

Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways Market Trend Assessment

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Full report online at: <http://adirondackscenicbyways.org/info-for-partners.html>



Buttermilk Falls near Long Lake, just off NYS Rt. 30 – the Adirondack Trail Scenic Byway (photo by Jon Vermilye)

Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways Market Trend Assessment 2008 Visitor Survey along the Scenic Byways in Northern New York

Adirondack North Country Association

Final Report – June, 2009

Introduction

Satisfied customers and word-of-mouth advertising are considered to be among the most powerful advantages in tourism and destination marketing. Marketing success and customer loyalty can be measured in a number of ways. One is “share of customer” — the degree your customer uses your offering compared to competitors’ products. A second is “customers for life” — repeat visitation throughout the ages and stages of their existence. A third is your customer’s willingness to recommend your destination or experience to a friend or colleague.

Based on the results of the Adirondack North Country Association’s (ANCA) Adirondack North Country Region Scenic Byways Market Trend Assessment, communities, attractions, the Adirondack North Country region, and the Scenic Byways are clear winners!

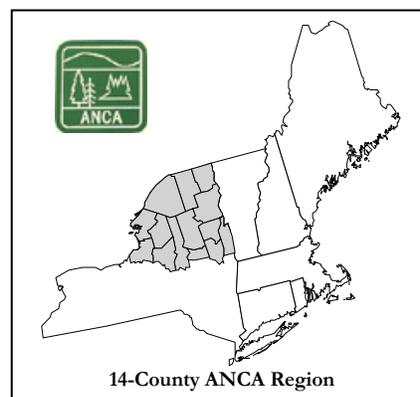
From more than 300 visitors, we now have, in their own words, key information that can be used to develop and support Scenic Byways brand identities, marketing strategies, themes, promotional campaigns, and tourism products.

About the Survey

In 2008 the Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA) completed the **Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways Market Trend Assessment**. The foundation of the research was a face-to-face survey of travelers who visited a wide variety of communities and attractions along the Scenic Byways in 12 of the 14 counties that comprise the Adirondack North Country region.

Research on travelers is an important step in learning what needs to be done to maintain the competitiveness of a region’s tourism economy. This is the first survey research project to focus specifically on those travelers using the interconnected system of State Scenic Byway touring routes in northern New York. The anticipated benefit of the project is to maximize return on investment for the promotional expenditures made by ANCA, the Byway communities, and the many tourism businesses.

The project was funded by a grant from the New York State Scenic Byways Program as supported by the Federal Highway Administration and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century of 1998. Holmes & Associates (<http://adirondackresearch.com>) directed the survey research and reporting, while Susan Fuller of Fuller Communications (<http://www.fullerventures.com>) assisted ANCA with project development and interpretation of the findings from a marketing perspective.





Overview of the 12 Scenic Byway Routes in the Adirondack North Country Region
(w/numbered locations relating to ANCA's Arts, Crafts, and Food Publication)

Goals & Objectives

The main goal of the Scenic Byways Market Trend Assessment was to:

Identify visitation trends that have the greatest potential for future success of regional Scenic Byway tourism and maximize return on marketing investments for ANCA, the Scenic Byway communities and for the many businesses serving travelers within those communities.

In order to achieve the project goal, the following objectives were addressed:

1. Identification and assessment of why travelers come to the Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways, including most appealing Byway features; most interesting destinations; and, what features, events, people, and community attractions are of most interest to travelers.
2. Assessment of visitation patterns, changes in visitation, and visitor spending patterns and trends.
3. Assessment of visitation patterns and trends having the greatest potential for growth.
4. Assessment of interests of today's travelers – what brand messages resonate with prospective visitors and repeat travelers, and what else is needed.
5. Assessment of relevant websites, maps, signage, brochures, etc.
6. Assessment of website functionality and what visitors prefer.

The main activity used to address those objectives was a detailed questionnaire survey of travelers while they were visiting communities and attractions along the Scenic Byways. The main inquiry of the survey effort included the following:

- How do visitors learn about the Scenic Byways?
- Why do people come specifically to the Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways?
- Where are they coming from?
- What are the most important features on the Scenic Byways. Why?
- What are the most interesting destinations. Why?
- What is the relative importance of the features, events, and community attractions that are of most interest to travelers?
- How does the Scenic Byways brand and promotion currently resonate with new and repeat travelers?
- What tourism website features do Byway visitors prefer, need, and would like to see more of?
- What services and information are visitors getting in other ways that they would prefer to be able to get from the website?

Methodology

Holmes & Associates used a tested intercept or sidewalk survey approach that relied on locally hired and trained research assistants (RAs) who lived in or near the communities where the surveys occurred. We collaborated with major attractions (i.e., museums, Olympic venues, scenic railroads, popular businesses, etc.) that allowed the RAs to work on their premises. The RAs were instructed to approach different types of travelers (i.e., families, couples, singles, seniors, etc.) and ask their participation in a brief survey in exchange for a small incentive, such as a coupon for an ice cream cone at a local shop. The RAs also were instructed to target first-time and occasional visitors as much as possible. A total of five RAs worked on completing the face-to-face questionnaires with travelers.

Geographically, the goal was to achieve as broad a coverage as possible in a 12-county area in northern New York in order to reach a diversity of the visiting public. We developed a preliminary target number of 50 completed surveys in six main areas of the region, described as follows:

- Lake Placid, Saranac Lake, Tupper Lake (Olympic Byway, High Peaks Byway)
- Inlet, Old Forge, Thendara (Central Adirondack Trail)
- Long Lake, Blue Mtn Lake, Raquette Lake, Indian Lake (Central Adirondack Trail, Adirondack Trail, Roosevelt-Marcy Byway)
- Lake George Village, Warrensburg, North Creek (Central Adirondack Trail, Dude Ranch Trail, Roosevelt-Marcy Byway)
- Rome, Boonville, Lowville (Black River Trail, Central Adirondack Trail, Revolutionary Byway)
- Speculator, Lake Pleasant, Piseco (Southern Adirondack Trail, Adirondack Trail)

As the research progressed, we had difficulty attracting research assistants that lived in the Long Lake, Lake George, and Speculator areas. In addition to shifting more effort to other areas, we initiated an online, interactive version of the questionnaire in an effort to obtain data from visitors in those communities where research assistants were not available. The online survey was promoted with posters and flyers at campgrounds, stores, and Chamber of Commerce offices in those areas. That technique resulted in 56 completed online questionnaires, or about 14% of the total questionnaires collected. It also resulted in data being collected in some of those target communities where we were unable to field a research assistant to collect data in person. The overall target of 300 completed questionnaires was achieved with a final total of 328.

The table to the right summarizes the number of questionnaires completed for each community. Questionnaires were returned from 32 communities, with the most common being Lake Placid, Tupper Lake, Thendara, Old Forge, Port Kent, Rome, and Indian Lake.

Completed Questionnaires
by Location

Survey Location	Total
Lake Placid	64
Tupper Lake	61
Thendara	51
Old Forge	34
Port Kent	25
Rome	24
Indian Lake	13
White lake	7
Cranberry Lake	5
Blue Mountain Lake	3
Inlet	3
Plattsburgh	3
Whiteface Mt.	3
Saranac Lake	2
Star Lake	2
Stillwater	2
Wanakena	2
Adirondack Loj	1
Big Moose Lake/Inlet	1
Chazy	1
Eagle Bay	1
Forestport	1
Hopkinton	1
Keene	1
Lake Champlain	1
Long Lake	1
Lows Lake	1
Moshier falls	1
North Hudson	1
Otter Lake	1
Robert Moses State Park	1
Wilmington	1
Other, Unknown	9
Total:	328

The survey work progressed during late summer and early fall, beginning on August 15 and completed on October 15, 2008. A number of attractions and organizations generously allowed the research assistants to approach visitors at their facilities and we appreciate their assistance with the survey effort.

The survey report highlights some of the main findings for each survey question and offers interpretation by Fuller Communications in terms of the six tourism marketing-related objectives outlined above that are of most interest to the many communities and businesses located along the Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways.

What We've Learned and Why It's Important

Through this one-of-a-kind, open-ended, qualitative survey process, we now understand reasons these representative visitors have come to the region for the first time, and perhaps more importantly, what brings them back year after year. We know what they consider most memorable about their Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways experiences, and what they would tell friends and family about the best parts of their visits. Equally important, we have their recommendations for ways to improve their Scenic Byways experiences, how they use the Internet and web sites for travel planning, and their level of awareness of Scenic Byways designations and programs.

The research results will be used by ANCA and made available to all Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways stakeholders. With it we can make sure we make the most of the tremendous opportunities tourism provides, as one of the three top economic drivers in every state in the United States. The information will help tourism-focused businesses, organizations, and attractions throughout the region plan, promote, and deliver the types of experiences our visitors value most. The ensuing success will support sustainable economic development and community revitalization that will benefit residents and travelers throughout the region.

