

CAMPER ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING THE PRESENCE OF PETS IN TEN PENNSYLVANIA STATE PARK CAMPGROUNDS

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to determine camper opinion on whether or not furred pets should be permitted in state park campgrounds within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The study was commissioned so that Pennsylvania Bureau of State Parks administrators could make informed decisions regarding the direction of pet policy. Surveys were taken at 10 state parks throughout the summer camping season of 2001. The results typically showed greater differences between pet owners and non pet owners than between Pennsylvania residents and non residents. Overall, about 73% of respondents were in favor of permitting pets in campgrounds. Additionally, the majority expressed that if pets were allowed, they would not change the frequency of their visits. Of those who said the frequency of their visits would change, more indicated an increase. It is recommended that pets be permitted in state park campgrounds, but that careful consideration should also be given to developing a management plan that meets the needs of campground visitors while protecting park resources.

Introduction

Pets are an integral part of the lives of millions of Americans, and many pet owners even find enjoyment in involving their pets in recreational activities such as camping. However, camping with a pet in public camping areas can be a source of conflict, because those who are not camping with a pet often find the presence of pets to be a nuisance. One challenge to resource managers has been striking a balance between opposing sides of the issue. The Pennsylvania Bureau of State Parks (BSP) policy regarding the presence of furred pets in overnight campground areas has historically been one of exclusion, although for part of the early 1990s, pets were allowed in Pennsylvania State Parks on a trial basis, but were ultimately banned due to public opposition. Now a decade later, there are many people within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as well as some from out of state, who would like to see the policy changed to allow furred pets—dogs and cats in particular—in state park campgrounds. At the same time, there exists a portion of the population who are equally opposed to allowing pets. Therefore, the Pennsylvania BSP initiated the 2001 Pet Pilot Project in which, for the 2001 camping

season (Memorial Day, May 27 through Labor Day, September 2), pets were allowed in ten state park campgrounds under a specified set of rules and regulations.

Relevant Literature

As long as humankind has walked the face of the earth, interactions with animals—whether positive or negative—have been common. Despite the persistent struggle to tame their wild surroundings, humans have benefited from the presence of members of the animal kingdom. Their furry (and some not-so-furry) friends have served as a source of food, clothing, and shelter. Animals have been trained to carry humans from place to place, to make their work easier and to entertain them. Many animals have even provided valued companionship. Today in the United States, pets have become a major part of life for many. In 1993 alone, pet owners spent about \$15 billion on their animals (Mogelonsky, 1995). Additionally, in 2001 there were 63.4 million households with a pet, up from 61.2 million in 1998 (Animal Sheltering, 2001). Although this figure is inclusive of all species of pet, the increase reflects a two-percent increase in dog-owning households, and an eight-percent increase in cat-owning households. In a similar study in 1999 by the Pet Food Industry (PFI), it was found that out of 101.7 million total households, 55 percent had at least one dog or one cat (Feedstuffs, 2000). There were 34.7 million cat-owning households, compared to 38.2 million dog-owning households. Dogs and cats lived together in 16.2 million households. In total, there were 58.5 million dogs in the U.S. and 72.6 million cats—increases of 1.5% and 2% from the year before, respectively.

These short-term increases are part of a longer-reaching trend. The American Veterinary Medical Association (1996) reported that the number of dogs in the U.S. had increased from 52.4 million in 1987 to 52.9 million in 1996. Similarly, the number of cats increased from 54.6 million to 59.1 million over those same years. The average number of dogs per dog-owning household was 1.69, and the average number of cats per cat-owning household was 2.19. These figures clearly show an increasing number of pets in the United States. However, according to Crispell (1994), married couples with children under 18 are the most likely to have pets (57%), and married couples with adult children still living at home are the second most likely (52%). These groups are expected to grow at a slower rate than single-parent families and people living alone. Therefore, it is expected that the percentage of those households with pets might actually decrease. Crispell (1994) projected a drop of 1%, from 42% to 41%, by the year 2010.

