

University of Montana

ScholarWorks at University of Montana

Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, &
Professional Papers

Graduate School

1972

Development of private campground associations in the United States

Marilyn Jeannie Hanson
The University of Montana

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd>

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Hanson, Marilyn Jeannie, "Development of private campground associations in the United States" (1972). *Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers*. 2055.
<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd/2055>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRIVATE CAMPGROUND
ASSOCIATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

By

Marilyn J. Hanson

B.A., Rocky Mountain College, 1969

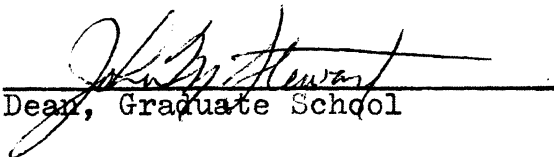
Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Business Administration

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

1972

Approved by:


Chairman, Board of Examiners


Dean, Graduate School

Date July 21, 1972

UMI Number: EP34568

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent on the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI EP34568

Copyright 2012 by ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This edition of the work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.



ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	
I.	INTRODUCTION 1
	Scope and Definitions
	Methodology Used in Paper
	Organization of the Paper
II.	CAMPGROUNDS AND THE TRAVEL VEHICLE INDUSTRY 7
	Campgrounds
	The Recreational Vehicle Industry
	Travel Trailers
	Camping Trailers
	Truck Campers
	Pickup Covers
	Motor Homes
	Self-Containment
III.	THE PRIVATE CAMPGROUND INDUSTRY IN MONTANA .. 17
	Montana's Situation in Respect to the Nation
	Montana Campgrounds and the Facilities They Provide
	Problems in the Industry
IV.	PRIVATE CAMPGROUND ASSOCIATIONS 26
	Purpose of an Association
	Organization
	Meetings
	Membership
	Association Activities
	Obstacles to Goal Attainment
	Example Associations
	National Campground Owners Association
	Campground Association of Pennsylvania
	Nebraska Association of Private Campground Owners

Campground Owners Association of Montana
Membership Required
Organization
By-Laws
Association Goals
Association Activities
Meaningful to Members
The Need For an Association in Montana
Problems of Associations

V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION 46
BIBLIOGRAPHY 49

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Summary of 1970 Recreational Vehicle Facts by Type of Recreational Vehicle	16
2. Campground and Recreational Vehicle Parks in Montana, by County, in 1971	20
3. Membership and Co-operative Advertising of Nine State Associations, in 1971	37

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
1. Recreational Vehicle Spaces in Montana, 1971, as Percentage of State Total.....	22

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to present the brief history and development of private campground associations in the United States. The study is prompted by several factors. For example, the campground industry is one of the most rapidly growing industries in the United States. There are approximately 180 private campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks in Montana. Over 30 states have private campground associations, all have been organized since 1963. There is a National Campground Owners Association with members from all fifty states. There is a growing nation-wide interest in recreational travel. Production of recreational vehicles increased over 500 percent during the period 1961 through 1969.¹ "With the

¹1970 Recreational Vehicle Facts and Trends (Des Plaines, Ill.: Recreational Vehicle Institute, 1971), p. 4.

government-sanctioned three-day holiday weekends already a reality, and the four-day workweek winning acceptance, sale of playthings can only increase," along with the leisure time to enjoy them.² The study of campground associations is important because of the growth in camping and expenditures therein, the nature of private campgrounds and the problems they face, and the ever increasing competitive nature of the camping industry.

Scope and Definitions

The campground and recreational vehicle parks included in the study are those in the private sector of the economy, located in the United States with emphasis on Montana, and in operation in 1971. For the purpose of brevity, the term campground also implies facilities for recreational vehicles. Campgrounds are recreational developments operated as business establishments. This differentiates them from the campgrounds in the public sector, which are supported by public revenues and maintained at public expense, charging only a minimal upkeep fee if any. Private campgrounds provide a place for camping parties with recreational vehicles to spend time in the out-of-doors. The duration of the camping party's stay may vary from one night to several weeks. There are

²"Out-of-Doors Is Out of Sight," Sales Management the Marketing Magazine, July 1, 1971, p. 24.

two basic types of campgrounds.

Destination campgrounds are those in which the camper frequently stays several days. The camper may utilize the immediate area surrounding the campground or make excursion trips to nearby points of interest. Because of the duration of the stay, these campgrounds of necessity require more activities for the campers such as fishing, hiking, historic sites, and natural wonders, to keep the campers occupied. Campgrounds of this type are the basic travel goal of the camping party because of the recreational opportunities they provide or because of their proximity to other areas of interest.

Intransit or overnight campgrounds are those where the camping party stays for one night while traveling. This type of campground must supply more services than a destination campground, such as laundry facilities, shower baths, sewage disposal connections and supply stores, because the users are staying there for the conveniences the campground offers rather than its natural setting and the recreational opportunities of the area.³ The major determinant of location for this type of campground is close proximity to major tourist routes and highways.

³State of Montana Statewide Outdoor Recreation Study (Helena, Montana: Montana Fish and Game Commission, 1969), B, 3.

Private campgrounds are heavily used by tourists with recreational vehicles. A recreational vehicle is a movable, temporary home, which serves as a temporary living quarters for recreation, camping or travel use, with either its own motive power or is mounted on or drawn by another vehicle. There are five major types of recreational vehicles: motor homes, travel trailers, camping trailers, truck campers, and covered pickups.⁴ They will be discussed at length in Chapter II.

The wide range of recreational vehicles makes it difficult to enumerate the facilities which are required to qualify as a recreational vehicle park. The basic facilities required would be a level parking space for the vehicle; water, sewage disposal, and electrical hook-ups; and a moderate amount of open space around the vehicle for the enjoyment of the out-of-doors.

The other major component of this study is associations of campgrounds. These associations are composed of independent businesses in the camping industry in various states who have joined together for the purpose of expanding the industry in their region and thereby increasing their revenues.

⁴1970 Recreational Vehicle Facts and Trends, p. 5.

Methodology Used in the Paper

This paper is primarily the result of secondary research. Due to the scarcity of current published data on the activities of private campground associations in other states, a survey of state organizations was conducted. The results of this survey are referred to throughout this paper and are summarized in Chapter IV, Table 3.

Information pertaining to the private campground industry in Montana was also primarily obtained through secondary research. However, that information pertaining to the Montana Campground Owners and Operators Association presented in Chapter IV is the combined result of a survey of campground owners in Montana and the organizational meeting of March 3, 1972.

