

Will Plan Be Dropped? Tar Heels See McKay, Protest Parkway Toll

By Eleanor Nance
Journal Bureau

WASHINGTON, Feb. 15—A large Tar Heel contingent formally protested today against the National Park Service plan to collect tolls on the Blue Ridge parkway. After meeting with Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay, members of the group said there was some indication the plan may be abandoned.

Both North Carolina senators and nine of the state's 12 House members joined Gov. Luther Hodges and a group of state officials in the conference room of Secretary McKay's office for an hour and a half discussion of the tolls—scheduled to go into effect May 1.

Gov. Hodges was accompanied to Washington by A. H. (Sandy) Graham, chairman of the state Highway Commission, Hugh Morton, member of the Department of Conservation and Development, R. Getty Browning, chief locating engineer for the highway department, State Sen. William Medford of Haywood County, Rep. Kelly Bennett of Bryson City and the governor's private secretary, Ed Rankin.

McKay, Lewis and Wirth

Secretary McKay was accompanied to the meeting by Assistant Secretary Orme Lewis and National Park Service Director Conrad Wirth.

Rep. George Shuford of Asheville acted as chairman of the North Carolina delegation and opened the protests by declaring that there are no charges on other parkways in the country. He recalled that the Blue Ridge Parkway was not purchased by the federal government but that the right of way for the project was obtained by North Carolina and Virginia and donated to the federal government.

"Unusual," Hodges Says

Gov. Hodges followed Rep. Shuford and said that "This is a rather unusual situation—to find North Carolina protesting vigorously the actions of our National Park Service—because our relationships through the years have been most cordial and very beneficial to all concerned."

He said Mr. Wirth was "well known and well liked in North Carolina—and our governors, highway officials and state park leaders have always enjoyed working with him in the best interest of the state and National Park Service."

The governor said that because the parkway is unique "we cannot agree that it should be treated like the more inaccessible national parks of the West."

He noted that the parkway is joined by 25 U. S. highways and hundreds of state and private roads, giving it more than 600 entrances of one kind or another.

"This should also clearly demonstrate that it is not a parkway."

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TOLLS

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failure to hold a hearing on the toll issue "is further evidence of the growing callousness of the administration toward the wishes of the people."

Hodges Comments.

Meanwhile, Governor Hodges declared:

"I am greatly disappointed of entrance fees on the Blue Ridge Parkway. As soon as I received notice from Mr. Conrad Wirth of the National Park Service, I wired him my concern over the proposed action."

"I will, of course, join with our congressional delegation in again opposing the collection of entrance fees on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Several years ago this same proposal was under consideration in Washington, but was postponed indefinitely we thought after we held a long conference with the Secretary of the Interior Department and all of us presented our case against the use of fees on the Parkway."

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North Carolina Group Sees McKay, Protests Blue Ridge Parkway Toll

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onstrate the serious difficulty in attempting to collect tolls along some 300 miles of mountain highways, the governor said.

Gov. Hodges emphasized that there are no toll charges on any other state or federal highway bridges, ferries or state parks in North Carolina and, he said, "we do not see the wisdom of establishing toll charges on the Blue Ridge Parkway after 20 years of successful operations as a free public roadway for tourists and the general public."

State Sen. Medford was then introduced by Rep. Shuford, and he read the text of a resolution recently adopted by the General Assembly in which opposition to the toll charge was set forth in detail. The resolution noted that the state had spent more than \$2,500,000 in obtaining the land for the parkway and when completed, North Carolina will have spent over \$3,000,000.

Sen. Medford recalled that former Highway Chairman E. B. Jeffress, who was present at the hearing, as well as an early commission member, John Randolph, had participated in the original parkway plans and the understanding was that no toll would be levied.

The charge that imposing a toll would be a "breach of faith" on the part of the federal government was underscored by Sen. Sam Ervin.

"To use plain North Carolina language, this would be a scandal to hell," Sen. Ervin declared amid laughter. "It would be like telling the moonshiners in my county that they could put a still on Goose Creek and operate it but if they put it on Hanley River the revenuers would move in."

"This toll would create more disturbance than revenue."

Met Scott Before

When Sen. Kerr Scott rose to speak, Secretary McKay recalled that he had met the former North Carolina Governor at a fish fry in North Carolina several years ago, when McKay was governor of Oregon.

"This time I've got other fish to fry," Sen. Scott announced.

