

# Private Landowner Attitudes Concerning Public Access for Outdoor Recreation: Cultural and Political Factors in the United States

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**ABSTRACT.** In this article issues concerning national commonalities and regional differences in the United States regarding private land and outdoor recreation are reviewed. Based on the particular cultural and political backgrounds of each region, it is hypothesized that landowners will exhibit degrees of differences in their attitudes regarding public access to private land. Data is from the latest decennial survey, the National Private Landowners Survey (NPLOS 1995-96), as well as from per capita state and local government spending on recreation, provided from the 1992 Census of Government. There is a discussion of the philosophical views on land in the United States, with some

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specifics for each region. It was found that there is a positive relationship between allowing public access to private land and the regional, state, and local spending on parks and recreation. The historical cultural differences between regions also seem to be of some importance, though not conclusive. Implications for marketing and income opportunities associated with fee-based private land recreation in different regions of the nation are discussed. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-342-9678. E-mail address: [getinfo@haworthpressinc.com](mailto:getinfo@haworthpressinc.com)]*

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### INTRODUCTION

Demand for outdoor recreation land use is projected to increase in future years. Sources of land in the United States that can be used to meet future outdoor recreation demand include the nation's public and private lands. Because of austere government budgets, it is not likely that the supply of outdoor recreational opportunities on public lands in the United States can be increased enough to meet all future outdoor recreation demand (Cordell et al., 1998; Cordell et al., 1997; Bergstrom and Cordell, 1991; Jensen, 1995; Kaiser and Wright, 1985; Teasley et al., 1998; Wright and Fesenmaier, 1988; Wright and Kaiser, 1986 ).

The inability of public lands to meet future outdoor recreation demands opens up possibilities for increased participation in outdoor recreation on private lands. In particular, the future appears to hold increased potential for private rural landowners to "market" the use of their land to the general public for outdoor recreation. Successful marketing of any good or service is heavily influenced by the attitudes of both consumers and producers. The focus of this article is on producer attitudes. Private rural landowners are the producers or providers of outdoor recreational opportunities on private lands. To what extent are these landowners interested in increasing public access to their lands for outdoor recreation? How are these attitudes related to cultural and political factors? What are the marketing implications of these attitudes? The overall purpose of this paper is to address these major questions.

In the next section, we explore relationships between attitudes about public access to private land and the political and cultural background of a region. Two aspects of those cultural and political roots are examined. The first is the historical background of people who settled each region. The other is conveyed in the actions of elected representatives' actions in allocating

state and local spending for park and recreation items. It is posited that the regional differences concerning the allowance of public access to private lands are part of a larger general attitude about providing recreational opportunities for the public, as well as being reflective of the heritage of each particular region. Following the discussion of cultural and political roots, we employ the decennial, nationwide survey known as the National Private Landowners Survey (NPLOS), to assess regional differences in attitudes towards access to private land for public outdoor recreational use. Implications are discussed in the final section.

### ***CULTURAL AND POLITICAL ROOTS***

The original thirteen American colonies were founded on claims, land grants, and land seizures. Out of these different methods of land acquisition came a diversity of land law. The ability to freely transfer land title originated in New England settlements (Davies, 1958). After the Declaration of Independence, there was the widespread beginnings of the repeal of entail (legally limiting inheritance to a specified series of heirs), as well as the repeal of primogeniture, whereby land was given to the eldest son (Keim, 1969; Kirkland, 1969). However, until after the American Revolution, the practice of primogeniture survived in both New York and Virginia. The colony of Pennsylvania grew under the proprietor's sales plans and William Penn's community planning. There were some parts of the Eastern United States that developed under Spanish law as in Florida; whereas, French law provided the background for Louisiana rule. Yet, an important step in the development of modern land ownership patterns occurred in America when ownership of the land shifted from a lord proprietor or a colonizing company to the individual (Davies, 1958).

