PERSPECTIVES, RETROSPECTIVES AND PROSPECTIVES: NERR IN ITS 15TH YEAR

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Abstract: This year NERR celebrated its 15th anniversary. At the time of the conference, the United States was at war with Iraq. This provides the global context within which this paper looks at the influence of life experiences and external contexts on both the work and issues faced by recreation and resource managers and scientists, and in the ways in which we approach our work. This paper is presented in three major sections that deal with 1) perspectives, the role of varying human perspectives on science and management work; 2) retrospectives, a look back at a brief history of NERR and a brief commentary about changes that have affected recreation, tourism and natural resources science and management; and 3) prospectives, a discussion of current contexts for our work, and challenges to be addressed in the future.

Introduction

The Northeast Recreation Research Symposium, commonly known as NERR (and pronounced a variety of ways) celebrated its fifteenth anniversary in 2003. As is typical within most human cultures, events such as anniversaries, holidays, and memorials provide opportunities to reflect on where we've been and where we're going. They provide opportunities to consider what we do and how we live in a deliberate way rather than simply to move through life from, as many of us do, rushing to meet deadlines and dealing with crises of various degrees of import. This fifteenth NERR anniversary combines this opportunity with sharing an anniversary cake and celebrating with long-time friends and colleague.

Over the years, a portion of the NERR participants have been researchers. As researchers, we are obligated to approach our work as objectively as possible. We strive to minimize bias, reduce error, and present results as neutral, non-judged outcomes of carefully constructed and implemented research methods and procedures. Yet, even as researchers, we are human beings first. So, as much as we strive to be objective, we bring to our work — and our interpretation, applications and implications of research results — our personal perspectives derived of individual experiences, upbringing, culture, and the current context of local, national and global events. Thus, many of the comments in this paper, as were the comments presented during the Founders' Forum, 1 are presented from a personal perspective and in the context of current global events (Perspectives). Also, they reflect on a bit of the history of the NERR symposium (Retrospectives), and look to the future about where we might be turning our research and recreation/resource management attention (Prospectives).

Perspectives

Personal Fire Perspectives. As I was thinking about how in the world I would have any relevant commentary in the midst of such an intense global event - the war in Iraq, following so closely on the heels of the September 11 World Trade Center attacks - images of fire surfaced over and over, both in my mind and on the television set casting eerie, flashing glows around my room. The image of flames, one of the four central life elements (earth, air, water, fire), triggers so many other images and meanings. My earliest (and most preferred) images of fire are mostly positive and, in some experiential way, probably contributed to my career involvement in the field of parks, recreation, leisure, tourism and resource management. I presume this might be the case for many people in the NERR "family" who are now involved as resource managers, outdoor recreation providers, and researchers. Among the conceptual and experiential associations represented by fire are leisure, relaxation, tasty food, and time shared with friends.

When I was still a toddler, my parents took us camping. Tasty meals cooked over the campfire were topped off with even tastier, sticky marshmallows toasted over the coals. A fire-stirring stick, its distal end glowing, could become an instant "sparkler" to draw glowing images in the blackness beyond the reach of the fire's glow. Fire in the morning not only took the chill out of the

air, but released the wonderful aroma of frying bacon and beckoned us out of the heavy canvas tent. For those having great patience (particularly in the eyes of a child), glowing embers would slowly cook a big baked potato.

Later, when I was able to branch out into camping environments away from the family, initially through years of Scouting, the campfire also became a place of sharing secrets and emotions with friends, and a place where singing and guitar-playing were learned and enjoyed. A deep bed of glowing embers could mesmerize late into the night, and inspire creation of intriguing stories of exploration, adventure . . . and ghosts. Giant bonfires — carefully constructed like log cabins, lit by ceremonial torches or magical chemical-combination-combustion, or with flames colorfully enhanced by chemical-dipped pinecones - and tiny memory boats or wish boats carrying glowing candles out across a river or lake became the focal point of hundreds of special ceremonies.

