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Herbert Evison's National Park Service Oral History Project, 1952-1999

Charles Richey
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CHARLES A. RICHEY

REEL L-III

SIDE I

[START OF INTERVIEW]

Herbert Evison: This is Herbert Evison. Today is November 15, 1963, and this morning I am in the office of the superintendent of the Lake Mead National Recreation Area in Boulder City. The superintendent is Charles A. Richey, and he is much better known among people in the Park Service as Chuck.

Herbert Evison: Now, Chuck, I would like to start this off with a rather brief run-down of your Park Service career. We won't put any flesh on it on this first run through, but I am interested in getting on the record where you started with the Park Service and how you happened to start with the Park Service, and then just a brief record of the various assignments that you have filled in that time. Let's start with how you happened to get into the Park Service and where.

Charles Richey: Herb, I don't know whether I can make this real brief, once I get started, but I actually got interested in the Park Service when I was going to college, and after my freshman year at Iowa State University I took a trip West and at that time I stopped in Yellowstone and I had a friend there, girl friend, who was working as a savage at Canyon Camps, and the people I was traveling with I prevailed on to stay over. So actually, I stayed about six weeks in Yellowstone that summer, camped and lived at Canyon Hotel, and during that time I became so interested in the parks I decided that I would try to get a job there for next summer. So, I went to see Pryor and got a job to be a savage the next year at the Canyon.

Charles Richey: This I was never able to follow through with because I went on to Portland, Oregon, and there I spent almost two-and-a-half years working for a wholesale drug firm, and I did not return to school until almost three years later. At that time, however, I changed from pre-medic course to landscape architecture and decided to get into the Park Service.

Charles Richey: My big problem was, though, that I couldn't find out who to write to, because the Park Service was not very well known at that time. And finally, I found that a guy by the name of Tom Vint was in charge of the planning, so I used to write to him about every six months, and then about three months later I would get a little brief note saying that someday we hope there will be a Civil Service examination and if so, we will let you know.

Charles Richey: This went on until I graduated from college, and that was just at the beginning of the depression. In the meantime, I had won a the Lake Forest scholarship for architects and landscape architects, which the year before had been won by Red Hill, who is now chief of WODC. I believe that we two are the only ones in the Park Service who have had the privilege of that very wonderful schooling and scholarship.

Herbert Evison: Where did that take you to?

Charles Richey: That took me to the north shore of Lake Forest, around Chicago, in Lake Forest. And the scholarship was put on by the millionaires of the North Shore to show the struggling young architects, landscape architects, sculptors and painters how the wealthier class lived and let us sample their living. And they provided the outstanding architects and landscape architects and painters and sculptors and let us live at and utilize their homes and grounds at any time we wished, and they also entertained us very frequently and provided these very wonderful instructors for us who lived right at the Foundation. We used the buildings of the old Lake Forest College, which we called the Chateau, the building that we lived in. It was a very wonderful experience and something that Red Hill and I have discussed, and it has been more or less his idea that we have something like that as a training program for professional people in the Service, in a sort of higher degree in the profession for those who really are sincerely interested in parks and recreation and other things.

Charles Richey: After Lake Forest, then, the depression was on and jobs were very scarce, and I had an opportunity for several permanent jobs, one to teach at the University of Wisconsin in landscape architecture, one to go with the Allegany Park System, and one also to go with A. D. Taylor in Cleveland, who was a very prominent landscape architect with whom I had worked during my college career. But I got a job working as a surveyor and with a survey team for the State Highway Department, hoping that this examination would eventually come for the Park Service. And that finally did come, about the middle of the summer after I graduated.

Herbert Evison: That would have been what summer?

Charles Richey: That was the summer of 1931.

Herbert Evison: You got through college in 1930, and your— ?

Charles Richey: No, I got through college actually in 1931. Now I'm not sure - no, I got through college in 1930, that spring.

Herbert Evison: Then you had your year at Lake Forest thereafter, then you went to work as a surveyor on the highway?

Charles Richey: Correct. And it was in 1931 that I went to work for the National Park Service, as I remember it.

Herbert Evison: Now that was when they had a Western Office in San Francisco.

Charles Richey: That is correct. We used to call it - it was the Field Office of the National Park Service. It had just a division of engineering and a division of landscape architecture, and then the forestry group and the interpretive group were over at Berkeley at the University.

Charles Richey: I entered in the summertime, and as I recall, it was during the depression and jobs had to be approved by the President, and that was under President Hoover and jobs were very very scarce. Fortunately, I was number three

on the national register, and Tom Vint, told me later he didn't know why he picked me, because I looked like a "Wop" from my picture, but I had written to him so many times that I was the only one he had any connection with.

