

National Recreation Lakes

Update to Regional Resource
Stewardship Council

June 22, 2000

National Recreation Lakes

- Recreation Lakes - The Beginning
- National Recreation Lakes Commission
- Study Findings & Recommendations
- New Legislation
- Questions

Recreation Lakes - Beginnings

- The situation - Changes in demand, aging facilities, reduced spending, private sector capital
- Nov. 12, 1996 - Presidential Advisory Commission on Recreation Lakes
- Purposes
 - Review extent of recreation & develop alternatives for enhancement
 - Determine capability for improvements under existing legislation
 - Consider new legislative needs
 - Recommend alternatives, e.g., National Recreation Lakes System

Recreation Lakes - Beginnings

Commission Membership

- Sec'y of Interior
- Sec'y of Army
- TVA
- Sec'y of Agriculture
- National Governors Association
- Recreation industry
- Conservation community
- Tribes
- Local governments

National Recreation Lakes Commission

- Began July, 1998
- Goals
 - Document infrastructure, supply, & demand
 - Identify and promote environmental values
 - Evaluate feasibility of National Recreation Lakes System
 - Develop legislative & policy recommendations
- 6 Meetings
- 9 Stakeholder Workshops
- Final Report Issued June, 1999

Commission Findings

- Challenges
 - Infrastructure is aging and has not been updated
 - Supply is limited but demand is growing
 - Budgets have declined or remained flat
 - Managing partners face same pressures
 - Confusing myriad of laws, missions, and congressional oversight
 - Concern for the environmental health of lakes

Commission Findings

- Conclusions
 - A significant national resource and public benefit
 - Recreation has not always been treated as a priority
 - Lack of unifying leadership from Congress
 - Facilities do not meet customers expectations
 - Current fees are not successful revenue generator

Commission Findings

- Conclusions (cont.)
 - Meeting demands will require smart, flexible, & visionary management
 - Expand & improve operating partnerships
 - Inconsistent concessionaire policies
 - Must integrate reservoir management, particularly drawdown & flow levels
 - Clean water is critical
 - National system has merit but should be tested on a smaller scale

Commission Findings

Recommendations

1. Make recreation a higher priority at lakes
2. Energize and focus lakes recreation leadership
3. Advance lakes recreation through demonstration
4. Create an environment for success in lake management
5. Identify and close the gap between recreation needs and services

Recommendation 1

- Make recreation a higher priority at lakes
 - Provide clear guidance at all agency levels that recreation is a project purpose and should receive appropriate budgetary and operation treatment

Recommendation 2

- Energize and focus lakes recreation leadership
 - Establish and adequately fund an interagency Federal Lakes Recreation Leadership Council to coordinate recommendations of the Commission

Recommendation 3

- Advance recreation through demonstration and reinvention
 - Develop a demonstration program and apply for Reinvention Laboratory status

Recommendation 4

- Create an environment for success in lakes recreation management
 - Operate lakes to optimize water use for all beneficial purposes, including recreation and environmental values
 - Review current guidelines and develop recommendations to include best business practices encouraging private sector involvement
 - Amend legislation that restricts cost sharing and revenue use

Recommendation 4 (cont.)

- Create an environment for success in lakes recreation management
 - Encourage partnerships with non-Federal entities
 - Inform public users about the mission, history, management, and services of the lakes
 - Establish recreation performance measures
 - Establish state & local, tribal, inter-agency, and private sector meetings

Recommendation 4 (cont.)

- Create an environment for success in lakes recreation management
 - Give emphasis to lakes in implementation of National Recreational Fisheries Conservation Plan
 - Encourage agencies to work with communities on lake management issues

Recommendation 5

- Identify and close the gap between recreation needs and services
 - Assess customer needs, infrastructure needs and natural resource capabilities
 - Develop a strategic plan for future investments, reduce backlog over next 10 years
 - Improve lake water quality through a watershed management approach

Pending Legislation

Summary

- Make recreation an authorized purpose
- Demonstration lakes program
- Periodic (15 year) review & revision of operating policy for all authorized purposes
- Revise cost sharing requirements
- Authorize appropriations for demo lakes
- Report status of recreation lakes to Congress