Strategy II. Reduce Use of Problem Areas

TACTIC 7: INFORM POTENTIAL VISITORS OF THE DISADVANTAGES OF PROBLEM AREAS AND/OR ADVANTAGES OF ALTERNATIVE AREAS

PURPOSE
By convincing visitors that they will have “better” experiences outside of problem areas, it should be possible to reduce use of problem areas. Problem areas can be lake basins, drainages, or other large destination areas.

DESCRIPTION
A wide variety of information could be provided to potential visitors (such as use densities, availability of campsites and horse forage, fishing opportunities, difficulty of travel, bear problems, and scenic attractions). Information can be provided in various formats, from written materials to personal contact. Information provided in guidebooks can be screened, and additions or deletions can be suggested to guidebook authors.

CURRENT USAGE
Common. This is one of the more popular techniques in current use.

COSTS TO VISITORS
Low. As long as the information is accurate and managers do not attempt to pressure visitors to visit or avoid certain areas, there are few costs to visitors. There could be costs to the current visitors of alternative areas if they have to contend with many new visitors and their impacts.

COSTS TO MANAGEMENT
Low to moderate. Some costs are incurred in the preparation and dispersal of information. Such information may require frequent updating.

EFFECTIVENESS
Lucas (1981) discusses means of increasing the effectiveness of use dispersal through information programs. It is particularly important to provide enough information so that visitors can choose settings that match their desires (use density information is not sufficient). It is also important to get information to visitors during the planning stage of their trips.

COMMENTS
Provision of information can have the added benefit of increasing visitor satisfaction by better matching the desires of visitors with their subsequent experiences. It is important to consider the ethics of providing selective information intended to influence visitors’ choices. Information on fishing or hunting opportunities should be phrased so as not to focus excessive pressure on certain areas. Moreover, it is important to plan for increased use of alternative areas, particularly if specific areas are being advertised. Where specific areas are being advertised it is probably easier to manage the effects of altered use distributions because it will be easier to predict where increased use will occur. Visitor support for this technique is high.

SOURCES