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## Travel Preferences of Recreational Motorcyclists'

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## **Cover Page Footnote**

This study would not be possible without the insight and guidance from the National Park Service, Watauga County Tourism Development Authority, Blue Ridge Motorcycling, Blue Ridge Outdoors, and especially, America Ride Maps who provided us with access to the user group.

# Travel Preferences of Recreational Motorcyclists'

## 1.0 Introduction

Tourism is a significant contributor to the economy in North Carolina, specifically the Western mountainous region which encompasses large tracks of protected lands including National Forests and Parks. Moreover, visitors enjoy the plethora of outdoor recreation opportunities Western North Carolina (WNC) offers in all four seasons noted for cool summers and snowy winters. A popular outdoor activity in the WNC is driving for pleasure on the Blue Ridge Parkway (BRP), a 469 mile long scenic highway built through the New Deal in the 1930s taking 52 years to complete. The BRP, although not a National Park, is the most visited unit of the National Park System and is maintained by the National Park Service (NPS). The BRP runs through 29 counties in Virginia and North Carolina and connects the Great Smokey Mountains National Park (in the south) to the Skyline Drive (in the north). Land on either side of the BRP is owned and maintained by the NPS. There is no fee for using the parkway, which has a speed limit of 45mph and it is not maintained in the winter, often with sections closed to travel. Mileposts along the parkway start at zero in Virginia and count to 469 at the end in North Carolina. The BRP reports creation of over 12,000 jobs, visitor spending estimated at \$902 million for surrounding gateway communities, and over 15 million visitors each year. The BRP has been shown to be a “major contributor to regional economic vitality” (NPS, 2014).

The BRP offers parks and vistas along the route that caters to motorized recreationists including automobiles and motorcycles. It is estimated there are 11 million motorcycles in the U.S. with approximately 9% of adults owning a motorcycle riding at least once a year, resulting in an expected annual growth rate of 6% and to be an \$85 billion market by 2015 (Market Line, 2012). The BRP is often referred to as America’s favorite drive and a top destination for motorcyclist recreationists who enjoy touring on curvy and challenging roads. Before visiting the WNC region motorcyclists have to conduct travel research and plan specific routes so they have adequate fuel and locate motorcycle friendly accommodations. The BRP uses short side roads to connect to highways with no major direct interchanges to interstates, which allow visitors the opportunity to enjoy wildlife and other scenery without stopping for cross-traffic. One drawback for visitor’s driving the parkway is the lack of amenities, including gas stations and restaurants, which most travelers are accustomed today. In order to access travel services you must exit the parkway into a nearby town, which is often not marked. Motorcycles, which have small gas tanks, must be especially aware of the distance between towns to avoid running out of fuel. As a result maps indicating services are essential to motorcyclists traveling through the region. There are specialty companies that aid in this research and offer waterproof maps specifically made for touring motorcyclists that indicate motorcycle friendly services.

These unique issues related to motorcycling and lack of knowledge about their contribution to tourism in the WNC region was a topic of conversation at a professional conference that lead to this research project. Noted points of interest included motorcyclists travel preferences, views of nature and quiet despite loud pipes, issues of safety, and average trip expenditures. While many studies have examined both recreation preferences and motorized recreation activities on public lands, empirical research is lacking on motorcycle recreationists’. As noted in the recent article by Weinzimmer, Newman, Taff, Benfield, Lynch & Bell, previous motorcycle research has revolved around safety concerns like helmet use, but rarely human dimensions (2014). Therefore, this paper discusses the results of an exploratory study with the purpose of understanding motorcyclists travel preferences and economic contributions to the gateway regions surrounding the Blue Ridge Mountains in WNC.

## 2.0 Literature Review

### *Outdoor Motorized Recreation*

Off-highway vehicles (OHV), which includes 4x4 Jeeps, All Terrain Vehicles (ATV), and dirt bikes, are one of the fastest growing sectors of recreationists on public lands. Cordell reported OHV growth in two separate studies citing 5 million users in 1972 to nearly 36 million in 2000, and from 1999 to 2004 OHV recreation grew by over 15 million participants (Cordell and others 2005, 2000). The OHV growth coincides with increased populations as well as declining equipment prices, aging populations with limited abilities, technological advances, and accessing once-remote areas (Kil, Holland & Stein, 2012; Flather & Cordell, 1995). Furthermore, there is an increase in the types of motorized vehicles including motorcycles, all terrain vehicles, utility type vehicles, larger trucks, and swamp buggies (Kil, Holland & Stein, 2012).

