

CHAPTER 31

Rural Outdoor Recreational Facilities*

A. NATURE AND COMPOSITION OF FACILITIES

1. THE PRIVATE RECREATION BUSINESS: DESCRIPTION OF FACILITIES

Physical characteristics of privately owned recreation facilities vary from rustic to contemporary; from rundown and outdated to new and ultramodern. Observations show that the present surge of demand is causing revolutionary changes in the physical plant. In northern Wisconsin, for example, the changing pattern of demand is creating problems for the older, small resorts designed to serve families vacationing there for 1 or 2 weeks. Vacationers are now more mobile. They stay for shorter periods and they want more luxuries. As a result, motels, and facilities designed to serve a very transient trade are needed to fit the new demands.

Another general change is demonstrated by the growth of facilities designed to serve the recreation needs of all ages in the family. Thus, a family may stay in a campground, a resort, or a motel which offers certain types of facilities but which depends on other off-property facilities for the variety of recreation desired by families of mixed ages, sexes, and recreational interests.

While the growth or even the overall importance of recreation enterprises has not yet been measured, it is evident that private enterprise is more directly involved in providing some kinds of recreational opportunities than others. For example, farm vacation and sky diving opportunities are generated almost entirely within the private sector.

Interests of the private sector in providing recreation facilities generally fall into four categories depending upon the motives involved. First and probably foremost is the profit motive. It is estimated that about two-thirds of all recreation facilities provided by private interests are profit-oriented business ventures. The second most important motive is to provide recreation for groups such as members of private clubs. Another is social welfare, educational, youth or religion oriented which relates outdoor living experiences with particular group programs. The fourth is reflected by private industries which provide recreational facilities as added fringe benefits to their employees or for public use as part of goodwill and public relations programs.

Demand for outdoor recreation is growing. It will continue to grow. The ORRRC report, *Outdoor Recreation for America, 1962*, predicts an estimated threefold increase in demand for recreation during the 40 years between 1960 and 2000.¹ Increased efforts by

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¹ Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (ORRRC). *Outdoor Recreation for America*. Government Printing Office, January 1962. P. 5.