Strategy II. Reduce Use of Problem Areas

TACTIC 14: ESTABLISH DIFFERENTIAL SKILL AND/OR EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

PURPOSE

If managers require special skills or equipment to enter problem areas, but they do not require them in other areas, use levels in problem areas are likely to be reduced.

DESCRIPTION

Require evidence of skill, such as in minimum-impact camping, through completion of acceptable courses or passing a test, and/or require possession and use of equipment that reduces impact, such as tents with integral poles; camp stoves; tents of subdued, natural colors; highline hitching ropes for horses; etc. The certificate would be required for visiting specific places (in effect, a permit).

CURRENT USAGE

Apparently untried for purposes of reducing use in problem areas. In some areas, certain skills and equipment are required only on whitewater rivers or for mountain climbers. These requirements are intended to promote safety and minimize impact rather than reduce use.

COSTS TO VISITORS

Low. Costs are significant only for those visitors who are unable or unwilling to meet test or equipment requirements or who feel the test is unfair, and who only want to visit problem areas. For others who want to visit the problem areas, costs are the time, effort, and money required to qualify. These costs need not be high relative to those associated with the trip itself. Costs are incurred offsite and during the planning stages of trips. Some required skill or equipment may contribute to more enjoyable trips for visitors.

COSTS TO MANAGEMENT

Moderate to high. Development and administration of ski tests, equipment checks, enforcement, and employee training will all add to costs. Testing skills would usually cost more than checking equipment. The fact that requirements would apply in some places but not in others would increase administrative difficulties. A permit system would be required. Costs will be ongoing. Some skill testing might be done by other organizations, schools, etc., which would lower costs.

EFFECTIVENESS

Could be effective if requirements are so stringent that many potential visitors go elsewhere.

COMMENTS

Unfortunately, special skills and equipment are usually more important in little-used and impacted areas than in places that already have problems. Problem areas are usually the most appropriate places for novices and visitors without low-impact training and equipment. Therefore, this technique usually would be counterproductive.

SOURCES

None.