Recreational Homes and Planning in Gateway Communities:  
A Literature Review

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Abstract. This review of the literature looks at the role of recreational homes within planning contexts for gateway communities. While the scope of our literature is global, our focus tends to center on the developed world. Following an introduction, we review the literature relating to spatial distribution and development patterns of recreational homes, migration and the role of amenities, and the social, economic, housing stock, and functional land use change elements associated with development planning to address key issues brought forward by recreational homes and their use. Implications for planning are examined, concluding with potential opportunities for further research.

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1. Introduction

Recreational homes and their usage in rural regions across the globe provide interesting and important developmental phenomena within gateway communities. The development and use of recreational homes by non-local owners create both opportunities and pitfalls for rural community leaders, their citizenry, local business owners, and those concerned about land use and development planning. While fiscal and economic growth metrics for these amenity-driven “destination” communities are supported by limited empirical evidence that suggests beneficial regional economic consequences, there are additional economic, social, and environmental elements that are often overlooked when considering the developmental implications of recreational homes (Rudzitis et al. 2010, Winkler 2010, Winkler et al. 2011, Winkler, et al. 2012,). These take on importance within welfare contexts of change in community economics (income inequality), sociology (social exclusion), political science (regional hegemony), resource management (environment justice), and land use planning (counter-urbanization and ex-urbanization). Tensions arise when various actors, specifically recreational homeowners and permanent residents, interpret these changes differently. Differing views, perceptions and preferences of how changes and impacts should be dealt with or managed often creates conflict among community members.

In this review of the literature, we capture the applied research and practical references specific to recreational homes and their local impacts with an eye toward rural development, counterurbanization, exurbanization, and land use planning implications. Our research questions remain broad. What are the elements of recreational home development and ownership that create change in rural communities? How can decision-making in gateway communities better address issues created in social, economic, political, and environmental structures? What are the motivations for recreational home ownership and are these stable over time? These questions provide the basis for our integrative summary of the relevant extant knowledge.

Recreational home development is associated with both negative and positive impacts, however an important element also discussed here is the varying perceptions and attitudes of local residents and recreational homeowners and challenges presented by these differences. While this literature review draws on many works relating to amenity led development, exurbanization and rural development, what makes this review unique from previous reviews (c.f. Marcouiller et al. 2002; Hall and Müller 2004; Oxley et al. 2008; Waltert and Schläpfer 2010) is its focus on the local community impacts specifically related to recreational home development and related implications for planning and public policy. The importance of research on recreational home development and the
resulting impacts on rural communities are becoming increasingly apparent across rural American and internationally, however the acknowledgement of this issue remains largely absent or overlooked as an important aspect of planning, tourism and/or migration (Johnson et al. 2005). This literature review examines existing work on recreational home development throughout the world and discusses the role this type of development plays in changing the economic, social, and environmental make-up of rural communities.

The literature contained within this review centers around recreational homes. Included are articles, books, and monographs that define, identify and analyze characteristics of recreational homeowners, purposes and functions of recreational homes, and differences between how local residents and recreational homeowners view recreational home development. Further, we are particularly interested in the resulting and often unintended impacts that development of recreational homes and presence of part-time residents create in rural communities. Recreational homes are not necessarily restricted to rural areas, although they are most often reflected in research on rural areas. In many cases the periphery of urban areas are magnets for second home owners as they allow for countryside living close to urban employment. These areas are also those most likely for conversion from second home to permanent home as urban areas expand (Müller, 2012).

In this literature review, recreational homes as they pertain to rural areas are the focus. This area of research falls within and sometimes overlaps with research on exurbanization, counter-urbanization, migration, tourism and amenity-led development. While literature pertaining to these topics is found within this review, these topics are only reflected on as they pertain to recreational home development and the implications these issues have for rural communities. Mostly, these overlapping issues are structured within this review to support and better explain issues of recreational home development.

The literature contained in this review was identified, selected and obtained from a variety of disciplines that include tourism, geography, economics, housing, leisure studies, sociology, land use planning, and natural resource planning. Databases used for literature searches included ProQuest, Web of Science/Web of Knowledge, and Google Scholar. Specific keywords used to search for literature included recreational homes, second homes, seasonal homes, vacation homes, cottages, development impacts, spatial patterns of development, migration impacts, absentee land owners, landscape changes, exurbanization, counter-urbanization, unplanned development, amenity migration, environmental impacts of development, resident attitudes, social impacts, seasonal homeowners, and perceptions of domestic tourism in various combinations. In our work, we were guided by a global geographic scope; temporally defined as contemporary (post 1970). A quick thematic summary of literature can be found in Table 1 while a location-specific summary can be found in Table 2.
We have organized this review into five subsequent sections. Beyond this
introduction, we begin with a section that summarizes the various definitions
relevant to planning for recreational homes. While we apply a US Census
definition to illustrate the spatial distribution of these types of homes in the US,
we are wary of its limitations and present several alternate, more global,
perspectives. Following this, we provide a summary of current extant
knowledge on varying perceptions related to recreational home development.
This is then followed by a section that summarizes characteristics of recreational
homeowners and common motivations for recreational homeownership. The
next multi-faceted section provides a summary of development issues within
gateway communities; organized into subsections that deal with social structure,
ecological development, housing stock, and functional landscape change.
Finally, we conclude with a section on implications for planning implications
and gaps in the literature that lead to further research needs.

