
**Recreationists at the Coopers Rock State Forest:
A Survey of User Characteristics, Behaviors, and Attitudes**



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Recreation Plan for State Agency Managed Land at Coopers Rock State Forest

This plan has been assembled for the purpose of addressing the needs of recreation users at Coopers Rock State Forest (CRSF). West Virginia University researchers from the Division of Forestry and Natural Resources conducted a study of recreation users at CRSF in 2007. The findings of this study have allowed CRSF management to identify important recreational issues. This plan will serve as a vehicle for the managing agencies of CRSF to make use of in establishing potential objectives. The overarching goal of this study is to provide managers with research supported information that will better enable them to improve the recreation experience at CRSF while maintaining the ecological integrity of the area.

RECREATION MISSION STATEMENT:

“As caretakers of the forest, we strive to provide diverse forms of quality recreation without yielding the silvicultural practices of a multiple-use philosophy. It is our belief that recreational activities play an important role in maintaining a thriving forest that is the source of emotional, spiritual, and financial prosperity for the general community. The overriding goal of the managing agencies is to work in harmony with one another in order to maximize the recreational experience at Coopers Rock State Forest, while emphasizing a stewardship ethic that will not compromise the future of the forest.”

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I. Introduction

Coopers Rock State Forest is located just east of Morgantown, West Virginia, and consists of 12, 713 acres of state lands. The Forest is bisected by Interstate 68, with a North Sector and South Sector. Most of CRSF to the north of Interstate 68 is leased to the West Virginia University Division of Forestry and Natural Resources for research, teaching, and demonstration. The rest of the acreage at CRSF is managed by the WV Division of Forestry, with the WV Division of Natural Resources playing a significant role in the management of natural resources and recreational activities in the forest.

The tremendous views and easily accessible location of CRSF have resulted in it becoming a major tourist attraction. The Forest can be visited by travelers who are passing through the Morgantown area, and provides prime recreational opportunities for the entire region. Most of the Forest's existing recreational facilities date back to the late 1930s, when the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) built numerous structures in the Forest. These facilities include the rustic pavilions near the overlook area, built of durable American chestnut wood, as well as other historical sights such as the Henry Clay Iron Furnace. Because of these various shelters and structures that exist at CRSF, picnickers and campers have the ability to enjoy many recreational opportunities throughout the developed and undeveloped areas of the Forest. Hunting is a tradition that West Virginia prides itself on, and CRSF offers up most of its 12,000+ acres every year for that very purpose. Many diverse forms of rock climbing have become popular recreational activities on the grounds as well. A maze of enormous boulders and cliffs give climbing enthusiasts of all skill levels a chance to have an enjoyable experience.

In order to better understand the recreational users that occupy CRSF, the WV Division of Forestry requested that the Department of Recreation, Parks, & Tourism Resources at West Virginia University conduct a study of recreational use in the areas of the Forest that are managed by the WVDOF. The results of the study have identified many issues that will be addressed by the collaborating managing agencies in this recreation plan for the state agency managed lands of CRSF.

II. Research Methodology

Introduction to Methodology

There are many diverse types of recreational use that occur at Coopers Rock State Forest. Accordingly, many diverse and complicated management issues may arise if recreational objectives are not thoroughly discussed and studied prior to being executed by the managing agencies.

This recreational research study, conducted by West Virginia University (WVU), is meant to serve as a starting point for management to identify recreational issues. The research findings will also serve as baseline data for management so that they may observe potential changes to recreational trends over time. After the completion of the actual recreational user study, researchers from WVU assumed the role of facilitating dialogue between the managing agencies to develop practical objectives that will positively address recreational issues.

The objectives that are discussed in this original recreation plan for state agency managed lands at CRSF should be viewed as a solid foundation for management to address the recreation and tourism aspect of managing the Forest.

Research Surveying Methodology

The study in this plan employed three main surveying methods: (1) On-site surveys, (2) E-mail Rock Climbing surveys and (3) Mail-returned Hunting surveys. In order to understand which survey methods would be effective, it was necessary to know how to best obtain quality data from a diverse range of CRSF recreationists. The four main areas of focus for this recreation plan are: (1) Facilities Management, (2) Trails Management, (3) Rock Climbing Management, and (4) Hunting Management.

Facilities and Trails fall under the category of *Developed Recreation*. On-site surveying was deemed as the best method in understanding how the users of the facilities and the trails view the recreational opportunities of CRSF. *Rock Climbing* and *Hunting* fall under the category of *Dispersed Recreation*, since these recreationists are not typically concentrated in developed parts of the forest during their actual recreation experience.

Though on-site surveys were also used to survey the dispersed recreationists, alternative methods were used to obtain a sample of that population. E-mail Rock Climbing surveys were sent out to a random sample of about 250 clients of an outdoor recreation store in Morgantown who were likely recreationists at CRSF. Since it is ineffective to seek hunters using an on-site methodology, a mail-returned survey was utilized. A total of 340 mail-returned Hunting surveys were sent to hunters who have previously registered as successful hunters at CRSF.

On-site surveys were conducted at CRSF from September 4th – October 20th of 2006. This survey (Appendix C) consisted of 24 questions that were designed to understand the demographics and characteristics of the users, their opinions of the facilities, and how those views affect their overall satisfaction at CRSF. Questions relating to conflict and perceptions of crowding were used to further gauge their satisfaction. The interviewers for the on-site survey consisted of eight graduate and undergraduate students from the WVU Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Resources. The interviewers were trained by professional researchers and instructed on how to strictly ask the question on the survey and write down the exact answers, unless otherwise asked to clarify a question by the respondent. The survey was administered by the interviewers in face-to face encounters with a random respondent at predetermined areas on random days throughout the surveying time period.

In order to understand the locations and main areas of CRSF prior to selecting the surveying areas, a tour was given by a manager from the WV Division of Forestry to the WVU research leader. Since CRSF has such a diverse set of recreational users, it was important to obtain surveys from respondents that use all of the different developed recreational opportunities that are available. In order to accomplish this, interviewers were instructed to obtain a given number of surveys in a certain area on a day within a specific time slot to ensure that all of the areas and their main recreation points were sampled properly.

There were five main data collecting areas which consisted of popular recreation points within those areas at CRSF.

- A. Concession Stand Area
 - a) Overlook Area
 - b) Sunset Rocks Climbing Area
 - c) Picnic Loop Area #1 and #2
 - d) Shelter #3 Point
 - e) Rock City Climbing Area

- B. Ravens Rock Area
 - a) Ravens Rock Parking Lot
 - b) Ravens Rock Trail
 - c) Roadside Trail

- C. McCollum Campground Area

- D. Day Use Parking Area
 - a) Parking Lot
 - b) Scott's Run Trail

- E. Henry Clay Iron Furnace Area
 - a) Henry Clay Parking Area
 - b) Trail to Henry Clay Iron Furnace
 - c) Roof Rocks Climbing Area

Rock Climbing at Coopers Rock. Rock Climbing is a popular recreation activity at CRSF. Since climbing is a dispersed recreation activity, climbers are notoriously difficult to obtain interviews from while recreating on-site. In order to obtain the opinions of rock climbers, an e-mail survey was used, resulting in 23 completed surveys. The email addresses of the respondents were obtained by contacting a local outdoor recreation store in Morgantown. This local business is well known in the climbing community as an important source for climbing information in the region. The survey instrument (Appendix D) was designed slightly different for the e-mail version in order to better fit the concerns of climbing enthusiasts. However, the basic questions concerning demographics, crowding, conflict, and overall satisfaction were still the main focus of the survey.

Hunting at Coopers Rock. A study of CRSF hunters was conducted to better understand their use patterns and opinions. Hunting is a unique form of recreation, requiring a much different set of questions on the survey instrument (Appendix E). The only questions that remained consistent on all of the survey instruments were the questions concerning crowding, conflict, and demographics. The satisfaction questions on the mail-back survey were related only to hunting at CRSF.

A WV Division of Natural Resources (DNR) District 1 Wildlife Biologist provided an address database of hunters who had previously checked in game that had been harvested at CRSF. A total of 340 hunters' names/addresses were randomly drawn from this database. The respondents included residents from West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio, Virginia, Massachusetts, and Maine.

General Recreation Information: Focus Group Interviews.

Focus Groups were held in August and September 2006 at the Cheat Lake Fire Hall for any person in the general public who wished to express their comments and concerns with a recreation plan for CRSF. The focus groups were promoted with e-mails to known recreation users, as well as with fliers that were displayed at CRSF on all of the bulletin boards and any other place of relevance that could be seen by recreationists. The focus groups were open to anyone who wanted to discuss an issue related to the recreation plan for CRSF. The purpose of the focus groups was to identify key issues that the public had with the current management of CRSF and to take note of any suggestions they might have on what would be included in the plan.

Facilitation Methodology

A draft recreation plan was presented to the WV Division of Forestry in December 2006. This document was based entirely on the results of the recreation research conducted by WVU researchers. CRSF resource managers were able to systematically view the results of each area of recreation that was studied. Individual meetings were held between the research team and each respective managing agency to discuss the implications of the recreation study. After each agency had a chance to provide input on an individual basis, a collaborative meeting of all of the managing agencies was held in order to discuss the strategies that would be pursued in developing sound and reasonable objectives for recreation at CRSF.

III. DEVELOPED RECREATION STRATEGIES

A. Goals & Objectives of Facilities Management

The purpose of this section is to explain recreational facility objectives that address the issues and concerns of recreational users at Coopers Rock State Forest.

Goal # 1

Further enhance and develop the relationship between managing agencies and recreation users at Coopers Rock State Forest.

Discussion of Goal # 1

The survey comments section revealed that some recreation users feel that the agencies may not be effectively communicating to the public what is actually happening regarding the management of CRSF. The managing agencies would like to strengthen the relationships among the various stakeholders and user groups related to making recreational decisions. It is the intention of the managing agencies to set up, at the very least, an annual meeting that would be aimed at establishing long term solutions that could solve any shortcomings that may be experienced by recreation users in the Forest. Managers are currently working on a plan to form a committee that would evenly distribute public participation among the diverse types of recreation users that exist at CRSF.

Objectives

- Establish a recreation committee by the year 2009. The recreation committee should consist of members from the managing agencies (WVDOF, WVDNR Wildlife, & WVDNR Parks), WVU Division of Forestry and Natural Resources, and representatives from the local recreation community such as the Coopers Rock Foundation, rock climbers, hunters, mountain bikers, and hikers.
- Set ground rules for the recreation committee that would require that all members work within the current parameters of the multiple-use philosophy at CRSF.

Goal # 2

Sustain the primitive style pavilions and day-use facilities at Coopers Rock State Forest while providing the necessary maintenance to keep these facilities in good condition.

Discussion of Goal # 2

The primitive style facilities throughout the Forest will continue to be upheld into the future. Management understands that CRSF holds a great historical and cultural value to almost anyone who visits it. New signs that are needed in the forest will likely be made out of a plastic laminate material for durability. Management is also looking at possible volunteer programs that would assist staff in sustaining and improving the upkeep of facilities.

