THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF MT. PULAG: AN ECO-TOURISM PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

National parks or generally protected areas (PAs) normally hold a high value as a recreational resource or destination. Though in many cases no fee or charge is made to view or enjoy natural ecosystems, people still spend time and money to reach PAs. These costs of spending (for transport, food, accommodation, time, etc.) can be calculated, and a visitation rate can be compared to expenditures. These travel costs reveal the value that people place on recreational, tourism or leisure aspects of PAs. The aim of this paper is to estimate the value of the recreational benefits from Mt. Pulag National Park (MPNP) of Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), Philippines. The valuation uses the individual travel cost method (ITCM) which estimates the value of a non-market good like recreation. The linear recreational demand for Mt. Pulag is estimated as \( r = 3.67 - 0.000087tc \), where \( r \) stands for the number of days intended to stay in Mt. Pulag and \( tc \) represents the travel cost per day. The estimated aggregate consumer surplus and the recreational value of MPNP, year 2007, were valued at \( \text{₱}47,062,560.00 \) and \( \text{₱}56,335,590.00 \) respectively. Greater market values are generated from off-site expenses than from on-site expenses. The value of MPNP is important in terms of its contribution to the market economy. These values can determine that marketing of eco-tourism for Mt. Pulag and can be used to generate efficient green fee or user’s fee to improve management for Mt. Pulag. The result of the study can be significant to future researchers where issues of conservation and policy options are concerned.

Keywords: economic value, eco-tourism, willingness to pay, consumer surplus, recreational value