2. Defining Recreational Homes

The academic discussion of recreational homes raises several inter-
disciplinary issues. Visser (2003) identifies recreational homes as a form of both
migration and tourism. Others (Williams and Hall 2000) suggest that blurred
boundaries exist between amenity-based migration and tourism with
recreational homes being integral to both. Jaackson (1986) views recreational
homes as an important component of domestic tourism. He suggests the
difference between a recreational homeowner and a tourist is time (length of
stay) and distance. However, Hall and Müller (2004) argue space and time are
not sufficient indicators to distinguish tourism from migration. There is even
some debate as to whether recreational home owners are indeed tourists as there
is little novelty associated with travel to a familiar place (Cohen 1974). This
argument is countered by Jaackson (1986) who contends that a great deal of
domestic tourism is taken without the intent of experiencing something novel.
Recreational or second home owners are a major domestic market for many
amenity rich tourism regions. The literature from urban and regional planning,
housing, amenity migration, exurbanization, and counterurbanization also
include aspects of recreational home research. What is important is not so much
whether recreational home owners are tourists but rather what are the
implications of this form of migration whether it be seasonal or with permanent
intent.

Providing a clear and distinct definition of recreational homes has proven to
be tricky lending to a general lack of a standardized definition. A recreational
home is a generic term. Common vernaculars for recreational homes also
include leisure, vacation, weekend, holiday, beach, country, seasonal, and second homes. They can include luxurious mansion-type buildings, small houses, shanties, cabins, cottages, ski chalets, trailer homes, and static caravans. Indeed, some extend the concept to recreational vehicles and time shares as transitional recreational homes (Esparza 2010). The problem in settling on one definition is found in the basic issues inherent to recreational homes in their relation to an individuals’ other fixed assets; the actual physical structure and the location of these land uses in relation to other uses (Hoogendoorn and Visser 2004). There is even debate as to whether a second home should be viewed as a recreational home due to the permanent place it occupies within the family (Kaltenborn and Clout, 1998). Recreational homes have neither a discrete typology nor are they able to be distinguished from other types of lodging; they fall into an arbitrarily identified group within a continuum (Coppock 1977).

The US Census uses the term “Seasonal, recreational, or occasional use housing unit” (SROU) for recreational homes and defines them as, “A housing unit held for occupancy only during limited portions of the year, such as a beach cottage, ski cabin, or time-share.” However, this definition is limited in scope, pertaining to dwellings used in a limited fashion, by the owner, mainly for occasional recreational and leisure use. Using this definition at the county-level in the United States, the spatial distribution of this type of Census defined housing unit is illustrated in Figure 1. Were these numbers to be presented as a percentage of total housing units, a more succinct focus on rural regions would become evident. This is presented in Figure 2. A problem with this definition is that it ignores the wide variety of types of recreational homes. While this definition is clearly necessary to be functional for state and local governmental uses, it does not differentiate between alternative types of recreational homes, owners, and varying usage patterns. Many homeowners may in fact rent their recreational home to others for years at a time or rent for a short time periods over the course of many years. They may also allow use by friends and family, without remuneration, increasing occupancy rates over the course of a year (Hoogendoorn and Visser, 2004).

(Figure 1 about here)
(Figure 2 about here)

We also show in Table 3 a listing of the top 25 counties with the highest percentage of total housing units by county classified as SROU. Note from this table that in the United States, the counties with the highest percentages of this type of housing unit are found in the Mountain-West, the Lake States, and the Northeast, areas with extensive natural resource amenities.

(Table 3 about here)
Again, the US Census neglects to differentiate the various types of recreational homes. However, Hoogendoorn and Visser (2004) provide four types of uses for recreational homes. These include homes that may:

1) be compromised private homes often visited at the weekend and on holidays by family and non-paying guests;
2) intermittently serve as commercial holiday homes, which were used as private holiday homes but were let at high season to defray costs;
3) be intermittently compromised private holiday homes, often purchased for retirement but meanwhile let out as commercial holiday homes, apart from occasional family use;
4) serve as commercial holiday homes, owned as an investment and usually let and managed by an agent.

The Census definition also excludes mobile homes, recreational vehicles, and static caravans. While this type of recreational home is much more prominent in Europe, mobile homes are counted as permanent residences in the US Census. This poses difficulties in assessing impacts as there are numerous areas in the Upper Midwest lake states of the U.S. where mobile homes are located permanently on a rented site but are used as recreational/seasonal homes by the owners. This can underestimate the presence of recreational homes in rural communities. One often cited issue in rural communities is the incidence of mobile homes that remain unoccupied for a large portion of the year.

To account for all types of recreational homes and owners in studies, researchers have used a number of different definitions. A commonly referred to definition used in Coppock’s (1977) notable early work defines recreational homes as, “A property owned, long-leased or rented on a yearly or longer basis as the occasional residence of a household that usually lives elsewhere.” Different cultures have various names for recreational homes; however they are typically a place of leisure, not a primary residence, and fulfill some need an individual cannot achieve at his or her permanent place of residence. Mahon (2007) explains how even the definition of rural can lead to discussion and debate. In three cases in Ireland rural was perceived differently by groups, leading to differing perceptions of what was expected and what should happen in the future.

In the United States, recreational homes are becoming increasingly popular. An early study by Ragatz (1970a) showed how prominent the issue of recreational homes was becoming in the US, in particular in the Great Lake States. The study showed Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan having more than twice the level of recreational home market sales than was expected. Recreational home development in these states then, and now, is due to a large natural resource base including forests and lakes. Recreational home development is unique in the upper Midwest compared to other parts of the US because of
abundant water resources. Outdoor recreation in this area is typically a high priority for recreational homeowners and water-based activities are generally the most common forms of recreational activity (Stynes et al. 1997). In the Lake States, issues surrounding recreational homes are mainly that of social and economic impacts on communities including varying attitudes and perceptions, effects of part-time residents, and displacement of local residents. Environmental impacts are also significant in terms of uncontrolled development in sensitive ecosystems and the spread of invasive organisms. Numerous laws have been enacted in an attempt to control particular impacts such as set-back requirements (permanent dwellings must be X feet away from the ordinary high water mark or shoreline), waste water discharge, wetland management, and resource manipulation that would serve to limit the number of dwellings on sensitive lands. Many of these regulations were viewed as common sense resource protection moves albeit with opposition from development forces.

