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The Montana Vacation Experience: Part 1

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The Montana Vacation Experience

Part 1

Research Report 2003-1

January 2003
The Montana Vacation Experience

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by

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A study of this magnitude had many locations where interviews were conducted. Thank you to all the locations and attractions for their cooperation including:

Arts Depot in Red Lodge
Bannock State Park
Big Hole National Battlefield
Big Sky Resort
Bighorn National Battlefield
CM Russell Museum
Copper King Mansion
Culbertson Visitor Center
Gates of the Mountain
Giant Cedars of Ross Creek
Glacier National Park at Apgar
Grant-Kohrs Ranch
Grizzly Discovery Center
Holland Lake campgrounds
Kootenai Falls
Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center
Lewis and Clark Caverns
Makoshika State Park.
Missouri Headwaters State Park
Moss Mansion

Museum of the Plains Indians
Museum of the Rockies
National Bison Range
Old Eureka Village
Old Trail Museum in Choteau
Pictograph Cave
Pompey’s Pillar
Range Rider’s Museum in Miles City
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
State Historical Society Museum
Sweet Palace in Phillipsburg
The Smoke Jumpers Center
The town of Bigfork
The town of Columbia Falls
The town of Ft. Benton
The town of Gardiner
The town of Lewistown
The town of Whitefish
Virginia City
Wolf Point Library

We would also like to thank all the employees of these attractions across the state for their cooperation and support of the project.

Finally, we would like to thank Monte Dolack who kindly reduced the cost of a select number of his prints to half price. These prints were used as an incentive/thank you and given to the vacationer interviewed upon completion of the interview.
Executive Summary

The Montana Vacation Experience

During June and July 2002, fifty-three nonresident vacationers in Montana agreed to be interviewed about their Montana vacation. Interviews, ranging from 20 minutes to one hour, were taped and transcribed verbatim then entered into the N-Vivo qualitative software package for analysis.

Visitors were grouped into singles, couples, or families. Group analysis showed little difference in the vacation experience based on group type. The only difference occurred in trip flexibility. Families with small children were more likely to be set in their itinerary than any other group type. Results for all group types revealed five main themes that described a Montana vacation experience.

1. **Trip planning:** While the amount and type of planning conducted by vacationers varied drastically, one constant was the use of the Internet. The Internet was used for ideas, to answer questions, and to reserve accommodations. Additionally, all other promotional mediums (e.g. guide books, brochures, maps, AAA, books about Montana, magazine articles) were used by some vacationers. This suggests a need to continue the diversity of promotional mediums to assure reaching the diverse audience of vacationers.

2. **Experiences and Activities:** Fishing was the activity mentioned most often by visitors. Other activities included rafting/floatin, hiking, camping, biking, birding, motorcycling, photography, horseback riding, and simply being in the outdoors. Visitors predominantly discussed activities as a mechanism to be in nature. This suggests that Montana’s natural environment was the draw for the activity rather than the activity as the main focus.

3. **Attractions and Motivations:** Motivations for visiting Montana spanned the horizon from visiting friends to fishing to just being outdoors. Those elements that attracted visitors were Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks, followed by Native American culture, Montana history, and Lewis & Clark. Visitors viewed these destinations as a “must see.” Glacier was generally described as awesome and spiritual while Yellowstone was described as commercialized and too crowded. Most visitors, while bothered by the crowds in Yellowstone, still enjoyed their experience. This suggests that Montana provides a “visual” to the vacation planner (e.g. parks, culture or history) that lures them to the state.

4. **Relationship to the Environment:** Vacationers expounded on Montana’s natural environment more than any other aspect of their experience. Mountains and forests, open space and uncrowded areas, wildlife, lakes and rivers, and badlands and plains, were highlights of their trip. In most cases, visitors were pleasantly surprised by the beauty and tranquility Montana offered. The naturalness and de-commercialized aspect of [most of] Montana provided the get-away they were seeking. This suggests that Montana provides an experience that is rejuvenating to the visitor.

5. **Impressions of Montana:** This emerging theme suggested that what visitors came here for was different than what they left with. They came here for the “attraction” of a park or mountains but left with an experience and “feeling” of spirituality and connection to nature, history, and people. On the positive side they had heard of the “big sky” and now understood what it meant. The western atmosphere was seen and felt especially through the expansive valleys running up against green lush mountains. Montana people were perceived as friendly, hospitable and easy going. Vacationers discussed the connection with a spiritual side or simply with nature that they had not experienced elsewhere. On the negative side, some visitors questioned a culture with so many casinos and others were disappointed in a lack of signage. Some repeat visitors were alarmed at the “urban sprawl” in the west and the resulting “sameness” as California. This suggests that Montana provides a unique connection to the environment, history, and self but is perceived by some as on the verge of losing this connection in portions of the state.
The Montana Vacation Experience

Introduction

In previous ITRR nonresident travel surveys, quantitative data that describes the nonresident visitor to Montana has provided a good glimpse of the traveler, their information sources used, where they go and what attracts them to Montana. These numbers tell us how many people did a particular activity or the “who, what and when.” The missing piece is the “how and the why.” We know that people are attracted to certain aspects of Montana, but what does that really mean? How are mountains and forests the attraction? Why do visitors say open space and uncrowded areas are an attraction to the state? Furthermore, in planning trips, what made the visitor decide to come to Montana in the first place? What does their planning horizon look like and why did they come? These questions and more were explored with this study. The purpose of this project, therefore, was to explore and further understand the Montana vacation experience and the decision process to visit Montana. The objectives include:

• To explore the motives for a Montana vacation.
• To discover the activities engaged in while in Montana and the reasons behind those activities.
• To analyze the decision process used by vacationers to come to Montana.
• To further explain what a Montana vacation really means.

This report provides the profile of nonresident visitors to Montana and their experiences. Visitors were qualitatively analyzed in the following manner:

1) Three visitor group types (singles, couples, and families) were analyzed and described individually for decision processes and attractions to Montana.

2) Each group type was compared for common themes among the group and between groups.

3) A summary document provided the “total” picture of the Montana visitor experience.

4) Information from the study is provided to those responsible for promoting Montana to explore promotional themes based on the results as well as advertising mediums.

This report is Part 1 of 2 parts to the report. Part 2 represents the narrative summaries of each individual interview. The summaries provide the researcher’s interpretation of the significant themes within an interview. Part 2
Methodology

Study Population and Sample

Nonresident travelers to Montana during the summer of 2002 (June and July) were examined for this study. The population of travelers was defined in four ways.

First, they had to be a nonresident of Montana. Second, their primary reason for being in the state had to be for vacation purposes. Third, vacationers were selected based on group type as an individual, couple, or a family. The percentage of interviews per group type was determined based on the percent of each from previous ITRR research on summer visitors (RR2002-5). Group types of all summer vacationers and the percent per group type in this study are shown below. Fourth, the vacationer was selected based on either a first time visitor or a repeat visitor to the state. Again, this study attempted to approximate the visitation (first time vs repeat) of all vacationers (see below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Type</th>
<th>All MT Vacationers</th>
<th>MTVacationers in this study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits to MT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-time</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeat</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this study ITRR intercepted more families than the percent of all summer visitors since this study did not attempt to interview groups consisting of family and friends, friends, or business associates. Therefore, the total percent in the "All Vacationer" column does not add up to 100 percent while in this study the three groups do add up to 100 percent of the respondents.

The first time and repeat visitor was the third variable used in the interview selection. It became necessary to allow the percentages for this variable to be slightly different than All Vacationers or the ITRR interviewer would have had a more difficult time finding the visitor to interview.

Some basic data was collected from each vacation group. Appendix A provides the data summary of each group interviewed.

Interview Methodology and Response Rates

Between June 19, 2002 and July 25, 2002, ITRR staff intercepted 53 visitors at a variety of places throughout the state (see Acknowledgements for complete listing). The sites included spots in or near national parks, monuments, forests, historic sites, museums and towns. The interviews were conducted in comfortable settings at nearby picnic tables, benches, or tables and chairs provided in the facility. Vacationers were asked if they would be willing to be tape-recorded and all respondents agreed. The tape recorder was set on the table or bench within close proximity of the respondents and interviewer.

Response rates for the interview were not a factor since the ITRR interviewer was never rejected by a potential vacationer. In contrast, ITRR rejected potential respondents when they did not fit within the criteria set for a vacationer (group type and visitation level).

Visitors were interviewed with use of an open-ended interview guide (Appendix B). This process provided the interviewer with a structured outline to help guide the interview in a style that allowed a free-flowing conversation. At an appropriate time in the interview, a list of attractions to the state was
provided for the respondent to complete. This list was the same list used in ITRR quantitative surveys. Upon completion, the interviewer would ask the respondent to clarify each of the attractions they checked on the list. In other words, what did that attraction mean to them?

Interviews lasted between 25 minutes and 1.5 hours with an average length of 35 minutes. The interviews were conducted with the group type. In other words, if they were a couple, they both contributed to the interview. If they were a family, all family members were part of the interview.

**Analysis**

Interviews were tape recorded and professionally transcribed verbatim. The transcriptions were then edited by simultaneously listening to the tape-recording and reading the text. The final edited transcriptions represent the data that were analyzed. Data were then entered into the N-Vivo qualitative software program for analysis.

Analysis of the interviews consisted of recognizing meaning units within the interview. These meaning units were then grouped into five aspects that emerged from the data. These were trip planning, interaction with the environment, attractions/motivation, impressions, and activities/experiences. These aspects were then analyzed to uncover differences and similarities of visitors, provide common themes, and identify the visitors’ experiences.

In addition to grouping interviews into emergent themes, a narrative summary of each individual interview was developed using the reconstructed interviews as a guide. These summaries describe the prominent themes in each interview and are included as a Appendix C to this report.
Results

The results of the interviews are presented as quotes reconstructed from the interviews. Results show each visitor type individually preceded by a summary of the specific aspect being analyzed. In some instances, singles did not contribute to a particular sub-heading and therefore did not have quotes included for that section.

I. Visitor Aspects – Trip Planning

Accommodations

When considering accommodations in the phase of trip planning, distinct patterns did not emerge from the interviews. Accommodations seemed to be selected based on the mode of travel and equipment possessed by the visitor. Families do, however, seem to plan their lodging more in advance and prefer options with greater facilities and services at their disposal.

Single
Anna Marie: I think I've stayed more in national forest areas.

Couples
Warren: One of the things too is that since we travel in an RV, your state parks that you have just kind of situated close to the interstates they're real easy to get into, they're usually available, and there's always something to do around them. The one that we like is called Beaver Tail.
Donna: I'd rather have a two star campground that had a nice site to park on than one that has entertainment in the evening and all the ... so their ratings are a little skewed toward people that are going to a place to stay a week for a vacation.
Jeff: We are going to, since we both caught colds, we're [staying in hotels] right now until the colds break up and then we're going to go camp.

Family
Chet: We stayed at a bed and breakfast, loved it, and loved the relaxation of just walking through the old town and talking to the people. We're staying at a cabin off the beaten track a little bit. Beautiful wooden log cabin overlooking the Madison Valley, and it's just very relaxing.
Kevin: [We're staying at a motel.] They can do more and we can plan for more of a lodge and dinner and everything = food included.
Joe: We stayed in a little campsite two miles out of Gardiner and it was great.
Dick: We've been staying in hotels. We do have our camping gear, but it's hard when you're moving every night.
Lori: We use the KOA systems and I really like the KOA systems. I did a trip last year, and that's why I'll be able to do this trip, to sort of follow-up on it, because I was able to get on the Web sites and map out my trip and go from KOA to KOA.

**Camping**

Camping is an accommodation mode that appeals to people because it lets them get away from the crowds and provides a natural setting. Camping allows visitors to experience wildlife and the environment in a more hands on, personal setting. Some visitors do not necessarily want the backcountry experience. Many, instead, prefer the KOA's or other organized camping systems. They still find a lot of enjoyment staying in these areas instead of a hotel or other type of lodging.

**Single**

Anna Marie: [I like camping.] Oh, it's great. I don't do the hard core backcountry. The places that I've gone up in the north have just been wonderful. It's a wonderful way for me to get away. In what I do back home, and I'm just surrounded by people constantly, constantly, constantly, on a personal level and professional level. It's just divine to get away and be alone. I feel safe here, but I'm not foolish. I'm cautious and so it just is very healing for me to go away.

**Couples**

Wolfgang: We travel, but we come here to camp and really enjoy. We have a whole campground for ourselves with 20, 25 sites. Maybe one or two other people there. We paid as low as two and a half [dollars], between two and a half and four, we paid in the national campground.

Jane: [We camp] just to get away from people. Just to get out and share the silence and be able to listen to the birds and have Bambi walk through your campsite in the middle of the night.

Teresa: My idea of camping is not going to a parking lot with RVs right next to each other, you know? You have more of an opportunity over here.

Sally: Well, when we realized we were going to have such a long car trip we said, well what about camping? We decided what we would do is kind of boogie on out and then take our time so that we could camp. Now after doing it one night we decided we needed to do it for two or three nights to make it worth the effort.

**Family**

Terry & Larry: I like [camping at] KOAs. This is the nicest one we've ever seen.

Joe: [Our camping spot] was just a grassy little meadow that they had mowed, and we were very happy to have it. We had a better experience there than we did in West Yellowstone, as far as camping goes. We prefer the more natural, the national forest, and national park kind of campground as opposed to private campgrounds. But, I found the private campgrounds, the people to be very accommodating. They have nice showers, pretty good facilities.

Deb: [laughs] The campground we stayed in was very nice. Nice people, really nice. So the camping is one area or way in which we can do that. So we take back the memories of the times that we had, and they're, of course, memories of camping as a family.

**Sources of Planning Information**

As would be expected with the increased use of technology in tourism, the use of the Internet as an information source has become a staple of trip planning. All user groups seemed to have equal propensities to use the Internet as their primary source for information.
State sources of information were not the primary form of information utilized. General guidebooks and planners for the region appeared important in the process of deciding which attractions to visit in the state. State information in the form of brochures and publications were not utilized very much by these respondents and correlates with other research (e.g. ITRR Research Report 2002-5).

**GUIDEBOOKS and PLANNERS**

**Couples**
Joe: I read the full tour part of Montana in the AAA guidebook, so you read about each major city and the attractions within each city. That gives you a much better feeling for the population of the state, the history of the state and major events that took place in all those different cities.

Joe: I think [the AAA booklet] is what got my interest in the museum here.

Jay: The AAA book helped a whole lot.

Sheila: We stopped at AAA. We took about a pile of stuff from them. They got sick of seeing us, but it was their fault.

**Family**
Kevin: Through a travel hotel guide [is how we got our information about Gardiner].

Tyler: My uncle got me a trip planner for my birthday, and that was really cool because you just type in what your destination is and then you start putting in where you're going, the routes and stuff, places you're going to stop, and it'll put in the times, what times you're going to arrive, what times you should leave.

Louise: We're AAA members. We did get trip-ticks just to help get a real sense of miles and time.

Christine: I got a book, one of the guidebooks.

Mary: My father is an AAA member and he got us all kinds of information through AAA. We have a Frommer book called Montana-Wyoming that we're using.

Mark: I would say a lot of it through the AAA books and maps would probably be the most likely things.

Patty: The excellent resources, at least we found Montana has the travel planner, and that's an excellent resource for campgrounds and phone numbers to call, resources to look at. So that's been a big help to us.

**BOOKS**

**Couples**
Vernon & Mary: We purchased at home a book called Hidden Montana and it is absolutely fantastic. It tells you about all the places that are off the track, anyway, and this is a complete tour, this part today is a complete tour from that book, isn't it? It will take us from Missoula to Whitefish and it's suggesting that our next stop is St. Ignatius Mission, and then there are several things then on the way to Whitefish. We have found the book most useful, haven't we? It's almost a bible in a sense.

Donna: I had a book. It's a National Geographic and they break down various things to do when you're driving down this interstate, take this side trip and this side trip.

Jeff: Picked up a ton of what to do in Montana books and they were real helpful about what to see and where to go and how to get there.
Donna: Well all of us went out and bought some Lewis and Clark books and some fact books about Montana so we would know what to expect.

Sally: We've got lots of guidebooks. We've done some major research. We had the Undaunted Courage by Ambrose. We read that and then he also published one for the National Geographic and we had read that and seen the pictures and, of course, that was very alluring.

John: Actually after reading Undaunted Courage by Ambrose about the Lewis and Clark trail and we got off the outbound trip which went through northern Montana, that's when we decided to come down, cut south a little bit to go to Yellowstone. So we missed northern Montana.

Family
Tarin: I read the whole Montana Handbook.

Julie: I've bought a couple of books on the way. I figure that they're the authoritative books on the subject and stuff.

Joe: In fact, I just bought [the Lewis and Clark] journal. I had read Undaunted Courage and I thought, oh, I don't know if I'd ever want to read the journal. That might get kind of old, but I think just opening the book and turning to a spot and starting to read, it's just incredible to see their first impressions of what this land was like.

Dick: Everybody got various books from the library.

**BROCHURES**

**Couples**
Mark & Lynn: When she's here she is a great collector of brochures. We have a file drawer in one of our file cabinets at home that she has classified by destination. I mean, old brochures and stuff. I love old travel brochures. That's one of my collecting interests.

Donna: They sent us tourist brochures in the mail showing us the things that were available in the area besides canoeing as well.

**Family**
Larry: What I did was I wrote to each state or each province and I received their travel brochures, and some of them were good, some weren't. Montana expressed enough that was here and told enough about the Rockies, the west, the cowboy, the old west philosophies and the open range, things like that. That left you with a lot of information there.

Mary: Brochures. Yeah, brochures.

Lori: We stopped at a visitor center and got the brochure of this place and I think a few others.

**INTERNET USE**

**Single**
Jack: I looked at the Nez Perce site [on the Internet], that's all. None of the state sites.

Shrie: I spent some time on the Internet sort of checking some of the difficulties of things like campsites.

**Couples**
Lynn & Mark: Typically I spend a lot of time on the Internet just researching. I found all my fishing guides through the Internet and it's worked out wonderfully. We've also made motel reservations.
Vernon: The places we've stayed, we did it through the Internet at home and we've had a bit of a selection. We've moved on obviously into the Internet, and so we used the Internet a lot more this year.

Joe: ...Doing a search on the Internet on Montana...narrowing in on the national park system. I was totally surprised by the quality of the Yellowstone web site where they have video along with a narrative and the still pictures.

Lee: I did a lot of the state Internet sites. Because we're camping, you have a very good site for finding campgrounds. I printed all those things off.

Linda: I would go just directly to the state and then look under the tourism section and print out whatever they had and we did the same for Glacier and Yellowstone. There's so much information available and it made it very easy. We had a pretty good idea of where we were going.

Family
Tarin & Gustaf: We got those travel planners from the state of Montana through the Web. They were so efficient. So she was checking all those events because I was too busy the time before we left.

Leslie: Did [my information search] through the Internet, through visitmontana.com. A couple different sites like that, and also through the chamber of commerce and asked for recommendations for tours and things like that. That was it.

Larry: I've gone through every detail. I went on Web sites all over the place.

Cobe: On the Internet, it's amazing. It's a wonderful tool and each state has its links. Really, it's nice, because otherwise how would I find out all the information?

Louise: Well one thing that has evolved over the years, I did a lot of planning on the Internet. The Internet was a big source of information. The National Park Service Internet sites are wonderful and you get information you normally didn't get until you were paying your fee and then you're suddenly studying it.

MAGAZINES and NEWSPAPERS

Single
Jack: I read the newspapers all the time, so I knew that there was a new Lewis & Clark interpretive center at Great Falls and it was worth seeing. Trailer Life magazine has had several real good articles on Montana and one was a tour of the old ghost towns in this area and talked about Deer Lodge and staying at the Riverside RV Court. I knew about that. There was another real good newspaper article about the Lewis & Clark trail just in the Three Rivers area. I kept all of those and I use a lot of those as guides too.

Couples
Ken: I probably have ten years worth of torn out pieces from magazines about trips to Montana, Outside magazine or Men's Journal or National Geographic, something. It's been interesting. We got up this morning and I said, this month's Men's Journal has an article about Holland Lake.

MAPS

Couple
Patricia: We just get the map out and look.

Brenda & Ken: Pretty much it was maps and articles.

Sally: Well for one thing, we had a nice road atlas that we bought at Staples, so the road maps were good.
Jean: [This site] was on the Montana map. That's where we saw it.

Family
Rick: Get the local trail maps and that type of stuff.

Flexibility of Schedule

Most travelers to the state expressed the ability to be flexible in their travel plans. Most were open to the suggestion that if an attraction presented itself, they would be interested in visiting. A general perception of busy areas often dictated the decision to reserve locations in advance. Areas such as Glacier, Yellowstone, and other peak tourist areas led travelers to believe they needed to reserve accommodations ahead of time to avoid running into no vacancies. Of all the three types of travelers, families appeared to be the most likely to stick to a fixed itinerary. Travelers explained this point by illustrating that families often contain a larger number of individuals and often include young children or infants. Coordinating these groups is more difficult, decreasing the ability to be spontaneous.