Charles Richey: But when I got to San Francisco I went there expecting a big fancy office and I found a rather small office with everyone in the field, almost. And Bill Carnes was working there as a seasonal; he had taken the same examination but came in later. And then there were two architects there, an Englishman by the name of Tom Brown and a part-time person who is now associated with WODC, George Woolsey, who was working as an architect.

Herbert Evison: W-o-o-l-s-e-y?

Charles Richey: I believe that's correct. He was a long-time associate of Tom Vint; he is now working with the office I believe as an inspector.

Herbert Evison: Well, Chuck, you went to work in the San Francisco office in 1931. What did they put you to doing?

Charles Richey: Well, when I got up there, I found that Tom Vint had been able to get several jobs approved to get out some general development plans for the National Park Service. At that time Tom was away and no one really knew what he had in mind, but it was the thought it would be a general over-all plan for a national park and that each one would have similar plans. The only thing that was certain, that there would have to be some kind of a base map which would have to go in this plan.

Charles Richey: There is a very interesting experience about this base map that perhaps I should relate to you, Herb. Bill and I looked over a number of parks, and of course I wanted to impress the people, so I picked out what looked to be about the toughest one, which was Rocky Mountain. And in order to do a base map you had to put on contours or topography, so I put on contours. Well, contours on Rocky Mountain are practically on top of each other, you know. And I was working on linen, which is very slick and very difficult on which to do drafting or drawing. But anyway, I started on Rocky Mountain, and I worked very hard all through the week. In those days we worked until Saturday noon. Saturday noon I had the plan all complete, and it looked to me pretty good. But as I put the cover on my drafting table I spilled a bottle of ink, India drawing ink, right in the middle of the whole plan. No one saw me do this. I quick covered it up and went out and hurriedly got my lunch and I went back and worked all Saturday afternoon and Saturday evening and all day Sunday and all Sunday night, and Sunday night I had the drawing re-done completely, and so I had it on my drafting board there on Monday morning and I didn't tell anyone that I had ruined this other plan, because I was afraid they might fire me or something.

Charles Richey: But anyway, we decided that that was too difficult a park to start on on a base map, so then I started over, and the first two drawings which I did, and which ended up finally in the master plans, were Mesa Verde and Glacier National Park. And it's a long story about getting out the first general development plan, but an interesting one, because all the people were in the field, almost everyone, and I was working on these things with very little information about them, not having seen them; but the thing sort of evolved as I went along.

Charles Richey: Nothing had been established as to symbol or what should be in a general development plan or how many sheets, or anything else. And as we worked along, and Bill was working with me from time to time, and he was actually there running the office for Tom in his absence—

Herbert Evison: In spite of the fact that he was just a seasonal?

Charles Richey: He was just a seasonal, that's right, because his name hadn't yet come up on the list. Later on, two other people came up on the list; one was Bigler and one was Stevenson, and then I think Bill's name came up, and also the chap at Yellowstone for many year —

Herbert Evison: Mattson?

Herbert Evison: Mattson, I went to school with, we were in school together came on. And that was a group that came on to do the general development plan.

Herbert Evison: Now, you mentioned one thing that is very interesting to me. You had to invent symbols at that time for the different kinds of things that you were putting on that map?

Charles Richey: Well, not necessarily, but some of them were invented, but we had to pick a group of symbols to tell, like on the general development plan what was at each particular location. It ended up that we had a roads and trails plan, a general development plan, the utilities plan, and several others; and they were all reprinted from this one base map, and on that we used various symbols; then we had to determine, we had to show what was existing and what was to be removed and what was proposed; all those kind of things evolved as we went along.

Charles Richey: I remember the first time I ever saw Tom Vint; it was on Veterans Day, only we didn't call it that, of that year, and it was a holiday. I didn't have anything to do, and I wasn't married at that time, so I was down working on the general development plans, and it was late in the afternoon. And who should walk into the office but two gentlemen whom I didn't know, and one of them was Tom Vint and one of them was McCarter, K. C. McCarter. They had been in the field, and Tom came in and said, "My God, somebody working today?" And so, then I introduced myself, and Tom said, well, anybody who had been working on a holiday certainly deserves a little pleasure, so he took me up to his house for dinner. And at that time, he was living up on Green Street, and so I met Mary Vint at that

time. I remember I was terribly embarrassed, because we had T-bone steaks so large that they hung over the edge of the plate and they dripped down on the lovely tablecloth, and that embarrassed me terribly, because that was the first time, I met Tom Vint and the first glimpses he had had of the general development plan.

Charles Richey: We worked furiously on these things, and the Hot Springs Conference was planned. I forget now the date, but any way as it drew nearer Tom could see that these plans were something that would be of very great Service interest, so he encouraged several of us to try to get some completed ones finished to go to the Hot Springs Conference.

