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State of Minnesota
September 1994

Part I: Assessment and Policy Plan

SCORP

STATE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

1995 – 1999

*Recreation Issues and Strategies to Guide
Planning in the Late 1990s
(1995 – 1999)*



Prepared by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Office of Planning

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STATE OF MINNESOTA

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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ARNE H. CARLSON
GOVERNOR

September 19, 1994

Mr. Don H. Castleberry
Midwest Regional Director
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1709 Jackson Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68102-2571

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Dear Mr. Castleberry:

I am pleased to present the Minnesota *Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan* (SCORP) outlining state outdoor recreation issues for the years 1995 to 1999 and the *Open Project Selection Process* (OPSP) identifying state and local government priorities for outdoor recreation projects funded by the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (L&WCF) during Fiscal Years 1995 and 1996. These two reports serve as the required documents to qualify Minnesota for funding under the L&WCF program.

A final component of these documents, the Minnesota State Wetland Plan, is being prepared and will be available for widespread distribution in 1995. We will keep you apprised of its progress and will submit it to you when it is completed.

The SCORP and OPSP, developed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, will guide Minnesota's use of the federal L&WCF appropriations over the coming federal fiscal biennium. These documents were prepared with the assistance of an advisory committee and citizens across Minnesota have had an opportunity to review and comment on them.

Ten copies of these documents are submitted in accordance with requirements of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965. Thank you for your continued support for this program.

Warmest regards,

ARNE H. CARLSON
Governor

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STATE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

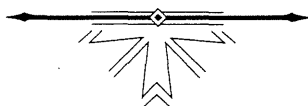
➤ This Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) includes the issues and strategies that will guide recreation-related land acquisition, facility development and operations, and recreation programming for the period 1995-1999. It is the sixth in a series of plans developed as part of the state's commitment to continuous planning for outdoor recreation. It satisfies requirements of the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (L&WCF) Act of 1965 (P.L. 88-578), which requires states to have an approved SCORP on file with the National Park Service in order to participate in L&WCF cost-share funding.

This document was prepared by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources with assistance of the Outdoor Recreation Planning Advisory Committee (ORPAC). The following individuals served on ORPAC.

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SCORP

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

➤ This State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) includes the issues and strategies that will guide recreation providers, researchers and policy makers in the 1995 - 1999 period. This plan was prepared with the assistance of an advisory group of individuals from the public and private sectors (See the inside cover for a list of advisory group members.) and facilitated by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources DNR. Additional input was sought from individuals and organizations throughout the state via public meetings and mailings.

Outdoor recreation patterns continue to change and evolve in response to social and economic forces. See Section II, Societal Trends, Page 11. Although socio-economic changes usually are gradual, they may prompt new demands for recreation facilities and programs over the long term. With the growing diversity of the American population, recreation providers will need to "stay close to the customer" and carefully monitor patterns in order to meet new and changing outdoor recreation demands.

At the same time, recreation providers must continue to address a range of long-standing issues. The most crucial of these continues to be funding for acquisition, development, redevelopment, new programs and research. Minnesotans will need to aggressively explore opportunities for cooperative approaches among agencies and between the public and private sectors in addressing these challenges.

The concepts of sustainable recreation and integrated management approaches are new and unfamiliar to many. But they are concepts that provide a guiding framework for meeting recreation challenges. They will become increasingly important themes for the DNR and other recreation organizations. ♦

SUMMARY OF ISSUES, GOALS AND STRATEGIES

➤ As recreation interests diversify and society becomes more complex, outdoor recreation issues increase and often become more difficult to resolve. SCORP identifies six high-priority issues that provide a focus for strategies and actions. These issues are summarized below along with appropriate goals and strategies.

1. Sustainable Outdoor Recreation: Integrated, interdisciplinary recreation planning and resource management is needed to ensure a balanced, coordinated and environmentally sustainable approach to meeting future needs of Minnesotans and their visitors for outdoor recreation.

Goal: *Manage and restore the long-term health of natural resource systems such that their recreation potential can be enjoyed by present and future generations.*

Strategy: Employ integrated resource management methods to promote an ecologically sustainable approach to acquiring, managing and developing outdoor recreation resources.

Strategy: Employ biodiversity measures as one benchmark to gauge the long-term sustainability of recreation policies, programs and management actions.

Strategy: Employ measures of public recreational experiences and benefits as a second benchmark for gauging the long-term sustainability of recreation policies, programs and management actions.

2. Roles and Responsibilities: There is a need to more clearly identify the appropriate roles and responsibilities of public and private sector outdoor recreation providers, and to forge stronger, more effective partnerships between providers that yield improved recreation programs, services and facilities for Minnesotans and their visitors.

Goal: *Seek greater clarity and unity of direction among public and private recreation interests.*

Strategy: Clarify outdoor recreation roles, responsibilities and identify the mix of recreation opportunities provided by the public and private sectors.

Strategy: Establish a statewide outdoor recreation forum to promote dialogue between outdoor recreation enthusiasts, public and private sector providers, elected officials, business and civic leaders, potential funding providers, and other interested stakeholders.

Goal: *Greatly expand opportunities for public/private partnerships in addressing recreation needs and opportunities.*

Strategy: Assess the extent to which private entrepreneurial investments in public recreation areas are feasible and consistent with public recreation goals and objectives.

Strategy: Aggressively seek out appropriate opportunities for private entrepreneurial investments in public recreation areas.

Strategy: Foster wider use of partnerships between agencies and between the public and private sectors to enhance the delivery of recreation services and opportunities.

Strategy: Provide incentives and remove barriers to providing public recreation opportunities on private lands.

Strategy: Explore opportunities for greater privatization of public recreation facilities and programs where appropriate.

ation facilities and programs where appropriate.

3. Capital Investment: Capital investment need is crucial in order to allow outdoor recreation facilities to meet the growing needs for recreation space, especially in rapidly growing areas.

Goal: *Provide a stable and reliable source of funding for capital investment projects.*

Strategy: Secure alternative funding sources for land acquisition and recreation facility development in both the public and the private sectors.

Strategy: Encourage all government recreation providers to develop rational and consistent processes for setting priorities on recreation investments. An example of such an approach is the open selection process used by the Outdoor Recreation Grant Program.

Strategy: Establish better state tax incentives to encourage donation of private land to public recreation providers.

Strategy: Urge Congress to increase federal L&WCF funding levels and to appropriate a larger share of the available L&WCF revenues to state and local park and open space programs.

Goal: *Increase land acquisition in areas of heavy recreational demand.*

Strategy: Identify critical areas of need including rapidly urbanizing areas and communities that currently lack adequate recreational facilities.

Strategy: Focus land acquisition in priority areas on critical habitat, unique natural and cultural resources, recreational rivers, lakes and streams, scenic bluffs and other high amenity areas.

Strategy: Develop stronger cooperative working relationships with the public and between federal, state and local

agencies and the private sector in acquiring land in areas of heavy recreation demand.

Strategy: Explore acquisition approaches through means other than fee title (e.g. easements, leases).

Goal: *Acquire open space for future use and/or protection from encroachment, development or other incompatible land uses.*

Strategy: Accelerate acquisition of land with critical habitat, rare biotic communities, and endangered species habitat in areas threatened with land use conversion.

Strategy: Encourage local governments in rapidly urbanizing areas to anticipate recreation needs and to set land aside for future recreation facilities and development.

Strategy: Continue the practice of acquiring abandoned railroad rights-of-way in order to meet future trail recreation needs and to link existing trail segments.

Goal: *Complete land acquisition in existing outdoor recreation sites and facilities.*

Strategy: Identify and acquire high priority inholdings in parks and other recreation facilities crucial to the use and access of recreation facilities.

Goal: *Develop/redevelop facilities needed to meet growing and changing public demands for outdoor recreation.*

Strategy: Identify high use recreation facilities that cannot sustain current use levels and redevelop those facilities.

Goal: *Ensure appropriate use and development of recreational facilities.*

Strategy: Develop year around, multi-use recreation facilities that are both durable and flexible in their use.

Strategy: Ensure that intensive recre-

ational uses, especially uses that can seriously damage natural systems and cultural resources, occur in areas suited to use levels. Redirect those uses when needed and feasible to areas that can accommodate the pressure they create on natural systems and cultural resources.

Strategy: Recognize the inherent conflicts between certain types of recreation experiences and separate conflicting uses.

Strategy: Ensure a balanced distribution of opportunities for both active and passive recreation activities.

Strategy: Recognize that costs for enforcement and rescue services can increase whenever facilities are developed, especially where conflicting and intensive use occurs. Often costs are not born by the facility managing agency but are passed on to other jurisdictions.

Goal: *Ensure broader access to outdoor recreation facilities and programs.*

Strategy: Maximize access to recreation facilities by removing physical and other barriers and by providing appropriate visitor information. Strive for total compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.)

4. Liability and Litigation: Liability and litigation concerns seriously limit recreation opportunities and increase costs to recreation providers. This may lead to an inadequate supply of outdoor recreation opportunities, especially for some higher risk activities.

