

Indicator 43. Nonconsumptive Forest Use and Values

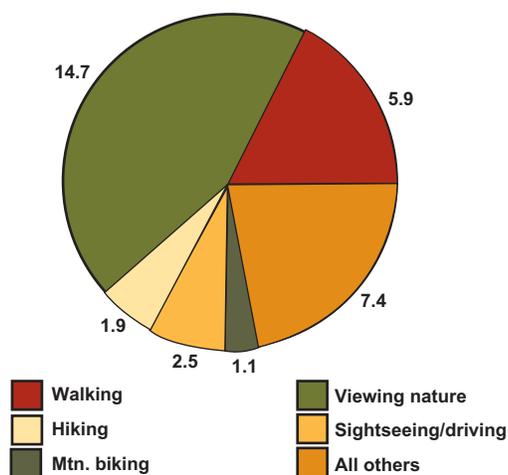


Figure 43-1. Millions of occasions for nonconsumptive outdoor activities in forest settings in the United States, 2001.

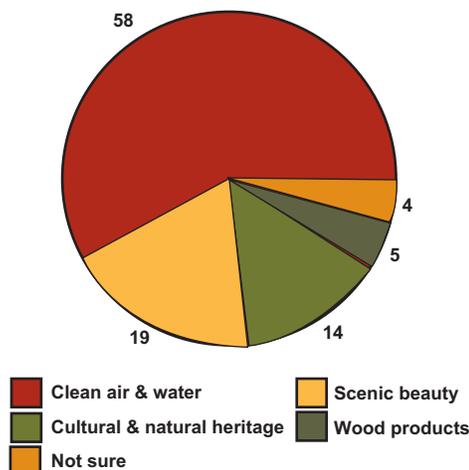


Figure 43-2. Percent of U.S. population indicating the value that is most important for management of public lands.

What Is the Indicator and Why Is It Important?

The indicator measures nonconsumptive uses and values of forests. It includes uses that do not result in physical removal or destruction of forest materials. Included are onsite uses, such as recreation and educational activities, and offsite values, such as ecological services, scenery, or existence values. Direct data sources are limited, but measuring nonconsumptive forest uses and values is highly important since recreation and other nonconsumptive and noncommodity uses seem to be rising in interest among Americans. Knowing the magnitude and trends in nonconsumptive uses and values is necessary to guide balanced forest management on both public and private lands.

What Does the Indicator Show?

At the same time that forest recreation capacity has been decreasing (indicators 35 and 36), demand has been rising. In terms of numbers of added participants, walking increased most between 1994 and 2001, up 46 million participants. Other increases include attending family gatherings outdoors (+36 percent), viewing and photographing wildlife (+34 percent), hiking (+24 percent), picnicking (+20 percent), visiting nature centers, museums, etc., (+17 percent), viewing and photographing birds (+16 percent), camping in

developed campgrounds (+16 percent), visiting historic sites (+12 percent), and driving motor vehicles off road (+10 percent). Participation in outdoor activities in both forested and nonforested settings is growing, with greatest growth in nonconsumptive activities that have relatively little effect on forests. With rising demand and declining acres of forest available, recreation use per acre continues to grow, as do conflicts over access by different users. Estimates of per capita economic value are highest for snowmobiling, nonmotorized boating, rock climbing, biking, and hiking.

When interviewed concerning values most important in managing public forests, clean air and water were identified as most important by more than 50 percent of national and regional populations. Scenic beauty was second. For private forests, clean air and water were identified as most important. For national forests, the values selected as most important nationally and across regions include protection of streams and other sources of clean water, management to assure healthy forests for future generations, protection of habitat for abundant wildlife and fish, protection of habitat for rare and endangered plant and animal species, and management to keep national forests natural in appearance.