Fire remained central to ceremonies even as I went to college. Really giant bonfires (compared with what I considered "giant" in earlier years, which were maybe four- to five-feet high log stacks) became the rallying symbol of a major football rival. First, at the University of Texas at Austin, the huge bonfires were fed by monstrous piles of trash wood. Later, when I dared become a student at UT's rival institution, Texas A&M, the huge bonfires were carefully engineered structures. Both were guarded fiercely, then burned in the same fervor of sports rivalry.

My fascination with fire, and my pride in building and maintaining quality fires by carefully placed blowing even was partially responsible for my camp counselor nickname of "Windy" (yes, a play on "Gail" and my love of sailing were also involved). Campfires have remained a meaningful part of wilderness expeditions, whether climbing or backpacking expeditions in the Rockies (where fire conditions and regulations allow) or canoeing in northern Canada. When I bought my first house a couple of years ago, a fireplace was one of my must-have features.

Cultural Fire Perspectives. My personal perspectives about fire probably are similar to those of many others in the United States. Additionally, we celebrate special occasions with fireworks, fire that is controlled in patterns and colors, and which triggers collective oohs and aahs, claps and cheers. A fiery golden sunset stirs similar feelings, reactions, inspirations. Yet fire has another "face" - the destruction, terror and pain of a powerful, uncontrollable force. Our nation's most effective media campaign, one associated with resource management - Smokey Bear - has taught generations of Americans that fire is "bad," more specifically that forest fires are "bad." Arsonists use fire as a tool of destruction. Eco-terrorists use fire as a tool of protest. Fires in Yellowstone National Park, and more recently on Storm King Mountain and in Mesa Verde, not only reinforced the negative images, but became a killer of fire fighters and a tool for self-aggrandizement of one. More recently, fire ultimately was the force that brought down the Twin Towers.

Fire Perspectives "Today." In the weeks leading to the 2003 NERR symposium, United States citizens found themselves bombarded with media images of fire from the front lines of war: fire from the oceanic test firing of the "Mother of all Bombs;" riot fires at the British embassy; fire from Tomahawk missiles; fire from burning oil wells; Baghdad on fire. In Michigan, war images were disrupted by those of riot fires inspired by basketball revelers during "March Madness."

Fire, War and Recreation. So what are the relationships between war and recreation, leisure and natural resources? At first glance, the two concepts seem disparate. Yet there are numerous interrelationships. First, the language of war and the language of sport are intertwined. Sports commentators use battlefield analogies in describing sport strategy. Many sports cheers use "fighting" images (e.g., "lean to the left, lean to the right, stand up, sit down, fight fight fight;" "hit 'em again, hit 'em again, harder, harder"). Conversely, war correspondents and the military public relations staffer provided daily updates using sports analogies (e.g., during the march toward Baghdad, troops used a "bump and run" strategy). Second, when we're a nation at war, we consider the "appropriateness" of certain types of celebratory and "fun" recreational activities and events. For example, some considered it "obscene" to have post-Oscar parties when so many are suffering and dying. (How odd that such a consideration occur

only when we, as a nation, are directly involved with and shown events so regularly and graphically through the news media. Such suffering and dying and warfare are going on somewhere in the world almost continuously.)

When nations are at war, people are under stress - soldiers, civilians of war-torn countries, and those "back home." Perhaps this is a time and context in which leisure and recreation are more critical than ever. Historically, there is precedence for use of recreation and leisure during war time. Bob Hope's comedy shows provided entertainment and reprieve for soldiers engaged in wars throughout the world. Leisure, play and recreation have been used as therapy in many contexts, including war, to help people cope with stress, tragedy and suffering. The television series MASH regularly illustrated how self-generated play and humor, in concert with more organized recreation events, helped medical staff deal with a highly stressful environment. In an article published in the Washington Post (Temple, March 23, 2003), Kathleen Cole, a Community and Family Support Center deployment specialist with the Army's Department of Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR), describes the importance of recreation to military staff today. "When we first went into Bosnia in 1996, we went to each base camp, basically grabbing 'space,' or tents to house the treadmills and the library. . . . We organized talent shows. . . . We brought games like dominoes, foosball, Risk, Scrabble - the real old-style, rec-center kind of games these guys wouldn't be caught dead playing back at home. . . . In Bosnia, mud was everywhere, so we had a mud-sculpturing contest. To see grown men playing in the dirt, with these big grins, that's job satisfaction. We've got five MWR civilians [in the Middle East] now, and 150 around the world gearing up to go in, just like the army is."

