The Next Generation: Looking at UTK Students’ Potential Future Engagement with GSMNP

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The Next Generation: Looking at UTK Students’ Potential Future Engagement with GSMNP

The Study of Motivations and Perceptions Surrounding Engagement with Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP) Amongst Undergraduate Students at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK) for the 2018-2019 Academic Year

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Research Focus: Marketing
School: University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Date: April 2019
Abstract

The purpose of this research was to understand the next generation’s, aka Gen Z’s, engagement with Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP) by studying the motivations and perceptions surrounding engagement with GSMNP amongst undergraduate students enrolled for the 2018-2019 school year at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK). This research was conducted in the format of a hybrid case study with a combined marketing strategy plan that aims to answer the following questions:

- What are the motivations and perceptions surrounding engagement with Great Smoky Mountains National Park amongst undergraduate students enrolled for the 2018-2019 school year at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville?
- What can Great Smoky Mountains National Park do to engage the next generation of visitors, volunteers, donors, fundraisers, and activists?

The quantitative portion of the research was conducted in the form of an anonymous online survey distributed to a convenience sample of undergraduate students enrolled at UTK. Findings from the survey guided talking points for the qualitative portion, focus groups, which were used to triangulate the survey data. These research findings informed the basis for sample marketing strategy applications targeted towards “The Next Generation.” The overall goal for this project was that the research findings and marketing strategy be presented to GSMNP for potential use.
# Table of Contents

List of Figures ........................................................................................................... 3  
List of Tables ............................................................................................................... 4  
Introduction ............................................................................................................... 5  
Institutional Review Board Statement ................................................................. 6  
Methodologies ......................................................................................................... 7  
    Survey Methodologies ....................................................................................... 7  
    Focus Group Methodologies ......................................................................... 9  
Limitations .............................................................................................................. 11  
Data ............................................................................................................................ 13  
    Survey Results ................................................................................................ 13  
    Survey Population ......................................................................................... 41  
    Focus Group Results .................................................................................... 46  
        Quantitative Focus Group Data .............................................................. 46  
        Qualitative Focus Group Data .............................................................. 49  
    Focus Group Population ............................................................................. 54  
Marketing Strategy Applications ........................................................................... 58  
Conclusion .............................................................................................................. 62  
Expansion of Research .......................................................................................... 63  
References .............................................................................................................. 64  
Appendix .................................................................................................................. 65  
    Appendix 1: UTK IRB Survey Approval Letter ........................................... 65  
    Appendix 2: UTK IRB Focus Groups Approval Letter ............................ 67  
    Appendix 3: Copy of Survey ......................................................................... 69  
    Appendix 4: Focus Group Questions ............................................................. 82  
    Appendix 5: Free Response Answers to Survey Q20 ................................ 83  
    Appendix 6: Free Response Answers to Survey Q21 ................................ 89  
    Appendix 7: Free Response Answers to Survey Q24 ................................ 95  
    Appendix 8: UTK Pop. By Age, Level, & Gender, Fall 2018 .................... 97  
    Appendix 9: UTK Pop. By College, Level, Gender, & Race/Ethnicity, Fall 2018 98  
    Appendix 10: Focus Group #1 Transcript ................................................... 99  
    Appendix 11: Focus Group #2 Transcript .................................................... 117
List of Figures

Figure 1: Importance of Being Outdoors................................................................. 14
Figure 2: Level of Interest in Outdoor Activities ......................................................... 15
Figure 3: Involvement in Outdoor/Sustainability Clubs/Organizations .......................... 16
Figure 4: GSMNP Visitation ..................................................................................... 18
Figure 5: GSMNP Visitation Prior to Attending UTK .................................................. 19
Figure 6: GSMNP Visitation Frequency ..................................................................... 19
Figure 7: Influences for Not Visiting GSMNP (In Last 12 Months) ......................... 20
Figure 8: Influences for Visiting GSMNP Once ....................................................... 21
Figure 9: Activities Engaged in at GSMNP .............................................................. 22
Figure 10: Enjoyment of Activities Engaged in at GSMNP ................................. 24
Figure 11: Visited GSMNP With .............................................................................. 25
Figure 12: Gone on Date in GSMNP ...................................................................... 26
Figure 13: Would Go on Date in GSMNP ............................................................... 27
Figure 14: Visitor Center Visitation ....................................................................... 27
Figure 15: Visitor Centers Visited ......................................................................... 28
Figure 16: Visitor Center Visitation Frequency ...................................................... 28
Figure 17: Seasonal Likelihood to Visit GSMNP ..................................................... 29
Figure 18: Likelihood to Recommend Visiting GSMNP ........................................... 32
Figure 19: Influences for Not Visiting GSMNP (Ever) ............................................. 33
Figure 20: Interest in Visiting GSMNP .................................................................. 34
Figure 21: Family Member(s) Visitation ............................................................... 36
Figure 22: Likelihood of Visiting with Family Member(s) ....................................... 36
Figure 23: Friend(s) Visitation .............................................................................. 37
Figure 24: Likelihood of Visiting with Friend(s) ...................................................... 37
Figure 25: Awareness of Free Entry ...................................................................... 38
Figure 26: GSMNP Promotion Recall .................................................................. 39
Figure 27: GSMNP Social Media Following .......................................................... 40
Figure 28: GSMNP Social Media Platforms ......................................................... 40
Figure 29: Survey Population, Age ....................................................................... 41
Figure 30: Survey Population, Gender .................................................................. 42
Figure 31: Survey Population, Race/Ethnicity ....................................................... 43
Figure 32: Survey Population, Class Rank ............................................................. 43
Figure 33: Survey Population, College .................................................................. 44
Figure 34: Survey Population, Part-Time vs. Full-Time ......................................... 45
Figure 35: Survey Population, Employment Status .............................................. 45
Figure 36: Survey Population, State of Permanent Residence ............................... 46
Figure 37: Pre-Focus Group Poll 1 ....................................................................... 46
Figure 38: Pre-Focus Group Poll 2 ....................................................................... 47
Figure 39: Post-Focus Group Poll 1 ...................................................................... 47
Figure 40: Pre-Focus Group Poll 3 ....................................................................... 48
List of Tables

Table 1: Involvement in Outdoor/Sustainability Clubs/Organizations – Free Response ..... 17
Table 2: Influences for Visiting GSMNP ONCE – Other .................................................. 22
Table 3: Activities Engaged in at GSMNP - Other .............................................................. 23
Table 4: Visited GSMNP With - Other ............................................................................... 25
Table 5: GSMNP Location Deciding Factors – Free Response ............................................. 30
Table 6: GSMNP Visitation Influences – Free Response ...................................................... 31
Table 7: Interest in Visiting GSMNP – Free Response “Yes” ............................................... 34
Table 8: Interest in Visiting GSMNP – Free Response “No” ................................................. 35
Table 9: GSMNP Promotion Recall - Other ......................................................................... 39
Table 10: Survey Population, Gender – Other .................................................................... 42
Table 11: Survey Population, Race/Ethnicity - Other .......................................................... 43
Table 12: Survey Population, College - Other .................................................................... 44
Introduction

The research team for this study consisted of researcher Layla Mosadegh, marketing and international business undergraduate student at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK), and advisor Dr. Melinda Micheletto, marketing professor at UTK. This study fulfilled the thesis requirements set for the Haslam College of Business Greg and Lisa Smith Global Leadership Scholars Program (Smith GLS) and the UTK Chancellor’s Honors Program. In determining the topic of this thesis project, the research team reflected upon problems faced by Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP) at the time, sparked by the researcher’s interest in the park. During initial research efforts, the team examined human subject studies previously conducted by the National Park Service (NPS) in GSMNP. One statistic that stood out in a 2008 Visitor Study conducted by the NPS Social Science Program was the visitor age group distribution. The 16-20 and 21-25 age groups had the smallest representation in the study, with 3% each (Papadogiannaki, Braak, Holmes, Eury, & Hollenhorst). While there are many factors that could have influenced this lack of representation, there is no way to check against the actual visitor age distribution of GSMNP, as that data is not collected or publicly reported. The research team decided to accept the age distribution from the survey, leading the following problem to present itself: those in the 16-25 age range do not visit GSMNP as much as other age groups.

The researcher falls within this age range and wanted to find a way to solve this problem of lacking visitation representation. The team chose to conduct marketing research to study the visitation influences and perceptions of peoples within the 16-25 age range. To simplify the research collection for an undergraduate thesis project of this scale, the study age was simplified to begin at 18 years old. The team debated on what population to use for the study, initially strategizing to pull study participants from secondary institutions within a specific radius surrounding GSMNP in another effort to ease data collection. This method quickly proved too intensive with the scale of the project’s time and budget limitations. Therefore, the study population was simplified further to UTK undergraduate students, with the hopes that findings could be generalized out to the rest of the 18-25 population within a similar 35-mile radius of GSMNP. Only undergraduate students were studied because there was minimal representation of 18 to 25-year-olds within the UTK graduate population.
Using family connections, the researcher contacted the Class Coordinator for the Experience Your Smokies program to gain further insight on the problem posed. The Class Coordinator, Julie Whitted, shared that GSMNP, as the most visited national park in the U.S., does not need help with visitation, but rather needs to solve the problem of engagement from the next generation, Gen Z. Engagement, in this use, is defined as more than just visitation. Engagement considers general interactions with the park (such as following GSMNP on social media or donating money), and includes involvement which delves further into service, activism, and fundraising.

Through quantitative and qualitative methods, this research aimed to answer the following questions:

- What are the motivations and perceptions surrounding engagement with Great Smoky Mountains National Park amongst undergraduate students enrolled for the 2018-2019 school year at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville?
- What can Great Smoky Mountains National Park do to engage the next generation of visitors, volunteers, donors, fundraisers, and activists?

The overall purpose of this study was to inform potential marketing strategy applications that GSMNP could implement to combat the proposed problem.

The following pages detail the study’s methodologies, limitations, data findings, marketing strategy applications, conclusions, and potential research expansions.

**Institutional Review Board Statement**

The following research contains data collected from human subjects. The data collection methods used were approved by the University of Tennessee, Knoxville Institutional Review Board. See Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 for the research approval letters.
Methodologies

This section details the various research methods used to study UTK undergraduate students’ motivations and perceptions surrounding engagement with GSMNP.

Survey Methodologies

Purpose

The goal of the survey was to create valuable insights from which to conduct focus groups and ultimately inspire marketing ideas for potential use by GSMNP. The survey focused on measuring student engagement, motivations, and perceptions.

Benefits to Society

The benefits to society were based on discovering student perceptions and motivations surrounding GSMNP, with the development of marketing strategy applications targeted towards increasing engagement in college undergraduate students and 18 to 25-year-olds surrounding the park. GSMNP could potentially use these findings and applications to better target college undergraduate students and 18 to 25-year-olds in their future marketing efforts, resulting in a greater percentage of engagement from that age category.

Design

The anonymous survey was built and conducted in QuestionPro, an online survey software platform. The survey consisted of 40 questions total, but due to the presence of skip logic, each respondent received a different number of questions.

The survey inquired whether or not the participant had visited GSMNP. If the respondent indicated that they had visited, they were asked about their visitation patterns, activity engagement, perceptions, motivations, and influences. If the respondent indicated that they had not visited, they were asked about their motivations and interests in visiting. The survey asked all respondents about interest in and engagement with the outdoors, outdoor activities, and outdoor/sustainability-related clubs/organizations. The survey also asked all respondents about
GSMNP promotions and social media accounts. Finally, the survey prompted a series of demographic questions. See Appendix 3 for a copy of the survey.

Potential participants were incentivized with the option to enter into a drawing for one of two $25 VolShop gift cards. The survey remained anonymous and participation in the drawing was kept confidential.

Following completion or non-completion of the survey, participants of the research procedures were then asked to voluntarily indicate their interest in participating in a focus group during the UTK Spring 2019 semester. The list of emails obtained were used as the potential participant pool for the focus groups. Again, the survey remained anonymous and indicating interest in focus group participation was kept confidential.

Test Population

The test population for the survey came from the 2019 cohort of the Haslam College of Business Greg and Lisa Smith Global Leadership Scholars Program (Smith GLS). The 2019 Smith GLS cohort was chosen as the convenience sample because this research project was a requirement of that program, of which the researcher was a cohort member.

Distribution

The survey was distributed between January 14th, 2019, and January 29th, 2019, to a convenience sample of undergraduate students through the communications department of various colleges and departments at UTK. The following colleges and departments agreed to distribute the survey: Herbert College of Agriculture, College of Architecture and Design, Haslam College of Business, College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences, Tickle College of Engineering, College of Social Work, and the Honors and Scholars Program. Those students on the Honors and Scholars mailing list may have been exposed to the survey link twice. Due to the unequal nature of distribution for the survey (convenience sample) and ultimately the unequal representation across all UTK colleges, the response rate could not be calculated.
Participant Population

The participant population of the anonymous survey only included undergraduate students 18 years or older who attended the University of Tennessee, Knoxville during the 2018-2019 academic year. Potential subjects for the survey were determined by those who received the departmental emails. Actual subjects were then determined by those who willingly decided to take the survey using the link in the email.

Graduate students and students under the age of 18 who were attending the University of Tennessee, Knoxville during the 2018-2019 academic year were excluded. Students of other universities, colleges, and campuses were also excluded.

The survey had a completion rate of 91.24% with 251 students starting the survey and 229 completing it. However, four responses had to be thrown out during the data cleaning process due to not qualifying for participation in the survey, leaving 225 valid responses.

Analysis

Analytics on the survey results were conducted using SPSS Statistics and Microsoft Excel. SPSS Statistics was used to run Crosstabs and Chi Square Tests on qualifying data. Excel was used for frequency and percentage analysis.

Focus Group Methodologies

Purpose

The focus group study followed the same purpose as the survey, and the focus groups were used to triangulate the survey data. The primary objective of the focus groups was to measure perceptions of engagement interest and perceptions of GSMNP in general.

Benefits to Society

Participants of the focus groups may not have directly benefited from their participation in the research study. The anticipated benefits were based on discovering perceptions and potential motivations behind student involvement with GSMNP. The expectation was to inspire marketing...
strategy applications targeted towards increasing involvement among undergraduate college students to promote the successful maintenance and protection of GSMNP for further generations.

Discussion

A list of potential questions was created to respond with depending on the direction that the discussions ended up leading towards. See Appendix 4 for this exhaustive question bank. Not all questions in the bank were asked, and the same questions were not necessarily asked during each focus groups.

Study Population

The potential study population included only undergraduate students from UTK who were also 18 years or older. The focus group population was recruited from a list of students who participated in the survey and indicated that they were interested in participating in a focus group. The data for this list consisted of 64 email addresses that the students provided. The email addresses were not connected to the students’ responses to the survey.

All 64 students were emailed a signup link through DoodlePoll. Twelve students responded, with six signing up for each focus group. Of the six participants intended for each session, two actually participated in the first focus group, and three actually participated in the second focus group. Participants identities were kept confidential, and they have been re-identified as Participant #1, Participant #2, etc.

Procedures

The study consisted of two focus groups conducted on February 26th, 2019, from 6:30pm-7:30pm and February 27th, 2019, from 5:30pm-6:30pm. The focus groups took place in the Haslam Business Building on UTK’s campus, specifically in rooms 334 and 316, respectively. The focus groups lasted approximately 45 minutes each.

Layla Mosadegh, the researcher, served as the facilitator for the focus group discussions. Josh Kitts, fellow Smith GLS peer, served as co-facilitator and note-taker.
Prior to conducting the focus groups, a straw poll was taken by participants to create a data baseline. The same questions, as well as demographic questions, were asked again following the conclusion of each focus group to measure the discussion’s impact.

Each focus group session was video recorded for transcription purposes. Following transcription, all copies of the video recordings were destroyed to maintain confidentiality. For the risk of exposed confidentiality, the following additional procedures were put in place: Last names of participants were not revealed to other participants; The key that identified participants and their assigned identities was destroyed; Participants were asked to keep the identities of fellow participants confidential; All files and data were stored in password protected folders; Paper documents were stored in a locked room.

Analysis

Once the data was transcribed, results were analyzed, and the most useful data was compiled for this report. The straw poll questions were used to measure anonymous changes in answers from before to after the focus group. The focus group data was then analyzed against the survey results to determine any parallel findings.

Limitations

Like all research, this study had limitations which should be considered when interpreting the results. The following summarizes the limitations faced:

- The time and resources allowed for this project limited the research to only include a target population of undergraduate students enrolled during the 2018-2019 academic year at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The time and resources allotted also limited the number of focus groups the researcher was able to conduct.

- The entirety of this research project was conducted between the months of August 2018 and March 2019. During this time period, the U.S. Federal Government shutdown for 35 days. This may be reflected in some of the research findings.
• The research team was unable to obtain a random sample of respondents for the survey from the UTK Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. This means that the convenience sample collected may not fully represent the UTK undergraduate population or the 18 to 25-year-old population as a whole and should be taken into account when interpreting results. The convenience sample provided data that may have been skewed by multiple demographic factors, such as gender and race/ethnicity.

• The research team limited focus group participation to those who participated in the survey and indicated that they were also interested in participating in a focus group. This limited the potential focus group population and ultimately attendance. The lack of focus group participation, in turn, did not provide robust enough data to analyze against the survey data, other than the use of frequencies.

• Caution is advised when interpreting any data with a sample size of less than 30.

• It is impossible to know whether or not data provided by respondents and participants is truly factual and/or reflects actual behavior.

• A respondent may not have answered all questions posed to them during the survey or focus group, or they may have answered them incorrectly. Unanswered questions mean missing data that can cause the number in the samples to vary. Incorrect answers mean small data inconsistencies. The survey and focus group data were cleaned to minimize this effect.

• Questions asked in the survey and focus groups could have potentially been influenced by the researcher’s own perceptions of GSMNP.

• The research team found that some participants associated Gatlinburg, Pigeon Forge, and Townsend as being part of GSMNP, leading the team to believe that some people do not know the boundaries of the park. This factor may have influenced respondents’ answers and the data analysis (Ex. see Appendix 11, lines 426-434).
Data

Survey Results

The following data details perceptions and statistics of all respondents (225).

Figure 1 shows the distribution for how important or unimportant being outdoors was to all respondents. Approximately 59.6% of all respondents fell within the top box of outdoor importance rankings, having indicated that being outdoors is either “very important” or “extremely important” to them.

