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### Outdoor recreation in the Winter of a Pandemic

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# Outdoor Recreation in the Winter of a Pandemic

Joshua C. Cobb, Cali Caughie, Dr. Stuart Hall



## Introduction

- A pandemic has the ability to affect lives from many different perspectives. The COVID-19 pandemic has altered the way people live, learn, and interact with one another; and it will create new social patterns reaching across virtually all platforms.
- Most research has been focused on the pathology and medical aspects about the disease, however, sociological and psychological aspects in terms of recreation will be impacted.
- Previous research indicates that outdoor recreation decreased in enthusiasts primarily in those who lived in urban clusters (Rice et al., 2020).
- There has yet to be data on how the pandemic has affected outdoor recreation in the winter season.
- A change in sociological habits in recreation have the ability to affect the frequency of recreation, the safety of recreators, and the industry that are dependent on revenue from tourism.
- Destination ski areas such as Whitefish set a record in the 2019-2020 winter season with 380,000 total skiers recreating.
- Understanding these effects is important on both individual and macroscale levels. Indeed, the data supports that resorts and communities dependent on tourism may see a decrease in commerce. Further, as recreationists find new places to recreate, safety concerns may increase.

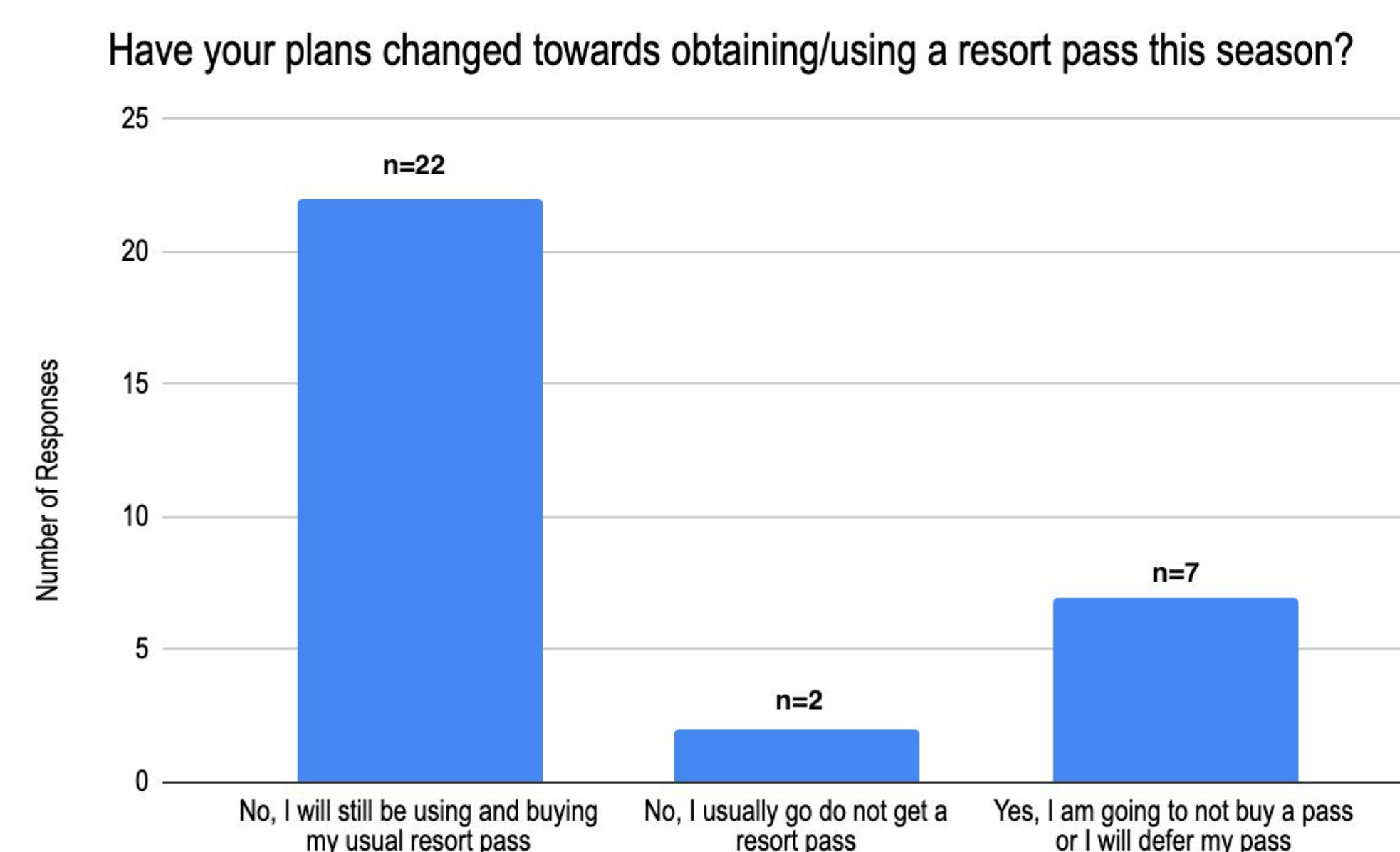
## Hypotheses

- Winter Outdoor Recreators will be affected by the pandemic at different rates depending on the region of the United States in which they reside.
- A majority of participants that usually recreate at a resort will find other routes of recreation due to the pandemic.
- The pandemic will cause people to recreate at different locations, going into more isolated regions of the outdoors.

