



Ecotourism in the Roanoke River Region: Impacts and Opportunity

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NCGROWTH was founded in 2012 to help businesses create good jobs and to help communities create sustainable and equitable opportunities for their people. With a passionate staff and a dynamic pool of graduate student analysts, we partner with businesses, communities, governments and other organizations to tackle outcome-based economic development and entrepreneurship projects. NCGrowth is funded by the Frank Hawkins Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise, US Economic Development Administration, GoldenLEAF Foundation, and Z Smith Reynolds Foundation.

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Research Advisor

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The Roanoke
River Paddle
Trail is a unique
asset that can be
leveraged to boost
the economic
growth of the five
county Roanoke
River region ...

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Executive Summary

NCGrowth in partnership with Roanoke River Partners (RRP) analyzed the annual economic impact of the Roanoke River Paddle Trail. It should be noted that the Paddle Trail is just one of Roanoke River Partner's initiatives; the organization has a broader impact on the region not reflected in this report through a variety of collaborative partnerships and activities such as marketing and promotion of partner events, reoccurring partner meetings, and attracting and hosting regional, state and national events.

This analysis found that the Paddle Trail is a unique asset that can be leveraged to boost the economic growth of the five county Roanoke River region (inclusive of Bertie, Halifax, Martin, Northampton, and Washington Counties). The current annual impacts of the trail include:

- **Employment:** The Paddle Trail supports approximately 7 jobs in the region over the course of each year.
- **Income:** On an annual basis the Trail contributes \$175,680 of personal income to workers in the region.
- **Economic Growth:** Each year the Trail contributes \$553,270 to the growth of the regional economy.
- **Multiplier Effect:** For every dollar spent as a result of the Paddle Trail \$1.64 is generated in the regional economy. This result is comparable to other rural ecotourism attractions that have been studied across the country.

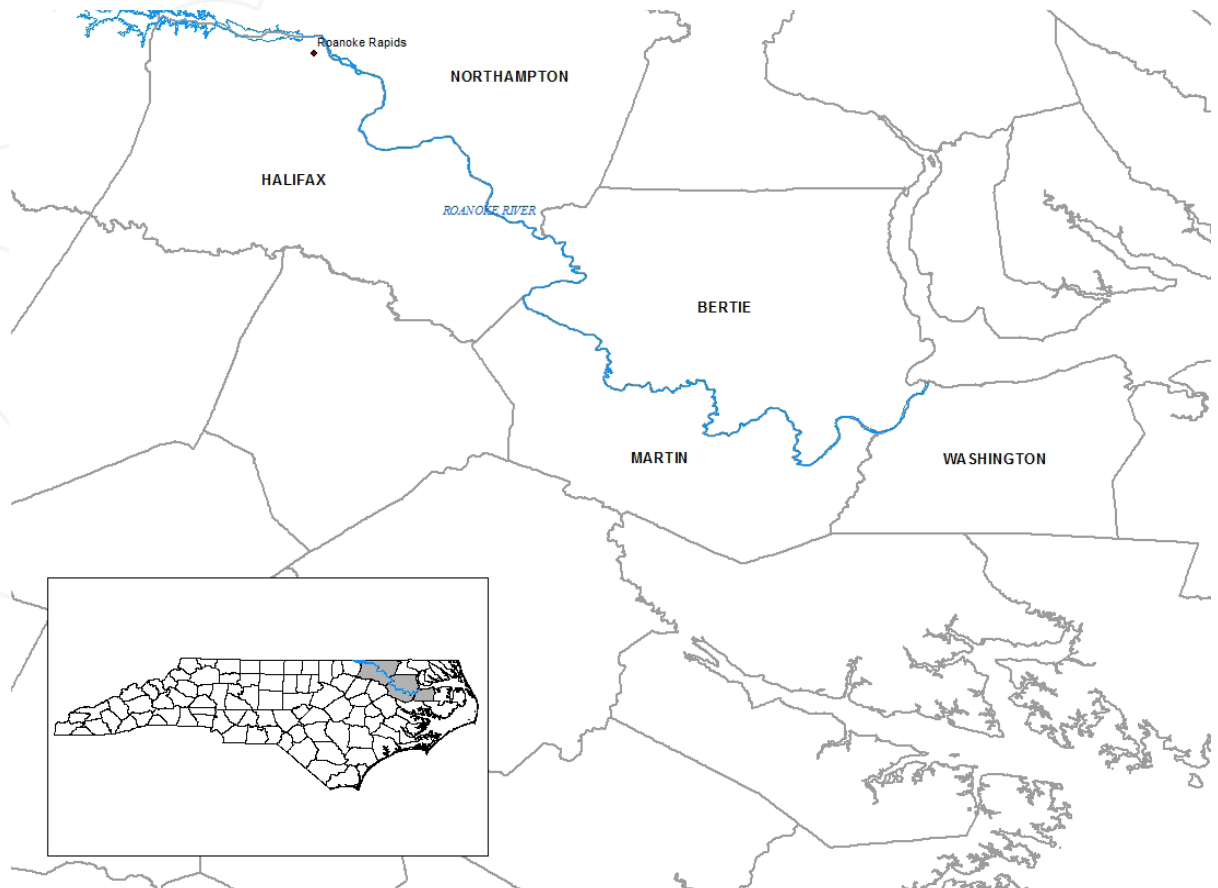
These economic impacts are driven by two primary activities: the operational spending of the Roanoke River Partners organization and spending by Trail users on groceries, equipment, lodging and other needs. RRP's efforts can boost the economic impact of the Paddle Trail by increasing visitor spending while they are in the region – either through marketing efforts to grow the annual number of overnight visits or through efforts to grow complementary attractions such as guided tours and unique dining experiences that enhance visitors'

experiences. Encouraging visitors to shop at locally-owned businesses, versus chain retailers, will also increase the impact of their spending as this reduces leakage out of the local economy. Strategies to increase the impact of the Paddle Trail are covered in more detail in the final section of this report.

Introduction

The Roanoke River is 410 miles long and up to 5 miles wide in some places. It runs through Virginia and Northeastern North Carolina. About 200 miles of the river resides in North Carolina. The River has historically served the region as a source for food and transportation of goods between North Carolina and Virginia; it was heavily used during the Civil War because of its natural curves that served as great places to build forts and launch attacks. Also, it provided shelter for runaway slaves seeking sanctuary and a route to freedom.

Figure 1. Roanoke River Region in Northeastern North Carolina



In 1996, the five counties of Bertie, Halifax, Martin, Northampton, and Washington came together to form an initiative to create a positive, healthy vision and future for the historic communities that reside throughout the Roanoke River region. This initiative led them to create the Roanoke River Partners (RRP) organization in 1997, an independent non-profit. The first item on the agenda was to create the Roanoke River Paddle Trail. The main goal of the Paddle Trail was to increase awareness and build infrastructure for campers with a series of platforms that could be used for camping, bird watching, boating, fishing, and other outdoor activities. This in turn will bring guests to the area and promote regional commerce through the visitor spending on food, gas, camping equipment, fishing gear, camping fees, guide fees, and license fees.

Today RRP has 15 camping platforms and one on-the-ground campsite in three regions along the river: the Upper and Lower Roanoke and the Cashie River. In 2015 these platforms attracted over 1200 overnight visits.



Figure 2. Roanoke River Trail Camping Platform

Methodology

This study used the industry standard economic impact modeling software IMPLAN (short for “Impact analysis for PLANning”) to estimate the annual economic impact of the RRP Paddle Trail in the five county Roanoke River region.

The Paddle Trail’s impact derives from two activities:

- the annual operational spending of Roanoke River Partners, and
- regional spending by RRP Paddle Trail users.

The model inputs from these two activities totaled \$411,840.

User Survey

A survey of Paddle Trail users was conducted to gather inputs for the economic impact analysis. Two user surveys were conducted to determine average spending by Paddle Trail users. One survey was targeted to trail users who had made a reservation for a camping platform in the last two years and was distributed by email to a list provided by RRP. The survey was sent by email to 771 users, of these users 139 responded for a response rate of 18%.

The second survey was targeted to Roanoke River users that did not stay on a platform – either because they visited just for the day or because they paid for lodging elsewhere. These users are much more difficult to track; this survey was distributed via social media and received 25 responses. Summarized results from both surveys are included in the appendix of this report.

Economic Impact Modeling

IMPLAN modeling software was used to calculate how visitor's expenditures affected the regional economy. IMPLAN is an economic impact model that utilizes national input-output structural matrices to estimate the 'ripple effect' of an economic activity – in this case visitor spending and the operations of the Roanoke River Partnership.

IMPLAN reports three impact types: direct, indirect, and induced. Direct impact results from expenditures made directly from end consumers to a business. Indirect impact is a result of business to business spending – for example a business purchasing inputs from a supplier. Induced impact is the result of spending by workers in the affected industries on consumer goods and services. All of these impacts are expressed in three different metrics: employment, labor income, and economic output. The employment figure represents the jobs supported by the modeled activity. Labor income are the wages provided by those jobs. Economic output is the contribution to overall economic growth.

