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A STUDY OF SOUTH FLORIDA RECREATIONAL PATTERNS



FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

A STUDY OF SOUTH FLORIDA RECREATIONAL PATTERNS

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE COMMUNICATION
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER 2

PARK MANAGERS INTERVIEWS

Introduction
Summary of findings
Survey results

CHAPTER 3

SURVEY OF USERS

Introduction
Summary of findings
Survey results

CHAPTER 4

OBSERVATIONS

Introduction
Summary of findings
Observations results
Maps of tracing and tracking

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

APPENDIX

PARK MANAGERS INTERVIEW FORM
PARK USERS SURVEY FORM
SURVEY FOR HISTORIC FILE DATA FORM

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION



One of the major industries in Florida is tourism. Florida's mild winter climate and abundant natural water related resources have made it over the years a winter haven for northerners to get away from the rigors of their harsh climate. Recently with the addition of manmade features such as the Kennedy Space Center and the tourist attractions in Orlando focusing on Disney World, tourism has become a year round industry.

South Florida has one of the worlds unique ecosystems in the Everglades, and the mainlands only living coral reef.

Much of these resources are now preserved to some extent by public parks and preserves such as Everglades National Park, John

Pennykamp State Park, Biscayne National Preserve, Collier Seminole State Park and numerous game preserves, Indian reservations, conservancies, etc. These preserved natural resources, together with the subtropical climate and its many miles of sandy beaches and warm waters are the heart of Florida's tourist industry. In addition to tourism, South Florida's natural resource base supports the majority of it's own burgeoning population's land and water related recreation interests. There are many resource oriented leisure time facilities in South Florida both public and private. Other than the information contained in the Florida State Parks statistics summary and the Everglades National Park attendance figures, little is known of the actual use of these diverse resources oriented facilities.

Who are the users of the various kinds of facilities, what do they do and what would they like to see and or do? Is attendance increasing, staying the same or decreasing? How do they learn about the facility? The answers to these and other similar questions are of vital interest to the protectors of the natural resources and to the providers of resources oriented leisure facilities.

The Department of Landscape Architecture of Florida International University is concerned with teaching its students about the wide use of Florida's natural resources. As part of its training, students must learn to effectively communicate through a variety of oral, written, graphic and mechanical methods both to secure accurate information and to disseminate their findings, conclusions and design solutions to the people who will use and /or implement their recommendations. To make this learning experience more meaningful the students have been assigned the real world task of studying and reporting on the users of South Florida's Natural Resources Oriented Leisure Time Facilities.

INTRODUCTION

The goal of the study is:

To develop an understanding of South Florida's multifaceted user groups, along with their needs and desires and relate this information in a useful manner to the appropriate decision makers. The information generated will enable the various participating resource oriented agencies and businesses to better understand what part of the user needs they serve and where there is room and/or need for their improvement and/or expansion. As part of the enabling legislation for the expansion of Big Cypress National Preserve, (Public Law 100-301) the National Preserve is required to identify the users of the Preserve. This report in addition to assisting the participants, will address in part these legislative requirements. It will explore who is using the park and surrounding areas. This summer season study will offer some assistance to the National Park Service in setting up the format of the necessary studies for a larger full year study of Big Cypress's users.

The Objectives of this Study are:

1. To Determine:
 - a. Who uses the resources oriented park facilities.
 - b. What the users do in the parks and commercial facilities.
 - c. What the users would like to do.
 - d. Future visitor trends.
2. Prepare:
 - a. Recommendations regarding the users and their desires.
 - b. Recommendations for future user studies

The Methodology used to carry out these objectives was as followed:

1. Conduct surveys. Administered by the class and self administered by the users.
2. Make observations and record how people actually use the park.
3. Systematically collect historic use information from various resource oriented parks normally from the parks managers.
4. Tabulate the data collected.
5. Analyze data.
6. Prepare findings and conclusions.
7. Make recommendations for suggested park management practices and facility development needs in written report form, graphic panels, and oral presentation.



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of major findings and recommendations from summer 1990 study of South Florida natural resource destinations.

FINDINGS

FINDINGS #1. More than 50% of the users are here for the 1st time and more than 60% of them arrive by auto.

FINDINGS #2. 70% of the repeat users use facilities more than 5 times per year.

FINDINGS #3. More than 60% of the visitors stated that sight seeing and nature viewing were the primary reasons for visiting the area.

FINDINGS #4. 65% of the users learn of facilities by non- conventional publicity (word of mouth, passing by, local familiarity).

FINDINGS #5. Annual attendances at facilities are either stable or increasing.

FINDINGS #6. 70% of the users visit multiple activity destinations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION #1. Provide adequate information and signage concerning destinations for the visitors who are unfamiliar with the area.

RECOMMENDATION #2. Provide users with additional facilities to serve reasonable requested needs.

RECOMMENDATION #3. Develop educational and interpretive facilities to reflect destination interests.

RECOMMENDATION #4. Develop a public relations program to educate visitors through traditional tourist information methods.

RECOMMENDATION #5. Develop additional facilities and programs to meet the needs and interests of user groups.

RECOMMENDATION #6. Develop multipurpose facilities by both government and private sector operators.

Additional information on these and other findings and recommendations can be found in chapter 5.

PARK MANAGERS INTERVIEWS

PARK MANAGERS INTERVIEWS

INTRODUCTION

A very important part of this study is the manager interview/survey. Managers at the following parks and recreational facilities in South Florida were asked questions about users, attendance, activities and programs, access and circulation, security, problems, future plans, and advertising. The survey yielded very interesting and informative answers. The managers' responses are referred to by the abbreviations on the right.

Big Cypress National Preserve	Big Cypress
Everglades National Park	ENP
ENP - Shark Valley Tram Tours	Shark V
Biscayne National Park	Biscayne
Collier Seminole State Park	Collier
Cape Florida State Park	Cape Fla
Chekika State Recreation Area	Chekika
Coopertown Park	Coopertown
Everglades Safari Park	Safari
Miccosukee Indian Reservation	Miccosukee
Sawgrass Fish Camp	Sawgrass
Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary	Corkscrew
Conservancy Nature Center	Conservancy
Everglades Chamber of Commerce	E Chamber

Information from the interviews is summarized below. Non-responses are left blank. N/A = not applicable. (See sample questionnaire, Appendix)

Due to the subjective nature of both the questions asked and the answers received it is difficult to draw objective conclusions. However, there are some questions of great interest whose answers imply notably marked trends and, in some cases, give us the ability to point out some preliminary conclusions.

PARK MANAGERS INTERVIEWS

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following questions of interest are presented below along with some of these trends and conclusions.

How many people visit the park in a year? (Is attendance increasing, stabilizing or decreasing?)

All parks reported at least a stable attendance with over half stating that numbers are increasing. Two thirds said that the number of European visitors had dramatically increased especially during the summer.

Who are the users of the park? Are they from the same county or nearby, or from other state, country?

All of the managers stated that over half of their visitors are out-of-state tourists. Half of the parks reported that foreign tourists, particularly Europeans, make up more than 30% of their total visitation.

What are the activities and facilities offered by the park?

Big Cypress Preserve is the only facility of our survey that offers hunting.

All facilities offer a visitor/interpretive/ information center. All managers report a high use of this type of facility due, in part, to high tourist visitation.

These questions ask about problems with park access, parking facilities, and problems with activities.

Of all the problems noted by the participating park managers, the desire for more and/or larger facilities of all types is common. (This is important in the planning of future facilities at Big Cypress and should be duly noted.)

What kind of programs or events are held in the park?

Guided visitor tours (walking/boat/tram/bicycle) are the most popular programs among visitors to all the facilities.

PARK MANAGERS INTERVIEWS

What type of advertising do you do?

All facilities have some method by which they may reach potential visitors except Big Cypress.

Some methods mentioned which may be of interest to Big Cypress are brochures, radio/television public service announcements, and the contacting of environmental writers for statewide newspapers and national magazines who may be interested in writing about environmental issues in the Preserve. Additionally, contact with the Miami Convention Bureau as an outreach source for Big Cypress could be very beneficial.

PARK MANAGERS INTERVIEWS

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PARK MANAGERS INTERVIEWS

SURVEY RESULTS

PEOPLE

HOW MANY PEOPLE VISIT THE PARK IN A YEAR?

Big Cypress	350,000	1989 - Total users
	100,000	1989 - Visitor Center
ENP	967,892	1989
Shark V	174,266	1988
Biscayne	589,957	
Collier	57,358	1989 - 90
Cape Fla	724,500	1988
Chekika	48,000	
Coopertown	1,500	
Safari	55,000	
Miccosukee	100,000	
Sawgrass	50-60,000	
Corkscrew	65,000	
Conservancy	32,000	(teach another 11,000)
E Chamber	100,000	

PARK MANAGERS INTERVIEWS

HOW DOES THIS NUMBER CHANGE OVER TIME? IS IT INCREASING, DECREASING, STABLE?

Big Cypress	Annual number of vacationers and windshield tourists increasing in comparison to hunters.
ENP	Average annual attendance in 70's: 1,176,948 Average annual attendance in 80's: 759,973 Attendance increased from 1984 thru 1988 a total of 79.2% Attendance decreased 9.7% in 1989.
Shark V	Getting bigger. Stymied by parking and tram capacity.
Biscayne	It has grown.
Collier	Increasing. Summer increase of Europeans is notable.
Cape Fla	Increasing.
Chekika	Increasing.
Coopertown	Decrease in fishing because of mercury content. Stable in airboat tour.
Safari	Increasing. Summer increase of Europeans is notable.
Miccosukee	Increasing. Summer increase of Europeans is notable.
Sawgrass	
Corkscrew	Heavy increase mid 70's-mid 80's. Leveling off the past couple years.
Conservancy	Increasing 10% annually. School children numbers increase with specific programs.
E Chamber	Increasing. Summer increase of Europeans is notable.

PARK MANAGERS INTERVIEWS

WHICH IS THE PEAK SEASON?

WHY?

Big Cypress	Sep-Nov Dec-Apr	Hunting season Tourism
ENP	Dec-Apr	Tourism-Recreation
Shark V	Dec-Mch	Tourism
Biscayne	Spring - 26% Summer - 23%	Winter - 30% Fall - 21%
Collier	Nov-Mch	Tourists travelling to and from the Keys
Cape Fla	Spring & Summer	62% of the year's traffic
Chekika	Winter Summer	Camping Day Visitors
Coopertown	Dec-Feb	
Safari	Winter	Steady all year long.
Miccosukee	Nov-Apr	Seasonal
Sawgrass	Winter	Tourists
Corkscrew	Dec-Apr	70% of the year's traffic. Wildlife viewing, weather, tourism all at peak.
Conservancy	Dec-Apr	Snowbirds are 70% of total
E Chamber	Jan-Mch	Snowbirds

PARK MANAGERS INTERVIEWS

WHAT IS THE MAXIMUM CAPACITY OF THE PARK?

Big Cypress	350 # of permits	7 Campsites Changes annually for hunting & ORV use
ENP	N/A	
Shark V	550/day	Daily tram capacity
Biscayne	N/A	
Collier	130 units 1,300 people	Camping Daily park capacity
Cape Fla		
Chekika	20 sites 160 spaces	Camping Parking
Coopertown		
Safari	100 people 25 people ea	Restaurant capacity 7 boats capacity
Miccosukee	2000 people	During Festival
Sawgrass	400 people	
Corkscrew	500 per day	
Conservancy	N/A	
E Chamber	N/A	

PARK MANAGERS INTERVIEWS

WHO ARE THE USERS OF THE PARK?

Big Cypress	Tourists : Windshield visitors, tour groups campers . Locals: Hunters , fishermen , campers , hikers , ORV's, Birdwatchers		
ENP	Foreign tourists : 18 % - More noticeable in summer US tourists : 82 % - Mostly New Englanders; many Floridians		
Shark V	Vacationers:	Senior Citizens :	Winter Europeans : Summer
Biscayne	Visitors & residents , with & without boats		
Collier	Europeans :	33%	
	US & Canada:	33 %	
	Florida Residents :	33 %	
Cape Fla	Florida Residents :	63 % (95 % travel less than 50 miles)	
	Other :	37 %	
Chekika	Foreign & US tourists :	Winter	
	Local Residents :	Summer	
Coopertown	German, English & Scandinavian, both groups and individuals		
Safari	Europeans & US tourists, both groups and individuals		
Miccosukee	Europeans:	70% (Mostly tour groups)	
Sawgrass	Mostly local residents:	Fishermen, clubs, airboaters, Scout groups	
Corkscrew	International, national, state, regional and local visitors all represented		
Conservancy	Tourists:	60%	
	Members:	40%	
	School children:	7,000 last year	
E Chamber	Tourists looking for information; from individuals to buses		

PARK MANAGERS INTERVIEWS

ACTIVITIES

WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES AND FACILITIES OFFERED BY THE PARK?

	Big Cypress	E.N.P.	Shark V	Biscayne	Collier	Cape Florida	Chekika	Coopertown	Safari	Miccosukee	Sawgrass	Corkscrew	Conservancy	E Chamber
Airboat Tours														
Boat Tours														
Tram Tours														
Bicycling														
Boat\Canoe R														
Camping														
Fishing														
Hunting														
Nature Trails														
Nature Study														
Observation														
O.R.V.														
Swimming														
Information C														
Picnicking														
Rest\Cafe														
Food Machines														
Restrooms														
Showers														
Photo\Bird W.														

PARK MANAGERS INTERVIEWS

WHICH OF THOSE ACTIVITIES/FACILITIES MENTIONED ARE MOST FREQUENTLY

Big Cypress	Camping and hunting changes seasonally by permits allowed. Influx of windshield sight-seeing in winter.
ENP	71% come to observe wildlife, mostly birds.
Shark V	#1 to ride the tram, #2 to see alligators.
Biscayne	All are used year round.
Collier	Winter: Camping Summer: Hiking, canoeing, camping, boating affected by biting insects
Cape Fla	Picnicking, hiking, beach activity, nature study.
Chekika	Summer: Swimming and picnicking Winter: Camping
Coopertown	Airboat rides.
Safari	All attractions are included in one price.
Miccosukee	Airboat rides and alligator wrestling in high season.
Sawgrass	All regularly (Winter: more RV's)
Corkscrew	Boardwalk trail is open year-round.
Conservancy	#1 users are elementary and middle-school children.
E Chamber	Restaurant and accommodation inquiries. Information on alligators and airboats.

PARK MANAGERS INTERVIEWS

ARE THERE ANY PROBLEMS WITH THESE ACTIVITIES/FACILITIES?

Big Cypress	Controlling hunting, ORV use, resource removal, illegal activities.
ENP	The biggest problem is lack of funding & staffing, therefore can't provide enough services. Need new exhibits & movies, and lobby renovation.
Shark V	We have no picnic tables.
Biscayne	Boating accidents, littering, coral reef destruction.
Collier	Not at this time.
Cape Fla	
Chekika	No.
Coopertown	None.
Safari	Need bigger facilities to handle the crowd.
Miccosukee	Stereotypes - misconceptions about Indians. Sometimes visitors think alligator wrestling is cruel.
Sawgrass	Boat ramps need rebuilding. Modernization in progress.
Corkscrew	Maintenance of 2-mile wooden trail is expensive and continuous.
Conservancy	No.
E Chamber	No.

PARK MANAGERS INTERVIEWS

ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

ARE THERE ANY PROBLEMS WITH THE PARK ACCESS AND/OR CIRCULATION PATHS THROUGH THE PARK (FOR BOTH PEDESTRIAN AND VEHICLES) IN RELATION WITH THE ACTIVITIES OFFERED WITHIN THE PARK?

Big Cypress	Poor signage. Safety problems adjacent to US-41. Loop Road in poor condition, which limits access. Overuse in some areas.
ENP	No.
Shark V	No.
Biscayne	No.
Collier	No.
Cape Fla	
Chekika	No - it is also handicapped accessible.
Coopertown	No.
Safari	No.
Miccosukee	No.
Sawgrass	No, but new will be installed in the near future.
Corkscrew	Road sign access could be improved. Trail is handicapped accessible.
Conservancy	Signage. Unpaved road to Briggs Nature Center. Lack of transportation for tourists to sites.
E Chamber	

PARK MANAGERS INTERVIEWS

ARE THERE PROBLEMS WITH THE PARKING LOT FACILITIES?

Big Cypress	Plan to upgrade parking for ORV loading and unloading.
ENP	Need more parking at Shark Valley.
Shark V	Not enough parking. People park outside the park and have to wait 1-2 hours for tram space availability.
Biscayne	No.
Collier	No.
Cape Fla	
Chekika	No.
Coopertown	No.
Safari	Need more.
Miccosukee	No.
Sawgrass	No.
Corkscrew	Inadequate at peak levels of visitation.
Conservancy	
E Chamber	

PARK MANAGERS INTERVIEWS

SECURITY

IS THERE A SECURITY FORCE IN THE PARK? WHAT TYPE OF SECURITY (PATROL, ELECTRONIC, ENTRANCE ONLY...)? IF PATROLLED, HOW (BY FOOT, MOTORCYCLE, BOAT, HORSE...)?