Of those people who own pets, a great many take their pet(s) along when they travel. According to a survey conducted by the American Animal Hospital Association (Sawicki, 2000), 67% of pet owners traveled with their animals in 1998, compared to 53% in 1996. Of these, 99% traveled by car. The major reasons for such an occurrence may be economical and/or emotional (Leggat & Speare, 2000). There are many pet owners who would rather avoid

the costs of boarding their pets. At the same time, some pet owners consider Fifi or Fido to be members of the family. In fact, 50-80% of pet owners fell into this category (Franklin, 2001). This emotional attachment seems to run deep. According to a 1997 American Animal Hospital Association survey, 79% percent of respondents claimed they felt guilty when they went on trips and left their pets behind. Forty-eight percent often stayed home specifically because of their pet; 53% believed their pet would come to their rescue in case of trouble; 60% included news of their pets in holiday greetings; and 27% even take pets for family pictures or pictures with Santa Claus (Libbon, 2000). There is even medical evidence to suggest that emotional attachment to pets has valid health benefits. For example, in a study of coronary patients during the late 1990s, after a one-year follow up, 28% of patients who did not own a pet had died. In contrast, only 6% of those who did own a pet had been laid to rest (Franklin, 2001).

Notwithstanding the potential benefits that pets provide, there exist certain health and safety concerns that accompany the presence of pets. Sanitation is an important issue. Pets can carry parasites or diseases, especially in their digestive systems, that can ultimately affect human beings. The filariform larvae of the zoonotic canine hookworm (*Ancylostoma caninum*), for example, have been found in soil contaminated by animal feces (Leggat & Speare, 2000). These larvae are then able to pass through the skin of humans (i.e. bare feet) into the body where they are able to carry on their life processes. Attacks by pets are a concern as well. Jeffrey Sacks, of the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta, estimates that there are 4.5 million people bitten each year, and children, especially those under the age of 10, account for about 10% of these (Marder, 1997). In 1994, the number was as high as 4.7 million people bitten (or 1.8% of the population) (Sacks, Kresnow & Houston, 1996). Most of these were relatively inconsequential. In fact, only 800,000 of those who were bitten sought medical care. However, some bites do indeed prove fatal. Between 1979 and 1994, a total of 279 people were killed as a result of dog attack (Sacks, Sattin & Bonzo, 1989; Sacks, Lockwood & Sattin, 1996). In 1995 and 1996, another 25 dog-bite-related fatalities occurred (Journal of the American Medical Association, 1997). Of those 25, 80% were children, and 72% were male. Thirty percent of attacks involved more than one unrestrained dog off the owner's property; twenty-two percent involved a restrained dog (or dogs) on the owner's property; forty-eight percent involved an unrestrained dog (or dogs) on the owner's property. Overall, 36% of attacks were by a single dog, and 64% were by groups of more than one. Rottweilers were the breed most frequently involved. It has also been found that, in general, dogs that are male and unneutered/un-spayed are more likely to bite than dogs that are female and neutered/spayed (Gershman, Sacks & Wright, 1994).

In spite of the potential dangers, people continue to include pets in many of the activities in which they participate, which means that conflicts are sure to arise in public areas where non pet lovers encounter pets. Overnight camping areas are one particular "hot" topic for debate, and pet

lovers appear to be winning many of the battles. Many national parks permit pets in overnight camping areas. About one fourth do not allow pets in the park at all (Aguirre, Starkey & Hansen, 1994). Numerous private campgrounds consider themselves "pet friendly." Also more and more state park systems are allowing pets in at least some of their overnight camping areas. In fact, as of the writing of this article, only three states remain (not including Pennsylvania) which fully restrict pets from state park campgrounds: Hawaii, New Jersey and Rhode Island. The state of Florida recently made the decision to allow pets. From August 1997 through July 1998, pets were permitted in five Florida state parks on a trial basis. During those twelve months, a study was conducted by Holland and Holdnak (1998) of the University of Florida to determine visitor reactions and attitudes to the presence of pets in those five state park campgrounds. It was discovered that about 70% of survey respondents (N=486) favored a change in policy to allow pets. Most of these insisted that rules be effectively enforced. Only 22% showed a desire to keep pets out. Additionally, about 28% indicated that they would increase the frequency of camping visits were pets allowed, compared to only about 9% who said they would visit less frequently. Of the 41% who reported that the presence of pets had some impact on their overall camping experience, those who perceived positive impacts outnumbered those who perceived negative impacts by more than two to one. Indeed, the results showed that a majority of Florida campers preferred that pets be allowed. But the minority opinion was an important one as well. Therefore, the challenge to management was in finding effective means by which to provide recreation and camping opportunities to both groups of people. Certainly the concept is key in all public recreation area management issues, so an understanding of public opinion becomes a cornerstone of management practice.

