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Landscape Architect Has Interesting Problems

By HOWARD BAKER Landscape Architect R.M.N. Park

Editor's Note — Howard Baker, landscape architect of Rocky Mountain National park, occupies the same position in a number of Western parks and monuments. Among these are Wind Cave, S. D., Scottsbluff National monu-ment, Nebr., Devils Tower, Wyo., Colorado National monument, Jewel Cave National monument, S. D., and Black Canyon, Colo., national monument. He was born in Nebraska and graduated from Kansas state college at Manhattan in 1930. He is a member of Alpha Rho Chi, a professional fraternity, and he has the degree of bachelor of science in architecture. His work is done largely at his office at Western Field headquarters of the park service at San Francisco, branch of planning and design, but CWA work necessitated his remaining in Estes Park this winter. He makes periodic inspection trips to the other parks and monuments in his jurisdiction. He is blond, a bachelor and a fine contract bridge player.

The preserving of national parks, monuments and other reservations assigned to the national park service and yet develop them so that they are accessible to nearly 4,000,000 people annually is an interesting though often difficult problem for the landscape architects upon whom devolves the responsibility of this phase of park activity.

These areas include the finest natural scenery the country has to offer. Also a great many of these areas of vast historical and archaeological value; the Indian ruins of the south, the colonial remains in the east, Scotts Bluff of Oregon trail history and many other areas of everlasting interest.

Each one of the parks or monuments has a general guide for development, a "Master Plan." This plan is prepared by the landscape architects and on this plan is charted all the proposed construction such as roads, trails and developed areas. After this plan has been approved by the respective superintendent or custodian, individual plans are prepared for each developed area.

The individual development begins with selecting the locations for buildings, roads, trails, parking areas, telephone lines, etc.; which do not disturb the landscape or obscure important views. The roads and trails must be located to reach the most important view points enroute and yet preserve the natural landscape as much as possible. Where a scar

made to replace the natural plant materials necessary to cure the scar. The architectural features are developed to use the native materials to harmonize with the surroundings.

The national parks and monuments are divided into landscape architectural districts operating from field headquarters in San Francisco, Calif., or Washington, D .C. Rocky Mountain National park is in a district with Wind Cave National park, Devils Tower, Jewel Cave, Scotts Bluff, Sand Dunes, Colorado and Black Canyon National monuments. With three different types of areas the landscape problems are very diversified, ranging from mountainous to semi-arid regions and from eroded canyons to limestone caves historical bluffs and volcanic

The supplying of adequate inving facilities for the tourist is an important feature in the development of the parks and monuments and is handled in various ways. The larger parks have hotels, lodges and cabin areas that are operated by individuals on government land. Their development whether planned by them with our concurrence or directly by us is entirely in accordance with the "Master Plan" for each park.

Each park or monument develops a number of campgrounds which are free to the public and are therefore heavily patronized. These campgrounds are developed with roads, individual campsites, fireplaces and tables. To preserve the natural landscape, especially in the heavily forested areas, steps are being taken to prevent unnecessary driving which would in time kill all vegetation in the area. This control is being accomplished through individual camp-site developments.

A landscape architect in the park service must have a good knowledge of landscape and architectural principles and be able to apply them to every conceivable development problem to preserve these spots of natural beauty and history for all generations to come.

There are 12 peaks between 11,000 and 12,000 feet high in the national park.

There are 10 peaks between 10,000 and 11,000 feet in elevation in the national park.

The ascending car has the right of way over a descending car in the national park.





Howard W. Baker