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FEASIBILITY OF DEVELOPING
YOUTH HOSTELS IN
STATE OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES

A Report to the Legislature

Prepared by
Department of Natural Resources
with the cooperation of the
Outdoor Recreation Advisory Council

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STATE OF MINNESOTA

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(Executive Summary)

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PREFACE

Hostels are part of a concept of outdoor travel based on the idea that travel should be healthful, inexpensive, educational, and a leisure-oriented experience. Hostels are dormitory-style facilities providing beds, blankets, toilets, a common kitchen, and a common dining and living room facility. Hostels have separate mens' and womens' sleeping quarters. Guests bring their own food, prepare their own meals, and clean up after themselves. Hostels are supervised by resident or nearby houseparents.

There are three basic elements to the hostel concept. One element is the promotion of friendship and cooperation. Guests are encouraged to interact while cooking, dining and relaxing in the dormitories or living area.

The second element is that hostels are a way to meet people of different origins and lifestyles. People travel to hostels from all over the world. The hosteler is likely to come into close contact with people of diverse backgrounds.

The third element of the hostel concept is the do-it-yourself principle. In the course of hosteling, individuals travel under their own power by hiking, biking, canoeing, skiing, or horseback riding.

Recognizing the attractiveness of the concept of hostels, the 1981 legislature directed the DNR to study how a network of hostels could be developed (ML 1981, Chapter 307, Section 7). This report is based on a detailed analysis and study done by the DNR during the fall of 1981. This report excerpts the major findings of that research.

The establishment of hostels in or near units of Minnesota's outdoor recreation system will enable the public to enjoy extended touring ventures and probably will encourage more Minnesotans and tourists, especially families, to discover the scenic qualities and other amenities in our parks, forests and trails.

BACKGROUND

Legislation

Federal legislation to encourage a nationwide system of hostels was introduced by the late Senator Hubert Humphrey and Representative Richard Nolan in 1976. Although reintroduced for several sessions, federal legislation has to date not been passed.

History

Hostels originated in Germany and soon the idea spread throughout Europe. In 1932 the International Youth Hostel Federation was formed. In 1934 the first American youth hostel was established in Massachusetts, coining the title American Youth Hostels (AYH). It was the 18th member of the International Youth Hostel Federation. Worldwide, there are over 5,000 hostels, of which 270 are in America and affiliated with AYH. AYH is financed by annual membership fees, sales of products and services, and contributions from the private sector. The budget for fiscal year 1981 was \$1.2 million. Membership in AYH has risen rapidly in the last 10 years. In 1970 the membership of AYH was 57,000; today it is over 100,000. The number of overnight visits in AYH-affiliated hostels has grown from 72,000 in 1970 to about 385,000 in 1980.

Cooperation With Public Agencies

A number of state and national agencies work closely with AYH. Public agencies such as state departments of natural resources, tourism, commerce, and planning, and federal agencies such as the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, and Department of Transportation have excellent resources for hostel development, such as: land, buildings, and educational programs. Many fine hostels exist today as the result of AYH cooperation with public agencies. For example, there are nine hostels (AYH operated) in five national parks. Some 10-15 more are under discussion. There are four states with AYH-operated hostels in state parks (a total of 12 hostels). Several more are under preparation or discussion and three or four more states are considering a first hostel. There are seven hostels on property owned by cities or counties: Los Angeles, CA (AYH operated); Phoenix, AZ (AYH operated); Bowling Green, OH (AYH operated); Santa Clara County in Saratoga, CA (AYH operated); Philadelphia, PA (operated by local sponsoring committee); Milwaukee County in Greendale, WI (AYH operated).

It is important to note that while facilities (and in some cases renovation money) have been provided by a public agency under lease to AYH; the operational control, profit or loss, and name recognition belong to AYH.

Minnesota AYH

Eleven hostels have operated in the State of Minnesota since 1977, none in public facilities. Today, only eight exist. The total membership for the Minnesota Chapter of AYH in 1981 was 3,315; an 9.3 percent increase from 1980. The overnight visits to Minnesota hostels totaled less than 500 during 1980 which implies that many Minnesotans purchase membership cards for hosteling in other states and abroad.

Outdoor Recreation System

The Minnesota outdoor recreation system consists of many units, including state parks, state forests, scientific and natural areas, trails, and other areas. This system provides an excellent framework for developing a network of hostels for non-motorized travel, such as by bicycle, skis, foot, canoe or horse.

Due to their interest in distance touring, bicyclists are the most likely group to use hostels. During the summer of 1980, approximately 50 percent of the 53,000 Luce Line State Trail users were bicyclists and approximately 80 percent of the 31,000 users on the Heartland State Trail were bicyclists. This demonstrates the large number of bicyclists using state trails. Public utilization of the outdoor recreation system could potentially increase if hostels were located on or near bicycling opportunities.

Location

Hostels should be located in areas which encompass natural, historical, cultural, educational, recreational, or scientific resources. Moreover, their location should encourage both short and long-distance trail experiences. Thus, the recommended criteria for locating hostels are:

1. Proximity to population centers;
2. Proximity to major scenic and recreation areas (state and national parks and forests);
3. Proximity to touring routes (present and planned);
 - a. bicycling
 - b. hiking
 - c. canoeing
 - d. cross-country skiing;
 - e. horseback riding

(NOTE: Routes include linear trails, loop trail systems, connectors and spurs.)

4. Proximity to areas or sites of particular historical interest;
5. Proximity to areas of cultural and educational interest (e.g. parks and semi-wilderness areas appropriate for the study of flora, fauna, ecology, and geology, etc.);
6. Connecting sites (to complete hostel networks); and
7. Areas with access to public transport.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The role that the state should assume in aiding AYH, or another vendor, to develop a network of hostels in Minnesota should be to:

1. Develop criteria and select a target area;
2. Promote the target area as a tourist attraction;
3. Identify a potential for developing a system of hostels;
4. Identify structures within the target area (focusing on historic structures) that can be used as hostels;
5. Seek vendors to develop low-cost overnight lodging for the traveler;
6. Develop model contracts for leasing state-owned buildings; and
7. Help selected vendors to pursue funding sources.

Study Areas

Given the above criteria, the geographic area identified as most appropriate for the development of a pilot hostel is the eastern portion of the state. This geographic area includes three locations which the public finds most scenic, namely: the North Shore, the Mississippi River blufflands, and the St. Croix River valley. All of these locations are well-established tourist destinations. This area also contains most of the state's population and a large percentage of the state's bicyclists and trail users. State parks with the highest attendance levels and prominent historical travel routes are located in this area. Public transportation can easily provide access for potential users in this area. State trails located in this geographic area are the Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Trail and the North Shore State Trail. These trails are connected to local trail systems. Based on its attributes, this geographic area is best suited for a program which would demonstrate the need for hostels in the state.

Throughout the course of this study, the following sites have been discussed for hostel development: Fort Snelling State Park (gateway potential), Itasca State Park (destination-user potential), Lawrence Unit in Minnesota Valley (corridor-user potential); Afton State Park (corridor-user potential), Tettegouche State Park on the North Shore (destination and corridor-user potential).

Develop Pilot Hostel

Therefore, it is recommended that two pilot hostels be established for the traveler: one near the Twin Cities, perhaps along the St. Croix River or Minnesota River for the metro, short-distance traveler, and the other at a site suitable for the destination traveler. Such a site is Itasca State Park.

CONCLUSION

Hostel development in Minnesota should concentrate on establishing a network for travelers based on three priorities: [1] complementing the outdoor recreation system; [2] highlighting scenic locations; and [3] promoting leisurely, long-distance trail experiences.

As mentioned previously, a detailed report on hosteling in Minnesota is available from the DNR, Division of Parks and Recreation.

THE SPIRIT OF HOSTELING

The spirit of hosteling is a worldwide feeling. It encompasses a love of adventure and the outdoors, and a sense of fellowship with people all over the world. It is particularly the fellowship of hosteling that makes it so special.

Hostels serve not only as simple overnight accommodations for hostelers, but also as the meeting places for these travelers. Because hostel customs require all hostelers to share in the duties around the hostel, hostelers feel that they have a responsibility towards the hostel, and towards other hostelers. Thus, while helping at the hostel, hostelers share their traveling experiences, and just enjoy meeting people from different areas of their country, or from other countries.

Perhaps the spirit of hosteling can best be summarized in the "Hosteler's Grace":

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him where'ere our footsteps go.
And may our joy and happiness
In comradeship, all others bless.*

*By Malou Komornicka
President, Minnesota Council
American Youth Hostels, Inc.
1979-1981*

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HOSTEL UNDERSTANDING

Expanded Definition Hostels provide a place for people to eat, sleep, and wash while traveling America's countryside. Hostels serve as shelter for people traveling under their own power for recreation, education and health purposes. The difference between a hostel and a motel is that no servants or waiters serve in hostels, nor are sleeping areas segregated beyond gender. The segregated, dormitory-style structures provide beds, blankets, toilets, and common kitchen, dining, and living rooms. Hostel guests are expected to bring their own food, prepare their own meals, and clean up after themselves. Hostels emphasize simplicity, so the cost incurred to the user is kept to a minimum. Supervision within the hostel is by resident houseparents who live in or near the facility. Their responsibility is to initiate cooperation and friendly exchange between the guests utilizing the hostel.

Hostel Concept Hostels are part of a concept of outdoor travel based upon travel that is healthful, inexpensive, educational, and leisure-oriented. The hostel concept consists of three basic elements. One element is the promotion of friendship and cooperation. Because of common housekeeping, guests are in close contact with one another. They are encouraged to interact while cooking, dining, and relaxing in the dormitories or living area.

The second element of hosteling is meeting people of different origins and lifestyles. People travel to hostels from all over the world. The hosteler is likely to come into close contact with people of diverse backgrounds. In 1981 there were over 106,000 overnight visits to American hostels by foreign travelers.

The third element of hosteling is the do-it-yourself principle. In the course of hosteling, individuals travel under their own power by hiking, biking, canoeing, skiing, or horseback riding. Minimum use is made of motorized transportation, except for gateway hostels. Since bed, bedding, cooking and dishwashing facilities are provided, hostels make it possible for the individual to travel with a lighter load than if he or she were camping. If a person wishes to hostel, all that is required is that he or she be willing to cooperate and share friendship with others of different origin and lifestyle, carry only personal toiletries and clothing, and have a sheet sleeping sack, and an American Youth Hostels, Inc. (AYH) membership pass. The hostel style seems to lend itself to a major emphasis on healthful, self-propelled, outdoor travel.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

Federal Legislation

Development of a national hostel program has been a consideration of Congress for six sessions. Former Representative Richard Nolan of Minnesota was the major proponent. As a participant in the European Parliamentary Exchange of 1976, Nolan had the opportunity to visit a Swedish hostel. He was impressed with the opportunities hosteling offered and realized the United States was lacking in inexpensive means for travelers of America's countryside. When Nolan returned to the United States and Congress, he began drafting legislation to involve the federal government in furthering the development and operation of hostels in the United States. Primarily, hostel development and operation has been through non-profit organizations. With federal support, hosteling opportunities could be expanded. By initiating federal support for development of a well-conceived hostel plan, Nolan thought it might provide the "push" to encourage state and local governments and local non-profit groups to develop and operate hostels in accordance with a national plan. With this in mind, Rep. Nolan began his rally in Congress on the basis that hostels would promote foreign and domestic travel of America's countryside for education and recreation purposes.

94th Congress

Rep. Nolan introduced the "American Youth Hostel Act" on October 1, 1976. However, H.R. 15836 was introduced too late in the session for any action to be taken.

95th Congress

The late Senator Hubert Humphrey introduced the companion bill in the Senate on April 28, 1977. Based on the feedback of parties supportive of the bill, changes were made, and a redrafted hostel bill, H.R. 13557, was introduced in the House on July 20, 1978. The bill called for grants on a 75 percent federal/25 percent applicant basis for renovating existing structures for use as hostels; grants on a 50 percent federal/50 percent applicant basis for constructing four new hostel structures; and development of a plan for a national system of hostels. Hearings were held on the bill before the House Subcommittee on National Parks and Insular Affairs on August 14, 1978. Rep. Nolan then re-introduced H.R. 13557 on August 17, 1978, as H.R. 13965. The only difference between the two bills was that H.R. 13965 had more backers. H.R. 13965 did not get out of committee for a full House vote and no action was taken in the Senate.

