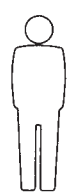


ROCKY MOUNTAIN

NATIONAL PARK / COLORADO



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Rocky Mountain National Par
k, Colorado : interpretive
prospectus AC 30822

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This prospectus is written to aid the park staff and the interpretive design center in presenting Rocky Mountain National Park in ways that provide both enjoyment for visitors and protection for the park — in an optimum mix.

APPROVED: Robert L. Giles
Acting Director, Midwest Region
April 12, 1973

c.2

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INTERPRETIVE PROSPECTUS

ROCKY MOUNTAIN

NATIONAL PARK

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR / NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

AC 30822

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Rocky Mountain National Par
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prospectus

AN OVERVIEW

Why do visitors stand before a scene they've driven perhaps days to see and feed chipmunks, instead of looking at the view? Why do they shop for souvenirs, and ignore the educational exhibits? Why do they photograph each other, rather than the park?

For most of us, static visual stimuli have limited staying power. It is true that some people become engrossed with an area intellectually, and others when they participate physically — but how can we strengthen the interest of a casual sightseer?

When the valley of Estes Park began attracting tourists nearly a century ago, it was integral with the forests, streams, lakes, and peaks now included in the surrounding Rocky Mountain National Park. Visitors hiked, rode horses, climbed, fished, camped, motored, and skied on the land, with the ever-present mountains serving as the scenic backdrop, and the wildlife providing serendipity. As Estes Park became a town, its attractions diverged from park activities and it was soon noted as a place to play games, eat, shop, promenade, and rest — the land was a feature outside, alienated from the people. Less than half of the town's tourists still visited the national park, and of those who did, most drove on roads, walked on paved paths, watched movies, and looked at exhibits. When they did view the park, their viewing platforms were detached. To complete the estrangement, tourist centers still on the national park land were removed because they infringed on the park's natural qualities.

Increasing use led the park to channel visitors through a "lubricated" visit to protect the resources. Unfortunately, this further concentrated numbers and increased congestion until it became hard for visitors to stand awestruck, even at outstanding scenic viewpoints, when cars stopped or started literally at the backs of their legs. Is it any wonder that visitors began to seek other values as the natural merits became less rewarding and harder to find? Is it any wonder that they failed to demand priority treatment for the park's resources management and other programs in the competitive world of government funding? The quality of the visit did not motivate visitors sufficiently for them to support the park's efforts to improve.

Even in late 1972, the centennial year of the National Park System, no factor existed to stop the evermore rapidly descending spiral of deterioration of the visitor experience at Rocky Mountain National Park, but this prospectus offers a potential solution.

The objective of interpretation at Rocky Mountain will be to provide *meaningful* and *personal exposure* to the *actual* area, *onsite*. It will provide an *"experience"* visit, with *involvement*, *action*, and *participation*, according to the *interests* and *abilities* of the *individuals*. (Note the italicized words again.)

For example, the park's program of conducted walks has fulfilled this objective for many years, and they will be continued. Other devices, such as campfire programs, visitor centers, and exhibits, must be better integrated with park features to be successful in this context, for they are removed now at least one level of abstraction from the real thing.

Primary experiences will be emphasized – visitors will see wild bighorn sheep, elk, and beaver; they will walk in the forest and climb Longs Peak; they will experience the tundra and its cold and windy habitat; and they will view the rugged Rockies without cars to distract them. New approaches are needed to provide these opportunities while also meeting the needs of increasing visitation and attendant congestion and resource damage, new transportation methods, and a visitor clientele less attuned to the outdoors. These approaches must be popular and effective, remaining pertinent to the park story without becoming ends in themselves. We can endeavor to give the visitor an experience he will enjoy, and at the same time, cultivate his appreciation for a natural area. This prospectus identifies several possible approaches.

Through implementation of this prospectus, Rocky Mountain National Park will generate out-of-door experiences that produce lifetime memories, and will again fill a meaningful role – directly, and for the people. When the park becomes relevant to America's culture, its future will be assured.

PROSPECTIVE VISIT

When this prospectus is implemented, you will come to the park preconditioned by the communications media, by library and school experiences, and, of course, by the stories of your friends who have been to Rocky Mountain, as well as by your own previous park experiences. Your first stop will be at a general center in one of the gateway towns to learn the recreational resources of the region, the activities available that will best expose you to the park, and specifics of travel through it including roads, transportation systems, trails, accommodations, and campgrounds.

At peak-use seasons, you will have the option of leaving your car at various points and receiving information as you travel on the public transportation system. Information services will be provided at park entrances and other points, and you may also view exhibits at visitor centers and read publications available there. You may have watched a special park television program the evening before in your motel room, or gone to a campfire program.

If you are a general or first-time visitor, three trips will appeal to you:

You may journey to Bear Lake, by public transportation in summer, by car the other seasons, and hike there or along the route. Wayside interpretation, as well as that at the Moraine Park visitor center will present the area's montane and subalpine forests, their associated wildlife, and the glacial past there. At Bear Lake, a major trailhead, day hikes, a "discovery" trail, and minimum-impact backpacking will be presented.

Another trip will lead you through the montane and subalpine forests up to the timberline and tundra of Trail Ridge, by car or by public transportation. Along this route you will hear the story of the alpine area of the park – its flora, fauna, climate, and glaciation. Wayside interpretation will accomplish most of this, and the Alpine visitor center will present a collection of highlights from these themes, as well as the shelter so often necessary in this severe climatic zone.

The third area you will be encouraged to tour will be that along the old Fall River Road, where you'll enjoy an intimate sampling of the various park forests. To facilitate your experience, the public transportation for this trip will be geared to short walks through the forests.

Interspersed where action is most likely will be presentations of the wildlife, wildflowers, and others of the area's dynamic resources. These will move in response to changes in the park – seasonal colors, wildlife migrations, lighting conditions, and similar considerations.

If you want a more involved visit, you may hike with groups or on your own, climb Longs Peak, backpack, attend a Summer Seminar, or camp. Longs Peak ranger station will develop the story of mountain climbing, emphasizing that mountain, while at Wild Basin a simple presentation of some of the trailside features will be made.

If you want to continue exploring the park, information will be available on other park attractions including those in the western portion such as Lulu City, Holzwarth homestead cabin, and various trails.

In winter when Trail Ridge and Old Fall River Roads are not accessible you may view displays on the tundra at Headquarters visitor center, and you will be encouraged to participate actively in outdoor enjoyment of the park.

BACKGROUND

THIS STUDY

The study team met at Rocky Mountain National Park from August 13th through the 16th, 1972.

This study cannot present the "complete and final" solution for interpretation at Rocky Mountain National Park, for evolvement will go on as the master plan concepts are implemented. Rather, it anticipates continuing innovations on the part of the staffs at the park and the interpretive design center, as well as enthusiastic support from the regional office to accomplish those goals of highest priority in a timely fashion. Phases of implementation are discussed, especially in the final chapter. It also anticipates that follow-up design studies will be done to identify the specifics of certain wayside and museum exhibits, as well as audiovisual programs, tours, and other informational presentations.

Relation to Master Plan

Interpretive considerations of the master plan draft of February 1973 include the following:

Rocky Mountain National Park is administered as a natural area of the National Park System. Its Specimen Mountain, West Creek, and Paradise Park are research natural areas.

Because use is increasing to the point where both the park experience and the park resource are deteriorating, development will be decreased slightly and transportation supplements to private automobiles (with coordinated interpretation) will be implemented at peak-use periods on

Fall River, Trail Ridge, and Bear Lake Roads. Present road and trail patterns will remain, although some loop trails may be added to connect stops on the new transportation system.

Interpretive stories will be developed for lower-elevation conifer forests, glacial moraines, and beavers; timberline and tundra; sculptured alpine peaks and living glaciers; bighorn sheep and elk; mountaineering; history; and other pertinent subjects. Interpretation will invite sensory involvement, mainly visual, of man with the land. Education in backcountry use will be provided. If there can be an overall theme, it will identify the many diverse park meanings as facets of a natural landscape.

Regional transportation/orientation/information visitor centers will be developed cooperatively with other agencies at Estes Park and Granby. Interpretive centers will have themes as follows:

Moraine Park — the glacial story, the changing landscape — including historic changes, wildlife, and the inspiration afforded writer William Allen White

Bear Lake — wilderness discovery, hiking, and backpacking

Longs Peak area — mountain climbing

Horseshoe Park — wildlife, old Fall River Road

Alpine visitor center — tundra

West Entrance — orientation to Trail Ridge Road and the park in general

These centers might be unmanned. Wayside interpretive devices will be located throughout the park along roads and some trails.

The National Park Service will cooperate with others in providing interpretation, to assure that all efforts are complementary. Offsite services will be provided, as well as onsite environmental study areas.

Boundary change proposals add the upper Kawuneechee Valley with its winter elk range and pristine scene, the historic Holzwarth homestead, and the lower Black Canyon with its winter deer and elk range and the historic MacGregor ranchsite.

FEATURES AND THEMES

Rocky Mountain National Park is a small sample of primeval America – a place where citizens can view or hike through wild mountain scenery, feel the elements, and wonder at nature. It provides a quality outdoor experience – scenic viewing, hiking, wildlife-observing, minimum-impact backpacking, limited camping, mountaineering. Recreational activities such as downhill-skiing exist, but remain subordinate to the landscape.

The park could have been established anywhere in the Rocky Mountains; it does not include features unique to the world or even to the region. It is, rather, a representative sample of the regional environment, and, as such, ensures perpetuation of a natural area. This gives it a significance in and of itself in today's world, where the trend is toward increasing development and declining simplicity. The park is a little piece – 410 square miles – of the Rocky Mountains kept intact as an attractive benchmark of wild America. Its operation and interpretation are properly responsive to its primary users, from Colorado and the Midwest, but Rocky Mountain National Park also meets the needs of visitors from other regions of this country and from other parts of the world.

Much of the significance of this piece of ground stems from the fact that it is part of the barrier fronting America's Great Plains and is the range most accessible to dwellers of this region.

Culturally, it may be to them as Fujiyama, Gateway Arch, or the Golden Gate Bridge are to people in other environs. At the least, it provides a dramatically different scene to dwellers of the flatlands and scientifically, its significance is clear – the park's high altitudes contain the finest tundra samples in the 48 contiguous states. The challenge is to present this feature to visitors in such a way that they will understand its meanings and appreciate its value, while maintaining the resource.

The varied altitude and physiography generate subthemes: plant communities change from montane through subalpine and timberline to tundra; wildlife drama includes beaver, elk, and bighorn; seasonal climatic fluctuations are extreme; the glacial story extends from moraines of the ancient past to the shrinking ice masses of today. These aspects of the natural scene contain other stories such as details of geology, plant and animal life, and ecology.

The history of the area has been kept in perspective, subordinate to scenery and natural history. This approach will continue with onsite presentation in

specially pertinent areas, through publications, during evening programs, and as a vehicle in techniques designed to develop interest in other subjects. Aspects to be presented include history of the tourist industry in the park such as the Holzwarth homestead, MacGregor ranch, and historic changes in the Moraine Park landscape – all coordinated with the developing Estes Park Area Historical Museum; the inspiration received by writer William Allen White from the area; Enos Mills as a local homesteader, nature and climbing guide, and conservationist-writer; pioneer ranching; mining at Lulu City; and the development of water supplies. The history will have as its base the natural resources of the area, and will emphasize conditions as they were found by the white man. The Indian story, too, will be presented where locally significant.

In applying themes, the dominant considerations will be pertinence at a site and relation to visitor circulation. Thus, while the tundra story will normally be presented where that feature occurs, a presentation will also be made in winter at a lower altitude so that visitors at that season, too, can learn of this important park feature even if they cannot experience it.

TWO AND A HALF MILLION VISITORS

Present

Visitation to Rocky Mountain National Park is growing. It passed 1 million in 1948, 2 million in 1968, and grew to nearly 2½ million by 1971. While three-fourths of all people who visit the park come during the traditional summer vacation period between Memorial Day and Labor Day, users during this season have increased only 5 percent since 1968. Fall, winter, and spring visits, on the other hand, have increased by 50 percent in that same span of years. This implies that existing summer congestion levels date back several seasons, and that the park experience began changing some time ago from an interaction between visitor and park to interactions solely between visitors.

As might be expected, most visitors come from Colorado, the park acting as a "backyard" for Denver, Boulder, Estes Park, and Fort Collins. The Midwest States of Illinois, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Texas, and Missouri generate more visitors than other states, and California residents are also well represented. Local visitors make repeated trips to the park, while those from farther away are likely to be on their first trip.

Most park access is by private auto, although there is also tour-bus service. Consistent with the geography of the source area, three-fourths of the visitors enter and leave the park by the east entrances (39 percent by Fall River and 35 percent by Beaver Meadows), with another 7½ percent coming

in by minor eastside entrances such as Longs Peak and Wild Basin. Entries from the west via Grand Lake total 19 percent. A loop trip from Denver over Trail Ridge Road is used by some.

How long do visitors stay? This is an elusive question. One survey indicated that 67 percent of visitors are day-users only, while the park travel figures indicate 90 percent. Because the only lodging available is located outside the park, it is apparent that many visitors base in the adjacent communities of Estes Park (45,000 beds) and, to a lesser extent, at Grand Lake and make successive single-day trips into the area. Campgrounds (private – 4,000 people, forest – 4,500, national recreation area – 1,600), a huge YMCA camp (3,000), and hundreds of summer homes add to the quantity of "multiple-day, non-overnight" visitors. Summer-visit averages are near 20,000 a day, with peaks below 30,000, while overnight capacity of the region at that time is 60,000.

Developed campsites inside the park are limited to about 3,000 people. Because there is a strong demand for sites, campgrounds are full all summer, and total overnight use within the park has remained the same in recent years. Half of the park campers stay 2 or 3 days; only 1 percent stay the limit of 7 days. Tent use, declining, is about equal to camper or trailer use, increasing; this will change, however, as more campgrounds are restricted to tents.

