

# **A field experiment on voluntary contributions to trail maintenance in a national park**

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## **Abstract**

National parks have crucial roles in providing ecosystem services. However, inadequate funding for parks poses significant challenges to sustainable management. The present study evaluated the effect of announcing the initial amount of government funding on voluntary contributions to trail maintenance. We also investigated whether the information about others' contributions influence subjects' own contributions. To address these issues, we conducted a natural field experiment in Daisetsuzan National Park, Japan. We found that information about the initial amount of government funding increased the probability of a positive contribution and raised the average contribution, compared to that under a no-information scenario. In addition, when the subjects had known others' contributions beforehand, the likelihood of a positive contribution increased. However, the average contribution was not different from that of a group with no information. Our findings reveal that providing information about an initial amount of government investment encourages people to contribute more.

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