

# **MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY**

May 22, 2012

Frederick A. Servello

Assoc. Dean, College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture

Assoc. Director, Maine Agricultural and Forest Experiment Station

101 Winslow Hall

University of Maine

Orono, Maine 04469-5782

Dear Dr. Servello:

On behalf of the coordinating committee, we are requesting that the number 1962 be assigned to the Multi-State Project, entitled "Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Other Green Environments: Understanding Individual and Community Benefits and Mechanisms". This project is a precedent-setting event. Not only is it the first Multi-State project focused exclusively on outdoor recreation, we anticipate that it will be approved in 2012, which is the 50th anniversary of ORRRC Report of 1962. Numbering the project NE-1962 would solidify the national significance of the event/date.

Referred to as "a watershed event in this history of U.S. natural resource policy" (Wellman & Propst, 2004: 189)\*, Congress created the bipartisan Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (ORRRC) in 1958. This body was assembled primarily as a response to the well-publicized crisis resulting from exploding outdoor recreation demand by post-WWII Americans and their subsequent impacts on natural resources. The Commission was chaired by Laurance S. Rockefeller, who was appointed by President Eisenhower, and consisted of 14 other members, six appointed by the President and eight from Congress, equally divided between the parties and the two chambers. Some of the more well-known members included Samuel Trask Dana (University of Michigan), Marian S. Dryfoos (New York Times), Bernard L. Orell (Weyerhaeuser Company), Henry C. Dworshak (Senator from Idaho) and John P. Saylor (Representative from Pennsylvania)

The mission of the ORRRC was to cultivate a long-term plan for the provision of outdoor recreation services. To achieve its mission, it took inventory of recreation resources and projected recreation demand in light of socio-economic conditions. In other words, the ORRRC was responsible for the first comprehensive empirical investigation of outdoor recreation in the US. Detailed in the lengthy 27-volume report released in 1962, the ORRRC research findings were quickly parlayed into significant and far-reaching laws, policies and programs, such as the National Wilderness Preservation System and the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act. The momentum generated by the report and subsequent legislation influence the nature and extent of outdoor recreation in America today. The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act molded all 50 states and thousands of local units of government into a multi-tiered system by providing funding (via offshore oil royalties, not taxes) for outdoor recreation planning, land acquisition and facility development. As a result, University programs and curricula in parks and recreation developed to prepare future



College of  
**Agriculture  
and Natural  
Resources**

**Department of Forestry**

Natural Resources Building  
480 Wilson Road, Room 126  
East Lansing, MI  
48824-1222

Telephone: 517 / 355-0092  
Fax: 517 / 432-1143

generations of management professionals and researchers. Cooperative Extension programs and specialists evolved to carry on the important work of linking continued research spawned by the ORRRC and universities into outreach initiatives. These Extension programs are aimed at the growing numbers of private businesses, non-profit organizations and public agencies who find themselves deeply embedded in the provision and management of outdoor recreation resources and services.

So the year 1962 is not just symbolic. It is the year in which the catalyst was created for a set of policies and programs that changed the course of history in regards to outdoor recreation research, education and outreach. The ORRRC Report raised the significance of outdoor recreation in the U.S. to national prominence on the cusp of a burgeoning environmental movement.

Assigning the number 1962 to the Multi-State project will result in a rich oral and written history. Current researchers and specialists will pass the torch to future generations of interdisciplinary scholars who will ground their work in that history. An unprecedented opportunity comes along perhaps only once in a lifetime. NE-1962 would continue the legacy, which the 1962 ORRRC Report began.

Sincerely,



Dennis B. Propst, Professor  
Department of Forestry  
Michigan State University and  
Co-chair, Multi-State Coordinating  
Committee on Outdoor Recreation  
[propst@msu.edu](mailto:propst@msu.edu)



Erin Seekamp, Assistant Professor  
Department of Forestry  
Southern Illinois University and  
Co-chair, Multi-State Coordinating  
Committee on Outdoor Recreation  
[eseekamp@siu.edu](mailto:eseekamp@siu.edu)

*\*Wellman, J. D. and Propst, D.B. (2004). Wildland Recreation Policy, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.  
Malabar, FL: Krieger.*