Herbert Evison: And to get them colored up?

Charles Richey: Well, that sort of evolved, too. I mean, we worked almost night and day; in fact, the last two days Bill and I I believe worked all night one night and all the next day, and we had to have them in the mail at six o'clock in order to get over to Hot Springs in time for the Conference. And so, as we had gone along, we had decided there had to be a title sheet, and then I decided that it would be better if we had a cover on them, so I made sketches and put on a cover. Then we decided there had to be a backing on it, so we got some rubber diaper material and sticks, and other things involved, we had determined there to be an alkaline; but it ended up that we had master plans for Glacier and Mesa Verde and Platt, and Bill had worked on Platt, and I think that was one sheet.

Charles Richey: Anyway, we got them in the mail, and they were a very great success at the Conference and Tom of course was very happy with them. And after he came back, of course he worked with me on various ones, and I had never seen Mesa Verde, and I had to do part of the development plans for Mesa Verde from topography and instructions from Tom. But it ended up we had a very nice package and all of them were colored, and they had covers on them and sketches and so on, and they were, I think, quite impressive for planning in that day.

Charles Richey: Then at the Conference we were calling them general development plans, in fact had that on the cover; and Director Albright said, "These are so fine, so wonderful, I think we should call them master plans," and at that time a master plan was more or less a master plumbing list, used in general professional circles. But the master plan name stuck, and I believe that is the first use of the so-called master plan in general over-all wide-range land planning today.

Herbert Evison: You mentioned - did I get this correctly? - that you had some sort of a narrative along with this?

Charles Richey: Yes, as we worked into the planning we found we couldn't get everything in the plans, so then we decided there had to be some kind of a narrative, and we tried to figure out how that could be presented with the plans, so

they were done on long sheets but very narrow, and they were bound in at the face of each plan, so as you went through they gave - the narrative gave the existing - gave something about the history and - well, as it broadened out and expanded it logically developed into the first form of what our master plan is today.

Charles Richey: I think everybody today is pretty familiar with the development of the master plan and how it has been used by most agencies of government and professional people and so on for the development of large-scale land proposals.

Herbert Evison: I would like to ask you one question in that connection: I hear quite frequently comments to the effect that the master plan and master-plan procedures have become too bulky, too overelaborate. Do you think there has been a tendency in that direction?

Charles Richey: I think there has, because once it was successful all of the various divisions and so on wanted to have something in the master plan. Actually, good planning is only a guide as used in the master plan, and it shouldn't be used for administrative control. And actually, the master plan developed into a very broad concept and was used for administrative control of planning, and that is where it really has been detrimental, in my opinion, as a planning procedure.

Herbert Evison: Chuck, I want to ask you first to go ahead with what started out to be a brief round-up of your career, go on, will you, from your assignment in the San Francisco office?

Charles Richey: Well, after the master plans, Tom Vint took me on a trip in the Southwest and wanted me to take over the planning in the Southwest. I was quite determined to go up in the Northwest, and after about a six-weeks trip with Tom Vint I went up in the Northwest. Then the next year, however, after having had typhoid in Glacier, I did go back to the Southwest, and I handled the planning there over what is about Region III until the regional office was moved to Santa Fe in '36 or '37. Then I had an office there prior to that time in the old Federal Building which we took over as one of the sites during the time that we took over all of the sites and monuments office and so on, and buildings, and that office space was used to trade for the District Office that came to Santa Fe first, and then later for the Regional Office. And then we built the Regional Office Building in Santa Fe with CCC and WPA and other forces. I stayed in Santa Fe until ‘41, when I went over then as assistant superintendent of the Southwestern Monuments, and I was assistant superintendent there, following Boss Pinkley’s death, for about less than a year, when Superintendent Hugh Miller was transferred to Washington, then I was made superintendent and was there until the war.

Charles Richey: At that time, they combined our office with the Regional Office, and I had two hats, you might say; I was both superintendent of the Southwestern

Monuments and assistant regional director. And I was there until I transferred to Washington in 1945; it was actually Chicago, but it was the Washington office. And I went in to take the job that I believe had been Ben Thompson's and was head of the National Park Division of the Land and Recreation Planning Division.

Charles Richey: Later on, I was made assistant chief of the Land and Recreation Planning Division. then later chief. Then not too long after that the Division was divided into the Lands Division and into the Recreation Planning Division. and I stayed with the Lands Division.

Charles Richey: I transferred then with the Director's office to Washington and was Chief of Lands in Washington until October 1954, when I was transferred to Lake Mead as superintendent. During my tenure in Washington, I had one wonderful experience, as advisor to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers and to the Japanese Government on the reorganization and replanning of the Japanese National Park System after World War I. That was in 1948.

