

OUTDOOR EDUCATION IN KANSAS

by 500

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B. S., Bethany College, 1965

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A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Physical Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

1969

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2668  
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1969  
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C2

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to express his thanks to Mr. Ray Wauthier for all his assistance and guidance in the writing of this report.

To my wife, Leona Joyce, whose wise counsel, love and constant encouragement has made this report possible and worthwhile.

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## INTRODUCTION

Millions of Americans are spending more of their time and money on outdoor recreation today than ever before. In the next ten or fifteen years, it is reasonably certain that the outdoors will play an even larger role in family and social life. In the process of providing enjoyment, recreational activity can be both mentally and physically constructive; it can create new outlooks on life, stimulate thought, clarify reasoning, and enhance physical health. Therefore, a continued increase in outdoor recreational activity in the future must be viewed as a healthy and desirable situation.

There are many reasons for the increase in outdoor activities in Kansas. First, "extracurricular activities, outdoor education and camping, and co-recreation are now receiving proper emphasis in the total curriculum experiences of an increasing number of schools and colleges".<sup>1</sup> Because of the increase of outdoor education in our schools, more people now have a knowledge and interest in outdoor activities.

Secondly, there has been a big increase in outdoor facilities in Kansas. At the writing of this paper, according to Ray Wauthier, Assistant Professor of Physical Education of Kansas State University, Kansas ranked fifth in the United States in total water impounded within the state. With this increased amount of water, more facilities have been developed.

Third, population growth. At the turn of the century, Kansas had a population of 1,500,000 people. The projected population by 1975 is 2,815,600.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>William L. Hughes, Esther French, and Nelson G. Lehsten, Administration of Physical Education For Schools and Colleges (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1962), p. 139.

<sup>2</sup>C. V. Bargeman, Governor's Advisory Council on Outdoor Recreation, Kansas Recreation, Past, Present, Future, p. 1.

Fourth, mobility. Current projections indicate that Kansas will have almost 1,500,000 motor vehicles by 1975 as compared to just under 600,000 vehicles registered in Kansas in 1940.<sup>3</sup> The ease of travel brought about by the passenger car has increased the use of and demands for recreation facilities, including many facilities or sites that once would have been too remote for popular use.

Fifth, income. The Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission found in its studies that participation in recreation increases sharply when the \$3,000 income level is reached. The percentage of Kansans spending units above this level by 1975 is expected to be 76 percent.<sup>4</sup>

Sixth, leisure time. Perhaps even more dramatic and having more of an impact on the increased time spent on outdoor recreation has been the growth of leisure time. There are several reasons for the increase of leisure time: 1) decline in the work week, 2) increase as a result of the extension of paid vacations, 3) increase in paid holidays.<sup>5</sup>

The values of outdoor recreation, according to many authorities, have been recognized as a means of drawing the family together, as a tonic for senior citizens, and as a contributor to health. It is an activity by which the public is made aware of the importance of conserving our open space and cleaning up our air and water.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of this growth is the manner in which it has moved beyond the vast number of rugged males who like to rough it to involve all of the members of the family.

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid, pp. 3 & 4.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this report was to show the types of outdoor facilities available in Kansas and to acquaint individuals with the many different types of agencies that offered these facilities. Finally, it was written to point out the fact that Kansas had the outdoor facilities that were truly adequate for outdoor education and recreation to take place.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

By outdoor education in this report was meant any activity performed for enjoyment or pleasure in leisure time out-of-doors and in some way involving the utilization of land and/or water resources.