

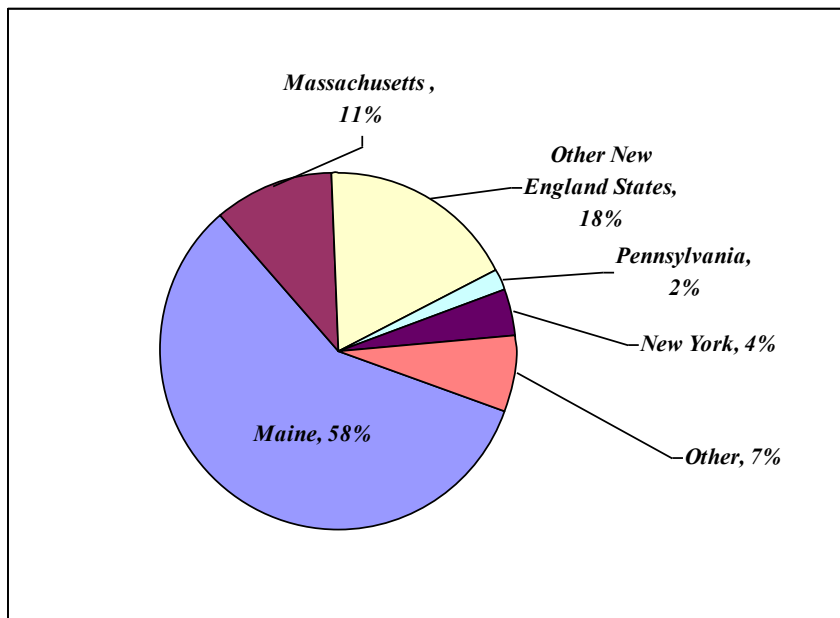
V. USER DEMOGRAPHICS, VISIT CHARACTERISTICS, AND RELEVANT OUTDOOR RECREATION TRENDS

VISITORS

Residency, Past Experience, Activities

The most recent detailed research on user demographics for the Allagash Wilderness Waterway comes from the 2003 *Allagash Wilderness Waterway Visitor Survey*, conducted by University of Maine Parks, Recreation, and Tourism professor John Daigle. A prior research study of Allagash users was undertaken by Harry Zinn, a University of Maine graduate student, in 1988/1989. Daigle's 2003 report lists Maine Residents accounting for 58% of non-winter visitors. This is not a significant departure from Zinn's 1988/1989 findings of between 50% and 55% total summer camping use being attributed to Maine residents. Figure V- A , based on Daigle's figures, depicts the proportions of visitors by residence.

Figure V - A: Proportion of Visitors by Residence. Based on Allagash Wilderness Waterway Visitor Survey (Daigle, 2003).



The Daigle survey reports that 27% of visitors had at least one child under the age of 16 in their party. Families or families and friends or acquaintances made up 88% of party compositions on the Waterway. Ninety percent (90%) of visitors had