Herbert Evison: Let's, while you are on that – you have gotten yourself to Lake Mead in 1954 and you are still here - let's go back to that Japanese assignment, Chuck. Give us a little dope on just what your chore was and how you went about it.

Charles Richey: Well, I might say, Herb, that was probably one of the most wonderful assignments that anyone could have, and it was so fantastic that I have never dared to relate some of the things that happened, because no one would believe it. I could tell you a few little stories about some of those, but I don't think I should take the time.

Charles Richey: Actually, it was soon after World War II, Japan was in a tremendous sphere, you might say, of inflation; it was before the Dodge report; the yen was inflating rapidly, the Japanese needed foreign dollars, and the only way that they could think of getting foreign dollars was in travel, and then they looked to their national parks to bring in travel from other countries. Actually, Japan had had a wonderful park system prior to the war; in fact, it was organized by a special assignment from the Emperor to a landscape architect, Doctor Tamura, and he was known as the father of Japanese parks.

Charles Richey: Prior to my request, or to the request for me to come to Japan, the Supreme Commander had written to the Department of the Army and asked that a man be selected from the National Park System. There were several considered, and fortunately I was selected for this assignment, and I went over there on loan; I did not work for the Army, but I went on loan from the National Park Service, and I actually served as an advisor to the Supreme Commander and to the Japanese Government.

Herbert Evison: Yes. Well, now, as I remember it, one of the first things you did was to look over their parks.

Charles Richey: That's true. I probably was the most widely traveled person who ever went over from the United States, I think, with the Supreme Commander; and when I got there I found that practically all of the parks in Japan and all the hotels in them were off limits to Americans and to the Allied Powers, and the first thing I did was to request for an off-limits pass to everything in Japan, which I received from McArthur. That gave me a very fine opportunity.

Charles Richey: I also had some advisors whom I had met en route who taught me some of the ropes, and I found that I had to get my itinerary approved several months in advance, so that when I first got there, I got itineraries approved for approximately a six months period, and I traveled to every village and hamlet and location almost in the country. And I also found that I could learn very little by traveling with the Army, because they had a military government in each State, and they had twenty-six states. So, by arrangement through the Japanese government, I arranged to go from one Governor to another and to use their interpreters, so that on practically my entire trip I went and lived with Japanese Nationals, and generally I had a representative of the Ministry of Welfare, which is a Department similar to Interior, which administers the parks, and also of the staff of the Director of National Parks of Japan. And then of course, of each State. I might say my schedules and my trips were somewhat like a snowball going downhill, because by the end of a trip I might have several hundred people or more joining my parties.

Charles Richey: And it was very interesting; the Japanese tried to get me to get up earlier in the morning and work later at night, in order to see more, and they do most of their business at banquets, so breakfast, lunch, and dinner were always banquets and generally they ran way into the midnight hour.

Herbert Evison: How did your digestion hold up?

Charles Richey: Pretty well. I seemed to be very rugged, and I was able to drink their sake and so on and not have any difficulties. I might say that Japanese hospitality knows no bounds, and if one does not have a rugged constitution, he would have a most difficult time.

Herbert Evison: Now, Chuck, what kind of a situation did you find in the parks? Had they been neglected, gone to seed, during the war?

Charles Richey: They had practically, you might say, been abolished during the war, but the Japanese people had such a high regard for the park scenery, because part of Japanese life - I mean the religious life of Japan - is either Buddhism or Shintoism. They say that a Japanese is born Shinto and lives Buddha and dies Shinto, and Shinto is the native religion of Japan and also of the Emperor, but Shintoism is somewhat ancestor worship and nature

worship, and almost everything in Japan that amounts to anything in the way of people or important things or events or beautiful places in the landscape, trees or animals, are deified, so the people naturally look to them and protect them; even though during the War when the Army was in control and practically demanded that certain things be done of park landscapes, the Japanese in most cases refused to do it unless it was at gun-point. So much of the park land was not destroyed even though it probably would have been if it had not been for the bringing up of the Japanese people.

Herbert Evison: Now, what kind of stuff have they included in their national parks?

Charles Richey: Well, their national parks are very similar, you might say, to our own except in scale. But they have a few, like Daisetsuzan in Hokkaido which are probably as grand as almost anything that we have in this country. Their park concept, because of land ownership, is somewhat different from our own, and the concept that Doctor Tamuru took back to Japan was based on American, Canadian, and Italian. So, they have a little different management there, because much of the land in the parks is privately owned, but because it was an imperial government, the Imperial Government could protect it even though it was in private ownership. And they did that through reduction in taxes, or other things.

