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78

REPUBLIC OF LEBANON
GREEN PLAN



UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM
F. A. O.

الجمهورية اللبنانية
مكتب وزير الدولة لشؤون التنمية الإدارية
مركز مشاريع ودراسات القطاع العام

République Libanaise
Bureau du Ministre d'Etat pour la Réforme Administrative
Centre des Projets et des Etudes sur le Secteur Public
(C.P.E.S.P.)

1970-1975
1975
1975

DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
OF
LEBANESE MOUNTAINS

STUDY OF OUTDOOR RECREATED POSSIBILITIES
IN
LEBANON

September 1969

MFN = 447

P01
SEV
78

10 SEP. 1984



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STUDY OF OUTDOOR RECREATION POSSIBILITIES

In
LEBANON

PREPARED

By
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September 1969

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I. INTRODUCTION

The following study for the establishment of a National Park System in Lobqnon was made as part of a UNDP/SF Project 78, Forestry Education, Training and Research F.A.O.

With members of the Green Plan and F.A.O., a good cross section of the country was covered, at which time the general recreation situation and possibilities was observed and discussed. Comments and suggestions relative to observations made are included. As requested, special attention was given to the study of the Echarre Cedars, and to the Barouk Cedars areas.

The term "National Park", as used in this study is defined as follows: "An area of Public land that is managed for use and posses special recreational values and interests, such as, outstanding scenic attractions, historical, archeological and botanical areas.

The objective of management of the National Parks will be to manage them for recreational use in such a manner that the basic resources and attractions will be maintained and enhanced. Other resources may be used, if such use does not have an adverse effect on the dominant recreational values.

Lebanon has, for the past twenty years, taken an active interest in the promotion of tourism. A substantial appropriation has been available, and several rather comprehensive studies have been made, such as those made by:

"TECHINT ITALCONSULT" Oct 1963

This study makes, an analysis of Lebanon's coast and suggestions as to the number of tourism facilities that could be constructed, without damage to the overall esthetic values of the shore or to the essential social and economic needs of the country.

"TRANSPORT AND TOURISM TECHNICIANS"
"RECOMMEND RECREATION PROGRAM"

Study to evaluate the recreation possibilities of Lebanon as an attraction for tourists, and a survey of existing tourist accommodation and facilities serving the tourist industry. Together with supporting statistics.

"TRANSPORT AND TOURISM TECHNICIANS"
"FUTURE TOURIST TRADE FOR THE LITTORAL OF THE LEBANON"
Aug. 1. 1965.

A study, the objective of which, (quoting from the report) is as follows: "The object of this study is to make recommendations on the programming of the tourism development of Lebanon's littoral for the period 1970 - 75, based on an analysis of the characteristics and travel trends of the main future potential markets, and estimates of the volume of visitor traffic the littoral could expect to attract"

"TRANSPORT AND TOURISM TECHNICIANS"
"RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CEDARS REGIONS
AS A MAJOR TOURISM CENTER" June 1964.

This is a 56 double paged report with emphasis on the development together with supporting statistics and information as to the economic and financial factors. The following recommendation is made with respect to "The Cedars" "To develop the area as a National Park and Historical monument with recreation - rest and leisure facilities for visitors from abroad and for the residents of Lebanon".

The above reports cover, in considerable detail, trends in recreation, travel points of origin, length of stay, expenditures, etc. They also make projection of future needs and recommendations for facilities needed to accomodate the visitors - such as resort centers, hotels and restaurants. The type of information contained in the above studies is not repeated in this report.

The previous studies have placed major emphasis on the development of resort centers and travel accommodations rather than on the development and protections of the basic recreation resources.

Lebanon has a need for a National Parks System and suitable areas are at this time available.

The next step is the establishment of an action program for the protection and management of the recreational resource. This can be accomplished by the establishment of an outdoor recreation department together with the necessary authority and finances to act.

The developing of sand beaches, access, and parking areas should be considered as a part of any National Park Program.

Another factor that needs to be given attention to insure attractive beaches is that of water quality.

(b) Rivers

Rivers, especially those that flow into the Mediterranean have cut deep gorges that possess outstanding scenic values. Some streams have a total drop of 1 500 meters in 30 kilometers. The source of water is from snow fields of the higher elevations and springs which produce clear, cold water of a high quality.

