

Jackson Hole Research Station Annual Report

Volume 1976 *Jackson Hole Biological Research
Station - Annual Report - 1976*

Article 13

1976

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Recommended Citation

Warder, Donald S. (1976) "The Perception of the Floating Experience by the Private Floater on the Snake River in Grand Teton, National Park, Wyoming," *Jackson Hole Research Station Annual Report*: Vol. 1976, Article 13.
Available at: http://repository.uwyo.edu/jhrs_reports/vol1976/iss1/13

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THE PERCEPTION OF THE FLOATING EXPERIENCE BY
THE PRIVATE FLOATER ON
THE SNAKE RIVER IN GRAND TETON, NATIONAL PARK, WYOMING

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This is a report on the preliminary findings and procedure of our study conducted in Summer 1975 in cooperation with the National Park Service for a management plan of the Snake River.

Introduction

In Grand Teton National Park, one of the most exciting experiences that a visitor can have is floating the Snake River; even though not far removed from the road while floating, one has the impression of being deep in the wilderness. In the past decade private floating within the Park boundaries has increased six-fold, and this use is expected to continue to increase in the future. This study is investigating the recreational social carry capacity, the amount and kind of use an area can support over time without causing an unacceptable change in the experience, of the Snake River by investigating the two user groups, the commercial floater and the private floater.

Specific Objectives

- A. A comparison of the perceived overall satisfaction with the floating experience by the user groups, i.e. commercial versus private.
- B. A perception analysis of those qualities that constitute a quality floating experience (i.e. sights, sounds, and crowding).
- C. To analyze the floaters' management preferences (i.e. access, camping, stopping along river, launching, etc.).
- D. To determine the behavior habits of the private floater.
- E. To determine the personalogical data on the user groups.

Progress to Date

Names and addresses of 230 private floaters were collected during the expected peak floating period within the park. Contacts were made at 3 of

the 4 access points to the Snake River within the Park. The access at the dam site was not included since its use is almost non-existent. All floaters (230) who agreed to participate were mailed questionnaires on or before September 10, 1976. The responses are now being received. Based on our return rate, we expect to receive approximately 75% of our questionnaires.

A similar analysis was conducted in 1974 on commercial floaters. The results of that study will be compared to the results of this year's investigation. The anticipated completion date is December, 1976. The total analysis, private floater responses from 1976 as well as the comparison of commercial floaters from 1974 to the private floaters in 1976 will be presented to the Superintendent of Grand Teton National Park in order to assist in the development of a master plan for the management of the Snake River.