



United States Department of Agriculture

# Visitor Diversity through the Recreation Manager Lens: Comparing Forest Service Regions 8 (U.S. South) and 5 (California)

Cassandra Johnson Gaither, Nina S. Roberts, Kristin L. Hanula



Forest Service  
Research & Development  
Southern Research Station

General Technical Report SRS-205

---

## The Authors:

**Cassandra Johnson Gaither**, Research Social Scientist, USDA Forest Service, Southern Research Station, Athens, GA 30602; **Nina S. Roberts**, Professor, Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism, San Francisco State University, San Francisco, CA 94132; **Kristin L. Hanula**, former Graduate student, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602.

## Cover photos

Clockwise from top left: Spring on the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest (photo by Jessica Mou); persons fishing at Big Bear Lake in the San Bernardino National Forest in California (photo by Nina Roberts); children participate in the Latino Legacy “Native Plant Gardening” program on the Sam Houston National Forest, near Houston, TX (photo by Tamberly Conway); hikers posing for photograph after hiking in the Tahoe National Forest (photo by Nina Roberts); recreation visitors participating in the Los Angeles Wilderness Program pump water (photo by Monica Cota); Latino Legacy—*Amigos del Bosque* (“Friends of the Forest”) team members interact with community members at a local Hispanic community event near Houston, while one visitor completes a survey about conservation education and outreach preferences (photo by Tamberly Conway).

## March 2015

Southern Research Station  
200 W.T. Weaver Blvd.  
Asheville, NC 28804



[www.srs.fs.usda.gov](http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov)

# **Visitor Diversity through the Recreation Manager Lens:**

**Comparing Forest Service Regions 8 (U.S. South)  
and 5 (California)**

**Cassandra Johnson Gaither, Nina S. Roberts, Kristin L. Hanula**



# Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	1
Minority Group Access to Outdoor Recreation: Why is it Important?	1
<b>THE CHANGING FACE OF THE SOUTH</b>	2
<b>REACHING OUT: CONNECTING WITH RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITY VISITORS</b>	3
The Forest Service’s Response to California’s Mosaic	3
<b>“PROVIDE IT...BUT WILL THEY COME?”</b>	4
<b>OUR STRATEGY AND METHODS</b>	7
<b>WHAT WE LEARNED</b>	8
A Look at the Southeast, Region 8	8
Daniel Boone National Forest, Kentucky	11
Kisatchie National Forest, Louisiana	11
National Forests in Mississippi	11
National Forests in North Carolina	11
National Forests in South Carolina	12
National Forests and Grasslands in Texas	13
National Forests in Virginia	14
Region 5: California from the North to the South	15
Angeles National Forest	15
Eldorado National Forest	16
Klamath National Forest	17
Lassen National Forest	17
Mendocino National Forest	17
Sierra National Forest	18
Tahoe National Forest	19
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	19
<b>REFERENCES</b>	21





# Visitor Diversity through the Recreation Manager Lens:

## Comparing Forest Service Regions 8 (U.S. South) and 5 (California)

Cassandra Johnson Gaither, Nina S. Roberts, Kristin L. Hanula

### Abstract

In response to changing demographics and cultural shifts in the U.S. population, the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture has initiated a range of “culturally transforming” management practices and priorities aimed at better reflecting both the current and future U.S. population (USDA 2011). This makeover also calls attention to the various publics served by the Forest Service and questions whether the Agency’s services and programming are reasonably accessible by racial and ethnic minority populations within the U.S. populace. Although a priority for upper level management, the actual implementation of recreation visitor services may be difficult to achieve given competing management demands. The present study is an effort to generate greater understanding of the priority given to visitor diversity by forest managers in two of the Forest Service’s most racially and ethnically diverse regions: the 13 Southern States (not including Puerto Rico) that compose Region 8, and Region 5 (California only). Importantly, we want to understand better what this emphasis on visitor diversity means from the perspective of National Forest recreation managers. We identify management priorities and challenges facing recreation managers in their attempts to connect with (i.e., outreach and/or engage) and understand culturally and ethnically diverse visitors. Results indicate that managers in both regions consider visitor diversity important, but fiscal constraints and understaffing inhibit more targeted programming. As expected, results indicate more programming aimed at diverse recreation visitors in Region 5 compared to Region 8, although racial, ethnic, and, increasingly, cultural diversity are prevalent in a number of key areas adjacent to National Forest lands in the South.

**Keywords:** Community engagement strategies, national forest recreation, National Visitor Use Monitoring Survey, racial and ethnic diversity, recreation managers, visitor constraints.

### INTRODUCTION

#### Minority Group Access to Outdoor Recreation: Why is it Important?

Ethnic and racial minority group outdoor recreation participation is important for several obvious reasons. First, National forests are public resources supported by tax revenues. Wherever practical, taxpaying residents should have information and equitable access to these areas. Secondly, conservation and land management organizations understand that engagement with various groups is important for environmental preservation. Traditionally, these groups’ base of support has been mostly from middle and upper income non-Hispanic white constituents, but changing demographics continually point to the necessity of engaging other racial and cultural groups. Third, natural, outdoor areas are important places for physical activity. Hispanics and African Americans are more likely than non-Hispanic whites to have compromised health (Taylor and others 2007). Outdoor areas on National forests can provide the space to help the American public both maintain and enhance physical fitness and overall health.

We would also argue that minority engagement with National Forest recreation areas could help to cultivate practical and ongoing relationships between communities of interest and the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Such connections are mutually beneficial, as they can aid in building social capital in traditionally underserved communities by expanding support and information networks at the local level. The Forest Service may also gain the respect and support of locals



Participants in the Los Angeles Wilderness Program participate in a wilderness leadership training program on the Angeles National Forest. (photo by Stephen Vodantis)

Los Angeles Wilderness Training (LAWT) is a Los Angeles-based organization that trains adults who work with children to lead camping and backpacking trips into natural and wild areas adjacent to the city of Los Angeles, CA. LAWT also has a free Gear Library available to alumni, who can borrow tents, backpacks, sleeping bags, ground pads, clothes, and boots for their trips. The LAWT Web site is [www.lawildernesstraining.org](http://www.lawildernesstraining.org).



Hikers check out a newt on the trail. (photo by Chelsea Griffie)

through these interactions. One practical example of how such reciprocity could play out is provided by the Agency's current efforts to include minority, lower income groups, and youth input into the Forest Service's new Planning Rule (see <http://www.fs.usda.gov/planningrule>) (U.S. Federal Register 2012). The Agency is making a concerted effort to outreach to groups that have not traditionally contributed to National Forest planning, but the challenges of doing so are acknowledged by the Agency. Forest-based recreation represents a viable avenue by which the public could become more familiar with the Agency, thereby creating a path or basis upon which meaningful contributions to forest management could be made.

## THE CHANGING FACE OF THE SOUTH

In recent decades, the social processes of migration and immigration have transformed southern cities and towns into multicultural communities seeking to balance taken-for-granted traditions and culture with the needs and views of its newer members (Winders 2005, 2008). As an example, the small town of Clarkston, GA, just east of Atlanta, had a total population of 4,539 in 1980 that was 90 percent white, non-Hispanic (U.S. Census Bureau 1982a, 1982b). By 2010, the population had increased to 7,554, was just 13.6 percent non-Hispanic white, and the town was home to refugees from more than 40 countries due to Clarkston's designation as an immigrant resettlement location (Bixler 2005, St. John 2009, U.S. Census Bureau 2012a). On a larger scale, the Hispanic populations of Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee increased 324 percent, 440 percent, and 284 percent respectively from 1990 through 2000. The increases were less from 2000 through 2010 in each of these States (96.1, 111.1, and 132.4 percent, respectively), but Hispanic growth exceeded that of white, non-Hispanics by at least 9 to 1, and 3 to 1 for African Americans in this most recent period (U.S. Census Bureau 2000, 2012b).

A primary factor "pulling" Hispanics to the Southeast in the 1990s was the region's comparatively stronger economy, particularly in the construction, service, textile, and agricultural industries (Hernández-León and Zúñiga 2000, Johnson-Webb and Johnson 1996, Zúñiga and Hernández-León 2001). Importantly, less restrictive Federal regulations governing movement of immigrant and migrant guest workers allowed these laborers to branch out from traditional immigrant gateway areas in the Southwestern United States such as southern California.



A variety of studies have looked at the impact of recent migration and immigration on education, health care, transportation, employment, and housing in the Southeast (Atiles and Bohon 2002, Bohon and others 2005, Harrison and Scarinci 2007, Johnson-Webb and Johnson 1996, Smith and Winders 2008). However, few studies document immigrants' interaction with the region's public recreation resources, although some public lands managers in the South have called for studies focusing on diverse publics. In 2008, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources asked the University of Georgia's Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources to conduct a visitor study to gather data on racially and ethnically diverse visitors to Georgia State parks because of the increase in numbers of Hispanics visiting the parks (Larson and others 2012). The Warnell School of Forestry conducted a similar effort in 2010 and 2012, both on- and off-site in north Georgia at various distances (0 to 75 miles) from the Chattahoochee National Forest (Parker 2013). The primary aim was to collect data on a diverse public's perceptions of National Forest recreation visitation, including data on visitation constraints from both those who visit National forests and those who do not. Again, both data collections highlight the increasing interest among public land management agencies for information on non-traditional visitors (or potential visitors) to publicly managed outdoor recreation areas. Managers understand that these "newer" publics represent demographic changes that can, over the longer term, influence land management policy and funding.

## REACHING OUT: CONNECTING WITH RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITY VISITORS

### The Forest Service's Response to California's Mosaic

There is no majority ethnic or racial group in California. In 2010, 39.4 percent of the State's population was white, non-Hispanic; 13.9 percent Asian; 6.6 percent African American; and 37.6 percent Hispanic (U.S. Census Bureau 2012c). Large pockets of California's Hispanic population are concentrated in Southern California, primarily in and around Los Angeles and in the San Joaquin Valley. Persons of various Asian and Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, and African American descent have long and flourishing histories throughout the State as well.

