

Range Opportunities

18 Policy Issues

Even though the Ministry of Agriculture programs do not dictate Ministry of Forests action as the ARDSA programs do, they do affect range administration. For example, production targets such as 65 percent self-sufficiency by 1986 create pressures for range improvement. How adequately the Ministry of Forests could respond to these pressures was never assessed. With the jurisdiction over the components of the range system split, there is a need for close coordination between programs.

Since most of the range occurs on forested land there is a further need to coordinate range management with forest management. It was this interaction between range and timber management that was of most concern to agronomists and foresters. There is general agreement that cattle and forests can be managed together but it will require more management efforts. The foresters have to ensure adequate regeneration of logged sites, and uncontrolled use by cattle reduces tree survival. This additional management effort is a cost to the rancher.

To prepare these sites for cattle may require additional scarification. While the additional costs are not great, the question is: who pays? Farm business studies indicate that ranchers generally have high production costs and need sources of cheap feed. The loggers must ensure adequate scarification for tree regeneration. Beyond that it is an additional cost without any benefit. The government would have to carefully assess the benefits before it could invest public funds in the venture.

Prescribed burning has been suggested as a management technique to improve range conditions in many cases. This tool has been used particularly effectively in the Peace River Region but there is no unanimous agreement on its usefulness in the southern regions. The technique has been tried in the Nelson Region and has been considered successful by range and wildlife managers. However, the silviculturalists were sceptical and found it depleted the soil moisture needed for tree growth and removed younger trees. In these areas the decision to burn will require some trade-offs. It will involve decisions to improve these marginal ranges as opposed to more intensive development on better ranges.

The conversion of grazing leases administered by the Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing to a tenure administered by the Ministry of Forests is a policy which requires discussion. The decision to make the conversion is not an issue but the workload created is of concern. These ranges tend to be fairly productive but have been degraded. Further, they tend to be useful as badly needed spring-fall ranges. Consequently they warrant a greater proportion of management effort than their area implies to make them a more productive part of the range system. As additional staff to handle the conversion has not been made available, work priorities have been altered.

Forest Recreation

19 Contents and Tables

19 FOREST RECREATION

CONTENTS

19.1 PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES	799
19.1.1 <u>ANALYSIS OF RECREATION</u>	799
19.1.2 <u>PLANNING</u>	800
19.1.3 <u>OPERATIONS</u>	800
19.1.4 <u>TRAINING AND COMMUNICATION</u>	800
19.2 POLICY ISSUES	801
19.2.1 <u>INTERAGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES</u>	801
19.2.2 <u>LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT</u>	801
19.2.3 <u>RECREATION SITE MAINTENANCE</u>	801
19.3 PROGRAM BENEFITS	802

TABLES

Number	Title	
19/1	Developed Capacity and Projected Demand to 1985	799
19/2	Recreation Facility Requirements	799

Forest Recreation
19 Program Opportunities

19 FOREST RECREATION

19.1 PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES

19.1.1 ANALYSIS OF RECREATION

The analysis of recreation is based on ministry estimates. These estimates include data obtained from the periodic checks that are made on the use of forest recreation sites. The estimates were projected on the basis of regional population growth. The total demand by 1985 is expected to be just under two million user visits per year.

To calculate facility requirements to satisfy this amount of use, a number of assumptions were made on the rates of concentrated and dispersed use. The interpretation of these figures gives an estimate of the number of sites and length of trails required. The total number of visits to ministry developments does not fully express the demand. Use is concentrated in weekend visits and these peak periods must be used as the measure of demand. Projected demand is based on the capacity required to meet user demand on peakload weekends. It is measured as number of people visiting ministry facilities.

TABLE 19/1
Developed Capacity and Projected Demand to 1985
(weekend user visits)

Development	Projected Demand	Current Developed Capacity	Deficit (percent)
Sites	66 000	27 000	60
Summer trails	26 000	10 000	60
Winter trails	21 000	5 000	75

TABLE 19/2
Recreation Facility Requirements

Facilities	Current Developments	Requirements to 1985
Campsite-picnic units	8 760	13 000
Summer-use trails (km)	992	1 600
Winter-use trails (km)	481	1 600

During this five-year period, the supply of recreation opportunities exceeds the demand except in some local areas. If the demand for improved recreation planning, including the application of forest landscape techniques, is met, then the pressure for single-use recreation areas is expected to decrease.