The unique geography of the Intermountain West also draws a large number of recreational homeowners and research suggests that recreational home ownership here is on the rise. This region offers scenic views, mountains, open spaces, and a high incidence of federal lands; namely national parks (USDI Park Service), forests (USDA Forest Service), wildlife refuges (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service), and rangelands (USDI Bureau of Land Management). Rural landscapes adjacent to publicly owned high amenity, “protected,” areas have become increasingly popular for recreational homeowners (Gosnell et al. 2006). A challenge unique to this area is that homeowners typically do not purchase land for its current productive use. A study in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem indicated nearly 40 percent of ranch sales between 1990 and 2001 were by “amenity buyers,” who typically purchased the land for aesthetic purposes, not traditional ranching uses (Gosnell et al. 2006). This trend presents land use planning concern as the fragmentation of productive land for amenity uses puts pressure on maintaining contiguous natural resource stocks which are economically viable. The major issue associated with ranchland ownership changes in the West is the change in function of the land that may create negative environmental and social impacts.

Large numbers of recreational home developments have also historically been seen in the Northeast US. The popularity of these areas is due to the attraction of natural resources and proximity to large urban populations. Problems with recreational home development in these areas are similar to those of the Lake States. Development regulations are often lacking in these areas because recreational home development has a long and traditional history in this area and there has not been a concerted effort to rein in development interests. This can and has led to haphazard and uncontrolled development.

More recently there has been a growth of recreational home development in the Gulf Coast region. In this case recreational home development is largely found in the form of recreational subdivisions. Stroud (1983) found large
concentration of recreational homes in the central and southern portions of the Florida peninsula. Change in the total amount of SROU housing units between 2000 and 2010 is summarized in Figure 3.

In Europe, as well as in the United States, the recreational home phenomena stems from an increase in, and availability of, recreational homes to the middle class. While recreational homes have occurred throughout history (the nobility and the wealthy have had country homes and estates as well as an urban dwelling throughout the last millennium), the increase in ownership by the middle class has vastly expanded recreational home development and associated impacts (Jaackson 1986). This was initially influenced by widespread car-ownership, an increase in leisure time due to reduced working hours, and an increase in disposable incomes (Pettersson 1999, Dijst et al. 2005).

While serving many of the same functions they do in the United States and Canada, recreational homes in Europe have a slightly different significance and purpose. Literature available on recreational homes in Europe tends to reflect a popular notion of the rural idyll as a primary motivator for recreational home ownership (Vepsäläinen and Pitkänen 2010; van Dam et al. 2002, Müller 2002). The long history associated with many of these properties, along with the dense nature of European cities relative to those in the U.S. may have some influence on this distinction. In Sweden, for example, recreational homes were found to represent an opportunity for individuals to “return to one’s roots” as these housing units were often homes occupied during childhood (Pettersson 1999). While recreational homes in the US also serve leisure purposes and represent a chance to “get away from city life,” the concept of the rural idyll and return to family roots is largely left out of literature relating to recreational homeownership and motivations in North America. Europeans, especially Scandinavians, value recreational homes as part of their long tradition of settlement practices and the issue of inheritance (i.e. how to split the property or value it) is important as many of these homes do not pass out of the family. Recreational homes are part of the Nordic folklore and an important element of family life (Müller 2007; Pitkänen and Vepsäläinen 2008).

On average recreational homes in Scandinavia are more modest than those found in the US although recent developments are much more substantial (Müller 2007). Further, purchases of recreational homes by non-nationals, primarily German and Russian buyers, is changing the look of many recreational home areas (Müller 2002; Pitkänen 2011). In particular, areas that are deemed especially sensitive to the loss of traditional community (e.g. Bornholm, Denmark) may be subject to special regulation. There exists special European Union legislation preventing non-nationals who do not work in the area from buying any type of home. One side effect of this legislation is depressed land
and housing prices in these “protected” zones. Some of the concerns that have led to these special buying restrictions were also voiced in Finland as Russian buyers are increasing in number. However the concerns raised have yet to materialize (Pitkänen 2011).

The issue of recreational homes is particularly prevalent in Northern European countries such as Norway, Sweden, and Finland, who have large portions of their population owning recreational homes. In Norway, about 6,000 new recreational homes are built annually (Kaltenborn et al. 2009). Sweden has one of the highest numbers of recreational homes per capita, globally.

A popular notion of recreational home use, particularly in the literature pertaining to Spain, is that of a “compensation hypothesis” (Módenes and López-Colás 2007). This is the idea that the dense nature of cities and compactness of buildings directly affects the need of residents to own homes in rural areas where they can enjoy and experience nature and leisure time.

Matters surrounding recreational homes are further complicated when it is considered that the use of a recreational home may be continually changing, making it difficult to distinguish primary uses of recreational homes. Recreational homeowners have been shown to progress through a cycle of ownership. For example, an individual may visit an area as an infrequent vacationer, gradually progressing toward becoming a frequent tourist. This, then, is followed by the purchase of a recreational home which is used intermittently until retirement when the recreational home transitions back into a primary retirement home (Marcouiller et al. 1996). This pattern is more common in the US, which does not have such a long tradition of “lake cottages” as compared to Northern Europe. In Northern Europe the cycle is more often family centered where interested children take over the recreational homes from their parents.

The primary use of a recreational home also transitions with the needs of the owner. Life cycle concepts suggest that as people age, wealth and leisure time increases. This is important to help understand recreational home usage. As recreational homeowners mature, there tends to be a greater ability to spend more time at a recreational home. Also, as families grow in size, a recreational home becomes a way to gather with the family. Finally, once an individual retires, they no longer have a need for their primary residence, making the recreational home their permanent home. Retirement migration can have a large impact on recreational homes in rural areas and their surrounding gateway communities. Often, retirees split their time between two locales, acting as “snowbirds.” In locating summer and winter locations, retirees are attracted to many of the same amenities as non-retired tourists (Deller 1995; Poudyal et al. 2008).