In our region, where tourism is an essential economic force, tourism stakeholders include far more than those obviously involved in tourism such as chambers of commerce, tourism officials, visitor services industries, and meals and lodgings providers. Tourists are likely to shop in grocery and drug stores, buy products from local artists, farmers and food producers, use guide services and purchase sporting goods, stop at gas stations, and buy clothing, maps, and books. In addition to direct tourism revenues, the economic benefits of "multiplier effects" expand tourism "stakeholders." These include the businesses that supply services and goods to tourism businesses, incomes earned by people employed in the tourism industry who spend their wages on a wide variety of goods and services in their communities, and governments that earn tax revenues on the sales of goods and services. Stakeholders also include everyone who has an interest in the sustainability of the Adirondack North Country region: state, regional, and local planners; agency and government representatives; organizations; educational institutions; concerned residents.

Using the survey results, tourism stakeholders can implement the following:

- clearly focus messages to ensure/enhance the number of visitors who actually come to visit compared to those who are considering a visit (conversion rates)
- be sure their brand experience, product offerings, and “look” resonate with target customers in target markets
- plan collaborative, cooperative inter- and intra- Scenic Byways experiences that will increase visitor length of stay and expand visitation to more Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways communities
- allocate marketing resources most effectively

Overview of Key Findings

Finding 32% of respondents said this was their first visit to the Adirondack North Country region.

Importance--We now have insight into what attracts first-time visitors and most importantly, what they like about the area once they get here. This information can be used to develop effective web site content and campaigns to attract additional new visitors.

Finding 59% of respondents indicated that they have visited the region from 2 to as many as 10+ times previously.

Importance--Repeat visitations are tremendous demonstrations of customer satisfaction and loyalty. Satisfied customers are key resources for “Word-of-Mouth” promotion. In tourism, Word-of-Mouth is among the first three sources of information people use to make travel plans and decisions. It is one of the most powerful, cost effective, easily implemented marketing initiatives available. Every tourism stakeholder in the Adirondack North Country Region can take advantage of Word-of-Mouth by ensuring positive, memorable, quality experiences for their customers.

Finding Visitors have strong emotional connections to the Adirondack North Country region. Many respondents mentioned first coming here when they were children and wanting to relive those experiences. Others were in the area to attend weddings, reunions, for honeymoons and anniversaries, and to fulfill annual traditions.

Importance—Positive emotions, including nostalgia, play key roles in ways consumers make decisions on experiential products including vacations. Tourism stakeholders in the Adirondack North Country can take advantage of this in their promotional and program planning.

Finding 70% of visitors surveyed stated they were drawn to the region in general, rather than to a specific destination.

Importance—With this level playing field there are opportunities for all stakeholders. Collaboration and coordinated planning in creating experiences that take visitors to several Scenic Byways communities will be far more productive than thinking in terms of competition between Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways destinations.

Finding We know our respondents are travelers who also enjoy vacation experiences in some of the world’s most highly rated tourism destinations, including the Caribbean, the Alps, Hawaii, Italy, Ireland, Cape Cod, and Vermont. We know that more than 80% attended college, graduate school or higher, and that nearly 70% have household incomes over \$50,000 annually.

Importance—These well-traveled, sophisticated, intelligent, well-to-do visitors value authentic quality experiences. This means that tourism development projects in Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways communities can have positive impacts on quality of life for all residents. Tourism can contribute directly to economic prosperity through decent hospitality jobs and support of entrepreneurial ventures including crafts, recreation and wildlife related businesses, and locally produced value-added products. Additional, often substantive, benefits result from the “multiplier effect.” This occurs when the restaurant or lodging owner buys supplies from local dealers; employees of these establishments spend their wages in the community for their own food, retail goods, and services, for example.

Finding When rating the activities most important to their overall experience and enjoyment, respondents said that driving through the area, and enjoying the scenery, views of lakes, forests, and mountains were the most important activities while travelling in the Adirondack North Country region, and the reasons they have memorable visits.

Importance—These experiences are based on intrinsic values that exist in the Adirondack North Country region, and that are made possible by, and sustained by, the Scenic Byways designation. We don’t have to “build it so they will come.” It’s already here! Communities, venues, attractions, hospitality providers, and anyone with an interest in having visitors as customers can use their association with Scenic Byways designation to make the most of the intrinsic values of the byways.

Finding After the importance of scenery and views, the next most important general category visitors identified related to outdoor activities: recreation (gentle activities), wildlife viewing, and adventure (more challenging activities).

Importance—These nature based and outdoor activities—hiking, bicycling, paddling, camping, hunting and fishing, winter activities, and wildlife viewing—contribute \$38 billion to the Northeast U.S. economy annually. Numerous low-cost, diverse, and easy-access opportunities for outdoor recreation are provided by the many trailheads, wildlife viewing areas, and water access sites that are readily available along the Scenic Byways. Much of that valuable infrastructure exists because of, and is maintained by, local governments or the State of New York.

Finding Visitors’ motivations in coming to the region are mainly to pursue their own interests, rather than coming here because family and friends are here to visit.

Importance—Visitors are not constrained by the need to spend “appropriate” amounts of time with relatives, so they have plenty of time to enjoy our many attractions and venues. This creates more opportunities for customers for lodgings and restaurants since visitors are not staying and dining with friends.

Finding Because of the open-ended qualitative interview process, respondents were encouraged to provide anecdotal comments. We know that 97% of those who completed the survey would recommend the area to others. We know based on their own experiences they would speak about the beautiful scenery, the friendliness of local people, easy access to nature, and the peaceful and relaxing environment, to name just a few.

Importance—We know what actual visitors say and value about their experiences. We do not have to surmise or make up themes based on what we think they like. In their own words we know what makes traveling in the Adirondack North Country region different and special from their other travel experiences. These comments are gold mines of messages, themes, and images that should be used to develop the Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways Brand and strategic marketing campaigns.

Finding We know how they get information that attracts them to select the Adirondack North Country region as a vacation destination. We know what materials and methodologies they use while planning their trips. We know what types of website information are most useful to them. We know what resources are most helpful while they are in the area. We know they value information and suggestions they receive from friendly, helpful, local people.

Importance—Scenic Byways stakeholders can use the information to make sure they develop useful cost-effective marketing materials, and know what's needed to supplement existing materials, and fill gaps. Stakeholder websites can also assist travelers by including a link to the new ANCA Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways website that provides information for the Adirondack Trail, Olympic Trail, and Central Adirondack Trail Scenic Byways.

Finding Levels of awareness about Scenic Byways in general, as well as those in the Adirondack North Country region, are limited. For many, participating in the survey itself was the first time they had heard anything about Scenic Byways.

Importance—ANCA needs significantly more resources to make the most of the advantages of the Scenic Byways program in the Adirondack North Country and its benefits to stakeholders and travelers.

Finding Visitors surveyed said more promotional pieces, better signage, more historic markers and interpretive signage, improved web sites, better and more accessible maps, and more information about the Adirondack Park in general, would improve their understanding and enjoyment of the region.

Importance—These are all solutions the Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways program is intended to address. Again, the Byways Program needs significantly more resources to meet these needs and enhance customer experiences. Projects that are underway, with funding from the Federal Scenic Byways program, include the new ANCA Adirondack Scenic Byways website, scheduled for release in 2009. ANCA is also preparing a large format map featuring all New York State Scenic Byways on one side and Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways on the reverse.

Finding Although there were very few complaints registered by the respondents, disappointments expressed include: some venues were closed after Labor Day; high prices in some locations; lack of nightlife in others; the weather.

Importance—Byway stakeholders may have opportunities to extend the tourism season by identifying ways to attract and keep visitors during shoulder seasons. Stakeholders should commit to consistent high quality service, and quality and value for the money of all experiences of Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways visitors.

Finding Purchases of goods and items that were locally produced (“Nothing made in China”) and had specific relevance to the Adirondack North Country region were most memorable.

Importance—In many tourism surveys, shopping is ranked as one of the top five most important activities. There are tremendous business development opportunities for quality one-of-a-kind, locally created and produced goods, and for the shops and restaurants that offer them.

Driving Forces Behind the 2008 Scenic Byways Visitors Survey

In 2007 the Adirondack North Country Association launched several initiatives to stimulate tourism in the region. These included the Adirondack Trail and Olympic Scenic Byways Marketing and Interpretation Campaigns. A series of meetings with stakeholders along both Scenic Byways demonstrated that formal market research was needed to ensure that ANCA and all other stakeholders could plan and develop the most effective ways to grow the tourism economy. The early research phase of development of a website for the Adirondack Trail, Olympic Trail, and Central Adirondack Trail Scenic Byways was also underway, as well as byway-oriented brochures for Tupper Lake and the Adirondack Trail Scenic Byway.

