

Recreational Experience Baseline Study Report

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument

Phase 1: Hole in the Rock Road Area



The Natural Resource Center at Colorado Mesa University

2014

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Executive Summary

In the fall of 2012, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (GSENM) entered into a five year assistance agreement with the Natural Resource Center (NRC) at Colorado Mesa University (CMU) in Grand Junction, Colorado to conduct a recreational experience baseline study of the Monument. A recreational baseline study is designed to develop an understanding of the recreational use and demands of a particular location at a particular time to establish a baseline for future planning or projects. This baseline will also serve as a starting point for conversations between the BLM and their partners in the surrounding communities and beyond regarding recreation on GSENM. The study was planned to be conducted in five phases across the approximately 1.9 million acre monument, beginning in 2013 with the areas accessed by Hole in the Rock Road. The Hole in the Rock corridor contains or provides access to several of the Monument's most frequently visited attractions (Devil's Rock Garden, Peek-a-boo and Spooky Slot Canyons, and Dance Hall Rock), as well as provides access to many popular sites in Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (Hole in the Rock, Coyote Gulch, Egypt Slot Canyons, and Harris Wash) where visitor use is steadily increasing.

A mixed methodology focus group, using audience polling in addition to engaging participants in open dialogue, was used to establish the recreation experience baseline. In this case, a focus group is a structured conversation with a limited number of participants (less than 25) regarding recreation in the Hole in the Rock area. The nature of the small-group setting and open-ended nature of the questions allows for interaction between the participants and the facilitator, and between the participants themselves. This methodology allows participants to express the subtleties and nuances of what really matters to them about recreating in the area. This mixed methodology approach provides a data set that captures both a complete set of responses from each participant using audience polling technology as well as documents a rich set of notes from the group dialogue that gives context and depth to the polling data. Dr. Tim Casey, a Professor of Political Science at CMU and director of the NRC, was named as the principal investigator to conduct the focus groups and prepare the analytical reports.

A total of 17 focus groups were conducted between March and September 2013 for this first phase of the study. Twelve of those focus groups were conducted in person in the towns of Boulder and Escalante, Utah, in three separate visits during March, May and September. The remaining five focus groups were conducted digitally via the internet and conference call (these will be referred to throughout this document as "digital focus groups"). There were a total of 123 participants in the 17 focus groups. Of the 123 participants in the study, 72 attended a focus group in Escalante, 25 in Boulder and 26 participated in digital focus groups. The participants were allowed to remain anonymous, although their responses were tracked and collated by the use of audience polling technology. Some basic demographic information was collected at the beginning of each session. Participants were asked to provide home zip codes in order to identify how representative this study

was of the overall population. The majority of participants came from zip codes in Utah (85%). Most of those came from Escalante (27.6%) or Boulder (23.5%), the two gateway communities to the area, as well as Kanab, Utah (9%) and the Salt Lake area (3.5%). Other participants represented a total of nine (9) other states and a Canadian province. There were participants from 41 unique zip codes. Participants were also asked to select one affiliation (role) they have in relation to the landscape. Those selections included: visitor, local resident, community leader, outfitter/guide, business owner, other. The majority of the participants selected affiliations associated with the local area: local resident (40%), business owner (10%), and community leader (2%). Visitors represented 25% of the total and outfitters/guides made up 11%. 6.5% of respondents did not select an affiliation, and 4.5% chose “other”. When asked, most of those were part time residents and also considered themselves part-time visitors.

The design of the focus group for data collection entailed a series of discussion questions intended to engage participants in open dialogue about their preferences, interests, and expectations regarding recreation so responses could be captured in their own words, followed by a list of choices that represented a spectrum of possible responses to the discussion questions. They could respond to this list of possible responses by selecting them via anonymous audience polling using hand held remote response devices (clickers). The focus group script covered all the major elements needed in planning for recreation on public lands: preferences for outcomes and experiences, interests and expectations, setting characteristics, activities, and the services needed to support the recreation experience.

After analysis of the responses from 123 participants in 17 focus groups over seven months of data collection in 2013, the following observations and recommendations began to emerge regarding the areas of GSENM that are accessed by Hole in the Rock Road. Although in a baseline study, the principal focus is on observations of the setting and context, inevitably some participants expressed their ideas concerning the Hole in the Rock area as recommendations for future action. These were not solicited in the study, but are recorded as part of the responses given.

Observations:

- The area is a unique landscape that is a very special place to a wide variety of people. It is a dynamic landscape that affords many different experiences and connections.
- The wild, unspoiled, remote, and rugged character of the place, combined with its natural and scenic qualities overwhelming define its specialness. The combination of these contributes to its sense of solitude and privacy as well as to a sense of discovery and wonder that is highly valued by the public.
- People come here to experience the naturalness and tranquil escapes embodied by the landscape.
- The importance of the area’s history, archeology, geology, and paleontology enhance the specialness of the area.

- There is a sense of discovery and self-reliance encouraged by the land itself.
- It is also an important place because of the connection people have with the it historically, spiritually, scientifically, recreationally and traditionally.
- This is an area that is often approached by vehicle, but is more likely encountered on foot. It is prized for its inspiring scenic qualities and the kinds of activities associated with such dramatic scenery such as photography, site-seeing, writing, and making art.
- Use of this space has increased in recent years, and this has been a mixed blessing. Most respondents thought the increased use had made it somewhat to significantly worse over the last five years. On the one hand it is seen as a positive thing to have more people enjoy the resource and boost local economies, but it can be “loved” to death or at least enough to substantially change the qualities people seek in this remote location.
- Threats to the specialness of the landscape include overuse, damage to the resources, and over development. There is also concern that many who come in the future will not have a connection to or appreciation of the place.
- The current management approach is generally working well on the landscape with some important noted areas of concern where the resource and its specialness are threatened. These areas of concern are noted and explained in the larger report.
- There is a strong preference for the lack of development (transportation and recreational facilities) of the area and a fear of what those would do to the specialness of the place as it is and has been. In the comments of many, improvements to access and facilities would trade off with the qualities of wildness, ruggedness and discovery/exploration. People overwhelmingly love the characteristics of this unique place as it is.
- Although some participants indicated that paving the road would be a benefit for access, the vast majority of participants opposed the paving of the Hole in the Rock Road, preferring the ruggedness of the road, particularly the further one gets from Highway 12.
- Visitors and locals rely on a variety of services from the gateway communities (Escalante and Boulder) and beyond to support their recreational outings in the Hole in the Rock area. These include gas and groceries, but also information provision, guide services, lodging, and restaurants.
- The interpretive and educational services provided by Escalante Interagency Visitor Center staff, outfitters/guides, and locals are vitally important to help people develop and nurture a monumental sense of place around the area accessed by Hole in the Rock Road.
- Part of the specialness of the area accessed by Hole in the Rock Road is a result of the way it is nested in a larger landscape of Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument, Glen Canyon

National Recreation Area, Capitol Reef and Bryce Canyon National Parks, Dixie National Forest, and other federal and state public lands.

- It is also important to the agencies as well as the communities to understand how public lands contribute to the character, identity, and economic livelihood of the local gateway communities.

Recommendations:

- Visitor education was suggested as important tool to address the threat posed by a lack of connection to the landscape from future visitors.
- Many participants recognized the responsibility and need the land management agencies have to manage the increase in use (and abuse) of the landscape, but this should be done in cooperation with the public (including public stewardship), and with an effort to minimize the impact of that management on the undeveloped character of the place.
- Targeted attention to maintain the specialness of the place in such areas of concern as Coyote Gulch, or to address issues such as vandalism, trash, human waste and crowding is supported.
- Developing certain areas to accommodate heavier use and directing visitors to those areas to help maintain the remote character of the rest of the landscape was supported by many. Such locations could include Devil's Garden, Dry Fork Slots (Peekaboo and Spooky), Dance Hall Rock, and Hole in the Rock.

The results of this first phase of the GSENM Recreation Experience Baseline Study were presented to the public and agency staff in a series of presentations held in early March 2014 in Boulder, Escalante, and Kanab. One of those presentations was on the agenda at the 2014 GSENM Outfitters and Guide Workshop in Kanab. In April 2014, the results of the study were shared via a webinar presentation with staff in the local GSENM and GCNRA offices, as well as staff in the BLM Washington and Utah State Offices. Additional phases of the study began in 2014 and are slated to continue through 2017 as funding allows.

Introduction

People have been visiting and interacting with the landscape currently accessed by Hole in the Rock Road for at least the last 10,000 years when the Ancestral Puebloan peoples moved through and dwelt in the area.¹ Archeological sites in the area and nearby on the Kaiparowits Plateau give strong evidence of ancient cultures that called this landscape home until around 1300. They were gradually replaced by more contemporary indigenous populations such as the Utes, the Southern Paiutes, the Navajo and the Hopi who began to move through the area for nearly 600 years before the Europeans moved into the area. The Europeans arrived in the area perhaps as early as the mid-16th Century when Coronado wandered through this area looking for a lost city of gold. In the 18th Century, the explorers Dominguez and Escalante came close to the southern part of this area. And in the 19th Century the John Wesley Powell Geographic Expedition came through the area while under orders of the US Government to map landscapes surrounding the Green and Colorado Rivers. Almon Thompson, a member of the Powell Expedition, is credited with first mapping and naming the Escalante River. Early explorers from Coronado to John Wesley Powell thought the area largely uninhabitable and stark even for all its beauty.

In 1876 Mormon pioneers moved into the area and founded the Town of Escalante, and then in 1879 an expedition set out along what is now the Hole in the Rock Road to cross the Colorado River in route to establishing a Mormon settlement in the Four Corners region along the San Juan River. The route was to be a shortcut from Parowan to what is now Bluff but proved to be anything but a shortcut. The anticipated six week expedition grew into a six month ordeal that required building a dugway down the sheer cliffs above the Colorado River and maneuvering through some of the roughest country most had ever seen. The dugway to the Colorado River was carved into the cliff at a location known as Hole in the Rock. While work commenced on the dugway construction, the party gathered at Dance Hall Rock to play music and dance to keep spirits up.

The other gateway community to this region, Boulder, was founded in 1889. Escalante and Boulder were connected by an all-weather road constructed by Civilian Conservation Corp crews in the 1930s. Electricity didn't reach Boulder until 1948, and it is claimed to be the last town in the lower 48 states to receive postal service by pack mule. The segment of Highway 12 going over Boulder Mountain was first paved in the 1980s. Even with the establishment of communities and basic infrastructure, the region remained remote and wild by most standards.

Visitation to the areas accessed by Hole in the Rock Road began to increase as surrounding public lands such as Bryce Canyon National Park in 1928 and Capitol Reef National Monument in 1938 (became a national park in 1971) were established and developed. Those increases in visitation became more pronounced when in 1972 Glen Canyon National Recreation Area was created. Then in 1996,

¹Historic and prehistoric information that provides the background for this introduction comes from Keiter, Robert, Sarah Gorge and Joro Walker (eds.) (1998) Visions of Grand Staircase-Escalante: Examining Utah's Newest National Monument, Utah Museum of Natural History and Wallace Stegner Center, unless otherwise noted.

significant visitation rates became the norm with the designation of Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument (GSENM). President William J. Clinton declared 1.7 million acres of BLM public lands, including those accessed by Hole in the Rock Road, to be one of the nation's largest national monuments. It was an unprecedented move because management of this new monument was allowed to stay under the purview of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Prior to 1996, newly designated national monuments were typically transferred to the National Park Service for management.

There has been a long and varied human connection to the landscape accessed today by Hole in the Rock Road. While historians have recorded much of the connection between people and this place in the past, changing pressures on the landscape from increased visitation and a wider variety of stakeholders required a fresh look at these connections. In response to these new demands, it was determined that a study should be undertaken to develop a recreational baseline study to better understand people's connection to this landscape in the present and their hopes for the future.

In the fall of 2012, GSENM entered into a five year assistance agreement with the Natural Resource Center (NRC) at Colorado Mesa University (CMU) in Grand Junction, Colorado to conduct a recreational experience baseline study of the Monument. A recreational baseline study is designed to develop an understanding of the recreational use and demands of a particular location at a particular time to establish a baseline for future planning or projects. This baseline will also serve as a starting point for conversations between the BLM and their partners in the surrounding communities and beyond regarding recreation in Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument. The study was planned to be conducted in five phases across the almost two-million acre monument, beginning in 2013 with the areas accessed by Hole in the Rock Road. Phase 2 of the study began in 2014 focused on the Grand Staircase region, and Phase 3 will focus on the landscapes within the Highway 89 corridor and on the Paria Plateau in 2015. Finally, the areas accessed by Highway 12 and the Burr Trail will be studied in 2016. The fifth year of the study will be dedicated to compiling a Monument-wide recreation experience baseline by combining and analyzing each of the earlier phases.

Although the principle focus of the study is on lands within GSENM, it is neither possible nor desirable to exclude the surrounding federal and state public lands from the dialogues. Lands adjacent to GSENM that are managed by federal or state agencies include Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Bryce Canyon and Capitol Reef National Parks, Dixie National Forest, Vermillion Cliffs National Monument, Kodachrome Basin and Escalante Petrified Forest State Parks, Utah State and Institutional Trust Lands, and lands managed by the BLM Kanab and Arizona Strip Field Offices.

A mixed methodology focus group, using audience polling in addition to engaging participants in open dialogue, was used to establish the recreation experience baseline. In this case, a focus group is a structured conversation with a limited number of participants (less than 25) regarding recreation in the Hole in the Rock area. The nature of the small-group setting and open-ended nature of the questions allows for interaction between the participants and the facilitator, and between the participants

themselves. This methodology allows participants to express the subtleties and nuances of what really matters to them about recreating in the area. This mixed methodology approach provides a data set that captures both a complete set of responses from each participant using audience polling technology as well as documents a rich set of notes from the group dialogue that gives context and depth to the polling data. Dr. Tim Casey, a Professor of Political Science at CMU and director of the NRC, was named as the principal investigator to conduct the focus groups and prepare the analytical reports.

When the five-year study is complete, each phase will collectively contribute to a rich understanding of the public's recreational preferences, their connections to GSENM and surrounding public lands, as well as the impact of recreational use of those lands on gateway communities.

Methodology

The mixed methodology focus group, using audience polling in addition to engaging participants in open dialogue, was determined to be the appropriate approach to establish the recreation experience baseline. This methodology captures both a complete set of responses from each participant using audience polling technology as well as documents a rich set of notes from the group dialog that gives context and depth to the polling data. Either approach used alone would leave an incomplete picture of the broad and deep relationships people have with this landscape.

The design of the focus group for data collection entailed a series of discussion questions intended to engage participants in open dialogue about their preferences, interests, and expectations so responses could be captured in their own words, followed by a list of choices that represented a spectrum of possible responses to the discussion questions that could be responded to via anonymous audience polling. The audience polling was captured by each participant using a handheld clicker linked to Turning Technologies software. The open dialogue comments were documented with audio recording equipment as well as by CMU researchers taking notes.

The focus group script covered all the major elements needed in planning for recreation on public lands: preferences for outcomes and experiences, interests and expectations, setting characteristics, activities, and the services needed to support the recreation experience. It included 19 questions, seven were open-ended, nine had prepared responses for audience polling, and three allowed for both polling and open-ended responses. All questions with prepared responses included an "other" option so participants weren't constrained by the prepared responses. Of the open-ended questions, one included a mapping exercise where participants noted special places on a map of the study area, and another included a series of black and white images that focused dialogue on perceptions of crowding and levels of development. The number of questions included in the script was tailored to allow for a 90-minute focus group. See Appendix 1 for a copy of the focus group handout.

A total of 17 focus groups were conducted between March and September 2013 for this first phase of the study. Twelve of those focus groups were conducted in person in the towns of Boulder and Escalante, Utah, in three separate visits in March, May and September. The remaining five focus groups were conducted digitally via the internet and conference call (these will be referred to throughout this document as “digital focus groups”). The digital focus groups were facilitated through Adobe Connect software and utilized the same discussion prompts and polls that were used during the in-person focus groups.

The in-person focus groups were conducted in different seasons and in different locations and settings, from the Outfitters and Guides Workshop in the late winter to the Escalante Canyons Art Festival in the fall, as well as several times that were not special occasions. The digital focus groups allowed for participation of those not living in the local area and not visiting during the times the in-person focus groups were scheduled.

There were a total of 123 participants in the 17 focus groups. Of the 123 participants in the study, 72 attended a focus group in Escalante, 25 in Boulder, and 26 participated in digital focus groups. The participants were allowed to remain anonymous, although their responses were tracked and collated by the use of audience polling technology. Some basic demographic information was collected at the beginning of each session. Participants were asked to provide home zip codes in order to identify how representative this study was of the overall population.

Outreach to populate the focus groups included:

- invitations shared at area board and committee meetings (i.e. Escalante/Boulder Chamber of Commerce, Monument Advisory Committee, Scenic Byway 12 Committee, etc.),
- direct outreach to partners and key stakeholders (GSENM Outfitters and Guides, Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners, Hole in the Rock Heritage Foundation, Monument Advisory Committee, LDS youth group leaders, Wilderness Society, etc.),
- press releases in local newspapers,
- flyers posted at Visitor Centers, local post offices, and in local businesses,
- postcards distributed to local businesses and in visitor centers,
- information packets with business cards in trailhead register boxes,
- door hangers provided to local hotels,
- group email notices,
- word of mouth, and
- direct e-mail or phone contact with any who expressed interest in participating.

Figure 1 (next page) indicates the date, time, and location of each focus group.

Figure 1: Focus Group Locations, Dates and Times

Focus Group Number	Group	Location	Date	Time
1	GSENM Outfitters & Guides	Escalante Visitor Center	3/8/2013	4:30 PM
2	Escalante Residents	Escalante City Office	3/9/2013	9:00 AM
3	Escalante Community Leaders	Escalante City Office	3/9/2013	11:00 AM
4	Boulder Community 1	Boulder Community Center	3/9/2013	2:00 PM
5	Escalante Visitor 1	Escalante Visitor Center	5/31/2013	10:00 AM
6	Escalante Visitor 2	Escalante Visitor Center	5/31/2013	4:00 PM
7	Escalante Visitor 3	Escalante Visitor Center	5/31/2013	7:00 PM
8	Boulder Community 2	Boulder Community Center	6/1/2013	1:00 PM
9	Digital Focus Group 1	Internet	6/26/2013	11:00 AM
10	Digital Focus Group 2	Internet	8/1/2013	3:00 PM
11	Digital Focus Group 3	Internet	8/26/2013	11:00 AM
12	Digital Focus Group 4	Internet	8/26/2013	3:00 PM
13	Digital Focus Group 5	Internet	8/26/2013	7:00 PM
14	Escalante Art Festival 1	Escalante City Office	9/27/2013	1:00 PM
15	Escalante Art Festival 2	Escalante City Office	9/27/2013	4:00 PM
16	Escalante Art Festival 3	Escalante City Office	9/28/2013	11:00 AM
17	Escalante Art Festival 4	Escalante City Office	9/28/2013	2:00 PM

The methodology of audience polling allows each participant the opportunity to weigh in on every area of the research. This is important to avoid a wide variety of social setting dynamics that arise in traditional focus group settings, such as only hearing from extroverted participants who dominate a conversation. The polling also minimizes the undue influence of peer settings in small communities. If an individual is worried about the repercussions of their responses mentioned aloud in a focus group within their community, they are not likely to respond, or not as accurately. However, if they can anonymously record their preferences, they may feel more liberated to express their true opinion. The audience polling using electronic recording devices preserves participants' anonymity while being able to link all of their answers together for the purposes of analysis. In traditional focus groups, one might be able to link comments and preferences back to a particular focus group, but unless the group was small and homogenous, it would be difficult to determine preferences for groups, or how those preferences might interact with other preferences (i.e. if a person is seeking solitude, do they choose particular activities or settings to achieve that outcome?). Traditionally, a survey was needed to link these variables; however, a survey often misses the nuance of the dialogue. The advantage of using audience polling and open-ended questions in a focus group setting is that participants are allowed to clarify what they mean when they select certain responses.

It is important to note the limitations of using this data. Because the sampling of participants was not random, it would be difficult to suggest this analysis is generalizable to the preferences of the entire population that might be interested in the area, and no attempt to do so is done here. However, effort

was made to hear from a broad sample of groups who have a connection to the landscape including both locals and visitors that were willing to spend 90 minutes participating in the conversation. Participants did self-select to join the study, but given the diversity of participants and the depth of data gathered, this study is certainly defensible as a solid baseline for recreational experiences in the areas accessed by Hole in the Rock Road.

Demographics

Participation in the study was anonymous and voluntary and no personal information was gathered or retained from the participants other than the two demographic questions of zip code and affiliation. Although participants were allowed to remain anonymous, their responses were tracked and collated by the use of audience polling technology. Participants were asked to provide home zip codes in order to identify how representative this study was of the overall population. The majority of participants came from zip codes in Utah (85%). Most of those came from Escalante (27.6%) or Boulder (23.5%), the two gateway communities to the area, as well as Kanab (9%), and the Salt Lake area (3.5%). Other participants represented a total of nine other states and a Canadian province. There were participants from 41 unique zip codes.

Participants were also asked to select one affiliation (role) they played in relation to the landscape. Those selections included: visitor, local resident, community leader, outfitter/guide, business owner, or other. Often individuals had more than one affiliation (for example a business owner might also be a local resident, or an outfitter might also be a visitor), but they were asked to choose their primary affiliation and respond to all questions "wearing that hat." The majority of the participants selected affiliations associated with the local area: local resident (40%), business owner (10%), and community leader (2%). Visitors represented 25% of the total and outfitters/guides made up 11%. When participants chose "other" for their affiliation, they were asked to explain their selection. Most indicated they were part-time residents/part-time visitors and did not feel comfortable selecting one or the other category. All but one was either a part time resident, a past resident, or a hopeful future resident.

As the analysis below will show, there were points of convergence among the different affiliations, but there were also real differences between them on some points. These demographic distinctions are important to understand not only visitor experiences on public lands, but how those compare to local resident expectations and experiences on landscapes they have a very strong sense of attachment to through years, often generations, of interaction. Understanding these similarities and differences is absolutely essential for agencies to effectively manage public lands in partnership with local communities, while balancing local demands with visitor expectations constitutive of a broader national mandate to manage those lands.

Figure 2 shows the affiliation of all study participants; Figure 3 shows the affiliation of the in-person focus group participants; and Figure 4 shows the affiliation of the digital focus group participants.