Survey Results

Expenditures

In the surveys users were asked to estimate their spending in the Roanoke River region across several categories. Expenses were broken into the following categories: lodging, equipment rental, license, restaurants, groceries, shopping, transportation, guide service fees, and other expenses. From this data we built a spending profile for the average trail user in terms of their per person, per day expenditures (Table 1). To obtain the total visitor spending this per day/per person expense was multiplied across the average party size (based on survey responses) and the number of user nights in 2015, obtained from Roanoke River Partners.

Table 1: Survey Results: Average Overnight Visitor Spending Per Person, Per Day

Expense Categories	Average Spending per Person per Day
Lodging	\$12.21
Equipment	\$2.27
License	\$2.05
Restaurant	\$10.24
Groceries	\$5.94
Shopping	\$2.40
Transportation	\$7.00
Guide Fees	\$29
Other	\$1.22
TOTAL	\$44.33

The average overnight user spent \$44 per person, per day with an average trip length of 3 days (2 nights). The average group size was four people, making for a total trip expenditure of \$530 for the average trip. Multiplied across the number of user nights in 2015 this spending totals approximately \$340,000 annually in the Roanoke River region.

Overnight Visitors Drive Economic Impact

This analysis focuses on overnight visitors because their spending is new to the economic area and can be reliably estimated based on survey data. Same day visitors are difficult to track and gather data from since they do not need to make a reservation, but more importantly same day visitors are much more likely to come from within the five-county Roanoke River Region. For this reason their spending cannot be considered a direct result of the paddle trail; if they had not gone on the paddle trail presumably they would have spent that money on a different activity in the region having the same economic effect. Therefore we cannot say that this economic effect is solely due to the paddle trail. Additionally, even if a day user comes from outside of the Roanoke River Region it is very likely that any expenses on provisions for their trip are made in their home region.

User Profile

In addition to spending patterns the survey results gives insight into who the typical Roanoke River Paddle Trail user is. From this survey sample, Paddle Trail users *tend* to be:

- Male: 81% of survey respondents were male.
- Baby Boomers and Generation X: 31% of respondents were age 55-64 and 45% of respondents were age 35-54.
- Educated: 86% of respondents have a bachelor's degree or higher.
- Affluent: 50% of respondents reported a total household income in 2014 of \$100,000 or more.
- Naturalists: while on the Paddle Trail 74% reported participating in wild-life watching and 57% participated in bird watching.
- Dedicated: 78% reported they were very satisfied with their most recent trip on the trail and 84% indicated they plan to return in the next year. This satisfaction rate is quite high and shows that the Paddle Trail has a dedicated user base.
- Local: 79% of registered trail users are from North Carolina. This matches the percentage of North Carolinians in the survey response data as well. Drilling down further in the survey data, 35% of respondents from within the state were from Wake County. The Paddle Trail draws users from 23 additional states, see the Appendix for maps of survey respondents and a complete list of registered users' states of origin.

The efforts of Roanoke River Partners are critical in leveraging the Roanoke River paddle trail asset and increasing its regional economic impact.

Economic Impact Analysis Results

Ecotourism activities on the Roanoke River Paddle Trail support a total of 7 jobs with wages of \$175,680 annually in the five county region. Overall this activity contributes an estimated \$553,270 to the economic growth of the region each year.

Comparing the direct impacts to the total impact, the Paddle Trail has a multi-

plier effect of approximately 1.64, meaning that for every dollar spent as a result of the Paddle Trail \$1.64 is generated in the regional economy. To put this in perspective, the manufacturing industry – which is considered one of the highest impact industries by economic development practitioners – typically has a multiplier effect of around 2 to 3 times. Tourism primarily impacts the retail and service sectors which tend to have a lower per-dollar impact on the local economy. The Paddle Trail’s multiplier of 1.64 is comparable to results from other studies estimating economic impact of rural tourism attractions.¹

Table 2. Annual Economic Impact of the Roanoke River Paddle Trail in the Five County Roanoke River Region

Impact Type	Employment	Wages	Economic Growth
Direct Effect	5	\$116,630	\$338,240
Indirect Effect	1	\$42,100	\$150,440
Induced Effect	1	\$16,950	\$64,590
Total Effect	7	\$175,680	\$553,270
Multiplier (Total/Direct)	1.37	1.51	1.64

Next Steps

The Roanoke River Paddle Trail currently has a modest impact on the regional economy. The efforts of Roanoke River Partners are critical in leveraging this asset and increasing its regional economic impact. Economic impacts are driven primarily by three variables which RRP efforts can affect: 1) annual number of overnight visitors, 2) average overnight visitor spending, and 3) percent local spending. Strategies to increase each of these variables, and thereby increase the overall economic impact of the Trail, are discussed below.

- 1. Increase the annual number of visitors** – continuing efforts to build up the brand of the Roanoke River Paddle Trail as a regional paddle destination will bring more visitors into the area.

¹ An unpublished study by Dr. Tad Hara, Associate Professor at the University of Central Florida, on economic impacts of tourism in rural Oregon showed a multiplier effect of 1.44. Similarly, a 2014 paper titled *Economic Impact of Cultural Events: The Case of the Zora! Festival*, Rivera et al observed a regional multiplier effect of 1.72 for the manufacturing industry and 1.42 for Accommodation and Food Services – the industry most directly affected by tourism.

a. **Overnight stays** – To boost economic impacts the number of overnight visitors specifically needs to increase. These users typically spend more than a day visitor, but more importantly their spending is new to the regional economy and is a direct result of the Paddle Trail. Same day users typically come from within the same economic region and would have spent that money in the region even if the trail did not exist and therefore their expenditures cannot be considered a direct result of the trail.

b. **Marketing** – The survey results offer some guidance in choosing what demographics to target, either to build on the demographics that the trail currently attracts or to identify new market segments that may be unaware of the Paddle Trail. Building awareness of the Paddle Trail beyond North Carolina markets would be most impactful.

c. **Facility Improvements** – Survey respondents mentioned several suggested improvements that could increase traffic:

- i. adding or improving bathroom facilities
- i. shuttle service
- ii. more camping platforms
- iii. better signage on and off the river
- iv. more access points and designated parking
- v. suggested itineraries
- vi. cultural/historical information
- vii. information on current river conditions

2. **Increase visitor spending** – The survey results reported here indicate that trail users tend to have disposable income to spend while on vacation, the question becomes what kind of offerings would allow more opportunities for visitor spending that enhances their experience while also maintaining the natural appeal of the trail? Several respondents expressed interest in riverside dining options that could break up a long day on the river. Signage and boat access at existing riverside businesses, like the Cypress Grill, could be a simple first step.

3. **Direct visitors to locally-owned businesses** – Spending at local businesses versus chain stores has a higher per-dollar impact on the local economy. Buy local campaigns or co-marketing with local retailers can increase visitors' awareness and likelihood of spending with a locally owned business. In turn this keeps more of the visitor spending dollars circulating in the local economy. Strategies that could be employed to increase the likelihood of visitors to spend local include:

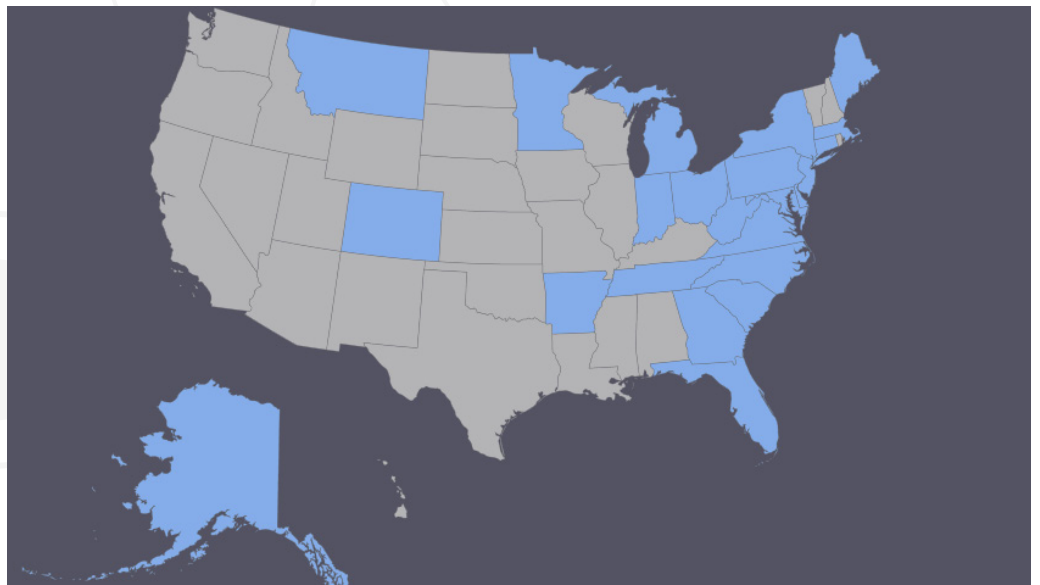
- a. Co-marketing of the paddle trail with complementary businesses
- b. Coupons for local businesses sent when a user registers for a platform
- c. Local business map posted on RRP's website, at boat put-ins, and/or sent with platform reservation confirmation
- d. Signage and access points for local businesses along the Paddle Trail



