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Building Constituency at Yellowstone National Park

Predicting Visitor Support Now and Into the Future



A report analyzing the level of park support and other psychological constructs of Yellowstone's 2015 summer visitors.

**Building Constituency at Yellowstone National Park:
Predicting Visitor Support Now and Into the Future**

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore how visitors support Yellowstone National Park, differences in support among groups, and the relationships between support and various behavioral and psychological concepts. An on-site and mail-back survey was conducted. Results indicate that highly salient memories lead to place attachment and are significantly related to increasing park support. High park supporters tended to be older, more experienced with the park, have geotouristic tendencies, and are generally more involved in recreational activities. Practical implications from this research show a need to engage visitors and provide experiences that are likely to lead to park support.

Executive summary

The primary impetus for conducting this project was realizing that declining budgets with increasing visitation was becoming more common, that fostering long-lasting relationship with current and future park visitors might help, and engaging diverse populations of visitors could all provide future support of the park. The purpose was to assess the level of support visitors have for Yellowstone National Park (YNP), the aspects that influence their level of support, and to gain a more in-depth view of the summer park visitor. Visitors were surveyed at the five exit gates of YNP from May through September, 2015. In total, 2,216 visitors were given mail-back questionnaires with 802 completed surveys for a response rate of 36 percent. Using place attachment, memories, geotouristic tendencies, and outdoor recreation involvement to gauge park support, findings included the following:

- Visitors are more likely to participate in indirect (e.g. sharing stories with others, introducing new visitors to the park) than direct support actions (monetary contributions to the Foundation and memberships with the Yellowstone Association). This may not alleviate financial constraints, but furthers Yellowstone's overall reach.
- Creating memorable experiences that lead to place attachment is the most important factor for driving both indirect and direct park support. Fostering a long-term relationship with park visitors is critical to success. Furthermore, monitoring the visitor experience is vital.
- Yellowstone caters to a large group of first-time visitors, but there are not large differences between first time and repeat visitors overall. Repeat visitors only had significant differences in place attachment and current park support.
- While first and repeat visitors do not differ in a large way, other typologies do. Visitors who were rated highest on any of the measured constructs had a significantly higher current park support score than those in the low group. Therefore, people who feel strongly about their responses in any of the measured categories are more likely to support the park.
- Fourteen percent of all visitors surveyed stated they probably would not return to Yellowstone; however, the majority of visitors stated that they would be back either next year or within 5 years.
- Over 50 percent of visitors did not purchase or had an existing NPS pass when they entered Yellowstone. If fee revenue is an important part of park finances, then changes may need to be considered.
- Data suggests that public support through monetary donations is not a long-term solution. More congressional allocations is what will sustain the parks financially into the future.

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Introduction

The National Park Service (NPS) is facing a number of underlying, societal and managerial challenges. Such challenges make it difficult for managers to fulfill all aspects of the dual-mission set out by the Organic Act of 1916 to “protect the resource and provide enjoyment” to visitors. In 2013, the annual budget of the NPS decreased by 5 percent across the board; a number that varied between individual parks. During that time, a U.S. government shutdown in 2013 placed the financial constraints revolving around the NPS in the forefront of America’s general public. For the time that federal sites were closed, people across the country voiced their concerns over the future of national parks. To park managers and avid park visitors, this may not be a new realization, but for the general public it became more known that the NPS is facing pressing issues. Despite vocal concerns, there have not been significant changes regarding congressional allocations for land management agencies except for a small increase in 2015 due to a presidential bill for the 2016 NPS Centennial. Not only are financial constraints a concern for the NPS, but societal changes such as a loss of appreciation for nature among younger generations are some of the complex issues facing the NPS.



The National Park Service Advisory Board Science Committee released *Revisiting Leopold* (2012) to guide research and management for the NPS into the 21st century. As an update to the original Leopold Report of the 1960’s, *Revisiting Leopold* (2012) aimed to be an influential document for all managers within the agency. The committee highlighted, in-depth, the aforementioned key concerns for the NPS. Of course, the financial constraints mentioned above are discussed and noted as of high concern, but the overwhelming number of potential issues is discussed as well. Many of these concerns are part of a larger societal change within the U.S. as a whole. For instance, younger generations’ loss of appreciation in natural areas affect more sites than simply those in the NPS, but may not have as far reaching effects as it may on

the NPS. Without a new generation of those interested in natural places, public support for the NPS may wane. Therefore, it's imperative for the NPS and other nature-based organizations to attract these new generations and populations of visitors. Yellowstone, in particular, has identified a need to address these issues to prepare for a new millennium of management.

Yellowstone National Park is America's 1st designed site with its 1872 protection. Since then, Yellowstone has remained a world leader in park management, setting the standard for conservation around the globe. Visitation statistics show an increase over recent years with 2015 setting an all-time record of over 4 million annual recreation visits (NPS, 2015). But, this upward trend does not equal long-term support for the park. Thus, the objective of this study was to investigate how current park visitors support the park, their activity trends, and a number of psychological and sociological constructs revolving around their park experience.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the level of park support among a number of psychological and recreational constructs. Furthermore, this study sought to develop a conceptual framework for park managers to continue to monitor for years to come. Using this framework, managers can identify how support for the park has shifted over time and what factors influence an individual's level of support.

Methods

This study was conducted during the summer season of 2015 from May through September. The research questions requested by park managers lent themselves to a quantitative survey, but a qualitative investigation was conducted concurrently to add breadth and depth to the project. In this report, only the quantitative findings are presented. A separate report "Understanding YNP support: A qualitative study," by Havens and Nickerson can be accessed at: <http://www.itrr.umt.edu>.



Researchers surveyed park visitors as they exited the park throughout the summer season. No commercial buses were intercepted for this study. Yellowstone National Park has five exits: north, south, east, west, and northeast. Survey locations were chosen because of the potential to intercept every type of visitors. A sampling frame was developed to survey visitors for 28 days during the summer of 2015. Days were spaced out throughout the week and on weekends to capture a representative sample of summer visitation. Furthermore, each exit gate was allocated a

number of survey days based on the percentage of traffic flow throughout each month. The west entrance of Yellowstone receives nearly 40 percent of all traffic, thus, more days were allocated to this location (12 days). Each subsequent site received a proportionate amount of sampling days to their percentage of traffic: south entrance (7 days), east entrance (5 days), north entrance (5 days), and northeast entrance (2 days).

Two bright orange construction signs were placed along the road to alert drivers of the survey. Researchers flagged their vehicle into a survey site in which they were asked to take a voluntary 10-question survey. The on-site survey was designed to be short and to collect important visitor characteristics and demographic information. After completion of the on-site survey, respondents were asked to complete a mail-back questionnaire upon their completion of the trip. The mail-back survey contained all questions about park support and key psychological and recreational constructs. In total, 2,216 front-end surveys were completed with 802 mail-back surveys returned for a response rate of 36 percent.

Survey design

Researchers called upon multiple disciplines to develop the surveys and hypothesized a conceptual framework. First to be explored was the concept of park support. As of now, there are no additional studies that define park support or that attempt to measure it. The most relevant and prevalent line of research was in philanthropy. However, philanthropy is limited to monetary giving, which the researchers deemed as too narrow for examining park support. Thus, we define park support as direct and indirect actions taken by people that assist in the preservation and livelihood of the ecological and social functions of national parks. By using this definition, the scope of support expanded to include both monetary and non-monetary behaviors.



In addition to park support, additional constructs were used to test their level of influence towards an individual's support. These constructs were: 1) geotourism tendencies, 2) recreation involvement, 3) place attachment, and 4) autobiographical memory. These constructs were chosen based on previous research including Manning's (2012) recommendation for future research. All constructs are displayed in full throughout this section including the foundational studies in which they were developed.

Park Support Construct

A comprehensive review of previous literature was undertaken by the researchers to construct the park support scale. No prior research had attempted to explore how people supported national parks through indirect or direct measures therefore a new scale was developed with review from park managers. Ten variables were constructed to measure specific Yellowstone support behaviors. Each variable is measured on a scale of 1 = “very infrequently” to 5 = “very frequently”. However, one section of the study measures the future likelihood of support where 1 = “very unlikely” to 5 = “very likely”. These variables appeared to be an exhaustive list on how an individual can realistically support a national park, specifically Yellowstone (Table 1).

Table 1: Park Support Variables

Park Support Variables
Shared your experience in Yellowstone National Park with others
Brought new visitors to Yellowstone National Park
Became a member/renewed membership of Yellowstone Association
Visited Yellowstone National Park Facebook page
Spent nights in lodging inside Yellowstone National Park
Contributed to Yellowstone Park Foundation
Spent nights camping inside Yellowstone National Park
Contributed to other conservation organizations
Spent nights in the gateway communities around Yellowstone National Park
Volunteer your time with Yellowstone National Park

Geotourism Tendencies Construct

Geotourism is defined as “tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place – its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and well-being of its residents (Stokes, Cook, and Drew, 2003).” Geotourism goes beyond sustainable tourism to include factors that enhance the destination where people are visiting. Furthermore, geotourism encourages the destination to remain authentic to itself instead of changing its identity to increase tourism. We utilized this concept to better understand how geotouristic travelers are to Yellowstone. A scale was developed in Boley, Nickerson, and Bosak (2011) that includes 16 behavior-related variables to assess geotourism tendencies. Each variable is measured on a Likert Scale of 1 = “not at all likely” to 5 = “very likely”. These variables are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2: Geotourism Tendency Scale

<u>Geotourism Tendencies</u>
<i>Cultural Heritage Behavior Scale</i>
<u>When you travel how likely are you to visit the following...</u>
national parks
historic sites
museums
cultural sites
cultural events
<i>Environmental Behavior Scale</i>
<u>In daily living, how likely are you to regularly...</u>
recycle
conserve energy
conserve water
purchase environmentally friendly products
<i>Aesthetic Behavior Scale</i>
<u>When you travel, how likely are you to do the following...</u>
travel to a specific area for its scenic beauty
stop at scenic overlooks
search for scenic driving routes
plan your vacation around the opportunity to enjoy scenic beauty
<i>Well-being of the Local People Behavior</i>
<u>When you travel, how likely are you to seek out...</u>
locally owned accommodations
locally grown food
locally made arts and crafts

Recreation involvement Construct

Recreation involvement is defined as “the degree to which an individual engages in a particular activity (Lee, 2011, p. 899).” Each individual may have a different degree of involvement that influences whether they have an attachment to a place. Generally, recreationists who are heavily involved in their activity are more likely to have a higher attachment to the place where they participate in said activity. Recreation involvement has been used in a number studies to assess their user base (Lee, 2011). Eight variables were utilized to measure how involved visitors in Yellowstone are with their preferred activity in the park. Each variable was measured on a Likert scale from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree.” These variables are included in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Recreation Involvement Variables

Recreation Involvement Variables
When I participate in my primary activity, I can really be myself.
I can tell a lot about a person by seeing him or her participate in my primary activity.
When I participate in my primary activity, others see me the way I want them to see me.
My primary activity is important to me.
Participating in my primary activity is one of the most enjoyable things I do.
I find a lot of my life is organized around my primary activity.
My primary activity does not have a central role in my life.
I find a lot of my life is organized around similar activities.

Place Attachment Construct

Place attachment derived from influential studies in the 1970’s in humanistic geography. Place attachment has proven useful in understanding recreation and tourism issues for a number of years (Williams and Vaske, 2003; Prayag and Ryan, 2012) and is defined as emotional or affective bonds that a person creates with a particular place. The most utilized scale comes from Williams and Vaske’s (2003) study of place attachment through two primary constructs: place identity and place dependence. Place identity is the degree to which an individual has a symbolic attachment to the place. Place dependence is the degree to which an individual depends on the place to receive a certain type of experience. Each construct is measured with four variables on a scale from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree” (Table 4).



Table 4: Place Attachment Variables

Place Attachment Variables
Yellowstone National Park means a lot to me.
I get more satisfaction out of visiting Yellowstone National Park than any other place.
I identify strongly with Yellowstone National Park.
I am not able to substitute other places for the type of experience I get in Yellowstone National Park.
I enjoy visiting Yellowstone National Park more than any other place.
I have a special connection with Yellowstone National Park.
Visiting Yellowstone National Park is more important than visiting any other place.
I am very attached to Yellowstone National Park.

Autobiographical Memory Construct

Autobiographical memory is a novel concept in both recreation and tourism literature. With its roots in cognitive and social psychology, autobiographical memory is long-term memories of personal events or experiences in a person’s life. These events help tell their life history and are evaluated amongst all other memories in an individual’s long-term memory system (Fivush, 2011). Autobiographical memory has proven useful in predicting decision-making, but it also provides a continuity of one’s self, and facilitates social bonds. Fitzgerald and Broadbridge (2013) developed a conceptual framework to measure specific events and the autobiographical memories people have of those experiences. This framework uses two main constructs of autobiographical memory: rehearsal and impact. Rehearsal is the frequency an individual rehearses the memory in their mind. Impact is the effect it has on a person’s behavior and life in general. Upon analysis, however, we found these constructs to be better combined together as one construct named “memory salience”. Variables are displayed in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Autobiographical Memory Variables

Autobiographical Memory Variables
*Since it happened, I have talked about this event...
*Since it happened, I have thought about this event...
*Since it happened, I have written about this event to others (e.g. Facebook, email, blog, letter, etc.)...
**As I remember the event, I can feel now the emotions I felt then.
**As I remember the event, it comes to me in words or in pictures as a coherent story or episode and not as an isolated fact, observation, or scene.
**This memory is significant in my life because it imparts an important message for me or represents an anchor, critical juncture, or turning point.
**This memory has consequences for my life because it influenced by behavior, thoughts, or feelings in noticeable ways.
***As I recall them now, I would rate the emotions I experienced during the event as...

*Rehearsal scale: 1 = “very infrequently” to 7 = “very frequently”

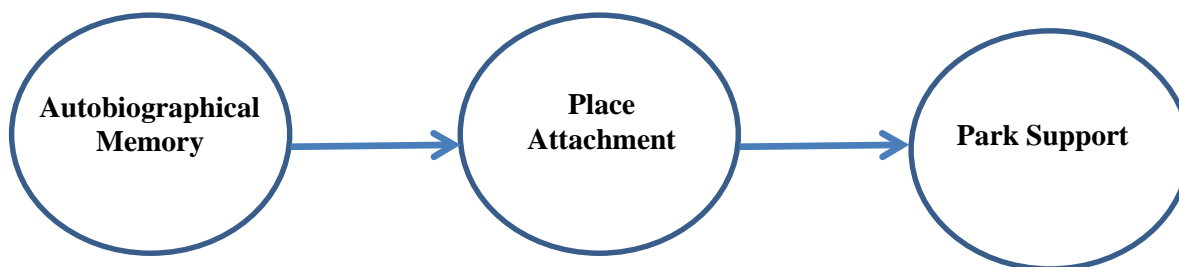
** Impact scale: 1 = “strongly disagree” to 7 = “strongly agree”

***Memory emotion: 1 = “extremely negative to 7 = extremely positive

Structural Equation Model – Predicting Park Support

During the study design phase, park managers were presented with a conceptual model intended to test the relationship of two of the primary concepts on level of park support. More specifically, the researchers hypothesized autobiographical memory and place attachment had a significant relationship with an individual’s level of support. This model was meant to test the National Park Service Advisory Board Science Committee’s call to action in *Revisiting Leopold* (2012) to provide “transformative experiences”. Essentially, autobiographical memory is used to measure the visitor experience in a novel method. Place attachment and park support are the hypothesized outcomes that exceptional experiences provide. The hypothesized model is presented below (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Support



Results

The results for this study derive from both the on-site and mail-back surveys. Each of the five primary constructs measured as well as trip characteristics are discussed throughout. A brief overview of the statistical methods used to compare responses is presented below:

Descriptive statistics: Descriptive statistics display frequencies, means, and standard deviations of individual variables. These statistics do not test any significant differences. However, descriptive statistics are important for understanding the story that is told throughout the results.

T-tests and Analyses of Variance (ANOVA): T-tests and ANOVAs test for significant differences between means of at least two groups or more. Independent samples t-tests are used for comparing means between only two groups whereas ANOVAS compare three or more groups. Both tests are used frequently throughout the results to compare specific group differences such as differences in support means based on first-time and repeat visitors. Unless a t-test or ANOVA finds a significant difference between the means of two groups, there can be no evidence to say that the means are not the same because of random variation. Significant differences are displayed by using a threshold of $p < .05$. P-values that are greater than .05 are said to be statistically insignificant.

Chi-square Tests: Chi-square tests compare significant differences in frequencies or proportions of responses on variables. This is primarily used where mean values are not available for interpretation or the data is in the form of categorical variables, similar to the household income ranges provided in this survey. Significant differences are found when the p-value is less than .05.

Structural Equation Model: A structural equation model (SEM) is a multi-level model to test relationships between constructs (such as the relationship between past visits and satisfaction). SEM is based on theoretical hypotheses on whether specific variables fall into the same construct and how well constructs are able to predict others. Theory is used to develop a hypothesis on whether specific variables are a part of a larger construct. For instance, the eight place-attachment variables are put into a SEM to tell how well they fit together. After these individual constructs are validated, paths are tested between these “latent constructs”. If the model provides significant results and is a good fit, then we can make statements as to whether a specific construct predicts another.

On-site Survey Results

Results presented in this section contain responses from the on-site survey given to all visitors intercepted at the exit gates of Yellowstone. In total, 2,325 visitors responded to the on-site questionnaire.

Figure 2: Prior Trips to YNP

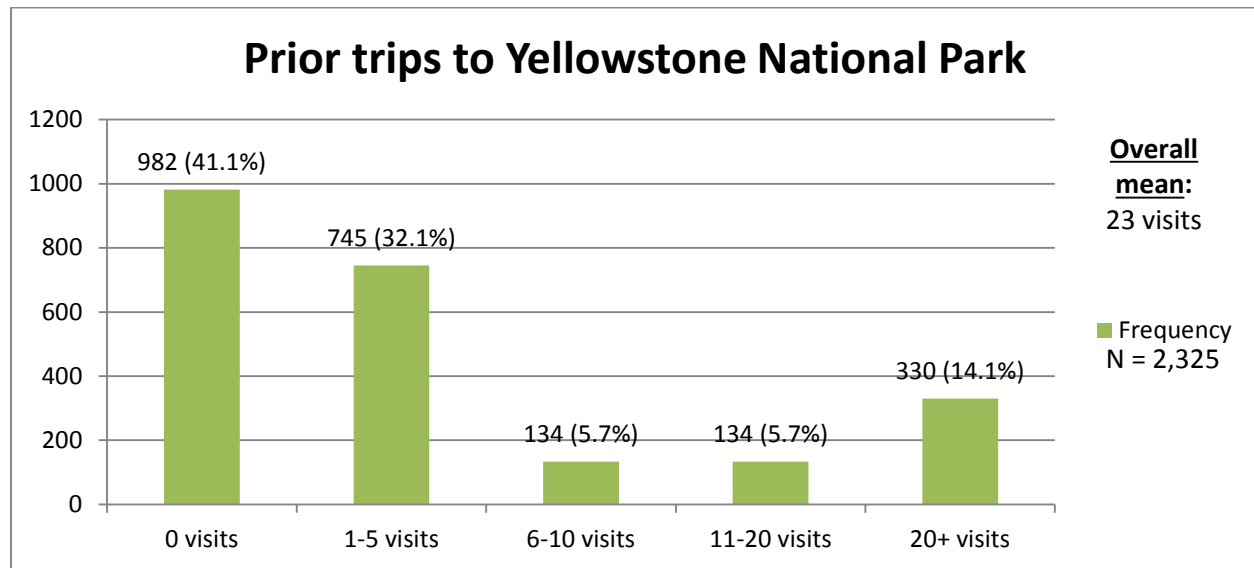


Figure 1 displays the distribution of prior trips to Yellowstone for all intercepted visitors. Visitors were asked how many times they have been to Yellowstone prior to their current trip. Past visits were classified into five groups ranging from 0 prior visits to 20 or more past visits. Forty-one percent of visitors were first time visitors to Yellowstone National Park while 32 percent have visited one to five prior times. The third most frequent past visit category are those who have been to the park more than 20 times in the past (14.1%). Thus, there appears to be large variation in the number of times visitors have been to the park. In fact, the overall mean of past visits was 23 past visits. Forty-six percent of visitors spent nights within the park (Table 6).

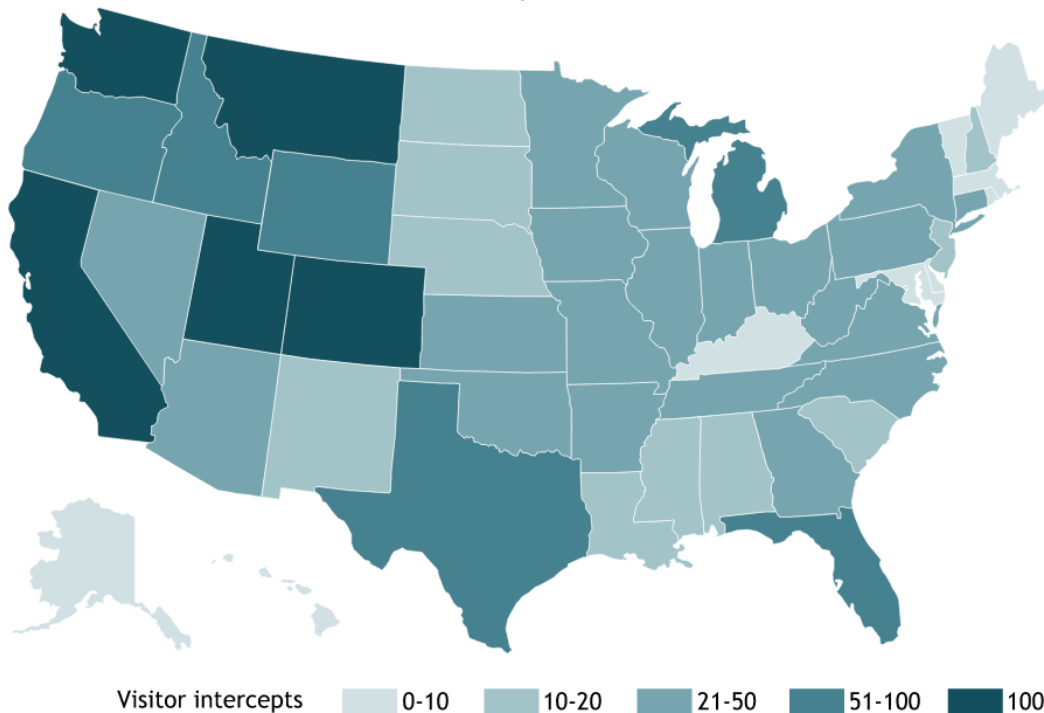
Table 6: Nights spent in YNP

Do you spend nights in YNP on the trip?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	1,097	46.2%
No	1,244	52.4%
Mean number of nights spent	4.74 nights	

Figure 3: Visitor Residency

Yellowstone National Park Visitor Residency

Visitor residency - Summer 2015



Most populated States as of 2013 (US Census)

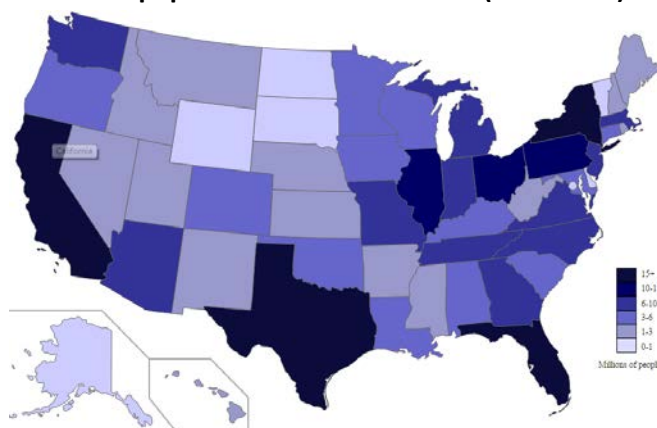


Figure 3 displays the U.S. residency of intercepted visitors at Yellowstone National Park over the course of the summer season with a smaller inset of the distribution of U.S. population by state.

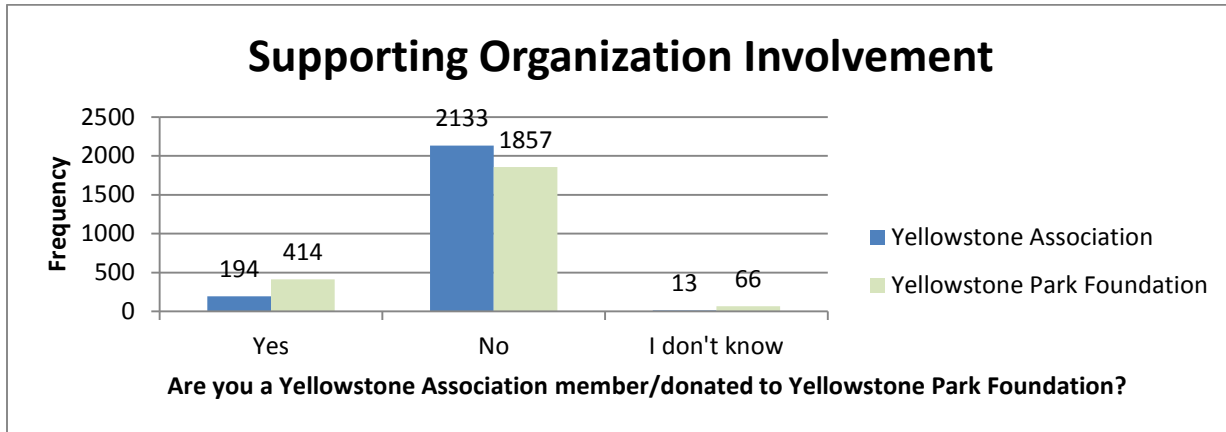
Five states had over 100 visitors who were intercepted at the park: 1) California, 2) Montana, 3) Washington, 4) Utah, and 5) Colorado. There were six states that had between 51 and 100 visitors entering Yellowstone National Park: 1) Oregon, 2) Idaho, 3) Wyoming, 4) Texas, 5) Florida, and 6) Michigan. Comparing state populations with the Yellowstone visitor residency population, two common-sense explanations emerge. In general, the greatest number of people visiting YNP are either nearby neighbors or come from the highest populated states. A few anomalies show up. First, Michigan is the 10th most populated state in the U.S according to 2015 estimates, but had more visitors to YNP than states with higher populations (NY, IL, PA, OH, GA and NC). Second, some nearby states (ND and SD) did not visit the park as much as other neighbors. While visitor residency is spread throughout the country, pockets of fewer visitors come from the deep south (LA, MS, AL), the upper Midwest (ND, SD, NE) and the Northeast (ME, VT, MA, MD, CT, DE, RI).

Table 7: Nights Spent in Gateway Communities

Nights spent in Gateway Communities	Frequency	Percent
West Yellowstone, MT	439	18.5
Gardiner, MT	131	5.5
Cody, WY	90	3.8
Multiple Communities	60	2.5
Cooke City, MT	19	0.8
Mean number of nights spent in gateway communities	6.16 nights	

Visitors who were not staying within the borders of Yellowstone National Park were asked if they were spending nights in the surrounding communities of the park (Table 7). By far most visitors spent their nights outside of the park in West Yellowstone (18.5%), followed by Gardiner (5.5%) and Cody, WY (3.8%). Two and a half percent of visitors stated they spent nights in multiple communities around the park; many included those that are cited above.

