



Visitor Use Management Plan for the Isle au Haut District



APPROVED:



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October 23, 2014

Cover: View of the southern shore of Isle au Haut, Knox County, Maine (C. Jacobi Photo)



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Visitor Use Management Plan for the Isle Au Haut District

Acadia National Park

October 2014

**U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

An implementation document of Public Law 97-335

SUMMARY

The purpose of this Visitor Use Management Plan is to re-establish a science-based visitor carrying capacity for the Isle au Haut district of Acadia National Park and prescribe other visitor management actions to protect park resources and provide high-quality visitor experiences. Isle au Haut is an island in Knox County, Maine, of which approximately half is in private ownership and half (2,900 acres) is federally-owned and administered as part of Acadia National Park by the National Park Service (NPS). This plan was prepared to comply with Public Law 99-335, passed in 1982. The law directs the NPS to preserve island resources, provide low-density recreational experiences, preserve the character of the town of Isle au Haut and its resource-based economy, and minimize adverse effects of park visitors on the local community and its residents.

The law also requires the NPS to establish a visitor carrying capacity, and review the capacity every five years. A visitor capacity of 90 day-use visitors and up to 30 campers at the Duck Harbor campground was established by the NPS in the late 1980s, and has never been modified.

Visitor carrying capacity figures described in this plan are based on an “indicators and standards” approach as outlined in the NPS Visitor Experience Resource Protection (VERP) Framework Handbook (NPS 1997a). This plan was developed based on research specific to Isle au Haut correlating resource condition to visitor use levels, social science research on visitor and resident preferences

for encountering other visitors while recreating on Isle au Haut, and several public workshops seeking input from visitors and residents.

Guided by this research, the visitor carrying capacity for Isle au Haut will rise from a total of 120 visitors per day to 128 visitors per day, and limit to six the number of days in July and August that this capacity will be allowed to exceed 128 total visitors per day. This six-day limit means that visitation for 90% of days in July and August will be 128 or less. Since 2002, the 128-person limit has been exceeded four times.

Other major actions described in this plan include: monitoring visitor experiences through surveys every three years; establishing resource condition standards for trails and campsites and monitoring for them; retaining the primitive character of trails; reviewing campground layout and design to identify opportunities to enhance privacy and resource protection; continuing to maintain the park road; and continuing a non-promotion policy for Isle au Haut with other park visitors unless they ask.

The plan is not a General Management Plan for the Isle au Haut district of Acadia National Park, and does not fully address the camping experience in Duck Harbor campground. Nor does it address broader park management issues such as wildlife management or fire protection.

In accordance with P.L. 99-335, this Visitor Use Management Plan will be reviewed and updated as needed every five years.



Acadia National Park lands on the southern shore, Isle au Haut, from Western Ear. (NPS Photo)

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Acadia National Park visitors board the Isle au Haut Ferry at Duck Harbor, 2005. (NPS Photo)



Hikers on the park's Western Head Trail, 2006. (NPS Photo)

INTRODUCTION

Isle au Haut (High Island) lies about 30 miles southwest of Bar Harbor, Maine and seven miles south of Stonington, Maine. The island is about seven miles long and two miles wide, and the National Park Service (NPS) manages about half of it (2,900 acres) as part of Acadia National Park (ANP) (Figures 1 and 2). An island family donated these lands to the federal government to be managed by the NPS as part of ANP in 1943. The other half of the island is privately owned and lies within the town of Isle au Haut. Visitors and island residents access the island from Stonington, Maine via a private, nonprofit passenger ferry service (no vehicles) that serves the town year-round and visitors in the park at Duck Harbor from June to September.

About forty-five year-round residents and two hundred summer residents call the town of Isle au Haut home. Fishing is the main livelihood for year-round residents. Summer residents began to move to the island in the late 1800s and their descendants have enjoyed island life ever since. The ferry service provides a critical social and economic link for the community. By design and desire, the town offers few amenities to visitors—a general store, gift shop, and some restaurants and overnight accommodations. The past few years have seen more business activity aimed at visitors.

NPS facilities include a pier and a small backcountry campground with five lean-tos at Duck Harbor, a ranger station and a fire cache/maintenance building near town, a gravel road that is part of the road around the island, and 19 miles of hiking trails (Figure 2).

Some visitors simply come to Isle au Haut to experience the ambiance of an island. Hiking trails along the scenic, remote, and undeveloped shoreline are the main attraction for more active visitors. Visitor surveys

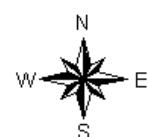
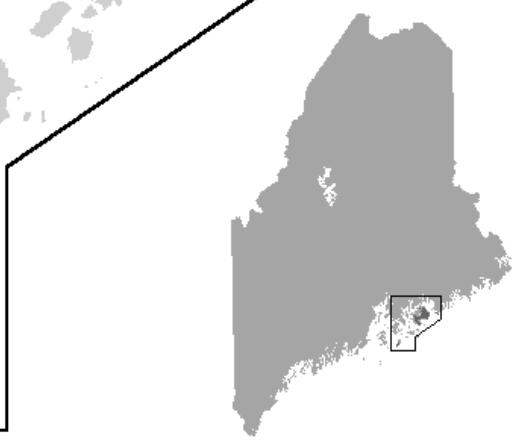
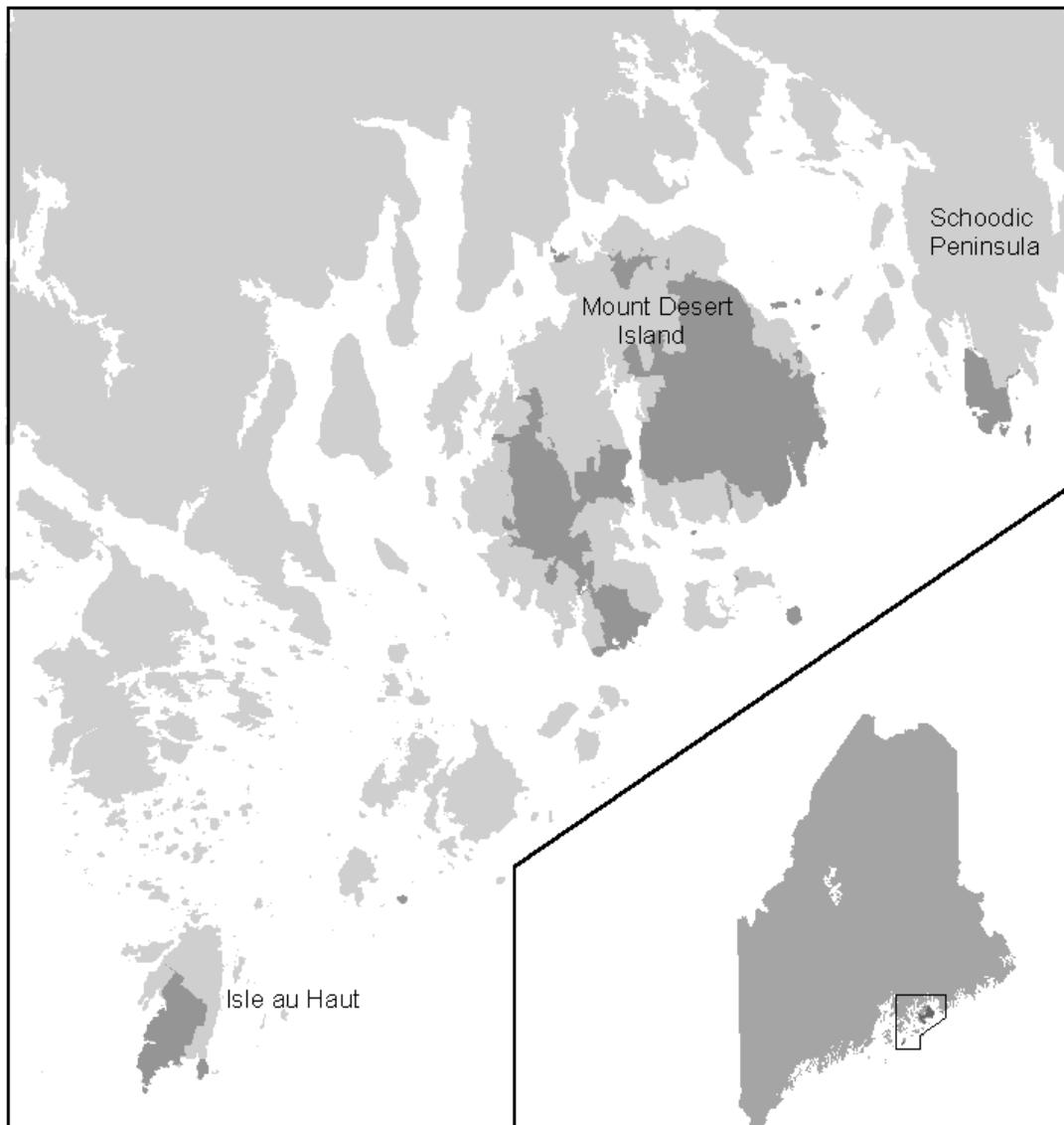
indicate that remoteness, solitude, and wildness are important attributes of a high quality visitor experience (Martin and Kimball 1989, Manning 2005)

Isle au Haut annual visitation is currently lower than it has been in the past, with about 5,000 – 7,500 day use visitors and 500 – 600 campers. This is down from a high of 8,844 day use visitors in 1998. The number of campers is relatively consistent from year to year.

