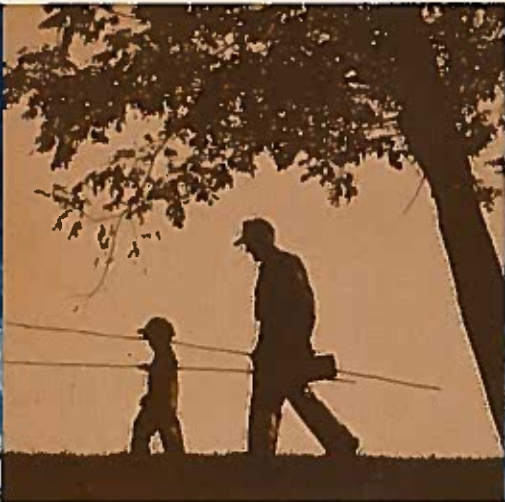

Outdoor Recreation in America: An Agenda for the Clinton-Gore Administration



The Recreation Roundtable
“Recreation is everyone’s interest”

“Our public lands

are some of America’s greatest natural assets.

America’s public land managers face a huge backlog of maintenance and repair – trails have eroded and camping facilities, picnic areas, and boat ramps have fallen into disrepair.

I support a new civilian conservation corps, as a low-cost way to restore infrastructure on public lands, while inspiring civic pride and responsibility.

I would also make funds available from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to help address critical infrastructure needs in state and local facilities. Finally, I would work to ensure appropriate access to public lands.”

**President Bill Clinton
Times Mirror Magazines
Voters’ Guide to Environmental Issues**





THE RECREATION ROUNDTABLE
"Recreation isn't a special interest; it's everyone's interest!"

February 15, 1993

The Honorable Bill Clinton
President of the United States of America
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The Recreation Roundtable congratulates you on your election as the President of the United States and wishes you a very successful tenure. It is fitting that this letter is dated February 15, the day we celebrate Presidents Washington and Lincoln. Many of us across this country believe that your administration is in a position to exercise leadership similar to that exhibited by these fathers of our country.

But you face many challenges. Throughout your campaign we were heartened by your pledges in support of outdoor recreation and natural resource conservation. To follow through requires a great deal of creativity, energy and the use of public/private partnerships. This document presents our suggestions of relatively simple ways your administration can move forward on your agenda of natural resource conservation and the promotion of outdoor recreation opportunities on public land, with minimal fiscal impact.

As you may know, recreation generates more than \$300 billion annually in economic activity and provides employment in factories and retail stores, at destination recreation sites and at magazines in New York City. Therefore, implementation of these recommendations will result in substantive economic gains as well as progress toward natural resource conservation.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with your staff to discuss any or all of these topics further, and we look forward to working with you on our many issues of mutual interest.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Nunis
Chairman

Fact Sheet

A Roundtable for the chief executive officers of leading recreation companies was first proposed by industry executives serving on the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors in 1986. Commissioners Sheldon Coleman, Rex Maughan and Stu Northrop saw an acute need for a forum to discuss key issues among the most forward-thinking leaders of the \$300 billion per annum recreation industry. They felt the recreation industry was poorly understood in Washington and on Wall Street, and agreed that all companies involved with recreation had a shared interest in four factors:

- people and their changing leisure needs;
- places for recreation;
- products used for recreation; and
- government actions influencing recreation opportunities.

In the fall of 1988, Sheldon Coleman's son, Sheldon C. Coleman, and Dick Nunis of Disney invited a select group of their peers in the recreation industry to join the Recreation Roundtable. Eighteen of the recreation industry's top level executives enthusiastically responded to the invitation, and the group met for the first time in January 1989.

Roundtable members represent a broad range of interests indicative of the diverse recreation activities enjoyed by Americans. Dick Nunis currently serves as Chairman of the Roundtable and Harry Shaw of Huff Corporation serves as the Vice Chairman.

The group agreed to a broad goal of developing strategies to enhance recreation opportunities in America. Roundtable members will select one or two topical areas each year for concerted, collective efforts. Currently Roundtable task forces are examining recreation information systems, international marketing of U.S. recreation opportunities and the America the Beautiful Passport.

The Recreation Roundtable meets twice annually. Its winter meeting is a three day retreat. Selected guests are invited to join the discussions. The Roundtable also holds a meeting in Washington, D. C., meeting with key Congressional and Administration officials on such Roundtable issues as liability, partnerships, scenic byways and energy policies.

Wallop-Breaux Trust Fund

Brief Description.

This user-funded trust account provides federal assistance to state programs that:

- (1) enhance access to public waters for boaters and fishermen;
- (2) conduct fisheries research;
- (3) restore coastal wetlands;
- (4) provide aquatic resources education for America's youth;
- (5) improve boating safety;
- (6) manage human wastes generated through recreational boating; and
- (7) enhance fish habitat.

