

PERCEIVED IMPACTS OF DISTURBANCE IN CENTRAL HARDWOOD ECOSYSTEMS

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Abstract: The intent of this research was to empirically identify and estimate the relationship between perceived scenic beauty and biophysical resources of hardwood stands in southeast Missouri under various disturbance regimes. The scenic effects of different harvest methods, wind, and fire were systematically investigated using a psychophysical approach. Ratings of scenic beauty were collected from both residents and non-residents, and scaled using the Scenic Beauty Estimation (SBE) method. Quantitative, predictive models were generated to identify what biophysical features contributed to public perceptions of scenic beauty. In addition, information concerning familiarity and experience with the area, group membership, knowledge about natural resources, and demographics were collected to assess how the perceptions of scenic beauty of disturbances related to respondent characteristics.

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