

Affinity to place and serious leisure: implications of amenity migration for nearby recreational and protected areas

Linda E. Kruger

Abstract — People have long been attracted to places with high amenity values. The first Baby Boomers have begun to collect Social Security checks and many more will follow. Increasing retirees who make up a growing numbers of migrants are moving into communities fortunate to have highly valued environmental and cultural resources and recreation opportunities. Tourists and retirees are drawn to natural amenities and opportunities for both tranquillity and adventure. Wilderness can be especially attractive and introduces people to rural and remote locations. Resort real estate, full and fractional ownership arrangements (time shares), residence clubs, and a variety of other options provide an array of investment possibilities. Rapid growth of retirees has implications for communities and public land managers. For land managers, growth is likely to increase population density in proximity to public lands, increase pressure on riparian and other environmentally sensitive areas and increase the demand for recreation opportunities and facilities. The changing values within the neighbouring community may change the issues and concerns residents have about recreational and protected area management. Healthy retirees are looking for a variety of recreation and volunteer opportunities. Communities need to consider infrastructure, especially in health and transportation sectors. As amenity migrants settle in their new community, the physical changes are readily apparent: new homes, new business, new roads, rising real estate values. Rising levels of disposable income among the middle and skilled working classes and the growth of a “leisure society” with time for recreation and travel have fueled demand for recreation. What are the implications for recreational and protected area management? This paper explores concepts of place and serious leisure as they are related to amenity migration and implications for management of recreational and protected areas near amenity communities. How can these concepts inform our understanding of the changing demands of amenity migration communities? In what ways are concepts of place attachment and sense of place useful in planning for change in high amenity communities and the surrounding recreational and protected areas?

Index Terms ó Recreational and protected areas, place's affinity, leisure.



Linda E. Kruger is with the USDA Forest Service,
2770 Sherwood Lane, Ste. 2A, Juneau, AK 99801
USA.
Email: lkruger@fs.fed.us.