In 1987, four supervisors for National forests in the Pacific Southwest—Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres, and San Bernardino—recognized the need for recreation programming to be more inclusive of various racial and ethnic groups, given the increase in Hispanic visitors to National forests in the region (Chavez 2001, 2002; Chavez and Olson 2009; Chavez and others 2008)(fig.1). As a result, a Forest Service research unit was established in Riverside, CA with the express purpose of documenting and devising management solutions addressing racial and ethnic diversity on southern California forests. Additionally, numerous programs targeting

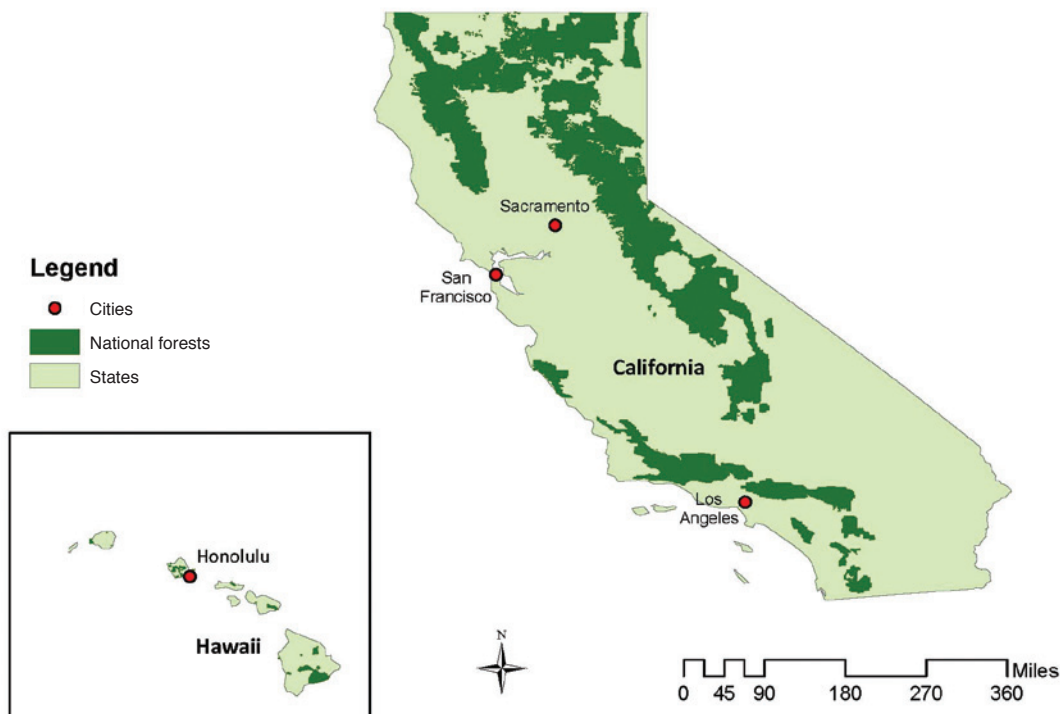


Figure 1 — National forests in Region 5. (Map created by Shela Mou)

urban-proximate Hispanic communities have since been initiated in southern California with great success.

More recently, attention to diverse recreationists in California resulted in a Pacific Southwest Station publication, “Serving Culturally Diverse Visitors in California: A Resource Guide” (Roberts and others 2009). This publication is intended for recreation managers, primarily, and highlights strategies and options for communication, services, and facilities. Additionally, this guide provides recommendations for partnership development and innovative ideas for community engagement and outreach. Content includes information about Forest Service programs and services in California as well as those of other Federal agencies (e.g., National Park Service, Army Corps of Engineers). Additionally, the publication highlights sample models from various non-profit organizations across the country, with suggestions for how Forest Service managers in California can benefit from incorporating these ideas or replicating programs.

For instance, the publication describes the California Consortium, a well-known community engagement program funded by the Forest Service with programs located in northern, central, and southern California. The Consortia throughout the State serve predominantly Hispanic and Hmong populations. They provide educational activities for families and encourage young people to consider careers in natural resources by facilitating internships and job placement opportunities. Outdoor Outreach is another example showcased by the publication, whereby “at-risk” youth are empowered to make positive, lasting changes in their lives through a variety of outdoor and adventure programs.



St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church in Apalachicola, FL. (photo by Cassandra Johnson Gaither)

## “PROVIDE IT...BUT WILL THEY COME?”<sup>1</sup>

Similar cultural diversity exists in and around National forests in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and South Carolina, with traditionally high percentages of African Americans and, in many instances, growing Hispanic populations. Yet few studies have examined potential constraints faced by African American visitors to southern National forests (Johnson and others 2007, Parker 2013, Smith and Anderson 2010). This is likely due to the comparatively small number of visits made by African Americans to National forests in the South. While local African Americans do value the land and natural environment, broadly (Finney 2014). This relative lack of engagement from a recreational use standpoint continues to raise the question of *why* they are not recreating outdoors in numbers proportionate to their presence in the local population.

The present study draws on data from the National Visitor Use Monitoring Survey (NVUM) collected from 2002 through 2003 and 2005 through 2009.<sup>2</sup> Using preliminary NVUM data, Johnson and others (2007) compared recreation visits for three regions of the country with relatively high racial and ethnic minority populations—African Americans in the South (Region 8), Hispanics in the Southwest, (Regions 3 and 5) and Asians in the Pacific Northwest (Region 6). From 2002 through 2003, estimated visits by Hispanics to the Los Padres and the San Bernardino National Forests in southern California were close to 25 and 20 percent, respectively. Percentage visitation by Hispanics to these forests approached the population proportion for Hispanics in southern California counties in the early 2000s (34.96 percent).<sup>3</sup> Similarly, estimated visits by persons of Asian descent to National forests in California and Oregon were consistent with the proportion of Asians in both these States in the year 2000 (10.9 percent and 3.0 percent, respectively) (U.S. Census Bureau 2002).

More recent NVUM estimates (2005 through 2009) from round two sampling show somewhat lower percentages

<sup>1</sup> From Johnson, C.Y.; Bowker, J.M.; Green, G.; Cordell, H.K. 2007. “Provide it... but will they come?” a look at African American and Hispanic visits to Federal recreation areas. *Journal of Forestry*. 105 (5): 257-265.

<sup>2</sup> NVUM is a national survey of recreation visitors to National Forests and Grasslands in the United States. The 2000 through 2004 data are available as data tables accessible through NRIS NVUM 1.5 software. U.S. Forest Service employees may download NRIS NVUM from the following website: [http://fsweb.nris.fs.fed.us/products/NVUM\\_Results/install/index.php](http://fsweb.nris.fs.fed.us/products/NVUM_Results/install/index.php). See specific instructions at <http://apps.fs.usda.gov/nrm/nvum/results>. [Date accessed: August 15, 2014].

<sup>3</sup> San Bernardino, Riverside, Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, Kern, Imperial, Ventura, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Inyo Counties. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002).

of visits by Hispanics to forests in southern California (USDA Forest Service 2013a). Hispanics represented 19.5 percent of visits to the Angeles, 16.2 percent of visits to the Los Padres, and 17.6 percent of visits to the San Bernardino, respectively (USDA Forest Service 2013a). Visitation estimates for the Carson and Gila National Forests in New Mexico (Region 3) showed Hispanics contributing to an average of about 27 percent of the visits to these forests (USDA Forest Service 2013a) (table 1).

Visitation estimates for persons of Hispanic and Asian descent in the West provide some support for the demographic theory of racial and ethnic recreation visitation, which offers a proximity explanation for the lack of minority visits to outdoor recreation areas. Simply put, people recreate in areas to which they have access (Hutchison 1987, Stodolska and others 2013). Again, in 2010, Hispanics accounted for 37.6 percent of California’s population and an average of 41.9 percent of the population in 11 southern California counties proximal to National forests (U.S. Census Bureau 2012c). Hispanics accounted for 46.3 percent of New Mexico’s population. Persons of Asian descent (non-Hispanic) accounted for 3.7 percent of Oregon’s population in 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau 2012c). To be sure, visitation rates for Hispanics are well below the Hispanic proportions in the relevant States; however, visits by Hispanics and Asians indicate a considerable measure of engagement with National forests in both the Southwest and the Pacific States.



Children participate in the Latino Legacy “Native Plant Gardening” program on the Sam Houston National Forest, near Houston, TX. (photo by Tamberly Conway)

In contrast, estimated visits by African Americans to National forests in the South that have adjacent higher-than-average African-American populations are drastically lower than the proportion of African Americans surrounding these forests. As an example, the African-American population exceeds 60 percent in some counties adjacent to the Talladega National Forest in Alabama; the Chattahoochee-Oconee in Georgia; the Homochito, Delta, and Tombigbee in Mississippi; and the Francis Marion in South Carolina. However, on average, African Americans made only 2 percent of visits

**Table 1—Percent of visits accounted for by race and ethnicity to National Forests in Regions 3, 5, and 8**

Region/Forest	African American	Asian American	Hispanic	White, non-Hispanic
<b>Region 3</b>				
Carson	0.4	1.8	24.8	94.3
Gila	0.3	0.3	29.0	97.7
<b>Region 5</b>				
Angeles	4.9	10.0	19.5	83.9
Los Padres	2.4	4.5	16.2	90.2
San Bernardino	3.3	6.3	17.6	89.5
<b>Region 8</b>				
Chattahoochee-Oconee	1.6	1.7	4.0	96.9
Francis Marion and Sumter	4.3	2.0	3.8	91.7
National Forests in Alabama	0.2	1.0	0.9	98.3
National Forests in Mississippi	2.8	0.0	0.1	94.2

Source: National Visitor Use Monitoring Survey 2005–2009.



to forests in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and South Carolina from 2005 through 2009 (USDA Forest Service 2013a). Further, the average Hispanic share of visits to these forests is the same as visits by African Americans, even though African Americans account for a much larger share of the general population in each of these States (USDA Forest Service 2013a).

