



Understanding stakeholders' attitudes toward water resources in a rural environment



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Purpose of study

To identify the place and time meaning of two rural Oklahoma water sources from the perspective of the recreators.



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Methods

Questionnaire based on the review of literature

Data acquired from in-person interviews examining how recreators felt about the rural water recreation areas:

Sulphur Springs

Blue River in Tishomingo

Interviews were transcribed, coded, and examined for recurring themes

Frequency counts assisted analysis (limited quantitative methods) mixed-methods study



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- Interviews were conducted randomly with a relatively small sample size and as such may not be an accurate example of the entire population of recreators.
- Only two rural locations were sampled and thus results may not be applicable to all rural water recreation sites.



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Codes – based on review of literature and research team discussions

1. Background
2. The Past
3. Connected
4. Nature
5. Wellness/Well-being
6. Joy
7. Coping
8. Meaningful
9. Freedom
10. Time
11. Barriers or Facilitators
12. Time Allocation/Investment
13. COVID



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Area descriptions

Sulphur Springs: Located at the gateway to the Chickasaw National Recreation Area. Administered by the National Park Service, known to Native Americans as "the land of rippling waters" due to the mineral waters, streams, lakes and swimming holes crisscrossing the area.

travelok.com/sulphur

Blue River: One of the last streams in Oklahoma flowing from its natural source without man-made structures controlling its waters. Considered by many to be one of the state's most beautiful areas.

Fishing is one of the most popular activities at the Blue River.

<https://www.adventureroad.com/destinations/blue-river/>



A participant fishing.



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Results

Of 13 initially identified codes, five proved more prevalent than the others:

Joy - activities or sights bringing joy to the recreator

Nature - trails, water, or natural world

Past - serious time and forming memories

Connected - closer and more in touch with surroundings

Meaningful – special time and place, more than other locations



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Recreator words at Sulphur Springs

Connected/Meaningful/The Past

“out of most any place I go ... is typically the one place I would”

“me and my niece”

“I used to come, with my ex-wife and my son and stuff. This was our main, main spot and I ... still love coming down here”

“...a chance to see my sister ... not see often enough”.

“to get away as a family”

“we used to live down here...we loved it when the creek ...it would rain”

Wellness/Well-being/Freedom/Barriers or Facilitators/Coping

“just have a relaxing day”

“we would have a two-person raft ... down the rapids all the way to the lake and my mom would just pick us up there”



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Recreator words at Blue River

Time Allocation/Investment/Joy/Coping/Barriers or Facilitators/Nature

“not replaceable with anything else around here”

“I live right by [Lake] Texoma ... but, this is irreplaceable”

“This place definitely takes the stress off ... I have no stress here”

“Other things I do just stress me out. It doesn't matter if it makes me happy or not.”

“important because people like me can't afford to buy property with running streams and things like that ... public access at places like this is pretty important for anyone that likes the outdoors”



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Results & Analysis

Words of negligible use for analysis were blocked. Examples included:

interviewer & interviewee

what

a

that

The distillation removed all interviewer words, non-word expressions (uhh, hmm, etc.), and the word “like” when not used to express affinity, etc.



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Results & Analysis

Word	Frequency	Documents	Documents %
time	80	14	100.00
good	44	14	100.00
like	152	13	92.86
family	43	13	92.86
important	26	13	92.86
feel	20	13	92.86
connected	15	13	92.86

Found in over 90 percent of all interviews in ranked order:

- Time
- Good
- Like (used to describe affinity)
- Family
- Important
- Feel
- Connected



Table 1. Appearance ranked by total appearance in each transcript.

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Results & Analysis



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Results & Analysis

Most common words counted overall used by interviewees in ranked order:

like (used to describe affinity)

time

out (generally meaning out of doors)

area (similar to place)

place (similar to area)

Combining “area” and “place” due to similarity, area/place would be ranked second in overall frequency of 118.



Word	Frequency	Documents	Documents %
like	152	13	92.86
time	80	14	100.00
out	71	12	85.71
area	71	11	78.57
place	47	11	78.57

Table 2. Ranked by appearance in total.

Results & Analysis



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Discussion

The results demonstrated overlap among themes/codes, and generated codes from reviewed literature aligned with our findings. Feelings of being connected to nature and family/friends were common to those interviewed and were accompanied with comments indicating a vitality of the place and time. The meanings of both place and time reflected positive aspects ranging from slight affinity to a more common joy and needed coping for well-being/sanity.



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Discussion

Our thought there might be a code necessary to hold comments related to the COVID pandemic demonstrated only a slight degree of time meaning. Mainly, two participants indicated a need to escape congested areas thereby avoiding possible contamination. This was most vividly demonstrated by one family camping out in the Blue River area and homeschooling their children to avoid contact with others. This was a limited finding.



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