



Introductory Report

Risk Perceptions of Climate Change on Outdoor Recreation in Western Maine
Nick Ferrauolo, Lydia Horne, Dr. Sandra De Urioste-Stone
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nicholas.ferrauolo@maine.edu, lydia.horne@maine.edu, sandra.de@maine.edu



Our Purpose

-Climate change has and will continue to bring both challenges and benefits to Western Maine's tourism industry. However, in order to combat these challenges and capitalize on these benefits, the industry's dynamism must be understood.

-Purpose: Investigate how visitors to the Maine Lakes and Mountains Region (1) perceived their risk to climate change, and (2) how those perceptions might influence future outdoor recreation decisions.

-Goal: Provide information to enhance tourism planning in Western Maine resulting in continued regional development and adaptation to climate change.

Methods

-Randomly administered online questionnaire to Western Maine residents (summer, 2017).

-Basic demographic and outdoor recreation behavior information, and risk perceptions of climate change.

-Response rate: 17% (N = 340)

89%

Respondents who said they agree that climate change is happening

70%

Respondents who would recreate elsewhere in Maine if Western Maine recreation conditions were poor

52%

Respondents who indicated that the increased presence of **ticks** would affect their recreation habits

Conclusions

-Residents are knowledgeable about climate change & anthropogenic influences.

-The primary concern for visitors in the future is increased ticks & mosquitos.

-Residents are willing to adapt by recreating elsewhere in the state and New England area.

Recommendations

-Provide recreationists with information on ticks & mosquitos to keep them informed.

-Prepare for an increase in industries providing weather independent activities.

-Winter based tourism will be likely to face these challenges and opportunities soon.

About the Author

My name is Nick Ferrauolo and I am a second year Wildlife Ecology student with a minor in Forest Recreation Management. Previously, I have worked for the National Park Service in Yellowstone and for the Fish & Wildlife Service on Maine's coast. I am interested in climate change and how it will affect both wildlife but as well as recreation opportunities and tourism. I also enjoy hiking, fishing, swimming and birding.