Forest Recreation
19 Program Opportunities

19.1.2 PLANNING

To date the Ministry of Forests program has been primarily concerned with the construction and servicing of sites and trails in an effort to resolve serious operational problems resulting from public use of forest and range lands. Because of this, the planning component of the program which is a prerequisite to development has not received the attention it deserves.

The adverse effects of this lack of planning to this point in time would appear to be minimal. However, should this imbalance between operations and planning continue, it could limit the effectiveness of the program in the future.

To prevent this, increased effort should be directed into the collection, analysis and evaluation of supply-and-demand data and the preparation of strategic recreation management plans in all regions of the province.

19.1.3 OPERATIONS

The total projected demand by 1985 for recreation opportunities on lands managed by the Ministry of Forests, based on what are believed to be conservative Ministry of Forests estimates, is just under two million user visits per year.

Based on present patterns of use, existing Ministry of Forests developments (sites and trails) would meet approximately 37 percent of that demand should future predictions be correct and present program funding remain at or near current levels.

Given this significant deficit in development capacity and assuming the supply of recreational lands is not limiting on the demand for recreation opportunities, it would appear feasible for the Ministry of Forests to prepare a program that would satisfy all or a good portion of that projected demand.

However, since the demand estimates are based on a subjective analysis of unsubstantiated estimates, to use these figures as specific program targets would not be advisable at this time. Rather, for the 1980-85 program period, it would appear logical to maintain operational development (construction of sites and trails) at a level commensurate with the need to deal with immediate use problems. Such an approach would allow a better balance between planning and development to occur and would ensure a more effective and efficient operational strategy in subsequent program periods.

19.1.4 TRAINING AND COMMUNICATION

To date, efforts at staff training and program coordination, both within the Ministry of Forests and with other ministries, have for the most part been minimal. Communication with the public has varied by region but in general efforts have been less than desirable.

The training and communication component of the forest recreation program is an integral part of the overall program. Improvements in both the magnitude and quality of outputs should be given high priority.

Forest Recreation
19 Policy Issues

19.2 POLICY ISSUES

19.2.1 INTERAGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

As each agency charged with the responsibility of outdoor recreation management develops and implements its programs, duplication of effort and administrative inefficiencies will become apparent. This matter is of particular concern in the relationship of the recreation programs of the Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division of the Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing, the Ministry of Forests and to a lesser extent the regional districts.

There may be cases where sites currently managed by the Ministry of Forests, because of location and public use preferences and use levels, should logically be managed by the Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division or regional districts, and vice-versa. The servicing (garbage collection) of sites is another area where there is a real potential for duplication of effort.

It is probable that duplication of effort and administrative inefficiencies could be reduced if the pertinent policies were reviewed and program coordination improved.

19.2.2 LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

The extensive application of sophisticated landscape management techniques to preserve aesthetic values could have a major impact on the management of the consumptive resources such as timber. This is of particular concern in the areas adjacent to major access corridors and settlements within Timber Supply Areas where there is already a deficit in wood supply or where the supply and demand for wood are currently in balance.

Policies are required on the management of natural landscapes that will guide resource managers in the decision-making process.

19.2.3 RECREATION SITE MAINTENANCE

Between 50 to 80 percent of the regional recreation budgets are allocated to garbage collection at recreation sites and trails. If the magnitude of these expenditures are reduced, some monies could be reallocated to planning and training and communication. Current policies on site servicing should be re-examined to determine if alternate strategies are available and practical. One such strategy might involve an intensive campaign to convince the recreating public to take all disposable material with them after using Ministry of Forests developments.

19.3 PROGRAM BENEFITS

Although forest recreation may provide fewer direct economic benefits than some of the consumptive resources, the recreation program does provide two very important benefits to the Ministry of Forests.

It aids the effective management of other ministry programs. By having the mandate for forest recreation as well as timber and range, the Ministry of Forests can develop goals, objectives and strategies for each program simultaneously. This allows a greater degree of flexibility in the integration of programs, particularly in the long term, than if the ministry was dependent on another agency.

It is a good vehicle for developing public rapport. It is popular because it satisfies real public needs by providing the type of recreation facilities desired in the environment preferred within the timeframe required. The on-site contact between Ministry of Forests staff and the recreating public provides the opportunity for direct two-way communication and allows planners to keep in touch with public preferences.

APPENDIX A APPENDIX A/1 Proposed Timber Supply Areas