A contemporary movie, Piano, as have other war-time films, reminds us that it is particularly important when people are involved in war and other tragedies to hang on to the things that make us human: culture, art, poetry, relationships. After the 9-11 attacks, many parks and natural areas, especially those close to home, indicated increased use of those areas, where people were trying to find some place peaceful, quiet, natural, in which to process the tragedy, to provide a reminder of "the good things in life," or simply to escape the constant media bombardment. Yes, the work we do - both in providing recreation opportunities and managing a wide range of parks and other natural resource areas - is important in times of war. It is interesting to note that those things we value as humans - good food, play, relationships - also are effective motivators when training animals, even animals involved in the war effort: dogs trained to find bombs, drugs and bodies; dolphins trained to find mines.

Another entanglement between war and recreation/tourism is related to impacts of war on historic, cultural and natural resources. Acts of modern warfare, even with supposed accuracy of modern weapons, destroy natural areas, historic records, cultural and historic buildings and resources. Often this initial damage is exacerbated by subsequent looting and theft of artifacts. Loss of these objects and resources not only destroys tourism attractions, but results in global loss of national and international history and heritage. In this recent war in Iraq, known as the "cradle of Western civilization," the national museum was looted. Threatened are artifacts, documents and structures reflecting many of history's greatest developments that occurred in early Mesopotamia, among them: irrigation for agriculture; use of copper and making of bronze; herding and animal husbandry; mathematics, calendars and maps; written language; use of the wheel for making pottery and moving carts. Persia, Babylon, Mesopotamia, the Arab Empire and Sumer are all important civilizations of the area, with Sumer dating to 5000 B.C. (Rodriguez and Duginski, n.d.) As these treasures are lost, so also are tourism attractions.

Retrospectives

NERR Retrospectives: A Brief History. As with many good ideas, the seeds of the idea for NERR were born of an informal conversation among four colleagues - Tom More, Alan Graefe, Jerry Vaske and Maureen Donnelly - who thought it important to develop some type of opportunity for recreation resource researchers and managers to interact face-to-face, to share ideas, identify challenges, and discuss issues of mutual interest. Goals were for researchers to better meet the needs of recreation and resource managers, and for managers to better understand and apply results of scientific inquiry in

managing their resources and providing recreation opportunities. Thus was born the NERR symposium. The atmosphere was to be informal, collegial, and based on sharing rather than solely on professional scrutiny. The research would be scholarly and quality, but the delivery non-threatening and to highlight management implications. Out of this conversation developed the first gathering of researchers and managers at Saratoga Spa State Park in eastern New York State, then the headquarters of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYSOPRHP). Ultimately, the following mission statement was developed:

The Northeastern Recreation Research meeting seeks to foster quality information exchange between recreation and travel resource managers and researchers throughout the Northeast. The forum provides opportunities for managers from different agencies and states, and from different governmental levels, to discuss current issues and problems in the field. Students and all those interested in continuing education in recreation and travel resource management are particularly welcome.

Initially, the NE of the NERR acronym was intended to indicate "The North East," subtly indicating "New England," as this was the general regional scope of the initial meeting. As the NERR meeting gained credibility and popularity, as participants began to come from places as distant as California and Oregon, and as doctoral students participating in early meetings eventually took faculty positions and their commitment elsewhere, NERR's participation range expanded (to Michigan, Illinois, West Virginia, Florida, Colorado, Texas and beyond). Jokingly, the steering committee decided that "northeast is a direction, not a place . . . as in "The North East" . . . and eastern New York could be considered northeast of most places in the United States. This "definition" effectively covers even those participants coming from places such as Italy and the Netherlands, as occurred this year, because eastern New York could be considered north east of those countries . . . if one were to follow the proper route, circumnavigating most of the northern hemisphere. This is conceptually cumbersome, so we might want to take a corporate lesson from organizations such as Kentucky Fried Chicken (now, simply "KFC") or Texas Agricultural and Mechanical University (now, simply Texas A&M), and attach no particular meaning to the acronym, relying on our brand identity.

