

# Connecticut Yankee Council

## Scout Camp Utilization Study – 2001

### □ PURPOSE OF STUDY

In February 2002, a study was prepared for the Council Properties Committee, to develop and analyze the utilization of Council camps. The primary source for the study was the reservation forms for the camps, for the year 2001.

The study did not include attendance figures for Boy Scout or Cub Scout Residence Camps, at Camp Sequassen, nor summertime Shoreline Foundation usage at Deer Lake. No activity at Pomperaug was tracked, nor was any activity identified at other Council facilities, generally considered “non-camping” properties.

### □ SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Based on the available records, almost 14,300 campers took advantage of the Council’s Camps during 2001, camping over 24,300 nights. **That represents over 66 years of camping.** Over \$32,000 in camping and facility usage fees were reported.

Deer Lake represented the highest total campers, 6,000, camping nearly 10,850 nights last year. This represented approximately 44% of the Council totals.

Hoyt showed the second largest totals, with nearly 4,700 campers and almost 6,700 nights. This represented one-third of the total Council campers, and 28% of the total camping nights.

Sequassen was third, with almost 3,300 campers and nearly 6,400 nights, representing approximately one-quarter of the Council totals.

Utilization at Wah Wah Tay See was lowest of the Council camps, with 240 campers and 413 nights.

Nearly one-half of the total Council camp fees were generated at Deer Lake, with 41% of the fees generated from Sequassen, and 10% of the total fees from Hoyt. No camping fees were reported for Wah Wah Tay See (CYC reservation policy states that no fees are charged for this camp; however, it has been understood that fees are generally waived by the Ranger when the unit that is camping performs a service project).

“Wholesale” camping represented almost 30% of all Council camping last year. “Wholesale” camping refers to attendance at camporees, Klondike Derbys, OA Ordeals, Deer Lake Fishing Derby, JLTC, and Wood Badge. Nearly one-half of the camping activity at Hoyt was “wholesale”, with about 22% at Deer Lake and 18% at Sequassen. Wah Wah Tay See reported no Camporee activity. It should be noted (and discussed later) that attendance figures at many of the “wholesale” events are estimates, and are thought to be the least reliable of the figures reported.

## □ **ACCURACY OF RECORDS**

For the most part, the reservation forms appeared complete and accurate. However, it is noted that some units did not fully complete reservation forms, leaving out attendance, and sometimes location of the unit. It is assumed that the Council Staff actually knew the identity (and attendance) of the units making the reservations, at the time of the reservations, and the omissions were merely administrative oversight. However, absent attendance figures on the forms, this report generally reflected a zero.

Also, for the most part, receipts for camping fees were attached to reservation forms, but not always. Additionally, some forms showed a fee for deposit but did not show payment of the balances. There is every reason to believe that the Council Staff did collect all camping fees and balances due. However, this report generally reflects only the fees that are shown as collected, ignoring any balances due.

It appears from an examination of the forms that camping fees were collected when reservations were made. But it was not clear when per-capita (per-person) fees were collected. Again, it is assumed that these per-person fees were actually collected. However, this report generally reflects only the fees that are shown as collected, ignoring any per-person fees due.

Since the purpose of this report was not an audit of either collections or procedures, no recommendations are considered appropriate. However, to make this and future reports of utilization more meaningful, the author needs a better understanding of the camp reservation system.

It is also fully recognized that units make reservations often far in advance of the camping date. Consequently, a unit, at the time of the reservation, has little knowledge of the numbers of Scouts or Adults that may attend an event.

With regards to camporees and similar “wholesale” camping events, there appears to be little data on attendance figures, at least as reflected in the camping reservation system. It is assumed that attendance figures are available, possibly in the budget system. This report generally reflects estimated attendance figures for these events, except in the case of Scatacook District, where the author was able to obtain figures from each event chairman.

Notwithstanding, it is recommended that attendance figures for “wholesale” events be provided by the appropriate District Executive within 1 week of each event, using the camping reservation form.

Finally, a number of different reservation forms were being used for camping reservations. And some units did not complete any form. It is recommended that a single form (preferably one page) be published for all 4 camps and all modes, including the Council web site, Council Calendar, etc., and that only that form be accepted by the Council Staff.