Figure 4: Involvement in Supporting Organizations



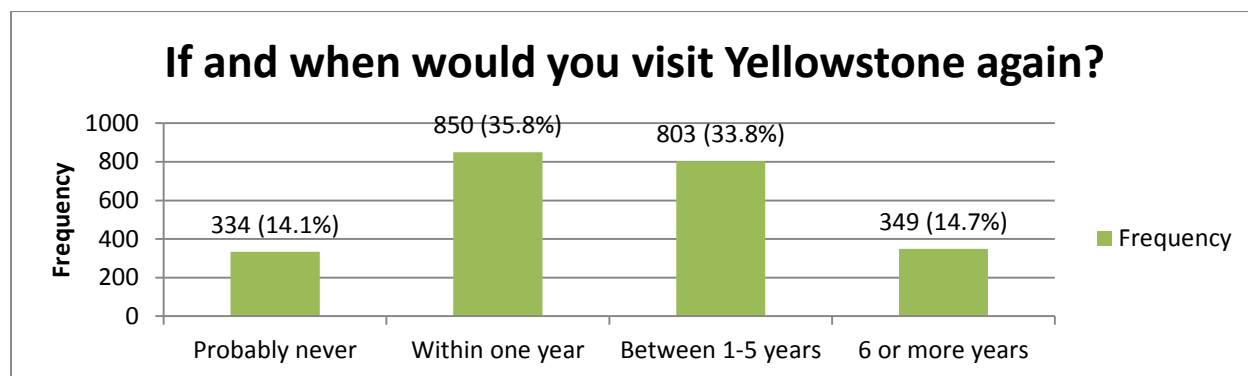
Besides demographic and trip characteristics asked during the on-site survey, the study aimed to capture the level of involvement visitors have with supporting organizations in the park, namely the Yellowstone Association and Yellowstone Park Foundation (Figure 4). Visitors were asked if they were a member of the Yellowstone Association and whether they have contributed to the Yellowstone Park Foundation. In regards to the Yellowstone Association, 8 percent of visitors stated they were current members. The Yellowstone Park Foundation had a higher rate of involvement with 17 percent of visitors contributing. However, this number may be slightly skewed as some visitors had only contributed \$2.00 upon checkout of their hotel, an unexpected response prior to survey implementation as researchers were not aware of this solicitation technique.

Table 8: Entrance Passes Purchased by Yellowstone Visitors

Entrance Pass Purchased at Yellowstone	Frequency	Percent
<u>7-day passes:</u>		
Private, noncommercial vehicle	687	29.0%
Motorcycle/snowmobile	10	0.4%
Bike/walk/snow coach	1	0.0%
<u>Annual and Other passes:</u>		
America the Beautiful Interagency	193	8.1%
Yellowstone NP Season	36	1.5%
Interagency Access	27	1.1%
Lifetime Senior	108	4.6%
Military Annual	11	0.5%
I did not purchase a pass at Yellowstone NP	1,265	53.3%

Park staff had interest in understanding the types of entrance passes visitors purchased while in Yellowstone National Park (Table 8). The majority of visitors (53.3%) did not purchase a pass at YNP. These visitors may have had an existing annual pass or a senior pass that was not purchased on their current trip. Twenty-nine percent of visitors purchased a standard 7-day noncommercial vehicle pass on their current trip to YNP, followed by 8.1 percent who purchased an America the Beautiful Interagency Pass.

Figure 5: Visiting Yellowstone in the Future



Finally, visitors were asked to respond to if and when they would visit YNP in the future (Figure 5). Thirty-five percent of visitors stated they would return within one year followed by 33.8 percent who said they would return in one to five years. On the extreme ends, 14.7 percent of visitors stated they would return in 6 or more years with 14.1 percent stating they probably would not return. Some visitors do not have the ability to visit as frequently as others and some were on a “once-in-a-lifetime” experience trip. Thus, they did not have the ability or interest to return to YNP.

Mail-back Results

As described, visitors who were stopped at the exit gate during the on-site intercept survey were asked to complete a mail-back survey to return to the researchers. This survey contained the majority of the park support questions as well as all social constructs used to predict park support. In total 802 mail-back surveys were returned for analysis purposes and results are displayed in this section.

Weighting Process

Before entering into the full results of the mail-back survey, the researchers used a weighting system to replicate the populations of the front-end and mail-back respondents. This process is common amongst mail-back survey designs in order to accurately reflect the overall sample population and to account for non-response bias. Non-response bias occurs when there is a bias between the type of respondents who were initially surveyed during the on-site survey and those who actually sent in the mail-back survey; creating an inconsistency in the results. In our

study, we chose three primary questions in order to check for differences between on-site and mail-back respondents. These questions were prior visits to YNP, Yellowstone Association membership, and contributions to the Yellowstone Park Foundation.

Upon analysis of the non-response bias check questions, a predisposition of Yellowstone Association members to complete the mail-back survey surfaced. Eight percent of on-site visitors stated they were members of the Yellowstone Association while 24 percent of visitors stated they were members on the mail-back survey. Thus, the data was weighted to account for this difference on the mail-back survey. Although initially 802 mail-back surveys were returned and completed, weighting decreases the sample size on a number of results.

Demographics and Trip Characteristics

The following section displays results for general demographics and trip characteristics of mail-back respondents.

Figure 6: Gender distribution of YNP Respondents

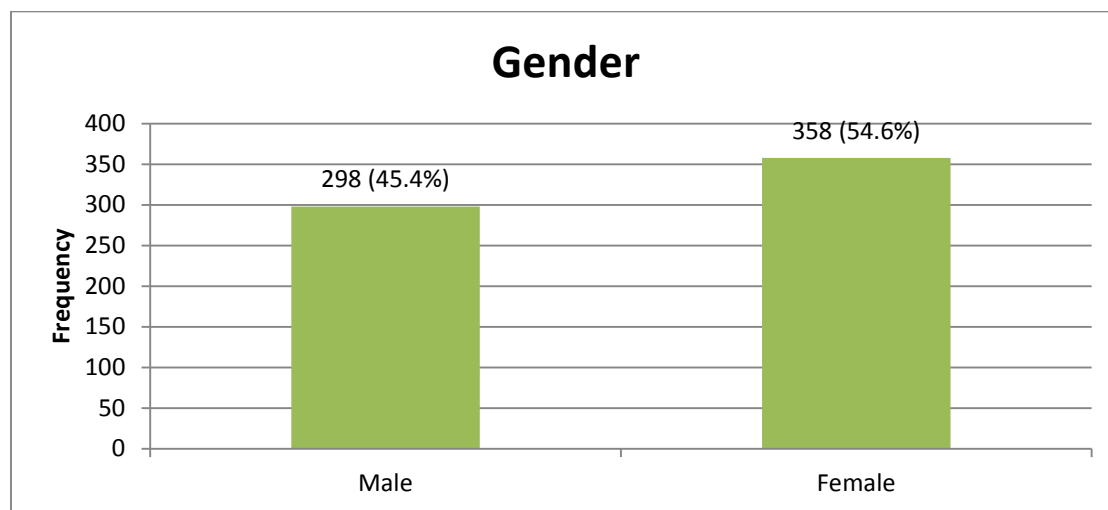


Figure 6 displays the breakdown of the gender of the respondents. In total, 45 percent of respondents were male while 54 percent were female.

Table 9: Education Distribution

Education Level	Frequency	Percent
Some high school	3	0.5
High school diploma or equivalent	62	9.4
Some college	118	17.9
Associate's degree	59	9.1
Bachelor's degree	204	31.1
Master's degree	144	22
Ph.D., M.D., J.D., or equivalent	65	10

Table 9 displays the distribution of the highest level of education for mail-back respondents to YNP. Overall, visitors tend to be well-educated with 31.1 percent of visitors holding a Bachelor’s degree and 9.1 percent holding an Associate’s degree at the least. Thirty-two percent of visitors hold a graduate degree with 22 percent holding a Master’s degree and ten percent holding a Ph.D., M.D., J.D. or equivalent. Nearly eighteen percent of visitors reported completing “some college” with 10 percent completing less.

Table 10: Household Income Distribution

Household Income	Frequency	Percent
Less than \$24,999	27	4.7
\$25k-\$49,999	79	13.4
\$50k-\$74,999	128	21.7
\$75k-\$99,999	115	19.5
\$100k-\$149,999	124	21.0
\$150k-\$199,999	60	10.2
More than \$200,000	56	9.5

Table 10 displays the distribution of household income for Yellowstone visitors. The most common income bracket is represented by 21.7 percent of visitors who earn \$50,000 to less than \$75,000. Closely following is the 21 percent of visitors earning between \$100,000 and less than \$150,000. Nearly half of all visitors have an average household income of over \$100,000, indicating a rather wealthy user-base. Yellowstone National Park is a difficult-to-access park as no major cities or airports are near, thus, it may be a product of its own location which draws a higher earning visitor.

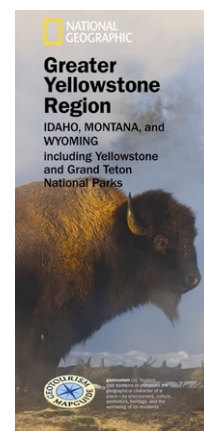
Table 11: Age of YNP Respondents

Age	
Range	18-86 years old
Mean	54.9 years old

Respondents’ age was a final demographic question of interest for the study (Table 11). In general, the mean age of travelers was roughly 55 years old; in line with multiple other tourism studies. The range of ages captured was 18 to 86 years old, but the mean tended to gravitate to the higher end. Thus, it appears visitors who are visiting Yellowstone National Park tend to be middle-aged and many near/in retirement.

Geotourism Tendencies

Geotourism tendencies are sustainable type behaviors that visitors do in their daily life and while traveling. Each of the 16 variables were rated on a scale of 1 = “not at all likely” to 6 = “very likely”. The four primary construct scores are displayed in the Table 12. These construct scores are compiled by taking the mean score of the



variables within each construct. Furthermore, these construct scores can be combined to make an overall Mean Geotourism Score for all visitors, which is at the bottom of Table 12.

Table 12: Geotourism Tendencies of YNP Visitors

Geotourism Tendency Variables	Mean	SD
<u>Cultural Heritage construct</u>		
When you travel, how likely are you to visit the following?		
A national park.	5.27	.977
Historic sites	4.75	1.072
Museums	4.24	1.216
Cultural sites	3.99	1.237
Cultural events	3.49	1.271
<u>Aesthetic Behavior construct</u>		
When you travel, how likely are you to do the following?		
Travel to a specific area for its scenic beauty.	5.55	.702
Stop at scenic overlooks.	5.17	.920
Search for scenic driving routes.	4.99	1.067
Plan your vacation around the opportunity to enjoy scenic beauty.	5.3	.912
<u>Well-being-of-locals construct</u>		
When you travel, how likely are you to seek out...		
Locally owned accommodations	4.02	1.361
Locally grown food	4.14	1.368
Locally made arts and crafts	4.13	1.448
<u>Environmental Behavior construct</u>		
In daily living, how likely are you to regularly...		
Conserve energy	5.03	.938
Conserve water	4.99	1.009
Purchase environmentally friendly products	4.61	1.107
Recycle	5.34	1.071
<u>Overall Geotourism Mean Score</u>	4.67	.618

*Scale: 1 = “not at all likely” to 6 = “very likely”

Results from the Geotourism Tendency Scale give interesting insights into Yellowstone National Park visitors (Table 12). In the Cultural Heritage construct, the most likely behavior is “visiting national parks” with a score of 5.27 out of 6.0, followed by “visiting historic sites (4.75)” and “visiting museums (4.24).” Results for the Aesthetic Behavior construct indicate “traveling to an area for its scenic beauty (5.55)” as most likely followed by “planning a vacation around the opportunity to enjoy scenic beauty (5.3).” For the Well-being-for-locals construct, seeking out “locally grown food (4.14)” and “locally made arts and crafts (4.13)” are rated highest by visitors. Finally, “recycling (5.34)” and “conserving energy (5.03)” are rated highest on the Environmental Behavior construct. Overall, visitors tend to have a high mean geotourism score with 4.67 out of 6.0.

Figure 7: Geotourism Construct Mean Scores

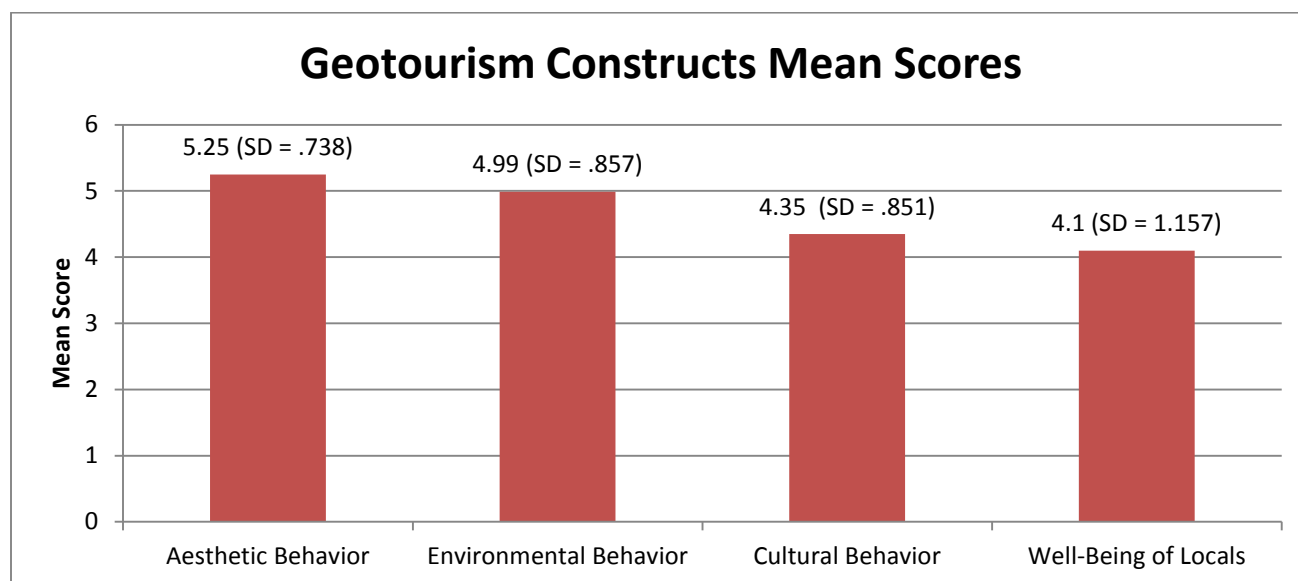


Figure 7 displays the mean scores of the four constructs of geotourism tendencies. As displayed all constructs have a mean score above 4.0 out of 6.0 with Aesthetic Behavior holding the highest mean score of 5.25. Environmental Behavior is a close second with 4.99 followed by Cultural Behavior (4.35) and Well-being-of-local people (4.1) rounding out the bottom. Overall, visitors to YNP tended to be likely to very likely to participate in geotourism behavior, indicating a sustainably-minded population.

Activities and Recreation Involvement



Table 13 displays the distribution of the activities visitors preferred during their trip to Yellowstone National Park. Respondents were instructed to select one activity that they felt was their “preferred” activity within the park. Even though the study took place during the summer season, visitors may have selected winter activities as their top choice. However, it is believed the dispersion of choices would likely have changed if the study was conducted during the winter season since winter would have been top of mind.

Table 13: Activity Participation of YNP Visitors

Please select one primary activity you prefer to do when in YNP.	Frequency	Percent
Scenic driving	213	34
Viewing geysers/geothermals	120	19.1
Hiking	81	12.9
Nature photography	64	10.1
Other wildlife watching	59	9.4
Bear watching	22	3.5
Car/RV camping	17	2.7
Fishing	15	2.4
Wolf watching	10	1.7
Nature study (e.g. geology, history, etc.)	8	1.2
Backcountry camping	5	0.9
Visiting visitor centers	3	0.5
Interpretive programs	2	0.3
Snowmobiling	2	0.3
XC skiing/ snowshoeing	1	0.2
Canoeing/kayaking	1	0.2
Taking guided tours	1	0.2
Road bicycling	1	0.2
Snowcoach riding	1	0.2

As Table 13 displays, “scenic driving” appears to be the most preferred activity (34%), followed by “viewing geysers/geothermals (19.1%) and “hiking (12.9%)”. If all types of wildlife watching were combined, the total number of respondents would hover near 15 percent, which would place it third overall. There were a number of selections that received little attention such as “canoeing/kayaking (0.2%)”, “road bicycling (0.2%)”, and “taking guided tours (0.2%)”. Despite these selections as being low, managers should still consider this population of niche activities as they comprise the larger Yellowstone Region visitors.

Table 14: Recreation Involvement Mean Scores

Recreation Involvement Variables	Mean	SD
When I participate in my primary activity, I can really be myself.	4.2	.765
My primary activity is important to me.	4.19	.937
Participating in my primary activity is one of the most enjoyable things I do.	4.0	.847
I can tell a lot about a person by seeing him or her participate in my primary activity.	3.5	.759
When I participate in my primary activity, others see me the way I want them to see me.	3.5	.863
I find a lot of my life is organized around similar activities.	3.31	1.107
I find a lot of my life is organized around my primary activity.	2.99	1.123
My primary activity has a central role in my life.	2.71	.996

*Scale: 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”

Recreation involvement variables gauged the level of centrality these specific activities have in an individual’s life (Table 14). Respondents were asked to think about the activity they had previously selected from Table 13 while rating the above statements. The top rated involvement statement was “When I participate in my primary activity (In YNP), I can really be myself (4.2 out of 5.0)”. Closely followed by “My primary activity is important to me (4.19)” and “Participating in my primary activity is one of the most enjoyable things I do (4.0)”. The bottom of the list is represented by “My primary activity has a central role in my life (2.71)”, which indicates that visitors may not be able to participate in these activities as much as they want. However, these activities are an important part of the identity of visitors.

Place Attachment

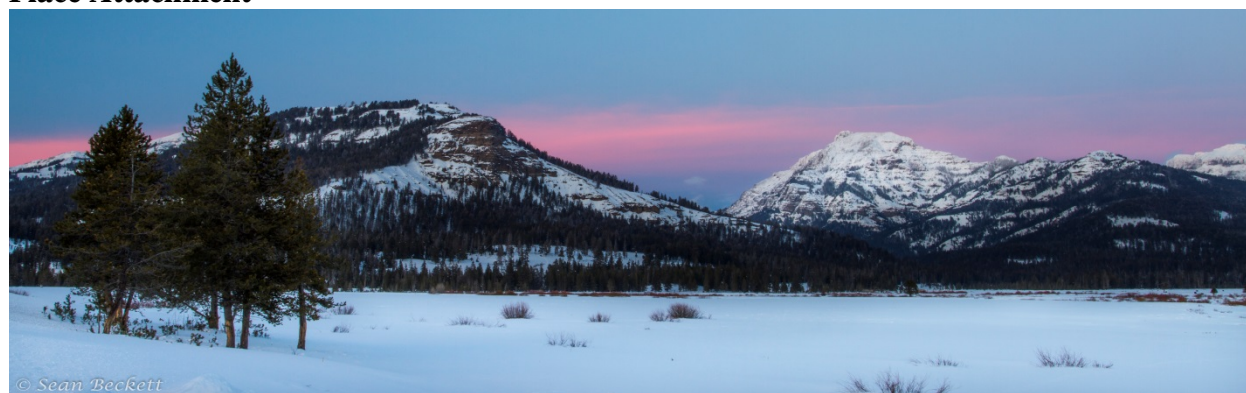


Table 15 displays results for the place attachment statements asked of respondents. These eight statements are divided into two constructs: place identity and place dependence. Figure 8 below displays the construct means to compare the strength of the attachment.

Table 15: Place Attachment Mean Scores

Place Attachment Variables	Mean	SD
Yellowstone National Park means a lot to me.	4.29	.754
I identify strongly with Yellowstone National Park.	3.43	.972
I have a special connection with Yellowstone National Park.	3.40	1.003
I am very attached to Yellowstone National Park.	3.29	1.080
I get more satisfaction out of visiting YNP than any other place.	3.10	.994
I enjoy visiting Yellowstone National Park more than any other place.	2.96	1.092
I am not able to substitute other places for the type of experience I get in YNP	2.87	.980
Visiting Yellowstone is more important than visiting any other place.	2.56	1.093

*Scale: 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”

The highest rated variable is “Yellowstone National Park means a lot to me (4.29/5.0).” A large gap exists between the highest variable and the next which is “I identify strongly with Yellowstone National Park (3.43).” Finally the lowest rated variable is “Visiting Yellowstone is more important than visiting any other place (2.56).” Overall, visitors tend to have a large amount of variation in the level of attachment they have towards Yellowstone.

Figure 8: Place Attachment Construct Mean Scores

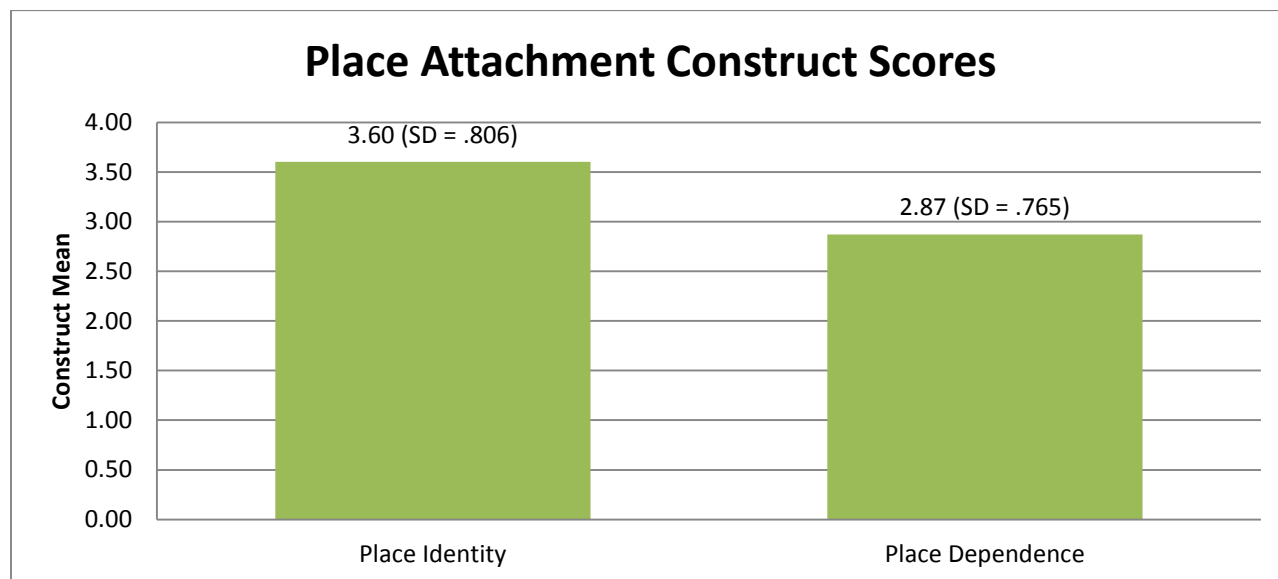


Figure 8 displays the mean construct scores of place identity and place dependence. As noted place identity has a mean score of 3.60 out of 5.0. Place dependence has a mean score of 2.87 out of 5.0, which is below the neutral value. This leads us to conclude that place identity is stronger for Yellowstone visitors than place dependence. This conclusion is interesting as many of the activities and attractions are not found in other destinations elsewhere (e.g. geothermal watching, abundant wildlife viewing). However, many visitors appear to have a special

connection with the park itself, despite their reluctance to state that they cannot substitute the place for others.

Autobiographical Memory



Finally, the last construct measured was autobiographical memory. As a new construct in the tourism field, it was important to validate its use in this context. This section displays the variables asked of respondents about their memory of an experience in Yellowstone National Park. Each variable was assessed on a 7-point Likert Scale where 1 is a weak remembrance/agreement of the variable and 7 is a strong remembrance/agreement.

Table 16: Autobiographical Memory Variables - Mean Scores

Autobiographical Memory Variables	Mean	SD
1. As I recall them now, I would rate the emotions I experienced during the event as...	5.94	1.261
2. As I remember this event, I can now feel emotions I felt then.	5.47	1.187
3. Since it happened, I have thought about this event...	5.46	1.301
4. Since it happened, I have talked about this event...	5.32	1.422
5. As I remember the event, it comes to me in words or in pictures as a coherent story or episode and not as an isolated fact, observation, or scene.	5.2	1.426
6. This memory is significant in my life because it imparts an important message for me or represents an anchor, critical juncture, or turning point.	4.44	1.663
7. This memory has consequences for my life because it influenced my behavior, thoughts, or feelings in noticeable ways.	3.96	1.732
8. Since it happened, I have written about this event to others (e.g. email, Facebook, blog, letter, text)...	3.62	2.056

*Scale for questions 2, 3, 4, and 5: 1 = “very infrequently” to 7 = “very frequently”
 Scale for questions 6, 7, 8: 1 = “strongly disagree” to 7 = “strongly agree”
 Scale for question 1: 1 = “very negative” to 7 = “very positive”

As displayed in Table 16, the highest rated variable on the memory of the experience is “As I recall them now, I would rate the emotions I experienced the event as... (5.94 out of 7.0)” where 1 = “very negative” and 7 = “very positive”. Thus, people perceive their emotions as being positive overall. This is followed by “As I remember the event, I can now feel emotions I felt then (5.47).” This rating represents that visitors appear to be able to strongly recall the

emotions of their experience. The lowest rated variable is “Since it happened, I have written about this event to others (3.62)”. Respondents appear to avoid writing about their experience and tend to only think (5.46) or talk about it with others (5.32).

