

Urban Rise, Second Home Studied By Task Force

Urban areas, which already contain 66 percent of the nation's population, are destined to expand into still more farm acreage despite recent challenges by environmentalists to the pace of development.

That is the forecast of a citizens' task force in a report that offers hope for reconciling some of the deep and growing differences between forces stimulating growth and those of unyielding conservation.

Though the task force, headed by Laurance S. Rockefeller, is critical of "unrestrained, piecemeal urbanization," it recognizes that "the needs of the American population can be met only through continuing development."

The 12-member group found all indicators pointing to a further spread of urban land area. Stimulated by affluence, the pace of land consumption exceeds both the increase in population growth and the rate of household formations, even though within the next 12 years more than 27,000 new households are

anticipated every week. That is the equivalent to the weekly creation of a city the size of Green Bay, Wis.

Set up last September by the White House-mandated Citizens' Advisory Committee on Environmental Quality, the task force was sponsored by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

Much of the rapid conversion of rural land is caused by the enormous demand of Americans for second or recreational homes, the research team found. It gave these statistics:

"There are now about 2.9 million second or recreational homes in America, up from 1.7 million in 1967. It has been estimated that 95,000 second or resort homes were started in 1971, up from an estimated average of 20,000 per year in the 1940s, 40,000 per year in the 1950s, and 75,000 per year in the 1960s. The estimated annual demand for second homes is expected to reach 200,000 by 1980."

But more significant in terms of inroads into the supply of rural land is a task force finding that "rural lots are being created far faster than second homes. For the nation as a whole at least six recreational lots were sold in 1971 for every second home started."

The task force believes "livable, ecologically sound recreational communities" should be encouraged, but it urged states and local jurisdictions to prevent lot sales where such communities are unlikely to be developed.

Recognizing that the nation's open space needs cannot be met solely with publicly owned land, the task force urges identification of privately owned land that should be preserved in a natural state, including uniquely productive or strategically located farm lands.

It urges, however, that measures that provide tax relief to farms in urbanizing areas be re-examined. The rationale for such measures, in effect in half the states, is that the predictable rise in property taxes in urban fringes tends to "drive the farmer off the land."

The task force believes that such tax relief is justified only when the land assessed in current use is truly worthy of preservation, and is to be conserved permanently in farm use. Tax reductions in the absence of permanent restrictions should be regarded as halfway measures, the group maintains.

The task force is hopeful about changed public attitudes that have

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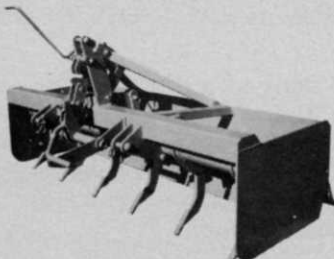


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JAMES W. DAVIS

A new vice president and general manager for Toro's Irrigation Division has been named by Toro president, David T. McLaughlin.

He is James W. Adams, 43, who resigned his post of manager, industry systems requirements, in IBM's Data Processing Division to take over direction of the Toro facility at Riverside, Calif.

Adams succeeds Edwin J. Hunter, founder and president of Moist O'Matic, Inc., the irrigation equipment company that was acquired by Toro in 1962. Hunter, who holds more than 50 patents, was named Toro vice president for research and development last month.

Product Liability Film Available from Kaiser

A comprehensive presentation on product liability, produced initially as an audio-visual by Kaiser Aluminum & Chemical Corporation, is now being released as a 16mm color and sound film.

The 30-minute program, titled "Product Liability — Loss Prevention and Control," is available to other companies and schools at a nominal cost. More than 300 companies throughout the United States and in several foreign countries have currently used it.

The colorfully-illustrated program outlines steps that companies can take to acquaint employees with procedures to improve product reliability and reduce claims. These include: education to develop an awareness of the seriousness of the problem; new product safety review; establishment of risk criteria.

For additional information about this film, write Product Liability, Kaiser Aluminum & Chemical Corporation, 300 Lakeside Drive, KB 910, Oakland, California 94604.

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