

Recreation Use and Visitor Survey Study
SUMMARY

Consistent with Section 6.0 of the *Recreation Use and Visitor Survey Study Plan* (Plan) that was filed with FERC on January 9, 2017,¹ the SSWD provides the following summary for the *Recreation Use and Visitor Survey Study* (Study). The summary includes a description of work completed to date, key findings, variances, and remaining work. Links to associated data files are also included. The SSWD considers these data to be public.

Work Completed as of 4/1/18:

SSWD completed field data collection for Step 1 (Identify Recreation Uses and Visitor Attitudes, Beliefs, and Preferences at Project Recreation Resource Areas). Field data collection for Step 1 occurred for 27 days from January 2017 through December 2017, including one weekday and one weekend day each month; and one holiday day each on Memorial Day, Independence Day and Labor Day holiday weekends (3 holiday days total). SSWD also completed part of Step 4 (Evaluation of the Functional Periods of the Project Boat Ramps). SSWD utilized existing topographical survey data of Camp Far West Reservoir to identify the bottom end of the constructed boat ramps and subsequently the functional range of each boat ramp.

Key Findings:

Step 1 Key Results

Regarding recreation visitors and their trip characteristics (as reported by survey respondents), SSWD found:

- Most survey respondents visited the Project recreation areas for overnight trips (59%) compared to day-use trips (41%)
- Day-use survey respondents stayed 6 hours and 20 minutes, on average
- Overnight survey respondents stayed 2.4 days, on average
- Most survey respondents indicated that their recreation group was family and friends: friends (37%) or family (32%)
- Survey respondents first visited the Project between 1959 and 2017, and reported visiting the Project 105 times overall, on average
- Survey respondents indicated their recreation groups consisted of, on average, 7.6 people, 2.4 vehicles, 0.5 RVs or campers, 0.6 motorized boats, 0.8 jet skis, and 0.3 non-motorized watercraft (e.g., canoes and kayaks)

Regarding recreation visitors' activities at Project recreation areas, SSWD found:

- The most popular recreational activities of the survey respondents were swimming (63%), camping (60%), fishing (50%), picnicking (46%), and motorized boating (39%)

¹ The Plan is available on SSWD's public relicensing website (www.sswdrelicensing.com) under 'Study Plans.'

- The top three primary recreation activities of survey respondents at the Project recreation areas were camping (38% of respondents), fishing (22%), and jet skiing (10%)

Regarding recreation issues such as safety and conflicts, SSWD found:

- The vast majority (92%) of survey respondents felt safe at the Project recreation areas and reservoir
- The survey respondents who felt unsafe (8%) indicated the top three reasons were related to the presence/speed/behavior of boaters and jet skiers (20%), speed of vehicles in recreation area (8%), road conditions within the recreation areas (8%), and congestion/activity at the boat ramp and/or floating courtesy dock (8%)
- The vast majority (92%) of survey respondents did not experience conflict at the Project recreation areas and reservoir
- The survey respondents who did experience conflict (8%) indicated the primary reasons were loudness (62%), the proximity of the other users/activities (46%), and rowdiness of other recreation visitors (31%)

Regarding crowding at the recreation areas and reservoir, SSWD found:

- The survey respondents reported being “not at all crowded,” on average, at campgrounds, picnic areas, swim beaches, boat launches, dispersed use areas and on the reservoir water surface

Regarding user’s ratings of the acceptability of the existing recreation facilities, SSWD found:

- Survey respondents rated most of the recreation facilities and amenities as “slightly acceptable” to “acceptable,” on average; except for the restrooms and potable water facilities, which were often rated as “slightly unacceptable” or “unacceptable,” on average
- Thirty-nine percent of survey respondents rated the condition of one or more of the facilities as unacceptable during their trip with the most common responses related to restrooms (57%), potable water (39%) and roads (18%)

Regarding recreation visitors’ potential barriers to participation in recreation activities, SSWD found only 3 percent of survey respondents indicated there were any barriers preventing their group from participating in any recreation activities.

