

All organizations that are responsible for the provision of non-urban recreation facilities have been faced with a tremendous problem in recent years. A growing interest in recreating in the out-of-doors is well documented by the attendance figures at National and Provincial or State parks in Canada and the United States. The demand has been increasing faster than facilities can be provided.

The reasons for the increasing popularity of non-urban recreation are not fully understood. If the problems presented by increasing public usage of park and recreation

The amount of recreation that a person requires will depend upon a variety of factors. These factors will include the following items:

- |         |                        |                     |
|---------|------------------------|---------------------|
| (a) Age | (c) Occupation         | (e) Past Experience |
| (b) Sex | (d) Place of Residence | (f) Personality     |

There are two extremes of need readily accountable. At one extreme will be people who require a good deal of recreation, at the other those who require very little. It should

## RESEARCH IN NON-URBAN RECREATION by GORDON D. TAYLOR

areas are to be solved, a new approach to the question is required. Rapid changes in the socio-economic environment undoubtedly lie at the base of the problem. Some of the pertinent factors can be isolated and studied—reduced working hours, increased wages, increased mobility, increased urbanization, to name a few. What is not so easy to study is the effect of these changes upon individuals and upon their behavior patterns. The problem to be solved is why these socio-economic changes have resulted in an increased popularity of outdoor activities.

It is possible that part of the solution to the problem lies in determining the relationships, if any, that exist between recreational demand and recreational need. Recreational demand is the pressure placed by the human population upon recreational facilities and resources. Recreational need is the amount of recreation that an individual needs in order to lead a meaningful and well-balanced life.

Demand can be gauged in a variety of ways. Probably the easiest is by relating park attendance to park facilities. Need is much more difficult to obtain. A new technique to determine recreational need is required. Attempts to determine need have usually measured demand. To ask a person the activities he prefers and the number of times a year he would use facilities for these activities, is to measure demand. No consideration has been given to how many times he really needs to take part in these activities. It is at this point that a departure from previous techniques is required. Prime emphasis should be placed upon recreational need.

The major problem for research in non-urban recreation, probably in all recreation fields, is to determine the need for recreation. The problem can be set out as the determination of the amount of recreation a person requires so that the culture of the nation may become well balanced—a balance between work, play and rest.

be possible from a study of the population to determine the amount of recreation needed by the population. The population should be able to be broken down into a variety of categories, each category with a somewhat similar need for recreation. It should then be possible to project the needs of each group out to determine the needs for the entire population. Further, it should be possible to project these needs in terms of a future population. The next stage in the procedure is the translation of needs into plans for areas and facilities. If the needs have been adequately determined, the park planners should be able to convert these needs into specific proposals.

This type of study is required. It does not say how the need is to be determined. In the literature and in conversation with competent specialists, the writer has not been able to find a method for determining need. It appears that the problem has not yet been tackled in the form outlined above. A lack of a suitable approach does not mean that the problem cannot be solved. A method of study must be devised.

Responsibility for the determination of recreational need does not rest with any one group of scientists. The problem is one that must be tackled by specialists from a variety of fields. Sociology, psychology, psychiatry, history, anthropology, geography and recreation, to name a few, all have contributions to make.



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At this time, the writer would like to outline a suggested program of research that will have as its specific objective, the determination of recreational need.

- (a) A detailed population study of the area to be studied,
- (b) An analysis of the make-up of various human beings to determine the amounts of work, play, and rest required for a balanced life,
- (c) An analysis of recreation to determine the essential elements in relationship to human well-being,
- (d) The translation of (b) and (c) above into a measuring device which can be administered to a sample of the population,
- (e) An interpretation of the results of such a test in terms of broad categories of recreational activities,
- (f) The projection of needs determined for the sample over the whole population,
- (g) The translation of needs for the whole population into a definite program of development.

A recreation program based on the results of the research outlined in the preceding paragraphs will be on a sound footing. The legitimate needs of the population will be met. Until these problems have been solved, the true relationship between demand and need will not be known.

When non-urban recreation is established on a basis of the needs of the population, it will be in a position to defend its right to a legitimate share of the natural resources of the area it serves.

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