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MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

**IMAGE AND SATISFACTION
SURVEY RESULTS**

April, 1992

**Submitted by:
Marketing Section
Information & Education**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following survey report presents Minnesota residents beliefs about the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). This survey was originally conducted by Anderson, Neibuhr & Assoc. in 1988 to provide information regarding resident's awareness of DNR responsibilities, their satisfaction with DNR services, and their opinions about potential DNR services. The survey also yielded information concerning residents sources of information regarding the DNR and their level of participation in a variety of activities. The survey was reissued in December of 1991 so that the Department can continue to monitor its image and satisfaction level and as a benchmark in tracking trends and concerns.

Essentially, the same research was conducted in both studies. Some minor changes were made in the questionnaire design to improve the type of information gathered. Changes include the deletion of questions regarding sources of funding and the addition of others which focus on current issues. Subgroups were not looked at in this survey due to the insignificant differences found in the 1988 study.

The research has shown very little change over the last three years in Minnesota residents' view of the DNR. Some areas of awareness and satisfaction have shifted slightly but generally our image with the general public remains the same. The fact that very little change has occurred indicates the validity of the information gathered in the 1988 survey and it gives the Department a sound benchmark to track future trends.

Awareness of DNR responsibilities remains stable. The DNR is best known for conserving land and water, enforcing game and fish laws and managing wildlife populations. They are not well known for leasing public land or regulating mining. Many residents believe the DNR is responsible for providing timber wolf management, environmental education and issuing permits for the BWCA. The DNR needs to decide if these beliefs are important enough to better inform the public about our involvement in these areas or in fact, change our involvement. A good example might be increasing our responsibility for environmental education.

Overall, residents are satisfied to neutral with the services the DNR provides. Services that were rated important or very important were looked at in terms of their satisfaction level. Protection of endangered species, building maintenance, DNR licensing, hunting, fishing, wetland protection and safety education all had satisfaction ratings of over 70 percent. Issues that were important but were not rated as high on

satisfaction levels include protection of old growth forest, preventing the spread of milfoil, managing lakeshore development and communicating natural resource law. All DNR services are considered to be important by over two-thirds of Minnesota residents. The prevention of the spread of Eurasian watermilfoil is perceived to be the most important service, followed by how much the DNR is doing to reduce trash dumped along lakeshores and rivers.

Opinions regarding potential DNR services are virtually the same as in 1988. In 1988, 62% disagreed with the statement that the DNR should cut more timber in response to forest industry needs. In 1991, 68% disagreed with this statement. Because there was some concern in the way the question was worded, an additional question was included in the 1991 survey. Residents were asked to rate their agreement with the statement, "The DNR should manage forests to meet consumer demand for forest products." Only 26% disagreed with this statement. The difference in percentage between these two questions seems to indicate the importance residents place in having a role in the management of the states natural resources and in turn their perception of DNR services.

METHODOLOGY

The population of interest for this study was Minnesota residents 18 years of age and older. A random sample of 1000 Minnesota residents selected from the general population were sent the survey. A response rate of 55 percent was achieved. An alert letter, followed by the survey and in some cases a 2nd survey, were sent to each of the 1000 households.

For comparison purposes, the information used in this report from the Anderson, Neibuhr & Assoc. study includes only the information obtained from their mail survey. The 1988 study included a follow-up telephone survey to increase the response rate. Those who responded to the telephone survey were less likely to know or participate in activities related to the DNR.

The survey was reissued as a benchmark in tracking the information gathered in 1988. The survey will help the DNR watch trends develop and look for areas to focus services and communication efforts.