96th Congress

Rep. Nolan persisted and introduced H.R. 2409, identical to H.R. 13965, on February 26, 1979. Again, hearings were held and the bill was redrafted. Rep. Nolan introduced the revised bill, H.R. 5841, on November 8, 1979, and in a later variation, as H.R. 7105 on April 22, 1980. H.R. 7105, "National Hostel System Act of 1980," called for the development of a national hostel plan which would provide grants to states, local governments, and private, nonprofit organizations, of up to \$200,000 for each hostel facility renovation. In addition, the act was to require state governments to incorporate hostels into the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The House Subcommittee on Interior and Insular Affairs waived its right to hearings and in its report recommended passage of H.R. 7105. The bill made House passage by a unanimous vote on May 19, 1980. In response to the House action, Senator Tsongass introduced a companion bill in the Senate on September 4, 1980, as S. 3092. Hearings were held before the Senate Subcommittee on Parks, Recreation and Renewable Resources on September 8, 1980, but, as in the 95th Congress, time did not permit action. S. 3092 failed to get out of committee for a full Senate vote.

97th Congress

Rep. Nolan chose not to run for re-election, but Rep. Philip Burton of California and Rep. Douglas Bereuter of Nebraska picked up where Nolan left off. They introduced H.R. 862 on January 16, 1981, being identical to Nolan's hostel bill of the previous session. At the time of this writing (Dec. 19, 1981), the "National Hostel System Act of 1980" was in the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs and no action had been taken in the Senate.

STATE LEGISLATION

Minnesota Laws 1981, Chapter 304, Section 7, "Youth Hostels," calls for the examination of the need for hostels, funding sources, and considers the adaptive use of historic structures or other structures on public land, especially "those on or adjacent to units in the Outdoor Recreation System." Furthermore, the emphasis is on the "expansion of hostels throughout the state "to further the development of the National System of Youth Hostels to increase the opportunity for outdoor recreation." If federal legislation is passed, the State of Minnesota will be well ahead of the requirement to incorporate hostels into the SCORP planning process, and will immediately qualify for grants to renovate structures for use as hostels. The state legislature defines a hostel as an "inexpensive, self-service, dormitory-style, supervised facility, chartered by American Youth Hostels, Inc., and operated in accordance with their practices."

AMERICAN YOUTH
HOSTELS, INC.
BACKGROUND

History

Hostels originated in Germany as a means to get the inner city youth into the countryside. The idea spread throughout Europe, and in 1932 the International Youth Hostel Federation was formed. In 1934 the first American Youth Hostel was established in Massachusetts and America was recognized as the 18th member of the International Youth Hostel Federation (IYH). The value of hostels began to be recognized by other countries, and today there are 68 national organizations that are members of IYH. Worldwide, there are over 5,000 hostels, of which 270 are in America and are affiliated with AYH.

General Purpose

AYH is a nonprofit, nonsectarian, and nonpolitical service organization. It has been AYH's goal to establish a procedure for the development and management of a nationwide system of hostels to promote hosteling as a way of travel. Therefore, the purpose of AYH is to expand development of hostels throughout the United States to promote travel consistent with the threefold hosteling concept of cooperative, friendly exchange, meeting people of diverse background, and the do-it-yourself principle.

AYH Structure

AYH is designed to provide low-cost, overnight accommodations for travelers. AYH is run as a nonprofit corporation and operates its facilities with the lowest possible capital investment. Local groups form councils and charter for membership in the AYH organization. Thirty-two councils exist in 31 states and the District of Columbia. Each council is chartered through the national AYH headquarters in Washington, D.C. and are staffed mostly by volunteers. Each local council is represented in the national AYH by a given number of delegates, dependent on the number of visitors served by that council (overnight visits in the council's jurisdiction). These delegates, plus a national board of 24 members, comprise the national council which is responsible for managing the affairs of AYH. The national AYH president and chairman of the board is Bob Williams, the executive director is Thomas L. Newman, and the director of hostel development is Robert Johnson.

AYH Membership

The hostel mode of travel is open to all people, but in order to exercise control over the use of hostels, use is restricted to those who have paid the annual membership fee and have a membership card. The card entitles the holder to use any of the AYH-affiliated hostels in the United States or IYH-affiliated hostels abroad. The membership fee is graded according to age (see Figure 1).

A question that has been frequently asked is: Can a public owned facility be used only by a private organization? The answer is yes, as long as it has been provided for in the lease agreement.

National membership in AYH has increased greatly in the last ten years. In 1970 the membership of AYH was 57,000; today it is over 100,000. The number of overnight visits in AYH affiliated hostels has increased from 72,000 to about 385,000 in 1980.

FIGURE 1
Membership Fees

Junior (17 yrs. and under)	\$ 7.00
Senior Citizen (60 yrs. and over)	\$ 7.00
Senior (18 yrs. and over)	\$ 14.00
Family (includes children of the family up to 18 yrs.)	\$ 21.00
Organization (must be a recognized, non-profit organization, and is valid for not more than 25 people, with a leader for each group of ten persons and may be only used in the U.S. and Canada)	\$ 35.00
Life membership (individual)	\$140.00

(Source: The National Hosteler's Knapsack, Spring, 1981)

AYH Revenue

The organization's main means of support is by annual membership fees, which account for over half of the \$1.2 million in funds generated by AYH for fiscal year 1981 (October 30, 1980-September 1, 1981). The revenue derived from membership fees is spent three ways: Fifty-five percent is for national AYH staff and publicity; forty percent is divided between the 32 local councils; and ten percent is set aside in the hostel development fund. The other sources of revenue for AYH are through the sales of products and services, operations of AYH-owned or rented hostels, trips sponsored by AYH, contributions from the private sector, or other miscellaneous sources.

Hostel Fees

Fees vary according to the type of hostel (see Figure 2). There are five types. Shelter hostels are typically, because they are still being developed, without full facilities. Simple hostels meet all the minimum requirements for a facility chartered by AYH. Examples of the minimum requirements are: 24 square feet of floor space per person in sleeping areas; segregated dormitories; bunkbeds; laundering schedule for all bed covers and linens; washing facility with at least cold running water; fully equipped kitchen; heating system capable of maintaining at least 55 degrees in the winter; and in compliance with existing health and building codes. A standard hostel more than meets these minimum requirements. A superior hostel is usually a large facility with substantially more than the minimum standards. All hostels should have a total capacity of 24 people except for home hostels, which are set apart from the above four types. Home hostels typically have a capacity of less than 24.

FIGURE 2
Hostel Fees*

<u>Types</u>	<u>Summer Fee</u>	<u>Winter Fee</u>
Shelter	\$2.50	\$3.00
Simple	\$3.50	\$4.50
Standard	\$4.50	\$5.75
Superior	\$5.50	\$7.50
Home	May accept donations up to \$4.50 per person per overnight.	

*These are maximum rates for graded hostels affiliated with AYH.

(Source: American Youth Hostels 1981 Handbook)

Hostel Customs

The users of hostels are regulated by a standard set of 17 management customs in effect for all the AYH-affiliated hostels. Custom number 13 offers the only means of enforcement. According to the AYH 1981 Handbook, the hostel customs are as follows:

(1) "Hosteling means traveling under your own power--biking, canoeing, skiing, and horseback riding--living and traveling in the spirit of fun and friendship and using hostels as overnight accommodations. School and educational trips are encouraged, so arrival in this case by bus is acceptable. Individuals arriving at a hostel by motorized means is acceptable if the individual is coming to travel under his or her own power. Hosteling is not a means for touring the country by automobile."(See "custom 11" for clarifications on motorized vehicles.)

(2) Every hostel user carries for use at all hostels a sheet sleeping sack, AYH membership card, and personal needs.

(3) Reservations should be made in advance, using the standard form. A self-addressed, stamped envelope should be enclosed with a deposit of one full night's fee for each person.

(4) Arrival time is between 5:00 P.M. and 8:00 P.M. Guests should present membership cards to the houseparents, show them the sheet sleeping sack, sign registration book and pay overnight fee. Hostels close between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 P.M. Kitchens close after 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 P.M.

(5) Maximum length of stay at any one hostel is three days unless permission is obtained from the houseparents.

(6) Lights should be out and dormitories quiet from 11:00 P.M. to 7:00 a.m., unless houseparents choose to extend hours.

- (7) Cooking and cleaning are shared by hostel guests.
- (8) Checkout is by 9:30 a.m. If facilities are used between 9:30 a.m. and 4:00 P.M., a day fee of 50¢ is charged.
- (9) Use of alcoholic beverages and illegal drugs is not allowed in hostels.
- (10) Smoking is allowed only where houseparents permit it, but is prohibited in sleeping, kitchen, and dining areas.
- (11) Motorized vehicles may be used:
 - a. as transportation to the first hostel in a chain;
 - b. as transportation to a single hostel if the user intends to travel under his or her own power in the area around the hostel;
 - c. as transportation to hosteling activities in cases where time and distance make traveling under your own power unsafe or impractical;
 - d. By special arrangement for touring youth groups.
- (12) Colds or other illnesses should be reported to houseparents.
- (13) Houseparents may withhold a guest's membership card for failure to follow customs. Houseparents need not return the card until the hostel is neat and clean.
- (14) Before going abroad to hostel, it is important to become fully acquainted with the customs of the hostels to be used. A validated, special card must be obtained when going abroad.
- (15) City hostels may have somewhat different rules and practices regarding reservations, arrival, checkout, lights out, and closing times, depending on local conditions.
- (16) Neither hostels nor houseparents assume responsibility for loss or theft.
- (17) The membership card must have a photo of the holder.

The above customs are compatible with the Minnesota State Park Official Rules.

Hostel Users

AYH has membership in all fifty states. Sixty percent of AYH members take vacation trips of more than one month each year. AYH membership is not restricted by age, but based on 1980 membership card sales, 57 percent of the buyers were between 18 and 24, and, of the total buyers, 51 percent were male and 49 percent female. The primary users of hostels and the purposes of their visits is summarized below in Figure 3.

FIGURE 3

Primary User Types

Individuals (U.S.)
Individuals (foreign)
AYH sponsored groups (6 or more)
Other organized trips (6 or more, U.S.)
Scouts (Boy or Girl, 7 or more)
School class (15 or more)
Church or temple (10 or more)
Trail hikers
Bicycle tourists
River rafters or canoe
Skiers, cross-country or downhill

Purposes of Visits

Stopover only
Near recreation
 bike
 hike
 ski
 sail
 cave
 raft/canoe
Near historic attractions
Part of hostel itinerary
Hold meeting or retreat
Hold class/seminar
Sightseeing

(Source: American Youth Hostels, Inc., National Hostel Development Plan)

Hostel Locations

Hostels affiliated with AYH are located in 31 states and the District of Columbia. However, of the 270 hostels, most are concentrated in the New England states, Michigan, Colorado, and the West Coast. These areas contain over 75 percent of the hostels in the United States. The rest of the United States is seriously lacking in hosteling opportunities.

Cooperation with Public Agencies

Public agencies such as state departments of natural resources, tourism, commerce and planning, and federal agencies such as the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, and Department of Transportation are important to hostel development. These agencies have excellent resources for hostel development, such as: land, buildings, educational programs, and money. Many fine hostels exist today as the result of AYH cooperation with public agencies. For example, there are nine hostels (AYH operated) in five national parks. Some 10-15 more are under discussion. There are four states with hostels within state parks (again, AYH operated) totaling 12 hostels. Several more are under preparation or discussion and three or four more states are considering a first hostel. Seven hostels are on property owned by cities or counties: Los Angeles (AYH operated); Phoenix (AYH operated); Bowling Green, OH (AYH operated); Genesee County in Flint, MI (AYH operated); Santa Clara County in Saratoga, CA (AYH operated); Philadelphia (operated by local sponsoring committee); Milwaukee County in Greendale, WI (AYH operated).

It is important to note that while facilities (and often renovation money) have been provided by the public agency under lease to AYH, the operational control, profit or loss, and name recognition belong to AYH.

MINNESOTA AYH COUNCIL BACKGROUND

Minnesota Hostels

Although hostels have existed in Minnesota intermittently since the 1930s, nine hostels have operated at one time or another between the years 1977 to 1981, (see Figure 4). For background on how hosteling developed in Minnesota from 1940 to 1960, see Bridgeman (1963). As of 1981, eight hostels were in operation. The locations are shown in Figure 12. Of these eight hostels, seven are supplemental accommodations, meaning the hostel functions are secondary to the main purpose of the building, and they do not offer complete services. One of these is a home hostel within the Twin Cities.

