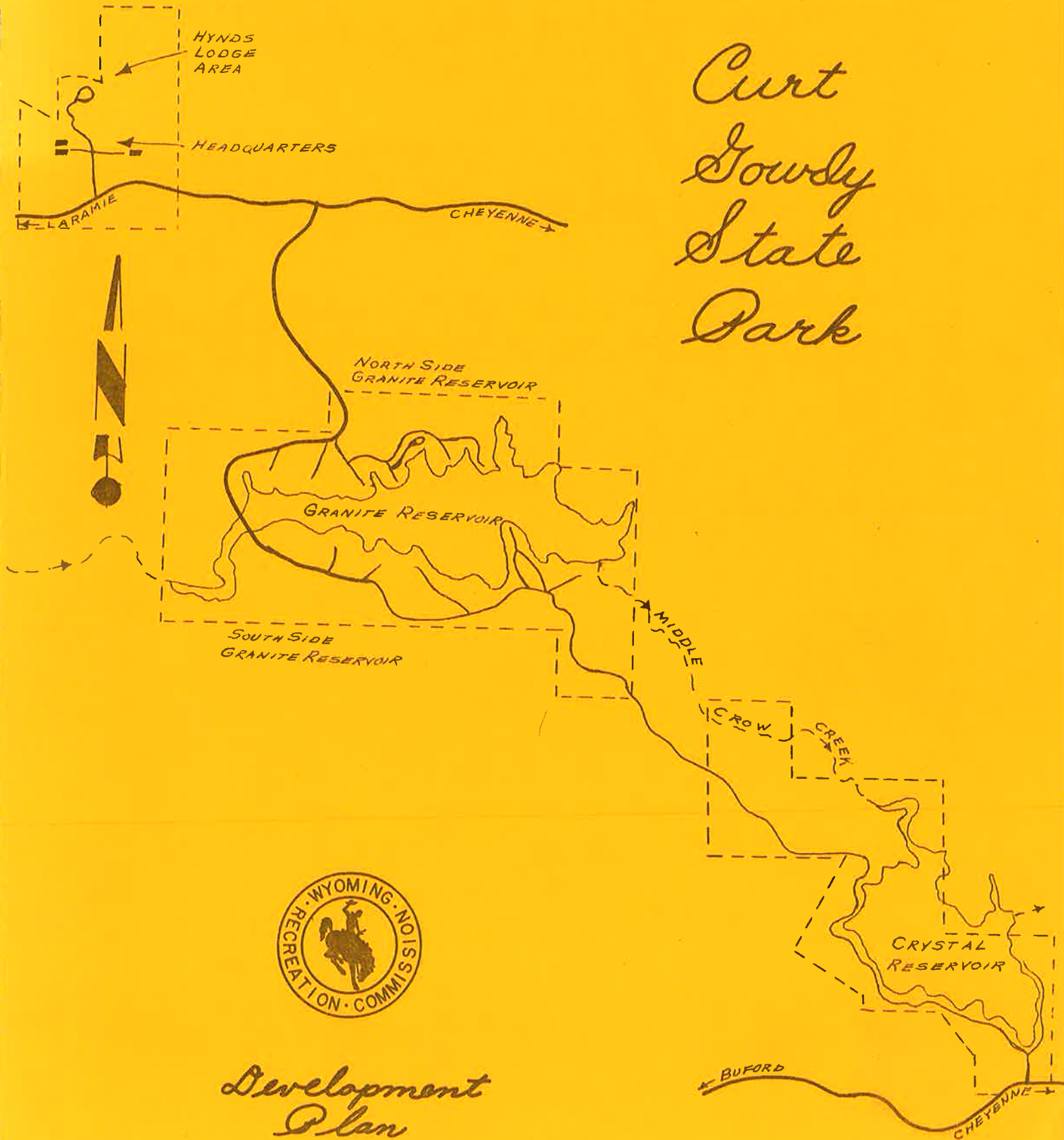


Curt Gowdy State Park



DEVELOPMENT PLAN
FOR
CURT GOWDY STATE PARK

Submitted by the
Planning Team
of the

Wyoming Recreation Commission
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002

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CURT GOWDY STATE PARK

I. INTRODUCTION

Curt Gowdy State Park consists of Crystal and Granite Reservoirs, owned by the City of Cheyenne; Hynds Boy Scout Lodge; and some contiguous lands. Established in 1971 as a state park through a lease agreement with the City and the Boy Scouts, the park contains approximately 1,220 acres of which 306 acres are water surface. Some development was already done by the city, county and Boy Scouts before the area became a park. This area is leased until 1996.

