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Environmental Insights from a Utah Pilot Study on Well-being

Casey Trout, *Utah State University* | Dr. Courtney Flint, *Utah State University*

Introduction

This project focuses on the importance of the natural environment to the well-being of those surveyed during a 2018 pilot study. The pilot study marked the beginning of the Utah Well-being Project, a 5-year study to assess well-being across Utah communities.

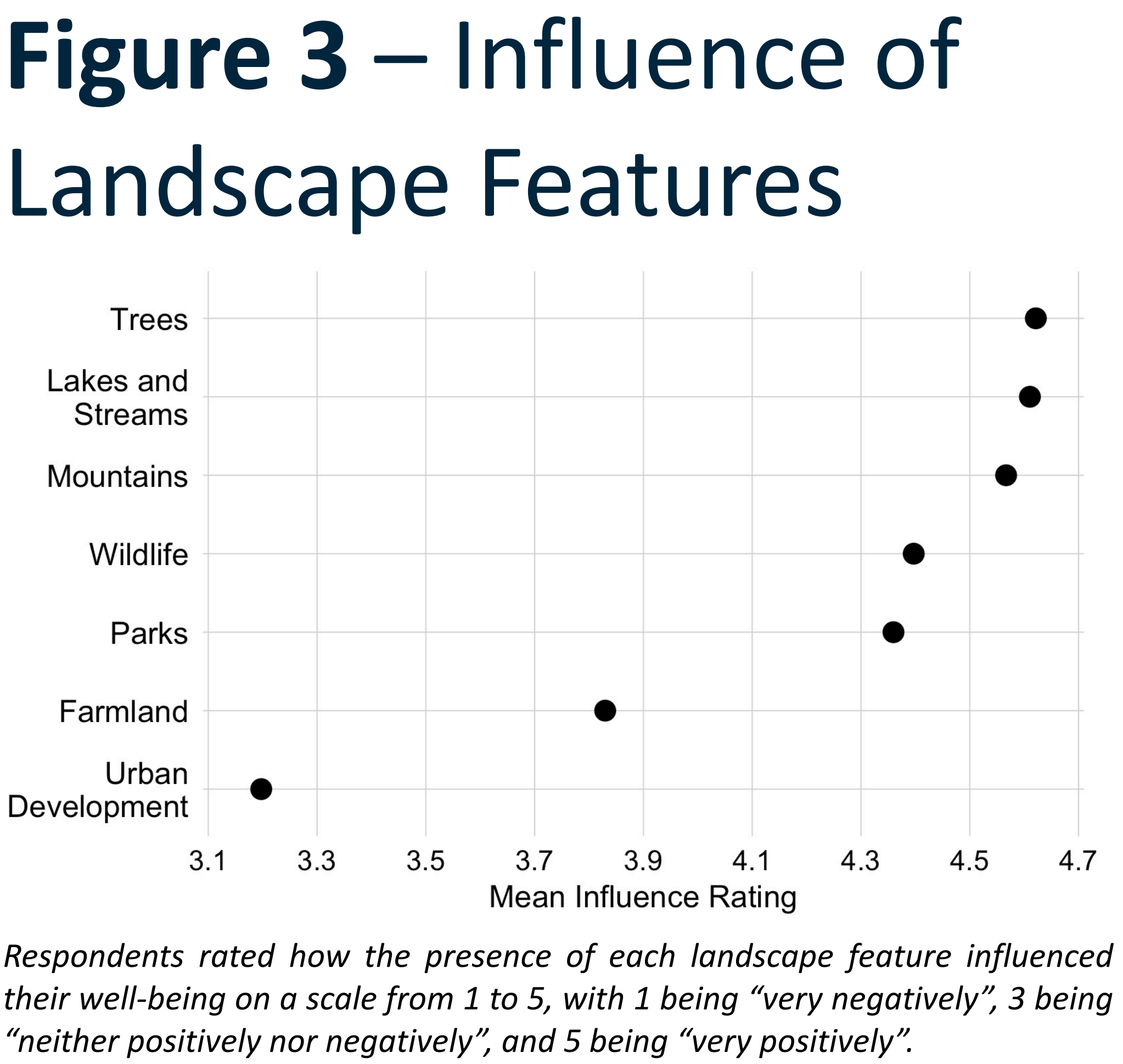
The survey asked participants questions about their overall well-being and their well-being in relation to twelve commonly articulated “domains”, including those that are listed in Figures 1 and 2.

Methods

Data was collected using a public-intercept i-Pad survey in April and May of 2018 at the Utah State University campus and public parks and city buildings in Logan City and Salt Lake City. The survey asked participants to rate their well-being across various domains, to rate the importance of these domains to their overall well-being, and to indicate how landscape features influence their well-being. Data were analyzed and visualized using R statistical software.

Results

Local environmental quality was the lowest ranked domain. Connection with nature was highly rated and important. Latter-day Saints indicated lower importance of connection with nature and local environmental quality as compared to other religious groups. While most landscape features (e.g. trees, mountains, parks, lakes) were universally positively viewed, farmland and urban development were viewed differently by Cache and Salt Lake County respondents.



Conclusions

Findings show local environmental quality and connecting to nature are of concern to survey respondents. This information may support decision-making in Utah as entities weigh land uses and investments in various domains relevant to well-being. As the Utah Well-being Project expands across the state, we will have more information on what Utahns value most in relation to their well-being and how well-being varies across Utah communities.



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