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Use and Attitude Survey of Mountain Par
OSMP Studies 4275

Study



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Use and Attitude Survey of Mountain Park Users

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City of Boulder, Mountain Parks

Running head: PARK SURVEY

Abstract

This survey presents the responses of mountain park users on the amount of time they spend in the parks a year, the types of activities they enjoy while in the mountain parks, and what they would like to see implemented in terms of management philosophies and park policies. Participants were randomly approached in Chautauqua Park and on Flagstaff Mountain and asked if they would complete a one-page survey. The only instructions given were that they rank questions 4,5, and 6 numerically. The survey indicates: (1) that the majority of people use the parks over 30 days a year, (2) that users value time alone or quiet time with friends more than social gatherings, (3) that protection of natural resources should be the top management philosophy over active development of the park regardless of the impact on natural resources. If a greater number of completed surveys had been collected, the distinctions between the various answers may have been greater than the current results indicate.

Use and Attitude Survey of Mountain Park Users

City of Boulder, Mountain Parks conducted a use and attitude survey of park users for the first time in ten years the fall of 1989. The motivation for the survey came from the results of a road counter placed on Flagstaff Road in the spring of 1989. The counter indicated that Flagstaff alone received 2.2 million cars annually. This figure works out to a 167 per cent increase in car traffic over the last nine years or an 18.5 per cent average yearly increase. The last counter placed on Flagstaff Road in 1980 indicated that 824,000 cars used the road annually.

The purpose of this survey was threefold: (1) to determine the average amount of use the Mountain Parks receive, (2) to determine what park users value most in terms of their experience in the park, (3) to determine what is important in terms of management philosophies and park policies through the park user's perspective.

An examination of the previously conducted study would be interesting and valuable in comparison with the results of the current study, however, this report will not compare the two studies.

The survey was conducted by Christine Mortonson, a fall intern through the Geography Department at the University of Colorado.

Method

Participants

Participants were mountain park users in the areas of Chautauqua Park and Flagstaff Mountain. One hundred fourteen participants completed a survey when randomly approached. Participants were chosen by the interviewer based on whether or not they appeared open to completing a survey. Gender was not a consideration, however, if people had young children, were clearly involved in a fitness routine (eg. running), or made a wide circle to avoid me I did not approach them. Also, if people replied that they did not have time when asked, I did not press the issue.

Apparatus

The survey used to collect information from participants was created by Ann Wichman with additional input by other mountain park rangers. The one-page survey of seven questions required participants to check off, circle, or rank answers numerically to complete their responses. Clipboards facilitated survey completion.

Procedure

Each potential participant was approached by the interviewer with a smile and a friendly greeting. In most cases, I asked if they had five minutes to spare. If people were open to me at that point, I explained who I was, what I was doing, and asked if they would mind completing a one-page survey.

While the participant was completing the survey, I answered questions, offered background information (on the survey, the park, any question

that I knew the answer to), tried to insure that questions 4,5 and 6 were ranked numerically, and that all questions were answered.

When they handed me a completed survey, I thanked them for their time and approached someone else.

Results

An intensive statistical analysis of the data collected is beyond my capability at this time due to time limitations and the lack of computer software. I have, however, calculated the totals for each question as well as some of the more important percentages. These calculations can be found at the end of this report.

Discussion

The primary aim of the survey was to collect as many completed surveys as possible. We did not know what type of responses to expect to the questions although a glance at the general political and psychological climate of Boulder indicates a conservation-oriented mindset.

Many of the people approached were sincerely interested in the survey (some even approached me and inquired about my mission), and some wondered what effect the results would have upon park management policies.

After I began to conduct the surveys, I noted two problems with the design of the survey. The lack of instructions for the questions that needed

to be ranked numerically was the primary problem. It was not obvious to many people that they should rank the responses in relation to each other.

