

History of the Samuel Trask Dana Chair

Samuel T. Dana was the founding and long-time dean of the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources (SNR).¹ The Dana chair, however, came into being well after Sam Dana's retirement from the School. The history of the professorship named in his honor thus provides a great opportunity to appreciate an important leader at the local as well as national levels.

The Dana Chair was created because of Laurance S. Rockefeller's appreciation of Sam Dana. The story of how and why that happened also provides a good occasion for some history – in this case, a look at the role of outdoor recreation in the United States in the second half of the 20th century.

The final section of this document provides a brief discussion of the creation and funding of the chair, selection criteria, and brief descriptions of the individuals who have held this professorship.

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This document was prepared upon being named to the Dana chair. Many people have helped in gathering material; special thanks to Ross Tocher, John Bassett, Kathleen Marquis of the Bentley Library, Darwin Stapleton, Director of the Rockefeller Archive Center, and Kellie Hoover of the Department of Interior Library. It has been fascinating to discover so many sources of pertinent material and a privilege to gain a deeper understanding of

the history of the chair, our school, and the role of recreation in American life. The chair comes with a remarkable and inspiring legacy. I hope future recipients of the Dana chair will benefit from this material and will keep it current.

Rachel Kaplan

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¹ I use SNR (School of Natural Resources) when talking of events prior to the School's name change to the School of Natural Resources and Environment, in the 1990's.

I Samuel Trask Dana

Sam Dana was born in Maine in 1883. His undergraduate degree was from Bowdoin College in Maine and he graduated from Yale University at age 24 with a Master of Forestry degree. Other than his service in the US Army during World War I (as captain and secretary of the commodity committee on lumber) and two years as Forest Commissioner for the state of Maine, the next 20 years of Dana's life involved various positions with the US Forest Service. Fresh out of graduate school he conducted studies on the culture of white pine and paper birch; later work focused on the economic value of forests. During the four years prior to his coming to the University of Michigan, Dana was the first director of the Northeast Forest Experiment Station of the US Forest Service.

Forestry at the University of Michigan was a department in the Literary College. A few years after its chair, Filibert Roth, retired (in 1923), the University invited Dana to fill the position, but he refused the offer. He did, however, express willingness to serve as Dean of an "independent and better-supported School of Forestry and Conservation." Dana arrived in 1927 to work with President C. C. Little to develop the new school, the first University-level school to have "conservation" in its name.

Various issues of the *SNR News* in the 1970's have paid tribute to Sam Dana; some of the material here is culled from these articles. John Carow (long-time faculty member here in forestry) provided a particularly helpful review of Dana's career; the quotes here are taken from Carow's piece (Nov. 1978). John described Sam Dana as an "ideal dean." The pattern of steadily increasing enrollments was one sign of Dana's leadership. However, during World War II enrollments dropped substantially. Dana solved this problem by persuading the University and the US State Department to offer funding to students from Latin America to study here. Thirty-one students from 14 countries received such support. Years later, one of these students, Carlos Flinta, sculpted the life-size bronze bust of Dana that has been in the Dean's conference room.

Enrollment boomed after the War. Dana recognized that the School needed to broaden its educational and research scope. In 1950, a year before his deanship came to an end, Dana proposed that the School change its name as a way to bring together units from other University departments (e.g., fisheries) as

well as provide support for fields such as environmental education, recreation, and regional planning that were “increasingly important in the overall resource concerns of the country.” The School of Natural Resources became the world's first school by that name.

During his years as dean, Sam Dana was chair of the US Timber Conservation Board, president of the Society of American Foresters, and editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Forestry*. After his retirement in 1953, at the then compulsory age of 70, Sam Dana had a 20-year career as a writer and public consultant on natural resource subjects. He published a book on *Forest and range policy: Its development in the United States* as well as *Forestry education in America*.