## ❑ **CAMPING AND FACILITY POPULARITY**

It is clear that many of the Lodges and Cabins at both Sequassen and Deer Lake are very popular, particularly in the cold weather months. It is likely that the more popular Lodges are reserved months in advance, and it is also likely that many units have a tradition of camping at the same facility year after year. That is as it should be.

Given the popularity, it is reasonable to question whether priority should be given to Scout units within the Council, as compared to Scout units outside the Council. A suggested priority system could be:

1. CYC Scout Units
2. Non-CYC Scout Units
3. Local Not-For-Profit Organizations (within CYC geography)
4. Other Not-For-Profit Organizations (outside CYC geography)
5. For-Profit Organizations [more on this category below]

One way to administer such a priority system would be to limit reservations to categories 2 through 5 to (say) no greater than 3 months prior to the requested date. The standard 11 month limit would be applied to Units from within Council.

## ❑ **CAMPING AND FACILITY FEES**

Based on the popularity noted above, related questions should be asked related facility fees.

It is clearly recognized that there are (at least) two sides to the question of facility fees. One position that many Scouters take is that fees should be as low as possible (even free). The opposite position is to charge fees as high as possible (as high as the “market” allows). Given the economic reality of running the Council’s camps, it is more likely that reasonable fees will be charged in the future, rather than no or low fees.

One question that must be asked is whether the current fees fairly represent the costs incurred by the Council. For example, the weekend charge for Point Cabin at Deer Lake (sleeps 17) is \$75.00 (for CYC units). Given that this cabin has both electricity and gas, does this fee reasonably recover the costs for the electricity and gas? Leary Hall also at Deer Lake (sleeps 26) is \$150.00. Given that this cabin has both electricity and gas, does this fee reasonably recover the costs for the electricity and gas?

And given that the sleeping capacity of Leary Hall is about one and one-half times that of Point Cabin, is the pricing strategy rational (the Leary Hall fee is double that of Point Cabin)? Is there or should there be a relationship of price to sleeping capacity?

A second question that should be asked is whether an increase in fees would reduce usage (supply and demand curve, price elasticity, etc). A 10% increase in fees could generate \$2,000 to \$3,000 in additional fees each year if demand does not change. Similarly, would a price reduction increase usage and thereby increase total fees?

Further, should the per-capita charge of \$1.00 per camper be increased? A \$1.00 increase (to \$2.00 per camper) could generate \$14,000 additional fees, assuming no decrease in demand. However, fees increased in this manner might meet with resistance at the unit level. Possibly increasing the per-capita fee for non-tent or non-lean-to camping might be easier to apply, since the units are already paying a relatively higher cost for the Lodge or Cabin. This could generate approximately \$5,000 in increased fees, from Sequassen and Deer Lake. Another alternative is to charge the per-capita fee on a per-night basis. A one-night camper would pay \$1.00 while a 2-night camper would pay \$2.00. This might generate an additional \$10,000 per year. If per-capita fees were only increased for camporees and other “wholesale” events, a \$1.00 increase would generate approximately \$4,000 more in fees. Charging increased fees for only wholesale events may be easier to manage, since the increased fees could be built into Camporee budgets.

A third question relates to fees charged to out-of-Council Scout units. From an examination of the fees, it is unclear what the pricing rationale is for non-CYC units. For example, at Deer Lake, the price difference for Point Cabin, between CYC units and non-CYC units, is \$15.00, or 20% premium over the CYC unit price. For DaRos Lodge, the difference is \$30.00, for an 18% premium. For Leary Hall, the difference of \$30.00 represents a 20% premium. And the premium for the Dining Hall is \$50.00, or nearly 30%.

At Sequassen, the premium for Hermit Shack is \$10.00, or 33%; for Savino Lodge, the premium is \$25.00, or 42%; for Zimmerman Lodge, the premium is \$15.00, or 21%; for Friendship Lodge, the premium is \$25.00, or 14%. And the premium for the Dining Hall is \$100.00 or \$150.00 depending on use, representing 60% or 67% premium.

It is recommended that the fee structure related to non-CYC Scout units be re-examined, with an eye towards coming up with a consistent premium over fees charged to CYC Scout units.

A fourth question relates to fees charged to non-Scout units, both local (within the same geography as CYC) and non-local. Presently, non-Scout units are charged in the same manner as non-CYC Scout units. Given that these properties are Scout camps, it is reasonable to question whether fees to non-Scout units should be materially higher. In this same vein, should CYC make a greater margin (profit) on non-Scout units?

