OUTDOOR RECREATION IN PIETERSBURG AND ENVIRONS: PRESENT PATTERN AND DEMAND

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. OUTDOOR RECREATION: THE PHENOMENON

Today more than ever before in history, the lives of most civilized human beings are regulated by time. In this ordered existence there is little chance for the working man to give rein to his inclinations. It is only in his recreation and especially his outdoor recreation, that he has complete freedom of choice. He can decide when, where, or how to spend his leisure time: whether he will spend it actively in taking part in organized activities or whether he will sit and look on, or simply lie and rest.

Outdoor recreation is of great physical as well as mental value. For the city-dweller who spends his life in offices or factories recreation in the fresh air is of the utmost importance to his actual bodily health. If he lacks such opportunities, it could also lead to the building up of mental frustrations. Where there are such facilities the result is usually a happy, healthy and therefore productive community.

There is however another aspect in connection with the value of outdoor recreation: "While recreation is and should be considered one of that order of services which must provide for its benefit to the public without a dollar-and-cents accounting of immediate benefits, it does make sound fiscal sense. In urban areas, recreation is often a wise economic use of land, increasing its value beyond its cost: in some underdeveloped areas, it may be a means of economic rebirth; and throughout the nation it provides a major market for goods and services" (ORRRC, 1962.181).

In view of the above it is clear that a community which does not make productive use of its natural resources for healthful recreation does itself great harm, physically, mentally and financially.

During the past few decades participation in outdoor recreation has increased rapidly. According to all expectations, the demand for recreational facilities will greatly exceed the supply in coming Several years ago the government of the U.S.A. realised the need for research in this field and appointed a commission to investigate the whole matter of outdoor recreation. The resulting report filled 27 volumes. To quote from this report: "Outdoor recreation is a major land use involving a quarter billion acres of public land and perhaps as much private land. Over 90% of the population participates with an annual government investment of an additional S 1 000 000. Yet, there is no systematic co-ordinated program in outdoor recreation as there is in other fields which involve fewer people, acres and dollars ... Perhaps no other activity involving so many people and so basic a part of our life has received less attention from investigators" (ORRRC, 1962, 80).

B. FACTORS INFLUENCING THE GROWTH OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

A survey of the contemporary literature indicates general agreement on the four most important factors influencing the growth of outdoor recreation, namely population growth, urbanization, increase in expendable income and in leisure time.

1. POPULATION INCREASE

As the population increases the need for facilities in outdoor

population increases by at least the same rate. With a yearly population increase of 3% (1960-1970) South Africa. has a much faster growth rate than that of the world average of approximately 2,0%. It also exceeds that of the U.S.A. (1,1%) and Europe (0,8%) to such an extent that the South African population will double itself in half the time that would be necessary in these countries (Tegniek, 71, 8-9).

2 URBANIZATION

One of the main reasons for the increase in outdoor recreation demand surpassing population growth is urbanization (Jooste & Venter, 1965,1). In rural areas the outdoors is within walking distance for everybody. In cities people live in concentrated circumstances so that the demand for recreation in the immediate vicinity of the city is very high. Working conditions in cities also tend to intensify the need for relaxation in peaceful surroundings.

In 1960 only 46,7% of the total population of S.A. was urbanized. This figure rose to 47,9% in 1970. This means that there is a yearly increase of 3,2% which is notably higher than the population increase (3,0%).

- 3. <u>T-I-M FACTOR</u> (Time, Income, Mobility)
- (a) Time. More and longer vacations and a shorter working week have been characteristic of developments in the U.S.A., Europe, South Africa and other countries. According to available information, the standard working week in S.A. has diminished from 47,4 hours in 1927 to 43,5 hours in 1969. While it took the U.S.A. approximately 29 years to reduce its working week from 47 to 43 hours (De Grazia, 1969, 441), South Africa has taken 42 years. Thus South Africa is at present where the U.S.A. was between 1930 and 1945. If the U.S.A. is taken as a measure, all indications are that a drastic decrease in the length of the working week in South Africa can be expected in future.

