
Survey of State Park Managers

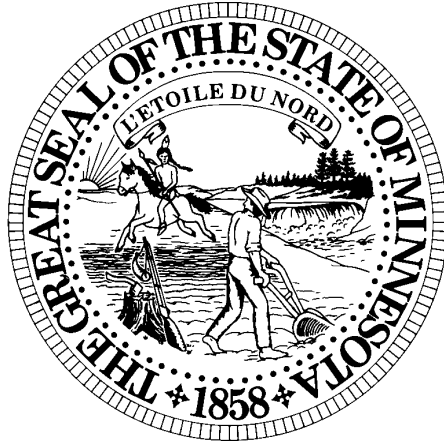
In August 1999, the Legislative Auditor's Office conducted a survey of state park managers. We asked park managers about the use of volunteers, state park budget and capital improvement procedures, park building conditions, educational services provided, problems in state parks, and other issues.

All state park managers responded to our survey.

Office of the Legislative Auditor

State Park Manager Questionnaire

August 1999



State Park

Park Manager

Please return in postage-paid envelope by August 23, 1999.

State of Minnesota
Office of the Legislative Auditor
Program Evaluation Division
Centennial Office Building First Floor South
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155
651/296-4708
FAX: 651/296-4712

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your responses to the following questions will help us understand how parks are managed and differences among the parks.

Please answer the questions specifically for the park identified on the cover page. As the park manager, you may answer all questions or you may work with other staff in the park to complete the questionnaire. If any of your answers require additional explanation, feel free to provide the explanation in the margins, at the end of the questionnaire, or on a separate sheet of paper.

Please return the completed survey by August 23, 1999 in the envelope provided.

Please print your name

Signature

Date

1. **How long have you been employed by the Department of Natural Resources?** _____ years
2. **How long have you been the manager at this park?** _____ years
3. **How many seasonal staff positions (employees, not full-time equivalents) were funded from the following sources during the *summer* of 1998?**
 - a. Greenvew _____
 - b. Work experience _____
 - c. Part-time labor _____
 - d. Other, specify: _____
4. **Please complete the following for seasonal part-time labor for calendar years 1998 and 1999.**
 - a. Number of 1998 seasonal part-time labor staff _____
 - b. Number of 1999 seasonal part-time labor staff _____
 - c. Number of seasonal part-time labor staff employed in 1998 returning in 1999 _____
5. **Considering that volunteers are not used to operate the park, to what extent are volunteers helpful in accomplishing the types of work they can do?**
 - ① Very helpful
 - ② Somewhat helpful
 - ③ Neither helpful nor unhelpful
 - ④ Somewhat unhelpful
 - ⑤ Very unhelpful
 - a. **If volunteers are not helpful, please explain.**

Please review the following information from the parks division database for this park's volunteers and volunteer hours for calendar year 1998 and correct any inaccuracies.

Unpaid Volunteers CY1998			"Paid Volunteers" CY1998		
	<u>Persons</u>	<u>Hours</u>		<u>Persons</u>	<u>Hours</u>
Campground hosts	#	#	Sentencing to Service	#	#
Park Partners	#	#	MN Conservation Corps	#	#
Scout troops	#	#	Paid youth crews	#	#
School groups	#	#	Other	#	#
Community groups	#	#	TOTAL	#	#
Other	#	#			
TOTAL	#	#			

State Park

The next two questions ask about how this park uses unpaid volunteers such as campground hosts, Park Partners, scout troops, school groups, and other community groups.

6. Please list up to five tasks performed by unpaid volunteers from most to least common. Examples of volunteer tasks include: campground host, office help, visitor center host, interpretive assistance, brush clearing, seed collection, tree planting, or trail clearing.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

7. What factors limit this park's use of unpaid volunteers? (Check all that apply.)

- a. ☐ No factors limit this park's use of volunteers
- b. ☐ Individuals or groups don't volunteer
- c. ☐ Supervising volunteers takes too much time
- d. ☐ Available work requires skills that volunteers don't have
- e. ☐ Use of volunteers would affect employee hours
- f. ☐ Unions oppose the use of volunteers
- g. ☐ Other, specify: _____

The next three questions ask about how this park uses "paid volunteers" such as Sentencing to Service, Minnesota Conservation Corps, and paid youth crews.