CONCLUSIONS

Demographics

- 1) Over 75 percent of the survey participants have been residents of Minnesota for longer than 25 years

- 2) Land Ownership
 - * 20 percent own lakeshore or rivershore property
 - * 11 percent make their income from farming

- 3) The median age of survey respondents is 45 years old

- 4) Male: 75% Female: 25%

- 5) Almost 70 percent attended college, 34 percent graduated

AWARENESS OF DNR RESPONSIBILITIES

1) The DNR is well-known for:

- * Conserving Minnesota land and water (96%)
- * Enforcing game and fish laws (96%)
- * Managing wildlife populations (94%)

2) The DNR is not well known for:

- * Leasing public land (44%)
- * Regulating mining (30%)

3) Many believe the DNR is responsible for:

- * Regulating timber wolf management (84%)
- * Providing environmental education (82%)
- * Issuing permits for the BWCA (63%)

4) Belief of Services that the DNR does provide have slightly increased.

5) Belief of Services that the DNR does not provide have all slightly decreased.

SATISFACTION WITH DNR SERVICES

- 1) Satisfaction with DNR services has remained about the same.

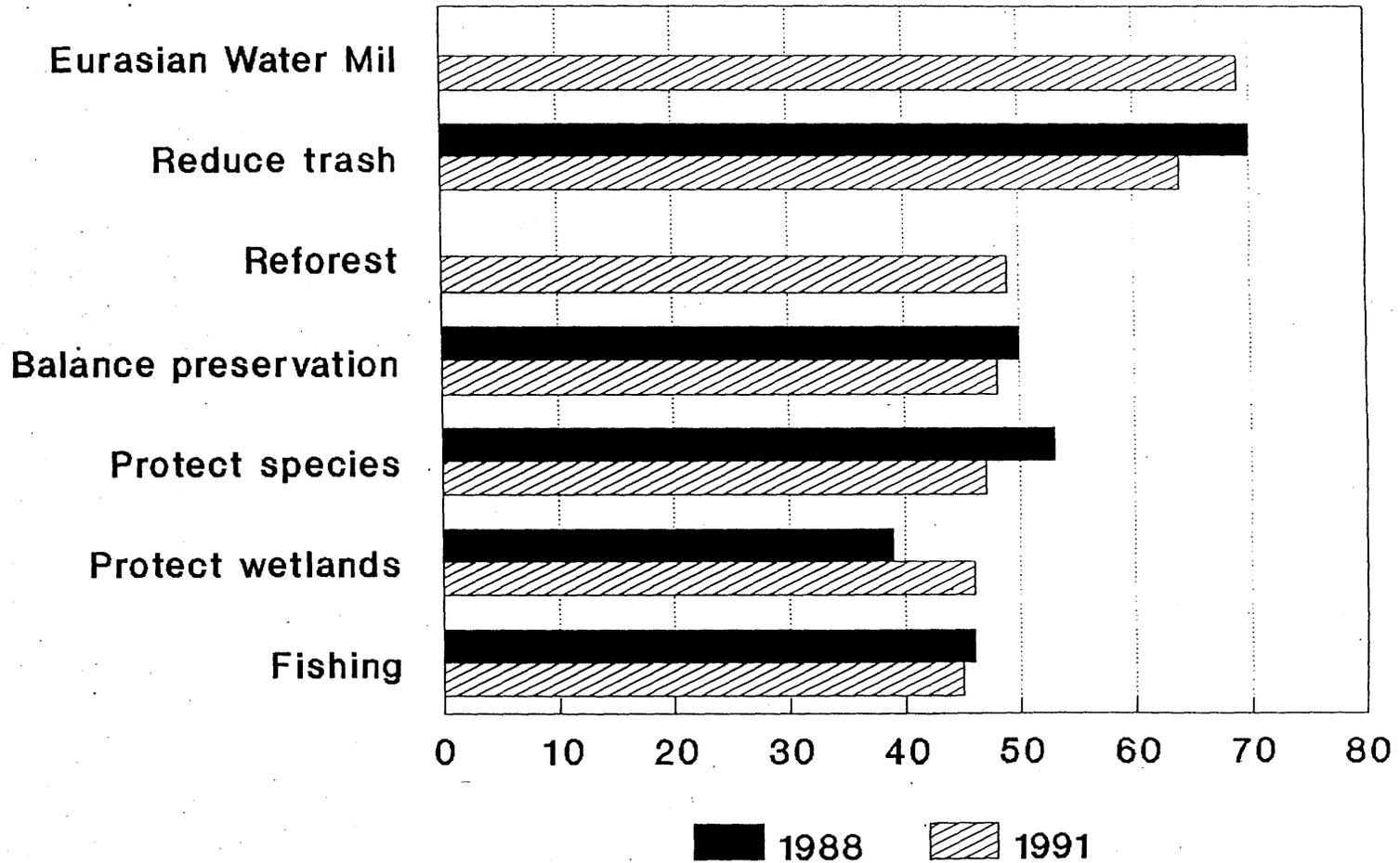
- 2) Over 70 percent are satisfied with the following services:
 - * What the DNR is doing to protect endangered species of animals (79%)
 - * The way the DNR maintains its buildings and campgrounds (76%)
 - * Fishing in Minnesota (72%)
 - * How well the DNR educates people about safety for activities such as the use of firearms and boating (70%)