At a celebration of Sam Dana’s 90th birthday at Washington’s Cosmos Club, Dean McFadden announced that the Regents had just renamed the building occupied by SNR as the Samuel Trask Dana Building. Dana died five years later in 1978.

Ross Tocher, a long-time member of the SNR faculty and the first Dana Chair, wrote the following about Sam Dana (*SNR News*, Nov. 1978): “He was and is probably still the most influential forestry intellectual this nation has had.” Ross commented on the “startling clarity with which [Dana] was capable of defining the professional issues which were emerging.” Even before coming to Michigan, Ross had found Dana to be “provocative, probing, incisive, and humanistic ... about the future of forestry education.” And now, 19 years after his retirement, Ross remembers the deep impression Sam Dana had already made on him as a graduate student at the University of California a half century ago because of Dana's advocacy of "a broad spectrum of disciplines [needed] to solve forestry problems" (letter dated July 6, 2000).

In *A Legacy of commitment to scholarship: Named faculty positions at the University of Michigan*,² Sam Dana is remembered as "the 'dean' of forestry education internationally" and as "an energizing force in natural resource conservation" who "made pioneering contributions to resource preservation in this country and abroad" (p. 118).

² Publication of the Development Office, University of Michigan, located in the Michigan Historical Collections, Bentley History Library, University of Michigan.

II Outdoor Recreation:

Laurance Rockefeller and the Dana Named Professorship

In 1958 Congress passed Public Law 85-470 which called for the creation of the National Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (ORRRC). The commission was to find answers to three basic questions:

- (1) What were the recreation wants and needs of the American people (with 1960 as the baseline), what would they be in 1976, and in 2000?
- (2) What recreation resources were available to fill those needs?
- (3) What policies and programs should be pursued to insure that those needs were adequately and efficiently met?

The Commission, appointed by President Eisenhower, consisted of eight Congressional members, two representing each party from the Interior and Insular Affairs Committees of the Senate and House, and seven private citizens. One of those seven was Sam Dana; another one, the chair of the Commission, was Laurance S. Rockefeller. Many people were consulted about membership on the Commission. At 75, Sam Dana was considered too old for the task of chairing the group. Rockefeller had by that time already been active in numerous conservation efforts. Years later, in 1991, he was the recipient of the Congressional Gold Medal. The Medal had been given less than 100 times in more than 200 years. Robin W. Winks points out in his book, *Laurance S. Rockefeller, Catalyst for Conservation* (Island Press, 1997), this was the first time it was given in recognition of contributions to conservation and historic preservation.

Winks provides considerable detail about the magnitude of the ORRRC undertaking, involving a great deal of collaboration, many constituencies, and a vast research effort. The Commission initiated an inventory of more than 24,000 nonurban public recreation areas in the country. The Bureau of Census conducted a survey of some 16,000 people to determine their outdoor recreation activities. Each state appointed a contact person and all pertinent Federal agencies were involved. The final report, *Outdoor Recreation in America*, was submitted in January 1962. It was one of 32 volumes (some 4800 pages in all) comprising the outcome of this effort. (The study report on the role of hunting in the United States was the work of SNR.)

One of ORRRC's important contributions was to point to the discrepancy between available recreational resources and the location of the people seeking recreational opportunities. This led to National Park Service's shift to finding units nearer major cities and to the Land and Water Conservation Fund for helping state and local governments to buy and develop open spaces. The Commission also recommended that some 20 separate federal agencies involved in recreation be combined into a newly created Bureau of Outdoor Recreation within the Department of Interior. BOR was established only a few months after the report was issued. It was superseded, in the Carter administration (in 1978), by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service. That agency, in turn, was abolished three years later during Reagan's presidency.