8. Please list up to five tasks performed by "paid volunteers" from most to least common. Examples of volunteer tasks include: brush clearing, seed collection, soil erosion monitoring, tree planting, constructing camper cabins, trail development, or trail clearing.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

9. **What factors limit this park's use of "paid volunteers"?** *(Check all that apply.)*
- a. ☐ No factors limit use of volunteers
 - b. ☐ Supervising volunteers takes too much time
 - c. ☐ Available work requires skills that volunteers don't have
 - d. ☐ Use of volunteers would affect employee hours
 - e. ☐ Unions oppose the use of volunteers
 - f. ☐ Other, specify: _____
10. **Please check all factors that limit this park's use of Sentencing to Service (STS) crews.**
- a. ☐ Nearby counties do not have STS programs
 - b. ☐ STS crews must travel too far, incurring substantial costs
 - c. ☐ The STS program does not select all of this park's projects
 - d. ☐ There are difficulties with county supervision of STS crews
 - e. ☐ Other, specify: _____
11. **How adequately would the minimum operating standards reflect the seasonal work requirements of this park if they were fully funded?**
- ① Completely adequate
 - ② Moderately adequate
 - ③ Barely adequate
 - ④ Inadequate
 - ⑤ Completely inadequate
12. **Overall, how adequate is the park budget, including staff hours, supplies, and equipment, to operate the park?**
- ① Completely adequate
 - ② Moderately adequate
 - ③ Barely adequate
 - ④ Inadequate
 - ⑤ Completely inadequate
13. **Once the operating budget is set for the park, how much discretion do you have to manage this park?**
- ① Complete discretion
 - ② Moderate discretion
 - ③ Barely adequate discretion
 - ④ Almost no discretion

14. What, if anything, would you like to change about the parks division's minimum operating standards and budget process?

15. How many buildings in this park are used to provide services for park visitors? Examples include the contact station, visitor center, bath houses, and toilets.

Number of public-use buildings = _____

16. How many buildings in this park are used to support park operations? Examples include storage sheds and garages.

Number of administrative buildings = _____

17. Please rate the overall physical condition of the facility types listed below by assigning the percentage of the facility square footage best described by each of the ratings categories. For example, if all of your sewage and water systems are in excellent condition, enter 100% in the "Satisfactory" category in the "Sewage and water systems" category. *(Consider only the facility's condition and not any desired improvements, additions, or modernization unless necessary to keep the building operating as it was designed or to ensure adequate health and safety.)*

For the purposes of this questionnaire, please use the following definitions of facility condition.

Satisfactory: good to excellent condition, facility is usable with no threatened structural or system component failure.

Marginal: fair condition, building is usable but one or more components are deteriorated or likely to fail.

Unsatisfactory: one or more components have failed and building use is limited.

FACILITY CONDITION RATING

<u>Facility Type</u>	<u>Satisfactory</u>	<u>Marginal</u>	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>
Public-use buildings	17a1 _____ %	17a2 _____ %	17a3 _____ %	17a4 _____ %	= 100 %
Administrative buildings	17b1 _____ %	17b2 _____ %	17b3 _____ %	17b4 _____ %	= 100 %
Sewage & water systems	17c1 _____ %	17c2 _____ %	17c3 _____ %	17c4 _____ %	= 100 %
Electrical service	17d1 _____ %	17d2 _____ %	17d3 _____ %	17d4 _____ %	= 100 %
Roads and parking lots	17e1 _____ %	17e2 _____ %	17e3 _____ %	17e4 _____ %	= 100 %

18. How satisfied are you with the parks division's capital improvement project evaluation process (PEP)?

- ① Completely satisfied
- ② Somewhat satisfied
- ③ Unsure
- ④ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ⑤ Completely dissatisfied

19. How knowledgeable are you about how project priorities are set and changed on the most recent capital improvement project list?

- ① Very knowledgeable
- ② Moderately knowledgeable
- ③ Somewhat knowledgeable
- ④ Little or no knowledge

Please answer the following two questions based on this year's final capital improvement project list.

20. How satisfied are you with the ranking of this park's projects relative to one another?

- ① Completely satisfied
- ② Somewhat satisfied
- ③ Unsure
- ④ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ⑤ Completely dissatisfied

21. How satisfied are you with the ranking of this park's projects relative to projects in other parks?

- ① Completely satisfied
- ② Somewhat satisfied
- ③ Unsure
- ④ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ⑤ Completely dissatisfied

22. If you are dissatisfied with the capital improvement process, please explain.

23. Does this park have a visitor center?

- ① Yes ② No

a. If YES, which of the following options best describes the building used for the visitor center?

