

Voices of My Ancestors, Their Bones Talk to Me: How to Balance US Forest Service Rules and Regulations with Traditional Values and Culture of American Indians

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Abstract

This study investigated the use of National Forests by the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation in Montana. Although public lands in the interior American west often surround Tribal lands, managers know little about how the Forest Service (FS) rules and regulations impact the traditional values and culture of American Indians. Interviews were conducted in 2001 with a sample of 60 enrolled Tribal members. Results indicate that Tribal members participate in a variety of outdoor activities in national forests: hunting, fishing, berry and mushroom picking, camping, hiking, and collecting medicinal plants. Perceived racism from both managers and the visiting public, coupled with feelings of resentment at being pushed out of their aboriginal lands has created distrust among Tribal members. In order to preserve and respect Tribal culture and values, FS managers need to approach Tribal members with mutual trust and respect according to Tribal customs before requesting input and expecting open dialogue.

Keywords: American Indians, cultural values, recreation, natural resource managers

Introduction

There is a paucity of literature with regard to American Indians. With this in mind, the goals of this paper are fourfold. First, from an historical perspective the authors ground our findings on a long history of American Indians facing myriad challenges in their pursuit of home-land legitimacy. Second, we examine the myriad reasons American Indians continue to struggle in their pursuit of quality outdoor experiences. Third, we explore how American Indians are similar

to other identified minority populations as well as the distinct differences that make them unique and difficult to research. Finally, we address the relationship between Forest Service managers and American Indians from both historical and contemporary perspectives, while offering suggestions to improve trust and collaboration between the groups.

History and Interaction between the U.S. Government and American Indians

The history of interaction between the United States Government and American Indians is a war of words, contradictions, and juxtaposed perspectives. In his book *Indian Country, God's Country — Native Americans and the National Parks*, Burnham (2000) makes a strong case that American Indians were in fact offered a no-choice-choice when asked to “gift” their sacred lands to federal authorities. The modern day dilemma is that those same sacred lands now belong to the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, other federal agencies, and the American public. In the hearts, minds, and memories of American Indians, they also belong to their own people.

The Intercourse Act (1802) segregated native peoples, pushing them out of their Tribal lands, for the purpose of encouraging the westward expansion of White settlers. The enactment of the Removal Act (1830) ushered in a new era of resettlement into what were labeled “Indian Reservations.” Within the span of 100 years the movement from segregation and the Trail of Tears, shifted to assimilation. Citizenship was promoted. It meant the forced removal of children from their parents and their reservations to be schooled in the English language and Christianity. The Dawes Act (1885) attempted to breakup reservations while offering American Indians land allotments. However, the result was that reservations were es-

entially opened up to homesteading by White settlers. The mass exodus, and ensuing diaspora, inflicted on American Indians broke both their land ownership and their spirits. Tribal lands shrunk from 138 million acres in 1886 to a mere 48 million acres by 1934. While some Tribal members relocated to inner cities in search of jobs, others established Indian Ghettos in urban America, helping to ignite the Red Power movement (Whittaker 1996).

Beginning in the 1960s, national politics and policies have focused on the American Indian plight. A plethora of both state and federal programs have been enacted to steer American Indians back to stability, give them a legitimate voice, and encourage them to shape their own futures. Supreme Court cases and federal legislation have further strengthened the resolve of American Indians to reclaim their sovereignty. In 2000, over half of all American Indians resided and worked off reservations. This in turn creates a complex milieu for understanding their preferences for, and indeed definition of, outdoor recreation activities (U.S. Census Bureau 2000).

Federal land management agencies and U.S. Forest Service employees have attempted for years to understand how and why American Indians use, or avoid using, federal lands. And while official requests to American Indians for feedback/suggestions on upcoming or pending proposals for land use potentially affecting them are routinely sent, Tribal response is one of virtual silence. Over the past 20 years, the lead author has been working with the Confederated and Salish Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) in northwestern Montana in an effort to improve the relationship between federal land managers and the Tribes. While findings from this study should not be generalized to other Tribes, the process of gaining acceptance and trust is the critical component to establishing a set of guidelines for future investigations.

The Confederated and Salish Kootenai People

The Salish-Kootenai live on the Flathead Indian Reservation in northwestern Montana. They were relocated from their homeland in the Bitterroot River Valley to the lower Flathead Valley as a result of signing the Hell Gate Treaty of 1855 (Burnham 2000). In return for giving up their land rights in the Bitterroot, the CSKT forever changed their destiny, for in doing so they ceded deeply rooted, centuries old ties, to specific sites in Glacier National Park and the Bob Marshall Wilderness. According to Burnham (2000, 265), they lost both their ownership and status:

In many places that later became parks, as at Glacier, Tribes were coerced into signing agreements that not only surrendered ownership of treaty lands, but compromised their right to use them for subsis-

tence. Eventually the government came to control every conceivable aspect of park ownership — or management — the law would bear.

Although the CSKT had traditionally hunted and gathered for hundreds of years in these areas, national parks became a showplace for wildlife and natural phenomena, such as rock formations, fumaroles, and wild flowers. Many park sites that historically were revered by the CSKT were now open for the general public to explore and/or alter. In an effort to demonstrate some sensitivity to this issue, the National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and the U.S. Forest Service requested that CSKT Tribal members identify sacred sites. However, like most other Tribes, the CSKT were worried that disclosing the location and identity of these hallowed places would result in destruction or looting. This lack of trust has created barriers to conducting research with Tribal members, and as a result, very little substantive in-depth research is available.

