

FORVISITS: modelling visitor flows at a regional level

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The Dutch Nature Planning Agency (NPB) is trying to develop a coherent set of indicators to monitor the state of the nature areas in the Netherlands. One of the proposed indicators deals with the recreational use of these areas. Such use is thought to be a suitable indicator of the social value of a specific area. Besides this positive side, the intensity of recreational use is also important with regard to possible negative impacts. Not only may overuse endanger the social value of an area for future generations, but the recreational pressure may also degrade its ecological value, by making the area less suitable as a habitat for certain species. The outcomes of the FORVISITS-model may be used as input for more detailed models on how visitors move about within the nature area. On the other hand, recreational use itself is likely to depend on the attractiveness of the area for recreationists, such as its scenic beauty. This attractiveness is yet another indicator in the NPB-set. Because the NPB wants a national overview of the recreation use of all nature areas, on-site monitoring is not a feasible option. Therefore we have started to develop a model to predict the number of recreational visits to forests and nature areas. Although the model is still in its early stages, a first nation-wide application has taken place and will be presented. Up till now the model only deals with car-borne visits from local residents. It distributes these visits based on the size and the attractiveness of the available destination areas in the local choice set, as well as on their distance (by road) from the visitor's home. Much attention will be paid to the shortcomings of the present model and how we intend to tackle them. In doing so a balance has to be maintained between the desired level of detail and accuracy on the one hand, and the ease of use of the model on the other hand.