Over half of 18-year-olds (53.66%) indicated that being outdoors was “very important” to them. The majority of 19-year-olds were split between the perception that being outdoors is “somewhat important” (38.3%) or “very important” (36.2%) to them. Almost half, (45.5%) of 20-year-olds considered being outdoors to be “very important” to them. The majority of 21-year-olds were also split, with 34% indicating that being outdoors is “very important” to them and 31.9% indicating that being outdoors is “extremely important” to them. For 22-year-olds, 34.4% considered being outdoors as “somewhat important,” while an equal distribution considered being outdoors as “extremely important” (28.1%) or “very important” (28.1%). There were only two 23-year-olds who participated in the study, and both indicated that being outdoors was “extremely important.” Half (50%) of respondents 24 or older indicated that being outdoors was “very important.”

The majority of females considered being outdoors as “very important” (38.7%) or “somewhat important” (32.4%), while the majority of males considered being outdoors as “very important” (46%) or “extremely important” (22%).

The majority of respondents who had visited GSMNP indicated that being outdoors was “very important” (42.4%) or “somewhat important” (25.3%). Similarly, the majority of respondents who had not visited GSMNP indicated that being outdoors was “somewhat important” (40%) or “very important” (32.7%).
In looking at all respondents’ general interest levels in various activities based on the GSMNP activities list provided by the National Park Service (NPS), the activities with the highest levels of interest indicated were hiking, picnicking, swimming, and camping. Well over half (68.5%) of all respondents indicated that they were “very interested” or “extremely interested” in hiking, 55.6% indicated that they were “very interested” or “extremely interested” in picnicking, 44.9% indicated that they were “very interested” or “extremely interested” in swimming, and 44.4% indicated they were “very interested” or “extremely interested” in camping. These interest levels represented the activities as a whole and not just on location within GSMNP. Alternatively, 26.2% of respondents indicated that they were “not at all interested” in running, 25.8% indicated that they were “not at all interested” in fishing, and 21.3% indicated that they were “not at all interested” in horseback riding. Figure 2 details the remaining interest distributions.
Figure 2: Level of Interest in Outdoor Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Not At All Interested</th>
<th>Slightly Interested</th>
<th>Somewhat Interested</th>
<th>Very Interested</th>
<th>Extremely Interested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife Watching</td>
<td>10.20%</td>
<td>17.30%</td>
<td>31.60%</td>
<td>22.70%</td>
<td>18.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>10.20%</td>
<td>15.10%</td>
<td>29.80%</td>
<td>27.10%</td>
<td>17.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic Auto Touring</td>
<td>10.20%</td>
<td>25.80%</td>
<td>22.20%</td>
<td>26.20%</td>
<td>15.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running</td>
<td>26.20%</td>
<td>19.60%</td>
<td>25.80%</td>
<td>13.80%</td>
<td>14.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnicking</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>13.30%</td>
<td>27.10%</td>
<td>30.70%</td>
<td>24.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horseback Riding</td>
<td>21.30%</td>
<td>20.90%</td>
<td>23.10%</td>
<td>18.70%</td>
<td>16.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiking</td>
<td>4.40%</td>
<td>8.40%</td>
<td>18.70%</td>
<td>32.90%</td>
<td>35.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>25.80%</td>
<td>25.30%</td>
<td>21.30%</td>
<td>17.80%</td>
<td>9.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camping</td>
<td>13.30%</td>
<td>15.60%</td>
<td>26.20%</td>
<td>31.10%</td>
<td>13.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycling</td>
<td>16.40%</td>
<td>24.90%</td>
<td>36.90%</td>
<td>16.90%</td>
<td>4.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backpacking</td>
<td>19.10%</td>
<td>21.80%</td>
<td>26.20%</td>
<td>23.60%</td>
<td>8.90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: all respondents (225)

Figure 3 shows the number of respondents who were involved in outdoor/sustainability-related clubs/organizations. The majority of respondents (93.8%) were not involved in any outdoor/sustainability-related clubs/organizations. The research team wanted to see if there was a
difference in UTK undergraduate students’ participation in these clubs/organizations based on visitation.

H₀: There is not a difference in UTK undergraduate students’ participation in these clubs/organizations based on visitation.
H₁: There is a difference in UTK undergraduate students’ participation in these clubs/organizations based on visitation.

According to Fisher’s Exact Test (within the Chi-Square Test), the difference between the two variables is not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted and there was no significant correlation between UTK undergraduate students’ participation in outdoor/sustainability-related clubs/organizations and whether or not they had visited GSMNP.

**Figure 3: Involvement in Outdoor/Sustainability Clubs/Organizations**

![Bar chart showing involvement in outdoor/sustainability clubs/organizations]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q5 - Are you currently involved in any outdoor or sustainability-related clubs or organizations?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93.80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: all respondents (225)

Respondents who chose “Yes” were asked to provide the name of the club/organization. Table 1 displays the clubs/organizations that those 6.2% of respondents were involved in as of 2019, with the largest percentage having been involved in the UT Canoe and Hiking Club.
### Table 1: Involvement in Outdoor/Sustainability Clubs/Organizations – Free Response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q5 - Are you currently involved in any outdoor or sustainability related clubs or organizations? - YES</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UT Canoe and Hiking Club</td>
<td>0.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT Outdoors Club</td>
<td>0.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Agriculture Society</td>
<td>0.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPEAK (Students Promoting Environmental Action in Knoxville)</td>
<td>0.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental &amp; Sustainability Committee of Student Government</td>
<td>0.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer Intramural Sports Team</td>
<td>0.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ski and Snowboard Club</td>
<td>0.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Farmers of America (FFA)</td>
<td>0.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis Club</td>
<td>0.44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: all respondents (225)

As illustrated in Figure 4, 75.6% of all respondents had visited GSMNP. The research team analyzed this data using a Chi-Square Test to determine if there was a difference in UTK undergraduate students’ GSMNP visitation based on age, gender, state of permanent residence, and/or class rank.

- **H₀**: There is not a difference in UTK undergraduate students’ GSMNP visitation based on age, gender, state of permanent residence, and/or class rank.
- **H₁**: There is a difference in UTK undergraduate students’ GSMNP visitation based on age, gender, state of permanent residence, and/or class rank.

The only association found was between GSMNP visitation and state of permanent residence. That correlation was given with 99% confidence. For the rest of the variables we accept the null hypothesis that there was no difference.
The following data details perceptions, motivations, and statistics of those respondents (170) who had visited GSMNP.

Of the 170 respondents who had visited GSMNP, 87.06% did so prior to attending the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (Figure 5). The research team looked at whether there was a difference in undergraduate students’ GSMNP visitation prior to attending UTK based on state of permanent residence.

H₀: There is not a difference in undergraduate students’ GSMNP visitation prior to attending UTK based on state of permanent residence.

H₁: There is a difference in undergraduate students’ GSMNP visitation prior to attending UTK based on state of permanent residence.

Based on a Chi-Square analysis, there was a correlation between GSMNP visitation prior to attending UTK and state of permanent residence. The strength of this association (Phi) was 0.425, which means that there was a significant relationship between the two variables, but the strength was less than 50%.
According to Figure 6, 14.71% of respondents who had visited GSMNP considered themselves to be frequent visitors (7 times or more in the previous 12 months). However, the majority indicated that they were moderate visitors, with 29.41% having visited “3-6 times” in the previous 12 months. A combined 42.94% were considered occasional (twice) or one-time visitors within the previous 12 months. The smallest percentage, 12.94%, of respondents had not visited GSMNP within the previous 12 months.
Figure 7 breaks down the influences behind those who had not visited GSMNP in the previous 12 months. Of those respondents who had not visited in the previous 12 months, 63.64% indicated that they were “too busy” to visit. Coming in second, 36.36% of those who had not visited in the previous 12 months indicated that they had no one to go with.

**Figure 7: Influences for Not Visiting GSMNP (In Last 12 Months)**

Base: those who had not visited GSMNP in the previous 12 months (22)

Figure 8, on the other hand, illustrates the influences behind those who had only visited GSMNP once in the previous 12 months. Comparable to those who had not visited in the previous 12 months, of those who had only visited once in the previous 12 months, 63.64% indicated that
they were “too busy.” Tying for second, 36.36% of respondents indicated that they had no one to go with and that they consider GSMNP to be “too far away.” Close behind, 33.33% of respondents who had only visited once in the previous 12 months indicated that they had not visited more because of “no particular reason.”

**Figure 8: Influences for Visiting GSMNP Once**

Of those respondents who had only visited once in the previous 12 months, 3.03% indicated that another reason influenced their visitation. Table 2 shows the other reason as respondents not having enough time to visit more.
Table 2: Influences for Visiting GSMNP ONCE – Other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q10 - What reasons, if any, have influenced you to only visit GSMNP ONCE in the last 12 months? - OTHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not enough time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: those who had only visited GSMNP once in the previous 12 months (33)

GSMNP lists activities available within the park on the NPS website. Of the activities listed, the majority of respondents who had visited the park indicated that they had hiked (74.71%) in GSMNP within the previous 12 months. As shown in Figure 9, the most popular activities to engage in at GSMNP in the previous 12 months amongst college students surveyed, following hiking, were scenic auto touring (42.94%), wildlife watching (36.47%), and picnicking (32.35%). A quarter of respondents (25.2%) who had hiked in GSMNP were 21 years old, 77.17% were female, and 35.43% were seniors at UTK.

Figure 9: Activities Engaged in at GSMNP

Base: those who had visited GSMNP (170)
Table 3 lists the other activities that 4.12% of respondents indicated that they engaged in at GSMNP during the previous 12 months.

Table 3: Activities Engaged in at GSMNP - Other

| Q11 - Select all the activities you have engaged in at GSMNP in the last 12 months. - OTHER |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Cabin Trip                                 | 1.18%            |
| Retreat, Shopping                          | 0.59%            |
| Sightseeing                                | 0.59%            |
| Photography                                | 0.59%            |
| Driving through to Gatlinburg for work     | 0.59%            |
| Watched the synchronized firefly show      | 0.59%            |
| Base: those who had visited GSMNP (170)     |                  |

The survey asked those who indicated that they engaged in an activity to rank their enjoyment of that specific activity within GSMNP. Figure 10 shows the distribution of agreement with the statement “I enjoy [insert name of activity] in GSMNP.” As the figure shows, for the four most popular activities, the majority of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with their enjoyment of that specific activity. For example, an overwhelming 95.28% of those who had hiked in GSMNP within the previous 12 months indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “I enjoy hiking in GSMNP.”
Figure 10: Enjoyment of Activities Engaged in at GSMNP

Q12 - Please indicate your agreement with the following statements:
"I enjoy [insert name of activity] in GSMNP."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree nor Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hiking</td>
<td>45.29%</td>
<td>25.29%</td>
<td>15.29%</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic Auto Touring</td>
<td>5.29%</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife Watching</td>
<td>2.35%</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnicking</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td>2.35%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camping</td>
<td>8.24%</td>
<td>4.71%</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backpacking</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td>8.24%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td>5.29%</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.76%</td>
<td>8.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td>4.71%</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>2.35%</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycling</td>
<td>2.35%</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horseback Riding</td>
<td>2.94%</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: those who had visited GSMNP (170)

Figure 11 illustrates with whom respondents had visited GSMNP in the previous 12 months. Of the 170 respondents who had visited GSMNP, over half visited with friends (63.53%) and/or family (58.82%).
Figure 11: Visited GSMNP With

A small percentage (2.35%) of respondents indicated that they had visited GSMNP with persons or groups other than the options listed. Table 4 lists these other persons or groups with whom respondents had visited GSMNP.

Table 4: Visited GSMNP With - Other

| Q13 - Please indicate with whom you have visited GSMNP in the last 12 months. - OTHER |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------|
| With Class                                    | 1.18%            |
| Burlesque Troupe                              | 0.59%            |
| Church Group                                  | 0.59%            |

Base: those who had visited GSMNP (170)

The research team wanted to determine the potential market for advertisements on dating apps in order to attract more of the younger generation. The survey asked respondents to indicate whether they had previously gone on a date (Figure 12) or if they would be willing to go on a
date (Figure 13) in GSMNP with someone they had met on a dating app such as Tinder or Bumble. The majority of respondents (98.82%) had not gone on a date in GSMNP with someone they met on a dating app. However, 41.76% of those who had visited the park indicated that they would go on a date to GSMNP with someone they met on a dating app.

**Figure 12: Gone on Date in GSMNP**

![Graph showing the percentage of respondents who have gone on a date in GSMNP](image)

- **Base:** those who had visited GSMNP (170)

To analyze this data further, the research team looked to see if there was a difference in UTK undergraduate students’ inclination to go on a date to GSMNP (Figure 13) based on gender.

- **H₀:** There is not a difference in UTK undergraduate students’ inclination to go on a date to GSMNP based on gender.
- **H₁:** There is a difference in UTK undergraduate students’ inclination to go on a date to GSMNP based on gender.

After running a Chi-Square Test, it was determined that with 99% confidence there was a correlation between gender and willingness to go on a date to GSMNP. However, because of the 0.212 Phi value, the strength of the association was minimal.
The survey also inquired about GSMNP visitor center visitation to determine the locations’ attractiveness for marketing about involvement. Figure 14 shows that, of those who had visited the park, 62.94% had also been to a visitor center.

Figure 15 shows that, of the four visitor centers within GSMNP, the one most visited amongst respondents (84.11%) was Cades Cove Visitor Center. Not quite half of respondents had visited Clingmans Dome Visitor Center (40.19%) and/or Sugarlands Visitor Center (42.06%). The Oconaluftee Visitor Center was the least visited, with only 7.48% of respondents indicating that they had been.
Figure 15: Visitor Centers Visited

![Figure 15: Visitor Centers Visited](image)

Base: those who had visited a visitor center in GSMNP (107)

The visitation frequency for those who had been to a visitor center is broken down in Figure 16. Not quite half (42.99%) of respondents indicated that they rarely visited one of the GSMNP visitor centers. A small percentage (11.21%) stopped by a visitor center almost every time they went to GSMNP, and even less (5.61%) visited every time they went to the park. Additionally, 0.93% indicated that they no longer visited GSMNP or its visitor centers.

Figure 16: Visitor Center Visitation Frequency

![Figure 16: Visitor Center Visitation Frequency](image)

Base: those who had visited a visitor center in GSMNP (107)
According to Figure 17, Fall (60%), Summer (54.71%), and Spring (51.18%) were the seasons during which the largest percentages of respondents indicated that they were “very likely” to visit GSMNP. Only 14.71% indicated that they were “very likely” to visit GSMNP during the Winter season.

**Figure 17: Seasonal Likelihood to Visit GSMNP**

The survey asked respondents the following free response question: How do you decide which location in GSMNP to visit? Table 5 summarizes the responses to this inquiry, with “characteristics of a hike” being the most mentioned (16.47%) response category. For the full list of free responses, see Appendix 5.
### Table 5: GSMNP Location Deciding Factors – Free Response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q20 - How do you decide which location in GSMNP to visit?</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of a hike (length, location, difficulty, etc.)</td>
<td>16.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The internet or an app</td>
<td>14.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>13.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depends on the activity or what I want to do</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity/Access</td>
<td>9.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't decide - let whoever I am going with decide</td>
<td>8.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether or not I've been there before</td>
<td>7.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on past experiences</td>
<td>7.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available Time</td>
<td>6.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic/Crowds</td>
<td>6.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sounds interesting or looks fun</td>
<td>6.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weather/Season</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenery/Views</td>
<td>5.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go and see where we end up (spontaneous)</td>
<td>4.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cades Cove</td>
<td>4.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popularity</td>
<td>3.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Research</td>
<td>3.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depends on who I am visiting with</td>
<td>2.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depends on what mood I am in</td>
<td>2.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books/Maps</td>
<td>2.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleanliness</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near water or stream</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services offered</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether or not it allows dogs</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask park rangers</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elkmont</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The survey also asked respondents the following free response question: What, if anything would influence you to visit GSMNP or visit more frequently? Table 6 summarizes the numerous free responses to this inquiry. For the full list of free responses, see Appendix 6. Approximately a quarter of respondents (24.71%) indicated that they would visit GSMNP or visit more frequently if they had “more free time/better schedule/less work.”

Table 6: GSMNP Visitation Influences – Free Response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q21 – What, if anything, would influence you to visit GSMNP or visit more frequently?</th>
<th>- Free Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More free time/better schedule/less work</td>
<td>24.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More people to go with (friends, family, etc.) who want to do the same activities</td>
<td>13.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closer proximity/better access</td>
<td>11.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>8.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Transportation Options</td>
<td>8.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less traffic/tourists</td>
<td>6.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More information/better availability of information</td>
<td>6.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better weather</td>
<td>6.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Services/Facilities</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I visit frequently already/I live there</td>
<td>3.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guided tours/discounted UTK led visits/organized group activities</td>
<td>3.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m not an outdoorsy person</td>
<td>2.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I had more money</td>
<td>2.35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The research team wanted to measure respondents’ likelihood of recommending visiting GSMNP. Figure 18 shows that the majority of respondents (80%) were “very likely” to recommend visiting GSMNP. Only 1.18% indicated that they were “very unlikely” to recommend visiting.

**Figure 18: Likelihood to Recommend Visiting GSMNP**

The Next Generation: Looking at UTK Students’ Potential Future Engagement with GSMNP
The following data details perceptions, motivations, and statistics of those respondents (55) who had not visited GSMNP.

Figure 19 shows the reason(s) which had influenced respondents to not visit GSMNP. Over half of respondents indicated “no particular reason” that influenced them not to visit. Other than that, 38.18% attributed not visiting to not originally being from here (“here” meaning the UTK area), 30.91% were “too busy,” and 29.09% do not know where GSMNP is located.

Figure 19: Influences for Not Visiting GSMNP (Ever)

The survey asked those respondents who had not visited GSMNP to indicate their interest in visiting. The responses are shown in Figure 20. A large majority (94.55%) stated that they were interested in visiting GSMNP, and only 5.45% stated that they were not interested. Using a Chi-Square Test, the research team looked to see if there was a difference in UTK undergraduate students’ interest in visiting GSMNP based on age and/or gender.

H₀: There is not a difference in UTK undergraduate students’ interest in visiting GSMNP based on age and/or gender.
H1: There is a difference in UTK undergraduate students’ interest in visiting GSMNP based on age and/or gender.

