

PLANNING BEYOND PARK BOUNDARIES TO PROTECT
SCENIC RESOURCES WITHIN PARK VIEWSHEDS

by

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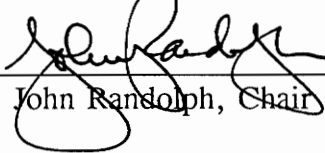
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William C. Fors

(ABSTRACT)

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This paper discusses the issue of threats to National Park Service resources that originate outside the boundaries of the parks, with specific emphasis on protection of scenic resources. A model planning process for protection of scenic resources beyond park boundaries is developed and the Blue Ridge Parkway is examined as a case study. The opportunities and problems associated with the application of the model process to the Parkway are also examined and discussed.

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I. INTRODUCTION.

Problem Statement:

A major problem facing the U.S. National Park Service is protecting National Park System resources from threats that originate on lands beyond park boundaries. Development of lands adjacent to many parks is accelerating as neighboring communities grow and the demand for tourist services expands (for purposes of this paper "parks" are all National Parks, National Monuments, National Historic Sites, National Battlefields, National Seashores/Lakeshores, National Recreation Areas, and National Parkways). This, in addition to increased demand for natural resources and energy resources on lands adjacent to parks has resulted in increasing damage, and many new threats to park resources.

The Park Service manages lands to conserve scenic resources, natural resources, cultural resources, historic resources, and recreational resources/opportunities. In an ideal world, a park would provide absolute protection for all scenic, natural, cultural, historic, and recreation resources that it provides access to. Absolute protection of resources like air, water, and scenery is unrealistic because it would require control over millions of acres of land because of the sheer size of ecosystems, watersheds, and viewsheds.

Many National Park areas were established when the idea of development damaging park viewsheds, ecosystems, and buffer zones seemed improbable at best. As the speed, efficiency, and availability of transportation has increased, many park resources have become vulnerable to damage and degradation from development and resource extraction activities on adjacent lands.

Land uses beyond park boundaries such as resource extraction or harvesting and industrial, commercial, or residential development can negatively affect the integrity of a park by contributing to air, water, and noise pollution, fragmentation of wildlife habitat, traffic congestion, and degradation of scenic views.

Detrimental activities on lands adjacent to a park are more difficult to effectively address because they are beyond the direct control of the Park Service. Planning beyond park boundaries to protect scenic resources within park viewsheds will be the focus of this paper.

Degradation of scenic views through indiscriminant development of private and public lands that are important parts of the viewsheds of National Parks such as Shenandoah and the Blue Ridge Parkway causes irreversible damage to one of the most significant, popular, and outstanding resource these parks provide. Poorly planned and sprawling development of lands within the viewsheds of these parks can, and in some cases already has, permanently and irrevocably reduced the quality of the scenery and the visitor's experience.

The Blue Ridge Parkway is especially vulnerable to damage from activities on adjacent lands for several reasons. The Parkway's most outstanding resource is the spectacular scenic views that include a combination of natural, historic, cultural, and recreational resources. Although the Parkway was intended to allow the visitor to experience the rural beauty of the Blue Ridge Mountains and reveal the history and culture of Appalachia, the Park Service, in most areas, only owns and controls a narrow band of land through the region it was intended to showcase.

As industry and tourism are promoted to enhance local economies in the traditionally depressed area, development continues to increase on the private lands that border over fifty percent of the Parkway. Encroaching development, private ownership of much of the Parkway viewshed, lack of local land-use controls, and the high elevation of the Parkway make planning to protect scenic resources beyond the Parkway boundaries especially problematic. These conditions have the potential to be the ultimate test of the model planning process developed later in this paper.

Preventing significant deterioration of scenic resources beyond park boundaries will require a planning effort that integrates the needs of the Park Service, other land management agencies, local communities, park visitors, and private landowners.

Purpose:

This paper will: 1. Explain and discuss the external threats issue with emphasis on scenic resource protection; 2. Develop a model process for protecting scenic resources beyond park boundaries that integrates the needs of the Park Service, other state and federal land management agencies, local and county governments, and private citizens; and 3. Use the Blue Ridge Parkway as a case study to illustrate the problem and help guide the development of the model process. The ultimate goal of this paper is the development of a model planning process to protect scenic resources beyond park boundaries that can be successfully applied to any Park Service area.

Organization:

In Chapter II the evolution of traditional Park Service planning to include planning beyond park boundaries is explained and external threats are defined and discussed in more detail. Goals and issues related to planning beyond park boundaries are discussed along with some of the specific problems related to protection of scenic resources beyond the boundary. Chapter III focuses on the development of a model planning process to protect scenic resources beyond park boundaries. The model process relies on public participation and education for identifying, prioritizing, and ultimately protecting important scenic resources located beyond park boundaries.

Chapter IV discusses the history and current viewshed protection efforts and problems at the Blue Ridge Parkway.

In chapter V planning to protect scenic resources at the Blue Ridge Parkway is discussed.

Chapter VI provides summary and conclusions.

II. PLANNING BEYOND PARK BOUNDARIES TO ADDRESS EXTERNAL THREATS TO PARK RESOURCES.

Traditional Park Service Planning.

The basis for all National Park Service planning efforts is the National Park Service Organic Act of 1916 which states that the parks will be managed to conserve park resources, provide for the use and enjoyment of the park by the people, and to do so "... in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for future generations." All park plans should ideally be geared towards balancing the conservation and public use mandates of the organic act while preserving the resources for future generations to enjoy.

The Park Service has been involved in formal efforts to plan for the preservation and use of lands within park boundaries since 1926 (deFranceaux, 1988). The first plans for parks were called master plans and served as umbrella documents under which several smaller scale construction and development plans were formulated (deFranceaux, 1988). Public participation in the park planning process was not commonplace until the 1970's when public outrage over an internally developed, development intensive plan for Yosemite that did not involve the public led to a major change in the park planning process (National Parks and Conservation Association, 1994).

Park planning subsequently shifted to a more comprehensive, interdisciplinary, and participatory approach. The park "master plans" were replaced by general management plans (GMP's) that dealt with all aspects of park operation and management (deFranceaux, 1991). Development of a GMP is one step in a five step park planning process.

The Park Planning Process

The first step in the park planning process is the development of a Statement for Management (SFM) by each park superintendent.

The SFM states the purpose of the park and provides an inventory of park resource conditions and problems. The SFM also includes a listing of all influences on a park, including those originating outside park boundaries. Influencing factors included in a SFM are: legislative and administrative requirements pertaining to the park, factors affecting the condition of all natural and cultural resources, land-use trends in and near the park, visitor-use figures and patterns, a facilities and equipment analysis, a status of current planning, and a map of existing management zoning (National Parks and Conservation Association, 1994). The SFM for each park is supposed to be updated every two years.

The second step in the planning process is the development of an Outline of Planning Requirements. This document identifies planning, design, and research needs for the park based on the problems identified in the SFM (National Parks and Conservation Association, 1994).

When it is time for a GMP to be updated and the development of an updated GMP is approved, a written Task Directive is drafted which describes the process for developing the GMP, delegates responsibility, directs public involvement, outlines which issues will be addressed, and states if an Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared as part of the GMP process (National Parks and Conservation Association, 1994).

The GMP process is the fourth step and includes gathering sufficient information about the resource(s), use of an interdisciplinary planning team, identification of issues, use of management zoning, formulation of several alternatives, consideration and integration of regional activities, and public participation (deFranceaux, 1988). The GMP process may be specifically designed to develop an Environmental Impact Statement.

In 1978 development and updating of GMP's became a legal requirement under the National Parks and Recreation Act (deFranceaux, 1988). GMP's are supposed to be updated every five to ten years (National Parks and Conservation

Association, 1994). In reality, because of funding and politics among other reasons, the cycle is often much longer. The current GMP being developed for Grand Canyon National Park is expected to be in place for ten to fifteen years before a major revision because of the magnitude and cost of the plans recommendations. Other units of the system such as the Blue Ridge Parkway have never had a GMP approved.

Despite the GMP being more comprehensive in nature than the former master plans, it is still essential that it be supported by specific implementation plans. The final step in the planning process is the development of specific implementation plans such as development concept plans, resource management plans, land protection plans, visitor management plans, interpretive prospectus, fire management plans, and exotic species control plans (National Parks and Conservation Association, 1994).

If the GMP calls for any development or redevelopment anywhere in the park, development concept plans will be created for each specific area of development. The development concept plan will serve as an area plan and will be much more specific than the GMP. For example the GMP may designate an existing mobile home housing area for employees to be redeveloped into a permanent housing area. The development concept plan will include the design of the housing area and will set the parameters for the project. All parks will have development concept plans supporting their GMP's.

All parks are also required to have resource management plans supporting the GMP. The resource management plan will guide the protection of all natural, cultural, historic, recreational, and scenic resources within the park.

Land protection plans will be developed on a park specific basis to guide the protection of non-federal land important to the park that is within the administrative boundary of the park. These parcels are commonly referred to as inholdings. The land protection plan will guide protection of these parcels by prioritizing them for acquisition and developing protection strategies.

Parks will have more specialized plans such as fire management plans, exotic

species control plans, and visitor management plans depending on the specific needs of the park.

Definition of an External Threat

An external threat to a park is any action or activity that occurs on lands over which the National Park Service does not have jurisdiction or control and damages any of the natural, cultural, historic, scenic, or recreational resources located within a park. Garrett (1982) states:

They (protected areas) cannot be seen as islands which exist in isolation from their surroundings. They are important parts of the regions in which they are situated, and the mutual relationships and linkages between them and adjacent land must be understood and applied to management (p.65).

External threats may include actions and activities such as mineral and energy extraction, timber harvest, industrial production, dam building, commercial strip development, road-building, and construction of residential subdivisions among a host of others.

Most parks only protect segments of natural, cultural, historic, recreational, and scenic resources. The parts of the resources located beyond the park boundary may or may not be protected by federal, state, or local laws, and are likely to be afforded much less protection. A park may only include the summer habitat for a herd of elk, the lower portion of a native trout river, half of a historic battlefield, only the foreground of a scenic view, or part of an ancient forest. Wildlife habitat that is protected within a park can be fragmented by residential development or road-building adjacent to the park, rivers may be polluted before they enter a park, parts of historic sites and battlefields may be converted to strip malls adjacent to a park, important elements of a scenic vista may be converted from agricultural to industrial use, and part of the same forest that is protected within a park may be clearcut beyond the park boundary.

In 1980 the Park Service completed a study of activities on lands adjacent to parks that were affecting park resources and developed a list of over 2000 including

strip mining, clearcutting, air pollution, a nuclear waste dump, and residential, commercial, and industrial development (National Parks and Conservation Association, 1994). A 1994 National Parks and Conservation Association book titled Our Endangered Parks (1994) states:

Parks were once seen as isolated enclaves preserved within impermeable boundaries. After a century of population growth and economic development, however, it has become clear that the integrity of a parks' natural and cultural resources is dependent on interactions with the large and complex systems that surround them.

Even Yellowstone National Park in a seemingly remote section of the west is not immune from the effects of growth and development on private lands. If the twenty counties in the three states that surround the park had been a state by themselves they would have been the fastest growing state in the union according to the 1990 census (Propst, 1992).

History of the External Threats Problem

External threats were first officially recognized as a problem for U.S. National Parks in 1933 when the Park Service issued a report on the problems facing wildlife in parks. The authors of the report concluded that most wildlife problems resulted from park areas not protecting entire habitats and they recommended that park boundaries be based on natural, rather than political considerations (Freemuth, 1991).

As the park system continued to expand, and the country continued to grow throughout the first part of the twentieth century, the types and frequencies of external threats increased. Mineral and energy exploration and extraction along with timber harvesting became increasingly serious problems, primarily in the west, while water pollution, urban sprawl, and air pollution problems began to affect Park Service areas nationwide. In 1963 two reports were issued that dealt with the growing external threats problem. The first again focused on wildlife and restated the conclusion in the earlier report that parks did not protect entire habitats (Freemuth, 1991). The second report was issued by the National Academy of Sciences and recommended Park

Service researchers study land-use, resource use, and economic activities on lands adjacent to National Parks. Once again no significant action was taken as a result of the reports but they did serve to focus more attention on the external threats problem.

In 1978 lawsuits filed to protect Redwoods National Park from clearcutting on adjacent National Forest lands resulted in a court decision that stated the Secretary of the Interior was responsible to protect parks from external threats (National Parks and Conservation Association, 1994). The Organic Act was subsequently amended to state:

The protection, management, and administration of (national parks) shall be conducted in light of the high public value and integrity of the National Park System and shall not be exercised in derogation of the values and purposes for which these various areas have been established, except where specifically authorized by Congress.

This amendment became known as the non-derogation standard and gave park managers, superintendents, and administrators significantly more latitude in protecting parks from external threats.

The Redwoods example illustrates a continuing and ironic problem. Even parks that are surrounded entirely by other public federal lands such as those administered by the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management are not necessarily protected or buffered from external threats. The National Parks and Conservation Association (1994) asserts that 1/3 to 1/2 of external threats can be directly traced to activities on other federal lands, specifically those of the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. University of Utah law professor and expert on park legal issues William Lockhart states that a large number external threats are the result of activities on other federal lands that are promoted by federal agencies (Kenney, 1991). There are several examples around the country where the managers of Forest Service and BLM lands have taken the initiative to protect the values of adjacent park lands. Even in these areas a threat still exists because the managers are not backed up by an agency policy or directive and any change in

management could result in a much lower level of protection.

In the late 1970's The Conservation Foundation concluded that because of the Park Service's very limited legal authority over activities on adjacent lands and the impracticality of acquiring large tracts of adjacent lands, cooperative efforts, linking the actions of federal, state, and local governments offered the best hope for protecting parks from external threats (Freemuth, 1991).

Shortly thereafter, in response to a study conducted by the Park Service and Congress that identified aesthetic and air quality degradation as the two most prevalent categories of external threats, the Park Service developed an external threats documentation and mitigation plan that was eventually blocked by Secretary of the Interior James Watt (Freemuth, 1991). Throughout the 1980's several more bills were introduced in Congress that were intended to address the external threats problem. They ranged from bills prohibiting the use of federal funds for projects adjacent to National Park areas that might be detrimental to park resources to bills that effectively created buffer zones around parks. Each of these bills was met with opposition from resource extraction industries and the Reagan administration and all were ultimately defeated.

A few current external threats examples give a good overview as to the extent and complexity of the problem.

A proposal to build a large IMAX theater, shopping center, and parking lot just outside the south entrance to Zion National Park would permanently obscure a scenic view of the park (National Parks and Conservation Association, 1994).

Air quality at Shenandoah National Park is already so poor on some days that vistas are almost completely obscured, yet there are plans to build 20 new coal fired power plants in the region (Kenney, 1991).

