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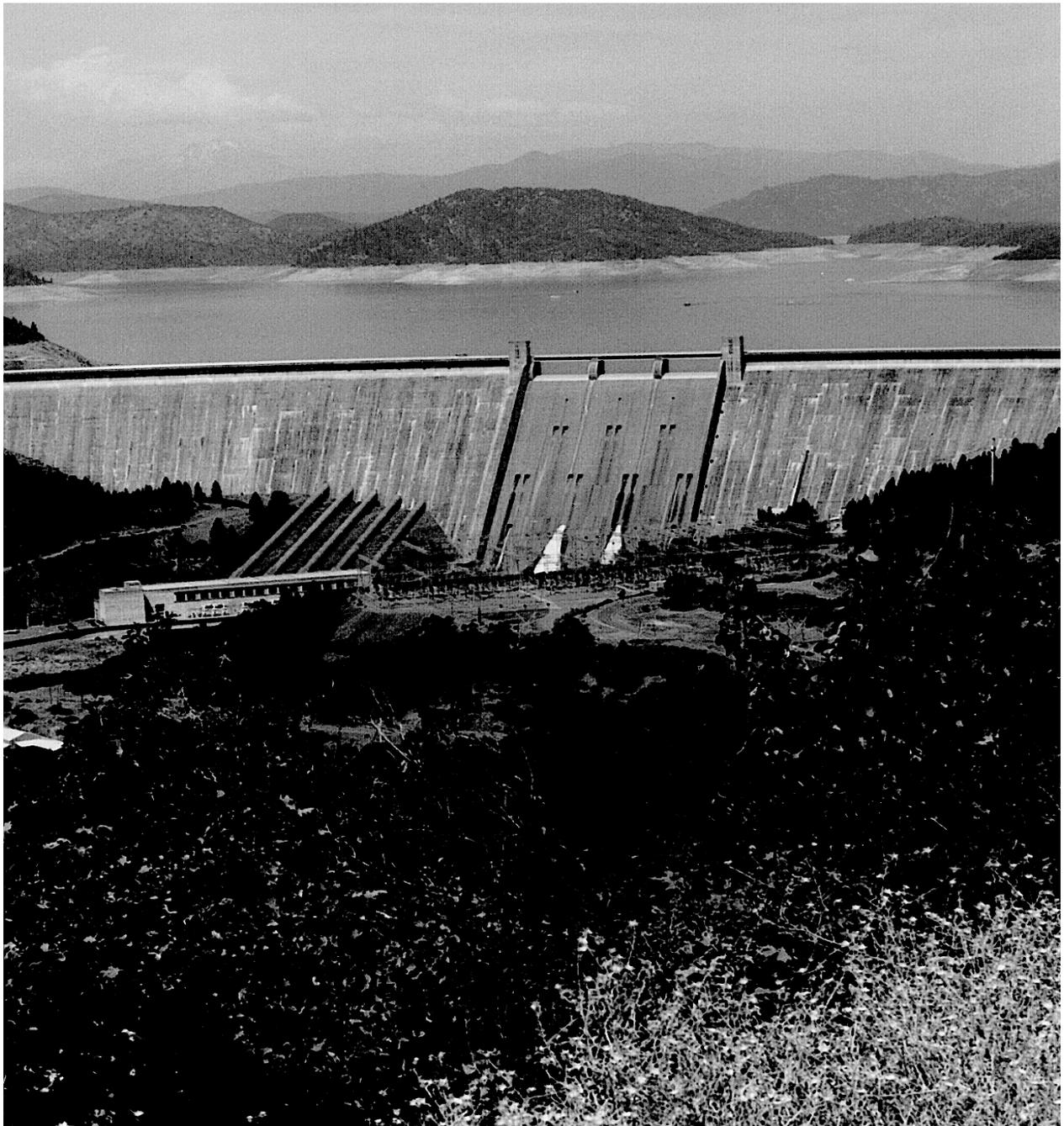
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Recreation at the Redding Resource Area in California

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Abstract

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In 1993 a cooperative study was initiated by the USDI Bureau of Land Management and the USDA Forest Service's Pacific Southwest Research Station to study the recreational needs of visitors to the Redding Resource Area in central and northern California. The study addressed specific issues in the Redding Resource Management Plan, such as attracting recreationists from local versus regional populations, as well as items previously established as important in other visitor research pilots, such as preferred amenities. Four seasons of data collection occurred, with the report covering all seasons. Eleven sites within either the Interlakes Special Recreation Management Area or the Sacramento River Recreation Area were targeted for study. Support for additional development and land acquisition was found, and most respondents were on a repeat visit and were well satisfied with the area. Conflict between recreation groups was rare. Results show the recreation patterns at selected sites and areas within the Redding Resource Management Area and provide valuable information for researchers and managers planning for these and similar areas.

