

CHAPTER 29

State and Federal Outdoor Recreation Facilities *

A. NATURE AND COMPOSITION OF PUBLIC WORK OR FACILITY

1. DESCRIPTION OF FACILITIES

Recreation facilities on Federal and State lands are of two types: Natural resources of land and water, and developed facilities.

Federal and State Governments have designated 312 million acres of land and water areas for public recreation in 20,822 areas with developed recreation facilities. Among the principal Federal recreation areas are all the units of the national park system; many areas in the national forests; shoreland around multiple-purpose reservoirs constructed by the Bureau of Reclamation, the Corps of Engineers, and the Tennessee Valley Authority; portions of the public domain; and selected areas in national wildlife refuges. State recreation areas include State parks, State forests, fishing and hunting areas constructed or operated by State fish and game commissions, State-administered areas along Federal reservoirs, and picnicking and rest areas provided by State highway departments. State lands comprise but 35 million acres just 11 percent of the total area in Federal and State ownership, but are more intensively developed and used than are Federal areas.

Outdoor recreation facilities serve people in all types of areas, residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural. Participants come from all walks of life and from all sections of the Nation. In addition to direct recreation services, such areas also contribute to the economy of the communities near which they are located by attracting visitors who spend money on food, services, lodging, equipment, and souvenirs.

Standards of performance are usually measured by the number of visits to recreation areas for any portion of a day. In 1965, Federal areas reported 320.1 million visits and State areas 303.4 million visits. Many areas were seriously overcrowded on summer weekends. However, most are capable of handling additional numbers of visitors on summer weekdays and at other times of the year. Measures of daily capacity, then, are largely meaningless, for visitor-use patterns are generally beyond the control of the agencies providing the facilities.

Acceptable qualitative standards of performance for recreation facilities have not been developed. Usual methods of evaluation are not applicable because there are great differences in individual tastes, perceptions, and appreciation of enjoyment derived from recreation. Some persons prize solitude and escape from crowds. Others are insecure when alone in wooded areas and prefer the company of large

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