

Survey of Vehicle Use in Grand Teton National Park

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A survey was taken of vehicle use in Grand Teton National Park. Visitor numbers to national parks increase each year, and the visitors are bringing an increasing number of motorized vehicles to the parks including boats, motor-bikes and cars towed in by motor-coaches. In August there was an average number of 547 vehicles per hour passing Moran Jct. There is an average of 3.3 people per car, making 1800 people per hour passing this one point.

Because of its small size and the arrangement of its road system, Grand Teton would be a good place to try an experiment in reducing traffic on some of the park roads not suited to heavy travel. There are two roads through the park--the road closer to the mountains is a 45 mph scenic road, narrow and winding, and the outer road is a high speed highway. Closing the inner road to private vehicles and substituting a public transportation system of park or concession operated busses to carry people through the area to specific points along the way would greatly reduce the traffic problem, especially since the situation can only get worse and not better in the future.

Bus service could be of two types--sightseeing busses which would stop at the scenic turnouts and other points of interest such as the Jenny Lake Visitors Center, and busses running on a regular schedule carrying hikers and picnickers to Jenny Lake or other areas. This system would markedly cut down on vehicle use and footage over this road. If a bus is 50 feet long and carries 50 passengers, the 1800 people per hour can be carried in 1800 feet of bus, or 20 per cent of present vehicle length per hour. Thirty-six busses can carry these 1800 people, or 7 per cent of present total vehicle numbers.

People would still be able to camp in their trailers and campers in the present camp grounds established for this use. Tenting would still be permitted at Jenny Lake and Adirondack shelters could be built in that area for those without tents who would like to camp in more of a wilderness setting. The bus system would allow for high visitor use of the area along the inner road but would greatly reduce motor traffic. It would also provide a convenient, sheltered camping area to give people a chance to more closely experience the wilderness nature of Grand Teton even if they are not hiking enthusiasts, an experience which will grow increasingly more valuable as our population increases and our natural areas decrease.

Miss Drummond also assisted Dr. William Calder on his project.

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