He added that Park Director Wirth "has built up a good reputation in North Carolina and it is a pity he wants to ruin himself."

He said he concurred with the sentiments expressed by Sen. Ervin, and quipped, "In fact we are the two best senators from North Carolina!"

Sen. Scott said he knew Secretary McKay had many problems to worry him and he suggested that the secretary "just forget about some of the things you plan to do."

Rep. Hugh Alexander of Kannapolis then explained that his district had many miles of the parkway and that all of his mail expressed concern about the proposed toll.

Chatham Cites Doughton

Rep. Thurmond Chatham of Winston-Salem and Elkin recalled the efforts of the late Rep. Bob Doughton in getting the parkway constructed and he said, "I think he would turn over in his grave at this idea, though he died at 91 last fall."

"If you are going to punish us, we in turn might get a little mean about it and punish Interior Department appropriations," the

Fifth District congressman suggested.
Lincolnton Republican Rep. Charles R. Jonas said he did not think the department should "deliberately take the position where the people of North Carolina could accuse the government of a breach of faith."

Rep. Woodrow Jones of Rutherfordton told of the Sunday afternoon traffic on the parkway and pointed out that the state had built a road from the parkway to Mt. Mitchell. He said if the toll were levied on the parkway, visitors to Mt. Mitchell would also have to pay it.

Bonner's Fears

Rep. Herbert Bonner of Washington said he feared the toll plan "might drift into my district." Rep. Bonner said that when one talks of toll roads to his constituents "it brings back memories of the Civil War and may bring a lot of rebellion."

Rep. Carl Durham of Chapel Hill told Secretary McKay that Congress could share his department's financial burden "if you explain it to us" without imposing a toll on the parkway.

Further congressional opposition to the toll was expressed by Reps. F. Ertel Carlyle of Lumberton and L. H. Fountain of Tarboro.

State Highway Chairman Graham then recalled that in 1935, when a toll plan was suggested for the parkway, Rep. Doughton had intervened with the department and it had been stopped.

"Free for All Our People"

State Rep. Bennett recalled that in 1927 a commission was sent down to establish the national park and he said, "they told me then it would all be free for all our people."

He said the late President Roosevelt made the same statement when he dedicated the Smoky Mountain National Park.

Mr. Morton underscored all that had been said.
Mr. Jeffress told the Interior officials that "North Carolina got into the union too late to vote for George Washington and didn't get out in time to vote for Jefferson Davis" but, he said, now that the state is in the Union, it would like to stay.

"So don't irritate us with this toll," he added amidst laughter.

Final speaker was Mr. Browning who presented Secretary McKay

with a picture folder of parkway scenes. He recalled how the rights of way were obtained and the difficulties encountered by the state with many mountain families "whose only contact with the government was through the revenuers." Mr. Browning said that despite these difficulties in obtaining ancient family lands, "nobody got shot."

"Nobody got shot?" Secretary McKay asked.
"No but they could have been if we had talked of tolls," Mr. Browning shot back.

After the protests had all been registered, Secretary McKay said, "it is not in the hands of the secretary to say yes or no since the park fee system was set up by Congress."

Two Don't Change Tolls

Mr. Wirth noted that all other parks charge tolls, but later admitted that the Mt. Vernon Parkway out of Washington and the Baltimore Parkway do not have toll charges.

Assistant Secretary Lewis emphasized the department's expenses of maintenance and said that the project had cost the government \$85 million, of which the state contribution was little.

Secretary McKay said he personally does not like toll roads, but the question in his mind is, can he rescind this order and not rescind toll orders on other national parkways?

Rep. Jones observed that there are no similar situations, for in the Western states the government purchased the land, whereas on the Blue Ridge the states donated it.

What Is a Parkway?

Secretary McKay then said he believes the question of what is a parkway needs "clarification."

Gov. Hodges' plane was waiting and he thanked the cabinet official for hearing the North Carolina petition. McKay said: "I am very glad to have seen you gentlemen and I see I've got a problem."

As he departed Gov. Hodges said he thought it "had been a good meeting" and that Secretary McKay had been impressed with Tar Heel arguments against the toll.

Sen. Ervin said he did not know what the outcome might be, but said "I always believe people will do the right thing until they convince me to the contrary."

