

Flying, a very different feature of Nancy Lake - one that could occur only in Alaska - is provision of a float plane drome. The need for this facility is demonstrated by the statistic that one-third of the total U.S. registry of float planes is based on Lake Hood at Anchorage - some 200 planes - while half of the 1200 (1961) civil aircraft in Alaska were based on Lake Hood and Merrill Field (private). However, this is not an accurate total as many planes are based on other lakes in the vicinity and converted to floats and skis. Merrill Field in Anchorage has, according to the 1961 General Plan for Anchorage, an ultimate capacity of 650 to 800 light planes. This Plan states that eventually an additional field will be required. Mostly used for "flying" recreation, many people can be expected to fly to Nancy Lake, combining their flying fun with picnics or whatever may interest them at the area. The ratio of private aircraft to population in Anchorage in 1961 was 81.3 per 10,000, in Alaska 63.2 per 10,000. Land planes will be able to land 2-1/2 miles north of the park entrance road at the settlement of Willow where there is now a good strip. Such arrivals could easily be picked up by the concessionaire.

Camping is a major recreation activity in Alaska, partly because of the lack of cabins and lodges but also because it is an activity that puts one on the fishing stream, boating lake or hunting ground. Even though it is a recreation very closely related to all outdoor activities except those requiring a stay of a day or less, camping for itself alone, unrelated to other activities, is an important Alaska activity. The demand therefore for camping facilities is very strong as illustrated by the chart. Nancy Lake, by providing amenities not presently justified in the small campgrounds now existing along highways, in the National Forest or the Kenai Moose Range will be an ideal situation for family camping. These amenities, in addition to the usual table and fire-place, will consist of tap water, flush toilets, laundry facilities, showers, and sanitary disposal stations at central locations. Activities will not be limited, as in most of the other campgrounds, but will cover a wide range of activities of interest to all members of the family. Because so many campers are fishermen or vice versa, **campgrounds were given priority of location on prime fishing lakes.** Actually, picnic grounds and campgrounds require the same kind of terrain. The Nancy Lake Plan relegates the picnic grounds to the shores of lakes having a low fishery potential. See Plan and Description - Typical Campground, pages 41 and 42.

CAMPING DEMAND AND NEED -- TOURISTS

This section is concerned solely with demand for camping facilities by tourists. Once the tourist is at Nancy Lake, his activities will be indistinguishable from those of resident users. Consequently, the number of tourists at the park is added to resident numbers for facilities other than camping.

Determining the impact of non residents on the park requires careful differentiation among the tourists Alaska attracts. Previously they arrive by airline, cruise ship, ferry or highway. Some are **vacationers**. some are **visitors**. Still



Campfire Singolong

others are business travellers.

We can discount the impact the airline vacationer would have on Nancy Lake because he is ill prepared baggage-wise and in transportation for camping. Additionally, the low airline "size of party" at 1.9 persons indicates a vacationer not oriented toward the family activities of Nancy Lake. Similarly we can exclude cruise ship passengers since they are highly organized for conducted, group tours. Nor would the business traveler have noticeable impact on Nancy Lake.

Our concern is with the highway traveler, and with the ferry passenger who utilizes a car during his stay. Among these we must differentiate further between visitors and vacationers. In the context of this report, **a visitor is one who comes to Alaska to visit an Alaskan. The vacationer on the other hand comes to see Alaska.** Even though the visitor spends 30% of his time visiting his host and the other 70% in seeing something of Alaska he was not included in the user projection because of a very different situation on the travel pattern of Alaska residents as compared to citizens of the lower 48.

Because of Alaska's isolation and its large number of Federal employees who receive bonus leaves home, about as many Alaskans depart as there are visitors arriving. In fact outward bound Alaskans spend more time away from Alaska than visitors spend in the state.

Survey work accomplished by the Alaska Department of Economic Development and Planning in its "Traveler Profiles, 1963-64" points up some very interesting facts regarding the particular highway and ferry vacationers who can be expected to utilize Nancy Lake facilities:



Early Fall Color - Quaking Aspen

- . . . the average highway vacationer spent 9-1/2 days in Alaska out of 39 days away from home.
- . . . people who visited Alaska were ones who liked a traveling vacation with only a few days in each spot.
- . . . over 50% of all highway vacationers were prepared for almost continuous camping.
- . . . 50.8% of Alaska Highway travelers used public campgrounds in the Yukon enroute.
- . . . in 1964 there were 5,411 highway vacationer parties amounting to 17,344 people (3.2 persons per party).
- . . . in 1964 there were 1,718 ferry vacationer parties amounting to 6,509 people (2.6 persons per party).
- . . . of the ferry vacationers, 71.4% used a car as a supplemental method of travel.
- . . . 60% of all highway vacationer parties visited the Anchorage-Valdez area and 20% (probably a segment of the 60%) the Kenai Peninsula.
- . . . of Ferry vacationers 59% visited Anchorage-Valdez and 10% the Kenai Peninsula.