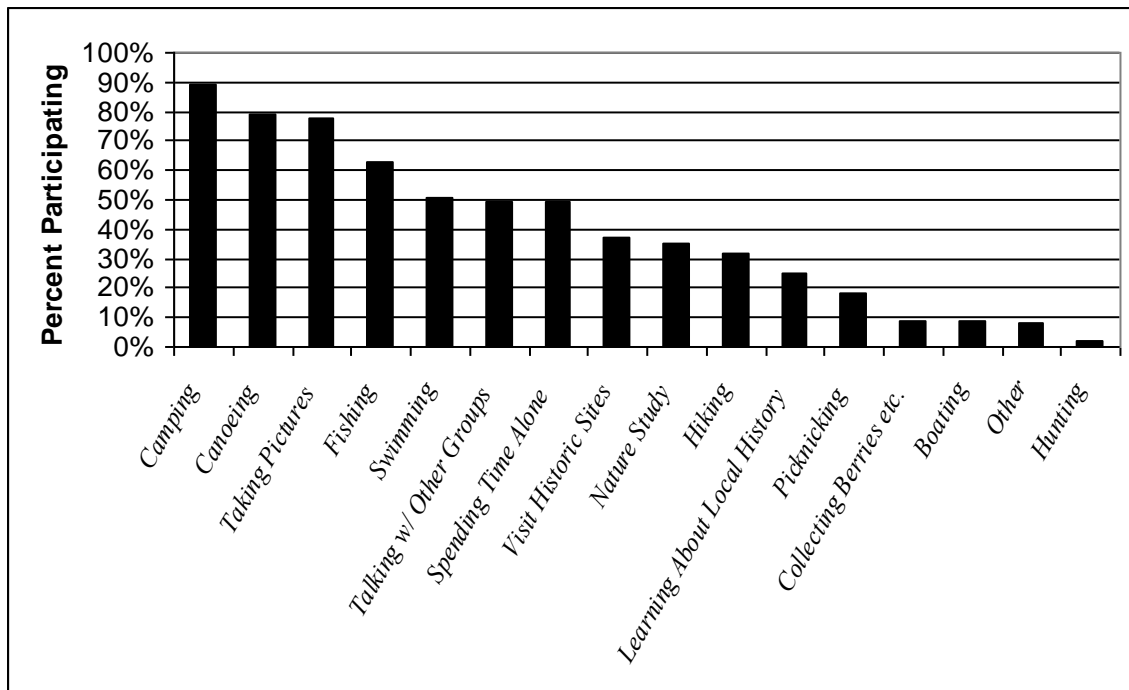
previously visited a remote or undeveloped river area prior to their trip on the Allagash. Most visitors (60%) had visited such a river area before they were 20 years old. These

two sources of insight may point to the significance of youth getting out on rivers like the Allagash if future generations are to continue to visit wild rivers.

Based on the Daigle survey sample (N=441), 73% of visitors had previously visited the Allagash Wilderness Waterway. Three percent (3%) of visitors hired a guide while 39% hired an outfitter to provide transportation or a vehicle shuttle and 16% hired an outfitter to provide equipment.

The most popular activities engaged in by Waterway visitors were camping (89%), canoeing (79%), taking pictures (78%), and fishing (63%). **Figure V-B** depicts the percent of visitors participating in specific activities.

Figure V-B: Percent of AWW Visistors Participating in Recreation Activities (Source: Daigle, 2003).



VISITS

Camping Nights, Group Size, Entry and Exit Points

When looking at camping nights over the time-span from 1995 to 2010, the clear trend is a reduction in the amount of camping occurring in the Waterway (**Figure V-C**). The figure of 18,860 camper nights in 2010 represents approximately 58% of 1995 camper nights. According to visitation records, the average number of nights camped by those visiting the Waterway between 2005 and 2008 was 3.7 nights. This figure is

significantly below the 5.2 (summer average) and 4.2 (spring average) reported by Zinn in 1989 and the approximately 5 nights average reported by Daigle in 2003.

Group size appears to have remained quite constant over the last decade. As shown by **figure V-D**, the breakdown of percent of parties by group size is fairly consistent between Daigle’s reported data published in 2003 and 2007/2008 AWW registration data analyzed for a comparable breakdown. If there is any trend between the two data sets, it may be that the more recent data is tipped slightly towards more use by parties consisting of one or two persons.