Table 1. — Comparison of NERR program & fees, 1989 & 2003.

Total # of:	1989	2003
Presentations	23	112
Management Sessions/Rd Tables	0	10
Posters	0	18
Keynotes/Special Sessions	0	2
Female Presenters	2	26
Registration Fees (Standard Professional/Student)	$40/$25	$175/$125

Table 2. — New NERR initiatives from 1989 - 2003.

New Initiatives	YEAR
First Symposium	1989
Keynotes/General Sessions	1991
Move from Saratoga Spa to Sagamore	1996
Poster Sessions (# /year: 6, 6, 5, 8, 6, 11, 17, 18)	1996
SUNY/Horace Shaw begin registration	1997
10-year Anniversary	1999
First Founders' Forum	1999
Venture Publishing support begins	~2000
Student Scholarship Program begins	2000

While the mission of NERR has remained consistent and proceedings have been continuously published and funded by the U.S. Forest Service, several changes have occurred. Over its 15-year history, NERR has grown in participant numbers, in student participation, and in range of program elements and activities. Compared with 23 presentations during the first symposium, the 2003 symposium has 112 papers and management sessions listed. Primarily traditional research papers were presented during the first symposium. Since then, other program types have been instituted: management round table sessions; poster presentations; keynote presentations of several kinds, to include the Founders' Forum series. The number of women participating has increased greatly, with the number of first-author women