Recreational homes and recreational home regions are dynamic in character, sometimes changing function or use over time (Coppock 1977). The pattern of recreational home development, usage patterns, and local impacts can be linked...
to common patterns of development for tourist areas (Strapp 1988). Christaller (1963) was the first to identify the presence of a pattern of evolution in tourism locations (Meyer-Arendt 1985). Butler (1980) took the concept of product life cycles and applied it to tourism destinations. He offered a conceptual framework with five distinct stages of development. A resort area begins in the “exploration” stage, with infrequent visits by non-local tourists and no public facilities. Then, as a response to these visitors, limited services are provided and the “involvement” stage is entered. General patterns of seasonal visitation and recreation begin to emerge (Meyer-Arendt 1985). More incentives and services offered to tourists spark the “development” stage. In this stage mass tourists are attracted during peak periods, along with outside businesses and service entities entering the market. Next, in the “consolidation” stage tourism is seen as a major part of the economy and growth rates begin to level off. Eventually, growth declines to a point that the “stagnation” stage is entered. In this stage tourist capacity is reached during peak times. While tourism is well established, it is no longer fashionable and property turnover rates increase (Meyer-Arendt 1985). At this point the destination makes a choice to leave things as they are and adjust to the decline or enter a new stage of rejuvenation. Strapp (1988) suggests promoting the development of recreational homes as a way to stabilize or grow an economy that is in the stagnation or decline stage of the tourism cycle. In many cases the destination has already embarked on this process as can be seen in Palma de Mallorca, Spain, or in the western beach resorts of Turkey.

3. Attitudes, Values and Perceptions of Recreational Home Development

The perceived impact of recreational home development depends on residency status. Often, long-term residents and recreational homeowners differ in their perceptions of the impacts of recreational home development. They often have differing views on how land is valued and contrasting attitudes toward development types and intensities. Recreational homeowner perceptions have been shown to exhibit a unique profile, often different than the resident populations of rural gateway communities. Typically, motivations for purchasing a recreational home are to fulfill a need or function different from the reasons long-term residents have for living in the area.

Proximity to recreational home development plays a role in determining how recreational homes are perceived in a community. Belisle and Hoy (1980) found the perception of positive and negative impacts varied according to the distance lived from “tourist-zones.” Similarly, perceived impacts can vary depending on level of involvement with recreational homeowners and tourists (Broughman and Butler, 1981; Jurowski and Gursoy, 2003). Class and wealth have also been suggested as important factors in determining group perceptions of land use controls (Green et al. 1996). Marcouiller et al. (1996) found attitudinal differences between residents and recreational homeowners in Northern Wisconsin. Recreational homeowners were more apt to perceive the protection of natural
resources for aesthetic enjoyment and limiting development to be of central importance while residents were more concerned with commodity resource utilization and economic growth. This perceptual difference was also found in Southern Sweden which is impacted by an influx of German recreational home owners (Müller 2002).

A typical difference between long-term, permanent residents and recreational home owners is the value placed on land and its productive use with respect to natural resource management. In comparing the attitudes of seasonal and permanent residents toward wildlife management goals for public lands in lake-rich northwestern Wisconsin, Clendenning et al. (2005) concluded that permanent residents placed higher importance on managing public lands for hunting opportunities than did seasonal homeowners. Similarly, seasonal homeowners can show a greater attachment to environmental quality and individual leisure whereas long-term residents hold greater attachment to social networks and community involvement (Stedman 2006).

A study by Dedam and Zwick (2006) examined three communities in the Northeastern US and found similar alternative value structures. As the portion of the population working in resource extraction decreased and tourism rose, many local residents expressed opposition to encouraging the trend because of changes in the quality of jobs. Results suggested that long-term residents and newcomers have similar goals of protecting the environment and retaining community character, however their different relationships to the land created differing ideas of the appropriate management methods and their respective impacts. Over time, changing uses and the growth of residential developments created environmental, social, and economic impacts that caused tensions between permanent local residents and new part-time homeowners due to differing value structures regarding appropriate development. Understanding these tensions was shown to be an important key to effective planning and community development policy.

Attitudes toward recreational homeowners appear to play a large role in determining the level of acceptance of recreational home development in an area. Broughman and Butler (1981) found that attitudes toward tourism varied within subgroups of permanent residents. Attitudes pertaining to recreational home impacts can also change as an individual grows older or lives in the community for a longer period of time. Godbey et al. (1987) found that at each stage of the life cycle, recreational homeowners formed subgroups often with perceptions and preferences in direct opposition to another group within the larger population. For example, their study (ibid) identified three sub-groups within a recreation subdivision in northern Pennsylvania that included a pro-development, an anti-development and a group supporting only development of off-peak activities. Their findings suggest that attitudes, values and perceptions towards land management and future development are not static but change over time. In a study of three rural communities in the rural western U.S., Smith
and Krannich (2000) found four distinct differences in attitudes and values between old and new residents that often lead to conflict. These different attitudes and values focused on issues that included environment, community growth and change, economic development, and tourism development. While there were some areas where levels of concern pertaining to these different categories varied, the authors found that many newcomer and long-term resident attitudes either did not differ or differed in ways other than what was often portrayed by media accounts. Müller (2002) found that perceptions international buyers of recreational homes held about their adopted community and the desire to “fit in” were often not realized.

4. Characteristics of Recreational Homeowners

Recreational homeowners typically come from areas more urban than the location of their recreational home. They are generally wealthier, older, educated, and employed in white-collar jobs (Stynes et al., 1997). A study from Canada found recreational homeowners were on average 52 years old, without children, had an after tax income of CDN $55,000 (compared to $39,000 for those that did not have a recreational home), and had wealth 60 percent higher than individuals who did not own recreational homes (Kremarik 2002). Marcouiller et al. (1996) found that recreational homeowners typically held “white collar jobs”, while local residents more often held “blue collar jobs”, and annually spent an average of US $6,200 (20 - 70% of which was within the local community depending on expenditure category) on recreational home-related expenses.