Wildlife habitat for deer, elk, moose, and grizzly bear on private lands adjacent to Glacier National Park's western boundary is threatened by development since a new road has been constructed to 17,000 acres of private lands in the area

(Kenney, 1991).

The BLM and San Bernadino County have proposed to construct the world's largest solid waste landfill just 8,000 feet from the boundary of Joshua Tree National Monument (National Parks and Conservation Association, 1994).

At Theodore Roosevelt National Park in North Dakota multiple sites are being leased by the Forest Service on the 1.3 million acres surrounding the park for oil and gas exploration and extraction. Many of the sites are within two miles of the park boundary (Kenney, 1991).

These activities, among a host of others pose significant threats to park system resources that are beyond the direct control of the National Park Service.

Planning Beyond Park Boundaries

Traditionally, the focus of park plans was internal in nature. Parks were viewed as areas within which a special planning process was applied to meet the Organic Act resource conservation and visitor use requirements. As the effects of external threats on park resources became evident over time it became clear that focusing on what was happening within a park was not sufficient to ensure protection of park resources. The GMP process requirement to consider the impacts that regional activities have on park resources, backed up by the 1978 Organic Act non-derogation standard constitute official and legal recognition of this fact. A 1988 Park Service management policy directive also supports a regional approach to park planning and states that "parks are integral parts of larger regional environments (USNPS Management Policies, Park Planning, 2:10, 1988)." The policy calls for cooperative regional planning with neighboring jurisdictions, other federal land managers, private landowners, and native American tribes on an ongoing basis and during the General Management Planning process. Protection of the rights of private landowners, providing technical assistance, use of cooperative agreements, and reasonable regulation are stressed (USNPS Management Policies, Park Planning, 2:10, 1988).

Many of the environmental laws passed by Congress during the past twenty years have given the Park Service some authority over certain activities beyond park boundaries. The Clean Air Act and the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act for example give the Park Service the power to block projects that would have negative impacts on park resources (Freemuth, 1991).

There are two goals of efforts to plan beyond park boundaries to address external threats. The first goal is the protection of the natural, cultural, historic, recreational, and scenic resources located within the boundaries of a park. The Department of the Interior and the Park Service are required by law to protect these resources and increasingly must look at actions and activities beyond park borders that have the potential to cause serious damage to park system resources.

Since it is not practical, or necessarily desirable, for the National Park Service to own the entire ecosystem(s), viewsheds, and watersheds within which a particular park is located, it is important to protect the values of these larger management units that are directly related to the integrity, value, or condition of resources within a park.

In addition to protecting the natural, cultural, historic, recreational, and scenic resources of the National Park System, the Park Service is also specifically charged with providing for the use and enjoyment of park visitors. It is well documented that people do not visit parks to see polluted air, polluted water, degraded scenery, and limited wildlife. The second goal is the protection the park visitor's experience, not only because it is a legal requirement of the Organic Act, but also to prevent erosion of the strong public support that the Park Service has long enjoyed and continues to need. Degradation of resources is likely to lead to a loss of confidence in the agency's ability to protect the system, a weakened constituency of support, and an incremental loss of high quality park areas.

Although most people are likely to agree that the goals outlined above are valid, important, and reasonable, protection of park resources from external threats is

controversial issues. Since such an effort often includes identification and mitigation of threats from activities on other federal lands, the issue of extension of Park Service control over adjacent federal lands becomes important. The multiple use mandates of the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management often conflict with the resource conservation mandate of the Park Service. This conflict sets the stage for power struggles and legal controversy over agency responsibilities and jurisdictions.

Far more problematic is the issue of extension of Park Service control over adjacent private lands. The rights of the private landowner are highly valued in the United States and any attempt by the government to restrict those rights is usually met by great resistance and opposition. The whole idea of the federal government being involved at all in state and local land-use planning is very controversial at best. Regulation of land-use has historically been a power of the state exercised through local governments and any involvement by a federal agency in local land-use decisions is seen as a great threat to that power.

In most areas where private lands abut National Parks there is continued resentment of the Park Service linked to the original acquisition of park lands. Any attempts by the Park Service to plan beyond their boundaries are often viewed as new threats and as the beginning of a new attempt to by the Park Service to take more land from private landowners.

The issue of extension of Park Service control over distant regions is increasingly related to planning beyond park boundary efforts and is increasingly controversial. The sources of certain external threats such as air pollution are sometimes discovered to be hundreds of miles away. Even if it were proven conclusively that air pollution from sources in the Los Angeles Basin or the Ohio River Valley was damaging views and other resources in parks hundreds of miles away, it would be difficult to convince residents of those regions that they should be subject to additional restrictions and controls on emissions to help solve the problem.

Cooperative Strategies

The strategy most likely to succeed to protect parks from external threats, recommended by Park Service officials, park managers and, park planners, and park advocates, is the use of cooperative regional planning. The National Parks and Conservation Association in Our Endangered Parks, (1994) states:

The best defense is a good offense. It is much easier, and places park resources at less risk, to emphasize sensitive planning and compatible activities on adjacent lands rather than to resolve controversial issues piecemeal (p.63).

As parks become less and less isolated from the impacts of development and federal spending spirals downward, it is essential that the Park Service seek cooperative avenues with other federal land managers and private landowners to protect the parks from the incremental damage caused by external threats. Luther Propst, Director of the Sonoran Institute (1992) states:

...People who care for parks ... are coming to realize that they cannot rely upon isolation and federal spending to protect the integrity of these areas (p.8).

To make cooperative strategies work park officials and advocates must effectively communicate to adjacent landowners, local jurisdictions, citizens, and regions the importance of the park resource to their local economies, local character, and local recreation needs. It is also important to communicate the crucial role these entities can play in protecting a resource of national and international significance. When dealing with private lands adjacent to park boundaries the adjacent landowners and jurisdictions have the ultimate power to determine how the lands adjacent to and related to parks will be used and developed. The challenge is to convince adjacent landowners and jurisdictions that it is in their best long term interest to protect the values of the adjacent park. Propst (1992) states:

The principle has become apparent in many communities that protection and enhancement of community resources is a better, more sustainable, approach to economic development than short term exploitation of community resources (p.5).

In order for any type of cooperative strategy to protect park resources to be successful the Park Service must put considerable effort into breaking down traditional barriers and hostilities. The local participants must see the Park Service as a partner in the process, not as a "big brother" figure dictating and manipulating the process. Garrett (1982) states:

... in most circumstances, when there is open and free consultation with all relevant information available in forms that everyone can understand, trust and cooperation increase and acceptable compromises are more easily reached (p.68).

This is why public participation in the planning process to protect parks from external threats is so important. If the public involvement part of the process is not fully supported, developed, and executed throughout, the effort may be doomed to fail because of opposition that may be at least partly unfounded.

Ecosystem Management

One type of cooperative regional planning that has been applied to protect parks from external threats is ecosystem management. This approach coordinates the management practices of all landowners within the larger ecosystem within which the park occurs (Freemuth, 1991). This approach has been attempted within the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (National Parks and Conservation association, 1994). The Nature Conservancy also uses a similar approach to protect the critical values of natural systems when they do not own all of the land in the system. This idea is especially well suited for parks surrounded by large tracts of federal lands owned by the Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management. Ecosystem management becomes more difficult when there are thousands of private landowners within the ecosystem area and the ecosystem has already been substantially altered.

In May of 1994 the Park Service received Congressional approval for a restructuring plan that will eventually organize groups of parks into clusters based on ecological, cultural, and geographical relationships. This effort should aid in

emphasizing and facilitating planning based on these larger, more appropriate units (Office of Public Affairs, National Park Service, 1995).

Cooperative Integrated Land-Use Planning

When dealing with adjacent lands owned by private individuals, a cooperative regional planning strategy that maximizes the benefits for all and minimizes the disadvantages for the landowners is the only approach that can realistically work. Cooperative integrated land-use planning is a regional planning process that considers activities on public and private lands adjacent to parks and attempts to minimize negative impacts on the park through early intervention and a heavy reliance on public involvement in the process (National Parks and Conservation Association, 1994).

There are several examples of successful cooperative integrated land-use planning that have successfully protected parks around the country. In the Richmond, Virginia area three counties, the city of Richmond, and the National Park Service have entered into a memorandum of understanding that has resulted in the protection of battlefield acreage adjacent to the Richmond National Battlefield Park and is intended to protect lands around other battlefields in the future (National Park Service Mid-Atlantic Regional Office, 1989).

A very promising cooperative integrated land-use planning effort that seeks solutions to external threats problems based on unique local circumstances is the approach taken by the Sonoran Institute in Tucson, Arizona. The Sonoran Institute was formed in 1990 to create creative mechanisms for dealing with conflicts between parks and adjacent communities (Propst, 1992).

The impetus behind the creation of the Institute was a proposal for a resort community on 6,000 acres of ranch land planned for an area bordering five miles of the eastern unit of Saguaro National Monument (Propst, 1992). This development had the potential to permanently alter wildlife habitat and mar views from within the park until the Sonoran Institute worked with park officials and the developer to create a plan that will protect critical wildlife corridors, restore riparian habitats, and

maintain critical open space within the development (Propst, 1992).

There have been several attempts and several successful examples of protecting park resources from external threats. It should be noted that rarely has a protection effort succeeded when there was not an emphasis on cooperative planning and public participation.

Protection of Scenic Resources Beyond the Boundary

Developing successful protection strategies for scenic resources located beyond park boundaries is especially difficult for several reasons. Although most people will agree on what lands are scenic, scenery is difficult to define in words. Once scenic views are identified they may be composed of a vast array of natural, cultural, and historic resources owned by hundreds of different people.

A single scenic view may be composed of heavily forested mountains owned and managed by the Forest Service, paper companies, and investors; large tracts of agricultural lands owned by hundreds of farmers and investors; small villages owned by dozens of citizens; and historic farmsteads that are privately owned.

Definition of Scenic Resources

The dictionary definition of scenery is: The aggregate of features that give character to a landscape (Random House Dictionary, 1980). Based on this definition scenic resources would be all of the important features that, when combined in a view, give the viewer the impression of a cohesive landscape character.

Any landscape can be divided into three primary scenic zones from any point from which it is viewed (see Figure 1). These are foreground, middleground, and background (Litton, 1968). The foreground is the zone closest to the viewer. The foreground also "provides the frame of reference, detail and sense of scale for all views (Shepherd, P.21, 1989)". Textures, colors, forms, and lines are most distinguishable in this zone.

The middleground links elements of the landscape and the features in the middleground characterize the landscape. It is in the middleground that the

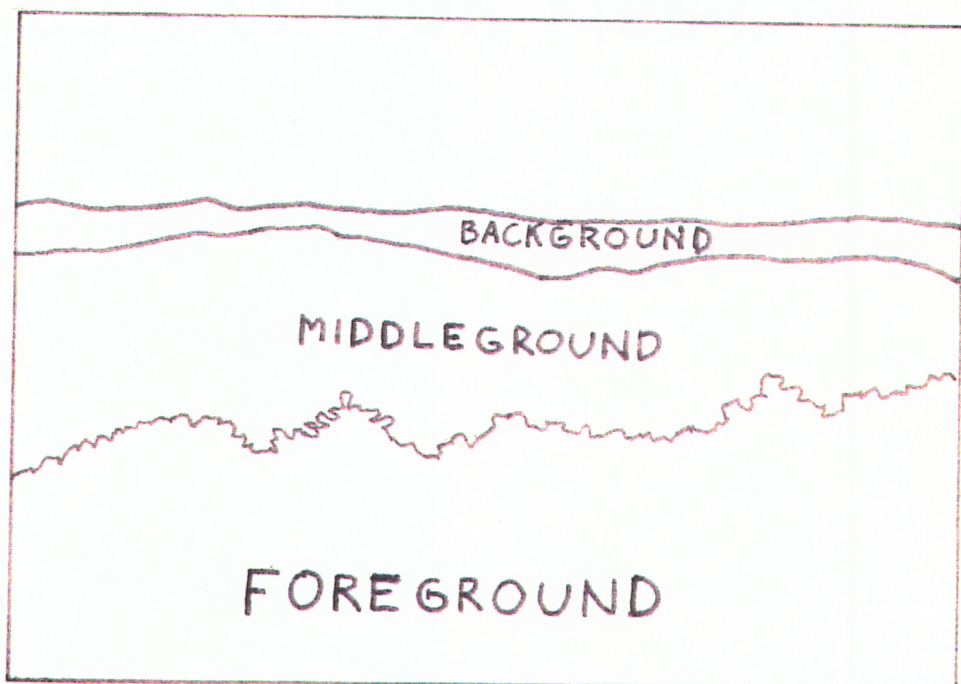


Figure 1: Scenic Zones

connection between the parts of the landscape, or the landscape pattern, can be seen (Litton, 1968). Color and textures are more subdued in this zone but forms and lines are still clearly visible.

The background zone provides a backdrop for the entire view, and although the furthest away, remains an important part of a scenic view, especially in large scale panoramas (Litton, 1968). Colors tend to be washed out in this zone, textures are indistinguishable, lines are difficult to discern, and only major forms are visible.

When scenic zones are being mapped from a linear feature such as a trail or parkway in a park, it is important to remember that the background at one location may be the foreground at another location and vice versa. Protection strategies should be based upon the closest zone to a viewpoint.

The National Park Service Historic Architecture Division distinguishes between two types of landscapes. Natural landscapes consist of topography, vegetation, geology, water bodies, and coast lines. These forms evolve through time and are acted upon by climatic influences, growth, and natural disasters among other factors (National Park Service, Melnick, 1984). The views from many parks may consist partly or entirely of natural landscapes.

Cultural landscapes are natural landscapes that have undergone an interaction with human culture over time (National Park Service, Melnick, 1984). The effects of culture on the natural landscape include roads, settlement patterns, land-use patterns, effects on vegetation because of harvesting or burning, and effects on waterbodies due to damming, channelling, or draining. Any landscape may have elements from any or all of the above categories that are from several historic periods (National Park Service, Melnick, 1984).

A problem related to park scenic resources and external threats is air pollution. The effects of air pollution already obscure views from and in National Parks such as Shenandoah, Sequoia, and Grand Canyon. Air pollution obviously reduces the observers ability to perceive elements of the landscape. The effects of air pollution

are most detrimental on background and middleground views. Air pollution can mar foreground views by causing physical damage to the resources visible in the foreground. Although the effects on scenic views in and from parks by air pollution is certainly an important issue, it is beyond the scope of this paper.

Scenic views that can be seen from a park, but are outside park boundaries inevitably will continue to change over time. This is especially true when the land that makes up the view is owned by hundreds or thousands of private citizens. The challenge is to identify the character, or vernacular of the views and work cooperatively with local communities to conserve the character of the landscape while allowing necessary development to occur. Shepherd (1989) states:

Protection of aesthetic and environmental quality need not be in conflict with new structures, improvements or activities. Forethought and attention to the site planning and design of these potential changes can create harmonious arrangements which are visibly compatible with the existing landscape matrix (p.16).