The fund is officially named the Aquatic Resources Trust Fund and was created in 1984 through amendments to the Sport Fish Restoration Act (popularly known as the Dingell-Johnson Fund). Since 1984, assistance provided through the account has grown from \$30 million annually to approximately \$300 million annually.

Funding is generated through: (1) a 10% federal excise tax on all fishing equipment at the manufacturer/importer level; (2) federal excise tax collected on sales of recreational motorboat fuels, transferred from the Highway Trust Fund; and (3) assorted other special taxes and duties.

The accomplishments of this program are found in every Congressional district and are reported by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by geographic area, project type and project status.

Wallop-Breaux is of crucial importance to state fisheries and boating safety programs. States receive, on average, some \$5,000,000 annually; these funds are matched by state fishing license, boat registration and motorboat fuel receipts. Increasing pressures on the nation's waters threaten the nation's fisheries and cause safety problems. Boating fatalities constitute the second-largest number of transportation-related deaths.

Several amendments to Wallop-Breaux have been made since 1984, including amendments in October 1992. The most recent amendments increased funding for boating safety, created a new, merit-based grants program to help reduce localized water quality problems caused by recreational boating and allowed the states additional time to spend monies on projects requiring federal permits. Senator John Breaux has announced plans to conduct an oversight hearing on the program in 1993, focusing both on the fund's accomplishments and the long-term needs of America's aquatic resources. The hearing is also likely to consider any recommendations offered by the General Accounting Office in its study of the fund's administration, a study requested by the leadership of the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee.

Action Recommended

Strong endorsement of the program and incorporation into FY1994 and subsequent budgets without any caps, limitations or diversions. Supportive testimony at oversight hearings before the Senate Finance Committee and a commitment to improved management of the program, including elevation of program responsibility to an Assistant Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Fiscal Impact

Wallop-Breaux is a true trust fund, using specialized revenues for specific purposes. Generally, revenues accrue for one year prior to allocation to the states under an automatic appropriations provision. A portion of the fund revenues (6%) is allocated to the Department of the Interior for administration of the grants. Additional monies, currently \$35 million annually, are available for appropriation to fund recreational boating services furnished by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Key Beneficiaries

Over 75 million Americans go fishing and boating. State fish and game agencies are the primary recipients of the funds. Program constituency is centered in the American League of Anglers and Boaters, a coalition of 35 organizations including Trout Unlimited, BOAT/U.S., National Wildlife Federation, International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Times Mirror Magazines, B.A.S.S., the American Fishing Tackle Manufacturers Association and the Izaak Walton League of America.

For Further Information

American League of Anglers and Boaters (Veronica Floyd) - 703-960-2320

Senator John Breaux (Marcia Jones, Legislative Director) - 202-224-4623

U.S. House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries (Lee Crockett) - 202-226-3500

Scenic Byways

Brief Description

In 1987, the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors recommended a coordinated federal/state/private effort to identify, protect and enhance roads and corridors offering outstanding scenic, recreational and cultural opportunities. Responses were strong and positive. The Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management quickly initiated partnership-based byways programs which now include 111 and 52 routes, respectively. All of these routes involve existing roads along which signs, interpretive facilities and recreation access have been added.

Similar prompt responses occurred in more than a dozen states. Typically, state programs involve an interagency committee created by the governor and include transportation, tourism, economic development and land management agencies to designate, map, mark, promote and operate byways systems.

In 1989, the Congress adopted language offered by Senator Jay Rockefeller and Representative Jim Oberstar requiring the Department of Transportation to develop a plan for a national scenic byways program. The plan was submitted in early 1991 and was used by the Congress in the development of a National Scenic Byways Program component of ISTEA, the \$153 billion surface transportation measure signed into law in late 1991. Under ISTEA, both an interim and a permanent scenic byways program were established with a total of \$80 million in categorical grants for such projects as interpretive kiosks and parking areas, passing zones and wider shoulders to facilitate bicycle use, improved access to recreation and cultural features and corridor landscaping and scenic easements, as well as development of state scenic byways programs. Initial grants were made in October 1992; applications for FY1993 funds are due by February 1993. The act also created a 17-member national advisory committee.

Recreational travel is estimated to constitute 20% of all vehicular trips; 80% of all vacation travel is by roads. Driving for pleasure, in fact, ranks at the top of the list of recreational choices in America — and has for more than a generation. Much of this travel is not well suited to interstate highways, where roads are built to be straight and flat and travel is intended to be rapid. Byways also offer important opportunities to aid economic diversification in rural America, where both great values and great opportunities can be found. Finally, byways provide an incentive for communities and state government to work together to shape growth so that important natural and cultural resources are protected.

