

# Public Purpose Recreation Marketing: A Focus on the Relationships Between the Public and Public Lands.

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**ABSTRACT:** Marketing has long had a place in the planning and management of public sector recreation. In particular, the use of market segmentation has allowed leisure providers to better understand their clients' needs and to tailor their services to the diversity of those needs. However, the use of marketing approaches is not without controversy and is sometimes perceived to be at odds with the public service or stewardship mandates often associated with recreation management. We suggest that wholesale adoption of basic marketing principles (such as the notion of giving people exactly what they want at a great price) may be inappropriate. An alternative form, relational marketing, may be better suited to public purpose organizations.

Relational marketing focuses on the development or fostering of a relationship between the public and the public agency. Thus, relational marketing focuses on building confidence in the agency's ability to guard the short- and long-term interests of the public. For example, for land management agencies, these objectives are embedded in legislative and policy mandates to provide outstanding opportunities for recreation, while at the same time protecting and enhancing the environment. Relational marketing seems better suited to these objectives compared with transactional marketing, which is more dominant in private sector businesses.

Whereas transactional marketing focuses on fostering current and continuing purchases of goods and services, relational marketing extends beyond the direct economic exchange. In the public recreation settings, the public is considered more than a current or potential customer, they are also considered an owner or shareholder of the agency. Thus, repeat purchases or customer satisfaction are not sufficient measures of success for organizations with a public service mandate. Instead, relational marketing considers the perceptions that the many different groups of the public (e.g. participants and non-participants, supporters and non-supporters) have of the agency and its actions.

The research reported here conceptualizes the relationship between the public and the agency into three dimensions: social trust (the degree to which individuals perceive the agency to share their views, goals, and values); commitment (the investment, attachment, and longevity of the relationship to the agency); and social responsibility (which includes attitudes towards the goals or public purposes of the agency). A market

segmentation based on these dimensions yielded distinct subpopulations of the general public.

The challenge for public agencies, such as the Forest Service, is to be responsive to the different relationships the public has with the agency. Collaborative planning efforts must acknowledge and incorporate knowledge of these differences in social trust, commitment, and social responsibility. Any public action or policy change should consider how it potentially affects the varying public's relationship with the agency and the services it provides. Managers must demonstrate stewardship, care, responsiveness, and continuing service to today's public and future generations. Any interaction with the public (e.g., marketing) should focus on the intended public purpose which guides the agency.

**KEYWORDS:** segmentation, social responsibility, non-economic criteria, public sector, recreation fees

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## Introduction

The importance of marketing, and in particular the use of market segmentation (a theoretical cornerstone of marketing) has been well discussed in the context of park and recreation management (e.g. Andereck & Caldwell, 1994; Crompton & Lamb, 1986; Johnson Tew, Havitz & McCarville, 1999; Knopf, 1990; Toy, Rager & Guadagnolo, 1989). It has been a successful technique for public and non-profit organizations to identify and accommodate the diversity of needs of the public. Marketing and market segmentation have allowed organizations to efficiently allocate resources, programs, and services to particular segments of the public, forging "a relationship between what they have to offer and the particular people who might want it" (Knopf, 1990, p. 51). In doing so, the agency appears responsive to a range of interests and needs of the public. Market analysis and survey research shifts the attention of managers from concerns with budgets, risk management, and controlling of visitors toward recognizing and considering how to better serve the changing needs and priorities of the public.

However, several authors have sounded a note of caution at the wholesale adoption of marketing terminology and approach. Bright (2000) described how the notion of marketing conjures images of advertising and the selling of products at maximal profit, and Knopf (1990) suggests that, "For many, marketing our public lands is tantamount to selling America's

soul” (p. 57). Both authors urge for recreation managers a marketing emphasis less on selling and more on the benefits that accrue to individuals and society. Havitz (2000) similarly argued that “pure marketing—simply giving people exactly what they want—is a hopelessly inadequate model in public sector contexts because it ignores possible negative consequences to both the individual in question and to long term community and social interests” (p. 46).

The purpose of this paper is to suggest an alternative framework, relational marketing, for managers of public recreation areas. In presenting relational marketing, we believe that the dimensions used to segment the public better reflect the missions and objectives of a public agency, as called for by Andereck and Caldwell (1994). A case study from the Oregon and Washington region of the USDA Forest Service is presented. This project was part of a national experiment to test the application of marketing principles to programs and program development by this public land management agency (Absher, McCollum & Bowker, 1999). While this experiment is ongoing, a substantial amount of learning has occurred as a team of scientists, planners, managers and marketing experts proceed through the steps of marketing.

Relational marketing, as applied to public recreation management, highlights the importance of the relationship between the public and the agency, in distinct contrast to an emphasis on the selling and purchase of recreation goods and services. As a guide to planning and managing park and recreation resources, we believe relational marketing better serves the public (and the agency) than traditional, transactive marketing approaches.

