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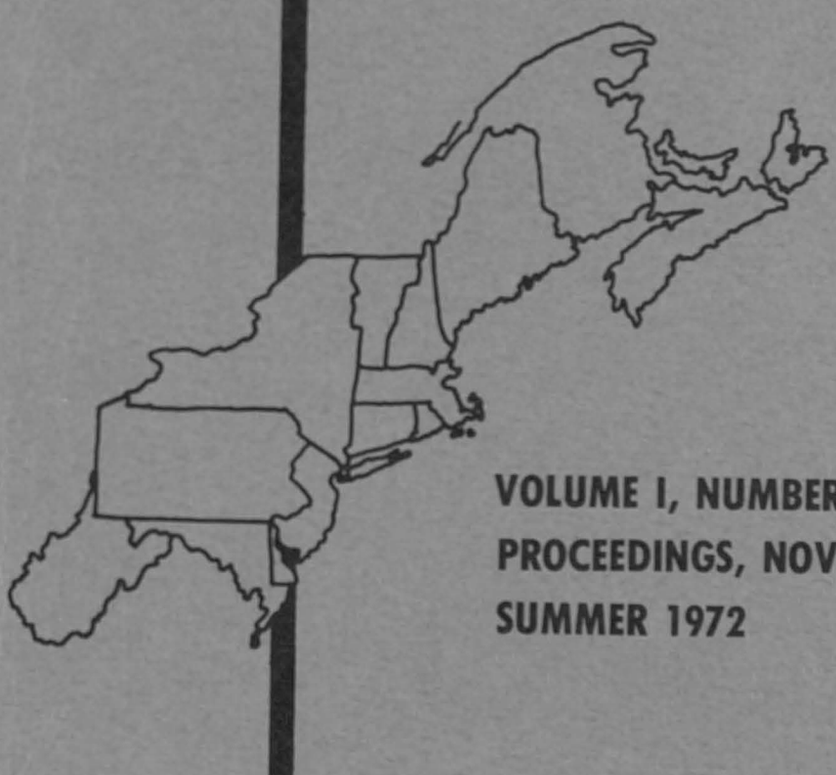

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MOTIVES FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION*

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More accurate prediction of future demand (or needs) for land for outdoor recreational activities[1/] would significantly improve land use planning. Unfortunately, prediction of demand (or projected use) is difficult. Most standard predicting measures have little or questionable relevance to outdoor recreation. Straightline projections of past outdoor activities are of limited use as technology, income, leisure time, mobility, and habits are changing so fast that it is doubtful if the past may be used to predict the future. In fact, all methods of predicting (or projecting) future demand (or needs) on the basis of past trends are inoperative in periods when there is rapid change in all the components influencing the trend, as well as in life styles. Surveys and questionnaires are of some use, but their value is limited by the propensity of respondents to give answers which they think are expected and the fact that they cannot appraise their future attitude towards activities with which they are now unfamiliar.[2/]

To achieve better understanding and insight concerning future requirements for outdoor areas for recreation, and to provide an improved basis for prediction of use, a series

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* This paper is a product of research projects Hatch 212 and McIntire-Stennis 15.

1/ By outdoor recreation activities, reference is to active, extensive land uses which utilizes the natural environment. Not included in this definition are spectator sports and activities on man-made courts, courses, pools, fields, pitches, tracks, and diamonds.

2/ Clawson and Knetsch in Economics of Outdoor Recreation discuss half a dozen methods of projecting future demand for outdoor recreation and also show the limitations of each.

of studies of motivation was conducted by the Vermont Resources Research Center of the University of Vermont. The motivations of groups representing nine types of outdoor activities were investigated. A registration and mail survey was conducted among hikers[3/] and personal indepth interviews were conducted with canoeists, hunters, sailors, spelunkers, rock climbers, bird watchers, cross-country skiers, and foliage viewers. The objective of the study was to identify and classify motives and to develop hypotheses which could be tested in future research and used in outdoor recreation planning. As a result of these investigations, it appears that some tentative concepts and hypotheses may be presented concerning the reasons why many people seek outdoor recreation.