Objectives

- Establish a volunteer program for the summer of 2009 season so that CRSF staff will have more time and resources to focus on maintaining the facilities.
- All new signs should be consistent with existing rustic signs, and remain as close to a primitive style that plastic laminate material will allow for.
- Conduct an annual inventory of picnic tables, pavilions, and signs to ensure that all physical features of the recreation areas are in acceptable condition.

Goal # 3

Focus on better educating the visitors of Coopers Rock State Forest with more interpretive and informative signage around the entire Forest.

Discussion of Goal # 3

Providing accurate and consistent informational and interpretive signs is a critical objective to improving the overall recreational experience at CRSF. It is the goal of management to improve the signs that direct visitors to the main tourist attractions. Management is currently developing a relationship with interpretational specialists in the RPTR Program at WVU, who are working on developing affordable interpretive signs that are already being considered for use on the new Roadside Trail.

Objectives

- Place two interpretive signs on the Road Side Trail by the year 2009.
- Replace the interpretive sign at the Henry Clay Iron Furnace with a new and refurbished interpretive sign by the year 2010.
- Add one or two interpretive signs at the Henry Clay Iron Furnace by 2010 that provide visitors with a better idea of what went into making an iron furnace function during the 19th century.
- Place two interpretive signs around the Overlook area by the year 2010 that give visitors a perspective on the significance of the overlook.

Goal # 4

Work toward implementing required standards at Coopers Rock State Forest that will enable the facilities to be more handicap accessible.

Discussion of Goal # 4

Management would like to make the Forest's recreation sites more easily accessible. All recreational facilities will be monitored and evaluated in order to assure the public that everyone has access at CRSF. The managing agencies are looking toward the possibility of obtaining a viable funding source that would be used to accomplish this task. Results of the survey showed that a priority for this project should be at the Scenic Overlook. Management is also considering the long term feasibility of laying out a completely new route to the Henry Clay Iron Furnace in order to enable easier access and a more interpretive friendly trail.

Objectives

- Make additions and improvements to the trails and facilities around the Overlook and Concession Area during the next five years in order to ensure easy access for any person that visits CRSF.
- Inform visitors that CRSF is ADA Accessible by putting up ADA approved signs at conforming recreation areas in the Forest.

B. Goals and Objectives of Trails Management

The purpose of this section is to explain recreational trail objectives that address the issues and concerns of recreational users at Coopers Rock State Forest.

Goal # 5

Maximize the potential of the current trail system by developing and maintaining standards of the highest possible quality.

Discussion of Goal # 5

The overarching goal of this objective is to sustain quality standards for the official trails that are already in existence at CRSF. With the exception of the new Roadside Trail, most of the official trails have been developed from pre-existing roads or access routes. Many of these pre-existing routes have never received the proper initial treatment that would allow for quality maintenance to be sustained at an acceptable standard. Management is investigating the possibility of having a contractor rebuild the official trail system to an acceptable level.

Objectives

- Conduct a thorough trail inventory by 2009 that points out problem areas that need to be remedied in order to meet the trail standards set by the WVDOF.
- Bring all official trails to an acceptable minimum quality level by the year 2015.

Goal # 6

Develop a standardized trail head setup for every official trail which includes maps and mile markers of the trail, along with a bulletin board that will inform all users of the rules and regulations of the trail.

Discussion of Goal # 6

A standardized trail setup is necessary to inform recreationists of the rules and desired behaviors of recreationists. A bulletin board should display basic hunting information about when hunting seasons are in so that trail users will know that they should dress accordingly if they are using the trails. The boards may also provide timber harvesting information so that trail users will know which areas of the Forest have recently been harvested, as well as which areas may be harvested in the near future. Mile markers would be placed at the beginning and end of the trails. These markers would serve to better inform trail users that lack the necessary maps that indicate how long the trails are. If maps are to be placed at trail heads, they will likely be made out of a lasting material as to endure the elements and potential criminal activity. Paper maps inside of clear plastic will not be sufficient enough for this objective. Management is also looking to provide quality trail maps that can be available on the CRSF web site and at the concession stand during the recreation season.

Objectives

- Develop standardized bulletin boards at the major recreation sights by 2009.
- Develop a quality trail map that is made available for the public by 2010.
- Develop a link on the official CRSF website that gives recreation users detailed trail information.

Goal # 7

Work toward solving staffing issues by working with West Virginia University to establish a summer internship program for a Trails Coordinator.

Discussion of Goal # 7

Management is striving to provide a working internship for WVU by creating a trails coordinator position. This position would be overseen by DNR Parks during the summer months. Because of the small staff at CRSF, it is difficult to convey guidelines to volunteer groups that assist in trail maintenance activities. Management understands the importance of getting a diverse number of groups involved in performing volunteer trail maintenance, so they will advocate working together with numerous trail maintenance groups to inform them of the importance of proper trail maintenance. A qualified trail coordinator could facilitate the proper organization of a volunteer schedule.

Objectives

- Create an internship program with WVU for the summer of 2009 that would institute a trail coordinator position at CRSF. The job of this trail coordinator would be to organize volunteer workers throughout the summer.
- Obtain a funding source for the trail coordinator position by the summer of 2009.
- Solidify the summer internship program so that it can be reconstituted annually.

IV. DISPERSED RECREATION STRATEGIES

A. Goals & Objectives of Rock Climbing Management

The purpose of this section is to explain rock climbing objectives that address the issues and concerns of recreational users at Coopers Rock State Forest.

Goal # 8

Address the needs of the diverse climbing community by providing general climbing information at well known climbing areas.

Discussion of Goal # 8

The three primary climbing areas of CRSF (Sunset Rocks, Rock City, and Roof Rocks) are some of the most popular climbing spots in the entire region. There should be basic trails with directional signs that lead to the popular climbing areas in the Forest for those who may not be familiar with CRSF. Signs and trails leading to climbing areas should help prevent unofficial markings which destroy the haphazard appearance of trees that have been spray painted. There should also be kiosks on these trails. Signs on the kiosks should display general climbing guidelines and address potential liability concerns, while also serving as a place for climbers to sign in. Potential guidelines should discuss suggested maximum group sizes and climbing safety tips.

Objectives

- Provide a kiosk at each of the three main climbing areas by 2009 which contains climbing guidelines, potential liabilities of rock climbing, emergency information, and a sign in sheet.
- Develop and maintain official trails that lead to the three popular climbing areas at CRSF by 2010.
- Provide climbing information on the official CRSF website.
- Construct a parking lot near the Roof Rocks area in order to provide easy access for all recreation users.

Goal # 9

Use interpretive signage to educate climbers on the different species that are unique to Coopers Rock State Forest.

Discussion of Goal #9

It is important that managers thoroughly understand the current threatened species situation at CRSF. Management will then plan to inform the climbing community through interpretive signage on federally threatened species that are unique to the cliffs at CRSF, such as the *Triodopsis platysayoides* (Flat-Spired Three Toothed Snail). These interpretive signs would serve as to elaborate on the various species that can be found at CRSF.

Objectives

- Place one interpretive sign at each of the three main climbing areas which conveys the importance of protecting endangered species.
- Continue monitoring all federally threatened species of concern so that managing agencies will have consistent and reliable information when making sensitive decisions that could potentially affect the ecosystem at CRSF.
- Develop strategies for bouldering at CRSF that will minimize the impact on snail habitats, and inform the climbing community on how to avoid negative impacts (i.e. - don't clean away leaf litter from the base of rocks).

B. Goals & Objectives for Hunting Management

The purpose of this section is to establish hunting and trapping objectives that address the issues and concerns of recreational users at Coopers Rock State Forest.

Goal # 10

Conserve and manage wildlife populations and their associated habitats for a wide array of game and non-game species to provide for a diversity of outdoor experiences for all recreation users.

Discussion of Goal #10

Management recognizes that sustaining a diversity of wildlife habitats is the key to meeting the above goal. Wildlife species associated with early successional habitats (i.e. sapling forests) have declined significantly over the past decades due to the lack of an active forest management program. Subsequently, habitat quality for various wildlife species (i.e. ruffed grouse) has declined. The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources will work closely with the WV Division of Forestry in providing input and recommendations pertaining to future timber sales and forest treatments.

Objectives

- Forest management activities will be instituted that will create various forest age classes within the forest. In addition, wildlife enhancement activities such as savannah and forest opening developments will be recommended in conjunction with future timber sales to create additional habitat diversity on the Forest.
- Continue monitoring and surveying work that is related to rare, threatened, and endangered species, in order to assure the public that management activities and recreational uses at CRSF do not negatively impact these populations.
- Continue with on-going wildlife management activities on the Forest.

Goal # 11

Regulate wildlife populations for hunting, trapping, fishing, and non-consumptive recreational opportunities that are compatible with habitat conditions.

Discussion of Goal #11

The WV Department of Natural Resources will continue monitoring efforts to evaluate hunting regulations and wildlife populations at CRSF. In addition, the DNR will continue with the older age deer management program at CRSF which provides for a unique hunting experience.

Objectives

- Continue wildlife population monitoring efforts such as evaluating harvest data and surveying deer populations in order to assure that hunting and trapping regulations are implemented at CRSF, which are based upon sound scientific evidence.
- Promote the older-age deer management program at the CRSF and continue to monitor deer harvests and public opinion relating to the antler restriction regulations.

Goal # 12

Improve information dissemination pertaining to the hunting and trapping season and regulations to the various recreation users at the Coopers Rock State Forest.

Discussion of Goal #12

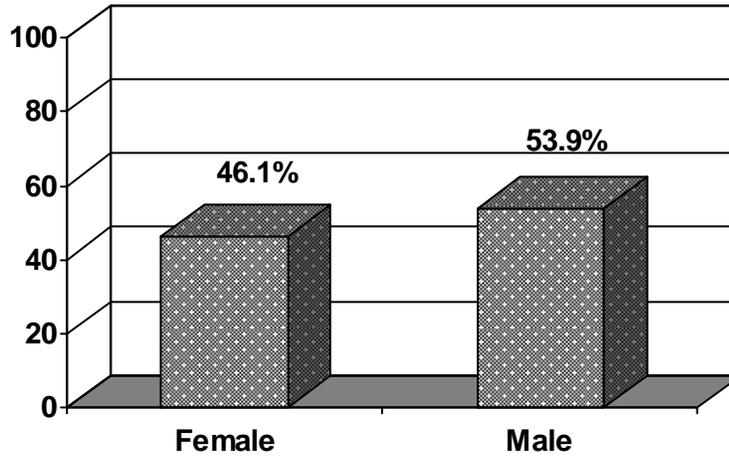
Management will increase public informational efforts in order to promote and facilitate recreational opportunities and management of the forest. It is management's goal to post sufficient signage that will educate the public about the hunting and trapping season, along with specific regulations that will aid in minimizing user group conflicts. It is also management's goal to delineate and mark the CRSF boundary in order to eliminate potential conflicts between CRSF recreation users and adjacent property owners.

