

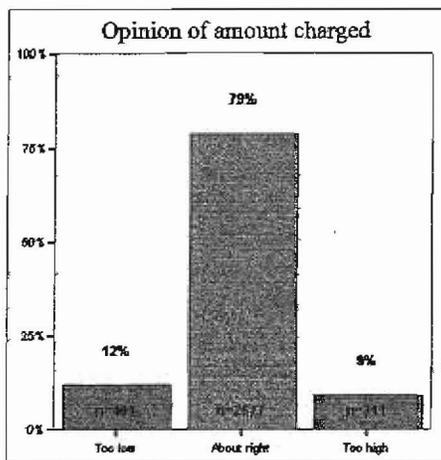
USFWS Demonstration Fees

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This study examined National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) visitors' reactions to changes in fees implemented as part of the fee demonstration program. Visitors' evaluations of the fees paid were examined in addition to their beliefs about fees and the fee demonstration program, and the impact of fees paid on their intention to return. All results were analyzed relative to socio-demographic characteristics.

Are fees acceptable?



Respondents were charged fees that ranged from \$0 to \$60 (Median amount paid = \$4). Ninety-one percent of respondents who evaluated their fee said the amount they paid was "about right" or "too low."

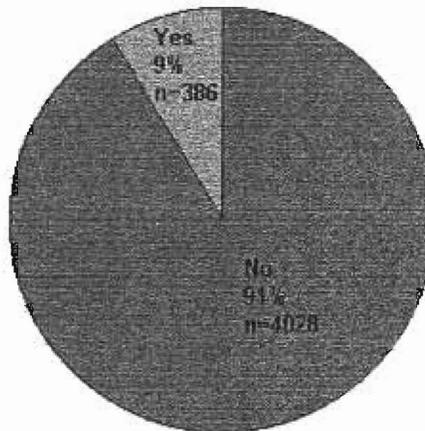
Are fees the right way to pay?

As shown in the table (below right), respondents' beliefs about fees and the fee demonstration program were generally positive. Eighty-seven percent of respondents understood the reasons behind the fee program and 86% believed the fees were necessary to maintain quality of services. Less than one-sixth of respondents believed the fees would limit their access, or that they should not have to pay a fee to visit wildlife refuges.

Respondents did not have a clear single preference for how public lands should be supported. Eighty-six percent

agreed that "public lands should be supported by public funds," but a majority (69%) also agreed that "public lands should be supported by the people who use them."

Will people stop visiting?



The fee program is not likely to negatively impact visitation at NWRs. Only 9% of respondents reported an intention to change their visitation patterns as a result of the fees paid. Of those 9%, 64% stated they would return either to visit the refuge less often in the future or do some other activity at this refuge.

Where should the money go?

Eighty-five percent of respondents agreed that "all recreation fees collected by the refuge should be used at that refuge," while seventy-two percent agreed that "some of the money should be used for acquisition of new refuge lands and the rest be returned to the refuge collecting the fees." Seventy percent of respondents agreed with, "80% of the recreation fees collected by

the refuge should be kept at the refuge and 20% distributed to other NWRs as needed."

Ninety-one percent of respondents disagreed with the "recreation fees collected being returned to the Treasury of the U.S. to be used as Congress directs," and 67% of respondents disagreed with "80% of the fees being used at the refuge but 20% returned to the Treasury."

All results were consistent regardless of income, age, sex, race, ethnicity, or education.

Methods

Random samples from 16 NWR's were surveyed during the peak season for each refuge. Refuges were selected to represent the variety of entrance and use fees implemented under the Fee Demonstration Program. The primary sampling unit was clusters of time randomly selected at a rate proportional to past use patterns. Two stratification dimensions were specified: 1) point of egress from the refuge and 2) weekend vs. weekday. All visitors exiting the refuge during a time cluster were included in the study. A total of 4503 completed surveys were collected.

Sacramento, CA	Assisippi, TX
Chincoteague, VA	Bullock, TX
Dungeness, WA	Baldwin Hills, CA
Edinburg, GA	Kenai, AK
Great Bay, NH	Sully's Hill, SD
Back Bay, VA	Kodiak, AK
St. Marks, FL	Crab Orchard, IL
Upper Mississippi, LA, IL	
St. Catherine's Creek, MS	

Beliefs about fees	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
I understand the reasons behind the fee program	87%	9%	4%
Overall, I approve of the fee program at this refuge	86	7	6
Fees are necessary to maintain quality of services	86	8	6
The fee program will limit my access to this refuge	14	12	74
I should not have to pay a fee to visit wildlife refuges	15	14	72
The current fees at this refuge are acceptable to me	86	7	8
Public lands should be supported by public funds	86	9	5
Public lands should be supported by people who use them	69	13	18

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