

Weekend Campers Will Compete For Sites

The use of Michigan camping areas is expected to jump more than 10 per cent this summer, according to Automobile Club of Michigan.

"This means that the weekend camper especially will have a harder time than ever before in locating a campsite, unless he knows where and how to find one quickly," states Jerry E. Fisher, Auto Club's touring manager.

Last year alone, Michigan--the third largest manufacturer of camping vehicles in the nation--produced 28,800 units. If all the 1967 Michigan manufactured vehicles were to head for Michigan state parks on any one given weekend, there would be over a 200 per cent site shortage.

NATIONALLY the production of all recreational vehicles was up 10.6 per cent while the dollar volume rise was 12.6 per cent for 1967 over 1966.

These factors point out that not only will there be more campers at parks than ever before, but there will be bigger and more sophisticated equipment in use.

The Recreational Vehicle Institute states that the 1967 national production of travel trailers as compared with 1966 production was up 8.3 per cent, camping trailers up nine per cent, truck campers up 13 per cent and motor homes up 73 per cent.

"Knowing in advance where camping vacancies will exist and what facilities are available will be of great importance this summer," states Fisher.

To aid the camper, Auto Club has compiled a listing of 67 state parks with almost 13,000 sites available to the public. The map and information not only tells the location of parks, what facilities are available, but lists phone numbers for the first time.

IN ADDITION to the growing number of campers throughout the state, Auto Club points out that Coho fishermen along Lake Michigan from Benton Harbor north to Harbor Springs will add to the usually crowded conditions at parks in West Michigan.

For those who want to increase their chances of finding a site at state parks with the first stop, Auto Club suggests these 17 areas which usually have vacancies even over the Fourth of July weekend when camping pressure reaches its peak:

Southern Lower Michigan--Bald Mountain and Orionville. Northern Lower Michigan--Bay City, Bentie, Cheboygan, Day, Gladwin, Hooft, Oshtemo and White Cloud.

Upper Peninsula--Fayette, Lake Gogebic, McLain, Muskegon Lake, Porcupine Mountains, Twin Lakes and Van Riper.

"There are also many privately owned parks in the state in addition to the county and township campgrounds, plus state and national forests which have vacancies all summer," states Fisher.

"However, when visiting some private or township parks, check and be sure what facilities are available and the cost before registering or getting settled in a spot."

One township park near the Whitney Drain off US-23 (just north of Tawas City) charged \$2.50 per night with no shower in operation during the April smelt season. Conditions were extremely crowded.

Nearby Tawas Point State Park had all facilities (including trailer sanitation disposal and facilities for filling a camping vehicle's water tank) plus showers in operation for \$2 nightly.

AUTO CLUB offers two tips for the weekend camper who wants to have the most successful site hunting this summer:

- Avoid looking for a choice site late Fridays. Take what is available. Between 3:30 and 5 p.m., Fridays, preferred sites usually are filled.
- Pick the geographical area in which you wish to camp. Choose two or three campgrounds. When within a half-hour's drive of an intended destination, stop and telephone the preferred park. If it is full, you can start checking alternate

destinations. (Although many private parks offer a reservation service, all state parks operate on a first-come, first-served basis).

"The family that takes a week-long camping trip will have the advantage as usual," states Fisher. "Although there

is always weekend competition for sites, campers can usually have their pick by Sunday afternoon, except for a few parks such as Holland and Warren

Dunes where people wait in line almost any day."

A \$3 annual Motor Vehicle Permit is necessary for residents to enter state parks,

or a \$1 daily permit can be purchased. Non-resident fees for entry permits are \$5 annual and \$2 daily.

In addition, there are daily camping fees: \$2 nightly at parks with all modern facilities; \$1.75 nightly at parks with out all sites offering electricity, plus 25 cents added if

electricity is used, and \$1.50 per night where no modern facilities are available, plus 25 cents if electricity is available and used.

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