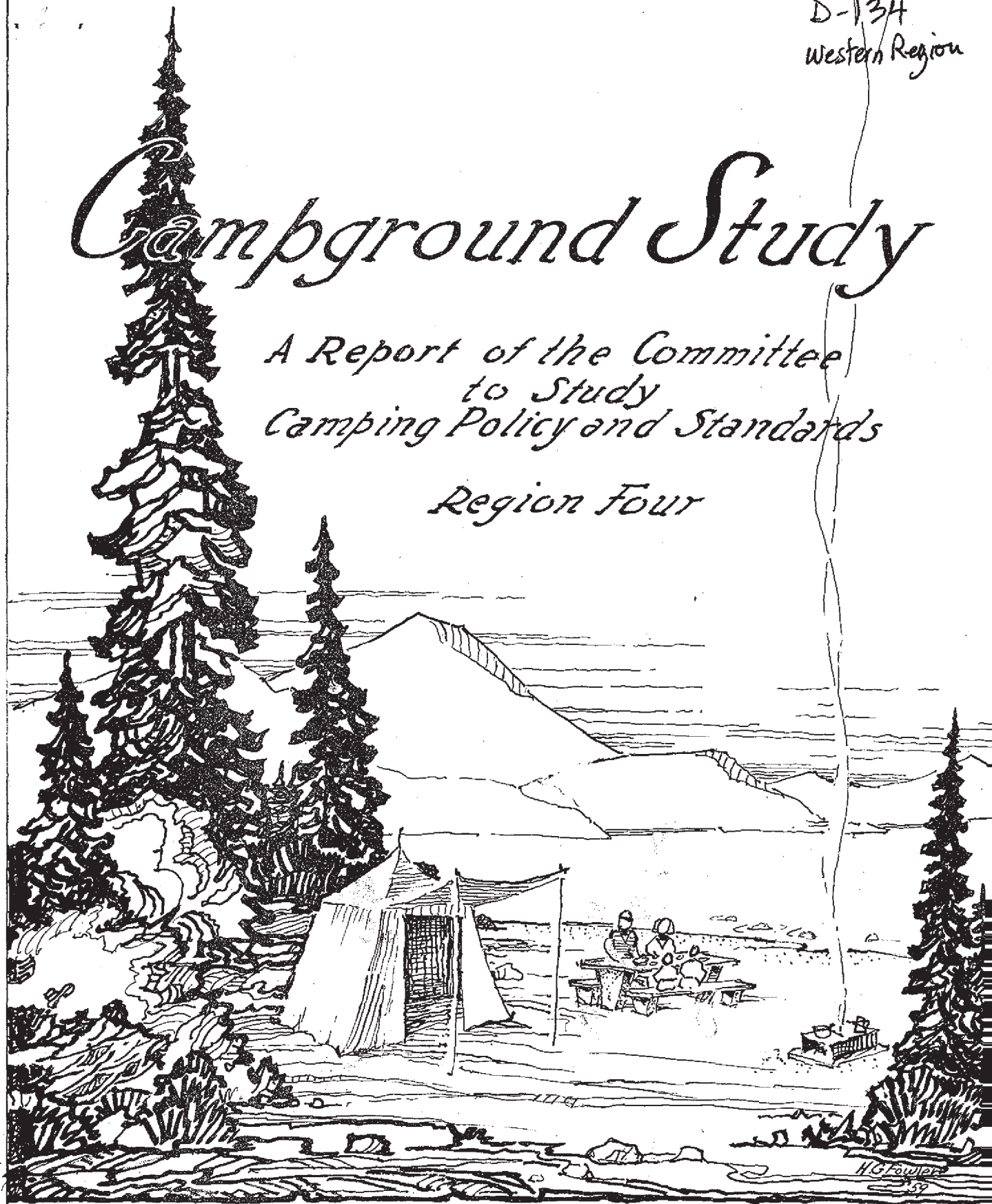


D-134
Western Region

Campground Study

*A Report of the Committee
to Study
Camping Policy and Standards*

Region Four



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
San Francisco
1959.

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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Lassen Volcanic National Park
Mineral, California

July 24, 1959

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region Four

From: Campground Committee, Region Four

Subject: Report of Study of Camping Policy and Standards

In our studies and in the preparation of this report we have endeavored to be thorough in the matter, due to the tremendous nationwide increase in camping which is reflected in heavy use of National Park Service campgrounds. We feel further responsibility since over half of the campsites in the National Park System are in Region Four.

In preparing our policy statement we have kept in mind design standards and uniformity of facilities and services. Some of these suggestions in our policy statement are not in keeping with present policy or practice; however, we have considered future years as well as the present.

The following members of your committee appreciate the opportunity to make this study and it is hoped that at least a portion of this report will be of value to the Service. The committee appreciates also the good work of Harold Fowler in preparing the illustrations.

Harold G. Fowler, Landscape Architect, Region Four
George A. Walker, Assistant Superintendent, Sequoia and Kings Canyon
William R. Supernaugh, Superintendent, Joshua Tree
Stanley McComas, Chief Park Ranger, Olympic

(Sgd) Edward D. Freeland

Edward D. Freeland
Chairman

Cleared for distribution
by the Regional Director,
Region Four Aug. 26, 1959
(date)

FOREWORD

Camping affords an ideal way for visitors, especially the family group, to enjoy areas administered by the National Park Service. This form of use permits the visitor a greater and more intimate park wilderness experience with such association leading to a more enriched visit and a fuller understanding of the natural and historic features of the particular area.

Camping is a form of use or recreation unto itself in which participation is by people of all walks of life. It should not be considered only as a cheaper form of overnight accommodation.

This committee is well aware of the importance of this timely study as the finally accepted regulations and standards will undoubtedly guide campground planning and administration for years to come. Simplicity should be the keynote in campground design. "Deluxe" camping should not be the goal but rather the seeking of good campsites with simple but durable basic facilities.

The committee has endeavored to project its thinking into the future as far as possible to anticipate trends and needs. For instance, the camp fireplace has undergone many changes and variations in design over the past 25 years or so. The problem of fuel supply will become more acute in years to come. The fireplace design should therefore be influenced by the need for fuel economy as well as the economy and simplicity of construction. The gasoline campstove has become so generally used that the camp fireplace will eventually assume the role of an auxiliary cooking facility with much of its use primarily for the evening campfire atmosphere.

Many of the NPS areas will eventually reach a saturation in campground development. Some thought should now be given to the maximum limit of campground development permitted in an area in order to still retain the natural character and features for which the area was set aside for preservation. When the campgrounds are full at any time, the visitor should be so informed. Within this report are recommendations to eliminate overflow camping and to institute an overnight campground for the "one nighter" to allow camping sites for the late comers who are specifically interested in seeing the park rather than having a "vacation camping spot."

The National Park Service should seek the cooperation of other federal, state, and county agencies to develop more campgrounds in or near park environs which will accommodate more of the summer vacationers. This would result in a considerable relief of the NPS campground problem and tend to bring about a greater percentage of camping visitors who are primarily interested in seeing the park and obtaining its story.

