

CHRONOLOGICAL EVOLUTION OF NATIONAL CAPITAL PARKS LEGISLATION-- THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK COMMISSION AND THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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August 25, 1916

39 Stat. 535. An Act "to establish a National Park Service..."

"The service thus established shall promote and regulate use of the Federal areas known as national parks, monuments, and reservations hereinafter specified by such means and measures as conform to the fundamental purpose of said parks, monuments, and reservations, which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

June 6, 1924

43 Stat 463. An Act, Providing for a comprehensive development of the park and playground system of the National Capital.

"...to preserve the flow of water in Rock Creek, to prevent pollution of Rock Creek, and the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers, to preserve forests and natural scenery in and about Washington, and to provide for the comprehensive systematic, and continuous development of the park, parkway, and playground system of the National Capital, there is hereby constituted a commission, to be known as the National Capital Park Commission..."

April 30, 1926

44 Stat. 374. Amended the above 1924 Act by changing to commission's name to the National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

May 29, 1930

46 Stat. 482

"Capper-

Cramton Act"

An Act for the acquisition, establishment, and development of the George Washington Memorial Parkway along the Potomac from Mount Vernon and Fort Washington to the Great Falls, and to provide for the acquisition of lands in the District of Columbia and the States of Maryland and Virginia requisite to the comprehensive park, parkway, and playground system of the National Capital (In specific fulfillment of the purposes identified in the 1924 NCPC Act cited above).

(b) For the extension of Rock Creek Park into Maryland, as may be agreed upon between the National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, for the preservation of the flow of water in Rock Creek, for the extension of the Anacostia Park system up the valley of the Anacostia River, Indian Creek, Paint Branch and Little Paint Branch, the Northwest Branch and Sligo Creek; of the Oxon Run Parkway from the District of Columbia line to Marlboro Road; and of the George Washington Memorial Parkway up the valley of Cabin John Creek, Little Falls Branch, and Willet Run, as may

--Continuation-- Sec. 3. Whenever the use of the Forts Washington, Foote, and Hunt, or either of them, is no longer deemed necessary for military purposes they shall be turned over to the Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, without cost, for administration and maintenance as a part of the said George Washington Memorial Parkway.

In spite of the fact that Congress has now given a purpose to the parks and a mandate for managing the resources, legislation is not followed. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers still administers the parks. A legacy of not needing legislation to say what parks are for and how to manage resources is firmly entrenched. In addition, the Army had no expertise on how to manage wild lands—either the new ones acquired under the Capper-Cramton Act, or old ones like Rock Creek Park. The Army was removed from Yellowstone National Park and replaced with Park Rangers. There were no Park Rangers in the National Capital Parks until, approximately, 1960.

July 26, 1933
Executive Order
6166

Transferred the above NCPC responsibilities to the National Park Service.

"All functions of administration of public buildings, reservations, national parks, monuments, and national cemeteries are consolidated in an office of National Parks, Buildings, and Reservations in the Department of the Interior..."

July 19, 1952
66 Stat. 782.

Added historical resources to protection responsibility, stating "...appropriate and orderly development and redevelopment of the National Capital and the conservation of the important natural and historical features..."

August 8, 1953
60 Stat. 885.

An Act, "...to facilitate the management of the National Park System and miscellaneous areas administered in connection with that system, and for other purposes."

Identifies "national capital parks" as part of the "National Park System".

August 18, 1970
84 Stat. 825.

"To improve the administration of the national park system... and to clarify the authorities applicable to system..."

"...though distinct in character, are united through their inter-related purposes and resources into one national park system as cumulative expressions of a single national heritage; that, individually and collectively, these areas derive increased national dignity and recognition of their superb environmental quality through their inclusion jointly with each other in one national park system preserved and managed for the benefit of all the people of the United States...". **There is but ONE National Park system!!**

March 27, 1978

"Redwood Act" Reaffirms that **resources are primary, with no exceptions**, unless otherwise directed by Congress.