

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

The following document is provided by the  
**LAW AND LEGISLATIVE DIGITAL LIBRARY**  
at the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library  
<http://legislature.maine.gov/lawlib>



Reproduced from scanned originals with text recognition applied  
(searchable text may contain some errors and/or omissions)

---

---

E I G H T Y - S I X T H   L E G I S L A T U R E

---

---

**Legislative Document**

**No. 96**

S. P. 16

House of Representatives, Jan. 10, 1933.

Read and accepted in concurrence. 500 copies ordered printed.

HARVEY R. PEASE, Clerk.

---

---

S T A T E   O F   M A I N E

---

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED  
AND THIRTY-THREE

---

REPORT of Committee on Natural Beauty and Historical Spots.

---

*To the Eighty-Sixth Legislature:*

The Committee on Natural Beauty and Historical Spots was created by authority of Senate Paper 453 (Legislative Record P. 247) of the Eighty-fifth Legislature, which states:

“On motion of Mr. Leland, it is Ordered, the House concurring, that a committee be appointed consisting of one member from the Senate with as many as the House may join, to examine into the natural beauty and historical spots of the state with a view of acquiring the same and creating a system of state parks. Said committee to have authority to add to its membership other interested citizens of the state. Said committee to report their findings to the next legislature.

“In conformity to the House action whereby it was voted that a committee of three should be appointed by the Chair to serve on a joint committee according to the Senate Order relative to examination into natural beauty and historical spots of the state with a view of acquiring same and creating a system of state parks the Chair will announce the House members of that committee: The Gentleman from Auburn, Mr. Additon; the Lady from Gorham, Mrs. Day; and the Gentleman from Caribou, Mr. Briggs.

“The president announces the appointment of Mr. Leland of Pis-

cataquis of the Senate as called for on the joint order \* \* \* (as above) \* \* \* \*."

Subsequent to this the Chairman of the Committee added the following members: Clarence C. Stetson, Bangor; Herbert L. Swett, Lakewood; E. P. Ricker, Jr., Poland Springs; Rev. Carl N. Garland, Portland; and Neil L. Violette, Augusta.

The Committee herewith submits its report.

At the first meeting of the committee Mrs. Lena M. Day was appointed secretary.

Several subsequent meetings were held. At an early meeting the committee had as its guest Mr. John F. Dyer of New Jersey, a native of Maine who has a summer home here and who is very much interested in having Maine establish a system of state parks. At his suggestion and through his efforts, and largely at his expense, Mr. Herbert Evison, Executive Secretary of The National Conference on State Parks, visited the state in company with Mr. Dyer and with several members of the committee made a brief and limited survey of the beauty and historical spots in the state. At the request of the committee both of these men made reports covering the trip, and included certain recommendations as to the steps which should be taken to establish a system of State Parks. Copies of these reports are on file with the committee and may be obtained for study by any interested person. The committee takes this opportunity to publicly acknowledge the valuable assistance and information contained in these reports and to thank both these gentlemen for their splendid cooperation.

We are quoting at considerable length from the reports of these men in the belief that they are among the outstanding authorities in the country today on the subject under discussion, and that their own words would convey more forcibly than any language of this committee the great need of undertaking at once the establishment of a definite plan to retain for our people and for the vast numbers of tourists who annually visit our state some of these natural beauty spots which make Maine so attractive as a vacation place.

The committee is also indebted to Mr. George B. Dorr, Superintendent of Acadia National Park, and Mr. Warren H. Manning of Cambridge, Massachusetts, for their valuable assistance and suggestions.

#### REASONS FOR STATE PARK SYSTEM IN MAINE

State parks provide an opportunity for certain types of out door recreation which is increasingly needed and in demand as the area in which it may be obtained becomes more and more restricted, due to other uses.

State parks are a variety of Conservation—conservation means to save—the sense in which it should be applied here—is, TO SAVE AS IS.

Maine's beauty is a common heritage to Maine and America and should not be permitted to be destroyed. Maine is probably the only state that has such a variety of suitable sites for state parks. Some states have the sea coast, others have lakes, or mountains, or streams, or historic features, or forests. Maine has all of these in abundance. There are the Rangeley Lakes, Moosehead, Sebago and innumerable others which are ideal for state parks. Already part of Katahdin belongs to the state, and there is more land there to be acquired; then there are many other mountain sites where parks might be located.