The committee hopes the following report and recommendations will be of assistance in the drafting of a handbook on campgrounds which will be a guide for good future planning and development as well as efficient operation and administration.

Campground Policy Statement

Due to the growing interest and increase in camping, the National Park Service is faced with the problem of providing more and better campgrounds, more uniform in design and operation. The following suggested statement of policy is to help accomplish this purpose. The criteria for a policy on campgrounds should be first, the protection of an area, and second, providing facilities for an enjoyable and beneficial camping experience for our visitors. A campground should not be located where it would intrude on any of the features for which the area was set aside. A handbook on campground development and operation would be beneficial and is recommended.

Campground capacity is limited in some cases by natural barriers, but in no case should a campground be so large that its operation is cumbersome or impractical. A suggested maximum number of sites is 300 except where a campground can be sectionalized as in the Dorst Creek camp in Sequoia. See Plate No. 3.

Campsites as a general rule should be fitted into the landscape where possible, keeping the more adaptable and best screened locations for tent campers. A proposed campsite should have a minimum of one thousand square feet and a maximum of twenty five hundred square feet. Examples of typical sites are shown on Plates 1 and 2.

Comfort stations should be located to serve approximately 30 sites. There should be one standard floor plan with two exterior finishes, one for concrete block and one for frame with wood siding. See Plate No. 10. They should not contain showers or laundry facilities except in unusual or justifiable circumstances. All comfort stations should contain an outside service sink. Some mirrors with electric outlets for electric shavers should be located away from basins. Pit toilets should be called "toilets" on signs and not comfort stations or rest rooms.

Camp tables should be standardized more than they are at present, with perhaps three designs. See Plate No. 7. It is the opinion of this committee that tables and fireplaces should not be furnished at sites suitable or designed for trailers.

Fireplaces should be simple in design and standardized so far as possible. They should be metal and should not be built of stone, bricks, or concrete blocks. One design is recommended. See Plate No. 6.

Barriers should be installed and maintained only where they are necessary to preserve the natural features of a campground. Examples are shown on Plate No. 9.

Screening of a campsite adds to the enjoyment of a true camper. The tent camper should be considered over the trailer camper in laying out sites.

Soil stabilization should be studied in areas where needed and chemicals injurious to shrubs should not be used.

Fuel for campers should be furnished only where cleanup, construction, and bug timber are available. The practice of allowing campers to gather wood in designated areas should be continued where practical. It should be remembered that camping is not camping without the evening campfire. Park literature should advise campers to bring their own means of cooking, such as camp stoves, charcoal, etc.

A safe adequate water system is essential even for small areas. Hydrants should be spaced not more than 200 feet apart, or a maximum distance of 100 feet from any campsite, and the faucets should be non-threaded and spring loaded. A drain or sump should be provided at all hydrants to prevent the formation of a mudhole. See Plate No. 8.

Registration of campers is considered essential if we are to have control. This can be accomplished on a voluntary basis in a small campground or supervised in the larger campgrounds.

Campsites should be numbered not only for the convenience of campers but for the camp tender or ranger. A numbered campsite is equivalent to an address when a camper has registered by name and site number. The register is a big help in case of an emergency call. See Plate No. 8.

Bulletin boards are necessary and should be located at the entrance or camp center and contain a simple outline or map of the camp, briefed regulations, and the several other items so necessary for the convenience and information of campers. See Plate No. 4.

Consideration should be given where possible to designating a small campground or number of sites near the entrance of a large campground as one-nighter. Many people traveling arrive late, wish to stay only one night, and must sleep in their car or keep going for lack of a campsite.

Time limits for popular or heavily used campgrounds should be posted on bulletin boards and on signs placed near comfort stations or other points of concentration.

Pets are often a pest in campgrounds. The regulations should be posted and enforced.

Garbage cans should be placed in non-tip racks above ground a maximum of 100 feet from any campsite but not placed near water hydrants. See Plate No. 8. The can should be washed and/or disinfected at frequent intervals. Garbage should not be burned in campgrounds by visitors.

Group camps should be separate from other campgrounds and provided with the same facilities as other campgrounds.

Shower and laundry facilities where considered a necessity should be furnished by a concessioner either in permanent or movable facilities.

Campgrounds should not only have a caretaker but should be patrolled by a park ranger on foot at intervals to insure compliance with regulations and safety and health of campers. Campers are usually our best park visitors, and we should be as considerate as well as a watchful host.

Trailer use of campgrounds is a problem with no easy solution. This committee believes that trailers with cooking, eating, and sleeping facilities should not usurp the space provided for tent campers. Sections or sites of a campground should be designated for dry camping for trailers. We do not believe this is discriminating against the trailer user. Trailer space should be provided in new campgrounds since the difference in cost of a campsite for a tent camper and a simple turnout for a trailer will save considerable money. Camps for trailer use with utilities should be provided by the government and operated by a concessioner.

Interpretation of the natural features of an area is an essential part of a National Park experience, and provisions should be made for some form of interpretation in or near all major campgrounds even if it is at the sacrifice of some other form of service.

Picnicking is an important phase of park use and picnic grounds should be provided separate from campgrounds. Picnic grounds should not be used for overflow camping. Small roadside picnic areas should be developed where possible since many people wish to get away from crowds.

Walk-in campgrounds have very limited possibilities. Their use should be limited to small developments for experimental purposes. Sanitation and the desire of the camper to be near the car are two factors that will limit their use.

Back country camping and use booklet or folder should be standardized for the Service. Small boxes at major trail junctions should be provided for the distribution of these folders. Register boxes for trail users should be used where practical. Garbage or trash pits should be provided in areas where cans are not carried out.

Overflow camping areas should not be encouraged. When a campground is full we should face the problem and put up a sign "No Vacancy." If we fill up our picnic grounds with campers, then our picnickers have no place to go.

The booklet titled "Camping Facilities in the National Park System" should contain instructions for prospective campers suggesting that they bring their own cooking facilities or gear, such as a camp stove for gasoline or kerosene, charcoal, or other fuel. The booklet should also contain the essential information on back country camping and manners. The burning of garbage that the booklet suggests in a campground is a definite nuisance as the odors of burning garbage is offensive to all. This practice may be followed only in back country or primitive areas. A statement may also be added to the effect that house trailer campers, since they have the facilities in their trailers should not expect a table and fireplace which is provided primarily for tent campers, and which are essential to them.

Campground Types

The combined thinking not only of committee members but of other National Park Service personnel familiar with campground use and problems has governed in outlining these three types of campgrounds. As has been mentioned before, we have kept in mind the necessity or desirability of uniformity. Three types are suggested: See Plate No. 1.

