

Removing Barriers: Student's Use of the Paul Smith's Visitor Interpretive Center

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Abstract

The Paul Smith's College's Visitor Interpretive Center (VIC) has been a staple in the lives of locals and tourists of the Adirondacks. The VIC offers nature-based recreational and educational programs year-round with the assistance of Paul Smith's College's students, faculty and staff. The purpose of this research is to take a deeper look into the present barriers preventing the Paul Smith's College community (student, faculty and staff) from accessing and utilizing the VIC's building and its trail system. A study was performed to discover barriers to accessing in the VIC area by utilizing surveys, focus groups, on-site visits, program implementation, trail register log, previous recreation capstones, and online resources. The results were analyzed to concentrate specific barriers. Most barriers involved programing, such as expanding current programs, as well as, offering new programs, followed by accessing the VIC, such as adequate signage and map interpretation, and finally access to general information, such as advertising and marketing. Using research from the past and present, this project gives suggestions that would better serve the PSC community by clarifying the needs and desires of the appropriate stakeholders associated with the VIC.

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Introduction

The Visitor Interpretive Center (V.I.C) was founded in May of 1989 as a New York State funded facility as an “outdoor-based thing where people would get to know the natural ecosystems of the park (Knight, 2010).” It is located about 23 miles from Lake Placid, home of the 1932 and 1980 Olympics, and 14 miles from Saranac Lake, considered to be one of the best small towns in America. The VIC hosts various nature-based programs, which attract and educate people of the resources found in the Adirondack Park.

In January of 2011, Paul Smiths College agreed to take over the VIC and manage it, since they already owned the land that the VIC was located on (Flaherty, 2011). To this day the VIC continues to serve the community and its tourist as a nature-based recreation facility under the management of Paul Smith’s College. Twenty-five miles of trails can be publicly accessed year-round for a fee during the winter months and free during the non-winter months. During the winter months, the trails can be accessed by the use of skis or snowshoes. Utilizing the college’s resources, tourists and the PSC community (faculty, staff, and students) can enjoy various activities and programs for free or minimal cost.

Since the college took over the VIC, various changes and additions have been made to the management, trails, building, programs, and events. The college contracted Brian McDonnell to manage the center who was given the responsibility of sustaining the center and making it independently profitable (Lynch, 2011).

In order for the center to be profitable, various activities and programs were added at a cost. Visual art, writing, and music were added so guests could enjoy the integration

of art and nature at the same time. Canoes were incorporated so guests could enjoy a small two-hour paddle or a half-day hike and paddle trip. Other additions were to rent out space to organizations such as the Adirondack Center for Writing, the U.S. Department of Agriculture soils program, the Adirondack Park Institute, and National Outdoor Leadership School (Lynch, 2011). The idea is the money generated from renting space, regular programs, and special events will be enough to sustain the VIC.

Along with Brian's additions to the VIC, several Paul Smith's College faculty and staff host special events open to the public through-out the year. Special programs include the annual Adirondack Rural Skills & Homesteading Festival hosted by Paul Smith's College's Professor Brett McCloud and the Adirondack Fungi Festival run by Paul Smith's College's TRiO Director Tom Huber. In collaboration with Cornell Maple Sugar Program, the VIC hosts a Maple Sugar workshop/clinic in their fully functional sugarhouse. These programs have some of the largest student involvement and participation.

In order to make this center a sustainable and profitable area, "it's going to take some creativity on the part of Paul Smith's, on my behalf, on the staff, on the programs that we offer," McDonnell said (Collier, 2011) "It's not going to happen overnight, and we're not going to do it by ourselves" (2011). It's going to be combined effort to run a successful center. Students can be the biggest contribution to this effort especially those involved in the recreation program.

While in the recreation program, students learn to develop education-based recreational programs, effectively manage recreation, follow professional recreation practices, and assess ecotourism ("About the Program," n.d.). Through collaboration and

integration of the VIC and course curriculum, students are able to acquire the skills described above and harness their abilities while making it profitable. However, several steps need to be taken in order to run a profitable center. Work has already begun by previous recreation capstones and this research will add onto the existing research.

A smaller goal must be set first and in due time, the bigger picture will slowly emerge as opportunities present themselves. The first goal is to increase PSC community involvement. This goal can be met by identifying the various elements preventing its usage and presenting it to the stakeholder. The stakeholders can then make decisions to address the elements preventing its usage by applying realistic methods and approaches with the assistance of its community. Some of elements have already been identified in previous capstones however new aspects will arise through this study and be addressed properly.

Literature Review

Numerous elements when combined, offer the foundation to determining barriers to access for recreational purposes. In terms applied to Paul Smiths' VIC, while analyzing these elements, five themes surfaced out of the research. They included the importance of symbolism in cartography, the importance of privately managed programs within communities, the importance of evaluation and registration methods, accessibility as it applies to rural communities, and fostering education and environmental awareness. It is the mixture of all or any of these fundamental components that can mitigate certain areas of concern, as well as, prevent future issues in management at the VIC.

The first researched theme was the concept of symbolism in cartography. Specifically, the importance of certain elements found within cartography that address its purpose. According to one study conducted by Ganpatrao, who conducted research of topographical maps in India, the importance of clear and concise topographical features is pertinent for user-friendliness (2009). It is noted in several literary works, including both articles written by Alexander Kent and Peter Vujakovic, the critical error of map translation is often found to be a key factor resulting in reduced tourism, poor navigation, and potential safety concerns (2009 & 2011). Certain features on maps aren't considered universal to all audiences. Instead, they could be localized or directed towards a specific group. If all symbols aren't as universal as possible, it hinders tourism within that specific region, creating a barrier to access the recreational opportunities ahead.

The second theme is centered around the concept of privately managed programs and/or organizations, as well as addressing certain struggles. Researcher, Kellie May, discovered three community-based programs that assisted with the idea of increasing

physical activity in rural communities. All three recreation programs discussed in May's article, which also relates to Paul Smith's College's VIC are privately-managed operations. The concept to thrive is self-sustainability, as mentioned by Mike Lynch and Jessica Collier who both have written articles for the Adirondack Daily Enterprise assessing the VIC's progress over the years. Lynch (2011) discussed the management and funding sectors of the VIC operations. While the majority of funding for the VIC is grounded in public access, their expenses are decreased severely by the volunteer mentality of the majority of their employees. Only two individuals actually receive full-time payment for their services. Furthermore, May (2011) discovered the community-driven programs in Minnesota, Wyoming and West Virginia are all privately owned and operated. For example, the bus transportation provided to the community walk does entail a fee. The money is used towards management and transportation costs. They also have to abide by self-sustainability and find profitable yet accessible means to reach the community. The balance between these two factors creates a barrier to access, because it could potentially decrease the number of willing participants. The checks and balances are in play between attendance, program fees, and the cost of managing a facility/organization.

The third theme found within the research pertained to the importance of evaluation and registration methods as they apply to recreational programming. Survey methods and registration logs are used for the purpose of mitigating or adapting to issues that arise. They also play the role of potentially preventing disaster in a state of emergency. The evaluation method noted by McKenzie et al. was the Recreation Facility Audit Tool (REFAT) method, which searches for positive and/or negative characteristics

of a specific facility in order to inform the proper authority figures, allowing an opportunity for the problem to be addressed and altered for the future (2013). The REFAT method could be applied to the VIC building and trails in order to further investigate and eliminate unknown barrier to access. By providing registration logs, VanLaer stresses the importance in a critical case of emergency, which could mean life or death scenarios (2014). If registration boxes are available, it is highly recommended that every participant notes their attendance, both entering and exiting. Furthermore, Ganpatrao and Kent state map effectiveness and clear symbolism/language increases security measures for individuals unknown to a new region/landmark.

The fourth theme relates to accessibility as it applies to rural communities. The top two problem areas that thrive in these regions, according to May, are accessibility in terms of transportation, funding and equipment (2011). Ideas found in three different states, included bus transportation to a free, weekly, community walk, bike and sports ball rentals, as well as, the building and management of ball parks, playgrounds and picnic areas. Paul Smith's College former-President John Mills relates the college's plans to maintain public access through "hours of operation, public visitation and outreach programs" (Knight, 2011). This is evident of administrator's understanding of accessibility and how it pertains to effectiveness of the VIC location. Also, students of Paul Smith's College can assimilate to some of the struggles seen in rural communities, recreationally. While located in the Adirondacks offers the conceptual opportunity to participate in recreation-based activities, there are clear issues that the majority of rural areas are exposed to. Not every student has the ability to transport themselves or travel to

the VIC building. Therefore, the accessibility factor can be a barrier to accessing the VIC from the campus or from the residences of commuting students.

The final theme found within the research is that of education and awareness. Former New York State Governor Mario Cuomo expressed his interest in both VIC buildings (located in Paul Smiths and Newcomb) because it “would provide visitors, residents and school children with ‘an in-depth understanding of the ecology and resources of the Adirondacks’” (Knight, 2010). Public awareness is evident in nearly all sources within the research due to its versatility. The general public is educated as they walk the trails or visit tourist locations throughout the world. Kent (2009 & 2011), VanLaer (2014) and (Ganpatrao (2009)’s research correlates increased awareness and knowledge as proper cartographical terminology and symbolism are used in maps. This coincides with Collier’s research of the VIC, which lists the variety of educational opportunities that would be continued when Paul Smith’s College originally took over management of the VIC facility (2011). A few of these opportunities include the butterfly house, nature-based art presentations, and course implementation as determined by the affiliated professor in the areas of draft horse management, recreational and ecotourism, forestry, as well as, fish and wildlife education. Depending on how education and awareness are delivered to the public sector, it can either be a barrier to access or an influential tool for the VIC members.

Methods

Survey Monkey

In order to achieve the goals created, various methods and approaches were taken into consideration when researching the topic. Surveys were determined most effective, particularly Survey Monkey, because they can be quick, easy to fill out, easily distributed through emails, completely anonymous, and it gives the participant the ability to take their time and feel unrushed. Survey Monkey is also useful because results can be easily analyzed and condensed through the use of charts and graphs. It also helps when the school has a subscription to Survey Monkey, as Paul Smith's College does.

Faculty members tend to take their students to the VIC for class; therefore, it was determined faculty and students would have a better insight on the existing barriers. The survey identifies the participants' demographic, discovers their current knowledge of the VIC and its policies, provides programing suggestions, and identifies barriers associated to the VIC.

The demographic questions for the students asked; how old they were, how long they have been going to PSC, gender, and if they lived on or off campus. Students were also asked what activities they would like to see at the VIC and were given the option to pick as many activities as they liked. Next, survey participants were asked if they had access to winter sports equipment, how they would access the VIC building from campus, what cost were associated to trail access, and what cost were associated to programs. These questions had listed responses giving participants the option to choose one response. There were other questions in the survey not listed or taken into consideration because the survey was conducted in collaboration with two other capstone

teams. The survey was done in collaboration with other teams to ensure maximum responses and prevent excessive emails that can deter participants from taking a survey.