FIGURE 4
Minnesota Hostels

<u>Location</u>	<u>Primary Facility Function</u>	<u>Overnights</u>				
		<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>
Barnum(S)	YWCA camp	24	45	38	15	86
Bloom.(Y)	Private res. (home hostel)	-	-	-	-	0
Duluth(Y)	YWCA	40	90	141	213	195
Gr.Marais (S)	Seagull Canoe Outfitters			16	No rec.	10
Grey Eagle	Ski chalet	8	6	No rec.	Closed	Closed
Hamel(S)	Hostel (farm)	No rec.	16	9	97	57
Mpls.(S)	U of M Chi Phi Fraternity	-	-	-	-	66 New
Nimrod	Hostel	22	16	5	9	12 Closed
St.Paul	YMCA	592	302	Closed	Closed	Closed
Wabasha(Y)	Anderson House Hotel (hist.)	-	23	No rec.	67	No rec.
Pipestone (Y)	Calumet Hotel (Hist.)	-	-	-	-	New
	TOTAL	686	497	209	1	

S = Summers only

Y = Available on a year-round basis

(Source: American Youth Hostels, Inc. Annual Report, Oct. 1, 1980-Sept. 30, 1981; personal communication, AYH Minnesota).

Minnesota AYH
Membership

Total membership sales between of October 1, 1980, and September 30, 1981 was 3,315. This was an increase of 9.3 percent from the previous year, when 3,033 membership cards were sold.

Membership vs.
Hostel Use

A significant disparity exists between the number of people holding AYH membership cards and the number who use Minnesota's hostels. The 1981 Minnesota AYH membership was over 3,000, but the number of overnights in Minnesota's hostels was less than 500. Two explanations may account for low resident use by AYH members. Many members participate only in the day-use trips sponsored by AYH. Also, many Minnesota AYH members purchase a membership card to travel to other states and abroad.

STATE AND
CONCESSIONAIRE
RELATIONSHIP

Benefits to
the State

The state can pursue a variety of management options to operate hostels on state land, and any vendor suited to provide lodging could be selected. If Minnesota is to have a successful hostel program, planning efforts should be coordinated between the state of Minnesota and affiliated vendors such as AYH, Inc. AYH would benefit from a state-coordinated hostel plan because it would further its national plan for hostel development. The state would benefit by enhancing the accessibility of its outdoor recreation system. Several other incentives exist for the state to develop an interest in promoting hostels:

- (1) Hostels can provide viable uses for facilities which might otherwise go unused.
- (2) Hostels can provide amenities for recreational user groups, i.e., bicycle tourists, trail hikers, rafters, etc.
- (3) Hostels enhance low-cost, energy efficient forms of travel and tourism.
- (4) Hostels can encourage dispersed use of recreational resources.
- (5) Hostels can separate the liability of management from the liability of the state (when operated by AYH).

AYH's Organizational
Goals in Minnesota

AYH is pursuing two primary goals in Minnesota, according to Robert Johnson, national director of hostel development. One goal is to establish a centrally located gateway facility within the Twin Cities. The other goal is to expand hostels in recreation areas that are more accessible to the user. This goal of providing a travel recreation experience complements state recreation goals.

At the present time, an adequate "gateway" hostel does not exist in the Twin Cities. The important criteria for a gateway facility are: a capacity of 50 to 100 people; and a central location within walking distance to points of interest and transportation services.

Hostels within Minnesota are few and far between. Hostel program planning should concentrate on developing a network that is based on two priorities: (1) ideal location; and (2) interconnectable sites which would have appeal to hostellers. Fulfillment of these priorities would go a long way toward increasing hostel use and AYH membership in Minnesota.

Proposed
State Position
on AYH Goals

The position the state should assume in aiding AYH or another vendor to open hostels in Minnesota is to aid in planning efforts, provide surplus structures, and help solicit funds from sources other than state revenue. AYH could assume the role of the contractee for designated surplus structures on state lands within priority areas identified by this study. As contractee, AYH could expect to undertake the responsibility for renovating structures up to all codes and AYH minimum standards. Also, AYH could be responsible for maintenance, property and liability coverage, and management of the newly renovated hostel. It will be necessary for the state and AYH to develop a contract defining the responsibilities of AYH for the structures provided by the state based on these requirements.

HOSTEL LOCATION
CRITERIA

Hostels can be bought and sold, leased and franchised, renovated and restored, developed and re-developed. They can make money or lose money. In choosing a hostel site, the major consideration should be location. The following location criteria are important considerations:

- (1) Proximity to population centers;
- (2) Proximity to major scenic and recreation areas (state parks and state forests);
- (3) Proximity to touring routes (present and planned);
 - (a) cycling
 - (b) hiking
 - (c) canoeing
 - (d) cross-country skiingNOTE: Routes include linear trails, loop trails, trail systems, connectors and spurs.
- (4) Proximity to areas or sites of particular historical interest;

(5) Proximity to areas of cultural and educational interest (such as parks and semi-wilderness areas appropriate for the study of flora/fauna, ecology, geology, etc.);

(6) Connective sites (to fill out hostel networks); and

(7) Access to public transport.

INTEGRATION OF HOSTELS INTO THE MINNESOTA OUTDOOR RECREATION SYSTEM

Importance of Hosteling in Minnesota

Many aspects of hostel development coincide with Minnesota's growing recreational needs. Hosteling involves traveling, learning, and experiencing the landscape in such ways as to extend or prolong one's visit with simple, relaxing, and low-cost overnight accommodations. Hosteling implies traveling in the interests of friendship, learning, cooperation, and developing an understanding of people and the environment. The interests of hosteling, therefore, are synonymous with many aspects of a healthy tourist economy.

Hosteling can improve the quality of the Minnesota recreation experience by putting one in touch with fellow travelers of all ages and nationalities. Such contact tends to enhance the personal value of the travel experience by allowing the increased sharing of mutual interests. These fond personal recollections often may result in repeat business for the same tourist areas.

Hosteling discourages the use of motorized means of travel. Non-motorized travel causes the tourist to invest a greater portion of his/her time within specific recreation areas. The longer the visitor is in an area, the longer is the opportunity to invest his/her dollars in the local economy.

Hosteling also encourages the recycling of under-utilized facilities. In particular, these facilities may be historic structures which can be adapted, at little cost, for sleeping, cooking, and toilet facilities. In many cases, the mere cost of building demolition, if diverted into hostel conversion, would be sufficient to give older structures a new lease on life.

For the reasons cited, AYH (or a similar vendor), in a combined effort with the State of Minnesota and private interests, could provide hosteling as a new tourist opportunity in Minnesota.

State Recreation
Goals

The Statewide DNR Trail Plan (Draft) calls for the investigation of the use of hostels in future trail development. The plan also calls for developing mutually beneficial relationships with host communities. Hosteling is one way in which host communities can provide a useful service for a certain type of tourist. Such service can only have a positive impact upon the tourist economy of the community.

A major state recreation goal is to provide maximum participation by the private sector in the operation of recreational facilities which complement public recreation facilities. The public sector, accordingly, should not place itself in a competitive position with private businesses. The public interest for encouraging hostel development within resorts should be examined. Hostel development could keep high-quality resort sites available to the public if a strong profit incentive existed. Providing a marginally profitable "service" to a particular form of tourist for any number of esoteric reasons would not be sufficient. Significant is the fact that the most profitable AYH-affiliated hostels are owned by private concerns rather than public ones, and are located in high-volume traveler stop-off places such as Washington, D.C. and Missoula, Montana. At these hostels, users arrive not under their own power, but by plane, bus, or train.

The operation of private income property as AYH-affiliated hostels has been demonstrated as being successful. However, because of the public-service orientation of hostels, the AYH position of controlling interest in facilities, and the need for high-volume use to insure profitability, the most ideal future hostel sites in Minnesota, outside metro areas, may well be not on former resort sites, but rather on land owned by organizations already committed to non-profit service, such as group camps. State and federal lands would also function well for providing additional hostel opportunity.

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE LIBRARY
STATE OF MINNESOTA

HOSTEL POTENTIAL IN MINNESOTA

Typical hostel users arrive at their facilities by bicycle, on foot, on cross-country skis, or by canoe. A noteworthy exception to the self-propelled user is the hostellers arriving at their facilities from a major transportation center. This makes some hostel locations exclusively population-density dependent. AYH is now developing urban, or "gateway" model hostels in such transportation/ population centers as New York City, Boston, San Francisco, Miami, Houston, and New Orleans. If a large-volume hostel were organized within the Twin Cities, and if it were focused upon major transportation facilities, it could function as a "gateway" to a Minnesota hostel network. Such a facility could provide the necessary first stop for international and U.S. travelers interested in a further hosteling experience in Minnesota. A well-promoted, large-volume Twin Cities hostel could also introduce area residents psychologically, if not physically, to the potential of a state hosteling network. This could have great significance for hosteling in the state because the seven-county metro area comprises only 3.4 percent of the land area of the state, but has 49 percent of the state population.

Hosteling Priorities

Assume hosteling did capture the interest of significant numbers of recreationists in Minnesota. What recreation user-groups would be involved? How would self-propelled hostel users fit within the priority development framework of future recreation trails in Minnesota? The Statewide DNR Trail Plan (Draft) identifies the following trail priorities: (1) bicycle trails, (2) cross-country (XC) ski trails, (3) hiking trails, (4) horse trails. A particularly difficult question would be whether the future out-state Minnesota hosteler would be a long-distance recreational corridor user (such as bicyclists, cross-country skiers, or horseback riders) or simply a recreational site user (loop-trail users, including hikers and downhill skiers). It is recommended that hostels be opened to serve the long-distance tourer. Such hostels may be spaced 50 miles apart for bicyclists. If the hosteler is most interested in activities within a particular destination-area, then a clustering of hostel facilities would be most appropriate, perhaps spaced only 10 miles apart.

Relevance of Trail-Siting Criteria

In attempting to locate hostel sites in Minnesota, the site criteria for recreation trails are relevant. Considerable effort has been expended in the DNR Statewide Trail Plan (Draft) in developing target trail suitability areas on the basis of more ideal, best-possible world criteria. These criteria are:

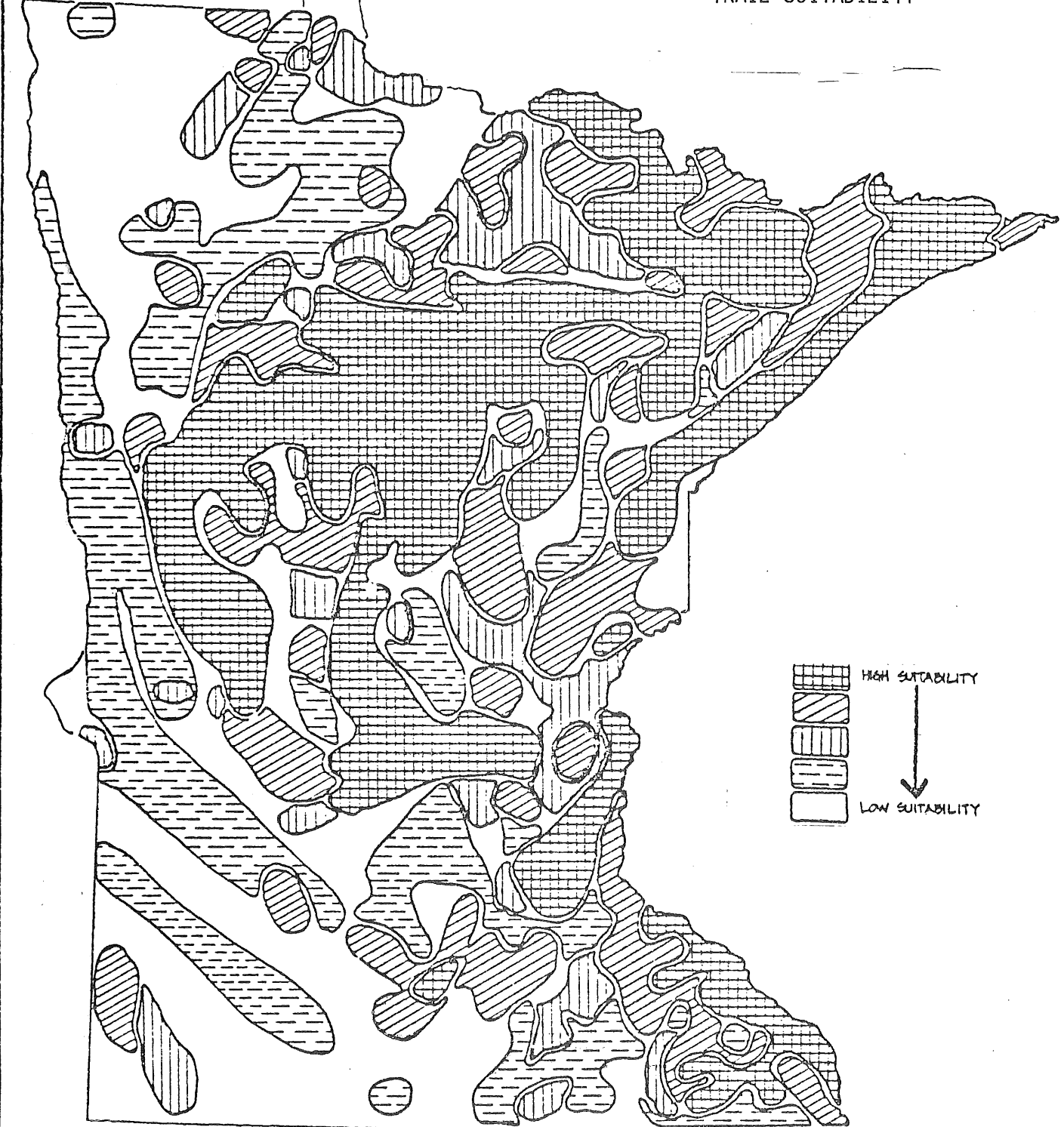
- Topographic roughness
- Location of resorts and campgrounds
- Proximity to water
- Vegetation diversity
- Historic travel routes
- Proximity to public transportation
- Lack of agricultural productivity

Figure 5 is a composite of the variables of the ideal-criteria analysis. This map indicates where hostels, as well as trails, would have the greatest appeal. Because larger population centers provide the greatest number of recreation participants, Figure 5 should be combined with population. The results of this combination are shown in Figure 6 and Figure 7. Another important factor shown as shaded areas in both Figures 6 and 7 is the willingness of metro residents to travel for summer and winter activities. Figures 6 and 7 indicate both how far a metro resident is willing to travel, and where within that area he is most likely to travel.

