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Publication of a new 96-page conservation booklet, "Quest for Quality," was announced today by Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall, It will be distributed initially to those participating in the White House Conference on Natural Beauty, being held next week (May 24-25) in Washington, D. C.

"Today we face perhaps the gravest--certainly the most stimulating-- challenge in the history of conservation" the publication declares. "It is the challenge to build a quality society--one in which we manage not just to preserve the delicate balance between the needs of our people and the natural resources of our land, but actually to improve the heritage which has been handed to us.

"The historian," the text continues, "looking back on our moment ·in time may note that the United States of America reached its golden days in the mid-20th century with respect to the equilibrium between needs and resources. From this truly bountiful land we have drawn amply to satisfy our material needs. The incomparable machine civilization, which we alternately enjoy and endure, has reached its current peak because we have had the resource wherewithal to draw on, to develop, to convert and build and bend to our will."

Carrying many full-color illustrations to portray both wise and improper use of natural resources, the conservation yearbook is the first in a proposed series outlining the problems presented by a rapidly growing America and challenges the reader to a critical look at the demands of tomorrow on the Nation's resources.

The new publication is available from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C., 20402, for $1.

"It deserves a place in the library of every person concerned with conservation problems," Secretary Udall said.

"The concept of conservation cannot be isolated on little islands of awareness," says the publication's introduction. "It must become universally accepted as a familiar, taken-for-granted part of everyday life."

Running throughout the publication is the theme, "applied ecology."

This, in the language of the text, "means living things and how they relate to their total environment.

"It means stretching our resources to cover the demands of a growing population and still observing the rightful claims of the inhabitants' of many an obscure ecological niche."

The broadly conceived "new conservation," the publication explains, is a story of how two Presidents, "against a backdrop of unplanned sprawl and planned ugliness, have moved to develop new measures designed to bring order and meaning into the overall conservation picture."

Seventy full-color illustrations, 31 toned pictures, and many black-and-white photographs portray the

problems and provide details on how the Interior Department is facing the conservation challenge of the 1960's.

Credit for its major role in writing a new conservation record is given in the publication to "a magnificently bipartisan Congress."

Noting that the 87th Congress established three National Seashores for public enjoyment, the "Quest for Quality" comments that the 88th Congress "capped the performance by approving Canyonlands National Park and Fire Island National Seashore," and a wide range of other public-use areas.

In an introduction to the "Quest for Quality," Secretary Udall counsels:

> "Our resource problems in the 1960's are measured by the flyway of a bird, the length of a river, the half-life of an element, the path of a wind, the scope of the oceans, and the shape of our cities. The years ahead will require both public and private conservation statesmanship of a high order."

The publication describes "the new direction conservation is taking" as "not just the setting aside of priceless and irreplaceable natural treasures and the wisest use of renewable resources, but an honest attempt to understand the relationship of all creatures--from the tiniest organisms in the chain of life to the lords of creation which we fondly imagine to be ourselves.

"The integrity of this chain is becoming increasingly apparent," says the booklet's introduction, "and our exalted position atop the pyramid of life is secure only if the base is allowed to remain broad and varied."

The book describes how "this Nation's caretakers, thoughtfully and surely are arriving at new programs, designed not just to remedy our yesterdays, but to enhance our tomorrows."