Hodges Cites His Horoscope Along With Protest on Tolls

Journal Bureau

WASHINGTON, Feb. 15 — It is written in the stars that today was "fortunate" for Gov. Luther Hodges, and astrological indications are that Secretary of Interior Douglas McKay will rescind the order to place a toll on the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Gov. Hodges revealed here today that Mrs. Hodges clips his horoscope from the paper each morning. When the governor began his remarks to Secretary McKay, protesting the toll plan, he drew a scrap of paper from his pocket and read what the stars held for him today.

Born on March 9, Gov. Hodges'

horoscope is under Pisces, sign of the fish. And this is what the astrologists forecast for him today:

"This is one of those fortunate days when you can go before an influential individual who is in a position to support your need in vocation, career, credit or other public expression. Give exact blueprint of your aims. Then sit back and accept support."

After the governor read this message, Tar Heels present at the conference in Secretary McKay's suite joined in the general laughter. The governor said he was "optimistic" about Mr. McKay's reaction to his formal protest.

Proposed Parkway Tolls Drawing More Protests

WAYNESVILLE, Feb. 28 (UP)—The chairman of the North Carolina National Parks, Parkway and Forest Development Commission said today the State "would never have agreed" to acquire rights of way for the Blue Ridge Parkway if the scenic drive was to be a toll road.

William Medford, Waynesville attorney, issued a statement protesting plans announced by Park Service Director Conrad Wirth to begin charging tolls on the Blue Ridge Parkway June 1.

Medford said the State of North Carolina, its Governors and Highway Commission have been opposed to tolls on the parkway since its inception as an idea of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933.

Opposition Cited.

He said his group and the State Legislature are on record as "unalterably opposed" to tolls.

"In fact, when North Carolina agreed to furnish the rights of

way we felt there was an implied agreement that there would be no tolls on the Blue Ridge Parkway," Medford said.

Meanwhile, the North Carolina delegation in Congress reacted quickly. Several members introduced legislation to block the tolls plan.

Rep. Charles Raper Jonas (R-NC) urged Interior Secretary Fred Seaton to rescind Wirth's tolls order.

Jonas called Parkway tolls "unfair to the thousands of people who live and work near it and are required to use it daily" as well as to drivers using it as a highway instead of a park.

Democratic Reps. Basil Whitener, Hugh Alexander and A. Paul Kitchin said they would sponsor or support such legislation. Kitchin called the toll order "offensive" and "dictatorial."

Whitener said the Park Service's

Deliberate Delay Charged In Fontana Road Project

By JOHN PARRIS
Citizen-Times Staff Writer

10 A ASHEVILLE CITIZEN-TIMES, Asheville, N.C.
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WAYNESVILLE—A state agency called upon the North Carolina delegation in Congress Saturday to launch an investigation into the development of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The request, filed by the N. C. National Park, Parkway and Forest Development Commission, particularly emphasized the Federal Government's failure to

build the long-promised Bryson City-Fontana Road.

The action came after an investigation by a special commission committee into charges made by the Swain County Board of Commissioners that the National Park Service was pursuing a deliberate and calculated policy detrimental to the state.

The Swain petition also charged that the National Park Service had no intention of ever building the Bryson City-Fontana Road for which it had contracted with the state in 1943.

The committee report, which was filed with the N. C. Congressional delegation, said that the Swain County resolution was jus-

tified and that there is undoubtedly a disposition on the part of the National Park Service not to build the long-promised road.

"For the National Park Service to refuse to build this road now is not only a clear breach of the explicit terms of a contractual obligation," the committee report said, "but it appears to be a breach of faith on the part of the federal government."

It further pointed out that the road had been included in the original master plan for developing the park and "no notice has been given that it has been changed."

In its request to the Congressional delegation, the commission asked that the Park Service explain whether or not the master plan had been changed.

In the original plan an "around the park" road was projected and the state agency said that a part of this road had been built on the Tennessee side.

It asked the state Congressional delegation to inquire as to whether or not the "around the park" road has been abandoned on the North Carolina side.

It documented dealings between the Federal Government, the state and Swain County since 1943 when the three groups signed a contract for construction of the Bryson City-Fontana Road by the Park Service.

At the time the contract was signed, the State of North Carolina agreed that as soon as the Federal Government began construction of the park road, the state would proceed with an access road at a point on U. S. 19 in Bryson City that would extend to a point on the eastern boundary of the park.

Since that time, the State of North Carolina has built its section of road, some three-and-a-half miles that cost some \$347,000.

The park commission's investigating committee pointed out that Congress in 1953 appropriated \$392,000 to start on the park road but that the Park Service refused to begin construction until the state started its part of the road. It said these funds were frozen and then diverted to other national parks or parkways.

