# Sisters Visitor Opportunities Study

Survey Results

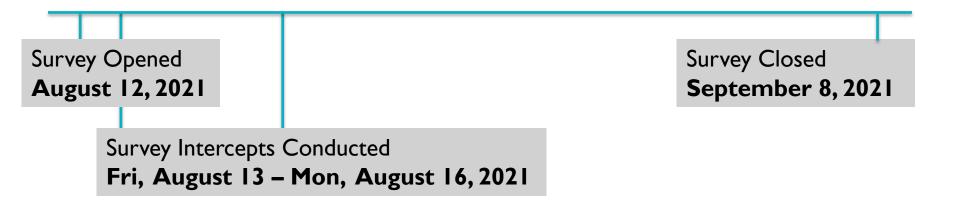




#### Survey Summary

### ECONorthwest ECONOMICS • FINANCE • PLANNING

#### Survey Dates



- Intercept sites included:
  - Local restaurants and shops (Three Creeks Brewery, Sisters Coffee, Sisters Bakery)
  - Trails, trailheads and rec sites (Peterson Ridge, Wychus Creek, Three Creek Lake, Suttle Lake)
  - Black Butte Ranch and Camp Sherman
- Online distribution via email lists and social media:
  - Creekside Campground, Sisters Folk, Quilt Festival, others

#### Survey Card





#### Survey Preview

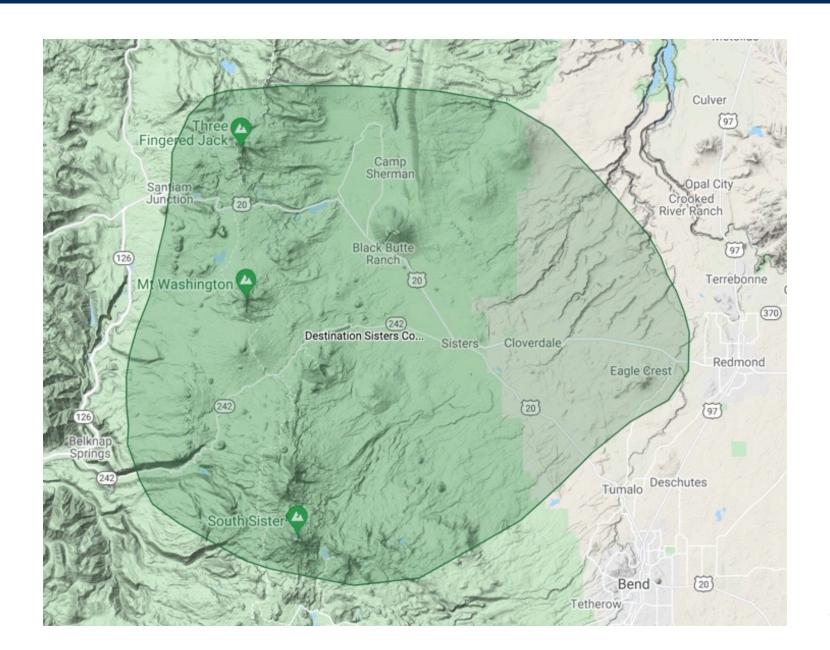


#### **Sisters Visitor Opportunities Study**

#### Trip Overview

- 1. Are you:
- A permanent resident of the Sisters area (Sisters, Black Butte, Camp Sherman)
- A temporary or seasonal resident of the Sisters area
- A visitor to the Sisters area

#### "Sisters Area"



#### Survey Response Rates

Total respondents: 1,470

Total collected on-site: 259

Total collected online: 1,211

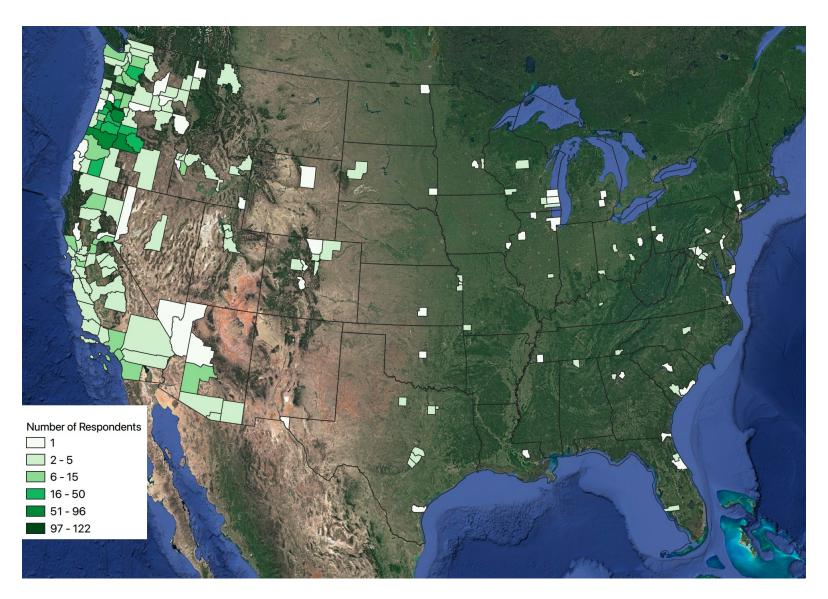
Incomplete surveys: (207)

Total completed surveys: 1,263

#### **Notes and Caveats:**

- Majority of respondents were from events (folk festival, quilt show) and Creekside CG.
- Survey includes visitors to Sisters within previous 3 years.
- Visitor characteristics and motivations for festival, event, and campground visitors are different. Results from both the on-site only and full surveys are presented here.

#### Where Did Respondents Visit From?



#### Survey Respondents by State/County

#### Total Responses by State/Region

Oregon:	721
Washington:	171
California:	140
Other western states:	90
Midwest:	34
South:	26
East:	24

#### Top 5 counties:

- Multnomah County (122)
- Clackamas County (96)
- Deschutes County (80)
- Washington County (73)
- Lane County (58)



#### Survey Results



#### Key Findings: Overall Summary

Visitors to Sisters are in general **highly satisfied** with their experience, but we find several key areas for improving visitor experience and encouraging repeat visits.

<u>Visitor profile</u>: Visitors tend to be <u>older</u>, traveling <u>without children</u>, on <u>3-4 night destination vacations</u> staying <u>with friends/family or vacation rentals</u>.

<u>Most popular activities</u>: Restaurants, hiking, shopping, breweries, and visiting parks/natural areas are the most <u>popular activities</u>.

<u>Recreation sites</u>: McKenzie Pass/Santiam Pass Scenic Byway, Suttle Lake/Scout Lake, Three Sisters Wilderness, Smith Rock, Black Butte and Metolius River are the most popular recreation sites.

<u>Most important factors for visiting: Scenic beauty, relaxation, and local dining</u> were rated <u>most important factors</u> to visitors when deciding whether or not to visit.

<u>What visitors disliked</u>: <u>Traffic</u>, <u>lack of availability of restaurants and accommodations</u>, and <u>affordability</u> were among main complaints deterring people from visiting the area more.

<u>What visitors liked</u>: Restaurants/food, scenic beauty, events, and time spent with family were most common positive feedback from visitors.

<u>Future visits</u>: Most visitors are <u>likely to return</u> and would plan <u>future visits</u> of **3-5 nights**. Not many are thinking of Sisters for a longer vacation (6+ nights).

Why would they choose not to return? Distance, cost and crowding are among main reasons people would choose not to visit again.

#### On-Site Respondents vs. All Respondents

Note, we assume that on-site surveys provide a more accurate representation of the average visitor to Sisters compared to the online sample, which was heavily weighted towards event and campground visitors. The on-site sample includes visitors intercepted in-person, and those who picked up a survey card at a local business.

In the summary analyses that follow, we use the on-site subsample (n=212) to describe visitor characteristics and activity participation, and the full sample (n=1263) to describe visitor satisfaction, trip planning, and written feedback. Graphic results for both the on-site subsample and full sample are included for each quantitative survey question in this presentation.



#### Section I: Visitor Overview

Visitors primarily stayed in Sisters or Black Butte

Staying with **family and friends** is the most common type of accommodation.

Only 27% of visitors stayed at a hotel, motel or resort.

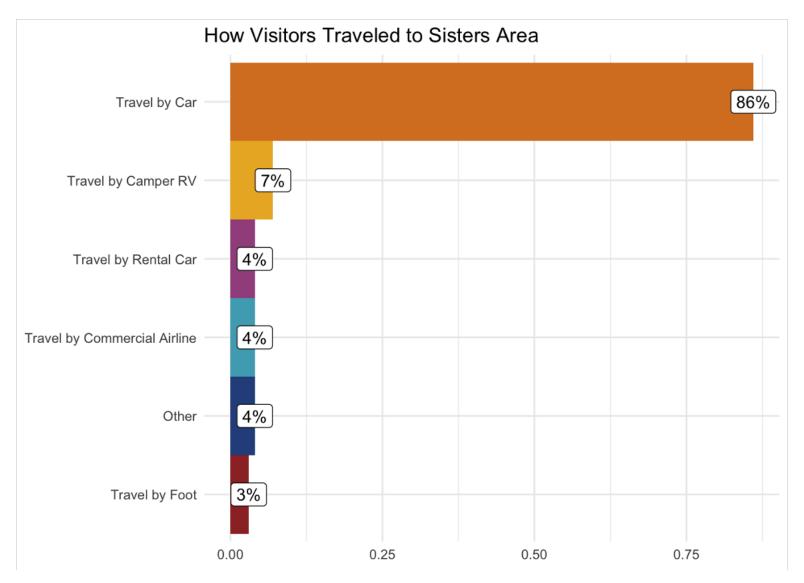
About 25% stayed at a private rental and 20% of visitors camped.

