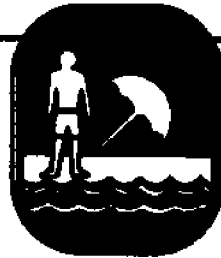


D E L A W A R E

Coastal Tourism Development Workshop



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**Tourism and Recreation Research:
Implications for Management
and Development**

**Summary Proceedings
May 12, 1988**

Summary Proceedings of the First

D E L A W A R E

Coastal Tourism Development Workshop



**Tourism and Recreation Research:
Implications for Management
and Development**

Sponsors

**University of Delaware Sea Grant
Marine Advisory Service**

**Delaware Development Office,
Delaware Tourism Office**

**Department of Natural Resources and
Environmental Control, Division of
Parks and Recreation**

**University of Delaware
Sea Grant College Program
Newark and Lewes, Delaware**

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C. Wheeler, DDO, Delaware Tourism Office
S. Laporte, DNREC, Division of Parks and Recreation

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Introduction

To present results of recently conducted tourism and recreation research to individuals associated with Delaware's coastal tourism industry. Such research can have implications for recreation resource management and tourism development within the resort community.

The above statement was the objective of the first Delaware Coastal Tourism Development Workshop, held at the University of Delaware's Marine Studies Complex in Lewes on May 12, 1988.

The workshop, "Tourism and Recreation Research: Implications for Management and Development," was sponsored by the University of Delaware Sea Grant Marine Advisory Service, the Tourism Office of the Delaware Development Office, and the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control's Division of Parks and Recreation.

Benefits of the workshop to participants included: learning about research techniques and approaches and how research benefits the coastal tourism and recreation industry, communicating research needs to state and university researchers, providing a forum to discuss issues of concern related to the Delaware coastal tourism industry, and providing input for future educational workshops.

The following pages summarize the presentations made at the workshop and are intended to serve as recorded documentation of the program.

Setting the Stage: Importance of Tourism and Recreation Research

**Dr. Alan Graefe
Associate Professor
Department of Recreation and Parks
Penn State University
and
Dr. Richard Gitelson
Director
Center for Travel and Tourism Research
Penn State University**

Dr. Graefe began the presentation by discussing the importance of tourism and recreation research, noting that it is increasingly important not only in coastal areas but in all aspects of natural resource planning and development. This growing significance is the result of today's complex society and the increasing demand for objectivity and documentation of the rationale used by decision makers. Dr. Graefe added that particular characteristics of the coastal zone complicate management, thereby increasing the need for research. These characteristics include the fluid and dynamic nature of the coastal environment, the prevalence of common property resources, and the multiple uses of and intense competition for scarce coastal resources.

Gathering information about the people who use coastal areas and their impacts on natural resources and each other is a key function of coastal tourism and recreation research. The development of coastal tourism also can be aided by studying the feasibility and operations of certain types of businesses and by research on the social and economic importance of tourism.

Many diverse studies are included in the broad category of coastal tourism research. One published classification of tourism research includes five major categories: operational, managerial, action, strategic, and evaluation.

Dr. Graefe discussed how a management/planning process can be useful when identifying impact problems and their causes, and when suggesting effective management strategies for reducing visitor impacts. He noted that this approach has elements of strategic research since it tries to develop a management framework. It also has elements of managerial research, in that it is geared toward solving a management problem.

He used as an example his research regarding the perceived crowding of recreational boaters on Raystown Lake in Pennsylvania. The key to the various steps in the process was listing indicators to measure the satisfaction of boaters on the lake. In the final analysis, there was no correlation between the number of boaters and how satisfied they were with their boating experience. Dr. Graefe said that much of the recreation research supports this notion that visitors and recreators are not severely dissatisfied if their recreational experience is conducted in crowded areas.

Dr. Gitelson spoke about the purposes and benefits of tourism research. By definition, research produces information to address particular problems. He noted that research can provide useful information while also establishing communication links. He further relayed that research can promote a shared understanding of issues affecting a community, increase the expectations of community members, and enhance their support for changes. It also can be used to forecast the future and possibly predict problems or outcomes of issues.

Next, he discussed economic impact studies and how they are an important research tool in the recreation and tourism fields. They often are conducted to justify expenditures by a group or organization, particularly promotional expenditures. Dr. Gitelson noted, however, that there are two major problems with economic impact research. The first problem is estimating total numbers of people or visitors, while the second is getting the individuals surveyed to estimate how much they spend. There is not, he added, a federal Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code that lists "tourism spending." Another difficulty with estimating tourism spending is deciding what percentage of total sales in a community should be attributed to tourism.