- 3) People expressed the most dissatisfaction with:
 - * How much the DNR is doing to reduce the amount of trash being dumped along lakeshores and rivers in Minnesota (29%)
 - * What the DNR is doing to prevent the spread of Eurasian water milfoil (22%)
 - * How well the DNR communicates natural resource laws and policies (18%)
 - * What the DNR is doing to promote the protection of old growth forests (18%)
 - * How well the DNR educates people about species such as zebra mussels (18%)

IMPORTANCE OF DNR SERVICES

- 1) All the DNR services included in the survey are considered to be important by over two-thirds of the residents.
- 2) What the DNR is doing to prevent the spread of Eurasian water milfoil is perceived to be the most important service. (69%)
- 3) Other very important services include:
 - * How much the DNR is doing to reduce trash dumped along lakeshores and rivers (64%)
 - * How well the DNR reforests harvested areas (49%)
 - * How well the DNR maintains the balance between use and preservation of natural resources (48%)
 - * What the DNR is doing to protect endangered species (47%)
 - * The fact that wetlands other than lakes are protected (46%)
 - * Fishing in Minnesota (45%)

Services Rated Very Important



SATISFACTION OF SERVICES RATED IMPORTANT

How satisfied are residents that rated the following services important or very important.

Satisfaction with:

- * Balance of use and preservation of Minnesota's resources (69%)
- * Fishing in Minnesota (75%)
- * Safety education (71%)
- * Protection of endangered species (81%)
- * Reducing the amount of lake and river trash (33%)
- * Wetland protection (72%)
- * Hunting in Minnesota (73%)
- * Building maintenance (79%)
- * Hunting law enforcement (69%)
- * Managing lakeshore development (53%)
- * Knowledge of DNR employees (69%)
- * DNR licensing (75%)
- * Wildfire control (69%)
- * Communicating natural resource law (54%)
- * Preventing the spread of milfoil (51%)
- * Answers to natural resource questions (76%)
- * Reforest timber harvest areas (58%)
- * Protection of old growth forest (45%)
- * Education of exotic species (53%)

