

A Coastal Park for North Carolina and the Nation

Opportunity at Hand for Government to Acquire One of the Most Charming Coastal Areas in America at Little Expense, for the Satisfaction of the Esthetic and Recreational Needs of the People, for the Conservation of Migratory Wild Life and for the Better Defense of an Open and Unprotected Coast Line in Event of War - - - By FRANK STICK

Within a single generation, with commendable foresight, our legislators have created and made accessible to the public a national park system which embraces thousands of acres of forests, mountains, lakes and desert. Through a period of years have been appropriated millions of dollars for the purchase of such of this hinterland, and each year expended added millions for the maintenance and the improvement of the tracts thus reserved. These huge expenditures aid in the economic advancement of the nation, for do they not bring to our national or local economies, excepting in an indirect way, the areas set aside for material advantage whatsoever, excepting as in certain instances they may serve as sanctuaries and breeding places for our wild life and in still rare instances, have some portions of them may be made grounds for domestic animals.

Yet the moneys ever expended by Congressional edict and through presidential approval have ever advantaged the public more, and nothing has better proven the intent and the desire of our legislators to work for the betterment of the constituencies they represent. No matter how divided they may have been upon economic and purely political issues, they have been single minded upon the one proposition that the success and the prosperity of a nation is not dependent wholly upon ponderable and physical things; but that the opportunity for healthful outdoor recreation, and communion with nature is as indispensable to national progression, as are commercial enterprise, educational and political discipline, or any of the manifold labors and endeavors of a modern civilization.

It is not entirely incidental to the main motive, and is, I believe, of almost equal importance to future generations, that in thus creating recreational areas, we have at the same time, preserved for all time, and in their natural aspect, some portions of the most sublime, and interesting regions on this continent.

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ALKRAMA
FRIDAY-SATURDAY
TIM McCOY
"Man of Action"

MONDAY-TUESDAY
"Trick For Trick"
RALPH MORGAN
SALLY BLANE

WEDNESDAY-THURSDAY
CHARLIE MURRAY
GEORGE SIDNEY
"Cohens and Kelleys in Trouble"

Then Why Not a Coastal Park?
Most of these parks and reservations are located in the extreme west, and are therefore in general use by but a small percentage of the American people, yet within the past few years have been consummated several notable projects in the east, including the Great Smoky Mountain National Park. With all due credit to the public spiritedness of those individuals and associations which have sponsored these inland reservations, and to the foresight of the members of those legislative bodies which have enacted measures necessary to their perpetuation, yet it has seemed to me a strange and unfortunable thing that no sustained and general effort has ever been made to reserve for public use any considerable tract or body of land, of that character and type which is universally conceded to be most attractive and interesting to the vacationist, and which, from a standpoint of health giving and environmental advantages; inspirational appeal and day after day livableness, offers more to the general public than can the most inspiring stretch of mountains, the most impressive forests or the clearest of lakes or streams. I speak now of our seashore.

Indeed, sporadic attempts have been made from time to time to create national or state parks along our Atlantic seaboard. It so happens that the writer became interested in such a movement, shortly after Will H. Dill, with slight assistance from some few of us, succeeded in procuring the enactment of the two and a half million dollar Upper Mississippi Bill. The later plan, which involved the purchase of eight miles of ocean front on the New Jersey coast, was frustrated by selfish commercial interests. Since then, however, I have given the matter considerable thought.

