

importance in America. In general, such areas are representative samples of American landscapes where nature is left relatively undisturbed. Little or no disturbing development is permitted, excepting simple foot trails and fire lanes. Some states, notably Virginia, have established natural areas for special purposes, such as for scientific and educational use and esthetic enjoyment. The idea is receiving growing popular support because these lands are providing very special opportunities for outdoor education.

Retention and management of property in this way is not uncommon among colleges and universities fortunate enough to own or control areas adequate for this purpose. Notable examples are Cornell University's Sapsucker Woods and the University of Kansas Natural History Reservation.

Almost any area designated as a "Natural Area" would function also as a bird and wildlife sanctuary and could be used for outdoor conservation education. No harm need come to the plant and animal life present provided there is responsible supervision and control. It is clear that indiscriminate roaming of individuals and groups could not be permitted.

A completely purist attitude toward "Natural Areas" implies absolutely no change other than those considered to be natural biological phenomena. In the case of the College Woods, some alteration of this concept would be necessitated by the pine bark beetle problem. Although the "Natural Area" approach might be justified on purely scientific grounds, it is unlikely that the maximum educational values would be derived under this system. It also is unlikely that financial support would be as readily forth-coming for management of the area under such a plan. Adoption of a plan whereby the College Woods simply was designated as a "Natural Area" with no development whatsoever would, in effect, be a continuation of the policy which presently exists with any advantages which might accrue from formally designating the area in this manner. It would continue to provide an outdoor laboratory for college course work in ecology, botany, and related areas. It also would continue to provide esthetic and recreational values for the limited number of people who avail themselves of these opportunities as they presently exist.

(b) Suggestions and Recommendations

Therefore, as one possible management plan the College might designate the property as the "William and Mary Natural History Area". Inherent in this designation would be the concept of little or no development of the area. Minimal management would entail construction and maintenance of fire trails, proper posting of the area, some patrolling, selective removal of diseased pines, and some maintenance to handle specific problems as they might arise.

Development of the area could be carried somewhat further by the construction and maintenance of "self-guiding" nature trails such as those found in all of the national and in some of the state parks. Certain improvements of the area to enhance its value for wildlife might also be made. Neither of these developments would be highly inconsistent with the concept of "Natural Area," even on the basis of a most limited definition.

The Department of Biology would support such a plan as it would perpetuate the area in the best condition for the successful realization of a number of biological studies. However, the Department also realizes that this approach limits the uses to which the forest might be put. It does not, therefore, advocate the "Natural Area" approach as the only one or, necessarily, as the most important one.

(c) Professional and Financial Assistance

A number of professional organizations provide consulting services for assistance in planning "Natural Areas". Among the more prominent is The Nature Conservancy, an organization dedicated to the preservation of natural areas by acquisition and by assistance to educational institutions, private groups or public agencies seeking to preserve natural areas for scenic, scientific or educational reasons. The National Audubon Society, Urban Renewal Administration, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, and others all furnish assistance with planning.

It is estimated that designation of the William and Mary Woods as a "Natural Area" with limited development, fire patrol, and some maintenance would require an annual operating budget of approximately \$15,000. This would be adequate only to provide personnel for patrol and maintenance duties.

Since such a plan as that mentioned above would provide greatest educational value for the students of the college, it appears reasonable that the College should provide the operating budget from state funds or from private gifts. Since the plan involves the community very little