

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.

48 Hrs.

Data collected over a two-day period beginning April 8th, focused on recreation trends as of April 2021, compared with April 2020 results.

803

Respondents

Phase 4

Data collected 393 days since pandemic declared by World Health Organization



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

Respondents reported participating in outdoor recreation 5.03 per week in April 2021, compared to 4.77 in April 2020*.

APRIL 2020	APRIL 2021
4.77 Times Per Week	5.03 Times Per Week

Respondents reported traveling further to pursue outdoor recreation in April 2021 (2.78 miles) compared to 1.96 miles in April 2020.



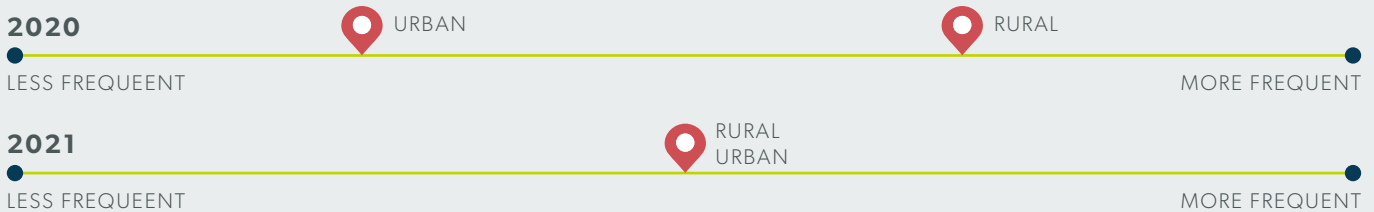
Average group size for outdoor recreation activities increased from 1.85 in April 2020 to 2.64 in April 2021*.

APRIL 2020	APRIL 2021
1.85 People	2.64 People



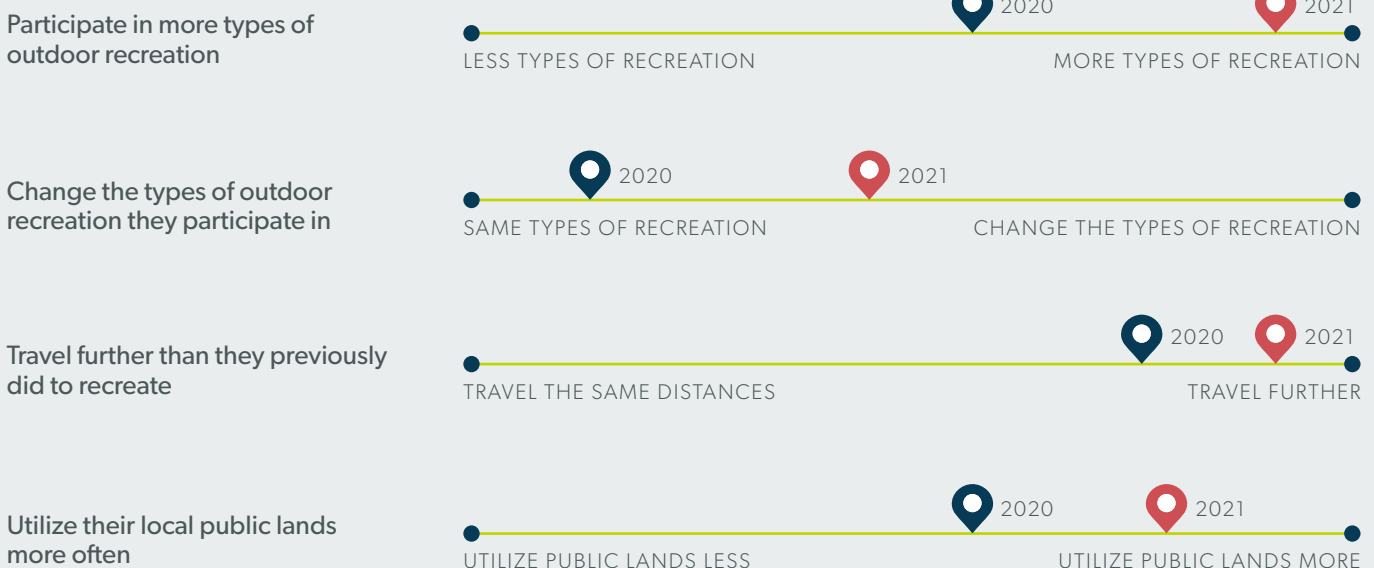
No significant differences between frequency of outdoor recreation based on respondent's community type.

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...



Learn more at lnt.org/research-resources/leave-no-trace-covid-19-research

See full results at doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/p3yqg

For more information contact Ben Lawhon at the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics (ben@LNT.org) or Dr. Derrick Taff at The Pennsylvania State University (bdt3@psu.edu).

Authors: William L. Rice¹, Ben Lawhon², B. Derrick Taff³, Tim Mateer³, Nathan Reigner³, and Peter Newman³ (¹The University of Montana, Department of Society and Conservation; ²Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics; ³The Pennsylvania State University Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Management)

*Statistically significant at a 95% confidence interval



Recreation, Park, and
Tourism Management