An absentee owner is a homeowner who lives most of the time in another primary residence and is often absent from the property. An increasing presence of absentee landowners presents significant implications for land and resource management. In examining ranchland ownership change in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, Gosnell et al. (2006) observed impacts on land use, conservation goals, and biodiversity. Land tenure transitioned from traditional ranchers, who were typically livestock producers, to absentee owners, who were more focused on amenity or conservation values. This change created conflict among residents as to how the land should be managed. The authors of this study concluded that instability in landownership may imply a need for intervention in order to maintain the integrity of local ecosystems.

Differences in attitudes toward recreational home development can partly be explained by the purposes or roles recreational homes play in the lives of recreational homeowners. Motivations for owning a recreational home mentioned in current research vary widely but typically reflect the leisure space and escape aspects of recreational homes. Jackson (1986) suggested several key themes for why recreational homes were important to their owners. These themes included the duality between routine and novelty; routine aspects of recreational homeownership provided some stability from unplanned circumstances while maintaining novelty (such as the change of seasons).
addition, inversion of the everyday, a back to nature sentiment, and a sense of identity existed as other important themes. Another theme was identified as continuity and surety of a place used exclusively for leisure. In some cases elitism and status provided a central theme for recreational homeownership. This status theme is echoed in recent work by Rudzitis et al. (2010). Aspiration about the future was another theme used to define motivations of recreational homeowners. Finally, the theme of time and distance defines a recreational homeowner because they typically come from an urban area and do not stay permanently.

Kaltenborn and Clout (1998) suggest closeness to nature, a change from everyday life, physical and psychological rest, and being with family as the most important motives for recreational homeownership. Similarly, Steer-Folwer (2008) explains how recreational homeownership provides an escape from urban life, salvation in and control over one’s own life, and enhancement of life and opportunity for things such as togetherness and quality time. However in a study contrasting Finnish and Canadian recreational home owners in their respective countries it was found that even though nature was commonly represented as a concrete platform necessary for certain activities it was also mentioned in the abstract which defied definition. It is because of the inability to articulate the importance of nature in meeting use objectives that planners and managers find it difficult to provide opportunities to meet need and goal attainment of recreational home owners (Pitkänen et al. 2011).

Coppock (1977) poses three socio-economic processes as driving forces behind recreational home ownership including higher disposable income, greater leisure time as a result of reduced working hours, and higher rates of automobile mobility. These are also echoed in other more recent work (Dijst et al. 2005).

The “compensation hypothesis” also provides some explanation of recreational homeownership. This idea poses the notion that residential environment impacts people’s preference and need for a recreational home. Módenes and López-Colás (2007) found a direct relationship between the level of a household’s neighborhood density and the probability of having a recreational home.

The “rural idyll” is yet another motive for recreational homeownership in which individuals have a serene, picturesque, or sometimes magical scene of rural life in their minds, whether realistic or not. Their ownership of a recreational home provides them an ability to attain this rural idyll (Müller, 2007). However, the unrealistic or naïve aspects of this perspective of rural life can create conflict with permanent residents. Vepsäläinen and Pitkänen (2010) found that a want for idyllic wilderness, adventure, and untouched nature provided motivation for recreational home ownership but created conflict with local residents who did not have the same perceptions. Van Dam et al. (2002)
examined the rural idyll in the Dutch countryside and found migration can lead to alternate perceptions of the countryside.

Dijst et al. (2005) distinguishes motivations for recreational homeownership by type of owner. Results of their research suggested three types of recreational homeowners defined by their different motivations for ownership: holidayakers, escapers, and enjoyers. Holidayakers used a recreational home to spend holidays (both long and short) with family; these owners typically did not have complaints about their primary dwelling. Escapers used a recreational home as a place to get away from daily life; living relatively close to the recreational home and making short weekend visits. Enjoyers had some complaints about their primary dwelling but enjoyed social contacts; frequenting their recreational home often. Enjoyers were more likely to convert their recreational home to a permanent home sometime during retirement.

5. Development Issues within Local Gateway Communities

In many cases it has been shown that proximity to a primary residence is a determinant in recreational home location. In Sweden, 25% of all recreational homeowners were within 8 km of their primary residence, nearly 50% were within 32 km and 75% were within 93 km (Müller et al. 2004; Hall 2010). Increased mobility also impacts spatial patterns of development.

The presence of amenities also influences recreational home location. An analysis by Schnaiberg et al. (2002) found the probability of a lake being developed is largely explained by lake size and accessibility. This suggests that by understanding where future development will take place, communities will be able to develop and draft appropriate regulations to avoid unwanted and detrimental development.

International literature reflecting the impacts of recreational home development in rural communities tends to be mixed and often negative (Norris and Winston 2009). However, this was often because recreational homes served as scapegoats for other underlying issues attributing to decline in rural communities (Gallent et al. 2005; Marjavaara 2007b). Stedman and colleagues (Stedman et al. 2006; 2007; Stedman and Hammer 2006) discuss the impacts of recreational home development as a “double-edge sword.” Positive impacts are seen through increased revenue in the local economy; however the positive economic impacts are often accompanied by a new group of residents who can change traditional uses and definitions of rural space.