Dr. Gitelson also discussed multipliers, and how they are estimated and used to show indirect impacts associated with initial spending (direct impacts). Indirect impacts occur when initial money is re-spent in a community. He noted that it is costly to calculate a precise multiplier for a local community or a state, and that most multipliers usually fall between one and two.

He concluded his presentation with a discussion of marketing studies, of which the three common types are: (1) segmentation—attempting to target a segmented market; (2) advertising/promotion-related—assessing the effectiveness of brochures and other promotional material; and (3) product evaluation—identifying what is and is not working when dealing with a specific product.

Regional Approach to Tourism Research: Impacts on the Delaware Beach Area

**Dr. Gerald Cole
Professor and Chairman
Department of Food and Resource Economics
College of Agricultural Sciences
University of Delaware**

Dr. Cole discussed a Northeast regional research project in which he is currently involved. The study is looking at different development activities in coastal areas, mountain locations, and river valleys. Coastal areas in Delaware, New Jersey, and Maine are being examined with the intent of developing a framework to help assess the benefits and costs of similar developments. He said the final product will aid local decision makers considering development alternatives, and will provide a computer model to weigh the benefits and costs.

He added that *tourism* development, including the entire tourism infrastructure, is the major type of development being examined in each of the coastal areas. Economic impacts, in terms of employment and business income and public sector revenues, are being explored, as well as the public services required.

He noted that the study, which also includes a look at man-made attractions such as theme parks, concentrates heavily on benefit/cost analysis. It identifies public revenues acquired by taxes, then closely examines how future revenues will be generated to meet the growing expenses of increased development. An in-depth examination of the growth of service industries to support growing populations is a major component of the study.

In conclusion, Dr. Cole said the study results will be disseminated to the various coastal communities in Delaware to help local leaders better predict changes caused by tourism development.

Delaware Visitor Profile: Characteristics of Sussex County Visitors

Eric Jacobson
Assistant Director and Assistant Professor
Delaware Public Administration Institute
College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy
University of Delaware

Mr. Jacobson discussed results of the recently completed *Delaware Tourism Office 1987 Visitor Profile Study*, the most comprehensive study of its kind ever conducted in the state. He focused particularly on Sussex County findings.

More than 1,400 personal interviews with visitors were conducted statewide, and more than half of those were in Sussex County. Visitors were defined as individuals who traveled at least 50 miles from their home to the survey site. The 18 survey sites in southern Delaware included beach locations, as well as sites in western Sussex County. Interviews took place at three different times during the year (spring, summer, and fall).

The research revealed that about 75 percent of all groups visiting southern Delaware are composed of two or more adults with no children (up to 16 years of age). Even during July, August, and September, only 6 percent of all groups visiting the area include children. The average group size of southern Delaware visitors is 2.86 persons, who have visited an average of four times in the last two years.

He further noted that more than half of the visitors interviewed reported annual household incomes of \$40,000 or more. Southern Delaware visitors also reported the following major reasons for visiting: pleasure/vacation (69%), visit friends/relatives (14%), passing through (6%), business (5%), and shopping (5%).

According to the survey, approximately 80 percent of southern Delaware's visitors travel no more than 300 miles from Pennsylvania (26%), Maryland (26%), Delaware (12%), Virginia (10%), New Jersey (7%), and Washington, D.C. (3%).

Typically, a visitor to southern Delaware stays three nights in the spring, four nights in the summer, and two nights in the fall (median values), lodging overnight in private homes (45%), motels/hotels (24%), campgrounds/R.V. parks (21%), and townhouses/condominiums (9%).

About 77 percent of overnight visitors to southern Delaware spend a mean total of \$172.28 daily, while day visitors average \$56.08. By category, an average of \$47 is spent on lodging, \$42 on meals/restaurants, \$37 on entertainment, \$35 on food shopping, and \$78 on non-food shopping.

Mr. Jacobson concluded his remarks by noting that more than 80 percent of southern Delaware respondents said friends and relatives are their source of travel information, compared to 68 percent of visitors to the state as a whole. About 93 percent of southern Delaware visitors are satisfied with their trip and plan to return within two years.