Among the most exciting opportunities underway is the creation of new, high visibility tourism corridors around scenic byways. The new Trail of the Great Bear (in Wyoming, Montana and Alberta) and the Pacific Coast Parkway (in Washington, Oregon and California) are leading examples. In these and similar cases, communities and attractions which might never acquire regional or national visibility can lure national and even international travellers by combining to create a significant tourism draw.


Action Recommended

Strong endorsement of the program and incorporation into FY1994 budget without any caps, limitations or diversions. Support for technical corrections to the 1991 act.

Fiscal Impact

Scenic byways grants are paid from the Highway Trust Fund, which receives federal excise taxes paid on motorfuel. Funding for scenic byways grants is provided under the ISTEA contract spending authority adopted by Congress in 1991.

Key Beneficiaries

Recreation, tourism, environmental, economic development and historic preservation interests all support scenic byways. These interests work cooperatively through the Scenic Byways Coalition, comprised of more than three dozen diverse organizations. The coalition has organized three national conferences, produced a video explaining the scenic byways movement and publishes a scenic byways newsletter. A 1993 national scenic byways conference is planned for late spring or early summer in the Washington, D.C., area.

For Further Information

Scenic Byways Coalition (Mary Suchenski) - 202-662-7420

Take Pride in America

Brief Description

Take Pride in America was created in 1985 to increase awareness of all Americans about the shared wealth of our public lands, to encourage responsible use of those lands and to stimulate volunteerism on the lands. The program has been a great success and was institutionalized by statute in 1990. Approximately 100 Take Pride in America efforts are selected as national winners each year, receiving awards at a July ceremony in Washington at the White House. All 50 states have component award programs (i.e., Take Pride in Arkansas), with state finalists comprising the national pool of 1,200 nominees for the awards. The winning efforts alone account for millions of hours of volunteered time and dollars invested in our nation's parks, forests, refuges and other public sites. Winners are also feted each year at a reception co-sponsored by The Nashville Network and the American Recreation Coalition.

Take Pride in America has an active public awareness campaign. Begun in 1986 with celebrity spokesmen Clint Eastwood, Lou Gossett and Charles Bronson as a national Ad Council effort, the campaign has more recently gained the efforts of Linda Evans and ALF. A new national PSA campaign is scheduled to begin in early 1993.

In 1990, a Take Pride in America Advisory Board was created to strengthen the existing program. Its 24 members, plus ex-officio members from each state, have recommended new outreach and education efforts, revisions to the awards program and more than doubling the available financial resources. These dollars are proposed to come from enlisting private sector partners to undertake urban park site clean-ups across the nation during National Take Pride in America Month (May); training sessions for state TPIA coordinators; and a clearinghouse to provide step-by-step information on organizing TPIA projects and to direct willing volunteers to good projects.

The program has an unusual and broad legislative authority which allows it to solicit and receive contributions. Few contributions have been received to date, however, because guidelines for allowable gifts have not yet been issued. Interior's solicitors have sought to insulate the Secretary from any appearances of impropriety involving contributions from corporations and individuals subject to Interior regulation.

Action Recommended

Strong personal involvement with the program by President Clinton and Secretary Babbitt, continuation of existing staffing and funding and full implementation of the recommendations of the TPIA advisory board. Prompt issuance of guidelines covering acceptable gifts.


Fiscal Impact

No augmented federal spending; program can grow significantly through use of special gift authority provided under the 1990 Take Pride in America Act.

Key Beneficiaries

Federal, state and local park and recreation agencies (through reduced vandalism and increased volunteer support), the White House and participating governors, visitors to public park and recreation sites and the volunteers themselves.

For Further Information

Executive Director, Take Pride in America - 202-208-3726

Public Access to Public Lands

Brief Description

The General Accounting Office (GAO), at the request of Congressman Bruce Vento, the Chairman of the Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands, has released a study of the extent and effects of blocked public access to public lands. The GAO found that 50.4 million acres, or about 14 percent, of Forest Service and BLM land in the contiguous United States has blocked public access. This area is about the size of Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, Delaware, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont added together. Imagine 22 Yellowstone National Parks being off-limits to the public, and you can understand the consequences of 50.4 million acres of blocked public access.

The GAO has documented losses of fishing, hiking, hunting, off-road vehicle use, mountain biking, camping and pleasure-driving opportunities. Construction, trail and road maintenance and wildlife habitat management by the public agencies are also impacted due to blocked public access. Not only is use blocked, but the natural resources on the property deteriorate due to an inability of the public agencies to manage the lands.

The biggest problems are in Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah and Wyoming. But the problem is not just something westerners should be worried about. Anyone who travels west for outdoor recreation is impacted. And, with outdoor recreation the \$300 billion industry it is, jobs are affected everywhere.

