

# Outdoor Recreation

by David A. King\*

A recent publication by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation<sup>1</sup> (BOR) makes it possible for the first time to compare national outdoor recreation participation at two points in time, 1960 and 1965. The data for 1960 were gathered for the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (ORRRC) while those for 1965 were gathered for the BOR's use in developing a national recreation plan.

Outdoor recreation participation data showing increases in participation are often cited to show that the "demand" for outdoor recreation activities, facilities, and resources has increased or shifted. This is implied in this BOR report.

However, recreation participation changes can be the result of changes in demand and/or the supply of facilities. The BOR report does not provide information on changes in the quantities of various facilities over the five year period. Nor can it be assumed the quantities of various types of facilities were in the same relative proportions in 1965 as in 1960. Thus, it is impossible to ascribe these participation changes to shifts in either demand or supply.

A great deal of caution is necessary in interpreting and evaluating the report. The following attempt at an interpretation will illustrate the problem while providing wider circulation of some of the results of the 1965 survey.

## Proportion Participating

There has been a rather startling change in the percent of the population participating in the Walking for Pleasure activity. The percent of the population (12 years and older) participating in this activity has increased

15 points. A typical example of this activity is an evening stroll around the block or through a city park. Thus, no special facilities are needed to participate and this change seems to be an expression of a shift in demand for the activity. Are Americans beginning to listen to the charge that they are too sedentary?

The next largest increase in the proportion of the population participating occurred for the Sightseeing activity where the percentage increased 7 points. It is difficult to

an activity is engaged in is another measure of participation. Again, Walking for Pleasure stands out and it has taken over as the number one activity. Swimming has also moved up in the rankings. However, the percentage increases for Picnicking, Camping and Sightseeing are greater than for Swimming. Again, because Walking for Pleasure is probably less related to specific facilities, a shift in demand for it appears to be a reasonable conclusion.

Though the increase in the proportion of the population participating in various activities has been modest for most activities, the increases in occasions of participation are greater than the population increase of 8 percent. Those who participate are doing these things more frequently than was the case in 1960.

## Occasions Per Participant

Still another way of looking at participation is the frequency with which those who participate engage in the activities. This measure gives some indication of how important the activity is to those who do it. A better indication, of course, would include some measure of time spent at the activity.

Proportion of Population<sup>1</sup> Participating in Selected Outdoor Recreation

Activity	1960		1965	
	Per cent of Population	Rank	Per cent of Population	Rank
Picnicking	53	1	57	1
Driving for Pleasure	52	2	55	2
Swimming	45	3	48	4
Sightseeing	42	4	49	3
Walking for Pleasure	33	5	48	4
Fishing	29	6	30	5
Boating <sup>2</sup>	22	7	24	6
Nature Walks	14	8	14	7
Camping	8	9	10	8
Horseback Riding	6	10	8	9
Hiking <sup>3</sup>	6	10	7	10
Water Skiing	6	10	6	11

<sup>1</sup> Population 12 years of age and older.

<sup>2</sup> Other than canoeing and sailing.

<sup>3</sup> With pack.

Source: "Outdoor Recreation Trends" Bureau of Outdoor Recreation pp. 22-24.

speculate what might have happened on the supply side for this activity. Certainly the number of nationally prominent natural phenomena has not increased. But access to these areas and to less prominent scenic features may have improved.

Increases in the proportion of the population participating in the other activities are small and could be due to sampling error. No statement on sampling errors is made in the publication.

## Frequency of Participation

The number of occasions on which

The increases in occasions per participant are small in an absolute sense, but some are large relative to the 1960 base. Picnicking has shown the largest relative increase in occasions per participant. Although the number of persons engaging in Water-skiing just kept pace with the population increase, the number of occasions per participant has increased, resulting in an overall increase in total occasions.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of the Interior, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. 1967. "Outdoor Recreation Trends, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington. 24 pp. illus.

## Recreation . . .

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Two activities show a decrease in occasions per participant, Driving for Pleasure and Horseback Riding, but the changes are very small and could be due to sampling errors. For Picnicking, Sightseeing, Swimming, Camping and Waterskiing there have been fairly large increases in occasions per participant. Some of the reasons for this could be; on the supply side, more and improved facilities; and on the demand side, more leisure time, interest, experience, and higher incomes.

The actual annual average growth for the 1960-1965 period has exceeded the projected annual average growth in participation for all activities except Driving For Pleasure. Large differences between projected and actual growth have occurred for Walking for Pleasure, Picnicking, Camping and Sightseeing. It is interesting that ORRRC, in their projections with an assumption of an increase in supply, assumed there would be no change in supply for Walking for Pleasure. Thus, the conclusion of a shift in demand for that activity is strengthened. There is no doubt that the total physical supply of facilities for picnicking and camping has increased over the 5-year period, but it is not known whether there has been a per capita increase.

