

WATER AND RECREATION

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It is a privilege to be here and to see emphasis placed on the recreational aspects of water. This has too long been almost disregarded or in other cases completely overlooked in planning for the development and use of this great resource.

Water is life. It is one of those God-given natural resources, which, like the air we breathe and the sun that shines upon us, have been created for the need and benefit of mankind.

We cannot consider water for recreation purposes without we consider the surrounding shore line lands that contain it. Furthermore, in a reservoir area such as Lake Mead that fluctuates constantly the receding lake bottom may have important auxiliary uses related to recreation, such as launching ramps, swimming beaches, ski beaches, or boat and car parking areas, etc. Such use can be provided satisfactorily only by avoiding pollution of the waters through proper sanitation. This has been accomplished at Lake Mead NRA in a number of unique ways. I wish there were time to enumerate and explain them.

Unlike the sun and air, which we might classify as intangible objects, water is a resource that may be captured and controlled. Control is use and we should preface "use" with a limiting factor called "wise" for it is wise use of this fluid benefactor with which all of us should be concerned. Some states have not included recreation as a beneficial use of water. This is short-sighted and old fashioned for it may bring the greatest benefit and is one of the least consumptive for it can be used over and over again.

But the theme of my remarks is a combination -- "Water and Recreation" -- Then just what is Recreation? We are talking about water and land area that surrounds it. In the words of John Collier, District Representative of the Pacific Southwest District National Recreation Association:

"The word 'recreation' is a collective term, a generic term if you will, denoting all the things that man might do in his leisure that provides him with relaxation, enjoyment and release from tensions."

When you couple this with water and the land you can understand what a broad concept we are trying to cover in these brief minutes.

While many groups and individuals in America have been concerned with the conservation and use of water for domestic and commercial purposes, it was not until the 1930's that recognition was given to the great potential of water for recreation purposes.

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