Figure V-C: Camping Nights 1995-2010

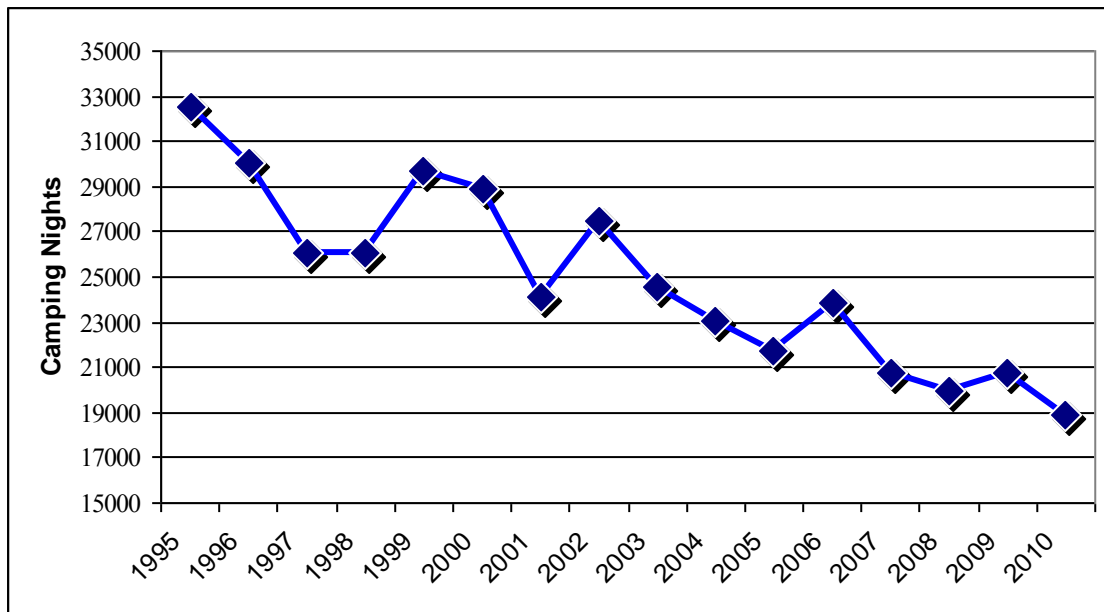
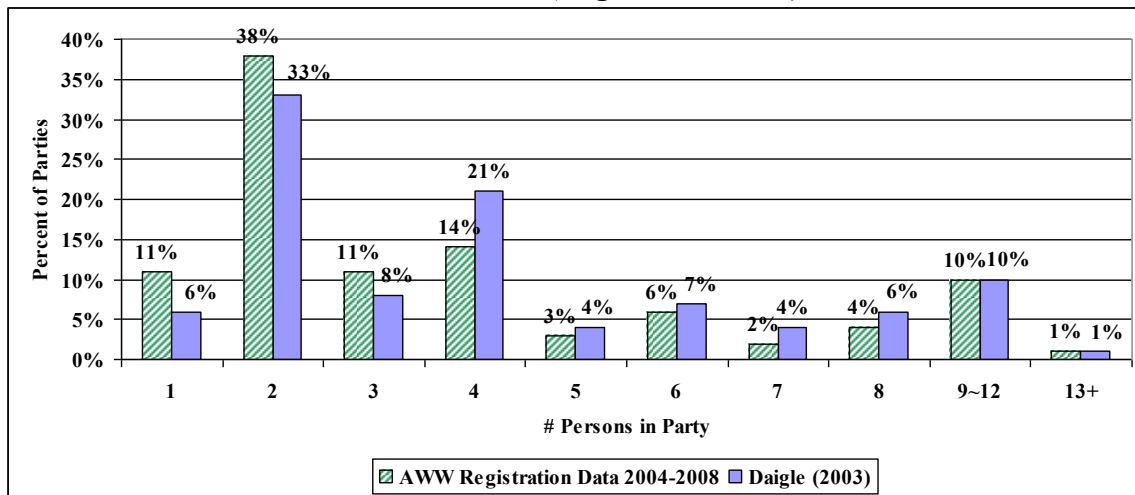


Figure V-D: Visitor Group Sizes in 2003 (Survey Data) and 2007/2008 (Registration Data).



When surveyed by Daigle for his 2003 report, survey respondents identified a variety of entry and exit points to the watercourse. The percentages of surveyed individuals using specific entry and exit points is depicted in **Figure V-E**.

