



Recreation Research Update



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Californians' Preferences for Threatened and Endangered Species Management

California residents were contacted for a telephone survey through a cooperative research effort between San Diego State University and Dr. Pat Winter.

A total of 603 surveys were completed, representing a statewide random sample. Respondents were ethnically/racially diverse with 59 percent self-identified as white, 24 percent Hispanic/Latino, 5 percent Black, and another 5 percent Asian American/Pacific Islander. Most (74 percent) had visited a National Forest in California; and a slight majority participated in outdoor recreational activities several times a month.

Respondents were fairly concerned about threatened and endangered (T & E) species, though they saw others as less concerned. Ratings of knowledge on T & E species were more likely to be in the mid-range or low end of the scale.

Three general opinion statements about species were presented. The greatest percentage (44 percent) agreed that "we probably have to let some species go, we cannot save them all", although more than one-third (37 percent) felt that "we must preserve all species regardless of cost". Some (15 percent) agreed "economic growth and human concerns must come first".

Most trusted the Forest Service to manage T & E species (69 percent). Trust has been found to be important in how people view and respond to agency actions.

Selected management interventions were rated for approval and effectiveness. Signs, closing some sites, and closing whole areas were the most highly rated; while banning certain uses was rated the lowest.

In cases where area closures to protect species were ignored by recreationists, respondents thought a large fine, verbal warning, and doing area maintenance were appropriate consequences, though many preferred a combination of responses based on repetition or first time offense.

Trust and concern show up as significant predictors of reactions to the proposed management interventions. This finding is important to land managers because it highlights the value of relationships with the public, fostered through communication and education efforts.

For more information about this study contact Pat Winter at (909)680-1557.

Red Rock Ranger District Monitoring Study

This study is a survey-based market assessment and customer service evaluation of the Red Rock Ranger District (Sedona, AZ: Coconino National Forest) and its new Red Rock Pass (recreational fee demo program). It also compares 2001 results to 1999 baseline data collected prior to program implementation. The 2001 effort contains 1,414 on-site and 427 mailback surveys. Data obtained included: visitor trip profiles, socio-demographics, recreation behavior and motivations, information needs and communications issues, customer service perceptions, fee attitudes and preferences, assessment of the Red Rock Pass system and visitor centers, and potential market options.

Overall, the pass program seems to be a success. Local resident visitors are strongly attached to the resource and hold positive attitudes toward charging fees to recreate. Forest visitors have a strong economic impact on the local community. Three-quarters stayed overnight in the community at least one night (5.6 % increase from 1999). Visitor expenditures increased 12.7% from 1999.

Satisfaction with the visit was high. Gateway Visitor Center users were impressed by the level of service and information from Forest Service staff and volunteers. Most ratings of service quality either held constant or improved. Performance of full service or developed sites improved the most. Several areas for improvement were noted, such as safety and trails/facilities. Forest Service communication efforts were rated more positively in 2001 than in 1999.

Attitudes toward fees are more positive now. The pass was judged to be a good value and reasonable cost. Also, visitors made it clear that charging a fee did not detract from their visit to the National Forest. Efforts still need to be made in the area of compliance. Noncompliance was estimated to be about 40 percent. The data also suggest that many visitors were unaware of the fee program and which areas required a pass.

There continues to be strong support for making investments that restore and enhance the natural environment. Visitors in 1999 and 2001 placed a high priority on using fee revenue for maintenance (trail, road, and recreation facilities) and on cultural resource

protection or restoration. In short, the Forest Service is operating out of a position of strength as a service provider – with considerable customer loyalty. **For more information about this study contact Jim Absher at jabsher@fs.fed.us.**

Adaptive Outdoor Recreation Management

Adaptive management is a technique that uses scientific information to help formulate management strategies and a process for continually improving management practices by learning from the outcomes of operational programs. Debbie Chavez has utilized this approach at an outdoor recreation setting in southern California (Applewhite Picnic Area--AWPA).

