

RECREATION

CHAPTER 1

THE APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM

1. Objectives

The planning of recreation facilities in Ontario has in the past been chiefly directed towards two ends: facilities such as parks and playgrounds within the boundaries of cities and towns, and facilities for long and comparatively expensive vacations in wilderness regions relatively far from the industrial and agricultural areas of the Province. The growing concentration of the population in industrial areas has overtaxed the local facilities, while the time and cost involved in reaching wilderness areas have prevented the average family or group from visiting such areas more than once or twice a year.

It is now well recognized that a third type of facility has been neglected - the public area within a few miles of the agricultural or urban worker's home. The lack of good recreation facilities close to the cities has been an obstacle to the enjoyment of healthy out-of-door activities and relaxation. One objective of this report is therefore to consider the development of public recreation areas outside the towns and cities in the Upper Thames Watershed. Inevitably some form of control of such areas, either by the application of zoning by-laws or by acquisition, is involved.

In the preparation of the report, three points have been kept in view:

- (a) The retaining and protection of natural advantages.
- (b) The development of adequate facilities in maximum variety, available to people of all ages, tastes and income groups.
- (c) The adjustment of recreation plans to any other conservation measures proposed for the Thames and neighbouring watersheds.

Small urban parks and playgrounds hardly fall within the scope of the present study. The larger urban parks are of course considered in their relation to an over-all parks plan.

The provision of opportunities for recreation on the lands and waters of the Thames Watershed is of course a public responsibility requiring long-term planning.

2. Distribution of Population

In planning for recreation the density of population over different areas of the watershed must be carefully considered. Several factors appear to be important.

The first is that the dominant population of the watershed is urban. Of the 190,000 population of the watershed, 138,000 or 70 per cent of the total live in three cities and three towns, namely London, Stratford, Woodstock, Ingersoll, St. Marys and Mitchell. The second is that more than 50 per cent of the population live within five miles of the centre of the city of London; and the third is that even the rural population tends to be denser in the southern part of the watershed than elsewhere, as shown by the population map which accompanies this report.

Areas for recreation must obviously be located as close to centres of population as possible. It is therefore clear that while the northern part of the watershed must not be neglected, the need for recreation facilities in the south-western part of the watershed is greatest.

3. Types of Recreation Facilities

The kinds of recreation facilities commonly considered are as follows:

- (a) Beaches and pools for swimming
- (b) Beaches developed for children's use
- (c) Boating and fishing areas
- (d) Individual picnic sites and group picnic grounds in parks
- (e) Roadside picnic sites
- (f) Scenic drives
- (g) Individual and group camping areas
- (h) Trails for riding, hiking and nature study
- (i) Public hunting areas
- (j) Winter sports areas
- (k) Arboretums¹
- (l) Youth Hostels¹

1. These are described in more detail in Chapter 2.

- (m) Swimming holes
- (n) Historic sites
- (o) Public golf courses

For many uses land acquisition is the primary, and sometimes the only, requirement. In addition, such measures as pollution control, supervision of public swimming areas, planting of shade trees and many other services may be needed.

Many of these uses can be integrated in a broad plan of land zoning for health and recreation. In all growing communities a long-range plan must be made with an eye to the future needs of the population. The amount of park lands and the location of them in relation to the centres of population are obviously of great importance. Modern master plans for both large and small cities now commonly include a zone of land called a Green Belt surrounding the inner metropolitan area and intended to provide space for many kinds of outdoor activities. Where strict zoning regulations are to be maintained some of this land may remain in private hands. Otherwise public acquisition is the only guarantee of proper use.

If the projected growth of the city of London would warrant a Green Belt in the future, the value of a long-range plan cannot be overestimated. Areas just outside the city can be restricted or acquired before they reach a high value as real estate. A typical example of an area which would have been suitable for a Green Belt is the land east and west of, and including, the Walker Ponds south of London. This area is now being occupied by the new hospital or otherwise built up.

4. Pollution of Watercourses

There is a rapidly growing need in Ontario for the reduction of present pollution and for prevention or control of proposed new outlets. Pollution on the Thames is discussed in detail in the section of this report on Water.