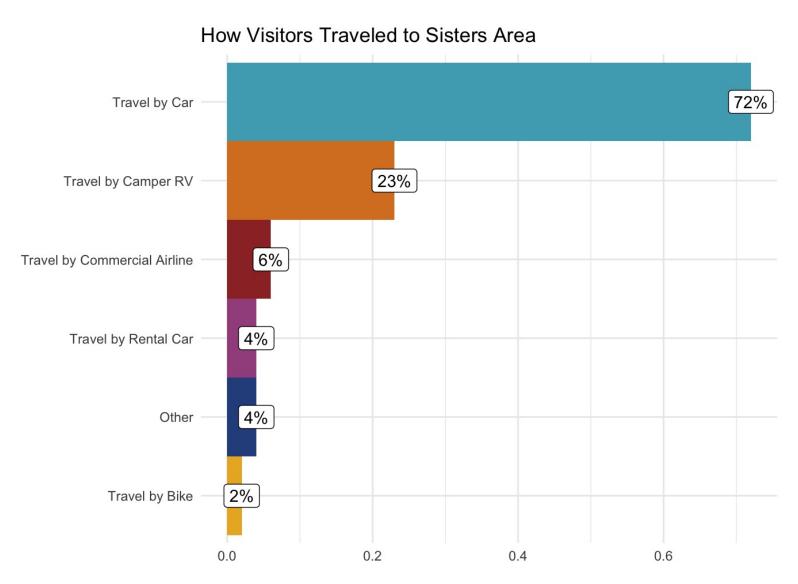
Sisters was a destination trip, rather than a stopover on a trip to another destination for 56% of visitors.

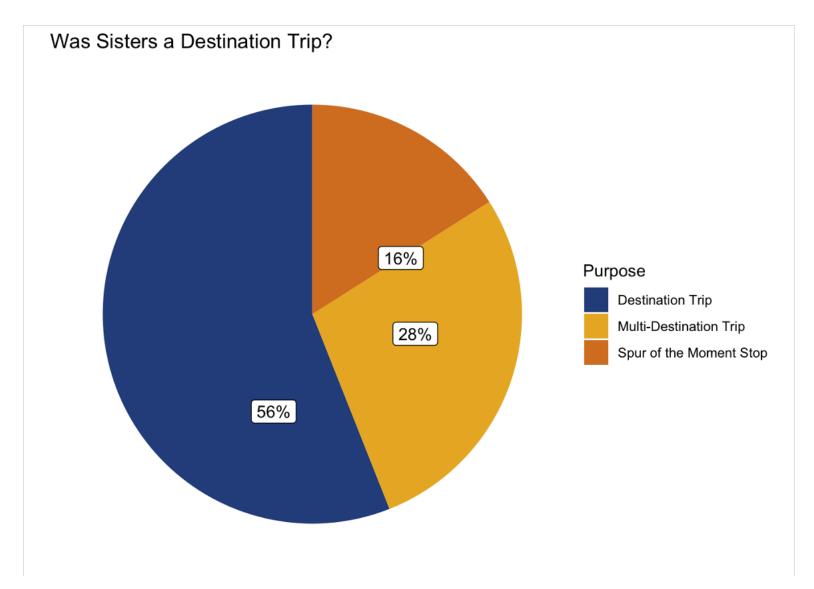
Most travel by car or camper/RV, but other travelers, such as bikers and PCT hikers, are common.

Visitors **tend to be older**, traveling **without children**, on 3 to 4-night vacations.

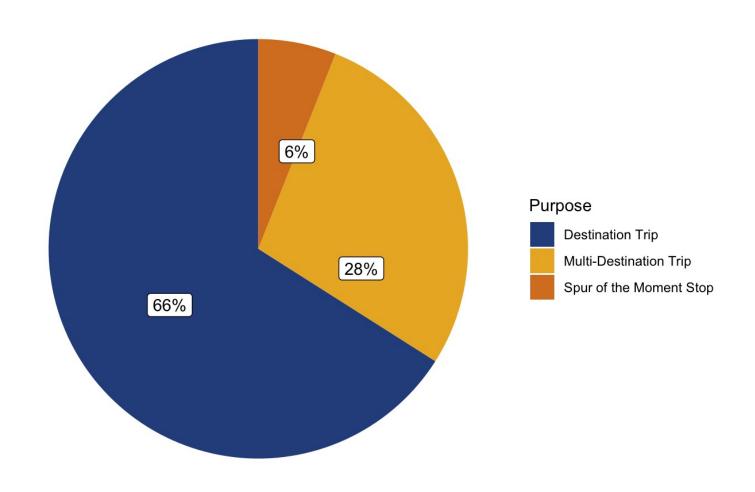
Average Group Size	3.2
Number of Adults	2.6
Number of Children	0.6
Percent of Visitors Traveling with Children	28%
Percent of Visitors on Overnight Trips	71%
Average Length of Overnight Trips	3.8 nights
Percent of Visitors on Day Trips	29%
Average Length of Day Trips	4.6 hours