A fifth question relates to fees charged to for-profit organizations. Presently, no distinction is among non-CYC Scout units, other not-for profit organizations, and for-profit companies. The same issue identified above should be raised: should fees charged to for-profit organizations be materially higher than any other category of camper. A different question could also be raised, should for-profit organizations be permitted use of CYC property?

A final question relates to “excess capacity” fees: A \$1.00 per person is charged when facilities are used in excess of stated capacity. It is assumed that the capacity figures are stated for planning purposes only, and do not relate to safety or health issues. If that assumption is true, then excess capacity fees can be understood. If the capacity figures relate to health or safety issues, then “excess capacity” fees should not be charged, since “excess capacity” should not then be permitted.

## □ RESERVATION POLICIES

There appear to be some inconsistencies or errors in the policies as listed on the Council web site.

Under the general “CAMP USE GUIDELINES-RULES AND REGULATIONS-RESERVATION AND REFUND POLICY”, it states:

1. *All cabin reservations are made through the Connecticut Yankee Council office (203-876-6868). A minimum \$50 deposit is required within 2 weeks of the date the reservation is made. After 2 weeks time, a reservation without deposit will be cancelled. The balance is due 60 days prior to the date of use and must be paid in full prior to arriving at camp.*
2. *Cancellations received 60 days before the use date will be refunded at 100%. Cancellations received less than 50 days before the use date will be refunded at 50%.*

The second paragraph seems to leave a hole between days 51 and 59. Additionally, when the use fee is less than \$50.00 (such as for tent sites), what deposit amount is required?

Under “Camp Reservation Guidelines-Operating Procedure for Camp Reservations, it states:

- a. *In person (at the Milford Scout Resource Center only):  
After verifying with the Camp Registrar that the desired facility is available, fill out the appropriate reservation form. Provide the form and the full payment or deposit to the registrar. A \$45 deposit will hold the reservation for up to 14 days. Reservations not paid in full after 14 days will be cancelled. Written notification will be sent to the designated point of contact before canceling a reservation for non-receipt of payment. Once the reservation is cancelled, the facility will be available for reservation on a first come first served basis.*
- b. *By telephone: Tentatively reserve a facility by contacting the Camp Registrar at (203) 876-6868, Ext. 273 or 1-800-333-7905, Ext. 273. Your tentative reservation will be held for 14 days pending receipt of the reservation request and payment. Reservations not confirmed in writing with full payment will be cancelled after 15 days and the facility will again become available for reservation.*
- c. *By mail: Camp reservation forms will be processed as soon as they are received by the Camp Registrar. Reservations received with a full payment will be processed as according to (a), above. Reservations received without full payment will be processed according to (b), above.*
  - *Refunds will be made as follows:*
    - *Cancellations received 60+ days prior to the use date will be refunded at 100%.*
    - *1 Cancellations received between 59-30 days prior to the use date will be refunded at 50%. 1 No refunds for cancellations within 29 days of the use date.*

These “Camp Reservation Guidelines” materially differ from the “Camp Use Guidelines”:

- a. Is the required deposit \$50.00 or \$45.00?
- b. When do cancellations merit a 50% refund – 50 days or less or 59-30 days?
- c. When is full payment due – within 14 days of date of reservation or 60 days prior to use date?

It is recommended that the reservation policies be reviewed and rewritten as soon as possible.

Additionally, it is noted that non-Scout units are required to provide proof of liability insurance and sign a “hold harmless” agreement. These requirements should probably be spelled out, in detail, in the reservation procedures, to avoid misunderstandings, or last minute cancellations

## ❑ **FEEDBACK SURVEY**

Many of the issues raised in this analysis directly impact our customers – CYC Scout Units. Consideration should be given to creating a survey to send to units, with questions related to facilities use, fee structures, etc. The survey could be a one-time event, or continuing, completed at the time of check-out or departure, or shortly thereafter.

The survey could include questions related to Resident Camp as well as weekend camping.

## ❑ **COORDINATION WITH THE CAMPING COMMITTEE**

It is clearly recognized that some if not most of the issues identified herein either fall under the direct responsibility of the Camping Committee, or may be a joint responsibility with the Camping and Properties Committees.

## ❑ **DISCLAIMER**

The findings and recommendations identified herein belong solely to the author of this study, and are not necessarily those of the Council Properties Committee nor the Connecticut Yankee Council.