Big Cypress	Eleven park rangers in airboat, ORV, helicopter, airplane, 4 X 4.
ENP	Park rangers.
Shark V	Park rangers in trucks.
Biscayne	Marine patrol, Customs, I.N.S., D.E.A.
Collier	Rangers on foot, truck, boat, ATV.
Cape Fla	
Chekika	Rangers and park officer, by foot and vehicle.
Coopertown	
Safari	No. But are going to get.
Miccosukee	Miccosukee Police Department, by car.
Sawgrass	Manager and assistant live on premises.
Corkscrew	Audubon workers live on site and provide supervision continuously.
Conservancy	On site residents with intern program.
E Chamber	Presence of former FHP office next door is still felt.

PARK MANAGERS INTERVIEWS

IS THERE EVIDENCE OF SECURITY PROBLEMS (ie. VANDALISM)?

Big Cypress	Poaching, resource removal, vandalism at camps, abuse of hunting laws, Native Americans harvesting cypress trees.
ENP	Drugs, crime, breaking into cars. Need more money.
Shark V	Only 3-4 cars broken into in last 5 years.
Biscayne	Drug transport, illegal aliens, drunk boaters.
Collier	No problems with vandalism or theft.
Cape Fla	
Chekika	Very few.
Coopertown	
Safari	Once in a while.
Miccosukee	Trespassing.
Sawgrass	No.
Corkscrew	Very little.
Conservancy	Occasionally at Briggs.
E Chamber	Very little.

PARK MANAGERS INTERVIEWS

PROGRAMS

WHAT KIND OF PROGRAMS OR EVENTS ARE HELD IN THE PARK? WHEN?

Big Cypress	Users attend Wild Hog Barbecue on private land in March.
ENP	Special guest lecture series. Puppet show for Broward County schools. Educational contests and awards ceremonies for school children.
Shark V	Bicycle tours on weekends. Ranger walks once in a while.
Biscayne	Camping on Elliot Key and Tropical Trials. Visitor Center. Columbus Day Regatta.
Collier	Seminole Indian Festival in March. Canoe race is Dec. Winter season: Interpretive programs, ranger guided canoe trip and nature walks.
Cape Fla	
Chekika	Wet Walks, nature walks, wildlife programs as requested by schools and groups. Campfire programs and star gazing during winter.
Coopertown	
Safari	Events for school children. Historical museum.
Miccosukee	Two annual festivals. Guided tours of village and film in museum.
Sawgrass	None at present.
Corkscrew	Self-guided nature trail. Guide service and roving naturalist available.
Conservancy	Educational tours and excursions. School programs. Recycling site. Holiday celebrations. Animal rehabilitation. Public meeting.
E Chamber	

PARK MANAGERS INTERVIEWS

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PLANNING AND RUNNING THE PROGRAMS?

Big Cypress	Private.
ENP	Gene Cox.
Shark V	Rangers, when available.
Biscayne	Interpretive Ranger Division.
Collier	Management and Rangers.
Cape Fla	
Chekika	Park personnel for school programs. Star gazing through Southern Cross Astrological Society.
Coopertown	National Park Service and South Florida Water Management.
Safari	
Miccosukee	Manager and assistant.
Sawgrass	Managers.
Corkscrew	Paul Hinchcliff.
Conservancy	Harding Educational Division.
E Chamber	Chamber of Commerce members.

PARK MANAGERS INTERVIEWS

DOES THE AREA SEEM TO FUNCTION WELL DURING PROGRAMS? DO PROGRAMS REQUIRE ANY SPECIAL SPACE, ACCESS, LIGHTING, OR OTHER FACILITIES?

Big Cypress	N/A
ENP	Not really. Often depends on weather, mosquitoes. Would like to do symposiums but would need conference facilities.
Shark V	Yes, very smooth.
Biscayne	Yes. Elliott Key provides space and utilities.
Collier	Done well. Well received by public.
Cape Fla	
Chekika	Campfire programs require a fire. Star parties require lighting at rest rooms.
Coopertown	No.
Safari	
Miccosukee	Functions very comfortably.
Sawgrass	N/A.
Corkscrew	Inadequate capacity at peak loads.
Conservancy	Yes.
E Chamber	

PARK MANAGERS INTERVIEWS

OTHER

ARE THERE ANY OTHER PROBLEMS IN THE PARK NOT MENTIONED?

Big Cypress	User confusion and concern over the roles of the National Park Service as public servants and law enforcement officers. Oil and gas exploration through mandated activity.
ENP	Park could be used more as a prime feature in South Florida and tool used by cities to attract tourism. ENP is not tied into Miami and other Chambers of Commerce.
Shark V	Not that I can do anything about.
Biscayne	Too many; fresh water discharge, sponge fishing, landfill encroachment, sunken ships offshore, all adversely affecting ecological balance of the Biscayne Bay.
Collier	No.
Cape Fla	
Chekika	No.
Coopertown	
Safari	No.
Miccosukee	No.
Sawgrass	
Corkscrew	Fostering public support for all programs at park.
Conservancy	No.
E Chamber	

PARK MANAGERS INTERVIEWS

ARE THERE FUTURE PLANS (CHANGES, ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES, ROAD/PATHS, ENTRANCES...) FOR THE PARK?

Big Cypress	Detailed in General Management Plan.
ENP	Added 107,000 acres Dec. '89. Largest restoration project in North America. In house, want to increase programs.
Shark V	No.
Biscayne	General Management Plan: to increase marine buoys, reef reclamation, cleanup programs, and public awareness of ecosystem.
Collier	City water installation '90-'91.
Cape Fla	
Chekika	Observatory is being considered.
Coopertown	Yes.
Safari	Future expansion plans if NPS allows them to stay for next year.
Miccosukee	Bingo Hall. Improvements: waterfalls and streams for fishing, adding "fantasy", and landscaping.
Sawgrass	Yes. Educational films and documentaries to be made to increase environmental awareness. On premise Seminoles and their handcrafts and history.
Corkscrew	Upgrade to accommodate more visitors with improved physical and interpretive facilities.
Conservancy	Specific environmental education for each user group. New exhibits.
E Chamber	

PARK MANAGERS INTERVIEWS

WHAT TYPE OF ADVERTISING DO YOU DO (RADIO, TV, NEWSPAPER, DIRECT MAIL, BROCHURES, MAGAZINES...)?

Big Cypress	Road signs. Need better coordination between government agencies to benefit the public.
ENP	None. Get publicity in all major magazines and networks because of environmental issues. Brochures. 12-page Summer and Winter newspapers published by park.
Shark V	Brochure put out by NPS.
Biscayne	None. But will give free information to travel guides.
Collier	Public Service Announcements on radio & TV. Brochures.
Cape Fla	Maps, brochures, road signs.
Chekika	Radio, TV, newspaper, brochures, magazines, direct mail.
Coopertown	Brochures.
Safari	Yellow pages, brochures.
Miccosukee	Florida Attraction Association. Brochures to states and Europe. TV 2 weeks of year. Miami Convention Bureau.
Sawgrass	Radio, newspaper, magazines.
Corkscrew	Commercial brochure distribution in SW Florida.
Conservancy	Visitor guides, magazines, direct mail, Cablevision, newspapers, PSA's, brochures. Resort and hotel visitors.
E Chamber	Advertising by merchants.

SURVEY OF USERS

SURVEY OF USERS

INTRODUCTION

To approach the objectives of the study questionnaires were conducted by students on nine different sites of the South Florida resource-oriented parks.

These are :

- Corkscrew Sanctuary
- Collier Seminole State Park
- U.S. 41 (from State Road 29 to Monument Lake)
- Monroe Station
- Oasis Visitor Center
- Sawgrass
- Shark Valley
- The canal (from Oasis Visitor Center to Francis S. Taylor)

Midway Campground and Loop Road were included in the list of sites for the survey, but no user was found to fill the questionnaire.

The objective of this survey was to determine :

- Who uses the parks
- What the users do and would like to do
- How they heard about the park
- Time spend in the park
- Knowledge of Big Cypress Preserve and other resource oriented parks

A total of 377 self administered questionnaires were filled out by the users :

Corkscrew Sanctuary and Collier Seminole :	23 questionnaires
U.S.41 :	41 questionnaires
Monroe Station :	9 questionnaires
Oasis Visitor Center :	116 questionnaires
Sawgrass :	38 questionnaires
Shark Valley :	55 questionnaires
The Canal :	81 questionnaires

The number of questionnaires at each site generally correspond to the number of people found in the site at the time of the survey.

The survey was done during June and July 1990 on weekends and weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The results of the survey reflect the users only during this summer season. These results may be different for other season.

SURVEY OF USERS

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

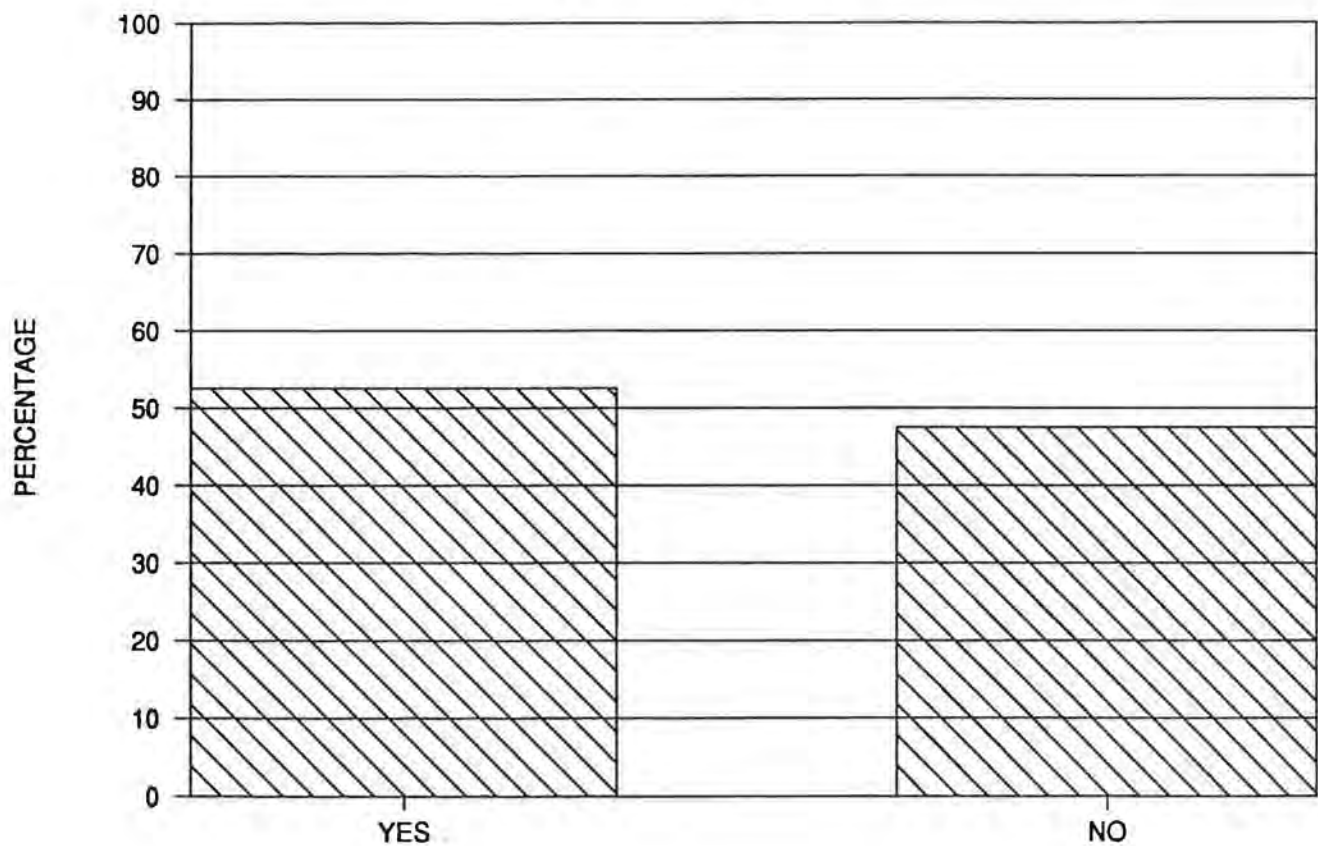
1. More than half of the visitors were first time users of the South Florida resource park they were visiting.
2. The places offering a variety of facilities for the users are Shark Valley, Royal Palm visitor center, Flamingo, Everglades City Ranger Station, Oasis Visitor Center and Monroe Station. These locations are more visited than the primitive campgrounds and the picnic areas.
3. Almost half of the visitors are primarily sightseers.
4. 30% of the users are tourists from out of state with another 17% non local and assumed to be tourist.
5. Half of the users are financially above average.
6. Mostly interviewees were in family groups (56 %) .
7. Less than 30 % of the users find hunting important or very important.
8. Almost 75 % of the users find sightseeing and nature veiwing important or very important.
9. Only 20% of the users find O.R.V. use important or very important.
10. There are three activities that are the least important to most visitors, they include: hunting, O.R.V. use and airboating.
The three activities that are most important to most visi tors include: fishing, nature viewing and sightseeing.
11. More than 50 % of the users are older than 30.
12. 65% of the users have knowledge of South Flori da's parks by nonconventional publicity (word of mouth, driving through, other).
13. Only 43% of the visitors interviewed had heard about the "Big Cypress Preserve". From this percentage, 84% knew about Big Cypress Preserve by non conventional publicity.

SURVEY OF USERS

SURVEY RESULTS

1) IS THIS YOUR FIRST VISIT TO THIS PARK/RECREATION FACILITY ?

FIRST VISIT

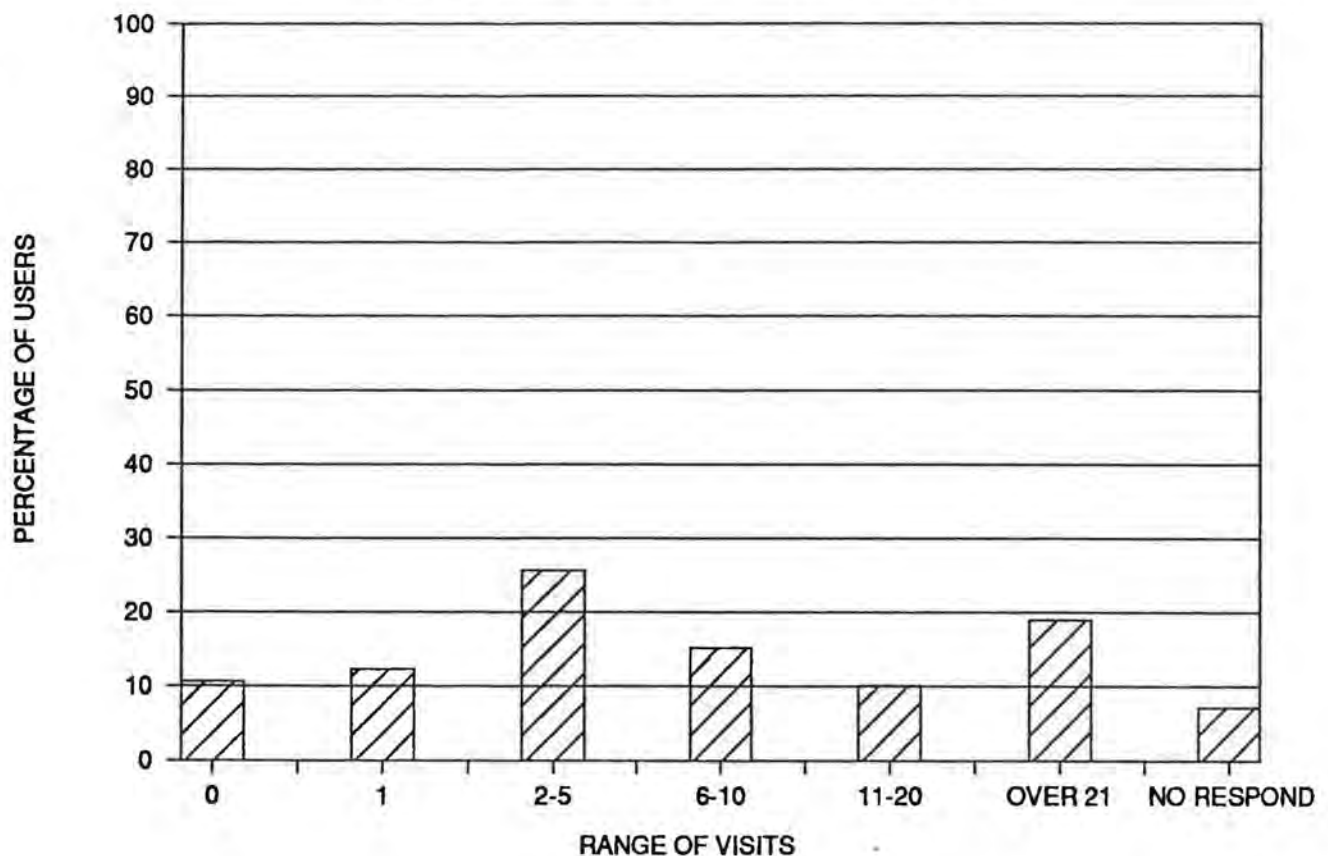


* MORE THAN 50 % OF THE VISITORS ARE FIRST TIME USERS.

SURVEY OF USERS

2) IF NO , HOW MANY TIMES DID YOU VISIT THIS PARK LAST YEAR ?

