

INTRODUCTION

It is a paradox that in Alaska -- with its limited population and tremendous land area -- the outdoor recreation situation is critical. Despite the existence in the State of over 3 million fresh water lakes larger than 20 acres; 10,300 streams and rivers with a total length of 82,000 miles; and 57 million acres of salt water within the 3 mile limit*, Alaska roads provide access to only 264 lakes, streams and salt water fisheries, all within one mile of a highway.**

This example of the problem -- a problem completely of access -- applies not only to fishing. The same could be said of all water activities including the important ones of boating and swimming. It could be said also of hiking trails, camping, picnicking and so on. Nancy Lake in effect is access -- the opening up of a large, varied and sorely needed recreation opportunity.

GENERAL

It is critical to the long range effectiveness of the Nancy Lake Master Plan that the number of users be estimated so that facilities in adequate quantity can be provided. In other words, that supply meet demand over the long term.

There is no alternative to reasonable projections of user numbers. Guesswork results in facilities that are inadequate and become overrun, often to the point where the attractiveness of an area is destroyed, a factor critical to the maintenance of good parks. If not overrun, then facilities may be overbuilt, a waste of the public purse.

Although still not an exact science by any means, it is now possible to reasonably anticipate the facilities that are needed in a particular park to meet the needs of a growing population.

Such an estimate must be based, first, on the **total population** that can be expected to use the area at some specific future time and, secondly, on the **extent** to which those particular people engage in the different recreation activities. This estimate for the Nancy Lake Area is limited in time to 1980 for two reasons. First it has been shown to be unrealistic to attempt to project beyond 20 years. Second, most of the basic planning studies on population and socio-economic conditions on which a specific plan such as this must depend for basic data, project only to 1980.

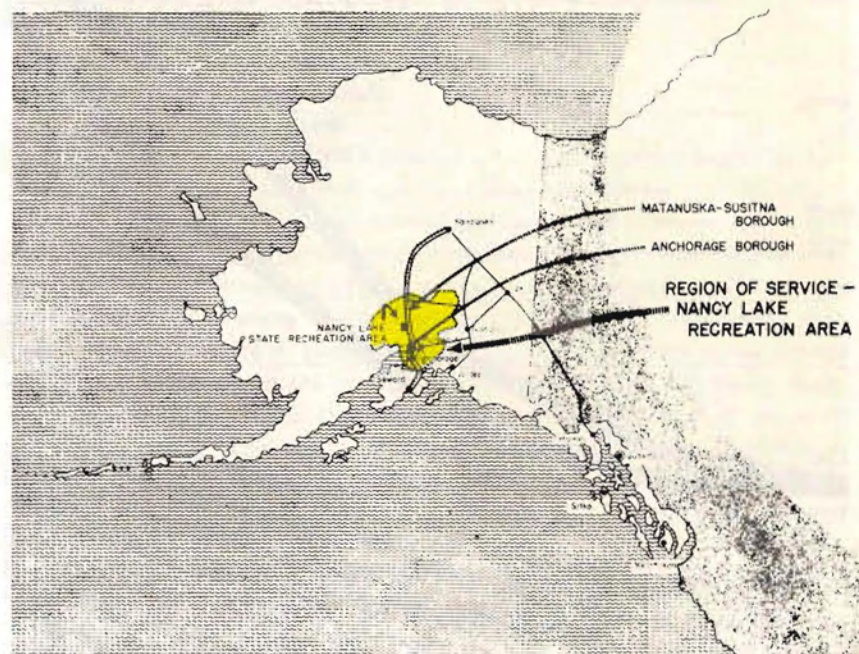
DEMAND AND NEED -- RESIDENT POPULATION

All of Alaska's people will not use Nancy Lake -- only the segment to which it is most convenient. What is this segment? Obviously the Anchorage Metropoli-

tan Area since it will be only 66 road miles distant -- close enough for a pleasant drive and Sunday picnic. Obviously, also, all of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough which will be even closer -- only 28 miles from Palmer for instance. We cannot anticipate significant use by any other major population segments. Seward is 195 miles away and the other Kenai Peninsula towns even further. Another reason people from the Kenai part of the State will not make much use of Nancy Lake is that they have many equivalent facilities in Chugach National Forest and the Kenai Moose Range, both closer to home. North, Fairbanks will be almost 300 miles distant via Alaska 3, the new (under construction) Fairbanks-Anchorage highway.

Even though there will be some use by residents outside the Anchorage area, this will be balanced off by Anchorage people visiting other parts of the State.

Illustrated on the map following, this user area -- the Anchorage and Matanuska-Susitna Boroughs is designated as the **Region of Service** of Nancy Lake. These two boroughs coincide with election districts 8 and 10 and also with census districts, enabling use of official population tabulations.