The commission's committee report also said that other projects for the development of the park have been too-long delayed and called particular attention to the Federal Government's failure to build a long-promised museum or visitors' center at the

Oconaluftee Ranger Station above Cherokee.

It said campgrounds at Deep Creek and Smockemont need to be expanded and new campgrounds built. It further charged that a road from Galbreths Creek into the Deep Creek Campground was promised many years ago but has not been built.

"These matters should also interest the North Carolina delegation to Congress," the commission's report said. "We feel this commission would not be doing its duty as an agency of North Carolina if it did not call to your attention these instances wherein there appears to be a failure to develop the North Carolina side of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park."

It said that the results of its investigation were being passed on to members of the state Congressional delegation "for such action as seems appropriate." Members of the investigating committee were William Medford of Waynesville, commission chairman; Frank H. Brown Jr. of Cullowhee, and Kelly E. Bennett of Bryson City.

Charlotte Observer, 19 Feb 1960

Funds Allocation Will Be Probed

WAYNESVILLE — An official investigation will be made into the allocation and appropriation of funds by Congress for the development of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

The North Carolina National Park Parkway and Forest Development Commission authorized a full-scale probe of park allocations over the past 25 years at an emergency meeting here Thursday.

To conduct the investigation, the commission set up a special committee and instructed it to turn over its findings to the North Carolina congressional delegation for appropriate action.

Commission Chairman William Medford of Waynesville was ordered to carry out the assignment with the assistance of commission members Frank Brown of Cullowhee and Dr. Kelly E. Bennett of Bryson City.

The committee was instructed to delve particularly into the development of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in

North Carolina in view of recent charges that the state is not getting its fair share of funds appropriated by Congress for park use.

The commission further authorized the committee to investigate and bring to the attention of Congress the entire question of the appropriation of insufficient funds by Congress for maintenance and protection of the Great Smokies as compared with amounts allocated for other national parks.

In launching the probe, the commission acted at the behest of the Swain County Board of Commissioners, who called for a congressional investigation of the federal government's failure to build the long-promised Bryson City-Fontana road.

Park, Parkway Fee Threat Is Seen In New House Bill

WASHINGTON — A House bill introduced last week proposing a national land conservation fund could result in entrance fees for use of federal parks and forest recreation areas in Western North Carolina.

Twelfth District Congressman Roy A. Taylor said he "viewed with alarm" the possible effect of the legislation on users of the Blue Ridge Parkway, Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests. All are entirely or partly in Western North Carolina.

Rep. Taylor said the bill is sponsored by the Interior Department and authorizes the President to establish admission and other recreation fees for use of land and water areas administered by agencies of the federal government.

Revenue received from the fees would be used to improve and expand recreational facilities across the nation.

President Kennedy made the proposal in a conservation message delivered to Congress in early March.

No charge is presently made for use of federal recreational facilities in WNC, although fees are collected at federal areas in many other parts of the nation. An unsuccessful effort was made several years ago to establish fees for use of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Upon learning of the bill, Rep. Taylor said he immediately advised Interior Secretary Stewart Udall that the right-of-way for the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina was donated by individuals and the state of North Carolina "with the understanding that access fees would never be imposed."

Taylor said he called to Udall's attention the fact that land for the Great Smoky Mountains National Park was acquired by North Carolina and Tennessee, assisted by the Rockefeller Foundation, with the understanding that the park would always remain open to the public without entrance or use charges.

The Congressman said he questioned the feasibility of even attempting to levy fees in the Great Smokies because of U. S. 441, a main U. S. highway bisecting the park between Cherokee and Gatlinburg, Tenn.

"How could a charge be placed against travelers who wish to merely use the highway and not the national park it happens to go through?" he asked.

Taylor quoted Udall as saying it is the Interior Department's proposal to issue an annual sticker, for about \$2 or \$3, which would be placed on a car and be

honored in any federal park or forest in the United States for a one-year period. The sticker would admit the car and all its passengers.

Other sources of revenue in addition to entrance fees as proposed in the conservation fund bill would place charges on motor boats operating in federal waters; diversion from the Highway Trust Fund of refundable, but unclaimed, taxes paid on gasoline used in motor boats; and receipts from the sale of surplus federal nonmilitary lands.

In turn, funds collected would be used to buy more land for public outdoor recreation and park and forest development and for other conservation purposes.