## ❑ **CONCLUSIONS**

Connecticut Yankee Council is fortunate to have four superb active camping facilities in Sequassen, Deer Lake, Hoyt, and Wah Wah Tay See. They appear to be well managed by a very competent staff of paid professionals and volunteers.

The figures presented in this analysis represent a single year, 2001. Information for prior years was not directly available from Council records. Consequently, while the figures identified herein seem reasonable, it is not possible to definitively conclude whether these results are typical for the Council. It is intended that the figures for 2002 and forward, will be analyzed in a similar manner, to determine longer term results and trends.

No conclusions can be drawn on whether the camps are under-, over- or optimally used. However, a discussion should started at some point regarding the defining the optimal use of the 4 camps.

No attempt was made to compare these figures with information that may be available from Camp Rangers or Campmasters. Comparisons and any supplemental information, however, would be welcome.

These figures may not include supplemental use of any of the camps (but primarily Deer Lake) for COPES or outdoor leadership activities. Those figures should, however, be included in any future analyses.

Much of the utilization of the camps relates to “wholesale” camping, primarily camporees. Very poor attendance information is available for these events. And per-capita fee information is also not available. Acquisition of this information should materially improve the quality of this study.

Many thanks to Dan Cooley and Anna Matusz for their assistance in completing this review.

Comments and questions are welcome.

Respectfully Submitted

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# Connecticut Yankee Council

## Scout Camp Utilization Summary - 2001

### Sorted in Order of Campers

<u>Camp</u>	<u>Scouts</u>	<u>Adults</u>	<u>Total Campers</u>	<u>Fee *</u>	<u>Person Night</u>
Deer Lake	3,971	2,123	6,094	\$15,834.00	10,849
Hoyt	2,975	1,709	4,684	3,386.00	6,685
Sequassen	2,104	1,173	3,277	13,411.00	6,357
Wah Wah Tay See	<u>162</u>	<u>78</u>	<u>240</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>413</u>
<b>Total - Council</b>	<b>9,212</b>	<b>5,083</b>	<b>14,295</b>	<b>\$32,631.00</b>	<b>24,304</b>

#### Percentage of Totals

Deer Lake	43%	42%	43%	49%	45%
Hoyt	32%	34%	33%	10%	28%
Sequassen	23%	23%	23%	41%	26%
Wah Wah Tay See	<u>2%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>0%</u>	<u>2%</u>
<b>Total - Council</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Sequassen does not include Scout Summer Camp*

*\* Fees may not include per-person amounts*

#### Camporees + OA Ordeals Only

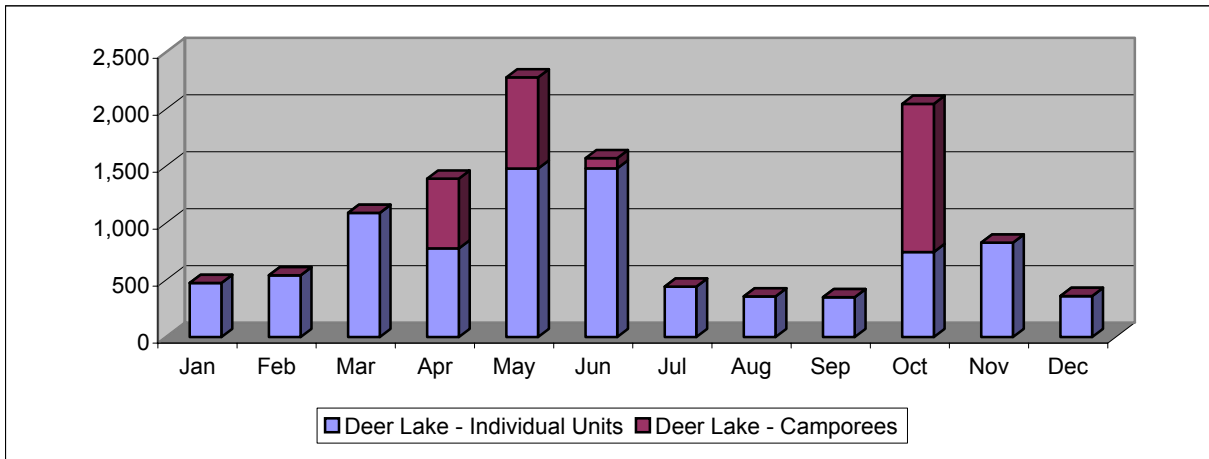
<u>Camp</u>	<u>Scouts</u>	<u>Adults</u>	<u>Total Campers</u>	<u>Person Night</u>
Deer Lake	956	339	1,295	2,542
Hoyt	1,600	625	2,225	3,100
Sequassen	500	140	640	1,030
Wah Wah Tay See	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>Total - Council</b>	<b>3,056</b>	<b>1,104</b>	<b>4,160</b>	<b>6,672</b>

