



#### The Outdoors: Barriers and Solutions

- To gain insight into how the outdoors and outdoor activities are perceived among young people across the country.
- To gain insight into the top barriers for youth to get outdoors and be more active.
- To learn how the outdoors can be made more culturally relevant, inclusive and interesting to new audiences such as minorities and urban youth.
- To obtain ideas for re-branding the outdoors so that it's cooler to be an outsider than an insider.



- According to Outsiders, the primary reasons why more young people aren't spending time outdoors include indoor technologies; time management issues; poor parental influence; and the lack of transportation.
- The most popular ideas for getting young people outdoors include lowering entry fees for parks and outdoor competitions; starting or joining clubs; adequately educating parents; and integrating the outdoors in school curricula.
- The great expense, dirt and discomfort, as well as the perceived and actual dangers of outdoor adventures are among the top barriers to enjoying the outdoors. Outsiders recommend tips on managing costs, emphasizing the "good" in getting dirty, and safety training as key steps toward designing solutions.
- More than half of Outsiders would use an hour of free time to do something active outside, which is indicative of a motivated, outdoor-oriented membership.





- Regardless of population size, Outsiders overwhelmingly view their city or town as a good place to enjoy the outdoors. This learning likely speaks to the curious nature of Outsiders who are more motivated than others to explore their hometowns or nearby outdoor attractions.
- While there are plenty of parks, trails and sports fields where our Outsiders live, 61% are without an outdoor skating rink, 47% are without bike lanes on main roads, and 38% are without skate parks.
- When asked to describe the feeling of enjoying the outdoors, Outdoors primarily described feelings of Peace and Calm, Friendship, and Adventure.



## **RECOMMENDATIONS**



#### **Provide Support for Initiatives aimed at:**

- Providing accessible and affordable transportation for young people to adventure sites and distant outdoor events.
- Providing "outdoor education" and safety training to both parents and young people.
- Selling quality outdoor gear at prices that young people can afford.
- Lowering entry fees to competitions like bike races and marathons, or providing reduced or free passes to National Parks.

#### Re-Brand the Outdoors in the following ways:

- Communicate "Get Outdoors" in a way that doesn't limit the definition to things like the wilderness and extreme sports. Exploring local trails and playing Frisbee at nearby parks can be branded as affordable and enjoyable ways of getting outdoors.
- Getting dirty (or muddy) isn't a bad thing. It brings us closer to the beauty of nature and reminds us of where we came from.



## **METHODOLOGY**





Data for this study was collected over a four week period within the <a href="https://www.OutdoorNation.com">www.OutdoorNation.com</a> online community.

Only Outdoor Nation members aged 13-30 are eligible to take surveys.

Outsiders had two weeks to complete each Mission:

#### Mission 1

Message on Barriers and Solutions

#### Mission 2

Mini Survey on Barriers and Solutions





## **Ambassadors**



### Moderator



Welcome to the Outdoor Nation!

Tabatha

I challenge everyone out there to take someone on an outdoor adventure! Doesn't matter if it's just a walk in the park or a float down the local river! Parents should definitely do this but everyone is invited. Post how your adventure went here!





Friday is the first day of the bouldering national championships which will be held at Sport Rock in Alexandria, VA. My house is already a climber-hostel! Non-climber outsiders- if you happen to be somewhere around the DC area this weekend, you should definitely come watch the event!



When I went to camp I could canoe, kayak, swim, horseback ride, hike, raft, and climb. Those activities don't even include the daily camp 'game' and campfire songs! Did any of you go to summer camp when you were younger?



# MISSION 1 RESULTS



## Reasons for not spending time outside

**Indoor Technologies:** According to Outsiders, the easy accessibility and instant gratification of TV and video games is a primary reason for not spending time outside.

**Time management:** Between school and part-time jobs, spending time outdoors becomes little more than an afterthought in a young person's daily life.

"Internet and video games are extremely accessible and addictive. You can be whoever or whatever you want to be while playing any type of video game."

"Pressures for success and doing well in school and the increasing load of *homework* at a young age *compete for time* outside."

"From our generation onward, there will be no generation that didn't have *video games* and *cable TV*. It will be that much more difficult to distance ourselves from that type of non active influence."

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"I see lots of *college students* get focused on school and extra-circulars that do not support an active and healthy lifestyle. After they finish with school, they *take a job that requires even more of their time.* They will not take more than a week out of the year to spend outside."

"Today's society is an *instant* gratification society. You can go to the house, turn on the *TV and Wii* and start playing"

"An increasingly stressful and *pressure-filled environment to perform well* in school and your career also leads to a skewed perception of how valuable time is spent."



### Reasons for not spending time outside

**Parental Influence:** Outsiders firmly believe in leading by example. Parents, they believe, should be held responsible for discouraging outdoor play or—worse—encouraging indoor activities like watching TV.