Overall, the number of pets in the United States appears to be increasing. This does not necessarily mean that more people own pets, but may instead indicate an increase in the number of pets per pet-owning household. Pet owners appear to be very attached to their pets and include them in many of their activities, including recreational endeavors such as camping. At the same time, there are many people who do not own pets and would prefer not to encounter pets in public areas, such as campgrounds. This conflict of opinions has ultimately provided the impetus for this study.

Research Methods

The survey instrument consisting of 43 questions was adapted from a similar study undertaken by the Florida State Park System (Holland & Holdnak, 1998). A few questions were added and a few removed to better fit the purposes of this study. The instrument was designed to assess the attitudes of campers in Pennsylvania State Park campgrounds concerning whether or not pets should be allowed in overnight camping areas. Midway through the summer season, a scannable survey form was adopted in order to simplify data coding. The study was conducted at ten state parks within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

(Parker Dam; Sinnemahoning; Cook Forest; Oil Creek [backpacking trail with overnight shelters and tent sites]; Shawnee; Pine Grove Furnace; Blue Knob; French Creek; Promised Land; Fowlers Hollow), each selected by the BSP. Surveys were collected throughout the 2001 summer camping season—a period of approximately three months, from Sunday, May 27 (Memorial Day Weekend) through Sunday, September 2 (Labor Day Weekend). Five Slippery Rock University (SRU) graduate and undergraduate students and one SRU graduate were employed to collect data throughout the summer. Another six were hired specifically for the final weekend of the study, bringing the total number of surveyors to 12.

Approximately six visits were carried out at each park. The following exceptions occurred: four visits at Sinnemahoning, eight at Cook Forest, seven at Blue Knob, and eight at Promised Land. Each visit was to last eight hours, or until all campers at the campground had a chance to be surveyed, whichever came first. In order to survey a broader population sample, it was suggested that four visits occur on weekend days and two on weekdays. Like the Florida study, this study utilized a randomized convenience sample. An effort was made to survey one camper from each campsite. Surveyors were instructed that, in the event there were too many occupied campsites to be surveyed during a particular visit, they were to use a randomization strategy similar to the following: choose at random one of the first five sites, and then proceed to every fifth site. Additionally, some parks only allowed pets in certain areas or loops of their respective campgrounds. In these instances, surveyors were to collect data from campers in those areas first, and then branch out into other areas of the campground in order to ensure that those campers potentially most affected by pets would be surveyed. Only campers found outside of their tents or RV's were approached. Surveyors introduced themselves, explained what they were doing and who they were representing, and asked campers if they were willing to participate in the study. If so, campers were read an informed consent statement and then given the survey. If not, surveyors moved on to the next campsite. The vast majority of surveys were read aloud by the surveyors, who recorded camper responses, but some campers preferred to fill them out by hand. The average survey took about 10 to 15 minutes to administer, but some took as long as 25 or 30, depending on the extent of comment of the individual being interviewed. After each visit, completed surveys were sent to SRU for coding and analysis.

Data was examined for demographic trends such as the following: camper distribution by park; camper distribution by residence; camper gender. Where appropriate, chi-squared tests for independence were used to determine statistical significance between groups. Other variables that were examined include: Camper trip satisfaction; Nights spent camping in the previous 12 months; Nights spent camping in PA in the previous 12 months; Nights spent camping in PA State Parks in the previous 12 months; Frequency of pet ownership; Frequency of campers who brought pets along on the current camping trip; Camper opinion regarding the \$2 per night pet fee; Frequency of

campers who selected a particular campground because pets were permitted; Frequency of respondents who observed pet droppings not picked up by pet owners; Frequency of campers who did not observe pet droppings picked up by pet owners; Frequency of campers who observed interactions between pets and wildlife; Camper perception of the impact of pets in campgrounds on campground safety; Camper perception of the impact of pets in campgrounds on the observation of wildlife; Camper perception of the impact of pets in campgrounds on campground noise; Camper perception of the impact of pets in campgrounds on the overall camping experience; Camper support for the current policy of restricting; and Frequency of expected future visits if pets were permitted in campgrounds.