The correlation was not found to be significant. Therefore, we accept the null hypothesis that there was no difference in visiting interest based on age and/or gender.

Figure 20: Interest in Visiting GSMNP

Respondents were also asked to explain their answer to the previous question on interest in visiting. Table 7 and Table 8 show the various reasons why respondents were or were not interested in visiting GSMNP. Over a quarter of respondents were interested in visiting GSMNP because they like the outdoors/parks/wildlife/mountains (30.91%) or think GSMNP “seems cool, fun, and beautiful” (29.09%). Not all respondents provided an explanation. Table 7 breaks down responses from those who answered “Yes,” and Table 8 contains responses from those who answered “No.”

Table 7: Interest in Visiting GSMNP – Free Response “Yes”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q24 - Are you interested in visiting GSMNP? Please indicate why or why not. - YES</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like the outdoors/parks/wildlife/mountains</td>
<td>30.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seems cool, fun, and beautiful</td>
<td>29.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is a famous icon</td>
<td>12.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would love to visit and experience</td>
<td>10.91%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The survey asked respondents if they knew of a family member(s) or friend(s) who had visited GSMNP and their likelihood of visiting GSMNP with the family member(s) or friend(s). According to Figure 21, 21.82% had a family member(s) who had visited, 30.91% did not have a family member(s) who had visited, and 47.27% did not know if any of their family members had visited.

Table 8: Interest in Visiting GSMNP – Free Response “No”

| Q24 - Are you interested in visiting GSMNP? Please indicate why or why not. - NO |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Not interested and don’t have time right now | 1.82% |
| What is there to do | 1.82% |

Base: those who had not visited GSMNP (55)
Figure 21: Family Member(s) Visitation

![Graph showing Q25 - Has a family member, that you know of, ever visited GSMNP?]

- Yes: 21.82%
- No: 30.91%
- I do not know: 47.27%

Base: those who had not visited GSMNP (55)

Figure 22 shows the likelihood of those 21.82% of respondents visiting GSMNP with their family member(s) who had visited. Of the 12 respondents for that question, 33.33% indicated that visiting with their family member(s) was “somewhat likely,” while 25% indicated that visiting with their family member(s) was “somewhat unlikely.”

Figure 22: Likelihood of Visiting with Family Member(s)

![Graph showing Q26 - What is the likelihood that you will visit GSMNP with this family member?]

- Very Likely: 16.67%
- Somewhat Likely: 33.33%
- Neither Unlikely nor Likely: 8.33%
- Somewhat Unlikely: 25.00%
- Very Unlikely: 16.67%

Base: those who knew a family member who had visited GSMNP (12)

According to Figure 23, 45.45% had a friend(s) who had visited, 16.36% did not have a friend(s) who had visited, and 38.18% did not know if any of their friends had visited. Therefore, more respondents knew of a friend(s) who had visited GSMNP than a family member(s).
Figure 23: Friend(s) Visitation

![Chart showing the responses to Q27: Has a friend, that you know of, ever visited GSMNP?]

- **Yes**: 45.45%
- **No**: 16.36%
- **I do not know**: 38.18%

Base: those who had not visited GSMNP (55)

Figure 24 shows the likelihood of those 45.45% of respondents visiting GSMNP with their friend(s) who had visited. Over half (56%) indicated that visiting with their friend(s) was “somewhat likely,” while 20% indicated that visiting with their friend(s) was “very unlikely.” Based on this data, respondents indicated that they were more likely to visit GSMNP with a friend(s) who had visited than a family member(s) who had visited.

Figure 24: Likelihood of Visiting with Friend(s)

![Chart showing the responses to Q28: What is the likelihood that you will visit GSMNP with this friend?]

- **Very Likely**: 20.00%
- **Somewhat Likely**: 56.00%
- **Neither Unlikely nor Likely**: 8.00%
- **Somewhat Unlikely**: 12.00%
- **Very Unlikely**: 4.00%

Base: those who knew a friend who had visited GSMNP (25)

The following data details perceptions and statistics of all survey respondents (225).
Out of all 225 respondents, 13.8% were unaware that GSMNP requires no entrance fee (Figure 25). The research team wanted to determine if there was a difference in UTK undergraduate students’ awareness about GSMNP’s free entry based on visitation, and/or state of permanent residence.

H₀: There is not a difference in UTK undergraduate students’ awareness about GSMNP’s free entry based on visitation, and/or state of permanent residence.

H₁: There is a difference in UTK undergraduate students’ awareness about GSMNP’s free entry based on visitation, and/or state of permanent residence.

With 99% confidence, there was a strong correlation between awareness of free entry and visitation. There was also a correlation between awareness of free entry and state of permanent residence, although it was not strong according to the assigned Phi (0.253).

**Figure 25: Awareness of Free Entry**

As shown in Figure 26, 52% of all respondents recalled seeing promotions for GSMNP on some form of social media channel, 43.1% recalled seeing promotions for GSMNP on billboards, and 42.7% recalled seeing promotions for GSMNP on a news channel. However, 19.6% stated that they had not seen promotions for GSMNP.
A small percent of respondents (2.67%) indicated other places for where they had seen promotions for GSMNP. Table 7 summarizes these other channels, with 2.22% of total respondents indicating that they had seen ads for GSMNP on television.

Table 9: GSMNP Promotion Recall - Other

| Q30 - Please select all of the places where you have seen promotions for GSMNP. - OTHER |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Television Ads                 | 2.22%                          |
| REI                             | 0.44%                          |

Only 12% of respondents followed GSMNP on Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook, while 1.8% were unsure whether or not they followed GSMNP. These percentages can be seen in Figure 27.
Figure 27: GSMNP Social Media Following

Q31 - Do you follow GSMNP on any of the following social media platforms: Instagram, Twitter, Facebook?

- Yes: 12.00%
- No: 86.20%
- I do not know: 1.80%

Base: all respondents (225)

Figure 28 shows the distribution of social media platforms on which respondents followed GSMNP. The majority (88.89%) of those who did follow GSMNP on social media, followed the GSMNP account on Instagram. Only 40.74% followed GSMNP on Facebook and Twitter, respectively.

Figure 28: GSMNP Social Media Platforms

Q32 - On which of the following social media platforms do you follow GSMNP?

- Instagram: 88.89%
- Facebook: 40.74%
- Twitter: 40.74%

Base: those who followed GSMNP on social media (27)
Survey Population

The following charts present the demographic information from the survey. See the demographic statistics for the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK), broken down by age, college, level, gender, and race/ethnicity, in Appendix 7 & Appendix 8 for comparison. Only numbers relating to the undergraduate population are mentioned because only undergraduates were included in the survey population. Additionally, due to the survey being collected from a convenience sample, the data is not fully representative of the UTK population at the time.

The age distribution for the survey population is broken down in Figure 29. As mentioned in the introduction, the target population was 18-25. The last category was simplified to “24 or older” because, as seen in Appendix 7, the undergraduate population drops off significantly after age 23.

The percentages from the survey did not parallel the percentages represented within the UTK undergraduate population at the time, but they were similar. The biggest differences in the two populations were that within the UTK population, 19-year-olds had the largest representation, whereas they were the fifth largest age represented in the survey data. Also, the 23-year-old population within the survey was considerably lower than the representation of 23-year-olds at UTK. See Appendix 7 for the UTK data.

Figure 29: Survey Population, Age

![Graph showing age distribution of survey responses.]

Base: all respondents (225)
The gender identities of the survey population are represented in Figure 30. Three quarters of respondents (76.9%) were female, which is also not representative of the UTK population at the time. See Appendix 7 for the gender break down of UTK’s population at the time. During the 2018-2019 academic year, there were roughly 10,591 male and 11,098 female undergraduate students between the ages of 18-25.

**Figure 30: Survey Population, Gender**

![Survey Population, Gender](image)

Respondents were given the option to write-in their identified gender if they did not identify with the gender binary classification. Table 8 lists the gender identity for the approximate 0.9% of respondents who indicated “other.”

**Table 10: Survey Population, Gender – Other**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q34 – What is your gender identity? - OTHER</th>
<th>0.89%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Binary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: all respondents (225)

As shown in Figure 31, the majority of respondents (90.7%) were considered white. In UTK’s population at the time, 78.17% of undergraduate students were considered white. See Appendix 8 for the rest of the UTK population percentages.
Table 9 lists the race/ethnicity of the approximately 0.4% who identified as “other.”

Table 11: Survey Population, Race/Ethnicity - Other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q35 – How would you describe yourself? Select all that apply. - OTHER</th>
<th>0.44%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middle Eastern</td>
<td>0.44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: all respondents (225)

Respondents were asked their designated year in college. Figure 32 shows that the largest representation came from freshmen with 30.2% and seniors close behind with 28%.

Figure 32: Survey Population, Class Rank

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q36 - What year are you in college at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>30.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>15.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>25.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>28.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Special</td>
<td>1.30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: all respondents (225)
Almost half of respondents (48.9%) were from the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences. There were no respondents from the College of Architecture and Design, although they were included in the potential survey population. The data shown in Figure 33 is not fully representative of the UTK population at the time. See Appendix 8 for UTK’s college enrollment data.

**Figure 33: Survey Population, College**

![Bar chart showing college distribution](chart)

Base: all respondents (225)

Approximately 1.8% of respondents indicated that they were in a college other than those listed. Table 10 shows their responses. However, Kinesiology and Recreation and Sports Management are actually both included within the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences.

**Table 12: Survey Population, College - Other**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q37 – In what college at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville is your major? - OTHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kinesiology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently Undecided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation and Sport Management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: all respondents (225)
Figure 34 shows that the vast majority of respondents (97.3%) were classified as full-time students.

**Figure 34: Survey Population, Part-Time vs. Full-Time**

![Bar chart showing the distribution of part-time and full-time students.](chart)

Over half of respondents (56.4%) were employed part-time when they took the survey (Figure 35).

**Figure 35: Survey Population, Employment Status**

![Bar chart showing the distribution of employment status.](chart)

Figure 36 shows that 80.9% of respondents were from Tennessee, 13.3% were from a state other than those surrounding the state of Tennessee, and 3.1% were from Georgia. Students were not asked to provide the names of the other state or country.
Focus Group Results

Quantitative Focus Group Data

Prior to conducting the focus groups, a straw poll was taken by participants to create a baseline. The same questions, as well as demographic questions, were then asked again following the conclusion of each focus group to measure the discussion’s impact.

Before the start of the focus groups, four participants indicated that they had visited GSMNP, and one participant indicated that they had not visited GSMNP. This data is shown in Figure 37.

Figure 37: Pre-Focus Group Poll 1
The one participant who indicated that they had not visited GSMNP was then asked their interest in visiting during the following 12 months. Figure 38 shows that the participant indicated that they were “somewhat interested” in visiting.

**Figure 38: Pre-Focus Group Poll 2**

![Pre-Focus Group Poll 2](chart1.png)

The one participant who had not visited GSMNP was then asked their interest in visiting during the following 12 months. Figure 38 shows that the participant indicated that they were “somewhat interested” in visiting.

However, following the conclusion of the focus groups, the visitation data changed to all five participants indicating that they had visited GSMNP (Figure 39). This change in answers was most likely due to either confusion about what the original question was asking, or the discussion sparked a memory of visiting in this one participant.

**Figure 39: Post-Focus Group Poll 1**

![Post-Focus Group Poll 1](chart2.png)
Participants were also asked their interest in getting involved with GSMNP at the beginning and end of the focus groups. See Figure 40 and Figure 41.

**Figure 40: Pre-Focus Group Poll 3**

![Pre-Focus Group Poll 3](chart1.png)

Base: all focus group participants (5)

As shown in Figure 40 and Figure 41, there was a change in interest following the discussion. In Figure 41, the distribution shifted forward with more participants indicating that they were “extremely interested” or “very interested” in getting involved with GSMNP.

**Figure 41: Post-Focus Group Poll 3**

![Post-Focus Group Poll 3](chart2.png)

Base: all focus group participants (5)
Qualitative Focus Group Data

The following section includes data from the two focus groups that was deemed the most useful and important. See Appendix 4 for the full bank of questions potentially asked during each focus group. See Appendix 9 and Appendix 10 for transcripts of focus group #1 and #2 respectively.

All focus group participants are referenced throughout this section. The following points detail the participant list for each focus group:

- Focus Group #1: Participant #1 and Participant #2
- Focus Group #2: Participant #3, Participant #4, and Participant #5

In both focus groups, participants were asked their perceptions of GSMNP. Participant #1 stated “...my perception of [GSMNP] is that it’s just like a big, super beautiful park that people wanna go for, like, their bucket list,” (Appendix 10, line 89-90). Participant #5 mentioned that every experience they have had in the park has been great, and that “the trails are always great, and the rangers are there if we need them.” Participant #5 also mentioned, “The roads are always good. They’re good about closing it if they don’t need to be open. I always have really good experiences with it,” (Appendix 11, line 88, 94, 96-97).

The 2016 fires were the only negative perception that was mentioned. Participant #3 stated, “...that’s like the only negative, but I don’t know if that’s a reflection on the park itself or just the idiots that caused it,” (Appendix 11, line 111-112). Therefore, based on the focus group population, the majority of perceptions about GSMNP were positive.

All participants were also asked about their motivations for visiting or not visiting GSMNP. Participant #1 indicated that they visited GSMNP when they were younger, and when asked their motivations on not visiting since, stated, “...I’m not from Knoxville, so I’m not close to it until like now in college, and then I never really think to kinda go that far away to like go hiking and things so that’s kinda my reasoning,” (Appendix 10, line 95m 97-98). This parallels data from the survey in which a correlation was found between visitation and state of permanent residence. Participant #1 also mentioned, “....I think the main reason I haven’t gone while I’ve been here is that I just don’t know a lot about it,” (Appendix 10, line 182-183).
Participant #2 then shared their motivations behind not visiting, “...’cause it’s a staycation if we go to the park,” (Appendix 10, line 100), and, “...with my family we’d rather go somewhere else,” (Appendix 10, line 105-106). Participant #2 went on to mention that their family was not “into like outdoorsy stuff,” (Appendix 10, line 126-127), but they had friends who were, although they did not have time to plan trips of 3-4 hours to GSMNP.

Participant #4, alternatively, mentioned that their family would visit often when they were younger, but then went on to state, “usually we just go around our area... for outdoor stuff,” (Appendix 11, line 124-126, 128). Being from just outside of Chattanooga, Participant #4 mentioned that they “have trails and stuff there, too, so I can go places there,” (Appendix 11, line 241, 243).

One of the reasons Participant #5 attended UTK was because it was close to GSMNP. Participant #5 explained, “...we came to the mountains, like, my family did when I was really young and we lived here, so I’ve just always loved coming to the Smokies. And so when I came to school here, that was one of the main reasons, that it was like close to that, a place where you can go and like be outdoors a lot. And so just any free weekend, that’s what I would go to,” (Appendix 11, line 31-34).

Participants in both focus groups were asked a follow up question about whether or not they visited GSMNP more while they were attending UTK. Participant #5 said, “For sure more now,” (Appendix 11, line 229) because they were originally from West Tennessee. Participant #3 said that they thought they went hiking more while attending UTK, even though they lived near GSMNP in Newport. Participant #3 attributed the increase in visitation to the people they met at UTK. Participant #4, on the other hand, stated, “I visit about the same amount because it’s just a drive and I don’t have gas money... And I’m always busy.... And usually if I’m off for the weekends, since I live just out of Chattanooga, I usually just go home,” (Appendix 11, line 233-234, 236, 238-239).

When asked what would motivate them to visit GSMNP more, Participant #1 stated, “...some sort of event would drag me up there....like music festivals are fun. Or even like something at night is always cool ‘cause it’s not something you would think for a National Park...” (Appendix
Participant #1 also mentioned going to see the fireflies, not knowing about the Synchronous Fireflies Mating Season event that takes place in GSMNP every summer. Participant #1 later suggested, “...if they did something with UT, and I was just like aware of what’s out there, I’d probably be more likely to go,” (Appendix 10, line 185-187).

Participant #2 mentioned that trips to GSMNP “can’t be spontaneous,” (Appendix 10, line 160) for them, but they would be interested in attending the firefly event. Participant #4 said that there was probably nothing that would get them to visit more, due to their schedule depending on school and interest level. Participant #5 echoed this point, mentioning, “...if I had a free-er schedule I would visit more,” (Appendix 11, line 310-311).

Participant #3 attributed tourists as the reason they did not visit as often; “I think the main thing that keeps me away from up there is just the amount of tourists that come in,” then went on to say, “...I would just go find somewhere else,” (Appendix 11, line 280-281, 285-286).

The research team was curious to determine where students got their information about GSMNP, so all participants were asked what resources they used when planning a visit. Participant #5 stated, “... I use this website. It’s called hikinginthesmokies.com and it has like every trail listed. You can do it by like what you wanna see, by difficulty, by how long it is,” (Appendix 11, line 164-166). Participant #5 was then asked some follow-up questions about their hiking preferences. When asked if there was a certain kind of trail they tried to look for, they said, “I am more of a view person, so I don’t really go on the ones-- like the historical ones… but I’ll do like the ones with a view or waterfalls if it’s been raining,” (Appendix 11, line 173-174, 176-177). When asked if they thought preferring to go on hikes with a view or waterfall was representative of college students in general, Participant #5 stated, “I think so,” (Appendix 11, 180).

Participant #3 used the AllTrails app when planning a visit (Appendix 11, line 186). Participant #3 also mentioned, “other than that, usually just kind of asking my dad, ‘cause he’s been to most of the trails up there,” (Appendix 11, line 189-190). On the other hand, Participant #4 just relied on searching the web, stating that, “Google’s my best friend,” (Appendix 11, line 213).
Participants in Focus Group #1 and #2 were asked what, in their opinion, GSMNP could do to reach college age students and get them engaged with the park. A few participants mentioned partnering with UTK in various ways. Participant #2 suggested partnering with Campus Events Board (CEB) to host or promote an event. Participant #3 mentioned that events would be a good way to attract UTK students who had been in school but may have not made their way up to the mountains because they did not know what to look for or what to do. Participant #3 thought that events could get students interested in what GSMNP has to offer. Participant #4 then added that “TRECS would probably do an event…” (Appendix 11, line 343), meaning that GSMNP could partner with UTK RecSports and the Tennessee Recreation Center for Students (TRECS) to hold an event for students. For events, or even general visits, Participant #2 proposed that GSMNP provide transportation for students. Participant #2 elaborated that transportation would be helpful “…especially for the people who don’t have cars or don’t feel like spending all that time with the gas money…” (Appendix 10, line 190-191).