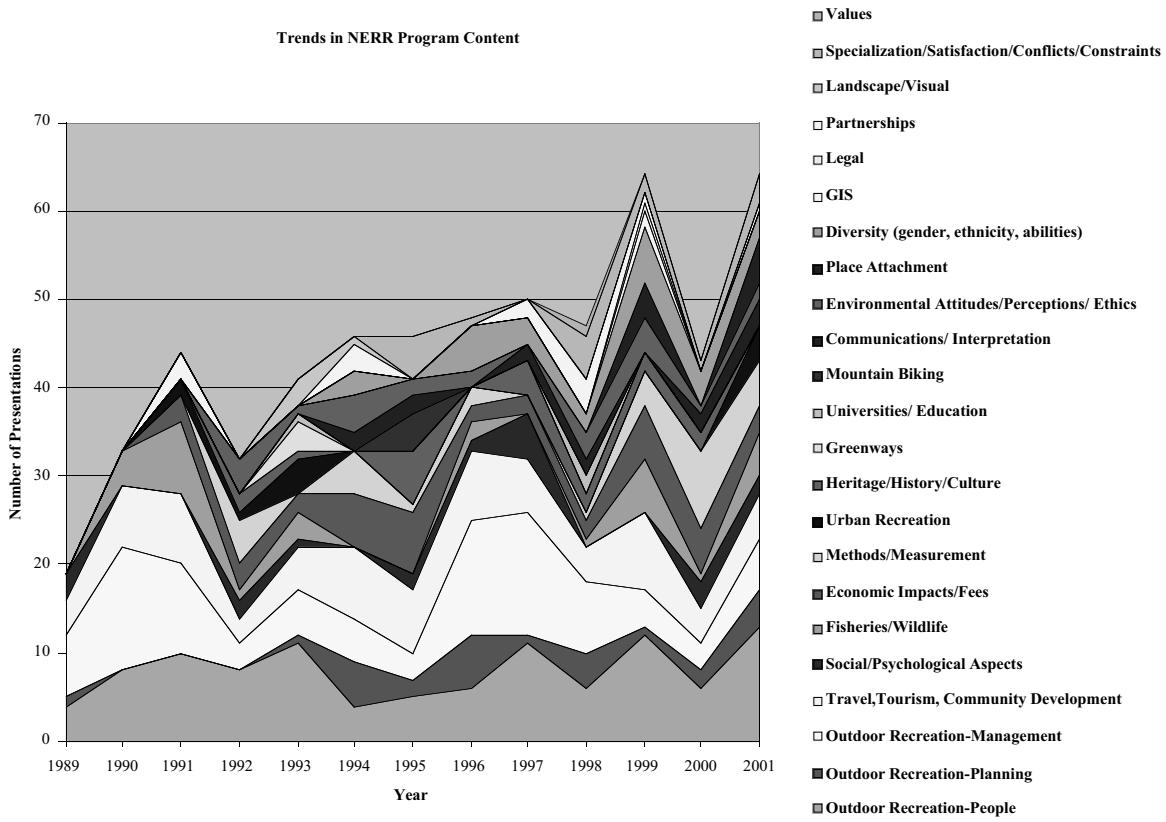

Figure 1: Trends in NERR program content from 1989 through 2001.

expanding from two in 1989 to 26 in 2003. Of course, symposium costs also have increased, partly due to inflation, partly due to increases in services and food events included during the symposium. (See Table 1.)

After seven years at Saratoga Spa, changes were afoot. Priorities within NYSOPRHP and related to its management of the research center shifted. This, combined with growing participant numbers (outgrowing the space availability at Saratoga Spa), encouraged the steering committee to seek an alternative site. In identifying a new site or sites, the committee considered whether the symposium should move annually throughout the region (thus making it more convenient for participants in different parts of the region during different years) or remain at a known, quality site (for ease of logistics planning, delegate participation, and ease of repetitive travel planning). As evidenced by the now eight years at the Sagamore in Bolton's Landing, the committee opted for the second choice. During the early years, each major task (program, logistics, registration, mailing list maintenance, finances, proceedings) rotated among steering committee members. Beginning in about 1997, a contract with SUNY-ESF, in Syracuse, NY was signed, through which many of the logistical issues (e.g., mailing list maintenance, pre- and on-site registration, AV equipment management) was assumed by SUNY-ESF, in the embodiment of Horace Shaw. Tom More has continued to coordinate negotiations with the host facilities and Muriel More has been a volunteer "right arm woman" for Horace during the conference. Most of the early steering committee members remain actively involved with conference planning, and the committee size has grown continuously over the years. Individual contributions are too numerous to acknowledge here. On the occasion of the 10th anniversary, the Founders' Forum series began (reflective presentations by early, still-active steering committee members). Other program innovations have included addition of poster presentations (which have grown in number), sponsorship by Venture Publishing, and implementation of a student scholarship program. (See Table 2.)

Over the years, some categories have remained as core topics: social aspects of outdoor recreation (e.g., choices, preferences, participation patterns), management of outdoor recreation resources; travel, tourism and related community development. Other topics (usually more narrowly described than the core areas) have surfaced as "hot topics" for a few years, then subsided. Examples include urban recreation; fisheries and wildlife-related topics; GIS applications; wilderness; legal issues; industrial/non-industrial private forests; and greenways planning. Other topics have emerged at various times and remained as part of the program, though at relatively low levels. Examples include place attachment, diversity issues, communications and interpretation, landscape and visual aesthetics, and heritage/cultural tourism. See Figure 1 for trends. Note that the criteria for placing papers in categories are relatively loose, and some presentations could easily be placed in more than one category. For the most part, categories were selected based on what seemed to be the main focus of a paper as represented by its title and abstract. Only papers appearing in published proceedings are included.

Retrospectives: Our Work. As with the Smokey Bear anti-fire campaign, numerous resource management actions and outdoor recreation behaviors once accepted as appropriate have now fallen into disfavor, sometimes due to unintended consequences of those actions, sometimes due to changes in values and philosophies, and sometimes due to increased numbers of people engaging in activities that, when few were doing them, caused negligible impacts. Examples include:

- building large campfires for cooking and camaraderie;
- cutting pine boughs to make beds and chopping down trees to lash complex campsite furniture;
- trenching around tents to keep water from puddling under tent floors;
- discarding used oxygen canisters and food tins during remote, extreme expeditions, such as to Mount Everest;
- draining wet areas and planting exotic plant species (in Yosemite National Park and many other areas) to make parks more accessible and pleasurable, and for a variety of resource management purposes;
- allowing artifacts to be removed from shipwreck sites as part of the recreational experience; and
- introducing non-native species to improve specific fisheries, often for recreational fishing purposes.