Single
Elaine: I kind of came here with a set number of things I wanted to do, places I wanted to go and stuff. It was their [friends] idea to come here. I had never been to Gates of the Mountains, so it sounded pretty exciting.

Couples
Lynn: I don't understand people who can say, I'm going to be here one night, here the next night, here the next night. That's not our typical vacation at all.

Mary & Vernon: You might be interested to know that all our motels were booked in April. We knew where we were going, what we wanted to do by April, and we booked various places to stay. We did that on the Internet and by telephone. We [prefer to have our trip] planned. We have flexibility within the day, but we know we’re going to be at A this evening.

Donna: Oh, we don't say we're going to be here and here on this day. We don't do that.

Jeff & Jane: We came over from Missoula over to Great Falls and just on a fluke noticed some people pulling off and saw the sign and decided to do it. Had no idea where we were going or what we were getting into and that was really great. That was really fun to see. [We don't have to be anywhere at any particular time] and it was such a treat to be able to do that.

John: We plan ahead. We book ahead because there's nothing more frustrating than having to run around in the evening and you can't find a motel and keep on driving and maybe end up in a rest area or something. I don't like to deal with that.

Shirley: We do have most of our things booked, but then we had two nights planned in a hostel last night and changed our mind because it was too hot. So we can be flexible.

Donna: I think we like to be more on the spontaneous side. When we came to Montana two years ago we had a family reunion in Glacier and then my husband and I, without any itinerary, just traveled eastern Montana and we went...just looked at the map and decided, let's go there, and we'd go there.

John: We'll plan from day to day and at times we even plan half days. We'll stop for lunch and change directions.

Family
Tarin & Gustaf: We tried this time not to pick the hotel a long time before. But we came to Great Falls and we couldn’t find a place to stay, you know, it was full. [We don’t tend to be flexible enough to take in things]. I had decided it before we come. We are cooperative, in terms of our interests. So she does a lot of the studying and she says, look out, there is something, there is something and then we combine our interests as a family group very well.

Tanya: We’re kind of fly by the seat of your pants. We jumped in the car and came.

Larry: We booked KOAs. I knew we had to be at a certain place at a certain time because the next stop is in Utah to visit some people we know, but I knew I had to be here at a certain time, but otherwise I just left certain things open.

Chet: We had a basic core plan. We wanted Yellowstone. We wanted to go to the mine and we want to go to Big Sky. Everything else was fill in.

Eleanor: [We’re fairly flexible travelers] if we see something we want to see. We were driving along and we had never been east of Bozeman in Montana. So we hit Livingston and we saw a sign that said that that was the international fly-fishing. Then we saw it on a billboard and we stopped in for an hour. [laughs]

Christy & Attila: When you’re traveling with a three-year-old it’s tough. It’s tough. You have to be very flexible.

Mark: We planned it though. I can show you our itinerary. We’re traveling with our one-year-old daughter, so a lot of it, as my wife said, hinges around her. We’ve been fairly close to what we had thought of as our schedule so far. I would say more often when it’s my wife and I we’ve kind of done a seat of the pants sort of thing. So if it was just us on vacation doing this and we said we’re really enjoying Montana, let’s stay for another couple days and we’ll skip out something later, we would do that on other occasions. But this trip, because we’re moving we kind of have to stick to more of a schedule.

Louise: We have two young children and we’re probably going to cover maybe as much as 3,000 miles in two weeks, so this is more planned. So out of 15 nights, there are four or five that are not planned.

Andy: I found if you’re just driving it’s so vast that you have to drive a long time to one site to another. In terms of trying to get back home in time, you have to organize. You can’t really say, well, I want to spend two hours at this site without that planned because then it throws the rest of the schedule off. You get into your hotel, you know, at 10:00 at night and you’re dog-tired and then you get up again the morning, starting with your next series.

Dick: Well we made our reservations just at Yellowstone and Glacier because we were afraid of not being able to get in. Because of that, you know, we had to hit those dates. So for instance, we were going to go to Cody on the way into Yellowstone, but now we’re going to go to Cody on the way out of Montana, into Wyoming instead.

### Plans to Return

The question, “Would you return?” elicited many responses. Predominantly, the general response of all visitors was an intent at some point to return to Montana. Some attributed this to the fact that the vacation they experienced would be something they would like to repeat. Others felt a need to return to experience new areas or visit attractions they did not have enough time to explore to their satisfaction.

**Single**

Elaine: Yes, [I would come back.]

Shrie: Yes, [I could see myself coming back] and in fact, I think I have some nephews and a niece and it looks like the niece is starting doing a little bit of this sort of stuff, so if she wants to do sort of a three week
trip or something like that in the area, then I certainly would think of coming back and doing that, definitely.

**Couples**

Vernon & Mary: Nothing else at all to say would not bring us back. Nothing. But we won't come back because there's too much else to see. We have a very short time - we're not all here for a long time and you want to see as much as you possibly can.

Jeff: Oh, absolutely [I'm likely to come back.]

Jay: Maybe the northern regions, northern mountain area of Glacier. I think it's Many Lakes. I heard some good things about that. I would probably try going up there. We took a ride this evening up to Whitefish and just kind of drove through town. If I ever had a chance to go snow skiing up here I'd think of that. The other thing I might do from what I know is maybe, you know, for wildlife, maybe go to Yellowstone, because I know there's more wildlife down there.

Sheila: Oh yeah, if the Lord allows, definitely.

Donna: I love Montana. I would come back.

Sally: [I'd come back] in a heartbeat. Outlined three trips. We can just fly down that little airport down there and go fly-fishing and, I'd love to come back, particularly to this area. I don't think I'd make much of an effort for those eastern plains, but I would make an effort for here [western Montana].

John: I think we'll come back again because we want to see northern Montana.

**Family**

Gustaf & Tarin: Oh yeah, sure. Absolutely, [we are likely to come back to Montana.]

Chet: It wouldn't hurt me at all to come back and spend a little time every year here.

Cobe & Austin: We want to come back now and spend just the vacation here.

Christy: Definitely would have to come back and stay longer to be able to do all the things that Montana has to offer.

Mark: Absolutely. We just said the other day, you know, we need to come to this area and have two weeks to spend a little time here, a little time there, really concentrate on fishing a little bit.

Joe: I see us coming back. Having spent more time out here, I'm falling more in love with the Rockies, and the Native peoples here. I'd like to, I really hope we get to experience a pow-wow, July 10th coming up, I guess.

**Planning Time**

The most typical planning time consisted of 3 to 6 months. Many visitors mentioned that the idea of visiting Montana was a thought process that began as much as one to two years ago, but serious effort devoted to planning did not take place until 3 to 6 months prior to their trip.

**Single**

Elaine: Back in January [six months earlier].

Jack: This trip, maybe two months ago I started planning it.
**Couples**

Mark & Lynn: This trip was planned around the conference, which the location was announced almost a year ago. Usually a couple months in advance I would start pulling it together. We usually plan our destinations at least six months out, at least in general terms.

Joyce & Wolfgang: We decided last year we were going to come. A year or two years ago we decided to trace the Lewis and Clark trail from St. Louis to Great Falls.

Patricia: [laughs] About a week before we left. [laughs]

Mary: About ten months we’ve been preparing.

Jeff: Oh, I think it was three years ago, when we were here the last time and had to leave. Ever since then that's one place we have to go back to.

Alex: Just like a couple of weeks ago.

Donna: Two years ago we stumbled into Fort Benton. We picked up a bit of literature. One year ago we had a family reunion in Canada and we all sat around and we said, why don't we do this Fort Benton float.

**Family**

Tarin: For a year or more? I read the whole year about Montana.

Clint: We’ve been talking about it for about a year.

Larry: I’d have to say in detail, in detail I’d have to say three months minimum.

Kevin: Woke up Saturday morning, last Saturday, packed up, and said, we're going to Yellowstone.

Joe: Clear back in January or February. It took about six months to get everything else, like where we’re going to go, arranging stuff with people.

Dan: Probably ten months ago, then we did research on the Internet specifically for Missoula. I guess it’s progressed from there for the last ten months.

**Trip Planning (general statements)**

Travel planning was considered an important aspect for most visitors. Many felt comfortable having a better knowledge of where they would visit and how to travel in the state. Many travel plans for the family group revolved around the ability to visit family or friends in the state. The planning process was also a time to increase enthusiasm and expectation for visiting the state. Motivations such as following the Lewis and Clark trail or returning to previous areas of interest drove individuals to spend time in the planning process.

**Couples**

Lynn: Yeah. Although this one was thrown together quickly, but I do a lot of research prior to a trip because I pretty much know what I would like to see, where I'd like to go.

Mary: About ten months we’ve been preparing. I suppose really the idea came five years ago. It’s about ten months ago that we said, okay, we’re going for it. So we went to our local library. We went to the local bookshops. We have a very good book shop. We read everything in it before we purchased.
Don: Well I think we kind of just assumed that we were going to come out here, but as far as planning and stuff like that, that's too much work. We just go. We have to set a date, especially for me because I've got some pretty hefty job obligations. I had to plan the dates that I was going to be gone a half month or so in advance, and it was kind of like a snap decision there too.

Jay: I think a person to really enjoy it has to do their homework. They come up here and just do things that attract them or try to take in too much, I think they may destroy their visit. So if they do their homework and pace themselves and get in physical shape [to bike] before they come. I think that would be a big plus.

Brenda: It's been wonderful to kind of read stuff and prepare a little bit and just talk to people. We've changed our vacation a lot, just on talking to folks from Montana.

Howard: I try to stop at tourist [centers]. As you come into each state they usually have a welcome center. That's a good place to go.

Georgia: Oh, Janet, in Hardin, Montana. Gary and Janet own the big IGA store there. They've told us every place we have to go and so far we haven't gotten out.

**Family**

Clint: It was all with my brother.

Leslie: I said, we're there for the wedding, we're going to hit Yellowstone while we're there. We were going to do Glacier, but we're not going to have time to do Glacier, so we'll have to come back.

Chet: [This trip idea first came to me when] my daughter-in-law called us and said they were coming to Montana and we were to go with them. [laughs]

Mark: We had kind of said, Melissa in particular for this trip, maybe what we ought to do since we know we want to come back here is maybe not stop at some of the bigger places, but come to like pictograph caves. It's not something that you might necessarily plan a vacation around, to make sure that we see some of those things.

Joe: We ended up knowing that my best friend's uncle lives in Montana. We're going to stay there in Missoula. Our friend's sister lives here and our friend's friends live here. He also, we wrote, or actually this friend of mine whose sister lives near Little Bighorn, he called, had her send a package of information. So she went to the chamber, so we got a good Montana map and lots of other information.

Neal: We had a friend who grew up near Polson and was going to be here for this summer, back for the summer and so we thought, well, what a great time to head this way and see a friend, where she grew up, and visit a lot of these things along the way for the girls.

Shirley: We have good friends that live here, so we pretty much come to see them, because we only see them once a year. This time around we did a lot of things that we knew were nice things because, [our friends] had never been out here before. So last time we did a lot more rugged things, like climbing mountains, you know, and coming down the wrong side and stuff like that.

Mary & Dick: We're anticipating we're going to be saying a lot of very nice things about it because this trip was planned due to my husband and I being in Yellowstone last year, sitting on the porch at Roosevelt, speaking to another person who said, if you think this is nice, you've got to go to Glacier. That seemed interesting enough in itself, except for it happened more than once, in various parts of Yellowstone. So we came home last summer and we said, we've got to go to Glacier because so many people said we should. We had a trip plan, although we varied from it quite a bit actually, but we did have certain points that we knew. We actually put it on Excel.
II. Visitor Aspects – Activities and Experiences

River Activities

Rafting and other river activities are attractive to visitors. For many it is the ability to have this recreational option in a very wild and rugged setting. The challenge and thrill associated with activities such as rafting is a draw for visitors and Montana provides them with the opportunity to participate in these activities.

Single

Shrie: The other thing is that you, especially the western end, there'll be some great kayaking, isn't there? Especially in the lakes and stuff. So that will be real interesting.

Mark: [I've been looking for] a spot where [my kids] can get in the water, where there's rushing water or a spot where they can actually physically climb...I saw the cedar forest in Glacier, that's really impressive. The water showers that come off the mountains. I can visualize them standing under the water showers and maybe even get a drink out of the water coming off the mountain with their hands and stuff like that.

Couples

Mickey: We're going to do some canoeing and we will do a lot of walking. I did hope to do some water rafting.

Donna: [The Missouri River is] very scenic with the cliffs and the rock formation, and very attractive because it's uninhabited. It's very wild. There were few other floaters on the river. We camped alone almost every night. It was a real wilderness experience. When we got past [the bad weather] and we started to adjust to the rhythm of life on the river, we loved it. It took a couple days to kind of make the transition. So after a few days that becomes the rhythm of life and you've forgotten all that other stuff; going to work and buying groceries. [laughs] I guess we were attracted to this river because of the Lewis and Clark voyage. We have watched that PBS Ken Burns movie on Lewis and Clark and been quite intrigued. We had read several books. So the White Cliff area, I remember their descriptions of going through that and how beautiful it was. I would say that whole river trip was a pleasant surprise because we came with certain expectations of what it would be like and what we would see, and it far surpassed our expectations. The river trip was a wonderful experience.

Jay: [What I like about whitewater is] a little excitement. It gives a bit of a thrill to ride, and you see the wildness of the backwater more so.

Family

Caroline, Linda, & Christine: That is so fun [rafting]! Adrenaline rush. Scary, good. Big rush. Beautiful actually. Excitement. Again, you're going down a river. You've got those lovely peaceful sort of flowing moments and then you go into this. It's like, forward paddle, forward paddle. It's like the water has a mind of its own. Then you were hearing about where the films were all filmed along there. That's where they filmed The River Wild. It's me thinking, it'll never be as wild as The River Wild and that's precisely where they filmed. It is a super experience. It's great fun. You have to get to know people in your boat real quickly, which is good, because you're all working together to keep the boat going. I like teamwork type thing.

Hiking

The draw of hiking for visitors has a few key points. To some it is a matter of accomplishment, exerting themselves, and reaching a goal. They prefer the physical aspect and enjoy the challenge. To others, it is simply getting away from society and into a more natural setting. They feel they can get away and forget about the stress of life. Being on the trail gives them the opportunity to see animals in their natural setting and view natural and scenic features that are not present in everyday life.
Couples

John & Shirley: Well, I like the hikes to go in to see the waterfalls. I like to see the water coming down and I get photographs of the waterfalls and things like that. I think it's just sort of neat to see all the different things that God has created. It's really neat to go back there and just the fact that you were able to accomplish and complete your hike and actually see what you wanted to see and get a photograph of it, it's worth it all to me.

Don & Teresa: The predominant reason that we came up here this time was just to specifically like. We hiked up to the Wolverine Lakes and we went hiking all over that thing and it was pretty impressive. There was a bunch of waterfalls and blue water and it smelled great. [We like to see these things] quite frankly, it is 'cause it's there. I wanted to hike up to the top of that thing just to see what it looked like. I'd never done it before. Once you get up there there's a sense of accomplishment. Why hike anywhere? I think it is basically 'cause it's there. It's not something I think about. There's the trail and you start hiking up it. We discuss which trail we're going to do the next day and we go hike that one. But while we're going we have our camera out and we're snapping pictures left and right. A lot of the trails that we're going on up around Ten Lakes are quite a bit, I mean, there's bridges. They're pretty primitive, but bridges over creeks and stuff like that. I almost consider that kind of not really out in the middle of nowhere yet. Whereas in Bob Marshall, it's like, I mean, geez. There's a creek across the trail, you either sloth through it or you find a tree that fell across it somewhere, climb across that. It's about as rustic as you can get realistically. I think it is basically 'cause it is there and it is rejuvenating.

Jay: My wife heard something about [this trail at] some point as being one of the better trails in the park, so we hiked that but [also] took the cedar trail and took the trail up to Avalanche Lake area. That was spectacular. I highly recommend that.

Alex & Ken: [The adventure of hiking is] to possibly see some kind of an animal, a wild animal. If I were riding by on my motorcycle I wouldn't see it, or bicycle. When you hike there's so much more. Slower pace. It's just the basics of getting back to nature. That's the way I feel about it. You leave the hectic world behind and you just kind of relax. It's like a therapy really. Basically it is.

Family

Eleanor & Lynanne: [I really enjoy hiking because] I like to explore trails. We enjoy looking at the wildflowers and the books. Just the fresh air too. We like to hike, and that kind of thing. I like to be outdoors like that.

Christy & Attila: If we were to live here, the only place I'd want to live is on the western border because Glacier National Park was the highlight of the trip. I like to hike, and that would be the best hiking area. I'd come back to visit. We have a three-year-old daughter who, without complaint, hiked two miles uphill in Glacier National Park. That's what we like to do. We think the outdoors is important because it gets kids involved with nature and away from the TV.

Melissa & Mark: You feel good about sort of exerting yourself and getting exercise while you're experiencing [the outdoors]. Getting a little off the beaten path, just you and either the scenery or the animals. Better chance at seeing the animals, too, the further away from the road you go, although we've done pretty well close to the road too. Getting away from people.

Louise & Neal: [laughs] Oh, I love it. It's about walking into country where no one else is practically, except for the animals. So you're dictated, dictated by mother nature, you're dictated by the animals a little bit more there than anything. It's exercise and being outdoors and seeing the animals and living a little more simply for a brief while. It kind of reinvigorates me in a lot of ways. Renews you.

Fishing/ Fishing Experience

Fishing is an activity that many visitors participate in when in Montana. To them, fishing and the experience associated with it is connected to just being outdoors and in nature. For many visitors catching a fish isn't as important to them as just living within the peace and quiet of the outdoors. To some visitors, fishing in Montana is an attraction because it presents new rivers and species of fish to catch that are not possible at
It is a new and unique experience to them. Also, fishing is a very social activity, shared by generations allowing family members to bond.

**Single**

Mark: [When I came to Montana I wanted to] learn how to fly fish.

**Couples**

Lynn & Mark: Mountains, fly-fishing. Is there anything else to life? That's the old bad day of fishing is better than a good day. Fly-fishing is a passion. It's serenity, it's the beauty of the surroundings, nature, sounds. Coming around a bend and having a deer standing in the stream right in front of you or standing or casting and having a cow come up and lick your elbow. The sound of the stream. It all comes together and it's peaceful, it's relaxing, it's my way of getting rid of stress. Catching the fish, and I'm strictly catch and release, is secondary to everything else that goes with it. [Here] the fish are somewhat different. Although, we have brown trout and rainbow trout in Wisconsin too. The rivers are bigger and moving faster. It's just a different experience.

Warren: I've been fishing up in the Bighorn out of Fort Smith. Our whole goal to go fishing in there, and we stayed down there at least a week and spent the whole time on the river, morning till night.

Joe: I think when you catch a fish it's the unknown, what's at the end of the line; feeling the vibration, struggle, and I've done some salmon fishing in Lake Ontario. I've caught fish out in the Pacific. It's just that, well, admiring the animal is one thing, and their survivability. Actually catching one, I guess it's the struggle. It's the human ability to have the knowledge of how to catch a fish. Then it's the excitement of being able, well, I like the survivability of it. I like, my own self, as far as my hunting, and part of me trying to be self-sufficient.

Kylie & Lee: What is it? The pursuit of that big catch. I just think it's exciting. You never know what you're going to get on the hook. Really [it's] just another thing, being out in nature and the whole outdoor experience, because I like all that too. It's peaceful and calm and you can sort out your thoughts.

Sally & Linda: Well [fly-fishing] it's an art. It's a whole culture. Neither one of us knows how to fly fish, [laughs] but we've liked the way all that stuff looks. Well look at the hats got the things on them, but the fly fishing, the solitude, the art of it, and what I think I've found is that a lot of the attraction of fly fishing is not catching fish. It's just where you have to go to get. I don't care whether I catch a fish or not. It's just being out there, being around that stuff. The people you meet. That's a part of it of the whole. I've enjoyed buying flies from local people and they always give us hints about things. So t gives us an entree to certain conversations that we wouldn't have normally.

**Family**

Clint & Tanya: Fishing [was the predominant reason for coming]. We're not working. [laughs] That's for sure. We just started fly fishing a couple years back and really enjoy it. The kids are learning to fish. It's a different type of fishing than where we are, a lot different.

Terry & Larry: [We like to fish]. It's fun. We don't catch fish, but it's fun. It's just the nature, just being there. You don't have to catch anything. Not doing anything. You sit back and relax, read a book or something, catch a fish. Away from your life. Your life is back there. You just want to be out. Being up here, looking at a lot of the places, looking at the fishermen, they're really away from it all. They're just enjoying it, they're just intent on just fly-fishing.

Austin, Rick, & Cobe: We're going to [go fishing this trip]. We're catch and release. Just catching the fish. That's it. The thrill of the hunt. [laughs] It's just for fun. That's right. That way we can catch them again, right buddy? [Also,] the beauty and the quiet, the solitude.

