

# Cluster Development - Cottages

SUBMITTED BY D. E. STEWART

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The traditional type of recreational cottage development on single lots ringing a lake, may soon give way to a newer cluster concept.

Under this concept single cottages or condominium units would be built some distance away from the lake, while such amenities as a swimming area, fishing areas and docking facilities would be located on the most suitable portion of the shoreline or lake. The balance of the shoreline would be opened to everyone from the cluster of cottages or used as a public park.

"In order to permit the most efficient utilization possible of our water resources, we will in future, encourage cluster cottage development rather than single tier strip development", says Diana Santo, director of the Ministry of Housing's subdivision branch.

"Gone is the day when everyone could expect to own a few hundred feet of shoreline," says Brett Biggs, subdivisions branch manager.

Although the Ministry of Natural Resources is making land available to cottagers each year in Northern Ontario, this land cannot be purchased. It can only be leased on a 30 year basis with two renewals of 10 years each.

There is another consideration. "Along with the mass migration of people from farms and rural areas to the cities, we are faced with another mass migration — back to the country . . . for weekends at the cottage," says Housing Minister John Rhodes.

When the normal population growth is considered, it is evident that the demand for cottages is increasing and will continue to do so at an accelerated rate.

The cluster type of cottage development may help to meet the demands of an expanding cottage-oriented society in areas where the land may still be purchased, as well as in areas where it may only be leased.

Before a decision is made regarding a lake's suitability for cottages of any kind, tests are conducted to determine the type and quantity of development which can be safely permitted, while leaving room for future land use options.

Sites on a number of lakes in north-western Ontario, located on crown land, have been identified by the land use co-ordination branch of the Ministry of Natural Resources as suitable for cluster cottage development.

In recreational areas, other than

crown land, policies for or against cluster cottage development will have to be included in the municipality's official plans.

"Where no approved official plan exists, the cluster subdivision may consist only up to the number of lots which could be developed in a single tier concept plus an additional 20 per cent of that number as an encouragement factor," Mrs. Santo says.

"In determining the number of lots which could be developed via the single tier system, consideration must be given to usable frontage, slope, soil type, topography, off-shore conditions and other factors which would be taken into account in a subdivision evaluation, such as conformity with official plans, and provincial policy," she says.

This policy will apply to condominium plans as well as subdivision plans.

In addition, the subdivision agree-

ment must be registered against the title of the property, thereby limiting the property's use to that described in the agreement.

"Any further subdivision of the property will have to wait for the completion of an official plan for the area," she says.

In crown land areas, the Ministry of Natural Resources determines the use to which a lake can be put. "In order to do this," says Norm Gordon, head of the lake planning unit, "four calculations are made. These are the number of boats a lake can safely accommodate at one time, the number of cottages the lakeshore can hold without environmental damage or overcrowding, the amount of recreational use a lake can withstand without lowering its water quality, and the amount of fishing pressure a lake can sustain."

At present, a number of studies are being conducted by the Ministries of Environment, Natural Resources and Housing which may affect the type of cottage that will be built in the future.

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