

# Chapter 16: Routes to Communicating About Outdoor Recreation With Diverse Publics: What We Know About Media

Patricia L. Winter,<sup>1</sup> Jessica Skenderian,<sup>2</sup> and William Crano<sup>3</sup>

## Abstract

This paper examines the issue of outreach to diverse publics as a central concern to natural resource recreation management. Increasing diversity across the Nation has been accompanied by an underrepresentation of communities of color among outdoor recreation populations in natural resource settings. Mass media may be an excellent way to conduct outreach, but the current investment in media addressing diverse publics is discouraging. Patterns of media use and variations by different ethnic groups in levels of use, as well as various ethnic groups' documented preference for ethnic media are presented. Purposes of media use, as well as trust and reliance in various sources of recreation information are also noteworthy considerations in developing an outreach strategy. Finally, we present some suggestions that may be of assistance to natural resource managers for reaching specific sub-populations, including the value of ethnic media, the potential utility of community networks such as churches, and the use of the Internet.

Keywords: Ethnic/racial diversity, broadcast media, print media, ethnic media, outreach.

## Introduction

### Recreation Participation and Ethnic/Racial Diversity

The U.S. population is ethnically and racially diverse. According to the 2000 Census, 69.1 percent of the population identified themselves as non-Hispanic White, and 12.5 percent as Hispanic or Latino descent. Irrespective of ethnicity, 4.5 percent of the population identified themselves as Asians and Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders and 12.9 percent of the population identified themselves as Black or African American (U.S. Census Bureau 2001). Although the United States has a long history of national ethnic and racial diversity, these figures represent a considerable increase in the non-Hispanic White population since 1950 (Cordell et al. 2004).

<sup>1</sup> Research social scientist, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station, Wildland Recreation and Urban Cultures research unit, 4955 Canyon Crest Drive, Riverside, CA 92507-6099; e-mail: pwinter@fs.fed.us.

<sup>2</sup> Doctoral student, e-mail: jessica.skenderian@cgu.edu.

<sup>3</sup> Professor of psychology, School of Organizational and Behavioral Sciences, Claremont Graduate University, 150 E 10<sup>th</sup> St., Claremont, CA 91711; e-mail: william.crano@cgu.edu.

---

**Patterns of media use and variations by different ethnic groups in levels of use, as well as various ethnic groups' documented preference for ethnic media are presented.**

Despite this diversity, White people participate in land-based outdoor recreation at much higher rates than do groups of color. For example, according to the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment, 37.6 percent of non-Hispanic Whites reported visiting a wilderness or primitive area, compared to 22.3 percent of Latinos, and 26.6 percent of Asian Americans (Cordell et al. 2004, 2005). In general, nonparticipants are more likely to be female, older, more ethnically diverse, and less affluent (Floyd 1999, Lee et al. 2001, Outdoor Industry Association 2004).

Non-Whites have reported a lack of information as a constraint to outdoor recreation participation (Crano et al. 2005, Scott et al. 2004, Tierney et al. 1998). Winter et al. (2004) examined constraints to visiting the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and reported that perceived constraints were affected by income levels, education levels, linguistic acculturation, ethnic group (four Asian American cultural groups) and gender. Also among these constraints was a lack of information. A lack of information was among the top five barriers to national forest visitation reported by Latinos, African Americans, and Asians, but not Whites, in a study of Los Angeles basin residents reported by Crano et al. (2005). Similarly, Scott et al. (2004) reported that Latinos and African Americans were more likely than Whites to indicate information and access constraints as barriers to use of outdoor recreation facilities. However, it should be noted that a lack of information is not always reported as a greater constraint to minorities than to Whites. For example, Mowen et al. (2005) reported that cost, lack of public transportation, no way to get to parks, and fear of crime were significantly more likely to be reported as a constraint to park use among African Americans than Whites. A lack of information was not significantly different in this particular study.