It was hypothesized that greater differences would be evident between pet owners and non pet owners than between Pennsylvania residents and non residents, and that pet owners would generally be more in favor of allowing pets than would non pet owners.

Results

A total of 605 campers were surveyed in the ten Pennsylvania State Park campgrounds participating in the study. Table 1 shows the distribution of surveys taken at each park. Although the number of visits to each park was approximately the same, there

Table 1 - Campers Surveyed by Park

Park	N	%
Blue Knob	33	5.5%
Cook Forest	130	21.5%
Fowlers Hollow	11	1.8%
French Creek	73	12.1%
Oil Creek	10	1.7%
Parker Dam	113	18.6%
Pine Grove Furnace	29	4.8%
Promised Land	80	13.2%
Shawnee	90	14.8%
Sinnemahoning	36	6.0%
Total	605	100.0%

was considerable variation among the numbers of surveys collected at each. For example, the greatest number of surveys was taken at Cook Forest (n=130), while the fewest (n=10) were collected at Oil Creek. The variation in numbers of surveys collected can be attributed to such differences among parks as types of facilities (i.e. traditional family campground vs. backpacking trail shelters vs. fishing access areas, etc.), popularity, size, and location. Pennsylvania residents comprised 85% of the sample. Fourteen percent of the campers were from other U.S. states, and approximately one-half of one percent of the campers surveyed were from foreign countries. Roughly half of the non residents surveyed (8.7% of the total, excluding foreign visitors) were from Ohio, New York, and Maryland—all of which are adjacent to Pennsylvania. The remaining 6% of the campers surveyed

were from a variety of other states, with less than five campers from each state.

Almost half of the respondents were 25–44 years of age. The next most common age group, with approximately 34% of campers, was 45–64. Eighty-eight percent of campers surveyed were under the age of 65, while 5% were under the age of 25. Most interviewees (32%) were camping in pairs, while less than 1% were camping alone. Approximately 71% were camping in a group of four or fewer, and only 1.2% were with a group of ten or more. Survey respondents were distributed evenly between the genders. Fifty-three percent of campers surveyed were male, while 47% were female. Few campers could be considered “local” residents, as fewer than 13% lived within 25 miles of the park where they were surveyed. However, most campers (68%) traveled fewer than 100 miles, and about 36% fewer than 50 miles. Only about 32% of the campers traveled more than 100 miles to the park.

Demographic characteristics of pet owners and non pet owners were compared to determine if there were any significant differences between the two groups. Chi-squared tests for independence were used to determine degrees of significance. The level of significance was set at <0.01 throughout the entire project. There were more pet owners camping in the state parks than expected. The percentage of pet owners interviewed at individual parks ranged from a low of 58% (Sinnemahoning) to a high of 91% (Fowlers Hollow). Although rates of pet ownership varied from park to park, there were consistently more pet owners than non pet owners interviewed. A chi-squared test revealed that this difference in pet ownership was statistically significant ($\chi^2 < 0.0001$). In contrast, there was no significant difference between Pennsylvania and non-Pennsylvania residents regarding pet ownership. Seventy-five percent of Pennsylvania residents were pet owners, compared to 69% of non residents. The percentage of female pet owners was greater than the percentage of male pet owners. Females were almost four times as likely to be pet owners as non pet owners, while males were only twice as likely to be pet owners. This difference is significant ($\chi^2 = 0.0041$), and may possibly be related to women’s safety concerns and the protection that dogs may provide.

Campers were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the current trip. The great majority of campers (96.6%) indicated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with their camping trip. Only 1% of the campers surveyed indicated that their camping experience was poor or very poor.

Table 2 - Frequency distribution of reported level of satisfaction

Level	N	%
Very Satisfying	392	65.4%
Satisfying	187	31.2%
Fair	14	2.3%
Poor	3	0.5%
Very Poor	3	0.5%
Total	599	100

Campers were asked whether or not they currently owned dogs or cats. Seventy-three percent of respondents reported owning dogs, cats or both. There were about twice as many campers who owned only dogs as campers who owned only cats. About 27% of campers did not currently own a dog or cat as a pet. Compared to the 30% of pet owners surveyed who usually traveled with their pet only 23% had their pet with them on the camping trip during which the survey was conducted. Almost 77% of the campers had left their pets at home. This difference may have been due in part to a lack of awareness among pet owners of the Pet Pilot Project in Pennsylvania State Parks. Other factors may have included individual preferences not to camp with a pet. Almost three-fourths of survey respondents owned pets. About one-third of those claimed to usually travel with their pet. In comparison, only about one-fourth of pet owners had brought their pet along on the current camping trip.

