



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR  
**BUREAU OF OUTDOOR RECREATION**  
..... **NORTHEAST REGION** .....

**128 North Broad Street - Philadelphia, Penna. 19102**

**CONNECTICUT RIVER NATIONAL RECREATION AREA FEASIBILITY STUDY**

**REPORT NO. 2**

This is the second of a series of reports on the study by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation to determine the feasibility and desirability of establishing a Connecticut River National Recreation Area. The study was authorized by Public Law 89-616 (approved October 3, 1966) and is being conducted under the direction of Rolland B. Handley, Regional Director, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, 128 N. Broad Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19102.

The study commenced in mid-November 1966 with a review of natural and cultural resources in the study area and the identification of major resource potentials. In mid-April the study moved into its second and current phase, that of determining needs for outdoor recreation and the potentials which exist for development.

The need for outdoor recreation development can be expressed in sociologic and economic terms and is evaluated by relating present and future parameters of demand with corresponding levels of opportunity for outdoor recreation. The difference in both quantitative and qualitative terms is the additional opportunities which should be created by both public and private sectors to provide an adequate recreation base for the individual and the populous. Major parameters of outdoor recreation demand under study are: extent of leisure time, income, sex and age, mobility, and of course, present and projected populations.

Indications of growing demand for outdoor recreation are seen in the findings of National Recreation Surveys conducted in both 1960 and 1965. These surveys measured actual rates of participation, detected trends and provided the basis for predicting future levels of participation. The results indicate nationwide that participation in

outdoor recreation by 2000 will increase about four times over the 1960 level whereas the population over the same period is expected to about double. Bringing this picture closer to bear, within a radius of 250 miles of the Connecticut Valley (its immediate recreation market area) there resided 44 million people in 1960 who engaged in outdoor recreation to the extent of about 1.9 billion experiences. By the year 2000, this same area will have at least 80 million people with a projected participation rate of about 6.9 billion experiences, an increase of some 5 billion over the 1960 level.

Public Law 89-616, authorizing the present study, states in part as follows: The Secretary's report shall contain, but not be limited to, findings with respect to ---

(a) the scenic, scientific, historic, outdoor recreation, and the natural values of the water and related land resources involved, including driving for pleasure, walking, hiking, riding, boating, bicycling, swimming, picnicking, camping, forest management, fish and wildlife management, scenic and historic site preservation, hunting, fishing, and winter sports;

(b) the potential alternative beneficial uses of the water and related land resources involved, taking into consideration appropriate uses of the land for residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and transportation purposes, and for public services; and

(c) the type of Federal program that is feasible and desirable in the public interest to preserve, develop, and make accessible the values set forth in subsection (a), including the consideration of scenic roads or parkways, and that also will have a minimum impact on other essential operations and activities in the area, and on private property owners.

In determining the potential for outdoor recreation development and reviewing necessary alternative uses, the Bureau has entered into in-depth studies of six subareas in the Connecticut Valley. These subareas, distinguished by unique cultural and natural characteristics, are: (1) the Connecticut Lakes-Lake Francis region; (2) West Stewartstown to Comerford Reservoir; (3) Comerford Reservoir to Turners Falls, Mass.; (4) Turners Falls to Middletown, Conn.; (5) Middletown to Deep River, Conn.; and (6) the river mouth and adjacent coastal area.

In addition to these specific subarea studies, the Bureau is also studying general aspects pertaining to the problems of water pollution and anadromous fisheries restoration. Water pollution seriously limits the recreational use of the river under present circumstances, but as

development will increase accordingly. The Bureau is taking into consideration the respective water quality goals and target dates, as well as areas which may fall short of expectations. To some extent, the scoping of a recreation action program in the Connecticut River Valley must correspond to that of the scheduled pollution abatement program.

Anadromous fisheries, through the years reduced to stepchild status in the family of resource enterprises in the valley, are now being held in new regard. The Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, coordinating its efforts with the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, is attempting to establish the potential and feasibility of restoring anadromous fisheries to full kinship as a legitimate companion to other essential products and services provided by the river.

The landscape and waterscape of the Connecticut Valley must be called upon to satisfy portions of the region's needs for additional recreation opportunity. Presently undeveloped resource areas will have to come into play. Correction of adverse land-use and water-use practices to enhance aesthetic and natural beauty qualities and implement outdoor recreation opportunities will be considered. Land and water resource areas presently developed for singular purposes should, where capable, be designed to incorporate other amicable uses in integrated, multiple-use patterns. Ideally, future development of the limited acreage requires scientifically-based planning for the provision of all life's essentials and space in which to live, work and to play. Planned complements of each requirement naturally should be based upon the anticipated needs exhibited for each and the inherent capability of the basic resources in question.