With the growth in popularity of OHV recreation a multitude of management policies to address this form of recreation have also emerged. Motorized OHV recreation brings ecological damage as well as user conflicts, not unlike motorcycle use (Parent, Alavalapati, Stein & Reed, 2006; Karasin, 2003). Although specific issues are directly related to OHV use, like trail maintenance, other issues like wildlife disturbance and noise pollution are common with motorcycle use on paved roads. Motorcycles that are equipped with aftermarket pipes often create noise disturbances that impede natural soundscapes. One of the most frequently cited and sought after visitor experiences in protected areas is the sound of nature and natural quiet, not people talking on cell phones, children screaming, dogs barking, or motorized noise (Weinzimmer, et. al., 2014). The first such protection of soundscapes in the parks was The National Parks Overflights Act of 1987 that eventually led to the National Park Service Order #47: *Soundscape Preservation and Noise Management*, which established guidelines and policies to protect soundscapes. Furthermore, in 2006 the NPS policies included terminology to preserve the natural soundscapes of parks with growing debates over personal watercraft use, helicopter tours over the Grand Canyon, and snowmobiling use in Yellowstone (NPS, 2006). This highlights the issue of human-caused noise to the park experience and growing concern over its effect on wildlife, resources, and user conflicts. Moreover, it amplifies the issue of noise disturbing modified motorcycles touring on scenic routes in the National Parks. Although there are no plans to impose noise restrictions on motorcycles in the parks, the agency under its Natural Soundscape Program, is studying the issue and partnering with motorcycle associations to request riders stay in smaller groups, not accelerate excessively and respect park quiet hours (NPS, Natural Sounds Program, 2014).

### ***The Motorcycle Industry***

Along with the growth in popularity of OHV use, the motorcycle industry has seen similar increases. The world motorcycle industry was worth \$63.5 billion in 2010 and is expected to grow at an annual rate of 6% to reach almost \$85 billion by 2015 (Market Line, 2012). According to the Motorcycle Industry Council (2012) one million new motorcycles are sold annually with an estimated 11 million motorcycles in the U.S. Approximately 9% of U.S. adults own a motorcycle and rides at least once a year. Harley Davidson is currently the leading motorcycle manufacturer in the U.S. market with around 47% of market share (Leisure Market Research Handbook, 2012-2013).

National trends indicate motorcycle riders are no longer young and looking for freedom on the open road, but are more mature riders over the age of 50. According to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics in 2009, 25% of motorcycle riders were 50 years old and older. This mature segment is projected to see the largest growth in the market with sales to women the fastest (Way, Roberts, & Turner, 2010). Additionally, the median household income of motorcycle owners exceeds that of the average American. Two-wheel households average \$59,290 while the U.S. average is \$50,233 (Motorcycle Industry Council, 2009).

A popular avenue for the motorcycle lifestyle is the participation at motorcycle rallies. The top three rallies are Daytona Beach Bike Week, Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, and Lacaonia all held annually in the U.S. The most well-known motorcycle event in Sturgis, South Dakota, celebrating its 74<sup>th</sup> year, which generates more than \$800 million dollars in economic activity to the region from an estimated 417,000 visitors who stay on average six days (City of Sturgis, 2010). While there are varying perceptions of motorcycle riders, most are the weekend types who are often members of the American Motorcycle Association and strive to maintain images

of responsibility, maturity and courtesy, unlike how they are often portrayed in popular culture and mass media, like Hell's Angels or Sons of Anarchy (Hopper, C.B. & Moore, J., 2004). These communities continue to reap the benefits of motorcycle tourism by hosting events that contribute to their economies.

### ***Motorcycle Tourism***

There are few studies that have examined motorcycle tourism specifically whereas most research focuses on safety (Weinzimmer, et. al. 2014; Elliot, et. al. 2003; Chesham, Rutter & Quine 1993). Some literature examines environmental aspects of motorcycles (Leong, Muttamara & Laortanakul 2002; ACEM 2000) and a few ethnographic studies focus on specific biker groups, like Hell's Angels, that are often not represented of the general motorcycle population (Walker, 2011; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). Recent research indicates that motorcycle riders are likely professional males, affluent and do not actively seek risk (Walker, 2011; Hannigan et. al 2008). Also noted in the literature is that motorcycle riders are social, travel in groups, and enjoy the travel to the destination as much as the destination itself (Walker, 2011). Targeting women riders is of interest and a study published by Auster examined how women overcome constraints to take part in a stereotypical masculine leisure activity (2001). Newer studies, however, are focusing on the importance of attracting this travel group which has disposable income and leisure time, all necessary elements for tourism (Sykes, Kelly & Ireland, 2012).