II. HISTORY

Lying 22 miles west of Cheyenne on Crow Creek is the site of the mining town of Silver Crown, sometimes known as Silver City, in an area known as the Silver Crown Hills. Color had been discovered as early as 1868, but active mining was not begun until 1877. The town had a hotel, stable, general store, several adobe and log cabins and a smelter capable of handling 20 tons of ore per day. One test in 1877 assayed at \$161.47 per ton. This consisted of 58.86 ounces of copper, 30.5 ounces of silver and .07 ounces of gold. A later test in 1887 assayed only \$24.10 per ton.

In 1887 a stage from Cheyenne ran to the mining camp on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday and returned the following day. The round trip fare was \$3.00. Rumored branch lines from both the Union Pacific and Colorado & Southern Railroads never materialized. One murder, committed by a man named Frenchie, was recorded in 1881. That same year the investors, which included many of the most prominent men in the southeastern part of Wyoming Territory, had hopes that the camp would rival Leadville, Colorado. Their hopes were dashed a few years later however, when

William Knight, Geology Professor at the University of Wyoming proved that the rich loads had been salted by Professor Aughey.

The town of Hecla, another mining town of the late 1880's, was located 5 miles west of Silver Crown. It too had a smelter and also boasted a brick kiln and a kiln to burn lime. Also founded on high hopes of gold, silver and copper, it never reached the fame or longevity of Silver Crown.

Faced with a shortage of water in the natural flow of Crow Creek, the City of Cheyenne constructed a dam and this created Granite Springs Reservoir. This dam was completed in 1904. Still having an inadequate supply, the city completed Crystal Dam in 1910 and North Crow in 1911.

Hynds Lodge was constructed in 1922-23 by Harry Hynds of Cheyenne on land donated by the Young Men's Literary Club of Cheyenne and dedicated to the use of the Boy Scouts of America and other organizations as the Literary Club may determine. It was deeded to the city in 1935 and leased by the city to the Wyoming Recreation Commission in 1971 as a part of the new state park.

III. NATURAL FEATURES

Set in the eastern foothills of the southern end of the Laramie Mountains, the soil in the park is mostly granitic with numerous large outcroppings of granite. The hills have large patches of pine with pockets of aspen. Chokecherries, mountain mahogany and other shrubs are frequent. Draws and creek bottoms contain natural meadows, some of which are cut for hay. Rainfall in the area averages about 16 inches. Nearby areas have traditionally been used for livestock grazing, but now many parcels are being subdivided for homesites. Elevation of the park varies from a low of 6,450 feet to a high of over 7,500 feet.

IV. LOCATION

Curt Gowdy State Park is located 26 miles west of Cheyenne and 22 miles

east of Laramie on Happy Jack Road. The area is near the eastern boundary of Medicine Bow National Forest and access is available from I-80 via the Buford Exit as well as by Happy Jack Road.

V. VISITATION

Visitors to the park are predominantly Wyoming residents with the majority being from Laramie and Albany Counties. This is the closest mountain area and the nearest good trout fishing area to the city of Cheyenne. Visitation was 84,000 in 1973, near 50,000 in 1974 and 71,894 in 1975. The area is visited by many who are seeking no recreational activity other than sightseeing.

VI. RELATED SITES

The nearest related sites to the park are Camp Jack and North Crow Reservoir just to the west and north of the park, Medicine Bow National Forest just west of the park which contains the Vedauwoo Camping and Picnicking Area, Happy Jack Ski Area and the Summit Rest Area, its visitor's center and Lincoln Monument. Nearby sites include the Ames Monument, a National Historic Place; the University of Wyoming and Laramie Plains Museum in Laramie; and several National Historic Places in Cheyenne.