Early in 2007, ANCA reviewed the Conversion Survey Results from the 2006 Adirondack North Country Spring/Summer Scenic Byways Advertising Campaign, conducted in partnership with the Adirondack Regional Tourism Council. This research provided quantitative data and statistical information about awareness of the Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways, how travelers were making decisions on vacation destinations, and demographic information.

While informative, that research did not identify emotional “drivers,” and did not provide information from visitors’ perspectives. ANCA determined it was also important to gather qualitative, anecdotal information directly from visitors to the region to assure success in its Scenic Byways tourism projects: what attracted visitors to the area; what they most appreciated about the time they spent here; how they would speak about the region to their friends and relatives. To achieve this objective, ANCA conducted a search process and hired Holmes & Associates of Saranac Lake to undertake a market research project. ANCA also contracted with Fuller Communications of Malone to provide services for project management, survey development, outcomes analysis, and recommendations for follow-up.

Benefits Of The Adirondack North Country Region Scenic Byways 2008 Visitors Survey

The 2008 market survey outcomes will be used to support the promotion and interpretation of Scenic Byway-specific applications, including the following:

- Building new campaigns based on knowledge of what motivates our regional visitors, and to identify opportunities ANCA can provide to enhance Scenic Byways experiences
- Ensuring messages are clearly focused and developed to maximize conversions (number of actual visits as outcomes of inquiries). The information can be used to refine and hone marketing messages and website content.
- Guiding improvement of enhancements such as roadside signage, scenic pull-offs, recreation access
- Helping tourism stakeholders work collaboratively and effectively to plan and implement sustainable Scenic Byways experiences to maximize visitor satisfaction.
- Ascertaining that the Scenic Byways brands and marketing identity resonate in our target markets to ensure that marketing and program dollars are spent most effectively
- Providing specific primary quantitative information to augment and complement other/previous relevant research findings (Longwood's, conversion studies, etc.)
- Providing information that all Scenic Byways stakeholders can use to make the most of all the distinct advantages of Scenic Byways designation

ANCA made immediate and tangible use of the survey findings in 2008 and 2009 during development of the new Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways website (<http://adirondackscenicbyways.org>). The website's layout, design, features, and heavy use of scenic photography are all in response to the visitors' main interests and preferences gleaned from the 2008 survey work.



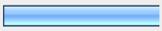
Erie Canal Village in Rome, just off Rt. 69 on the Black River, Central Adirondack, and Revolutionary Trail Scenic Byways

Specific Response Rates by Questionnaire Survey Item

The following is an item-by-item summary of what we learned about the travelers who were visiting the Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways during late summer and early fall of 2008.

The first section of the questionnaire asked about past visits and the reasons for this visit.

A1. In total, how many times have you visited the Adirondack North Country region?

3. In total, how many times have you visited the Adirondack North Country region in the past 10 years or so? (the 14-county area North of the Mohawk River or North of the Thru-Way, map available)		
	Response Percent	Response Count
this was my first visit 	30.9%	100
2 or 3 previous visits 	17.9%	58
4 to 9 previous visits 	13.3%	43
10+ previous visits 	26.5%	86
I live within the 14-county Adirondack North Country region 	11.4%	37
<i>answered question</i>		324
<i>skipped question</i>		4

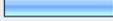
The main target audience for the survey was first-time visitors and those who had visited only 2 or 3 times before. We achieved our goal that the first-time and seldom visitors would comprise close to one-half of all respondents, with 30.9% being first-time visitors and 17.9% having only 2 or 3 previous visits in the past 10 years.

A2. Why are you visiting the region for the first time, or what has brought you back?

See [Appendix A](#) for a complete listing of all responses to this question.

The responses generally represent many of the common reasons visitors travel to the area, including nature, relaxing, visiting friends and family, scenery, and to visit their vacation camp or family home. The responses also include a number of attractions of specific interest, such as the Wild Center, Adirondack Scenic Railroad, and Erie Canal Village. The purpose of this item was to learn about the reasons why respondents chose to visit the area rather than to rank the popularity of attractions. The attractions mentioned were mainly those that were located in the communities where the survey took place. The responses also represent the timing of the survey – late summer and fall – with many mentions of fall colors and the changing of the leaves.

A3. In total, how many times have you visited this specific community?

5. In total, how many times have you visited the community where you spent most of your time (that you typed in on the previous page)?		
		Response Percent Response Count
1st time visitor		42.3% 137
2 or 3 previous visits		23.8% 77
4 to 9 previous visits		12.0% 39
10+ previous visits		21.9% 71
<i>answered question</i>		324
<i>skipped question</i>		4

When asked how often they had visited the specific community where the survey took place, 42.3% were 1st time visitors and another one-quarter (23.8%) had only 2 or 3 previous visits, indicating that at least two-thirds (66.1%) were visiting a community that they had never or only seldom visited.

A4. Were you drawn to the region as a whole, or did you have an interest in one specific community or in one specific activity/attraction? *answer all that apply*

6. Were you drawn to the Adirondack North Country as a region, or did you have an interest in one or more specific communities, activities, or attractions? (check all that apply)		
		Response Percent Response Count
I was drawn to the region as a whole.		69.6% 220
Drawn to a specific community.		18.7% 59
Drawn to a specific activity/attraction.		29.1% 92
Note the name of the communities, activities, or attractions:		149
<i>answered question</i>		316
<i>skipped question</i>		12

The vast majority (69.6%) reported being drawn to the region as a whole, providing strong support for regionally-based marketing efforts. While just under one-third (29.1%) were drawn to a specific activity, only one-fifth (18.7%) had a specific community in mind they wanted to visit,

A4 & A5. Did a particular community, activity, or attraction influence your visit?

See *Appendix A* for a complete listing of all responses to this question.

The responses run the gamut of reasons why visitors travel to the area, including fall colors, attractions, communities, recreational activities, scenic beauty, and visiting friends and family. Some of the more specific comments include the following:

- Canoeing Blue Mountain Lake and surrounding waters, hiking trails in the area, dining at 7th Lake House, rafting out of Indian Lake, fishing in the area, camping at various DEC campgrounds.
- Brochure at High Peaks info center on RT 87 Northway.
- Camping in the Adirondacks in the fall, Lewey Lake.
- Canoeing opportunities and to purchase maple syrup for pancake breakfast.
- Heard it was beautiful this time of the year - they were right.
- I had never entered any designated wilderness areas, so that was a big draw.
- My children love the various attractions in Old Forge.
- North Country National Scenic Trail.
- Read about Wild Center and it had enthusiastic endorsements from friends.
- The availability of services like restaurants, etc., and opportunity to climb Rondaxe.
- The beautiful State Park. So clean and inviting.
- The mountains and shopping; getting away from the heat in Florida.

A6. Is “Visiting Friends or Family” the main reason why you are on this current trip?



One main goal of the survey research was to try and target visitors who were not visiting friends and family, in an attempt to gather more information from those whose visit was triggered more by an activity, attraction, promotion, article, etc., than by the desire to visit friends or family. Our intercept survey approach was successful in that regard, with three-fourths (75.9%) in the “NO” category.

A6b. If not “Visiting Friends or Family,” what is the main reason you are on this trip?

See *Appendix A* for a complete listing of all responses to this question.

Surprisingly, the responses provide a different flavor than those to previous questions. In addition to some of the expected responses: a vacation, see the fall colors, take a train ride, etc., there were some new insights provided that suggest some of the region’s intrinsic values that hold importance for those who live outside the region. Examples include:

- Interest in wildlife.
- It's the nearest "wilderness" canoeing opportunity to Maryland.
- Just because it is fairly close by and love the atmosphere and scenery.
- Several of my friends sang praises of the region and their wilderness experiences in it.
- To enjoy the unblemished "Forever Wild" portions of the region.
- Cycling through this beautiful area.
- For the great camping sites - very quiet and high quality.
- Get away from home, relax, look at beautiful country.



Lewey Lake between Indian Lake and Speculator,
Rt. 30 on the Adirondack Trail Scenic Byway

The next section asked about what visitors hope to see or do in the area.

B1. How important these activities are to your overall experience while traveling in the Adirondack North Country region.