Lynanne & Eleanor: My dad's a big time fisherman with his husband. It's relaxing to me, when I go stream fishing. It's just relaxing. You can walk around in the shade and sit there and read a book if you want. Fishing
attracts me as a spouse because I like to hike, and that kind of thing, and so I do that while my husband is fishing.

Mark: Did a little fishing, so covered a lot of the bases I think.
Melissa: That's his passion.
Mark: She indulges me. I think there are many different levels [to fishing]. I'd say number one is being out somewhere where you can really enjoy the scenery and the countryside that you're in, both the river as well as what's up and around it. Two, then some way to relax. Trying to out think a fish, see the fish, have that excitement.

Joe: I definitely like just being on the rivers, but being in a place where you can catch a fish from your canoe, keep one maybe for dinner, that's a good experience. I like it.

Gary & Linda: I was fascinated with the Ennis area and the fishing, like I say, the trout fishing. I think probably, if anything, it relates to something I did, I was trout fishing one time, going out early in the morning, and this is before the sun came up when I got to the stream. Then to watch the sun come over the horizon, watch the mist come off the stream, it was almost a religious experience. That was worth it. It didn't matter whether you caught something or not. It is a challenge. Fly-fishing brings you closer to the challenge of actually, a natural way of getting a fish to do something that it would be doing naturally anyway. I suppose if you tie your own flies that gives you some pride in the fact that you've done something that would attract a fish in its natural environment and eating ways. His fishing to him has been relaxation. It gets away, it gets your mind off what you are worried about in your every day life and you're out with nature and you're away from the phones and all the other kind of things.

**General Activities**

Of the activities below, the common thread is the fact that Montana provides visitors a new and interesting setting to participate in their preferred activities. It allows them to see things that are not in their home areas and experience their favorite activities from a new perspective. Activities such as biking, motorcycling, birding, hunting, photography, horseback riding, and simple outdoor activities were part of the experience.

**Biking**

**Single**
Shrie: [On a bicycle] you get a completely different view of the country compared with when you drive through it. You can see it, the sounds and sights and smells of the country are quite different. The pace at which you go through is clearly not frantic, that you tend to get in a car where you're sort of endlessly driving through. You get quite a different view. People are much more open and friendly towards you when you're cycling. The only difficulty quite often is that the distances between towns is such that I always run out of water and things like that. It's quite difficult, but there are enough places where you can actually stop and people will always give you water and stuff.

**Couples**
Ken: [We] hung out and rode [our bicycles] up in Pattee Canyon and then another ride in Rattlesnake Canyon. So two great rides. We were going to do Blue Mountain for biking. I've read about Rattlesnake before actually, but I don't know that, we always go by maps, so we might have found it. Just yesterday, just driving, riding our bikes from Whitefish to Columbia Falls, you know, thirty-mile bike ride. It would never be in a guidebook. It was a beautiful morning.

**Motorcycling**

**Couples**
Ken: [On a motorcycle] you can see so much more. You can experience more on a bike. In a car you're confined. You're sitting side-by-side. Motorcyle, you're riding back of one another. You can smell the smells in the air, going by a lot better. You're more one with nature on a bike. If you see something it's easy to pull off to the side of the road and stop.
Katherine & Gary: When you're in a car you don't have the visibility that you do when you're on the back of a motorcycle. Like I'm sitting on the back. I'm sitting quite high up. I can see everything that you'd never see in a vehicle. Just like, I can remember the last time we came through, the fields, all the cows and the deer were out there with them. [laughs] I love that. I thought that was neat. I think you're part of the road, part of the land when you're on a bike. You smell it, you smell the countryside. You feel the rain. We drove through the warm rain the other day and it was just great. You're part of the road as you drive through. It's something hard to describe. We wouldn't ride in a car. We wouldn't do this trip in a car. We wouldn't be here in a car. I guarantee it.

**Birding**

* Couples

Donna: My husband and I are birders so it was a chance for us to see some birds we hadn't seen before.

**Family**

Gustaf: Well, birding takes you out into nature. It's a hobby that calms you down because you have to be patient. You cannot just rush around. You have to stand, wait and see and have a close look at things. Birds, they are beautiful. They are in many colors and shapes and I think also there is some scientific interest in this. Keeping track of things, life lists, day lists, tour lists. Also it gives you company because bird watching seems to be a very worldwide hobby, so you run into bird watchers, nice people, all over the place, wherever we go.

**Hunting**

* Family

Andrew, Katie, & Dan: [Hunting means] the chance to get away from the city for a little. You can have fresh meat. I'd say for me freedom and solitude and quiet and no phones and no real responsibilities and freshness.

**Photography**

* Couples

Joe: [Photography] is a different challenge. It's getting up close to the animal if you're going to take a good photograph of it. It's sharing what you've seen, perhaps, with another person.

John: Oh, [photography] it's just like an adrenaline rush. You actually had a chance to snap it. Like there was another time in Yellowstone where I got a close-up of a buffalo. I was smart enough to have the hood of my car between the buffalo and me in case he decided to charge. [laughs]

Don: We've got some friends who are real big into photography trips. That's what they do. We're here and look at how pretty it was and don't you wish you could have been there, but too bad.

**Horseback riding**

* Couples

Jay: Three days of some horse riding, terrific meals, comradeship of the high school buddies and their spouses and we enjoyed riding the backcountry. I think we were pushing one day about 300 or 400 head of cattle I guess. Maybe about that many. Anyway, I got a great admiration for the horses. I was riding a thoroughbred and just enjoyed riding. I guess I'm not an expert rider by any stretch of the imagination, but I enjoyed being on a horse and leap a creek or two and just push the cattle along. So, I have a new admiration for the horse, and avoiding all the holes while the ground squirrels and so forth. The horses took care of you. They're either following another horse or cutting across country, they eyed all the bad spots. You can see when they were getting ready to leap, or getting ready, and avoiding the holes and so forth. So that was great. A new gained respect for horses and their capability for going through rough country and having the knowledge to take care of you as a rider.
John: We came through the Big Hole, on the Big Hole River and it’s one of those places where I told Jean, I said, I wish I had a horse and could just start on one end of this and just have a bedroll and go to the other end.

Family
Deb: The day after that we went over to Many Glacier where we went horseback riding. I loved the horseback riding. They were really nice. It was a nice ride.

Outdoors Experience
Couples
Donna: It was a real interesting experience I think in completely kind of throwing off your city experience and stepping into another experience. We had with us quite a few children. Our adult children, and we realized that they had very few opportunities to experience now any place without, for instance, cell telephones and the Internet and all of that. So on this trip we just were back to the basics, putting up our tent, sleeping, making our food. I think it’s an experience everyone should have. It’s completely different. I think for one thing, you do, we have done different activities when we’ve come here. We’ve done very outdoorsy kind of activities.

III. Visitor Aspects-Attractions/Motivation

Motivation
The general attraction or motivation for visitors to come to Montana is to experience the environment and western attitude of the state. Visitors were attracted to the national parks and monuments, as well as the frontier, western feel. They wanted to experience that lifestyle and the environment that is home to it. Other visitors are motivated for cultural activities such as the Lewis and Clark Trail as well as Native American attractions.

Couples
Wolfgang: What we basically have been doing is retrace the Lewis and Clark trail this time. Last year we did it from St. Louis, Missouri up to Great Falls and we took five weeks. So we did spend quite a bit of time in Montana. Then we head for home, which is in the central part of Washington. This time we started from Missoula and took Hwy. 200, that’s actually the way that Lewis went on the way back, up to Great Falls. We’ve been tracing the trails through Montana, then Idaho, into Washington. What we basically did, we camped two days on 200, in Lincoln, no, three days before we got to Great Falls. In Great Falls they also had a very marvelous jazz festival. There were probably eight bands. There were truly some outstanding musicians from all over the country.

Carol & Warren: Well one reason we came up here was because we wanted to visit our friends’ ranch. Friends would be one motivation and also wildlife. We’re always interested in trying to find a moose. All of our vacations in the last ten years were always west of Denver. So we just enjoy this piece of it. The lure of the west if you want to call it, the cowboy piece, the Lewis and Clark piece, the wagon train piece. So we’ve spent a lot of time kind of chasing the Lewis and Clark trail as we go through.

Mickey: I was looking forward to doing some river rafting, hiking, trails, walking trails and seeing some of the historic areas, just like this home, and to see how the state even got to be what it is.

Joe: Talking with Monty [an old classmate], he said how much he thought Glacier National Park had more to offer as far as scenery and beauty. So I cancelled my plans of going to Yellowstone after this and will spend three to four days up in Glacier Park.

Jeff: Oh, I think Glacier Park will be the biggest thing that stands out. I mean, that’s one of the main reasons we came back here is to spend some more time in the park.
Brenda: Just being outside, and that's really what we wanted to do. Go to kind of undisturbed, big open wilderness and spaces. That's what we were looking for.

Alex: To me, going on vacation isn't going to a big city. We just like the woods.

Kylie: Probably what did it for me [to come to Montana] are the whole cowboy, horses, and western mentality. Since a little kid, I wanted horses. I ride quite a bit I guess you could say, but I don't have my own. Someday I will. I think out here would be a good place to fulfill those dreams and aspirations.

Sally: Well, our primary effort was to come up to Whitefish to go camping and fly-fishing. We started planning this trip and then we got into the Lewis and Clark thing, and then we got into the fly-fishing thing, and it all just started folding together as this grand trip cross country.

Jean: My mother was born here in the Bitterroot Valley and I wanted to see that.

**Family**

Clint: What attracted us was actually the Madison River this time, and some fly fishing. [So fishing is kind of our predominant reason to come].

Chet: To be honest, we're looking where would be a nice place to have a vacation home.

Kevin: [We want to see mountains] because that's what we came for, basically. You don't see anything like this in Illinois.

Chelsea: Well my favorite animals are horses. I like to see all those and [that is a feature of Montana that attracted me here].

Lynanne: I've always heard about the Museum of the Rockies and I wished to see it, which I have yesterday and today and found it very interesting, and recommend it highly.

Louise & Neal: Glacier Park is one [motivation for this trip], and friends. Also wildlife, because I was going to say that you're seeing things all the time, which I love. Wildlife and Glacier, mountains, friends, and Yellowstone.

Deb: Basically I want to see Glacier, and I always wanted to come back to the west. Glacier was one of the things my parents talked about, how pretty it was.

Jeff: [We are here with about 30 other family members for our annual family get-together in Bigfork.] The idea is to really get unplugged, especially the kids. It forces them to interact with their cousins, to make them get out of the house and do some stuff outdoors and it just happens without anybody forcing it.

Mary: Well, the main reason we came to Montana this year is for Glacier National Park, which we have yet to get to. We're anticipating we're going to be saying a lot of very nice things about it because this trip was planned due to my husband and I being in Yellowstone last year, sitting on the porch at Roosevelt, speaking to another person who said, if you think this is nice, you've got to go to Glacier.

Dan: Well, we're going to do hiking; just enjoying Montana's beauty basically. We're here checking out the possibilities of whether we might move here or not. That's why we're here. We're an outdoor family. We hunt and fish and hike and backpack and ski and all that stuff, we do it. That's really what's attractive about this place.

Linda: Yellowstone Park was what brought us here first because of the tales of our parents when they initially had come here.
National Parks

The national parks are an important attraction that many visitors focus their vacation around. Each park has its own unique features and specific attractions. In terms of Yellowstone National Park, visitors were motivated by the ability to have access to seeing a greater number of animals. These are animals not always present in their own states. They are also motivated to see the geological attractions such as the geysers and paint pots. Visitors do recognize that Yellowstone is a very commercialized and visited park. They noticed the amount of crowding and realized this aspect must be accepted when visiting Yellowstone. Glacier National Park is associated very strongly with the scenery of the park. Visitors describe a sense of peace and awe that accompanies Glacier National Park. The ability to interact with the environment is of most importance. Visitors did not find it as crowded or commercialized as those who visited Yellowstone National Park.

Single

Yellowstone NP
Anna Marie: Well, I came for Yellowstone this time. I've never seen it.

Glacier NP
Mark: I think Glacier's a real secret, the park, and the snow - there's snow there now. It's almost like it's sculptured, but by nature. It's fantastic, the water flowing and the snow. Unbelievable. I'd heard it was probably the most beautiful of the national parks. So now I probably agree. I haven't been to all of them, but it was really fantastic.

Jack: Of course the scenery is spectacular and that Going to the Sun Road, that's unbelievable.

Couples

Yellowstone NP
Wolfgang: Yellowstone is beautiful, but it's a little irritating. Naturally there are crowds and crowds of people. Everybody wants to see it. It's very populated. Let's put it that way. It's a different kind of going and seeing. It's okay. I love it, I think it's wonderful.

Don: [Disney Land is too populated]. Yellowstone would be another good example of that. You know, it's not really in the wilderness. It's just, it's like commercialized wilderness. It's kind of fake. I think half the lure of going to Yellowstone is to see all the animals, and then the other is to see the geysers and the hot springs.

Georgia & Barbara: So the problem with Yellowstone is if you don't like crowds, if you're in Montana for open spaces and not for that, then you have to find a way to do it without them, and you can't. You can't do Yellowstone without them, but we love the colors of the soil around the geysers. This is something you can never see. It's like an artwork. What we really appreciated about Yellowstone when we were there without people is the peace, is the quiet. You feel like you're almost at the beginning of the formation of the world, if you look at some of it. It's very cool. I told this to my husband, we'll go back to Yellowstone in the beginning of September sometime and then we'll go up hiking, backpacking, and there won't be any people, and it'll be fine. You'll love it. I go from Chicago to go to a natural place, it's not to be with tourists.

Glacier NP
Mary: We don't experience snow as you do in this area. Part of us is hoping that it's going to be very deep up there.

Greg: First we were interested in going to Glacier, and we did. Parked outside of Glacier and really enjoyed it. Our campsite was excellent. We loved our drive through the Going to the Sun Road. That was beautiful,
awesome. Many people have told us this; if you have the chance, see Glacier. Glacier is different, Glacier is really wonderful.

Jeff & Jane: Oh, I think Glacier Park will be the biggest thing that stands out. I mean, that's one of the main reasons we came back here is to spend some more time in the park. Some of the fun things we did yesterday, which would probably be pretty hard to top today. We just did part of the Going-to-the-Sun Road. It was our dog's first time to ever see snow, so we played in the snow with the dog and slid down the hill and got our butts wet and saw a mother mountain goat and her baby, which was pretty cool. Then we saw a park ranger chasing a male goat out of the parking lot at Logan Pass, which is not something you see every day. We stood up at the same point, Logan Pass, and the last time we were up there it was actually almost frightening because the clouds would come in and circle around you and you wouldn't be able to see anything, and then they'd just lift and dissipate and you'd be able to get a view again. Then they'd be right in there rolling around you again. It was just awe-inspiring. It was pretty remarkable.

Don & Teresa: We've never been to Glacier, so we want to see what, well at least I've never been there. [I believe it's] been over commercialized in a sense. It's like Montana's Disneyland.

Jay: Two words would be big and fantastic to describe [Glacier NP]. Peacefulness. That's what struck me. Just watching the plumes of water come down the cliffs. I think it was very enjoyable. Just relaxing and walking up and down the mountain along the creek was very enjoyable. Seeing the water go down through the gorge right before it gets down on the cedar trail. The traffic was less traffic than what I expected. I don't know how many people visit Glacier, but I was expecting probably bumper-to-bumper traffic, you know, for some of the trips. That did not occur.

Shirley: [Glacier], it's just kind of a spiritual thing, in terms of getting in touch with creation. Because it's so obviously natural creation that ....doing that I think you get more in touch with yourself.

Howard: There's really nothing like [Glacier NP] on the east coast. The Adirondacks and White Mountains, they don't compare.

Family

Yellowstone NP

Elizabeth & Matthew: Well I'd definitely tell [my friends] a lot about Yellowstone because that was my favorite thing so far. And I'd definitely mention about seeing buffalo in the road and everything. It's a change from Colorado. [We liked that in Yellowstone] there's all the buffalo. We saw big herds and last time when my parents had come they had all these buffalo in the road and they were by the side of the road and the first time we drove through Hayden Valley where that had happened we didn't see any of them close. So Elizabeth and I were really disappointed. But then we went back the second day or the third, and they were really close and some passed in front of us, so we were happy that we went back.

Lori: [We were looking for] wildlife in Yellowstone, and they have never seen Old Faithful or any of that. We just can't wait to see their face when they see it. Also, I wanted to bring my husband. I wanted to show him the animals and just the natural, the geysers, the paint pots, you know, all the cool things.

Glacier NP

Larry: I've always wanted to go to Glacier National Park and now it's closed because of the latest snowfall, but it's my favorite national park.

Christy: Glacier National Park was the highlight of the trip. I like to hike, and that would be the best hiking area.

Neal & Louise: I'm anticipating Glacier. I'm kind of looking at just being moved by it and being engaged by it. The other mountains that I've seen, I mean, I'm looking forward to it because I've always heard that Glacier is this, there's this ruggedness to Glacier and you can kind of get inside of it more. When I've been in
mountains in Colorado and south of here, I don’t know, everything kind of looks like a picture postcard or something. There’s not this sense of drama. That’s what I think we’re looking forward to.

Deb: I mean, it was absolutely beautiful. I loved Glacier. Even in the rain, it was beautiful. I loved it yesterday. I think it was pretty much what I expected. I expected it to be really pretty and it was. That it would be green and it was.

Caroline, Christine, & Adrian: [My impression of Glacier is like] wow. Lovely, beautiful. Breathtaking scenery. Lovely. There is clarity in the air. I don’t always like to put something of similarity, but to me it is in many ways akin to parts of Switzerland. It always had that sort of alpine people have described.

Native American Culture

The attraction of Native American culture is based on two aspects. The first is from a historical perspective and how the culture interacted with the land. This is demonstrated to visitors through the national battlefields, museums, and other cultural attractions. The second aspect is the ability to experience the culture today in the form of pow-wow’s or other Native American cultural events. Many visitors have developed a respect and interest in the native cultures and value the knowledge about its historical aspects.

Single

Jack: One of the reasons I’ve come to Montana is to see the Native Americans and their culture, and the Nez Perce at the Bear Paws Battlefield. I’m very interested in the Nez Perce and their trail and the experience of Bear Paws and Big Hole is really moving. I’ve really got interested in Native Americans, the Plains Indians. I’m trying to understand more about their life back in the time they depended on the buffalo.

Couple

Mary: The American Indians [are an attraction], which I think is from our childhood, possibly cowboy films that were always there when we were kids. What really has happened to them and where are they now? Okay, they have these vast tracts of land that are reservations, well, okay, where are they?

Joe: I bought a piece of Indian art, which I gave to a friend, so I love history; I love geography, so the whole frontier, Indian reality aspect of it has always interested me. I think the variety of Indian tribes is interesting, and how they got along, and traded with each other. Russell’s paintings I think, just the reality of them is what I like.

Ken: I think one of the big things that made us choose our route in was coming up [hwy] 12, which was a combination of the Nez Perce trail and the Lewis and Clark trail, and I thought that, for me, was a wonderful chance to look at two different bits of culture in Montana.

Bob: I think [what appeals to me about the Native American culture is] it’s the appreciation for ecology and for living with nature without destroying it. That’s one aspect.

Judy: We enjoy studying about the Native Americans. We went to the Little Bighorn and spent hours here and there and were just fascinated. We really enjoyed that. So when we came up here we were interested in the Plains Indians and now we’ve been interested in the Nez Perce Indians because we went through Big Hole. So we’ve been learning about how they were abused and we’ve found that very interesting.

John: I’ve always liked Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce story and so when we were doing our little daily planning, I guess a couple days ago I noticed the pass. I noticed the Chief Joseph Pass and then I noticed the Big Hole National Battlefield next to it, so that’s why we actually came here. It was part of the plan for today. I’ve loved Indians since I was a little kid. That’s the cowboys and Indians deal. I was always an Indian [when playing cowboys and Indians]. I just loved it. So I’ve just had an interest in it.
Family
Cobe: [We're interested in] all the tribes. Just the history of all the tribes and how many we've had throughout the United States. Where they were and how they developed, or how they respected the land, really. Then historically, it's almost all gone. This is the start of our United States right here, you know? We like to see all that, don't we?

Joe: We also live in a community where there are Native Americans. I'm a teacher. I have Native American students. So we celebrate their culture a bit. Probably not as much as we could or should. But I have impressions of people who were very in tune to nature, of course, and were actually at first friendly to the white people that came out here. We actually drove over the Bighorn Mountains to try and catch a Crow pow-wow. So I have an interest in seeing these plains Indians, the different tribes in their regalia, their costumes, but I'm also encouraged to see them doing better, the tribes doing better; even if it's because of casinos. Having spent more time out here, I'm falling more in love with the Rockies, and the native peoples here. I'd like to, I really hope we get to experience a pow-wow, July 10th coming up.