Appendix

State of Origin for Registered Users of the Roanoke River Paddle Trail, January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2015

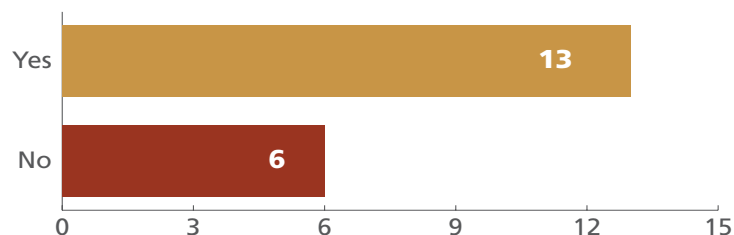
State	Number of Registered Users	Percent of Total
AL	1	0%
AR	1	0%
CO	1	0%
CT	1	0%
DC	4	1%
DE	1	0%
FL	5	1%
GA	5	1%
IN	1	0%
MA	2	0%
MD	25	3%
ME	1	0%
MI	1	0%
MN	1	0%
MT	2	0%
NC	566	79%
NJ	1	0%
NY	5	1%
OH	1	0%
PA	10	1%
SC	6	1%
TN	7	1%
VA	70	10%
WV	1	0%
Total	719	100%



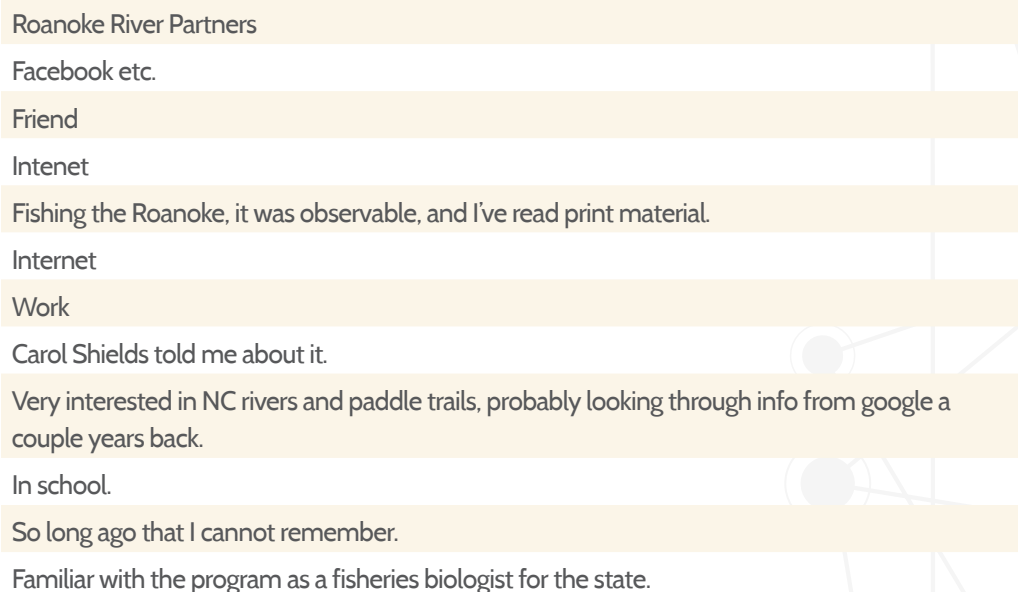
Survey Response Summary (04/28/2016)

Two surveys were administered in early spring 2016, one was distributed directly to registered users of the paddle trail and one was distributed through social media channels. The following introductory questions were only included in the survey distributed through social media.

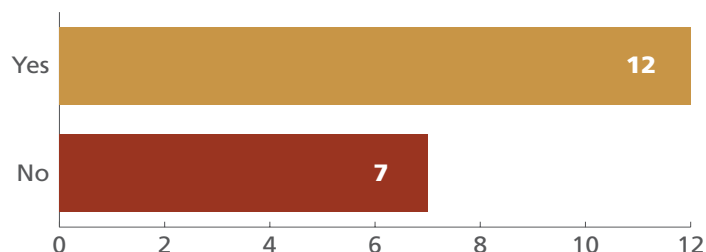
Are you familiar with North Carolina's Roanoke River Paddle Trail?



How did you find out about it?



Are you familiar with Roanoke River Partners?



What do you know about this organization?

It actually was initialized by old time friends ... A lot of time and energy has been put into this unique organization... I feel this organization will flourish ... The Roanoke River is a most

Promotes tourism on the Roanoke.

That they're awesome.

internet

Personal relationship with director

It is a group of organizations working together to raise the profile of the river area.

Not that much. I know it exist and does work to help protect the river.

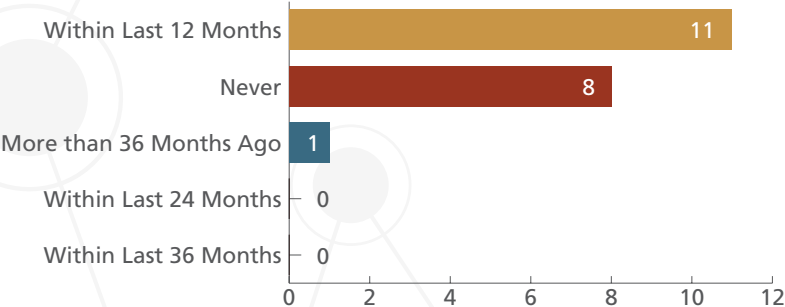
nothing really

Through FB

Does good work telling the story about outdoor activities involving the rivers and creeks of the region and of the western Albmemarle.

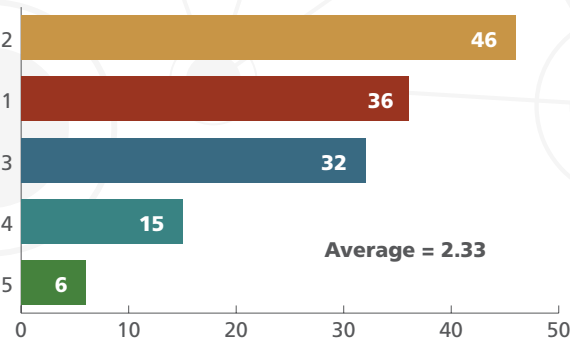
Familiar with organization as fisheries biologist

When was your last visit, if any, to North Carolina's Roanoke River Region?



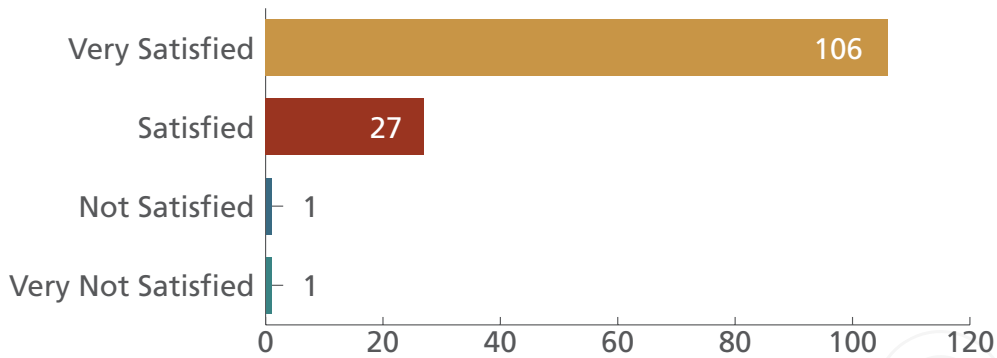
The remainder of the survey questions were included in the both the registered user survey and the social media survey.

In the past 12 months, how often did you visit North Carolina's Roanoke River Region?

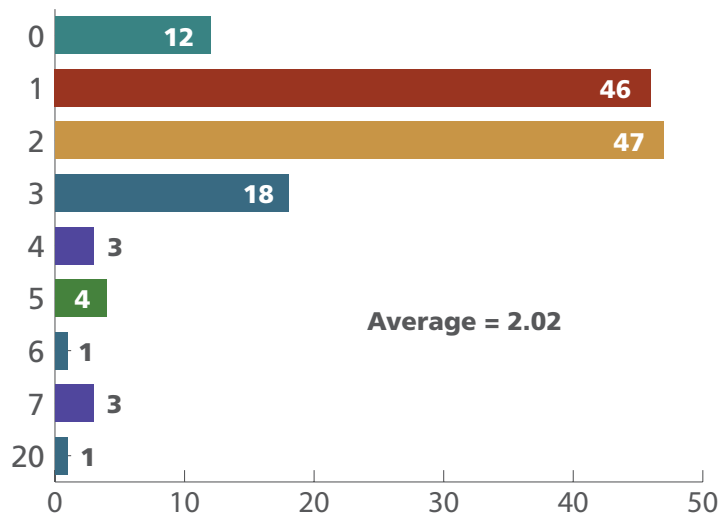


IMPACTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

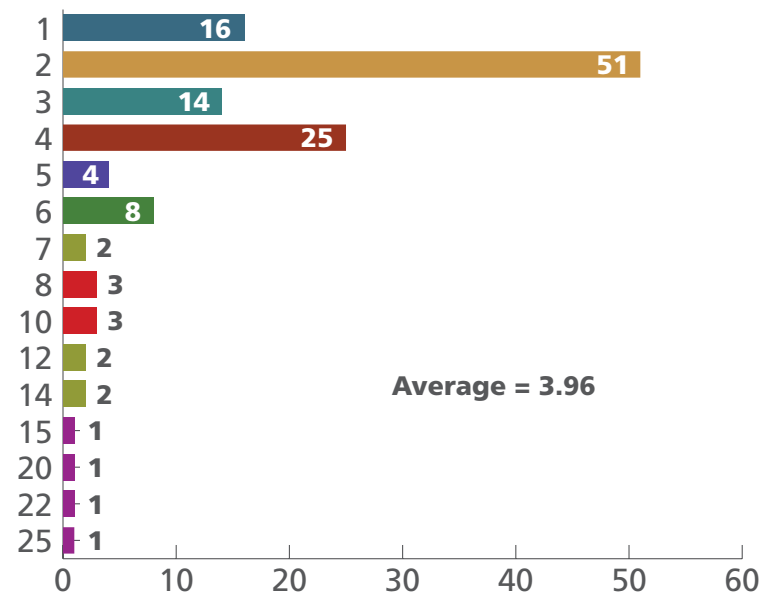
How would you rate your overall satisfaction with your most recent trip?