All these actions were taken with good intentions and good rationale . . . at the time. Yet experience, research and changing values, economics and policies all influence endeavors of both research and resource management. Similar patterns of changing values have influenced interpretive communications and the stories of places, people and cultures that we tell to tourists who visit many of our nation's recreation and natural resource areas. Where we once told stories of Custer's Last Stand (a "massacre" of a "hero" and his men), celebrated the valor of white defendants at the Alamo, lauded Columbus, Lewis and Clark and westward expansion, and memorialized Hiroshima as the best way to end World War II, we now question the one-sided, value-laden, often politically inspired perspectives of these stories. While the changes often are still controversial, many sites are making efforts to tell more balanced stories, allowing visitors to arrive at their own conclusions. We now tell the story of the Battle of Little Big Horn, acknowledge the role of Mexican people at the Alamo, and question the use of the atomic bomb (e.g., the Enola Gay exhibition at the Smithsonian). We're more careful about how geology and archaeology and evolution are presented. These are a start, yet we have a long way to go in being inclusive, in telling the stories of "common people" and those not in the majority groups.

Those of us who are scientists often have not thought about the impact of the science process in our parks. Yes, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) must approve any social science that occurs on federal lands to protect the visitors, yet we conduct other types of science in parks and protected areas. We assume - and often argue - that if something is done in the name of science, then it is a perfectly legitimate and justified enterprise. In the name of archaeology we have unearthed human remains as well as ceremonial and other artifacts from pyramids, burial grounds, and other sacred sites. We have sold archaeological items (often across international borders) and placed human remains on display in museums throughout

the world. While much knowledge has been gained from these activities, and quality tourism destinations and experiences have developed around many of these sites, the very act of Phase III archaeology is destructive and extractive and displays of sacred objects and human remains are a cultural affront. Scientific inquiry sometimes creates "special privilege," often challenged by others. Archaeologists may excavate historic sites, but the general public may not use metal detectors and hunt for potsherds and arrowheads on federal lands. Scientists may take documentary photos of human remains on shipwrecks, but avocational divers who take such photos and use them in publications and public presentations are chastised. Very few people raise an eyebrow when National Geographic publishes photographs of scantily clad native people, but the general public is strongly criticized for similar publication and sale of images. While I could write a strong scientific justification for each of these scenarios (and could just as easily write a counter-point argument), it is no wonder that the general public is often confused, at the very least, or outright angry at the "special" accommodation often given to work done in the name of science.

Other challenges for scientists and managers of resource sites are changing laws and ethics, changing public values and priorities, changing economic pressures, changing political climate, and improving technology that changes not only the way we do our work, but makes accessible many natural and cultural resources to people previously restricted. For example, deep water shipwrecks once were protected by their very location. However, mixed gas technical diving and reasonably priced robots and mini-submarines now enable recreational divers to access those sites. Managers fear resultant theft and rapid deterioration. Now, archaeologists do not automatically excavate every site and artifact. Other options - such as re-burying objects and sites after excavation, returning excavated artifacts to original owners (e.g., tribal groups), or simply not disturbing a site at all - are analyzed carefully. In maritime environments, several factors are considered in determining whether to excavate or remove artifacts as part of the scientific process: Would the site make a quality, safe dive site if everything is left in situ? Should some selective recovery of highly valuable or attractive artifacts by done to protect them from theft? Should recovery of select artifacts be done to provide access (through museum exhibits) to many people? Should artifacts in highly vulnerable sites be recovered to prevent imminent deterioration and loss?

Speaking to some of the challenges facing resource managers are recent articles published in mainstream newspapers:

- National Park System Gets Low Marks in History; A scholarly reminder: blacks and women were there, too (speaking of numerous sites); social history is often sacrificed to stories of military history (Scott, New York Times, November 15, 1997);
- Museums: Britain Has Right to Keep Greek Items; Greece demands return of artifacts acquired in the 1800s (Barr, Associated Press, 12/12/02);

Prospectives: Where Do We Go From Here, What Impacts Our Future Work?

