

Sportsmen Develop Unique Osseo Recreation Project

By FRED STEFFEN
State Editor

OSSEO (Special) — A unique non-profit, low-cost recreation area is rapidly taking shape near here under impetus provided by the Osseo Rod and Gun Club.

Several private and public county, state, and federal agencies are helping develop full potential of the Osseo Recreation Area.

It hasn't been easy, according to William Paulson, Jr., Rt. 3, club secretary, and Arnold Eide, Rt. 3, executive board member. But the club members firmly believe they are building a useful self-sustaining, and lasting memorial of their activities in the 1960's.

PRESIDENT of the club is Eldon Erickson, an Osseo garage employe. Other members of the executive board include Einer Lokken, Ed Pederson, Russell Sayles, Adolph Baglein, and Leonard Gilbertson. Club officers emphasize that the bulk of the membership has been active in advancing the project.

Principal outside financial help has come from an organization of eight sportsmen groups in the county, the Trempealeau County Associated Clubs which has contributed \$1,000.

But now that a \$6,000 dual-purpose earth dam has been

completed and a toboggan and ski area roughed out of a hillside, the project which began as a hopeful idea among the 125 members of the club a dozen years ago is well on its way.

When it's completed the 160-acre site in the Town of Sumner along Hy. 53 will offer three camping areas, picnic grounds, trout fishing in an eight-acre spring-fed pond, and more than 100 acres of natural forest and pine and spruce plantation.

A 300-yard rifle range will furnish four targets for area marksmen and Army reservists who are assisting the club in building it.

IN THE WINTER the hillside will provide a toboggan and ski area with a steep eastern slope.

Eide says that the club which he believes to be one of the oldest in Wisconsin, has toyed with the idea of developing a recreation area for many years. It took the plunge two years ago when it purchased a 160-acre farm from the Thompson estate for \$8,000. Plowable acres in the farm had been placed in the U.S. department of agriculture soil bank earlier and are under contract until 1966.

Henry Anderson, Whitehall Wisconsin Conservation department forester in Trempealeau County, has helped

the club plan its forestry and camping projects. He is enthusiastic over the opportunities for camping experience and conservation education the area will provide for Osseo's Boy and Girl Scouts and for 4-H and other youth groups in northern Trempealeau County.

CLUB MEMBERS have already planted 30,000 transplants which have taken a firm hold in the 26 acres of light-soil area where they have been plowed. Club members turned out faithfully despite a steady drizzle in the spring of 1963 to plant 10,000 Norway pine, 10,000 Norway spruce, and 10,000 white spruce. Youth groups may assist with clearing out a protected camping area which has been set aside for them.

Anderson pointed out that the pine and spruce plantation will provide a scenic backdrop to the pond and a source of income in about 10 years as selective normal of trees to aid growth will permit the sale of the trees removed for Christmas trees.

Plenty of volunteer labor from the club has also shown itself in the construction of the dam. The clearing of the hillside for the ski and toboggan slide and rifle range were done by Army Reserves in Co. C, 397th Engineer Battalion principally by the third platoon from Whitehall.

Trempealeau Club