But the Hell Gate Treaty (1855) inadvertently proved to have a silver lining. The Bitterroot is an extremely hot and arid area with poor aquifers, while the Flathead boasted an abundance of natural resources. Today, the CSKT have used this land swap to their advantage. While they lost some of Glacier National Park, Salish-Kootenai Tribal lands now support the southern portions of Flathead Lake. The pristine waters flowing out of the Bob Marshall Wilderness boast a rich biodiversity of fish and animals, which in turn encourage sport fishery, hunting, and tourism. Moreover, the Tribes have a hydroelectric property, commercial highway, Tribal College, and the first national Tribal wilderness, the 95,000 acre Mission Mountain Tribal Wilderness. The Director of the Bilingual Education Department at the Salish-Kootenai College, Vernon Finley summed up the resiliency of his Tribal members and their relationship to Glacier National Park in the following words:

... almost everything the Kootenai used in their economy before white people [came] could be found in the Glacier area ... it was near there that the Tribal creation story says one of the spirits first revealed itself to the Kootenai, giving them direction on how to sing, how to dance, how to survive the winter ... sovereignty isn't something the U.S. government can say we have and we can have it. Sovereignty is from within, whether it's recognized by other nations or not (Burnham 2000, 201-202).

Salish-Kootenai Tribal members believe that federal lands, their former heritage, as aboriginal territory are essential to sustaining their Indian culture. It follows that they associate use of these lands as a natural connection to continuing their cultural traditions (McAvoy, Flood and Shirilla

2003). While most Salish-Kootenai Tribal members consider activities in national forests as a form of recreation, some see these activities as a way to carry on their cultural traditions.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Research examining leisure behavior among minority populations has historically focused primarily on three theoretical frameworks: marginality, ethnicity, and perceived discrimination. Marginality helps explain why low levels of leisure participation by some minority populations may be directly linked to poverty, socioeconomics, education, and limited transportation options. Each of these factors alone creates a significant barrier that prevents, or at best reduces, opportunities to participate in leisure activities (Washburne 1978). Research findings suggest that the nature of racism has had an undeniable and major impact on minority groups (Blahna and Black 1993; Floyd, Gramann and Saenz 1993; McDonald and McAvoy 1997; West 1989). As Floyd (1998, 3) states, "... it is not clear how marginality accounts for a wider range of behavioral or affective outcomes beyond participation and preferences." What is clear, however, is that the impact of discrimination and its progeny has a disproportionate effect on minority populations.

Ethnicity theory, while relying on racial categories and ethnic labels to explain leisure participation, fails to identify the unique characteristics driving such non-assimilation choices within racial groups (Hutchison and Fidel 1984). Further studies have also challenged assimilation, especially when applied to Hispanics, African Americans, and American Indians (Chavez 1993; Floyd et al. 1994; McDonald and McAvoy 1997). An example of the application of ethnicity theory suggests that American Indians possess a separate set of values and attitudes, creating in effect a discrete sub-culture different from the dominant White culture which guides their leisure choices (Chavez 1993; Floyd et al. 1994; Washburne 1978; West 1989).

The discrimination theory recognizes that discrimination in and of itself is a potent and powerful inhibitor of leisure participation. Unfair and/or unequal treatment engenders bitter feelings, and encourages serious infractions on the part of other visitor groups and poorly trained managers, both of whom lack cultural sensitivity (Blahna and Black 1993; Floyd, Gramann and Saenz 1993; Philipp 1993; Stodolska and Jackson 1998; Toupal 2003; West 1989). One weakness is the difficulty in measuring perceived discrimination. Phinney (1990) examined ethnicity in the context of discrimination emphasizing that membership in social groups, and the adherence to specific values and emotional expressions that emanate from that attachment, explain both the differences and similarities within ethnic groups. Tierney et al. (1998,

iv), using a proposed model of ethnic participation, concluded that:

All minority ethnic groups were more likely to express the belief that discrimination was an issue, compared to their white respondent counterparts. In addition, model results showed that perceived discrimination was a significant predictor of visitation even after controlling for respondent income and education. The results are unique because they invalidate the commonly held belief that discrimination is an urban park issue that does not impact rural recreation areas. Analyses of barriers participation suggest that discrimination is perceived to occur within undeveloped natural areas, not just en route to them.

Institutional Racism: The American Indian Experience

The American Indian experience encompasses a painful history of both real and perceived discriminatory actions by state and federal land management agencies. Feagin and Eckberg (1980) suggested that two situations may be occurring separately, or simultaneously, with regard to overt institutional discrimination and discriminatory practices by leisure service providers: (1) side effect discrimination; and (2) past-in-present discrimination. Side effect discrimination occurs when an institution, unintentionally, creates adverse patterns of discrimination that are cumulative in nature, or mutually reinforcing through the policies and practices of an organization. Past-in-present discrimination is best defined as the practice of predicating leisure services on negative images of a minority group based upon prior experience and/or personal belief.

Admittedly, this is difficult and myriad responses exist from the perspective of minority groups, non-minority groups, and management. Because of this, some minority groups deliberately choose alternative activities or locations to recreate based on their fear of encountering acts of discrimination by other visitors or managers (Blahna and Black 1993; Chavez 1993; Floyd and Gramann 1995; Gobster 2002; Gramann 1996; McDonald and McAvoy 1997). In support of this position, Tierney et al. (1998) suggested that the ethnic participation model presented evidence that minority groups made decisions to participate in outdoor activities based more on group preferences, assimilation, resident education, and perceived discrimination than income level or transportation constraints.

In regard to American Indians, it is critical to acknowledge that institutional discrimination has been occurring for

several hundred years and has influenced how American Indians make leisure choices on public lands (Burnham 2000; McAvoy, Flood, and Shirilla 2003; Whittaker 1996; Yetman 1985). Gobster (2002) suggests that police and park managers need to receive awareness and sensitivity training in order to fundamentally understand how their actions, as well as language, either enhance or reduce feelings of discrimination. He further advises that new staff with similar ethnic backgrounds be hired so that cultural sensitivities of individual groups will be addressed appropriately.

