

Stewardship Notes

Indiana Division of Forestry



Designing Recreation Facilities

Although forest products are the most tangible commodity derived from forest land, many other forest products are important. Recreation develops whether we consciously plan it or not, but by including certain additional practices, the forest can be made to serve us far better. Opportunities develop automatically on and around forest land. Proper planning for recreation facilities can enhance enjoyment of the forest.

The most popular activities on forest land are hunting, boating, swimming, and hiking. Many people, who live in cities, find relaxation away from the pressures of modern living in a forest area.

The federal and state governments provide facilities for outdoor recreation through their forest and parks systems. The highway department provides roadside recreation areas and picnic sites. However, there is still a great demand for more recreation areas and picnic sites. The private landowner who desires to make the land “work” can provide recreation sites for the public. This land transition could supplement income, or provide recreation for family, friends, and public.

There are some tremendous opportunities in the outdoor recreation business. However, there are some unique problems that should be considered before entering this business.

1. Would you enjoy working with ALL kinds of people and enduring the many problems that are sure to crop up at all times of the day and night?
2. Can you give up Sundays and holidays to provide fun and relaxation for paying guest?
3. Will you be able to find suitable help in your area?
4. Can you depend on your children to help you out and how long will it be before they will leave for other college or take other jobs?

5. Can you afford the changeover cost? The investment in land, facilities, and improvements may require \$100,000 or more, with 25 percent of this available for annual operating expenses. What financial returns do you expect to earn?
6. Do you have adequate land and natural resources, and the outgoing personality needed to operate this kind of enterprise?

When you settle these basic questions, you need to determine what type of facilities will be provided on the site.

Land and water acreage is beneficial for outdoor recreation. The amount needed depends upon the activities provided. One hundred acres of land and at least 20 acres of water is desirable for most operations, although much smaller areas are applicable in certain situations.



Swimming is the most preferred activity in recreation, followed by fishing and boating. Hiking trails and playground facilities for children complete the five facilities preferred by people who frequent recreation areas. Because camping is a family activity, playground facilities are highly desirable for your recreation area. Hiking is popular because the skill level and equipment requirements are low. The potential entrepreneur should select a product mix likely to be merchantable, and should prioritize the development of popular facilities.

A camping area requires well drained, level land. Trees provide shade and also act as a divider between campsites. These trees also provide a aesthetic view for campers, as

well as homes for wildlife. Campers usually want morning sun and afternoon shade.

The number of campsites and size of each recreation area is determined by topographical conditions. The most economical distribution of central comfort stations should also be considered. Fit all elements into the landscape. Give each camping area individual attention to obtain the maximum number of campsites per acre. In no case should a campsite be less than 2,500 square feet (50' x 50').

Each individual campsite should contain a car parking space, a tent or recreational vehicle area, one table and bench combination, and one fireplace or grill. This design accommodates an average of four persons per campsite. Sufficient land should be available to provide four undeveloped acres for each developed acre in recreation areas. Campsites should have a minimum spacing of fifty feet centerline to centerline, when they have at least 60 sites for efficient and economical operation of the outdoor recreation business.

There are two types of camping areas: modern and primitive. Modern campsites cater to RV's and provide more facilities. These camps usually provide electrical outlets for an additional fee. A tent fee. A cement pad provides a porch next to the trailer, or a foundation for tent campers. Running water is available at a central location so no campsite or picnic area is more than 200 feet from the outlet. A bathhouse and toilet should be located within 300 feet of the most remote campsite, and no more than 500 feet from the most remote picnic table. A comfort station should contain the necessary toilet and other plumbing fixtures in at least the following ratio:

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Flushing toilets	1 for 30 sites	1 for 15 sites
Urinals	1 for 30 sites	-----
Lavatories	1 for 15 sites	1 for 15 sites
Showers	1 for 30 sites	1 for 30 sites

Showers should be individual stalls with walls constructed of dense, non-absorbent, waterproof material or covered with water-resistant material. Adequate hot water should be available to prevent depletion during the morning and evening rush hours.

An ample and convenient supply of water (in qualities that meet the standards of the State Board of Health) should be available at all times for drinking, cooking, and bathing purposes. If possible, water for the campground should be obtained from a public water system. Wells used as a source of water supply for the area should be constructed and well protected in accordance with the State Board of Health. Water outlets should be located at least 30 feet from any waste dumping station, and should extend above the ground

surface to permit filling containers.

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A primitive campsite should also provide adequate space for tent and car, but may not necessarily have shower facilities, electrical outlets, cement pads, or flush toilets. A grill and table-bench combination may or may not be provided on each site. Some primitive areas provide open wooded space with no boundary, so campers can select their own site. Privies are usually used as toilet facilities in primitive areas, and they should be provided in at least the following ratios:

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Privy seats	1 for 30 sites	1 for 15 sites
Urinals	1 for 30 sites	-----

A lake is needed for successful recreation areas. More than half of the preferred activities for campers is based on having water available. This water may be a large state reservoir nearby or a lake on the recreation area. This water should be clearly marked so there will be at least 50 square feet of water surface per person for swimming, and three acres of beach for each acre of water in the swimming area. An acre of beach should accommodate a minimum of 800 people.

Fishing is also a favorite water activity. There should be one acre of surface water per person fishing from a boat, or about two acres of water for each motor boat. On lakes of less than 300 acres, motor boats may not go faster than ten miles per hour. Water skiing is practical only on lakes of 300 acres or more.

Farm ponds can be constructed for fishing also. Personnel from the Natural Resources Conservation Service can provide technical assistance to build a pond or dam. These small ponds could allow only rowboats or electric motors, which allow people to get on the water, but reduce the chance of an accident. You can manage these ponds on a "put and take" or "fish for fee" basis.

Adequate facilities should be provided and maintained for the satisfactory treatment and disposal of all domestic

waste. Camps located near a sewer system should be connected to this approved system. Where approved sewers are not available, and where conditions will permit, install a subsurface seepage system.

If privies are used, the vault type are by far the most satisfactory, sanitary facilities. These permit cleaning out when needed, and actually reduce maintenance and expenses in comparison to the earth pit type. Vault type privies are also much easier to keep clean and free from flies.

All garbage and refuse should be kept in durable, watertight, rust-resistant, non-absorbent, and easily washable containers that are covered with close-fitting lids furnished with suitable handles. The conventional heavy duty galvanized cans meet the above requirements.

The full appreciation of a recreation area by visitors is often lessened by the foul smell of spoiled food, accumulated garbage, and litter on the grounds. Containers should be placed no further than 100 feet from any campsite. At least one container should be furnished for each two to four campsites, and the containers should be readily accessible to collectors. A commercial garbage pick-up service should be contracted to pick up all garbage receptacles at picnic areas and food stands. The handling of garbage and refuse has an important bearing on the successful camping area and the recreation business.

Wooded areas are as much a necessity as lakes. Most campers want to get outdoors, and hiking is one of the most popular activities for campers. The camp should include trails, which can also act as fire breaks. Signs placed near trees, wildflowers and shrubs assist in identification.

Horseback riding and bridle trails through the woods can also be offered as a leisure time activity if there is sufficient area to stable and pasture the horses. Proper removal and disposal of manure to prevent fly breeding is the primary environmental health concern.

Hunting areas and shooting ranges could be set aside so their use does not conflict with recreation sites. A fee could be charged to hunt in areas licensed as shooting preserves, or they can be used to entice campers to your facility. Proper game management techniques should be followed to sustain the game on hunting areas, which could be used by local clubs or leased.

The recreational use of the woods by hikers, nature lovers, and hunters does not conflict with the growing

of trees for timber production. Any woodland areas, which are not part of the campground or picnic areas, may qualify for the Classified Forest Program. Your district forester can supply detailed information on this program and help determine which areas are eligible.

For more information contact:

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