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Title: Residents' Preferences and Use of Urban and Peri-Urban Green Spaces in a Swiss Mountainous Region of the Southern Alps

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1 **Residents' Preferences and Use of Urban and Peri-Urban**  
2 **Green Spaces in a Swiss Mountainous Region of the Southern**  
3 **Alps**

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5 **Conedera, M.; Del Biaggio, A.; Seeland, K.; Moretti, M.; Home, R.**  
6

7 **Abstract**

8 Urban sprawl and population growth lead to loss of contact with nature for urban residents; thus  
9 giving more importance to the remaining urban green spaces for the residents' wellbeing. In this  
10 study, we assess the preferences and uses of urban and peri-urban green spaces by inhabitants of  
11 the city center and of the bordering areas of the pre-alpine city of Bellinzona in southern  
12 Switzerland. In a quantitative survey in which a questionnaire was mailed to a selective quota of  
13 1000 local households, we asked about general perceptions of the quality of life; the general  
14 importance of the green on the surrounding mountain slopes; the frequency of urban and peri-  
15 urban green space visitation including the activities undertaken in them; and the motivations for  
16 engaging in those activities. The results of a multivariate analysis, which included linear modelling  
17 and ordinal regression, show that visual contact with the green slopes of the mountains is a  
18 decisive contribution to the perceived general quality of life for the inhabitants of Bellinzona and  
19 surroundings. This positive perception tends to increase with closer proximity of available private  
20 or urban green spaces. Different motivations for visiting urban green spaces were found, and vary  
21 among inhabitants according to age and gender, which indicates the existence of different user  
22 groups with different perceptions and also different (and potentially contrasting) needs with  
23 respect to the green areas. The practical implications of these differences for managing and  
24 planning urban green spaces are discussed.

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26 **Keywords:** urban green infrastructure, urbanization, residential quality evaluation, user groups, life  
27 quality, environmental perceptions.

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