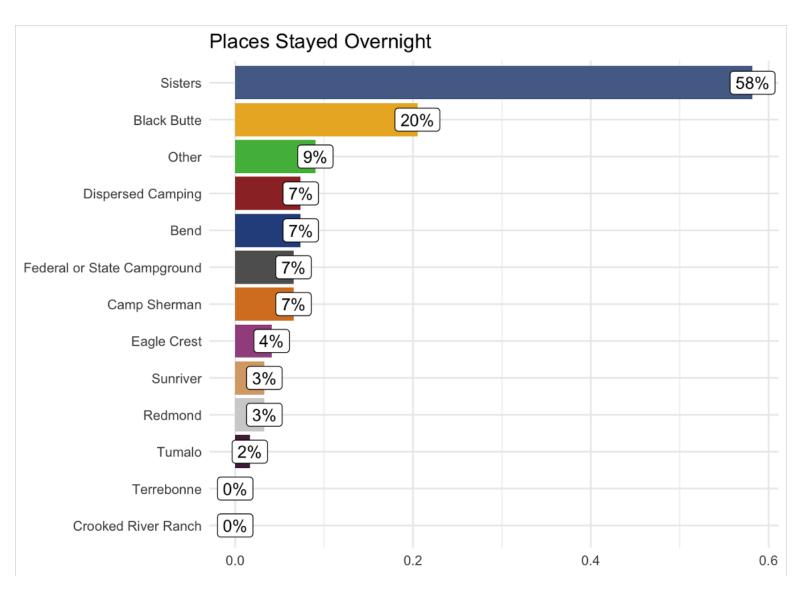


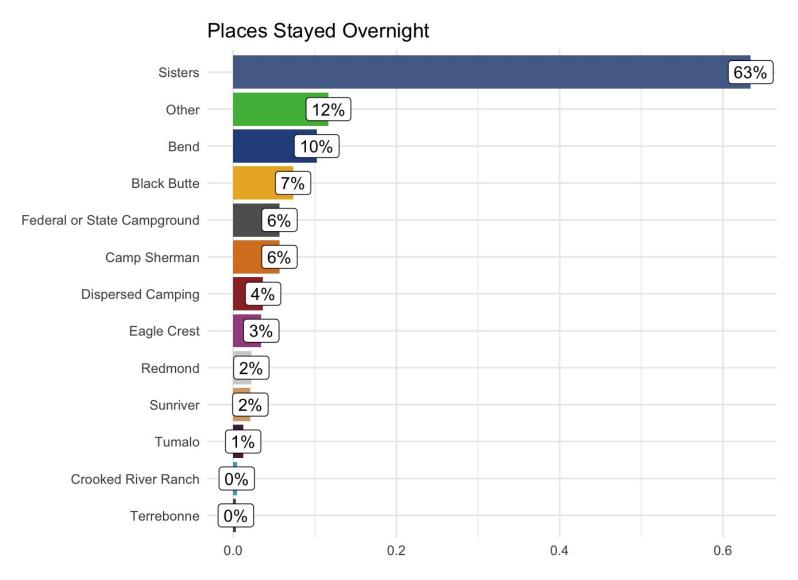


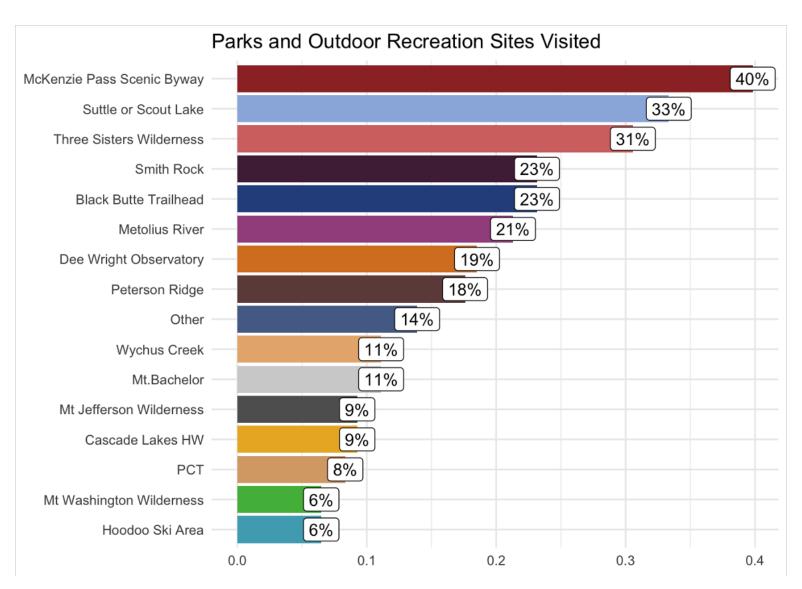


#### Was Sisters a Destination Trip?

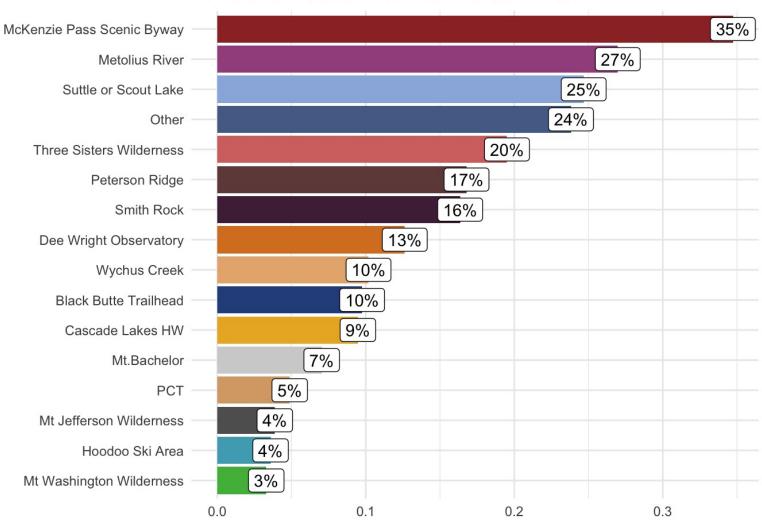


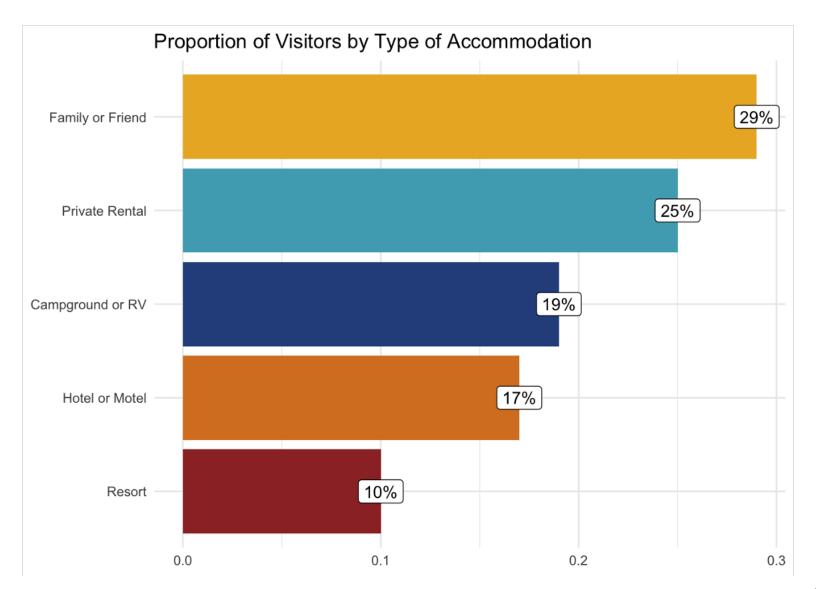


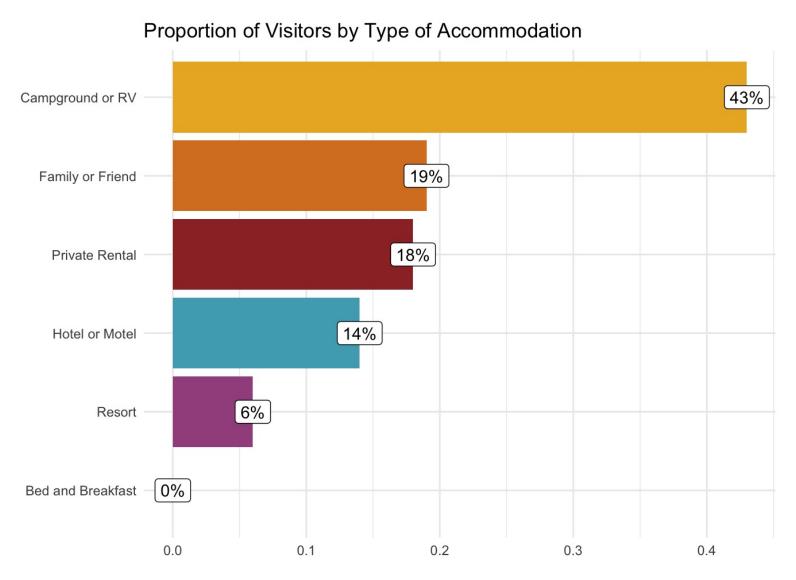


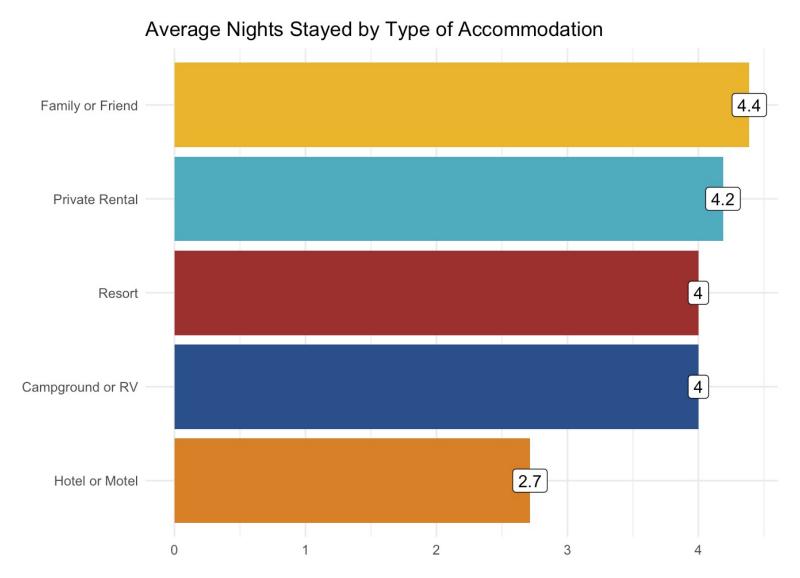


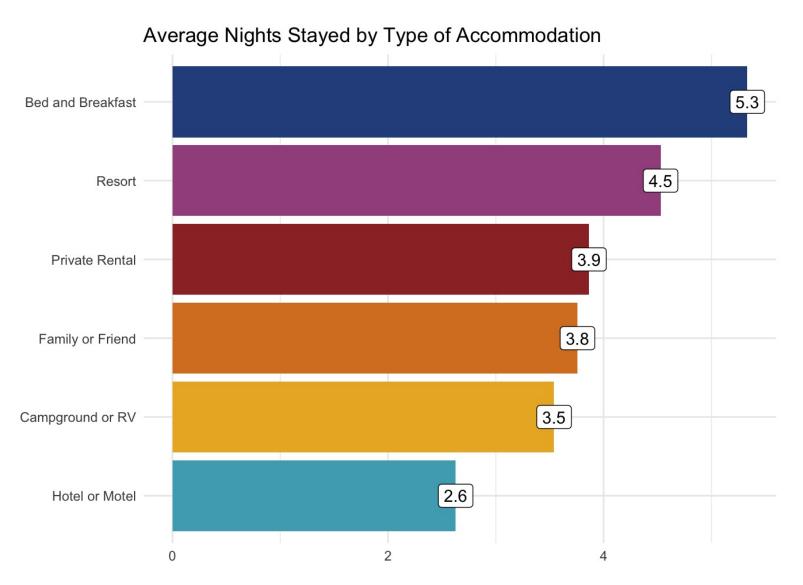
#### Parks and Outdoor Recreation Sites Visited











#### Differences by Visitor Demographics

Low-income visitors (less than \$50,000 household income) were more likely to stay in a campground (36%) than the overall sample (19%).

Low-income visitors took shorter visits to the area (3.3 nights vs. 3.8 night for all respondents).

Nonwhite visitors were more likely to be on day trips (37% vs. 29% for all respondents).

Modes of transportation were similar across all races and incomes.

(Note: statistical significance of differences across groups was not tested.)



## Section II: Visitor Activities and Satisfaction



Primary reasons for visiting Sisters area:

Outdoor Recreation: 45%

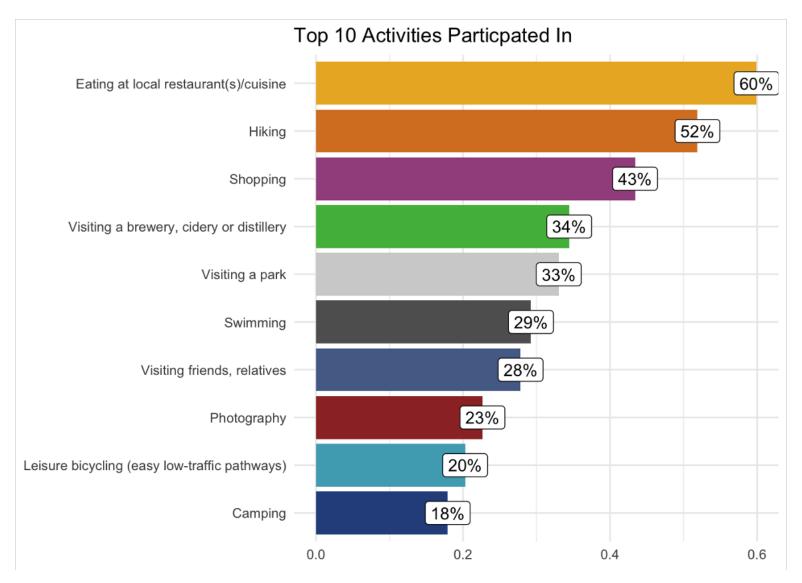
Dining: 23%

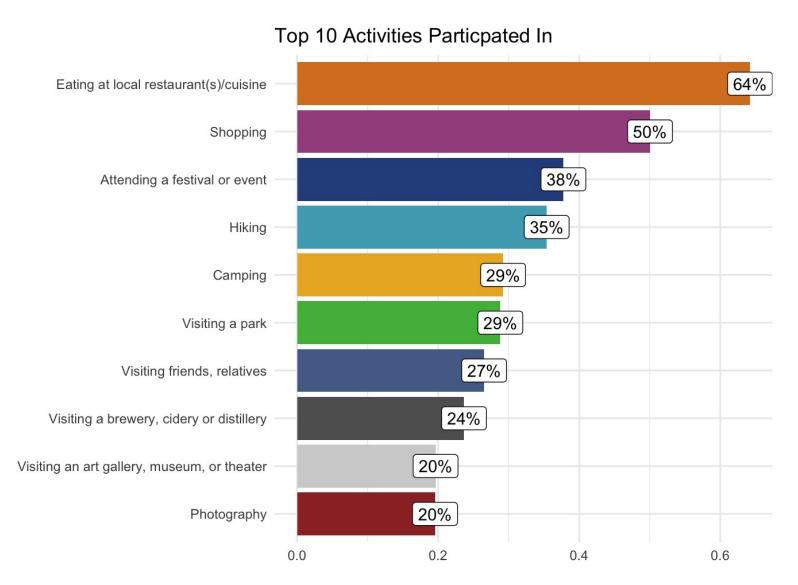
Visit family, friends, relatives: 21%

Festival, event or wedding: 8%

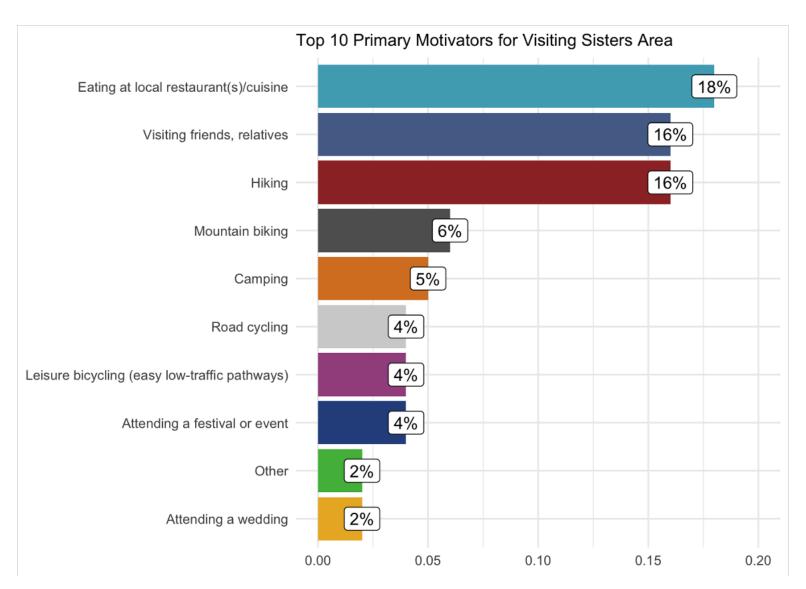
Other: 3%

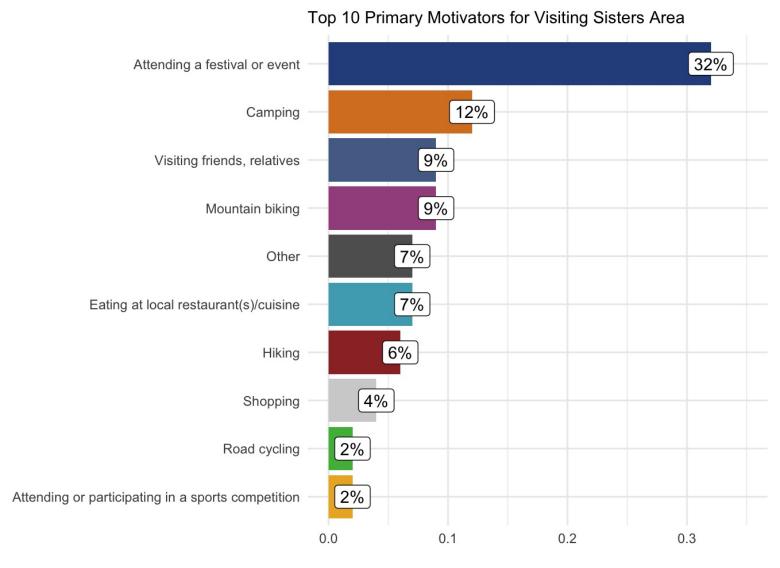
Eating at **local restaurants**, **hiking** and **shopping** are the most common activities.





Activity	Percent
Eating at local restaurant(s)/cuisine	64.2%
Shopping	50.0%
Attending a festival or event	37.8%
Hiking	35.4%
Camping	29.2%
Visiting a park	28.8%
Visiting friends, relatives	26.5%
Visiting a brewery, cidery or distillery	23.7%
Visiting an art gallery, museum, or theater	19.6%
Photography	19.6%
Mountain biking	16.9%
Leisure bicycling (easy low-traffic pathways)	16.2%
Viewing wildlife, geology, and botany	13.9%
Swimming	13.8%
Picnicking Other	13.3% 8.9%
Birdwatching	8.2%
Kayaking/canoeing	8.1%
Fishing	8.0%
Visiting historical sites	7.7%
Visit cultural or heritage sites	7.0%
Road cycling	7.0%
Farmers market	6.7%
Visiting a winery or tasting room	6.7%
Paddleboarding	6.2%
Backpacking	5.7%
Participating in a sports competition	4.7%
Golfing	4.6%
Off highway vehicle driving	4.2%
Running	4.0% 2.8%
Visiting a ranch River rafting	2.8%
Attending a conference or business meeting	2.1%
Taking a guided tour trip	2.1%
Cross country skiing or snowshoeing	1.8%
Horseback riding	1.7%
Downhill skiing/snowboarding	1.7%
Climbing	1.5%
Attending a wedding	1.3%
Geocaching	1.0%
Disc golf	0.8%
Motorized boating	0.7%
Hunting	0.4%
Snowmobiling	0.3%





Primary Activity	Percent
Attending a festival or event	32%
Camping	12%
Visiting friends, relatives	9%
Mountain biking	9%
Other	7%
Eating at local restaurant(s)/cuisine	7%
Hiking	6%
Shopping	4%
Attending or participating in a sports competition	2%
Road cycling	2%
Fishing	1%
Leisure bicycling (easy low-traffic pathways)	1%
Attending a wedding	1%
Photography	1%
Visiting an art gallery, museum or theater	1%
Wildlife / Geology / Botany viewing	1%
Backpacking	1%
Kayaking or canoeing	1%
Swimming	1%
Visiting a brewery / cidery / distillery	1%
Attending conferences and/or business meetings	1%

#### Why did visitors choose to come?

Scenic beauty, relaxation, and local dining were rated **most important factors** to visitors.

#### How satisfied were they?

Satisfaction ratings **exceeded importance ratings for all factors** rated by visitors.

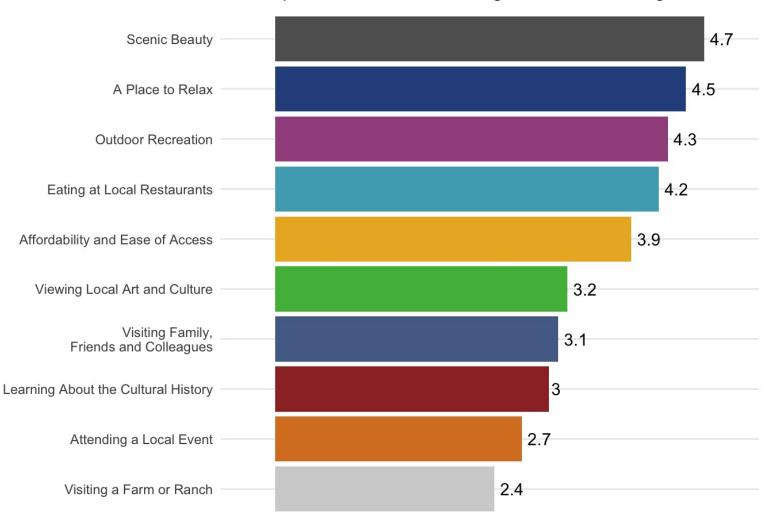
#### **Exceeding expectations:**

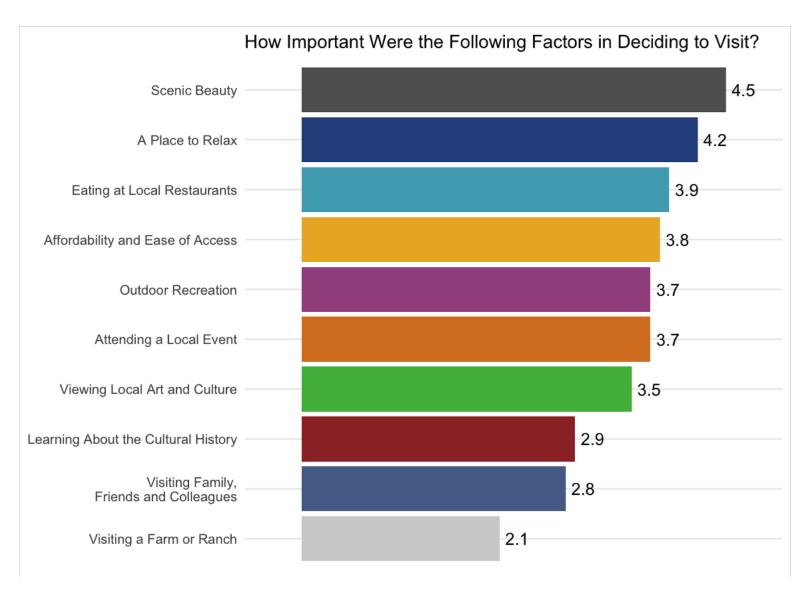
Learning about the **cultural history** of the area, viewing **local art and culture**, and **visiting a farm or ranch** <u>most exceeded</u> the average ratings for importance.

#### Possible room for improvement:

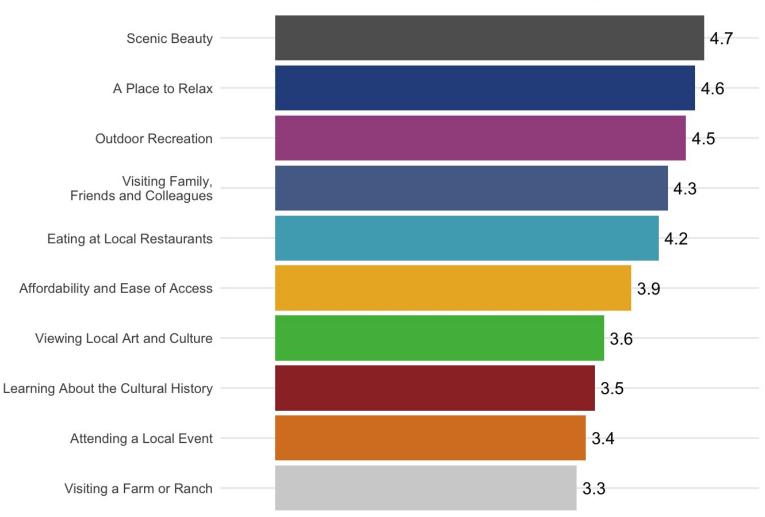
Local **restaurants**, **affordability**, and **outdoor recreation** had the lowest satisfaction rating relative to their importance.