Very few sections of the streams remain free-flowing as the waters are diverted into flumes for use of power or irrigation near their source.

There are remaining a few short sections of natural streams. At one place, near the natural bridge in the Faraya area, the irrigation ditch has been in place for a great number of years and the bottom appeared to have developed natural stream bottom conditions. Pools resulting from seepage, leakage, and springs also occur between pick up points. It may be possible to develop in some of these areas a "put and take"[¶] fisheries which could provide some supplementary income to the owners and develop an additional recreational attraction.

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[¶] Put and take fishing: - fish raised in a hatchery to catchable size. These are planted in a controlled section of a stream or pond. A charge is made by the operator for fishing. Charge can be by the hour for fishing or by the weight of the fish caught.

The possibility of developing some section of the Barouk section of the Awali River is mentioned by T.W. Sears and A. Ghorayyob in their F.A.O. report "Watershed Resources and problems of the Awali Saghbine Perimeters" 1964. Further investigation by a fisheries expert needs to be made.

(c) Scenic Roads and Roadside Rest Areas

Almost every section of road in Lebanon is scenic due to the long coast line on the Mediterranean and its two mountain ranges. There are, however, several roads which lead to point of recreational interest or pass through areas offering outstanding scenic vistas. This type of road should be given special emphasis.

In any survey of recreation attractions recreation roads should be classified as a "Scenic highway" or "recreation road", there should be facilities to accommodate the recreation needs such as roadside rest stops,^x parking at points of interest or at areas offering outstanding views. The recreation plan could then be incorporated in the road construction or maintenance plan, and as the roads are improved or reconstructed the necessary recreational improvements can be made.

For new roads the recreation plan should be an integral part of the road plan. The acquisition of land, and construction can then be done at much less cost.

The number of areas needed depends on the volume and type of traffic. Usually on main roads, one area in each 40 - 60 kilometer section is desirable.

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^x Road side rest stops are areas developed along roads receiving a high volume of traffic. They generally provide toilet facilities, drinking water, parking, and an area in which the people can walk. If they can be located at locations near points of interest this is good, but it is not always possible or necessary.

In this type of area administration can become a problem, especially as truckers and others wish to spend the night in the area. No over night camping should be permitted. This problem on heavily used areas might be overcome by having attendants, or by leasing the concession rights to an individual in return for administrative services.

(d) Camping

Public camp grounds, as such, are not found in Lebanon. A few privately developed areas are located along the shore road. Those having a good location are doing a good business. One visited north of Byblos had, on the day of our visit, about thirty camping parties using the area. Tents were used by 90% of the campers. The concentration of three trailer camping units ~~at this location~~ apparently is an exception. In 1100 - 1500 kilometers of travel in all sections of the country in two months of living in Lebanon only one other like unit was observed. Due to the grade, width and alignment of many of the roads the use of trailers should not be encouraged.

There is an apparent need for public camping facilities. Many camping parties were noted camping at unimproved areas. At the Cedars there is much evidence of uncontrolled use, some of which, undoubtedly is doing damage to the trees.

Camping, as an outdoor form of recreation, has many possibilities and many people are interested in this form of recreation. In Beirut, it was noted that the largest department store devoted a prominent location in the store to a camping equipment display. Also, some of the stores dealing with sports equipment have displays of camping equipment, tents, etc.

If attractive areas are provided they no doubt will receive use which will show a yearly increase. This has been the pattern in countries where facilities are provided. In fact, in many areas use has grown so rapidly that facilities are over crowded and much of the attractiveness of the areas is being lost.

Throughout the country there are many areas that would lend themselves to campground development. Although much of the country is too steep for development except for isolated camping spots reached by walking trails.

The major factors affecting the desirability of a campground are:

1. Topography
2. Soil
3. Drainage
4. Cover
5. Water
6. Access
7. Availability of power
8. Attractions and places of interest

(o) Picnic or Day Use

Picnicing is a popular outdoor form of recreation. Any areas developed near population centers will receive much use.

A picnic area for day use has the same general requirements as are needed for a campground. Shade is of major importance. If natural shade is not available it sometimes can be provided by structures.

Areas should be located as near to the people who use them as possible.

While a water supply is desirable it is not a necessity at smaller areas. Sanitation can be provided by pit or chemical toilets. In areas built to accommodate over 200 people at one time water born sanitation systems are needed.