I wish to present two things for your consideration and critical evaluation: (1) a proposal of six categories of motives for analysis and planning outdoor recreation activity and (2) some tentative conclusions and implications of the use of these concepts and how they might improve outdoor recreation research projections. It is hoped that after further testing these concepts may be found to be useful in projecting demand and planning outdoor recreation facilities in the public sector.

The responses in the surveys and interviews, suggest that six categories of motives cover the principal reasons for outdoor recreation activities. They are: (1) exercise, (2) escape from daily routine, (3) intimate contact with nature, (4) the sensation of speed, (5) response to a challenge, and (6) social and psychological drives. While many recreators have multiple motives, some motives are more important than others in projecting future land uses. Identification of the dominant motive is necessary to better forecast public land use requirements.

Two motives are usually found in the answers of recreationists of all types when they are asked to give reasons for their activities. They are "exercise" and "escape from urban or daily routines." While "exercise" is given as a reason for outdoor activity more often than any other single answer, in our judgment it is not sufficient by itself to explain people's actions. If exercise were the only need, it could be satisfied by many means other than outdoor activity. It could be obtained by calisthenics, skipping rope,

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3/ "Hiking on Camels Hump," by Frederic O. Sargent, Vermont Agricultural Experiment Station, Research Report MP 60, 1969.

jogging, swimming, or other home or club activities. "Exercise" as a reason for outdoor recreation appears to be complementary to other motives and not the determining reason.

The motive of "escape from daily routine" is also often given as a prime reason for outdoor recreation. This motive, like exercise, is not fully satisfactory as an explanation of why people engage in outdoor recreation. Like exercise, it may be practiced indoors by watching television or a movie, playing chess, reading, listening to music, and other pastimes. While "exercise" and "escape from routine" are good reasons for outdoor recreation, they are not sufficient reasons to logically explain the large numbers of people who engage in outdoor activities. For a more satisfactory explanation we must look for reasons that cannot also be satisfied indoors.

In the investigation of hikers, 500 people were asked why they hike. The hikers' answers were sorted into 18 classes (Table 1). These answers were edited, condensed, and analyzed. A conclusion was drawn that the most significant and determining reasons for hiking could be reduced to two motives: (1) a push--to get away from the routine of daily life and (2) a pull--to associate more intimately with the natural environment.

Table 1.
Reasons Given for Hiking

Rank	Reason	Number of replies
1	Exercise	375
2	Peace	204
3	Fun	182
4	Nature enjoyment	163
5	Scenery	114
6	Challenge	86
7	Wilderness experience	70
8	Nature study	52
9	Family	43
10	Education	41
11	Hobby	33
12	Hunting and fishing	31
13	Health	27
14	Adventure	25
15	Photography	17
16	Trail maintenance	11
17	Skiing	7
18	Inexpensive	6

Source: See footnote 3, page 2.

To test the hypothesis that this dual push-pull motive is significant, 18 canoeists, on a one-week canoe hike in Algonquin Park, Ontario, were interviewed. They were questioned indepth to learn their motivation for canoe hiking. The canoeists gave answers similar to those of hikers, such as "exercise," "to get away from it all," "fun," "enjoyment of nature," "scenery," "challenge," "wilderness experience," etc. Again the conclusions arrived at by analyzing, interpreting, and classifying these responses was that the canoeists are stimulated by the same motives that activate hikers--a push to get away from the routine life and a pull to have closer contact with the natural environment.

A dozen small boat sailors were interviewed to learn why they sail. They were notably less articulate than hikers in expressing their interest in the sport. They were also less apt than hikers to give exercise as a motivation. This may be because sailing appears to the nonparticipant observer to be less active. The conclusion drawn from an analysis of their responses, however, was that small boat sailors, like hikers and canoeists, are activated by a desire to escape from the routine of daily life and an attraction to indulge in intimate contact with nature. After additional interviews with other interest groups it was tentatively concluded that the motive of "intimate contact with nature" is a definitive motive for the hiker, snowshoer, tour skier, small boat sailor, flat water canoeist, and amateur naturalist.