What was the length of your stay (in nights)?

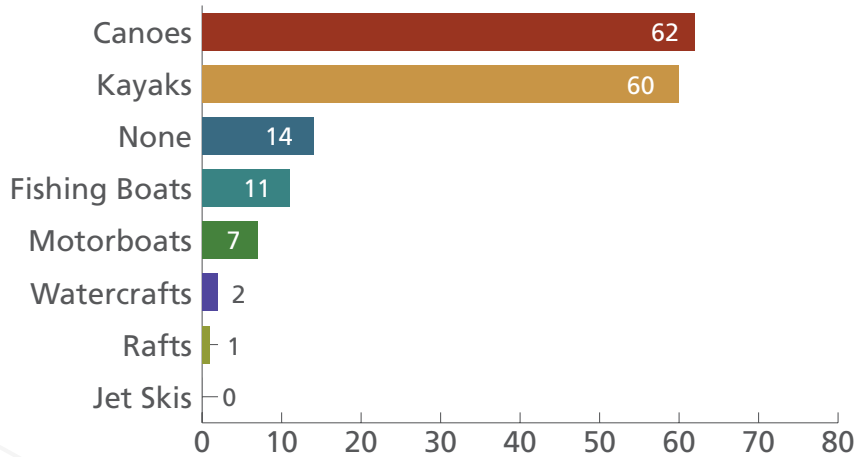


How many people were in your party?



ECOTOURISM IN THE ROANOKE RIVER REGION

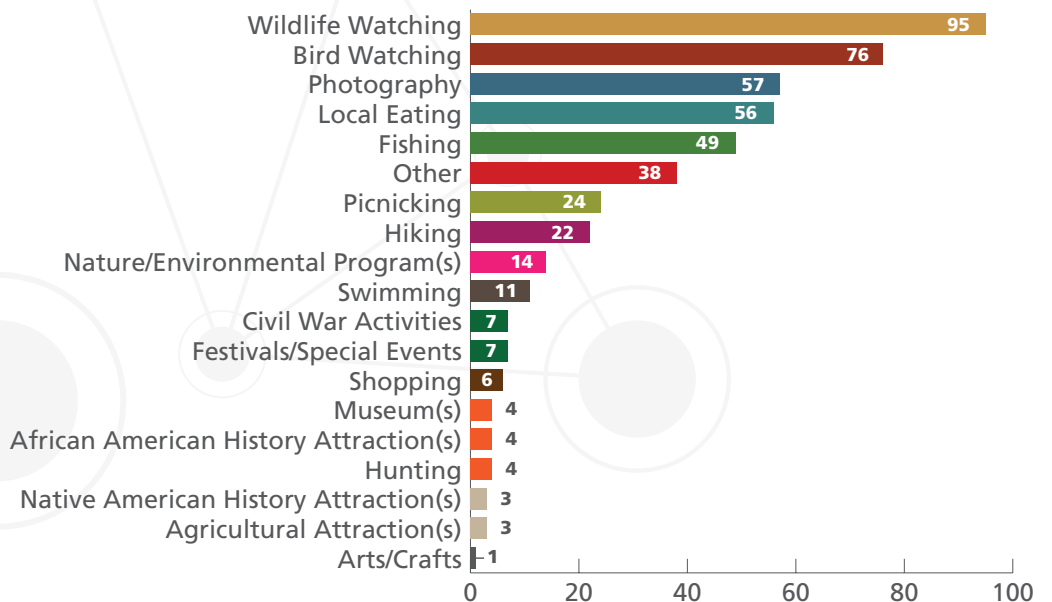
Which of the following, if any, were used on the Roanoke River by members of your party during your most recent trip?



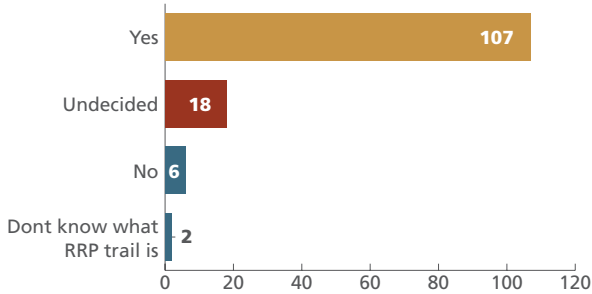
Average number of watercrafts per group.

Rafts	3.0
Canoes	2.6
Kayaks	2.6
Fishing Boats	1.1
Motorboats	0.9

Which of the following activities did you or your group participate in during your trip?

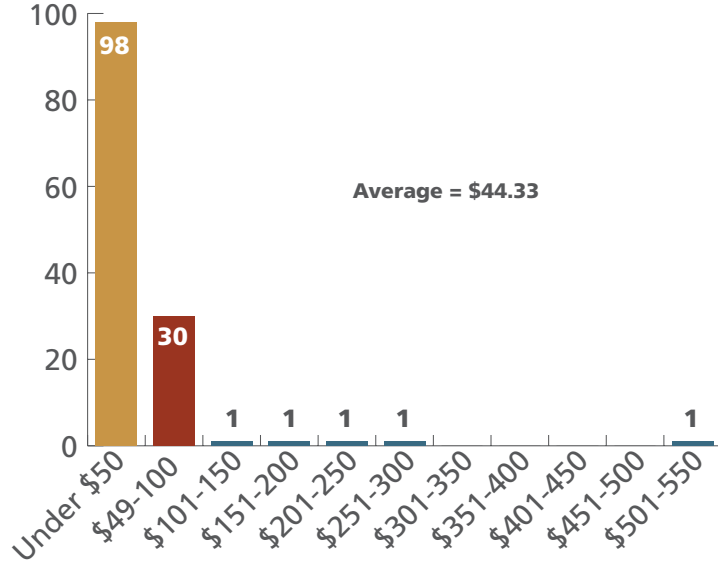


If you plan to visit North Carolina's Roanoke River Region in the next 12 months, will your visit include the Paddle/Camping trail?

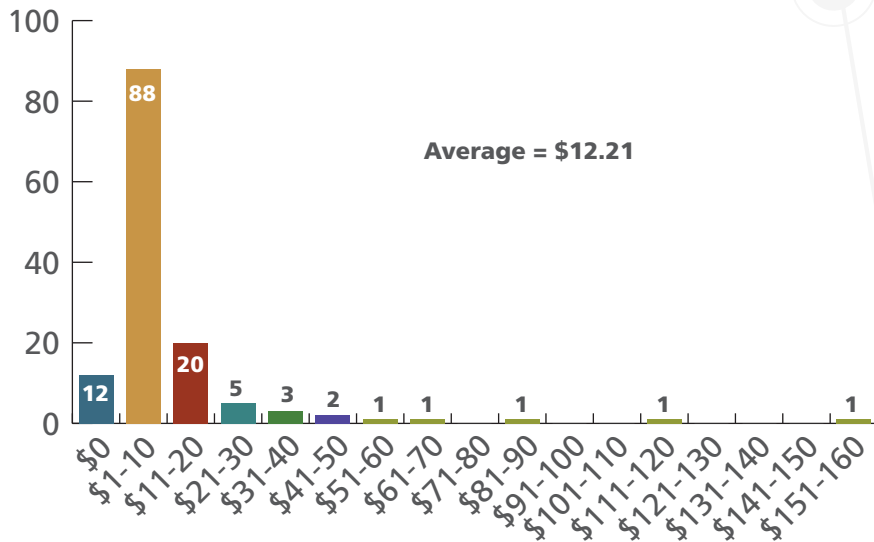


Trip Expenditures

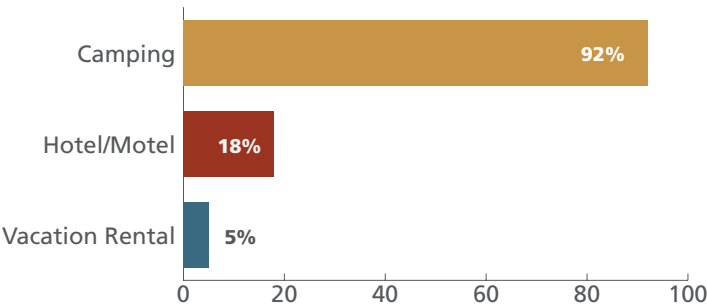
Total trip expenditure per person, per day.