Visitor Satisfaction

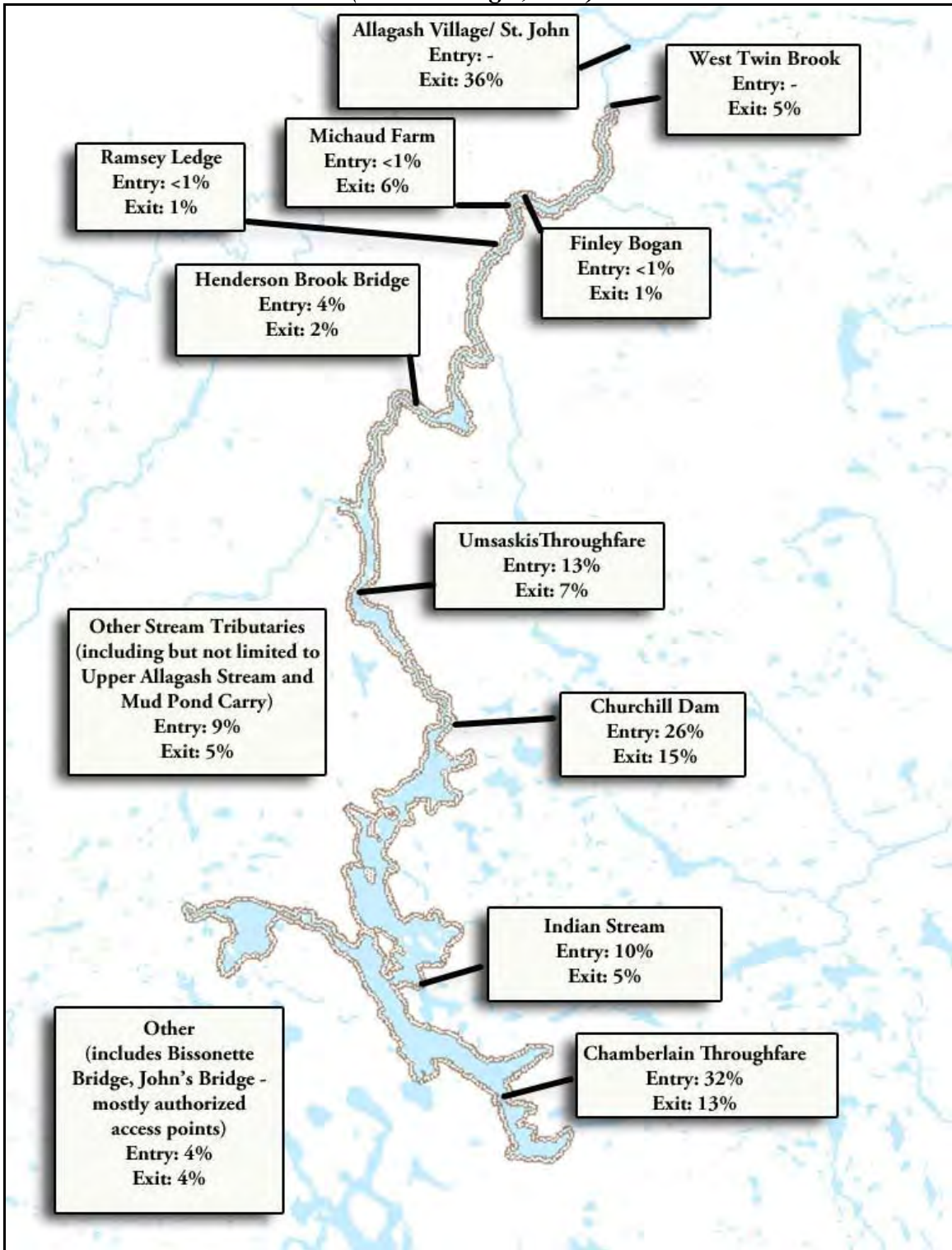
Daigle’s 2003 research indicates that overall visitor impressions of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway experience is positive; 74% of survey respondents gave the experience a rating of “A” (on an A-E scale) and 23% rated it as a “B”. According to Daigle, the ratings of importance for specific experiences or conditions appear to cluster into distinct segments reflecting different user types. In other words, there is evidence that the importance of attributes and conditions (e.g., “number of other users”, “solitude”, “good fishing near campsite”, “number of trees with exposed roots near campsite”, etc.) are not unanimously valued but rather are clumped into groups of attributes that may matter strongly to, for instance, anglers, while not being seen as important to mid-summer canoe tripping parties. Likewise, other attribute clusters are significant to canoe trippers but not anglers.

A strong majority of respondents (71%) rated the amount of people seen at campsites as “about right”, while 18% felt they saw too many. The “about right” and “too many” numbers reported by respondents regarding travelling on the Waterway were 69% and 14% respectively (with 3% reporting “way too many” and 3% total seeing “too few” or “way too few”).



(Above) Paddlers at the Former Site of Long Lake Dam

Figure V-E : Percentage of Visitors Using Sites for Entry and/or Exit
 (Source: Daigle, 2003).