5.1 Social Structure

Recreational homeowners in rural communities tend to be non-local urban residents. This presents an entirely new sub-group to the rural population. Tensions and conflict arise when perceptions about the other group are created, new preferences are introduced, and the two cultures interact. Specific areas of contention between new and old residents span differing attitudes concerning
the environment, community growth and change, economic development, and tourism (Smith and Krannich 2000). As recreational homeowners grow in number, they become more important stakeholders with an increased ability to reshape the social structure and economies of rural communities (Kaltenborn et al. 2009). This is also true as rural communities become dependent on business from recreational homeowners (Preissing et al. 1996). Communities can also take on a new sense of identity as has been experienced in Durban, South Africa, where different groups of tourists throughout time have shaped the space according to their own tastes and preferences (Preston-Whyte 2001). Girard and Gartner (1993) suggest that recreational homeowners’ attitudes are as important as permanent residents’ in shaping the future direction of gateway communities. Kalternborn (1998) argues that recreational homes in the Nordic countries are indeed permanent homes as they pass from generation to generation. Because of long standing ownership traditions, recreational home owners have as much clout in local politics as permanent residents.

Conflict can arise in gateway communities when the traditional social structure changes. In the rural West, Nelson (2001) surveyed residents’ opinions and perceptions of how economic and cultural aspects influence land use decisions in their communities. The analysis indicated significant variation and diversity in how individuals interpreted change occurring in their communities. An understanding of the connection between these changes and perceptions can assist planners in responding to change.

5.2 Economic Development

Hoogendoorn and Visser (2004) find both positive and negative impacts resulting from the development of recreational homes in a small South African community. Impacts included job creation, developed infrastructure, and displacement of residents. Results of this study suggested that all the respondents used local contractors to build or renovate their recreational homes and 86% used materials bought in the region. While this did provide some income for the local economy, these are non-recurring expenses.

Economic impacts are hard to define and are often case specific. One school of thought suggests that recreational home owners’ expenditures are negligible in their second home community whereas others argue that it depends on distance from the permanent home to the recreational or second home. International recreational home owners spend as much in their adopted recreational home community as permanent residents (Müller 2004).

There are also trade-offs between economic benefits and environmental or social elements of communities in which recreational homes are an important component. If owners increase usage rates of recreational homes, then it stands to reason that local expenditures will also increase. However there may also be an increase in environmental impacts as a result of extended stays and additional recreational home usage (Hiltunen 2008). Further, expenditures of recreational
home owners are not the only issue that affects a community’s economic viability. In some cases, government transfer payments are tied to an area’s population base. The classification of housing stocks as permanent or seasonal affects the amount of these transfer payments. Classification of what is and what is not considered a permanent home is a major issue for many communities (Müller and Hall 2003).

There is also debate as to whether recreational homes can create good jobs. Much of the research, while specific to tourism, also reflects job creation stimulated by recreational homeowner spending. Research by McKean et al. (2005) suggests that high-end (expensive) tourism motivated by superior natural amenities tends to create low quality jobs. These results are confirmed by more recent studies (c.f. Marcouiller and Xia 2008; Lacher and Oh 2012). A study by Saint Onge et al. (2007) showed that as a result of recreational home development residents on average experienced income growth over time and had higher levels of initial occupational status, but that long-term residents do not gain higher occupation prestige or social mobility. Many times an owner of a recreational home will employ a gardener or domestic worker to maintain the property in their absence (Hoogendoorn and Visser 2004). However, the wages paid to these workers are low and the jobs are often part-time and highly seasonal.

The debate concerning the type of jobs created by recreational home development is interesting in that it focuses on service and retail jobs. Opponents of tourism economies often stress that the jobs created are of a low paying nature. The same can be said of retail and service jobs in general. Tourism is more related to the service and retail sectors than other economic sectors. In a review of rural development in the U.S. from 1969-2000, Gartner (2005) compared the number of jobs created in the extractive industries (e.g. forestry, fisheries, mining) with those created in the retail and service sectors. For every nine jobs created in the service/retail sectors there was one job created by the extractive industries during the same time period. This brings up the observation that many times rural communities have few options when it comes to economic development. Another important yet often overlooked economic impact is the creation of job types supported by recreational home development that involve construction and remodeling crafts, title and mortgage services, development permit fees, and safety and security (e.g. police, fire) services that expand to meet the need of increased home development. Construction jobs are often viewed as ephemeral as the demand for new construction ebbs and flows but they are replaced by home maintenance, remodeling and renovation services over time. Failure to look beyond the most visible signs of job creation can paint a biased view of tourism and recreational home development employment impacts.

5.3 Housing Stock
The growth of recreational homes in rural communities can be related to several processes of housing stock change. As many regions in which
recreational housing exists reflect highly rural characteristics, the first process involves housing vacancies driven by depopulation and/or relocation of rural residents to urban areas. Another involves displacement of permanent residents that occurs due to rapid valuation appreciation of housing proximate to natural amenities (Johnston 1981; Barke 1991; Hoogendoorn and Visser 2004). As low wage, low quality jobs are created, the ability of permanent residents to afford to buy or pay the property tax of homes in the community decreases. With both of these existing home vacancy types, recreational homes convert from permanent residences and are purchased by residents living outside the area. When displacement does occur, sometimes the solutions can pose other problems. For example, a solution to displacement in Queenstown, New Zealand was to develop affordable housing units for residents. This led to the further conversion of farmland into housing (Hall, 2010).

Marjavaara (2007a; 2007b) argued that recreational home development is not always the cause of displacement in communities as is often the argument. Additionally, Hoggart and Buller (1995) provide a case in France where the influx of British recreational homeowners actually improved and strengthened the quality and supply of local housing. In terms of price, Di (2009) found that when looking at recent home buyers, recreational home ownership did not affect the value of a new primary home. Müller and Marjavaara (2012) found that recreational home owners choosing to locate in the Swedish forest areas often utilized the stock of homes that were already in place which were being vacated as resource dependent industries declined. Although both sides of the debate have examples to prove their point it is often where the recreational home development takes place that determines the impact on existing housing prices rather than a broad generalization that can be applied to recreational home development everywhere.