NON FIRST TIME VISITORS

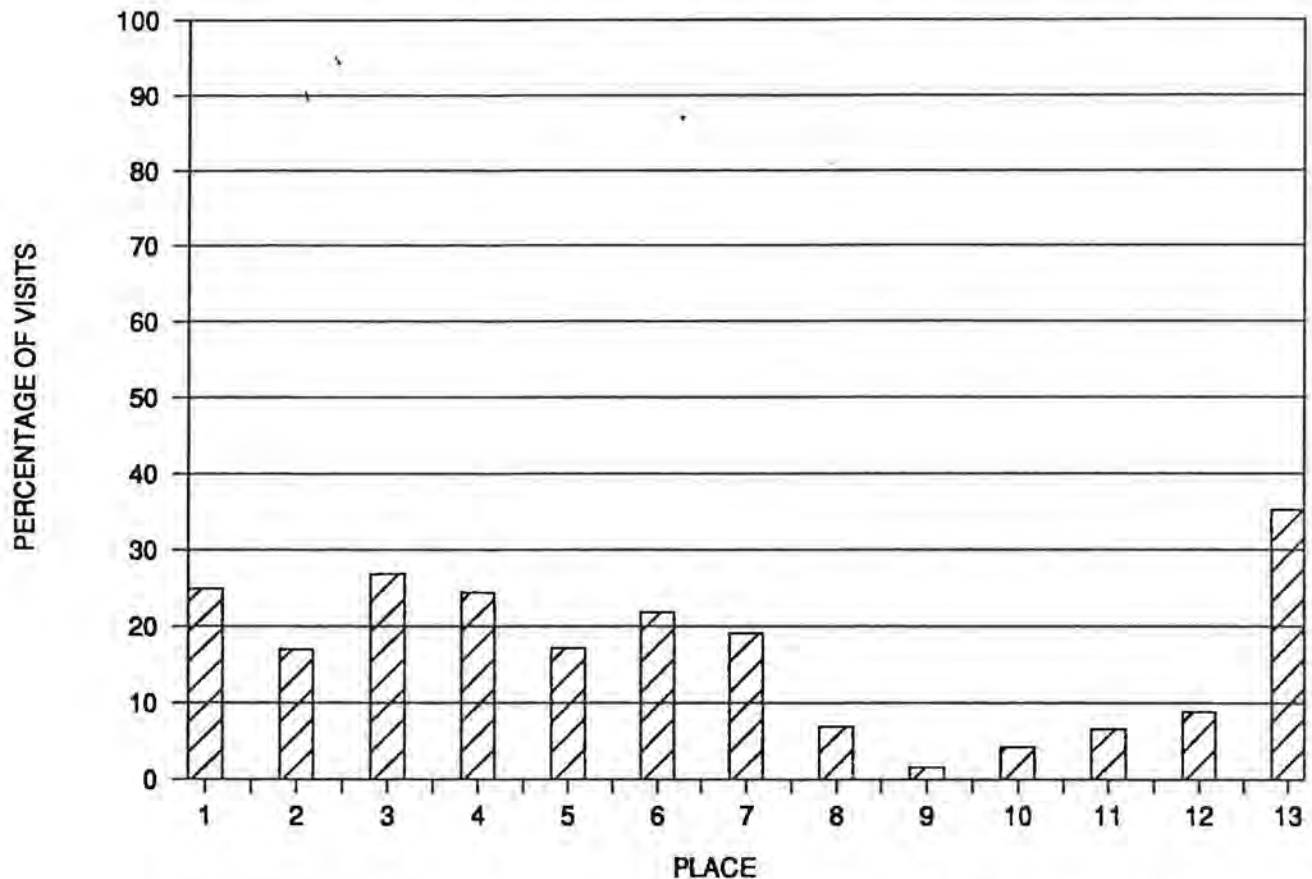


*** 48 % OF THE INTERVIEWEES ARE NON FIRST TIME VISITORS . FROM THIS PERCENTAGE 70 % ARE FREQUENT USERS (2 OR MORE VISITS) .**

SURVEY OF USERS

3) HAVE YOU EVER VISITED ANY OF THE FOLLOWING EVERGLADES OR BIG CYPRESS FACILITIES ?

EVERGLADES\BIG CYPRESS FACILITIES



1 - SHARK VALLEY

2 - ROYAL PALM VISITOR CENTER

3 - FLAMINGO

4 - ROADSIDE PICNICS AREAS (Includes all areas along 41)

5 - EVERGLADES CITY RANGER STATION

6 - OASIS VISITOR CENTER

7 - MONROE STATION

PRIMITIVE CAMPGROUNDS

8 - BEAR ISLAND

9 - 50 MILE

10 - MIDWAY

11 - BURNS LAKE

12 - OTHER

13 - NO RESPOND

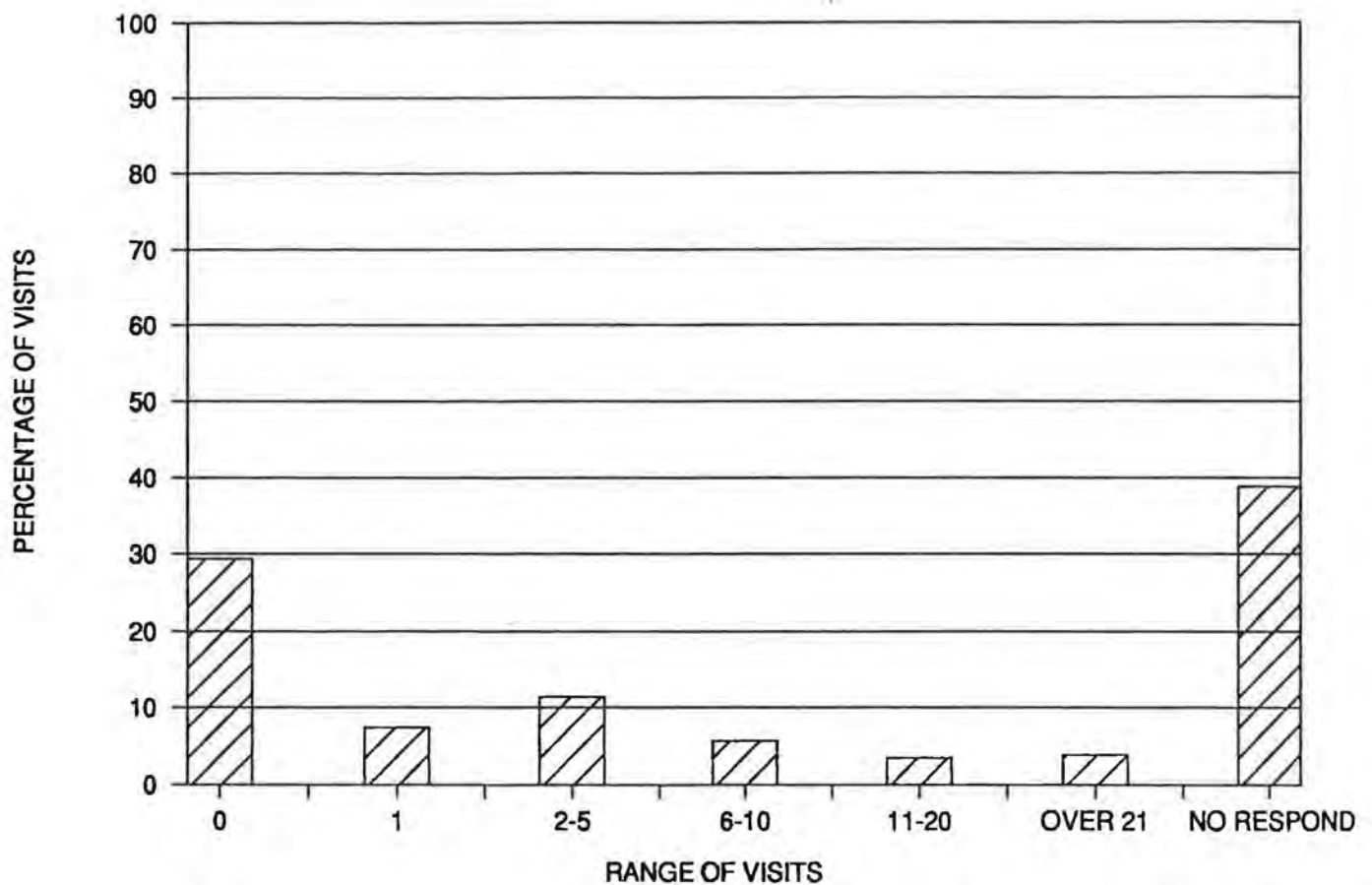
*

THOSE PLACES OFFERING A VARIETY OF FACILITIES TO THE USERS (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, AND 7) ARE MORE VISITED THAN THE PRIMITIVE CAMPGROUNDS.

SURVEY OF USERS

4) HOW MANY TIMES DID YOU VISIT OTHER RESOURCE-ORIENTED PARKS LAST YEAR ?

VISITS TO OTHER PARKS

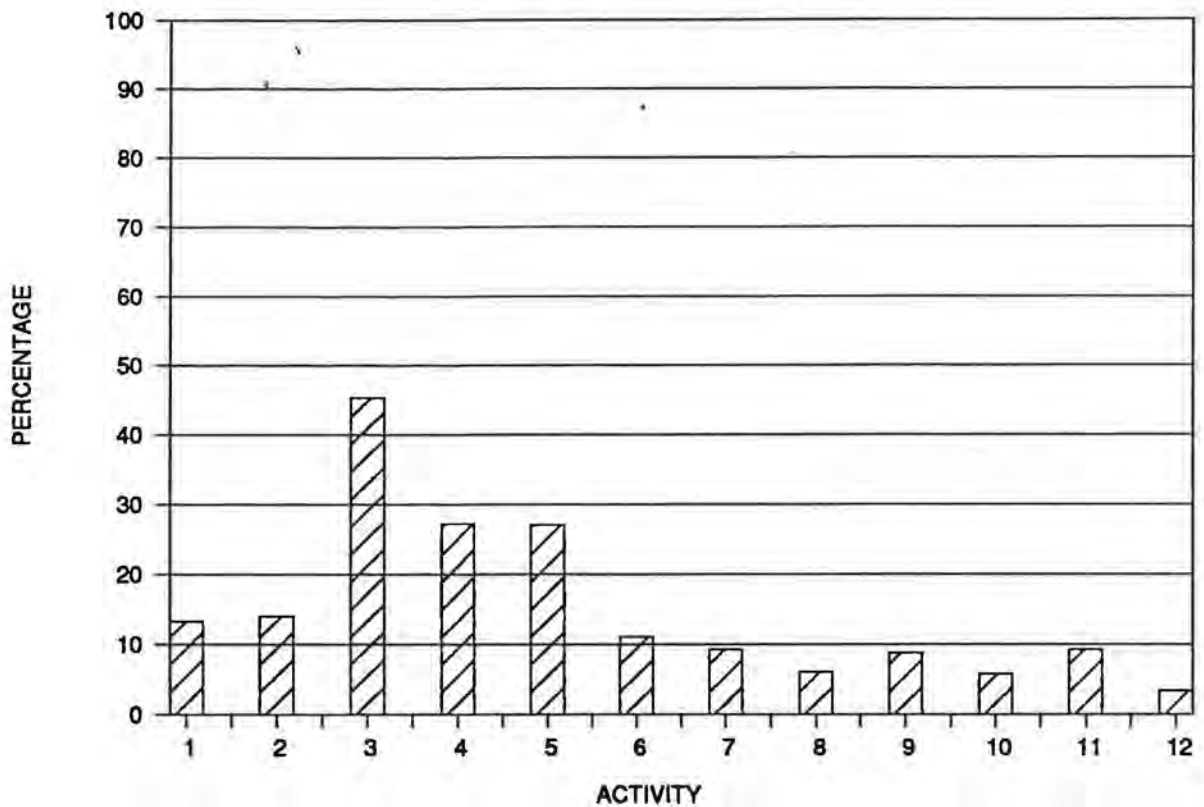


* 30 % OF THE INTERVIEWEES HAVE VISITED OTHER RESOURCE-ORIENTED PARKS AT LEAST ONE TIME LAST YEAR.

SURVEY OF USERS

5) WHAT IS YOUR PRIMARY REASON FOR VISITING ?

REASON FOR VISITING



1 - HUNTING
2 - CAMPING
3 - SIGHTSEEING
4 - NATURE VIEWING

5 - FISHING
6 - PICNICKING
7 - AIR BOATING
8 - HIKING

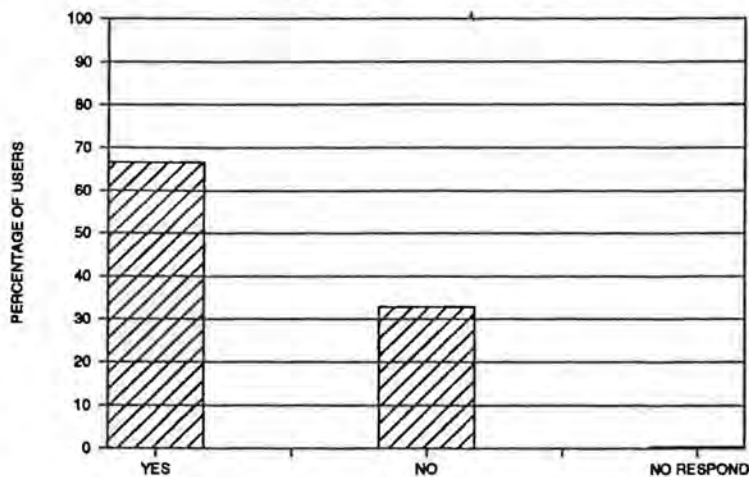
9 - BIRD WATCHING
10 - O.R.V.
11 - OTHER
12 - NO RESPOND

- * **ALMOST 50 % OF VISITORS ARE PRIMARELY SIGHTSEERS. (THE RESULT MAY BE SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT FOR OTHER SEASON)**
- * **VISITORS DO MORE THAN ONE ACTIVITY**

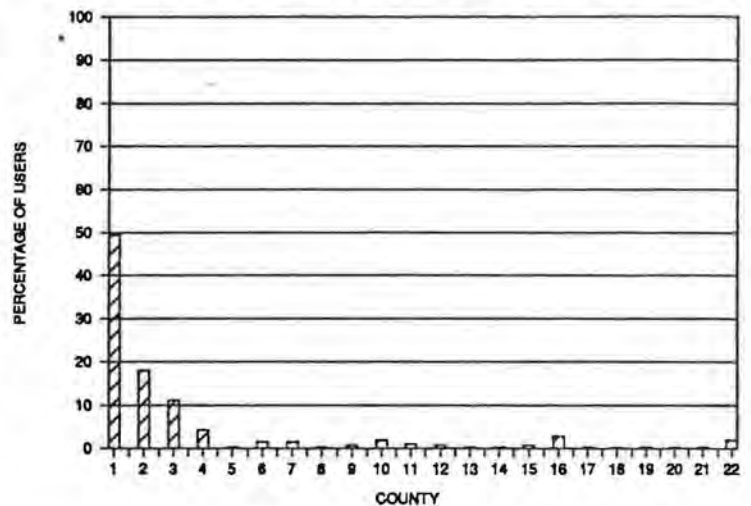
SURVEY OF USERS

6) ARE YOU FLORIDA RESIDENT ?

FLORIDA RESIDENT



FLORIDA RESIDENT BY COUNTIES



1 - DADE
2 - BROWARD
3 - COLLIER
4 - LEE
5 - CHARLOTTE
6 - MONROE
7 - PINELLAS

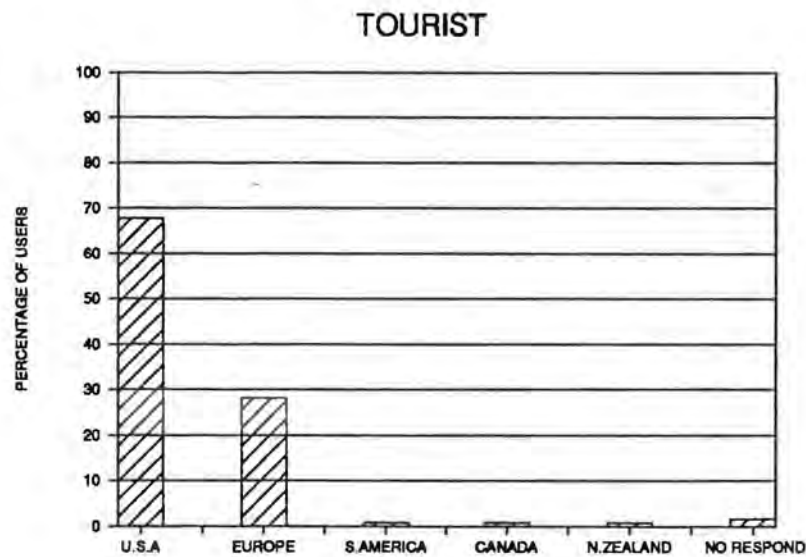
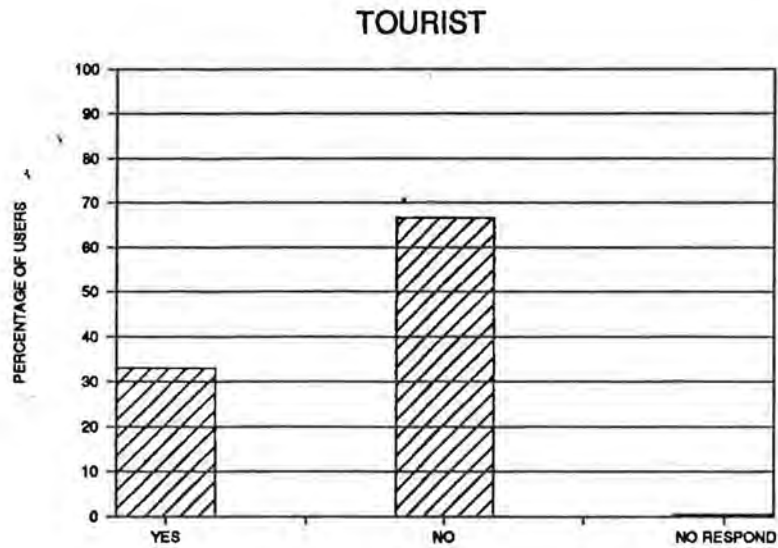
8 - ALACHUA
9 - SARASOTA
10 - ORANGE
11 - HILLSBOROUGH
12 - BREVARD
13 - ESCAMBIA
14 - SEMINOLE

15 - MANATEE
16 - PALM BEACH
17 - DUVAL
18 - MARTIN
19 - GLADES
20 - HENDRY
21 - POLK
22 - NO RESPOND

* 30 % ARE TOURISTS FROM OUT OF STATE WITH ANOTHER 17 % NON LOCAL

SURVEY OF USERS

7) ARE YOU TOURIST ?

