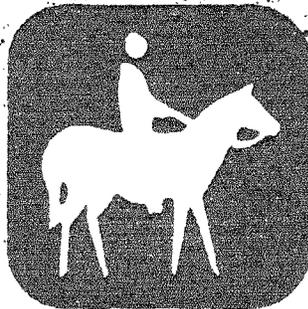
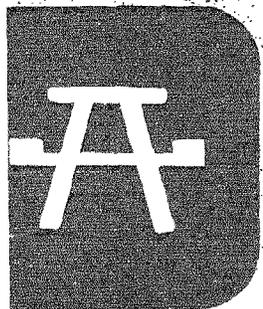
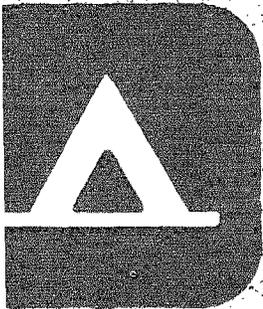


Preparing Directories to Local Outdoor Recreation Facilities



by Roger E. McCay, David A.
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Development of a good guide to local outdoor recreation facilities can be accomplished in five basic steps. Knowing your users and what information they need are key ingredients to success. The procedure outlined here was used successfully in northeastern Pennsylvania in 1976.

The "Great Outdoors" can seem like a jungle when you're looking for recreational opportunities but don't know where to turn. Although more and more people are looking for fun and relaxation out of doors, good guides or directories to local facilities are hard to come by.

We recently asked a number of resource managers, land use planners, and researchers to list critical needs in outdoor recreation. Topping their list was the need for reliable and complete directories to facilities. Directories are useful not only as guides to available services but also as data bases for subsequent studies of outdoor recreation.

How do you inventory and prepare a directory to facilities? We faced that question during a recent project in which recreation directories were prepared for 12 counties in northeastern Pennsylvania (Northeastern Forest Experiment Station 1976). The guides were produced in cooperation with two regional planning agencies—Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania and the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission—at a cost of about \$2,500 per county. Feedback from tourist bureaus, chambers of commerce, recreation associations, newspapers, and recreationists indicates the venture is a huge success. In this paper, we review the procedure used in producing the guides.

Given the resources to do the job, preparation of a useful directory requires five basic steps:

- Choose the activities to be included.
- Determine the type of information needed for each activity.
- Collect the information.
- Package the information into a useful product.
- Distribute the product to the user.

