

## A Test of Inequity in River Recreation Reservation Systems

Schomaker, J. H. and Leatherberry, E. C. (1983). A test of inequity in river recreation reservation systems. *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* 38(1), 52-56.

River(s): Nationwide  
Research Topic(s): Use allocation, Trip characteristics, Boater characteristics  
Type of Publication: Journal

### 1. Study Purpose

“To determine whether river reservation systems systematically create a disadvantage for certain segments of the river-floating population” (p. 52). In this case, the authors tested whether “certain types of users tend to decide to run a river sooner or later than other users” (p. 52). The authors did this by comparing the background characteristics of early planners and late planners from rivers that do not currently have reservation systems.

### 2. Findings

Response rate 72% (median).

#### 2.1. Boater and Trip Characteristics

- Primary purpose users (those whose main purpose in the trip is boating) decide to take trips earlier than non-primary purpose users
- Late planners: were more frequent visitors to the river, used their own gear, live closer, spend less time on the river, and are younger
- Education and occupation incidence was similar for both early and late planners
- Late planners can be categorized into three types:
  - | Type I: Person is not able to plan in advance – this group is of greatest concern to managers
  - | Type II: Person puts off decisions or is spontaneous – this group is also a concern to managers
  - | Type III: Person is not required to plan well in advance (e.g., lives close to the river) – less cause for concern from managers

### 3. Key Discussion Points

- The group at greatest risk of inequity are those unable to plan well in advance, followed closely by those who are spontaneous trip takers.
- "Situation plays a large role in determining whether a person is an early or later planner." (p. 55)

- Overall, reservation systems do not appear to discriminate against certain types of users.

#### **4. Management Recommendations**

- Perform a comparison of user characteristics before and after implementation of a reservation system to watch for unforeseen interactions.
- A combination reservation and drop-in system would alleviate some of the inequity in impact to certain types of users.

#### **5. Research Design**

Survey research, random sample

##### **5.1. Study Area**

26 rivers from the Nationwide River Study

##### **5.2. Data Collection Instruments**

On-site contact card and mail questionnaire

##### **5.3. Study Population**

Floaters from 26 rivers nationwide

##### **5.4. Sample Size**

7,533 boaters surveyed

##### **5.5. List of Variables and Operational Definitions**

###### **5.5.1. Trip characteristics and demographics**

- Question asked how long prior to the trip the boater decided to go, 6 response categories were provided ranging from less than 24 hours to more than 1 year
- Other questions included:
  - | Floating was primary purpose of trip
  - | Commercial or private
  - | Prior experience on the river
  - | Length of trip
  - | Distance traveled to river
  - | Age, education, and occupation

#### **6. Theories Used in Study**

N/A