

Oregon's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

Outdoor Recreation Amongst Oregon's Hispanic and Asian Populations

Summary Report

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SUMMARY REPORT

In preparation for the 2008-2012 Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) contracted Oregon State University (OSU) to conduct a survey of Hispanic and Asian Americans in Oregon. This research was motivated by a concern that Hispanics and Asians are a growing percentage of the Oregon population, yet national data indicate they do not engage in outdoor recreation as often as the white majority population.¹ This may reduce the physical and mental health benefits of recreation for these groups, as well as future support for outdoor recreation and the natural areas where it occurs.² As of 2000, minorities comprised 19% of the Oregon population, and this proportion will increase in the future – each main minority group grew faster than the state population as a whole between 1990 and 2000. Driver et al. observe that "if public land managers are to be responsive to the changing needs and values of an increasingly multicultural citizenry in management planning, they must work toward a fuller understanding of those needs and values."³ This SCORP project provides such an understanding.

Survey recipients were obtained from a commercially provided list of Hispanic and Asian households in Oregon. Surveys were mailed to a 3,595 recipients. Adjusting for undeliverables, the response rates were 17% for Hispanics and 21% for Asians. In total, 522 completed surveys were received. However, 164 respondents did not classify themselves as Hispanics or Asians. These respondents were included in the "by group" analysis, but not in the other analyses. The remaining 358 respondents were included in all analyses. Census data on gender and educational attainment were used to weight responses and reduce the potential for non-response bias. The sample almost exactly matched the statewide geographic distribution across Portland metro versus elsewhere in the state, so responses were not weighted by location. A brief phone survey of non-respondents was used to assess potential non-response bias; there was no indication of systematic bias.

Walking for pleasure is the most common favorite activity for both Hispanics and Asians, with fishing and soccer being the next most common for Hispanics and hiking and fishing the next most common for Asians. Across all groups, respondents most commonly did their favorite activity with members of their immediate family. Asians were more likely than Hispanics to do activities alone, as were older respondents relative to younger respondents. Park areas outside town was the most common location for all groups, but self-classified Hispanics and Asians were more likely than "non-self" respondents to do their favorite activity in neighborhood parks. Males were more likely than females to engage in their favorite activity further from home.

Walking for pleasure was also the activity respondents spent the most days engaged in during the past year. Comparison between the diversity and parents samples is limited by potential differences in factors other than ethnicity, but results do suggest that the diversity sample engages in outdoor recreation less than the general population. With respect to days of participation (intensity), this is especially true for Asians. With respect to number of activities, this is true for both Hispanics and Asians. As one would expect, results vary across individual activities. For example, differences across groups for the most popular activity (walking) are modest, but Hispanics engage in outdoor sports more intensively than either Asians or parents, while parents engage in horseback riding more intensively than either Hispanics or Asians.

¹ Cordell, H.K., C. Betz, and G.T. Green. 2002. Recreation and the environment as cultural dimensions in contemporary American society. *Leisure Sciences*, 24, 13-41. In this report, "white" refers to white non-Hispanic persons.

² On the link between recreation participation and support for natural area conservation, see Place, G. 2004. Youth recreation leads to adult conservation. *Parks and Recreation*, February, pp. 29-38.

³ Driver, B.L., D. Dustin, T. Baltic, G. Elsner, and G. Peterson. 1996. Nature and the human spirit: Overview. In B.L. Driver, D. Dustin, T. Baltic, G. Elsner, and G. Peterson (eds.), *Nature and the human spirit: Toward an expanded land management ethic*. State College, PA: Venture.

With respect to activities they would like to do more often, or start doing, the most common response was walking for Asians and walking and camping for Hispanics. The factor that would most help make this happen is availability of partners, followed by more time.

Most of the Hispanic and Asian respondents have lived in another country and engaged in outdoor recreation in that country. The specific activities engaged in varied widely, with walking being the most common, followed by day hiking.

Being in the outdoors, having fun, and relaxing were the most important motivations for respondents. Spending time with family and friends was particularly important for Hispanic respondents. With respect to age, several motivations decrease in importance amongst older respondents, with escaping the daily routine illustrating the relative unimportance of work-affected motivations amongst older respondents.

Turning to the effect of park actions, providing clean and well-maintained parks was most likely to lead to increases in outdoor recreation participation. Also important were keeping parks safe from crime, expanded facilities, and more free-of-charge activities. Overall, the listed agency actions was reported to have the greatest effect on Hispanics relative to others. Actions would have the least effect on older respondents.

In terms of information sought by respondents, practical information on activities, facilities, and location was the most common response, followed by information on cost. Overall, the internet was most frequently noted as the desired information outlet, but there was noticeable variability across the groups. Asians clearly preferred the internet, followed by newspapers and TV. Hispanics preferred newspapers and TV, followed by the internet. The most commonly recommended facilities for development in parks were picnic tables, followed by trails and campgrounds. There were some differences across groups, with Hispanics being more likely than Asians to suggest additional sports fields. The majority of respondents indicated they would visit parks in groups of 5 or smaller, but noticeable percentages of Hispanic respondents would visit in groups of 11 or larger.

With respect to youth outdoor programs, the majority (59%) of respondents with children indicated that their children have participated in outdoor sports programs. Close to forty percent also indicated participation in day camps or multi-day camps. Outdoor sports programs was also the activity that children were most likely to participate in in the future, followed by programs to help youth use their free time productively.

Weekends were the most popular times for participation in youth outdoor programs, followed by summer weekends and weekdays. Lack of information and cost were reported as the main constraints to participation in such programs, with Hispanics giving higher importance ratings in general for constraints. For example, cost was more important to Hispanic respondents than to Asian respondents. With respect to priorities, most of the potential priorities were rated as very important. Staying safe received the highest percent of "very important" ratings. Spending time without kids was the least important, but was relatively important for Hispanic respondents.

This document is the summary report. A full report is also available on the OPRD website at <http://egov.oregon.gov/OPRD/PLANS/SCORP.shtml>.