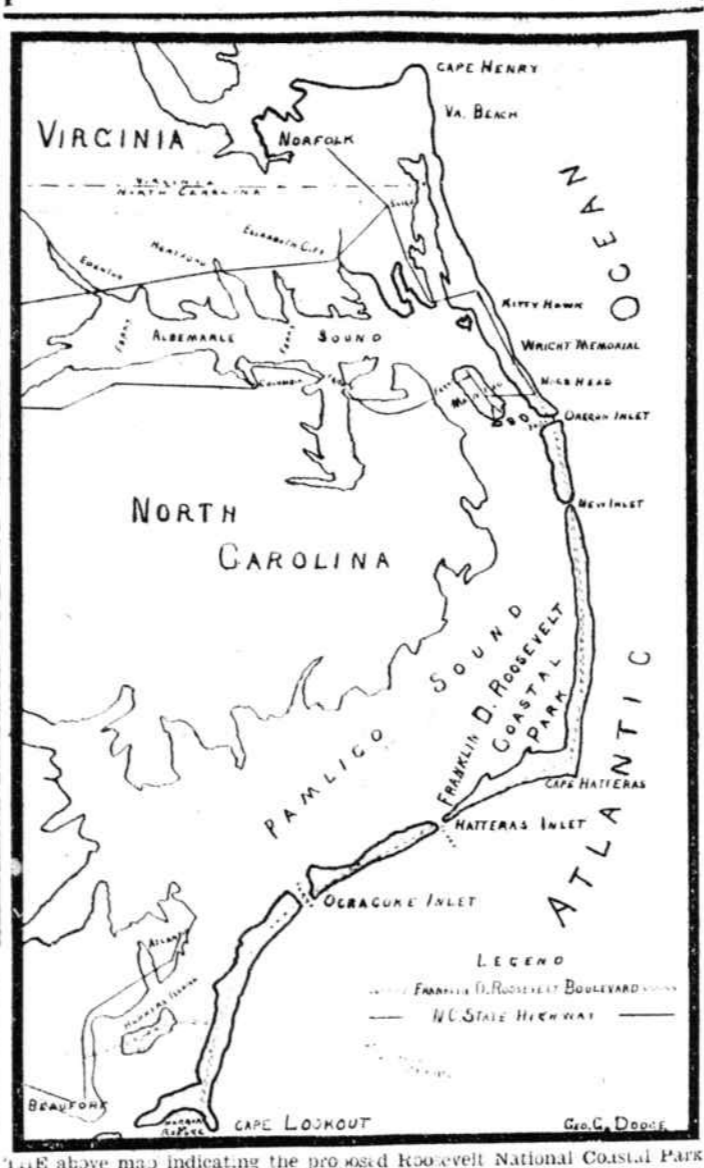
A glance at a map of our Atlantic coast would immediately suggest to the average person the idea that here is such a vast stretch of territory that there will always be an abundance of ocean front open to the use of the casual or the confirmed seeker for its pleasures. Yet investigation will discover the fact that a considerable portion of it is entirely unsuited for recreational or residential purposes; because of its character; because of inaccessibility, which can never be overcome, or because of unfavorable climatic conditions. The balance, for the most part is in the hands of speculators, who have either developed their sections, or who are holding them at prices which would be prohibitive for the purpose we have in mind. Fortunately, however, there still exists, what I believe to be the most attractive, unique and enchanting coastal section in America, and one which can be acquired through condemnation proceedings and, through state and private gift, at a cost per mile of less than would be charged for a hundred foot lot

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A Daring Project



THE above map indicating the proposed Roosevelt National Coastal Park and Ocean Shore Boulevard was drawn for this newspaper by George C. Dodge. It is a daring idea and should be expanded to embrace the coastal area from Old Point Comfort, Va. to Ocean View, Cape Henry, Virginia Beach and south to Kitty Hawk. Such a program would necessitate a suspension bridge from Old Point Comfort to Willoughby Spit, just west of Ocean View, from which point paved highways already extend to Cape Henry and Virginia Beach. The entire Virginia delegation in Congress would get squarely behind the larger project.

on our northern coast. A tract twenty-five miles in length, bounded by the ocean on one side, and by Pamlico Sound on the other, could be taken over for less than the price of five miles of concrete highway, and this amount could be doubled, tripled, or quadrupled on about the same basis if desired. Incidentally, this is the last great stretch of ocean frontage available on the Atlantic coast, today, and this once gobbled up by speculators, our last opportunity to create a coastal park is gone forever.

Where Nature is at Her Best
From a standpoint of climate—and no factor is more important in considering a national park—this section I have in mind could scarcely be improved upon. Such high extremes of temperature as occur even at famous northern resorts, are unknown, yet, because of its close proximity to the Gulf Stream, the winter climate varies little from that of Jacksonville, Florida. Tornadoes have never visited this region, and high winds are a rarity. For its entire length of shining beach, surf bathing facilities are afforded; the inside waters give opportunity for boating of all kinds, and on the high, well grassed beach, the camper or cottager may safely establish his temporary or his more permanent residence, while a considerable portion embraces luxuriant woodland and grassy meadows. From the sportsman's standpoint, no section could be more desirable, and the opportunity to relax body and soul under the ennobling spell of the sea, or in the peaceful solitude of sun-kissed sounds, I do not know where could be found a territory comparable to it. This land is rich in history; also, for in the immediate vicinity the English flag was first planted upon our shores, and here too, the first attempt at colonization was made. It is exactly midway of our Atlantic coast, and can be reached in less than twenty-four hours, by fifty million of our populace, travelling by automobile, or in less than five hours by air.

Consideration of the map which is appended to this article, suggests the thought that here is a section of our coast, unique among all the lands of the earth. A statement of this, which has all the earmarks of an emotional outburst. But again, look closely at the map. From a point opposite Roanoke Island—where the first English colonies were planted—we discover the beachland trending somewhat to the east, and at the same time, the mainland recedes, until, after a slight westward fluctuation, at Cape Hatteras, we are separated from the continent proper, by some thirty miles of wide and deep sound. Here—when we have approached to within eighteen miles or so of the Gulf Stream—the island we are on breaks abruptly to the west, and following a gradual descent, after crossing Hatteras and Ocracoke inlets, we are again within a short distance of the mainland. Is it any wonder then that this long and narrow strip of beachland, which we refer to as "the lower banks," is blessed with a healthful, a pleasant and invigorating climate, and is it any wonder

the northern limits of the island to which this article specifically refers. From this point one progresses either by driving the hard, sand beach, or over a meandering road across the meadows, or by boat. This condition would appear to make the plan of creating a national park on the lower banks, if not an un-surmountable, at least an impractical undertaking (though my first season in Glacier National Park, I was forced to travel sixty miles by pack train). Fortunately, in this case, some of our nationally minded legislators—including our own Senator Bailey and Congressman Warren—have envisioned a project, which if carried out, would make of this plan, what—in sporting parlance would be termed—"a natural." This the construction of a highway as an extension of the Virginia Dare Trail, which would follow the ocean front continuously to the deep water harbor at Cape Lookout, and there cross the narrow neck of water to the mainland.