#### Relational Marketing

In the past, marketing has largely focused on methods to generate revenue-producing transactions between customers and providers of products or services. For most of the history of marketing, creating or increasing customer satisfaction with this transaction has been the primary emphasis (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Morgan & Hunt, 1994) with repeat purchases being the primary measure of success. But Webster (1992) and Kotler (1995), for example, have described a fundamental shift toward relationship marketing that acknowledges the importance of relationships to long-term business success. Morgan and Hunt (1994) discussed the importance of paying attention to all relationships that a business has, including those with suppliers, buyers, and both lateral and internal partnerships. For the purposes of marketing in the public sector, and particularly for providing guidance for market segmentation, a focus on relationships between the managing agency and the public is a feasible and appropriate conceptual framework to guide data collection and other aspects of marketing and policy development.

A discrete transaction with a customer is said to have a distinct beginning, short duration, and sharp ending (Dwyer, Schurr & Oh, 1987). A relational exchange, on the other hand, builds from previous agreements, is longer in duration, and reflects an ongoing process. When providing

services to the public through development of programs on public lands, the more appropriate view of “customer service” would likely be developing or fostering a relationship between members of the public and the places that have been established on their behalf as public lands. We suggest that the role of the public land management agency is as stewards of that relationship, and that relationship should be the focus of any marketing effort undertaken by the public agency.

Several definitions of relational marketing exist (see Berry, 1983; Berry & Parasuraman, 1991; Doyle & Roth, 1992; Jackson, 1985; Paul, 1988) across relations with different types of groups (suppliers, buyers, partners, etc.). Most recently, Morgan and Hunt (1994) defined relational marketing as “all marketing activities directed toward establishing, developing, and maintaining successful relational exchanges” (p. 22). They emphasized theoretical and empirical research on commitment and trust as the primary influences on successful relational marketing. Support for public agency actions also depends on confidence in efforts that recognize responsibility to current and future generations and efforts to meet the public purpose (legislation or policy mandates) as opposed to the demands of vested interests.

Trust. Anderson and Narus (1991) acknowledged that not all customers desire the same relationship with a producer of goods or services. They suggest that an organization may need to pursue both transactional and relational marketing simultaneously, and that customers may exist on a continuum of transactional to collaborative exchanges. In the public sector, however, members of the public are, by definition, involved in a collaborative relationship with the stewardship agency taking responsibility for implementation of public policy. While we are suggesting that a collaborative relationship exists for all people, we acknowledge that the level of commitment or involvement with the services provided by an agency and the level of trust instilled among members of the public may vary substantially. Relational marketing suggests that a focus on understanding variation in commitment and trust will be paramount in developing and implementing public policy to meet the mandates or purpose of public lands (Garbarino & Johnson 1999; Moorman, Deshpande & Zaltman, 1993; Morgan & Hunt 1994).

Putnam (2000) made a convincing case for the importance of social trust in American society. Our lives are more productive and our society is more efficient when the social ties and networks that bind communities together are strong. Trustworthiness is the lubricant that makes social life work and is a foundation for civic engagement. As Putnam suggested, “Nowhere is the need to restore connectedness, trust, and civic engagement clearer than in the now empty public forums of democracy” (p. 412). He charges America’s public agencies with a duty to operate in ways that foster participation in public life, particularly through structures and policies that build trust, connectedness, and investment in social capital.

Trust is also widely viewed as an essential ingredient for successful marketing relationships (Berry 1995; Dwyer et al., 1987). Trust is indicated

by a willingness to rely on an exchange partner. While much research has investigated factors that influence trust in a single salesperson, some recent marketing research has specifically examined a customer's trust in the organization providing the product or service to the consumer (Garbarino & Johnson 1999). In the mid 1990s, Moorman, Deshpande and Zaltman (1993) reported that very little research had attempted to understand the factors that affect trust in marketing relationships. Emphasis has been primarily on measuring associated factors that may influence trust, such as perceptions of sincerity, effort in establishing a relationship, goal congruence, and expectations for cooperation.

Until very recently, studies of trust in organizations or institutions were virtually unknown (Earle & Cvetkovich, 1995). Two dominant views of trust for organizations have emerged. The more traditional view is that trust is based on confidence in competence, objectivity, fairness, consistency or predictability and caring, or the perception of good will (Earle & Cvetkovich, 1995). In recognition that this traditional view requires a generally unattainable level of knowledge of complex social systems, Earle and Cvetkovich (1995) suggested an alternative view. In that view, people judge the similarity of values they hold to those expressed by an organization. Trust is then quantified in terms of perceptions of shared values, direction, goals, views, actions and thoughts (Winter, Palucki, & Burkhardt, 1999).