As discussed in the previous sections, external factors and changes across many factors have affected both what we study and how we approach science, how we provide recreation opportunities and how we manage both the resources and users. Such contextual factors - political, environmental, technological and demographic - will continue to affect our work and the places we manage. News articles foreshadow some of the challenges - many not entirely new, but perhaps intensified or modified - we must address. Political unrest and terrorism have influenced where tourists travel, the number of tourists, and how we screen and manage tourist movement. "At Grand Canyon National Park, which typically depends on foreigners for nearly half of its visitors, 42 percent fewer people arrived at the south entrance station on bus tours through April [2002] vs. [the previous year], while arrivals by private vehicles were up 5 percent" (Engle, Los Angeles Times, June 9, 2002). In some cases there have been site closures (high profile national parks, Army Corps of Engineers dams and other facilities) and increased surveillance/visitor screening (e.g., boaters crossing international boundaries in the Great Lakes are required to report in a timely manner to the nearest customs office). A more direct impact on science is the potential constraint to publication of scientific studies for fear that contents will be used for illicit

purposes by enemy groups, as indicated in a news article titled "Journals to edit out dangerous material; Scientists fear data in publications may aid terrorists' work" (Verrengia, Associated Press, n.d.).

Population growth, sprawl, pollution and other environmental factors can affect visitor numbers or behavior patterns as well as impact the visitor experience. A recent Associated Press article (n.d.) discusses problems associated with smog and haze in Western parks. "The typical visual range at monuments and national parks in the West is 62-93 miles - half to two-thirds what it would be without pollution." Light pollution, sound pollution and water pollution also affect habitats and visitor experiences in parks. Even global warming is affecting visitor experiences, as evidenced by glacial melting which now has post-movie curtains at one Alaska visitor center opening onto a pool of water backdropped by mountains. This facility was designed originally so the large wall of windows opened onto a view of the toe of a major glacier.

Not only has technology created faster, new and alternative toys and transportation modes for outdoor recreation (e.g., ATVs, snowmobiles, personal water craft, snowboards, wind surfers, parasails, mountain bikes), it has provided other tools to the wilderness traveler such as cell phones and GPS. While these tools may help people navigate or more easily call for assistance if they get lost or otherwise in trouble, they also strip adventurers of the true sense of "risk" and "adventure," as expressed several years ago by Dan Dustin. Additionally, they may create a false sense of security for people who might otherwise not venture into more remote areas, and who are otherwise less prepared for such recreational experiences. Such visitors then become the responsibility of the recreation resource managers. Technology also provides new ways for us to conduct research, ranging from web-based surveys to GPS for community input into planning to increasingly sophisticated remotely operated vehicles (ROVs) for deep water exploration.

Technology also can help provide experiences to a wide range of visitors to museums and other recreation sites. Remote video technology (sometimes controllable by visitors) can be used to observe things otherwise unobservable. This includes observation of sensitive species (e.g., visitors watching raptors build nests, lay and hatch eggs, and fledge the young) as well as inaccessible resources (e.g., divers exploring a shipwreck). A specific example of a remote visitor opportunity will be tested at California's Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Exploration will involve underwater robots, live video, the Internet and a Telepresence Center. "The project can be experienced at the Immersion Institute at the Mystic Aquarium and Institute of Exploration in Mystic, Connecticut . . . Visitors to the theater can operate the robots beneath Monterey Bay in real time and test their skills with other interactive tools." (Wall Street Journal, n.d.) In another example, Colorado's Ocean Journey Aquarium will use lots of technology to create virtual experiences for visitors, borrowing extensively from theater and entertainment worlds. Stimulating all the senses, the aquarium will include "[s]imulated flash floods with thunder and lightning. Live archer fish that will be rewarded with food if they spit water at mechanical bug targets. . . . And don't forget the pine scent atomizer that will sprinkle an alpine smell and make the Colorado high country display a true sense-surround exhibit." (Booth, Denver Post, December 26, 1997)

Recent newspaper articles addressing these issues include:

