



# The State Park Movement in America: A Critical Review

*Ney C. Landrum*

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Essentially a phenomenon of the twentieth century, America's pioneering state park movement has grown rapidly and innovatively to become one of the most important forces in the preservation of open spaces and the provision of public outdoor recreation in the country. During this time, the movement has been influenced and shaped by many factors—social, cultural, and economic—resulting in a wide variety of expressions. While everyone agrees that the state park movement has been a positive and beneficial force on the whole, there seems to be an increasing divergence of thought as to exactly what direction the movement should take in the future.

In *The State Park Movement in America*, Ney Landrum, recipient of almost two dozen honors and awards for his service to state and national parks, places the movement for state parks in the context of the movements for urban and local parks on one side and for national parks on the other. He traces the evolution of the state park movement from its imprecise and largely unconnected origins to its present status as an essential and firmly established state government responsibility, nationwide in scope. Because the movement has taken a number of separate, but roughly parallel, paths and produced differing schools of thought concerning its purpose and direction, Landrum also analyzes the circumstances and events that have contributed to these disparate results and offers critical commentary based on his long tenure in the system.

As the first study of its kind, *The State Park Movement in America* will fill a tremendous void in the literature on parks. Given that there are more than five thousand state parks in the United States, compared with fewer than five hundred national parks and historic sites, this history is long overdue. It will be of great interest to anyone concerned with federal, state, or local parks, as well as to land resource managers generally.

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