CHAPTER 2

EXISTING FACILITIES

1. Urban Facilities

It is not the purpose of this report to make plans for recreation within the urban areas. The planning of such recreation is already in the hands of a number of capable organizations. Some instances will indicate the type of organization and the facilities provided in different centres.

The largest organization having recreation within its scope is the London Youth Council. This Council has representatives from all the major interested groups such as the churches, Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A., service clubs, schools, athletic clubs of industrial firms and the Public Utilities Commission of the city, under which an extensive park system is organized.

The City of London already owns 654 acres of land devoted to recreation, consisting of 417 acres of park-land, 125 acres of supervised playground areas and a public golf course of 112 acres. It is regrettable that of this total 465 acres or 71 per cent lie well outside the city limits. The city has a great asset in Springbank Park. Although it lies three miles from the city it is intensively used. It is attractively landscaped and has excellent playgrounds and ample shade. The only factor which seriously prevents full use of this park is the condition of the river, which is severely polluted.

The City of Stratford has the best example of completed land planning for recreation in the watershed. Victoria Lake, formed by the damming of the Avon River, and the parks and playgrounds along its banks are extremely attractive and a credit to those who planned them at a time when other centres were allowing industrial development to mar the river banks. The development here is a good example

This lake and the park surrounding it at Stratford were planned forty-seven years ago at a time when other planners were allowing industrial development to mar the river banks.



Facilities provided in the park include both play areas for intensive use and restful scenes such as this.



The lake is much used for boating. It also provides a home for Black Ducks and swans.



of the wedge type of parkland recommended by many modern planners. Open land continues in a narrowing wedge right into the centre of the city. As well as its beautiful lake, Stratford has a total of ten parks and a fairground, including 125 acres. There is also a municipal golf course. Additional recreation areas are being planned.

The City of Woodstock has four parks totalling 61 acres, a fairground of 30 acres and a private golf course. Southside Park is well developed for both separate and group picnics and includes facilities for canoeing, swimming and field sports. There is also a separate section for camping, with kitchen supplied.

Ingersoll has two parks totalling 21 acres - Memorial Park with picnic ground and children's playground and Victoria Park with sportsfields and fairgrounds.

St. Marys has 21 acres of parks, including a fairground. It has already developed one of its two flooded quarries to form a very fine natural swimming pool and has plans for further development.

The Town of Mitchell has taken a commendable step in developing a Community Centre of 22 acres, with a fine natural site and with facilities for all kinds of sports and an exceptionally well designed swimming pool and bathhouse. The town also has a 19-acre fairground with additional sportsfields. When the work is completed the Community Centre may well be a model for other centres in Western Ontario to follow. Credit for this development should go to an exceptionally enterprising Lions' Club.

2. Rural Facilities

(a) Beaches and Lakes

At present a considerable number of people in the area go south to the Lake Erie beaches or to Lake Huron, fifty miles away. These lakes, however, are too far for an afternoon outing. Outside the towns there are at present no

publicly owned beaches in the watershed. There are, however, a number of small lakes and ponds in the area, the ownership and size of which are as follows:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Ownership</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
St. Marys Quarry	Public	10
Walker Pond 1	Hospital grounds	12
Walker Pond 2	Private (Angling Club)	18
Walker Pond 3	Hospital grounds	12
Mill Pond (Westminster)	Private	34
Foster Pond	Private	16
Beattie Pond	Private	4
Mud Lake (Dorchester Tp.)	Private and inaccessible	20
Quarry Pond (Beachville)	Private	20
Reservoir west of Ingersoll	Private	25
Embros Mill Pond	Private, some swimming allowed	20
Hodges Mill Pond	Private	50
Crystal Lake (Lakeside)	Partly subdivided, partly available with permission	65
Mud Lake (Nissouri E.)	Private and inaccessible	7
Lakes east of Stratford	Private	30
Mill Pond at Dorchester	Private, partly in commercial hands and available for picnics	26
Arva Mill Pond	Private	30
Innerkip Quarry	Private, swimming allowed	14
Victoria Lake (Stratford)	Public	30
		<u>443</u>

Two facts can be seen from the above list. The first is that apart from river courses the total lake and pond water in the watershed is only about three-quarters of a square mile. The second is that two only out of 19 lakes and ponds are now in public ownership. Many of them are posted against intruders.