Organization of the Paper

Before commencing into the study itself, a brief overview of the organization of the study is called for. In Chapter II campgrounds and the recreational vehicle industry are discussed. The private campground industry as it exists in Montana, along with some general comments as to the history of camping in Montana are considered in Chapter III. Private campground associations of other states are analyzed in Chapter IV. Such factors as their membership, standards, by-laws, goals, and activities are reviewed. These three areas will then be examined in an

effort to determine what an association of Montana camp-grounds could provide and if there is a need for these services. A summary and conclusion are presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER II

CAMPGROUNDS AND THE TRAVEL

VEHICLE INDUSTRY

In this chapter, a description of campgrounds will be presented followed by a description of the components of the recreational vehicle industry. These two areas are being presented in one chapter because of their cross elasticity of demand: campgrounds depend on the recreational vehicle users for consumption of their services, while at the same time recreational vehicles depend on recreational vehicle parks to meet their demands for services.

Campgrounds

The facilities which are required for a campground are not as obvious as might be expected. The basic requirements are a passable road and a relatively level parking space for the recreational vehicle and the towing unit, if any is used. Beyond these basics the additional

requirements are determined by (1) the campers' desires, (2) the extent of self-containment of the vehicle, and (3) the duration of the stay in the campground.

Campgrounds vary immensely in the facilities and supplies they provide. Rand McNally's Campground and Trailer Park Guide includes sixteen of the most common in its tables:⁵

1. Store
2. Cafe-snack bar
3. Automatic laundry
4. Block ice
5. Showers
6. Flush toilets
7. Recreation hall
8. Shelter
9. Firewood
10. Tables
11. Air conditioning
12. Bottled gas
13. Sanitary station
14. Sewer hookup
15. Water hookup
16. Electrical hookup

The Family Camping Federation has established 64 desirable standards for campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks. These standards include the ratio of toilets and showers to sites, posting of rules and extra charges, certification of drinking water, and cleanliness. Other desirable standards include screening and spacing of sites, drainage, sanitation and registration procedures.⁶

⁵Campgrounds and Trailer Park Guide (Chicago, Ill.: Rand McNally & Company, 1971), p. 159.

⁶Ibid., p. vi.

The National Campground Owners Association as well as the state associations have also enumerated standards for member campgrounds. Although these standards will be discussed in Chapter IV, association standards are similar from state to state.

These standards enumerate many of the facilities which are required for the maximum usage and enjoyment of campers. The screened area and spacing of the campsites is required for enjoyment of the out-of-doors, by allowing the camper some quiet and privacy. This feature is more important in destination campgrounds than in intransit campgrounds because of length of stay at camp. In the Rand McNally list, tables and fireplaces are given importance for the same reasons. The last six items on the Rand McNally list are especially developed for the use of self-contained units.

The Recreational Vehicle Industry

Of basic importance to this study is the recreational vehicle industry, its growth and components. Travel trailer production started in the 1930's. However, significant growth did not occur until 1956. At that time a small group of manufacturers produced 15,370 travel trailers. By 1964 travel trailer production had increased to 90,370 units. By 1969, camping trailers, truck campers, pickup covers and motor homes had been added to the industry. The Recreational Vehicle Institute predicts that by

1980 annual industry sales will approximate \$2 billion. This represents an increase of 85 percent over the 1970 sales volume of \$1.15 billion.⁷

Travel Trailers

In 1970, 138,000 travel trailers with a retail value of \$445,326,000 were sold. Travel trailers are the most popular type of recreational vehicle.⁸ These are hard wall trailers ranging in size and price from the compact ten foot models selling from \$700 to the thirty five foot, self-contained models selling for up to \$17,000.⁹ There are three basic travel trailer designs. The conventional type which are rectangular in shape and constructed similarly to a frame house, with prefinished aluminum or molded fiberglass sheeting over wall studs. The aircraft type are constructed of anodized or polished aluminum riveted to an aluminum or other metal fram. The telescopic type which is similar in construction to the conventional type. These trailers have the unique feature of an upper half that raises for living and lowers down over the bottom half for towing and storage.¹⁰

⁷1970 Recreational Vehicle Facts and Trends, p. 4.

⁸Ibid., p. 6.

⁹Robert Stump, "Recreational Vehicles, Styles and Trends," American Camping Congress Resume, 1 (June, 1971), 3.

¹⁰1970 Recreational Vehicle Facts and Trends, p. 6.

Camping Trailers

The camping trailer is a veritable tent on wheels. This smaller, more compact type of recreational vehicle is constructed with a collapsible roof and side walls that can be quickly raised and folded out into a living area. The lower portion is generally constructed similarly to a conventional trailer, aluminum or fiberglass on a frame chassis. The collapsible upper half has walls of fabric, plastic or some other pliable material with a canvas, fiberglass or aluminum top. Some of the larger units have such options as interior lights, built-in cooking facilities, water supply and cold storage. Self-containment is not a feature of camping trailers because of limited space. These trailers generally appeal to larger families with limited funds because they have a sleeping capacity of from four to eight persons and range in price from \$300 to \$2,500 depending on the optional equipment included.¹¹ The sale of camping trailers was down by 17.7 percent in 1970 compared to the 1969 level,¹² probably as a result of the economic slowdown which tended to hit the lower income groups the hardest.¹³

¹¹Robert Stump, "Recreational Vehicles, Styles and Trends," p. 3.

¹²1970 Recreational Vehicle Facts and Trends, p. 7.

¹³Robert Stump, "Recreational Vehicles, Styles and Trends," pp. 3-4.

Truck Campers

There are two types of truck campers. Slide-in Campers are temporarily carried on pickup truck beds and range from six to eleven feet in length. These campers utilize the electrical system of the pickup and may include all the optional features available in travel trailers including self-containment. Chassis-mounted Campers are larger than slide-in campers, and range from eleven to eighteen feet in length. They are permanently affixed to the truck chassis and may include a passageway between the truck cab and the living area of the camper. Truck campers retail prices range from less than \$1,000 to \$4,000 for slide-in campers, plus from a few hundred dollars to \$4,500 for a pickup, to from \$5,000 to \$10,000 for chassis-mounted campers including the truck.¹⁴ The truck camper tends to appeal to sportsmen because it can be taken into remote areas over inferior roads.