The newly founded United States' greatest economic resource was land. In England, land was a scarce commodity and the heart of common law created an elaborate legal structure concerning land ownership and use. The abundance of land and the absence of a feudal past combined to shape a distinct body of real property law for America (Hall, 1987; Scott, 1977). Furthermore, the expanse of land available in the U.S. allowed Americans many opportunities in the outdoors for rest and recreation, something a less land-abundant nation could not afford to enjoy (Clawson, 1964, 1968; Innes, 1978).

Born in New England with a Puritan background, Benjamin Franklin possessed a mixture of acquisitiveness and moral sensitivity. These characteristics were shared by many of his contemporary Americans. Franklin declared that all private possessions must be subject to community control. Furthermore, he maintained that only land that was absolutely necessary for

an individual's subsistence was justified. A key point in the area of public access to private land can be found in the fact that Franklin thought accumulated wealth was okay, as long as opportunities remained open to others and the community was able to control the resources and economic activities of its citizens. Lacking both a decadent aristocracy and landless masses, Americans came to view themselves as in a superior situation to that of Europeans (Scott, 1977). Indeed the early abolition of the collection of quit-rents in America was due to not having ties to a feudal past (Bond, 1912). The English philosopher James Harrington believed property was the decisive factor in politics because the individual or social class that controlled the majority of wealth in a particular society also controlled the government. John Locke maintained that the right of property was derived from God and that the amount of land ownership was restricted to that which an individual needed and could use (Scott, 1977).

Agrarian republicanism in America relied heavily on Lockean natural rights arguments, which provided an explanation and justification for the Revolution. Being one of the first to openly oppose Parliament's policies, American colonist James Otis stated that the very act of taxing those who are not represented appears to deprive those people of their most essential rights as freemen. If continued, Otis thought that there would be an entire disenfranchisement of every civil right because a person's property could be subject to being taken away from him or her without consent. Thomas Jefferson stands out as the most important spokesman for agrarian republicanism. Widespread ownership of land was central to Jefferson's idea of a good society. The broad ownership of land made people economically and politically whole and independent because landless wage earners could be exploited (Scott, 1977; Katz, 1976).

Hamilton did not place as high a value on widespread ownership of active resources. He thought private property held by any size group was more important for the assurance of rapid economic development and national wealth. Hamilton was not as concerned with universal property holdings to insure the greatest happiness to the greatest number of people (Scott, 1977).

At first Americans enjoyed the luxury of an almost limitless supply of unoccupied land. Frederick Jackson Turner (1893) argued that the end of the frontier in the last part of the nineteenth century spelled the end of an era in American life because one person's ownership denied the opportunity for others to own that land.

The concern of twentieth-century policy makers for civil liberties, social welfare, and employment opportunities for all Americans is part of an effort to preserve many of the liberties traditionally associated with property rights. Yet increased civil liberties, economic security, and employment opportunities do not provide individuals with the means of complete control of their

own livelihood. Instead, “these new liberties provide only partial substitutes for Jefferson’s concept of property, the individual’s right to liberty as well as the means to pursue happiness” (Davies, 1958).

Franklin, Harrington, Locke and Jefferson provide a common background of much of the philosophy used to secure Americans the right to have property. Furthermore, though the philosophers defended the right for individuals to own private property, part of their belief system also encompassed the idea that the public’s needs should be equally considered. Between the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, the American conception of private “ownership of property was justified not for its own sake but rather its value for its contribution to increased national wealth” (Horwitz, 1973). With the closing of the American frontier, as described by Jackson Turner, the need for providing for the needs of the general public becomes all the more important. As American historian Gates (1976) espouses, society should protect property rights while also limiting those rights:

Is not the public land that has passed into private hands a trust? Older and more crowded societies than ours have long since been obliged to take this stand and we should come to this point of view also and soon. (Gates, 1976)

### ***Regional Differences***

One area of investigation in this paper is to determine whether the ancestry of people in a particular region has any bearing on their attitudes towards providing recreational opportunities for the public. Table 1 indicates the predominant ancestry of the people who settled each region. The four subregions follow the U.S. Forest Service Renewable Resources Planning Act Assessment regions and are footnoted in Table 1.