(b) Picnic Sites and Camping Areas

There are still some excellent picnic sites along the river courses in the watershed. However, none of these are public property. The best sites, set in attractive scenery, include old pastures with large shade trees. Since the areas are normally pastured, there are no young trees other than hawthorn growing up to take the place of the present trees when they eventually fall or are cut down. The result is that good picnic sites are becoming progressively rarer. Many of the best sites in the vicinity of London are already

in the hands of private owners from the city who do not allow visitors.

Camping areas are of two types, the community camping area for use by groups and the individual camping site with emphasis on the privacy which a family appreciates. As far as is known there are no public camping areas outside municipal boundaries in the watershed.

(c) Nature Trails and Arboretums

Nature trails are marked paths intended to help the average citizen to appreciate the interesting and attractive side of natural history. Such features as trees, plant and animal communities, rock formations, old beaver dams, and other natural phenomena are named or explained with suitable markers. A beginning in this work has been made at Springbank Park, London, but nowhere else in the watershed.

An arboretum is a collection of living trees and should include as many of the native tree species of the Province as possible and interesting exotic species. Arboretums are both attractive parks and useful in conservation education.

(d) Youth Hostels

The Canadian Youth Hostels Association is part of an international non-profit organization operating in 25 countries. It organizes well-supervised sleeping quarters (with cooking facilities) away from urban areas and available for a small fee, so that hikers, cyclists and skiers can enjoy the open country and meet others of similar tastes in attractive surroundings. There are several regional executive committees, as well as a national Board of Trustees, composed of men and women prominent in educational and welfare work. This organization does not cater to those who travel by car.

Youth Hostels are normally established in chains 10 to 20 miles apart. At present there are two Youth Hostels established in the watershed, one near St. Marys and another at Woodstock. Membership in the Youth Hostels Association is rapidly growing in Ontario.

(e) Scenic Drives

There are several very attractive drives in the watershed, particularly those following the North Branch of the Thames River north and south of St. Marys, the road east and west of Dorchester, and the part of the county line between Perth and Oxford Counties, east of Fairview. Such scenic drives should have occasional pull-outs, where a car may be driven off the highway, but there are none available at the present time.

(f) Historic Sites

Four tablets have been installed by the Historic Sites Commission of the National Parks Bureau. None are of importance to rural recreation facilities. Three in London commemorate distinguished persons. The fourth, at Ingersoll, notes the establishment of the first cheese factory in Canada. Several cairns and markers have been set up by local bodies. One commemorates the foundation of Mitchell, another records the original Seebach family settlement, and a third, at Shakespeare, notes the beginnings of the village.

With these exceptions there are no publicly owned historic sites in the watershed.