Lori: We believe that there's some Native American in my mom's side of the family, and we're kind of in the area, so we're just going to see what it's like.

Montana History
Montana provides visitors with the ability to experience the history of the state. Many visitors have developed an appreciation for historical sites and culture. Montana provides visitors the opportunity to understand the western development of American culture. To many, the west and the frontier were social and cultural images that have always fascinated them. Visiting Montana gives them a way to have a tangible experience with their favorite historical images.

Single
Jack: I'm really interested in history and just about everywhere in Montana there's some history.

Elaine: The capital. The Lewis and Clark expedition thing. Hearing about that, seeing the paintings and all their stuff, I really just, it absorbs me. It's got a special place in my heart for all of it.

Couples
Lynn & Mark: That's one thing about mining history, there's so much involved, and it's not just the mining, it's the social aspects, the architecture, and technology. Recently, [our trips have focused on mining history].

Vernon & Mary: We have been very interested in the way the Americans view their history, very interested in their history. When it compares to the history that we look at when we're back home, it's about that much, whereas ours is that much. The people in this country show much more interest in their history, I think, than a lot of the people that live in our country [England]. So many people who have come here are European and we've been interested in why they chose to come, what drew them, what was happening in Europe that drew them to this place, and then what's over here. What's happened to them there? That's why I think we've seen several ghost towns. Bannack was the place where everything came to life because they haven't restored it. They've just preserved it. That was quite special. You could see why people had come, you could see what kind of life they were living and what had happened to them and what's happened to them since.

Carol: I think it was an exciting time in American history, and I liked cowboys. I like horses; I would love to take a covered wagon trip sometime.

Shirley: I just really like U.S. history and, you know, that's part of it. The fact that [Lewis and Clark] came from the neighborhood where I live, it even makes them more interesting. I think it's the history and the connection to the past. We've lost a lot of that in this country. It's important to be in touch with what it was like here before the Europeans invaded.
Jay: I've always been interested in the West. Always read biographies of say Abraham Lincoln, of the western pioneers and so forth. So i've always been interested. Being of the time frame I am, there was Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, Lone Ranger, Red Rider and the West has always intrigued me.

Sally & Linda: We came for Montana history. I will say we didn't know a whole lot about Montana history, but I look at it as just that generic western history. I've been very interested in that. I've been very interested, in particular, and I think Linda has too with how recent this westward expansion was. I mean, this town is only a hundred years old. What an enormous physical struggle it was for these people to get here, and how recent that was in our history. That's very powerful to me.

**Family**

Tarin: Well first of all, I like to read and with that comes history. So I got the interest from the reading, and I love to read about the West and America. I've studied at a college in my old age about the British and American history and culture and literature. So I know that you have a lot of good spots, old historic spots here. You're really good to take care of things and to put up a sign, this happened here and this happened here.

Chet: I mean, the history is of interest. I think there's so much more wealth in the people and the communities that are here and the environment. Montana history, as it relates to Virginia City, Ennis, is intriguing. Of course, that's what I grew up with. My dad had all the books, Robber's Roost, you know, the whole thing. We always had to watch one of those movies that were on TV that referred to that, so I acquired that. Now it's interesting to kind of really study it a little bit and really understand what has happened, what created the culture of the local people. Why are the people like they are? That's kind of interesting.

Neal: You also have a sense of the country's history more, there's a more sense of recent history. We're not an old country so everything's pretty young, but here it feels real recent. You feel like people just put their stake down a couple years ago or just a generation or two ago. That's a different sense than in the eastern parts where you have more of a sense of things being around for 150, 200 years, and so there are patterns and all of that kind of stuff. That's kind of a different way of relating to history. You really feel like history is alive.

Audrey: It seems like all these real old houses and everything are still preserved. They're still here. Where we come from, they have an awful time trying to preserve the history because it's making way for progress and they're tearing them down. Old buildings there don't seem to last.

Karen: I used to read cowboy stories. I still do. Book and books and books and you hear all this, they explain the scenery or where this guy went behind some kind of a bank and now I can see them. I guess they knew what they were talking about. I've read a lot of these stories about what this looked like and you can almost picture that now. After you see it, it's just fascinating.

Linda: I just like to find out any area, just sort of what their past and who was there and where it, how it got established and so on.

**Lewis and Clark**

The cultural popularity of the Lewis and Clark journey has inspired many visitors to follow the trail. To them, it is not so much the connection of Montana to the Lewis and Clark journey, but the journey itself. Many visitors have become fascinated by the scope of the journey and the many facets included in it. Popular culture and books have increased interest as the bicentennial of their journey approaches, it is a part of American history that many visitors relate to and will always have an interest in.

**Single**

Jack: I went down to Great Falls and had a very nice time at the new Lewis & Clark interpretive center.
Couples
Lynn: Lewis and Clark certainly, they’re the ones who somewhat opened up the West to put it bluntly, the white people. Their writings about their findings are intriguing. Getting the flavor of some of the places that they stayed is interesting to me.

Joyce: Well I think [Lewis and Clark is] primarily Wolfgang’s fascination. Although I’ve really come to appreciate what they went through, the length of the trip, the hazards that they faced. It’s an exciting portion of our history, of the country. So it’s fun to go see the places where they were.

Dan: Well I’ve got a whole bunch of books. You just can’t realize what those men went through. There were no machines; there were no horses until they got to the top of the Rocky Mountains. Then when they came back, I can just feel what they were feeling. It’s more of a feeling that I get thinking about it.

Jeff & Jane: I was very impressed by the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center. I didn’t expect it to be as in depth as it was. Found a really neat historical marker along the way where Lewis and Clark were furthest north on the return trip. I guess coming from the plains side and having just been through all the Lewis and Clark stuff and being interested in history you just keep on thinking, these poor guys are going across this prairie going, oh, we’re almost there and then they see these mountains and go, oh man. Just on the other side of that mountain, and realizing because, of course, we have a full map, that buddy, you haven’t even started yet. You’re in for a real surprise. Also, the Ken Burns documentary about Lewis and Clark, just seeing the scenery in that, you just got to go and see it for yourself.

Shirley: Oh, we read the book of the Lewis and Clark journeys and it made us more interested in some of the areas that they described in the book.

Donna: I guess we were attracted to this river because of the Lewis and Clark voyage. We have watched that PBS Ken Burns movie on Lewis and Clark and been quite intrigued. We had read several books. So the White Cliff area, I remember their descriptions of going through that and how beautiful it was.

Jean & John: We both read Undaunted Courage, loved it. That just really sort of, I think, intrigued both of us. It’s just a remarkable journey and these guys did it, and again, I’m coming from being a teacher, I wanted to sort of firsthand experience it.

Family
Cobe: I read the Lewis and Clark [journals]. I took two years to read the journals and I am just fascinated by them. So, I didn’t expect to see much of that here. I didn’t realize how much, how far they came up into Montana.

Joe: [Lewis and Clark’s] part of the allure to me too. In fact, I just bought their journal, which I had read Undaunted Courage and I thought, oh, I don’t know if I’d ever want to read the journal. That might get kind of old, but I think just opening the book and turning to a spot and starting to read, it’s just incredible to see their first impressions of what this land was like. I had read Undaunted Courage and I thought it would really be neat to see more of the Lewis & Clark Trail.

Dick & Mary: Well I know one thing that we really enjoyed that I’d read a little about, we really enjoyed the Lewis & Clark Center. We haven’t been particularly following the Lewis and Clark route or anything. There are obviously a number of things along the way that you can see and enjoy about that. I think it’s, I think they got the right people to go out on that expedition. It sounded like Captain Clark was a wonderful virtuous man and what upset me is the people. He set a standard for white people interacting with Native Americans that were not followed by the people who came subsequently, and that’s really upsetting to me. It’s kind of just pushing on into the totally unknown, not having a clue where they were really, what they were going to find.

Lori: The Lewis & Clark Expedition, we’ve followed that quite a bit because we have the same ultimate end of the trail, in Oregon. I was looking at the mountains yesterday and I was also commenting on, we have these gigantic freeways. Look what kind of stuff they had to go through, you know?
**Family/Friends**

Visiting family and friends is a common motivation for any state's visitors. Through the statements made by visitors, those visiting family and friends had the same comments and experiences as those not visiting family and friends. Visiting Montana for other reasons appeared to give them the ability to visit family and friends in their areas of interest.

**Couples**

Jean: I have a distant cousin in Bozeman, so we saw her and her husband.

Dan: I've got a sister living in Helena at the Masonic Home. I've got her grandkids living in Billings, and that's where we're heading for now, to try to see if we can locate them.

**Family**

Gustaf: We have some friends from years ago that live in Bozeman, and we have been visiting them before, so that will be basically the second last stop.

Chet: Well, let's start out with our favorite person, Steve. He's a miner in Sheridan. I've known him since he was 21 years old, or I knew of him at that point in time, and met him at that stage. We would occasionally have telephone conversations throughout the years and wishful merry Christmases at the holiday season. Then when we finally got to see each other after all those years, it was like an old homecoming.

Donna: Well he has a half sister that lives in Livingston so that kind of geared the route we took.

Joe: We ended up knowing that my best friend's uncle lives in Montana. We're going to stay there in Missoula. Our friend's sister lives here and our friend's friends live here.

Louise: We had a friend who grew up near Polson and was going to be here for this summer, back for the summer and so we thought, well, what a great time to head this way and see a friend, where she grew up, and visit a lot of these things along the way for the girls.

Christine: [We visited a ranch but] it wasn't really a working ranch though. It was where our friend, a friend of a relative breeds some very special Brazilian horses. We just went out to see the horses and have a swim.

**IV. Visitor Aspects—Relationship to the Environment**

**Wildlife Experiences**

Most visitors to Montana seem to have a general appreciation for wildlife. Some describe wildlife viewing as a very powerful experience and one they value very much for their personal enjoyment. The unique aspect of Montana is the ability to see species of animals in settings that would not be possible in their home state. The feeling of interacting with wildlife in a natural setting roaming free opposed to in a zoo or other artificial setting seemed very important to most visitors.

**Single**

Anna Marie: I definitely enjoy seeing the animals. I get excited when I see a rabbit. [laughs] I don't see them where I come from. I just greatly love and value animals, so it's a wonderful place to see the game. It's very exciting.
Elaine: I've seen some really neat birds that I've never seen anywhere. Black and white birds. I've never seen those anywhere else.

**Couples**

Warren & Carol: Well this hike that we took this morning, in one mile we saw an antelope herd and a fox and all the birds. We enjoy that part of it.

Joe: If I ever get away from the harvesting of the wildlife I'd think about getting into photography. I've been out on wild turkey hunts where our main purpose was to photograph the birds coming in. I enjoyed hunting that. I mean, the kill is the down part of hunting. The up part is, to me, doing a lot of bow hunting, sitting up in a tree stand and just for hours at a time, being silent and motionless and then having a big deer come through or a herd of deer come through. Even if you don't get a shot, I mean, just appreciating seeing it, and looking forward to seeing that here. I've taken care of bluebird boxes. If they cover the boxes right, they might have three hatchings in the box during the season. I used to work for the Navy and take care of a nature trail of bluebird boxes. So I would take sequence photographs of the bluebirds developing in the box. Just the appreciations of seeing the birds grow and then fledge. I like seeing that.

Jane & Jeff: I think it's a blessing [seeing the wildlife wander through your campsites]. It's wonderful. You should have seen the people on the mountain yesterday when they saw that mother mountain goat and the baby. They were all beside themselves. It's something most people never get to see and don't expect to see except at a zoo or at Disney world or something. There are a lot of people that think it's a real blessing to be able to actually see something in the wild.

John & Shirley: Well, you get to see a lot of different types of wildlife here that you may not see in the mountains and forests around Spokane. I think it's mainly when you go on vacation, you like to see things that you don't see at home all the time, just something different, out of the ordinary.

**Family**

Gustaf: [We've had a chance to see some wildlife]. Deer, some kind of antelopes.

Tanya & Clint: Well, we've seen a lot of antelope. We've seen a lot of deer. Just seeing them [is what it is about wildlife we like]. I think, too, just to get away and see something different. You see your hometown, your area all the time and it's just different. It's cooler.

Pam & Chelsea: We've seen two baby black bear and a mother black bear, and I saw a grizzly bear. We saw a mountain goat way up high. It was amazing to see him just standing. I mean, where is the cliff he's sitting on?

Eleanor: [We're big wildlife viewers]. I had mountain sheep standing at the fence looking at me and [we have a picture] that's the only picture where we've been up close enough to a moose that he looked at us and we took his picture

Mark & Melissa: Even just driving through at 75 miles an hour we've seen all kinds of deer, we've seen pronghorn, prairie dogs, elk all over the place. Didn't see any bears yet, so we're keeping our fingers crossed. I think [the attraction I feel with seeing wildlife is] with the earth. For me where I fit in the whole sort of larger scheme of the world. Away from cities and technology, back to the more important, who am I, why am I here, how do I fit into the rest of nature and the environment and the ecology. That's it for me. You have a better likelihood at seeing big animals I would say. I was fishing yesterday and a big bull elk just walked right through the river right past me, and that's not something you can experience elsewhere I don't think.

Shirley & Steve: It's what it's supposed to be. It's more natural up this way. They're supposed to be roaming around. It's kind of a calming, just because they're so free and they have not a care in the world. To see them, just in the natural setting, it's like they're still out there yet. There's still some around. They're not all in
a zoo or they haven't been completely wiped off the face of the earth, you know? It's just nice to know that we still have resources that we haven't used up, that we haven't just thrown everything away.

Caroline, Linda, & Christine: [Seeing wildlife is important to us because] the only way we've ever seen it is in a cage, which is so unnatural. It's lovely to see these animals and we're able to see that grizzly in its habitat albeit that he was guzzling a gopher. It was wonderful to see those buffalo out on the plains.

Dixie: What gets me is these antelope don't even lift their head up. We passed one, it was standing right on the white line on the other side of the road, right on the white line, and it's just standing there eating. It never lifted its head when we drove by or nothing. At home if it was a deer at home they'd be jumping out in front of you.

**Lakes and Rivers**

The pristine pure nature of the rivers and lakes in Montana is what attracted many visitors. They were drawn by the ability to see a glacier-fed stream or river. Viewing a river in Montana's natural setting is a unique experience that brings peace and great appreciation.

**Single**

Anna Marie: [I] always wanted to see the Missouri headwaters. I just think that's just a very magical place to be, and I'm right. Rivers bring peace. I just think they're God's gift. They're just peaceful. They're just so peaceful and they're lovely and clean and glorious surroundings. There's a magical quality about these Montana rivers. I really can't adequately describe it.

Elaine: [Rivers], I just look at them. They're so beautiful, they're so blue, and they're so clear.

**Couples**

Patricia & Leo: The rivers are just beautiful. Well they're just wide and full and running right along. I think this is the third year of drought in Colorado, and here you look at these [rivers] and you are driving along and you think, oh, that'd be great to fish there, and oh, they're rafting over there, and you see all the potential for vacationing. Things that we would have done 20 years ago. Just fantastic. The rivers must flow pretty well all the time because it supports an awful lot of vegetation, trees along the river itself. It's beautiful. That gives you an idea of how much snow there is up here too.

Greg & Donna: The constant changing sight of these glacier-fed streams coming down the sides of the mountains. The sounds they make and what they look like. It's just fun sitting there watching them flow. The water's all clean. It's very clear.

Sally: One of the things we've enjoyed, like I said, is these forests, but the amount of water in there, there are loads of streams and lakes. It's not that we've gotten into them because they're all freezing cold for us! But that it's so easily accessible. I think that's one of the things that's impressed me is that anybody can have access to any of this experience, if they want. It doesn't cost anything to do it. You do not always have to pay to get into something.

**Family**

Gustaf: We should add [we came here for] the rivers, you know, the Missouri and all its tributaries. Of course, for bird watching, any pond or lake is a major spot. So we have been to Medicine Lake, to Lake Benton, north of Great Falls. So we try to look out for those streams, creeks, lakes and stuff. We make stops along the way to do just that.

Terry: [We are attracted to the streams and lakes] because they're in the mountains.
Chet: The rivers, I'm just discovering [them]. In my previous trips I never, I saw the rivers, never really noticed the rivers. But if anything, on this trip I have a growing attraction towards the rivers, and hopefully tomorrow with our little fishing trip I think it might intensify a little bit more, especially going with my son.

Neal & Louise: The rivers here are gorgeous. I have to say, they're beautiful. It's a different quality. It's a different kind of river. It's really lovely.

Gary & Linda: But the glacial streams too are magnificent. They're clear enough, the bubbling drops as they go down. There's another babbling brook.

Mark: I would say the rivers are bigger [in Montana], fishing is good.

**Badlands and Plains**

The plains and Badlands in the eastern part of the state were not mentioned very often. Of the visitors that did comment on them, the color and uniqueness of the topography was the most attractive aspect of the area. Some visitors commented on the time necessary for the Badlands to form and were amazed at the plains, which were in such contrast to the mountains of the state. They were pleasantly surprised by the diversity the landscape in Montana.

**Couples**

Georgia: I like the Badlands of North Dakota and Montana better than those in South Dakota, I have to say right out. The North Dakota and the Montana Badlands, and this is even a little different, but they're just, to me they are more inviting. It's more like an opening up of the earth. There's still a lot of variation in colors and in vegetation and it's still an open feeling to me. I don't go to the South Dakota Badlands. I go to North Dakota and Montana, but I think they're very vastly different, and they're not promoted enough, right? The people, it's a whole different feeling to me.

Sally & Linda: God, the Badlands were fantastic. [They] blew us away. That's where we just pulled off the road and camped in the middle of the grassland. I thought it was going to be all these big rock, barren mountains. We were blown over with the plains. I had no idea that Montana had those big plains out there.

**Family**

Tarin: We were sitting there and you listen to the grass. The plains are so full of sounds and life and everything. The colors, the smells. People should stop and sit down and be on the plains and just feel it. It's marvelous.

Karen, Dixie, & Audrey: Well, [I like the scenery,] the rangeland and, mostly the rangeland, the rough country. I have to say the scenery too. The Badlands over there and the forests. Everything like that. Just thinking about how long it took those rocks to form like that and how many years of erosion it took to make them look like they are today. What gets me, I wonder what the first white guy thought when he poked his head over the hill and saw that mess. I said, I'd like to see that before there was fences and conglomeration all over it. I like the Badlands and plains.

**Mountains and Forests**

The mountains and forest seemed to bring a sense of awe and excitement to most visitors. Many experiencing them for the first time are astounded by the scale and scope. Other visitors from states with mountains feel the Montana mountains are different. Visitors feel the mountains are wilder, more forested and larger in scale. The colors and formations are different than the Sierras or Appalachians. The experience with the mountains is very dynamic and elicits very strong emotions. Visitors connected with the mountainous environment in a very powerful way and appreciated its beauty.
**Single**

Anna Marie: [The difference with Montana's mountains are that] they're bigger here. They're bigger and wilder. They're untouched. They don't have necessarily a lot of comfortable trails going through them. You can navigate your way through a Washington forest pretty well. You try to think you're tough and go navigate a Montana forest, you may be in for somewhat of a surprise I think. They're untouched. They're pristine. Formidable.

Elaine: [My mountain experience is] oh God, I don't know. I just love it. It's kind of like a sponge. I just want to absorb it. I really don't know. I want to say since, I don't know if it's a power thing or, they're just beautiful, just looking at them, just beautiful, because I never see them when I go back home or anything. I get a sense of peace and I get a sense that just kind of clears out my mind. I just got a sense of inner peace.

Mark: [My impression of the mountains is] I think the color, like I mentioned the beauty, the scope of the mountains. It's got a lot of color to it, different colors. Anything from rock and green to you almost see a reddish tan color from different minerals.

**Couples**

Mark & Lynn: We have a thing for mountains, both of us. The mountain terrain really does add something to any trip I think. We also have, as you might suspect, sort of a geological bent. So rock outcrops and exposures are inherently interesting to us. I like relief. I like vertical relief and terrain and it's visceral. There's something comforting about mountains. I can't explain why. There are two things that kind of give us peace, and that is a large body of water, be it one of the Great Lakes or an ocean, and mountains. They have a very similar effect on us internally, and I can't quantify it, I can't describe it any better than I probably already have.

Mary & Vernon: It's greener. It has more hills, more mountains, and more variations than Wyoming's large areas. It's the mountains here that we have seen in all directions, which we weren't aware of in Wyoming.

Joe: The Appalachians are more tree covered, at least in the area where we are. It's nothing magnificent like here. The Smokies may be a different story, but the Rockies are more rugged to me. They are not as green, at least in some areas I've been anyway. To me, after being away and flying back over the western ranges again, it's always a surprise, the reality of how magnificent they are. I think our smallness in relationship to the mountains strikes me. I'm very limited in the experience so far, but just looking around Helena here, it seems more graceful, so to speak. It's rugged when you look at some of the areas near here. You see the rolling plains and then you come up against the mountains.