### Mass Media and Diverse Publics

Popular mass media may be one method of informing visitors and potential visitors about outdoor recreation opportunities. Print media, radio and television spots, and Internet sites are all ways of reaching large populations, and represent an untapped source for diverse communities. A study by the Association of Hispanic Advertising Agencies (2002) examined the percentage of national advertising investment allocated to Hispanic television and print media in comparison to the percentage of advertising investment allocated toward television and print media overall (Hispanic plus general market). The results indicated that to reach the Hispanic market effectively, at least 8 percent of an advertiser's budget should be spent on Hispanic advertising; however, only 3.2 percent of total national and business marketing dollars is devoted to this population. In addition, although total spending for advertising in the United States in 2004 was about \$236.7 billion, advertisements

specifically targeting African Americans approximated only \$1.8 billion (Price 2005). This bias in advertising spending may help to explain differences in media use patterns among various ethnicities.

Studies assessing media usage patterns indicate that many individuals prefer broadcast (i.e., television and radio) over print media (La Ferle and Lee 2005). Although television is the primary form of media used among most ethnic groups, differences regarding the use of radio, Internet, and print media have been uncovered (Albarran and Umphrey 1993, Bickham et al. 2003, Blosser 1988, Delener and Neelankavil 1990, La Ferle and Lee 2005). For instance, Delener and Neelankavil (1990) examined media preferences among Hispanic and Asian populations. Although they found similarities in that the participants tended to use the major forms of broadcast media for entertainment or news, both groups indicated that they preferred television more than any other medium. In regard to differences between the groups, they found that Latinos (69.7 percent) were more likely to use radio for entertainment compared to Asians (56.7 percent), and that Asians were more likely to use newspapers as information sources (58 percent) compared to Latinos (54 percent).

In another study, La Ferle and Lee (2005) examined English language media use patterns among Anglo Americans, African Americans, and Hispanic Americans. They discovered that all of the groups spent the most time with the major forms of broadcast media and the least time with print media (i.e., least amount of time was spent reading newspapers). Significant differences were found among the groups, in that African Americans (51 percent) reported watching television more hours (3 or more) during a typical weekday compared to Anglo Americans (39.2 percent) and Hispanic Americans (32.4 percent). The results also indicated that African Americans (47.1 percent) listened to the radio more hours (3 or more) during a typical weekday compared to Hispanic Americans (38.5 percent) and Anglo Americans (37.2 percent).

A recent study by Crano et al. (2005) investigated media use patterns among a sample of African American, White, Asian, and Latino residents of Los Angeles. The findings from their study mimic the results of previous research. Specifically, the results indicated that among the participants in that study, the most hours per week were spent watching television. African-Americans reported the greatest number of hours of television watching (20 hours) and Latino respondents reported the greatest number of hours listening to the radio (14.5 hours) compared to the other ethnic/racial groups in the study. There were no significant differences between ethnic groups regarding time spent reading magazines and newspapers. Their results also illustrated that the types of radio stations and print media differed

with each ethnic group; in particular African American and Latino respondents indicated a preference for ethnically based media (i.e., media directed toward a specific ethnic group that is typically written or broadcast in a language native to the group or targeted to a specific cultural base associated with an ethnic group) over mainstream media (such as English language media or media targeted to a White majority).

Other studies have found that various ethnic groups, such as Hispanic, African American, Asian American, Arab American, and Native American groups, prefer ethnically based media (Hsu 2002, La Ferle and Lee 2005, Los Angeles Sentinel 2005, Vicuna 2005, Winter et al. 2004). For instance, a study conducted by the New California Media (2005) surveyed 1,895 Hispanic, African American, Asian American, Arab American, and Native American adults in the United States. The results indicated that 45 percent of all African American, Hispanic, Asian American, American Indian, and Arab American adults prefer ethnic television, radio, or newspapers in comparison to their mainstream media sources. These results suggest that 29 million adults (45 percent of the 64 million ethnic adults studied), or 13 percent of the entire adult population of the United States, prefer ethnic media to mainstream television, radio, or newspapers. These variations in use of media ethnic groups' documented preference for ethnically based media have been linked to differences in perceived credibility of various outlets (Beaudoin and Thorson 2005), levels of trust in various media sources (Sizemore and Milner 2004), and maintenance of culture (Dahan and Sheffer 2001, Jeffres 2000, Johnson 2000). The results of the New California Media study indicate that advertisers should not only focus on the most common form of media being used (i.e., television, radio, newspaper) but also consider the preferred type of media (i.e., ethnically based vs. mainstream media) of the targeted population.