CHAPTER 3

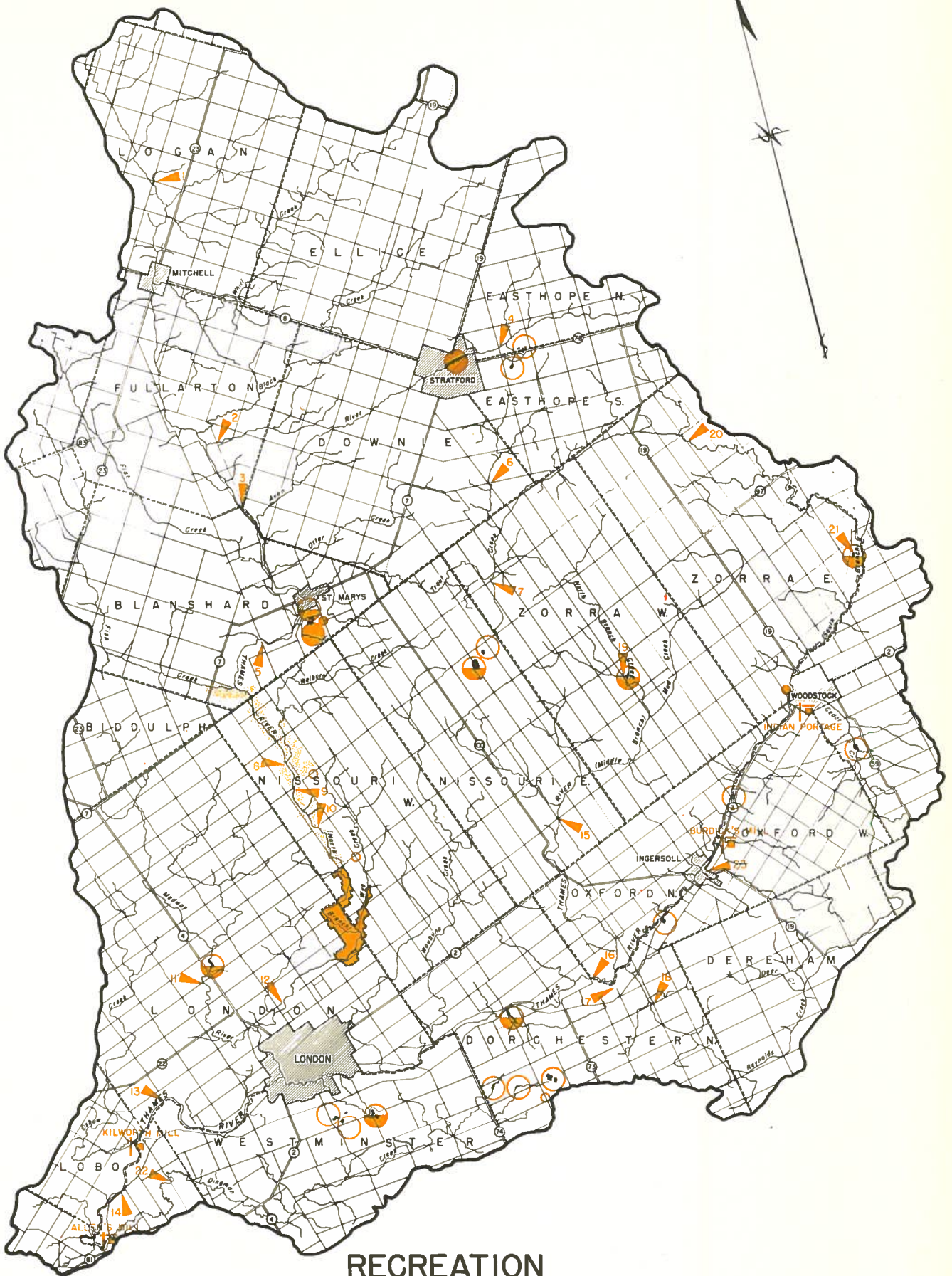
RECOMMENDED FACILITIES

While the population of other centres in the watershed has tended in the past thirty years to increase slowly or to be stationary, that of London has shown a consistently sharp increase and will certainly continue to do so for some time. This will produce a great strain on the recreational facilities available in the area. It is also true that many of the best natural sites for recreation in the land surrounding London and throughout the watershed are no longer available for acquisition by the community, having already been bought up for private estates. Since the tendency continues in this direction, it is important that early action should be taken to ensure public ownership for some of the remaining beach, park and picnic sites.

(1) Thames Valley Park

The valley of the North Branch of the Thames between London and St. Marys contains some of the most attractive scenery in the watershed. It is easily accessible from London by several routes. Since lands must be acquired for flood storage in the valley above the Fanshawe Damsite the time is opportune for the establishment of a large park which would surround the flood storage area, and might eventually include parts of the whole valley stretching some thirteen miles northward to No. 7 Highway near Prospect Hill. The dam now to be built will create a permanent lake which will provide good fishing as well as boating and swimming.

The accompanying maps show in detail the part of the valley which has already been planned as an intensive use area by the Authority's Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.