Action Recommended

The key to solving the access dilemma is to elevate the level of concern about the issue among the Administration and the Congress. The agencies have the needed authority and tools to solve the problems, but they need to be directed to use them and given the resources to carry out the programs. Three primary solutions exist:

- 1) According to the Public Lands Access Association, Inc., 80 percent of all blocked public access are situations where legal access already exists. Legal resources devoted to documenting and defending existing access rights would have a large payback to the public.
- 2) Presently, the primary method the agencies use to enhance access is to acquire right-of-way easements, a preferable approach to condemnation. Such easement acquisitions should be made a separate line-item in the Forest Service and BLM budgets, with special emphasis on problem areas such as Montana where access problems are particularly severe.

3) Some private land passes through public ownership when there are defaults on federal loans such as those through the Farmers Home Administration. Rarely does the lending agency place easements on the land to provide public access prior to resale. This solution, without a direct cost to the U.S. Treasury, should become standard operating procedure as an easy to implement approach to increasing the public's ability to use its land.

Congress needs to focus on this problem. Oversight hearings on the GAO report is a good first step. Such hearings should be used to emphasize that the BLM and Forest Service maintain an innovative public access program to acquire and defend public rights, while mitigating private landowner concerns through improved public education about responsible outdoor behavior.

Fiscal Impact

An appropriation of \$25.0 million each to the BLM and Forest Service lands offices for easement acquisition is needed. Presently, the Forest Service spends \$4.0 million a year and BLM spends \$1.5 million annually. The GAO and Forest Service have documented that to solve the problem on National Forests will require the acquisition or documentation of 28,000 easements. Presently, about 350 are acquired each year. The timeframe to accomplish this acquisition in a cost-effective manner is the next ten years since beyond that period the costs will escalate. To solve the problem on National Forests, at the present cost per easement, will require about \$25 million a year. A similar estimate is assumed for the BLM.

The costs could be reduced by reassigning existing staff to document where easements already exist. As determined by the Public Lands Access Association, most access problems could be resolved by documenting where legal access already exists.

Key Beneficiaries

Outdoor recreation users of public lands, resource managers.

For Further Information

Times Mirror Magazines Conservation Council, 202-467-4949

Challenge Cost-Share Agreements in Recreation and Wildlife

Brief Description

An innovative way to leverage federal funding to accomplish recreation and wildlife projects already contained in approved federal land management plans (chiefly Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service) requires non-federal partners to provide at least 50% of the project cost, either in cash, real property and materials or skilled services (such as architectural and legal services). While welcomed, volunteered labor is generally not allowed as a match because of difficulties in accounting and valuation. The program allows the public, which has participated in federal land use planning processes, to become involved in converting agreed-upon plans into reality much more promptly than through the normal agency project funding process. Public support for the program has been so strong that most projects receive more than \$2 in non-federal funding for every \$1 in appropriated monies. The program was initiated in FY1987 and has grown every year in diversity, numbers of projects and partners and Congressional support.

Projects funded under the Challenge Cost-Share Programs have ranged from restoration of historic buildings on national forests to reversal of stream channelization and wetland restoration, from new trails for mountain biking in Colorado to handicapped fishing access piers in Arizona. The Challenge Cost-Share Program was expanded by the 102nd Congress to cover the National Park Service through the FY1993 appropriations measure, but still remains without legislative authorization. Authorizing legislation could help remove a lingering concern that this highly successful program might actually prompt reductions in traditional appropriated funds, premised upon the belief that partners would add the necessary dollars to offset the reduction, and that important recreation and wildlife projects where cost-sharing was either not feasible or inappropriate would not be undertaken simply because they required 100% federal funding.

The underlying concept of Challenge Cost-Share Agreements is similar to that involving the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the National Forest Foundation: that innovative partnerships can often accomplish tasks better, at a lower cost and with greater public support than traditional governmental programs.

Action Recommended

Strong endorsement of the program and incorporation into FY1994 budget. Support for legislation authorizing this program. A commitment to regard the Challenge Cost-Share Program as supplemental to, and not a substitute for, traditional appropriations.

Fiscal Impact

Existing spending — incremental changes between \$5 and \$20 million per annum. Further, the matching dollar requirements actually reduce federal investments needed to implement approved land management plans by at least 50%. The program's matching funds have grown considerably: in FY88, \$3.1 million from the Forest Service was matched by \$5.5 million from private sector partners; in FY89, \$9.4 million from the Forest Service was matched by \$16.4 million from partners; in FY90, \$15.4 million from the Forest Service was matched by \$25.1 million from partners; and in FY91, the Forest Service's funding of \$21.8 million was matched by \$44.4 million from partners.

Key Beneficiaries

Conservation, recreation plus historic preservation organizations.

