Continued longitudinal analysis of avid outdoor recreationists during the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has altered outdoor recreation behaviors in the United States for over one year. In an effort to continue gathering timely and relevant data on national outdoor recreation patterns, the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics and its academic partners, The Pennsylvania State University and The University of Montana, conducted a four-phase, year-long study to offer guidance to land managers, recreation providers, and outdoor enthusiasts across the United States. The information contained here details key findings from this final phase, occurring one year into the pandemic. By comparing results from April 2020 (Phase 1) and April 2021 (Phase 4), we provide a longitudinal perspective of how avid outdoor recreationists’ reported behaviors and perspectives are evolving with the ever-changing pandemic.

Avid outdoor recreationists are pursuing activities significantly more often, in larger groups, and at further distances.

No significant differences between frequency of outdoor recreation based on respondent’s community type.

April 2020 data demonstrated significant disparities between frequent outdoor recreation by respondent’s community type. Respondents living in urban areas participated in outdoor recreation significantly less than those living in rural communities (see Rice, Mateer, et al., 2020). Data from April 2021 suggest that these differences no longer exist.

Post-pandemic, expect that avid outdoor recreationists will participate more, change type, travel further, and utilize more local public lands to recreate.

When the World Health Organization officially announces the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, avid outdoor recreationists indicate that they will...