**Commitment.** Another strong influence on relationships between providers and customers is level of commitment, defined by Gundlach, Achrol, and Mentzer (1995) as having three components: 1) an instrumental component or investment, 2) an attitudinal component or psychological attachment, and 3) a temporal dimension indicating that the relationship exists over time. A relationship commitment requires that an exchange partner believe an ongoing relationship with another is so important as to warrant maximum efforts at maintaining it (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Cook and Emerson (1978) characterized commitment as a central factor in distinguishing social from economic exchange. Even the concept of brand loyalty, which was initially thought to be indicated only by repeat purchases, is now more likely to be defined as commitment to a particular brand, and is sometimes sought by establishing perceived commonality in values between the purchaser and the providing organization (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

**Social responsibility.** Even in corporate America, the concept of social responsibility can take on a new emphasis in development of products and in research on customer attitudes (Drumwright 1994). The adoption of non-economic criteria in customer decision making (criteria other than price, or relationship between price and quality) has led to greater understanding of how some purchase decisions pose social dilemmas and prompt moral reasoning (Drumwright 1994). Samli (1992) also describes social responsibility in the private sector and those who want to make a profit but who also care. In the public sector, it is mandated that the public agency care about the stakeholders and the public purpose of the places and resources

it manages. Gaski's (1985) position that marketing with social responsibility was undemocratic certainly did not adequately consider the growing energy aimed at marketing in the public sector at the time. Indeed, Smith (1994) and Smith and Alcorn (1991) heralded a tendency toward acknowledgement of social responsibility in marketing as marketing's greatest contribution to society. However, Crompton (1987) pointed out, in describing the cause-related marketing of American Express, that social responsibility may be just a by-product of creating a profitable relationship between the brand and wholesalers, employees, and customers. While there are some questions about the motives for businesses that adopt an element of social responsibility in their marketing strategies, there should be no doubt that in the public sector social responsibility is a mandate in the delivery of services and carrying out of the legislation and policy that guide a public agency.

#### Public Purpose Marketing

The use of marketing principles by public recreation land management agencies poses both a threat and a promise to the people who depend on them for pleasurable outdoor experiences. The most serious threat is from a focus on those experiences as a transaction between the agency and the visitor, and the temptation to focus too much on measures of on-site satisfaction and repeat visitation as an indicator of success in meeting the public purpose of those places. Although it has been previously suggested that "... the goal of government ... service agencies is to provide satisfaction to their client groups, which is exactly the same goal pursued by private sector organizations" (Crompton & Lamb, 1984, p. 37), we suggest that marketing focused on a simple transaction with the public as a customer is too narrow. Instead, the promise entails a positive focus on the purpose of land management agencies that have been assigned the relatively weighty responsibility of representing the values of society in making policy decisions. Focus on the relationship between the public and those public recreation land management agencies, with emphasis on trust, commitment and social responsibility should be a guiding principle when employing marketing principles in the public sector.

In 1998, the USDA Forest Service convened a national team of scientists, managers and planners to test the application of principles of marketing to enhance management of current programs of the agency. The team selected the relatively new policy of applying charges to access many previously free recreation sites as a case study. At that time, legislation to allow testing of recreation fees had influenced public perceptions of the Forest Service with the risk of creating hostility between the agency and various segments of the public (Watson & Herath, 1999). The team agreed that a marketing approach would be successful in Forest Service applications if it: 1) helped address the public's needs and expectations, 2) yielded additional resources (financial, volunteer labor, donated supplies, etc.), 3) facilitated achievement of higher standards of quality, 4) enhanced efficiency, 5) supported the agency's mandated public purpose of stewardship, and 6) maintained or increased public support.

This paper focuses on the application of marketing, in particular market segmentation, for public agencies. Originally recognized in the 1950s, market segmentation has quickly grown from an academic concept into a commonly used planning strategy. Segmentation has commonly been defined as the process of partitioning markets into segments of potential customers with similar characteristics who are likely to exhibit similar attitudes and behaviors (Weinstein, 1987). Kotler (2000) described the many ways market segments can be defined, including separation by geographic, demographic, psychographic and behavioral attributes. Andereck and Caldwell (1994), for example, suggested the importance of motive- or benefit-based segmentation for marketing of park and recreation agencies. Multi-attribute segmentation is also possible, combining several variables and types of variables in an effort to identify more meaningful target groups.

Weinstein (1987) suggested that it is impossible to pursue every market opportunity and thus recommended strategic choices in the market by selecting one or more groups of consumers as targets for any marketing activity. We assert that in the public sector, due to our recognized collaborative relationship with all members of the public, segmentation can not be used as a method for strategically ignoring any group, but instead as a method to allow more targeted communications with the diversity of the population. We are suggesting that a meaningful approach to segmenting the public for public purpose marketing should be based on descriptors of the relationships people have with public agency lands and policies. For these segments to be meaningful, we expect them to be defined by variation in commitment, trust, attitudes toward social responsibility and support for accomplishing the public purpose of the agency. Second, meaningful segments should demonstrate differences in basic demographic characteristics and orientations toward the purpose of the services or lands involved.

