

# CHOICE

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*The following review appeared in the May 2008 issue of CHOICE:*

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Carr, Ethan. **Mission 66: modernism and the National Park dilemma.** Massachusetts/Library of American Landscape History, 2007. 407p bibl index afp ISBN 9781558495876, \$39.95

This book explains how the US national parks became what they are and provides a basis for looking at their future. Mission 66 refers to the period from 1955 to 1966, the postwar era of suburbanization and burgeoning freedom of movement for Americans. Carr (Univ. of Massachusetts, Amherst) describes the stresses between environmental organizations and legislation mandating the preservation and protection of natural or cultural features, and managerial responses to increased visitation that characterized Mission 66. As the automobile became the dominant means of visiting national parks, park managers built straighter roads, bigger campgrounds, restaurants, and supermarkets. These facilities and more employees were necessary to support the flood of visitors. Although the number of national parks doubled during this era, increasing numbers of visitors were concentrated into auto-accessible areas. The book succeeds as an account of large-scale government planning and standardized environmental intervention, a comparison of visitor versus wilderness-oriented ethos, and a solid example of scholarship that both explains and enriches. Carr focuses on landscape architecture, integrating the economic, sociological, and geographic aspects of the changing national park landscape. This volume should be part of every library supporting planning, recreation, land economics, and geography. **Summing Up:** Essential. General readers through professionals. -- *E. J. Delaney, National Park Service*