Environmental Literacy in New Jersey: Why we are where we are

Urban green spaces have long been studied in terms of their impact on human and environmental health and well-being. We collected and analyzed preliminary survey data for central New Jersey municipalities relating to participants’ perceptions of public green spaces, quality, and usage and relating these factors to environmental knowledge and literacy. Results have yielded new insights into the role of urban canopy cover in differing levels of environmental literacy. Included in this, persons living in areas with higher canopy cover have higher levels of environmental literacy (p=0.0338) and higher educational attainment (p=0.049). Persons with access to higher quality parks also exhibited higher levels of educational attainment (p=0.0475). This relationship and others collectively would support there being multiple types of environmental literacy, with diverse sources, impacts, and outcomes on individuals and communities. Work done to this point has not addressed this idea, nor sought to study the connections between EL and all influencing socio-cultural and landscape factors.

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