#### Percentage of Totals

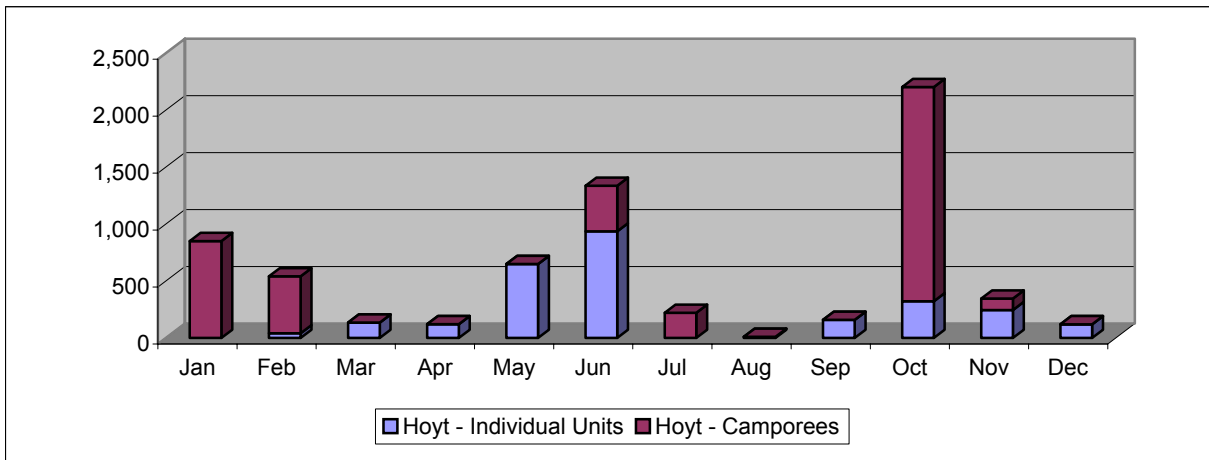
Deer Lake	24%	16%	21%	23%
Hoyt	54%	37%	48%	46%
Sequassen	24%	12%	20%	16%
Wah Wah Tay See	<u>0%</u>	<u>0%</u>	<u>0%</u>	<u>0%</u>
<b>Total - Council</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>27%</b>

## 2001 Comparison of Camping by Individual Units and Camporees \*

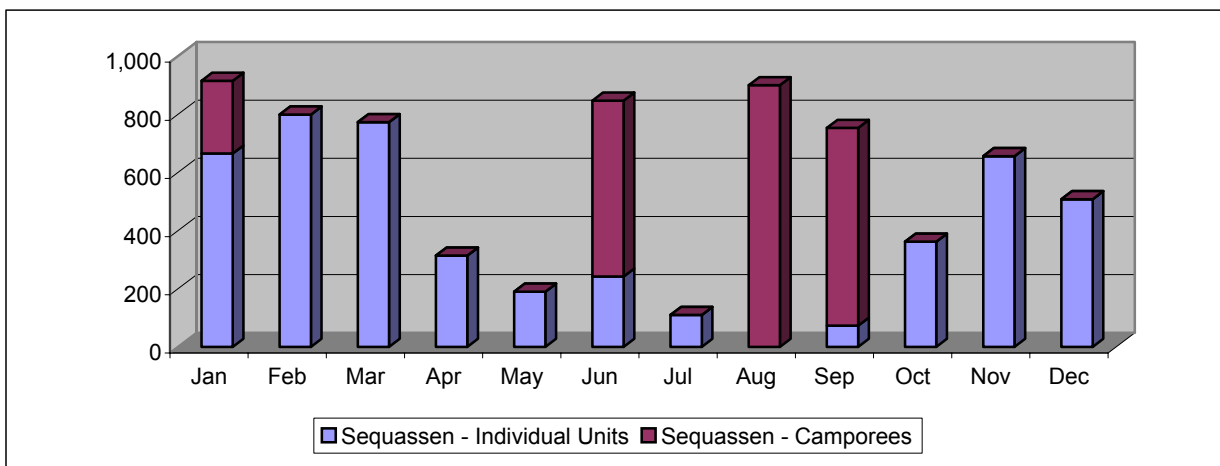
*Total Person-Nights (Scouts and Scouters)*