Pickup Covers

Pickup covers or shells are portable units which provide an all-weather enclosure over the bed of a pickup truck. These units resemble slide-in campers but lack the over cab section. Built-in living conveniences and self-containment features are seldom included. However,

¹⁴1970 Recreational Vehicle Facts and Trends, p. 8.

some units do include bunks and interior lights. Pickup covers range in price from \$200 to \$1,000, depending upon the features included. This sector of the recreational vehicle market showed the most substantial decline of the industry between 1969 and 1970. Retail sales showed a decline of approximately \$6 million and unit sales were down 19.2 percent.¹⁵

Motor Homes

The fifth and most rapidly growing type of recreational vehicle with respect to both retail sales dollars and production is motor homes. Motor homes are self-powered units, equipped with sleeping accommodations, compact kitchens, dining or lounge areas, and full baths. There are three types of motor homes. Conventional motor homes are constructed directly on a truck chassis and are designed and produced entirely by the recreational vehicle manufacturer. These are generally the largest type of motor home. Van-conversion motor homes are van type trucks who's cargo space has been converted into a living area by the recreational vehicle manufacturer. Most of these are self-contained, but more compact than the other types of motor homes, and represent the smallest type of motor home. Chassis-mounted motor homes are constructed on an inter-

¹⁵Ibid., p. 9.

mediate-size van type truck. The engine and power train of the truck are retained and recreational vehicle manufacturers are limited as to size of the vehicle by the original chassis. There were 30,300 motor homes produced in 1970, a gain of 31.2 percent over 1969. Retail sales showed a \$66 1/4 million increase in the same period. Motor homes have a wide price range, starting at \$5,000 and reaching \$20,000 for larger, more custom styled, models.¹⁶

Self-containment

For recreational vehicles the term self-containment means that the vehicle is designed to be lived in for extended periods of time and contains heating, electrical and plumbing facilities. Generally the unit is designed to provide these facilities for three or four persons for approximately one week.¹⁷

A fully self-contained recreational vehicle generally contains a gas/electric refrigerator and range, gas and electric lights, kitchen sink, heater, lavatory with bathing facilities, dining and sleeping accommodations. The water system may be either pressurized or gravity type. Holding tanks provide storage for the used water

¹⁶Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 18.

and waste material. These tanks are emptied at sanitary stations.

Two electrical systems are typically present: a 12-volt system, operated on an automotive battery, which provides temporary power for small appliances and lights and a 110-volt system which can be fully utilized when an outside power hook-up is available. Gasoline powered electric generators can be found in some of the larger recreational vehicles.

The Recreational Vehicle Institute estimates that 80 percent of the travel trailers, truck campers and motor homes now being produced offer self-containment.¹⁸ The trend has a great effect on the recreational park industry as discussed earlier.

A summary of the above mentioned data about recreational vehicles is given in Table 1, page 16.

¹⁸Ibid.

TABLE 1
 SUMMARY OF 1970 RECREATIONAL VEHICLE FACTS
 BY TYPE OF RECREATIONAL VEHICLE^a

Sales Data	Type of Vehicle				
	Travel Trailers	Camping Trailers	Truck Campers	Pickup Covers	Motor Homes
Average Retail Price	\$3,227	\$1,510	\$1,910	\$305	\$10,500
Total Units Produced	138,000	116,100	95,900	91,700	30,300
Change in Units Produced, 1969-1970	-4.2%	-17.7%	3.7%	-19.2%	31.2%
Total Retail Sales	\$445,326 ¹	\$175,311 ¹	\$183,169 ¹	\$27,968 ¹	\$318,150 ¹
Change in Retail Sales, 1969-1970	-\$7.25 ²	\$12.5 ²	\$7.5 ²	-\$6 ²	\$66.25 ²
Percentage of RV Market ³	29.2%	24.6%	20.2%	19.5%	6.5%

Notes: ¹in 1,000
²in millions
³Recreational Vehicle

^a1970 Recreational Vehicle Facts and Trends (Des Plaines, Ill.: Recreational Vehicle Institute, 1971), pp. 6-10.

CHAPTER III

THE PRIVATE CAMPGROUND INDUSTRY IN MONTANA

In this chapter, a discussion of the Montana camping industry and the problems it faces will be presented. This will include a presentation of the public sector as well as the private sector. The distribution of recreational acreages and population will serve as the starting point.

Montana's Situation in Respect to the Nation

As the amount of available leisure time has increased for Americans, the recreational facilities and opportunities available to them have become increasingly more important. Compared to most states, Montana offers generous opportunities for outdoor recreational activities.

Almost any type of outdoor recreation activity can be found in Montana. Hunting and fishing are two of the most widely utilized activities by Montanans and visitors. There are twenty-six ski areas in Montana and with the development of snowmobiling, winter has become even more a time of outdoor recreation. Camping and hiking, although

mainly summer activities, are enjoyed year-around. Water recreation, including water skiing, swimming, and boating, is plentiful on Montana's numerous lakes. Picnicking and sightseeing are favorite activities of many Montanans and are enhanced by the more than one hundred ghost towns and eighteen historical sites which provide unusual attractions for visitors.¹⁹

The distribution of recreational facilities in Montana, like that of the nation, is not proportionate to the population. The western area of the state has approximately 72 percent of the recreational acreage in the state with only 41 percent of the population, compared to the eastern section with approximately 28 percent of the recreational acreage and about 59 percent of the population. This disparity like that of the nation, is basically the result of the geographical differences of the areas. The developed facilities are more evenly distributed than the gross recreational acreage.²⁰

Montana Campgrounds and the Facilities They Provide

There are 4,616 trailer spaces in private camp-

¹⁹Robert Bigart and Edward G. Groenhout, Montana Economic Study, Selected Nonpecuniary Aspects of Life in Montana (Missoula, Montana: Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of Montana, June, 1970), p. 29.

²⁰Ibid., p. 35.

grounds in Montana. These camping areas occupy some 3,594 acres and are concentrated in the western portion of the state.²¹ See Table 2, pages 20 and 21. There are clusters of facilities located around Glacier National Park and Flathead Lake and Yellowstone National Park. Also see Map 1, page 22.

The western region of the state, with rugged mountains and numerous rivers and lakes, offers more opportunities for outdoor recreation than the eastern section of the state. These factors combined with the presence of two transcontinental highways and the north-south artery of U. S. 93, make western Montana well suited to the use of recreational vehicles. Therefore, it is logical that numerous campgrounds would be developed in the region to meet the ever increasing demands of Montanans and other campers.

These campgrounds vary in size and the amount of facilities they provide. In 1969, the Montana Fish and Game Commission conducted a study of the outdoor recreational facilities in Montana. In the study, four camping spaces per acre was considered average size.²² However, Kampgrounds of America, headquartered in Billings, considered between 20 and 30 spaces per acre as appropriate

²¹Campgrounds and Trailer Park Guide, pp. 158-165.