Following with a similar concept, all participants were asked if they had ideas for GSMNP surrounding student involvement, not just engagement. Participant #1 mentioned opportunities surrounding environmental work, stating, “I care a lot about the environment, so I think anything that’s kinda of promoting that like, ‘Let’s take care of planet.’ Like anything-- like picking up litter, anything like that I think would be really interesting. Or even just like something educational, just about taking care of the environment, would be interesting. That’s what I would want to be a part of,” (Appendix 10, line 204-207).

When asked in what capacity they thought college students would be interested in getting involved with GSMNP, Participant #5 stated, “I think we would have to know, like, what needs need to be met,” and went on to say, “…so just, like, making that information, like, available…” (Appendix 11, line 358, 363-364). This insinuated that there was a lack of awareness of involvement needs and/or opportunities targeted towards students. Participant #3 mentioned partnering with fraternities and/or sororities for service opportunities because they had service hour requirements. Participant #4 added that GSMNP could partner with the UTK Honors and Scholars Program for their service requirements, as well. Participant #4 expanded further, mentioning that the Center for Leadership and Service had a newsletter for service opportunities in the community that GSMNP could utilize.
Both focus groups were asked what they thought the best channels were, in their opinion, to reach college students. Social media was mentioned by almost all participants. Participant #1 attributed social media as the place where they got a lot of their information. However, Participant #1 added that social media was valuable “as long as they updated it regularly,” and that GSMNP could use social media as a way to “remind people that it’s there, because, I think that might be their biggest problem, that we forget about it,” (Appendix 10, line 271-273). Participant #1 brought up the exposure recollection effect that social media posts and ads have, commenting, “.... you would even think like ‘Oh I forgot that was like in my backyard, let’s go,’” (Appendix 10, line 240-241). Participant #2 agreed with the use of social media, stating “... I don’t think they can say it any other way, ‘cause we don’t really watch local news...we really don’t do anything, unless we’re like scrolling through Facebook or Twitter or like Instagram and see like a picture of the park or see like an ad come up for the park. It would be like, ‘Oh that’s a cool thing that I want to do,’” (Appendix 10, line 233-234, 237-239). Participant #2 also elaborated on the effect of social media, mentioning, “If you see how pretty something is, you want to go there,” (Appendix 10, line 265).

Participant #1 mentioned utilizing YouTube videos as part of GSMNP’s social media strategy. Participant #1 explained, “...I like watching videos about places... so if they did like a short like docu-series about the park and like how it came to be and like what there is to do now. I think that would be interesting,” (Appendix 10, line 254-255, 257-258).

Different from social media, when asked about channels for reaching college students, Participant #4 stated that GSMNP could reach students through partnering with classes for extra credit opportunities to give students incentives to get involved. Participant #4 also asked whether GSMNP had a newsletter, and mentioned that if they had one, they could inform students about it. Participant #4 went on to generalize that because they had to check their email every day, other students were like that, too, meaning that a newsletter could be a good way to reach students.
Focus Group Population

The following charts present the demographic information from the focus groups. Due to the small population size, the focus group statistical data was not able to be properly compared against the survey population data. Also, due to the small population size, the figures are presented in frequencies instead of percentages.

Of the five focus group participants, as Figure 42 shows, three were 21-years-old, and the other two were 19 and 22, respectively.

Figure 42: Focus Group Population, Age

![Bar chart showing age distribution](chart.png)

Base: all focus group participants (5)

There was only one male who participated in the focus groups. The other four participants were female (Figure 43).

Figure 43: Focus Group Population, Gender Identity

![Bar chart showing gender identity distribution](chart.png)

Base: all focus group participants (5)
Four of the participants indicated that they were white, and one indicated that they were biracial. Figure 4 shows the lack of diversity within the focus group population, which parallels the lack of diversity in the survey population.

**Figure 44: Focus Group Population, Race/Ethnicity**

![Race/Ethnicity Bar Chart](image)

Base: all focus group participants (5)

Only one freshman participated in the focus groups, while two juniors and two seniors participated. Figure 45 shows that there was no “sophomore” or “undergraduate special” participants.

**Figure 45: Focus Group Population, Class Rank**

![Class Rank Bar Chart](image)

Base: all focus group participants (5)
There were four different colleges represented in the focus groups, with one participant belonging to two colleges. The distribution of colleges represented can be seen in Figure 46. The four colleges were the College of Arts and Sciences (1), the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences (2), the Haslam College of Business (1), and the Herbert College of Agriculture (2).

**Figure 46: Focus Group Population, College**

As illustrated in Figure 47, all participants were considered full-time students.

**Figure 47: Focus Group Population, Part-Time vs. Full-Time**
Figure 48 shows that three of the participants were employed part-time and two were unemployed. This distribution of employment is similar to that of the survey population.

**Figure 48: Focus Group Population, Employment Status**

![Bar chart showing employment status](image)

Base: all focus group participants (5)

Additionally, Figure 49 shows that all five participants considered Tennessee to be their state of permanent residence. However, two focus group participants indicated during the discussions that they were originally from different states. Therefore, there was confusion in the question asked, and would have been better presented as, “Where were you living before attending the University of Tennessee, Knoxville?” or “Where are you originally from?”

**Figure 49: Focus Group Population, State of Permanent Residence**

![Bar chart showing state of permanent residence](image)

Base: all focus group participants (5)
Marketing Strategy Applications

The following section summarizes the key study conclusions and suggests marketing strategy applications that could potentially be used by GSMNP or inspire other effective ideas.

The majority of survey respondents who had not visited GSMNP indicated that being outdoors was “somewhat important” or “very important.” From this data, the conclusion can be made that there is a market for new engagement with GSMNP. Additionally, the majority of survey respondents who had visited GSMNP indicated that being outdoors was “very important” or “somewhat important,” meaning that there is also a market for further engagement with GSMNP from those who have visited. These findings establish a target market within the study population.

Amongst the surveyed population, the activities with the highest levels of interest were hiking, picnicking, swimming, and camping, in that order. The activities with the least amount of interest were running, fishing, and horseback riding. As for those students who had visited GSMNP before, hiking, scenic auto touring, wildlife watching, and picnicking had the most engagement within the previous 12 months. In general, the majority of those who had engaged in the previous activities indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with enjoying that activity in GSMNP. Therefore, GSMNP should keep these findings in mind as the activities to and not to market to 18 to 25-year-olds who have or have not visited previously.

A large portion of those students who had not visited GSMNP in the previous 12 months or had only visited GSMNP once in the previous 12 months, attributed their lack of visitation to being “too busy.” When survey respondents were asked what would influence them to visit GSMNP, or visit more frequently, almost a quarter responded with more free time, a better schedule, and/or less work. The other top reasons for lack of visitation were having no one to go with, the weather not being good enough, GSMNP being too far away, and “no particular reason.” For the survey respondents who had not previously visited GSMNP, they indicated “no particular reason,” “not originally from here,” and “too busy” as the main influences for not visiting. Collectively, these are the main factors that may influence university students not to visit GSMNP or not to visit GSMNP frequently. Also, those who indicated “no particular reason”
might attribute their lack of visitation to GSMNP not being at the forefront of their mind. As mentioned in the first focus group, sometimes people forget that the park is there. Visitation ultimately leads to engagement; therefore, this is an area where GSMNP could make improvements to engage more persons 18-25. In their marketing to 18 to 25-year-olds, GSMNP could emphasize activities that do not take up a lot of time, suggest ways to find groups of like-minded people to visit with, target out-of-state students to visit “America’s Most Visited National Park,” and/or create motivation that gives students a reason to visit.

The survey data revealed that more respondents visited GSMNP with friends than family. As for those survey respondents who had not visited GSMNP, more knew of a friend(s) who had visited than a family member(s). Respondents also indicated that they were more likely to visit with their friend(s) who had previously visited than their family member(s). In advertising efforts, GSMNP should emphasize visiting the park with friends more than any other group to visit with.

While most survey respondents indicated that they had not previously been on a date in GSMNP with someone who they had met on a dating app, not quite half said that they would be willing to. Dating apps could be a potential advertising channel for GSMNP, as they are widely known to be popular with the 18-25 age group. GSMNP could suggest “cute date spots” in their advertisements.

When it comes to deciding which location in GSMNP, UTK students considered the characteristic of a hike (when hiking), pulled information from the internet, and/or took recommendations from others. GSMNP should use these influences to inspire their marketing strategy if they want to target university students. In an effort to combine all three decision influences, GSMNP could create an online, student led blog or blogging platform that details the characteristics of hikes and provides recommendations accordingly.

A large majority of survey respondents who had previously visited GSMNP indicated that they were very likely to recommend visiting GSMNP to others. The use of Word of Mouth (WOM) is a powerful marketing tool that GSMNP could use to attract non-visitors, infrequent visitors, and/or eventually more students to engage with the park. For those survey respondents who had not visited GSMNP, the vast majority indicated that they were interested in visiting. Therefore,
the market for visitation and engagement is there, GSMNP just needs to motivate those interested to actually visit. An idea that utilizes the power of WOM is employing (on a volunteer or incentive basis) social media influencers to share their positive experiences at GSMNP. For the UTK target market, these influencers could potentially be heavily followed students within the university who already visit or engage with the park.

Over half of all survey respondents recalled having seen promotions for GSMNP on social media, and nearly all of the focus group participants thought that the use of social media to reach UTK students was a good idea. One focus group participant even mentioned that they get a lot of their information from social media. Another mentioned that using ads on social media would be an effective way to remind university students that GSMNP is there. These findings point to the recommended use of social media in an effort to attract 18 to 25-year-olds, either through the use of influencers, hashtags, story takeovers, story features, advertisements, etc.

Survey respondents and focus group participants alike provided valuable ideas for ways to reach university students and/or motivate them to visit. The study population mentioned the following ideas: hosting events targeted toward college students, providing transportation to and from the park for college students who may not have a car or the money to pay for gas, partnering with various UTK departments or offices for trips or events, attracting various organizations for volunteer opportunities, collaborating with professors to offer academic incentives to students that could be fulfilled by engaging with GSMNP, informing students of the needs of the park which they can satisfy through involvement, and maintaining a newsletter targeted towards students.

Through the focus groups and survey free response questions, it was clear that there is a slight problem of awareness that is affecting visitation amongst the desired age group. Some participants and respondents indicated that they did not visit GSMNP because they did not know enough about the park and wished that there was more prevalent information readily available. One focus group participant mentioned that they did not know what the park needed in terms of involvement, and another survey respondent mentioned that they would like to see more availability of information on the park, trails, and programs that engage students and encourage them to visit. As for perceptions, focus group participants described GSMNP in a positive light,
but also attributed the park to a bucket list item, somewhere their parents took them when they were little, or a staycation that is less desirable than going somewhere else. GSMNP should work to increase awareness about the park and its offerings, as well as change the target market’s perceptions of the park from a bucket list check to more of a weekend/afternoon getaway.

The focus group discussions also revealed that GSMNP may have a problem differentiating themselves from closer or more convenient outdoor options, such as parks near UTK or options near students’ hometowns. One focus group participant stated that they never think to go as far away as the park to engage in outdoor activities. Another participant mentioned that they tend to visit home on weekends and will just engage in outdoor activities near their hometown. Therefore, GSMNP needs to emphasize their points-of-difference that would motivate students to visit GSMNP instead of choosing a more convenient option. A campaign idea could be to feature images of iconic GSMNP views with the tagline, “You can’t find this view anywhere else.” To attract UTK Volunteer fans, GSMNP could emphasize that the park is home to “The Rocky Top” and that it cannot be found anywhere else.

Some survey and focus group participants mentioned that they, themselves, were not “outdoorsy” or that they came from a family that was not “outdoorsy.” This group could be broken off into a second target market in order to work on changing the perception that all there is to do in GSMNP is “outdoorsy.” GSMNP offers numerous activities and events that could potentially appeal to this “non-outdoorsy” group. GSMNP needs to advertise and promote these events/activities in a way that is inclusive to this potential market.

Following the focus group discussions, the distribution of interest in getting involved with GSMNP shifted further towards “extremely interested” and “very interested.” Exposure to a conversation about GSMNP influenced focus group participants to become more interested in getting involved with GSMNP. GSMNP could take this finding and apply it to their marketing strategy by adding more exposure to target markets and sharing featured stories that the target market could relate to. The more the target market is exposed to GSMNP and feels a connection with it, the more they are interested in engaging and getting involved.
These marketing applications are solely suggestions for GSMNP and were made based on data collected without consideration of the cost of implementation. Additionally, these findings and applications should be interpreted and/or implemented with caution, as they may not be fully representative of the actual target population, and therefore, might not be effective to a certain degree.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to understand Generation Z’s current and potential engagement with Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP) by studying the motivations and perceptions of engagement with GSMNP among undergraduate students at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville for the 2018-2019 academic year. GSMNP was faced with the problem of lacking engagement among 18 to 25-year-olds who will eventually become the group that the park relies on for volunteering, conservation, fundraising, etc. The goal of this research was to study the target market of 18 to 25-year-olds, specifically looking at UTK undergraduate students for ease of data collection, in order to tailor marketing efforts in hopes of attracting the next generation to engage with GSMNP. Through quantitative and qualitative research methods, the research team worked to better understand the target market, flesh out tangible marketing applications backed by data, and answer the following research questions:

- What are the motivations and perceptions surrounding engagement with Great Smoky Mountains National Park amongst undergraduate students enrolled for the 2018-2019 school year at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville?
- What can Great Smoky Mountains National Park do to engage the next generation of visitors, volunteers, donors, fundraisers, and activists?

While this research is not fully comprehensive or completely representative of the target market, the findings are still valid and informative.
Expansion of Research

This research topic and its corresponding research questions could be expanded on a larger scale to gain more comprehensive and accurate findings. The following are some suggested ways in which this research could be expanded:

- Survey and focus group population could be expanded to include other secondary institutions within a certain radius of GSMNP, 18 to 25-year-olds who are not enrolled at a secondary institution, or 16 to 25-year-olds in general.

- A study could be built off of this research that observes changes of motivations and involvement overtime amongst different generations influenced by changing technology.
References

Appendix 1: UTK IRB Survey Approval Letter

December 13, 2018

Layla Marie Mosadegh  
UTK - Haslam College of Business - Marketing and Supply Chain Management  

Re: UTK IRB-18-04839-XM  
Study Title: University of Tennessee, Knoxville undergraduate student visitation patterns and perceptions of Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Dear Layla Marie Mosadegh:  

The Human Research Protections Program (HRPP) reviewed your application for the above referenced project and determined that your application is eligible for exempt review under 45 CFR 46.101. Category 2: Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior unless, the information is obtained in an identifiable manner and any disclosure of the subjects responses outside of research could reasonably place the subject at risk.

Your application has been determined to comply with proper consideration for the rights and welfare of human subjects and the regulatory requirements for the protection of human subjects. This letter constitutes full approval of your application (Version 1.2) as submitted, including:
Waiver of documentation of consent – will see consent cover statement at beginning of online survey  
Consent Form for GSMNP UTK Student Study - Version 1.1  
GSMNP End Survey-Export-12-3-2018 - Version 1.1  
Distribution Text - Version 1.0  
GSMNP UTK Student Study - IRB 12/3/18 - Version 1.1  
The above listed documents have been dated and stamped IRB approved 12/13/2018.
In the event that volunteers are to be recruited using solicitation materials, such as brochures, posters, web-based advertisements, etc., these materials must receive prior approval of the IRB.

Any alterations (revisions) in the protocol must be promptly submitted to and approved by the UTK Institutional Review Board prior to implementation of these revisions. You have individual responsibility for reporting to the Board in the event of unanticipated or serious adverse events and subject deaths.

Sincerely,

Colleen P. Gilrane, Ph.D.
Chair
Appendix 2: UTK IRB Focus Groups Approval Letter

February 26, 2019

Layla Marie Mosadegh
UTK - Haslam College of Business - Marketing and Supply Chain Management

Re: UTK IRB-19-05024-XM
Study Title: University of Tennessee, Knoxville undergraduate student visitation patterns and perceptions of Great Smoky Mountains National Park - Focus Groups

Dear Layla Marie Mosadegh:

The Human Research Protections Program (HRPP) reviewed your application for the above referenced project and determined that your application is eligible for exempt review under 45 CFR 46.101. Category 2.

Your application has been determined to comply with proper consideration for the rights and welfare of human subjects and the regulatory requirements for the protection of human subjects. This letter constitutes full approval of your application (Version 1.1) as submitted, including:
Focus Group Intro Script V2 - v1.1
Focus Group Recruitment Email-FINALv1.1
Focus Group Straw Poll v1.0
Focus Group Questionnaire v1.0
Focus Group Questions V3 v1.1
Letter of Consent v1.1

The above listed documents have been dated and stamped IRB approved 2.26.19

In the event that volunteers are to be recruited using solicitation materials, such as brochures, posters, web-based advertisements, etc., these materials must receive prior approval of the IRB.

Any alterations (revisions) in the protocol must be promptly submitted to and approved by the UTK

The Next Generation: Looking at UTK Students' Potential Future Engagement with GSMNP 67
Institutional Review Board prior to implementation of these revisions. You have individual responsibility for reporting to the Board in the event of unanticipated or serious adverse events and subject deaths.

Sincerely,

Colleen P. Gilrane, Ph.D.
Chair
Appendix 3: Copy of Survey

Informed Consent for GSMNP UTK Student Study

This anonymous survey is being independently conducted as part of an undergraduate thesis research project at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK). The purpose of this study is to gain insight into visitation patterns and perceptions of Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP) amongst undergraduate students at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. You do not need to have visited GSMNP to take the survey.

BENEFITS TO SOCIETY
The anticipated benefits to society are based on discovering motivations behind student visitation in GSMNP with the expectation of building a marketing campaign targeted towards increasing visitation in college undergraduate students surrounding the park. GSMNP could potentially use these findings and the sample marketing campaign to better target college undergraduate students in their future marketing efforts, resulting in a greater percentage of visitors in that category.