Attitudes Toward Specific Areas

Another way to address travel willingness and area preference is to survey more subjective attitudes about scenic quality within various areas of the state. Two assessments of scenic quality attitudes are presented in Figures 8 and 9. They are superimposed upon the Population / Resource high priority area already presented. Although the opinions of professional staff in Figure 9 more focused than the user opinions of Figure 8, they both show an orientation toward the Mississippi Valley, St. Croix Valley and North Shore. The professional opinion, and to a lesser degree, the user opinion, both orient interest away from the western portion of the high-priority population/resource area.

FIGURE 5
GENERALIZED LEVELS OF RELATIVE
TRAIL SUITABILITY



Statewide DNR Trail Plan (Draft) Fig. 22, p. 69

FIGURE 6
 METRO REGION RESIDENTS AVERAGE
 MILES WILLING TO TRAVEL FOR
 SUMMER ACTIVITIES RELATIVE TO
 HIGHEST PRIORITY AREAS FOR TRAILS

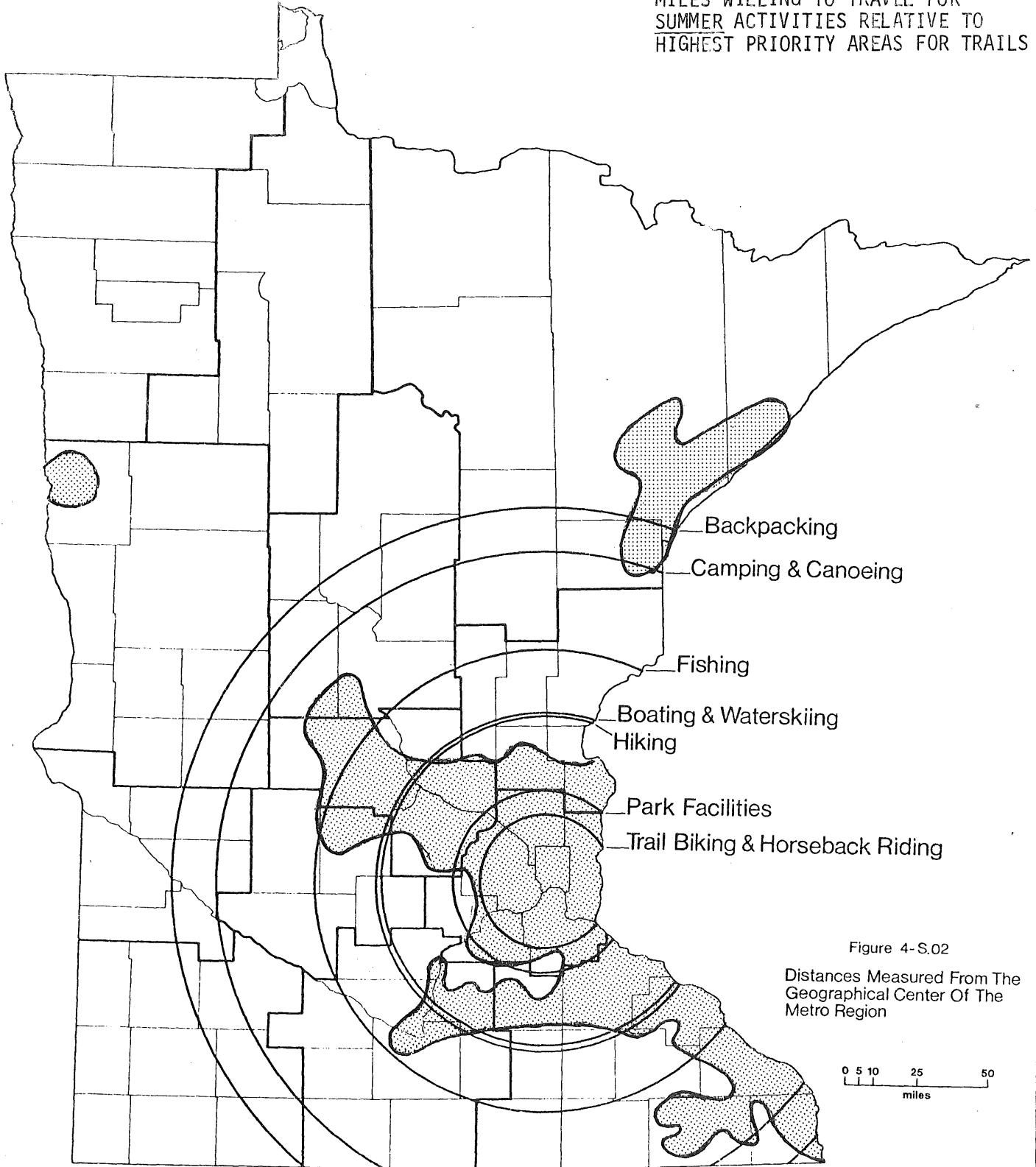


Figure 4-S.02
 Distances Measured From The
 Geographical Center Of The
 Metro Region

0 5 10 25 50
 miles

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

HIGHEST PRIORITY AREAS
 FOR TRAILS - based upon
 Population/Resources Criteria

FIGURE 7
 METRO REGION RESIDENTS AVERAGE
 MILES WILLING TO TRAVEL FOR
 WINTER ACTIVITIES RELATIVE TO
 HIGHEST PRIORITY AREAS FOR TRAILS

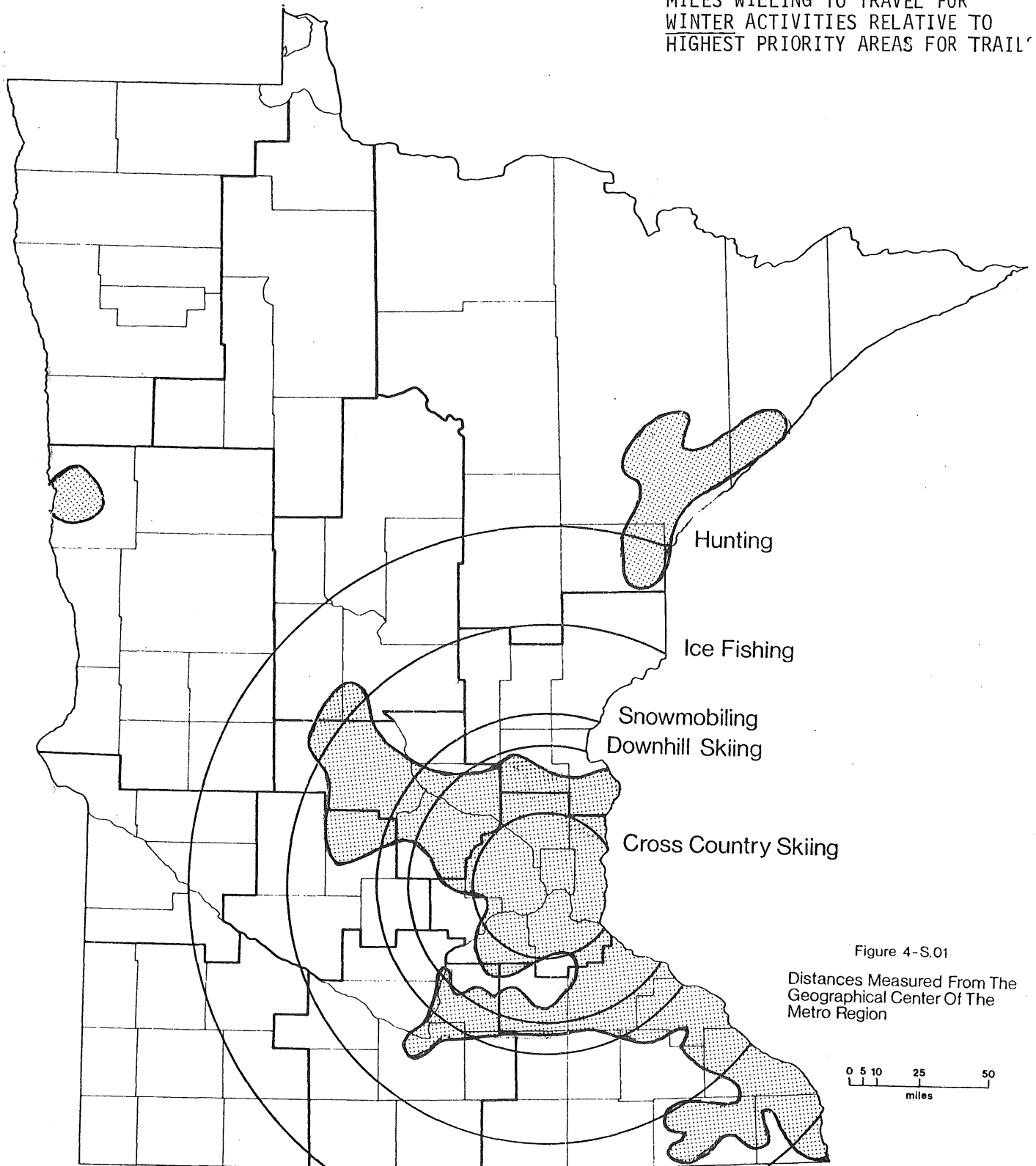


Figure 4-S.01
 Distances Measured From The
 Geographical Center Of The
 Metro Region