In order to have an accurate portrayal of how American culture has been created, one has to look at the concept of cultural diffusion. Cultural diffusion refers to the spread of characteristics from one people to another (McDonald, 1989). A view that disregards cultural diffusion is the belief that because America is some how a unique country, that there is an *instant* melting pot effect. That is, as soon as people immigrate to the United States, they immediately cast off their former cultural identities and assume a homogeneous American cultural identity. However, a more realistic viewpoint is that immigrants bring cultural attributes with them into a new country (McDonald, 1989).<sup>1</sup> In keeping with the institutional development of property use and control, a key focus of this paper, Indians and Afro-Americans are treated as separate cultural groups use.<sup>2</sup>

The Southern region states have a Celtic heritage from England’s uplands regions. In the English grass-growing uplands, men specialized in rearing

TABLE 1. Ethnic Background of Regional Populations (Source: Coffman and Sullivan, 1995)

REGION	ANCESTRY OF SETTLERS
Northern Region <sup>(a)</sup>	English, Irish, Italians, Afro-Americans, French Canadians
Southern Region <sup>(b)</sup>	English, Irish, Scottish, Afro-Americans
Rocky Mountain Region <sup>(c)</sup>	American Indians, Mexican-Americans, European descent
Pacific Coast Region <sup>(d)</sup>	European ancestry, Afro-American, Mexican-American

(a) Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, Wisconsin

(b) Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia

(c) Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming

(d) California, Oregon, Washington

sheep or cattle. The Celtic fringe groups, composed of Cornwall, Wales, the Scottish Highlands, the Hebrides and Ireland also have the prevailing upland herding pattern. In addition, warfare rather than commerce was the main non-agricultural pursuit. This is in contrast to the New England ancestors who predominately originated from the English Lowlands. In the English lowlands, "mixed farming," with extensive tillage, was the norm. Also business commerce was much more frequent in the British lowlands than in the British uplands (Coffman and Sullivan, 1995).

As will be shown, the private landowners in the North are somewhat more tolerant of public use of private land than are private landowners in the South (McDonald, 1989). Perhaps this more lenient land policy stems from a less territorial attitude of British lowland people as compared to the Celtic people. An elitist economic class hierarchy with respect to land also developed in the South. This was due to a few thousand rich families investing in slaves and land, while reducing the economic status of both the majority of whites and virtually all Afro-Americans (Faulkner, 1935). However, it should be pointed out that in contrast, Boney (1984) maintains that some scholars have spent too much time trying to contrast Southerners with other Americans. His view is that Southerners, "past, present, and future," are people who "stand in the American mainstream" (Boney, 1984).

French and Italian ancestry are also especially important to Northern states (Coffman and Sullivan, 1995). Italians helped to revive trade in Europe at the

close of the Middle Ages and the beginnings of the Renaissance (Cameron, 1997). The French were noted for trading, intermarrying with and having military alliances with the American Indians, rather than endeavoring to subjugate the American Indians as the British had done (Cooke, 1973; Billard, 1979; Whitten, 1993).

The western region is another part of the country that had a preponderance of settlers from a specific ancestry. Those settlers largely came from Hispanic countries, with significant cultural and legal aspects of Hispanic heritage adopted in the United States (Worcester, 1976). Indeed, Frederick Jackson Turner's idea of the frontier thesis has an Anglo-Saxon ethnocentrism to it because when Anglo-Saxons spread out through the United States, people of American Indian or Hispanic heritage were often displaced. There is no parallel glorification of the frontier in Latin America like there is in the United States (Weber, 1988; Weber and Rausch, 1994). Instituting elitist hierarchies with land grants, as had been done in Iberia, was an important phenomena in the development of Latin America. Of course, much of what is now the Western United States was never under Hispanic rule.

