

Australian campers weigh in on noise

INAPPROPRIATE, LOUD, OR EXCESSIVE NOISES in recreation areas can be a source of conflict among visitors, detract from the overall experience, and degrade park resources. Diana Beal's research in three Queensland national park (Australia) campgrounds is on campers' attitudes toward noise sources and potential regulatory efforts by the park. Rangers distributed surveys that asked campers to provide their perceptions of 10 different noises, including human-caused, natural, and technology-based events. For those sounds that irritated or annoyed visitors, they were asked to give their opinion on whether more passive or active regulation was needed by the park. Natural sounds, such as those of birds and insects, were rated as the most pleasant, while loud technology, such as radios and televisions, was deemed most annoying by the campers. Respondents rejected management regulation that would create stricter rules for behavior; however, they favored the idea of more patrols by park officials to enforce the rules. Beal recommends that managers consider zoning parts of the campgrounds to accommodate visitors who arrive after a "reasonable hour" to limit the number of noise intrusions from late arrivals.

Reference

Beal, D. 1994. Campers' attitudes to noise and regulation in Queensland national parks. *Australian Parks and Recreation* 30(4):38–40.

—Dave Stack

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