- Type No. 1, or Standard
- Type No. 2, or Basic
- Type No. 3, or Primitive or Back Country

Type No. 1

Standard

Utilities

1. Water and Sewer
Hydrants, with sump or drain
2. Power, if available

Comfort Station

1. To serve 20 to 35 sites
2. Women { 4 water closets
(2 lavatories
- Men { 2 water closets
(2 urinals
(2 lavatories
3. Heated only where essential
4. No laundry or shower

Facilities

1. Table
2. Fireplace
3. Garbage can with above ground non-tip frame
(100 feet maximum distance from any campsite)
4. Parking (spurs or loops)
5. Tent Site
6. Campsite numbers
7. Laundry and shower facilities by concession in large
campgrounds
8. In desert areas sun shade should be provided (ramadas)

Fuel

1. Government or concession furnished

Capacity

1. Minimum
20 campsites
2. Maximum to be controlled by topography and capacity to
permit a proper camping experience.

Camp Center

1. Ranger or Caretaker
Periodic inspection by Ranger or Caretaker
2. Bulletin board with location maps and regulations
3. Registration Box

Interpretive Facilities

1. Campfire program and self-guiding trail and interpretive exhibits

Trailers

In a campground that has been developed primarily for tent camping, trailers should be limited to a "dry camp type" (no utility hookups) used in lieu of a tent. No water, sewer, or power hookups permitted. No special facilities should be provided for trailers.

Trailer size should be limited.

Type No. 2

Basic

Utilities

1. Water piped to area
2. Pit toilets

Facilities

1. Tables
2. Fireplaces
3. Garbage cans in non-tip racks
4. Bulletin board and campers' register
5. Access road with one-way circle to serve several campsites
6. Fuel - down material if in forest area
7. Capacity - 10 to 20 sites

Interpretive Facilities

1. Exhibit on natural features of the area

Note: It is considered that the walk-in campgrounds will come under this type for most areas.

Type No. 3

Primitive or Back Country

Utilities

Usually located near spring, stream, or lake.

Facilities

Where heavy use demands, one or more pit toilets should be provided

One or more fire pits should be provided where necessary, mainly to prevent indiscriminate campfire sites.

Major campsites in the back country should be named after nearby geographical features and a small sign installed.

Some areas consider a register box desirable at permanent sites.

Statistics

The following information was gathered from a questionnaire sent to all areas in Region Four having campgrounds.

A. Of the total campsites in the National Park System (13,248), over 50% (6,680) are in Region Four.

B. Of the total in Region Four, over 50% are in Yosemite (3,557).

C. In Region Four there was an increase in campers of 11.5% in 1957, and 19.7% in 1958.

D. Under the MISSION 66 program an additional 5,689 campsites are planned for this Region.

E. 27% of the campsites in Region Four are now used by trailers.

F. 62% of the areas in Region Four having camping favor walk-in campgrounds. The suggested average maximum distance campers should carry their gear is 200 feet. Mount Rainier has a walk-in campground that is proving very popular and they plan to add 25 more tables and fireplaces.

G. 50% of the areas in Region Four furnish some fire wood; 40% of the areas allow gathering of fire wood in designated areas. 60% of the campers provide their own means of cooking such as camp stoves, charcoal, etc. In 45% of the areas, fuel can be purchased from the concessioners or outside the area near the park.

H. The questionnaire asked for opinions on whether or not the Service should provide showers and laundry facilities in comfort stations. Only one area said "Yes." All other areas said "No" and suggested that this service should be provided by a concessioner.

I. Most areas in Region Four have a camping limit of 30 days. One has a 15-day limit, and one has a 10-day limit.

J. Half of the areas in Region Four have from one to four group camps.

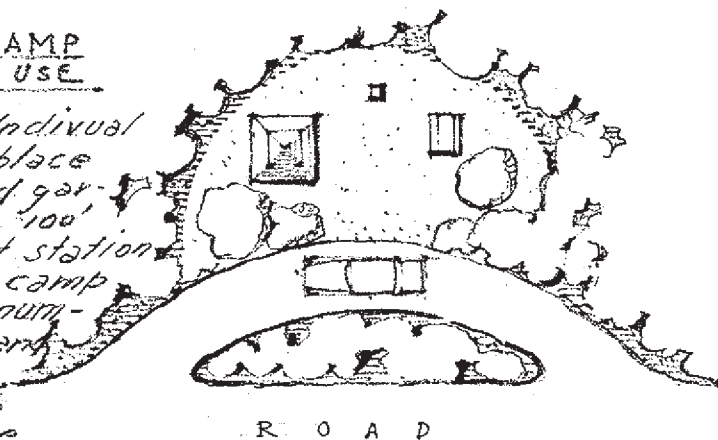
K. Only three of the areas in Region Four have camper registration.

L. All of the major campgrounds in Region Four have some form of interpretive facilities, such as campfire circles, nature trails, guided tours, visitor centers, or exhibits.

CAMP TYPES

A HIGHLY DEVELOPED CAMP FOR PRINCIPAL CAMP USE

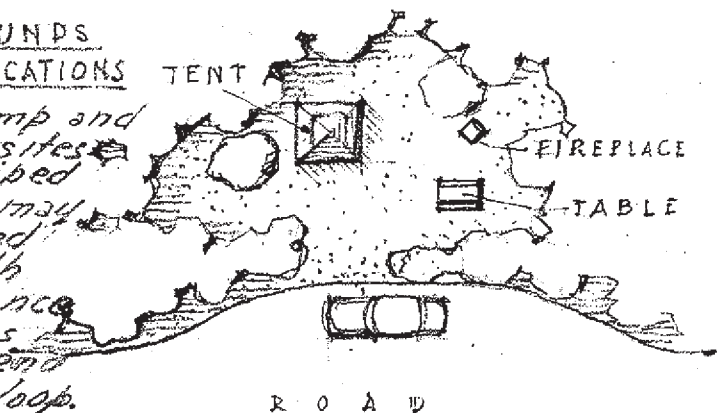
Facilities include: Individual parking, table, fireplace tent site. Water and garbage disposal within 100' from camp. Comfort station within 300 ft from camp site. Camps to have numbers. Bulletin board and camp location map to be located in a camp center. Interpretive programs in a camp fire circle or amphitheater.



TYPE I • STANDARD • Primary

FOR SMALL CAMPGROUNDS IN MORE REMOTE LOCATIONS

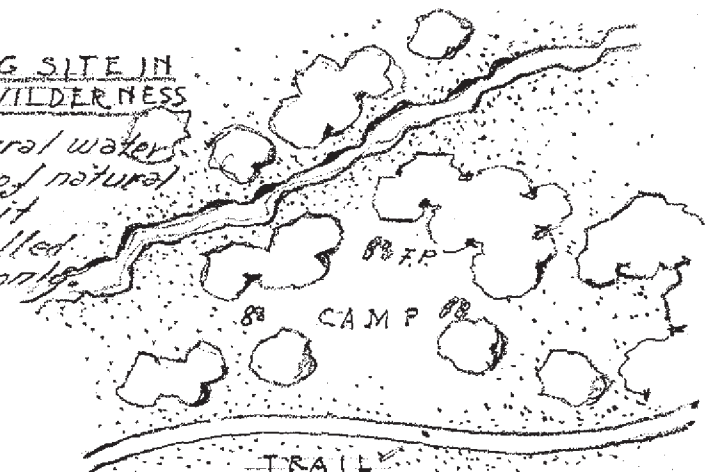
Offers a quieter camp and are limited to 20 sites. Water should be piped in but pit toilets may be used. Camp fitted into landscape with minimum disturbance of natural features. Could be located at end of access road in a loop.