The accompanying table (Financial Mail, 1971, 29) is an indication of the increase in white family income in South Africa recorded between 1960 and 1966:

Income	Group	Percentage of	White Population
(R per a	nnum)	1960	1966
Under	3 000	76,8	27,7
3 000 -	4 000	11,2	29,3
4 000 -	6 000	7,4	-28,6
Above -	6 000	4,5	14,5

From the above it is evident that the number of white households with an income of less than R3 000 per year has decreased very markedly while the higher income groups have shown a steady increase.

(c) Mobility. The coming of the motor car has more than anything else brought changes in the pattern and magnitude of outdoor recreation. The greatest value of the motor car lies in its ".... flexibility in timing and use ..." (Burton, 1970, 14). People can come and go whenever they wish without being bound by termini and timetables and early planning.

The motor car, moreover, is not only a means of transportation to the place of recreation but the journey itself may be regarded as a form (a very important one at that) of recreation. The fact that there are equal volumes of traffic on our roads on weekdays and Sundays, points to the role that the motor car plays in recreation. During the 1960's there was a 6,4% annual increase in motor ownership but a traffic volume increase of 8,3% (Lombard, 1971,4). Since 1940 the motor

ownership in S.A. has more than doubled from 31 to 65 per 1 000 people (Houghton, 1967, 192) - which is still, however, far behind the saturation point which, according to Tanner (1960), is 400 motor vehicles per 1 000 of the population.

II. OUTDOOR RECREATION IN PIETERSBURG

A. AIMS OF THE SURVEY

From the foregoing it is evident that South Africa can look to a future in which there will be an ever-increasing demand for more outdoor recreation facilities - but to determine general trends still does not solve the problem for the specific communities living in specific geographical environments. The development of such outdoor recreational facilities should be based on a thorough analysis of the specific needs of the community, against the background of the actual physical resources of the area. With this in mind, a survey was undertaken to determine the physical resources for outdoor recreation and also the character and magnitude of the recreation demand in Pietersburg.*

B. PHYSICAL RESOURCES FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION ON THE PIETERSBURG PLAIN

It is not surprising that outdoor recreational planners have usually turned their attention to mountainous areas or those areas abounding in bodies of water and places of luxuriant natural vegetation or snow cover. Because rainy or cold climates limit the time available for outdoor recreation in such attractive areas, one of the most tenacious problems to be solved by planners is that of the overcrowding of resorts during peak periods. The holiday season causes such congestion at resorts and picnic places that there can hardly be any suggestion of "having a peaceful outing in the countryside". Resorts tend to develop

At present very few outdoor recreational facilities (organized sport excluded) exist for the inhabitants of Pietersburg, Northern Transvaal. The nearest mountainous area with dams and waterfalls suitable for picnic spots is approximately 70 km east of the town. Because such picnic spots are relatively far* and few in number, there seems to be a definite need for outdoor recreational facilities near the town. A closer look at the physical resources in this area** explains this lack in outdoor recreation.

1. CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

An analysis of the climate points to two very notable aspects as far as outdoor recreation is concerned. Firstly the low rainfall, its seasonality and its torrential character, has the effect that rivers are generally dry except for a short period immediately after heavy showers. Dry spells very often cause lakes and dams — of which there are very few — to dry up completely. In the light of the ORRRC finding that 44% of all recreationists in America prefer the proximity of water bodies, the dryness of the Pietersburg Plain is a serious factor in hampering the development of outdoor recreational facilities. Apart from this, and compounding the problem further, is the fact that all standing water in this area is infested with the bilharzia snail — the

^{*} Details of this survey may be found in a report to the Pietersburg Municipality. (Hattingh & Hugo, 1971)

^{*} Recent studies have shown that the great majority of people seldom travel more than 50 km on one-day recreation trips (See e.g. Mercer, 1971, 506; Burton, 1970, 379; Duffel and Goodall, 1969).

^{**} For detailed analysis see Hugo & Hatting (1972).

presence of which renders the water bodies unsuitable for activities where there is direct contact with the water.