The only way such a synthesis can occur is if there is a strong coalition of community support to preserve the views from the park, and a cooperative integrated planning effort is undertaken with the Park Service participating as a partner in good faith. Because of the number of different resources that may comprise the scenic view, and complex ownership patterns, developing and implementing a scenic resources protection plan may be the most difficult task of all.

Although the idea of managing the larger ecosystem within which a park occurs is primarily applicable to natural areas, the basic structure could be used to manage parks areas such as Shenandoah or the Blue Ridge Parkway that have seriously altered ecosystems but extensive scenic resources. Instead of managing within the larger ecosystem, areas such as these could be managed as part of the larger viewshed within which they occur.

Several units of the National Park Service have embarked on projects to protect scenic resources beyond their boundaries. At Gettysburg National Military

Park in Pennsylvania the Park Service worked closely with the neighboring boroughs to develop a plan to conserve the agricultural landscape surrounding the park that is such an important part of the park. The effort was backed up by an act of Congress which directed the Park Service to initiate a conservation incentive program within the 11,000 acre Gettysburg Battlefield Historic District, created in 1975. The act also expanded the acreage of the park, and specifically listed methods by which the Park Service can assist local governments with conservation projects within the historic district. The Park Service is authorized to prioritize grants for projects within the district, provide technical assistance to local governments, reimburse up to 50% of planning costs, and accept conservation easements. The act also allows the Park Service to review any project requiring a federal permit within the district to assure its consistency with the goals of the district. An advisory commission was also set up to coordinate conservation and development projects within the district and the park (National Park Service Conservation Incentive Program for the Gettysburg Battlefield Historic District, undated).

In 1988 scenic lands adjacent to Manassas National Battlefield Park that are important to the site's historic integrity were slated for commercial development. A coalition of supporters organized to fight the project and development was averted through a congressionally authorized acquisition of the property (Kenney, 1991). This is an example of a coalition of support protecting a park from an external threat but also represents how costly a delayed reaction can be. It is almost certain that such a scenario would be virtually impossible in today's political and economic climate.

In the early 1990's, Shenandoah National Park began a related lands study that included a major assessment of related scenic lands. The analysis of scenic lands important to the park includes lands visible from the park trails and from Skyline Drive overlooks. This is an example of an effort to clearly inventory scenic resources beyond the park boundary so that a sound database will be in place to enable

informed decision making about development on these adjacent lands. It is important to note that this effort is only one important part of a planning process to protect scenic resources beyond the boundary. The Shenandoah related lands study also gathered detailed information about elevation, soils, land cover and land use, wetlands, development, wildlife habitats, watersheds, cultural resources, recreation resources, and existing resource constraints. The goal of the study was to identify lands within the park's administrative boundary that were suitable for acquisition by donation (National Park Service, Shenandoah National Park Related Lands Study for Abermarle County, draft 1992).

The next three chapters deal specifically with planning beyond park boundaries to protect scenic resources that are within park viewsheds. A model planning process is developed based on the principles discussed above, a case study is examined, and recommendations for the application of the model process are discussed.

III. PLANNING BEYOND NATIONAL PARK BOUNDARIES TO PROTECT SCENIC RESOURCES WITHIN PARK VIEWSHEDS: A MODEL PROCESS.

Introduction

A model planning process designed to protect scenic resources that are within park viewsheds, but beyond park boundaries, must include several key elements.

The model process must include a thorough inventory of scenic resources so problems can be clearly recognized and understood, and the issues, goals, objectives, and strategies developed during the process can be firmly grounded in objective fact to the greatest extent possible.

Public participation is especially critical because many of the scenic resources within park viewsheds may be partially or entirely owned by private citizens. Public participation will also help build support for the goals of the plan and help diffuse opposition based on misinformation or suspicion.

The planning process must allow room for adaption and modification. If the plan is not flexible, opportunities to improve the plan may be lost or delayed as new information and strategies emerge over time. A lack of flexibility may also lead to commitment of project resources to activities that are ultimately proven ineffective.

This chapter provides an overview of theoretical environmental planning approaches that can contribute to the development of a model planning process for protecting scenic resources beyond park boundaries. A model process is developed and discussed that is a synthesis of several of the theoretical models.

Foundation for the Planning Process: Theoretical Models

There are six basic theoretical approaches to environmental planning - rational/comprehensive, incremental, adaptive, contingency, advocacy, and participatory (Briassoulou, 1989). Each approach, or pure model, has distinct advantages and disadvantages (see Figure 2). The model process developed in this chapter is intended to maximize the potential effectiveness of the process by relying on theoretical approaches at points where they would be most successful.

Elements of Selected Environmental Planning Approaches.

| Element | Planning Approaches | | | | | | |
|---|------------------------|-------------|----------|-------------|----------|---------------------|---------|
| | Rational Comprehensive | Incremental | Adaptive | Contingency | Advocacy | Participatory Model | Process |
| 1. Includes public participation at the very beginning of the process. | No | No | ? | ? | ? | Yes | Yes |
| 2. Uses an interdisciplinary planning team to provide technical information and oversee the process. | Yes | No | ? | No | No | ? | Yes |
| 3. Designed to educate the public about problems and opportunities. | No | No | ? | No | ? | Yes | Yes |
| 4. Designed to build a coalition of support behind the planning effort. | No | No | ? | No | ? | Yes | Yes |
| 5. Decisions are based on comprehensive information about the resource being planned for. | Yes | No | Yes | No | ? | Yes | Yes |
| 6. Involves the public in the actual decision-making process. | No | No | ? | No | ? | Yes | Yes |
| 7. Allows for public review and comment of draft plans. | ? | No | Yes | ? | ? | Yes | Yes |
| 8. Designed to reach consensus through compromise. | No | No | ? | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| 9. The plan produced is flexible and able to change over time as conditions change and new information becomes available. | No | No | Yes | ? | No | Yes | Yes |

? indicates a maybe.

Matrix adapted and modified from Briassoulis, 1989. p.385.

Figure 2: Planning Processes Matrix

The Rational Comprehensive Model.

This approach involves a thorough analysis of all available data related to the problem, development of alternative solutions to the problem, and the selection of the best alternative based on scientific criteria. Planning is done by "experts" with the "public interest" in mind, and with no input from the public or citizens affected by the problem or the proposed alternative solutions.

The Incremental Model

Incremental planning is described by Briassoulos,(1989) as "crisis management with whatever means available at the moment" (Briassoulos, 1989, p.385). Reasons for the prevalence of this approach in practice are the conflict between the regional nature of environmental problems and the fragmented approach to local planning and government, the importance of local power, and the difficulty in reaching agreement on environmental issues (Briassoulos, 1989). An advantage to the incremental model is that it allows for progress to be made at times of crisis when support for otherwise unpopular ideas may be temporarily high. In reality a plan to protect an environmental resource may have to be incremental in nature in order to make progress one small step at a time against a tide of opposition.

The Adaptive Model

The adaptive, or iterative, approach to environmental planning is premised on the idea of developing "solutions to problems on the basis of predictable future events (Briassoulos, 1989, p.386)." As more information becomes known about an environmental problem or hazard, or mistakes are made, new solutions are tried and existing plans are modified accordingly. Scientists, planners, and interested parties are all involved in the process. Adaptive planning allows for flexibility to change and modify a plan. Ortolano's iterative open planning process is an example of adaptive planning. This approach allows for feedback loops in the process. The feedback loops allow information developed at later stages in the process to be input into steps started earlier. In effect several critical stages of the planning process are occurring

simultaneously and are never closed to modification. This approach also enables interested parties to see where the planning process is going as it develops and to speak out against ideas, trends, or decisions before they become part of a final draft and a significant amount of time has been invested in them (Ortolano, 1976).

The Contingency Model

The contingency model stresses the formulation of alternative plans in preparation for unexpected natural or man-made environmental problems that have the potential for serious consequences. This essentially means planning to deal with environmental emergencies that arise as a result of not planning to prevent them. This approach is well suited for dealing with uncontrollable natural disasters, but is a reactionary rather than proactive approach for dealing with man-made environmental emergencies.

The Advocacy Model

This model is based on the idea that it is not possible to satisfy opposing interests, and solutions to environmental problems should result in win - lose outcomes. This approach commonly results in prolonged periods of skirmish between opposing sides, during which no progress at all is made, and the problem has the opportunity to exacerbate (Briassoulous, 1989). Of course, any environmental planning effort needs an advocate group or coalition to build support for the idea of protecting the resource and to educate the public about the importance of protecting the resource. The advocate group or coalition must be careful not to adopt the pure theory of advocacy planning which leaves no room for compromise and negotiation with opposing interests. Without a strong advocate the concerns about protecting the resource can be easily overshadowed by special interests opposed to the project.

The Participatory Model

The participatory model encourages maximum involvement by citizens, interested parties, and those likely to be affected by proposed alternative solutions to environmental problems. Actual involvement in the decision making process, rather

than just the review of "experts" decisions, is intended to build consensus behind decisions and produce win - win situations.

In reality it is rare to find plans carried through to implementation that strictly adhere to a single theoretical model. Briassoulis states:

Given ... the disparity that usually exists between theoretical propositions and practical applications, as well as between plan formulation and plan implementation, the actual approaches pursued ... are blends of the ... types (Briassoulis, 1989, p.389).

A realistic model planning process must incorporate elements from several theoretical approaches at points where they are most appropriate in the process.

The Model Planning Process

Synthesis

The eight part model planning process outlined in the next section integrates elements of the rational comprehensive, adaptive, incremental, advocacy, and participatory models (see Figure 3). The elements of thorough gathering and analysis of data, goal formulation, and the development and selection of alternatives from the rational comprehensive model are incorporated into the model process. The adaptive model's iterative process is relied on throughout and especially in the implementation and evaluation parts of the model process. Elements of the participatory model are present in all parts of the process and provide the foundation for a successful plan. Elements of the advocacy model are present in the coalition building portion of the plan and incremental components can be found in the implementation part and in the way the plan might be applied to a case study such as the Blue Ridge Parkway.

The individual parts outlined in the model process are not intended to suggest that the process is a linear one. They are separated and organized based on roughly when each part would begin and to allow each part to be explained clearly (see Figure 3). The process allows each step to be updated as new information becomes available during the process. For instance, if a new issue was identified during the strategy development stage, it could simply be incorporated into the process. Involving the

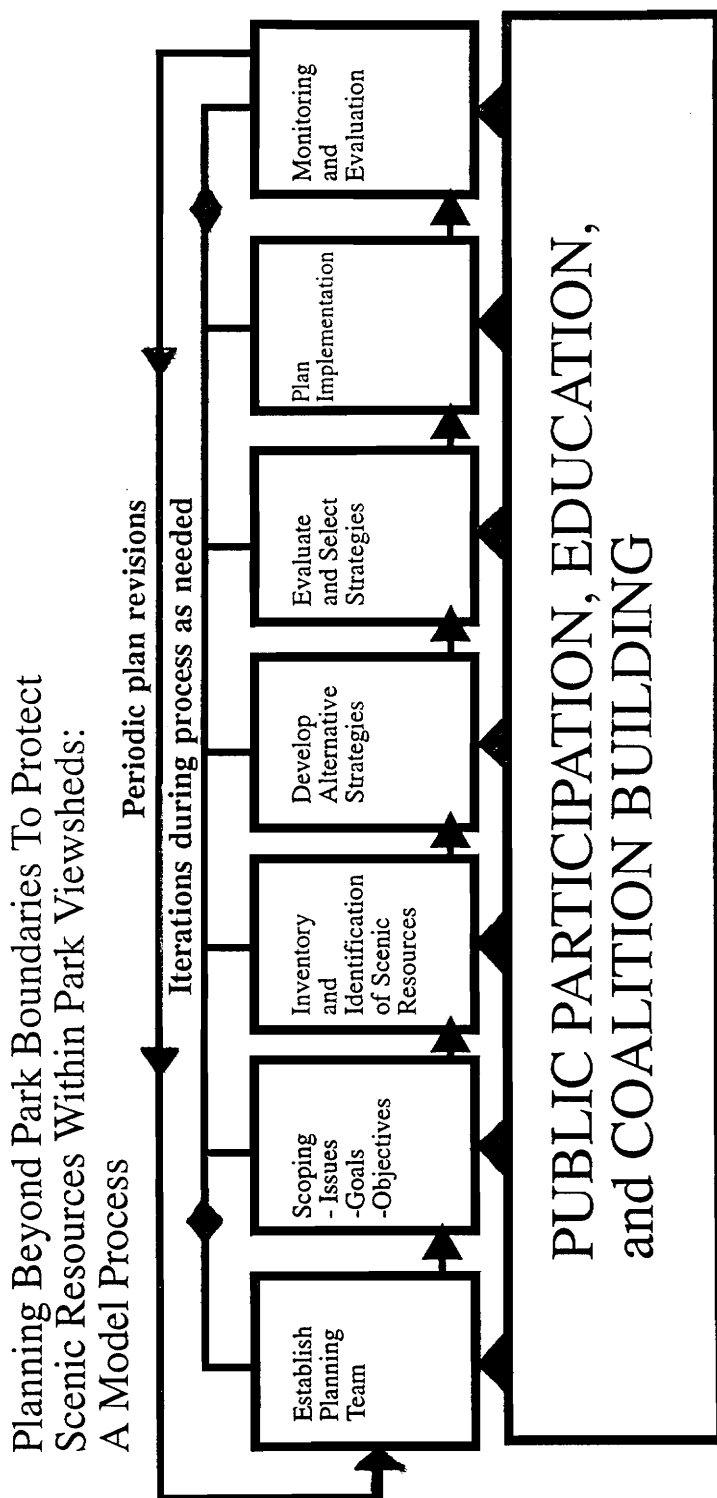


Figure 3: Model Process Flowchart

public in each step allows them to see trends in the process and influence them before they have significant time invested in them (Ortolano, 1976). Parts three through eight of the process are repeated on a regular basis when the plan's effectiveness is evaluated and new strategies become available.

The nine criteria used to develop the model planning process are:

1. Use of public participation early in, and throughout, the process (from participatory model).
2. Use of an interdisciplinary planning team (from rational comprehensive model).
3. Ability to educate the public about problems and opportunities (from participatory model).
4. Ability to build a coalition of support for the project (from participatory and advocacy models).
5. Decisions are based on detailed information about the resource being planned for (from rational comprehensive model).
6. Involvement of the public in the decision making process (from participatory model).
7. Opportunity for public review at draft stages (from adaptive and participatory models).
8. Ability to use compromise to reach consensus (from participatory model).
9. Flexibility to adapt to changes over time (from adaptive, incremental, and participatory models).

(See Figure 3).

Part One: Public Participation, Education, and Coalition Building.

