
BOOK REVIEW**Studies in Outdoor Recreation:
Search and Research for Satisfaction, Third Edition**

Robert E. Manning
Oregon State University Press, 2011

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Twenty-five years after *Studies in Outdoor Recreation* was first published, and 12 years after the most recent edition, Robert Manning has published a thoroughly updated and authoritative resource. Over the years, his purpose has remained the same—to compile and synthesize all of the research contributing to a greater understanding of the social aspects of outdoor recreation participation. For Manning, this spans resource, social, and managerial environments. These environments comprise “a useful way to consider and analyze outdoor recreation in a comprehensive, multidisciplinary fashion” (p. 323).

The book contains 14 chapters, which is one more than the previous edition, and each chapter corresponds to what Manning suggests are themes or focus areas that emerge from scholarly, peer-reviewed literature. Although each chapter discusses unique subject matter, the chapters generally follow the same presentation pattern. Each chapter begins with a description of the theme, discusses relevant theories and any seminal work, and describes methodological approaches along with the findings and results of related studies. Many chapters also include a section that addresses important issues, concerns, or challenges that have come to light.

While it is often the case that a first and final chapter would serve as “book-ends,” it is my opinion that Chapter 1, “Search and Research for Satisfaction: An Introduction to Outdoor Recreation Research,” and Chapter 14, “Principles and Practices of Outdoor Recreation: Knowledge into Action,” accomplish their purpose exceptionally well. Chapter 1 frames the book and sets the stage for the following chapters, while the final chapter summarizes, revisits, and moves the reader toward a trajectory of action via guiding principles and a framework for recreation management. Collectively, these two chapters provide an important and thorough look at the past and current state of outdoor recreation research, while providing a frame of reference for where the future of outdoor recreation research and practices should go in the future.

The themes of the remaining 11 chapters address the following: (1) social aspects of outdoor recreation, (2) descriptive aspects of outdoor recreation, (3) carrying capacity, (4) crowding, (5) indicators and standards of quality, (6) motivations and benefits, (7) the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum, (8) recreation conflict, (9)

substitutability, and (10) recreation specialization. A helpful feature of the book is the summary section found at the end of each chapter. There are also numerous tables, charts, and models provided throughout the book. The third edition incorporates hundreds of new studies published since the second edition.

There is far too much noteworthy content to be mentioned in a review, but one example of new research discussed in the book is the idea of “trade-offs.” Based on economic theory of indifference and stated choice analysis, research on trade-offs provides insight into how visitors and managers make decisions when there are competing demands on resources. This approach takes previous work on descriptive analysis a step further and increases the chance that accurate predictions can be made about visitor acceptance of management practices.

This third edition includes new models for understanding outdoor recreation behavior. For instance, the Conflict Model has been expanded to include issues of “safety” and “expectations” to the list of variables that influence conflict sensitivity. In addition, a new conceptual model for substitutability is introduced. Manning added two appendices—the first summarizes indicators and standards used for measuring the quality of parks and outdoor recreation areas, while the latter includes a useful guide for locating social science literature in outdoor recreation. Several chapters have been expanded, and there is a new chapter entitled, “Outdoor Recreation Places: Emotional and Symbolic Meanings.” If there is any deficiency in the third edition, it is the need for an index of authors.

While Manning divided the book into chapters based on themes, he emphasizes interrelationships among concepts, which is certainly an argument for reading the book cover to cover rather than reading only those sections or chapters pertaining to a particular research interest. Manning’s book is a valuable contribution to all those who have a scholarly or vested interest in outdoor recreation.

The third edition of *Studies in Outdoor Recreation* is an obvious choice for a graduate class in outdoor recreation studies. It would also make a superb text for a graduate research class addressing broader studies in recreation, parks, tourism and leisure studies when taught by a knowledgeable researcher. The book draws attention to many different research methods and types of analyses, which provides a natural platform to discuss the rationale for and advantages and disadvantage of one analytical technique over another.

Professors and instructors teaching undergraduate classes will also find *Studies in Outdoor Recreation* useful. While the book is not intended to serve as an undergraduate textbook, it is a wonderful reference for supplementing concepts found in introductory texts.

Studies in Outdoor Recreation is also a vital resource for researchers, scientists, and managers. Managers in outdoor recreation will benefit from the extensive review of studies that apply to issues or concerns specific to their recreation area. There are several instances in which Manning provides helpful measurement or evaluative tools in the form of checklists. For instance, there are eight criteria given for good indicators of quality, five characteristics of good standards of quality, and 13 themes related to carrying capacity. I found this feature of the book to be quite useful in bringing consensus to how an idea or concept is defined and encouraging consistency and unity in measurement techniques. Chapters 13 and

14 are solely devoted to management practices. In Chapter 13, Manning discusses extensively a variety of alternative management practices. In Chapter 14, he then discusses implications of these practices in the form of 14 Outdoor Recreation Principles. Another major contribution of this chapter is the step-by-step framework he provides for developing management practices based on the resource, social, and management environments found in outdoor recreation.

Manning's book also provides valuable assistance to aspiring scholars. Many graduate students know they are interested in outdoor recreation but may be unclear as to which particular area. Although the book provides a broad and thorough overview of scholarly research, some topics will likely resonate or kindle enthusiasm more than others. The book will aid young scholars as they seek to narrow their research interests.

In addition to having historical, informative and educational attributes, the book also inspires and motivates. Manning is quick to acknowledge that "outdoor recreation is not an academic discipline but an interdisciplinary applied field of study" (p. 19). One of his summarizing ideas is that there must be a balance between research geared toward more scholarly expectations and rewards and research that will yield usable information for resource managers. In that spirit, Manning has successfully written a book that is applicable to both managers and scholars. He also has successfully written a book that gives the field of study a sense of identity. Chapters 1 and 14 should be read and considered often as they clarify who we are, what we seek to accomplish, and how best to go about that work.

Manning has a wealth of experience and insight that allows him to do more than just summarize and present years of empirical research. On several occasions, he addresses the criticism that outdoor recreation research lacks generalizability and usefulness to management. Bent Flyvbjerg (2001), author of *Making Social Science Matter*, refers to the importance of a collective process of knowledge accumulation. This perspective seems to capture not only the rationale for Manning's momentous effort of synthesizing a vast amount of literature but his appeal to the research community to share in the responsibility toward more integrated research. To this end, Manning argues that for research to be relevant and provide sound, practical implications, investigators must collect data using consistent measurement techniques, utilize research methods that maximize respondent involvement, and strengthen dialogue among diverse stakeholders. Manning's book goes a long way toward helping researchers and managers become better connected, informed, and equipped to generate knowledge that will inform practice.

Studies in Outdoor Recreation provides a much needed framework and is a must read for anyone who is interested in contributing to the science that informs those practices geared toward ensuring quality and satisfaction for the social, resource, and managerial environments found in outdoor recreation.

Reference

- Flyvbjerg, B. (2001). *Making social science matter: Why social inquiry fails and how it can succeed again*. New York: Cambridge University Press.