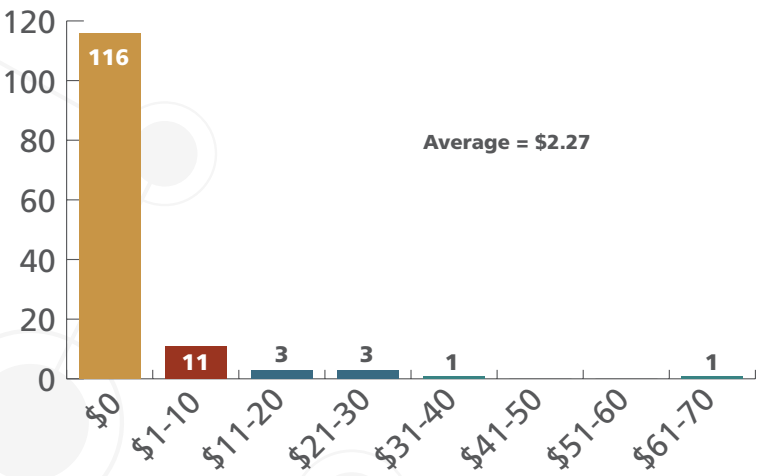
Lodging expenditure per person per day.



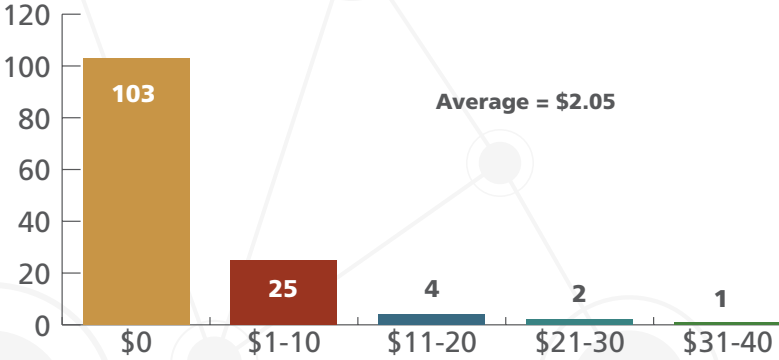
Lodging by type.



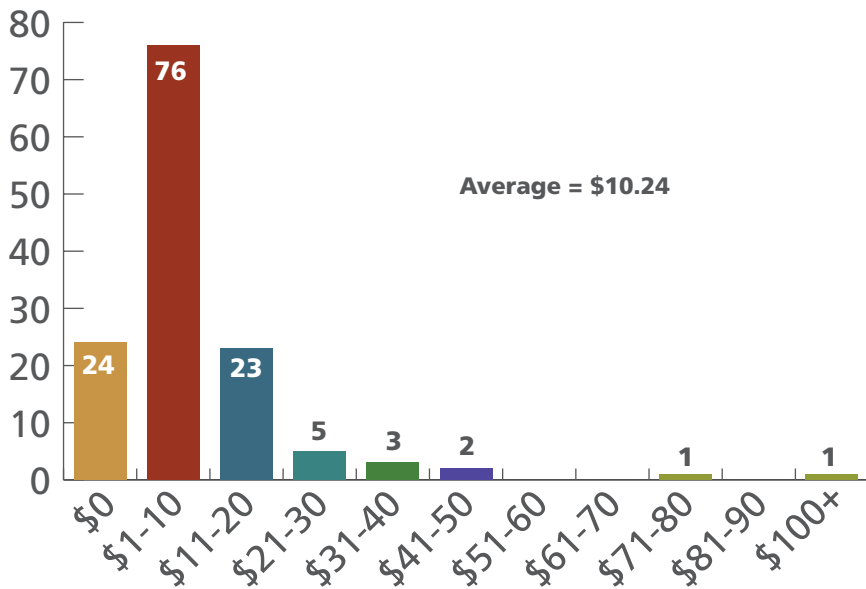
Equipment expenditure per person per day.



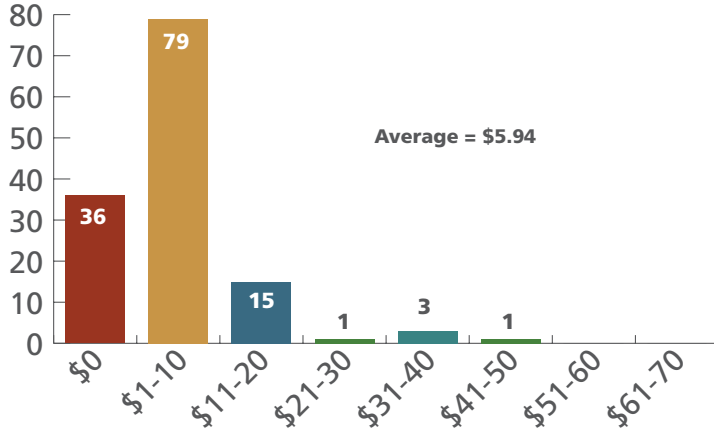
Lisence expenditure per person per day.



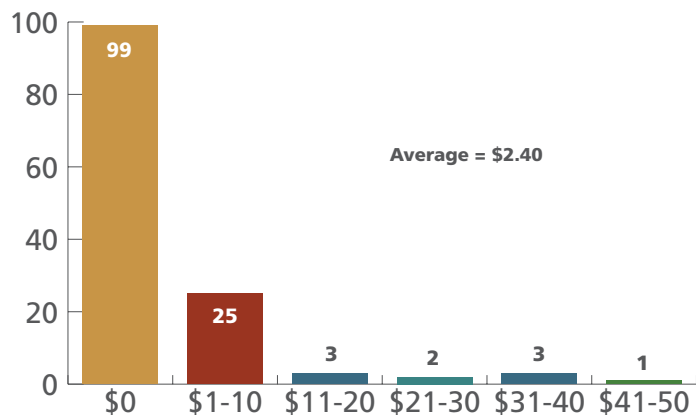
Restaurant expenditure per person per day.



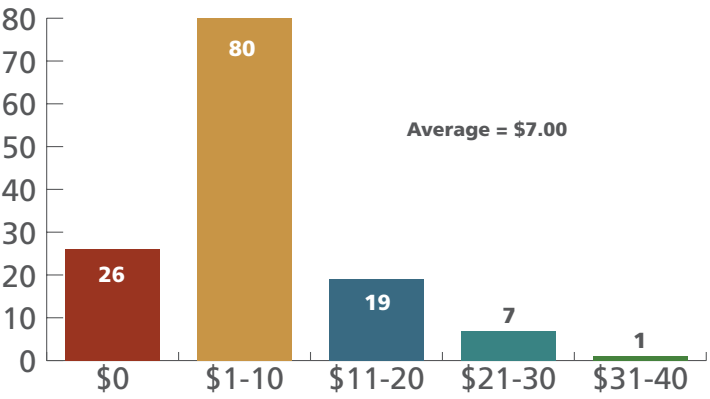
Grocery expenditure per person per day.



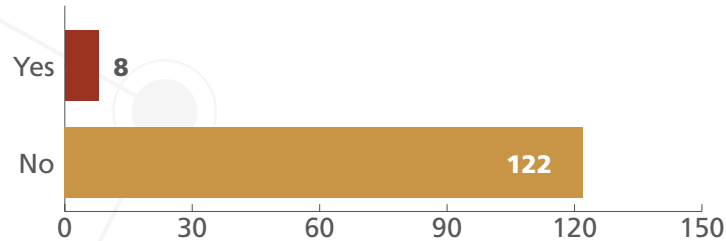
Shopping expenditure per person per day.



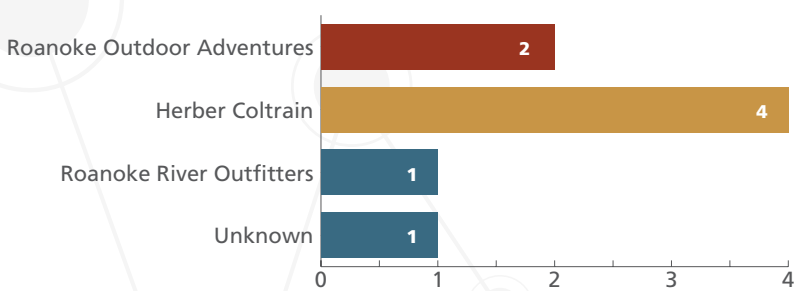
Transportation expenditure per person per day.