Trail Register Log

The following method was a survey set up through a physical registration log. The purpose of the trail register was to get a better understanding of who was accessing the VIC trails through the Bobcat trail closest to PSC campus. With the assistance of Brian McDonnell (VIC Management) and Patrick Titus (Facilities Management) a trail registration box was acquired and set up. The box was set up about 100feet into the Bobcat trail tucked out of the telephone lines' path. It currently hangs using two support beams that are dug into the ground. Snow levels in the winter and the average human height was taken into consideration when determining the height of the box above ground. The log was set up on October 20th 2015, approximately one week before the Adirondack Night of Horror Event and before the Survivalist Workshop.

Inside of the registration log a binder was left with several registration sheets. The registration sheet was composed using the information asked by the Department of Parks and Recreation in the Adirondack High Peak Region trail register. The ADK High Peak Region Trail register asks basic information like name of group leader, number of people in a group, planned length of stay, and destination (VanLaer, 2014). The trail register set up on the Bobcat trail asked similar questions with the addition of a check box asking if they were student, employee, or other. It was formatted so responses would be in list format as seen in (Appendix A).

Focus Group

In order to figure out the barriers preventing students from accessing the VIC, its' map was taken into consideration for analysis. A focus group was used as a resource because of their productive research results. The focus group gives students, faculty, and staff, who have been at PSC for various amounts of time, an opportunity to identify the barriers and constructively give input on the current VIC map. For positive results two maps had to be used as a compare and contrast. The map included the Saranac Lake 6ers map (Appendix B) and the Current VIC map (Appendix C). The Saranac Lake 6ers map was used because its close proximity to PSC and the map could easily be found in bulk.

The four parts of the focus group included a demographic section to figure out who was taking part without identifying who exactly it was, a section asking questions specifically to the VIC map, a section asking questions specifically to the Saranac Lake 6ers map and finally a section formatted as a discussion group asking about the two maps.

The section tested the students map interpretative skills along with their knowledge of the areas associated to the area in each map. It included an area to record difficulties and misunderstandings found while trying to answer questions about the map. The discussion section comparing and contrasting the two maps, asked what improvements can be made to the current VIC map and signage.

Previous Capstones

One of the methods was taking advantage of previous capstones in the Recreation degree. Information was drawn from the results found by the survey distributed by the R.A.T.E. (Recreation, Adventure, Travel and Ecotourism) capstone submitted on April 30th, 2015 by Nathaniel Casaregola & Steve Farrell and information from the RATE capstone submitted on December 3, 2012 by Daniel P. Dwyer.

Information from the capstones were analyzed and synthesized to influence the development of questions found in the surveys. Specifically, information involving a student's recreational needs and wants were extracted from previous capstone. The survey results found in the recreation capstone, by Nathaniel and Steve, was taken into consideration when forming some of the questions asked in the survey. According to results found by Nathaniel Casaregola and Steve Farrell most students utilize fall and spring trail hiking the most (2015, p. 29). Most students also agreed they would attend recreational opportunities if they were offer (2015, p.31). Finally, students were asked list of options and asked to choose which one sounded most appealing. Canoeing/ kayaking, survivalist workshop, and archery range were the top three options found to be the most appealing (2015, p. 32).

Adirondack Night of Horror

On October 31st the programming team of the recreation capstone group hosted an Adirondack Night of Horror at the VIC. The Adirondack Night of Horror was developed in responses to results found in the surveys and involved activities such as pumpkin carving, apple bobbing, haunted walk, food & beverage, comedian performance, costume contest with prizes. A great deal of logistics went into the event to ensure its success including identifying possible barriers and addressing them prior to the event. Barrier included seeking volunteers, ensuring safety, transportation of people, marketing an appealing event with details, acquiring funding, and providing food and beverage.

Following the event, a survey will be used to determine if the methods determined to address the barriers were successful. The survey found in Appendix D was used to measure participant involvement, satisfaction of activities, and transportation methods. Adequate space was provided to allow participants to give feedback along the number scaled questions.

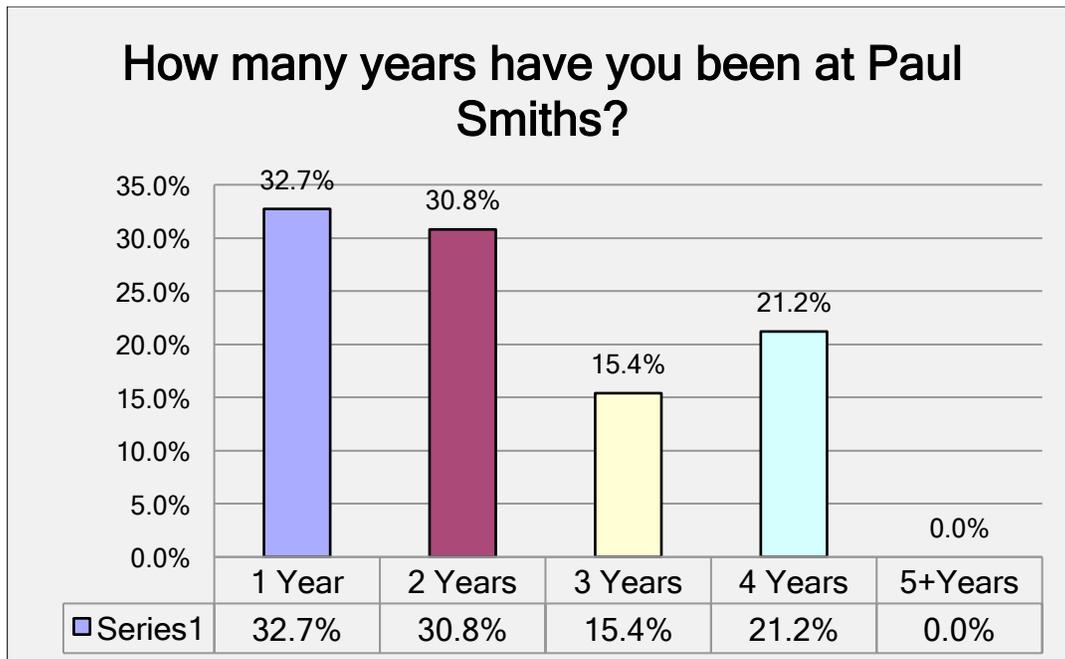
Results

Survey Monkey

An electronic survey was sent out to the students on September 29th 2015 by email and results ended [collected] on October 7th 2015. The survey was created in collaboration with the marketing and programming team in the capstone group. There was a response of fifty-two students, which is about five percent of the total student population. The first part of the survey involved figuring out who was taking the survey.

The first demographic questions included how many years' students attended PSC. As seen in the graph below most participants who took the survey were first-year students, followed by second-year students, and then third-year students. Fourth-year students participated the least of all the student body and no responses were from students who have been attending five or more years.

Table 1: How many years have you been at Paul Smith's?



Next students were asked to record which gender they identify themselves as. Results based on options given were almost even between male and female, as found in the chart below however males responded more.

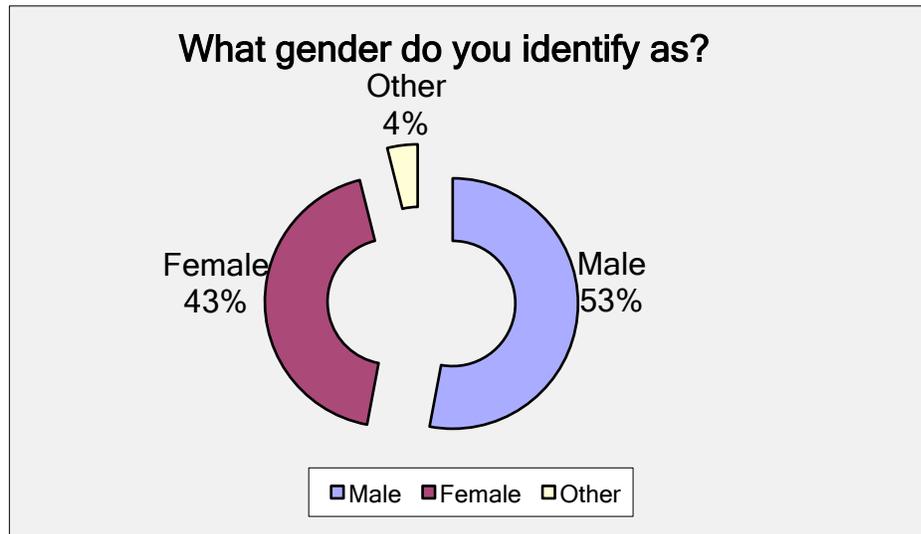


Table 2: What gender do you identify as?

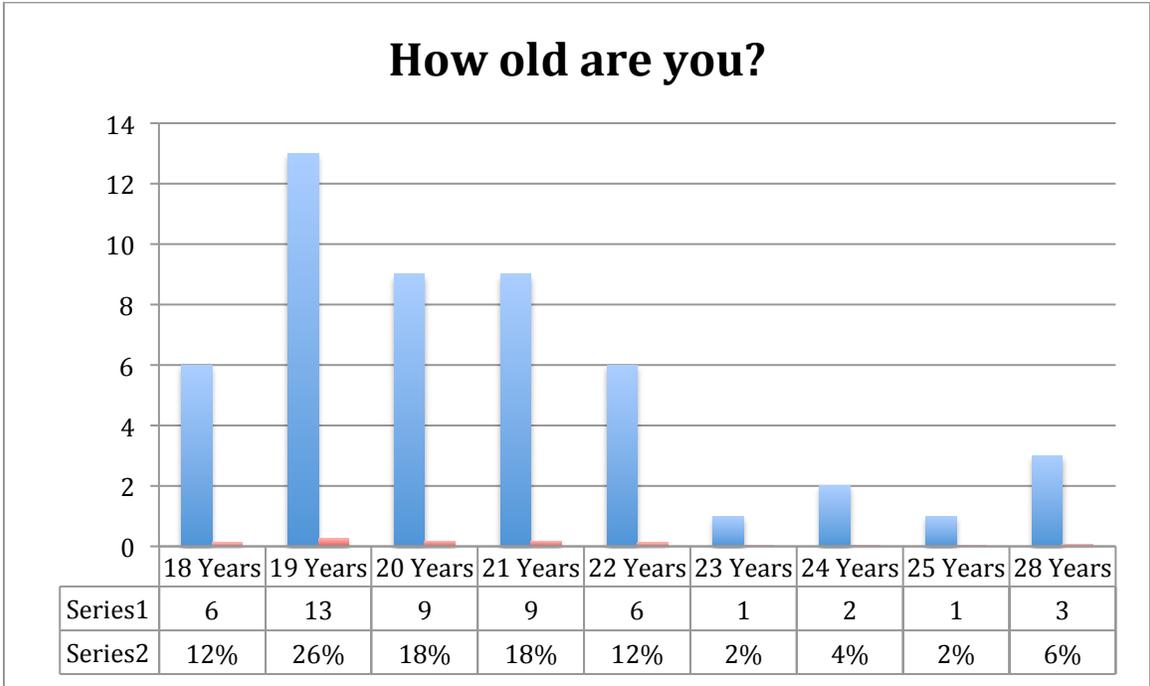


Table 3: How old are you?