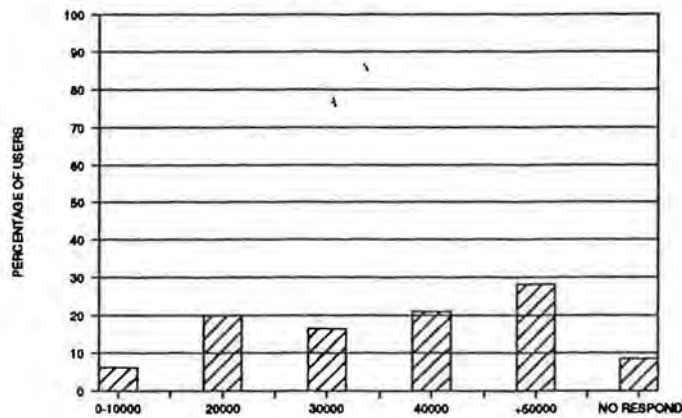


* 33 % OF RESPONDENTS CONSIDERED THEMSELVES TOURISTS WITH 68 % FROM U.S AND 32 % OVERSEAS

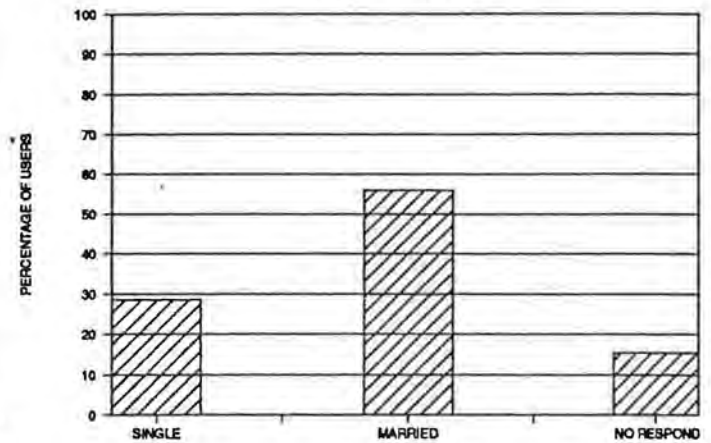
SURVEY OF USERS

8) SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ?

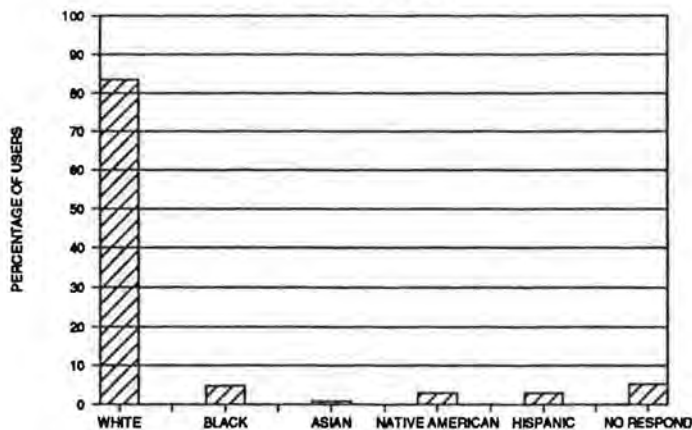
INCOME LEVEL



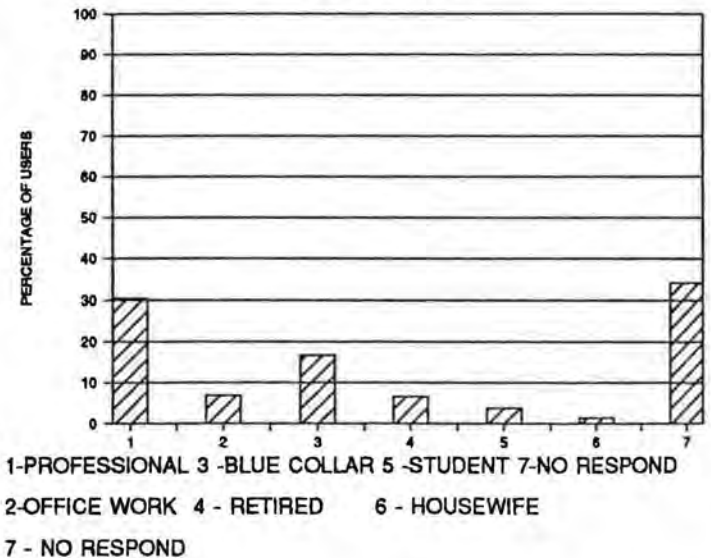
MARITAL STATUS



ETHNIC GROUP



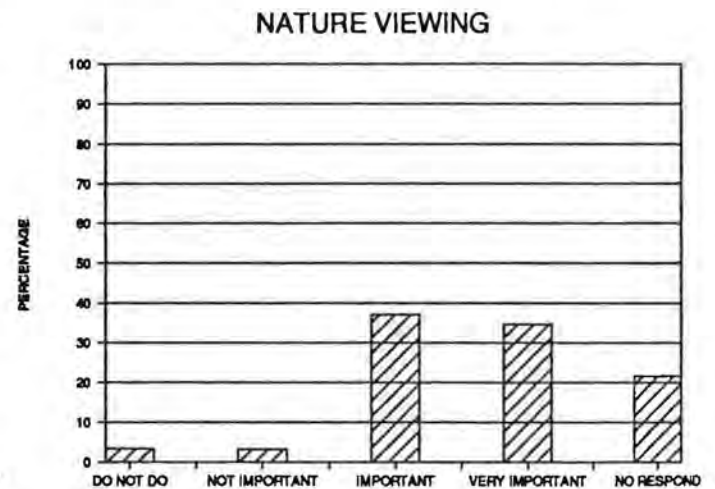
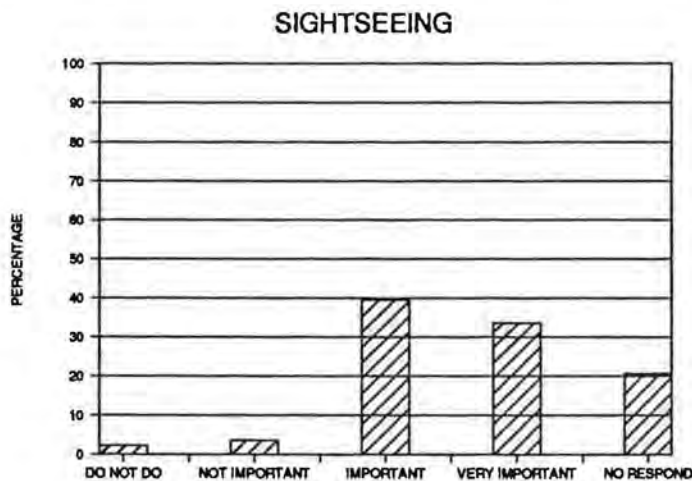
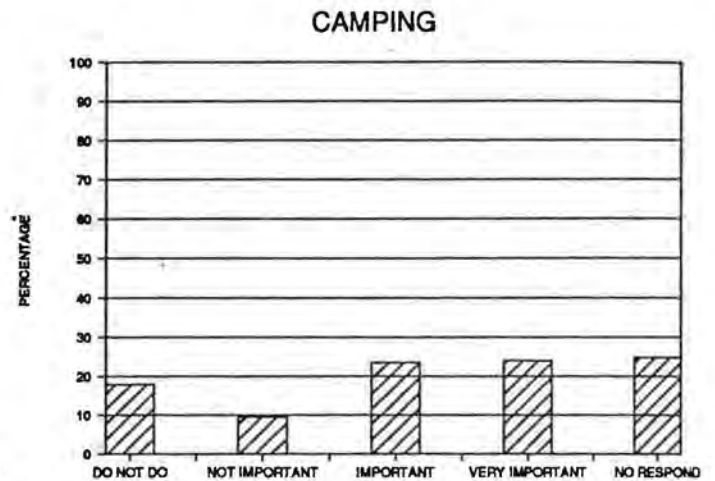
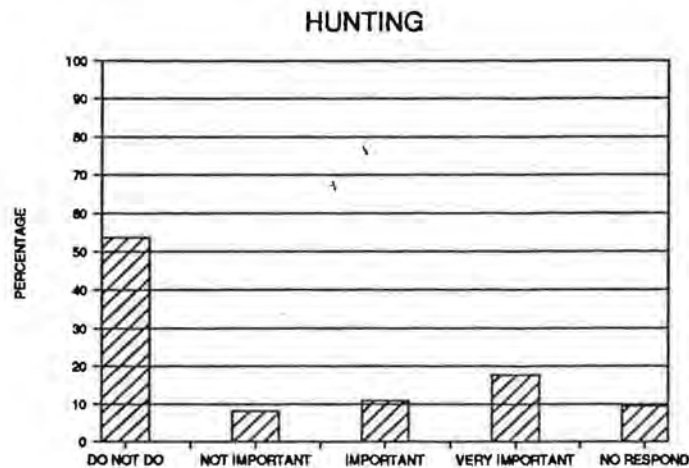
OCCUPATION



- * MORE USERS ARE FINANCIALLY ABOVE AVERAGE , 49 % ABOVE AND BELOW.
- * MOSTLY FAMILY GROUPS (56 %)
- * MOSTLY WHITE PEOPLE (83 %)
- * MORE THAN 50 % OF THE PEOPLE ARE WORKING CLASS (CATEGORIES 1,2, AND 3)

SURVEY OF USERS

9) RATE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FOLLOWING OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES THAT YOU MAY ENGAGE IN ?

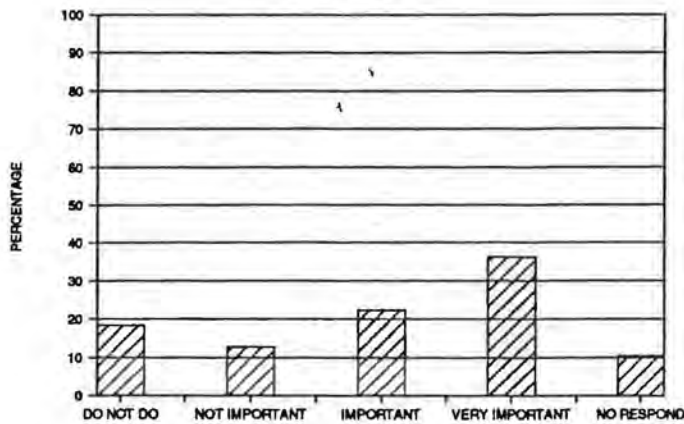


- * **HUNTING :LESS THAN 30 % OF THE USERS FIND THIS ACTIVITY IMPORTANT. MOST OF THE PEOPLE RESPONDING TO HUNTING AS IMPORTANT WERE PEOPLE REGISTERING THEIR O.R.V.'S AT THE OASIS VISITOR CENTER.**
- * **CAMPING : 48 % OF THE USERS FIND THIS ACTIVITY IMPORTANT**
- * **SIGHTSEEING : 74 % OF THE USERS FIND THIS ACTIVITY IMPORTANT**
- * **NATURE VIEWING : 72 % OF THE USERS FIND THIS ACTIVITY IMPORTANT**

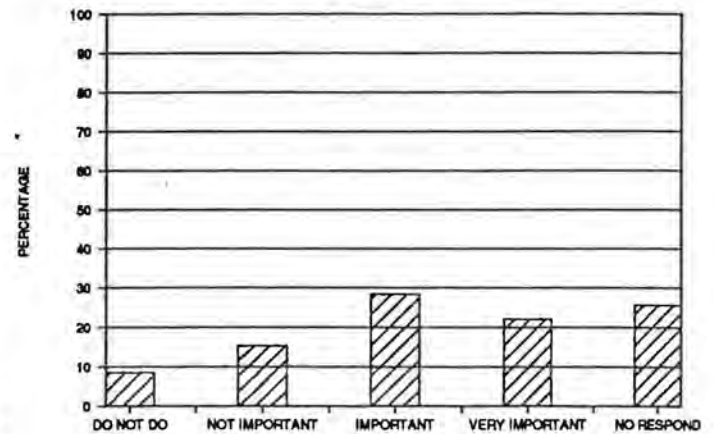
SURVEY OF USERS

9) RATE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FOLLOWING OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES THAT YOU MAY ENGAGE WITH ?

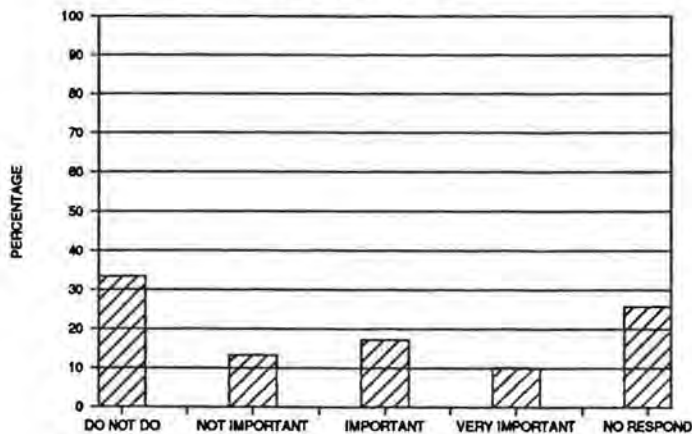
FISHING



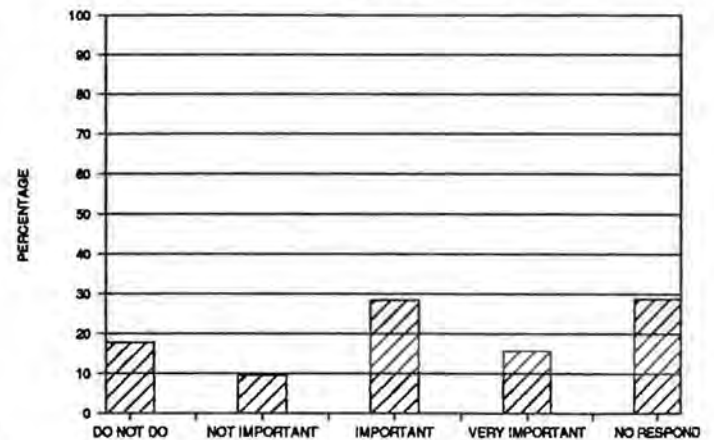
PICNICKING



AIR BOATING



HIKING

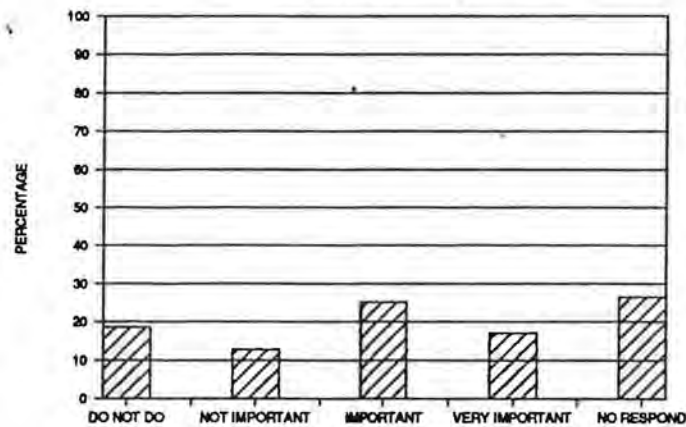


- * FISHING : 59 % OF THE USERS FIND THIS ACTIVITY IMPORTANT
- * PICNICKING : 50 % OF THE USERS FIND THIS ACTIVITY IMPORTANT
- * AIR BOATING : ONLY 26 % OF THE USERS FIND THIS ACTIVITY IMPORTANT
- * HIKING : 44 % OF THE USERS FIND THIS ACTIVITY IMPORTANT

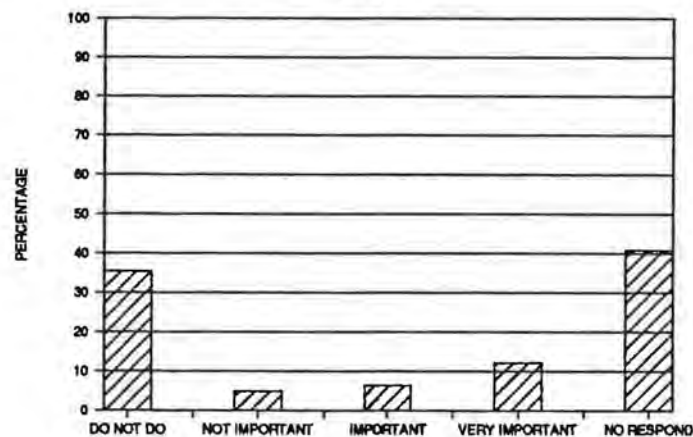
SURVEY OF USERS

9) RATE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FOLLOWING OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES THAT YOU MAY ENGAGE IN ?