Objectives

- Utilize G.I.S. by delineating and marking the CRSF boundary by 2010.
- Develop a quality CRSF map/brochure that identifies important recreational opportunities and topographic features by the year 2010.
- Numerous informational boards have already been constructed and erected at the various trailheads throughout the CRSF. Management will continue to evaluate the need for additional information boards and put them up as needed. The boards will contain information pertaining to the hunting and trapping season, along with special regulations (i.e. antler restrictions) relating to CRSF.
- Management agencies will upgrade public information pertaining to CRSF via various avenues such as websites and publications.

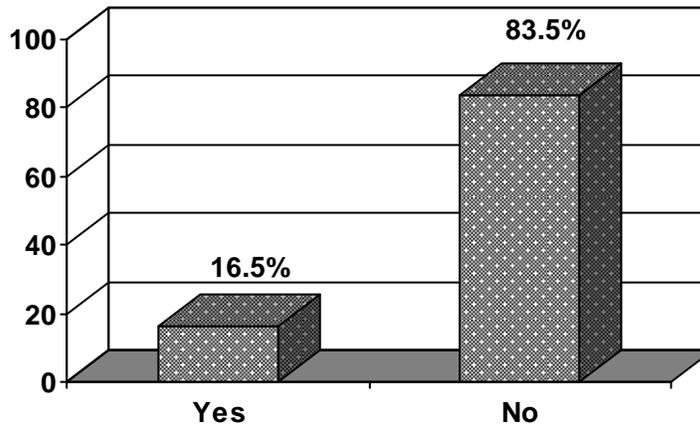
Appendix A (Survey Results)

What is your gender?



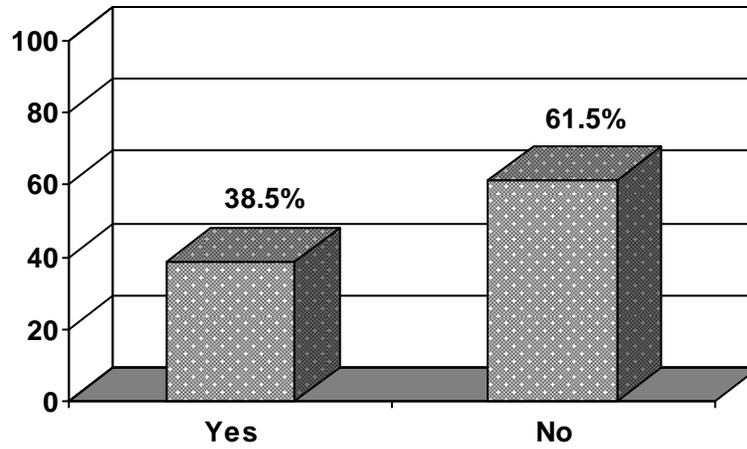
- Slightly over half of the on-site interviews at Coopers Rock were conducted with Male respondents (54%).
- n = 115.

Is this your first visit to Coopers Rock?



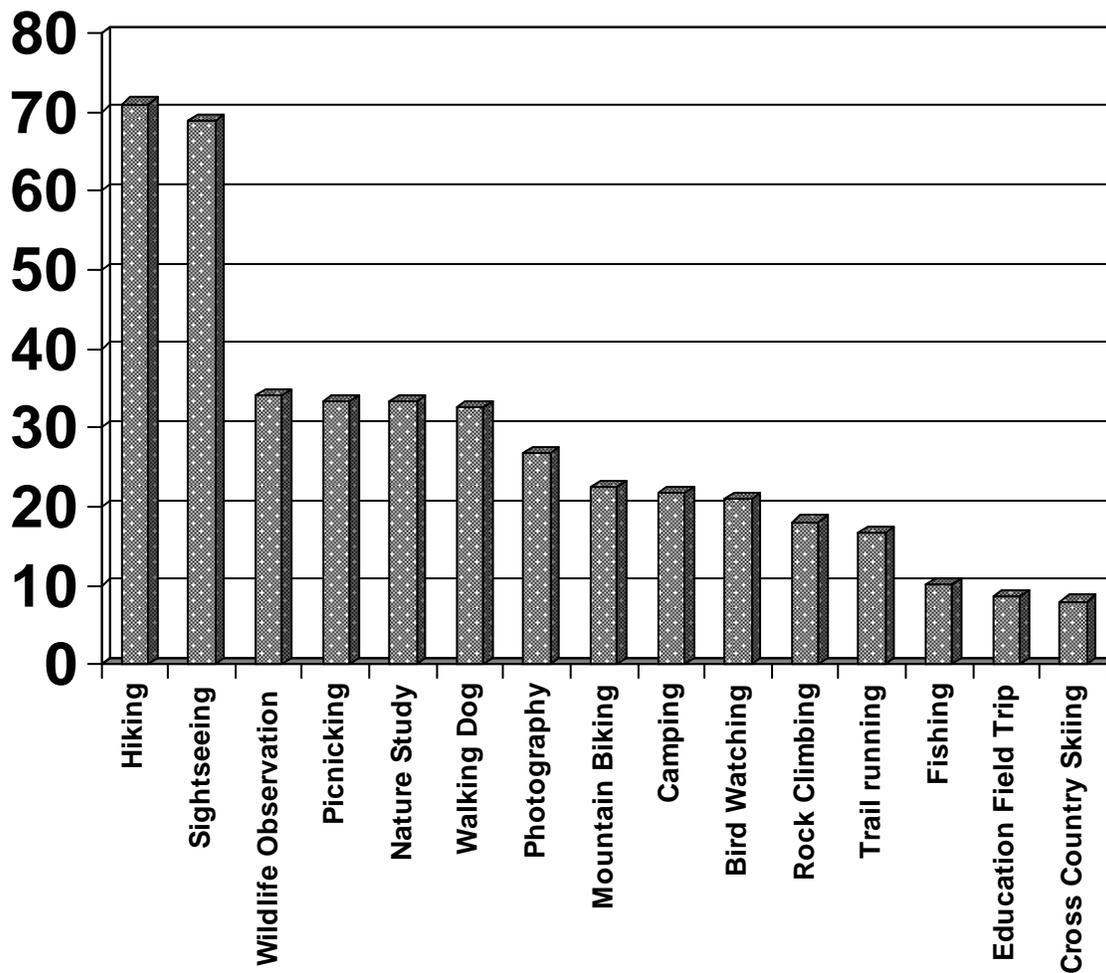
- The vast majority of respondents were repeat visitors, with just 16% of respondents being first time visitors to Coopers Rock.
- n = 115.

Do you recreate as often as you would like at Coopers Rock?



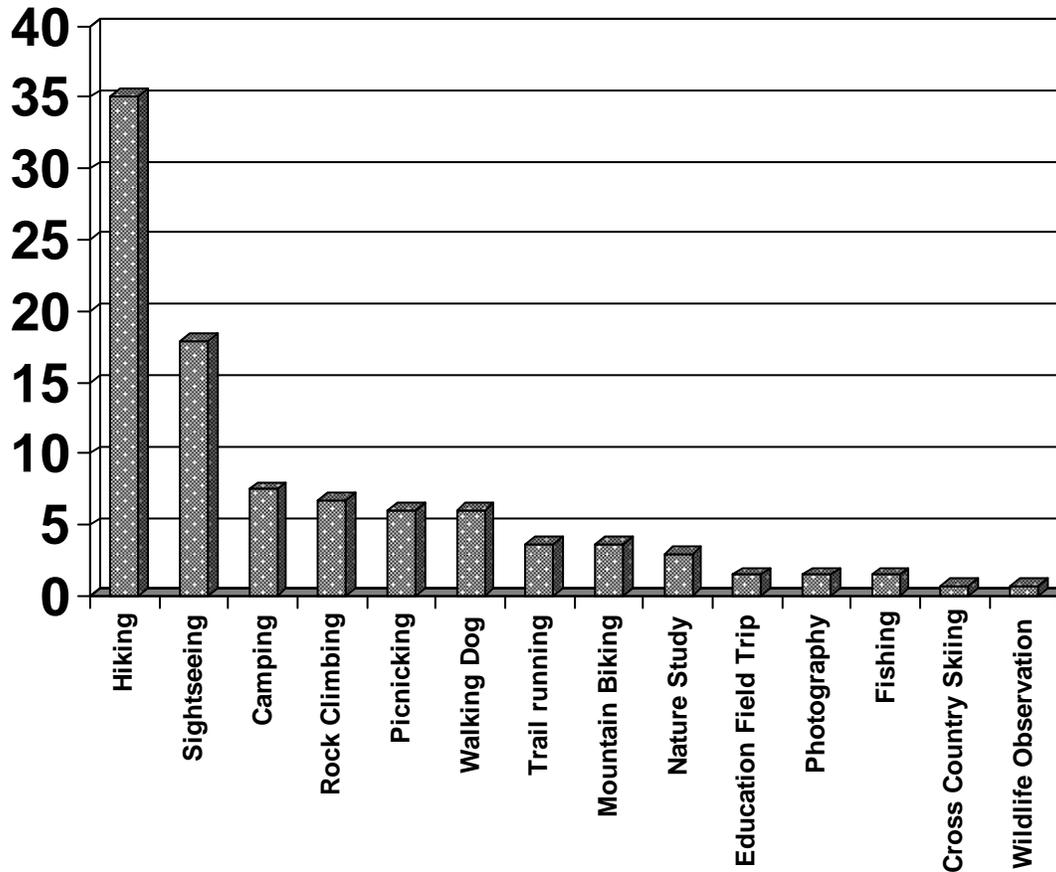
- Nearly two-thirds of the respondents (62%) reported they were not able to recreate at Coopers Rock as often as they would like.
- n = 122.

Which activities have you participated in at Coopers Rock this year?



- Hiking (71%) and Sightseeing (69%) were the two most popular activities among respondents who participated in the on-site survey.
- Horseback riding, hunting, scouting for hunting, snow shoeing, geo-caching, mushroom/berry gathering, and trail blazing were all activities that were participated in by less than 6% of the on-site survey respondents.
- n = 115.

What is your primary activity at Coopers Rock?

