A BRIEF HISTORY OF FOREST RECREATION

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INTRODUCTION

I. Past forest recreation development

A. Forest recreation is undoubtedly one of the oldest primary uses of our forests. Ever since man has inhabited this world, he has enjoyed the protection and mental relief afforded by our forests. Many people cannot stand the constant physical and mental strain which is a result of our modern methods of living and crowded habitations. Our forests have long afforded a simple relief for these people. Strangely enough though forest recreation is one of the last major forest uses to be developed. We as people go through life without realizing the benefits of those things which are common and ordinary to us, and yet the public when you speak to them of forests, generally are reminded of the good times which they have had while hunting, fishing, hiking or camping in our great timbered area.

Quite naturally our people are more interested in recreation than they are in any other use, since they can realize the direct benefit of such uses and these benefits are for the greatest number of people.

II. Recent recreation development

A. Recreation today is a result of at least four great events or trends in our modern civilization.

1. The present movement of our population from the country to the city.

2. The great strides made in the automobile industry which is leading to a modern motor age. According to figures
taken from "Facts and Figures of Automobile Industry" in 1931 there was one car.

3. The present widespread realization of the value of physical and mental benefits to be derived by our people from forest recreation.

4. The last few years have seen the adoption of the forty hour week and a continued policy of shorter working hours, and hence more leisure time which must be spent in some method of beneficial recreation.

B. Colonel Henry S. Graves is credited with giving or developing the idea of forest recreation in the United States. Today recreational values are placed on a sustained yield basis much the same as is being developed in our lumber industry. In the past many areas have been unregulated in recreation and as a result have degenerated due to intensive use by trampling and burning out of the ground cover, mutilated trees, ruination of beauty along shore lined of lakes, and destruction of scenic beauty along our roads and highways. A very fine example of overuse by trampling the ground cover is in the Redwoods Region of California where some experts claim these giant trees have been killed and injured due to lack of soil aeration and life as a result of such practices. For this reason some recreationists have divided the field into two major divisions.

1. Areas of intensive use.

2. Areas of non-intensive use.

The Forest Service in the past looked upon the recreationist as
being a menace due the fires he caused and the poor sanitation features practiced by him, but today they are opening up our National Forests to the public and welcoming them. Congress is also realizing the recreational value and are helping by methods of land classification and larger appropriations.

Under the favorable side of recreation we have:

1. Economically additional funds and income.
2. Educational relief from worries, inspirational and it teaches the public the value of our forests.
3. Mental and physical health improvement of our people.

Some of the unfavorable sides of recreation in our forests.

1. Conflicts with industry due to fires.
2. Influences the biological balance of nature.
3. Increased fire hazards and public expenditures.

It is an almost impossible problem to place a monetary value on forest recreation, but Frank A. Waugh attempted to do so by comparing it with other recreational values. He compared it with such recreation as movies, ball games, concerts and other forms of recreation upon which a definite per hour cost value can be computed. As a result Mr. Waugh determined that forest recreation would cost from 10¢ to 25¢ per hour as a minimum figure. The following figures will then show a comparative value of our forests to recreationists:

1. 4,000,000 visitors to our National Parks per year.
2. 35,000,000 visitors to our National Forests per year.
3. 50,000,000 visitors to our State Forests and Parks per year.

With a growing population and increased leisure time, we can expect
these figures to continually rise each year.

C. In consideration of Forest Recreation plans two major Departments must be considered and the policies of each factor taken into consideration.

1. National Parks under the Department of Interior.
These Parks have as their chief objection, the preservation for present and future generations the outstanding scenic and inspirational values. They operate on the theory of maintaining our forests in absolute non-use for any commercial values except capitalized concessions which give the public all possible comforts and make charges for such recreational uses.

