

Staff Paper Series

Staff Paper P77-3

February 1977

THE CRANE LAKE CONNECTION

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I. Introduction and Scope

The purpose of this report is two-fold:

- To provide current estimates of the recreational activities, or uses in the newly-established Voyageurs National Park that are dependent upon Crane Lake as a means of access or source of supplies.
- To examine Crane Lake as an operating community in relationship to its physical resource base, its service to the larger society, and to the public services and agencies with which it must interact.

Data upon which use estimates are based was assembled by the authors in cooperation with business operators, agencies and individual citizens of Crane Lake. This was done in the Spring of 1976.

The data that are developed here can:

- Provide a benchmark measure against which change can be measured.
- Assist governmental agencies in developing facilities and policies.
- Serve as a guide to Crane Lake business operators.

The treatment of Crane Lake as a community is far from comprehensive. At best, the report only highlights some of the potentials and problems. Its purpose will have been served if it helps to stimulate constructive discussion of Community goals among Crane Lake

Citizens and between the community and the several agencies with which it must interact.

II. The Crane Lake Setting

Crane Lake occupies one of the most unique recreational access sites in North America. Through Sand Point and Namakan Lakes it serves as the southeastern entrance to the Voyageurs National Park. It is the western entrance to the million-acre Boundary Waters Canoe Area. It is an international boundary-crossing point and provides access to the adjacent Canadian wilderness which includes Quetico Provincial Park. It is situated along the traditional route of the Voyageurs and within a northern woods and waters near-wilderness.

Its location is isolated at the end of county highway 24. The nearest incorporated area is Orr -- at a distance of over 30 miles. Human population of the area is sparse since the land is used almost exclusively for forestry and recreation and almost no other industry exists within 60 miles.

The vastness of apparently undeveloped land contributes to its visitor's image of being in a remote wilderness area. This factor adds flavor to the experience of visiting Crane Lake and, through it, gaining access to the Voyageurs National Park or the Boundary Waters Canoe Area.

III. Estimates of Recreational Uses of the Region That are Based in Services From or Access to the Area Through Crane Lake.

Voyageurs National Park was officially designated in 1975. Already it has national appeal even though limited park facilities were available in 1976.

The figures that are given below provide a benchmark measure against which growth of activity in the Voyageurs National Park area and other parts of the region about Crane Lake can be measured. They may also be used as policy guides by agencies and individuals operating in the area. Estimates are for 1975. Two kinds of estimates are made.

An Overall Estimate of all Crane-Lake Based Recreational Activity

This estimate measures all people-activity. It thus establishes an upper limit for people-pressure from Crane Lake upon any part of the resource. Total person-days by all people in the area are computed, based upon persons served through the Crane Lake Post Office.

	<u>Person days</u>
3 months, peak period 90 days x 3000 people	270,000
2 months, limited recreation period 60 days x 1500 people	90,000
7 months, year round residents 220 Indians, 80 others, 210 days x 300	60,000
Total person days	<u>420,000</u>

The reader should note that although this is an approach to a comprehensive estimate, it is almost certainly conservative. It will not include day users who live outside the Crane Lake Star Route. There are also numerous visitors who do not make use of the postal services; among these will be those who embark through Crane Lake without making specific contact there.

The area covered includes the Crane Lake Star Route, plus second homes from Crane Lake north into Namakan Lake, those camping, canoeing outfitted and flown in from Crane Lake Services to Canada (mainly Quetico area) North to Namakan Lake and East to Lac La Croix and other parts of the BWCA and nearby Canadian Woods and waters. Resorts in Sand Point and Lac La Croix Lakes are included.

The Crane Lake population of 360 (Including all served by the Star Route) expands tenfold to 3000 during the peak period. The people-days of use if spread evenly throughout the year would be equivalent to a city having a resident population of 1250. Services for people -including transportation and waste disposal - must be maintained on a scale capable of handling a population of 3000.

Estimates of Crane Lake Tourist-Recreational Use Impacting Upon
the Voyageurs Park Area

Estimates made below are for activities and facility users based at and/or services through Crane Lake. These are grouped to avoid

disclosure of data from individual operations. For example resort house-keeping cabins, lodging rooms, and American plan resorts are all included in the resort figure, however, each different one is computed separately to arrive at the total estimate for person-days of use.

1. Second Homes - Uses related to second homes currently exert by far the greatest recreational impact upon the area. This includes people-days in the area and on the water, economics, and alteration of the natural setting by man-made facilities. Other recent studies have also found a dominance of second home-related recreational uses elsewhere in Minnesota. An example is Lake Minnewaska in Pope County; study findings are reported in the Fall 1976, and Winter 1977 issues of Minnesota Tourist Travel Notes. Specific data for use per second home in the Crane Lake Area are not available. As a first approximation average data from other Minnesota studies have been used. In these studies it was found that the average second home is used 75 days per season by an average of 4 persons or 300 person-days. There are 350 second homes in the Crane/Sand Point/Namakan Lakes area. Seventy of these are politically in Ontario, however they are included since users of these second homes will exert pressure upon the physical resource which is a part of the Voyageurs National Park.
2. Resorts - There are 12 resort operations with 101 rental units of all types: Lodging rooms, housekeeping cabins, and American

plan. It is estimated that these operations could house an average of 400 guests. Crane Lake thus can accommodate a relative small number of overnight visitors in commercial lodging facilities.

