

PRT User Survey Report

OVERVIEW

The Sisters Trails Alliance (STA) conducted a *User Survey* of the Peterson Ridge Trail (PRT) system over an 8-week summer period from July 16th to August 31st, 2012. The purpose of the survey was to obtain a snapshot image of the trail system's usage, demographics of trail users and indications of the economic impact the trail system brings to our community. This report summarizes the data collected.

When/how the survey was organized:

- The survey dates were chosen randomly from the allocated 8-week survey period.
- Specific 2-hour timeslots were randomly selected on each of the selected survey dates.
- There were five daylight time slot options:
 - (A) 8:00 AM -10:00 AM
 - (B) 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
 - (C) 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM
 - (D) 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM
 - (E) 4:00 PM - 6:00.PM
- Weekdays and weekend day timeslots were included.
- The survey captured data from a total of 12 hours of trail usage time.
- Survey volunteers included STA members: Donna Trimmerman, Phyllis Lewis, Lisa Nicol, Ann Marland, Bruce Mason, Bruce Simon, Clyde Dildine, Gary Guttormsen, and Dixie and Patrick Eckford.
- Survey approach: Survey teams of two people were situated at the main PRT trailhead kiosk on Tyee Street and at the equestrian entry point near the rodeo grounds. All persons entering or exiting the trail system from those points during each two-hour timeslot were asked to participate in the survey. The surveyor identified one person per group to be the 'respondent' for the whole group and then read the survey questions and recorded the respondent's answers.

SURVEY RESULTS¹

Survey coverage:

- 85 survey forms were filled and tabulated. This represented 85 individual respondents who provided information for themselves and all of their group members if they were not alone.
- Only one form was filled per group
- The 85 forms represented a total of **171** trail 'users'
- The average group size was 2.11.

Where 'respondents' were from:

- 35.3 % of respondents were from Sisters
- 14.1 % of respondents were from other Central Oregon locations (Bend, Redmond, Prineville, Madras, etc.)
- 50.6 % of respondents were from outside Central Oregon.

Where 'users' were from:

- 27.5 % of users were from Sisters
- 15.2 % of users were from other Central Oregon locations (Bend, Redmond, Prineville, Madras, etc.)
- 57.3 % of users were from outside Central Oregon.

¹ Important note about terminology/nomenclature: 'Respondent' denotes the person who answered the survey questions for themselves and for their group, if applicable; the term 'user' refers to all the persons covered in the survey (all members of a group). Some questions and results apply to respondents, while others refer to users. STA-User Survey (10/16/2012)

Respondents/Users came from diverse and distant locations including:

Spokane, WA; San Francisco, CA; Fredericksburg, VA; Vancouver BC; Denmark; Pasco, WA; San Diego; Wisconsin; Colorado; Bozeman, MT; Walnut Creek, CA; Ashland, Astoria; Portland, etc.
(for full list see attached Annex A)

User Age Groups

- 13 % of users were aged 'K12 or Under'
- 19 % of users were aged 'K12+ to 25'
- 13 % of users were aged '26 – 35'
- 32 % of users were aged '36 – 50'
- 17 % of users were aged '51 – 60'
- 6 % of users were aged 'Over 60'

Frequency of use (by respondents)

- 24 % of respondents were first time users
- 6 % of respondents use the PRT on a daily basis
- 17 % of respondents use the PRT 3-5 times per week
- 15 % of respondents use the PRT 1-2 times per week
- 9 % of respondents use the PRT once per month
- 28 % of respondent use the PRT a few times per year

Type of use (by respondents)

- 16 % walking/hiking
- 63 % biking
- 12 % running
- 3 % horse back riding
- 0 % x/c skiing or snowshoeing
- 5 % pet walking
- 2 % other

How did they hear about the PRT (by respondents)?

- 35 % by word of mouth
- 0 % from Forest Service
- 18 % from Bike Shops
- 11 % from STA Website
- 10 % from STA flyer/map
- 26 % Other

(for more details on 'other' responses, see Annex B).