Significant as these contributions were, there is a further outcome of the Commission's work that may be even more important in its manifestations. Winks points out that Rockefeller's leadership "catalyzed the commissioners toward a people-oriented approach to resource management, as he persistently argued that conservation meant relating parks and outdoor recreational resources more directly to the needs of the people" (p.135). Rockefeller's concerns were not "how many acres, but how effective were the acres for people." To put his new "people-oriented ecology" into effect, Rockefeller formed the Citizens Committee for the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (known as CORRRC). He asked a few of the ORRRC members, Sam Dana among them, to join him in this action group which went to the people to publicize the commission's report.

By 1966, Rockefeller chaired the Citizens' Advisory Committee on Recreation and Natural Beauty that was established by President Johnson under Executive Order 11278. It was also the year that he pledged a substantial sum of money to establish an endowed chair as an expression of his "high regard and admiration for Sam Dana" coupled with the development of "outstanding programs in training leaders for many agencies and activities both public and private" at the University of Michigan. While the details of the history that led to establishing the Samuel Trask Dana Chair in the School of Natural Resources may not be remembered, the fact that the Chair is a tribute to Sam Dana's inspiration, perceptiveness, and leadership as a "brilliant environmentalist" (Winks, p. 124) has not been forgotten.

III The Dana Chair

Funding

In his philanthropy as in many other domains documented in Winks' book, Laurance Rockefeller was a committed catalyst. Rockefeller's pledge, approved by the University Regents in October 1966, was a few years in the making. The material graciously provided by the Rockefeller Archive Center³ documents that the idea for the chair was initiated by Stephen H. Spurr, then dean of SNR. In a letter to him (dated 1/3/64), Rockefeller wrote: "Your idea of the establishment of a Samuel T. Dana Chair of Outdoor Recreation is an intriguing one. I can think of no one more deserving of the honor and no more appropriate way of honoring him. I would be interested in participating in such an undertaking..." There were, however, quite a few hurdles yet to come.

It took several visits and considerable correspondence over the next 27 months for SNR and the University to show its commitment to outdoor recreation education. Steps were being taken toward developing a new undergraduate and graduate curriculum in outdoor recreation. Rockefeller's advisors, however, were urging him to move cautiously: "They have come with no real program for the chair but say they are studying it" (memo dated 3/20/64).³ Spurr had asked for a commitment of \$250,000; Rockefeller offered \$100,000.

By the end of 1965, Hugh C. Davis had prepared "background information"³ for Spurr documenting SNR's considerable record in training leaders in outdoor recreation. Included were dozens of alumni in important positions. These were later summarized in the press release of University President Hatcher's announcement of the Rockefeller pledge at the American Forestry Association meeting (11/1/66) as "four federal bureau chiefs, an assistant secretary in the Department of the Interior, 24 heads of forestry and allied schools, and heads of many national and state natural resource organizations, agencies, and professional societies."³ Also listed were many individuals with SNR connections who helped author some of the volumes

³ University of Michigan folder, box 266, Record Group 3, Rockefeller Family Archives, Rockefeller Archive Center, Sleepy Hollow, New York. Copies provided to the author courtesy of the Rockefeller Archive Center with the permission of Laurance S. Rockefeller.

included in the ORRRC reports, and current doctoral students whose work focused on outdoor recreation. Even with this documentation, however, Rockefeller's advisor noted (memo dated 12/9/65), "I have some serious reservations on whether this is the most effective use of philanthropic funds available for conservation efforts."³

Nonetheless, a few months later Rockefeller notified Spurr of his willingness to contribute \$200,000 if the University raises the remaining \$300,000 needed to establish the chair. Rockefeller's gift of 2,440 shares of Standard Oil of New Jersey common stock had a book value of \$201,605 on 12/17/68 (per memo from R. G. Griffith to J. W. England on 1/8/69). This gift was considered part of the University's Sesquicentennial \$55 Million Campaign and other contributions to that fund were used for the needed match. Included in the match were gifts from alumni and friends targeted for this purpose. The exact amount of this portion is not clear; it is stated to have been \$58,000 (memo by J. W. Bulkley dated 6/9/86 tracing the history of SNR endowed chairs) and as \$32,138 (University memo from T. J. Mason to H. R. Cottrell, dated 1/27/69).