### ***North Carolina Tourism***

Recreation and tourism activities on public lands, and surrounding gateway regions (within roughly 60 miles of the park), attract millions of visitors annually. The National Park System received 283 million recreation visits in 2011 with visitors spending roughly \$14.7 billion in local gateway regions (NPS, 2012). Visitors staying overnight outside the park (in motels, hotels, cabins, etc.) accounted for almost 60% of the total spending with other spending include 21.4% for gas and local transportation, 9.7% for recreation and entertainment, 8.1% for groceries, and 12.7% for other retail purchases. The four local economic sectors most directly affected by non-local visitor spending are lodging, restaurants, retail trade, and recreation and entertainment (Cui, Mahoney & Herbowicz, 2013). Economic impacts are significant for gateway regions near public lands, especially iconic National Parks like the Blue Ridge Parkway located in Western North Carolina.

Tourism is a key economic driver for North Carolina reporting annual spending of \$19.4 billion in 2012. Visitors are attracted to the state for the mountains in the West and beaches in the East, ranking North Carolina as the 6th most visited state in the U.S. (NC Department of Commerce, Tourism Services, 2014). The Blue Ridge Mountains start at the southern-most portion in Georgia, then ends northward in Pennsylvania, edging along Western North Carolina. The Blue Ridge Mountains are noted for their bluish color when seen from a distance and within the range are three major national parks: The Shenandoah National Park, The Blue Ridge Parkway, and Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The BRP connects the parks in North Carolina and is located along the ridge crestlines intersecting with the Appalachian Hiking Trail. The BRP attracts over 15 million visitors each year with a \$2 billion per year economic impact to local communities (National Park Service, 2012). An estimated 500,000 motorcyclists tour the BRP and often consider the region the best motorcycle venue in the United States (Blue Ridge Motorcycling, 2014).

The motorcycle tourism sector proves to be a powerful economic generator in communities across the country. With little research conducted on this user group, understanding motorcyclists will offer a greater knowledge of this travel group's preference. Furthermore, as motorcycle tourism increases in gateway communities this research can aid in marketing, collaborating, and policy making among local tourism development authorities, business owners, and federally managed lands (i.e. National Parks).

### **3.0 Study Objective**

To effectively serve and manage motorcycle tourism in the Blue Ridge Mountains, understanding their travel preferences is imperative. Often due to popular media, motorcycle riders are portrayed in a negative light;

however, based on studies administered by motorcycle companies riders are in fact higher earners than the average US citizen (Motorcycle Industry Council, 2009). Furthermore, perceptions about their travel preferences and relationship to nature while riding are anecdotal and empirical research is lacking on motorcycle recreationists' preferences. Therefore, this research project aims to understand these aspects of the motorcycle touring recreational experience.

## **4.0 Methodology**

### ***Data Collection***

Interception of motorcycle riders during their visit to the Blue Ridge Mountains was, and is, a difficult task. As a result Facebook (FB) was used. Furthermore, many of the roads traveled by this user group are part of NPS, like the BRP with bureaucratic limitations, creating further difficulties. As a result, we partnered with the premier motorcycle map company in the Southeast, American Ride Maps, to access their customers through FB. Online social networking sites (SNSs) like FB offer researcher's ways to quickly, cheaply and single-handedly conduct exploratory research studies (Bhutta, 2012). A limitation to this type of study method is the inability to calculate a response; however, you can calculate the study's completion rate. The survey was started 244 times, yielding 189 completed surveys for a completion rate of 77.5% with approximately 1,058 FB emails sent. These are comparable to rates achieved in other web-based studies (Bhutta, 2012; Manfreda & Vehovar 2002).

