

The Future of Outdoor Recreation Research and Education in the USA: Preliminary Outcomes of a National Strategic Planning Process

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Societal Importance of Outdoor Recreation

Economic Impact

- Estimated \$730 billion industry in USA (Outdoor Industry Foundation, 2006)
- 6.4 million jobs generated
- \$87 billion fed, state taxes
- Active outdoor recreation:
(Biking; hunting; hiking; camping;
paddling; fishing; snow sports;
wildlife viewing)



Health & Well-being

- 1 in 3 kids are overweight in US (Alliance for a Healthier America)
- Last Child in the Woods? (Richard Louv)
- Nature Deficit Disorder
- Political movement to reconnect children & nature



Environmental Impacts

- Unmanaged impacts of Off-Highway Vehicles
- Snowmobile impacts in Yellowstone National Park
- Loss of open space; amenity migration
- Challenge to manage for sustainable experiences & ecosystems



Strategic Importance to Resource Management Agencies

- US Forest Service—Four major threats:
 - * Loss of open space
 - * Un-managed recreation
- USFS Strategic Goal: “Provide high quality outdoor recreation while sustaining natural resources, to help meet national recreation demand.”
- National Park Service. . . . President’s 2008 Budget Proposes \$3 Billion investment in national parks over 10 years

Modest Investment in Science & Education

- 2005 US Forest Service R & D Annual Report
 - 15 soc. sci. of 486 scientists = 3.1 %
 - Numbers flat since 1995
- National Research Initiative Allocations 2007
 - TOTAL NRI ALLOCATION \$181,000,000
 - Managed Ecosystems \$4,000,000 (2.2%)
 - Rural Development \$0

**Outdoor Recreation Research &
Education (ORRE): Defining National
Strategic Direction and
Building Capacity**

USDA—CSREES

- Federal agency in US Dept. of Agriculture
- Advance knowledge for agriculture, environment, human health, and communities
- Fund research, education, and outreach programs
- Work through partnerships with Land-Grant University system and other partner organizations

Strategic Planning Context

- CSREES-sponsored
- Deliberative; participatory process/modest budget
- National Steering Committee (30)
 - May 2007 Meeting
- Professional Society Roundtables
- Iterative Plan Development; Draft form presently

Draft Strategic Plan Outcomes

- Vision
- Mission
- Strategic Themes
- Implementation Strategies

Vision

“Sustainable outdoor environments connecting people and nature through recreation, leading to healthier people, resources, and communities.”



Mission

- ADVANCE knowledge about sustainable outdoor environments, recreation experiences, and healthy communities.
- FOSTER innovative education programs to develop future leaders and engage citizens in sustainable outdoor environments, recreation experiences, and healthy communities.
- BUILD CAPACITY to transfer useable knowledge and communicate impacts about sustainable outdoor environments, recreation experiences, and healthy communities to policy-makers, industry, landowners, managers, and communities.

Strategic Themes

- Theme #1: Outdoor Recreation, Human Health and Well-being
- Theme #2: Sustainable and Accessible Outdoor Environments
- Theme #3: Outdoor Recreation, Resilient and Vibrant Communities
- Research, Education, and Outreach Strategies

Implementation Strategies

- Promote ORRE Strategic Plan to university and agency scientists, educators, extension specialists, and administrators.
- Develop multi-state research projects
- Develop more inclusive language in formula fund and competitive research programs
- Establish national Advisory Committee
- Support unified professional advocacy network for ORRE

Global Linkage Opportunities

- Social learning with national strategic ORRE plan development and implementation
- Coordinate efforts to leverage support for science and education programs
- Share strategic plan outcomes, impacts, and success stories
- Host coordinated science/policy workshops; other ideas??

Kiitos and Thank You!!