VII. CITY OF CHEYENNE

A twenty-five year lease agreement has been entered into between the Recreation Commission and the City of Cheyenne on the original 1,118 acres. The lease expires in 1996. Sixty acres were purchased from BLM and an additional 41.6 acres are leased from the State Land Commission. Since the reservoirs are the source of water for the City of Cheyenne, no swimming is allowed, no sewer can be released on or under the surface of any of the drainage feeding the lakes and no temporary structures, fires or facilities are permitted on the ice on the

reservoirs. In addition, Hynds Lodge and its immediate area are to be dedicated to recreational use only by the Boy Scouts and other organizations.

VIII. DEVELOPMENT

Much of the development at this park is complete as far as numbers are concerned, but upgrading or altering of some of the facilities still needs to be done.

A. Hynds Lodge Area

The Hynds Lodge Area is north of the Happy Jack Road and in a secluded little glen surrounded by pines, aspen and large granite outcroppings.

1. Hynds Lodge

The Lodge contains an upstairs dormitory, kitchen, storeroom, large main room and a full length front porch. The building is built of native rock with a tile roof. The roof is in need of repair and the tiles should be removed and replaced with a composition shingle similar to Timberline. Some repointing of mortar needs to be done on the lower portions of the building. Restrooms with a one-man shower are going to be installed in one of the storerooms and the kitchen will be remodeled. The main room should be refinished with knotty pine paneling or some other rustic appearing material. All of the windows should be repaired. Some of the dividers between panes are gone and others are in bad repair. The ceiling should be repaired and finished with a material that is easy to clean. The fireplace should be cleaned and the wall board removed from the upper portion. Water and sewer need to be installed in the lodge. A ramp for the handicapped should be installed giving access to the north end of the porch. A brochure explaining the rules, regulations and facilities at the lodge should

be prepared and given to each group using the facility. The building also needs to be rewired and has to be remodeled to some extent before it will meet the requirements of the State Fire Marshall's recent inspection.

PHASE I

- a. remodel to approval of Fire Marshall
- b. reshingle roof
- c. repoint rock work
- d. rewire entire building
- e. install sewer, water, restrooms and shower
- f. repair windows
- g. refinish main lodge room
- h. construct handicapped ramp
- i. print handout material

2. Shower House

A shower house and restroom capable of handling ten people at a time should be constructed just north-northeast of the lodge. This should be of log, stone or board-and-bat or a combination of these materials.

PHASE I

- a. construct a 10-man shower house-restroom facility

3. Flagpole

The present flagpole should be removed. The top of the pole can be utilized or a new pole constructed. It should be installed centered on the building and about 8'-10' out from the lodge. The pole should be 20'-30' tall.

PHASE I

- a. remove present flagpole and install new one

4. Tent Sites

All of the old concrete tent pads should be removed. These should be rejuvenated as tent sites with a dirt pad so tent stakes can be driven in.

PHASE I

- a. remove present tent pads and replace with dirt pads

5. Picnicking and Campfire Circles

After the present trailer houses are removed from the area, we can determine the amount and type of use the picnic tables receive. These may need to be removed, rearranged or possibly extra tables will be needed. The presence of the living quarters appears to inhibit the use of these tables for the time being. The two fire circles should also be maintained. One of these presently gets quite a bit of use while the other apparently gets none. This usage pattern may also change after removal of the trailers.

PHASE I

- a. check on use of tables and adjust accordingly
- b. check on use of fire circles and adjust accordingly.

6. Utilities

A sewer system capable of handling the shower house and the lodge needs to be constructed. With a few alterations the present system may be adequate.

All electrical lines in the area should be buried as soon as the trailers are moved. Outdoor lighting should also be installed. The present vault toilet should be moved to the campground near the headquarters area when the new restrooms are completed.

PHASE I

- a. upgrade sewer system as necessary

- b. move present toilet

PHASE II

- a. bury electrical lines
- b. install outdoor lighting

7. Trails

At one time there were several hiking trails in the lodge area.

These trails need to be repaired and should be mentioned on the brochure.