Furthermore, restrictive land policies, typical of the Eastern United States, were more relaxed in the western part of the United States, making that area more suitable for open ranging (Myres, 1969). Also one has to be cognizant of the fact that farms in the grasslands of the west "must be considerably larger than in the east if they were to provide an adequate living for a farm family" (Bogue, 1965). As a result, the culture of the west was more attuned to wide-open spaces.

Two conclusions may be drawn from the literature on the cultural differences of settlers in each region. One is the idea that there may have been some influence in the South of having a more territorially conscious people compared to the other sections of the country, with the western areas perhaps being settled by people with the most understanding of an open land policy. Secondly, the common heritage of all Americans may outweigh the sectional historical backgrounds.

### ***CURRENT POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR PARKS AND RECREATION***

Now that the cultural background regarding land use of the settlers of different regions of the United States has been examined, our task is to analyze the current political support for public recreational opportunities. One way to assess the regional priorities for providing outdoor recreation opportunities is by examining combined state and local spending on parks and recreation. Table 2 conveys the per capita, aggregate state and local spending on parks and recreation. The data is from the latest U.S. Census of Governments, the 1992 census. The highest per capita level of spending is in

TABLE 2. Per Capita State and Local Spending on Outdoor Recreation (based on 1992 data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census 1996; 1997) and Land Accessibility (Data from Teasley et al., 1998)

Region	Spending Per Capita	Sign Lease Agree- ment	Get Written Agree- ment	Get Written Permission Pay Fee	Get Verbal Permission Pay Fee	Get Verbal Permission No Fee	No Require- ments	Other	% that Post	Posted Acreage	% of Land that is Public
National	\$62.07	3.1	8.6	1.6	47	1.5	15	13.9	40.5	205.7	22.5
North	\$59.93	1	8.1	0.8	51.2	1.1	16.8	13.9	42	108.8	4.6
South	\$53.66	5.6	9.8	2.6	42.8	2.1	11.9	14.8	41	238.4	6.3
Pacific Coast	\$79.96	4.6	6.5	1	48.8	1.8	18.5	13.8	47	298	35.3
Rocky Mountains	\$73.22	2.4	7.2	1.6	44.9	1.3	16.8	11.4	32	397.4	45.1



the Pacific Coast region (\$79.96). Not far behind that is the Rocky Mountain Region (\$73.22). Following that are the Northern region (\$59.93) and the Southern region (\$53.66). Although these figures have not been adjusted for regional cost of living differences, clearly the West would remain ahead of both regions in the Eastern United States.

Perhaps because there is an uneven distribution of private land in the United States, Americans have supported the expansion of federal ownership of lands (Geisler, 1993). By the mid-1950s, demand for the protection of natural, historical and cultural areas was increased to such a degree that federal policy action was necessary. Established in 1958 by the United States Congress, the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission recommended the creation of the Land and Water Conservation Fund to provide outdoor recreation opportunities to the nation. On September 3, 1964, the act establishing the fund passed (Public Law 88-578). The act provides for federal money to acquire land to the National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (U.S. Department of Interior-National Park Service, 1997).

Through federal programs, additional monies are dispersed to state and local governments for acquiring, developing and improving outdoor recreation areas. Federal grants to state and local governments are predicated on matching funds. State and local government participation in the program infers a social and political attitude of wanting to provide recreational opportunities for their constituents. However, the numbers presented in Table 2 already reflect state and local contributions. Until the last few years, monies from the Land and Water Conservation Fund were used to match local and state contributions for recreational needs. Furthermore, during the last few years of budget tightening by the federal government, the amount of federal support to state and local governments through the Land and Water Conservation Fund has no longer been available. Instead any monies from that fund are being used for federal parks (Compton, 1998).<sup>3</sup>

