

## RECREATION MANAGEMENT OF FOREST SERVICE LANDS IN THE KAMLOOPS REGION A FIELD REPORT

This study discusses an area lying within the dry belt region of British Columbia and within a one to three hour drive from the city of Kamloops. The study is based on field observation in the Tunkwa Lake area and interviews with Forest Service personnel conducted during the summer of 1972. The impression formed as a result of that field study and interviews is that the tentative Forest Service recreation plan is inadequate with respect to the Kamloops area.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the personnel responsible for implementation of recreational management in the Forest Service areas are hampered by overall Forest Service attitudes and policies towards recreation.

This paper will explain the prevailing Forest Service policies towards recreation affecting the study area and then sort out the factors resulting in recreational pressure on the study area. In order to see what the Forest Service recreational plan, in combination with increasing recreational pressure, might lead to, an area similar to the study area will be examined in the State of Washington. Recreational management in British Columbia will also be analyzed in part to determine just what opportunities and options might be open to the Forest Service in handling their share of British Columbia's recreation resource.

### FOREST SERVICE RECREATIONAL PLAN AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS RECREATION

In general, the forest Service's tentative plan is to impose the fewest limitations on recreationalists and create only minimal facilities which can be moved to new localities to allow the old area to fall under another facet of multiple use.<sup>2</sup> These minimal facilities are being established with the idea of luring people to the desired areas. In the Kamloops Region an inventory was recently carried out of sites within the region which are receiving recreational pressure. At the same time these sites are being developed with minimal facilities as needed (garbage cans, toilets, trails) to support the usage. In the case of Tunkwa Lake, the Recreational Supervisor and District Ranger were considering installing a boat ramp, masonry cooking stoves, and graveling the road into and around the campsite in addition to existing toilet and garbage facilities. They had even suggested tables at several of the spaces. All these were needed to handle the pressure on the site and keep people from making their own roads as they please, tearing up the shoreline banks, and building fire pits and makeshift toilets at random.

According to the Regional Recreational Supervisor, funding was so limited as to make graveling of the roads and masonry cooking stoves dependent on what materials could be scrounged from the immediate

area. Graveling would then depend on who knew who with the closest bulldozer to do the work. Yet earlier, this same supervisor had stated that the Recreation Section received as much consideration and was on an equal footing with the divisions concerned with grazing and timber production. The supervisor has also been attempting to keep some kind of count of persons using this site and others and still stay within his budget. In this case, data on use is gathered by an individual who picks up the garbage at the sites every week or so.

The object here is not to make light of the fact that the personnel in the Recreation Division must scrounge for material and rely on garbage collectors for what funds and means are available. The object is to point out the questionable status of recreation in the eyes of the Forest Service powers that be. If the personnel responsible for implementing recreational management are thus limited by available funds, it suggests either the Forest Service created the Recreation Division as a public relations vehicle, or the Forest Service is oversimplifying recreational use within its boundaries. In all probability it seems the latter is the case. The personnel involved seem to be honestly committed to dealing effectively with recreation's impact and individually have good ideas and tactics. However, something is obviously amiss with a general strategy that hinges on luring people to desired sites and then expects to be able to move these sites about at will. At the same time the Recreation Officer, Management Division in Victoria makes the statement, "People do what they want to rather than what you want them to."<sup>3</sup> An understatement at best!

Recreational management within the Forest Service constraint in terms of funding appears to be a result of prevailing attitudes within the Forest Service. The comment from the Chief Forester, Kamloops Region, was, "Our job is growing trees." From published reports of the Forest Service it is evident that up until this year, they have been growing trees for the purpose of lumber production. Numerous charts and tables proudly show quantity of production in dollars and cents. Recently the Forest Service has had to recognize that there is another production they also turn out in growing trees. This one which is not so easily quantifiable is, of course, recreation potential.

