

Recreation Experience Preferences and Activity Profiles in a Crown Land Forest in Ontario, Canada

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The use of public forested areas in Ontario, Canada is governed by the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act* that directs the management authority, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR), to ensure that forest operations co-exist with other uses of the forest, especially recreation and tourism. Implementing these legislative requirements has been difficult for the OMNR: it lacks data on recreation and tourism; it lacks readily available social scientific expertise; and it lacks the necessary integrative model. The larger project of which this work is a part, focussing on the Dog River-Matawin Forest, west of Thunder Bay, Ontario and immediately east of Quetico Provincial Park, is designed to address several of these gaps.

This paper seeks to answer two of the many questions concerning how people use the forest for recreation and tourism purposes: what motivates different users and how do those motivations relate to activity profiles. Such knowledge would enable the OMNR to anticipate conflicts between recreation or tourism activities and forestry as well as conflicts between recreation or tourism activities.

Our findings indicate that four distinct experience groups exist among the 3,500 people in our sample of forest users. One group, largely from Thunder Bay, is motivated primarily by a desire to experience new and different things and to be with friends. A second, large group is interested in activities that allow them to be with friends, to experience new and different things, to learn about aboriginal culture and to experience risk. A third is primarily motivated by experiencing new and different things. The fourth eschews risk and seeks activities with friends. When these groups are analysed with activity profiles, we make connections that, when mapped (a future phase of the work), begin to indicate areas where potential conflicts might occur with forest operations or with other recreation activities.

We conclude by noting that, while knowledge about how people use the forest is interesting in itself, an integrative framework is needed if that knowledge is to find its way into management actions to implement the requirements of Ontario's *Crown Forest Sustainability Act*.