TYPE 2 • BASIC • Secondary

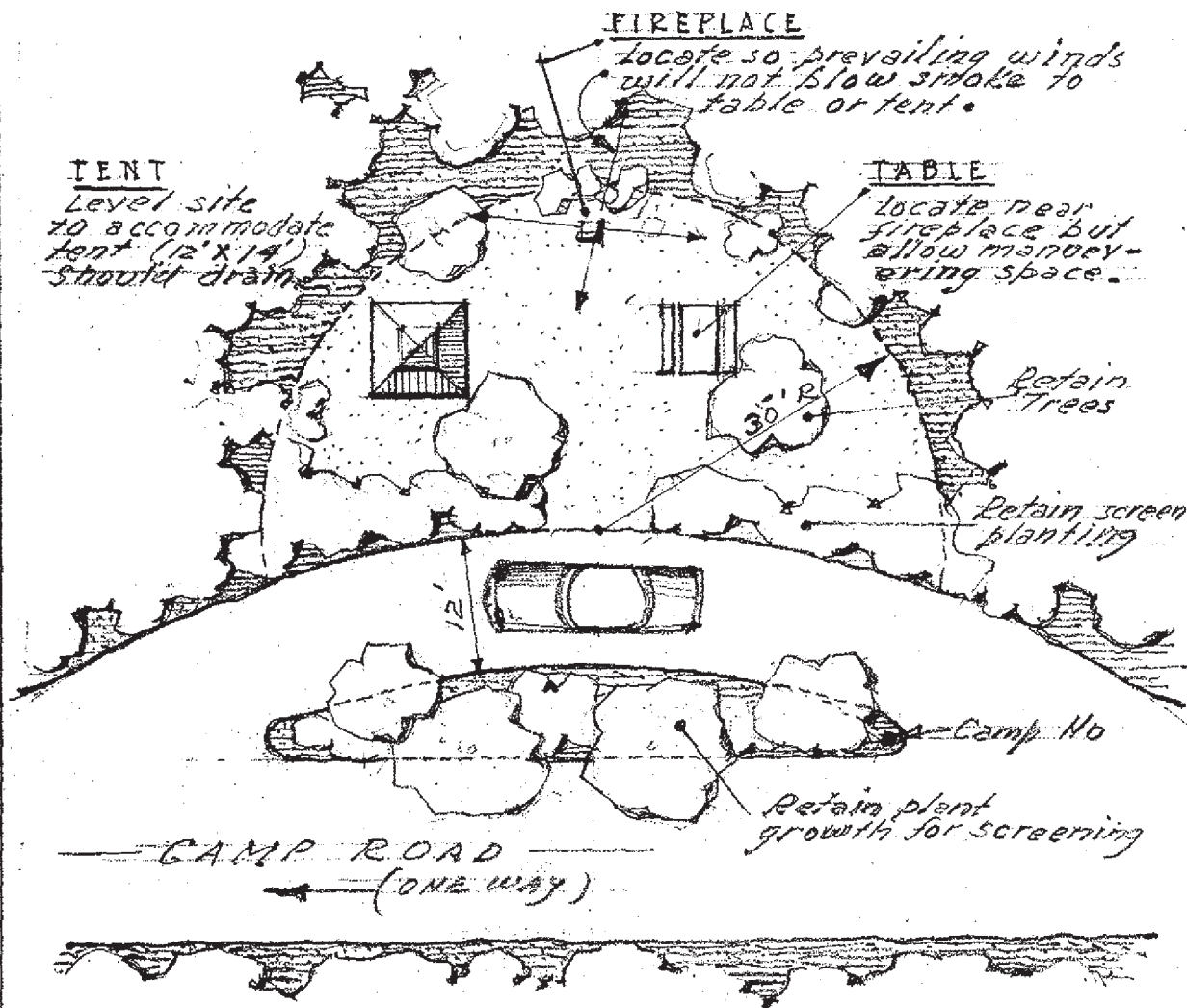
A MINIMUM CAMPING SITE IN KEEPING WITH THE WILDERNESS

Located near a natural water supply. Fire pits of natural rock groupings. Pit toilets to be installed in high use areas only.



TYPE 3 • PRIMITIVE • Back-Country

A TYPICAL CAMPSITE



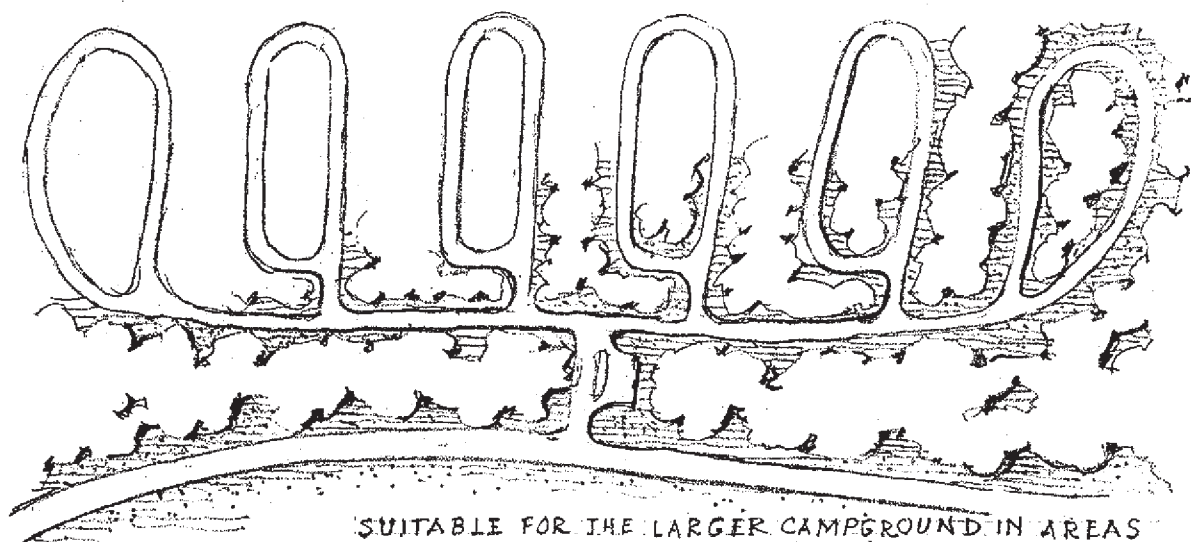
IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CAMPSITE THE NATURAL CHARACTER OF THE AREA SHOULD BE RETAINED AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. IN WOODLAND AREAS THE SHRUBBY GROWTH SHOULD BE REMOVED IN AN IRREGULAR MANNER IN DEVELOPING A SITE. CLEAR CUTTING SHOULD BE AVOIDED.