3. Boat Launchings and Boat Rentals - An estimated 250 rental boats are available in the area. There are two large marina services. In addition, most facilities for overnight lodging maintain launching and marina facilities. Many day users and boat campers bring their own boats and pay for launching privileges and a place to park their automobile and boat trailer. Many others from N. E. Minnesota rent marina space and leave their boat in the area for all or part of a season where it is available for their use as desired. Boat campers are those who make camp from their boat at some shore-side site outside the immediate Crane Lake Community area. Use estimates in this category only include those boaters not counted in other classifications.
4. Campers - This figure considers only those who set up camp at or near the Crane Lake area. There is one commercial campground in Crane Lake, however, since operators are permitted to host up to four campers without a permit, there is some camping immediately within Crane Lake that is not in this campground. In addition there are Superior National Forest campgrounds available nearby.

5. Houseboats - A total of 16 houseboats are based at Crane Lake. Eight of these are individually owned and maintained primarily for owners use only. The eight rental houseboats are intensively used during the peak season.

6. Canoeists - There are an estimated 200 rental canoes available in the Crane Lake area. Many area canoeists bring their own craft with them.

7. Fly in - The service is available, however, no use estimates were made since nearly all of the fly-in parties go into Ontario.

Estimates of person-days of use for each of the above items are given below. Total person-days for each class of user that is dependent upon Crane Lake are estimated. In each case a varying proportion of total person-days is allocated to the Voyageurs National Park area. These proportions are based upon information obtained from operators about activity patterns.

<u>Type of Activity/Facility</u>	<u>Total Person Days</u>	<u>Person days in VNP area</u>
1. Second homes	105,000	105,000
2. Resort Patrons (80% fish., 1/2 assigned to VNP)	41,000	16,000
3. Boat Launchings & rentals (1/2 to VNP) (not included in other five classes)	22,000	11,000
4. Campers (most fish., 1/2 to VNP)	9,000	4,500
5. Houseboats (only have access to VNP waters)	4,000	4,000
6. Canoeists (Bulk go into BWCA)	15,000	3,000
	<hr/> 196,000	<hr/> 143,000

Border Crossing at Crane Lake

Border crossings at Crane Lake, from Canada into the United States are given below for the year 1975. These were supplied by the U.S. Customs. The data complement use estimates made above in that (1) they measure a specific activity which cross-cuts the use estimates and (2) seasonal patterns are shown. Note that person-days of use cannot be determined from these data since information on length of stay is not available. Note also that crossings in only one direction are given.

<u>Month</u>	<u>Border crossing into U. S.</u>
January	222
February	329
March	341
April	272
May	815
June	2,347
July	1,783
August	2,104
September	1,150
October	296
November	96
December	104
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Total 1975 crossings into U.S. from Canada at Crane Lake	9,859

IV. Crane Lake as an Operating Community

The Crane Lake Community is not only uniquely sited - its economic base is unusual. Tourism and recreation are almost the sole basic economic activity. In the United States tourism and recreation have been growing and now account for 20 percent of consumer purchases. In few locations, however, is tourism so nearly the single economic reason for a community's existence.

A complementary relationship exists between the tourism-recreation-service businesses of Crane Lake, the natural resources, and the several large publicly-managed facilities of the region. The unusual woods-waters-northland features attract many who wish to recreate -- to see and experience the beauty and wilderness qualities of the region and to engage in many specific recreational activities of which fishing, power boating, and canoeing are the more prominent. But in order to gain access to the region many services must be performed. The basic ones are lodging, food and transportation. In addition special services including equipment rentals, outfitting, launching, guiding, portaging and fly-in must be available. Crane Lake community specializes in the provision of these services for visitors to the area.

In 1976 there were 38 separate business operations in Crane Lake. They may be classed in three groups as

Hospitality Services - those necessary for people to live and travel away from home.

Recreational Related - services necessary to the pursuit of specific recreational activities.

Residential and Support - those needed by people in order to live in the area and necessary to support the above activities.

A classified listing of the services includes:

<u>Hospitality</u>	<u>Recreational Services</u>	<u>Supporting</u>
Resorts	Outfitting	Groceries
Restaurants	Canoe rentals	Construction
Auto and Gasoline	Boat rentals	General Repair and Maintenance
Campgrounds	Marina (launching, docking, repair)	Religious services
Fly-in	Water taxi	Access to health care
Limousine	Bait and tackle	Access to education
	Guide	Communications facilities
		Power and Fuel

Many of the above services may be classed in more than one way. For example, grocery stores supply food to residents, but in the case of Crane Lake the bulk of grocery sales almost certainly go to non-residents. Hence grocery operations might as well be classed as "Hospitality" types. Similarly, gasoline and automobile services are used by residents and visitors alike.