Park User Survey: Implications for Marketing and Managing Coastal State Parks

**Susan Laporte, Coordinator
DNREC, Division of Parks and Recreation
Technical Services Section
Recreation Resource Planning**

and

**Dr. John MacKenzie
Assistant Professor
Department of Food and Resource Economics
College of Agricultural Sciences
University of Delaware**

Ms. Laporte presented results of 1986 and 1987 user surveys conducted in all 11 state parks to see who uses the parks, their demographic characteristics, and whether state park personnel are meeting the needs of park visitors. Division of Parks and Recreation personnel also use the information for promotion and marketing.

Surveys were handed out randomly to visitors as they entered the parks. They were requested to return completed survey forms to the Division of Parks and Recreation office in Dover. The response rate for both years was 19 percent.

Ms. Laporte focused on results from the three major coastal parks (Cape Henlopen, Delaware Seashore, and Fenwick Island), which were of most interest to workshop participants.

According to the survey results, a large proportion of state park visitors, particularly to the coastal parks, reside in neighboring states. In rank order, visitors reside in: Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. The coastal parks of Cape Henlopen and Delaware Seashore were the most visited in both 1986 and 1987.

Ms. Laporte said that most coastal park visitors are day users who pay their entrance fee by the carload. A relatively large proportion of coastal park visitors stay in weekly rental accommodations in the resort communities.

The average annual household income of coastal park visitors is between \$30,000 and \$40,000. In 1986, the average was \$40,000; in 1987, it dropped slightly to \$38,000.

The top two activities of coastal park users are sunbathing and swimming. Saltwater swimming, however, appears to have declined between 1986 and 1987. At Delaware Seashore State Park in 1986, about 81 percent of the respondents reported that they went swimming, as compared to 70 percent in 1987. At Cape Henlopen in 1986, almost 89 percent of the respondents swam, as compared to 68 percent in 1987. The same decrease was evident at Holts Landing State Park,

where 44 percent of the respondents swam in 1986 versus 17 percent in 1987. Ms. Laporte suggested that one possible reason for the decrease was public anxiety about episodes of pollution affecting various New Jersey ocean beaches.

Camping also is a popular activity at the coastal parks. The campgrounds are filled to capacity most summer days at both locations.

In the 1986 survey, visitors did not mention congestion as a serious problem. However, respondents from beach parks more often noted crowding as a problem than visitors to inland parks. Survey respondents in 1987 mentioned crowding as a significant problem on weekends at the coastal parks.

Overall, park visitors in the 1987 survey favored a combination of increased fees and state funding to provide future support for the state park system. Despite the higher incidence of out-of-state visitors to the coastal parks, respondents at Cape Henlopen and Delaware Seashore were more amenable to increased entrance fees rather than increased state support.

Dr. John MacKenzie discussed his research regarding a travel-cost demand analysis of Delaware's state parks. The objective of this effort is to construct a logically consistent framework for obtaining economic valuations of the parks and some of their individual amenities. As Delaware's land pressures continue to build, it is important to demonstrate the economic significance of coastal recreation, and to justify the continued involvement of government in providing public recreation facilities and services more efficiently than private markets.

He said a recreation site generally is worth far more than the admission fees (if any) it generates: people spend significant time and money to get to the site—expenditures that also can be attributed to the site's "value." This principle underlies the travel-cost method of evaluating the economic demand for a recreation site; the method treats a dollar spent on gas, food, or lodging to get to a site as equivalent to a dollar paid for admission at a real or hypothetical park entrance booth.

Using the 1987 state park survey data, travel distances, expenditures, and related increased trip expenditures with declining frequency of visitation were ascertained. This relationship allowed for the development of an economic demand schedule for each park, relating total visits to cost per visit. The research also allowed Dr. MacKenzie to estimate the annual economic benefits, or economic "surplus," accruing from each site.

The economic benefits are defined as the sum of all the money visitors would be *willing* to pay to use the site beyond the amount they *do* pay. In other words, most visitors would be willing to pay somewhat more than they do pay; therefore, they benefit to the extent that they do not have to pay that extra amount. Dr. MacKenzie said this theory often is mistaken as a mandate to increase fees. In fact, there is no workable fee system that can capture all of the economic surplus.

Delaware State Parks host about 2 million visitors annually. While Bellevue State Park (adjacent to downtown Wilmington) has the most visitors each year, the

coastal sites, principally Delaware Seashore and Cape Henlopen, have by far the greatest economic importance. Delaware's beach visitors far outspend those at inland parks in every expenditure category; they average considerably more miles traveled, and more time spent in travel. The travel time itself represents an "opportunity cost" estimated to be approximately 22 cents per round trip mile.

