

DRAFT MESSAGE/TELEPHONE CALL TO ANNUAL MEETING OF AMERICAN SOCIETY  
OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

Minneapolis, Minnesota

September 26, 1977

I regret I cannot be with you today for your annual meeting.

But you all know that parks and recreation are dear to my heart and that I especially miss meeting with many of my close friends that are among your ranks.

Let me first pay tribute to my dear friend, Connie Wirth. Connie is a park man from a park family. His father a Swiss-born horticulturist, was superintendent of Minneapolis parks. His brother headed the Pennsylvania park system.

In the '30s, Connie directed the CCC camps working on Federal, State and municipal park lands. In the '40s he carried out the first Congressionally mandated recreation survey of the United States.

We are indebted to his leadership of the National Park Service for many years. Perhaps his most outstanding accomplishment was to conceive and gain approval of Mission '66, a ten-year, billion-dollar program to maintain and protect the National Parks. I know that today and for a long time to come Connie will be in there fighting to improve our parks.

Your organization has played a key role in developing and maintaining a suitable living environment for the citizens of our great nation. You are to be congratulated for the many

accomplishments of your membership.

But the challenge is the future. You all realize there is a serious crisis in parks and recreation today. Our nation has become increasingly urbanized.

Looking forward to the not too distant day when perhaps nine out of ten of our children will live in cities, the challenge is set out before us. We must pursue with all our vigor and imagination those ideas which will mean for all of them a more beautiful and worthwhile life.

Parks, recreation and open spaces are not a luxury but are basic to life itself. Without them we may exist, but we do not live.

In Genesis we are told that God created the universe in six days and on the seventh day he rested. We are told in the Commandments to remember the 7th day and keep it holy. We are told to honor that day of rest, that day of leisure of contemplation.

But will our children live in a society where they can use their leisure to express their highest aspirations? Will the citizens of our nation have the parklands and recreational areas they need to maintain the dignity of man?

Your goal must be to help insure open recreational space in and near our urban areas as well as to preserve beautiful landscape and wildlife habitats throughout the country.

For a beautiful America, rich in parkland and recreational areas, is one of the greatest legacies we can give to the generations of the future.



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