Goal: *Reduce liability exposure of outdoor recreation providers by upgrading high-risk recreation facilities and by developing and implementing improved management techniques to reduce risk.*

Strategy: Develop and disseminate information and technical assistance to outdoor recreation providers to help

them design safer facilities, operate and maintain facilities in ways that will increase safety and reduce liability, and encourage them to undertake risk assessments.

Strategy: Focus law enforcement efforts on the need to assist and protect recreation visitors, facilities and resources.

Strategy: Provide state funding to encourage local governments and school districts to upgrade the safety and accessibility of playgrounds and trails.

Goal: *Reduce liability exposure of public and private recreation providers by amending current state tort legislation.*

Strategy: Develop a coalition of public and private recreation providers to recommend changes in state laws related to tort liability.

5. Operations and Maintenance: Funding constraints are impairing the maintenance of many outdoor recreation facilities. Facility deterioration poses liability risks and diminishes the value of facilities and the quality of the recreation experience.

Goal: *Strengthen the focus on long-range planning for the maintenance, rehabilitation and on the redevelopment of existing recreational facilities.*

Strategy: Develop/update comprehensive facility and grounds management standards and schedules at all levels of government.

Strategy: Minimize facility maintenance costs by designing and constructing low-maintenance and vandal resistant facilities.

Strategy: Encourage management initiatives and actions that enhance and protect natural resources in areas outside of designated facilities where outdoor recreation activities occur.

Goal: *Provide the staff, training and equip-*

ment needed to operate outdoor recreation facilities and programs at appropriate levels of public service.

Strategy: Encourage development of professional standards for recreation maintenance and technician positions.

Strategy: Explore creative methods of performing operations and maintenance responsibilities.

Strategy: Develop opportunities to network operations and maintenance strategies and information between providers.

Strategy: Evaluate and quantify the need for expanded law enforcement services in response to expanded outdoor recreation activities.

Goal: *Provide a reliable and steady source of funding to maintain and rehabilitate recreation facilities.*

Strategy: Assess a broad range of funding options to support state and local park maintenance and rehabilitation. This can include dedication of a portion of municipal utility bills, increased users fees, use of the interest from park dedication funds, and other options.

Strategy: Encourage recreation providers to dedicate a specific portion of operating budgets to future rehabilitation of existing facilities.

Strategy: Encourage providers to dedicate operations and maintenance funds by including priority ranking criteria in the Open Project Selection Process for L&WCF funding.

Strategy: Encourage legislative support for a secure and stable source of funding for recreation facilities and programs.

6. Recreation Research: Lack of current information hampers the ability of recreation providers to establish effective priorities for facility and program development.

Goal: *Develop a comprehensive inventory of public and private outdoor recreation facilities.*

Strategy: Determine the types of information the public and recreation providers use from recreation inventories.

Strategy: Assess the quality and currency of outdoor recreation facilities information in various recreation inventories (RECFAC, Minnesota Office of Tourism and others).

Strategy: Update and collect data on facility inventories to meet facility information needs.

Strategy: Use computer networking systems to link recreation providers in order to enhance access to recreation facility and program data and to foster cooperation in recreation planning and management.

Strategy: Establish a central clearing house for recreation information, reports and plans from the private and public sectors in Minnesota.

Goal: *Document the social, economic, environmental and personal benefits that Minnesotans (and tourists) derive from outdoor recreation activities and experiences.*

Strategy: Clarify the benefits of outdoor recreation on personal, social, cultural and economic interests at the state and local level.

Strategy: Where data are unavailable, apply recreation models to describe how outdoor recreation activities benefit social, cultural, environmental and economic interests.

Goal: *Periodically collect comprehensive data on outdoor recreation activities.*

Strategy: Identify recreation activity

data needed by recreation providers to understand and meet recreation demands.

Strategy: Develop a trend scanning process (Delphi, Nominal Group, etc.) to identify new developments in outdoor recreation and to identify non-recreation trends that will impact recreation patterns.

Strategy: Initiate a broadly scoped program to coordinate and collect outdoor recreation activity data on a regular basis.

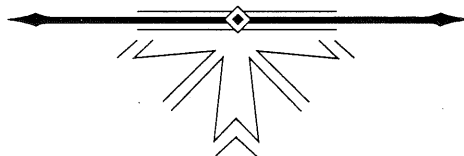
Goal: *Broadly share information among recreation providers on the recreation programs, maintenance standards, rehabilitation standards, etc.*

Strategy: Determine the types of information recreation providers need on program effectiveness, successful maintenance and rehabilitation standards, etc.

Strategy: Suggest guidelines for types of facilities and area needed to provide outdoor recreation activities for a community or population.

Strategy: Explore opportunities for exchanging information between recreation providers. ♦





SCORP

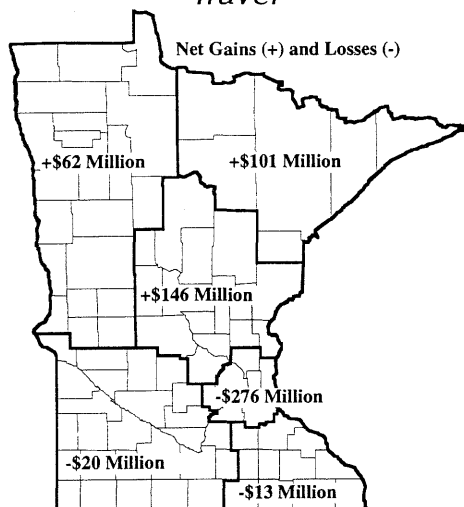
INTRODUCTION

MINNESOTA'S RECREATION RESOURCE BASE

➤ Minnesota is endowed with many outdoor recreation resources. With over 12,000 lakes, 90,000 miles of streams and rivers, 17 million acres of forest land, and an extensive array of public and private recreation facilities, Minnesota offers a wealth of recreational opportunity.

Outdoor recreation is a major component of the Minnesota economy. Over 500,000 hunters, 2 million anglers, 200,000 registered snowmobilers and 700,000 registered boat owners are among those who contribute nearly \$2 billion annually to the state's economy. Outdoor recreation provides income and employment for thousands of state residents, and an economic boost for local economies.

Annual Redistribution of Dollars Among Minnesotans Due to Outdoor Recreation Travel



Source: MN DNR, 1985-86 Outdoor Recreation Participation and Expenditure Survey of Minnesotans.

MINNESOTA'S OUTDOOR RECREATION SYSTEM

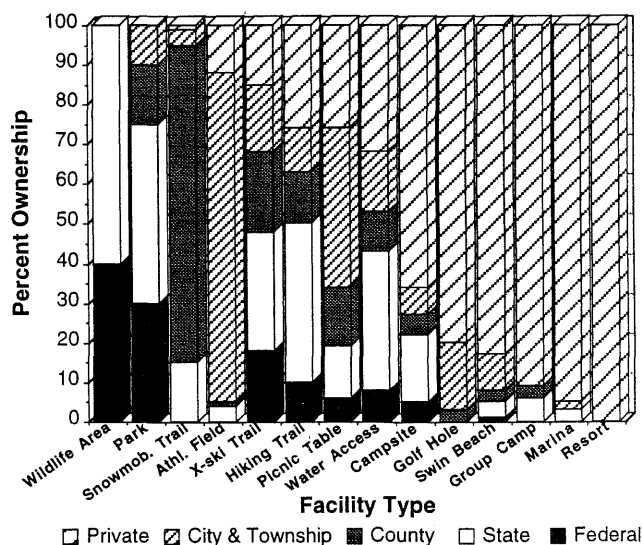
Minnesota's "Outdoor Recreation System" as defined by Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 86A (1975) includes all lands and facilities established by the Minnesota Departments of Natural Resources and Transportation to provide public access to outdoor recreation. Examples include State

Parks, State Trails, State Forests, State Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers, Scientific and Natural Areas, Wildlife Management Areas, Public Water Accesses, Public Waysides and Rest Stops. Historic Sites, as defined by Minnesota Statutes 138.51 - 138.59, provide a recreation opportunity that complements the state's outdoor recreation system. Federal agencies also provide a range of public recreation facilities and services in Minnesota.

County, township and municipal governments provide a network of local parks, athletic facilities, nature preserves, golf courses, swimming beaches, picnic sites and urban open space. Regional (or multi-county) parks and open space agencies not only operate parks systems but they also coordinate planning and development of area-wide recreation systems and operate a wide range of recreation facilities.

Private sector recreation vendors often provide activities and facilities with a higher level of services or amenities than provided by the public sector, and those with greater potential for generating profit. For example, private providers supply hotel/motel rooms, recreational vehicle parks, alpine ski areas, swimming beaches, resorts and marinas, golf courses, group camps and, to a lesser extent, camping and picnic sites, water access sites and trails.

Providers of Minnesota Recreation Facilities



Source: MN DNR, Office of Planning. RECFAC Data Base.

Undeveloped public lands and waters complement the state's recreation facilities by providing opportunities for activities, such as hunting and fishing, that do not need to occur in developed recreation facilities. These areas will become increasingly important as private lands are developed or posted against public use and access.