Figure 9: Autobiographical Memory Saliency Groupings

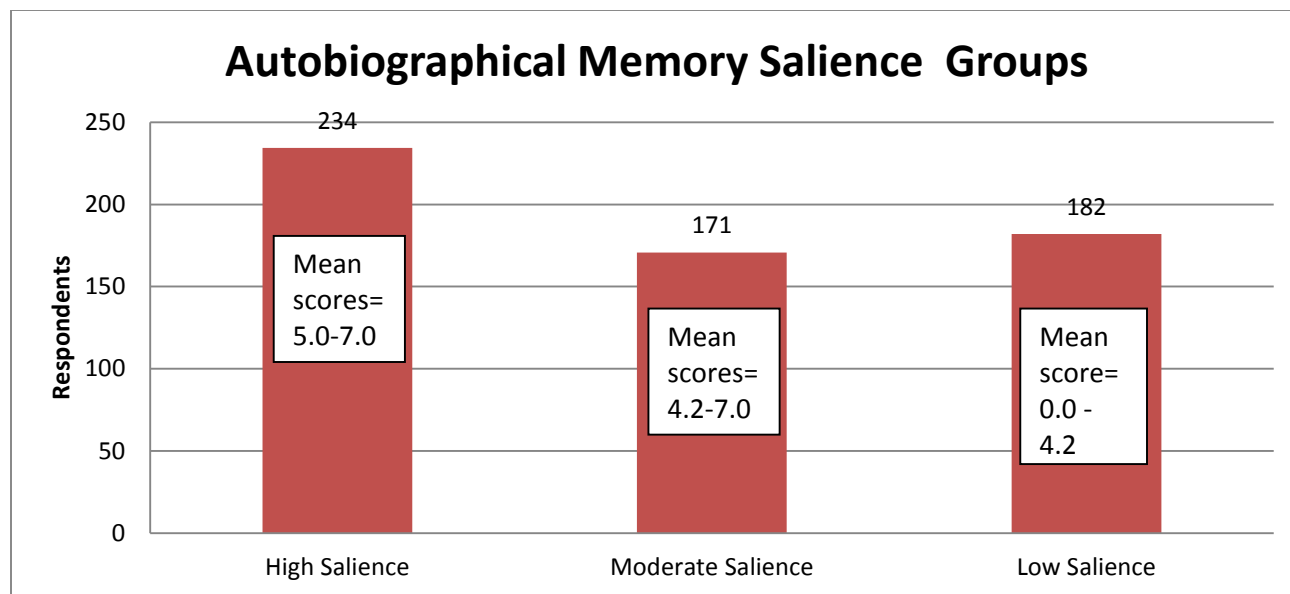


Figure 9 displays three groupings of autobiographical memory saliency, which is the combined mean score of all memory variables. “High saliency” memories are those who have a mean score above 5.0 out of 7.0 (a third of the sample population). “Moderate saliency” memories are the one third of respondents who had a mean score between 4.2 and 5.0. Finally, “Low saliency” memories are those that had a mean score below 4.2. Thus, the majority of respondents have a memory saliency above the neutral point of 4.0 with many having an impactful memory as defined by their responses.

Park Support

Park support represents the primary construct of interest to the study. Prior to this study’s design, the concept of park support had not yet existed. The researchers aimed to develop a number of key measurement variables based on behaviors individuals could take to support Yellowstone National Park. In fact, the definition of “park support” is stated as direct and indirect actions taken by people that assist in the preservation and livelihood of the ecological and social functions of national parks. The primary consideration of this definition is the separation of direct and indirect actions.

Direct park support behaviors are those that tangibly benefit the park in a monetary and non-monetary way. Within the survey, these actions are represented by memberships with the Yellowstone Association, donations to the Yellowstone Park Foundation, volunteering of time with Yellowstone, and spending nights lodging and/or camping within Yellowstone. Indirect actions support Yellowstone in a less tangible or unrecognized way to support the park. These

types of behaviors are represented by sharing stories with others about Yellowstone experiences, bringing new visitors to Yellowstone, visiting Yellowstone’s Facebook page, and spending time in the gateway communities around the park.

Finally, park support is measured on two time-periods: current and future support. The same 10 variables were used to measure both time-periods, but the measurement of the variables changes. In the current support variables, each support variable is measured on a scale of 1 = “very infrequently” to 5 = “very frequently”. Future support is measured on a scale of 1 = “very unlikely” to 5 = “very likely”.

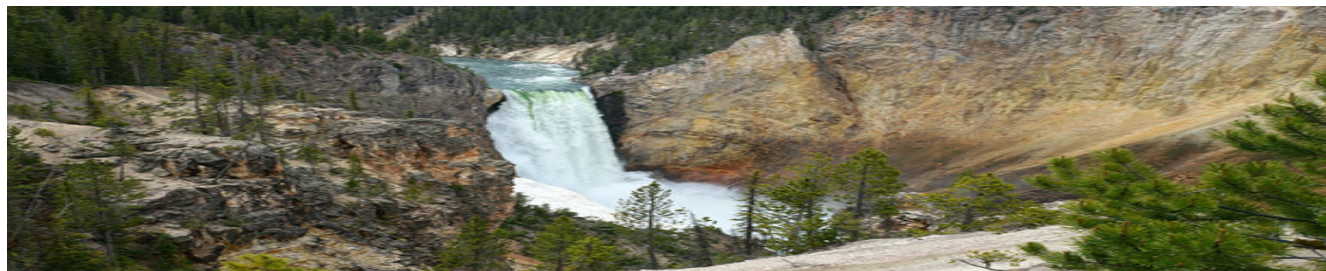
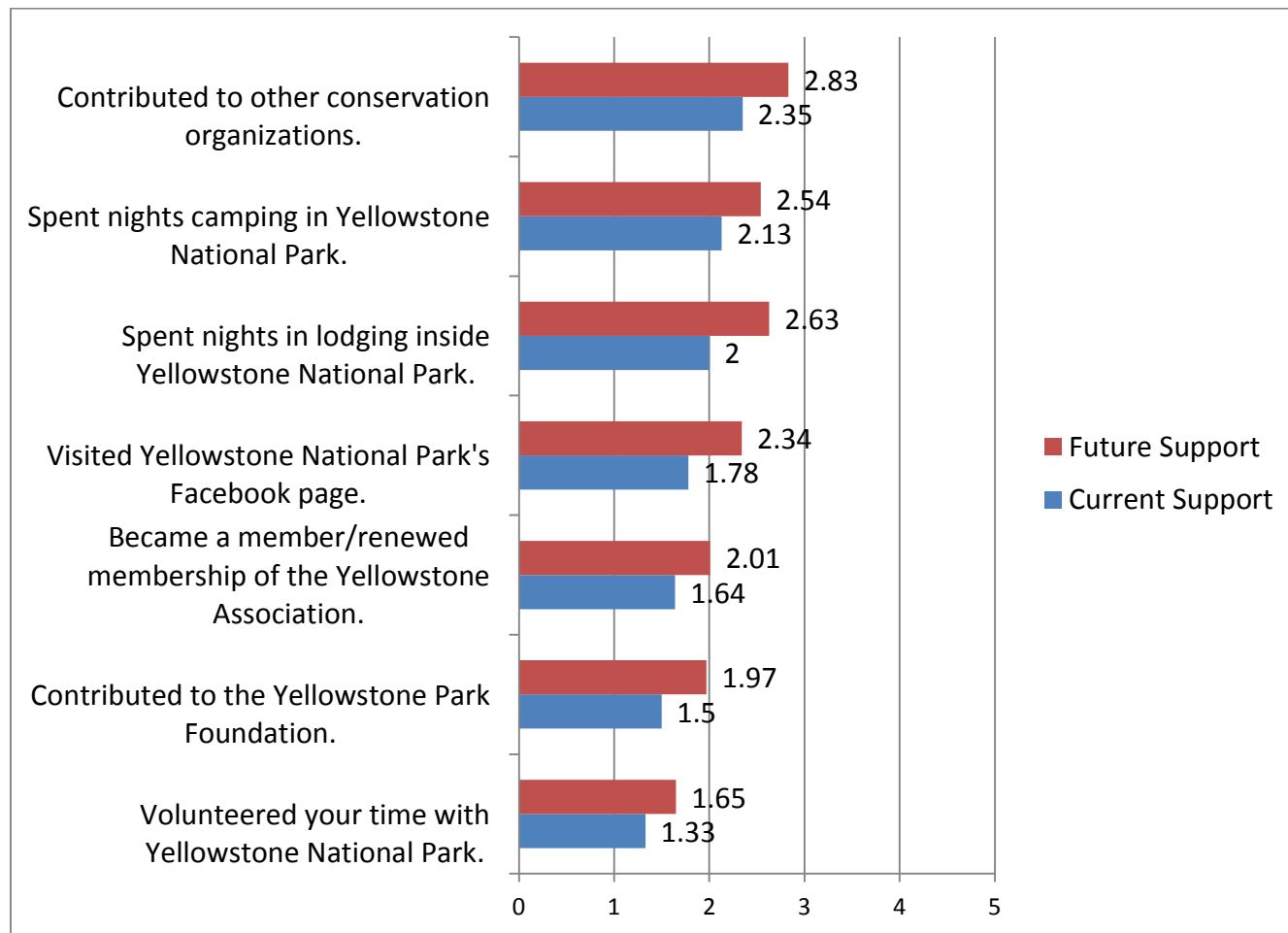


Figure 10: Direct support means – Current and Future support

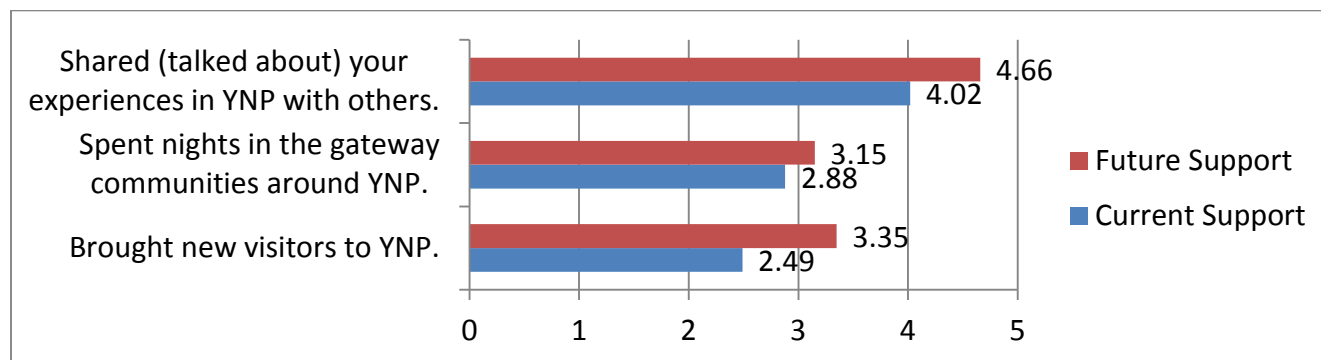


*Scale: 1 = “very infrequently” to 5 = “very frequently” for current support. 1 = “very unlikely” to 5 = “very likely” for future support.

Figure 10 displays the mean scores of current support for the five direct support variables. These behaviors are those that visitors are currently partaking in and their level of frequency. As shown, no direct support variables are over a 2.5 out of 5.0 ranking. A neutral ranking of 3 would suggest some participation in some actions, but these means represent low participation in all direct support activities currently. The highest mean score is “Spending nights camping in Yellowstone National Park (2.11)” whereas the lowest mean score is “Volunteered your time with Yellowstone National Park (1.33). Future support is assessed as the intention to support the park in the future. Again, all mean scores are below a mean of 3.0 out of 5.0. Thus, there is a low likelihood that the majority of visitors will directly support the park in the future. The highest rated variable is “Spend nights in lodging in Yellowstone National Park (2.64).” The lowest mean score is for the variable “Volunteer your time with Yellowstone National Park (1.63).”



Figure 11: Current Indirect Support Means



*Scale: 1 = “very infrequently” to 5 = “very frequently” for current support. 1 = “very unlikely” to 5 = “very likely” for future support.

Figure 11 represents the current and future support means for indirect variables. These variables tended to be higher than the direct support variables, but still appear to be rather low. The highest mean score is represented by the “Shared (talked about) your experiences in Yellowstone National Park with others (4.01).” On the other hand, the lowest mean score is represented by “Visited Yellowstone National Park’s Facebook page (1.77).” Only one variable exceeds the neutral point of 3.0 out of 5.0 within indirect support. Contrary to all other support indicators, indirect support into the future looks rather promising. The highest rated variable is

“Share (talk about) your experiences in Yellowstone National Park with others (4.66)”, followed by “bring new visitors to Yellowstone National Park (3.34).” The lowest rated variable is “Visit Yellowstone National Park’s Facebook page (2.34).” However, it appears visitors are optimistic about their likelihood to support the park indirectly in the future.

First-time visitor and Repeat Visitor comparison

This section outlines a critical comparison of interest by park managers throughout the development process of the study: the differences between first-time and repeat visitors. One of the primary hypotheses revolved around the notion of direct experiences potentially having an effect on support. First-time visitors have not had as much direct experience with the park than people who have been to the park multiple times. Independent samples t-tests were run on all major constructs between first-time and repeat visitors. The results are displayed below in various tables with significant differences bolded within each table.

Table 17: Independent t-tests - Geotourism Variables

Geotourism Variables	First-time	Repeat	t	Sig.	Mean Difference
A national park	5.19	5.32	-1.98	0.048*	-0.162
Historic sites	4.78	4.73	0.591	0.555	0.054
Museums	4.24	4.22	0.11	0.913	0.011
Cultural sites	4.12	3.91	2.279	0.023*	0.235
Cultural events	3.62	3.42	1.801	0.072	0.192
Travel to a specific area for its scenic beauty	5.57	5.54	0.615	0.539	0.036
Stop at scenic overlooks	5.25	5.12	1.819	0.069	0.138
Search for scenic driving routes	5.03	4.96	0.811	0.418	0.073
Plan your vacation around the opportunity to enjoy scenic beauty	5.32	5.28	0.674	0.500	0.052
Locally owned accommodations	4.01	4.03	0.289	0.772	-0.033
Locally grown food	4.36	4.03	3.071	0.002*	0.349
Locally made arts and crafts	4.19	4.13	0.847	0.397	0.102
Conserve energy	5.06	5.02	0.4	0.689	0.032
Conserve water	4.98	2	0.338	0.735	-0.029
Purchase environmentally friendly products	4.63	4.59	0.578	0.564	0.054
Recycle	5.43	5.3	1.291	0.197	0.114

*Significantly different at the .05 level

Table 17 displays the comparison of first-time and repeat visitors’ geotourism tendencies. Out of the 16 geotourism variables, only three are significantly different between first-time and

repeat visitors. Repeat visitors are more likely to visit national parks when traveling and less likely to visit cultural sites or seek out locally grown food.

Table 18: Independent t-tests - Geotourism Constructs

Mean Geotourism Construct Scores	First-time	Repeat	t	Sig.	Mean Difference
Mean Cultural Behavior	4.38	4.32	0.757	0.449	0.05475
Mean Aesthetic Behavior	5.29	5.22	1.138	0.256	0.0707
Mean Well-being of Local Behavior	4.19	4.06	1.525	0.128	0.1464
Mean Environmental Behavior	5.02	4.97	0.607	0.544	0.04421
Mean Geotourism Score	4.71	4.65	1.099	0.272	0.05873

Table 18 displays results of the independent samples t-test of first-time and repeat visitors for the aggregate geotourism construct scores and overall scores. As results indicate, there are no significant differences between first-time and repeat visitors. Even then, the mean difference indicates that first-time visitors have a slightly higher mean score on all constructs, but there are no significant differences. Therefore, geotourism tendencies between these groups are equal.

Table 19: Independent t-tests - Recreation Involvement

Recreation Involvement Variables	First-time	Repeat	t	Sig.	Mean Difference
When I participate in my primary activity, I can really be myself.	4.21	4.19	-0.021	0.983	-0.001
I can tell a lot about a person by seeing him or her participate in my primary activity.	3.47	3.5	-0.239	0.811	-0.019
When I participate in my primary activity, others see me the way I want them to see me.	3.5	3.5	-0.009	0.993	-0.001
My primary activity is important to me.	4.41	4.21	-1.012	0.312	-0.065
Participating in my primary activity is one of the most enjoyable things I do.	3.92	4.03	-1.585	0.113	-0.115
I find a lot of my life is organized around my primary activity.	2.94	3.02	-0.904	0.366	-0.084
My primary activity has a central role in my life.	2.58	2.78	-1.882	0.06	-0.177
I find a lot of my life is organized around similar activities.	3.27	3.31	-0.769	0.442	-0.064
Mean Recreation Involvement	3.51	3.57	-1.195	0.233	-0.062

Table 19 displays the independent samples t-test between first-time and repeat visitors on recreation involvement variables. Results indicate no significant differences between groups on the eight observed variables or the aggregate mean score. Thus, recreation involvement and visitors' belief about that activity does not differ based on repeat or first time to visitors to YNP.

Table 20: Independent t-tests - Place Attachment

Place Attachment Variables	First-time	Repeat	t	Sig.	Mean Difference
<u>Place Identity</u>					
Yellowstone National Park means a lot to me.	4	4.45	-7.717	0.000	-0.453
I get more satisfaction out of visiting Yellowstone National Park than any other place.	2.9	3.21	-3.956	0.000	-0.311
I identify strongly with YNP.	3.14	3.59	-5.607	0.000	-0.453
I have a special connection with YNP.	3.11	3.56	-5.234	0.000	-0.455
<u>Place Dependence</u>					
I am not able to substitute other places for the type of experience I get in YNP.	2.86	2.86	0.057	0.954	0.005
I enjoy visiting YNP more than any other place.	2.82	3.02	-2.361	0.019	-0.191
Visiting YNP is more important than visiting any other place.	2.44	2.61	-2.048	0.041	-0.163
I am very attached to YNP.	2.97	3.47	-5.672	0.000	-0.499
Mean Place Identity	3.31	3.77	-7.225	0.000	-0.461
Mean Place Dependence	2.76	2.93	-2.745	0.001	-0.170

Table 20 displays the first noteworthy differences between groups and it is within place attachment variables. Of the eight observed variables, six are significantly different between groups with first-time visitors having a lower level of attachment than repeat visitors. Furthermore, both mean construct scores of place identity and place dependence are highly significant. Repeat visitors tend to have much higher levels of place attachment than first-time visitors. Thus, place attachment appears to be significantly affected by direct experience at the park.

Table 21: Independent t-tests - Autobiographical Memory Variables

Autobiographical Memory Variables	First-time	Repeat	t	Sig.	Mean Difference
Since it happened, I have talked about this event...	5.33	5.32	0.12	0.904	0.014
Since it happened, I have thought about this event...	5.61	5.39	2.00	0.046	0.221
Since it happened, I have written about this event to others (e.g. email, Facebook, blog, letter, text)...	4.19	3.28	5.32	0.000	0.914
As I remember the event, I can feel now the emotions I felt then.	5.48	5.46	0.19	0.852	0.019
As I remember the event, it comes to me in words or in pictures as a coherent story or episode and not as an isolated fact, observation, or scene.	5.12	5.23	-0.93	0.353	-0.113
This memory is significant in my life because it imparts an important message for me or represents an anchor, critical juncture, or turning point.	4.38	4.48	-0.74	0.46	-0.105
This memory has consequences for my life because it influenced my behavior, thoughts, or feelings in noticeable ways.	3.83	4.04	-1.41	0.16	-0.208
As I recall them now, I would rate the emotions I experienced during the event as...	5.94	5.93	0.12	0.903	0.013
Overall Memory Salience	4.60	4.58	0.078	0.938	0.006

Table 21 displays the t-tests between first-time and repeat visitors on autobiographical memory variables. These results are somewhat interesting as there are only two variables that are significantly different between groups which were thinking about the event and writing about it. Furthermore, first-time visitors tend to have higher ratings on both of these variables. The overall score of autobiographical memory salience is not significantly different between these groups.

Table 22: Independent t-tests - Current Park Support

Current Support Variables	First-time	Repeat	t	Sig.	Mean Difference
Shared (talked about) your experiences in Yellowstone National Park with others.	3.84	4.11	-3.56	0.000	-0.265
Brought new visitors to YNP.	1.9	2.82	-9.248	0.000	-0.927
Became a member/renewed membership of the Yellowstone Association.	1.5	1.72	-2.465	0.014	-0.215
Visited YNP Facebook page.	1.77	1.76	0.156	0.876	0.015
Volunteered your time with YNP	1.34	1.32	0.325	0.745	0.021
Spent nights in lodging inside YNP	1.93	2.03	-0.89	0.374	-0.097
Spent nights camping in YNP	1.94	2.21	-2.305	0.021	-0.266
Contributed to the Yellowstone Park Foundation.	1.49	1.5	-0.127	0.899	-0.01
Spent nights in the gateway communities around YNP.	2.5	3.09	-4.767	0.000	-0.568
Contributed to other conservation organizations.	2.16	2.46	-2.769	0.006	-0.3
Current Support Mean	2.04	2.31	-4.863	0.000	-0.262

Table 22 displays t-tests between groups on current support variables. Unsurprisingly, repeat visitors tend to be more supportive of the park currently as five total variables as well as the mean current support score indicate a significantly higher level of support by repeat visitors. The interesting part of these results is that repeat visitors do actually support the park more than first-time visitors, thus, having people visit appear to have an effect on support.

Table 23: Independent t-tests - Future Park Support

Future Support Variables	First-time	Repeat	t	Sig.	Mean Difference
Share (talk about) your experiences in YNP with others.	4.7	4.63	1.495	0.135	0.075
Bring new visitors to YNP.	3.25	3.38	-1.22	0.223	-0.136
Become a member/renew membership of the Yellowstone Association.	1.83	2.1	-2.718	0.007	-0.27
Visit Yellowstone National Park's Facebook page.	2.4	2.27	1.085	0.278	0.126
Volunteer your time with YNP.	1.61	1.66	-0.582	0.561	-0.047
Spend nights in lodging inside YNP.	2.67	2.59	0.682	0.495	0.082
Spend nights camping in YNP.	2.48	2.58	-0.802	0.423	-0.099
Contribute to the Yellowstone Park Foundation.	1.92	2	-0.772	0.44	-0.076
Spend nights in the gateway communities around YNP.	2.79	3.38	-4.897	0.000	-0.587
Contribute to other conservation organizations.	2.73	2.87	-1.269	0.205	-0.148
Future Support Mean	2.64	2.75	-1.694	0.091	-0.109

Finally, Table 23 displays the results of the t-tests between groups on future support variables. While only two variables are significantly different (becoming a YA member and spending nights in gateway communities), repeat visitors are more likely to support the park in the future, but this is not a significant finding. This is a positive result though as it indicates that first-time visitors are overall more likely to support the park in the future than currently.

First-time and Repeat Visitor Comparison Summary

The above comparison indicates a number of notable results based on whether visitors had been to the park prior to being intercepted on-site. As indicated above, first-time and repeat visitors are not significantly different except for in place attachment and current support levels. In fact, they share many similarities that may not have been predicted prior to this study. Place attachment and current support is significantly lower in first-time visitors than repeat, however. Therefore, it is assumed that prior visitors the park or direct experiences should influence these constructs specifically. Presented below are the visitor profiles of first-time and repeat visitors

Group Construct ANOVA Comparisons

Besides first-time and repeat visitor comparisons, the analysis focused on comparing groups based on responses to the mean construct scores. Using recreation involvement, place identity/dependence, memory salience, and geotourism, each construct had three unique groups created based on low, moderate, and high levels of respondents. For instance, geotourism has a low, moderate, and strong geotourist based on the percentile cutoffs for the mean scores. Therefore, each group contains 33% of visitor responses. Analysis of Variance testing is used to compare the three groups on other observed variables. This will allow for comparison of differing visitor typologies and their responses to multiple questions.

Construct Comparisons of Park Support

Table 24: ANOVAs - Construct Comparisons of Current Park Supporters

Differences Between Current Support and Tested Constructs	Significance
Recreation Involvement Groups	0.000
Place Attachment Groups	0.000
Geotourism Tendencies Groups	0.000
Memory Salience Groups	0.000

Table 25: ANOVAs - Construct Comparison of Future Park Support

Differences Between Future Support and Tested Constructs	Significance
Recreation Involvement Groups	0.000
Place Attachment Groups	0.000
Geotourism Tendencies Groups	0.000
Memory Salience Groups	0.000

The first comparison is between overall group differences between the five constructs and park support (current and future support). As Tables 24 and 25 displays, each construct grouping

is identified as having highly significant differences between groups on current and future support. Each ANOVA test indicates a p-value < .001, which indicates a high level of significance between individual groups. The following tables outline group means for each construct and where the significance differences lie. Only current support was tested between construct groupings as it is of more interest to capture who supporters are currently than what may or may not be affecting future intentions.

Table 26: ANOVAs - Recreation Involvement Groups and Current Support

Recreation Involvement Group Comparison	Current Support Mean	SD
Low Recreation Involvement	1.96 ^a	0.546
Moderate Recreation Involvement	2.31 ^b	0.636
High recreation Involvement	2.44 ^b	0.714

Within the recreation involvement construct groupings, only “low recreation involvement” respondents have a significantly lower mean support score than both moderate and high recreation involvement (Table 26). Therefore, it appears that once an individual deems a recreational activity to be somewhat important of their life, their level of support may rise as well.

Table 27: ANOVAs - Geotourism Groups and Current Support

Geotourism Group Comparisons	Current Support Mean	SD
Low Geotourism	2.05 ^a	0.603
Moderate Geotourism	2.18 ^a	0.59
Strong Geotourism	2.50 ^b	0.735

Geotourism tendencies were separated into low, moderate, and strong groupings and compared with current park support (Table 27). Contrary to recreation involvement, the high level of geotourism tendencies differ from both moderate and low, but low and moderate have similar group means. Thus, only visitors who are participate in geotourism behaviors often have a higher level of park support. The differences were significant at a p < .001 level.

Table 28: ANOVAs - Place Identity Groups and Current Park Support

Place Identity Group Comparison	Current Support Mean	SD
Low Place Identity	1.95 ^a	0.558
Moderate Place Identity	2.23 ^b	0.609
High Place Identity	2.60 ^c	0.672

For place identity and current park support, all three construct groupings were significantly different from one another at a p < .001 level (Table 28). Essentially, the higher the level of place identity, the higher level of current park support. The levels of significance were very high. All differences were significant at the p < .01 level.

Table 29: ANOVAs - Place Dependence Groups and Current Park Support

Place Dependence Group Comparison	Current Support Mean	SD
Low Dependence	1.99 ^a	0.534
Moderate Dependence	2.24 ^b	0.647
High Dependence	2.44 ^c	0.718

Place dependence results indicate similar differences as was found with place identity (Table 29). Each dependence group is significantly different with one another. As place dependence increases, the mean becomes significantly higher for park support. High dependent visitors have a significantly higher current support score than moderate and low dependence visitors.

Table 30: ANOVAs - Autobiographical Memory Salience Groups and Current Park Support

Memory Salience Group Comparison	Current Support	SD
Low Salience	2.00 ^a	0.567
Moderate Salience	2.17 ^b	0.614
High Salience	2.48 ^c	0.704

Finally, the last construct grouping comparison was conducted between autobiographical memory salience groupings and current park support (Table 30). As indicated on the above table, all groupings are significantly different than each other. Visitors within the high salience memory group had a significantly higher park support mean than both those in moderate and low salience groups. Therefore, as the memory becomes more important in the mind of a person, they have a higher likelihood to participate in park support behaviors.

Place attachment and Memory Group Comparison

Place attachment and autobiographical memory were hypothesized as highly important constructs for predicting park support. Furthermore, understanding whether people who are place attached or with highly salient memories have vastly different responses to other measured constructs is useful as a whole. Therefore, the following tables display ANOVA tests of place identity, dependence, and memory salience groupings on the other four constructs measured in this study.

Table 31: ANOVAs - Place Identity groups and All Other Constructs

Place Identity Comparison	Mean Geotourism*	Mean Recreation Involvement*	Mean Memory Salience*	Mean Place Dependence*
Low Identity	4.48 ^a	3.32 ^a	4.03 ^a	2.43 ^a
Moderate Identity	4.78 ^b	3.57 ^b	4.76 ^b	2.98 ^b
High Identity	4.84 ^b	3.89 ^c	5.17 ^c	3.47 ^c

Respondents within “low”, “moderate”, and “high” identity attachment were compared using ANOVA tests. Overall, there are highly significant differences between groups at the $p < .001$ level. As place identity increases, the ratings for every construct significantly increase. The only similar groups in rating among the four constructs were high identity and moderate identity on their levels of geotourism tendencies. All other constructs had significant differences between identity groups at the $p < .001$ level.