In the South, social and cultural definitions of forested areas may detract from African-American visitation to these places. Johnson and Bowker (2004) argue that historical associations of both wild and cultivated lands with oppression—in the form of plantation agriculture, harsh working conditions in forest products industries, and episodic violence—have combined to produce a “wildland aversion” among many contemporary African Americans. A more straightforward explanation may be that African Americans recreate predominantly on State or privately held land. However, Larson and others (2012) also report significantly lower numbers of African Americans (vis-à-vis non-Hispanic whites) visiting three Georgia State parks.

Anderson and Smith (2009) and Smith (2012) argue that a given community’s engagement with a local National Forest depends largely on the level of social capital within that community (e.g., social structures, information exchange, and strength of civic organizations). In the case study of Louisville, MS, near the Tombigbee National Forest, Anderson and Smith (2009, p. 8) argue that “The contextual history of slavery, and the role that the national as well as State governments played in it, is critical to understanding if and how natural resource management agencies like the USDA Forest Service can invest in the social capital of rural communities.” These factors, they argue, along with high poverty rates and contemporary social segregation in Louisville, contribute to the Tombigbee National Forest as a racialized landscape that may inhibit the forest from contributing to social capital formation in Louisville.

Culturally based programming promoted by National forests in the South occurs less frequently than in the West, although we identified one successful outreach program centered in Houston, TX titled *Urban Connections, Hispanic Legacy*. The program targets Hispanic children and their families in the Houston metropolitan area.



Latino Legacy—*Amigos del Bosque* (“Friends of the Forest”) team members interact with community members at a local Hispanic community event near Houston, while one visitor completes a survey about conservation education and outreach preferences. (photo by Tamberly Conway)



Annie Hermansen-Baez of the Southern Research Station poses by the *Bosque Móvil* (“Forest Bus”), a mobile forestry education initiative sponsored by Stephen F. Austin State University, the Texas A&M Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Forest Service. The bus visits Hispanic cultural festivals and other Hispanic events. (photo by Tamberly Conway)

Through the interagency-funded *More Kids in the Woods Program* initiated in 2007, *Hispanic Legacy* promotes conservation education in Hispanic communities by stressing conservation ethics and by highlighting Hispanic history and contributions to forest history and management. A prominent feature of the program is its *Bosque Móvil* ("Forest Bus"), a traveling bus that visits Hispanic cultural festivals and other Hispanic events (Stephen F. Austin State University 2010). The bus is stocked with bilingual conservation and management material, hands-on activities, and various other exhibits. The program is sponsored jointly by the Forest Service, Texas A&M Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Stephen F. Austin State University, among other local organizations.

*Hispanic Legacy*, however, is not region-wide. It is not available in other southern cities with growing Hispanic populations due to a number of factors, including lack of funding and personnel. Also, there are few comparable programs geared to either urban or rural African-American populations, although the lack of intentional nature contact for African Americans in the South may pervade rural areas as well. Johnson and others (2009) remark on the unfamiliarity of African-American children with nature in a rural, coastal South Carolina community.

## OUR STRATEGY AND METHODS

While findings on recreation demand by racial and ethnic groups are informative, it is equally important to understand constraints that managers may face in attempting to modify sites or otherwise respond to various socio-cultural groups' recreation preferences. To obtain managerial input into this issue, we interviewed professionals responsible for recreation management on National forests in Regions 8 and 5 regarding their ability to be responsive to diverse recreation visitors. Interviews were conducted in three phases during the summer and fall of 2009 and summers of 2010 and 2011. Responses for each forest were summarized and reported accordingly. A total of 47 managers and supervisors were contacted, 20 in Region 8 and 27 in Region 5. Managers were primarily at the forest level but also included supervisors and regional recreation managers. Of the 20 contacts made in Region 8, 11 managers responded.

In Region 8, managers responded to each question for all of the National forests in a given State with the exception of six locations: the Ouachita, Chattahoochee-Oconee, Daniel Boone, Kisatchie, Francis Marion and Sumter, and George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. In these cases, responses were provided for a specific forest. Ten of the 13 States that make up the Southern Region were represented.

**The following tabulations show the forests represented:**

National Forests and Grasslands represented in Region 8 were:

Alabama: National Forests in Alabama  
 Arkansas: Ouachita  
 Georgia: Chattahoochee-Oconee  
 Kentucky: Daniel Boone  
 Louisiana: Kisatchie  
 Mississippi: National Forests in Mississippi  
 North Carolina: National Forests in North Carolina  
 Oklahoma: Ouachita  
 South Carolina: Francis Marion and Sumter  
 Texas: National Forests in Texas  
 Virginia: George Washington and Jefferson

National Forests represented in Region 5 were:

Angeles  
 Eldorado  
 Klamath  
 Lassen  
 Mendocino  
 Sierra  
 Tahoe



Florida teenagers participate in the Florida Indian Youth Program on the Apalachicola National Forest. (photo by USDA Forest Service)



Seventh-graders from Union Point STEAM Academy estimate tree height using hypsometers at Scull Shoals on the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest in Georgia. Students assisted by Joan Scales of the Georgia Forestry Commission. (photo by Cassandra Johnson Gaither)



In Region 5, the Klamath, Sierra, Tahoe, Angeles, Eldorado, Lassen, and Mendocino National Forests were represented. Nine managers out of 27 responded (33 percent). Responses were provided for individual forests. Two managers responded for the Sierra and the Lassen. The interview process consisted of 16 open-ended questions related to management priorities and challenges, views on recreation visitor diversity, length of the manager's time at the forest, and perceptions of local culture and demography. Management from 7 of the 18 forests in California was represented.

## WHAT WE LEARNED

### A Look at the Southeast, Region 8

**National Forests in Alabama**—The National Forests in Alabama are comprised of four forests: William B. Bankhead, Talladega, Tuskegee, and Conecuh. These forests encompass roughly 667,000 acres, with the northernmost forest (Bankhead) located in the Southern Appalachian Mountains, the Talladega in the Cumberland Plateau, and the Tuskegee and Conecuh in the Coastal Plain (fig. 2). Extensive recreation opportunities are available on each forest. The Tuskegee is the smallest national forest in the State and also the smallest in the United States. It is contained in a single county, Macon County, which is noted for high poverty rates and a large African-American population (81.8 percent). Historically black Tuskegee University is located in the county as well.

We interviewed the forest supervisor and a recreation manager for the National Forests in Alabama in 2009

and 2010. The top three problems recreation managers encountered at that time related to the high demands that come with heavy use of the forests, budget constraints, loss of personnel due to attrition, and the lack of a statewide strategic vision for recreation. Compared to other management priorities, diversification of the visitor base for Alabama National Forests along racial and ethnic lines was considered “moderately important.” The supervisor stated that there was already a diverse recreation user base due to the overall ethnic diversity in the general population. Forest managers did not strive to increase use for any particular groups. The assumption was that the diversity of the general public would be reflected in the population of visitors to the National Forests in Alabama. The supervisor said that the largest barrier for non-white groups visiting the forest may be entry fees. Explaining this particular constraint, he stated: “If you have families with a lower income in the poverty areas, it’s hard to get out and go pay five dollars.”

The recreation manager also expressed that “economics” and “cultural factors” or perhaps unfamiliarity with forest resources were likely barriers to greater minority recreation participation. At the time of data collection, there were no programs aimed at increasing racial or ethnic diversity of forest visitors; instead, forest managers aimed to increase use generally, although there were school and trail partnerships and camping programs in place to increase overall use.

**National Forests in Arkansas/Oklahoma**—The Ouachita National Forest is spread across Arkansas and Oklahoma. The forest spans 1.8 million acres in central

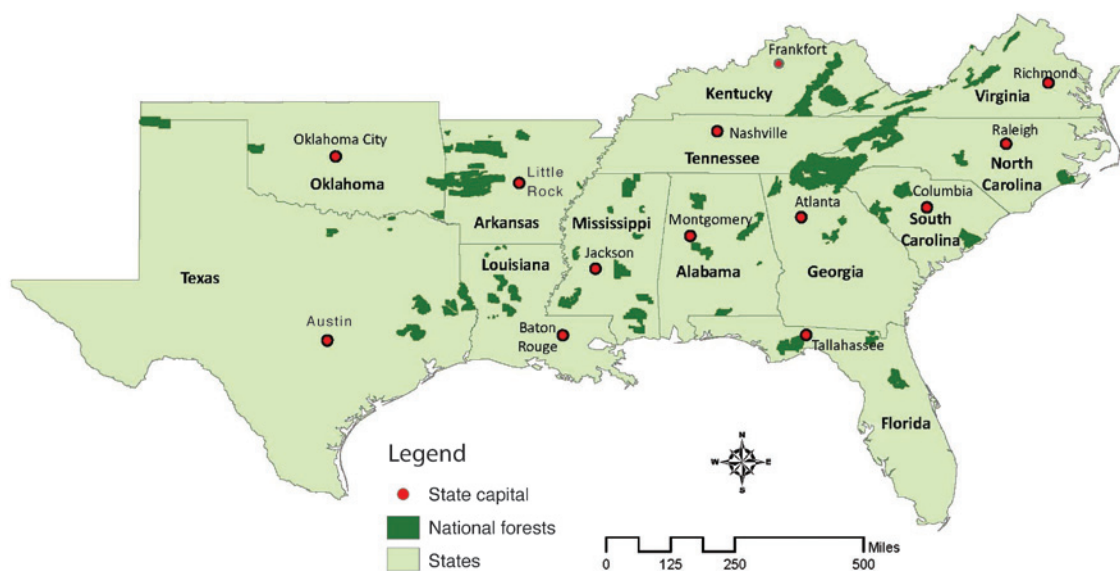


Figure 2—National forests in Region 8. (Map created by Shela Mou)

Arkansas and stretches across to eastern Oklahoma. We interviewed a recreation manager who indicated the primary problems experienced on the forest were capacity issues, or specifically “to be able to essentially operate all our facilities up to standard,” and lack of staffing. The manager emphasized that all of the top concerns were strongly correlated to insufficient budget; specifically, he said that the budget issues resulted in a lack of personnel resources on the forest. He estimated that the recreation workforce had decreased by about 20 percent in the 5 years prior to this 2010 interview.