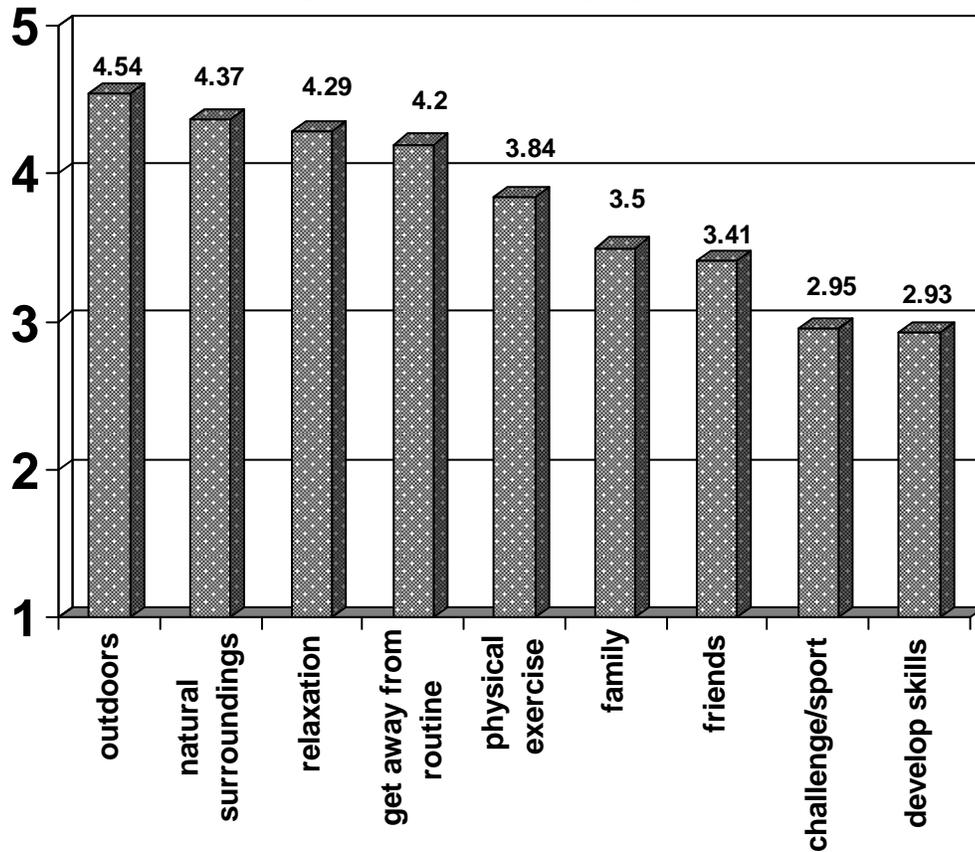


- The number one primary activity among the respondents was hiking (35%).
- Sightseeing was the second most popular primary activity (18%).
- Exercising/walking dog, camping, picnicking, and rock climbing were mentioned by the respondents as primary activities for recreation users (between 6% - 8% each).
- n = 115.

How important are the following reasons as to why you may recreate at CRSF?

Importance of experience	Mean
To be outdoors	4.54
To experience natural surroundings	4.37
To relax	4.29
To get away from routine	4.20
For physical exercises	3.84
For family recreation	3.50
To be with friends	3.41
For challenge/sport	2.95
To develop my skills	2.93

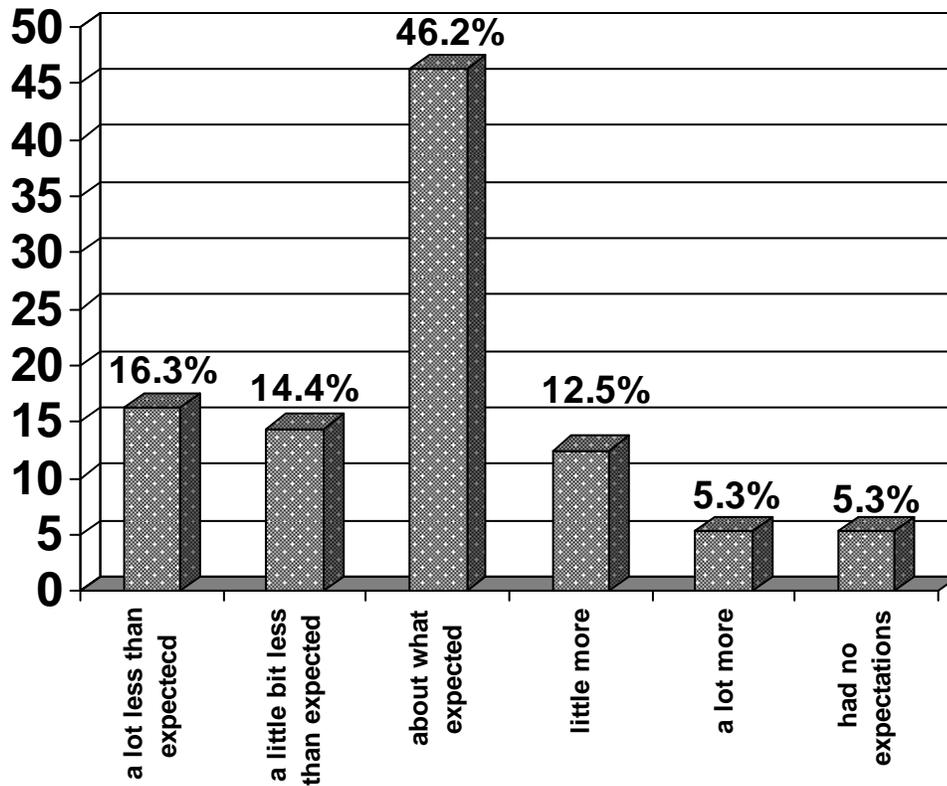
Note. Response Code: 1 = "not at all important" to 5 = "extremely important". n=136.



- Recreation users at CRSF have the most value for experiences such as being outdoors, being in natural surroundings, relaxing, and getting away from the regular routine of their lives.
- n = 136.

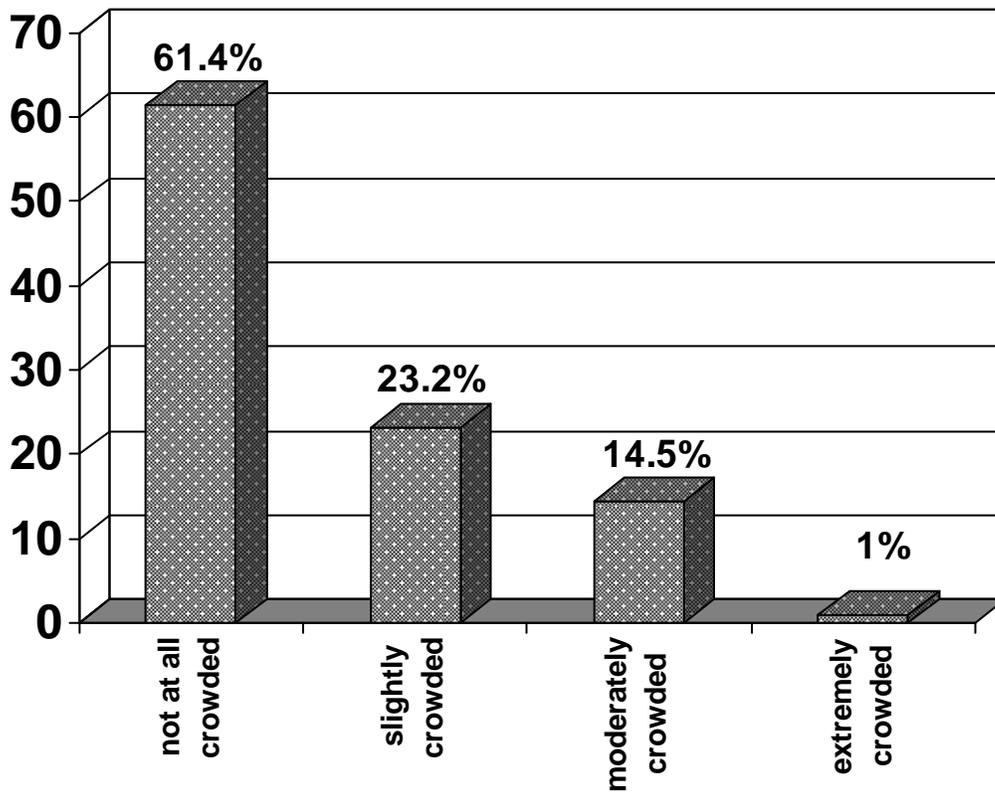
CROWDING

How does the number of people you saw compare with what you expected to see?



- Almost half (46%) of the respondents saw the same amount of people at CRSF as what they expected to see.
- Nearly two-thirds (31%) of respondents saw less people than what they expected to see.
- Only 18% of the respondents felt that there were more people at CRSF than they expected to see.
- n = 208.

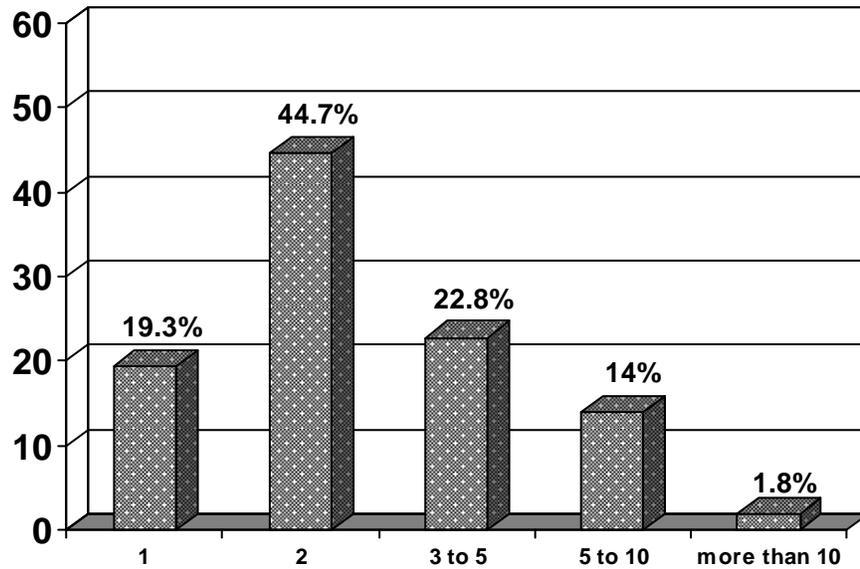
How crowded did you feel on this visit?



- Nearly two-thirds (61%) of the respondents were not at all crowded at CRSF.
- Over one-third of the respondents were slightly to moderately crowded.
- n = 207.

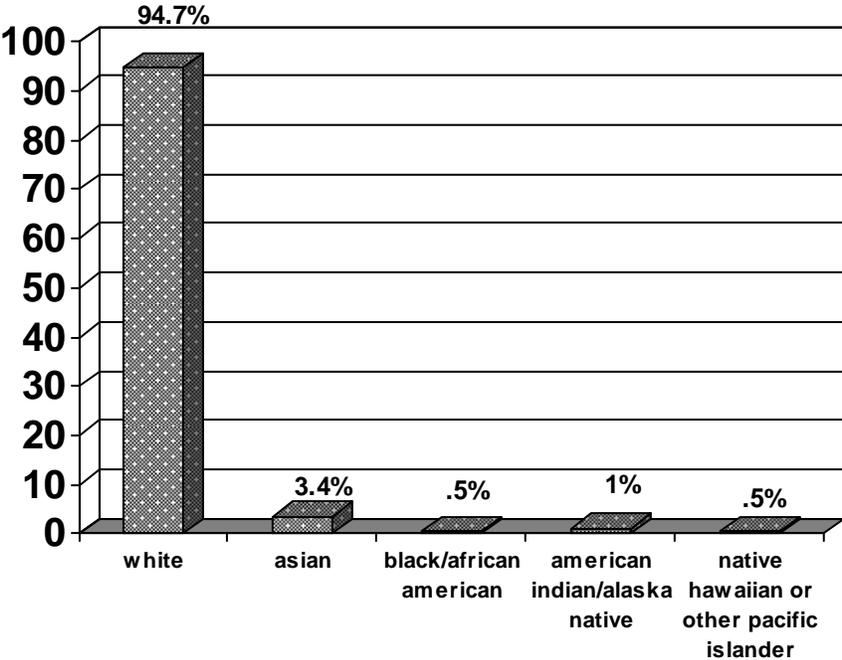
DEMOGRAPHICS

How many people are in your group today?



