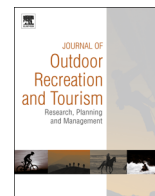




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# Landowner perceptions of three types of boating in the Saranac Lakes area of New York State's Adirondack Park



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## ABSTRACT

In order for natural resource managers to better understand conflicting landowner perspectives related to non-motorized, motorized, and personal watercraft use, this study examines the demographic and experiential characteristics, values, attitudes, and beliefs of landowners in the Saranac Lakes area of the Adirondack Park in New York State. A mixed-methods approach, composed of 20 in-depth interviews with land managers and a mail survey of 1000 landowners, was used. Three path analyses were completed, one for each type of boat use. Results indicate that resource-related values influence beliefs and attitudes related to boat use, supporting the cognitive hierarchy model of human behavior (Fulton, D. C., Manfredo, M. J., & Lipscomb, J. (1996). *Wildlife value orientations: a conceptual and measurement approach. Human Dimensions of Wildlife, 1*, 24–47). In addition, length of residence in the area, past participation in non-motorized and motorized boating, age, and education were found to influence attitudes towards certain types of boating. The results of this study can be used by natural resource managers to identify management strategies that better address the values and recreational interests of landowners.

## MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

A mixed methods approach, including a path analysis, of landowner perspectives on three types of boating can assist resource managers to

1. Understand differences in beliefs and attitudes of boaters – providing insight into existing and potential boater conflicts.
2. Create boater education programs that influence the basic beliefs and attitudes specific to landowner concerns.
3. Create recreational opportunities that meet resident needs, and garner resident support for management efforts.

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## 1. Introduction

The Saranac Lakes area of New York's Adirondack Park is composed of private lands as well as 79,000 acres of state-owned lands (i.e., the Saranac Lakes Wild Forest) that contain 142 water

bodies used extensively for water-based recreation (NYSDEC, 2008; Fig. 1). The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) manages the public lands in the area, which extends over Essex and Franklin counties in the Adirondack Park. Boating is extremely popular with business owners, visitors, and landowners, all of whom have a long-standing tradition of using state forest lands within the Saranac Lakes Wild Forest management unit for boating. However, conflicts between different types of boaters (e.g., between non-motorized boaters and motorboat users) are frequently perceived by landowners and natural resource managers. As managers seek new strategies to reduce boater conflicts, more information is needed about the elements that influence landowner beliefs and attitudes towards the three types of boats used predominantly in the

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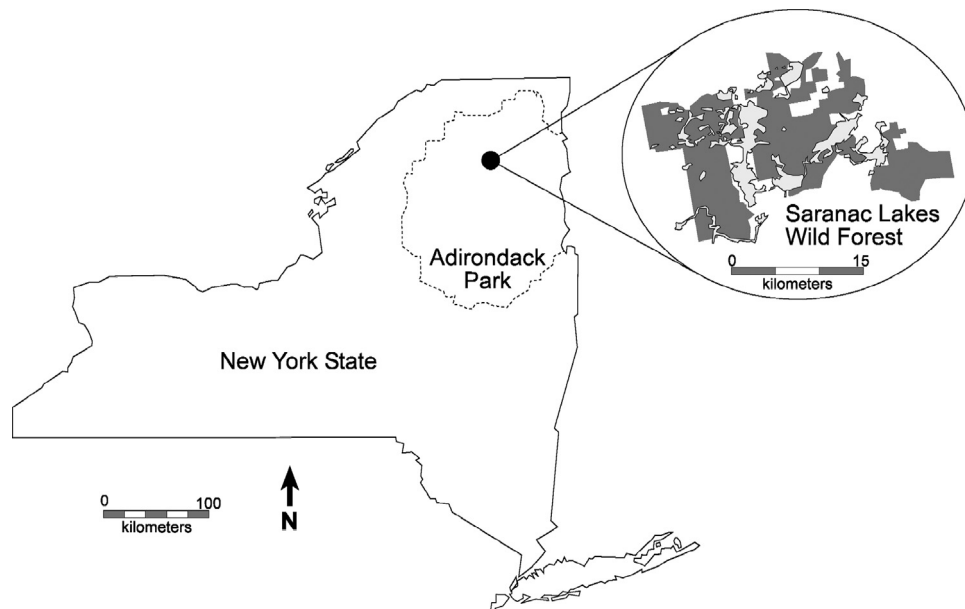


Fig. 1. The location of the portion of the Saranac Lakes Wild Forest Area included in the study. Dark shading indicates land; light shading indicates water.

area (i.e., non-motorized boats, motorized boats, and personal watercraft (e.g., Jet Ski<sup>®3</sup>)).