In the late 1960s and 1970s, the behavior of some visitors (e.g. trespassing on private lands) caused friction with island residents. These behaviors and resident concerns about additional private lands being added to the park created conflict between residents and NPS managers. These conflicts were largely resolved by Public Law 97-335 (Appendix 1), enacted by Congress in 1982 at the behest of island residents, and by subsequent NPS management actions, especially having rangers meet all ferries and gently guiding visitors away from town and into the park.

Since 1983 and as required by this law, the NPS has managed visitor use of Isle au Haut for a visitor carrying capacity. Until now, this daily capacity was 120 visitors, or no more than 90 day visitors and up to 30 campers at the Duck Harbor campground. Numbers were based on research conducted by the Appalachian Mountain Club in the late 1980s. Implementing this limit has been difficult because there are no formal entrances to the park and access is largely uncontrolled. Some visitors arrive by private boat, and island residents and their guests also use the park.

A brief summary of the planning and management history of the Isle au Haut section of ANP is provided in the next section of this plan.



0 2 4 6 8 10 Miles

0 2 4 6 8 10 12 Kilometers

Acadia National Park
Non-park lands

FIGURE 1: ACADIA NATIONAL PARK AND VICINITY

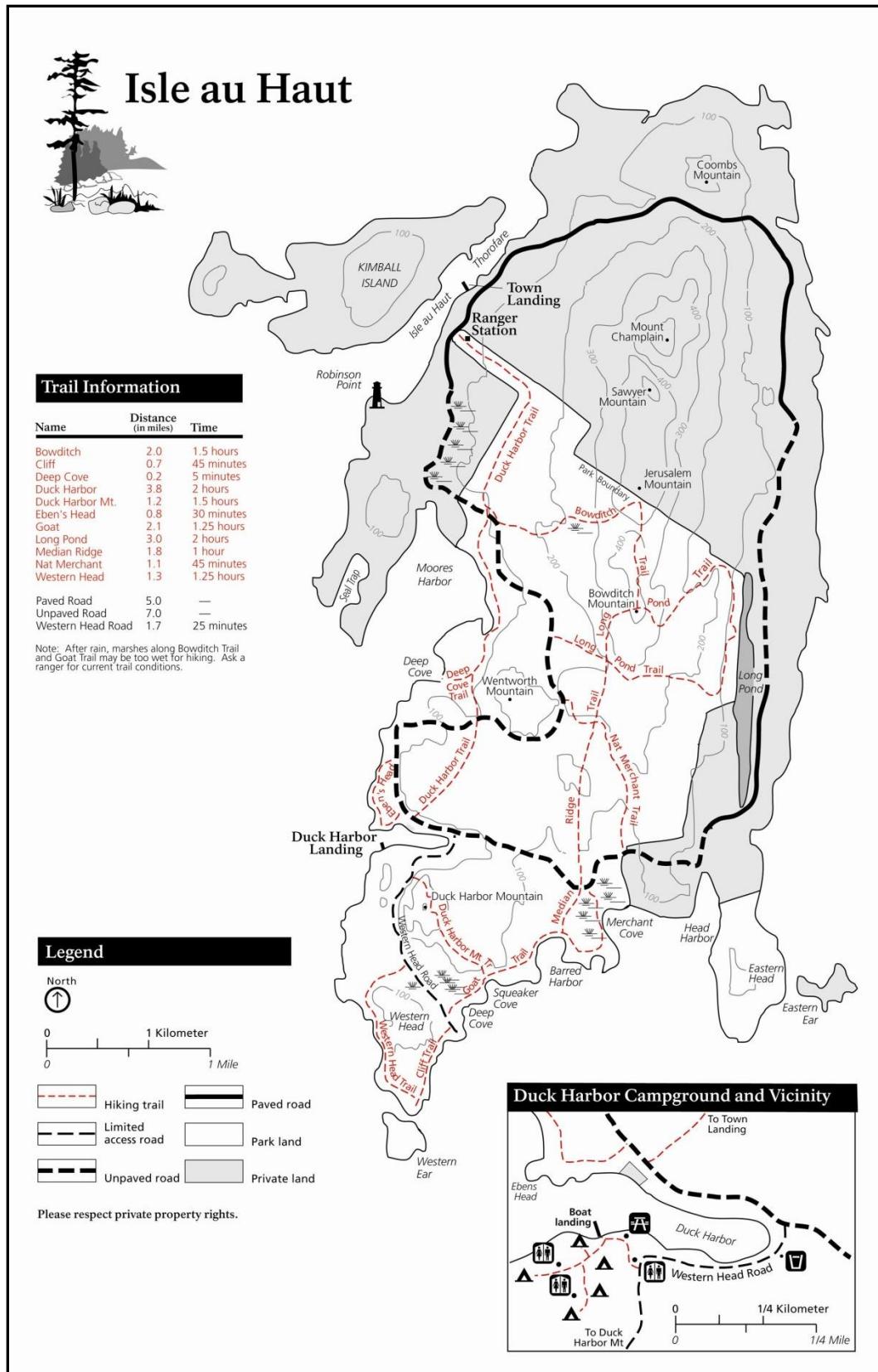


FIGURE 2: ISLE AU HAUT

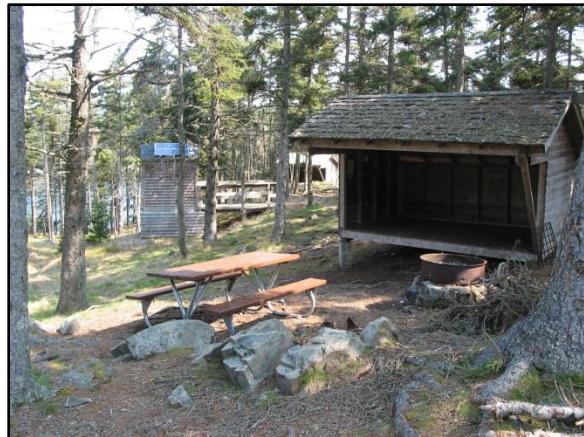
PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PLAN

The purpose of this Visitor Use Management Plan is to protect park resources and high-quality visitor experiences and conserve the character of the town of Isle au Haut as required under Public Law 97-335. The law requires the establishment of a visitor carrying capacity for the Isle au Haut district of the park. This plan re-establishes a science-based visitor carrying capacity using an “indicators and standards” approach as outlined in the NPS Visitor Experience Resource Protection (VERP) Framework Handbook (NPS 1997a).

Indicators are specific measurable physical, ecological, or social variables that reflect the overall condition of a park, specific parts of parks, or specific park resources. Standards are defined as the minimum acceptable condition for each indicator variable, and are expressed numerically. Management actions are triggered by violations of standards, or more proactively, as conditions approach the standard.

This plan prescribes visitor management actions to achieve the goals of Public Law 97-335 and establishes a visitor carrying capacity for Isle au Haut for the hiking experience and the physical condition of Isle au Haut hiking trails and campsites. It does not address the camping experience in the Duck Harbor campground.

This plan is **not** a general management plan for the Isle au Haut section of Acadia National Park. It does not address in depth the many topics a general management plan usually addresses, such as management zoning, natural or cultural resource issues, or facilities.



Lean-to and campsite at the Duck Harbor Campground.
(NPS Photo)

The plan is needed because:

1. anecdotal evidence suggests increased impacts to soil and vegetation on trails and in the campground;
2. the history of conflict and controversy between the NPS and island residents over visitation requires the NPS to manage visitors to minimize their interference with island life;
3. resources and visitor experiences in areas of low density recreational use (like Isle au Haut) are more sensitive to changes in levels and type of use;
4. the NPS goal to manage Isle au Haut to protect its unique values of remoteness and solitude relative to other parts of ANP is largely dependent on managing visitor use and;
5. P.L. 97-335 requires that the visitor carrying capacity be reviewed every five years and if necessary, revised.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE ACADIA NATIONAL PARK GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The General Management Plan (GMP) for Acadia National Park states that planning for the Isle au Haut portion of the park will be undertaken separately (NPS 1992). Planning for the Isle au Haut district was separated from planning for the other districts of Acadia National Park in 1976 because of Isle au Haut's unique circumstances and the controversy with the island community over NPS lands and visitor use. Thus, references to Isle au Haut in text and on maps are absent in the park's GMP.

Nevertheless, there are many elements of the GMP that logically and intuitively apply to Isle au Haut.

