

# VISIT MOTIVATIONS AND PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF FARMS, PRIVATE FORESTS AND STATE/NATIONAL PARKS IN MISSOURI

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## ABSTRACT

This study explored the variability in visit motivations and perceived benefits of Missouri households from three natural settings: (1) Farms; (2) Private Forests; and (3) State/National Parks. Specific goals of this study were: (1) To describe outdoor recreation preferences and behavior; (2) to contrast motivations for visiting these three natural settings; and (3) to compare the perceived benefits among these three settings. Data were collected in 2010 using a mailed self-administered questionnaire from a random sample of 5,000 Missouri households. The survey produced 969 responses (19.6% adjusted response rate). Results show that “Do something with their family”, “View the scenic beauty”, and “Enjoy the smells and sounds of nature” were the three most important motivations for visiting all three natural settings. Repeated Measures ANOVA showed that the 15 motivation items were perceived to be significantly more important to visit a state/national park as compared to a farm or a private forest. Post-hoc paired *t*-tests showed that only seven motivational items (i.e., “Use their equipment”; “Give their mind a rest”; “Experience new and different things”; “Enjoy the smells and sounds of nature”; “Share their agritourism/outdoor skills”; “Have a change from their daily routing; and “Experience solitude”) were significantly different across the three natural settings. Overall, respondents also considered significantly more important state/national parks for providing several environmental, socio-cultural, and economic benefits to society as compared to farms and private forests. Planning and managing implications of study results are presented and discussed.