of the Pratt Fine Arts Center Advisory Council, holds a check for \$250 presented by City Council member Jeanette Williams, the first contributor to a scholarship program to make art classes at the new center available to low income youth and adults. Photo: Seattle Parks and Recreation.*

Council (ARC). Registered as a non-profit corporation in the state of Washington and with the Internal Revenue Service, ARC is authorized by a city council ordinance that spells out its functions, responsibilities, and duties to the city. By a further agreement between the park department and the council, ARC now acts as a banking agency for the individual advisory councils. The state attorney general has ruled that this keeps us within the limits of the Washington Constitution and Washington Accountancy Act.

We now have 40 advisory councils that are members of ARC. Approximately \$1.6 million pass through ARC each year from the various advisory councils. This money pays for instructors, materials, and supplies for the classes and activities offered by each community center or city-wide program. Each quarter, the advisory councils produce a program brochure describing all of the classes and activities offered that quarter, along with their fees. When fees are collected, they are deposited in ARC and disbursed to cover instructors' contracts or supplies for the various activities.

The park department provides the facility, two full-time staff members, and, depending on the size of the center and magnitude of its programs, 2,000-5,000 hours of part-time staff.



*Music In The Parks is a popular summer attraction. Concerts are sponsored by the Music Advisory Council and the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation with financial assistance from the Performance Trust Fund of the Musicians Union and other agencies such as the Seattle Arts Commission. Photo: Seattle Engineering Department.*



Programs such as this tiny tot class at one of Seattle's 24 community centers are sponsored by advisory councils in cooperation with the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Photo: Seattle Parks and Recreation.

Our senior recreation supervisor at each community center or senior recreation specialist for citywide programs works directly with the advisory councils. The advisory councils meet monthly and develop programs for their centers. Our senior supervisor hires all of the instructors for the programs and referees for sports activities. These instructors and referees then are paid by the advisory council. We provide the basic facilities and staff to supervise and operate the local centers, including both program and custodial staff. The advisory councils, with the support and advice of the staff, produce all of the programs at the center.

The advisory councils take real pride in what they do. They promote their programs within the local community and represent that center to the community as a whole. They also are involved in any decisions regarding refurbishing, redesign, or additions to the building or nearby parks or playfields.

People from all walks of life serve on our advisory councils. The councils tend to be self-perpetuating in that members serve 3-year terms. When vacancies occur, the remaining council members recommend to the department people from the community to replace the outgoing members. Individuals who are recom-

mended and are interested in serving fill out profile sheets, which then are approved by the local senior supervisor, by our director of recreation programs, and by the director of operations or the superintendent.

*C. M. "Bud" Girtch is Director of Operations in the Seattle, Washington, Department of Parks and Recreation.*



# Productivity through Worker Incentive and Satisfaction

by Daniel G. Hobbs

Welcome to Rockville, Maryland, a community of 50,000 people. Located 12 miles (19.2 kilometers) northwest of Washington, D.C., Rockville also serves as the county seat for Montgomery County, a rapidly urbanizing suburb of the nation's capital. The city of Rockville employs 350 people in 7 departments. Forty percent of these employees are formally unionized, represented by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. These employees perform parks maintenance and public works activities.

Beginning in late 1976, the Rockville city government initiated a productivity program called the "Worker Incentive and Satisfaction Program" (WISP). This title was used for several reasons. The goal of the program was job enrichment and job satisfaction—which would increase productivity in turn. Also, the union had already demonstrated its antagonism toward the term "productivity." Previously, when management had brought up productivity during a collective bargaining session, union officials nearly walked out in protest. Therefore, an acceptable program title was critical both in gaining union support and in communicating the city's intention to work with *all* employees—unionized, middle management, and senior management.

One year later, the project showed a direct and indirect cost saving of \$27,173. Procedures and morale had improved, and the need for productivity within the organization was better appreciated. The key ingredient in the program's success was the *consultation* with the supervisors and employees and *their involvement* in both the selection and execution of projects. Five measures were used to determine the effectiveness of the program:

- Direct cost savings;
- Indirect cost savings;
- Improved procedures;
- Improved morale or a better management-labor relationship;
- Consciousness raising of supervisors and employees regarding the



*Rockville has won the all-American City Award four times.*

Photo: Courtesy of the city of Rockville



*Employees discuss the pros and cons of a possible strike.*

Photo: Courtesy of the city of Rockville

need for improved productivity and efficiency (which could generate other opportunities for savings).