The broadly stated goals of the park's GMP are clearly applicable to NPS lands on Isle au Haut:

- Resource Management Goal 5 in the GMP (NPS 1992:28) recommends developing carrying capacity objectives and measures for the park or parts of the park.
- Isle au Haut offers a distinctively different experience that contributes to the provision of wide variety of high quality resource-related visitor experiences described in Goal 1.
- Isle au Haut provides perhaps the best opportunity in ANP for the low density/solitude experiences recommended for preservation in Goal 4.
- Goal 5 speaks to preserving the undeveloped qualities of the west side of Mount Desert Island, Schoodic Peninsula, and the islands. Isle au Haut is also largely undeveloped and can be preserved as such.

Several of the recommended actions in the GMP such as monitoring and mitigating

visitor use and visitor impacts apply broadly to NPS lands on Isle au Haut as well.

Finally, while NPS lands on Isle au Haut are not classified in any of the four management zones of the GMP, park staff have been guided by that classification while developing this plan. Thus, most park lands on Isle au Haut have been treated as if they were part of the Natural Zone, and the campground, dock, and Ranger Station areas treated as part of the Developed Zone.

While there are cultural resources on NPS lands on Isle au Haut, they have not yet been evaluated for their significance and integrity. Until significance is evaluated, they are treated as if they would be part of a Cultural Resource Zone. The importance of the cultural resource values of park lands to today's island residents are well documented in a recent special ethnographic report (Deur 2013). The report identifies tangible cultural resources within the park, but also describes enduring cultural connections that are best managed as ethnographic resources. We do not believe that implementing this plan would have a significant adverse impact on these cultural resources.

We also do not expect any significant adverse effects on such things as road or utility rights-of-way that would be classified as a Special Use Zone.



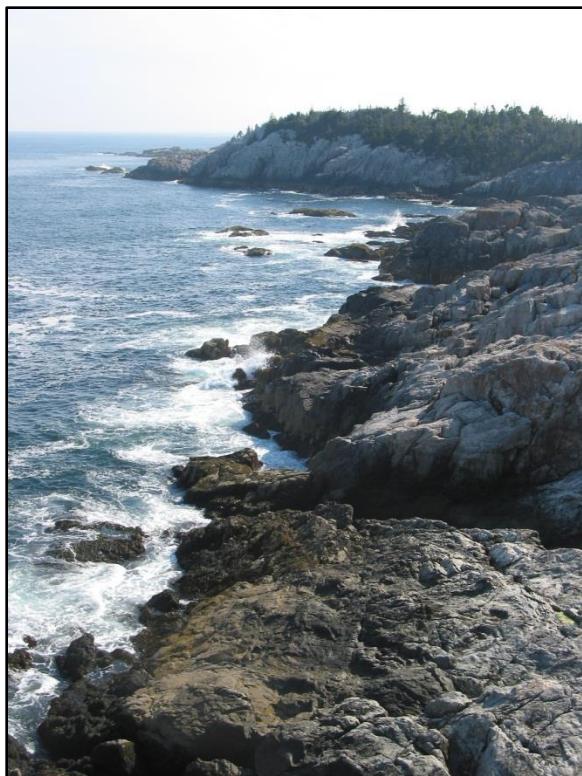
Park rangers orient arriving visitors. (NPS Photo)

RECENT PLANNING HISTORY

The NPS began to develop this Visitor Use Management Plan in early 2001 with the first meeting of a team of park staff and researchers from the University of Vermont and the U.S. Geological Survey at Virginia Tech. From this meeting, a research program was developed and implemented between 2001 and 2003. A summary of research results is presented in the next section.

In 2001 and 2002, public meetings were held at Isle au Haut and in Stonington, Maine. As research findings became available in 2002 and 2003, further meetings were held on Isle au Haut to communicate them to residents.

As the planning slowly progressed, two additional meetings were held on Isle au Haut in late August of 2006 and 2008 to seek feedback on potential actions and management alternatives.



Southern shoreline of Isle au Haut. (NPS Photo)

PARK SETTING

Acadia National Park is located on the “downeast” coast of Maine and includes approximately 35,500 acres (Figure 1). Most of the park is located on Mount Desert Island and covers about half of its area. The park also includes about 2,400 acres on the Schoodic Peninsula; 2,900 acres on Isle au Haut; and all or parts of 15 smaller coastal islands. Acadia National Park also currently manages 210 conservation easements that protect over 14,000 acres on islands in Knox County, and on islands and the Schoodic Peninsula in Hancock County. The Isle au Haut district of the park is located entirely within the town of Isle au Haut in Knox County on the southeastern edge of Penobscot Bay. There are no NPS lands in Stonington where the passenger ferry to Isle au Haut originates.



A rustic kiosk provides orientation information near Duck Harbor campground. (NPS Photo)

PARK MISSION

Acadia National Park’s mission statement is based on the park’s enabling legislation and the latest version is found in the Acadia National Park Strategic Management Plan:

The National Park Service at Acadia National Park protects and conserves outstanding scenic, natural, and cultural resources for present and future generations. These resources include a glaciated coastal and island landscape, biological diversity, clean air and water, and a rich cultural heritage. Acadia National Park also offers opportunities for high quality non-consumptive recreation, education, and scientific research (NPS 1997b).

PARK PURPOSE

According to the 1997 ANP Strategic Management Plan (NPS 1997b), Acadia National Park has three main purposes. One is to protect and conserve the land and water resources, the scenery, the natural and historic objects, the wild life, and the undeveloped character of the lands within the legislated park boundary. Another is to promote and regulate the use of the park for the benefit and enjoyment of the public in such manner and by such means as will leave park resources unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. Finally, NPS is directed to protect and preserve the scenic, ecological, historic, archeological, and cultural resources of the Acadian archipelago and to limit development of the islands and preserve their natural qualities and traditional resource-based land uses.

PURPOSE OF PARK LANDS ON ISLE AU HAUT

Several letters and documents from park files dating back to 1943, 1945, and 1967¹ offer some insight into the purpose and significance of the Isle au Haut district+ of the park as it was acquired and during its first 25 years. These records note the remote nature of Isle au Haut lands compared to other park lands, the need for restraint in development, and the desire to manage it as a wild area with minimum facilities.

The purpose of parklands on Isle au Haut is outlined very specifically in Public Law 97-335 passed by U.S. Congress in 1982 (see Appendix 1 for the complete text). The genesis of this law is explained later in this plan. Passages quoted from sections of the Law offer the following guidance:

Section 1. (preamble)

(1) there are significant scenic, educational, natural, and cultural resources in the town of Isle au Haut Maine;
(2) due to the isolated location and traditional resource-based economy of the town's island community, these resources are fragile and deserving of conservation and protection through both public and private efforts; and,
(3)...both residents of the town and visitors to Acadia National Park will benefit from the establishment of a permanent boundary for the park and the management of park lands on a limited entry, low intensity basis.

Section 4. (a)

The management and use of parklands on Isle au Haut shall not interfere with the

¹ B.L. Hadley (Asst. Superintendent). 1943. Preliminary Report on Isle au Haut (from 6/3/43 visit).
R.W. Smith (NPS Forester, Region 1). 1945. Memorandum for the Regional Director (6/7/45).
T.B. Hyde (Superintendent). 1967. Letter to Mr. and Mrs. Stanley French (6/27/67).
T.B. Hyde 1967. Letter to Mrs. John R. Dice (11/16/67)

maintenance of a viable local community with a traditional resource-based economy outside the boundary of the park. To the maximum extent practicable, no development or plan for the convenience of park visitors shall be undertaken which would be incompatible with the preservation of the flora and fauna or the physiographic conditions now prevailing, and every effort shall be exerted to maintain and preserve this portion of the park in as nearly its present state and condition as possible. In recognition of the special fragility and sensitivity of the park's resources, visitation shall be strictly limited to assure negligible adverse impact on such resources, to conserve the character of the town, and to protect the quality of the visitor experience.

Section 4. (d)

Carrying capacities... shall be reviewed, and if necessary, revised, every five years.

PARK SIGNIFICANCE

When President Woodrow Wilson set aside lands in the town of Bar Harbor as a national monument in 1916, he cited the historic interest associated with Samuel de Champlain's 1604 landing on Mount Desert Island, and the great scientific interest of the island's topography, geology, wildlife, and vegetation.

Today, a rich combination of natural, cultural, and scenic resources—together with a host of exceptional scientific, educational, and recreational opportunities—contribute to the significance of Acadia National Park, the first national park east of the Mississippi and the only national park in New England. Highlights of this significance are:

- an abundance of varied habitats such as subalpine summits, wetlands, estuaries, and the intertidal zone;

- about 1100 species of vascular plants including state-listed threatened and endangered species;
- about 330 species of birds, especially migratory shorebirds and nesting warblers;
- a rich history, from Native Americans to 20th century conservation movement leaders, with beautifully designed and constructed historic roads, carriage roads, and trails;
- outstanding evidence of the last continental glaciations, writ large in its u-shaped valleys and small in its glacial polish and chatter marks;
- Sand Beach as a premier example of a calcareous (largely composed of shell fragments) beach in northern latitudes;
- the incomparable scenery of an island of mountains amid the Maine archipelago, with Cadillac Mountain at its apex, the highest point on the east coast of the U.S.;
- more than 100 years of scientific research with the legacy of an extensive multi-disciplinary database that has laid the foundation for further investigations;
- outstanding recreation and education opportunities—few natural areas of similar size offer such an accessible diversity of experiences by car, bike, boat, or foot to such a wide array of scenery, natural habitats, and cultural resources.