(f) Youth Camps

Several organizations have camping or outdoor programs. These camps are on land rented or by arrangement with the land owners. This is good for those organizations having the ability to operate camp in this manner. There is a need for additional camps to supply small agencies and groups that cannot make arrangements for satisfactory areas.

The ideal situation is for camps to be located adjacent to Park of Forest lands. In any recreational survey of Lebanon the need for such areas should be considered. The highest priority should be given to areas within easy driving distance of population centers. Such areas can also be used by schools as nature study areas, or other parts of the school program.



(g) City and Village Parks

Due to the practice of almost everyone in the urban centers living in apartments there is an apparent need for play ground, parks etc. Throughout the cities. I understand that the city of Beirut now has such a program under way.

One area visited is located in a 50 year old pine plantation established to stabilize blowing sand. A very attractive park and playground is being developed. It is well along to completion next spring.

The park will provide new recreational opportunities for many. In addition to this type of park there is an urgent need for the development of small neighbourhood play grounds.

A pilot study is also underway at Hammana for a large recreation area containing a stadium, zoo, picnic areas, hotel, restaurant etc. Which is being designed as a major tourist attraction.

The smaller communities generally lack park and playground areas. Areas suitable for such use are found in many of the twons such as the area visited in Aley. This is a level lot having a magnificent view of the valley and which, if owned by the municipality with little work, would make an excellent park playground. Areas of this type are generally considered city or municipal responsibilities rather than a part of a national park program of operation.

The National Park program might well have provision for planning assistance. Also, some arrangement might be made for grants or loans for land acquisition and construction, the responsibility for administration and maintenance being left with the municipalities.

(h) Winter Sports

Lebanon has several winter sports centers and is doing much to promote skiing. The developments so far are all privately financed, and apparently are being planned by European ski-experts.

The role the National Park System should play in winter sports is providing areas near to population centers. These should consist of hills for beginners learning to ski, areas for sled and other types of sliding, and general snow play.

The use of snowmobiles is becoming very popular as a new winter sport in the United States and Canada. However in steep country they can be very dangerous. There are some limited areas in Lebanon where they can be used and supply a good deal of winter sport but they should not be encouraged for general use.

(i) Mountain Tops

In any recreation plan for Lebanon consideration should be given to the designation of sections of its mountain tops to future recreation use. They may then be maintained in their natural state for use by those seeking rest and solitude. Only minimum facilities for back packing or pack animals should be provided. Some type of shelter may be desirable at intervals as are trail marking and signs to available water. This type of recreation is of low priority at this time but it should be in the plans so that it is possible to implement them as the opportunity permits.

(j) Wildlife

The wildlife population of Lebanon is very low. This is the result of heavy uncontrolled year round hunting pressure.

Satisfactory cover is also lacking on much of the uncultivated land due to heavy over grazing by sheep and goats.

Several bird migration routes cross Lebanon. These have an appeal a limited segment of the population. However until such time as hunting regulations are established it is recommended that no action be taken to encourage birds to linger in the area.

When the Park System has been established and the problems of grazing and uncontrolled hunting have been solved the habitat will no doubt improve. Then it will be possible to re-establish the bird and small mammals that were once indigencous to the area. The relative small size of the National Park areas make it questionable if the population of the larger species could be retained under natural conditions.

III. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF:

(a) Bcharre Cedars

The groves of cedars east of Bcharre known as "The Cedars" is the most important natural feature of Lebanon, the Lobanon cedar (*cedrus Libani*) is found in limited stands at several locations. However the trees at "The Cedars" is the only concentration of the old large trees, some being an estimated 4-6 thousand years of age. These trees are Lebanon's National symbol. Their likeness appears on the flag, coins, seal etc. They are part of Lebanon's heritage and culture.

As its national emblem the trees are too important not to be given all possible protection, but in such a manner that the public will be able to view and walk among them.

It is not reasonable to leave the job of protection and maintenance to the community of the church. This is a national responsibility. The community has done well to preserve this area. The people of Lebanon are indebted to them for their foresight and efforts.

In any National Park System this area must receive first attention. Each day's delay results in use that has an injurious effect on the stand.

Not detracting from the care that is now being given the area there are several additional measures that need to be taken.

Recommendations for the management of Bcharre Codars area is as follows:

Establish a National Park of approximately 200 hactars
"See map attached" the key attraction being "The codars"

The area now devoted to hotel accomodations and the ski hill should not be included, but left for private development.