Table 32: ANOVAs - Place Dependence Groups and All Other Constructs

Place Dependence Comparison	Mean Geotourism*	Mean Recreation Involvement*	Mean Memory Salience*	Mean Place Identity*
Low Dependence	4.58 ^a	3.4 ^a	4.12 ^a	3.12 ^a
Moderate Dependence	4.69 ^{ab}	3.54 ^b	4.52 ^b	3.57 ^b
High Dependence	4.77 ^b	3.76 ^c	5.13 ^c	4.21 ^c

Place dependence groups have similar results to place identity groupings. All constructs had significant differences at the $p < .001$ level overall. As place dependence groups increased in intensity as did all construct scores. The only insignificant differences were within geotourism where moderate and low did not differ significantly and high and moderate dependence groups were similar as well. However, all other constructs have significantly different means between each place dependence group.

Table 33: ANOVAs - Autobiographical Memory Salience Groups and All Other Constructs

Autobiographical Memory Salience Comparison	Mean Geotourism*	Mean Recreation Involvement*	Mean Place Identity*	Mean Place Depend.*
Low Salience	4.45 ^a	3.26 ^a	3.16 ^a	2.53 ^a
Moderate Salience	4.68 ^b	3.52 ^b	3.64 ^b	2.89 ^b
High Salience	4.98 ^c	3.93 ^c	4.15 ^c	3.34 ^c

Finally, the autobiographical memory salience groupings were significantly different among all four construct means. Among these groupings, even geotourism had significantly higher means for higher levels of autobiographical memory salience. All individual group means differ at the $p < .001$ level.

Figure 12: Place Identity Groups and Prior Visits

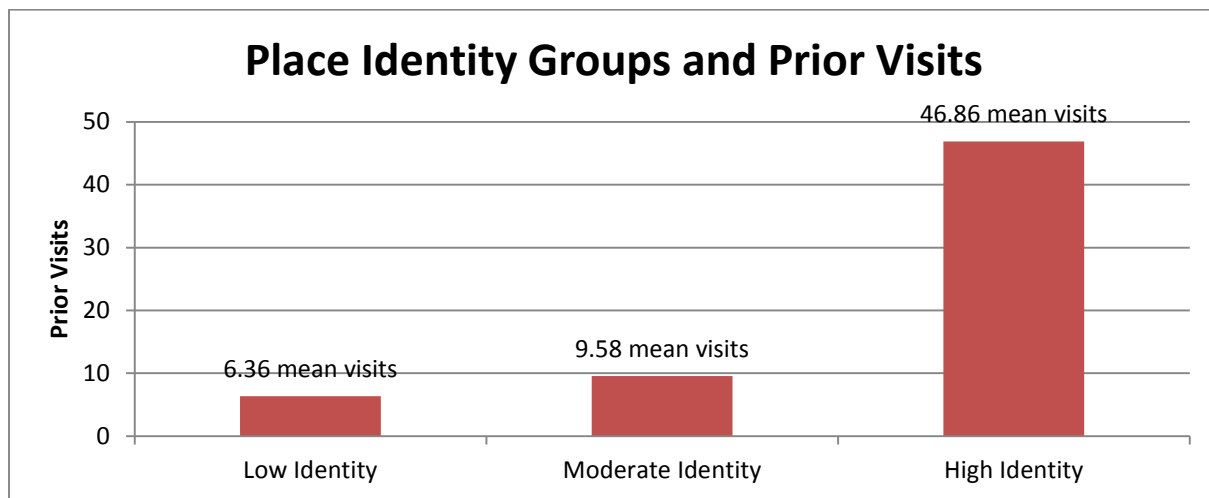
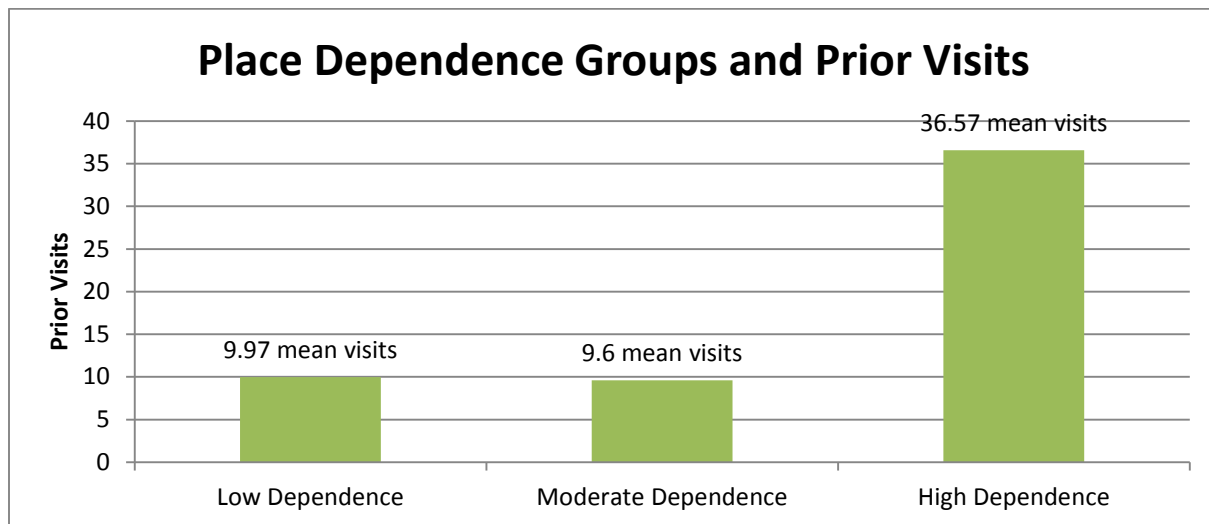
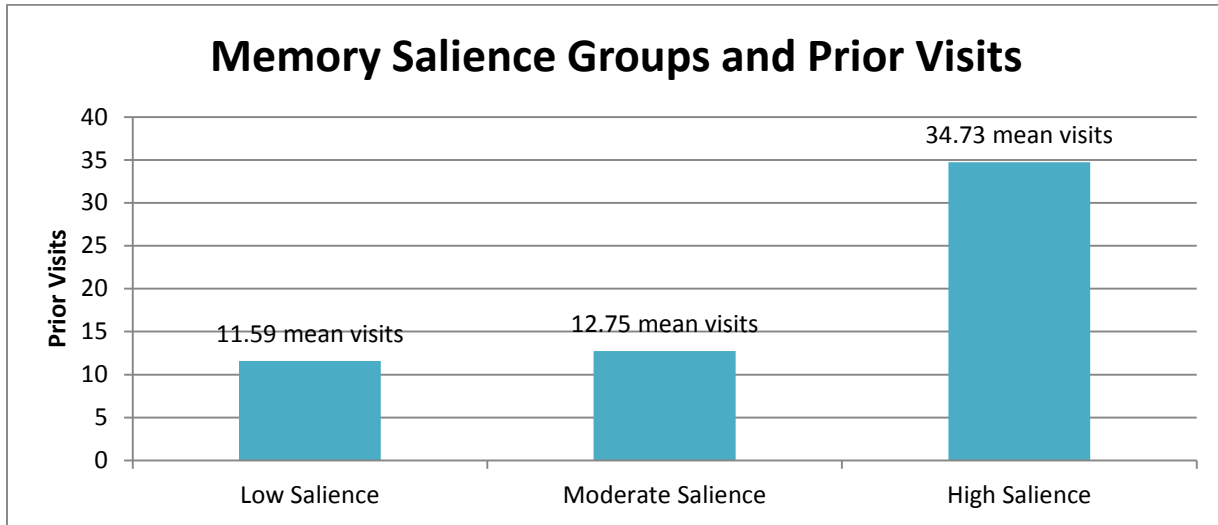


Figure 13: Place Dependence Groups and Prior Visits



Figures 12 and 13 indicate the differences in prior visits to Yellowstone based on place identity and place dependence groups. Both construct groupings have significant differences, but the differences are primarily between the high dependence and high identity groups and the moderate/low groups. As the graph indicates, the high dependence and high identity groups have much larger mean prior visits than the others. For high identity the mean prior visits is 47 visits and high dependence is 36 visits. This is most likely due to people who live in a reasonably close perimeter to Yellowstone.

Figure 14: Memory Salience Groups and Prior Visits



Similar to the two place attachment groups, the primary differences in autobiographical memory salience and prior visits is between the high salience and moderate/low salience groupings (Figure 14). High salience has a significantly higher mean average of prior visits than the other two. However, both the low and moderate salience groups have a decently high mean average of prior visits (11.59 and 12.75).

Figure 15: Recreation Involvement Groups and Prior Visit Means

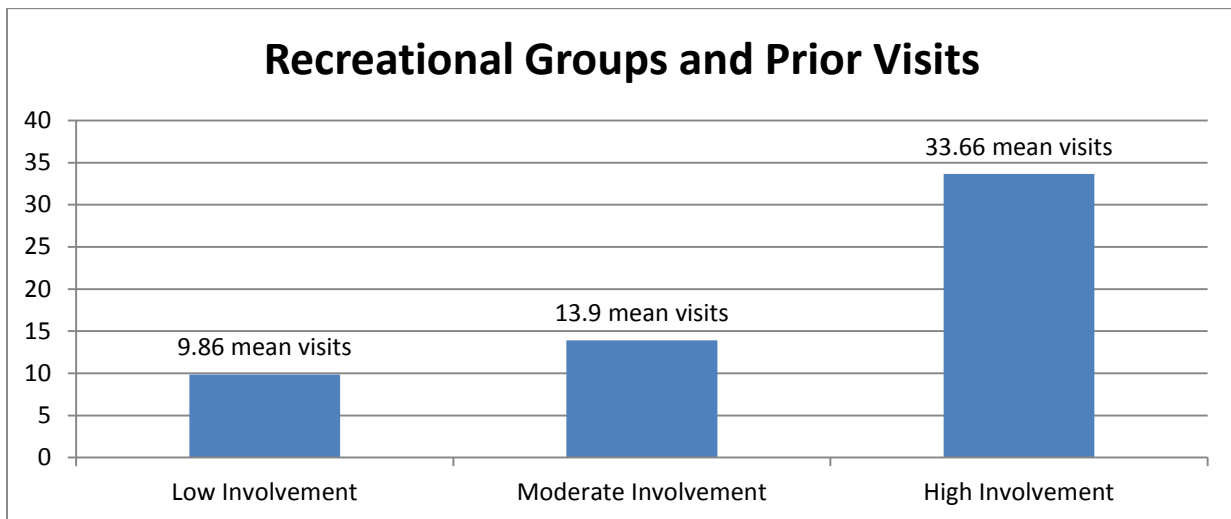
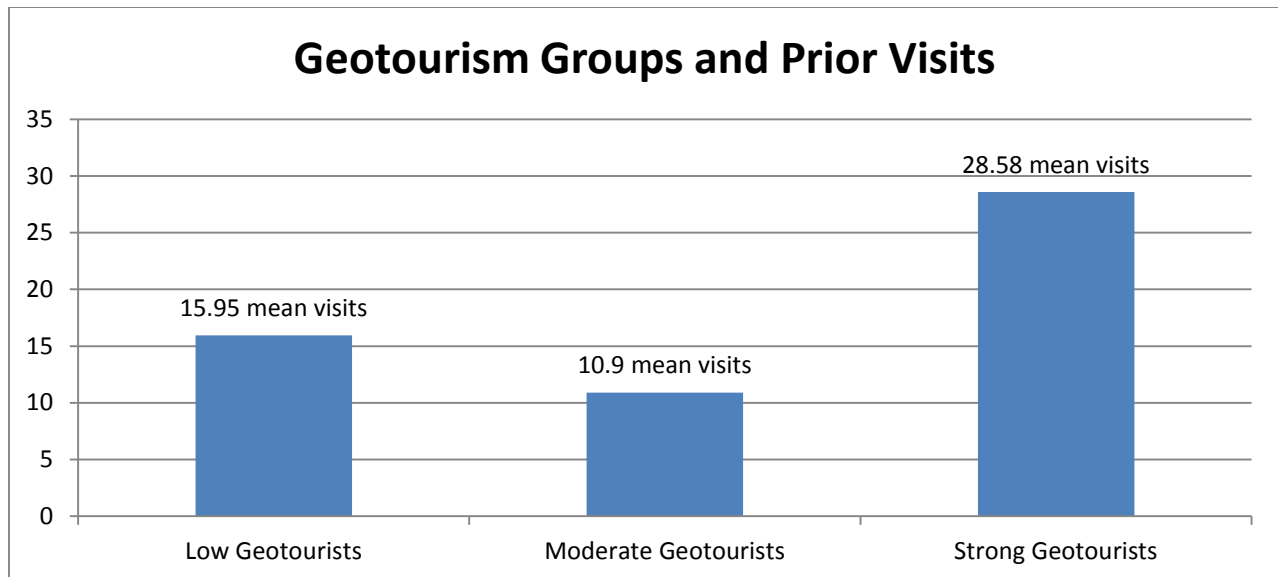


Figure 15 displays the mean prior visits of the three recreational involvement groups from low to high. As the graph displays, low involvement individuals tend to have roughly 9.86 mean prior visits. As involvement increases as does the mean number of visits. Moderately involved recreationists have a mean number of prior visits of 13.9 visits while high involvement individuals have 33.6 mean visits.

Figure 16: Geotourism Groups and Prior Visits

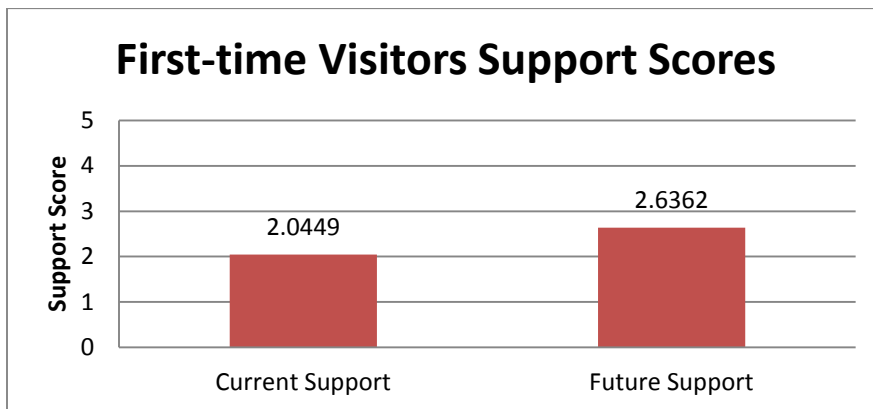


Finally, Figure 16 displays the comparison of prior visits based on geotourism groups. This does not have as clear of a trend as the past construct groupings had, but one fact remained with the highest rated group having the most mean past visits by a large margin. Low geotourists had visited the park on average 15.96 times with moderate geotourists visiting 10.1 times. However, strong geotourists had a much higher mean average with 28.58 prior trips.

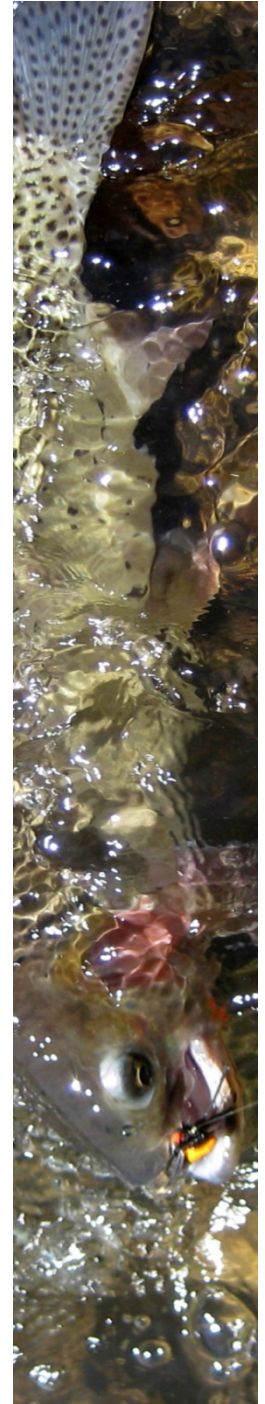
First-Time Visitor Profile

As many as 238 respondents to the study during the summer of 2015 were on their first visit to the park. These visitors are separated into a homogenous grouping to compare versus visitors who had been to the park previously. Below is a visitor profile of the first-time visitor.

1 st Time Visitor Demographics	Results
Age:	50.81 years old
Gender:	62% female
US Citizenship:	76% US residents
Income:	22% \$50k-\$75k
Education:	31% bachelor's degree
1 st Time Visitor Construct Scores	Mean Scores
Mean Geotourism Score:	4.71 out of 6.0
Mean Recreation Involvement Score:	3.51 out of 5.0
Mean Place Identity Score:	3.30 out of 5.0
Mean Place Dependence Score:	2.76 out of 5.0
Mean Memory Salience Score:	4.58 out of 7.0



1 st Time Visitor Top Activities	Percentage
Scenic Driving	36.9%
Viewing Geysers/Geothermals	18.4%
Hiking	17.3%
Nature Photography	10.1%
Other wildlife watching	7.6%



Repeat Visitor Profile

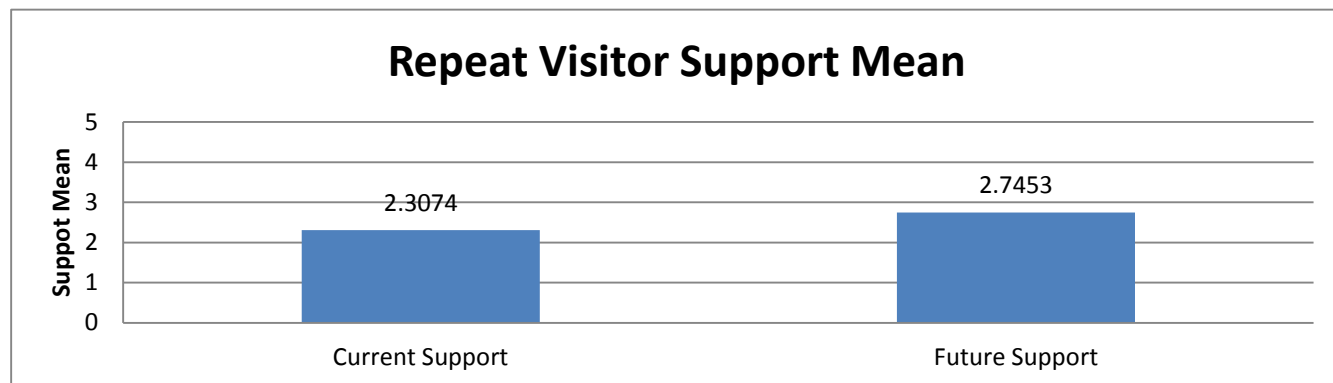
Up to 414 respondents had previously been to the park prior to their current trip. Past visits ranged from 1 prior visit into the hundreds of previous visits. Thus, there is large variation in the number of prior trips for this specific grouping. Presented below is a profile based on repeat visitors.



Repeat Visitor Demographics	Results
Age:	57.44 Years Old
Gender:	50% Female/50% Male
US Citizenship:	93% US Residents
Income:	22% \$50k-\$75k
Education:	31% Bachelor's Degree

Repeat Visitor Top Activities	
Scenic Driving	36.9%
Viewing Geysers/Geothermals	18.4%
Hiking	17.3%
Nature Photography	10.1%
Other wildlife watching	7.6%

Repeat Visitor Construct Scores	Mean Scores
Mean Geotourism Score:	4.65 out of 6.0
Mean Recreation Involvement Score:	3.57 out of 5.0
Mean Place Identity Score:	3.77 out of 5.0
Mean Place Dependence Score:	2.93 out of 5.0
Mean Memory Salience Score:	4.58 out of 7.0



Top Supporter Profile:

70 visitors were deemed to be “top supporters” defined as being within the top 10% of mean current park support. The mean cutoff point for the top 10% of supporters was 3.2 out of 5.0. Therefore, only 10% of visitors had a mean current support score above that mark.



Top Supporter Demographics	Results
Age:	56.58 Years Old
Gender:	51% Female
US Citizenship:	93% US Residents
Income:	23.5% \$100k-\$149,999k
Education:	40% Bachelor’s Degree

Top Supporter Construct Scores	Mean Scores
Mean Geotourism Score:	4.99 out of 6.0
Mean Recreation Involvement Score:	3.86 out of 5.0
Mean Place Identity Score:	4.14 out of 5.0
Mean Place Dependence Score:	3.35 out of 5.0
Mean Memory Salience Score:	5.23 out of 7.0

Top Supporter Top Activities	Percentage
Scenic Driving	26.4%
Viewing Geysers/Geothermals	16.0%
Hiking	14.5%
Nature Photography	13.5%
Other wildlife watching	8.8%

Low Supporter Profile:

Similar to the “top supporter profile”, these visitors comprise the bottom 10% of mean current park support. Visitors under a mean of 1.6 out of 5.0 were considered “low supporters”. A total of 65 respondents were classified as weak supporters and their results are displayed below.



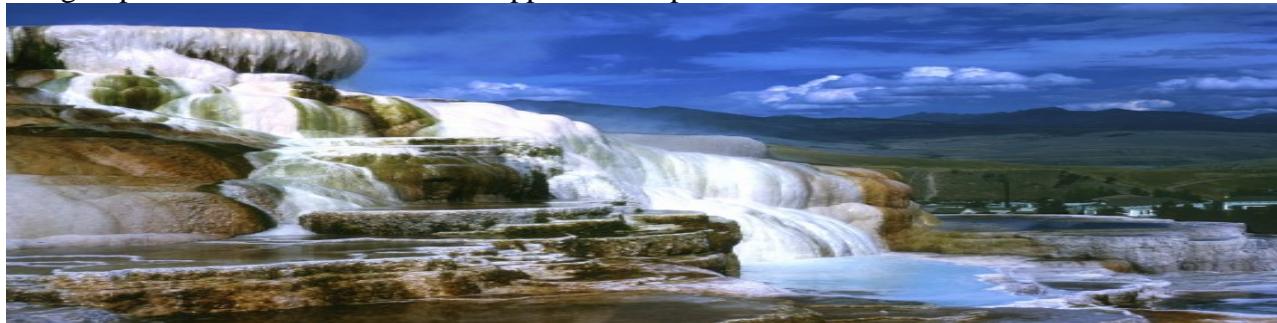
Low Supporter Demographics	Results
Age:	52.74 Years Old
Gender:	60% Female
US Citizenship:	76.5% US Residents
Income:	25.6% \$50k-74,999k
Education:	30% Bachelor’s Degree

Low Supporter Construct Scores	Mean Scores
Mean Geotourism Score:	4.40 out of 6.0
Mean Recreation Involvement Score:	3.26 out of 5.0
Mean Place Identity Score:	3.09 out of 5.0
Mean Place Dependence Score:	2.58 out of 5.0
Mean Memory Salience Score:	4.05 out of 7.0

Low Supporter Top Activities	Percentage
Scenic Driving	37.3%
Viewing Geysers/Geothermals	28.0%
Hiking	10.1%
Other wildlife watching	12.3%
Nature Photography	4.5%

Moderate Supporter Profile

Moderate supporters are those who hold a current mean support score of 1.6 to 3.2. These respondents are considered to be the middle 80% of park supporters and represent the largest sub-group. Results for 603 moderate supporters are presented below.



Moderate Supporter Demographics	Results
Age:	54.83 Years Old
Gender:	54.5% Female
US Citizenship:	86.8% US Residents
Income:	25.6% \$50k-74,999k
Education:	31.2% Bachelor's Degree

Moderate Supporter Construct Scores	Mean Scores
Mean Geotourism Score:	4.67 out of 6.0
Mean Recreation Involvement Score:	3.55 out of 5.0
Mean Place Identity Score:	3.61 out of 5.0
Mean Place Dependence Score:	2.87 out of 5.0
Mean Memory Salience Score:	4.59 out of 7.0

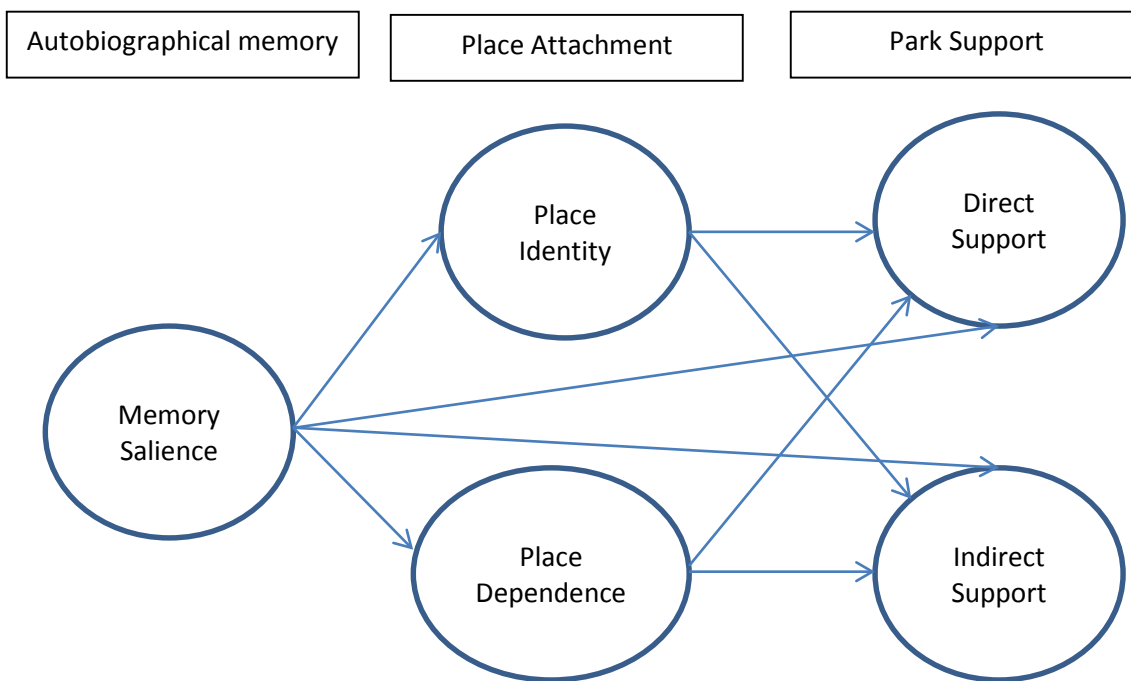
Moderate Supporter Top Activities	Percentage
Scenic Driving	34.1%
Viewing Geysers/Geothermals	19.2%
Hiking	12.5%
Nature Photography	9.8%
Other wildlife watching	9.6%

Modeling Park Support

Besides exploring means and building profiles of a variety of park support scores and constructs, a conceptual model was developed in order to predict park support. This model uses Structural Equation Modeling to test relationships between three primary constructs measured: autobiographical memory, place attachment, and park support.