Figure 2: Affiliation of All Participants in Study

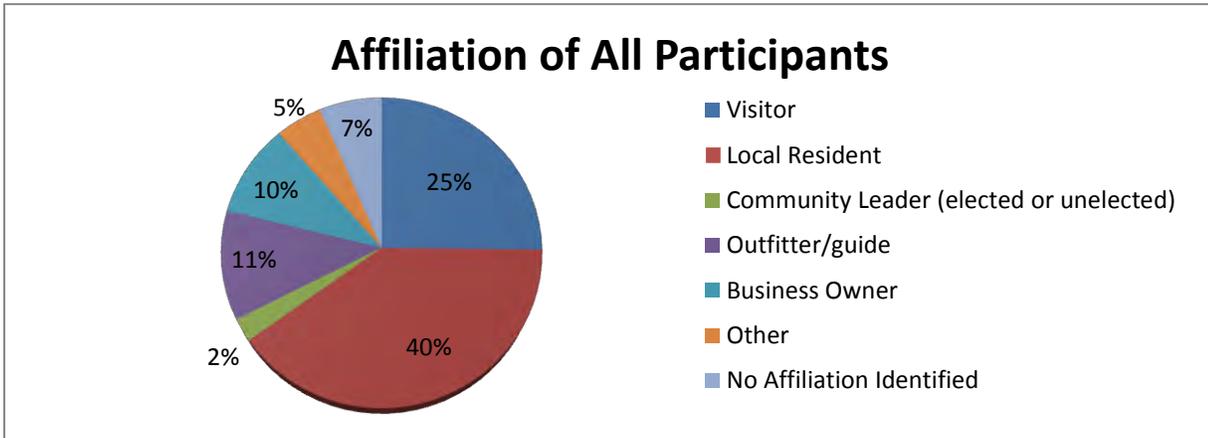


Figure 3: Affiliation of In-person Focus Groups Participants

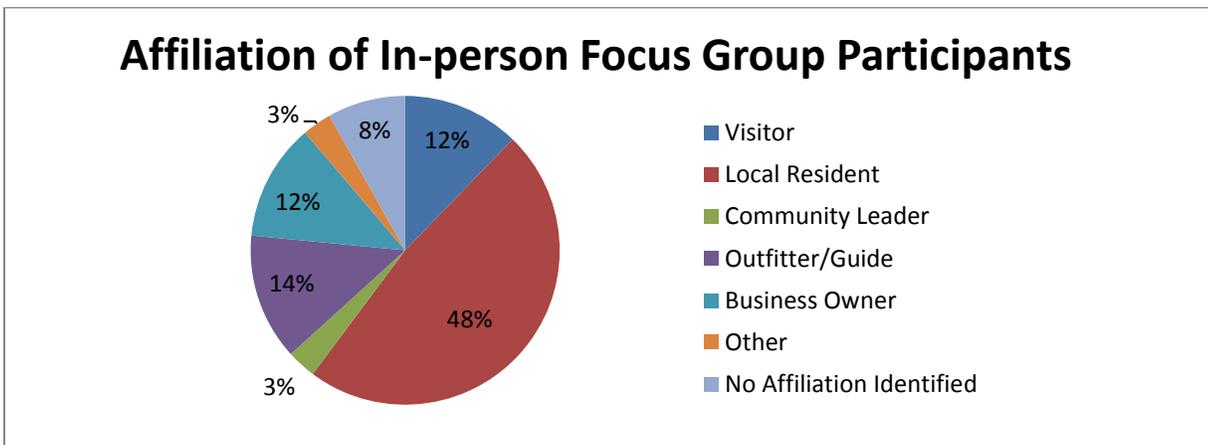
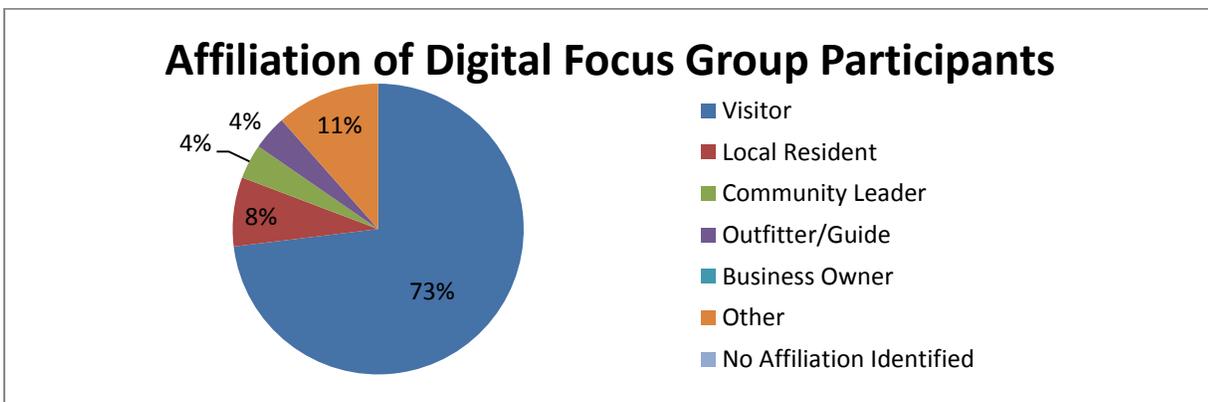


Figure 4: Affiliation of Digital Focus Group Participants



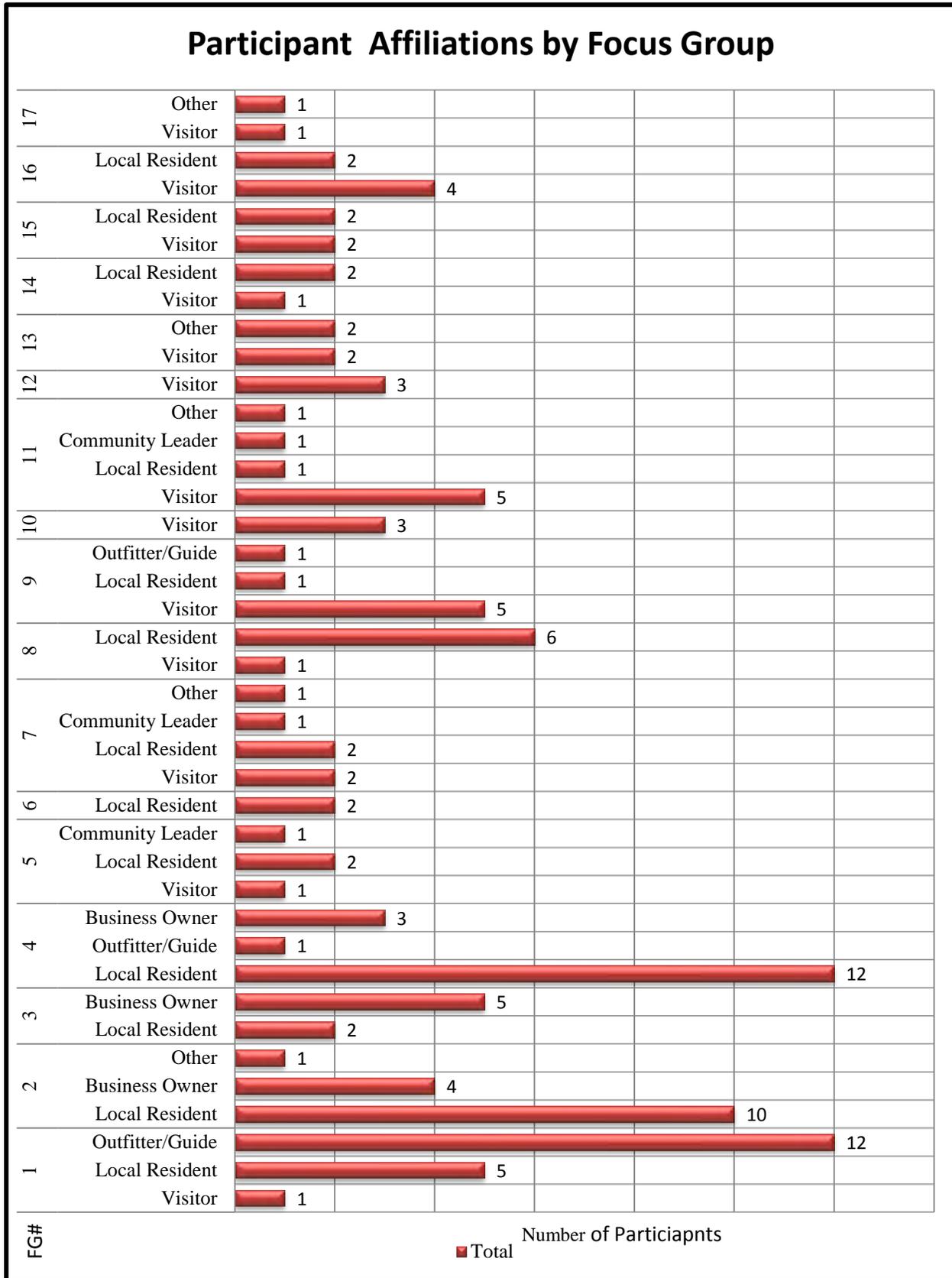
One of the challenges of an in-person focus group on public lands is the ratio of local residents to visitors that participate. Local residents are more likely to be aware of the focus groups and be willing to attend, whereas visitors are not as likely to be aware of the sessions nor are they as likely to take 90 minutes from their vacation to join a focus group. The focus group affiliation statistics revealed that the digital focus groups were valuable for reaching participants with a connection to the landscape but who do not live in the areas adjacent to the Monument. However, the in-person focus groups were critical for understanding how the participants living in gateway communities regard recreation in the Hole in the Rock Road area. Adding the five digital focus groups allowed a greater overall balance of participation and a more complete representation of the recreational experiences and expectations of those who recreate on the landscape.

Part of the dynamics of any focus group is the make-up of the participants as they interact with each other. As such, it is instructive to consider the affiliations of participants broken down by individual focus groups. Not only does the demographic constitution of the group matter, but the size of the group matters as well. Smaller groups and more homogenous groups often create an inviting atmosphere for participants to voice their opinions more freely, while larger, more diverse groups afford participants the opportunity to hear the perspectives of individuals that may more accurately represent the multitude of stakeholders engaged in any public landscape. This study has a blend of both small, homogenous and larger, diverse groups to sample the best from both possibilities (see Figure 5, next page).

Data Analysis

The data analysis that follows combines the polling data from each question with the spoken comments from the meetings as those particular questions were discussed. The result is a comprehensive and nuanced collection of participant preferences that will serve as a recreational experience baseline for future planning in the Hole in the Rock area and across GSENM as these results are compared with other phases of the research on other regions of the Monument and surrounding public lands. For recreation planning, land managers need to know the desirable outcomes people are seeking for when recreating on public lands. They also need to know the activities that people engage in, as well as the landscape setting characteristics that support those interests and expectations. Finally, they need to understand the essential services provided by the agency or surrounding communities that support recreation on the public lands. The data analysis section is divided into these essential elements needed for planning and management of the Hole in the Rock area. This recreational experience baseline data will not only be useful for planning, but it will serve as a background for conversations that BLM can have with its local public and private partners and service providers.

Figure 5: Participant Affiliations by Focus Group

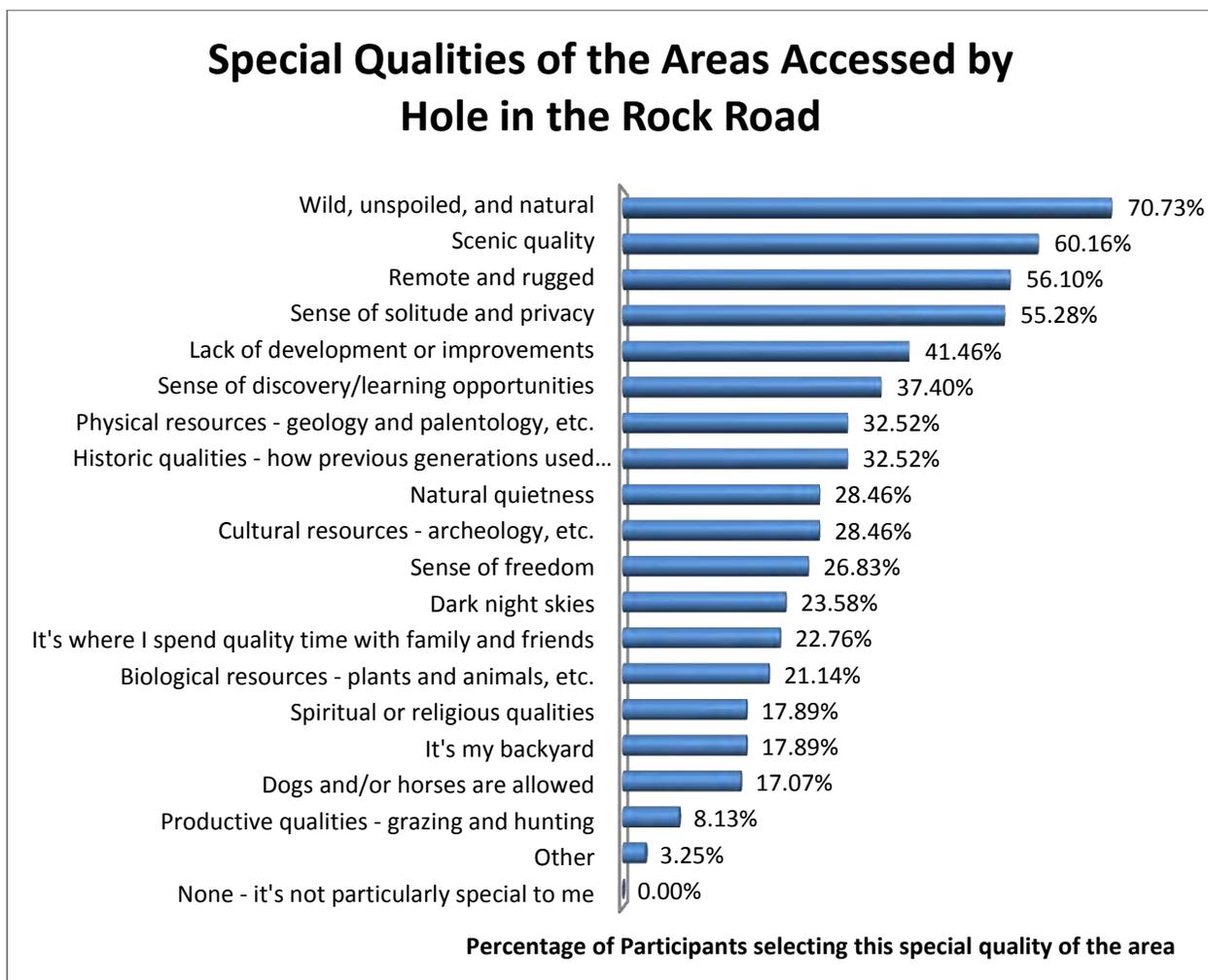


Desirable and Undesirable Experiences and Outcomes:

What are the qualities of the Hole in the Rock area that make it special?

Initially, focus group participants were asked to share the qualities of the Hole in the Rock area that make it special. A wide variety of responses were given during the open-ended dialogue prior to the prepared list of responses was shared for polling. To allow for analysis, the dialogue responses were grouped with the choices selected through the polling. Comments were coded in terms of what response or responses they related to in the polling selections. There were several comments in each section that didn't neatly fit into the choices offered in the preset audience polling. These responses were coded and grouped according to their concern. Only a representative sample of all the comments is located in this report, but the total comments as well as the audio recordings for all focus groups were given to the BLM as part of the administrative record of the research. The responses are discussed in the order of their popularity as measured by the percentage of participants in the entire study (all focus groups) that selected them. Figure 6 (below) shows the overall distribution of responses by all participants.

Figure 6: Special Qualities of the Areas Accessed by Hole in the Rock Road



By way of comparison, Appendix 2, Figure 25 shows the distribution of responses broken down by community where the focus group took place (Escalante, Boulder, or digitally via the internet) as well as the total of all preferences for each special quality captured by polling.

- **Wild, unspoiled, and natural**

The option of wild, unspoiled and natural was by far the most often selected reason that the area is special with 70.7% of all respondents selecting that option. Most affiliations selected this quality with more than 80% of those identifying as "visitors" and "other" and 78.6% of outfitters and guides choosing it. This was a more popular selection for Boulder participants (80%) than for Escalante (65.3%) or digital (76.9%) participants. Responses to the initial question of why the area is special included:

"I come to this area to submit myself to wilderness. I realize this is not an officially designated wilderness area but I look for its natural state, none or as light human touched as possible. Although it is expected to have many visitors, I expect those visitors to have to face the wild it presents."

"Wilderness. Quiet use and solitude opportunities that don't exist elsewhere."

"Access to some of the wildest country in the lower 48."

- **Scenic quality**

The scenic quality of the place contributed to the specialness of the area for more than 60% of those responding. Although this quality was not the single most selected, it enjoyed the broadest support with more than 50% of every affiliation choosing this quality as a reason the area is special. Digital participants selected this quality more often (69.2%) than Escalante (56.9%) or Boulder (60.2%) participants. Responses to the initial question of why the area is special included:

"Alien landscape—most beautiful place on earth—remoteness, isolation, strangeness—I look at man-made objects all the time but I come here to see something natural."

"Relatively undeveloped and open, beautiful portal for adventure."

"To me beauty is a bit different than scenic quality-- it's more overwhelming to the senses, and less tame than scenic quality."

"The beauty and openness of landscape."

- **Remote and rugged**

More than half of all participants (56.1%) also expressed that the specialness of the place is

tied to it being remote and rugged. Nearly two-thirds of both visitors and local residents found this a special quality of the area. Half of the affiliated outfitters and guides made this a selection. Digital participants chose this quality (69.2%) significantly more than the average selection rate, and certainly higher than Escalante participants (48.6%). Many comments related to this quality describe the value of struggling with the landscape when recreating in the area. Responses to the initial question of why the area is special included:

"Remoteness, the ability to have no development in the area, the rare quality of not having crowds of people around."

"It takes some effort to achieve some reward—whatever you're looking for—if you drop from a helicopter or climb out of a car, it's not the same as hiking in."

"Naturally limits amount of usage (because of hard access)."

"Long dirt road, trailhead, aids feeling of going deeper into the place."

"The price of admission is adversity."

- **Sense of solitude and privacy**

The final quality of the area selected by more than half (55.4%) of all participants had to do with the sense of solitude and privacy provided by the landscape. Nearly every affiliation emphasized this solitude quality as special in the area. Business owners chose it the least, but even 41.7% of them identified the solitude and privacy as a special quality. Responses to the initial question of why the area is special included:

"Can indeed have solitude, absolutely spectacular landscape, and there is still opportunity for solitude since road is not developed for access."

"Solitude and not everybody can get out there. Makes it exclusive."

"Lots of solitude, plenty of space for everyone's enjoyment."

"Important to be by myself."

"Few places left where seeking solitude and naturalness can still be met."

- **Lack of development and improvement**

Many of the participants (41.5%) attributed the lack of developments and improvements in the area as a reason the area is special. This was an important quality for nearly half of visitors and local residents, and 42% of business owners. There is a real gap between Boulder participants (60%) and the average response or the Escalante participant selection rate (33.3%), which is almost 10% below the overall average. Responses to the initial question of

why the area is special included:

"The fact that it has not been developed, paved, and wired."

"Undeveloped, still rural."

"No marked trails. Spread out and you just keep going. Marked trails would increase the concentration of people."

"One of the things about area compared to other areas; doesn't have great access by roads so you don't get OHV activity; and can get remote."

- **Sense of exploration and discovery**

Another strongly supported (37.4%) special quality of the area was the sense of exploration and discovery. This quality was preferred by Escalante participants (45.8%) much more frequently than the average, and certainly more than the Boulder participants' choice of this quality (24%) which is below the average. This quality was particularly important to business owners with two-thirds of all business owners selecting it. This was particularly pronounced in the open-ended discussion of special qualities. Responses to the initial question of why the area is special included:

"You can be in one place, take the next bend, and be in a new landscape."

"It is unusual and very different than what I am used to."

"Could explore it for years and never visit the same place twice; never see the same thing twice."

"I could visit the same place bringing other people there, and be surprised even as a guide in that space."

- **Historic qualities**

Many participants identified the historic qualities (how previous generations used the area) (32.5%) as reasons that the area is special to them. These qualities were of particular importance to those identifying as community leaders, business owners, and "other" with more than 40% of each of those groups selecting historic qualities. Again, there is a real gap between Escalante participants' selection of historic qualities (40.3%) and the Boulder participants' selection of historic (12%), with the digital participants (30.8%) near the average on this quality. Responses to the initial question of why the area is special included:

"I feel what took place here in the scope of settling the West is one of the most incredible events. The story should be told. We tell these kinds of stories everywhere in the country"

and it should happen here, too."

"The short canyons in this area are great for limited amounts of time. The historical reference to people using this area before is intriguing."

- **Physical, cultural, and biological resource qualities**

Others noted resources such as geology and paleontology (32.5%), archeology (28.5%), and the biological resources such as plants and animals (21.1%) as qualities that contribute to the area's specialness. 41.7 % of the business owners participating selected biological resources which is more than double the percentage compared to any other group except visitors who selected biology 25% of the time.

"The natural beauty, especially biologically, and a lot of that depends on it being pristine."

- **Social qualities**

Social qualities were identified by fewer, but still an important number of participants. They selected "it's my backyard" (17.9%) or "it's where I spend quality time with family and friends" (22.8%) as some of the reasons why the area was special to them. These two social qualities were significantly more important to Escalante participants (25% "backyard" and 29.2% "family and friends"), than for Boulder participants (12% "backyard" and no selection for "family and friends"). Those affiliated with community leadership also highlighted the spiritual or religious qualities of the area, while 43% of those identifying as outfitters and guides placed their selections in the area's specialness with a sense of freedom. Responses to the initial question of why the area is special included:

"I have enjoyed the freedom that I felt when I went there. I do not like feeling like I am being micro-managed."

- **Other qualities**

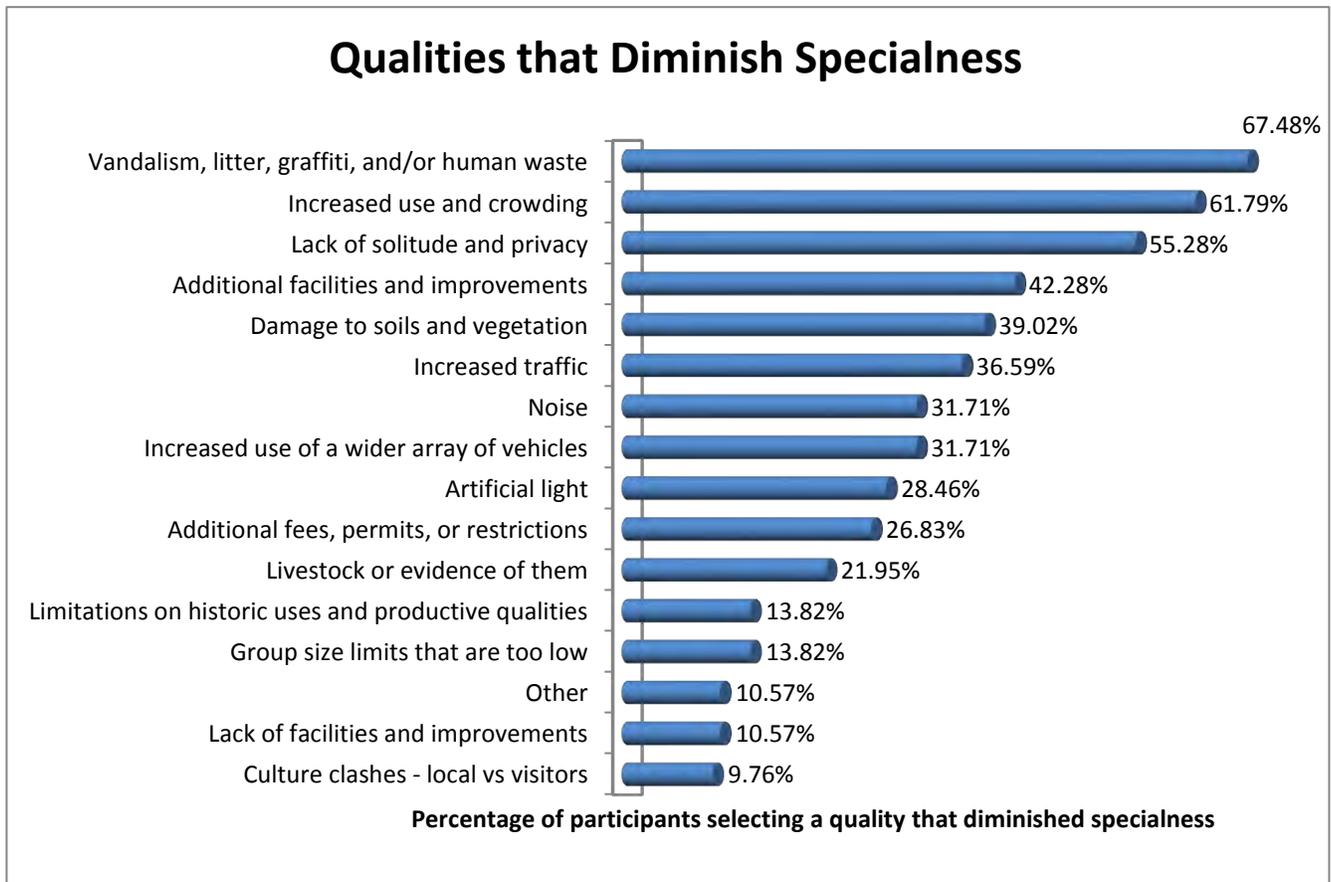
Finally, qualities of the area that support other qualities such as wildness, remoteness, and sense of solitude were selected by some participants. 28.5% of all respondents indicated that natural quietness and dark night skies (17.9) added to the specialness of the place for them. These aesthetic qualities of the area were particularly salient for digital participants (42.3% for each quality) while the dark night skies were relatively less valued by the Boulder participants (only 8% selected it).

