

VISITATION RATES TO THE APOSTLE ISLANDS NATIONAL LAKESHORE AND THE INTRODUCTION OF THE NON-NATIVE SPECIES *LYMANTRIA DISPAR* (L.)

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ABSTRACT

The introduction of non-native species has accelerated due to increasing levels of global trade and travel, threatening the composition and function of ecosystems. Upon arrival and successful establishment, biological invaders begin to spread and often do so with considerable assistance from humans. Recreational areas can be especially prone to the problem of accidental non-native species transport given the number of visitors that arrive from geographically diverse areas. In this poster, we examined camping permit data to the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore in northwestern Wisconsin from 1999 to 2007 relative to gypsy moth distribution, phenology, and outbreak data. During this time, gypsy moth populations became established in this area ahead

of the moving population front of the gypsy moth, suggesting possible anthropogenic introduction. The permit data revealed that most visitors arrived from outside of the gypsy moth established area. However, there was a consistent yearly trend of visitors who arrived from areas of high gypsy moth populations and who arrived during the gypsy moth life stage (egg masses) most likely to be successfully introduced. Using available data on the gypsy moth and its relationship to camping permit data, we describe how recreational managers could optimize park strategies to mitigate unwanted introductions of the gypsy moth as well as develop analogous strategies for managing other biological invaders in recreational areas.