#### Method

A region-wide revision in the existing recreation fee program in the Pacific Northwest Region of the Forest Service provided an opportunity to test application of the marketing approach to public land management.

#### Study Population and Sampling Methods

The study population was defined as all adult residents of Oregon and Washington who live in a household with a functional telephone. This population should not be confused with all residents of Washington and Oregon, since it excludes households without working telephones, the institutional population, and those absent from the state during the survey period.<sup>1</sup> The telephone survey was administered during the period of November 1999 and January 2000 by the University of Montana's Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER) using a Random-Digit Dial (RDD) process. A Kish table method was used to randomly select respondents within households (Kish, 1949). This sampling method yielded

1,676 completed telephone questionnaires from 3,199 eligible numbers, a total response rate of 52.4 percent. Table 1 details the final sampling resolution.

**Table 1**  
**Survey sample resolution of telephone numbers selected by RDD process**

<b>Status</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean number of attempts</b>
Regular interviews	1,534	4.6
Completed Spanish language interview	38	4.7
Refusal conversions	104	4.9
Refusals	1,293	10.9
Non-contacted eligible numbers	228	6.7
Non-working numbers	1,397	1.6
Non-eligible numbers	774	2.3
Faxes	289	3.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,657</b>	

#### Telephone Questionnaire Development

As part of a pre-testing effort, BBER conducted cognitive interviews using verbal protocols or “thinkalouds” with several individuals. The purpose of these interviews was to investigate respondents’ thought processes when answering the survey and to explore potential problems with the survey questions (Sudman, Bradburn & Schwartz, 1996). After refinement of the survey based on the results of the cognitive interviews, trained telephone interviewers conducted a test of the survey with 30 respondents to examine question wording, question order, and technical implementation of the survey. The survey was revised based on that pretest.

#### Measurement of Segmenting Variables

The market segmentation analysis was based on a set of six variables that measured relationships to the agency and were constructed using a variety of questions worded to match the specific case study context of recreation fees on lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service. These included: (1) Social Trust, assessed through five, five-point scale items measuring perceived shared values, direction, goals, views, actions and thoughts with the Forest



Service; (2) Commitment, consisting of three sub-dimensions: temporal commitment (measured by the respondents' recreation use history both on and off lands managed by the Forest Service), willingness to invest commitment (as measured by general attitudes toward paying fees to recreate), psychological attachment commitment (assessed through feelings about the potential for privatization of public recreation resources), and (3) Social Responsibility (attitudes of support for funding alternatives that ensure equitable and fair access to recreation opportunities), and public purpose (support of differential fee systems based on impacts to ecological and social conditions of the recreation site). These questions were asked of all telephone interview participants regardless of whether they had recreated on National Forest lands. The specific items comprising each of the relationship variables are shown in Figure 1.

#### Development of Market Segments

In brief, cluster analysis was used to develop market segments from our sample of households in Oregon and Washington using hierarchical and then K-means clustering procedures. A four-cluster solution was chosen, which demonstrated meaningful segments with a good mix of recreation user and nonuser types, as well as different levels of trust in the agency and variation in opinions about fee policies.

More specifically, four market segments were identified with the following multi-step approach. First, missing values were estimated using regression analysis of the other variables of the same general type. Using this method, the estimated responses were distributed around the mean in a pattern approaching normal and with greater degrees of freedom than would be obtained by elimination of cases with missing values (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). The questionnaire items were then factor analyzed to identify underlying dimensions and to form summary scales representing the segmenting variables. Common factor analysis was used, with generalized least squares extraction and interpretation with Equamax rotation.

The first segmenting variable measured social trust toward the Forest Service and utilized an existing scale (Winter et al, 1999). The coefficient alpha reliability of the five questionnaire items was an acceptable 0.93 and analysis indicated that the items should be simply averaged to form a composite agency trust variable. The second variable was a composite measure of temporal commitment, which included the number of recreation trips in the past 12 months to non-National Forest lands in Oregon and Washington, the number of recreation trips in the past 12 months to National Forests in Oregon and Washington, and a four-category recreation type variable derived from whether or not the respondent participated in outdoor recreation in the past 12 months and whether the respondent had ever visited a national forest in Oregon or Washington. These items were standardized, weighted by standardized factor scores (De La Vina, Hollas, Merrifield, & Ford, 1994) and yielded a coefficient alpha of 0.69. The remaining two commitment variables (investment commitment, psycho-

**Figure 1**  
**Relationship marketing segmentation variables and the**  
**questionnaire items used in the context of recreation**  
**fees on National Forests in the Pacific Northwest**

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**Social Trust in the Forest Service <sup>a</sup>**

The USDA Forest Service:

- Shares my values (5) ... Does not share my values (1)
- Is like me (5) ... Is not like me (1)
- Has similar goals to mine (5) ... Has different goals than mine (1)
- Supports my views (5) ... Opposes my views (1)
- Thinks like me (5) ... Does not think like me (1)

**Temporal Commitment**

- During the last 12 months, how many trips have you made to any National Forest in Oregon or Washington?
- During the last 12 months, how many trips have you made for outdoor recreation at non National Forest lands (e.g. National Parks, State Parks, private lands, etc.) in Oregon or Washington?
- Recreation Type was classified based on several screening questions. Recreation type included (1) no recreation, (2) no outdoor recreation, (3) outdoor recreation, not on Forest Service lands, and (4) Recreation on Forest Service lands.

**Willingness To Invest Commitment**

- Do not charge any fees for recreating on National Forest Lands. <sup>b</sup>
- If the National Forest did not have enough money or staff to adequately maintain a particular recreation site, it should ... impose a fee for people to use the site. <sup>b</sup>
- In your opinion, what is the proper balance between taxes and user fees for generating public forest areas operating funds? <sup>c</sup>
- Do not charge fees for the use of National forest lands, except for activities like camping at developed sites. <sup>b</sup>
- If the National Forest did not have enough money or staff to adequately maintain a particular recreation site, it should . . . keep the site open but allow it to deteriorate. <sup>b</sup>

**Psychological Attachment Commitment**

If the National Forest did not have enough money or staff to adequately maintain a particular recreation site, it should ...

- Contract with a private company to manage the site. <sup>b</sup>
- Sell the site to a private company. <sup>b</sup>
- Allow private corporations to sponsor the site. <sup>b</sup>

**Attitudes Toward Social Responsibility**

- Make one day a month free. <sup>b</sup>
- Give senior citizens a discount on recreation fees on National Forests. <sup>b</sup>
- Give people a free pass after they have volunteered and worked at the site. <sup>b</sup>
- Insist that Congress allocate additional funding to the Forest Service. <sup>b</sup>
- Set aside some areas of National Forests where no fees are charged. <sup>b</sup>
- Offer an annual pass that works for all recreation sites. <sup>b</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> Items measured on a five point scale

<sup>b</sup> Measured on a five point scale from Strongly Oppose (1) to Strongly Support (5)

<sup>c</sup> Measured on a five point scale from Entirely from taxes (1) to Entirely from user fees (5)

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logical commitment) and the two variables measuring attitudes of social responsibility (social responsibility, support of public purpose) were developed using a factor analysis of 20 attitudinal items measuring opinions about recreation fees and management practices. Four of the questionnaire items had communalities under 0.20 and were removed. Each of these four variables (shown in Figure 1) was evaluated for scale reliability and additivity and was constructed using factor score coefficient weights.

All six segmenting variables were then standardized to z-scores for comparability and equal status. Hierarchical clustering (to get initial cluster seeds), and iterative cluster analyses (Hair et al., 1998) yielded an appropri-

ate four-segment solution. Finally, a classification and regression tree analysis (SPSS C&RT) was used to validate the market segments and the variables most important in defining them.

## Results

### Segmentation

Segmentation results show distinct groups of respondents based on variables of commitment, trust, and social responsibility. Final segment centers based on cluster analysis of segmenting variables are shown in Table 2. The means for a variety of socio-demographic variables such as age, income level, and household composition were also found to vary significantly across the segments, as shown in Table 3. Further, examination of the importance of various benefits associated with a recent outdoor recreation experience also showed significant differences between the segments. Mean responses for a comprehensive list of benefits are shown in Table 4. The significant differences between the segments are narratively described below.

**Table 2**  
**Final segment centers based on cluster analysis of standardized segmenting variables**

Segmenting variable	Segment			
	1	2	3	4
Social trust	0.28	-0.19	0.32	-0.73
Temporal commitment	-0.98	-0.32	0.69	0.45
Investment commitment <sup>a</sup>	-0.01	-0.38	-0.49	1.29
Psychological commitment	0.39	-0.35	0.15	-0.41
Social responsibility	0.54	-1.20	0.43	-0.20
Support of public purpose	0.16	-0.25	0.58	-0.98

Note: Segmenting variables are standardized with mean of 0 and standard deviation of 1.

<sup>a</sup>Negative values of investment commitment variable represent higher levels of commitment, due to negative wording of questionnaire items.

Segment one (26% of sample)—high agency trust, lowest temporal commitment.

On average, respondents in segment one expressed moderately high levels of trust in the Forest Service. However, these respondents have the lowest levels of temporal commitment to the Forest Service as a provider of recreation. For example, they show a lower proportion of respondents who had participated in outdoor recreation in the last 12 months, and, on average, lower numbers of trips to National Forests in the last 12 months. This first segment expressed average levels of investment commitment, and moderate to high levels of social responsibility (showing stronger attitudes towards public purpose than other low temporally committed respondents) and psychological commitment.