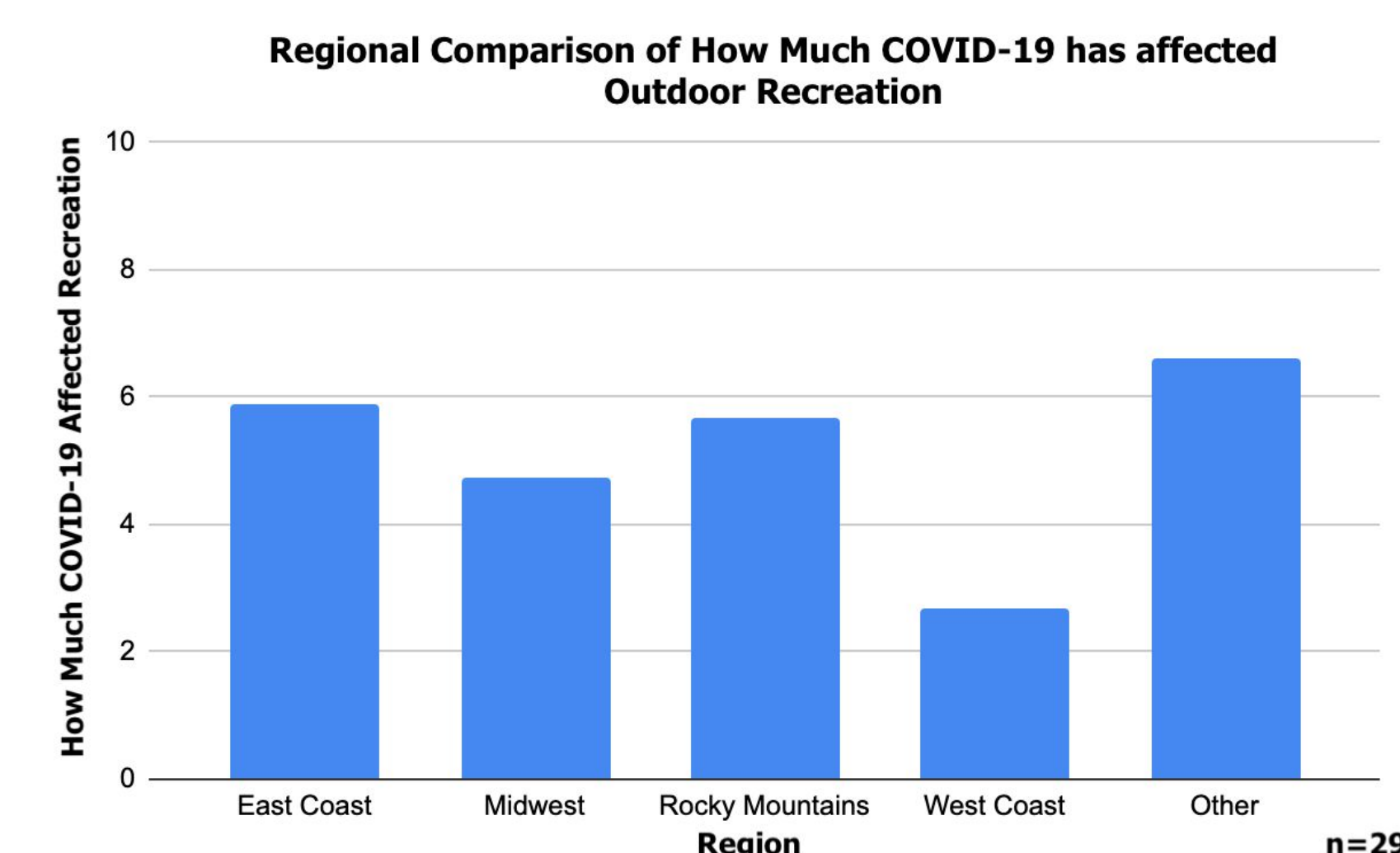
## Methods & Materials

- Participants n=30 were adults (18+) years of age and members of a popular online outdoor recreation forum.
- Participants were then directed to take a short, 15 question survey about their trends of winter recreation this past season as well as demographic data using the online survey website Qualtrics.
- Data was compiled and analyzed using Qualtrics statistical software.