RECREATION

RECOMMENDED FACILITIES

- | LEGEND | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> THAMES VALLEY PARK POSSIBLE EXTENSION OF T.V.P. PICNIC SITES HISTORIC SITES EXISTING YOUTH HOSTELS PROPOSED YOUTH HOSTELS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EXISTING LAKES — CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC PRIVATELY OWNED BUT OCCASIONALLY USED BY THE PUBLIC OPEN TO THE PUBLIC |



The boundaries of the intensive use area have here been slightly modified to take advantage of the existing property boundaries rather than of existing fences, in order to simplify land purchase.

In the land use survey of the watershed, described elsewhere in this report, the parts of the watershed which should be restricted to forestry or permanent pasture were mapped. A large part of the valley and steep slopes along the North Branch between the Fanshawe Damsite and St. Marys came under this heading. These areas are shaded on the accompanying park map. The findings should be a very valuable aid in the selection of additional areas for park use, since they take into account not only the soil type, slope, degree of erosion and drainage, but also the present land use.

The section of the valley between No. 7 Highway and the mouth of Fish Creek, which is recommended in the Forestry section of this report for acquisition and reforestation, is shown on the park map. Several smaller areas are also shown which are particularly suitable for reforestation but which are not listed in the Forestry section because of their small size. Existing woodlands, chiefly overgrazed, occupy 90 acres of the intensive use area and 320 acres in the northern section. Much of the remainder is stony pasture or unused land with patches of hawthorn trees. The chief questions which would require examination in detail in setting up the park are therefore the value of the pasture land, standing timber and rights to water cattle, and the costs of necessary improvements and maintenance. Within the boundaries of the park, the following facilities could be made available:

(a) Swimming and Boating Facilities

The permanent lake will have an area of 650 acres. It will be four miles long and will have a



A view of the North Branch of the Thames River in the proposed extension of the Thames Valley Park. The flat lands at the top of the hill would be outside the park boundary.



The Green Heron, Spotted Sandpiper and other shore birds are common along this stretch of the North Branch of the Thames River in the proposed park. The preservation and wider spread of interesting species of animals should be a major objective in park management.

maximum width of half a mile. Most of the lake will be more than six feet deep. Some water may be drawn from the lake for the municipal requirements of the City of London but the level of the lake will not be seriously affected. Summer storms may raise the lake a maximum of six feet. Since total variations of about eight feet are possible (apart from the spring floods), the docks will presumably be of the floating type. Some mud flats will probably be inevitable in the upper reaches of the lake, but there will be many parts of the lake where excellent facilities for diving and water sports can be provided.

(b) Beaches and Wading Areas for Children

It would be necessary to make one or more artificial sand beaches. This might not be feasible in the more northerly stretches of the river beyond the impounded water, since the spring floods would tend to remove the sand, but it could easily be achieved along the quiet water of the lake.

(c) Parkways

The upper stretches of the river valley lend themselves to attractive parkways. The modern practice in planning such drives along rivers is to restrict the drives to one side of the river, leaving the other side as an unspoiled area to which there is access by car at a few points only. In this case the main drive should follow the west bank of the river, since it has better views and part of the present road system already follows the upper edge of the valley slopes on that side. Parking places would be provided at those points on the drive which have exceptional views.

(d) Picnic Sites

Both group and individual picnic sites should be developed. Those which are in wooded areas

would have the usual type of cemented fireplace, similar to those now supplied by the Province of Ontario at camping sites in many parts of Northern Ontario. Sites selected for group picnicking would also be provided with rough benches and tables.

(e) Camping Sites

There are a number of attractive camping sites along the river which could easily be developed, but the critical factor would be location of spring water. Neither the Thames River nor the artificial lake can be expected to provide water suitable for drinking without extensive treatment, since the Avon now carries all the partly-treated sewage from Stratford, and since the Main Branch now undergoes serious pollution at Mitchell and minor pollution at several other points above the park. Reliable springs are therefore essential for campers. Cemented fireplaces would be a necessity. Camping sites in public areas should, if possible, be provided with fuelwood cut and piled. Otherwise, live trees are likely to be destroyed or damaged. In practice this has not been an expensive item of parks management elsewhere.