The cedar area within the stone wall should be maintained in a natural condition. All man made improvoments, with the expection of the church and trails and simple benches should be removed, and the area restored.

At some points 25 - 50 cm. of soil and humus has eroded. This is the result of human use. As a result many of the tree roots are exposed. There is ovidence of many camp fires, some having been built at the base of large trees. Branches have been broken for firowood. Numerous initials have been carved in the bark. All of these uncontrolled impacts of human use hasten the deterioration of the stand.

Trails should be constructed to direct and control use. Their use can be encouraged by signing and by natural means such as the planting of ground cover and native shrubs, placing benches along the trails etc.

Camping, picnicing, building fires, or the disturbance of any tree or part of any tree must be prohibited.

To insure future generations of these trees re-production should be encouraged by both natural and artificial means.

The objective of management of this small area should be simplicity a place for meditation and tranquility.

The focal point of the area would be a visitors center located at the north-western corner of the tract near the present stairway leading from the road to the trail.

The topography at this location makes it possible to design a two story building. One floor could be used as a restaurant and the other floor would contain informational and educational material pertaining to the cedars and the general conservation program.

Some suggestions for the type of exhibits that would be appropriate are:

1. Historical references to the cedars, such as reference made in the Bible and other early records.

2. A series of maps showing the areas where cedars were once found
3. Examples of uses of cedars - such as caskets from all Egyptian tombs. Sections of cedar timbers from early buildings, ships, etc., that may be available
4. History of the timber stand.
5. Drawings or models of methods used to get timber from forest to sea.
6. Display items of Lebanon on which the symbol of the cedar is used - such as the seal, coins, flag, money (currency), the order of the cedar etc.
7. A cross section of the tree on which important dates are shown.
8. Exhibit of some of the work of Bcharre author and artist, Khalil Gobran and reference to the museum at Bcharro
9. A plaque dedicated to those who had the foresight to save the stand of trees for future generations
10. A small theater, seating a bus load of people, in which slides or moving pictures could be shown.

The above are but a few possibilities. The building should also house toilet facilities, drinking water, etc.

Entrance to the area should be at the building only.

To accommodate those who wish to spend a few days camping a campground should be designed for a capacity of 200 family units plus 3 areas for groups of 10 - 30 people that may wish to camp together. The design should be made in such a way to build the area by stages. That is as the first stage a unit of 30 or 40 family units could be constructed complete with water and toilets. Then as demand increases additional units could be build. This form of design will also facilitate administration. During periods of little demand sections of the area may be closed, reducing the maintenance costs.

Some planting has been done in the proposed campground area. After the "on the ground" design for the area has been made, planting should proceed so as to insure future shade. Fast growing species should be desirable with under-plantings of the more desirable but slower growing species. Honey locust is now used but due to the many spines which can be a safety hazard for camp ground uses. Other species, if available, should be used.

A picnic area could well be constructed in the valley down stream from the steps leading from the road to the entrance trail. (as shown on attached map). Some shade is available at this location, as is a view of the cedars. During the spring run - off there may be a heavy volume of water passing through this valley although there was little evidence that this does occur.

There is also located in this area an old reservoir, of an estimated 15 meters by 50 meters. This offers possibilities for the construction of a reflection pool at little cost, and which would add much to the formality of the area.

An amphitheater should be constructed for use by the annual cedars festival, which now has a stage and an amphitheatre in the timbered area. Such use places an unnecessary impact on the area. If the entrance road can be moved up the hill it may be possible to design an amphitheater on the same area suggested for picnic use. If not, a site adjoining the grove on the south west side should be considered. If the land mentioned above cannot be acquired as an alternative the picnic area could be moved to a suitable tract east of the cedars grove. This location would be much less desirable and effective as it would not be as near to the cedars.

The ski area development as well as the areas now occupied by hotels has been omitted from the suggested boundary. This should be a private enterprise. The restaurant near the cedars would need to be acquired and removed as this area would be the logical one to develop for the visitor center's parking lot.

(b) Barouk Cedars

The Barouk Cedars consist of three groups of trees known as the Arz Ain Zhalta, the Arz el Barouk, and the Arz of Maasser el Shouf. The three groups have an estimated total area of 216 hectares of mixed cedar and oak stands.