The manager had worked on the Ouachita 6 years, and he conveyed that the socio-demographic composition in counties adjacent to the forest had changed somewhat over the years he had been affiliated with the forest, notably with a growing Hispanic population. Indeed, the increase in the Hispanic population was at least 50 percent in nearly all of the 13 counties adjacent to the Ouachita from 2000 through 2010, while the percentage of African Americans declined in 7 of the 13 counties and the percentage of non-Hispanic whites declined in 11 of the surrounding counties. The manager also surmised that working class people mostly populate the nearby counties, except in the areas around Hot Springs, AR, where there are retirees of a higher income class. However, diversifying the ethnic and racial composition of visitors on the forest was a very low priority at this area compared to other issues. Explaining the reason behind this position, the manager commented:

They’re just trying to keep the areas open and maintained, and who uses them is just not a priority. They’re just trying to keep them open.... And we haven’t had the luxury to focus our efforts on... what particular user is going to benefit from that open recreation area. I guess our goal and objective has been more basic and that’s just, let’s keep it open so we have a place for people to recreate.

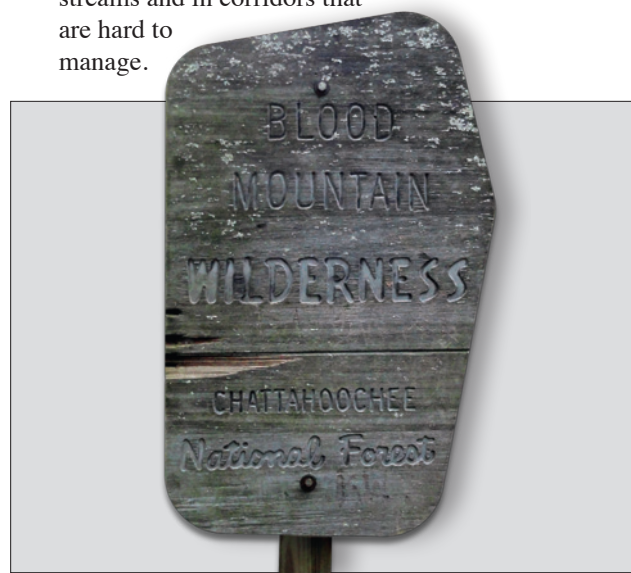
The manager remarked that upper income whites who are retired and have the time and resources to pursue recreational interests made most visits to the forest. For the Ouachita, this profile is consistent with the general population surrounding the forest. This assessment is confirmed by NVUM results showing that 96.8 percent of visits are accounted for by whites (USDA Forest Service 2013a). Still, the manager observed that Hispanic visitors were more likely to use day use sites on the forest, larger picnic sites in particular, and that their recreation seemed to be more family oriented. The manager also relayed that he did not perceive any barriers that different racial groups faced recreating on the forest; however, there was a concerted effort to provide signs in Spanish. The manager stated that managers would like to increase

visitor diversity, but at that time there were no plans or programs in place aimed at doing so.

**National Forests in Georgia**—The Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest is operated as one unit administratively but split into the Chattahoochee and the Oconee National Forest physically, totaling more than 865,000 acres. The Chattahoochee portion is in north Georgia at the southern end of the Appalachian Mountains. The Oconee reserve is located roughly 150 miles to the south; it is situated in the agricultural region of the Piedmont.

The forest supervisor we interviewed had been in his position nearly 2 years and the recreation supervisor nearly 4 years. The top problem revealed by these managers was with concessionaires, particularly regarding fee compliance. This involved theft from fee tubes located in recreation areas. Managers described it as a “chronic problem.” Other key issues were deferred maintenance; dispersed recreation with many access points and entry issues, which made it difficult for forest staff to monitor visitors; lack of staffing; and keeping up with necessary maintenance. Unauthorized dispersed recreation was especially problematic. The supervisor commented:

One issue that we face is with our dispersed recreation, being a forest that’s very fragmented and very close to large populations, there’s just a lot of different access to the forest, which is a good thing. However, having so much access to such a large population, it means that folks are recreating not necessarily in the areas where we want them to, particularly along rivers and streams and in corridors that are hard to manage.



Blood Mountain Wilderness signage on the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest (photo by Jessica Mou)



...Our dispersed recreation actually is growing in popularity, and of course it's free to the public, and we just don't have a plan for managing that type of recreation. We're very comfortable with our developed [recreation], but the dispersed is becoming more and more of a challenge.

In addition, the recreation supervisor noted that the lack of Agency personnel had resulted in an increase in the number of concessionaires on the forest. She felt that the lack of clearly designated revenue areas made it difficult to manage and maintain concessions on the forest.

Both managers stated that retirees and the working class made up much of the population of counties adjacent to the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest. For the recreation supervisor, "diversity" of forest visitors related more to recreationists coming from metropolitan Atlanta

than racial or ethnic differentiation. However, the forest supervisor believed there had been somewhat of a demographic change in areas surrounding the Chattahoochee, especially increases in the Hispanic population. When asked what forest personnel would like to know about different racial or ethnic groups recreating on the forest, the supervisor stressed that he would like to understand better what both the Hispanic and African-American communities would like to have for recreation opportunities on the forest. The recreation supervisor surmised that the lack of non-white visitors to the forest was likely due to the lack of ethnic and racial diversity near the forest. This was more the case near the northern, Chattahoochee portion of the forest, where the population mix is largely white. However, as discussed, there is considerable diversity in counties adjacent to the Oconee preserve south of metro Atlanta. The recreation supervisor also felt that a significant barrier for non-white



Various photos depicting typical flora and fauna in the spring time on the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest. (photos by Jessica Mou)

visitors may be the lack of existing visitor diversity, that non-whites may feel uncomfortable traveling to places that are overwhelmingly white.

The managers felt they were able to be responsive to the inquiries of non-traditional users on the forest, who were defined as anyone who is “non-Caucasian.” In general, however, recreation managers have very little contact with these non-traditional users. There were no current plans aimed at increasing ethnic diversity on the forest. However, the forest supervisor explained, “We’re starting to think about that [plans to increase diversity] to better understand it, but we need some information, such as your survey; that type of information might provide us help.” In addition, the recreation supervisor said that forest staff worked with local volunteer groups that reach out to underrepresented racial and ethnic groups.

### **Daniel Boone National Forest, Kentucky**

The Daniel Boone in northern Kentucky is one of the larger National forests in the east, with 2.1 million acres of land within its proclamation boundary. However, the Forest Service manages only about one-third of these acres. Land fragmentation represents an ongoing controversy for forest managers because forest boundaries are often disputed by adjacent landowners. Red River Gorge is a popular geologic feature on the forest.

A recreation manager interviewed in 2010 indicated that the top forest concerns were budget (insufficient funding leading to needs on the forest going unmet), lack of staffing, and high recreation usage. The socio-demographic mix around the forest has somewhat changed over the years, with an increase in various Hispanic populations. For recreation managers, diversifying the ethnic and racial composition of visitors was considered “not important” due to the challenge of “insufficient staffing.” Still, recreation managers were interested in learning more about both the recreation interests of diverse visitors on the forest and what group sizes are most common for different racial and ethnic groups. Language was the main barrier facing racial and ethnic groups on this forest because all of the information about forest activities is in English. In terms of plans aimed at increasing visitor diversity, forest managers had some conservation programs in place in inner cities. The managers also identified the need to address diversity issues after conducting a forest-wide interpretive plan.

### **Kisatchie National Forest, Louisiana**

The Kisatchie National Forest contains 604,000 acres of public land and is the only national forest in the State of Louisiana. The forest contains a range of traditional outdoor recreation activities, as well as the remains of

U.S. Army post Camp Claiborne dating back to World War II. Top forest concerns on the Kisatchie included deferred maintenance, lack of staffing, and “getting recreation recognized as an important function within the forest.” Concerning the lack of staffing, recreation managers indicated they were meeting forest needs, but lack of staffing remained a constant struggle.

The recreation manager we interviewed had worked for the Forest Service for 21 years and for the Kisatchie about 12 years. She described many of the people living in counties near the forest as long-time, lower income residents. She perceived the social mix as mostly unchanged over the years, although she noted an increase in Hispanics near the southernmost Calcasieu Ranger District. Diversifying recreation visitors on the forest was important: “We’re welcoming diversity.” She said forest managers were looking more closely at Hispanic visitors to determine whether they should begin to provide signs in Spanish.

The manager believed that the biggest barrier for ethnic and racial recreation visitors on the Kisatchie was the lack of public awareness. There were programs designed for school children that relayed information about the various recreation possibilities on the forest. Forest personnel were also working with 4-H groups across the State and with the Louisiana School for the Deaf to help encourage people with hearing disabilities to visit the forest.

### **National Forests in Mississippi**

Approximately 1.2 million acres of public lands are contained in Mississippi’s six National forests: De Soto, Homochito, Bienville, Delta, Tombigbee, and Holly Springs. These six preserves are distributed fairly evenly throughout the State from north to south. We spoke with a forest recreation program manager whose responses reflected conditions for all National forests in the State. Here, too, the most compelling problem facing forest managers was budgetary concerns. The program manager relayed that the managers of National forests in Mississippi were interested in learning more about the recreation interests of visitors, but managers said that they received very little contact from anyone they would consider “non-traditional” visitors. There were no plans in place focused on increasing diversity on these forests.