As seen in the graph above students were then asked how old they were. Of the fifty-two students 62% are between the ages nineteen and twenty-one years. Very few were older than twenty-one years of age, which suggest first year students younger than twenty-one provided feedback found in this survey.

Next students were given a list of programs/activities and asked to choose to choose as many as they would like to see at the VIC. As seen in the below, the most popular program was survivalist workshops, which is a response of 73% student, followed by Haunted walk though the VIC, which is a response of 63% student. The third most popular was pumpkin carving, which is a response of 42% student.

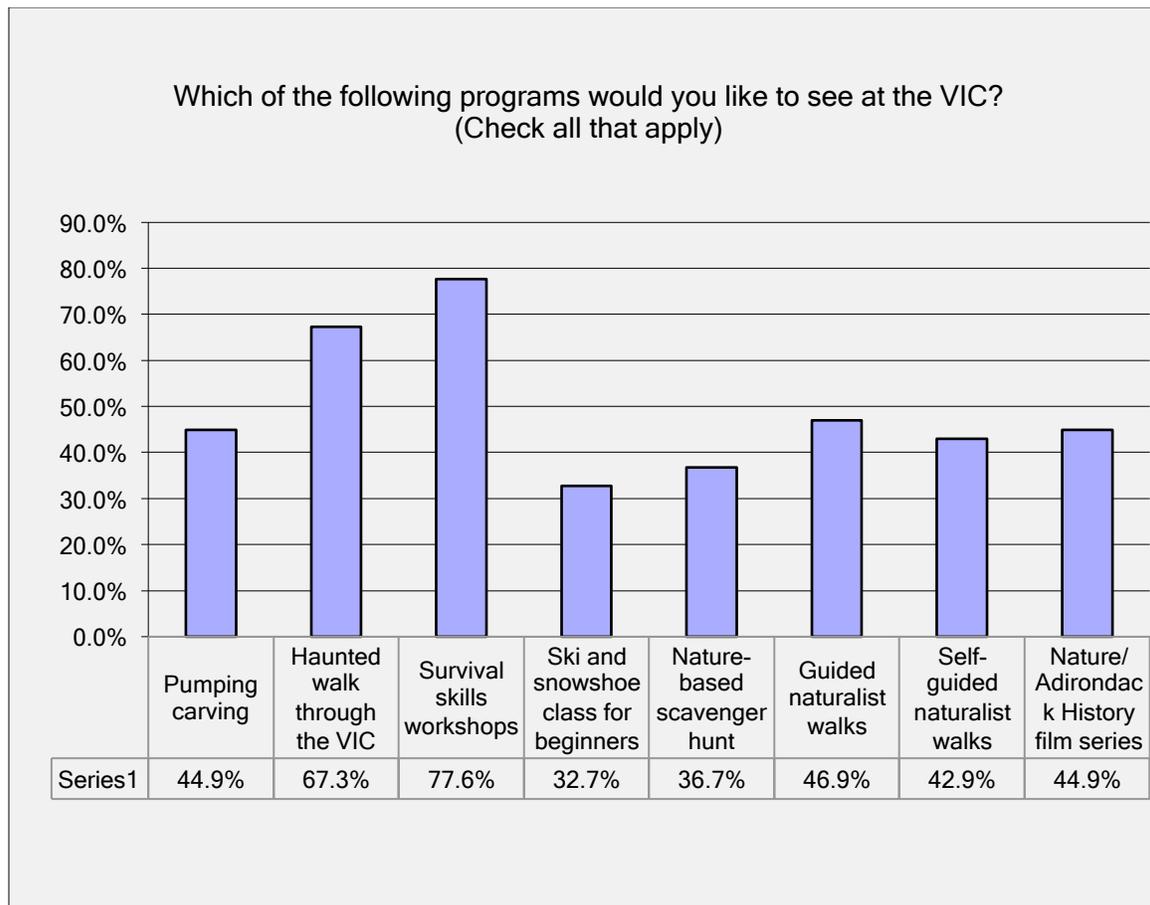


Table 4: Which of the following programs would you like to see at the VIC?

Students were then asked given a list of options and asked to identify if they had access to winter sports equipment and where or how they get equipment. Most students acknowledged they had equipment or had access to equipment, based on the results found below. Either student's owned their own personal equipment or they knew where to rent them. They knew they could be rented from the recreation gear room and VIC for a fee, or at the gym for a free. Very few participants didn't know where to get winter sports equipment although many didn't own equipment personally.

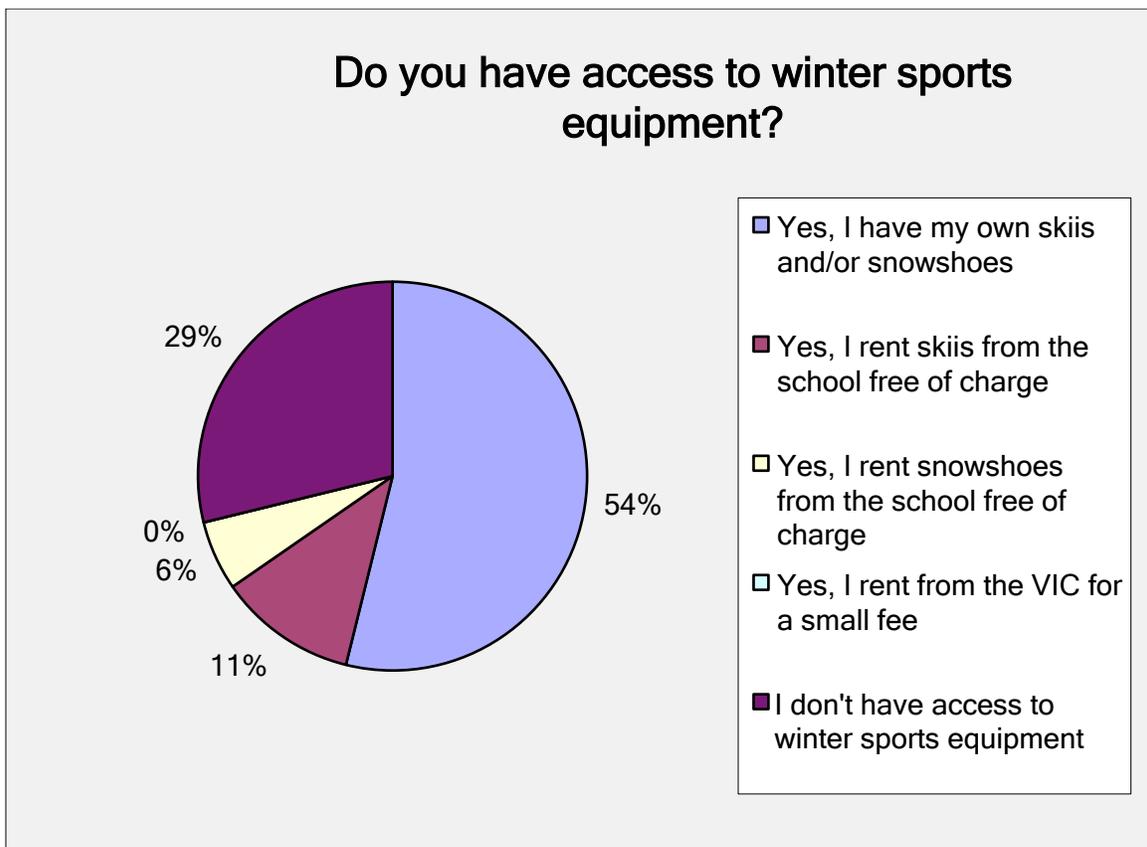


Table 5: Do you have access to winter sports equipment?

Students were also asked to identify how they get to the VIC from campus. In the graph below, students identified trails as being the number one way to get to the building, followed by driving and then walking along the road. Little to no students utilizes the trails through bicycling either because they know its not permitted or because they just don't.

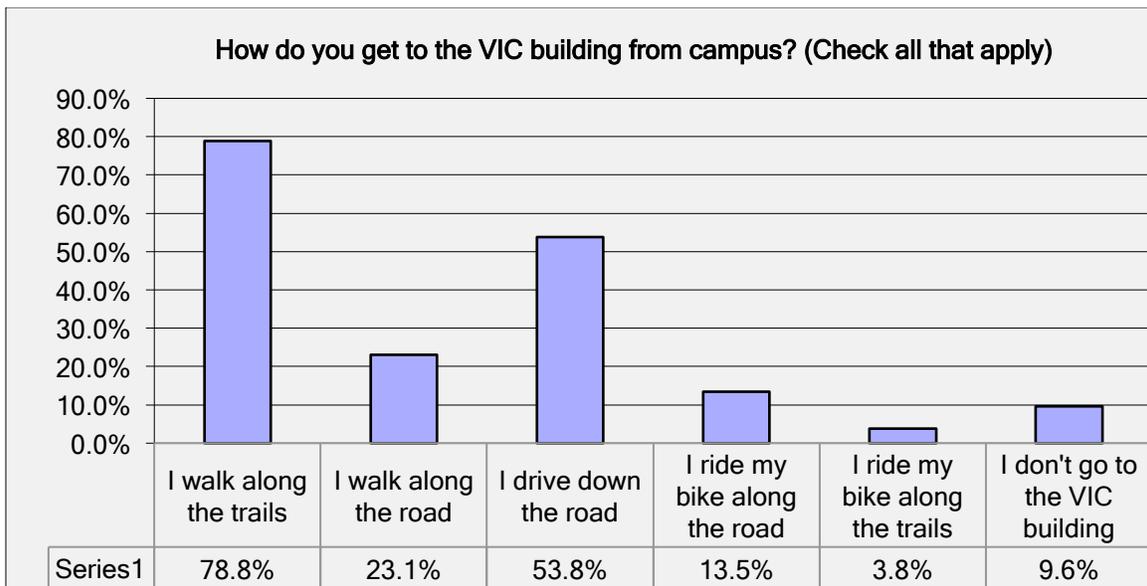


Table 6: How do you get to the VIC building from Campus?

Next students were asked questions regarding fees related to programs and trails. They were asked, to the best of their personal knowledge, if students were charged for using the trails. As seen in Table 8 almost every student knows trails are accessed for free. Only a handful think there is a cost associated to using the trails however it is not true. The second question asked students if there was a charge associated to taking part of programming Table 7. Due to the how the question was formed results showed a mix of students who believe there was sometimes a charge and there is never a charge. Results can be interpreted that students believe or know the VIC doesn't always charge student for every program.