The Annual Report 1971, British Columbia Forest Service, mentions recreational consideration for the first time. The Chief Forester's report states that the Forest Service's responsibility for forest recreation has been firmly established. Recreation is also mentioned again in the 115 page booklet. A twelve line section records what had been done to date concerning recreation efforts. In a packet handed out by the Chief Forester in Kamloops, recreation is also mentioned. One booklet states that "maximum public use of the forests consistent with a minimum of interference with industry is the general guideline."<sup>4</sup> The Forest Service seems to overlook the fact the public might possibly desire to reverse this last statement and hold tenaciously to its attitude of growing a commercial crop.

Another attitude which binds recreational management within the Forest Service is the reluctance of the Forest Service to use the research and ideas of persons outside the forestry element, as well as its reluctance to give up any power or lands under its control - an attitude called



"dog-in-the-manger" by William Richard Careless.<sup>5</sup> Careless also points out the waste, cost-wise, in overlapping studies. The Regional Supervisor, Kamloops Region, said that his resource information was mainly from reprints of United States studies and data now being collected by his office. Yet there are studies and information available from other Canadian sources not being used. An example is the yearly Game Harvest Questionnaire Analysis put out by the Fish and Wildlife Department, British Columbia, which gives information regarding use by region within the Province. After looking at the guidelines and constraints under which recreational management now operates within the Forest Service, the Kamloops area should now be analyzed to find out to what degree and types of pressure the Forest Service lands are subjected and should be taken into consideration in formulating a plan.

#### FACTORS OF THE KAMLOOPS AREA TO BE CONSIDERED IN PLANNING FOR RECREATIONAL USE

A number of physical and human elements have combined to make the Kamloops area one of high recreational potential. The landscape of the Kamloops area is mountainous and glaciated. This has resulted in a large number of lakes throughout the area. This area also lies in the rain-shadow of the coast Mountains, making for a rainfall of only seven to twenty inches per year. The low rainfall puts this area in the Southeast Interior Region or dry forest belt of British Columbia. The resulting vegetation grades from open grasslands, to grassland forests of Douglas Fir and Yellow Pine, to comparatively open Douglas Fir forests. Aspen groves are found in low areas around lakes and streams. This dry forest belt is the warmest part of British Columbia in the summertime.

Kamloops itself is located on one of the main access routes to the interior of British Columbia as well as to Alberta. The route through Kamloops is also a route to the Provincial Parks of Silver Star, Hamber, Mount Robson, Wells Gray, Bouron Lake and the National Parks of Kooteney, Yoho, Glacier, Jasper and Banff. Transport routes have put this Kamloops area within easy reach of metropolitan regions and directly in the path of major recreation resource points. Equally important, if not more so, is the city of Kamloops itself with respect to the area outlined. Kamloops represents a sizable population center only a matter of several hours from any point within this area.

In summarizing the area outlined, it is an area rich in water bodies, with an attractive climate, with areas of open vegetational cover, and with a high potential of outdoor recreation resource users. Another factor should be added here before attempting to establish to what extent the area is being used and by whom. Although British Columbia covers 366,255 square miles, the area recreationally usable by the majority of the populace is confined to a much smaller area in the southern portion of the Province. On this basis one could say that the study area lies in the main outdoor recreational belt of British Columbia.

Determining the extent of Forest Service lands usage in the study area presents a problem due to lack of sufficient data, which the Forest Service is currently attempting to gather. The immediate and most likely users of this area are the residents of Kamloops who should know the area

best. In 1966, North Kamloops and Kamloops together had a population of 22,078.<sup>6</sup> According to Nelson Riis, a geographer at Cariboo College, Kamloops (recently amalgamated) has a present population of nearly 60,000 and a service population in excess of 100,000. This suggests the recreational demand has more than doubled in six years. This proximity of the concentration of people makes for a high use potential.

The Recreation Supervisor stated, although his data is not yet tallied, that there seems to be just as many users from the Vancouver region and the United States as local users. There were, in fact, several out-of-locality vehicles at the Tunkwa Lake site at the time of this field study. Considering the locality of the lake and the fact that it is not publicized, one is led to think this is a regular recreational spot for a number of non-local users. The Tunkwa Lake site also seems to be used heavily enough to have had significant wearing of its grass cover and a tearing up all roads leading to the site.