### **National Forests in North Carolina**

The Nanatahala, Pisgah, Uwharrie, and Croatan National Forests make up the National Forests in North Carolina. The Pisgah and Nantahala in western North Carolina hug the Southern Appalachian Mountains, and the Uwharrie and Croatan are in the central Piedmont and Coastal Plain regions, respectively. The renowned Nantahala



River runs through the Nantahala National Forest. The river is a popular whitewater rafting venue and trout fishing resource.

The forest supervisor for the National Forests in North Carolina told us that illegal dumping (and the resulting environmental damage), budget concerns, and user conflicts on forest trail systems were the top problems recreation managers experienced. Decreased funding, in turn, exacerbated the related problem of facility degradation. Diversifying the racial and ethnic composition of visitors was considered “somewhat important,” but the immediate priority was to simply try to maintain facilities with a limited budget. The supervisor had been in her current position about 4 years when she was interviewed. She noted that the Hispanic population in counties surrounding some of the forests was increasing; however, she was not certain of this given her relatively short duration as forest supervisor. She added that if the Hispanic population was indeed increasing, then the National Forests in North Carolina should pay more attention to developing bilingual interpretive material. Recreation managers had not received any contact from non-traditional visitors; therefore, it was noted they had not had a chance to interact. The National Forests in North Carolina did not have any plans or programs focused on increasing visitor diversity.

## National Forests in South Carolina

The two National forests investigated in South Carolina were the Francis Marion and Sumter National forests. The recreation manager interviewed represented perspectives on both forests. The Francis Marion (258,864 acres) is a part of the Middle Atlantic coastal forests eco-region. The Sumter (370,000 acres) contains Ellicott Rock Wilderness, which spans three States, and the Chattooga, a National Wild and Scenic River.

The recreation manager we interviewed felt that one of the larger issues for the National forests in South Carolina is the regionalized nature of the Forest Service.

He explained:

[The structure] tends to be decentralized as an agency from the Washington office down. And so we all kind of reinvent the wheel, so to speak, in terms of accomplishments and targets; we don't have a real good way to manage our accomplishments, at least that's my perception.... When we set our program of work up for the following year, it's somewhat of a challenge to get us some accountability on some aspects of the program; some things are easy to track, others are harder.

Similar to other forests across the region, budgetary concerns were another top problem. Specifically



Sliding Rock on the Pisgah National Forest. (photo by USDA Forest Service)



concerning the appropriation process, forest managers did not know how much funding they would receive until late in the fiscal year. Managers on the forest tried to deal with this issue by prioritizing a list of projects and outcomes and then adjusting to funding constraints. Added to this problem was a lack of staffing. Those working in recreation on these forests tend to have many different responsibilities; they are not just focused on recreation. The recreation manager believed these multiple tasks made it more difficult to focus on the recreation program alone.

People living adjacent to the forest span the spectrum from poor and working class communities along the coast (Francis Marion) to affluent populations in this same area. In the Piedmont region closer to the Sumter there are also affluent communities intermixed with retirees and the working classes. This manager said that the Hispanic population had “skyrocketed” in the Piedmont and Mountainous areas adjacent to the Sumter in the time he had worked on the forest (10½ years).

The importance of diversifying the ethnic and racial composition of visitors was considered “somewhat important,” but this goal had to be considered along with many others. In addition, there were no clear performance standards for meeting a goal of “visitor diversification.” The manager explained:

With all the other things that we have on our plate, that [increasing visitor diversity] tends to get left behind a little bit. But it probably needs to be a more important thing, and we’ve done some brochures in Spanish and some signs in Spanish, particularly through the Wild Scenic River Corridor since we get a lot of folks down there, especially in certain areas.... The Hispanics like to congregate in large groups and swim, so we had some issues with safety. So we’ve certainly done, or have done some signing in Spanish alerting folks to some safety hazards.... But with all the other things we have on our plate and a finite amount of people to do the work it takes to put behind that... and again, there’s really no major way to measure that performance; there’s really no way, if that’s an important thing to accomplish, there’s nothing that really says you do this, you get brownie points for doing it or, or you get a good performance review for doing it.

The recreation manager felt that managers on the forest have a general understanding of the preferences and patterns of Hispanic families recreating on the forests. The manager noted that Hispanic families tended to utilize the forest during the day and in large family groups. The manager stated that the larger group

sizes for Hispanics necessitated changing facilities to accommodate larger groups, but that the relatively low budgets prohibited managers from making such changes. He cited an example of a recreation site in the Piedmont that received higher-than-average visitation by Hispanics. Management had been trying to upgrade facilities at this location but had been unsuccessful due to lack of funding. He further explained, however, that overall visitation at the site was lower than sites on the coast that typically attract more whites. He believed heavier-use sites would stand a better chance of having funds allocated to them, other factors equal, because of relatively higher visitation at these locations.

### **National Forests and Grasslands in Texas**

The National Forests and Grasslands in Texas include four National forests in east Texas—the Davy Crockett, Angelina, Sabine, and Sam Houston—and the Caddo-Lyndon B. Johnson Grasslands in northeast Texas. We spoke with a recreation manager who had been in her position 26 years. She commented that problems she encountered had to do with administrative processes that could be daunting tasks for those working on these forests. The manager explained that the maps for travel management (i.e., navigating through the forests) were poorly organized (e.g., type of vehicle and season use were not labeled), unclear, and printed in black and white, which was a requirement. She felt the maps were very confusing both to users and to Forest Service staff.

The manager also iterated that unmet visitor preferences are another top problem with which recreation managers must contend. She stated:

There’s a huge emphasis on developed recreation sites, developed campsites. That’s where we put our money, time, and resources, and in many cases that’s not where the public is interested in going. They’re interested in dispersed recreation. They’re interested in trails or just going out hunting and fishing in the general forest area.

The three forests located in rural east Texas (Angelina, Davy Crockett, and Sabine) are surrounded by working class communities and, in some instances, communities with very high poverty rates. The recreation manager noted that in some instances people in the poorer communities hunt for subsistence, rather than for recreation. Since this manager had been in her position, the racial and ethnic diversity of communities surrounding the four National forests had changed considerably. She explained that the town where her office is located, Lufkin, TX, is predominantly Hispanic, and noted that this population had grown significantly over the past 20 years. There are also counties near some of the forests

## **CADDO NATIONAL GRASSLANDS**

The CADDO comprises 17,785 acres and contains three lakes. The largest, Lake Coffee Mill, is 651 acres with one developed recreation area containing 13 picnic units and an improved boat ramp. Lake Davy Crockett is 388 acres in size and has two developed recreation areas. West Lake Davy Crockett has 11 camping units, while the east side has four picnic units and an improved boat ramp. Forty-five acre Lake Fannin is accessible for fishing from the east side only and has an unimproved earthen boat launch site.

## **LYNDON B. JOHNSON NATIONAL GRASSLANDS**

The LBJ comprises more than 20,250 acres with one developed recreation area located at Black Creek Lake. The recreation area consists of seven picnic units, seven walk-in camp units, one improved boat ramp, and an accessible fishing bridge. No drinking water is available. The lake is approximately 30 acres in size.

The Cottonwood-Black Creek Hiking Trail is 4 miles long and connects the two lakes. It is rated moderately difficult. There are nearly 75 miles of multipurpose trails which run in the Cottonwood Lake vicinity.

TADRA Point is a designated trailhead camping facility that is a primary access point for the 75-mile LBJ Multiuse Trail system. Restrooms and parking facilities are provided.

Other popular lakes include Clear Lake and Rhodes Lake. Clear Lake is approximately 20 acres in size and has a concrete boat ramp and a 50-foot wheelchair accessible fishing pier. Rhodes Lake is approximately 15 acres and has no facilities

Text taken verbatim from: USDA Forest Service. Caddo-LBJ National Grasslands, [Online]. Available: [http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/texas/about-forest/districts/?cid=fswdev3\\_008440](http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/texas/about-forest/districts/?cid=fswdev3_008440) [Date accessed: August 8, 2014].

that are “heavily African American.” She believed that diversifying the ethnic and racial composition of recreation visitors was considered “very important” to recreation managers. She stated:

I think it’s a very important issue because we need to understand our customer or visitor; and, their ethnic background is part of what they’re all about, and it’s going to have an impact on the type of activities they would like to be engaged in.

Hispanic interests (extended-family focused) are subjects about which some, yet not all, managers are knowledgeable. Similar to managers elsewhere, this manager commented that Hispanics typically visit in larger group sizes; and that some recreation sites should be modified for groups with larger than average sizes. She acknowledged that forest managers had less contact with African-American visitors:

...we unfortunately are not good at bringing in the African-American visitor, and I think a lot of it is security; they would like to have more of a feeling of security when they go out to a place that is out in the middle of nowhere.

However, she mentioned that a conservation educator had been hired to develop interpretive programs for school districts near Houston, TX, that would target Hispanic populations around Houston. The manager considered any groups who are not white and young people as non-traditional groups. Recreation managers at these forests had received very little contact from non-traditional users, so the managers had not had a chance to be responsive to non-traditional visitors. Additionally, the manager felt that the Forest Service, as an Agency, had not kept abreast of current technologies and social media such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter that would allow younger people better access to Agency information and programming.

### **National Forests in Virginia**

The George Washington and Jefferson National Forests in eastern Virginia combine to make one of the larger public land areas in the Eastern United States. They span nearly 2 million acres in Virginia, with a smaller number of acres spilling into West Virginia and Kentucky. The Blue Ridge Parkway, managed by the National Park Service, also runs through the forest. The adjacent Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia expands this public land coverage by nearly one million acres.