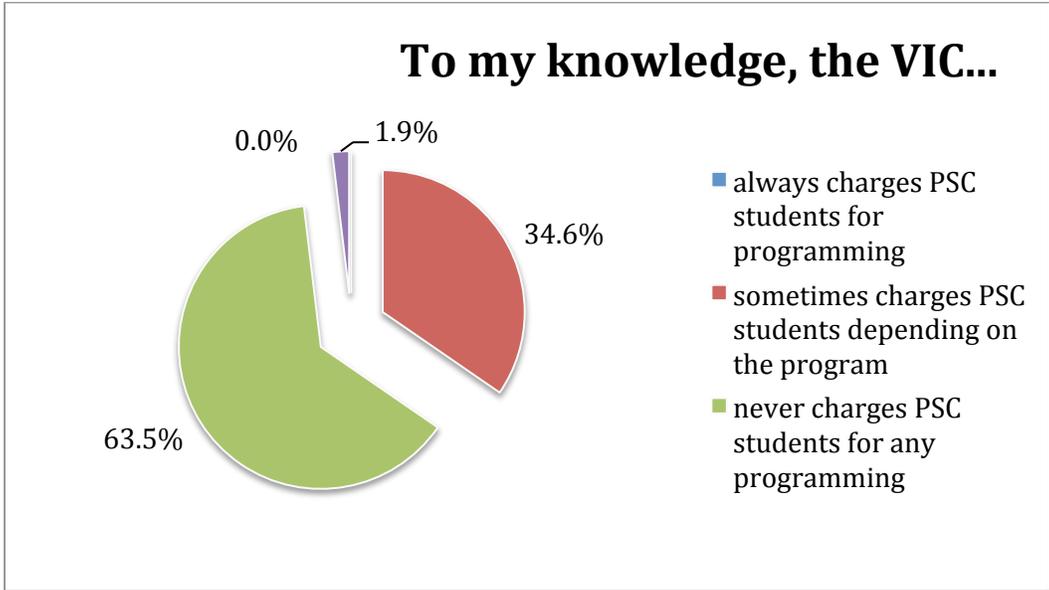


Table 7: To my Knowledge, the VIC.... (Charges for Programs)

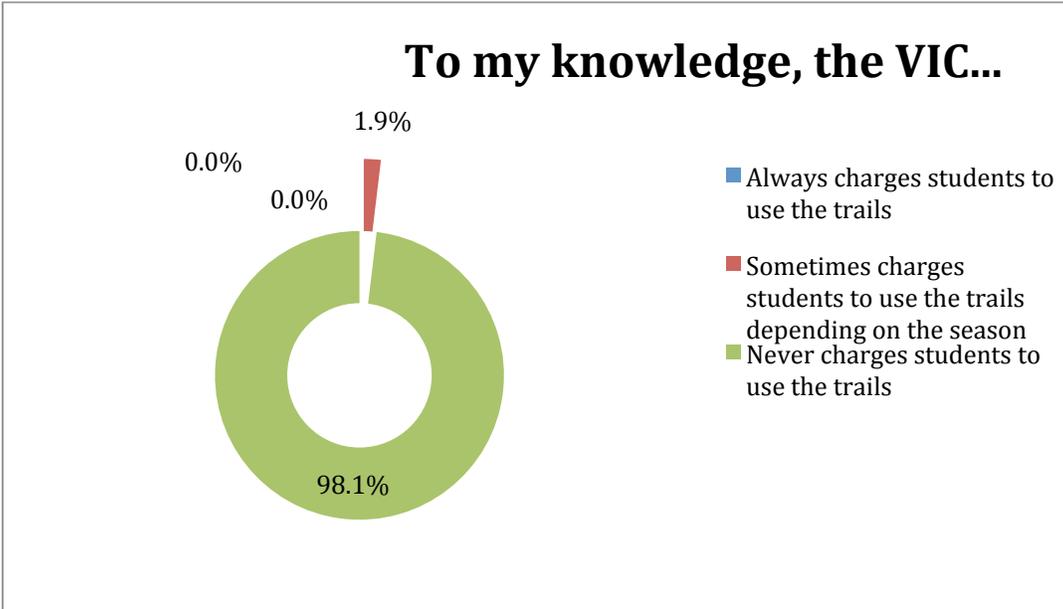


Table 8: To my knowledge, the VIC.... (Trail Fees)

Trail Registration

The results found in the Trail Registration box, located on the Bobcat trail closest to campus. The following results are from a 24-day span, beginning on October 22, 2015 and ended on November 15, 2015. The data is not conclusive or a good representation of results however data was still worked with. Refer to Appendix E for an exact copy of the results, which were then converted into a digital copy.

Twenty entries were recorded during the time frame stated above, of the twenty entries fourteen are students, two are employees, and five are other unspecified people.

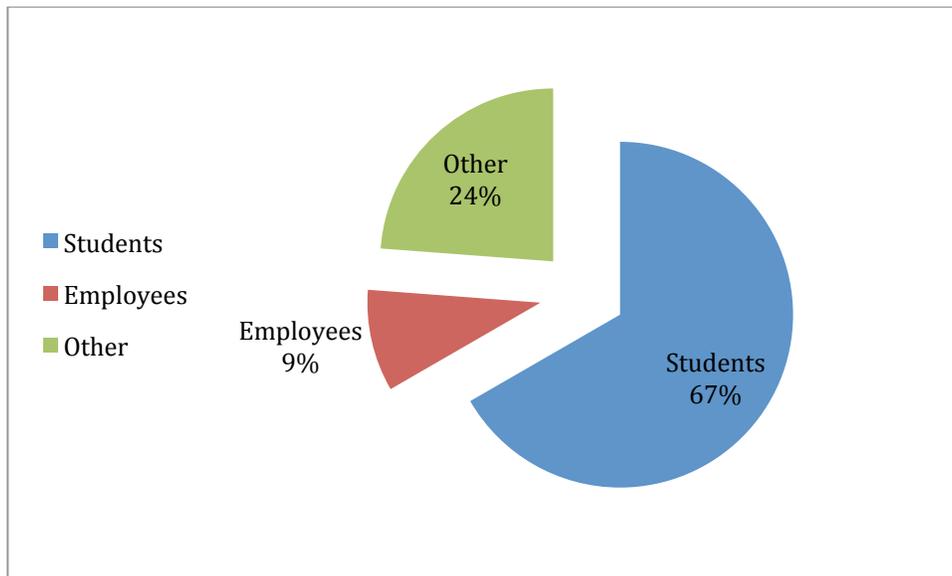


Table 9: Who are you?

Participants spent various amount of time on the trails through out the day. Out of the twenty participants, thirteen provided an entry and exit time. The seven, marked as other, provided entry time only which could not factored into the results. As the chart shows below, participants spent around thirty-to-forty minutes hiking the trails. The average time spent on the trails was about one hour and twenty minutes.

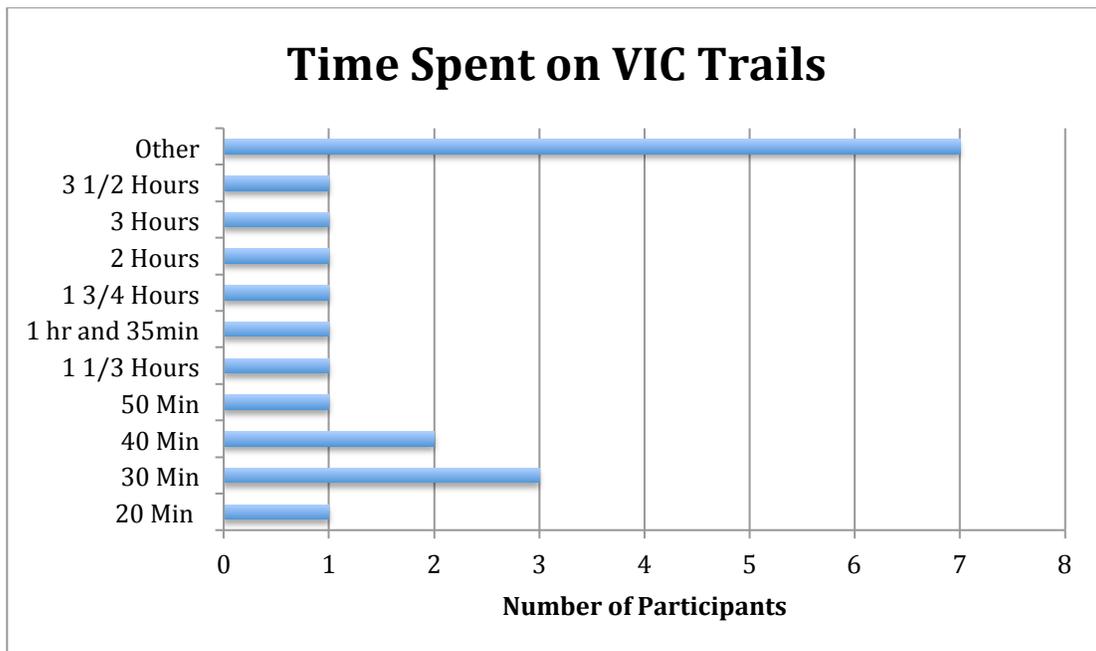


Table 10: Amount of time spent on VIC trails.

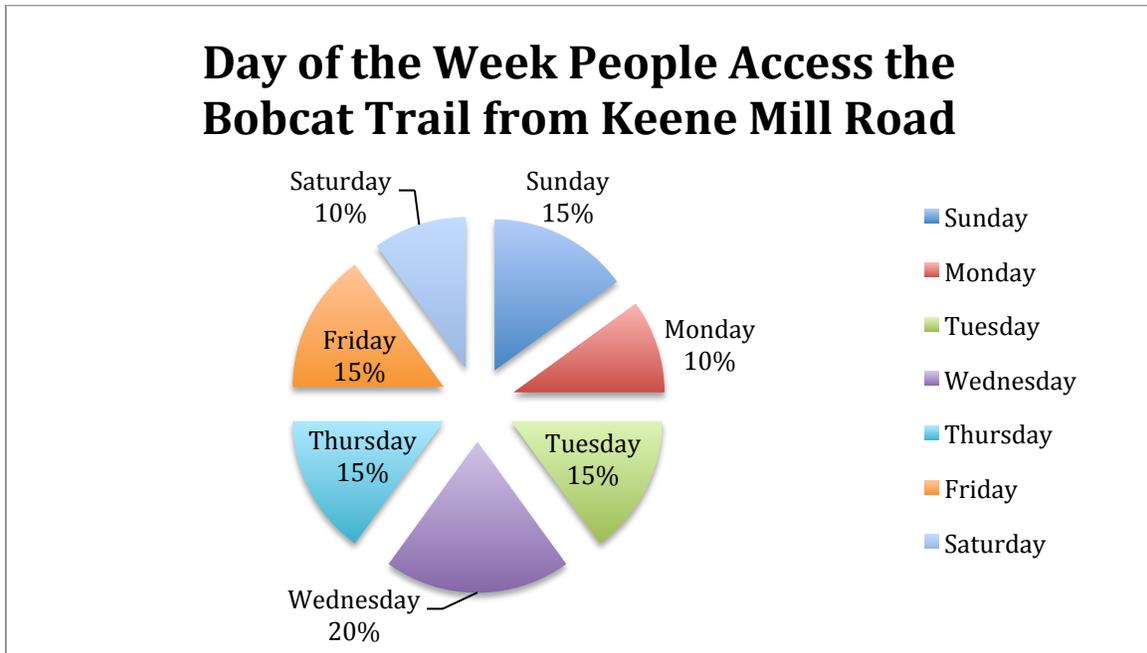
The graph below lists the start and/or finish time of each participant. Also included are the total time spent on the trails if the participant provided both a start and finish time. It is assumed the times provided are during the hours of operation (Dusk to Dawn). According to the data most users accessed the Bobcat Trail in the afternoon between one and five.