Maine needs State Parks for out door recreation for her own people as well as for the many tourists who come to the state in increasing numbers every year. Our highway system reaching farther into every county of the state each year brings the matter of public recreational centers more and more into prominence. The financial benefits to be derived from state-owned and controlled recreational centers will keep this need constantly in the foreground.

Automobiles and aeroplanes have made possible the advent of more than a million of tourists into the state each year. Also by their use the tourists are able to go farther into the state than before. Many of the beauty and historical spots have passed into private hands, many into out-of-state ownership. The need to save those left is eminent.

There are at present on our Maine coast many locations which our Maine people as well as tourists frequently visit during the summer for picnics. The condition at these places, especially those where lobster and clam shells have been left by thoughtless people is little less than a disgrace. This is in itself perhaps the most forceful argument that could be used for the establishment of some means of control over such conditions.

Some idea of the popularity of state parks and the business created thereby may be obtained from the records of parks in the State of Michigan. While it is estimated that Maine has in excess of a million visitors each season the attendance record at Michigan parks last year was eight million people, of which twenty-five per cent. or two million were from out of the state.

The private land owner, whether he be farmer, summer home owner or timber land owner, finds that his lands, if desirable for recreational use, are constantly subject to trespass by people who are under no control at all; and such trespass is damaging,—bringing with it destruction of trees, flowers and animal life; gates left open and livestock allowed to roam at large; streams littered and polluted; and a variety of undesirable conse-

quences. Aside from the need of these trespassers for some outlet, the private land owner needs state parks both for his own use and as a defense against destructive use of his property.

Maine's historical features are known in all parts of the country, and tourists visiting the state plan to see as many of them as possible, just as Maine people do in visiting other states.

There have undoubtedly passed into other uses many areas which would have been eminently suitable for state park purposes, but now, because of those uses, are probably forever barred from consideration. We shall doubtless see other desirable areas go into that status before the state will be in a position to obtain them.

#### WHAT SHOULD A STATE PARK BE?

In order to maintain its seasonal customers the best of the scenic and recreational resources which now attract visitors must be preserved permanently and made available for public use.

California has one of the most comprehensive systems of state parks to be found in the country. This work was largely planned and put into effect by Mr. Frederick Law Olmsted, one of the foremost landscape architects in the country. We quote from Mr. Olmsted as follows:

"The chief criteria for determining what areas should be included in an 'Ultimate, comprehensive state park system' seems to be these:

1. They should be sufficiently distinctive and notable to interest people from comparatively distant parts of the state to visit and use them, not merely good enough to attract people from the region in which they are situated and merely because of the absence of more interesting areas within easy reach. Also they should, in general, be situated beyond the limits of urban and suburban communities which have sufficient population and wealth to assume the obligation of providing parks that would be mainly serviceable for the daily use of their own citizens, even though of incidental value to people of distant communities.

2. They should be characterized by scenic and recreational resources of kinds which are unlikely to be reasonably well conserved and made available for enjoyment under private ownership, or which under private ownership are likely to be so far monopolized as to make it seriously difficult or impossible for the ordinary citizen to secure enjoyment of them, except at a cost in time and money disproportionate to the cost of providing that enjoyment through state parks.

3. They should be as nearly as possible just sufficient in number

and extent and character to meet the prospective demands of the people for the kinds of enjoyment which they can provide, and which can not or will not be supplied by such other means as local parks, National Parks and Forests, and the use of scenic highways \* \* \* .

4. They should be geographically distributed with a view to securing a wide and representative variety of types for the state as a whole, and at the same time making a reasonable assortment of them equitably accessible to the people in each part of the state. 'Equitably accessible' in respect to state parks obviously does not mean that if one community has a state park within a half hour's ride every other community should have one equally near. A state park system can not be laid out on that scale of accessibility. It means more nearly that a fair assortment of state parks should be within the reach of a day's travel by automobile of any considerable body of population."