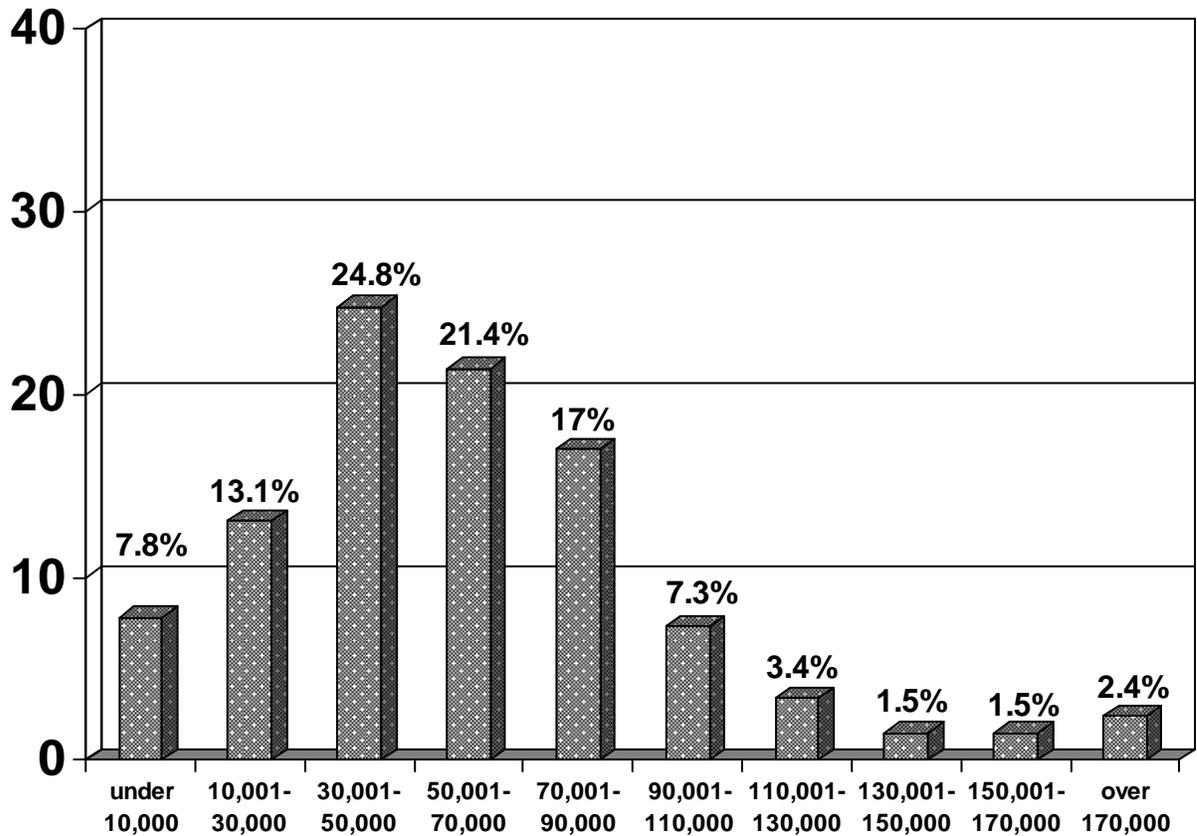
- The largest proportion (45%) of respondents came to CRSF in a group of two.
- Over one-third (37%) of the respondents were in larger groups (3—10 people).
- About one-fifth (19%) of the respondents were visiting CRSF alone.
- n = 114.

Which racial group do you most closely identify yourself with?



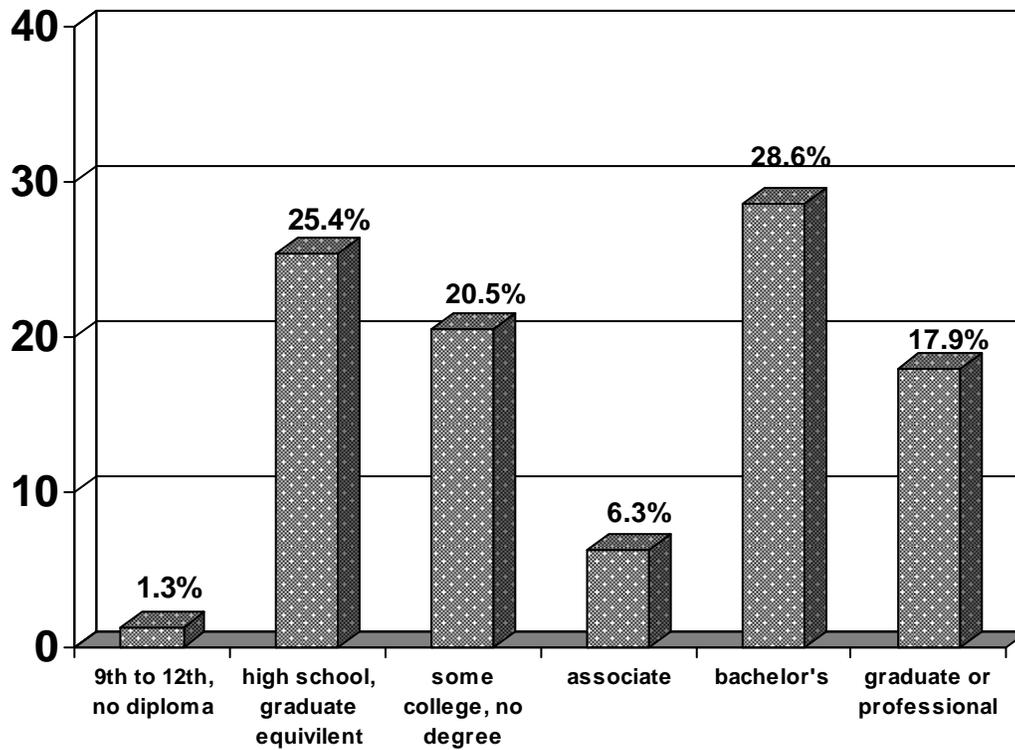
- The vast majority (95%) of the respondents identified themselves as being white.
- n = 226.

What was your total household income last year?



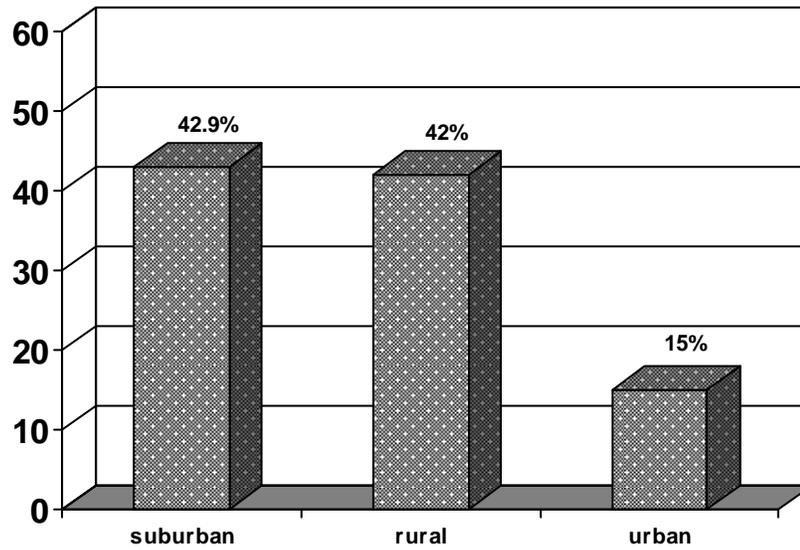
- Nearly half (46%) of the respondents identified with a total household income of \$30,000 -- \$70,000 annually, while nearly one-quarter (24%) indicated that they earned between \$70,000--\$110,000 annually.
- About one-fifth (21%) reported their income was \$30,000 or below.
- A small proportion (9%) reported a total household income greater than \$110,000.
- n = 206.

What is the highest level of schooling you have completed?



- Almost half (46%) of the respondents indicated that they had a high school degree without a college degree.
- Almost half (47%) of the respondents reported having a bachelor's degree or advanced degree.
- n = 226.

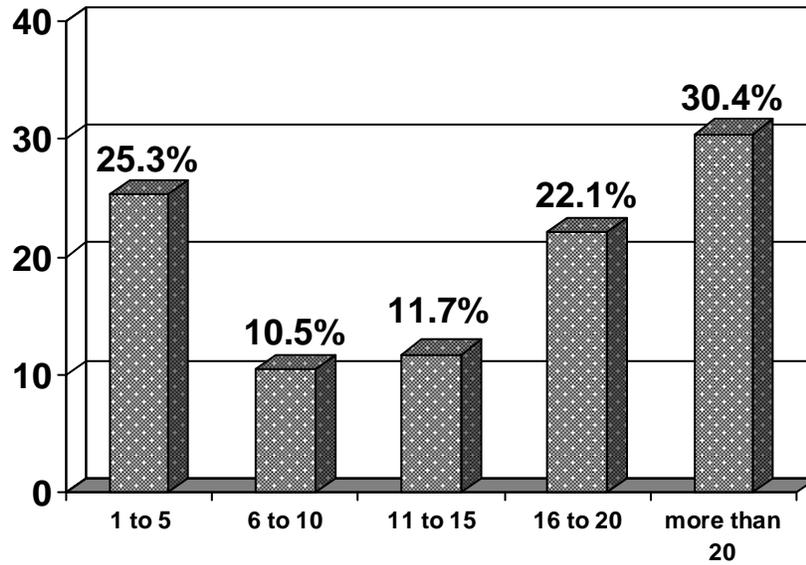
Do you consider yourself to be living in an urban, suburban, or rural community?



- Most of the respondents reported that they lived in either a suburban (43%) or rural (42%) community.
- Only 15% of the respondents identified themselves as currently living in an urban community.
- n = 226.

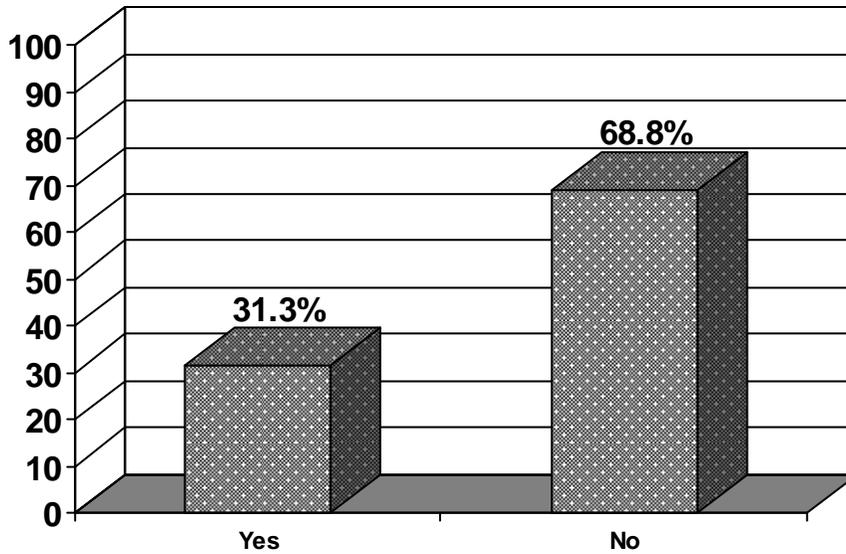
STUDY OF HUNTERS

How many years have you been hunting at Coopers Rock?