The Barouk Cedars area is near to the main population centers and the principle mountain resort developments. The restored Beit - El - Dine Palace is near by. Good improved roads from two directions lead to the village of Barouk. The Green Plan has constructed a high standard secondary road from Barouk leading to the areas. This road when completed will be a recreation in itself. An extensive reforestation program has also been in progress for a number of years which will also add to the recreational values.

Generally the trees are of a much younger age class than the Bcharre Cedars. However, in the Arz el Maasser tract there are found some trees that approach the sign and age of the Bcharre trees.

The topography of all three areas is very steep. Very few areas can be found that will permit recreational development. Water is also scarce.

Sites suitable for limited size recreational developments were found on each of the three areas. Suggested use of those areas are as follows:

Arz Ain Shalta Area

A tract of land that would be suitable for development is located on the South East edge of the cedar stand at the head of a small valley. It is accessible by an unimproved road approximately two thirds of a kilometer from the forestry department road.

A limited supply of water is available. A concrete tank has been built for stock water. It is supplied by a small spring which flows during the spring of the year. To use this site it would be necessary to construct a larger holding tank or reservoir large enough to hold a seasons supply of water.

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Up valley from the present water tank there is room to construct a camp that would accommodate 100 campers, and the necessary overhead. This would require 12 - 13 tent sites for campers, 8 - 10 sites for overhead, permanent kitchens mess hall, a hospital building and a work shop building. Three toilets and baths for the campers and one for the overhead would be needed. Play areas and parking space would need to be provided. These should be located down the valley from the present water tank.

Arz el Barouk

The suggested recreational area on the Arz el Barouk stand is located near the point where the forest road enters the tract from the north east. This area is large enough to accommodate 50 - 80 family units. The problem of water is the major one at this location and needs to be resolved before further detailed plans for the development are made. The official 1962 contour map indicates that there are several intermittent streams in the vicinity. Some of these terminate in depressions and the possibilities exist that wells may be found or reservoirs might be constructed to hold a season's supply. If water cannot be located this area should only be developed for day use.

If the water problem is resolved this area offers excellent opportunity for development. The camping sites should be located in the timber. Small terraces will need to be constructed to provide a 3 - 4 meter square level area for tents. Trails from the initial stage. Pit toilets can be provided. It is suggested that 20 - 24 family unit sites be planned plus 2 or 3 parking spurs for camping vans and trailers. One group camp should be provided which could accommodate groups of 10 - 20.

The southern most area Arz el Maasser now has a partly developed picnic area which has apparently been used by the local people for a long time. Terraces have been constructed. A concrete table has been built and a holding tank has been constructed to hold the flow of a small spring. This area should be retained for a day use recreation area.

The area will require careful planning as there is no level land. Parking will be a problem, as will the development of additional picnic sites, all of which must be terraced. The area can be extended into the timber stands by the construction of trails to terraced picnic sites.

Trails should also be constructed to points of interest such as large trees and points offering good views. The possibility of the construction of a trail between the Arz el Maasser and the Arz el Barouk area should be looked into. Such an improvement would be of interest to both people using the picnic area and those of the Barouk campground.

Sanitation facilities should be constructed as soon as possible.

(c) Other areas noted having recreational values further planning and study needed.

1. Litani Reservoir

The Litani Reservoir, created by the dam on the Litani River, in the south central part of Lebanon, was built chiefly for the production of power and for irrigation waters. At full stage 859 meters - the reservoir has a surface area of about 550 hectares. Normal draw down is to 830 meters, which is reached during the average year just prior to the fall rains.

At the present time the area does not appear to be receiving the amount of use that would be expected in an arid region. This is due perhaps to the fact that there has been little improvement made at the site to enhance the beauty or encourage recreational use. The waters have been stocked. We were informed that some good catches of fish were being made.

In a discussion with Mr. Halawani, Director of the Litani Office he gave us the following information:

The power authority responsible for the Reservoir project recognized the recreation potential of the project. In 1964 they sent one of their engineers to the United States, and in co-operation with the Department of Interior, Park Service, a plan for the recreational development of the area was made. This plan was quite comprehensive.

To date, no part of the plan has been implemented, as the Litani Office has no authority to undertake the recreational development.

At the time the land was purchased for the reservoir it was acquired to an elevation of 860 meters. This will necessitate an acquisition program before any development work can be done.