At present, to get concrete data on possible use, the best source seems to be the Fish and Wildlife Department. Their records show that from the period of April 1, 1970 to, March 31, 1971, their Kamloops agency issued 12,536 resident fishing licenses, 9,478 resident deer, elk and moose tags, and 7,447 resident hunting licenses.<sup>7</sup> It can be argued that many of these licencees are just passing through, which is undoubtedly true. W. G. Smith, Chief, Wildlife Management, Fish and Wildlife Branch, Victoria, has stated that 26% of the adult males in British Columbia are hunters in any one year. And he added,

For example, a few years ago I calculated that in Kimberly about 80% of the adult males were hunters. I am not sure what percentage were fishermen—it would probably be more. There is a high level of interest, and you might say that there is a high level of demand for these resources where they are available to the people.<sup>8</sup>

An annual publication published by the Fish and Wildlife Branch<sup>9</sup> gives estimates of hunter activity by region in British Columbia. According to this report, the Kamloops Region (close to that area outlined as the study area) accounted for upwards of 47,000 hunter units in 1970. A hunter unit is defined as one person hunting one particular species on one occasion in a given area.

Along with determining the number of recreational users, it is also necessary to determine the type of recreational user to be dealt with. Forest Service ownership is over public recreation settings of recreation areas, hunting areas, fishing areas, outdoor trails, undeveloped public lands, buffer zones, cottage sites, and resort areas. Cottage sites and resort areas are fairly easy for the Forest Service to manage as they have good control on permanent permit type uses such as this. Tunkwa Lake has a small resort and two cottage sites on it. The District Ranger in charge of this site said that would be all the development that would be allowed and that they had the final say of Forest Service land.

The Forest Service lands around Kamloops offer the entire range of outdoor recreation to the public, with the possible exception of recreational boating such as water skiing or racing due to the general size of the lakes.



The accessibility of the area through logging roads and jeep trails, as well as the dry climate and more open forested areas, offer special attraction to the motorized recreationalist equipped with trailers, camper pickups, four-wheel drive vehicles, motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, and, in the winter, snowmobiles. At present, according to the Regional Recreational Supervisor, the motorized vehicles have freedom of the land on or off the established roads and neither are campers required to use existing campsite facilities. Trailers and camper units come into this area fully equipped to set up residence anywhere they may be able to travel, limited only by fuel supply. People equipped in this manner need not put up with the codes and restrictions of a National or Provincial Park and, in the case of local people, can be out in sufficient wilderness in less than an hour. I would speculate without available data that a large number of hunters and fisherment would be owners of these units and that a large percentage of the users of this Kamloops area are hunting and fishing oriented.

Trail cycles, A.T.V.'s and snowmobiles are not modes of transportation, but are basically a sporting instrument and designed for the purpose of sport. As such, these vehicles are severely restricted in National or Provincial Parks, and private landowners are not particularly open to having thier land torn up either. The Forest Service lands have far less restrictions and the lands of the Kamloops area are ideal for cross country sports. After all, from the standpoint of these types of vehicles, hills were meant to be climbed and trails were meant as raceways.

The Department of Recreation and Conservation, Victoria, B.C., has some data on numbers of camper units and trailers. It includes both out-of-Province and in-Province vehicles, but numbers and increases are particularly interesting to look at:

Total recreational vehicles traveling on seven routes of the British Columbia Ferries in the first nine months of 1971 was 119,952, compared to 89,317 during the same months of 1970. This is an increase of 23.1%. Some of the "off season" increases in 1969 and 1970 were even more spectacular. The January, February, March figures for 1970 compared to 1969 loadings were up a phenomenal 74% and for the January figure, in the dead of winter, the increase was 142%.<sup>10</sup>

In April of 1972, the Forest Service, Kamloops Region, had 139 minimal facilities sites. At the time of the field observation the sites had had been increased to 219, and some of the first 139 had been expanded.<sup>11</sup> These sites had been established at points of obvious pressure along the guidelines of the tentative plan previously stated. To get an idea of what could develop in this area, it may be useful to examine an area in Washington State similar to that of the Kamloops area.