**Lack of Transportation:** Outsiders also point out the critical role of transportation in getting to adventure destinations; many youth depend on their (often busy) parents.

"Without parental restrictions, children are left to spend hours just sitting in front of a screen. *Parents need to push* their children to play outside and experience the outdoors."

"If parents do not want to take their kids out or let them go out, then all opportunity for them is nullified. At the same time, if parents are active their kids get a much higher chance of becoming an Outsider."

"Lack of a parental push for outdoor activities; whether parents are busy with work, or some may find that putting their kids in front of the TV is easier than going outside." "There is **not enough easy access to the outdoors.** More and more youth are growing up in the city where they depend on their parents to transport them to and from their activities."



"Lack of transportation to outdoor adventures - I live in San Francisco, and although we have great parks, bike trails and beaches it's hard to get out of the city and experience a more rural outdoor adventure when you don't have a car."

"Most youth don't own cars, and its rare that public transport has stops that include forests, ski hills, rock cliffs, rivers, etc."



# Outdoor Nation Research: Youth Feedback and Ideas

Outdoor Nation and its online research has been made possible through generous grants from Recreation Boating and Fishing Foundation, REI Foundation, The North Face, the National Park Service and The Outdoor Foundation.



## Ideas for getting young people outdoors

- Outsiders feel lowering entry fees for competitions and parks would go a long way toward encouraging first-timers to enter.
- Outsiders also see the benefit in creating or joining clubs as a way to both foster friendships and keep young people engaged with the outdoors on a more regular basis.

#### Lower entry fees for competitions and parks

Competitive events such as bike races, climbing competitions, etc. should have very low entry fees for youth (under 25 years old). This is a big factor in why many folks don't compete in outdoor activities.

Give **free or reduced tickets to outdoor parks** or places like ski resorts or tennis courts.

I would say we need something **free and exciting** to get them started. A traveling climbing wall would get kids around here out.

#### Join or Start a Club

Start a club and schedule maybe a trip every month or two to go camping or to do outdoor activities. Have a fundraiser or something to raise money for the trips and decide as a group where to go.

Outdoor clubs available to kids - I definitely would have joined a community hiking club if there was one available, but left to my own devices to figure out where to go, when to go, and (most difficult) who to go with.

**Start a nature photography club** with your friends, or with your kids and their friends.



## Ideas for getting young people outdoors

- Outsiders strongly believe that **educating parents** on how to plan and prepare for outdoor activities will motivate them to teach their children to appreciate the outdoors.
- Education from parents is not enough. Outsiders believe in the need for creatively
   integrating the outdoors into school curricula, from PE and Geography to Biology and Civics.

#### **Educate Parents**

Host family-oriented **"first time" outings** or campouts for larger groups that provide a fun and easy way to educate parents and children about getting outdoors.

Convince more parents that camping (not RVing) can be a relatively affordable, very fun, and healthy vacation alternative. When they take their kids along at a young age, the importance of wilderness/nature will be instilled in them.

I think you really need to **get the parents motivated.** If the parents are interested and plan
trips, the kids will go and enjoy themselves. It was
my parents who exposed me to the outdoors.

#### **School Curriculum**

Include outside exploration and hands-on experiences as part of the student's curriculum in school. Youth organizations should coordinate inexpensive events at local parks. Tap into the health benefits associated with outdoor activities.

Outdoors should be built into education.
Walk trails during PE class, visit wetland areas in a biology course, etc.

What about assemblies, clubs and programs through schools that give kids the opportunity to learn about outside activities like hiking, mountain biking, rock-climbing, etc?

### **Getting Outdoors: Barriers and Solutions**



**Too Expensive** 

Take mountain biking, road biking, kayaking, backpacking-GEAR IS EXPENSIVE! I spent an entire year saving money for my bike—it was a gruelling



**Dirt and Discomfort** 

The anti-germ focus that society conditions into our minds... the outdoors is associated with getting dirty.



**Perception of Danger** 

A lot of people are under the impression that outdoor activities automatically involve danger and risk. Many shy away by assuming that outdoor sports are extreme sports.



**Actual Danger** 

The danger of being outside is of course a factor, the media always love to tell the epic survival stories and accidents... Parents do not want their children to be in danger.

#### **Solution: Manage costs**

Let beginners know that you don't need much to get started. Once you get hooked on being outside, you can slowly begin investing more to take on bigger challenges.

Encourage top of the line manufacturers to make less expensive quality products.
Think about the \$200 laptop—brilliant!

#### **Solution: Change the Focus**

Emphasize the natural rawness and beauty about getting down in the dirt, whether it's gardening or mountain biking after a rain.