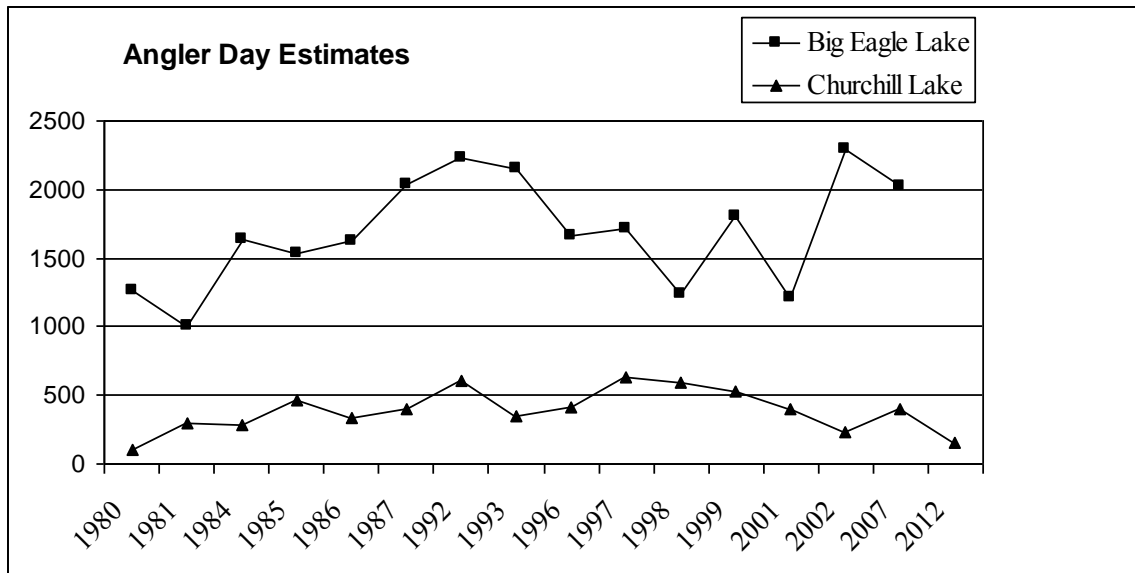
Visitation Levels and Visitor Experiences

Current visitation levels are significantly below documented highs in previous decades. Furthermore, current visitation levels are lower than the early 2000s time period in which Daigle studied visitor satisfaction. Given that Daigle reported that satisfaction, including satisfaction concerning views on amount of use, was high, it could be reasoned that now, with somewhat lower visitation levels, satisfaction related to use levels should remain high. However, given that this plan advocates for more concerted efforts to attract and enable visitation (see policy 9), it is recommended that satisfaction be monitored (see policy 4), especially if use levels rise significantly.

Winter Recreation

Given staffing and logistical limitations, including North Maine Woods checkpoints not operating in the winter months, it is difficult to produce a full picture of winter use in the Waterway across time. One robust source of data is based in winter angler counts taken by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW). **Figure V-F** depicts angler day estimates from 1980 to 2012. As shown, there are moderate swings in use, with a drop in use occurring in the most recent sampled season. This most recent data along with other MDIFW surveys in other remote northern locations such as the Musquacook Lakes suggest that travel to remote lakes for ice fishing may be down due in part at least to fuel costs.

Figure V-F: Winter Angler Day Estimates for Big Eagle and Churchill Lakes, 1980-2012. Note: years depicted represent years with data, not equal intervals.



Although robust data is not available to confirm the growth of snowmobile touring in the Waterway, winter staff indicates that there appears to have been a significant growth in the amount of snowmobile use not associated with ice fishing but rather with touring. This has been noted as particularly observable at the Tramway, which serves as a destination for riders travelling upwards of 50 miles on snowmobile.

Non-motorized day use of the Waterway, such as snowshoeing and cross-country skiing is similarly difficult to track. However, these uses appear to be quite limited in frequency.