It is evident that differences in media use among various ethnic groups exist. Messages conveyed through the media must take these differences into consideration to reach ethnically diverse audiences successfully (Campanelli 1991, Marin 1994). La Ferle and Lee (2005) argued that a clear understanding of media use patterns associated with ethnic groups will "help make better media decisions and ensure the effective communication of advertising messages" (p. 141). This is particularly important in social marketing contexts, in which advertising is used to communicate programs and public services that are offered to all ethnicities, such as messages that the Forest Service might want to promote to publics.

## Sources of Information Relied Upon and Trusted

Another consideration in selection of a communication route is identifying the information sources most relied upon and most trusted. In other words, aside from general media use, we need to understand sources that publics tell us that they use to gather information about outdoor recreation opportunities, as well as which sources they trust the most. Sources of information that recreationists rely upon have also been shown to differ by ethnic and racial group. In a number of studies, family and/or friends have been reported as recreationists' primary sources of information about recreation opportunities and recreation settings (Chavez et al. 1993, Chavez et al. 1994, Crano et al. 2005, Parker and Winter 1998, Simcox and Hodgson 1993). However, Latinos typically rely more on family and friends as their primary information source than do other ethnic/racial groups.

For instance, Crano et al. (2005) examined the most trusted source individuals, who had varying ethnic/racial backgrounds, listed for outdoor recreational information. The results indicated that sources differed greatly by ethnic/racial group. For example, African Americans were more likely than other groups to rely on church as a source of information. In the same study, respondents were asked which source of information they trusted the most. The greatest proportion of respondents chose the Internet and computers as their most trusted source. The second most-trusted source among all groups except Whites was family and friends (among Whites the second most-trusted source was newspapers).

Trust in the Internet as reported by Crano et al. (2005) corresponds with a national survey on Internet users that revealed the Internet as an important information source when compared to other forms of media (Lebo 2004). However, some caution is in order, as research has shown a lesser likelihood among Latinos and African Americans to have access to, and consequently to use the Internet (Spooner 2003). Effects of restricted access among groups of color are compounded by the lack of ethnically targeted Web portals and targeted advertising (Singh et al. 2003).

Although use of the Internet may be increasing, primary uses might not include gathering of outdoor recreation information. Spooner (2003) found that only a small portion of the use of the Internet is for travel information purposes. Primary use was related to e-mail. Similar considerations for television viewing purposes, and exposure to different programming should be taken into account (i.e., Busselle and Crandall 2002). Use of various media outlets should be considered along with the types of information individuals seek from that media form. In addition, the amount of attention paid to information types from the various sources would be important to know (Shah et al. 2001).

---

**Use of ethnic media seems paramount in efforts to reach diverse publics. Since ethnically based sources are often judged to be more credible and are attended to more than other outlets among selected communities of color, they represent a valuable resource for information dissemination.**

## Suggestions for Outreach

Lessons for outreach efforts of natural resource agencies are numerous. Among them is the importance of investing in varied media outlets, while recognizing that purpose of use of a particular type of media by various ethnic groups may determine the true effectiveness of any one outlet more than simple exposure levels. Further, use of ethnic media seems paramount in efforts to reach diverse publics. Since ethnically based sources are often judged to be more credible and are attended to more than other outlets among selected communities of color, they represent a valuable resource for information dissemination. Ethnic media would extend to Internet offerings as well as more traditional print and broadcast media. Agencies may need to develop particular Web pages that are targeted at an ethnically diverse audience.

The role of media in outdoor recreation decisionmaking for communities of color through selection of a destination is one area where additional research would be of value. Although overall influence of media may be less than family and friends, ethnic media may prove a fruitful outlet. This information would be helpful to natural resource management agencies. In addition, ways to capitalize on community and social networks as information sources might be helpful. The work by Reed et al. (2003) examining the use of churches as a source of engagement of the African American community serves as an example of how this might be done. Recognition of the diversity within racial/ethnic groups also remains an important area of inquiry, given the documented heterogeneity within ethnic/racial groups (see, for example, Kakai et al. 2003, Winter et al. 2004). It is important to understand cultural differences in information-seeking behaviors to effectively reach and serve a diverse public (Kakai et al. 2003).