**Retail**  
8,921  
**Wholesale**  
2,802  
  
**Total**  
11,723



**Retail**  
2,735  
**Wholesale**  
3,950  
  
**Total**  
6,685

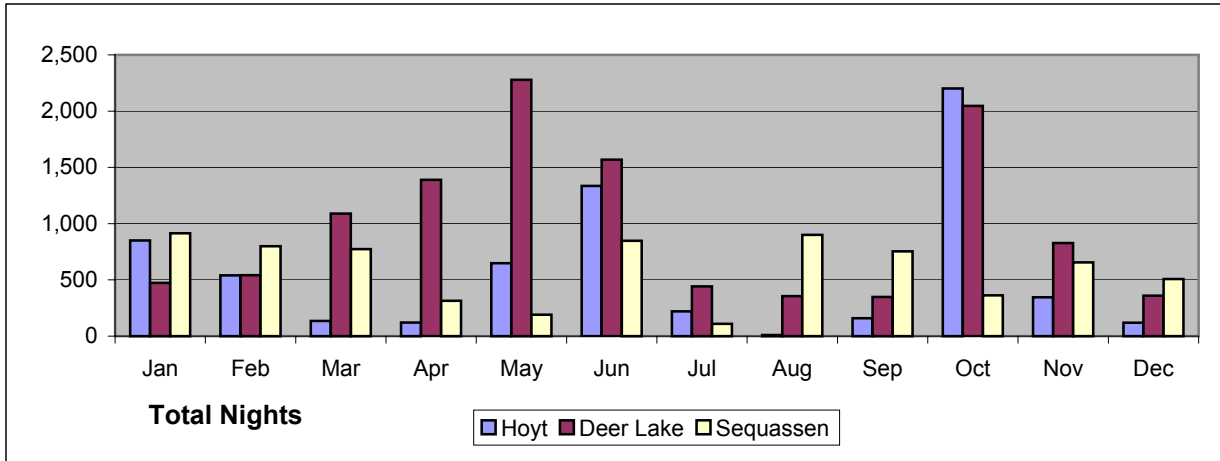


**Retail**  
4,692  
**Wholesale**  
2,435  
  
**Total**  
7,127

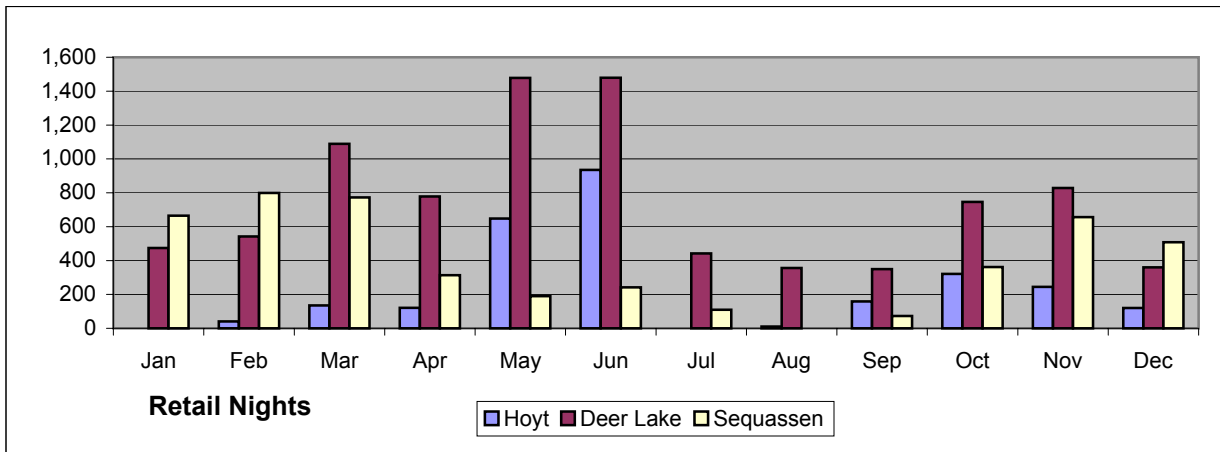
\* Includes All "Wholesale" Camping, including:  
Camporees, Klondile Derby(s), OA Ordeals, Woodbadge, JLTC

