

PARK SERVICE PLANS TO MAKE PREMIER PLAY SPOT OF SECTOR

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Recreational Facilities To
Be Made Accessable for
Travelers

LARGE PROGRAM

Long Range Development
Plan Is Worked Out By
Officials

Long range plans for developing the Boulder dam area into the nation's premier playground, whose natural and man-made wonders can be viewed on foot, horseback, by boat, automobile and airplane, were announced in Washington last week by the national park service, according to word received here today from Congressman Jim Scrugham.

Under these plans the millions of visitors expected to throng the area in years to come may spend either a few hours or a number of weeks resting comfortably or participating enthusiastically in varied recreational activities in the area, park service officials declared.

There may be dude ranches, floating swimming barges, sandy bathing beaches, desert gardens, tennis courts, swimming pools, amphibian planes taking off and landing on Boulder lake, boat trips into the lower reaches of the Grand Canyon, visits to the Valley of Fire, foot trails to walk, bridle paths to ride, game fishing, observation lookouts, picnic grounds, museums housing prehistoric relics, but they will not be allowed to detract from the natural beauty and character of the area, large parts of which have been seen by few men.

THE NATIONAL Park Service has drafted plans extending 20, 30, 50 years into the future for this entirely new type of project and is keeping in mind the fact that the area is not being considered as a national park but as an intensive development for the use of extensive recreational and educational facilities around a monumental reclamation reservoir.

The great dam and the artificial lake looking like a giant mirage in the barren land, will always be the centers of recreational as well as reclamation interest, but there are many other points nearby worth visiting. Some have been selected for immediate development, others for future development if the number of visitors increases.

THE SERVICE has not recommended any definite boundaries for the recreational reserve, but its program report covers an area of approximately 7,500 square miles in the form of a rough rectangle 100 miles long from near Las Vegas, on the west, to Grand Canyon National Monument on the east, and 75 miles wide through the middle.

It lies in the path of a great share of transcontinental railroad and motor traffic and is very close to many of the southwestern national parks, monuments

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and forests. Travel to the dam has been steadily increasing and reached 1,000 a day even before the president threw the switch on September 11 that started generation of power.

The recreational development depends largely upon the accessibility of the area and much road building is necessary. Major roads are planned to form a loop around the reserve, with minor roads or spurs leading to observation points, overnight cabins and special areas of interest.

THE LAKE and reservoir formed by Boulder dam, winds, now wide and open, now narrow between canyon walls for 115 navigable miles from near Boulder City to the Grand Canyon of the Colorado and extends an arm 30 miles north up the Virgin river forming a triangular development area. The three major recreational areas will be located on the points of this triangle, one at Boulder City in connection with nearby Hemenway on the lake in the west, one at St. Thomas toward the northern tip of the Virgin river arm of the lake, and one at Pierce's Ferry in the southeast, the first logical crossing place on the lake below the Grand Canyon of the Colorado.

The park service plans overnight accommodations for tourists at these points, with lodges, cabins and other comforts provided. At Pierce's Ferry, the major development will be north of the ferry, but there will also be cabins on the south shore for those who do not plan to cross.

DAY-USE areas, with facilities for picnicking, boating, bathing, sight-seeing, are suggested for early development at six points, and, if tourist travel increases tremendously, similar areas are suggested for future development at four other locations. Observation points and overlooks are suggested for Fortification Hill, Hualpai Wash and Black Canyon.

Dude ranches are considered for construction near Forlorn Hope Springs, Virgin Peak and Muddy Peak some time in the near future. The region east of Pierces Ferry to Grand Canyon National Monument will be left free of concentrated use developments of any kind.

The extreme fluctuation of the lake—as much as 175 feet—makes bathing arrangements difficult. The park service is considering construction of floating barges and bath houses that will rise and fall with the water.

THE BEST views of the dramatic and man-size scenery of the area are obtained from boat trips over the lake, through canyons, by tremendous rock masses rising thousands of feet, although the clear air makes them appear deceitfully small and near. Trips over the entire lake are too long to be managed in one day and the service anticipates use of tourist overnight accommodations by visitors who will take the boat trip from one of these points to the next in one day, stay overnight, and move on again for another lap of the journey in the morning.

The location of docking facilities for amphibian planes at Hemenway Wash is feasible. There are land airports at Las Vegas and Boulder City now.

THE COUNTRY is very hot and the area will probably be more of a winter recreational area than a summer one. With little foliage to provide shade, it will probably be an early morning and late afternoon park, with rest coming between, and with magnificent moonlight nights to add to visitors' enjoyment. Because of the heat, the service believes that there will be more demand for horseback riding than for walking and is planning its foot trails and bridle paths accordingly.