### Program Origins

A productivity program does not just spring up out of the ground. It requires careful planning, discussion, and consultation. The seed must be sown long before productivity blossoms. For example, consider the environment and circumstances from which the Rockville program evolved.

In 1974 the city began its first comprehensive training program of all 89 supervisory personnel. The program was funded with a \$5,000 federal Intergovernmental Personnel Act grant. The National Training and Development Service for State and Local Government (NTDS) helped the 89 city supervisors identify their needs and develop their own training agenda.

The following year, to avert a strike by the city's union employees, Rockville established cost savings task forces representing both labor and management. The task forces were charged with finding hard savings that would be shared on a 50-50 cash basis with the union employees. Some \$6,200 in savings was identified, and a modest amount of \$23.30 given to each employee.

Spurred on by this success, the city engaged NTDS in September 1976 to facilitate a Worker Incentive and Satisfaction Program aimed at improving organizational productivity. This program was funded with \$4,500 from the state of Maryland under the federal Intergovernmental Personnel Act.

And so began the Rockville productivity program.

### What Happened?

In September 1976, a task force of 15 employees and supervisors from the Public Works Department and the

Recreation and Parks Department met to discuss target opportunities for increased productivity. At the onset, it was anticipated that the task force would address only 3 or 4 target items. By the time the program was completed, however, the task force had successfully addressed 12 of the issues previously identified as target opportunities. Let's examine 2 of the most important ones: reducing absenteeism, and the 4-day work week.

### Reducing Absenteeism

Employee absenteeism and sick leave abuse concern most organizations, and Rockville was no exception. A special task force of management and union personnel reviewed this problem area and offered many suggestions. The city followed through on the following items.

- The city's policy of requiring a doctor's certificate to document illness was reaffirmed.
- Superintendents reviewed day-to-day work procedures to ensure consistency in all divisions. These procedures then were discussed with all employees.
- Demotion within grade for leave abuse was discussed with union representatives and will be considered as a disciplinary option in the future.
- The personnel director made available to the employees a list of available counseling resources ranging from psychiatric to marital counseling.

The task force's efforts combined with the serious discussions of leave abuse during the last 2 years of union negotiations have reduced sick leave usage and absenteeism by blue-collar workers 23.5 percent. This translates into 4,064 man-hours saved for \$21,873 in productivity savings.

### Experimental 4-Day Work Week

In the motor vehicle maintenance shop, Rockville began an *experimental* 4-day work week with 10-hour days to provide quicker and better servicing of the city's 195 vehicles.

Data collected during the first year of the experiment showed a productivity increase of 22.5 percent in the number of units serviced and a reduction of more than \$3,000 in overtime costs. The new 4-day schedule also gave the division an opportunity to conduct in-house training programs for the mechanics. Employee morale significantly increased within the division, as measured by survey research. Prior to the experiment, complaints from departments about the speed of vehicle service were averaging between two and three per week. These complaints were reduced to less than one per month during the experiment.

An interesting footnote to this productivity breakthrough is that the initial concept was pushed by a middle manager in the Public Works Department who has the reputation of being a no-nonsense, by-the-book supervisor. It was an idea that I, as assistant city manager, was not very interested in originally. But the productivity program gave this manager the chance to try out some of his ideas based on what he knew to be the needs of his division. And they worked.

### Union Perspective

The president of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local #1453, who represented Rockville's unionized employees on the productivity task force, made these comments about the program:

Several of the union members, stewards, and myself sat in on groups that were looking for ways to





*Productivity task forces like this targeted areas for productivity gains.*

Photo: Courtesy of the city of Rockville

save money for the city in order to reach a better negotiated settlement than what the city said it could afford.

We get very suspicious whenever management uses the term "productivity" because we think that what that can mean is more work and less pay. . . . There is just so much work a man can do in any one day. The nature of our work in the public works and recreation departments lends itself to limitations as to how much the human body can physically do in a given time.