Donna: I love all the pine forests and all the mountain lakes. They're very pretty. We don't have the mountains. We don't have any high desert, so seeing that side and that part of the mountains is very different. We live in a really flat part of the world. We're marshlanders, so it's just sort of nice to see different landscapes and these are particularly impressive. It's wide open, you get the great big sky without a lot of buildings.

Alex: Well the mountains are just something that you don't see anywhere else. To me, these mountains are just the most beautiful mountains in the whole United States. We have been to Yellowstone before, but I just think these mountains and scenery are spectacular. It's just breathtaking. It's something that you just enjoy seeing. It's just beautiful and it's just all natural.

Jean & John: Certainly, we have different types of forests at home, so it's nice to see something different. It smells good too. That evergreen smells wonderful. I just love going out and seeing a range of mountains on my right and different range on my left and there's one behind me and there's another one in front of me, and I'm on the map saying, okay, that's the Gallatin Range and that's the Bozeman Range. I just love that because I'm a map person anyway, especially when I can identify things like that. The mountains are just so rugged and raw, especially compared to the Appalachians, you know, that we would be used to.
Family
Larry: [The mountains in Montana are different because] they're a lot more striking than the Sierras. I feel there's a lot more trees. It's more striking, because ours seem to be hard, Sierra Nevada seems to be a little bit more rounded, where these are just pushed up out in the middle [makes sound]. A lot more striking. I'd have to say that's the whole Rocky Mountain chain, because I've never really looked at it like that, but it's just a lot more striking. I liked it.

Chelsea & Kevin: [What I think is beautiful is] the mountains. It just makes me think of Rockford, how it's so dull there, and you come up here and it's like whoa! It's awesome. It's magnificent.

Pam: [What struck me most about Montana was] the mountains, of course. I feel we're up in God's country. I've never seen such beauty. So we hit Montana and they woke me. We're in Montana. I look up and there are the mountains and I've never seen them and of course I turned my head and I had tears for a while. It's gorgeous. So I'm leaving Illinois behind. I'm moving, this is my goal, to move here.

Mark: Just from a recreational perspective I, in particular, am a passionate fly fisherman, so that's one thing I think of are the mountains with the streams. We also like hiking and camping and we like seeing the animals. So in addition to the spectacular scenery, I think all of those things we like to enjoy when we talk about going to the mountains. The thing that we remarked about the mountains is you go on from one side of the mountain range to the other and it has a really remarkable different character, and that's something that's different. For example, the Sierras that we're more familiar with in California have the fairly uniform character as you drive through them. So you'll have one maybe really forested kind of gradual slope on one side and then a real precipitous rocky granite slope on the other side and that's pretty spectacular to see the two different things.

Joe: [The mountains here] oh, they're just different. They're so different. They are as huge and peaky and glaciated, but Glacier's much different. They're definitely bigger glaciers and the big U-shaped valleys are something that you don't see so much in California.

Deb, Nick, & Andy: These are very dramatic. The mountains are dramatic. It really gives you a bigger sense that America's more than our backyard. Splendor. Vast. Bigger.

Shirley, Mary, & Steve: [I like] the purple mountain sunsets. You always hear about the purple mountains, but you actually can see them out here. That's why it's fun to walk through the trees and look up and say, yes, it's a lot bigger than our Minnesota oak trees and things like that. It just puts things in perspective, if you want to put it that way. Now the hardwoods and the softwood forests up north, you don't have all the big pine forests like we do mile after mile after mile out here. I was just in Denver about three months ago and the mountains, I expected the mountains there to be more like the mountains here, and they're not. They're just, they just didn't seem as lush and just rolling. It's just like mountain after mountain after mountain. I was not impressed at all. And when I got up here, I mean, I could stay here forever. This is just, like, awesome. It's just breathtaking, I think. It just never ends.

Linda: Coming into Montana, first of all, coming across the border from Alberta we were stunned with, very similar terrain. Then the changes started to take place. We had gone through the Rockies over to Vancouver and then back and we thought we had left them and then suddenly we're getting into a very mountainous area again; which, we're always fascinated by the different kinds of mountains that we see, whether they're granite or limestone or whatever they happen to be. When I see those signs where it's like a real U-turn I just wonder how we're going to get around the mountain and I just want to get around it. The grandeur of the whole thing just makes you feel very small, like it's just horrendously grand. To think that you're looking across at glaciers and down into deep valleys, you're just so small and insignificant in the grandeur of the plain and the valleys. It's magnificent.
Green and Lush

When describing the mountains and forests of Montana, visitors commented on the particular fact that the color of the mountains was more striking in Montana. The mountains were more green and lush than in other mountain states. Montana’s color appeared to stand out as a specific characteristic of the western mountains. Some visitors stated it was a nice change coming from states where the environment was drier and with less trees.

Single

Mark: I think the big thing that stuck out in my mind [about the mountains] is how steep they are, and yet they were still green. In fact, the trees look like they were layered up because you see spots along the way. The trees look like they’re just put there perfectly in place and layered up the side of the mountain.

Couples

Patricia: Now one thing about the mountains is that we just have such thick pine trees that all you see are trees. And here they just look green and velvety. They just look so soft and, so it must be that because you get so much moisture here that it lets it grow like that. Every turn we made why it’s just one big view right after another. He’s driving and I’m trying not to say, oh, look over here.

Mary: We anticipated that Montana would be like Wyoming, and it isn’t. It's greener.

Family

Clint & Tanya: It's just the green look at the mountains. I live in the desert. It's flat, it's brown. Just to see green trees. Green is actually a very nice color.

Larry & Terry: Going up to the mountains you see more green than what we have. They are greener.

Deb & Andy: [The difference about particularly the mountain part of Montana is] it's green. It's green.

Shirley: I don't know. [The mountains in Colorado] they just didn't seem as lush and just rolling. It's just like mountain after mountain after mountain after mountain. I was not impressed at all. When I got up here, I mean, I could stay here forever. This is just awesome. It's just breathtaking I think. It just never ends.

Andrew: [My description of Montana is] lush mountains. I think Montana is a beautiful state because of all the trees and green and plants.

Lori: You've got a lot of trees and it's green. Everything is so green, it's so green. It looks almost like green suede up there.

Open Spaces, Uncrowded Areas

Open space brings a sense of freedom to many visitors. To them, it means getting away from civilization and the pace of their normal lives to a place where things are more relaxed. It offers them a sense of personal space and "elbow room" they cannot find at home or in the city. The uncrowded areas of Montana give a sense of what frontier life was like at time when things weren't as congested. Many visitors came from urban settings and large cities. To them, having the opportunity to be in a rural setting is very valuable and it brings a sense of peace and relaxation. A view without buildings and billboards has value to them. For others, the expansiveness of the open spaces is a change of pace. Some visitors come from areas where their view is limited by forests and other features. In Montana, they feel they have a view of the horizon, which is a refreshing change giving them the ability to look out over the landscape. Montana epitomizes these feelings and the ability to experience the environment in a different way.
**Single**

Shrie: There's some really remote places, aren't there? It's always sort of curious to me, quite often, what people do in these remote places and how they manage. You can end up being quite insulated, insular.

Anna Marie: Montana is the most beautiful place in the world. Wide open spaces, few people, and just glorious, pristine beauty. There's no place else like it.


**Couples**

Lynn & Mark: Open space, uncrowded areas. That's always nice. We don't have a horizon at home. I mean, it's a nice place to live but we don't have a horizon. We live in a spot that's about a thousand feet above sea level. It's rolling terrain, postglacial, rolling terrain, pretty heavily wooded. It's pretty. It's very pretty, but we have no horizon. There's not enough relief in our terrain.

Warren: Well your other question about why do you like the open spaces and trees, that whole freedom piece is really pretty. You feel that when you're out West. You don't have the big leafy trees closing you in, so you can always be out, you've got that freedom. To be able to say this scene probably hasn't changed. We're missing the buffalo running over this hill, but the antelope are here.

Mickey: I've lived always in big cities. It's just fascinating to come out to see that we still have a lot of open spaces. People living in open spaces, ranches and farms and doing the things that we read about but you don't actually see it yourself, not coming from big cities.

Joe: Looking on a crowded urban area and taking the train into work and the subway every day and being crowded in and hemmed in by people going up and down the escalators and subways. Fighting to get inside a subway door on a daily basis. To me, getting away from that, my purpose is just slowing down and stepping back. I've always loved the outdoors, but where I hunt and so forth, there's a lot of trees and woods and stuff. Here it's more of a vista, where you take in more at once, and not have the scenery interrupted by crisscrossed roads and so forth. I think that's a big thing and sitting back from the mountains and seeing the mountains and not having your view interlaced with telephone poles and turnpikes and so forth. That's what I'm looking forward to and being out on the ranch and looking forward to that.

Donna & Greg: We drive for miles and don't see a car, very few houses. That's just very unique to us. That does not happen on the east side. Miles and miles of land, where we are we just don't see that. You don't get that kind of visibility at all.

John: Well [open space is] important because I live in a city that's 300,000 people and you have all the traffic and everything like that. A lot of times you have to deal with crowded conditions. It's kind of nice to go to a place where it's not quite as crowded. If you want to go someplace where you can be more alone or get away from the hustle and bustle of the city, Montana's a great place to go for that.

Teresa: It is that kind of unpopulated, or that's the idea. Fast roads and it's just nice because it's not that crowded. So you can get up away from people and into the mountains and that's what I think of Montana. Montana and Wyoming I guess. To me I've always kind of thought that's one of the reasons people are getting, things are getting crazier, you know, is you pack people too close together and it's like rats. They start chewing on each other. We need space.

Brenda & Ken: Go to kind of undisturbed, big open wilderness and spaces. That's what we were looking for. So for us it's open space and uncrowded areas.

Bob: Well Shirley was commenting this morning about how this is a new kind of beauty here because yesterday we spent our time in the mountains, but the open plains are also beautiful in a different kind of
way. I think it helps one to get more in touch with nature because one's focus then is on nature rather than on people. When you're living in the city you're caught up in just getting around and you don't have a chance to really make that connection to nature.

Judy: Oh, it's refreshing. It's wonderful. I'm concerned that it's planned and that they don't have sprawl, because we have a lot of sprawl in the east because nobody planned anything. We want conservation of Montana so that it'll be here for our grandchildren to enjoy.

Georgia: Well for me, I grew up in western North Dakota. For me it's a connection. For me it's a spiritual connection. When I'm out on that open plains and the prairie, the sky is the universe and I feel much closer to God. I don't know, there's a lot of poetry about the plains being spiritual, and that's the way I feel about them.

Family

Clint: Montana still seems pretty much wide open. In the other western states, as opposed from Wyoming is about the same way, but just the wide openuess.

Leslie: Lots more wide open spaces, and I think the mountains with the snow on top are the most impressive things to me. Just everywhere you go, just to see that. I love that. In the middle of summer, just wide open, beautiful, uncluttered space.

Larry & Terry: You can still feel like you're in the open and it's like you're out in the west or something. You're like 50 years back in time. It's nice. Lots of room. You're not so crowded with stores and stuff.

Chet: It's just so quiet. You can hear the cows in the pastures tens of miles away and you hear a little rumble of traffic going down the middle of the canyon, but every once in a while you'll hear a horse. That's beauty that's hard to describe. [Open space is important to me because] if you've been to Disney World during the summertime when people are stacked 15, 18 deep, climbing over each other to get a candy bar or an ice cream cone, then you'll know what uncrowded space is.

Cobe & Rick: [Montana is] just so open and clean. Wide open, beautiful, untamed. It's pretty much what I've been told. It's the open land. Everything's really clean. It's expansive. It means that this land is so untouched, like it was hundreds of years ago. That's how I felt. Like it must have looked exactly the same with the pioneers. You don't come into the state and see the big clear cuts of trees. We really haven't seen that out here. You can see where they've logged, but they've select logged everything.

Lynanne: [One impression of Montana is] the expansiveness. I live in kind of, it's called Mongo Valley and you have a closed-in type feeling, at least I feel that way. You come out here and you see for miles and miles, and elbow room and the people are friendly and very down to earth.

Mark & Melissa: [What open spaces means to me] I would say it's seeing the countryside as it existed originally, kind of untouched by man to a degree. I always think of this as like Aaron Copeland's America actually. That's this part of the country. That's what I always hear as I was coming through here. Even in California we have places that are relatively untouched, but I think the scale of it is different. We have some park areas and much of the mountains, but not the magnitude as we've seen here already.

Steve: We're getting boxed in. And when you come up here and you go up to where our friends live, up in the northeast of town, up about four miles out or so. But you're up in the meadowlands and you can look at the Cabinet Mountains from there. The house is down below the ridge, but you don't see anything. You don't feel boxed in. It's just nice. You can sit there and you don't have a care in the world, not worried about the neighbors looking in your curtains. Out here you don't feel like you've got the crime area that attacks big cities. To me it's a feeling like there's still room to grow or room to breathe yet. When you live in the city or spend most of your time or most of your life in the city and you can get out and you can see for miles. There's nothing but open country and that's kind of relaxing. It's really nice to see.
Caroline: I think it's more natural than being in a city with buildings and people buzzing around you all the time. I think it's a natural instinct that we all have. Maybe some people prefer the buzz of a city, but I think you get sick of it after a while. It's nice here the way you can just get out from it all.

Mary: Well, when you come from the east coast where a lot of communities, not ours, but in a lot of communities people have quarter acre lots so they're almost looking into the kitchen of the next house. I think you really enjoy coming out where that's not the case.

Patty: [I consider wide open spaces] not constant traffic jams. A feeling of something bigger than ourselves. A feeling of a grandeur, a power bigger than people, than man, something beyond us.

Gary: We're always amazed. In our area alone, Toronto area, you're talking three million people. If you go further you're talking even more people and that's a very small area. When you come to Montana you're talking less than a million people for a whole state. Then you have wide open spaces, you feel you have elbow room. You don't feel the hustle bustle that maybe attracts some people, but not myself, especially at my age. I'd rather have a relaxed feeling. I like to go out on the highway and not feel that I'm being cut off every time I breathe, because that's the way it's becoming around where we're living. It's just many people compacted into a small area, and therefore you get aggressive and probably have few of them listening too. But certainly a lot more when people feel that they need to try to get one place to another in a hurry and here you don't. They don't have to worry about that I don't think because you know what you are going to face probably day after day.

V. Visitor Aspects-Impressions

Big Sky

Most visitors are attracted to the expansiveness and panoramic views provided by the landscape. This is the essence of what "big sky" means to them. It allows them to see across a horizon that is not possible for most of them in their home states. This becomes something that they then value when visiting Montana.

Couples

Leo: And, you know, they say, big sky. Well it's big sky all right. We were talking about that yesterday. How can a sky be bigger? But it's expansive and beautiful in addition.

Greg & Donna: You get up on a rise and you see so far, you know? Miles and miles of land. Where we are we just don't see that. It's flat and you don't have that kind of visibility at all.

Jay: [The sky is different because] it's clearer. More big, so to speak, with the mountains.

Kylie & Lee: I think big sky country describes it well. It's so big and vast. The sky is huge. It looks like it won't end. We noticed it when we came in. It's just so open that you can just see the sky in a huge panoramic view, as opposed to being in Missouri or Minnesota where there are trees all over the place and your perspective is a lot different. The sky is only this big. Down here it goes all the way from the ground up.

Katherine: It's like they call it big sky country. It's just exactly that. That's what I like about it. You can just see the land and the sky meeting in such a distance. Like when we got to that first area, I think that's what it means. You can see for distances.

Georgia: What I love about Montana is the same thing I love about western North Dakota, is the wide-open horizon and the space and the sky as being a landscape.
Family
Clint: I mean, they call it the big sky country, and that's easy to see why. You know. There are lots of open spaces still and it's definitely beautiful.

Eleanor: [What big sky country] means is that there's something here that when I look across at the mountains and they're fairly far away, but it's like they just go on and on and the sky just goes on and on. I don't feel closed in here by the mountains.

Julie & Paulette: Well we saw a spectacular sunset last night. That was cool. When they say big sky you can understand where they're coming from. [The sunset is different because of] the clearness, the cloud formation, the color. Everything. You don't get the whole panorama sort of effect in Omaha, even though its flat. That's one of the things I really do enjoy is seeing just so much blue sky everywhere you look. You feel like you're higher up and you look right now, the horizon seems low and the sky is just endless. It really does feel that way and the vista, the panorama when you're on top of the Custer place and all that and the fact that just seeing that made it like when they said they had the scouts on the lookout points and so on like that and they could see the group of Indians there and this and that and you'd go and then you get up there and you actually really can visualize that.

Neal: It is big country. You know, the sky is big and the mountains are, there's a ruggedness to them and there's just a sense of the earth here that's pretty amazing. We were just talking about it this morning.

Population Scale/Level of Expansion

Visitors commented on the scale of population typically in an admirable fashion. Many enjoyed the small town atmosphere. To them it reaffirmed the belief that areas in the United States have not all been converted to urban settings and have become ‘spoiled’. Montana appears to be a place where they feel they can get away from urban sprawl and crowding. This is something they value in their vacation experience and appear to seek out. In contrast, there were some visitors who expressed their concern with the sprawl visible, especially in western Montana. There was more urban sprawl taking over the valleys than they expected. This brought some disappointment to their experience.

Couples
Leo: Well, it's a bunch of small towns with a lot of space in between, and not overrun with development. There's getting to be so many people there in Colorado. Colorado used to be something like this before all those people came. Now if you want to get a bunch of people up here you're going to not have as nice a place as you have right now. I guess maybe it would take away the comforting thought that there is some areas of the United States that still aren't spoiled.

Brenda & Ken: It was more populated than I expected it to be. Or at least sprawl. There's a lot more sprawl than I expected. Really, from Flathead Valley. From Missoula, I mean Missoula basically to Whitefish looks a lot like California. Where little towns stop being little towns and there's kind of sprawl. So there's a town, but there's a strip mall and a sprawl and I was kind of surprised. I haven't been here since '61, so it's been a long time. But I was surprised at how many people and kind of how much spread of suburban Montana there was.

Family
Leslie: You've got to make sure you have enough gas in your car, and your car is in good repair, which I'm used to that from driving out southwest. I experienced it going long stretches with no gas stations, anywhere to stop and go to the bathroom. You know, I think that's real different. You just have to, safety wise, make sure that you have enough gas and in case something breaks down you can take care of it. You don't have to worry about that at home.

Larry: I like the small towns, because coming down, you slow down, and you come through the town, that's why I do not like the interstates. I like going through the small towns. Slowing down, looking at them and the culture and anything. I just like old little towns and all.
Christy & Attila: The cities are so different. People know people in the cities and they're smaller, much smaller, much less congested. Your big city would be our small city in Ohio.

Julie & Paulette: I was surprised that the largest town is only 92,000. That was a surprise. Coming up from Custer. It was the highway coming up to Billings. There are just no people. I know that as you go farther east into the wheat fields there's whole big sections where there's no people.

Lori: I'd say it's not so populated [or], urbanized as some of the other states are.

**Frontier-Western atmosphere**

The atmosphere of the environment and the culture presents visitors with a strong feel of frontier-western living. Many visitors associated Montana with the stereotypical cowboys of television and film which they found attractive. The frontier and ruggedness that Montana presents is also something that a visitor respects. They have admiration for the individuals who work the land and have passed the western culture on from generation to generation.

**Single**

Elaine: It's just more rugged. I mean, it's not as, like as settled maybe. I want to say they didn't have it as easy, because out east they had like more luxuries, it was more settled. Out here they didn't have that. They had to start from scratch.

**Couples**

Mark: That is from when our predecessors found it and understood it as their personal frontier, to what it is today, and how the notion of the frontier has changed and how although we settled hard up against the Pacific Ocean, there still are some frontier elements going east to west on different issues; not so much people moving across the ground, but different issues. So it's still here, and it's just fun to kind of immerse yourself in it and connect what you can see today geographically, physically, spiritually with what happened in the past and what you've read in the records. That's why I come out, one of the reasons.

Brenda: I guess, for me it's kind of just seeing untouched America. I have fantasies about places in different states and different parts of the U.S. that I would like to believe are still left as they were from the Native Americans who lived here or for the early discoverers who came through here.

Joe: The ruggedness. I think the harshness of the land, along with its open beauty appeals to me. The essentials of life come to life. It's survival up here, at least in the early days.

Alex & Ken: To me the last bit of wilderness in the lower 48, the biggest. There's something about the name too, Montana. It just sounds so rugged. It's wild and rugged. It's got a ring to it. I like the cowboy way of life. You see anything in Montana it's always cattle or horses or ranches and something like that. See, back east it's farms, not ranches. And they're big. You know. Back east it's a hundred acre farm you've got a lot of ground. That's nothing out here. That's somebody's back yard. That's what they keep their swimming pool on. [laughs]

John: We came through the Big Hole, on the Big Hole River and it's one of those places where you, I told Jean, I said, "I wish I had a horse and could just start on one end of this and just have a bedroll and go to the other end."

**Family**

Leslie: As far as up here it's more wild west cowboyish atmosphere [laughs] than what I saw going through the southwest.

