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Rider Preferences and Values of Equestrian Trail Characteristics in Kentucky

By: Marie Pelton, Dr. Wuyang Hu, Dr. Angelos Pagoulatos

Marie Pelton
Graduate Student (Masters Degree)
University of Kentucky Department of Agricultural Economics
Email: mepelt2@uky.edu

Dr. Wuyang Hu
Associate Professor
University of Kentucky Department of Agricultural Economics

Dr. Angelos Pagoulatos
Professor
University of Kentucky Department of Agricultural Economics

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Marie Pelton (mepelt2@uky.edu), Dr. Wuyang Hu, Dr. Angelos Pagoulatos
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Part I: Introduction and Background

Kentucky: The Horse Capital

320,173 Horses
96,000 Equine Related Jobs

Horses in Recreation:

31% (9,900 horses) involved
Over 1,000 miles of existing trails
Trails being constructed on both private and public property and under programs like Rails to Trails

Previous Studies Found:

High values of consumer surplus for trail riding in KY

Part II: Objectives

- I: To identify important trail characteristics that influence a rider's choice of trail
- II: To find how different trail attributes are valued
- III: To provide valuable information to trail managers and policy officials who make decisions about maintaining, expanding/closing equine trails



Part III: Data and Variables

Survey Data:

Mixed-mode (online and mail-in)
Collected during Summer of 2009
275 Observations from Kentucky

Attributes used determined by previous studies and focus group discussions

Trail Characteristics

Variable	Description
Trail Length	Distance in miles of trails Levels: 5, 10, 15, 20
Scenic Views	Does the trail have scenic overlooks/views? Levels: Yes/No
Open Land	Is the trail on open land? Levels: Yes/No
Bathroom/Shower Facilities	Are bathroom and/or shower facilities available on the trail (or at trail head)? Levels: Yes/No
Restricted Use	Are trails restricted to horses only? Levels: Yes/No
Distance	Distance in miles from home of rider to trail Levels: 10, 20, 40, 60
Entrance fee (Price)	Price in dollars of admission to trail (per vehicle per day) Levels: 3, 8, 13, 18

Part IV: Results/Analysis

Significant variables:

Positive association with trail choice

Trail Length (Longer trails)
Presence of Scenic Views
Restricted to horses

Negative association with trail choice

Entry fees
Longer distance to and from trail

**As expected higher costs are seen as negatives when riders are choosing a trail to use.

**Scenic views and restricted use are valued highly with WTP values above \$20

**For each additional mile away from home, a rider is willing to pay \$1.28 less

Conditional Logit Results

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	Marginal Effect (WTP)
Intercept	.4523	.1266	
Trail Length	.0809*	.0077	3.58
Scenic Views	.7865*	.0940	34.81
Open Land	.1123	.0896	---
Bath/Shower	.0527	.0936	---
Restricted Use	.4836*	.0960	21.39
Distance from Home	-.0289*	.0018	-1.28
Entrance Fee	-.0226*	.0057	---
*Significant at the .01 level			

Part V: Conclusions

As resources become increasingly scarce managers and policy makers should keep in mind:

- Location is of great value to riders
 - Trails should be located close to the population they serve
 - Trails need to be a suitable length (trail value rises with length)
 - Scenic views are of considerable value to the rider
 - Trails that have such views may be used more often even if they cost more than similar trails with no scenic areas

Restricted use greatly improves value of equestrian trails

Amenities like bathrooms and showers are of little significance when riders decide to use a particular trail. This may be due to the fact that horse trailers can come equipped with these features.