²²State of Montana Outdoor Recreation Study, B, 2.

TABLE 2

CAMPGROUNDS AND RECREATIONAL VEHICLE PARKS
IN MONTANA, BY COUNTY, IN 1971

Counties	Private			Public		
	Number	Acres	Spaces ^b	Number	Acres	Spaces ^b
Beaverhead	2	11	46	14	120	137
Big Horn	3	13	103	5	25	52
Blaine	1	1	10	2	7	40
Broadwater	1	1	7	1	18	11
Carbon	4	32	98	11	111	110
Carter	5	29	135	2	320	40
Cascade	7	96	355	4	45	37
Chouteau	0	0	0	0	0	0
Custer	0	0	0	0	0	0
Daniels	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dawson	1	5	12	3	821	15
Deer Lodge	2	10	90	5	503	98
Fallon	1	5	6	0	0	0
Fergus	3	19	35	3	480	39
Flathead	24	764	910	32	443	904
Gallatin	19	655	466	9	585	223
Garfield	1	10	5	5	525	58
Glacier	7	116	181	7	49	517
Golden Valley	0	0	0	0	0	0
Granite	0	0	0	10	76	100
Hill	1	4	50	3	52	268
Jefferson	2	2	28	5	19	50
Judith Basin	0	0	0	2	13	33
Lake	14	347	411	12	293	365
Lewis & Clark	6	134	106	16	96	229
Liberty	0	0	0	1	NA	50
Lincoln	7	85	97	13	76	189
Mc Cone	0	0	0	0	0	0
Madison	9	92	192	8	221	132
Meagher	1	1	15	3	12	25
Mineral	2	18	57	4	32	95
Missoula	10	918	231	12	105	215
Musselshell	1	1	15	1	11	75
Park	10	55	317	6	37	78
Petroleum	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phillips	1	4	8	3	253	19
Pondera	0	0	0	0	0	0
Powder River	1	10	8	0	0	0
Powell	2	16	52	3	9	21
Prairie	0	0	0	2	6	30
Ravalli	6	41	123	16	357	175

TABLE 2--Continued

Counties	Private			Public		
	Number	Acres	Spaces	Number	Acres	Spaces
Richland	0	0	0	3	103	118
Roosevelt	1	1	11	4	69	158
Rosebud	0	0	0	3	18	17
Sanders	1	4	12	5	110	62
Sheridan	0	0	0	0	0	0
Silver Bow	3	14	81	4	216	45
Stillwater	1	3	14	6	48	75
Sweet Grass	2	30	70	4	18	41
Teton	3	12	85	0	0	0
Toole	0	0	0	0	0	0
Treasure	0	0	0	0	0	0
Valley	2	8	29	5	3030	85
Wheatland	0	0	0	3	310	24
Wibaux	1	1	9	0	0	0
Yellowstone	8	36	156	2	11	50
State total	176	3594	4614	262	9643	5105

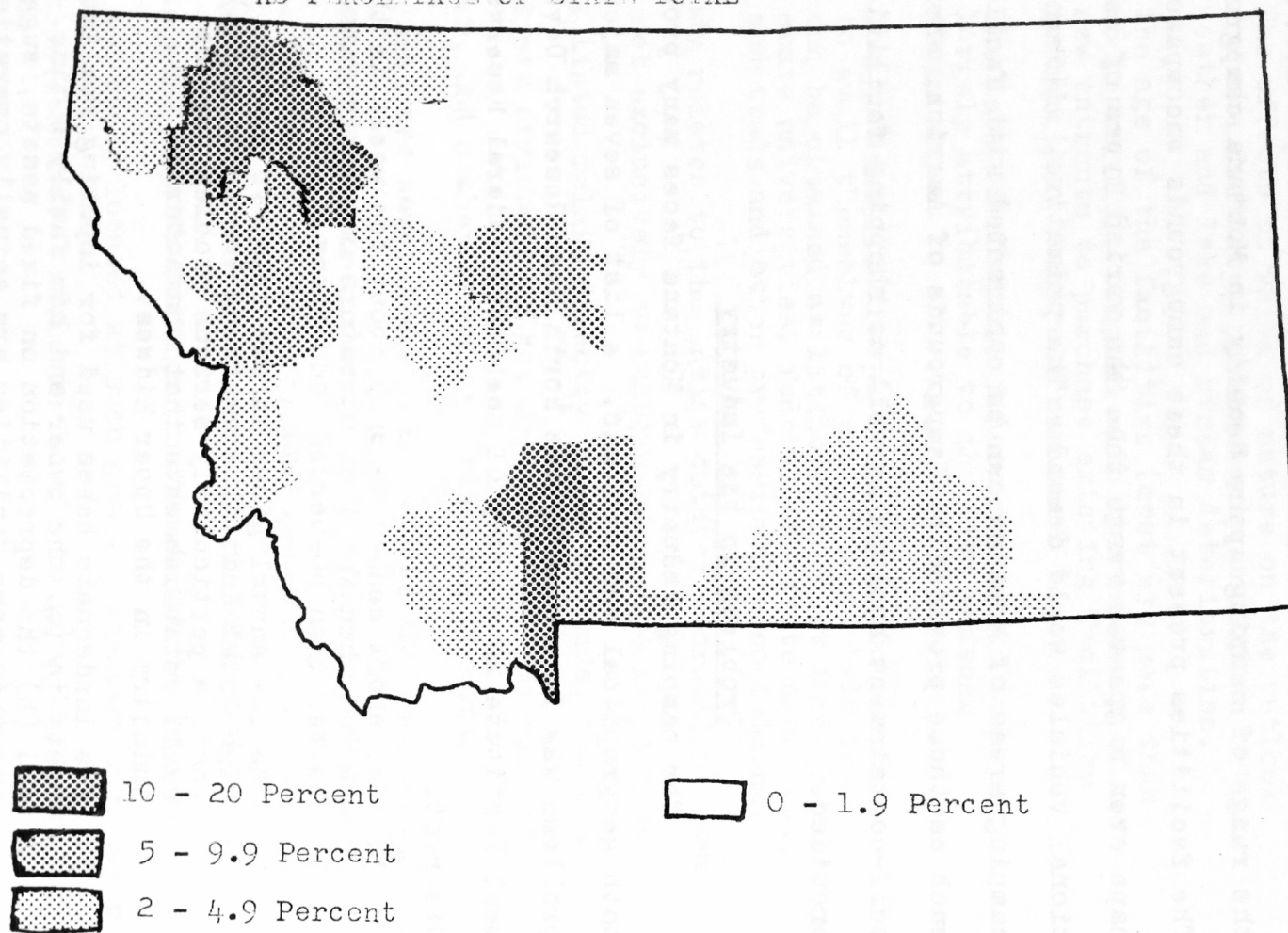
^aCalculated from: Campgrounds & Trailer Park Guide (Chicago, Ill.: Rand McNally & Company, 1971), pp. 158-165.