One important component of this study was to identify the reactions of campers to actual pet encounters as well as the perceived impacts of pets on campgrounds and their resources. About 58% of respondents indicated that they had seen a dog in the campground on their camping trip. Forty-two percent reported seeing no dogs at all. Only about 4% indicated that they had seen a cat in the campground on their camping trip. Ninety-six percent reported seeing no cats at all. Almost 94% of campers reported that they had not observed interactions between pets and wildlife, compared to only 6% who had. When asked what effect permitting dogs and cats in campgrounds has had on camper safety, the majority (68%) of campers indicated that they felt safety was not affected. Of those who felt safety was impacted, almost 20% felt that the impact was positive, while only about 12% indicated that they felt safety was impacted negatively. Pet owners differed significantly from non pet owners in their perception of the impact of pets on camper safety ($\chi^2 = 0.0018$). Pet owners were more likely to feel that impacts on camper safety were positive, while non pet owners were more likely to feel that impacts were negative. However, the majority of each group indicated a neutral response regarding the effects of pets on camper safety. Campers were also asked about their perception of the impact of pets in campgrounds on the observation of wildlife. Overall, about 21% indicated that they felt that permitting pets would have a negative effect on wildlife observation, while only about 6% indicated that the effects would be positive. The remaining 73% indicated a neutral response. Again the difference between pet owners and non pet owners was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.0012$). While the majority of each group remained neutral, a greater percentage of pet owners (7%) than of non pet owners (3%) thought that any impact on the observation of wildlife would be positive. In contrast, 30% of non pet owners and 18% of pet owners thought there would be negative impacts.

The majority (68%) of respondents also felt that the impact of pets on campground noise would be neutral. Only 4% indicated that the presence of pets would have a positive impact, while almost 28% indicated that the impact would be negative. The difference between pet owners and non

pet owners was once again statistically significant ($\chi^2 < 0.0001$). In fact, non pet owners were almost twice as likely as pet owners (42% and 23%, respectively) to perceive negative impacts of pets on campground noise. Additionally, the percentage of pet owners who perceived a neutral impact (72%) was notably higher than that of non pet owners (56%). Campers were also asked how permitting pets in campgrounds impacted their overall camping experience. Of the total sample, about 60% responded "neutral." Almost 26% said that pets had positive impacts on their overall camping experience, while only about 14% indicated that the effect was negative.

Table 3 - Frequency distribution of respondents' perceptions of the impacts of pets on the overall experience

Perceived impact	N	%
Strongly Positive	83	15.4%
Somewhat Positive	56	10.4%
Neutral	326	60.5%
Somewhat Negative	45	8.3%
Strongly Negative	29	5.4%
Total	539	100

Again the majority of both pet owners (56%) and non pet owners (73%) indicated a neutral response. The difference between the two groups was again statistically significant as well ($\chi^2 < 0.0001$). Almost 33% of pet owners, compared to only 6% of non pet owners, felt that pets contributed positively to the overall experience. On the other end of the spectrum, about 20% of non pet owners and 11% of pet owners indicated that the impact would be negative.

From this study it appears that encounters with pets were not particularly common. The majority of survey respondents perceived that the impact of pets on campground resources—particularly safety, wildlife observation, noise, and the overall camping experience—were neither positive nor negative. As might generally be expected, pet owners were significantly more likely to perceive impacts as positive, and non pet owners were more likely to perceive impacts as negative. It appears that the great majority of campers had little or no problem with the notion of allowing pets in Pennsylvania State Park campgrounds. Almost 73% of campers liked the idea of allowing pets in campgrounds, while only 21% supported the current policy of pet restriction. Of those who supported letting pets in, almost all (70.2%) agreed that rules must be in place and enforced.