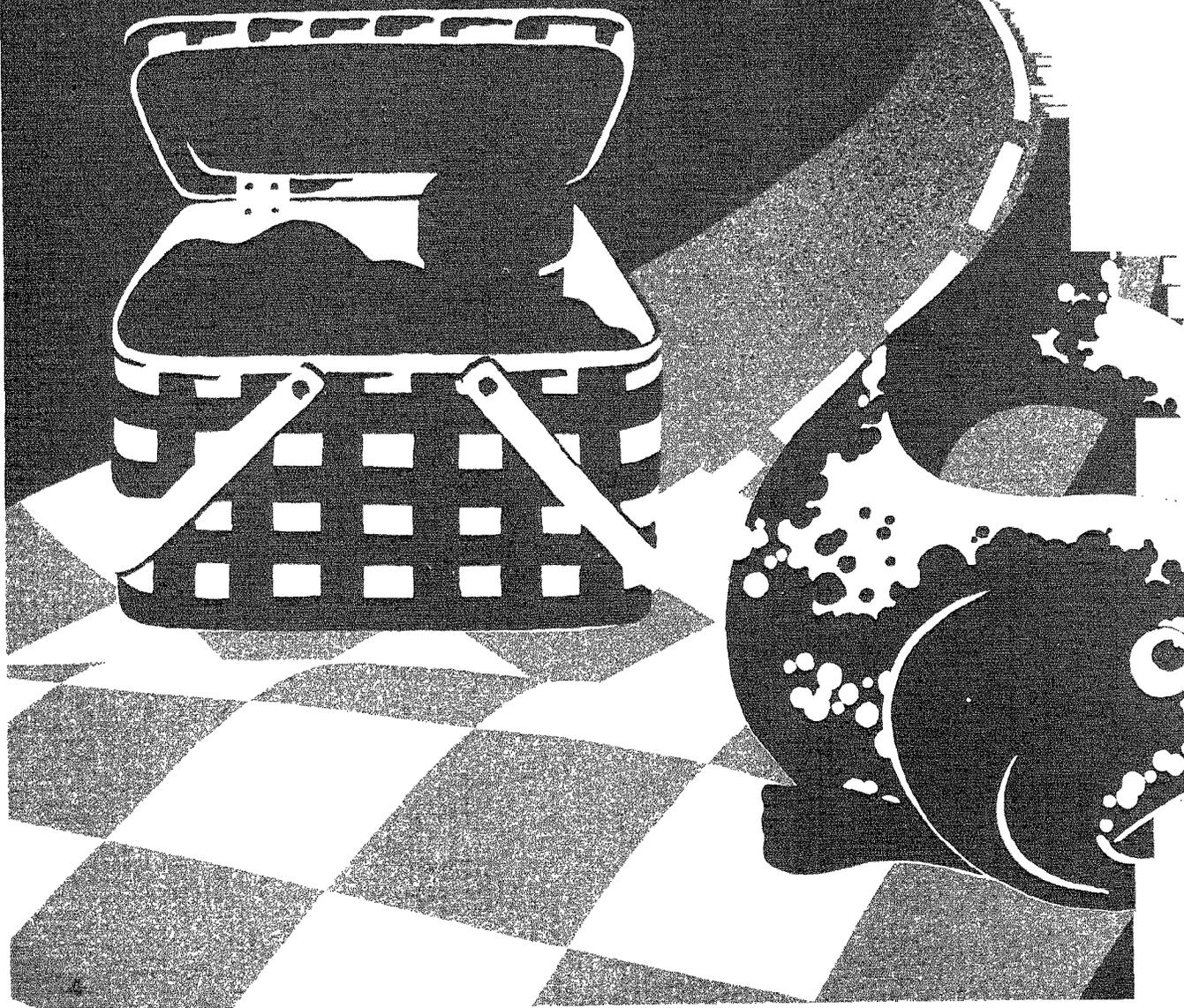
But remember, directories are soon outdated, so provisions must be made for keeping the information current.