PARTICIPATION
It will take approximately 10 minutes to complete the series of questions. You must be 18 years or older AND an undergraduate student at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville to participate. You can decline to participate or end your participation at any time with no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

RISKS
The risks related to your participation in this study are no greater than those you would encounter in daily activities. However, if you feel uncomfortable answering any questions, you can withdraw from the survey at any point.

ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY
Your survey responses will be sent to a link at QuestionPro.com where data will be stored in a password protected electronic format. The survey features Respondent Anonymity Assurance (RAA) from QuestionPro and does not collect identifying information such as your name, email address, or IP address. Therefore, your responses will remain anonymous. No one will be able to identify you or your answers, and no one will know whether or not you participated in the study.

RANDOM DRAWING
By participating in this survey, you will be invited to enter into a random drawing for one of two $25 VolShop gift cards. If you do not fully complete the survey, you will still be invited to enter. If you do not wish to participate in the survey, but wish to enter into the drawing, please email Layla Mosadegh at lmosadeg@vols.utk.edu. Your participation in the drawing is completely voluntary and will not be connected to your survey responses. Survey responses will remain anonymous and all participation in the drawing will remain confidential. Participation in the drawing will not be published.
FOCUS GROUP INTEREST
By participating in this survey, you will also be asked your interest in participating in a focus group during the spring 2019 semester. More information will be sent to those who provide a valid email address. Indicating your interest in participating is completely voluntary and does not confirm your actual participation in a focus group. Your response to this question will not be connected to your survey responses. Your survey will remain anonymous and your participation will remain confidential. Interest in the focus group will not be published.

CONTACT
If you have questions, comments, or concerns at any time you may contact principal investigator and undergraduate student Layla Mosadeq by email at
imosadeq@vols.utk.edu. You may also contact the advisor on this undergraduate thesis research project, Dr. Melinda Micheletto at mjmicheletto@utk.edu. This research has been reviewed according to the University of Tennessee, Knoxville IRB procedures for research involving human subjects. If you have questions or concerns about your treatment in this research or your rights as a research participant, please contact the University of Tennessee IRB Compliance Officer at 865-974-7697 or utkirb@utk.edu.

Thank you very much for your time and support.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT
You may print a copy of this consent form for your records. Please select your survey participation choice below.

- Clicking on the “Agree” button below indicates that you agree to participate in this study and have read and understood the information presented. Your decision to participate or not participate is completely voluntary, and this certifies that you have decided to participate.

  - Agree
  - Disagree

- Are you 18 years or older?

  - Yes
  - No
**What is your current status at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville?**

- Undergraduate
- Graduate
- Other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important or unimportant to you is being outdoors?</th>
<th>Not At All Important</th>
<th>Slightly Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please indicate your level of interest in the following outdoor activities:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Backpacking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horseback Riding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnicking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running (including trail running)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic Auto Touring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife Watching</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are you currently involved in any outdoor or sustainability-related clubs or organizations? If yes, please indicate which clubs/organizations.

- No
- Yes

GSMNP UTK Student Study
Have you ever visited Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP)? If you cannot remember, please select “No.”

- Yes
- No

Did you ever visit GSMNP prior to attending the University of Tennessee, Knoxville?

- Yes
- No
- I cannot remember

Estimate how often you have visited GSMNP in the last 12 months.

- Once
- Twice
- 3-6 times
- 7 times or more
- I have not visited within the last 12 months

What reasons, if any, have influenced you to not visit GSMNP in the last 12 months? Select all that apply.

- Too far away
- Not originally from here
- Too busy
- Weather not good enough
- No transportation
- Can't afford it
- Family or personal issues
- I have no one to go with
- No particular reason
- Not interested
- I had a bad experience
- Other (please specify)
What reasons, if any, have influenced you to only visit GSMNP once in the last 12 months? Select all that apply.

- Too far away
- Not originally from here
- Too busy
- Weather not good enough
- No transportation
- Can't afford it
- Family or personal issues
- I have no one to go with
- No particular reason
- Not interested
- I had a bad experience
- Other (please specify)

Select the activities you have engaged in at GSMNP in the last 12 months. Select all that apply.

- Backpacking
- Bicycling
- Camping
- Fishing
- Hiking
- Horseback Riding
- Picnicking
- Running (including trail running)
- Scenic Auto Touring
- Swimming
- Wildlife Watching
- None of the above
- Other (please specify)
Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement(s):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree nor Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Please indicate with whom you have visited GSMNP in the last 12 months. Select all that apply.

- [ ] Friend(s)
- [ ] Family
- [ ] Fellow members of a club you belong to
- [ ] Boyfriend/Girlfriend
- [ ] Spouse
- [ ] Coworkers
- [ ] A Date
- [ ] By Myself/Solo
- [ ] Other (please specify)

Have you ever gone on a date in GSMNP with someone you met on a dating app (e.g. Tinder, Bumble, Hinge, etc.)?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

Would you ever go on a date in GSMNP with someone you met on a dating app (e.g. Tinder, Bumble, Hinge, etc.)?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

Have you ever visited a GSMNP visitor center?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] I do not know
Select the visitor center(s) you have visited in GSMNP.

- Cades Cove Visitor Center
- Oconaluftee Visitor Center
- Sugarlands Visitor Center
- Clingmans Dome Visitor Center

How often do you visit one of the four visitor centers within GSMNP.

- Every time I visit GSMNP
- Almost every time I visit GSMNP
- About half the time I visit GSMNP
- Less than half the time I visit GSMNP
- I rarely visit one of the GSMNP Visitor Centers
- I have never visited one of the GSMNP Visitor Centers
- I no longer visit GSMNP

Please indicate your likelihood to visit GSMNP during each of the following seasons:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Very Unlikely</th>
<th>Somewhat Unlikely</th>
<th>Neither Unlikely nor Likely</th>
<th>Somewhat Likely</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How do you decide which location in GSMNP to visit?
What, if anything, would influence you to visit GSMNP or visit more frequently?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How likely are you to recommend visiting GSMNP?</th>
<th>Very Unlikely</th>
<th>Somewhat Unlikely</th>
<th>Neither Unlikely nor Likely</th>
<th>Somewhat Likely</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What reasons, if any, have influenced you to not visit GSMNP? Select all that apply.

- [ ] Too far away
- [ ] Not originally from here
- [ ] Too busy
- [ ] Weather not good enough
- [ ] I don’t know where it is
- [ ] No transportation
- [ ] Can’t afford it
- [ ] Family or personal issues
- [ ] I have no one to go with
- [ ] No particular reason - I’ve just never been
- [ ] Not interested
- [ ] Other (please specify)

Are you interested in visiting GSMNP? Please explain why or why not.

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
Has a family member, that you know of, ever visited GSMNP?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

What is the likelihood that you will visit GSMNP with this family member?

- Very Unlikely
- Somewhat Unlikely
- Neither Unlikely nor Likely
- Somewhat Likely
- Very Likely

Has a friend, that you know of, ever visited GSMNP?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

What is the likelihood that you will visit GSMNP with this friend?

- Very Unlikely
- Somewhat Unlikely
- Neither Unlikely nor Likely
- Somewhat Likely
- Very Likely

Are you aware that GSMNP is free to visitors?

- Yes
- No
Please select all of the places where you have seen promotions for GSMNP.

- Social Media
- News
- School
- Internet (not social media)
- Billboards
- I cannot remember
- I have not seen promotions for GSMNP
- Other (please specify)

Do you follow GSMNP on any of the following social media platforms: Instagram (@greatsmokynps), Twitter (@GreatSmokyNPS), Facebook (@GreatSmokyMountainsNPS)?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

On which of the following social media platforms do you follow GSMNP? Select all that apply.

- Instagram (@greatsmokynps)
- Twitter (@GreatSmokyNPS)
- Facebook (@GreatSmokyMountainsNPS)

What is your age?

- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- 22
- 23
- 24 or older
What is your gender identity?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to answer
- Other (please specify)

How would you describe yourself? Select all that apply.

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
- White
- Prefer not to answer
- Other (please specify)

What year are you in college at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Undergraduate Special
- Other (please specify)
In what college at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville is your major?

- Herbert College of Agriculture
- Architecture and Design
- Arts and Sciences
- Haslam College of Business
- Communication and Information
- Education, Health, and Human Sciences
- Tickle College of Engineering
- Nursing
- Social Work
- Other (please specify)

Are you considered a part-time or full-time student at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville?

- Part-time (less than 12 hours a semester)
- Full-time (greater than 12 hours a semester)

What is your employment status?

- Employed – Full Time
- Employed – Part Time
- Unemployed

What is your state of permanent residence?

- Tennessee
- North Carolina
- South Carolina
- Georgia
- Virginia
- Kentucky
- Other State
- Other Country

GSMNP UTK Student Study
Have you filled out this survey before?

- Yes
- Not to my knowledge

Comments/Suggestions:

Please click the button below to submit your survey.

You will be taken to a page where you are invited to enter into a drawing for one of two $25 VolShop gift cards. You will also be asked if you are interested in participating in a focus group on the same subject.
Appendix 4: Focus Group Questions

Questions asked during the two focus groups were pulled from this question bank depending on the direction and flow of the discussion.

1. **What outdoor activities do you like to engage in and why?**
   a. How did you get into that activity?
   b. How important to you is doing that activity outdoors?
   c. If you do not like the outdoors, tell us why?

2. **Have you previously visited Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP)?**
   a. If yes, do you still visit.
      i. Tell us about your experiences in the park
      ii. What activities do you partake in within the park?
      iii. How did you find out what you could do in the park?
      iv. How did you decide where to go or find out where to go?
      v. It sounds like you’re outdoors a lot, is being outdoors important to you?
      vi. Have you found that you have been visiting GSMNP more now that you are a student at UTK?
      vii. Have you had any negative experiences in the park?
      viii. Have you visited with friends? How do you motivate them to visit?
   b. If no, tell us about your motivations behind not visiting GSMNP
      i. Is there anything that would get you to visit?

3. **Is there something that would encourage you to visit the park or visit more often?**
   a. Motivations?
   b. Is there something you could do to encourage others to visit the park or visit more often?

4. **The park is wanting to reach college age students and get them engaged and involved, what could they do to reach you or get you interested?**
   a. In what capacity would you be interested in getting involved, hypothetically speaking? (Examples: Trail maintenance, volunteering with visitor centers, getting involved with affiliated non-profits, etc.)
   b. What channels would you prefer them to reach you at?
   c. What could they do to engage you on social media?
   d. In what ways do you think they could better inform the public of activities at the park or ways to get involved?

5. **What is your favorite aspect of GSMNP?**
   a. If you haven’t visited, what are your initial thoughts on the park? What immediately comes to mind?
   b. What do you like about the park?
   c. How does GSMNP make you feel?

6. **Any final comments or questions about GSMNP or my research?**
Appendix 5: Free Response Answers to Survey Question 20

Responses to Question 20 on the survey have not been edited in any way, and, therefore, may contain typos and grammatical mistakes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q20 - How do you decide which location in GSMNP to visit? - Free Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time of year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It depends on the activity I am wishing to do - most of the time I look online and decide before planning my trip.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I usually let whoever I am going with decide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length/location of the hike etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use a trails app.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>looking online for new trails or suggestions from others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleanliness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I grew up here so I know everywhere to go such as hiking, camping, etc. I'll decide where to go based on what I want to do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services and proximity to Knoxville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My boyfriend picks the trails he wants to hike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I mostly go to the chimney tops if I go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whatever is popular and on my level for hiking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiking websites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Googling best hikes, looking at the hike lengths and the best time to complete those hikes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find trail online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually my friends decide by the length of the hike.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>word of mouth, past experiences, what looks fun online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I hear about different hikes that my friends/family enjoy so I go on those.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I plan out trips and look for areas i havent been to before. I consider trails’ altitude, grade, length and position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depends on the purpose/activity of my visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I heard from a friend which area was best to hike in.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Typically I will decide on where I'm going to visit based upon the time I have to spend before my responsibilities force me to come back to Knoxville. The longer I have, the more likely it is I will pack my backpacking bag for a 2-3 day backpacking trip along the AT. If I only have a day or a few hours I visit trails that are shorter in distance, but more difficult.

It depends on the distance and views of the trails that I'm looking at.

The views change depending on the season.

Whichever hike I'm interested in, or what I have time for.

Difficulty of hiking trail and the amount of other visitors that will be there.

There is a section that my family and I always go, so we go there often. Other than that, we like to explore different sections of GSMNP.

I almost always just go to Cade’s Cove.

Proximity to my residence, Busy or not.

My family decides.

I typically make my decision to go somewhere which I have not yet visited, so that I can experience the park in full, over time.

Weather, trail availability, ability of companions to handle trails.

Convenience to area I will be closest to.

Whichever is closest to me.

Based on traffic and what I want to do.

Research and familiarity.

I did not choose.

Google image searches.

trails that I can hike or the scenery.

Look up places on social media.

I let my friends decide.

We see which location one of us haven’t been to and go to that one. If we have gone to all of them, we pick our favorite.

It depends on what activity I'm planning on doing.

Who I'm going with, the weather, how much time I have to spend there.

It depends on what I am going to do.

I decide solely on how I'm feeling that day, how much time I have, who I'm with, and what the weather is like.

I decide based on the activity of interest and time available for the activity.

The views, the occupancy numbers and the cleanliness.
I have developed favorite locations over my childhood. I also take the traffic into consideration when deciding.

We drive around until we find what we think will be a good spot to hike. Sometimes we look for interesting sites beforehand.

**Recommendation**

**Asking friends**

Closeness in drive time, Difficulty depending on mood, I like seeing new parts

**Reviews or recommendations**

Talk to my friends or family and see what everyone is interested in

**Recommendations from friends**

I didn't decide. My family or club leaders chose.

I live closest the the Cades Cove area of the park so that is where I usually visit.

**Using online references and recommendations from fiends**

I decide based on the best hiking locations since hiking is my favorite thing to do in GSMNP.

I go to wherever I feel like going to, if that makes sense.

Based on what activity I will be doing. For hiking, I use the hiking in the smokies website to determine which hike to do.

I use a hiking guide that I own to find new places or I visit places that I have been going to for a long time.

Whether or not I’ve been there before. Also, I never really know “where” I’m going because I typically wander until I find a trail I like.

look up trail maps, how far away, traffic

**Ease of access, trail difficulty**

**Difficultly and whether they allow dogs**

Searched for best day hikes

**Friends or online recommendations**

Just drive until I find somewhere to park that looks appealing

By the amount of traffic I think I will run into. So for example, in the fall, I stay away from Cades Cove.

**hikes recommended by friends**

Whatever I am in the mood for that day - length of a hike, location, views, etc

I have always been invited by someone who has already planned the hike, so they have chosen the location.

I didn't really decide, just went where my parents told me to go.
Wherever my friends or family wants to go for that trip

I don’t?

the season

Wherever is closest to where I’m going

places I have not visited before

Depends on what we're going for

Scenery

I look the places up online before I go to see pictures/what there is to do there.

Ask friends or google new locations before I leave recommendations

Depends on which trails are open and who is with me

I just try to find places I have never explored or take a trip back to my favorite locations.

Look up trails

Recommendations from friends and family

I usually ride with my friends who are from Knoxville, so I go with whatever they think is best

By looking at the description and condition of various hikes along with the trail knowledge of my parents and neighbors back in Maryville.

By what I plan on doing (picnic, touring, etc.)

Based on estimates traffic/crowds, estimated driving time, and whether I’ve visited that location before or not

Closest

just depends on what the plans are for that day

I’m usually told where we’re going. It’s never my idea.

Distance and weather

I look for the best hiking trails or I look for trails that would seem like a good fit for me to hike and have fun.

Just whichever one might be least crowded during that time of year.

We normally visit cades cove or change it based on the activity we want to do

I either go where is recommended for best viewing of wildlife or best viewing of nature

I decide in advance how long/difficult I want the hike to be and base my decision off of that.

People told me where to go

personal recommendations, previous experiences, person(s) I am going with, how much time i have to spend in the park
Where I want to go on my next hike

I have an app called the outbound

Really just anything that catches my eye or sounds like something interesting or a new adventure.

The one that is closest in distance

Based on hiking trail options and the length of the drive to reach the location

Whatever we feel like

I have some favorite spots I go to often but I want to hike as many of the trails as I can so I try to just visit new places too.

google

I would look up the most popular tourist location online and then go to that place.

most of the time I visit Cades Cove because it bring back memories of my childhood going there with my grandparents

My parents usually pick the trail

I always go to Cade’s Cove

Based on weather and how many people are on the trails

Depending on the time of year and the amount I want to hike.

The place with a stream

I have a book of all the best locations and trails to hike and I’m using it as a checklist

Through driving or have visited before with family

closest or best views

Look at guide books and ask park rangers

I just go.

based on how long we want to hike, location, etc

Usually look up the best places to go online or ask a friend

Looking online

based off of how long the hike was

Online search and reviews. Or word of mouth

The amount of people who visit that area and/or what time of day it is.

I find a hike that I would like to do

We usually just drive towards the mountains and see where we wind up. If we want to plan a hike, then we look up trails online and determine which one fits our needs best by factors such as length and difficulty.
It solely depends on the activity I want to engage in.

My parents decided

depending on what I'm doing

google

We don't really decide where we are going until we get in the car and drive. Sometimes we just pick a place to go and other times we decide when we get there.

Research through hiking apps/personal recommendations from peers

I personally prefer Cades Cove and Elkmont.

I look up the difficulty and length of trails, and the weather for that day and then pick a suitable trail.

Trails or hikes I research and interested in. Usually something new each time.

I would choose to visit the location that is closest to me.

Water for fly fishing

Based on the difficulty of the trail

Google best hikes in smokies

I look for paths with the best views that are relatively short because we normally decide to go last minute.

I just heard Cade's cove was awesome so that is why I went there

Went to see the solar eclipse

how much time in the day we have or the activities we want to do

Whatever I'm in the mood for.