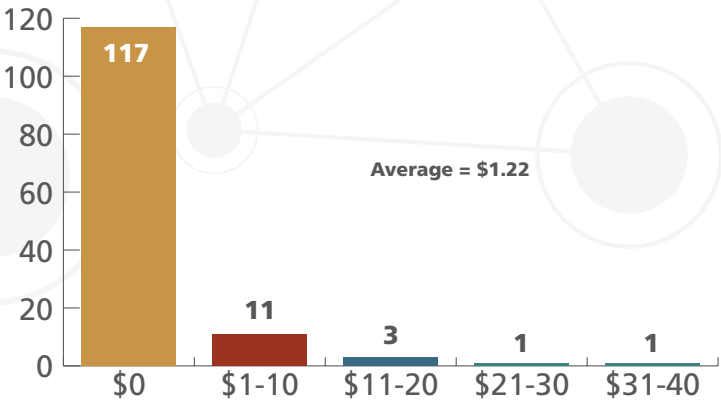
Did you use a guide service?



Guide services used.



Other expenditures per person per day.



What types of services, facilities, businesses or activities did you benefit from during your visit?

bought gas, snacks and lunch

Camping Platforms

Sunnyside Oysters, Bojangles, Hampton Inn, Camping Platforms

boat launch

camping platforms; local B&B; restaurants/grocery/liquor stores; paddle trail

Paddle Trail accommodations, take out at Plymouth.

boat ramps

Local canoe rental and shuttle

Kayak rental service, river put-in service (fee for launching boats from private property), state campground, restaurants, and gas service station

roanoke platforms and paddle trail.

Local marina, boat rental facilities

CAMPING PLATFORM

Ferry to Cape Lookout, Canoe Shuttle, dining, seafood, shopping, camping at KOA, etc.

We did ended up talking to a Guide and he gave us some advice

shuttle service, fast food, gas, groceries, use of camping platforms

Public access areas to the river and surrounding woodlands

Bed and Breakfast (Haughton Hall B&B), grocery store in Williamston, gas station in Williamston, Guide service (Roanoke Outdoor Adventures- Heeb).

Roberson's Marina - Bait/Boat Launch/Local Information/ Rental when needed. / Sunny Side Oyster Bar - Great Dinner and friendly locals. / Shamrock Restaurant - Breakfast / Green Acre

Used a dock on the Chowan river for launching our boats and parked our vehicles overnight there. Ate at several local restaurants in the vicinity.

camping platform

Gas, food

Put ins. restaurants

Canoe Rental

B&B, restaurants, gas stations

Convenience store, restaurant, boat launch

camping platforms

Wine store, restaurants,

The canoe put-ins and take-outs are well maintained and useful.

ECOTOURISM IN THE ROANOKE RIVER REGION

screened in porch, water access platform camping

Primarily the River Trail, plus local businesses.

the all in one hardware auto parts,bait ,licence tire,store

Just the Partnership (overnight kayaking)

We used the NCWRC boat ramps to access the river

none

Advice from Roberson's Marina.

Cypress Grill!

The Plymouth Oyster Bar

Absolutelly love Sunnyside Oyster Bar! Spruill Farm is a delightful place to camp. Loved paddling Deep Creek and out into the Albemarle Sound, and also Mackey's Creek

Folks at Roanokr/Cashie River Center invited us to pitch our tent on the Center's property & left the men's room open for our use - all because we indicated that we would be arriving late

Platform camps

All

Water trail info, water access.

I think the ongoing paddle trail improvements are going great

Heber Coltrain river guide, shuttle, info. Roanoke river partners camping platforms

Shuttle service from Williamston to Plymouth

Outfitter services

Boat launches and public restrooms

platforms / restaurants at beginning and end of trip

Gas station, fast food.

gas stations, grocery stores

camping platforms

Easy access to launch kayak.

Guide service, camping platforms, restaurant, police station

Boy Scout troop camped at Spruill farm landing. Did not go anywhere else that trip.

None

Roanoke River Partners help changing original reservation; also RRP maps for trip planning; RRP staff answers to questions about river conditions.

Guide and equipment rental. Fishing license and supplies. Local restaurant

Gas, food, lodging

We were at Weldon to play in the rapids

IMPACTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Gas station, hotel, restaurants, sports shop

park

Nature trail was the most important followed by visiting local eateries.

Boat launch; place to park car safely; restaurants/food store/gas station

Boat launch and parking. The Roanoke Paddle Trail.

boat ramps, camping platforms

Local business that easily provide groceries (ice!)

Motels, restaurants, food stores, police department, public parks

River Platforms

Restaurant - Motel - Wal-Mart

Gas, food shopping

we stopped at the Roanoke Sportsman tackle shop before getting on the water for some last minute supplies and, after a couple of nights on the river, visited the Cypress Grill and the

Camp stand

Kayak outfitter, hotel, camping platforms

Web map services

camping platforms, restaurants, gas

We visit for the shelter and the paddle trail. We get gas, food, supplies in Oak City, Scotland Neck, or Halifax.

bed & breakfast, state parks, national wildlife refuges, gas stations, restaurants

Camping platform

canoe rental would be great

camping platforms, visitor center

None

canoe rental

We used the public boat ramp in Weldon to put in, and benefited from secure overnight parking. Fuel was purchased at a gas station near Halifax. We benefited from USGS / Dominion

I spoke with someone on the phone who could help me plan the 4 day 3 night paddle trip

Kayaking

Put in docks, camping platforms, info online.

kayak trails

Camping platform

Restaurants, gas station, state boat landing and parking lot at Jamesville

Camping platform, boat launch, gas station, wildlife managers & enforcement officers

ECOTOURISM IN THE ROANOKE RIVER REGION

Love the river platform system!

river maps,

Parking. Boat launch. Garbage disposal. Restrooms. Restaurants.

will look at museums on next visit

Boat ramps, platforms, parking

Roanoke River Sportsman (Tackle Shop), Walmart Williamston (camping gear, food), Food Lion Windsor (food), Hess Williamston (boat gas)

restraunts, grocery stores, gas stations, bait/tackle shope

Sylvan Heights, locally owned restaurants

Awesome local food.

Bertie Peanuts, wilco Hess

Museum

Plymouth Maritime Museum

Convenience stores, Fast food

Are there any amenities/activities that you would like to see added to the roanoke river paddle trail?

even more platforms for camping

More remote large platforms

More platforms

A functional port-o-potty

Better explanation of put in areas and available parking

more put-in/take-out locations

restrooms

Add a bear box on the Royal Fern camping platform - there is a lot of bear sign and there are no good trees to hang a bear bag in such a way that it would actually be safe from a bear. / /

Garbage bins at take outs on the river would be a plus. But given that it's wilderness camping, it's also expected that there aren't these type of services/facilities available.

Composting toilets

No. loved the trail and the platforms were great.

MORE CAMPING PLATFORMS ON THE FIRST SECTION IN THE RIVER TRAIL

more clearly defined signage

More camping platforms.

Maybe a monitored VHF radio service?

IMPACTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Please don't make it more "commercialized" or refined. It's great to go camping places like this where it's still rustic and there's a sense of being out in the wild on your own. It would really change the experience if there were too many people around or too many amenities.

Additional camping areas including dry ground locations.

Consider one more covered platform - but please, don't improve it at all. It is beautiful the way it is. Maybe a trash clean up at some point.

It's my understanding Roberson's Marina is no longer in business. May need another boat launch.

It would be nice to have more covered and/or screened-in platforms for bugs and rainy weather.

River Landing needs an appropriate kayak launch

Need more river access. We had issues getting off the river safely.

Shuttles between take outs

Waterfront restaurant/bar

Privy

Great as it is.

MOre platforms!

It's great now.

no

outhouses! Saves carrying the bucket.

As you build upon these platforms, additional locations that can be reached both by car and boat would be wonderful. We miss having a campfire at some of the platforms, but understand none

Better canoe shuttle service -- the guy we hired was carrying a gun and ranting about the government. That's his right, of course, but a more professional operation would be nice. We couldn't find one.

Better platform maintenance

More Bed and Breakfast opportunities

We love it as is!!

More patforms

Keep the wilderness

Need secure parking, and better info on possible shuttle services.

not really....more platforms

No

toilets, fire rings

toilets

ECOTOURISM IN THE ROANOKE RIVER REGION

none

A companion hiking trail which follows the river(s) so a troop could backpack from one camp site to another.

No

no

Not really. A great resource

Bears

A couple more camping sites above Williamston to fill the long gap on the upstream section. I'd like to do the whole river from Weldon to the Albemarle Sound.

Historical/cultural info at some camping platforms would be cool.

Would like to see another platform on the Chowan River further upstream from the Island or possibly in Bennets Creek.

Possibly some ground camping options. (Actually I'm not sure if you have these upstream, my visit camping on the trail was down by Lost Boat, etc...)

Weldon is great when it is running but I would like to spend some time on the paddle trail.

better hiking or greenway along river. More put ins and paring for paddle craft. More pubs and restaurants. The choices are not that great in Roanoke rapids or they are unknown to out of towners. We like nice pubs with craft beer and good food.

Make sure river trail markers are more clearly visible. Some looked faded.

better signage

no

No

No

Less is better it is perfect as is. Remember the purpose for these trips is to get away from the society.