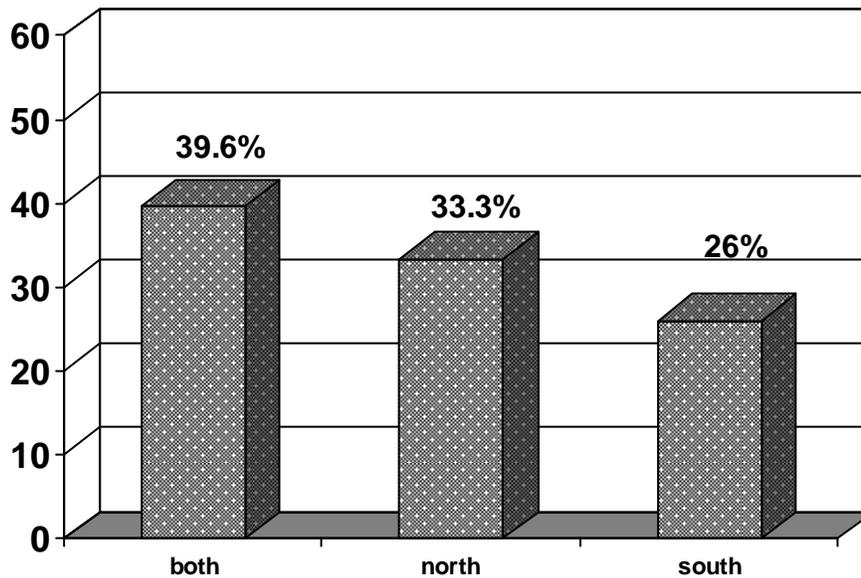
- Hunters showed a bipolar response in the number of years they have hunted at CRSF, with nearly one-third (30%) of the respondents hunting for more than 20 years and one-quarter (25%) of the respondents hunting five years or less.
- n = 95.

Are you a resident license holder?



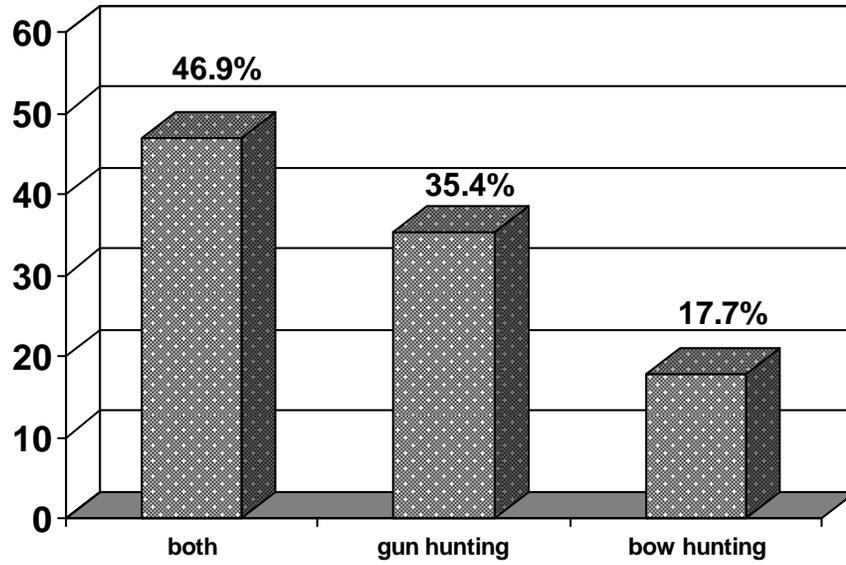
- The majority of respondents (69%) were not resident license holders from the state of West Virginia.
- n = 95.

Where do you hunt at Coopers Rock?



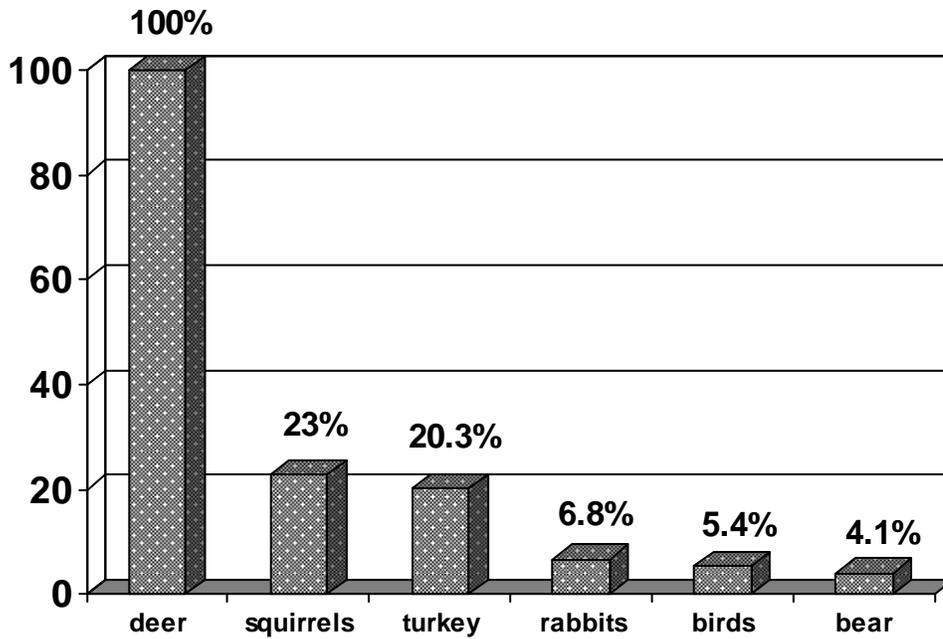
- The largest proportion of the respondents (40%) hunt on both the north and south side of the Forest.
- n =96.

What type of hunting do you prefer?



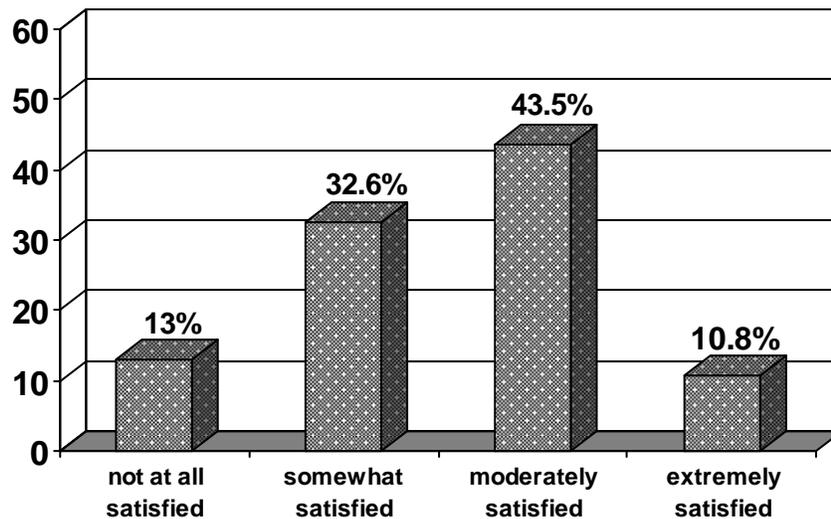
- Nearly half (47%) of hunters at the CRSF prefer to hunt with both a gun and bow.
- Over one-third of the respondents hunt only with a gun, while nearly one-fifth (18%) only bow hunt.
- n = 96.

What type of game do you hunt at Coopers Rock?



- All of the hunters that participated in the survey have hunted deer at CRSF.
- Squirrels (23%) and Turkey (20%) were also popular game at CRSF.
- n = 96.

How satisfied are you with hunting at Coopers Rock?



- Almost half of the respondents (43%) were moderately satisfied with their hunting experience at CRSF, while 11% were extremely satisfied.
- One-third (33%) of the hunters were somewhat satisfied.
- A sizeable amount of CRSF hunters (13%) were not at all satisfied with their experience.
- n = 92.

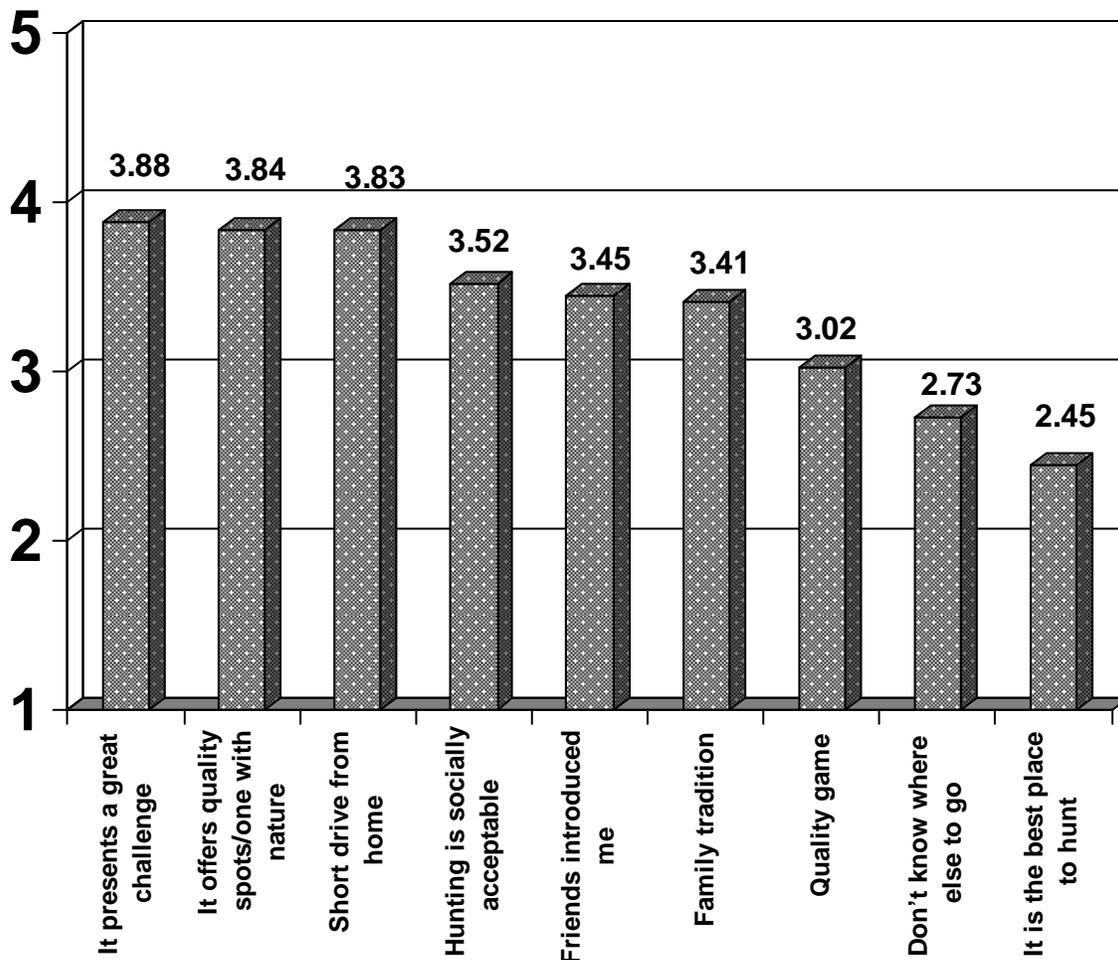
How important are the following reasons as to why you may hunt at CRSF?