Table 11: Demographic, Start and End Time with Total Time

Demographic	Start	Finish	Total
Student	5:20	5:40	20 Min
Student	3:40		
Other	3:00	6:00	3 Hours
Student	1:00	1:30	30 Min
Student	2:00	4:00	2 Hours
Student	10:50	11:30	40 Min
Employee	11:30		
Student	12:03		
Student	5:00	5:30	30 Min
Other	1:00	4:30	3 1/2 Hours
Student	3:35	4:25	50 Min
Student	4:52	5:22	30 Min
Other	8:30		
Student	1:40		
Student	2:20	3:00	40 Min
Other	1:00	2:20	1 1/3 Hours
Student	3:15	5:00	1 3/4 Hours
Student	10:14		
Other/ Employee	10:45	12:20	1 Hr. and 35min
Student	11:20		

Finally the day of the week was taken into consideration to find what days the Bobcat trail are accessed. According to recorded dates, Wednesday's usage was highest with four users. Thursday, Tuesday, Friday and Sunday had a usage of three users. Finally Saturdays and Monday had the least usage of two users.

Table 12: Day of the Week people accessed the Bobcat trail from Keene Mill Road



Focus Group

The focus group was conducted on Wednesday November 11, 2015 in Jill Susice FYC class. Data from the focus group may not be conclusive and may not be a complete representation of the school body however the data does have substantial results. From the focus group a lot of interesting information was formed.

When comparing and contrasting the VIC map and the Saranac Lake 6ers map, a constant theme arose. The color scheme, trail identification, map interpretations, time, and trail name cohesiveness and clarity.

According to the demographics surveyed, a total of seventeen students were surveyed all whom were first year students. Students were between the ages of eighteen and twenty years. Fourteen of the seventeen have been to the VIC and are from New York State.

The first written section of the focus group was based on the VIC map provided. Using the sharpie students was asked to highlight how to get from PSC campus to the VIC building. In the graph below you can see the results found.

Sixteen out of the seventeen knew how to access the VIC building from campus. Each participant had one or more method of getting to the VIC building from campus except for one. The most common route of chose was the Bobcat trail.

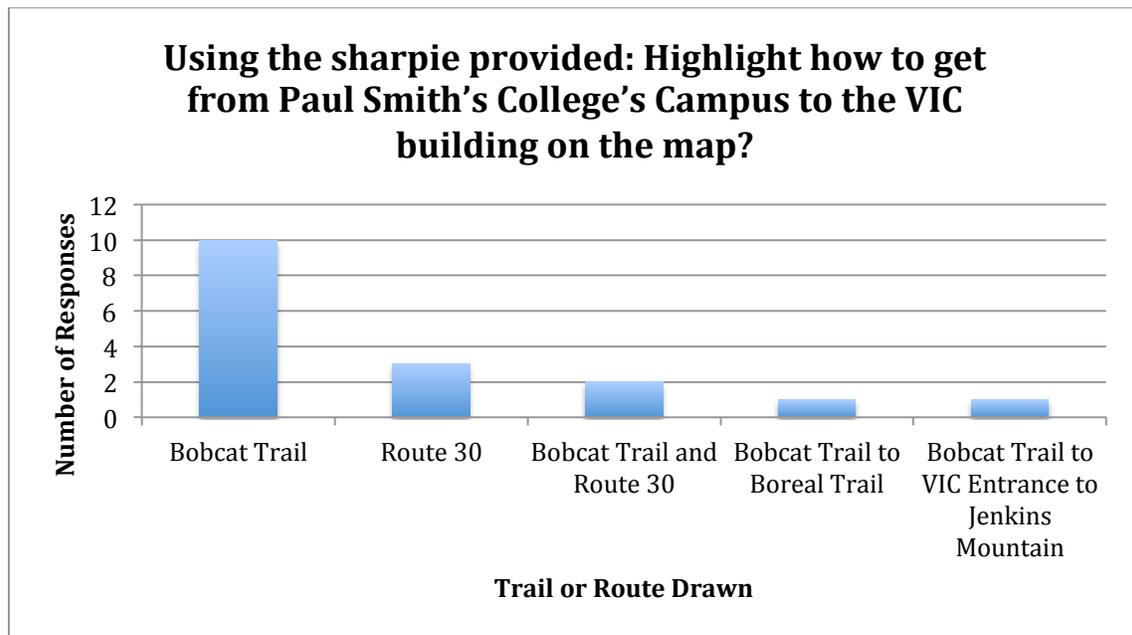


Table 13: Highlighted Route from PSC campus to the VIC Building.

Next we asked how long does it take to get from the entrance of the Bobcat trail (Keese Mills Road) to the VIC Building? (In terms of minutes and one way) As seen in the graph below, most students believe it takes ten minutes to reach the VIC building from the beginning of the Bobcat trail. The three responses in the “other” category were not individually recorded but there responses were “I don’t know”, “1/2 mile”, and “depends”.

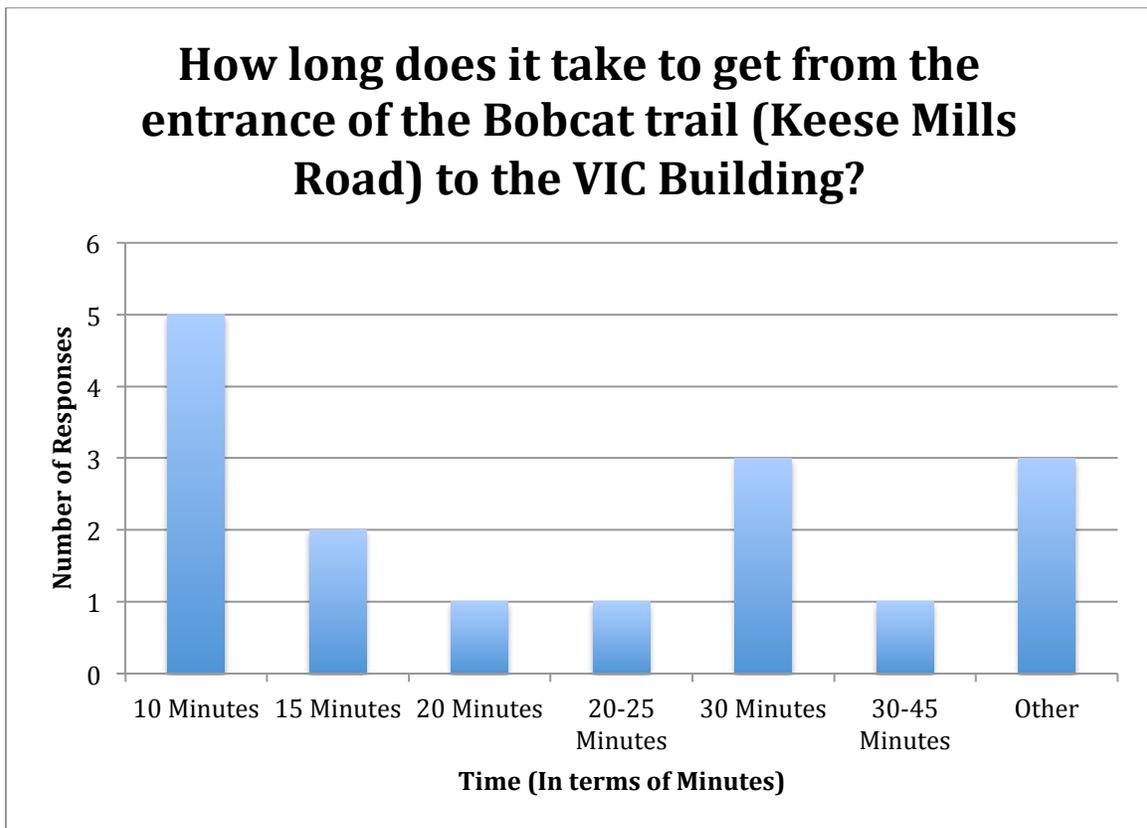


Table 14: Time it takes to get from the entrance of the Bobcat trail (Keese Mills)to the VIC Building

We then asked participants to identify the trail highest in elevation and the trail lowest in elevation based on the VIC map. In the lowest in elevation graph one student believed the Shingle Mill Falls is a trail and is documented as other. Everyone recorded Jenkins Mountain trail as highest in elevation with the exception of one. Mean while ten out of the seventeen participants recorded the Heron Marsh Trail as the lowest in elevation.