- ① The center is located in a free-standing building
② The center is part of the contact station
③ Other, specify: _____

24. Does the center include space for naturalist-led activities?

- ① Yes ② No

25. Does the center include non-staffed interpretive exhibits?

- ① Yes ② No

26. How is the visitor center staffed? (Check all that apply.)

- a. ☐ Seasonal employee(s)
b. ☐ Volunteer(s)
c. ☐ Park staff as part of the contact station
d. ☐ Other, specify: _____

27. What months is the visitor center open? (List all months.)**28. What days is the visitor center typically open in the summer? (Check all that apply.)**

- a. ☐ Monday
b. ☐ Tuesday
c. ☐ Wednesday
d. ☐ Thursday
e. ☐ Friday
f. ☐ Saturday
g. ☐ Sunday

29. What hours is the visitor center typically open in the summer?

- a. Weekdays (Monday–Friday) _____
b. Weekends (Saturday and Sunday) _____

- 30. What naturalist or interpretive programming does this park offer?** *(Check all that apply.)*
- a. ☐ Year-round naturalist-led programming
 - b. ☐ Seasonal naturalist-led programming
 - c. ☐ Occasional staffed programming
 - d. ☐ Non-staffed interpretive services (including exhibits, self-guided trails)
- 31. How many different types of naturalist-led activities did this park offer in calendar year 1998?** For example, bird watching is one type of activity.
Number of types of activities in 1998 = _____
- 32. What is the total number of naturalist-led programs provided in calendar year 1998?** For example, weekly bird watching for ten weeks equals ten programs.
Number of programs in 1998 = _____.
- 33. Are any naturalist or interpretive services performed by volunteers?**
- ① Yes ② No
- 34. How well do this park's naturalist/interpretive programs meet park visitor demand?**
- ① Programs do not meet demand; many visitors are turned away
 - ② Programs meet demand; almost all interested visitors can be accommodated
 - ③ Programs are rarely full
- 35. Please specify any naturalist/interpretive programs that usually do not meet demand.**
- 36. Please list the resource management projects undertaken in this park during fiscal year 1999.** Examples might include prairie restoration or exotic species control. *(Use a separate sheet of paper if necessary.)*

37. When does this park use self-registration for day visitors and campers? *(Check all that apply.)*

- a. ☐ Never
- b. ☐ Summer weekdays
- c. ☐ Summer weekends
- d. ☐ Summer after hours
- e. ☐ Fall and spring weekdays
- f. ☐ Fall and spring weekends
- g. ☐ Fall and spring after hours
- h. ☐ Other, specify: _____

38. If there is a campground in this park, what dates will you open and close the sanitation buildings (showers and toilets) serving the campground this year?

- a. Date opened _____
- b. Date closed _____

39. Is there sufficient demand to operate the campground for a longer season next year?

- ① Yes ② No ③ Unsure

- a. If YES, explain _____

40. How do you seek customer feedback? *(Check all that apply.)*

- a. ☐ Feedback not actively sought
- b. ☐ Comments on camper cards
- c. ☐ Comment cards
- d. How are these distributed? _____
- e. Where is the drop-box located? _____
- f. ☐ Oral communication
- g. ☐ Other, specify: _____

41. How do you estimate or calculate the following types of visits? If you correct or adjust initial counts, please provide detail.

- a. Cars _____
- b. Buses _____
- c. Bicycles, Hikers _____
- d. Snowmobiles/skiers _____
- e. Campers _____

42. How frequently do the following problems occur for this park? *(Circle the number corresponding to the most appropriate response.)*

	<u>Daily</u>	<u>Weekly</u>	<u>Monthly</u>	<u>Once or Twice a Season</u>	<u>Almost Never</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>
a. Persons without permits	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. Drunkenness	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. Vandalism	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. Excessive noise	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. Pet-related problems	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. Other, specify:	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. Other, specify:	1	2	3	4	5	6

43. Do you feel you have the resources (training, staff, and equipment) necessary to provide an appropriate level of law enforcement in this park?

① Yes ② No ③ Unsure

a. If NO, what additional resources do you need?

44. Does this park have a written emergency response plan?

① Yes ② No ③ Unsure

45. What community organizations do you work with to market this park? *(List all organizations.)*

46. Are you aware of any discussions for the future expansion of the statutory boundaries for this park?

① Yes ② No ③ Unsure

a. If YES, describe.

47. Do you have privately-owned land within the statutory boundaries of this park?

① Yes ② No ③ Unsure

a. If YES, what problems, if any, does this land create?

All responses to items 48, 49, and 50 below will be maintained as confidential in our files. Responses to these items will not be disclosed to the public even after the end of the project.

48. How satisfied are you with your working relationships with parks' staff in the regional office?

- ① Completely satisfied
- ② Somewhat satisfied
- ③ Unsure
- ④ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ⑤ Completely dissatisfied

a. If you are dissatisfied, please explain.

49. How satisfied are you with your working relationships with parks' staff in the central office?

- ① Completely satisfied
- ② Somewhat satisfied
- ③ Unsure
- ④ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ⑤ Completely dissatisfied

a. If you are dissatisfied, please explain.

50. Please include any other comments or concerns about how state parks are managed. (Use the reverse side if necessary.)

Please use the enclosed postage-paid envelope to return your completed form by August 23, 1999.

Centennial Office Building First Floor South
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155
651/296-4708
FAX: 651/296-4712

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

If you have any questions, please call Jan Sandberg, at 651-297-1245.

Code#