Chet: When you talk and you go out drinking and sit down and share a couple pints of beer, going back into what has transpired in their lives and what great families they raised and the principles of the frontier culture.
These are people that are not that many years away from a period of time, the early periods of time. So they are reflecting the culture of the frontier days.

Paulette: Well, there's not much else you can do with a whole bunch of grassland, except have cows on it. So I know that's one of the businesses up here. You see all the pickups. It's like a country western feel to some of the radio stations and all of that. It's like a western lifestyle that you have out here where you spend a lot of time outdoors and living on the east coast, you have a lot of people who don't do that so much.

Deb & Andy: Well, it's probably two things. One is the movies where you see the westerns and [laughs] and that's actually, Montana is what I expected from the west. When you see Ben Cartwright. The Ponderosa. The old western movies, you expect that with Montana. I didn't see that in any other state we went. That's why Colorado was such a disappointment.

Bill: Then going back to the early history days when I'm thinking of cowboys and the North American Natives, now that you can see and you can experience. It brings back the memories of a boy that used to read about some of your historical characters of the past, the West.

Lori: It's like the Old West in the way that you see in the old westerns where people are walking down the street and they say good morning, good afternoon, how are you? A lot of the buildings are preserved with the ornate woodwork and brass work and things that you get in the Old West. So it's not just the buildings, it's the people, their nature is more of like an Old West, of a different era when people were friendly and slow and took time to notice each other.

Surprises

When asked what surprised them the most about Montana, most surprises stated were linked to misconceptions that visitors had about the state. Some were surprised at the developed cities or tourist attractions such as the IMAX theatre in West Yellowstone. Others found stereotypes reaffirmed such as the hospitality of the people or statements made to them to be true such as the ability to view wildlife. It appears as if visitors had heard about these features, but it took experiencing them first hand to accept them.

Couples

Ken: But the real surprise I think has been the people. I would say that's really been a very positive, wonderful thing. That's kind of what I remember.

Family

Joe & Tyler: Finding the IMAX Theater [in Yellowstone], that was kind of fun. That was cool! That thing was huge. It was a surprise to see that it's even more touristy than I remembered it from 20 years ago.

Louise & Neal: [The suburbs], they're much denser where we are, but it feels a little suburban sprawl into the foothills [here in Montana]. That was surprising. We even started noticing that driving into Yellowstone from the east entrance and we were going, wow, look at this development. It's developed suddenly as you're entering this national park. Last time we were here was 12 years ago, just after the fire, and the difference is amazing. I think I expected more to be driving through the cities and then driving through nothing for a while and then the cities and nothing. You really see development almost everywhere.

Linda, Christine, & Caroline: We didn't realize the wildlife would be so close and we kind of thought, now you go and stand and watch it up in the hills maybe and be really lucky...it walked right beside us. You're kind of like, whoa, can you get that close? It's kind of freaky.

Dixie: Well for me, when we come, after we left the Custer Battlefield Memorial and we come through Custer National Forest there, I wasn't expecting that type of country and scenery down there. I figured it would be flatter and more plains than it was.
Lori: Pleasant surprises. The people. Huckleberries, salt water taffy, huckleberry sauce on my ice cream last night.

Aesthetic and Spiritual

The impact Montana scenery gives visitors is very powerful and spiritual to them. The adjectives used to describe the environment include “awe-inspiring, mind-boggling, peaceful, and rejuvenating.” Many visitors tap into a very spiritual aspect of their visit and describe this in depth. To them, they experience closeness with a God and feel a connection to the land and its creation. The land gives them a chance to relax and release from life. It is the essence of unplugging and retreating from their everyday lives. The aesthetics of the land is one of the most dominant parts of their experience in Montana and will continue to be an extremely valuable aspect to each visitor.

Single

Anna Marie: Montana is the most beautiful place in the world. Wide open spaces, few people, and just glorious, pristine beauty. There’s no place else like it. Peace and the way it should be, I think I can come into our humanity here. I think people are living in a more natural way and closer to the earth, closer to God. It means this huge sky without 10,000 airplanes in it. It means looking all around me and not seeing skyscrapers or another house right in my face. So I can breathe, I can truly breathe here. Just unparalleled beauty. It never fails to amaze me. I think it just takes me to a higher place. I think I come back more peaceful, which is a great change I think for anybody. I think I get very grounded here and know what’s important in life and what really isn’t. It always helps get me very focused again on what’s important.

Mark: Well one thing, for a flatlander from South Dakota, one thing is the smell. You can smell the pines. That’s got to be one of the most, one of the first things, your sense of smell. You roll down your window when you come in. You get the sense of smell as you start to come into the mountains.

Elaine: Oh, it just like clears my mind, clears my mind. Gives me a sense of hope maybe. It just really, it just clears my mind. It just kind of, I don’t really know how to describe it. It’s just awesome, I just love it! I mean, it’s just awesome. I miss it. I miss this place so much when I go home. I get a sense of peace and I get a sense of just kind of clears out my mind. I just got a sense of inner peace.

Couples

Mark & Lynn: It’s a spiritual thing too. There’s something comforting about mountains. I can’t explain why. There are two things that kind of give us peace, and that is a large body of water, be it one of the Great Lakes or an ocean, and mountains. They have a very similar effect on us internally, and I can’t quantify it, I can’t describe it any better than I probably already have. It’s a feel-good thing. Sometimes it’s reflective. Sometimes it’s kind of the, “Aha!” where you make a connection. What that connection may or may not be, I can’t be specific. Occasionally you say, oh yeah, I remember that. It was here, I have to go back and look at something. Then you go back and you pull a book off the shelf, oh yeah, you make the connection. That’s where I get my satisfaction.

Wolfgang: I think it’s restorative, body, soul, and spirit. I still believe we are part of nature, part of God’s creation, and so consequently the more we are surrounded by it, particularly in an undisturbed way, as one still finds quite a bit out here, but it really does for one’s spirit and soul. Not that it substitutes for God, it’s just an extension of part of the beauty that he created for us as our Creator, you know, to enjoy.

Vernon & Mary: It’s peaceful, isn’t it? Very peaceful and calming. It brings you back to reality, what really matters. We have been on trips, just only the few days already, where we have been in the car driving and have said nothing. The reason is because words can’t describe our feelings about the surroundings and the scenery.

Dan: Well I think it’s almost spellbinding in the Mission Range, seeing the Mission Range and the National Bison range. I lived between St. Ignatius and Ronan for several years and you just never got enough of it.
Joe: Just being alone in my own thoughts. I think that's part of it. You read about the Indian life here and the spirituality they had with nature. I reconnect maybe a little bit of that within myself, between God and myself. Also I think I'm a little bit of a loner at times, on my hunting and so forth. Just getting on a horse and just stepping into the past a little bit. Trying to imagine what it was back when the initial people came through the area. I think that is what I'm looking forward to. Just trying to be young again I guess.

Jeff & Jane: All you can do is going in a circle and go wow, wow, look at that. Wow. It's just mind-bogglingly beautiful. It was just awe-inspiring. It was pretty remarkable.

Teresa & Don: It's refreshing. I think most of the rejuvenating part is just simply being there. It doesn't matter where you are on the top of the mountain or halfway up it. I mean, it's just the smells are wonderful, the sights and the sounds. Out in the middle of nowhere, seeing what it was like way back when.

Jay: Definitely more relaxed. I was looking at the sky behind you right now, the pinkish clouds, I think that's very characteristic. I mean, that's a memory I'm taking back, because I've seen that other years. The purple, purplish, pinkish sky, Montana sky. I mean, that will always be a memory.

Shirley: It's just kind of a spiritual thing, in terms of getting in touch with creation. Because it's so obviously natural creation that...doing that I think you get more in touch with yourself.

Georgia: For me it's a spiritual connection to me. When I'm out on that open plains and the prairie, the sky is the universe and I feel much closer to God. I don't know, there's a lot of poetry about the plains being spiritual, and that's the way I feel about them.

Family

Kevin & Pam: Its like how the Bible describes God making the mountains. I feel we're up in God's country now. I've never seen such beauty.

Linda: I've looked the entire trip though. Everything is fascinating. It doesn't matter where you are, there's something, every corner there's just another picturesque view and in through the prairies it was different for us from where we're used to living, and I just enjoyed the whole thing.

Christy, Donna, & Attila: Well, we get back to nature. [laughs] Our transcendentalist experience. It's relief for us. Get away from work, thinking about work. Just appreciating the natural beauty of the countryside and what God created. Just how it was created, how you have a set of mountains there and just to the east of it it's flat rolling hills and what a difference. When we hiked back to Avalanche Lake, how like it was a tropical paradise back in there, the greenery and how the mist and the water supports the vegetation in there. It can be totally different on the outside from that area in the park.

Joe: The rich soil and the plant life as a result of it is just fantastic. I like the grandeur of the mountains. To me it's, I guess you'd say it's my church, going to the high peaks, as far as experiencing any closeness to God or spirituality, I feel it in our wilderness areas, most definitely. I'm going to take home images of those glacially carved mountains and what I experience when I am up high like that. It's where I just feel in tune with myself and with nature I suppose. I'll take that back and be able to visualize that for a long time.

Louise: There's a slight distinction from here on up in the ruggedness of it and to me you feel like the earth is still being formed kind of. Like it was just heaved up and all kind of being molded and formed, which to me is very dramatic and very beautiful and very moving.

John: Absolutely breathtaking, especially the western part where the mountains are, and the back road excursions. Just absolutely beautiful. The color of the forestry is gorgeous because they've had a lot of rain in western Montana. Quiet, peaceful. Just very enjoyable. Utopia.

Mary: Well, I can already tell the great easing of tension in myself. I think certainly I'll have lower blood pressure by the time I get home. Whether it will stay low I don't know. Some of it's been a little bit religious for
me. Just thanking God for the beautiful countryside. Thanking people, mostly men, with vision to have set aside great tracts of land for my enjoyment and the enjoyment of my grandchildren.

**Disappointments and Suggestions**

To some visitors, the negative aspects of their trip connected with the population scale. The distance between spots and the level of development in cities were disappointing to many visitors. Some had the impression that cities would be more developed and have more cultural aspects. Negative impressions came most often in the form of suggestions. Visitors suggested more comprehensive tourist information about campsites and attractions that could be received when crossing the state border. Others commented that signage and advertising for popular Lewis and Clark and other historical sites were not always the best. They became frustrated with navigation in these areas. Finally, some visitors commented on their impression of harsh winters and “guns everywhere” which were factors that distracted them from possibly making Montana a permanent home.

**Single**

Shrie: The campsites are too far apart for most, like it’s not easy. So it constrains you in a way that you don’t get in let’s say somewhere like France. In France, they have municipal campsites. Every little town has a municipal campsite, so you’re never more than something like 15 kilometers away from a campsite. So it’s an absolute delight to cycle. Whereas here, you could often be something like, you know, 50, 60 miles away.

**Couples**

Ken: I think my expectation was that it was going to be a little wilder than it was. That was a little bit of a disappointment. You get up to a big vista and you see logging. I’ve been a certifiable tree hugger, but I’m not really. That’s a little disappointing.

Wolfgang: The only thing I’m missing is in this area you don’t have, I haven’t found a single comprehensive camping book that gives all the campgrounds. So I think it may be well advised that somebody could get together and come up with one, because, as I said, I have five or six of them.

Greg & Donna: Montana isn’t as well organized as a lot of other states. With the other states you get across the state line and there’s the tourist information spot and you get a map, a detailed map, which is better than your atlas. They don’t have information like on the interstates when you first cross in. You have to go somewhere to get it. Now that was something Idaho did that could be done here. They had a book of all their scenic byways and the percent inclines and what kind of road they were to drive and whether it was good to tow. A little thing that you got at the border.

Mark & Judy: Before we went to the Battle of Bighorn site we went to Rosebud, which is a very small park with basically only three signs as you go in. Yet we felt that that was actually a major contribution to understanding what happened at Bighorn later. It seemed to us that it would be good if there was a little bit of additional signage available at Rosebud. I was personally disappointed in the state, well I guess it’s the Montana Historical Society. I don’t know if it’s supported by the state or whom it’s supported by, but I felt that they have a good collection, but it could be updated. They need some money to update their displays.

Linda: We have not been particularly impressed with any of the cities. We’ve thought that they were sort of, granted, we’re not interested in the cities, but we thought that they were sort of disorganized looking. They weren’t very interesting looking. And in a couple of them we had real problems just finding [things]...but the signage for the Lewis and Clark has been exceptionally disappointing in that we couldn’t find that center.

**Family**

Lynanne: I think there’s probably more guns up here per capita. You just have to be respectful of them.
Paulette: I don't think I'd want to be here in the wintertime. I think it might be a little bit miserable out here in the wintertime. [laughs] Just because it's so windy now, and I'm just imagining these cold Canadian winds coming through here.

Joe: We both have a bit of a negative impression resulting from what the state of Montana has been doing to the buffalo in West Yellowstone. I have told him about seeing large herds in Yellowstone, and then we find out that a third of the herd has been wiped out by the state of Montana, and I'm not very pleased about that. That definitely leaves a negative impression about the people of Montana that would allow that sort of thing to happen by their own state. Whatever the agency is that handles livestock and stuff I'd like to see the people of Montana do something about it, because I'm going to continue to tell that story because it bugs me to go to Yellowstone and realize that there's 2,000 less buffalo there.

Louise & Neal: The only thing I'd say at all close to that is when I was talking about the sprawl that we've noticed. That was surprising.

Deb: I found the southern part disappointing. Maybe it was just extra dry when we were here. I recall it being dry. I recall the towns seemed run down. They weren't very prosperous, even places like Butte and Billings. We're from the east coast where everything's just grown there, but I didn't like all the casinos. We went in the Laundromat and there's a casino and I said what are you suppose to do. Lose your shirt while you wash it? I wasn't happy with that. We weren't happy really with Virginia City. Frankly, the first trip through I was disappointed in Montana, except for the Little Bighorn, because that was interesting.

Larry: I've often thought in each of the books, if they just had somewhere in there just a list of ideas. Just ideas of traveling. If you like small towns, and just left a little list of every idea you could, list down on there. If you had to list paleontology and then somewhere else list dinosaur digging, because somebody may not catch the two together, and put down tent camping, but then put down tent, trailer camping or just not RV but just, there's all sorts of things, ideas and just, you know, go through the detail, just a list, that's all, no page, just a list of things to think about. This is what's in our state. Here's a list.

Andy & Deb: Set up an interesting tourism plan of setting up these lodges in order to get tourists to move from one site to another because this was an issue. It seems like because of the distances a coordinated program where people could go to different sites would make coordinated tourism... It's nice in one hand, but on the other hand you do like to know that you're headed in the right direction. [laughs] At Glacier there weren't any signs. I was amazed how far we went before we finally saw a sign. A sign that would let you know something to do. Like gem mining or something. If there's an ad for something out there so you know it's there.

Jeff: It seems to me the state would be benefited by a population that had its horizons broadened a little. Maybe some of its intellectual outlets developed and that kind of thing. I'm sure there's lots of outreach going on that I don't know about. There's just not a real bright future there. The same is true of tourism. Okay, Switzerland is a perfect model. They've managed to milk the tourist ghost cow, milk the tourism cow for a century very successfully and there's probably a great deal that could be borrowed from that model.

Dick: I guess you might ask what could Montana do different to encourage more tourism, assuming that's what you want. There's limited degrees of that too, because too much tourism would be counter to many of the aspects that draw people here in the first place. I'm sure there's some discussion that you often have in your job.

**Impressions of Montana's People**

Visitors found the people of Montana very friendly and helpful. Most compared Montana to other states as being extremely more down to earth and relaxed. Visitors coming from the east coast or more highly populated areas find the people of Montana represent a more rural attitude where neighbors and personal relationships are important. This was very important and comforting to visitors. They respect the people of
Montana for their character and integrity. Very few negative comments were mentioned anywhere in the interviews.

**Single**

Anna Marie: Oh [the people], they're delightful. They're very warm. Everyone says hello. Everybody, like the two gentlemen down the way, oh, good morning, and just, people are very warm.

Elaine: Oh, just down to earth and simple and I want to say like straight. Straight shooters and I like that. [laughs]

Shrie: The people have been absolutely fabulous. They've been helpful, friendly, just generous, just to a fault almost. It's been a wonderful experience. New Zealanders have got a reputation for being open and friendly, but I've found the Americans here have been more so than the New Zealanders, and that has been a surprise to me.

**Couples**

Lynn & Mark: They're just very open. They're open. I think they're easier going with strangers than east of the Mississippi.

Patricia: The people have been so nice. It hasn't really mattered whether we've stopped at small towns or larger towns, they've been very welcoming. Very, very hospitable. It's been a totally enjoyable experience. They're not in a rush. They've got time to enjoy life it looks like here. In Colorado now, everything is rush rush.

Donna: People aren't in a hurry so much. Much more laid back. I think that comes with the environment in general.

Jay: Resourceful, independent, self-dependable. I think that kind of covers it. I know Monty and Larry at the ranch, they just take things as they happen. We did our whole trip, took things as they happened. I think they're more remote and unplugged than probably the east coast people are. That's kind of a generality, but back home it's a lot faster pace, definitely. I don't know whether it gains you that much. From what I've gathered here is you take life as it comes. You stay flexible for the changes that come along.

Ken: It was a real pleasant surprise to go into a bike shop and figure out later that they were really telling you about their favorite bike rides. These were places that were real special to them. After a couple minutes of talking they were really willing to say, well, why don't you go here, you'll really like this ride.

Ken: When we first came up here we just fell in love with Montana. We did interact more with the people up here because at the time we were looking for a business, and it was amazing just how friendly some of the people were. I can remember walking out of a supermarket and just striking up a conversation with some rancher, like we've known each other for years. They're so friendly. The east coast is not that way.

Donna: We found people friendly, and that's good. I've also seen lots of drunks and various things. I have to say, coming from Canada, when you see every other sign saying "casino" you kind of wonder what the culture is.

**Family**

Tarin & Gustaf: All around, you feel kind people asking you, how's your day today? That wouldn't happen in Norway. I would like to mention the couple that ran the Moostein Motel in Townsend. He was such an outgoing and very helpful [person]. He was more than willing to make suggestions and come up with ideas, what to do in Townsend, and showed us things on maps and brochures and his wife also was very helpful. So they made a very good impression. Very good impression.

Lynanne: Hard-working people, not pretentious. I live close to Palm Springs, California, where there's a lot of conspicuous consumption and a lot of wealth. There's also poverty there too, but just a lot of conspicuous
consumption, which you don't see so much here. They accept you as a person first and then go from there. You're who you are, not what you have. That's always how I felt when I've come to Montana. People aren't like in such a rush here. Like you just go through the exhibits and they take their time and they're not push, push, push. You go to restaurants and people aren't pushing you along. It doesn't seem like they're on their cell phones as much. It's just more relaxed, slower paced. It's still a busy place, but it's not like in California.

Christy: The people where we stayed, like in Kalispell, weren't as friendly as I expected. I don't know. Maybe they're inundated with tourists. I feel the people have been pretty friendly for the most part. There's some areas they're just soso, but overall my experience has been great. I wish I could spend more time here.

Julie: It looks to me like the people are in pretty good shape, outdoorsy kind. They're kind of rugged looking and weathered a little bit, but you don't see floppy fat people.

Shirley & Steve: I think they're all at peace with themselves. They maybe don't have a lot, but what they have they enjoy and they just live the way they want to live. I feel they probably enjoy life more than what we do, because we're very focused on going to work, going and doing all these things. Getting our kids to soccer, getting them to hockey, getting them wherever they need to be. Here it's like they do those things, but they do them at a lot more peaceful pace it seems like. You get away from your usual hubbub. The people are friendly. They seem to, when there's something going on they'll come up and help you.

Jeff: Coming from the east coast, as my wife and I do, we find that the people here are more relaxed, more outgoing, certainly friendly is what most people from the east feel when they come out here. The people seem to just have a little more patience with each other than in the large metropolitan areas on the east coast. Just not so densely packed together would be one guess. Montanans don't seem to strike one as redneck or xenophobic, which is really pleasant, it's refreshing, because I kind of expect that when I get here. My wife's from Thailand. I'm not quite sure what kind of reception we're going to get where we go, and Montanans seem to be very open-handed in that way.

Christine & Adrian: I'm afraid at our age we're very entrenched in our ways. I would say possibly my opinion of Americans has changed somewhat because we have discovered Montanans to be a more civilized part of the race.

Lori: Everyone here says good morning, and they smile. So, you walk by and they smile at you. It's like the Old West in the way that you see in the old westerns where people are walking down the street and they say good morning, good afternoon, how are you? They don't even know you. It's the people, their nature is more of like an Old West, of a different era when people were friendly and slow and took time to notice each other.

General Impressions of Montana

The final statements of this section include general comments about the state that did not necessarily fit well into other sections presented in this report. They address the question regarding the general impression visitors have when visiting Montana.

Single

Elaine: They've done a very good job of keeping [the state] up. It's just immaculate. They do such a great job. I was thinking about relocating. Maybe sometime in the future.