In some cases a number of the above services are performed by a single business operation. In addition to the for-profit business operation, there are many other people services, such as religious and social, provided by the community.

The privately provided services of Crane Lake Community complement a substantial set of governmentally-provided services in the area. These latter are substantial and prominent because of the large proportion of the natural resource which is owned and managed by governmental agencies. These resources include all meandered waters, plus a high proportion of the land surface. Most recreational activities take place on governmentally managed land and water area, but relatively few individuals could enjoy these resources without the private services provided by Crane Lake. These private services provide a variety of alternatives in access and accommodations. They appeal to a wide range in tastes and ability to pay. This is a major genius of such a complex of private operations. Without them public investment would be needed to provide this access, and it would almost certainly offer a more limited range of service.

Special Problems of Crane Lake

Because of its uniqueness, Crane Lake confronts a number of special situations. These pose challenges in the on-going life of the Crane Lake Community and to the several businessmen who serve

the tourists there:

1. Remoteness - This factor lends special charm and appeal. It also results in high costs for food, fuel, building supplies. It limits the ready availability and variety of supply and it precludes easy access to commercial transportation.
2. A high proportion of publicly owned land - One result of a high proportion of publicly owned land is limitation to flexibility in area land use patterns. In one important respect this is desirable -- stable patterns of use, guaranteeing a wilderness setting are essential to the vacation/recreation image of Crane Lake. On the other hand limited areas of privately held land create an artificially high price and tend to either limit new development or force it into an already congested setting. Another result is that many decisions concerning the land management are made at a point beyond the local community (It should be noted that this is a characteristic of most non-resident ownership whether public, individual-private, or corporate).
3. The International Border - The nearness of Canada generates visitor appeal. But it means that there is the added problem of international crossings of individuals, customs clearances, and fishing licenses required by a foreign government for visitors from both directions.
4. Governmental Agency Impact - A welter of public agencies impact upon Crane Lake, and especially upon those businesses serving

the tourist industry. Every community and business is, of course, subject to regulation by governmental agencies. But the special situation of Crane Lake results in a presence of non-local governmental bureaucracy that exercises a dominant influence. The three factors noted immediately above plus the area's recreational appeal are primarily responsible for the unusual degree of governmental agency impact here.

Among those agencies having regular interaction with Crane Lake are:

- St. Louis County Agencies - Crane Lake is remote even from most agencies of its own county government.
- Arrowhead Regional Development Commission - A regional planning agency.
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - has jurisdiction of the fish and wildlife resources, water area, and state-owned land.
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
- Minnesota State Planning Agency
- Minnesota Environmental Quality Council
- Minnesota Aeronautics Department - aircraft are an important means of local transportation.
- National Park Service - Manages Voyageurs National Park

- Superior National Forest - Manages the Superior National Forest including the specially-designated Boundary Waters Canoe Area.
- Federal Communication Commission - radio is a major means of communication.
- U. S. Coast Guard - has responsibility in international waters.
- The U. S. and Canadian Customs Services
- The U. S. and Canadian Immigration Services
- The International Joint Commission - regulates lake water levels.

The number of these agencies is so large that local businessmen must consider them in most business decisions. Often agency heads are remote from Crane Lake, thus policy rulings and operating procedures may be poorly adapted. Further, there may be inconsistency between rulings of two agencies with closely related jurisdictions. There may be limited communications and even open conflict among agencies. The overall effect is sometimes to buffet the business operators at Crane Lake about in a wholly unintended manner.

5. Relatively Short History of Intensive Development

While there has been settlement at Crane Lake since the 19th century, its present popularity as a recreational center

came after World War II. As a result its development as a recreation service center may be described as immature. It is focused primarily upon fishing with limited (but growing) recognition of its boating and canoe service potential. It has few other services: such as for childrens activities, for non-fishermen (or non-fisherwomen), or for evening activities. Even interpretation of this outstanding area is available only incidentally. Further, its development upon the water and along roads is for the most part first-tier. That is, all services are crowded directly onto the waterfront or road with little back-land development. This is a characteristic of "frontier" development. The effect is to limit the community's capacity to expand services for hosting visitors and to create a sometimes cluttered appearance.

6. Conflicts Between "Wilderness" and "Development" Values

As with most areas having the natural beauty of Crane Lake and its appeal for recreation, there are substantial differences of opinion in the desired degree of wilderness that should be maintained. These differences exist among residents as well as visitors. Often second home owners are particularly vocal concerning the need to limit further development; they purchased their site because of wilderness qualities and do not depend upon the flow of commerce for a living. Environmental groups, consisting mostly of non-residents, may also express wilderness

objectives. This conflict of view is a necessary part of the debate over resource use in our democracy. There is no single "right solution" for all time. It should be possible, however, to agree upon general area goals toward which Crane Lake citizens, public agencies and the many other interested publics can work.