Overnight-user information is crude, but it does show that about half of the visitors spend 2 days in the park. Most of these people are based overnight at a gateway town and the rest stay in park campgrounds. The other half of the visitors stay only 1 day but most of them have visited before, so intensity of use is significant.

Backcountry camping is engaged in by only 1 percent of visitors, yet it has doubled in the past 4 years. Although an overall limit of 2,000 people is now established for this use, only the more popular sites are used at capacity.

Travelers most commonly appear in groups of two or four, followed by three, five or six; one, and seven or more are the least common. Organized groups such as church, youth, and mountaineering clubs, visit the area frequently and bus tours for individuals are provided from Estes Park. The family unit is typical, but mixed groupings of young adults are also apparent. Many visitors travel with a pet.

Park visitors are better educated, wealthier, and whiter than the population in the source area. Some of them are extremely knowledgeable about the

SALT LAKE CITY
SAN FRANCISCO
& NORTHWEST

CHEYENNE

WYOMING
NEBRASKA

80

CHICAGO
& EAST

COLORADO

SALT LAKE
CITY & SAN
FRANCISCO

40

FT. COLLINS

ROCKY
MTN.
NAT'L
PARK
SHADOW
MTN. N.R.A.

GREELEY

80
S

GRAND LAKE
GRANBY

LOVELAND

LONGMONT

Boulder

DENVER

(AIR, RAIL & AUTO
TRANSPORTATION
CENTER)

70

ST. LOUIS
& EAST

LOS ANGELES

70

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COLORADO
SPRINGS

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PUEBLO

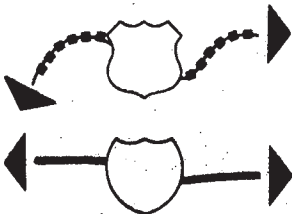
PHOENIX &
THE SOUTHWEST

COLORADO

THE REGION

NEW MEXICO
OKLAHOMA

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK



SCENIC ROUTE

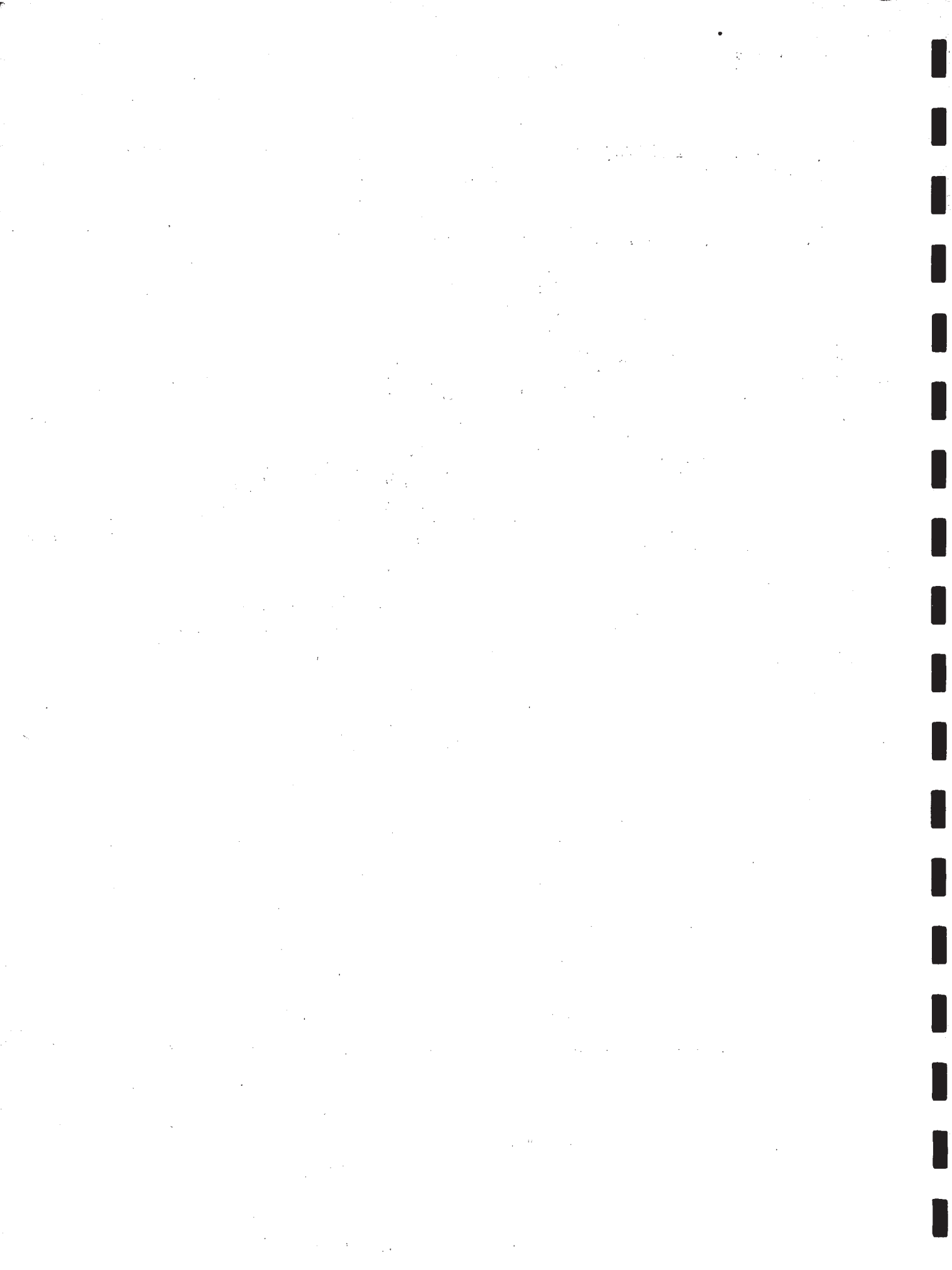
INTERSTATE ROUTE



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mountains and aggressive in their pursuit of enjoying them. Interest from the adjacent universities in various academic and research uses is high.

These generalities about visitors to Rocky Mountain National Park should not be accepted so completely as to obscure important differences, for within these patterns visitors vary widely — they come from the local area or long distances; they are seeing the area for the first time or the hundredth; they may be 3 years old or 85; and they may be enthusiastic or cursory in their interest levels.

Sightseeing is overwhelmingly the most popular activity, with almost all visitors participating, primarily along Trail Ridge Road and at Bear Lake. Many people picnic. Only two-fifths of all visitors reach a visitor center; less than one-fifth study or photograph nature; and fewer than one-tenth attend campfire programs or go on guided walks. Visitor activities that are not promoted through the interpretive program do about as well as those that are — one-third of the people shop for souvenirs; one-fourth hike in the backcountry; one-fifth camp; one-tenth fish; and one-tenth climb. Are these fields more fertile for enhancing visitor experience than more traditional interpretive programs? Souvenir-shopping challenges the visitor center in popularity, and only a small proportion of visitors, basically campers, attends heavily-staffed campfires and guided walks, compared with the vast number who sightsee with little exposure to National Park Service personnel. Visitors who stay outside the park have the option of returning for evening programs, but most go shopping instead.

Recreational attractions in the region are abundant but the park itself is dominant, if only symbolically. Shopping and promenading in Estes Park are strong rivals, however, and one highway planning study ranked Estes Park above the national park as a destination. Supporting this study is the fact that twice as many people stay overnight in Estes Park as enter the national park and that the locality name used by residents for the general area is not Rocky Mountain National Park but Estes Park. The two areas are complementary in function but it must be remembered that not all visitors experience them both. Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area receives only a tenth as many visitors as the national park, and recreational use of adjacent national forests is probably even less.

The visitor profile discussed so far applies mainly to the summer user. Important differences occur in fall, winter, and spring. Autumn color attracts many visitors in mid- to late-September, but not long after it fades Trail Ridge and Fall River Roads close because of the snow, cold, and winds of winter, not to reopen until May. Both day-use and camping dwindle

because of weather factors and the school schedule. Minor peaks do occur on weekends and on holidays such as Christmas and Easter. The Bear Lake Road remains open all year, attracting snowshoers and cross-country skiers. Snowmobilers journey from the west up Trail Ridge Road to Fall River Pass. Elk can be seen in the aspen groves bordering the open parks. Skiers, snowplayers, and spectators come to Hidden Valley Winter Sports Area, open from December to April.

Projected

More and more people will be attracted to see and use Rocky Mountain National Park as leisure time, wealth, and mobility increase in the visitor source area. How popular can the park get? As we've already noted, use is still growing during summer but less rapidly than in other seasons. Is this because the quality of the natural experience is deteriorating from overuse and discouraging some would-be visitors? If so, there is an inherent limit on the park's popularity. Administrative restrictions lend credence to this thesis, for these define tolerance levels and codify use rations: campers are limited to 7 days; campsites are designated and overflow is not permitted; backcountry camping is set at the carrying capacity; horse use is confined to certain trails.

This inherent limit of tolerance for congestion must, by its very nature, fail in controlling use at desirable levels, for it becomes operative only after obnoxious conditions have already appeared. Regulations, too, will have limited effect, for they tend to be too lenient to accomplish the controls needed. Instead, deliberate programs must be developed to improve circulation patterns and experiences, and to reduce peak-season congestion.

Summer use may be approaching a limiting peak because of declining visit quality and fall, winter, and spring use may continue to increase rapidly because those seasons provide the quality experience visitors seek. A major boost in this trend could be in store if changes in the school schedule accelerate from the start already made. Of course, local non-summer users will predominate because out-of-State travelers are deterred by winter road conditions. Thus out-of-Staters will concentrate increasingly in the summer, and local repeaters in other seasons. Younger, non-family groups may prefer the non-summer periods, too.

National trends point to increasing sophistication in use of leisure time, and the Rocky Mountain outdoor enthusiast is no exception. Visitors, especially the repeaters, will become more limited in their interests individually, but more diverse as a group. This will create a challenge to the staff to provide programs specialized enough to maintain or, perhaps, recover their interest and yet present material compatible with the area's significances.

Enthusiasm for climbing, especially for Longs Peak and the glaciers, will grow as equipment is more widely owned and techniques more widely known. The same is true of cross-country skiing and winter camping.

Use of the park for academic research will increase in a self-generating fashion, and there will be ever more enthusiastic nature buffs as the ecology movement and the Summer Seminars provide mutual reinforcement.

Day use will become increasingly popular, while overnight use is held static. Day hikes will appeal more than overnight trips as use of the backcountry becomes more regimented. These changes will reduce the number of evening users, and create the interpretive challenge of presenting the park during that delightful time — when the visitors are not there. Early mornings and nights produce the same challenge.

The use of Hidden Valley winter sports area will continue; currently skiing affects the summer visitor little except when vistas are marred, and winter visitation is insufficient to cause conflict between downhill-skiing and other visitor-oriented activities.

Use of the western side of the park may increase in response to greater interest in that region as the Forest Service develops new recreational facilities and designates wilderness areas, or these developments may divert visitors from the park. What will happen to winter use on the west side, including snowmobile use, when the Storm Mountain and Bowen Gulch Ski Areas are developed by the Forest Service? (Trail Ridge and Fall River Roads will remain prohibitively difficult to snowplow for the foreseeable future, so they are expected to remain closed in winter.) Trends on the west side are not yet apparent, but basic patterns will probably not be altered.

Significant change is not expected in the eastern entry pattern of the vast majority of park visitors. Principal park access will shift to Beaver Meadows entrance from Fall River in response to proposed realignments in State approach highways and in public transportation systems.

As a final thought, National Park Service environmental education programs will influence the demographic characteristics of visitors, as wider knowledge of the parks is gained in more social and cultural groups. Economic assistance to the poor will also be an influencing factor.

INTERPRETIVE OBJECTIVES

Interpretation is defined broadly here as that function that determines park meanings and presents them to visitors, whether through direct activity programs or through subtle influence. Within this meaning, it has several objectives at Rocky Mountain National Park:

TO INFORM

- by introducing visitors to the park and its special aspects so that they may more efficiently match available options to their personal interests, abilities, and time schedules.
- by making visitors aware of hazards, regulations and the reasons behind them, and of weather factors, so that they may have a safe and enjoyable visit.

TO INTERPRET

- by developing an ecosystem- and environment-centered approach that will supply park visitors with a deep and lasting understanding of the natural forces of the park.
- by presenting specifics of the area as well as their meanings and values – tundra, glaciation, wildlife, montane forest and timberline ecology, and history.
- by involving enthusiasts in indepth programs such as field seminars, research, library.
- by occupying visitor time profitably during evenings and inclement weather.
- by actively pursuing interpretive innovations and applying those that have been successful.

TO INVOLVE VISITORS

- by keeping them outdoors and in contact with the area to the maximum possible extent and by encouraging walking and direct sensing through use of various onsite techniques such as comfortable downhill routes.

– by responding to the needs of users of a variety of ages, social groups, and interests (photography, art, hiking, climbing, cross-country skiing, natural history subjects):

– by developing improved transportation to park features, with coordinated interpretation.

– by encouraging the use of the park at all times of day so that visitors may experience aspects that vary with time – sunrise, evening, moonlight – especially as the number of visitors who may stay inside the park overnight is limited.

– by assisting that segment of the public traveling with pets to enjoy their visits without infringing on the rights and sensitivities of others, or on the park itself.

TO INFLUENCE USE PATTERNS

– by motivating visits to the park during seasons of lesser use so that people may enjoy a higher quality experience.

– by dispersing activities associated with widely represented features (elk, parks, montane forests) from excessively-used sites, in order to keep environmental impact within carrying capacity and visitor congestion within acceptable limits.