#### THE NATIONAL FOREST AREAS OF KITTITAS VALLEY

This area to be considered lies on the astern slopes of the Cascade Mountains, 80 to 100 miles east of the Seattle Metropolitan area. Ellensburg, the main city of the valley, has a population of 13,000

and is on the main east-west transport route of U.S. Interstate 90, a four-lane freeway. It is also at a junction of a four-lane freeway to the south. Like Kamloops, this city lies in a rainshadow giving it an annual rainfall of about nine inches. The vegetation is also like that of the Kamloops area as one moves west towards the Cascade's or north or south up the valley sides. It is closer to a large population center than Kamloops, and the freeway has made it even closer on a time scale (a potential possibility for Kamloops considering the proposed Coquihalla route proposal linking Kamloops and Vancouver). Unlike Kamloops, this area does not have the number of lakes available, but has quite a number of streams which serve as an attraction. Description of recreation impact will, like the Tunkwa Lake area, be based on field observation, but over a period of four years.

In the summertime this area sees a deluge of campers of the type already described, the majority from Seattle. The early to late winter sees the hunters come in droves to the point that some areas for miles along some streams look like National Park campgrounds. Even the worst part of the winter offers no respite to the area. This is the prime snowmobile time. A local snowmobile club could muster over 1,000 members from Ellensburg, Yakima and Seattle. A national snowmobile meet is held every year in Cle Elum, 25 miles northeast of Ellensburg. The springtime brings the beginning of another recreational cycle which is always bigger than the one before.

A local jeep club, called the Search and Rescue Unit, has a local membership encompassing 250 vehicles. A quick look at air photos of the area or a drive into the hills shows quite adequately the impact of these particular four-wheel drive vehicles. The area is criss-crossed at every conceivable location by the tracks of these vehicles (despite the fact operation of motor vehicles off established roads is illegal in U.S. National Forests). These vehicles do not just flatten the vegetation, but actually tear it out on the steep slopes characteristic of the area. Trail bikes are able to get where the jeeps cannot. The deterioration of of slopes due to trail bike use has been responsible for the closure of an entire area in the Boise-Cascade Tree Farm within the National Forest. Fourth of July weekend, 1972, over sixty motorcycles were counted along a five mile stretch of Taneum Creek, a favorite camping site in the area.

This same Taneum Creek had open grassy areas all along the banks four years ago. It was used to the point then that the grass was kept worn down. By the summer of 1972 these grassy camping sites had been reduced to hard packed dirt with the grass nearly eradicated. All this is happening in a region where the Forest Service has applied limited restriction, limited enforcement, limited facilities, and where logging has provided easy access routes. The sheer weight of numbers of recreationalists and their accompanying playthings have simply outgrown a system that was adequate before. Yet the British Columbia Forest Service seems to be following the U.S. guidelines that are already inadequate.



## MANAGEMENT POSSIBILITIES OPEN TO THE BRITISH COLUMBIA FOREST SERVICE WITHIN EXISTING FRAMEWORK

The administration of outdoor recreation in British Columbia falls under the aegis of ten Provincial departments and sixteen Provincial agencies supported by twenty-four acts, either pertaining specifically to recreation or affecting recreation. Those acts pertaining specifically to recreation within or around Forest Service lands are the Park Act, Wildlife Act, Firearms Act, Travel Bureau Act, Water Act, Pollution Control Act, Land Act, Forest Act and the Highway Act. These Acts in turn are administered by the Department of Recreation and Conservation, Department of Travel Industry, Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources (of which the Forest Service is a part), and the Department of Highways.<sup>12</sup> Each of these Departments has a specified amount of power to deal in a specific area of recreation which limit them as individual units. If all these powers were applied in a joint concerted effort on a given area, total control in terms of recreation management could be achieved.