We interviewed a recreation manager who had been on the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests for 4 years. The top issues confronting management were illegal off-road vehicle usage and the proximity of large populations to the forest. Managers here were interested

in learning more about the recreation interests of visitors. Knowing more about visitor mobility would be valuable in that "...access is an issue with certain ethnic groups that aren't as mobile, it seems, as others." She felt that language differences and fear of law enforcement officers are the largest barriers for Hispanics:

...and there's a great fear of law enforcement officers. They [Hispanic visitors] think if they go to the woods they're going to get arrested because that's what happens back home and on the border, so anybody in uniform, they think they're going to get arrested.

In addition, few African Americans visit the forest: "We have a significant African-American population in Virginia, but we aren't having users of the forest." She attributed the lack of African-American visitation to a preference for urban culture and to a lack of mobility. Recreation managers here have been able to be responsive to non-traditional users, whom they described as African American, although recreation managers hear very little from these non-traditional users. Forest managers have been working through schools to help educate the public about recreation opportunities and to encourage forest visitation.

### **Region 5: California from the North to the South**

The Federal Government manages close to one-half of California's 100 million acres of public lands. Eighteen National forests, spanning 20 million acres, are included in the National Forest System. These forests are located on the State's North Coast, in the Cascade and Sierra

Nevada ranges, and southward from Big Sur to the Mexican border in the South Coast range. California's National forests include world-renowned destinations such as Mt. Shasta, Lake Tahoe, Mt. Whitney, and the Big Sur coast. These National forests constitute one-quarter of National Forest recreation sites in the country.

### **Angeles National Forest**

The Angeles National Forest is situated in the San Gabriel Mountains north of Los Angeles. The forest features 3 Wilderness areas (Cucamonga, San Gabriel, and Sheep Mountain), 10 lakes and reservoirs, and 240 miles of rivers and streams. The Angeles abuts several sprawling metropolitan areas, including Los Angeles and San Bernardino.

The recreation manager interviewed had worked on the forest 9 ½ years. He felt that the biggest concerns on the forest were the lack of staffing, budgetary shortfalls, and costs to collect and enforce the fee program. In the manager's opinion, the ethnic and racial diversity of residents had remained about the same; many of the people in counties adjacent to the forest are longtime, working class residents. In terms of efforts to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of forest visitors, the manager stated:

...we don't have any problem trying to diversify. We have a very heavily diverse group of forest users.... Hispanics are regular forest visitors.... The afternoon, Sunday meal, especially with the large, Hispanic community, that [meal] seems to be a very family oriented and a very culturally important activity in their lives.



Recreation visitors participating in the Los Angeles Wilderness Program pump water. (photo by Monica Cota)



There are also a large number of Asian visitors that come to the forest as members of organized hiking groups.

The manager did not believe there were any barriers that different ethnic or racial groups might encounter in their attempts to visit the Angeles, and because the visitor base is already so varied, the manager said there were no specific programs aimed at increasing diversity. Rather, he said the more urgent task was successfully managing the large number of visitors they receive. He estimated yearly visitation of between 3 and 4 million, which is consistent with an NVUM estimate of 3 million visitors for fiscal year 2006 (U.S. Forest Service 2013b).

The manager described non-traditional groups as Native Americans:

I think a big part of it is the Native American groups... we're a little more unique here in that there are no Federally recognized Native American tribes in this area; however, you know there are over a dozen Native American groups, but they're not Federally recognized so that makes it a little bit different.

Forest managers here have been able to be responsive to the needs and concerns of Native American groups, however. For example, Forest Service staff have quarterly meetings to help keep Native groups informed of relevant forest events. Notably, there is the Haramokngna American Indian Cultural Center on the Angeles, which is managed cooperatively between the Angeles National Forest and the Ne'ayuh ("friends" in Tongva language), a Native Peoples organization (<http://www.colapublib.org/native>).

With respect to visitation, the manager said that the forest is used primarily for day use activities because of its proximity to large, urban areas. This relates to "everything from bike riding, hiking, horseback riding, and especially weekends, Saturdays and Sundays." Despite the manager's statement that the Angeles did not have outreach programs aimed at increasing ethnic or cultural diversity, such efforts are apparent in the many partnerships the forest maintains. For instance, the California Consortium focuses on underserved communities. It also provides information to area schools about natural resources careers and recreation opportunities on the forest, and it offers various other types of information that might attract people from these communities to the forest. The forest also works closely with Outward Bound Adventures, Inc. in Los Angeles, which focuses primarily on at-risk youth from African-American and Latino communities. In addition, the forest partners with the Los Angeles Conservation Corps and the San Gabriel Conservation Corps.

## **Eldorado National Forest**

Also located along a mountain range, the central Sierra Nevada, Eldorado National Forest is surrounded by other National forests (Tahoe, Humboldt-Toiyabe, and Stanislaus) and is another urban-proximate forest, located a short distance from the State capitol, Sacramento. As of 2009, the recreation manager with whom we spoke had been on the forest for 27 years. Important management concerns were: engaging the public with public lands; maintaining a Forest Service presence on the forest (e.g., meeting with the public and developing a connection); completing analyses for work on trails and recreation facilities; dispersed recreation, including its resource impacts; and managing motorized vehicle users. Unlike managers interviewed elsewhere, this manager said that recreation facilities on the forest were in good condition.

The task of diversifying the ethnic or racial composition of recreation visitors was considered "an important one, although it probably doesn't get the attention it needs to." Recreation managers on the Eldorado would like more information on how to communicate with some ethnic groups about their use of dispersed areas of the forest. He believed that the larger constraints Hispanics encounter have to do with group size barriers in developed areas. For instance, Hispanic visitors often need family/multi-family sites. Language barriers are also challenges that can pose problems. Visitor groups speak different languages, so there are communication problems among visitors, broadly. Additionally, those who worked on the forest could not communicate well with some non-English speaking groups. There were few or no signs or literature in a language other than English: "We recognize the need probably for multi-language literature but we just haven't moved that way." However, the forest had been increasing the number of group campgrounds and modifying them to meet the needs of larger groups.

Forest managers here did not receive much input from non-traditional users, who were described as Hispanics, African Americans, Asians, Eastern Europeans, and Native American groups. Recreation managers had very little contact with these non-traditional visitors. However, when they did have contact with such visitors, they were able to be responsive. The Eldorado National Forest, for instance, works with schools in the community to increase awareness of the National Forest; with this partnership, forest managers are able to reach out to underserved communities. The goal of these programs is to try to engage school children with forest activities with hopes that eventually entire families would find their way to the forest as well. When asked about communication with groups that do not typically visit the forest, the manager replied that forest managers had held meetings in various

communities to try to reach these populations, but the response had been low.

### **Klamath National Forest**

The Klamath's location relative to northern mountain ranges and the Great Basin makes it a receptor of intricate climate patterns which, in turn, produce a broad spectrum of vegetative and biological diversity. The first problem the recreation manager on the Klamath mentioned was implementing the travel management decision. Particularly as this relates to the Klamath, an Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) system was being designated by forest managers. Recreation managers were still figuring out how to fund the new system at the time of our interviews. Also concerning staffing, the manager reported that the lack of staffing meant that the forest could not always take advantage of opportunities due to workers' "limited capacity to take on the additional workload." In addition, many employees on this forest were planning to retire soon, but filling those positions could pose a problem because of hiring cutbacks.

Forest managers here did not have programs aimed at increasing visitor diversity because the Klamath did not draw the kind of racially diverse visitors seen on other forests in southern California. However, this forest also has a partnership with the Northern California Consortium, which focuses on recruiting and hiring from communities that do not typically visit forests.

### **Lassen National Forest**

Lassen National Forest is well known for both its natural and cultural histories. The Pacific Crest Trail meanders through the forest, along with miles of other trails and lakes. The Lassen is another urban-proximate forest in the State, with relatively easy access by residents in the Bay Area, Sacramento, Chico, and Redding. Iconic figures from both Native American and European American histories are connected to the forest. The Ishi Wilderness, for example, is named for a Native American who survived most of his life with a small number of others from his Tribe in rough terrain near Oroville, CA, and the name "Lassen" is given in honor of Peter Lassen, a pioneer who established the Lassen Cutoff section of the California Trail.

The top problems for recreation managers on the Lassen included dealing with cattle management (a very controversial topic), budget, lack of staffing, and the travel management plan. According to the manager with whom we spoke, diversifying the ethnic or racial composition of recreation visitors was "very important" in relation to other issues. Forest management was interested in knowing the recreation preferences of different ethnic

and racial groups. The manager perceived barriers for non-whites more as cultural preferences for collective recreation settings and activities that are less conducive to dispersed settings:

I think what we tend to offer is mostly outdoors, relatively isolated experiences.... I get the impression that they [non-white visitors, most likely Hispanics] would prefer recreation experiences that involve lots of other people; and the two large lakes, I would say, tend to draw most of our ethnic diversity as opposed to hiking or biking or hunting or fishing or other recreation-type things.

For the Lassen, non-traditional visitors are equestrian and biking groups. The Lassen plans did not include any ongoing arrangements with groups focused on reaching out to underserved communities, although the manager said they are concerned about the issue, and they will use the most recent NVUM data to understand better the types of groups visiting the forest.

### **Mendocino National Forest**

The Mendocino encompasses 913,000 acres in California's Coastal Mountain Range in the northwestern part of the State. The recreation manager on the Mendocino had been in her position for 2½ years. Two primary concerns managers there faced included a general lack of funding and lack of staffing for recreation positions. Both of these issues led to three other problems: (1) the need for more training in trail management, (2) trail maintenance, and (3) the use of pack stock in wilderness.

For the Mendocino, diversifying the ethnic or racial composition of visitors was not considered important.



Recreation visitors celebrating in California wilderness.  
(photo by Chelsea Griffie)



According to the recreation manager, “Probably the main things we’re focusing on relate to simply the basic maintenance of our facilities... not so much going out and doing a lot of outreach to different populations...” However, similar to other National forests in the region, the Mendocino partners with the Northern California Consortium to help expose non-traditional populations to the forest.