Couples

Mark: I just enjoy getting out in the open spaces. I think, again, the difference between Colorado mountains and the Montana mountains for me has been that the Montana mountains tend to be, instead of having a mountain with a little valley in it in between, you have these mountains with a 50 mile valley in between. I think that's a nice variation.

Mary & Vernon: People all on our journey said, oh, you'll love Missoula. Oh, Missoula is beautiful. We just think it's a very large retail outlet. We weren't as impressed with Missoula as maybe these people felt we
should have been. We were impressed by the mountains around it and the fact that you see in a valley, but it was very materialistic and nowhere else has been.

Brenda & Ken: We both just had this fantasy, I think, vision of pulling into Missoula, especially having come through the Bitterroots and thinking that you just drop right down into this little contained town, and then we're on this edge of this urban sprawl out of [Highway] 12 going, oh man, what's this? This looks like Modesto, in California. With casinos and the like and we thought, oh gosh, let's hope we find a little something special in Missoula.

Mary & Vernon: Butte, a scar, but an absolutely beautiful scar. I was so impressed by all the work that's been done by volunteers to save the place. How people love it and how proud they are. We spent quite a bit of time walking in Butte. We went by this historic place, was quite impressed.

Mark & Lynn: We're looking for, this is going to be kind of a cryptic answer, but we're looking for it to be Montana and nothing else. We don't want it to be California. We don't want it to be New York. We don't want it to try to be anything other than what it is.

Joyce: I think the thing that, one of the things that I really like about coming to Montana is it isn't as highly populated and I'm really more of a solitude person, and I like the peace and quiet. So we're down in a campground today, we're the only ones there so far today. It's wonderful. I like it that way.

Brenda: I really have liked being off the main highways and coming into wilderness like this. This is really more my picture of Montana. Little less disturbed, little more quiet. So I would really recommend this place.

Mark: Its a lot like Colorado without the hype. So [Colorado] loses some of its appeal, and that's unfortunate. Montana is, I think, to a greater extent less spoiled, if you will. It's a little more in its raw state than some of the other Rocky Mountain States, and we like it.

Dan: Very, very big. Very mountainous, both east and west. Everybody says that the eastern part of the state is all plains. Well that's not true. There's a lot of mountains over there. That's the same way with, the north is about the flattest area in the state I think, clear across from Glacier Park. I think Montana has got everything that a person could possibly want in life, except they've got some terrific winters.

John: You want to make sure you [tell friends] about the national parks, Glacier Park and Yellowstone Park and tell them about the rivers and lakes and the excellent fishing and the wildlife and about the trail hiking and just the fact that it's uncrowded country, open space and a lot of places where you can go to be alone with nature and that sort of thing.

Judy: We've been to Colorado a lot, but for example, the Beartooth Mountains on the Beartooth Highway. I don't really recall any panoramas in Colorado that quite match that.

Georgia: I'm going to tell [my friends] that I saw the most spectacular sunset that I've ever seen in my life.

Family

Chet: It's like coming home. I was in high school when I first came to Montana. All those memories were burnt in my mind. Coming back this time, after 39 years, after having raised a family, it's like coming home to see everything, the beauty that I visualized then is really there, and it's magnified ten times more. The relaxation, the enjoyment, everything is just tremendous.

Kevin: The beauty, and it was awesome coming into the Montana and Gardner area because when I talked to my mom I told her the route we took and she was like, no, they never had a chance to see this coming in this way. Before a person dies, they truly need to see this side of the country. They really do.

Cobe: It makes me appreciate how undeveloped and just the beauty. It makes you want to go home and take care of your land. Do you know what I'm saying?
Lynanne: You feel like you have a vested interest when you come up here. It's part of, you own it in a sense. It's part of what you have as an American. I can look out and I own this. I'm an American. You go to Yellowstone and it's part of your, I don't know, part of me because I grew up in this area too. My heritage.

Shirley: Breathtaking. I just think that, anybody that I've talked to from back home, I'm just like, I told them all, I said, the scenery is just breathtaking. It's incredible. No skyscrapers, it's just open air and beautiful.

Dan: I like the wildness again. I like to be around people, but sometimes you need to be away. There's a lot of national, public land around to hike through. So yeah, we'll probably take, if we don't move here we'll probably still backpack here.

Neil & Louise: [Compared to other areas where] you just kind of get overwhelmed by - it's like a shopping mall dropped on it. And that's what I think has been one of my responses to Colorado. It's just, you're going to Estes Park or something like that and it's a theme park. It's like Rocky Disneyland or something. And Montana is like Montana. You know, it's a real deal place. And people live in the mountains and live by the mountains and every little town has a bar called the Stockman Bar and it's just - there's still a sense of a real daily life, not a recreation tourist daily life.
Summary and Discussion

Summary

The depth of information provided in the interviews is summarized below in short paragraphs. This is followed with suggestions for marketing, programming or policy, and future research.

Vacation Experience Summary

First of all, the analysis for this study looked at three vacation group types: singles, couples and families. Interestingly, very few differences were apparent between these three visitor types. In terms of the vacation experience, it appears the group type does little to change the experience and the feeling of the Montana vacation. The only notable difference was in trip flexibility. Families, especially those with very young children, were less likely to be flexible on their vacation and usually had their plans made and set.

For all three group types the Montana vacation experience was emotion, feeling, emersion, and sometimes reliving the past but being in the moment. Visitors eloquently expressed their thoughts about Montana but ended up saying they really couldn't express it in words. The idea was that you had to be there. The message is "Go to Montana -- that's the only way to really know what I'm talking about."

Montana provides a link to the past. It provides an authentic immersion into what people might say were "the good 'ole days." Those days, while difficult, were perceived to provide a sense of self -- a complete person. Montana still offers that to visitors. When visitors are in Montana, they get to know their surroundings and live them. Montana is still the past -- a living past open to visitors.

The open space Montana provides is the catalyst for the past. Visitors have images of wide valleys and big mountains with little or no development. For most visitors, this is what they experienced while here. In their minds, California, Colorado, and the east coast have lost that authentic connection to nature. Montana still holds that opportunity. Defining open space is not an easy task as it means different things to different people. However, taking the adjectives used by vacationers and listing them, one can get a general idea of what open space means. Perhaps these adjectives can be categorized into two main themes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What You Feel</th>
<th>What You See</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>Vistas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection to God</td>
<td>Visibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>Can see the Horizon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back in time ~ 50 years ago</td>
<td>Untamed/Untouched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No hustle bustle ~ slowing of life</td>
<td>No turnpikes/telephone poles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elbow Room</td>
<td>Not a city ~ it's farms/ranches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncrowded</td>
<td>Few People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote</td>
<td>Expansive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Open space, while inducing a feeling of the past, also induces a spiritual element for many visitors. The open space engaged all their senses; sights of the vast horizon, smells of the pines, sounds of the birds or the neighing of a horse, and the feel of the earth. Sometimes it was the lack of sound that brought spirituality to the visitor. Silence was golden. Many described a connection to God — that this beauty was part of God’s creation. It became the epitome of unplugging and removing themselves from the struggles and problems of their everyday lives. This aesthetic and spiritual aspect of the land and environment was one of the most powerful parts of the experience in Montana.

One thing is clear about the Montana vacation experience — it is different for everyone. Motivations for visiting the state are as numerous as there are stars in the sky. However, the two national parks, Glacier and Yellowstone, still were mentioned more than any other attraction. It is interesting. In Yellowstone they knew what they were looking for (e.g. animals and geysers). In Glacier it was more mysterious. They were told to see it. But, it wasn’t until they experienced Glacier that they appreciated it and knew why they came. Yellowstone was more to show others what it was all about. Glacier was this “ruggedness” — you can kind of get inside of it more.” Yellowstone was a wonderful experience but provided a commercialized and crowded atmosphere while Glacier was seen as refreshingly natural.

History was a big part of many Montana vacations. Visitors found themselves trying to understand the plight of the Native Americans be it along the Nez Perce Trail or the interaction between the Indians and the Lewis and Clark expedition. In other states you can “see” where Lewis & Clark went, but in Montana, you “feel” it. Visitors sensed the thoughts of Lewis & Clark and were amazed at what these men were able to do. Some say that history is still alive in Montana — that Montana is currently living it like the past to some extent. Visitors got a feeling of authenticity. It is not contrived — we’re living it. You can live the west in Montana. The “feel” is still there.

The journey of Lewis and Clark is a very important one in American history. It is a key part of the expansion and development of our nation. Recent literary work such as Undaunted Courage by Stephen Ambrose and the bicentennial have inspired many visitors to follow the trail. Visitors associated most directly with the scope of the journey. Many were in awe of the feat and appreciated the journey given the conditions and resources available at that time in history. Montana gives them an opportunity to visit many sites along the journey of Lewis and Clark. Visitors expressed that the land in Montana seemed much the same as when Lewis and Clark traveled it. Visitors were able to see the views and land that had so well been described in the many books, journals, and television programs. They had developed a vested interest in the journey and were able to connect with it in Montana.

What the term “big sky” means to them is the ability to see across the horizon in a sense that is not possible on the plains or in other areas. Seeing a horizon uninterrupted is something visitors valued and appreciated while in Montana. The visual impact of Montana’s “Big Sky” was frequently cited. Visitors frequently used physical gestures to help describe the notion of big sky. With sweeping arms or turning of heads, visitors talked about the horizon going from “here” to “there.” They spoke of the sky and land meeting miles away.

The people of Montana were “delightful, friendly, relaxed, easy going, helpful, and down right hospitable.” Visitors mentioned Montana people time and time again and seemed pleasantly surprised at the open character Montanan’s possessed.

Many visitors alluded to an activity as a way to get out in nature such as fishing, hiking, rafting, camping, horseback riding, birding, or photography. Certainly, some visitors were there for the physical exertion or the ability to say, “I did it.” Many, however, wanted and were able to get, a reprieve from their other life. Montana provided the escape they so desired. As the catalyst, activities rejuvenated them, provided accomplishment, and even food (as in fish). But overwhelmingly, those same visitors were not out there for the activity. It was a chance to relax, to be one with nature, to escape. Because our society sometimes looks at idle hands as a bad thing, visitors, even in their vacations, have to say they “did something.” But what they really want is an excuse to hang out in one spot for a long time. They want to experience the “here and now.” So, instead of telling friends that they are going to Montana to
experience nature (what the heck is “experiencing nature” anyway), they tell them they’re going fishing! All these activities were engaged in so the visitor could touch, smell, and hear nature.

Visitors noticed their environment in Montana and compared it to other places not as “well endowed.” They pointed out the diversity that Montana has from plains to peaks. The mountains were green, velvet, suede – green, green, green! The badlands and plains captured the “rawness” of the west and elicited responses like, “what was it like for the pioneers?” Visitors felt they could go back in time on the plains...things hadn’t changed that much. Again, open space was a preservation of the past that they felt simply did not exist other places.

The process of trip-planning was extremely varied. Some decided to visit Montana the day before while others planned for a year. Most had in the back of their mind that Montana was on the “do to” list and depending on the type of person they were, they either spent months reading and planning, or they hopped into the car and ended up in Montana. Differences in personalities emerged in the planning stage. The “adventurers” were more spontaneous and flexible. Those who needed to reduce the “unknowns” made plans and stuck to them. Both had a great time. They simply had to go with their own personality or their current life stage (e.g. traveling with small children made it difficult to be spontaneous).

One interesting aspect of the Montana vacation experience centered on the logistics of the trip. In terms of information gathering, everyone was different and all means were used. The word to the wise here is diversification. Some people used guidebooks as bibles. Others followed AAA like marching orders. Brochures were collected – some even saved from years back before being used. Magazine articles were cut out, saved, and pulled out to guide their Montana experience. Maps gave them ideas of places to go. The Internet, however, was king. The Internet was more than a tool - it was a sedative or it was the bait. It provided answers to questions. It pointed out ways to go. It reserved their accommodations. It encouraged their dreams. It provided a little comfort of the unknown or it created more unknowns. The Internet supplied or offered or granted what the person was looking for in their trip.

The vacation experience for some visitors brought out some interesting comments about Montana either in the form of suggestions or disappointments they had while in the state. Suggestions included the need for better signage. Some visitors either did not find what they were looking for (as in the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center), or simply stumbled upon attractions by coincidence. Some visitors suggested a need for visitor centers at the borders so they could get information on what to see and where to go.

A few negative impressions were imprinted on the visitor’s minds. One visitor mentioned the number of casinos and wondered about the gambling culture in Montana. Another negative was the “sprawl” seen in the state. These visitors were surprised at the change and the increased development taking over the valleys. They felt that Montana was beginning to lose the open space and the reason why people came to this state. It was a disappointment. As one visitor said, “We want conservation of Montana so that it’ll be here for our grandchildren to enjoy.” Along with that, one visitor suggested that Montana look to Switzerland as a model for tourism development. Another simply saw the plight Montana was in encouraging more visitation is counter to many of the aspects that draw people to Montana in the first place.

Lastly, some visitors commented on how “uncomfortable” the state might be in other seasons of the year. Their impressions of harsh winters and travel were factors that detracted them from visiting in other seasons or becoming a permanent resident of the state.

The summary paragraphs above provide a good description of the Montana vacation experience. One aspect, however, that was not described adequately in this summary was the difference between why people came to Montana and what they took home. In other words, on the surface, they came to Montana for the landscape. However, they took home with them elements of the experience ~ the spirituality and connection to nature, history, and the people. The mountains and open space provided the feeling within them. The feeling is what they took home and what they will remember.
Marketing ideas are divided into promotion and product development. In terms of promotion, there are numerous advertising themes that emerge from the data. Many words or themes could be taken directly from the visitors themselves. For example:

- “Before a person dies, they truly need to see this side of the country.”
- “I think that Montana has got everything that a person could possibly want in life.”
- “It’s just nice to know that we still have resources that we haven’t used up, that we haven’t just thrown everything away.”
- “In Montana you can still feel like you’re in the open and it’s like out west. You’re 50 years back in time. It’s nice. Lots of room.”
- “History is alive in Montana.”

The idea of open space was probably best summed up by the visitor who explained it in terms of distance. “Montana has valleys that extend 50 miles between the mountains. Colorado has short valleys with mountains that pen you in.” Hence, the open space feel. This image provided the feel and sight of open space. Visitors, trying to describe the physical characteristics of Montana used terms such as uncluttered, wilderness, untamed, clean, and expansive.

- Montana: Untamed, Uncluttered, Unlimited.
- Montana: Away from it all.
- Montana is where land and sky meet.

The challenge in advertising Montana is to capture its spirit, the sense of freedom, the open space, and the feelings of rejuvenation. This is what connects the visitor to Montana.

- “Montana is a feeling – you can’t take it back with you until you’ve been here – so come.”

The visitor experience most visitors talked about was the spirit of Montana, their motivation for being in the state, and how their activities were the catalyst for their need for an outdoor connection. Yet, only 40 percent of those interviewed were actually at outdoor locations when interviewed. The other 60 percent were interviewed at places like a museum or in a small community. In other words, even though history was important to them and they visited museums, they still reflected on Montana’s landscape. The landscape brought the history to life.

Promotional mediums. This research pointed to the need for diversity in advertising. The Internet should always have a presence in promoting any tourist destination or product. However, it is clear that information gathering happens at any time, any place, and with all mediums. It is certainly recommended that AAA be courted throughout Montana, travel writers continue to spend time in Montana, brochures are distributed around the state, maps are easily accessible, and highway signs are prevalent.

Books are a great source of information for travelers. Not just travel books, but books about the history, people, geography, and natural resources of the state. People seem well read prior to visiting Montana. Lewis & Clark books were frequently mentioned as pre-trip reading along with travel guides. It might be useful to link books about Montana to other promotion vehicles. Provide links on the state web site to books, highlight books about places in Montana with travel information on those locations, and maybe even sell books directly or indirectly. While there is a link to some books on the current web page, it is recommended that the “book” section be easily found and not hidden within other categories.

Montana does not have what other states do in terms of visitor centers at the borders. Visitors in this study mentioned that they liked access to visitor centers right there on the highway. These centers
provided ideas of what to see and do. It probably gave them reason to stay longer in those states. That model is not adhered to in Montana but should be considered as a very important aspect of promotion. Besides convincing those who are in Montana for vacation to possibly stay longer or visit other places, it would probably capture the pass-through visitor and encourage them to stay a day longer. As one visitor pointed out, "We've changed our vacation a lot, just from talking to folks from Montana." Those folks happened to be the frontline people at restaurants, motels, and gas stations, but should also include those at visitor centers near the borders. Visitor centers right off the highway and at the borders are simply another mechanism for promotion.

Product development. Signage, restoring old buildings, and keeping Montana as "Montana" are the three prevalent themes emerging from this study related to product development. While signs are not the attraction themselves, without clear directions of where the attraction is, people may not visit. Well placed signs, therefore are a necessary piece of the marketing plan.

Visitors mentioned that Montana is doing a good job in restoring their old buildings. These buildings seem to be part of the "live history" that visitors felt while here. When people can feel as if they are in that historic time as opposed to simply viewing it, their experience is enhanced. It is important, therefore, for Montanans to support the restoration of buildings and sites.

Finally, one product development theme that emerged from this study is the need to maintain Montana's "big sky country," the open space feel, the green of the mountains, and the fast-flowing rivers and streams. These pieces of the landscape created the spirit of the state and allowed the visitor to get a better sense of self. Being able to return from a vacation feeling revived, refreshed, rejuvenated is an amazing feat that Montana's landscape has accomplished. It is up to the stewards of this land -- both residents of the state and federal landholders -- to forever uphold this commodity. This is the challenge for the future of Montana's tourism industry.

Programming or Policy Recommendations

When evaluating the Montana vacation experience it is interesting to note that Montana holds a special place in the hearts and minds of visitors. It's more than a nice vacation -- it's a connection to themselves. The connection is made because of Montana's western feel, open space, and "untouched" lands -- a preservation of the past that seems to be lost elsewhere. If Montana is using tourism as one of the major economic drivers of this state, then investing in the reason folks visit Montana -- the scenery or the landscape -- would be a wise investment. How one "invests" is still up for discussion, but that discussion should be taking place. We probably do not want our visitors avoiding Montana and going to places like British Columbia and saying, "this is what Montana used to look like." In other words, Montana still has something to offer. The discussion of what that is and how it can be maintained needs to be on the table.

Growth and development are difficult topics to address. Visitors to Montana want the state to maintain a very rural atmosphere without the invasion of urban centers or some corporate chains. The evidence of urban sprawl in the Flathead Valley region is just one example of an area where visitors were not happy with the expansion they noticed. Policies that can focus on expansion and maintaining the land in the image it currently has will be important for the continued visitation of many nonresidents. Of course, this is much easier said than done. Development in Montana should focus on maintaining the western culture that is currently here and avoid the urban, trendy look seen in such communities as Vail and Boulder, Colorado. On the other hand, growth and development will take place and visitors DO want services. So, it is important to strategize both the positive and negative sides of growth and then work towards a development that is pleasing to residents and visitors. The topic of growth is not necessarily in the hands of the tourism industry -- it is at the city planning level. However, people in the tourism industry should be involved in their community to assist in proper development of their home town.
Future Research

This study provided an opportunity to delve deeper into the Montana vacation experience. In-depth interviews are an excellent method to further the understanding of complex issues such as personal vacation experiences. It is highly recommended that this method of data collection be used in the future for studies looking into niche markets, for clarification of ideas, and to guide future quantitative research.

For example, it would be an interesting and useful study to interview Montana tourism business owners and land managers to learn what they feel the Montana vacation is so the industry and visitors are seeing the same experience. If there is a discrepancy in what the industry thinks they are offering to what the visitor says they are getting, the industry can adjust both their service and their marketing to better fit the consumer’s expectations and experiences.

This study revealed the complexity of information gathering used by the individual consumer. It pointed out the wide range of mediums used by various people and that all mediums are useful. It appears that research on the relationship between personality and information gathering could provide the missing link to understanding why some people chose one method and others chose another method. It could also provide direction in to how the different mediums are used and what makes a certain medium useful to the person. In the tourism industry, promotion is the key to success. It is essential, therefore to understand the people to whom you are promoting.

Do you use the activity to explore Montana or is Montana just a place to do the activity? In other words, how is Montana used? Could the same activity be engaged in elsewhere with the same “experience,” or is that “experience” dependent on being accomplished in Montana. Previous quantitative research has focused on the tourist activities for describing a Montana vacation. However, in this study, activities such as fishing, hiking, camping, and biking all became secondary in their conversations. By further investigating the amount of time spent participating in these types of activities, it could be possible to learn how visitors associated these activities with the state. Promotion could then be geared either to the activity itself and what a wonderful place Montana is for that activity, or the promotion could stress the landscape and show the activity as a way to enjoy the landscape.

