

(The matter referred to follows:)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
BUREAU OF OUTDOOR RECREATION,
Washington, D.C., February 27, 1968.

HON. HENRY M. JACKSON,
Chairman, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs,
U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C.

DEAR SENATOR JACKSON: We are pleased to respond to your letter of February 7, 1968, pertaining to the relative benefits of fee collections at Corps of Engineers' projects.

We have been advised that a similar request was addressed to the Chief of Engineers and that he has provided information on the costs of collection and fees collected at Corps' projects.

The revenue collected by the Corps is not, however, a complete indication of the revenue generated by their designated recreation areas. The \$7.00 annual Passport may be purchased from one agency and used in areas managed by other agencies. In addition, a substantial proportion of the total sales is by mail or some other source not associated with any fee areas. While the total amount of such sales is not known, direct sales by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, which manages no recreation areas, and sales by non-Federal interests reporting to this Bureau totaled more than \$700,000 during calendar year 1967.

Survey data collected in August of 1967 by Arthur D. Little, Inc., indicate that 66 percent of the people using the Golden Eagle Passport at Corps' areas acquired the Passport at some location other than the area where they were using it at the time of interview. For calendar year 1967, the fee revenue which is thus at least partially attributable to Corps of Engineers' areas is estimated at about \$800,000.

Although the Corps experience seems to indicate an adverse collection cost versus revenue ratio, personnel engaged in fee collection produce indirect benefits not subject to precise evaluation. These benefits and the revenue from the Golden Eagle Passport indicate that the total benefits derived from fee collection exceed the costs of collection at Corps' projects.

Some of the indirect benefits creditable to the fee program are discussed in the following paragraphs. These include:

1. Rangers' performance of other duties besides fee collection;
2. Creation of a favorable economic climate for State, and private collection of recreation fees; and
3. Reduced crime and vandalism.

In some instances, the Corps of Engineers rangers engaged in fee collection are the only Corps personnel making regular patrols through the designated recreation areas. These rangers may enforce rules relating to the use of recreation facilities, direct traffic, keep an area clean and respectable, answer questions, perform minor on-the-spot facility repairs, and perform other assorted duties in addition to the primary function of fee collection.

Collecting fees at Corps of Engineers' projects and other Federal recreation areas helps to create a favorable economic climate for State and private recreation fee systems. The maintenance of a favorable economic climate is important at new Corps of Engineers' projects subject to the cost-sharing provisions of the Federal Water Project Recreation Act (P.L. 89-72, Stat. 213). Pursuant to this Act, States and other non-Federal public agencies are encouraged to accept repayment responsibility for one-half of the separable costs of public outdoor recreation developments at Federal water resources projects. These agencies commonly obtain such funds for the reimbursement of Federal recreation development expenditures through the collection of recreation fees. The retention of Federal fees at Corps' projects will deter shifts in public use which might restrict the ability of non-Federal interests to collect sufficient fee revenue to cover required reimbursements.

An additional benefit indicated by the experience of the Corps of Engineers and other agencies collecting Federal recreation fees is that incidence of crime and vandalism is less in designated areas than in nondesignated areas. The presence or anticipated presence of a ranger is believed to be a strong deterrent against vandalism and other crime. However, available information is not adequate for estimating the specific values of visitor protection and reduced destruction and theft of government property incidental to operation of the Federal recreation fee system.