(f) Nature Trails

The extension of the park in Concessions II and III, Lots 27 to 30, in Nissouri West Township is an area in which a nature trail should be laid out. This could be marked and also perhaps maintained by any of several Boy Scout troops in the watershed. A second nature trail could be located near the damsite and close to the city of London. Such trails offer a very useful addition to the educational facilities of the various municipalities.

(g) Winter Sports

There are excellent opportunities for ski trails to be opened at both the north and south ends of the park. The park would of course be open for all winter sports, including skating.

(h) Youth Hostels

The nearest Youth Hostel to the park is that at St. Marys. It is probable that there would be sufficient demand for overnight accommodation near the northern part of the park to warrant one or two more Youth Hostels being located in the neighbourhood of Thorndale or Plover Mills.

(i) Reforestation

There are two types of tree-planting needed in the park and its northward extension. Much of the planting in the intensive use area would be in groups of trees rather than reforestation in solid blocks, and would have to be carried out by trained men, but some of the larger blocks and most of the reforestation proper in the northerly extension of the park could be carried out as part of an educational conservation program. Individual schools, Scout troops and other organizations could be encouraged to plant small areas annually. This type of education has already been given prominence in Simcoe County, where Boy Scouts have planted a million and a quarter trees, and has proved of great value in teaching the principles of proper land use and woodlot conservation. There is also ample scope in the park for small projects of erosion control.

(j) Park Administration

The preliminary plan provided by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board of the Authority already includes suitable sites for an administration building, boathouses, park service buildings, an amphitheatre, a trailer camp and an athletic field. Many of the park services could be modelled on those now used in the parks surrounding the impoundments of the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy in Ohio. These services have been exceedingly successful and have also provided enough profit to the

Conservancy to pay for some of the improvements in the parks. Small fees are charged not only for boat rentals or licences and for camping or trailer facilities, but also for overnight or weekly rentals of cabins near the lake. Where cabins or refreshment pavilions of this type are operated by concession rather than directly by the Authority, it is usual to set minimum standards both for the design of the buildings and the operation of the services. It is best for the Authority to be responsible for both the design and the construction of such buildings. Where a park will be very intensively used, as the Thames Valley Park certainly will, the allocation of restricted parts for summer cottages on long leases seems hardly justified. This should certainly not be the primary or even a major purpose in establishing a park so close to a large population centre.

While lands should be acquired for a park, such as is planned, as quickly as possible, improvements should be spread over a period of several years.

2. Picnic Grounds and Smaller Picnic Sites

While recreation requirements in the crowded London district are the most urgent in the watershed, there is also a definite need for the acquisition for public recreation of additional areas near the other population centres. The Authority has already taken a lead in this work. In the process of making the new river channel at Ingersoll, it was found necessary to acquire a considerable area on both sides of the channel. The Authority prepared plans for the development of two areas as parks. These areas will have a total frontage on the channel of more than 2,000 feet. Much of the land involved requires grading and filling, which can be carried out as fill becomes available from the nearby quarries.

Two small sections of one acre and a quarter of an acre are scheduled for immediate development, the remainder for future development.

Improvement of rural sites can be carried out with little expense. The most essential improvement is the provision of parking space off the roads. For large picnic sites, fireplaces and tables with benches are an advantage. Where a picnic ground will be heavily used, one of the modern designs of small iron fireboxes which can be bought in quantity should be used. These take up little space and use a minimum of fuel. The repetition of many large cemented fireplaces close together is not justified. Receptacles for trash disposal should be fly-proof and also inoffensive to the eye. Shade is of prime importance in picnic sites in Southern Ontario. Tree-planting should therefore be a part of the program for development of any picnic site.

Of several hundred possible picnic sites examined in the watershed, 22 of the best were selected. Their locations are marked on the Recreation Map of the watershed with the same site numbers used in the following list. All are accessible by road. With one or two exceptions which are noted, the area involved would be very small, varying from half an acre to two or three acres.

