

Speech at ARC Recreation Forum; 2007, Washington D.C.
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Thank you.

First and foremost, let me begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to the American Recreation Coalition and all of the partner organizations and federal agencies that have made this forum possible.

We sincerely appreciate the opportunity to share a little about Scenic America and what we think our role should be in the future of outdoor recreation in our country's lands and waters.

Scenic America is a national non profit advocacy organization dedicated to the protection and enhancement of the visual character of America's communities, countryside and public lands.

We are the ONLY national nonprofit organization actively focused on visual landscape character issues.

So what does that mean you ask?

Well, it means we are devoted to heightening the awareness of and importance of protecting scenic resources in our country alongside other public resources such as air, water, and wildlife.

It means we fight to prevent visual blight and visual impacts that threaten to erode the scenic heritage of our landscapes and our communities.

In terms of outdoor recreation in America, if we think back to the popular recreation equation of EXPERIENCE= ACTIVITY + SETTING;

Then our organization's role lies clearly with the SETTINGS variable in that equation;

We certainly are NOT a provider for any of the myriad of recreational activities available today, nor do we advocate for or against any one of those activities in particular.

We are HOWEVER, concerned with the protection and enhancement of the landscape settings necessary to provide the types of quality recreation experiences sought by millions of people every year.

- We do not provide the RV or SUV traveling America's scenic byways and back country roads.....
-but we do work to ensure that these roads are designed and managed to be sensitive to the environment and the aesthetic character of the landscapes in which they cross.
- We are not a backpacking advocacy organization....
-but we do care about the integrity of the viewsheds as seen from the thousands of miles of America's scenic and historic trails

Hence we are concerned about the consequences and visual impacts of land uses occurring in and around our recreational lands and waters.

The challenge for the future lies in changing the present.
We must overcome the notion that visual quality is subjective or the scenic protection is discretionary.

Our recreational places are, in many ways, refuges from the other world we grind our way through.

Why not improve both the world we work and live in as well as protect the landscapes in which we play.

Attractive places do not happen by accident.

Choices and decisions are made on a daily basis that have influence on the visual appearance and character of our surroundings;our towns, our neighborhoods, our streets, our public lands, the places we all have pride in, the places we want to recreate in.

The scenic character of our natural resources and the diverse natural beauty of this country are more important now than ever.

They are part of our national identity. They help define America the Beautiful.

So, when we talk about protecting our environment and promoting quality outdoor recreation...

... we must also include protection of our visual environment and work to promote those visual qualities of our natural world that bring recreational enjoyment to so many.

Change is inevitable, ugliness is not.
Thank you.