Importance of experience

Mean

It presents a great challenge	3.88
It offers quality spots that make me feel one with nature	3.84
Short drive from home	3.83
Hunting is socially acceptable by other recreation users	3.52
Friends introduced me	3.45
Family tradition	3.41
Quality game	3.02
Don't know where else to go	2.73
It is the best place to hunt	2.45

Note. Response Code: 1 = "not at all important" to 5 = "extremely important". n = 79.



- Hunters at CRSF most highly value the challenge of the hunt, the oneness with nature that CRSF allows for, and the close proximity that CRSF is to their home.
- n = 79

Appendix B
(Open-Ended Responses)

Recreation at Coopers Rock State Forest

Open-ended Responses to Recreation Experience Questions

What constrains you the most from recreating at CRSF as much as you would like?

Constraints	Freq
Lack of Time	37
Work	18
Distance from Home	16
Family Obligations	6
Gas Prices	3
Age	2
Laziness	1
Other Hobbies	1
Other Tourists	1
Health	1
Climbing Schools	1
I Own Outdoor Property	1
Lack of Winter Access	1
No Car	1
Total	90

What is your most frequently used trail or area at CRSF?

Trails/Areas	Freq
Rock City	16
Overlook	11
Rattlesnake Trail	9
Henry Clay Iron Furnace Trail	7
Roadside Trail	7
Scott's Run Trail	6
Ravens Rock Trail	6
Hemlock Trail	5
Campground	4
Sunset Rocks	3
Tilted Tree	2
Picnic Areas	2
Quarry run	1
Mont Chateaux	1
Rhododendron Trail	1
Snake Hill Area	1
Total	82

Which trails or areas did you feel crowded at CRSF?

Trails/Areas	Freq
Overlook	19
Concession Stand	2
Campground	2
Picnic Area	2
Scott's Run Parking Lot	1
Rock City	1
Rattlesnake Trail	1
Total	28

What features at CRSF contributed the most to your enjoyment?

Features	Freq
Views/Scenery	71
Wildlife	37
Trails	33
Trees	29
Nature	22
Serenity/Quiet	15
Weather	13
Rocks/Boulders	12
Wildflowers	8
Remoteness	6
Mountains	5
Friends/Family	4
Historical Landmarks	4
Sunset	3
Picnic Accommodations	2
Fishing	2
Smells	2
Other People	1
River	1
Total	270

What features at CRSF detracted the most to your enjoyment?

Features	Freq
Litter	14
Crowding	8
Poor Trail Quality	7
Noise	5
Dogs Off Leash	5
Lack of Signs	4
Lack of Parking	4
Power Lines	3
Illegal ATV	2
Flies	2
Hunting	2
Bees	2
Cops	1
Mountain Bikers	1
Broken Glass	1
Closed Gate	1
Total	62

If you've experienced conflict, what was the nature of your conflict?

Nature of Conflict	Freq
Dogs off Leash	4
Trail Use Disputes	3
Hunting Disputes	3
Illegal ATV Use	3
Boundary Disputes	2
Parking Lot Accidents	1
Littering	1
Total	17

What do you believe CRSF management should focus on to improve your overall recreation experience.

Categories of Suggestions	Freq
Hunting	58
Good Work/Appreciation	33
Trails	32
General Comments	18
Signs	17
Facilities/Services	15
Access	8
Restrooms/Toilets	7
Campsites/Campgrounds	6
Conflicts	6
Littering	4
Rock Climbing	4
Fishing	2
Total	210

Access

Suggestions	Freq
Open more roads and parking areas	3
Allow all season access	2
Don't allow doe hunters to park beyond the main gate	1
Keep road closed to vehicles during the winter months	1
Better accessibility to trails	1
Total	8

Restrooms/Toilets

Suggestions	Freq
Cleaner restroom facilities	3
Put soap in bathrooms	1
Improve the quality of restroom facilities	1
More restrooms	1
Put TP in bathrooms at all times	1
Total	7

Campsites/Campgrounds

Suggestions	Freq
More showers at campground	1
Provide more water fountains	1
Plant more trees to give more privacy	1
Make campground larger	1
Provide better restroom facilities at campground	1
Institute some primitive camping areas along the trails	1
Total	6

Conflict

Suggestions	Freq
Close forest during rifle season to all other forms of recreation	3
Close trails during first week of rifle season	2
Regulate groups that utilize the state park for business	1
Total	6

Facilities/Services

Suggestions	Freq
Make a better map available	4
Need more visible staff	2
Visitor center staff should be more knowledgeable	1
Open up a nature wildlife expo facility	1
Provide better informational brochures	1
Provide more water fountains	1
Improve appearance of overlook facilities	1
Better parking lots	1
Control gypsy moth infestations	1
Put in a watering hole	1
Make a waterfall	1
Total	15

General Comments

Suggestions	Freq
Install more playgrounds	4
Create a form of swimming recreation	3
Have dog-off-leash areas	2
Build cabins	2
Provide more horseback and birding areas	1
Food, cafeteria, snack area	1
Get rid of power lines	1
Provide more planned community activities	1
Better internet information	1
Build a gun range	1
Have an overlook bike rental during the summer months	1
Total	18

Rock Climbing

Suggestions	Freq
Work on a climbing etiquette plan that's accepted by the climbing community	1
Make climbing areas more known	1
Provide rappelling areas	1
Bolts are needed at climbing spots	1
Total	4

Signs

Suggestions	Freq
More informational signs	10
More interpretive signs	4
Fix current signs throughout forest	2
Replace sign at Henry Clay Iron Furnace	1
Total	17

Trails

Suggestions	Freq
Expand trail system	16
Provide maps at trail heads	7
Better overall trail maintenance	4
Improve trail to Henry Clay Iron Furnace	2
Make plan to control erosion on trails while allowing mountain biking	1
Install mile markers on trails	1
Open up an ATV trail in the forest	1
Total	32

Good Work/Appreciation

Suggestions	Freq
CRSF is a great place	7
Everything is nice, maintain as is	7
Management is doing a great job	5
Beautiful place to be outside	4
Lovely place to camp	2
I've been very fortunate during buck season	1
Nice bathrooms	1
Nice picnicking accommodations	1
Nice benches	1
Close to Morgantown	1
Overall positive experience	1
Very helpful rangers	1
CR foundation doing well on trails	1
Total	33

Fishing

Suggestions	Freq
Put bass in the trout pond	1
Create more fishing opportunities	1
Total	2

Hunting

Suggestions	Freq
Reconsider the antler spread restriction	26
Sustain the antler restrictions	7
Go to a point restriction on deer heard instead of spread	6
Provide sustainable timber harvests for a better wildlife habitat	5
Enable the proper nutrition of game animals	3
Minimize timber harvesting	3
Improve the quality and quantity of deer and turkey	1
Stop all timber harvesting	2
Stop hunting at CRSF until deer herd is replenished	2
Reduce the doe hunting or stop it all together	1
Plant feed plots	1
Don't log timber during rifle season	1
Total	58

Littering

Suggestions	Freq
Improve litter clean up	3
Provide trash cans at trail heads	1
Total	4

Appendix C
(On-site Survey Instrument)

2006 Coopers Rock Recreation Study West Virginia University

Survey Number _____ Date: _____ Time of Interview: _____ Gender _____

Interviewer Script Hello, I am (name), of WVU's Recreation, Parks and Tourism Program. We are conducting a study for the WV Division of Forestry of visitors to the Coopers Rock State Forest. The information visitors give us will be used to help forest managers better serve the visiting public and protect the area's natural and cultural resources. You have been selected as part of a random sample of visitors to participate in this survey. Participation is voluntary and if you choose to participate, everything you tell us will be kept strictly confidential. The survey will take about 10 minutes to complete. May we proceed with the interview?

1. Is this your first visit to the Coopers Rock State Forest ____ No ____ Yes

IF respondent has visited previously:

2. During the last twelve months, how many days have you spent recreating at the CRSF? _____

3. During the last twelve months, how many days have you spent recreating at other outdoor recreation areas within a two hour drive of your home? _____

4. How many years have you been recreating at the CRSF? _____ (total years)

5. Do you recreate at the CRSF as often as you like? ____ no ____ yes

IF NO, what constrains you most from recreating at CRSF? _____

Questions 6 and 7. These questions pertain to this trip to the Coopers Rock State Forest only:

6. In what activities on this list do you participate in while at Coopers Rock? (Check box for all that apply)	7. Which of those is your primary recreation activity while at Coopers Rock? (Check only ONE Box)
Question 7	Question 8
Bird Watching	
Camping	
Cross Country Skiing	
Educational – Field Trip	
Fishing	
Hiking	
Horseback Riding	
Hunting	
Mountain Biking	
Nature Study or Observation	
Photography	
Picnicking	
Sight Seeing	
Scouting areas for hunting	
Snow shoeing	
Technical rock climbing/rappelling	
Trail running	
Wildlife Observation	
Walking/exercising your dog	
Geo-caching	
Mushroom/berry gathering	
US military activities	
Trail Blazing	
Other-(Please Describe)	

8. Which trails or other areas do you utilize? If a regular user, indicate most frequently used trails/area.

Trails/areas _____

Most frequently used _____

9. Here is a list of possible reasons why people recreate at Coopers Rock. Please check the importance of each item as to why you recreate at Coopers Rock State Forest.

Reason	Not at all Important	Somewhat Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
To be outdoors					
For relaxation					
To get away from the regular routine					
For challenge or sport					
For family recreation					
For physical exercise					
To be with my friends					
To experience natural surroundings					
To develop my skills					

10. How did the number of people you saw during your visit to CRSF compare with what you expected to see?

- _____ A lot less than you expected
- _____ A little less than you expected
- _____ About what you expected
- _____ A little more than you expected
- _____ A lot more than you expected
- _____ You didn't have any expectations

11. How crowded did you feel at CRSF during your visit [Circle one number]

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all Crowded		Slightly Crowded		Moderately Crowded			Extremely Crowded	

12. If you felt at all crowded, please indicate which trails or areas where you felt crowded.

Trails/Areas _____

13. Please list those features that particularly CONTRIBUTED to your enjoyment (wildflowers, views, wildlife, etc.) as well as any aspects of the forest that DETRACTED from your enjoyment:

FEATURES WHICH:

CONTRIBUTED

DETRACTED

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____

14. During your visit, did you have any conflicts with others? ___ yes ___ no

14a. If you experienced conflict, please identify who, besides yourself, was involved:

Check all that apply	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hikers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mountain bikers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vehicles
<input type="checkbox"/>	Forest staff
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dogs
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adjacent property owner(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Horseback riders
<input type="checkbox"/>	Educational groups
<input type="checkbox"/>	Illegal ATV users
<input type="checkbox"/>	Climbers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hunters
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bird watchers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other-(identify):

14b. If you experienced conflict, please describe the nature of the conflict.