For Further Information

Forest Service/USDA, Recreation Staff (Lyle Laverty) - 202-205-1706

National Recreational Trails Fund

Brief Description

Trail-based activities are among the fastest growing recreational activities in America today. Traditional activities — walking, hiking, horseback riding — are rising in popularity and have been joined by new activities such as mountain biking and snowmobiling. America's trail network, in contrast, has remained largely static, and important components — such as the trail system on our national forests — have declined in quality and dimension due to inadequate funding.

A broad coalition of the nation's trails community responded to this challenge by proposing the transfer of certain federal motorfuel excise taxes — those collected on fuel used in motorized trails activities and certain other off-road recreational uses — to a new trails fund. The fund was successfully incorporated into the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 with an authorization of \$30 million annually through FY1997. Initial funding of \$7.5 million was appropriated for FY1993. The monies are distributed among the states. The legislation further establishes a national trails advisory committee and requires states to take certain actions to remain eligible for the funds, including creation of state trails advisory boards and increased funding for trails. A study of fuel taxes attributable to non-highway recreational activities is also required, and will likely be underway by late 1993.

The new law is not designed as a panacea for trails; rather, it is one tool which can help to bring demand and supply into better balance. It is especially useful as a “partnership builder”; specifically, the legislation was designed to bring about increased cooperation and unity within the trails community. Although conflicts between trail enthusiasts do occur in some areas, the conflicts are largely attributable to inadequate trails opportunities and inadequate information about alternatives. The program also encourages innovative trail management, including separation of incompatible uses by day or time, and/or through distinct treadways within a single corridor.

The new trails program is administered by the Federal Highway Administration, in consultation with the Department of the Interior. The national advisory committee has begun its work.

Action Recommended

Full funding of the trails program at \$30 million for FY1994 and support for necessary technical amendments to the existing legislation.


Fiscal Impact

Funds for the trails assistance program were included in the \$151 billion ISTEA authorization and were originally intended to be under the contract authority provisions of the measure. Actual estimates of the federal excise tax collected on non-highway recreational use of motorfuels is estimated to exceed \$80 million annually — far more than the amount transferred from the Highway Trust Fund.

Key Beneficiaries

Hiking, bicycling, equestrian, snowmobiling, off-road motorcycling, cross-country skiing and other interests are very supportive of this program. More than two dozen key trail organizations supporting the program have organized as the Coalition for Recreational Trails (CRT). CRT is currently producing a videotape explaining the program. State trails programs are also eager to receive federal assistance, especially for maintenance purposes.

For Further Information

Coalition for Recreational Trails - 703-273-9606

America the Beautiful Passport

Brief Description

Legislation was introduced in the 102nd Congress to establish an America the Beautiful Passport which would furnish information about the national systems of parks, forests, refuges, rivers, trails, wilderness and other lands available for recreational enjoyment. The passport would be approximately 40 pages and a size comparable to a U.S. passport. It would contain maps, key telephone numbers and addresses, explanations of the various federal land systems and tips on responsible use of public lands. The legislation was the subject of hearings before House and Senate committees, but no final action was taken. Reintroduction is anticipated in the 103rd Congress. The passport would replace the Golden Eagle Pass, created in 1965 under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, which allows unlimited access to federal recreation sites for a single annual charge. Poor promotion and other factors have resulted in disappointing levels of sales of the Pass — just over 100,000 per annum. In contrast, national surveys by The Roper Organization and by Peter Hart and Associates indicate that sales of 3 million+ annually of the new passport are possible.

The objectives of the proposed passport are:

- to provide Americans and international visitors with improved information about lesser-visited federal recreation sites, and to ensure closer correlation between visitor expectations and their experiences by directing visits to those sites offering the opportunities and experiences sought;
- to enable the public to make a real and visible contribution to quality management of our shared outdoors legacy through augmented financial resources; and
- to link American companies providing recreational goods and services to the public with federal land managing agencies.

As proposed, the passport would be offered through such companies as L.L. Bean for \$30, as well as through federal agencies such as the National Park Service. All proceeds from private sales, minus a maximum of 10% to cover costs, would be deposited into a special account to fund interpretive facility and resource protection projects under the Challenge Cost-Share Program. Federal agency sales proceeds would be retained by the agency.

Action Recommended

Inclusion of the America the Beautiful Passport proposal in the Administration's legislative recommendations and subsequent support at Congressional hearings.


Fiscal Impact

We estimate that private sales of the passport can total one million in the first year of sales and nearly three million by the third year. The result would be an estimated net increase in receipts, after deducting decreased daily entrance fee collections, of \$55 million annually — an amount which would be doubled (or more) under the Challenge Cost-Share Program provisions.

Key Beneficiaries

Federal land managing agencies (National Park Service, Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). Public land users.