The second problem was the impracticality of implementing the user fee presented in question 7. The fee is impractical because such a large number of people park at Chautauqua to visit only the dining hall or the auditorium, especially in the summer -- the season of highest use. I think that the main objective of the proposed fee is to target people who actively use the mountain parks. Several participants suggested alternate ideas. These ideas are included at the end of the report.

A third area of improvement would be the time and human power invested. In order to have obtained results that reflect greater distinctions between responses, we should have had either an additional person conducting surveys or conducted the surveys over a longer period of time, perhaps over both summer and fall seasons.

The number of surveys completed falls way below the number needed to make the survey statistically valid. A user population of 2.2 million requires a vast number of surveys to lend statistical significance. The calculated percentages although simple facilitate the reader's comprehension of the responses.

A brief look at the responses to question 3 indicated a total of 424 responses to the 12 activities listed. This total averages to 3.7 activities per

person. The fact that 42% of survey participants utilize the mountain parks over 30 days a year (many people indicated that their use was much higher -- at least once a week) suggests that park users are an active crowd.

Question 4 shows that almost half of the participants value the opportunity to be alone or to spend quiet time with friends over social gatherings. The third choice of the five is a toss up between escaping from city life which is ranked second too or observing wildlife.

Question 5 elicited the most response from participants beside question 7. Mountain parks rank high as Boulder's greatest attraction and business opportunities rank lowest by a large margin over the other four choices.

The results for question 6 reflect the general conservation-oriented attitude in Boulder with 66% of the participants stressing protection of resources over active development with blatant disregard for resources.

Question 7 is most interesting when the student and non-student populations are compared. The student population is more equally divided as to whether or not to charge a vehicle fee. The non-student population is more adamantly opposed to the idea of a fee.

The comments written on the surveys are worthy of some consideration. Perhaps a couple of the ideas suggested can solve the problem of additional funds for park management in a practical way or the problem of Boulder's multitude of car/bicycle disputes.

Acknowledgements

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Miscellaneous Responses and Comments

Responses to "other" for question 3

- studying
- bird watching
- meditating
- spiritual training
- kite flying

Comments:

- user fee
- walk-in fee
- how about a bond issue?
- good Jr. ranger program; have City appropriate funds for management and protection
- 7,000 registered bicycles; running trails all over which allow horses; not one road for mountain bikes – keep up with the times!
- certain trails could be scheduled for certain times for mountain biking
- pins instead of paper; fee charged to all equally, but I think it should be charged to people who bring vehicles in
- close Flagstaff except to local traffic; shuttle bus up to access points every 15 minutes or so or annual fee to drive in
- limit vehicle access to local traffic on Flagstaff Road; provide shuttle service; open to bikers, hikers, and skaters
- I would support Flagstaff Mountain closed except to bicyclists, hikers, local traffic; seasonal passes or Boulder Rec passes recognized

Survey Dates

<u>Code</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Weather</u>
A	10/08/89	Flagstaff Mtn.	sunny; 80°F
B	10/14/89	Mesa Tr./Bluebell Rd.	sunny; 80°F; ptly cldy aft.
C	10/28/89	Bluebell Rd.	ptly cldy; cool (55-60°F)
D	11/04/89	Bluebell Rd.	cldy; breezy; cool (50°F)
E	11/11/89	Bluebell Rd.	sunny; warm; 75°F
F	12/02/89	Bluebell Rd.	sunny; cool; 50°F