The whole program was supposed to involve more than just "productivity." It was supposed to deal with workers and their problems. Problems and situations that could be improved while helping the city save money. The men could benefit as a result of their efforts. . . . We think we have some pretty good ideas on where money can be saved and how the job could be done better with the skilled employees that we have.

I would like to point out that it is very important in this type of a program to involve the men and that both the men and the city benefit as

a result of this effort. I don't think you can really do anything that will last very long unless the men are involved and know the reasons behind some of the changes that are made. If nothing else, you'd be surprised at how these sessions open up more communication between the union and management.

Based on what I have observed in the program, and based on what my fellow workers told me about the program, it has shown some success because the men participated in it and we would like to see the program extended.

## Management Perspective

The director of Recreation and Parks, who was also involved in the program, offered these views:

I was very anxious to explore the possibilities of the productivity program. This opportunity forced me to think of inefficient areas that existed in our department that needed help.

Our Park Maintenance Division is responsible for parks, city buildings, rights-of-way, street trees, bikeways, and stream valley maintenance.

These are important services to the community. But we were asked to take on increased responsibility without adding manpower. The only answer was to improve our productivity. The following are some examples of how we have reached our goal of higher productivity at a lower cost.

- The department purchased more mowing equipment and virtually eliminated trimming. This equipment was used on our rights-of-way and enabled our crews to mow more areas and to do the job better.
- The department used part-time summer help for \$2.50 per hour, assigned to specific park sites. This has cut the cost per site and improved appearance. For example, one summer employee now performs full-time the routine summer maintenance on the City Hall grounds whereas previously a crew of 6 maintained the area once a week.
- Regular meetings between our park superintendent and the 6 foremen have improved worker/management relations so that problems can be noted and discussed before their effects become critical. This has helped uplift morale.  
Still other benefits are occurring and we believe the program will help the department keep pace with the future.

## Phase 2

Based upon the initial success of the productivity program, Rockville decided in June 1978 to try the same

consultative approach with the rest of its work force, especially the non-unionized employees. This time, instead of meeting with a task force designed to represent the employees, management decided to meet with *all the employees* to describe the program and directly solicit productivity ideas and suggestions.

Four months into phase 2, nine seminars attended by more than 230 employees had been held. Approximately 25-30 employees from different departments attended each session. Each work group viewed a 14-minute slide show describing the initial productivity program, then discussed a printed handout on the current program's objectives, criteria, and ground rules. This handout consisted of the following:

- I. Objectives of Productivity 2
  - A. Direct cost savings (hard cash)
  - B. Indirect cost savings
  - C. Improved procedures
  - D. Improved morale (includes better working conditions)
  - E. Awareness of need for additional productivity and efficiency
- II. Criteria and Ground Rules
  - A. All suggestions reviewed with respective department head or supervisor based on:
    1. Feasibility
    2. Cost trade-offs (for example, examination of any additional capital investment; additional personnel costs, and so forth)
    3. Acceptance by both labor and management
  - B. No reduction in service quantity or quality
  - C. Hard savings are important (suggestion should generate actual cash)

## Review Process

Under "Criteria and Ground Rules," it is important to note that management was committed to reviewing all suggestions with the appropriate department head or supervisor. It was considered critical not to bypass the supervisory and departmental personnel. These people are paid to supervise, to manage, to get the job done. Top management did not want to be viewed as undercutting their role.

## Feasibility and Cost Trade-Offs

The feasibility of a suggestion is examined to determine whether it really can be implemented, or whether it is just a crazy idea.

There were some employee suggestions made to the effect that "if only I could hire two more people, I could save the city \$7,000 a year." This necessitated a review of the cost trade-offs. What does it cost to hire two people, with fringe benefits, with additional equipment, and so forth? Does the city make money or lose money? What is the pay-back on the city's investment?

## Acceptance by Labor and Management

In requiring that a productivity idea be acceptable to both labor and management, management demonstrated explicitly that the goal of the program was to get things done, to solve problems. Management did not want to create more problems through these suggestions—and certainly did not want to aggravate or anger a group of employees.

If someone came up with a brilliant idea that was unacceptable to labor or to management, that idea would be tabled, no ifs, ands, or buts about it.

## No Reduction in Service

The program mandate of no reduction in service quantity or quality placed an additional constraint on the employees' productivity suggestions.