This data indicates that Nancy Lake will attract practically all the highway vacationers who camp and who visit the Anchorage-Seward-Kenai Peninsula area plus all the ferry vacationers who utilize a car in the same region of Alaska. This indicator is not based solely on the number of campers or Nancy Lake's location near Anchorage. For many of these people Nancy Lake will be a destination point, particularly when Alaska Highway 3 is completed between Anchorage and Fairbanks. Connecting the two major cities of the state and with Mt. McKinley National Park midway in between, Alaska Number 3 will also serve Nancy Lake.

Vacationers will of course camp at all other campgrounds. However, for the most part, these are of the roadside, overnight type. The attraction of Nancy Lake that will make it a destination point will be not only its extensive recreation facilities but, perhaps more important to the camper who has traveled all the way from Haines or the whole distance of the Alaska Highway, its shower and laundromat facilities and its store where he can provision up. For many campers it will serve as a convenient central location and base for exploration of all of south central Alaska.

Deriving the number of campers from the 1964 figures of "Traveler Profiles" shows that a demand for 54 campground units for vacationers existed in Nancy Lake in that year. This calculation is based not only on the data mentioned but also on the assumption that use of the park will amount to 75 days per sum-

mer season. The normal 90 day summer season is not applicable to vacationer activity in Alaska as it does not take into account his week of travel at both ends of his Alaska sojourn. The survey, "Alaska Campers, 1964" indicated that the average campground stay of users was two days. This figure, along with the other data, was used to estimate the number of camp units needed in the Nancy Lake area in 1980. It is emphasized that the two day stay is thought to be overly conservative for Nancy Lake campers. In comparison to the campgrounds covered by the 1964 camper survey, Nancy Lake will tend toward a longer stay for reasons previously mentioned. In fact the area will offer sufficient in size, activity and interest for an entire vacation.

The foregoing is the point of beginning for projecting the long range need for camping development of Nancy Lake. Basic to the projection are several projections of future tourists in Alaska. The University of Alaska in its report, "Tourism in Alaska, 1965-1967" states that a conservative estimate of tourists in 1975 would be 450,000 which would be increasing at 18% per annum. This would mean 1,030,000 by 1980. Also, this report states that the lowest 1975 number would be 200,000 if absolutely nothing is done to attract more tourists. This low range would grow to about 275,000 by 1980. The U.S. Department of Commerce has estimated that the number of tourists could reach 650,000 by 1980. The same report showed that Alaska had 75,000 tourists in 1965. Another estimate is that under the most favorable conditions tourism could be developed to a total of 850,000 by 1980.*

The Department of Commerce points out that 650,000 tourists would spend 230 million dollars, resulting in 14,000 new workers who would earn 87 million dollars which would serve as the base for an increase in population of 88,000 persons!

The projections of 1980 tourist numbers and economic benefit are especially striking when compared to a **1953 U.S. National Park Service study which showed that in the year June 1, 1952 to May 31, 1953, 22,500 visitors spent 7 million dollars in Alaska. This report also reveals other comparable factors (illustrated in the table following) that are useful for long range projections.

The important fact of the table, for purposes of this report, is the increase in the number of highway vacationers. The ferry, of course, did not exist at the time of the 1952 or 1960 surveys. The other differences certainly do not indicate that there will be appreciable departures in the future from **the two important tangibles - percent of total campers and the percent of those campers who can be expected to visit the Anchorage area in 1980.**

Applying the same formula to secure the number of 1980 Nancy Lake campers as was used to derive the 1964 need, against an overaged projected total of 1980 tourists, (700,000) we have a twenty fold increase in that time - to a to-

*Transport Requirements for the Growth of Northwest North America - Vol. 2, Sec. V, pg 260.

**Alaska Recreation Survey Vol. 2, pgs 114, 116.

tal of 1100 campsites. This is the **total** projected need of the Nancy Lake Region of Service for vacationers.

However, solely on the basis of judgement and for reasons noted on pages 13 and 14, this total is felt to be about 50% under the 1980 need. A certain madness seems to seize Alaskans at spring break-up and the self-imposed prescription for relief from the cabin fever of winter seems to be the outdoors and camping. Though participation rates for camping must be assumed, it is believed the rate is much higher in Alaska than elsewhere in the country. This situation applies of course only to residents. Other factors at work on both residents and travelers to increase camping is the great growth in leisure time and the increase in popularity of the activity, partly because of the ease of conducting it in the newer trailers, campers and turtlebacks. A further factor is the concentration of recreationists at Nancy Lake that is bound to occur as a result of completion of Alaska Highway 3. For these reasons the number of camp units to be provided in Nancy Lake for both residents and vacationers, was arbitrarily increased to a total 1750.



Nancy Lake Pond Reflects Mt. Susitna