## Literature Cited

- Albarran, A.B.; Umphrey, D. 1993.** An examination of television motivations and program preferences by Hispanics, Blacks, and Whites. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*. 37: 95–103.
- Association of Hispanic Advertising Agencies. 2002.** Missed opportunities: vast corporate understanding in the U.S. Hispanic Market. <http://www.ahaa.org/research/research.htm>. (January 5, 2007).
- Beaudoin, C.E.; Thorson, E. 2005.** Credibility perceptions of news coverage of ethnic groups: the predictive roles of race and news use. *The Howard Journal of Communications*. 16: 33–48.

- Bickham, D.S.; Vandewater, E.A.; Huston, A.C.; Lee, J.H.; Caplovitz, A.G.; Wright, J.C. 2003.** Predictors of children's electronic media use: an examination of three ethnic groups. *Media Psychology*. 5: 107–137.
- Blosser, B.J. 1988.** Ethnic differences in children's media use. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*. 32: 453–470.
- Busselle, R.; Crandall, H. 2002.** Television viewing and perceptions about race differences in socioeconomic status. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*. 46(2): 265–282.
- Campanelli, M. 1991.** The African American market: community, growth, and change. *Sales and Marketing*. 143: 75–81.
- Chavez, D.J.; Winter, P.L.; Mainieri, T. 1993.** Recreation day use series—Report 2. Angeles National Forest. Unpublished report. On file with: USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station, Wildland Recreation and Urban Cultures research unit, 4955 Canyon Crest Drive, Riverside, CA 92507.
- Chavez, D.J.; Winter, P.L.; Mainieri, T. 1994.** Recreation day use series—Report 3. Los Padres National Forest. Unpublished report. On file with: USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station, Wildland Recreation and Urban Cultures research unit, 4955 Canyon Crest Drive, Riverside, CA 92507.
- Cordell, K.; Betz, C.; Green, G.; Fly, M.; Stephens, B.; Super, G.; Thompson, F. 2005.** Participation in outdoor recreation activities: Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islanders. *Recreation Statistics Update*. Update report No. 7. [www.srs.fs.usda.gov/trends/RECUPDATES/RecStatUpdate7.pdf](http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/trends/RECUPDATES/RecStatUpdate7.pdf). (March 13, 2007).
- Cordell, K.; Green, G.; Betz, C.; Fly, M.; Stephens, B.; Super, G.; Thompson, F. 2004.** Hispanic participation in land-based outdoor recreation activities. *Recreation Statistics Update*. Update report No. 4. [www.srs.fs.usda.gov/trends/RECUPDATES/RecStatUpdate4.pdf](http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/trends/RECUPDATES/RecStatUpdate4.pdf). (March 13, 2007).
- Crano, W.; Quist, R.; Winter, P.L. 2005.** Getting the Forest Service's message out to the people: a study of information channels among diverse publics in the Los Angeles basin. Unpublished report. On file with: USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station, Wildland Recreation and Urban Cultures Research Unit, 4955 Canyon Crest Drive, Riverside, CA 92507.
- Dahan, M.; Sheffer, G. 2001.** Ethnic groups and distance shrinking communication technologies. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*. 7(1): 85–107.

- Delener, N.; Neelankavil, J.P. 1990.** Informational sources and media usage: a comparison between Asian and Hispanic subcultures. *Journal of Advertising Research*. 30: 45–52.
- Floyd, M. 1999.** Race, ethnicity, and use of the National Park System. *Social Science Research Review*. 1(2): Spring/Summer.
- Hsu, H. 2002.** Ethnic media grows up: will increasing mainstream attention alter the ethnic media landscape? *Colorlines*. 5: 7.
- Jeffres, L.W. 2000.** Ethnicity and ethnic media use: a panel study. *Communication Research*. 27(4): 496–535.
- Johnson, M.S. 2000.** How ethnic are U.S. ethnic media: the case of Latina magazines. *Communication and Society*. 3(2&3): 229–248.
- Kakai, H.; Maskarinec, G.; Shumay, D.M.; Tatsumara, Y.; Tasaki, K. 2003.** Ethnic differences in choices of health information by cancer patients using complementary and alternative medicine: an exploratory study with correspondence analysis. *Social Science Medicine*. 56(4): 851–862.
- La Ferle, C.; Lee, W. 2005.** Can English language media connect with ethnic audiences? Ethnic minorities' media use and representation perceptions. *Journal of Advertising Research*. 45: 140–153.
- Lebo, H. 2004.** The digital future report. Surveying the digital future, year four. USC Annenberg School Center for the Digital Future, accessed at <http://www.digitalcenter.org>. (March 14, 2005).
- Lee, J.; Scott, D.; Floyd, M.F. 2001.** Structural inequalities in outdoor recreation participation: a multiple hierarchy stratification process. *Journal of Leisure Research*. 33(4): 427–449.
- Los Angeles Sentinel. 2005.** Ethnic population prefers ethnic media; new poll spotlights ethnic media as the “giant hiding in plain sight,” findings considered a “call to action” for communicators. June 16–June 22; A4.
- Marin, G. 1994.** Self-reported awareness of the presence of product warning messages and signs by Hispanics in San Francisco. *Public Health Reports*. 109: 275–283.
- Mowen, A.J.; Payne, L.L.; Scott, D. 2005.** Change and stability in park visitation constraints revisited. *Leisure Sciences*. 27: 191–204.

