

Summary of Findings

Of the 36 outdoor activities listed in the survey, the respondents participated in an average of 7.2. By their own estimates, they averaged 37 activity-days of the listed activities during the 12 months prior to the interview and spent about \$355 on outdoor recreation during that period. Figures 1 through 7 illustrate how involvement in outdoor recreation (activities, days, and dollars) differs among various segments of the respondent sample.

AMERICANS AND THE OUTDOORS

As in past surveys, young Americans are the group most heavily involved in outdoor recreation. None of the identified respondent groupings exceeded the young—aged 12 through 24—in number of activities pursued nor in activity-days of participation. Both of these indicators of recreation involvement decline steadily throughout adulthood to a minimum in the aged 60-and-over group. The reverse is true of the respondents' estimate of money spent on outdoor recreation, which rises sharply through young adulthood and then stays in the \$400-to-\$500 range even with the decline in activity in later life.

The outdoor recreation patterns of the two sexes are remarkably similar, although there are a few activities for which this does not hold. As figure 2 illustrates, however, there are substantial differences between the sexes in the average amounts of time committed to outdoor pursuits.

Racial differences in free time outdoor activity are shown in figure 3. Some of the disparity between average White and non-White participation may be related to income and other factors.

As in past surveys, all measures of outdoor recreation participation rise with increasing family income and added years of education (figures 4 and 5). The effect of income does not become substantial until an

annual level of about \$15,000 is reached.

Figure 6 illustrates the association between outdoor recreation involvement and car ownership. The non-car-owning segment was one on the least active groups in the survey.

The size of the locality where a respondent lived (figure 7) bore little relation to outdoor involvement, except that a notable decline occurred in the largest cities—those of more than a million people.

Eleven percent of the survey respondents said they did nothing at all for outdoor recreation during the 12 months prior to the interview. These nonparticipants were concentrated in the aging, non-White, and non-car-owning segments of the sample—and among those with less than a high school education.

ACTIVITIES

None of the 36 activities listed in the NRS appear to have declined in absolute numbers of participants since the 1960's. Most have grown moderately both in numbers and in the percentage of the respondents who say they participate.

Hunting, horseback riding, and ice skating have maintained a limited following (under 15 percent) or even declined slightly in relative terms since the 1960 and 1965 surveys. Activities which were already mass pursuits—done by about half the respondents—in the 1960's have retained that status. They include swimming, picnicking, walking for pleasure, and driving for pleasure. Among the sports with stable clienteles, fishing and boating were intermediate in popularity between the limited and mass categories.

Four activities—bicycling, camping, jogging, and tennis—have risen from limited popularity (less than 10 percent) to the status of major pursuits over the past two decades. Canoeing and snow skiing have emerged rapidly from a very small base, but

are still limited in the percentage of 1982-83 respondents who participated.

PLACES AND TRIPS FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

Most respondents had access to both yards and neighborhood parks for close-to-home recreation. They used nearby recreation areas more frequently than those farther away, but most took at least one trip to an outdoor recreation area more than an hour's travel from home during the 12 months prior to the interview.

Participants in certain activities were queried about the details of trips they took to engage in those pursuits. Trips to go freshwater fishing, small game/waterfowl hunting, and off-road vehicle driving averaged about 100 miles one way. The average distance traveled to go hiking/backpacking, or to go campground camping was over 200 miles. Canoeing trips were intermediate at 150 miles from home, on the average. Hunters, hikers/backpackers, and off-road drivers had the greatest tendency to penetrate roadless backcountry and to encounter few people.

AMERICANS AND THEIR NATIONAL PARKS

Of the respondents aged 21 and older, 53 percent could recall at least one visit to a national park. In a 1955 survey, 37 percent could recall such a visit. Disproportionate numbers of nonvisitors were found among respondents who were low income, Black, from a large family, non-car-owning, resident in a big city, or low in educational attainment.

Respondents aged 16 and older were asked for their opinions on certain national park policy matters. There was widespread support for the view that the operating costs of national parks should be shared between the general public (through taxes) and the

visitors (through entrance and user fees). In the case of special visitor services, such as campgrounds and bus rides, there was a tendency to favor charging the users rather than the taxpayers.

Support was also widespread for rationing access to national parks when necessary to prevent overcrowding. Most respondents preferred reservation systems over alternative rationing methods.