Structural equation modeling is a statistical technique that tests for relationships between “latent constructs”. Each latent construct is measured using a varying number of observed variables that are measured through the quantitative survey. For instance, “place identity” is a latent construct measured by four observed variables that were presented in an above section. Place identity is considered to be a latent construct as it is not being measured by a variable itself, but instead through the four observed variables. Therefore, structural equation modeling allows for testing of conceptual constructs that are not able to be measured by a single variable. A visual display of the model is presented below:

Figure 17: Conceptual SEM of Memory, Attachment, and Support



Hypotheses:

The below hypothesis statements were designed by aggregating prior literature on all three primary concepts and potential relationships between. Each hypothesis is tested using SEM and are tested throughout the analysis.

- H1: Autobiographical memory salience has a significant, direct relationship with place identity.
- H2: Autobiographical memory salience has a significant, direct relationship with place dependence.
- H3: Autobiographical memory salience has a significant, direct relationship with direct support.
- H4: Autobiographical memory salience has a significant, direct relationship with indirect support
- H5: Place identity has a significant, direct relationship with direct support.
- H6: Place identity has a significant, direct relationship with indirect support.
- H7: Place dependence has a significant, direct relationship with direct support.
- H8: Place dependence has a significant, direct relationship with indirect support.

Practical implications:

SEMs are typically seen in academic journal articles only. However, there can be real-world implications that formulated through such models. The model predicts that exceptional memories of the Yellowstone National Park experience lead to a higher degree of place attachment which then leads to higher park support. If results indicate that the hypotheses provided above are indeed true, then park managers can examine how to provide exceptional experiences that lead to park support.

SEM Analysis:

Prior to conducting the SEM analysis, autobiographical memory and park support were individually tested using confirmatory factor analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis results indicated autobiographical memory as a singular factor construct of autobiographical memory salience and some slight changes were necessary for park support.

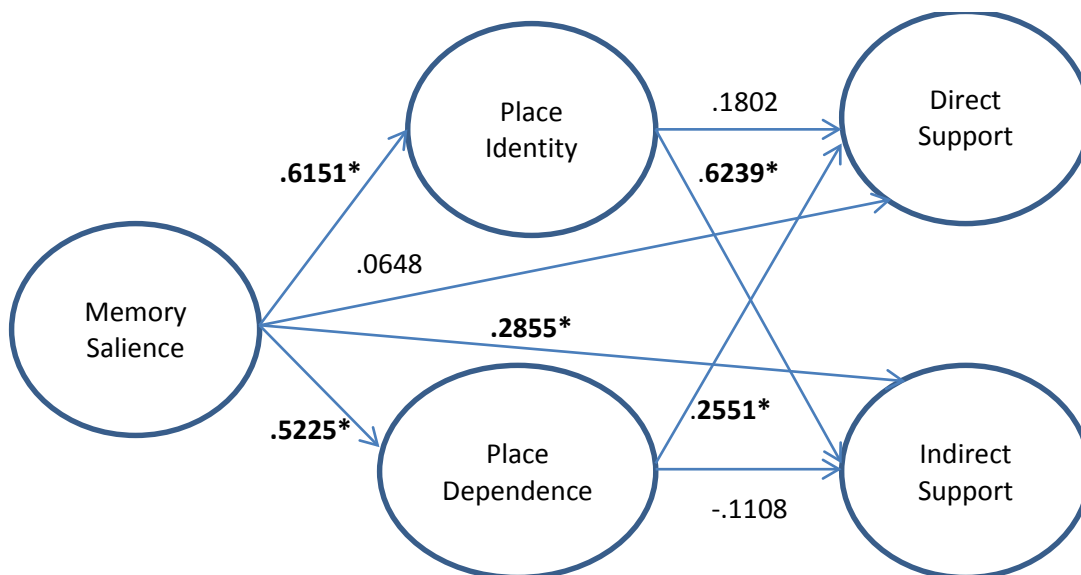
Indirect park support contains three observed variables:

- Sharing your experiences in YNP with others
- Bringing new visitors to YNP
- Spent nights in gateway communities around YNP

Direct Support contains six observed variables:

- Becoming a member/renewing membership of the Yellowstone Association
- Visiting YNP's Facebook page
- Volunteered your time with YNP
- Spent nights in lodging inside YNP
- Contributed to other conservation organizations
- Contributed to the Yellowstone Park Foundation

Figure 18: SEM Results of Park Support



*Significant at the .05 level.

Figure 18 displays the results of the entire SEM analysis. Furthermore, Table 34 displays the z-value and level of significance for each relationship or path in the model. The strongest relationship overall is between place identity and indirect support with an estimate of .6239 (p-value < .001). Coming in right behind is the relationship between autobiographical memory salience and place identity (.6151, p-value < .001) and place dependence (.5225, p-value < .001). Out of the eight paths (or relationships) tested, five were found to be significant at the p < .05 level. Therefore, five total hypotheses are supported using the structural model with three hypotheses found as unsupported.

Table 34: Structural Relationships from SEM of Park Support

Structural Relationships	Coefficient	z-value	p-value
Salience -> Place Identity	0.6151	19.69	.000
Salience -> Dependence	0.5225	15.31	.000
Salience -> Direct Support	.0648	1.02	.306
Salience -> Indirect Support	.2855	4.31	.000
Identity -> Direct Support	0.1802	1.72	.086
Identity -> Indirect Support	0.6239	5.99	.000
Dependence -> Direct Support	0.2551	2.76	.006
Dependence -> Indirect Support	-0.1108	-1.17	0.244

Hypotheses:

Hypothesis one: Autobiographical memory salience has a direct, positive effect on place identity (Supported)

Results indicate hypothesis one is supported as autobiographical memory salience had a very strong coefficient (.6151) and is highly significant (p-value < .001). *Therefore, autobiographical memory salience predicts place identity.*

Hypothesis two: Autobiographical memory salience has a direct, positive effect on place dependence. (Supported)

Results indicate that hypothesis two is supported with a coefficient of .5225 and a p-value < .001. Similar to place identity, autobiographical memory salience has a strong, positive relationship with place dependence. *Thus, autobiographical memory salience has a very significant relationship with place attachment in general.*

Hypothesis three: Autobiographical memory salience has a direct, positive effect on direct support. (Unsupported)

Hypothesis three is the first unsupported hypothesis in the SEM analysis. With a low coefficient of .0648 and a very insignificant p value of .306, *autobiographical memory salience does not directly influence direct park support.* However, there is a significant indirect effect moderated by place attachment.

Hypothesis four: Autobiographical memory salience has a direct, positive effect on indirect support. (Supported)

Results display that autobiographical memory salience does significantly predict indirect park support. Hypothesis four is supported with a coefficient of .2855 and a p-value < .001. *Therefore while memory salience does not predict direct support, it does have a significant relationship with indirect actions.*

Hypothesis five: Place identity has a direct, positive effect on direct support.
(Unsupported)

Hypothesis five is not supported within the data. *Place identity does not significantly affect direct support* with a coefficient of .1802 and a p-value of .086. However, the relationship is close to being significant and there may be a significant relationship found upon additional data collection.

Hypothesis six: Place identity has a direct, positive effect on indirect support.
(Supported)

Contrary to hypothesis five, hypothesis six is supported in this dataset. *Place identity does have a significant relationship with indirect support*. Results indicate a coefficient of .6239 and a p-value $< .001$. This relationship is the strongest among the entire SEM analysis.

Hypothesis seven: Place dependence has a direct, positive effect on direct support.
(Supported)

Hypothesis seven is supported in this analysis. Place dependence does have a significant relationship with direct support. Results indicate a coefficient of .2551 and a p-value of .006. *Place dependence does predict direct support while place identity does not*.

Hypothesis eight: Place dependence has a direct, positive effect on indirect support.
(Unsupported)

Finally, hypothesis eight is not supported in this analysis. Place dependence does not have a direct, positive effect on indirect park support. *Therefore, place identity and autobiographical memory salience have a significant relationship with indirect support while place dependence has a significant effect on direct support*.

Interpreting the results

The above hypotheses indicate a theoretical linkage between the well-formed tourism and new psychology constructs. The purpose of building this model was to identify what drives people to support Yellowstone National Park. As shown, both place attachment and autobiographical memory influence certain types of park support. Place identity and memory salience influence indirect support while place dependence influences direct support. For managers, this suggests that place attachment and autobiographical memory are equally as important to develop and are necessary to foster park support.

Facilitating exceptional experiences that drives visitors to have “transformative memories” is the crux of the issue for fostering park support. *Revisiting Leopold* (2012) was on the right trajectory when it suggested that managers should provide transformative experiences. High autobiographical memory salience is critical for building and influencing whether visitors will become attached to a place. Thus, managers should strive to provide these experiences as much as possible. However, additional research may be needed in order to link the descriptive elements of the experience to the quantitative results. Doing so would allow for managers to identify what specific types of experiences may lead to higher levels of autobiographical memory salience.

Providing transformative experiences may still be a lofty goal for managers. Each visitor comes to the park with their own set of circumstances, background, perspectives, and expectations. The pre-test to this study does give some insights into the types of experiences that may be more likely to lead to highly salient memories, place attachment, and hopefully, park support. Jorgenson and Nickerson (2014) identified four key primary experience typologies that were typically mentioned by actual Yellowstone National Park supporters. Some of these typologies were: 1) wildlife experiences, 2) “first-time” experiences, 3) landscape-based experiences, and 4) family and friends experiences. Using these as a baseline, it is not a large leap to suspect the same will hold true in future analyses.

Conclusions & Recommendations

This study draws out a number of previously unknown characteristics about visitors who come to Yellowstone during the summer season. Furthermore, it provides new information pertaining to the key concerns raised in *Revisiting Leopold* (2012). Public support for parks is not a problem that will disappear in the near future unless steps are taken in order to stress the importance of these places to the greater American public. However, there is hope for the future as highlighted in these results.

Park supporters are individuals who have a high level of place attachment, direct experience with the place, involved in outdoor recreational activities, and practice some level of pro-environmental behaviors. Consistently throughout these results, the higher the level for each construct (place attachment, memory, recreation involvement, or geotourism), the higher the levels of park support. Because of these results, it is reasonable to say that the proposed constructs are strong antecedents for developing park support. All of these constructs were hypothesized as related to park support due to prior literature, despite not being used in this context before. However, the ANOVA and SEM results make it clear that there are definitely significant relationships. Theoretically, these findings are quite important. Predicting behaviors that support parks could be beneficial to other researchers who are tasked with understanding why people contribute to natural places or protected lands. Practically, there are significant findings to take into consideration for the future.

Park managers at Yellowstone can now have a clearer picture about both who is currently supporting the park and potential areas to monitor or target to facilitate future support. Practically, there are a number of implications 1) current park support is somewhat low among

summer visitors, 2) there are a select number of visitors who are very strong supporters, 3) strong supporters differ significantly in their ratings to all four measured constructs in this study, 5) there is hope for the future to gain more park support for Yellowstone. While current park support is rather low on most variables except for some indirect variables, there is a high degree of optimism for contribution in the future. Visitors rated the future support likelihood variables higher than those of the current park support. Thus, it may be the case that they need to be inspired to contribute and there needs to be more awareness of the needs that Yellowstone currently possesses.

In regards to the relationships between constructs, park managers can now view the antecedents of park support. More specifically, the rating of the memories visitors had of their Yellowstone experiences are key in predicting place attachment and park support. Appendix B provides the descriptions respondents were thinking of when rating their memories. That list can be used as a basis for specifically identifying memorable experiences. Providing opportunities for these meaningful experiences is crucial for park managers as it leads to real-world outcomes. Experiences that are highly salient to the individual, foster place attachment, and lead to park support are exactly what *Revisiting Leopold* (2012) wishes to create. The authors of this report were on the right page with the types of experiences that are important for park managers to consider, but now there is actual data to support these efforts. Furthermore, the idea of *transformative experiences* can be solidified, rather than being a vague call to action.

Direct experience is by far the most important aspect to raising park support. Direct experiences create salient memories and are fundamental for place attachment. Without a direct experience at the park, there is a lower likelihood that visitors will provide support. That being said, direct experiences may need to be more than simply driving through the park. This is not to say that the scenic driving experience is not important, but there should be a concerted effort to encourage activities that get visitors outside of their car.

Future research should focus on truly diving deep into the experience of Yellowstone National Park visitors. The next step should be to explore what types of experiences are more likely to foster those memories. The pre-test (Jorgenson and Nickerson, 2014) provided four primary categories to begin this process, especially wildlife experiences and “first-time” experiences. A qualitative investigation of visitor experiences would provide even more information to link to the quantitative results of this study. Asking visitors to go into detail about their memories of Yellowstone would more than likely uncover not only the transformative qualities about the experience, but also areas that could be improved or promoted to other visitors. For instance, if visitors are continually citing seeing bison as a very important part of the experience, then it should be clear to managers that preserving this experience is highly important for the future of the park.

Recommendations

In addition to the above conclusions, the researchers developed a number of recommendations for park managers in order to best utilize the findings and to facilitate park support. These recommendations are based on both data and anecdotal experiences. While some

of the recommendations may be long-term solutions, we suggest that managers consider all avenues for fostering public engagement and park support.

Recommendation 1: Continually monitor the visitor experience

This study is considered a “first-of-its-kind” investigation. There had been no other efforts by Yellowstone or other national parks to truly investigate the effect that the visitor experience has on visitor behaviors and park support. Social science studies have been conducted in national parks for years, but many studies either investigate issues of crowding, overuse, or issues primarily affecting the park at the current moment. This study went beyond simply investigating a singular issue the park is facing, but rather tried to capture a wide variety of potential issues that the NPS as a whole and Yellowstone individually faces in the 21st century and beyond. While the results here provide a number of useful measures, there needs to be more continual measurement of the visitor experience. If park managers are striving to engage younger generations and diverse populations, researchers need to keep abreast of how these groups perceive their experiences at the park. A continual monitoring plan should rival those of wildlife biology and natural resource management in order to protect the park into the future. It is not enough to say that one-off studies provide adequate information to managers. This study should be replicated in other parks to understand whether the relationships follow the same structure and to give insight into the larger picture of visitor engagement.

Recommendation 2: Focus on maintaining the visitor experience

Yellowstone catered to the highest volume of park visitors during the summer of 2015 with over 4 million visits. The data for this study does not reflect crowding as an issue, but anecdotal experiences from some of the visitors we intercepted prove otherwise. These visitors who were surveyed at the gate spoke primarily about two issues outside of the set survey questions: 1) the Yellowstone experience, and 2) crowding within the park. Some open-ended responses to memories referenced the unexpected amount of people encountered during their Yellowstone experience while most recalled a very positive time they had within the park. With that said, the current support figures are low and it is unknown whether or not this is in part due to potential crowding issues. The results throughout this study indicate that direct experiences lead to support, which would suggest that more visitors experiencing the park equals more support. However, we want to reiterate that this may not be true if the experience is not held to a level that is expected by visitors.

This is where the park is in somewhat of a conundrum, in our eyes. The park needs to try cater to any traveler interested in experiencing the park, yet too many visitors may degrade the visitor experience. As a sheer gauge of volume, the more visitors that enter the park, more experiences are had and potentially more salient memories are created. There is no telling whether the experience improves if fewer visitors come to the park or not. However, it is known from visitor interactions that there were many negative perceptions due to crowding. For managers, there needs to be a concentrated effort to ensure that the Yellowstone experience is kept at the highest level possible. This will allow for a large number of visitors to continue to enjoy the park, but also to receive an experience that meets their expectations. This recommendation falls in-line with the monitoring of the visitor experience above.

Recommendation 3: Promoting National Parks using previous visitor experiences:

The 2015/2016 “Find Your Park” campaign represents a unique approach that has not been seen in the NPS since Mission ’66. The campaign stresses visitors to define what “park” means to them and to share their experiences online with other visitors and potential visitors. This campaign was aimed to create attention and engagement for the 2016 NPS Centennial. Results of this campaign remain unknown at this time, but the idea of providing a platform for individuals to share their experiences, interact with other park visitors, and become involved in an online community parallels the findings of this study. Even if visitation does not change for 2016, promoting parks in this way may appeal to younger generations and populations that have not made it to a national park yet.

The NPS has not stated whether these efforts will continue after the 2016 celebration, however, Yellowstone could continue to promote the park in the same mindset. Creating a platform that allows for social exchange between incoming visitors or visitors within the park may foster engagement and attachment. Yellowstone’s Facebook page currently provides the best avenue for visitors to interact with the park and other visitors. With that said, the variable revolving around visiting YNP’s Facebook page in this survey garnered the lowest likelihood for park support. Therefore, park managers may need to look at other options in order to engage and promote. However, the best result would be a continuation from the NPS, as a nationwide effort to promote parks as they have been during the past year.

Recommendation 4: Creating positive interactions with park staff and visitors

One of the pieces of information that is not included within the quantitative data is the interactions between park staff and visitors. The researchers witnessed a number of staff/visitor interactions while within the park during the summer of 2015. There were a number of positive interactions as well as negative interactions. As mentioned, the visitation, specifically during peak season, in 2015 was record-breaking. The majority of visitor/staff interactions were positive, but there were a number of situations that raised concerns as to whether there would be a negative effect on the experience. It is a known issue that hospitality and tourism staff can experience “burn-out” over a season. The national parks are not exempt from this problem. Park staff became less hospitable during the end of the peak season, especially when the park was busy. In parks today, visitors do not have a chance to interact with park staff as much as they may expect. Some visitors may not interact with staff except for at the entrance gates. Therefore, these interactions become even more important as it may be the only time they talk with a uniformed ranger.

High visitor volume seasons are indeed stressful for park staff given the fact that Yellowstone is underfunded and understaffed. However, park managers need to aim for visitor-staff interactions that form a positive experience for the visitor. Whether that takes the form of working the entrance gates and visitor center desks with revolving 3 hour shifts where the employee (or volunteer) then does a completely different job in the next shift, or assigning all park employees from the superintendent on down to take entrance gate/visitor center shifts, it is recommended that Yellowstone work on more and improved communications with visitors. In

doing this, additional focus on preparing park staff for challenging times and fully recognizing their role in the visitor experience is important. Even if the NPS is a land managing agency, they still play a role as a tourism and hospitality provider. Visitors in a tourism setting expect to be welcomed by park staff as guests instead of being “allowed” into the park. These negative interactions occurred at varying sites from entrance gates to traffic jams. Even one negative interaction may turn the perception of the experience into an unwelcoming time.

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Appendix A: Survey instrument

OMB Control Number 1024-0224
Current Expiration Date 8/31/2015

2015 Yellowstone National Park Visitor Survey

The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of visitors at Yellowstone National Park and their level of park support. Please read the instructions carefully. We thank you for your participation and hope you enjoyed your visit to Yellowstone National Park. Please respond for yourself only, not your household.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: The National Park Service is authorized by 16 U.S.C. 1a-7 to collect this information. We will use this information to evaluate visitor experiences at Yellowstone National Park. Your response is completely voluntary. Your name and contact information may have been requested and will be used for follow-up purposes only. When analysis of the questionnaire is completed, all names and contact information will be destroyed and will in no way be connected with the results of this survey. A Federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and you are not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB Control Number.

We estimate that it will take about 15 minutes to complete this questionnaire. You may send comments concerning the burden estimates or any aspect of this information collection to: Norma Nickerson, Principal Investigator, norma.nickerson@umontana.edu or Jacob Jorgenson, jacob.jorgenson@umontana.edu.

1. Prior to your most recent trip, how many times have you visited Yellowstone National Park?

2. When you travel, how likely are you to visit the following? (Please "X" only one response per line.)

	Not at all likely 1	Unlikely 2	Somewhat unlikely 3	Somewhat likely 4	Likely 5	Very likely 6
A national park	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Historic sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Museums	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cultural sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cultural events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. When you travel, how likely are you to do the following? (Please "X" only one response per line.)

	Not at all likely 1	Unlikely 2	Somewhat unlikely 3	Somewhat likely 4	Likely 5	Very likely 6
Travel to a specific area for its scenic beauty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stop at scenic overlooks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Search for scenic driving routes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plan your vacation around the opportunity to enjoy scenic beauty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. When you travel, how likely are you to seek out... (Please "X" only one response per line.)

	Not at all likely 1	Unlikely 3	Somewhat unlikely 3	Somewhat likely 4	Likely 5	Very likely 6
Locally owned accommodations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Locally grown food	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Locally made arts and crafts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. In daily living, how likely are you to regularly... (Please "X" only one response per line.)

	Not at all likely 1	Unlikely 2	Somewhat unlikely 3	Somewhat likely 4	Likely 5	Very likely 6
Conserve energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conserve water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Purchase environmentally friendly products	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recycle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Have you contributed to the Yellowstone Park Foundation in your lifetime? (Please "X" only one.)

Yes No I don't know

7. Are you currently a member of the Yellowstone Association? (Please "X" only one.)

Yes No I don't know

8. Please select one primary activity you prefer to do while in Yellowstone National Park. (Please "X" only one activity.)

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scenic driving | <input type="checkbox"/> Other wildlife watching | <input type="checkbox"/> Car/RV camping | <input type="checkbox"/> Interpretive programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Viewing geysers/ geothermals | <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing | <input type="checkbox"/> XC skiing/ snowshoeing | <input type="checkbox"/> Birding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking | <input type="checkbox"/> Nature study (e.g. geology, history, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Canoeing/kayaking | <input type="checkbox"/> Taking guided tours |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nature photography | <input type="checkbox"/> Backcountry camping | <input type="checkbox"/> Motorboating | <input type="checkbox"/> Snowmobiling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wolf watching | | <input type="checkbox"/> Night sky viewing | <input type="checkbox"/> Road bicycling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bear watching | | <input type="checkbox"/> Visiting visitor centers | <input type="checkbox"/> Snowcoach riding |

9. In thinking about your PRIMARY Yellowstone National Park activity from question #8, rate your level of agreement with the following statements. (Please "X" only one response per line.)

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
When I participate in my primary activity, I can really be myself.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can tell a lot about a person by seeing him or her participate in my primary activity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I participate in my primary activity, others see me the way I want them to see me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My primary activity is important to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participating in my primary activity is one of the most enjoyable things I do.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I find a lot of my life is organized around my primary activity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My primary activity does not have a central role in my life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I find a lot of my life is organized around similar activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. On your most recent trip to Yellowstone National Park, what type of park entry pass did you purchase? (Please "X" only one park pass.)

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I did not purchase a new pass/already had pass | <input type="checkbox"/> Bike/foot/snowcoach 7-day pass | <input type="checkbox"/> Interagency Senior pass |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private, noncommercial vehicle 7-day pass | <input type="checkbox"/> Annual Yellowstone pass | <input type="checkbox"/> Interagency Access pass (\$0) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Motorcycle/snowmobile 7-day pass | <input type="checkbox"/> Annual "America the Beautiful" Interagency pass | <input type="checkbox"/> Military Annual pass (\$0) |

11. How often have you done the following? (Please "X" only one response per line.)

	Very infrequently 1	Infrequently 2	Neutral 3	Frequently 4	Very frequently 5
Shared (talked about) your experiences in Yellowstone National Park with others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brought new visitors to Yellowstone National Park.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Became a member/renewed membership of the Yellowstone Association.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visited Yellowstone National Park's Facebook page.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteered your time with Yellowstone National Park.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spent nights in lodging inside Yellowstone National Park.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spent nights camping in Yellowstone National Park.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contributed to the Yellowstone Park Foundation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spent nights in the gateway communities around Yellowstone National Park.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contributed to other conservation organizations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. In the future, how likely are you to...? (Please "X" only one response per line.)

	Very unlikely 1	Somewhat unlikely 2	Neutral 3	Somewhat likely 4	Very likely 5
Share (talk about) your experiences in Yellowstone National Park with others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bring new visitors to Yellowstone National Park.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Become a member/renew membership of the Yellowstone Association.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visit Yellowstone National Park's Facebook page.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer your time with Yellowstone National Park.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spend nights in lodging inside Yellowstone National Park.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spend nights camping in Yellowstone National Park.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contribute to the Yellowstone Park Foundation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spend nights in the gateway communities around Yellowstone National Park.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contribute to other conservation organizations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements. (Please "X" only one response per line.)

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
Yellowstone National Park means a lot to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I get more satisfaction out of visiting Yellowstone National Park than any other place.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I identify strongly with Yellowstone National Park.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am able to substitute other places for the type of experience I get in Yellowstone National Park.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy visiting Yellowstone National Park more than any other place.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not have a special connection with Yellowstone National Park.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visiting Yellowstone National Park is more important than visiting any other place.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am very attached to Yellowstone National Park.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

In this next section, we are interested in your memories of a past experience or event at Yellowstone National Park.

14. Please describe the memory that first comes to mind of an experience or event at Yellowstone National Park.

15. Now, please think about the memory you just described. Read each item below and carefully choose the option that most closely reflects your opinion of the experience. (Please "X" only one response per line.)

	Very infrequently 1	Infrequently 2	Somewhat infrequently 3	Neither infrequently nor frequently 4	Somewhat frequently 5	Frequently 6	Very frequently 7
Since it happened, I have <u>talked</u> about this event...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Since it happened, I have <u>thought</u> about this event...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Since it happened, I have <u>written</u> about this event to others (e.g. email, Facebook, blog, letter, text)...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. Continuing to think about this memory, please select the option that best represents your opinion.

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Somewhat disagree 3	Neutral 4	Somewhat agree 5	Agree 6	Strongly agree 7
As I remember the event, I can feel now the <u>emotions</u> I felt then.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
As I remember the event, it comes to me in words or in pictures <u>as a coherent story</u> or episode and not as an isolated fact, observation, or scene.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This memory is <u>significant</u> in my life because it imparts an important message for me or represents an anchor, critical juncture, or turning point.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This memory has <u>consequences</u> for my life because it influenced my behavior, thoughts, or feelings in noticeable ways.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Extremely negative 1	Negative 2	Mildly negative 3	Neutral 4	Mildly positive 5	Positive 6	Extremely positive 7
As I recall them now, I would rate the <u>emotions</u> I experienced during the event as...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. What is your gender? Male Female

18. Are you a permanent resident or citizen of the United States? Yes No

19. In what state/province/foreign country do you permanently reside?

20. What is the highest level of formal education you have completed? (Please "X" only one.)

<input type="checkbox"/> Less than high school	<input type="checkbox"/> Some college	<input type="checkbox"/> Master's degree
<input type="checkbox"/> Some high school	<input type="checkbox"/> Associate's degree	<input type="checkbox"/> Ph.D., M.D., J.D. or equivalent
<input type="checkbox"/> High school diploma or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree	

21. Which category best describes your annual household income in U.S. dollars?

<input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$24,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75,000 to \$99,999	<input type="checkbox"/> More than \$200,000
<input type="checkbox"/> \$25,000 to \$49,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100,000 to \$149,999	
<input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000 to \$74,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150,000 to \$199,999	

22. What is your age?

Please provide any additional comments that you wish to share in the space below.

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix B: Open-ended Memory Responses

100th anniversary we stayed at Old Faithful Inn had a mini suite and stayed in the park a total of 3 nights. Very peaceful stay.

1st visit in August

2 visits and still haven't seen a moose.

2nd year, black bear crossed in front of our car. Very unique place, something I have never seen before. Wild bison that came walking up to our car. Hanging out in Hayden Valley (literally sitting in camp chairs) and letting wildlife come to us.

A beautiful place. Our first thought was how Yellowstone Lake looked like Lake Tahoe (near where we live), but with no houses. Seeing a grizzly bear or elk is also a wonderful experience.