BROADER RECREATION TRENDS ASSOCIATED WITH THE WATERWAY

Outdoor Recreation Activity Trends in Maine and New England

There are several sets of data relating to outdoor recreation trends that are worth noting in this plan. However, the data sets do not simultaneously point in the same direction. On one hand, there has been growth in a number of outdoor activities associated with the Waterway. As noted by Daigle (2003), 85% of visitors to the Waterway are from the New England states (including Maine). Data obtained as part of the 2009-2014 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan shows that in New England between 1995 and 2009, there was a gain of 2.71 million people reporting participating in viewing wildlife (besides birds). Similarly, the following growth was documented in New England: day hiking – 1.97 million participants added; kayaking – 1.73 million participants added, viewing/photographing fish – 1.51 million participants added, viewing/photographing birds – 1.44 million participants added, swimming in lakes/streams – 1.39 million participants added, primitive camping – 280,000 participants added (Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan [MESCORP], 2009). Data also shows that based on the percent change in number of participants, kayaking (up 2,656.9% from 1995 to 2009) and canoeing (up 86% from 1995 to 2009) both show growth in New England (MESCORP, 2009). Additionally, 47.1% of Maine citizens reported visiting a wilderness or primitive area. This data demonstrates growth in activities that visitors participate in within the Waterway and could be construed as pointing towards increased demand.

Data reflecting fishing activity paints a relatively static picture in Maine. According to the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, from 1999-2009, Maine fishing license sales have remained fairly consistent, up 0.19 percent. In 1999, 272,528 licenses were sold; and in 2009, 273,038 were sold.

Visitation Trends to the AWW and Other Destinations in Maine's North Woods

North woods destinations: while fishing licenses sold by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife have essentially remained steady and regional participation in notable activities associated with the Waterway have increased over the last decade, Allagash Wilderness Waterway visitation has been declining over the last ten years. This trend follows the same general pattern as other destinations in Maine's north woods. Visitation levels within the North Maine Woods system, Baxter State Park, and the Penobscot River Corridor have all declined significantly over the last decade. **Table V-A** shows the percent change in visitation at Acadia National Park and the Maine State Parks system as well as destinations more closely associated with the north woods, including North Maine Woods, Baxter State Park, KI-Jo Mary Multiple-Use Forest, and the Allagash Wilderness Waterway.

It is noteworthy that only the Maine State Parks saw an increase in visitation. Additionally, there is a notable difference between the visitation drop for North Maine Woods and the KI-Jo Mary forest, even though the recreation opportunity and management of these two areas is similar. The increased visitation at Maine State Parks and reduced visitation at (most notably) North Maine Woods may suggest that travel distance is a significant factor driving visitation. Maine State Parks (AWW excluded), when compared to more remote destinations, are generally closer to population centers and attract significant day-use. However, camping reservation data for Maine State Parks do not show a decline in camping (see **Figure V-F**). Thus, day-use is not the only factor keeping State Park attendance strong. As for the distinction between the KI-Jo Mary Forest and North Maine Woods, the KI Jo Mary forest, while still rather remote, is closer to larger population centers than North Maine Woods. This too, hints at a possible connection between travel distances and diminished visitation. Finally, the reduction in Acadia National Park's visitation may also reflect travel limitations.

This possible impact of travel costs on Waterway visitation is supported by findings elsewhere in the nation. For example, a 2008 USA Today/Gallup poll found that "more than a third of Americans are rethinking vacation plans because of record-high gas prices" and "of those altering travel plans, 37% are scrapping trips and one in four won't go as far or stay as long" (Keen, 2008). According to USA Today/Gallup analysis of reservations for 2,500 campsites and attractions on federal land, visitors chose destinations in their own state at a higher rate than the same time period the year before, when gas prices were lower (Keen, 2008).

The minor discussion above notwithstanding, this management plan does not address in great depth the causes of reduced visitation in the Allagash Wilderness

Waterway or the larger northern forest surrounding it. The plan, should, however, be informed by the fact that visitation has declined and that several external factors may be influencing visitation.

Table V-A: Changes in Visitation to Select Maine Outdoor Recreation Destinations

	1999-2002 Average	2007-2010 Average	Percent Change
Acadia N.P. (visitors)	2,536,647	2,252,613	-11.12%
Maine State Parks (visitor days)	2,146,905	2,300,478	+7.15%
North Maine Woods (visitor days)	288,600.3	175,865.5	-39.06%
Baxter State Park (visitor days)	137,255.8	110,615	-19.41%
KI-Jo Mary Forest (visitor days)	29,328	24,584.75	-16.17%
AWW (nights)	27,560	20,086	-27.11%

(Below) Figure V-G: Maine State Parks Day-Use and Camping Visitation Trends.