TRENDS IN TIME AND MONEY EXPENDITURES

As in past surveys, the most frequently cited constraint on outdoor recreation participation was lack of time, followed by lack of money. Respondents aged 16 and older were asked about changes in their allocations of time and money to outdoor recreation over the prior 2 years, and about any anticipated changes in the next 2 years (figures 9 and 14). About half cited no change, past or future. Of those whose time allocations had changed, the number who cited a decrease in time spent was almost double the number of those who claimed to be spending more time on outdoor pursuits. By contrast, about four times as many respondents anticipated a rise as expected a decline in time spent over the next 2 years. Relatively few respondents cited a reduction in dollar expenditures for outdoor recreation for the past or anticipated a reduction for the future.

The most common reasons cited for changes in time spent in outdoor pursuits were related to the changing stages of the life cycle. Next to old age, the most constraining life condition seems to be the early child-rearing years. This is followed by a rapid increase as the children become older.

AGING AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

Despite modest increases in participation since 1960, respondents aged 60 and older were much less active in outdoor recreation than younger persons. Almost a third of the older group said they did nothing at all for outdoor recreation in the 12 months prior to the interview, compared with 7 percent of those individuals aged 12 through 59. As measured by average number of activities pursued and number of activity-days, older respondents were about one-third to one-fourth as active as the rest. Given this low level of activity, the average estimated annual expenditure for outdoor recreation by senior citizens was quite high (\$391)—higher, in fact, than that of the younger segment (\$350).

Senior citizens' reasons for enjoying their favorite activities were quite similar to the other respondents' reasons. Seniors were much more likely to cite health problems as a constraint on their favorite pursuits or as a reason for discontinuing a recreation activity.

Only 13 percent of the respondents 60 years and older reported participating in any club- or organization-sponsored outdoor recreation activities. Senior citizen groups and church organizations appeared to be the primary sponsors of these club activities.

Older respondents who were skilled in fishing, hunting, golf, gardening, or team sports, tended to be active in teaching those skills to others. The role of senior citizens in teaching other outdoor skills appears to be very limited.