Charles Richey: Now, they have two zones. They have an absolute zone, in which practically nothing can be done; then they have an ordinary zone, in which you might have small villages or other things. But all through both zones the regulations and so on stem from the Ministry of Welfare and the Park Department, so that they do have a very good system of protection, even though it is entirely different from our own.

Herbert Evison: Now, do they do anything in what we would call interpretation?

Charles Richey: Well, they had very little. Of course, they look at interpretation - every Japanese has an omnivorous appetite, you might say, for anything new or different, and they love all of the natural things and many of them are deified, so as they go through the parks, they enjoy almost everything. Now, ordinarily in Japan about the only parks in the city or anything are the Buddhist temples, which have quite elaborate grounds as a rule. So national parks in Japan serve a great need of the people, because it's one of the few places that they can get out and not be in an area that is urban, you might say.

Herbert Evison: Now, what recommendations, what would you say were the major recommendations that came out of your observations over there?

Charles Richey: Well, I made a report, of course, to the Japanese government and to the Supreme Commander, which was very well received, and I do not recall - it went through the whole phase, you might say, of planning; it made recommendations for the establishment of certain new park areas which I

investigated while I was there and which I made the recommendation that they were of fittingly - would fittingly come within the categories they had established, also some minor areas. Then there were things of budget and staff, and even down to where the parks should be administered in the Japanese government.

Charles Richey: As a representative of the Supreme Commander, I could go directly to the different Ministers, which would be the same as going directly to the President's cabinet, and I had that opportunity, and it was necessary for me to help present the budget, for instance, of the National Park Division to the Finance Minister. And actually, there are many departments over there interested in parks because of the different government - different type of government; and while I was in Tokyo I often worked at a cabinet level in order to try to give more prestige and so on to the park system.

Charles Richey: While I was there, too, the question of the Emperor's grounds came up, and it was referred to me and I recommended that that be put under the Park Department similar to what we have in Washington, and that gave them a great deal more status than they had before, because of the importance of the Emperor to the Japanese people.

Charles Richey: The press over there followed me terrifically. Sometimes I would have fifty or more press people following my party. And the day before I left Japan, I had a press meeting in Tokyo with something like three or four hundred in attendance and including Communists.

Herbert Evison: Including what? Communists?

Charles Richey: Including representatives of Communist papers. And of course, they tried to throw questions and so on that would bring some confusion. But there was a tremendous love of the parks in Japan, and there are many parks in Japan that are worthy of a trip clear to Japan for just that one purpose.

Herbert Evison: Tell me: you said that you recommended the establishment of certain new parks. Have you been in touch enough with what has happened in Japan to know whether any of those have been established?

Charles Richey: All of those have been established, and certain more that I went into at that time and not a definite recommendation was made.

Herbert Evison: You've got quite a monument in Japan.

Charles Richey: Well, it's a monument in my memory as to one of the most interesting experiences in a lifetime and one that I think could never be repeated, because conditions were just exactly right and I was the first one, and I believe the only one, to ever go there on that particular mission.

Herbert Evison: Yes. How about your relations - did you have direct relationships with McArthur?

Charles Richey: Occasionally, but mostly through staff. McArthur was a very great staff man and he only saw most of his staff at staff meetings, and I did attend staff meetings occasionally. And after I came there and after the parks became - there was so much publicity, a number of the different divisions of SCAP wanted to try to get me on their staff instead of the one I was on. I was brought over by CI&E and that brought—

Herbert Evison: What's CI&E?

Charles Richey: Civil Information and Education. And that brought some problems, but I told them that I wouldn't make any recommendations until I had completed my study. That way I avoided having to be associated with one or the other and I had a much broader acceptance from the staff, because all of them, or several of them, were trying to get me to work with them. For instance, the railroads in Japan are largely government-owned, and they have a division of Railroads and Transportation, and so on. And for instance, the Japan Travel Bureau is about half government and half private, and they have a division, and so on, and all of those are interested - the railroads are interested in parks, the travel bureau is interested in parks, the forestry bureau - about half of the parks in Japan are national forests, but I mean they are carved right out of national forest lands, but the national forests do the protection as far as fire protection and so on, and so they were deeply interested and they felt that perhaps they should run the parks. There was a great deal of competition, but I felt that they should stay in the Ministry of Welfare, because historically they had been there, and I felt that if they had moved out of there, they might be just a grabbing bag, and therefore I recommended that they stay in the Ministry of Welfare.

Herbert Evison: Which they have, I judge.

Charles Richey: Which they have stayed in since that time. I tried to get them a higher status, and I was somewhat helpful in that. But it's the kind of thing that one could spend a lifetime on. And they tried to get me to come back for two years, but I felt that I just couldn't see staying away from the National Park Service for such a long time.

Herbert Evison: Tell me: did you write your report while you were still over there?

