

LAND MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROGRAM TRENDS¹

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There has been a shift in federal land management agencies toward less facility-oriented recreational activities. This shift is described by executive messages and legislation. Other indicators of the shift are President Carter's environmental message of 1979, establishment of additional National Recreation Trails, and a combined report to the President by the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior which describes coordinated objectives and action plans developed by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service.

In spite of the fact that land management policies and programs have recently focused on such topics as oil and gas, coal, timber, and range, there have been several key indicators of outdoor recreation trends.

President Carter's Environmental Message of August 2, 1979, contained specific directions regarding Wild and Scenic Rivers, Trails, and increased coordination between the two largest federal land managers, the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service. The Urban Recreation Study conducted by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service signals another change in emphasis. The popularity of the term "dispersed recreation" in several land management agencies signals a shift toward less facility-oriented recreational activities. Yet another indicator is the adoption of the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum by the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service as a means of dealing with recreation within the multiple-use management perspective. In this paper, some of these key signals are identified and briefly described.

PRESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL MESSAGE OF 1979

Wild and Scenic Rivers

"Development along the banks of our rivers continues to outpace our ability to protect those rivers that might qualify for designation. This problem is particularly acute near urban areas, where there are greater demands for

recreational opportunities which can partly be met by river protection.

We need to speed up the process for studying Wild and Scenic Rivers for designation and to consider the protection of rivers or parts of rivers which can protect important natural ecosystems. Moreover, the federal government should set an example of sound management for state, local, and private landowners by taking an aggressive role in protecting possible Wild and Scenic Rivers which flow through our public lands. Accordingly, I am directing the following actions be taken:

- federal land management agencies shall assess whether rivers located on their lands and identified in the National Inventory prepared by Heritage Conservation Service are suitable for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System; if so, these agencies shall take prompt action to protect the rivers--either by preparing recommendations for their designation or by taking immediate action to protect them;
- all federal agencies shall avoid or mitigate adverse effects on rivers identified in the National Inventory; and
- the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior shall jointly revise their Guidelines for evaluating wild, scenic, and recreational rivers to ensure consideration of river ecosystems and to shorten the time currently used to study rivers for designation."

These measures are currently underway and represent a considerably stronger protective stance on the treatment of possible Wild and Scenic Rivers which flow through federally administered lands.

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National Trails

"Under my direction, the U.S. Forest Service will establish 145 additional National Recreation Trails by January 1980, achieving a goal of two National Recreation Trails in each National Forest System unit. I am directing each federal land management agency to follow the example set by the Forest Service and by January 1980 announce a goal for the number of National Recreation Trails each agency will establish during 1980 on the public lands administered by the agency. I am also directing that, by the end of 1980, a minimum of 75 new National Recreation Trails shall be designated on public land other than National Forests by the federal land management agencies.

I am directing the Secretary of the Interior, through the Interagency Trails Council, to assist other federal agencies in surveying existing trails on federal lands to determine which of those can be made part of our National Trails System and to initiate a grass-roots effort in every region of the Country to assess our nationwide trails needs. In addition, I am directing the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority to encourage states, localities, Indian tribes, and private landholders to designate trails on their lands."

This effort has refocused land manager's attention to hiking trails across the Nation.

Coordination between the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service

"I am directing the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to work together to coordinate their Departments' natural resource policies and programs, particularly those of the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service. I am requesting the two Secretaries to develop within six months a detailed statement of coordination objectives and a process and timetable for achieving them."

This assignment resulted in the submission of a report to the President by the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior on February 6, 1980.

The report describes coordination objectives and action plans developed by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service. The report addresses the following areas:

1. Program Cycles
2. Program Development
3. Jurisdictional Transfers and Boundary Adjustments
4. Energy and Minerals

5. Common Procedures in Grazing Management
6. Sharing Facilities/Personnel/Training
7. Research
8. Public Involvement
9. Other

Of particular interest to this group is the fact that outdoor recreation policies and procedures have been identified for the formation of a topical subgroup to develop action programs.

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

This will prove to be quite timely as the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service have already begun to come closer together philosophically on the basics of outdoor recreation. Thanks to the research efforts of the Forest Service, the concept of an outdoor recreation spectrum has been endorsed by both agencies and is presently being incorporated into inventory, planning, and management policies and procedures for both agencies.

Recreation Land Acquisition

Another recent indicator of outdoor recreation policy has been the administration's proposal to reduce the federal portion of the Land and Water Conservation Fund from \$357 million available in FY 1980 to \$256 million to reduce federal spending. An additional cut from \$252 million to \$75 million is being proposed by the President for FY 1981.