"How much Western North Carolina might expect to benefit

from the proposed legislation in terms of expanded recreational facilities must be very carefully considered," declared Rep. Taylor.

Taylor said he was undertaking a diligent study of the proposed legislation and its effects on users of federal facilities in Western North Carolina.

In line with this, Rep. Taylor said he had requested Chairman William Medford of the N. C. Park, Parkway and Forests Development Commission to set up a meeting in Asheville on April 25 to study the legislation.

In addition to members of Medford's group, the meeting will be attended by representatives of a number of interested planning and chamber of commerce groups in WNC.

Taylor Draws Regional Support In Opposition To Park Fees Bill

Opposition to proposed legislation which could result in establishment of fees for the use of federal recreational facilities in Western North Carolina was expressed Wednesday at a called meeting of the North Carolina Park, Parkway and Forests Development Commission here attended by some WNC community leaders.

The group concurred in opposing such legislation, but took no official action, William Medford, commission chairman, stated.

Medford said the group backed the opposition of Rep. Roy A. Taylor, at whose request the meeting was called.

Five members of the commission and 10 other persons attended the meeting in Battery Park Hotel.

The group's opposition was based on three factors, said Medford:

1. "The facilities, we believe, are for the use of all of the people."

2. The difficulty of collecting fees because of the many accesses to Blue Ridge Parkway and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

3. The "implied agreement between the two states (North Carolina and Tennessee) and the federal government that no fees would be charged for their use."

Taylor said the proposed legis-

lation, sponsored by the Interior Department, authorizes the President to establish admission and other recreation fees for use of land and water areas administered by agencies of the federal government.

No charge is currently made for use of such facilities in North Carolina, although fees are collected at federal areas in many other parts of the country.

Taylor had asked for the special meeting to get a sampling of opinion among WNC leaders concerning the proposal.

The congressman pointed out that it would be impractical and quite difficult to impose fees on Blue Ridge Parkway travelers because the Parkway is intersected by 25 federal highways and some 600 state and private roads.

In the case of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Taylor said a toll fee would again be impractical because U. S. 441, a main east-west thoroughfare between North Carolina and Tennessee, bisects the park. It would not be fair, Taylor said, to charge motorists for driving across the road just because it happened to go through federal park land.

Taylor also noted that North Carolina and Tennessee, with the aid of the Rockefeller Foundation, purchased land for the park and gave it to the federal government with the understanding that

no fees would ever be charged for its use.

During a discussion period, Kelley Bennett, Bryson City political leader and a member of the commission, expressed strong opposition to the proposal, asking, "Is the federal government coming to the point where it will ignore the people entirely and not honor its contract?"

Jack Barfield, president of the Asheville Chamber of Commerce, noted that "With all the millions of dollars the government gives away each year, such a proposal just don't make sense."

Charles Parker of the State Board of Conservation and Development said the board is opposed to the proposal and that it does not favor toll roads in any part of the state.

The commission agreed that the government should appropriate more money for expansion of federal parks, but that the bill now under consideration takes the wrong approach.

Also attending the meeting were L. Y. Biggerstaff of Hendersonville, commission secretary; Frank H. Brown Jr. of Cullowhee, Bob Sloan of Franklin and Ralph Winkler of Boone, commission members; Mrs. Corinne Killian of Waynesville, commission clerk; Luther Shaw and Tom Mallonee of Rep. Taylor's staff; Richard K. Degenhardt and George M. Stephens of Asheville and Joe Lee Hartley of Linville.

Great Smoky Fees Still A Question

By JOHN PARRIS
Citizen Staff Writer

GATLINBURG, Tenn.—No decision has been made on the question of a users' fee for the picnic and camping areas of Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

George W. Fry, superintendent of the park, told The Citizen Tuesday that "we have had no word at all on it."

"We don't know if or when fees will be introduced in the Great Smokies," Fry said. "We are just waiting for a decision from a higher level."

JUNE 1 DEADLINE

The new national outdoor recreation fee system, authorized under terms of the recent Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, is scheduled to go into effect in national forests in North Carolina on June 1.

The U. S. Forest Service announced recently that an entrance fee would be charged at all developed recreation areas on the Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests in Western North Carolina this summer.

Fry said his interpretation of the Land and Water Conservation Fund act rules out the entrance fee for the Great Smokies, but does not preclude users' fees for picnic and camping areas.