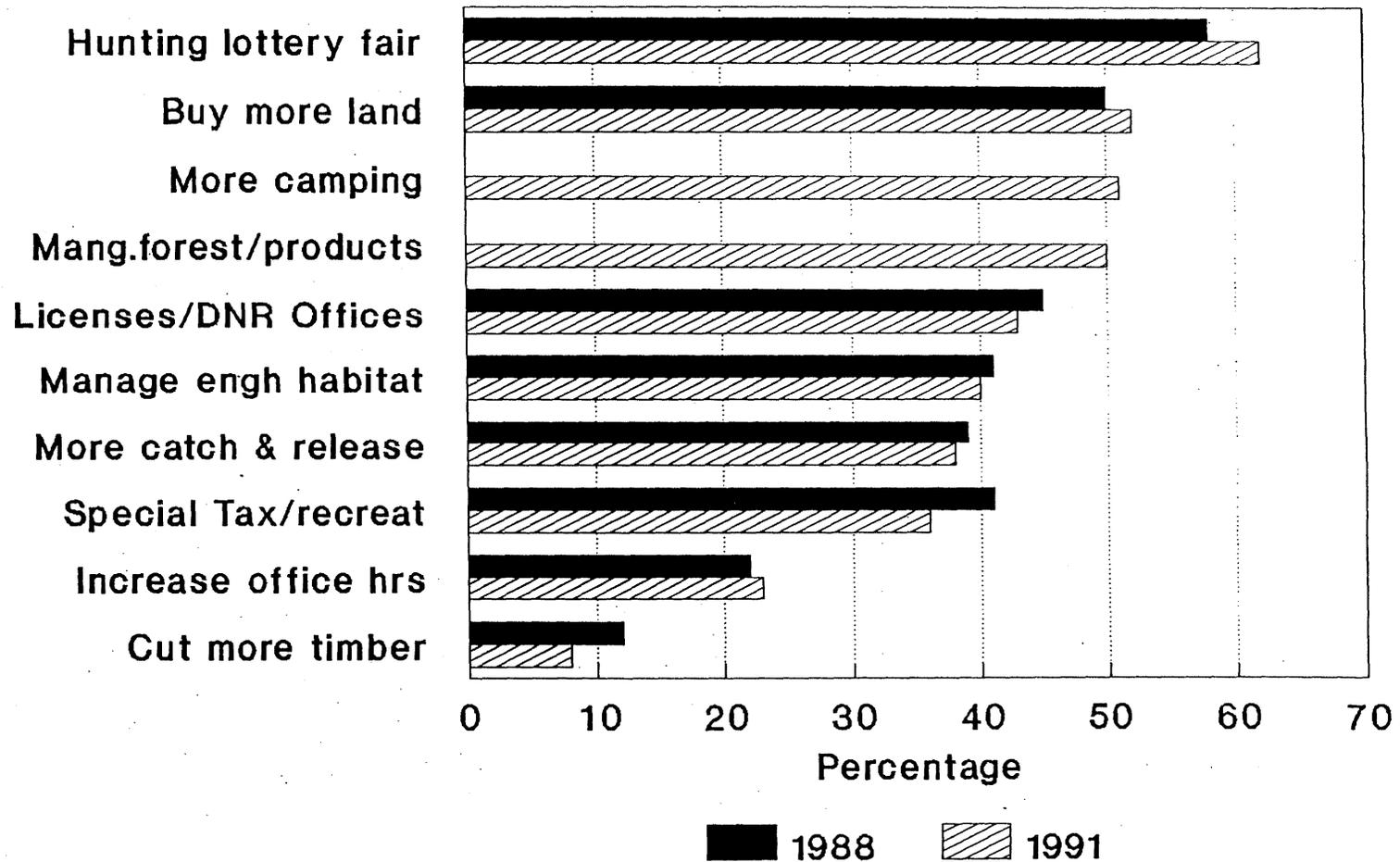
SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE DNR

- 1) The most common source of information comes from newspapers and television
- 2) Least common sources include telephoning a DNR office, the VOLUNTEER Magazine and citizen groups

OPINIONS REGARDING POTENTIAL DNR SERVICES

- 1) Responses to these questions are very much the same as the 1988 survey. Residents tend to express opinions that show concern for preserving Minnesota's natural resources.
- 2) Same questions - different wording
 - * The DNR should cut more timber in response to forest industry needs (68% disagree)
 - * The DNR should manage forests to meet consumer demands for forest products (26% disagree)
- 3) Half agree that the DNR should create more camping opportunities
- 4) Residents most often expressed disagreement with the following:
 - * A special tax on recreation equipment should be charged (45%)
 - * The DNR manages enough habitats for wildlife (36%)

Agreement with Statements



• Includes agree and strongly agree

PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES

- 1) Most participation: Nature observation (79%), motorized boating (66%) and fishing (64%)
- 2) Slight increases in cross-country skiing (up 7%) and non-motorized boat (up 3%)
- 3) Slight decreases in snowmobiling (down 5%), hunting (down 5%) and fishing (down 5%)