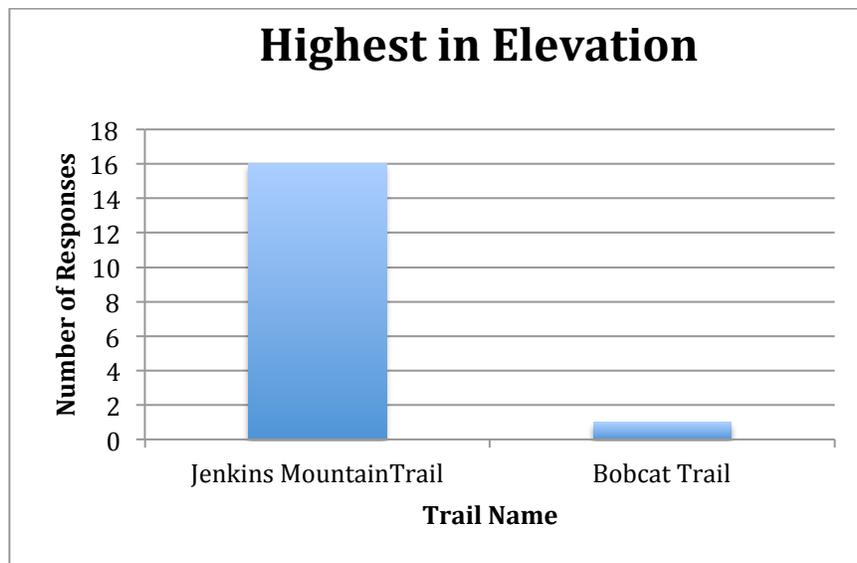


Table 15: Highest Elevated Trail at VIC

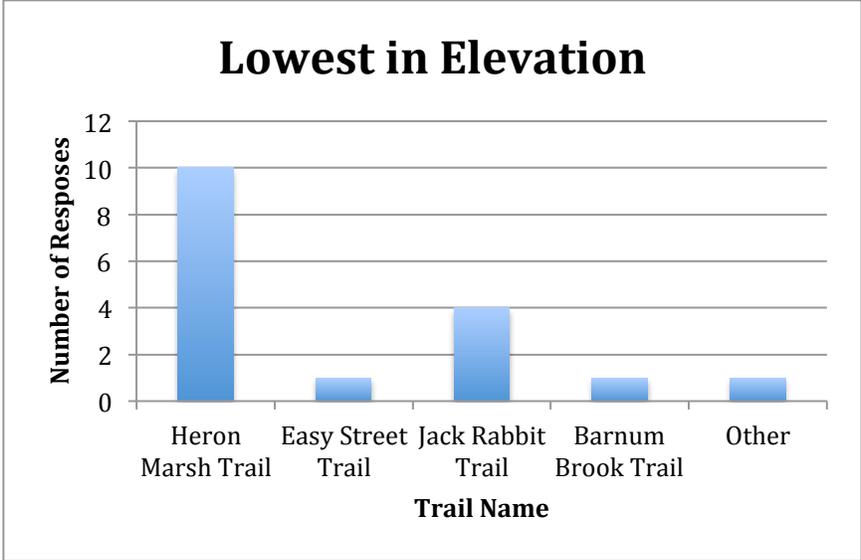


Table 16: Lowest Elevated Trail at VIC

The following question asked to identify the easiest and most difficult trail to hike at the VIC. The Easy Street trail and the Burnum Brook trail were identified as the easiest amongst all the trails. Once again a participant identified the Shingle Mills Falls as a trail and was documented as other. Jenkins Mountain was Identified by fourteen participants as the most difficult trail to hike.

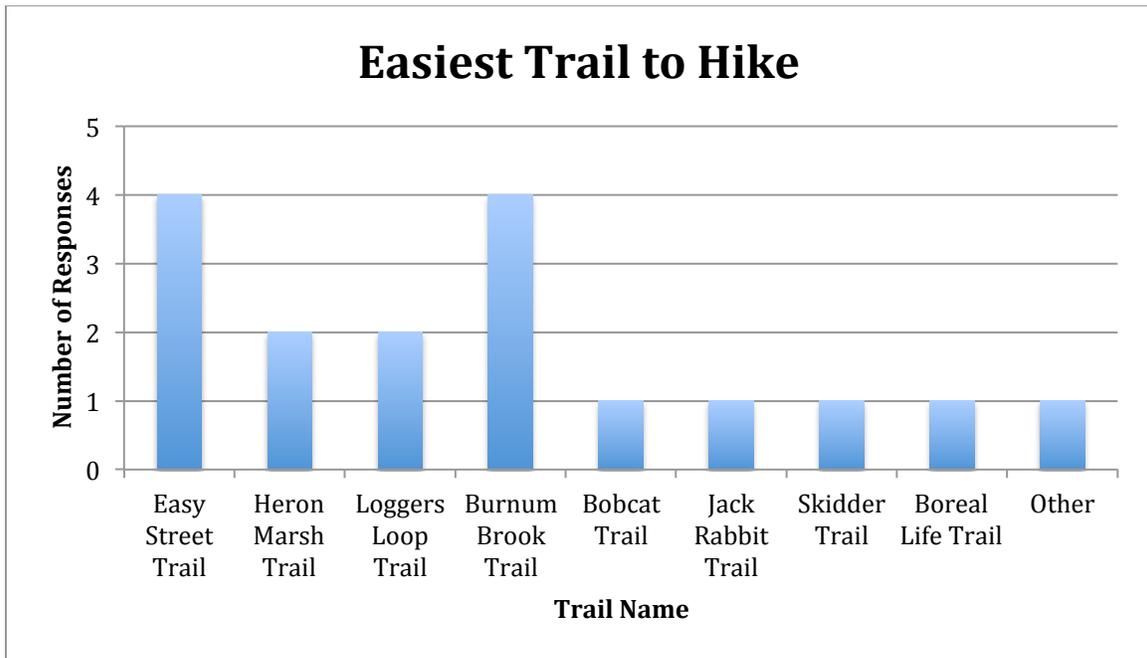


Table 17: Easiest Trail to Hike at the VIC



Table 18: Most Difficult to Hike at the VIC

Next participants were asked to name the trail or every trail they would use from the VIC Building to the Top of Jenkins Mountain. Thirteen out of the seventeen people stated they would at some point use the Jenkins Mountain Trail. Out of the thirteen only four knew only one trail was required meanwhile nine of them knew that the trails crossed onto each other along the way.

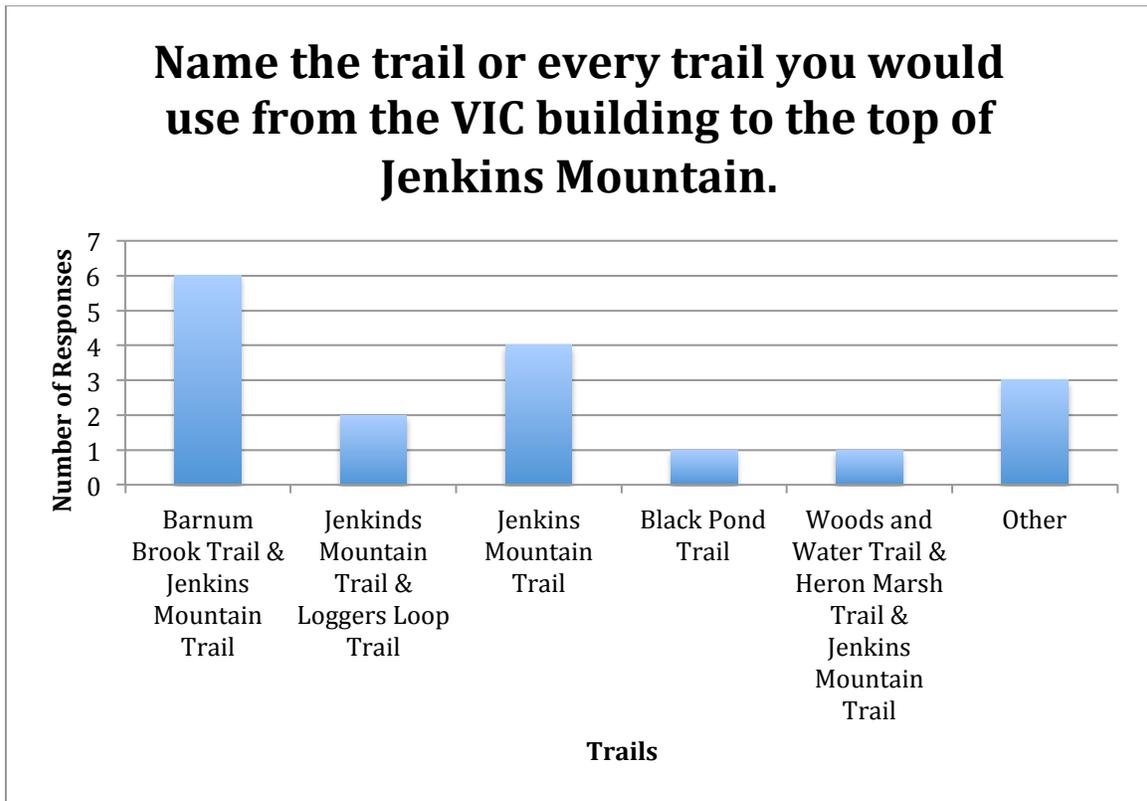


Table 19: Trail or Trails used from VIC building to Jenkins Mountain Peak.

Finally students were asked if the Trails were confusing and twelve of them stated no and one of the twelve stated “just the printer quality”

Two said yes and stated:

“Some signs point one way while the trail sign says something different”

”Because I am lost”.

Three other stated:

“There’s a lot of trails that get jumbled around the VIC”

“ By walking it may be less confusing as for looking at the map is a bit confusing”

“ When I am on VIC trails I have no issue finding my way”

The next part of the focus group involved utilizing the Saranac Lake 6ers map to answer several questions. The first question was to use a sharpie and highlight how to get from the bottom of Baker Mountain to the peak of Mt. Baker. Seven people drew a line from Main Street and Broadway to the Mt. Baker Peak. Five participants began at the trailhead of Baker Mountain to the Peak. Three entries were left blank and one entry started from Main Street and Lake Flower to Mt. Baker peak. Only one entry was inconclusive due to poor drawing.

The second question asked how long does it take to get from the beginning of Haystack Mountain to the top of Haystack Mountain? (In terms of Minutes and one way). Ten out of the sixteen responses stated it takes two hours or less.

