SECTION II

II - D. SOIL INTERPRETATIONS

5. Recreation

INTRODUCTION

General

The purpose of these interpretations is to help engineers, planners, and others understand how soil properties influence behavior when used for recreational uses such as camp areas, picnic areas, playgrounds, off-road motorcycle trails, and paths and trails. Soils are rated for the uses expected to be important or potentially important to users of soil survey information. Ratings for proposed uses are given in terms of limitations. Only the most restrictive features are listed. Other features may need to be treated to overcome soil limitations for a specific purpose.

Soils are rated in their "natural" state, that is, no unusual modification of the soil site or material is made other than that which is considered normal practice for the rated use. Even though soils may have limitations, it is important to remember that engineers and others can modify soil features or can design or adjust the plans for a recreational use to compensate for most degrees of limitations. Most of these practices however are costly. The final decision in selecting a site for a particular use generally involves weighing the costs for site preparation and maintenance, with benefits from the intended land use.

Soil limitation ratings of "No Limitations" and "Limitations" along with the specific limiting feature(s) are given in the reports available through the USDA-NRCS Soil Data Mart and USDA-NRCS Web Soil Survey.

Within the Soil Data Mart, recreation interpretations are contained in the "Camp Areas, Off-Road Motorcycle Trails, and Paths and Trails (CA)" and the "Picnic Areas, Playgrounds, and Lawns, Landscaping, and Golf Fairways (CA)" reports.

Within the Web Soil Survey, recreation interpretation maps and tables are found under the "Suitabilities and Limitations for Use" tab under the section "Recreation Development".

RECREATION INTERPRETATIONS

The soils are rated according to limitations that affect their suitability for camp areas, picnic areas, playgrounds, paths and trails, and off-road motorcycle trails. Not considered in the ratings, but important in evaluating a site, are location and accessibility of the area, size and shape of the area and its scenic quality, the ability of the soil to support vegetation, access to water, potential

water impoundment sites available and either access to public sewer lines or capacity of the soil to absorb septic tank effluent. Soils subject to flooding are limited in varying degrees for recreational use by the duration of flooding and the season when it occurs. On-site assessment of height, duration, and frequency of flooding is essential in planning recreational activities.

Camp Areas (CA)
These are tracts of land used intensively as sites for tents, trailers, campers, and accompanying activities of outdoor living. Camp areas require such site preparation as shaping and leveling in areas used for tents and parking areas, for stabilizing roads and intensively used areas and for installing sanitary facilities and utility lines. Camp areas are subject to heavy foot traffic and some vehicular traffic. The soils are rated on the basis of soil properties that influence the ease of developing the camping area after development. Soil properties that influence trafficability and promote the growth of vegetation after heavy use are also important.

Picnic Areas (CA)
Picnic areas are natural or landscaped tracts used primarily for preparing meals and eating outdoors. These areas are subject to heavy foot traffic. Most vehicular traffic is confined to access roads and parking lots. Soils are rated on the basis of properties that influence development costs of shaping the site, trafficability, and growth of vegetation after development. The surface of picnic areas should absorb rainfall readily, remain firm under heavy foot traffic, and not be dusty when dry.

Playgrounds (CA)
These are areas used intensively for games such as baseball, football, and similar activities. Playgrounds require a nearly level soil that is free of stones and that can withstand heavy foot traffic and still maintain adequate vegetation. Soils are rated on the basis of properties that influence the cost of shaping, trafficability, and growth of vegetation. Slope and stoniness are the main concerns in developing playgrounds. For good trafficability, the surface of playgrounds should absorb rainfall readily, remain form under heavy foot traffic, and not be dusty when dry.

Paths and Trails (CA)
Paths and trails are used for walking, horseback riding, and similar uses, and should require little or no cutting and filling in site preparation. Soils are rated on properties that influence trafficability and erodibility. Paths and trails should remain firm under foot traffic and not be dusty when dry.

Off-road Motorcycle Trails (CA)
Off-road motorcycle trails require little or no site preparation. They are not covered with surfacing material or vegetation, Considerable compaction of the soil material is likely. The ratings are based the soil properties that influence erodibility, trafficability, dustiness, and the ease of revegetation. These properties are stoniness, slope, depth to a water table, ponding, flooding, and texture of the surface layer.