Base: those who have visited GSMNP (170)
Appendix 6: Free Response Answers to Survey Question 21

Responses to Question 21 on the survey have not been edited in any way, and, therefore, may contain typos and grammatical mistakes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q21 - What, if anything, would influence you to visit GSMNP or visit more frequently?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time of year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More free time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends and family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friends being interested in going with me or backpacking with me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trolley rides to the trails.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I go almost every weekend anyway, but its annoying to go during the summer because the main roads and cades cove are clogged with tourists. I would go more often in the summer if there weren't as many tourists in all my usual spots, but I don't mind it that much.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having more people to go with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A car with better gas mileage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing specifically, I’m not really an outdoorsy person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More time, If I knew about places to go swimming, canoeing, horseback riding, or anything other than hiking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I just dont have a lot of people to go with that also want to do the same thing as me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My accessibility to transportation, the weather being good, and being in shape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More free time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If it were closer to Knoxville I would visit more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If it was closer to my house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I was a part of an outdoor active group, or if I had more free time in the warmer months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More availability of information on the park/trails/programs that encourage students (or anyone for that matter) to go.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More free time and easy of access (having an on-campus car/bus/etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>having more time off, more money to spend</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If the weather was better, I would go more often.

If there were to ever be a commuter railway established between Knoxville and GSMNP/Gatlinburg/Pigeon Forge I would be on it at least twice a week. While it isn't particularly far (45-60 mins) the amount of travel time adds up.

If I had more friends that liked trail running.

Quicker reopening of trails.

Friends who wanted to go

Guided tours that observe and teach about the flora in the area

Nothing, I live there

Nothing, I just need more time available

I would visit more frequently if there were fewer tourists simply visiting to view the park from their automobile

Moving closer to the mountains to shorten the drive

Increased time to take trips.

Good weather

Knowing there’s less traffic

N/a

Nothing, I am not an outdoorsy person.

More internet information on the different locations

n/a

A better schedule and free time

More free time

If available, discount University of TN led visits to GSMNP during the Spring and Fall semesters

I wish it was closer to campus but I know that can't be changed.

More fully free days :)

Organized activities with a group

I don't need to be influenced, I just wish I had more time and lived closer! I love the Smoky Mountains!

I believe that less traffic on the way there along with better parking opportunities would lessen my debate of whether or not to go.

Better seclusive and animal friendly human structures such as garbage cans and picnic tables

closer proximity

time

I just wished that I lived closer to the park and that the the traffic would not be so heavy getting to the park.
I would visit more often if the trails were more clearly marked. I am used to the well marked trails in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, so I am somewhat afraid to hike by myself because the trail markings in GSMNP are confusing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>More free time from school.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taking less credit hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being less busy at work/school :)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistently nice weather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I had less schoolwork and more gas money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public restrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy, cheap transportation to GSMNP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having people to go with/ being allowed to drive there alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having more time to visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I planned better I could go more often.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If other people asked me to go to it with them more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I had more time to visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A more reachable list of all of the trails based on difficulty and placement that is online versus a book that I have to go all the way through to find good trails.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned, ranger-led flora and fauna hikes where they have specified areas to point out to us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>traffic, easier information on parking and good hiking trails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If friends were more interested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More info / easier navigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closer to me, more time in my schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People to go with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am currently not attending GSMNP as much as I used to due to unfriendly rangers who do not make me feel welcome in the park, so an improvement in that would be nice. Additionally, increased traffic control, or a way to get 'real-time'-ish traffic conditions (see Houston Transtar, <a href="https://traffic.houstontranstar.org/layers/">https://traffic.houstontranstar.org/layers/</a>) before leaving, would increase my likelihood of going up to the mountains. Also, more frequent nature walks with a ranger, or the Friends of the Smokies, that didn't begin at 8 am and last for 10 miles or so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my course load allowing me to go out on the weekends or not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having more time on my hands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being in an outdoor club/having more friends interested in going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>location away from campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$$$ and a ride bc I can’t drive. Maybe move the mountains closer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more access to water sights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I lived closer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More availability to go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing, I go as often as I can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If i knew more easy hiking trails. Having weekends with better weather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my mom loves the hiking there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I really enjoy the park when the leaves are changing color. I like that you don’t have a park fee, which makes it easy to enter the park. I’ll keep coming back no matter what changes are made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More free time and more friends that enjoy being in the mountains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a car here or more free time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better weather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If someone close to me were to want to go more often.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More spots for picknicking, easy walking trails, wading spots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will resume visiting GSMNP when he federal government opens up again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m sickened at the level of trash and waste tourists have left in the park while our rangers have been furloughed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If my friends/family went more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many people are there, the condition the park is in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having friends that would hike with me more and also having more time to hike.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If it was closer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would go more if I had more free time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I had more time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I had more free time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being in a group that goes and tells me what to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More free time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>if it was closer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More friends wanting to visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If i knew more things to do there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If they had more events at the park I would visit the park more frequently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>just having the time to be able to go. having alot of homework and labs i have to do takes up most of my time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If my friends were more enthusiastic about going and if I had more free time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanting to see the mountains or go in a picnic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a car with better gas mileage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More knowledge of events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more hiking paths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More people to go with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seeing more ads about it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time of year and how busy affect when I choose to go. If there would be designated time for ppl to go to cut down on traffic I would go more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less homework and more time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>if I had more free time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More people who wanted to go with me and more time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>having a car or transportation to get there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transportation incentives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictures of places people have gone or talking woth people about their experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I lived closer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I lived closer I would visit way more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I already visit very frequently, but I haven’t been since the government shut down. If the government opened back up, I would go again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If it was no longer free to enter I would go less. If you could camp anywhere I would go more. If you didn't have to make reservations and pay for back country camping I would go more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having more free time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>having more time off from school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time, an planned event there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More advertising for events occurring in the park all year. I don't really hear about things until after everything is said and done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I already visit fairly regularly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I had more time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More information on things to do such as what trails offer more ability to fish or camp or bike through.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe if my friends wanted to go more often? But really the only things holding me back right now are the weather and having to pay for gas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easier/faster routes to get there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good weather in the spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>someone to go with more often or more time during the day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good weather.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: those who have visited GSMNP (170)
Appendix 7: Free Response Answers to Survey Question 24

Responses to Question 24 on the survey have not been edited in any way, and, therefore, may contain typos and grammatical mistakes.

<p>| Q24 - Are you interested in visiting GSMNP? Please indicate why or why not. - YES |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| I enjoy the outdoors               |                                 |
| I like parks                       |                                 |
| I just feel like it’s something I should do since it’s a part of our state and a national park. |                                 |
| I’m interested in seeing the scenery |                                 |
| I like the outdoors.               |                                 |
| I like to see wildlife, so could be fun. |                                 |
| It has been a long time since I have visited |                                 |
| It sounds cool, and it is probably relatively close to campus |                                 |
| I like going out into nature and taking photographs. I also really like the mountains. |                                 |
| I’ve never been but I would like to if I could find the time |                                 |
| It seems like a good experience that I should try to have while I still can. |                                 |
| I’m from here and really have not been there |                                 |
| nice views                         |                                 |
| It’s one of the world’s most visited places |                                 |
| It looks like a lot of fun         |                                 |
| I enjoy exploring the outdoors and I would like to learn more about the nature of Tennessee. |                                 |
| Seems fun                          |                                 |
| It looks cool.                     |                                 |
| Could be cool, plus I like to travel |                                 |
| I enjoy the outdoors and love the mountains. |                                 |
| It seems really beautiful and I love the outdoors |                                 |
| Love to spend more time outdoors!  |                                 |
| Near                               |                                 |
| I want to see the great smoky mountains because I want to see this cool area in Tennessee. |                                 |
| just to say I’ve been              |                                 |
| I’ve heard and seen great things about the park. |                                 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I enjoy the outdoors.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I love being outside in nature and it’s so class to UT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One of the largest icons in America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i think it would be fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i love seeing outdoors- like overlooks, i love being outdoors, i love seeing pretty landscapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like nature and beautiful views.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I love being outdoors, and this is another place I would love to visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I love the mountains.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think it would be fun to take some time out of my busy schedule to go and see what all is available it do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People say it’s beautiful and there really isn’t a reason not to go.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not originally from Tennessee so it would be a really good experience to see</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I love national parks, and I don't know why I haven't been! I have to go this spring!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sounds great, I'm just only in Tennessee during school so I'm busy with classes and then home is Pennsylvania so I can't go on breaks or in summers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think it would be very cool to see. I'm from Minnesota and have never really seen mountains before.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do enjoy hiking and spending time in nature. I’d love to visit someday with my family or maybe some friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of how beautiful the trails are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve just never been there before and I love to try new things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seems fun and beautiful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have never been to a national park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it'd be fun, a new place to explore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s fun and beautiful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I love going to parks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is a great park right in our backyard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is in the area and would be a greta experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: those who have not visited GSMNP (55)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q24 - Are you interested in visiting GSMNP? Please indicate why or why not. - NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not interested and don’t have time right now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>what is there to do</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: those who have not visited GSMNP (55)
# Appendix 8: UTK Population By Age, Level, & Gender, Fall 2018

## Headcount Enrollment

### By Age, Level, and Gender

#### Fall 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>UNDERGRADUATE</th>
<th>GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28,894</td>
<td>14,042</td>
<td>14,852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 18</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>3,278</td>
<td>1,390</td>
<td>1,888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>4,768</td>
<td>2,223</td>
<td>2,545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>4,656</td>
<td>2,168</td>
<td>2,488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>4,556</td>
<td>2,163</td>
<td>2,393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>3,273</td>
<td>1,753</td>
<td>1,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>1,712</td>
<td>962</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>989</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>836</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>87</td>
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<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 - 45</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 - 50</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 - 64</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 AND OVER</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

UTK FACT BOOK 2018-19
## Headcount Enrollment

**By College, Level, Gender, and Race/Ethnicity**

**Fall 2018**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Undergraduate Total</th>
<th>Graduate/Professional Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Sciences</td>
<td>2,376</td>
<td>1,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication &amp; Information</td>
<td>661</td>
<td>495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, Health &amp; Human Sciences</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>1,599</td>
<td>1,177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tickle College of Engineering</td>
<td>1,210</td>
<td>881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University (Undeclared/Trans)</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>11,247</td>
<td>8,784</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Undergraduate Total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non Hispanic</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Race</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>132</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Graduate/Professional Total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non Hispanic</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Race</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>204</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>408</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 10: Focus Group #1 Transcript

1 Layla: We'll get started. This will go by a lot faster then with just two people, depending on how
talkative you are. Okay so well thank you both for agreeing to do this and showing up. I really
appreciate that. Um I'm Layla, again. Um and this is Josh. He's just co-facilitating and taking
notes. Um so this study is part of an independently conducted undergraduate thesis project and
I'm the principle investigator on that project. And before we begin, I want to go over some like
procedures and ground rules. Um the duration was intended to be 45 minutes, but it'll be
quicker than that. Um you may opt out to leave the study at any time. And um, we want both of
you to participate. *laughter* Since there's less it will be a little harder for you to just be quiet.
*laughter* Um there are no right or wrong answers and this is a safe speaking environment. Um
and it will be video recorded for the sole purpose of transcription and afterwards the video
recording will be erased, and your identities will be con- remain confidential. In the final report it
will just be indicated as Respondent A said this, Respondent B said this, and so on. Um and we
also ask that you keep each other's identities um confidential as well. *laughter* Are there any
questions before we begin?
*respondents shake their heads no*
Layla: Okay, then let's get started. Um, I'll start out with this question. What ac-outdoor
activities, if any, do you like to engage in, and why?
Participant #1: I like to go on long power walks when it's sunny outside *laughter* 'cause I'm
85 years old um *laughter* That's my main outdoor activity. I also like hiking. I like being in
nature. Anything to get me out of the house really.
Layla: Okay well how did you get into, like, power walking --
Participant #1: Power walking?
Layla: How did you find that as your thing?
Participant #1: When I was younger I used to jump on the trampoline all the time, and then I
turned some age and I was like and now I'm too old to jump on the trampoline *laughter* for like
exercise so I wanted something-- I don't like to run, but I wanted something aerobic and I don't
mind doing it for a longer period of time. So, yeah basically just as an alternative to running. I

don’t like it. *laughter*

Layla: Okay. And Participant #2, what about you?

Participant #2: For me, I um, I’ve done white water rafting and I love it, I just don’t go, like,

often because… money *laughter* Um I als-- I really do like hiking. I don’t do that that often

either, but those are I would say my main two. I do like doing ropes courses and everything. But

yeah.

Layla: Okay cool. How’d you get into, like, white water rafting, and--

Participant #2: Boredom. I was um *laughter* I was going with this whole entire camp thing

when I was a freshman in high school, and basically apparently white water rafting was optional,

but our person was like ‘Nah, every person has to do it.’ *laughter* So, he made is all sign up for

it and it was a blast. Like, I’ve gone white water rafting here in Tennessee on the Ocoee, in

Jamaica, and in Costa Rica.

Layla: Oh wow.

Participant #2: The best one is here in Tennessee, surprisingly.

Layla: Really?

Participant #2: Mhmm

Layla: I’ve done...

Participant #1: I--

Layla: …the Ocoee, so that makes me feel *laughter* feel better *laughter*

Participant #1: I have, too. It is really fun.

Participant #2: So much fun.

Participant #1: I went white water rafting with my friends and-- I went with like a youth group,

but I was on the raft with my friend John and his mom, *laughs* and his little brother was in

another raft and he fell out. *laughter*

Layla: oh no.
Participant #1: I know. And his mom was "laughter" just like in my raft, like 'Why aren't you saving your brother?' "laughter" 'He fell out!' She was panicking, it was really funny. "laughter"

Participant #1: It's the highlight of the whole trip. He was fine. They just pulled him back in. "laughter"

Layla: Oh good. Good. Didn't lose him. Yeah, white water rafting can be dangerous uh sometimes. Um, well, my next question is, kind of obviously, have you visited the Great Smoky Mountains National Park?

Participant #2: I did once when I was 5 years old

Participant #1: *coughs*

Participant #2: I did Cades Cove. Don't remember any of it.

Layla: Okay

Participant #2: I work at the hospital like right next to the park, too, where a lot-- "laughs"

Layla: Okay. Um, well let's see. Can you tell me about your perceptions of the park, then? Like what-- what you think about it, having not been in a long time, or what you've heard about it. That sort of thing.

Participant #2: So, perceptions from us, like right now at this age?

Layla: Yes

Participant #2: Okay. So I work at the hospital like right next to the park, too, where a lot-- So, I've seen like all the injuries that come in.

Layla: Mhmm

Participant #2: So, I still-- Like I still think it's a beautiful park and it's a treasure, but it's been interesting. There-- There's an Australian who came in, and we were really surprised that an Australian was all the way in Tennessee to see the park

"laughter"
Participant #2: Um, and there’s been other like incidences, but I’ve just-- but it’s because I work in the ER, so I see like the bad stuff. But I still think it’s like a great place. Um, I really like the initiative when they kept it open during the government shutdown, that they had that. And I also know that like that community got really close together after the fires and everything, so.

Layla: Mhmm

Participant #2: Tha-- Those are my main perceptions, sort of.

Layla: That is a unique perspective that you work at the hospital nearby.

Participant #2: Yeah

Layla: Um, Participant #1 what about you?

Participant #1: Uh, so I haven’t been in a while, but my mom went like last year with my grandparents because I think it was like on their bucket list to go, so I guess my perception of it is that it’s just like a big, super beautiful park that people wanna go for like their bucket list.

Layla: Yeah, like kinda check it off.

Participant #1: Yeah

Layla: Um, are there any motivations behind you all not visiting since you were little?

Participant #1: I mean I’m not from Knoxville...

Layla: mhmm

Participant #1: So I’m not close to it until like now in college, and then I never really think to kinda go that far away to like go hiking and things so that’s kinda my reasoning.

Layla: Okay

Participant #2: It’s-- I think it’s ‘cause it’s a staycation if we go to the park...

Layla: mhmm

Participant #2: ‘Cause-- ‘Cause I’m from here and we only went once when family came and visited us, but now we don’t really have family coming and visiting us anymore…

Layla: Yeah:
Participant #2: So, I’m just here chilling. Um, we, like with my family we’d rather go somewhere else, and like go to Florida or go to another-- another place where it might be warmer or something different for vacations.

Layla: Okay so weather, you would say weather is an important factor for you?

Participant #2: Weather, yeah, especially-- Again, so “laughs” um working at the hospital… In like December-ish it was super windy and there was a lot of people hiking. Did you hear about the freak accident where like a tree landed on someone?

Layla: Yeah

Participant #2: So, I was there when that person came in.

Layla: Really?

Participant #2: It was just a sad day.

Layla: Aww

Participant #2: So, yeah. It was a really sad day, so I heard-- so I think it’s-- weather’s a big factor.

Layla: Would you say based on your experiences with working at the hospital near the park that you maybe have a negative connotation err with the park?

Participant #2: I don’t think I have a negative connotation. I know the dangers that are associated...

Layla: yeah

Participant #2: …with it. But I still think it’s like a good thing to have here, with the park, like

Layla: okay

Participant #2: I will-- I would go there and visit, um, I-- My family’s just super not into like outdoorsy stuff.

Layla: mhmm
Participant #2: And then it’s also like I-- I do have a group of friends who’s into outdoorsy stuff, but we just don’t have the time to plan it or I’m always working or something like that, when we wanna spend like a good like 3 or 4 hours there.

Layla: Yeah

Participant #2: So, yeah.

Layla: Yeah. Well that-- that kinda leads me into my, um, my next question. Is there something that would encourage you or motivate you to visit--

Participant #2: Mhmm

Layla: actually to visit since you’ve been, when you were little?

Participant #1: I think like some sort of event would drag me up there. Like if it was something really cool. I don’t know *laughs*

Layla: Do you have any like specifics in mind?

Participant #1: Specific events?

Layla: Or what kind of events?

Participant #1: I mean, like, like music festivals are fun. Or even like something at night is always cool ‘cause it’s not something you would think for a National Park...

Layla: Mhmm

Participant #1: ...but then I feel like it’d be cool ‘cause I’m sure there’s like fireflies or like owls and things like that, that are interesting.

Layla: Well, funny enough, the Smoky Mountains is known for like being one of the three places in the world where um during firefly mating season they um synchronize. Like, millions of fireflies. Yeah.

Co-Facilitator: It’s in the summer every year.

Participant #1: That’s so cool!

Layla: Yeah. So that’s-- That could be something that you could look into.

Participant #1: Yeah, I should.
Layla: “laughs”

Participant #1: That’s so cool.

Participant #2: I think I would need to actually need to find a time to carve out to, like, plan to visit.

