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CAMPERS AND RESORTERS IN NORTHERN MINNESOTA: SOME IMPLICATIONS
FOR VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT^{1/}

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Introduction

Although the National Park Service has a considerable amount of experience in Park development, there are some conditions which produce relatively unique problems in the development of Voyageurs National Park. Two such conditions which bear upon the research reported herein are: (1) much of the park and the surrounding area consists of water which defies development in the usual sense; (2) the park and its surroundings are presently locations of resorts and campground sites with sufficient usage to make potential users question the appropriateness of continuing present facilities.

Previous Research

These conditions seem to be verified in part in a study of a random sample of suburbanites near Minneapolis-St. Paul who would represent many potential users of Voyageurs National Park (Mills, *et al.*, 1974). These suburbanites perceived this national park as merely one part of "beautiful northern Minnesota." Considering the potential increase in visitors to Voyageurs Park and surroundings, it is important to know what differences in development and facilities expectations exist among campers and resort guests in the area. This is especially important since campers and resort guests might be found near opposite ends of the continuum on the dimension of preferences for modern conveniences. Even among campers, differences in preferences for campground development were found in a 5-year study of state park and forest users. Campers in campgrounds with similar development attributes tended to have similar preferences for development. Managers differed from campers in their perception of the areas, being more naturalistic in their views (Merriam, *et al.*, 1973).

In another study of the area, it was found that resort guests in the general region in which the park is located consider fishing the all important activity, but that this orientation of resort guests is apparently unique to northeastern Minnesota (Blank, 1973). This same researcher concluded that resort guests were the most numerous class of tourists visiting the Lake-of-the-Woods and Rainy Lake area, which includes Voyageurs National Park (Blank, 1971). In a study of the part of Minnesota which they call the "northern recreational corridor," extending from Isle Royale to Rainy Lake, it was found that the Voyageurs Park locality is well known and contains the most dense lodging facility distribution of the entire region (Rusch, *et al.*, 1972). In summary, present users of the Voyageurs Park area appear to be mainly oriented toward the facilities of resorts.

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Study in Brief

A random probability sample of two groups of car campers were taken in the summer of 1973, one at Woodenfrog State Forest Campground bordering the south edge of Voyageurs Park and the other at Scenic State Park, situated about 110 miles south of the park locations. A selected judgement sample of resort guests was taken from the Voyageurs Park area at the same time. Both state campground areas in the sample have similar aesthetic characteristics, are located on lakes known for fishing, and have a number of facilities and activities available to users. The interview schedule included items concerning socio-economic information, activities in the respective areas, reasons for coming to that location, and in the case of campers, items on camping, attitudes and experiences with national parks, and development preferences.

Results

Results reported herein are aimed at differences that occur between resorters and campers with respect to the likely use of the Voyageurs National Park, and at their personal characteristics and their orientation toward development of the park (see Table 1).

Probable Use of the Park

Past visits to national parks were significantly more frequent among campers than among resorters (p .08). More than two thirds of the campers but only one half of the resorters had previously visited a national park. When the number of visits was taken into account, nearly twice the percentage of campers as resorters had visited a national park three or more times. The stated intent to visit Voyageurs National Park was also significantly higher among campers than resorters (p .01).^{3/} When shown a map and asked if they had a desire to visit the park, only one of the 34 resorters gave a definite yes, while one-third of the 207 campers so responded.

Differences in Characteristics

To some extent the public stereotype of persons who constitute the greatly increasing cohort of travelers to national parks is that of an older couple travelling around the nation in a small camper. However, in particular parks, recordings of large groups of young people has mixed the public image somewhat. The present data for campers and resort guests visiting the vicinity of Voyageurs National Park do not support the general stereotype, at least not by comparison. A far higher proportion of resorters than campers are 40 years of age and older. Likewise, although 48% of the campers were of this older age group, an almost equal percent (44%) were between the ages of 25 and 39. Fewer than 10% of either campers or resorters were under 25. Almost 80% of the campers were from Minnesota while two-thirds of the resorters were from out-of-state. And still further, campers were more often in larger parties, with only 27% of the campers compared to 59% of the resorters in parties of two. All differences reported were statistically significant at the .05 level or better.

Differences in Orientation toward Park Development

A general pattern of higher orientation toward facilities is found among resorters. Almost 80% of the resorters compared to only about half of the campers preferred to have playgrounds for children, an especially unexpected finding since the resorters were older and more often found in parties of only two. A similarly surprising finding

^{3/}The frequencies in one cell of the table on which this conclusion is based is below five. After a thorough study of chi square, Cochran concludes that under such circumstances, use chi square without correction for continuity in tables of more than one degree of freedom. See: William G. Cochran, "The Chi Square Test of Goodness of Fit," The Annals of Mathematical Statistics, Vol. 23, No. 3, September, 1952.

is the considerably higher proportion of resorters (65% compared to 26%) who preferred to have waterskiing. When modern conveniences such as toilets, paved roads and stores were added together, none of the resorters preferred fewer than three and the highest percent preferred five. This orientation toward modern conveniences may be contrasted with the campers, almost a third of whom preferred fewer facilities than did the resorters. Both groups, of course, were heavily oriented toward fishing, but even this orientation was significantly higher among resorters (p .01).