## Results

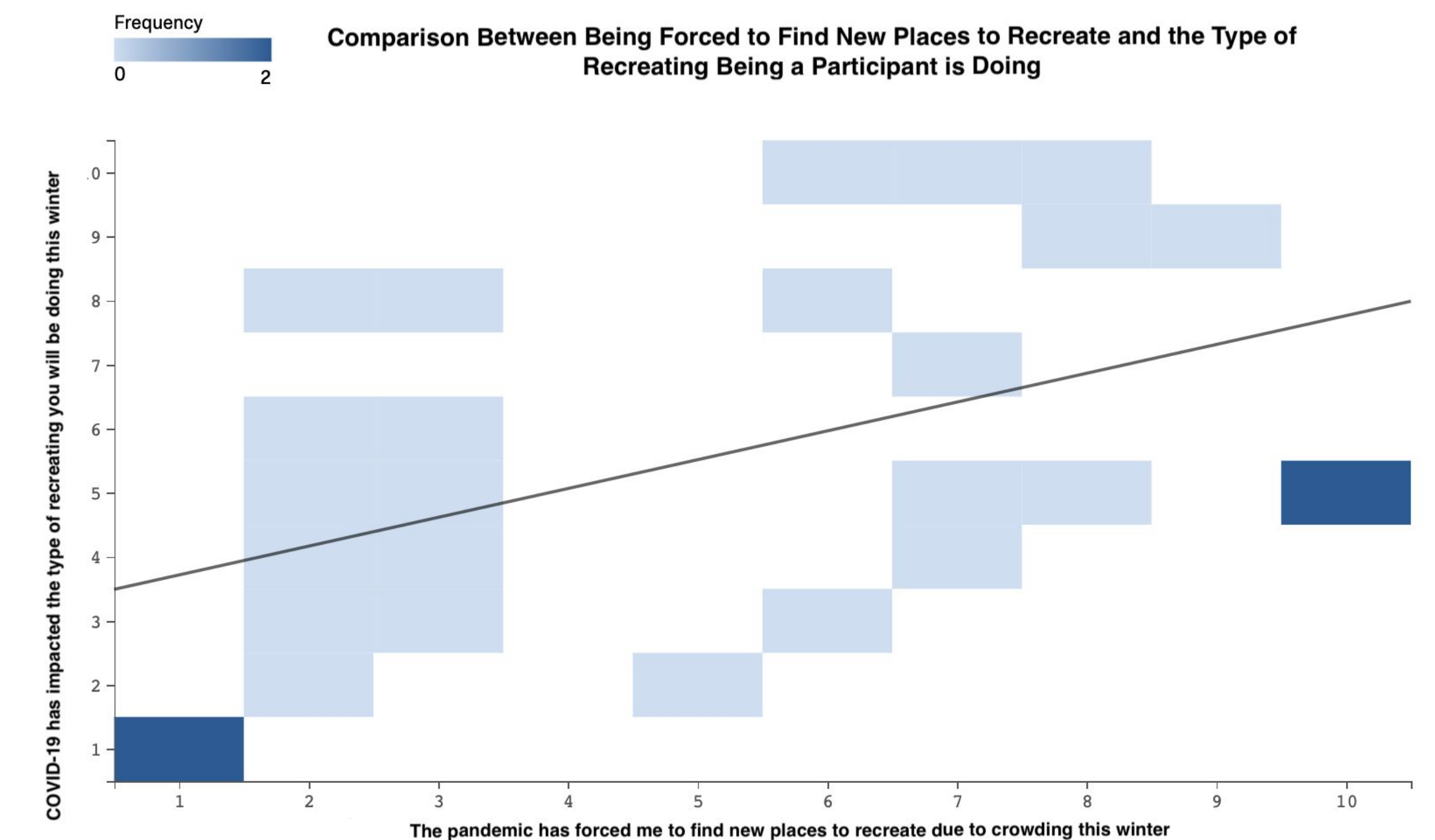


- Changing plans towards obtaining a resort pass this season 22.6% are expecting to not buy/use a pass that they previously would have.



- Regional significant differences in how much COVID-19 affected outdoor recreation. Those in different regions had varying responses how much COVID-19 has affected their winter recreation.

Ranked ANOVA: P = 0.0384 Effect Size (Cohen's f) = 0.508



- There is significance shown between the amount that COVID-19 has affected the type of recreation a recreator would be doing during the winter season and being forced to find new places to recreate.

Unpaired t-test P = 0.0132 Effect Size (Pearson's R = 0.471)

## Conclusions

- The results demonstrate that the pandemic affected how people recreate. These trends may yield a variety of effects seen across disciplines.
- 22.6% of people who would usually get a ski pass will forgo obtaining or not use their ski pass this season. A decrease in those buying a ski pass will cause tourism based recreation to decrease as well and communities will have less revenue towards these areas.
- There was significance found in the relationship the the type of recreation and recreators being forced to find different areas to recreate. The relationship causes safety concern for those that travel in the backcountry and are going towards more isolated regions to recreate.
- East Coast Recreators are significantly more affected than West Coast recreators when compared to each other P = 0.0384. The difference seen between the recreators maybe be due to differences in legislation, where East Coast Skiers had more stringent legislation compared to that of West Coast Skiers.