Selection criteria

- Original guidelines

When the Dana Chair was established, Dean Arnold appointed a committee (A. Cowan, J. Leonard, F. Knight, and K. Polakowski) to review the correspondence on the chair and develop Guidelines for Selection of the Occupant of the Dana Chair. Their document, dated 12/5/68, offered the following:

"The available material is not extensive and is very general in its content although we were able to obtain some guidelines from it. It was generally agreed that no one person is likely to possess all of the traits and abilities which could be established through the guidelines.

A. The job itself is not specific but there are a few general requirements and recommendations which a candidate for the position should know.

1. The Dana Chair will be established administratively within the Department of Resource Planning and Conservation. However, the position involves all departments of the School and the candidate should be aware of this fact.
 2. This is a teaching and research position which will require commitment to the recreation program of the School and particularly in graduate teaching the responsibility for conducting at least one formal seminar in outdoor recreation.
- B. The criteria for the selection of the individual should not be too specific because of the variety of directions involved in the job. No individual could possibly meet all of the expressed needs for the position. The following three requirements might then be considered as basic to the position and we hope would be attainable.
1. He must have a resource management background in training and/or experience. This point is one of the guidelines from earlier correspondence.
 2. He must be a man who is a proven leader in his specific field and with a knowledge and deep interest in outdoor recreation and resources in general.
 3. The individual must be articulate in both speaking and writing and with this ability we should expect an individual who is broadly known nationally
 4. We need someone with a keen awareness of urban needs and a compassion for society generally
 5. The candidate should be capable in research as proven by published work. His interest should be in using science to solve real problems
 6. The individual should have a modern approach to management and policy including an understanding of systems analysis methods
 7. We would like someone with a good background in resource economics, political science, in motivational research, in sociology, and in planning.

We have made no attempt to place priorities on these desirable attributes nor have we attempted to list them all. We should look for the man who will do a superior job not for someone with a particular specialty.”

- Reflection by first Dana Chair:

At the time of his retirement, Ross Tocher, the first to hold the Dana Chair, offered the following as his views of the criteria:

- a. Identify emerging issues in outdoor recreation
- b. Provide conceptual development in the field of outdoor recreation
 - develop new approaches to problems
- c. Serve as a focus for faculty and students and other professionals concerned with outdoor recreation topics
- d. Serve as an advocate for critical needs of the field of outdoor recreation
- e. Teach in the field of outdoor recreation
- f. Undertake personal research in the field

- Consideration of guidelines after David Hales' departure

In 1988 Dean Crowfoot sought guidance from the University administration about the use of endowed chairs. In the response from the University's Office of Development Legal Services, R. E. Debrodt (8/4/88) indicated that "even scouring University vault records has not produced very much" in the effort to "locate [the] so-called 'founding' documents for the Samuel T. Dana chair." Debrodt offered the following interpretation:

"The purpose of the Dana chair is described in the fund raising literature as follows: 'A professorship of outdoor recreation to develop and give leadership to graduate work and research on a broad basis.'" (emphasis added)

Further, I believe the language and background surrounding the gifts, their negotiation, and the Regents' commitment of close to half the funding for the chair in outdoor recreation require this chair to be occupied by someone whose primary specialty demonstrably has been and is 'outdoor recreation', however that is translated in terms of the current palette of disciplines within SNR."

- Guidelines from Dean Mazmanian, 3/11/00, with respect to appointments to Pack, Dana, and Wege endowed professorships:

“Assign professorships to existing, regular tenured members of the faculty with the primary purpose to acknowledge the good work of our current faculty. Preference is to be given to full professors. Nominations can be made by anyone on the faculty during a two-week designated period. Recommendation of the appointees to the Dean was to be made by the Executive Committee, but this was later changed to the Academic Affairs Committee (with the addition of the member of the Executive Committee who was not at the Professor rank?) If appointed to one of these named professorships, a person who currently holds a university professorship would relinquish it.”