SIGNIFICANCE OF PARK LANDS ON ISLE AU HAUT

Natural Resources

More than 700 species of plants have been identified on Isle au Haut, a considerable number for a moderately sized island.

At least three State of Maine endangered or threatened species of vascular plants are found on Isle au Haut: swarthy sedge (*Carex adusta*); Screwstem (*Bartonia paniculata*); and inkberry (*Ilex glabra*). A fourth plant, mountain sandwort (*Minuartia groenlandica*), usually found in alpine habitats, is currently State-listed as a plant of special concern.

The diversity of habitats on Isle au Haut ranges from bogs and small wetlands full of sundews and orchids to dry, rocky, nutrient-poor ledges of pitch pine and blueberries.

The nutrient-poor ledges include two communities that are somewhat rare in Maine. The first is the Low Elevation Bald and is characterized by low bush blueberry (*Vaccinium angustifolium*), lichens, three-toothed cinquefoil (*Sibbaldiopsis tridentata*), and mountain sandwort. The second is the Pitch Pine Woodland, dominated by pitch pine (*Pinus rigida*) with a 25% - 65% canopy cover.



The Median Ridge Trail offers an opportunity for visitors to explore a Pitch Pine Woodland.
(NPS Photo)

Because of its distance offshore, the mammal fauna of Isle au Haut differs from the mainland nearby. Of note is fauna that is absent—striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), beaver (*Castor canadensis*), and porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatum*)—and the effects of their absence on Island habitats and ecology.

Significant fauna on Isle au Haut includes the harlequin duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*), which winters along the southern coast and is currently State-listed as threatened. Bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), and purple sandpipers (*Calidris maritima*) are two other less common species of note. No pelagic seabirds or terns are known to nest on Isle au Haut.

Perhaps of most significance is the offshore location of Isle au Haut, making it an important stopover refuge for migrating bats, insects, shorebirds, raptors, and songbirds.

Cultural Resources

Native American history, early European exploration and settlement, and the establishment of 19th century summer communities have all left a legacy of significant cultural resources on Isle au Haut.

Coastal archeological sites document five thousand years of Native American use. These sites, referred to as shell middens, preserve evidence of seasonal use of the island for fishing, hunting, and gathering.

Samuel de Champlain named Isle au Haut on his exploration of the Maine coast in 1604-05. Settlement of the island as a fishing outpost with subsistence farming occurred the late 1700s. Remnant stone walls and foundations remain from the small communities once found at Duck Harbor and near Eli Creek in Moore's Harbor. These vernacular cultural landscapes are well documented in a recent Special Ethnographic Report (Deur 2013). While they have not been formally evaluated, these landscapes are significant to the Isle au Haut community based on oral tradition, retained place names, and continued use of park lands by the year-round community.

As on Mount Desert Island and elsewhere in coastal Maine, a late 19th century summer colony was established on the island at Point

Lookout. These "rusticators" built cottages and the hiking trails that are now an integral part of the park (see Deur 2013 for a detailed discussion of the history of Point Lookout).

Ethnographic research about Acadia National Park documented historical use of Isle au Haut by members of the four federally recognized Indian Tribes in Maine (Prins and McBride 2006). Deur (2013) conducted similar research, discussed above, on the traditional associations of the existing community of Isle au Haut with park lands and resources. That research documented historic land use activities.

Scenic Value and Visitor Experiences

Isle au Haut is also significant because it offers long sections of undeveloped shoreline with high scenic and recreational value. This shoreline is undeveloped in the sense that there are no structures, but also and importantly, no immediately adjacent road, as found on park lands on Mount Desert Island and the Schoodic peninsula. Park lands at the south end of Isle au Haut offer that singular "lands end" experience of looking out into the limitless Atlantic Ocean.

The significance of visitor experiences on Isle au Haut lies in its contrast with the visitor experiences on Mount Desert Island and the Schoodic Peninsula. Isle au Haut offers a true island experience for visitors, combining a small traditional community and wildland recreation. Islands are intrinsically attractive to visitors and backcountry enthusiasts. Isle au Haut is more remote and less easily accessible than most other parklands. You must take a boat to reach it, and the vast majority of visitors experience it on foot rather than in a vehicle. Trails are more primitive and less easy to follow than those in the main part of ANP on Mount Desert Island.

Isle au Haut also offers the only backcountry camping experience in Acadia, with a

primitive campground on a remote island with a high degree of solitude; this experience is not readily available to visitors without their own boats and navigation experience.

Island Community

Making a living off the coast of Maine is a difficult proposition in the 21st century. Viable island communities with year-round populations are scarce, especially without a public ferry service. The community on Isle au Haut persists in the face of many difficulties. Fortunately, the resource-based economy of the year-round population combined with the annual influx of summer residents has met the challenges thus far.

ISLE AU HAUT PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT HISTORY

This section provides a history of park planning and management for Isle au Haut from 1944 to the start of this planning process in 2001.

The Isle au Haut section of Acadia National Park passed most of its first 25 years (1944-1969) with few visitors other than local residents, even fewer rangers, and little need for management planning. Tourists and outdoor enthusiasts discovered Isle au Haut during the nationwide surge in outdoor recreation participation in the mid-1960s.

Commercial interest in Isle au Haut began then also as the mailboat² owner promoted visitation. Visitors were then dropped off in town, not knowing they were four miles by foot from most of the park. Conflict between

park visitors and island residents then occurred because some visitors trespassed and camped on private property.

Park staff was first stationed at Isle au Haut in 1965 or 1966. These fire control aides began to meet the mailboat at the town landing at least some of the time to provide orientation to the park. The Duck Harbor campground was built between 1968 and 1970 on the north side of the harbor. By 1970 however, relations between NPS managers and residents had deteriorated because of the influx of visitors and their inappropriate behaviors.

Community relations went from bad to worse with the release of an Acadia National Park Draft Master Plan in 1972 that included Isle au Haut. NPS managers had developed the plan with little or no input from island residents. It proposed that the NPS acquire more private lands and conservation easements by purchase or donation. The NPS would also return some federal lands to private ownership, and the number of campsites would increase from three to five. Island residents also interpreted an NPS recommendation to expand tourism to the park as applying to Isle au Haut as well. Given their recent experiences with increased numbers of visitors to the island and inappropriate behaviors, residents were concerned about any further promotion of Isle au Haut for visitor use. Both summer and year-round residents strongly opposed the Draft Master Plan.

While the planning effort continued over the next decade, NPS managers improved access for visitors twice. In 1975, for the first time, the passenger ferry took park visitors directly to Duck Harbor on a naturalist program and rowed them ashore in a dory. In 1978, NPS staff installed seasonal floats to make access easier and improve safety. The current steel and granite pier was built by the NPS in 1988 with the ferry company agreeing to buy and maintain the floats. Over the years, NPS managers and ferry company staff have

² The mailboat provided regular passenger ferry service to Isle au Haut as a private for-profit corporation from then until 2002, when it became a nonprofit corporation providing the same service. The term mailboat and ferry are used interchangeably in this document to refer to this service.

collaborated several times, adjusting the schedule of the Duck Harbor ferry run to improve visitor services.

NPS planning for Isle au Haut did continue, though slowly, from 1972 to 1982. The park and the town had a continuing dialogue to try to reach agreement over the key issues of the park boundary and visitor use. Following a series of public meetings with residents of Isle au Haut, the park released an Assessment of Management Alternatives for public comment in 1977 (NPS 1977). This document presented five alternatives addressing the boundary and visitor use issues such as the number of campsites, trails on private lands, the amount of use, boat service, and the location of primary access for visitors.

Residents of Isle au Haut did not support any of the alternatives, and countered with their own alternative³ (see NPS 1977, NPS 1979). For the next four years (1977-1981) NPS managers continued to work closely with the town to resolve their differences. In 1980, the NPS released the Record of Decision, General Management, Isle au Haut (NPS 1980)⁴. This document was as close as the NPS came to producing a General Management Plan for Isle au Haut.

The 1980 Record of Decision largely settled the boundary issues between the town and the park. It also stated that NPS lands on Isle au Haut would be left in a generally undeveloped state except for the rustic gravel road, trails, campground, and pier. Overnight use would be limited to five campsites, possibly relocated to the south side of Duck Harbor to separate campers from the road and day users. Day use

access at Duck Harbor would be limited to one tour boat company (presumably the existing mailboat), and the boat would be operated on a schedule to help retain the sense of a remote island, an uncrowded experience, and to protect natural resources. The Record of Decision directed NPS managers, with town officials, to undertake a study of the trail system with the general intent to add and delete trails as appropriate, and more specifically, to remove trails on private lands, and, where possible, relocate them to NPS lands. Trails on private land were removed from park maps.