**Table 3**  
**Means and Post-hoc Comparison Groups for Demographic Variables**

Variable	Segment											
	One			Two			Three			Four		
	M	Group <sup>a</sup>	M	Group	M	Group	M	Group	M	Group	M	Group
Age	.47	b	.48	b	.40	a	.42	a				
Gender <sup>b</sup>	.57	c	.52	bc	.46	b	.36	a				
Household Size	2.4	a	2.6	b	2.7	b	2.6	b				
No. Children (< 6yrs.)	.17	a	.14	a	.16	a	.20	a				
No. Children (6 – 18 yrs.)	.47	a	.67	a	.64	a	.64	a				
Household Income <sup>c</sup>	3.65	a	4.13	b	4.34	b	4.15	b				
Education Level <sup>d</sup>	2.8	a	3.1	b	3.1	b	2.9	ab				
Urban / Rural Residence <sup>e</sup>	.58	b	.61	b	.59	b	.47	a				
White <sup>f</sup>	.79	a	.86	b	.93	c	.86	ab				
African American <sup>f</sup>	.07	a	.05	a	.04	a	.03	a				
Asian American <sup>f</sup>	.06	b	.04	ab	.02	a	.04	ab				
Hispanic <sup>f</sup>	.08	b	.05	ab	.04	a	.08	ab				

**Note.**

<sup>a</sup>Taking each variable separately, a common letter indicates clusters did not have significantly different means.

<sup>b</sup>0.00 = 100% male, 0.50 = 50% male, 1.00 = 100% female.

<sup>c</sup>1 = < \$10,000, 2 = \$10,000 - \$19,999, 3 = \$20,000 - \$29,999, 4 = \$30,000 - \$49,999, 5 = \$50,000 - \$74,999, 6 = \$75,000 - \$99,999, 7 = > \$100,000.

<sup>d</sup>1 = Less than High School completed, 2 = High School graduate, 3 = Some post High School, 4 = Bachelors degree, 5 = Masters degree, 6 = Doctorate, 7 = Professional.

<sup>e</sup>0.00 = 100% rural residences, 0.50 = 50% rural, 1.00 = 100% urban residences.

<sup>f</sup>Proportion of cluster e.g. 0.79 = 79% of cluster.

**Table 4**  
**Means and Post-hoc Comparison Groups for Benefit Factors**

Variable	Segment			
	One M <sup>a</sup> Group <sup>b</sup>	Two M Group	Three M Group	Four M Group
Excitement benefits factor	3.5	3.0	3.4	3.3
Provided a challenge that tested my abilities	b	a	b	b
Provided a sense of adventure				
Increased sense of confidence				
Nature benefits factor	3.6	3.6	3.9	3.7
Greater connection with wilderness	a	a	b	ab
Greater connection with nature				
Being at one with nature				
To experience nature in a pristine setting				
Provided opportunities to view wildlife				
Increased appreciation of the areas cultural history				
Provided an opportunity for solitude				
Self improvement factor	3.6	3.3	3.6	3.5
Improved self-reliance	ab	a	b	ab
Increased self-confidence				
Improved mental health				
Spiritual growth				
Reduced stress				
Improved physical health				
Relationship benefits factor	4.1	3.9	4.1	3.9
Strengthened relationships with my companions	a	a	a	a
Enhanced family relationships				

**Note.**

<sup>a</sup>How important was each of the following benefits to you. Average of mean on items (1 = Not at all important, 5 = Extremely important).

<sup>b</sup>Taking each variable separately, a common letter indicates segments did not have significantly different means.

Further differentiation of segment one is seen by significantly lower income levels than the other three clusters. The first segment shows a high proportion (57%) of women, but with significantly lower household sizes. Those in segment one show average importance ratings for the different benefits of recreation. Lastly, respondents in both segments one and two are older, on average, than those in segments three and four.

Segment two (21% of sample)—low agency trust, low temporal commitment, low social responsibility.

People in segment two also show low levels of participation in outdoor recreation on National Forests of Oregon and Washington. However, unlike segment one, these folks tend to have lower levels of trust in the Forest Service. Segment two can also be differentiated by their tendency to have very low feelings of social responsibility, as specifically expressed by their lack of support for alternative funding mechanisms for the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities.

As with segment one, the respondents in segment two tend to be older than those in segments three and four. Looking at the benefits sought on their last outdoor recreation trip, respondents in segment two rate excitement benefits (that is, providing a sense of adventure, providing a challenge that tests abilities, or an increased sense of confidence) at a significantly lower level than the other three segments.

Segment three (34% of sample)—high agency trust, highest temporal commitment, highest willingness to invest commitment.