PHASE I

- a. repair foot trails
- b. construct new trails as necessary

8. Use Fee

It is the consensus of the planning team that a use fee should be charged for the lodge. A fee schedule was approved by the Commission and was implemented January 1, 1976, for all users of the lodge. This will help to prevent an organization from reserving the lodge for several different periods during the year and then failing to use the lodge on many of the occasions. This has been happening under the present no fee system and the building sits idle because it's reserved but not used while other groups would like to use the facility at those times. Nothing in the agreement with the city appears to prohibit charging a fee to all groups, including Scouts, who want to use the lodge. It is the feeling of the team that the Hynds Lodge Area should be restricted to group use only.

B. Headquarters Area

1. Headquarters-Shop Building

The headquarters area is located adjacent to the north side of the Happy Jack Road on both sides of the entrance to Hynds Lodge. The shop

and headquarters building is in use but still requires some finishing. The exterior needs some additional rock work to enhance its appearance. This should be of native stone. A fence needs to be constructed around the outside storage area. There should be a one or two room dormitory built in over the office area. This could house temporary employees. A stairway for access will also have to be constructed. A storage shed abutting against the north side of the building is currently in the planning stage. Water service needs to be connected to the building.

PHASE I

- a. complete exterior work on the building
- b. complete interior work on the building
- c. install water service

2. Trailer Dump Station

The trailer dump station will be located on the road into the headquarters building.

PHASE I

- a. construct trailer dump station
- b. provide sewer, water and lighting at station

3. Housing Area

The housing area will be west of the entrance road into Hynds Lodge. There should be two houses with full basements. Since the area is sloping, the lawns on the front will need some terracing. The state has several houses in Cheyenne that must be moved. We should acquire two of these houses which are of a similar architectural style and move them to the park. They should be painted a color that blends in with the area and the shop. Water, sewer, electricity and telephone need to be installed for them.

PHASE I

- a. secure two houses from the state
- b. construct basements and move both houses
- c. install utilities
- d. do necessary painting and remodeling
- e. construct terracing and driveways as needed

PHASE II

- a. construct garage for each house
- b. finish basements

4. Water System

The entire Hynds Lodge and Headquarters areas should have a central water system. A storage tank can be installed west of the housing area. It can be supplied by both the well at Hynds Lodge and the well at the shop. Service lines can then be extended from the tank to the housing area, dump station and shop and another line can serve the camping area and Hynds Lodge.

PHASE II

- a. install water storage tank
- b. install water lines to Lodge, campground, houses etc.

5. Camping Area

The camping area between the housing area and Hynds Lodge is in good shape except for water and restroom. The vault type restroom now located near Hynds Lodge should be moved to this location. Water can be provided when water lines are run from the water tank to Hynds Lodge.

PHASE I

- a. move toilet from Hynds Lodge

PHASE II

- a. install water outlet

C. Signing

A large entrance sign should be placed at each entrance into the park. One at the Hynds Lodge entrance; one at the entrance to the north side of Granite Reservoir and one at the entrance to Crystal Reservoir. These should be constructed of local granite and log. Other signing in the area should follow statewide park signing standards. Signing along I-80 and I-25 at access points should be requested from the Highway Department.

The present routed map sign just inside the Granite entrance should be rerouted and moved to the opposite side of the road. A similar sign should be placed just inside the Crystal entrance.

There is a possibility that some informational signing should be done to explain the construction of the two dams and the gold and copper mining activity that was once active in the area. An informational shelter should also be constructed at the site where the routed map is at the Granite entrance. This shelter can include the routed map if desired.

PHASE I

- a. construct entrance signs for Hynds Lodge and Granite
- b. request signing from Highway Department
- c. install directional signs as needed
- d. construct and install routed map signs of the area
- e. construct informational shelter

PHASE II

- a. install any informational signs needed.
- b. construct entrance sign for Crystal at new entrance

D. North Side of Granite

1. Roads

Construction of a road from the north side of the lake to the south

side, across a causeway at the west end of the lake will facilitate movement of traffic and will also change usage patterns to some extent. The road is currently under contract. A connecting road should be constructed from the loop at the eastern end of the handicapped area to the access road going on east. At present, vehicles are crossing this area with no road. Guard rails would only move this traffic around the end of the rail.

