

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 4/25/2024 6:20:51 PM

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Comments: Large groups are perceived to have a disproportionately large impact on the physical and especially the social environment of the BWCAW. Perceived and real crowding happens at campsites and at portages because so many groups are traveling the same areas.

I want to focus on one part of this issue.

Most groups have two people per canoe and generally three packs per canoe. They make two trips to get the four loads across the portages. With an average BW groups size of four, that amounts to four sets of footprints going across, four more going back, and four on the second trip with loads (12 sets in all). If the portage takes 10 minutes from lake to lake, then the total time on the portage is 30 minutes (maybe a bit less).

Many youth groups (Northern Lakes Girl Scouts, for example) travel with three canoes, three people per canoe, and six packs. At the same portage, they travel from lake to lake with nine sets of footprints and a total time of 10 minutes (or so).

When waiting my turn at the portages (off-shore) I do appreciate that those larger groups have less social impact than the smaller groups. The quicker portage travel times also allow such groups to get further into the wilderness, further reducing crowding.

Please remember this if group size is discussed in the future. Thank you for indulging me by reading this email. I hope I explained this small issue well enough.