

Name: _____

Lesson 35

Period: _____

Why Are Our National Parks Crumbling?

Directions. Read the *Handy Dandy Guide* and the mystery. Read the clues. Be careful. While all the clues are correct, only some are *useful* in solving the mystery. Decide which clues are most relevant to solving the mystery. Use the clues and one or more of the ideas from the *Handy Dandy Guide* to figure out a solution to the mystery. Write your solution.

Handy Dandy Guide

1. People *choose*.
2. People's choices involve *costs*.
3. People respond to *incentives* in predictable ways.
4. People create *economic systems* that influence individual choices and incentives.
5. People gain when they *trade* voluntarily.
6. People's choices have consequences that lie in the *future*.

The Mystery

We love our National Parks. In fact, we may be loving them to death. U.S. National Park managers report all kinds of serious problems.

- Campgrounds are closed.
- Roads are crumbling.
- Buildings are in disrepair.
- Maintenance is years behind.

Yet many state parks, including those in Texas, South Dakota, and Arkansas, are offering new services to park users and are increasing their revenues.

Why are national parks crumbling while state parks are thriving?

The Clues

1. On August 25, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson signed an act creating the National Park Service.
2. The National Park System of the United States occupies more than 83 million acres.
3. In 1872, Congress established Yellowstone National Park in the Territories of Montana and Wyoming "as a public park or pleasuring ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people."
4. In 1918, a federal law was passed requiring that all revenues from the National Parks be turned over to the U.S. general treasury.
5. The founding of Yellowstone National Park began a worldwide national park movement. Today more than 100 nations contain some 1,200 national parks or equivalent preserves.
6. Many state parks in Texas and South Dakota rely on user fees—not general revenues from the state legislature—to operate the parks. Parks are encouraged to be self-reliant.
7. The National Park Service reported a \$500 million maintenance backlog in 1998.
8. In 1915, Stephen Mather was appointed the first director of the National Park Service.

Record your solution and explain it briefly here:
