

## RECREATION IN WATER RESOURCES PROJECTS

by

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An upsurge of interest in the outdoors has taken place in recent years and though it has important roots in the past, it can be viewed primarily as a product of the growing affluence of today's society.

Traditionally, Americans have looked to the hinterlands for raw materials and supporting resources. Today they are looking for something more. Urban dwellers want to emerge from the high-rise apartments, get off the paved streets, and find green fields, wooded hillsides, and clear, clean water in which to play. Although wholesome outdoor environments may be available in remote parts of the country, this does not satisfy their need. They want and need these resources within reach for a weekend outing, if not an afternoon picnic.

As urbanization progresses and as both the city and farm populations enjoy greater opportunity to participate in recreation activities, the enhancement of recreational opportunities, preservation of natural beauty and aesthetic values, and conservation of fish and wildlife assume increasing prominence in development of the nation's resources. Today, full consideration must be given to the entire natural and social environment in planning and developing water resources.

Senate Document No. 97, 87th Congress, 2nd Session<sup>1</sup> sets forth present policies, standards, and procedures for guidance in formulation, evaluation, and review of Federal water development programs. The first sentence of Section II, Objectives of Planning in that report is as follows:

"The basic objective in the formulation of plans is to provide the best use, or combination of uses, of water and related land resources to meet all foreseeable short- and long-term needs."

Following parts of the Section establish that full consideration shall be given to development of water and related land resources in such a manner that will contribute to economic growth and development, to preservation of resources and areas of value for recreation, scientific and aesthetic purposes, and, as a basic guide to plan formulation, that

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<sup>1</sup>Senate Document No. 97, 87th Congress, 2nd Session, "Policies, Standards, Evaluation and Review of Plans for Use and Development of Water and Related Land Resources," May 29, 1962, prepared under the direction of the President's Water Resources Council.

well being of all the people shall be the overriding determinant in considering the best use of water and related land resources.

In keeping with the administrative and congressional intent as expressed in the above policies and guidelines, it is most proper that outdoor recreation and all of its associated aspects be given a prominent place in the planning of water development programs by the Corps of Engineers.

Recent studies show that heavy demand for recreation is now with us and that it will grow tremendously in the future. Studies and reports of the Outdoor Recreation Resource Review Commission<sup>2</sup> were a major effort on the National level and some of the principal findings are pertinent to any consideration of recreation demand and needs in water resources planning.

The Commission considered most types of recreation ranging from such passive activities as driving, sightseeing, and walking for pleasure through the active sports such as golf, camping, swimming, and so forth. Naturally, those dependent on water or water-oriented are most pertinent to the water resources planners. Swimming, fishing, all types of boating, water-skiing, and some types of hunting are dependent on water and others like picnicking, camping, hiking, and sightseeing are enhanced by the presence of water. National recreation survey data for the summer of 1960 indicates that these water-related activities were the major purpose of 79% of recreation trips; for the southern region the percentage was even higher - 87%. It is evident that water and the shorelines are going to play a major part in satisfaction of recreation needs.

Nationally, the ORRRC studies found that recreation will grow in some relation to several economic and social factors. Based on data from their studies,<sup>3</sup> Figure 1 illustrates the projected growth of selected water-related recreation activity through the year 2000 in the country as a whole. From the base figure of about 1.85 billion activity occasions in 1960, it is anticipated that these recreation activities will increase to about 5.4 billion or approximately triple by the end of the century. The projection reflects that increasing personal income, leisure time, mobility and other factors will contribute to the individual's ability to participate in a greater number of recreational activities each year. This increase is further multiplied in the future by the expanding population and results as the total projected demand for recreation.

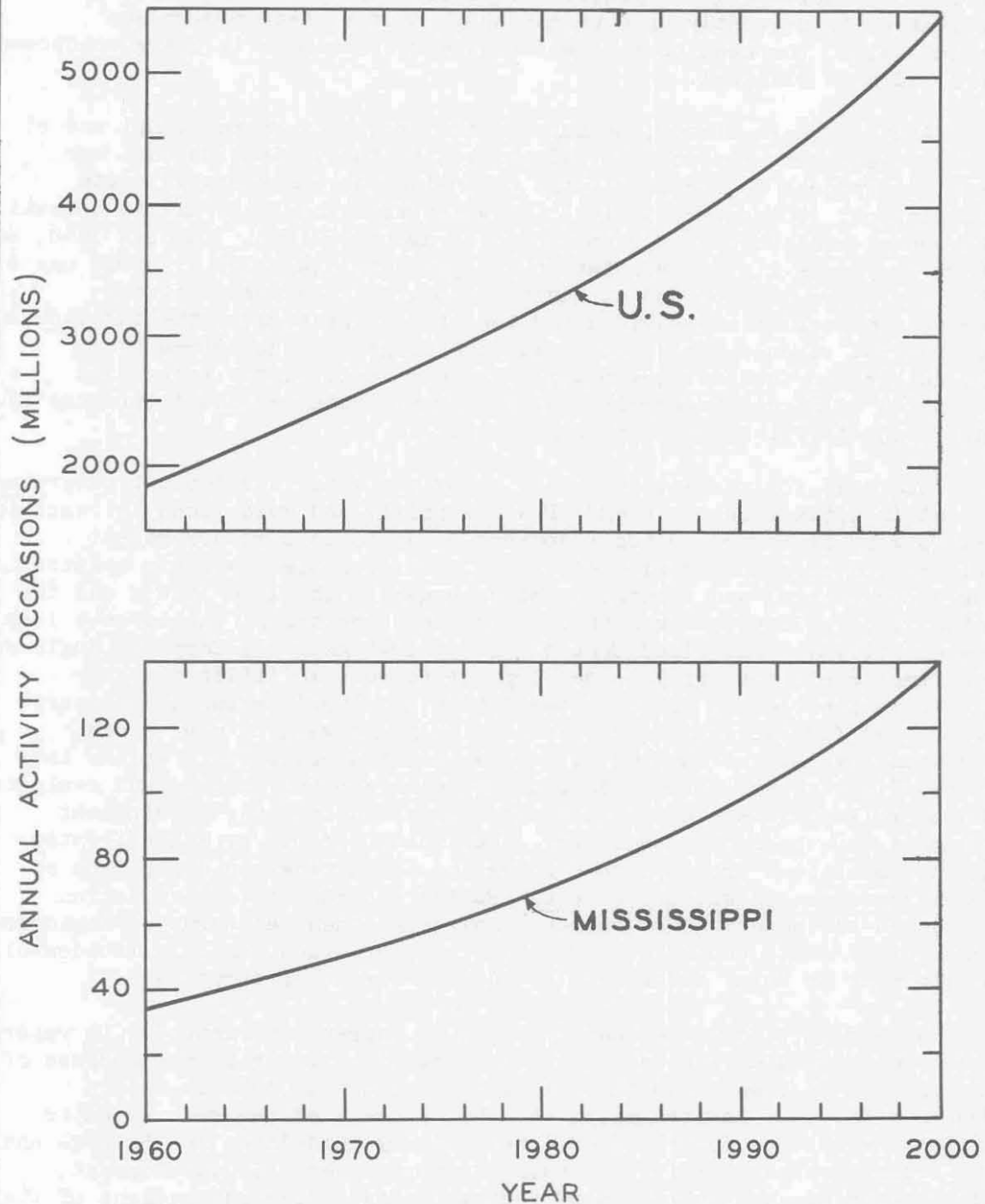
A projection of water-related recreation demand in Mississippi is

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<sup>2</sup>The ORRRC was created by the Act of June 28, 1958 (PL 85-470) and its report, "Outdoor Recreation for America," was presented to the President and to Congress on January 31, 1962.

<sup>3</sup>Prospective Demand for Outdoor Recreation, ORRRC Study Report 26, Table 6. Number of occasions (millions) by persons 12 years and over in selected activities 1960, 1976, and 2000.

**FIGURE 1**  
**RECREATION DEMAND**  
**SELECTED GROUP OF WATER RELATED**  
**ACTIVITIES**



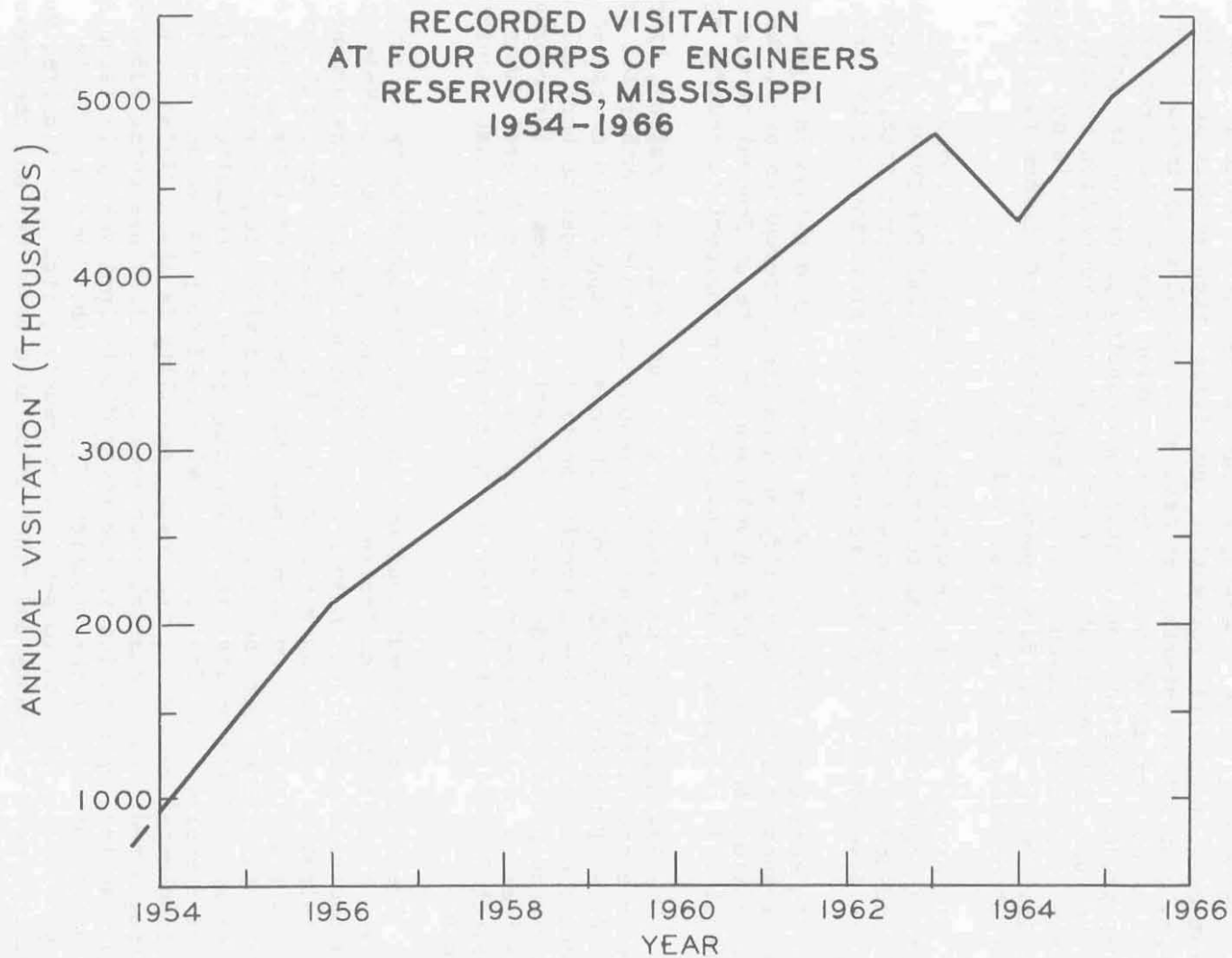
also shown in Figure 1. Again the rate of increase is high, and in the 40-year period recreation will about quadruple from the 1960 base figure of about 36 million. This is based upon recent population projections for the State and adjusted rates of participation per capita in the several recreation activities. This is a rather rough calculation and considers only the resident population. It is included only for the purpose of indicating the general trend and that need for planning for recreation is presently upon us and that, as the State progresses economically, the need to accommodate the recreationer is going to become more and more critical.

Another, more direct, measure of the growth of recreational use at water development projects is illustrated by the visitation that has been experienced at the four Corps of Engineers reservoirs in north Mississippi. Going back to 1954, at which time they were all in operation, the annual visitation was recorded to be about 950,000. Through 1966, as shown in Figure 2, this visitation has grown to 5,419,000. Future use of the reservoirs is expected to continue to grow in accord with the recreation facilities provided and the characteristics of the individual reservoirs. Should the Yazoo Navigation project as described by Mr. Ahlrich in the previous paper, become a reality, the recreation potential of Sardis Reservoir will be greatly enhanced and future use at that project will be considerably greater.

The need for recreation exists. How can water development programs assist in satisfying the need? Present policy and guidelines in recreation development at Federal water resources projects is a rather recent culmination of a long series of events. Large-scale reservoir construction for flood control and related purposes began in the late 1930's and the established policy then was that recreation development should be a local responsibility. The Flood Control Act of 1944 gave the Corps of Engineers its first basic authority to develop public-use facilities at water development projects. Through the 1940's and 1950's means and measures to provide for recreation progressed slowly and was, in many cases, hamstrung by lack of funding as well as limited authority. In the late 50's and early 1960's the bits and pieces were being aligned and evaluated and overall policies on treatment of recreation in water development programs were beginning to emerge. Beginning efforts by Federal inter-agency committees provided some guides to accounting and evaluation of these resources in water projects. Policy and administrative action increased the potential of recreational development at Corps of Engineers reservoirs. But, until the early 1960's, recreation was only incidental development at Corps reservoirs authorized for other purposes.

Generally, today the consideration of recreation resources in water development studies and inclusion of recreation features as a purpose of the project is based upon the principles set out in 1962 in Senate Document No. 97. Additionally, in 1965, passage of the Federal Water Project Recreation Act (PL 89-72) set primary guidelines for Federal and non-Federal responsibility at Federal water projects in development, administration, and operation of recreation including enhancement of fish and wildlife.

**FIGURE 2**  
**RECORDED VISITATION**  
**AT FOUR CORPS OF ENGINEERS**  
**RESERVOIRS, MISSISSIPPI**  
**1954 - 1966**





First, the 1965 Act provides for full consideration and comprehensive treatment of recreation and fish and wildlife enhancement as a purpose of Federal water projects. Next, it provides for full development of the recreation potential of a project. This is subject, however, to an agreement with non-Federal bodies that the non-Federal interest will assume half of the separable costs of recreation and all of the costs of operation and maintenance of such recreation facilities. Separable costs to be shared would include the first cost of specific recreation facilities, such as boat launching ramps, camp sites, swimming beaches, etc., and also may include such items as cost of added storage for recreation purposes in a reservoir or other project modifications. This cost-sharing provision is applicable to the bulk of Federal water projects that have recreation potential. In the event that cost-sharing by non-Federal interests is not available, the law limits Federal development to provision of minimum facilities to protect the public health and safety only.

In either case, with or without cost-sharing, it provides for initial acquisition of lands to preserve potential for future recreation use and development. Again, however, any Federal participation in such future development is subject to cost-sharing provisions of the Act.

In some cases where recreation and associated values in a project are of such potential to qualify as a National recreation area, the Act provides that recreation development will be at Federal expense and that it will be operated and maintained by an appropriate Federal agency.

The law applies to navigation, flood control, reclamation, hydro-electric and multiple-purpose water resources projects authorized after the date of the Act, 9 July 1965. It does not apply to non-reservoir local flood control, beach erosion control, small boat harbor, and hurricane protection projects. Cost-sharing requirements for recreation features at projects exempted from provisions of the Federal Water Project Recreation Act are for the most part similar to that required by the Act.

The need for recreational development, the opportunity to satisfy a part of these needs at Federal water projects, and the non-Federal responsibility required in such development all point to the urgency of participation by all interests at the Federal, State, and local levels in the planning of recreational and other features of water projects. The Corps of Engineers has employed fish and wildlife, recreational and other specialists on its staffs for many years and consulted experts in other agencies. In view of the growing need to preserve and develop the environmental resources, the Corps capability in these fields is being strengthened. Environmental resources specialists are being added to the planning organization in the Lower Mississippi Valley Division and to staffs of each of the District Offices in the Division. Their responsibility will be to see that recreation, fish and wildlife, water quality, natural beauty and other associated resources and the views of agencies with an interest in these resources are included from the start in all of the planning and project formulating activities. The Corps

effort will be to intensify its working relationship with all these interests and to meet the new challenges of providing for the comprehensive needs of all interests in water development programs.

In summation, the Corps of Engineers recognizes the need for full consideration of all beneficial uses of water, including recreation, in its planning for water resources development. Recent legislation provides for full consideration of recreation and fish and wildlife enhancement in Federal water projects and encourages States or other non-Federal public bodies to assume a responsibility for development, maintenance, and operation of recreation areas at these projects. Finally, and most important, it is evident that all interests must work together, and act together, with full cooperation among all levels of government, as well as private interests, if we are to realistically solve the difficult problem of meeting the broad demands being put upon water and related lands resources.