

Visitor's Perception toward Boating in Silver River, Florida

Authors : Hoda Manafian, Stephen Holland

Abstract : Silver Springs are one of Florida's first tourist attractions. They are one of the largest artesian spring formations in the world, producing nearly 550 million gallons of crystal-clear water daily that is one of the most popular sites for water-based leisure activities. As part of managing the use of a state park, the state is interested in establishing a baseline count of number of boating users to compare this to the quality of the natural resources and environment in the park. Understanding the status of the environmental resources and also the human recreational experience is the main objective of the project. Two main goals of current study are 1) to identify the distribution of different types of watercrafts (kayak, canoe, motor boat, Jet Ski, paddleboard and pontoon). 2) To document the level of real crowdedness in the river during different seasons, months, and hours of each day based on the reliable information gained from camera versus self-reported method by tourists themselves in the past studies (the innovative achievement of this study). In line with these objectives, on-site surveys and also boat counting using a time-lapse camera at the Riverside launch was done during 12 months of 2015. 700 on-site surveys were conducted at three watercraft boat ramp sites (Rays Wayside, Riverside launch area, Ft. King Waterway) of recreational users. We used Virtualdub and ImageJ software for counting boats for meeting the first and second goals, since this two software can report even the hour of presence of watercraft in the water in addition to the number of users and the type of watercraft. The most crowded hours were between 9-11AM from February to May and kayak was the most popular watercraft. The findings of this research can make a good foundation for better management in this state park in future.

Keywords : eco-tourism, Florida state, visitors' perception, water-based recreation

Conference Title : ICSRD 2020 : International Conference on Scientific Research and Development

Conference Location : Chicago, United States

Conference Dates : December 12-13, 2020