

SOCIAL SCIENCES SERVING PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF OUTDOOR
RECREATION

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Abstract

Social sciences can support planning and management of outdoor recreation in three major ways: (1) surveying and analyzing people's preferences towards leisure facilities as well as towards nature and landscape, (2) monitoring of visitor flows as well observing and analyzing general and problematic visitor behavior during outdoor recreation, and finally (3) measuring the effect of planning and intervention measures on attitudes and behavior of those recreating outdoors. In the presentation theories and studies regarding these three fields will be discussed. As experiencing nature and landscape is one of the most relevant motives for outdoor recreation, a special emphasis will be given to landscape preferences. Based on the theoretical framework of Bourassa (1991) their two major predicting dimensions will be presented by referring to empirical studies: the biological dimension, landscape as space, and the social dimension, landscape as place (Hunziker et al. 2007). Visitor behavior will also be considered on the background of a well-known theory, the 'theory of planned behavior' of Ajzen (1991). This theory allows pinning down general and problematic behavior to predictors as attitudes, norms, behavior control, and intention. The use of this theory for analyzing outdoor recreation behavior will be demonstrated on the basis of own results. Whether social sciences are useful to evaluate the effect of infrastructure and/or persuasive interventions on attitudes and behavior will be discussed by referring to results of experimental studies as well as theories such as the 'elaboration likelihood'-model of Petty and Cacioppo (1986).

Key Words

Landscape preferences, visitor expectations, changing attitudes and behaviour

Key References

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