With respect to the Dana Chair, the Dean’s memo indicated the following:

“A faculty committee at the time the professorship was endowed determined that the intent of the chair was quite broad. It was to recognize teaching and research. In view of the difficulty of satisfying all the desired qualities of the person holding the chair, the committee identified the following: a person with resource management training and experience; a proven leader in a field; deep interest in the outdoors (stated as ‘recreation and resource in general’); an articulate individual, known nationally; someone with a keen awareness of urban needs; someone using science to solve real problems; and someone with a modern approach to management and policy.

Based on my conversation with the Provost, the position of the University today is that the School needs to make every effort to respect the intent of donors in assigning a chair. However, this needs to be understood in view of contemporary approaches and issues of concern in natural resources and environment within the School today. Given the breadth of characteristics identified for the chair, it strikes me that the number of potential holders of the chair among the faculty in SNRE is quite large.”

The Dana professors

S. Ross Tocher was appointed to the Dana chair in 1969 and retired in 1981. After teaching for 13 years at Utah State University, Ross joined the Forestry faculty in SNR in 1965. His early experience had been in industrial forestry, shifting later to outdoor recreation. At SNR Ross collaborated with Grant Sharpe in expanding the focus of the recreation program in the Department of Forestry. In 1969 Sharpe left SNR to head the Forest Recreation Program at the University of Washington. In the same year Ross earned his PhD from Michigan and was named to the Dana Chair. Ross took over the International Seminar on National Parks and Equivalent Reserves when Sharpe left, changing its format to a four-week traveling field study that gave SNR substantial visibility. Several dozen high-ranking park administrators and professionals from around the world joined the Seminar each summer. Ross warmly acknowledges the important support from Rockefeller, by way of the Conservation Foundation: "The entire time we ran the Seminar with the National Park Service and Parks Canada, the Conservation Foundation supported participants and urged others such as World Wildlife Fund to do the same" (letter dated July 6, 2000). Ross also taught a very popular undergraduate course in outdoor recreation which was cross-listed as a course in LS&A. Ross was a person of boundless energy and limitless generosity. He was an inspired teacher, much beloved by generations of students at SNR, Camp Filibert Roth, and in the International Seminar for which he provided the intellectual leadership.

David F. Hales was the Dana chair from 1981 to 1987. A political scientist by education, David came to SNR from an assignment as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks in the Department of Interior in the Carter administration. In this capacity he exercised Secretarial direction of all domestic and international programs and policies of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service (HCRS) -- the federal agency that superceded the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR). (BOR was the result of the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission, the congressional committee where Laurance Rockefeller, its chair, got to know Sam Dana, one of the members.) By the time David joined SNR, however, the HCRS had already been abolished by the Reagan administration. David was hired to fill the Dana Chair as an untenured professor for an initial three-year term that was later extended.

Patrick C. West was appointed to the Dana chair in 1989 and retired in 2000. Pat received his undergraduate education at the University of Minnesota and his PhD from Yale University. When he joined the SNR faculty in 1975 it was to fill a position in outdoor recreation; in 1982 he was promoted to associate professor. Pat's teaching and research focused on the sociological aspects of outdoor recreation as well as resource development and protection in relation to economic development and rural poverty in the U.S. and developing countries.

Rachel Kaplan was appointed to the Dana chair in 2000. Rachel did her undergraduate work at Oberlin College and received her PhD from the University of Michigan. She joined the faculty of SNR in 1973 (the year the building was named for Sam Dana) and has been a professor since 1978. She also is professor of psychology in LS&A and is Affiliate Professor at the University of Washington's College of Forest Resources. An environmental psychologist, she is known for her innovative research on the benefits of the natural environment to human well-being.