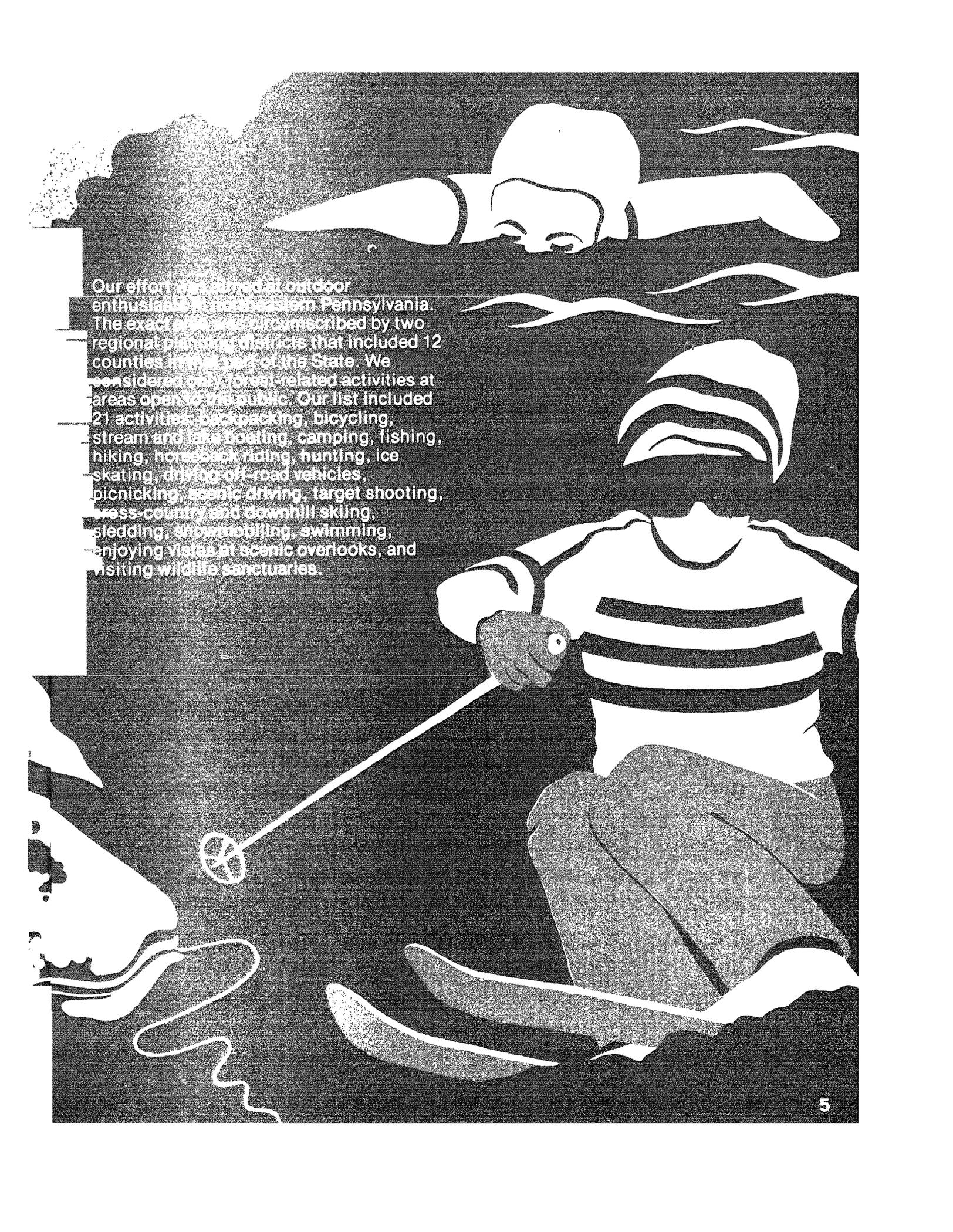
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1 Choosing Activities

Who? That is the question to ask in choosing activities to include in the directory. Determine your audience—what group are you trying to reach?





