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## RESPONSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOR: METAPHORIC TRANSFERENCE OF MINIMUM-IMPACT IDEOLOGY

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This abstract represents a thesis research project that studied changes in National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) students' attitudes, intentions, and behavior, as they pertain to the environment, resulting from participation in NOLS' Wind River Wilderness course.

It was hypothesized that an increase in these concerns would result from the metaphoric transference of minimum-impact ideology to daily life. Prominent theories from the fields of social psychology and environmental education relating attitudes, intentions, behavior, and other considerations were incorporated into the theoretical framework of the study.

A survey instrument was administered to the students ( $N = 288$ ) immediately before, immediately after, and four to eight months after their course. Students were asked first to report certain background demographic data, then to respond to 15 statements of the New Ecological Paradigm (NEP), measuring attitudes toward the environment in general. Students were then asked to indicate how often they had been practicing each of eight specific behaviors representative of responsible environmental behavior (REB), and how often they intended to in the future. Finally, for each of the eight specific behaviors, students were asked to respond to seven constructs of a theoretical model of REB: belief, locus of control, personal responsibility, knowledge, situational factors, subjective norm, and concern for that norm.

A decidedly pro-environmental distribution was found for behavior and attitudes prior to NOLS: Nearly 70 percent indicated that they

followed REB practices "frequently" or more often in their daily lives; over 80 percent "agreed" to some extent with the worldview of the NEP. Statistical analysis revealed that students' behavior (as reported) was significantly more environmentally responsible after NOLS, although intentions toward REB and attitudes as measured by the NEP did not change significantly. It was also revealed that students responded more positively after NOLS to all seven constructs of the theoretical model for REB. Changes in intentions and these constructs, along with demographic variables, proved useful in predicting changes in behavior.

Those associated with outdoor programs have confirmation that incoming students tend to be relatively ecologically-minded to begin with; however, notwithstanding this initial orientation, students can still be expected to experience significant positive changes in certain cognitive domains relating to the environment. These changes tend to occur with regard to specific attitudes and beliefs and appear to have a close link to the expressed intent of the curriculum for the course.

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