

Hispanic/Latino Visitation Constraints to China Peak Mountain Resort

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Abstract:

Introduction: As the demographic composition of the United State changes, racial and ethnic minorities constitute a larger percentage of the overall population. For example, the U.S. Census projections indicate that, by 2050, the Latino population is expected to double in size, accounting for more than 30% of the total population (Stepler & Brown, 2015). This growth is particularly relevant in the Central Valley, California where the Hispanic/Latino population is 46.7%. Understanding the outdoor recreation behavior of these groups has therefore become increasingly important to managers offering recreational experiences and outdoor educators working with racial/ethnic minorities. These insights are especially important given the general underrepresentation of minority populations in nature-based outdoor recreation settings (Long & Hylton, 2002). Research suggests there are very few racial and ethnic minorities that ski/snowboard or engage in other winter recreation activities (Coleman, 2013). Hence, this study examined differences in racial and ethnic participation in winter recreation activities along with recreation constraints between snow park participants and ski resort participants from the Central Valley, California.

Methods: Data were collected via intercept surveys in both onsite (four snow parks near Shaver Lake, CA, n = 491) and offsite locations (in various Central Valley communities) (n = 1,318) during the winter of 2018. Self-administered intercept surveys available in English and Spanish were conducted in onsite and offsite settings. The surveys contained questions about respondents' participation in winter recreation activities, recreation setting preferences, constraints to resort visitation, and their sociodemographic background.

Results: Respondents were asked to rank their preferred settings for recreation activities by number of visits per year. Respondents (n = 1776) reported the most visited setting was community parks followed by national parks and then snow parks with China Peak Mountain Resort (CPMR). Hispanics and Asians respondents were more likely to visit snow parks than Whites or African Americans while Whites were more likely to visit China Peak Mountain Resort (CPMR) than other groups. Overall, offsite respondents represented the population of surrounding communities with 45% White, 36% Hispanic, 8% Asian, and 11% other. Onsite data represented a more diverse sample of respondents with 46% Hispanic, 36% White, 12% Asian, and 6% other. Of 13 items asking respondents about limiting factors restricting them from visiting CPMR, the top four were not enough free time, the cost is too high, resort location is too

far from my home, and lack of information about resort activities. White respondents reported being less constrained by most items than other racial/ethnic groups.

Conclusion/Implications: Results of this study are similar to the work of Shores and West (2010) which suggest that community parks are frequented more often than other recreation settings outside of urban areas (Shores & West, 2010). While racial/ethnic minorities were more constrained to visit CPMR, their presence at public snow parks presents opportunities for recreation managers for winter activity programming. Managers may consider reexamining snow parks as hubs for diverse recreation, with users that have varying recreation preferences (Gobster, 2002). Future snow park facility management decisions may require considerations of a more diverse visitor characteristics than in the past. Finally, as a result of the close proximity of snow parks to CPMR, resort management may consider opportunities for cross-over initiatives to address the underrepresentation of minorities in ski and snowboarding.