### Conclusions

The changes shown are interesting, but very little can be said about why they occurred. It is very probable that



Douglas  
KAWT Livestock Report, 6:20 a.m. and 12:10 p.m. Monday thru Saturday.

Phoenix  
KOOL Garden Show, 8:45 a.m., Saturday.

KOOL Farm Report, 5:40 a.m., Monday thru Saturday.

KOY Farm Report, 6:50 a.m., Monday thru Friday, and 6:55 a.m. Saturday.

KPHO Farm Program, 5:45 a.m., Monday thru Saturday.

KTAR & KTAR-TV, Farm, 5:55 a.m. Monday thru Friday.

KUPD Farm, 5:50 a.m. & 12:28 p.m. Monday thru Friday.

## Town & Country Life Conference

It's a bit early, folks, but Miss Jean M. Stewart reminds it's time to start making plans to attend the annual Town and Country Life Conference.

The dates are June 3 through 7. The place is the University of Arizona campus in Tucson.

Some 400 women and some men participate in the conference each year, and the people come from all 14 of the state's counties.

"Everyone is invited," says Miss Stewart.

Commenting on past conferences, she said, "most of the women tell me they come to learn, to get a break in their homemaking routines, and to make new friends from all parts of the state."

She urged that persons interested

in attending, men and women alike, contact the Cooperative Extension Service office in your county.

The list follows:

Apache — Miss Viola Koenig, St. Johns, 85936. Cochise — Mrs. Mildred Marrs, 112 E. Maley St., Willcox, 85643. Coconino — Miss Peggy Putnam, P. O. Box 790. Flagstaff, 86001. Gila — Mrs. Mary Kay Simons, Globe, 85501.

Graham — Mrs. Darleen Kurtz, Safford, 85546. Greenlee — Miss Nancy Prugel, Duncan, 85534. Maricopa — Miss Edna Weigen, 1201 W. Madison, Phoenix, 85007. Mohave — Mrs. Audrey Davies, P. O. Box 1111, Kingman 86401.

Navajo — Mrs. Ina Ward, Holbrook 86025. Pima — Miss Lee McGoogan, 112 W. Pennington St., Tucson 85701. Pinal — Miss Shirley Weik, Casa Grande 85222. Santa Cruz — Mrs. William Hagler, Nogales 85621. Yavapai — Mrs. Katherine Brittingham, Prescott, 86301. Yuma — Mrs. Helen Wissner, 1047 Fourth Ave., Yuma 85364.

the growth in participation in Walking for Pleasure shows a shift in demand because of its freedom from specific facility requirements.

The BOR report implies that these data show an increase in demand, pressure on recreation facilities and resources, and a need for more facilities. This conclusion cannot be drawn from the information in the report since no information is presented on how the number or quantity of facilities has changed (a general increase has occurred) over the five-year period. The data in the report cannot be used to justify the provision of additional recreation facilities.

Participation in outdoor recreation activities will probably continue to increase as long as additional facilities are provided, given population growth, since entrance fees are so low as to be an insignificant portion of the visitors' total cost, as well as below the costs of providing and maintaining the facilities.

This increasing participation, then does not show a "need" for more recreation facilities, but shows the large quantity of recreation demanded at low prices for the existing physical supply of facilities. The question that should be answered is do we wish to continue to subsidize nonurban outdoor recreation activities at present levels. In order for the general public and policy makers to answer that question, explicit information on the public costs of providing alternative levels of facility supply is needed together with reasonable measures of the value of outdoor recreation experiences and resources.

## Bermudagrass . . .

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### To Honor a Hero

One writer suggests that the grassy crown placed on the head of one Siccius Dentatus, Roman tribune in 454 B.C. for 120 battle victories, was made of bermudagrass. The runners of bermuda would be handy for such construction and were used this way in at least one other Mediterranean area. A French archeologist named Bonet, digging among some first century tombs in Egypt about 1900, found a leafy crown around the head of a female "magician". Part of this crown was bermudagrass. In the same tomb were preserved vases of plant material, again including bermuda. Since Dioscorides describes bermuda in the same century as a medicinal plant, the lady magician probably used it in the same way. Relief of the bellyache or of kidney stones is a very wonderful piece of magic!

Dioscorides' description lists common names from the full circle of the Mediterranean showing beyond doubt that bermuda was then found everywhere in this area.

Bermuda spread into Europe from the Mediterranean. For example there is bermudagrass growing along the coasts of Cornwall, probably brought there accidentally by Greeks and Phoenicians mining tin well before the Christian era. An English botany book published in the 1840's describes the Cornish bermuda as a "very pretty grass, of no practical use". We know better don't we?