### ***Property Rights***

Property rights governing the use of private land are important components of the political and institutional environment affecting public access to private lands. For this reason, property right concepts are discussed here briefly. Land ownership refers to claims of interest, tenure refers to the different methods, time periods and share of property rights on the behalf of individuals, corporations and governments (Wunderlich, 1993; Barlowe, 1986). Over time, private owners' property rights have diminished through increased public mandates to regulate private land for aesthetic, recreational and environmental reasons (Geisler, 1993; Gates, 1976). Furthermore, there is the advent of "new or hybrid property" which refers to private property

subjected to land-use regulations, right-of-ways, covenants, purchased or transferred development rights, and land in conservancies and community land trusts. This type of property has grown in its importance and impact on private property rights. Indeed, social forces have brought us to a point where property rights sometimes refer to the right of ownership, as well as the “right *not* to be excluded” from land use (Geisler, 1993). Increasing use of public lands for recreation makes planning for private land all the more important, with signs of bipartisan support in creating new tenure allocations (Geisler, 1993; Tindall, 1990; Madison, 1988).<sup>4</sup>

An important component of property rights affecting recreational access is the liability risk to landowners resulting from injuries sustained by visitors on their land. American law gives landowners some protection from liability. The “mere ownership of land and the fact that a visitor was injured on that land does not presume liability for the injury.” Only when a landowner “fails to fulfill the legal duty to act” is the landowner liable for visitors’ injuries (Kaiser and Wright, 1985). Although liability laws vary from state to state, recreational use statutes have reduced landowner liability, with differences for individuals with permission to use land, as opposed to those who enter into a business agreement with the landowner (Kaiser and Wright, 1985; Wright, 1986).

Through examining the strictness of access rules, Wright, Kaiser and Fletcher (1988) divided landowners into five groups.<sup>5</sup> Those who allowed no access to their land were considered prohibitive. Exclusionists limited hunting to themselves and family members. Allowing families, friends, employees and themselves to the land merited a restrictionist classification. Open landowners allowed public access to their properties. While exclusionists and prohibitionists expressed negative attitudes toward hunter behavior-related problems and liability, restrictionists and open landowners were the most agreeable about access to public hunting. An “anti-hunting” attitude could be due to a view that hunting is unnecessary; however, permitting access could allow better control over hunters’ actions (Wright and Fesenmaier, 1990).

### ***CURRENT LAND ACCESSIBILITY PATTERNS***

So far we have examined the cultural and political background of each region, as well as reviewed property rights concepts relevant to recreational access to private lands. In this section, we review current recreational access attitudes and patterns and examine the relationships of these current attitudes and patterns to the cultural and political characteristics of particular regions of the United States.

Current recreational access attitudes and patterns are indicated by the

results of the recent National Private Landowners Survey (NPLOS) conducted by the University of Georgia, U.S.D.A. Forest Service, and U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service. The NPLOS employed a representative national sample of rural, private landowners, with tracts of at least 10 acres, within the forty-eight contiguous states. Details on the survey methodology are provided in Teasley et al. (1998). The NPLOS contained a broad array of questions which examined current private land uses, as well as landowner attitudes with respect to the use and management of their land. The NPLOS results most relevant to this paper concern private land accessibility on the part of the public.

Key to the amount of public recreation that occurs on private lands is the degree to which the land is accessible to outsiders. Teasley et al. (1998) examines methods landowners use for controlling access from people outside their household. Requiring verbal permission and paying a fee to gain access is the major method used. On average, one third of rural landowners maintain an approximately 65 acre portion of their tract exclusively for family use. Close to half of landowners allowed some type of public access to their land. Yet only 15 percent of landowners allowed some of their land to be completely accessible to the public. There were many types of recreational activities pursued on private land, with hunting, fishing, hiking and camping among the top activities listed. Reasons for owners allowing access to their land for recreation include maintaining good will with neighbors, benefiting from the extra help and protection of members who lease that land, and generating income often used to pay taxes (Teasley et al., 1998).