Together, recreation providers at the federal, state, regional, regional, local and municipal levels and in the private sector supply the land, facilities and program opportunities that make up Minnesota's outdoor recreation system.

FUNDING RECREATION DEVELOPMENT

Since the Federal Land & Water Conservation Fund (L&WCF) Program began in 1965, Minnesota has received over \$57 million in federal funds for recreation-related land acquisition and facility development. About half has been used for land acquisition and the remainder for facility development. State and local units of government have matched these funds, funnelling over \$110 million into outdoor recreation projects.

Competition for L&WCF dollars is intense. In recent years, less than \$.06 of federal L&WCF funding has been available for each dollar requested. (In fiscal year 1992, \$439,000 in L&WCF funding was awarded for state and local grants in Minnesota from the more than \$8 million in grant proposals that were submitted.) Despite decreasing apportionments, L&WCF provides the major source of funding for many local park and recreation programs.

More than 93,500 acres have been acquired with L&WCF funds in Minnesota. Among the facilities developed in whole or in part with L&WCF funds are 64 State Parks, 6 Waysides, 5 State Trails, 13 Public Water Accesses, 4 Wild & Scenic Rivers, 32 State Forest Campgrounds, 6 Scientific and Natural Areas, and 11 Wildlife Management Areas, as well as hundreds of local parks projects.

Local and regional government and state agencies can look to a variety of sources for recreation funding including the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), several programs through the state legislature and others. See the appendix for a broader description of funding sources.

PLANNING PRODUCTS

SCORP has four parts.

- 1) The Assessment & Policy Plan identifies issues, strategies and objectives for the 1995-1999 period.
- 2) The SCORP Implementation Program includes high priority actions and L&WCF priorities for the 1995 to 1999 planning period.
- 3) The Open Project Selection Process (OPSP) provides a systematic and objective method of selecting specific acquisition and development projects to be funded by the L&WCF grant program.
- 4) The Minnesota Wetland Plan will identify policies and actions needed to protect the state's wetland heritage.

PLANNING PROCESS

This SCORP will guide recreation-related land acquisition, development of recreation facilities and development of recreation programs for the period 1995-1999. It is the sixth in a series of such plans developed as part of the state's commitment to continuous planning for outdoor recreation. As such, it satisfies requirements of the L&WCF Act of 1965 (P.L. 88-578), which requires states to have an approved SCORP on file with the National Park Service in order to participate in L&WCF cost-share funding. Minnesota's SCORP was developed over a multi-year period through the following processes and participation efforts.

ORPAC Process: The DNR Outdoor Recreation Planning Advisory Committee (ORPAC) was established to guide development of SCORP. ORPAC members represent a broad spectrum of recreation interests. ORPAC does not nor is it intended to reflect all interests. ORPAC size was kept small to foster more effective communication. (See the inside cover for a list of individuals who served on ORPAC.

ORPAC met about once a month during 1993. ORPAC developed and prioritized the outdoor recreation issues. Staff from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources provided facilitation, meeting management and draft preparation services.

Public Input: Input from Minnesota citizens and interest groups was sought at a series of meetings in the fall of 1993. Public meetings were held in Rochester, St. Paul, Grand Rapids, Brainerd, Bemidji, and New Ulm. Public input was used to determine perspectives on the major issues and to raise additional ideas on objectives and strategies.

DNR Outdoor Recreation Coordinating Committee (ORCC): ORCC includes representatives of each DNR discipline with responsibility for recreation programs or activities (Divisions of Enforcement, Forestry, Fish and Wildlife, Minerals, Parks and Recreation, Trails and Waterways, Waters). ORCC helped identify issues and reviewed SCORP drafts.

DNR Directions: "DNR Directions For Natural Resources (1993)" is the DNR's strategic planning document. It identifies goals and strategies for a broad range of resource issues and provides a guiding framework by which documents such as SCORP can be prepared and reviewed. Directions states:

"We will provide opportunities to enjoy our outdoor recreation resources by developing and maintaining safe, accessible outdoor recreation facilities and by documenting the benefits people and communities receive from recreation activities."

Sustainable Development Initiative: Sponsored by the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board in 1993, the Sustainable Development Initiative was designed to find new and creative ways to balance the economic, social and environmental goals of Minnesotans. Outdoor recreation is one of seven components of the initiative.

The sustainable development initiative, with its focus on future generations, has a longer time horizon than SCORP. Nevertheless, many of the issues and strategies in the sustainable development initiatives parallel those in SCORP. Also of special interest is the sustainable outdoor recreation vision which states:

"Provide - through responsible private and public economic development, community development, and environmental stewardship - a diverse array of quality opportunities so present and future generations can enjoy the benefits of outdoor recreation."

The SCORP strategies designed for the 1995-1999 period, support that longer-term vision. ♦

I. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

➤ Congress passed the Land and Water Conservation Fund (L&WCF) Act in 1965. Congress recognized that states needed comprehensive outdoor recreation plans in order to best use this new form of federal funding. Accordingly, Congress required states to prepare a Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) as a prerequisite to receiving L&WCF grants. The Act requires states to update the recreation plans every five years in order to reflect changes in outdoor recreation needs and priorities.

Earlier SCORPs provided comprehensive background data and research on outdoor recreation. Much effort and money was devoted to surveys that provided the basis for determining supply and demand for outdoor recreation facilities and programs. Much of that detail is still useful today since many recreation patterns change slowly over time. The prior SCORP began a trend towards streamlining and defining issue areas and reducing detailed data collection. This SCORP continues that trend and focuses on the key issues.

Several factors drive the decision to focus SCORP on key issue areas.

- 1) *The National Parks Service, the federal agency responsible for reviewing and approving SCORPs, urged Minnesota to focus and prioritize its recreation issues in SCORP.*
- 2) *L&WCF funding levels are sharply reduced and cannot support extensive data collection efforts. Funding from other sources, likewise, is reduced.*
- 3) *Decision makers expect a SCORP document that is readable and useful. A document that focuses on issues rather than data analysis serves that purpose.*

In past years, the broad scope of the plans, the large number of priorities, and the lack of specific action plans made it difficult to assess the impact of SCORPs. By focusing on a small number of high priority issues, decision makers can better target actions and produce measurable results. ♦

II. SOCIETAL TRENDS

➤ Societal trends¹ will change outdoor recreation behavior and leisure patterns. The challenge is to identify the impacts and to redirect programs and services to address emerging needs. Recreation investments are sizable and long-term. Therefore, future strategies must be developed now in order to address these long-term trends.

Minnesota Population: Minnesota's population will surpass 5 million by the year 2020 (State Demographer). During the 1990s, the state's population is expected to grow by 6.3 percent, the slowest growth rate this century. It is expected to grow by 5 percent and 4 percent in the following two decades. The U.S. population is expected to grow nearly twice as fast over the same period.

Minnesota's aging white population will grow by only 6 percent between 1990 and 2020, with births barely exceeding deaths between 2015 and 2020. The state's younger minority population, with higher birth rates and substantial in-migration, will nearly triple (175% increase) between 1990 and 2020. Three of every five new Minnesotans in the next 30 years will be persons of color, bringing the state's minority population from 6 percent to about 13 percent. Minority group members have been under-represented in non-urban, resource-based outdoor recreation activities.

The number of persons age 45 and older is projected to increase nearly 70 percent. Growth in the state's elderly population and the middle-aging of the *Baby Boom* generation will push Minnesota's median age from 32.5 in 1990 to age 40 by 2020. Persons age 65 and older will outnumber children in most Minnesota counties. Statewide, the number of children under age five is projected to decline by 11 percent by 2020. Aging will be especially pronounced outside of the emerging St. Cloud-Twin Cities-Rochester corridor. Recreation participation generally declines sharply with age.

¹ Adapted by Brian McCann (MN DNR) from "Participation Shifts in Outdoor Recreation Activities" (1985) Joseph T. O'Leary, et al., Purdue University and "Some Selected Societal Trends and Their Impacts on Recreation and Leisure" (1985) Geoffrey Godbey, Pennsylvania State University. Demographic data from State Demographer, MN Planning (1992) and the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1993).

Population and Settlement: Many Americans choose to live in rural locations close to a major metropolitan area. This "exurban" choice led to an overall population growth rate of 12.9 percent for metropolitan Minnesota during the 1980s, while non-metropolitan areas declined 2.8 percent.² Most cities and towns with fewer than 2,500 residents also lost population.

Most rural areas are losing population, while urban areas, notably emerging Twin Cities Area suburbs, are experiencing rapid growth. This primarily is due to the migration of young and middle-aged adults with families from rural to metropolitan areas. By 2020, more than half of the state's 87 counties will have lost population for at least 4 consecutive decades, and one-quarter will have fewer residents than they did in 1940. By the year 2020, 68 percent of Minnesotans are expected to reside in the Twin Cities, Rochester and St. Cloud.