Please indicate how important these activities are to your overall experience while traveling in the Adirondack North Country region. Score them each on a 1 to 10 scale, where 1 means not at all important and 10 means extremely important to you.		
Answer Options	Rating Average	Response Count
Enjoying scenic views of lakes, forests, mountains	9.13	267
Driving through the area and enjoying the scenery	8.37	264
Outdoor recreation (hiking, swimming, biking, etc.)	6.91	253
Visiting Museums or Historic Sites	6.74	260
Stopping in communities and exploring what they have to offer	6.68	261
Viewing wildlife, bird watching, etc	6.35	252
Shopping for locally made crafts or art work	6.02	255
Meeting and visiting with people who live and work here	5.81	247
Getting out on the water (boating, canoe, kayak, etc.)	5.80	250
Interpretive Tours (learning about the environment, history, etc.)	5.39	253
Attending a special event, performance, festival, etc.	5.10	247
Shopping for locally grown fruits, vegetables, or other foods	4.62	243
Outdoor adventure (rock climbing, rafting, strenuous exercise, etc.)	4.50	243
Demonstrations and Instruction (learning to do something)	3.95	248
Other important activities to you (please specify)		36
<i>answered question</i>		274
<i>skipped question</i>		54

The table above lists each of the offered activity categories in the respondents' rank order, beginning with the most important. The most popular, on average, included:

- Enjoying scenic views of lakes, forests, mountains;
- Driving through the area and enjoying the scenery; and,
- Outdoor recreation (hiking, swimming, biking, etc.).

Of special significance to the Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways program is that the two items ranked most highly are directly associated with travelling along the Scenic Byways.



Interpretive Panel along the Hudson River by North Creek and North River, Rt. 28 on the Central Adirondack Trail

B2. Looking back over each of those items in B1, which one represents your favorite activity?

Looking back over each of those items, which one represents your most favorite activity?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Outdoor recreation (hiking, swimming, biking, etc.)	24.2%	67
Enjoying scenic views of lakes, forests, mountains	20.9%	58
Driving through the area and enjoying the scenery	17.7%	49
Visiting Museums or Historic Sites	8.3%	23
Getting out on the water (boating, canoe, kayak, etc.)	7.9%	22
Stopping in communities and exploring what they have to offer	5.4%	15
Outdoor adventure (rock climbing, rafting, strenuous exercise, etc.)	3.6%	10
Meeting and visiting with people who live and work here	3.6%	10
Attending a special event, performance, festival, etc.	3.2%	9
Viewing wildlife, bird watching, etc	2.9%	8
Shopping for locally made crafts or art work	1.4%	4
Interpretive Tours (learning about the environment, history, etc.)	0.7%	2
Demonstrations and Instruction (learning to do something)	0.0%	0
Shopping for locally grown fruits, vegetables, or other foods	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		277
<i>skipped question</i>		51

It is interesting to note that when asked to pick one of the thirteen activities as their overall favorite, outdoor recreation edged out scenic views and scenic drives. All three of those items are very close in popularity. There is quite a gap between those three and the next most important items, with “visiting museums and historic sites” and “getting out on the water” as the 4th and 5th most important.

B3. Are there specific aspects of your favorite activity that you especially enjoy? Score each on a 1 to 10 scale, with extremely important and 1 not important.

Are there specific aspects of your favorite activity that you especially enjoy? Score each of these on the 1 to 10 scale, where 1 = not at all important, and 10 = extremely important.		
Answer Options	Rating Average	Response Count
It is Relaxing	8.55	296
It takes place Outdoors	8.45	291
It is a Change of Pace from my usual lifestyle	7.79	279
It is Entertaining	7.41	282
There is a bit of Adventure to it	7.08	283
It involves some Exercise	6.91	289
It is Family-oriented	6.22	279
It is Educational	5.94	279
It is a Group activity	4.77	265
Other aspects you enjoy (please specify)		13
<i>answered question</i>		300
<i>skipped question</i>		28

B4. Looking back over those items in B3, which one is the most important to you?

Looking back over those items, which one is of most importance to you?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
It takes place Outdoors	37.5%	110
It is Relaxing	21.2%	62
It is Family-oriented	11.3%	33
It is a Change of Pace from my usual lifestyle	9.9%	29
It is Educational	6.1%	18
It is Entertaining	6.1%	18
There is a bit of Adventure to it	4.4%	13
It involves some Exercise	2.4%	7
It is a Group activity	1.0%	3
<i>answered question</i>		293
<i>skipped question</i>		35

The two tables above confirm that “Outdoors,” “Relaxing,” “Family-oriented,” and “Change of Pace” are four concepts that have the greatest appeal among the survey respondents. There is certainly some appeal to all of the concepts but when ask to pick only one, over one-half (58.7%) settled on Outdoors or Relaxing.

B5. Are there other vacation locations where you have had a memorable time enjoying your favorite activity? Where and what was especially enjoyable?

See *Appendix A* for a complete listing of all responses to this question.

Over three-quarters of the respondents (78%) wrote a response to this question. Most were fairly short responses and there were many mentions of beaches, islands, and exotic locals. There were a few more lengthy comments and many of those contain some thoughtful observations that seem to have relevance to the marketing and promotion of the Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways, as indicated by the following:

- Anywhere involving non-motorized transportation of some sort (bike, boat, boots) and scenic views (e.g., the Catskills, the New Jersey Pinelands, Pennsylvania Poconos, Great Smoky Mountains of Tennessee & North Carolina, Maine's Mt. Desert Island). THOSE were some other vacations or trips when I've had a memorable time enjoying my favorite activities!
- Stone Mountain, Georgia. The history of the area; the visit to a plantation. This was a bit of Americana that we wanted to explore. Also have had memorable trips to Cooperstown, NY for the Baseball Hall of Fame and the Farmers Museum; The Corning area for the Glassworks, wineries, and geologic formations; explored the Mohawk Valley, again for its history and geology; spent time on the San Andreas Fault in California and the Napa Valley.

- We take a yearly camping trip to Maine. We enjoy it because it's a voyage and a change of pace. We camp and hike in Maine, although there is more of a touristy aspect to it than our monthly weekend adventures in the Adirondacks.
- Hard to answer. I am hiking the North Country Trail in sections, and each area has its own charms. The diversity along the trail is enjoyable. But I suppose I like the wild areas the best... the Boundary Waters in Minnesota, Trap Hills in Michigan's UP, prairies of North Dakota. I like the places where there are few people.
- Hamilton, Bermuda - the people, island atmosphere, the homestead resort - Homestead, VA very relaxing and welcoming environment and seeing the hot springs
- European Alps - Alti Adige in Italy or Bavaria in Germany. Really high mountains - great hiking - unfortunately too many people so the sense of adventure that I get in the Adirondacks was not there.
- Canada, Belize, Mexico, St. Thomas, Saint Dominique, Finger Lakes, NY, Puerto Rico, Tylum Ruins - enjoyed exploring and local culture and interests.
- I have multiple backpacking trips throughout the Adirondacks with a select group of friends. I have been backpacking over 30 times in almost all the regions of the Adirondack Park. The best part of all the areas is the blending of community / civilization and remote wilderness areas. This is what make the Adirondacks unique in my mind.

The region's favourable comparison to other regions that seem "touristier" is very encouraging. One challenge appears to be how to promote the region as wild, unspoiled, and relatively undeveloped, while at the same time making it clear that there are many small communities throughout the area that offer all the necessary amenities as well as nice restaurants, good shopping opportunities, great hotels, etc. The last comment seems to sum it up and can be paraphrased as:

What makes the region unique is the blending of remote wilderness areas with historic communities offering all the conveniences.

Overall, it is very encouraging to learn that the activities and experiences visitors are most interested in are based firmly in the intrinsic values of the region. The scenic drives, spectacular views, outdoor recreation opportunities, and relaxing atmosphere that travelers appreciate are among the region's most valuable assets. The findings could be summarized in terms of a popular saying, "If you build it, they will come," but in this case, there is no need to build it. The spectacular views, outdoor recreation opportunities, and relaxing atmosphere are all very well established and it is the Scenic Byways that provide easy, enjoyable accessibility to those assets for the general public.



The south side of Algonquin Peak near Lake Placid, Rt. 73 on the High Peaks Byway

This short section asks about travel experience along the Scenic Byways.

C1. Were there any specific activities or events that influenced your decision to visit the region this time, and Why?

See *Appendix A* for a complete listing of all responses to this question.

It is important to note how influential the fall foliage was on many of the respondents' decision to visit the area. While what they enjoy about the region does not likely differ too much from the average visitor, some of the specific activities they were engaged in were different than those engaged in by the average visitor during the summer, spring, or winter.

C2. Of all the things you've done while you are here, what has been most enjoyable about your visit so far, and Why?

See *Appendix A* for a complete listing of all responses to this question.

The overwhelming response indicates that just about every respondent enjoyed something special about their visit. There also is considerable diversity in the responses.

C3. What experience has been the most surprising, and Why?

See *Appendix A* for a complete listing of all responses to this question.