# 2001 Comparison of Camping by Individual Units and Camporees \*

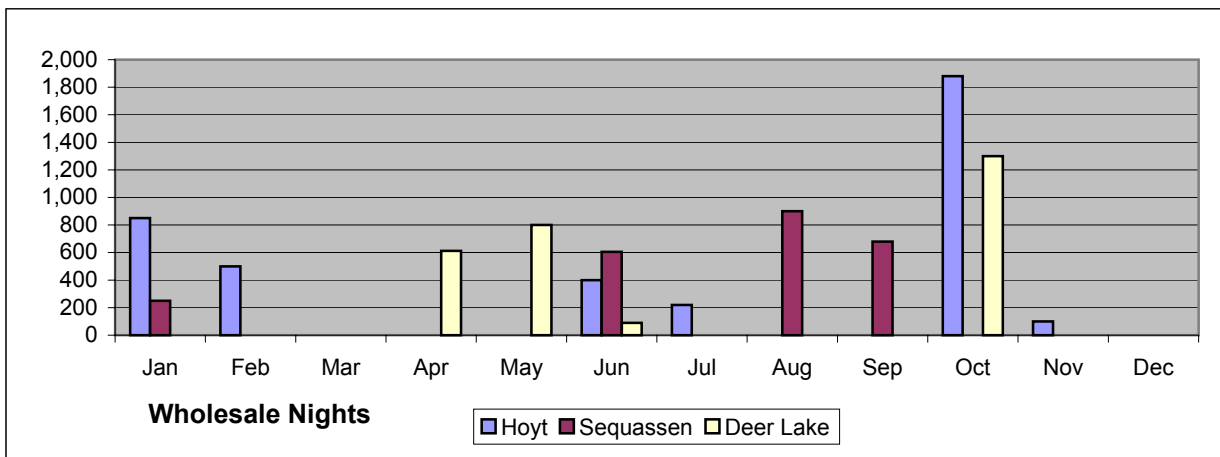
*Total Person-Nights (Scouts and Scouters)*