Recreation managers at the Mendocino were also interested in learning about diversity trends. The manager explained: “I think it would be interesting to learn what the trends have been, maybe over the past 10 years on whether...we’re getting more diversity among our recreationists or if it’s really kind of staying the same.” The manager felt there were no barriers for ethnic or racial groups visiting the forest.

### **Sierra National Forest**

The Sierra National Forest is located in California’s Central Valley. Popular scenic attractions are Fresno Dome, a large granite exposure, and Nelder Grove, a grove of Giant Sequoias. We spoke with a forest supervisor and recreation manager for the Sierra. The supervisor had been in his position for 6 years and the recreation manager for ten years. Primary concerns for forest management were implementation of the travel management plan, motorized vehicle users using the designated trails (and designating a system of roads and trails for motorized vehicles), and having sufficient Forest Service staffing to engage with the visitors. The forest had contracted out many of its recreation services, like maintenance. As a result, there was less face-to-face contact between the Agency and the visiting public. Also, many of the forest’s recreation facilities were outdated or in need of repair. The recreation manager added that demand services for special uses were also big issues for them.

Both managers stated there had been a change in the socio-demographic composition of residents living in counties adjacent to the forest over the previous several years. Traditionally, the population consisted mostly of working class people. This stratum still constituted the majority of residents, but because of the decline in working class employment opportunities in recent years, more retirees and those with higher incomes were moving into the area. There were small “pockets of high income people” who, in some instances, had constructed expensive homes that abut the forest. In California’s Central Valley, there had also been significant shifts in terms of racial and ethnic diversity. On the Sierra, the staff considered the goal to diversify the ethnic or racial

composition of visitors “very important” compared to other issues.

Two culturally distinct groups have a presence on the forest: Hispanics and an increasing number of people from Southeast Asia, Hmong in particular. The forest supervisor commented on these cultural shifts:

We have a very high Hispanic component, and the facilities that were built forty years ago on the forest, in some cases, were built for individual campers, small group kind of facilities. And through this cultural change or diversity mix that we’re seeing you end up with more people coming that want the large group camp areas or they come more as larger family groups rather than small [sic] individuals.

Another situation that we’re involved in is we have a large Southeast Asian population here in Fresno County, and they like to get out on the forest. It’s part of their culture to be out on the forest; they come from a culture where they kind of live off the land and so we’ve had some real issues in dealing with some of the newer people to the area in educating them about harvest laws with fishing, hunting seasons and laws relative to that, what are game species and nongame species. So we’ve had a lot of educational issues with people from other cultures that are not necessarily in tune with the rules and regulations relative to public lands or game management in the United States or California.

Recreation managers on the Sierra wanted to know the best way to raise public awareness of the forest for underrepresented groups. They also hoped to understand better the recreation preferences of visitors insofar as these activities are environmentally sustainable and legal. The supervisor wanted more discussions with recently immigrated communities to foster awareness of the forest’s presence and the range of activities available. Recreation managers on this forest did realize, however, the importance of outreach to young people and how best to accomplish this task. They felt the main barrier for some ethnic or racial groups visiting the Sierra was language and not being able to communicate with those who work on the forest. This was especially problematic in serving Hmong visitors because some of these visitors are not able to read the Hmong language. To communicate with them, the forest used Hmong radio and television stations. The plans and programs they have aimed at increasing visitor diversity included the Central California Consortium, communication efforts with the Southeast Asian community, and other community

outreach involving internship programs and Generation Green. This latter initiative includes information about the National Forest and its conservation education in green industries and recycling.

### **Tahoe National Forest**

The Tahoe National Forest is located in the northern Sierra Nevada, extending from the foothills to California's border with Nevada. The forest includes 800,000 acres of public land with 400,000 acres of privately held lands. We spoke with a recreation officer for the forest who had worked on the Tahoe since 1998.

Lack of funding is a major concern for Tahoe recreation managers. The dearth of adequate funds led to a lack of staffing, another challenging issue on the forest. The Tahoe serves large metropolitan areas (e.g., San Francisco, Sacramento, Fresno, Reno) so a lack of law enforcement was also a problem. Forest managers also experienced constantly changing administrative processes along with a shortage of help to complete these processes. As a result, workers were spending much more time on administration and had less time for other areas needing attention.

When questioned about the importance of increasing diversity among recreation visitors, the recreation officer said the Tahoe was already very diverse, and he did not

think work on increasing ethnic diversity in the forest was necessary. However, the manager felt there was a need for more Spanish language information on the forest, given the Hispanic presence there. He reiterated that having more material available in Spanish would help Spanish-speaking visitors to comply better with forest regulations. Non-traditional users were Asians (Hmong), Hispanics, and Russian groups. As far as partnerships with groups who reach out to underserved communities, the Tahoe National Forest also works with the California Consortium. The forest did not have any plans or programs aimed at increasing diversity. The reasoning behind this, as explained by the manager, was that the recreation managers at the Tahoe "have more use than we can adequately deal with" without specific diversity initiatives

### **CONCLUSIONS**

This inquiry of Forest Service managers offers insight and understanding of how they, specifically, view visitor diversity. A common theme across all forests in both regions is the lack of funding and staffing to address the most basic tasks associated with National Forest recreation. Despite these obstacles, though, some managers are finding innovative ways to enhance community engagement and outreach. Findings indicate that Region 5 recreation managers are somewhat better



Backpackers rest after a long day of hiking on the Angeles National Forest. (photo by Dennis Arguelles)

able to either balance budget priorities or find alternatives to meet recreation demands. Undoubtedly, efforts to address visitor diversity in California are propelled by the greater ethnic and racial diversity in that State compared to most places in the South, and by the fact that non-traditional visitors like the Hmong are frequent visitors to some of the State's National forests. Thus, there is also pressure from outside the Agency to respond to diverse communities. To compare, the South has racial diversity, yet there is less outdoor recreation engagement by non-white members of the population. To better understand this phenomenon, it is crucial to investigate relationships between local communities and land management agencies.

Smith's (2012) research may offer some insight. He argues that the Forest Service must help build social capital in local communities by collaborating with specific, place-based interests. Successful collaboration requires that managers understand the prevailing social and economic milieu of local communities.

This can include data gathering on barriers locals experience and/or perceive in making contact with forests; information about longstanding rifts or factions embedded within the community that might inhibit a communitywide outreach strategy; opportunities for local input beyond that required by the National Environmental Planning Act; or an awareness of alternative sites for local, outdoor recreation that may be preferred by some in the population. After gathering baseline data on a community's socio-cultural structure, the Agency can then better determine ways in which to engage both the larger community and specific population segments of interest.

Smith (2012) suggests that this engagement should include Agency use of local news outlets to advertise

meetings and Agency representation at local festivals and activities visited by cross-sections of the local population. In this way, the Agency is paired with events that celebrate local culture, thus helping to reframe the Agency as a local entity concerned with the welfare of the community rather than as a remote Federal bureaucracy. Importantly, assessing local customs in the rural South would also necessitate understanding the importance of alternative media and religious affiliations to sub-populations. Churches are integral to African-American, Southern identity. Recognizing that religious leaders often serve as gatekeepers in African American communities would help the Agency to not only establish rapport with these communities but also to understand community relationships with the land and avoid assumptions about its use or non-use.

Our data indicate that forests in both regions are already doing some of these recommended engagement activities (Gibson and Stein 2001, Jacobson and others 2006, Roberts and others 2009, Stanfield and others 2011). These are valuable examples that have led forests to experience success (e.g., California Consortia). However, it appears that in the South such activities are not widespread. Again, the lack of funding and staffing allow for only the most necessary duties to be performed. Yet, as Gibson and Stein (2001) note, "numerous Federal directives require outreach efforts by any agency or group that receives Federal funds" (page 18); hence, balancing management priorities is essential. The realities of this Nation's already-changed socio-demographic structures, in both urban and rural areas, call into question conventional modes of outreach and service provision. Indeed, the time is ripe to also consider differentials in societal access to the recreational and environmental services of National forests.