During the 1980s, growth was concentrated in this St. Cloud to Rochester corridor, and in the counties of north-central Minnesota. In all, 38 counties gained population. Meanwhile, counties in the west, southwest, northeast and along the Iowa border lost population. The greatest growth took place in newly emerging suburban rings and in a few regional market centers located in non-metropolitan areas (e.g., Willmar, Mankato, Marshall, Brainerd). This trend and the fact that most outdoor recreation occurs close to home, suggests that fast-growing areas may experience sharp increases in demand for recreation opportunities.

Boomers in Their Forties: *Baby Boomers* (those born between 1946 and 1964) are entering middle age and their leisure choices will influence recreation patterns. By 1995, people in the age 35-44 bracket will number 42.5 million people nationally. Because of their large population, distinct

lifestyles and higher expectations, boomers are expected to substantially affect most aspects of American life, including how leisure services are provided. Many boomers have delayed marriage and children, opting instead for education, travel, career and self-fulfillment. As they leave their child-bearing years, the *Baby Bust* generation will replace them. This will result in fewer children after 1995 and a 7 percent drop from 1990 in Minnesotans under the age of 45 by 2020.

The percentage of women who will remain childless throughout their lives is approaching a record 22 percent. By 2010, the number of married couples without children is expected to increase by nearly 50 percent nationally (to 31 million), surpassing the number of married couples with children (23 million). The new childlessness, primarily a white middle-class phenomenon will fuel the shift to an older, more ethnically diverse American society.

Boomers soon will enter their most productive, highest wage-earning years. Many two career families may enjoy more discretionary income, but less leisure time. Such households must plan their time, even leisure time, very carefully. Boomers have tended to vacation more frequently, but closer to home and for shorter periods of time than their predecessors.

The 1990s may be a turning point in boomer's attitudes towards consumption, investment and saving. What they expect from government may change accordingly. Economists predict that Minnesota households will increase their savings rate due to economic uncertainty and the impending boomer's workforce exodus. In the process, boomers may become increasingly conservative in their spending, and more critical of government spending, especially for "non-essential" programs and services. This may affect outdoor recreation, which is considered by many to be a non-essential service.

Minnesota Households Composition: Minnesota households are becoming more diverse. In 1950, 77 percent of households

² Minnesota's two largest cities, Minneapolis and St. Paul, split a small population loss of 563 persons during this period. This small loss is a product of a large movement both into and out of the two cities.

consisted of married couples; compared to only 57 percent by 1990. During the 1980s the number of married couples with children declined 4 percent while female-headed, single-parent families grew by 34 percent and male-headed, single-parent families grew by 83 percent.

Minnesota household size declined from 2.74 to 2.58 persons during the 1980s and is expected to decline further.

Non-family households account for nearly one third of Minnesota households. One fourth of all Minnesota households contain only one person. Others generally consist of two or more unrelated persons living together. Non-family households with two or more persons grew by 44 percent between 1980 and 1990, accounting for about 6 percent of all Minnesota households. Over 80 percent of new households are projected to be non-family households. Over half of all children alive today may spend some time in single-parent households before age 18, and one in two will marry and divorce. The nuclear family accounts for less than one in five households nationwide.

These trends could be a reflection of the convergence of many trends; e.g. delayed marriage and child bearing, higher divorce rates, lower birth rates, a changing labor force, rising housing costs and a variety of other economic and lifestyle changes. These changes could shape outdoor recreation behavior and determine future demand.

Economic Changes: American may be entering a period of forced economic restraint. Increasing federal debt burdens leave an uncertain legacy for the next generation. At the same time, real family income growth is negligible and high paying, career track jobs increasingly scarce.

The recent drop in childbearing may be related to a variety of factors including high material expectations many boomers developed during the more affluent 1950s and 1960's and economic uncertainty. For example, the median income of college-

educated men aged 45 to 54 fell 17 percent between 1986 and 1992, after adjustment for inflation (U. S. Census of Population). Median family income in 1972 was \$38,760 (adjusted to 1993 dollars), and in 1990 it was just \$38,266.

Poverty among Minnesota's non-white population, the state's fastest growing population, is more prevalent than in any other major U.S. metropolitan area. An analysis of 1990 census data by the Metropolitan Council shows that 43.7 percent of non-whites living in the central cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul live below the poverty line. In contrast, the poverty rate for urban whites is 11 percent, and just 5.9 percent for the 11-county Metro Area. Income disparity has never been greater.

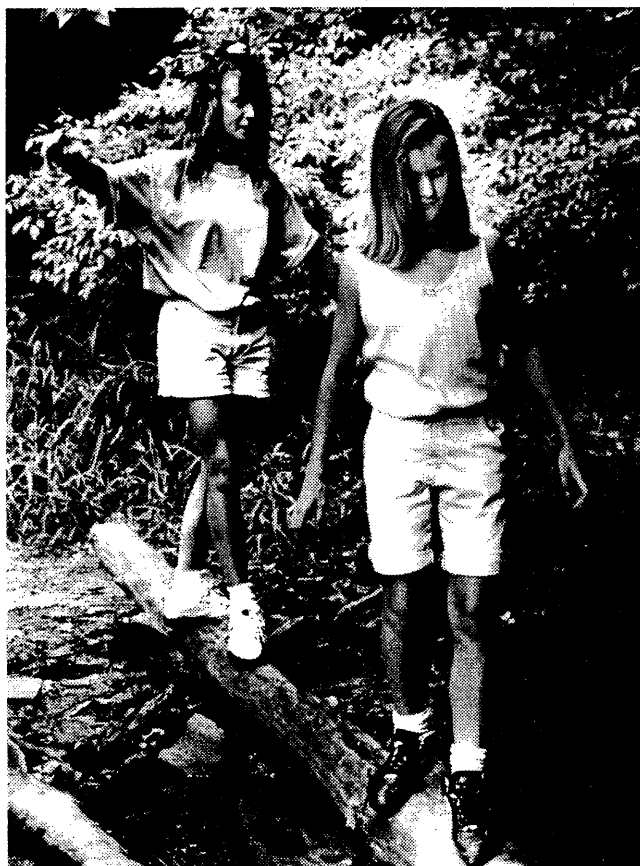
Work and Leisure Time: The median workweek of Americans has grown longer as real incomes have stagnated for many workers, and as the economy has shifted away from manufacturing and towards salaried and service sector employment. With more women in the labor force, time devoted to family, housework, commuting and personal improvement influences free time. Single parenthood and second jobs also influence free time.

Leisure time is directly related to income and age. As people enter middle and senior years, recreation time declines. Recent speculation suggests shifts in recreation preferences between boomers, prior generations and the X generation. All of this could translate into shifts in how people spend both their free time and leisure time. Such shifts would have major implications for recreation management.

Leisure Ethic: The leisure ethic is deeply rooted in American culture. Leisure spending remains strong and accounts for a substantial portion of discretionary spending. Leisure travel and tourism is the leading employer in many states, and is increasing in relative economic importance in many places of the country. Individuals exercise more selectivity in their leisure decisions, as leisure retains an unprecedented importance in the Americans' priorities.

Trend Application: These trends suggest a number of conclusions relevant to strategies and objectives of the 1995 - 1999 SCORP.

- ❑ Large changes in outdoor recreation patterns may not occur in the short term.
- ❑ Demographic and economic changes combined with shifts in recreation preferences could translate into major long term changes in some recreation patterns.
- ❑ With strong competition for consumer free time and dollars, recreation providers will need to provide a quality experience that matches consumer expectations.
- ❑ Funding outdoor recreation needs will pose difficult choices to recreation providers at all levels. ♦



III. OUTDOOR RECREATION ISSUES

➤ Many issues influence outdoor recreation patterns but do not lend themselves to development of specific goals and strategies. Because their impact may be significant, issue identification is important. Five are identified here. Recreation providers may wish to develop their own specific strategies for these issues, especially the issue of access barriers.

A. BACKGROUND ISSUES

ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS/VALUES AND LOSS OF OUTDOOR SKILLS

"The character of the Indian's emotions left little room in his heart for the antagonism toward fellow creatures...for the Lakota, mountains, lakes, rivers, springs, valleys and woods were all finished beauty. Winds, rains, snow, sunshine, day, night and changes of seasons were endlessly fascinating. Birds, insects and animals fitted the world with knowledge that defied the comprehension of man."

Chief Luther Standing Bear

At the time of European immigration to Minnesota, Native American residents of the state lived close to nature and held a deep respect and understanding for natural processes. Society's closeness to nature is waning. Many people, especially in urban areas, are unfamiliar with the environment and how natural processes work. Many lack outdoor skills that would allow them to fully enjoy recreational facilities and places. Lack of knowledge may translate into socially unacceptable values and activities which degrade recreational facilities through improper use, abuse, or neglect.

Access factors limit the exposure of many people to environments and learning opportunities that could enhance their understanding and appreciation of the state's natural and cultural resources. Many urban and suburban residents, especially in

the inner city, must rely on local, regional and state parks to provide close-to-home opportunities to experience recreation areas. For various reasons, these opportunities for exposure to settings with natural environments are either not readily available to many residents or are underused. Access to park facilities within urban areas usually is quite good. However, many urban residents, especially those in low income groups, and people with disabilities may lack transportation connections to parks and natural areas outside of urban areas. Recreation agencies are developing a broad range of efforts to address these concerns, however, the needs remain strong.