It is recommended that the Litani Plan be reviewed, and provision made for the acquisition of land necessary for public development in the following order.

First: Areas needed for access boat ramps and parking.

Second: Areas needed for picnic use.

Third : Lands needed for camp grounds.

As use increases with the corresponding demand, private capital will be attracted to the area, and provide facilities such as hotels, boat rentals and restaurants.

2. Jabel Kammouha

The Jabel Kammouha area in the northern part of Lebanon appears to have outstanding qualifications for the development of a future park. Its establishment will necessarily be delayed, pending the solving of some social problems and finding solutions to the goat grazing and fuel wood cutting problems.

The area is well wooded. Much of it is at the upper limits of tree growth and the tree forms characteristic of alpine forests adds much to their scenic attractiveness.

Near the southern end of the suggested area is found an open level area of an estimated 150 - 200 hectares. This area, at an elevation of 1450 meters; has corresponding temperatures, an apparent water supply and land whose topography would lend itself to a number of recreation uses.

If the water supply proves adequate after further investigation this area could well provide space for a 50 - 250 or more family units ~~campground~~, a small day use area ~~for~~ those not stopping over night. An extensive resort development could be built at the southern end of the open area taking advantage of the view to the south east and the wooded valley below.

There are many opportunities for the development of a well rounded summer recreation program. There could be hiking trails, playgrounds and fields for group sports. If water and suitable grasses are available for the soil and climate there is room for a golf course.

In planning, consideration also should be given to the construction of a youth camp and educational center.

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⌘ Family unit - an area in a campground designed for use of a single family or 1-6 people generally consists of a level area for a tent, parking for car or trailer. Access to water, toilet and garbage container.

⌘ Day use area - an area designed for picnicing, swimming etc. But not over night use, generally provided with parking, toilets, water, playground, change - house if swimming is available.

In order to lengthen the season of use of the required investment, the possibility of developing a winter sports area should be looked into. Such a program would be largely depended on locating a suitable ski hill within a reasonable distance. Ski slopes for beginners and sliding hills could be developed with little work.

The large open area could be used for snow mobiling on a rental basis, and trails could be laid out in the surrounding wood area to give variety. However, use should be limited to designated areas only.

Access to the area will need improvement if a winter sports program is planned.

The proposed area is part of a large area studied by Mr. J.J. Veltkamp and S. Salame (see F.A.O. Report Forest Economic Survey of perimeter I Kammouha/Nahr Abou Moussa 1963). Also the geology of the area with pictures is described by Mr. Desauettes in "Etude De Reconnaissance Du Perimetre De Kammouha".

The proposed recreation area is part of a larger area being considered as a part of a National Forest Program. The above recommendation supplements the National Forest Proposal. The devoting of part of the Forest to Recreational use should be part of any well planned forest program.

3. Jezzine

The suggested area is located approximately $2\frac{1}{2}$ kilometers west of Jezzine on the Saida Jezzine road. This area is an excellent example of the type of area that meets the basic requirements for a high standard recreational area. The cover is good, with a high crown class, providing shade and air movement. The soil appeared to be a sandy loam. The topography is good. It is not steep on the ridge top. This will permit good planning and drying out of the areas.

From a very preliminary survey it appears that there is room for the development of a road side rest area. This could be large enough to accommodate five to ten family groups.

It is also believed that a suitable location is available to plan and construct a 30-50 family unit campground.

The above recreation use would place some impact on the pine stand. However, with good planning and proper management this can be minimized and should be considered a forest use. In this case the value could well be much higher than any other use.

4. Tyr

Adjoining Tyr, to the south, is found an excellent sand beach extending along the Mediterranean for over two kilometers. At some places it has a width of approximately 500 meters. This beach is at present largely undeveloped. During the past twenty years as a soil holding project, over twenty hectares of the area has been planted to trees. An additional 22 hectares of planting is scheduled to be completed by 1971. This cover restoration has done much to enhance the recreational value of the site.

The Tyr beach area comprises the largest undeveloped beach in Lebanon and offers the best opportunity for a large public development. Next to "the cedars it has the highest potential of any area noted, and immediate steps should be taken to insure its being available for orderly planning and development. This can best be done by acquisition of any private owned parcels, and not permitting any further development until a plan for the entire area has been made.

IV. SUGGESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

At the present time the laws of Lebanon do not contain provisions for the establishment of a National Park System.