In terms of responses that were not commonly selected, participants seemed less interested in identifying the productive qualities of the area such as hunting and grazing with only 8.1% of all responses selecting that category. One might have expected a higher percentage selecting that quality given the large sampling (40% of all respondents) of local residents traditionally associated of those qualities in landscapes proximate to their communities.

What could or does diminish the specialness of the area?

While it is important to understand why people think a place special, it is equally important to understand what might diminish that specialness and affect their connection to place. After discussing why the Hole in the Rock area is special, participants were asked to identify, “*What could or does diminish the specialness of the place?*” After the open-ended dialogue about the threats to specialness, the participants were given prepared list of qualities from which to choose using the audience polling clickers. Figure 7 (below) shows the percentage of responses selected by all participants. Details about the most commonly selected responses are then discussed in more depth.

Figure 7: Qualities that Diminish Specialness



By way of comparison, Appendix 2, Figure 26 shows the distribution of preferences broken down by community where the focus group took place (Escalante, Boulder, or Digital as well as the total of all preferences for each diminishing quality captured by clicker responses).

- **Vandalism, litter, graffiti, and/or human waste**

The most common response (67.5%) to the question of what diminishes the specialness of the Hole in the Rock area was vandalism, litter, graffiti and /or human waste. This is not surprising when one considers that the wild, unspoiled and natural condition of the area as well as its scenic qualities were the two most popular responses to the question of the area's specialness. Over 65% of every affiliation except community leaders selected this response. Only one-third of the community leaders selected this quality. Participants in the Escalante focus groups were particularly concerned about these issues with three-quarters of all those participants selecting this response. Responses to the question of what could or does diminish the specialness of the area included:

"Disrespect for the land and for other visitors. Graffiti. Tromping things that are nice or climbing fragile things."

"Garbage, toilet paper. They don't use 'leave no trace' philosophy."

"Defacing of the rocks. Trash."

"People do that as a day trip--toilet paper and a big mess left behind."

- **Increased use and crowding**

A significant number of participants (61.8%) indicated that increased use and crowding would diminish the character of the Hole in the Rock area. Again, this shouldn't come as a surprise given that more than half of all participants selected the specialness quality of sense solitude and privacy. More than 50% of every affiliation except community leaders selected increased use and crowding as a threat to the specialness of the place. It is noteworthy that not a single community leader made this selection. This threat to the specialness of the place was particularly salient for the Boulder participants (76%). The comments of those selecting this quality give us a more nuanced understanding of just what it is that concerns them about this quality. Responses to the question of what could or does diminish the specialness of the area included:

"Allowing off-road vehicle traffic would be disastrous. Too many users can diminish experience. Industrialization..."

"Over-population, over-crowding. Driving down Hole in the Rock Road is unique in itself—washboard and steep grades that get you primed for the experience.."

"Moab we don't want to be—dealing with the parking problems at the trailheads; parking and too crowded on the trails."

"Too many people or crowds go down to Calf Creek and it's packed with people and the

noise. I don't like to be crammed into a small area with lots of people."

- **Lack of solitude and privacy**

The lack of solitude and privacy which was selected as a threat to the specialness of the area by 55.3% of all participants and by more than 50% of all affiliations except community leaders and those who self-identified as "other". Not a single community leader selected this concern, and only 25% of the "other" affiliations selected this quality as a concern. Lack of solitude and privacy was particularly salient for Boulder participants (68%) which are noticeably higher than the overall average. Responses to the question of what could or does diminish the specialness of the area regarding solitude and privacy seem to lament the changing nature of visitation on the landscape with comments such as:

"The first time I came, I hiked over 300 miles and saw only one vehicle but not anymore."

- **Facilities and improvements**

There were a number of concerns expressed by most of the focus group participants regarding the paving of Hole in the Rock Road and other facilities and improvements that could diminish the specialness of the place. 42.3% of all participants selected additional facilities and improvements as something that would diminish the specialness. About 50% of those identifying as local residents expressed these concerns, while 45% of the visitors selected this issue. Nearly two-thirds of those selecting "other" as their affiliation were concerned about additional facilities, but only 28.6% of the outfitters and guides identified this variable as a concern. The community leaders and those not selecting an affiliation did not see this as a potential threat to the specialness.

Few participants (10.6%) indicated that the lack of facilities and improvements would diminish the specialness of the area. Not a single Boulder participant selected that choice.

For those that expressed concern about additional facilities and improvements, the road and access to the region was a primary focus. Most of the participants expressed concern, either through clicker, verbally, or both, that they were not interested in actually paving Hole in the Rock Road. In two of the focus groups, there were so many comments on paving the road, that we actually offered it as a write-in option (#9) for the clicker responses.

Responses to the question of what could or does diminish the specialness of the area related to facilities and improvements included:

"I'm pretty resistant to change, development that might change the character, don't want to pave the road."

"Infrastructure, development. Paved roads. More noise from off-road vehicles. Crowds of people."

"Paving Hole in the Rock Road, which would encourage lots of visitation, opening camping areas to large groups."

"Paved road—many more people would visit and reduce solitude and more impact on the land."

"Why do so many Germans come here? Vastness and remoteness and accessible (to current degree) ... but if they pave the road, it reduces specialness."

"Road keeps getting wider and increases speed."

"Roads that aren't supposed to be there. Driving on roads that are not supposed to be there."

"Over-development which would provide access to a lot of sites that should be remote."

"I'm very opposed to any development except maybe undeveloped campsites."

"Any kind of over-development – diminishes remoteness."

- **Increased traffic and increased use of a wider array of vehicles**

Related to the improvements in access are concerns about increased traffic (36.6%) and the increased use of a wider array of vehicles in the area (31.7%). Increased traffic was of most concern to local residents (41%) and outfitters and guides (43%), while the increased use of a wider array of vehicles was of concern to visitors (45.2%), local residents (50%), business owners (41.7%), and those identifying as "other" (50%). The concern about a wider array of vehicles was most pronounced in the digital focus groups (42.3%), while the concerns about increased traffic were more than double for participants in Escalante (41.7%) than in Boulder (20%). Comments indicate that the traffic is a result of improvements to the road and the speed that such improvements facilitate. Responses to the question of what could or does diminish the specialness of the area related to vehicle use and traffic included:

"Out of proportion to the experience—people are driving too fast. I'm not going there for the speed. I like the slowness."

"The yahoo contingent –bombing down the road too fast and taking the landscape very lightly."

- **Damage to soils and vegetation**

A significant number of participants (39%) expressed a concern for damage to soils and vegetation. Interestingly, damage to soil and vegetation was most salient for those identifying with the affiliation of "other" (67%), outfitters and guides (50%), and local residents (45%), but less so with visitors (35%) and business owners (33%). Responses to the question of what could or does diminish the specialness of the area related to damage to soils and vegetation included:

"Social roads and trails that are not on the map—driving off the road or foot trails leading to the same place."

"Disrespect for the land and for other visitors. Graffiti. Tromping things that are nice or climbing fragile things"

- **Noise and Artificial Light**

Similar percentages of participants selected noise (31.7%) and artificial light (28.5%) as threats to the specialness of the Hole in the Rock area. These concerns were most pronounced in those identifying as "other" with two-thirds choosing these two variables. 42% of visitors also selected noise as a principle concern. This is reflected in the digital focus groups with 42.3% of those participants identifying noise as an issue and 53.8% selecting artificial light. Responses to the question of what could or does diminish the specialness of the area related to noise and artificial light included:

"Increased noise in this very quiet place would be detrimental; quiet makes this an incredible and rare place to visit."

"Any resource extraction—noise, light, air pollution."

"Large, noisy groups."

"Lighting from outside, or even inside, that would impact the night sky."

- **Administrative controls such as: additional fees, permits, or restrictions, and group size limits**

Less than one-third (26.9%) of participants selected additional fees, permits, or restrictions as a threat to the specialness of the place, and only about half (13.8%) were concerned with group size limits set too low. It is worth noting that these two items were selected in high percentages of self-identified community leaders, but did not receive a majority selection from any other affiliation. In fact, the two qualities selected by a majority of the community leaders (additional fees and restrictions and group sizes that are too low) were not chosen by more than one-third of any other affiliation group. This displays a complete disconnect between the

community leaders concerns for diminishing qualities and all other groups. This was most surprising for outfitters and guides, whom one might expect to be concerned with additional fees and restrictions, but instead the outfitters and guides had the smallest affiliation selection at 14.3% of all groups. And visitors (3.2%) clearly had little interest in the group size variable. Responses to the question of what could or does diminish the specialness of the area related administrative controls included:

"One thing might be the restriction of guides and outfitters to take me "back there", to tell me about it. About the historical value, geology. Restriction of special uses/permits."

"Continually met monitoring [like park rangers], a great deal of government scrutiny."

"... restriction of my ability to go where I want and do what I want. Diminishes if limits are placed."

"Also if access were restricted I and those I represent would be against that. I think there should be camping for large groups. Large youth groups could learn so much from what takes place there."

- **Livestock or evidence of them**

Livestock or evidence of them was selected by 22% of participants in the focus groups as diminishing the specialness of the area. Interestingly, the community that was least concerned about impacts of livestock was Boulder (19.4%) and the community most concerned about the impact of livestock was Escalante (28%). No outfitters/guides or community leader affiliation selected livestock as a concern at all, while the largest affiliation percentage expressing a concern for the impacts of livestock were those who selected "other" (33%). These "others" were almost exclusively part time residents. Responses to the question of what could or does diminish the specialness of the area related to livestock included:

"Overgrazing and ORV use impacts on biodiversity."

"Grazing damage—archeological sites impacted in the past but not currently."

"I go out with my dog and we'll be going along and then suddenly its bark, bark, bark, and my dog is chasing a calf."

"Cattle, not cows, dispersed. I would prefer that they were not all over the place."

- **Limitations on historic uses and productive qualities**

Finally, there was some concern that limitations on historic uses and productive qualities does or could diminish the specialness of the area. While only 13.8% of all participants selected this as a variable, their comments are telling of the concern that these

traditional uses and access to be excluded:

"{something that would diminish the specialness of the area for me is...}... outfitters and guides who are not able to support their families; opening to more people can encourage. Guides also source of education in "trail etiquette."

"Closed road sign."

- **Other comments**

There were a number of comments related to attachment to and knowledge of the place that were not easily associated with one of the provided options. Several of these comments focused on the lack of education about the place for both visitors and local residents as well as a corresponding lack of connection to the place. A sample of these comments includes:

"In the Smart phone era with mix and match trail system people create social trails to connect points because they can know where they are exactly on the landscape"

"...worry about some of the people using it—not prepared to be out on it."

"Lack of attachment to area (with paved road), too easy to get to, so don't get a good grasp of what the place is about."

How has the use of the area changed in the last five years? Has it been for the better or worse?

The next question revolved around the nature of change the participants had noticed in the landscape, and their perception of whether those changes had made things better or worse. These questions are related, and when discussing their answers, participants were encouraged to speak both of how much change they had noticed, as well as whether it had made things better or worse, and why. All participants were asked to record their selections on a series of two Likert scales using the audience polling clickers. The first scale recorded how much change in use they noticed in the area over the last five years from strongly decreased to strongly increase with a neutral value of no change in the middle of a 5-point scale. The second scale recorded whether they felt that the change they had indicated had made things much better to much worse with a neutral no change in the middle of a 5-point scale.

Figure 8 (next page) shows the response to the value of the change depending on how the participant answered the question of how much change they noticed in use over the last five years.

Figure 8: Nature and Value of Use Change

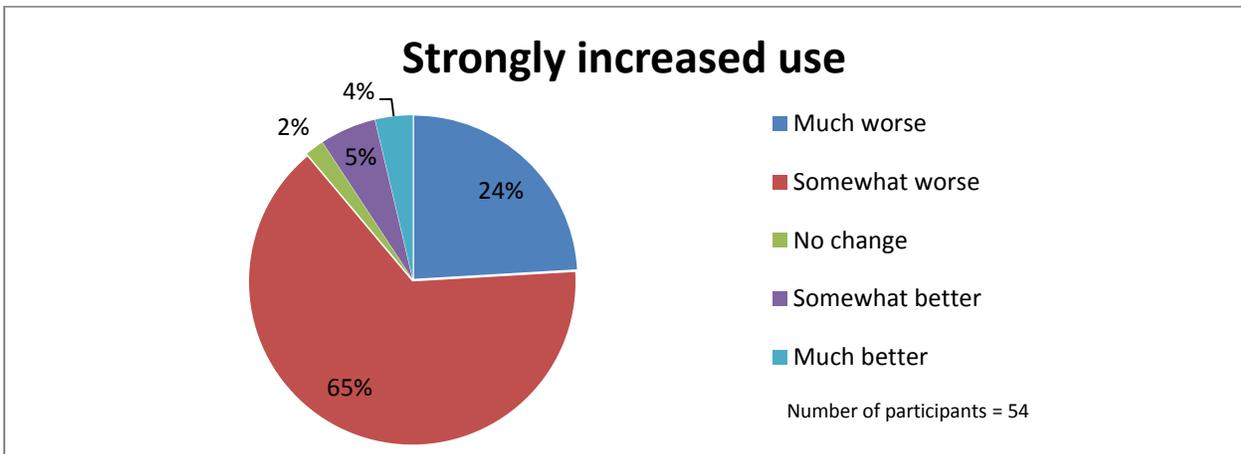
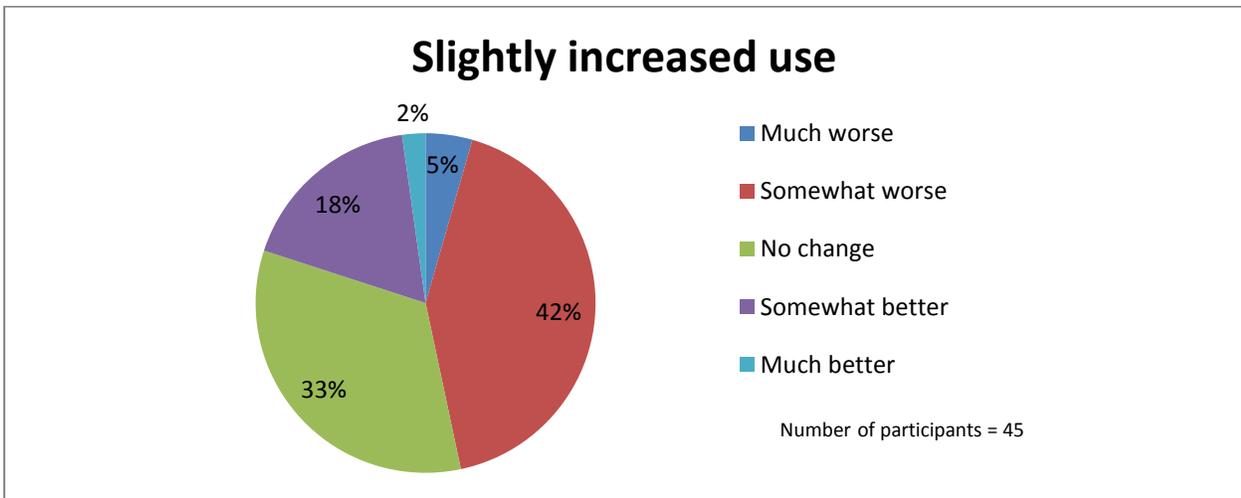
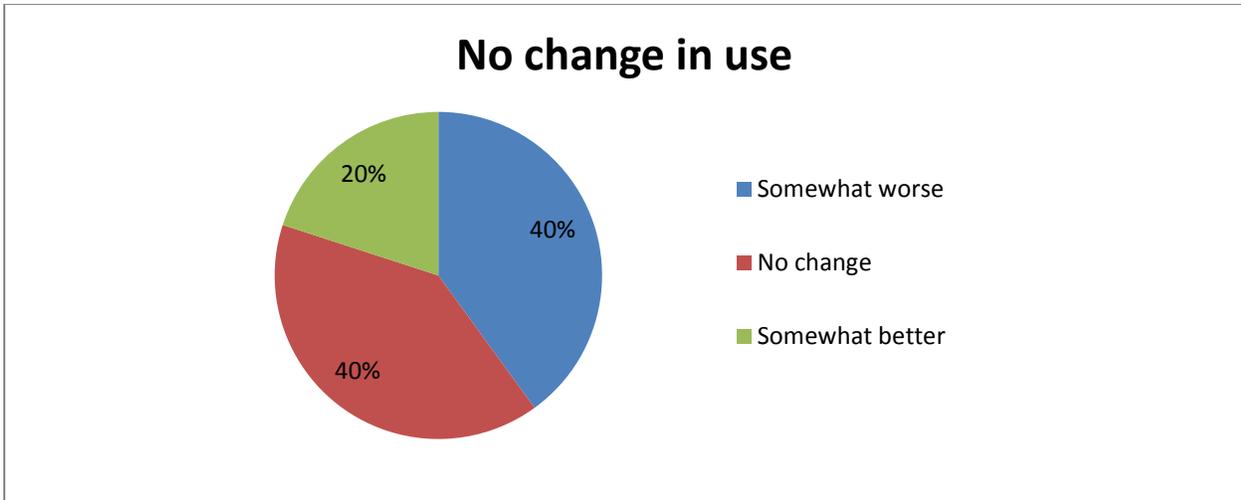


Figure 9 (next page) combines the answers each individual provided along with their affiliation. Red and yellow colors indicate that things have gotten worse (somewhat or much worse), green is neutral indicating no change, blue and purple indicate that things have gotten better (somewhat or much better) and gray indicates no response. The length of the bars indicates how many responses were received in each instance. With the exception of the business leaders, the vast majority of participants thought things had become worse in some way over the last five years. Only one person out of all 123 participants indicated that use had decreased, and only a small number thought that use had not changed. Most participants thought there had been a slight or strong increase in use of the area. When participants responded that the increase had been slight, some local residents and several visitors thought there was little change. But regardless of affiliation, once participants thought that the use of the area had strongly increased, almost every recorded response also indicated that things got worse in some way. This is significant because the single most common response from the local residents and visitors was that use had strongly increased. This sense of a worsening situation because of increased use was not shared by the business owners who largely saw the slight increase in use as making things somewhat better.

While the responses from the participants recorded through the clickers suggest that participants were singularly concerned about the worsening situation associated with increased use over the last five years, their dialogue offered a more nuanced view. Many mentioned that the condition of the area could both be better and worse for different reasons and they could make adjustments to visit the area in off times if they were concerned about crowding. For example, a sampling of responses included:

"Somewhat worse...more people and more crowds. But being a resident, I can go out in winter when there are no people. But also somewhat better because of what it brings to the Town of Escalante. And I am on the art festival committee, so I am one of the people who is encouraging increasing people coming to visit."

"Mixed bag - nice that more people are getting out into the backcountry, but not nice that many are trampling it and destroying the peace and solitude. More education on leave no trace principles would help."

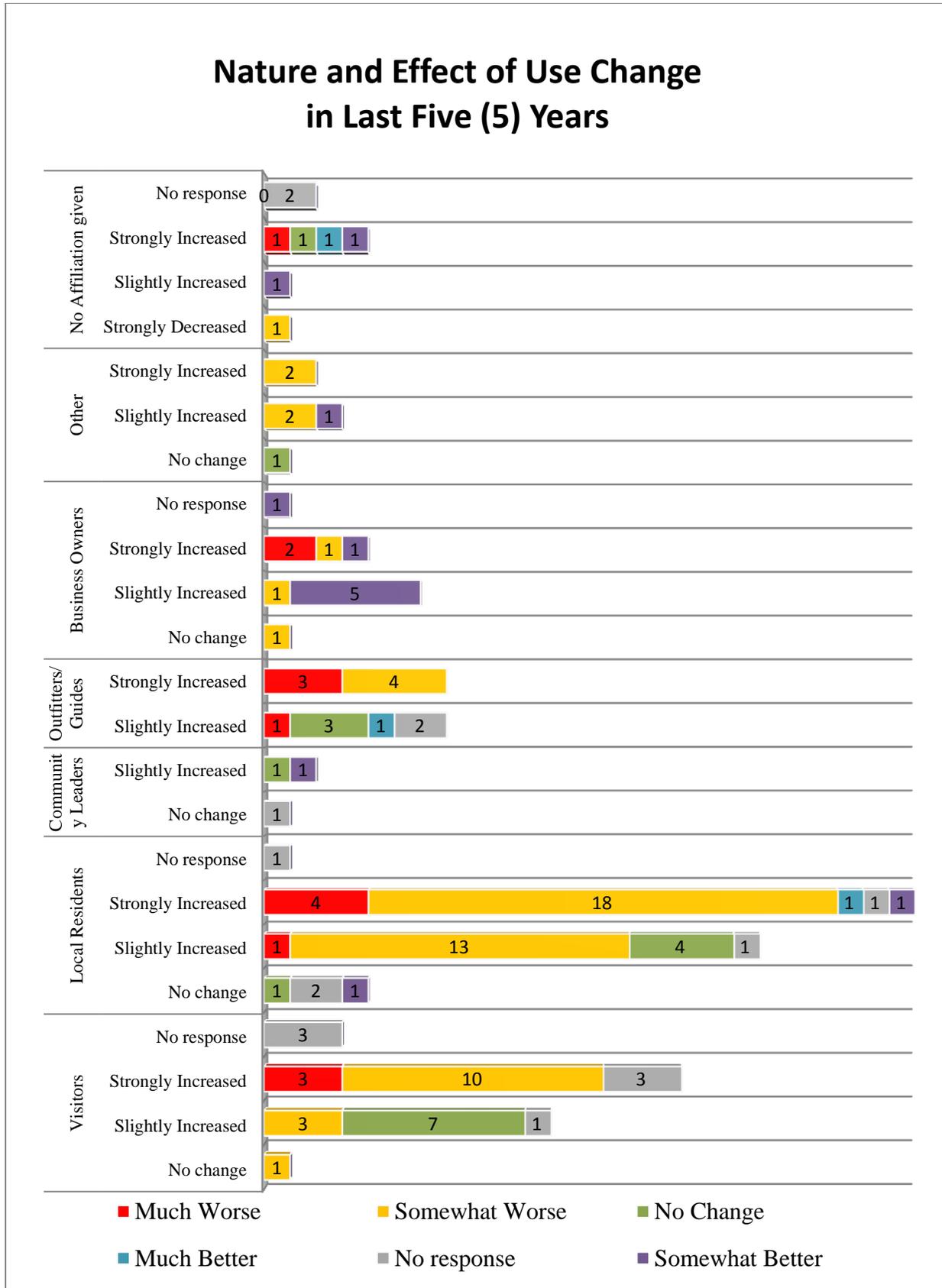
"Nice that more people are in the backcountry, but the traffic jams and some of the uses are without knowledge, education."

"Difficulty with question is that it's both. More trash because more people. But haven't solved because of the trade-offs to get trash collected."