Mr. Evison says, in this regard:

"For almost any state, and particularly for such a state as Maine, where the natural scenic and recreational resources are so well and widely distributed, I believe that a due regard for these standards of selection will ultimately insure Maine a state park system of such character as to make it outstanding the United States over. In only one respect that I think of would it be subject to possible modification. Having the visitor to the state in view rather than the residents themselves, I believe Maine would be well advised to plan the ultimate establishment of rather more state parks in the upper section of the state than would be wholly justified by the needs of the local population. The tourist, coming into the state from the west and south with these playgrounds as an objective would benefit not only the localities in which the parks might be situated but also the regions it would be necessary to traverse in order to reach them. Such northern parks would be a proper supplement—but no substitute for—an adequate collection of parks in the southern half. The latter will not only meet the desires of visitors but also the needs of Maine people who are finding more and more of the places they have been accustomed to visit occupied either by commercial forms of development or by private residences which naturally and properly bar public recreational use."

It is believed that the coast line attracts more visitors than any other type of scenery. The coastal parks should be retained as far as possible in their natural state. It is more difficult to do this with a coastal park than the others, but with good management this can be done to a certain

extent. The reason for this is that the people come here to see the coast as it is, and to change it would lessen its attractiveness.

The lakes in Maine are many and beautiful. Here camping, hiking and picnicking facilities could be made more attractive. Some of our smaller, but picturesque and beautiful lakes could be retained complete in their natural wilderness condition; while the state would be well advised to acquire on certain of the largest lakes fairly extensive areas of shore frontage so that the people of the state and visitors to it could have access to these waters without trespass on private property, and could make use both of the lakes and the adjoining land for the simple and healthful kinds of recreation for which they are so well suited.

We already have in the Katahdin area, which was a gift to the state by former Governor Baxter and accepted by the last Legislature, the finest example obtainable in Maine of a scenic type of mountain park, of which undoubtedly several other examples should ultimately be included in the park system. Thanks to the fact that the Katahdin area is a gift, made with the restriction against any roads or permanent structures, the state is able and compelled to do that which is often difficult to do in the case of areas obtained with public funds,—that is, to retain its wilderness character completely. In respect to such reservations there is always, sooner or later, a popular clamor for roads and other developments—and where the public funds have been used for the purchase, this clamor is very difficult for an administrative agency to resist, no matter how strong its desire to retain the wilderness character of such a holding.

Forests for parks are among the important factors for state park sites. Old forests when grown will be practically virgin, and if there are virgin forests to be obtained they would make very desirable parks.

With regard to historic features, we further quote from Mr. Olmsted:

“The places of historic interest brought to attention by the survey are broadly of two sorts: Those marked by buildings or other objects of intrinsic architectural or picturesque interest having historic associations, and those which have historic interest, merely because of some event which is associated with the site but which left no substantial physical reminder.

“In general, I believe that the latter can best be dealt with by the erection of suitable tablet or markers, with or without public acquirement of land for a setting and except when such a site is worthy for other reasons of being made into a state park, its acquirement and administration hardly seems to be an appropriate function of the State Park Commission.

“In some cases of historic objects, such as buildings, the case is different. There is sometimes urgent need of action to protect them from disintegration or vandalism, and where they are of state-wide interest, and local or private initiative is unlikely to take the necessary steps for their preservation, the state ought to do so. Here, again, if the prime object which the state has in view, namely, the preservation and respectful treatment of the historic object and reasonable opportunity for the public to see it, can be satisfactorily accomplished by agreement with the owner or owners, without the state’s taking title to the property and assuming the entire burden of caring for and protecting a small isolated unit, this course will often be the wiser. But there are some cases where the only practicable course is for the state to take title to the land, to repair and protect the object, give it a suitable setting, and permanently safeguard it, all of which involves considerable annual expense without much possibility of securing any corresponding revenue in any dignified and legitimate way. Much the same may be said of certain objects of archaeological interest, remains of Indian culture now neglected and seriously subject to destruction by thoughtless vandalism, and to various isolated objects of special scientific interest—geological, botanical, zoological and otherwise.”

To this we would add that, in our opinion, areas solely of historic, scientific or archaeological value should be distinguished from state parks by some other official designation. On the national side we already have an excellent precedent for this in the national monuments, a classification created for that very purpose. Adoption of the designation “State Monument” for areas of these types will effectively differentiate them from the state parks and prevent many of the absurdities of which other states are guilty.

