



Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Urges Increased Attention to Safety by Vacationing Public

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Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall today urged the tens of millions of visitors who will enjoy Interior-administered recreation areas this year under the "Discover America" slogan to "discover, also, that safe travel begins with the traveler."

Secretary Udall estimated that a record high of approximately 185,000,000 visitor-days of use will be recorded in areas managed by the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Reclamation. The 1965 total was about 173 million.

"The upswing in sales of the \$7 Golden Passport to Federal recreation areas indicates that more people than ever before are preparing to move into the countryside and enjoy the hundreds upon hundreds of beautiful spots dedicated to their use by Interior," Secretary Udall said. "At the same time, safety experts in the Department are becoming increasingly aware that the wholesome outdoors is not always the most healthful for those who ignore the basic rules of accident prevention."

Under the President's Mission Safety-70 program, calling for a reduction of injuries not only among Federal workers, but for users of Federal recreation areas and other sites, the Department has added many safeguards the past several months. The Job Corps has had a leading role in speeding this work, Secretary Udall added.

But, he said, new hazards develop quickly.

"Typical of these," Secretary Udall said, "are the dangers of asphyxiation while camping. Last year--in outdoor settings--six people lost their lives in our national parks because they heated their tents or trailers with charcoal-fired units, usually barbecues. The coals depleted the air of oxygen and death resulted. These six deaths in a single year from a single cause can be compared with the preceding 19 years in our parks when a total of only five such deaths was recorded."

Following are summaries of recreational opportunities on Interior-administered areas and some basic safety rules:

National Park Service

The National Park Service, which administers 225 areas and anticipates 128 million visitors during 1966, its 50th Anniversary Year, offers these tips:

1. See a Ranger, especially if it is your first visit to an area, to become acquainted with unusual weather conditions, terrain, wildlife, or other features.

2. Let Park headquarters know if you plan a trip away from the "populated" areas of a park.
3. Stay away from wild animals--they may attack without warning. Keep food safely stored to prevent raids.
4. Children should be watched so they won't become lost or venture into dangerous areas.
5. Drive carefully. Be prepared to stop for animals. Be alert for natural hazards, such as loose rocks. Guard against "freezing" at the wheel because of precipitous cliffs. Even in daytime driving, keep your headlights on. Drive defensively; others probably are also strangers to the road.
6. Don't over-exert. Wear proper clothing and low-heeled shoes when walking.
7. Be extremely careful with fire; do not build any kind of fire in an unventilated or poorly ventilated space.
8. Never swim alone. When you do swim, avoid dangerous water.
9. Ask a Ranger's advice before boating on any park water.

The Park Service points out that motor vehicle accidents and falls of persons lead in causes of nonfatal injuries in Park areas. Fatal accidents are almost evenly divided between motor vehicle accidents and drowning. Falls rank next.

Bureau of Land Management

About 460 million acres of public land, administered by the Bureau of Land Management, await vacationers. More than 100 developed campgrounds are ready for use in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming. You are welcome to make your own camp, away from developed facilities, if you observe a few rules. Some safety tips:

1. Be extremely careful with fire.
2. Observe regulations and common-sense rules regarding firearms.
3. Watch for wild animals on roads. Give logging trucks ample room.
4. Do not go into remote areas without leaving word as to your destination and your intended length of stay. Take ample water, a good map, compass, first aid kit, spare rations, extra clothing.
5. If you are on a hike--or are walking back from a disabled vehicle, walk on the left-facing traffic.

Bureau of Indian Affairs

Indian tribes, which operate recreational areas in 22 States and are planning to be hosts to 7 million visitors this year, have been busy installing additional safety devices, including warning signs, fencing, and guardrails.

Because many of the recreation areas have expanses of water, Bureau of Indian Affairs safety officials urge guests on reservations to observe normal precautionary measures. These include: Remain on shore

during inclement weather. Permit only experienced handlers to operate boats. Be watchful of children and do not permit inexperienced swimmers to go beyond safe depths. Do not "horseplay."

"Horseplay," add the Indians, "is for horses--not for humans enjoying water sports."

In addition to water activities, outings on reservations can be devoted to sightseeing, picnicking, scientific-historic studies, attendance at Indian ceremonials and dramas, fishing, hunting, hiking, and mountain climbing.

Some of the reservations offer horseback riding and golfing.

Fish and Wildlife Service

Scattered throughout the United States are 297 National Wildlife Refuges totaling 28 million acres, which are expected to be the scene of 16 million visitor-days of use this year.

While these areas, which include lakes and streams, are managed primarily for various species of wildlife, they are open to the public as long as basic purposes of the refuges are not jeopardized. Activities available include picnicking, swimming, boating, fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, and wildlife observation.

Water safety and fire prevention are stressed along with the warning: "Do not feed or handle any animals,"

Designated swimming areas will be roped-in during periods of peak use. Roads have been improved for safety, but not for high-speed use.

Public awareness has helped prevent damage to signs and other safety installations, but vandalism still remains a problem.

Bureau of Reclamation

The Bureau of Reclamation, which has created 200 recreation areas encompassing over 4.5 million acres in the 17 Western States while developing water-resource projects primarily for irrigation and power, expects a considerable increase this year over the more than 35 million visitors who enjoyed these spots last year.

Reclamation has a carefully planned safety program, "Operation Westside" which is conducted in cooperation with the American Red Cross. Thirty-six community water-safety councils have been created to educate and protect the public in recreation areas throughout the West.

Chief among causes of drowning at Reclamation sites are children swimming without adult supervision, overloaded boats, and insufficient water safety equipment in boats.

In predicting increased use of Reclamation-created water areas, the Bureau points out that one of its new lakes--Lake Meredith, created by the recently completed Sanford Dam--drew approximately 250,000 fun seekers to the Texas Panhandle the first six months it was open to the public.

<https://www.bia.gov/as-ia/opa/online-press-release/secretary-udall-predicts-record-breaking-use-interior-recreation>