"Groups of young people who want to have the experience of going to Hole in the Rock—increased, but for the better for religious purposes, but a less good experience without facilities."

"Use has dramatically increased and that is not for the better. Limiting visitation is not the answer, but maybe better directing folks to certain places that can accommodate the use, and also not promoting some of the more remote and sensitive locations."

Figure 9: Nature and Value of Use Change by Affiliation



"The additional controls on visitor use have been helpful at managing impacts of increased visitation. I really appreciate the increased visitor information that's been provided by the interagency teams, helping to build a stronger environmental ethic. Nonetheless, despite the best education, more visitors is going to have substantial impacts."

The discussion about change in use and whether it made things better or worse was some of the liveliest in many focus groups. Many agreed that increased use would put more pressure on the area and could decrease its specialness, but there was a sense that fairness demanded the landscape should be shared. In several cases, the sharing of the landscape was, in fact, one of the really special experiences of the landscape, particularly among local residents who have developed a sense of pride about the place. The idea that sharing this special place with others could even be a strategy to develop connections to the place leading to the increased support for the preservation of the place. Some of the comment about this included:

"Without people going into wild country, we're not going to keep it for long."

"Increased - somewhat better. Good because it's a beautiful space and we want it to be preserved."

Finally, there were a number of comments by those who simply saw the increased use and changing demographics of users to be a serious threat to the long-term preservation of the experience and the landscape. For example:

"I thought strong increase and somewhat worse. Lots of places where I used to go and get down to the trail without seeing people. People everywhere and trash."

"In my case, not so much an increase in use but an increase in people who don't know where they're going. I could tell you horror stories. Following GPS to some coordinates they found on the internet and they have no idea. They are going the wrong way."

"Increased and more people who don't appreciate where they are going—trash, graffiti. And I have a problem with people on 4-wheelers going wherever they want. See them going into a meadow and doing wheelies or seeing how far up the rock face they can go."

"Increased and for the worse based on my own opinion and customers (backcountry users). Information about area has increased - focus in magazines and other places on certain areas become high impact areas most affected by graffiti and trash and loss of the wilderness experience people are looking for."

What are your interests and expectations when going out into the Hole in the Rock area?

Research has indicated that people visit public lands to achieve a variety of beneficial outcomes and experiences for themselves, their communities, and the environment, while at the same time trying to avoid adverse outcomes and experiences. The list of such outcomes and experiences is extensive, but further research has discovered that people tend to bundle these experiences and expectations into a

limited number of profiles of interests and expectations.² Participants were given a list of 12 profiles of interests and expectations they might have when visiting the HTR area. Each profile included a descriptive sentence of what someone choosing that profile might say. The profiles and descriptions included the following:

1. **Natural Landscapes** - I like to surround myself with the beauty of open space and the wildness of mountains, forests, rangeland, water and wildlife.
2. **Rural Landscapes** - I want to connect with the visual landscapes, sense of place and pace of rural areas where people make their living from the land.
3. **Cultural & Heritage History** - I am interested in how historic and prehistoric peoples lived in the area, and in exploring the connections I have with those peoples.
4. **Natural History & Science** - I am interested in knowing about natural processes in this area and the study of the scientific value of the landscape for enhancing our understanding of the world around us.
5. **Health & Fitness** - I like being able to regularly access public lands recreation areas that help me get and stay fit or improve my mental well-being.
6. **Self-Reliant Adventure** - I prefer outdoor adventure on my own that challenges my outdoor skills, improves my abilities, and maybe even involves some risk.
7. **Tranquil Escapes** - I look forward to the quiet serenity of getting away from it all for some mental and physical relaxation, reflection, and renewal.
8. **Youth, Family & Friends** - I am enriched by socializing with others: young people, my family and/or friends and enjoying companionship in the outdoors together.
9. **Community Life** - I like seeing what the discovery and enjoyment of nearby open space recreation does for my community and our visiting guests
10. **Economic Well-being** - I want to see public lands recreation areas contributing in a significant way to our economic livelihood.
11. **Learning & instructing** - I feel comfortable having others equip and enable me to do recreation and tourism outings—or being part of helping others learn how to do that.
12. **Stewardship & Caretaking** - I like giving back to the outdoors from what I've received by helping care for special sites and facilities so others can also enjoy them.

Participants were allowed to select up to three profiles. Figure 10 (next page) indicates the percentage of total selections by all participants for particular interest and expectation profile options. Figure 11

² For a good discussion of the experiences and outcomes that people seek when recreating in public lands see the work of Driver, B.L. and D.H. Bruns. 1999. Concepts and Uses of the Benefits Approach to Leisure. P. 349-369 in *Leisure Studies: Prospects for the Twenty-First Century* E.L. Jackson and T.L. Burton et al. (eds.). Venture Publishing, State College, PA. Venture. To see the research that narrows the list of experiences and outcomes into profiles of interests and expectations see Parry, B., Gollob, J. and Frans, J. 2014. Benefits of public land usage: an analysis of outdoor recreationists. In *Managing Leisure* 19(4). That study narrowed the profiles down to eight (8). Those eight (8) are used in this study along with an additional four (4) that were added to more comprehensively capture people's expected experiences and outcomes for recreating in these landscapes.

(page 38) shows the analysis by affiliation preference to see if additional insight could be gained on the motivation for visiting this area and how that might differ depending on who is visiting.

Figure 10: Interest and Expectation Profiles

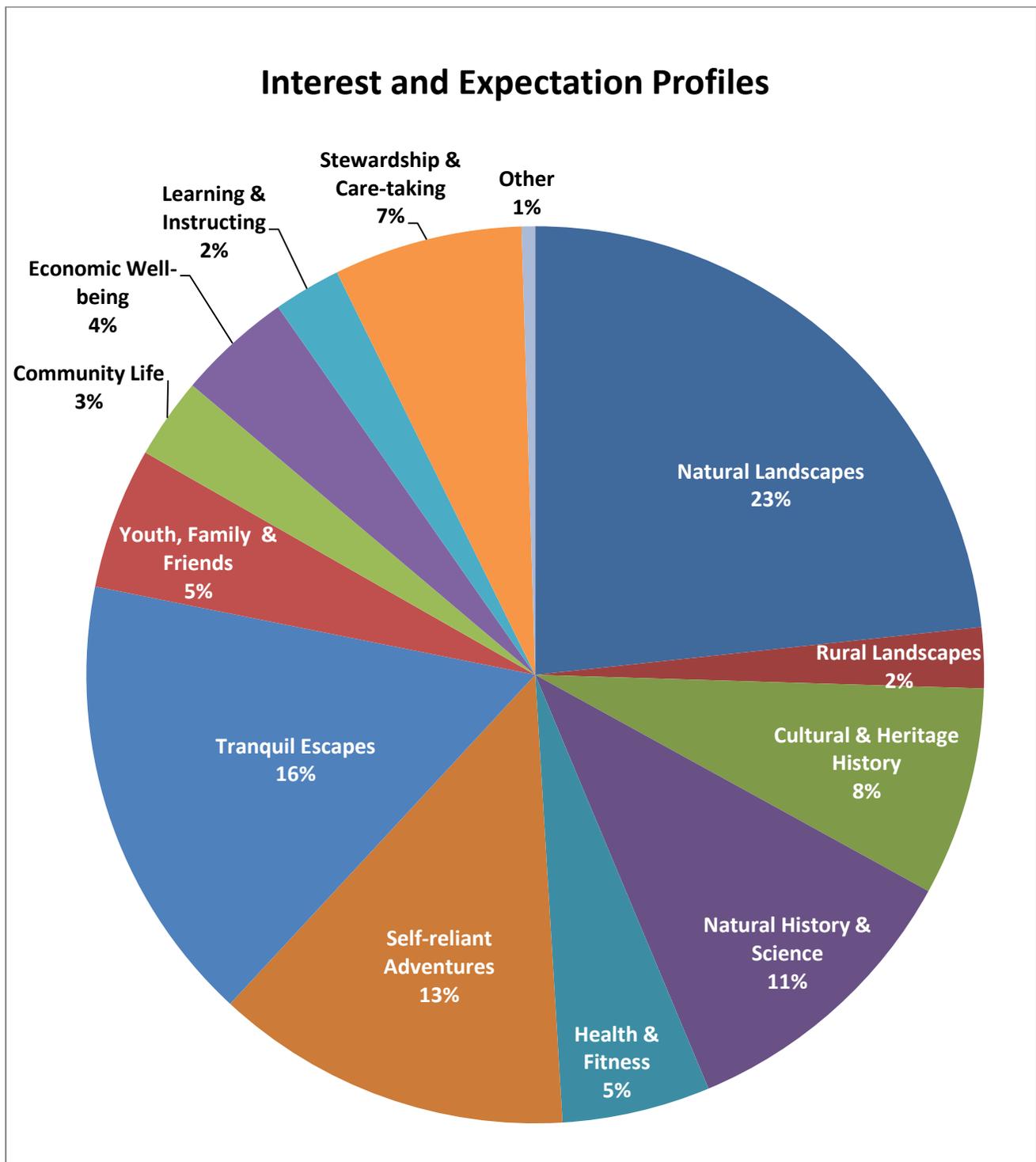
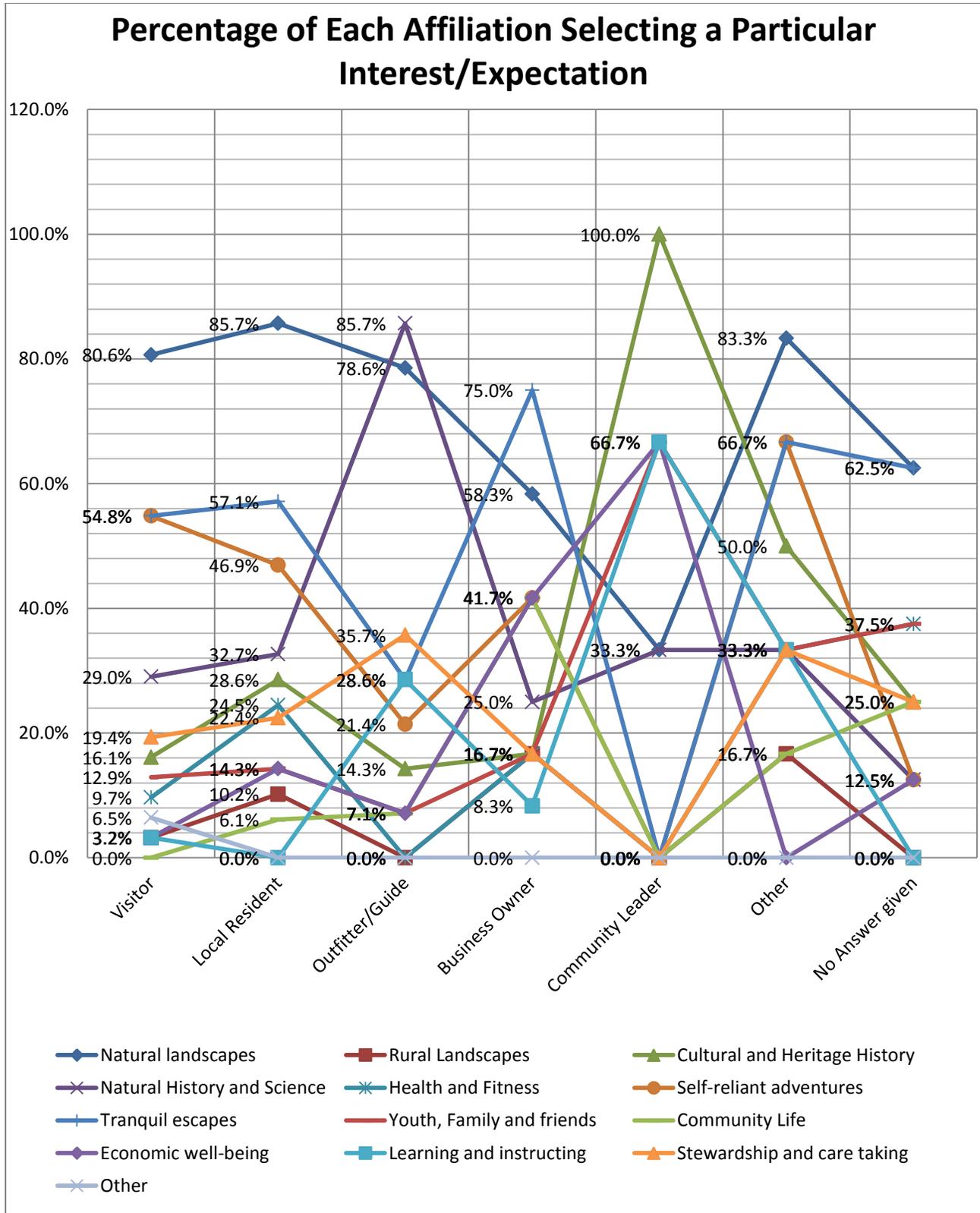


Figure 11: Interests and Expectations by Affiliation



³ Percentages will total over 100% because participants were asked to select up to 3 choices.

The most selected interests and expectations option was natural landscapes (23% of all responses; 78% of all respondents). Fewer responses (16% of the total responses) were given for the second most popular category, tranquil escapes, though it was still selected by a majority (54.5%) of all respondents. This selection was particularly popular among Boulder participants (80% chose it). Other significant selections includes self-reliant adventures (13% of total responses; 43% of all respondents), natural history and science (11% of total responses; 35.8% of all respondents), cultural and heritage history (8% of all responses; 25.2% of all respondents) and stewardship and caretaking (7% of total responses; 22.8% of all respondents).

The selections of affiliation groups mirrored these overall selections with a few noted exceptions. The community leaders focused on cultural and heritage history (100%), youth, family and friends (66.7%), as well as economic well-being (66.7%). While the outfitters and guides did favor natural landscapes (78.6%), it was not their most common selection; that went to natural history and science (85.7%). No other affiliation gave that selection greater than 33% of their choices. Business owners were also interested in the economic well-being of the community (41.7%) and community life (41.7%), while no other affiliation gave that latter selection greater than 25% of their choices. There were significant distinctions between the participants in the Boulder and Escalante focus groups in the youth, family and friends category where 20.8% of Escalante participants chose it, but only 4% of the Boulder participants did. Likewise, the Boulder participants selected rural landscapes and learning /instructing at half the rate Escalante participants did, and 50% less on community life.

The comments from participants when discussing their interests and expectations helped to clarify their selections. Comments particularly helpful in this regard were:

"Stewardship caretaking - I started taking my young son to these places to give him not only the experience they provide but to show him our amazing public lands and build within him ownership/stewardship awareness"

"Maintaining the sense of self-exploration and self-reliant adventuring, be it 4WD or hiking, is so important to preserving the integrity of Hole in the Rock Road and the Escalante Canyons and GSENM."

"I expect quiet down time and respect from other users just like I would respect what they are up to."

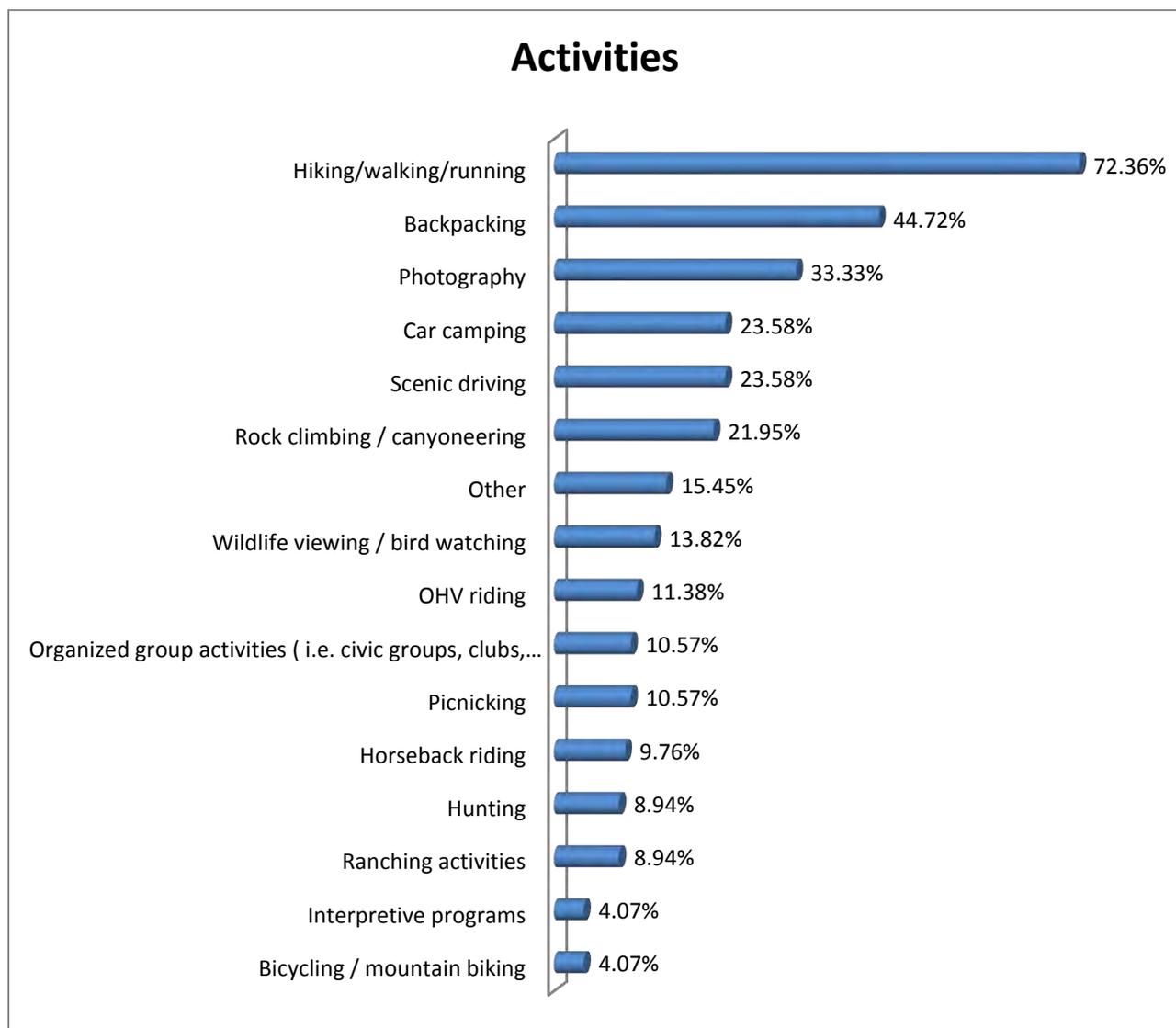
"Combining two: rural landscapes and history; no distinction between past and present. Present is a continuation of past"

Activities

Traditional recreation studies on public lands typically began by determining which activities people engage in, then determining how and whether those activities could be supported by the land base. More contemporary recreation studies focus instead on the interests, expectations and benefits the public receives from recreating on public lands and the settings necessary to provide them, recognizing that a variety of activities can provide similar benefits and meet expectations if the settings needed

remain intact. Also, discussing preferred activities has a tendency to allow people to form “tribes” and allow stereotypes to cloud interactions. For these reasons, activities were not discussed until midway through each focus group during this study. After discussing the specialness of the place, threats to it, and participants’ interests and expectations, they were asked to select up to three activities they engaged in most often from a prepared list. Participants could select more than one activity and had the option of selecting "other" then were asked to clarify it. Figure 12 which also shows the percentage of participants that selected any given activity. 15% of participants selected “other” and provided explanations such as exploring, discovering new areas, swimming, kayaking on the Escalante River, winter activities, heritage learning, meditation/spiritual/renewal activities, aerial tours, star-gazing, and writing and painting.

Figure 12: Activities Engaged in Most Often



By far the most common response to the discussion of activities in the Hole in the Rock area was hiking / walking / running with 72.4% selecting it as one of their top three activities. The Boulder participants

(88%) chose this in even higher percentages than the average. This choice was the largest percentage selected of every affiliation group except community leaders (33%). They were most concerned with scenic driving, OHV riding, and photography (67% each). No other affiliation selected scenic driving beyond 35% (visitors), or OHV riding beyond 18% (local residents). The participants in the digital focus groups identified scenic driving (34.6%) as an important activity, but not a single member of either the Boulder or digital focus groups selected OHV riding. As a consequence, only 11.4% of all participants selected OHV riding, but nearly 1 in 5 (19.4%) of local residents selected it.

The second most popular activity selected was backpacking (44.72% of all participants). This was more popular among participants in the digital focus groups (61.5%) and Boulder participants (52%) than Escalante participants (36.1%). Scenery based activities such as photography and scenic driving were popular, being selected by 33% and 25% of the participants respectively. Rock climbing / canyoneering was selected by 22% of all participants, but those were heavily concentrated in digital focus group participants (42.3% of all those made this selection).

While picnicking was not selected by a significant number (only 10.6%) of total participants, it represented real distinctions between the three location based participant groups (15.3% of Escalante, only 8% of Boulder, and 0% of the digital focus groups). Another real difference between the location-based groups centered on the selection of wildlife watching / bird viewing (13.8% of total participants). This activity was most popular in Boulder with a 24% selection rate, less so in Escalante with 12.5 %, and much less still in the digital groups at 7.7%.

Members of the digital focus groups had almost no interest in many activities associated with traditional uses of the land such as horseback riding (3.8%), ranching activities (0%) or hunting (0%). Boulder participants didn't select organized group activities at all and very few of the digital participants (3.8%) selected it, but 16.7% of the Escalante participants chose organized group activities as one of their top three activities.

Most Important Places Mapping

In order to contextualize comments from the focus groups within the landscape of the area accessed by Hole in the Rock Road, participants were asked to identify particular areas of importance by writing place names on sticky notes and attaching them to a large map of the area in the general location of the place. They were also asked “*Why is this area particularly special?*” They could either record those responses on the sticky notes, or verbalize them in the discussion afterwards. Figure 13 (next page) indicates the most commonly articulated places and the discussion that follows captures a bit of the flavor of the conversations about the places identified. The table includes the top 32 locations named by frequency, but there were a total of 295 places identified of which there were 79 unique locations named. The table contains all places that were mentioned at least three times by different participants which correlate to 1% of the total number of special places identified. It is clear from this sample that the area is a diverse complex of special places, few of which are special to everyone, but many of which are particularly important to some people. 183 of the locations identified were in the

Monument (62%), 114 of the locations identified were in the National Recreation Area (38.6%), two locations were on Dixie National Forest (.7%), and one was on private land (.3%). A complete list of all sites identified along with their locations were recorded and mapped and included in the data given to GSENM as a result of this study.

The most popular location identified was the Hole in the Rock that the road and area are named for; 25 participants identified that location which represents 20% of all participants and 8.5% of all the places mentioned. The Dry Fork Slot Canyons (particularly Peekaboo and Spooky) and three of the canyons draining eastward toward the Escalante River (Harris Wash, Egypt, and Coyote Gulch) all received 18 mentions each by 14.6% of the total participants which correlates to 6.1% of the total places identified. Iconic locations such as Devil's Garden and Dance Hall Rock also received several mentions (15 and 11 respectively). Large features of the landscape such as 50 Mile Bench and the Escalante River itself rounded out the top special places that were mentioned at least ten times.