Charles Richey: Part of it, but my mother became very ill just about near the close of my assignment, so I flew back, and I didn't complete the report until after I had returned here. It was very well received by the Supreme Commander, and I received many compliments on the report, which was concisely written; I mean it dealt mostly with facts and factual matters.

Herbert Evison: I think that's wonderful. I am delighted to have that on the tape, and I am a little chagrined that when I wrote you about it I forgot about that assignment.

Herbert Evison: I am particularly anxious, though, Chuck: You are the superintendent of the biggest of the national recreation areas, the one that has greater amount of use than any other in the collection, I would say by several times, and also the first one that was established. Now, one of the Park Service's failures, I think, has been to accommodate its thinking with respect to national recreation areas - or rather to accommodate its thinking about national parks and monuments and the other areas to the different requirements of the national recreation area. Isn't that a fact?

Charles Richey: Well, I think it is, Herb. I don't know whether that's exactly a question or just how I would evaluate that, but as far as I am concerned personally, I have always tried to keep my thinking fluid and try to keep up to the times and try to be appreciative of the needs of people for recreation. When I came here to Lake Mead I was about as dyed-in-the-wool, you might say, national park person that anyone could be, because even in my education I had gone there with the thought of going into national park work. But when I came into a recreation area and found the difference and variety of problems and the type of use that people wanted to make, I found that I had, in order to keep up with the times, to adjust my thinking.

Charles Richey: About that time, after I had been here a short time, we had what is known as a boat boom which started in about 1956 and is probably the greatest explosion of any type of recreation that has happened in this country in several generations, and that hit Lake Mead probably harder than anywhere else, because of the great significance of water in the desert. Even a mud puddle in the desert has significance, because the kids like to wade in it. And here with this tremendous inland sea, you might say, in the desert, it had a tremendous impact.

Charles Richey: And I found that in order to keep the National Park Service abreast of the times and abreast of public thinking, we had to adjust our use policies and our - or you might say our uses gradually developed into certain policies and principles that today are more or less those governing national recreation areas.

Herbert Evison: This has really been the great proving ground, I suppose, for the Park Service's development of policy on recreation areas.

Charles Richey: I guess so, though I don't believe the Service has ever thought of it that way, but I think that might be what you could say evolved from our administration, although the unfortunate thing here is the fact that we were not called in to administer the area until everything was completed, and it threw a tremendous burden on the Park Service, because here were these great bodies of water with no facilities and very difficult to put them in, because you can't build a boat ramp under water, and things like that. And with the tremendous fluctuation we have in Lake Mead, even though you build something that will meet a year's fluctuation, if you have a great variation in weather, next year it may be twice as bad; so you have a boat

ramp down to a certain elevation, and then it doesn't function. So, it isn't like it is today.

Charles Richey: And now in the legislation, the basic legislation for Hoover Dam, there was not, I don't believe, one word in it about recreation, and that of course has been corrected, like in the Upper Colorado River Storage Act where we now use Public Works funds to develop recreation along during construction period of the dam and reservoir; and that makes it so that you are able to take care of visitation almost as soon as the water impoundments form. That was one reason why we came under very heavy criticism during the early administration of this area in that we didn't have in facilities, and we had very little way to put them in, because in most cases it was impossible.

Herbert Evison: You know, I had never thought of that before. You mention coming in here when the lake was well up. How did you - your ramps now run down to water level, those that I have seen; I suppose you have just had to, as the water has gone down at various times, build ramps while you had the chance.

Charles Richey: That's true. Now of course in a couple of places we used an old road; down at Boulder Beach we used an old road that was used to construct the dam with, and that serves very well, only it's too narrow, it's only 20 feet wide. Now most of our ramps should be 200 to 400 feet wide. And it was only during the low period when we had very heavy drought in 1954, -5 and -6 that we were able to put a number of the ramps down, because at that time the elevation of Lake Mead dropped down to elevation 1083 above sea level. The spillway level of the lake is 1221; that's the top of the gates; the spillway is 1206. So, when it went down to 1083, we built as many ramps as we could get money for. At that time the people in the Park Service didn't realize this great opportunity, but there wasn't any way to get money, because that was back before the Mission 66 program. So that was the one opportunity.

Charles Richey: Now with the filling of Glen Canyon Dam probably this coming year and the next year, if we can get adequate money, we should put every proposed ramp down to the maximum elevation; I mean by that, every ramp that we ever anticipate being used within the next half a century, because it may be our last opportunity.

Herbert Evison: Practically wherever you could put one?

Charles Richey: That's true, because there are so few good places, but it is going to mean a tremendous expense; I mean it will probably cost a million to two million dollars to put ramps in at all the places and put them in to the widths and so on necessary.