For Further Information

American Recreation Coalition (Derrick Crandall) - 202-662-7420

Luring International Visitors to America's Great Outdoors

Brief Description

America's Great Outdoors is already a powerful magnet for domestic and international visitors. Yet its potential is far greater — and can help bring dollars to communities across the nation and reduce the trade deficit. Simply stated, we have the world's best and most diverse national parks, forests and wildlife refuges.

Moreover, the diversity and quality of recreational activities possible in America exceeds those available in any other single nation.

U.S. efforts to attract international visitors are primarily by the airlines, hotel companies and destination resorts like Disney. Some states and cities have also become very active. The U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration (USTTA) is a contributing factor. Generally speaking, our cities are much more effectively marketed abroad than our Great Outdoors — largely because the recreation providers in the Great Outdoors are largely federal agencies like the National Park Service and small businesses like campgrounds and guide services. These interests are unable to be active in promotion of their offerings to the international market, whether by law or economics.

The United States should mount a very successful campaign to attract additional international visitors because of the convergence of short-term and long-term factors. Presently, U.S. vacations are very economical because of the valuation of the dollar relative to other currencies. Moreover, interest in the U.S. has been fueled by the dramatic increases in democracies around the world and the recent U.S. elections, which demonstrated how committed we are to peaceful changes in government. Longer-term, the U.S. has a blend of natural and cultural attractions which can be honed and utilized: our wide open spaces; our watchable wildlife; our "cowboys and Indians" lore; our rivers and mountains.

One of the most efficient ways to attract visitors would be through the use of widely recognized U.S. individuals: musical stars, actors, political leaders such as President Clinton. American music, television and movies reach virtually every community around the world. Media such as the CNN, MTV and Country Music TV networks could be utilized cost effectively to raise interest; USTTA leadership would be needed to galvanize the U.S. tourism and recreation industries to convert interest into visits.

Action Recommended

The new Under Secretary of Commerce for Travel and Tourism should be charged with the creation and implementation of an immediate campaign to attract international visitors to America from June 1, 1993, to December 31, 1994, and to integrate existing tourism/recreation information and marketing efforts. To help achieve a goal of increasing international vacationers, the USTTA budget should be increased by \$20,000,000 to allow cooperative promotions and related activities — an investment which will be recovered through spending by additional visitors.


Fiscal Impact

Increase in USTTA appropriations above FY1993 by approximately \$20,000,000, and continued additional funding if the program is successful.

Key Beneficiaries

Businesses in the travel and tourism and recreation businesses; U.S. economy, from reduction in balance of trade deficit; rural economies.

For Further Information

Travel and Tourism Government Affairs Council (Aubrey King) - 202-293-5407

Federal Assistance to Local Recreation and Conservation Efforts

Brief Description

It is time for important modifications to the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965. The act presently provides for use of up to \$1 billion annually in federal receipts earned through the sale of Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas resources to purchase additions to federal land systems (national parks, refuges, forests, etc.) and to provide financial assistance (matching grants) to state and local governments for parkland acquisition and selected recreational facility developments. Overall, funding for the program has decreased by more than 50% since FY1979. Funding for assistance to state and local efforts has decreased the most. Yet the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors report in 1987 described state and local efforts as the highest priority for activities designed to meet national outdoor recreation needs.

President Clinton has expressed support for the fund, and his support comes at a crucial time since the Congress has begun to address the need for changes to the fund. The shape of the changes is critical. There are some who argue for merely returning the program to its 1970's heyday, ignoring the fact that the program decreased in size during the 1980's because it failed to generate a constituency of adequate stature. In fact, President Bush's attempt to restore modest funding to the state assistance program was rejected by Congress for FY1993.

We suggest careful consideration of: separation of the federal and state "sides" of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, to eliminate the competition between these two important programs; revisions to the state side to restructure the federal financial role into that of a catalyst for partnerships, with higher levels of funding for priorities - such as linear corridors, open spaces near urban areas and improved access to public waters; addition of a revolving loan fund to assist local communities to develop recreation facilities such as pools, ballfields and camping areas; and an end to grants for non-permanent investments.

Action Recommended

Develop an Administration legislative initiative for a National Trust for the Outdoors which would provide financial and technical support to state, local and private recreation and conservation efforts.

Fiscal Impact

Current federal appropriations for the state side of LWCF are less than \$30 million annually. To be effective, a financial and technical assistance program should be funded at a minimum of \$250 million annually, although this level of funding could be the target for FY1997, with several years of "ramping up." We suggest that a portion of the receipts attributable to OCS sales be directed in this manner.

Key Beneficiaries

State and local governments and urban Americans, especially those with limited mobility; conservation organizations.

