

From Isle Royale

Initially purchased for administrative and payroll applications, Isle Royale's Datapoint 8620 Computer system is now being used for resources management applications as well. Located in the middle of Lake Superior, Isle Royale does not have direct telephone access to the main computer, which is located in Houghton, Mich. A terminal is hooked into the processor via a 1200 baud modem and radio telephone to run applications programs. The same terminal is also used as a "dumb tube" along with a matrix printer to connect with the AFFIRMS fire weather computer system.

The Datapoint system is largely business oriented, so software for resources management and scientific applications is practically nonexistent — particularly programs dealing with statistical analysis. Use of existing software largely focuses around Datapoint's Integrated Electronic Office System or Word Processor, whose benefits are obvious in the development and updating of resources management plans and reports. For example, Isle Royale now has a complete Park Bibliography, easily updated, of over 750 references which can be queried by key word or word combinations such as author or subject(s). This application has been particularly useful in responding to requests for specific information by the public or the research community.

Development of in-house computer programs at Isle Royale for resources management applications is in the beginning stages. Initial efforts are geared towards the analysis of visitor use data collected from the Backcountry and SCUBA diving permits. For example, a summary list of the number of dives made on each of the 30 shipwrecks and historic sites is being used to make decisions on the placement of mooring buoys to protect these significant cultural resources. Because of the time consuming nature of writing software, a "program to write programs" called DATAFAST is used to build the data entry portions of all programs.

Envisioned for the future are programs to develop data bases and do analysis on meteorological conditions, backcountry campsite conditions, and colonial bird rookeries.

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