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES


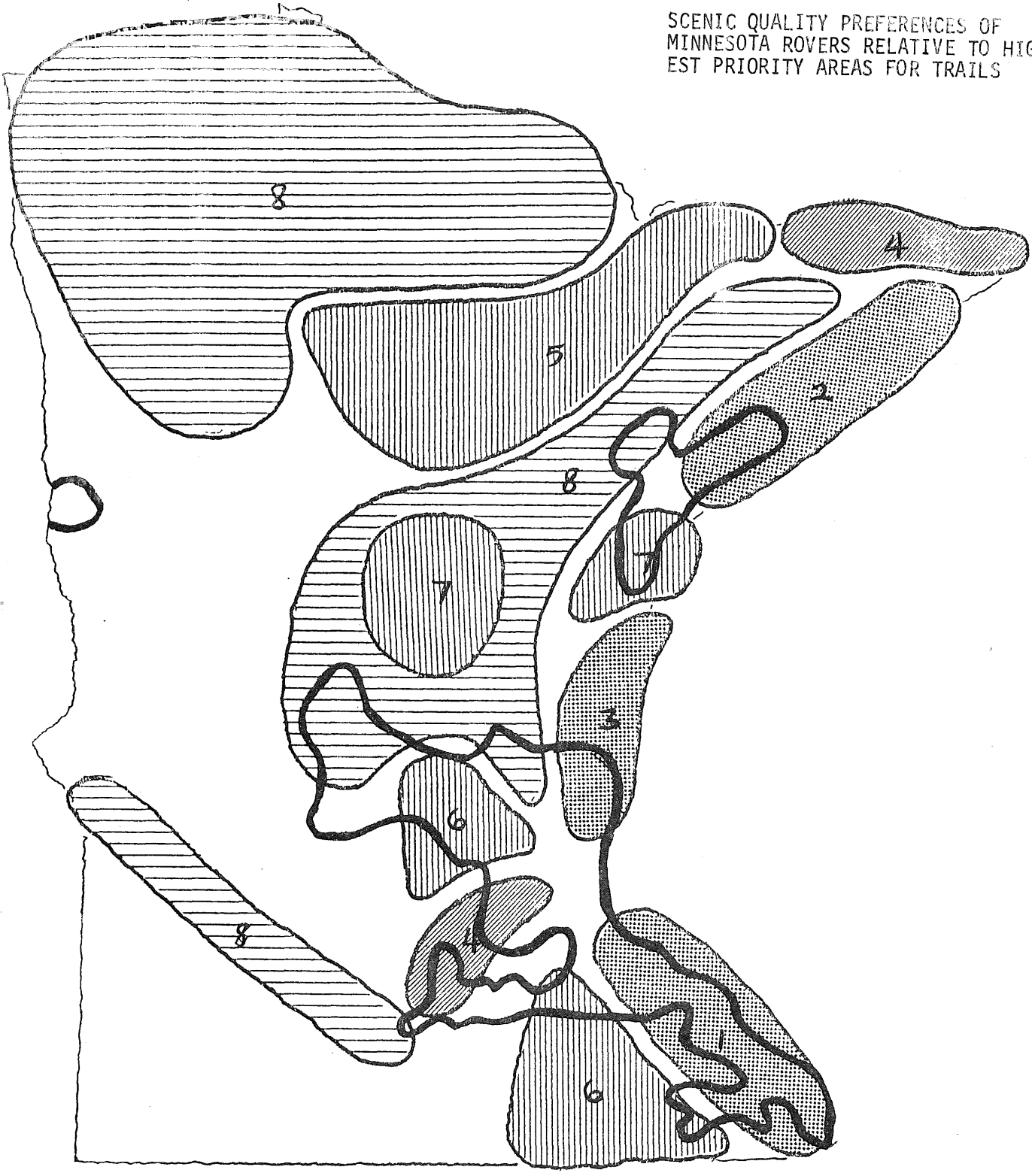

 HIGHEST PRIORITY AREAS
 FOR TRAILS - based upon
 Population/Resources Criteria

FIGURE 8
 SCENIC QUALITY PREFERENCES OF
 MINNESOTA ROVERS RELATIVE TO HIGH-
 EST PRIORITY AREAS FOR TRAILS



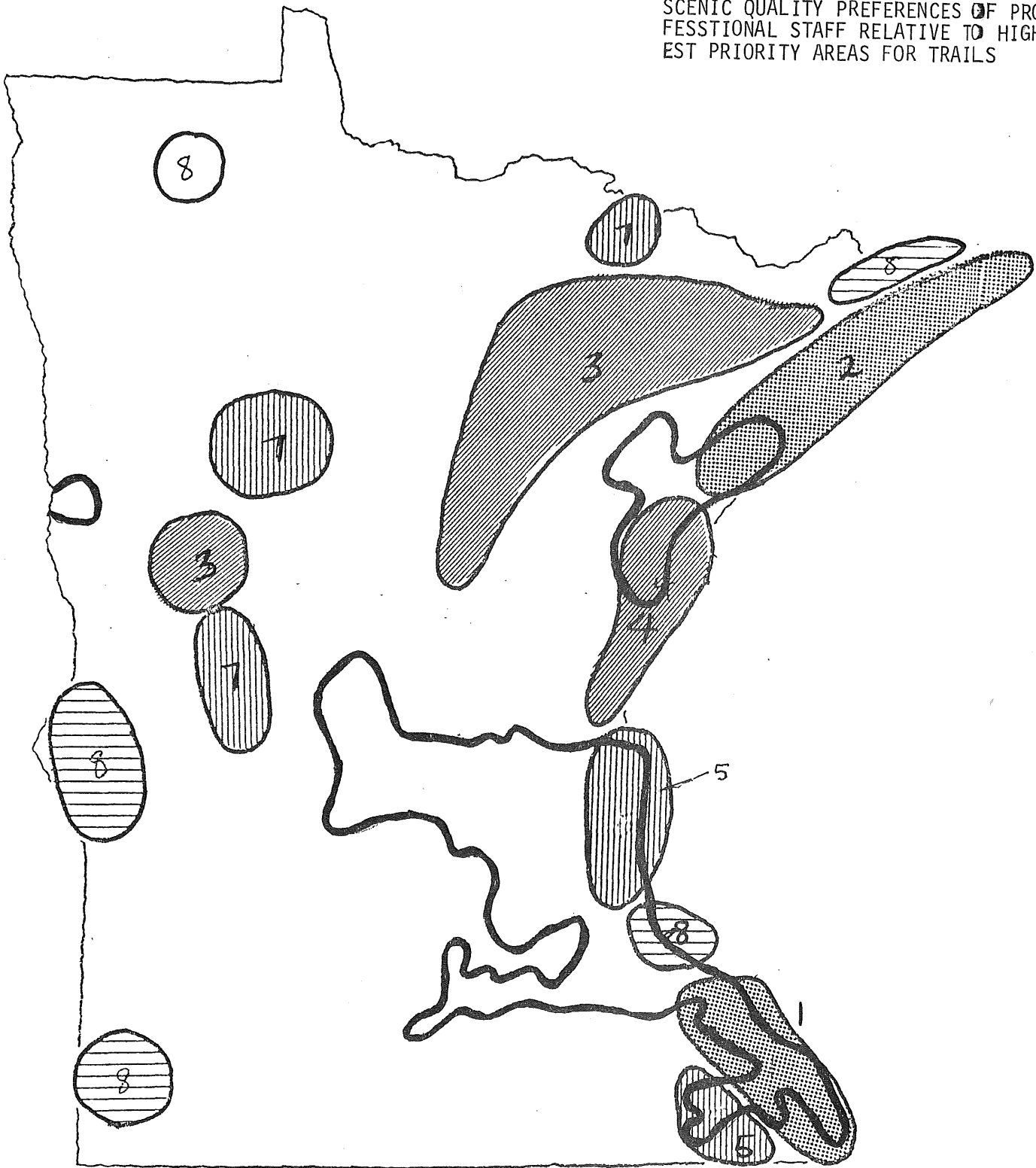
Shading Pattern	Percentage
Horizontal lines	90%
Vertical lines	30%
Diagonal lines	20%
Cross-hatch	5%

 HIGHEST PRIORITY AREAS FOR TRAILS - based upon Population/Resources Criteria

According to Minnesota Rovers Outing Club
 3/24/81, 30 responses.

Statewide DNR Trail Plan (Draft) Fig. 84, p. 209

FIGURE 9
 SCENIC QUALITY PREFERENCES OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF RELATIVE TO HIGHEST PRIORITY AREAS FOR TRAILS



Shading Pattern	AREAS JUDGED AMONG	MOST SCENIC BY	PERCENTAGE
[Dotted pattern]	"	"	95%
[Diagonal lines /]	"	"	30%
[Diagonal lines \]	"	"	20%
[Horizontal lines]	"	"	5%

HIGHEST PRIORITY AREAS FOR TRAILS - based upon Population/Resources Criteria

According to MN/DNR-T&WU Staff
 3/12/81 17 responses

Statewide DNR Trail Plan (Draft) Fig. 83, p. 208

POSSIBLE PATTERNS
OF MINNESOTA USER
INTEREST

Figure 10 suggests future user-potential for hosteling in Minnesota by showing the flow of selected Twin Cities metro region recreationists into out-state areas during 1977 and 1978. Of those activities selected, the greatest out-state activity of Twin Cities residents was downhill skiing (1,197,579 occasions), followed by hiking (606,039 occasions), bicycling (512,719), X-C skiing (307,780), and horseback (97,062).

FIGURE 10

Summary of Recreation Occasions of Twin Cities Metro Region Residents
by User Group and Destination

1. Downhill Skiing Occasions - Winter, 1977-78 Calculations	
Total skiing occasions:	2,596,633
Occasions within metro region:	- <u>1,281,455</u>
Resident skiing occasions outside metro region:	1,315,178
Resident occasions provided outside of Minnesota:	- <u>117,599</u>
Metro skiing occasions within the state but outside the metro region:	1,197,579
2. Hiking Occasions - Summer, 1978 Calculations	
Total hiking occasions:	2,589,868
Occasions within metro region:	- <u>1,690,279</u>
Resident hiking occasions outside metro region:	899,589
Resident occasions provided outside of Minnesota:	- <u>293,550</u>
Metro hiking occasions within the state but outside metro region:	606,039
3. All Bicycling Occasions - Summer, 1978 Calculations	
Total bicycling occasions:	26,938,243
Occasions within metro region:	- <u>26,384,680</u>
Resident bicycling occasions outside metro region:	553,563
Resident occasions provided outside of Minnesota:	- <u>40,844</u>
Metro bicycling occasions within state but outside metro region:	512,719
4. All Cross-Country Skiing Occasions - Winter, 1977-78 Calculations	
Total skiing occasions:	2,828,814
Occasions within metro region:	- <u>2,390,403</u>
Resident skiing occasions outside metro region:	438,411
Resident occasions provided outside of Minnesota:	- <u>130,631</u>
Metro skiing occasions within the state but outside metro region:	307,780
5. Horseback Trail and Other Riding Occasions - Summer, 1978 Calculations	
Total trail riding occasions:	772,893
Occasions within metro region:	- <u>647,180</u>
Resident trail riding occasions outside metro region:	125,713
Resident occasions provided outside of Minnesota:	- <u>28,651</u>
Metro trail riding occasions within the state but outside metro region:	97,062

(Source: SCORP - Report 2316 and 2324)

Bicyclists

Of the user-groups in Figure 10, bicyclists have the greatest potential, at least for a linear arrangement of hostels. Bicyclists fit well into the hosteling philosophy, with their light traveling habits and interest in distance touring. During the summer of 1980, approximately 50 percent of the 53,000 Luce Line State Trail user occasions were by bicyclists, and approximately 80 percent of the 41,000 user occasions on the Heartland State Trail were by bicyclists. The remaining user occasions on these trails were by hikers and joggers.