This study explores the relationships among landowner demographics, experiential characteristics, recreation and resource values, and beliefs and attitudes towards the use of the three types of boats in the Saranac Lakes area. The objectives of this study are 1) to explore the values and beliefs of public and private land managers towards boating in the Saranac Lakes Wild Forest through land manager interviews; and 2) to identify the relationships among the values, beliefs, attitudes, and demographic and experiential characteristics of local landowners towards motorized boating, non-motorized boating, and personal watercraft use. The conceptual framework for this study was adapted from the cognitive hierarchy model of human behavior (Fulton, Manfredo, & Lipscomb, 1996) for water-based outdoor recreation (i.e., boating) in the Saranac Lakes area through a mixed methods approach (i.e., 20 interviews with public and private land managers followed by a mail survey of 1000 landowners). By integrating experiential and demographic characteristics, values, beliefs, and attitudes, this framework provides insight into the resource- and recreation-related values of Saranac Lake landowners. In addition, the framework permits the exploration of a previously neglected relationship in outdoor recreation research: between held values and past participation in boating (not to be confused with intended behavior, a succedent of attitude according to the cognitive hierarchy model of human behavior; Fulton et al., 1996).

## 2. The theoretical framework

The cognitive hierarchy model of human behavior (Fulton et al., 1996) suggests that relationships exist among values, basic beliefs, attitudes and norms, behavioral intentions, and behaviors. Values are identified as determinants of basic belief patterns, which in turn influence attitudes and norms, followed by behavioral intentions, and, finally, behaviors. Results from studies using the cognitive hierarchy model have shown strong support for the

model, finding significant relationships between values, beliefs, and attitudes (Dougherty, Fulton, & Anderson, 2003; Vaske & Donnelly, 1999; Fulton et al., 1996). Our study applies the cognitive hierarchy model to water-based recreation (specifically boating), which has not yet been studied using this framework. In order to focus on the antecedents of attitudes, we incorporate the constructs of values, beliefs, and attitudes from the cognitive hierarchy model into the conceptual model of our study (Fig. 2).

Values (regarded as the foundation of the cognitive hierarchy model) are defined as relatively stable constructs that “transcend specific situations” (Fulton et al., 1996, p. 27) and are used as standards for evaluating behaviors (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1994; Fulton et al., 1996; Vaske & Donnelly, 1999). Vaske and Donnelly (1999, p. 525) further discuss values as constructs “shared by all members of a culture” that are “slow to change.” Studies in social science have primarily focused on “held” values – “ideas or principles that people hold as important to them” (Seymore, Curtis, Pannell, Allan, & Roberts, 2010, p. 143; Lockwood, 1999). In previous studies related to wildlife and natural resource management, held values have included wildlife protection/use values and ecosystem-based values (Dougherty et al., 2003); landscape values (Brown, 2001); intrinsic (nature), non-use (untouched nature), use (of nature), and recreation values (Winter, 2005); and ecological, recreation, and production values related to forest areas (Nordlund & Westin, 2011). Schwartz (1994) suggests 10 types of values that have “universal” aspects across cultures. One of these values—“universalism”—is related to the protection and appreciation of all people and of nature, while the values of “achievement,” “hedonism,” “stimulation,” and “self-direction” are related to different aspects of outdoor recreation. “Value orientations” have also been studied in order to better understand differences in how individuals express values (Manfredo & Dayer, 2004). For wildlife and forest resources, egoistic, altruistic, and biospheric orientations have been proposed (Stern, Dietz, & Kalof, 1993; De Groot & Steg, 2008), as have value orientations based on biocentric–anthropocentric (Vaske, Donnelly, Williams, & Jonker, 2001; Vaske & Donnelly, 1999), benefits–existence, and protection–use continua (Fulton et al., 1996). Values specific to water-based recreational activities have not yet been identified or measured. In order to determine the values most pertinent to non-motorized boating, motorized boating, and personal watercraft use in the Saranac Lakes area, we use a mixed methods approach to identify (from interviews; Table 1) values related to water-

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