**Hoyt**  
6,685  
**Deer Lake**  
11,723  
**Sequassen**  
7,127  
  
**Total**  
25,535



**Hoyt**  
2,735  
**Deer Lake**  
8,921  
**Sequassen**  
4,692  
  
**Total**  
16,348

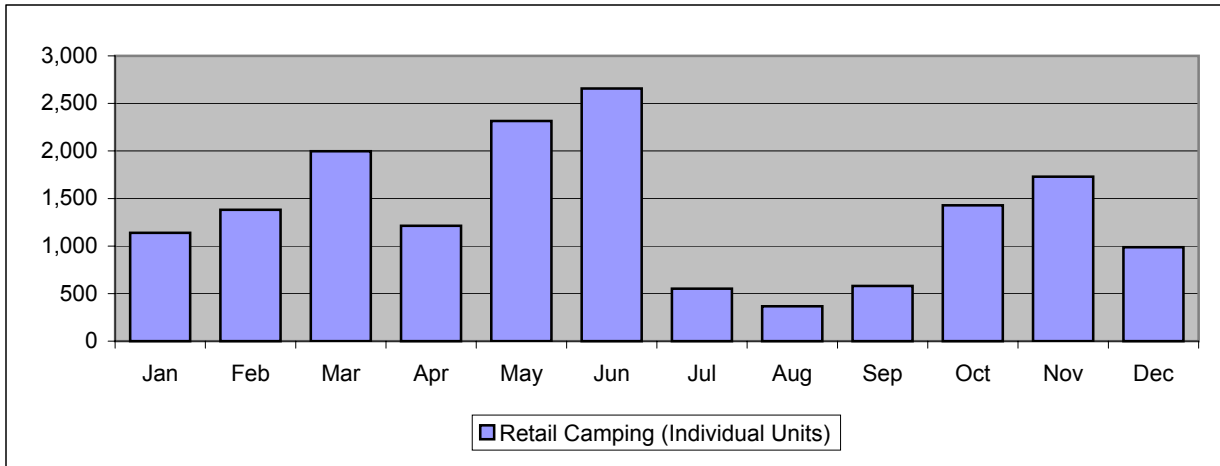


**Hoyt**  
3,950  
**Deer Lake**  
2,802  
**Sequassen**  
2,435  
  
**Total**  
9,187

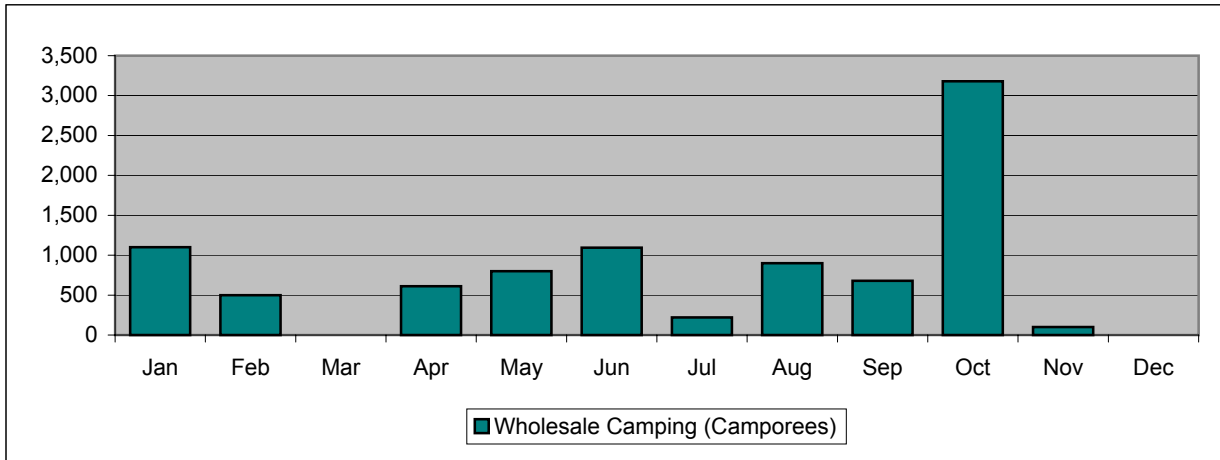
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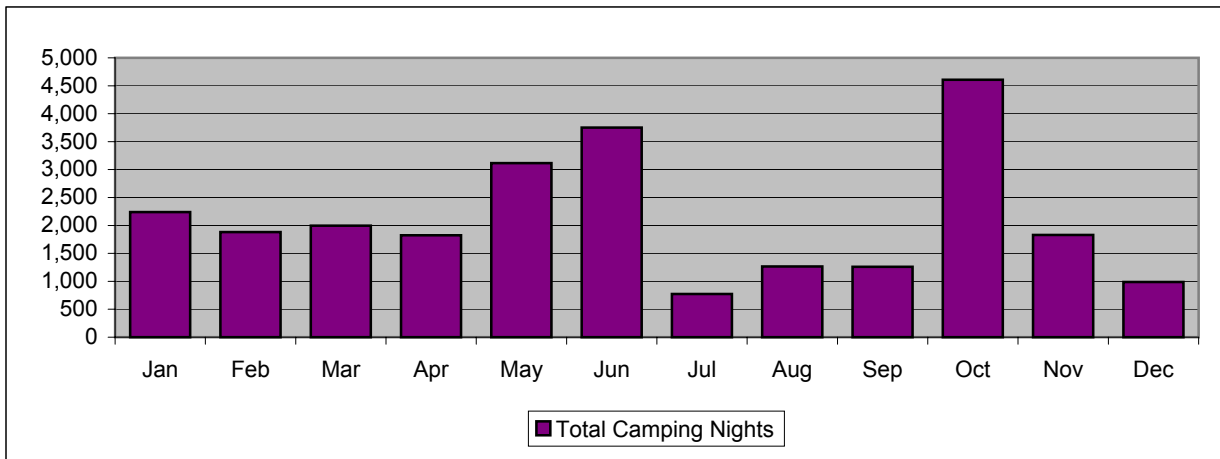
*Total Person-Nights (Scouts and Scouters)*



Hoyt  
2,735  
Deer Lake  
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Sequassen  
4,692  
  
Total  
16,348



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