

White Paper – Marion County Park and Lake User Survey

Amber Kelly, Cara Gunzelman, Cody Thompson, Maridee Weber

The purpose of this project was to create a survey to collect data for use by Marion County Park and Lake. This data, with analysis, would provide information for the development of a lake management plan, which the Lake does not currently have. The primary objective of the survey is to collect data on visitor and resident demographics, trip itinerary, and opinions on what the park and lake offer. Currently, Marion County Park and Lake only collects information from visitors who rent spaces or obtain camping or boating permits. These visitors fill out a paper form, which is kept at the lake office. While useful, this method only captures a portion of residents and visitors participating in certain lake activities, and it does not cover all information necessary to create a lake management plan.

This survey project will help Marion County Park and Lake management better understand who is using their facilities and how they are being used, including where visitors are traveling from, peak times, days, and months of activity, which activities are most popular, what visitors value in a lake, and how camping areas are being utilized. The survey also poses policy questions for how the lake should manage certain key issues. This will allow the lake manager to assess the wants of the majority of users.