Secondly, a climatic analysis points to a long warm summer and mild winter. The summer days are definitely not uncomfortably hot whilst the sunny winter days are generally ideal for outdoor life. Nights are neither uncomfortably warm in summer nor very cold in winter. Compared to Western Europe where approximately only four months per year are suitable for holidaymaking, the Pietersburg Plain can offer a full twelve months season. While London has an average of 3,8 hours of sunshine a day (Conally, 1969, 23), Pietersburg has 8,3 (Weather Bureau, 1950).

2. LANDSCAPE

As far as landscape is concerned, the Pietersburg Plain has very little, if anything, to offer. Scenic beauty as such is generally coupled with mountainous, well-vegetated areas. The Pietersburg Plain, as its name suggests, consists of an extended flat to slightly rolling plain, gradients are seldom steeper than 12%. The only natural features breaking the monotonous landscape are very conspicuous small, steep-sided hills.

The aspects of the physical environment as described above emphasize the necessity for research to establish a suitable basis for planning, especially because current planning is usually concentrated on physically attractive areas, so that little if any practical experience can be drawn from areas similar to the Pietersburg Plain.

C. METHOD OF DETERMINING RECREATION DEMAND

To determine the recreational requirements of the Pietersburg public questionnaires were used to obtain a large enough sample to be fully representative of the population. These questionnaires were mailed to a randomly selected sample comprising thirty-three and a third per cent of Pietersburg's households.*

* Household: private residence, flat, boarding house.

In Questionnaire 1, interest in a number of outdoor recreational activities had to be indicated according to the following statements:

- 1) Participate but not interested in doing it more often.
- 2) Participate and would enjoy doing it more often.
- 3) Do not participate but would like to, should facilities be available.
- 4) Approximate number of times participated during the previous year.

Questionnaire 2 concentrated on the type of resort people prefer and the factors which influence their choice of a resort. Respondents had to choose between:

- 1) a highly developed crowded resort:
- 2) a relatively unknown resort; small but with basic conveniences;
- 3) a totally undeveloped place in natural surroundings.

The following factors had to be ranked in order of their influence on the choice of resort:

- 1) distance:
- 2) low costs (entrance and accommodation fees);
- 3) requirements of children;
- 4) climate;
- 5) water bodies;
- 6) natural beauty of the surroundings;
- 7) peace and quiet;
- 8) popularity of the resort.

The third questionnaire reviewed the facilities that people would like to have at the resort of their choice. For this purpose the types of resorts were again listed as in Questionnaire 2. The facilities which the respondents were asked to number in order

of preference were the following:

- 1) social facilities (e.g. bioscope, dancing, etc.);
- 2) cold water swimming-bath;
- 3) hot water swimming-bath;
- 4) availability of meals and other refreshments;
- 5) sports facilities;
- 6) playgrounds for children;
- 7) quality of service;
- 8) "braaivleis" facilities:
- 9) lawns and shady trees;
- 10) luxury accommodation.

Information regarding family composition and income was also asked for in all three questionnaires.

D. RESULTS

1. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND CORRELATIONS

An analysis of the completed questionnaires revealed that respondents mainly represented families. 14,9% of the questionnaires which were returned came from married couples without children: 82,7% from families with children and only 2,4% came from single persons.

(a) Choice of type of recreational facilities in terms of the Family Group

Table 1 is an analysis of the correlation that exists between the type of family and the choice of a resort. To summarise it seems that (i) families with children prefer the B type of resort, i.e. a relatively unknown and small resort with basic requirements (53,5%); that (ii) the A type, i.e. a highly developed crowded resort was second in popularity 43,9% and that (iii) an undeveloped resort in natural surroundings was preferred by a small minority of families (only 11,6%). Elderly couples without children show exactly the same tendency as those families with children. Young married couples without children prefer type A (50%) while types B

and C each gained a popularity vote of 25%. Questionnaires returned by single persons were too few in number to lead to any significant conclusion (only 4 out of 168).