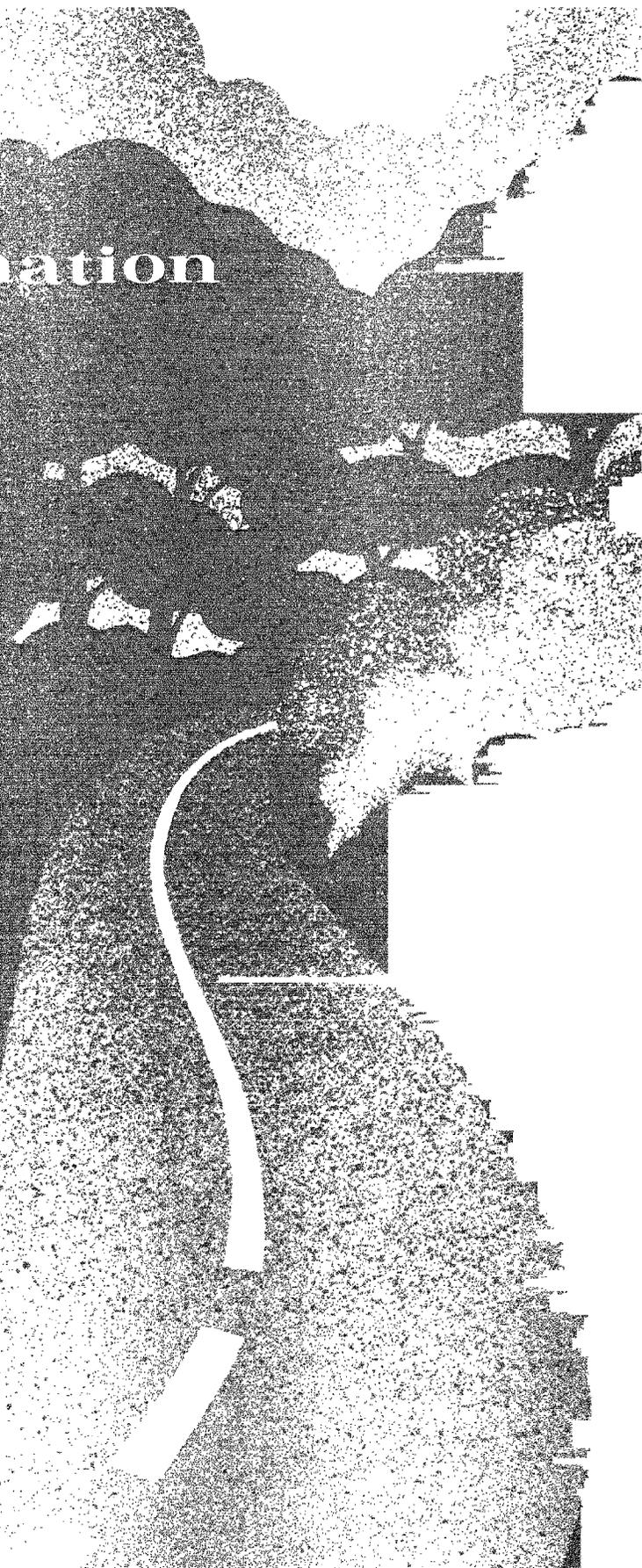
Our effort was aimed at outdoor enthusiasts in northeastern Pennsylvania. The exact area was circumscribed by two regional planning districts that included 12 counties in the east of the State. We considered only forest-related activities at areas open to the public. Our list included 21 activities: backpacking, bicycling, stream and lake floating, camping, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, hunting, ice skating, driving off-road vehicles, picnicking, scenic driving, target shooting, cross-country and downhill skiing, sledding, snowmobiling, swimming, enjoying vistas at scenic overlooks, and visiting wildlife sanctuaries.

3 Collecting the Information

We used two kinds of inventory forms in collecting information for the directory. On one, we compiled information about each recreation area (page 9). On the other, we gathered data about each activity available at that area (pages 10 and 11). The "Information to Include" checklist was used in structuring these forms.

Most of the information on what's available can be collected from tourist bureaus, government agencies, recreation associations and clubs, chambers of commerce, recreation equipment stores, and local enthusiasts. Having exhausted these sources, go to the field to locate recreation areas that you missed, to check your data, and to fill in gaps on the inventory forms. The best sources of this information are owners and managers.

The people who do the field work should be conscientious and personable, and have an interest in outdoor recreation. We used local college interns for our inventory.



Area Inventory

Lackawanna State Park

name

RD1 Dalton, Pa. 18102

address

717-915-3239

phone number

Pa. Dept. of Environmental Resources

ownership or managing agency

1300 acres

land area

220 acres

lake area

none

entrance fee

available activities:

backpacking

bicycling

boating, lake

boating, stream

camping

driving off-road vehicles

enjoying vistas at scenic overlooks

fishing

hiking

horseback riding

hunting

ice skating

picnicking

scenic driving

skiing, cross-country

skiing, downhill

sledding

snowmobiling

swimming

target shooting

visiting wildlife sanctuaries

food concession at swimming pool, boat rental

concession or supplies

Pa. State Park Regulations

restrictions

summer outdoor educational classes

special information

Activity Inventory-Camping

Lackawanna State Park

name

camping

activity

\$3.00/night

user fee

facilities

30 tent sites

none sewer hookups

70 trailer sites

yes flush toilets

none cabins

yes showers

none laundry

yes dumping station

none electric hookups

first aid, fireplaces, playgrounds

other

points of interest

April to October

season of use

yes

drinking water

Activity Inventory—Bicycling

Lackawanna State Park

name

bicycling

activity

none

user fee

hard surface roads

facilities

points of interest

general park map at park office

maps and guides

several throughout park

access points and parking locations

located at campground and picnic areas

drinking water

3 miles

length of trail

easy



moderate

strenuous

degree of difficulty

class 3

class of bikeway*

*class 1 — a completely separated right-of-way for the exclusive use of bicycles.