Landowners are much more comfortable with the use of their land by friends and family, rather than by strangers. This is evidenced both by the percentage of landowners that indicated they allowed different groups of people onto their land, as well as the reasons landowners gave for posting their lands.<sup>6</sup>

Aside from summarizing some of the national findings from the NPLOS survey regarding public access to private land, this paper also makes note of the regional differences. It is hypothesized that regional differences in private landowner attitudes and action regarding that public access reflects some of the regional cultural and political differences between regions.

### ***North***

To arrive at a general category for ease of public access to private land, we can combine the numbers in Table 2 for the public access categories indicating relatively open attitudes on the part of landowners with respect to public access. These categories include "Get Verbal Permission" for access, "No Fee" charged for access, and "No Requirements" restricting access. In the Northern region, this combined total equals 17.9%; whereas the national

average is 16.5%. People in this region tend to have an ancestry that is more English Lowland, French or Italian—all groups more noted for encouraging trade rather than territorial consciousness.

Additionally, the North had the highest percentage of entrepreneurial activity. Over half of landowners (51.2%) who allowed outside access to their land charged a fee. A greater preponderance of entrepreneurial activity also may be related to the merchant background of the ancestry of the North. This region has a per capita spending on recreational opportunities funded by state and local government that is greater than the national average. Public spending on recreational opportunities is in keeping with Franklin's view that public community concerns are just as important as private endeavors.

Table 2 also shows the percentage of total land area in different regions of the nation that is public. As shown in Table 2, the North has the lowest regional proportion of public land in the nation (4.6). This relative scarcity of public land recreational opportunities may have contributed over time to the more open attitudes on the part of Northern landowners with respect to public access.

### ***South***

The NPLOS results indicated that private landowners in the South are the least open to allowing the general public to use their land. The combined total for "Get Verbal Permission," "No Fee" and "No Requirements" public access categories in Table 2 is smaller (14.0%) than any other region and less than the national average. The cultural ancestry of the South has a very territorial conscious ancestry, relative to the rest of the country. There is also a parallel to the fact that the southern region has the lowest per capita spending for public park and recreation opportunities. The strong emphasis on individual responsibility without as much concern for the group that is expressed in other regions may be reflective of the agrarian republicanism advanced by Jefferson.

As shown in Table 2, 6.3% of the total land area in the South is public. This is the second lowest regional proportion of public land in the nation. In contrast with the North which has a similar proportion of public land, the relative scarcity of public land in the South does not appear to be correlated with more open attitudes with respect to public access. According to the NPLOS results, Southern landowners have the most closed attitudes in the nation with respect to public access in spite of the fact that public land recreational opportunities are relatively scarce.

### ***West***

The Western region is composed of both the Pacific Coast and the Rocky Mountains regions. The Pacific Coast is slightly more progressive in their

attitudes towards public access to private land and to public spending on recreational activities. However, in treating the two Western regions collectively, one can still see the contrast between the West and the rest of the country. Perhaps the reason for the people in the West being the most open to public access to private land has to do with the cultural background of access to the outdoors being an important part of the region's ethos. The Hispanic influence emphasized responsibility to the community, not just the individual.

There appears to be regional differences in the way recreationists are allowed onto private land. Yet one cannot disregard the national view with respect to private land. Many years have passed since the time of Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and the English philosopher John Locke, who so strongly advocated individual property rights. As Horwitz, Gates and Turner point out in examining changes in American views concerning property rights, taking into account community concerns is part of the natural process of "older and crowded societies" (Gates, 1987).

As shown in Table 2, the greatest proportion of total land area that is public land occurs in the West. Private landowners in the West also have relatively open attitudes with respect to public access. Thus, in the West, the relative abundance of public land recreational opportunities does not appear to negatively affect landowners' openness to public access to private land for outdoor recreation.

