Crowding, Conflict & Displacement

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Crowding, Satisfaction & Displacement

- The link between crowding and satisfaction is often very weak.
- Satisfaction depends upon more than crowding.
- People will re-define their expectations to match the situation they encounter.
- “Displacement” and the “Last Settler Syndrome” result

Displacement

- Recreation Displacement is the decision to change your behavior caused by adverse changes in the recreation environment.
- Other causes of displacement:
  - Age
  - Family life cycle
  - Career
  - Residency
Last Settler Syndrome

Even though the setting has changed considerably, at any point in time, most visitors express high levels of satisfaction. **WHY?**

Those dissatisfied with the changes have been displaced; those remaining judge the existing setting based upon how they first encountered it.

What is the Role of Crowding?

Crowding involves **Privacy / Personal Space / Territoriality**

**Privacy** -- an interpersonal boundary process by which a person or group regulates interaction with others.

**Personal Space** -- the area immediately surrounding the body where a person alters their distance & angle of orientation from others to control level of desired interaction.

What is Crowding?

**Territoriality** -- behaviors that include possession, marking, & defense of objects and areas.

Commonly exhibited examples in recreation settings:
- beach blanket, picnic table w/picnic basket
- camp chair, tent, cooking gear
"Crowding" Defined

- Density = Number of people per area
- Crowding results when your achieved level of privacy is less than your desired level of privacy
- Different norms for:
  - Place
  - Season
  - Activities

A Model of Crowding

Socially Isolated
(Achieved privacy more than desired)

Desired Privacy (ideal)

Interpersonal control mechanisms:
- Personal Space
- Territoriality
- Verbal & non verbal behavior

Crowded
(Achieved privacy less than desired)

The Role of Solitude

- Solitude varies with the setting
- "True Solitude" = Complete Social Isolation
- Paradox of Solitude
  - People want to be "Alone with Others"
- "Backcountry Solitude" = Achieving the desired level of privacy (isolation) for you and your group.
What is Recreation Conflict?

- Is it just one activity pitted against another?
- Is it just a question of motor versus muscle?
- Does it mean that all skiers hate all snowboarders?
- Does it mean that different activities can never co-exist?

For an individual, conflict is defined as goal interference attributed to another's behavior.

Not the same as competition for scarce resources or opportunities.

Conflict is a special class of user dissatisfaction, where the cause of one's dissatisfaction is identified as another group or individual's behavior.
Factors Affecting Recreation Conflict

- **Experience levels**
  - more experienced users are more sensitive to higher densities of use.

- **Characteristics of those encountered**
  - perceptions of alikeness
  - similar mode of travel
  - smaller parties are preferred

- **Asymmetric antipathy** (unequal impact)

Factors Affecting Recreation Conflict

- **Location of encounters**
  - less tolerant near campsites
  - more tolerant at portals and along trails

- **Activity specialization**
  - intensity of participation (central life interest)
  - longer experience
  - higher skill level
  - more specialized equipment
  - more specific resource dependency

Factors Affecting Recreation Conflict

- **Lifestyle Tolerance** -- the tendency to accept or reject lifestyles different from one's own.

- **Situational Group Norms** - following the crowd, taking cues from the reaction of others around you.
Reactions to Recreation Conflict

*Stereotyping* -- asymmetrical disruptions may lead to blanket accusations.

*Scapegoating* -- the process whereby feelings of personal frustration or failure are projected onto another.

*Displacement or Anti-Social Behavior*