Figure 13: Special Places

Place Name #	Name	# of Mentions	% of total mentions
69	Hole in the Rock	25	8.5%
17	Harris Wash	18	6.1%
25	Egypt	18	6.1%
49	Coyote Gultch	18	6.1%
16	Devil's Garden	15	5.1%
32	50 Mile Bench	13	4.4%
20	Slot Canyon (Peekaboo and Spooky)	12	4.1%
61	Dance Hall Rock	11	3.7%
5	Escalante River	10	3.4%
55	Stevens	8	2.7%
7	Spencer Flats	7	2.4%
35	Dinosaur Track	7	2.4%
8	Red Breaks	6	2.0%
50	Dry Fork	6	2.0%
57	50 Mile Mountain	6	2.0%
28	Neon	5	1.7%
45	Kaparowits (All)	5	1.7%
63	Navajo Mountain Overlook	5	1.7%
12	The V	4	1.4%
37	Left Hand Collett	4	1.4%
65	Soda Springs	4	1.4%
74	All of it	4	1.4%
4	Big Horn	3	1.0%
10	Baker Canyon	3	1.0%
13	Jacob Hamlin Arch	3	1.0%
27	Choproch Bench	3	1.0%
48	Batty cave	3	1.0%
66	Sooner Rocks	3	1.0%
67	50 mile Canyon	3	1.0%
68	Davis Canyon	3	1.0%
70	Lewelyn and Cottonwood Canyons	3	1.0%

The comments that surfaced as to why these places are special varied from unique qualities of the place to personal connections to the place. Many of the comments referred to the scenic qualities of the place while others identified important features of the landscape such as water and geologic formations. Historical and spiritual connections to the landscape also enhanced the specialness of particular places. Finally, the diversity of the landscape for opportunities to explore, discover and recreate made it unique and special. A sample of the comments provides greater understanding of why places were identified, such as:

"All spring-fed canyons in the lower drainage. Water in the desert"

"Geology and variations - hoodoos and Hole in the Rock - are on a par with the goblins you see that are better than at Goblin Valley State Park"

"What's so nice is that it's so big. The scale is huge but so are the experiences that can be found from one area to the next."

"I appreciate that there are some defined "destinations" and trailheads, but I also appreciate having the freedom to go in areas that are not as well defined. The area offers a great range of experiences."

"One gets the feeling you could explore and explore and still not see all there is to offer. The exploration itself is an enriching experience. We have rarely gone to the same place more than once - and they have all been rewarding."

"Some of the special places are unnamed. I feel like I am sometimes stepping in a place that no one has ever been. That is special!"

"Entire road has significance to me as one of the most amazing stories of exploration. This is a very cultural landscape. The Hole in the Rock is the gem on this road, along with the trail resources and Dance Hall Rock."

"Harris Wash, Batty Caves, Dance Hall Rock, Hole in the Rock, 40 Mile, Willow Gulch and most of all Egypt - that landscape is incredible. The entire trail is really special, historic, and beautiful."

"Today by horse, mountain bike, or car you can cover the whole area in a day, not well, but it is possible. Might not have been 15 years ago. Each area in this whole provides for a different contribution to the experience."

"Undeveloped is what is special about BLM."

"Scenic quality has to do with quality of light and contrasts between near view and far view. Is so different even from other places"

"Cathedral. Very spiritual place and the reflection of the light on the water."

"As a motorcyclist, Scenic Highway 12 and the look-out is world renown." (Off the special places map)

"Some of them you have to discover. That's the quality of these places."

"Talking about areas that are special - I have always wanted to visit Coyote Gulch but have not because of how crowded it is reported to be."

Settings

Is it the place or the activity that is most important to you? Or both?

There is a good deal of debate among academics and practitioners of recreational management on public lands as to whether the place is most important and people simply chose activities to enjoy the places where they want to be; or whether the activities they engage in are most important and they simply look for ideal places to engage in their chosen activities. The answer to this debate is likely to have a direct impact on the way the area is managed in order to provide desired setting characteristics. To better understand how these debate plays out in the Hole in the Rock area, participants were asked whether the place is most important to them, or the activity, or a combination of the two.

This dichotomy turns out to be more of a constructed debate among academics and land managers than in the preferences of the participants involved in this study. Most of the participants (69%) said that *both place and activity* were important to them. The second most popular selection was that the *place itself is inherently special* (21%) and activity was only selected by 1% of all participants. Specific comments offered by the participants offer some clarification into the thinking behind their selections:

"Both place and activity are important and that is what makes this such a special place. I hope that makes sense. In other words, do mountain bikers really need to mountain bike here? Whereas, exploring those slot canyons or visiting the river or the historical/cultural landscape can ONLY be experienced HERE, along Hole in the Rock Road."

"Stumble on this one. Entirely the place. Because of the place the activity becomes so enjoyable. So, starting with the place."

"Because this place is so special, I personally do not feel that if people come here to engage in an activity that they engage in elsewhere, those activities should be prioritized."

"Place is inherently special, but also allows activities I do because of its inherent specialness."

"In that solitude and beautiful lanscape; ability to quiet self and spiritualness that comes out of area, which is not possible in other places."

Crowding Analysis Using Series of Black and White Landscape Images

One of the principle considerations for land managers and recreation planners is the setting characteristics for the landscape that should be tied to particular interests and expectations of the public. Unfortunately, the settings matrix used to determine the appropriate setting (primitive to urban) along at least 16 different setting characteristics (see Appendix 3) can be overwhelming to members of the public, so it is difficult to determine what really matters most.

In order to get at what matters most to the participants in terms of setting characteristics related to the issue of crowding, a series of black and white images without any sign of other visitors were

offered. The same discussion prompt, "If you came across other people while visiting the scene in this photo, how many people would be too many people before it would change the character of the place for you?" was included with each image. Since many public landscapes have prescriptions that limit the number of people in some way, the prompt was good to begin discussion; but more important than the number assigned, was the rationale participants used to make their determinations⁴. Open-ended discussion was encouraged before participants were asked to record a number with the clickers.

The three images in the series and the comments they generated are shared below.

Image # 1 – Open slick rock landscape

Figure 14: Image #1 – Open slick rock landscape



When viewing this first image that depicts a landscape that could have been taken in many locations in the Hole in the Rock Road area, there was a distinct hesitation among most of the focus group participants to assign a numeric value to the question, "How many would be too many?" Some of the comments made by participants included these related to desiring a sense of solitude:

"One. I'm very selfish. I wouldn't want to see anybody. If I see anybody I'm going to go somewhere else."

"All thing being equal, if just an individual or party, what is the likelihood that they will disturb my recreation?"

"To put a number or quantity on it - "last man syndrome". I'm here and I want it all to myself. Least possible and most remote area in US. So don't know how to respond."

"People come out to get away from the noisy city and lots of people. They want solitude."

⁴ This is interesting to note, because one of the major management tools to maintain characteristics of the landscape is the ability to assign a number to the total visitor count in an area, and the group size in an area. The fact that every focus group responded to a numeric question by suggesting "it depends on..." might cause one to rethink some of those prescriptions.

"If it's where I want to be, one is too many. But if I see a ton of other folks at another location, I know they're not where I want to be."

"If I am expecting to get away, anyone else is too many."

Other participants qualified their choices by suggesting that the answer depended on what the other people are actually doing on the landscape. Vandalism and noise seemed to be two important concerns in this regard:

"Depends on what they're doing. Meditating okay, ATVs not."

"That all depends on what kind of people they are, if loud and boisterous, two is too many."

"Noise—20 people but if dispersed being pretty quiet; if 20 in a group, too loud."

"Depends if people have respect for the land when they are there."

"If I saw a couple of ranchers on horse, great; if I saw people come by me on ATVs throwing beer cans, [not so great]."

"Agree that it depends on what people are doing: disparate activities would have greater effect."

"Funny question. Depends. Somebody crossing over walking themselves, no negative feelings about that, but if I saw somebody hacking at the trees."

Some participants commented that the scale of the landscape and the question of proximity were the most relevant factors for determining how many people would be too many people in this space:

"More, because more people can walk across there without leaving a trace."

"Depends for me how close it is to the road. If you're back in there and see a camp, I say damn. But close to the road, I expect it."

"Big landscape and see guys far away, that's okay."

"Depends on expectations—Peek-a-boo and Spooky expect people, at other places don't expect."

"Locals respected 'giving everybody their space'. Not crowded, if everyone has space."

For a few participants the choice of how many is too many depended on time of year and expectations that there are certain areas that visitors are likely to go, so more were expected in those areas:

"Could narrow this question, ask, 'If it was Memorial Day Weekend, how many is too many?'"

"As long as there is some time when locals can enjoy it."

"Time of the year, not expecting to see anybody in January."

"Visitors want to see something when they come, must be funneled toward places that they want to see. But as residents, don't need it."

Finally, some participants indicated that they would qualify their answers based on their perspective and the relation of the other visitors to themselves. For example:

"Are these people you went with or people you don't know? More people, if people that you're with, fewer if strangers"

"Developed a kind of snobbism—the farther from easy access if I see another person I am happy because they went through a lot to go through to get there - personality in common and traits"

"If you are hypothetically tripping and you see someone, that's not good."

"If I'm in a very remote area and I saw a person coming toward me, I'm going to be glad to see them and ask what route?"

"Depends on why you're there. A few other people are okay. If you're taking your brother and son out to show them something, then a few other people is okay."

Image # 2 - Dance Hall Rock Historic Site

Figure 15: Image #2 - Dance Hall Rock Historic Site



The second image was of the familiar and iconic Dance Hall Rock Historic Site. Although it is quite a way down Hole in the Rock Road, the site is immediately adjacent to the road. The historic site played prominently in the Hole in the Rock/San Juan Mission expedition involving Mormon pioneers who camped there while constructing the Hole in the Rock dugway. Since that time, the site has hosted historic reenactments on many occasions. As soon as the image of Dance Hall Rock was displayed and

participants were asked “How many would be too many?” the tone of the conversation changed considerably. Several of the participants commented on the fact that it is an important site for people to be connected to, so their expectations would be different and higher use numbers would be acceptable when compared to the open slick rock landscape (Image #1):

"Reenactment or concert to celebrate place; don't want to be exclusionary."

"... very popular place to come. If see 10 or 15 looking at historical site."

"Specific focal point - my number of allowable would increase."

"Since I know that this is Dance Hall Rock and that it is an historic place, I would anticipate that groups could request to have a special event several times a year. I would expect to see people visiting and cars off the road and nearby."

"Landscape vs. attraction—the attraction attracts people and they stay longer to experience the landscape."

"I suppose it does for me since it's a historical place, so I expect more people."

Other participants suggested that the proximity of the site to the road would increase the numbers to be expected and tolerated:

"Proximity question, this isn't a solitude place for me. Would expect to see a large number. If it was several miles from trailhead, wouldn't expect to see so many."

"This looks like more of a destination, with vehicles. I guess I would expect more people."

"See a road. Easy to get to. Might see or hear stuff you wouldn't at the other place."

"Distinction between front country and back country changes expectations."

"I know this is a busy place. Since it's by the road, this is the kind of place that's ok with people."

There were a number of comments also related to camping in the area and group sizes in the area due to heritage group use:

"I feel camping could be allowed for smaller groups. You could limit the days when camping is allowed and those who don't want to visit the place when a lot of people are there, then they could avoid the place."

"If they were all congregated in the road area where you can turn around, you can have 100 people easily sitting there, being given a presentation about the area."

"I get a kick out of sharing it. When I see a bunch of people there, I'm glad 'cause I'm sharing it."

Finally, a few participants suggested that the use of this iconic space could certainly expand beyond the traditional connections to history to take advantage of the unique characteristics of the formation; although they were quick to point out they did not want to stop the historical connection:

"We could have a party under that rock. If I was invited."

"I am a singer, so being able to sing there under the stars for just my two friends was absolutely amazing. But when I came back from the trip, I kept telling people, "You need to go there!"

"I would expect to see more people in this area than in Photo 1 because of vehicle access and historic value. The first photo, our school would certainly be seen in, but would work to limit our visibility."

"{larger groups ok there}... occasionally we've had group parties or family get togethers, or during the art festival when painters want to go there one time a year thing or maybe at some points"

"Highly impacted area but would go to Dance Hall Rock for acoustics."

Image #3 - Devil's Garden Day Use Site

Figure 16: Image #3 - Devil's Garden Day Use Site



The third image was taken inside Devil's Garden Day Use Site without the parking area, toilet or signage visible. This is another of the Monument's iconic attractions within the Hole in the Rock area. Like the previous photo, the issue of proximity to the road weighed heavily in the comments as to what factors might impact the number of acceptable people using the space. In addition to this, proximity to the gateway community of Escalante also seems to matter quite a bit.

"Expect lots of people because it's road accessible."

"Since you know that this is easy to access, have more people there rather than having them further down the road where it's more remote. Not gonna be bummed-out - had a good time."

"Destination where many people can go close to Escalante and can just walk around which is good and bad because soil destruction and plants. Time may come when might have to have restrictions "

The activity of those encountered also impacts the number of people that are tolerable in the space.

"Some places for sitting and picnicking, hiking not so much impact."

"You wouldn't want hundreds camping here, but if they were trekking by here you could have a string of people that could be in the hundreds hiking by and then disappear out of site. It all has to do with what the activity is."

"Use makes a difference here. To run across people hiking for the day and having their packed lunch is more acceptable than many tents congregating here overnight."

"I feel all of these places could have a significant number of people depending on their activity."

The existence of facilities such as toilets, parking lot and picnic tables also affects how many people the landscape can absorb without changing the character of the place. Devil's Garden is a destination developed for people to visit, so it may be an area that can handle more people:

"There are facilities there. Expectation that people are there."

"Because I know it's a destination I am willing to tolerate/accept more people - between [photo] #1 and Dance Hall Rock in terms of numbers."

"It's a destination for a lot of people."

"Day use area, picnic and bathrooms, so designed for people."

"Every time I have been to this site I have seen people and it has been fun to see people from all around the world comment on these formations and enjoying themselves. This is not the backcountry."

Landscape Imagery Analysis

In general, there was reluctance amongst participants to assign a number answering the question, "How many would be too many?" to each image, after extensive discussion several participants did so with the polling clickers. The power of this methodology was revealed when the images of Dance Hall Rock (Image #2) and Devil's Garden (Image #3) were shared and the same question was asked. Each image in the series was compared to the others to capture differences in the responses. The most common comments (22.6% of all comments on photos) suggested that crowding thresholds are location dependent. Often (19.5%) participants indicated that they would change their expectations depending on location or the numbers of people using it. Several (18.2%) said that the fact two of the three landscapes depicted in the images were recognizable attractions had a strong impact on their responses. Others (17%) indicated that their activity or the activity of the others they encounter would impact their response. Other concerns that would impact participants' tolerance of other people in a

given landscape includes the desire for solitude (11.3%), traffic and roads (10.7%), the proximity of the others (10.1%), and place’s history (10.1%).

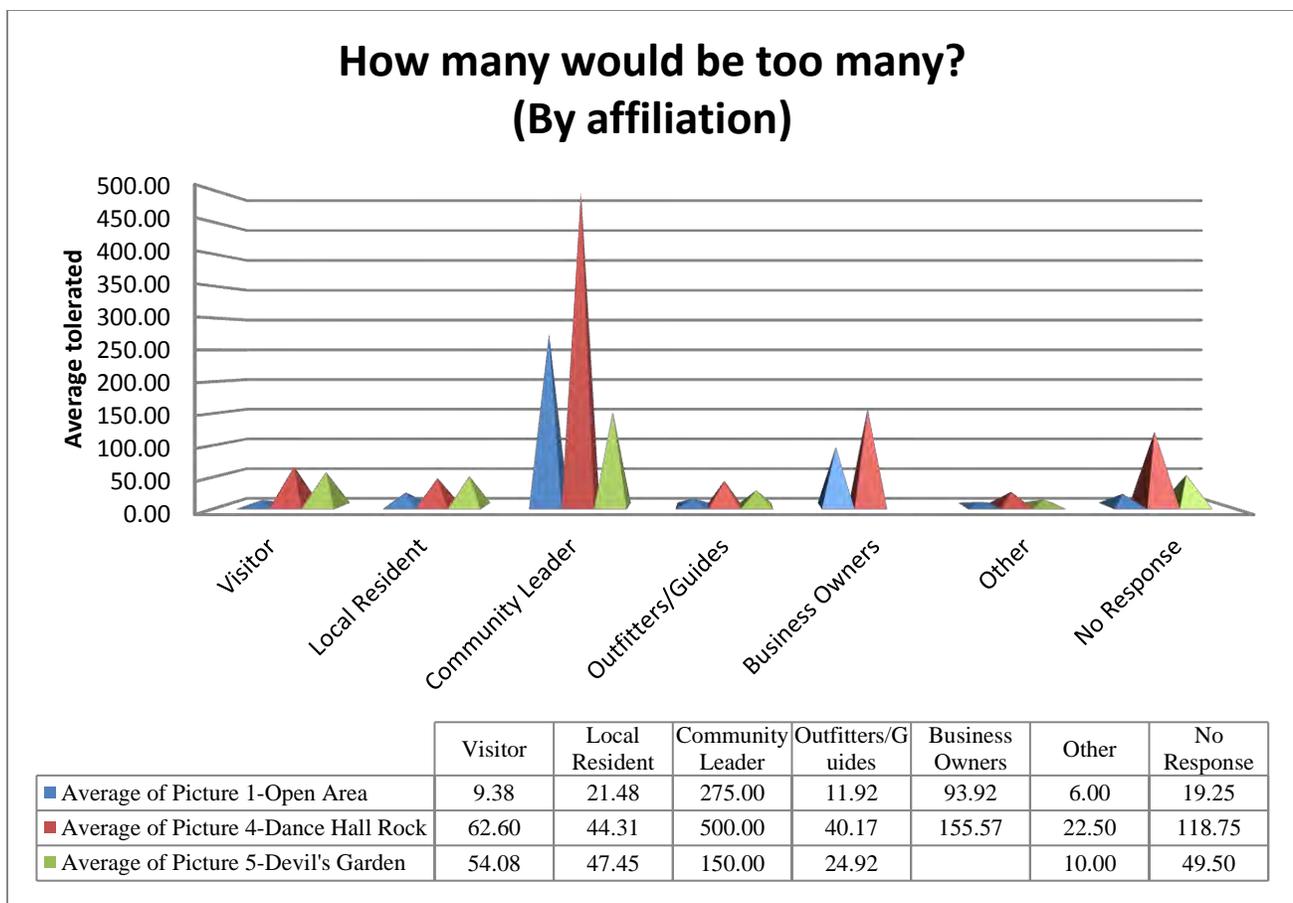
Regarding the recognizable attractions, many referred to these areas as "sacrifice zones" that have a "funneling effect" on most visitors, thus higher use numbers would be expected and tolerated. Conversation among some focus group participants suggested that a strategy to maintain the solitude and backcountry experience of most of the landscape could be to direct most visitors to the iconic places close to the road such as Dance Hall Rock, Devil's Garden and even the Dry Fork slot canyons instead of the lesser developed or known locations. Comments related to this included:

"Like Spooky and Peekaboo you just give them up and sacrifice them; sacrificial areas; they can have it."

"Focus the masses where we know they are."

"Sacrifice zones" - Peekaboo, Spooky, Dance Hall Rock, other places that have become better known because of Monument status."

Figure 17: How many would be too many? (By affiliation)



⁵ The average number for business owners on Picture 5-Devil’s Garden is blank because none of them responded for that particular question.

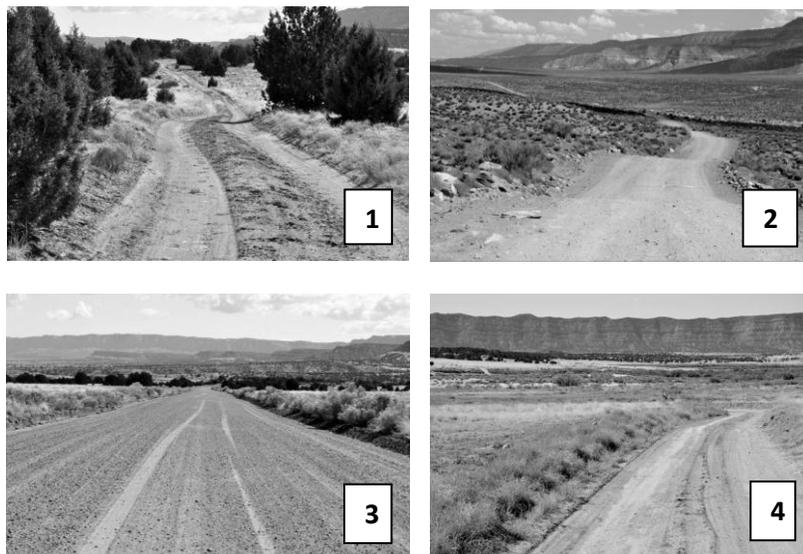
Though many participants did not use the polling clickers to share specific numbers that would be tolerated in the three landscapes, the average responses of those who did are included in Figure 17 (previous page). The graph visually represents several trends in the data. First, community leaders, and to a lesser extent, business owners, were tolerant of much higher numbers than other affiliations. Visitors and outfitters/guides selected significantly lower values than local residents. In all affiliations, there was a noticeable difference between the open slickrock landscape (#1) and the two recognizable attractions. Across every affiliation group, the average number assigned to the open slickrock landscape (#1) was the lowest offered. Dance Hall Rock (#2) had the highest averages under each affiliation, and then the number declined for Devil's Garden (#3). There was little difference in numbers recorded by visitors, locals, outfitters and guides, and those identifying as "other". The consistency of all of these observations across most affiliations was a remarkable finding, given this methodology draws participants into a localized conversation before they assign numbers. One would have assumed that these localized conversations would have a greater influence on the numbers selected than their affiliation because of the immediacy of the discussion prior to assigning numbers, but this does not appear to have had such an influence.

Analysis of Road Development Preferences Using Black and White Images

Participants were asked to compare four images depicting various levels of road development in the Hole in the Rock area to determine their preferences for travelling within the landscape. The four images provided are shown in Figure 18 (below). The explanations associated with each photo included:

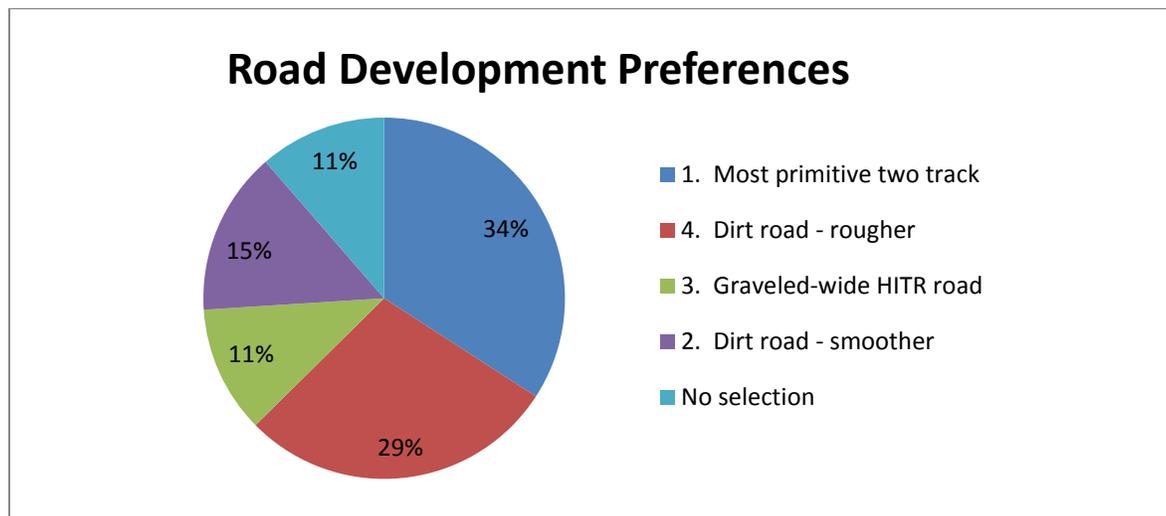
- Photo 1 - two-track maintained only by use (most primitive).
- Photo 2 - bladed, natural surface road that is maintained on a regular basis.
- Photo 3 - regularly maintained gravel road (most developed).
- Photo 4 - periodically maintained natural surface road.