BIRD WATCHING



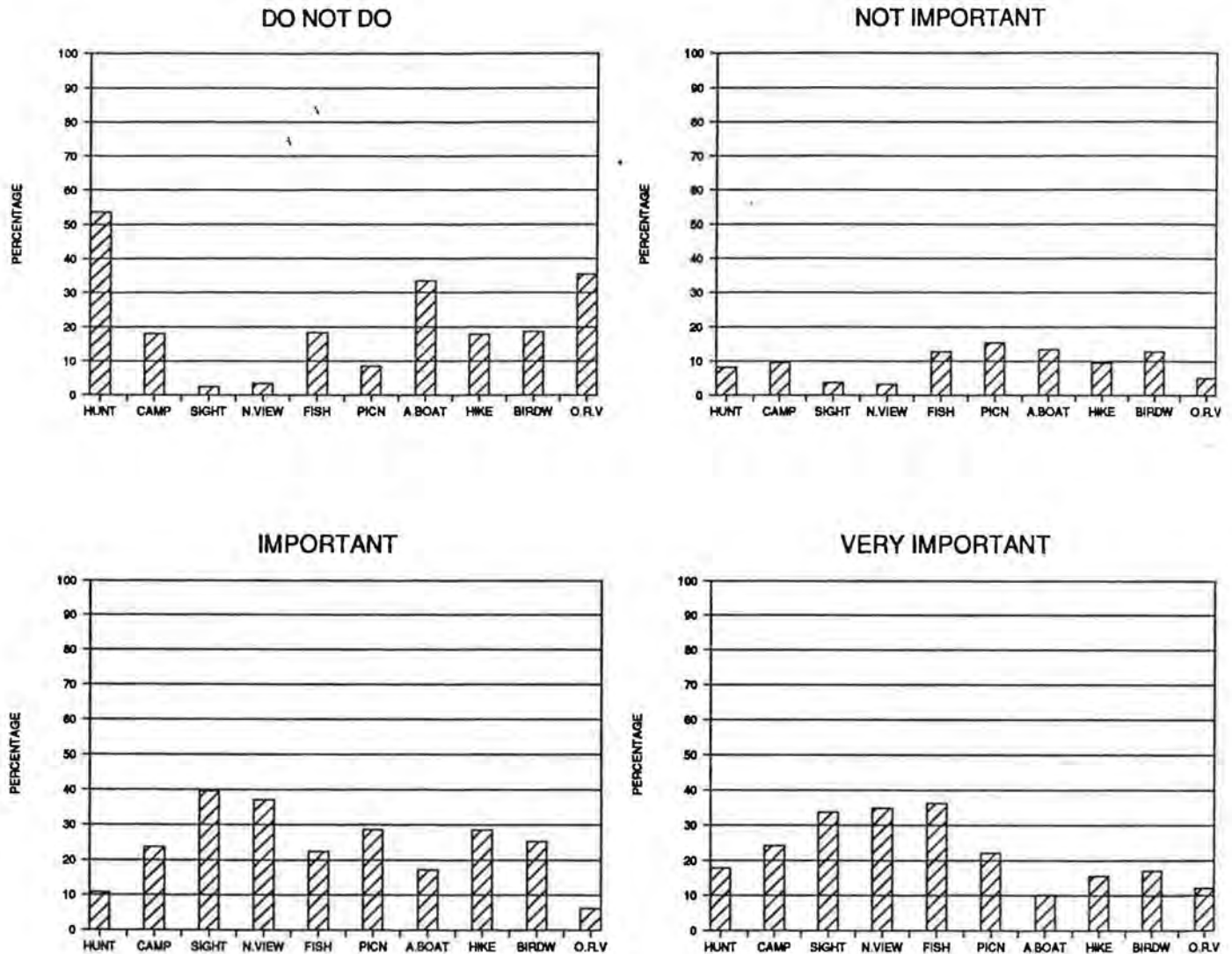
O.R.V.



- * **BIRD WATCHING :42 % OF THE USERS FIND THIS ACTIVITY IMPORTANT**
- * **O . R . V . : ONLY 20 % OF THE USERS FIND THIS ACTIVITY IMPORTANT**

SURVEY OF USERS

9) RATE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FOLLOWING OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES THAT YOU MAY ENGAGE IN ?

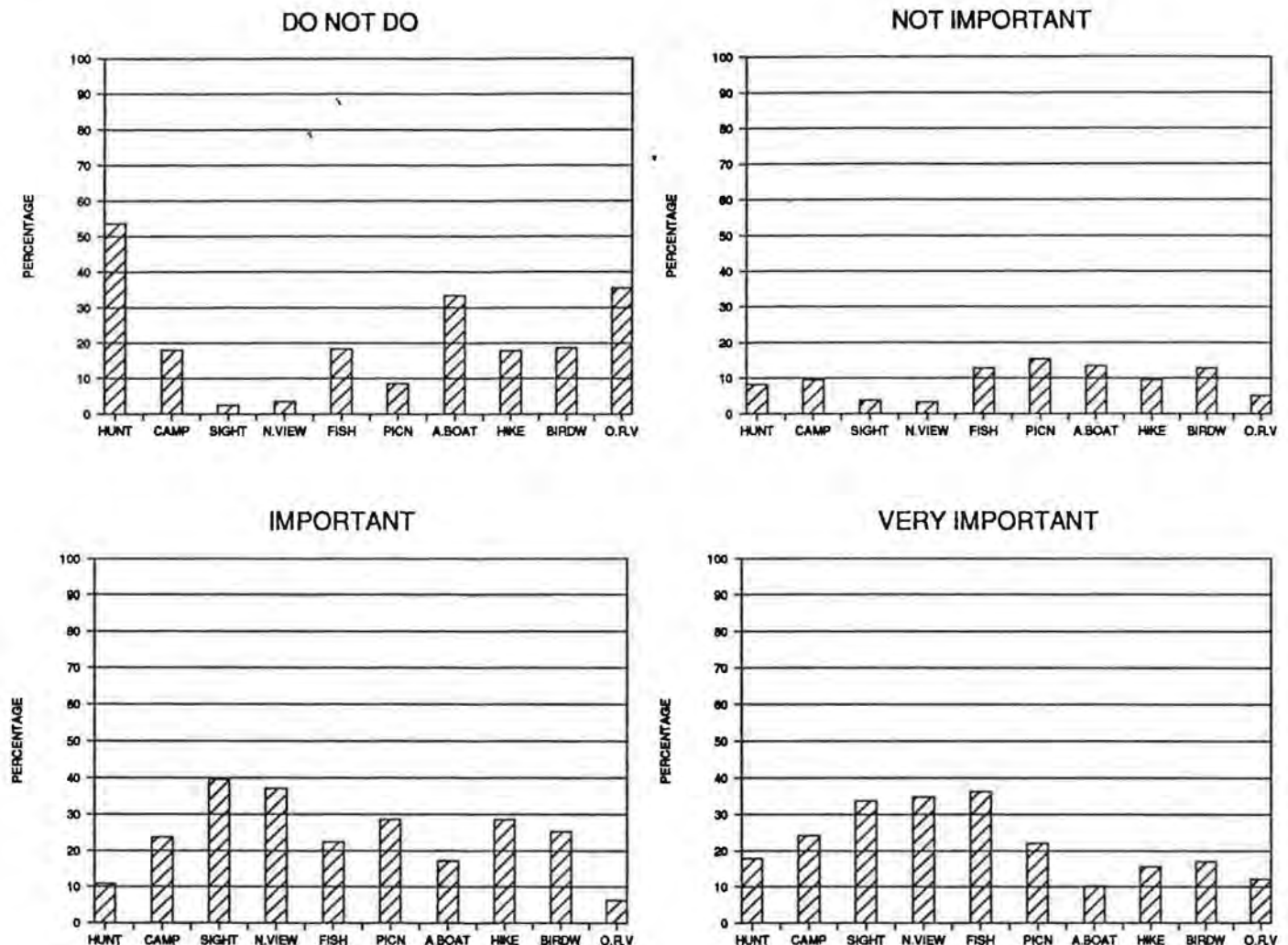


* THE THREE ACTIVITIES LEAST IMPORTANT FOR MOST VISITORS ARE :
HUNTING , O.R.V. , AND AIR BOATING.

* THE THREE ACTIVITIES MOST IMPORTANT FOR MOST VISITORS ARE :
FISHING , NATURE VIEWING AND SIGHTSEEING .

SURVEY OF USERS

9) RATE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FOLLOWING OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES THAT YOU MAY ENGAGE IN ?

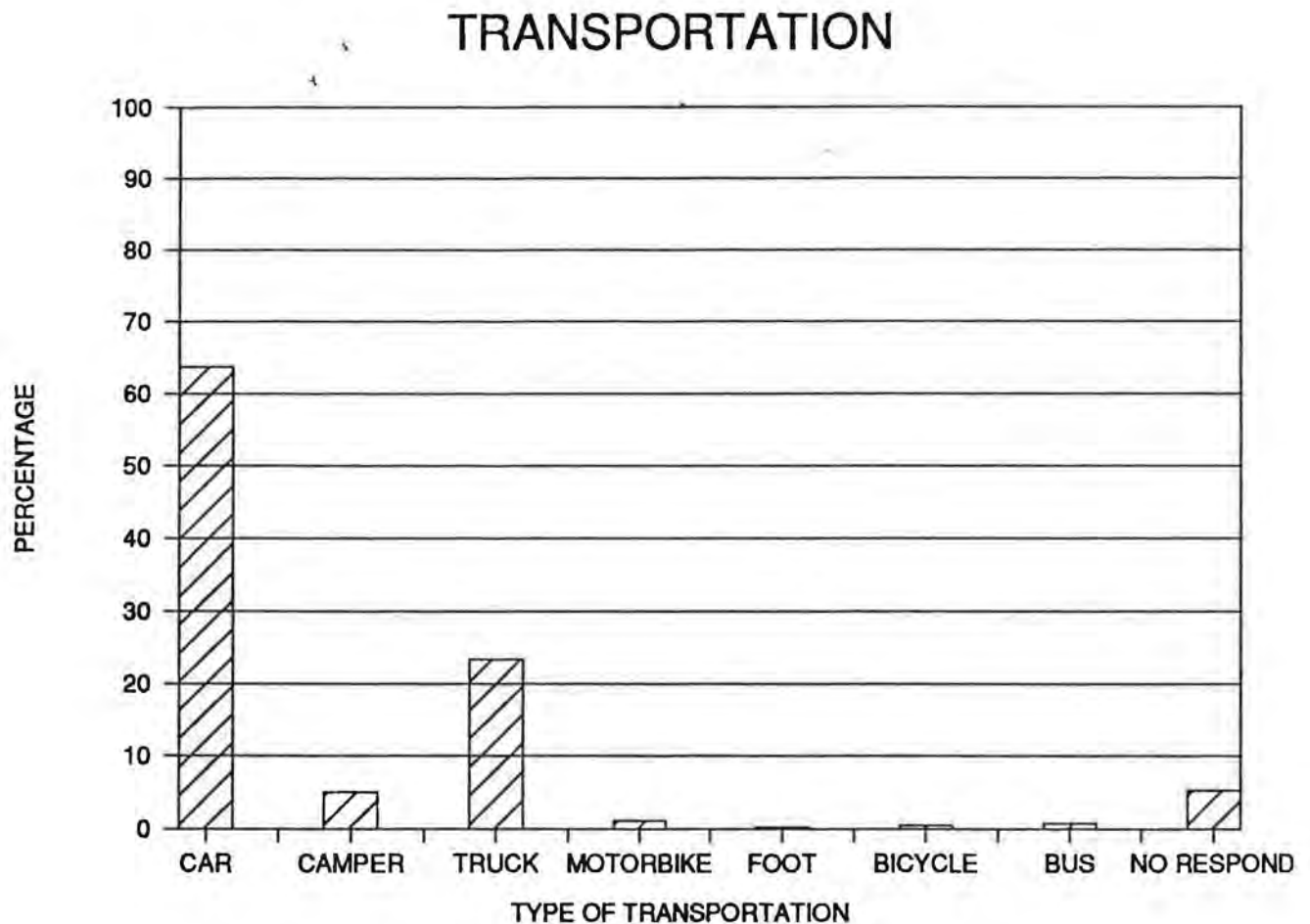


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FISHING , NATURE VIEWING AND SIGHTSEEING .

SURVEY OF USERS

10) HOW DID YOU TRAVEL TO THE PRESERVE ?

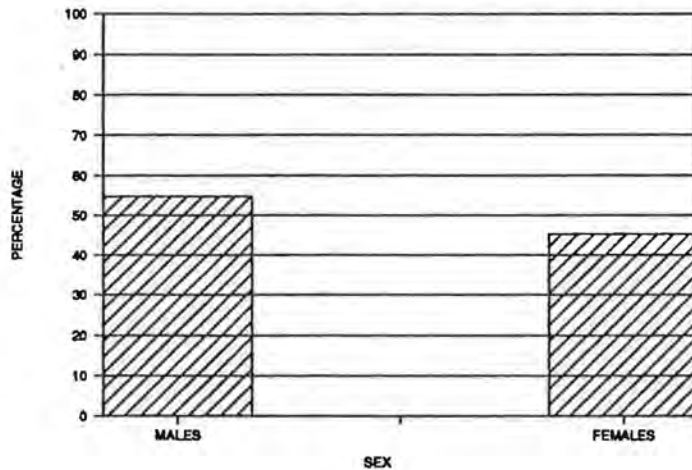


- * **64 % OF THE USERS COME TO THE PARK BY CAR**
- * **THE PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE COMING BY BUS MAY BE LOW SINCE MANY OF THE BUS USERS COULD NOT SPEAK ENGLISH AND DID NOT FILL OUT QUESTIONAIRES**

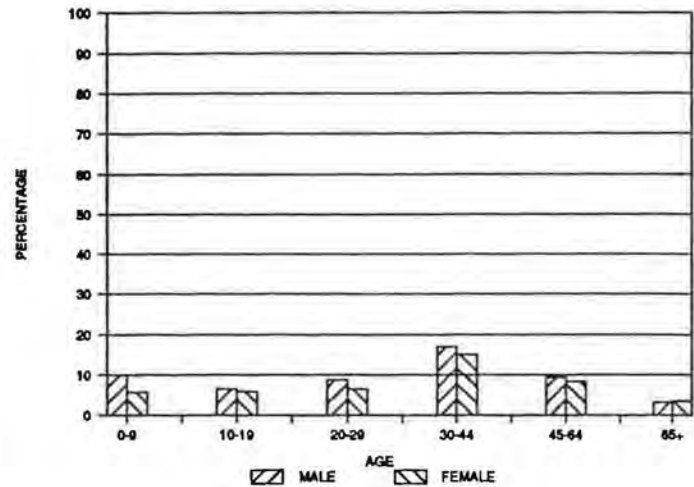
SURVEY OF USERS

11) NUMBER OF MALES / FEMALES IN EACH AGE GROUP

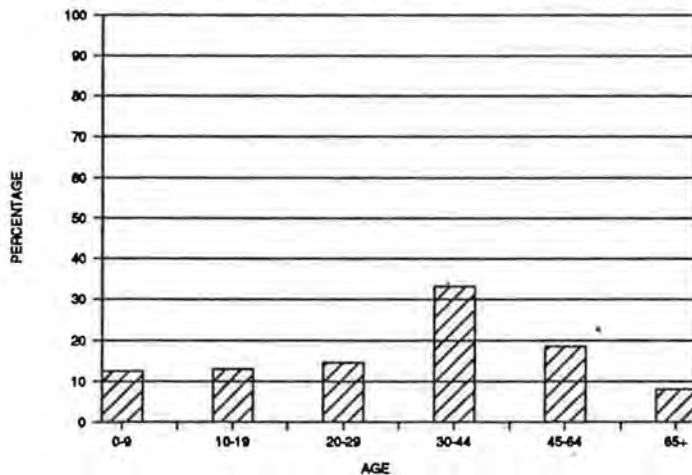
PERCENTAGE OF MALES\FEMALES TOTAL



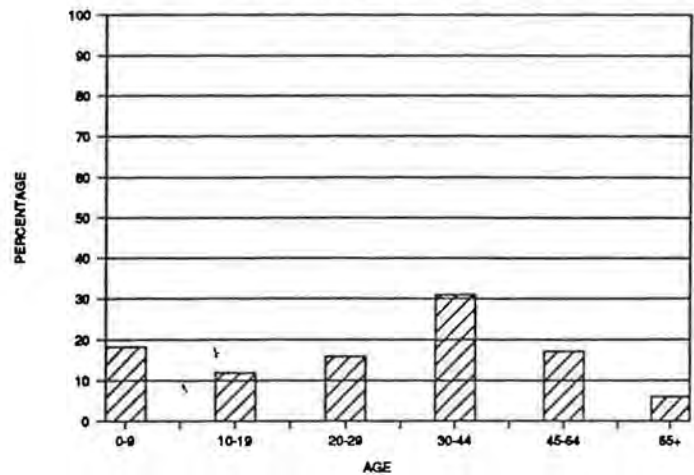
PERCENTAGE OF FEMALES\MALES (BOTH)



