

Fishing is one of the most wholesome forms of recreation. It is a personal participation sport and can lead to the development of real and satisfying skills. It is available to everyone and ranges widely in cost. The bridge and pier fisherman, the surf caster, and the rowboat angler may find satisfaction as real as the yachtsman or charter boat fisherman.

In addition to the conservation and sociological benefits, improved opportunities for recreational fishing in salt-water carries strong economic benefits. In 1965, for instance, the national average annual expenditure of the salt-water fisherman was \$96.29; Atlantic Coast fishermen spent \$79.27 per year; Gulf Coast fishermen spent \$84.50 per year; Pacific Coast fishermen spent \$143.11 per year.¹

RESEARCH IN OUTDOOR RECREATION

Situation and outlook

Participation in outdoor recreation has been growing at a tremendous rate—far faster than the general rate of increase in population. Many indicators provide evidence for this. Trends in park and forest attendance show it. Expenditures for recreation equipment show it. New activities—ballooning, sand sailing, spelunking—are coming into being all the time, and participation in them soars. This happened with water skiing a few years ago.

A variety of surveys verify the growth. For example, the results of a recent survey sponsored by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation showed a 50% increase in the volume of participation in 16 major outdoor, summertime activities during the period 1960 to 1965. This is more than double the expected increase in these activities, based on projections made a number of years ago from the data from the comparable 1960 survey.

This present situation has been building up for a number of years. And the end of this boom is not in sight. An examination of recent trends in recreation activity and of the factors that are given impetus to these trends leads to the conclusion that the pressures on resources and facilities will be even stronger in the future. Projections based on the 1965 data now indicate that the volume of participation in major activities will increase fourfold in the period 1960 to 2000 rather than threefold as projected from the 1960 data used by the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission. This is a conservative estimate because it does not take into consideration the possible impact from new facilities or from improving the quality of existing resources and facilities. The boom will continue to grow at a pace much faster than population growth. Unless careful planning is undertaken to channel this volume of activity, needs can only be met on a crisis-by-crisis basis. In many instances, the resource base at existing areas could be irreparably damaged, or lands suitable for outdoor recreation may be preempted for other public or private purposes.

National significance

The growth in outdoor recreation is a nationwide phenomenon. People are getting outdoors more than ever.

Both public agencies and private enterprise have responded to people's demands for additional outdoor recreation opportunities, and their efforts continue. The major concern, however, is how both public and private response can be made more effective in meeting the needs in the future.

Congress was aware of some of the same concerns already expressed, and authorized the Secretary of the Interior to prepare and maintain a continuing inventory and evaluation of the Nation's outdoor recreation needs and resources and to formulate and maintain a comprehensive recreation plan for this Nation. Congress directed that the needs and demands of the public for outdoor recreation and the availability of resources to meet these needs, both now and in the future, shall be set forth in this plan.

A need for systematic planning

The main problem in planning for outdoor recreation at the national level—or at the State or local levels—is one of determining what additional investments are needed for land and water, for facilities, and for complementary programs. The distribution of these investments, geographically and in relation to the kinds of people who need them the most, is no less an issue. Funds for investment are far from adequate, and competition for resources is steadily

¹ 1965 National Survey of Fishing and Hunting. U.S.D.I., Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Resource Publication 27.