Survey participants were sent an email from the American Ride Maps Page on FB by the company's owner to participate in the study and offered to be entered into a drawing for a \$50 Amazon gift card upon completion of the survey. During the fall 2011 approximately 1,058 people liked the FB page and all were sent an invite, note that there were no restrictions to sending emails through FB messaging at that time. The survey invitation was sent between November 10, 2012 and February 1, 2013. Modified Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2009) methods were used. An invitation email message which explained the study's goals and provided a URL link to the online survey, preceded by a statement regarding informed consent was sent first. The survey was completely anonymous and results were housed on a secure university server. Two follow-up emails messages were sent and data collection continued throughout the winter. Upon completion of data collection 189 participants completed the survey. SPSS was used for data analyses. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequencies were calculated for all appropriate items on the questionnaire in response to research questions. In addition, a Chi-square test of association and crosstab procedures was used to see if differences occurred between groups, by comparing the percentage of participants who reported noise disturbances on wildlife within three education levels (high school, some college, and college degree).

### ***Survey Development***

Phase I included a pilot study that was conducted in fall of 2011 in collaboration with the National Park Service, Watauga County Tourism Development Authority, Blue Ridge Motorcycling, Blue Ridge Outdoors, and America Ride Maps. All organizations were interviewed to gain information and insight on their perspectives and information needed. A total of 88 people completed the pilot survey administered to a convenience sample of American Ride Maps past customers. Respondents were mostly males (73%) with an average age of 51 years, spending on average of \$1,258, riding in the summer (51%) with a partner (63%) while traveling approximately 1,005 miles per round trip. This phase revealed the difficulty of intercepting motorcycle users and the variety of information stakeholders were interested in collecting as well as lack of funds for researchers. After much discussion the final survey was agreed upon as well as the methodology of collecting data through Facebook (FB).

Phase II was conducted in the winter of 2012-2013 with insight from the pilot study. The survey instrument consisted of four sections, totaling 45 items. The first section consisted of questions asking motorcyclists about past travel characteristics, citing their most recent trip to the WNC mountains. The second section asked respondents to rate their travel attitudes; specifically environmental orientation (see Table 1). The New Environmental Paradigm (NEP) scale (Dunlap, et al, 2000) was modified by the researchers to understand

motorcyclist's view of nature and their relationship to it while touring on their motorcycles (attempted to use actual NEP scale but participant-expert reviewers indicated motorcyclists would not respond well). The NEP scale was reduced and modified after a literature review on outdoor recreationists, expert reviewers, and pilot study results. The third section asked about motorcycle safety and their practices, while the last section inquired about basic demographic information.

**Table 1: Selected Items Included in the Survey Instrument**

<b>Section 1: Past Travel Characteristics</b>
1. <i>What time of year did you travel?</i>
2. <i>How much did you spend?</i>
3. <i>Where did you stay?</i>
4. <i>What amenities do you prefer?</i>
5. <i>Overall satisfaction with trip?</i>
<b>Section 2: Travel Attitudes (Rank from Insignificant to Very Important)</b>
1. <i>To find solitude</i>
2. <i>To be in nature</i>
3. <i>To see wildlife</i>
4. <i>To see historic sites</i>
5. <i>Social connections</i>
<b>Section 3: Motorcycle Safety</b>
1. <i>Does your state require you to wear a helmet?</i>
2. <i>Do you wear a helmet?</i>
3. <i>Have you had an accident?</i>
<b>Section 4: Demographics</b>
1. <i>Education Level</i>
2. <i>Zip Code</i>
3. <i>Gender</i>

## 5.0 Results

A total of 189 people completed the survey and majority were males (85%) with an average age of 56 years. Over 68% of people that took the survey worked full time and only 5% worked part time, the remaining 30% were retired. The majority of people surveyed had finished some type of college; 30% completed some college, 19% had an associate's degree, 21% had a bachelor's degree, 9% had a master's degree, and 3% had a doctoral degree. Motorcyclists traveled most during the summer (47%) months to the Blue Ridge Mountain Region, with slim visitation in the spring (14%) and increasingly more in the fall (38%). The majority of motorcyclists traveled with a partner (58%) and in an average group size of four people. Respondents found information about the region from the Internet (67%), a previous visit (58%), a friend (45%), or brochure (28%). The average route trip mileage was 1,531 miles while spending four nights in the region. Respondents reported spending an average of \$1,032 on the entire trip with the majority staying at a motel (53%) or hotel (37%), which often catered to this clientele.