^bRecreational Vehicle Parking Spaces

NA not available

MAP 1

RECREATIONAL VEHICLE SPACES IN MONTANA, 1971,
AS PERCENTAGE OF STATE TOTAL



spacing.²³ The two extreme standards clearly demonstrate the range of camping space density in Montana campgrounds. The facilities present in these campgrounds encompass perhaps even a greater range than the varied types of recreational vehicles would demand. The primitive, wilderness camping areas of Montana can be contrasted with facilities such as those provided by Campgrounds of America, where self-containment hookups as well as shopping facilities are provided.

Problems in the Industry

The camping industry in Montana faces many problems both geographical and economic. A list of seven major problems was developed by the North Star Research Development Institute in a study of the Ninth Federal Reserve District.

1. The short season -- only about ten weeks is the period when facility operators can anticipate better than 50-percent occupancy.
2. The low annual gross income relative to the high total initial investment (or replacement) cost, a particularly serious problem for the small establishments that characterize the industry in the Upper Midwest.
3. The inadequate bases used for imputing realistic costs to (a) the owner and his family's time, and (b) the depreciation on fixed assets, suggesting that more facilities are actually operating at a loss or at low profits than are reported.

²³Darrell Booth, "Commercial Campgrounds, A New Industry," American Camping Congress Resume, 1 (June, 1971), 8.

4. The effects of whims of nature on the outlook for the facility, particularly uncertain weather and lake and stream deterioration.
5. The age of the facilities (most are more than 25 years old), coupled with the tendency of new entrants to purchase existing facilities rather than construct new ones.
6. The lack of adequate financing, which is largely attributable to the five reasons given above.
7. The tendency of inexperienced operators not to avail themselves of professional help that can be obtained at little or no cost through state universities, federal and state agencies,²⁴ and trade and other professional associations.

This study relates to the entire outdoor recreation industry and not exclusively to campgrounds. The first four problems listed relate directly to campgrounds, numbers five and six obviously do not apply to recreational vehicle parks, and number seven is applicable to both.

There are several economic factors that effect outdoor recreation's attractiveness as an industry. It is seasonal and therefore creates seasonal employment and unemployment. Montana is in competition with every other state as well as with foreign countries for the tourist dollar and being located at such great distances from major population centers, Montana is likely to grow less rapidly

²⁴Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, the Upper Midwest Research and Development Council, Developing and Financing Private Outdoor Recreation in the Upper Midwest (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, October, 1966), pp. 30-32.

in the tourist industry than some states. The industry is characterized by low-paying jobs which if held by heads-of-households can be damaging to the per capita income level of the state. The multiplier effect of tourist dollars is less than that created by export sales by industry which utilizes local resources and sources of supply.²⁵

Competition is a major problem for campgrounds. "There is a subsidy for the tourists and recreationists in a Forest Service campground as is the case in a Park Service or in a State campground," because no profit is required.²⁶ This combined with competition between regions for tourists make the industry very competitive.

The major problems faced by campground owners appear to be the result of size, seasonality, and competition. Most campgrounds in Montana are small in size, have thirty spaces or less, thus giving them limited funds for advertising, promotion, lobbying, and other activities. Seasonality limits the use of campgrounds to less than six months per year, even for those campgrounds which have both summer and winter appeal. The competition from other states and the public sector are also important.

²⁵Maxine C. Johnson, "The Tourist Industry: Some Second Thoughts," Montana Business Quarterly, VI (December, 1968), 20-25.

²⁶Frank Blackmer, "U. S. Forest Service Campgrounds," speech at Private Campground Owners of Montana Meeting, Helena, Montana, March 3, 1972.

CHAPTER IV

PRIVATE CAMPGROUND ASSOCIATIONS

Purpose of an Association

The purpose of a state association of private campground owners is to improve the operations of private campgrounds within the state. The means of achieving this goal are: (1) adopting uniform policies regulating the quality of camping facilities on private land; (2) working for the adoption of favorable state, county and municipal recreation policies and laws; and (3) increasing sales of operators.

Organization

There are over 30 states with campground associations and also a national one. A survey of 29 campground associations was conducted in October, 1971. Approximately half of the associations responded and the following data are a synthesis of those responses. The organizational structure of these associations varies with the demands of the membership. Administrative offices typically include a President,

Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and other board of directors members. This body is elected by the voting members of the association and conducts the business of the association. This is a quasijudicial body, in that it inspects member campgrounds as to compliance with the established standards of the association and may in some associations hold hearings on expulsion of members for misconduct or failure to maintain standards of the association. Where regional divisions of associations exist, the director from each region acts as its president for regional meetings and reports on these meetings to the Board of Directors.

Meetings

A general meeting of the membership occurs annually, at which time officers are elected and any proposed changes in the by-laws are considered and voted upon, dues are established upon executive advice, and in some associations applications for membership are reviewed and voted upon. The membership may also exercise judicial powers with respect to accepting or expelling members and impeachment of officers for misconduct. Generally each active member has one vote and may use a proxy.

Extraordinary meetings may be called by the Board of Directors. Sufficient notice of the meeting is required. Special sessions are not common because the Board of Directors has sufficient power to act in almost any

situation. Workshop meetings are held by some state associations.

Membership

There are two basic types of membership in campground associations. Active members have full voting rights, and, typically, are campground owners or operators. Active membership status is determined by varying requirements ranging from ownership of a campground to paying dues, achieving required size, possessing required facilities, and offering required services. Associate members are persons and organizations interested in the private campground industry ineligible for active membership because of association requirements. Camping equipment producers and suppliers may also be associate members. These persons join the association for the privilege of having display booths at association meetings. From this exposure they hope to make sales and obtain indications of the needs of private campgrounds, needs which they might supply in the future. Associate members cannot vote.

Association Activities

Associations engage in numerous activities in their efforts to advance the industry and aid their membership. The associations work with government agencies. In this way they are able to keep their members informed as to what the legal requirements are and what proposed changes are

being considered. Compliance with government regulations, especially health and pollution standards, can either be urged or required of members, depending on the association by-laws. By working with state advertising agencies, a broader distribution of association brochures and other advertising material can also be obtained.

