Kenneth Mitchell, Forest Service District Ranger from the Tongass National Forest in Sitka, Alaska, has a different approach to gathering data from visitors. He looks to a variety of outside as well as internal information sources. Some of his sources include the Alaska Division of Tourism and Economic Development, State fish and game surveys, university studies, and information gathered from outfitters, guides, and other concessionaires. Visitors and their needs are also identified through firsthand contacts at visitor centers and from interviews with wilderness rangers, through letters (both positive and negative), and the land management planning process. Mr. Mitchell also works with Forest Service researchers to gather special informational needs.

In discussions following Machlis' and Mitchell's presentations, symposium participants stated they needed to know a great deal about present and potential national recreation area guests if they are going to provide quality services for them. Basic information needs are where their guests come from, their patterns of travel, length of stay, expectations, activity patterns, and preference for facilities and services. It is also important to know when travelers gather information, which sources of information they use, and when and how they ultimately decide whether or not to visit a national recreation area. Such information is essential to effectively target markets, plan and invest in appropriate facilities, evaluate nonrecreational land uses of the national recreation area determine the appropriate mix and level of staffing, and most importantly, deliver services that meet the customers' needs.

Trends in Recreation Use

Dr. Kenneth Cordell, a Forest Service researcher at Athens, Georgia, reviewed current trends in recreation activities. Traditional activities such as picnicking, sightseeing, and swimming are still very popular. Though the risky, physically demanding pursuits such as mountain climbing have grown, they are not the majority yet. Nature study and walking are increasing in popularity. The profiles of recreation customers are diverse and different from hunters, who are again different from horseback riders.

The most fundamental changes important to recreation managers are those dealing with social demographics, and the effect traveling distance has on selecting places to visit. People are not traveling as far from home for their recreation, nor are they staying as long. They are taking shorter, more frequent trips. And, probably most important, leisure time is decreasing for many population groups. Dr. Cordell felt that national recreation areas have an unusual opportunity to alleviate future recreational shortages because they allow moderate development while still protecting resources. Thus, the large national shortages predicted for recreation opportunities such as nature observation, backcountry hiking, photography, and sightseeing are particularly relevant.

Based on the diversity of our customers and their interests, the inequities of population distribution versus Federal land distribution, and the substantial increase in demand for close-to-home recreation, Dr. Cordell moved that there may be a need to expand the national recreation area system.

George Siehl, who served on the President's Commission on America's Outdoors as the Associate Director for Trends and Forecasts, and James Page, Supervisor of the Monongahela National Forest, West Virginia, concurred with many of the issues brought out by Dr. Cordell.

Mr. Siehl noted that the public has lessening confidence in the Government to solve problems, and it is demanding a voice in the planning and decisionmaking processes of Government. Public hearings during the President's Commission on America's Outdoors brought out the need for assured Federal funding, clear identification of roles among public and private sector, Federal leadership on recreation issues, and a need to recognize the benefits of recreation in budget allocations.

Changes have occurred because of the larger role played by the private sector in providing recreation opportunities. Examples include the increase of fitness and indoor recreation centers. The Commission stressed decentralized, local action and increased cooperation with the private sector as ways to meet the urban recreation needs.

Mr. Siehl summarized the findings of the President's Commission on America's Outdoors. First, the recreation estate is fraying through lack of stewardship and consistent funding. Second, the pace of land development in rapid growth areas is claiming potential recreation sites while creating new, unmet recreation demands. Third, though State and local governments are developing facilities that should meet recreation demands, the Federal Government needs to better maintain Federal facilities and continue reliable funding support.

Symposium participants engaged in a lively discussion about trends over the next 5 years, pointing out that they will differ for large remote, small remote and urban national recreation areas. At the remote national recreation areas, there will be increased demand by families for more adventure-type activities. In the urban national recreation areas, the natural environment will continue to increase in value, people will demand more organized activities and events, and there are likely to be increases in such noncompatible activities as vandalism, drug use, and crime. Snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, hiking, and motorcycling would increase at remote national recreation areas while there would be more jogging, pleasure walking, and pet walking at urban national recreation areas. Regardless of the type of national recreation area, it was felt that guests would include more retirees, persons with disabilities, single-parent families, foreign visitors, and large groups.

Marketing and Delivering Visitor Services

Elizabeth Estill, Assistant Director of the Recreation Management Staff, Washington, DC, came to the Forest Service recently from Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Demonstration Area in Tennessee, managed by the Tennessee Valley Authority. While at Land Between the Lakes, she faced drastically declining budgets, from $17 million in 1978 to less than $8 million by 1981. To keep the recreation area afloat, she took the approach that public land management is a business, and that as with any business