

Chapter 1: Introduction

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In 1987, the Pacific Southwest Research Station (PSW) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS), chartered a research work unit to examine outdoor recreation in the wildland-urban interface. The need for the work unit was identified by the four forest supervisors in southern California, from the Angeles National Forest, the Cleveland National Forest, the Los Padres National Forest, and the San Bernardino National Forest. Supervisors wanted scientific information about the diverse outdoor recreation visitors who were using USFS lands for outdoor recreation. They noted that in the past, most recreation visitors were White, but that the percentage was changing with an increase in diverse visitors. In particular, they noted the increasing numbers of Latino or Hispanic visitors and that they recreated in different ways compared to White visitors. For example, for outdoor picnics, Latinos would come early in the day and stay all day, often making foods from scratch on site. In comparison, White recreation visitors would stay for only a few hours and bring foods made at home. The supervisors expressed concern that the needs of the diverse visitors may not be being met because the sites were often developed with White visitors in mind. For example, Latinos were coming in larger groups than could be accommodated with solitary picnic tables, so site designs did not fit their patterns of use. The supervisors requested scientific information that would help them better serve those diverse visitors. The research work unit has emphasized applied research as a response.

In 2001, Chavez authored a general technical report (PSW-GTR-180) on managing outdoor recreation in California, focusing on studies of visitors from 1989 through 1998. The current document presents a compilation of studies that have occurred since the Chavez 2001 paper. Several differences exist between the 2001 paper and this general technical report (GTR). First, many of the studies reported here are outside California (they include studies in Oregon, Minnesota, Illinois), and several studies are international. Next, some articles in this GTR include general population studies, whereas Chavez 2001 focused on visitors to public forest and desert lands. Another difference between the GTRs is that the Chavez 2001 GTR is a synthesis of different topics included in several studies, whereas here we report on several individual papers, including a few synthesis papers. There are also some similarities—both GTRs have an emphasis on diverse visitors and both emphasize the applied nature of the studies. Our hope is that this document continues to fulfill the needs of the supervisors in southern California as well as other managers in need of information about diverse recreation visitor groups.

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International Studies

The three papers in this section cover the following topics:

- The dual role of local residents in the management of natural protected areas in Mexico. Local residents play an important role in the management of protected areas because they represent potential users of these areas, they receive the benefits or costs of developing nature-based recreation in these areas, and they are the group most closely interested in the management of these areas.
- The use of the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) framework for managing recreation opportunities at two protected natural areas in Mexico. The ROS criteria and standards used to inventory and describe outdoor recreation opportunities in these two areas had to be adapted for local conditions; nonetheless, the ROS framework performed well.
- Results from constraints to leisure travel and visitation to natural area studies conducted in Mexico, and also, Scotland, Spain, and the United States. The article points out how cultural values produced significant differences on visitation constraints and use of undeveloped natural areas.

Syntheses of Studies

Three papers in this section cover the following topics:

- A synthesis of materials from 17 research projects provides insight into serving Latino recreation visitors to urban proximate outdoor recreation areas. Suggestions to serve Latino outdoor recreation visitors were offered in communications, development of recreation sites, use of partnerships and cooperation, and provision of employment opportunities.
- A synthesis of visitor participation patterns, visitor preferences, and the perceptions of visitors based on data collected over time in southern California at day use outdoor recreation sites.
- An assessment of research trends and five research gaps in studies related to race, ethnicity, recreation, and leisure.

Management Studies: Programs/Outreach/Employment

The five papers in this section cover the following topics:

- Management assumptions and program realities for fern gathering on the San Bernardino National Forest, focusing on biological and sociological factors.
- Southwesterners' views of threatened and endangered species management, which examined whether trust, or the willingness to rely upon others to make decisions or take actions on others' behalf, was influenced by racial/ethnic diversity or gender.
- Physical activity among Latino and non-Latino White visitors in California, Illinois, and Minnesota. The differences found between the two racial and ethnic groups suggested both management challenges and opportunities.
- Results of focus group interviews with racial and ethnic group members in Oregon. The focus group interviews were designed to determine perceptions about what recreation activities, services, facilities, and experiences were thought to be appropriate at various public locations in Oregon.
- Perceptions of agriculture and natural resources careers among minority students from a national organization. The perceptions and attitudes reported by students who chose a career in agriculture and natural resources were focused around the themes of career opportunities, positive educational experiences, and internship/job experiences with agencies and organizations.

Environmental Belief Studies

The two papers in this section cover the following topics:

- Perceptions of Latino outdoor recreation visitors about ecosystem services. These visitors strongly agreed with the importance of managing natural areas for both cultural (such as outdoor recreation locations) and regulating (such as protecting water quality) ecosystem services.
- Wilderness and day use recreationists' preferences for natural resource management and their perceptions of purposes for management using an Environmental Identity Salience scale, which indicate that management of recreation opportunities can include considerations of sustainability.

Communication Studies

The two papers in this section cover the following topics:

- Lessons for outreach based on a needs analysis conducted among residents of Los Angeles County. The findings suggest that ethnic media may be one form of contact to utilize, and the data suggest the use of print media and getting the word out through community contacts.
- Routes to communication about outdoor recreation with diverse publics, including a discussion of the value of ethnic media, the potential utility of community networks (such as churches), and the use of the Internet.

Measurement Studies

The one paper in this section covers the following topic:

An approach to measuring cultural diversity in recreation. Measuring cultural diversity in recreation is an important topic because of the increasing coverage of and interest in ethnicity and cross-cultural aspects of recreation. Cultural consensus analysis is suggested to estimate the level of within-group agreement, and approaches to measuring between-group differences are described.

Literature Cited

Chavez, D.J. 2001. Managing outdoor recreation in California: visitor contact studies 1989–1998. Gen. Tech. Rep. PSW-GTR-180. Albany, CA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station. 100 p.