FIGURE 1
Involvement in Outdoor Recreation, by Age

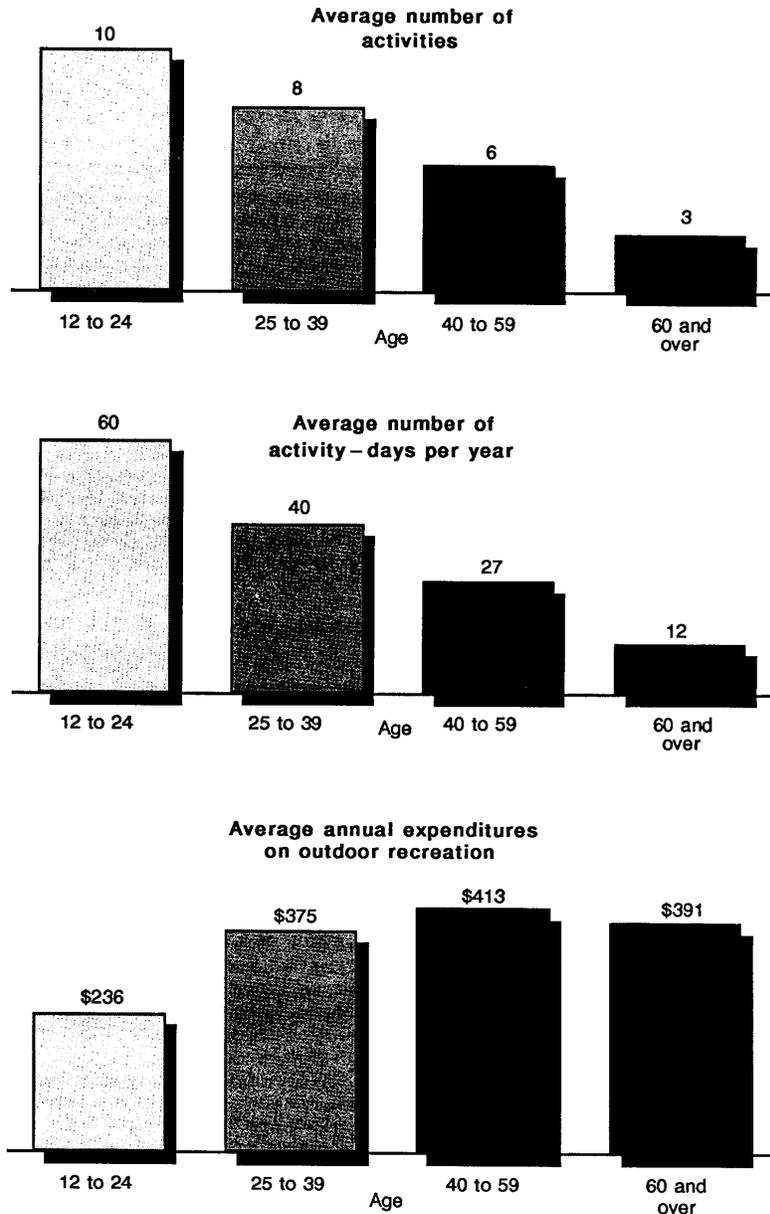


FIGURE 2
Involvement in Outdoor Recreation, by Sex

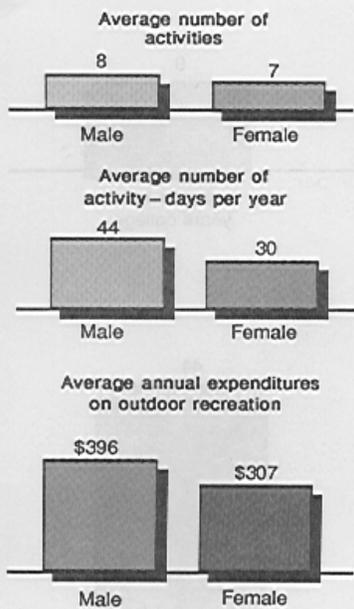


FIGURE 3
Involvement in Outdoor Recreation, by Race

