



PENNSYLVANIA CONSERVATION  
**HERITAGE**  
PROJECT

**Fact Sheet to accompany “The Life of Maurice Goddard”**

*“Someone once asked me how I could work for both Democratic and Republican governors, and I said, ‘Well, a forest fire’s not a Democratic fire or a Republican fire. It’s just a fire.’” —*

*Maurice K. Goddard*

Known for his no-nonsense, blunt style, Maurice K. Goddard served under five Pennsylvania governors as Secretary of Forests and Waters and as the founding Secretary of the Department of Environmental Resources (1955-1979). His legacy as a public servant includes: A commitment to professionalism and civil service; a state park within 25 miles of every Pennsylvanian; a watershed-scale approach to water management; dedicated funding for natural resource conservation; profound influence on national conservation policy; and instrumental in the formation of the Delaware River Basin Commission and Susquehanna River Basin Commission.

**Early Years**

Born in 1912 in Lowell, Massachusetts, Maurice K. Goddard was the son of Norman O. and Susan Kimball Goddard. Maurice spent his childhood in Pretty Prairie, Kansas, where his father was called to a clergy position. While in high school, his family moved to Toronto, Canada, then to Maine, where he earned a B.S. in forestry from the University of Maine in 1935. He taught for several years at Penn State’s Mont Alto campus, before pursuing a master’s degree in forestry from the University of California at Berkeley. In 1940, he married Ethel Mae Catchpole. The couple had two sons, Kimball and Mark.

Goddard served in World War II on the staff of General Eisenhower where his service earned him two distinguished awards – the Bronze Star and the Legion of Merit. In 1946, after his army stint, he returned to Mont Alto to run the forestry school, and then to the University Park main campus to direct the School of Forest Resources where he remained until 1955.

**Mr. Secretary**

In January of 1955, Governor George Leader appointed Goddard as his Secretary of Forests and Waters. Under Governor Leader, Goddard worked ardently on obtaining civil service status for his professional staff. Historically, these positions had been political appointments. Goddard felt strongly that civil service status would create continuity and professionalism. Governor

Leader signed an executive order requiring minimum qualifications for state forestry personnel in October of 1956; but it would not be until 1963, during the Scranton administration, that the law granting civil service protection would be passed. In reflection upon his state service, Goddard considered this to be one of his greatest accomplishments.

### **Vision for Expansion of State Parks**

In 1955, there were 45 state parks in existence on already-owned state forest lands which were located in remote areas of the state. A number of things helped to fuel Secretary Goddard's vision of a park within 25 miles of every citizen including a national movement for parks near cities, better roads state-wide, increased automobile ownership, and increase "leisure" time.

### **Funding the Vision**

Demand for outdoor recreation grew by 300% between 1955 and 1961 – visitors to state parks increased from 8 million to 24 million during that time period. To address this growing trend, Goddard set up a Bureau of State Parks in 1962 to specialize in park management, officially separating park and forestry operations.

### **On the Issue of Entry Fees for State Parks**

The state Chamber of Commerce proposed a \$2 - \$5 entry fee in the form of a sticker that would be usable at any park. Goddard opposed anything but free access stating that:

*"The economic and social benefits of the present system are so far-reaching that the Commonwealth can afford this small subsidy," Goddard said, noting that the state spent two tenths of one percent of its budget on parks. "You don't put parking meters in shopping plazas, because you want people to come. We want people to use our parks, too."*<sup>2</sup>

Governor Thornburg signed a law barring entrance fees to state parks in 1983.

The problem now was how to fund the expansion of parks in Pennsylvania. Knowing that building more parks would cost money, he went to work to establish a dedicated source of funding. In 1955, the creation of the Oil and Gas Lease Fund dedicated revenue from oil and gas leases on state lands for conservation, recreational development and land acquisition. This was followed— in 1963 by Project 70, a bond issue that raised \$70 million for public lands and facilities.

Matching federal dollars for Project 70 came from the Land and Water Conservation Fund which was established for recreation development in the eastern states. Revenue from offshore oil and gas drilling from the Gulf of Mexico, provided \$100 million to Pennsylvania in the 1960s for the development of state and local parks.

In 1968, to address additional funding demands, Project 500—The Land and Water Conservation Reclamation Act—was passed by Governor Shafer. This bond issue would provide \$500 million for land acquisition, recreational facilities and a variety of environmental projects.

## **Goddard's Criteria For New Park Locations**

*(From Pennsylvania's New State Parks: A Report to the General Assembly on Act 256)*

- ❖ Clean bodies of water to serve as the centerpiece of a park, with adequate size and flow, suitable for swimming;
- ❖ Reasonably level ground for picnicking, camping and construction of roads, parking areas and boat ramps;
- ❖ Historical or scenic values, and enough area to accommodate 25,000 visitors a day;
- ❖ And a location reasonably near population, because, in the end, the report noted, *"parks are for people."*

## **Conservation Leadership**

In January of 1971, the Department of Environmental Resources (D.E.R.) was created which merged the Departments of Forests and Waters, Mines and Mineral Industries, and other related responsibilities. Although Goddard was opposed to the merger, Governor Milton Shapp appointed him Acting Secretary. Goddard was formally appointed Secretary in 1975 and continued to serve the commonwealth until his retirement in 1979. In the same year, the Goddard Chair at the Penn State School of Forestry was created.

In his retirement, Goddard stayed extremely active as a voice for Pennsylvania's natural resources, serving on the boards of a number of conservation groups. He advocated for establishing a separate agency for parks and forestry; and in 1995, Governor Tom Ridge created the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Goddard died later that same year.

Goddard spent an unprecedented 24 years as a cabinet officer, realizing his vision of a park within 25 miles of every Pennsylvanian. During his tenure he added 45 parks and 130,000 acres of park land to the state park system and gained national recognition for Pennsylvania's state park system.