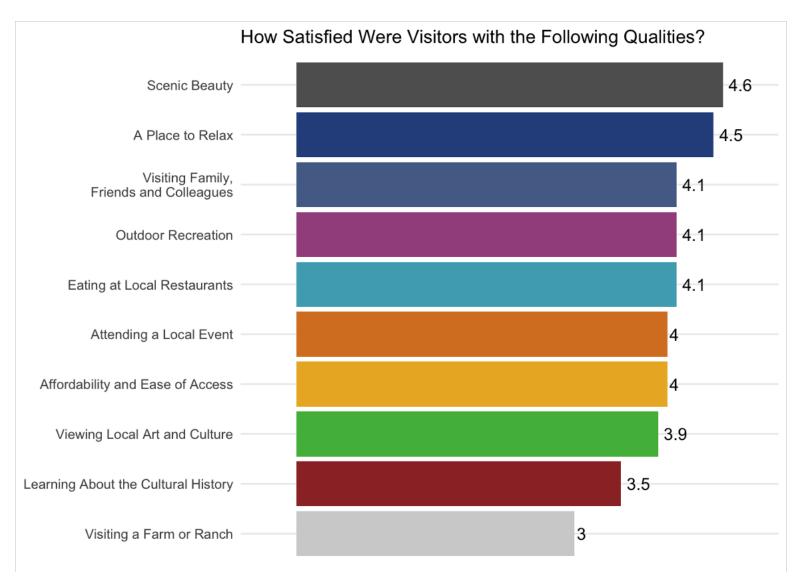
#### How Important Were the Following Factors in Deciding to Visit?

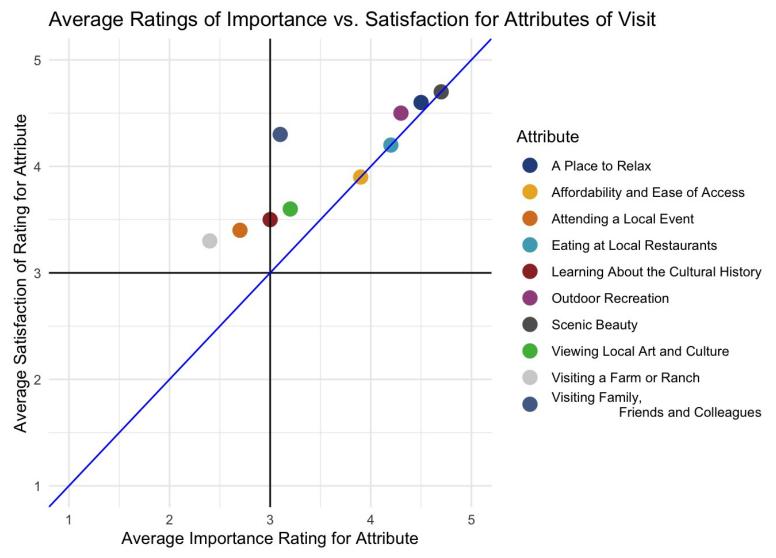




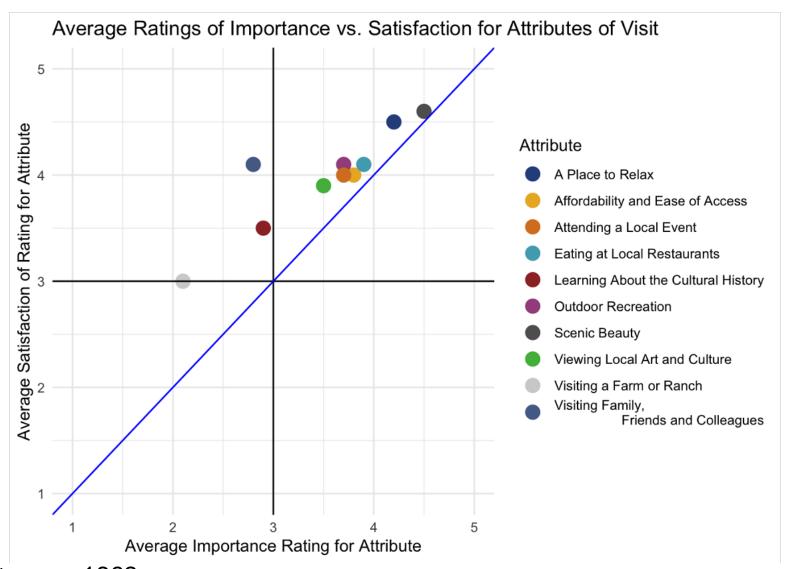
#### How Satisfied Were Visitors with the Following Qualities?







All visitors, n = 212. Note: greater distance above the blue line means visitors were more satisfied with the attribute than how important they rated it.



All visitors, n = 1263. Note: greater distance above the blue line means visitors were more satisfied with the attribute than how important they rated it.

#### Differences by Visitor Demographics

Types of activity participation were similar across races and incomes.

Low-income visitors were more likely to go camping than the overall sample.

Nonwhite visitors were slightly more likely to do shopping and biking, and less likely to go hiking than the overall sample.

SCORP (2018) shows racial minorities have less access to info about outdoor recreation and less exposure to outdoor recreation.

Visitor satisfaction was similar across races and incomes.



# Section III: Trip Planning and Future Visits

Word of mouth and personal experience provided some of the best advertising and information for visitors.

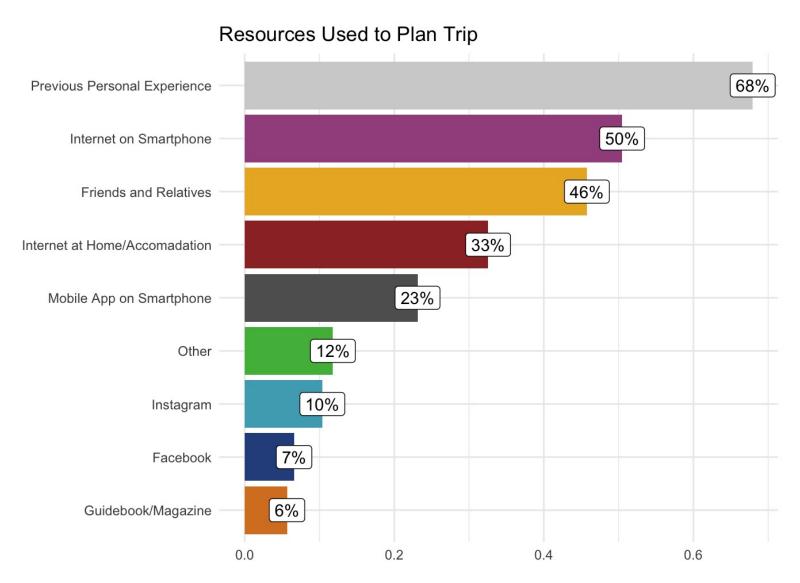
Future visitors were most likely to want to stay 3-5 nights on a future visit. This is what the current average length is (3.8 nights).

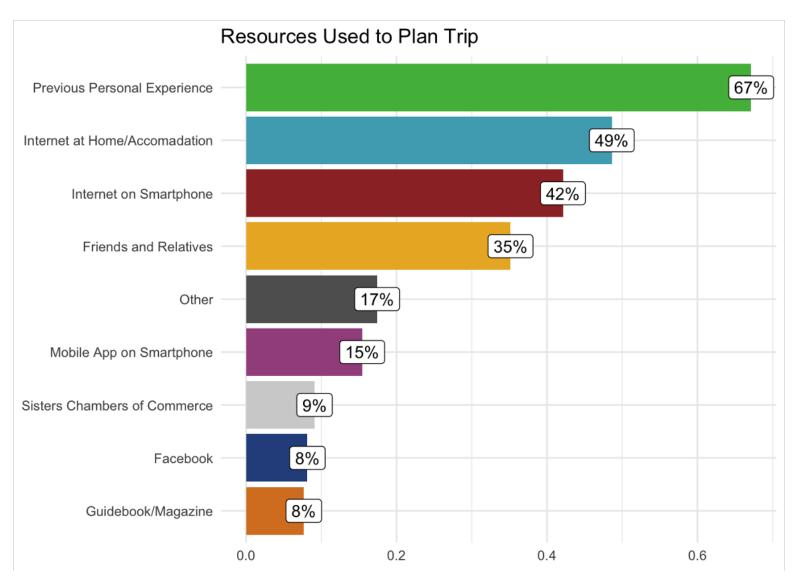
Visitors want to participate in water-based recreation (kayaking, SUP, and swimming) in future visits, but were less likely to have done so on their last visit.

Respondents generally did not view Sisters as a destination for a full vacation (only 13% said they would visit for 6+ nights)

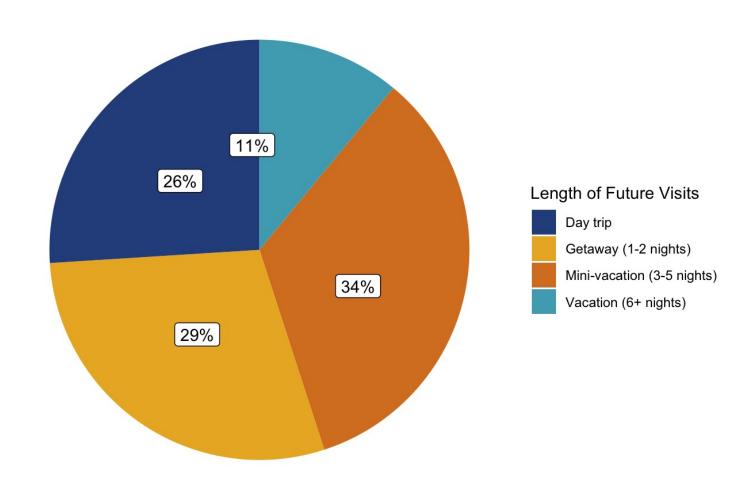
On average, visitors spent about \$133 per party per day on day visits and \$217 per party per night on overnight visits to Sisters.

