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**Attitudes of Local Residents to Recreation and Tourism Development of
Fredericksburg/Spotsylvania: A Case Study**

Many national military parks today are threatened by such issues as urban sprawl and commercial development. Local residents can play an integral role in minimizing or exaggerating these planning issues. The purpose of this case study was to measure the local residents' attitudes toward a national military park in order to identify these development issues. Survey respondents (n= 115) were residents who lived near the park. Although the majority of the respondents felt that the benefits of the park outweighed the negative impacts, and in particular that historical preservation was important for the town and park, differences were found in the respondents' attitudes.

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Introduction

Although tourism is sometimes considered an invisible industry, it does have impacts on different elements of the local residents' lives. Social, economic, and environmental aspects of tourism can have profound impacts on the local residents. According to McGehee and Andereck (2004), most studies in tourism impacts discovered one or more positive impacts and one or more negative impacts. These impacts, whether positive or negative, can in turn affect the attitudes of local residents toward tourism within their community and associated urban growth.

Previous research suggests that these attitudes impact behavior and specifically, in this case, impact behavior toward tourism and tourists. Allen, Long, Perdue, and Kieselbach (1988) suggested that for tourism based economies to support themselves in local communities, the residents' attitudes and perceptions toward tourism must be continually assessed. Additional research also suggests that the goodwill toward tourists and the support of local residents' for tourism is critical for tourism's sustainability (Gursoy, Jurowski, & Uysal, 2002; Jurowski, Uysal, & Williams, 1997; Sheldon & Abenoja, 2001).

One particular theory that discusses the impact of local residents' attitudes toward tourism is the social exchange theory. Ap (1992) suggested that residents evaluate tourism in terms of benefits or costs to them for the services needed. Based upon this theory when the exchange of resources is high, the tourism impacts are viewed as positive. On the other hand if the exchange of resources is low then the impacts are viewed as negative.

One particular area of tourism and the area of interest for this study is heritage tourism. Heritage tourism is defined as "visits by persons from outside the host community motivated wholly or in part by interest in historical, artistic, scientific, or lifestyle/heritage offerings of a community region, group, or institution" (Silberberg, 1995). While the tourist is served by heritage tourism, it can also serve the host community by increasing the locals'

awareness, understanding, and appreciation of their history and culture (Cela, Lankford, & Knowles-Lankford, 2009). According to Herbert (1995) this area of tourism is one of the most significant and fastest growing niche areas in tourism.

This study focused on a particular type of heritage tourism, specifically tourism to Civil War battlefields. Throughout the United States, there are approximately 31 Civil War battlefields managed by the National Park Service (NPS) and even more managed by the individual states. Stynes (2009) found that in the five states he studied, Missouri, Tennessee, South Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, Civil War visitors exceeded 20 million. These tourists bring in approximately \$50 per day per visitor to the local economies and support on the average 287 full-time jobs (Davidson-Peterson Associates, 2006) per park. In the study conducted by Davidson -Peterson Associates (2006), they further found that at the 20 sites they studied that the Civil War tourists generated \$21 million in state taxes and \$11.7 million in local taxes.

Some communities have a challenging dilemma of trying to maintain the historical or cultural integrity of their community while also catering to tourists and managing associated urban sprawl. For example, towns in Orange County and Fredericksburg have become bedroom communities for employees who work in Washington, DC. The resulting challenge is to preserve the integrity of the Fredericksburg/Spotsylvania National Military Park (FSNMP) while addressing demand for urban growth. During the past year, this issue came to the forefront when Orange County was sued by preservation groups in an attempt to block the building of a Walmart adjacent to the military park. The preservation groups were concerned with historical integrity of the park, while proponents argued the store would help the area economically. The case was settled out of court, but it did bring about the questions of how do local residents feel about the national military park, the tourism generated by the park, and the development patterns in the community.

Civil War battlefields are being impacted by urban sprawl. Research suggests that the United States loses approximately 30 acres of Civil War battlefields per day which amounts to about 10,900 acres each year (E. Egles, personal communication, January 7, 2010). The Civil War Trust publishes a yearly list of the ten most endangered battlefields (which included the FSNMP) that are impacted by urban sprawl and other issues. The Wilderness Battlefield is included on this list.

