

Additional background for “Recreation Impacts on Natural Resources”

The focus of the recreation topic is the impact of recreation on natural resources - not the impact of the natural resources on recreation. It may be useful to remember that outdoor recreation encompasses a vast variety of activities including offroading to mountain biking, fishing, hunting, camping, backpacking hiking, wildlife watching, *and many others*. The impact of these activities upon natural resources is influenced by such factors as frequency, season, and intensity. Impacts are also influenced by site conditions – e.g., soil depth, texture, and slope – and other factors.

Some issues of concern to managers include:

Impacts of ATV’s/off-road vehicles – usually taken to include soil compaction, removal of ground cover, etc. This can lead to decreases in infiltration increases in overland flow and concentration of flow in trails/roadways.

Disruption of natural quiet – natural quiet is usually defined as that level of noise present without human activity. Note that natural quiet can be very noisy: a rapid on a stream or a very windy day in a grassland. Natural quiet can be disrupted in a number of ways such as over flights by sightseeing planes, motorized vehicles, talking, etc.

Removal of soil litter cover and compaction of soils at recreational sites.

Introduction of non-native invasive species via weed seeds in horse hay, transport of seeds on the undercarriage of motor vehicles or by hikers. Soil surface that accompanies recreational activities can make ideal sites for establishment of these weedy species.

Damage to cultural sites (Indian ruins/homestead sites)

Degradation of water quality via introduction of sediments, hydrocarbons from motorized boats, improper waste disposal

Improper disposal of trash including monofilament at fishing areas, plastic six- pack holders, etc

Changes in animal behavior including “taming” of wildlife associated with campgrounds, disruption of breeding cycles, etc in human sensitive species; introduction of non-native fauna such as bait fishes, crayfish, quagga or zebra mussels via movement of motorboats

1. What components of the hydrologic cycle can be altered by recreation? infiltration
2. What two impacts to the resource could off road vehicles, mountain biking, and hiking have in common? soil compaction/trailing, transport of invasive species

How do they differ in impact?
area affected, noise levels

3. What impacts would construction of a campground on this site have to the soil resource?
4. Which of these is not usually considered an impact of recreational boating?
 - A. hydrocarbon pollution
 - B. wake damage to shorelines
 - C. potential to introduce invasive species
 - D. fragmentation of habitats
 - E. noise
5. Given the two soils (possibly a clay textured and a loam textured) which would be a better site for a campground? explain
Loam – higher infiltration, faster drainage, etc
6. What are two common management strategies employed in campgrounds to prevent wildlife from becoming dependent on humans?
 - a. wildlife proof trashcans
 - b. rules requiring campers to store food in closed containers

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