

Summary of:

Recreation and Wilderness: Participation and Economic Significance in Saskatchewan.

Researchers:

- K.G. Loewen

- S.N. Kulshreshtha

Wilderness provides many economic, aesthetic and environmental benefits. Economic values include direct benefits to wilderness users. Non-users derive satisfaction from the fact that wilderness is there and will be there in the future. Aggregate non-use values can be substantial. Neglecting non-use benefits in multiple use management of a resource could lead to mismanagement of the resource. Once preservation values of wilderness are estimated, they can add valuable information to the management process, particularly under integrated resource management philosophy.

The objectives of this study were to:

- 1) develop and apply a procedure for measuring the benefits of wilderness resources.
- 2) analyze characteristics of the respondents regarding their recreation activities and wilderness preferences.

A survey, contingent valuation method, and Tobit analysis were employed to determine the willingness-to-pay (WTP) for wilderness preservation by Saskatchewan residents. Education, income, and involvement in outdoor recreation activities had a significant positive influence on, or were positively correlated to, WTP. Age, satisfaction with current levels of wilderness protection, and lack of recent association with a preservation group, had a negative effect on, or were negatively correlated to, WTP.

58% of respondents were satisfied with the current level of wilderness and wildlife protection in Saskatchewan. 42% of respondents wanted more protection. The main reasons for preserving wilderness were for the protection of water quality, air quality, rare and endangered species, and wildlife habitat. Preserving wilderness for future generations was also an important reason. Providing spiritual inspiration and tourism dollars were the least important reasons to preserve wilderness.

The estimated annual WTP to ensure that current wilderness protection prevails was approximately \$61 per household. Saskatchewan residents recently affiliated with a wilderness or wildlife group had a WTP approximately double that of residents not associated with such groups. Saskatchewan residents are willing to pay up to \$15.3 million annually to preserve the eight million acres of wilderness in the province.

In general, Saskatchewan residents are avid participants in outdoor recreation activities. Walking, viewing wildlife, fishing, camping, picnicking, swimming and boating were the activities Saskatchewan residents participated in most frequently. Cross-country skiing and ice fishing were the most significant winter activities.

Emma Lake, Christopher Lake, Candle Lake and Prince Albert National Park were the most popular recreation areas. In Prince Albert National Park, the combination of wilderness within the park boundaries and the town of Waskesiu was an attractive feature. The liquor store and bar were relatively unimportant features of the park. Park congestion, commercialization, expense, and the use of a cabin elsewhere were common reasons why some respondents did not want to visit the park more. However, residents value their wilderness whether they use it or not, and a key component of this wilderness is Prince Albert National Park.