– by allowing close contact with and better understanding of special features (Bear-Dream Lakes area, the tundra) through interpretive devices and methods that hold human erosion to acceptable limits.

TO MOTIVATE ENVIRONMENTAL INVOLVEMENT

– by relating the mountain scene, through in-park activities as well as urban environmental programs, to modern man's need for a land ethic. The objective is to develop concerned and informed citizens who can react more effectively to environmental issues, including those involving the park.

– by providing open channels of communication between staff and public to allow for two-way feedback in setting standards. This can be accomplished through personal contact and other appropriate avenues such as working with cooperating organizations, volunteers, the Student Conservation Program, and indepth programs such as Summer Seminars, work-study, research, and library.

– by assisting in the integration of purpose among the various visitor and tourist organizations in the park region.

– by inspiring greater visitation from demographic groups inadequately represented at present.

– by explaining park management programs, especially in resources management, including fire, wildlife, backcountry, transportation systems, and master planning.

Thus, interpretation will not be one of those activities de-emphasized to confine popularity of the park but, on the contrary, it will be stressed in order to help visitors attain a fuller and more intimate contact with the scene – providing greater meaning, higher quality experiences, and preservation through education, even in summer. Redirection of use to the highest purpose is a major interpretive goal vital to the park. If this results in more visits than can be tolerated by the resource, other methods of control will be applied, such as elimination of activities less directly associated with the park's values, increased utilization of transportation systems, and transfer of uses to Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area.

Increased public education and visitor interest, with visitation channeled in such a manner as to protect the resource, should be the recurring theme.

SPECIAL ASPECTS

EAST SIDE – WEST SIDE

The question naturally arises at Rocky Mountain National Park as to whether the two sides of the park should be treated in the same manner, for physically they are quite different. The east side is dryer, less forested. Peaks have steeper east slopes, with glaciers. Historical development of the region has progressed more rapidly on the east. It is closer to the population center using the park, and is favored by transportation access. The greatest campground capacity and the most lodging units are on the east, as is park headquarters.

On the west side, especially as viewed from Trail Ridge Road west of Milner Pass, the scenery is average and the validity of extending the park to this area

is questionable because the land has been indelibly and severely scarred, not only by that road and its predecessor but also by the Grand Ditch water diversion.

Thus, the prospectus favors the east side in its visitor-activity proposals.

SEASONAL VARIATIONS

The resource features at Rocky Mountain National Park change with the seasons, as do the activities based on them. Summer is a time for scenic viewing, motoring, backpacking, trail riding, and climbing. Autumn is for fall color and elk-watching. Winter focuses on snow-based activities, more elk observations, and whitened landscapes. Spring is a time of transitions – blooming flowers, melting snowbanks.

Transportation varies with the season, too. Trail Ridge and Fall River Roads are closed from autumn into late spring. During this time on the west side, snowmobiles may ascend Trail Ridge Road to Fall River Pass and skis and snowshoes replace hiking boots all over the park. At some future time, summer public transportation may be provided along Trail Ridge, Fall River, and Bear Lake Roads – and in spring and fall if visitation increases.

The interpretive program offered will also vary with the seasons, not only in terms of number of activities and number of personnel employed, but also by program type. Thus in winter, an interpreter with a skill in oversnow travel would be more effective than the song-leading naturalist needed for summertime family campfires. Mobile exhibit devices will allow response to seasonal changes.

REGIONAL RELATIONS

A variety of recreational opportunities is available in the park region and many organizations exist to provide them. At the moment, however, the park is the dominant attraction. Therefore, to conserve the park for its highest quality use, the National Park Service will be aggressive in helping to supply information on regional opportunities so that persons seeking other types of experiences will find them outside the park.

UTILITIES

Electricity is available in the park only at developed areas, and this makes it difficult to install onsite audiovisual devices. Mobile units or battery power

are feasible where the need for this form of interpretation is great and the power generated on the transportation system will also be available. Presently, the most heavily used restroom in the park is located at Alpine visitor center; others enroute at convenient locations would not only promote visitor comfort (essential to effective interpretation!) but would allow more of the visitor-carrying capacity of the fragile tundra to be applied to a higher purpose.

RESOURCE IMPACT

The park's most fragile features are its wildlife and tundra. Unfortunately, these are also its most popular features. Furthermore, both occur on a scale requiring closeup presentation, compounding the potential for visitor impact on them. Erosional impact from human use is also occurring in the montane forests. Construction of better paths and installation of directional signing to channel visitors would help concentrate impact on a limited zone, for trails now are not always obvious. Both new transportation methods and mobile exhibit techniques will aid in spreading or relocating impact.

Excessive visitor pressure on the beaver, bighorn, and elk may be disrupting natural behavior patterns. A certain amount of viewing is not only necessary if visitors are to experience wildlife values, but is also inevitable. The need is to insure that the maximum number of visitors benefit from the amount of disturbance the animals can tolerate. The interpretive "patrol" in wildlife viewing areas is one solution; optical devices on distant lookouts is another.

INFORMATION

Newly proposed programs — transportation systems, backcountry-use rationing, expanded interpretation — will make information service even more important to visitors of the park and region. Coordination will be necessary to insure balance between the various serving organizations, and a stronger program is needed within the park itself. These information activities logically belong to the park's interpretive organization, and it will take the initiative in developing them.

Devices used will include regional centers along transportation access routes. Publications (especially leaflets, maps, newspapers), radio, and television will also carry informational specifics. These will not just happen; park management will have to see that they materialize by coordinating their promotion with the planning and development done by organizations such as

chambers of commerce, State and county highway departments, and the Forest Service. The time to start is NOW.

At busy stations, information will be separated by categories such as permits, general, and publications, to facilitate transmission. User interests will receive attention also, so that various users like backpackers, picnickers, organized groups, individuals, and families, may effectively pre-plan their visits.

PROTECTION

There are several pressing protection needs for both the visitors and the park that will be assisted by the interpretive program:

- public acceptance of the new fire-management policy
- visitor awareness of winter hazards and survival methods
- understanding of and compliance with the backcountry camping permit system
- keeping dogs out of the backcountry and on leash in the few places where dogs are allowed
- stopping feeding of animals
- controlling harassment of wildlife, especially elk and bighorn

PLACE NAMES

A memorial to Roger Toll, former park superintendent, eulogizes his contribution to conservation through the construction of Trail Ridge Road. It has taken on the aura of a place name already, beyond the deserved significance. Consequently, use of the word Toll Memorial will be restricted to the plaque itself and generally not placed on maps, while the general locality there will be known as Tundra Trail. Similarly, the use of the placename, Rock Cut, will be de-emphasized as inappropriate and uninspiring for the area, especially since parking there is inadequate and viewing, hazardous. A new and more appropriate name for Rock Cut may be developed.

CLIMATE

Weather factors at Rocky Mountain National Park can influence visitor enjoyment more than National Park Service visitor programs. This is true even in summer at places such as Trail Ridge Road or during times of thunderstorms. For this reason, an aggressive program of informing the public of possible conditions and how to prepare for them is important. Some interpretation of the natural phenomena behind the climate – thunderstorm patterns, for instance, would be appropriate. This same climatic situation makes it desirable to provide shelters at important but exposed interpretive sites – especially as public transportation replaces private cars and “instant shelter” is no longer available.

SEASONAL STAFF

A highly qualified and long-experienced staff of seasonal naturalists has developed over the years at Rocky Mountain National Park. These people are sincerely dedicated to their mission and have an unselfish interest in providing high-quality interpretation for their visitors, especially in the area of natural history. Within their ranks the naturalists have adopted high standards, and park visitors endorse their product. The special talents of this group will continue to be utilized in their particular fields, and their efforts will be bolstered where demand has not yet been met in existing and already-conceived naturalist services. Thus, the established naturalist program will remain a quality activity and the strong staff will be kept as the base and springboard for new programs. When programs require new skills, personnel possessing them will be added to the staff.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The target for design of programs and facilities at Rocky Mountain has traditionally been the family group but there are other categories of visitors, and their needs and interests will not be overlooked.

There will be two main responses to visitors: that made to specific categories of people (this is most easily accomplished through the flexible format of personal services), and that made to a combination of all kinds of visitors (self-guiding devices, audiovisual programs, exhibits, and similar presentations, plus personal service events – especially those that are fun, humorous, or appeal to a sense of adventure or emotion).

Identification of the target audience as an important element in program design is not new to this prospectus. It is mentioned, however, to emphasize its increasing importance as broader cross-sections of visitors are placed in captive situations aboard public transportation systems in our national parks.

THE PLAN

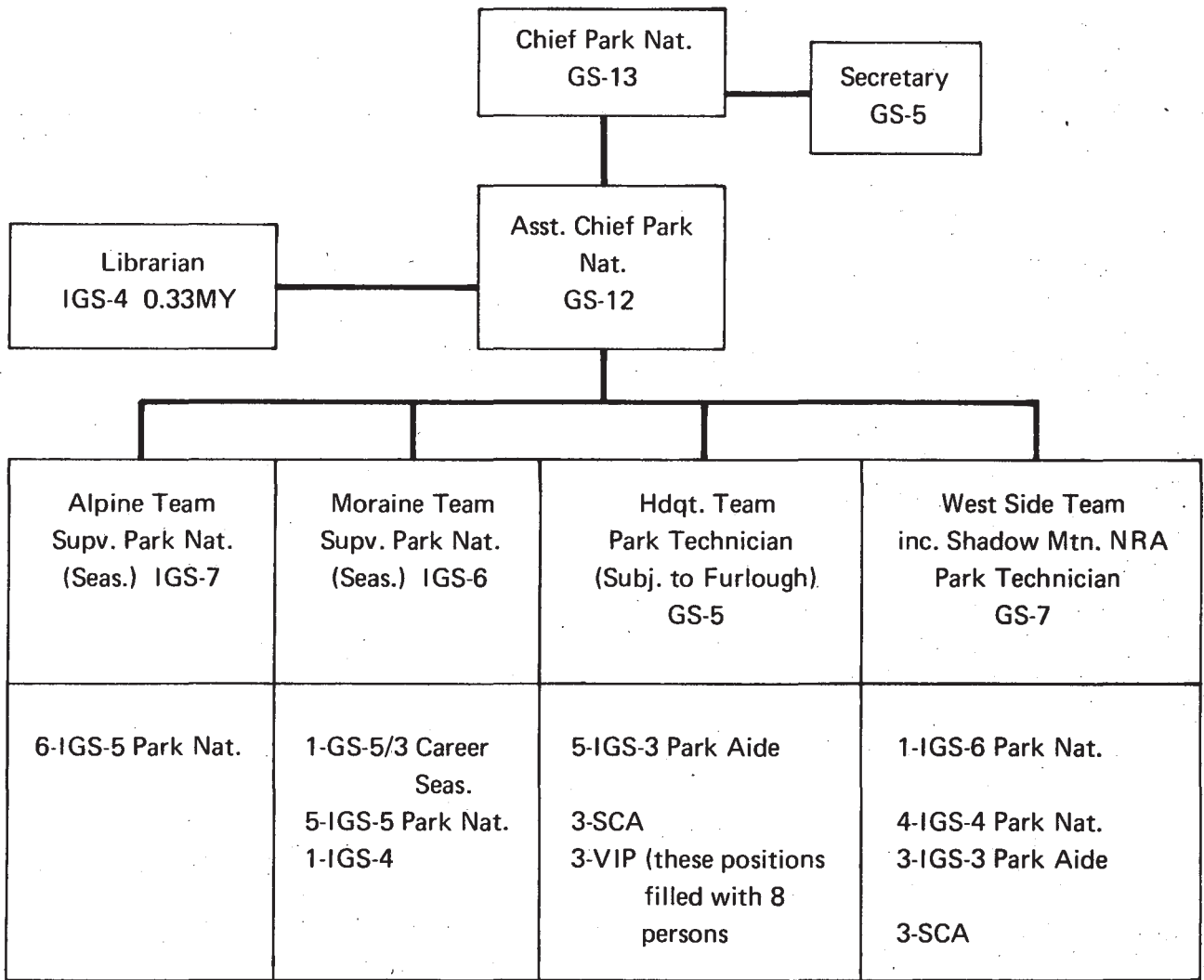
PRESENT

Rocky Mountain National Park is administered in conjunction with Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area. It is organized, overall, on a functional basis with operating chiefs of Administration, Interpretation, Resource Management and Visitor Protection, and Maintenance, each having responsibility for his respective functions in each of the field areas.

The permanent interpretive staff at the park consists of a chief park naturalist (GS-13), his assistant (GS-12), a park technician (GS-7), and a secretary (GS-5). Seasonal personnel are organized into four geographic teams — Alpine, Moraine Park, and Headquarters have seasonal supervisors; West Side and Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area are being operated as a unit and have a permanent park technician assigned in summer only, with duties on the east side occupying him the rest of the year. The interpreter in charge of the program for Shadow Mountain and the west side reports directly to the unit manager in the summer.

Interpretive Staffing

Interpretive staffing for the summer of 1972 is shown below:



SCA = Student Conservation Association

VIP = Volunteer-in-park

LONG DRAW
RESERVOIR
EXPANSION
U. S. F. S.

LA POUVRE PASS

FALL RIVER
PASS

ENDOVALLEY
CAMPGROUND

FALL RIVER
ENTRANCE

MAC GREGOR
RANCH BOUNDARY
REVISION (ADD)

TIMBER CREEK
CAMPGROUND

HIDDEN
VALLEY

BEAVER
MEADOWS
ENTRANCE

ASPENGLIN
CAMPGROUND

MAC GREGOR
RANCH

ESTES PARK
ORIENTATION
STATION

HOLZWARH
HOMESTEAD SITE

KAWUNEECHEE
VALLEY
BOUNDARY
REVISION (ADD)

MORaine PARK
CAMPGROUND &
VISITOR CENTER

PARK
HEADQUARTERS

BEAR
LAKE

GLACIER
BASIN
CAMPGROUND

YMCA CAMP

WEST SIDE
INFORMATION
BUILDING

GRAND LAKE

ROOSEVELT
NATIONAL
FOREST

SHADOW
MOUNTAIN
N. R. A.






