Strategy III. Modify the Location of Use Within Problem Areas

TACTIC 17: ENCOURAGE OR PERMIT CAMPING AND/OR STOCK USE ONLY ON CERTAIN CAMPSITES AND/OR LOCATIONS

PURPOSE
Stock and camping impacts can be limited in areal extent if they occur only in certain places. Moreover, if such places are durable, the severity of impact could be reduced further.

DESCRIPTION
This technique is similar to the preceding technique. Instead of identifying campsites or general locations where camping or stock use is not appropriate, this technique involves identifying places where such use is appropriate. Such a strategy could be implemented by allowing camping or stock use only in certain places. It could also be implemented by asking visitors to camp or use stock only in certain places. Camping or stock use could either be confined to specific designated sites or allowed anywhere within a general area but not outside that area. Regulations or suggestions could apply to camping or stock use or to both.

CURRENT USAGE
Infrequent to common. Requiring visitors to camp on designated sites is infrequent, except in National Parks, where it is a common technique. Designated sites are also used by the Forest Service in such places as the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and some southern California wildernesses. Encouraging visitors to camp on previously used campsites is a common practice. Some areas require or ask visitors to camp on designated or previously used sites in certain places, while allowing visitors to camp wherever they want elsewhere. Generally sites are designated in popular areas, while at-large camping is allowed in more remote areas. In National Parks it is common for stock to be allowed only in designated stock camps; however, this restriction is seldom practiced in wildernesses managed by other agencies. Some areas allow stock use only in certain areas or on certain trails; another variation is to allow stock only in traditionally used places. In a few places managers encourage visitors to camp on previously unused sites.

COSTS TO VISITORS
Low to high. Costs depend on the level of regulation, whether or not some places with at-large camping and stock use are also provided, and where camping and stock use opportunities are provided. Costs become high when areas where use is allowed are away from places visitors want to be or where sites are clustered together, eliminating opportunities for campsite solitude. They are also high when confinement of use to selected places is combined with a program requiring visitors to establish a fixed itinerary before entering the area (usually part of tactic 9). The high costs are imposed more by the itinerary, which reduces freedom and spontaneity, than by only being allowed to camp or take stock to certain places. Costs can be reduced by making visitors aware of regulations, reasons for regulations, and alternative opportunities for use while they are planning their trip.

COSTS TO MANAGEMENT
Moderate. If relying on visitor compliance with recommended behavior, information must be disseminated. If relying on regulation, information must be disseminated and regulations must be enforced, with higher costs. Site maintenance costs may also be substantial due to the concentration of use. But this is likely to be offset by the fact that a smaller number of sites require attention.

EFFECTIVENESS
This can be highly effective in avoiding problems with campsite deterioration, packstock impact, human waste, water pollution, trail deterioration, and wildlife disturbance throughout most of the wilderness. It was the most effective of many techniques implemented in order to minimize campsite impacts in a popular lake basin in Glacier Peak Wilderness (Thornburgh 1986). It may result in severe impact problems in certain places because of concentrating use; however, much research suggests that the additional impacts of increased use in popular areas are small. Use concentration may aggravate crowding, however. Wide spacing and screening of designated sites can reduce crowding problems.

COMMENTS
This technique is particularly appropriate in areas of high use and fragility. Although fixed itineraries are strongly disliked by most visitors, attitudes toward designated sites are more positive.

SOURCES