TABLE I: CHOICE OF TYPE OF RESORT ACCORDING TO FAMILY TYPE*

	% OF QUESTIONNAIRES TYPES OF RESORTS							
oung couples WITHOUT ildren d couples WITHOUT ildren Total								
FAMILY TYPE	A Highly Developed**	B Partially- Developed***	C Undeveloped					
Families WITH children	34,9	53,5	11,6					
Young couples WITHOUT children	50,0	25,0	25,0					
Old couples WITHOUT children	33,3	55,6	fi, f					
Total	44,0	36,0	20,0					
Single Persons****								
	0,0	66,7	33,3					
Old :	0,0	100,0	0,0					
- Total	33,3	54,2	12,5					

- * Total number of questionnaires returned = 168
- ** A highly developed resort would include picnic facilities (barbecues, water, toilets, shady trees and swimming pool(s) as well as some of the following amenities: restaurants, facilities for sport and social intercourse (e.g. dancing, bioscope, etc), with the important implication that the resort is visited by large numbers of recreationists.
- *** A partially developed resort with basic requirements includes picnic facilities, trees and swimming pool with a quiet and peaceful atmosphere.
- **** Numbers too small to give a trustworthy percentages (4 out of 168, i.e. 2,4%).

It would normally have been expected that the Type A Resort which is usually crowded, would have been the most popular

choice. However the anomaly in this survey is very likely due to the fact that so very few young people answered the questionnaires. Apart from this fact it may be that the smaller resorts where fewer visitors can be accommodated at a time, and visits are more frequent, do actually receive more visitors than the larger places where the crowds during the holidays could perhaps give a wrong impression of overwhelming popularity However it may be, the fact remains that by far the greater portion of the Pietersburg European population lives in family groups and that the findings of the popularity of Resort B are therefore valid Because of the greater choice of employment in the large urban centres there are comparatively few young single people in this town. The great need of the Pietersburg public is thus for the unsophisticated type of recreational resort. The crowded conditions of the highly developed resorts are in conflict with the demands of the majority of the public. This overcrowding could also be due to the fact that there are too few resorts with an atmosphere of rural calm.

As far as the young married people are concerned, it is clear that they prefer the popular resorts; but even here there was a remarkably large percentage who prefer undeveloped camping sites. The fact that they are anxious for adventure and capable of physical effort, is the reason for their relatively high choice of type C resorts.

Correlation between income and choice of resort (Table II)
It seems as if for all income groups Resort B is the most popular choice. There is, however, a tendency for Resort A to become relatively more popular with a rise in income. It should be noticed that there is an increase in the number of questionnaires returned as the income increases. The largest number of returns fell in the Group with incomes exceeding R6 000 which does not indicate a normal distri-

bution according to income.

TABLE II: CHOICE OF TYPE OF RESORT ACCORDING TO INCOME

	QUESTIONNAIRE RETURNS NUMBERS (a) AND PERSENTAGES (b)										
INCOME	TYPES OF RESORTS										
R '000 per annum	A Highly developed		B Partially developed		C Undeveloped		Total				
200	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)			
1 - 2	3	33,3	4	44,4	2	22,2	9	100			
2 - 3	9	37,5	12	40,0	3	12,5	24	100			
3 - 4	10	32,3	18	58,1	3	9,7	31	100			
4 - 5	6	19,4	21	67,7	4	12,9	31	100			
5 - 6	11	39,3	14	50,0	3	10,7	28	100			
above 6	17	37,8	22	48,9	6	13,3	45	100			
TOTAL	56	-	91	-	21	. T.Y	168				

2. PARTICIPATION AND LATENT DEMAND FOR RECREA-TIONAL FACILITIES

Questionnaire No. 1

When the percentages in columns A, B and C of Table III (i.e. those who participate, those who would like to take part more often, and those who are not participating at the moment but would like to do so in future) are totalled (Column F) the popularity of the various activities is reflected. The activities, swimming (hot and cold water) and picnicking, head the list with 70,7% and 72% The other activities show a uniform decrease in popularity - from driving for pleasure 59,7% to cycling 11,0%.