LONGS PEAK
CAMPGROUND

WILD
BASIN

ALLENS
PARK

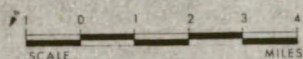
GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

LEGEND

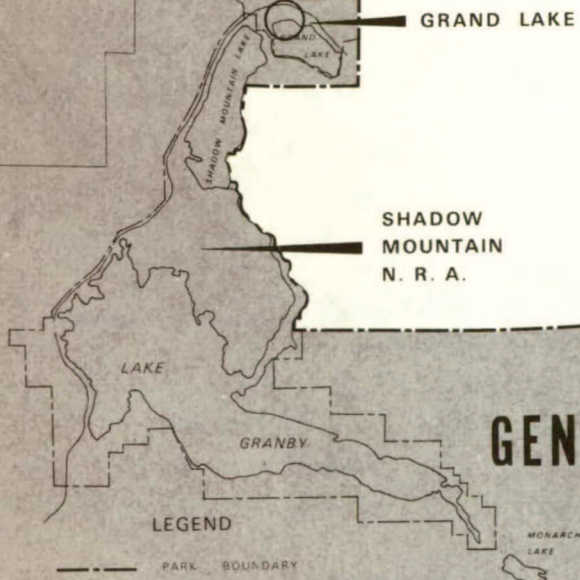
-  PARK BOUNDARY
-  PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT
-  EXISTING DEVELOPMENT
-  URBAN DEVELOPMENT
-  PROPOSED ADDITIONS

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK

COLORADO



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The Rocky Mountain Nature Association, Inc., employs clerical assistants to operate its sales program and Summer Seminars. Sales at information counters are provided by the park's information staff.

The outstanding part of this program is in the area of personal services, especially during the summer period. These appeal mainly to families, although anyone is welcome. Programs designated for other social groups are generally missing — at all times of day.

Evening campfire programs with group singing and slide talks are popular, successful, and traditional; they are presented nightly (summer) at Aspenglen, Moraine Park, Timber Creek, and Glacier Basin campground amphitheaters, and twice weekly at Longs Peak campground. None are given at Endovalley, which is being operated currently as a day-use area, although an old campfire-circle is there. Programs in adjacent communities, notably Estes Park, are no longer being provided.

There are many guided hikes, mostly attended by camping families. The majority of hikes are location-oriented, going to areas popular with visitors, but several present themes such as birds, tundra, or nature. These include the interesting beaver-walks, so popular that attendance at each walk is now limited to 50 by means of a ticket-registration system. Beaver-walks are provided only on the east side of the park.

An interesting experience is the evening tundra car-caravan. Photographic interpretation is also provided — both by park interpreters on caravans and by Kodak representatives at evening programs.

Visitor Centers are located at six points in the park, and all are staffed during the principal use periods, at a minimum:

Headquarters: The park movie is shown here but the only exhibit is a relief model; publications are on sale. This location is difficult for visitors to find because two-thirds of them enter the park on other roads and miss it completely. Others may find it only after they have traversed the park. A former commercial installation at Deer Ridge Junction, however, once attracted 1½ million visitors a year! Earlier, the park's first visitor center was in Estes Park, and the still-used Moraine Park visitor center was once on the main park entrance road.

Moraine Park: This visitor center features mounted animals (typed labels, old cases), historic displays, a new exhibit, and a movie on the theme "change," a butterfly exhibit with scientific names only, and a multiple-slide

program at a view window explaining the glaciation that produced the moraines outside; publications are on sale.

Bear Lake: Only a simple shelter is located here, with unscheduled manning by roving assignments.

Longs Peak Ranger Station: This consists of a too-small room in which hiking and climbing information, registration, and other activities are coordinated; simple photographic and map exhibits are provided and publications are sold.

Alpine: An audio station is available at this location – however, it is inaudible because of distractions and the background noise level. Static exhibits on the tundra and its climate, ecology, and development are featured and one panel contains weather instruments that monitor conditions outside; publications are on sale; and the lobby includes exhibits on regional features. Heavy use distracts visitors from all these services, however, and reduces their effect. A partition wall is currently being constructed that will separate the lobby from audio equipment; and an information desk will separate the information/sales functions.

Public Information Building: A new name is being sought for this center on the west side of the park. It displays an unlabeled relief model and offers publications for sale.

Of these facilities, only Alpine visitor center could be described as a full-service visitor center developed with a coherent and relevant theme.

Winter Sports Center: Located at Hidden Valley, this center provides services and information for winter users, and contains exhibits about the National Park System, wildlife, winter weather, the Canadian forest, and history. In summer it is little-used but does provide snacks, curios, and restrooms.

There are also information stations in Estes Park, Grand Lake, and Granby, all operated by chambers of commerce. The National Park Service maintains a limited-exhibit information trailer at the roadside as visitors enter Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area from the south. Entrance stations sell park permits and provide information services that will be expanded in the future. Their season of operation is short, compared with the season of park use. Limited-range AM radio is in use at entrances to explain recreational options.

Signing

Directional signing is generally adequate within the park and along the approach roads, although trailside signing is lacking at a number of junctions.

Estes Park is an exception, however, as signs route visitors around the town, thus bypassing both city traffic and the Headquarters visitor center!

There are wayside signs along the roads explaining aspects of the scene, and there are several nature trails and road guides including those for Bear Lake, Old Fall River Road, Trail Ridge Road, Tundra Trail, Moraine Park, and Lulu City. A nature-trail guide booklet to Gem Lake has been abandoned because of vandalism, but the trail is still used.

Area Information

There is an audio tour of Trail Ridge Road that is privately distributed by Auto Tape Tours Division of Comprehensive Communications, Inc., (at \$5.95 plus a rental deposit). Most of this material is oriented to the presentation of natural history specifics rather than the story or theme of the trail area.

The new book *Rocky Mountain and Mesa Verde National Parks* by National Parkways, is a professionally written regional guide. At present, there is no good selection of quality films about the area.

Park collections are predominantly those of natural history. A few historic furnishings are being acquired. Art and photographic resources are minimal, in spite of the interest in the area by the renowned artist, Bierstadt. There is a good, well-maintained library but it is little-known to the public, and little use is made of it by the staff.

Television programs on management topics are being presented now in cooperation with the Estes Park station, Channel 13. There is also park coverage in the tourist-oriented newspapers "Colorado Playland" and "Mountain Marquee" (the latter prints interpretive schedules) and on the Estes Park radio station, KKEP, 1470. The Estes Park Chamber of Commerce provides handouts and information service, both telephone and counter, in the eastern part of town as does the Stanley Hotel, at a site near the park access-highways intersection.

Interpretation

Personal interpretation along the roadside vistas is lacking. Various experiments have been made in the past to provide such service, but none have resulted in continuing programs. A horse-mounted ranger on the Old Fall River Road may prove an exception.

There is an indepth interpretive program, the Summer Seminars, provided for students, teachers, and enthusiasts in the academic phases of natural

history such as animal, bird, montane and alpine ecology, geology, plant identification, and mountain climates. "Innovative Ecological Education" was added in 1972 to acquaint teachers with new National Park Service programs in this field. Seminars are presented cooperatively by the Rocky Mountain Nature Association, Inc., the University of Colorado, the Thorne Ecological Institute, and other interested groups.

Winter seminars are also offered. Winter interpretation has included information, the park movie at Headquarters, personal contacts, short talks, and movies at Hidden Valley Winter Sports Center. Saturday night talks have been given at Headquarters.

Activities

Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are increasingly popular at Bear Lake, and enthusiasts are journeying into the backcountry at that season to places such as La Poudre Pass and even Longs Peak. Experiments have been conducted with ski and snowshoe walks, and regular programs are now being initiated. The National Park Service policy is to encourage these trends, and to encourage ski mountaineering. Trail Ridge Road is closed in winter, as is Old Fall River Road, and snowmobilers may travel on Trail Ridge Road from the west park entrance to Fall River Pass.

Longs Peak is one of the popular climbs of America, and local mountaineering firms offer guide service. Primitive exhibits are available at the Longs Peak ranger station and an informative handout is provided by the park. Various books describe the climb in styles that are either too brief or too antique. There is a concern that climbing the peak is becoming too popular, and this has led to a de-emphasis of publicity by the park.

Backpacking is a popular activity, and is included in the interpretive talks and in demonstrations. The new concepts of backcountry camping registration in order to regulate resource carrying-capacity will apply to Rocky Mountain's backcountry.

There is also a concern that certain other visitor activities — including interpretation — are concentrating visitors beyond carrying capacities of local areas. As a consequence, certain programs have been suspended while acceptable alternatives are being sought. These programs are: hikes in the Specimen Mountain sheep range, the picnic aspects of a popular evening alpine caravan, and limitation of beaver-walk attendance. A few more boardwalks or pavements to channel visitor feet are being considered. An annual fall "Elk Festival" is heavily promoted by Estes Park interests, but is not controlled adequately to keep the animals from being disturbed.

Sightseeing-bus service is provided by The Gray Line in summer to Trail Ridge and Bear Lake, but this affords little exposure to the park interpretive program.

Estes Park is a center for many visitor activities. In addition to the overnight lodging, restaurants, and bars, there are Indian, craft, souvenir, book, and art stores; games, slides, and a tram; movie theaters and historic re-enactments; churches, a medical clinic, drug stores, and a post office; livery stables, and shops providing mountaineering goods and services (including climbing, backpacking, cross-country and downhill-skiing), camera, and fishing-tackle stores. Similar enterprises are located at Grand Lake on the west side.

The Estes Park Area Historical Museum gives a historical perspective of the region, including the park, and preserves and exhibits specimens and photographs. Another museum, small and privately operated but with significant collections, occupies an early homestead cabin constructed by Enos Mills, the mountaineering-nature guide and writer who was largely responsible for establishment of the national park; it sits at the base of Twin Sisters, just outside of the park, and is owned and operated by Mrs. Enda Mills Kiley, Mills' daughter. It is proposed as a national historic landmark.

The park has an environmental study area at Sprague Lake, and there is another in the Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area that also serves the park's west side. The National Park Service Colorado State Office Environmental Education Specialist has developed an active program of conducted environmental trips to the park, particularly during the spring.

PROPOSED

Beyond the Border

The special values of Rocky Mountain National Park will be presented to the people through all appropriate means – by staff encouragement of writers, editors, and photographers in the communications media of television, radio, magazines, and newspapers; by placing literature in libraries and bookstores; by a correspondence service at the park; by traveling exhibits; and by environmental education programs and school texts.

Within the region there will be park-based speakers available for offsite services, especially those dealing with management and planning, so as to further educate the public on new programs and considerations and to receive their feedback.

State and regional National Park Service offices in Denver and Omaha will assist in presenting national programs, and the potential of TV in Estes Park for visitors will be a natural entry into greater involvement beyond the immediate park area. Colorado State University at Fort Collins has a TV curriculum and has expressed an interest in developing programs about the park. Knowledgeable seasonal personnel will be encouraged to present programs that have been coordinated with the park and the region in their home areas.

Thus, not only those who are planning visits to the park will be served, but a greater cross-section of the population will become aware of the area's values. The "vicarious visit" will be fostered — it will provide an intellectual or philosophical satisfaction in knowing that there is a place like Rocky Mountain National Park without actually going there.

By its very nature, the park is identified as a supreme example of the original American landscape, but in these programs it will be placed in perspective as a part of the land, all of which should be developed with environmental concern. It will serve as an example of the land ethic, rather than as an excuse to ignore it.

Approaching the Park

Signs will direct visitors to the park at road junctions enroute, as they do now, but a problem needs solving for those entering from the east: two main approach roads enter the park on that side and both will remain in use, yet there is no location on either for a visitor facility that can serve both.

A solution is to establish a regional center in Estes Park at the point where the approach roads meet. There is a satisfactory site adjacent to these roads, yet away from the traffic in town. This prospectus tentatively recommends it. Final selection, however, must await contacts with other organizations involved — especially the Estes Park Chamber of Commerce and the Colorado highway department — to insure continuing access for and exposure to the traveling motorist, should the roads be realigned.

Finalization of the center concept itself must also await such contacts. To be fully effective, the center should be favored as a public contact point by all the major visitor-serving organizations in the region. Fortunately, interest in the concept is already developing — primarily through the Estes Park Chamber of Commerce. The park staff should support this, even taking the lead if appropriate, but at least joining other groups in sponsoring an impartial study to define the overall function of the center and the roles of the various participants. Specific interpretive designs, guided by the general

considerations below, will follow the crystallization of opinion expected to occur during this phase.

This center would serve a variety of functions of a regional character: orientation and information services for Rocky Mountain National Park and Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area, Estes Park Chamber of Commerce, and Roosevelt National Forest. It would also be a staging area for the transportation system within the park, and so would provide parking. As a community building, the center would have the potential of fostering broad interest for forums whose purpose is to develop a common ground to define tourist experience in the area, environmental activities, and similar subjects.

Provision would be made in this center for limited exhibits of the region (these would be rotated as needed to attract repeat visitors and the local population, to alert them to program changes), information counter, publications sales, literature distribution by a non-profit organization, and daytime talks to groups traveling together, as well as evening talks for visitors staying in town. Telephone information services, both personal and recorded, would be provided.

The building would be designed to cultivate a feeling of connection with the outdoors, and would be open at most hours. When unmanned, it would convert to self-service and continue to provide basic information needs.

If the regional center concept does not prove viable, traffic will be routed to the present headquarters area, where most of the services described above will be provided.

Entering

Backup facilities will be provided at park entrances, where visitors may not only purchase park permits but will also be encouraged to ask questions. Attractive entrance signs will identify the park.

