

2001 Columbia River Recreation Survey – Implications for the Hanford Site Integrated Assessment

Anderson, D. M., Scott, M. J., Bunn, A. L., Fowler, R. A., Prendergast, E. L., Miley, T. B., Eschbach, T. O., and Jaksch, J. A. (2002). *2001 Columbia River recreation survey – implications for the Hanford Site Integrated Assessment*. (PNNL-13840). Richland, WA: Pacific Northwest National Laboratory.

River(s): Columbia River
Research Topic(s): Use estimation methods, Economic value of recreation, Trip characteristics
Type of Publication: Report

1. Study Purpose

- “To establish a current baseline of recreation use and value on the Columbia River in the Tri-Cities vicinity for use in estimating health and economic impact” (p. 2)
- Objectives include:
 - | Measuring the amount of recreational use
 - | Identifying types of recreation activities
 - | Determining trip duration and frequency
 - | Fishing activity characteristics
 - | Amount of money spent by recreationists per visit, relative to activity and trip origin
 - | Recreation alternatives

2. Findings

Response rate not reported.

2.1. Trip Characteristics

- 80% of respondents are from the local area, and most are from Benton County
- Very few visitors came from Grant County
- Sundays were the heaviest use day of the week, followed by Saturday

2.1.1. Length of stay

- For those recreationists from outside the area, average trip length is six days
- On average, recreationists visit the river 47 days each year (60 days for locals)
- 10% of non-local recreationists stay 10-14 days

2.1.2. Party size

The average party comprises three adults and two children

2.1.3. Recreation activities

- The most commonly reported activities were: picnicking, boating, water-skiing, and swimming (24% of those surveyed did not respond to this question)
- 31 parties participated in some level of fishing and indicated no species preference

2.1.4. River areas

- Area 1 recreationists spent 75% of their time in this area
- Area 2 recreationists spent 70% of their time in this area
- Area 3 recreationists spent 98% of their time in this area
- Suggests Area 1 and 2 users spent time in other river areas during their trip

2.2. Recreation Expenditures

- Results indicate over \$300 per party is spent per trip
- On average, recreationists spend \$32 per person per trip, of which \$18 is spent locally
- “Fishing is the most locally intensive for the economy with over 80 percent of expenditures occurring inside the Benton-Franklin County area” (p. 15)
- “Boaters and water-skiers spend much more per person, while sightseers and swimmers spend much less” (p. iii)

2.3. Recreation Alternatives

- When asked what they would do if the Columbia River was not available for their trip that day, 78% would go to a different location to recreate
- Of those continuing to recreate elsewhere, 14% said they would change activities. The remaining results have a large non-response bias.

3. Key Discussion Points

N/A

4. Management Recommendations

Larger sample sizes are recommended for future studies.

5. Research Design

5.1. Study Area

Approximately 100 miles of the Columbia River from Priest Rapids Dam to McNary Dam, and two miles upstream into the Snake River

5.2. Data Collection Instruments

On-site interviews and field observations

5.3. Study Population

Columbia River recreationists during early-July to mid-August 2001

5.4. Sample Size

256 recreationists surveyed

5.5. List of Variables and Operational Definitions

5.5.1. Trip characteristics

Length of stay, party size, activity participation, visitation habits, trip expenditures, recreation alternatives or substitutes

5.5.2. Use data

Recorded general conditions and count data

6. Theories Used in Study

N/A

7. Cautions/Limitations

- Sample size for recreationists outside of the local area was small, resulting in variability of results.
- This study took place outside of the prime fishing seasons, therefore fishing related questions/responses may not be representative of that activity group.
- The questions relating to activity alternatives produced results that suggest a misunderstanding by the respondents about the intent.