The difficulty in all this is addressing the differing needs and concerns of each minority group, making room for satisfying the *status quo*, and allocating resources. Bullard and Wright (1990) suggest additional steps to mitigate this issue, including recognizing first the shared concerns, which seem to be isolated to the need for clean bathrooms. From this point, minority groups split in terms of priorities: African Americans favor more developed settings and increased perceptions of safety (West 1989), while American Indians seek more primitive sites that offer minimal facilities to create a feeling of isolation and independence (McAvoy, Flood and Shirilla 2003). Gobster (2002, 156) suggests that “park managers should investigate the quantity and quality of facilities, services, programs, and staff throughout the park, paying particular attention to areas that serve minority clientele.” It is his belief that such actions will reap a harvest of trust; reduce negative feelings, and lessen the perception of deliberate discrimination that exists among minority groups.

Importance of Place Attachment

Although it may be argued that every environment invites a shared symbolism to each individual, this position is refuted by Greider and Garkovich (1994) who contend that our definitions of environment are grounded in culture. While one person’s form of leisure may represent another person’s worst nightmare — one runs ultra-marathons, the other is a voracious reader on the couch — individuals place their level of attachment to specific and remembered environments (Flood 2003). This suggests that cultural groups change the conceptual meaning of landscapes to reflect what they define as right and comfortable, for themselves, as well as between themselves and the natural environment (Berger and Luckmann 1967).

McAvoy, McDonald, and Carlson (2003) suggest that place meanings, and how people prioritize the importance of protected places, such as national parks, forests, and wilderness, varies significantly among cultures. As an example, a majority of White Americans indicate a preference of place meanings specific to (1) individual/expressive meanings (an individual identifies strongly with a unique place); (2) instru-

mental/goal directed (resource management); or, (3) a cultural or symbolic meaning (where a place creates a sense of emotional, symbolic, historical, spiritual, and cultural significance for an entire group). Tribal members, however, rate their preferences in reverse order. They identify the cultural/spiritual category as their first priority, followed by instrumental/goal directed, and place individual/expressive meanings in solid last place. These findings illustrate the juxtaposition of White and Tribal values, but more importantly, offer insight to those managers seeking to understand the importance that cultural and symbolic places hold for American Indians.

Over the past hundred years American Indians have experienced unsettling changes in the natural environment. Stoffle et al. (1990) argues that competing epistemologies between the dominant White culture and American Indian culture creates a wedge of misunderstanding. While the federal land manager may see tremendous benefits in creating a modern, comfortable, new campground in a wild setting — offering hot showers and electricity — American Indians see the earth being disturbed, plants being killed, animal habitat eradicated, and the destruction of artifacts. For the federal land manager there is little recognition that the American Indian views these “improvements” as Mother Earth being desecrated for the sake of plumbing, that the sacred and ancient connection of human and non-human being severed unbalances the whole of nature.

Using the sociological framework of landscapes construct, Greider and Garkovich (1994) suggest that people have multiple meanings of environment that are important symbols defining both themselves and their relationship to the environment. Recognizing that this type of framework does exist, and that it is particularly strong in Tribal cultures, may provide a clearer lens through which managers evaluate how proposed changes to landscapes will affect populations whose reliance on physical landscapes is intrinsically connected to cultural and self definitions. Even though research (McDonald and McAvoy 1997; Williams and Patterson 1996) has shown a direct relationship between wild places and the importance of place attachment for visitors, there are a number of studies (Cronon 1996; Di Chiro 1996; Johnson 1998; Meeker et al. 1973; Taylor 2000) investigating the importance of wilderness in the lives of both Blacks and American Indians (Martin 2004).

Discrimination

As members of a new nation, U.S. citizens proclaimed their dreams and wishes in the Declaration of Independence. From that document, the phrase “...life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness...” became a foundation in which various groups grounded their claims to individual rights. Hutchison

(1987), however, argues that there are inherent systematic differences between dominant and subculture populations in placing emphasis on which individual rights hold more value. While parenthesis to the goals of White citizenship, recognized differences among ethnic subcultures are reflected in more traditional family structures that favor the importance of group involvement over the importance of individual choice selection. More recent research on racial differences in leisure behavior has examined the influence, and impact, of differential socialization, ethnic/racial identities, and fear of discrimination (Bixler, Floyd, and Hammitt 2002; Carr and Williams 1993; Feagin 1991; McAvoy 2002; Taylor 2000; Williams 2002).

Ethnicity theories offer a cultural explanation for intergroup differences. In short, such theories espouse that an identifiable set of Black, American Indian, and Hispanic leisure activities are the direct result of a distinctive minority subculture. For example, Black Americans embrace a set of values and attitudes toward leisure behavior that are different from that of the majority of White Americans, and those sub-cultural values translate into alternative leisure choices (Floyd et al. 1994; Washburne 1978; West 1989). Research has clearly demonstrated that public places often shape socially constructed definitions about the types of activities that are appropriate for particular locales, as well as the types of people who are welcome to participate there (Day 1999; Greider and Garkovich 1994; Lee 1972; Madge 1997; Williams and Carr 1993).

According to Feagin (1991) discrimination is least likely to take place when an individual is at home among family and friends. His research confirmed that encounters of hostility and prejudice increased dramatically in less familiar, safe surroundings. Furthermore, Feagin documented responses to discriminatory treatment ranging from placid acceptance, to verbal attacks and physical encounters, to total displacement in an effort to avoid potential sites of discrimination. Martin (2004) implies that if "racialized" outdoor leisure identity does contribute to apartheid in the great outdoors, ethics dictates that efforts must be made to eliminate it. Implied or not, Lee (1972) observed a process by which distinct social and cultural groups were essentially establishing outdoor preference areas by literally partitioning off land for their group's exclusive use. For example, Tierney, Dahl, and Chavez (1998) recognized the need for Hispanics to recreate in large family groups and often in or at least near the waters edge. Reliable statistics predict that 82% of America's population growth over the next 30 years will be driven by high birth rates among Hispanic, Asian, African American, and other ethnic minority groups (Cordell, Betz, and Green 2002; Dwyer 1994, Murdock et al. 1990). Concomitant with this growth is the necessity to zero in on how to understand, en-

courage, and serve minority populations in their search for quality outdoor recreation experience opportunities.