The overwhelming majority reported sightseeing (88%) as their main activity while traveling to the region; however, other activities included visiting historic sites (67%), parks (45%), shopping (36%), outdoor recreation (32%), motorcycle rallies (32%) and dining (25%). All respondents reported taking day trips on their motorcycles several times per year, with 89% reporting overnight trips. Overall, 79% respondents reported

being extremely satisfied with their experience in the Blue Ridge Mountain Region of North Carolina and ranked the views and scenery (67%) as very important for their trip choice (Table 2).

**Table 2: Travel Attitude Responses**

	<i>Insignificant</i>	<i>Little Important</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Important</i>	<i>Very Important</i>	<i>Rating Average</i>
The scenery/views	1%	1%	2%	30%	67%	4.62
To get away from traffic	1%	2%	8%	41%	48%	4.35
To ride challenging, curvy roads	1%	4%	12%	40%	42%	4.18
To be in nature	1%	1%	16%	52%	30%	4.09
To see historic sights and places	2%	1%	21%	57%	21%	3.94
To find solitude	4%	3%	26%	42%	25%	3.81
To see wildlife	3%	5%	34%	46%	12%	3.59
Social connections	7%	22%	44%	20%	7%	2.99
It's within comfortable riding distance to home	22%	23%	23%	24%	8%	2.75

*\*Likert Scale where 1=Insignificant to 5=Very Important*

Participants were asked in an open ended format the brand of motorcycle they owned and style of riding. The most popular motorcycles were Harley Davidson, Honda, Kawasaki, Yamaha, and Suzuki with common styles of riding including Touring, Ultra Classic, Electra, Gold Wing, Cruiser, Sport, and Adventurer. Seventy percent of participants reported making after-market modifications to their motorcycle with the most popular being exhaust, chrome, seat, air, engine, luggage rack, foot pegs, and saddlebags. When asked if they belonged to a motorcycle club 51% reported they were a member. The most popular touring roads reported were mostly federal scenic highways including the BRP, Cherohala Skyway, and Foothills Scenic Parkway (Table 3).

**Table 3: Popular Roads Traveled in WNC and Surrounding Region**

<i>Road Traveled</i>	<i>Percent</i>
The Blue Ridge Parkway	95.8%
The Tail of the Dragon at Deals Gap	87.9%
Great Smokey Mountains National Park	80.1%
The Cherohala Skyway	78.1%
Foothills Scenic Parkway	59.1%
The Hellbender 28 to NC 28 or Moonshiner 28	51.3%
The Snake	38.7%
The Diamond Back	32.4%
The Rattler	27.2%

Motorcycle safety was a concern for the region due to the curvy roads in the mountains. Only 59% of participants reported their home state required helmet use (required by North Carolina Law) with 70% stating they enjoyed wearing a helmet while riding. The majority of participants (58%) reported they had never had a motorcycle accident. About 42% reporting an accident, cited reasons including road conditions, being hit, motorcycle malfunction, and car pulled out in front of them. Questions regarding motorized noise were difficult



to develop in a way that did not directly state “motorcycle noise,” in fear participants would end the survey. Therefore, Table 4 illustrates the responses to their perceptions on how transportation noise impacted people, other user groups, and wildlife. Although the responses vary, note over 71% felt transportation noise had either some or great impact on wildlife, 67% on hikers and sightseers, and 60% on non-motorcycle travelers. To further understand beliefs of motorcyclists about noise disturbances on wildlife we examined differences in responses by education level (Table 5). A Chi-square test for independence indicated no significant association between education and wildlife disturbances,  $\chi^2(6, n = 183) = 11.96, p = .06, \phi = .26$ . Although education is not statistically significant, it does appear that respondents with a college degree were more likely to report that noise had some (43.1%) or a great deal (37.9%) of impact on wildlife when compared to those with a high school degree (some impact = 38.2% and great impact = 26.5%). Additionally, respondents with a high school degree reported that noise had either no (5.9%) or little (29.4%) impact on wildlife when compared to those with a college degree (no impact = 8.6% and little impact 10.3%), which indicates that education may play a role in perceptions of noise disturbances on wildlife.

