

establish a new National Park was presented to the people it soon foundered on the shoals of the actual or perceived policies of Parks Canada regarding residents and resource utilization. We understand that similar scenarios unfurled at Ship Harbour and Cape LaHave Islands in Nova Scotia, and we are all aware of the disastrous publicity surrounding the implementation of Parks Canada's policies at Kouchibouquac in New Brunswick and at Forillon in the Gaspé.

It is easy to be critical with hindsight, but the challenge is to learn from these experiences to develop constructive policies and programs for the future. In Prince Edward Island we feel this can be accomplished by looking to models other than the wilderness park model - such as the Countryside Commission model of Great Britain. Here the people, the cultural landscape, and certain forms of resource utilization not only are permitted to continue, but actually form a key component of the resources which attract visitors to the park. The natural area is preserved through conservation and management programs, but it is not returned to a wilderness state. We believe that the Countryside Commission model has much more to offer for the Maritime Provinces than the wilderness preservation model, and we urge Parks Canada to introduce a policy that would encourage the incorporation of this type of park in its National Park system, while retaining the wilderness preservation model park for regions of Canada where it is appropriate.

Finally, the Natural History Society of Prince Edward Island notes that the image which the people of the Maritime Provinces have of Parks Canada is an extremely poor one. This is unfortunate, because the national park system deserves the support and admiration of our people, but it is a fact. This poor image is partially a result of inadequate consultation with the people at an early stage in past planning processes (the imposition of park fees comes to mind as well as the public involvement programs for recently proposed parks), and partially because of the purist preservation ethic as applied to the interpretation of Parks Canada's policies. Therefore, with respect to the draft policy paper under consideration we submit that it must be amended, not only to permit the co-existence of our human, cultural and natural heritage, but to spell out specifically in the paper that this will take place. Only then will our people have any likelihood of believing that we have reached a new consensus on a form of National Park that meets the needs of our region of Canada.

The Natural History Society of Prince Edward Island Newsletter is published eight times per year. If you have seen something unusual, please share it with us. It is important to have your observations recorded where others will learn of it.

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