Picnic Sites Suitable for Acquisition

- (1) Logan Township, Con. VI, Lot 21 An attractive woodlot on the bank of a small clear stream.
- (2) Fullarton Township, Con. IX, Lot 10 This site lies in a valley on a small clear creek.
- (3) Fullarton Township, Mitchell Road East Lot 31
A spacious site on the north branch of the Thames close to some of the best bass fishing in the river.

An area recommended for acquisition as a public picnic site. This lies on the Thames River just east of the bridge south of Komoka. The site is on a good road about a mile from Provincial Highway No. 2. This site should be planted with a few shade trees as early as possible.



This land, included in the area described above, would be used for car parking.



On No. 7 Highway, near St. Marys, this roadside picnic site has been set up by the Ontario Department of Highways. The neat arrangement of facilities is an indication to the public to keep the area clean and tidy.



- (4) Easthope North Township, Con. I, Lots 40 and 41

A small area one-half mile north of No. 7 Highway on a clear stream. Tree-planting is needed.

- (5) Blanshard Township, T.R.C., Lot 42 This is

a very attractive picnic area. A ford in the North Branch, approached by a blind road. This is already a very popular site. Space for turning a car around and some tree-planting are needed.

- (6) Downie Township, Con. IX, Lot 5 A large and

popular picnic site with excellent flats and trees and including a rather muddy swimming hole.

- (7) Zorra West Township, Con. II, Lot 30 The site

of Harrington Pond. This would be a very attractive site if the old mill dam were restored.

- (8) Nissouri West, Con. II, Lot 28

- (9) Nissouri West, Con. II, Lot 26

- (10) Nissouri West, Con. II, Lots 20 and 21

These three sites all lie in the part of the valley of the North Branch recommended as a possible extension of the Thames Valley Park.

- (11) London Township, Con. VII, Lot 18 This is

a large and popular area for picnics on Medway Creek. It has several swimming holes and excellent flats on both sides of the road.

- (12) London Township, Con. IV, Lot 12 A large

area already popular, with stony beaches and some swimming available. It is at the end of a blind road. Some tree-planting is urgently needed.

- (13) London Township, Con. III, Lot 29 An excellent upland picnic area, with fine views of the Thames Valley.
- (14) Delaware Township one-half mile east of Komoka Bridge. This area comprises four acres of rolling non-arable land on the south bank of the Thames River. It lies within an area recommended for reforestation. There are grassed flats at the west end. This kind of recreation site was selected in spite of the absence of trees on it. It should be acquired for its future value. A parking area and immediate tree-planting are needed.
- (15) Nissouri East, Con. XII, Lots 5 and 6
This excellent park and picnic site, two miles north of Thamesford on the Middle Branch, is strongly recommended for acquisition, but it has one disadvantage, in that it lies in one of the proposed storage basins recommended for flood control purposes in the Hydraulics section of this report. If a decision is made by the Authority to use the area above Thamesford as a flood storage basin the site could not be used.
- (16) Oxford North, Con. V, Lot 19, at the Thames River
- (17) Dorchester North, Con. B, Lot 7 at the Thames River

These two sites lie a short distance apart on either side of the South Branch of the Thames. Both are approached by blind roads and have attractive flats and terraces. The site in Dorchester North Township is closer to a good highway, but access to it involves crossing a small boggy stream. A small culvert is therefore needed.

- (18) Dorchester North, Con. I, Lot 4 The site is on Reynold's Creek. Some trees are present. Additional planting would improve the appearance.
- (19) Zorra West Township, Con. V, Lot 13 This site is on the one remaining pond a quarter mile north of Embro.
- (20) Zorra East Township, Con. XIV, Lot 29 There are no outstanding sites in this part of the watershed. The one here listed appeared the best available. There is a good but rather muddy swimming hole at the site.
- (21) Innerkip Quarry Innerkip Pond, a former quarry, provides a very fine swimming pool. It should be possible to refill a small corner of the quarry with some of the material now lying around the edges, to provide a safe area of shallow water for children. Immediate tree-planting is needed.
- (22) Delaware Township, Con. IV, Lot 2 This is a site already very popular for corn roasts. There are excellent flats and fine views from the heights north and south of the site.