Respondents in segment three, the largest segment, show the highest levels of trust in the Forest Service and the highest levels of use, with most being visitors to National Forests in Oregon and Washington, and frequent participators in outdoor recreation on both Forest Service managed lands and non-Forest Service lands. On average, this segment shows the greatest willingness to invest in recreation provided by the Forest Service, as demonstrated by their relative support of fees. They also tend to express high to very high levels of social responsibility and concern for public purpose.

Segment three shows a low average age (mean = 40 years old), and the highest proportion of Anglo-Americans (93% of the cluster identify themselves as White, a significantly higher proportion than the other three segments). People in segment three report, on average, higher degrees of motivation for nature-related benefits on their last recreation trip. For example, they record high responses for the importance of a greater connection with nature (mean = 4.2, 1 = not at all important, 5 = extremely important), of experiencing nature in a pristine setting (mean = 4.1), and of opportunities to view wildlife (mean = 3.7).

Segment four (19% of sample)—lowest agency trust, lowest willingness to invest commitment, low levels of social responsibility, higher temporal commitment.

Segment four shows relatively high levels of temporal commitment, with an average of five trips to National Forest destinations in the last 12

months and a total of 10 trips to non-Forest Service recreation destinations. However, this cluster has, on average, the lowest levels of trust in the Forest Service, the most negative attitudes toward fees (reflective of lowest levels of investment commitment), and low levels of support for differential fee systems (showing low levels of social responsibility) and for allowing private involvement with recreation site management (illustrating low psychological involvement). Segment four has a significantly higher percentage of men than any other segment (64% men), and more rural residents (47% from rural zip codes). These respondents show few differentiating values for the importance of different recreation benefits.

### Discussion

The use of trust, commitment, social responsibility and support for public purpose as segmenting variables successfully yielded distinct and valid market segments. The analyses also demonstrate the reliability and validity of the segments developed. First, the segments are sufficiently homogeneous within the segments and heterogeneous between the segments (as illustrated by the post-segmenting examination of socio-demographic and benefit motivation variables). The regression tree analysis confirmed the robustness and validity of the segmenting variables. Satisfactory levels of reliability were achieved with the scales developed for segmentation.

The preparation of specific informational messages can be an important application of the market segments developed above. Instead of assuming that one message fits all members of the public, positioning of a specific message to a particular segment allows the organization to tailor its contents and method of communication to its audience. Positioning refers to the distinctive position that the organization or service holds in the public's mind (Kotler, 2000). That is, segmentation and subsequent positioning can establish and strengthen the opinion and awareness that the public has of the management agency and the recreation opportunities it provides. Since those opinions and awareness vary among the public, it is efficient and respectful to more carefully consider who is receiving what messages. Tailoring the interactions of the Forest Service to each of the segments avoids the homogenizing effect of treating all publics alike.

While not illustrated in this paper, positioning statements can be developed in the communication of recreational opportunities provided by the U.S. Forest Service. Kotler (2000) describes five dimensions of a product that may be differentiated for any particular segment for positioning purposes: 1) features of the product, 2) features of the services provided in the delivery of that product, 3) the competence, courtesy, and credibility of the personnel, 4) the channels or outlets used to provide the product, and 5) the identity or image of the organization. A difference is worth incorporating into a message to the extent that it is important and distinctive to the segment to whom it is targeted, and for which the organization has a competitive advantage or opportunity compared to its competitors.

For example, the importance and performance of a range of attributes of Forest Service recreation sites could be evaluated including: degree of solitude or naturalness (product differentiation), the safety and security of the recreation site (services differentiation), friendliness and helpfulness of the Forest Service staff (personnel differentiation), the convenience and accessibility of the recreation site (channel differentiation), and overall image of the U.S. Forest Service. Messages highlighting particular differentiating features of the recreation opportunities could then be developed with direct consideration of each segment's characteristics, interests and desires. Those attributes that are evaluated as important and for which the Forest Service has a competitive advantage or opportunity—not necessarily the same for all segments — should be emphasized in the content of the message. Examining the sociodemographic and other characteristics of each segment will further help managers and marketers fine tune the methods used to communicate with each group. Different styles and formats of messages, media choices, and timing will be most effective for different groups. For example, if any one segment is significantly younger than the others, then distinctly youth-oriented types of communication might be most effective for the particular message.

Using trust, commitment, social responsibility and support for public purpose to develop the market segments can help in the development of messages that foster, not undermine, the relationship between the public and the public recreation manager. That is, the variables that are used to develop the market segments are as important as the content of the statements. Marketing methods should reflect not only the values of the public but also the trust that has been placed with the agency. Public purpose marketing is well suited to help recreation managers be good stewards of the relationship they have with the public.