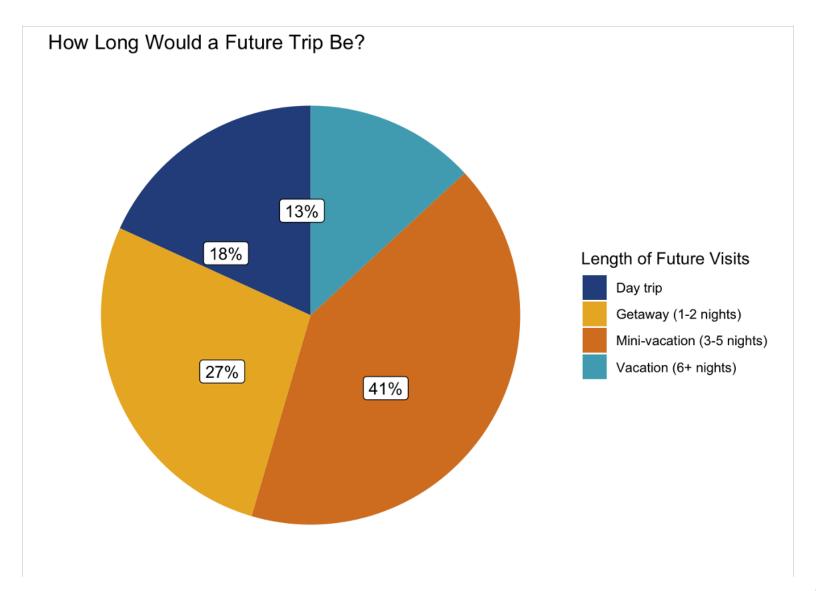
**Event successes**: event visitors are likely to return for events. Non-event visitors were much less likely to consider visiting Sisters for an event.

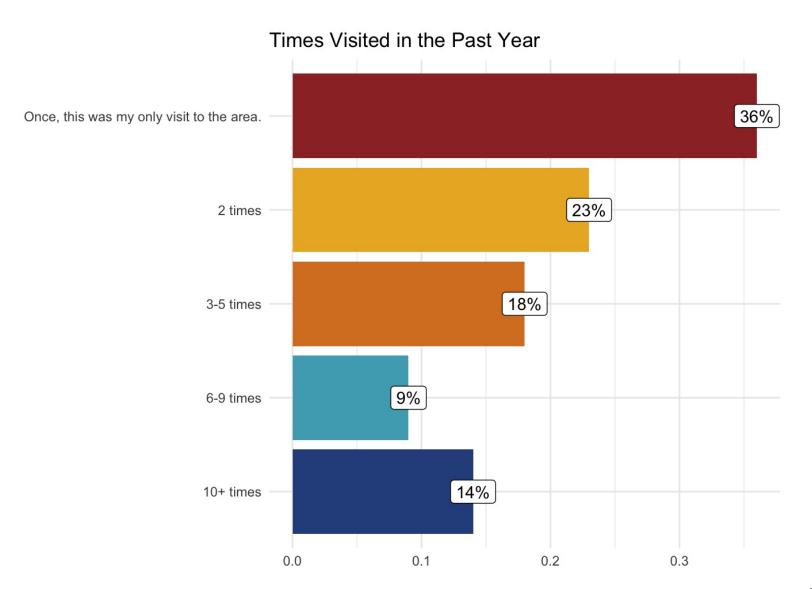


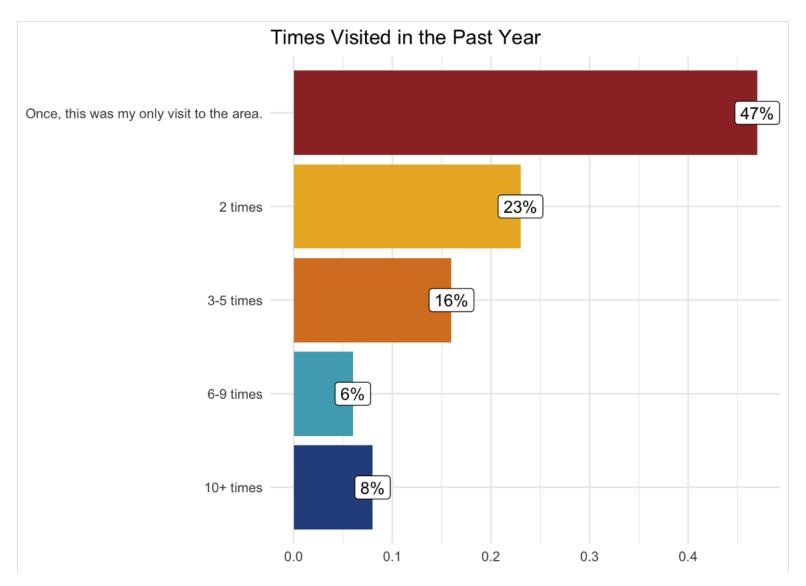


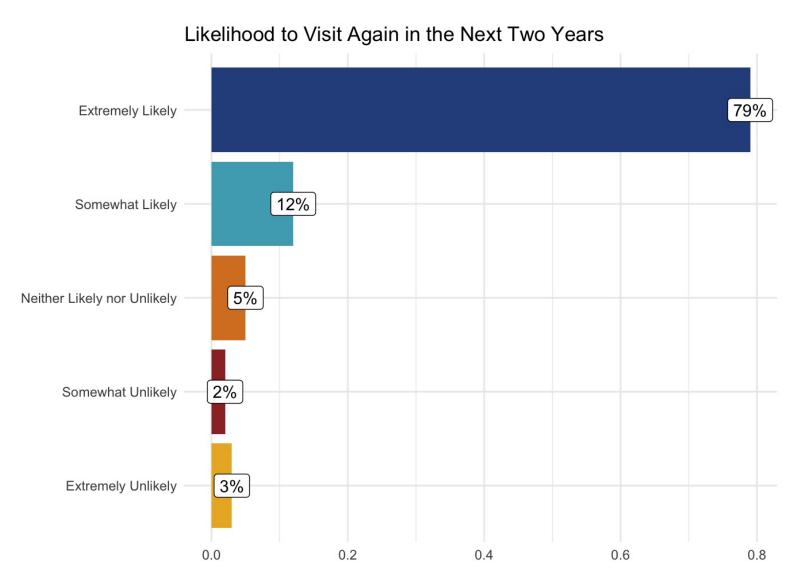
How Long Would a Future Trip Be?

