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Multifunctional recreation and nouveau heritage values in plantation forests



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ABSTRACT

Recreation benefits constitute a substantial part of the total economic value of forests in modern societies, and are an increasingly important determinant in multi-functional forest management. Heritage sites, such as historic buildings open to visitation, are important parts of some recreation experiences, yet people who do not visit may also view their protection as important. However, few studies have examined the importance of heritage sites as part of the recreational experience or tried to compare their importance for recreational users versus the general public, even though these issues are central to management decisions. In this study, a choice modelling experiment was conducted in Australia to estimate the marginal values for improvements in recreation facilities (trails, day and night facilities) and historic sites in State plantation forests. The aim of the study was to examine the relative importance of historic sites as an attribute of forest recreation, and explore preference heterogeneity for various attributes of forest recreation across different forest areas and forest users. The results indicate that while there was significant preference heterogeneity for the different recreational attributes at two forest areas, there was less variation in the welfare estimates across attributes, sites and between user and non-user groups. Similar values were identified for the Heritage sites between recreational users and non-users, indicating that protection values were dominant over recreational use;

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yet no sub-group of the sampled population appeared to value Heritage sites in isolation from recreational assets, suggesting that respondents viewed the forests in multifunctional dimensions.

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Introduction

Recreation benefits constitute a substantial part of the total economic value of forests in modern societies, and are an increasingly important determinant in multi-functional forest management (e.g. [Cubbage et al., 2007](#); [Zandersen and Tol, 2009](#)). However, because people have a wide range of motivations for visiting forests, there is likely to be significant heterogeneity in preferences for specific attributes associated with forest recreation. The potential for multiple recreational uses and preference heterogeneity of different users means that the management of forests for recreation may require tradeoffs in resource allocation between different and potentially competing forest uses. For example, in forests with important biodiversity values there may be a conflict between increasing recreation use and protecting the conservation values of the forests (e.g., [Horne et al., 2005](#); [Juutinen et al., 2011](#)), or between different types of recreational use such as hiking and mountain bike riding and the use of four wheel drive vehicles (e.g. [Brey et al., 2007](#); [Morey et al., 2002](#)).

There is now an extensive literature with a wide range of studies valuing different forest management policy options. These include a number of meta-analyses (providing an indication of the volume of studies that exist) for woodland recreation ([Bateman and Jones, 2003](#)), forest recreation ([Zandersen and Tol, 2009](#)), contingent valuation forest studies which include recreation ([Barrio and Loureiro, 2010](#)) and more broadly on the non-timber benefits such as the value of forest protection, biodiversity and multiple use forestry in Norway, Sweden and Finland ([Lindhjem, 2007](#)).

Recreation is generally associated with activity that attracts direct use value, but many studies into multifunctional forest recreation have indicated that recreational values may be closely aligned with passive use values, for example for environmental amenity (e.g. [Abildtrup et al., 2013](#); [Czajkowski et al., 2014](#)). Less attention has been given to the cultural significance of a forest environment and how that might also provide passive use values. Many cultures have used forests and forest products as part of their traditional spiritual and livelihood systems, and may retain a continuing cultural connection even if the forest no longer forms part of their livelihood system ([Taylor and Lennon, 2011](#)). The benefits of forest recreation may also be higher for certain types of forests with historic and cultural values such as Caledonian Pine forests ([Willis et al., 2000](#)). The presence of archaeological or historic sites also increases the benefits of forest recreation ([Willis et al., 2000](#)), although the value of such sites tends to be assessed separately and is rarely assessed as an attribute of forest recreation per se.

The valuation of historic sites (e.g. [Navrud and Ready, 2002](#)) has generally focused on relatively important sites that are the main attraction for visitors even though the site visit may form part of a broader recreational experience, e.g., Stonehenge ([Maddisson and Mourato, 2002](#)) and Hadrian's Roman Wall ([Willis, 2009](#)) in the UK. Little attention has been given to the valuation of less important sites that may have some historic importance, but may be of limited significance to all visitors. Such sites may have value as part of a recreational trip but are not necessarily the main attraction for visitors and may only appeal to a proportion of visitors. In these cases it is important for resource managers to understand community preferences and preference heterogeneity to maintain these sites.

The motivation for protection values is complex. Recreation values are generally treated as direct use values that are largely non-market, while values for major heritage sites are generally viewed as non-use values underpinned by existence and bequest motivations. Yet heritage sites can be important tourist attractions, encompassing direct use values. Apart from direct use values, values for future protection may encompass option values where people want to maintain the option for visitation

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