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An Examination of rural residents’ perceptions of environmental activities at the Nevada Test Site: Results of a mail questionnaire 2008 – 2009

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Rural residents’ perceptions of environmental activities at the Nevada Test Site: Mail questionnaire 2008 - 2009

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Purpose

• Given the U.S. DOE’s Environmental Management activities at the Nevada Test Site, what matters to rural residents living nearby?

• DOE provided a grant to the University of Nevada, Las Vegas to conduct a questionnaire and analyses.
Questions

• (1) How aware are residents of Environmental Management activities at the NTS?
• (2) How important are environmental issues to residents?
• (3) How important are socioeconomic and geographic characteristics for predicting whether respondents are aware?
• (4) Does awareness predict whether respondents select an environmental issue?
Approach

• (1) Summarize responses to awareness questions
• (2) Summarize responses to environmental issue questions
• (3) Use logistic regression to model respondent awareness (Awareness = f (socioeconomic, information, community))
• (4) Use logistic regression to model respondent identification of environmental activity as an issue (Issue = f(awareness))
• Developed a mail questionnaires reviewed by both UNLV and DOE

• Sent to 14,083 residents living near the Nevada Test Site

• Received 1,732 responses

• 12.2% response rate
Experience with the NTS

- Tour of NTS: 71% Yes, 27% No
- Attended meeting on NTS: 81% Yes, 18% No
- Worked at NTS: 68% Yes, 30% No

Sample size 1,732
Time in neighborhood

- Over 16 years: 36.3%
- 6 - 15 years: 34.2%
- Less than 5 years: 28.6%

Sample size: 1,732

Percent
(1) How aware are respondents about the Nevada Test Site?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>NTS</th>
<th>Env. Mgmt.</th>
<th>Yucca part of OCWM</th>
<th>Low Level Waste Disposal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>89%</td>
<td></td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample size 1,732
(2) Environmental Issues?

Sample size 1,732
(3) What predicts awareness?

- Time: 16 years (+, ***)
- Communities are not statistically significant
  - With the exception Beatty (+, significant) with respect to low level waste disposal
- Female respondents (-, ***)
- DOE info source (+, ***)
- NTS CAB info source (+, ***)

Note: ***, **, * represent statistical significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% levels, respectively. (N = 1,732)
(4) Does awareness reduce likelihood of selecting an env. issue?

- Awareness of environmental programs (-, ***)

- Note: ***, **, * represent statistical significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% levels, respectively. (N = 1,732)
Discussion & Conclusions

- There is a potential response bias given only approximately 12% responded to the questionnaire.

- Presentation limited to brief summary of results – questionnaire included open ended questions.

- Our results suggest differences for socioeconomic groups on awareness; potential opportunities to increase involvement.

- Our results suggest awareness may reduce likelihood of identifying an environmental issue; needs to be explored further given recent developments in the risk literature on values/beliefs and environmental concern.
Acknowledgements

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