The data gathered on proposed regulation changes are very useful to the association. The associations' prime function is to further the interest of private camping. Since private campgrounds must operate within the legal framework and compete with public campgrounds, changes in the public sector may affect them. Therefore, lobbying is perhaps the most important function of an association. Lobbying whether professionally staffed or of a grass roots nature has the same intent, to pass favorable legislation and block the passage of unfavorable legislation. By working with governmental agencies, some agency actions may be blocked, such as changes in rates for public campground use.

Private campgrounds generally provide more facilities for the use of recreational vehicles than do those in the public sector. However, a parity of prices must be maintained so that the private sector can compete. If public rates are too low, campers utilize public facilities instead of private ones. Coordination with government agencies to raise public campground prices is important to the individual campgrounds and therefore the associations.

Legislation requiring increases in facilities, which would result in large capital expenditures for compliance, are also fought by associations. Such legislation as the proposed National Electrical Code is being lobbied against on the basis that the resulting gain in safety is only marginal and the costs involved in compliance are not justified. It is this type of legislation which associations strive to block.

The association attempts to upgrade private camping by establishing basic standards for membership. These standards refer to the types and number of facilities to be provided, such as toilets and utility hookups. This will assure the consumer of finding those facilities he desires at member campgrounds and thereby stimulates demand through a type of brand consciousness.

Information gathering and dissemination is another major activity of an association. By keeping the membership informed as to trends and legal requirements the association enables its members to plan for and react to change in a well planned, rational manner.

The most widely utilized co-operative activity of associations is advertising. A brochure listing members and the recreational opportunities they provide is published by all state associations. By distributing this information to campers the association creates a unique type of exposure for its members, namely a listing of mem-

bers together with a description of their facilities and recreational activities. This enables the camper to plan his recreational activity to include member campgrounds. National advertising along similar lines is also engaged in by many associations. Collective advertising provides a wider coverage than many members could afford individually. The Florida Association of Camping & Trailer Parks in 1971 sent out brochures at a co-operative mailing rate of 5 cents per brochure, for individual members brochures.²⁷ The co-operative mailings resulted in a considerable saving to members.

Associations also may attempt to coordinate the activities of their members in other areas. For example members may receive quantity discounts in buying supplies. By coordinating member activities economies of scale and operation can be achieved.

Obstacles to Goal Attainment

The actions of associations can be seen as attempts to further the industry and do therefore comply with the goals. The major problem of an association then is not its goals or actions, but rather the lack of professional management. Association officers are campground owners and/or operators and have businesses of their own to manage which

²⁷Florida Report, I, No. 10 (1971) 4.

rightfully do come first. Increased co-operative activity could be fostered, such as buying, if management had the time and energy to devote to these areas. However, Mr. Denis Snyder, CAP, states that professional management would not be as good a pulse of the membership and could therefore incur objective problems which member-officers can avoid.²⁸

Obstacles are evident, however, and must be considered. Campground owners and operators are independent businessmen and must be persuaded into action. They have limited funds, time, and energy. Many are semi-retired and are working part of the year, so that they can relax and enjoy life for the rest of the year. Under these conditions trying to upgrade facilities on a statewide level is difficult. Owners are reluctant to incur capital expenditures whose gain can not be accurately predicted. Also, change is deterred by an existing investment of time and money which is being risked. Given that member campgrounds are basically profit oriented, their owners will be reluctant to risk a certain profit for an unpredictable future. Obstacles to making associations more effective are the lack of managerial abilities, part time operations wherein owners have other businesses and jobs, and the like.

²⁸Denis Snyder in survey response, October, 1971.

A brief description of three associations of campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks will now be presented. From these three examples it will be demonstrated that goals and activities are basically the same for associations regardless of size. These examples will serve as comparison organizations for the newly formed Montana association.

National Campground Owners Association

The National Campground Owners Association was founded in 1967, by approximately sixty New England campground owners, for the purpose of promoting camping through the private sector and protecting the camping industry from unfair legislation and unfair competition. Within a five year period it has grown to a membership representing two-thirds of the states.

Adverse legislation can be opposed more effectively by association officers, both state and national, rather than by the individual because of the political pressure of group action and more authoritative status of group officers. State associations in conjunction with NCOA are working to block government interference in the private campground industry. Members are advised on legislative affairs through a newsletter which is issued bi-monthly and a national meeting is held in the fall of each year. As camping grows in popularity NCOA plans to stimulate

organized growth in the private sector through increased co-operative efforts.²⁹

Campground Association of Pennsylvania

The oldest association in the nation is the Campground Association of Pennsylvania. Founded in 1963, this organization now has over one hundred members. CAP's goal is threefold: to upgrade the standards of private campgrounds; to protect and advance the interests of its members; and to oppose regulations a majority of members of the association believe detrimental to their operations.

In an effort to upgrade the standards of private campgrounds CAP has established fourteen minimum mandatory standards for membership:

1. all advertising must be truthful
2. a current state health department permit must be available for inspection
3. hot showers and at least some flush type toilets
4. toilets must be cleaned daily and kept odor-free
5. an attendant must be readily available during normal working hours
6. campsites must be numbered and provided with a picnic table, parking space and space for a tent or a recreational vehicle
7. there shall be a bulletin board listing church services and points of interest
8. all charges for extra services must be prominently posted
9. the campground must be courteously and helpfully managed
10. a reasonable curfew hour must be enforced
11. the campground must have a minimum of twenty sites

²⁹National Campground Owners Association Newsletter
(Aug.-Sept., 1971), p. 14.

12. must have at least ten percent of their sites available to transients
13. must have been in operation at least one season
14. restroom and shower facilities must be available on a twenty-four hour basis.³⁰

It can clearly be seen that compliance with these standards will result in clean, pleasant campgrounds.

Nebraska Association of Private Campground Owners

The Nebraska Association of Private Campground Owners was founded in January, 1971, with a membership of thirteen. It was formally organized in April and already has in conjunction with the state Game and Park Commission compiled accurate information on private campgrounds and has published a brochure listing its members.

NAPCO had four objectives for 1971. They were: (1) to contact every campground owner in the state in an attempt to get a complete study of the camping industry in Nebraska and increase membership; (2) to work with the Department of Roads in an attempt to get camping signs at interstate exits where approved campgrounds are within a specified radius of the exit; (3) to set and enforce minimum standards for membership; and (4) to provide a more realistic budget for the promotion of tourism in Nebraska by working with the legislature and the division of tourism.³¹ It can be seen from

³⁰ Campground Association of Pennsylvania By-laws (1970).