There were 200 surprising experiences documented, most of them favourable, but a few were not so favorable. A sampling of the surprises includes:

- Finding a great yard sale at a Museum, bought items that remind me of the great trip and area.
- Finding fewer people than expected for this time of the year - which gives a greater sense of communion with nature.
- Finding otter dams in middle of the trail - so accessible.
- Fort Stanwix - very well done, historic interpreters.
- Found a beautiful teapot in Old Forge.
- Friendly people.
- That so many shops and activities are closed this early in the season (9/25/08).
- The fall foliage is actually spectacular.
- The number of loons I saw was far greater than ever before.
- The outstanding displays and thorough explanations on the signs.
- The scenery prettier than we thought, cleanliness of area.
- The shopping. It was fun and the prices were reasonable.
- The train ride.
- The variety of geography.
- Watching a horse pull the boat on the Erie Canal.

C4. What experience has been the most disappointing, and Why?

See *Appendix A* for a complete listing of all responses to this question.

There were about 120 disappointments documented, some very specific to a particular attraction or establishment, others very general such as “the prices” or “the food”, with some beyond anyone’s control, such as “the weather” or the “rain.”

C5. What two or three things could the Adirondack North Country region offer or do differently that would improve visitors’ understanding and enjoyment of the region’s communities, activities, and events?

See *Appendix A* for a complete listing of all responses to this question.

There were about 175 suggestions documented. There were many suggestions for more advertising, better road signs, better maps, etc., all suggestions that the Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways Program is intended to address. Similarly, there were requests for more roadside markers, more historic markers, and better websites. In some comments there was an expectation expressed that the area should be more like a National Park, with more signage, rangers, and large visitor information centers. That is a continuous public education and marketing challenge to make a distinction between what the Adirondack Park is all about, as compared to and what people generally expect when they visit other State and National Parks.

C6. Did you or your family make any purchases that you are especially excited about or pleased with?

See *Appendix A* for a complete listing of all responses to this question.

There were about 100 items mentioned by about 70 respondents, or just under one-quarter (23%) of all respondents. The items run the gamut of local crafts and supplies, including books, furniture, candles, clothing, quilts, t-shirts, outdoor gear, jewelry, and food. Several large items were mentioned such as kayaks, bikes, canoes, gun cabinets, and chain saw carvings. A few other examples include:

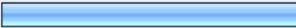
- Postcards, we collect them because our pictures don't show everything.
- Maple syrup bought directly from the maker; several antiques excited to have.
- We just rented a canoe, the rate was reasonable.
- Not this trip, but on the last we got a hand-made wooden bed.
- Olympic Passport program and local crafts.
- I always find some wonderful buys at the Cabin Fever store in Star Lake.
- Four hand-knit hats, including one from a soldier made of Afghanistan yarn.
Ceramic piece from Blue Mountain Art Center. **NOTHING MADE IN CHINA!**
- Hand-turned bowls by Bruno Graziano bought directly from him at his home.
- Bike carrier for car, pleased.
- Blackberry pie at Noon Mark dinner.
- Books about the history of the area.
- A canoe and some items to display at home.
- We shopped at a Church thrift store and loved it.

This next section asks about your familiarity with Scenic Byways.

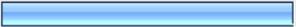
D1. Have you ever heard of the Federal Scenic Byways Program?

21. Have you ever heard of the Federal Scenic Byways Program?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
YES 	31.3%	98
NO 	68.7%	215
<i>answered question</i>		313
<i>skipped question</i>		15

D2. In your travels anywhere in the U.S., have you driven on a Scenic Byway that you were aware of?

22. In your travels anywhere in the U.S., have you driven on a Scenic Byway, that you were aware of?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
YES 	50.0%	155
NO 	50.0%	155
<i>answered question</i>		310
<i>skipped question</i>		18

D3. Do you look for opportunities to travel along Scenic Byways?

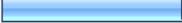
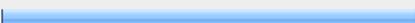
23. Do you look for opportunities to travel along Scenic Byways?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
YES 	51.0%	157
NO 	49.0%	151
<i>answered question</i>		308
<i>skipped question</i>		20

D4. Have you ever heard of the Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways?

24. Had you heard or seen information about the Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways, prior to your visit?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
YES 	38.1%	117
NO 	61.9%	190
<i>answered question</i>		307
<i>skipped question</i>		21

Over two-thirds (68.7%) were not familiar with the Federal Scenic Byways Program. A similarly high percentage (61.9%) had not heard of the Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways. One-half (50%) had driven on Scenic Byways or other scenic routes, and about one-half of the respondents (51%) look for such opportunities. The interest in scenic routes combined with the lack of familiarity with the Scenic Byways program signals a promotional opportunity. The findings send a strong message on the need for additional promotional activities for the Scenic Byways, including websites, maps, and interpretive signage. Both the travelling public and the region's business owners would benefit from those additional promotional efforts.

D5. Are you familiar with any of the specific Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways, such as the Central Adirondack Trial or the Olympic Byway?

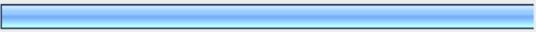
25. Are you familiar with any of the specific Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways, such as the Central Adirondack Trial or the Olympic Byway?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
YES 	30.1%	94
NO (you can SKIP the next question) 	69.9%	218
<i>answered question</i>		312
<i>skipped question</i>		16

D6. Check off any of the following Scenic Byways you are familiar with:

Check off any of the following Byways you are familiar with:		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Adirondack Trail	60.6%	97
Seaway Trail	48.1%	77
High Peaks Byway	31.3%	50
Central Adirondack Trail	28.8%	46
Olympic Byway	23.8%	38
Blue Ridge Road	20.6%	33
Southern Adirondack Trail	20.6%	33
Black River Trail	15.6%	25
Lakes to Locks Passage	15.6%	25
Roosevelt-Marcy Byway	11.3%	18
Military Byway	8.1%	13
Revolutionary Byway	7.5%	12
Dude Ranch Trail	3.8%	6
<i>answered question</i>		160
<i>skipped question</i>		168

Only about one-half of the survey participants responded to this question, those admitting some familiarity with one or more of the Byways. It is interesting to note the differing levels of familiarity; however, the findings are influenced to some extent by the locations where the questionnaires were predominately collected, as shown on Page 3 of this report.

D7. Before starting this trip, did you plan to drive along one of the Scenic Byways?

27. Before starting this trip, did you plan to drive along one of the Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
YES 	9.8%	30
NO (you can skip the next question) 	90.2%	275
<i>answered question</i>		305
<i>skipped question</i>		23

D7a. If YES, which ones:

If YES to the question above, please indicate which of the Scenic Byways you had planned to explore.		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Central Adirondack Trail	47.6%	10
Adirondack Trail	38.1%	8
Southern Adirondack Trail	19.0%	4
High Peaks Byway	14.3%	3
Seaway Trail	14.3%	3
Lakes to Locks Passage	9.5%	2
Olympic Byway	9.5%	2
Roosevelt-Marcy Byway	9.5%	2
Blue Ridge Road	4.8%	1
Dude Ranch Trail	4.8%	1
Military Byway	4.8%	1
Black River Trail	0.0%	0
Revolutionary Byway	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		21
<i>skipped question</i>		307

D8. If it were available, would you want to obtain information specific to one or more of the Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways before you traveled here?

29. If it were available, would you want to obtain information specific to one or more of the Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways before you traveled here?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
YES 	49.3%	145
NO 	50.7%	149
If YES, what would you really like to know:		118
<i>answered question</i>		294
<i>skipped question</i>		34

While only about 10% of respondents indicated they had planned to drive along one of the Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways before their visit, one-half (49.3%) now say they would like to obtain more information about one or more of the Scenic Byways.

D8a. What would you really like to know about the region’s Scenic Byways?

See [Appendix A](#) for a complete listing of all responses to this question.

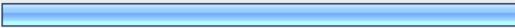
There were 106 items mentioned by the almost one-half (49.3%) of respondents who said they would like more information about the Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways. There is a wide variety of responses from the more general “what to do and see,” to requests for specific information about B&Bs, historic markers, where to hike, etc.

A word frequency analysis on all of the comments revealed there were eleven main “marketable” concepts that were mentioned by more than one respondent. Routes, maps, hiking trails, attractions, lodging, and history are among the main items visitors would like to have or to know more about. Following are some of the specific comments that illustrate the types of Scenic Byway information of most interest:

- A booklet on the whole area and what it has to offer, accommodations, maps etc.
- A specific map and some information about the features of each route. I would definitely take those routes if I knew more about them. Many of those named I believe I have travelled without knowing it.
- Accessibility, recommended stops along the way, what’s being done to protect the land and incorporate communities.
- Destination points, places of interest, good places to stop along the way to bike or hike.
- Good places to stop and take pictures.
- History, hiking, natural resources, places to stay.
- How the network of scenic byways fits into my tour around New York State.
- I would like to know what places of interest or history are located along the trail.
- The physical route and a few key things that characterize what you would see. Perhaps a sense of the services available, gas, food, etc.
- We have not seen any information, other than the signs along the road.
- Website with info about attractions, lodging, dining, seasonal considerations such as rainy season, temperature, insects etc.
- Well, I'd really like to know what I would be seeing along each of the Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways -- before embarking on a trip. Maybe this is unfeasible, but lots of photographs would be super.
- What attractions, opportunities, costs, lodging, dining, museums, recreation available.
- What each trail covers as far as hiking trails, best time of the year to go on the Scenic Byways. Where they start from and where they end.
- Would I be able to take any of them travelling through instead of the Interstate.
- What there is to see along the way and why are they considered scenic byways.