Regarding users’ attitudes toward potential new recreation facility improvements, SSWD found that most survey respondents were indifferent about improvements, except for improvements to campsites, restrooms and potable water facilities, which survey respondents showed a slight preference for overall.

Step 4 Key Results

SSWD found that the functional range of the North Shore Recreation Area (NSRA) developed

boat ramp is 60.7 vertical ft, which ranges from Camp Far West Reservoir’s NMWSE at 300 ft down to the functional end of the ramp at 239.3 ft. Note that a boat ramp is considered functional if the reservoir water level is at least 3 vertical ft above the constructed end of the ramp. In addition, SSWD found the functional range of the NSRA undeveloped (dirt, 1-lane) ramp is 109.0 vertical ft, which ranges from Camp Far West Reservoir’s NMWSE at 300 ft down to the functional end of the ramp at 188.0 ft. Notably, the NSRA boat ramp is open year-round.

SSWD found that the functional range of the South Shore Recreation Area (SSRA) developed boat ramp is 67.0 vertical ft, which ranges from Camp Far West Reservoir’s NMWSE at 300 ft. down to the functional end of the ramp at 233.0 ft. The SSRA does not have an undeveloped ramp. Notably, the SSRA is typically only open during the peak recreation season.

If and when SSWD proposes water year types for the Project, then SSWD will complete the evaluation of the boat ramps functionality by comparing the end of the ramp to the median WSE for each water year type.

Associated Data Files:

One data file listed below in Table 1 is available on SSWD’s public relicensing website (www.sswdrelicensing.com).

Table 1. Data files associated with Study summary.

File Name	Data Description	File Type and Size
CFW_RecreationUse_Data_BoatRampWSE.xlsx	Analysis of functional boat ramp periods using reservoir water surface elevation data by water year type based on the historical record from 1966-2010.	Microsoft Excel, 1.6 MB

Variances from Study:

There has been one variance from the Plan. SSWD collected 349 visitor surveys (309 at NSRA and 40 at SSRA) from January 2017 through December 2017. The overall target for completed surveys was 383 surveys, including 306 surveys at the NSRA and 77 surveys at the SSRA). SSWD met the targeted number of surveys at NSRA, but was unable to meet the survey target at SSRA and thus the overall target. SSWD was unable to meet the targeted number of surveys overall for three reasons. First, the SSRA was only open from Memorial Day holiday weekend through Labor Day holiday weekend as anticipated; however, the SSRA was also only open primarily on weekends and holidays in response to the overall low recreational demand, which was not anticipated. Second, the overall recreation use from October through December 2017 at NSRA (SSRA was closed) dropped substantially compared to the previous nine months and particularly the off-peak season months from January through April. Third, during the months of October through December 2017, the nominal recreational users observed also resulted in a higher frequency of visitors contacted that had already completed a survey during the 2017 survey season. For these reasons, SSWD did not meet the overall target number of surveys. However, this variance will not affect the

Study's ability to accurately characterize user attitudes towards recreation at Project facilities because the 383 completed surveys was merely a target based off recent recreation use levels and patterns and the use/demand at the SSRA was less than anticipated in 2017. SSWD did meet and exceed the target number of surveys at NSRA where the vast majority of the recreational use occurred in 2017.

Remaining Work:

Study requirements remaining include: Step 1: conducting data analysis on the field data collected, including the visitor surveys, observation surveys and entrance gate records to comprehensively characterize the recreational uses and visitor attitudes, beliefs and preferences; Step 2: estimating current recreation use and occupancy at Project recreation areas, utilizing the field data analyzed as part of Step 1; Step 3: identifying future use and demand opportunities, which will utilize data from Step 1 and Step 2, along with other sources of demand and use projections to complete this step; and Step 4: evaluating the functional end of the boat ramps when the proposed water year types are established for the Project.

SSWD anticipates that the Study will be completed by May 2018, which is consistent with the Plan.