This motive is useful in analysis as it clearly separates indoor from outdoor activities. It also distinguishes those who are interested primarily in the natural environment from the fourth category--those whose interest is speed of movement with assistance from motors.

The motor assisted recreators are interested in enjoying the exhilarating feeling caused by fast movement with reference to the surroundings--the sense of speed--in addition to escape from daily routine and exercise. This group includes the outboard motorboaters, water skiers, snowmobilers, motorcycle scramblers, and dune buggy drivers. While they indulge their pastime outdoors, the very speed that thrills them and the motor that propels them precludes close contact with nature and so sets them apart from the intimate contact motivated group.

A fifth reason for some outdoor recreation is the acceptance of a self-imposed challenge. The challenge may be of several kinds. Some decide to hike the length of the Long Trail in Vermont, all the peaks over 4,000 feet in New England, all the peaks over 14,000 feet in the Rockies, or

the length of the Appalachian Trail. Rock climbers combine challenge with danger when they pit their ability against steep cliffs and ledges. Those who scale difficult peaks or pioneer new trails are motivated by a self-set challenge. The bushwhacker who travels by compass and topographic map is setting himself a special challenge and then responding to it.

While the challenge motive may be dominant, it may be associated with other motives. The white water canoeist and kayak enthusiast combines challenge with three additional motives--exercise, speed, and intimate contact with nature. There may be some self-imposed challenge in the motivation of hunters. On the other hand, a hunter's dominant motivation may be explained by the sixth category--psychological/social.

There are several social and psychological motives for outdoor recreation. When the hunter's interest in hunting is the result of an inherited cultural attitude or practice related to proving his manly skills, it is in this category. A prime example of social motivation is the hiker or birder whose principal interest is participating in a social group. Those who hike or sail or canoe primarily for "family togetherness" are socially motivated.

A study of drivers-for-pleasure was made of foliage viewers found on mountain roads in the Camels Hump region in Vermont during a fall foliage season. The tentative conclusions drawn from this study were (a) that driving for pleasure is not <u>outdoor</u> recreation but indoor recreation, (b) that it is a passive, spectator activity--exercise is not a component of the motivation, (c) that the drivers for pleasure are motivated by a push--a desire to get away from daily routine, and a pull--an aesthetic interest for <u>visual</u> contact with the colors and scenes of fall, and (d) that aside from motivation, it is an economically significant activity in Vermont where it represents an annual peak in numbers of tourists.

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Some tentative conclusions and propositions useful to land use planners may be drawn from these investigations of motivation. The conclusions concern (1) provision of a new set of concepts of motives for use in research and planning future demands (or needs) for outdoor recreation facilities, (2) suggestion of a set of land use categories based partially on motives, (3) the relationship between numbers of participants in an activity and the availability of instruction,

(4) the extent of conflicts and competition in outdoor land uses, and (5) the place of "driving for pleasure" in the gamut of recreational activities.

The five possible dominant motives explained above may be useful in conducting attitude surveys as a step in determining future needs. Interviews based on motivational categories instead of specific types of activities will provide for the activities which will be in demand in the future when people are introduced to them, even though few people declare a need for them today. There are several areas in which a supply might create a demand. A survey of attitudes toward outdoor recreation might show, for instance, that a significant number are interested in intimate contact with nature activities while few might mention cross-country skiing per se. On the basis of this information, we might plan cross-country skiing facilities plus a program to introduce people to it. Identification and quantifying the intimate contact motive might lead to planning more walk-ins or tents--only campgrounds in state and national parks. The same rationale is true for other motives and other activities. The use of these concepts may permit us to better predict future demand (or needs) for types of outdoor land use experiences in general; and, therefore, to do a better job matching future facilities with future demand.