Retrieval Terms: conflict, information preferences, preferences for development, recreation management, visitor case study

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Retrieval Terms: conflict, information preferences, preferences for development, recreation management, visitor case study

In 1993 the USDI Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the USDA Forest Service's Pacific Southwest Research Station joined in a cooperative study of the needs of visitors at the Redding Resource Area in central and northern California. Specific issues in the Redding Resource Management Plan (RMP), such as attracting recreationists from local versus regional populations, as well as items previously established as important in other visitor research pilots, such as preferred amenities, were queried. Although the Redding Resource Area was comprised of less than 20 distinct regions, the Interlakes Special Recreation Management Area (ISRMA) and the Sacramento River Area (SRA) were selected as target locations. Specific recreation sites were identified within each of those two areas by the BLM and through consultation with other agencies and the Pacific Southwest Research Station. Four seasons of data collection occurred as part of this case study, and each of the 11 sites was visited twice within each season between June and May of 1994, once on a Saturday and once on a Sunday. Dates were randomly selected in advance of the data collection season. A total of 609 self-administered questionnaires were completed, representing a response rate of 53.6 percent.

Respondents were mostly males, with at least some college education. They were primarily Anglo, English-speaking, and U.S.-born. Household income was mostly between \$20,000 and \$69,999. Few respondents reported physical (auditory, visual, or mobility impairments) or mental challenges (mental/cognitive or learning impairments). Miles traveled varied dramatically between sites, with the Shasta Overlook (a site at the ISRMA) having the highest miles traveled. Respondents at the areas were most likely to be with family or friends, visiting on non-holiday weekends and weekdays. Water-sports activities were most likely to be participated in at all sites, and additional water-sports activities were most likely to be desired. The range of activities was heavily influenced by the types of sites selected for visitor contact.

Friends and family were the most reported information sources. Respondents were interested in different types of information, with the highest interest indicated at the Shasta Overlook. Very few wanted information about area rules and regulations, while most were interested in information about cultural, natural, and historic features of the area, or about similar areas nearby. New visitors showed a much stronger interest in all information types. The most preferred methods of information dissemination were signs along the road and brochures available on-site.

Respondents preferred that the area remain pretty much as it was, but they would like more information about the area. Plans for additional facilities and additional access points did not receive strong opposition or support. Plans for land acquisitions were mostly supported, but this question was stated in a general fashion.

Development between Shasta and Keswick Dams (at the ISRMA) was supported and should probably involve additional hiking and jogging trails. Scenery and esthetic qualities of the areas were most enjoyed, while amenities and facilities were rather unimportant. Few respondents had experienced conflict, although as an area, ISRMA showed the highest levels of reported conflict.

Most respondents were repeat visitors. The Sacramento River Trail Bridge was the most visited site within a 1-year period on average. Satisfaction with the sites was fairly high, although some dissatisfaction was expressed at Ball's Ferry (at the SRA). Issues related to boating problems were offered as the source of dissatisfaction.

Knowledge of the managing agency varied quite a bit, although this was clearly best at sites where most respondents were locally-based and had visited the area before, and where signs were readily visible.

Seasonal variations in site visitation showed most first-time visits in the summer and spring. At Keswick and Bend Bridge Fishing Access, visitor satisfaction varied significantly by season, but a clear explanation is not offered by the data.

Some assumptions presented in the RMP were compared to the results of this on-site visitor study. The RMP assumptions were based on resource managers' knowledge of the areas combined with written public comments and transcriptions from open public meetings. The on-site visitor study was distinct in that it gathered information from visitors to areas on the basis of a pre-determined set of items in the questionnaires. RMP assumptions that were confirmed through the on-site survey include the comparatively high level of use at the ISRMA (versus the SRA), primarily local resident visitation at the ISRMA, a wider draw of tourists to the SRA, and seasonal concentration of use at the SRA.

Results show the recreation patterns and preferred recreational opportunities at selected sites and areas within the Redding Resource Management Area, as well as development preferences, which can facilitate management and amenity development where appropriate. Modes of information reception, preferred types of information, and primary language of visitors assist with the tailoring of agency communication efforts. Degree and sources of conflict identified through the survey help pinpoint where conflict resolution strategies might be needed. Findings provide valuable information for researchers and managers planning for these and similar areas.

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