A Practical Highway
The advantages, nay, the vital necessity of such a highway have been pointed out, and will be dwelt upon later. This roadway is no fantastic dream; no expansively enthusiastic scheme to attract public or political favor, but a sensible, well thought out project that would prove of incalculable economic and esthetic value, with the added incentive of being a safeguard to our shipping in times of peace, and giving mobility to defensive instruments in possible times of war. Within three or four years it would bring in a revenue to the Federal government at least equal to the moneys expended upon its construction, and its manifold values, not only to adjacent counties, but to the entire state are scarce conceivable.

It is safe to say—and a financial report from any going ocean resort will bear me out—that fifty people would be attracted to such a national park as we visualize, where one would visit an inland mountain, lake or forest reservation. We who live close to the old ocean know its advantages of temperate

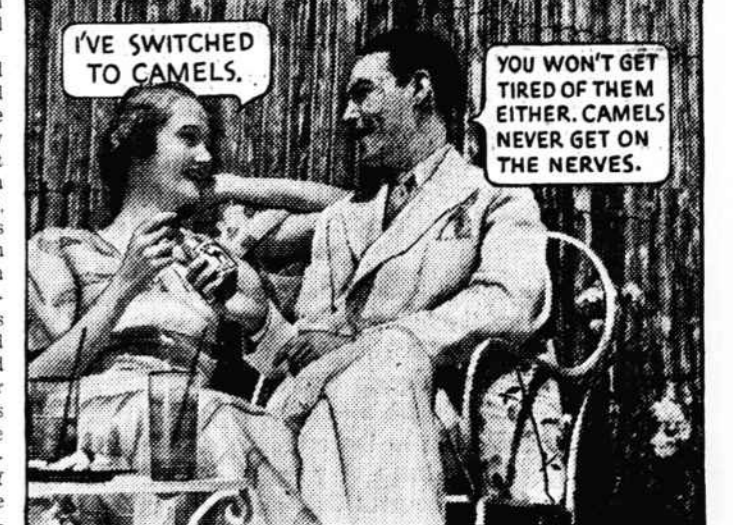
climate, and the invigorating and healthful properties of the salt laden breeze, that make of our springs, and summers and autumns a joy. In an instinctive way, we who are native to it, have an appreciation for the romance of this great, blue water, that rolls and surges to a distance further than the eye can see or the mind conceive of. But only those who come from inland sections, or who who have been for some time from under its spell can know the depth of the emotions it may induce.

A Hundred Miles of Ocean Front
I have made mention of an ocean fronting park twenty-five miles or so in length. It might well be, in its final consummation, that this reservation should extend for almost the entire length of the proposed highway, which would be well over a hundred miles. Why not? There would be b.e.a.k.s, of course where small settlements exist, or where private lodges have been constructed, but even in these sections—with few if any exceptions—the ocean frontage could be taken over. In many instances the land would be donated, and in all others its acquisition would be simple and entail but small expenditures.

At the present time, the land through which the highway would pass, and which would go to make up the reservation, is ridiculously cheap. Yet no sooner is the first transit sighted down the beach than values will increase; potential values, at least. Real estate speculators will swarm our coasts, intent upon capturing a quick profit, yet they can be easily forestalled. Through condemnation proceedings the lands can be taken at a price which would effect a hardship upon none, and yet which would be eminently fair to our governmental agencies. This price should be based upon the actual valuation placed upon adjacent property by the state of North Carolina, or upon the price indicated in actual transfers of adjacent real estate. A maximum valuation could be agreed upon, as was done in the purchase of our upper Mississippi lands. As title to

a considerable portion of this land remains vested in the state, this portion would, of course, be turned over to the government without cost, through special legislative enactment.

Revenues Suggested
Cottage and bungalow sites would be leased by the government at a nominal rental of fifteen or twenty dollars per year. Tent colonies and cottage communities would spring up over night, and hotels and lodges would follow. These could be under Federal management, or they could be leased to private individuals at a profit, or the entire tourist business could be handed through the communities already established. In any case, the revenues derived therefrom would be given to thousands of employments would be given to thousands. The park, covering as it would, what is probably the greatest fishing territory of the entire Atlantic coast—and I do not except the Florida Keys—would mean a steadily increasing income from our angling fraternity, and added employment to the citizens of that section, and to outsiders.



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