Part one includes:

- * Identification and Notification of All Interested Publics.
- * Use of Interested Publics During Scoping Process to Help Develop Goals and Objectives.
- * Use of Interested Publics During Inventory of Resources and Identification of

Problems Process.

- * Use of Interested Publics to Help Develop Alternative Strategies.
- * Use of Interested Publics to Help Choose Strategies for Each Goal.
- * Use of Interested Publics to Assist With Implementation of Plan.
- * Use of Interested Publics to Help Monitor and Evaluate Implementation Efforts.
- * Use of Media to Educate Public About Issues.
- * Use of Support Groups to Help Build a Coalition of Support for the Project.

The process begins with identification of all governmental bodies, agencies, and citizens who might be interested in the protection of scenic resources within the viewshed of a National Park, including groups and individuals who are concerned about, or opposed to such a project. The list is likely to include: park staff; county and local government representatives; local, county, state, and Park Service planners; private landowners; managers of other public lands adjacent to the park; members of economic and industrial development commissions; members of chambers of commerce; local business people, state tourism officials, members of environmental groups; and concession and tour operators.

A well developed formal public participation process must be implemented at the beginning of the planning process and continued throughout. Understanding the different groups and individuals interested in or potentially affected by the plan is essential along with an understanding of what is wanted, needed, and will be provided for the public (USNPS Riverworks, 1988).

A citizens advisory committee can be formed at this stage and should include interested individuals and representatives of groups who have time to dedicate to the project. Care should be taken to ensure all interested publics that have been identified are represented on the committee.

Information gathered from the public is intended to provide guidance for the

planning team about what the public sees as the problem(s) and which solutions they see as viable. It is important that information gathered through workshops and surveys be documented and categorized into thematic areas so that it will be in a form useful to the planning team.

In order for the planning effort to result in effective results, there needs to be a strong coalition of support behind it. In addition, strong efforts to block it that are based on misinformation need to be avoided by maintaining open communication and involving those who are interested in, and concerned with, the planning process from the very beginning.

Parts one and two of this process would begin at about the same time and would continue throughout the process.

Part Two: Establishing the Planning Team.

The interdisciplinary planning team should include planners and landscape architects from the National Park, the Denver Service Center, and all jurisdictions within the planning area. The team should also include resource specialists, lawyers, and governmental representatives. The team would be responsible for:

- * Guiding the planning process.
- * Developing the citizen participation elements.
- * Organizing goals and objectives by theme.
- * Researching, presenting, and explaining alternative strategies.
- * Producing a final plan.
- * Overseeing plan implementation.

The planning team should focus their initial efforts on educating the public regarding the need and justification for the proposed planning effort. The team needs to communicate information about what the planning effort is not intended to be and the importance to local citizens and communities of conserving scenic lands associated

with the park.

The team will also be responsible for developing and organizing the public participation elements required during the planning process. These include the surveys, workshops, and other education and coalition building efforts. This should be done with review and input from the citizens advisory group.

The planning team can communicate information using: newspaper, radio, and television announcements; clear and concise project fact sheets; Park Service interpretive programs; periodic mailings to interested parties; slide shows and informational meetings; and constant communication with political leaders and representatives. The citizens advisory committee should be afforded the opportunity to review and comment on all materials before they are disseminated to the public.

The planning team will be responsible for developing alternative strategies that aren't developed during the citizen workshop and survey processes. They will also research and explain all alternative strategies to the involved public to facilitate better decision making.

The planning team will guide and manage the planning process from the very beginning and will be ultimately responsible for producing the draft plans and the "final" plan. Certain members of the team will be responsible for overseeing the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the plan and will be in charge of drafting the necessary changes when they are needed.

Part Three: Scoping.

The scoping process includes:

- * Development of a Park Specific Definition for Scenic Resources.
- * Development of a Statement of Purpose.
- * Identification of Issues.
- * Identification of Goals and Objectives.

* Determining the General Boundaries of the Planning Area.

Once interested parties are identified they should meet and communicate to accomplish several important tasks. A definition for "scenic resources" needs to be established at the very beginning of the process and should be based on the important elements of the scenic views located beyond the boundaries of the particular park area.

Scoping should also result in the development of a clear and concise statement of purpose that answers the question, "Why is such a planning effort necessary and important?". The statement of purpose should establish the overall goal of the planning effort. During this process, a statement of what the process is not intended to do should be developed.

A park visitor scenic resources preference and problem survey is recommended to obtain information on what the users of the park prefer to see in terms of scenery beyond the park boundary, and what activities they consider detrimental to that scenery. In conjunction with this effort, a local community scenic resources identification and problems workshop is recommended to gather much of the same information from the perspective of local residents.

The surveys and workshops will uncover the issues related to the problem and help planners determine the boundaries of the planning area. It is important for each information gathering forum to have a ranking system for issues so an understanding of the importance of each issue can be gained from the perspective of the groups and individuals involved in the process. Every effort should be made to make participation in the survey and at the workshop as broad as possible.

Following the identification of issues, each issue needs to be understood in terms of who is involved or responsible, what is currently happening, how it will it affect the park, where and when the effects will occur, and how visitors and local residents view the problem (USNPS Riverworks, 1988). It is also important to help prioritize issues by educating the public about the relative risk of problems and by

using a general ranking process during citizen workshops. The importance of issues should be determined based on a combination of the views of interested local citizens, park visitors, and the planning team.

Once the issues have been determined the goals of the project can be determined by reversing the issues. For example, an issue might be deterioration of views of forested valley's outside the park from hiking trails inside the park, caused by vacation home development and timber cutting. The corresponding goal would be the protection of views of forested valley's located outside park boundaries from viewpoints along hiking trails within the park. The objectives for that goal would be the sub-goals necessary for the overall goal to be reached. For this example they might include mapping of views from hiking trails, determination of ownership of the land comprising the views, and identification of the persons and agencies with control over projects and development within the areas of concern.

Scenic vistas beyond park boundaries that are important to one park may include several heavily forested mountain slopes seen from two viewpoints within the park, while scenic vistas important to another park may include forested hillsides, open agricultural land, historic buildings, cultural settlement patterns, and meandering rivers seen from 100 or more viewpoints within the park.

Part Four: Inventory and Identification of Scenic Resources Beyond Park Boundaries and Within Park Viewsheds.

This part includes:

- * Inventory of Important Scenic Resources Outside the Park Boundary Based On Issues Developed During Scoping.
- * Identification of Scenic Areas and Resources That are Rare, Unique, Degraded, or Threatened.
- * Prioritization of Threatened Resources.
- * Use of Interested Publics in All of the Above Steps.

The scoping and public participation steps should provide information on what areas the public and interest groups deem most important to plan for. In addition to this, an effort should be made to objectively map all park viewsheds, including the foreground, middleground, and background views (see Figure 3). Great caution should be exercised by planners undertaking such an endeavor because of the potential for the public to mistake an inventory with a plan. Referring to the mapping project as "what can be seen from Jellystone National Park" is better than calling it by a technical name or ominous sounding acronym. The effort should be explained to interested parties for what it is - a simple inventory of information with no attached or hidden plan.

Results of the park visitors survey and citizens workshops can be used to help identify important (based on ranking), critical, or sensitive areas within the viewsheds. If available, use of a geographic information system or CAD site analysis program could make the objective inventory of park viewsheds and the mapping of specific resources and problem areas much less time consuming.

After the viewsheds have been mapped and critical and sensitive areas have been identified, it should be determined what portions of the views from the park are owned by other public land management agencies, and what portions are privately owned. This is important because the strategies and tools used for working with other public land management agencies and with private landowners are very different.

Once park viewsheds and important vistas have been identified, the information needs to be documented in a form that is presentable and easily understood (USNPS Riverworks, p.5). Maps that break the park viewsheds into background, middleground, and foreground should be prepared and should also show the location of important, critical, sensitive, and degraded visual resources. Dividing the viewshed into these components is important because there will be a different set of tools or strategies that is used to address and prevent problems in each of the three areas. Maps showing portions of the viewsheds in public and private ownership

would also be useful. Fact sheets can be used to communicate information about visual resources identified as important to the park.

Part Five: Developing Alternative Strategies.

Part five includes:

- * Brainstorming Strategies For Reaching Each Goal and Associated Objectives.
- * Use of Interested Publics For Brainstorming Process.

Scenic resource protection tools and methods workshops are recommended to involve the public in determining alternative strategies to reach the goals established during the scoping phase.

The purpose of this step is to develop strategies based on the goals that have been identified previously. The goals have already been defined as the end results that will contribute to the solving of a problem, or the realization of an opportunity. Strategies should be geared towards attaining the specified goals. Once again it is recommended that the interested and concerned public be used as a resource to generate strategies (USNPS Riverworks, 1988). A brainstorming approach is recommended at this point to allow for the generation of as many ideas possible and to allow for new ideas and possible solutions to develop.

Strategies should be grouped under common themes and need to be prioritized based on the importance of the goals each strategy addresses. A strategy intended to accomplish a goal may involve a single action by a single person, or may involve a long series of actions involving many people. Strategies need to be divided between options designed to reach goals established for dealing with problems and opportunities on portions of viewsheds on other public lands, and on private lands. Working with other agencies may involve establishing or strengthening cooperative agreements or better coordination of planning efforts between the two agencies. Strategies for accomplishing goals for scenic protection on private lands may involve technical assistance and easement programs for private landowners and developers,

coordination with existing economic, industrial, and tourism development efforts, and coordination with existing resource protection and planning efforts at the local, county, and state levels.

Development of strategies should also include a review of existing regulatory, financial and technical assistance, and incentive programs (USNPS Riverworks, 1988). In addition, the planning team should provide research on innovative tools and strategies and relay that information to interested parties and the public to facilitate informed decision making at public workshops.

Part Six: Evaluating and Selecting Best Strategies.

Part six includes:

- * Evaluation of Each Strategy.
- * Selection of the Single Strategy or Group of Strategies That is Most Likely to Lead to Attainment of Each Goal.

After several alternative strategies designed to accomplish each goal have been presented, they need to be evaluated in terms of several general and specific questions. Each strategy will be evaluated in terms of:

- * Effectiveness towards accomplishing the goal or associated objective(s).
- * Effectiveness within time limits required to conserve the resource.
- * Existing legal and political barriers blocking implementation.
- * Economic feasibility.
- * Any foreseeable negative consequences and the groups and individuals affected (USNPS Riverworks, 1988).

The evaluation should be done by involved citizens and the planning team. The input of the public should help answer questions about the political viability of alternative strategies and the negative consequences associated with each.

For each goal developed to address each problem or opportunity, a strategy or

group of strategies needs to be selected that is most likely to have a positive result based on the criteria above. Strategies should be selected based on the importance of reaching certain goals and should also reflect the interests of as many parties as possible in order to maintain interest in, and support for the process (USNPS Riverworks, 1988). The planning team needs to make the final decision on strategies using the technical information they have compiled as well as the information gathered at workshops about the strategies preferred by involved citizens.

Part Seven: Development of an Implementation/Action Plan

Part seven includes:

- * Designating Teams to Work on Implementation of Strategies For Each Goal.
- * Delegating Responsibility For Accomplishment of Each Goal and Associated Objectives to a Team Leader From Each Group.

This step is critical because it is intended to ensure the translation of the plan into action and reality. Many plans are developed but few are implemented because once the planning process ends no responsibility is assigned to translate the plan into action. This process often results in a loss of interest in the planning effort and a lack of faith in planning as a tool to shape the future.

The first step towards plan implementation is the formation of an implementation team. This team should include members of the interdisciplinary planning team, the citizens advisory committee, and representatives from all interest groups. The implementation team should be divided into workgroups, and groups of related goals should be assigned to each workgroup. Once responsibility has been assigned, each workgroup should develop a workplan, or task list, that will serve as a step by step guide to implementing the objectives chosen to reach each goal.

It is essential that someone be in charge of overseeing the implementation process and that specific responsibility be assigned for implementing each goal. Each workgroup should have a group leader or spokesperson who can be held accountable

if no progress is made towards implementation. The group leader may run into obstacles beyond their control, in which case they should seek assistance from the planning team member in charge of the implementation effort. If the problem can not be overcome, modification of the strategies will be necessary.

Part Eight: Monitoring and Evaluation.

Part eight includes:

- * Periodic Evaluation of Implementation Progress of the Strategies For Each Goal.
- * Periodic Evaluation of the Effects of Implementation of Strategies.
- * Periodic Revision of Strategies.

To maintain and continue to build a coalition of support, implementation efforts and progress reports should be publicized and disseminated to interested citizens and groups. It is also important to periodically evaluate the success of the planning effort based on whether goals are being reached, workgroups are staying on target, and the occurrence of any unexpected problems or new opportunities. Goals, objectives, and strategies should be reviewed, reconsidered, re-evaluated and modified annually and as necessary. An effective way to do this might be to have an annual conference at which the results of monitoring are disseminated and discussed.

Once the initial inventory of park viewsheds has been completed and critical, sensitive, and problem areas have been identified, it is important to keep the inventory information updated by adding new general and specific problem areas that develop. This practice will not only assure updated information about the status of park viewsheds outside of park boundaries, but will also serve as an evaluation tool by showing the scope and pace of future degradation of scenery. It is also important to update the inventory of scenic resources by designating levels of protection that develop as a result of the plan.

The model planning process presented in this chapter is intended to be a guideline for planners. It is not highly detailed or specific so that it can be adapted to

the many different situations in different National Park Service areas.

The following chapters discuss the opportunities and problems associated with the application of the model process to the Blue Ridge Parkway. The Parkway was chosen as a case study because it presents more obstacles for planning beyond park boundaries for the protection of scenic resources than any other Park Service area. The Blue Ridge Parkway is also one of the National Park units that could suffer the most from the degradation of its scenic vistas.

