Monitoring Wilderness Experience Quality

Brad Johnson

To Do List

- Wilderness Experience Project
- Experiences +/-
- Experience Quality. What is it?
- Conceptualizations of Experience
- In-Class Exercise
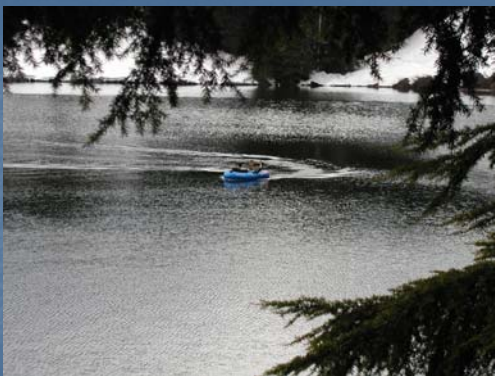

Wilderness Experience Project

Marion Lake
Mt. Jefferson Wilderness

7

Pete Lake
Alpine Lakes Wilderness

8

9

10

11

Eagle Cap Wilderness

12

13

14

15

Managing Wilderness

- The Wilderness Act (1964) says that wilderness will be managed to ensure "outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined type of recreation".

16

Experiences +/-

- When you think about nature / wilderness experiences that you've had, what things come to mind?
- What things affect your own experience?

17

Experience, what is it?

- **Experience**: "the apprehension of an object, thought or emotion through the senses of the mind"
- **Quality**: "the essential character of something; nature"

18

Conceptualizations of Experience

- Quality – peak, flow, satisfaction
- Typologies – wilderness, recreation, etc.
- Temporal – dynamic nature over time

19

Toward a Theory of Wilderness Experience

- Environment
- Social
- Ephemeral
- Individual
- Locus of Control

20

Environment

- Environment plays a prominent role in the wilderness experience and is often characterized in terms of 1) naturalness, 2) primitiveness, 3) unconfined, 4) solitude, and 5) remoteness

21

Social

- Strongly grounded in crowding, privacy and solitude literature.
- Increases in crowding decrease experience?

22

Ephemeral

- Romantic notions of wilderness
- Connection with God, Nature, & mystery
- Spiritual and aesthetic qualities

23

Individual

- Belief, attitude and motivation
- Affect & cognition
- Past experiences
- Theory of Planned Behavior
- Cognitive Dissonance – people try to be consistent with their thinking to reduce negative states.

24

Locus of Control

- Locus of control is the perception that a behavior will alter an outcome
- "If I hiked over there I could get a wilderness experience"

Assumptions

- Wilderness provides for a unique kind of experience.
- As use-level increases the quality of wilderness experience decreases
- Day and Overnight visitors are different

Did you have a wilderness experience?

- "Yes, definitely, even with a lot of people. It's wilderness to me even if I see few people".
  - *Glacier Lake, Tape #E16, Interview 0808-2, 12:45pm*

Did you have a wilderness experience?

- "No. I'm, I don't usually think of this as being wilderness. But, yeah, I suppose I did. I suppose if I had to qualify it, yeah, I did. You know, I mean, there were certainly times when, you know, we were up in areas with rock falls and vistas and got away from other people, so sure I did".
  - *Ann Lake, Tape B3, Interview #19, 6/15/02, 10:45am*

W.E. ???

- Um. I guess, I guess not. Well. I don't know. A lot of times, I'll base it sort of on if I see a bear or something that you don't see necessarily all the time or find some tracks or, or when you're, I guess when you walk in you really are walking for an entire day and you don't see hide nor hair of anybody. I guess, maybe, those are the sort of the kind of things that classify. So, I guess that, I mean, just being out here, I'd say that this is more of a, you know, sort of a wilderness experience, but sort of not, kind of.
  - *Pete Lake, Tape B5, Interview #32, 7/5/2002, 7:50pm*

W.E.? No.

- "Not really so much, again, because the whole area is so beat down and there were these groups of people within sight of us and we could hear them and their campfire smoke was everywhere".
  - *Ann Lake, Tape #E4, Interview #28, 6/15/02, about 10:45am*

Exercise

31

You are the Manager

- Given a specific experiential quality
- Establish a unit of measure
- Establish a monitoring protocol
- Establish a inventory / standard
- What happens when your standard is violated?
- Defend your position.

32

Example

Experience Quality Indicator	Unit of Measure	Monitoring Protocol	Inventory/ Standard
Frequency of encounters	Number of groups (1 or >) encountered in 1 day (6 hours min.) as recorder moves along trails.	Recorder will collect frequency of encounter data during the 6 hour period (9am – 3pm) on the Lostine Trail on the 15th of each month (May – Nov)	Average = 9 groups per sample day.

33

34