Replace signage as applicable

Yes. It has been disappointing over the years to see logging activities along many stretches of the river. It would be nice to see, at the very least, RRP work with local landowners to create an economic incentive for a visual buffer in support of the paddle trail. This would be a great use of some carbon dollars if they every become available. It would also be nice to see some upgrades to the platforms. Perhaps the addition of a nice tree house placed strategically so that it can draw enough interests to pay for itself.

more regulation sized striped bass

More camp stands, improved kayak/canoe ramps, more public boat access

toilet seats at platforms

Keep it minimally marked. No need to advertise up North, plenty of folks in our state who use these facilities. Don't want to see condos and gated communities.

IMPACTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

more access to the river; more environmental education & cultural interpretation; car camping
compost toilet

Recommended trips and itineraries

Keep it quiet and undisturbed from business, industry and encroaching urban sprawl

I would wish for a higher density of official platform or ground camping sites upstream of Hamilton, to accommodate additional trip planning flexibility (e.g., due to low river flow, for example). But I also recognize the expense and difficulty of that wish. / / To complement the helpful river mile signs, upstream and downstream demarcations of NCWRC gamelands would be helpful to distinguish public from private land.

Better signage for camping platforms

Better markings for parking areas

more platforms

Emergency contact info -- who do we call if we're on the river and we need trail-related help?

eco toilets added to the platforms (like in the Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia)

Maybe more group activities

Swinging rope over the river, fire pit near camping platform

more bird blinds

More established canoe and kayak rental in more locations.

no, the paddle trail is GREAT.. if you do anything, add some more platforms, but do not put them too close so the wilderness experience is maintained

Maybe a few more platforms with an enclosure, like Conine Platform, to eliminate the need for campers/paddlers to bring tarps for rainflies and even tents, as space is already limited in a canoe/kayak and these seem to be some of the bulkier items needed.

no

Don't use it, sorry.

Possibly a consistent volunteer monitoring/maintenance program. The last couple times I've stayed on platforms they have had some minor issues. Someone didn't bring a toilet system and defecated on the floor of the privacy room. Some boards were burned on the platform. And I've been noticing some shifting/lifting of the tiered decks leading up to the main platform. None of these things ruined our trip but I am seeing a need for some sort of long term maintenance plan.

1. Set up the Trail as a "project" on iNaturalist so visitors can record their observations of birds, mammals, plants, insects, reptiles, fungi, etc. and such observations can be shared with many.
/ 2. Document cycling trails on the many secondary roads of the area and begin the process of considering converting some of abandoned rail lines to become bike trails.

Do you have any suggestions to improve your overall experience of the roanoke river region?

The paper mill noise did detract from our experience. It was very loud, and when the wind shifted, it smelled pretty bad.

improve facility where pick up permits

Continue to send out newsletters and reference materials to paddlers

More restrooms

Not at this time.

Composting toilets.

no

GIVE PADDLERS WHAT AND REASONABLE PADDLE DAY LOOKS LIKE/ HOW MANY MILES. MORE ABOUT RIVER CONDITIONS

more areas to paddle and explore.

It was a great experience. I do not think you can keep it from raining. (lol)

Wife deathly afraid of bear. Maybe some better shared intelligence about actual bear activity to put her mind at rest instead of letting her fret over old bear marking near the platform.

I know there other areas to explore, but I' am happy with the river.

Not at this time.

I would love to see better kayak/canoe launch/landing in Williamston. The water was so low we were slogging through muck at Moratoc Park (the launch platform was too small and angled poorly for 18' kayaks), and if I remember correctly, the boat launch at the River Landing was also tough due to the distance between dock level and water level.

See above about River access. The paddle upstream much more difficult than was represented. Wed come every year to fish Stripers if this changed. /

It was great!

Some of the platforms need some maintenance. I often try to try to perform some good service/maintenance but this is becoming an issue.

Great Trip no improvements except for a waterfront restaurant/bar to break a multi-day trip

GPS helps, if you have one, but distance markers. The last time I went, markings could have been better.

Clean up the platforms. lots of trash, filthy outhouses.

Love that you are working with Rosenwald Schools!

No

no

I've camped at the Barred Owl Roost and Tillery platforms. Barred Owl is amazing as it is. It feels like you're living in a prehistoric world back in this swamp and I love everything about it.

none

IMPACTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

I have enjoyed the Roanoke River Paddle Trail several times (just not in the last 12 months). The biggest drawback is the noise from the paper plant in Plymouth -- at the last platform where we camped (sorry, can't remember its name at the moment) the factory noise was loud, all night long. Perhaps the local governments could work with the paper company to reduce the noise levels.

More camp sites in towns slog the river

Canoeing & Platform Trails are unique and special in NC and throughout the SouthEast.

great job

No

Don't over do amenities, the wilderness aspects are the paddle trails greatest strengths.

I would like to see access restored to the old canoe/kayak launch under the bridge upstream of river falls park in weldon

more platforms / toilets

no

no

no

No. Sorry.

Publish typical paddling times between landmarks, platforms

Cleats installes on the docks for tie off

None

No. We had a great experience.

Using a bucket for a bathroom is the one new weird thing a squeamish newcomer has to absorb. Possibly some info and humor around that could be posted ... A la, ask your cat -- litter box works great! No worries!

You may take the risk of better identification of the campsites on the river. It is reasonable to be suspect of the attention that may draw from persons who may not treat the sites properly.

No suggestions really, that was my first time platform camping and it was a really interesting experience.

No the fact that the releases at Weldon are well publicized is already really helpful.

More places like the Weldon Ramp.

Not at this time.

quiet down that fluff pulp mill

Garner creek access and parking

Don't tell everybody about it!

It is perfect as is.

Don't change a thing

On our last trip we had the unfortunate experience of a fish kill. There was no warning about this and we originally planned to stay two nights but after one night we were run out by the smell of rotting fish. It was beyond bad. Most normal people would have turned around but it was late and we gave it a try. On a separate topic, I recently received notice that there was interest with RRP for preventing the more natural river flows which have been advocated by most of the land conservation groups including the WRC, USFWS, and TNC. This came as some docks went under water. Let's focus attention once again on what is truly important in the region. The health of the river system. The short term loss of a landing or a platform can be overcome. Keeping the entire system healthy is and should be a priority of RRP. This is what brings in people to the region. Focus on the health of the river and good things will happen. Prolonging the duration of water on the floodplain by artificially holding it back using the up-stream reservoirs may help the power companies bottom line but it only degrades the health of the lower river.

conserve the river and surrounding areas, and protect them from development... surprisingly, there wasn't a lot of garbage floating around with us, but nevertheless, we carried large bags of trash picked up off the water with us and deposited them in a dumpster at the end of our trip

Make the fish tell me when and where they will be on the river, telepathically

campaigns to clean litter from the river and keep it clean

I think these are excellent platforms. I did manage to find a person who picked us up and took us back to parking in Williamston. Would be good if these type of services were listed on line. Carolyn was a big help when she was around.

We hope you'll keep doing what you're doing. Hunters/fishers can be conservation and eco-tourism minded, so we hope you'll remain inviting to them.

recommended trips and itineraries

Keep it quiet and undisturbed from business, industry and encroaching urban sprawl

the water current was slow, so we had to paddle a lot

The RRP pdf trail maps are such a great trip planning resource. What about a complementary text document that briefly describes interesting natural and historical facts associated with a stretch of river, ordered by ascending river mile? For example, a statement describing the geological layers that can be seen just upstream from The Bluffs platform?. Or, as you pass Halifax you could read about the historical significance of the Halifax Resolves?

The platforms are great and we felt safe leaving our cars at the p unlicensed boat ramp. Better signage for the platforms would have been helpful. If we had not had a gps I don't know if we would have found the platforms. /

We arrived on a Sunday afternoon when everything was closed including the police department and sheriff's office. There was no area marked for overnight parking with most areas including put-in/take-out, museum, etc marked with "no overnight parking" with no signage showing where to park. Luckily we met a resident who recommended a grassy area off the main street where we could park.

see above

None

More efforts to improve water quality and natural flows in the river, more efforts to protect the old growth cypress and other trees along the river

It's a magical place! I'll keep coming back.

not too fond of motorboat engines when I'm canoeing. It would be nice to have some stretches of water that were canoe and electric motors only. If you're going fishing, why do you need a high powered engine....? What's the hurry?

improve flow conditions so there are not prolonged floods as the Corps produces under current operations

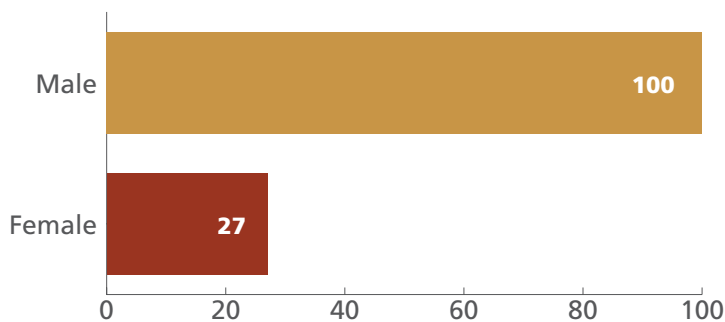
Coordinated marketing, provide information and offer deals to lodging customers

Better cellular signal in the area.