Finally, there was one suggestion by a visitor to use the model of Switzerland for tourism. This visitor alluded to the idea that Switzerland has figured out how to maintain the natural resource while still providing a good visitor experience. Everyone in Montana knows that Montana is special. In order to keep it that way, it would be very useful to visit areas that have figured out how to have mass tourism and a beautiful place at the same time. Many ideas could be brought back to Montana. If someone else has already put in the time to figure out how it works, why re-invent the wheel? Therefore, it is suggested that research be conducted to discover the places that “work” and to find out why and how. Conversely, it would be wise to go to places that have failed and learn what NOT to do. Interviews showed that many visitors compared Montana to other Rocky Mountain states such as Colorado. Visitors prefer Montana to Colorado because they feel it has not become as commercialized or trendy as what Colorado has become. The small town feel where people are friendly, helpful and have a more western-frontier culture is what visitors are seeking.

Along with the above, it would be useful to understand why those people have left Colorado to vacation in Montana. Where is the visitor tolerance level for change? In other words, ask the visitors to tell us “what was the last straw?” Where was their breaking point? What changed them from a Colorado vacationer to a Montana vacationer? Knowing the answer to these questions can help guide the development progress of Montana to assure that Montana does not repeat the mistakes of Colorado.

In summary, this study has attempted to provide the missing link of what a Montana vacation really means to the visitor. Previous quantitative surveys have provided us the numbers – this study helped provide the understanding.
## Interview Data Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Subject ID #</th>
<th>Place of Residence</th>
<th>Group Type (Self, Couple, Family)</th>
<th>Visit (First, Repeat)</th>
<th>Why are you in Montana?</th>
<th>Time in Montana on this visit</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6/19</td>
<td>Smoke Jumper Center</td>
<td>Lynn &amp; Mark</td>
<td>WI</td>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>Repeat</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6/20</td>
<td>National Bison Range Visitors Center</td>
<td>Vernon &amp; Mary</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>7 days</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Family (4)</td>
<td>R-her, F-him</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
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<td>Ken &amp; Brenda</td>
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<td>Couple</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>6/22</td>
<td>Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation</td>
<td>Dan, Patty &amp; 3 kids</td>
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<td>Family (5)</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>2 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6/24</td>
<td>Grant-Kohrs Ranch</td>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Self</td>
<td>Repeat</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>7 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6/24</td>
<td>Sweet Palace in Phillipsburg</td>
<td>Lori, Barb, Cathleen, &amp; Rachel</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Family (4)</td>
<td>2 Repeat 2 First</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>2 days</td>
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<td>Sally &amp; Linda</td>
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<td>10 days</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>Big Hole Battlefield</td>
<td>Jon &amp; Jean</td>
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<td>Vacation</td>
<td>2 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>6/25</td>
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<td>Gustov, Tauren, Karl</td>
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<td>Tanya &amp; Clint</td>
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<td>4 days</td>
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<td>Leslie, Taylor, &amp; Cameron</td>
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<td>Anna Marie</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>Self</td>
<td>Repeat</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>2 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Subject ID #</td>
<td>Place of Residence</td>
<td>Group Type (Self, Couple, Family)</td>
<td>Visit (First, Repeat)</td>
<td>Why are you in Montana?</td>
<td>Time in Montana on this visit</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>6/30</td>
<td>Copper King Mansion</td>
<td>Leo &amp; Patricia</td>
<td>CO</td>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>First vacation</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>6/30</td>
<td>Lewis and Clark Caves</td>
<td>Rick, Austin, &amp; Colby</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>Family (3)</td>
<td>First vacation</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>2 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>7/1</td>
<td>Museum of the Rockies</td>
<td>Lynanne &amp; Eleanor</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Father/daughter, Husband/wife</td>
<td>Repeat vacation</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>3 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>7/2</td>
<td>Arts Depot, Red Lodge</td>
<td>Warren &amp; Carol</td>
<td>CO</td>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>Repeat vacation</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>7/3</td>
<td>Bighorn Battlefield</td>
<td>Attila, Christie, Olivia, Jon &amp; Donna</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>First-Family R-Parents</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>8 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>7/4</td>
<td>Pictograph Cave</td>
<td>Mark, Melissa, &amp; child</td>
<td>CA-MA</td>
<td>Family (3)</td>
<td>R-her, F-him</td>
<td>Vacation/Moving</td>
<td>2 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>7/4</td>
<td>Pompeys Pillar</td>
<td>Julie, Paulette, &amp; Tom</td>
<td>NE/VA</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Family Reunion/Vacation</td>
<td>1 day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>7/5</td>
<td>Moss Mansion</td>
<td>Mickie &amp; Jan</td>
<td>FL</td>
<td>Tour</td>
<td>Repeat/First</td>
<td>Tour Vacation</td>
<td>1 day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>7/6</td>
<td>Pompeys Pillar</td>
<td>Joe &amp; Tyler</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Repeat/First</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>2 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>7/6</td>
<td>Pompeys Pillar</td>
<td>Dan &amp; Jean</td>
<td>WA, AZ</td>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>Repeat vacation</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>14 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>7/7</td>
<td>State Historical Society Museum</td>
<td>Jay</td>
<td>MD</td>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>First vacation</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td>State Historical Society Museum</td>
<td>Greg &amp; Donna</td>
<td>MD</td>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>First vacation</td>
<td>6 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>7/9</td>
<td>Gates of the Mountain</td>
<td>Elaine</td>
<td>IL</td>
<td>Self</td>
<td>Repeat vacation</td>
<td>4 days</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>7/9</td>
<td>Gates of the Mountain</td>
<td>Andy, Deb, Nick, &amp; Jean</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>Family (4)</td>
<td>Repeat</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>7/11</td>
<td>Giant Cedars, Ross Creek</td>
<td>Steve, Shirley, Gary, Mary, Meagan</td>
<td>MN</td>
<td>Family (2/3)</td>
<td>Repeat-2</td>
<td>First -3</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>7/11</td>
<td>Kootenai Falls</td>
<td>Mike</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Self</td>
<td>First vacation</td>
<td>Business/Vacation</td>
<td>4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>7/12</td>
<td>Bigfork</td>
<td>Jeff &amp; family</td>
<td>VA</td>
<td>Family (3)</td>
<td>Repeat vacation</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>5 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>7/13</td>
<td>Whitefish</td>
<td>Bess &amp; Larry</td>
<td>MN</td>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>Repeat vacation/Visiting</td>
<td>6 days</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>7/13</td>
<td>Whitefish</td>
<td>Jeff &amp; June</td>
<td>FL</td>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>Repeat vacation</td>
<td>4 days</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>7/13</td>
<td>Glacier/Apgar</td>
<td>John &amp; Shirley</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>Repeat vacation</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>7/14</td>
<td>Old Eureka Village</td>
<td>Don &amp; Teresa</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>Repeat vacation</td>
<td>4 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>7/15</td>
<td>Columbia Falls</td>
<td>Jay</td>
<td>MD</td>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>First vacation</td>
<td>7 days</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>7/16</td>
<td>Apgar/Glacier</td>
<td>Ken &amp; Alex</td>
<td>ID</td>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>Repeat vacation</td>
<td>4 days</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>7/16</td>
<td>West Glacier</td>
<td>Adrian, Caroline, Christine, &amp; Linda</td>
<td>No. Ireland</td>
<td>Family (4)</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>14 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>7/17</td>
<td>Museum of the Plains Indians</td>
<td>Dick, Elizabeth, Mary, &amp; Matt</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Family (4)</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>7 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>7/17</td>
<td>Museum of the Plains Indians</td>
<td>Bob &amp; Shirley</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>Repeat vacation/Conference</td>
<td>2 days</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Subject ID #</td>
<td>Place of Residence</td>
<td>Group Type (Self, Couple, Family)</td>
<td>Visit (First, Repeat)</td>
<td>Why are you in Montana?</td>
<td>Time in Montana on this visit</td>
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<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>7/17</td>
<td>Old Trail Museum, Choteau</td>
<td>Howard &amp; Sheila</td>
<td>FL</td>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>2 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>7/18</td>
<td>Ft. Benton</td>
<td>Dale &amp; Phyllis</td>
<td>TX</td>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>14 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>7/19</td>
<td>CM Russell Museum</td>
<td>Donna</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>Repeat</td>
<td>Vacation/ Reunion</td>
<td>8 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>7/19</td>
<td>Lewis &amp; Clark Interpretive Center</td>
<td>Mark &amp; Judy</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>Repeat</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>14 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>7/20</td>
<td>Lewistown</td>
<td>Kylie &amp; Lee</td>
<td>MN/MO</td>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>Repeat/First</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>1 day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>7/22</td>
<td>Wolf Point Library</td>
<td>Shrie</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Self</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>5 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>7/23</td>
<td>Hwy 200 &amp; 24 Rest Area</td>
<td>Audrey, Karen, Dixie &amp; Audrey, Gordon &amp; Leland</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Repeat</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>7/24</td>
<td>Culbertson Visitor Center</td>
<td>Gary &amp; Katherine</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>Repeat</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>1 day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>7/25</td>
<td>Range Rider’s Museum, Miles City</td>
<td>Gary, Linda, &amp; Bill</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>3 day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>7/25</td>
<td>Makoshika State Park</td>
<td>Georgia &amp; Barbara</td>
<td>IL, Poland</td>
<td>2 friends</td>
<td>Repeat</td>
<td>Vacation/Reunion</td>
<td>4 days</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Interview Guide

The following questions were used as a guide by the interviewer. As vacationers responded or expounded on a point, the interviewer would probe by asking additional questions not listed here. Each interview was unique. This guide was used simply as a means to get the conversation rolling and to make sure certain topic areas were discussed with each group.

Before the interview, qualifying questions were asked:
- Where from - they had to be a nonresident
- Trip type - It had to be a vacation
- Type of visitor - single, couple, family
- Number of times visited MT before - needed first time and repeat visitors
- If intercepted by Yellowstone - how much time in Montana (we did not want a day tripper)

1. Just describe for us your current trip to Montana.
2. About how many times have you visited Montana in the last, say ten years?
3. What is there about Montana that stands out to you, as compared to other places you visit?
4. What is your Montana experience? Please describe.
5. What types of emotions does Montana elicit?
6. Describe people you’ve met in Montana.
7. How would you describe Montana for people thinking about visiting? What would you tell them?
8. Is there anything about Montana that makes it different to you?
9. I have a list of attractions where people have indicated in previous surveys what attracted them to this state. Please look it over and check any of the attractions that fit your reason for being in Montana on this trip. (after completion the interviewer continues) Now... explain to me what you mean by ____ (attraction)? (interviewer probes for complete understanding).
10. Where and when was the seed planted to come to Montana?
11. Tell me about how you planned this trip? When, who involved, how, where did you get information at home and while in Montana?
12. Tell me how flexible you are with your vacation plans. Was this a planned stop or discovered?
13. Are there any other questions that we should be asking others?
Interview Summary Examples

(Note: All the interview summaries can be found in RR2003-7, The Montana Vacation Experience Part 2 – Interview Summaries. It can be accessed at www.forestry.umt.edu/fttr under research reports.)
RV#01 Lynn & Mark

Lynn and Mark are repeat visitors from Wisconsin who were intercepted in Missoula at the Smoke Jumper Center. The couple flew into Bozeman and then traveled to Wallace, Idaho to attend a Mining History Association Conference. They will return to Bozeman where Lynn plans to go fishing with a guide.

Mark began by commenting on fishing. He said, “the bad day of fishing is better than a good day” (Pg 2 Ln 5). Lynn associates fly-fishing and mountains to the state and inquired “is there anything else to life?” (Pg 2 Ln 20) Mark describes Montana as “Colorado without the hype” (Pg 2 Ln 30). He feels development pressure has ruined Colorado while Montana has been less spoiled and remained more in its “raw” state than other states.

Mark and Lynn find the west very hospitable and the people open to visitors. They find people more open than east of the Mississippi. Both enjoyed the city of Butte with its mining history and culture. Mark describes the area as a time capsule of history and culture (Pg 4 Ln 39).

Mark’s father first exposed him to the Rocky Mountains as a child. His father had a passion for history that he passed on to Mark. He remembers as a youth seeing Virginia City and visiting Lewis and Clark sites.

Lynn describes Montana as beautiful, friendly, and a wonderful destination to visit (Pg 6 Ln 41). Mark feels there are great opportunities in the state if you enjoy the outdoors. He describes the experience him and Lynn look for as “for it to be Montana and nothing else” (Pg 7 Ln 34). The both come for Montana and the unique experiences the state provides. Its essence is difficult for either of them to describe. Mark feels Montana is more laid back than Colorado. Lynn always feels welcome and has the opportunity to do many different activities.

Mark enjoys the open spaces in the state because at home he doesn’t have a definitive horizon (Pg 9 Ln 2). Trees and lack of relief in Wisconsin don’t allow for the same viewing experience as in Montana. Mark feels that mountain terrain adds to any experience. Both he and Lynn enjoy geology and the rock outcroppings they can see in the state. Mark finds the mountains very comforting and the relief as something spiritual and visceral to him (Pg 12 Ln 8, 14). He feels mountains and bodies of water are two things that bring the couple a peace that he cannot fully explain.

Lynn and Mark describe fishing as a passion. Lynn finds serenity in the surrounding nature. She feels catching a fish is secondary to the relaxing, stress-free experience (Pg 13 Ln 34). Both Mark and her agree that the motivation to fish in Montana is because of the unique surroundings and different species of fish to catch.

Lynn discussed having an interest in Lewis and Clark history and their expedition. Mark continued by explaining his interest in the American frontier and how it has changed. He feels Montana is a place where you can immerse yourself and connect with the frontier “geographically, physically, and spiritually” (Pg 15 Ln 12).

Lynn used the Internet for much of the trip planning. She does a lot of research on visitor sites and locations prior to the trip, but never feels locked into an itinerary. They both describe themselves as very flexible travelers. Lynn continued to add that the Internet helped her find fishing guides, reserve hotels, and find Lewis and Clark attractions. She starts pulling information together a few months prior to any trip with their destination usually planned six months in advance. Lynn collects many brochures while traveling and keeps a file cabinet at home full of old brochures to use for planning (Pg 18 Ln 35).

Both Lynn and Mark said that they would change nothing about their trip. Mark suggested asking visitors if there was anything negative about their experience or how one could make it better.

FV#29 Greg & Donna

Greg and Donna are first time visitors from Maryland who were intercepted at the State Historical Society Museum in Helena. They had been in the state for six days when interviewed. Their trip to that point consisted of visiting Missoula, Helena, and Glacier National Park.
Greg first commented that Montana has ever-changing scenery (Pg 1 Ln 19). Both were excited about seeing Glacier NP and enjoyed driving on the Going to the Sun Road. Both were surprised by the amounts of snow in the park for early June.

Greg and Donna mentioned they were pleasantly surprised by “just how pretty it has been all over” (Pg 3 Ln 9). Being from the east coast, Montana was entirely different scenery for them. Donna stated that compared to other mountain states Montana has been a lot less congested and easy to travel around. Greg commented that in other mountain states or other countries like Austria, remote areas to drive are not present like they are in Montana (Pg 4 Ln 7).

Donna mentioned that viewing wildlife was not the primary attraction. She focuses more on beautiful scenery. Donna also commented on the wide-open spaces present in Montana. She stated that you are able to drive for miles without seeing another car or home. This aspect is very unique for them since they live on the east coast (Pg 5 Ln 9).

Greg was interested in the changing sights of the glacier-fed streams on the sides of mountains. He enjoyed the sound the streams made and just watching them flow.

Greg stated that the couple’s expectations for Glacier NP were very high. Each agreed that their expectations were met. The mountains were of particular interest for them. Donna stated that they live in a really flat part of the world. She feels that it’s nice to see different landscapes. Montana is wide open, with a great big sky without a lot of buildings (Pg 7 Ln 25). Greg and Donna felt that once you were up on a rise, you could see for miles.

The primary accommodations and lodging used by Greg and Donna were campsites for their recreational vehicle. Donna felt one must interpret the information available about sites to fit with your needs. She would much rather have nice sites with a view than a campground that provides entertainment and activities in the evenings (Pg 9 Ln 11).

Planning for their vacation began a year and a half ago. Greg and Donna had traveled cross-country in the southern United States before and this visit to Montana was part of a northern cross-country trip. Both felt Montana was not as well organized in travel information as other states. They were accustomed to crossing the state line and receiving maps and information from tourist information centers (Pg 9 Ln 42-44).

Greg and Donna used a National Geographic book that provided information on attractions along the interstate. Both considered themselves very flexible travelers that did not have a scheduled itinerary. Both commented they would like to return to the stated for an extended visit where they could park in one area for a month’s time (Pg 13 Ln 15).

The people of Montana were seen as very friendly. Donna saw them as very laid back and not in a rush. The couple felt towns were very rustic and had a very rural feel to them. Both had a sense of life slowing down and becoming more laid back as you traveled.

**RV#22 Attila, Christie, Olivia, Jon, & Donna**

Attila, Christie, and their family are mix of first time and repeat visitors from Ohio who were intercepted at the Little Bighorn Battlefield. Donna and Jon have visited Montana before, but the rest of the family members are first time visitors. The family traveled across the state and spent a week in the West Glacier area.

Jon describes Montana as absolutely breathtaking (Pg 2 Ln 26). The atmosphere has been very peaceful and he has enjoyed the colors of the forests in western Montana. He sums up his impressions in one word-utopia (Pg 2 LN 31). Donna has had a tremendous experience and describes the scenery as absolutely gorgeous. Christy explains that if she were to live in Montana, she would only want to live on the western border of Glacier NP. The park has been the highlight of her trip. She enjoys the beautiful scenery and the park has the best hiking areas.

Christy was surprised that the people were not as friendly as she expected (Pg 3 Ln 15). She believes they may be inundated with tourists. Jon feels that his overall experience has been great and for the most part people have been very friendly.

Attila would love to move to Montana because of the mountains, rivers, and opportunities to hunt and fish. He feels he needs to come back to Montana to do all the things the state has to offer (Pg 4 Ln 26). Attila and Christy like the outdoors because they feel it gets children involved with nature and away
from television. It helps children learn to appreciate beauty. Christy feels that being in nature is a transcendentalist experience (Pg 5 Ln 8). For Attila, it is getting away from work and appreciating natural beauty and what God created. He looks at the mountains and wonders how they were created.

Jon feels the mountains in Montana are more rugged than in other mountain states. Donna feels they have more grandeur and are more spectacular and overwhelming than others she has seen (Pg 5 Ln 41). Attila feels people are drawn to western Montana for the tranquility, beauty, and scenery.

Trip planning began about six months ago. Christy used the Internet to inquire about cabins and accommodations. The group considers themselves very flexible travelers who “fly by the seat of their pants.” Christy and Attila have a three-year-old and they believe one has to be flexible (Pg 7 Ln 11).

Attila feels the lifestyle in Montana is very laid back. Cities are different with a lot fewer people than the family is used to. The cities are less congested and move at a much slower pace.

The only negative experience for Donna has been the mosquitoes. She was not expecting them to be as bad. The only negative aspect for Attila has been not having enough time to see the vastness of Montana and explore all it has to offer (Pg 8 Ln 46). In his opinion, one needs a month or more to fully explore the state.

**RV#06 Jack**

Jack is a repeat visitor from Oregon who was intercepted at the Grant-Kohrs Ranch. He had been in the state for a week. During this time he visited Glacier NP, the Plains Indians museum, the Chinook county museum, Fort Benton, the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, and now the Grant-Kohrs Ranch.

Jack is very fascinated by history and has a great interest in Native American culture. One of his reasons for coming to the state was to see the sites associated with the Nez Perce Trail. Jack describes himself as a very flexible planner who doesn’t worry about where he’ll end up each night (Pg 2 Ln 10).

He describes Montana as big open country with open plains. He feels that there is history everywhere and enjoys being surrounded by it. Montana was not necessarily different than other states Jack had visited, but he did have unique experiences in the state. The opportunity to experience the Big Hole battlefield and the mining history in Butte were opportunities he enjoyed (Pg 3 Ln 6). Jack re-emphasized his interest in Native Americans and specifically the Nez Perce. He had spent a lot of time reading about Native Americans and their culture.

Jack’s primary attraction to Glacier NP was the nice scenery of the park. The Going to the Sun Road was an unbelievable experience for him.

Jack describes himself as someone who typically avoids the crowds and looks for the off the beaten path attractions.

Trip planning for Jack began two months prior to the trip. His motivation was to visit sites on the Nez Perce trail he had missed in previous trips and to spend more time at the locations he had enjoyed (Pg 5 Ln 6). Jack utilized maps primarily for his trip planning. He also used a guidebook for the Nez Perce trail that he referred to as “his bible” (Pg 5 Ln 18). Newspaper articles and information from friends provided additional ideas for sites to visit.

The main reason Jack would return would be to bring his wife. He would like her to be able to enjoy the scenic areas he has visited. He enjoyed the Gates of the Mountains and seeing the views that Lewis had described on his expedition. Jack has had difficulty expressing his feelings about the open spaces and scenery but concluded by stressing that he really enjoyed the state.