He pointed out that Rep. Roy A. Taylor of the 11th N. C. District amended the act to exempt the Great Smokies and the Blue Ridge Parkway from any entrance fee.

Fry said he felt, however, that under terms of the act a fee could be charged for use of picnic and camping areas in the park.

STILL UNDECIDED

"But whether we introduce a users' fee at this time is still undecided," he said. "We just don't know what Washington will decide."

And he said that if a users' fee is introduced he had no idea what it would be—whether per person or per site.

The Forest Service announced that it would charge a 50-cent per person fee for the use of picnic or camping sites on a per-day basis with a \$2.50 seasonal fee per person and a \$7 annual national permit good for use in any national park, parkway, or national forest during

the year and as many times as the holder chooses.

\$7 PERMIT

The national fee system, including an annual \$7 permit, is being handled by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation.

Taylor told The Citizen from his Washington office Tuesday that he had asked officials of both the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation and the Department of the Interior for a legal interpretation on the question of users' fees for the Great Smokies and the Blue Ridge Parkway.

"If a users' fee is charged," Taylor said, "then it will have to apply to everybody, even those who have the annual national permit. For this permit applies only to an entry privilege and not to use of a picnic or camping area."

Taylor charged that the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation was primarily interested in selling the national permit, and was resorting to a users' fee in the Great Smokies and on the Blue Ridge Parkway as "a pressure tactic" since both areas are exempted from an entrance fee.

PREDICTS TROUBLE

The North Carolina congressman conceded that while a modest fee for camping and perhaps a few other activities might be acceptable, a charge for picnicking was "carrying fees too far," and he predicted they would reap more trouble than money.

Taylor said he still contended that a charge for use of picnic and camping areas was contrary to the intent of Congress when it enacted the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act. He said Wayne Aspinall, chairman of the House Interior Committee, and other congressional leaders were of the same opinion.

"Under terms of the act," Taylor said, "no entrance fee can be charged in a national park or parkway or national forest where at least 50 per cent of the land has been donated by a state."

"This exempts both the Great Smokies and the Blue Ridge Parkway from an entrance fee, but does not affect the Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests. As to the question of a users' fee for recreational areas, there is also some doubt in my mind whether it is legal and can be enforced. I have asked for a legal interpretation on it."

Reduction Also Being Considered

Picnic, Camping Fees Delayed

By JOHN PARRIS
Citizen Staff Writer

A 30-day postponement of the inauguration of entrance fees to designated picnic and camping areas in North Carolina's national forests was announced Thursday by the U. S. Forest Service.

The new fee system had been scheduled to go into effect June 1 at 18 national forest recreation areas on the Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests in Western North Carolina.

Peter J. Hanlon, supervisor of N. C. National Forests, an-

nounced the postponement through Congressman Roy A. Taylor, who has been leading a fight with federal officials over the fee system since it was disclosed in April.

"No fees will be charged to the picnic and camping areas during June," Hanlon advised Taylor. "Plans now call for starting them July 1."

Hanlon, who is in Washington conferring with top federal officials on the application of the fee system, told Taylor that

"meanwhile, we are re-studying the situation with a view to making the fee system more lenient."

Taylor said Hanlon informed him that officials responsible for administering the fee system were considering a reduction of the 50 cents per day per person entrance fee to 25 cents and the \$2.50 per season fee to \$1.25 for use of the picnic and camping areas.

The recreation charge was authorized by the Land and Water Conservation Act of 1965, which

named the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation to administer the program on all national parks and national forests.

Taylor succeeded in getting the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Blue Ridge Parkway exempted from the entrance or admission fee charges.

But the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation announced recently that it proposed to institute a user fee for picnicking and camping on developed recrea-

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tional sites in the park and on the parkway.

Taylor charged that this was a move to circumvent action by Congress and called upon the National Park Service "to reconsider and reverse" its plans to charge a user fee.

Meanwhile, Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr., D-N.C., entered the fight over the weekend. He announced his sponsorship of legislation which would give Congress veto power over imposition of fees in national parks and forest areas.

Ervin said his action was prompted by a letter from Edward C. Crafts, director of the Interior Department's Bureau of Outdoor Recreation.

Included in this letter, Ervin said, were recommendations that user fees be approved for the use of selected picnic and camp sites in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Ervin pointed out that because the park lands were donated by North Carolina, Tennessee and private foundations, he, Congressman Taylor and Sen. B. Everett Jordan of North Carolina, were able to exempt the park from all entrance fees at the last session of Congress.