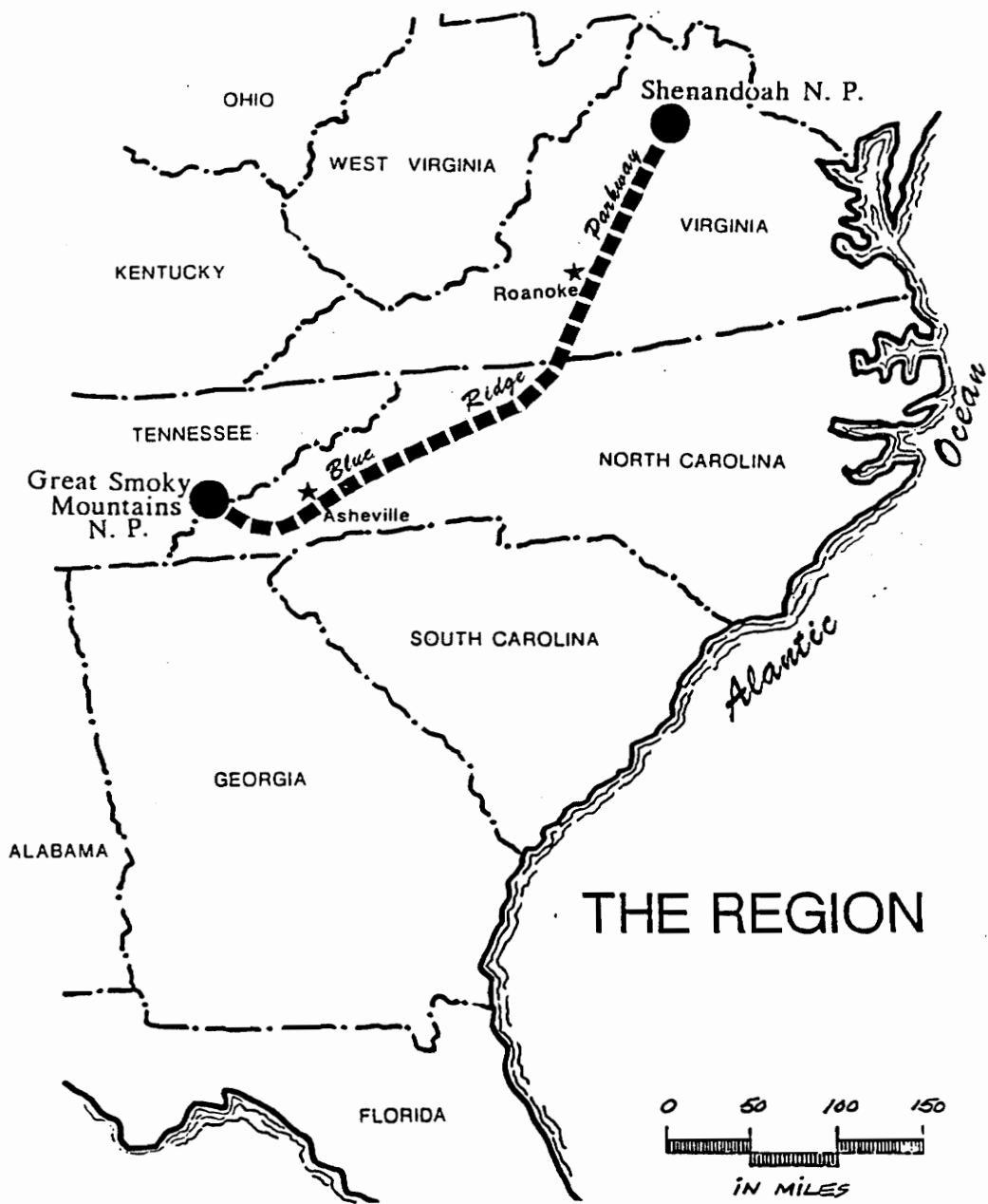
IV. THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY.

Introduction

The Blue Ridge Parkway (BRP) is a unit of the National Park Service and contains over 87,000 acres of land within a 470 mile long corridor that links Shenandoah National Park in Virginia with Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina (USDI, BRP Statement for Management, 1989)(see Figure 4). In addition to the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Parkway travels along or crosses the Black, Great Craggie, Great Balsam, and Plott Balsam ranges. A two lane scenic motor road, a narrow band of land on each side of the road, 275 maintained overlooks, and larger parcels of land located intermittently along the corridor are the primary components of the Parkway. The BRP shares a boundary with 29 counties, 13 planning districts, six congressional districts, four National Forests, an Indian reservation, and between 4000 and 5000 private landowners (USDI/BRP Statement for Management, 1989)(see Figure 5). The corridor of land owned by the Park Service averages only 800 feet in width along the over 275 miles of the Parkway that is located outside of National Forest areas (USDI, BRP Land Protection Plan, 1988).

The Parkway provides tourists and local residents with ample opportunities for leisurely automobile travel, picnicking, bicycling, hiking, camping, fishing, and historical and cultural education within a very diverse and incredibly scenic setting (see Figure 6). Elevations range from 600 to 6000 feet and the corridor contains parts of several physiographic provinces and ecological zones. There are 1,250 types of plants, twenty-five rare and endangered plant species, four rare and endangered animal species, 110 miles of streams, and ninety-nine historic structures within Parkway boundaries (USDI/BRP Land Protection Plan, 1988) The Appalachian Trail parallels the Parkway for over 100 miles (USDI/BRP Statement for Management, 1989).

Visitation has increased 169% since 1965 and now exceeds 23 million visits per year, making the BRP the most visited unit of the National Park System (USDI,



BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Figure 4: Blue Ridge Parkway Locus Map

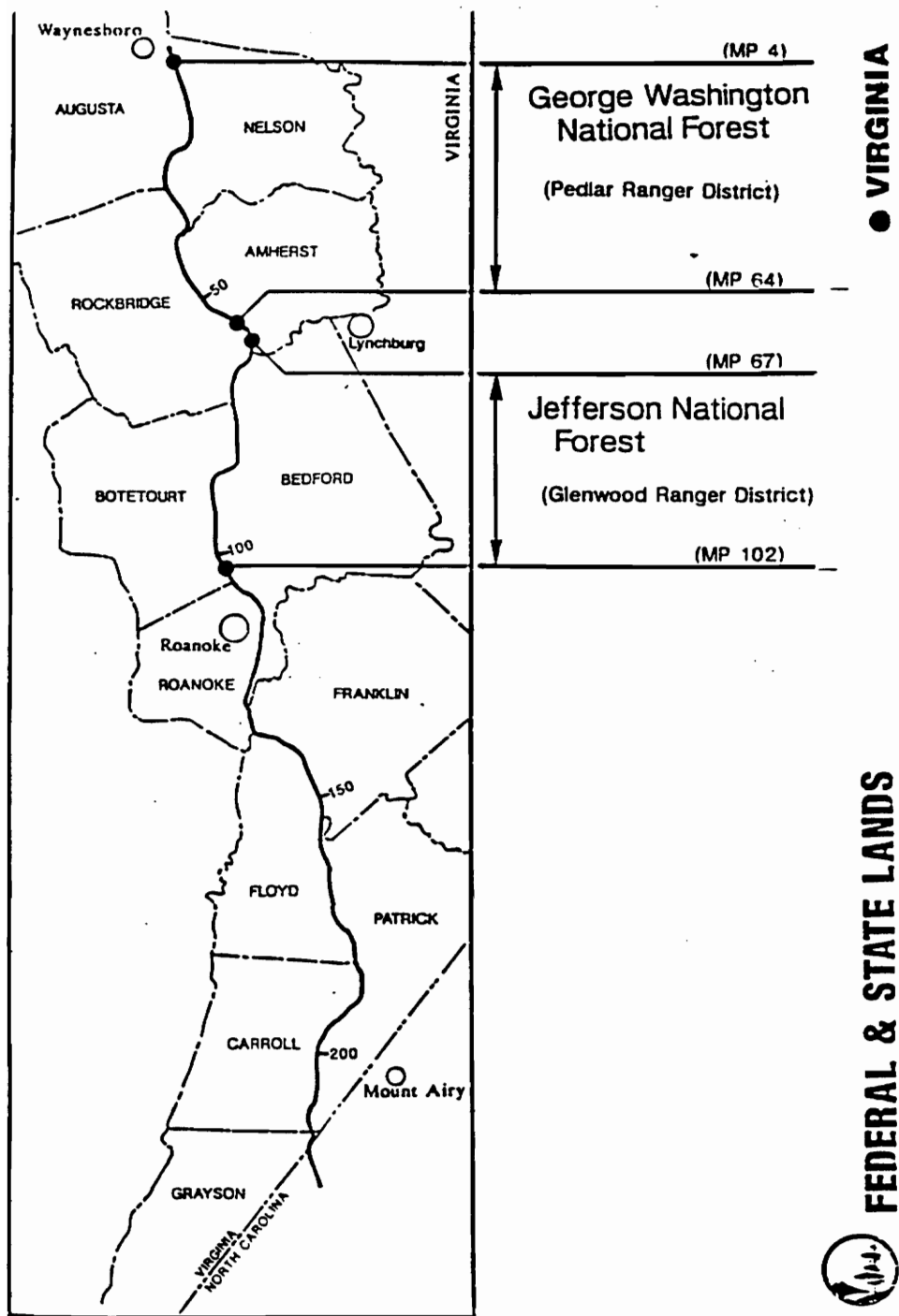


Figure 5: Blue Ridge Parkway Boundary Map: Virginia Section

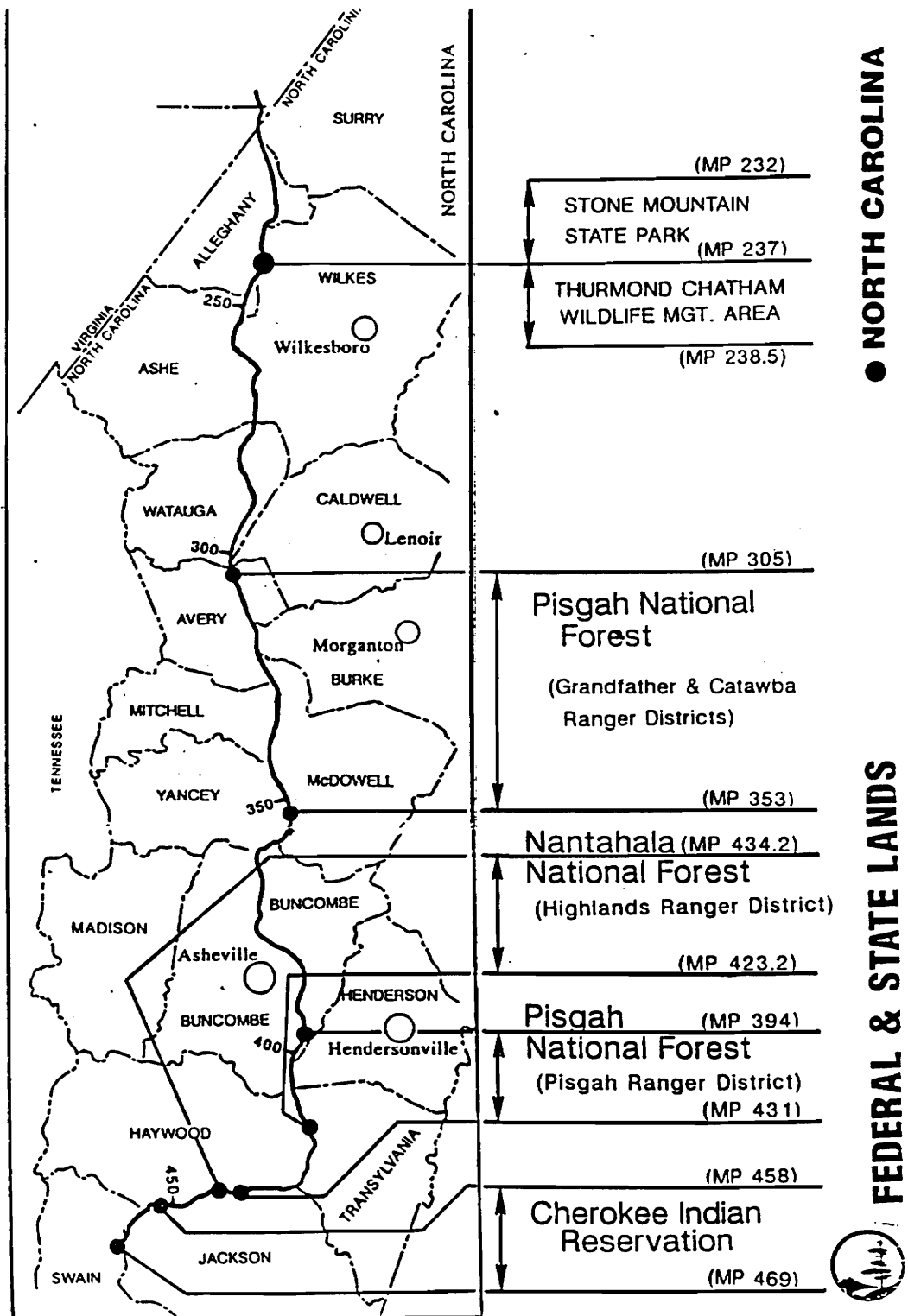


Figure 5: Blue Ridge Parkway Boundary Map: North Carolina Section



Figure 6: Typical Parkway Scenery

BRP Statement for Management, 1989). The high number of visitors is partially attributable to the fact that the Parkway is located within a days drive of approximately 50% of the entire population of the United States (USDI, BRP Statement for Management, 1989). Data indicate that visitation now peaks in October and visitation is increasing in the traditionally slow winter months (USDI, BRP Statement for Management, 1989). A 1989 economic impact study of the BRP by the Federal Highway Administration concluded that Parkway visitors contribute 1.3 billion dollars to the economies of the 29 adjacent counties. It is estimated that parkway visitors generated 98 million dollars in tax revenues and supported over 25,000 jobs in 1987 alone (Federal Highway Administration BRP Study, 1989. Executive Summary).

History and Purpose of the Parkway

The BRP Statement for Management describes the Parkway as "... a depression child, designed to rehabilitate man and land (USDI/BRP Statement for Management, 1989. p. i)." The late U.S. Senator from Virginia, Harry Byrd, is given credit for the idea for a parkway linking Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains National Parks. Byrd is said to have suggested the construction of such a road to President Roosevelt in 1933 while they were touring Shenandoah National Park (personal communication, Bob Hope, BRP, October 1992). The President liked the idea, and especially Byrd's plan for the construction of the road to provide badly needed employment for the economically devastated Appalachian region. Construction began in 1935 after the establishment of a unique arrangement between the federal government and the states of Virginia and North Carolina. The states were asked to purchase an average right of way of 125 acres per mile and an additional 25 acres per mile in scenic easements (USDI/BRP Land Protection Plan, 1988). The average right of way is now 100 acres in Virginia and 115 acres in North Carolina (USDI, BRP Land Protection Plan, 1988).

In 1936 Congress officially named the new road the Blue Ridge Parkway and

incorporated it into the National Park System (USDI, BRP Statement for Management, 1989). The official purposes of the Parkway are to "link Shenandoah National Park in Virginia and Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina and Tennessee by way of a recreationally oriented motor road", "conserve and interpret the unique natural and cultural resources of the Southern Appalachian Highlands", and to "provide for leisure motor travel through a variety of environments" (USDI, BRP Statement for Management, 1989, p.4). Parkway designer and landscape architect Stanley Abbott not only had to design a road to meet the above objectives, but also had to facilitate the repair of a landscape that had been devastated by years of overgrazing, clearcutting, erosion, and wildfire (Davis, 1990). Abbott intentionally planned a route that would maximize contact with high quality scenic, historic, and natural features (USDI, BRP Land Protection Plan, 1988). The Parkway statement for Management states:

In order to maximize scenic views, the Parkway was located in terrain that normal roads would have avoided. An objective is to give visitors the impression that they are in a park without boundaries extending to the horizon (USDI, BRP Statement for Management, 1989. p.4)(see Figure 7).