PERCENTAGE OF FEMALES



PERCENTAGE OF MALES



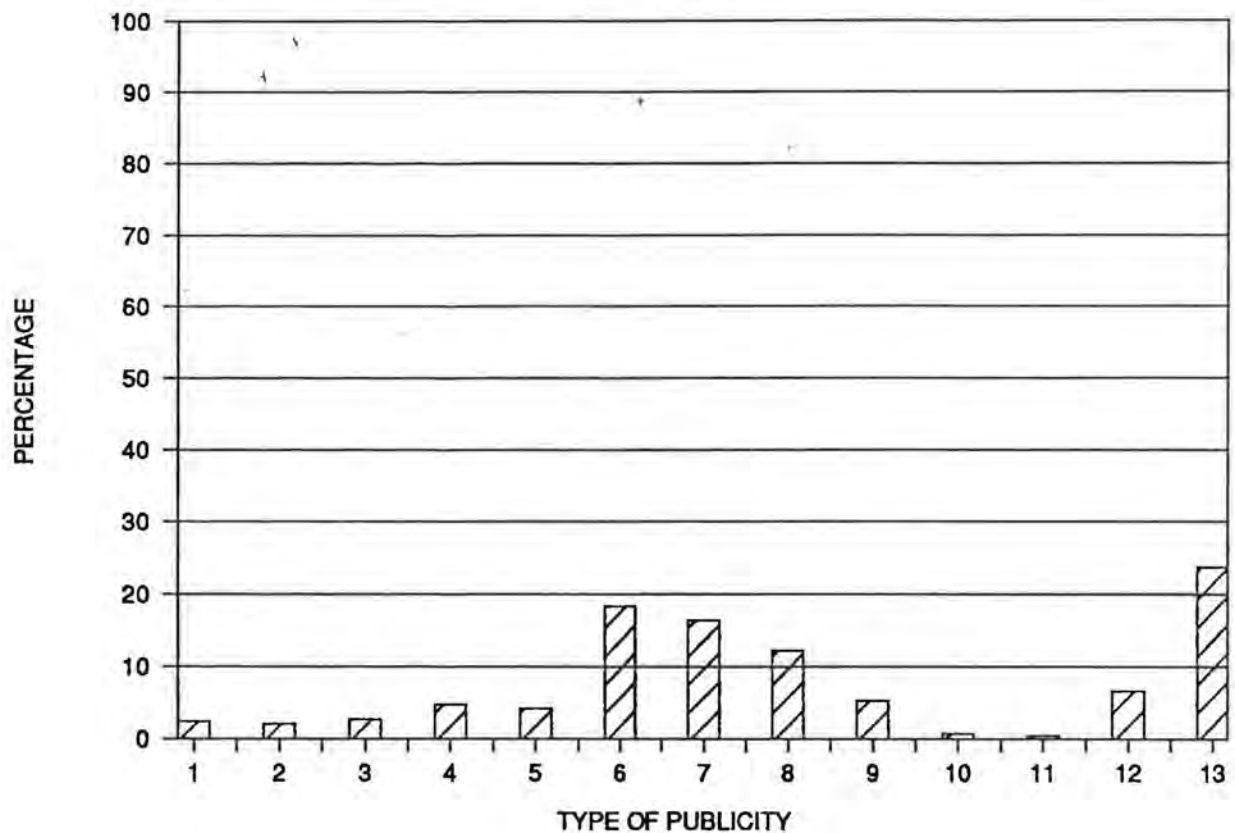
* THE PERCENTAGE OF MALES IS 10 % MORE THAN THE PERCENTAGE OF FEMALES

* MORE THAN HALF OF THE USERS ARE OLDER THAN 30

SURVEY OF USERS

12) HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THIS PARK \ RECREATION FACILITY ?

PUBLICITY



1 - RADIO
2 - T.V .
3 - NEWSPAPER
4 - MAGAZINE

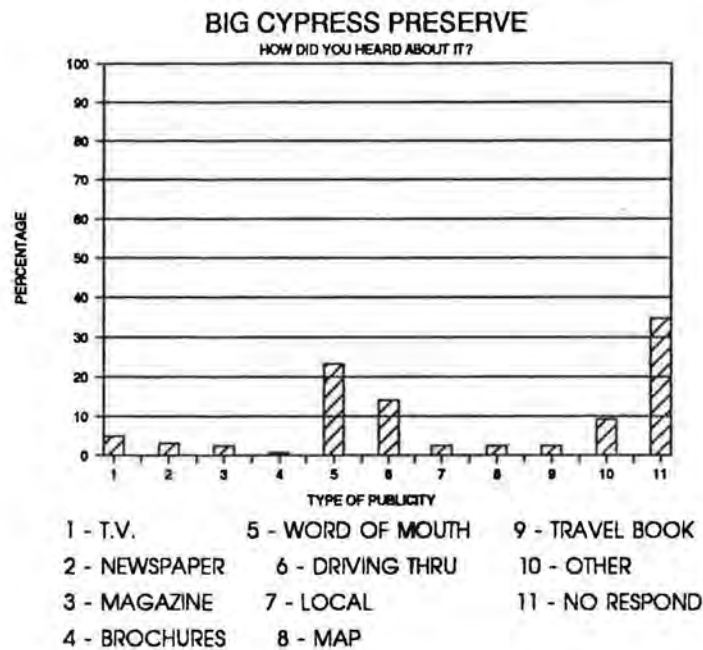
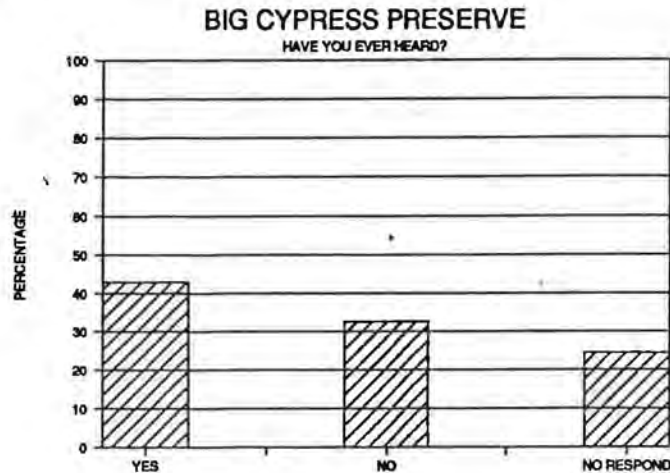
5 - TRAVEL AGENCY
6 - BROCHURES
7 - WORD OF MOUTH
8 - DRIVING THRU

9 - LOCAL
10 - MAP
11 - TRAVEL BOOK
12 - OTHER
13 - NO RESPOND

* 65 % OF THE USERS KNOW ABOUT SOUTH FLORIDA PARKS BY NON CONVENTIONAL PUBLICITY

SURVEY OF USERS

13) HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF BIG CYPRESS PRESERVE ? HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT IT ?



* ONLY 43 % OF THE VISITORS HAVE HEARD ABOUT BIG CYPRESS

* 84 % OF THE USERS WHO HEARD ABOUT BIG CYPRESS PRESERVE KNEW ABOUT IT BY CONVENTIONAL PUBLICITY

SURVEY OF USERS

14) WHAT ACTIVITY WOULD YOU LIKE TO ADD ?

1 - NONE	36
2 - SWIMMING POOL,	5
3 - TELESCOPE	1
4 - ATV IN HUNTING AREA	1
5 - HIKING TRAILS	2
6 - HORSE RIDDING	2
7 - CAMPING AREAS	7
8 - SHORT TRIAL DOGS DURING GENERAL GUN SEASON	2
9 - DANCING	1
10 - BICYCLE TRAILS	6
11 - O.R.V	1
12 - GUIDED WALK TOUR	3
13 - WATER TOBOGAN	1
14 - MORE HUNTING	3
15 - FISHING RESORT	2

* **40 % OF THE VISITORS THAT ANSWERED THE QUESTION WOULD LIKE TO MAINTAIN THE EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS**

SURVEY OF USERS

15) WHAT FACILITY WOULD YOU LIKE TO ADD ?

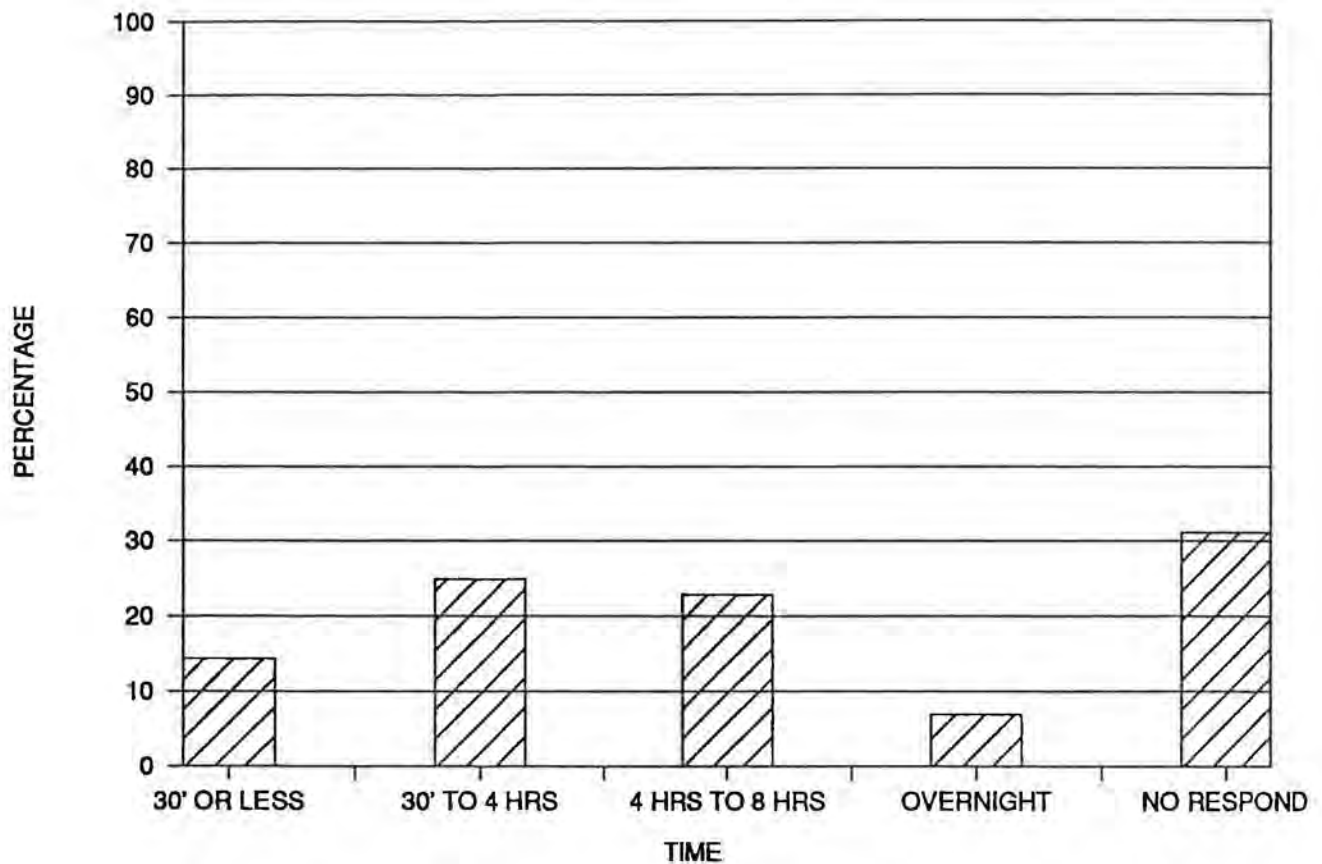
1 - NONE	55
2 - BRING BACK ABILITY TO HAVE PRIVATE CAMP	1
3 - WATER WELLS	1
4 - COUNTRY CAMPING SHELTERS	7
5 - BAR/CAFETERIA/REFRESHMENT STANDS	4
6 - MORE INTERPRETATIVE EXHIBITS	1
7 - SEARCH AND RESCUE DOGS	1
8 - BOAT RAMPS	2
9 - RESTROOMS	4
10 - GAME ROOM	1
11 - REST STOPS ON TRAIL	1
12 - BIRD WATCHING	1
13 - SHOWERS	1
14 - MORE ACCESS	1
15 - FISHING SHOPS	2
16 - SHADED AREAS	1
17 - TRUCK PARKING	1

* 65 % OF THE VISITORS THAT ANSWERED THIS QUESTION DO NOT WANT TO ADD FACILITIES

SURVEY OF USERS

16) WHEN DID YOU ARRIVE ?
17) WHEN WILL YOU LIVE ?

TIME IN THE PLACE



★ 7 % OF THE USERS STAY OVERNIGHT DURING SUMMER

SURVEY OF USERS

18) COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Oasis Visitor Center

- a. It is very important to preserve these parks. I commend what is being done now.
- b. Improve public relations.
- c. There are no designated trails
- d. I believe The State Game Commission should regulate all hunting in Big Cypress. I have hunted 20 years and never shot a deer but my freedom to hunt should not be taken away for any reason.
- e. Quit destroying what we have left. Just make it better.
- f. Preserve nature.
- g. Florida seems to go out of its way to be certain tourists are left feeling we are inconveniencing the residents. Twice we were told we had to do something and threatened with a penalty fine or no campsite without being told what we had done wrong or in advance what the rule was.
- h. The Everglades were a great disappointment. I really don't know about Big Cypress.
- i. Very pleasant reception at the Oasis Ranger Station.

Monroe Station

- a. Limits should be enforced on fishing in these areas.
- b. I have seen tremendous difference in our hounds ever since the 9 day hunt was initiated. In fact just in this last year we lost to death our oldest two hounds. I am sure they would have lived longer if they kept active.

Canal

- a. This is a wonderful place to spend with your family but it needs more facilities.
- b. Need of trash containers and clean up
- c. the trip is very relaxing.

State Road to Monument Lake

- a. Need of better sign.
- b. More information about the activities.
- c. Portable toilet
- d. Dumpster and camp.

Shark Valley

- a. Keep it the way it is.
- b. More primitive trails.
- c. Less development.
- d. Less garbage.
- e. More buses at different times.
- f. Mosquito net hats.
- g. Do not like the way the National Park is treating the Florida sportman, specifically trying to stop hunting and airboating in the east Everglades.
- h. Nice guides.
- i. It's great.

Sawgrass

- a. I would like to see the number of gar reduced in the canals.
- b. Remove gar from canals.
- c. Throw some bass in the canals.
- d. Since the change of management, I would return to this facility after an absence of some 5 years. The previous management has let this valuable asset to South Florida deteriorate to such an extent, that I have refrained from using it.

Corkscrew Sanctuary. Collier Seminole State Park.

- a. None

OBSERVATIONS

OBSERVATIONS

OBSERVATIONS

Observations were made at the 28 locations listed . To achieve this, 4 teams of 2 students each were formed and then were assigned several sites. In addition to other responsibilities, observations were made concerning the kinds of activities taking place at the site, aesthetics, maintenance and the kinds of facilities available.