Activities

Participation by residents

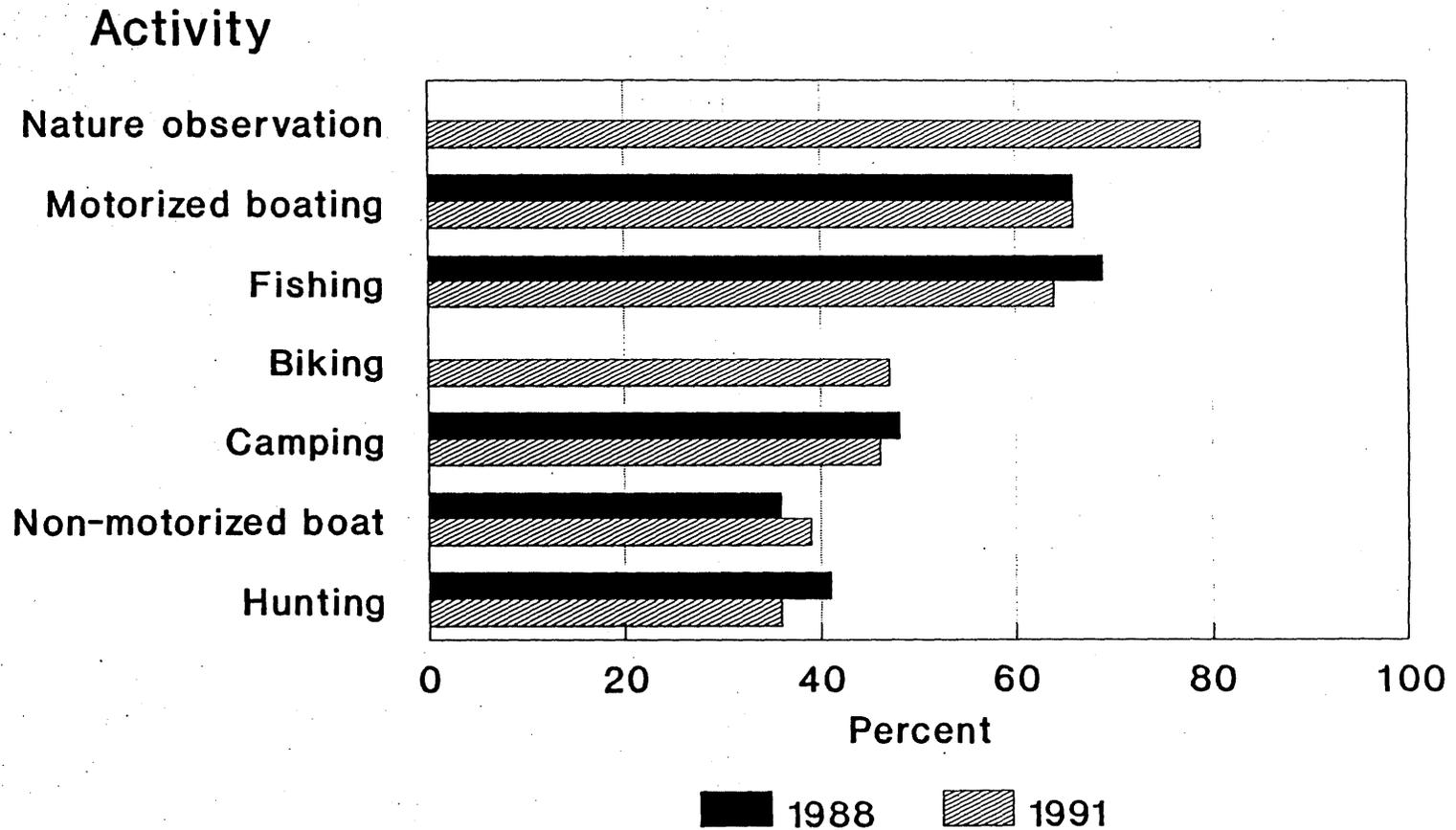


TABLE 1

Beliefs about Services that are DNR responsibilities

	1988			1991		
	Yes %	No %	Don't Know %	Yes %	No %	Don't Know %
Managing wildlife populations	95	2	3	96	2	2
Enforcing game and fish laws	94	3	3	94	3	3
Conserving Minnesota land and water	92	4	4	96	2	2
Building trails for outdoor activities	76	13	11	77	14	9
Assisting private landowners	55	22	23	55	25	20
Leasing public land	40	32	28	44	34	22
Regulating mining	31	40	29	30	46	24
Protecting rare species of plants	71	12	17	75	14	11