### **SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS**

Private land ownership is an important part of the American heritage. This was especially true in the sense that owning land guaranteed freedom for a citizen's livelihood. With the closing of the frontier, the realistic ability for *all* private citizens to own land was diminished. Since recreation is a major part of our lives as Americans, public access to private rural land may be a critical necessity for now and the future.

Giving public access to private land may be indicative of a more general cultural attitude towards providing outdoor recreational opportunities. For example, state and local per capita spending on park and recreation appears to be highest in those regions of the country where private landowners are most open to providing public access to private lands. The Southern region had the least per capita public spending on parks and recreation and the most restrictive public access attitudes on the part of private landowners. However, what was not included in these per capita state and local spending comparisons is the per capita federal public land availability in the West in comparison with other sections of the country.

Three caveats should be taken into consideration when examining the question of cultural diffusion in the regions of the United States. One is that

with population mobility and communication between the regions, the country should be getting more homogeneous all the time. Furthermore, the regions used in the NPLOS analysis are based on geographic rather than cultural heritage distinctions. One only has to think of Louisiana<sup>7</sup> with its heavily Spanish and French influenced cultures to see that it is not typical of some of the other Southern states. Additionally, differences between regions may be viewed as not as important as the common culture of the United States. As this paper expresses, there is a large amount of shared philosophical heritage.

The United States was founded with a population of four million citizens. Today there are over 260 million people. While it is true that the nation has grown somewhat in geographic area during the last two hundred years, the per capita resource base, including the recreational resource base, has decreased. Nostalgic views that people can live their lives in total independence without regard for the needs of others are not based on present day realities. Therefore, the goal of recreational policy makers should be how to make more private land accessible to more of the public, balancing the needs of both private land owners and the general public.

A potential means of opening up more private lands to public recreation in the future is to encourage private landowners to provide outdoor recreation opportunities on their land for a fee. One hurdle to overcome in the development of successful markets and marketing for fee-based outdoor recreation on private lands are negative attitudes on the part of many private landowners with respect to public access to their lands. Negative attitudes of this type are evident across the entire United States. New England landowners appear to be most open to marketing their land for fee-based outdoor recreation and Southern landowners appear the least open. Western landowners are somewhere in between. Because of their cultural heritage, New England landowners may have a higher entrepreneurial spirit as compared to landowners in other regions of the country.

Entrepreneurial spirit and skills are important for developing outdoor recreation markets. The ability to recognize the use of natural resources for potential recreational purposes requires a future vision, which is a trait of entrepreneurs (Sheffield, 1988). Syme, Uysal and McClellan (1988) point out that the skills of strategic planning, risk-taking, decision-making and planning are also entrepreneurial traits. The volatility of outdoor recreation markets creates new opportunities for entrepreneurs. Important strategic decision-making factors include participant needs, natural resource availability, rules/regulations and land use policies of the government (Syme, Uysal and McClellan, 1988). Jamieson (1988) suggests that a commitment not only to profits but also to education and entertainment are also important factors for successful outdoor recreation entrepreneurship.

Marketing and income opportunities are also influenced by overall de-

mand and supply considerations. Public land recreational opportunities are relatively scarce in the East and relatively abundant in the West. Because a large proportion of the U.S. population is concentrated in the East (demand-side considerations) and public land recreational opportunities are relatively scarce in the East (supply-side considerations), there appears to be a large potential market for fee-based private land recreation in the East.

Northern landowners in the East have traditionally been more open to allowing public access to private lands free of charge. Thus, a change to fee-based access to private land in the North may be met in some areas with cultural resistance on both the part of landowners who want to continue being “good neighbors” and people who have grown accustomed to using private land for recreation without a fee. On the other hand, the NPLOS results suggest that a good many landowners in the North already charge fees for public access which is perhaps indicative of a growing trend towards less access to private land in the North free of charge. Southern landowners in the East have not traditionally been open to allowing public access to private land free of charge. Because public access to private land in the South has traditionally occurred more on a fee basis (e.g., hunting leases), fee-based private land recreation for a variety of consumptive and nonconsumptive recreational activities may be more of the cultural norm.