Word Count	"Want to Know" about the Byways
13	ROUTES
13	HIKING TRAILS
12	MAPS
8	SCENIC
6	PLACES
5	ATTRACTIONS
5	LODGING
4	HISTORY
4	ACTIVITIES
4	POINTS
2	TOWNS

D9. While here, have you learned anything new about the Scenic Byways?

30. While in the Adirondack region, did you learn anything new about the Scenic Byways?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
YES 	13.0%	38
NO 	87.0%	255
If YES, what have you learned and what was the source of that information:		34
	answered question	293
	skipped question	35

D9a. If YES, what have you learned and what was the source of that information?

See [Appendix A](#) for a complete listing of all responses to this question.

There were about 30 items mentioned, with the most common by far being that the questionnaire was the first time they had heard or learned anything about the Scenic Byways. There are a wide variety of ways for travelers to receive visitor information and travelers vary considerably in how they seek out information. The few comments below illustrate how maps, tour guides, and preconceptions all influence awareness and understanding of what the region has to offer.

- The information announced to us while on the train ride.
- Just this survey and I'm baffled because I read a lot of local publications.
- In 10 years things sure have changed, with the towns growing and the roads improving.
- I saw on a map that there are more of them than I had realized.
- That they actually are scenic, it's not entirely hype to reel in tourists.
- Rest areas with picture taking appeal (gorgeous scenery).
- Person leading boat tour.
- Reading maps.
- Shopkeeper in Saranac Lake.



Bicycle Touring between Long Lake and Newcomb, Rt. 28N on the Roosevelt-Marcy Byway

This section helps to identify themes and messages about the region and Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways that will appeal to visitors.

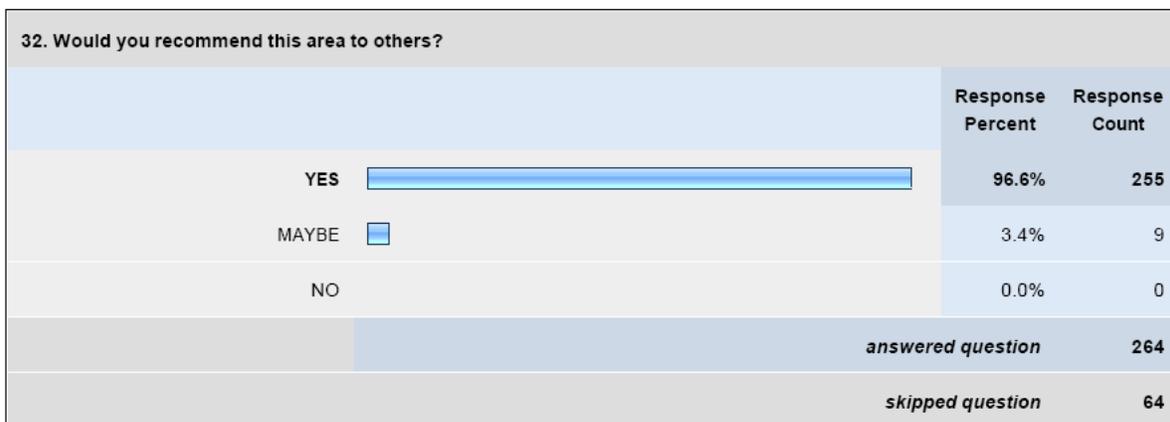
E1. For you, what two or three things make traveling through the area different or special from any other travel experiences?

See *Appendix A* for a complete listing of all responses to this question.

There were about 350 items mentioned, with the most common being: Scenery, Beautiful, Lakes, Mountains, and Views. A word frequency analysis revealed those items, along with six other experience concepts that were mentioned at least five times. Those include Fall Foliage, Wildlife, Roads, Nature, Towns, and Forests.

Word Count	What makes the area different or special from other travel experiences
69	SCENERY
31	BEAUTIFUL
25	LAKES
22	MOUNTAINS
19	VIEWS
19	FALL FOLIAGE
11	WILDLIFE
10	ROADS
9	NATURE
6	TOWNS
5	FORESTS

E2. Would you recommend this area to others?



E3. Based on your experiences driving along region’s roads and Scenic Byways what two or three words or phrases would you use to encourage a friend to come and tour the region?

See *Appendix A* for a complete listing of all responses to this question.

There were 395 words or phrases mentioned in all. There were 8 words mentioned 10 times or more among the 372 words used, as shown in the table. Beauty and Scenery led the list by far, followed by Views, Friendly, and Peaceful. Many respondents provided thoughtful suggestions on how they would encourage a friend to visit the area, such as the following:

- Accessible mountain lakes and streams to hike around.
- Be sure to bring binoculars and stop at pull offs, add time for that.
- Be sure to study the maps and plan your trip.
- Beautiful and slower pace.

Word Count	2 or 3 words to encourage a friend to tour the Adirondacks
89	BEAUTIFUL, BEAUTY
51	SCENERY, SCENIC
15	VIEWS
11	FRIENDLY
11	PEACEFUL
10	LAKES
10	NATURAL
10	RELAXING

- Drama, beauty, natural landscapes.
- Friendliness, old home feeling.
- Friendly and helpful local residents.
- Gorgeous and life renewing.
- Grandeur.
- It's better than I thought it would be.
- It's peaceful.
- Nice road, sense of freedom, great scenery.
- Quaint little towns with friendly people.
- See New York State to realize it is not just a city, it's a state.
- Spectacular scenery unlike any other in NE.
- There are alot of off the beaten track places to hike and kayak.
- You can learn alot of history.
- You haven't lived till you see this.

E4. Based on your experiences in the region’s communities, what 2 or 3 words or phrases would you use to encourage a friend to come and visit one or more communities?

See [Appendix A](#) for a complete listing of all responses to this question.

There were about 330 words or phrases mentioned, with the most common words being: Friendly and Beautiful. Scenery, Shopping, Relaxing, People and Quaint were among the words mentioned more than 10 times. Some of the interesting comments include the following:

- A fun place for kids.
- Awesome (the dictionary definition).
- Get outdoors -- learn about nature and get some wonderful exercise.
- Interesting combination of outdoors and town.
- Many beautiful interconnected waterways.
- Nice drive.
- Nature at its finest.
- Shop keepers are friendly and kind.
- The beauty & relaxing feeling you experience.
- The Wild Center and the Adirondack Museum - compliment each other beautifully.

Word Count	2 or 3 words to encourage a friend to visit Adirondack Communities
44	FRIENDLY
27	BEAUTIFUL, BEAUTY
15	SCENERY
15	SHOPPING, SHOPS
13	RELAXING
12	PEOPLE
12	QUAINT
10	NICE

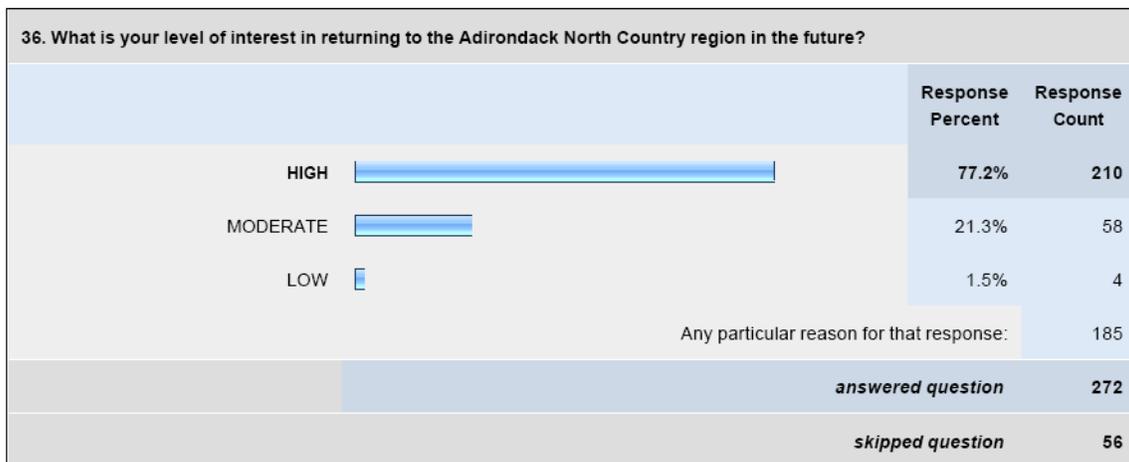
E5. What are the main reasons you would NOT recommend this area to others?