Authority vested in the "Office of Land Reclamation", known as "The Green Plan", is quite broad and permits planning and action on some phases of the program. However, to give the National Park System full legal status, a special "Enabling Act" is needed.

Some of the major provisions of such an act are as follows:

- a - Designation of areas as National Parks.
- b - The establishment of new areas, and making changes in establishment area boundaries.
- c - Fix authority for administration
- d - Grant authority for the establishment of rules and regulations of operation of Park areas.
- e - The enforcement of rules and regulations established
- f - Provision for funds.

- g - Provision for acquisition of land by purchase, including land for access.
- h - Authority to charge user fee
- i - Accepting donations of land for Park purposes
- j - Authority to exchange land when it is in the interest of the public.
- k - Authority to enter into long term leases for land, and construction improvements there on.
- l - Authority to enter into leases or contracts for use of Park land or facilities when such use will further the Park program such as hotels, concessions, bath houses etc.
- m - Planning assistance to municipalities and villagos.
- n - Planning and coordination of outdoor recreational facilities with other governmental departments.
- o - Making recreation research as needed.
- p - The operation of information and educational facilities as they relate to the area and to the general conservation program.



V. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Take necessary action to give complete protection to "the Cedars at Bcharre".

"The Cedars" at Bcharre is the outstanding natural monument of Lebanon. The law of July 1939 and the 1950 decree should be reviewed. It initiated action for the state to assume management either by purchase or agreement. If sufficient authority does not exist such authority be sought. In addition to the area within the stone wall an additional buffer of 250 meters should be acquired to protect the environment.

2. Take action to protect from further development and deterioration of recreational values key beaches of the mediterranean shore.

Protection of most of the remaining sand beaches and the scenic value of the Mediterranean shore is of high priority if Lebanon is to provide healthful outdoor recreation for its people and remain in a competitive position with other areas in the attraction of foreign tourists.

3. Enact legislation to establish a national outdoor recreation system.

Lebanon has many areas that have the qualifications for making outstanding park areas. They should be under management in order to obtain the fullest use of the land, provide healthful recreation for its people and an attraction to

outside visitors. To be successful legal authority to establish such areas is needed together with the delegation of responsibility for management. It is suggested that this authority and responsibility be given to an established department now working in a related field.

4. Conduct a survey of Lebanon's outdoor recreational resources and develop a program of action.

One of the first undertakings of the office of recreation, after its establishment, would be to make a survey of the areas of Lebanon having recreational possibilities. In this way an orderly program of development can be obtained and facilitate the coordination of improvements with other programs - such as power dams, highway and forestry programs and resort center development.

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VI. RESUME DU RAPPORT

Le Liban a grand besoin de parcs nationaux. Il en possède les possibilités et doit maintenant passer à l'action en créant l'administration appropriée et en la dotant de budget et des pouvoirs nécessaires.

Le Conseil National du Tourisme libanais quoique bien organisé et efficient dans le domaine de la promotion touristique a accordé encore trop peu d'attention à la conservation des sites naturels. Ceux-ci une fois disparus ou dégradés ne sauraient être reconstitués qu'à grands frais et très lentement.

La situation actuelle de ces sites se présente comme suit:

- La côte méditerranéenne constitue un grand atout pour le Liban et une action rapide doit être entreprise en vue de sauver le restant des plages (surtout sablonneuses) non encore détériorées et ce en vue de leur libre usage par le public.
- Les principales rivières sont déjà exploitées pour l'irrigation et l'énergie électrique. Il en reste cependant des pieux qui peuvent être développés en vue de leur exploitation touristique.
- Presque toutes les routes au Liban sont pittoresques et panoramiques. Certaines dont notamment celles aboutissant à des lieux d'intérêt touristique doivent être classées comme telles et être équipées de "parking" et autres facilités.
- Le camping public n'existe pas au Liban. Quelques rares camping privés cependant sont échelonnés sur la côte. Des lieux de picnic devraient être aménagés en grand nombre et à portée facile des utilisateurs des villes.

Plusieurs groupements de jeunesse organisent des sorties dans des camps. La situation idéale de ces camps est à proximité des forêts et pas trop loin par la route des grands centres.