For Further Information

American Recreation Coalition - 202-662-7420

Greenways for America

Brief Description

In its 1987 report, the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors noted the dual importance of undeveloped areas in and around urban areas and the surge in linear-based recreation. The Commission further noted that the tremendous legacy of national parks and forests and refuges was an immeasurable gift from those in previous generations with vision and a commitment to action. Today's Americans are challenged to add to this common wealth through the establishment of a network of greenways across America to serve recreation, wildlife and environmental needs for future generations. The Commission envisioned Americans being able to bicycle, walk and ride for thousands of miles on inter-connecting greenways reaching into the hearts of our cities and the neighborhoods in which we live.

Important progress has been made in making the greenways vision a reality. A new system of scenic byways is evolving, and the byways often form the spine of a greenway. Local communities are using land use planning and land trusts to make progress. Abandoned railroads are being acquired and converted to recreational trail and greenway usage.

Yet national leadership, and coordination of federal efforts, is badly needed. Limited support is being provided by the Recreation Resources Assistance Section (the last remnants of the old Bureau of Outdoor Recreation) of the National Park Service and programs such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund, ISTEA and the new National Recreational Trails Fund. But additional technical assistance is badly needed. To accomplish this, removal of the technical assistance program from the National Park Service is a virtual necessity. NPS has a major challenge as the steward of 90 million acres of very special real estate; to date, it has shown neither the inclination nor the ability to extend its horizons effectively beyond the lands it manages directly. Federal coordination of efforts to aid the greenways efforts, and especially efforts in urban regions, should be a priority in itself, and should be vested in a distinct office within the Office of the Secretary of the Interior.

Action Recommended

Develop legislation to create a new Greenways technical assistance program in the Office of the Secretary of the Interior. Establish a goal of one new greenway in each metropolitan area of 1 million acres or more by 1994.

Fiscal Impact

Current spending on federal technical assistance for local greenway development is less than \$5 million annually. To be effective, spending will have to grow to between \$20 and \$25 million annually by 1995.


Beneficiaries

Conservation, environmental and recreation interests; the public which will have access to new, close-to-home recreation opportunities.

For Further Information

Conservation Fund (Ed McMahon) - 703-525-6300

Ann Lusk - 802-253-7758

National Recreational Lakes System/Recreation Enterprise Zones

Brief Description

Many of America's premier aquatic playgrounds — our lakes — have been ignored. Dramatic changes are occurring in and around federally-managed lakes. The investment of billions of public dollars in wastewater treatment plants plus aggressive anti-pollution law enforcement have improved water quality across America. More of our lakes are "swimable and fishable" than a generation ago, and the improvements are continuing. Public access to the cleansed waters is improving through Wallop-Breaux expenditures. Finally, federal agencies such as the Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Reclamation and TVA are showing active interest in recreation opportunities above and below dams they control. The leadership of these agencies realizes that the American public is no longer satisfied with "one-dimensional" natural resource management — lakes managed solely for flood prevention, or power production, or irrigation, for example.

Concurrently, there is a remarkable opportunity to guide development adjacent to lakes with substantial federal land ownership. Much of this land can and should stay undeveloped. Other portions, though, already serve recreational purposes — in many cases at low quality because of inadequate maintenance budgets — or are appropriate for careful recreational facility development. This development can be an important positive force in local economic diversification, as well.

We recommend the creation of pilot recreation enterprise zones at ten designated National Recreation Lakes with high potential recreation opportunities. Within the recreation enterprise zone, the managing agency would be empowered to identify and create partnerships with for-profit, not-for-profit and government organizations to increase recreational opportunities in an environmentally sensitive fashion. These facilities could include: campgrounds, environmental education centers, marinas, children's camps, swimming beaches and more. All revenues accruing to the agency under the partnerships would be retained for use in improving public recreation facilities within the zone and/or to subsidize certain desired recreation services which could not be operated on a for-profit basis. Concurrently, an investigation would be undertaken to identify likely additional candidates for designation as National Recreation Lakes.

Action Recommended

The new Administration should convene a task force comprised of the involved agencies; selected conservation, recreation and environmental leaders; economic development experts and recreation facility operators to develop a plan and identify any needed legislation required to create the proposed Recreation Enterprise Zones. Authorizing language for a National Recreational Lakes System should also be developed.

Fiscal Impact

Enhanced partnerships on and along federally-managed lakes are likely to reduce pressure for federally-funded recreation development. Moreover, some of the likely partnerships could be expected to pay fees to the agencies for use of federal lands, so the revenues should be positive.

Key Beneficiaries

Boaters, anglers, swimmers and others who enjoy lake-oriented recreation; adjacent communities because of the enhanced economic activity; environmental education programs and small businesses.