Minnesota has a well-developed system of environmental education centers. Those centers in combination with environmental education opportunities in parks and recreation facilities offer what may be the finest environmental education opportunities in the nation. However, these various opportunities may need to be better coordinated if they are to be effective in helping the state's population better understand and appreciate resource values.

Residents of some rural areas, particularly in the prime agricultural areas of southern and western Minnesota, have limited local natural areas for public use. Rural residents generally have less access than urban residents to environmental learning centers and interpretive programs.

DETERIORATION OF LANDS AND WATERS

" Civilization has been thrust upon me . . . and it has not added one whit to my love for truth, honesty and generosity . . . "

Chief Luther Standing Bear

The quality of Minnesota's public and private lands and waters are increasingly degraded. For example, the continued sedimentation of lakes and rivers and the increasing toxicity of border lakes diminish potential use of these resources for many recreation and other purposes. Hunting, fishing and other recreation ac-

tivities are mainstays of the state's recreation economies and rely heavily on a land and water base that is environmentally healthy. Threats to lands and waters include:

- ❑ *Spread of vegetative blights such as oak wilt,*
- ❑ *Exotic species crowding out desired native plants and animals,*
- ❑ *Contamination of land and waters from acid rain, illegal dumping, unwise landuse practices, faulty septic systems, fertilizer runoff, erosion, etc.*
- ❑ *Intensive uses including land clearing, wetland drainage, intensive cultivation, and simply too many people seeking to enjoy a resource of limited capacity,*
- ❑ *Intrusive noise (motorized uses, trains, aircraft, freeways).*

Continued deterioration of the state's lands and waters will have a negative impact on the state's fish and wildlife communities. This impact will seriously limit outdoor recreation opportunities if the trend is not reversed. State and local agencies will need to develop creative and coordinated approaches to enforcement of environmental standards. Cooperative approaches with the private sector could yield enhanced results over traditional enforcement approaches.

LOSS OF OPEN SPACE

Opportunities for recreational use of open space is being lost due to the following factors.

Development: Some areas with outdoor recreation potential are lost due to inadequate long range planning by local governments, poor zoning decisions, lack of park dedication ordinances and policies that encourage urban sprawl and economic development over resource protection. Inadequate resource protection measures at all levels of government allow damage to

sensitive resource areas that should not have been developed or that should have been better protected in the development process. Use of existing recreation facilities often is impaired by incompatible developments or uses of privately owned inholdings.

Funding/Coordination: Many opportunities are lost due to inadequate funding or coordination among public agencies. For example, abandoned railroad grades, ideal for trails and parks, return to private ownership when public agencies lack the resources or rapid decision making mechanisms to convert them into public recreation facilities. Land acquisition often becomes prohibitively expensive in areas of rapid urban and suburban growth. These same areas pose increasing demands for recreation space. Land that could be acquired today, even at a high cost, will be considerably more costly in the future.

Posting: Fear of litigation and concerns for vandalism and other abuses from the public are causing many landowners to post areas of private land against trespass and hunting.

Parcelization: Large land parcels are subdivided into smaller land units making public use impractical. (Many recreation activities require large areas. When a large area is needed, acquisition of many small parcels may be impractical and very expensive.)

COORDINATION & CONNECTIONS

Greater integration of Minnesota's outdoor recreation system requires that recreation managers seek opportunities to link facilities, programs, and planning efforts. Some examples of possible opportunities include:

Recreation/Education: Outdoor recreation can be the medium through which youth and adults connect to the land and learn to use and conserve the natural and cultural environment.

Many public recreation providers already provide excellent education experiences to complement outdoor recreation activities. However, additional opportunities exist to link outdoor recreation with environmental education more consistently.

Facilities: Public agencies have made major strides in coordinating their recreation facilities - especially trail systems. For example, the state has a very effective process to measure the potential public benefits of rail corridors scheduled for abandonment. A significant share of abandoned rail corridors are converted to recreation trail use. However, recreational facilities could be linked together more effectively. Trails can be used as parks or connect parks while serving as transportation corridors. Natural areas can preserve open space and unique environments while providing educational and recreational opportunities to connect these areas.

Programs: Recreational facilities offer a broad range of environmental education and recreation programs. Minnesota has pioneered numerous cooperative approaches to meeting outdoor recreation needs. However, better coordination could reduce duplication and allow programs to reinforce and complement each other.

Providers/Participants: Many opportunities still exist to link providers and participants more effectively. Expanded coordination and partnerships among private and public providers can yield better recreational facilities, enhanced service delivery to users, and cost savings.

Funding: Funding efforts could be better coordinated. For example, funding comes from federal, state, local, and special district (e.g., IRRRB) sources without planning for how these activities interact with one another or without regard to outdoor recreation needs and priorities.

ACCESS BARRIERS

Barriers that restrict access to recreational facilities, programs and activities include the following:

Facilities: Facilities and programs often are inaccessible to people with disabilities.*

Information Access: Lack of information about facilities and programs. A component of this is the lack of outdoor skills essential to full enjoyment and participation in some forms of outdoor recreation.

Transportation: Inadequate transport to recreational sites (e.g. car or public transportation). This problem affects urban and rural residents alike.

Affordability: Cost barriers including user fees, facility entry fees, travel and recreation equipment expenses.

Cultural Differences: Cultural or linguistic barriers. New immigrants and citizens with different languages or cultures may not understand the availability of recreational opportunities.

Staff Limitations: Many recreation staff individuals are unfamiliar with the needs OF people with disabilities and of the opportunities to more effectively provide service for this client group.

The attitude of providers and the public often imposes another underlying barrier. Attitudinal barriers create a sense that one does not belong or is not welcome. This intangible barrier is difficult to describe and almost impossible to measure but is very real to those who perceive it.

The public and private sectors will need to establish creative approaches to addressing these barriers that go beyond simple adjustments in facilities and programs. Linkages with advocacy groups, such as those for people with disabilities, can be a helpful step in the right direction.

* *The DNR is developing an ADA (American's with Disabilities Act) manual to guide recreation providers in developing recreation facilities that are physically accessible. Additional efforts will be needed at all levels to strategize approaches to making recreation programs accessible.*



B. RECREATION ISSUES

Introduction: The following six issues include the most pressing concerns that recreation providers and decision makers must address in the near future.

SUSTAINABLE OUTDOOR RECREATION

Issue Statement: *Interdisciplinary, integrated, recreation planning and resource management is needed to ensure a balanced, coordinated and environmentally sustainable approach to meeting the future needs of Minnesotans and their visitors for outdoor recreation.*

"All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the children of the earth."

Attributed to Chief Seattle of the Sugwamish and Sawamsh people

Discussion: An integrated management approach is expected to foster improved efficiency, accountability, and service delivery at a time of diminishing public resources. Improved resource stewardship also is likely to result from closer integration of recreation planning with natural resource protection, management, land-use and development. An integrated, interdisciplinary approach involves all interested, affected stakeholders (both users and providers, public and private) over broad geographic areas or landscapes. Planning should explore a broader range of relevant issues than in the past, and provide an open forum for public policy dialogue. A thorough socioeconomic accounting of recreation-related costs and benefits would be conducted to inform this discussion and guide public policy development.

The desired outcome is a "sustainable" outdoor recreation future that satisfies recreation needs without compromising the basic character, quality or productivity of the natural systems upon which outdoor recreation depends. This approach seeks

to balance resource use and protection by focusing recreation development on areas most suitable for this use. Integrated resource management is the suggested methodology for achieving an ecologically sustainable recreation future, and biological diversity, as a condition, can provide a benchmark or measure of ecosystem health. Together, these organizing principles constitute a new way of doing business; a new management approach for the 1990s and beyond. Within this context, user needs and demands will change over time. Recreation managers must respond to those changes.

Goal: *Manage and restore the long-term health of natural resource systems such that their recreation potential can be enjoyed by present and future generations.*

Strategy: Employ integrated resource management methods to promote an ecologically sustainable approach to acquiring, managing and developing outdoor recreation resources.

Objective: Adopt an interdisciplinary, multi-resource approach to recreation resource planning over broad geographic areas (e.g., ecoregions, landscapes or watersheds).

Objective: Consider the full range of social, economic and environmental factors in assessing proposed recreation management actions and public policy alternatives.

Objective: Meaningfully engage public and private sector recreation stakeholders in outdoor recreation planning, public policy making, program development and funding decisions at all levels of government.

Objective: Integrate recreation planning concepts into planning for natural resource protection, management, land-use and development in an effort to balance resource use and protection.

Objective: Forge strong cooperative

working relationships with landowners, business and commercial interests, local citizen's groups and others potentially affected by planning or subsequent management decisions.

Strategy: Employ biodiversity measures as one benchmark to gauge the long-term sustainability of recreation policies, programs and management actions.