See *Appendix A* for a complete listing of all responses to this question.

Only 54 respondents (17%) offered a reason why they would not recommend the area, with the weather, insects, distance, and winter cold comprising the majority of those negative comments. Some would not recommend the area because they wanted to see less people. A few thought it was too expensive, some thought it was too touristy, while others wanted to see more tourist attractions. While many appreciated the quiet, quaint, and relaxing atmosphere of the region, a few thought there was not enough night life and that area is more appropriate for couples and families. Some specific comments include the following:

- I would recommend coming off season, I think it may be too crowded during the high season.
- Insects, distant from hospitals for someone in frail health or in case of emergency.
- It's pretty remote, quite "touristy," and not cheap.
- Lack of facilities, run-down, poverty (but don't get me wrong, I like that as it keeps the area from being over-run...
- Lack of nightlife - better for couples and families.
- Lack of restaurants between villages (very little on RT 3 from Tupper Lake to Watertown).
- Need more tourist attractions.
- Not much shopping available in evenings.
- Services tend to be few and far between. Don't go with an unreliable vehicle!
- Shops and stores closed early by 5pm, train wasn't operating on Monday. Monday should be like any day with something to do.
- There are few good views along the highway, other parts of the world have fewer trees or more openings in them.
- Some towns have overly commercial main streets, selling tacky t-shirts.

E6. What is your level of interest in returning to this area in the future?



Over three-quarters of the respondents (77.2%) expressed high interest in returning to the region in the future.

E7. Why do you indicate a high, moderate, or low interest?

See *Appendix A* for a complete listing of all responses to this question.

There were about 170 reasons given for responding how they did in E6. Most of the comments were positive, indicating a high likelihood of returning. A few mentioned they only visit or vacation in a new area once, then have no reason to return. Among the more detailed comments were the following:

- Area beauty, quaint shops, unique.
- Beautiful, quiet setting - not far from Ontario.
- Great place, great people, great outdoor activities, great views.
- I LOVE the Adirondacks. You haven't lived until you've laid on the dock and looked up at the Adirondack sky either at night or during the day.
- I love the easy access to natural beauty.
- Important part of getting away is to share time with friends and family.
- It is a beautiful area - so many places to visit.
- Just take a walk around there and it should be clear to you.
- Love having great scenery and natural areas so close to us.
- Scenery and small towns with shops.
- The beauty will never change.
- Too expensive, but gorgeous.
- Lodging areas are spread out, requiring lots of driving.
- Been there done that, like to visit new areas.



View from Owls Head near Keene, Rt. 73 on the High Peaks Byway

Just a few questions on planning this current trip...

F1. Before starting your trip, did any of the following provide useful information about the region and what to do? Check all that apply.

Before starting your trip, did any of the following provide useful information about the Adirondack North Country region and what to do on your visit? Check all that apply.		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Suggestions by friends or family	58.1%	143
Websites about the Adirondack region	44.3%	109
Articles (magazines, newspapers, etc.)	25.2%	62
Printed travel & tourism information from another source	24.4%	60
I LOVE NY travel & tourism information	24.0%	59
Advertisements (magazines, newspapers, etc.)	15.9%	39
TV program (cable, network, PBS)	9.3%	23
Blogs	1.2%	3
Podcasts	1.2%	3
Any other sources of good information (please specify)		49
<i>answered question</i>		246
<i>skipped question</i>		82

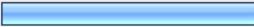
While “Friends & Family” and Websites were the most common source of travel information for these respondents, about 25% reported using a number of other sources, including newspaper and magazine articles, as well as the I Love NY promotional program. For example, earlier comments indicated that an article in a magazine triggered a visit or two to the Wild Center in Tupper Lake.

F2. Was there a particular source of information that was most useful to you, BEFORE you arrived in the area, and why?

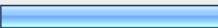
See *Appendix A* for a complete listing of all responses to this question.

Close to 150 sources of information were listed by the respondents, led mainly by the Internet (websites, web, computer, etc.). What is most interesting is the diversity of sources, from national magazines and TV, to local and regional newspapers and magazines. Very few sources were mentioned more than once. For example Triple A travel guides and websites were mentioned by a number of respondents, as was its Canadian counterpart, CAA. A wide diversity of specific websites were mentioned as well, including the websites of accommodations, attractions, communities, and others.

F3. Did you use the Internet to research the area before starting your trip?

39. Did you use the Internet to research the area before starting your trip?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
YES 	57.4%	156
NO (you can SKIP the next 2 questions) 	42.6%	116
<i>answered question</i>		272
<i>skipped question</i>		56

F3a. If YES, how would you rate the overall quality of the information about the area that you found on the Internet?

40. If you DID USE the Internet, how would you rate the overall quality of the online information you found about the Adirondack North Country region?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Very Good 	36.6%	59
Above Average 	28.6%	46
Average 	31.7%	51
Below Average 	2.5%	4
Very Poor 	0.6%	1
<i>answered question</i>		161
<i>skipped question</i>		167

Just over one-half of respondents (57.4%) used the Internet to research the area before starting their trip. Of those, about one-third (36.6%) rated that online information as very good and 28.6% gave it an above-average rating. One-third (33.8%) of the respondents to this item rated the area’s websites as “average” or below. Given that the majority of people are now using the Internet to research travel destinations, it is imperative that Adirondack North Country region has a number of high quality websites that appeal to the main interests of visitors, as illuminated in this report.

F3b. Was there a particular website or type of information that was especially useful to you in planning your visit, and WHY?

See *Appendix A* for a complete listing of all responses to this question.

Again, quite a diversity of websites were mentioned, with Google and a variety of the major attraction websites being the most common.

F4. What type of website information about the area would be most useful?

See *Appendix A* for a complete listing of all responses to this question.

There were 116 useful items of information mentioned, with some respondents requesting quite a bit of detailed information. “Comprehensive” maps of the area were near the top of the list, along with requests for information on all attractions, lodging, and dining opportunities. That breadth and depth of information would require a large travel guide, similar to the Alaska Milepost, to reference all visitor services of interest along each mile of the highway.

Specific requests by the survey participants include the following:

- A central place that told about all the activities in the area.
- A CURRENT detailed map of the area.
- Approximate costs, sites to see, physical requirements etc.
- Recreation opportunities, lodging, dining, and costs.
- Detailed maps showing the roadways and listing shopping, dining, events, lodging, camping.
- Easier access to the DEC information concerning wilderness areas.
- Hiking information. There are many different websites and sometimes it is difficult to locate good information. Trailhead GPS coordinates would be helpful too to make it easier to drive to them.
- Overview of the area, maps, accommodations, restaurants, and museums, especially hours and dates of operation and if seasonal.
- Photos and descriptions of attractions.
- Weather and bug info - black flies and mosquito info - best bug repellent.
- Where to eat, family oriented activities, churches.



Indian Lake Theatre, recently restored by a community not-for-profit group, Rt. 28 on the Adirondack & Central Adirondack Trails

This section asks about travel information received while in the area...

G1. While in the area, which of the following sources have provided useful information about the area or about what to do while here?

While you were in the area, which of the following sources provided useful information about the area or about what to do?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Brochures for attractions, activities, etc.	63.7%	163
Suggestions by friends or family	45.3%	116
Highway signs	31.3%	80
Employees at stores, lodgings	31.3%	80
Visitor Information Center staff	25.8%	66
Articles (magazines, newspapers, etc.)	22.3%	57
Websites	18.4%	47
Advertisements (magazines, newspapers, etc.)	15.2%	39
TV programs (network, cable, PBS)	6.3%	16
Any other useful sources of information:		16
<i>answered question</i>		256
<i>skipped question</i>		72

G2. Was there a particular source of information that was most useful to you, AFTER you arrived in the area, and why?

See [Appendix A](#) for a complete listing of all responses to this question.

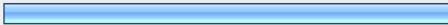
There were about 130 items, with brochures and visitor center staff the most common.

G3. If you have had difficulty finding the information you need about a particular activity, attraction, or event, please identify the problem:

See [Appendix A](#) for a complete listing of all responses to this question.

There were only 22 problems listed and few of those were very specific. Most common was the issue of unclear directions, with a number of comments in that regard related to hiking trail descriptions. One respondent expressed the following frustration with their search for regional travel information: “The internet is a scattered and fragmented source of information.” That is a problem that the ANCA Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways website project is designed to address.

G4. Are you using the Internet to find information while in the area?