MAXIMUM DISTANCE TO WATER 100 FT.

MAXIMUM DISTANCE TO GARBAGE DISPOSAL 100 FT.

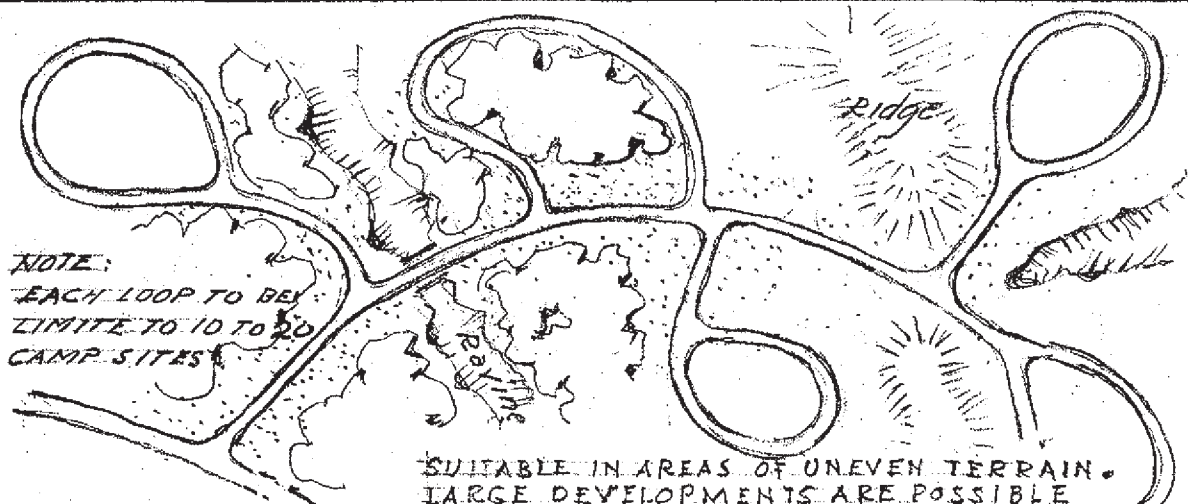
20 TO 35 SITES PER COMFORT STATION.

CAMPGROUND LAYOUT



LOOP TYPE

SUITABLE FOR THE LARGER CAMPGROUND IN AREAS OF RELATIVELY LEVEL EXPANSES. ANY LOOP MAY BE READILY CLOSED TO PERMIT MAINTENANCE AND REHABILITATION. LESS TRAFFIC ANNOYANCE.

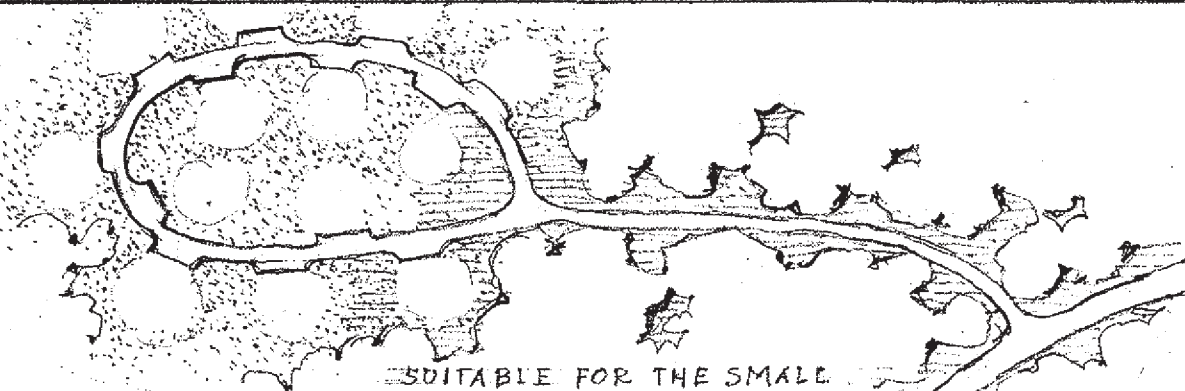


NOTE:

EACH LOOP TO BE LIMITED TO 10 TO 20 CAMP SITES

SECTION TYPE

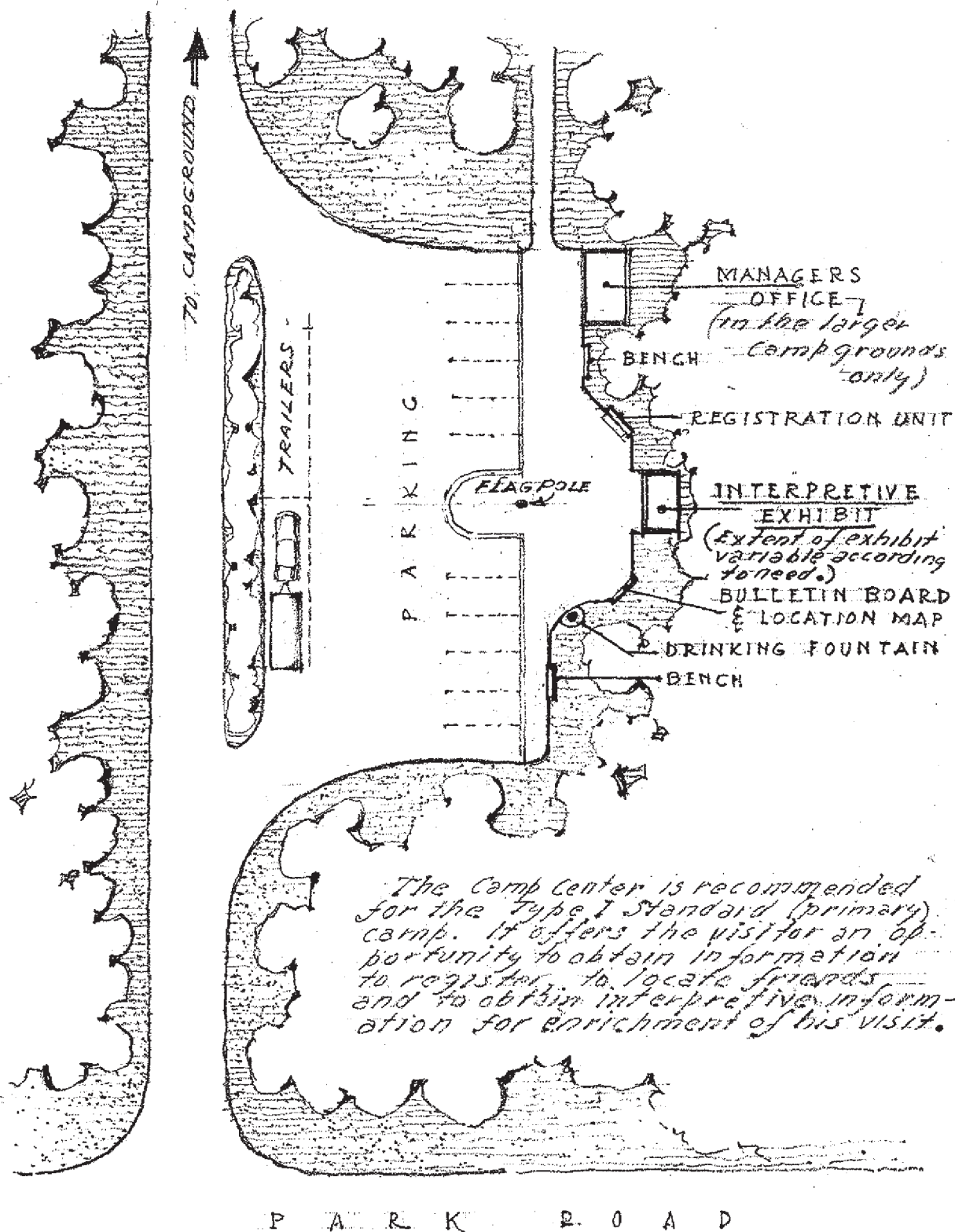
SUITABLE IN AREAS OF UNEVEN TERRAIN. LARGE DEVELOPMENTS ARE POSSIBLE BUT A GREATER FEELING OF SECLUSION EXISTS AS A RELATIVELY FEW CAMPS MAY BE SEEN FROM ANY ONE LOCATION.