To help protect some of the vistas located between the Parkway boundary and the horizon, scenic easements were purchased during the corridor acquisition process. The acreage of scenic easements in Virginia has dropped from 947 to 245.48 acres and North Carolina easements have decreased to 809.09 acres from an original total of 1,115. These decreases are the result of easement acres being exchanged or acquired (USDI, BRP Land Protection Plan, 1988). The majority of the easements are on lands within the foreground of the Parkway viewshed and there have been some difficulties encountered administering the program due to vague legal language in some of the original easements (Jim Fox, BRP, October 92).

The Blue Ridge Parkway was completed in 1987, 52 years after work began and at a cost of approximately 130 million dollars (Bob Hope, personal communication, October 1992).



Figure 7: Panoramic Views From the Parkway

Statement for Management

The Blue Ridge Parkway Statement for Management (SFM) was last updated in 1989 and serves as the primary guiding document for planning activities at the Parkway. The SFM re-iterates the significance of the Parkway, inventories influences on Parkway resources, reviews current management zoning at the Parkway, and discusses planning, major issues, and objectives. The SFM lists significant issues at the Blue Ridge Parkway as: 1. Changes in traditional land uses, 2. Access from public and private roads, 3. Increased visitation, 4. Aging and inadequate facilities, 5. Lack of base line data, 6. Lack of information about the Parkway visitor, 7. Declining interest in the agricultural lease program, 8. External threats to resources, 9. Need to create more opportunities for public involvement, 10. Inadequate visitor services, 11. Deterioration of facilities and resources (Blue Ridge Parkway Statement for Management, pp.35,36, 1989). The SFM also lists a series of objectives designed to deal with the issues listed above. The Parkway is currently developing an interpretive prospectus that will provide much of the updated information needed for an updated SFM (personal communication, Gary Johnson, 5/95).

General Management Plan

The Blue Ridge Parkway has never had a parkwide General Management Plan (GMP) completed. In 1971 a Master Plan was prepared that was subsequently deemed inadequate. The Master Plan was revised in 1976 but never approved (BRP, SFM, 1989). This means that the primary planning document for the Parkway is the 45 page 1989 SFM. The initiation of a GMP process for the Parkway is currently on hold (personal communication, Gary Johnson, 5/95). Fortunately several of the "sub-plans", including a resource management plan, a land protection plan, fire management plan, a boundary management plan, a trail management plan and several vegetation management plans, all of which are usually developed under a GMP, have been completed using the SFM for guidance.

Management Zoning

The 87,000 acres of Parkway owned lands are divided into four zones for management purposes. The Natural Zone contains 73,284 acres, and the overriding management goal is the conservation of natural resources and processes. There are five management subzones within the Natural Zone. An Outstanding Natural Features Subzone of 765 acres is intended to protect unusual or unique resources. A Natural Environment Subzone contains the 11,940 acres of undeveloped land found within larger nodes intermittently along the Parkway. This subzone is managed to conserve natural resources. A Protected Natural Area Subzone of 7,770 acres is intended to strictly protect fragile and/or ecologically significant lands. A Landscape Management Subzone contains 48,180 acres and includes the actual roadway, shoulders, overlooks, bays, vistas, private road easements, and most of the other lands immediately adjacent to the Parkway road. This subzone is managed to protect the structural integrity of the Parkway road and enhance scenic values by maintaining clearings, maintaining vegetative screens, and preventing development that would substantially change the character of the landscape. An Agricultural Management Subzone includes 4,625 acres of pasture and cropland that is leased to farmers to help maintain the active agricultural component of the landscape (USDI, BRP Land Protection Plan, 1988)(see Figure 8).

A Historic Zone of 2,220 acres includes all lands containing, and related to, the historic resources of the Parkway. The Park Development Zone is approximately 1,425 acres in size and includes Parkway maintenance and visitor service facilities. The Special Use Zone contains approximately 10,382 acres of lands over which the Park Service has an active lease, a scenic easement, or has expressed an interest in acquiring (USDI, BRP Land Protection Plan, 1988).

Parkway Land Use Maps

All lands within the Blue Ridge Parkway administrative boundary have been mapped at a scale of 1:200. The Parkway Land Use Maps (PLUMS) provide details

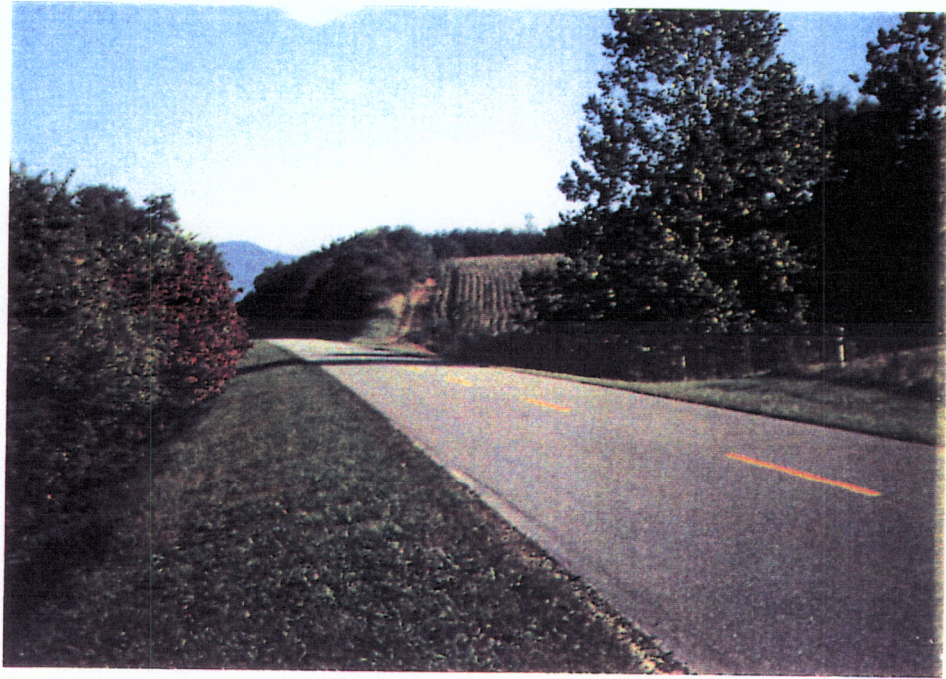


Figure 8: Agricultural Lease

on Park Service boundaries, private lands within the administrative boundary by tract, vegetation, overlooks, natural resources and cultural features. The maps are used to guide land acquisition, planning, vegetation management, and roadway maintenance. The major boundaries and the roadway are currently being digitized into Autocadd, with the ultimate goal of having all PLUMS features computerized into an interactive form (personal communication, Gary Johnson, 5/95).

The Land Protection Plan

The Blue Ridge Parkway Land Protection Plan (LPP) is used as a guide to protect non-federal land important to the Parkway, and within the administrative boundary of the Parkway (inholdings). There are currently 351 parcels classified as inholdings accounting for a total acreage of 8,388.15 acres (USDI, BRP Land Protection Plan, 1988). The LPP addresses eight major issues:

1. Potential traffic problems and reduced quality of visitor experiences that can result from the development of adjacent parcels of land accessed from the Parkway, or by crossing the Parkway.
2. Minimum requirements for protection of the outstanding scenic, natural, cultural and recreational resources that are an integral part of the Parkway experience.
3. Maintenance of vistas obstructed by vegetation.
4. Needs for recreational and administrative uses as developed in existing development concept plans.
5. Continued and enhanced cooperation with local governments and residents to protect Parkway resources.
6. Cost-effective methods of acquiring necessary interests in lands.
7. Prioritization of parcels for protection.
8. The ability to acquire, administer and enforce scenic and conservation easements.

The first goal of the LPP is to control hazardous public and private road crossings and accesses. Protection of significant resources and providing for visitor use is the second priority goal, and protection of scenic vistas is the third goal. The LPP

identifies 351 parcels of non-federal land within Parkway boundaries and prioritizes them for acquisition based on the number and priority of LPP goals each would support.

Acquisition is recommended only when no other alternative is available and the LPP states:

This land protection plan proposes that only the absolute minimum of land be in direct Federal ownership and/or management. While the primary responsibility for perpetuation of the more distant scenic resources rests with the states and with neighboring counties and communities, Parkway management would be prepared to comment on issues involving these resources (USDI, BRP Land Protection Plan, 1988. p.29).

The LPP identifies each parcel by PLUMS tract number, acreage, current owner, reason for proposed protection, and proposed protection strategy. Proposed protection strategies include fee-simple acquisition, acquisition of a scenic or conservation easement, development easement, compensation, and exchange. The LPP was recently revised with the only major changes being minor adjustments in acquisition priorities and an update of activities. All acquisition under the LPP is presently on hold while Congress contemplates a five year land acquisition moratorium (personal communication, Gary Johnson, 5/95).

Current Efforts to Protect Scenic Resources Beyond the Boundary

There are several characteristics of the Parkway that make it especially vulnerable to the effects of activities on adjacent scenic lands. The three primary characteristics contributing to the problem are the high number of jurisdictions and private landowners that share a boundary with the Parkway, the high elevation of the road, and the limited control the Park Service has over most of the Parkway viewshed. Ironically, the length of the Parkway, the expansive scenic views afforded by the elevation of the road, and the "living" quality of especially the privately owned lands beyond the boundaries are also the characteristics of the road that have made the Parkway such a popular tourist attraction.

The number of jurisdictions and landowners within the Parkway viewshed is problematic in several ways. U.S. Forest Service, Indian, and state wildlife refuge lands do provide a limited buffer of protection for Park Service lands and some protection for lands within the viewshed of the Parkway. The threat of major residential, commercial, or industrial development occurring on these lands is less than on private lands, but it is important to remember that the Forest Service - the public landowner with the greatest common boundary with the Parkway - is required to manage National Forest lands for multiple uses including timber production, mineral extraction, and intensive recreation (see Figure 9). There is presently a non-binding cooperative agreement between the Park Service and U.S. Forest Service that allows Parkway officials to review and comment on proposed timber cuts within view of the Parkway and to date the Forest Service has modified or canceled all timber cuts that Parkway staff have objected to (James Ryan, Blue Ridge Parkway, personal communication, 9/92).

The private lands within the Parkway viewshed are very susceptible to change due to both land development and agricultural abandonment. Over 50 percent of the land directly abutting the Parkway corridor is privately owned. State regulations coupled with local zoning and subdivision ordinances currently provide the only regulation over private lands within the Parkway viewshed and only eight of the adjacent 29 counties have complete zoning ordinances. Twenty six of the counties have comprehensive plans and seventeen have subdivision control laws (USDI, BRP Land Protection Plan, 1988). The strong landowner rights sentiment characteristic of Appalachia may be one reason for the low level of land-use regulation.

Major residential, commercial, and industrial development has occurred within the viewshed of the Parkway, especially in Roanoke County, and is continuing at a steady pace (see Figure 10). There are currently ongoing negotiations between Parkway staff and Roanoke County planning officials about the status of scenic lands within the Parkway viewshed in the Roanoke Valley. This activity was initiated when



Figure 9: Clearcuts on Adjacent Forest Service Lands

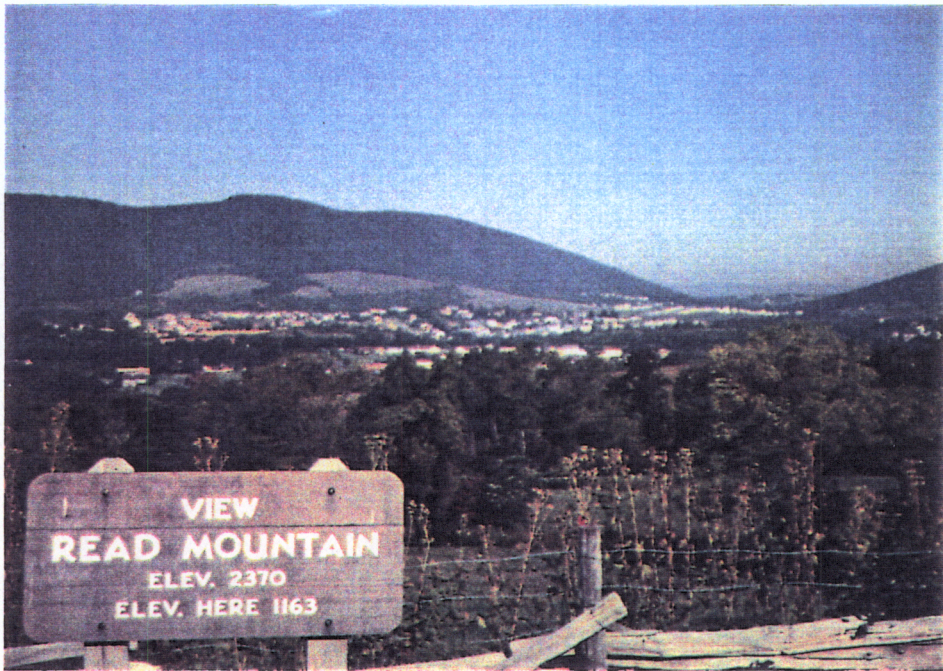


Figure 10: Development Near Parkway in Roanoke County

the County began re-zoning procedures for almost all lands adjacent to the Parkway. The re-zoning would greatly increase allowable residential densities on adjacent lands. The Parkway resident landscape architect has identified all of the critical and sensitive views beyond the boundary in the county and attended public hearings urging consideration of the importance of these areas to the condition and quality of the Parkway. This recent activity is promising in that it is an example of cooperation and communication between the National Park Service and County government. It also reveals that communication on an ongoing basis may have helped the County guide planning efforts within the Parkway viewshed and given the Parkway adequate time to prepare for, and participate in, planned zoning changes. This activity also was the impetus for the formation of the Coalition for the Blue Ridge Parkway, discussed later in this section.

Parkway designer Abbott's placing of the Parkway "in terrain that normal roads would have avoided" has been a double edged sword. Abbott's decision has certainly succeeded at providing the traveller with opportunities to enjoy sweeping, multi-directional views. It has also allowed Parkway views to be impacted by development and land disturbance activities occurring over a much greater geographical area (see Figure 11). The only lands that the Park Service has any legal control over within this tremendously large viewshed are the acres that it owns in fee simple and the parcels that it owns scenic easements on. If it had been predicted in the 1930's that there would be incredible suburban growth and land development along certain sections of the Parkway within sixty years, efforts would likely have been made to purchase title or easement of many more acres within the foreground and middleground sections of the viewshed.