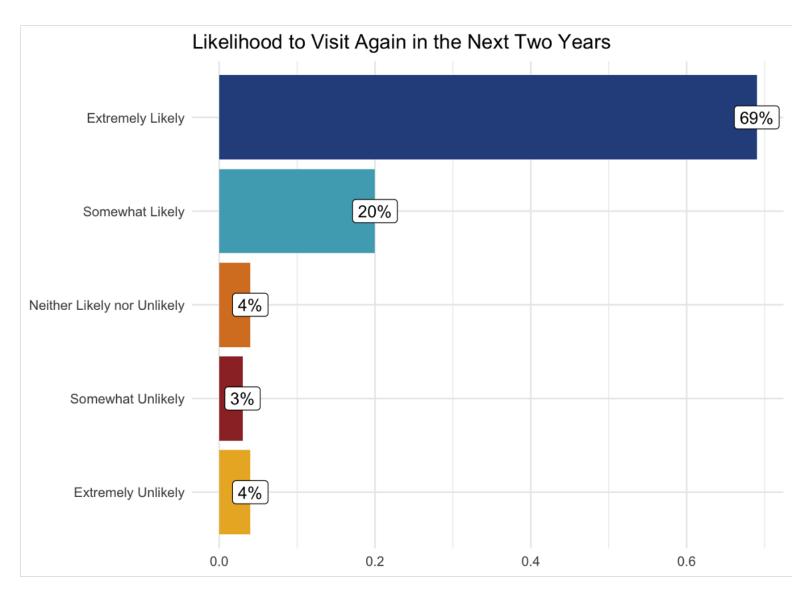


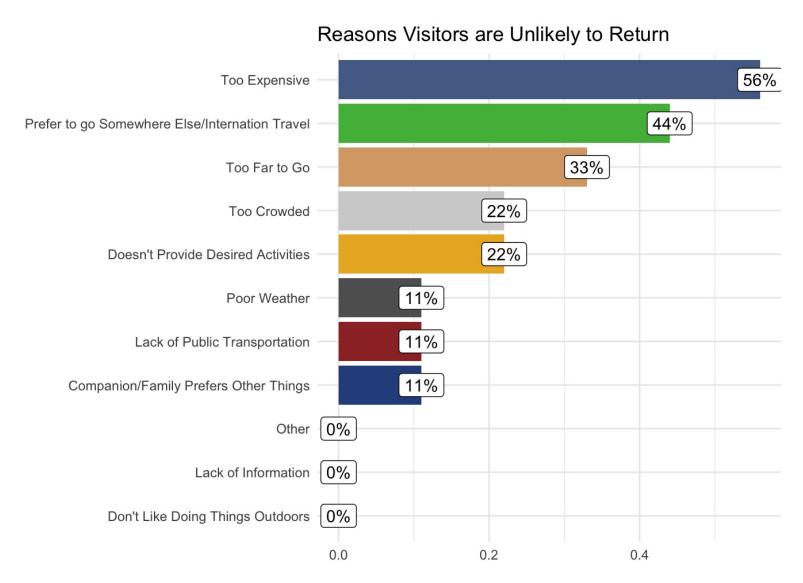


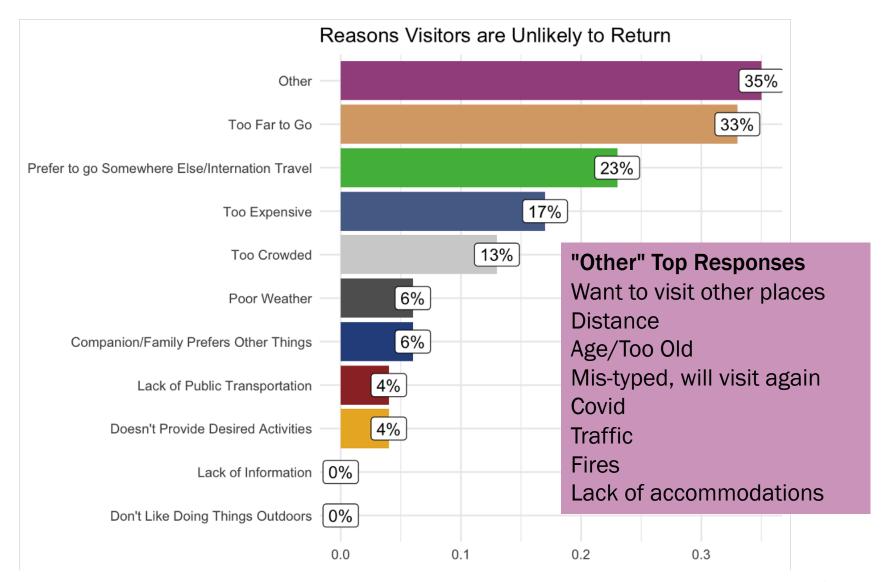


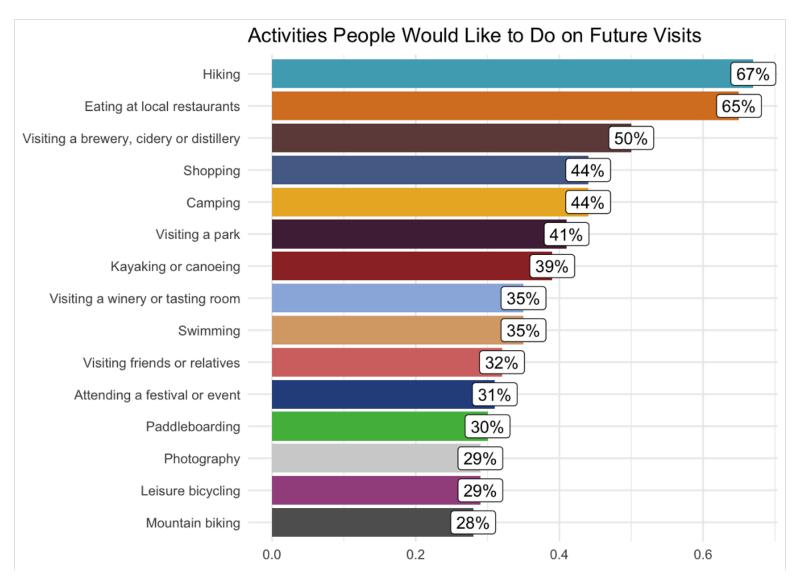


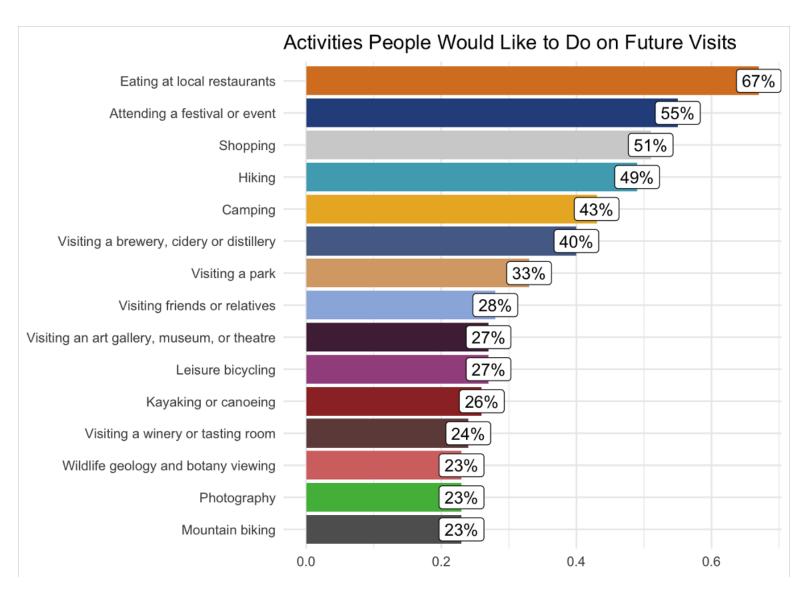












Activity	Percent
Eating at local restaurants	67%
Attending a festival or event	55%
Shopping	51%
Hiking	49%
Camping	43%
Visiting a brewery, cidery or distillery	40%
Visiting a park	33%
Visiting friends or relatives	28%
Leisure bicycling	27%
Visiting an art gallery, museum, or theatre	27%
Kayaking or canoeing	26%
Visiting a winery or tasting room	24%
Mountain biking	23%
Photography	23%
Wildlife geology and botany viewing	23%
Picnicking	21%
Visiting historical sites	21%
Swimming	20%
Attending a farmers market	20%
Fishing	18%
Visiting cultural heritage sites	18%
Paddleboarding	15%
Birdwatching	14%
Backpacking	13%
Road cycling	12%
River rafting	11%
Cross country skiing, snowshoeing	11%
Golfing	8%
Downhill skiing, snowboarding	8%
Horseback riding	7%
Running	7%
Visiting a ranch	7%
Off highway driving	6%
Sports competition	6%
Guided tour trip	6%
Other	6%
Disc golf	4%
Climbing	3%
Geocaching	3%
Attending a conference or business meeting	3%
Motorized boating	2%
Hunting	2%
Snowmobile	2%
Attending a wedding	2%
Consider establishing a business or residence	2%

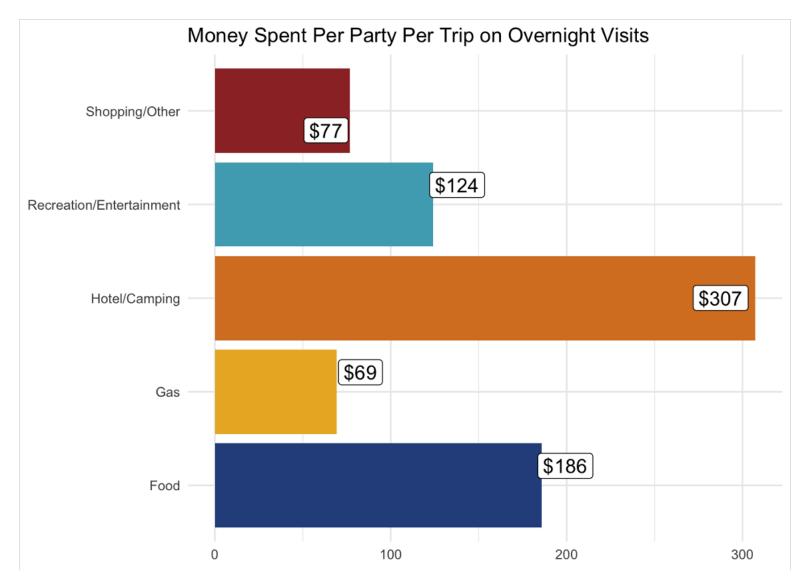
#### Differences by Visitor Demographics

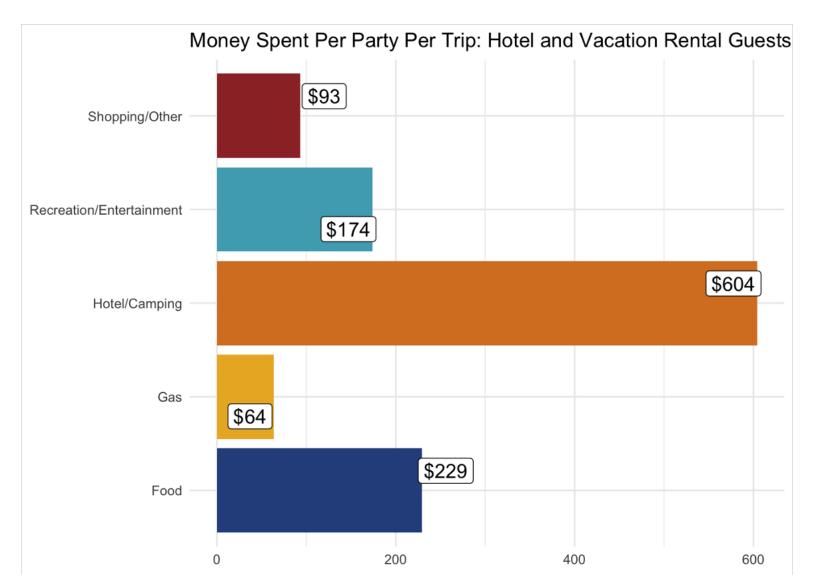
Low-income visitors were more likely to want to eat at local restaurants, go shopping and visit the farmer's market than the overall sample.

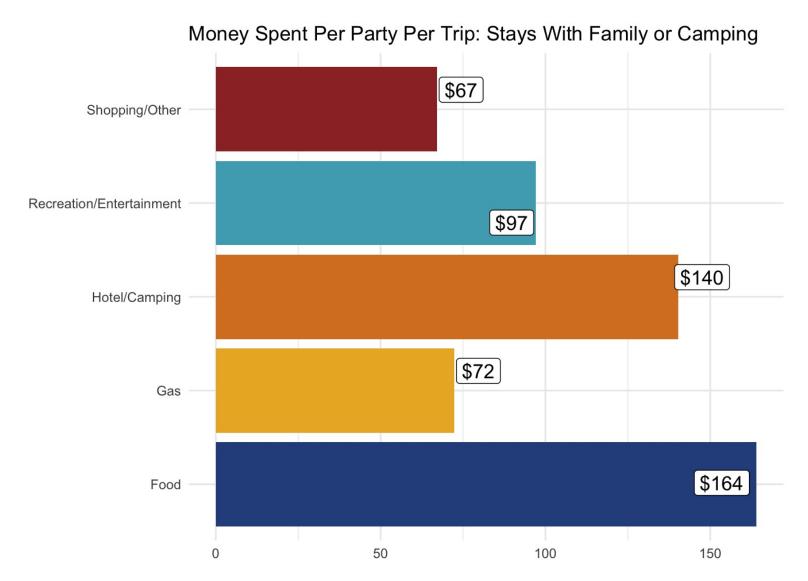
- -> Low-income visitors are less likely to want to go hiking in the future.
- -> Low-income visitors were 2.4x more likely to rate Sisters as too expensive than the average visitor.

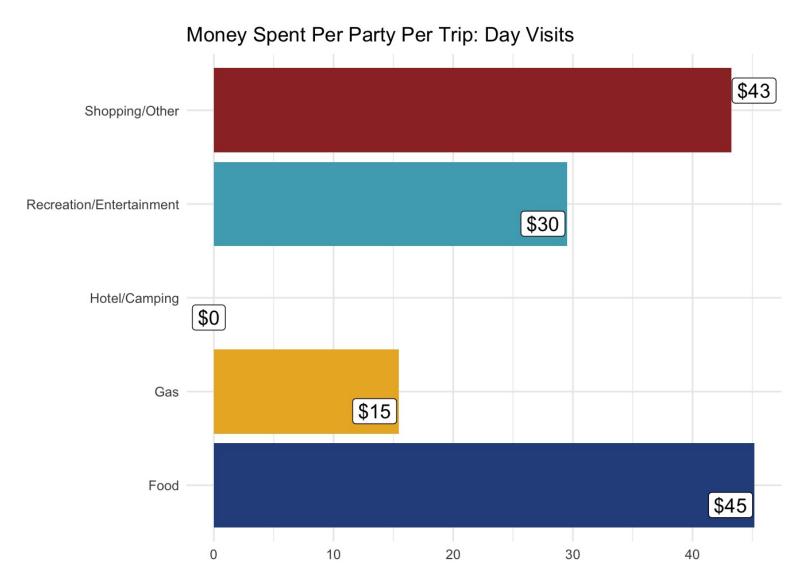
Nonwhite respondents were less likely to be "extremely likely" to visit the Sisters area in the next two years

(60% of nonwhite respondents, vs. 69% of all respondents and 79% of all on-site respondents).