Second, a set of mutually exclusive categories based on motives is suggested for researching or planning public outdoor recreation facilities. Five categories appear to cover the majority of recreation land uses: (1) indoor activities, (2) outdoor intensive activities (use of courts, pools, fields, pitches, tracks, and diamonds), (3) nature contact activities--those interested in nature contact, thrill, or challenge (hikers, etc.), (4) motorized activities (motorboating, water skiing, snowmobiling, motorcycle scrambling, etc.), and (5) driving for pleasure--a spectator activity and substitute for outdoor recreation for the auto-bound.

Good planning should provide land for all of these interests and activities. No recreational land use should be excluded solely on the basis of small past numbers of participants, nor should land uses be planned exclusively on the basis of present and projected numbers of participants.

A third tentative conclusion deduced from this study may help to explain why people participate in specific outdoor activities instead of others. The combination of motives found in a single individual appears to be a function not only of his education and imagination, but especially of the type of activities to which he has been introduced. Formal introduction to outdoor recreation activities is apparently

of crucial importance in determining a person's leisure time activities. Many activities have a considerable amount of actual or assumed danger attached to them. This public image of the activity inhibits participation until a person gets over the threshold of fear or concern for danger. This can be done by an individual by himself if he has drive or determination, or by an instructor in a class in which the individual is introduced step by step to the "dangers" and thrills of the activity. Sports especially associated in the minds of nonperformers with danger include downhill skiing, sailing, water skiing, horseback riding, rock climbing, white water canoeing, and spelunking. When any of these sports are on a commercial basis (e.g., downhill skiing, riding, or sailing), a considerable investment is made to introduce new participants by carefully graded lessons. Further study of this hypothesis would help to explain the number of participants in dangerous sports, and the numbers that might participate in the future if instruction programs were available. This would lead to planning facilities simultaneously with planning programs of instruction and on the basis of population projections rather than present trends.

Land use planners know that some outdoor recreation activities are compatible, while others are incompatible. The proposed set of motivational categories will help us understand and reduce this conflict. One of the principal areas of conflict is between the "intimate nature contractors" and the "motor assisted recreators." According to respondents' comments, much of the routine from which the nature contactors wish to escape is associated with internal combustion engines. It disturbs the hiker or canoeist to encounter a motor on the trail or lake when they are communicating intimately with nature. It disturbs the backpacking tenter to have to pitch his shelter between a 4-wheel house trailer and a behemoth mobile home with its generator running till midnight. Recognition of these conflicts based on clearly identifiable motives should lead to reducing or preventing them by spatial and time zoning, land use regulations, and provision of exclusive use areas.4/

Finally, many studies of outdoor recreation activities include "driving a car for pleasure." The ORRC reports are a case in point. According to our analysis, driving has little resemblance to other forms of outdoor recreation. It is not "outdoor" but "indoor." It provides no physically

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4/ "Lakeshore Land Use Controls," by Frederic O. Sargent and William H. Bingham, Vermont Agricultural Experiment Station, Research Report MP 57, 1969.

intimate or close contact with nature. It inhibits movement rather than providing exercise. There is no real challenge of man against nature involved. However, driving is a "recreational" activity for many in the sense that it is an escape from the monotony of the everyday pattern of living--at least for those who do not drive daily--and it provides some visual appreciation of the outdoors. Perhaps it should be considered as a substitute for outdoor recreation performed by people who lack the opportunity for true outdoor recreation. It may be the nearest thing to outdoor escape for the elderly, the disabled, and the very young. If this characterization of driving for pleasure is accurate it would be unfortunate for the numbers engaged in driving for pleasure to be taken as an indicator of the importance of driving for planning purposes in contrast to actual "outdoor" activities. It may be a more accurate indicator of the number of people who lack access for outdoor recreation and the potential demand for more accessible outdoor recreation facilities.

Land use planning exclusively on the basis of numbers of drivers would, in fact, be planning for the auto-bound, not for the outdoor recreator. The auto-bound should be considered and facilities should be provided for them but not under the rubric of "outdoor recreation." Also, more consideration should be given to providing opportunities for drivers for pleasure to walk a short distance to enjoy more intimate nature contact at an overlook.