The basic conclusion of this research so far is that the park system's coastal recreation amenities have much greater economic value and drawing power than those inland. Dr. MacKenzie concluded by stating that the mandate for developing additional sites is clear—the state should move quickly to acquire and develop additional coastal recreation sites. In fact, he noted, it is presently doing just that.

Recreation Survey of the Inland Bays: Activity Patterns and Management Concerns

**Van Polhemus
Vice President
The Greeley-Polhemus Group, Inc.**

Mr. Van Polhemus reported on the results of a 1986 study to assess water quality issues in Delaware's Inland Bays and factors affecting how people use the resource. The study attempted to find out where people recreate and their reactions to various approaches to control expected problems in the area.

He noted his previous work, under contract with the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), in the Inland Bays. The first study compared two water systems—New Jersey's Barnegat Bay in 1960 and Delaware's Inland Bays in 1980. The study team looked at what happens to a system as development and pollution increase. Also, the 1982 Inland Bays Economic Study examined who should pay for environmental quality and who really benefits from the Inland Bays and their attributes. The 1986 recreation study was a spin-off of these previous Inland Bays studies.

The survey methodology was two-fold. Initially, two helicopter fly-overs were conducted to view recreation activity as it was taking place. Video cameras were used to document recreation activity. The second approach included personal interviews with 423 people recreating throughout the region. Individuals covering a wide range of users and age groups were randomly surveyed.

The majority of those interviewed were out-of-state visitors. According to the survey results, Delaware, with 41 percent, has the highest number of visitors; however, those from Pennsylvania (32%), Maryland (14%), and Virginia (3%) compose the majority. Thirty percent are short-term visitors (a few days), 23 percent are seasonal residents, 21 percent are permanent residents, and 20 percent are seasonal renters. The average group size is 3.5 individuals. Seven percent of Inland Bays visitors are 15 to 20 years old, 18 percent are 21 to 30, 21 percent are 31 to 40, 21 percent are 41 to 50, 17 percent are 51 to 60, and 15 percent are 61 and over. The average annual household income of visiting groups is \$34,000.

During their stay, seasonal and short-term visitors use the following accommodations: rented apartments/houses/condos (45%), campgrounds (47%), hotels/motels (5%), and boats (2%).

About 74 percent participate in fishing or crabbing, while more than 68 percent sunbathe or sightsee. Water-contact recreation (swimming, clamming, water-skiing, or wind-surfing) is engaged in by 55 percent of Inland Bays visitors. Approximately 54 percent go boating, as either owners, renters, passengers, or crew members, sometime during their stay in the area.

Survey respondents report mixed feelings regarding whether water quality in the bays has changed between 1960 and 1986. A number of older residents and visitors believe a steady decline has occurred over the past 15 to 20 years. A significant number of respondents believe the state's clean-up efforts have been successful. About 46 percent see improvement or no change in water quality over the years.

Mr. Polhemus also noted that a series of resource management questions were asked. One question asked for individual's reactions if recreation in certain areas of the bays was restricted. More than 75 percent of the respondents support the following types of restrictions: selected beach closures, selected shellfish closures, speed limits on boats, area use restrictions on boating, and a set limit on fish and crab catches. They are less supportive of actions such as limiting users at crowded beaches, charging daily user fees at crowded beaches, establishing a moratorium on dredging, and setting a moratorium on building piers and marinas.

Ninety-two percent of the respondents support increased enforcement of boat sanitary facilities; 88 percent support increased sewer connections for homes and trailers; 81 percent support a ban on all bay storm and treated-waste discharges; and 81 percent support increased shore buffer areas. Only 38 percent support limiting the use of fuel-powered boats.

To fund environmental protection of the bays, 59 percent favor a hotel tax, 57 percent a visitation tax on rental property, 50 percent a surcharge on sewer and water use, 32 percent a local sales tax, and 25 percent road tolls.

Mr. Polhemus concluded that Delaware's Inland Bays are integral to the rapid growth in the area, and there is a need for land-use planning to deal with the issues. The area has a significant economic impact on Sussex County and the state. There is a need to establish programs to build sewers, on-site disposal systems, and pump-out facilities and someone must be responsible for paying the bills.

Profiles of Coastal Visitors: Implications for Tourism Development

**James Falk
Marine Recreation and Tourism Specialist
Sea Grant Marine Advisory Service
University of Delaware**

Mr. Falk reported on two tourism visitor profiles conducted by the University of Delaware Sea Grant Marine Advisory Service to help tourism officials and Chamber of Commerce members better characterize visitors to Delaware coastal communities, understand their activity patterns and spending habits, and respond to their needs.