The situation is different on the west side of the park for it has only one entrance road, simplifying the problem of providing the bulk of park information at a single location. The primary station there (Public Information Building) will have three main functions – to provide, through limited exhibits, an introduction to the major features along Trail Ridge Road for cross-park travelers, to give information on routes and destinations for tourists going west, and to provide orientation and information and literature services for the west side of the park. Backcountry permits will be issued. Information on Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area will be

available, but it is anticipated that demand will dictate another facility specific to that area and closer to it.

In master planning for Rocky Mountain National Park and Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area, a regional information center is proposed for the vicinity of Granby to provide services related to the varied recreational opportunities available – including Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area, Rocky Mountain National Park, Willow Creek Recreation Area, the towns of Granby and Grand Lake, Arapahoe National Forest, Routt National Forest, and the Colorado State Forest, as well as other state recreation areas and ski areas. Even when this facility is operational, backup will still be needed at the park entrance to accommodate visitor needs there.

Estes Park

Because there are few overnight accommodations within the national park and only limited camping available, most overnight visitors stay in Estes Park. In fact, many who come to Estes Park do not go on to visit the national park. To serve those who do, several programs relating to and coordinated with the regional information center will be provided in town and some will be based there. In addition to those already described under that center, there will be activity announcements on bulletin boards, in newspapers, on the radio, and in motel rooms.

Special television programs about the park will be broadcast to present backgrounds and meanings, to explain management programs and planning, and to give informational specifics. Evening is the time for these, since that is when park visitors are most likely to watch; during the day they will be viewing the real area. The TV presentations are not intended as a substitute for a park visit, but rather, as a means of making a visit more meaningful by giving advance knowledge or follow-up explanations. Programming will repeat periodically, but be varied within the context of the length of stay. It will respond to seasonal changes. New programs will be produced at least annually and "specials" presented in order to attract repeat visitors and alert the local population to changing aspects of the park operation for their own edification, as well as to assist them in responding to visitor interests.

Demonstrations designed to appeal to general audiences will be given in the town park in cooperation with the chamber of commerce. Park rangers may show the skills of their profession – climbing, search-and-rescue, first aid, horse-packing, fire-fighting – and park naturalists may give high-appeal presentations such as Indian skills, backpacking, bird or mammal calls, or yodeling, that are more performances than academic talks. Standards of good park conduct would be woven in unobtrusively. Private

conservationists, conservation organizations, and park cooperating societies would be encouraged to participate, to better involve the people.

Short films for use at the local movie houses would be provided to develop knowledge about park conservation programs and attitudes concerning them.

Evening audiovisual programs would be given at the regional center to tell the story of the park and region and how to get the most from a visit. Several organizations would participate here, not just the National Park Service, so programs would be locally produced and presented "live."

In addition, more traditional campfire programs would be presented at outdoor sites selected for their natural setting and convenience to the audience. Locations downtown in the town park, at the Stanley Hotel, and at the YMCA camp are among those that would meet these criteria.

Transportation

Master planning for Rocky Mountain National Park calls for the automobile to remain the basic access device for most of the area and for present travel patterns to stay much as they are. Changes are proposed, of course, but within the context of the existing system.

During the peak travel season of summer, certain areas will be accessible only by public transportation device: the road to Bear Lake from Beaver Meadows Junction (near park headquarters) and probably the Old Fall River Road. Trail Ridge Road will be served by a combination of public system and private car during summer, then only by private car until its close for the winter.

What opportunities does this system offer for visitor use and for interpretation? The system has as an objective the improvement of the visit – both by reducing the distractions of congestion and by enhancing the park experience – and is flexible enough to allow experimentation. It can provide interpretation of the park and motivation to experience it onsite. Of course, the system will also serve the need for simple transportation of those heading directly for the trails or to a single roadside point. At the least, it will improve the experience of those who would otherwise be the drivers; specially designed vehicles will allow better viewing than is possible in most private cars and it will encourage walking because one-way hikes are possible between stops. A system of interpretation will be developed to meet the special opportunities provided by the transportation system, although it will overlap on the ground with that developed for the cars.

Applications of the system include transporting interpretive aids to roadside sites on the first run of the day when use is light and retrieving them on the last, and possibly moving them during the day to more desirable sites as conditions change. These would portray aspects of the scene pertinent at a given time, and would respond to the many daily and seasonal changes in weather, wildlife, wildflowers, fall color, snow pattern, and so forth. Portable exhibitry and audiovisual devices would allow a more effective presentation of the most dramatic feature of the day. If these interpretive units are visually keyed to provide ready recognition, it will encourage visitors to use them. One such unit will be designed as an experimental prototype; if it is successful, two more units are envisioned for Trail Ridge Road and one each on Fall River and Bear Lake Roads.

To a degree, such devices could also serve resource management objectives by providing a means of spreading human impact or of relocating it. Another use could be made of the early and late trams in bringing in supplies and hauling up comfort station trailers to be parked along the road. These could alleviate the present environmental load on the Alpine visitor center area, as well as serve as an added convenience for visitors. Either these vehicles or other fixed structures will provide shelter from the elements.

The transportation system will do more than substitute a bus tour for the present car tour; it will provide a new experience. To help attract riders, groups traveling together must know they will not be separated — whether they be families, organized groups, or acquaintances. The needs of backpackers, picnickers, and other special categories of users must be met, as well as those of "typical tourists." Pets must be provided for. Explanation of how these various categories of visitors may best use the system will be presented in advance of boarding, so they can plan their time, meals, clothing needs, and other necessities. If visitors are educated about the transportation possibilities, they are more apt to use the system.

Once on the system, visitors must be encouraged to leave it periodically and experience the park directly. Otherwise, it will only be a new type of tour, better than a private car, but not responsive to the goal in mind. To encourage effective use of the transportation system, visitors must understand the frequency of service, times involved, routes and destinations; and they must also be assured that there are shelters in case of weather change, that later buses will have space available for them, and that there are experiences and activities (mobile exhibits, personal interpretation) awaiting them off the tram that are superior to those they are enjoying while riding.

While experimentation is necessary to produce a workable product, a certain initial routing of the transportation system is suggested:

A loop would go to Bear Lake either from Beaver Meadows Junction or from Headquarters. Several stops would be provided along this route to encourage contact with the park.

A circuit would be made of Trail Ridge and Fall River Roads. There would be a stop at Hidden Valley center to utilize restrooms and food service, as well as to allow new passengers to board there rather than at Fall River Pass where impacts are greater. The trip includes brief stops at each vista point along the way and it would be possible for hikers to disembark and enjoy new trails planned for the Fall River canyon. If necessary, some switchbacks would be widened to accommodate the park vehicles. A variation of this trip would be to use Trail Ridge Road as the route both to and from Fall River Pass.

A third loop emanating from the regional information center, but with additional boarding points in town, could connect the other loops with Estes Park.

The first two loops will be for interpretive purposes; the third, predominantly for transportation to the others. A fourth loop might extend from Grand Lake and connect with the Trail Ridge-Fall River circuit at Fall River Pass if there is future demand in that area.

Hidden Valley has been identified as a major boarding point and its existing parking will be utilized in this context. Parking facilities at other centers (Headquarters and Alpine, for instance) could not handle the added load and still serve the original parking intent, so they are not likely to be used as boarding areas. The Hidden Valley and Bear Lake parking lots will be landscaped to break up the expanses of pavement, and at a minimum, will have an island of vegetation in the median. The Hidden Valley Winter Sports Area will be given a new name, at least for summer, perhaps the Hidden Valley center, and architectural redesign will make the buildings more compatible with year-round use.

Informational tools to be utilized on the transit systems include prerecorded messages – specific details will be given at sites and thematic presentations will be made enroute between sites. Quiet time will be included to allow personal looking and social conversations, so as not to overpower the captive audience. Intriguing possibilities present themselves should private transmission (through earplugs, for example) prove practical – messages in

various foreign languages or of appeal to persons with special interests or in certain social groupings (various scientific fields, popular, youth, family). Should speakers be used, they will be mounted at several spots on the vehicles so that volume may be kept low and audio disturbance of the park environment be held to a minimum.

Roadside signs will serve both the public transportation system (when riders get off) and the needs of the private-car motorist wherever these two systems overlap.

To allow trans-mountain visitors to board the system, there will likely be multiple staging areas at places like Beaver Meadows Junction, Hidden Valley center, Estes Park, and possibly even Grand Lake. Each staging area will provide an overview of trip options.

The free park folder, widely available and distributed at entrances, will provide basic map orientation to the area's primary features and the available transportation options and travel systems. It will describe the trips that may be made by the first-time visitor, with rewards to be found through each, but it will not attempt to be a road guide.

Wayside Happenings

Wayside turnouts and vistas will constitute the basic presentation of park to visitor for both private car and transportation-system passengers. Viewpoints are generally well interpreted now, but by the wrong devices — thematic signs, subject-specific road guides. Redesign of parking where cars and public transportation overlap will separate the cars from the viewing area as much as possible.

By its very nature, a sequence of wayside stories tends to be kaleidoscopic rather than thematic because it is intended to present the outstanding features along the way, and these are not necessarily related. Further, overlap among exhibits is inevitable because not all visitors will go to all parts of the park and so repetition of transcendent points is desirable. Wherever possible without contrivance, however, story lines will be developed to provide coherence. At least they will be related within geographic zones. For instance, interpretation along upper Trail Ridge Road will present the story of the outstanding features there — the tundra and the ecological implications of wildlife and climate, but will also touch the Indian story where the trail is so obvious. By emphasizing the route selection process in which the Indians picked the higher altitude paths because they were more open than the forest below, that story, too, can be tied to tundra factors.

It is anticipated that a separate exhibit plan will be prepared for wayside exhibits, probably incorporating all those now existing and adding to them, from the road and trail guides, for instance.

Consequently, this prospectus will guide the development of that plan and relate it functionally to other interpretive devices. A proper balance will be established on the signs between the thematic approach and site relevance, recalling that visitors are more responsive to experiences than enlightenment. More specific ideas are suggested for consideration in the exhibit plan:

- to explain Hidden Valley, a series of exhibits: from Horseshoe Park where the valley is hidden, at the valley mouth where the moraine cross-section can be seen, and from above at Rainbow View.

- at Twin Sisters summit, remove unused lookout tower and clean up the area. Add a peak-finder, interpret Longs Peak and its related moraines and trails and the view to the east. Toilets and water should be provided along the trail rather than at the summit. Boundary change proposals might affect this project, but regardless of the administering agency, improvements are needed to meet the demands of both hikers and horseback riders.

- the interpretive sign explaining glaciation at Glacier Basin campground is appropriate even though it's not on a main road, because it gives that area an "identity of place" for visitors. Other campgrounds can benefit from similar theme development.

- forest fire signs will be redone so as to emphasize fire as an ecological factor.

- peak-identifiers along roads will be continued and the idea will be applied to other features as well, such as trees along Old Fall River Road. These will locate objects usually visible and within the park – not, for instance, the Gore Range 60 miles away, or the Medicine Bow Range. The high point on Trail Ridge Road will be indicated.

- the upland surface concept will be told, probably between Tundra Curves and Tundra Trail, relating the geomorphic history of that area to the development of the tundra.

- interpretation at Forest Canyon overlook now presents both glaciers and wilderness, but the scene relates better to the latter theme. A slight extension of the overlook might reduce the need visitors now feel to scramble down the ridge for better views.

– Chasm Falls on the Fall River Road will be presented with interpretive signs and a trail leading downhill and back to the road. Safety hazards here will be identified and corrected with engineering and/or interpretation.

– history of travel in the park would be appropriate at either end of Old Fall River Road.

– the Indian story will be presented where the Ute Trail crosses Trail Ridge Road and the Tundra Trail. A hike along a portion of it will be encouraged, and reference to artifacts pertinent to the Indians will be made, along with their location in the park.

– mining history will be told at Lulu City and the Shipler Cabins and at Miner Bill's Place on the Old Fall River Road.

– elk and sheep will be featured at Horseshoe Park by means of waysides and other mobile devices there and on Trail Ridge Road.

– cirque formation is a pertinent topic at Iceberg Lake as is volcanic phenomena.

Thus, there will be an extensive system of wayside exhibits along the roads, perhaps 40, when the park as a whole is considered, including about five of those now existing.

Among the wayside events will be stations where interpreters and/or exhibits are available to present the scene. They will provide the key to the "experience" visit. They will present academic natural history stories, as well as provide assistance for photographers and interpretation to encourage scenic and wildlife viewing, including esthetic inspiration. The Fall Elk Festival at Horseshoe Park sponsored by Estes Park, for instance, could be improved with personal services – the elk would be disturbed less and the visitors would see a more natural performance. Mobile exhibits and interpretive devices will be used where the best and most exciting experiences are available. Some may be in conjunction with roadside shelters; others, at special trail points. Optical devices will be developed to allow viewing of the park's special animals – beaver, elk, and bighorn – within the visitors' time frames and physical capabilities. These will be operated by experienced personnel. In all cases, the animals will be presented undisturbed in their natural habitat in a way that maintains the onsite relation between the animal viewed and the viewer, so that the distant setting being relayed is also visible to the unaided eye. Other devices will have film or slides to reveal how glaciers have ground down a valley and

these will be shown where visitors are looking at that valley. Comparisons of present scenes with those of the past can be made onsite, as winter conditions on the tundra can be contrasted with those of summer. "Framers" – perhaps with slight magnification – can be installed at viewpoints to focus attention on the scene longer and minimize the distraction caused by other people and roadside animals. Mobile exhibits will be designed for versatility and capability for rapid modification by the park staff to meet changing conditions, including equipment for labeling visuals.