The first stage in the process was to determine what needs the resource managers had. They were contemplating renovation of the picnic area and needed input from the recreating public before making plans. Thus, the first portion of the project required acquiring reliable and valid data from the recreating public. The visitors (mostly Hispanic) identified several desired picnic area changes including bigger sites and barbecue grills that could accommodate large groups, add trash containers near the tables, and add grassy areas and shade trees. Managers used this data for developing renovation plans.

The second stage occurred after the renovation. In this case it was important to managers to find out how visitors felt about the renovation. Survey results indicated visitors were pleased with the renovations, though they wanted cleaner restroom facilities and more grass and trees. Site use observations indicated a need for more group spaces within the area. Managers have used these results to focus attention on serving large groups and keeping the facilities clean.

In the third stage the goal was to obtain information on actual use of the renovated area. Site observations of use and measurements of vandalism and graffiti indicated additional changes were needed. Visitors often made their own recreation sites rather than use ones provided—possibly because so many of the developed sites were in full sunshine. Though reduced, there was still evidence of vandalism and graffiti at the site. Managers have used these results to make further changes, including making plans for visitation by diverse groups (such as a communication plan), moving some tables into shady areas, and removing graffiti as quickly as possible.

The attention to outdoor recreation visitor preferences at this site has demonstrated the success of the adaptive management process for outdoor recreation settings. A guideline for adaptive outdoor recreation management is being developed. **For more**

information about this study contact Debbie Chavez at dchavez@fs.fed.us.

Unit Publications

Baker, D.; Absher, J.; Anderek, K.; Knopf, R. 2002. **Red Rock Ranger District monitoring study**. Technical report. Riverside, CA: USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station. 62 p.

Baker, D.A.; Loo, G.H.; Absher, J.D. 2001. **Factors that influence national forest visitors' satisfaction among seniors and non-seniors**. In Havitz, Mark E. and Floyd, Myron F. (symposium co-chairs). Book of Abstracts 2001 Leisure Research Symposium, National Recreation and Park Congress; 2001 October 3-6; Denver, CO. Ashburn, VA: University of Waterloo, University of Florida, National Recreation and Park Association, p. 84.

Burns, R.; Graefe, A.; Absher, J. 2001. **A comparison of performance-only and importance-performance gap scores as predictors of recreational customer satisfaction**. In Havitz, Mark E. and Floyd, Myron F. (symposium co-chairs). Book of Abstracts 2001 Leisure Research Symposium, National Recreation and Park Congress; 2001 October 3-6; Denver, CO. Ashburn, VA: University of Waterloo, University of Florida, National Recreation and Park Association, p. 83.

Chavez, D.J. 2002. **Adaptive management in outdoor recreation: Serving Hispanics in southern California**. *Western Journal of Applied Forestry* 17, 3, 129-133.

Kneeshaw, K.; Vaske, J.J.; Bright, A.D.; Absher, J.D. 2001. **Regional similarities/differences in outdoor recreation place attachment measures**. In Teel, Tara and Fix, Peter (compilers). Book of Abstracts, Human Dimensions of Natural Resources in the Western U.S: A regional conference of human dimensions professionals; 2001 October 18-21; Alta, WY. [on-line]. Available: http://www.cnr.colostate.edu/nrrt/hd/book_of_abstracts.htm p.23-24.

Marx, M.; Chavez, D. 2001. **Conflict and coalitions: An examination of outdoor recreation magazines**. *Environmental Management* 29: 207-216.

Tierney, P.; Rosegard, E.; Absher, J. 2002. **Central and northern California outdoor recreation market analysis**. Technical report. Riverside, CA: USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station. 62 p.

Tynon, J.F.; Chavez, D.J. 2002. **Response to crimes on public lands: U.S. National Forest case studies**. [Abstract]. Hawaii International Conference on Social Sciences; 2002 June 11-15; Honolulu, HI. [on CD ROM only] 2 p.

Tynon, J.F.; Chavez, D.J. 2002. **Testing Pizam's model: Classification of outdoor recreation crimes in the U.S**. [Abstract]. Hawaii International Conference on Social Sciences; 2002 June 11-15; Honolulu, HI. [on CD ROM only] 1 p.