*Cash savings from productivity gains are split by the city and the workers.*

Photo: Courtesy of the city of Rockville

But again, this constraint was in the open for everyone to see.

For example, the city could save money by cutting grass in the parks once every 10 days instead of once every 5 days. However, that definitely would reduce the service quality that has been established through the annual program budget.

The city also could save significant dollars if the twice-a-week backyard

refuse collection service were changed to once-a-week curbside pickup. However, that would deviate from a deliberate city policy decision. Therefore, such a suggestion would not fall within the scope of this program.

In discussing these criteria and ground rules with the employees, no negative attitudes were expressed toward the constraints put on the program. Probably this was because our approach was extremely forth-

right and everyone understood the reasoning behind the constraints. In other words, everyone knew the rules of the game going into it. The importance of that cannot be overstated.

#### **Employee Reaction**

What resulted from this approach? There was terrific feedback from the employees! They all appreciated having the opportunity to sit down with top management to discuss their



This auto mechanic works a 4-day week. Photo: Courtesy of the city of Rockville

ideas. It was a chance to expurgate the "if only the city would" feeling out of everyone's system. The 9 sessions generated 249 suggestions, with little duplication.

Not only were the sessions great opportunities to elicit solid productivity ideas from the employees, they also provided a chance for me, as assistant city manager, to discuss city policy with the employees. One of the basic ground rules that I followed in these sessions was listing every idea that employees wished to bring up. There were no names attached to any of the suggestions. When particular items came up which represented an opportunity to comment on city policy or to provide some back-

ground, I did so. I tried to be as objective as possible. Given some of the suggestions and the context in which they were delivered, it was sometimes difficult not to become defensive or to show irritation. I felt it was critical to be receptive to each idea; yet, I had to correct misstatements or provide additional factual background when it seemed appropriate. Here are two examples of how this worked.

#### **Employee Evaluation Form and Increased Office Space**

One item that came up five or six times was a criticism of the employee evaluation form, which is used periodically to assess each employee's performance. I accepted the com-

ments as given and listed them on the chart sheets. But I used these criticisms of the form to provide some background on the situation. I responded by saying that many of the problems suggested *might* be true, and it might well be time to revise the evaluation form. Yet, I pointed out that, incredible as it might sound, many organizations have *no* system of evaluating employee performance. That means employees can literally work for years without any real feedback from their supervisors as to their performance—good or bad.

I reiterated our organizational posture, which believes it is critical for an employee to know how the supervisor feels about him or her. I observed that even if all of the criticisms leveled against the evaluation form were correct, at least the form required supervisors to sit down twice a year with each employee and comment on job performance. Now, obviously, the supervisor can beat around the bush, not be honest with the employee, or in some other fashion short-circuit the process. But that is an item that management must deal with in supervisory training and supervisory evaluations. At least *the process is there* for employees to receive formal feedback on how they are doing. My comments, which established this background on the evaluation form, were understood, and I believe appreciated. My comments in no way invalidated the critiques leveled against the evaluation form; they merely put those critiques in a larger context.

The second item that continually arose was the need for more employee space. For years city employees have worked in cramped office conditions; presently they are scattered at six different sites. Thus, when the productivity suggestion was made that the city could save money and increase employee efficiency by providing rea-





*Representatives of the union and management successfully complete negotiations.* Photo: Courtesy of the city of Rockville

sonable office space in one location, I could point out that the city was indeed funding an addition to the City Hall. This addition will consolidate all city offices into one location and provide reasonable office space. This information was appreciated by many of the employees who had not been aware of it.

In summary, the information exchange process that resulted from the productivity discussion presented a set of payoffs that, alone, contributed to better employee morale.

There were two possible dangers inherent in this approach of meeting with employees. First, it is easy for this type of meeting to degenerate into a gripe session. There was a ten-

dency for this to happen when many of the employees in a work session were from the same department. Secondly, there was the possibility of a "planted agenda" where several employees might get together and push for the same item, that item being something of particular interest to them. However, the payoffs derived from these meetings with the employees were far greater than these potential drawbacks.