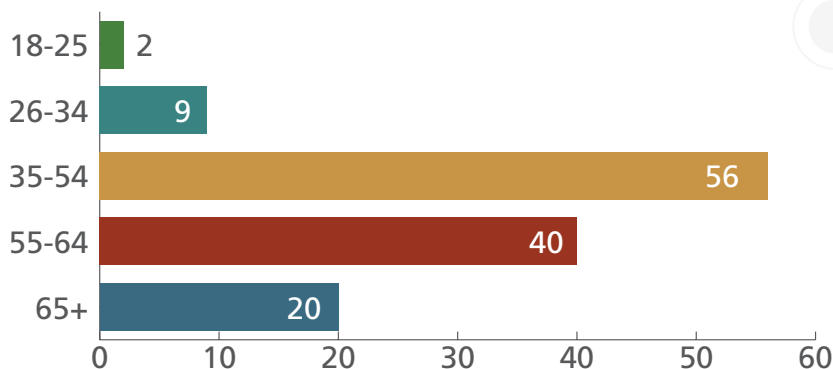
The story needs to be told more and certain features emphasized, e.g. that the Albmarle is the largest freshwater sound in the world. I would be nice if the NC Dept of Travel and Tourism would help, but that may too much to ask for.

Survey Respondent Demographics

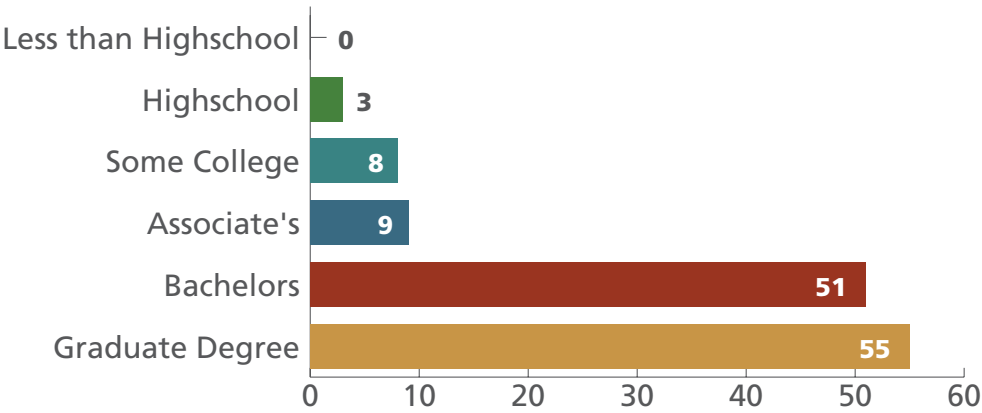
Gender.



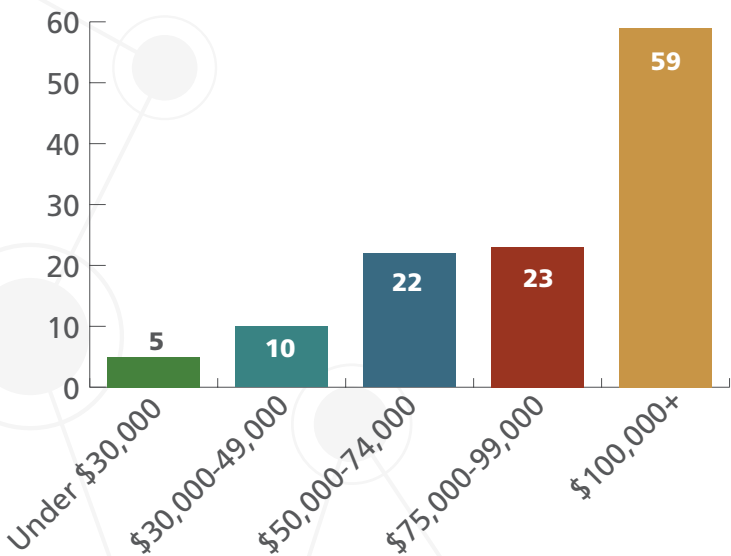
Age.



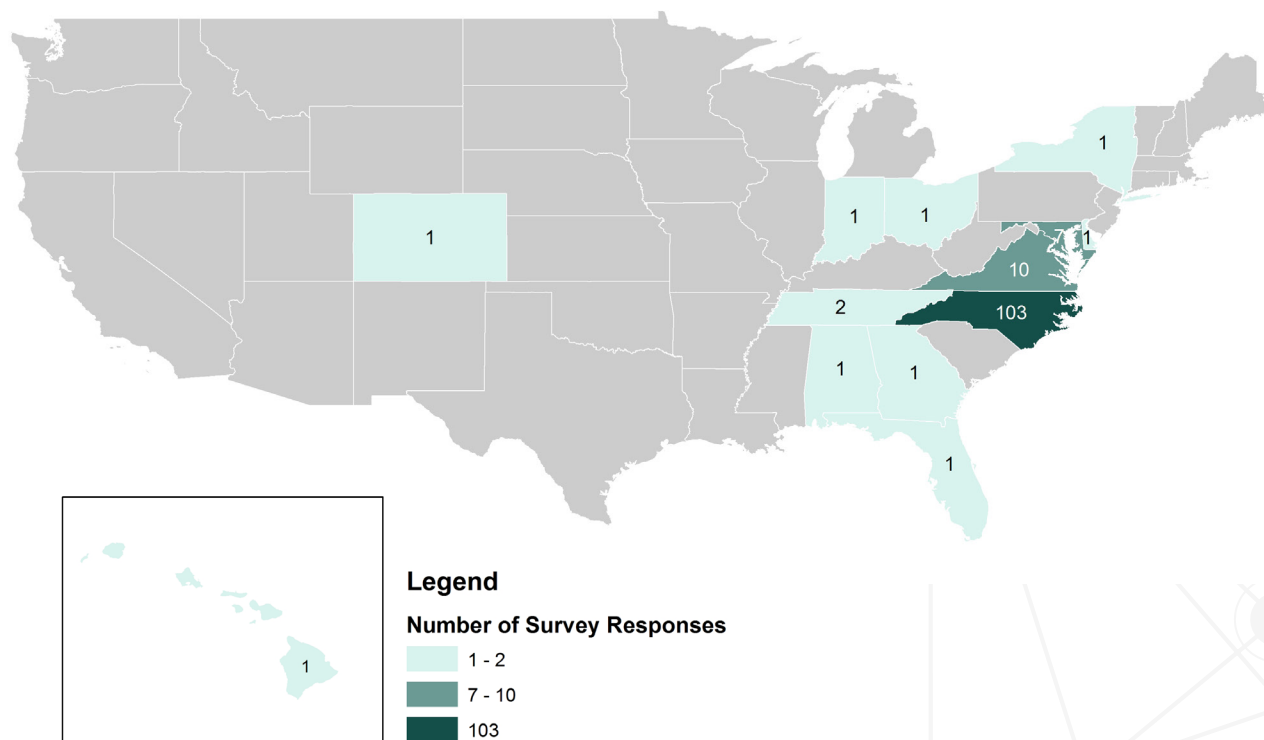
Educational level.



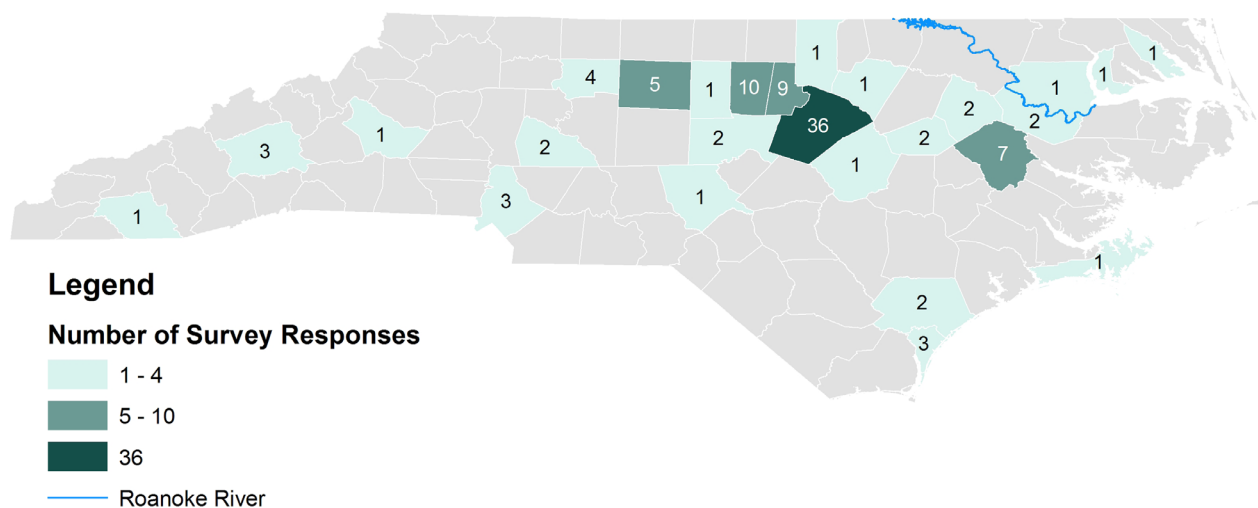
Annual household income.



Survey Responses By State



Survey Responses By County



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