Looking at each of the segments in turn, there are noticeable differences, and each provides insight into how the Forest Service should communicate with the public in this particular context. The first segment has high levels of trust in the Forest Service, strong attitudes of social responsibility, high degrees of psychological commitment, but low levels of recreation use. This segment might be typified as supportive of the Forest Service and its public purpose, but not active outdoor recreationists. There may be significant constraints limiting recreation participation by members of this segment as suggested by significantly lower income levels, older average age, and higher proportion of women. Raising awareness of, and possibly facilitating access to, the distinct recreation opportunities of the National Forests of Oregon and Washington would be key communication themes for this segment. Highlighting the mandates and expressing the social and environmental contributions of the Forest Service's programs will not only strengthen the support of members of this segment, but also capitalize on their existing positive view of the agency. This group is most likely "primed" and interested in extending their relationship with the



National Forest System, and considers the agency a trustworthy and relevant information source. Expenditures on communicating with this audience are likely to be worthwhile and efficient.

The second segment, in contrast, is typically disengaged with the Forest Service. They express low levels of each of the three types of commitment to the Forest Service as a provider of outdoor recreation, have low trust in the agency, and share few values of public purpose and social responsibility. This segment rarely recreates on National Forest lands. In communicating with this public, the Forest Service should therefore not assume the importance of recreation or the missions of the agency. Instead, perhaps, a focus should include description of the roles that Forest Service recreation plays in individual and community lives. This would be an initial step in building common ground and a relationship between the organization and the agency.

The largest of the segments is the third one, which represents the 'fans' of the agency. These folks have the highest levels of trust in the Forest Service, are frequent visitors, and are expressive of high levels of investment commitment and social responsibility. Since members of this segment are significantly more interested in nature-related benefits and tend to be younger than the other segments, messages and media outlets favored by youth would be an appropriate venue to build on this segment's already strong commitment and relationship to the agency. Reinforcing and extending the outlets of their engagement with the agency and with nature, such as promoting volunteer opportunities in wilderness areas, should be directly linked to the social purposes of the Forest Service.

The last segment, dominated by men and rural residents, are frequent visitors to Forest Service sites but show low levels of psychological and investment commitment and of social responsibility. Thus, the Forest Service should not assume all visitors to the National Forests are supportive of the public purpose of the Forest Service, nor of the agency itself. For example, appealing to the environmental protection mission in messages designed to encourage 'Leave No Trace' (LNT) practices may not be effective with visitors from this segment. Instead, messages should build on the strong temporal commitment (high use levels) that this group shows and instead emphasize the beneficial impacts of LNT practices upon the quality of recreation opportunities available to them.

## Conclusion

It is worth highlighting how public purpose marketing for recreation emphasizes an appropriate relationship with the public. First, it should be noted that all publics are sampled in these procedures and not just the currently recreating public. The management of recreation lands serves many off-site and symbolic values in addition to the benefits gained by visitors. Managers also have obligations to recognize and preserve both bequest and option values. That is, not only should marketing efforts be tailored and communicated to all constituencies, but they should also be

reflective of the opinions of both supportive and non-supportive publics, of recreating and non-recreating publics, and of current and future generations.

Furthermore, public purpose marketing treats the public more like owners and stakeholders than as clients and customers. In emphasizing more the long-term relationship between the public and the recreation manager, and less the provision of individual recreation experience opportunities, managers avoid the dangers of building inappropriate expectations. Public land management agencies probably cannot, and should not, compete with private entrepreneurs; the use of marketing terminology certainly runs the risk of triggering that association. Instead, public purpose marketing intrinsically endorses notions of duty, service and a continuing presence. The maintenance of a public constituency for public recreation management will require an approach to marketing that does not send messages (neither literal nor implied) that confuse the relationship between the public and the agency. The more the agency looks and sounds like a private operator, the more the agency will be expected to compete with the approaches and standards of companies such as Disney. However, Disney's approach to designing and prescribing the visitor experience emphasizes artificial notions of harmony, cleanliness, safety, and the romantically familiar (Borrie, 1999), and these may be less appropriate objectives for public recreation resources.

In addition, public purpose marketing endorses an approach to assessing and monitoring the quality of the recreation experience that focuses less on immediate satisfaction and more on the long-term relationship to the place. Success is defined more by the development or fostering of the relationship and less by the immediate satisfaction of the customer. This reflects a trend in recreation research away from a multi-attribute, commodity view and towards a more meanings-based view (Borrie & Birzell, 2001; Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck & Watson, 1992). Measuring the success of public recreation managers entails more than counting the number of 'satisfied' customers, if not only because there are many factors beyond the control of managers that influence the achievement of that satisfaction.

Part of the purpose of this project was to develop a feasible and appropriate framework for the application of marketing principles and approaches to public recreation management. In doing so, a logical and valid procedure is demonstrated that can be adopted and applied in future situations. While specifics may vary from region to region, the underlying principles and thought process are widely applicable to public resource management. The collection and analysis of marketing data can have a profound influence on planning and management decisions and this paper illustrates an approach that reflects both public policy mandates and methodological integrity.

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