The purpose of this case study was to: 1) determine local residents' attitudes toward the FSNMP and the impacts of urban sprawl; 2) to measure attitudes toward the impacts of tourism to and recreation associated with the national military park; and 3) pilot an instrument to be on the ten most endangered Civil War battlefields.

Research Methods

Site

The Fredericksburg/Spotsylvania National Military Park contains 7600 acres spread over four counties (Stafford, Orange, Spotsylvania, and Caroline) and one municipality (Fredericksburg). The park contains four historically significant battlefields including Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania, the Wilderness, and Chancellorsville. In 2008, the park hosted 1,534,041 visitors and in 2007 the non-local visitors spent \$25,682,000 in the local economies (NPS, 2009).

Instrument

An adapted version of the Tourism Impact Attitude Scale (TIAS) was utilized for this study (Lankford & Howard, 1994). The TIAS has been found to be a reliable and valid instrument to measure attitudes toward tourism and recreation (Bachleitner & Zins, 1999; Chen, & Hsu, 2001; Dimanche, 2004; Harrill & Potts, 2003; Kang, Long, & Perdue, 1996; Wang & Pfister, 2008; 2006; Weaver & Lawton, 2001). Questions from the original TIAS

were changed to ask about attitudes toward the impacts of recreation and tourism around the military park. Additional demographic information such as gender, home ownership, family income, and employment status was collected. Questions were added to also measure attitudes toward preservation and battlefield preservation using a five-point Likert-type response format.

Procedures

Subjects were randomly selected and asked to voluntarily participate in the study. The mailing list was generated by Melissa DATA, which is a marketing and data firm that provides contact information for business and research. Using Geographic Information System (GIS) , the researchers were able to locate the eight zip codes that were directly adjacent to the FSNMP (22401, 22405, 22406, 22407, 22408, 22508, 22508, and 22553). Based upon these eight zip codes, mailing addresses were requested for 650 potential participants. Of these 650 addresses, 20 were bad. Following Dillman's procedures each of the remaining 630 selected potential participants received four mailings to remind and request participation (Dillman, 2007). The participants were given a choice whether to respond to the survey using the paper copy or an on-line copy through SurveyMonkey.

Subjects

The researchers received 115 completed surveys, resulting in a rate of 18.3%. Males made up 54 % of the sample. Sixty-one percent of the respondents were not born in the county or town that they currently live, but the average length of residency in the town or county is 21 years. The most common response for type of employment for the respondents was managerial (35.7%). The average family income was between \$50,000 and \$100,000. Seventy-one percent of the respondents owned their own house. The median age of the respondents was 57 years old. Refer to Table 1 to view the characteristics of the population based upon the 2010 Census compared to the respondents.

Table 1 Characteristics of Sample Respondents to Population

Characteristics	Population	Sample
Overall Population	131,711	115
(Aged 20 & over)		
Gender		
(%, Aged 20 & over)		
Male	47.5	53.9
Female	52.5	43.5
Home Ownership (%)		
Own	72.4	71.3
Rent	27.6	27.0
Occupation (%)		
Managerial	26.4	35.7
Technical, sales	31.9	9.6
Services	23.3	6.1
Farming, fishing	0.2	0.9
Operators, laborers	8.3	1.7
Homemaker	-	3.5
Student	-	0.0
Retired	-	30.4
Unemployed	7.1	2.6

Data for the population were based upon the 2010 United States Census

Results

Overall, 68.7% of the respondents supported preservation of battlefields, while slightly more respondents (81.7%) suggested that it also was important to preserve historical sites (Table 2). A number of demographic characteristics illuminate on these findings.

Specifically, people not born in Virginia, or the town or county of residence felt it was more

important to preserve battlefields. Females and those owning their own home felt it was more important to preserve battlefields.