Because of the variable pattern of daily and seasonal events, it is not possible for this prospectus to preselect sites where personnel or viewing devices will be placed. It is anticipated, however, that the more successful locations will be at the Gore Range overlook onto the Specimen Mountain area, the Tundra Trail area, Chasm Falls, Bear Lake-Dream Lake area, the Continental Divide at Milner Pass, Sheep Lake (autumn), Farview Curve, and Forest Canyon overlook. Of these, no more than four are expected to be in use at any one time and it is suggested that experience be gained first with a single prototype to insure an effective design. A radio-linkup between the interpreters with their mobile exhibits and the transportation system vehicles will allow interpreters to locate the best conditions at any given time and enable them to maximize the visitor experience. Onsite personnel already need a communication link to meet protection needs of visitors.

Limited-range AM radios will continue to be installed at various places on an experimental basis – visitor center parking areas, entrance stations, vistas, trailheads. These may be informational or interpretive, depending on the need at the site. Integrating them with transportation access will be a consideration.

Nature Trails

Self-guiding nature trails will be utilized as now but they will each present a major theme of the park, rather than merely catalog the natural history features. Catalog trails will be provided, but at campground or other out-of-the-way locales so that visitors at the major sites are not distracted by extraneous detail.

Self-guiding trails will be as follows:

Area	Theme and Execution
Bear Lake	The present booklet is passive, emphasizing such static things as plants and rocks, yet the area itself is dynamic and competes with the nature trail. The park is improving its booklets and may also use interpretive signs. Deer, fish, squirrels, ducks, and beaver signs, along with the presentation of the mountain scenery, will comprise the new approach with a theme of discovery of the outdoor world. More barriers are needed to protect the fragile lakeshore, and a continuation of the sensitive placement of rocks and logs already started will serve well. Interpretation will include the rewards to be found up the Dream Lake Trail, but few if any signs will be placed beyond Bear Lake.
Moraine Park	Here the ecology of a moraine is interpreted. The story of moraine formation is told inside the Moraine Park visitor center; this trail presents an opportunity to experience a moraine and observe the way its soil and slope influence local ecology. The present trail will serve fairly well with a few modifications – a phone line will be hidden, obsolete stops will be relocated, the trail or a spur will crest close enough to the moraine top so as to present its full topographic form rather than only one slope. A separate interpretive trail will present the William Allen White property and story, emphasizing the influence the park scene had on his life's work.
Tundra World Trail	This is the place to present details of the tundra environment, along with broad concepts. The theme of the present booklet could be presented at the trail start by interpretive signs. Present signs are too small to be read by more than one viewer at a time, and they will be enlarged. In some instances they do not clearly identify the object discussed; more visuals will improve this.

Clearer signing to guide visitors from the parking area to the trail start will be installed (this will help reduce gullying), and to reduce congestion and add another perspective, a separate return trail will be added along the adjacent ridge and past the mushroom rocks. For esthetic and environmental reasons, this could be made with a set-rock pavement rather than asphalt, and ultimately the tundra trail could be similarly redone. Benches will be added to encourage resting and viewing because the trail at that high altitude is steep for some. The memorial to Roger Toll will be de-emphasized, although the peak-finder there will retain its importance. A second finder will be installed adjacent to the first so that more people can use this device at one time.

Old Fall River Road

The montane forest is the story here, up to timberline. The present booklet may be discontinued when the transportation system is installed, and a series of interpretive signs may be placed at important turnouts. They will be both conceptual and specific, but will be limited in number and size so that visitors are left with ample opportunity to discover the forest on their own.

Shiplier Cabin Trail

Mining history of the park, especially the west side including Lulu City and its importance to the founding of Grand Lake, will be presented here. The Shiplier Cabins will be the main destination and culmination of the trail. An invitation will be extended to go on to Lulu City and the interpretive sign there will be continued, but as the rewards fall off beyond Shiplier Cabins and the trail gets steeper, it will be arranged so that Lulu City is an optional "add-on."

Specimen Mountain Trail

The story of bighorn and elk will be presented by a booklet giving instructions on how to see these animals without disturbing them, and how to recognize their signs. Trailside posts will not

be used, because the features to be emphasized are too ephemeral; instead, good visuals will explain important aspects. Some details on status and life histories will be included, such as ecological relationships in the wild and with man.

Glacier Basin,
Hidden Valley,
Kawuneechee Valley

Depending on the beaver's tolerance, its ecology might be presented with a developed trail, perhaps a boardwalk. The same trail might serve for evening beaver-walks and could include a viewing platform. Such a trail recognizes a certain amount of intrusion, but this may be more acceptable than having visitors search for their own viewing sites. Experience should be gained with no more than one trail at a time to minimize disturbance to the animals.

Timber Creek,
Longs Peak,
Glacier Basin,
Endovalley,
Moraine Park,
Aspenglow Campgrounds

Local ecology and plant identification will be stressed at these locations. Note that each of these campground nature trails will present the ecology of its own area; each will also try to "identify" with some important feature of its region to help give the campground a character of place. In many cases trail names give clues to their personalities. The simplest method of development is envisioned – probably post and mimeographed leaflet.

Gem Lake

This will present an area of disintegrating granite, much different from the rest of the park; show good views of Estes Park; present the curious Gem Lake itself; and be available for winter use when other trails in the park are too snowy. Development will be minimal, however, as the trail is long, steep, and warm in summer. Simple vandal-proof interpretive signs are suggested, keyed to posts at viewpoints of the Twin Owls, Estes Park – where a short new spur needs to be added from the main trail, Longs Peak, and at Gem Lake.

Historical exhibits, such as the William Allen White cabin, will be a part of the wayside system presented in the context of interesting sites within the natural park rather than as entities in their own rights. Audio programs might be used to interpret them. This would apply also to homesteads, such as Holzwarth's in Kawuneechee Valley, and pioneer ranches like MacGregor's in Black Canyon should they be added to the park. The Enos Mills cabin is located outside the park but it would fall into the same category; it should, however, be indicated more prominently as a park-related historic resource, in close cooperation with the owners. (National historic landmark status is being sought.)

Signing on hiking trails will be brought up to the required standard – all junctions marked with mileage and destination and outstanding features identified. Interpretive signing is not envisioned on these routes, however, except in unusual cases.

Visitor Centers

Visitor centers will provide background information. They will meet the need for exhibit housing and establish places for central presentations, providing coherence for certain story elements not possible to obtain onsite. They will provide information services and literature sales, registration permits, and similar park services. Each will also provide convenient restrooms, a respite from the elements during severe weather, and some will include quick meal service and supply other travelers' needs.

The regional information centers will introduce and orient, then direct visitors through transportation options to first-hand experiences where real rewards onsite will fulfill the visit.

Alpine: at 11,796-foot Fall River Pass will be the most vital. Facilities here include parking area, footpaths, viewpoints and view windows, food service, exhibit hall, information service, restrooms, and simple shelter. All these functions are needed by visitors, and all will be continued.

The facilities have been too small from the day they were opened. Even so, since a management objective is to minimize development in the alpine zone and an interpretive objective is to emphasize the outdoor experience, none will be enlarged. To achieve these goals while still meeting visitor needs, a coordinated approach will be developed and emphasis among the various options will be realigned. It could be asked why two separate buildings are needed here, for instance.

Alpine visitor center will synthesize the story of the tundra, the park's most significant feature. It is important this be realized, for many visitors consider

the alpine to mean craggy, glacier-covered peaks. The center is, however, properly oriented to provide an intimate view of the more significant alpine tundra rather than the more impressive, but less important, alpine peaks.

How dull the exhibit hall is! Visitors come in from an expansive colorful world of action and motion, their senses tingling from the cold and wind, to a tiny, darkened, windowless box full of people staring at the walls. The mood transition is too great for the static exhibits to succeed even though the right subjects are covered in a format normally effective. Consequently, exhibits will be made more visual and less text-oriented and will be redesigned for faster absorption so as to increase circulation. Action will be provided in exhibits like the existing weather monitors, to involve visitors. A few exhibits will be deleted – road construction, ancient geology. Space can be added by converting the attached apartment to an exhibit area, if the living quarters are not needed. Congestion at the entrance to the exhibit hall will be reduced by relocating the weather exhibit on the inside wall, and the sign "Exhibits" and its arrow will be raised above head level to enhance visibility.

The lobby area is too small to serve all its present purposes: entrance, exit, restrooms access, exhibit hall access, information/sales, regional travel opportunities, and viewing window with audio. It must be redesigned and certain functions relocated.

The present information counter is overtaxed. To alleviate this, a separate counter and room divider are being installed. Too, personnel could be assigned to circulate in the parking area, concessioner building, and lobby. A random-select slide projection system incorporated in the information desk may assist in answering questions through use of visual images and maps. Literature and map sales could be relocated to the concessioner building, with a special display there on alpine and tundra titles. Other titles would have to be specially justified for stocking.

An audio message at the viewing windows has added to congestion in the lobby, but this may be alleviated by the new partition. If not, it could be relocated to the viewing room in the concessioner building where specially designed "talking seats" in front of the view windows could give the same general tundra theme. A divider the length of that room could separate the viewing area from theme-related memento sales and lunch area, so tundra artwork and photography could be placed along the side facing the window.

Should this solution be unfeasible, however, the existing viewing window will be continued with audio. Speakers will be placed nearer ear level, and the room will be acoustically improved by means of tile, rugs, and partitions.

Not only will this separate the viewing area from the lobby, it will also separate viewing groups from one another, thereby minimizing distraction from social conversations. Additional speakers will be installed outside on the adjacent porch to place visitors in more intimate contact with the scene they are viewing, as well as to reduce congestion inside – at least while the weather is tolerable.

In response to adverse public comment as well as principle, attractions competing with primary park values, or not vital to visitor needs at this site, will be de-emphasized. Theme-related mementos (not general souvenirs), film, interpretive literature sales, restrooms, and fast-food service would continue to be provided within the context of meeting actual needs in the shortest time possible, so that shoppers and others not involved with the park features do not tie up space needed by scenic viewers. Parking will not be enlarged. Instead, a park transportation system will be utilized in addition to private cars. More opportunities for visitors to meet creature needs for meals and restrooms will be provided along Trail Ridge Road, especially at Hidden Valley.

Footpaths have been worn into the tundra in several directions and they seem to be permanent. They will either be paved with a colored (perhaps mottled earth tones) soil-cement to stabilize the ground and minimize their scars, or rock-pavement will be set. No interpretation is proposed for them so that visitors will not be distracted from taking the already developed (and much better) Tundra World Trail.

Rock walls are suggested to block access to the cornice below the visitor center, a safety hazard, and to keep feet from the tundra gardens in the walkways.

Moraine Park: will serve an incidental role for visitors in its vicinity, providing shelter during inclement weather, information and literature sales, and interpretation – emphasizing the montane zone flora and fauna (especially beavers) and including the glacial origin of Moraine Park. History of its lodging use will be presented in conjunction with the adjacent William Allen White writing retreat. An interpretive trail will motivate onlookers to visit the retreat. The Bear Lake area will be introduced here, because it will be a major destination for visitors, and the adjacent moraine trail will be continued and improved.

Moraine Park visitor center has a historic character and its rustic interior gives the visitor opportunity to see a well-kept mountain lodge. It is an example of a period of use now over, and the few remaining structures in the

area (some visible from this center) are slated for removal. This was once the park's only visitor center, located on the former main access road of the park. Its present layout and content reflects its "growth like Topsy." Consequently, existing exhibits must be modified in order to accomplish the proposed reorientation of theme.

Recall that this visitor center will become a stop on the transportation route, at least during summer when it will not be accessible to cars. Use will probably decline as visitors opt for onsite, newly available park experiences rather than museum experiences and because their need for information will be reduced by the simplicity of the transportation system and already met in part at the regional information center. This may well reduce the personnel requirements, and consideration should be given to operating the facility without manpower during spring, fall, and winter.

Downstairs, the sole use will be as an information lobby featuring literature sales and exhibits on things to do – camping, backpacking, hiking, photography. Seats and tables for resting will be provided and there will be reading matter and, perhaps, a fireplace. Acoustical damping will be provided by a rug and ceiling tile, and lighting will be improved.

The upstairs will be devoted to a thematic presentation. The existing theme "Forces of Change" will be adapted to apply more directly to Moraine Park. The viewing window will continue to be a dominant attraction, presenting the moraine itself. The multiple-projection slide program will be retained in concept but the mechanics will be improved. The structure there will be modified to provide a more expansive view for more of the audience (this is a non-historic addition, so changing it will not affect the building's integrity), and the exotic tree growing up at the side, removed. The tree's mention will also have to be deleted from the nature trail guide. Existing mounted animals native to the montane zone may be retained in the new exhibitry. Others, including the butterflies, will be returned to the museum collections.

This visitor center has been cited as an excellent place to become acquainted with moraines but actually only one side of the system can be observed from it, and there is no practical spot that is better. An aerial photograph or a model will be added to show overall relations of moraine ridges on both sides of the valley and it will be oriented so as to be compatible with the view from the window and presented in conjunction with it.

This visitor center also functions as the meeting point for the children's program. This does not detract from other uses at this site, but an area away

from the building would allow park resources to be presented "live" rather than as exhibits, and would facilitate use of NEED's environmental strands approach.

Headquarters: will be less needed when the transportation system is installed and the regional information center becomes operative. The building will continue in use as the park administrative headquarters, roadside information source, and certain special groups such as schools and summer seminars will use the auditorium and research facilities for indepth activities — library, special films, publications, forums.

For winter use, because the park's only tundra exhibit at Alpine visitor center will be unavailable and because tundra is an important park story, a tundra exhibit may be duplicated or developed for the headquarters area and made available to the public.

Artworks may also be moved there during winter from their summer base at Hidden Valley.

In the interim until the transportation system and regional information center become functional, operations will continue as at present, with information/sales, relief model, and a bigger-screen movie. Park staff will circulate in front of the information counter and through the parking area.