A bison walking in the road so close to our car that you could reach out and touch it. Also the geyser erupting. The beautiful mountains and rivers.

A black bear and others and two small cubs playing for a long time near a river very near the road. Too close by the rules but two ranger directed people, so I guess it was ok. As a child I saw bears play in the zoo, exact the same as the little ones. I did think this is captivity behavior but it was not.

A black bear came out of the pond by our lodge.

A few years ago, my family and I came to YNP to go camping. We went on a hike to Trout Lake, where we saw an otter with her babies. It was a neat experience to go on such a beautiful hike and see wildlife that we do not normally see.

A grizzly bear came barreling down the mountain right in front of my car. He continued on down the mountain only stopping briefly to look back at me. I was so surprised. I narrowly missed getting a picture, and it was just enough to know that it was in fact a grizzly.

A grizzly walking out in front of us in the path at Norris.

A hike I made with my wife on a trail after an hour we crossed a river. The water was hot. We have swam in the river. Back to the car we met a group of bison.

A very special eruption of Beehive Geyser

After watching Old Faithful from the overlook, a weasel ran past us with a mouse in his mouth. After dropping the mouse about 100 feet away he returned, spent a couple minutes in the brush and ran past again with a chipmunk this time passing on a log and staring right at us with the chipmunk in his mouth.

All of us are amateur geologists. Our interest lies in geological formation and history of any and all places including YNP. That doesn't mean we don't enjoy the wildlife because we do. So our most memorable event is the interview with the two geologists in Mammoth. They took time out of their day to answer our questions and gave us information about the park. We learned a lot and are so very grateful for the opportunity to acquire information on a deeper level than is available in a general sense. One can see with the eyes but until one understands the process, one doesn't grasp the reality of it.

All the animals we've seen in the past few days are amazing. Also the 1988 fire was an emotional trigger for my family. Such a tragedy!

All the different wildlife spotting around our trip. And the daylong looking for bears and wolves without seeing them.

All the geysers especially Old Faithful

An awesome experience of God's handiwork in nature and all the ways it fits the symphony of God's creative plan for this earth.

Animals and the beauty of the landscape!

Animals!

Around 1962, I was 10 years old and tent camping with my family. A bear raided our cooler while we were sleeping and sat down next to my mother against the side of the tent the contents of our cooler. My mother was petrified, many grey hairs were had. She was so petrified she didn't move until daylight. As a child seeing a geyser for the first time.

As a graduate student in wildlife at the University of Montana, I studied elk, bison and fish management in Yellowstone in the 1960s (1965-1967). As a state (MT FWP) biologist in the northern half of MT (1973-2009), I maintained an interest in wildlife management in YNP throughout my career and visited the park throughout my career.

As a young boy we always stayed at the cabins at Fishing Bridge the time spent there was very memorable. We fished, hiked, listened to nightly presentations by the park rangers and of course were always excited to see the bears.

As a young married couple we used to drive down to Yellowstone from Bozeman MT (my husband was in graduate school at MSU) and camp. One particular time I unpacked a box of stuff from the car and put it on a picnic table. A raven swooped down and flew off with my new bar of soap, still in its shiny gold wrapper. We've laughed that he might have been surprised at the contents- or maybe it just made him all bubbly!

As I was waiting for Artemisia geyser to erupt early one morning, the fog was hanging over the Firehole river and a herd of elk came out of the fog. At about the same time, the sun broke through and I call this a "Yellowstone moment". It was surreal and awe inspiring. One that I will never forget. There have been other Yellowstone moments, but this was very special!

As there were 5 going buffalo this summer 2015, I saw 2 men take a selfie stick and get in about 10 feet of a buffalo to take a pic. Stupid.

As we entered the east entrance we were amazed at the beauty surrounding us. We saw a bear with 2 cubs and watched them for a while. As we drove a little ways we saw 3 elk. They were huge. Just as we thought we wouldn't have any more opportunities to see wildlife up close a buffalo was right by the road in front of us and crossed. This all happened on the drive in. Exciting.

At the end of the day, listening to the local performers' music while sitting in the magnificent candlelit lobby of Old Faithful Inn.

Back in the early 90s when my wife was on spring break during 2 weeks in May with year-round teaching a week or two after the south entrance was open still had 12 feet of snow drifts on the road. We watched a moose climb down a bank and walk up the middle of the road for 5 miles to find a way to get off the road. He would stop every so often and look to see if we were still there. There was no way I was going to pass him.

Backcountry camping with my children in YNP near Grebe Lake. They were eight and ten.

Backcountry hiking in the Bechler River area. Saw my first moose and grizzly bear during the first trip. Both up close and personal. Been to that area several times.

Backpacking into the Thorofare of SE Yellowstone NP

Backpacking trip 30 years ago up Hellroaring Creek and Slough Creek.

Bear watching in the Hayden Valley with a nice lady from Lewiston, ID who showed us grizzlies through her scope.

Bears begging for food in the park when I was a young boy.

Beautiful and lovely place. Very peaceful!

Beautiful lakes and rivers. Wildlife and buffaloes

Beautiful landscape, Old Faithful, Grizzly and bison.

Beautiful nature. See wildlife during hiking.

Beautiful scenery in falls, lakes, rivers, fascinating wildlife.

Beautiful scenery, rivers and waterfalls.

Beautiful scenic drive and landscape. Also first experience was watching Old Faithful.

Beauty of Mammoth Springs area.

Beauty of nature.

Beauty of the land.

Beauty, animals, stores

Being able to see a variety of wildlife.

Being able to watch a mother bear and two cubs. The mother was eating and the two cubs followed her around. It was breathtaking and probably a once in a lifetime experience!

Being awestruck and appreciating our country's dedication to keeping Yellowstone and other parks healthy and accessible. My strongest memories involve my emotional reaction to the vast, open, natural landscape and wildlife that thrive here in YNP. I felt this the first time and visited Yellowstone and continue to do so.

Being from Denmark, the diversity and variation of the nature are the memories I will keep.

Being on Yellowstone Lake when I was 16 years old coming from the suburbs of New Jersey. I loved the silence and not being able to see civilization. I now live in Jackson, WY.

Being stopped in traffic by a huge buffalo.

Being surrounded by a herd of Bison while we were in a compact car.

Being surrounded by the pristine beauty of nature and seeing a landscape that has remained largely unchanged by men is an awesome sensory experience and is thought provoking and relaxing.

Bicycling between Daisy Castle geysers and also seeing Grand and then Firehole Lake erupt all within 2 hours. Beautiful setting sun set the scene perfectly too!

Bicycling down the road and being able to stop anywhere

Bike touring in all types of weather. It is never the same that makes Yellowstone a special place.

Bison and geysers

Bison crossing the road.

Bison herd surrounding my car in Lamar Valley. And to wake up at 4 am for this experience.

Bison herd walking down the road. We were going the opposite direction so got great pictures from inside the car and got to drive past the 2.5 mile backup the bison created. Very cool and a little unsettling to have the herd come so close!

Bison in our camp site.

Bison rule the park! Weather can change on a moment's notice.

Bison rut in Hayden Valley is always of great interest. I enjoy watching and taking photos of the large gathering of bison at this time of year.

Bison sitting along the roadside.

Bison wandering through the campsite.

Bluff charged 2 times by female grizzly with cubs while hiking.

Bringing grandkids to visit park (3rd generation)

Bringing my daughter to Yellowstone.

Bringing the family to celebrate the 50th anniversary in Yellowstone NP. 11 members, pregnant daughter-in-law 16 month old, ranging from 75 yo. with 4 children married. Because I am an artist favorite part of whole trip for me was sitting with 3 granddaughters for 2 hours drawing the Lower Falls at Artist Point. We still have our pictures!

Buffalo charge.

Buffalo traffic jams

Buffalo (bison) jam in Hayden Valley-bison on both sides of the car, really close. Love these big animals. But also respect their size and speed and their right to be free and roam wherever they want. They seem to be tolerant enough of us, though I'm sure they don't all appreciate our getting in their way. Camping and fishing at Yellowstone lake as a child.

Camping at grizzly lake on a backpacking trip and waking up to hear loud splashing. A herd of approximately 20 elk were splashing through the lake. We watched them through the tent.

Camping is always the best. YNP just adds extra because of the special geysers and geothermals that the park has. Every time we go we also love to see the animals and take photographs of the park animals. Camping with a nice view!

Camping with grandma and a campfire.

Canyon Falls, bison herds.

Castle geyser, better than old faithful

Catching a cutthroat in slough creek.

Catching a large native cutthroat trout.

Catching cutthroat trout in Yellowstone River in 2007, eagles, others and bull bison at dawn first fly fishing trip (Had been to YNP many times but first fishing).

Catching fish with buddies surrounded by wildlife.

Catching trout

Catching very large cutthroat!

Chasing Asian tourists back onto the boardwalk, there should be a message sent to all phones once entering.

Climbing Avalanche Peak. Spectacular 360 view, away from the crowds.

Climbing up the stairs to see the falls.

Close encounter with a griz at Old Faithful opening day 2005.

Close up viewing of Bison, Pronghorn, mule deer, Elk, and distant view of Black Bear. Yellowstone Grand Canyon and Hayden + Lamar Valleys and views of other canyons...

Coming to Yellowstone and seeing a lot of wildlife. Seeing the beautiful mountains.

Coming to Yellowstone with my mom on my first trip and seeing Old Faithful erupt. Four months later I moved to Montana.

Coming to YNP as a kid and now bring my family here.

Couple years ago we came the day when the park opened. A lot of snow remained on the area close to the streets. The bison used the streets to come along. Very exciting memory.

Didn't see too many wild animals. Not enough entrances or exits. Too many (something)

Disappointed for not having witnessed grizzlies and wolves. At awe when seeing the "grand canyon". Its colors and Lower falls. I have to return to YNP with better luck.

Discrepancy between environmental policy and behavior of visitors. Operating engines in parking lots, coaches with heavy engines and a lot of exhaust fumes in the housing area of lodges.

Diversity in scenery and opportunity to explore.

Do not have a special memory.

Driving directly behind a bison that wouldn't leave the road for 15 minutes.

Driving into the park on our first day, there was a bison in the oncoming lane. There was a very large line of cars and RVs behind him as he made his way slowly up the road.

Driving motorcycles through the park in 88 when it was burning. Sad to see the trees have been cleared. Driving near Tower-Roosevelt and a herd of bison walking the road in my direction.

Driving on roadways and seeing various animals both near and far from the road, including bison elk and geese. Though I expected to see bear and didn't see or hear any sightings.

Driving the loop, seeing bison, bears, wolves, elk, swans, and the lakes and rivers. While also seeing the thermal features all at the same time.

Driving through and seeing the bison

Driving through Hayden Valley looking for bears and other wildlife.

Driving through the Lamar in winter later catching glimpses of frozen falls on Baronnette, climbing them, learning to ice climb and navigating the mountains in the winter. At peace, always alone just 200' off the road. I always come back to create similar memories.

Driving through the Lamar Valley and seeing the wealth of wildlife everywhere we looked.

Driving through Yellowstone at night and encountering 3 bison on the road. Memorable experience!

Encountering a grizzly bear and her cub on the road. We stopped our car and they walked right by the side of our car. We watched them climb up the grassy bank to continue grazing.

Enjoyable, short morning walks/hikes

Enjoyed all aspects on this, our first, visit to Yellowstone. I have a positive feeling from all of our experiences, the sheer beauty of the entire park, the interesting features- geysers, etc.

Enjoyed seeing elk and bear in world.

Enjoyed seeing how the trees have regrown since the fire in the 80s. I can remember seeing pictures of how devastated the park looked. Still didn't see many animals.

Enjoyed seeing the wildlife in their natural habitat.

Every time I have come, I have enjoyed it. It is a very special place- Thank you

Excitement. You never know what you're going to see. It's a new adventure every time.

Experiencing it with my children. Firehole swimming hole was their favorite, as were other opportunities to explore, swim, and climb without crowds.

Extremophile colors of thermal features.

Fairy Falls hike, backcountry geysers.

Fall cycling tour from West Yellowstone to Old Faithful. Multiple times.

Family reunion- camping and sightseeing in the Park.

Family road trip when I was 6.

Fantastic experience. Never seen anything like it before. Been there for three days.

Fantastic wildlife around the park.

Fear of the busloads of people, need more pullouts.

Feeding the bears as a nine year old.

Feeding the bears in the 1950's and fishing.

Female elk walking through the campground was great. The same evening Asian tourists were preparing vegetables and leaving waste in the dishwashing sink in Grant campground, as well as washing feet, brushing teeth in the area for filling potable water canteens. This was unpleasant.

Few years ago we witnessed a doe give birth to twin fawns. No one else was there and we stayed far enough away that the doe was not frightened. Later when we passed by there were many cars and people taking pictures. We drove past without stopping.

First driving into the park and taking it in. Thinking this is so freaking awesome despite having been in a bad mood. Taking it all in completely changed my mood.

First encounter with a bison while driving the car.

First encounter with buffalo and elk

First entering the park and seeing the beautiful views and first seeing the buffalo on the road.

First time fishing, Buffalo Ford in YNP in August 1978.

First visit. No memories yet.

First visit to Yellowstone: Seeing old faithful for the first time with a couple high school friends as we took a road trip to see the West Coast from eastern South Dakota. Marmots would approach you begging for food. We slept in a maroon Chevy 1500 pickup truck that had a camper shell, had all of our food, etc. Have had several visits to YNP since then with my family. Hiking in YNP with a "little bear" is special.

First visit, entering south gate over memorial day weekend and seeing massive amounts of snow and thinking that planned hikes would be impacted. Worked out just fine including hike in Canyons over with brown bears and buffalo on the trail.

First winter visit was awesome!

Fishing an especially good pool on the Lamar River. I caught 15-20 cutthroat trout including several around 20 inches. Side note, example of solution to a problem that doesn't exist! Do not treat the Soda Butte Creek by killing all fish to remove Brook trout. The current population of cutthroat is strong, healthy, viable and perfectly adapted to the stream. Why kill them to save them? Replace with what hatchery fish?

Fishing in Slough Creek.

Fishing with family members. For decades, members of my family went to fish in and around the park. Costs and expenses somewhat limit family enthusiasm now, and those who loved Yellowstone best are no longer with us. But we do have places we like to hike into, and there are experiences of nature that you can only obtain in Yellowstone park, Seeing moose while catching a grayling or finding elk antlers or listening to elk bugling in the fall air while catching cutthroat.

Fishing with my dad 60 years ago.

For years, we thought of "Old Faithful" as being the Yellowstone experience. However, that is just the tip of the iceberg. Everything was enjoyable.

Free pass, seeing the fire damage was an impact. Enjoyed Old Faithful.

Get better food! Park food is beyond crappy and my husband got sick!

Getting to see Grand Geyser erupt was really special.

Geysers and other geothermal phenomenon (even better than in New Zealand)

Geysers are amazing; waterfalls are the best feature of the park along with the rivers and streams. Great scenic drives. Love the wildlife.

Geysers spectacular- well laid out boardwalk.

Going around the park with my kids.

Going on the road early in the morning and meeting an elk half a mile outside the campsite.

Going to Yellowstone with my family when I was a child and staying at a cabin called the Little Hut at Fishing Bridge. We had good times there.

Got lost! No map was offered at west entrance. Spend 3 to 5 hours wandering around. Park signage is awful. There should have been a sign directing traffic towards lodging. Spent 1 night at grant village and 1 night at lake. Sign reads "Lake area". We didn't know they were the same. The town just outside west entrance was full of businesses that treated us like they didn't want our business long stares, rudeness, and angry looks. Just awful. This park is not on our places to revisit. Asked about a trail at lake and they just told us to "pick one" from the guy at the help desk. No maps of length and difficulty of trails so if we wanted to go we had to risk it. Other places provided pamphlets with tracks and level of difficulty so we expected the same at Yellowstone.

Grand Canyon of Yellowstone, fishing the Firehole River.

Grand prismatic springs - very colorful, unique landscape. Lower falls, way up/down was breathtaking and canyon, view absolutely stunning.

Grandparents, bears in the early 60's.

Great time fishing at Soda Butte Creek. I had to change my flies so many times to get a bite on my line but then got about 7 hits and 4 hooked fish. I didn't land any but had a great time anyway. We also saw a small black bear on the hill above the creek. He was far enough away to be enjoyable without being fearsome.

Great wildlife, although did not see bears, moose, or foxes. Very nice place to visit. Would like to return and spend more time.

Had a great time at the park, spent 7 days

Hard to determine. Many cool memories soaking in the river at Boiling River; seeing geysers, hot springs, pots, etc. Seeing mule deer, elk, bison, hiking Mt. Washburn, Avalanche, Fairy Falls, trout lake, not happy about buffalo jams. People have to stop on road at first buffalo sighting. Like trails at Las Vegas, it gets old quickly. We were in YNP 7 days. I suppose many have 2 days. They stop and gawk. Did a 3 week trip. 5 days in GNP, 7 days in YNP, and 4 in Grand Teton. Day in Wyoming to Ten Sleep. Day or 2 in MT. Day in ID. Day in Black hills. Day in Mt. Rushmore. Day in Badlands. First trip at age 57 out "west".

Having a bear cross the road right in front of us. Having my kids talk about what they liked, and having the list go on and on.

Having close views of wildlife.

Having fun in nature with my family.

Having skunks hop onto the picnic table to eat the marshmallows we intended to roast. That was about 60 years ago. The other memory that pops into my mind was the first time I saw upper and lower falls. I visit all the NPs and State parks I can.

Having to drive on the side of the road to allow a herd of bison to pass!

Heavy traffic on this visit. All parking areas were full. Even the handicap parking was full.

Herd of bison.

Hike to Shoshone lake.

Hiked South Rim loop including Uncle Tom's side trail.

Hiking along the rim of Grand Canyon. We hiked for nearly two hours, stopping frequently to view the Yellowstone River. At point sublime, we stopped to rest and enjoy the view. We were away from all other tourists and the park felt like it belonged to us.

Hiking and seeing Lone Star Geysers. Better than Old Faithful. Spending 1 & 1/2 weeks with my grandson. Always good times!

Hiking and viewing a bull moose that wanted to cross our trail. Backing up and allowing him to pass first.

Hiking and views.

Hiking Avalanche Peak with my son and friend.

Hiking from Slough Creek campground up to the first meadow with my family and watching my husband coach my son fishing and then watching as my son, age 6, on his own, see a cutthroat, cast, and witness the fish taking the fly. He was thrilled and so were his parent and sister. (1978)

Hiking lake loop with our grandsons.

Hiking near lake with multi-generations of family.

Hiking the 20 mile loop in the Tetons with our daughter. Having her birthday dinner at Jackson Lake Lodge. I consider Teton and Yellowstone one in the same. I'd like to see YNP move away from an automobile focus and provide better opportunities to just walk to places i.e. Bridge Bay campground to the big yellow lodge on the lake. Take care of historic lodge.

Hiking to Mallard Lake near Old Faithful with family.

Hiking to Mystic Falls with 7 other family members and seeing the kids down below us. It held the constant reminder that we were voluntarily walking around a huge caldera. Wow!

Hiking Uncle Tom's Trail.

Horseback ride at Roosevelt

Horseback riding, seeing my first bison, overall magnitude of park beauty and majesty and camping as a family.

How beautiful and not destroyed by man.

Husband has been a ranger, regular visits with our kids and family, close proximity of where we live, the first national park, first spotting of wolves, grizzly bears, and ski trip in my formative years.

I always get a special feeling seeing a Yellowstone NP official sign. My journey to YNP is usually over 1,000 miles. I can almost feel the smile it gives me crossing the line as I enter. I am the ultimate tourist. The journey to YNP has now become a family event. My kids 3 of 2 have visited the park four times already. When the boundary line comes we all throw our hands in a pile for a family shake. 1996, I thought I was Jim Bridger crossing the boundary line my first time in June that year.

I always think of our first trip, driving into the park through the windy southern entrance. It was pretty late and very dark and we were wondering what we'd gotten ourselves into. Then all of a sudden we were at our accommodations at the Old Faithful Inn. The big red doors were open still and the fire was on. It was so welcoming and so cozy. All of a sudden we were back on vacation mode and so excited to be at Yellowstone and staying in such a historic Inn. We talked the whole way to the room. And then I lay down on the bed to wait for my boyfriend to use the bathroom and fell immediately asleep from relief and exhaustion. The story is funny to me and always brings a smile to my face.

I am a first time visitor. We came for the 60th anniversary of square dancing in the area. We were able to go to the inn for a special dance. I enjoyed that very much. Also have enjoyed the sights in the park.

I am a member of the civil air patrol that does community service upon request. I have been active because of my father taking part of YNP. Deepest memory is 1959 the night YNP shook, we were driving from boat trip when trees at east gate fell across the road, we helped put them to side of the road.

I am visiting from UK so it is difficult to answer.

I came here as a child for a large family reunion. This is when I fell in love with Yellowstone NP. After I married, my husband and children would come with me to visit and camp. Now we live in Cody, WY and drive through frequently. I also planned a large family reunion with my children and grandchildren in YNP. The cycle has repeated itself! Yay!

I come from Germany. The hotel mammoth hot springs was nice. We drove 2 days through the park, first day we come from Cody. Last day we drove from Yellowstone to Grand Teton. We saw many animals, prefer the buffalo herds.

I enjoy seeing the variety of wildlife however, people getting too close to snap photos frequently spoils the experience.

I enjoy when I travel across all Yellowstone because I love all the beauty everywhere scenic views, animals, woods, rivers. I pretty much love most of YNP except the crowds!

I enjoyed seeing the wildlife, especially the buffalo.

I enjoyed seeing wildlife.

I enjoyed the time I spent with my family and friends in Yellowstone.

I enjoyed the wildlife. I couldn't believe the population of the buffalo. Wow! We saw some very close!

I first visited Yellowstone at 14 years old with my family. We ended up with the most amazing campsite next to meadow and stream. Our neighbors were an elderly couple who came to paint. Such a lovely memory.

I go to my special place and listen to nature, watch nature, and just sit in the quiet of the area and listen to the water. Total peace!

I grew up here; it's an integral part of my life.

I grew up in Jackson Hole with very active outdoor parents and who were wildlife watchers and landscape painters. So I spent a lot of childhood years tromping around the parks looking for animals. My husband and I went to Yellowstone just after we met to go fishing. We were on the Madison at dusk when a hatch was happening and a storm rolled through. It was fall so the elk were bugling and out of sight in the woods just beyond the river at least my husband hooked an enormous trout and one of the bulls we had been hearing emerged from the trees and crossed the river quickly behind my husband. We stopped, motioned so not to affect the elk. And the elk stopped, mid-river and bugled for what seemed to be several minutes. The steam raising from the rain that good creature in dusk light and my husband with a trout will be an image I carry for the rest of my life.

I grew up in the park. My grandmother was the manager of Fishing Bridge and canyon cafeterias in the 1960s. We spent every weekend in the park. It is the best!

I grew up near Yellowstone and remember feeding bears, watching bears at West Yellowstone garbage dump and seeing bears at most locations. Although, I understand that the bear/human interface is dangerous, I still associate Yellowstone with bears. Bears are my fondest memory of YNP.

I have a million memories but the first that comes to mind is the two hour horseback ride I did at Roosevelt. I got to participate in an activity I love while taking in the scenery and passing by a large herd of bison, black tail deer, and a pronghorn. I had a first class seat on a great horse and friendly wranglers. Felt right at home.

I have visited and enjoyed Yellowstone in the summer often but my most memorable experience was my visit in winter. The Norris Geyser Basin region in winter was spectacular. We stayed at Mammoth and cross-country skied the terraces, such fun it didn't even seem cold at -12. The ski van trip was worth every penny it cost. Remember this experience.

I like seeing the elk. Hate to see all the timber that is dying and going to waste.

I loved the artists' paint pots. The mud was fascinating to watch! I tried to imagine what was underneath them and what was happening at the core of the Earth. Mesmerizing! It brought back memories of when I was a little girl and my mom built little fires in our yard. It would heat up water and dirt to make mud pies. I loved watching it bubble and see the different colors and consistencies!

I must tell you I have more than one experience. I am fortunate that YNP has been a part of my entire life. I grew up in Livingston, MT. My parents were the only members of their respective families that lived near the park. We took countless day trips into the park to the point where I tired of it. However, for 3 summers in the 80s we had a boat and kept it at Bridge bay. It was wonderful! Such a huge, beautiful, wild and clear lake. We caught fish on every cast, measured, and released them. We often got the back country sites and slept on the boat. My husband has done road construction for FHWA for over 20 years in the park. I worked for him for a short time. Now our son works there. I have been fortunate yet again to make countless trips with him as he checked on jobs. We see many animals. I appreciate it more now.

I really enjoyed revisiting the thermal features over the years. I take careful notes of each feature when I visit and then explore, re-read, and describe the feature again the next time I return. I visit YNP about once a year and cycle through 2 or 3 geysers each time.

I remember as a child seeing Old Faithful. The geyser was quite huge compared to today. The park seemed to be full of animals all over the park roads. Today it seems they are scattered. The arch was awesome to go through back then and was a little disappointing that construction is taking the arches away.

I remember the first trip to Yellowstone driving through the arch and seeing all the bison in Lamar valley on our way out.

I remember visiting the Mammoth Hot Springs when I was in the third grade. I still have a photo I took there. I remember being really impressed by the colors and formations at the Canary Falls.

I revisited after coming here 37 years ago. I took a picture in the same place. The canyon with the same vest I bought here. The picture is my favorite from traveling all over the world. USA veteran

I saw many bears this year (25) watching most from a distance, but one was extremely close for a short times allowing pictures and videos.

I saw some freakin bison! Totally gnarly seeing all the thermal pools too.

I suppose all the wildlife viewing.

I thought that it was sad to see so many foreign visitors in the park knowing that there are so many Americans that would love to visit the park.

I traveled here with my whole family including my children and grandchildren. My children are 40 and 43. When they were last here, they were 6 and 3. My grandchildren are 6 and 3 so it was thrilling seeing them experience the park as we had showed the park with their dad, having everyone together is very important and doing so in Yellowstone was even more special.

I used to work at Lake hospital!

I visited with my dad when I was 18. When we got to our campsite at dusk, I ran down a hill to see the river at sunset. I stopped on the bank; I was shocked that I was standing less than 10 feet from several elk.

I visited Yellowstone with my dad when my daughter was young. It was a special trip and I have fond memories of visiting Old Faithful.

I visited YNP with my parents and family as a young child. But I didn't really remember that. My first real memory was bringing my 10 year old daughter out west from our first road trip and camping trip. We arrived late to 8 all the way to a campground by a lake near the south entrance. It was so cold that night that there were snowflakes in the air. But we survived and enjoyed sampling all the major sites including seeing our first grizzly bear. Then it was to the Grand Tetons for more beauty.

I was amazed at the vast terrain. The geysers were awesome and very unusual. I liked the bison "owning" the roads. The rivers made me want to learn to fly fish.

I was amazed by how many people were in the park. We encountered stopped and very slow moving traffic only to find cars blocking the road to view an elk. I was amazed at seeing the animals myself once we did get to them. (Sometimes taking 15 mins!) The animals seemed so un-afraid of us tourists. I was born and raised in Jackson, WY. I remember fondly of the wildlife and sense of being and sharing with family. I grew up spending a lot of time in Grand Teton National Park and Yellowstone. I am very lucky to live so close to have the opportunity to camp in the park. I was in the 8th grade and it was the first vacation my family had ever taken.