2. National Forests under the Department of Agriculture.
Their Policy is to conserve the forests for all legitimate uses and to regulate stream flow, so as to bring the greatest good to the greatest number of people. Their policy is complete utility of economic uses of timber, minimum control of the public, no recreational charges, and diversified organization. They are attempting to correlate aesthetic and economic control for the public.
A unit recreation plan is a picture or a visualization of some scheme for a definite area. In order to have an effective plan, it must be developed from nature's scheme and not man's, since as much artificiality as possible must be eliminated. A plan for a region or an area is the revelation of nature's setting for some activity.

It must be remembered that recreation is not necessary for badly existence, (except to a certain minimum) but it is necessary for real living or a "fuller life" according to President Roosevelt. Recreation is not merely "non-industry," it is the reason for industry.

Recreation plans as used by the U. S. F. S. in region six are divided into:

1. Regional Recreation Plans.
2. Forest Recreation Plans.
3. Unit Recreation Plans.

In making a unit recreation plan for any given area one of the first requirements is a complete forest description of the area. This description includes:

1. **Location and Area** of the tract.
   a. Accessibility by roads, trails, etc.
   b. Distance from cities.
   c. Amount of people visiting area at present time.

2. **Climate**.
   a. Rainfall, Snowfall, and Elevation.
   b. Temperature.
   c. Storms and Winds
6. Ruggedness or toography.

3. Forest Cover.
   a. Tree species, shrubs, and flowers.
   b. Brush and timber relations to recreation.

4. Natural Phenomena.
   a. Geological formations.
   b. Scenic and biological possibilities.
   c. Possibilities of future use and expansion.

5. Wild Life.
   a. Type or kind and abundance of animals.
   b. Fishing and hunting conditions.

6. Sanitation and Improvement.
   a. Purity measures and possibilities.

7. Other Uses.
   a. Grazing values and regulations.
   b. Timber values and cutting regulations.
   c. Reservoir and Watershed values.

   a. Safety and hazards.
   b. Protection plans.

Unit recreation plans are an inventory and classification of a group or series of tracts along a main recreation road, recreation watershed, recreation Lake, mountain meadow system, or a combination of these. These unit plans do not necessarily have to be completed at one time, but may allow for future expansion or changes in program.
In making any plans one of the first basic principles is to maintain the area under natural conditions as much as possible. Virgin conditions must, of course, be altered in making any plan but these should be kept to a minimum such that the recreationist obtains the idea of nature unspoiled.

Unit Plan Types.

1. Forest Camp Tracts.

These large public camps are first in priority and should be selected adjacent or close to the main routes of travel. Convenience is the main asset of these camps, that is to be easily accessible to the public. These tracts must be attractive and consist of sufficient improvements so the camper can easily build up a comfortable camp, and then lie around, fish, boat, swim, or hunt.

Improvements must be carefully watched after and where artificial fireplaces are built, strict enforcement of their use should be followed. Open fires will eventually ruin the scenery of such an area and give the picture of a burned over area. The fire danger on these tracts is usually very small after a few years intensive use such as these areas are usually subject to.

Sources of good drinking water and proper camp sanitation are of course two of the first considerations to look for.

Scenic beauty is often one of the major reasons for locating one of these tracts. Often many of these scenic spots are very well adaptable to public use and cannot be destroyed by intensive use.
Some of the improvements and special features of these recreation tracts should be discussed:

1. Parking Areas.
   a. The present policy is to allow cars to be parked wherever they desire and is convenient to the recreationalist.
   b. This policy must be changed as we have more intensive use of our tracts to one of designated parking areas.
   c. These parking areas must be within reasonable walking distance of the use areas. If this is impossible the use of spur lines and turn arounds so the driver can unload the party at the use area, and then drive back to the parking area.
   d. Parking areas should be screened out from other areas, have good exits and entrance facilities, and should be safe where there is danger from heavy traffic.