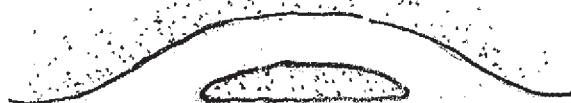
REMOTE TYPE

SUITABLE FOR THE SMALL OR BASIC TYPE CAMP LOCATED IN THE MORE REMOTE AREAS.

CAMP CENTER

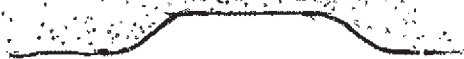


CAMPSITE PARKING



LOOP

Suitable for car or car and trailer use. Easy access. Island permits plant screening for privacy.



PARALLEL

For use in basic type camps or where natural features limit depth.



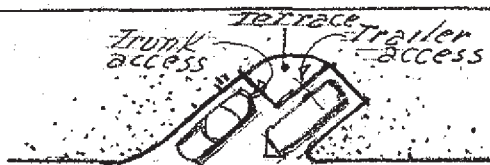
ARC

A variation of 'parallel' permits easier maintenance by equipment.



SINGLE SPUR

Suitable where trees or rocks restrict space.



DOUBLE SPUR

Suitable for trailer or two family use.



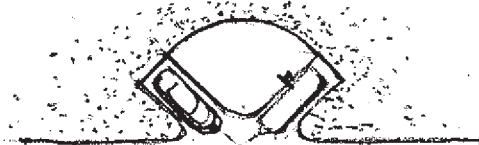
MULTIPLE

For group camp or for the "walk in" type of camp.



TRIANGLE

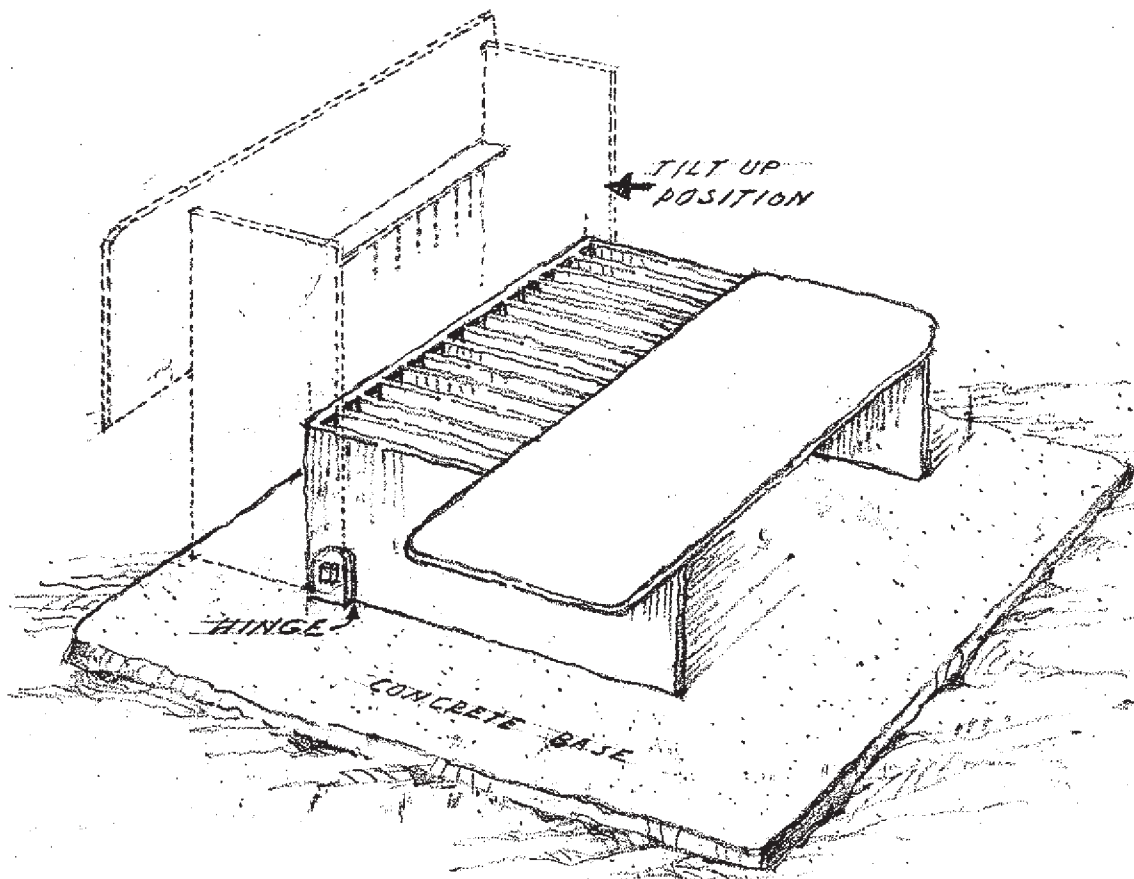
permits parallel or diagonal parking from either direction.



FAN

For trailer use. Car and trailer form a screen for the stabilized soil terrace.