#### **How Productivity Items Were Analyzed**

The productivity suggestions made by the employees were checked out by administrative interns in the city manager's office. These interns are

graduate students at area universities who are enrolled in masters of public administration programs and have an interest in becoming municipal managers. For \$3.75 an hour, they performed mini cost/benefit analyses of each suggestion under the supervision of the assistant city manager.

The interns attended the sessions with the employees so that they would understand the context in which the various suggestions were made. Work meetings were held with the interns to make assignments and to refer them to the appropriate people for checking out each suggestion. These meetings also helped the interns acquire a managerial perspective on these issues.

These young professionals performed a real service for the organization because they approached each job with an energy and enthusiasm seldom found in someone who has been around awhile. Although management retained final review over all recommendations that were made, the graduate students did such a good job on the mini cost/benefit analyses that few recommendations were overruled.

A breakdown of the 109 analyses made within 6 months of program initiation showed that the city was able to implement quickly about 25 percent of the productivity suggestions; management already was taking action on another 25 percent of the items; and about 35 percent of the suggestions were rejected. The other productivity suggestions remained under consideration.

The following charts show some of the productivity ideas generated by the employees during the work sessions and the type of payoff projected for the city by each idea.

	Direct Cost	Indirect Cost	Procedures	Morale
Implemented				
Graphics form revision	X	X	X	
Employee handbook update			X	X
Supervisory training program			X	X
Resolution of refuse collection problems			X	X
a) cans not accessible				
b) residents put some refuse at curb, some at house				
c) commercial grass cutting				
	Direct Cost	Indirect Cost	Procedures	Morale
Future Implementation				
Train secretaries in typewriter care	maybe		X	X
Orientation on purchasing forms		maybe	X	X
Senior staff meet with purchasing agent			X	X
Update evaluation form			X	X
Let men contribute to equipment specs			X	X
Salesmen discuss products with men			X	X
	Direct Cash	Indirect Cash	Procedures	Morale
Already Being Done				
Floating secretary			X	
Better janitorial service				X
Wheelchair access at Community Resources			X	
Need map showing city buildings			X	
Examine quantity of recreation flyers	X	X		
Personnel Procedures Manual update			X	X





*Union President and Assistant City Manager reach contract agreement.*

Photo: Courtesy of the city of Rockville

### **The Inside Scoop—From the Assistant City Manager**

Three crucial elements of the Rockville productivity story warrant explicit explanation.

- *Productivity, in the Rockville fashion, is a real opportunity to communicate with employees on a practical level about their work situation. This is not a forced “organizational development” type of discussion. Rather, it is a nitty-gritty, down-to-earth discussion about the day-to-day activities of*

the employees and about how money could be saved by people working smarter, if not harder. From my own experience in these discussions, I state flatly and unequivocally that you, as a manager or a supervisor, will come away with more insight about the job that is going on out there—no matter how many years you have been working with a particular division or work unit.

- *The Rockville process provides an opportunity for managers at all levels to try some things that or-*

*dinarily might be a little risky. This is your chance to experiment. You can try out some things ordinarily not permitted without numerous clearances from above. Without being too cynical, this means you can roll out the agenda you have been saving for years. You can now institute that change, try out that new approach to the work activity that was previously considered a little bit risky—all by calling it a productivity experiment. The employees, likewise, may take this advantage to suggest that the organi-*

zation try out some things that heretofore may have been looked upon with a jaundiced eye. That brings us to the next point.

- *Be comfortable that you are not giving the shop away and you will not give the shop away.* Top management always retains at least a veto over what items the organization will or will not try. You always control the agenda, and you are in the driver's seat as the decisionmaker for the organization. Consultation with the employees in no way diminishes the final decisionmaking authority that management *can and should retain at all times.*

We really did not know the results of the productivity effort until near the end when we tallied up the numbers. You cannot assess the situation properly until there has been enough time and experience for the numbers to come in. Frankly, we were surprised at our success. Most of the productivity literature indicates that this is a fairly common experience in productivity efforts. The Rockville productivity story is not a story of one success after another. It is rather a story of an array of activities, involving the employees, set into motion under the umbrella of productivity.