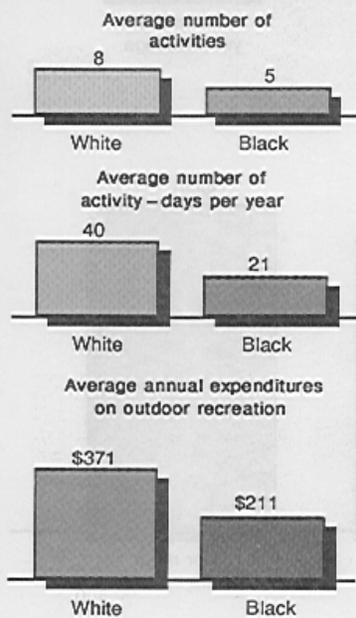


FIGURE 4
Involvement in Outdoor Recreation, by Family Income

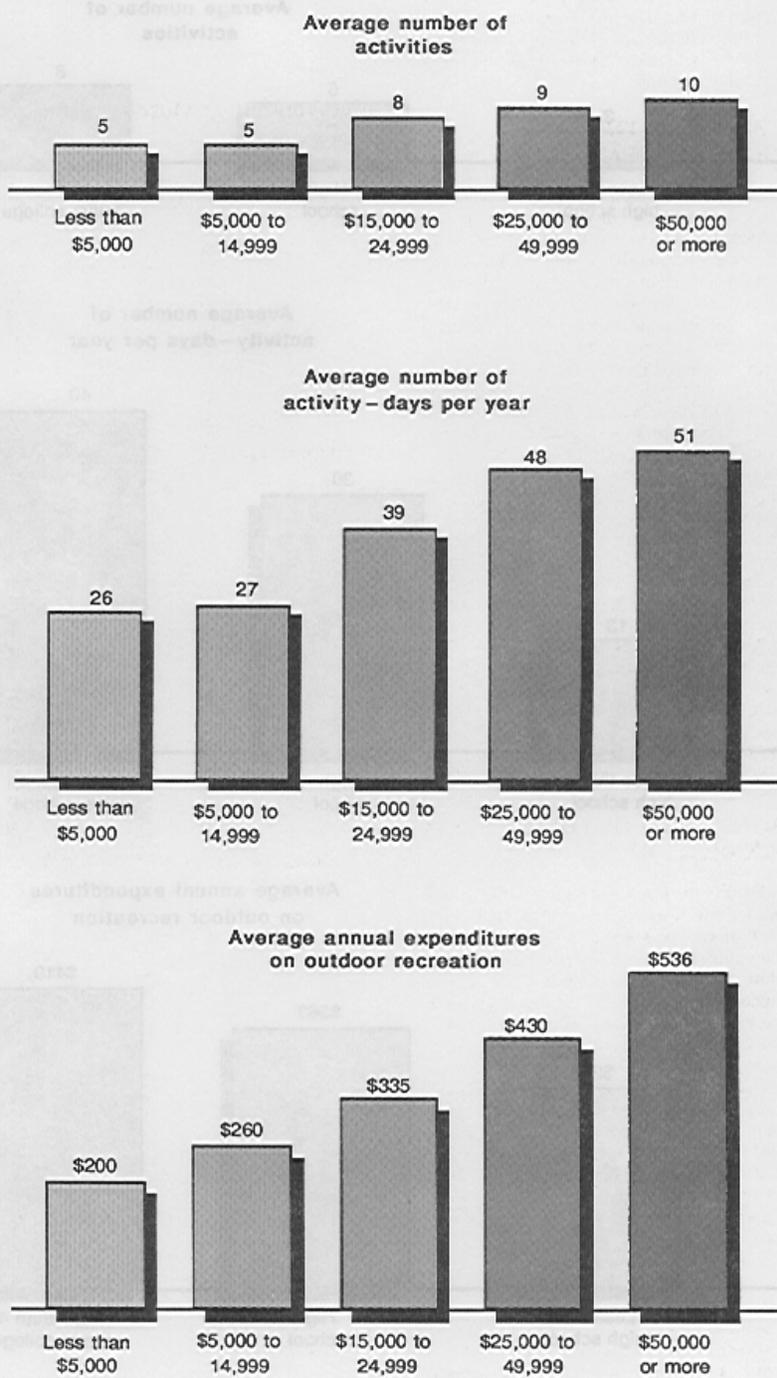


FIGURE 5
Involvement in Outdoor Recreation, by Education

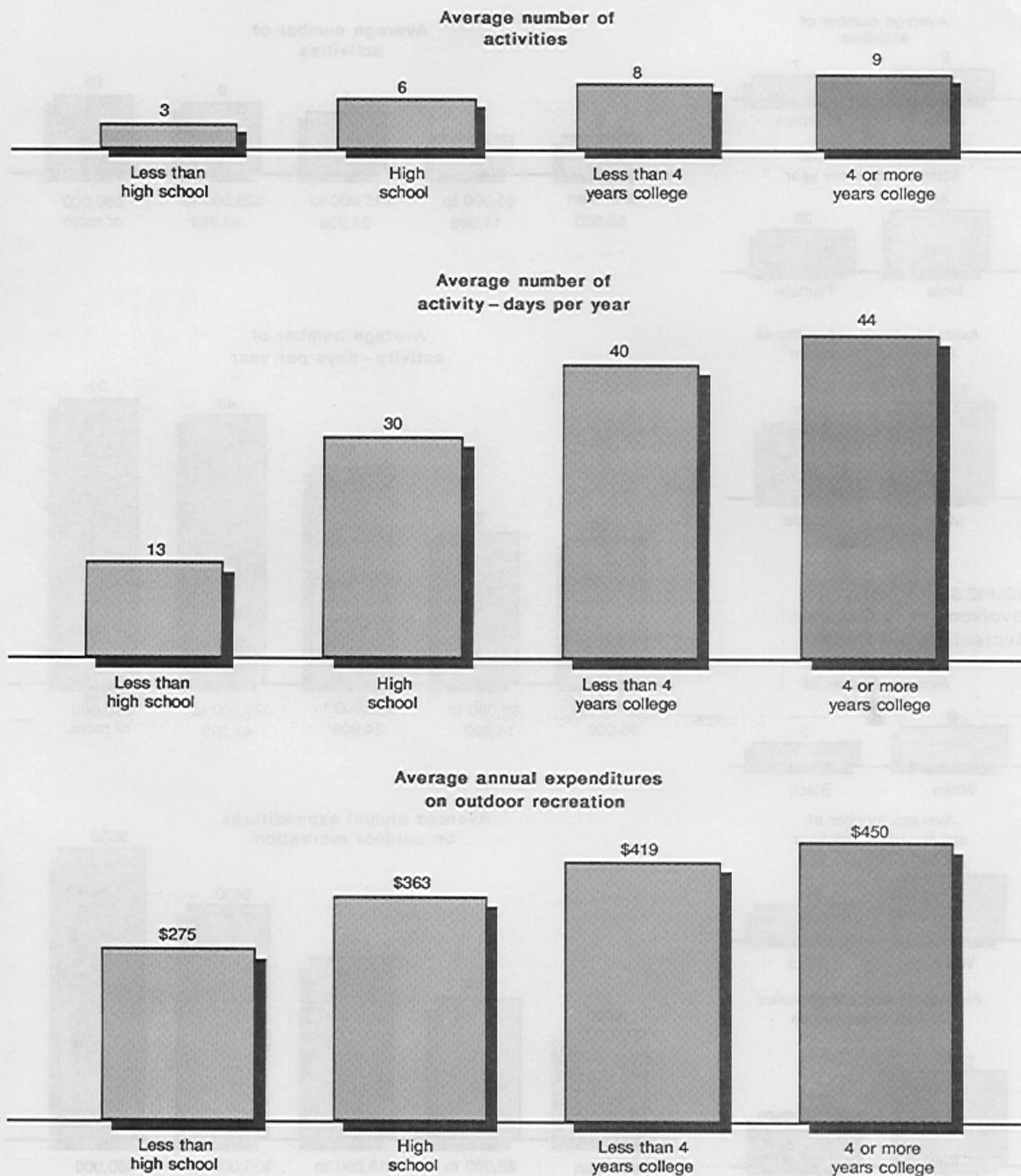