Downing and Dower (1973) identify another obvious housing change process in which communities, developers, and/or individuals build new housing stock to accommodate the interest in recreational home purchases. The distinction between planning for recreational homes which were vacated housing units and the construction of new homes in high amenity tourist areas, pose different implications for planning and policy creation.

Fritz (1981) found that recreational home development in rural communities could increase the tax burden of residents, conflicting with the dominant notion that recreational home development would shift the financial impacts to new homeowners. This creates a greater likelihood of a property tax divergence in these communities. Hasdell and Colarusso (2009) find an association between high concentrations of seasonal homes and lower effective property tax rates in towns, but higher rates in villages in New York.

5.4. Functional Landscape Change
A common factor attributing to conflict created as a result of recreational home development is the issue of functional landscape change. Conflict is often created when discussing whether land in a rural community should have a productive or amenity-based use. Historically, permanent residents tend to value land in utilitarian and production oriented terms; relying upon land based natural resources for direct economic use values. These residents have historically been dependent on natural resource extraction (including animal and crop production, timber production, and mineral extraction) and related processing activity for household income sustenance. Communities facing recreational home development are also typically rich in amenities and recreational opportunities making them excellent places to hunt, fish, camp, and partake in various outdoor sports (water-based recreation, skiing, hiking, golfing, etc.). Recreational homeowners are normally drawn to an area because of the latter amenity values and are not dependent on the regional natural resource base for an income or a way of life. They tend to value natural resources for scenic and purely amenity-based purposes. Gosnell et al. (2006) found changes in landownership tenure from traditional ranchers to absentee owners, created conflict among residents as to how the land should be managed.

Growing recreational home development is sometimes located within more general trends of exurbanization, counterurbanization, and the development of a post-productivist countryside (Ward 1993; Halfacree 1994; Norris and Winston 2009; Hall 2010). These three concepts can be generalized to exist most notably in rural regions characterized by high levels of natural amenities. Indeed, there is a broad literature that speaks to the fact that amenity-rich rural regions are witnessing a rebound (Gude et al. 2006; Waltert and Schläpfer 2010). Exurbanization and counterurbanization are two distinctly different and relevant phenomena (Löffler and Steinike 2006). Exurbanization refers to low-density expansion of metropolitan areas on the peri-urban fringe (beyond the outer suburban belt); primarily catering to the development of rural bedroom developments and hobby farms within metropolitan commuter-sheds. Counterurbanization, on the other hand, reflects the diffusion of more affluent “urban refugees” to remote high-quality environments (Mitchell 2004; Halfacree 2012); catering to the development of recreational housing as second, third, and fourth homes. Indeed, counterurbanization represents the driving factor behind enclaves of the rural rich; their spatial presence, leisure activities, and resulting community impacts (Rudzitis et al. 2011).

The development of a post-productivist countryside entails landscapes of production transformed into residential landscapes of leisure and consumption (Hall 2010). Social change, facilitated by flexible working practices, information technology and the liberalization of the planning system, occurred in the 1980’s in the form of non-agricultural middle classes moving into the countryside. As a result, farmers that neighbored these new residents were pressured to change undesirable farming practices (Ward 1993). Hall (2010) argues that this
generalization of trends is often wrong, as peri-urban areas are better described as a new landscape of production characterized by intensive and highly innovative forms of rural industry rather than the end of a landscape of agricultural production.


Broughman and Butler (1981) found attitudes toward tourism to be varied among groups of permanent residents. This has implications for planning as the perceived benefits of recreational home development varies, so will the impacts of different policies.

Hidle et al. (2010) reflect on how physical mobility between rural and urban is reflected in Norwegian regional policy and political discourse to shed light on how recreational home mobility, the movement between urban and rural areas, is conceptualized. There are not clear distinct categorical spaces and categories formed from an overlap between several typical characteristics or features. A distinction between the two categories allows recreational home development to be framed as an economic development strategy for rural areas. The problem presented by the authors is that rural areas are highly dependent on primary and recreation industries as well as the public sector. One aspect of the urban-rural discourse is that of value creation and the right for rural areas to exploit natural resources to make it possible for more people to live in rural areas. Another is the increase in connectivity, meaning recreational homes can be used more frequently and for longer periods of time, presenting challenges in distinguishing the rural and urban divide in terms of municipal boundary distinction. An idea is that value creation lies in blurring the boundaries between urban and rural, as value creation will flourish if factors are able to flow across boundaries unhampered. As the flow of mobility increases, rural areas once distinct and sometimes dependent on urban areas are now beginning to resemble urban areas. It also suggests society is entering a new networking era in which the world is shrinking and things that once inhibited flows and movement are reduced.

One of the greatest implications of recreational home development is the increasing need for planning where no planning tradition exists. Given recent trends in recreational home development, many rural areas are in danger of open land use change to residential purposes encroaching into natural ecosystems sensitive to over development.

Gurran and Blakely (2007) discuss a “sea change” and warn that if the trend of migrating to rural high amenity coastal areas continues, the result will be that the places we are fleeing to will become the places we are fleeing from. Selwood and Tonts (2004) discuss how the popularity of recreational homes in some areas of Australia have led to over-development, changing what many residents valued about the communities in the first place. In a Turkish study, Özden et al. (2004) showed how unplanned expansion can lead to many negative and
undesired impacts. In certain cases, rural recreational home destinations are reaching population densities that mimic urban and suburban areas. This is most prevalent in areas that have developed as tourist centers with high levels of recreational home ownership added to the mix.

There is ample opportunity for further work on planning implications associated with recreational homes. We conclude with a brief list of research questions that serve to lead future work on this topic.