How and why different racial/ethnic groups participate in disparate leisure activities, if at all, on national forests begs the question of what specifically influences these different choices in leisure participation. While Haggard and Williams (1992) purport that participation in leisure activities affirms participant identities, they equally support the idea that symbolism relating to the activity reflects both the desired character traits and identity images inherent in a group image of its ideal self. Lee (1972) believed that sub-culture identity provided a better insight into what value and significance different socio-cultural groups attribute to recreation places or leisure activities. The socio-cultural-meaning theory that emerged from Lee's work raises profound questions about the why and who and how of people visiting recreation places, engaging in recreation activities, and, most importantly, how various groups behave in recreational settings.

Use of National Forests by the Confederated Salish Kootenai People

The purpose of this research was to specifically identify the outdoor recreation activities of the Salish-Kootenai Tribal members in surrounding national forests. In addition, the research sought to explain the general forest areas where Tribal members use national forests for outdoor recreation, clarify the significance of these activities to Salish-Kootenai Tribal members, and make recommendations to managers regarding Tribal members' use of national forest lands. While American Indians are receiving increased attention from scholars and outdoor recreation managers, little is still known about the leisure behaviors of American Indians (Cordell et al. 1999; McDonald and McAvoy 1997). Although American Indians visit a large portion of the interior American West, scant knowledge exists regarding the attitudes of American Indians with regard to public lands adjacent to reservations (Keller and Turek 1998; Wilkinson 1997). While the National Environmental Policy Act (1969) requires managers to increase stakeholder involvement, American Indians have often felt isolated, and historically have provided few recommendations to national forest planners and decision makers. For years researchers have investigated the opinions of North American Indians regarding the management of natural resources (Jostad, McAvoy, and McDonald 1996; Redmond 1996; Tyler 1993) and forest lands (Kimmerer 2000; Morishima 1997). However, information is nearly non-existent, and therefore, unavailable to offer insight to the impact of federal land management practices on Tribal members' use of these areas.

On the Flathead Reservation, employees in the Wildland

Recreation Program of the Natural Resources Department are often asked to comment on how the impacts of resource development projects (building roads and campgrounds and timber harvest) occurring on national forests might influence Tribal members' use of these areas. While Forest Service planners and managers are asked to document the use of national forests by Tribal members, and determine the impact that Forest Service management practices might have on these Tribal members, little information is available regarding outdoor recreation uses. Evidence suggests that Tribal members use adjacent national forest lands for many outdoor recreation activities. But, little is known about the extent of this use, patterns of use, or the personal values placed on these uses. Another reason why a clearer understanding of Tribal members' outdoor recreation use of national forests is important lies in the fact that federal and state resource managers are increasingly required to work with Tribal members regarding the management of natural resources close to reservations. Lack of understanding and past conflicts have compounded a mutual distrust. Without research creating a better understanding between governmental land managers and American Indians, such conflict is likely to continue. A primary goal of this study was to investigate the CSKT use of national forests and make recommendations on how to improve communication between the Salish Kootenai and U.S. Forest Service.

Method

This study focused on the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation in Montana. Semi-structured interviews were completed in 2001 with a purposive sample of 60 enrolled Tribal members. Tribal members were selected based on their prior use of national forests in NW Montana, as identified by referrals from the Tribal Natural Resources Department, and other Tribal members. Interviewees represented an age range from 20-75, males and females, and included both members who were and were not employed by the Tribes. The interview instrument was developed through consultation with researchers, employees of the CSKT Natural Resources Department, Tribal Preservation Office and Legal Department, as well as the Salish and Kootenai Cultural Committees. Three Tribal members trained in interviewing techniques conducted interviews in the homes lasting approximately one hour. Questions were asked about outdoor recreation participation in six national forests in NW Montana, why specific places were important, personal and family history of forest use, and recommendations for managers. Interviews were audio taped and then transcribed for analysis. Qualitative analysis of the data included the following: reading all interviews, generating

major themes and categories of responses for questions, coding the responses into the major codes/categories sharing a common focus, constant comparisons between and among interviews, generating conclusions, member checks with Tribal staff, and an independent analysis by two additional researchers of randomly selected portions of the data.

Limitations

Due to the small sample size, inability to generalize findings to the larger American Indian populations, and paucity of literature regarding American Indian leisure preferences, these findings are offered as the nascent beginning of future investigations.

Results

American Indians of North America are not a monolithic group. They are as diverse as any other population. While some live on reservations and adhere to traditional ways, others live in cities, have severe economic challenges, are considered middle class, and live very modern/western lifestyles. Conclusions and recommendations in this study are based on data from two Tribal groups on one reservation in a rural area of Montana. Caution should be exercised in generalizing these results to apply to "all" North American Indians, or to "all" Salish and Kootenai people. The data for this study came from interviews with 60 Tribal members of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. Forty-two were male and 18 were female. The average age of those interviewed was 46.4 years; 15 were 20-39 years old, 39 were 40-59 years old, and nine were 60 or over.

This study found that many American Indians in the Salish and Kootenai Tribes participate in a variety of outdoor recreation activities in a number of national forests in the region of the reservation. These activities include hunting, camping, berry and mushroom picking, fishing, sightseeing, hiking, and collecting traditional plants. The Tribal members interviewed in this study identified 18 additional activities. These ranged from picnicking, viewing wildlife, traveling *via* motorized use, to spiritual and religious activities. Most of these Tribal members' use of the national forests occurred in undeveloped areas. Of those interviewed, a majority participated in these recreation activities on the national forests in family units (76%). Knowledge of specific sites within the national forests was typically learned through the family. When asked why they visit the national forests, common responses identified traditional gatherings, spending time outdoors, spiritual renewal, peacefulness, cultural events, and following a way of life.