Observations made at the following sites have a major impact on the uses taking place at the Big Cypress Preserve. These sites include:

Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary

Collier Seminole State Park

Everglades Chamber of Commerce

Wootens Airboat

Dona Dr. Campground

Ochopee Post Office

Private Campground

Williams Picnic Area

Burns Lake Campground

Starter Picnic Area

Monument Lake Campground

Loop Road

Monroe Station

Oasis Ranger Station

Midway Campground

Osceola's Village

50 Mile Bend Campground

Indian Village

Miccosukee Reservation

Canal

Restaurant

Airboat

Village

Rest/Gas

Shark Valley

Canal

Buffalo Tiger Airboat

Everglades Airboat

Everglades Safari

Frog City Airboat

Coopertown

Old Town Everglades

OBSERVATIONS

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In light of the information gathered from observations and interviews made at all of these sites on nine dates (June 11,18,30 and July 1,2,8,9,14,16) several generalizations were made possible. They are as follows:

- There are 13 public or governmentally owned sites.
- There are 12 privately owned sites.
- There are 3 quasipublic sites.
- A total 840 vehicles were counted, of which 792 (95%) were automobiles 17 (2%) campers, 17 (2%) O.R.V.'s, (1%) buses, and 3 horses. The automobile category was further broken down to include 167 rental cars which represent 21% of the automobiles in addition 15% were out of state vehicles, making a total of 36% of the vehicles as probably tourist oriented visitors.
- 506 vehicles were destination oriented and this covered 71% of the activity taking place in the area represented.
- Destination users are drawn from both coasts and they participate in a variety of activities such as fishing ,hiking and hunting.
- Windshield tourists vary seasonally with an increase from December through April.
- The numbers of hunters are not increasing.
- There is a uniform utilization of sites except for camp grounds on the weekends surveyed with the greatest number being fishermen which are locals from the east and west coasts.
- Users at private sites include 547 or 73% local users and 123 or 15% out-of-state users. The other 12% being public site users.
- Camping fishermen are repeated users, 71% visit more than 6 to 25 times per year.
- Fishing is greater along the canals at both ends of the study area, showing that residents of both coasts fish close to home. Canal fishing consists of single and multiple males and a few females.
- Private sites generate more than 70% of the users.
- Usage at the Everglades Chamber of Commerce is greater on the weekdays with more travellers and is estimated as 100,000 users annually.
- An estimated 350,000 people visit Big Cypress annually.
- There is an increase in tourists during school recess for the summer and holidays.
- Trash accumulation is prevalent at campgrounds indicating usage patterns and the need for facilities.
- Predominant activities include: sightseeing , bird watching , photography , hiking , camping , O.R.V. use , fishing , picnicking and bicycling.

OBSERVATIONS

OBSERVATION RESULTS

More detailed research took place at 8 popular locations. This research included observations, tracking and tracing, interviews and questionnaires. Some of the highlights are as follows:

CORKSCREW SWAMP SANCTUARY

- Quasi-public and operated by the National Audubon Society. Visitor use is confined to boardwalk which is a mile long and runs in a circular pattern. This confinement is to aid in the preservation of the Sanctuary.
- Visitor parking accommodations are located directly outside the Sanctuary entry.
- Upon entering the Sanctuary, you are drawn into a small building which contains a registration desk, a small hands-on nature exhibit, books, t-shirts, pictures and other items.
- Restrooms are located in a separate building near the entry.
- Upon paying a \$5.00 entry fee, you are issued a booklet describing and illustrating the elements that will be seen while walking the boardwalk.
- An information board located at the beginning of the boardwalk points out what animal life has been seen recently and lists the plants that are presently in bloom.
- There are periodic numbered points posted along the boardwalk which correspond to information in the booklet.
- The boardwalk also offers rest areas with trash receptacles and benches.
- Naturalists are available along the trail to answer any questions that visitor may have and to point out areas of interest.

COLLIER SEMINOLE STATE PARK

- Publicly owned.
- Known for its "Native Royal Palm Hammock" which has a small trail where guided tours by park rangers take place throughout the day. It can also be toured alone by visitors.
- There are two camping areas in the park with some sites having electrical hook-ups.
- There are also showers and restroom facilities along with a screened-in room containing tables and benches for eating.
- An actual "walking dredge" which was used to build U.S.41 is permanently mounted in the park. Parents stop and sit while children climb on it.
- There is a boat ramp and basin which a guided tour leaves from. Visitors can launch small boats and canoes can be rented to tour an established canoe trail.
- Boat tours visit surrounding flats.
- A picnic area and playground is located adjacent to the boat basin.
- An interpretative center that gives information on the ecological area is located near the Royal Palm Hammock.

LOOP ROAD

OBSERVATIONS

- A Public Road.
- It consists of half paved road and half rock road.
- There are several houses located along the road way but there was no activity taking place.
- No traffic on road.
- Litter was found occasionally along roadway.
- Primarily a narrow roadway with little or no place to pull off to the shoulder of the road.
- A scenicly beautifull ride.

MONROE STATION

- Privately owned.
- Primarily used as storage facility for O.R.V.'s and their owners vehicles when the O.R.V.'s are in use.
- Does very little business in the summer time.
- Can pick-up small general supplies.
- Has repeat customers.
- The only place in area to get something to drink or eat.

OASIS RANGER STATION

- Publicly owned.
- Restrooms and water fountain are the first facilities that visitors use upon entering the building.
- Visitors view most of the displays and book shelves, taking time to read display information.
- Most visitors were unaware that the Big Cypress existed before visiting or stopping by Oasis Ranger Station.
- Most visitors were unaware that a movie about Big Cypress was available for viewing unless a Ranger mentioned it.
- Of those who viewed the movie, most said that they really enjoyed it.
- Some people were hungry and wanted to buy something to eat or drink, but found no facilities for this purpose.
- Service counter had steady customer flow with many hunting license renewals and questions concerning directions taking place.
- Counter is sporadically busy.

MIDWAY PRIMITIVE CAMPGROUND

- Pubicly owned.
- Is not used much during summer months.
- Has nice lake to fish in.
- Trash is a very big problem.

OBSERVATIONS

- Trash piles have developed, especially under the camp site's signage because there are no receptacles in the area.

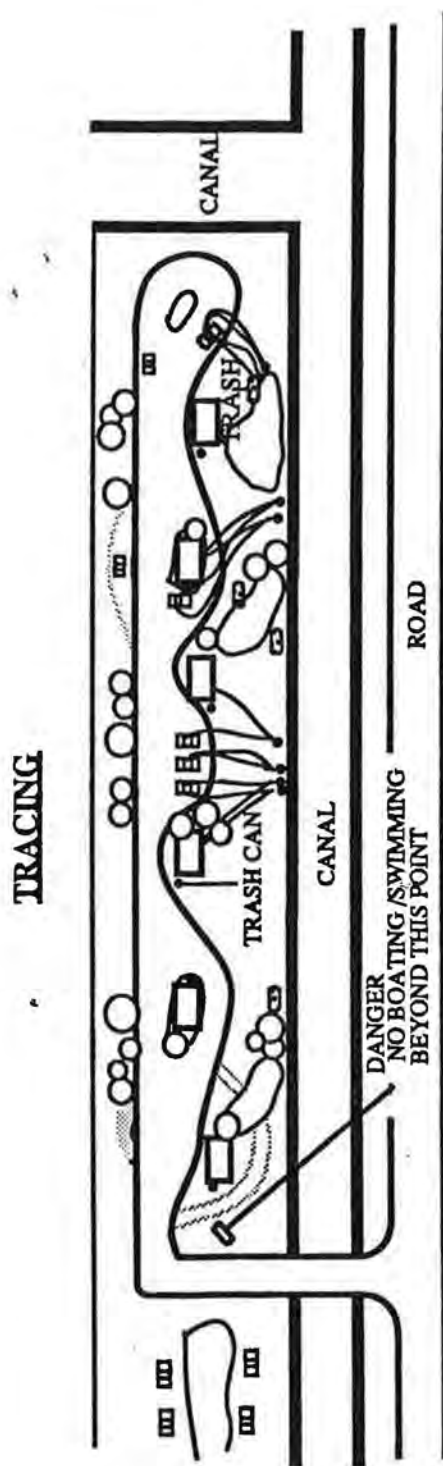
THE CANAL

- Public property.
- Canal area from Oasis Ranger Station through Francis S. Taylor wildlife management area is primarily used for fishing.
- Some people use the covered patios with tables and seating for picnics. These people include, those using the site for fishing and those stopping to rest.
- Trash receptacles are used, but are limited causing trash to overflow.
- Area is patrolled regularly by rangers.
- Boat launching and boating through canals takes place. People say that they want more boat ramps.
- Cars park anywhere along canal.

SHARK VALLEY

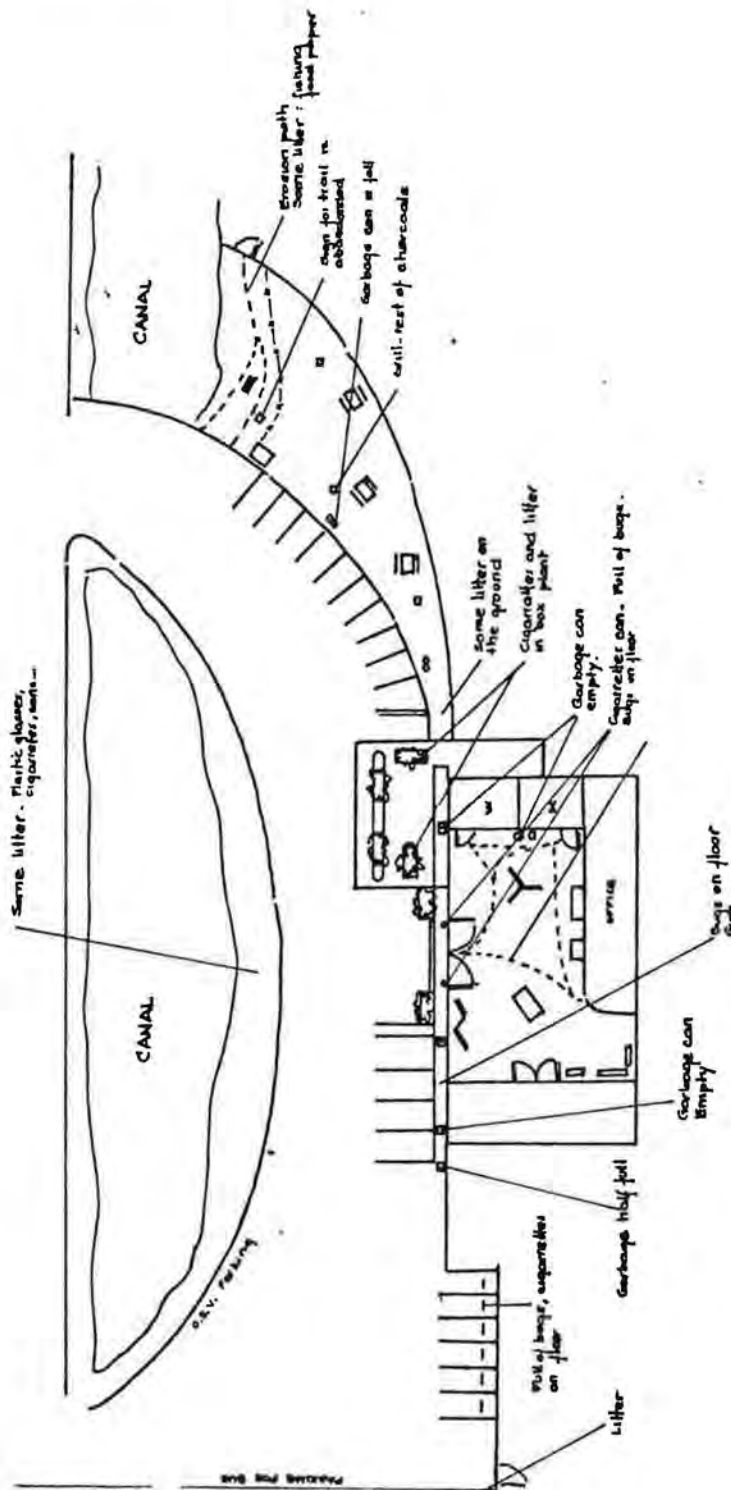
- Publicly owned.
- It was estimated in 1988 that 174,266 people visited the park.
- Activities at the park include tram tours, bicycle rentals, an information center, nature trails, ranger talks, guided walking tours and an observation tower.
- Facilities include restrooms and food machines.
- An estimated 11% of the visitors interviewed were bicyclists.
- There are a lack of facilities such as picnic tables to eat on and the lack of drinking fountains along the trails with the only fountain located in the rangers office.
- Restrooms are too small to accommodate mothers in need of a changing table for their babies.
- There is limited trash receptacles and existing ones are overflowing and have a strong odor.
- Cigarette butts are everywhere, especially in the gutters.
- Visitors comments included- wanting more guided walking tours, more primitive trails and waterfountains located through out the site.

OBSERVATIONS



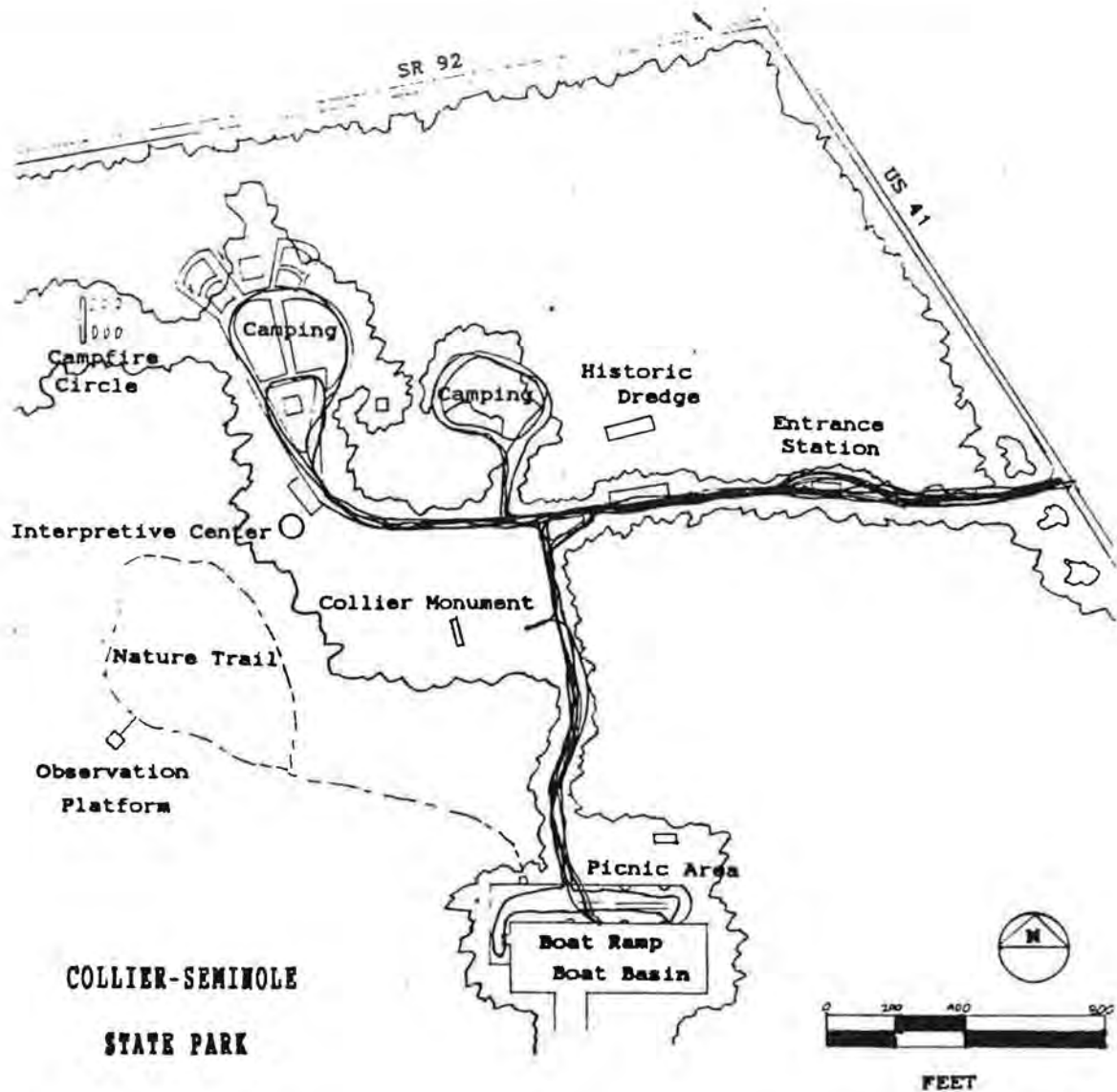
FRANCIS S. TAYLOR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA (CANAL)