Herbert Evison: What happens to a ramp when it is under water for a long while? Does it deteriorate to any degree?

Charles Richey: Most of them do not. We are not using concrete here. We wish we could, but it's too expensive and we are using what we call a hot oil mix, and they stand up very very well, and we have had some ramps under water five or six years and they have deteriorated very little except possibly where the propellers have worked over them; propellers will make a tremendous - will erode ramps or even dig deep holes if they are revved up too much or too close to the surface. But ordinarily the hot mix ramps stand up very good; as the water goes down, we may have to patch them from time to time, but it's so much cheaper to do it that way that it's the only economical way we could do it here.

Herbert Evison: There's another thing that interested me very much about this that all ties in again with the fluctuation in your water. You have I know, down here, I guess it's at Boulder Beach, a pavilion with a restaurant and a bar and so on and so forth, where you also have the problem of sanitary facilities. There have to be toilets, there have to be wastes coming out of there; and yet that may be here this month, and six months from now it may be 300 feet out from where it was before it had to be moved. How do you meet the problem of taking care of those wastes from a structure that is not in a fixed position?

Charles Richey: Well, Herb, I might say, at Lake Mead we are probably leading the country in finding a way to take care of sanitation and so on from areas of fluctuating water, and that is going to be of great benefit to other reservoir areas as they are developed.

Charles Richey: Now, the way we do it: when the water goes down, we build our sewer and water lines and power lines out in the lake bottom with hook-up boxes and valves. And we can only do that, again, when the lakes are down. Now at Glen Canyon and some of the other newer reservoirs where they have money, they are doing that now, based on our experience. And what we do, we have underground pipelines for sewerage, and they can't be tile, they must be cast iron or transite with valves every so far, so that if you want to move up or down, you close a valve and open another, and then you flush out a line; so you can move, say, up or down, generally at 2- to 300-feet intervals. Then you have flexible lines that hook on to those.

Charles Richey: Now for sewage facilities we have automatic electric pumps that are hooked on right below these hook-up boxes, and they are pressure pumps, and they pump the sewage up and out of the area generally to other pressure pumps which pump them up to some type of disposal area which will not pollute the lake. And in our larger facilities, like down here at Lake Mead Marina, which is one of the largest floating facilities I think in the world, they have pressure pumps and tanks on barges, and they pump those to pressure pumps on the land through flexible tubing and pipes, and it is pumped on out. So actually, on Lake Mead Marina we have complete sanitary facilities, kitchen facilities and so on, and all of that is handled without getting any pollution into the lakes.

Herbert Evison: I suppose that that first pump, that is, coming from the barge itself, goes up to a tank somewhere fairly close and then is picked up from there?

Charles Richey: No. We have the pumps set on mobile tanks, like trailers, which we move up and down too, and that has to move down almost to the lake shore; and the pump in the restaurant or facility then pumps directly with very little rise into the tank on this pump, and it's operated automatically by a float, and when it fills up to a certain point then it automatically pumps up out of the lake area. But we can't have large enough pumps on the restaurant facilities themselves to take care of the great depths, because in some places when the lake is down to elevation about 1080, we have got to have a booster pump above the regular pump in order to get the effluent out of the lake area.

Herbert Evison: But what the pumps aboard do practically is to get it on a level onto the shore.

Charles Richey: That's right. And those pumps you might say are mobile pumps mounted on trailers and they have steel tanks. And then we use those same pumps with our mobile comfort stations, and they drain by gravity into this reservoir and then it's pressurized up.

Herbert Evison: Now, there's another element of your problem here that I remember, and that's in connection with your beaches. You have beaches which this month come to the water's edge at a certain point; six months, maybe the edge of that beach is out a quarter of a mile. Now how do you meet that fluctuation, and particularly the drop in water, in order to keep a decent beach?

Charles Richey: Well, there's considerable maintenance, Herb. First, we have to serve those with sewer and water and power, which is done very similar to our harbor areas, and then we hook on mobile comfort stations there for sanitary facilities; then we run our parking areas, and when the water is low we run those down as far as we could, so the water comes up over them; then each year as the water goes up or down we blade and wet and roll those beaches until we compact them so they have a fairly good surface. Of course, Boulder Beach down here got its name from the boulders down there, and many of them are a foot or two across, so it has taken continual work and some sanding, but every year we have to wet and roll and compact, so that now we have some very fine beaches.