I was lying down on some rocks at the Lamar River with my shoes nearly touching the water. I was listening to the water while observing a coyote prance away from the river into Lamar Valley when I heard people a hundred yards away saying to be careful and pointing to 100 bison coming my way to cross the river. Too late for me to run I sat back and watched them cross the river about 50 feet away from me. One of the best experiences of my life.

I've witnessed bears and two gray wolves fighting over an animal carcass. This was one of the most interesting and exciting things I have ever seen.

Imperial geyser on hike to backcountry campground.

In 1959 my first visit a major earthquake occurred- many people were injured by a major earth slide- it was a scary time for us! On the day prior to the quake we saw lots of wildlife, much more than on this visit.

In 1969 leaving Great Falls we would have a pull camper. This year on our way back to Minnesota to visit grandparents my father went through the park. I remember the bears would back up the traffic for miles because people would feed them. As we were camped at Mammoth Hot Springs and the 1959 earthquake that found Quake Lake struck. This woke us all up by the next morning we hurried to get out of the park. More startled than afraid.

Incredible waterfalls.

It was amazing to see the power of nature and watching Old Faithful geyser!

It was beautiful! Perfect fall day.

It's like stepping into another world. The sights, sounds, and smells are unique and wonderful.

July was super time to visit. Baby bison and elk so fun to see. Wild flowers are gorgeous. Weather was pretty good. We get to gate between 4:30 and 5:00. Leave by noon because road gets congested. God's creation is wonderful! Rangers and staff are excellent!

June no crowds, cool weather, bears. July, more people. August, Too many people/crowds never again!

Just crossing in via the Beartooth Highway at the Northeast entrance, seeing a black bear follow shortly by a bison herd was thrilling.

Just enjoying the beautiful creation God made for us. It's breathtaking.

Just seeing all the different types of beauty Yellowstone has to offer. From the rock formations around Mammoth Hot Springs, the waterfalls of the Yellowstone River, all the scenic rivers, to the valleys with many animals. Wow!

Lack of wildlife that I saw. Immense amount of traffic driving through the park at all hours of day and night. The beautiful natural waterfalls, some great hiking and kayaking. Lack of showers and poorly stocked general store. Regrets: I wish I had more time to backcountry camp and kayak so I could get away from the crowds. It was one of my least favorite parks I visited on my 8 park trip.

Lamar valley was great.

Lamar Valley with bison and the enjoyment of the valley. Artist Point on the South Rim of Canyon The Great Geyser, blast worked for us. (Rough translation from Spanish to English).

Lamar Valley with no commercialization. The quiet, the animals (bison)

Large herds of bison.

Long lines at entrances to park because people are not aware of where to get information before the entrance.

Looking at the beautiful scenery, watching wildlife, enjoying overlooks.

Looking down from the boardwalk and admiring the various hot springs.

Lots of people during the summer, most of the people are fine, but many are very disrespectful and have no common courtesy. Park employees are quite helpful and do the best they can with all the people. Parking at popular places must be improved, limited bathrooms, and people with gigantic rv's that park in 2-3 places. Could we tow them? Or at least hit them with a stiff fine.

Love the hiking and viewing of the spectacular attributes of the park. This is a great educational tool for our children.

Loved to see the wildlife, natural geysers

Lower brick falls- Grand Canyon of Yellowstone River. Awe inspiring.

Lower Falls is beautiful. Rainbow in the mist. I accomplished the 328 steps to get to the bottom. It was worth it!

Lower Falls- artist point is the best! Beautiful Grand Canyon of Yellowstone drive.

Lower falls, amazing

Lunch with Jaggart Lake with a young moose across the lake.

Mammoth Hot Springs

Mammoth Hot Springs - size of it.

Mammoth Hot Springs to Roosevelt was the most memorable and best drive. However, the construction and one way road was horrible.

Many years ago I saw my first grizzly bear. It was on the north side of Mt. Washburn in the Antelope Creek area. It was early morning and the sun shone on it creating a misty halo around its fur. I fell in love immediately. It was a spiritual experience for me. I go to the park multiple times each year to see the great bears and each time I see one I still get the same thrill.

Meeting a lone wolf in Pelican Valley.

Meeting my wife in the park in 1990!

Met my future wife in 1973

Met my husband while working at Old Faithful Inn. We now have an infant who wouldn't exist without that marvelous park! Too many memories to pick just one!

More people don't pick up trash. Trash is more and more a problem. I pick it up everywhere in the park.

Most of all, coming across wildlife e.g. bison, elk, pronghorn was a stunning experience for me.

Motorcycling in the park in Early June. Five foot snow banks line the road. Even though it's cold, it's great because there are no crowds!

Muddy bear in back seat of yellow convertible eating picnic lunch.

My (now deceased) husband and I arrived at 7 am at Old Faithful on our very first day in YNP, back on our first visit in 2001. We were alone! The ONLY PEOPLE around to witness Old Faithful erupt. Pure magic for us alone. And we actually wondered what all the benches were for. We found out when we returned at about noon the next day.

My dad and I rode our bikes out to Lone Star Geyser. The ride was so pleasant and peaceful. We had arrived there after visiting the Grand Prismatic where there had to have been 500+ people. On our ride, we saw 20 people (I counted) and watched the geyser erupt all by ourselves. This was the perfect Father's day weekend.

My family visited YNP when my son was five. The experiences we had visiting the geysers and thermal features on the upper geyser basin and staying at Old Faithful Inn started a lifelong love of the park and geysers. My son just got home and was able to watch the video we had purchased about the Geysers of Yellowstone. His response was "you mean there's more?" and immediately wanted to go back. We did the following summer with his baby sister. The experience with the rangers and materials we purchased helped him develop his passion for science. He is now a Ph.D. candidate at UCSD with a master's in physics and soon to be doctorate in computer and electrical engineering. He still loves geysers and so does his sister!

My fiancé and I hiked the Elephant Back Loop Trail. It was an enjoyable hike up to an overlook near the top. We stopped to enjoy the view. The sky was getting cloudy so we went back down the same way we hiked up. It started to sprinkle so we started to jog back. Even though it eventually rained on us the entire way back, it was a very enjoyable hike. We later found out that trail a month or so earlier then we had experienced that a YNP hiker was attacked and killed by a grizzly bear. Because of this, we tell more people and talk about this hike.

My first experience in Yellowstone was 20 years ago when I moved to Old Faithful to live and work. I now live in Jackson and return every year to explore YNP.

My first memory of the park was when my mom and dad rented an RV from our home in Eureka, CA. Our whole family drove down to the park. We saw many animals and fished on the Madison River. This most recent trip was exceptional, I was able to show my three kids a wolf pack on the eastern end of the

Lamar Valley, and then at the end of the day we saw a grizzly bear sow and two cubs! It will be a memory that the kids will never forget. Just like my childhood memory of the first trip to YNP!

My first time at Yellowstone. We spent the week on an "old times" tour through Xanterra. The drive and guide made Yellowstone come alive.

My first trip to Yellowstone when I was 10, we saw bears trying to get into dumpsters behind the lodge. We stayed in the lodge, and then saw Old Faithful go off several times. I've never seen a wolf or another bear in the park. So seeing at least one of those animals in the park is a precious memory.

My first trip to YNP was as a child with my family on a horse backing trip. I remember setting up camp in a meadow near a forest and stream that ran through the meadow.

My first visit as an adult was with my husband and then 6 month old daughter. As we walked around the boardwalks of the Old Faithful and amused about the number of people who come to Yellowstone from all around the world to work for the summer season. I mentioned we should plan to do that when we are older/empty nesters. That was in 1991. My 3rd summer working in or around YNP currently at the museum in West Yellowstone and have bought a home here with intentions to return for many more summers to come.

My first wonderful experience in the park was when you could actually see the bears and other animals. Now you barely see any except for bison. The wildlife in the park is really no longer there. I was a child then and now a senior citizen.

My four year old loved sleeping inside a super volcano.

My husband and I and our youngest son went backpacking from Old Faithful Area to Shoshone and went out through Bechler. 4 days and 3 nights. Didn't see a lot of wildlife but the waterfalls were really beautiful.

My husband and I came here 5 times. He loved it here. This visit I came to spread his ashes because he wanted to come back. 26 people attended his ashes scattering on May 21st. I will be back next year on the anniversary of his ashes scattering.

My husband and I came to Yellowstone on our honeymoon years ago. It is a magnificent place! Later, our three girls have swum in the Firehole River and enjoyed the campground in the park. Sharing the geothermal features with them, seeing their joy in discovery, has been very meaningful to us. We all love the wildlife and actively search for wildlife. We also love the ranger programs. Thanks for this research! There is no other place like this in the NPS!

My husband and I spent our 2 year anniversary at Yellowstone and the most memorable moments included the beautiful scenery and watching the wildlife. These lasting memories bring us from Texas to Yellowstone every year.

My husband's family has visited YNP since the 1920s and I first visited with my husband in 1985. We have visited nearly every summer since then, so it is hard to pick just one event. One favorite memory

was in the late 1980s we camped at Pebble Creek, cooking fish we had caught in the Lamar River over an open fire and that night a buffalo wandered into our campground. We also saw a fawn hidden in the grass nearby. Where else but YNP?

My most memorable experience in Yellowstone is the first time seeing the bison herds, knowing they were descendants of the last genetically pure bison that roamed the plains before nearly being hunted to extinction. I was thankful these bison were saved and that I was able to see these herds and imagine what it was like when millions roamed the plains.

My oldest son went to work at YNP right after high school. My youngest son began working there this summer season. Because my oldest introduced me to YNP and has done so many things there, it is a big part of our family. Now that youngest is there, the tradition carries on. So first memory, seeing my son's smiling face as he introduced me to his favorite place. Lifelong memories.

My son had a great time playing at Lewis Falls.

My wife and I brought about a dozen of my college students to YNP in June 2010. They were in awe of the wildlife and natural features, although I'd taught them a mini-course on park prior to our trip.

My wife and I were overwhelmed by the hike on the southern trail to the upper and lower falls heading to Artist point.

Native cutthroat trout and their link to survival of other species. Was mortified when Lake Trout were discovered in Yellowstone Lake. Support ongoing effort to remove Lake Trout from same, and non-natives in other park water. Other obvious memory is just that everyone is pretty mellow on vacation or "holiday" and employees going out of their way to help others.

Natural Beauty

Nature at its finest

nature, bison watching

Never here before

Nice scenic point, nice scenic driving routes, wonderful nature, sense of discovery and wildlife watching.

No previous visit and only probable visit.

North rim walk

Nothing special, but a whole movie of Yellowstone.

Of all experiences I have to say seeing a wolf walk down to the Lamar River and get a drink, also to go on a walk with Rick McIntyre when he asks a bunch of people if they wanted to go at the foot bridge several years ago.

Old Faithful

Old faithful - bucket list

Old Faithful and talking to the people before the geyser erupts.

Old faithful and traffic backups around noon.

Old Faithful and wildlife viewing.

Old Faithful was awesome. The lakes were beautiful. Being able to see the bison.

Old Faithful.

On a few occasions we were able to stop and watch a mother bear with her cubs. Once we saw them feeding on a bison. We really enjoyed watching the interaction of the cubs with their mother. We also met several people who were also there to see the cubs that had been there for several months and shared many other "bear stories" with us.

On an early spring day on a hike on Specimen Ridge we saw an abundant amount of wildlife.

On my second trip through YNP my family and I watched a large herd of buffalo and saw a calf born and we also enjoyed seeing a bear and her cubs playing in a meadow.

On our first tip to Yellowstone (1967), I drove my VW into the park from the East Entrance. As I drove along a hill I encountered another VW backing down the hill towards me. As I pulled out to pass/allow it to continue, I discovered a bear had dropped over the hood pushing the car downhill. I turned around, drove back to the entrance and informed the ranger. The ranger affirmed an oath against "stupid tourists who feed bears" jumped in his vehicle, and drove back into the park; bear, other and ranger were no longer visible. Since then, much has changed regarding prevention of bear-human encounters. Thank you for the ongoing protection for both animals and humans in a balanced policy approach!

On this visit we stopped at a pull-out somewhere between West Thumb and the South Entrance. We took a very short hike to a pretty waterfall. I don't recall ever stopping here before. It was a pleasant little break on our drive. We travel through the park a few times a year and it was fun to see a place we hadn't before.

Once in a life time something very special, very wonderful and very beautiful happens to you. Something that is so special that you don't share it with anyone. You put it in a special box and put it in a special place in your heart only to be opened by you. That happened to me in Yellowstone!

One day we saw a black bear beside the road. That was really exciting. The ranger came and made sure that everybody got back in their car.

One of the first trips in the Park. We were driving along. There was a big open field and I thought I saw something walking. Pulled over on the side of the road. Next thing it was snowing like a blizzard. It was

the beginning of June. It stopped as quickly as it started. Then I saw what was coming through the field. It was a wolf. I taped it on my camcorder. I really am fascinated by wolves. I have yet to see a grizzly in the wild.

One time my family was camping in Yellowstone in the 1970s and we saw a man up high in a pine tree and a bear down below pushing the tree. Eventually the bear left and the man came down the tree. He had been fishing at Yellowstone Lake.

One trip when my son was young (10) we walked from Norris campground over to the geyser basin. A storm brewed while we were there and on the way back hail broke loose. We were running around a bend and surprised a small herd of elk on either side of the trail. We all starred at each other. In the middle of this crazy moment, magic also happened! We were able to dry off in our new tent trailer and we never go anywhere without a poncho!

Only been here 1 time prior many years ago. Yellowstone is spectacular, amazing, and plenty of things to see. Buffalo were everywhere!

Our family hiked to Union Falls during August 2009. The hike up to the falls was pleasant and uneventful and the view at the top spectacular, but the way back down we ended up separating into three groups. We had a hard time re-uniting and finally made it back to our vehicle around 10pm. What a memorable day! We're looking forward to getting back there again (without separating!).

Our first visit to Yellowstone was in the fall of 2007. We experienced our first buffalo jam near Mud Volcano. A good sized herd was standing in the middle part of the road and we stopped some 30 feet away expecting them to move across the road. But instead this huge bull bison started to move down the road towards us. The rest of the herd followed and soon we had buffalo walk passed our car on all sides. We sat very still and watched these huge amazing animals pass us walking down the road. It was the most thrilling and a little scary thing to see them up close. They are incredible!

Our grandson just turned 5 a few days ago. We enjoyed watching our grandson become a junior ranger! The program was wonderful and we learned a lot ourselves. Thank you so much!

Our son worked at Lake Yellowstone one summer as a fisheries biologist while in college. We saw so much of the park that summer as he took us places we otherwise probably wouldn't have seen.

Outbreak at Old Faithful.

Overlook of Lamar Valley

Overwhelmed with vastness and variety within the park.

Park is becoming more congested than previous visits. Too bad parking at Old Faithful had to take place at peak park visit timeframe.

Parking is not set up for disable people to see out of the car.

Photo of a grizzly bear and wolf on river. Our favorite day with aspen bright yellow. What a moment, picture, and memory.

Photographing and watching bears.

Photographing fall colors.

Positive: Bison everywhere, negative: the smell of geysers

Pulling over in Lamar Valley and watch a black bear and her two cubs meander along a hillside close to the road.

Rain storm during old faithful visit.

Retired bus driver. In 1988 I drove tours through the park while on fire. Another driver almost was trampled by a buffalo that was being chased by Japanese tourists! Since 1988 I got to watch park come back.

Riding bikes by bison, horse ride and cookout. Seeing the steam from geysers for the first time is like nothing else.

Saw 4 grizzlies and 2 elk on our first visit.

Saw a lot of bears and it was very exciting and peaceful. The rangers were very nice and friendly.

Saw grizzly bears for the first time!

Saw it 2 years before the fire, breathtaking. Saw it 2 years after the fire and it made me cry. Saw it now about 25 years later with a 1st time visitor, she said breathtaking. I also enjoyed the park a lot. My grandkids will appreciate it even more.

Scenic beauty, nature, and wildlife watching. We were very impressed with the recycling program throughout the park. The roads were well marked and maintained.

Scenic beauty.

See 3 foxes along the road at dawn.

See and photograph a bull snake at Mammoth hot springs. Surprise eruption of White Dome at dawn. Swimming Bison.

See wildlife

Seeing 4 coyotes up close on a walking trail and watching them cross our path.

Seeing a black bear and her cub.

Seeing a black bear with a fresh killed elk/fawn. Having a black bear walk within 5 feet of our car.

Seeing a black bear, bison, and deer.

Seeing a grey wolf by the roadside in a stream. Amazing. The size took our breath away!

Seeing a grizzly bear.

Seeing a grizzly mama and 2 cubs.

Seeing a heard of elk or bison hiking on a mountain trail.

Seeing a large grizzly bear get hit by a large motor home that was speeding through the park. The only thing that I regret is that we didn't get the number. The bear walked away but I always wondered if it died from injuries later.

Seeing a lone wolf.

Seeing a mother grizzly and her cubs in a tree.

Seeing a young bison romping in fresh snow that fell overnight- just outside our cabin.

Seeing all the animals and fishing.

Seeing all the bears when my parents brought me to YNP as a child. I was in awe and amazed.

Seeing all the bison and knowing that at one time only 27 remained. The beautiful scenery which we call "God's landscaping" and knowing that we only saw a tiny slice of the beautiful country of ours.

Seeing and photographing the wildlife and beautiful scenes in the park was a wonderful experience. I'll be back. We saw a large bison right on the side of the road and took his photo safely from the car. It was surreal.

Seeing and photographing the wildlife.

Seeing bison and bears, close encounters

Seeing bison for the first time. Also the breathtaking landscape was a great experience.

Seeing bison in their natural habitat. Brilliant.

Seeing black bears and cubs in addition to bison

Seeing buffalo

Seeing elk in the "downtown" area of Mammoth Hot Springs was memorable, watching them graze and lay down on manicured lawns was great!

Seeing Griz.

Seeing grizzly bears feed on carcass.

Seeing hundreds of elk in the rut in a backcountry basin truly undisturbed by anything man made.

Seeing moose.

Seeing my first free roaming bison and then herds of them was really cool. Also enjoyed the waterfalls and geysers.

Seeing my first grizzly bear on Mt. Washburn.

Seeing Old Faithful erupt twice. The beehive geyser erupt, and touring the other thermal pools and geysers along the boardwalk. We were only able to spend 3 hours in the park, but we will be back!

Seeing Old Faithful with our 7 year old daughter

Seeing Old Faithful/beauty/wildlife.

Seeing the abundance of wildlife in their natural habitat.

Seeing the animals up close & almost personal. The wonders of the Geysers & thermal activity. Mother nature at her finest.

Seeing the bison and other animals in the open and near our car as we drove through the park.

Seeing the bison come down a hill near the road we were driving on. It was the first time we saw bison and we were amazed at how they were just doing things they would normally do in the wild. We were also impressed at their size.

Seeing the bison herds in Lamar Valley.

Seeing the bison where they were crossing the Yellowstone River and when they have been on or near the road, seeing their faces!

Seeing the buffalo up close.

Seeing the excitement and awe in my wife's behavior for her first visit to the park. Information from guided tours was very useful to make the trip a more pleasant one.

Seeing the extent of the thermal exhibits.

Seeing the famous wolf, the "OG Female"

Seeing the geysers and the wildlife.

Seeing the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone.

Seeing the Grand Prismatic Pool!

Seeing the mountains and viewing the wildlife.

Seeing the mud pots.

Seeing the natural beauty of Yellowstone. The falls in particular. Any geological feature makes a big impression on me as I love science whether geology, biology, botany etc.

Seeing the variety of wildlife.

Seeing the vastness of untouched landscapes.

Seeing the wildlife and waterfalls and family, and others who have not been here before. Being outside.

Seeing the wildlife within the park.

Seeing wild animals close- we're taking all 5 of our grandchildren to Yellowstone Park also driving all 5 across America. Now our youngest granddaughter has made the drive with us once, she will always remember seeing Old Faithful in action and the buffalo walking in the road causing her grandfather to park along behind them. Very exciting day to share with our family. There were 6 family members with us.

Seeing wild bison was amazing.

Seeing wildlife

Seeing wildlife and whip down to new meadows.

Seeing wildlife, lots of bison.

Seeing Yellowstone canyon and the upper and lower falls.

Seeing Yellowstone park has been on my to do list since I was a teenager. First trip, finally at age 67! I was so awed by the park that I vowed to bring my children and grandchildren to see the awesome beauty of this park! We already have reservations at Fishing Bridge for July with 2 of our grandchildren and plan to return for 2 more the following year.

Sharing the experience with family and friends over the years.

Sharing with my oldest son.

Showing visitors their first bear is always a highlight
size of the park

Snow Coach rides in the winter.

Snowmobiling in winter without the crowds!

Snowmobiling two times from West Yellowstone to Old Faithful.

So much more than just Old Faithful

Some of most embedded memories are of years ago and all the bears being fed out of cars! I know it isn't a good thing, but what a great memory! I still see bears just about every trip and am thankful they are thriving again!

Special days fishing

Spending an evening at Roosevelt Lodge. Sitting outside our cabin on our lawn chairs, drinking wine watching wildlife including a fox, deer, and black bear sow and twin cubs all from the front porch.

Spending nights with relatives at Grant Village and walking and dining at the hotel.

Spying a fox in the brush and having it cross the road 6' from me. Buffalo on the road.

Standing at a pull out watching a grizzly across the Yellowstone River in Hayden Valley. The bear [slides] into the water, lifts its head for a picture, and swims to shore. We all scattered and he's coming over the rise next to my car. Then he crossed 2 cars behind me and grazes near the buff after stopping traffic.

Staying at Grant Village with my parents about 30 years ago.

Staying at the snow lodge in the winter time with lots of snow on the ground. This was before the new visitor center was built in 1987.

Staying at the Yellowstone Lodge and enjoying the beautiful lobby and fireplace. Also, seeing wild animals out in nature.

Staying near a small geyser in Norris and looking and showing, staring many times at variable heights. A very unique experience among many others.

Stopped in traffic on a motorcycle when a bison started running towards me. No place to go.

Stopping along with many other cars to view a bear and two cubs on the road side.

Stopping our car to study plants and creating a traffic backup, with tourists asking what kind of animal it was we were looking at.

Stunning natural beauty. Very impressive geysers. Old Faithful Inn was very nice. However, far too busy compared to other National Parks in the US & Canada. Inadequate infrastructure, too many cars on the road.

Swimming in boiling river

Swimming in the Boiling River with family.

Taking one-way road was a highlight of the trip because we felt not many people notice these roads or spend time to take them. We spotted a red fox on one of these trips. I felt that was quite a benefit. Taking the states and USA flags down at Old Faithful inn at sunset on the roof.

Taking the tour of Old Faithful when we stayed there. Also the geysers and the buffaloes and coyotes roamed freely.

Ten years ago before we were familiar with the area we stopped at a pull out called Pumice Rock. We had forgotten all about it until stumbling across some old pictures. On our last camp trip over Labor Day Weekend we stopped there once again to revisit the old memories from many years ago.

Thanksgiving with no snow and no races in West Yellowstone. Walked down the road quiet and peaceful.

The 1959 Earthquake, Canyon Hotel Fire, 1988 fires.

The ability to stop at the rivers' edge and fly fish when we wanted was fantastic. All the wildlife that we saw was fantastic! And going off-season at the end of September was a great choice as the crowds were definitely down. We had a couple of great hikes that we did not see anyone else on. That was a real treat!

The accumulations of animals which allows an opportunity to see more than just one species. Also it takes you back in time of no one putting homes up or a mall for shopping it allows to dream of what it was like somewhat before man invaded. I would love to have been a pioneer and see YNP before settlements came to be. I also got to see bears and wolves, buffalo, beavers etc.

The amazement upon seeing the mountains while driving to the East entrance. I had never seen anything like it before.

The amazing colors of Grand Prismatic.

The amazing landscape and the closeness to the wildlife.

The amount of colors in the hot pools.

The awe at seeing the geysers and Old Faithful. Also loved Yellowstone Grand Canyon and the wildlife.

The awesome beauty and the energy of the amazing falls.

The awesome wonder of God's country!

The beautiful grandeur, incredible vistas from mountain tops! Sitting by the Imperial geyser! Could have stayed there all day to watch!

The beautiful power of Old Faithful Geyser

The beauty of it all.

The beauty of Mammoth Hot Springs pops into my mind first as it was so different from other natural beauty in this and other national parks.

The beauty of the park in whole. I came from a small town called Athens, Texas. I was raised on a small farm, had never traveled anywhere much until I married my new husband in 2009. He brought me here and I fell in love with the mountains, lakes, rivers, wildlife, and all the beauty this park has. We love going on the cookouts in Roosevelt area. The buffalo is very interesting to watch. We came early in 2013; the June bears and three cubs were just coming out of hibernation. We got lots of pictures from inside our jeep. I could go on and on. God has blessed me greatly by allowing me to see Yellowstone!

The beauty of Yellowstone is overwhelming. Expected it to be great, but it exceeded my expectations greatly.

The beauty of Yellowstone was just amazing. We have been there 5 times and brought our grandchildren twice. The whole experience has been from viewing geysers and paint pots to the wildlife, it's been just an amazing experience.

The bison herd crossing the road. The beauty of the place.

The bison in front of my car. Great experience.

The bison walking on the road.

The buffalo coming so close to you. It's awesome!

The changing landscape, from geysers to hot springs, to steam vents, to mud pots was amazing.

The colors of the different geysers. Blue, red, yellow, orange etc.

The diversity of people encountered. Trend and the universality of appreciation and connection with nature.

The diversity of the park and the impact of seeing nature, wildlife, and the evolution of the area is one of a kind. This most recent trip we witnessed Grizzly bears eating and saw them chase away other animals that were also eating the carcass and then waiting in the background for bears to leave.

The diversity of the park, how can all these things be in one park?

The drive from Livingston to Old Faithful out the Cody exit on to Rapid City all in one day without duplicating any route in the park.

The elk and the buffalo roaming free. The rivers and waterfalls. It was my first time to visit. I live in NC, but I now want to move to Idaho and visit YNP more often!

The extra oddity natural phenomenon of geysers, mud pots, colored pools and sulfurous smell.

The feeling of awe of the sights seen in Yellowstone.

The first buffalo we saw in the wild. Old Faithful, wow. The whole park, wow.

The first time going through the park I was with my grandparents. I was probably 10 at the time. That was my most memorable and favorite time going through the park.

The first time I came to Yellowstone was with my immediate family and mom and dad. We saw a lot of elk and buffalo. Old Faithful was just the lodge structure. We had never seen that much wildlife in one area. My boys were young and very excited that their pawpaw brought them to Yellowstone. I can still hear their excitement every time we saw more wildlife.

The first time I took my kids camping, we camped in Yellowstone. As we were just sitting down to dinner at the picnic table, a bison walked right through our campsite.

The first time left the greatest impression because it was all new. I enjoy Yellowstone but the traffic and large number of people is a deterrent

The first time my family and I saw bison!

The first time we spent camping in Yellowstone in 2005.

The first time we visited the park was the first time we came across a grizzly bear or moose. Memories not to be forgotten.