Objective: Develop practical measures or indicators to monitor ecosystem health.

Objective: Develop *safe minimum standards* for particular ecosystems to better define the limits of what constitutes "unacceptable or irreversible damage."

Objective: Develop methods of reconciling human needs and demands with the natural capacity of ecosystems to withstand and satisfy these demands without impairment.

Objective: Develop practical methods of restoring damaged and degraded natural systems.

Objective: Continue and intensify measures to prevent the introduction and halt the spread of exotic plant and animal species.

Strategy: Employ measures of public recreational experiences and benefits as a second benchmark for gauging the long-term sustainability of recreation policies, programs and management actions.

Objective: Document and present the social, economic, environmental and personal benefits that Minnesotan derive from outdoor recreation activities and experiences.

Objective: Use the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum* to monitor and define that which constitutes unacceptable or irreversible change in recreation settings.

* *The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) identifies a range of settings from primitive to urban in which different types of recreation experiences are suited. The ROS is determined by such factors as land use and road accessibility.*

Objective: Adjust management plans and development priorities to reflect public benefits obtained from providing environmentally sustainable outdoor recreational experiences.

Objective: Integrate recreation needs and interests into the public discourse and thinking similar to more traditional environmental concerns such as air and water quality, global warming, endangered species and pollution impacts.

RECREATION ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Issue Statement: *"There is a need to more clearly identify the appropriate roles and responsibilities of public and private sector outdoor recreation providers, and to forge stronger, more effective partnerships between providers that yield improved recreation programs, services and facilities for Minnesotans and their visitors."*

Discussion: With constraints on agency budgets and growing, changing demands for outdoor recreation, a major role for SCORP is to clearly identify major outdoor recreation providers and to foster an appreciation for the role each plays with respect to one another and relative to the rest of the outdoor recreation community. This can improve efficiency, accountability, coordination and service delivery. A fundamental objective of the SCORP planning process is to identify key stakeholders in the outdoor recreation community and to suggest the conceptual framework needed to improve coordination and communication between these stakeholders.

Clearer definition of public and private sector recreation responsibilities can spur

new alliances and help forge stronger partnerships among recreation providers in pursuit of shared goals. Collaboration and power-sharing exploits individual strengths and helps overcome long-standing differences within the recreation community. These alliances are critical to making informed public policy choices and difficult resource allocation decisions. Alliances will be essential in promoting a strong outdoor recreation agenda at all levels of government and in the private sector. Coordinated efforts will help to insure that continued quality outdoor recreational opportunities are provided to the public.

Goal: *Seek greater clarity and unity of direction among public and private recreation interests.*

Strategy: Clarify outdoor recreation roles, responsibilities and identify the mix of recreation opportunities provided by the public and private sectors.

Objective: Identify all major public and private sector outdoor recreation providers; their mission, role and specific responsibilities. Target overlaps between recreation providers as opportunities for greater cooperation. Identify key client groups and their interests.

Objective: Develop and implement agreements between public and private sector providers to clarify roles and formalize cooperative efforts.

Objective: Identify recreation funding sources (public and private) and share that information along with eligibility requirements and limitations on fund uses with interested stakeholders in a convenient, comprehensive and easy-to-use format.

Strategy: Establish a statewide outdoor recreation forum to promote dialogue between outdoor recreation enthusiasts, public and private sector providers, elected officials, business and civic leaders, poten-

tial funding providers, and other interested stakeholders.

Objective: Develop a shared vision and a collective strategy for the future of outdoor recreation in Minnesota based on an examination of recreation issues and emerging trends.

Objective: Explore methods of improving the delivery of outdoor recreation programs, facilities and services.

Objective: Identify programs and geographic areas of the state where joint public/private partnerships and cooperative planning would be both logical and mutually beneficial.

Objective: Support regular sharing of recreation information among providers.

Goal: *Greatly expand opportunities for public/private partnerships in addressing recreation needs and opportunities.*

Strategy: Assess the extent to which private entrepreneurial investments in public recreation areas is feasible and consistent with public recreation goals and objectives.

Strategy: Aggressively seek out appropriate opportunities for private entrepreneurial investments in public recreation areas.

Strategy: Foster wider use of partnerships between agencies and between the public and private sectors to enhance the delivery of recreation services and opportunities.

Strategy: Provide incentives and remove barriers to providing public recreation opportunities on private lands.

Strategy: Explore opportunities for greater privatization of public recreation facilities and programs where appropriate.

Objective: Identify and target areas where privatization shows promise.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

Issue Statement: *Capital investment needs are crucial in order to allow outdoor recreation facilities to meet the growing needs for recreation space, especially in rapidly growing areas.*

Discussion: Minnesota has an exceptional outdoor recreation system including the full spectrum of facilities from local through the federal level. Additional investments are needed in the following areas.

Acquisitions: Additional acquisitions are needed to accommodate increased outdoor recreation use, to protect key outdoor recreation resources and amenities, and to provide opportunities for new types of recreation activities.

Development: Many existing recreation facilities were never completed to their design plan, standards or use capacity. Such facilities are not being used efficiently or in a manner that realizes their potential for meeting recreation needs. Recreation facilities are needed especially in communities that are growing rapidly or that lack the financial resources to develop recreation opportunities.

Redevelopment: Many facilities are ill equipped to meet current recreation activity needs or use levels. In addition, many facilities are obsolete, unsafe, inaccessible, or deteriorating often due to poor maintenance and require major renovation or replacement.

Goal: *Provide a stable and reliable source of funding for capital investment projects.*

Strategy: Secure alternative funding sources for land acquisition and recreation facility development in both the public and the private sectors.

Objective: Explore legislative changes

(e.g. dedicate a share of the Environmental Trust Fund or a special sales or excise tax on sporting goods) for capital investment in recreation facilities.

Objective: Maximize the impact of dedicated funds by using them directly rather than for retirement of bonds.

Objective: Assess how funding approaches used in other states might be applied successfully in Minnesota

Objective: Explore options for increasing revenue generation options at the local level (e.g. dedicate a percentage of land title transfer fees or a portion of certain municipal utility fees) for open space acquisition and development/redevelopment of recreational areas.

Objective: Encourage continued use of Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) funds for bicycle and pedestrian facility development, historic preservation, scenic enhancements, and environmental preservation, protection and impact mitigation.

Strategy: Encourage all government recreation providers to develop rational and consistent processes for setting priorities on recreation investments. An example of such an approach is the open selection process used by the Outdoor Recreation Grant Program.

Strategy: Establish better state tax incentives to encourage donation of private land to public recreation providers.

Strategy: Urge Congress to increase federal L&WCF funding levels and to appropriate a larger share of the available L&WCF revenues to state and local park and open space programs.

Goal: *Increase land acquisition in areas of heavy recreational demand.*

Strategy: Identify critical areas of need including rapidly urbanizing areas and com-

munities that currently lack adequate recreational facilities.

Strategy: Focus land acquisition in priority areas on critical habitat, unique natural and cultural resources, recreational rivers, lakes and streams, scenic bluffslands and other high amenity areas.

Strategy: Develop stronger cooperative working relationships with the public and between federal, state and local agencies and the private sector in acquiring land in areas of heavy recreation demand.

Strategy: Explore acquisition approaches through means other than fee title (e.g. easements, leases).

Goal: *Acquire open space for future use and/or protection from encroachment, development or other incompatible land uses.*

Strategy: Accelerate acquisition of land with critical habitat, rare biotic communities, and endangered species habitat in areas threatened with land use conversion.

Objective: Continue the County Biological Survey in order to identify and prioritize areas with critical habitat, rare biotic communities, and endangered species habitat.

Strategy: Encourage local governments in rapidly urbanizing areas to anticipate recreation needs and to set land aside for future recreation facilities and development.

Objective: Expand use of land dedication provisions in local subdivision ordinances and other approaches to banking land for future recreation use.

Strategy: Continue the practice of acquiring abandoned railroad rights-of-way in order to meet future trail recreation needs and to link existing trail segments.

Goal: *Complete land acquisition in existing outdoor recreation sites and facilities.*

Strategy: Identify and acquire high priority inholdings in parks and other recreation facilities crucial to the use and access of recreation facilities.

Goal: *Develop/redevelop facilities needed to meet growing and changing public demands for outdoor recreation.*

Strategy: Identify high use recreation facilities that cannot sustain current use levels and redevelop those facilities.

Goal: *Ensure appropriate use and development of recreational facilities.*

Strategy: Develop year around, multi-use recreation facilities that are both durable and flexible in their use.

Strategy: Ensure that intensive recreational uses, especially uses that can seriously damage natural systems and cultural resources, occur in areas suited to use levels. Redirect those uses when needed and feasible to areas that can accommodate the pressure they create on natural systems and cultural resources.

Strategy: Recognize the inherent conflicts between certain types of recreation experiences and separate conflicting uses.

Objective: Develop recreation facilities specifically for high impact activities (e.g. all terrain vehicle use, shooting sports, bird dog trials, swimming beaches) that tend to conflict with other recreation activities and with adjacent land uses.