³¹ National Campground Owners Association Newsletter, (Aug.-Sept., 1971), p. 15.

these first year efforts that even the infant association works through the same channels and toward the same goal as the giants in the field.

Campground Owners Association
of Montana

On March 3, 1972, the Campground Owners Association of Montana was formed at an organizational meeting in Helena, Montana. At that time the Constitution and By-Laws were established. These documents are the basis for the following portion of this chapter.

Membership Required

The first requirement for an association is members. There were approximately 180 private campgrounds in Montana in 1970. The number of members required to form an association is not dependent on a percentage of the total number of campgrounds but rather on the dedication to the association of the people involved. For this reason a small number of members - as few as 25 - would be sufficient for the initial formation of an association. From Table 3, page 37, it can be seen that the membership in associations varies greatly in the different ones represented. However, it tends to be greater the older the association is. This is to be expected as more and more potential members recognize the advantages of membership and join the association. It is this growing recognition of the good an

TABLE 3

MEMBERSHIP AND CO-OPERATIVE ADVERTISING
OF NINE STATE ASSOCIATIONS, IN 1971^a

States with Associations	Number of Campgrounds		Co-operative Advertising	Dues
	Members	Total ^b		
Delaware	14	20	X	\$50
Florida	60	100	X	\$350-100
Nebraska	13	65	X	\$50
New Jersey	29	109	X	+
New York	108	380	X	\$20-60
North Carolina	39	200	X	\$75
Pennsylvania	100	344	X	\$50-75
South Carolina	+	64	none	+
Virginia	62	139	none	\$25

Notes: + not known

^aSurvey conducted in Nov., 1971.

^bCampground and Trailer Park Guide (Chicago, Ill.: Rand McNally, & Company, 1971).

associations can provide that is responsible for the growth of an association and is hoped for in Montana.

Organization

The organization of an association is to some extent dependent on the number of members and the geographical distribution of those members. In a state as large as Montana, traveling to meetings may present a hardship to members and even serve to deter some persons from joining. Also, Montana encompasses a wide variety of types of recreational activity because of its wide spectrum of climate and terrain. For these reasons a districting of the state into three districts appears to be advantageous. These districts would be: Eastern Montana, Glacier Park and Flathead Lake, and Yellowstone Park. This districting would shorten the distances required to attend meetings and also bring campground owners and operators together who are facing similar problems. By grouping members with similar problems, interest in those problems can be heightened and solutions worked out. Also, workshops for the district can be more specific and aimed at solving these problems. For example, the problem of heavy snowfall damaging buildings and trees might well be an important area of interest to members in the West Yellowstone area, but of little importance to those in the Sidney area.

The major drawback to districting is initial member-

ship. For a district to be successful it would need at least 20 active members. Therefore, for the original campground association in Montana a statewide organization will be required until interest and enthusiasm can be built up among campground owners and operators. This association should have an annual meeting for the election of officers and the transaction of business. These elected officers shall have the authority to transact the business of the association between annual meetings. Special meetings can be called of the membership; however, adequate notice of their time and place must be given to the members.

The ultimate goal of a districting of the state should be strived for and upon its attainment district annual meetings should be held to elect district officers. These persons will then represent their districts in the statewide association governing body and report back to their districts on the activities of the association. Special district meetings may also be called. The districts, however, will not replace the state-wide association. They will be component parts on a grass-roots level. The state-wide association will continue with its existent organizational structure as described above, with the addition of district representatives to the governing body.

By-Laws

The by-laws of a campground and recreational vehicle

park association for Montana would be the ruling legal document of the association and would specify the qualifications for membership meetings, official structure, dues, and amendments of the association. These specific areas will be discussed in the following few paragraphs.

There are two types of membership in an association for Montana. The first type is active membership. These members meet all requirements for membership and have full voting rights in the association. The requirements for active membership are the ownership or engagement in the operation of a private campground or recreational vehicle park in the state of Montana. The second type of membership is associate membership. These members are of two types; (1) campground owners and operators who are interested in the association but do not attain active membership for some reason, and (2) persons or organizations that are interested in the private camping industry but do not own or operate private campgrounds, such as corporations producing camping equipment. Membership shall be conferred by a majority vote of the remaining members.

The dues of the association are set by a majority vote of the active members upon the advice of the Board of Directors. These dues are based on membership status, with a somewhat higher rate for active members. These dues shall be due on or before the first day of the month in which the annual meeting is held.

The final component of the by-laws is a provision for amendments or additions, to these by-laws. This is necessary because as the association grows its needs will no doubt differ from those of the founding infant.

Association Goals

The goal of a state campground owners association for Montana is the advancement of the private camping industry in Montana. This is a wide sweeping goal and will encompass many activities for attainment. The major activities involved are: working for the adoption of sound policies in the establishment of camping facilities on private lands; working for the adoption of sound national, state, and local recreation policies; working with government agencies in establishing compliance with the laws; and creating demand for private campgrounds.

Association Activities

As discussed in the preceeding chapter the activities of a private campground association are varied and diverse. They include information gathering and dissemination to members and the public as well as coordinated efforts with public agencies and elected bodies. For a Montana association the two major initial activities will be co-operative advertising and lobbying.

The state association will publish a brochure listing the members and the recreational opportunities they

provide. These brochures would then be distributed to persons interested in camping in Montana. By advertising in one brochure, mailing as well as handling charges would be reduced, and perhaps a greater exposure attained. The Montana State Advertising Board would be approached by the association for the purpose of distributing association brochures through that office to parties inquiring into recreation in Montana. This co-operative effort between the public and private sector is being done in Pennsylvania as well as some other states and should be strived for in Montana.

The second major activity of an association is lobbying. This would be at all levels; national, state, and county. This area includes working with government agencies to keep members informed of the legal requirements and any proposed changes therein. The information gathered on proposed regulation changes may be used to further the interests of private campgrounds, by warning the association of unfavorable actions to the private sector. Armed with this information, the association can then present a united and organized effort to block unfavorable and pass favorable legislation.

The other areas of activities for campground associations discussed in Chapter IV will also be covered by the Montana association. The effort to improve camping will be extended to ultimately include facility and upkeep

standards for membership as the association grows. These standards will create a type of trade-mark awareness among consumers, and will serve to stimulate business for members.