- L'aménagement du Parc des Pins de Beyrouth est vivement encouragé. Il faudrait y ajouter des terrains de jeux. Et il faudrait faciliter l'établissement des parcs si possible à proximité de tous les centres du pays.
- Les stations de sports diverses sont l'oeuvre des entreprises privées. Sur le plan national, il faudrait y ajouter des centres plus proche des villes et on propose d'introduire le sport du "snow mobile".
- Aménager les sommets dénudés mais pittoresques des montagnes pour le tourisme à pied ou à dos d'animal est à envisager mais pas dans l'immédiat.
- Le gibier a été dévasté au Liban. Il ne se reproduira que lorsqu'on aura pu régler le pâturage et ainsi rétablir l'habitat nécessaire pour le petit gibier seulement.

Il est ensuite fait des suggestions plus spéciales pour le développement des parcs de Beharré, de Barouk, et d'autres lieux pittoresques.

A Beharré le vieux bosquet historique et vénéré doit naturellement servir de motif central de l'aménagement.

Il faut écarter les activités de camping et de spectacles dommageables aux arbres, les cantonner à proximité, dans un parc national, d'au moins 200 ha, les hôtels et le ski étant encore à l'extérieur de ce parc.

Il faut régénérer le bois, établir un bâtiment en dur en pleine vue sur le bois, bâtiment de deux étages servant de centre d'information sur les cèdres, d'éducation et de réception.

Il faut aménager, camping, abris, autour du bosquet et au bord de la route, une place pour picnic, avec peut-être un petit bassin. Les manifestations folkloriques pourraient être données dans un amphithéâtre proche également.

- Le groupe de Barouk comporte 3 bosquets de cèdres couvrant plus de 200 ha. Une route touristique et les reboisements ont amélioré les possibilités. Il y faudrait ajouter les aménagements de récréation et de camping. La station est très en pente.

Au bosquet nord d'Aïn Zhalta à portée de la route touristique la confection d'un réservoir d'eau permettrait d'installer un camp avec jeux et parking.

Un bosquet central de Barouk, un vallon se prêterait très bien à l'installation de 50 à 80 camping familiaux et camps de groupes après avoir toutefois résolu la fourniture de l'eau.

Le bosquet sud de Maasser Chouf, déjà aménagé, doit être révisé en raison de la pente excessive. Il faut compléter l'aménagement par des sentiers promenade.

D'autres sites valables pour le développement de la récréation pourraient être aménagés au Liban. Il s'agit de :

Les bords du lac de Karaoun. Celui-ci d'une superficie de 550 ha. n'a pas encore été aménagé pour le tourisme. Il y faudrait des terrains supplémentaires nécessaires pour les installations de récréation pour les bateaux, et les picnics, les camps de groupes, etc. On prévoit que le capital privé va mettre en valeur ces sites.

La montagne des sapins de Kamouha, au nord du Liban, offre de magnifiques conditions pour l'établissement d'un beau parc pour le futur lorsqu'on aura pu résoudre le problème social de sa grave exploitation et éliminer le surpâturage des chèvres.

Près de Jezzine dans le bois de pin de la route de Safda on pourra installer des camps et lieux de repos le long de la route.

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Enfin/de Tir une très belle plage avec implantation forestière agréable offre le lieu le plus intéressant au Liban avec de réelles possibilités de développement qu'il faudrait planifier rapidement.

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L'auteur fournit ces suggestions pour l'établissement d'un système de parcs nationaux : délimiter les zones, établir une autorité responsable, une réglementation stricte, fournir des moyens financiers et acquérir et gérer le domaine foncier nécessaire, construire les bâtiments d'exploitation, concéder toutes les actions de gestion, assister les communes et villages dans les mêmes réalisations, coopérer avec toutes agences gouvernementales et autorités régionales, pousser l'information et la recherche pour toujours mieux remplir son rôle dans la récréation.

Enfin dans la conclusion, l'auteur insiste sur la protection nécessaire des cèdres de Bcharré, entamée légalement en 1939, et des plages de la méditerranée, sur l'urgence d'établir une législation de la récréation au grand air. Il faut utiliser toutes les possibilités potentielles du pays et développer un programme d'action dans ce sens par le moyen d'un office spécialisé, travaillant en liaison avec les autres services nationaux des barrages, des routes, des forêts et les organismes privés telles les stations de villégiature.

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République Libanaise
Bureau du Ministre d'Etat pour la Réforme Administrative
Centre des Projets et des Etudes sur le Secteur Public
(C.P.E.S.P.)