Strategy: Ensure a balanced distribution of opportunities for both active and passive recreation activities.

Strategy: Recognize that costs for enforcement and rescue services can increase whenever facilities are developed, espe-

cially where conflicting and intensive use occurs. Often costs are not born by the facility managing agency but are passed on to other jurisdictions.

Goal: *Ensure broader access to outdoor recreation facilities and programs.*

Strategy: Maximize access to recreation facilities by removing physical and other barriers and by providing appropriate visitor information. Strive for total compliance with A.D.A.

Objective: Ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act through modification in facilities and programs and training of recreation staff.

Objective: Expand programs, such as the recreational fishing pier program, that encourage wider access to recreation opportunities by people with disabilities.

Objective: Develop linkages with agencies and organizations that provide services to people with disabilities to help recreation providers design facilities, programs, volunteer networks, etc. that not only comply with ADA but provide superior service to this group.

Strategy: Develop cooperative approaches among recreation providers and with agencies and organizations that provide services to people with disabilities to identify and expand the range of recreation facilities that comply with ADA.

LIABILITY AND LITIGATION

Issue Statement: *Liability and litigation concerns seriously limit recreation opportunities and increase costs to recreation providers and users.*

Discussion: Recreation providers in this country operate in one of the most litigious

environments in the world. Liability concerns constrain public and private outdoor recreation providers in Minnesota from providing a desired level of facilities and services. Some facilities have been removed or never built and funds have been diverted from recreational activities to litigation. This may lead to an inadequate supply of outdoor recreation opportunities, especially for some higher risk activities or for activities such as playground facilities that have been the focus of increased litigation. The result can be increased recreation costs for the user and taxpayer.

Goal: *Reduce liability exposure of outdoor recreation providers by upgrading high-risk recreation facilities and by developing and implementing improved management techniques to reduce risk.*

Strategy: Develop and disseminate information and technical assistance to outdoor recreation providers to help them design safer facilities, operate and maintain facilities in ways that will increase safety and reduce liability, and encourage them to undertake risk assessments.

Objective: Develop and broadly disseminate information (including federal Consumer Product Safety Guidelines) on safe playground and trail design and maintenance.

Objective: Establish a clearing house to develop and distribute risk assessment information and assistance.

Objective: Encourage cities to take advantage of risk management information and services provided by the League of Minnesota Cities.

Objective: Develop and disseminate model operations and maintenance plan guidelines and information for local governments.

Strategy: Focus law enforcement efforts on the need to assist and protect recreation visitors, facilities and resources.

Strategy: Provide state funding to encourage local governments and school districts to upgrade the safety and accessibility of playgrounds and trails.

Objective: Explore funding opportunities for matching grants to local governments and school districts to encourage them to upgrade the safety and accessibility of playgrounds and trails.

Goal: *Reduce liability exposure of public and private recreation providers by amending current state tort legislation.*

Strategy: Develop a coalition of public and private recreation providers to recommend changes in state laws related to tort liability.

Objective: Support legislation (e.g. "Recreational Responsibility Act") which recognizes that a recreation participant assumes certain risks inherent in recreational activities, including those offered by private providers.

Objective: Support passage of legislation requiring the plaintiff to pay defender's court costs when legal action is ruled to be frivolous, unfounded or without merit.

Objective: Support legislation to amend Minn. Stat. Sections 466.03 and 3.736 (which deals with tort liability of the state) to remove or change provisions that increase the liability exposure of state recreation providers.

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Issue Statement: *Funding constraints are impairing the maintenance of many outdoor recreation facilities. Facility deterioration poses liability risks and diminishes the value of facilities for public recreation use and the quality of the recreation experience.*

Discussion: Minnesota recreation facilities are deteriorating because of heavy use, vandalism, age and inadequate maintenance. This applies to all types of facilities from the primitive to the urban and across facilities managed by federal, state, local and private organizations.

Maintenance and operations funding for the state's outdoor recreation system has remained relatively constant during the 1980s, despite inflation, increased operating expenses, an expanded facilities base, and growing visitor use. As a result, visitor safety and satisfaction are being jeopardized, and public services have been reduced.

Local governments experience similar cuts in budgets and state aid. Parks operation and maintenance often is considered a low priority compared to other local government services. State assistance for operations and maintenance for the Twin Cities regional parks and trails system and other local park grant programs have decreased in recent years.

Private recreation providers experience similar difficulties in meeting the public's demands for service. Aging facilities, increased operating expenses, increased demand and liability expenses also impact the private recreation industry. The financial environment under which these providers operate needs to change. Opportunities must be developed to help nurture existing recreation-oriented businesses while also encouraging expansions and new development.

The importance of adequate operation and maintenance funding must be recognized

and the current funding trend needs to be reversed. Operation and maintenance must become a priority in order to protect Minnesota's investment in recreation resources.

Goal: *Strengthen the focus on long-range planning for the maintenance, rehabilitation and redevelopment of existing recreational facilities.*

Strategy: Develop/update comprehensive facility and grounds management standards and schedules at all levels of government.

Objective: Develop operation and maintenance standards for recreation systems that include missions, goals, and policies. Include in those standards long-range rehabilitation and replacement plans and funding alternatives for parks and support facilities. (The National Recreation and Parks Association publication "*Park Maintenance Standards*" provides useful guidance to developing such plans.)

Objective: Establish guidelines for the maintenance of recreation and support facilities.

Objective: Encourage providers to develop inventories which include recreation and support facilities, their condition ratings, use levels and maintenance history to help develop more sophisticated approaches to long-range maintenance planning.

Strategy: Minimize facility maintenance costs by designing and constructing low-maintenance and vandal resistant facilities.

Objective: Establish guidelines for energy efficient and low maintenance materials and designs.

Strategy: Encourage management initiatives and actions that enhance and protect natural resources in areas outside of designated facilities where outdoor recreation activities occur.

Objective: Encourage local governments to develop land management efforts (local tree preservation, landscape planning, urban forest management, shoreland management programs and water resource management planning) that will enhance the natural environment of areas not in designated recreation facilities.

Goal: *Provide the staff, training and equipment needed to operate outdoor recreation facilities and programs at appropriate levels of public service.*

Strategy: Encourage development of professional standards for recreation maintenance and technician positions.

Objective: Encourage professional organizations to take a more active role in developing and promoting training for park maintenance leaders and employees.

Objective: Encourage educational institutions to include an operations and maintenance component in park and recreation administration curricula.

Objective: Expand in-service training and continuing education opportunities for professional recreation and natural resource managers and field personnel.

Strategy: Explore creative methods of performing operations and maintenance responsibilities.

Objective: Make wider use of seasonal staff and contract maintenance, where feasible.

Objective: Encourage providers to investigate and use the varied public work programs and volunteer networks to meet some staffing needs, e.g. Sentence to Serve Program, County Restitution Programs, Twin City Tree Trust Program, etc.

Strategy: Develop opportunities to network operations and maintenance strategies and information between providers.

Objective: Encourage networking between public agencies and/or private providers to share ideas, purchase equipment, share equipment, etc.

Objective: Explore development of public/private partnerships to develop operations and maintenance strategies.

Strategy: Evaluate and quantify the need for expanded law enforcement services in response to expanded outdoor recreation activities.

Goal: *Provide a reliable and steady source of funding to maintain and rehabilitate recreation facilities.*

Strategy: Assess a broad range of funding options to support state and local park maintenance and rehabilitation. This can include dedication of a portion of municipal utility bills, increased users fees, use of the interest from park dedication funds, and other options.

Strategy: Encourage recreation providers to dedicate a specific portion of operating budgets to future rehabilitation of existing facilities.

Strategy: Encourage providers to dedicate operations and maintenance funds by including priority ranking criteria in the Open Project Selection Process for L&WCF funding.

Strategy: Encourage legislative support for a secure and stable source of funding for recreation facilities and programs.

RECREATION INFORMATION AND RESEARCH

Issue Statement: *Lack of up to date information hampers the ability of recreation providers to establish effective priorities on facility and program development.*

Discussion: Recreation providers need better information to develop recreation programs and services priorities. Better information is needed on the following concerns:

User Activity Data: Recreation patterns, recreation activity rates, recreation destinations, expenditures, newly emerging or fast-growing activities (in-line skating, jet skies, etc.) all modify demand for recreation facilities and space.

Emerging Outdoor Recreation Issues: Rapidly changing environmental, social, economic and other patterns (single parent families, untraditional work schedules, population aging, cultural diversity, etc.) create new demands or modify demands on existing facilities.

Socioeconomic Benefits: Outdoor recreation benefits many local economies and produces numerous social and personal benefits. A state-wide model to document the personal, social and economic impacts of outdoor recreation services would clarify these benefits.

Program Effectiveness: Programs, such as the snowmobile grant-in-aid system, that have been effective in meeting recreation needs and issues should be assessed so that their strengths can be applied to other recreational programs.

Facility Inventories: Recreation facility inventories are incomplete and out of date. Better information is needed linking forecasts on recreation activities with facility needs.