Hidden Valley: will be on the transportation route and may be a stop-and-boarding station for motorists wishing to join the system. Food and restrooms will be located there, and mementos will be available. Strangely, the interesting geologic origin of Hidden Valley cannot be presented here as an onsite story, because one cannot see the relationships, so it will be handled by wayside exhibits. A brief explanation of the name will be given, however. Architectural improvements will give the facility an appearance and utility more compatible with year-round use (it is now a winter sports area and is little used the rest of the year.) The name would change in summer and skiing would not be emphasized at that season. Because visitors will be anxious to get to the park sites, the presentation here will be light. One possibility encouraged by local interest is to establish an art center. This would be compatible if art displays and programs were directly related to Rocky Mountain National Park and sales were unobtrusive. The interest level should be beyond the local area, however, with a supervising board broad enough to include the region at least as far as Denver. The fact that the famous artist Bierstadt painted Longs Peak is an excellent base for this program and contact should be made to see if that painting might be obtained from the Denver Public Library, if only for special occasions.

During the winter, the center would revert to a ski area and the art exhibit would be placed in the Headquarters visitor center. At that time, winter exhibits would be installed at Hidden Valley replacing the nature-oriented ones there now, and might include the story of winter, snow-surveying in the park, alpine weather (perhaps with readings transmitted for side-by-side comparison from Alpine visitor center, Hidden Valley, and Estes Park), as well as the history of skiing in the local area.

West Side: will have no full-service visitor center on the west side of the park; the present Public Information Building will include scenes along Trail Ridge Road, Longs Peak, and attractions of the immediate area for those wishing information on the features ahead. Travelers leaving the area will be furnished with route suggestions, and backcountry permits would be issued, with trail information provided. The park interpretation would be provided onsite farther up the road.

Longs Peak: center of climbing activities for the mountain, would have an exhibit on climbing the peak and climbing in the park in general – routes and methods for both the prospective climber and the person with a casual interest. It would be staffed during the summer to serve both groups. A new, larger facility is needed and design will include possible use for campground management as well as a climbing rescue center.

The small contact stand at Bear Lake will be replaced with a structure that will provide shelter for visitors (without private cars this will be vital at times), and the story of hiking in the region will be developed through exhibits – with motivation to discover the rewards uptrail and the distances and times required to get to them. These rewards will be identified as the opportunity to experience at close range some of the park's scenic aspects, especially glacial characteristics, rather than as a chance to learn natural history details. There will be a light introduction to the realm of climbing and winter mountaineering as this is where much of it begins and not everyone will get to Longs Peak ranger station, especially in winter. One suggested design is to have a walk-through facility, perhaps spanning the trail, with exhibits on one wall only, to avoid congestion. This has merit because it would provide exhibits and shelter at all times of day, whether manned or not. It would require durable techniques. In fact, the facility needn't ever be manned, although there should be a contact person in the vicinity who can work with individuals, assemble groups, and coordinate this sort of activity. Interpretive exhibits here will be coordinated with the proposed modification to the Bear Lake interpretive trail.

Winter Program

In terms of total commitment of resources, ranger personnel, road equipment and so on, the primary thrust of the park's winter program has been to promote active sports such as downhill-skiing. It has been asked whether this is the highest use to which the park can be put and some have wondered whether the environmental modifications these activities have caused are proper in an area dedicated for its natural qualities.

Use of existing facilities will continue to remain enjoyable. At the same time, the National Park Service will broaden the horizons of users by active demonstration programs of snow survey, winter rescue, avalanche prediction, survival methods; through winter natural history tours on ski or snowshoe, and with exhibits and movies on these subjects; the history of skiing in the area, and winter wildlife. General material on conservation and ecology will *not* be provided in this effort; instead, only aspects of the scene that are pertinent at the time will be covered.

A better balancing of uses is expected to result because more viewpoints will go into the analysis of proposals for new developments and activities. The program will be aimed not at local area sightseers who came to be entertained as spectators of the sports scene (they will be welcome, though) but rather at those who are participating or will participate actively in enjoying the park for its own values.

Programs will also be provided at Bear Lake where winter activities are beginning spontaneously; a Winter Seminar on academic winter natural history is appropriate here. Also, some west-side interest in use of La Poudre Pass as a winter destination is developing.

Park personnel must continue to prepare for the consequences, already appearing. Winter ranger parties with radios and shelters are no longer alone in the park; there are others with far less skill and far fewer resources. They increasingly need route guidance, registration service, and even rescue, just as downhill-skiers need lift checks, slope evacuation, and first aid huts.

Of course, it should go without saying that activities for the general sightseer will be provided as well — exhibits at Headquarters visitor center, opportunities for wildlife viewing, wayside interpretive devices.

Conducted Trips

The existing program of conducted trips will be expanded as an excellent way to bring park and visitor together. Additions will be made to encourage more participation during early morning, evening, sunset, and at night.

Development of new programs will continue – such as bicycle tours in the Moraine Park area, appropriate creative art and cultural workshops featuring art as inspired by the park surroundings, overnight hikes, and of course the winter ski tours. More indepth trips on specific subjects will be developed to appeal to the greater sophistication that is becoming evident in our society as people pursue their hobbies more aggressively.

Of course, there will be interpretation on the buses, as already described under the transportation system. Some walking trips will begin with a trip on the tram or be an integral part of the tram ride.

Since Specimen Mountain is a research natural area with de-emphasized access, naturalists will either be stationed in the area to interpret and control use, or they'll lead hikes into it.

As with the attended stations and mobile exhibits, conducted trips will be programmed to select those spots of outstanding quality at a given time – based on wildlife, wildflower display, weather factors, fall colors, and so on. Conducted trips will merge with the attended stations and the mobile exhibits.

No attempt is made here to identify sites for trips – there are many excellent ones available and much staff experience in using them; they are listed in summer naturalist schedules.

Children's Programs

Special programs will continue to be provided for children at Moraine Park, and will be attempted elsewhere in the park as well. They will educate and motivate without being patterned after a school experience. The National Park Service NEED program could well be applied here. A new name will be developed (now "Youth Nature Program") more in keeping with the imagery modern kids like. The program will involve children in *doing* things. There will be active participation, real objects to handle, awards, competition, and fun.

Should Government funds be inadequate to develop these programs, assistance from other sources will be sought, such as the Rocky Mountain Nature Association, Inc., or user fees.

Organized Groups

A variety of organized groups travel to and through Rocky Mountain National Park – schools, including those using environmental study areas, churches, university and college classes, mountaineering clubs, retirees, and

others. The Student Conservation Association and the Youth Conservation Corps assist the park. And not to be overlooked are the park employees – National Park Service, concessioner, and public service personnel in Estes Park. All of these groups provide excellent opportunities to present special-interest programs at a specific ability level, and it is appropriate that they be served in addition to the regular public. The particular needs – both logistical and social – that groups have to remain together will be a factor in the design of the transportation system.

Outdoor marriages are currently increasing in popularity, a trend that the National Park Service could well encourage. There are also the more traditional church services for campers, in which it can be hoped that pantheistic relevance to the park will be included.

Evening Activities

Evenings are generally a time for rest, relaxation, and socializing. But this is also a time of day when the park exhibits special qualities – changing light, warmer colors, a setting sun. Campers in the park experience this varied beauty as a normal part of their stay, but most visitors cannot because they are not even in the park! Thus, there are two objectives for evening – to reach visitors when they have time for programs and to present first-hand park experiences at that time. Both of these will be met.

It is apparent that few people will return to the park unless special activities are organized for them, and this includes transportation. Sunset walks, tundra caravans, and beaver-walks are all successful and will be continued. So will campfire programs, although these present park features only in an indirect fashion, verbally or by images. Campers in the park will be encouraged to attend the more active programs along with visitors from town, while nonvisitors will be welcome at the campfires, but not encouraged. Parking at evening program sites may be enlarged where environmentally acceptable, but providing evening transportation is an alternative that will also be considered.

The traditional family campfire program will be continued, for it remains popular with that group, but it will be improved, perhaps with new activities or more varied projection facilities. Even at its best, however, this activity does not appeal to all visitors, so new programs will be designed to attract the reluctant. The abundant young adult group is one important segment that will be reached with programs geared to more active recreation in the park, environmental discussion sessions, and use of more sophisticated multiple image projection. The same amphitheaters will serve several purposes – young children could have a hotdog-roast early in the evening, with families joining them later. When bedtime comes for this group, the young adults might assemble, though obvious noise conflicts would have to

be considered. Religious services could be provided at the same place at appropriate times.

At Longs Peak campground, where climbing is an important activity and only tent-camping is allowed, special demonstrations of techniques can be arranged for by the staff with camper participation.

There will also be night prowls to learn of the woods in the dark, and moonlight walks. Stargazing is splendid and there are few places as fine as the parks for this, now that light-pollution has invaded the country. A group in San Francisco, John Dobson, Sidewalk Astronomers, is available at cost to develop such a program and, incidentally, is also able to assist in the construction and use of optical aids for wildlife viewing; an alternate choice is Von del Chamberlain, Abrams Planetarium, Michigan State University. Preliminary experiments at the park have shown there is visitor interest in night programs.

Special encouragement, such as providing buses, will be given to come to the park for evening activities but there will also be programs offered in Estes Park for those not wishing to involve themselves so completely at that time. Some might be demonstrations in conjunction with other programs supplied by the town chamber of commerce; others will be more traditional activities like an outdoor campfire program at an adjacent site – more appropriate than indoor programs. There will also be multimedia shows in the regional center auditorium and in-room television programming as already described. Movie shorts will be supplied the theaters to run between features.

Activities on the park's west side will be more traditional – campfire programs and lodge talks but again, these would be developed with diverse audience types in mind.

Environmental Education

The environmental study area at Sprague Lake will be continued, as will the one at Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area, which also meets the demand on its side of the park. School groups will be assisted by the staff in their use of these resources.

An excellent opportunity to expand environmental interpretation in the area is to work more closely with the YMCA camp near Estes Park. Efforts have been made in the past but they've always required diversion of the staff needed for visitor programs in the park. Now, the YMCA has indicated an interest in having their camp serve as a base for environmental education programs and cooperative programs, and means of funding them will be explored.

The Summer Seminars at Rocky Mountain have been providing ecological education, and a new addition is an environmental education seminar designed for teachers so they can better utilize National Park Service programs, areas, and material in the field. With the support of Rocky Mountain Nature Association and the University of Colorado, these might be expanded to involve persons at the YMCA camp in summer and to attract them there or to another appropriate site at times when school groups, school teachers, or other groups might attend. A Winter Summer Seminar emphasizing natural history at that season is also provided.

When the television programs are available for use in the Estes Park area, it is quite likely that they will also be applied to environmental-education activities in places such as the Denver schools. Denver has an environmental-education program now into which National Park Service participation is being fit through the Colorado State Office Environmental Education Specialist.

COOPERATING ORGANIZATIONS

Rocky Mountain National Park is a central focus for many groups — some of national scope, but mostly from the regional area. These, along with the general public, which has been the main consideration thus far in this prospectus, are the clientele of the park — the object and purpose of its programs and very existence. Contacts will be maintained to develop and present park goals and determine and respond to expressed reactions.

The Estes Park Chamber of Commerce promotes tourist travel to the area. It hands out both general and specific guides to features and accommodations, operates an information station in Estes Park, stages an annual elk-festival, and in summer provides historic gunfight skits in the town park. It was once an active cosponsor of the Summer Seminars.

Professors and instructors at universities and colleges in the region are enthusiastic about the park, and they use it for personal study as well as these topics for their students. Colorado State University at Fort Collins has a television laboratory that would like to work with the park in presenting aspects of its story. The University of Colorado at Boulder assists with the Summer Seminars and provides both academic accreditation and general resources, and is also involved, as is Thorne Ecological Institute, in alpine botany research at the park.

The city of Denver has an extensive park and museum system, and the city schools provide environmental education. Because Denver is just an hour and a half by car from the park, liaison will be maintained to develop cooperative programs in the fields of publications (several are now sold in the park), environmental education, and possibly, facilities and public transportation.

The YMCA has a 3,000-bed camp ranging from rustic to modern accommodations with recreational facilities adjacent to the park, and provides naturalist services on its own. Cooperative programs here are obvious in the fields of environmental education, environmental conferences and workshops, and cooperation with interpreters at the park in mutual training and resource sharing.

No nonprofit cooperators are known in the adjacent national forests, but as the Forest Service moves more into the outdoor recreation field, such organizations may come into being locally, and should be encouraged. The Rocky Mountain Nature Association could serve as a vehicle to help them get their own programs started.

The Chamber of Commerce at Grand Lake maintains an information station on the highway between the park and Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area and may show an interest in helping provide information on a more regional basis farther south, to serve visitors enroute to the recreation areas as well as to the park.

There is a chamber of commerce information station in Granby on U.S. Highway 40. The Grand Lake Chamber of Commerce will share this with Granby in 1973.

The Colorado Mountain Club has taken a special interest in the park, from the early days to the present. It leads climbing and other trips to the area and its search-and-rescue unit assists when needed.

A number of private commercial organizations have an interest in the park and would probably be eager to be involved with it. Those most closely aligned include Eastman Kodak Company, which provides interpretive-style programs in the park to assist camera-users. There is also The Gray Line sightseeing tours, with trips to Trail Ridge and Bear Lake. Climbing guides operate in the area. Finally, park concessioners provide visitor facilities at Fall River Pass (souvenirs, gifts, snacks), Hidden Valley (skiing in winter, souvenirs and snacks in summer), and at Moraine Park and Glacier Basin (stables).

Another cooperator is the Estes Park Area Historical Museum, primarily interested in the history of Estes Park and Rocky Mountain National Park. Their display building is east of the town.

With all of these groups, the importance of establishing mutual goals compatible with public philosophies at the national level is essential to assure that visitors experience the values intended.

