

Flambeau River State Forest

2006 River Survey Results

Methods

Results from the 1986 and 2006 aerial survey were combined with the results from the 2006 written survey.

General Results

Trends from the Upper Flambeau River

- Number of watercraft on the river is up 2% from 1986
- Number of vehicles is down 17% from 1986
- Number of crafts associated with camping is **down 66%** from 1986
 - The state forest does not currently maintain camping areas on the upper portion of the river.
- The Upper Flambeau was not targeted for the written survey.

Trends from the South Fork of the River

- Number of watercraft on the river is **down 45%** from 1986
- Number of vehicles at landings is up 17% from 1986
- Number of crafts associate with camping is **down 72%** from 1986
 - The state forest does not currently maintain camping areas on the South Fork of the river.
- The South Fork was not targeted for the written survey.

Trends from the Entire North Fork of the River

- Number of watercraft on the river is down 3% from 1986
- Number of vehicles at landings is up 27% from 1986
- Number of crafts associated with camping is down 3% from 1986
- Over 70% of reported group size was between 1 and 8 people. 80% of those surveyed responded that they were not part of an organized group.
- 34% of respondents said they were on their first visit to the Flambeau River. 61% said they had visited the property less than 5 times.
- Wanting to canoe or boat on a wild and scenic river was chosen as the main reason people visited the Flambeau River at 27% of all respondents.
- The most popular campsite along the river was Cedar Rapids with 30% of campers reporting that they chose to stay at this site. Bear Run and Hervas Landing were both identified by more than one group of campers as being hard to find.
- 94% of groups ranging from 1 to 8 people felt that based on the number of people in their group, the size of the campsite they chose was appropriate. In groups withy more than 9 people no group reported that their campsite was too large indicating that in general campsites max out at around eight or nine people.
- Overall, 75% of campers were generally satisfied with the visual appearance of their campsite. The two highest rated campsites in the 'acceptable' category were County Line and Wannigan. Both scored 100%. 7% of campers also rated Cedar Rapids in the 'very degraded' category, which was the only campsite to receive a rating in that category.
- When asked what visitors would like to see happen to the more frequently used campsites 22% would like to see more campsites added, while 23% would like to see a limit on campers or group size. 45% said no changes were needed.
- When grouped by topic 22% of visitors reported that trash in the river and unpleasant interactions with other visitors negatively affected their experience on the river. However, 22% also reported positive comments about the staff.
- 96% of all river visitors responded and rated how strongly they favored or opposed specific management activities along the Flambeau River corridor. All four management activities were generally favored.
- 49% of campers reported that weather and/or nature related events negatively affected their experience. Additionally, 20% of river-goers also reported that unpleasant interactions with other visitors negatively affected their experience.

Trends from the North Fork, North of HWY W

- Number of watercraft on the river is up 19% from 1986
- Number of vehicles at landings is **up 47%** from 1986
 - Landings in this section include: Nine Mile, Deadman's, Dix Dox, & Babb's Island
- Number of crafts associated with camping is **up 31%** from 1986
 - Camping areas in this section include: County Line, Oxbo, Log Creek, & Mason Creek

Trends from the North Fork, South of HWY W

- Number of watercraft on the river is down 15% from 1986
- Number of vehicles at landings is up 16% from 1986
 - Landings in this section include: Highway W, Camp 41, Hervas, & Beaver Dam.
- Number of crafts associated with camping is down 17% from 1986
 - Camping areas in this section include: Headquarters, Boy Scout, George's Island, Camp 41, Wannigan, Forks, Bear Run, Hervas, & Cedar Rapids.

Conclusions

Camping along the River:

- The most popular campsite along the river was Cedar Rapids with 30% of campers reporting that they chose to stay at this site. This camping area is the last one located on the North fork, south of HWY W, within the state forest boundary. 7% of campers also rated Cedar Rapids in the 'very degraded' category, which was the only campsite to receive a rating in that category. This section, as identified by the aerial survey, is the most popular stretch of the river for camping.
- Bear Run and Hervas Landing were both identified by more than one group of campers as being hard to find. These two areas are located within close proximity to each other along the North Fork, south of HWY W.
- Overall, 75% of campers were generally satisfied with the visual appearance of their campsite. The two highest rated campsites in the 'acceptable' category were County Line and Wannigan. Both scored 100%. The County Line site is located on the North Fork, north of HWY W. This section sees considerably less camping than south of HWY W which may be by the condition of the site was so much higher than others. Wannigan is located south of HWY W but according to the written survey only 5% of those who responded chose to camp at this location. The relatively lower level of use at this site may also be the reason it scored so well.

Watercraft along the River

- The slight decrease of watercraft along the North Fork, south of HWY W may be due to over use. Many people found littler along the river and negative interactions with other river users to be a problem. These two complaints can be associated over crowding or over use of an area.

Vehicles at Boat Landings

- Not counting the landing at HWY W, there are three boat landings to the north and three to the south along the North Fork. With just under a 50% jump in use since 1986, the landings in the north totaled 237 observed vehicles to over take the 231 vehicles observed in the south. This reinforces the idea that this section of the river is mostly used for those looking for a day trip.