Statistics

Total Number of Surveys = 114

	A	B	C	D	E	F =	%
1. student	6	8	3	5	12	8 = 42	37%
2. nonstudent	12	16	8	5	22	5 = 68	60%
3. no answer	1	0	0	2	0	1 = 4	3%
<u>QUESTION 1</u>							
4. City of Boulder	11	16	7	6	21	10 = 71	63%
5. Boulder County	3	3	2	2	4	0 = 14	12%
6. Denver Metro	1	2	1	0	4	0 = 8	7%
7. Other CO County	1	1	0	2	1	2 = 7	6%
8. Out of State	3	2	1	2	4	2 = 14	12%
<u>QUESTION 2</u>							
9. first visit	5	2	0	1	4	2 = 14	12%
10. 1 - 10	0	5	2	3	9	3 = 22	19%
11. 11 - 20	2	1	2	2	7	2 = 16	14%
12. 21 - 30	4	4	1	3	1	1 = 14	12%
13. Over 30	8	12	6	3	12	6 = 47	42%
14. no answer	0	0	0	0	1	0 = 1	1%
<u>QUESTION 3</u>							
15. hiking	13	17	10	12	31	12 = 95	
16. running	6	10	3	4	10	8 = 41	
17. bicycling	7	6	1	0	7	2 = 23	
18. climbing	10	7	1	3	14	2 = 37	
19. nature study	1	3	1	4	8	1 = 18	
20. general enjoyment	11	11	7	8	24	10 = 71	
21. photography	3	2	5	3	8	3 = 24	
22. picnicking	8	6	7	2	15	5 = 43	
23. social gathering	6	6	4	4	15	1 = 36	
24. horseback riding	0	3	1	1	1	0 = 6	
25. walking with family pet	2	5	2	1	8	4 = 22	
26. other	1	1	0	0	5	0 = 7	
27. no answer	0	1	0	0	0	0 = 1	
total 424							

Statistics

Question # 4 = 96 answered
* 18 mismarked

	A	B	C	D	E	F	=	
28 opp. to be alone								
a. 1	7	10	4	3	14	7	=	<u>45</u> 47%
b. 2	1	1	4	2	6	4	=	18
c. 3	3	5	0	3	8	2	=	21
d. 4	2	1	2	3	2	0	=	10
e. 5	0	0	1	0	1	0	=	2
29. opp. to observe wildlife								
a. 1	1	2	2	2	3	3	=	13
b. 2	2	6	4	2	9	5	=	28
c. 3	4	4	3	3	5	2	=	<u>21</u> 22%
d. 4	6	2	1	4	14	2	=	29
e. 5	0	3	1	0	0	1	=	5
30. opp. to escape fr. city life								
a. 1	2	2	3	2	8	1	=	18
b. 2	8	5	1	4	8	5	=	<u>31</u> 32%
c. 3	3	4	3	2	9	5	=	<u>26</u> 27%
d. 4	0	6	4	2	6	1	=	19
e. 5	0	0	0	1	0	1	=	2
31. opp. to get in shape phys.								
a. 1	4	2	2	4	5	2	=	19
b. 2	2	5	2	3	7	0	=	19
c. 3	2	4	4	2	9	3	=	<u>24</u>
d. 4	5	6	3	2	8	8	=	<u>32</u> 33%
e. 5	0	0	0	0	2	0	=	2
32. opp. to socialize								
a. 1	0	1	0	0	1	0	=	2
b. 2	0	0	0	0	1	0	=	1
c. 3	0	0	1	1	0	0	=	2
d. 4	0	2	1	0	2	2	=	<u>7</u>
e. 5	13	14	9	10	21	11	=	<u>59</u> 61%

Statistics

Question # 5 = 93 answered
#21 mismarked

	A	B	C	D	E	F	=	%
33. restaurants/shopping								
a. 1	0	2	0	0	0	1	= 3	
b. 2	0	4	2	1	5	2	= 14	
c. 3	1	8	2	2	13	5	= 31	33%
d. 4	8	4	5	7	9	4	= 37	50%
e. 5	2	1	2	1	2	0	= 8	
34. Cultural and social events								
a. 1	2	1	0	1	2	1	= 7	
b. 2	4	5	4	6	14	5	= 38	41%
c. 3	4	9	5	4	9	4	= 35	38%
d. 4	0	2	2	0	4	2	= 10	
e. 5	1	2	0	0	0	0	= 3	
35. Business opportunities								
a. 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	= 0	
b. 2	2	0	1	2	0	1	= 6	
c. 3	0	1	2	0	2	0	= 5	
d. 4	2	8	1	0	7	5	= 23	
e. 5	7	10	7	9	20	6	= 59	63%
36. mountain parks								
a. 1	9	15	11	9	25	10	= 79	85%
b. 2	1	2	0	1	4	1	= 9	
c. 3	1	1	0	0	0	0	= 2	
d. 4	0	0	0	0	0	0	= 0	
e. 5	0	1	0	1	0	1	= 3	
37. recreation facilities								
a. 1	0	1	0	1	2	1	= 5	
b. 2	4	8	4	1	6	2	= 25	
c. 3	5	0	2	5	5	1	= 18	
d. 4	1	5	4	4	9	3	= 26	28%
e. 5	1	5	1	0	7	5	= 19	