From the present end of the east bound access road, no more roads should be constructed. The entire park area from here east should be reserved as a semi-primitive camping area with access by four-wheel drive vehicles and boaters only. An access road should be constructed to the group area at the west end.

PHASE I

- a. construct connecting road from loop to east access road
- b. sign 4 WD area

PHASE II

- a. construct access road and parking at group area at west end
2. Fencing

The fence dividing the western area from the main developed area should be removed as soon as the access road between the north and south sides is completed.

3. Handicapped Area

This area needs to be completed. Some stabilization of the ramp should be done to prevent erosion and provide better fishing access. A hiking trail should also be constructed for use by the handicapped. This may possibly be better if it is located just east of the new causeway on the south side of Granite. A small playground needs to be installed

northeast of the handicapped area. This should be similar to the one at Seminoe.

PHASE I

- a. complete handicapped fishing area
- b. construct about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of handicapped trail on the south side

4. Boat Ramp

At present there are two boat ramps and both are in need of repair. The team felt both ramps should be removed and a new double width ramp constructed on the site of the present eastern most ramp.

PHASE I

- a. remove existing boat ramps and construct new double width one

5. Utilities and Restroom

The restrooms in the area are adequate in number but some should be changed in location. Two in the eastern area should be moved east to serve the loop area. A new restroom will be needed in the group area at the west end.

The well north of the loop should have a hand pump installed. A new well will also have to be drilled for the group area on the west end.

PHASE I

- a. move restrooms down toward lake
- b. place hand pump on well north of loop

PHASE II

- a. install restroom at group area
- b. drill well at group area

6. Campgrounds

It was the feeling of the team that camping development has reached its peak on the north shore with the exception of developing a group area.

The area proposed for this is north west of the causeway and is completely undeveloped at present. There is a meadow and the area is bordered by trees. The meadow is boggy in the spring and, if it is needed for a play field, it could have drain tile installed to eliminate this condition. The area should have a serving shelter capable of handling large groups; a playground area with equipment similar to that at Seminole; restroom facilities; access road and parking area; and a well for water. The last three items have all been dealt with in other topic headings so will not be phased in this section. This area should be available for groups on a reservation basis and open to the general public when not reserved.

PHASE I

- a. drain meadow if necessary
- b. install group shelter
- c. construct playground

E. South Side Granite

The south side of Granite Reservoir has some development at present. The completion of the causeway from the north side should increase the south side usage considerably. Just east of the causeway is an excellent area for a handicapped hiking trail.

Two new water wells or outlets should be installed. A group shelter not of the serving type should be constructed north of the present well. Several of the present tables are damaged and should be replaced and some new tables should be installed. A total of two dozen new tables are needed for here and for Crystal Reservoir as replacements and new sites.

PHASE I

- a. drill two wells

- b. construct handicapped trail
- c. replace damaged tables and construct new sites
- d. construct group shelter

F. Crystal Reservoir

1. Boat Ramp

A boat ramp and parking area should be constructed near the entrance to the park from the county road. This would be a single boat ramp. At present there is none on this lake.

PHASE II

- a. construct boat ramp and parking area

2. Camping Facilities

The restroom at the exit from Crystal to the south side of Granite should be moved closer to the lake for easier access by visitors.

Several of the tables need to be replaced as was mentioned before in the section on south Granite.

PHASE I

- a. replace tables as necessary
- b. move restroom

3. Off-Road Vehicle Area

Just north of Crystal is an area currently used by off-road vehicles, primarily motorcycles. This area should be signed and set aside for this use, and boundaries established. This can be signed and marked as necessary upon recommendations of enthusiasts in this activity.

PHASE I

- a. lay out off-road vehicle area with necessary signing and boundaries

4. Roads

A wider improved road needs to be constructed from the end of the causeway road at Granite to Crystal around this lake and to the Crystal entrance from the county road. The entrance should be moved east to near the east boundary of the park. This will provide better sight distance and also an easier climb and a leveler approach to the county road.

PHASE I

- a. reconstruct road from Granite to Crystal

PHASE II

- a. reconstruct road around Crystal to park entrance and construct a new entrance

5. Wells

Drinking water in at least two locations needs to be provided.

