

# ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLY BEHAVIORS AT NATIONAL PARKS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

Sarah Herrick



## BACKGROUND

- Little bit about me and why I chose to do this as my research project.
- Many people say they are environmentally conscious, but do not adopt environment to their daily actions (Ellsmoor, 2019).
- Over 300 million people visit the National Parks each year, generating millions of tons of trash.
- During this project I kept the quote in mind, 'take only pictures, leave only footprints'



## SCHOLARLY QUESTION

- How do we promote a pro-environment behavior in college students who have or plan to visit National Parks?
- According to The Theory of Planned Behavior...(Ajzen, 1985).
- People find behaviors, like recycling, to be inconvenient, time-consuming, and even uncomfortable (Venhoeven, L.A. 2013).



## WHAT MAYBE THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO HELP SOMEONE BECOME PRO-ENVIRONMENT?

- Previous research on environmental behaviors suggest multiple ways to promote pro-environment behaviors.
- Examples include reward system, penalty system, and social marketing.
- In tourism, the college student has received little attention though the increase of travel among this age.



### Scenario question

Imagine it is your last week of summer before your back on the grind of college. You and a handful of your friends decide it would be the perfect time to take off on an adventure. Not going to the city or beach, but an adventure of camping and hiking. You all decide the destination: Redwood National Park in California. A place filled with natural wonders, lots of wildlife, camping, and most importantly – fresh, clean air from that trees. The group decides tent camping is the best option for you. When you arrive to the camp, the front desk gives you an option on how to keep their park at the most pristine cleanliness.

- 1) The front desk tells you about their clean park initiative. When camping with a group, at the end of your stay, you can bring as many bottles and cans back up to the front desk. After this, each person will receive a sticker to show proof they are a part of the clean park initiative. Someone in your group asks the question, ‘what happens if we don’t?’ The clerk then replies with, ‘this is up to you, it is what you feel internally. Whether you want our trees to become sick and die from your trash or stay healthy and clean is your decision. I hope you decide to be a part of our program to keep our national parks clean for future generations to experience what you will during your stay’. Would you join the initiative in the Redwood clean park by bringing back the bottles?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 2) Imagine the front desk clerk told you the clean park initiative was required to stay at this camping site. Once you have arrived, you must fill out how many plastic bottles or aluminum cans your group has and need to bring back all of those at the end of the stay. If not, you are required to pay \$.25 per item you don’t bring back to the office. Would you like to participate in this program to stay at this campsite?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 3) The front desk clerk informs your group about the initiative to keep their parks clean. She informs you that every bottle and can you bring back to be recycled at the end of your stay, a \$.10 donation will be sent to the natural resource conservation agency. Would you join this initiative during your stay?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 4) You have been given three different scenarios that could possibly be used at the National Parks. Out of the three, which one would you be most willing to join? Why?

## METHODOLOGY

- The scenario idea.
- A set of four questions were sent out to students enrolled at BGSU via email or university Facebook pages.
- Three questions focused on different ways to promotes recycling using the reward system, penalty system, and social marketing.
- One additional open-ended question asked gave the respondents a chance to say which they thought was most effective and why.



## RESULTS

A total of 32 answers were received by respondents.

93.8% said they would participate in the reward system.

96.8% said they would participate in the social marketing.

71.9% said they would participate in the penalty system.



## RESULTS CONTINUED...

Which would be most effective?

75.0% of respondents said social marketing would be most effective.

15.6% said the reward system would be most effective.

9.4% of respondents said the penalty system would be most effective.



## OPEN-ENDED QUESTION

- The open-ended question about their choice provided more details why they social marketing was found too be the most effective in respondents willingness to participate in the recycling program.



## REASONS WHY RESPONDENT'S CHOSE SCENARIO ONE

### Reward system

The front desk tells you about their clean park initiative. When camping with a group, at the end of your stay, you can bring as many bottles and cans back up to the front desk. After this, each person will receive a sticker to show proof they are a part of the clean park initiative. Someone in your group asks the question, 'what happens if we don't?' The clerk then replies with, 'this is up to you, it is what you feel internally. Whether you want our trees to become sick and die from your trash or stay healthy and clean is your decision. I hope you decide to be a part of our program to keep our national parks clean for future generations to experience what you will during your stay'. Would you join the initiative in the Redwood clean park by bringing back the bottles?



'we, as a people, need the environment to survive. If the we can do our part to help the environment, then we can help the environment thrive.'



'because it is optional even though I would clean up my trash no matter what'



'I like the sincerity of the message and option to bring the cans back. I think the sticker also helps to honor the cause'



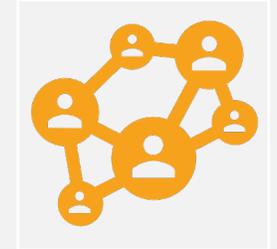
## REASONS WHY RESPONDENT'S CHOSE SCENARIO TWO

### Penalty system

Imagine the front desk clerk told you the clean park initiative was required to stay at this camping site. Once you have arrived, you must fill out how many plastic bottles or aluminum cans your group has and need to bring back all of those at the end of the stay. If not, you are required to pay \$.25 per item you don't bring back to the office. Would you like to participate in this program to stay at this campsite?



'I would be most willing to do the second option where I would get charged .25 cents because that to me is the only way that will more motivate me to bring back bottles to the front desk because I wouldn't want to pay the money. Also, I don't really recycle'



'I would be willing to join 2. I feel like that is a good way to get people to care about the environment because no one is going to want to pay for anything they left behind. They'd rather collect all the plastic and aluminum before going back instead than get charged for it.'



## REASONS WHY RESPONDENT'S CHOSE SCENARIO THREE

Social marketing

The front desk clerk informs your group about the initiative to keep their parks clean. She informs you that every bottle and can you bring back to be recycled at the end of your stay, a \$.10 donation will be sent to the natural resource conservation agency. Would you join this initiative during your stay?

- 'I think this because of the fact that there is a donation involving money. Anytime money is involved it always peaks a person's interest. It would also be interesting to see how much you would get to donate at the end of it all'
- 'I believe this is doing the best because it is collecting the bottles & cans to be recycled and also putting money back into the national resource conservation agency!'
- 'People are going to be allowed to bring their plastics/aluminum with no judgement. Visitors would just drop off the stuff they used, and the park would handle it from there. There is nothing further that the camp visitor must do, and the action of just dropping a bag of plastic bottles helps EVERYONE because of the donation.'



## CONCLUSION

- Most respondents were found to intend to adopt environment friendly behavior (i.e., recycling).
- If people feel as though they are betting something and helping, like donating recycles for a donation for a foundation, they are more likely to do so.
- On a larger picture...
- There are few studies that have been done like this among college students.



THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!

Questions?



## REFERENCES

- Ajzen, I. (1985). From intentions to actions: A theory of planned behavior. In J. K. J. Beckman (Ed.), *Action-control: From cognition to behavior* (pp. 11-39). Heidelberg, Germany: Springer.
- Ellsmoor, J. (2019). 77% Of People Want To Learn How To Live More Sustainably. *Forbes*. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jamesellsmoor/2019/07/23/77-of-people-want-to-learn-how-to-live-more-sustainably/#2c68d3832b01>
- Venhoeven, L.A., Bolderijk, J.W., & Steg, L. (2013). Explaining the paradox: how pro-environmental behaviour can both thwart and foster well-being. *Sustainability*, 5(4), 1372-1386.