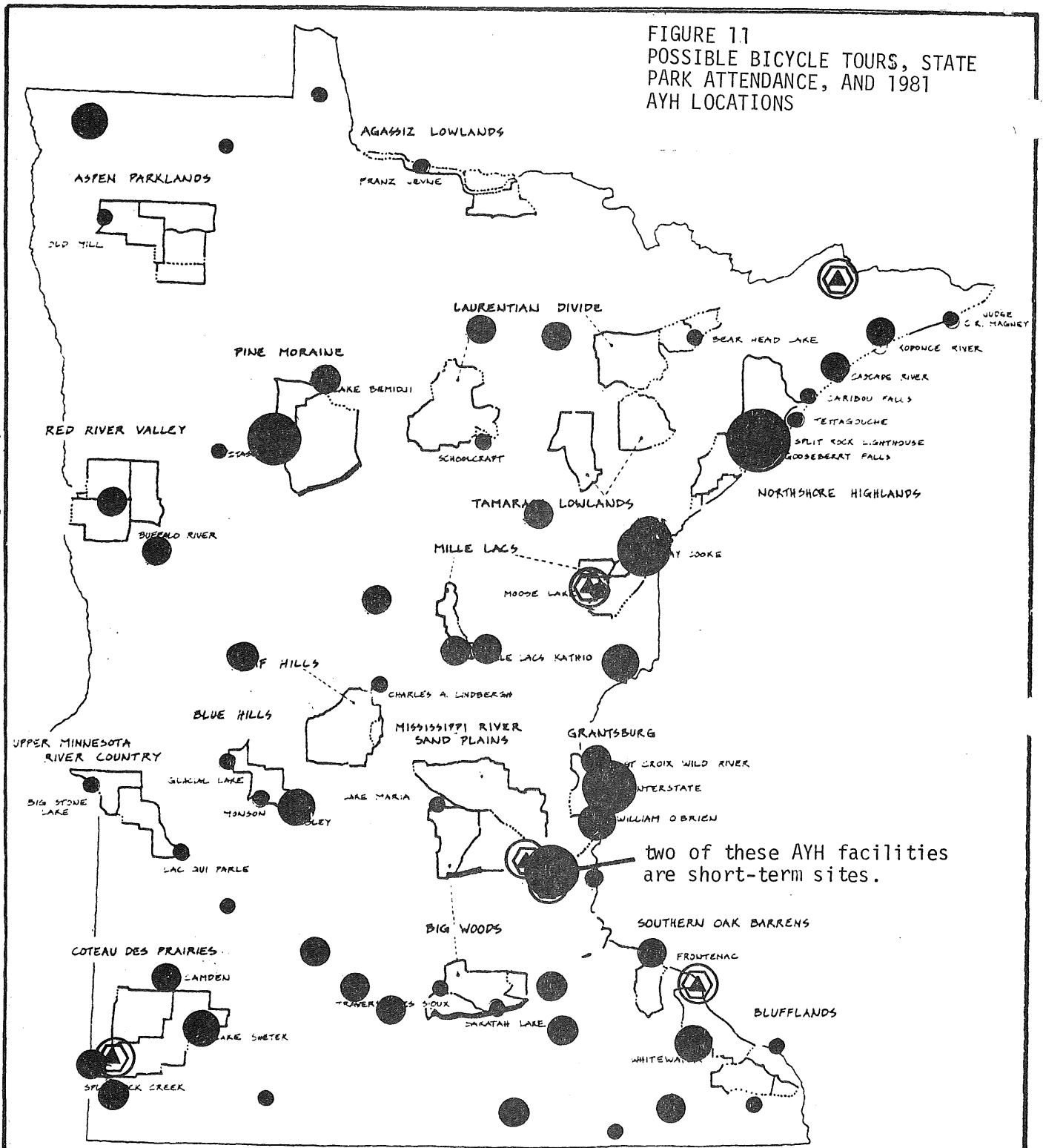
Bicycle touring has been showing significant growth nationally in the past few years, with bicycle sales leveling off at about 10 million per year, with 59 percent of these sales in lightweight touring bicycles. Bicycle equipment sales have also been increasing in recent years. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents to a 1980 Bicycle Magazine survey indicated they do short-distance touring, and a substantial number of these camp overnight. In addition, 25 percent of the respondents indicated they took weekend tours, 10 percent indicated they took one-to-two-week tours, and only 3 percent took two-to-four-week tours. The focus for Twin Cities bicycle hostels should therefore be upon the two-day traveler. This translates into a radius of 35 to 45 miles from the Twin Cities for typical touring bicyclists. This limited bicycling range could be vastly expanded with a little capital, creative marketing and local interest.

Figure 11 correlates bicycle touring possibilities with state park locations and present AYH sites. All AYH sites, excepting the canoeist-oriented site in extreme northeastern Minnesota, fit well within a system of bike-able roads and state parks.

Figure 12 combines Figure 11 information with Twin Cities metro usage during the summer of 1978. These bicyclists had a definite northern and northwestern orientation. The density of appropriate roads (see Figure 13) quite reasonably would be associated with bicycle use. Eighteen thousand miles of fair-to-good biking roads exist in the state. What Figure 13 does not explain is how bicyclists travel to the starting point of their bicycle trips. If this information were known, the appropriateness of clustered-versus-linear spacing of hostels could be determined.

The Minnesota touring bicyclist may well be drawn from the bicyclists now registered in the state. In 1981, approximately 150,000 bicyclists were registered. The total bicycling occasions in the state, however, are nearly 27 million, with over 500,000 occasions by Twin Cities bicyclists in out-state areas (see Figure 10).

FIGURE 11
 POSSIBLE BICYCLE TOURS, STATE
 PARK ATTENDANCE, AND 1981
 AYH LOCATIONS



POSSIBLE BICYCLE TOURS,
 (by landscape region)

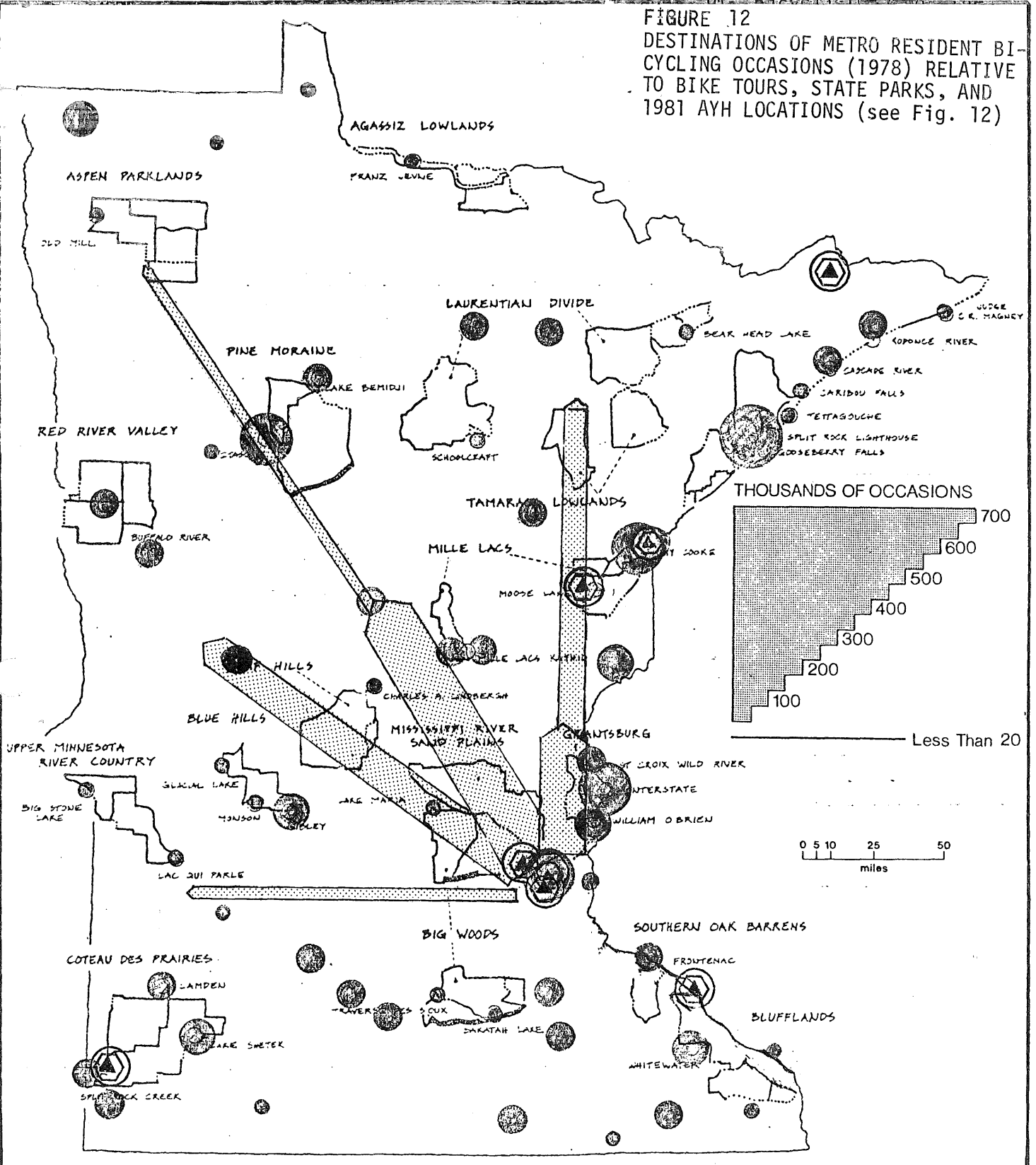
- on DNR Trail
- good/fair roads
- poor/gravel roads

STATE PARK ATTENDANCE AND 1981 AYH LOCATIONS.
 (five year annual averages)

- 30,000+
- 30,000-150,000
- 150,000-300,000
- 300,000-500,000
- 500,000+

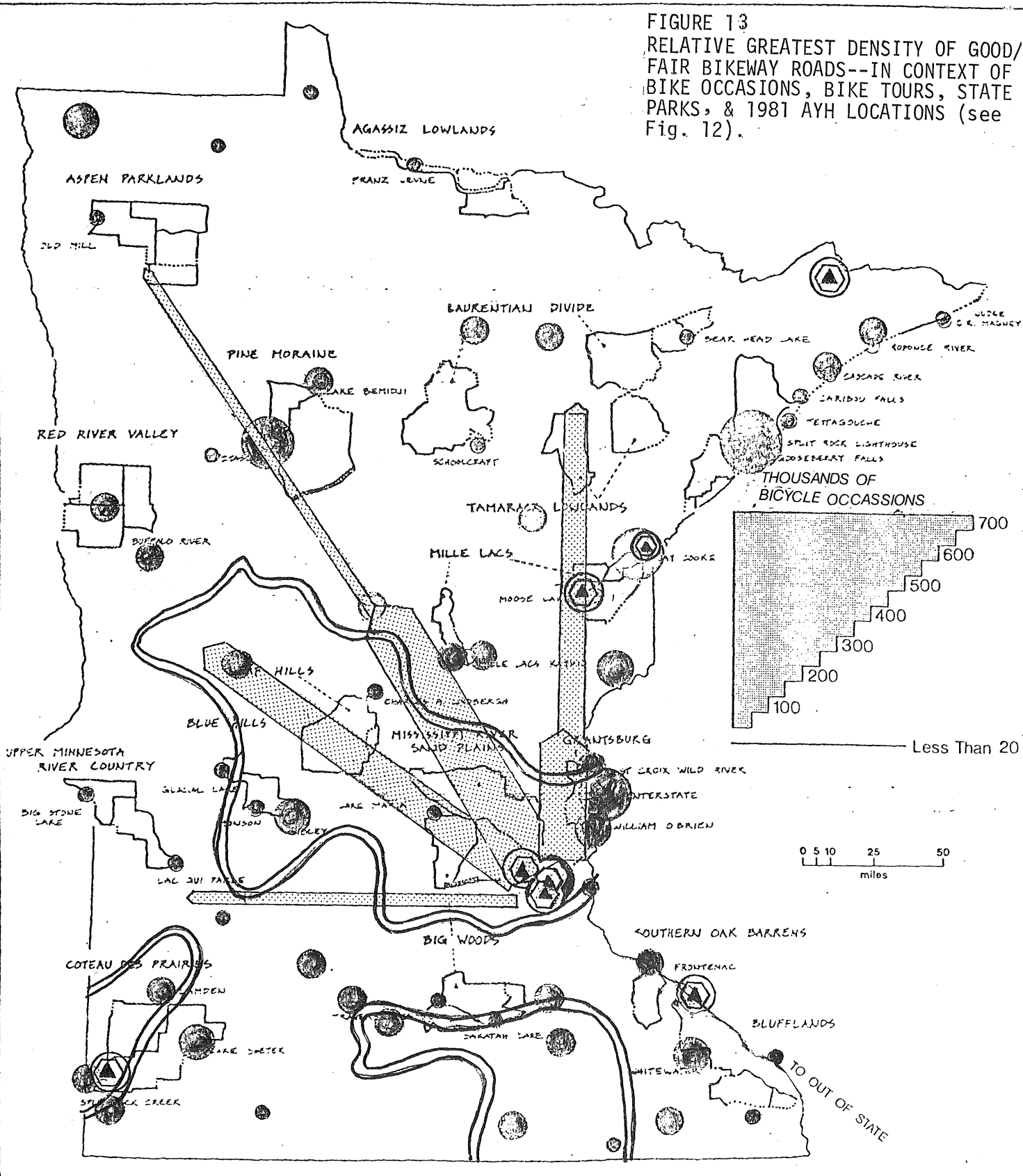


FIGURE 12
DESTINATIONS OF METRO RESIDENT BI-
CYCLING OCCASIONS (1978) RELATIVE
TO BIKE TOURS, STATE PARKS, AND
1981 AYH LOCATIONS (see Fig. 12)



41,000 OCCASIONS MADE OUTSIDE MINNESOTA	
26,938,000	TOTAL NUMBER OF OCCASIONS MADE BY METRO RESIDENTS
26,385,000	TOTAL NUMBER OF OCCASIONS MADE WITHIN THE REGION
553,000	TOTAL NUMBER OF OCCASIONS MADE OUTSIDE THE METRO REGION

FIGURE 13
 RELATIVE GREATEST DENSITY OF GOOD/FAIR BIKEWAY ROADS--IN CONTEXT OF BIKE OCCASIONS, BIKE TOURS, STATE PARKS, & 1981 AYH LOCATIONS (see Fig. 12).



