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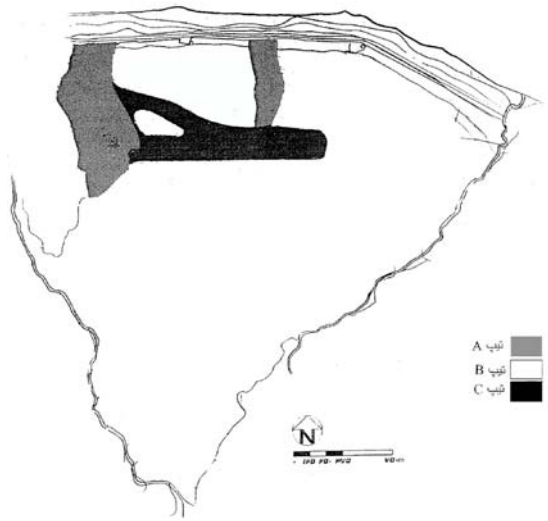
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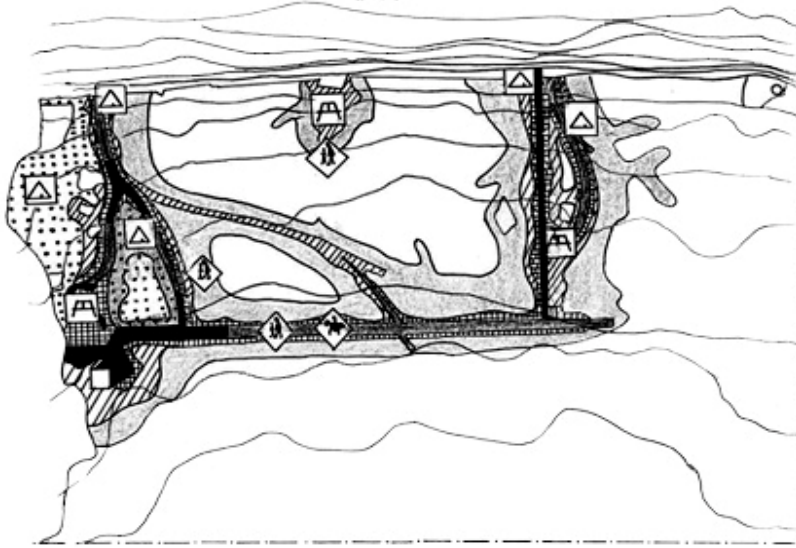
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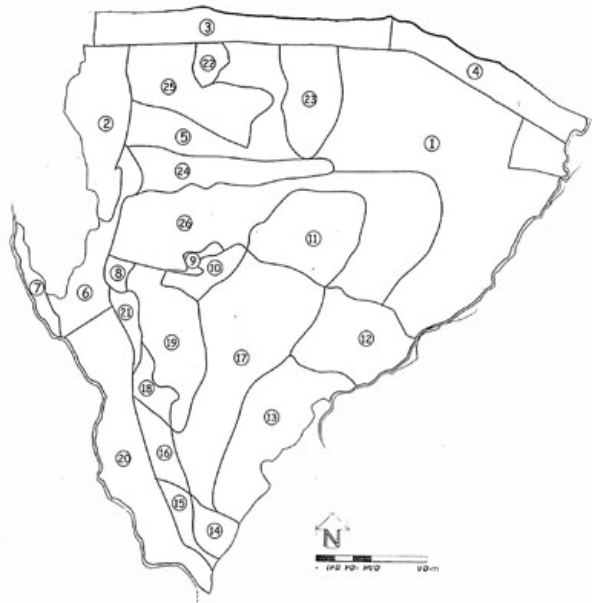
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Popular preferences and their application in designing natural forest parks

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Abstract

Natural Forest Parks are complex ecosystems. The dual and simultaneous aim of conservation and tourism developments in such areas could be achieved by creating a balanced relationship between human activities and natural environment. Although evaluating ecological potential is one of the ways to provide balance in forest parks, minding people's needs and preferences is extremely important since they are real conservers of the forest parks. Sisangan is one of the most popular forest park in Iran which also known as a botanical reservoir of rare *Buxus hircana*, a species threatened with extinction. Inattention to preferences of users of the park not only has weakened the quality of the park as a recreation facility but also has encouraged the users to help the destruction of this invaluable natural treasure. This research is an effort to assess users' aesthetic preferences through q-sort method, and also to investigate recreational activities based on observational studies. Besides studying public preferences, the ecological potential for tourism was also determined by the use of β classification method based on type and density of plants in Sisangan forest park. Although this park has been designed with respect to the extent of recreational activities and ecological potential as well, this design has not been able to meet needs of users of the park as a recreational facility. Finally, the research presents ideas for designing concentrated and extensive recreational areas in view of popular preferences.

Key words: Sisangan Forest Park, People Preferences, Aesthetic evaluation, Activity pattern, ecological potential