Layla: Mhmm

Participant #2: Um, can’t be spontaneous. Has to be, like, super ready. And I-- I would go during the firefly thing, ‘cause I know that’s super cool. Um, and then, I think that’s it. Yeah, fireflies. That would be really cool. And I know they have other like cool things that the Smoky Mountains is just known for. Like, the AT is up there, and everything like that, so.

Layla: Yeah. Would you go-- I don’t think there’s any white water rafting in the Smokies.

Co-Facilitator: There’s not.

Participant #2: No.

Layla: There’s not? Dang it.

“laughter”

Co-Facilitator: You can kind of do it. Like I’ve done it in a-- in a-- a kayak through the sinks, but it’s…

Layla: Not safe?

Co-Facilitator: very frowned upon.

“laughter”

Layla: Okay you’re not-- maybe not allowed to do that.

“laughter”

Layla: Um, well, so-- This is hypothetical. Say the park was wanting to reach college age students, and get them engaged, get them to visit the park, and get them involved. Um, what do you think they could do to reach out to get you interested in visiting or getting involved with the park?

Participant #1: I think maybe partnering with UT…
Participant #2: Mhmm

Participant #1: ...in some way. ‘Cause I think the main reason I haven’t gone while I’ve been here is that I just don’t know a lot about it.

Layla: Mhmm

Participant #1: So I feel like if there was— like we all get newsletters and things, so if they did something with UT, and I was just like aware of what’s out there, I’d probably be more likely to go.

Layla: That’s a good idea.

Participant #2: I would say like partnering with UT and then giving us like transportation up there, especially for the people who don’t have cars or don’t feel like spending all that time with the gas money or whatever.

Layla: Yeah

Participant #2: Um I think that would be helpful ‘cause it would have like company— it could be like a CEB [Campus Events Board] event in that they could promote and have them provide that.

Layla: Oh that’s true.

Participant #2: Mhmm

Participant #1: Yeah

Layla: Oh that’s true. That’s a good idea. Um, would you all, hypothetically be interested in getting involved and potentially— well not, not you all getting involved, but— In what ways do you think you or college students would be interested in getting involved with the park?

Participant #1: Like kind of working with them?

Layla: Yeah.

Participant #1: I care a lot about the environment, so I think anything that’s kinda of promoting that like, ‘Let’s take care of planet.’ Like anything— like picking up litter, anything like that I think
would be really interesting. Or even just like something educational, just about taking care of the environment, would be interesting. That’s what I would want to be a part of.

Layla: Okay

Participant #2: I think-- I don’t know if the forestry, wildlife uh people do that, but I know they have the thing called ‘Camp’ where they, basically during the fall, they’re just like out from 8 to 5 playing with animals or something. I don’t know if it’s at the park..

Layla: Really

Participant #2: Yeah it’s super cool.

Layla: I’m in the wrong major.

*laughter*

Participant #2: But it’s super cool. And they have a lot of fun and they enjoy it. But I don’t know if it’s-- and I feel like if we were able to go up there for like educational purposes... Or like a lot of people when they hear about Camp they’re like “I only want to do it for one day. I don’t want to do it for the whole entire like semester,” as someone does *laughs* …

Layla: Mhmm

Participant #2: that want to do it for one day or something like that.

Layla: okay, so maybe like a program that-- where they do what the forestry majors do, where anyone can do it...

Participant #2: Mhmm. Mhmm

Layla: ...that kind of thing.

Participant #2: Yeah.

Layla: That would be cool. Uh, So I know our generation is kind of big on social media. Do you think that would be a potential outlet for the Smoky Mountains to inform college students of events and ways to get involved with the park? Or do you think maybe it’s not a good idea for them to use social media?
Participant #1: I think it’s a great idea. ’Cause that’s where I get like most of my information.

*laughs*

Participant #2: And I don’t think they can say it any other way, ’cause we don’t really watch local news…

Layla: Mhmm

Participant #1: Yeah.

Participant #2: Um, we really don’t do anything, unless we’re like scrolling through Facebook or Twitter or like Instagram and see like a picture of the park or see like an ad come up for the park. It would be like, ‘Oh that’s a cool thing that I want to do’ or like--

Participant #1: Yeah, or you would even think like ‘Oh I forgot that was like in my backyard, let’s go.’

*laughter*

Participant #2: Yeah

Layla: Okay that— yeah— okay— good. *laughs* Um, so, besides social media, are there— do you think there are any other ways that the park could inform, um, students or people in general about activities that they have going on or just about what they have to offer at the park.

Participant #2: I know for older people, the um— the new— the like local news really does work well for them and they raised a lot of money through like the government shutdown with the local news broadcasting, but I don’t know of another way like other than social media for—

Participant #1: Yeah. My only thought would be YouTube, which you could argue is social media *laughs*

Participant #2: Yeah

Layla: Yeah

Participant #1: well maybe a different format of it. ’Cause yeah I like watching videos about places..

Layla: Okay
Participant #1: ...so if they did like a short like docu-series about the park and like how it came
to be and like what there is to do now. I think that would be interesting.

Layla: Okay well, besides that, are there any other ways you think they could use social media
specifically?

Participant #2: Mhmm

Layla: Um

Participant #2: I do like the docu-series. That's a good idea.

Participant #1: Yeah and like a YouTube thing.

Participant #2: If you see how pretty something is, you want to go there, more.

Participant #1: Mhmm

Participant #2: So

Layla: That's true.

Participant #1: Yeah

Layla: Very true.

Participant #1: Yeah, I think anything like on social, as long as they updated it regularly. Like
something to just, like, remind people that it's there. I think that might be their biggest problem,
that we forget about it. "laughs"

Layla: Yeah. I mean we're busy college students it's...

Participant #1: Exactly.

Layla: ...time is very limited.

Participant #1: Mhmm

Layla: Um, well that is-- well okay I have one last question. Um, this is kind of the-- like the first
or the second question I asked you all. What immediately comes to mind when you think of the
park?

Participant #1: Trees

Participant #2: A bear
Layla: Bear?

"laughter"

Participant #2: Mhmm

Layla: Okay. Anything else? Any associations?

Participant #2: It’s the Smokey Bear’s don’t-- don’t prevent-- like the prevent wildfires, remember that thing.

Participant #1: Yeah! Smokey the Bear!

Participant #2: Yeah I don’t know why...

Participant #1: Totally

Participant #2: ...but that’s the first thing that comes up to mind.

Participant #1: Yeah, that stuff comes to my mind, too. I think that, and just like lots of trees.

Layla: Mhmm

Participant #1: Just like a green-- a green landscape. That’s what I think of.

Participant #2: But I thou-- I think it’s ‘cause like in kindergarten I thought Smokey the Bear was associated with the Smoky Mountains, so that just always has been...

Layla: Yeah

Participant #2: ...the first thing that I think of.

Participant #1: Is it not?

Participant #2: I, like I thought it was a national thing, like...

Co-Facilitator: Yeah, it’s a national thing.

Participant #2: ...I thought it was a national thing.

Co-Facilitator & Layla: Yeah

Participant #1: Oh it’s a national-- but did--

Layla: It’s just named after our own place

Participant #1: Oh. Okay.
Co-Facilitator: It actually just kinda started because the campaigning was "Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires."

Participant #1: Uh huh

Co-Facilitator: And so smoke, forest fires...

Layla: Yeah

Co-Facilitator: ...bear.

Participant #1: Right.

*laughter*

Participant #1: Interesting

Layla: Well, I just learned something new.

*laughter*

Participant #1: I know, I thought it was like, this park thought of it or like *laughs* they just told other people *laughs*

Layla: That would have been cool. Claim to fame.

*laughter*

Participant #1: Right.

Layla: Um. Well, that is the end of my questions. Are there any final comments or questions that you have about this topic?

All Participants: *head shaking no*

Participant #1: How much is it to go to the park?

Layla: The Smoky Mountains is free. It is one of two free national parks.

Participant #1: Really? What's the other one?

Participant #2: What's the other free one?

Layla: I do not know. I just know that there are two that are *laughs* free.

*laughter*

Layla: Um, technically Mammoth Cave is free to get in to, but...
Participant #1: I've been there.
Layla: ...to get in the cave you have to pay for a tour.
Participant #1: Mmm I went to elementary school in Kentucky.
Layla: Oh really?
Participant #1: You went to Mammoth Cave like every year *laughs* That was like...
Layla: Field Trip
Participant #1: ...the one field trip
*Laughter*
Layla: But yeah, it's-- It's free.
Participant #1: Cool. How far away is it?
Layla: Depending on where you wanna go, it's about--
Participant #2: 45 minutes to an hour
Layla: Yeah and if you-- but the North Carolina side is like 2 hours.
Participant #1: Okay
Layla: Yeah.
Co-Facilitator: You can get there, though, within 30 minutes.
Participant #1: Okay
Co-Facilitator: Yeah
Layla: It depends on which dire-- like which way.
Participant #1: Right, 'cause it's like massive
Co-Facilitator: Right.
Layla: Back-- there's back roads and stuff.
Participant #1: Right.
Layla: Yeah.
Participant #1: Is that where people like hike on the Appalachian Trail? Is it--
Layla: Hmm. The Appalachian Trail goes through the Smoky Mountains.
Participant #1: Okay. Yeah. I guess that’s the other thing that comes to mind when I think of that. ’Cause I know like two people that hiked on it.

Layla: Really?

Participant #1: Yeah. Not all of it. *laughs* just-- one of them was my cousin who like gave up after a week.

*laughter*

Participant #2: One of the docs I work with at the hospital that’s close to the park…

Participant #1: Mhmm

Participant #2: ...He dropped out-- ah no he-- he did drop out-- he-- he either graduated early, or took his junior year off to hike the AT, as like a high school junior.

Layla: High-- In high school?

Participant #2: Mhmm

Participant #1: Oh my gosh.

Co-Facilitator: That’s-- Did he finish it?

Participant #2: He-- I think he did. Or--

Co-Facilitator: That’s really impressive.

Layla: That’s so cool.

Co-Facilitator: Yeah that’s really impressive.

Participant #2: Then he went back and graduated on time. And it’s-- But-- It’s awesome.

Layla: Wow.

Participant #2: Yeah.

Layla: Man I missed-- I-- I missed my prime.

*laughter*

Layla: I’m too late *laughs*

Participant #1: I think Professor Murphy, like the finance...
Participant #1: She-- She's done it. But she did it like split up. Like she...

Layla: Yeah. That's like--

Participant #1: just spent the weekends hiking different parts.

Layla: I've done all of almost all of the AT through the park.

Participant #1: Really?


Participant #1: Yeah. Cool.

Layla: But um, um--

Participant #1: Are you gonna do the whole thing?

Layla: Yeah. Ev-- No-- Eventually. I wan--

Participant #2: A bucket list thing?

Layla: It is a bucket list thing, but I don't know if I could be away from civilization for that long.

*laughter*

Participant #2: Yeah

Participant #1: Yeah. That's what happened to my cousin. That's what she--

Layla: I could do like a week at a time.

Participant #1: That's what she did for her honeymoon. Like a weekend. She was like 'I hate this'.

*laughter*

Participant #1: She's like ‘We should have gone to the beach.’

*laughter*

Layla: Well, if there's no more final comments or questions, um, I want to thank you all...

*laughs* for coming. Um, and I'll say that the purpose of this study is to gain insight into um undergrad students here at UT, their visitation and involvement motivations with the park um to hopefully share this information-- This isn't directly related to-- Like I'm not affiliated with the park.
Participant #2: Mhmm

Layla: I wanna share my findings with them. And I'm a marketing major, so kind of looking at the data that I find and finding applications for it in a marketing sense that the park can actually use. So, I'll give them some campaign ideas and stuff. But hopefully they can get more college students interested and…

Participant #1: Yeah

Layla: ...aware of the park and it's offerings.

Participant #2: Are they like-- is there not-- Are there not a lot of college students who basically go there, or--

Layla: Um, based on one survey that they-- visitation survey they've done, which it was-- it was just based on their perceptions of the visita-- like the visit, we-- our age group had the lowest representation.

Participant #2: Okay

Participant #1: Hmm. Okay.

Layla: So 18 to 24...

Participant #1: Yeah.

Layla: ...is the age group. And they-- I have a contact at the park and they-- I was talking with them and they said their goal is to get the next generation involved with the park, get them involved now so that they'll be involved for a long period of time…

Participant #1: Right

Layla: ... and keep it sustaining. So that's kind of the reason behind my research.

Participant #1: Okay.

Co-Facilitator: And I think a lot of it is 'cause of like the issues that you guys brought up of you're not from the Knoxville area, so like you haven't grown up in it. But like I grew up in Maryville, so I've like-- I-- Actually my dad taught me how to like walk in the Smokies. And so
like "laughs" I've done, like-- like Layla said, I've done nearly all of the trails up there as well, but that's just because, you know, we were born into it.

Participant #1: Yeah

Co-Facilitator: That everyone around the area who hasn't had that experience, uh missing out really "laughs"

*laughter*

Layla: So they could work on some awareness...

Participant #1: Yeah

Layla: ...campaigns. But um I do have one-- (directed at Josh) do you have the question--

Co-Facilitator: Yes.

Layla: One last thing for you all to fill out, then you are free to go.
Appendix 11: Focus Group #2 Transcript

Facilitator: Okay, so I just want to say thank you all so much for um showing up today. It really helps my research and everything, so I appreciate it. Um, again my name is Layla. Uh I’ll be moderating and Josh is over there taking notes. So this study is part of an independently conducted undergraduate thesis project and I’m the principle investigator. And I want to go over some procedures before we begin. Um, it’ll be-- It’ll probably last around 30 to 40 minutes, depending on how talkative you all are.

Participant #3: Okay

Facilitator: And um, you may opt out or leave the study at any time. And I wanna hear from everybody and I may call on you if you haven’t spoken in a while. And it-- that won’t be as much of a problem ‘cause there’s just three of you. There are no right or wrong answers and this-- this is a safe speaking environment. Um it is video recorded just for the purpose of transcribing the data at the end. Your identities will be kept confidential and in the final-- in my final report, you will be referred to as Respondent A, Respondent B, and so on. Um, and we also-- I also ask that you keep each other’s identities confidential and that nothing that we talk about leaves the room. Uh are there any questions or comments before we begin.

All: *shake heads no*

Facilitator: Okay. Awesome. So, I will jump right into my first question. So, what outdoor activities, if any, do you like to engage in, and why? Anyone want to start us off?

Participant #5: Um..

Participant #3: Go ahead

Participant #5: Oh Sorry *laughs*

Participant #3: No, go ahead. You’re good.

Participant #5: Um, I love to go hiking, so I mean I just love being outdoors. And then I guess also not just the Smoky Mountains, but also I love to play sports...

Facilitator: Mhmm

Participant #5: ....and generally just be outside.
Facilitator: What kind of sports?

Participant #5: Uh I grew up playing soccer and tennis, so mostly those, but then I've like played intramural flag football and like I play softball. That stuff, so really just whatever. *laughs*

Facilitator: And going back to hiking, like how did you get into hiking? How did you--

Participant #5: Um, so we came to the mountains, like, my family did when I was really young and we lived here, so I've just always loved coming to the Smokies. And so when I came to school here, that was one of the main reasons, that it was like close to that, a place where you can go and like be outdoors a lot. And so just any free weekend, that's what I would go to.

Facilitator: Okay. Cool. Fun. What about you Participant #3?

Participant #3: Um, pretty much any kind of-- any kind of sports really.

Facilitator: Mhmm

Participant #3: So soccer, basketball. Uh played a little bit of tennis growing up, but also hiking, kayaking. Grew up uh with four wheelers and dirt bikes so I grew up like pretty much at the foothills of the Smoky Mountains.

Facilitator: Mhmm

Participant #3: In Newport, Tennessee. Um, so growing up we had four wheelers, dirtbikes, and would go and ride those around. Um we have like a 50 acre farm...

Facilitator: ooh

Participant #3: So we’d ride those around hayfields, around ponds and whatnot so, a lot of that stuff, too. Um and then just recently got into kayaking. Not like whitewater.

Facilitator: Mhmm

Participant #3: But just kind of like slow stream where you paddle slow...

Facilitator: Yeah

Participant #3: And then there’s like parts where it actually will keep you going, that you don’t have to paddle for.

Facilitator: Yeah. Was there something that like sparked that interest?
Participant #3: The kayaking?
Facilitator: Yeah
Participant #3: Um, not really. I mean-- well my house is like 5 minutes from err like the river that we usually go on, and we-- we had been like tubing down it before. And then one Christmas, just asked for a kayak to start like getting into it. Well, one of my friends has a kayak, and that's how-- he kinda like introduced us to it.
Facilitator: Mhm
Participant #3: 'Cause he's like 'You all need to get kayaks so we can go.' And that-- so tha-- that kinda sparked it then, I guess.
Facilitator: Okay
Participant #3: My friend had one.
Facilitator: Yeah. Cool. Participant #4? What about you?
Participant #4: I just like, my mind totally blanked.
Facilitator: *laughs* it's all good.
Participant #4: Um, I do a lot of hiking and camping.
Facilitator: Okay
Participant #4: My family would always go when we were younger. I was like part of Pathfinders, which is kinda like…
Facilitator: Pathfinders? Is that a--
Participant #4: It's kinda like boyscout/girlscout except religious. *laughs*
Facilitator: Yeah.
Participant #4: So, I did that. And so we did a lot of outdoor stuff. Hiking. Camping. Kayaking, is really fun. Um Tubing. I live like really close to the Hiawassee…
Facilitator: Ooh
Participant #4: So we go there on the weekend.
Facilitator: Yeah
Participant #4: But tubing. That kind of stuff.

Facilitator: Mhmm. Um who would you say that you usually go hiking or camping with?

Participant #4: My family.

Facilitator: Okay. Family? Awesome. Well, that leads me kinda to my next question. Um, it’s about the Smoky Mountains. Have you all previously visited the Smoky Mountains?

Participant #4 & Participant #5: *Shake heads yes*

Participant #3: Yeah

Facilitator: Um can you tell me a little bit about your experiences in the park? Uh are they mostly good? Mos-- Are any- Any bad experiences?

Participant #5: I-- Every experience I’ve had has been great. Except I almost hit a bear with my car. A few times ago I was there. It was actually terrifying.

*laughter*

Participant #5: But it scared the bear as much as it scared me. But um other than like the occasional bear, like…

Facilitator: Yeah

Participant #5: ...the trails are always great, and the rangers are there if we need them.