3. Swimming Holes

At several points on the river swimming holes have existed for many years. These are frequently found at larger bridges where material has been removed to make the bridge approaches or where the stream cuts sharply around a curve. These old swimming holes are part of a long-established pattern of rural life in Ontario. Very little improvement is needed on many of them, but here and there a diving-board might be included and some indication

The old quarry at St. Marys has been acquired by the town. Facilities such as diving-boards, a raft and a refreshment booth have made this a very popular swimming pool.



This attractive pool two miles north of Woodstock is in the middle of a farming district, and is used by many young people in the neighbourhood.



A historic relic, the old mill wheel at Kilworth still remains. It is in urgent need of repairs. As far as is known, there are no mills with this type of wheel now operating in Ontario.



given as to the depth of water. Some of the existing areas and others which might be established could be included in those of the recommended picnic sites selected for acquisition.

4. Wilderness Areas

It is of great interest both to the general public and to naturalists to retain in every region a small section of country as nearly as possible in its primeval condition. There are few if any such areas in the watershed. Most of the woodlands have been cut over at least once, and many of them have also been burned.

The Ellice Huckleberry Swamp in Ellice Township is no longer of much interest. It has been repeatedly burned since drains were put through it to make the edges usable for agriculture. It has significance for future reforestation and flood control, and might be developed for wildlife, but is of little interest to the general public.

The woods surrounding Hodges Pond in Concession IV, Lots 18 to 21, of Oxford Township have survived much cutting, and probably fires, in fair condition. The area is already a game preserve. The fact that the City of Woodstock derives much of its water from a reservoir in the western edge of the woods is an additional reason for preserving them. Some consideration should be given to the use of this area as a natural park.

The only other wooded area in the southeastern part of the watershed that merits consideration for recreation is the Huntingford Woods at Concession XI, Lot 15, in Zorra East Township. This land includes old pastures, steep hardwood slopes, cedar thickets, a permanent stream and a marsh. It could be developed both as a picnic site and as an area with a wide range of plant and animal life,

available for field study by urban and rural school systems. Some cutting is now going on in the wooded area.

5. Historic Sites

One historic site might well be made into a public park. This is the site of the old mill at Kilworth in Lebo Township, where a large wooden mill wheel which is probably more than a hundred years old still remains. There is now no sign of the buildings, but there was a mill here at least as early as 1819. The wheel urgently needs repairs. The sites of two of the earliest mills are of greater historic interest, but provide no interesting remnants of the former structures or equipment. One of these is the site of James Burdick's mill, one of the first two grist mills in the watershed, located at Lot 15 B.F., Oxford West Township. This mill was built before 1799 and burned during the War of 1812. The other is Ebenezer Allen's sawmill, the first sawmill in the watershed, on Dingman Creek, built in 1794.

Public interest in the old canoe routes and trails established by the Indians before land settlement has always been keen. It is therefore recommended that a cairn or marker be installed close to the termination of the Indian trail from the head of Lake Ontario to the Thames River. The confluence of the Thames and Cedar Creek was then called the Upper Forks of the Thames and the actual trail end was at a point on Cedar Creek in the vicinity of Woodstock.

6. Conservation Trail

Public interest in conservation is rapidly growing. The subject is already being discussed and taught in both primary and secondary schools. Many enquiries have already been made for help in organizing tours on which good examples may be seen of sound conservation methods in use. Such tours would be a very valuable addition to class-

room teaching. Examples of all phases of conservation could be shown. These should include the results of misuse of land as well as corrective measures.

It is therefore recommended that a Conservation Trail be established in the watershed. Permanent markers could be set up alongside the examples of good land use. Those marking misuse of land would be set up only if the farm was abandoned. An outline and map of the tour could be mimeographed for distribution to all students or visitors taking part in it. The route should be approximately a circle and should include several attractive picnic sites so that parties from widely separated schools could cut in on the route at various points and still have suitable areas for lunch.