The fog above the rivers and meadows in the early morning hours with all the beautiful animals in there. It was a cold night and the first light of the day was golden. Very impressive.

The geysers, grand canyon, waterfalls and wildlife!

The geysers, the ranchers, the bison, the grizzly bears with cubs

The lack of seeing animals. We expected to see lots of animals. We were there 2 days and can count on our hands how many we saw. None were very close either.

The majority of all my favorite memories were made in Yellowstone. I love this park and it has been a huge part of my life.

The memory that I recall the most of my visit was the lack of repeat/distance park visitors kept from the wildlife and the lack of park employees or rangers to disperse crowds in particular the bison and calf. I enjoyed seeing them very much; however, the experience was negatively impaired by the number of people stopping to take pictures, exiting their vehicles mere feet or inches from the animals. This happened throughout my stay and in different areas in the park. In many instances, it wasn't a handful of cars but 20-30 with turnouts under 1/8th of a mile away. The areas this occurred seemed to be known trouble areas when I spoke to park employees or other visitors. This poses a great risk to the animals. The tourists as well. I'm not sure if it is a language barrier as most of these people were not English speakers. This happened not only with bison but with bears, elk, pronghorn, moose....It is why I shortened my stay and spent the remainder in Grand Teton.

The morning we drove away at am for wildlife watching and saw two bears only 10 yards from our car!

The most important part of our 5-day Yellowstone vacation was having our son visit with us. We live in Ohio and he lives in Oregon! Made our vacation a wonderful time! Plus, we did not see bear until he arrived and then we saw grizzly and black bears.

The mountain views!

The natural beauty of the park.

The nature - the landscape and the animals - are great. The organization and idea of NPs are great. Humans remain guests in the animal's surroundings.

The nature is spectacular! We had such a great time! The hot spring was wonderful!

The park area is overwhelmed with Asian tourists.

The people and traffic were horrible. No fun with all these people.

The Pink Cone Geyser spouting. It was such a baby geyser but just kept erupting/bubbling up. It was so exuberant and happy!

The rivers and meadows with wildlife.

The road to Artist Point being closed for resurfacing and being the only park visitor at the point for over an hour in the early morning. Over a three hour period, I was joined by two other couples. The road close need to hike in the 1 mile or so along the South Rim Trail keeps people away. It was an awesome

experience. The second memory the bus loads of Asian tourists at other points of the interest along the way who were very intrusive and loud. There should be no food allowed near the geysers because they were throwing it into the geyser.

The scenery, we love the mountains and the diversity of the geothermals.

The scenic beauty and wonder! It is so sad to see the Republican party wants to take it all away and turn our national treasures into oil fields! Also, through the years the lack of funding to all our national parks and government is due to the Republicans.

The sights in Yellowstone are very unique. Geothermal activities, landscape, animals. That was the most memorable part for me.

The strongest memory is of the beautiful spectacular and varied scenery of Yellowstone Park.

The thermal spots, I have never seen the geysers and steam vents in all my 68 years.

The things I think of most are the trips with family in the winter on the snow coaches. We had some wonderful trips to both Old Faithful and Canyon. These trips were great bonding times and produced lasting memories.

The total experience of Yellowstone.

The uniqueness of thermal features and geysers.

The view at Artist's point was spectacular and very special.

The views of the Canyon and lower falls! Seeing Old Faithful twice!

The way our 2 year old son clapped at each geyser eruption.

The wildlife I photographed.

The wildlife in its natural state.

The wildlife was great, the campsite was good. There is so much to see that you need a lot of time. I've enjoyed more than any other park I visited.

The wildlife. We saw elk, coyote, herds of bison, and a bear. Fortunate.

The Yellowstone Grand Canyon and the spectacular views at each stop!

There are so many beautiful places in the USA that I have been very fortunate to visit. So for me it is not fair for me to say one has more memories than the next. They all hold a very special memory to me. And Yellowstone is one of them.

There are so many memories that come to mind as this is my favorite park. What comes to mind are all the bison in the park. Thinking about how they were almost wiped out to prevent the Native Americans from having a food source and then actually seeing so many of the lumbering creatures was amazing. My youngest daughter and I made the trip two years ago and she enjoyed watching them on the roadway and on the road. While we stopped in traffic, one of the mothers came alongside the car and sniffed my daughter. Our windows were down to allow better camera viewing when this occurred. We were very surprised when the bison put her head through the rolled down window area. The bison went on her way with the rest of the herd. I even wrote a poem about the experience and my daughter is now 25 and still talks about it.

Thermal Activities.

This is my first time visiting Yellowstone. It was an awesome experience. However since we live in a similarly beautiful community, more than a thousand miles from Yellowstone, this was a once in a lifetime visit.

This is the first national park I visited. I was in awe with the beauty, peacefulness, and witnessing the geothermal activities. The number of rivers, lakes, trees, scenic mountains, and valleys. I do not think there is any other place on Earth that holds such beauty in a relatively small space. I love seeing thermals flowing, the wildlife, bison, bears, otters, a few moose, elks, waterfalls. I've seen many bars(?) unlike other that have visited. I'll bring more family members and friends in the next years.

This was a trip around Wyoming for our 2nd anniversary. We enjoyed simply driving through the park, seeing the wildlife, witnessing Old Faithful erupt, and enjoyed a small amount of fishing. During our limited time finishing, I managed to catch (and release) a 25 inch YNP cutthroat.

This was my first visit to YNP. As we pulled into the park, about a 1/4 of a mile from the entrance on the side the road was a star elk within 10 feet of our car. We were stunned, he majestically strutted into the forest. Amazing! Unhappily my photo turned out to be in the rear view mirror!

This was our first trip so no memories yet.

This was our first trip to Yellowstone. We really liked the areas where we could just pull off the road and enjoy the scenery.

This was our first visit, likely our last as we are seniors and will probably not be traveling that far again.

This was so hard! I decided I would take it as a whole. Having grown up close by I have had the opportunity to visit a lot. What my experience or memory is all of them. I have been coming since I was a child, with my parents and grandparents. I have brought my children with my both my parents and grandparents and now I get to share this with my grandchildren. Yellowstone might not change much through the years but our experiences were always different with each visit.

This was the first time out of three visits that we saw the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone. Amazing! An experience of a lifetime. Thank you, and thank God for an amazing National Park!

This was the first time visiting the park. I was thoroughly impressed by everything I saw, including (but not limited to) hiking, wildlife viewing, and visiting the many cultural exhibits on its history.

Three days visiting a new national park. Once-in-a-lifetime experience! Just visited Joshua tree, Sequoia, and Yosemite, all memorable.

Too many people/cars

Too many stupid people doing very stupid things. Too many things to recall!

Too many uneducated people Should be watched more.

Too much tourists! Summer is the wrong season it visit the park. Campgrounds don't have enough sites in the high season. You have to offer some overflow places. In the campground (no reservation) 1st come 1st served, it will be better to offer some places only for RV and only for tents. We could see some small tents in a big sites and no places for RV left. The camp host probably could help to share up better the sites.

TRAFFIC JAMS! WAY TOO MANY CROWDS.

Traffic noise all night in the Madison campground. Excessive regulations to keep your site bear proof!

Two buffalo in the middle of the road doing the "big nasty". Quite funny watching the guy in the truck trying to get out of the way without getting crushed...you asked.

Two grizzlies eating at the wolf killed elk. Watching the bison migrate across the valley. Absolutely majestic!

Uncle Tom's trail: we walked all the way down. Great views with mountains and falls. Mammoth Hot Springs, Grand Prismatic.

Unfortunately the first thing that comes to mind about our recent visit to YNP is a very negative one. The horrible mobs of people which certainly negatively impacted our experience. I realize we were foolish to visit during the high season, but since we were already planning to be in the area, we though "why not?" We tried to stay away from the hot spots during 10:30-3:00, by touring other perimeters which are usually pleasant. But still, late in the afternoon, hordes of people were assembled everywhere. Exiting the Old Faithful exists was like leaving a rock concert. I think admission should be limited in peak season.

Unfortunately this visit too crowded. Campgrounds rather uninteresting. Love the beauty, history. There is no place I'd rather eat breakfast than Old Faithful Inn.

Upon entering from the East seeing in rapid succession a bison, an eagle, and a heron within the first three minutes, we knew we had arrived in a place of natural splendor.

Vastness and beauty of the park.

Very scenic.

Viewing Bison and other wildlife in the park.

Viewing bison in Lamar Valley.

Viewing bison on the road walking right next to our car.

Viewing Grizzly Bears in Hayden Valley, we have seen grizzlies 4 out of our last 5 years. On 7/6/15, viewed and photographed a grizzly sow and 2 cubs on a very fresh and this was my best experience in the park to date.

Viewing the lower falls at the brink.

Visited Norris Geyser Basin early morning, before hordes of other tourists with selfie sticks. Walked around black basin, and as we traveled, we came upon Vixen Geyser erupting right beside the boardwalk path. It spit streams of water high into the air and the clouds of steam catching the morning sun. We watched this for several minutes, until the water suddenly ceased. The water pooled on the surface and drained away in a matter of seconds.

Visited park as a teen. With husband I extolled Mammoth only to find and the geology has changed! We still enjoy our visits!

Visiting as many geysers possible during 1 day only. Finishing with waiting for old faithful to "empty" at the end of the day.

Visiting on a cool morning and seeing the steam rise from the ground was very inspiring. The upper and lower falls is magnificent.

Visiting Shoshone geyser and not having hundreds of people there at the same time.

Visiting the park and camping when I was 12 years old.

Visiting the park with grandparents circa 1955

Visiting Yellowstone with my grandfather as a young child. He would feed the black bears out the car window. We would also watch the bears at the dump.

Visiting Yellowstone with very good friends and the young children. Seeing awe and amazement of children when surrounded by nature in all her glory.

Visiting YNP in January 1989 after the fire. Clearly the best of our 4 visits.

Waking to find 5 elk grazing about 20 feet from our tent.

Waking up before the sun rises to experience the sunrise, twilight, and the animals at dawn, and no crowd. Being up early enhances the experiences of the park.

Walking around some of the boardwalks at different geyser basins.

Walking Geyser Hill with our two children and all experiencing Lion Geyser erupts as we approached. A truly "wow" experience for all of us.

Walking into a misty woodland at first light (with a guide of course).

Walking with my boyfriend on a trail and the scenery being amazing. I was thinking I wanted to live out here and it felt amazing with the cool air and intense sun. We were on some sand and rocks on the beach of the big lake, walking and (attempting) to do impressions of accents from all different countries.

Was able to see a wolf/grizzly encounter in Lamar valley. I came to YNP exclusively to observe wolves after a 5 year boycott of WY and MT because of the aggressive wolf hunting policies. I came this time only because my friend wanted to see wild wolves. We spent thousands of dollars in the area (and in the park) but it is time the policy makers understand wolves are worth more to the economy alive rather than dead. I am sickened that wolves can be lured out of the park with calls to be hunted.

Was able to see Old Faithful erupt.

Was one of the most enjoyable, relaxing vacations we had in a long time. Needed more than 2 days there though. The scenery and wildlife were outstanding.

Was surprised at the number of geysers to see

Watching 2 bears and 2 wolves for 2 hours at Hayden valley and Grand Prismatic hot springs.

Watching a grizzly bear circling a bison from a bear/bison jam.

Watching a grizzly bear nearby eating, and given an opportunity to make beautiful photographs.

Watching a grizzly eating plants (mainly onion roots) at the Chittenden road junction.

Watching a pack of wolves running across Lamar Valley

Watching an idiot stop his car on the grand loop and exit the car to approach a bear on the other side of the road. He didn't pull over but blocked the lane with his car and then occupied the opposite lane. Luckily the bear ignored him and loped away.

Watching and getting a picture of wolves.

Watching and not seeing black bear and 2 cubs from road in bear jam for 45 minutes without being yelled at by Ranger Police.

Watching bison and bears, scenic drivers

Watching bison swim across the river.

Watching black bear cubs playing with their brothers and sisters.

Watching bear eat an elk carcass

Watching geysers erupt after a long wait.

Watching geysers for the first time. Breathtaking canyons! Watching grizzlies!

Watching my 8 year old grandson as he watched old faithful.

Watching my daughter watch wildlife. Could grow up to be a biologist.

Watching my kids enjoying the park, geysers, and wildlife!

Watching my two sons see YNP for their first time. Enjoying the campsite and not having cell service. It was nice to not be interrupted by digital devices and the kids got to be kids, like the good old days. They found rocks and sticks and used their imaginations. They did not want to leave.

Watching Old Faithful and the geysers in the park.

Watching old faithful was my first connection to the park. After watching that everything else seemed to come to life for me.

Watching Old Faithful with the kids 15 years ago. Waiting on the fences and then their excitement seeing her blow.

Watching the amazement on my children's faces as they first saw a bison and some of the geothermal sites.

Watching the Beehive Geyser go off unexpectedly. Watching a mother elk and her fawn cross the road. Watching Lower Falls from Artist's Point.

Watching the bison and their babies.

Watching two wolves and two bears all going to eat off a bison or elk carcass near the Yellowstone River in Hayden valley.

Watching wildlife and geysers.

Watching wolves and grizzly bears. Meeting people from all over the world and sharing our knowledge of Yellowstone. Showing visitors wolves and bears and seeing their excitement.

Watching wolves chase a cow elk. "Beoust" their cubs, both black and grizzly

Waterfalls, hiking, wildlife

Way too many people at old faithful!

Way too many people, it's so different today.

We (wife and I) came to YNP on our honeymoon 23 years ago. We remember how awe inspiring nature can be. Seeing firsthand how natural disasters (fires, earthquakes) shape and frame a landscape. We told each other that we would bring our kids here and show them things that they cannot experience at home here in Ohio. We took them here and their eyes were open widely. We made memories that cannot be duplicated, but rather appreciated. You could sense their excitement and awe. The older I get the appreciation and perspective changes.

We are addicted to this amazing landscape. We save yearly to complete a trip to Yellowstone and Teton and Glacier National Park. All are extremely important to us and the break that kept us going. Hiking these areas is unbelievable. Encountering wildlife and the scenery are good for the soul. It just gets better and better.

We are from Florida. Will try again to see the wolffies again. I did my best to not spend money in the states that want to hunt wolves.

We came to Yellowstone on our Honeymoon. August 1st and were able to get a room without a reservation at Canyon.

We didn't reserve a campsite this trip (it was a semi last minute trip), so it was a mad dash to find a camp spot. Thankfully, we did!

We didn't see any wolves. We saw all other animals. We were in the park for 3 days.

We didn't see much wildlife like bear, moose, elk, and deer.

We don't frequently seek out NPs because of the crowds. We prefer to enjoy nature without a lot of people. Because we live in a low population place, we DO enjoy nature and our activities (hiking) most of the time not seeing other people. We realize NPs attract crowds. Many people do not live close to nature, so they want to connect with nature wherever they can. Nature is a gift we all need.

We drove from Glacier NP and loved the beautiful scenery. We were especially looking forward to seeing the wildlife and photographing everything. We did get to see a black bear the first day which was exciting. In Lamar Valley we saw a grizzly digging and a wolf eating a carcass. I also loved our hikes and seeing different birds, we stayed in the park we also loved driving around Yellowstone Lake.

We got to see a mama grizzly and her baby this trip!

We have been to YNP 3 years in a row, and have reservations already for 2016. This year my 13 year old daughter came with us. There was not just one memory it is everything we experience. We love all the wildlife especially the bison! We sat for an hour on several times just watching them. We got up early several mornings to go out looking for wildlife which including seeing the wolves and black pups and another pack of wolves down the road, the black bears and cubs, and grizzlies and cubs. We enjoyed all the geysers, old faithful, mammoth hot springs, the grand canyon at all the lookout points. This year's trip to YNP was the greatest because we got to show our daughter how great it was and she loved it and wants to come back.

We have had experience of the buffalo around our car. Hearing the sounds they make. How they protect their little ones.

We have slipped a boat at Bridge Bay Marina for 30+ years. Every moment of those years has been memorable and wonderful. We hike and love every trail, every tree, and every flower.

We have traveled a lot in the U.S. in a motorhome this was our first trip to Yellowstone Park. We were here 7 days and busy site seems almost every day. We were so impressed with everything we saw from animals to rivers, waterfalls, Grand Canyon of Yellowstone, geysers, and on and on. All ways so beautiful we could stay more days and see something new every day.

We love the fresh air, extraordinary beauty and great opportunity to get off the beaten path. We love the park, but it's not the only beautiful place we visit regularly.

We loved the bears at Mammoth Hot Springs.

We moved to Billings MT in August of 1970 and being from Texas we took the first opportunity before Beartooth Pass closed to drive into the park. As I remember we hit both the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone and the Old Faithful area the first day. That firmly placed in our mind that Yellowstone was an achievable day trip. Over the next 38 years our family continued to go to Yellowstone multiple times a year. This year 2015 our mom (who lives in the Dallas area) insisted on holding her birthday celebration at a Yellowstone Association Cabin with family flying in from around the world.

We remember the scenery, animals, and Old Faithful Inn and Lake Yellowstone and watching Old Faithful erupt.

We saw a bear just in front of our car!

We saw a bear loping across a river.

We set up camp (a tent) at Canyon Village campground in the rain. We rigged a tarp and still managed dinner in a reasonable time over a fire. Pretty big accomplishment since I had not camped for a while and my husband is NOT a camper. He said afterwards that he enjoyed our two nights camping in Yellowstone. I thought the best I would get is that he "endured".

We spotted a bear and also we liked watching geysers.

We stayed at Lake lodges and what I remember most vividly is the sunset and sunrise over the Lake Yellowstone. The lake is truly beautiful with the mountains in the east.

We stayed in a cabin and when we first drove up to the door there were 2 bison within 30 yards of us. We were impressed by the "welcoming committee"

We stopped along the road outside of Mammoth Springs and had a picnic in the field. It was nice getting to experience nature and enjoy God's beautiful creation during a picnic.

We thought this survey would expedite the park entrance instead of it being just a "free for all" make it more efficient. Thought maybe this survey would deal with the lack of camping site problems.

We walked the boardwalks at the Norris geothermals area at 7 am on a very foggy morning. The fog and all the absence of more than a handful of other visitors made the experience extra special!

We wanted to hike but the hiking trails weren't described on the map, and we didn't know how curvy or difficult the trails were where we have [passed] some trailheads by driving. So we didn't hike. It's really sad! In other parks the hiking trails are much more described than in Yellowstone. Although we mostly had good experiences in Yellowstone. The landscapes there are amazing and so beautiful. Wildlife viewing is such an experience, and I haven't had it in my life before. We were on the road, stopped by a group of bison that wanted to cross the road. A bison calf had stopped by our car and licked it. It was so cute and was the last experience of our trip at Yellowstone National Park

We were blessed to see a pack of Yellowstone wolves eating a fresh, young male bison bull. It was shared by an eagle, magpies and coyotes after the wolves lay sleeping and full. Although violent it brought the fragile interconnectedness of all living things within the park and the entire ecosystem that supports it.

We were camping at Mammoth campground on our way to town, we noticed a crowd at the top of the trail and upon inquiring found out a grizzly bear had killed an elk calf on the trail and was feeding on it. This is a trail my husband often uses. Wow! We watched it for a while and just marveled at a sight this was. We have many wonderful memories of YNP but this stands out for us.

We were driving through the Hayden Valley towards the lake. There were so many bison we decided to stop and take pictures. To our left was a body of water. We watched a group of bison on the other side entered the water. Swam across and started running as they came out of the water. It was breathtaking to see how such large animals swam so quickly. In addition to the adults in the group there were a couple little ones. We had never seen bison before going to YNP and knew nothing about these majestic animals. We have since learned quite a bit about them and look forward to our next opportunity to visit Yellowstone.

We were fishing on the Gibbon River in 2014. We were at a bend in the river very close to the Gibbon meadows. It was a beautiful day, the fish were taking our flies and I was fishing and doing photography. My husband looked up and yelled to me to look across the river 25 feet away from us. A beautiful blonde wolf traveled silently through the trees, down to the river, and crossed in front of us. She looked over, slowed down, and just jogged off into the woods. I had time to reach for either my bear spray or my

camera and I stupidly reached for the spray, but did not use it as she was not threatening us or even interested in us. Darn, I could have had a photo!

We were privileged, as a family, to have a good view of, for a good while, a mother black bear and two cubs (small) that were playing on the ground as well as, on a tree trunk.

We were staying at Mammoth Springs and 2 bison walked down in between the hotel and the cottages and grazed on the grass. The ranger said this had never happened before with bison coming so close.

We were up early every morning, drove to a different part of the park and stopped to see animals. We do not have these in the wild in the Georgia. Mid-morning, we found a hiking trail in the area and ate a picnic lunch. In the afternoon we visited a visitor center then headed back to camp to make dinner around the campfire. At dusk we drove around to see more animals. This trip was really about connecting to our family. We have 4 kids aged 8-15 who have very different interests. We wanted to do something to make a memory and venture west.

We've had such a wonderful time. Hiking down to the falls. Down all those steps with an infant strapped to me and a toddler. Hard, but worth the view!

West Thumb Geysers, the lake shore, a beautiful site.

What shocked me most was the beauty of earth if untouched by people.

When driving I came very close to a grizzly and her two cubs. I will always remember that image.

When I saw the grizzly swim across the Lamar River and actually captured it all on film.

When I was a child I visited with my parents and siblings. The wildlife was most memorable.

When I was a child, my family and I came (in the 60's) and we stayed in two of the "cabins", (they weren't big enough for 8). We went to the store so that each of us, kids, could pick out a personal gift. Wow! That was hard, so many choices! I still have the tiny cedar chest with Yellowstone imprinted on it. When I was a kid, I directly remember feeding bears alongside the road. The bears would "beg" for food. Today you don't see this. The last two times I've seen bears they were eating natural food, a much more enjoyable viewing of bears.

When I was a kid, seeing old faithful and bears.

When I was about 10 years old my family visited YNP and stopped for a picnic. We had our lunch spread out on a blanket and enjoying when a bear came into the area. We quickly packed up and were to the car. My glass of chocolate milk did not get picked up and the bear sat down and drank my milk! In my later years I took two backpacking llama trips into Slough Creek had a great time and great memories.

When I was in YNP with my parents in 1995 in the morning, when we walk out of our cabin of the Yellowstone Snow lodge there were about 30-40 bison standing a few meters in front of my cabin. It was an amazing moment that impressed me a lot. These animals are extremely majestic.

When I was little, my family from CA and we would always make day-trips to West Yellowstone and go sight-seeing. Now that I am adult, I do a lot more exploring and visit both the West and North entrances because I live in Bozeman.

When I was young with my family. Remember some geysers and animals also crying, oh well.

When I went in the 50s as a kid, we always saw and fed the bears.

When my husband and I first traveled through Yellowstone, we had no idea the beauty that it held. We decided that we would travel through on our way back from touring the West Coast on our "road trip" honeymoon. As we just celebrated our 20 year anniversary, we again for the fifth time came to YNP. We have enjoyed sharing this park with our kids. Yellowstone is so much more than Old Faithful. We love it! It's my favorite place on the planet. Our whole family desired to live near there so we can enjoy it frequently.

When our family first spotted a herd of bison and a bald eagle in the Lamar Valley. We immediately pulled out at a pullout in the road and got our spotting scope out to get a better look. Later we realized we hadn't made it yet to the Lamar Valley, a few more miles and corners and were driving amongst the bison. Incredible, a moment we won't soon forget.

When we first arrived we realized the traffic was horrible! A lot of people don't use the pullouts and are not aware of their surroundings perhaps. If there was a limit on the number of people in the park the scenery could be better enjoyed.

When we got to the hot springs in Mammoth I remembered taking a picture in the exact same location when I was younger. Then I tried to recreate the photo so I could compare them over the years. Hopefully I can recreate it in another five years.

When we visit we talk about how many people and how rude they are.

When we were driving, a mother and cub grizzly were right next to our car on our first day in the park. We got to watch as they played in the water and ran around.

When we were younger, we took hikes "off the beaten path"

While driving in Hayden Valley we stopped behind a long line of cars and watched a bison walking on the road in the oncoming lane. I took a photo of him looking at me as he walked past our car.

While driving in the northeast part of the park, we saw herds of bison roaming the plains. Was an amazing site to see!

While hiking, we saw elk very close to where we were. Then they crossed the path we were on.

While taking a Yellowstone Association class we watched wolves for 3 hours early one morning. Then later we had a talk from someone in the Wolf Project telling us about the wolves we watched.

While visiting Yellowstone in the winter one year, it began to snow. It snowed every day we were there, and every day, I didn't think the park could get more beautiful. The next day after more snow, it was more beautiful.

While we were in Yellowstone we saw a mama black bear and her two cubs. Thoroughly enjoyed watching them.

Wildlife and the recovery from the fires.

Wildlife encounters!

Wildlife in Lamar Valley, bison and antelope.

Wildlife up close, elk, bison, on names in visitor center.

Wildlife viewing especially the bison, eagles, osprey grizzly and elk

Wildlife viewing.

Wildlife viewing.

Wildlife watching trip (commercial) in 2000 or 2001. Left from Jackson, drove through Idaho to West entrance. Saw lots of baby bison on the way to Old Faithful in May. Drove to Lamar Valley, watched wolves, elk, coyotes and saw a bear. Overnight in Silver Gate or Cooke City. More watching the next day then back home to Jackson.

Wildlife, Geysers - Awesome scenery!

Wildlife, interesting and changing landscape

Wildness, free space, what the first man that saw the park felt like me.

Winter snowmobile trip.

With every visit to the park I find I love it more and more. Seems there is always something new to discover.

Within first five minutes saw a bald eagle on a stump next to a river. 5 to 10 minutes later drove past 3 buffaloes and 10 to 15 later witnessed two male elk sparring.

Witness to a female grizzly bear with 2 cubs.

Wolf watching in Lamar - howling both sides of the road then watching wolves greet each other in a tumbling ball of wolves. Showing college students (when I'm teaching) these sorts of "national geo" experiences and having Rick McIntyre then talk to them, very powerful.

Worked summer concessionaire job for many summers in the 1980s. Too many memories to pick just one. Oh wait. August '86 or '87 drove to Firehole Lake. Drive during Perseid Meteor shower put sleeping bags on the asphalt near White Dome Geyser and watched the meteor shower. Fun!

Working in Yellowstone as a summer employee during my college years. An amazing summer experience with lots of hiking, campfires, and swimming in the Firehole River and observing wildlife all around the Old Faithful area.

YA wildlife photography class. Taught much about wildlife, photography, the park, and ethics! I now want to become a volunteer

Years spent camping at fishing bridge with family. Mother's ashes are spread in the area.

Yellowstone Institute 14 times

Yellowstone is a step back to a simpler time, before the white man came with all their barbed wire. Nothing compares to seeing nature in the wild - exciting and dangerous place to visit with geological dangers, volcanic and wildlife danger. Would very much appreciate an orientation to city folks and foreigners about safety- around above mentioned dangers.

Yellowstone is an absolutely unique place that has to be visited at least once in a lifetime. I got amazed by watching bison and geysers. The mountains of different colors and shapes are also impressive. Yellowstone is very beautiful!

Yes, being the park is so vast in size; the changing types of land, water, etc. are still amazing!

YNP is one of the four most enjoyable places we visit.