Landowners in the West are somewhat open to allowing public access to private land free of charge, and are also receptive to fee-based private land recreation. Fee-based private land recreation has an established and accepted tradition in the West (e.g., “dude ranches”). In the West, a major factor affecting marketing and income opportunities associated with private land recreation is the relative abundance of public land recreational opportunities. Successful marketing of private land recreation may be more difficult if the public can substitute “cheap” public land recreation for more expensive fee-based private land recreation. However, if private landowners can market private and public land recreation as complements rather than substitutes, marketing and income opportunities associated with private land recreation could be enhanced by the relative abundance of public land recreational opportunities in the West.

Public and private groups and organizations interested in working with private landowners to promote public access to private land should be sensitive to the prevailing attitudes of landowners. A program to promote expansion of markets for fee-based recreation on private lands, for example, should consider how the cultural and political background of landowners may influence their entrepreneurial spirit and general attitudes with respect to “outsiders” using their lands. A better understanding of cultural and political factors influencing landowner attitudes in different regions of the nation is an important first step towards successfully working with landowners to develop markets for public recreation on private lands.

## NOTES

1. Interestingly, whether the Caucasian majority of American settlers is treated collectively or in separate cultural groups, two groups of “ethnics”—Afro-Americans and Indians—are treated separately from the other colonials (McDonald, 1989).

2. See Clawson (1968) for an outline of the differences between American Indians and European settlers concerning concepts related to land ownership, as well as agreements broken by settlers.

3. There is broad agreement that the LWCF provides “a significant stimulus to State and local recreation efforts” (Hammond, 1969). Revenues for the Land and Water Conservation Fund come from three sources: (a) sales of federal surplus real properties, (b) a small portion of Federal motorboat fuel taxes and (c) Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) revenues derived from the leasing of oil and gas sites in coastal waters. Furthermore, the Act guarantees that the fund will receive \$900 million revenues per year. In 1987, the L&WCF Act was extended from the original 25 year term to its present expiration date of 2015 (U. S. Department of the Interior–National Park Service, 1997).

4. The Census of Agriculture (AELOS) is an analysis of land ownership, land transfers, property taxes, land distribution and other issues of land policy, with recent results that confirm increasing ownership concentration in agricultural land (Geisler, 1993; Meyer, 1979). A census of all land, with an analysis of interests and areas and wealth, may be more useful than a Census of Agriculture (Geisler, 1993; Wunderlich, 1993). Urban acreage is surveyed both by the Census Bureau and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (Alig and Healey, 1987). Population, income and agricultural rent factors provide significant information in regard to urban and related uses of land (Alig, 1986; Brueckner and Fangler, 1983).

5. The decision of whether an owner decides to limit access to his private property depends on the private costs versus benefits of such exclusion (de Meza and Gould, 1992).

6. Restricting public access is often achieved by posting. The most important factor in a landowner’s decision to post has to do with “unpleasant experiences with recreationists,” rather than with socioeconomic differences or differences in rural versus urban settings (Brown, Decker, and Kelly, 1984). Teasley et al. (1998) present some of the reasons landowners gave for posting, as well as the percentage of landowners across the country that post some or all of their land and the average acreage they post. The majority of motivations for landowners posting sections of their land include destruction of property, littering, poaching and disruption of privacy. Teasley et al. (1998) also note that close to 80 percent of the land leased to clubs or individuals for recreation was posted, either by the club or by the landowner. Ninety-eight percent of landowners said they would post the same or more of their acreage in the future.

7. For instance see Burns (1928) and Freyer (1987) for an examination of the role of Spanish culture on land laws in Louisiana.



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