TABLE III: PERCENTAGE PARTICIPATION IN TYPES OF RECREATION

		A		В	С	D	E	F	G	F
Order of preference	Type of recreation	Satisfied with participation	Wish to participate more often	1 .	and a ment of the smellines	Do not wish to participate	Average number of annual visits per respondant	A + B + C	A + B	B + C
1	Hot-water springs	23,2	37,8	11,0	0	28,0	2,8	72,0	-	-
2	Swimming	13,4	51,2	6,	1	29,3	1		1	1
3	Picnicking	20,7	42,7	7,8	3 2	29,3	6,6	70,7		, , ,
4	Driving for pleasure	23,2	34,1	2,4	4	10,3	20,0	59,7	57,3	
5	Visits to farms	22,0	29,3	2,4	4	6,3	11,1	53,7	41,3	31,7
6	Visits to other towns	23, 2	26,8	2,4	4	7,6	6,5	52,4	50,0	29,2
7	Hiking mountaineering	9,8	31,7	7,3		2,2	6,5	48,8	41,5	39,0
8	Angling	6,1	29,3	8,5	56	6,1	9,9	43,9	35,4	37,8
9	Visits of cultural historical interest	9,8	19,5	12,2	58	3,5	2,6	41,5	29,3	31,7
0	Boating and skiing	4,9	15,9	13,4	65	5,8	11,4	34,2	20,8	29,3
1	Hunting	4,9	13,4	6,1	75	5,6	4,6	24,4	18,3	19,5
2	Horseback riding	4,9	7,3	8,5	79	3,3	4,0	20,7	12,2	15,8
3	Cycling	6,1	4,9	1,2	87	1,8	-	12,2	11,0	6,1

In terms of the actual average annual visits per respondent swimming is again the most popular, driving for pleasure is second choice. The fact that swimming has such a high figure (50,9 visits per respondent per year against 20,0 for trips by car) in an area where there are hardly any public amenities outside the municipal boundaries indicates that, to a great extent, private pools or dams on nearby farms and plots are very likely often visited.

The extent of the latent demand is obtained by adding together columns A, B and C. Column A indicates present participation and respondents evidently regard the amenities as satisfactory. Column B, however, suggests that the existing amenities are probably insufficient, while C to an even greater extent shows that either there is a demand for more facilities or those existing are not sufficiently well advertised.

It is obvious that, with an eye to planning, a combination of columns B + C could determine the latent demand. These two columns deal with respondents who would like to participate more often than at present, i.e. those who are dissatisfied with existing conditions. Accordingly the greatest need seems to be for more *cold water swimming baths*, with hot water baths and picnic spots together forming a close second choice (See column H).

A second groups of activities, fluctuating between 39 - 36%, includes (in decreasing order of popularity) the following: walking, angling and driving for pleasure.

At present there seems very little demand for facilities for horseback riding, cycling and hunting.

It is illuminating to compare these findings with those of the ORRRC (Table IV). As can be seen, there is a close correlation between the rankings of the ORRRC survey and that of Pietersburg.*

^{*} According to Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient the data show a positive correlation at the 99,0% confidence level

TABLE IV: PERCENTAGE PARTICIPATION IN TYPES

OF RECREATION

ACTIVITIES	U. S. A.*	RANK			PA	PIETE.	ATION ATING RSBURG
Picnicking	1		1		53	-	63
Driving for	1000			20			0.5
pleasure	2		3		52	50	- 57**
Swimming	3		2	*:	45	61	- 64**
Walking for						01	04.
pleasure	4		4		33		42
Fishing	5		5		29		35
Boating & water-							00
skiing	6		6		28		21
Hunting	7		7		13		18
Cycling	8		9		9		11
Horseback riding	9		8		6		12

Source: ORRRC Study Report 26: Prospective Demand
Outdoor Recreation p. 27.

* Participation during summer months

** This figure includes driving for pleasure and
visits to nearby towns and farms

*** Includes both hot and cold water baths

Note: Descriptions of activities are not identical in all
cases. Visits to places of historical or cultural
interest are excluded in accordance with ORRRC
survey.

3. FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE PARTICIPATION IN OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY:

Questionnaire No. 2.

