

# Profiling recreational users of national parks, national hiking areas and wilderness areas in Finland

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About one fifth of Finnish people use state owned lands: national parks, state recreation areas and wilderness areas, for outdoor recreation annually. About one fourth of nature tourism trips is directed to these state lands. State lands are also used for recreation close to home; approximately five per cent of one day visits to nature is directed to state lands. These areas, most of which are dedicated primarily for nature conservation, have an important role in supply of recreation opportunities. Visitor surveys have produced visitor information of individual areas, but they have not offered a general picture of user profile of state lands. It is beneficial to be aware of the user profile of these areas, for example, for the sake of equality. There are population groups that participate in the financing of these areas through taxes but are for some reason either unable or unwilling to use them.

In this study we analyze who belong to recreation users of national parks, state recreation areas and wilderness areas and which variables explain the frequency of use. A population based data from national inventory of outdoor recreation is used in the analysis. The data consist information of the use of state lands for recreation from 2 632 respondents. Logistic regression analysis is used to explain the visitation in recreation on state lands. Furthermore, negative binomial regression analyses offers information of those variables that explain the frequency of visits.

The results show that probability of visiting state areas was higher when respondent had high education, was white collar employee or entrepreneur and had several outdoor activities, especially skiing and camping. Short distance to nearest state area increased the probability of belonging to the user group of state areas. On the other hand the large amount of state areas on the municipality of residence increased the frequency of participation. Keeping other variables constant the participation frequency was higher in Eastern Finland than in other parts of the country and in six biggest municipalities than in municipalities with less inhabitants. Number of household members had negative and number of free days positive effect on the frequency of participation in recreation on state areas.