

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Beaches And Parks

Whenever people say to Charles A. DeTurk, "Develop what you have before you buy any more recreational land," the chief of the Division of Beaches and Parks has a ready and convincing answer. It goes like this:

"If we are to preserve scenic beauty and outdoor character, we cannot develop a recreational area too highly or it ceases to do the job. And while we are developing, the price of desirable sites goes from \$50 an acre to several thousands.

"To us, the preservation of a redwood forest is its development. We try to make it available with trails and necessary facilities, but we do not seek to cut it down to build picnic areas."

California's park system has inherited both Occidental and Oriental influences. France and England have also left their marks. The state has preserved an old Joss House at Weaverville in memory of the Chinese miners: the old mining town of Columbia as a monument to the '49ers. The state presents El Pueblo de la Reina de Los Angeles's Olivera street surrounded by skyscrapers but typically Mexican and lots of fun. And take a look at all the division has accomplished in the way of preservation in Monterey and Monterey County!

California's long, beautiful coastline and ocean front, a thousand miles long, is none too extensive for its 15,000,000 inhabitants and more arriving every day. That is only four inches of coastal standing room per person according to the figures of the commission.

Near Santa Monica, the state park division is paying \$100 an inch for the beach - 119 feet deep.

We quote Mr. DeTurk: "We do not have an abundance of beach or waterfront - ocean, lake or river. We actually own 135 miles, much of it up and down. We are down to about one-fourth inch per person of usable recreational beach.

"We must remember that a state fortunate enough to have an ocean front must share it with the rest of the United States. The people of Kansas and Nebraska, when they wish ocean recreation, may have it only on our Atlantic or Pacific shores."

We find that California's state parks cover 660,000 acres in 150 units. Only 220,000 acres are in non-desert state

park land. Parceled out among California's 15,000,000 people, that would be 175 persons to an acre.

California's state parks intended to:

1. Preserve open space for outdoor recreation in beautiful scenic surroundings,
2. Provide things interesting and vital to California's cultural and educational background - not only historical subjects, but things of geological, architectural, or botanical interest.
3. Preserve some of California's outstanding scenic assets.

California originally acquired Yosemite as a place of scenic majesty and later transferred it to the United States as a national park.

The state has just purchased 440,000 acres of the Anza-Borrego Desert, most of it to be maintained unchanged - including the coyotes - for its scenic values. The mountains are of unusual interest, especially from late fall to early spring.

Last year, some 2,225,000 persons visited Folsom Dam State Park. Popular though it is, the commission is cited as thinking it is "a bad way to go about it."

The commission reports that when the federal government developed the dam, it was decided not to make this a recreational area. The land was valued at \$50 an acre. Eventually, the state paid \$750,000 for some 600 acres at the site of this big federal dam.