

Assessing Your Preferences, Options and Goals

A key point before venturing into farm/ranch recreation is to identify or revisit the real goals of the farm or ranch and to discuss these with all those who may influence the decision-making. If any of the “partners” do not have the same goals, success will be limited and interpersonal stress may be the major result. ALL partners (this may be family members or outside interests) must meet together and seriously express their personal and business goals.

Define your target market:

- What kind of visitors do you want to attract?
- What kind of guests can you attract to your farm/ranch with what you have today?
- What kind of visitors will you be able to attract in the future?

One real market advantage of farm/ranch recreation is that potential clients are numerous and there are few operations offering this type of service. Using a shotgun approach to attract anyone and everyone is expensive and seldom effective without a massive advertising campaign. A more effective use of time and money is targeting a particular audience (e.g., sportsmen, families, retired persons, bird watchers, photographers, etc.) who may be interested in what the farm or ranch has to offer.

Let’s start creating a profile of the customer you want to attract. The section on **MARKETING** will further help you refine this description:

The ideal customer is: _____

Where does she/he live? (in-state or out-of state/foreign) _____

Age composition (young? retirees? variety?) _____
Single/Married? _____

Income Level \$ _____ Party Size and Composition _____
Children? _____

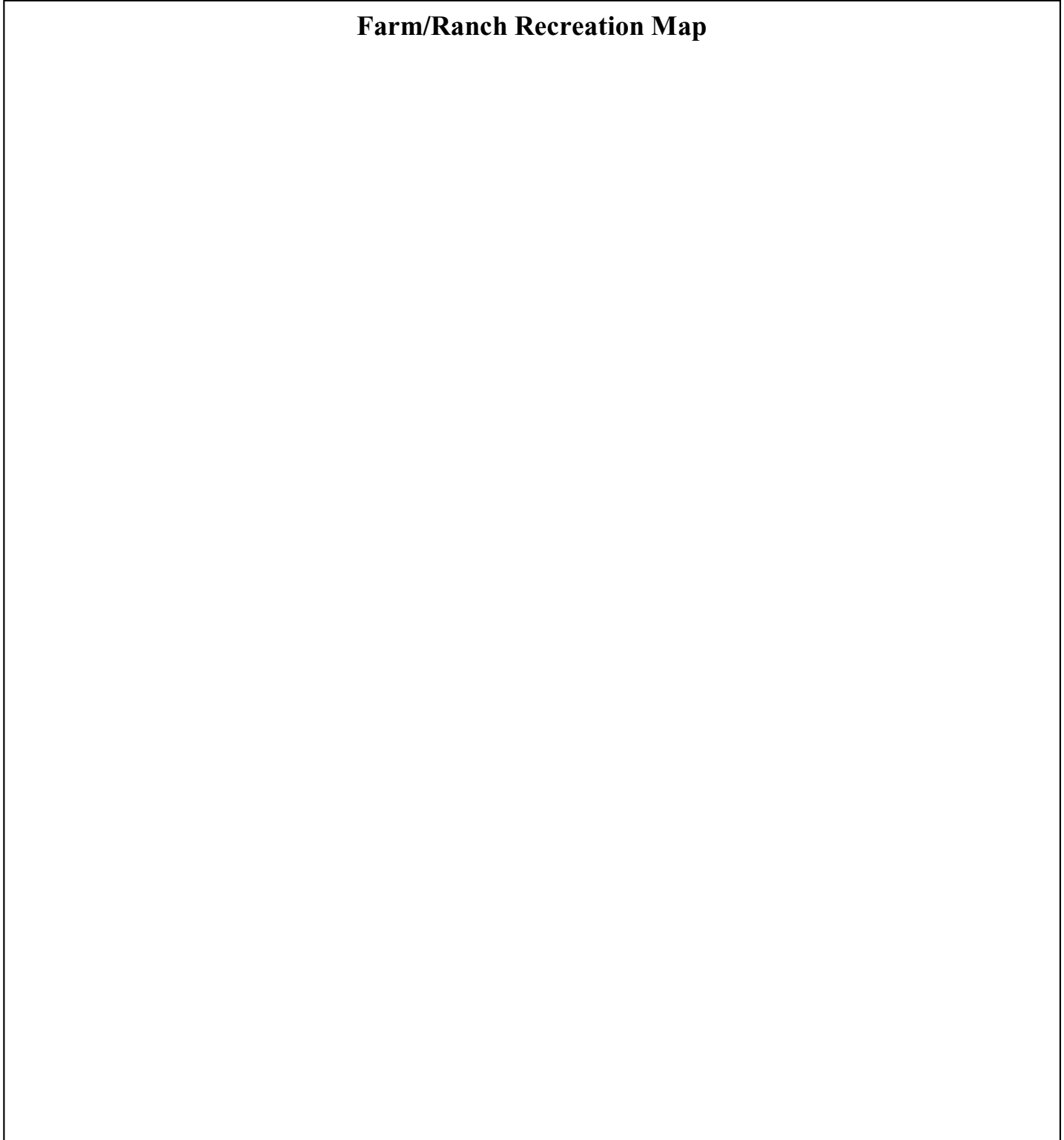
Hobbies/Interests (Hunting background? Horse experience? Photographers? Etc.) _____

How does he/she access information? (Newspapers, magazines, websites?) _____

What characteristics do you want your guests? (Independent people who emphasize self-fulfillment and self-help? Action oriented? Seeking relaxation? Desire for entertainment and activities?) _____

As you begin to develop ideas about your farm or ranch recreation enterprise, sketch out the locations on your property where you think these activities will best be located. Is there adequate access? Will guests have to drive to get to various sites? Is there drinking water and restrooms at appropriate locations? Enough space for privacy and solitude? What about aesthetics and topography?

Farm/Ranch Recreation Map

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for sketching a farm or ranch recreation map. The box is centered on the page and occupies most of the lower half of the page.