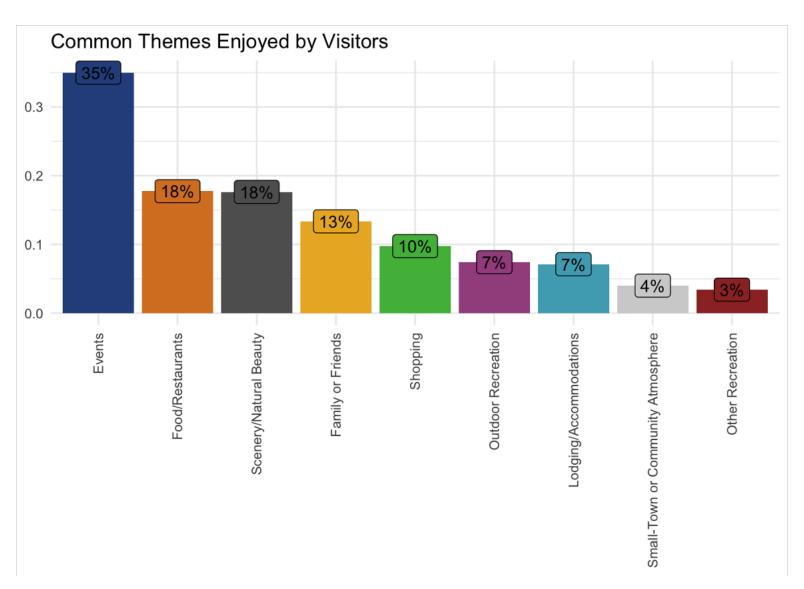


## Section IV: Written Feedback

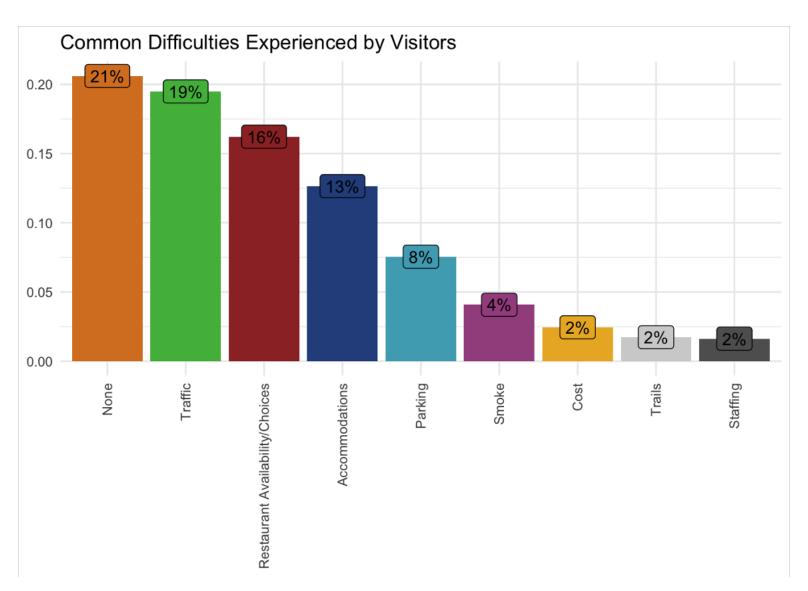
#### Written Feedback

Visitors Liked	Visitors Disliked
Restaurants, bars and dining	Traffic and parking
Events and festivals	Lack of availability or expense of accommodations
Natural beauty	Lack of availability of restaurants
Relaxation and family time	Situational- covid, smoke, staffing
Nice lodging and access to outdoor recreation	Cost or expense

#### Feedback: What Visitors Enjoyed



#### Feedback: Difficulties Encountered by Visitors



#### Quotes: What Visitors Enjoyed

- Hiking to surrounding waterfalls and taking walks through Sisters. Also enjoyed the restaurants.
- Music, picnic in the park in the center of town enjoying food from a local restaurant.
- I enjoy so much about the Sisters area, and used to live there. The Folk Fest was my reason for my last trip, but I also go for the wilderness, hiking, backpacking, skiing, all things outdoors!
- I like the Sister Creekside CG. there is a bit of traffic noise, but nice campground, close to Peterson Ridge trails and easy shopping!
- Trails close to town, easy access to great food
- Well-organized folk festival. Very accommodating camping at the high school and we biked to our musical events on well maintained bike trails.
- The quilt show and classes have been a lifelong dream of mine to attend. In 2018 I was finally able to attend this spectacular event.

#### Quotes: Difficulties Visitors Faced

- Too much traffic on Main Street. Noisy. Takes away from the charm of Sisters.
- TRAFFIC! Getting out onto the main road to go anywhere was crazy. We started going through the residential streets to keep from having to turn left at the intersections of town.
- Lodging is sparse and super expensive. that is the main reason I stay in Bend and drive or ride my bike to Sisters.
- I have never been able to actually stay in Sisters, during the Quilt Show week, because the hotels etc. fill up so quickly.
- Affordable places to stay. Would've liked to stay in Sisters. Instead stayed in Bend and drove over for the day.
- Many closed restaurants due to staffing. We feel very sorry for local businesses and wish that we could've supported them.
- Parking is somewhat limited / not clearly marked and traffic on the main route through town makes turning around to back track somewhat of a challenge

#### Quotes: Improvements Visitors Want

- More dining options and places to stay.
- Sadly, it's the inability to get accommodation. If I don't have a place to stay near Sisters, I have to day-trip it, and it's a punishingly long day trip from where I live.
- ...encourage hotels to not raise their rates so excessively during the festival. We would have stayed longer.
- Add more places for quick healthy food rather than sit down food. More affordable places to stay overnight. Getting too expensive so I typically make it a day event.
- More biking trail variety. Biking specific trails. Biking shuttle.
- More resorts/hotels near downtown similar to 5 Pines
- Another similar campground in the area, limiting vehicles to the campground, businesses with broader hours (everything was closed when we weren't cycling)
- I wish you could move the highway. I always worry about pedestrians when driving through. Maybe some way to slow down traffic, raised crosswalks? Stop signs?

#### Word Cloud: What Visitors Enjoyed Most

Q15 What did you enjoy most about your visit?

Walk RV park Mountain bike Sisters Creekside Campground Peterson Ridge Visiting friends sister's Everything lovely friendly people river stores also wonderful quality beauty surrounding views bike race friendly new restaurants lots food road Seeing Beautiful area Outdoor Quilt Easy access Sisters Coffee mountains family community Hiking away beautiful shops restaurants Folk Festival Quiet area Sisters Stampede Music trails love go shopping Attending town Seeing quilts quilt show place Sisters nature quilts fun scenery music festival Relaxing work enjoyed bike trails great parks friends Eating event outdoors local beautiful scenery Camping Creekside Campground Visiting easy Sisters Folk setting festival natural beauty Sisters Quilt Staying atmosphere bakery weather amazing good riding small town variety time coffee shop walking around Black Butte nice Great music people local restaurants around town many beauty area Sisters Outdoor

#### Word Cloud: Difficulties Visitors Faced

Q16 What was the main difficulty you and/or your group encountered during your trip?

festival warm Na help reservations little event room Long outside places eat visit venues use stayed dinner lot lunch hot many people closed stay sisters available traffic main many Air quality Traffic town night lodging rv time much camping easy enough problem N Lack go Smoke fires town restaurants open crowded due Covid difficulties challenging Sisters housing Traffic expensive Nones Parking walk restaurants stay Bend heat much traffic Finding Finding restaurant Nothing local Smoke great Covid Weather quilt show good place stay take area year day closed early drive Folk Festival Make Long lines Shops weekend hotel way hard food places one accommodations seating Finding place wanted campground trip really big around availability restaurants closed cancelled quilt Waiting

#### Word Cloud: Improvements Visitors Want

Q17 What improvements could be made to make you a repeat visitor to the Sisters area?

Make open love Sisters return way Less always left stay help nice season Improve show downtown sisters Folk Festival back repeat visitor Options please Keep around S already Will back Bend need main street campground venues N even sure live Will lodging Visit big think enjoy restaurants hours Better quilt parking one town see Sisters day None really Nothing places stay traffic work area stop quilt show things love already repeat visitor time know year limited place access camping much shops rv parks great home Maybe housing go available close try improvements come back affordable fires event smaller find without accommodations move people definitely come longer food NA RV sitting hotels Covid



Section V: Demographics

#### Demographics

• Gender: 68 percent female

	Gender	Percent	
Male		319	%
Female		689	%
Non-Binary		<1%	
Other		<1%	

Age: 66 percent aged 51 and over

	Ages	Percent
Under 20		9%
21-30		6%
31-40		10%
41-50		9%
51-60		18%
61+		48%

Income: 52 percent made over \$100,000

Income	Percent
\$150,000+	27%
\$100,000-\$149,999	25%
\$75,000-\$99,999	19%
\$50,000-\$74,999	18%
\$20,000-\$49,999	8%
Less than \$20,000	2%
	76

#### Demographics

 Household Status: 44 percent households with adult kids

Household Status	Percent
Single, no children	10%
Household (couple, no children)	27%
Household (single or couple)	
w/children living at home	19%
Household (single or couple)	
w/grown children not at home	44%

Race: 94 percent white

Race	Perd	cent
Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific		
Islander		2%
Black or African American	<1%	
Native American or Alaska Native	<1%	
Write In		2%
Two or more races		2%
White/Caucasian		94%

 Ethnicity: 97 percent not Hispanic/Latino

Hispanic/Latino	Percent
Not Hispanic/Latino	97%
Hispanic/Latino	3%

## ECONOMICS · FINANCE · PLANNING









Los Angeles Portland Seattle Boise