Public/Private Partnerships

Parkway officials are currently involved in efforts to plan for commercial facilities along the Parkway in Floyd and Patrick counties at Rocky Knob. The Floyd/Patrick Bi-County Commission was formed to study the possibility of formally



Figure 11: Distant Land Disturbances

creating a public/private partnership between Parkway management, County officials, and private commercial developers. The Floyd and Patrick County area is in need of expanded visitor service facilities and the concept currently being discussed involves linking Park Service interpretive facilities with appropriate privately owned visitor service facilities and general tourism related commercial facilities.

The concept being explored is based on three nodes of development with the node directly adjacent to the Parkway containing a visitor center and possibly other interpretive facilities. The next node would be controlled by the Bi-County Commission and would contain private for profit businesses directly related to the purpose and character of the Parkway such as craft shops, antique galleries, lodges, or theaters. The third node, located the furthest from the Parkway, would contain privately owned tourist related commercial service businesses such as motels and gas stations. The intent of such a project is to concentrate commercial development in an appropriate area and where the impact on Parkway scenery would be minimized and design controls could be utilized to keep the character of development in line with Parkway goals and objectives. The initial project study grant was funded and much of the preliminary research has been completed. The project has been enthusiastically supported by the Park Service, the County governments, and state and federal representatives. Many involved with the effort see the Rocky Knob project as a potential model for use along the entire length of the Parkway. (Sources: Personal communication, Bob Hope, BRP 10/92; personal communication, Wayne Wilcox, landscape architect, Anderson and Associates; USDI/BRP Study Proposal for Public - Private Partnerships for Appropriate Land Adjacent to the Blue Ridge Parkway, undated; Floyd County Board of Supervisors, CORD Grant Application for the Rocky Knob project, 12/91.) To date the design schematics for the Rocky Knob project have been completed and the project is on hold pending funding (personal communication, Gary Johnson, 5/95).

The North Carolina Mountain Ridge Protection Act.

In 1983 the State of North Carolina passed a law that gave counties the power to restrict development on mountains and ridgetops higher than 3000 feet in elevation. The North Carolina Mountain Ridge Protection Act, also known as the "Ridge Law", gives counties the power to regulate construction within a 200 foot wide ridgetop buffer zone. The Ridge Law prohibits structures over thirty feet high from the zone, but exempts water towers, antennas, utility poles, and church steeples. The law is further weakened by a provision that allows the individual counties to ban all construction in the regulated zone, adopt a permit system, or vote to not participate at all. In addition, the Ridge Law only pertains to ridges in excess of 3000 feet that are at least 500 feet above the adjacent valley floor. (Sources: USDI/BRP Land Protection Plan, 1988; Davis, 1990).

Outdoor Advertising Regulations

Both Virginia and North Carolina have state laws regulating the placement of advertising billboards adjacent to the Blue Ridge Parkway. In Virginia, billboards are not allowed within 650 feet of the Blue Ridge Parkway boundary. North Carolina restricts billboards within a zone that extends 1000 feet in both directions from the centerline of the Parkway road. Both states have exemptions for areas within 1000 feet of a Parkway/State Highway interchange. (Source: personal communication, Bob Hope, BRP, 11/92.)

Parkway management has clearly recognized loss of scenic resources on adjacent lands as a problem. The LPP states:

There are actual and potential uses of external lands (lands outside the administrative boundary) that may impact the Parkway's pastoral character and the visitor's experience. These include homebuilding, commercial development, land clearing and road building (USDI/BRP Land Protection Plan, 1988. p. 11).

The primary strategy proposed for dealing with this issue is stated in the Parkway statement for management: "Responsibility for protection of cultural landscapes and

scenic resources beyond federal ownership must rest with neighboring communities and counties (USDI/BRP Statement for Management, 1989). Although this is essentially true, in order for local communities to understand the needs and values of the Parkway and why it is important to them, there must be a continuous stream of communication and cooperation between the Parkway staff and county governments. The SFM lists several objectives for dealing with the issue of changing land use beyond the boundary which include encouraging cooperation between the Park Service and local communities, coordinating land planning efforts with local and regional planning agencies, and inventorying and prioritizing scenic and natural resources (USDI, BRP, Statement for Management, 1989). Recent communications with Parkway planning and landscape architecture staff indicate that many of these efforts are being thwarted by a lack of funding and staff.

Friends of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

In 1991 private citizens concerned about the future of the Parkway formed a non-profit organization named Friends of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Their mission statement reads: " To protect, promote and preserve the Blue Ridge Parkway through conservation, preservation, education, and advocacy."

This group has become an extremely strong and vocal advocate of protecting the Parkway. The Friends organization took the lead in pushing for more reasonable zoning densities during the conflict with Roanoke County mentioned previously.

Coalition for the Blue Ridge Parkway

The Friends of the Parkway also helped spearhead the creation of the Coalition for the Blue Ridge Parkway, a Parkway corridor-wide initiative to look at the problem of development within the Parkway viewshed. Most of the Planning District Commissions along the Parkway have been participating in this effort. This is the first cooperative attempt to coordinate protection of the Parkway viewshed along the entire length of the road. The Coalition also is the perfect vehicle for heading the public participation, education, and coalition building efforts called for in the first

step of the model process.

The Coalition is currently involved in efforts in conjunction with North Carolina State to produce model viewshed maps for the Ashville and Roanoke areas of the Parkway. Once the model maps are produced they intend to designate sensitivity classes to help prioritize protection efforts in the most critical parts of the viewshed (personal communication, Gary Johnson, 5/95).

The following chapter will explore the application of the model planning process developed in chapter three to the Blue Ridge Parkway. A strategy for applying it that is most likely to be successful in light of the fiscal and political problems involved will also be suggested.

V. PLANNING TO PROTECT SCENIC RESOURCES AT THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY.

Strategy for Application of the Process

The extreme linear nature of the Blue Ridge Parkway, number of neighboring landowners, and massive viewshed make the selection of an appropriate strategy for application of the model process critical. Application of the planning process to a stereo-typical National Park such as Grand Canyon would not involve as many issues because there are a relatively small number of landowners (primarily other federal agencies) and political jurisdictions adjacent to the park (the 1.2 million acre park is contained within two counties), the park encompasses most of the highest and lowest elevations in the area, and the Park Service owns almost all of the land within the viewshed of the park. A successful effort to plan for the protection of scenic lands beyond Blue Ridge Parkway boundaries requires a strategy that involves over thirty affected jurisdictions and thousands of interested parties. It would make little sense for the Park Service to plan for the use of private and public lands beyond Parkway boundaries and then present the final plan to the counties which have the power to control land use on the lands in question with the expectation that they would approve land use controls needed to implement the Park Service Plan.

In a thesis titled "Protecting the Visual Values of the Blue Ridge Parkway: A Scenic Corridor Study" Davis (1990) describes and analyzes four alternative strategies for implementation of a scenic corridor protection plan and recommends a preferred alternative. The strategies presented by Davis are reviewed in the first part of this chapter and a strategy for applying and implementing the model planning process to the Parkway is formed using some of the elements of the strategies reviewed.

The first strategy evaluated by Davis is continuation of existing authority. This option would leave current land use control power structures intact. The National Park Service would continue to manage Parkway owned lands and easements

under the direction of the Land Protection Plan. Private landowners in the viewshed would continue to enjoy the freedom to make land use decisions within the bounds of local and state law, whether or not the resulting change(s) was appropriate from the perspective of Parkway visitors and management. The states would maintain the authority to supersede local land use law with state sponsored initiatives such as the North Carolina Ridge Act. Davis' evaluation concludes that, although this alternative would likely be the most acceptable to local communities and politicians, it would result in the lowest level of protection for scenic resources in the Parkway corridor.

In theory, the National Park Service operating under existing authority could simply map the entire Blue Ridge Parkway viewshed, determine critical and sensitive areas, pursue Congressional boundary expansion authority, and purchase the land. This option, even if it were possible, is unfeasible and undesirable for several reasons. The cost of such a project would be tremendous and totally unrealistic in a dawning (and for the Park Service continuing) age of federal fiscal austerity. The negative political repercussions would certainly assure the project's downfall even if budgetary constraints did not. There remain bitter feelings towards the Park Service to this day because of the relatively modest amount of land purchased from private landowners by the states for the original Parkway right of way. If all of the critical and sensitive parts of the viewshed were owned by the Park Service and all of the farmers and other residents were removed, the Appalachian culture and living landscape that the Parkway is supposed to interpret would soon begin to erode. After several years a road through a tunnel of trees with significantly reduced and less varied vistas would be the likely outcome (see Figure 12).

A modified acquisition scenario that would better serve the needs of the Park Service would be to purchase the critical and sensitive parts of the viewshed and then sell the parcels back to private owners with deed restrictions and easements designed to protect historic structures, the cultural landscape, and scenic vistas. A lack of available funding and authority in the foreseeable future also precludes use of this

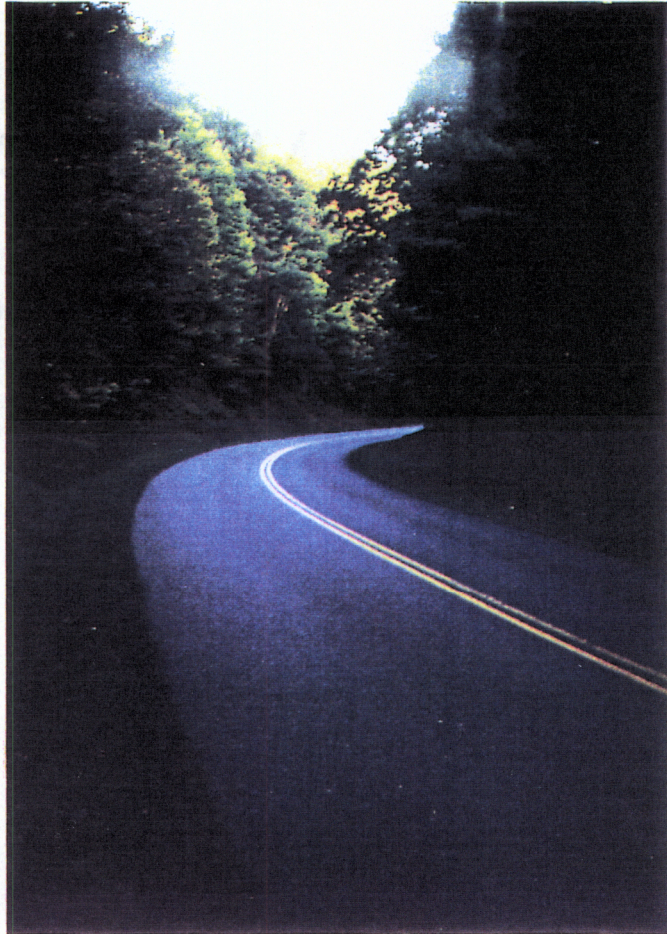


Figure 12: Parkway Through a Tunnel of Trees

option as the primary tool for protecting the Parkway viewshed. If the Park Service had the budget and the political backing to acquire all of the lands that create the illusion that the park's boundaries extend to the horizon, much of the model planning process developed in chapter four would not be necessary. The planning process would be reduced to an inventory and analysis of the viewshed, a goal of protecting the elements identified as critical or sensitive, and a strategy to acquire those lands in fee. Fiscal and political realities require that alternatives and compromises be explored that are beneficial to the Park Service, users of the Parkway, adjacent private landowners and residents of neighboring communities.

Under the multi-government commission scenario evaluated by Davis the federal government would declare the BRP viewshed a special scenic district and would authorize the formation of a commission, including representatives from the federal, state, county, and local governments, to plan for and manage development within the district (Davis, 1990). The commission would develop a comprehensive plan for the entire district and would have regulatory power that would supersede state, county, and local land use power (Davis, 1990). Counties and localities would be assisted in the development of land use controls that would meet the goals and objectives of the commission's comprehensive plan and if county or local controls were deemed adequate by the Commission, control would be maintained at the lower level of government (Davis, 1990). Davis explains that this planning strategy has similarities to the greenline park concept. The major difference is that the permanent inholdings characteristic of greenline parks are not inholdings at all in this case since they are located almost entirely outside Parkway boundaries. This reversed greenline concept is clearly appropriate for the Parkway because of its narrow linear and elevated characteristics. Davis asserts that this option would likely be highly undesirable to local communities because of loss of control, but would result in a high level of consistent protection for Parkway viewshed lands. A serious disadvantage that Davis does not mention is the potential for a long delay (possibly forever) before

Congress enacted enabling legislation for the proposed commission. If this were considered the most desirable alternative, considerable effort and time could be directed towards pursuing the mechanisms required for the creation of the commission while irreversible damage continued to occur within the Parkway viewshed.

Davis suggests that the costs of the restrictions are local while the benefits are national. Protection of a nationally significant resource in a community could certainly be beneficial on a local level through the increases in revenue from tourists and recreationists using the resource over time. In addition, reasonable land use controls applied where none previously existed are likely to prove beneficial to all, although the property rights of a few might be somewhat diminished. If the Parkway becomes mediocre, adjacent land values are likely to reflect its declining status. If the Parkway experience is enhanced by basic protections of the viewshed and development activities are encouraged that provide services, products, and activities for Parkway travellers, local tax revenues, land values, and employment opportunities will all likely increase.

The central federal control option discussed by Davis contemplates the use of federal zoning within a park protection district to protect scenic resources within the Parkway viewshed. The Park Service would zone the district and have the power to seek an injunction against violators. An advisory committee would assist in preparing regulations and would serve as a liaison between the Park Service, lower levels of government, and interested parties. Davis' evaluation of this approach is similar to the evaluation of the multi-government commission. Both local opposition and scenic resource protection would likely be very high. There is again the potential for long delays in any meaningful progress while complicated and controversial mechanisms for the necessary authority are pursued at the federal level.

The final planning process implementation strategy described and evaluated by Davis is the formation of an interstate commission with planning and land use control powers within the Parkway scenic corridor. The Park Service would provide funding

and technical assistance to the commission, but would have no direct authority over lands beyond the Parkway administrative boundary. This type of approach has been used successfully in the Adirondack region of New York and Pinelands of New Jersey (Davis, 1990). Davis points out that these models only involve lands within a single state and states:

"Requiring North Carolina and Virginia legislators to agree on a series of land use controls to be imposed on a region notoriously against such controls could create intense political conflict (Davis, 1990. 211).

This alternative does enjoy constitutional support by maintaining land use decisions at the state level, but is unlikely to gain the support of local residents as Davis contends. Loss of control over land use decisions by local government and private landowners is likely to be seen as just as insidious regardless of whether it is imposed by the state or Washington.

The conflict between the states could be avoided by allowing each state to form a commission responsible for Parkway viewshed lands in that state. As long as goals and objectives are reasonably consistent, the strategies and tools employed by each state to reach the goals and objectives could differ. Allowing each state to select strategies and tools based on a common set of goals linked to problems identified within the Parkway viewshed would also serve to stimulate innovation.