- New California Media. 2005.** Ethnic media in America: the giant hidden in plain sight. [http://news.ncmonline.com/news/view\\_article.html?article\\_id=0443821787ac0210cbecebe8b1f576a3](http://news.ncmonline.com/news/view_article.html?article_id=0443821787ac0210cbecebe8b1f576a3). (February 2, 2007).
- Outdoor Industry Association 2004.** Outdoor recreation participation study for the United States. Executive summary. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. <http://www.outdoorindustry.org>. (January 7, 2005).
- Parker, J.D.; Winter, P.L. 1998.** A case study of communication with Anglo and Hispanic wilderness visitors. *Journal of Interpretation Research*. 3(1): 55–59.
- Price, M. 2005.** Some analysts expect surge in corporate spending on black-targeted advertising. *Knight-Ridder Tribune Business News*, January 17.
- Reed, P.S.; Foley, K.L.; Hatch, J.; Mutran, E.J. 2003.** Recruitment of older African Americans for survey research: a process evaluation of the community and church-based strategy in the Durham Elders Project. *The Gerontologist*. 43: 52–61.
- Scott, D.; Herrera, S.L.; Hunt, K.S. 2004.** Constraints to outdoor recreation among ethnic and racial groups. In: Tierney, P.T.; Chavez, D.J., tech. coords. *Proceedings of the 4<sup>th</sup> social aspects and recreation research symposium*; San Francisco, CA: San Francisco State University: 17–20.
- Shah, D.V.; McLeod, J.M.; Yoon, S-H. 2001.** Communication, context, and community: an exploration of print, broadcast, and Internet influences. *Communication Research*. 28(4): 464–506.
- Simcox, D.E.; Hodgson, R.W. 1993.** Strategies in intercultural communication for natural resource agencies. In: Ewert, A.W.; Chavez, D.J.; Magill, A.W., eds. *Culture, conflict, and communication in the wildland urban interface*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press: 123–134.
- Singh, N.; Kwon, I.-W.; Pereira, A. 2003.** Cross-cultural consumer socialization: an exploratory study of socialization influences across three ethnic groups. *Psychology and Marketing*. 20(10): 867–881.
- Sizemore, D.S.; Milner, W.T. 2004.** Hispanic media use and perceptions of discrimination: reconsidering ethnicity, politics, and socioeconomics. *The Sociological Quarterly*. 45(4): 765–784.
- Spooner, T. 2003.** Internet use by region in the United States. *Pew Internet & American Life Project*. <http://www.pewinternet.org>. (December 8, 2005).

**Tierney, P.T.; Dahl, R.F.; Chavez, D.J. 1998.** Cultural diversity of Los Angeles County residents using undeveloped natural areas. Res. Pap. PSW-RP-236. Albany, CA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station. 76 p.

**U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau [U.S. Census Bureau]. 2001.** Profiles of general demographic characteristics. <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/dpl/2kh00.pdf>. (February 11, 2007).

**Vicuna, L. 2005.** Minority media steps out of the shadows. Afro-American Red Star, July 16–July 22; A4.

**Winter, P.L.; Jeong, W.C.; Godbey, G.C. 2004.** Outdoor recreation among Asian Americans: a case study of San Francisco Bay Area residents. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*. 22(3): 114–136.