Table 2 Local residents' attitudes toward preservation of FSNMP

Indicators	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
It is important to preserve sites of historical or cultural significance	0.9	7.0	10.4	27.4	54.8	4.28	0.97
It is important to preserve the battlefields	13.0	12.2	6.1	29.6	39.1	3.70	1.43
Preservation of battlefields prevent growth of my community	16.5	20.9	27.0	27.8	7.8	2.63	1.07
I wish outsiders would stop meddling in the local decision making process on preservation	4.3	9.6	33.9	31.3	20.9	3.55	1.06
1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree, M= Mean, SD = Standard Deviation							

The majority of respondents (74.8%) felt the benefits of the FSNMP outweighed the negative impacts (Table 3). Forty-five percent of the participants responded that the park did not restrict the growth of the community, while an additional 33% were neutral on this point. Interestingly, 56.5% of the respondents did not feel like their community's identity was based on the battlefields and FSNMP, yet they reported (68.7%) that the park will play a major role in the future of their community. A slight majority of the respondents indicated that outsiders should stop meddling in the local decision making process (52.2%).

Table 3 Benefits of tourism to FSNMP as perceived by local residents

Indicators (Benefits)	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
Tourism to FSNMP increased my standard of living	5.2	15.7	47.8	22.6	8.7	3.14	0.93
Jobs tourism provides are highly desirable	2.6	13.0	36.5	40.0	7.8	3.37	0.90
I have more money to spend as results of FSNMP	13.0	34.8	40.9	7.8	3.5	3.00	0.94
Tourism development of FSNMP will provide more jobs	2.6	6.1	17.4	62.6	11.3	3.74	0.84
I support tourism and would like to see it become main industry in community	2.6	9.6	27.0	42.6	18.3	3.63	0.97
The FSNMP will continue to play major role in my community.	1.7	7.0	22.6	45.2	23.5	3.82	0.93
The benefits of the FSNMP outweigh the positive	0.9	4.3	20.0	40.0	34.8	4.03	0.90
1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree, M= Mean, SD = Standard deviation							

Respondents (63.5%) noted the park and the resulting development around the town has reduced the quality of outdoor recreation opportunities, and that it is more important (42.6% agree, 29% disagree) to provide recreation facilities for locals rather than visitors (Table 4). In terms of impacts, those respondents who were born in town or Virginia noted that the park and development around the park created more negative impacts. Males, respondents who rent and those not employed in tourism or the park noted significantly more negative impacts.

Table 4 Negative impacts of tourism to FSNMP as perceived by local residents

Indicators (Negative Impacts)	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
Tourism has reduced the quality of outdoor recreation opportunities at the FSNMP	20.9	42.6	29.6	7.0	0.0	2.23	0.86
Noise level from the FSNMP is not appropriate for my community	11.3	32.2	26.1	10.4	20.0	2.96	0.68
FSNMP has negatively impacted the local economy	14.8	31.3	27.8	13.0	13.0	2.78	1.23
There is more litter in my community due to the FSNMP	17.4	41.7	33.9	5.2	1.7	2.32	0.88
The FSNMP has increased crime in my community	15.7	39.1	33.9	8.7	2.6	2.43	0.95
1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree, M= Mean, SD = Standard Deviation							

Conclusions

The obvious limitation of this study is the low response rate of 18%. Despite the low return rate arguments have been made that it can still be representative of the overall population. For example, according to Wallace (1954), a response rate of 15% to 30% is indicative of the entire group if a random sample is used. Although the return rate is low for this study, since the sample was drawn randomly, the attitudes should be representative of the population.

The findings suggest respondents acknowledge the importance of the park and the associated visitor industry. However, there are some concerns with regard to impacts on outdoor recreation, negative impacts from visitors and sprawl. There also appears to be some incongruence with regard to development outside the park. Those employed in the park, and those who live outside the sphere of influence of the park favor the preservation. Respondents

from the area in and around the park noted negative impacts from the park and the development patterns.

Some of the findings are consistent with past studies using the TIAS, specifically, the studies in the Columbia Rivers Gorge National Scenic Area (Lankford & Howard, 1994). The TIAS as modified provided a preliminary review of the situation within the context of the study site. However, a number of modifications need to be made with regard to wording of specific questions. Adding additional questions on development patterns, sprawl, type and scale of development, planning and process issues related to citizen involvement. In addition questions on community identity specific to heritage tourism are recommended. An additional pilot of the instrument with a larger sample is also recommended prior to use with to a study of the ten most endangered Civil War battlefields.

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