



Nancy Lake State Recreation Area Management Plan



Planning Update October 2010

Overview

In early July the Department of Natural Resources released a questionnaire for the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area (NLSRA) and invited the public to participate in order to learn more specifically how NLSRA is accessed, used, and what types of activities and recreational facilities may be appropriate there. The questionnaire not only included questions about recreation and associated recreational development but also questions that were specific to landowners. These landowner-specific questions helped us understand where people own land, how long they have owned it, and what type of access methods they utilize to access their property. One hundred and fifty one individuals completed the questionnaire by the September 13th, 2010 deadline. The following paragraphs summarize the responses to the questionnaire.

What we heard

Nearly all respondents indicated they recreate, or have previously recreated, in NLSRA. Of the questionnaires received, slightly more than half were from landowners. The majority of respondents selected "Opportunity to escape urban environments", with "Own property in the area" and "Quiet natural setting" as their reason for recreating in NLSRA. More people indicated that they typically recreate in the summer or winter but responses indicated that use occurs throughout the year. Response to the question of where people have recreated was even with all areas being utilized. Top responses to the types of activities that people engage in were snowmobiling, canoeing, boating, fishing, and hiking. Examples of the responses included in the 'Others' category for this question included swimming, skijoring, ice skating, bird watching, and jet skiing.

Respondents were asked to select activities from a list that they felt were appropriate for the NLSRA, as well as activities they felt were inappropriate. Many respondents listed multiple selections for appropriate activities and chose not to select from the inappropriate list. Top selections for activities appropriate in NLSRA were hiking, cross-country skiing, camping, public use cabins, snowmobile riding and boating. Some examples of the write in responses under 'Other' for appropriate activities were All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) access to private property, non-motorized boating, fishing, hunting, ice skating, jet skiing, canoeing, geo-caching and quiet areas. The top selections for inappropriate activities were horse riding, dog training, float plane use, education & interpretive center and snowmobile riding. Some examples of write in responses under 'Others' for inappropriate activities included ATV's, jet skis, motorized boating, planes, fireworks, docks beyond 25' into lakes, street lights, RV's and barge/boat storage on park land.

Respondents were then asked to select what they like most, as well as what they like least about the NLSRA. Top choices for most liked were the quiet natural setting, remote canoeing & camping, and the diversity of recreational opportunities. Some examples of the write in responses under 'Others' for what they like most included snow-machine trails, fishing, boating, jet skiing, wildlife viewing and hunting. Top choices for the least liked were motorized use in the recreation area, crowding in the area of Nancy Lake Parkway and the lack of developed access. Some examples of write in responses under 'Others' for what they like least included ATV damaged trails, non enforcement of

noise ban after 10PM, lack of ATV summer access, snow cover limitations for snow-machine use, jet skiing & water skiing and boat docks beyond 25' into lakes. It was common to receive a questionnaire that selected boating or snowmobiling as activities needed or engaged in, and then select "Motorized Use" as the choice they liked least about the NLSRA. It's possible that some respondents distinguish "Motorized Use" as ATV's or Off Highway Vehicles (OHV's) from snowmobiling & boating from "Motorized Use" in the recreation area.

Question ten asked respondents about the amount of development that is appropriate for the NLSRA with the majority of responses being "Keep it near current levels" or "Increase it slightly" respectively. Questions 11 through 24 consisted of yes or no questions concerning specific development ideas within the NLSRA. Many of the selections were split down the middle, receiving fairly equal responses in support of or against, while a few selections were either strongly opposed, or strongly in favor. Some of the selections that respondents indicated support for were to expand the crosscountry ski trails north of Nancy Lake Parkway, skate skiing trails, looped snowmobile trails, develop the canoe trail system to a higher standard, back-country cabins, looped mountain bike trails, multi-use trail on East Red Shirt Lake & Chicken Lake Cross Park trail,' and interpretive/nature trails in the South Rolly Campground area. Some of the selections that respondents were opposed to were equestrian trails in the Nancy Lake Parkway area, higher level of development in the Lynx Lake Rd/ Butterfly Lake trail area, and a higher level of development in the Nancy Lake Parkway Corridor.

Part B of the questionnaire was land-owner specific, and as stated earlier slightly more than half of the questionnaires received were from land owners either within, contiguous or nearby the NLSRA. Most respondents owned land at Nancy Lake, Butterfly Lake and Redshirt Lake. The average length of time owning/accessing land in the area was 17 years, and 19 years respectively. The top 6 access methods for landowners are snowmobile in the winter, highway vehicle in summer, highway vehicle in winter, canoe in the summer, hiking in summer and power-boating in the summer. Sixty two percent of landowners utilize trails, launches or boat storage areas in the NLSRA to access their property, whereas only 34% utilize the boat launch and parking area of the Recreation Site to access their property.

Summary

DNR would like to thank all of those that took the time to fill out the questionnaire. Learning how the public uses and accesses an area to recreate is a critical part of the decision making process of a management plan. This questionnaire was not developed for rigorous statistical analysis and selections are not treated as votes but the input received is helpful and will be used as an additional tool to evaluate different alternatives and management options for the management plan revision.