41,000 OCCASIONS MADE OUTSIDE MINNESOTA	
26,938,000	TOTAL NUMBER OF OCCASIONS MADE BY METRO RESIDENTS
26,385,000	TOTAL NUMBER OF OCCASIONS MADE WITHIN THE REGION
553,000	TOTAL NUMBER OF OCCASIONS MADE OUTSIDE THE METRO REGION
——	RELATIVE GREATEST DENSITY OF GOOD/FAIR BIKEWAY ROADS

Cross-Country Skiers

In a SCORP survey of X-C skiers, 28 percent agreed or strongly agreed that tent sites, cabins or resorts should be available along trails. Figure 7, however, shows the reluctance of X-C skiers to travel. This drawback can, with proper promotion, be overcome. A good example of such promotion is the Telemark X-C ski resort in Cable, Wisconsin. This area is three hours by automobile from the Twin Cities and has an AYH year-round facility nearby, with 40-60 beds. In Minnesota, the Anderson House AYH facility at Wabasha, with X-C skiing along the Mississippi River, has about 30 beds.

An indication of the number of Minnesota X-C skiers can be found in the number of pairs of such skis in the state. That number was 400,000 in 1978. The total number of X-C skiing occasions in the state is about 2.8 million, while over 300,000 of these are by Twin Cities residents traveling out-state (see Figure 10). These X-C skiers have been traveling in a northerly, northwesterly, and to a lesser extent, southerly direction from the Twin Cities (see Figure 14).

Downhill Skiers

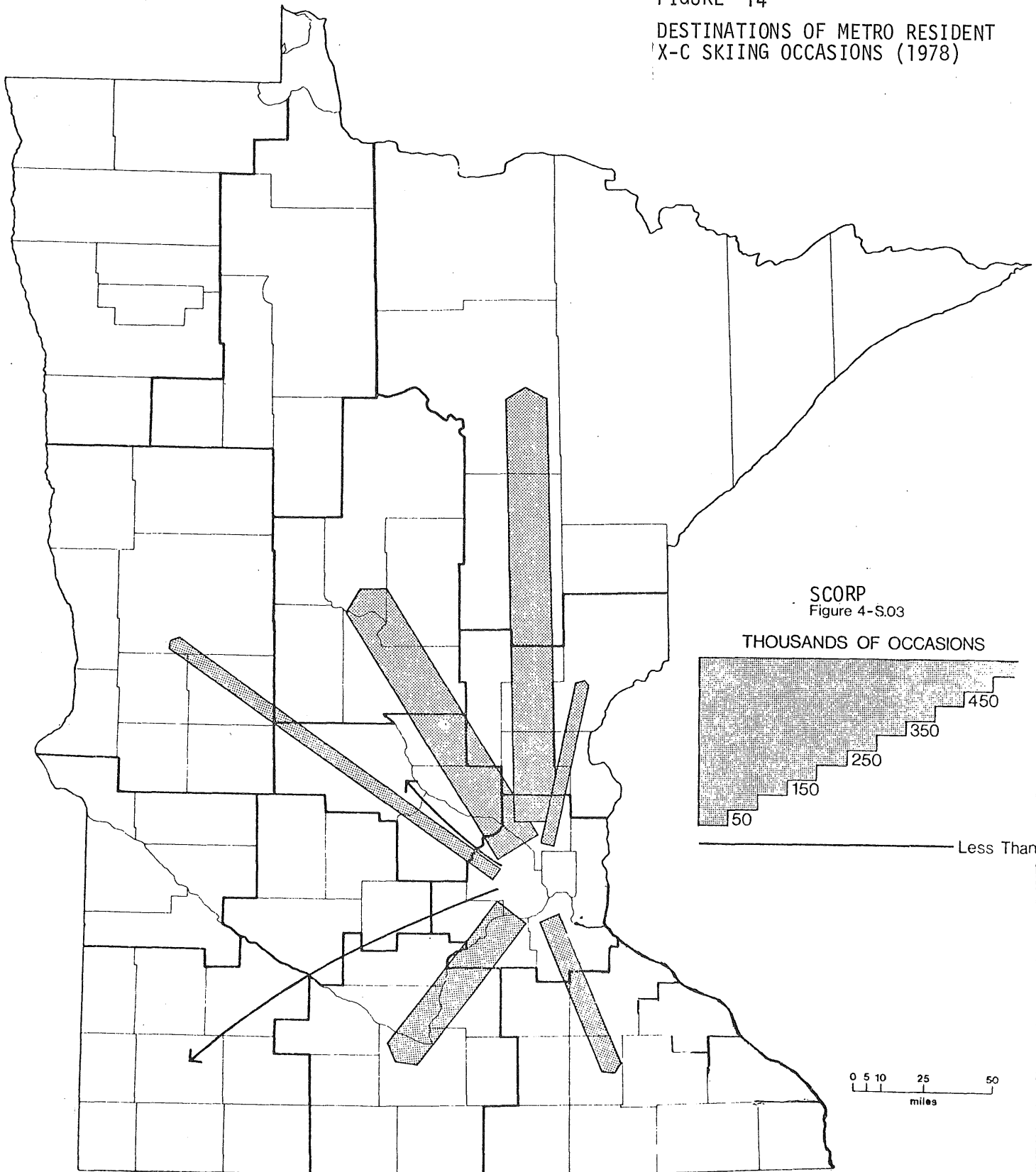
Figure 10 indicates that this group has the largest potential for outstate recreational travel. Whether this is a group with interest in using hostels, however, remains to be seen. Certainly, linear-arranged hostels would be of no use to downhill skiers in the relatively flat-landed Minnesota terrain. The possibility of destination-oriented hostels for downhill skiers could exist. This type of hostel, however, would rely upon motorized transportation which is already serviced by private-sector hotels, motels and resorts. Figure 10 shows the great potential numbers of outstate skiers, and Figure 15 shows the northerly and out-of-state preoccupation of this group.

Horseback Riders

Figure 10 indicates the very limited amount of horseback activity by metro residents traveling outstate. Within these 97,062 riding occasions, only one-third are actually trail experiences. Figure 16 shows the distribution of horses and ponies in Minnesota. It also correlates with the population / resource highest priority area. These horses are associated with urban dwellers and they represent riding horses rather than draught animals. There are approximately 60,000 horses in Minnesota, representing 180,000 horses. Figure 16 is most useful to show the pattern of horse ownership rather than the number of horses.

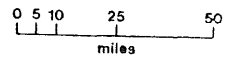
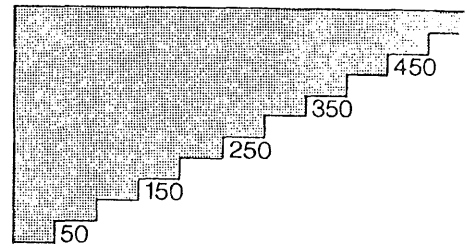
Horseback hosteling limitations would most probably include the extent of trail opportunities and the extent to which livery services could be provided.

FIGURE 14
 DESTINATIONS OF METRO RESIDENT
 'X-C SKIING OCCASIONS (1978)



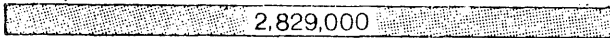
SCORP
 Figure 4-S.03

THOUSANDS OF OCCASIONS



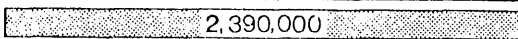
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

131,000 OCCASIONS MADE OUTSIDE MINNESOTA



2,829,000

TOTAL NUMBER OF OCCASIONS MADE
 BY METRO RESIDENTS



2,390,000

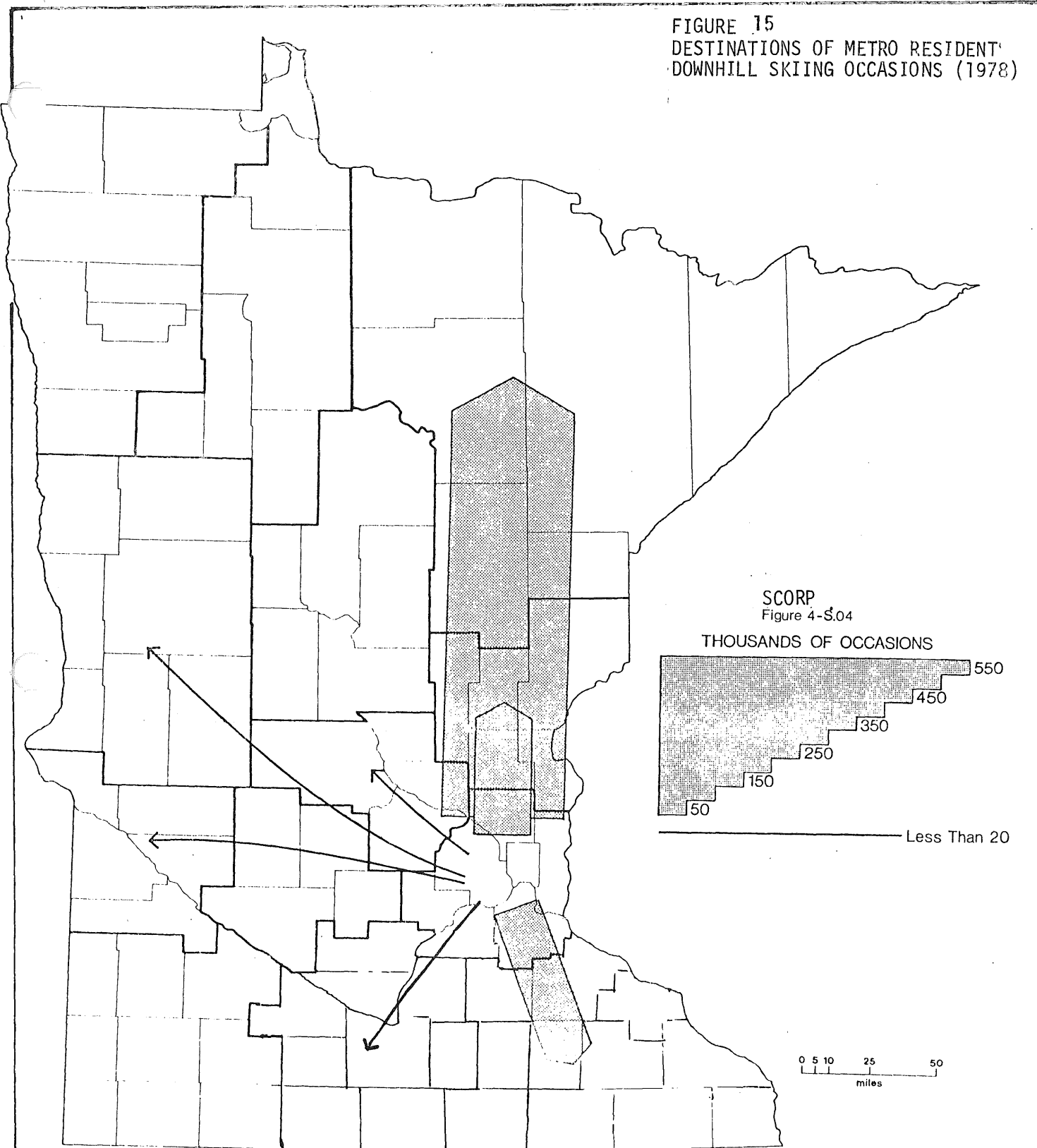
TOTAL NUMBER OF OCCASIONS MADE WITHIN THE REGION



439,000

TOTAL NUMBER OF OCCASIONS MADE OUTSIDE THE METRO REGION

FIGURE 15
 DESTINATIONS OF METRO RESIDENT'
 DOWNHILL SKIING OCCASIONS (1978)