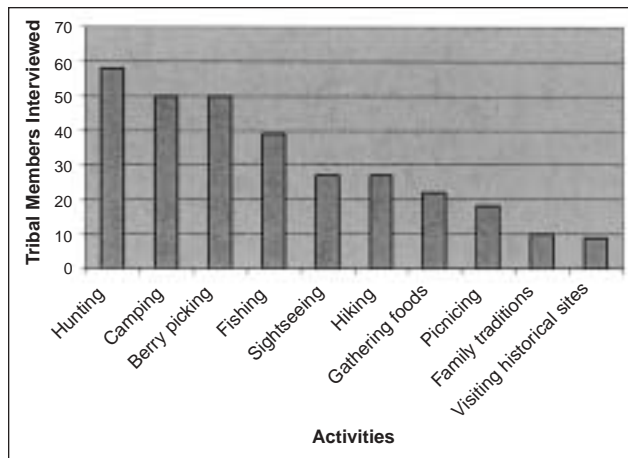


Figure 1. Recreation Activities

Four of the 60 Tribal members interviewed in this study hesitated to recognize the term “outdoor recreation.” They agreed to be interviewed about their “activities” in the national forests, but stated that “outdoor recreation” was a “white” term that has little meaning to them. These Tribal members view their activities in the national forests not as recreation, but as a way of continuing their cultural traditions, a way of life, and continuing interaction with the natural environment as they and their ancestors have for centuries. Their perspective embraces outdoor recreation activities as a cultural tradition of living in harmony with the natural resources while using these resources to sustain themselves and their families in both a physical and spiritual way.

Spiritual Values

There were no questions on the interview instrument on spiritual values Tribal members have regarding places in national forests. Yet, during the interviews, a large proportion of Tribal members indicated, without prompting, that spiritual values play a large role in their use of national forests. Themes of spirituality emerged from the interviews conducted with Salish-Kootenai Tribal members. Of those interviewed, 27 (45%) explicitly mentioned spiritual themes when describing their relationship to the surrounding national forests. Themes that were viewed as spiritual included the explicit use of the word “spiritual,” or included terms participants used such as “traditional religion,” “Creator,” “Mother Earth,” and “prayers.” When describing spiritual themes, Tribal members described places, thoughts, feelings, and actions to illustrate the perception of national forests contributing to their overall spirituality. The following quote from an elderly man exemplifies this:

When I go to the forest, I think about the spirituality that’s connected there, I think about the bones of

my ancestors looking at me, and helping me to teach my kids to respect the forest and all that it has to offer us, and providing us a place to camp, to share our meal with the ancestors, to pick berries, to swim, to partake in the traditional materials, bark, the willow, whatever it is that we’re going to the woods to get. And that’s what [we] always pays tribute to — our ancestors and all the people that made tracks for us.

Some interviewees stated that it was essential to visit the national forest to maintain and strengthen their spiritual connection to the land and for passing traditions onto future generations. One middle-aged woman said:

Because of the way I was raised and to get along with Mother Earth and the trees and the forestry and stuff, we find our peace there...we just exist and be one with the Earth and that’s how our spirituality grows, and it strengthens it.

Certain places and activities were often mentioned by interviewees, while some used care to not give specific locations. For example, a very traditional young man shared the following:

...and I know a couple places where my grandpa [utilized] was there. He was a medicine man; he was the last one, the medicine man that used to put up the blanket. And he showed me where he got his medicine from. Exact place up there and I can’t say and will not say to anyone where it’s at that he showed me where he got it, when he was a little boy. And those types of things makes you feel good, ‘cause you know it’s there. And just like when, [we go to] Kootenai Falls, we were up there, it’s a sacred place; you can feel it when you go there.

Another element that emerged from the interviews relates to what some would construe as subsistence activities. Many interviewees commented that hunting, fishing and gathering activities were an extension of their spiritual practices. When asked to comment on their feelings about their favorite berry picking areas in the national forest, many interviewees mentioned spiritual outcomes. The quote from a young woman illustrates this:

I think what I like about a really good berry picking place is to be able to do it in peace and quiet, to enjoy the overall activity, aside from the fact that you are getting berries to take home. But when you go out there and ya know for myself looking at the sunlight as it goes through the trees and shines on the huckleberry leaves, I mean to me [it] is just

beautiful. And when you look at big, black, ripe huckleberries I mean and you are filling up your basket, I mean there's a spiritual contentment, I think is all that I can call it in going out there and gathering something that is, ya know it not only fills your stomach it just kind of fills your soul.

When asked how the national forests are important for continuing family traditions, one elder man mentioned passing on the traditional ways of hunting:

I learned a lot about how we as Indians are supposed to hunt. How we pray, how we prepare for that, how we give thanks for that hunt. So, that's something I want my sons to know...I want my sons to understand why we hunt.

Conflict

Sometimes when people visit the national forest, they experience some type of conflict with the way an area has changed, is managed or when they feel too many "other" visitors are using the area. Those interviewed in this study were asked to describe their experiences with conflict in the national forests. Figure 2 shows the types of conflict encountered by Tribal members when they go to national forests.

The greatest type of conflict encountered is that of overcrowding, indicated by 37% of those interviewed. The next most common type of conflict was "lack of respect," indicated by 28%. This was expressed as encountering White people in the national forest who showed a lack of respect for the natural environment and for Indian people and their uses of the forest. The next most important type of conflict encountered was "laws and attitude of Forest Service personnel" encountered in the forest. Figure 2 indicates a number of other

conflict types. Only 10% of those interviewed indicated that they encounter no conflicts when they visit national forests. The three quotes below are examples of conflict statements given in the interviews:

Or sometimes you will get to a place where you used to enjoy going and they've turned it into a park or they've put places there for you to camp, but they've also...they've modernized it so much that it's not as comfortable as it used to be. They've taken the naturalness out of the wilderness.