The primary cooperator from an interpretive standpoint is the Rocky Mountain Nature Association, Inc. This National Park Service nonprofit society has a long history of successful service to the park, especially in the fields of publications and summer seminars and is in sound position to continue.

It has maintained a low profile with respect to the public and has only a few members. Because wider exposure would result in a greater capacity to serve, an expanded role may be adopted — especially in developing new programs that are cumbersome to initiate within the Government funding process. Once started successfully, however, these innovations will be funded by the Government but this does not necessarily apply to activities like the seminars that are self-sustaining and better administered privately. Through the Association, private donors could be encouraged to add to the revenue already available from sales activities. The Association now employs its own office help, with the park providing the information/sales assistants, and this principle will continue as the mission is expanded.

Objectives will be to gain broader public support for park programs, especially interpretation, and to help provide a two-way channel of communication between park and public. Many spinoff benefits are anticipated in community relations if such a program is adopted, and in support even in the public arena, for the management and planning concepts now developing.

PUBLICATIONS, SALES ITEMS

Publications fill an important interpretive need at Rocky Mountain National Park, for they provide background meanings and depth to observations made in the area. They can be read before a park visit or after it, maximizing the opportunity for viewing while in the park. All visitor centers presently offer publications, although this results in some duplication at Fall River Pass store and Alpine visitor center.

The Rocky Mountain Nature Association publishes several titles:

Title	Sales Price
<i>Alpine Flowers of Rocky Mountain National Park</i>	\$.75
<i>Backcountry Booklet</i>	free
<i>Bear Lake Nature Trail Guide</i>	.15
<i>Bighorn, Elk, and Deer of Rocky Mountain National Park</i>	.60
<i>Fall River Road Guide</i>	.25
<i>Glaciers of Rocky Mountain National Park</i>	.20
<i>High Country Names</i>	2.25
<i>Moraine Park Nature Trail</i>	.15
<i>Rocky Mountain Plants</i>	3.50
<i>Trail Ridge Road Guide</i>	free
<i>Tundra Nature Trail</i>	.05

Planned additions to the park list include:

Mammals of Rocky Mountain National Park

Geology of Rocky Mountain National Park, by Dr. Gerald Richmond, U.S. Geological Survey, Denver Federal Center. This will emphasize the park's geomorphology, especially glaciation.

Titles will be revised, especially for the road and trail guides, to coincide with development of the transportation system. To accomplish this, quantities printed will be conservative.

For orientation purposes, a map of the route should be added to the *Trail Ridge Road Guide*.

The *Tundra World* guide may be discontinued when its conceptual material is incorporated in the Tundra Trail signs, as may the *Bear Lake Nature Trail Guide*.

A proposed addition is a book on local Indians to help the visitors, now exposed to tribes of other regions in the shops, realize the geographic distinctions between tribes.

A popular and simple account of the Longs Peak climb will be produced.

A wide selection of titles is produced by other publishers and several of these are also stocked in the visitor centers. Thus it is in the visitors' interests if the National Park Service assists in the review of these materials to provide to the public the most accurate information possible. Also, if the private sector

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PRIORITIES, FACILITIES, STAFFING

GENERAL

This prospectus is for Rocky Mountain National Park, yet, because the park is administered with Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area, organizational relations with that area must be considered. In fact, the park's west side administrative district includes Shadow Mountain.

PRIORITIES

While every effort should be made to secure funding and personnel to continue present activities, it must be realized that adequate sources will probably not materialize, so that some new programs must be started at the expense of existing ones if they are to be born at all.

Examples of activities that could be reduced in favor of others include certain campfire programs and conducted trips that serve only a small percentage of park visitors, mostly repeaters. The point is that a tremendous new opportunity for interpretation is on the horizon at Rocky Mountain National Park, and the effectiveness of each existing program must be justified against the potential of new ones. While it is recognized that adjustments must be made to priorities based on external realities, proposed priorities for implementation of this prospectus are listed below to guide management. Each proposal will be considered individually, subject to current needs of the park, before implementation.

Establish National Park Service participation in Estes Park regional center, and follow through until the facility is functioning.

Implement transportation system, and begin supplying coordinated interpretation and related facilities.

Develop action-oriented onsite programs and install wayside exhibits.

Institute evening TV programs in Estes Park.

Utilize Hidden Valley center as a major stop-and-boarding point on the transportation system and install exhibits.

Install Bear Lake facilities.

Redesign Fall River Pass area including Alpine visitor center.

Consider discontinuation of Headquarters visitor center in summer.

Refurbish Moraine Park visitor center.

Add personal services – including expanded environmental education service to schools. This priority will be met earlier to the extent feasible with the expanded use of special employment programs.

Add information stations at park entrances.

Supplementary to the priority listing are cooperating association projects such as expansion of membership, institution of winter seminars, new publications, expansion of literature sales, and so on. There also seems little need to include many of the housekeeping projects, like improvement of the audio at Alpine visitor center, installation of a larger screen at Headquarters visitor center, and upgrading of existing projection equipment and amphitheaters. These are best accomplished by close liaison with Harpers Ferry Center and others, documented by up-to-date proposals.

FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

Physical developments and equipment needed to carry out the goals of this prospectus are listed. Some (*) are more properly placed in programs other than interpretation, but are included here so they won't be overlooked. Projects best accomplished by the Harpers Ferry design center are marked "HF". Other projects will be accomplished by the park or the Denver Service Center.

Entire Area:

- * Backcountry and mountaineering registration system, including trailhead signs, literature, Park Service use-concept boundary signs

Limited-range AM radio transmitters at entrances, visitor centers, major parking areas (approximately 15 sites)

Rocky Mountain theme film for circulation to groups (HF)

Shorts – films regarding park conservation (HF)

Audiovisual equipment to upgrade existing equipment (HF)

Campground nature trails at Glacier Basin, Endovalley, Aspenglen, Timber Creek, Longs Peak

Transportation system automatic messages with public address capability (HF)

Mobile exhibits (HF)

Shortwave radios for attended-station duty and conducted trips

* Quarters for additional permanent and seasonal personnel

Headquarters visitor center:

Prepare auditorium for use as exhibit hall and art display in winter, with provision for occasional projection

Install larger screen, new drapes (HF)

Alpine visitor center:

Redesign of lobby function

New action exhibits (HF)

* Redesign of concession building viewing area

* Development of paths and rock walls

Trail Ridge Road:

New waysides and viewing shelters (HF)

Redevelopment of Tundra World Trail (HF)

Old Fall River Road:

* Trails

Wayside signs (HF)

Horseshoe Park:

Development of viewing sites for bighorn and elk, with exhibits (HF)

Fall River entrance:

Add information station, with restrooms

Beaver Meadows entrance:

- * Add information facilities

West Side entrance:

Add exhibits (HF)

Moraine Park visitor center:

Re-do exhibits (HF)

Convert downstairs to information area only

Re-do moraine ecology trail (HF)

Add trail to interpret William Allen White property

- * Remove buildings in view

Bear Lake:

- * Landscape parking area

Add exhibits and shelter (HF)

Re-do interpretive trail (HF)

Hidden Valley center:

- * Landscape parking lot

New exhibits (HF)

- * Architectural redesign of building exterior

Longs Peak ranger station:

- * Replace building, provide exhibits (HF)

Add campground amphitheater circle

Add campground nature trail

Wild Basin:

Trailhead sign to indicate some of rewards to be found (HF)

Estes Park:

Regional information facility with associated information service, exhibits (HF) – auditorium, outdoor amphitheater, projection equipment (HF)

Television programs (HF)

Granby:

- * Regional information center

Lulu City Trail:

Redesign

Specimen Mountain Trail:

Produce interpretive leaflet

Beaver ecology trails:

Develop, if resource impact allows, at Glacier Basin, Hidden Valley, Kawuneechee Valley

Gem Lake Trail:

Add limited interpretive signs (HF)

STAFFING

One position at the park will be directly responsible to the superintendent for the interpretive function, his major duty. The position will handle the

affairs of the cooperating association and arrange for production of publications and other programs. There will be two permanent district interpreters, West Side and East Side. Each will have principal assistants in charge of major program elements to provide full-week coverage by responsible personnel. Permanent supervisors will participate in program development during the slack season — environmental education, publications, wayside exhibits, and visual programs, as well as provide interpretive services.

There will be a part-time curator and a part-time librarian (or one position for both), who will also oversee the photofile and slide library until such time as full-time help is needed. An audiovisual maintenance technician will be employed as needed.

Seasonal personnel will be programmed by the park to carry out the personal services activities specified. To make up for any deficiencies between salary appropriations and personnel needs, capable volunteers will be encouraged through the Volunteers-in-Parks, Rocky Mountain Nature Association, Student Conservation Program, Youth Conservation Corps, Summer Seminars, Work-Study, collaboratorship, and other appropriate programs. Qualified minority group members will be employed to provide equal opportunity, but also to increase interest in the area by members of such groups who are potential visitors.

No mention of staffing increases would be complete without consideration of quarters. They are insufficient to meet the demand, and worse yet, often intrude on otherwise undeveloped sections of the park.

Estimating future seasonal staffing needs is difficult with the major changes proposed in program emphasis for Rocky Mountain. A major increase is envisioned, and inasmuch as present demand for interpretive services is not even met, future demand is expected to require a seasonal staff at least twice as large as the present 36. Further, more personnel will be employed in fall, winter, and spring. Many will handle information duties only; some may be tour guides on the transportation system; and still others may have skills in mountaineering, photography, and audiovisual techniques. In this way an effective response may be made as the program becomes more diverse. Of course, naturalist/interpreters will still make up the backbone of the seasonal staff.

For the Cooperating Association

A full-time professional managing editor will be employed by the Rocky Mountain Nature Association as soon as its budget allows, and it will continue to utilize clerical assistance in the office.

APPENDIXES

A: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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1972. *Environmental Impact Statements — Master Plan, Wilderness, Horse Use, Boundary Adjustments, Rocky Mountain National Park.*

1973. *Master Plan, Rocky Mountain National Park.*

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Rocky Mountain National Park

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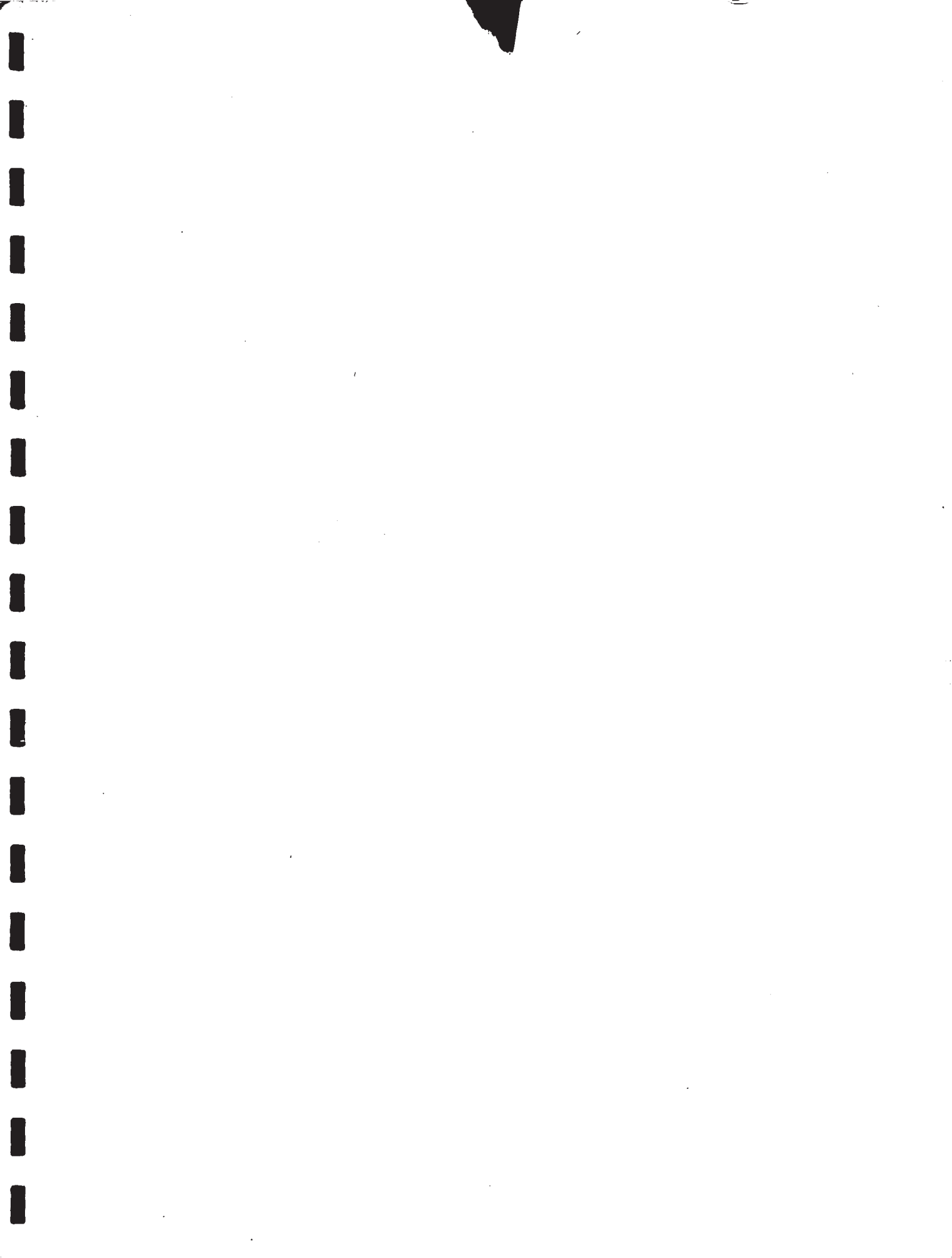
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