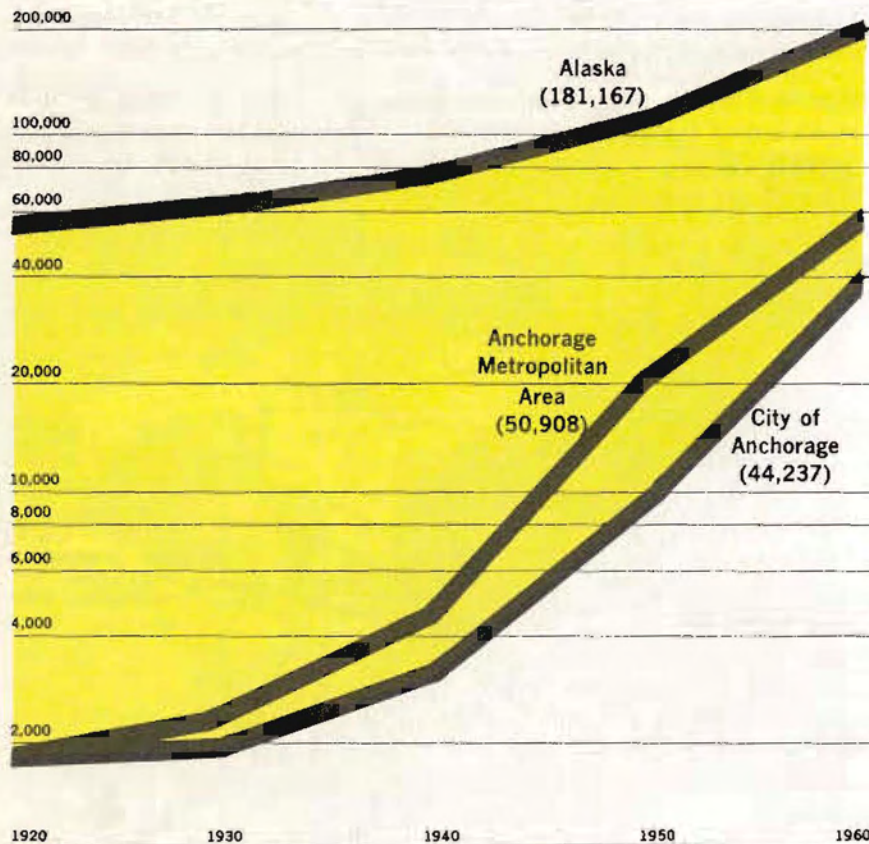


To estimate population of the Region of Service of Nancy Lake in 1980, various projections were examined, not only for the Anchorage area but also for the state as a whole, the latter being used as a rough check on the Anchorage figures. 1980 projections for the Anchorage Metro Area range all the way from

* U.S. Dept. of Interior: Rampart Project, Alaska, Jan. 1965, Vol. 1, page 180

**Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game: Report to Alaska Outdoor Recreation Council, Nov. 1, 1964, page 11

CIVILIAN POPULATION GROWTH 1920-1960



112,500 to 400,000. For the Alaska Housing Authority in the report "Land Utilization and Marketability Study" -- Downtown Urban Renewal Project, the consultants, Real Estate Research Corporation, estimated 1980 Anchorage Metro Area population in a range from 180,000 to 195,000.

Comparing this against state projections, specifically the 46% of state population projected to live in Anchorage Metro in 1980, we find ranges from 323,000 to 605,400 including *ORRRC - 404,500; U.S. Census Bureau - 323,000 to 371,000 and Rogers and Cooley - 373,500 to 407,700. The ORRRC projection was selected as a reasonable estimate for state population as it lies between the extremes of the ranges. 46% of the ORRRC - 404,500 results in an equivalent for Anchorage Metro of 186,000. Feeling this is conservative, the higher figure of 195,000 was orbitrorily selected as the base popouion of Anchorage Metro for purposes of the Nancy Lake demand analysis.

Added to this number was the population of the Motanuska-Susitna Borough - 5,188 in 1960, growing at the statewide average of 2.5% per onnum to a total of 8,500 in 1980. Added also was the projected 1980 traveller population. See Tourism, Need and Demand page 13. Finally, because the recreation porticipation rotes of ORRRC do not count children 12 or under (on the basis they are part of the family group and tag along, not being copable of independent oction in the sense of selecting activities), they were deducted from the total. The result of these computations is a population of 221,500 persons over 12 years of age who will constitute the 1980 Nancy Lake user population.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

However, the simple total number of prospective users that may exist in 1980 is not enough. That total must be tempered by the socio-economic character of the particular population segment **because such characteristics determine how much of what kinds of recreation the individual will participate in.**

Age, for instance, is a key characteristic. Obviously, the 70 year old is not likely to water ski.

Income is an even greater determinant than age -- the man who cannot afford a boat will not engage in boating.

Education influences choice of recreational pursuits and is closely related to income. Generally, high income and educational levels generate more outdoor recreation. The influence of education appears to be greater in activities like swimming, game playing, sightseeing, walking and driving for pleasure. It is less for some activities like fishing, hunting and camping.

Occupation. There is an overlopping here because occupation reflects income and education. As might be supposed, professional people with greater income, longer weekends, longer vacations, more freedom from regulation, etc. enjoy

*Outdoor Resources Recreation Review Commission