PHASE I

- a. drill wells and install hand pumps

G. General Improvements

1. Reseeding

All abandoned roads, construction areas and any blow-outs should be smoothed and reseeded as soon as possible. On abandoned roads, temporary barriers will need to be installed until grass cover obliterates the old road.

PHASE I & II

- a. reseed all areas as needed,

2. Trees

Native pines, quaking aspen and cottonwood should be planted at random along the north and south shores of Granite to improve appearance and to provide shade for picnic areas that currently have no shade of any type.

PHASE I

- a. plant trees at random and around picnic areas

3. Shelters

It was felt that all new shelters should have "Timberline" shingles and present shelters should be reroofed with the same thing when reroofing is necessary. This is a desirable, attractive shingle that doesn't lend itself to the vandalism that wood shingles or shakes do.

4. Further Study

Upon completion of the causeway and the access from the north to the south sides of Granite, usage patterns need to be watched and studied closely to see how they affect present development and future plans. This road could affect present usage patterns to a considerable degree.

PHASE I

- a. have the Planning Division study usage of the Granite area.

5. Boating

The total water area in the park is only 306 acres. According to studies, 40 acres is required for a boat pulling one water skier. This effectively limits the use of this park to seven boats pulling water skiers and only one or two boats in the remaining 26 acres for fishermen. The agreement with the city prohibits swimming, but allows water skiing. This seems rather inconsistent to the team. We also feel the limited area and capacity for skiers does not provide good skiing conditions and it does pose a very definite hazard to fishermen. We therefore propose that an agreement be sought with the City of Cheyenne and the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission restricting motor boating to those boats with five (5) horsepower motors or smaller. This would allow sufficient

power for fishing and trolling and at the same time would eliminate water skiing because of insufficient power to pull a skier. We feel the intensive use of these lakes make this step imperative. This type of limitation is done through the Fishing Orders of the Game and Fish Commission.

PHASE I

- a. negotiate with City of Cheyenne and Game and Fish Commission to restrict boat motors to no more than 5 h.p.

IX. ACQUISITION OF ADDITIONAL PROPERTY

Both Camp Jack and North Crow Reservoir have been proposed as future additions to the park.

A. Camp Jack

This area, located just west of the Hynds Lodge Area is now used by Boy Scouts as a campground. Improvements in the area consist of only a few fire rings, a few log railings and an access road. It is the team's recommendation that this area be left as is, under the present status of management and ownership. We do not feel it should become a part of the park in the foreseeable future.

B. North Crow Reservoir

This is a very pretty and desirable area north-northwest of Hynds Lodge. We feel this area would make a desirable addition to the park. Since there are no improvements in the area other than a few jeep roads, complete development of the area would have to be undertaken. Its distance from the other facilities at the park would require an additional employee, an additional vehicle, and additional operations money. The development to include roads, parking areas, reseeding construction sites, restrooms, water, camping facilities, boat ramp and signing would cost in the neighborhood of \$80,000 to \$90,000.

In view of the above facts, the team felt no effort should be made to include this area in the park until all development is completed on the present park and until such time as we can be assured of the availability of sufficient manpower, equipment and funding to properly operate and maintain the area.

X. NAME OF THE PARK

The team felt the name "Curt Gowdy State Park" is a bit unwieldy and would like to suggest a change. If the name cannot be changed back to "Granite State Park", but must be left to honor one of the state's former residents, we suggest that it be shortened to just "Gowdy State Park". This would carry the same honor as the present name and would be a shorter more concise name for the area.

IX. CONCLUSION

We need to guard against the temptation, at this relatively small park near large population centers, to overdevelop. We could easily wind up with a concrete jungle and virtually eliminate the scenic beauty, especially along the lake shores. We feel the development along the north shore of Granite, the Crystal Area and Hynds Lodge Area to be close to completion when currently funded work is finished. Some additional development could be done along the south shore of Granite and quite a lot of work needs to be done in upgrading or completing present facilities.

In view of the expected change in use patterns, particularly at Granite the team recommends a complete review of this plan in the fall of 1976.