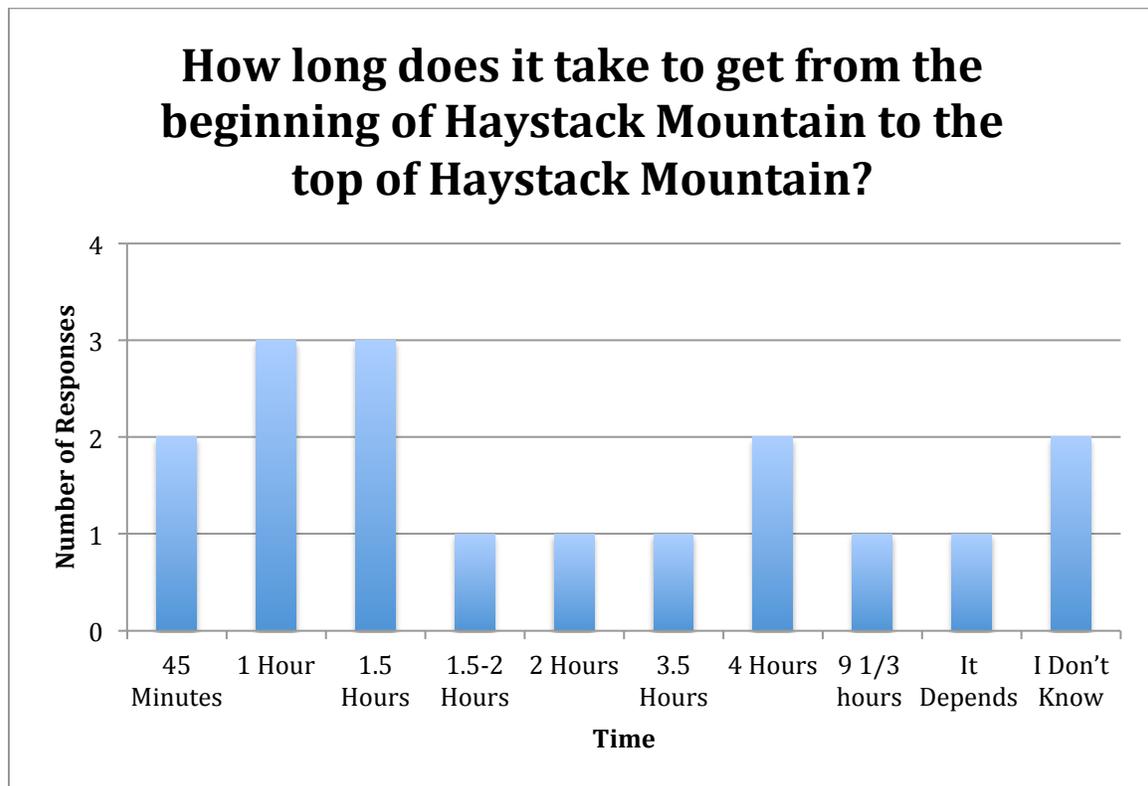


Table 20: Time it takes to get from the beginning of Haystack Mountain to Haystack Mountain Peak

The next question asked students to identify which trail is highest in elevation and which one is lowest in elevation. McKenzie trail was identified as the highest in elevation. One participant left the answer blank, two answers included VIC trail names, and there was one with unknown handwriting, which was listed as other.

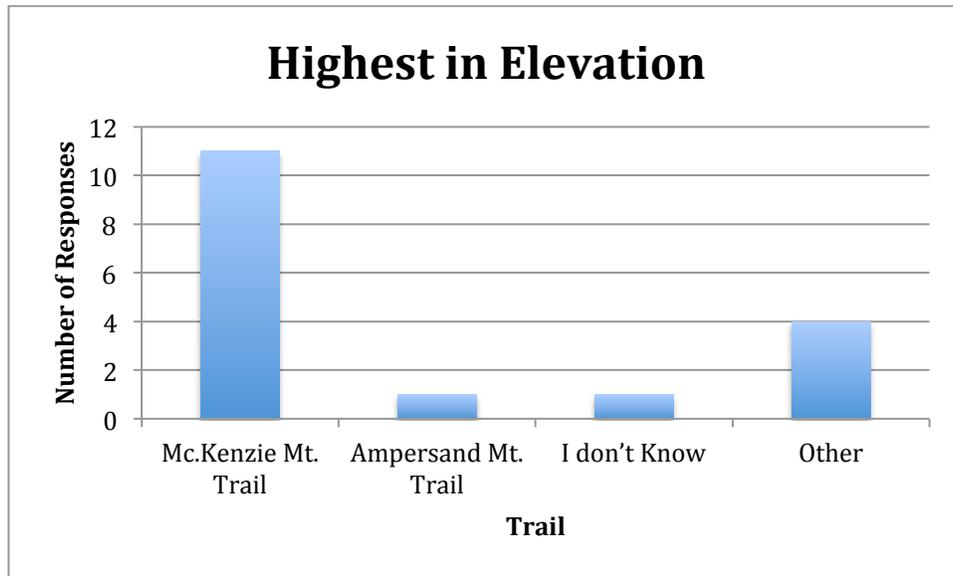


Table 21: Highest Elevated 6ers Trail

Baker Mount was identified as the lowest in elevation by a majority of the participants. Once again two participants used VIC trails, one left blank, and one with unknown handwriting, which was listed as other.

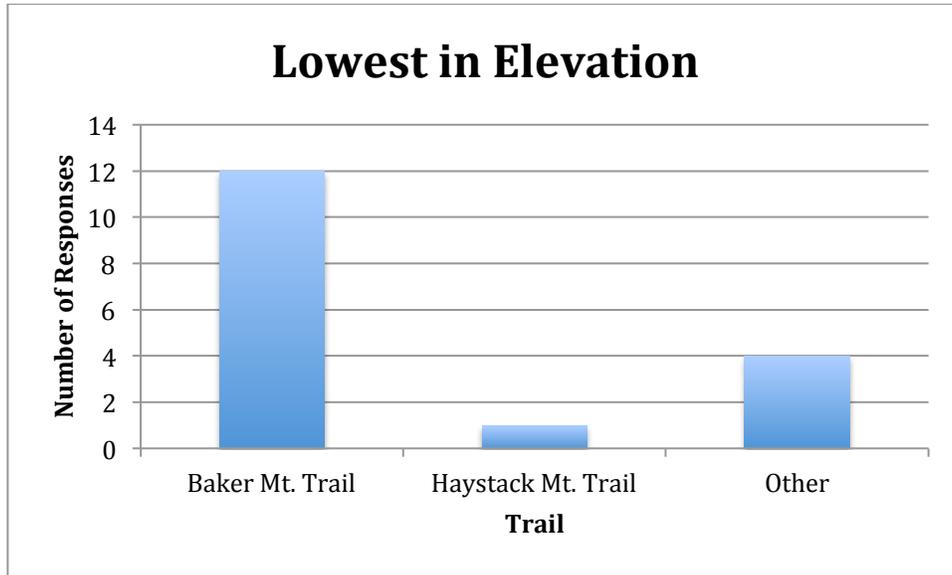


Table 22: Lowest Elevated 6ers Trail

Finally participants were asked to identify which trail was easiest to hike and which trail was most difficult to hike. According to participants, Baker Mt. was identified as the easiest to hike by a majority of the group. One participant left the result blank and two had unknown handwriting, which is defined as other.

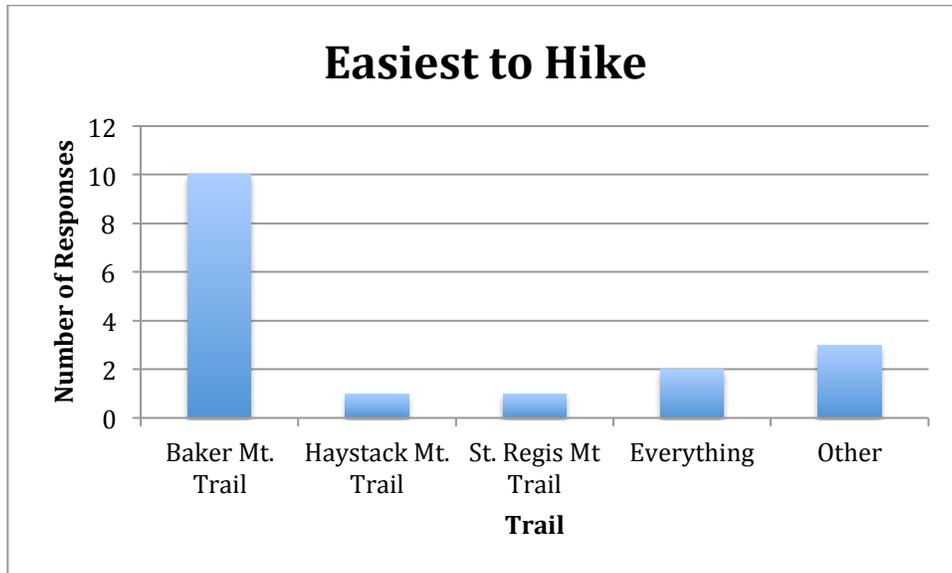


Table 23: Easiest 6ers Trail to Hike

McKenzie Mt. trail was identified as the most difficult to hike followed by Ampersand Mt. trail. The other responses included one VIC trail, one response left blank and two responses with unknown writing.

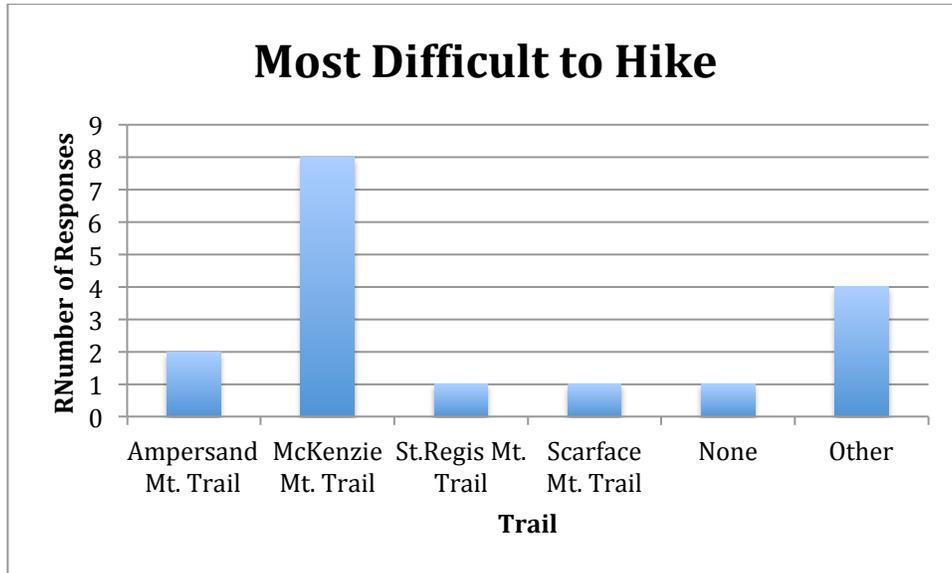


Table 24: Most Difficult 6ers Trail to Hike

Next participants took part in an open discussion section. Participants were asked what were their opinions of the VIC map and what would be their suggested improvements to the VIC map. Participants stated the following:

- Map should include estimated time to hike
- A distance and elevation scale similar to the 6ers map
- More information on locations
- Color scheme is off- less green
- Trail signs should match the colors on the map
- Drawn to scale
- Topological lines and elevation marked
- Color code difficulty of trail- maybe inclination
- The overlapping trails are hard to follow
- Color of each trail is definitive- not sure which color is which

Adirondack Night of Horror

During the event we offers shuttle service between PSC campus and the VIC starting at six pm and ending at eleven-thirty at night. The event started at seven pm and concluded around ten-thirty at night. According to number of waivers signed, at least 138 people showed up to the event. Out of the 138 documented participants plus those undocumented participants, 89 participants took a post survey. The results can be seen by the graph provided bellow. Out of the 89 participants 87 recorded what means of transportation was used to get between the VIC from campus. A majority of the participants drove or carpooled to and from the event. Others took advantage of the shuttle service provided.