Meaningful to Members

The association to succeed must be meaningful to its members. By this is meant that the association must fulfill a need of some sort for its members. The association might be meaningful by simply functioning as a social club for people of common interests. But, as can be seen from the goals and activities of the association as discussed, this organization will be doing things which will directly or indirectly effect the profit margins of the members. For this association to be meaningful to the membership it must stimulate an increased return on investment, along with the goal of improving camping in Montana. From the activities discussed above and in Chapter IV it can be seen that with active participation the association can be meaningful and rewarding to its members.

The Need For an Association in Montana

The private campground and recreational vehicle park industry in Montana is typified by small campgrounds, of the family type of operation. These businesses have very limited funds and cannot afford to advertise nationally or lobby effectively. Because of this condition, a need does

exist for an association in Montana at this time.

Problems of Associations

Campground associations face a wide variety of problems basically arising from two factors of their nature:

(1) they are a voluntary banding together of independent businesses and (2) the association serves as a middle man between campgrounds and government as well as between campgrounds and other businesses. A brief description of these areas will be presented here.

As a voluntary organization of independent business men an association has limited power over its members. An association may be given powers over the membership such as levying fines or even expelling members for certain types of misconduct, as specified in the by-laws. The association may also rule on an applicants qualification for membership with respect to the by-laws. To give an example of a problem which might arise in an association, due to its nature, assume an association wishes to establish a reservation system for campers among members. If a member does not wish to comply, the association has no real enforcement power to make him comply. It can be seen here that before an association attempts to sell a new service or idea to the camping public it must first sell the members on the idea and attain their co-operation.

The second problem is the position of go-between

that the association fills. The association here presents a united front of its members to governmental bodies as well as suppliers and competitors. In this position associations work with government bodies to protect the interests of the membership. The go-between with buyers may enable the members to receive discounts on purchases as has already been discussed. The position of the association in respect to competitors is more difficult to explain. The association will work for equitable fees in the public sector to put and keep members and public campgrounds on an even par. Competition from non-member private campgrounds can be handled in two ways, either co-exist or induce the competitor to join the association and co-operate.

Attracting members is very important. For the association to have power it must have numerical strength. For a new association this problem is vital because the association has no record of what it can do to show prospective members. In Montana at the present time, this problem is very real. Other state associations have been in existence since 1963 and they have records which can be shown as proof of potential.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter a summary of the major points of the paper will be presented along with some conclusions bases on these points. There is an increasing amount of leisure time available to people in the United States. This increase is coming at a time when people have funds available for recreation. With this situation people are spending more money on the enjoyment of their leisure time. A portion of this money is being spent on camping and recreational vehicles.

In Chapter II the growth in the production and sale of recreational vehicles was discussed. From this information future growth in the recreational vehicle industry seems certain. The cross elasticity of demand between recreational vehicles and campgrounds therefore implies that the demand for campgrounds will continue to grow in number and capacity.

To summarize Chapter III the Montana camping industry is made up of approximately 180 private campgrounds.

These campgrounds are typically small, family operations. Campgrounds in Montana are plagued by two problems: distance from population centers and seasonal changes in climate. The main problems these campgrounds face are a result of their size and location. Montana campgrounds are not big enough to independently afford to advertise nationally or lobby effectively. Therefore, the major goal of campgrounds is to increase occupancy, thereby increasing revenue by making more efficient use of the fixed investment. Since nothing can be done about controlling the climate, campground owners must concentrate on attracting more campers to achieve this goal.

In Chapter IV state campground associations are discussed. Being a voluntary banding together of campgrounds for the purpose of advancing camping in their states an association has inherent weakness and strength. It is a democratic organization with member voting rights. As in a democracy, the majority rules. This is both a strength and a weakness. While it protects the association against sudden, drastic changes which time may prove mistakes, it may also move too slowly to keep pace with the industry. The Board of Directors must keep abreast of changes and opportunities in the industry and their recommendations must be weighed carefully by the members.

By banding together the individual campground gains greater lobbying power, purchasing power, and is able to

employ economies of scale. In accomplishing these three gains for members, associations definitely attain their goal of advancing the camping industry.

A brand consciousness is developed among campers for member campgrounds by co-operative advertising and the establishment of standards of operation for members, which induces a desire to stay in member campgrounds and thereby increases the occupancy rate for members. This increase in occupancy results in increased profits for the campground owner. Therefore, the association satisfies the need of the camper for accommodations and the campground for occupants.

In conclusion, campgrounds have two basic problems, small size and short operating period. Associations have three strengths, increased size by representing a group, increasing occupancy for members, and protecting members from unfavorable government actions. By banding together campgrounds have greater lobbying, purchasing, and advertising power. These three gains will result in protection from governmental changes, lowering costs for purchases and advertising, and greater advertising coverage. With occupancy increased for members and costs reduced, profits should be increased. Therefore, an association can be very helpful to its members if the members work for the attainment of association goals, which are, after all, the collective goals of its members.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

American Camping Congress Resume. Martinsville, Indiana:
Family Camping Federation, June, 1971.

Bigart, Robert and Groenhout, Edward G. Montana Economic Study, Selected Nonpecuniary Aspects of Life in Montana. Missoula, Montana: Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of Montana, June, 1970.

Campground & Trailer Park Guide. Chicago, Ill.: Rand McNally & Company, 1971.

Campground Association of Pennsylvania By-Laws. Campground Association of Pennsylvania, 1970.

Campground Owners Association of Montana By-Laws. Missoula, Montana: School of Business Administration, University of Montana, 1972.

Campground Owners Association of Montana Constitution. Missoula, Montana: School of Business Administration, University of Montana, 1972.

Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. The Upper Midwest Research and Development Council. Developing and Financing Private Outdoor Recreation in the Upper Midwest. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, October, 1966.

Florida Report. Florida Association of Camping and Trailering Parks, Inc., 1971.

Johnson, Maxine C. "The Tourist Industry: Some Second Thoughts," Montana Business Quarterly, VI (December, 1968), 20-25.

Malauf, Carling. A Water & Recreation Study of the Blackfoot River System. Missoula, Montana: Institute for Social Science Research, University of Montana, Nov., 1969.

National Campground Owners Association Newsletter.

Highland Park, Ill.: National Campground Owners Association, 1971.

"Out-of-Doors Is Out of Sight," Sales Management the Marketing Magazine, July 1, 1971.

Private Campground Owners of Montana Meeting. Minutes of organizational meeting of the Campground Owners Association of Montana, Helena, Montana, March 3, 1972.

1970 Recreational Vehicle Facts and Trends. Des Plaines, Ill.: Recreational Vehicle Institute, 1971.

Stump, Robert, "Recreational Vehicle -- Styles and Trends," American Camping Congress Resume, 1 (June, 1971).