

needed protection because of the high numbers of trekkers. They invited the New Zealand Government to help establish the Sagarmatha National Park. In this high altitude, roadless region, timber grows slowly and cannot meet the demand for tourist construction and firewood for trekking parties. Now with national park management, campsites and simple lodges have been built, alternative fuels are encouraged and a reforestation programme has begun. A visitor centre shows sensitivity towards Sherpa life and beliefs.

In some North American National Parks camping sites have had to be closed while they recover from over-use, and in certain very popular areas development has spoiled enjoyment of natural wonders. Therefore, today at Yellowstone geysers are seen from walking tracks placed to keep as natural an atmosphere as possible, while roads have been relocated so they do not intrude on the natural wonders.

Generally in New Zealand our relatively low use has kept us clear of such problems. However one hotel development in Rotorua which dominates the Whakarewarewa thermal area gives a relatively few guest rooms a view but intrudes into the experience of thousands enjoying the thermal features.

Not all development disasters in natural areas lie at the door of the tourist industry. US park planners, seeking to cater for visitors to Carlsbad Caverns National park in Texas, established a car park above one of the major caverns. This reduced the seepage which kept stalactites and stalagmites healthy. Then the micro climate of the cavern was altered by establishing a cafeteria underground and a passenger lift to the surface. Consequently, the condition of the cavern deteriorated significantly.

What is done outside a national or historic park can create a negative impres-

sion. So can advertising signs and distortions of culture with plastic Navajo "teepees" in Arizona, signs and wires in New Zealand and souvenir stalls in Japan's Fuji National Park. The use of names of no significance to the region and garish motel signs act as a repellent to me. In Rotorua, I'll always stay at a motel with a Maori name ahead of one with a name imported from Las Vegas, especially if it has the added attraction of its own thermal pool!

Shattering roar

Aeroplanes in isolated regions can spoil a wilderness experience. Recently a tramper on the Milford Track recounted how, "just as you approach the top of the McKinnon Pass the atmosphere can be shattered by the reverberating roars of the tourist planes flying low overhead."

A similar problem exists in Mount Cook National Park where ski-equipped aircraft have enabled thousands of people to experience the awesome grandeur of the mountains. At the same time, it is easy to understand the reaction of climbers being greeted by an aircraft bringing tourists onto the snow. At Mt Cook, flights are controlled as far as possible, showing that management can deal with such conflicts.

Tourism has often been the catalyst for conservation. Competition between two major Canadian railway systems led in large measure to the establishment of Banff and Jasper National Parks. McKinnon, who established the guided Milford Track last century, played a significant part in developing the public appreciation which ultimately led to it becoming a national park.

The growing demand for resource-based tourism is typified by Te Rehuwai Safaris operated by a Maori group on Maori land and in Urewera National Park, combining a recreational and scenic experience with contact with Maori spir-

tual, cultural and social values.

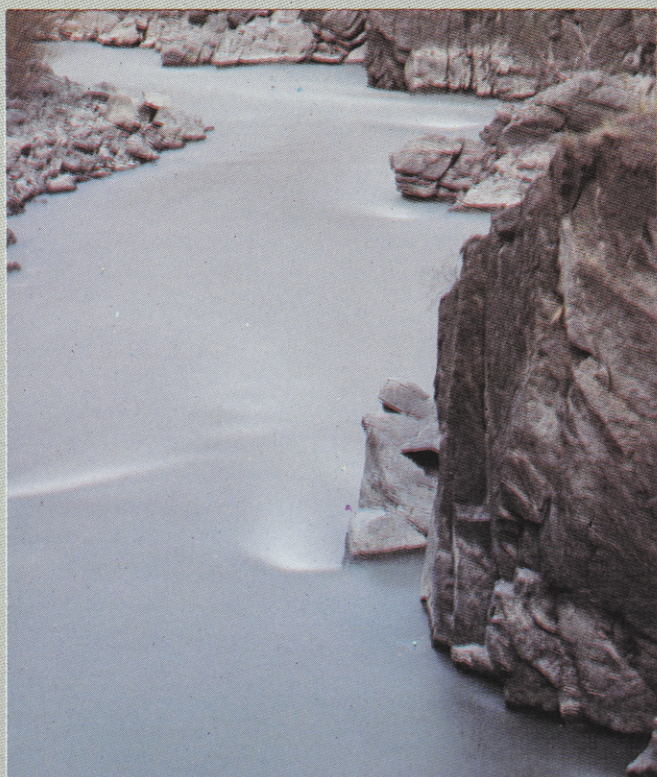
World-wide, there is growing interest in "nature tourism". A notable example is the three-day package offered by Tiger Tops in the Royal Chitwan National Park in Nepal's lowlands. This combines staying at a jungle lodge, wildlife viewing from elephants, and seeing the Asian rhino and with luck the Bengal tiger, punting on rivers, riding and walking jungle trails and tent-camping. This organisation employs its own biologist.

The economic value of nature for tourism can be a powerful weapon in added justification for the protection of nature. I recall looking at a fine stand of trees in Mount Rainier National Park and hearing the Park Superintendent say, "The loggers would love to get hold of them but the real dollars in those trees are tourist dollars and we can sell them over and over again". At the Thyangboche Monastery at the approaches to Mount Everest I heard the same thought expressed by the High Lama. Discussing the potential of tourism to provide income and employment for the region, the High Lama said, "here, the mountains are our mines".

The tourist industry in New Zealand has such a stake in the positive values of the environment that, rather than being a contributor to environmental degradation, it should be a strong force for environmental quality and, increasingly, it is. Indeed, there is keen support from tourism as we plan to celebrate the centennial of our national park system in 1987.

Let us remember that true conservationists are people who know that the world is not given to them by their parents but borrowed from their children.

The Council for Recreation and Sport is pleased to sponsor these pages.



DANES — NEW ZEALAND'S BACK COUNTRY SPECIALISTS

LANDTRIPS

Goldfields walk — 2 days
 Skippers — 3 days
 Rees/Dart — 5 days
 Skippers — 4½ hours

RIVER TRIPS

Landsborough — 3 days
 Shotover — 2 days
 Dart — 4 days
 Hunter — 4 days
 Shotover — 4½ hours

The rivers and valleys are the essence of the experience. We will give you time to relax and enjoy good food, time to fish, goldpan and camp beneath the stars. If you desire the very best of adventures, be it your first or one of many, allow us to share the unspoiled wilderness with you.

Please write for free brochure:
Danes Back Country,
 P O Box 230,
 Queenstown