## REFERENCES

- Anderson, D.H.; Smith, J.W. 2009. Southeastern pilot test of rapid assessment protocol for assessing social capital in National Forest associated communities. Final report submitted to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the USDA Forest Service. Prepared by the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management, North Carolina State University. 42 p. Available: [http://www4.ncsu.edu/~jwsmit12/linked\\_docs/Smith\\_FS\\_Community\\_Social\\_Capital.pdf](http://www4.ncsu.edu/~jwsmit12/linked_docs/Smith_FS_Community_Social_Capital.pdf). [Date accessed March 5, 2015].
- Atiles, J.H.; Bohon, S. 2002. The needs of Georgia's new Latinos: a policy agenda for the decade ahead. *Public Policy Research*. 3: 1-51.
- Bixler, M. 2005. *The Lost Boys of Sudan*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press. 254 p.
- Bohon, S.A.; MacPherson, H.; Atiles, J.H. 2005. Educational barriers for new Latinos in Georgia. *Journal of Latinos and Education*. 4(1): 43-58.
- Chavez, D.J. 2001. Managing outdoor recreation in California: visitor contact studies 1989-1998. PSW-GTR-180. Albany, CA: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station. 100 p.
- Chavez, D.J. 2002. Adaptive management in outdoor recreation: serving Hispanics in southern California. *Western Journal of Applied Forestry*. 17(3): 129-133.
- Chavez, D.J.; Winter, P.L.; Absher, J.D., eds. 2008. Recreation visitor research: studies of diversity. Gen. Tech. Rep. PSW-GTR-210. Albany, CA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station. 216 p.
- Chavez, D.J.; Olson, D.D. 2009. Opinions of Hispanic outdoor recreation visitors at four urban National Forests. *Environmental Management*. 11(4): 263-269.
- Finney, C. 2014. *Black faces, white spaces: reimagining the relationship of African Americans to the great outdoors*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press. 194 p.
- Gibson, C.; Stein, S. 2001. Reaching out: a USDA Forest Service toolkit for equal participation. FS-721. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service. 24 p.
- Harrison, L.; Scarinci, I.C. 2007. Child health needs of rural Alabama Latino families. *Journal of Community Health Nursing*. 24(1): 31-47.
- Hernández-León, R.; Zúñiga, V. 2000. Making carpet by the mile: the emergence of a Mexican immigrant community in an industrial region of the U.S. historic south. *Social Science Quarterly*. 81(1): 49-66.
- Hutchison, R. 1987. Ethnicity and urban recreation: whites, blacks, and Hispanics in Chicago's public parks. *Journal of Leisure Research*. 19(3): 205-222.
- Jacobson, S.K.; McDuff, M.D.; Monroe, M.C. 2006. *Conservation education and outreach techniques*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. 480 p.
- Johnson, C.Y.; Bowker, J.M. 2004. African American land memories. *Environmental Ethics*. 26(1): 57-75.
- Johnson, C.Y.; Bowker, J.M.; Green, G.; Cordell, H.K. 2007. "Provide it... but will they come?" a look at African American and Hispanic visits to Federal recreation areas. *Journal of Forestry*. 105 (5): 257-265.
- Johnson, C.Y.; Halfacre, A.C.; Hurley, P.T. 2009. Resistant place identities in rural Charleston County, South Carolina: cultural, environmental, and racial politics in the Sewee to Santee Area. *Human Ecology Review*. 16(1): 1-16.
- Johnson-Webb, K.D.; Johnson, J.H., Jr. 1996. North Carolina communities in transition: the Hispanic influx. *The North Carolina Geographer*. 5: 21-40.
- Larson, L.R.; Whiting, J.; Green, G.T. 2012. Monitoring visitation in Georgia state parks using the system for observing play and recreation in communities (SOPARC). *Journal of Recreation and Park Administration*. 30(4): 21-37.
- Parker, S.E. 2013. National forest use and outdoor recreation constraints across four ethnic and minority populations in Georgia. [Not paged]. Available: [http://purl.galileo.usg.edu/uga\\_etd/parker\\_susan\\_e\\_201305\\_phd](http://purl.galileo.usg.edu/uga_etd/parker_susan_e_201305_phd). [Date accessed: September 23, 2014].
- Roberts, N.S.; Chavez, D.J.; Lara, B.M.; Sheffield, E.A. 2009. Serving culturally diverse visitors to forests in California: a resource guide. Gen. Tech. Rep. PSW-GTR-222. Albany, CA: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station. 76 p.
- Santucci, D.C.; Floyd, M.F.; Bocarro, J.N.; Henderson, K.A. 2014. Visitor services staff perceptions of strategies to encourage diversity at two urban national parks. *Journal of Parks and Recreation Administration*. 32(3): 15-28.
- Smith, B.E.; Winders, J. 2008. "We're here to stay": economic restructuring, Latino migration, and place-making in the U.S. South. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*. NS 33: 60-72.
- Smith, J.S. 2012. Barriers and bridges to U.S. Forest Service—community relationships: results from two pilot tests of a rapid social capital assessment protocol. *Forests*. 3: 1157-1179.
- Stanfield McCown, R.; Tuxill, J.L.; Laven, D.N. [and others]. 2011. *Beyond outreach handbook: a guide to designing effective programs to engage diverse communities*. Conservation and Stewardship Publication, No. 21. Woodstock, VT: National Park Service Conservation Study Institute. 16 p.
- Stephen F. Austin State University. 2010. Latino Legacy. <http://forestry.sfasu.edu/research-highlights/latino-legacy-4.html>. [Date accessed: August 15, 2014].
- Stodolska, M.; Shinew, K.; Floyd, M.; Walker, G. eds. 2013. *Race, ethnicity, and leisure: perspectives on research, theory, and practice*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics. 375 p.
- St. John, W. 2009. *Outcasts united: a refugee soccer team, an American town*. New York: Spiegel & Grau. 307 p.

- Taylor, W.; Floyd, M.F.; Whitt-Glover, M.; Brooks, J. 2007. Environmental justice: a framework for collaboration between the public health and recreation and parks fields to study disparities and physical activity. *Journal of Physical Activity & Health*. 4(1): S50–S63.
- U.S. Census Bureau. 1982a. 1980 census of population, Volume 1 characteristics of the population. General population characteristics. Table 5: population of places 1960 to 1980: 12-23. Available: [http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/1980/1980censusofpopu8011u\\_bw.pdf](http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/1980/1980censusofpopu8011u_bw.pdf). [Date accessed: August 15, 2014].
- U.S. Census Bureau. 1982b. 1980 Census of population, Volume 1 characteristics of the population. General population characteristics. Table 15: persons by race urban and rural and size of place. 12-15. Available: [http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/1980/1980censusofpopu8011u\\_bw.pdf](http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/1980/1980censusofpopu8011u_bw.pdf). [Date accessed: August 15, 2014].
- U.S. Census Bureau. 2000. Detailed tables. P1. Total population P7 Hispanic or Hispanic by race. <http://factfinder.census.gov>. [Date accessed: September 16, 2010].
- U.S. Census Bureau. 2002. Census 2000 Summary File 1, matrices P3, P4, PCT4, PCT5, PCT8, and PCT11. [http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC\\_00\\_SF1\\_QTP3&prodType=table](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC_00_SF1_QTP3&prodType=table). [Date accessed: December 12, 2013].
- U.S. Census Bureau. 2012a. State and county quickfacts. Clarkston, Georgia. Available: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/47/47003.html>. [Date accessed: September 16, 2010].
- U.S. Census Bureau. 2012b. 2010 Census Summary File 1, tables P5, P8, PCT4, PCT5, PCT8, and PCT11. [http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC\\_10\\_SF1\\_QTP3&prodType=table](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC_10_SF1_QTP3&prodType=table). [Date accessed: December 12, 2013].
- U.S. Census Bureau. 2012c. State and county quickfacts. State of California, New Mexico, and Oregon. Available: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06000.html>. [Date accessed: January 20, 2014].
- U.S. Federal Register. 2012. U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service. National Forest System Land Management Planning, 36 CFR Part 219, RIN 0596–AD02. Vol. 77, No. 68 / Monday, April 9, 2012 / Rules and Regulations. Vol. 77, No. 68 / Monday, April 9, 2012 / Rules and Regulations. <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-04-09/html/2012-7502.htm>. [Date accessed: October 10, 2013].
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). 2011. My USDA: a progress report for employees on USDA’s cultural transformation. 10 p. <http://www.dm.usda.gov/CulturalTransformationSummaryReportNov2010-Feb2011FINAL.pdf>. [Date accessed: January 20, 2014].
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service. 2013a. Natural Resource Manager. [Online database.] USDA Forest Service National Visitor Use Monitoring. Available: <http://apps.fs.fed.us/nrm/nvum/results/A03002.aspx/Round2>. [Date accessed: October 7, 2013].
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service. 2013b. Natural Resource Manager. [Online database.] USDA Forest Service National Visitor Use Monitoring. Available: <http://apps.fs.fed.us/nrm/nvum/results/A05001.aspx/Round2>. [Date accessed: October 17, 2013].
- Winders, J. 2005. Changing politics of race and region: Hispanic migration to the U.S. South. *Progress in Human Geography*. 29(6): 683-699.
- Winders, J. 2008. An “incomplete” picture? Race, Hispanic migration, and urban politics in Nashville, Tennessee. *Urban Geography*. 29(3): 246-263.
- Zúñiga, V.; Hernández-León, R. 2001. A new destination for an old migration: origins, trajectories, and labor market incorporation of Hispanics in Dalton, Georgia. In: Murphy, A.D.; Blanchard, C.; Hill, J.A., eds. *Latino workers in the contemporary South*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press: 126-135.







**Johnson Gaither, C.; Roberts, N.S.; Hanula, K.L.** 2015. Visitor diversity through the recreation manager lens: Comparing Forest Service Regions 8 (U.S. South) and 5 (California). Gen. Tech. Rep. SRS-205. Asheville, NC: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Southern Research Station. 22 p.

In response to changing demographics and cultural shifts in the U.S. population, the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture has initiated a range of “culturally transforming” management practices and priorities aimed at better reflecting both the current and future U.S. population (USDA 2011). This makeover also calls attention to the various publics served by the Forest Service and questions whether the Agency’s services and programming are reasonably accessible by racial and ethnic minority populations within the U.S. populace. Although a priority for upper level management, the actual implementation of recreation visitor services may be difficult to achieve given competing management demands. The present study is an effort to generate greater understanding of the priority given to visitor diversity by forest managers in two of the Forest Service’s most racially and ethnically diverse regions: the 13 Southern States (not including Puerto Rico) that compose Region 8, and Region 5 (California only). Importantly, we want to understand better what this emphasis on visitor diversity means from the perspective of National Forest recreation managers. We identify management priorities and challenges facing recreation managers in their attempts to connect with (i.e., outreach and/or engage) and understand culturally and ethnically diverse recreationists. Results indicate that managers in both regions consider visitor diversity important, but fiscal constraints and understaffing inhibit more targeted programming. As expected, results indicate more programming aimed at diverse recreation visitors in Region 5 compared to Region 8, although racial, ethnic, and, increasingly, cultural diversity are prevalent in a number of key areas adjacent to National Forest lands in the South.

**Keywords:** Community engagement strategies, national forest recreation, National Visitor Use Monitoring Survey, racial and ethnic diversity, recreation managers, visitor constraints.

## How do you rate this publication?

Scan this code to submit your feedback, or go to  
[www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubeval](http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubeval)







The USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD)

To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.