Figure 18: Road Development Preferences Images



Participants were allowed to select only one option when asked, “Which road would you prefer travelling on when going to recreate in the Hole in the Rock area?” Figure 19 (below) shows the percentage each choice was selected. The data revealed a strong preference for the #1 - the most primitive option (34%) and #4 - the next most undeveloped option (29%). When combined, nearly two-thirds of all participants selected one of the two least developed options. Only 11% of participants selected the most developed, wide graveled road.

Figure 19: Road Development Preferences



Comments offered in clarification of their choices support the desire to leave roads less developed, although an important minority of participants expressed the desire to improve the road or maintain the road to minimize its infamous washboard condition.

"Across THIS particular landscape, I prefer #1, because I come here because it's remote. #3 is least desirable - looks like a highway!"

"My preference for driving would be for a road that is the minimum width necessary for safety. I prefer in this location to have a more rugged road condition (4 WD or high clearance 2 WD). Prefer road design that minimizes impacts to surrounding landscape."

"#1 would accommodate fewer vehicles one would think. Selections 2 and 3 appear more developed which means more vehicle types and more speed of those vehicles."

"Whether it's a 2-track or maintained gravel road, it's still a road that's carved out of the landscape. That being said, the roads should remain narrow and not appear to be just shy of being a highway."

"One of the things I enjoy about this area is the rugged access. There are other places in the area that provide greater ease of access. My preference is to provide a range of experiences in the region, not make all areas equally developed."

"It also depends on why you are traveling across the landscape. If you are hauling cattle or are an outfitter with a trailer full of bicycles or kayaks, # 3 might be preferable."

"The main road out to Hole in the Rock should be passable by anyone in a decent vehicle. Side roads do not need to be as good."

Management Boundary Between GSENM and GCNRA

The study area for this phase of the project includes GSENM lands managed by the BLM and GCNRA lands managed by the National Park Service. The boundary between the two is crossed by Hole in the Rock Road approximately 50 miles from the junction with Highway 12. The Escalante River crosses from GSENM into GCNRA just above Harris Wash and is within the national recreation area until it joins Lake Powell (Colorado River). Most of the trailheads providing access to popular recreation destinations within the Escalante Canyons are located on GSENM very near the boundary with GCNRA. In most instances, once recreationists park and head into the canyons, they leave the Monument and enter the Recreation Area almost immediately. While this boundary is clearly demarcated on maps, it is not as well defined on the ground. Boundary markers are located along Hole in the Rock Road but in few other locations.

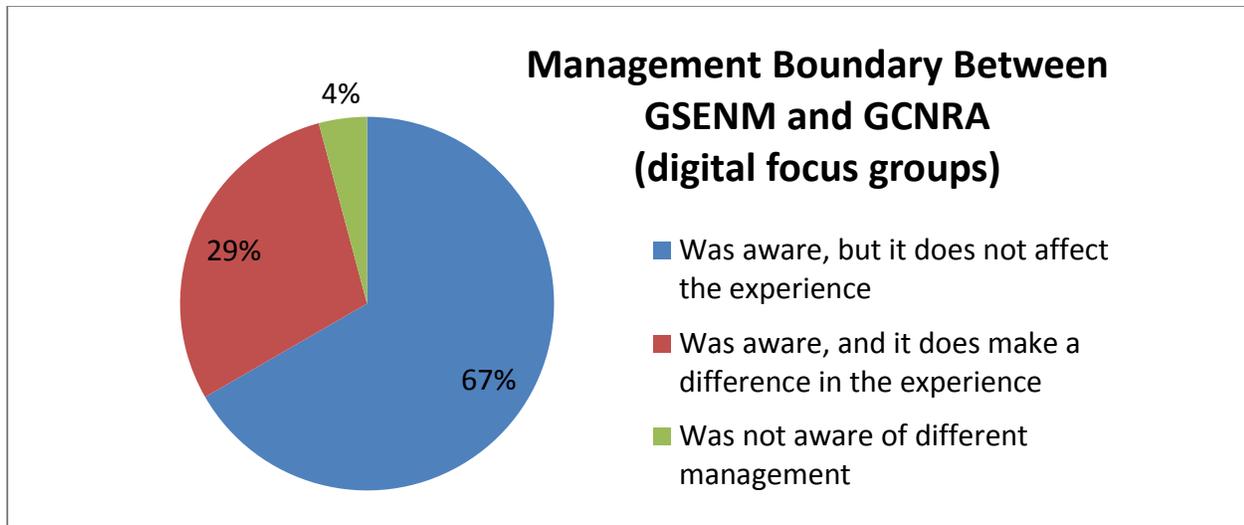
Participants were asked whether they were aware when they crossed from the Monument to the Recreation Area, and if so, how that awareness impacted their perceptions. In the in-person focus groups, the responses were captured through discussion without the use of audience polling clickers, but an audience poll was set up for the digital focus groups (26 people participated in that format).

Most of the responses to this question indicated that for those who were aware of the boundary, their perceptions were related to the different regulations of the two agencies. Many comments indicated that the BLM regulations were not as strict, which they appreciated by and large. Outfitters and guides seemed to be particularly aware of the boundary, regulation differences, and levels of cooperation and support between the two agencies. The comments seemed to indicate a perception that regulations increase in GCNRA especially for guide permits, ATVs, and dogs. There were also a few comments about the resources available for management between the two. It was articulated several times that GCNRA has far more resources available than GSENM.

Several participants indicated that the boundary is not well marked on the landscape itself, so it is often easy to be unaware of where the boundary is. Despite the awareness of differences in resources and regulations between the two, many concluded that it didn't matter much to their experience, and that they did not think of their favorite places as separate destinations if they traveled through GSENM to end up in GCNRA. Several indicated it was the journey not the destination that mattered to them, so they treat much of that area as a continuous landscape. Some participants were unaware of the boundary, especially if they were not local to the area.

Based on the digital focus group polling, most participants were aware of the boundary, but for two-thirds of them, it did not impact their experience. 29% were aware of the boundary and it made a difference to them, and only 4% were unaware of the boundary.

Figure 20: Management Boundary between GSENM and GCNRA

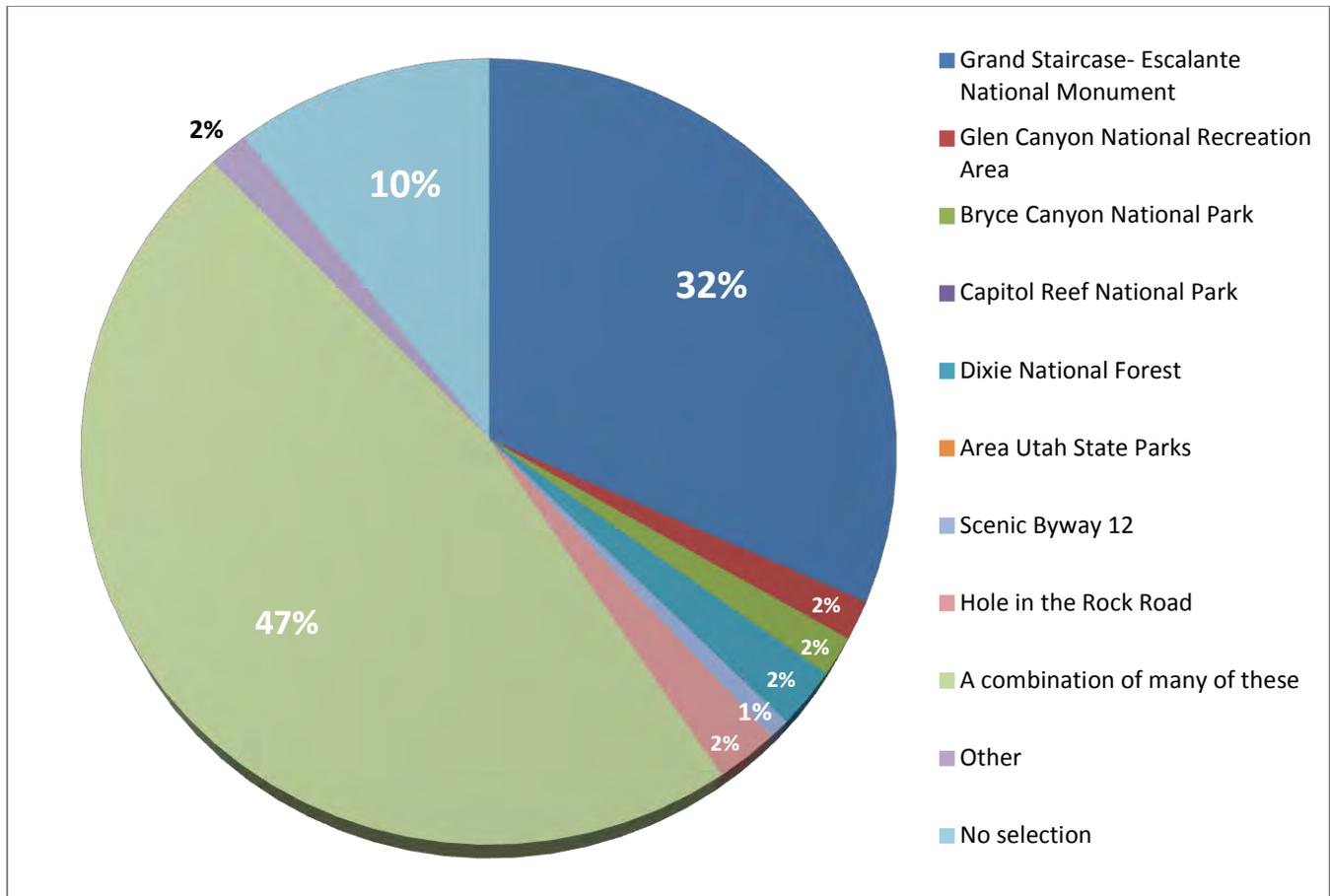


When choosing to recreate in the area, where do you spend the most time?

One of the remarkable aspects of the landscape accessed by Hole in the Rock Road is the "neighborhood" it is located with related to other public lands. The beginning of the road is connected to Scenic Highway 12, Utah's only All-American Road (the highest designation in the National Scenic Byway Program); it travels through the western portion of the Escalante Canyons Special Recreation Management Area of GSENM; and ends at the Hole in the Rock Historic Site in GCNRA. Bryce Canyon and Capitol Reef National Parks bracket the area to the east and west and Dixie National Forest bounds it to the north and west. There are also several Utah State Parks within 50 miles. There are numerous outdoor recreation opportunities within less than a two hour drive of the Hole in the Rock area, so it is cannot be assumed that the area would be the primary destination for a visitor. Any of these other areas could be a visitor's primary destination, and the Hole in the Rock area could be a secondary stop.

To better understand where visitor spend the most time when recreating in the area, participants were provided a list of options including "other" and "a combination of many of these". They were only allowed to select one option with the clicker but they could also explain their thinking through comments. Figure 21 (next page) indicates the results of their recorded selection. GSENM (32%) was the single largest response. No other single destination received more than 2% of the responses. However, nearly half of all participants selected a combination of many of the area destinations indicating that the Hole in the Rock area is used for recreation as part of a broader landscape that includes a wealth of magnificent surrounding public lands accessed. This preference supports the need for the various public land managers to engage in a dialogue considering the region as a whole destination.

Figure 21: Where do you spend the most time when recreating in the area?



Individual comments by participant confirm the broader landscape theme along the corridor. Local residents also consider the region more broadly, but they often think about the combination depending on seasonal considerations. Some of the comments that clarify these positions include:

"I use all of these areas nearly every year, depending on the weather and the season."

"Weather depending, I like higher elevations for summer and lower elevations when temps are more moderate."

"I tend to spend multiple days in this area and enjoy visiting different areas to have a variety of experiences. I love the Monument, but also enjoy the national parks and visiting the rural communities along the way."

"I checked combination because I love Highway 12 and traversing it several times a year but I spend a lot of time in the Monument and on longer trips, time in Glen Canyon NRA."

"There's a lot of great areas in the region, so I may camp on the Dixie and hike on GSENM, and then go to Bryce..."

"Last visit included both Zion NP and Hole in the Rock, with Cottonwood Wash in between."

"I picked a combination of many because of different factors. Heat. Long weekends. What I can do to provide for the experience I'm looking for."

Services

When individuals recreate on public lands they are concerned about the outcomes and experiences that they desire, the activities they want to participate in, and the setting characteristics that make all of those possible, but they are also reliant on the provision of services that make their experiences possible. These services typically range from information to fuel, food to gear, and accommodations to communications. While BLM does not provide many of the services needed by recreationists using the area, the agency does need to understand what services are necessary for visitors and local residents to be successful when recreating in the Monument and on adjacent public lands. The data about services allows BLM staff to engage in dialogue with business owners, community leaders, and residents to develop partnerships that enhance the livelihood and well-being of the local communities and supports visitor needs. The conversations that arise from these "practical partnerships" between the BLM and the service providers are one of the best values of this study. Done well, these will strengthen the ties of local residents, community leaders, business owners, to the landscapes surrounding their gateway communities.

Participants were asked several questions to prompt discussion about the kinds of services that are needed to be successful when they recreate in the Hole in the Rock area and where those services are located. Their responses and a selection of clarifying comments are offered below.

Information sources for the Hole in the Rock Road area

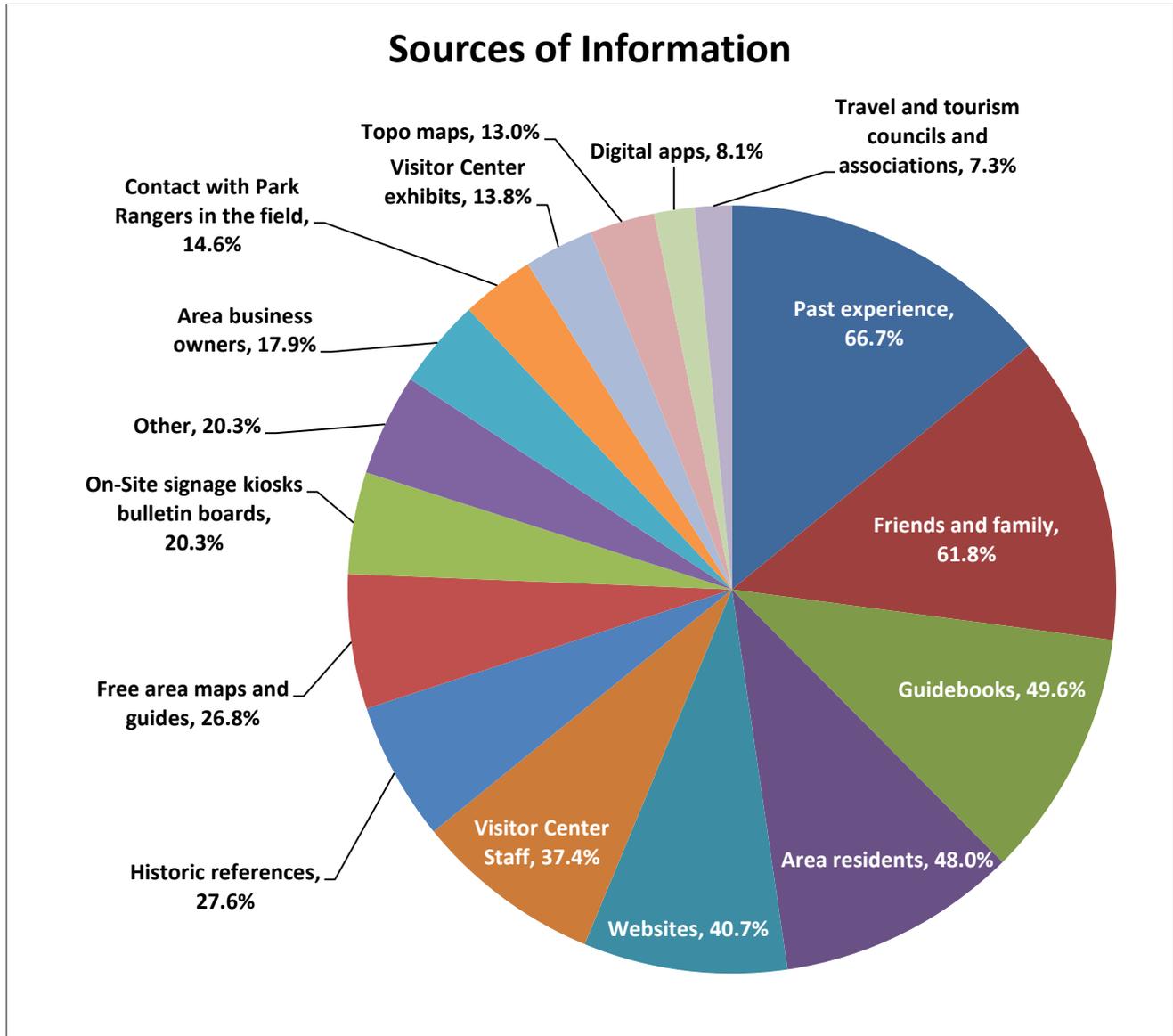
The first set of services almost every recreationist relies on to be successful is quality information. The participants were asked, "*Which sources of information do you depend upon to plan your recreation in the Hole in the Rock area?*" and were allowed to choose more than one response from the prepared list. Figure 22 (next page) contains the percentage of participants that chose particular responses.

While there are certainly a variety of written sources of information about the Hole in the Rock area, the majority of participants rely on personal contacts and memory to plan for a recreation outing. Significant sources of verbal and memory information come in the form of past experiences (66.7%), family and friends (61.8%), area residents (48%), visitor center staff (37.4%), area business owners (17.9%), and contact with rangers in the field (14.6%). In other words, the process of getting valuable information about this area is still a largely social process. Comments about the information sources confirm this:

"The interagency staff was fabulous during my last visit. They pointed out the better destinations than what had been recommended by friends--including less visited spots. They were great."

"Rangers in the field, but because of sequester they are a rare thing / nonexistent."

Figure 22: Sources of Information about the Hole in the Rock Area



"Most of my information comes from word of mouth. I guess I've Googled a few things, but I think it's more fun to hear about "secret" spots from friends."

"Staff at the VC used to be very helpful & knowledgeable about the area. We've found that less so in recent years."

"Waitresses know..."

Written sources of information included guidebooks (49.6%), historical references (27.6%), free area maps and guides (26.8%), topographic maps⁶ (13%) as well as those information and interpretive

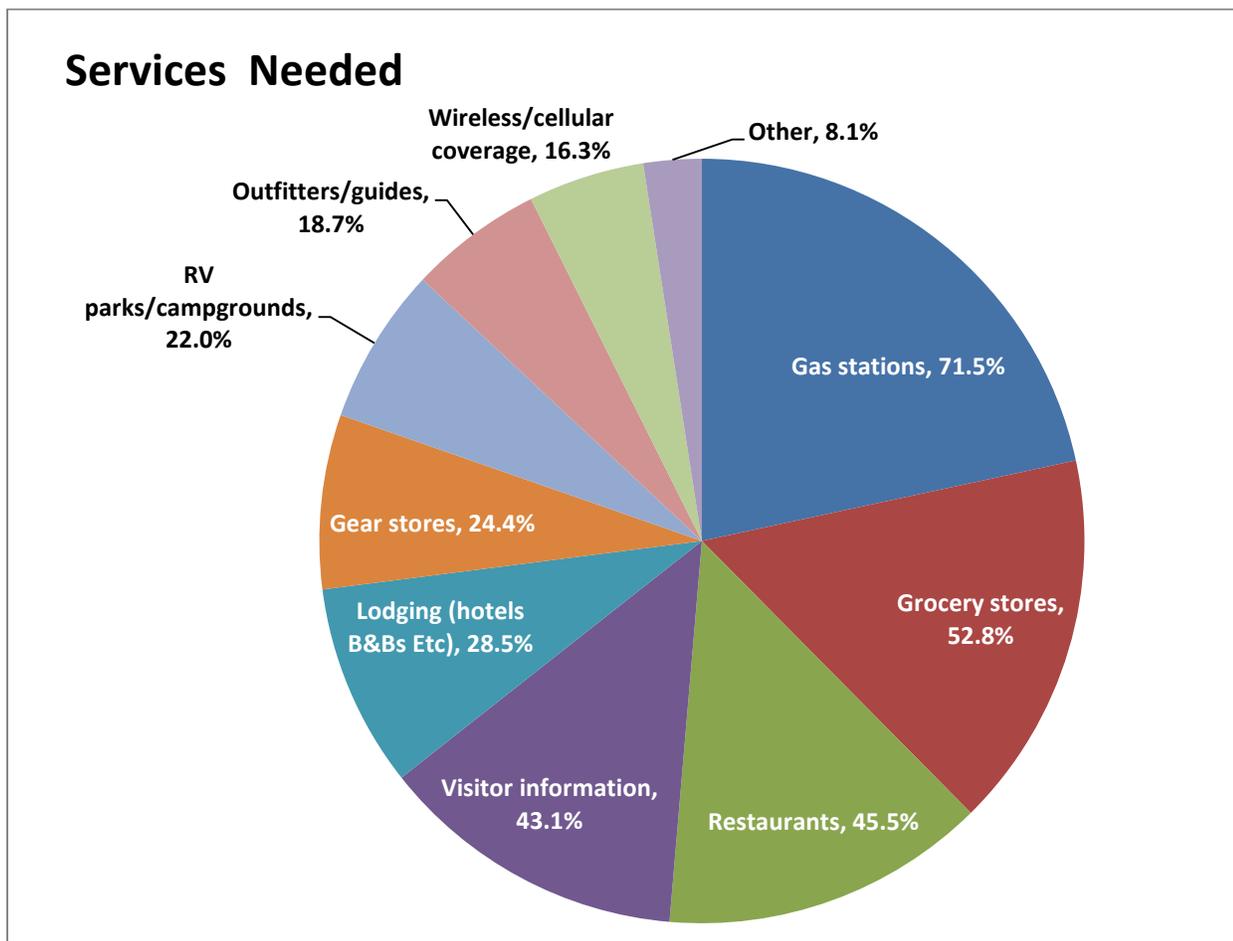
⁶ Initially, the focus group script did not include topographic and purchased maps but after several participants included these as "other", this information source was added to the prepared list in the script. While a number of participants selected this choice (13%), not every focus group had the option to select it, so that percentage is probably artificially low.

materials provided by the land agencies such as on-site signage, kiosks, bulletin boards (20.3%) and visitor center exhibits (13.8%). Information provided digitally included websites (40.7%) and digital apps (8.1%). The fewest selections were for travel and tourism councils and associations (only 7.3%).

Other services needed for successful recreational experiences

In order to measure the other services that participants depended on, they were asked “What services do you depend on to have a successful recreational experience?” and to select as many responses from the prepared list as were applicable. Figure 23 (below) indicates the percentage of total participants selecting each of the services.

Figure 23: Services Needed to Be Successful



As one might expect, gas stations are the most common selection (71.5%) followed by grocery stores (52.8%), restaurants (45.5%), and visitor information (43.1%). Accommodations were split between lodging (hotels, B&Bs, etc.) at 28.5% and RV parks / campgrounds at 22%. Participants selected gear stores (24.4%), and outfitters and guides (18.7%) in lower percentages. Wireless/cellular coverage was selected by only 16.3% of participants, many noting the value of not being "reachable." Some of the comments surrounding these selections included:

"What I need depends on the nature of my trip. When backpacking I am pretty self-sufficient (other than gas). I also take trips that are day-trip focused when I stay in campgrounds or lodging in town. It depends on what I'm trying to do on a particular day during my trip."

"It is nice not to have cell reception/wireless everywhere, especially not on the Hole in the Rock Road! In town is just fine. And I really like that there is not wireless/cellular coverage available. I want my boss to know that I really can't respond to his texts/emails."

"I think that it would be helpful to have more places to primitively camp with a vehicle. I would also like to be able to reserve a camp space at Calf Creek so that I could plan on camping there."