15. Does Coopers Rock State Forest meet your expectations when it comes to available recreational opportunities?

_____ no _____ yes

16. Please tell us what areas you believe Coopers Rock management should focus on to improve your overall recreational experience.

17. Other Comments:

18. What is your age? _____ years

19. Including yourself, how many people are in your group today? _____

20. Which racial/ethnic group(s) do you identify with? Circle all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/> White	<input type="checkbox"/> Black/African American
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian	<input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/Alaska Native
<input type="checkbox"/> Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino	<input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please list)	

21. Which of the following reflects your total household income before taxes, for the last year? Circle one.

<input type="checkbox"/> Under \$10,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50,001-70,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$110,001-130,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Over \$170,000
<input type="checkbox"/> \$10,001-30,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$70,001-90,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$130,001-150,000	
<input type="checkbox"/> \$30,001-50,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$90,001-110,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150,001-170,000	

22. What is the highest level of schooling you have completed? Circle one

<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 9 th grade	<input type="checkbox"/> Associate degree
<input type="checkbox"/> 9 th grade to 12 th grade, no diploma	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree
<input type="checkbox"/> High school graduate or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/> Graduate or professional degree
<input type="checkbox"/> Some college, no degree	

23. What is your zip code/postal code? _____ Visitor is from other country (list)

24. Do you consider yourself to be currently living in an urban, suburban or rural area?

Urban Suburban Rural

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY!!!!

Appendix D
(E-mail Rock Climbing Survey)

2006 Coopers Rock Recreation Study
West Virginia University

Dear Recreationist: The Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Resources at West Virginia University is conducting a survey of visitors who recreate at Coopers Rock State Forest. The information you provide us will be used to help forest managers better serve the visiting public and protect the area's natural and cultural resources. Participation is voluntary and if you choose to participate in the following 20 questions, everything you tell us will be kept strictly confidential.

1. Have you recreated at Coopers Rock State Forest in the past twelve months? Yes No

IF you have visited in the last 12 months, continue with the survey:

2. During the last twelve months, how many days have you spent recreating at the CRSF? _____

3. During the last twelve months, how many days have you spent recreating at other outdoor recreation areas within a two hour drive of your home? _____

4. What year did you first start recreating at the CRSF? _____ (year)

5. Do you recreate at the CRSF as often as you like? Yes No

IF NO, what constrains you most from recreating at CRSF? _____

Questions 6 and 7. These questions pertain to a typical visit for you at Coopers Rock State Forest:

6. In what activities on this list do you participate in while at Coopers Rock? (Place an X in the box to the left for all that apply)		7. Which of your activities would you consider to be your primary recreation activity while at Coopers Rock? (X only ONE Box)
Question 6		Question 7
	Bird Watching	
	Camping	
	Cross Country Skiing	
	Educational – Field Trip	
	Fishing	
	Hiking	
	Horseback Riding	
	Hunting	
	Mountain Biking	
	Nature Study or Observation	
	Photography	
	Picnicking	
	Sight Seeing	
	Scouting areas for hunting	
	Snow shoeing	
	Technical rock climbing/rappelling	
	Trail running	
	Wildlife Observation	
	Walking/exercising your dog	
	Geo-caching	
	Mushroom/berry gathering	
	US military activities	
	Trail Blazing	
	Other-(Please Describe)	

8. Which trails or other areas do you utilize? If a regular user, indicate most frequently used trails/area.

Trails/areas _____

Most frequently used _____

9. Below is a list of possible reasons why people recreate at Coopers Rock. Place an X in the box next to EACH reason that shows the importance of each item as to why you recreate at Coopers Rock State Forest.

Reason	Not at all Important	Somewhat Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
To be outdoors					
For relaxation					
To get away from the regular routine					
For challenge or sport					
For family recreation					
For physical exercise					
To be with my friends					
To experience natural surroundings					
To develop my skills					

10. Please list below those features that particularly CONTRIBUTED to your enjoyment at Coopers Rock (wildflowers, views, wildlife, etc.) as well as any aspects of the forest that DETRACTED from your enjoyment:

FEATURES WHICH:

CONTRIBUTED

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

DETRACTED

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

11. While recreating during the last twelve months, did you have any conflicts with others? ____ Yes ____ No

11a. If you experienced conflict, please identify who, besides yourself, was involved:

Place an X next to all that apply	
	Hikers
	Mountain bikers
	Vehicles
	Forest staff
	Dogs
	Adjacent property owner(s)
	Horseback riders
	Educational groups
	Illegal ATV users
	Climbers
	Hunters
	Bird watchers
	Other-(identify):

11b. If you experienced conflict, please describe the nature of the conflict.

12. Does Coopers Rock State Forest meet your expectations when it comes to available recreational opportunities?

____ Yes ____ No

13. Please tell us what areas you believe Coopers Rock management should focus on to improve your overall recreational experience.

14. Other Comments:

15. What is your age? _____ years

16. What racial/ethnic group(s) do you identify with? Check all that apply

White Black/African American

Asian American Indian/ Alaska Native

Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

Other (please list)

17. Which of the following reflects your total household income before taxes, for the last year? (Circle One)

Under \$10,000 \$50,001-70,000 \$110,001-130,000 Over \$170,000

\$10,001-30,000 \$70,001-90,000 \$130,001-150,000

\$30,001-50,000 \$90,001-110,000 \$150,001-170,000

18. What is the highest level of schooling you have completed? (Circle One)

Less than 9th grade Associate degree

9th grade to 12th grade, no diploma Bachelor's degree

High school graduate or equivalent Graduate or professional degree

Some college, no degree

19. Do you consider yourself to be currently living in an urban, suburban, or rural area?

Urban Suburban Rural

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY!!!!

Please send any comments or questions to Dr. Robert Burns, Recreation, Parks and Tourism Program, Box 6125, Percival Hall, WVU, Morgantown, WV 26506. Email robert.burns@mail.wvu.edu or phone 304-293-2941, ext 2416.

Appendix E
(Mail-back Hunting Survey)

2006 Coopers Rock Recreation Study of Hunters
West Virginia University

The Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Resources at West Virginia University is conducting a survey of hunters at Coopers Rock State Forest. Sharing your opinions and details relating to your hunting experience could help shape and improve hunting management here at the state forest. Your participation in this study is optional and your answers will be strictly confidential.

1. How many years have you been hunting at the Coopers Rock State Forest?

_____ years

2. During the past year, how many days would you say you spent hunting at the Coopers Rock State Forest?

_____ days

3. Are you a resident license holder?

___ Yes ___ No

4. If you are not a resident of West Virginia, where do you reside?

5. Are/Did you hunt on the northern (north of I-68) or southern (south of I-68) part of Coopers Rock?

___ North Side (WVU Research Forest) ___ South Side ___ Both Sides

6. What access point/parking area did you on your most recent hunting trip at Coopers Rock?

7. What suggestions do you have regarding access points/parking areas at Coopers Rock?

8. What type of hunting do you prefer?

___ I prefer gun hunting ___ I prefer bow hunting ___ I like gun and bow hunting equally

9. During the past 12 months, how many days would you say you spent hunting on other public lands in West Virginia?

_____ days

10. What kind of game have you hunted at Coopers Rock in the past twelve months? (Check all that apply)

___ Deer

___ Squirrels

___ Bears

___ Turkey

___ Birds

___ Rabbits

_____ Other (Specify)

11. On a scale of 1-10, how satisfied Are/Were you with your hunting experience at Coopers Rock over the past twelve months? (circle one number)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

10. The following are some statements describing possible reasons for hunting at Coopers Rock State Forest. For each statement, please select the response that best describes your feelings about your visit. If the statement does not apply, do not answer the question.

I chose to hunt at Coopers Rock because:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
It is a short drive from my home	1	2	3	4	5
It is a family tradition	1	2	3	4	5
It offers a great area to find quality game	1	2	3	4	5
I don't really know any other better areas to hunt that are better	1	2	3	4	5
A friend/friends introduced it to me as a good place to hunt	1	2	3	4	5
It offers a great challenge to the hunter	1	2	3	4	5
I think it is the best place to hunt that I am aware of	1	2	3	4	5
It offers quality spots that give me a feeling of being one with nature	1	2	3	4	5
I know hunting is looked at as a socially acceptable recreation activity by other Coopers Rock recreationists	1	2	3	4	5

11. How did the number of people you saw hunting this year compare with what you expected to see?

- _____ A lot less than expected
- _____ A little less than expected
- _____ About what you expected
- _____ A little more than you expected
- _____ A lot more than you expected
- _____ You didn't have any expectations

12. On a scale of 1-9, how crowded did you feel while hunting at Coopers Rock State Forest during this past year? (Circle One Number)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all crowded		Slightly Crowded		Moderately Crowded			Extremely Crowded	

13. During your time hunting at Coopers Rock over the past twelve months, have you ever had any conflicts with others?

_____ Yes _____ No

13a. If you experienced conflict, please identify who, besides yourself, was involved:

Check all that apply	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hikers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mountain Bikers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vehicles
<input type="checkbox"/>	Forest Staff
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dogs
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adjacent property owner(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Horseback riders
<input type="checkbox"/>	Educational groups
<input type="checkbox"/>	Illegal ATV users
<input type="checkbox"/>	Climbers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Hunters
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bird Watchers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other-(identify)

13b. If you experienced conflict, please describe the nature of the conflict.

14. Please share any areas you believe Coopers Rock Management should focus on to improve your overall recreational experience.

15. Other Comments:

16. What is your age? _____ years

17. What racial/ethnic group(s) do you identify with? Check all that apply

White Black/African American

Asian American Indian/ Alaska Native

Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

Other (please list)

18. Which of the following reflects your total household income before taxes, for the last year? (Circle One)

Under \$10,000 \$50,001-70,000 \$110,001-130,000 Over \$170,000

\$10,001-30,000 \$70,001-90,000 \$130,001-150,000

\$30,001-50,000 \$90,001-110,000 \$150,001-170,000

19. What is the highest level of schooling you have completed? (Circle One)

Less than 9th grade Associate degree

9th grade to 12th grade, no diploma Bachelor's degree

High school graduate or equivalent Graduate or professional degree

Some college, no degree

20. Do you consider yourself to be currently living in an urban, suburban, or rural area?

Urban Suburban Rural

THANKS VERY MUCH FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY!!!!

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