For Further Information

American Recreation Coalition - 202-662-7420

Partnership For America's Resources

Brief Description

America's prominence in the world is based upon the abilities of its people and the richness of its natural resources. A new initiative to aid the futures of both resources makes sense for America in 1993 — and especially because actions can be undertaken rapidly and at low cost which will have measurable, immediate economic benefits.

The proposed initiative would offer America's youth, and especially those ill-equipped to find good job opportunities because of limited skills or localized economic problems, the chance to become part of ECO-ACTION (actual name of program yet to be determined). A network of residential and non-residential ECO-ACTION centers would undertake projects on public lands and waters comparable to the efforts mounted during the 1930's by the Civilian Conservation Corps — except that some of the efforts would be high-tech, such as building GIS data bases. Through these work projects, ECO-ACTION members would be given skills training in areas ranging from heavy equipment operation to computer programming, as well as remedial education in language and mathematics where needed.

The management of the program would be provided by existing Federal employees of the land managing agencies (the Forest Service, the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management, principally) plus units of the military. As the military is "downsized," the need for some of its orientation and basic training personnel will decrease. These personnel are experienced in working with young, disadvantaged youth and in building a sense of teamwork. Additionally, the military is likely to have reduced needs for specialists in everything from heavy equipment operators to mechanics. Some of the current personnel may well find their anticipated military careers unavailable and entry into the civilian workforce difficult — and welcome the chance to use their skills and assist in training. Recruitment of ECO-ACTION participants might even be handled in part through existing military recruitment networks.

The downsizing of the military may have a very undesirable secondary consequence: a traditional route out of high unemployment neighborhoods and into skills training for generations of Americans might be severely curtailed.

A key to the success of this program will be strong participation by the private sector, which might underwrite portions of the costs for ECO-ACTION participants as tax-deductible "scholarships," underwrite specific projects (such as the material costs of a new trail or visitor center) and provide employment opportunities for successful ECO-ACTION graduates. Different from previous job corps programs, we should line up the private sector to employ the ECO-ACTION graduates. A tax incentive of a 150% tax deduction for ECO-ACTION graduate salaries for a two year period would be one example of a means to encourage private sector support.

The types of projects to be undertaken might include: trail construction and maintenance on federal lands and in near-urban greenways; landscaping and pull-offs along designated scenic byways across federal lands and All-American Roads created pursuant to the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991; improved access to public waters for fishing, boating and swimming, especially near urban areas and for the disabled; visitor centers and interpretive facilities on public lands; development of brochures and other materials designed to enhance the educational value of visits to the public lands; production of theatrical dramas rooted in the cultural history of specific areas.

The economic boost comes through the daily release of information on one attractive recreational/natural/cultural site by the White House under the "This Land is Your Land/ See U.S." program. The information would be presented in a format similar to that used by National Geographic Traveller — providing highlights of the area as well as information on sources of information (including state travel offices). The selected sites will be drawn from the 360+ units of the National Park system, the 150+ national forests, the 270 million acres managed by the Bureau of Land Management and the hundreds of additional sites operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Corps of Engineers and others. Priority would be given to lesser known sites and sites at which ECO-ACTION and volunteers are making recreation visits more fun. In addition, the President and the Vice President could visit these sites and participate in some of the ECO-ACTION work.

Action Recommended:

Develop initiative to aid America's human and natural resources and to provide instant economic stimulus. The program provides education and experience for disadvantaged young people while enhancing our environment and promoting recreation and tourism. The goals of the initiative are:

- Stimulate economic growth immediately with minimum requirements for new technologies and major capital investments through expanded recreation-based tourism, including attraction of additional international visitors.
- Utilize the existing capabilities and resources of the Departments of Defense, Agriculture, Interior and Commerce to provide the infrastructure for quick implementation.
- Provide jobs and future career opportunities for American youths, particularly those in high unemployment locations.
- Stimulate new and creative partnerships with states and the private sector to aid the nation's human and natural resources.

Options:

The new program could replace existing Job Corps efforts and other federal youth training programs, providing substantial funding without adding new federal spending.

Participants could be provided room, board, transportation, medical care and clothing and very little cash compensation except for a "graduation stipend" for those who complete the program and earn a high school equivalency certificate or college course credits.

The program could be linked to community colleges and land grant universities to obtain qualified instructors and to provide manpower for appropriate research.

The ECO-ACTION crews could be available as “contractors” to undertake certain natural resource related projects funded by federal grants to the states under Wallop-Breaux, Pittman-Robertson and the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Private sector willingness to provide employment and further training to ECO-ACTION graduates could be enhanced through a 50% bonus deduction against income, as proposed by Senator Breaux.

Idea Development:

The heart of the proposed program has been developed by the Forest Service but requires substantial additional expansion. A multi-departmental team supplemented with non-governmental participants could have the full plan for implementation no later than May 1.

Tom Bedell

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