**Table 4: Transportation Noise Impact**

<i>How do you feel transportation noise has an impact on:</i>	<i>No Impact</i>	<i>Little Impact</i>	<i>Some Impact</i>	<i>A Great Impact</i>
Other people in your travel group	21%	39%	31%	8%
Other motorcycle riders	19%	42%	33%	6%
Other travelers not on motorcycles	9%	31%	44%	16%
Hikers and Sightseers	11%	22%	39%	28%
Wildlife	5%	24%	43%	28%

**Table 5: Chi-Square Test of Association for Wildlife Disturbances by Education Levels**

			Wildlife Disturbance				Total
			No Impact	Little Impact	Some Impact	A Great Impact	
EDUC	High School	Count	2	10	13	9	34
		% within EDUC	5.9%	29.4%	38.2%	26.5%	100.0%
		% of Total	1.1%	5.5%	7.1%	4.9%	18.6%
	Some College	Count	3	28	40	20	91
		% within EDUC	3.3%	30.8%	44.0%	22.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	1.6%	15.3%	21.9%	10.9%	49.7%
	College Degree	Count	5	6	25	22	58
		% within EDUC	8.6%	10.3%	43.1%	37.9%	100.0%
		% of Total	2.7%	3.3%	13.7%	12.0%	31.7%
Total	Count	10	44	78	51	183	
	% within EDUC	5.5%	24.0%	42.6%	27.9%	100.0%	
	% of Total	5.5%	24.0%	42.6%	27.9%	100.0%	

## **6.0 Discussion and Implications of Study**

These survey findings of this exploratory study are a beginning to understand motorcyclist's recreationists and their economic contribution to WNC. Motorcyclists visiting our region are middle aged, often traveling with partners in small groups, and spending over a \$1000 dollars per trip, indicating their spending power for local tourism. As we slowly recover from an economic recession, tourism and hospitality providers can expand their customer base by marketing to motorcyclists recreationists. Participants in an open ended response indicated features like secure covered motorcycle parking and washing stations with towels as essential amenities when choosing motorcycle friendly accommodations. Furthermore, by recognizing this group purchases specific travel maps from local providers they can promote and market specifically to target motorcyclists through this means. A recent Motorcycle Tourism Report published in Ontario outlined specific strategies to attract tourism including working with Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) to create overnight packages on key motorcycle routes, publish map packages, develop social media campaigns linking with motorcycle friendly products and other DMOs, and attend events to promote motorcycle tourism (2011). Other suggestions included promoting motorcycle friendly destination with signage in front of locations. During challenging economic times, understanding how to cater to various users can help tourism operators diversify their target markets and expand their business.

Despite popular perceptions of motorcyclists, participants indicated mountain scenery and views, getting away from traffic, riding challenging roads, being in nature, and visiting historic sites as important to them when choosing to travel in the mountains. This is juxtaposed when considering motorcycles can have aftermarket pipes that interfere with natural soundscapes and create user conflicts. As indicated earlier, although there is currently no noise restrictions on motorcycles traveling in National Parks, research findings like these can aid in policy makers understanding travel preferences of this user group and provide information for future collaborations to develop noise reducing strategies.

The aim of this exploratory study was to begin to answer the questions about motorcyclists travel preferences, their views of nature and quiet, issues of safety, and average trip expenditures. These results provide a platform for further discussion and research as public lands become more crowded with competing recreation demands and gateway communities search for new revenue markets; however, many questions remain that can only be answered by studies specifically addressing the issues and research findings produced by the current study. Such questions include: (1) how can motorcycle recreationists be intercepted for further studies? (2) are motorcyclists willing to adhere to noise restrictions to protect soundscapes? (3) what are the long term trends of the motorcycle touring? and (4) which tourism products/services best match needs of those likely to visit the WNC and how do you reach them?

This research will assist recreation planners, destination marketing organizations, and tourism operators in providing services to motorcycle users and recognize their economic contribution to the WNC region. With a lack of research examining the human dimensions of the motorcycle recreationists, this exploratory study provides an overview of issues in data collection and general descriptive results that can be used as a foundation for further research. For the WNC region, specifically the BRP this begins to answer the questions about motorcyclists' recreation preferences and their contribution to the local economy.

Although the study had a high completion rate, it is limited by the inability to account for non-response bias and a traditional response rate (Henry, 2009). Additionally, due to collecting data through SNSs and the fact WNC motorcyclist tourists were only surveyed, the results are not generalizable. Similar to other studies though, survey participants were middle aged, male, traveled in small groups with majority attending college. Nevertheless, the results from this study provide important information to understanding motorcycle recreationists' perceptions, economic impacts, and demographic variables for professionals and scholars alike.

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