2. Tables, Benches and Fireplaces.
   a. The design of these improvements should be of rustic and natural features and should be designed for very hard and rough use.
   b. Tables and benches are best made out of hewn logs.
   c. Fireplaces have in the past been based more on fire protection, but in the future will also take into consideration the aesthetic viewpoint. (Stoves are ugly in appearance and present poor harmony.)
   d. A few of these improvements should be grouped but most
of them should be singly and separated by groups of
trees, brush screens, etc.
e. Cement fireplaces are preferable with the one ob-
jection that hot fires are built in them and then
cold water poured on them to put the fire out. This
cracks the cement, but can be remedied by the use of
fire brick lining wherever possible.
(Metal discs of instructions should be posted nearby.)

The Public Forest Camp tracts are usually divided into two
major divisions.

1. **Camp Grounds.**

   These are overnight or extended use areas and must
   be so arranged and planned to allow the recreationist
   facilities for several days use.

2. **Picnic Grounds.**

   These areas are usually smaller and are not arranged
   for overnight use. Their purpose is solely as an after-
   noon or day picnic or lunch grounds.

The Forest Service devides these tracts according to size.

1. Class A Camps
   5,000 visitors annually.
2. Class B Camps
   500-5,000 visitors annually.
3. Class C Camps
   50-500 visitors annually.

2. **Resorts Sites.**

   These sites include the hotel and sanitarium sites with
   special priority for the health camps.

   1. These camps should have adequate and safe drinking water
and good chances of safe sewage disposal.

2. Hot Springs, scenic beauty, etc. may be the deciding feature in their location.

3. Commercial site tracts are often included in these tracts and give such services as stores, garages, etc.

4. Seclusion is often an important factor in their location, but good roads are a necessity to draw the best trade.

5. Organization tracts are also listed along these lines and include such camps as Boy Scouts, Y.M.C.A., Elks Lodge, etc.
   a. Fire hazard is of prime importance here since these camps are often made up of women and children.
   b. They usually include tracts from one acre to twenty-five acres or more in size.
   c. Play areas are a very important unit in the location of these tracts. These play areas must be located and adapted to heavy use. They should be level and kept in as naturalistic order as possible.


After giving priority and selecting the community tracts, the areas for private use can be selected. Although the summer home owner is not given any priority, he usually obtains good sites because he is often the first to locate these areas and apply for them. He is generally one of the best and most careful users of forests. He is also one of the Forests biggest and best advertisers and is usually willing to cooperate on any plans for the benefit of the forests.
Summer homes are usually arranged in a group idea, although a few isolated tracts may be found. This colony arrangement is based on man's gregariousness, although it should be the policy and is desired to have some sort of a tree or brush screen between each individual summer home site.

Some of the characteristics of good site locations and homes are:

1. **Buildings.**

The building should be skillfully subordinated to and harmonized with the natural landscape. Construction from "native" material as logs, stone, etc. should be encouraged. Along this line there is a tendency towards the vertical alignment of logs in the construction of cabins. This vertical arrangement fits in very well with the pattern of the dense forests. Glaring colors should be prohibited.

The Forest Service at present must O.K. any buildings permits on these sites as to type, fire menace, sanitation, and appearance. Also the service is tending towards a method of standardizing many of the building features and requirements. They are emphasizing the attractive and rustic styles with the soft color combinations especially of the grays, browns, and greens. The use of rough lumber and stains is preferred to finished lumber and glossy paints. The summer home can be built cheaply, but yet can be attractive, safe and sound.

2. **Location and Lot Description.**

Summer homes should be somewhat secluded from the dust,
noise and traffic of the rest of the world. The homes should be well located out of the field of vision from main traveled roads, and from the view of lake or river travels. They should not all be located directly along the shore lines of a lake or river, thus destroying recreational value of land to the rear. They must also be safe from the hazards of high water and floods, and should preferably be located back on secondary benches of steams and valleys.

Lots are leased from 1/5 to 1/2 acre by the Forest Service but are not sold. No attempt is made to square up these lots, but they are usually so located as to fit the topography, roads, streams, etc. The fee charged by the Service for these lots generally runs from $10 to $25 per year payable at the first of each year.