The committee feels that the following thought should be most emphatically stressed—The character of Maine’s ultimate park system will be determined fully as much by what is left out of it as by what is included in it. It will be set not only by inclusion in it of the best obtainable samples of the marvelously varied beautiful and awe-inspiring landscape that is hers, but by resolute refusal to include any area that is commonplace or of purely local significance. THE SECOND RATE STATE PARK THE STATE PARK THAT SIMPLY REPRESENTS A SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO UNLOAD LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY IS AN EXPENSIVE LIABILITY NO MATTER HOW CHEAPLY IT MAY BE OBTAINED.



Certain types of sites are suitable for and can be safely subjected to intensive recreational use,—camping, picnicking, boating and canoeing, swimming, even certain types of outdoor sports, where the latter can be provided without destroying valuable scenic features. Other types provide a much more limited but very valuable and desirable recreation use of the pure wilderness type. These require little in the way of development beyond the construction of safe trails, and the designation of camping grounds at places where safe water supplies may be provided and simple but adequate sanitary facilities installed.

As an example of this there is the already mentioned Katahdin area. Mr. Baxter very wisely specified that the land given should be preserved in its natural state and if more land is acquired this too should be conserved as is.

Concerning this we quote from Mr. Dyer:

“State parks conserve areas in their natural state, differentiating from county parks and city parks where only the ground, sometimes the bare ground, or even dumps, are saved, and then reclaimed to the people. In these parks, beautiful and useful as they may be made, plants and grass must be grown, but the act of setting aside a state park is an act of conserving a natural thing such as a magnificent water fall, a great sweep of mountain, meadow or coast, and the most outstanding area of its type; these areas may be set aside and the state encourage a comprehensive attitude toward the native things which may live and grow therein. In Maine the pines, spruce, white birch, juniper and native flowers are often distinctive. Deer, moose, bear and many small animals are a part of the very state.

“Maine is the playground of the eastern portion of our country and rapidly is drawing from the west. Automobiles and aeroplanes have made this possible; they have also made possible excessive exploitation of many other areas once thought inaccessible so far as the summer vacationists were concerned.”

Many states have received suitable park sites as gifts from public spirited citizens. Of New York's system twenty parks have been donated in whole or in part. It is also true that many of these parks are operated on a self-sustaining basis. In a number of them a small charge is made for supervised parking of automobiles. Last year in the Finger Lakes region in New York this produced a gross income of more than \$21,000 even though all patrons were given a choice between such paid parking and other parking facilities for which no charge was made. Concessions for the

performance of necessary services in parks are also an important source of income.

### CONCLUSION

This committee realizes that under present financial conditions it is unwise to recommend the expenditure of state funds for any purpose not absolutely essential to the progress and well being of the state. It is our firm conviction, however, that these very conditions will make possible the acquisition of tracts of land, and particularly tracts of wild land, well adapted to state park purposes, which under normal conditions would be much more difficult to obtain. It is quite possible that what is happening in many other states may also occur in Maine, viz: That large tracts of wild land are being turned back to the state because of failure to collect taxes, and for these reasons it seems to us that the present legislature might well consider the advisability of establishing a state park commission in order to be in a position to conduct negotiations for suitable park sites and to encourage public spirited citizens to make such gifts. This commission would of course serve without pay, but should have a small appropriation for the employment of one man, who shall have had some training in this kind of work and who would be able to secure information regarding available tracts of land and to advise the commission as to their suitability for park purposes.

This Committee feels very strongly that the Eighty-Sixth Legislature has the opportunity to enact legislation which will have a far reaching effect upon the future development of our state. Such legislation for the purpose of preserving to posterity some of our natural attractions will receive the support of an ever increasing number of our citizens who are becoming more and more aroused to the need for immediate action looking toward the preservation of the natural scenic beauty of Maine.

JOHN W. LELAND, Chairman  
LENA M. DAY, Secretary  
JUDSON L. BRIGGS  
E. E. ADDITON  
CLARENCE C. STETSON  
HERBERT L. SWETT  
E. P. RICKER, JR.  
REV. CARL N. GARLAND  
NEIL L. VIOLETTE