What would seem logical is for the Forest Service and the other affected agencies to cooperate completely to achieve this maximum control in managing this recreation resource, rather than the Forest Service attempting limited control within its own sphere of influence. For instance, if the Forest Service wished to "lure" people to an area it could establish their minimal facilities, enlist the Fish and Wildlife Branch to keep the lakes well stocked, and arrange for the Department of Travel Industry to promote the area. The same thing could be worked in reverse. If it is desired that a site be vacated either to allow it to rest or to make way for the logging element of multiple use, a lake could be left to be fished out and publicizing of the area could be stopped. It would only raise difficulties if the recreationalists were to be forced out by decree of the Forest Service while their favorite spot was being steadily stocked by the Fish and Wildlife Branch. But if there were no fish the chances are the recreationalists would leave of their own accord.

This, of course, would take advance planning and cooperation between agencies. There is also the possibility of hard line tactics such as closures or specific closures, as against travel (could be interpreted as off road travel), camping, etc. Still another possibility is the "single use" idea over the "multiple use" idea. This is probably heretical from the standpoint of the recreational public as well as possibly from the lumber industry. Each could see itself being neglected. But it may be more practical to concentrate on recreational use near the main impact areas, then to grade use accordingly out of areas of concentrated lumber interests while at the same time allowing room for the grazing users.

## CONCLUSION

The initial impression still remains concerning the Forest Service Recreation Plan, although it is substantially reinforced. Even though the Kamloops area is not yet near the point of saturation in terms of recreational use, this does not condone a plan which appears to be a "patch job" type until the situation outgrows it, as in the U.S. area. One must appreciate the fact the Forest Service is in the middle of two

opposing sides who desire use of land near urban centers and is getting increasing pressure from both. At the same time, the Forest Service should be expected to weigh the potential of the views and manage its crop accordingly. Judging only from this study, based on the Kamloops area, the Forest Service is not making an effective attempt to weigh the recreation potential in its management of this resource under its control.



## FOOTNOTES

1. Impression, rather than opinion or hypothesis, is used here considering the limited field work on which the paper is based. The field work was conducted in September, 1972.
2. H. G. Marshall, Recreation Officer, Management Division, British Columbia Forest Service, Victoria, B.C., in "Forestry and Outdoor Recreation in British Columbia," presented at a Seminar on Outdoor Recreation held by the Wildlife and Recreation Committee of the Canada Land Inventory, November 26, 1971, Victoria, B.C., this plan was also stressed by the Regional Recreation Supervisor in Kamloops, British Columbia.
3. Ibid.
4. From a brochure called "Management of British Columbia's Forest Lands," out of a packet also containing: "Sustained Yield from British Columbia's Forest Lands;" "The Forest of British Columbia;" "Protecting the Crop;" "The Harvest;" "The Principal Commercial Trees of British Columbia;" "Trees for Tomorrow;" and a map of P.S.Y.U. location.
5. William Richard Careless, "Intra-Governmental Conflict: Provision of Outdoor Recreation in British Columbia." Thesis for Honors Degree in Geography, 1971.
6. Manual of Resources and Development, British Columbia, Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Victoria, B.C., 1967.
7. Summary of Total Revenue from Sales of Various Licensed, Collections, etc., April 1, 1970 to March 31, 1971, courtesy of British Columbia Fish and Wildlife Branch.
8. W.G. Smith, Chief, Wildlife Management, Fish and Wildlife Branch, Victoria, B.C., at a Seminar on Outdoor Recreation held by the Wildlife and Recreation Committee of the Canada Land Inventory, November 26, 1971, Victoria, B.C.
9. Game Harvest Questionnaire Analysis, 1970, British Columbia Fish and Wildlife Branch.
10. J. Buckley, Assistant Minister of Travel Industry, Department of Recreation and Conservation, Victoria, B.C., at a Seminar on Outdoor Recreation held by the Wildlife and Recreation Committee of the Canada Land Inventory, November 26, 1971, Victoria, B.C.
11. Kamloops Region, Recreational Supervisor, Recreation Division, British Columbia Forest Service.
12. The Administration of Outdoor Recreation in Canada, Canadian Council of Resource Ministers, 1968.