Based on the evaluations of the four implementation strategies described above, Davis supports both the multi-government commission approach and the federal zoning approach as the options most likely to succeed in protecting Parkway scenic resources at a reasonable level. The multi-government commission approach is by Davis favored because it seeks to involve interested and concerned governments in the planning process (Davis, 1990).

Synthesis

The ideal strategy for protecting scenic resources in the multi-jurisdictional Parkway viewshed is the formation of a multi-government commission with the

responsibility and power to protect scenic resources within a designated Parkway protection zone. The commission could be responsible for guiding the planning process, and most importantly, for implementing regulations that would make plan goals and objectives become reality. It is not realistic to expect that the money or support for such a solution will be forthcoming in the near future. In light of the growing deterioration of scenery within the Parkway viewshed, work needs to begin sooner than a multi-government commission can be expected to become a reality.

Continuation of existing authority does have the potential to result in adequate protection of scenic resources beyond Parkway boundaries and does not necessarily mean perpetuation of the status quo. The current system of land use authority and control may be adequate if a concerted effort is made to better utilize existing limited resources, develop a system of regular communication between Parkway management, local governments and landowners, and foster cooperation between governments, agencies, and citizens in the Blue Ridge region. In other words, a concerted effort must be made to use the existing resources and structure to move away from the status quo.

Use of existing authority to target a small number of counties that are either undergoing heavy development pressure within the Parkway viewshed or are receptive to a cooperative planning effort to address scenic protection issues within the viewshed would allow the planning process to begin. There are several distinct advantages to such an approach. Planning should be able to begin with three or four counties utilizing available funds and personnel. Concentrating on critical and receptive counties will allow efforts to be focused where they are most needed and most likely to succeed. An incremental, county by county approach allows the planning process to be modified and improved as experience is gained. This approach gives counties and communities the option and the benefit of maintaining local control and avoiding the bureaucracy that is likely to accompany a centralized solution. A county by county approach also forces the Park Service to develop real opportunities

for local participation because they must gain the trust and support of local people and governments and don't have the option of falling back on the power of a legislatively authorized commission. Innovation at the local level by adjacent counties would be stimulated if solutions were sought to common problems on a county by county basis. Although the planning process would initially be started with only a few counties, several elements of the process such as education and coalition building could be pursued in all twenty-nine counties. Exposure of the pilot planning efforts would serve to bring the issue into the limelight and if satisfactory solutions were not found for individual counties, broad across the board support may be gained for a centralized solution such as a multi-government commission.

Even if the full planning process is initially only applied to a small number of the twenty-nine counties bordering the Parkway, there are several parts of the process that could be initiated throughout the entire Parkway corridor. These include use of the Friends of the Parkway group as the primary coalition building force, completion of objective viewshed mapping, and starting visitor scenery preference survey's. The next section discusses how each part of the planning process could be applied to the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Part One: Public Participation, Education, and Coalition Building.

As has been re-iterated repeatedly throughout this paper, a successful plan to protect scenery that is both outside park boundaries and within a park viewshed must include significant, meaningful, and well intentioned public participation and education components. These components are especially critical when the scenic resources are located on private lands. Over fifty percent of the land abutting the narrow band of BRP lands is in private hands. In addition, the activities on private lands such as small farm agriculture and Appalachian arts and crafts enterprises are an integral part of what the Parkway was intended to interpret for the visitor.

The public must be supportive of goals and objectives that are developed during the planning process that will require land-use regulation as implementation

strategies. The best way to gain this support is through an open participatory planning process that allows for meaningful participation by and education of the public.

The education and coalition building aspects of this part of the planning process should be started region-wide even if only a few counties are initially involved in the full planning effort. This will enable a broader base of support to be in place before the planning effort is proposed in a particular county or region. The Friends of the Parkway group has already begun many of these efforts and is in an ideal position to coordinate the region-wide and county specific public education and coalition building functions.

Part Two: Establishing a Planning Team.

If a county by county approach is used at the Parkway, a separate planning team will be formed for each county when it becomes involved in the planning process. There may be several common team members from the Park Service, Planning District Commission, or the Friends of the Parkway coalition, but it will obviously be necessary to have different county planners and other officials in each jurisdiction.

Applying the model process to the Parkway will necessitate designating someone in charge of overseeing the entire process as it proceeds from county to county. This person will be able to track progress, facilitate the exchange of ideas between jurisdictions involved in the process, and coordinate the parts of the process that should be started in all counties simultaneously. The project coordinator could be the Parkway's senior landscape architect, a professional services/resource management staff person, or someone hired specifically for the job. Realistically there might be a succession of several project coordinators because of the time it will take to complete the planning process in all twenty-nine counties.

Part Three: Scoping.

Scoping to determine problems, issues, goals, and objectives will need to be

done at the county level as each county begins the planning process. It is also important to have a preliminary scoping session involving all jurisdictions along the Parkway and all interested parties before the planning process is started in the first counties. This is important to enable an overall goal, or mission, to be developed that will provide some consistent guidance as the process is applied in each county. It will be at this stage that a definition of scenic resources can be developed that specifically describes what the scenic resources are beyond Parkway boundaries that Parkway officials and supporters want to protect.

A Parkway visitor scenic resources preference and problem survey should also be initiated so the results can be disseminated to the county level planning projects in time for them to be incorporated into the goals and objectives of the plans. This survey may need to be updated several times as the planning process is started in new counties.

Part Four: Inventory and Identification of Scenic Resources Beyond Park Boundaries and Within Park Viewsheds.

As stated previously, it is important to complete an objective mapping of the entire Parkway viewshed as soon as possible. This is one of the projects that should be pursued in all counties at the beginning of the planning process, regardless of whether a particular county is actively involved in the full planning process or not. Completion of an objective mapping of foreground, middleground, and background portions of the Parkway viewshed will allow the area of concern to be determined and graphically displayed. This information will provide valuable baseline data to each county as they begin the planning process and will help avoid long delays while mapping projects are undertaken on a county by county basis.

A county that is involved in the full planning process must also identify and inventory specific scenic resources and problems within their jurisdiction and within the Parkway viewshed. The results of the inventory may vary from county to county because of different values and opinions and differences in the landscape. The inventory should be a synthesis of the results of Parkway visitor scenic resource

preference and problem surveys and county resident scenic resource preference and problem surveys.

Part Five: Developing Alternative Strategies.

Developing strategies for reaching each goal should be done primarily by county residents with input from Parkway staff and visitors. It is important that the process of developing and selecting strategies remain in control of the local residents because they are the ones who will be responsible for translating the selected strategies into reality. Without their support the plan will collapse. Development of strategies for each objective, or sub-goal established during the scoping process is crucial because the strategies will be the tools and steps that, if effective, will ultimately lead to the realization of each goal.

Part Six: Evaluating and Selecting Best Strategies.

When selecting strategies for reaching each goal, it is important to also evaluate each using the criteria developed in the model process. In the region the Blue Ridge Parkway traverses, particular attention must be paid to any existing legal or political barriers blocking a particular strategy. The Dillon Rule, strong landowner rights sentiments, and strong anti-government feelings may make some of the most effective strategies unrealistic at the present time.

Following is a list of potential strategies, or tools, available to protect scenic resources beyond the boundary of the Blue Ridge Parkway. They are divided into nine major categories: 1. Traditional Land-Use Controls, 2. Innovative Land-Use Controls, 3. Technical Assistance Programs, 4. Financial Assistance Programs, 5. Acquisition Strategies, 6. Co-operative Agreements, 7. Public-Private Partnerships, 8. Landscape/Engineering/Physical Strategies, and 9. Legal Strategies.

1. Traditional Land-Use Controls:

- * Sign Standards.
- * Billboard Regulations.
- * Agricultural Zoning.
- * Comprehensive Planning.
- * Subdivision Regulations.

2. Innovative Land-Use Controls:

- * Planned Unit Developments.
- * Design Standards.
- * Performance Standards.
- * Overlay Zoning (scenic highway zoning districts).
- * Cluster Development.
- * Agricultural and Forestal Districts.
- * Erosion and Sedimentation Control Regulations.
- * Scenic Corridor Plan.
- * Setbacks and Buffers.
- * Rural Landscape Planning.
- * Site Plan Review.

3. Technical Assistance Programs:

- * Technical Assistance to Farmers.
- * Technical Assistance to Developers.
- * Technical Assistance to Small Businesses Related to Appalachian Region (craft shops, bed and breakfasts etc).
- * Technical Assistance to County Governments.
- * Technical Assistance to Historic Property Owners.

4. Financial Assistance Programs:

- * Preferential Tax Assessment.
- * Reimbursements of Planning Costs for Local Communities.
- * Rehabilitation Tax Credits.
- * Capitol Improvement Program.

5. Acquisition Strategies:

- * Land Trusts (purchase and re-sale with deed restrictions).
- * Park Service Purchase of Key Properties That Capture or Contain Critical Elements of the Cultural/Natural/Historic Landscape.
- * Conservation and Scenic Easements.
- * Land Donation Programs.
- * Purchase of Development Rights.
- * Transfer of Development Rights.
- * Bargain Sale.

6. Co-operative Agreements:

- * Strengthening of Existing Co-operative Agreements With Forest Service.
- * Development of Co-operative Agreements With State Agencies.
- * Development of Co-operative Agreement With Cherokee Indian Reservation.
- * Development of Co-operative Agreements With County Boards of Supervisor's and Planning Commissions.

7. Public-Private Partnerships:

- * Development of Co-operative Agreements With Large Private Landowners Adjacent to Parkway (management agreements).
- * Public/Private Historic Preservation Partnerships.

8. Landscape/Engineering Strategies:

- * Painting/Landscaping Certain Structures (large factory buildings, gasoline storage tanks etc).
- * Mowing/Cutting/Planting Programs.
- * Visual Resource Management Programs.

9. Legal Strategies:

- * Historic District Designation.

10. Public Education Strategies:

- * All Media Education Programs.
- * Emphasis on Public Participation in Planning Process.

The fact that most of the counties bordering the Parkway don't even have zoning ordinances and many of the most useful tools are zoning based illustrates how

difficult implementing a successful scenic resource protection plan will be in this region.

Part Seven: Developing an Implementation/Action Plan.

Development of an implementation plan for individual counties along the Parkway can be a joint effort of Friends of the Parkway members, Coalition for the Blue Ridge Parkway members, other interested volunteers, and members of the original planning team for that county. It is especially important to have an implementation team that is dedicated to a long term process because of the length of time implementation could take in some counties.

Part Eight: Monitoring and Evaluation.

Monitoring and evaluation in the counties along the Blue Ridge Parkway can be accomplished by utilizing the implementation team and other interested volunteers. Their findings can be turned over to the project coordinator who will be responsible for making changes and revisions to the implementation plan as they become necessary. If major changes in strategies become necessary it will be important to incorporate the visiting public and local population into the process of making changes in the implementation plan.

VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.

External threats to National Park resources will continue to increase as urban sprawl, tourism related development, and resource harvesting and extraction continues to occur near park boundaries. Negative impacts to wildlife, air, water, and scenic resources will continue and exacerbate in many parks because of these activities.

One of the most difficult resources to protect will be scenic views of lands beyond the park boundary. In the few parks like Grand Canyon where most of the scenic views are comprised of park lands, the primary challenge will be to prevent deterioration of these views by air pollution.

Unfortunately most parks are not inverted mountains like the Grand Canyon. Many of our parks are located in the higher elevations of mountain ranges and have extensive scenery that can be seen from the park that is made up partly, mostly, or in some cases totally, of National Forest Lands, Bureau of Land Management lands, and private lands. Even parks located in less dramatic topography can have significant scenic views beyond the boundary, especially smaller parks in rapidly urbanizing areas.

The traditional approach of passing off all responsibility for protecting the scenic lands visible from parks to the owners of those lands can not be the prevalent protection strategy in the future. Although the ultimate power for protection, conservation, and development of these lands certainly rests with the landowners, and the local jurisdictions, the Park Service must take a proactive role as a cooperative partner in initiating dialogue, research, planning, and conservation efforts on important scenic lands beyond their boundaries. Parks should follow the recommendations of the Sonoran Institute and strive for cooperative strategies to protect parks from external threats that are based on local conditions and needs.

Parks with significant scenic resources beyond their boundaries must embark on a planning effort that uses public participation early, and throughout the process, seeks guidance from a broad team of planning experts, educates the public and builds a broad coalition of support for the effort, bases decisions on objective fact, allows

the public to participate in the decision-making process, and is flexible enough to allow for compromise and adapt to changes over time.

Parks at higher elevations that have scenic views as an integral park resource, have views that are not owned by the Park Service (especially views that are privately owned), and have views over regions with limited land-use controls are the most susceptible to deterioration of their viewsheds. The Blue Ridge Parkway has all of the problems listed above along 1,200 miles of boundary, and is likely the National Park most susceptible to significant damage to scenic resources beyond the boundary (USDI, BRP, Statement for Management, 1989). The job of successfully planning to protect scenic resources beyond the boundary of the Parkway will be a tremendous one.

There have been several positive steps taken towards this end recently. The formation of the Friends of the Parkway group and the Coalition for the Blue Ridge Parkway are two important initiatives required for a successful planning effort. The work of each group will continue to bring attention to the issue and build a coalition of support for taking additional steps to minimize damage to scenic views while allowing necessary development to occur within the Parkway viewshed.

Applying the model process strategy development, selection, and implementation steps on a county by county basis as recommended in chapter five, will allow solutions tailor made for each local area, rather than forcing a Parkway wide solution that may not be well suited for all areas. This is exactly what is recommended by the Sonoran Institute on a nation-wide basis. This approach is well suited for the Parkway also because of the length and diversity of adjacent lands and jurisdictions.

As each year passes incremental, irreversible damage is done to the viewsheds of the Blue Ridge Parkway and many other National Parks. Fortunately, the viewsheds of most parks are not as susceptible to damage to the same degree that the Parkway is. It is crucial that the planning process begin now because the incremental damage that is occurring to park viewsheds is irreversible and each time a view from a park is marred, permanent damage is done.

A former Park Service Director, Newton Drury stated:

If we are going to succeed in preserving the greatness of the national parks, they must be held inviolate ... If we are going to whittle away at them, we should recognize at the very beginning, that such whittlings are cumulative and the end result will be mediocrity. The greatness will be gone (from National Parks and Conservation Association, 1994).

It is impossible to completely protect all of the outstanding views that can be experienced from the Blue Ridge Parkway or any other park. Development will occur, land-uses will change, the quality of some vistas will be reduced, and in some cases the quality of vistas can be enhanced.

The challenge to the National Park Service, other land management agencies, park neighbors, park supporters, and local governments is to recognize the scenic, historical, cultural, recreational, natural, and economic values of neighboring parks, promote those values, and seek a balance between necessary development and protection and enhancement of the incredible scenery that contributes to the value of the National Parks. If such an effort can be successful at the Blue Ridge Parkway, it can surely succeed at any National Park in the United States.

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