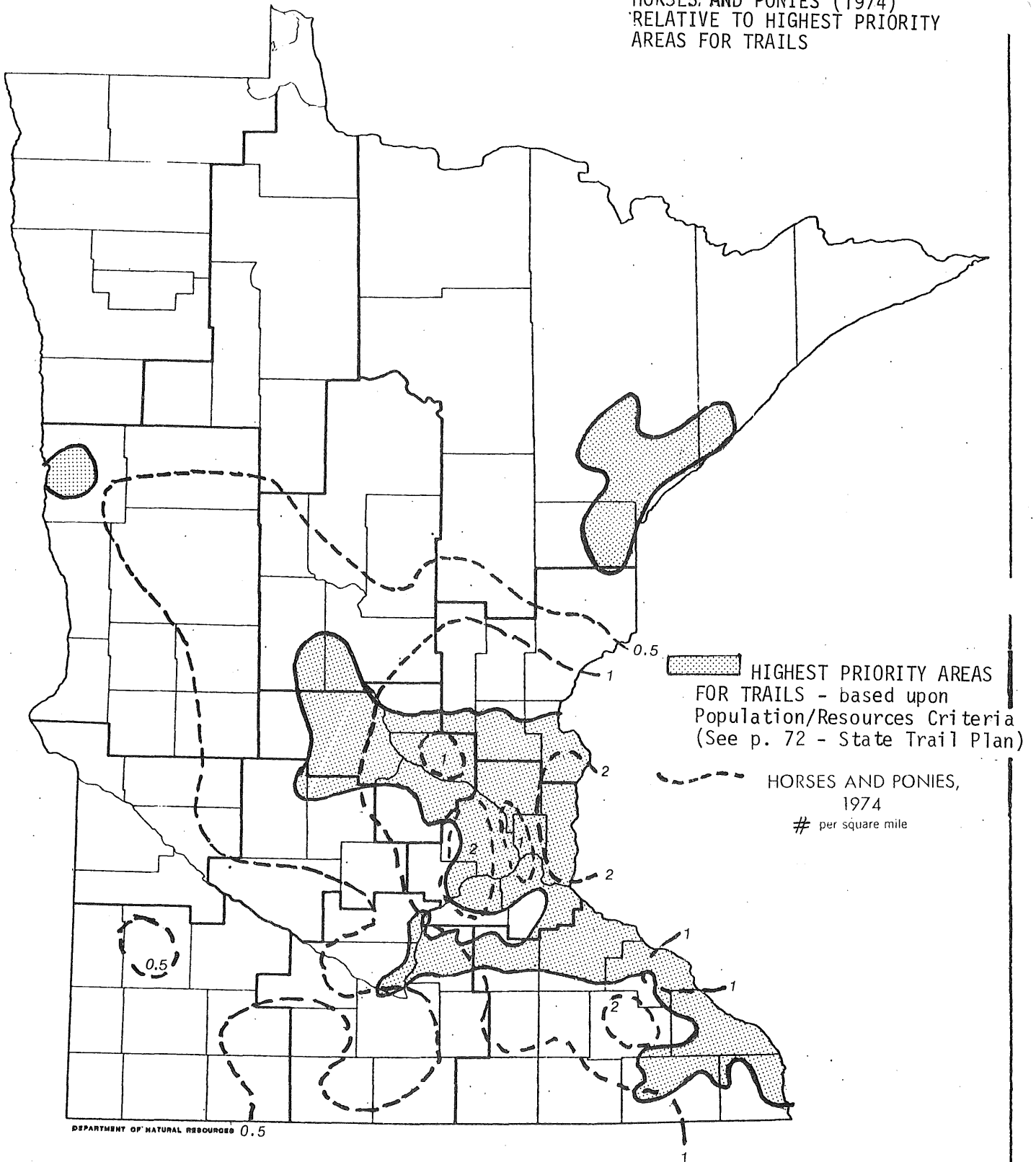


DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

118,000 OCCASIONS MADE OUTSIDE MINNESOTA

2,596,000	TOTAL NUMBER OF OCCASIONS MADE BY METRO RESIDENTS
1,281,000	TOTAL NUMBER OF OCCASIONS MADE WITHIN THE REGION
1,315,000	TOTAL NUMBER OF OCCASIONS MADE OUTSIDE THE METRO REGION

FIGURE 16
 HORSES AND PONIES (1974)
 RELATIVE TO HIGHEST PRIORITY
 AREAS FOR TRAILS



Sources: Borchert & Gustafson 1981, p. 82, Statewide DNR Trail Plan(Draft), p. 72.

Hikers

According to Figure 10, outstate hiking by urban residents is surpassed only by outstate downhill skiing. If one assumed hikers did not use other transportation, we would limit hiker hosteling potential to the average distance of daily travel, which is approximately ten miles. This represents a fairly dense hostel network. If, however, hiking hostelers were to arrive at their starting points by another means, such as public transportation, the sites serving them could be much more spread out, perhaps at distances which would also accomodate bicyclists.

Other Hostel Users

The list of potential hostelers is limited only by the imagination of the traveler. The discussed groups are most likely, both in actual numbers and appeal, to use hostel facilities. River canoeists are another group which could benefit from hosteling. Motorized travelers, however, are generally less interested in what hosteling offers. Existing overnight lodging is already adequately meeting the motorists' needs. On the other hand, budget motor travelers and in particular, international travelers, would be the motorized group most interested in hosteling.

AVAILABLE STRUCTURES

On Public Lands

The following quote from the Minnesota State Park and Recreational Area Plan of 1939 shows the basis for considering structures on public lands for hostel purposes:

"Youth Hostels - have not been planned in Minnesota due primarily to the sparsity of population and the lack of a ready demand for such type of activity. It is highly probably that this movement, which originated in Europe and has since spread to the Atlantic seacoast, will in some degree reach the Middle West, in which event, it is recommended that development of the activity preclude the construction of camps and structures for that specific purpose and foster the utilization of other state park buildings such as garages, warehouses and group camp buildings.

"Inasmuch as planned tours by the Youth Hostel movement will probably reach and utilize many properties under the supervision of national and state recreational agencies, it is suggested that all such agencies, including the Highway Department, cooperate in the encouragement of this excellent program."

This quote shows the foresight of the planners of that time. It was as applicable in 1939 as it is in 1982, with one exception: no longer is there sparsity of population. The population density has risen from 34.9 persons per square mile in 1940 to 50.5 persons in 1978. The population has also concentrated more within the Twin Cities area, where 36% of the population lived in 1940, but where 41% of it lived in 1978. These demographics make a central gateway hostel feeding into an outstate network more practical today than in 1940. (For a discussion of how hosteling has developed in Minnesota from 1940-1960, see Bridgeman, 1963). Also, one-fourth of Minnesota's land acreage (over 12.5 million acres) is under public ownership by various governmental agencies (state, federal, county, or local). The structures on these lands hold potential for finding surplus structures which could be adapted for hostels.

One aspect of Minnesota's outdoor recreation system is state parks. State parks offer certain structures that could be renovated for hostels. Based on availability, four parks have been identified as suitable for hostel development:

(1) Tettegouche State Park is on the North Shore. It has a 1910 logging camp composed of several buildings which were formerly being used as a Youth Conservation Corps camp. This facility would fit well with the hostel concept and little renovation would be needed. It is ten miles from George Crosby Manitou State Park, with its backpacking facilities, and it is fifteen miles from Gooseberry Falls State Park, which has a backpack / bicyclist campground.

(2) Itasca State Park is at the Mississippi Headwaters. According to Itasca's management plan, the former Civilian Conservation Corps building is to be remodeled for use as a seasonal park staff dormitory and in the future will have the potential for use as a hostel for destination travelers and bicycle tourists in the area.

(3) Afton State Park is located on the lower St. Croix. There is a private residence within the park that is to eventually become the property of the state (life estate). The abandoned barn of this residence has a loft which could be renovated for use as a hostel, provided the owner would give permission. This site could be worked into a Twin Cities area hostel system.

(4) Fort Snelling State Park is located where the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers meet. The historic Fort Snelling area has several buildings on the site. In particular, Building 63, as it is identified on the Fort Snelling management plan, is suitable for hostel purposes.

Many abandoned or surplus structures exist on public lands in Minnesota, but in order to assess their suitability for hostel purposes, it is necessary to identify these structures. This study cannot identify all the structures on public lands, but it does develop the criteria to evaluate structures using location and demand as the primary factor. A mechanism exists within the DNR to review surplus state as well as federal property. With hostel selection criteria in place, the DNR could screen potential properties as they become available.

Historic Structures

Historic structures as administered by the Minnesota Historical Society or other state and local agencies, or the private sector, may also be suitable for hostel purposes. But, whereas the structures on public lands are surplus or abandoned facilities, the structures administered by the Historical Society have historic significance. For the most part, these structures have been restored to period and are used for display purposes and therefore would not be useable as hostels. However, historic structures listed by the Standing Historic Structure Survey or structures listed by the State Historic Site Survey that have not been restored to period may prove suitable for use as hostels, again depending on location, need, and owner's consent.

FUNDING SOURCES

Funding is a constraint in hostel development, particularly in the initial stages. Many worthy projects and good locations have been forfeited because of a lack of funds. Many hostels have been started up in poor condition with inadequate, even unsafe, facilities. Hostels are vulnerable to economic factors outside the control of the operator because they are often low profit-margin businesses. Hostels are often low-budget affairs in order to provide the low-cost service for which they are known. Hostel operation generally has had a dismal record for finding start-up funds and has been unable to subsidize operations when necessary. Several sources of funds, however, are available:

(1) AYH is developing a national hostel capital fund which will be utilized for startup and renovation costs of new hostels. Grants from foundations, gifts from individuals, and apportionment of organizational income are serving to build this fund.

(2) Use of special funding from national foundations on a project-by-project basis is possible. Recent hostel development projects throughout the country have shown that such funds can be obtained when the case for their use is stated well.

(3) Government funding in a variety of forms has been available. Federal sources have included historic preservation money, Housing and Urban Development (HUD) money, the Urban Development Action Grant Program, and Economic Opportunity Act designations.

(4) Private investment in hostels is also a possibility. AYH may seek to cooperate with private business to finance hostel renovation and management.

(5) Hostels that perform well in their communities may find it easy to seek funding. Support from individuals, local foundations, and private businesses is possible.

(6) Hostel development has aspects which may interest funding simultaneously for historic preservation, neighborhood redevelopment, a needed tourist facility, or a specialized bicycle facility.

(7) When considering surplus structures on public property for hostels, it must be stressed that the renovation costs may represent significant savings in maintenance, continued losses to vandalism, and property liability. Even when the alternative is demolition, the renovation cost may be less. Therefore, the state may find it advantageous to provide funds for renovation of surplus structures for hostel purposes. State bonding may serve well for such purposes.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout the United States the interest in hostels is growing. AYH is the major proponent perpetuating this interest. The organization is seeking to expand development of hostels in the nation. On the federal level, legislation is being introduced that would enact development of a national hostel plan. State, county, and local governments are incorporating hostels into their recreation program planning. The National Park Service is permitting hostels to locate within park boundaries. This interest in the hosteling concept is based upon the inherent nature of hosteling which fills a gap in existing recreation programs. Hostels allow for a form of travel which promotes recreation, health, and education, and is open to all. Hosteling is an inexpensive means to tour America.

For Minnesota, hostels can be a viable part of its existing outdoor recreation system of parks, trails and waterways. Three recommendations can be made to aid in fitting hostels into Minnesota's Outdoor Recreation System: [1] Hostels should be located in primary target areas presented in this study. [2] Ideally, hostel planning should concentrate on developing a network of hostels which originate and radiate outward from a central hub. [3] A hostel program, to be successful, should be coordinated with AYH because they can provide the necessary expertise. Following these recommendations would ensure the success of hostels in the state in a way that would further strengthen Minnesota's tourist economy.

Hostel location criteria and present focus of tourist and recreation activities point to four primary target areas, or corridors, that radiate toward the four corners of the state. The goal should be to locate a chain of hostels within these corridors. One corridor would follow the St. Croix River Valley to the north shore of Lake Superior; another would go northwesterly toward Itasca State Park; the third, southwesterly along the Minnesota River Valley; and the last, south along the Mississippi River Valley. The Twin Cities, at the center of this hostel network, would be the location of a gateway hostel that would function as the first stop for foreign and outstate travelers. A building in Fort Snelling State Park's Officers' Row appears suitable for use as a youth hostel. A network of hostels such as this would take advantage of what Minnesota has to offer in recreation. It would make for easy hostel travel and would greatly increase hosteling in Minnesota.

Location, based on target areas, and a network plan are not enough to make a successful hostel program. The state should work closely with AYH (or suitable vendor) in developing a hostel program. AYH has the necessary expertise to fund and design structure renovation and can operate and control newly developed hostels.

This study is preliminary to any hostel planning that should follow. It provides the basis for further hostel planning in Minnesota. The above description of the hostel network was given as a possible future scenario to illustrate the dimension to which hostels could be planned in Minnesota. It is apparent that hostels can enhance Minnesota's Outdoor Recreation System, and thus, they warrant further planning.

Recommendation

It is recommended that a pilot hostel be established near the Twin Cities, perhaps along the St. Croix or Minnesota Rivers. This facility would service the metro short-distance traveler. There is also potential hostel interest at Itasca State Park for destination-traveler bicycle opportunities in the vicinity.

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*Outdoor Recreation Advisory Committee (ORAC) has representatives of developing regions 1 through 11, including Metro Council. Representatives are on an advisory group that oversees development of Minnesota's Outdoor Recreation System.