Table V indicates the factors that respondents consider important in choosing recreation resorts. Scenic beauty (39%) seems to be the most important factor. It underlines

the importance of nature conservation as essential to the development of outdoor recreational facilities. Not only is soil and plant conservation necessary but also the planting of trees and the building of dams, so that bird, fish and other animal life can be protected.

TABLE V: FACTORS INFLUENCING CHOICE OF RECREATIONAL RESORTS

-		FACTORS	% OF	CHOI	CE
	1	Scenic beauty		39	FINE COLUMN
	2	Children's needs		37	
	3	Distance		35	
	4	Peace and quiet		35	
	5	Climate		29	When you
	6	Low costs		28	
	. 7	Water surfaces		27	
	8	Popularity		6	

The fact that special facilities for children at resorts are so important (37%) shows that swings, chutes etc. should be provided in planning a resort.

The great importance attached to the beauty of nature is supported by the wish for peace and quiet (35%). This appears third on the list, together with distance. After this there is a sharp decline in percentages: climate (29%) low costs (28%) and water surfaces (27%).

In the survey of the ORRRC it was found that water plays an exceptionally large part in outdoor recreation. Altogether 44% of those who took part in that survey preferred the presence of water at a resort. "Most people seeking outdoor recreation want water to sit by, to swim and to fish in, to ski across, to dive under, and to run their boats over" (ORRRC, 1962, 3). Water surfaces as a factor is ranked lower by the Pietersburg public, probably because of the danger of bilharzia found in all the dams of the

Northern Transvaal. Furthermore, it is possible, too, that the lack of perennial streams may be a factor accounting for people's failure to regard water surfaces as an essential outdoor recreational asset.

It is illuminating that the *popularity* of a resort is the only factor that seems to carry very little weight. This proves that the crowded resorts are not the most sought after. This apparent contradiction has already been discussed.

4. AMENITIES AT RECREATIONAL RESORTS

Questionnaire No. 3 Table VI

Only the first three choices of respondents were examined. From these the order of importance could be determined exactly, as recreationists usually have decided preferences for only a very limited number of facilities and are usually indifferent to those which do not interest them. Because they are of no importance to them, those lower in the list are usually listed at random with no regard to their importance.

TABLE VI: CHOICE OF AMENITIES AT RECREATIONAL RESORTS

Ar	nenities	Percentage	of	Choice	
1 2	Grass and Shade Playground for children	42% 23%			
3	Availability of meals and refreshments				
4	Warm water swimming-pool	19%			
5	"Braaivleis" facilities	19%			
6	Cold water swimming-pool	16%			
7	Social facilities, sports facilities,				
	luxury accommodation and quality of				
	service	16%			

Grass and shady trees was chosen by a very large majority as the most important requisite. The choice of a playground for children as second in importance also correlates with the findings of Questionnaire 2, where "needs of

Aspects such as social and sports facilities do not appear to be of great importance to the average Pietersburg family. This point also stresses the finding in the previous questionnaire. (No. 2) viz., that highly-developed resorts are not the most popular.

C. CONCLUSIONS

The type of resort in demand by the Pietersburg public can be developed at very little cost. As a matter of fact the natural surroundings are suitable, but instead of utilising these, more luxury resorts are steadily being established in the vicinity, apparently without taking into consideration the preferences of the public. A possible reason for this is that there is little financial gain in providing the public with partially-developed resorts where natural surroundings play an important part. It could prove to be a solution if farmers were encouraged to throw open their farms (or portions thereof) to the public for a small fee. This is a popular practice in the U.S.A. where farmers (in California) and even private companies are finding that opening their lands for recreation purposes yields a much higher cash return than can ever be derived from their farming activities. Some farmers, by applying wild-life conservation and stocking their property with game, and their waters with fish, have developed their farms specifically for hunting and fishing (Hey, 1958, 15).

It is evident from this survey that for the Pietersburg public, as for that of the U.S.A., ... "simple activities are most popular This is generally true regardless of income, education, age or occupation" (ORRRC 1962, 3). The exploitation of nature in the

Pietersburg area for simple outdoor activities like picnicking and walking, has therefore great recreational possibilities.

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