The first survey of summer visitors, in 1984, was conducted at the Delaware Beaches Tourist Information Center on Route 1 in Lewes. It was followed in 1986 by a survey at the Bethany-Fenwick Area Chamber of Commerce Information Center on Route 1 in Fenwick Island.

In 1984, 382 visitors were sent a mail survey. A 72 percent response rate was attained after one follow-up survey was mailed. In 1986, 358 visitors were surveyed, with a 57 percent response rate after one follow-up mailing.

Mr. Falk noted that Pennsylvanians composed 28 percent of the 1984 respondents and 27 percent in 1986. Twenty percent of the visitors were from Maryland in 1984 and 30 percent in 1986. Eleven percent came from Virginia in 1984 and 7 percent in 1986, while New Jersey was represented by 9 percent of the 1984 visitors and 7 percent of those in 1986.

The distance traveled to reach the beach was not asked in 1984, but 7 percent of the 1986 visitors traveled between 1 and 100 miles, 52 percent between 100 and 200 miles, 30 percent between 200 and 500 miles, and 11 percent more than 500 miles to reach the Bethany Beach-Fenwick Island area.

In both the 1984 and 1986 surveys, visitors were asked how they heard about Delaware as a travel destination. In both surveys, friends were the best source of information (42% and 39% respectively). Relatives were mentioned next (24% and 30% respectively).

The average size of visiting groups in 1984 was 3.3 persons and 3.6 persons in 1986. In 1984, 51 percent of the responding groups traveled with no children (no age specified). In 1986, 63 percent of groups traveled with no children under the age of 13.

In the 1986 survey, age distribution for adults (13 and above) and children (under 13) was obtained. Thirty-five percent of the children were between 1 and 5 years, 40 percent between 6 and 9, and 25 percent between 10 and 12.

Of the adults, 15 percent were teenagers between 13 and 19, and 14 percent were between 20 and 29. The largest group of adults (24%) was between 30 and

39, while 20 percent were between 40 and 49 and 15 percent between 50 and 59. Twelve percent of the adults were over 60.

As expected, swimming and sunbathing were the major activities of the majority of participants in both years. Shopping, sightseeing, and general relaxation also were popular group activities.

The average length of stay for visitors in 1984 was 4.5 days and 4.2 nights. In 1986, the average number of days visited increased to 6.5 and overnight stays increased to 5.8.

Mr. Falk added that lodging varied somewhat between 1984 and 1986, perhaps reflective of the accommodations in the Lewes and Rehoboth Beach area as opposed to Bethany Beach and Fenwick Island. Hotel/motel accommodations were the choice of 36 percent in 1984 and 23 percent in 1986. Fifteen percent of 1984 visitors and 39 percent of visitors in 1986 stayed in a rented condo/house/townhouse. Private or public campgrounds were the preferred choice of 33 percent in 1984 and 19 percent in 1986.

Eighty-two percent of the 1986 visitors read the free beach weekly newspapers, 56 percent listened to local radio stations, 51 percent tuned in local cable television, and 43 percent read local newspapers.

Income levels also were obtained in both surveys, with 1986 respondents tending to have higher average incomes than those responding in 1984. In 1984, almost 17 percent of respondents had annual household incomes below \$20,000; in 1986, only 4 percent reported incomes under \$20,000. In 1984, about 21 percent had annual household incomes above \$50,000, whereas 43 percent of respondents in 1986 reported incomes above \$50,000.

Mr. Falk concluded by reporting that average group spending amounted to \$356 in 1984 for lodging, food, transportation, and miscellaneous items. In 1986, group spending equaled \$616 for the same items. An estimate was made for the average amount spent per person/day based on average group size, average length of stay, and average group expenditure per trip for both years. In 1984, this estimate was \$23.94 per person/day; in 1986, this amounted to \$26.39.

Delaware Beaches, A Valuable Resource: Perspectives of Property Owners, Resort Merchants, and Realtors

**Victoria Crouse
Graduate Student, Applied Ocean Science
College of Marine Studies
University of Delaware**

Ms. Crouse presented the results of a recently completed University of Delaware Sea Grant Marine Advisory Service study, noting in the outset of her presentation that it is an agreed upon fact that Delaware's beaches are an important tourism generator. She stated that the beaches are a dynamic system, and most people are familiar with the natural processes and understand the physical processes of beach erosion. Much research has been conducted in this area; very little, however, has attempted to connect tourism and the economic impacts of erosion.