OBSERVATIONS



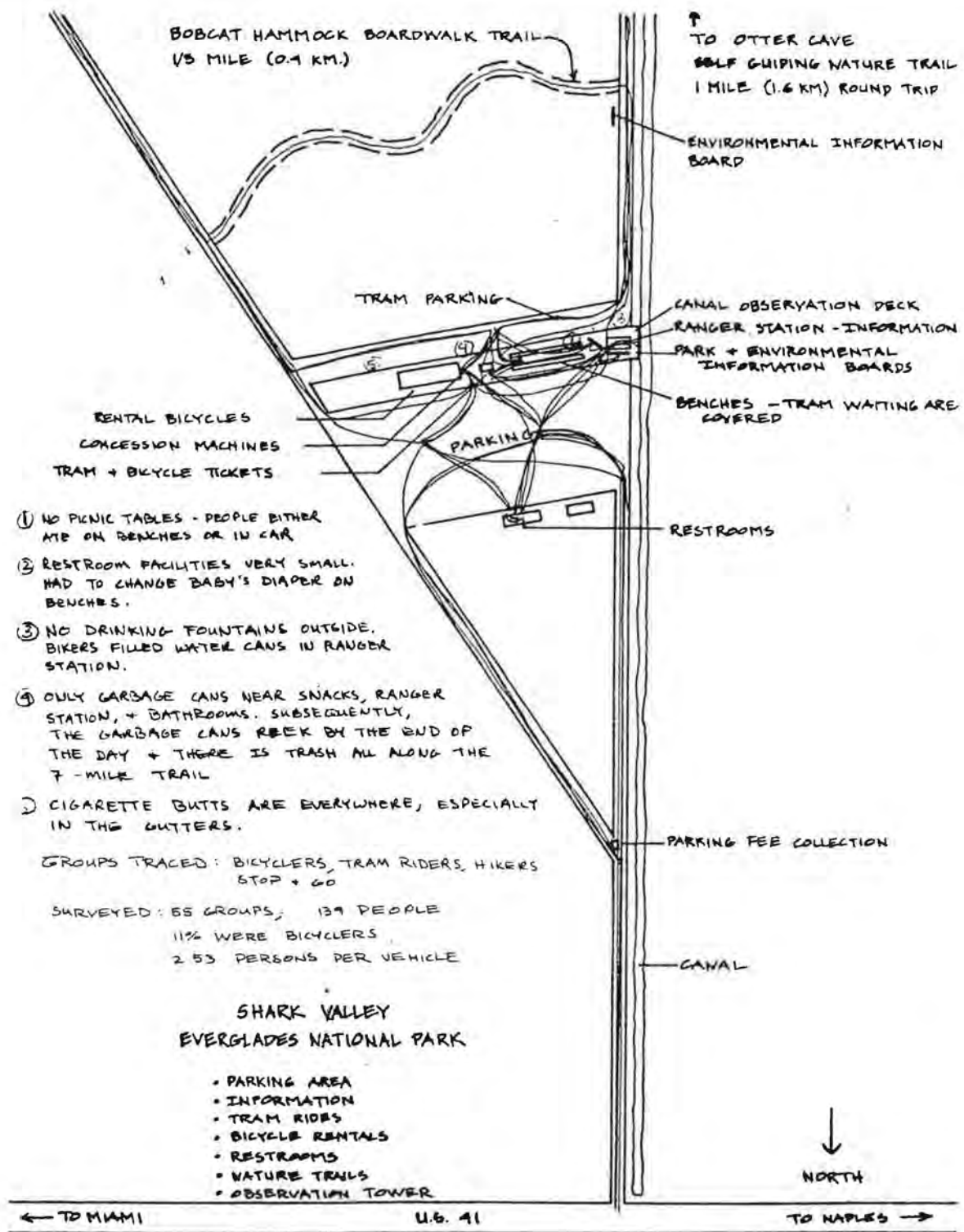
OASIS VISITOR CENTER - TRACING

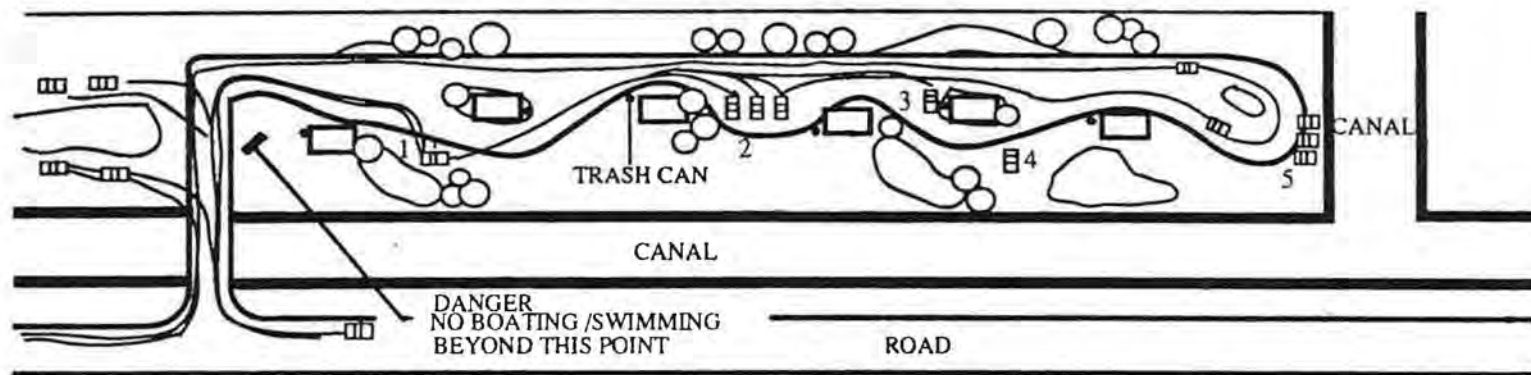
OBSERVATIONS



5 GROUPS ENTERED - WENT TO
BOAT BASIN
DROVE THROUGH ENTIRE
PARK

OBSERVATIONS



TRACKING

FRANCIS S. TAYLOR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA (CANAL)

GROUP #	ACTIVITY	NOTES
1	FISHING	FAMILY OF 3
2	FISHING	GROUP OF MEN 30'S
3	PICNIC	COUPLE IN THEIR 60'S
4	FISHING	FATHER AND SON
5	FISHING	2 COUPLES / 1 SINGLE

CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Just as the uses and users of South Florida have changed over time, so too do the visitors and their destinations evidenced by this preliminary study. Each decade since the completion of the arterial transversing the Everglades, US 41, has brought more intensive development of this area. From timber to oil, to ranching to land speculation and finally to tourism. South Floridians have sought to develop their surroundings to maximum benefit. Relatively recent changes in perception about the most valuable resource of all - water - has succeeded in creating recreational opportunities that hopefully will continue to be enhanced by prudent decision making and use.

The determining factors in South Florida's rapidly changing composition are the numbers of people and their demands on the environment. The traditional consumptive uses of resources, especially agricultural, industrial, and urban development, in proximity to the area included in this study, necessitates a rethinking of how we may best enlighten visitors about the educational and recreational opportunities available.

While the statistics obtained from the three sources (manager interviews, administered surveys and site observations) may have the potential to be manipulated, our purpose and intent are to present them as they relate to our perception of who users are, where they come from, why they are here and will they return.

We recognize the seasonal aspects of this informational gathering process as well as the inconclusive results it may yield, but we do believe it is indicative of a general trend indicating the composition of the emerging user groups. Although the numbers obtained from the observations and surveys are seasonal, the information shared by the managers is from over a period of many months and in some instances years. There exists varied reasons to create and opportunities for education and experience rather than merely observe the continued consumption of resources.

Greater than one half of those surveyed were first time visitors, with 65% arriving by auto. According to Florida department of Commerce figures between January and May 1990, 9 million tourists came by highway indicating that improved signage and vehicular access would be beneficial.

45% of the individuals polled, who indicated repeat visits, used facilities more than 6 times per year. They expressed an interest in upgrading the specific facilities at frequented locations.

The primary activities were sightseeing, fishing, and nature viewing. When giving a choice, hunting, O.R.V. and related activities were judged relatively unimportant. A recent survey published in "Florida Business Southwest Magazine", July '90, concurs with these findings in a

CONCLUSIONS

lifestyle index that rate fishing as a top ten activity while hunting and shooting were relegated to bottom ten status.

All managers reported either increasing or stable attendance with a rising attendance by European and summer visitors.

Universally, the administrators expressed an interest in expanding programs and facilities. Interpretative programs proved to be the most popular with users. Not surprisingly, increased promotion was proportionate to visitorship and name recognition.

The observation of 25 sites along US 41 between SR 29 and 27 indicated that nearly three quarters of the users at this time of the year traveled to multiple activity destinations. While Big Cypress Preserve facilities were relatively unused by comparison, the picnic areas reflected a situation where if the facility was occupied by one or more travelers it would attract additional users rapidly. Vacant sites generally remained unoccupied for long periods of time. As might be expected, on weekends, residents from both coasts ventured repeatedly to familiar locales, while tourists comprised the bulk of weekday users.

The completion of the Interstate 75 corridor is a variable in the user origin/access/destination profile. It creates additional opportunities to educate the potential visitors about the location and content of South Florida resource oriented facilities. While provisions in the GMP for Big Cypress Preserve will facilitate access for traditional seasonal activities such as hunting and related O.R.V. usage, surveys yielded figures (57%) indicating relative visitor misconception and unawareness about other aspects of Big Cypress Preserve. There were definite differences in the purposes of travel to the various sites. Residents from either coast primarily viewed it as an opportunity to engage in periodic consumptive usage, whereas, tourists sought to learn about the area and experience the hammocks, prairies and wetlands of the "original natural Florida". Many of the tourist users specifically sought to view and photograph the diverse wild life and vegetation.

While we are aware of the problems inherent in attempting to balance the requirements of resource management in Big Cypress Preserve against the demands of both the pre-existing and present uses, the results of our survey indicate an opportunity to further differentiate between the perceived and actual users. There exists an opportunity to experience viewing the incomparable mixture of flora and fauna in an historical perspective offered those who have come before. Big Cypress Preserve represents one of the last remaining opportunities to observe these diverse varieties of plant and animal life as a comparatively untouched ecological community.

Multiple activity oriented destinations generated the most user interest in this study. The enhancement of physical facilities and the creation of observation and interpretative experiences

CONCLUSIONS

in the vicinity of the Oasis Visitor Center and Loop Road at specific sites could generate greater numbers of users. Familiarity with the opportunities for use, the purposes of the Preserve, the varied aspects of management, research and administration of a facility of this size and complexity could increase the numbers of users and their understanding and identification with the Preserve. We believe that the increasing numbers of users and their familiarity will undoubtedly expand the numbers of benefactors and protectors of this facility and other South Florida resource oriented destinations. While the problem of mismanaged expectations regarding the function and purpose of the Preserve appears to be an unending dilemma - decisions of political expediency in contrast to resource management - future changes could be monitored and challenged by far greater numbers than by those who are presently familiar with the intent and realities in the administration of Big Cypress. Interpretative experiences and other opportunities to learn about the Preserve could foster a user concern that would demand increased cooperation of private and public agencies influencing the well being of the facility. While additional studies are essential to further define who users are, why they come, and how and where they would like to experience South Florida's unique ecosystem and climate, successful integration of users and spaces requires appropriate design of facilities respectful of the seasonal requirements of user numbers and activities.

Big Cypress Preserve has both special qualities and opportunities for visitors to this area. Appropriate promotion and public relations targeting some of the specific user groups that this study has identified, will increase the number of individuals allied with purpose of the Preserve as well as potentially mitigate further traditional user/administrator conflicts. The integration of various private concessions, public organizations and governmental agencies could benefit from accumulation of additional data and a more exciting user profile. Management decisions influenced by this information can enhance the accuracy of projections and the design of facilities to accommodate the increasingly diversified user groups. The assembled data identifies a user who may be satisfied with forms of access and use that are less disruptive of resources than traditional users and more tolerant of the pressures from conditions necessitated by an environmentally conscious perspective. The opportunity for increased education of visitors to this area affords the Park Service a means to heighten and direct public awareness concerning 1. the growing demands on varied resources, 2. the necessity for management decisions that safeguard the presentation of fragile ecosystems and 3. the fostering of user allegiance in support of opportunities associated with the Preserve.

While the survey does not address the user groups of other seasons, we anticipate that they will be equally cooperative in taking the time and making the effort to express desires for access and expectations within the facilities represented in our study. The increase in the numbers South Florida residents and visitors will create further competition for limited space and resources. The Florida Department of Commerce recently reported that 18.9 million tourists came to Florida in

CONCLUSIONS

the first 5 months of 1990. This represents a 7.3% increase over the same time period last year. By further identifying users and their needs and desires, administrative decisions may be implemented that potentially could lessen controversy among both user groups and between administrators and users. Additional information about these groups enhance the potential for amicable compromise on topics of contest. Further definition of users would enable recommendations that could influence the development of areas in proximity to Big Cypress that could provide visitor support facilities (Restaurants, accommodations, and other tourist destinations). Information about new users would afford decision makers additional input when balancing the needs of users with respect to the tolerances of the resources. Extremes of user perspectives are traditionally well represented in the decision making process in most public-government administration dialogues. The perception of public rights on public lands has historically proven to be a challenge to preserve administrators. Identifying and educating new users of the area may prove to be the Park Service's greatest asset in its implementation of management principles that guarantee future generations the same conditions as described in the Park Service brochure "the beauty of broad sweeps and limitless horizons; and the beauty of infinite miniature and interrelated worlds" that we enjoy today.

APPENDIX

INTERVIEW FOR MANAGERS

1. Date:
2. Name of the recreation area:
3. Name of the person interviewed:
4. Role/position of the person in the park.

PEOPLE

5. How many people visit the park in a year?
6. How does this number change overtime? Which is the peak season and why?
7. What is the maximum capacity of the park.
8. Who are the users of the park? Are the users coming alone or in groups? Are they from the same county, near by, another state or another country?

ACTIVITIES

9. What are the activities and facilities offered by the park?
10. Of those activities mentioned, which are most frequented by the users?
11. Are there any problems with these activities?

ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

12. Are there any problems with park access and/or circulation paths through the park (for both pedestrian and vehicles) in relation to the activities offered within the park?
13. Are there any problems with the parking facilities?

MAINTENANCE

- 14. Who is responsible for maintaining the park? Is maintenance done by in-house labor or by contract?
- 15. What do they do and when?
- 16. Are they using special equipment?
- 17. Are there problems with the maintenance of the park?

SECURITY

- 18. Is there a security force in the park? What type of security if any (patrol, electronics, entry only...)? If patrolled, how (by foot, motorcycle, boat, horse...)?
o7 3
- 19. When are they on duty (hour of operation)?
- 20. Is there evidence of security problems (ie.. vandalism)?

PROGRAMS

- 21. What kind of events or programs are held in the park? When?
- 22. Who is responsible for planning and running the programs?
- 23. Does the area function well during these events? Do these events require special space, access, lighting or other utilities?

OTHER

- 24. Are there any other problems in the park not already mentioned?
- 25. Are there future plans for the park (changes/addition of activities, roads/paths, entrances etc...)?

A REGIONAL STUDY SURVEY DETERMINING SOUTH FLORIDA RECREATIONAL PATTERNS



WHO ARE THE PEOPLE WHO USE THE SOUTH FLORIDA PARKS & RECREATIONAL FACILITIES?

A class study by students from Florida International University



WE ARE INTERESTED IN YOUR OPINIONS, NOT
IN WHAT INFORMATION YOU MAY OR MAY
NOT HAVE ABOUT THE TOPICS IN THE SURVEY.
I REALLY THINK YOU WILL FIND THE INTERVIEW
INTERESTING AND ENJOYABLE. IN A STUDY
SUCH AS THIS THERE ARE NO RIGHT AND
WRONG ANSWERS; WE ARE SIMPLY
INTERESTED IN LEARNING ABOUT YOU AND
HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THINGS.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND HAVE A
NICE DAY.

Florida International University, is conducting a study and analysis of the South Florida area to provide information to the leisure and recreation industry so they can better meet the wants and needs of you, the user.
Please answer the following questions and place in the box provided.

DAY:

TIME:

PLACE:

1) Is this your first visit to this park / recreation facility? () yes () no

2) If no, how many times did you visit this park last year? ()

3) Have you ever visited any of the following Everglades or Big Cypress facilities ?
(please check those that apply)

Shark Valley () Royal Palm Visitor Center () Flamingo () Roadside Parks ()
Everglades City Ranger Station () Oasis Visitor Center () Monroe Station ()
Primitive Campgrounds (Which one) Bear Island() 50 mile() Midway() Burns Lake()
Other (Please list).....

4) How many times did you visit other resource-oriented parks last year? ()

If yes , please list.....

5) What is your primary reason for visiting? (Check one)

hunting () camping () sightseeing () nature viewing () fishing ()
picnicking () air boating () hiking () bird watching () O.R.V. ()
other () which one?

6) Are you Florida Resident ? City () County ()

7) Are you Tourist ? City () State () Country ()

8) Please fill out the following questions

Male () Female ()

Age ()

Are you : white() black() oriental() American Indian () Spanish () Other.....

Marital status Single () Married ()

Income level : Which of this categories includes your annual family income ?

() Less than \$ 10,000

() \$20,000

() \$30,000

() \$40,000

() over \$50,000 .

Occupation

Please turn over

9) Rate the importance of the following outdoor activities that you may engage in.

(Check one column per activity)

	do not do	not important	important	very important
Hunting	()	()	()	()
Camping	()	()	()	()
Sightseeing	()	()	()	()
Nature viewing	()	()	()	()
Fishing	()	()	()	()
Picnicking	()	()	()	()
Air boating	()	()	()	()
Hiking	()	()	()	()
Bird watching	()	()	()	()
O.R.V.	()	()	()	()

Other - Please list

10) How did you travel to the preserve?

car () camper/camper trailer () truck\van () motorcycle () bicycle ()

Foot () Bus () Number of passengers () other

11) Number of males\emales in each age group

	male	female		male	female
0-9	()	()	30-44	()	()
10-19	()	()	45-64	()	()
20-29	()	()	65+	()	()

12) How did you hear about this park \recreation facility? (Check one)

() radio () tv () newspaper () magazine () Travel agency () Brochures ()
other

13) Have you ever heard of Big Cypress Preserve ? () How did you hear about it?.....

14) What activity (s) would you like to add ?.....

15) What facility(s) would you like to add ?

16) When did you arrive ? Day () Time ()

17) When will you leave ? Day () Time ()

18) Please use this space for additional comments and suggestions

If you have any question feel free to ask any interviewer

et al.

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- 56

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