A lot of that I think, some of the conflicts that I have with the national forests and the way things are done is again, I think there's a lot of lack of respect by the people that visit the national forest. Well in the national forest one conflict that I have, well it's a conflict, and it's just the changes that we as Indian people go through, and we've always hunted and fished and picked berries all our lives that was part of our living, it wasn't a job for us it was something that we lived. But now you go over into times where they got so many rules and regulations that they want us to follow by, and it's just the changes, the rules and regulations that they have on our way of life.

And one of the biggest conflicts we had was Game Wardens pullin' in there and basically going through and checking everybody's IDs, checking everybody's, I mean they checked me so close, they checked to make sure that I had insurance on my pick-up.

Figure 3 shows categories of responses when interviewees were asked how they react to conflicts they encounter while visiting the national forest.

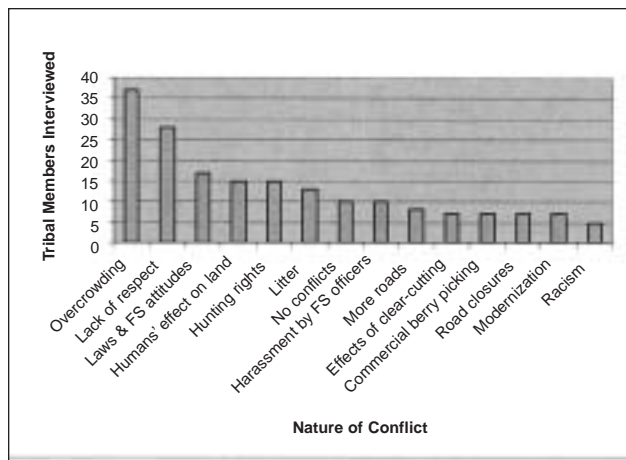


Figure 2. Types of Barriers Encountered

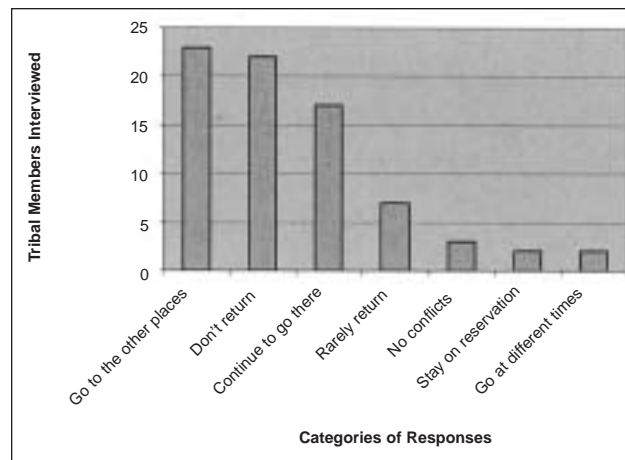


Figure 3. Reactions to Barriers Encountered

Satisfaction with National Forest Facilities

Those interviewed were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with the developed facilities currently existing within the national forests. Figure 4 indicates that most of those interviewed were satisfied with the existing developed facilities in the Forests. Sixty-three percent indicated that facilities were either adequate or that there was no need for additional facilities. Smaller percentages indicated that facilities should be cleaner, should be more primitive or should be monitored more. The quotes below are examples of opinions regarding existing facilities:

I've seen some facilities that are very appropriately placed where they were; campgrounds that weren't real intrusive but provided a little convenience, especially for people that might not have had access in their ability to camp there; things like that. As you were saying earlier, a bathroom is nice every now and then. But, a lot of the facilities I've seen have been very good.

I think in consideration of the numbers of people they get trafficking through their campgrounds and all their facilities, I think they probably do the best they can. I think that they actually do a pretty good job considering those numbers. But, you're coming from a time and place where a bathroom facility was probably non-existent, it's actually a nice extra perk, but sometimes you can see in some areas that they do get a lot of heavy use.

In a separate question, those interviewed were asked how satisfied they were with the national forest(s) they visited for outdoor recreation. They were asked to respond on a 5 point scale from very dissatisfied to very satisfied. Forty

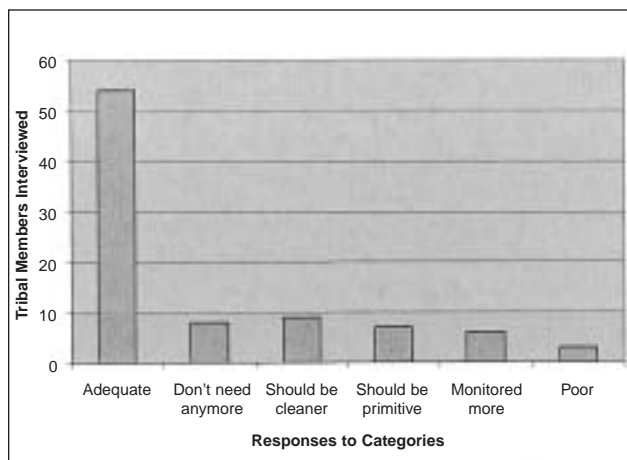


Figure 4. Opinions of Forest Service Facilities

seven percent indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the national forests they visited, and 38% indicated a neutral response. Only 8% indicated they were unsatisfied with the national forests they visited.

Recommendations for Managers

The final questions in the interview asked Tribal members to make general recommendations to Forest Service managers of the national forest areas they had identified where they participate in outdoor recreation activities. A number of suggestions were given, and they are summarized in Figure 5.