Rate trail maintenance/condition (by respondents)

- 75 % of respondents rated the condition of the PRT as "excellent"
- 23 % of respondents rated the condition of the PRT as "good"
- 1 % of respondents rated the condition of the PRT as "fair"
- 0 % of respondents rated the condition of the PRT as "poor"

Rate trail signage (by respondents)

- 51 % of respondents rated PRT signage as "excellent"
- 42 % of respondents rated PRT signage as "good"
- 7 % of respondents rated PRT signage as "fair"
- 0 % of respondents rated PRT signage as "poor"

ECONOMIC IMPACT

The PRT survey data supports the contention that STA trails and the PRT have an economic impact on Sisters and Sisters Country. Although there is likely significant economic value associated with local (and Central Oregon) trail users, for assessing economic impact of the PRT, the survey focused only on expenditures made by trail users from outside of Central Oregon. To get a sense of the scale of the impact of these out-of-area² visitors/users, surveyors first asked where respondents were from. If they were from outside the area (i.e. outside Central Oregon), they were then asked to answer a few questions related to their spending associated with their present visit.

What types of expenditures did out-of-area respondents/users have? (some respondents provided multiple responses)

- 69 % of respondents spent money on beverages
- 56 % of respondents spent money on snacks
- 64 % of respondents spent money on restaurants
- 49 % of respondents spent money on groceries
- 49 % of respondents spent money on gas or diesel
- 29 % of respondents spent money on bike supplies
- 15 % of respondents spent money on clothing
- 13 % of respondents spent money on rental equipment (mostly bicycles)
- 9 % of respondents spent money on 'other' expenses

Where did out-of-area respondents/users stay?

- 132 - total number of nights spent during this visit
- 3.57 - average number of nights spent per group

- 22 % hotel/motel
- 0 % B & B
- 14 % vacation rental
- 19 % camping/campground
- 32% friend or relative
- 14 % other

Overnight stays (by users/groups from out-of-area):

- 86 % of groups stayed one or more nights in Sisters Country
- 3.56 - average number of nights stayed

How much spent in Sisters Country during this visit? (out-of-area respondents)

- \$18,685 – total expenditures by all groups surveyed during 12 hours of interviews.
- \$435 - average per group
- \$191 – average per individual user

ECONOMIC EXTRAPOLATIONS

Projections from the survey data collected indicate that expenditures by visitors to the PRT trail system contribute as much as \$1,557 per daylight hour to the local economy during the summer season. This does not include economic impact associated with local and other Central Oregon trail users. It should also be noted that during analysis of the survey results, it became clear that user expenditures were under-reported in relation to the cost of accommodations.

² 'out-of-area' refers to respondents and users who were visiting from outside Central Oregon.
STA-User Survey (10/16/2012)

Based on the reported expenditures of the out-of-area respondents/groups:

- \$18,685 - total spending over 12 hours of surveying
- \$1,557 – estimated average hourly expenditure by all groups per hour of survey
- \$15,571 – estimated total expenditure by all groups per 10-hour day during survey period
- 30 – average number of days per summer month
- \$467,125 – extrapolated monthly economic impact of out-of-area trail users during a typical summer month.

RESPONDENT COMMENTS

After answering the main survey questions, respondents were given the chance to make candid comments. Many were highly complimentary while others were instructive or highlighted suggestions for improvements. Here is a sampling of comments made:

- Strongly support STA!
- Thank you!
- Rock on!
- Great spot – Good trails!
- Awesome trails!
- Willing to volunteer...
- Trails are great – confused by STA trail signs on Road #16! Thanks!
- Love area – a little trouble reading the map.
- Great system - would like more trails. One of my favorites!
- This is a destination for us because of the bike trails – we plan to return 2-3 times every year!
- PRT is great – we take our kids often.
- Upper end signage can be confusing.
- We may buy two new biked from *local bike shop* for \$7200!
- Love the trails – big improvement over the last few years.
- Awesome! Will return in September. Bought a \$2000+ bike in Sisters!

Several suggestions made or issues raised have already been addressed as a direct result of user feedback during the survey – particularly related to signage.

(To view all comments, refer to Annex C)