While the Record of Decision was generally accepted by the community, the town sought legislation to establish a permanent boundary for park lands on Isle au Haut and to provide specific direction for visitor management, most notably through the establishment of a carrying capacity. Congress passed this special legislation for Isle au Haut in 1982. Sections of Public Law 97-335 that address visitor management are excerpted in the purpose and significance section of this document.

The NPS completed the visitor carrying capacity report (NPS 1983) required by the Public Law 97-335 with considerable input from the Isle au Haut community and others. The report recommended a natural resource approach to capacity, limiting change so that a return to a point within the natural range of variation could be attained by the following visitor season. Under such an approach, the NPS felt that 1983 visitor use levels on Isle au Haut were close to capacity. The report stated that visitor contact between small groups of hikers was limited at the time, but that a significant increase in visitation would erode the experience of relative solitude. It also established interim day use limits of 50 and 25 mailboat passengers respectively for the summer and spring/fall. The report stated that these use levels would be evaluated by NPS managers and town officials at the end of the 1983 season.

³ See also transmittal letter from Isle au Haut First Selectman Jack Mac Donald dated September 28, 1977, with enclosed comments entitled "Comments of the Town of Isle au Haut, Maine on the Draft Assessment of Management Alternatives for Isle au Haut, Acadia National Park."

⁴ This document is similar to an earlier "Review of Alternatives." See Literature Cited.

There is no record that these interim limits were considered unacceptable. However, the NPS then contracted with the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) to conduct a study to develop a more informed visitor capacity for Isle Haut based on resource conditions of trails and visitor experiences. The AMC conducted that study between 1984 and 1988.

The AMC study concluded that resource impacts on Isle au Haut trails could be mitigated by proper trail maintenance. It recommended 90 day users plus up to 30 campers as the daily visitor limit for Isle au Haut in the summer, stating that this number was close to current visitation from all the sources of access—the mailboat runs to town, the Duck Harbor run, private boats, and island residents (Martin and Kimball 1989). The NPS implemented these limits in 1989.

Next, the NPS completed a Development Concept Plan (DCP) (NPS 1990) to identify facility needs to manage Isle au Haut. These needs included park housing, a ranger office, and a maintenance/fire program facility. No NPS staff housing had been available since two small recreational trailers became uninhabitable in the late 1980s. Isle au Haut residents and other interested members of the public participated in the development of the DCP. The selected DCP alternative provided for housing, a ranger station, and a fire cache/maintenance facility on the narrow strip of NPS land near town.



Ranger Station and Fire Cache. (NPS Photo)

In 2000, four Clivus toilets were installed: two at the campground; one at the road near the campground for day users; and one at the ranger station. In 2004, a new ranger station was constructed near town, and two years later the fire cache/maintenance shed was replaced. There is still no NPS housing for employees as of 2014.

Ferry service to Isle au Haut had been a for-profit business since the 1960s. The Isle au Haut ferry service became a nonprofit corporation, Isle Au Haut Boat Services, in 2002 and entered into a cooperative agreement with the NPS to provide passenger service between Stonington to Duck Harbor.

In 2001, the NPS committed to following the Visitor Experience Resource Protection Process to re-establish a visitor capacity for NPS lands on Isle au Haut.

2001 – 2003 RESEARCH SUMMARY

In anticipation of this planning effort, the NPS sponsored research to identify and measure visitor resource impacts and to ask park visitors about their knowledge, attitudes, and experiences on Isle au Haut.

Dr. Jeff Marion (U.S. Geological Survey, Virginia Tech) conducted a study of visitor use-related resource impacts on the campsites

and trails of Isle au Haut to establish current conditions using a variety of indicators.⁵ Compared to other backcountry campsites he has studied, Marion found that campsites in the Duck Harbor campground were generally in good condition, though two sites were quite large. He determined that the overall campsite size was the most useful indicator to establish standards to monitor campsite condition. He suggested that standards might be set for either individual campsite size or collective campsite size, using current sizes as a reference point (Marion 2006).

Similarly, Marion found trails on Isle au Haut also in good condition. The study showed a direct relationship between the width and depth of trails and the estimated amount of visitor use (low, medium, high). The more use on a trail, the greater its width and depth (Marion 2006).

Thus, trail width and depth were selected as the most useful indicators of trail condition because they are sensitive to differences in visitor use levels. Potential standards might be crafted in three ways: 1. based on existing conditions for these indicators; 2. for the entire trail system; 3. or separately for high, medium, and low use trails. The number of visitor-created trails was also considered as a potential indicator of trail condition, but park staff felt these could be reduced through proper site management.

Dr. Robert Manning (University of Vermont) conducted social science research from 2001 to 2003. In 2001, his team administered an initial survey of visitors to learn who they were, their activities on Isle au Haut, and what

they thought were the important elements (indicators) of a high quality visitor experience. In 2002, a follow up survey explored in depth the four indicators visitors identified as important for a high quality experience. These were the level of trail impacts (erosion), social (visitor-created) trails, trail development and maintenance techniques, and encounters with other groups of visitors on trails. The survey also asked about other aspects of visitor experiences, including existing and potential NPS management strategies. Finally, the same survey was administered by mail to island residents in 2003.

Residents and visitors perceived the current conditions of all four indicators as relatively good. When presented with a range of possible conditions, visitor and resident perceptions of trail impacts, social trails, and trail development were the same. Visitors and residents differed in their perceptions of the number of trail encounters with other groups of hikers (Manning 2005).

Residents preferred to encounter fewer groups per day on trails than visitors (1.9 versus 5.6 groups); their level of acceptability for encountering other hiking groups was also less than that of visitors (6.5 versus 10.8 groups); and they typically encountered fewer other hiking groups than visitors (2.5 versus 4.7 groups). Thus, *typical* encounter conditions for residents and visitors are less than *acceptable* encounter conditions meaning high quality experiences are the norm. It seems likely that residents know where and when to plan their hikes to reduce their encounter rates, or they simply use the park at different times and places (Manning 2005).

Both the median (middle value) and mode (most frequently occurring value) for hiking group size was 2 persons; mean (arithmetic average) group size was 2.8 persons. Thus, the number of people represented by the resident acceptability level of 6.5 groups per day would

⁵ Indicators are specific measurable physical, ecological, or social variables that reflect the overall condition of a park, specific parts of parks, or specific park resources. Standards are defined as the minimum acceptable condition for each indicator variable, and are expressed numerically.

most likely be between 13 and 18.2 people based on the median and the mean respectively. The number of people represented by the visitor acceptability level of 10.8 groups per day would most likely be between 21.6 or 30.24 people based on the median and the mean respectively. Residents also reported that 8.2 groups per day would displace them from Isle au Haut trails; note that this level is below the acceptable level of 10.8 groups per day for visitors (Manning 2005). These differing results between local users and other visitors are not unexpected.



Thunder Gulch. (NPS Photo)

The research team also developed a simulation model of hiker traffic patterns on Isle au Haut. The model can estimate overall visitor use levels (the number of entries to the park from all entry points) from a desired number of encounters with other hiking groups. Park staff asked the research team to estimate overall use levels for trail encounter rates of 5, 6, and 7 groups. These estimated use levels are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1: ESTIMATED OVERALL USE LEVELS FOR THREE HIKING GROUP DAILY ENCOUNTER RATES

# Groups	# Hikers*	Overall Use (# visitors)
5	10 – 14	105
6	12 – 16.8	128
7	14 – 19.6	149

* This range is based on the using median (2.0) and the mean (2.8) number of hikers per group. These data are available in park files.

If one interprets this table in reverse, this means that if a visitor capacity of 105 persons (for example) is implemented by the NPS, then most visitors will encounter 5 other hiking groups on their hike with between 10 and 14 people in them. This would be a higher quality experience than if the NPS managed for a visitor capacity of 149 persons (for example), where seven groups and 14 to 19.6 visitor would be encountered.

Therefore, the data in Table 1 offer a range of realistic, potential visitor experience alternatives based on overall visitor use levels that are reflected in the number of trail encounters with other groups.