class 2 — a restricted right-of-way for the exclusive or semi-exclusive use of bicycles. (bike lane)

class 3 — a shared right-of-way so designated by signs placed on vertical posts or stencilled on the pavement. (bike route)

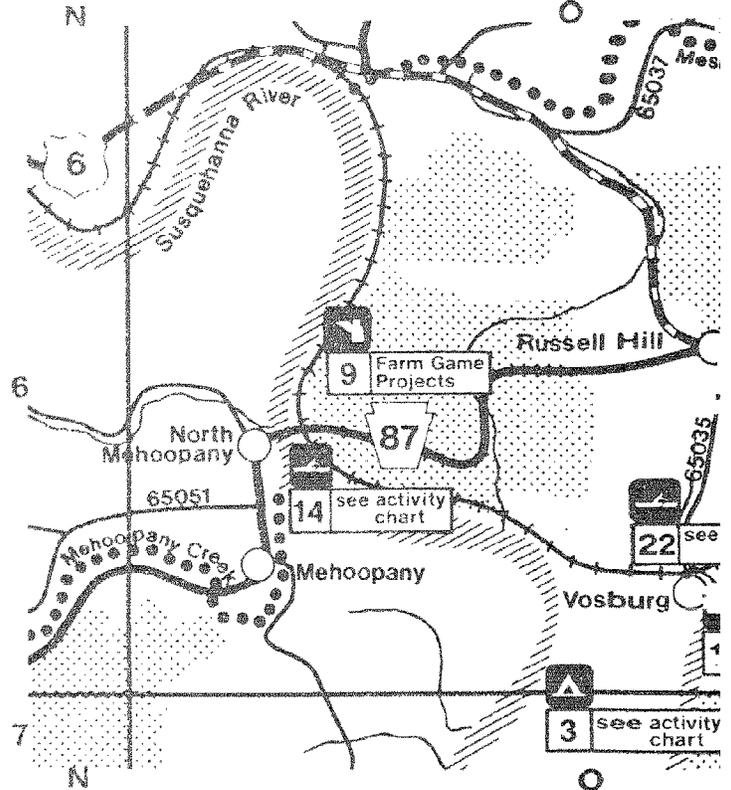
4 Packaging the Product

Now that you've identified your audience, know their needs, and have the information in hand, what do you do with it? Put yourself in the user's shoes. The most helpful directories are complete, accurate, and easy to use. The first two requirements can be met only by the tedious process of checking and rechecking your information in every phase of the project. In the end, it's worth the effort, since a directory full of errors won't be used.

We had a lot of information which we needed to present in a way that would make it most accessible. We decided to use both maps and guidebooks.

The maps, one for each county, were printed on one side of a large sheet of paper, with activity charts on the back. They showed the name, location, and phone number of each recreation area and indicated the activities available at that area. To highlight recreation opportunities and avoid clutter, we included on the maps only those features (streams, lakes, roads, etc.) that we thought would be important to users.

The guidebooks were tailored to each county. They included a chapter on each activity—with cross-references to other activities at each recreation area—and provided details about facilities (page 14).



Wyoming County Pennsylvania



name of facility	phone number	
Bowman's Creek		1
Brickyard		2
Camp Lackawanna	717-833-3444	3
Camp Onawanda	717-836-3404	4
Camp Spear	717-945-9502	5
Ciprich's Camp	717-869-1094	6

Sample from Sullivan County



Skiing, Cross-Country

3 Broad Horizons Resort (717) 482-3491

Charles Fyfe
RD 1
Muncy Valley, Pa.