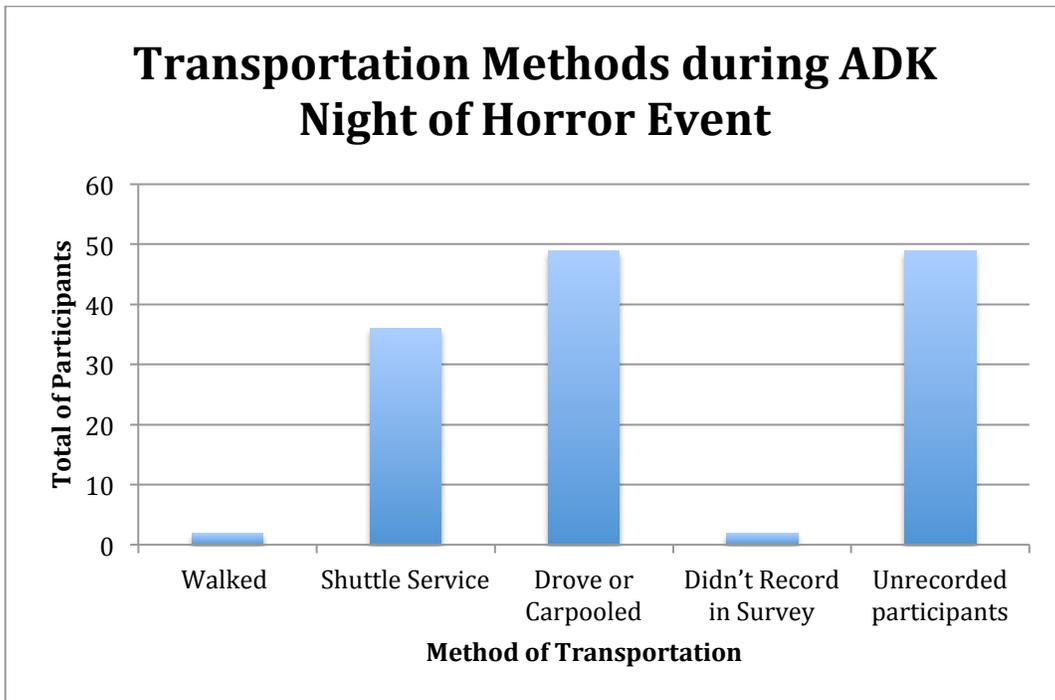


Table 25: Transportation Method used to get between the VIC and Campus

Part of the survey, we asked participants what would be some of the changes could have been made. The following are some of the replies related to barriers:

- Better lighting or old school lanterns
- Better maintenance of trails
- More consistency, meaning make it an annual thing at the VIC

Throughout the event I heard participants make the following remarks:

- This was the first time at the VIC
- I never knew the VIC was this close to campus
- I think I might come here more often
- I wish this was open to the public, they would enjoy it
- The VIC is cool
- During the winter you can go skiing and snowshoeing. Where can I get snowshoes and skis?

Discussion

Survey Monkey/Previous Capstones/Adirondack Night of Horror

Results do not give a good representation of the PSC population due to the low quantity of responses. Although the survey was sent out twice through email, other research methods can provide better results. Because the survey was sent in conjunction with two other groups in the capstone, questions were limited leading to limited results.

Utilizing the survey results found in the capstone made by Nathaniel and Steve barriers were identified and a new survey was sent out to students. Barriers identified included programming, signage, general knowledge of the VIC, and access to the VIC. The purpose of the new survey was to identify specific solutions student would like to see in order to confront those barriers, while questioning and clarifying student's existing knowledge of the VIC. Student responses were constrained to specific answers to address barriers with realistic goals that could be addressed with-in the capstone period.

In table 4 students identified the survival skills workshop and a haunted walk through the VIC as the two most popular activity students want to see at the VIC. The survivalist workshop and the Adirondack Night of Horror had several barriers that needed to be addressed in order for its success.

The biggest barrier was how students, who wanted to take part in these programs, were going to access the VIC. Marketing transportation and appropriate signage was key in accessing the VIC. The large portion of the students who attended the event utilized the shuttle service properly displayed through emails, and signs at the pick-up and drop-off locations. The barrier to access to the VIC was addressed by displaying the VIC map

located in the trail register. The results could not have found if it wasn't for the addressing the barriers for these events.

The survey question addressed in table 5 was not addressed due to the limited time frame. In order to address the barrier of access to equipment, further surveys will need to be conducted to fully understand the students desire to winter equipment. This included location of current equipment, quantity amount, storage of equipment, cost for equipment, rental cost, and more.

Trail Registration

The Trail Registration log was posted for 24 days and provided a lot of useful information. The registration log unearthed some barriers about accessing the trail that were not originally introduced or part of the original purpose of posting the trail registration log. Management, safety/security, communication at the VIC is some of the barriers found during the study. Results were not very conclusive or a good representation of access of the VIC due to the lack of participant's fully completing the information sought in the trail register and the format of the trail registration sheet.

The purpose of the trail registration was to find out who accessed the Bobcat trail, when do participants access the Bobcat trail, how many people accessed the trail, how long participants utilize the trails, and finally provide trail information to users. The registration sheet was originally formatted with the intention of participant registering individually and would completely fill out the desired information. Due to how it was formatted and the lack of instructions, results did not meet the original purpose however results did prove valuable.

The results found in table 11 and table 12 showing which day of the week the VIC trails are being utilized and times. These dates and times can be used to determine when users are available and how long they are available. In order to increase PSC usage of the VIC, the popular dates and times found in the results can be utilized to determine when programs and events can expect the largest student involvement.

There were a lot of factors contributing to the results found in the trail registration besides the ones listed above. If the trail registration were posted for a longer duration of time, results potentially may have been different. In the process leading to setting up the

trail registration, some barriers appeared. It was very difficult to communicate with management personnel at the VIC. Multiple attempts and various methods were made to establish communication with VIC management.

At first, the use of emails was sent to management and there wasn't a response for some period of time. Eventually a response was received and the conversation began through an exchange of emails. In the process of exchanging emails, management was sought out at the premises and with little luck management was not available or was not present on the property at the time.

Many phone calls were also made to contact the VIC building and the following happened: no one answering the main phone; someone picking up and due to the lack of knowledge of how to use the phone system the call was dropped; calls were transferred and no one picked up; management could not be located on the VIC property.

After a long period of exchanging emails, phone calls, and face-to-face conversation the trail registration box was ready to set up, the VIC did not have the appropriate tools to set it up. Facilities were contacted to borrow the proper tools needed to set it up. According to management, the VIC currently mainly utilizes their personal equipment to perform tasks at hand or rely on facilities for equipment. By the VIC not having their own equipment on property, it may take time for management to acquire tools necessary to complete a task.

While creating the trail registration sheet, consideration was taken solely to complete its purpose. After having the completely setting it up, a safety concern arose. In general a trail registers in the Adirondack High Peak region asks for basic information that will provide management trail usage information and can be used to locate a user in

case of emergency (VanLaer, 2014). Safety was not taken into consideration when posting the registration box. Further research must be done before assuming safety as a barrier to accessing the VIC however it is a possibility. There is a possibility that since the registration box has been set up, users will feel safer on the trail. Campus safety or management can now periodically check and insure trails are clear of users or during an emergency locate them.

Focus Group

One of the biggest difficulties in conducting the focus group was finding people for it. An email was sent out to recruit people to be a part of the focus group and no one replied to it. Due to the lack of incentives, such as a raffle or free gift certificate, it is difficult to acquire participants. The decision was made to ask a FYS professor to use their class as a focus group. The results were entirely created by first-year student. Because responses were by first-year students, they were limited responses and not a good representation of the entire PSC community. Although the focus group parameters were not met, by limiting to one demographic, data was found very useful.

First-year students give fresh and new perspectives to how the map is understood and they are also the target market to increasing the usage of the VIC since they are the largest demographic of students on campus. Students are expected to learn about all aspects of the college campus including various departments and how they inter-relate. This is done during welcome week and during their first-year at PSC. The focus group result leads to several possible conclusions/barrier; by the end of the first semester, first-year students do not understand how to interpret maps; they were not given the proper knowledge to understand the VIC trails and its map; the VIC map is not sufficient enough to allow the user the ability to navigate through the 25-miles of trails.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Trail registration Log

							Please Check [✓]		
	Date	Time In	Time Out	Destination/ Route	First Name	Last Name	Student	Employee	Other
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									
13									
14									
15									
16									
17									
18									
19									
20									
21									

Appendix B: Saranac Lake 6ers Map

Please see Physical copy of Capstone for an exact Copy of Saranac Lake 6ers Map

Appendix C: VIC Map

Please see Physical copy of Capstone for an exact Copy of VIC Map

Appendix D: Adirondack Night of Horror Post Survey

Name:

	Worst				Best
Did this event meet your goals and expectations?	1	2	3	4	5
In your opinion, did the date and time work well?	1	2	3	4	5
In your opinion, did the location work well?	1	2	3	4	5
What was your favorite part of the event?	1	2	3	4	5
What changes would you make for the future?	1	2	3	4	5

How did you find out about this event? Check all that apply:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook | <input type="checkbox"/> Email |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Posters in the Student Center | <input type="checkbox"/> Raffle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Posters in the Academic Building | <input type="checkbox"/> Fellow Student |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Posters in the dorm rooms | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pine Scent News | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |

How did you get to the VIC?

- I drove/ carpoled
- I took the PSC Vans
- I walked the trails

Additional comments:

Appendix E: Trail Registration Results

							Please Check [✓]		
	Date	Time In	Time Out	Destination/ Route	First Name	Last Name	Student	Employee	Other
1	10/22/15	5:20	5:40		Derrick	Fellows	✓		
2	10/22/15	3:40			Eric	Juers	✓		
3	10/29/15	3:00	6:00		Brandon	Norton			✓
4	10/30/15	1:00	1:30		Ben	Weinstein	✓		
5	10/30/15	2:00	4:00		Sean	McCann	✓		
6	11/2/15	10:50	11:30		Ashley	Evans	✓		
7	11/2/15	11:30			Kelly	Linehan		✓	
8	11/3/15	12:03			Collene &Isabella	Padron	✓		
9	11/3/15	5:00	5:30		Eric	Juers	✓		
10	11/4/15	1:00	4:30		Jim	Shorts			✓
11	11/4/15	3:35	4:25	Heron Marsh	Paige	Buchholz	✓		
12	11/4/15	4:52	5:22		Maria & Sarah		✓		
13	11/6/15	8:30		Loggers Loop	Peggy & Bob	Bulton			✓
14	11/7/15	1:40			Derrick	Fellows	✓		
15	11/8/15	2:20	3:00		Maria & Emily		✓		
16	11/10/15	1:00	2:20	All-ish	Cassie & Matt	Levac			✓
17	11/11/15	3:15	5:00	Building	Paige	Buchholz	✓		
18	11/14/15	10:14		Building	Julia	Ho	✓		
19	11/15/15	10:45	12:20	VIC	The Burns Group			✓	✓
20	11/15/15	11:20			Cody	Dennis	✓		