• FIREPLACE •

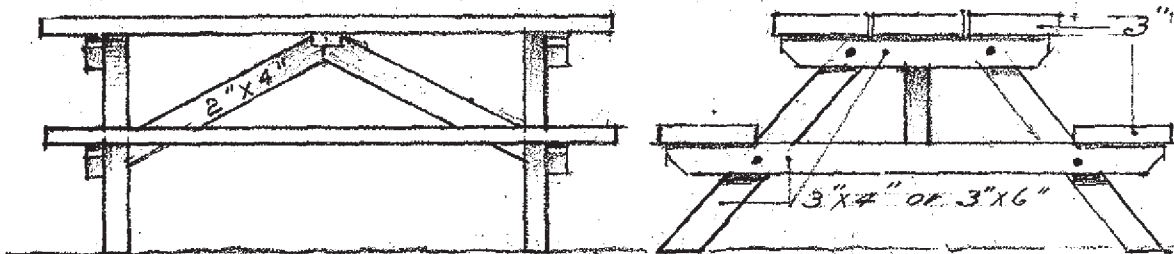


THE STANDARD CAMP FIREPLACE SHOULD BE A SIMPLE, ECONOMICAL YET DURABLE UNIT. THE FIREPLACE HERE SKETCHED FEATURES A LOW FIREBOX NOT OVER 7" HIGH WHICH WILL BE ECONOMICAL ON FUEL AND PERMITS COOKING BY HOT COALS OR CHARCOAL. THE COOKING SURFACE, COMPOSED OF HALF GRATE AND HALF PLATE SHOULD NOT BE OVER 18"X20" WHICH WILL READILY ACCOMMODATE 4 LARGE COOKING UTENSILS. THE UNIT IS HINGED TO ALLOW TILTING BACK FOR EASIER ASH CLEAN OUT AND SETTING OF FIRES AS WELL AS PERMITTING AN OPEN CAMPFIRE.

• CAMP TABLES •

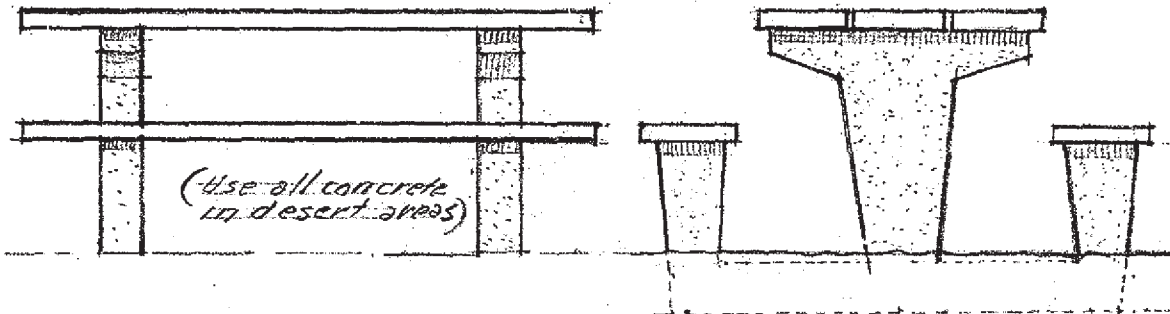
SEVERAL STANDARD TABLES ARE RECOMMENDED DUE TO THE VARIED CLIMATIC CONDITIONS EXISTING IN THE PARKS AND MONUMENTS. PRIME CONSIDERATION IS THAT ALL TYPES OF TABLES SHOULD BE NON-TIPPABLE, DURABLE, SIMPLE AND ECONOMICAL TO CONSTRUCT.

USE: In woodland areas when lumber is least costly. When locality has heavy snows use 3"x6" members.



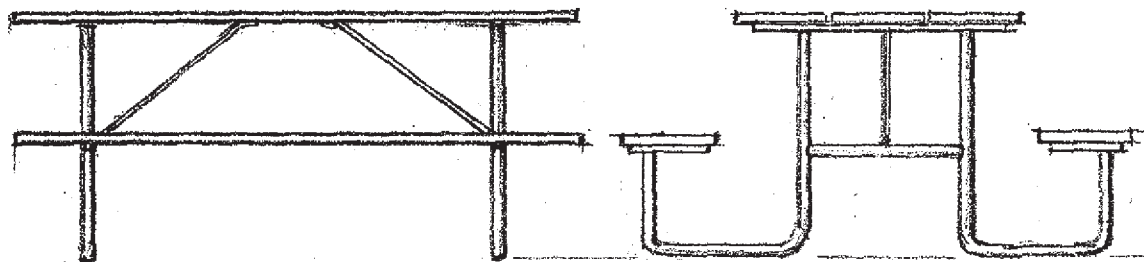
ALL WOOD TYPE

USE: In most areas where a durable table requiring a minimum maintenance is desired.



CONCRETE AND WOOD OR ALL CONCRETE TYPE

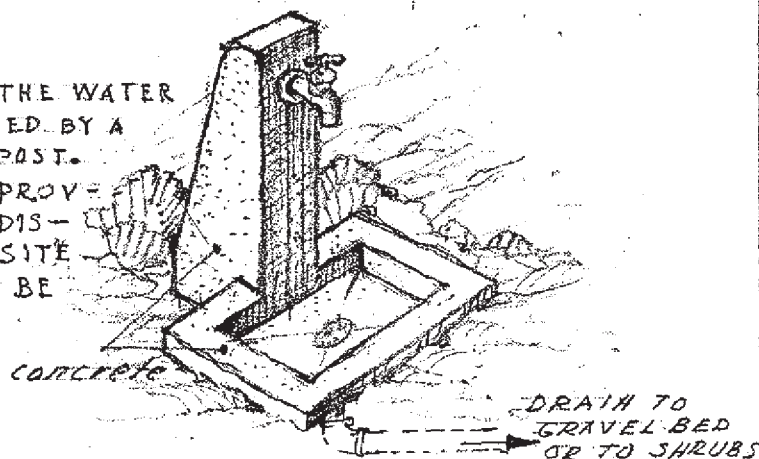
USE: In areas not having heavy snow but not in desert areas.



METAL AND WOOD TYPE

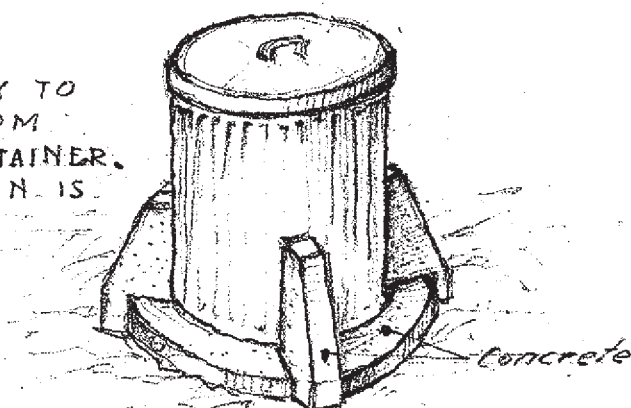
WATER HYDRANT

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE WATER PIPE RISER BE PROTECTED BY A CONCRETE OR TIMBER POST. A DRAIN SHOULD BE PROVIDED. THE MAXIMUM DISTANCE FROM CAMPSITE TO HYDRANT SHOULD BE 100 FEET.



