
Abstract:
Given that wetlands have become a major environmental issue in the United States, it is important for people to understand the functions and values provided by wetlands so they are in a position to make informed decisions regarding public policy. This study is an attempt to document people's perceptions of wetlands and to determine if college students (who can be surveyed via the Internet at low cost) are representative of the general population. Although many people have at least a fair understanding of wetlands, it would appear that there is room for improvement because many of those surveyed are not aware of some important wetland benefits. Moreover, the results of this study suggest there are broad similarities of opinion between college students and residents of Baldwin County, Georgia. Finally, it would appear that the potential exists to develop a representative sample of the nation's college students (via the Internet), and that such a sample might be used in conjunction with conventionally obtained survey data to determine relationships between demographic characteristics of respondents and their views of wetland functions, values, and public policy.

Keywords: Wetlands; Environmental perception; Environmental policy; Georgia