Facilitator: Yeah

Participant #5: The roads are always good. They’re good about closing it if they don’t need to be open. I always have really good experiences with it.

Facilitator: And what-- what do you like to do at the park?

Participant #5: Hiking

Facilitator: Hiking mostly?


Facilitator: Okay. Okay. And Participant #3, what about you?
Participant #3: I mean, mostly good experiences. Except for the wildfires that happened a couple years ago. Which that didn’t like directly affect me...

Facilitator: Yeah

Participant #5: Yeah

Participant #3: ...but I have like friends and stuff that—like their grandparents live up in like Gatlinburg and kind of like the Cosby/Hartford area, the—were impacted by that.

Facilitator: Yeah

Participant #3: Um, so that’s like the only negative, but I don’t know if that’s a reflection on the park itself or just the idiots that caused it.

Facilitator: That started the fire. Yeah. Um--

Participant #3: But no, everything else is positive.

Facilitator: And what about like activities that you like to do in the park?

Participant #3: Um, my family and I have gone camping quite a bit of—like the state parks up there.

Facilitator: Mhmm

Participant #3: Um, and—so mainly camping, hiking. My dad and I go a lot up at like Mt. Leconte, up past Gatlinburg, um from like Newfound Gap.

Facilitator: Yeah

Participant #3: But uh mainly just hiking and camping in the Smoky Mountains.

Facilitator: Okay. Uh Participant #4. What about you?

Participant #4: They’ve been positive. I will say I’m probably the least, like, used to the Smoky Mountains, ’cause I’ve only been like a couple times. I have been, but usually we just go around our area...

Facilitator: Yeah

Participant #4: ...for outdoor stuff. So I think I— I have see little bears. That’s like the big thing for me.
Facilitator: That’s kind of surprising that you both, like, you’ve all seen bears in the park, ‘cause... *looks at Josh shaking his head* What?

Participant #3: I know if I have seen a bear, honestly.

Facilitator: Do you think that’s-- I feel like that’s surprising ‘cause

Participant #3: Yeah

Participant #4: Well, like one time I was in a-- I-- We stayed in a cabin up there with like my whole like side of my-- my family and everything. It was huge. So. But there was two baby bears and a momma bear just outside like the glass door, and we were like *leans back and makes a surprised face* okay. *laughs* This works.

Facilitator: Did you feel unsafe at all by them?

Participant #4: *shakes head no*

Facilitator: That’s good

Participant #4: We just thought they were cute.

Facilitator: Aww *laughs*

Participant #3: I think the only time I’ve seen the bears in Cades Cove...

Facilitator: Mhmm

Participant #3: ...but like--well I know I’ve like heard stories of them like roaming around Gatlinburg. But I’ve never ran into one like that. Or hit them with my car *gestures to Participant #5*

Participant #5: Oh my gosh

*laughter*

Participant #5: It was so close to my car *laughs*

Participant #4: My dad went there one time-- like they were up when I wasn’t able to go up as soon as they were...

Facilitator: Mhmm
Participant #4: ...and they went to Cades Cove and there was a bear that crossed like right in front of their truck and then looked at them as he got across the road he was like glaring at them.

“laughter”

Facilitator: That’s a little-- that’s a little intense.

“laughter”

Facilitator: I’d be-- I would be afraid of the bear. Um so where do you all kind of decide where to go in the park, where to visit? Like do you use any resources to figure out where to go hiking or camping?

Participant #5: Um, so I-- It depends on like who I’m going with or how long I have to hike. Um, but I use this website. It’s called hikinginthesmokies.com and it has like every trail listed. You can do it by like what you wanna see, by difficulty, by how long it is.

Facilitator: Mhm

Participant #5: I love like tables like that so it’s really helpful, but um I usually end up there. It has like a description of the trail, and like what to expect, how to get there, everything. It’s super helpful.


Participant #5: I am more of a view person, so I don’t really go on the ones-- like the historical ones...

Facilitator: Yeah

Participant #5: ... I don’t really do those, but I’ll do like the ones with a view or waterfalls if it’s been raining.

Facilitator: Would you say that’s pretty representative of what college students would want to go to?
Participant #5: I think so. *laughs* I picture like elderly people who are like the history buff like
going down the quiet walkways with the historical things, but *shrugs* I don’t know.

Facilitator: Anyone else-- what--

Participant #3: What was the question please?

Facilitator: Um *laughs* I asked where do you decide where to go in the park? Like how do you
decide?

Participant #3: Um, well from like a website that I use a lot. I use like the AllTrails app.

Facilitator: Mhmm

Participant #3: And then-- ’cause I use it for if we go like to like Roane State or like any other
state park. I’ll use it there, so I just use that one for the Smoky Mountains. Um, other than that,
usually just kind of asking my dad, ’cause he’s been to most of the trails up there. Or te-- having
him ask some of his buddies that hike religiously. Um. But other than that, just kinda trails I
haven’t done before. I got-- I-- I try not to do like the same ones over and over again you
know…

Facilitator: Yeah

Participant #3: ...like I just did Mt. Leconte for the first time this past year.

Facilitator: Really?

Participant #3: Yeah. Yeah.

Facilitator: How’d you like it?

Participant #3: It was-- I was honestly expecting harder ’cause I did-- I was expecting it to be
harder than it was because I did Mt. Cammerer, which is up in Cosby, like the week before…

Facilitator: Mhmm

Participant #3: ... and that one kicked my tail.

Facilitator: Yeah.
Participant #3: But then I did Leconte, and like its a long hike, but it wasn't as strenuous as
what I expected. Like well, just from what everybody says, like Mt. Leconte, even though it's like
the highest point in like the Smoky Mountains. But, no, it was fun. So--
Facilitator: And Participant #4, the few times that you have been, um, did you-- were you the
one who kind of decided where to go?
Participant #4: *shakes head yes* Mhmm sometimes.
Facilitator: And how did you--
Participant #4: Um I just Googled. I use like-- I would just find a website and I'm like oh trails in
the Smokies, or trails wherever I'm going, then I just look at them. My brother hikes more than I
do, so he knows a lot more trails than I do. Google's my best friend.
Facilitator: Yeah *laughs*
Participant #4: But, I don't like strenuous hikes. I went on a 7 mile hike one time and I'm not
doing that again.
Facilitator: *laughs*
Participant #4: It was 7 miles in and 7 miles out.
Facilitator: Ooohh that's a long one.
Participant #4: And I didn't have a toenail at the end of it.
Facilitator: Oh that's-- *sighs* I've been there. *laughs* Um. So, have you all found that s--
after coming to UT that you visit the park more than you did before?
Participant #5: *shakes head yes*
Facilitator: You-- You're saying yes?
Participant #5: Well, I'm from West Tennessee...
Facilitator: Oh okay.
Participant #5: ...so yes. *laughs*
Facilitator: Okay
Participant #5: For sure more now.
Facilitator: Definitely. Uh Participant #4, you were saying no?

Participant #4: No.

Facilitator: Wh--

Participant #4: I visit about the same amount because it’s just a drive and I don’t have gas money.

Facilitator: Mhmm

Participant #4: And I’m always busy, so.

Facilitator: Yeah.

Participant #4: And usually if I’m off for the weekends, since I live just out of Chattanooga, I usually just go home.

Facilitator: Okay

Participant #4: And we have trails and stuff there, too, so...

Facilitator: Mhmm

Participant #4: ...I can go places there.

Facilitator: Very true. And Participant #3, you live right there.

Participant #3: Well yeah. I think I’ve gone hiking more, though…

Facilitator: Okay

Participant #3: ...like since I’ve been in college, but, like, so I use-- I feel like I used to go to like Pigeon Forge/Gatlinburg kinda to do like the more touristy stuff growing up there. But, now I feel like I’ve made friends here at UT that hike more than like my old high school friends did.

Facilitator: Mhmm

Participant #3: So, we’ve ended up actually going like to Townsend and that whole area more often than not. Just like going through Maryville up that way…

Facilitator: Yeah

Participant #3: …’cause it’s just as close here as it was to where I lived prior.

Facilitator: Okay.
Participant #3: So--

Facilitator: And how did you meet those specific friends? Like-- did-- was it through some--

Participant #3: Well, I’m like really involved with the BCM on campus…

Facilitator: Mhmm

Participant #3: …and there’s a pretty diverse group that um in the-- for the-- uh the-- are also

involved there, and just like finding those people and getting groups together to go. Like, it’s

easier to find a-- a smaller group out of that big group to-- that all enjoys hiking than I guess just

like my normal high school friends that I know…

Facilitator: Yeah

Participant #3: …from playing sports, mostly.

Facilitator: Yeah.

Participant #3: So it’s just finding a different friend groups here though.

Facilitator: And would you say you looked for people who kind of…

Participant #3: Kind of. Yeah.

Facilitator: …likes to be outdoors and stuff?

Participant #3: Mhmm yeah.

Facilitator: Okay. Um. And then, my next question is-- is there something that would encourage

you or motivate you to visit the park more often? Participant #4, why don’t you start us off.

Participant #4: Um not really just because uh my schedule depends on school…

Facilitator: Mhmm

Participant #4: …and, like, interest, so…

Facilitator: Yeah

Participant #4: …probably not.

Facilitator: Okay
Participant #3: I think the main thing that keeps me away from up there is just the amount of tourists that come in. Which, being a local, like, any kind of like rod run weekend in Pigeon Forge, or something like that, where I knew I wouldn’t be able to get through Pigeon Forge to...

Facilitator: Mhmm

Participant #3: ...get up to like Gatlinburg, um, would keep me away from there even if it was like a beautiful weekend and I wanted to go hiking and I was like-- I would just go find somewhere else, not necessarily...

Facilitator: Yeah

Participant #3: ...in the Smokies. So just like the amount of people that visit it every year is kind of the one down-- like the downfall to it…

Facilitator: Yeah

Participant #3: ...I guess

Facilitator: I mean have you-- have you found some parts of the park that are, like, maybe more...

Participant #3: More exclusive?

Facilitator: ...populated or more exclusive?

Participant #3: Yeah

Facilitator: Yeah

Participant #3: I mean on the-- on like the Cosby end of it. So like you have one-- one end that goes up through Pigeon Forge and one end that goes through Cosby. Most people do go up through Pigeon Forge, but if you go up like the Cosby side, there’s a couple different like campgrounds on that end and some trails. But there’s-- I mean in my opinion, the best trails are like up above Gatlinburg, more on the Townsend side.

Facilitator: Mhmm

Participant #3: But, I mean I can-- I can get to the Cosby side or else it would be easy without the traffic flow and the back up.
Facilitator: Yeah, no. All the tourists.

Participant #3: Yeah

Facilitator: *laughs* … And Participant #5, do you have any-- anything that would encourage you to visit more?

Participant #5: Um, I don’t think so. It’s more of just my time *laughs* so if I had a free-er schedule I would visit more.

Facilitator: Okay. Yeah, I-- we all understand that. Um, so hypothetically say that the park is wanting to reach college age students like you all and get them engaged and involved with the park. What could they do to reach you all and get you interested or involved? Like, through what channels, maybe? Or in what ways would you prefer to get involved with the park, hypothetically?

Participant #5: Hmm that’s a good question.

Facilitator: Let’s talk about channels. How-- how could the park best reach college students, per say? In your opinion.

Participant #5: Probably social media.

Facilitator: Social Media.

Participant #4: Or extra credit in classes.

*laughter*

Participant #5: Yeah.

Facilitator: True.

*laughter*

Participant #4: Yeah, social media and extra credit. If you want to get people to go somewhere…

Facilitator: Mhmm

Participant #4: …just give them an-- an incentive.

Facilitator: Mhmm. Any--
Participant #3: I-- I was gonna say social media. Um, I can't think of anything specifically, but I guess just events, like put on events that would be in Gatlinburg or something to get them up there, 'cause I would say there's probably quite a few that-- quite a few people at UT that haven't gone to the Smoky Mountains because they could be from West Tennessee....

Facilitator: Mhmm

Participant #3: ...or whatnot. And if they haven't been here 1 or 2 years then they may not have made their way up there yet.

Facilitator: Yeah

Participant #3: May not know what to g-- what to look for or what to do. So, just to get new events that-- that way, I guess. Just to get them interested in what's up there.

Participant #4: TREC would probably do an event, maybe for that.

Participant #3: True

Participant #4: 'cause I know they have like-- or even like BCM has like that whi-- there's a wh- Participant #3: Yeah we do white water rafting every year.

Participant #4: white water rafting, like--

Participant #3: We do that on the Ocoee.

Participant #4: Yeah

Participant #3: But, doing a--

Participant #4: But you could do stuff, like a hiking trip like that, but make sure that it's like-- not like intense because that would scare people.

Participant #3: Yeah.

"laughter"

Facilitator: Yeah. Yeah. Um. And like in what capacity would you all say that college students would be interested in getting involved with the park? Like not just visiting, but um potentially getting involved.

Participant #5: I think we would have to know, like, what needs need to be met.
Facilitator: Mhmm

Participant #5: Like if you asked me right now, like what the park needs, I wouldn’t be able to tell you.

Facilitator: Mhmm

Participant #5: And so just, like, making that information, like, available, and making sure the ads say like, ‘Hey, we need this many people to come…

Facilitator: Yeah

Participant #5: …and do what-- clean up this trail.’ Or whatever.

Facilitator: Yeah

Participant #5: Just making that known, I guess.

Facilitator: Um, what about like, I guess, volunteering opportunities or trail maintenance? Do you think, in your opinion, would college students be open to that and to helping with that?

Participant #5: I think so.

Participant #3: I think if they reached out-- I know like a lot of fraternities, sororities, they do service projects and stuff. So if they targeted those specifically to reach out and like say ‘Here’s some hours opportunities. Like, have some of your people come help with whatever, then. I mean, they already have to do the hours, so.

Facilitator: Yeah

Participant #3: The ones that wanted to be in the mountains or like that kind of stuff end up being the ones that uh end up helping.

Facilitator: Very true. Yeah. Um--

Participant #4: The honors colleges--

Facilitator: Honors colleges?

Participant #4: The honors program, too, ‘cause I have like 5-- 5 hours each semester and when I go to Chancellor’s I’m gonna have like 20 hours or something like that, so.

Facilitator: I think it’s 25.
Participant #4: 20?
Facilitator: ...per year.
Participant #4: 25 Per year.
Facilitator: Yeah *laughs*
Participant #4: So, I know they-- in their newsletter they always say like what these
opportunities are. And the Center for Leadership [and Service] also has that.
Facilitator: So maybe partnering with them to get the word out about opportunities. That’s a
good idea. And um, kind of going off that, what do you-- what ways do you think the park could
better inform the public of activities, just like hiking, biking, um swimming, that kind of thing? Do
you think that-- how do you think that they could inform the public about that better-- like college
students about that?
Participant #4: Do they have a newsletter?
Facilitator: You know what, I do not know if they have a newsletter.
Participant #4: Maybe they do and then like-- actually like bring it up to them that they have a
newsletter.
Facilitator: Mhmm. So I guess they’re-- they’re trying to reach college students and um--
Participant #4: ‘Cause I have-- have to check my email every single day, like at least three
times…
Facilitator: Mhmm
Participant #4: ...so I think a lot of students are that way, too.
Facilitator: Okay.
Participant #5: Yeah. I was a newsletter, but then I was like, ‘Do they have one?’ They may
already have one.
Participant #4: That’s why I wasn’t sure *laughs*
Participant #5: But I have no idea, so yeah.
Facilitator: S-- So maybe awareness…
Facilitator: ...about the newsletter. That could be a campaign that they could work on. Um. And then I'll g-- go ahead and go to my last question, unless there’s anything else on that. Okay.

Um, what’s your favorite thing about the Smoky Mountains? Or what-- what comes to mind when you first think of the Smoky Mountains?

Participant #4: I want to say nature, but the first thing that came to my mind was Dolly Parton.

*laughs*

Facilitator: Dolly Parton *laughs*

Participant #4: But second, nature.

Facilitator: Nature.

Participant #5: Um, I just think of like some of the views that I’ve seen at the top of the mountains.

Facilitator: Like which ones specifically?

Participant #5: Charlie’s Bunion is the first one that came to my mind, ‘cause that was like the first one that I did really in the Smokies that had like a view like that. So that’s the first one I think of.

Facilitator: Mhmm. What about you Participant #3?

Participant #3: Hmm I mean mainly-- probably just camping, ‘cause my family has camped since I was little, so-- and we’ve camped everywhere up there.

Facilitator: Mhmm

Participant #3: Pretty much any campground that’s up there, probably-- at least been to uh once. So just uh memories of camping with my family growing up.

Facilitator: Do you have a favorite campground?

Participant #3: Um, probably-- it’s cal-- I don’t know if it’s still called this, uh at one point it was called Lazy Days in Townsend. Um and it was like one that has like no cable.

Facilitator: Mhmm
Participant #3: I think it has like electric and sewer, but like no cable, nothing really there except for there’s like the little river runs uh right behind it. And I remember, like my best memory from there is like um my dad would pile all of his kids up and take us up to-- there’s like a drop off point where like the River Rat and like the actual...


Participant #3: ...swimming companies will like drop you off up there. Uh we would just go to Walmart and buy our own tubes and then he would like take us up there and let us ride the river back down. And then we would just get out where our campground is. So he wouldn’t have to like...

Facilitator: Oh that’s smart.

Participant #3: ...yeah, so he wouldn’t have to like wait on us or whatever. But we ended up like once or twice every camping trip, and it was a lot of fun.

Facilitator: Awesome. Good-- good memories right there.

Participant #3: Mhmm

Facilitator: Um well are there any final comments or questions that you have about the Smoky Mountains or my research?

*silence*

Facilitator: Okay well, I’ll go into the kind of debrief I guess. Um, thank you again for participating and providing me with some quality data. Um, so the purpose of my study is to look at undergrad students here at UT, their visitation and involvement with the park. Um because the Smoky Mountains wants to-- and this is-- this is not affiliated with the Smoky Mountains, my research isn’t, um but I’m gonna give them my research when I’m finished with it. But they want to basically get the next generation of people involved in the park to keep the longevity uh of the park and get people like interested in it for the long run. Um, so that’s kind of what I’m looking at, and eventually the data that I’ve collected will-- I’ll take it and analyze it and create some marketing applications for them to potentially use. And so, that’s what my research is. And um I have one last thing for you all to do. If you could fill out this short questionnaire and then you are free to go.