

Recreationists' Preferences for Freshwater Amenity Characteristics: Implications from the U.S. Household Survey

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Abstract. Studies have analyzed the importance of site amenities in the choice of recreation activities (e.g., Cutter et al. 2007; Paudel et al. 2011). Because of inherent heterogeneity, visitors may have different preferences on site amenities. However, studies have not examined what are the most important site amenities as ranked by visitors and is there any relation between activity participation and how visitors rank these amenity characteristics. Hence, we used U.S. national household survey data to understand visitors' rankings of freshwater amenity characteristics (size, quality, wildlife, and closeness). We employed spectral analysis to identify the most preferred site amenities and rank-ordered and multinomial logit analyses to identify the factors affecting those ranking choices. Results from spectral analyses indicated closeness and size were the two most important amenity characteristics in freshwater recreation. Results from ranked-ordered and multinomial logit analyses suggested visitors placed importance based on activity they participated in. Visitors who participated in boating placed importance on size; visitors who participated in swimming placed importance on water-quality; and visitors who participated in fishing/bird/nature viewing placed importance on wildlife. Recreation resource managers could benefit from these findings to better understand the needs and expectations of their user groups and manage these attributes accordingly.