TABLE 2

Beliefs about Services that are not DNR responsibilities

	1988			1991		
	Yes %	No %	Don't Know %	Yes %	No %	Don't Know %
Issue permits for BWCA	66	14	20	63	16	21
Regulating discharges into lakes	58	27	15	56	31	13
Operating Superior National Forest	51	30	19	48	32	20
Regulating use of pesticides	50	30	20	46	37	17
Operating county parks	41	45	14	41	47	12
Managing municipal landfills	28	48	24	22	56	22
Regulate timber wolf management				84	8	8
Provide environmental education				82	9	9

TABLE 3
How Satisfied Minnesota Residents
are with Items Related to the DNR

	Response									
	Very Satisfied		Satisfied		Neutral		Dissatisfied		Very Dissatisfied	
	'88	'91	'88	'91	'88	'91	'88	'91	'88	'91
How well the DNR maintains the balance between use and preservation of natural resources	8	5	63	63	20	23	7	8	2	1
What the DNR is doing to protect endangered species of animals	13	13	65	66	16	15	4	6	2	0
Fishing in Minnesota	12	13	57	59	16	15	12	9	3	4
Hunting in Minnesota	10	11	53	57	20	21	14	8	3	3
The way the DNR maintains its buildings and campgrounds	17	15	58	61	21	21	3	2	1	1
The way lakeshore development is managed by the DNR	7	5	46	48	28	28	15	15	4	4
The fact that wetlands other than lakes are protected by the DNR	13	11	56	56	22	20	6	10	3	3
How effectively conservation officers enforce Minnesota hunting laws	13	10	56	57	18	20	11	9	2	4
How well the DNR educates people about safety for activities such as use of firearms and boating	14	12	56	58	19	23	10	6	1	1
How much the DNR is doing to reduce the amount of trash being dumped along lakeshores and rivers in Minnesota	7	6	33	38	21	27	32	23	7	6
The procedures for obtaining a DNR license or permit	10	8	57	61	24	23	7	7	2	0
How well the DNR protects property from wildfires	15	7	58	60	20	31	5	2	2	1
How knowledgeable DNR employees are	13	9	52	55	29	30	5	5	1	1

(con't)

TABLE 3 (con't)

How Satisfied Minnesota Residents
are with Items Related to the DNR

	Response									
	Very Satisfied		Satisfied		Neutral		Dissatisfied		Very Dissatisfied	
	'88	'91	'88	'91	'88	'91	'88	'91	'88	'91
How helpful DNR employees are in answering your questions	18	13	52	58	23	23	5	5	2	1
What the DNR is doing to prevent the spread of Eurasian water milfoil	8		43		27		16		6	
How well the DNR communicates natural resource laws and policies	4		49		29		14		4	
How well the DNR reforests harvested areas	9		48		29		12		2	
How well the DNR educates people about species such as zebra mussels	4		41		37		15		3	
What the DNR is doing to promote the protection of old growth forests	4		41		37		12		6	

TABLE 4

Responses Concerning the Importance of
Various Items Related to the DNR

	Response					
	Very Important		Important		Not Important	
	'88	'91	'88	'91	'88	'91
How well the DNR maintains the balance between use and preservation of natural resources	50	48	47	50	3	2
What the DNR is doing to protect endangered species	53	47	43	48	4	5
Fishing in Minnesota	46	45	49	48	5	7
Hunting in Minnesota	43	40	46	48	11	12
The way the DNR maintains its buildings and campgrounds	25	24	67	67	8	9
The way lakeshore development is managed by the DNR	36	35	59	59	5	6
The fact that wetlands other than lakes are protected	39	46	53	49	8	5
How effectively conservation officers enforce hunting laws	48	43	50	51	2	6
How well the DNR educates people about safety	49	43	48	53	3	4
How much the DNR is doing to reduce trash dumped along lakeshores and rivers	70	64	30	35	0	1