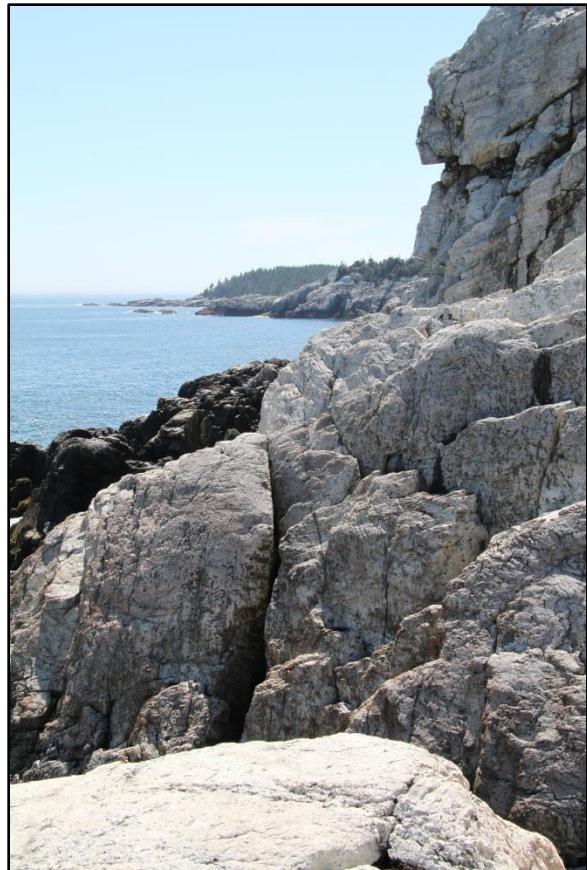
VISITOR USE HISTORY

Obtaining visitor use numbers with a reasonable degree of precision and accuracy at Isle au Haut is a challenge. NPS staff can get accurate counts from the Isle au Haut ferry, but NPS staffing levels and daily activities sometimes prevent them from meeting all ferries. Estimates of visitor use from town and private boats (commercial and noncommercial) are just that—estimates. Increasing visitor use levels throughout the 1990s raised concerns among park managers and prompted this review of visitor capacity. Revisions in data collection in 2002 to standardize methods for greater consistency appear to have resulted in a decline in use, but declines in visitation at ANP and other parks

began in the mid-1990s, confusing matters. Since 2005, ANP visitation has climbed slightly and is fairly stable.

Annual use of Isle au Haut (day users plus campers) has ranged from 5,000 to 7,500 since data collection was standardized in 2002. Since 2002, the 120 person/day capacity has been exceeded 91 times, or on average seven to eight days in July and August.

A further perspective on visitor use is provided in Figure 3, which shows the number of days in July and August from 1990 – 2013 that daily use in the park at Isle au Haut, including campers, was greater than 120 visitors (the current capacity) and 128 visitors (the middle value in Table 1).



The geology of Isle au Haut is distinct from other districts of Acadia National Park.

(NPS Photo)

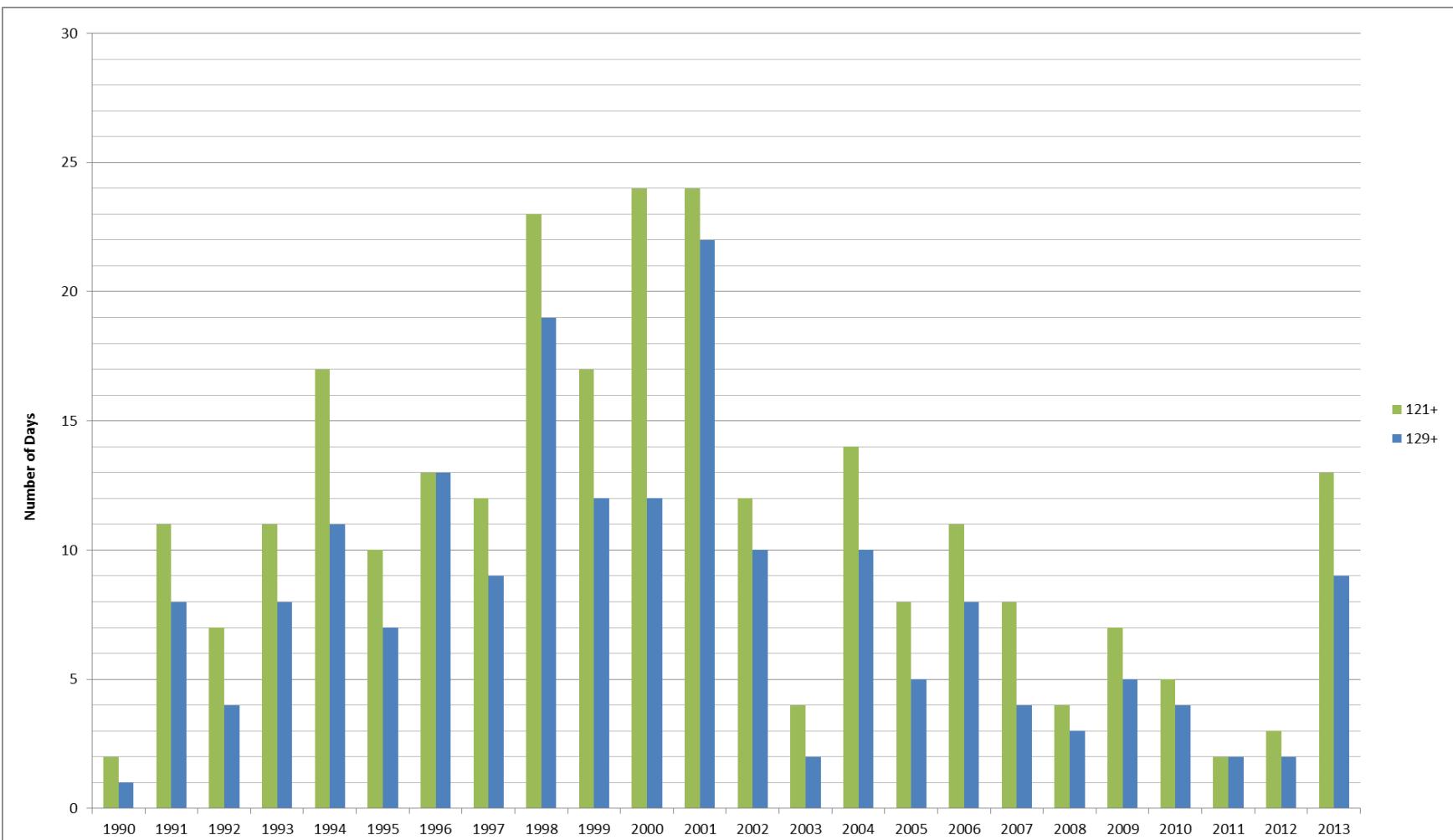


FIGURE 3: NUMBER OF DAYS IN JULY AND AUGUST THAT DAILY USE AT ISLE AU HAUT WAS > 120 AND > 128, INCLUDING CAMPERS, 1990 – 2013
NOTE—DATA COLLECTION PROTOCOLS CHANGED IN 2002).

MANAGEMENT GOALS

The purpose of this Visitor Use Management Plan is to re-establish a science-based visitor carrying capacity for the Isle au Haut district of Acadia National Park and prescribe other visitor management actions to protect park resources and provide high-quality visitor experiences.

Based on Public Law 97-335, NPS policies, and guiding park management documents, the following management goals set the overall direction for managing visitor use of the Isle au Haut district of Acadia National Park.

- 1. Preserve the scenic, educational, natural and cultural resources of the park and the island;**
- 2. Provide a high quality, low density visitor experience characterized by a high degree of solitude, wildness, remoteness, and limited, rustic facilities; and,**
- 3. Preserve the character of the town of Isle au Haut and its resource-based economy, and minimize adverse effects of park visitors on the local community and its residents.**

DESIRED CONDITIONS

Desired Conditions serve as objectives to guide managers. We use indicators and standards to monitor whether objectives are being met. Trail and campsite condition and the quality of visitor experiences while hiking are the focus for monitoring visitor capacity.

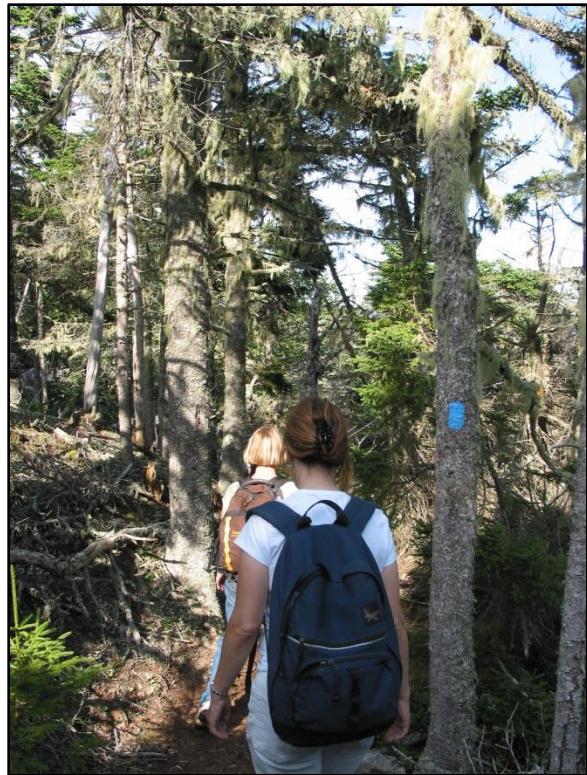
Although this Visitor Use Management Plan is not a General Management Plan, during the process of developing the plan, NPS managers considered a wide range of issues

that could be addressed. This resulted in developing broadly-based Desired Conditions related to visitor use.