Alternative Management Approaches: Recreation managers need to network with each other to share experiences and information on new techniques for improved management of recreation facilities, programs or activities.

Goal: *Develop a comprehensive inventory of public and private outdoor recreation facilities.*

Strategy: Determine the types of information the public and recreation providers use from recreation inventories.

Objective: Establish criteria that define the types of information needed for different recreation facilities; clarify what level of facilities should be surveyed.

Objective: Explore patterns on how people use outdoor recreation facilities in combination with indoor recreation and amusement facilities, such as theaters, casinos, etc.

Strategy: Assess the quality and currency of outdoor recreation facilities information in various recreation inventories (RECFAC, Minnesota Office of Tourism and others).

Objective: Inventory the quality (completeness, date, etc) of data on outdoor recreation facilities.

Objective: Prioritize data update needs; define and clarify the role of data providers.

Strategy: Update and collect data in facility inventories to meet facility information needs.

Objective: Establish an automated outdoor recreation facilities data base and Geographic Information System using existing information (PRIM maps series) from various recreation providers (Office of Tourism, DNR, MnDOT, etc.) Make that system accessible to recre-

ation managers and the people using recreation facilities.

Objective: Develop a funding and management plan for keeping the facility data base information current and accurate.

Strategy: Use computer networking systems to link recreation providers in order to enhance access to recreation facility and program data and to foster cooperation in recreation planning and management.

Strategy: Establish a central clearing house for recreation information, reports and plans from the private and public sectors in Minnesota.

Goal: *Document the social, economic, environmental and personal benefits that Minnesotans (and tourists) derive from outdoor recreation activities and experiences.*

Strategy: Clarify the benefits of outdoor recreation on personal, social, cultural and economic interests at the state and local level.

Objective: Measure the economic benefits of recreation expenditures at the state and local level. Include travel and non-travel related expenditures.

Objective: Identify and measure the personal, social, and cultural benefits of outdoor recreation at the local level especially in urban areas by urban residents.

Objective: Identify cultural differences in outdoor recreation preferences by different groups (racial, cultural, etc.)

Objective: Measure the impact of out-of-state tourism on the supply of and demand for Minnesota's private and public recreation facilities and programs.

Objective: Explore how people with disabilities and the aging benefit from

using outdoor recreation facilities and assess how to meet their needs and interests.

Strategy: Where data are unavailable, apply recreation models to describe how outdoor recreation activities benefit social, cultural, environmental and economic interests.

Objective: Identify and assess existing models that measure outdoor recreation benefits.

Objective: develop a specific model application to assess benefits of outdoor recreation on urban youth, especially in inner city locations where recreation opportunities are limited.

Goal: *Periodically collect comprehensive data on outdoor recreation activities.*

Strategy: Identify recreation activity data needed by recreation providers to understand and meet recreation demands.

Strategy: Develop a trend scanning process (Delphi, Nominal Group, etc.) to identify new developments in outdoor recreation and to identify non-recreation trends that will impact recreation patterns.

Strategy: Initiate a broadly-scoped program to coordinate and collect outdoor recreation activity data on a regular basis.

Objective: Coordinate data gathering efforts of various recreation providers in order to maximize data availability and minimize data collection costs.

Objective: Establish some form of regular dialogue between recreation researches and recreation providers in the public and private sectors in order to insure wide support for efforts to collect outdoor recreation activity data.

Goal: *Broadly share information among recreation providers on the recreation programs, maintenance standards, rehabilitation standards, etc.*

Strategy: Determine the types of information recreation providers need on program effectiveness, successful maintenance and rehabilitation standards, etc.

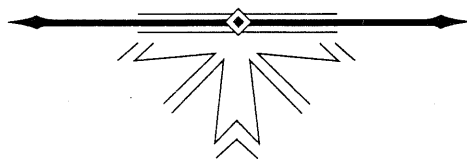
Strategy: Suggest guidelines for types of facilities and area needed to provide outdoor recreation activities for a community or population.

Objective: Identify guidelines or standards that define appropriate level of facilities and area for recreation activities given the population size and demographics of a community, county or region.

Strategy: Explore opportunities for exchanging information between recreation providers.

Objective: Expand on existing efforts to more broadly share information among a wide range of recreation providers, researchers, etc.

Objective: Communicate recreation needs and priorities broadly to local decision makers and planners through cooperation with organizations, such as the Association of Minnesota Counties, the Minnesota Recreation and Parks Association and the League of Minnesota Cities. ♦



A. PUBLIC RECREATION FUNDING

FUNDING PUBLIC RECREATION DEVELOPMENT

➤ During the past three decades federal and state funding for outdoor recreation has had a major impact on state and local government's ability to provide outdoor recreation opportunities. Federal and state funds supplemented local funding resources and enabled local governments to undertake projects that might not otherwise be pursued. The state has been able to expand its role as a recreation provider by adding substantially to the number and types of facilities available for public outdoor recreation.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund: One of the most important funding sources throughout this period has been the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (L&WCF). L&WCF, created in 1965, provides matching funds for state and local government acquisition, development and renovation of outdoor recreation areas and facilities. Since 1965, Minnesota has received over \$57 million in L&WCF funds. This has been matched by over \$110 million in state and local government funds. This program has helped fund a wide variety of facilities, ranging from state parks to local playgrounds.

During the past decade, L&WCF funding to states decreased dramatically. From a high of almost \$6.5 million in 1979, Minnesota's annual allocation dropped to less than \$500,000 in 1993. In recent years, less than \$.06 of L&WCF funding has been available for each dollar requested. Despite decreasing apportionments, the L&WCF remains the major source of funding assistance for many local park and recreation providers.

About one half of L&WCF dollars have been used for land acquisition and the remainder for facility development. Over 93,500 acres of outdoor recreation lands have been acquired with L&WCF dollars in Minnesota. L&WCF funds helped develop 64 State Parks, 6 Waysides, 5 State Trails, 13 Public Water Accesses, 4 Wild and Scenic Rivers, 32 State Forest Campgrounds, 6 Scientific and Natural Areas, and 11 Wildlife Management Areas. In addition, the L&WCF program assisted hundreds of local outdoor recreation projects throughout the state.

The Minnesota Legislature: The legislature provides funding for outdoor recreation facilities and programs in several forms. The state has created a number of specific special accounts or funds that can be used for projects that benefit outdoor recreation. Revenues to these funds come primarily from user fees, special taxes, license fees, donations and the state lottery. The Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR), a joint legislative commission which makes recommendations to the legislature for funding a variety of natural resource related projects, has also been a major factor in developing outdoor recreation resources in Minnesota. Between 1963 and 1993 the LCMR recommended over \$150 million for outdoor recreation projects. This represents almost one-half of all LCMR recommendations during that period. Some of this was used as matching funds for L&WCF projects. In addition, the state general fund and the state capital bonding program continue to provide millions of dollars for recreation facilities and programs.

Charitable Gambling: Minnesota has a wide range of public service organizations such as the Lions Clubs, etc. that raise charitable gambling funds and donate funding, labor, equipment, land or other assets to benefit outdoor recreation. The impact of these donations occur statewide.

User Groups: Recreation user groups; such as trail users, snowmobilers, hunters and anglers; also make considerable contributions to outdoor recreation. Their dona-

tions to the DNR alone have been significant and have greatly enhanced recreation opportunities in Minnesota. In addition to donations of money and time, these groups also contribute through user fees, license fees, fuel taxes, etc. which support several of the special accounts or funds mentioned earlier.

Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA): This program, which is administered by MnDOT, incorporates federal highway assistance to the states. It includes several new initiatives which provide funding for non-traditional transportation projects, such as trails and scenic waysides. It is expected that Minnesota will receive at least several million dollars each year for use in such projects, some of which can be passed on to other state agencies or local governments for specific projects. ISTEA may provide an important source of funds for trails, in particular, through the remainder of this decade.

Other Federal Funding Sources: Several sources of federal funding assistance, particularly those related to acquisition and development of fish and wildlife habitat, have played a key role in providing an outdoor recreation resource base for Minnesota. Federal facilities, such as national forests, national parks and monuments, and national wildlife refuges, have also added greatly to the outdoor recreation opportunities of the state. Urban Park and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) grants have helped to renovate several parks in major urban areas.

Local Government Funding Sources: Local governments employ a wide variety of mechanisms to fund outdoor recreation area acquisition and development including taxes, bonding, dedication fees applied to land development, special funds, user fees, and donations. In addition, many local governments have received grants and other financial assistance through state and federal funding programs.

Summary: Combining all these sources of funding, it is clear that there has been a tremendous investment in outdoor recre-

ation resources in Minnesota. It is also apparent, however, that getting a handle on funding needs and coordinating this investment is not easy because of the multitude of players, overlapping purposes, and competing interests. This comprehensive recreation plan will provide priorities to better guide decisions on these investments. It is evident that this huge historical investment, while providing a substantial outdoor recreation resource base, has not yet met all of the needs and will also require continued funding for maintenance and upgrading. ♦