- To what extent do residential segregation, absentee ownership, and housing vacancy occur in high amenity rural locations and what are resulting impacts on local housing markets?
- What are the characteristics of social and economic interaction between recreational home owners and local residents of gateway communities?
- How do relationships between “been heres” and “come heres” (locals and non-locals) affect local decision-making in these rural regions?
- How does the local incidence of recreational homes affect rural economic and demographic characteristics over time?
- To what extent do recreational homes and their use contribute to rural economic sustainability and long-term implications for continued rural community vitality?
- How do recreational homes and their use stimulate small business development and private sector entrepreneurship within nearby affected gateway communities?
- How has the recent housing market downturn affected recreational home markets in rural amenity-rich regions?
- To what extent do recreational home developments affect the provision of basic services (e.g. medical, safety, education, roads, sanitation, etc.)?
- Are there central issues that affect all recreational developments regardless of location or amenity attributes?
- What are the relevant developmental impacts associated with the impending retirement of the baby-boomer generation on amenity-rich communities?
- What are the developmental implications of recreational home owners transitioning their status from seasonal to permanent resident during retirement?

Impacts generated by recreational developments will not disappear. Socio-economic forces are in place to continue the trend of recreational home development worldwide. There may be down periods brought on by economic recessions but the long-term trend is for more recreational home development to take place. There was concern in the 1970’s that the rapid increase in recreational home ownership was about to overwhelm rural areas. There are some examples
where this has occurred but for the most part the negative forces that were predicted did not manifest themselves. In the early 1990’s concern was again raised about the increase in recreational home ownership and resulting impacts. However this period saw new actors enter as globalization forces and relaxed land ownership policies led to increasing levels of recreational home development catering to an international market. This trend is more pronounced in Europe due to the formation of the European Union. While this may bring up issues of cross-cultural conflict it also offers an influx of international money into rural areas. Recreational home development will continue to be a force in rural amenity rich areas. Planning and management of the consequences from this type of development involve improved understanding on the part of community leaders and their citizenry. Understanding issues, trends, and social change brought on by recreational home development is an important topic for present and future generations.

Literature Cited


Explanatory Notes:

i These have been alternatively termed “second”, “seasonal”, “cottage”, and/or “occasional use” housing units. Each alternative term has its own set of contradictory issues (e.g. “second” home neglects to include an increasing incidence of wealthy individuals who own more than two homes). We define “recreational housing” as residential housing units that are not primary residences and are used by their owners for leisure, recreational activity, pleasure, solitude, status, and/or non-location specific work. For simplicity, our use of “recreational” will be consistent throughout this review of the literature noting that our references could include the variety of terms. More on defining the phenomenon can be found later in this review.

ii We define these as rural communities surrounded by natural or developed amenities that attract non-local visitors. They may or may not be in close proximity to residential housing units defined as recreational. Closely analogous terms for gateway communities can include destination regions, amenity rich areas, and tourism destinations with the defining uniqueness of gateway communities as capturing local settlements, towns, or villages (and their residents) that are primarily affected by non-local visitors.
Table 1. Thematic Focus of Literature Cited

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Theme</th>
<th>Key Variables</th>
<th>Relevant Literature</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Impacts on Housing Markets</td>
<td>Barkinson 1991; Hoggart and Buller 1995; Carliner 2002; Atkinson et al. 2007; Kochera 1997; Marjavaara 2007a; Marjavaara 2007b; Norris et al. 2008; Oxley 2008; Di 2009;</td>
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<td>Land Use Planning</td>
<td>Functional Landscape Change</td>
<td>Impacts of Absentee Land Owners</td>
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<th>Natural Resource Planning</th>
<th>Environmental Impacts of Development</th>
<th>Amenity-led Migration</th>
<th>Role of Natural Amenities</th>
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**Migration Impacts**


**Cycles of Homeownership**


**Tourism of Tourism/Planning for Tourism**


**Policy**

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>Columbia</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>Strapp 1988; Cadieux 2009.</td>
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<td>Finland</td>
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<td>Vepsäläinen and Pitkänen 2010; Hoggart and Buller 1995; Chaplin 1999; Palmer and Mathel 2010.</td>
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<td>Germany</td>
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<td>Dingsdale 1986.</td>
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<td>Lebanon</td>
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<td>Ladki et al. 2002.</td>
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<td>Scotland</td>
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<td>Sweden</td>
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<td>Beiger et al. 2007; Nicod et al. 2007.</td>
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<td>Turkey</td>
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<td>United States</td>
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<td>Kochera 1997; Gutierrez 1999; Carliner 2002; Di 2009.</td>
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<td>Wales</td>
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Table 3. Top 25 US Counties Ranked by Percent of Housing Units Classified as “Seasonal, Recreational, and Occasional Use” (SROU) - 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau 2011).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>County (Rural-urban Continuum Code)</th>
<th>Total Housing Units</th>
<th>SROU Housing Units</th>
<th>Percent of Total - SROU</th>
<th>Percent Change 2000 - 2010</th>
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Total Top 25: 294,594 179,640 56.7 2.15
Total Lake States: 104,653 63,325

1. The Rural-urban Continuum Code (also known as the Beale Code) is a USDA ERS county-level classification system that captures the urban-rural continuum. Specifically, codes reflect population and metropolitan area adjacency criteria; Metropolitan Counties are coded as 1-3 and Nonmetropolitan counties are coded 4-9. In this Table, code 7 is defined as a county with urban population of 2,500-19,999 and not adjacent to a metro area, code 8 is defined as a county that is completely rural (less than 2,500 urban population) and adjacent to a metro area, and code 9 is defined as completely rural (less than 2,500 urban population) and not adjacent to a metro area.
Figure 1. 2010 Number of Housing Units by County Classified as “Seasonal, Recreational, Occasional Use” (SROU) by the U.S. Census Bureau (2011).
Figure 2. 2010 Percent of Total Housing Units by County that are Classified as “Seasonal, Recreational, Occasional Use” (SROU) by the U.S. Census Bureau (2011).
Figure 3. Ten Year Change in Total Number of Housing Units Classified as “Seasonal, Recreational, Occasional Use” (SROU) over the last decade (2010-2000) by the U.S. Census Bureau (2011).