1. Pre-visit information about park lands on Isle au Haut is readily available for visitors that seek it.
2. Visitors have an opportunity to visit the Isle au Haut district via a passenger ferry service.
3. Arriving visitors easily find the information, services, and facilities they need.
4. Visitors arrive prepared for their stay, practice Leave No Trace ethics, and have a safe visit.
5. Visitors explore the park mainly on foot.
6. Visitors have an opportunity to experience the island's protected and preserved natural and cultural resources, including a natural dark sky and natural soundscape.
7. Visitors experience a sense of adventure, exploration, self-sufficiency, contemplation, and discovery.
8. Visitors understand some of the natural and human history of the island.
9. A limited number of campsites are available at Duck Harbor.
10. The camping experience includes a high degree of solitude, tranquility, and remoteness. All of these values

are enhanced in the spring and fall when backpacking is required due the lack of ferry service to Duck Harbor.

11. The natural environment within the campground or adjacent to trails and other facilities is minimally affected by visitor use.
12. Visitors experience a high degree of solitude and tranquility on hiking trails.
13. Visitors experience a sense of wildness and remoteness in the undeveloped landscape. As part of this, hiking trails are maintained in a primitive manner
14. Visitors understand and respect the desires of residents for privacy and minimal interference with their daily life.
15. Visitor and support facilities are limited to the minimum necessary, and designed and located so as to not compromise visitor experiences described in numbers 7, 10, 12, and 13.



Hikers on Isle au Haut have an opportunity to experience a forest in change. (NPS Photo)

MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

While many Desired Conditions were outlined in the previous section, because this is not a General Management Plan, not all of them have associated management actions described in this section. The focus of these management actions is mainly, though not exclusively, the development of a visitor capacity.

The following actions, some already in place, some new, will be taken to achieve NPS management goals related to visitor use of the Isle au Haut district of Acadia National Park.

CONTINUE PASSENGER FERRY SERVICE TO DUCK HARBOR

The NPS will continue to use a Cooperative Agreement to ensure ferry service to Duck Harbor. Ferry service will be the primary tool to manage visitors to protect resources and maintain high quality visitor experiences and manage the visitor carrying capacity for NPS lands on Isle au Haut.

ESTABLISH VISITOR EXPERIENCE STANDARDS (DAILY VISITOR CAPACITY)

The visitor experience standard will be:

On 90% of the days in July and August (56 of 62 days) visitors will experience a daily encounter rate of no more than 6 groups while hiking, which is equivalent to a daily visitor capacity of 128 persons, including day users and campers (see Table 1).

This standard allows ten percent of the days in July and August (six days) to exceed the 128-persons per day or 6-groups standards

before NPS management actions are needed to meet the standard (see Table 1). It recognizes that peak use days are difficult to manage and that counting Isle au Haut visitors is challenging. The 128 persons per day carrying capacity is slightly more than the capacity of 120 persons per day adopted by the NPS in 1989.

To better understand what these numbers mean, refer back to Figure 3, which shows the number of days in July and August from 1990 – 2013 that daily use, including campers, at Isle au Haut was greater than 120 and 128 visitors respectively. Since 2002, the former 120 visitor capacity has been exceeded, on average, seven to eight days in July and August. The new proposed capacity of 128 persons per day allows a few more visitors on a daily basis, but limits the number of days exceeding 128 visitors to six. Since 2002, the proposed six-day limit has been exceeded four of the 12 years.

The 128 persons per day standard will be achieved by continuing the 50 passenger limit for the ferry to Duck Harbor. We estimate that on an average day, the other 78 persons will come from the following sources in the following numbers: Duck Harbor campground – 18; all other nonresident visitors (morning and noon ferries and private boats) – 30; residents (includes year-round and summer residents, and renters) – 30.

MONITOR DAILY VISITOR USE LEVELS

Rangers will record daily counts of visitors using established methods (appendix 2) and compare them to the standard. These numbers will be compiled at the end of the

year and archived to track visitor use levels over time.

MONITOR TRAIL ENCOUNTERS

Trail encounters will be monitored every three years through a brief visitor questionnaire based on work conducted by the University of Vermont and results will be compared to the standard.

Actions if Standards are Violated

If visitor experience standards are violated or in danger of being violated, the following actions are available to NPS managers:

1. Reduce the number of passengers on the Duck Harbor ferry run, based on the number of visitors arriving on the earlier ferries to the town landing.
2. encourage visitors to hike less-used trails to disperse use and reduce encounter rates.
3. encourage “residents” to visit at off-peak hours to reduce encounter rates.
4. institute a permit system for up to 80 day use visitors, 50 from the Duck Harbor Ferry plus 30 from other ferries and private boats (it would not apply to residents).

ESTABLISH RESOURCE STANDARDS FOR TRAILS

The resource standard for trail width and depth will be:

Mean trail width and depth for high, medium, and low use trails respectively shall not exceed the 90% confidence limit for the upper bound for mean trail width and depth as measured in the 2002 study.

The confidence limit for the upper bound simply means it is not a problem if trails become narrower or less deep. The ninety percent allows some statistical leeway for

random variation or measurement errors. Because existing trail conditions were considered good in 2002, using those measurements as a standard seems appropriate.

MONITOR TRAIL WIDTH AND DEPTH

Trail width and depth will be monitored every five to seven years using protocols from Marion (2006) and compared to the standard.

Actions if Standards are Violated

If trail width and depth standards are violated or in danger of being violated, the following actions are available to NPS managers:

1. Apply trail maintenance techniques.
2. Educate hikers to stay in the middle of the trail.
3. If trail maintenance and education fail to work, the 128 person/day visitor capacity may be adjusted downward.

RETAIN THE PRIMITIVE CHARACTER OF TRAILS

In contrast to trails in the Mount Desert Island part of the park, trails on Isle au Haut will be maintained to retain their primitive character. Highly crafted features will be used sparingly. The use of stone steps, rock paving, and retaining walls will be used only when necessary to stabilize erosion or promote safety. Blazing/marketing of trails will be more infrequent and designed for more experienced hikers.

EVALUATE PROPOSAL FOR A NEW TRAIL NEAR TOWN

The NPS will cooperate with community members of the town of Isle au Haut to evaluate the effects and feasibility of

constructing a new trail opportunity on park and private lands near town. The purpose of such a trail would be to provide a hiking opportunity near town and potentially disperse use from the popular southern coastal trails.

RETAIN EXISTING CAMPGROUND VISITOR CAPACITY OF UP TO 30 PERSONS

The visitor capacity of 30 persons in the six lean-tos will be retained as an important and fixed component of the overall daily visitor capacity.

ESTABLISH RESOURCE STANDARDS FOR CAMPSITES

The resource standard for individual campsite size is:

No campsite shall exceed an area of 800 square feet.

With only five campsites, this standard is an absolute, not-to-exceed value.



Rustic wooden signs contribute to the ambiance of the Isle au Haut district. (NPS Photo)

MONITOR CAMPSITE SIZE

Campsite size will be monitored every five to seven years using protocols from Marion (2006) and compared to the standard.

Conditional Actions

If the campsite size standard is violated or is in danger of being violated, site management and education will be used to bring sites into compliance.

REVIEW CAMPSITE LAYOUT AND DESIGN

The layout of the campground (lean-tos, rest rooms, and trails) will be reviewed to determine the feasibility of reconfiguring facilities to increase campsite privacy while offering enhanced protection for natural and cultural resources.

CONTINUE MAINTENANCE OF PARK ROAD

The NPS will continue to maintain the park road for motor vehicles because it is an important community link and part of the recreation experience of visitors.

MEET ALL FERRIES TO ORIENT VISITORS

NPS staff will meet all visitors at the Town Landing when the ferry arrives, help orient them, and guide them to the Ranger Station and into the park. Rangers will ride the ferry from the Town Landing to Duck Harbor.

CONTINUE NON-PROMOTION POLICY FOR ISLE AU HAUT

To achieve the goals and desired conditions of this plan and meet the legislative requirement for a visitor capacity, the NPS will continue the policy of not actively promoting use of Isle au Haut with visitors to Mount Desert Island and the Schoodic peninsula. Visitors inquiring about Isle au Haut will be provided with accurate, up-to-date information so they can make an informed decision about visiting the island.

EXPAND INFORMATION OUTREACH

For those already planning their visit, the park will expand its efforts to provide information about visiting Isle au Haut. This information will include parking options in Stonington, NPS management of Isle au Haut including its visitor carrying capacities, island geography, recreation opportunities, natural and cultural resources, history, safety, and Leave No Trace guidelines, including information about marine debris. New exhibits and kiosks at the Ranger Station, in Stonington, and at Duck Harbor have already been installed.

ENFORCE EXISTING REGULATIONS

The following regulations will continue to be enforced:

- Camping is permitted only in the designated sites at Duck Harbor.
- All campers must have a special use permit.
- Camping reservations may be made for the upcoming season beginning April 1.
- Camping season: May 15 – Oct. 15.

