

---

---

# Recreation Statistics Update<sup>1</sup>



Update Report No. 4  
November, 2004

---



---

## Hispanic Participation in Land-Based Outdoor Recreation Activities<sup>2</sup>

---

In 1900, 87.9 percent of the U. S. population was White, mostly non-Hispanic White. Blacks (also mostly non-Hispanic) were 11.6 percent of the population. The remaining 0.5 percent of the population was mostly either American Indian or Asian-Pacific Islander. By 1950, Whites composed almost 89.5 percent of the population and Blacks 10 percent. Very few among the population then were of other races or ethnicity. By 1980, however, this had begun to change when Whites composed 83.1 percent, Blacks composed 11.7 percent, and others composed the remaining 5.1 percent. In 1990 a much smaller 75.6 percent of the population was non-Hispanic White, Asian and Pacific Islanders were 2.9 percent, Hispanics were 9 percent and Blacks were 12.1 percent. By 2000, non-Hispanic Whites were just 69.1 percent, a dramatically smaller proportion than in earlier decades. Hispanics comprised 12.5 percent of the U.S. population, exceeding for the first time in this country's history the percentage who are Black. The most recent (August 2004) population estimates from the 2000 Census show the proportion of Hispanics in the United States continuing to grow to 14.1 percent, with Whites dipping slightly to 67.3 percent. Currently about one half of all net immigration to the United States is by people of Hispanic origin. Thirteen states had more net immigration in the 3 years between 2000-2003 than in any previous decade. Leading in net immigration in these 3 years were Georgia, Arizona, North Carolina, and Colorado. North Carolina's Hispanic population grew nearly six-fold and Georgia's nearly five-fold during this period. Obviously, it is increasingly important to better understand this growing segment of the United States' population. Described briefly below are comparisons of recreation participation percentages for 3 segments of our population—White non-Hispanic, Hispanic of Mexican origin, and Hispanic not of Mexican origin.

---

<sup>1</sup>This update is based on research information generated for the Forest Service's 2005 Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Assessment Update Report.

<sup>2</sup>Authors: K. Cordell, Project Leader, USDA Forest Service, G. Green, Research Scientist, University of Georgia, and C. Betz, Outdoor Recreation Planner, USDA Forest Service, all at Athens, GA; and M. Fly and B. Stephens, Professor and Senior Research Associate, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN; Collaborators: Gregory Super and Floyd Thompson, USDA Forest Service, Washington, DC.

Shown in Table 1 are participation rates (percentages of the populations) for 25 land-based outdoor recreation activities. Three things about these participation rate comparisons stand out. First, overall, White participation rates are substantially higher across the listed land-based activities, but for one, day hiking. For many activities (other than hiking), the difference is substantial. For example, the participation rate in gardening for the White population is about 25 percent greater than for Hispanics, driving for pleasure is over 25 percent higher, and hunting approaches 3 times greater. Day hiking stands out in that the Hispanic participation rate is higher than for Whites. Second, Hispanics not of Mexican origin participate in walking, yard games, attending outdoor concerts, and motorized activities at higher rates than Hispanics of Mexican origin. Hispanics of Mexican origin participate at higher rates only for picnicking and day hiking. However, there are more participation rate similarities than differences between Mexican and non-Mexican Hispanics across the activities listed. Third, activities with especially low participation rates by Mexican Hispanics relative to Whites include gardening for fun, driving for pleasure, yard games, visiting farm or agricultural settings, driving off roads, primitive camping and hunting. The statistics in Table 1 hint that as the composition of U. S. population changes even more in the future, it is highly likely that the composition of outdoor activities will also change. With surveys like the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment, we will be better able to monitor and be responsive to these changes.

Table 1.—Comparison of percentages of 3 segments of the U. S. population participating in land-based outdoor activities, 2000-2004.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Whites not of Hispanic Origin</b>	<b>Hispanics of Mexican Origin</b>	<b>Hispanics not of Mexican Origin</b>
Walk for Pleasure	85.5	62.0	74.6
Family Gathering	75.1	68.0	68.2
Gardening or landscaping for pleasure	70.2	45.0	45.8
Driving for Pleasure	59.1	28.3	34.6
Picnicking	56.7	49.1	45.3
Yard games, e.g., horseshoes	45.8	17.3	23.2
Attend outdoor concerts, plays, etc.	44.4	23.0	34.9
Bicycling	40.6	33.7	35.1
Visit a wilderness or primitive area	37.6	21.2	22.3
Day Hiking	34.4	49.3	41.5
Visit a farm or agric. setting	31.9	16.9	19.1
Developed Camping	30.7	19.1	19.2
Mountain Biking	23.1	18.5	18.0
Drive Off-road	21.1	10.9	12.3
Primitive Camping	19.4	9.0	9.8

Activity	Whites not of Hispanic Origin	Hispanics of Mexican Origin	Hispanics not of Mexican Origin
Hunting	14.0	5.0	5.3
Backpacking	11.8	8.3	10.2
Horseback Riding on Trails	11.0	5.2	5.7
Big Game Hunting	11.0	2.9	3.0
Small Game Hunting	9.1	2.1	2.9
Horseback riding (general)	8.9	8.0	7.9
Mountain Climbing	6.9	4.2	4.5
Rock Climbing	4.9	3.9	2.5
Migratory Bird Hunting	3.0	0.7	1.1
Orienteering	2.1	0.8	0.6

This Recreation Statistics Update Report is based on recent data that updates the estimated participation statistics reported in **Outdoor Recreation for 21<sup>st</sup> Century America**, published by Venture Publishing, College Station, PA. Copies of **Outdoor Recreation for 21<sup>st</sup> Century America** may be obtained from Venture Publishing at their website (<http://www.venturepublish.com>) or telephone at 1-814-234-4561. To see more of our research, please visit our website (<http://www.srs.fs.fed.us/trends>).