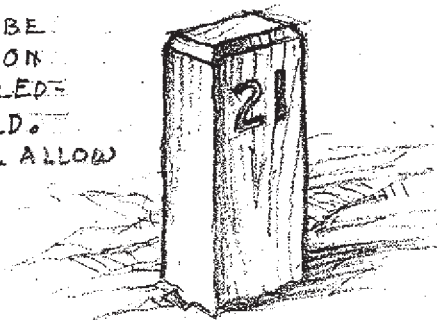
GARBAGE CONTAINER RACK

A RACK IS NECESSARY TO PREVENT ANIMALS FROM OVERTURNING THE CONTAINER. THE DESIGN AS SHOWN IS SUGGESTED.



CAMP SITE MARKERS

EACH CAMPSITE SHOULD BE NUMBERED AND INDICATED ON A MARKER. A 3"X6" RED WOOD POST IS SUGGESTED. THE 6" WIDE FACE WILL ALLOW NUMBERS TO 3 DIGITS.



• BARRIERS •

THE CAMPGROUND BARRIER IS A 'NECESSARY EVIL' AND AN ATTEMPT SHOULD BE MADE TO KEEP THIS CONTROL FACILITY AS UNOBTUSIVE AS POSSIBLE. THE LOW HORIZONTAL TYPE SUCH AS IN A ROUNDED CURBING IS CONSIDERED LEAST OBJECTIONABLE.

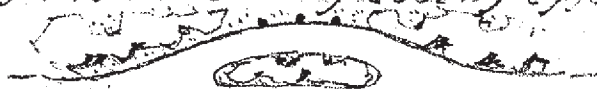
The use of natural rock barriers is satisfactory if they are properly placed and are used in an area having natural rock outcroppings. An even toothy effect should be avoided.



NATURAL TYPE

POSTS

Effective as a barrier but should not be over used because of the resulting toothy effect.



VERTICAL TYPES



CONCRETE
OR LOG



WOOD

The log and timber type is suitable for limited use. For barrier and bumper stop of parking spur especially on down grade.



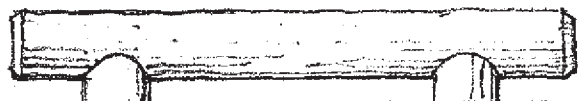
Sect.



DIM. TIMBER



Sect.



LOG

Bituminous concrete has been developed for curbing. A rounded section with backfill is worthy of further investigation. A study of this material is suggested.

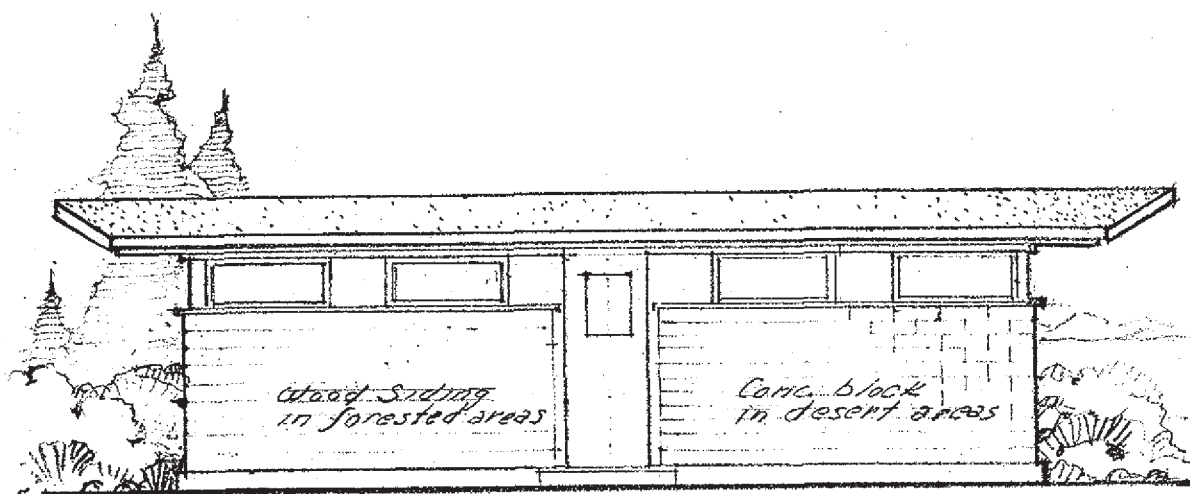


Sect.



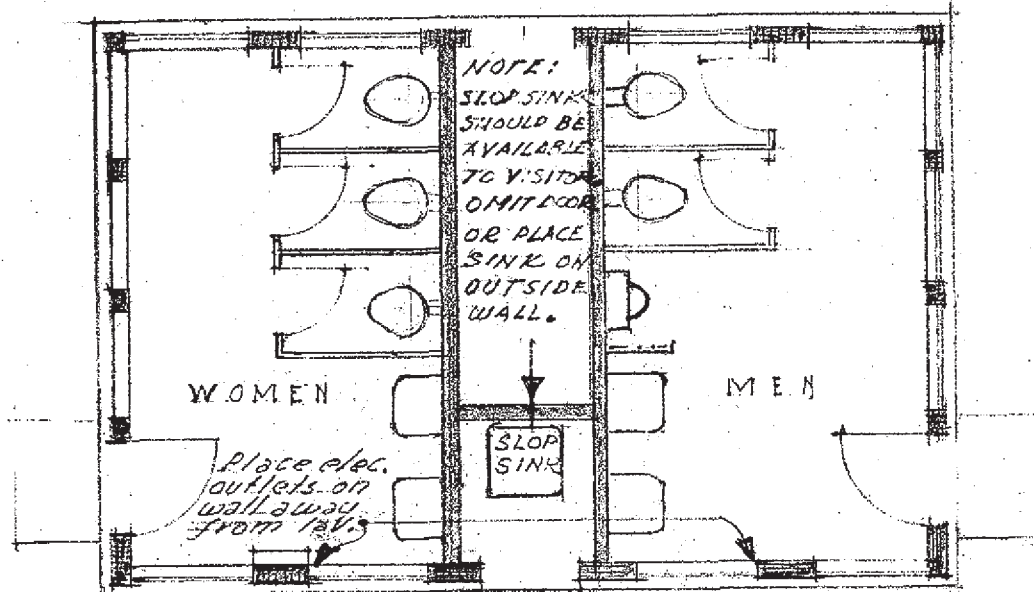
HORIZONTAL TYPE

COMFORT STATION



FRONT ELEVATION

NOTE: A roof loading schedule is used to satisfy various snow load conditions.



PLAN

STANDARD PLANS FOR CAMPGROUND COMFORT STATIONS ARE RECOMMENDED. PLANS W.O.P.C. P.G. 9044 & 9045 ARE SUITABLE FOR THIS USE. WOOD SIDING EXTERIOR IS SUGGESTED FOR FORESTED AREAS WHILE CONCRETE BLOCK CONSTRUCTION IS MORE APPROPRIATE FOR DESERT, SEASHORE AND SOME OTHER THAN FORESTED AREAS.