Again the difference in opinion between pet owners and non pet owners was significant ($\chi^2 < 0.0001$). Almost 80% of pet owners favored letting pets in state park campgrounds, while about 17% were opposed. In contrast, 51% of non pet owners favored letting pets in, while almost 36% said pets should be kept out. There was not a significant difference between Pennsylvania residents and non residents regarding support for the current policy. The majority of both groups (approximately 72% in each) supported letting pets in the campgrounds, while only 21% of both groups preferred the current policy. Campers were asked

Table 4- Frequency distribution of support for current policy of restricting pets

Feelings on current policy	N	%
Keep pets out	126	21.1%
Neutral	38	6.4%
Let pets in (unrestricted)	14	2.3%
Let pets in (with restrictions)	420	70.2%
Total	598	100.0%

Table 5 - Frequency of expected future visits if pets were permitted in campgrounds

Frequency Change	N	%
Great Increase	93	15.6%
Some Increase	89	14.9%
No Change	349	58.4%
Some Decrease	51	8.5%
Great Decrease	16	2.7%
Sample n	598	100.0%

about the expected frequency of future visits, were pets to be permitted in Pennsylvania State Park campgrounds. The majority (58%) indicated that there would be no change. Of those that did indicate a change, 30% indicated an increase, and 11% indicated a decrease. Approximately half of those who said they would visit more often indicated that the frequency would increase greatly. Only about 3% of those that said they would visit less frequently indicated that the change would be great. The difference between pet owners and non pet owners was again significant ($\chi^2 < 0.0001$). Thirty-nine percent of pet owners indicated that they would increase the frequency of their visits if pets were permitted in campgrounds, compared to only 2% of non pet owners. On the opposite end of the scale, 7% of pet owners said that they would visit less frequently if pets were allowed, compared to about 23% of non pet owners who would reduce their visits. Similarly, when campers were asked whether they would seek or avoid campgrounds that allowed pets, a slight majority of respondents indicated that they would neither seek nor avoid those campgrounds. About 31% indicated that they would probably seek pet campgrounds, while almost 19% indicated that they would avoid those campgrounds that permitted pets.

Generally, there appears to be considerable support for changing the current policy to permit pets in Pennsylvania State Park campgrounds. Almost 73% of the campers were in favor of such a change. It also appears that if pets were allowed in Pennsylvania State Park campgrounds, the majority of survey respondents would not change park visitation habits. Any change in visitation that might occur, however, would likely be a net increase, as more campers would plan to increase, rather than decrease, the frequency of their visits.

Summary

Significant differences exist between pet owners and non pet owners on almost every issue examined. Of particular interest is the fact that almost 80% of pet owners asserted that pets should be allowed in state park campgrounds, compared to 51% of non pet owners. Additionally, if pets

were allowed, more than 30% of pet owners would increase their visits to state park campgrounds, and almost 40% would seek out those campgrounds that allowed pets.

Fewer differences appear to exist between Pennsylvania residents and non residents. In fact the only statistically significant difference was in nights camping in the previous 12 months. Not surprisingly, Pennsylvania residents spent significantly more time camping in the state of Pennsylvania and in Pennsylvania State Parks. It is also interesting to note that, even though the difference was not significant, more residents than non residents seemed to be aware of the Pet Pilot Project. The majority of respondents felt that the impacts of pets in campgrounds were neutral. While most of the concerns expressed were related to campground noise and the observation of wildlife, many campers perceived the presence of pets to be beneficial to camper safety and to the overall camping experience.

Overall, there appears to be considerable support for changing the current policy to permit pets in Pennsylvania State Park campgrounds. Almost 73% of the campers indicated that they were in favor of such a change. It also appears that if the current pet policy were changed to allow pets in Pennsylvania State Park campgrounds, the majority of survey respondents would not change park visitation habits. However, any change in visitation that might occur would likely be a net increase, as there are reportedly more campers who would increase the frequency of their visits than those who would decrease. In fact, inferred from the percentages of campers who indicated some change in visitation if pets were permitted, it may be possible that an overall net increase of nearly 27% would occur.

Conclusions

While there is substantial support for changing the pet policy, preservation of park resources should continue to be a primary goal. If pets are ultimately allowed in Pennsylvania state parks, a point may be reached over time at which the benefits of having pets in campgrounds diminish as park resources and/or visitor satisfaction levels become more seriously impacted. In this case, management may need to adapt or revise policies and/or practices in order to protect the resource and provide quality recreational experiences. Resource and visitor management planning will likely be essential to the success of any future pet programs as well as to the health and welfare of park resources. Continued monitoring of visitor satisfaction may also be a valuable tool that can be used to help guide the future direction of pet policy.

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