A mail survey of coastal property owners, resort merchants, and realtors was conducted during the summer of 1987 to find out whether erosion is an important factor in their everyday lives. The survey also attempted to gauge the economic impact of erosion and to give respondents a chance to share opinions and attitudes about erosion and various beach preservation methods.

The three key objectives of the survey were: (1) to document the importance of beach erosion to the three coastal interest groups, (2) to gather information about their attitudes regarding beach preservation and beach management options, and (3) to gauge support and opinions for financing beach preservation options once they are established.

The study team randomly sampled 705 individuals—441 property owners, 184 resort merchants, and 80 Sussex County realtors. A 63 percent response rate was achieved after one follow-up mailing.

Property owners and realtors were asked why individuals purchase coastal property and to rate 11 variables on a scale from one (not very important) to five (very important). The reasons receiving the highest rankings were: rest and relaxation (4.4 from owners and 4.3 from realtors); scenic beaches (4.2 from both groups); well-maintained beaches (4.1 from owners and 3.9 from realtors); and financial investment (3.7 from owners and 4.4 from realtors). These responses emphasize the importance of the beach itself to individuals buying coastal property.

Ms. Crouse noted that the survey also asked realtors the approximate increase of property values since the last Sussex County assessment. The average realtor response was that values had increased 400 percent since the 1972 assessment. Thus, beach area real estate transactions translate into large economic impacts for Sussex County; if the beaches are unprotected and erode at a high rate, serious economic hardships could be felt.

Fifty percent of the property owners surveyed said they would not live in their current coastal location if there were no beaches.

The survey also asked resort merchants what percentage of their business is dependent on the existence of wide sandy beaches. Forty-two percent replied that 75 percent of their business is dependent on the beaches, while 33 percent said 100 percent of their business is beach-dependent. Merchants also were asked if sales would suffer without the beach, and 94 percent responded with a resounding yes.

But what types of beach preservation efforts would those surveyed support? The most popular preservation methods or techniques include dune stabilization, beach nourishment, and zoning regulations. These three methods, identified as "softer" techniques, are preferred over engineering methods such as groins, bulkheads, and jetties.

Seventy percent of the respondents believe the State of Delaware should have sole authority over beach planning, management, and preservation, but considerable support also was expressed for multiple-agency authority.

A two-part question asked all three interest groups who benefits from Delaware's Atlantic beaches and who should help finance beach preservation efforts; 12 distinct groups were listed, representing beach user groups, county residents, governmental units, and various businesses. All respondents said that most of the groups listed benefit and should help finance preservation efforts. In all cases, state and federal government agencies were identified as having primary responsibility for financing beach preservation efforts.

Another question asked respondents how much they personally would be willing to pay for beach preservation efforts they deemed worthwhile. More than 20 percent of the property owners would contribute over \$1,000 annually, while 16 percent would contribute between \$501 and \$1,000.

About 3 percent of the resort merchants said they would contribute over \$1,000 annually, whereas 4 percent said they would provide no support. The average contribution from merchants was between \$100 and \$150.

Ms. Crouse closed by indicating that beach fees and state tax increases were consistently noted by all three groups as options for raising beach preservation money. Many respondents voiced indecision about supporting certain options—an indication that additional education regarding other alternative options could elicit stronger support.

Wrap-Up Session

A final discussion session brought up a number of interesting points from participants. First, it was noted that some very useful research on Delaware visitors and recreators is being conducted, and it probably is a very good representation of current research in other locations across the United States.

One individual noted that Delaware has made a good start, but a decision must be made as to why research data is being collected and how it is going to be used. Another participant responded that hopefully future policy decisions regarding recreation and tourism will be based on much of this ongoing research.

Other comments noted that tourism is a mature industry and Delaware cannot expect to simply open its community doors, put out a welcome sign, and automatically attract quality visitors. The current research by the workshop participants and others will drive the success of tourism agencies and groups. Additionally, one participant noted the need to carefully review current research and put more money into it. He stressed that tourism is a competitive industry; unless you do research and do it well, you won't be able to compete effectively.

Additional comments focused on the need to involve decision makers in workshops such as this. It was noted that invitations were extended to all local leaders to attend the program. One of the key objectives of the workshop, as earlier indicated, was to present research data to individuals involved in tourism and recreation so they, in turn, will pass information along to decision makers at all levels.

The workshop provided an opportunity to share information and draw a more complete picture of Delaware's tourism and recreation sectors. It also was a chance to gather more pieces of the information puzzle, thereby increasing an available information base to make important decisions, at all levels, about tourism and recreation easier in the future.

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