Start with easy stuff: going for a walk, playing catch outside, sit on the grass. Who knows... maybe they'll get hooked right away and become hardcore in a week!

#### **Solution: Education**

Educate others on the many varying degrees of outdoor immersion.

Educating people about options in their area and even having some "beginner" groups or classes that start from the very beginning of an outdoor activity would be key.

#### **Solution: Safety Training**

Kids need to grow up with outdoor programs that teach not only sports, but also safety, first aid, etc. It would minimize accidents and make them feel safer in the outdoors.

Have talks with local parent groups and PTAs about outdoor safety. Offer first aid classes for adults and kids alike. Everyone will feel safer if they know what to do in an emergency.

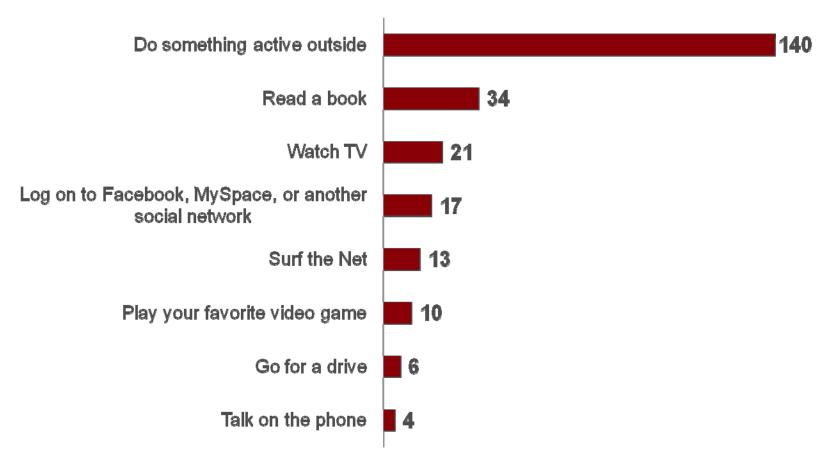
process.



# MISSION 2 RESULTS



This is clearly not a community of video gamers and web surfers. The fact that over half of Outsiders would use an hour of free time to do something active outside is indicative of the kind of motivated, outside-oriented individuals that make up the Outdoor Nation.



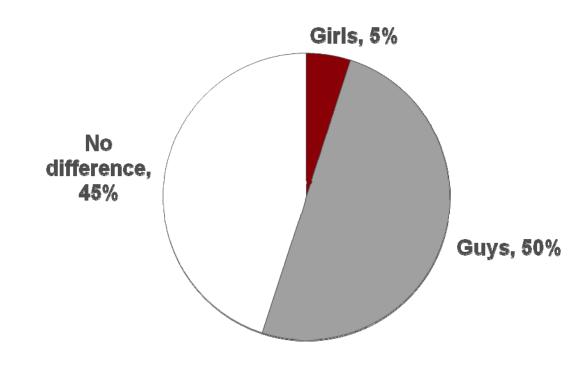


## Who spends more time outdoors?

50% of Outsiders believe that guys spend more time outdoors. Many share the perspective that most girls are afraid of getting dirty.

45% of Outsiders see **no difference** in time spent outdoors, believing that differences may be seen in the kind of activity being enjoyed.

Only 5% of Outsiders believe that girls spend more time outdoors, mainly because guys are more into playing video games indoors and other "indoor technologies."



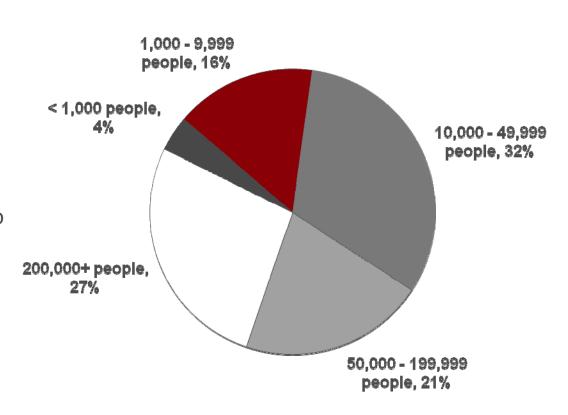
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This learning likely speaks to the curious nature of Outsiders who are more motivated than others to explore their hometowns or nearby outdoor attractions.