- Maximum length of stay: 3 nights. Only one camping visit per person is allowed per calendar year.
- No tents may be erected outside lean-tos.
- No generator use is permitted.
- Checkout time is 11am.
- When not in use, all food and garbage must be stored in the storage boxes provided so it is not available to wildlife.
- A maximum of six people are allowed per site.
- Fires are allowed only at designated facilities with campsites.
- No pets are allowed in the campground. Pets must be leashed on trails and at all other locations in the park.
- Bicycles are not allowed on hiking trails
- The Western Head Road is closed to auto traffic.
- No commercial uses are allowed on NPS lands on Isle au Haut.

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APPENDIX 1: P.L. 97-335

Pub. L. 97-335, Oct. 15, 1982, 96 Stat. 1627, as amended by Pub. L. 104-333, Div. I, Title VIII, Sec. 814(d)(1)(C), Nov. 12, 1996, 110 Stat. 4196, provided:

“That the Congress finds that—

“(1) there are significant scenic, educational, natural, and cultural resources in the town of Isle au Haut, Maine;

“(2) due to the isolated location and traditional resource-based economy of the town’s island community, these resources are fragile and deserving of conservation and protection through both public and private efforts; and

“(3) both residents of the town and visitors to the Acadia National Park will benefit from the establishment of a permanent boundary for the park and the management of parklands on a limited entry, low intensity basis.

“SEC. 2. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the permanent boundary of Acadia National Park lying within the town of Isle au Haut, Maine, is hereby established to include only those lands and interests therein as are depicted on the map entitled ‘Boundary Map, Acadia National Park, Town of Isle au Haut, Maine’, numbered 123-80003 and dated October 1981, which map is on file and available for public inspection in the offices of the Department of the Interior and at the Registry of Deeds for Hancock and Knox Counties, Maine.

“SEC. 3. (a) Within the boundary established by section 2, and as indicated on the map referenced therein, the Secretary of the Interior (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Secretary’) is authorized to acquire lands and interests therein by donation or exchange. The Secretary is authorized and directed to acquire by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange the tract known as the Hamilton lot in Duck Harbor. No later than one hundred and eighty days from enactment hereof [Oct. 15, 1982], the Secretary shall convey to the town of Isle au Haut all right, title and interest of the United States in and to those lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary which lie outside the boundary established by section 2 and within the town of Isle au Haut, subject only to such covenants running with the land as the Secretary and the town agree are necessary to preserve the general character of such lands, which shall include covenants to maintain forever in their natural condition (excepting the cutting of fire trails and the extinguishment of fires) lands above three hundred feet above the mean high water level: Provided, however, That such covenants with respect to lands above three hundred feet and below four hundred feet shall permit the gathering and removal of dead and fallen timber.

“(b) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Act [this note], the Secretary is also authorized to accept by donation, as a coholder for enforcement purposes only, a limited enforcement interest in conservation easements on lands outside the boundary established by section 2 hereof and within the town of Isle au Haut which may from time to time be donated to the Isle au Haut Land Conservation Trust, a trust established under the laws of the State of Maine. The Superintendent of Acadia National Park is hereby authorized to serve as an ex officio trustee of such trust.

“SEC. 4. (a) The management and use of parklands on Isle au Haut shall not interfere with the maintenance of a viable local community with a traditional resource-based economy outside the boundary of the park. To the maximum extent practicable, no development or plan for the convenience of park

visitors shall be undertaken which would be incompatible with the preservation of the flora and fauna or the physiographic conditions now prevailing, and every effort shall be exerted to maintain and preserve this portion of the park in as nearly its present state and condition as possible. In recognition of the special fragility and sensitivity of the park's resources, visitation shall be strictly limited to assure negligible adverse impact on such resources, to conserve the character of the town and to protect the quality of the visitor experience.

"[(b), (c) Repealed. Pub. L. 104-333, Div. I, Title VIII, Sec. 814(d)(1)(C), Nov. 12, 1996, 110 Stat. 4196.]

"(d) Carrying capacities established pursuant to this section shall be reviewed, and if necessary revised, every five years. Any revision in such carrying capacity shall be made in accordance with the procedures set forth in subsections (b) and (c) of this section.

"(e) Until such time as a carrying capacity limitation is established and implemented pursuant to subsections (b) and (c) of this section, the Secretary shall take such temporary measures as are necessary to assure that visitation does not exceed the average annual visitation for the period 1979 to 1981.

"SEC. 5. There are hereby authorized to be appropriated after October 1, 1982, such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act [this note]."

APPENDIX 2: ISLE AU HAUT VISITOR USE DATA COLLECTION GUIDELINES

Isle au Haut Visitor Use Data Collection Guidelines 2010

In 2007 we eliminated *3pm Campers* and *3pm Day Users* because according to Isle au Haut rangers, their numbers were essentially zero. As of 2008 there was no 3pm freight boat. That has been combined with the Duck Harbor boat on a 2:30pm run out of Stonington. This boat is where the *PM Camper* count comes from, with perhaps and occasional stray from the 4:30pm boat (who would have to hike to the campground). We added a column for day users arriving by commercial boat (*Day Use Comm Boat*) to count operations like Old Quarry Adventures (Bill Baker) or others who now drop visitors off at the town dock. We also deleted the *Total Day Use* and *Arriving Campers* Columns to eliminate confusion over which columns to add and eliminate potential addition errors. The Excel spreadsheet will make these calculations.

1. Data collection was revised and standardized in May 2002, and again in 2008 and 2010.
2. In a perfect data collection scenario, a ranger meets every mailboat. The ranger counts day users and campers arriving on that boat and records them in the appropriate column. If a ranger is not able to meet the boat, they will get an estimate or count from the captain.
3. *PB Cmpr* refers to **campers** arriving by private boat—usually kayaks, but possibly other small boats. This should be a direct and complete count. It should also include campers arriving via commercial boat (see #6 below).
4. *PB Day* is the number of day users estimated arriving from private boats (motor and sail) **anchored in Duck Harbor at mid day** and the number of kayaks hauled ashore (generally in Duck Harbor only). This number should be calculated by multiplying the number of private boats **times three persons** per boat plus individual counts of kayaks/people. No attempt should be made to count visitors from each boat. Any **campers** from private boats should not be included here. If groups like Chewonki or others use the park for the day and arrive on their own boats and moor/anchor somewhere other than Duck Harbor, they should be added to the *PB Day* column
5. *# Pvt Boats* is the number of private motor and sail boats anchored in Duck Harbor and does not include kayaks. It is not a count of persons.
6. *Day Use Comm Boat* are day users (only) arriving via Old Quarry Adventures or other commercial operators who provide transportation to the town dock or other private docks on Isle au Haut, **and are likely to enter the park!** So far, only day visitors are arriving from this source and only Old Quarry is providing it. Make a note about Old Quarry in the *Remarks* column with the number passengers in case other transportation providers begin providing service. We want to tally Old Quarry arrivals separately. If Old Quarry or other providers drop off **campers**, record them as *Camper Private Boat* for now.
7. *Day Use Town* is the number of day users counted coming from town. These may be year-round or seasonal residents or renters. **Rangers will count only those they see and know are from town.** If vehicles are observed without the occupants, a multiplier of **four persons per vehicle** will be used. We will not estimate the amount of traffic coming from town as in previous years.

8. *Cmpr days* is the count of campers each evening in the campground. Campers are counted for each night they are in the campground. This count is also used for the monthly park visitation report.
9. *# Arriving Campers* (no column anymore) is the sum of campers arriving each day on the five boats from Stonington plus campers from private boats. This is the number of **individual** campers and is used for the monthly park visitation report. **Excel will calculate Arriving Campers.**
10. *Total Day Use* (no column anymore) is the sum of day users arriving on the five boats from Stonington, private boats (including kayaks), commercial boats, and from town. No day users are expected on the PM boat or the 3pm freight boat, and even if they do they have no time to access the park. This count is also used for the monthly park visitation report. **Excel will calculate Total Day Use.**
11. *Weather* should be recorded as sunny (SUN), cloudy (CLD), foggy (FOG), or rainy (RNY).
12. *Remarks* should include the number of people in large groups for noncommercial groups like Chewonki or Outward Bound who use the park from time to time (**be sure to count them as day users somewhere!**) and the group identity; the number of people staying at Eli Creek Cabin (each night!); and counts for Old Quarry Adventures, because we want to track them separately.
13. Zero should be used whenever a count is made and zero people are observed. If a boat or a count is missed it should be recorded as a blank—no data. There is a difference!!!

Entries should be made to the file in Google Docs.

Month	IAH Mailboat Arrivals-DH and Town						Private Boat Arrivals-DH						Cmpr Days	Weather	Remarks (note large groups, Eli Crk visitors, Old Quarry, Outward Bound, Chewonki #s etc)	
	AM Day	AM Cmpr	DH Day	DH Cmpr	Noon Day	Noon Cmpr	PM Day	PM Cmpr	PB Day	PB Cmpr	# Pvt Boats	Day Use Comm Boat	Day Use Town (local)			
1																
2																
3																
4																
5																
6																
7																
8																
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Total																
Avg																