**Strategy II. Reduce Use of Problem Areas**

**TACTIC 10: ENCOURAGE OR REQUIRE A LENGTH-OF-STAY LIMIT IN PROBLEM AREAS**

**PURPOSE**
By reducing the amount of time that visitors spend in problem areas, total use of these areas is reduced.

**DESCRIPTION**
Either enforce regulations with a specific time limit or, through provision of information, visitors can be asked to stay only a short time in specific areas. Limits could apply to specific destination areas or larger management units.

**CURRENT USAGE**
Unknown, but probably rare for purposes of reducing use in problem areas. Regulations on stay seem much more common than encouraging shorter stays. We are aware of some areas with regulated limits in some places. Usually these augment direct limits on numbers of visitors, allowing more visitors access to a limited number of permits. They are most common in wildernesses where limits apply only to use of whitewater rivers. Length-of-stay limits at individual campsites are common; limits are usually 14 days. This action is generally taken to avoid “homesteading,” the situation where one party takes over a site for an extended period. It is really a prohibition on a particularly damaging practice—see tactic 25—and it has essentially no effect on amount of use.

**COSTS TO VISITORS**
Low. Visitors have the option of visiting areas where limits are not imposed. But visitors who choose to visit problem areas anyway will experience some loss of freedom with its associated costs. Negative consequences can be minimized by getting information about area-specific limits to users during the planning stage of their trip.

**COSTS TO MANAGEMENT**
Low to moderate. Where limits are encouraged rather than required, information dispersal will be the primary cost. Where limits are required, the need for a permit system and enforcement will increase costs substantially.

**EFFECTIVENESS**
Parsons (1983) describes how a 1-night use limit in a popular part of Rings Canyon National Park reduced visitor nights by a factor of two, despite a 35 percent increase in the number of visitors. To be effective, length-of-stay limits must be very low.

**COMMENTS**
If use of problem areas is reduced substantially, increased use of other areas must be expected and planned for. Stay limits low enough to reduce use effectively also will carry the highest costs for visitors and require the most intensive and costly enforcement by managers.

**SOURCES**