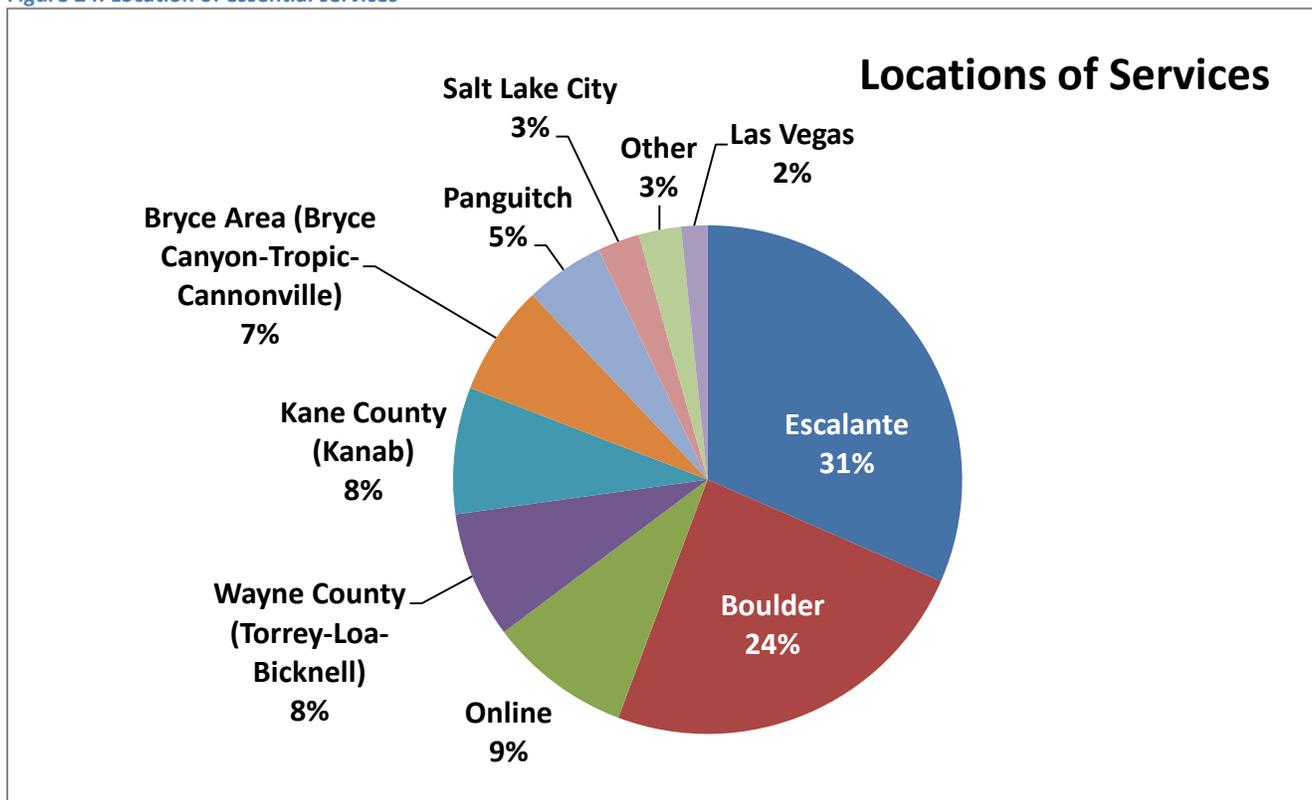
"I like the location (of the Escalante Outfitters) because you can disappear down the road for a long time but there are services before you leave or come back. I agree that it's nice to not have cell reception. "

"Have to have gas stations somewhere, but hopefully not too close or too many."

Where those services are located?

The real power of a discussion of services that participants depend on comes when one combines it with the location of those services so as to better understand the relationship between the gateway communities and the public lands surrounding them. Once again participants were encouraged to offer comments as well as consider a list of several of the communities from which they might obtain services. They were allowed to choose as many locations as they thought essential. Figure 24 shows the percentage of total selections for any particular location to obtain necessary services.

Figure 24: Location of essential services



By far the most popular locations for services were the gateway communities of Escalante (31%) and Boulder (24%). Together they represented 55% of all selections. Interestingly, the next most commonly selected service location was on-line (9%). Wayne County and Kane County towns were both selected 8% of the time. Other locations selected included the Bryce area towns (7%) and Panguitch (5%). Some participants named locations that were not among the choices provided, including Richfield, Page, and Green River. Other comments indicate a conscious effort to support the local gateway communities, such as:

"We like to support the local economies; especially if/when they support our backcountry use out there."

"I don't need these services; however, when I am passing through Boulder, Escalante, Torrey, etc. I patronize the restaurants, shops, etc. in those areas because I like to support the locals."

"I try to give my service to the local towns. In the case of Hole in the Rock Road, I use Escalante."

"We've tended to stay & shop more in Boulder because they are more welcoming to the eco-visitor. We would love to be able to more strongly support Escalante."

Missing services?

Participants were asked what services were missing in the area that might help them to be more successful in their recreation. A number of responses were given including: Additional information (road conditions, safety), Emergency support (search and rescue, care flight), additional shopping and dining options in gateway communities (grocery store, coffee shops, gas stations, auto repair), campsites (large groups, primitive, reservable at Calf Creek), educational opportunities (minimal impact, leave no trace, respect for landscape, orientation to the area), permits (scientific research), better access (road improvements), restrooms or systems to deal with human and animal waste, and shuttle services to minimize traffic on road. Some participants indicated that they do not need additional services, and too many additions would impact the landscape and the experience negatively.

Most Recent Visit - Expectations and Surprises

The final discussion in the focus groups centered on the participants' most recent visit to the Hole in the Rock area. They were asked to comment on whether that last visit met their expectations and whether they were surprised by anything. Of course, the most important element of this discussion was their response to the follow up question, "Why?"

In terms of meeting expectations, the comments seemed to be fairly evenly split between those who felt their expectations were met, and those who did not. Many of the comments referred to the conditions of Hole in the Rock Road. Some liked the improvements to the road because it enhanced accessibility, but more comments expressed concerns about the improvements because of the crowding and traffic issues it created. A sample of these comments both for and against road improvements will illustrate the point.

"I was unhappy that the last part of the road was bulldozed to the Hole in the Rock. The slot canyons were way too crowded with people."

"I was surprised at how much the road had been widened and graded in some areas. Once we got out of the car and hiked we had a great time."

"No, the slot canyons around Spooky, etc. were so overcrowded it was unpleasant. In addition, the road was so well groomed that people were driving very fast coughing up a dust storm to match the Dust Bowl. "

"I would love to see the road improved in a primitive way that removed the wash boarded nature of the road. Getting your teeth rattled out of your head can get old. I do not want it paved I just want to be able to not have it wash boarded the entire way."

"Road gets wider and deeper."

When asked what surprised them about their last visit, the road and its condition once again figured prominently in the comments, both positively and negatively:

"Yes, I expected to have a wilderness experience and did just that. I wasn't happy with how much the road had been graded and widened but got off the road and found a remote area."

"Biggest surprise was the amount of traffic on the main Hole in the Rock Road and the number of vehicles on the road. Passenger cars were in abundance and this was a surprise. I wonder if the road could be watered down to keep the dust down."

"I realized it was much easier to get in, hence all the crowds, and although it is dusty and dirty as should be, the speed of which people were driving caused such a dust storm, it was very unpleasant and reeked of too much human activity."

"How quickly they graded the roads after the flash flooding."

"Road was in better condition."

Another important issue surfacing in the discussion of their last visit to the HITS area was the issue of crowding and increased visitor use. When participants indicated that the area met their expectations or they were pleasantly surprised, it generally related to the solitude experiences and lack of crowding. When their expectations were not met or they were not pleasantly surprised, it was often because of increased visitor use and crowding issues. A sample of those comments captures some of the concerns:

"Spooky and Peekaboo shocked. Hadn't been for a long time. No parking available but didn't see anyone."

"Did meet my expectations. I like the nature of the approach to the area we were hiking in in terms of the number of people we met and numbers, great day."

"Yes, in that I did manage to find places without people or few of them."

"As far as experience itself, many people, 40-60 per day was way too many."

"Pleasantly surprised not to find lots of cars on the road."

"Last we spent much time there it corresponded with public school break - so things were quite crowded."

"I was very surprised. I expected lots of people, but even more than I expected."

"How much more popular GSEM has become, especially in the past five years."

"Agree: checklist places {iconic sites} number of people has jumped in the last few years."

Often at the end of the focus groups on this last question, participants would offer recommendations for future action, even though they were not called asked to do so. Here is a representative sample of such comments received:

"Finding a way to help visitors explore and enjoy the area and retain a sense of the freedoms while protecting the wild sense of the place is important. I think a lot has to do with directing visitors, while leaving the room for exploration."

Additional comments focused on facilities or the lack of facilities, activities that people were engaged in or could engage in, regulations that have been put in place and the dynamic nature of the landscape. There was concern over the signs of increased use and resource degradation through vandalism and trash, but also appreciation for increased information and support to mitigate this increase in use through the efforts of the BLM staff and local residents.

Conclusions

After analysis of the responses from 123 participants in 17 focus groups over seven (7) months of data collection in 2013, the following conclusions began to emerge regarding the areas of GSENM that are accessed by Hole in the Rock Road. They will be separated here into observations and recommendations. Although in a baseline study, the principal focus would be on observations of the setting and context, inevitably as participants expressed their ideas concerning the Hole in the Rock area, some of these ideas came as recommendations for future action. These were not solicited in the study, but are recorded as part of the response given.

Observations:

- The area is a unique landscape that is a very special place to a wide variety of people. It is a dynamic landscape that affords many different experiences and connections.
- The wild, unspoiled, remote, and rugged character of the place, combined with its natural and scenic qualities overwhelming define its specialness. The combination of these contributes to its sense of solitude and privacy as well as to a sense of discovery and wonder that is highly valued by the public.

- People come here to experience the naturalness and tranquil escapes embodied by the landscape.
- The importance of the area's history, archeology, geology, and paleontology enhance the specialness of the area.
- There is a sense of discovery and self-reliance encouraged by the land itself.
- It is also an important place because of the connection people have with the it historically, spiritually, scientifically, recreationally and traditionally.
- This is an area that is often approached by vehicle, but is more likely encountered on foot. It is prized for its inspiring scenic qualities and the kinds of activities associated with such dramatic scenery such as photography, site-seeing, writing, and making art.
- Use of this space has increased in recent years, and this has been a mixed blessing. Most respondents thought the increased use had made it somewhat to significantly worse over the last five years. On the one hand it is seen as a positive thing to have more people enjoy the resource and boost local economies, but it can be "loved" to death or at least enough to substantially change the qualities people seek in this remote location.
- Threats to the specialness of the landscape include overuse, damage to the resources, and over development. There is also concern that many who come in the future will not have a connection to or appreciation of the place.
- The current management approach is generally working well on the landscape with some important noted areas of concern where the resource and its specialness are threatened. These areas of concern are noted and explained in the larger report.
- There is a strong preference for the lack of development (transportation and recreational facilities) of the area and a fear of what those would do to the specialness of the place as it is and has been. In the comments of many, improvements to access and facilities would trade off with the qualities of wildness, ruggedness and discovery/exploration. People overwhelmingly love the characteristics of this unique place as it is.
- Although some participants indicated that paving the road would be a benefit for access, the vast majority of participants opposed the paving of the Hole in the Rock Road, preferring the ruggedness of the road, particularly the further one gets from Highway 12.
- Visitors and locals rely on a variety of services from the gateway communities (Escalante and Boulder) and beyond to support their recreational outings in the Hole in the Rock area. These include gas and groceries, but also information provision, guide services, lodging, and restaurants.

- The interpretive and educational services provided by Escalante Interagency Visitor Center staff, outfitters/guides, and locals are vitally important to help people develop and nurture a monumental sense of place around the area accessed by Hole in the Rock Road.
- Part of the specialness of the area accessed by Hole in the Rock Road is a result of the way it is nested in a larger landscape of Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Capitol Reef and Bryce Canyon National Parks, Dixie National Forest, and other federal and state public lands.
- It is also important to the agencies as well as the communities to understand how public lands contribute to the character, identity, and economic livelihood of the local gateway communities.

Recommendations:

- Visitor education was suggested as important tool to address the threat posed by a lack of connection to the landscape from future visitors.
- Many participants recognized the responsibility and need the land management agencies have to manage the increase in use (and abuse) of the landscape, but this should be done in cooperation with the public (including public stewardship), and with an effort to minimize the impact of that management on the undeveloped character of the place.
- Targeted attention to maintain the specialness of the place in such areas of concern as Coyote Gulch, or to address issues such as vandalism, trash, human waste and crowding is supported.
- Developing certain areas to accommodate heavier use and directing visitors to those areas to help maintain the remote character of the rest of the landscape was supported by many. Such locations could include Devil's Garden, Dry Fork Slots (Peekaboo and Spooky), Dance Hall Rock, and Hole in the Rock.

The results of this first phase of the GSENM Recreation Experience Baseline Study were presented to the public and agency staff in a series of presentations held in early March 2014 in Boulder, Escalante, and Kanab. One of those presentations was on the agenda at the 2014 GSENM Outfitters and Guide Workshop in Kanab. In April 2014, the results of the study were shared via a webinar presentation with staff in the local GSENM and GCNRA offices, as well as staff in the BLM Washington and Utah State Offices.

As the project moves to other parts of the Monument in subsequent phases of the research, additional communities such as Cannonville, Kanab, Page and others will host focus groups and these differences between gateway communities will be quite interesting to consider in terms of their different preferences. For now they are attached as an Appendix to be included in the report, but not analyzed in depth other than as a visual representation of some of the similarities and differences between the communities.



Appendix 1: Handout for Focus Group Meetings

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument

Hole in the Rock Area

Recreation Experience Baseline Study – Phase 1

Tim Casey, PhD

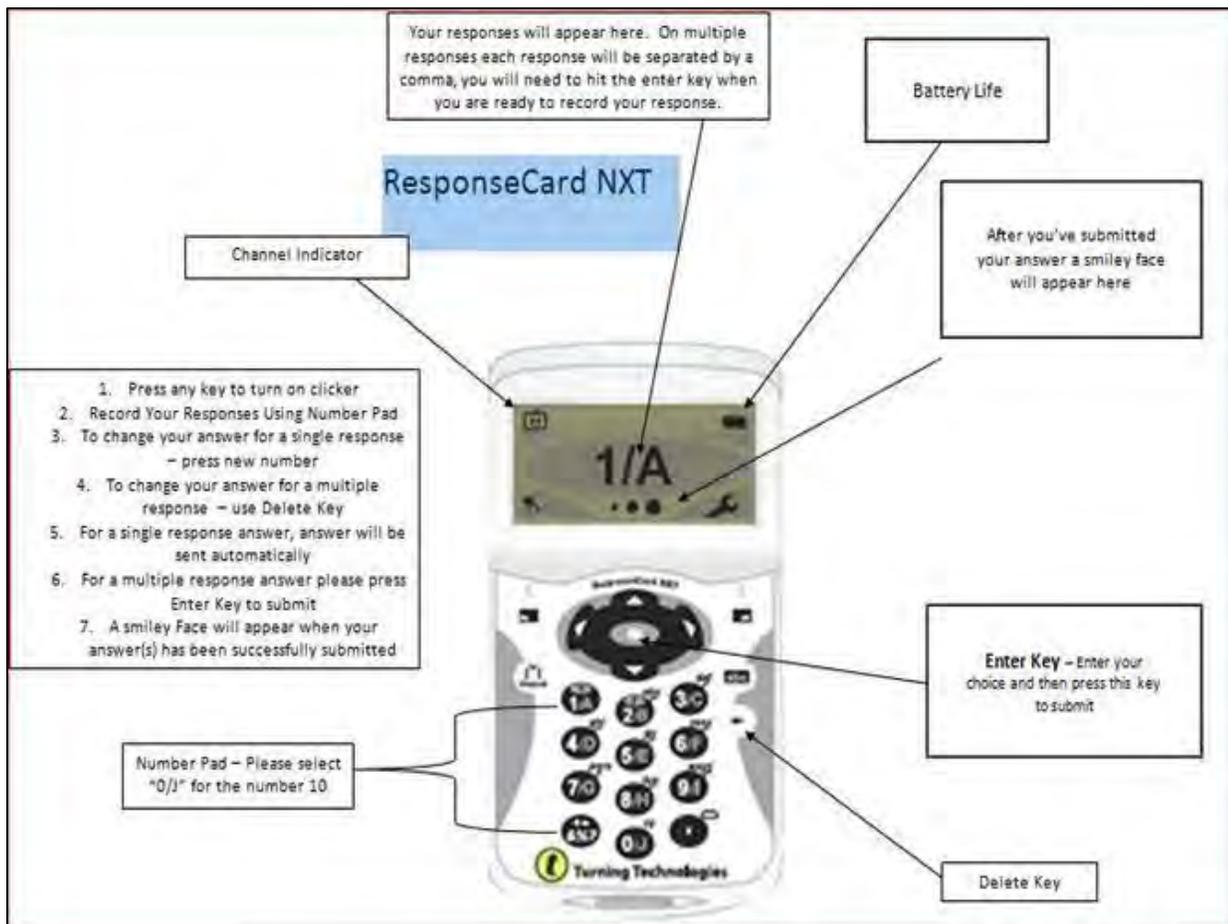
Natural Resource Center - Colorado Mesa University



2013

Participants:

- ✓ Listen, contribute, and stay focused on the subject at hand
- ✓ Feel free to keep or change your opinions in response to what you hear
- ✓ Respect others' right to share their thoughts; do not interrupt
- ✓ The moderator will stop anyone who attempts to block another's views
- ✓ Feel free to get up, obtain refreshments, or visit the restroom
- ✓ Do not engage in separate, private discussions
- ✓ Remember, participation is voluntary on all questions



To ensure that we all can use the clickers to help record your preferences throughout the focus group, let's try them now.

1. Would you start by entering your zip-code when the slide is available and the polling bar in the corner of the slide is green.

2. Which of the following choices best describes your primary association with the Hole in the Rock area?

- 1. Visitor**
- 2. Local resident**
- 3. Community leader**
- 4. Outfitter/guide**
- 5. Business owner**
- 6. Other**

To submit your response, select the enter key in the center of the arrows. You should see a smiley face at the bottom of your screen, if your response has been received.

Discussion:

3. What are the qualities of the Hole in the Rock area that make it special for you?

3. What are the qualities of areas along or accessed via Hole in the Rock Road that make it a special place for you? (Choose up to five.)

SP-1	1	It's my back yard
	2	It's where I spend quality time with friends and family
	3	Historic qualities - how previous generations used the area
	4	Productive qualities - grazing and hunting
	5	Biological resources - plants, animals, etc.
	6	Physical resources - geology, paleontology, etc.
	7	Cultural resources - archeology, etc.
	8	Scenic quality
	9	Spiritual and/or religious qualities
	10	Sense of freedom
SP-2	1	Wild, unspoiled, and natural
	2	Remote and rugged
	3	Sense of solitude and privacy
	4	Natural quietness
	5	Dark night skies
	6	Sense of discovery/learning opportunities
	7	Dogs and/or horses are allowed
	8	Lack of development or improvements
	9	None – it's not particularly special for me
	10	Other

Discussion:

4. What could or does diminish the specialness for you?

4. What could or does diminish the specialness for you? (Choose up to five.)

DIM-1	1	Additional fees, permits, or restrictions
	2	Increased use and crowding
	3	Increased traffic
	4	Increased use of wider array of vehicles
	5	Group size limits that are too low
	6	Limitations on historic uses and productive qualities
	7	Additional facilities and improvements
	8	Lack of facilities and improvements
DIM-2	1	Vandalism, litter, graffiti, and/or human waste
	2	Damage to soils and vegetation
	3	Lack of solitude and privacy
	4	Noise
	5	Artificial light
	6	Livestock or evidence of them
	7	Culture clashes – locals vs. visitors
	8	Other

Discussion:

5. At the places you enjoy visiting has use increased or decreased in the last five (5) years?

1. Strongly Decreased	2. Slightly Decreased	3. No Change	4. Slightly Increased	5. Strongly Increased
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6. If use at that these places has changed in the last five (5) years, has it been for the better or worse?

1. Worse	2.	3.	4.	5. Better
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Why?

7. Is there a particular area that is most important to you?

(Please write the names of these places on a sticky note provided and place them on the large map of the area.)

Why is this area particularly special?

**8. When you go to your area of interest, which of these phrases best captures your interests and expectations for going there?
(Choose up to 3)**

CS-1	1	Natural Landscapes	I like to surround myself with the beauty of open space and the wildness of mountains, forests, rangeland, water and wildlife
	2	Rural Landscapes	I want to connect with the visual landscapes, sense of place and pace of rural areas where people make their living from the land
	3	Cultural & Heritage History	I am interested in how historic and prehistoric peoples lived in the area, and in exploring the connections I have with those peoples
	4	Natural History & Science	I am interested in knowing about natural processes in this area and the study of the scientific value of the landscape for enhancing our understanding of the world around us.
	5	Health & Fitness	I like being able to regularly access public lands recreation areas that help me get and stay fit or improve my mental well-being
	6	Self-Reliant Adventure	I prefer outdoor adventure on my own that challenges my outdoor skills, improves my abilities, and maybe even involves some risk
CS-2	1	Tranquil Escapes	I look forward to the quiet serenity of getting away from it all for some mental and physical relaxation, reflection, and renewal
	2	Youth, Family & Friends	I am enriched by socializing with others: young people, my family and/or friends and enjoying companionship in the outdoors together
	3	Community Life	I like seeing what the discovery and enjoyment of nearby open space recreation does for my community and our visiting guests
	4	Economic Well-being	I want to see public lands recreation areas contributing in a significant way to our economic livelihood
	5	Learning & instructing	I feel comfortable having others equip and enable me to do recreation and tourism outings—or being part of helping others learn how to do that
	6	Stewardship & Caretaking	I like giving back to the outdoors from what I've received by helping care for special sites and facilities so others can also enjoy them

9. When visiting that area, what activities do you engage in most often? (Choose up to 3)

Act-1	1	Scenic Driving
	2	OHV riding
	3	Hiking/Walking/Running
	4	Backpacking
	5	Car Camping
	6	Picnicking
	7	Rock Climbing/Canyoneering
	8	Wildlife Viewing/ Bird Watching
Act-2	1	Bicycling/ Mountain Biking
	2	Horseback Riding
	3	Organized group activities (i.e. civic groups, clubs, scouts, church, etc.) including historic reenactments
	4	Ranching activities
	5	Hunting
	6	Photography
	7	Interpretive programs
	8	Other

10. Do you recreate in this area primarily because:

1	The PLACE is inherently special to me
2	The area allows me to engage in a favored ACTIVITY
3	Both PLACE and ACTIVITY are important to me
4	Other

11. Photo Preference: The next set of slides show images from the Hole in the Rock area. We would like to know how many people or campsites you would consider too many in the particular setting. In other words, how many could the space hold before it changes the character and specialness of the place for you and what you do there.

We also want to know other things beyond crowding that you think would change the character of the place.

12. When traveling in the Hole in the Rock area are you aware when you move from Monument lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management to Glen Canyon National Recreation Area lands managed by the National Park Service?

If so, how does that influence what you do or your perceptions?