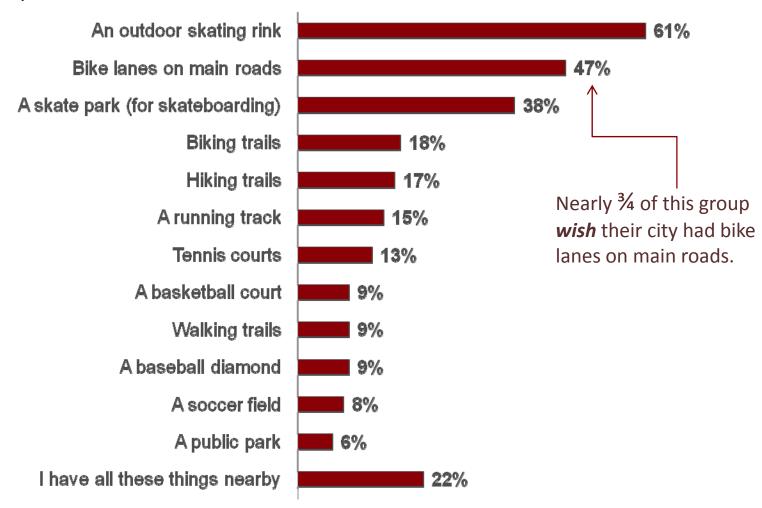


Q. Overall, do you feel that your city or town is a good place to enjoy the outdoors? Why or why not?



## Plenty of parks, not enough bike lanes

While there are plenty of parks, trails, and sports fields where our Outsiders live, 61% are without an outdoor skating rink, 47% are without bike lanes on main roads, and 38% are without skate parks.

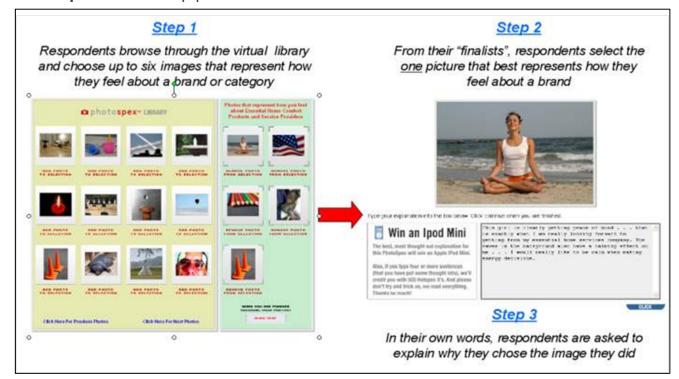




## **PhotoSpex™ on Enjoying the Outdoors**

Our **PhotoSpex™** tool was used to gain insight into how Outsiders imagine the feeling of enjoying the outdoors.

#### PhotoSpex™ is a 3-step process:





#### **RESULTS**

Three themes emerged in the Outsiders' description of the feeling of enjoying the outdoors:

- Peace and Calm
- Friendship
- Adventure



## Peace and Calm – Top 3 Images



"It's the feeling of **calm**, all encompassing, serenity in the great wide open. Coasting down a river, camping under the stars, skiing down a hill, and hiking through **nature** all give me that feeling of joy. The outdoors allows me to get lost in its beauty, its heart, and its wonder."

"It just looks so peaceful. This picture perfectly describes what I love. My favorite moments outdoors are the ones of peace and basking in natural beauty."





"It embodies both the excitement that the outdoors can bring and also the **peaceful** sanctuary it holds at the top."





"Going on an adventure with **friends**, on your own, no way back. The bond made between **friends** and families on a trip like this is unique."





"Whenever I am outdoors at night one of the best parts is just sitting around a campfire relaxing and talking with **friends** in nature. This image demonstrates both the solitude of nature and the fun of enjoying nature with **friends**."

"This image demonstrates both the solitude of nature and the fun of enjoying nature with **friends."** 









"Being outside is always an **adventure**. Conditions and expectations are never as expected. The thrill of always having a new and unique experience outside is amazing. Even if you walk the same hiking trail everyday, your experience will always be different and always rewarding."

"The sense of **adventure** you get knowing you never know what to expect just around the next tree. The imagination is in high gear when venturing through unknown territory."





"It shows pushing the boundaries of a sport and living on the edge, getting out there and having some **adventure**."



## **THANK YOU**



Outdoor Nation™ online research has been made possible through generous grants from Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, REI Foundation, The North Face, the National Park Service and The Outdoor Foundation.

#### ABOUT THE OUTDOOR FOUNDATION®

<u>The Outdoor Foundation</u> is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to inspiring and growing future generations of outdoor enthusiasts. Through ground-breaking research, action oriented convening and outreach and education programs, the Foundation works with partners to mobilize a major cultural shift that leads all Americans to the great outdoors.

#### **ABOUT OUTDOOR NATION™**

Created by The Outdoor Foundation and supported by a diverse coalition of public, private and not-for-profit organizations, Outdoor Nation and its community of Outsiders™ are committed to increasing and expanding youth participation in the outdoors through entertainment, education, engagement and action - especially among urban communities and communities of color – resulting in a healthier, more active generation.

For additional information about The Outdoor Foundation and its Outdoor Nation initiative, research and or its Outsider™ community, please contact:

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