46. Did you use the Internet to find information while you WERE IN the area?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
YES 	15.3%	40
NO (you can skip the next question) 	84.7%	222
<i>answered question</i>		262
<i>skipped question</i>		66

After arriving in the area, most respondents (84.7%) did not use the Internet to find information about the area. Reasons for that could include not having a computer on the trip, not finding Internet access, or not using the Internet at all. As reported above in item F3, just over one-half (57%) of respondents used the Internet to find travel information prior to their trip. Once in the area, only about one-sixth (15%) of all respondents used the Internet to find travel information.

We anticipate that the growing trend in use of the Internet while on vacation will continue, including access by personal computer as well as by public computers at libraries, cafes, and motels. Use of the Internet by cell phone is also a growing trend. Improved service and wider access in terms of broadband, wireless, and cell phone service throughout the rural Adirondack North Country region will facilitate and improve use of online travel information by visitors while they are travelling along the Scenic Byways.

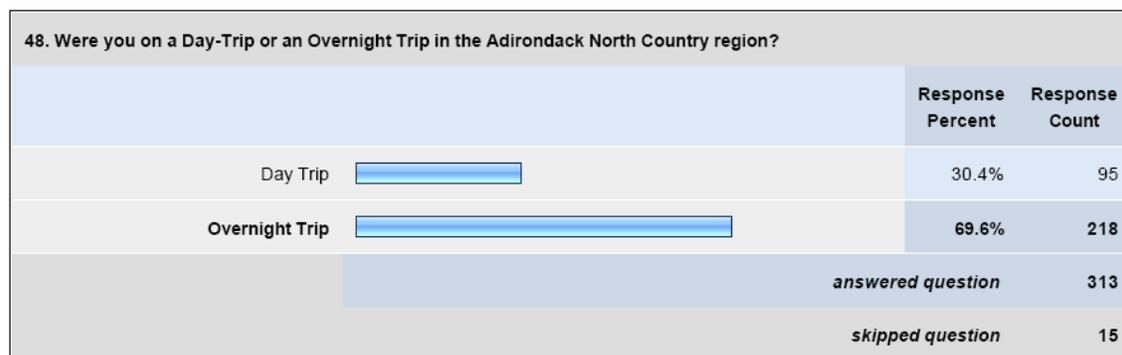
G4a. Are there any websites you have found that have been especially useful or especially disappointing, and WHY?

See Appendix A for a complete listing of all responses to this question.

Only seven items were listed and none were very specific.

This final section asks just a few background questions...

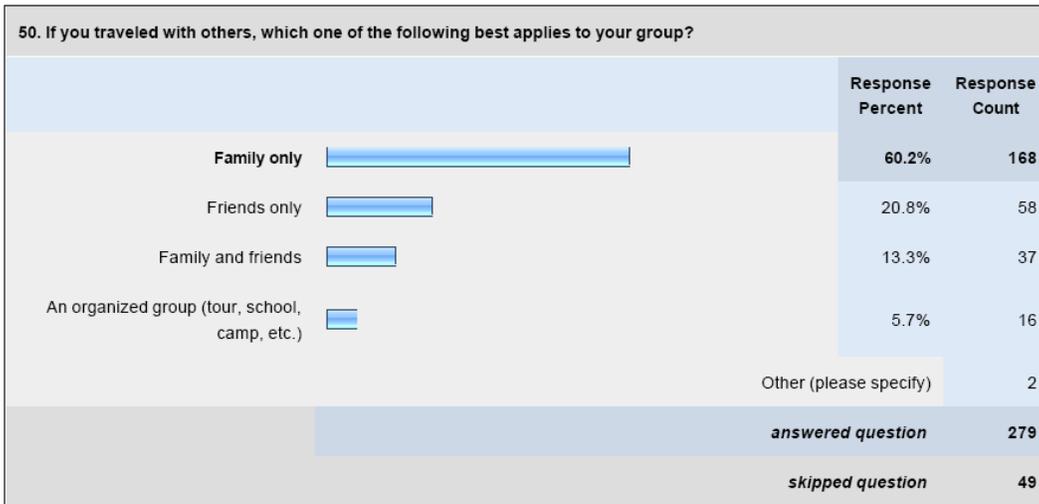
Are you on a Day-Trip or an Overnight Trip during this visit?



Including yourself, how many people are in your immediate travel party?



If with others, which one of the following best applies to your group?

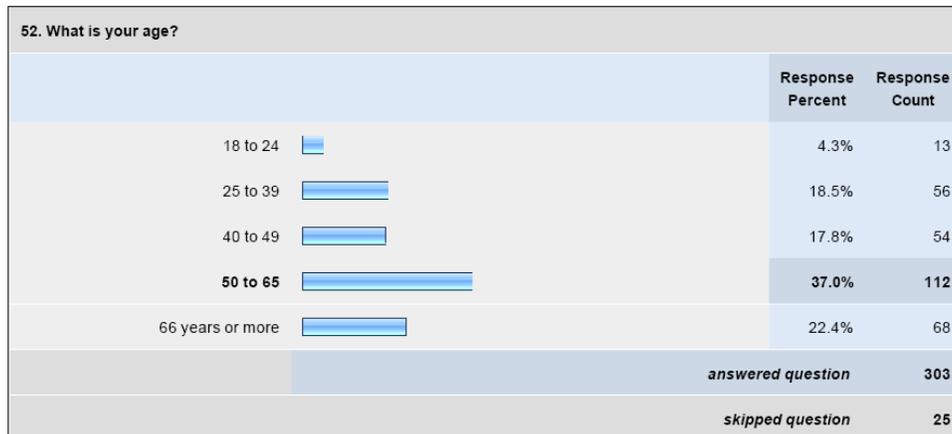


If with others, are children travelling with you? (check all age groups that apply)



The survey work took place from late August to mid-October, which explains why only about one-quarter (24.4%) of respondents were travelling with children.

What is your age? (check appropriate category)



One objective of this research was to try and target the “baby boom” generation who are in or nearing retirement. Well over one-half of respondents (59.4%) were in that age group.

What is the highest level of school you have attended?

53. What is the highest level of school you have attended?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
High school	20.3%	60
College	44.9%	133
Grad School or Higher	34.8%	103
<i>answered question</i>		296
<i>skipped question</i>		32

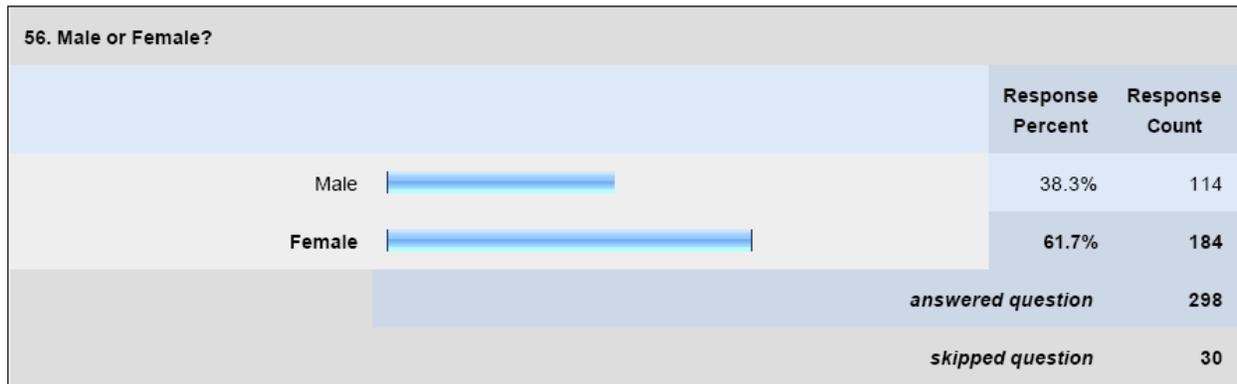
Another objective of the survey research was to try and target college-educated travelers, and that group did comprise 80% of respondents.

What is your total annual household income?

54. What is your total annual household income?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than \$50,000	30.9%	79
\$50,000 to \$150,000	57.8%	148
More than \$150,000	11.3%	29
<i>answered question</i>		256
<i>skipped question</i>		72

The survey research effort also attempted to target respondents with household incomes of \$50,000 or more, which describes 70% of the respondents.

Gender:



State or Province of Residence:

State or Province	Total
NY	184
PA	16
Ontario	11
CT	7
FL	7
NJ	6
Quebec	5
VT	5

State or Province	Total
MA	4
MI	4
OH	4
AZ	3
CA	3
MD	3
TX	3
VA	3

State or Province	Total
WI	3
AL	2
CO	2
IL	2
IN	2
NH	2
WA	2
Australia	1

State or Province	Total
Ecuador	1
England	1
GA	1
IA	1
ID	1
MS	1
NM	1
Total:	291

While the majority of respondents reside in New York, a total of 26 states, two provinces, and three countries were represented by the respondents.



Kayak on the Hudson River near Thurman, not far from Rt. 28 on the Central Adirondack Trail Scenic Byway