(con't)

TABLE 4 (con't)

Responses of Minnesota Residents Concerning the
Importance of Various Items Related to the DNR

	Response					
	Very Important %		Important %		Not Important %	
	'88	'91	'88	'91	'88	'91
The procedures for obtaining a DNR license or permit	19	19	68	67	13	14
How well the DNR protects property from wildfires	52	35	46	59	2	6
How knowledgeable DNR employees are	39	32	59	63	2	5
How helpful DNR employees are in answering your questions	34	26	63	70	3	4
What the DNR is doing to prevent the spread of Eurasian water milfoil		69		29		2
How well the DNR communicates natural resource laws and policies		32		64		4
How well the DNR reforests harvested areas		49		48		3
How well the DNR educates people about exotic species such as zebra mussels		30		55		15
What the DNR is going to promote the protection of old growth forests		41		52		7

TABLE 5

Responses Concerning Whether Minnesota Residents Receive Information About the DNR from Selected Sources

	Responses			
	Yes		No	
	% '88	% '91	% '88	% '91
Newspaper articles	86	86	14	14
VOLUNTEER magazine	27	25	73	75
DNR publications (brochures, pamphlets, posters etc.)	27	62	73	38
At the Minnesota State Fair	33	44	67	56
By telephoning DNR central office in St. Paul	16	20	84	80
By telephoning a DNR office other than the St. Paul office	27	24	73	76
Special events such as county fairs, sportshows etc.	58	50	42	50
Citizens groups such as sportsmen or conservation organizations	53	39	47	61
Radio	65	69	35	31
Television	71	72	29	28
Billboards		46		54
State Parks		64		36

TABLE 6

Responses of Minnesota Residents Concerning Agreement with Selected Statements about the DNR

	Responses									
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	% '88	% '91	% '88	% '91	% '88	% '91	% '88	% '91	% '88	% '91
The DNR should designate more waters for only catch and release fishing	14	11	25	27	36	35	19	21	6	6
The DNR manages enough habitats for wildlife	6	4	35	36	26	24	26	28	7	8
Licenses or permits required by the DNR should be available at more DNR offices	9	7	36	36	45	47	8	9	2	1
The DNR should manage forests to meet consumer demand for forest products		8		42		24		17		9
The number of hours DNR offices are open should be increased	3	3	19	20	60	60	17	16	1	1
A special tax on recreation equipment should be charged	9	9	32	27	19	19	24	27	16	18

(con't)

TABLE 6 (con't)

Responses of Minnesota Residents Concerning Agreement with Selected Statements about the DNR

	Responses									
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	% '88	% '91	% '88	% '91	% '88	% '91	% '88	% '91	% '88	% '91
The current lottery process is administered fairly	9	10	49	52	26	24	9	9	7	5
The DNR should buy more more land to protect our resources	18	20	32	32	30	24	14	17	6	7
The DNR should cut more timber in response to forest industry needs	2	2	10	6	26	24	37	38	25	30
The DNR should create more camping opportunities	10		41		34		11		4	

TABLE 7
Responses of Minnesota Residents Concerning Whether
They Have Participated in Selected Activities in the Past 12 Months

	Responses			
	Yes		No	
	%	%	%	%
	'88	'91	'88	'91
Fishing	69	64	31	36
Hunting	41	36	59	64
Non-motorized boating	36	39	64	61
Motorized boating	66	66	34	34
Camping	48	46	52	54
Snowmobiling	20	15	80	85
Cross-country skiing	20	27	80	73
Hiking/backpacking		39		61
Biking		47		53
Nature observing		79		21
ATV riding		13		87
Been a member of a sportsmen's organization such as Ducks Unlimited	16	17	84	83
Been a member of a conservation organization such as the Sierra club	7	9	93	91