Statistics

Question # 6 = 96 answered
* 18 mismarked

	A	B	C	D	E	F	=	%
38 protection								
a. 1	7	13	9	5	22	7	= 63	66%
b. 2	7	3	2	4	6	4	= 26	27%
c. 3	1	3	0	0	2	1	= 7	7%
39 active development								
a. 1	0	2	0	0	2	2	= 6	7%
b. 2	1	1	0	2	4	2	= 10	10%
c. 3	4	16	11	7	24	8	= 80	83%
40 some development								
a. 1	8	4	2	4	5	3	= 26	27%
b. 2	7	15	9	3	20	6	= 60	63%
c. 3	0	0	0	2	5	3	= 10	10%

Question # 7 = 109 answered completely
* 4 answered 2/3
* 1 answered 0

	A	B	C	D	E	F	=	Student	nonstudent
41 City of Boulder									
a Yes	7	3	6	6	13	3	= 38	40%	32%
b NO	11	21	5	6	20	11	= 74	60%	68%
42 Boulder County									
a Yes	8	6	3	5	12	7	= 41	45%	35%
b No	10	18	8	6	19	7	= 68	55%	65%
43 Out of County / State									
a Yes	7	8	1	5	18	6	= 45	46%	37%
b NO	11	16	10	6	14	8	= 65	54%	63%

CITY OF BOULDER MOUNTAIN PARKS

USE AND ATTITUDES SURVEY 1989

LOCATION _____ DATE _____ TIME _____ BY _____
STUDENT _____ NON-STUDENT _____

1. Where is your place of residence? City of Boulder _____
Boulder County _____ Denver Metro _____ Other Colorado
county _____ Out of state _____
2. How many days a year do you use the Mountain Parks?
First visit _____ 1-10 _____ 11-20 _____ 21-30 _____ Over 30 _____
3. What type of use do you make of the Mountain Parks?
Hiking _____ Running _____ Bicycling _____ Climbing _____
Nature Study _____ General Enjoyment _____ Photography _____
Picnicking _____ Social Gathering _____ Horseback Riding _____
Walking with family pet _____ Other _____
4. What aspects of your experience do you most value? (1-5, 1 = highest)
Opportunity to be alone or share quiet time with friends _____
Opportunity to observe wildlife/explore nature _____
Opportunity to "escape from city life" _____
Opportunity to get in shape physically _____
Opportunity to socialize with large groups of people _____
5. What are Boulder's greatest attractions or assets? (1-5, 1 = highest)
Restaurants, shopping _____ Cultural and social events _____
Mountain Parks and other natural areas _____ Business
opportunities _____ Recreation facilities (in city) _____
6. Rate the following management philosophies which could be applied to the Mountain Parks: (1-3, 1 = highest)
 - a. Protection of the natural resources and biological diversity of the park should be the prime goal _____
 - b. Active development of the park with new trails, parking, picnic areas, etc., regardless of impact of natural resources _____
 - c. Allow some development but only in areas which will have minimum impact on natural resources and biological diversity _____
7. Would you support a motor vehicle parking fee (similar to state parks) in the Mountain Parks which would be used for management and protection? The fee would be approximately \$10 for an annual pass. The fee should be charged to:
City of Boulder residents: Y / N
Boulder County residents outside city of Boulder: Y / N
Out of County/Out of State: Y / N