- Group tackles smog, haze in Western parks (Associated Press, n.d.);
- Parks less crowded this year; Fewer international visitors, post-9/11 jitters decrease travel (Engle, Los Angeles Times, June 9, 2002);
- Iraq war may devastate tourism (unknown);
- Cell phone helps in rescue of 4 hunters (Associated Press, n.d.);
- Paddle Pushers: Landlubbers who never so much as crossed a millpond are taking up competitive rowing (speaking of male and female senior citizens) (Richards, Wall Street Journal, n.d.);
- Undersea explorers get high-tech boost (Wall Street Journal, n.d.); and
- Aquarium to offer dash of Hollywood (Booth, Denver Post, December 26, 1997).

Perhaps our work in recreation resource management, and in the scientific study of challenges and issues facing managers, is needed

now as much or more than ever. With increasing population, increasing demands and impacts on resources, and new stresses in lives of people, our work is essential. People are looking for places of refuge. Natural areas play a critical role. People are looking for places to connect . . . with each other and with their heritage. Experiences in the out-of-doors and exploration of historic and cultural sites and stories are essential contributors to meeting such needs. As sprawl, pollution, competing land and water use demands, and increasing population place greater demands and impacts on natural, cultural and historic resources, managers and researchers must work together to address the challenges. In a culture of instant gratification, electronic records, and disposable resources, all of these resources will assume increasing importance as humans (hopefully) look for ways to find meaning in their lives.

Current challenges are traditional, modified and new. Increasing urbanization brings increasing needs for urban residents to have opportunities in natural areas, and to have nearby recreation opportunities. Recreational needs of diverse populations - racial, ethnic, family structure, and those having various disabilities - continue to be under-addressed, despite focused efforts in recent years. Coastal communities, perhaps the highest growth areas in this country, are facing issues of public vs. private access, coastal land and water impacts, demands for revitalization, and impacts on fisheries resources. Sprawl development continues to threaten integrity of natural ecosystems and agricultural lands. Energy use, including for recreational pursuits, continues to rise. Visitor safety in recreational areas increasingly is a concern. Changing visitor preferences for recreation and entertainment impact how and what we offer. In a push-pull sort of way, our technology-savvy, heavily mediated society both relies increasingly on Hollywood-style, convenient entertainment, yet also is looking increasingly for authentic, engaging, and involving experiences. They are looking for meaning and value in many of their recreational and travel experiences. Some of our challenges, as scientists and managers, include:

- How do we assist in managing resources within park (and other resource site) boundaries by helping manage critical adjacent resources, land use activities, and economies?
- How do we stay cognizant of and responsive to external factors that affect our work?
- How do we, in turn, affect communities and resources adjacent to parks and other sites within our direct management control?
- How to we better serve increasingly diverse populations, with increasingly diverse and often conflicting resource use demands?
- How do we help our visitors more effectively explore, learn, question, and connect with our natural and historic resources and stories?
- How do we stay relevant - in service provision, policies, management actions?
- How do we contribute to our global society and help protect our global resources?

Perhaps, as we move our work forward, we can strive to contribute to making a world in which images of fire are those having positive associations - warmth, safety, relaxation, camaraderie, celebration - rather than those of war, terrorism and destruction. Perhaps we can contribute to making the close-up observations and perceptions of world match those "from a distance," as sung by Nancy Griffith, written by Julie Gold:

"From a distance the earth looks blue and green,
and the snow-capped mountains white. . .

From a distance we all have enough, and no one is in need.
From a distance there are no guns, no bombs, no diseases, no hungry mouths to feed.
From a distance we are instruments, marching in a common band,
Playing songs of hope, playing songs of peace, they're the songs of every man. . .

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[1]This presentation was heavily dependent on visual images, much of which will not be evident in the paper. Also note that, at the time of this symposium (early April 2003), the United States was deeply involved in a war in Iraq, which specifically shaped many of the "perspectives" comments. In the "perspectives" section, I take liberties to be "human" rather than a "detached, objective scientist." Meanings, values and experiences are, after all, important concepts in understanding recreational behavior and motivations. They are central also to this "reflection."

Pages 98-107 in:

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