Charles Richey: Then we use mobile guards which we move up and down to regulate parking. We have to have mobile signs to move up and down, to regulate the parking. And then we have to have mobile guards around our beaches; we have three sets in the water, one to limit the shallow, one to limit the swimming area, and then one to keep boats out. Now those all have to be moved. And our diving floats and so on, they all have to be anchored and they have to be moved, because as the water comes up or down, at Boulder Beach you lose about twenty feet of shoreline every foot of

elevation, and some days in the summer and spring when the water is coming in we will gain almost a foot of water a day; that's during the spring run-off. And during the summer when it goes down it's much more gradual, but right now we are losing about five feet of depth a month. And so right there you have a change of about 100 feet per month of your beach line, and we have to continue to maintain and make that useable, if it is going to be of any benefit to the public.

Herbert Evison: Now, you provide lifeguard service at your beach?

Charles Richey: We do at certain seasons, only through the summer season; and we provide lifeguards now at three different beaches on Lake Mead and Lake Lake Mojave. They are all designated beaches and all of them are buoyed and marked, as I described.

Herbert Evison: What are your relationships with the Coast Guard in here?

Charles Richey: Well, the Coast Guard have just a small boarding team here which inspects boats for safety, under the Motorboat Act of 1940, and that's what they call a mobile boarding team. It's a four-member team and they travel around the lakes and inspect boats for the numbering Act and whether they have life preservers and lights and so on.

Herbert Evison: Is that a year-around job for them?

Charles Richey: They are here most of the year. However, they do handle the Lower Colorado River too. Our ranger force handles search and rescue, aids to navigation, patrol, harbor patrol; practically all of the water activities here are regulated by the National Park Service. And that is a tremendous job.

Herbert Evison: Yes, that I know. Water skiing and races: what sort of regulations have you found it necessary to put in on water skiing?

Charles Richey: Well, at the present time we have our own rules and regulations with respect to water skiing. The Coast Guard does not regulate water skiing.

Herbert Evison: No, I understand that.

Charles Richey: We have our own regulations that you must have an observer, and you can't ski after dark, and you can't use a rear-view mirror in lieu of an observer. And we have to watch that very closely, because there is probably more conflict between water skiing and other water sports than anything else, and because of the speed it is fairly dangerous; and so that is something that we do try to watch very very closely. Of course, in those areas the size of Lake Mead and Mojave, we feel that probably patrol by plane will be one of the best ways to catch the worst offenders.

Herbert Evison: I understand you have a plane on order.

Charles Richey: That's right.

Herbert Evison: Got a pilot lined up?

Charles Richey: No, we're trying. We'll have to select a pilot from the Civil Service Register. We've had quite a number of applicants, I guess a dozen or more.

Herbert Evison: Will that be a sea plane?

Charles Richey: No, it'll be a land plane. We decided on a land plane because ordinarily sea planes cannot work here in the rough kind of weather that we have when we need them for search and rescue. And we are buying the type of plane, the tricycle landing gear plane, the Cessna Skylane; it's one that you can get on and off the field in a higher wind than almost any other type of plane. A conventional landing plane is pretty hard to get off in excessive wind, but that's when we need a plane the most, and we use them as an eye, you might say, for our boats. And we work boats from I think nine different locations, but we need somewhere above to tell a boat where to go quickly. You can work a boat for two or three days in a small area and not search out the coves.

Herbert Evison: With a shoreline like this one.

Charles Richey: That's right.

Herbert Evison: Well, Chuck, that's something that I have very much wanted to get on tape, because I think your situation here is so different, so different from what National Park people understand as national park problems, for instance. It seems to me there ought to be - there has got to be, as a matter of fact - a lot better understanding throughout the Park Service of what the problems of these areas are.

Charles Richey: I think that's true, Herb. In fact, the people that come in, they do not understand, you can't convince them that this isn't a national park, even our best friends, because our uses are so similar. But when it comes to operating one you find that the problems you have here, because of constant physical use, are so much greater that you need more, many more people and rangers and activities than you do in an average park, because most of our people who come here are active recreationists and they stay here days and weeks at a time. You see, boating is now - boating has done more, you might say, to bring families together, because it used to be that dad would go boating; now if they have a boat it's a family institution and the whole family comes and they camp, and the kids water ski and dad fishes and they all take part in certain activities, and swim; so that actually you might say boating I think has done more in the national recreation areas to bring families together in the way of playing together than almost any other type of area.

Herbert Evison: I think that's a darned good observation, Chuck, one that I am frank to say I had never thought of, but it seems to me awfully important.

Charles Richey: Well, it is, and it much greater than people realize.

Herbert Evison: Yes. Well, Chuck, I notice first that the time is after two o'clock and we are almost at the end of this tape. I am sure I could turn it over and fill another side very interestingly, and I hope some time maybe I can, but at the moment I am going to call it a day on this tape, with a thank-you for having given me all this time in the midst of a working day.

Charles Richey: Well, I am very happy to do it, Herb, though I am sorry it has been so hectic.

[END OF INTERVIEW]