Park Visits and Development

Since campers, when compared to resorters, have visited national parks more often and gave intentions to visit Voyageurs Park more often, their orientation toward less park development in terms of facilities has implications for Park plans. To more directly test this, the number of national parks visited previously was correlated with an expressed preference for the highest level of park development among our measures--playgrounds for children. As seen in Table 2, the relationship expected on the basis of group comparisons is confirmed in the direct test: the more national parks a person has visited the less oriented he or she is toward a high degree of development in the park.

Implications and Discussion

Both at present and in the past, the area which includes Voyageurs National Park has received comparatively high use from older couples who go to resorts and are primarily interested in fishing. If this were to be the pattern of future use, a high degree of development of facilities in the park would appear appropriate. However, the present research indicates a future visitor mix for the park of more campers than resorters. Since, for the most part, people tend to do what they have done before, campers, both by experience and statements of intent are far more likely to be the users of the park. Further, it is likely, based on a projection of these findings, that such users are likely to be in groups composed of friends or family, to be in the middle years of life, and to be oriented less toward a high degree of development of facilities in the park. Taken in conjunction with previous studies, fishing and enjoying the scenery are very likely to be the major reasons for coming to the park. While changing an area to a national park will doubtless attract more out-of-state visitors than the area has attracted in the past, a major share of visitors will likely be Minnesota residents.

There is increasing pressure from the public for public officials to be more responsive to people's desires. There is also increasing interest toward preservation of nature. And there is greatly increasing use of national parks. This research would seem to indicate that in the case of Voyageurs National Park, these three trends are not in contradiction. Users are most likely to prefer a plan of development which will both encompass the previously established orientation of park managers toward nature and to preservation of the natural environment.

Literature Cited

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Table 1. Camper-Resort Guest Comparisons

Items	Campers		Resorters		Chi Square
Have you ever visited a national park?					
No	32 (65)		50 (17)	(82)	$X^2=5.15$
Yes, one or two	32 (67)		29 (10)	(77)	D.F.=2
Yes, three or more	36 (75)		21 (7)	(82)	p<.08
	100% 207		100% 34	241	
Desire to visit Voyageurs National Park in the future:					
No	12 (25)		21 (7)	(32)	$X^2=12.46$
Maybe	56 (116)		76 (26)	(142)	D.F.=2
Yes	32 (66)		3 (1)	(67)	p<.01
	100% 207		100% 34	241	
Age:					
40 and over	48 (100)		70 (23)	(123)	$X^2=6.06$
25 to 39 yrs.	44 (90)		21 (7)	(97)	D.F.=2
24 yrs. and less	8 (17)		9 (3)	(20)	p<.05
	100% 207		100% 33	240	
Place of Origin:					
Minneapolis-St. Paul and suburbs	43 (88)		21 (7)	(95)	$X^2=29.63$
Rest of Minnesota	36 (75)		12 (4)	(79)	D.F.=2
Other states	21 (44)		67 (22)	(66)	p<.001
	100% 207		100% 33	240	
Size of Party:					
2 persons	27 (57)		59 (20)	(77)	$X^2=17.60$
3 to 5 persons	48 (99)		41 (14)	(113)	D.F.=2
6 to 11 persons	25 (51)		0 (0)	(51)	p<.001
	100% 207		100% 34	241	
Prefer to Have Playgrounds for Children:					
Yes	51 (102)		79 (26)	(128)	$X^2=7.75$
No	49 (98)		21 (7)	(105)	D.F.=1
	100% 200		100% 33	233	p<.01
Prefer to Have Waterskiing:					
Yes	26 (53)		65 (22)	(75)	$X^2=19.05$
No	74 (154)		35 (12)	(166)	D.F.=1
	100% 207		100% 34	241	p<.001
^a Modern Convenience Facilities Preferences:					
Zero	2 (4)		0 (0)	(4)	$X^2=23.92$ D.F.=5 p<.001
One	11 (23)		0 (0)	(23)	
Two	19 (39)		0 (0)	(39)	
Three	27 (56)		27 (9)	(65)	
Four	26 (53)		29 (10)	(63)	
Five	15 (31)		44 (15)	(46)	
	100% 206		100% 34	240	
Participate in Fishing when at "Areas Like This":					
Yes	80 (165)		100 (33)	(198)	$X^2=6.77$
No	20 (42)		0 (0)	(42)	D.F.=1
	100% 207		100% 33	240	p<.01

a. These facilities were flush toilets, showers, paved roads, store and community center.

Table 2. Feel that Campgrounds such as this Should Provide Playgrounds for Small Children

	Yes	No	Total N	Chi Square
Previous Visits to National Parks				
Never visited a National Park	41 (42)	22 (22)	(64)	$X^2 = 11.26$ D.F. = 2 p < .004
Visited one or two National Parks	32 (33)	31 (30)	(63)	
Visited three or more National Parks	27 (27)	47 (46)	(73)	
	100% 102	100% 98	200	