13. When choosing where to recreate in this region, where do you spend the most time?

Dest-1	1	Grand Staircase- Escalante National Monument
	2	Glen Canyon National Recreation Area
	3	Bryce Canyon National Park
	4	Capitol Reef National Park
	5	Dixie National Forest
	6	Area Utah State Parks
	7	Scenic Byway 12
	8	Hole in the Rock Road
	9	A combination of many of these
	10	Other

14. Which sources of information do you depend upon to plan your recreation in the Hole in the Rock Road area?

S-1	1	Friends and family
	2	Past experience
	3	Area business owners
	4	Area residents
	5	Visitor Center Staff
	6	Contact with Park Rangers in the field
	7	Visitor Center exhibits
	8	On-Site signage, kiosks, bulletin boards
S-2	1	Travel and tourism councils and associations
	2	Free area maps and guides
	3	Guidebooks
	4	Websites
	5	Digital apps
	6	Historic references
	7	Topo Maps
	8	Other

15. What services you depend on to have a successful recreational experience? (Choose all that apply.)

Services- 1	1	Gas stations
	2	Gear stores
	3	Grocery stores
	4	Lodging (hotels, B&B's, etc.)
	5	Outfitters/guides
	6	RV parks/campgrounds
	7	Restaurants
	8	Visitor information
	9	Wireless/cellular coverage
	10	Other

16. Where are those services located? (Choose all that apply.)

Services- 2	1	Escalante
	2	Boulder
	3	Bryce Area (Bryce Canyon, Tropic, Cannonville)
	4	Panguitch
	5	Wayne County (Torrey, Loa, Bicknell)
	6	Kane County (Kanab)
	7	Las Vegas
	8	Salt Lake City
	9	Online
	10	Other

17. Are there services that are missing and prevent you from having a successful experience?

18. Did your last recreational outing in the Hole in the Rock area meet your expectations? Why or why not?

19. What was the most surprising thing about your visit compared to what you expected?

*We appreciate your involvement in this important focus group.
Your input is an important part of maintaining an ongoing inventory of our recreational users' preferences, expectations, and concerns.*

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Appendix 2: Select Quality Preferences by Community Location of the Focus Group

The following charts show the distribution of responses broken down by community where the focus group took place (Escalante, Boulder, or digitally via the internet) as well as the total of all preferences for each special quality, diminish threat, interest and expectations, activities and service locations captured by the polling. One of these three categories was assigned to each participant depending on where they participated in the focus groups. Of the 123 participants in the study, 72 attended a focus group in Escalante, 25 in Boulder and 26 participated digitally over the web. While the distinctions between each of these groups and the total average response did not always differ, (particularly for those in Escalante who made up 58.5% of all participants) where they did, or where they differed from other communities significantly it is noted in the data analysis in the report text.

The communities are the columns and the lines are a graphic representation of the qualities. Where the lines remain relatively flat there is agreement among the communities but where the lines move up and down in sharp angles there are stronger differences on those qualities.

Figure 25: Special Qualities by Community

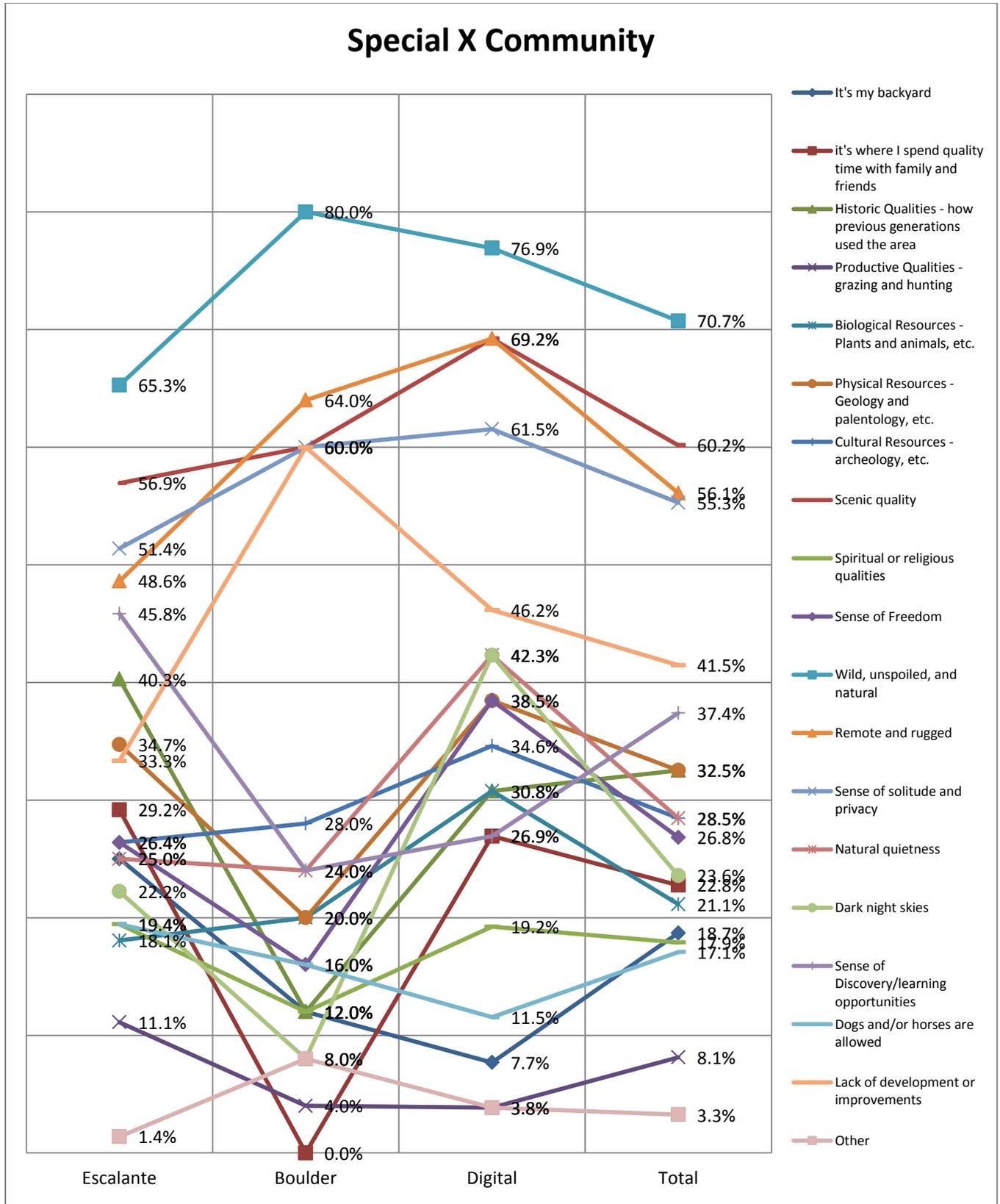


Figure 26: Diminish Qualities by Community

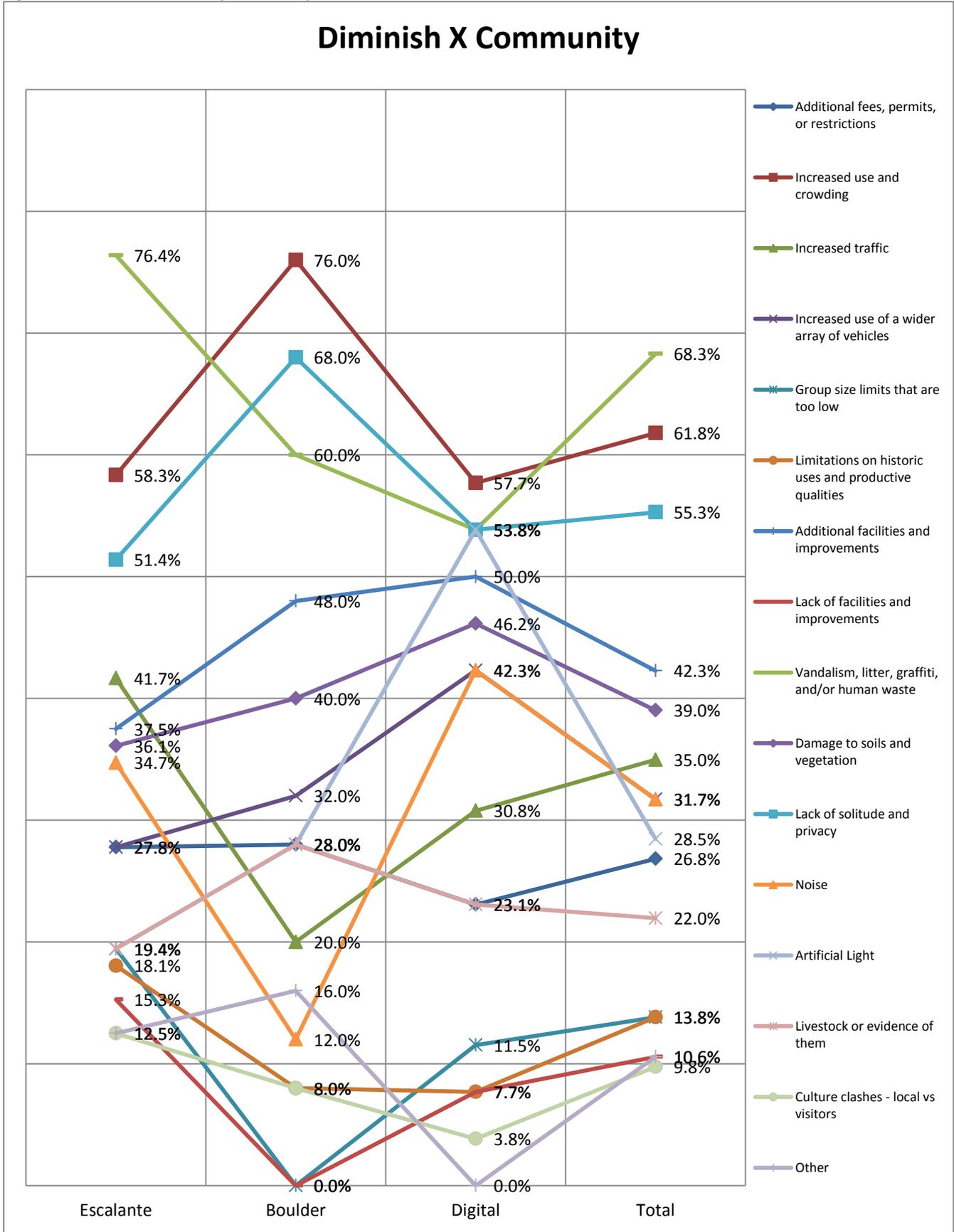


Figure 27: Interests and Expectations by Community

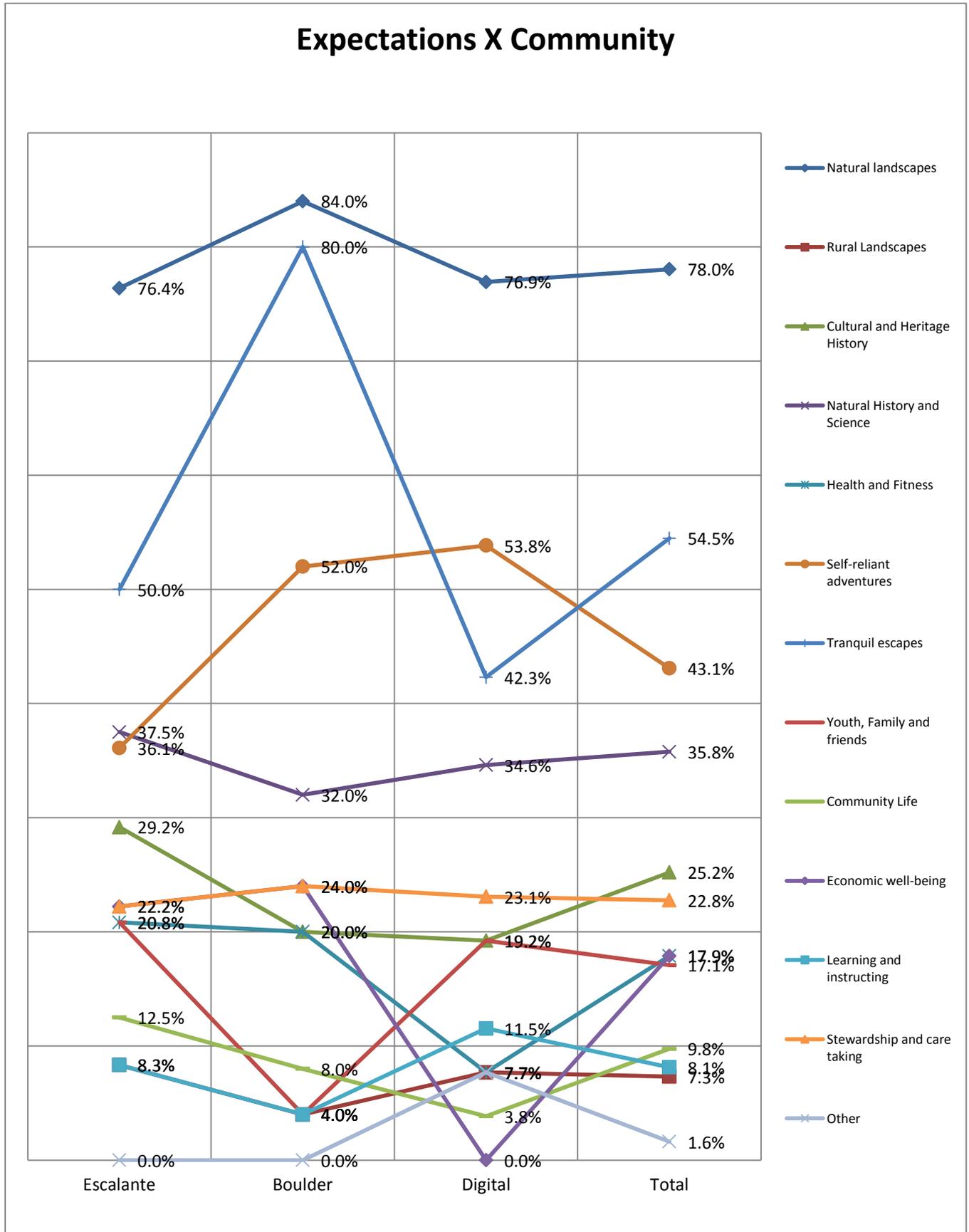


Figure 28: Activities by Community

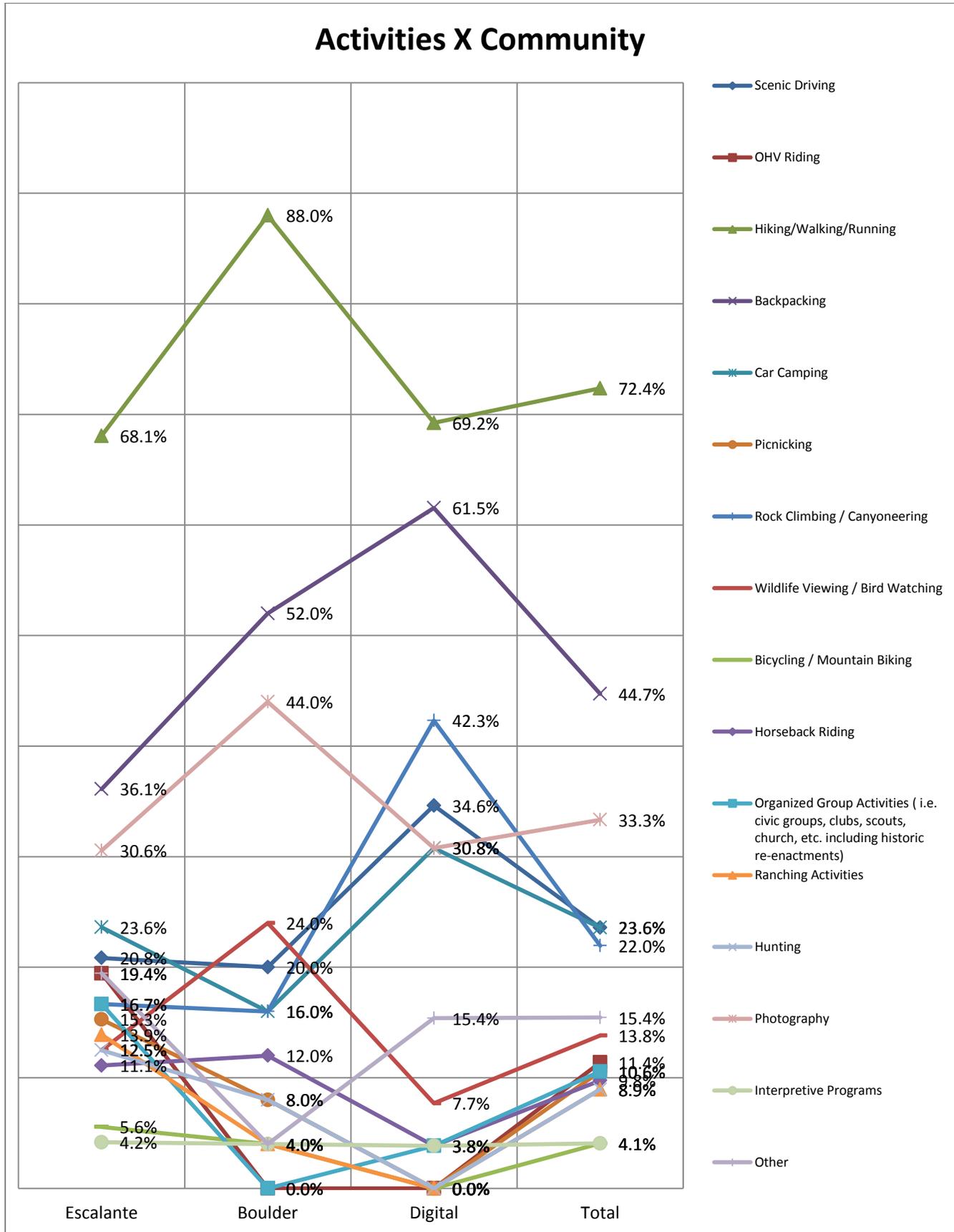
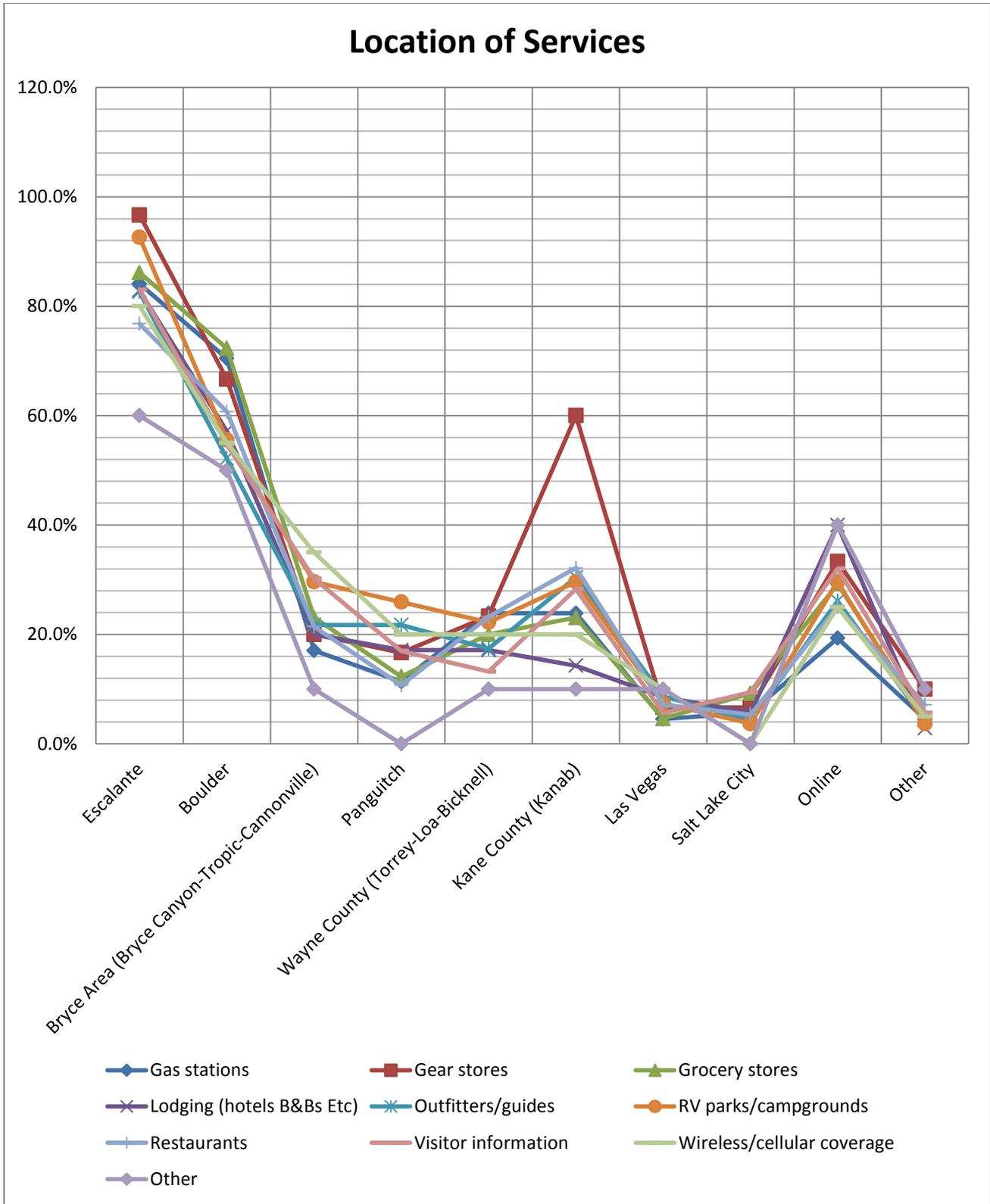
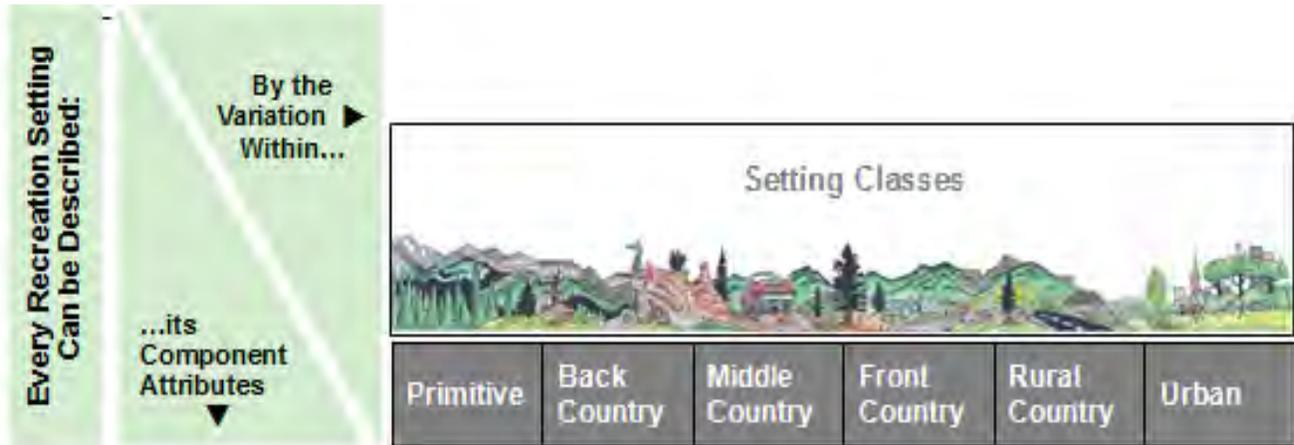


Figure 29: Services by Location



Note: the percentage in Figure 27: Location by Services refers to the percentage of total participants selecting both that location and that service of participants. They could select as many services and locations as they wanted to.

Appendix 3: Setting Characteristics Planning Matrix



BIO-PHYSICAL:	a. Remoteness:						
	b. Naturalness:						
	c. Facilities:						

SOCIAL:	d. Group Size:						
	e. Contacts:						
	f. Evidence of Use:						

+

OPERATIONAL:	g. Visitor Services:						
	h. Management Controls:						
	i. Travel Mode:						