3. Landscaping Summer Home Sites.

The landscaping plan should conserve all the natural beauty possible by preserving the brush and tree screens. The location of dusty roads too near the buildings should be avoided. Small trees should not be "limbed up" giving an artificial appearance but only the dead limbs should be removed. Brush and tree screens should be encouraged especially between houses and roads or steams. An occasional small glimpse of the road or stream is preferable, but not in such a manner as to become ordinary or monotonous.
13.

If any planting is to be done only the native trees and shrubs should be used. In any case the axe should be used sparingly as you can cut out undesirable trees and shrubs at a later time when you are certain they should go.

4. Roads.

The object of roads is a means of ingress and are not intended to be high speed highways. They are laid out with a view of showing the people the beauty of the area and yet serve as a means of safe and moderate rate transportation. Also the fire protection value of these roads is quite important as well as serving scenic value.

Width and straightness are not the objectives upon which these roads are built as is the case in highway construction. The tendency is to follow the general contours of the area, thus keeping your cuts and fills to a minimum. They are so located as to make use of outstanding scenic views and should have good scenic strips along both sides of the road. Thus the slashing and debris should be burned along these roads both as a scenic and a fire protection measure. This will ordinarily cost from $400 to $475 per mile for the areas here on the West Side of the Cascades. One of the big thorns in the present road system in our National Forests is the poor mining laws which we have at present. Certain individuals can stoke out mining claims along these roads,
and then set up roadside enterprises which are often a public nuisance. The only feasible method of combating this practice is to bring our mining laws up to date.

This thesis has dealt only with the ordinary recreation areas of our National Forests. There are six main classes of recreation areas and I have covered briefly the last class. Following is a list of these six types.

1. Primitive Areas.

These were formerly called wilderness areas. These areas are administered with the least possible alterations or human interference and must be officially approved by the Chief Forester.

2. Formal Dedication Recreation Areas.

They are usually large areas in which recreation is considered of paramount importance and all other conflicting uses are considered as subservient.


They are established by acts of congress or by the President the particular act so passed will define its particular uses and conditions. These monuments are put to similar use as the National Parks.

4. Natural Areas.

These differ from the primitive area only in the character of the land involved. They are set aside in the natural state to be used as a comparison, etc. for educational and scientific interest.
5. Experimental Forests and Ranges.
    These are self-explanatory.

6. Ordinary Recreation Areas.
    These are the Ranger Districts upon our public forests and are used by the public for recreation.
    The above named primitive areas are rapidly disappearing and can never be replaced. There is need for strict conservation here if we ever expect to maintain these areas. The great increase in the amount of motor roads has certainly not improved the matter. It has been ascertained that only 5% of the visitors in Yellowstone National Park leave these roads to view this great park area. With the increased use and development of the aeroplane and radio, perhaps some of our remaining primitive areas may be saved.

In conclusion mention might be made of some of the methods and instruments used in making these unit plan recreation tracts. The transit is seldom used in these surveys, except in a few cases where there are adjoining alienated lands, local magnetic attraction or some other justifying circumstances. The plane table is perhaps the most useful instrument for these tract surveys. Its accuracy is within the desired limits, and it is very quick and simple except its use is limited in dense timber. Also the ordinary compass and tape or chain are commonly used. It is probably true that recreation surveys are not very accurate and are usually quite hurriedly accomplished, but their accuracy is undoubtedly within the limits of error necessary for this type of work.
CONCLUSIONS.

It might be said that after centuries of use of the Forests for recreation, it has not been until the last few years that any beneficial legislation or appropriations have been made in this direction. It seems very probable though that Forest recreation will be one of the major forest uses in the future with the increased leisure time of our American people.

Unit Recreation Plans are the chief guides in the management of our National Forests for Recreational purposes. These plans are the actual working units of our one large Forest or Regional Plan, and are the units in which the American public is interested. These units must grow and expand upon a definite plan and not just come into existence by hit-or-miss, if they are to serve the public to their best benefit.
17.

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