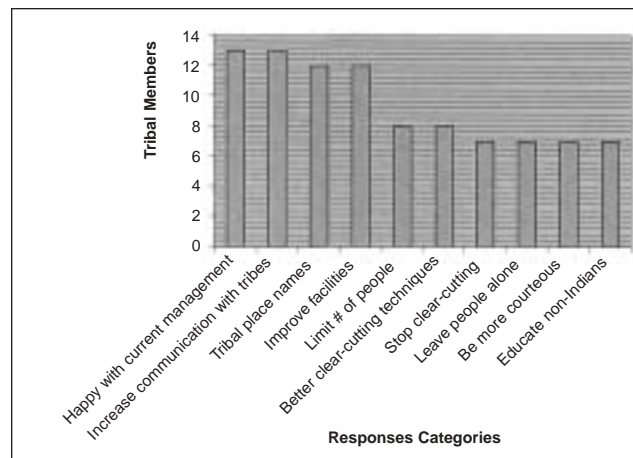


Figure 5. Recommendations to Managers

Many of those interviewed are happy with the current management of the forests. Other suggestions for management included: increasing communication with the Tribal Council, posting signs with Tribal place names, improving facilities, limiting the numbers of people, creating better clear-cutting techniques, stopping of clear-cutting, leaving Tribal people alone while in the forests, increasing the courteousness of the staff toward Tribal people, and educating non-Indians about the use rights of Indian people. The following quotes from an elder illustrate the depth and range of management recommendations:

I don't think they (Forest Service) take enough of what this Reservation has to say about their forest management. I think they need to do more dialogue with our folks, ya know go through Council to where they can put it out. But there should be something tied in to our treaty rights to have something to say about how the Forest Service is gonna manage the places in western Montana. To know both worlds 'cause they're both different cultures, totally

different. Maybe they have other reasons of being there, you know I don't know what their reasons are, and I don't think we should tell 'em they can't be there. But I don't think they should be there during my time either. And I would respect not being there during their time. I guess a total respect of both; to all the cultures.

Discussion

The results of this study reveal three major outdoor recreation research and management issues concerning American Indians. The first is that although many Tribal members in this study indicated that they participate in outdoor recreation activities in the national forests, some indicated that they do not recognize the term "outdoor recreation." When asked, they responded that they do not participate in "outdoor recreation." They see outdoor recreation as a White, Euro-western activity that is not part of their culture. They see outdoor activities like hunting, fishing, berry or mushroom picking, and collecting traditional plants as ways of carrying on traditional gathering activities in the environment, traditional ways of subsistence use of the natural world. As a result, many Tribal members indicated that they do not accept the term "outdoor recreation" as being a legitimate term that applies to them as a culture. They see other activities that resource management professional's term "outdoor recreation," including camping, hiking, picnicking, boating, etc. as activities that they do as an extended family group in conjunction with the gathering activities in the environment. As an example, although many Tribal members indicated that they do go camping, they seldom go to developed camping areas in a national forest. Rather, they tend to go to isolated sites in the forest where they camp out as a family group while they are hunting, or fishing, or gathering berries, or engaged in other traditional activities.

The second issue is the experienced or anticipated racism that some American Indians perceived when they attempted to participate in activities that professional's term "outdoor recreation." This usually falls into three categories of racism: actual racism encountered while in the national forests, historical racism, and anticipated racism. Only a few Tribal members interviewed in this study actually used the term "racism" to describe the behaviors and attitudes they often encounter while in the national forests. But, many indicated they encountered threatening and disrespectful behaviors by White recreationists and agency staff while in the national forests, behaviors they believe are directed at them because they are Indian. These behaviors included racist slurs, racial profiling and harassment from agency law enforcement officers, and threats from other recreationists. The

other two categories of racism that influenced Tribal members' use of the forest were historical racist behaviors by recreationists and recreation staff, and anticipated racist behavior. Some Indians stay away from specific areas, recreation facilities, and agency staff because of racist problems in the past, and anticipated racist behavior. As a result of these experienced and anticipated racist behaviors, American Indians have traditionally avoided studies that attempt to measure their use of, and involvement in, developed recreation sites such as campgrounds, picnic areas, boat launch sites, swimming beaches, and recreational trails. Not only is there a cultural influence going on here, as indicated in the first issue explained above, but in many cases American Indians have been told by words and behaviors of White recreationists and staff that they are not welcome at some developed outdoor recreation sites.

A last issue concerns how outdoor recreation areas and facilities in the national forests are managed, especially near Indian reservations. In some cases Forest Service managers are making development or resource management decisions without much information or knowledge of how those actions would impact American Indian use of the land or area. Examples are timber harvests, changing water levels in lakes and reservoirs, snowmobile and ATV policies, and the building or closing of roads. These management and/or development activities can have major negative impacts on areas and resources used by Indians for traditional gathering and other activities. Many American Indians want to have a larger say in how these areas are managed. They are eager to work with management agencies on an equal footing to manage national forest lands so that resource extraction and outdoor recreation needs of the White population are met in harmony with the traditional needs of Indian people.

The outdoor recreation research and management fields are just beginning to scratch the surface of a better understanding of the concerns and needs of American Indians. It is hoped this research can add to that body of knowledge. Significantly more research must be done to understand the worldview of American Indians and how that worldview influences the management of outdoor recreation resources.

Another element that emerged from the interviews relates to what some would construe as subsistence activities. Many interviewees commented that hunting, fishing, and gathering activities were an extension of their spiritual practices. When asked to comment about their feelings concerning their favorite berry picking areas, many interviewees mentioned spiritual outcomes. And when asked how the national forests are important for continuing family traditions, one young woman interviewee emphasized the importance of passing on the traditional ways of hunting: "I learned a lot about how we as Indians are supposed to hunt. How we pray,

how we prepare for that, how we give thanks for that hunt. So, that's something I want my sons to know...I want my sons to understand why we hunt." Some interviewees stated that it was essential to visit the national forest to maintain and strengthen their spiritual connection to the land, and to pass traditions on to future generations. An elder stated: "Because of the way I was raised and to get along with Mother Earth and the trees and the forestry and stuff, we find our peace there...we just exist and be one with the Earth and that's how our spirituality grows, and it strengthens it." Knowing what visitors are seeking during their visits to the national forests is essential if managers want to provide quality experiences while opening the door for a better understanding of visitor preferences.