"Now," Ervin said, "so-called user fees are proposed to frustrate the intent of this amendment in the Land and Water Conservation Act."

"I personally consider that the attempt of these agencies to collect such user fees will cause much confusion and will raise more Cain than revenue. At a time when our government spends millions annually on foreign aid, it is distressing that we would charge our taxpayers for the use of their own land."

Ervin said that "since these agencies have not seen fit to take my advice on this point, I have joined with Sen. Fred R.

Harris of Oklahoma in introducing a bill to prohibit charging fees or access to or use of waters owned by the federal government.

"The bill," Ervin added, "would also provide that no fees, such as user fees, be promulgated by federal agencies, unless the schedules imposing such fees are filed for 60 days with each house of Congress and no resolution against them has been passed during such time by either house."

The Citizen learned that Crafts wrote the chief of the Forest Service and the director of the National Park Service last week a letter in which he said:

"It is my recommendation to both of your agencies that the Park Service institute user fees at appropriate camp and picnic sites inside the park, and that the Forest Service in a peripheral zone around the park for a distance of 10 miles, more or less, convert its admission system, which is on a per person basis to a user fee system for appropriate camp and picnic areas, which would be on a per site basis. There is nothing in the statute which prohibits the imposition of user fees in the national park."

"I further recommend that in making such adjustment," Crafts wrote, "the Forest Service and the National Park Service collaborate in the selection of the fee rate within the framework of Secretarial Regulations and also selection of individual sites to which user fees would be applied. This would mean that within the park and in a surrounding zone of national forest land, comparable user fees would be charged for comparable facilities."

"Under such recommendations," Crafts added, "it would be expected that substantially more picnic sites would con-

tinue to be free than subject to a site or user fee, but most campsites would be subject to a use fee."

During his conferences with officials in Washington, Hanlon is understood to have opposed the zoning recommendation as unworkable and impracticable.

And George Hartzog, director of the National Park Service is understood to be opposed to charging a user fee for picnicking in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Park Given Reprieve; No Picnic Fees In 1965

No fees for picnicking or camping in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park will be charged this summer.

Nor will there be any for use of picnic areas on the Blue Ridge Parkway, although a fee for use of established camp sites along the scenic route is still under consideration.

A National Park Service decision not to introduce users fees this summer to the nation's two most heavily visited federal recreation areas was announced by Rep. Roy A. Taylor of the 11th N. C. Congressional District.

Rep. Taylor said that National Park Service Director George A. Hartzog Jr. had informed him of the "no fee" decision.

"There will be no fees for picnicking or camping in the Great Smokies this summer," Mr. Hartzog said, "but we haven't made up our mind whether to introduce them later.

"We have also decided not to charge a users fee for picnic areas on the Blue Ridge Parkway this summer, but we are thinking in terms of charging fees on established campgrounds on the parkway."

However, Rep. Taylor said that under existing law the Park Service is obligated to give the governor of North Carolina 60 days notice of its intention to put users fees for camping into effect.

"The Park Service has not done this," Rep. Taylor said. "And even if it does within the next few days, the fees could not go into effect until September. So I think it is safe to say there will be no fees of any kind on the Parkway facilities this year."

Meanwhile, the new National Outdoor Recreation fee system, authorized under terms of the recently enacted Land and Water Conservation Act, is scheduled to go into effect July 1 on National Forests in North Carolina.

The U. S. Forest Service announced several months ago that an entrance fee would be charged at all developed recreation areas on the Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests this summer.

At the same time, the National Park Service disclosed that it was considering a users fee for picnic and camping areas in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Blue Ridge Parkway.

The Park Service contended that while Rep. Taylor had succeeded in exempting the Park and Parkway from the National Entrance Fee the Land and Water Conservation Act did not preclude a charge for use of picnic and camping facilities.

Both Rep. Taylor and Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr. of North Carolina charged that the National Park Service was attempting to circumvent the intent of congressional amendments to the act by proposing "so called users fee for picnicking and camping" to get around the exemption of an entrance fee to the Park and Parkway.

The National Park Service decision Saturday not to inaugurate a users fee for picnicking and camping in the Park and on the Parkway this summer was considered another victory for Rep. Taylor in his opposition to the fee system.

Less than a month ago, Rep. Taylor succeeded in getting the U. S. Forest Service to reduce by 50 per cent its entrance fees to designated picnic and camping areas of North Carolina National Forest lands.