FIGURE 6
Involvement in Outdoor Recreation, by Number
of Cars Owned by Household

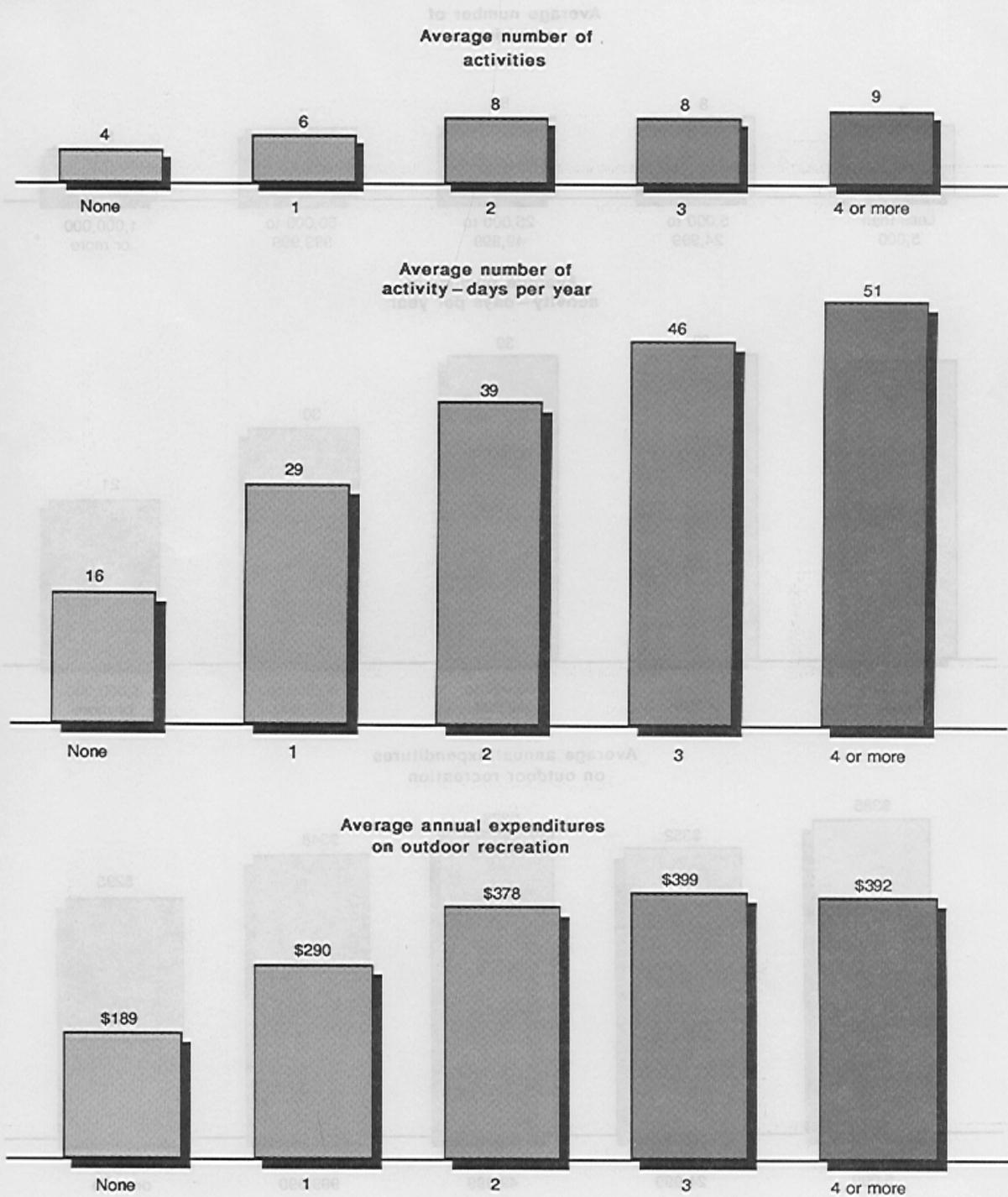


FIGURE 7
**Involvement in Outdoor Recreation, by Size
 of Locality of Residence (Population)**