200 acres land, 3 acres water

facility identification number: 3
map coordinates: J-9
restrictions: must be camper to use facilities
concessions: cross-country ski rentals
access points and parking: trail head near campground
drinking water: in campground
length of trails: 2 miles
degree of difficulty: moderate

Other activities include lake boating, camping, fishing, hiking, hunting, ice skating, picnicking, downhill skiing, sledding, snowmobiling, swimming, and viewing scenery.

33 Ricketts Glen State Park

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources
RD 2
Benton, Pa. 17814

13,100 acres land, 254 acres lake, 10 miles stream

facility identification number: 33
map coordinates: L-9, M-9
restrictions: see Pennsylvania State Park regulations
maps and guides: general map showing trails, available at park office
access points and parking: many areas—see map
drinking water: in picnic and camping areas
length of trails: 3 miles
degree of difficulty: from beginner to expert

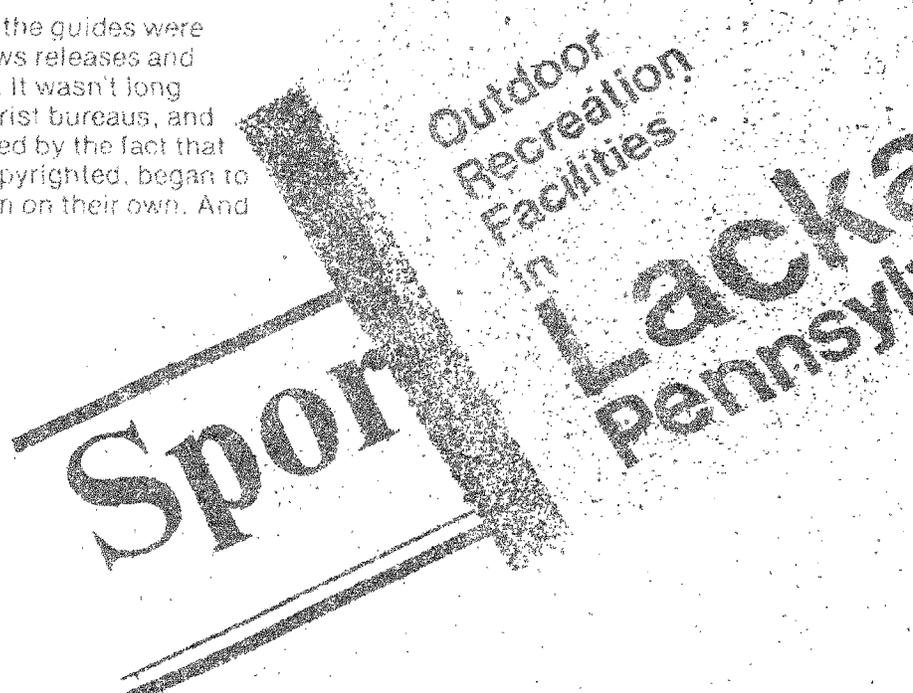
Other activities include bicycling, lake boating, camping, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, hunting, ice skating, picnicking, sledding, snowmobiling, swimming, and viewing scenery.

5 Distributing the Product

Your aim here is to get the directories to as many people as possible, and at the lowest cost both to you and to them. Outdoor recreation guides are very popular items and will break your printing budget if you give them away. You'll find that people are willing to pay a reasonable price for them.

Since we lacked the resources and facilities to print, distribute, and sell the guides, we worked with a local recreation association to set up a system for the final stages of the project. Our cooperators, the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania and the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission, also printed and distributed a limited number of directories.

To let people know that the guides were available, we issued news releases and held press conferences. It wasn't long before newspapers, tourist bureaus, and other groups, encouraged by the fact that the directories aren't copyrighted, began to print and distribute them on their own. And that's where we are.



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Northeastern Pennsylvania*. U. S. Dep. Agric.
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Misc. Publ.

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