In Burnham's (2000) investigations, he found long held agreements between the CSKT and federal land managers emphasizing the importance of hiring Tribal members to work in the parks. Although this has been practiced over the years, the positions have typically been entry level with little opportunity to improve one's status. According to McLeod (1993), when ethnic minorities know there are people of their ethnicity working at the parks, they are more willing to visit. It can be argued that much can be improved by utilizing minorities in managing local and regional parks. When asked how Tribal members feel when visiting their favorite area in the national forest, it was common to hear them complaining about their favorite areas being overcrowded by people other than Tribal members — they often quit going to these areas as a result. West (1989) further emphasizes that hiring minorities to work in parks offers improved "psychological safety" as well as making them feel more welcome.

While Cheek, Field, and Burdge (1976) argued that peoples' preference for resources are often based on resource proximity, results from this study identified an extensive history of American Indians traveling long distances in search of specific hunting, spiritual, and gathering experiences. Although proximity will always play a role in amount of time spent in specific areas — especially those closer to where one lives, the fact that Tribal members traveled hundreds of miles to achieve specific goals such as gathering medicinal plants, should offer managers some insight as to the importance of including Tribal peoples in their long-term planning efforts and proposed changes to the landscape.

Implications for Management

From a management perspective, the findings from this study can be helpful in a number of ways. Giving voice to the Salish-Kootenai people who had not previously participated in any level of dialogue is a crucial beginning. Even though we learned little about the numbers and preferences for their

participation in outdoor related activities, identifying why, and the importance of what they do in national forests, should prove very informative to managers. Previous studies (Carr and Williams 1993; Dwyer 1994; Floyd and Gramann 1995) along with the findings from this study, suggest that recreationists' seek out compatible areas to recreate that offer opportunities to be with individuals with compatible social definitions. The final interview questions asked Tribal members to make general recommendations to Forest Service managers of the national forest areas where they participated in outdoor recreation activities. Many of those interviewed were satisfied with the current management of the forests. Management suggestions included: increasing communication with Tribes, use of Tribal place names on signs, improving facilities, limiting the numbers of visitors to some areas, improving clear-cutting techniques, halting clear-cutting, leaving Tribal people alone while in the forests, making the staff more courteous to Tribal people, and educating non-Indians concerning the use rights of Indian people. The following quotes illustrate the depth and range of management recommendations:

I don't think they (Forest Service) take enough of what this Reservation has to say about their forest management. I think they need to do more dialogue with our folks. But there should be something tied in to our treaty rights to have something to say about how the Forest Service is managing places in western Montana.

To know both worlds 'cause they're both different cultures, totally different. Maybe they have other reasons for being there, you know I don't know what their reasons are, and I don't think we should tell them they can't be there. But I don't think they should be there during my time either. And I would respect not being there during their time. I guess a total respect of both; to all the cultures.

The Salish-Kootenai Tribal members strongly believe that outdoor activities are one way of continuing cultural traditions. Dwyer (1994, 32) asked a very appropriate question, "will members of particular groups want to behave more like other groups, or will they retain traditional recreation Patterns?" A Salish Kootenai Tribal Council member answered this question quite succinctly when he stated:

...now that the elders are actively consulted, and the old ways of hunting, gathering, and speaking the language are being revived. Slowly they have realized...this is what makes us a sovereign nation. Sovereignty isn't something the U.S. Government can say we have and then we have it. Sovereignty is from

within, whether it's recognized by other nations or not (Burnham, 2000, 202).

While results from the National Recreation Survey conducted by Cordell, Betz, and Green (2002), suggests that the American mainstream is pursuing more non-utilitarian recreation pursuits, American Indians seem to be hanging onto an essential piece of their past that helps them understand that their relationship to self, culture, and place in the environment is crucial for their survival as Tribal people.

A number of recommendations presented by the authors and supported by previous research by Toupal (2003) are highlighted. First, managers at all levels lack adequate knowledge and understanding of cultural issues. Second, many personnel lack the training to effectively communicate with diverse minority groups. Third, managers are exceptionally challenged in their efforts to fully understand and/or appreciate American Indian concerns, issues, and the importance specific areas have to them as Tribal people. Fourth, even when all policies have been followed and the language has been carefully crafted to include input from Tribal members, government officials continue to be baffled when they hear no response to their requests for information. After several hundred years of mistreatment and neglect, it should come as no surprise that distrust toward government officials is still very much alive. Much can be accomplished through person-to-person dialogues that begin with a social visit at an individual's home, a recreational outing, social event, or Tribal celebration.

Only when we have walked a mile in another groups' moccasins, can we begin to understand how past experiences of injustice and marginalization, struggles for independence, and the fervent pursuit of a newly awakened identity can we begin to meet the needs and goals of Tribal peoples. The next step toward improving relationships between Forest Service managers and Tribal members is to continue pursuing an open dialogue that builds on trust and cooperation. Equally important is cultural awareness training for federal land managers. It is imperative that managers learn how to effectively and respectfully communicate with North American Indian Tribes in order to achieve a mutually productive working relationship.

Future Research

Although this study did not set its primary agenda as an investigation into support for the marginality, ethnicity, or discrimination perspectives, there is strong evidence to suggest that additional research needs to be conducted to better understand what others (Grossman 2005; Klobus-Edwards 1981; Stamps and Stamps 1985; Washburne 1978) believe to

be essential links between race and leisure preferences. Moreover, it is imperative that we explore how both impacts perceived, and real discrimination, define and influence choices minority populations consider when it comes to leisure activities. Although North American Indians value a strong adherence to cultural traditions, understanding the nexus between proximity of where Tribes live (city vs. reservation), their attachment to place, and how they prioritize the importance of traditional experiences is utterly essential to nurturing a dialogue between White culture and Tribal culture for the joint purpose of encouraging enjoyment of leisure activities. Our hope is that creating a shared trust and vision will build the bridge between cultures and values, enhancing each, enriching both.

Endnotes

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