A recent special newsletter of the National League of Cities on productivity set realistic expectations for these efforts nationwide:

Interestingly, few dramatic successes are claimed to result from productivity programs. On the other hand, even failures seem to have some positive results. Most efforts show savings or at least leveling off of expenditures. Improved management and decision-making systems frequently are cited as outcomes. Approaching a productivity program as a panacea is bound to be a disillusioning experience. Yet a well-managed productivity program, which includes a measurement system, appears to be one of the most hopeful ways of dealing with the demands for high quality service at low cost that are placed on local governments today.

The Rockville productivity program had modest results. The hard dollars, the direct savings were not that big. The Rockville program is not a story about New York City saving \$7 million as a result of a time/motion study or a significant technological breakthrough. However, *this modest success is the strength of the Rockville productivity program for most organizations, especially smaller organizations.* These organizations can relate to Rockville's size and to Rockville's process; they will not be intimidated by this kind of "productivity." Therefore, they are more likely to try the productivity process out for their own situation.

That is why the real strength of the Rockville productivity story is the *process*. Anyone can use this approach, which is open-ended and very simple. Your needs and opportunities will be just that, yours, not Rockville's. You can't imitate our productivity items, but you can imitate our process.

#### **What is Different about the Rockville Program?**

In the past decade, cities and counties have utilized a variety of methods to improve productivity. The *Guide to Management Improvement Projects*, prepared by the International City Management Association, lists a number of productivity improvements that have been tried across the country.

Many of these projects are applications of technology; for example, data processing, mechanized refuse collection, solid waste recycling, new paving materials, and modifications to fire-fighting vehicles. Other productivity improvements have involved employee incentives, training programs, work scheduling, performance auditing, and industrial engineering. Rockville's productivity program differed from these efforts in other cities in several ways:

- The program was comprehensive. Phase 2 covered *all* city departments, rather than concentrating on one aspect of city services.
- Employees were the source of productivity ideas. Rockville's program

was built on the philosophy that employees are the "experts" in their work situations. Given the opportunity, workers can develop their own ideas for productivity improvements and will, therefore, be receptive to the ensuing changes.

- The program brought employees and management together in an atmosphere of free and open discussion.

#### **Why Productivity Makes Sense**

Whether or not the Rockville productivity process is right for you and your organization, productivity does make good fiscal sense. We all are looking for ways to save dollars. In this era of post-Proposition 13 activities, productivity may be a necessity rather than a luxury.

Productivity also makes good political sense. Elected officials like it, and it sells well to the public. Productivity by means of the Rockville process can and should improve labor-management relations. Those of us in municipal managerial positions tend to take for granted our opportunity to influence our own job situations, city policy, and the allocations of resources among community activities. Other people are no different; they, too, like to have some say over their jobs. They, too, appreciate the opportunity to express their ideas about how their job could be made easier, more productive, or less wasteful. These kinds of productivity discussions with the employees can have big payoffs for the agencies.

Through Rockville's productivity program, dollars were saved for the city. Improved procedures and better morale resulted. From our perspective, inside the project, it seems like a modest success. Maybe, though, the project assumes even more significance, if we can share the lessons that we learned from this process with you.

*Daniel G. Hobbs is Assistant City Manager of Rockville, Maryland.*



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Management and Operations with TRENDS

1976

o. 1	Maintenance	Received
o. 2	Camping	
o. 3	Scientific Research Emphasis	OCT 05 1981
o. 4	Innovative Financing	

1977

o. 1	Historic Preservation	
o. 2	Natural Resource Management	
o. 3	Public Involvement Emphasis	
o. 4	Arts in the Park	

DOCUMENTS  
UGA LIBRARIES

1978

o. 1	Trends in Park Management	
o. 2	Serving Special Populations	
o. 3	Medley of Summer Concerns/Opportunities	
o. 4	Urban Park and Recreation Opportunities	

1979

o. 1	Energy Conservation and Environmental Education	
o. 2	Rivers and Trails	
o. 3	What's New in State Parks?	
o. 4	Law Enforcement and the Park Mission	

1980

o. 1	Safety and Occupational Health	
o. 2	Partnerships for Survival	
o. 3	The Park and Recreation Employee	
o. 4	Vegetation Management	

1981

o. 1	Water-based Recreation	
o. 2	Coping with Cutbacks	

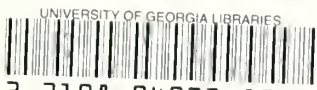
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