ANALYSIS TO ASSIST WITH PRICING THE NEW RECREATION PASS

Final Report on Task # 4: Focus Groups

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ANALYSIS TO ASSIST WITH PRICING THE NEW RECREATION PASS

Task # 4: Focus Groups

Overview

During September, 2005, researchers from the University of Wyoming (UW) completed six focus groups in diverse locations around the country, as one task in a wide-ranging study to assist federal agencies in pricing the anticipated new federal recreation pass for access to federal lands (herein, the New Recreation Pass, or NRP). Although the call for proposals had specified only four focus groups, UW elected to conduct six focus groups within the budget, to cover more completely the regions of the country. These six had been preceded by one informal, pre-test group discussion held in Laramie, Wyoming in early August to explore possible topics and approaches for the other meetings. In chronological order of the meeting dates, the six focus group venues were Peabody, Massachusetts (September 10); Richmond, Virginia (September 11); Portland, Oregon (September 19); Fresno, California (September 20); Madison, Wisconsin (September 27); and Salt Lake City, Utah (September 28).

The locations for the focus groups were selected in consultation with representatives of federal agencies during an initial project meeting held in Washington, D.C., on August 8-9, 2005. Another consultation between the UW research team and agency representatives took place in D.C. on September 13, between the second and third focus groups. During subsequent meetings on February 24, 2006 (in Ft. Collins, CO) and June 16 (in D.C.), agency representatives gave feedback on the focus group findings in the context of the other results of the full study.

The cities chosen for the focus groups span a range of sizes, and also include variation in the types and extent of nearby state and federal lands available for recreation. The six focus group locations include the state with the largest sales of the current National Parks Pass (CA), two western states (CA, OR) and one intermountain state (UT) that are all in close proximity to large areas of national forest, national parks, and other federal lands and waters, plus one midwestern state (WI) and two eastern states (MA, VA). In each of the states visited for a focus group, a member of the UW research team also contacted state park officials to gather comparative information about their experiences with passes and pass pricing, for use in the benchmarking task of the larger study.

Participants in the focus groups were recruited through advertisements in local newspapers near the venues, and were selected based on a short set of “screener questions” (Appendix A) asked of those who responded to the ad by phoning the UW toll-free number. Each of the focus groups included general discussion of outdoor recreation and federal lands, as well as more specific discussion about the planned NRP and its pricing. All focus groups were provided with information about current passes for recreation on federal lands (Appendix B), and about attributes of the NRP (Appendix C). In the first two groups, the information sheets were distributed early in the meeting, and the ensuing discussion of pricing was entirely open-ended. For the third and fourth focus groups, the pricing discussion was more structured, and was introduced with a very brief paper-and-pencil questionnaire (Appendix D) that preceded distribution of the information sheets. In the last two focus groups, feedback was first obtained on a four-page questionnaire (Appendix E), followed by the information sheets and the general

discussion. This questionnaire formed the basis of the telephone interviewing script used in the nationwide survey conducted by UW early in 2006.

In preparing for the focus groups, we specified three explicit goals for information to be solicited from the group participants. First, we wanted to obtain various perspectives on the problem of pricing the NRP for entrance into fee areas of the national parks, forests, and other federal lands. Second, we wanted to see if we were overlooking key issues to be addressed in the survey of pricing for the NRP. Finally, we hoped to use the focus groups as venues for pre-testing the suitability of specific questions for the telephone survey instrument. The focus groups gave us all this information and more. Below, we summarize the results of the information gathered from the focus groups. This summary is followed by detailed transcripts of all of the focus group sessions.

Focus Group Emergent Topics

The focus group participants, in general, were strong advocates for federal lands and waters and the agencies that oversee them. This was to be expected given the manner of solicitation for focus group members, which intentional allowed some self-selection for individuals keen to discuss recreation on federal lands.

Focus group members pointed to specific reasons why they supported federal recreational lands and the agencies that administer them. Most important was the idea that only the federal government could do a credible job in managing these lands. Some participants expressed the belief that state governments were too susceptible to development pressures, and that the federal government was better suited to deal with such pressures. Many of the focus group participants commented that the federal recreational lands were a great asset and that the cost to enter these lands was a bargain for the benefits provided.

A number of recurrent themes emerged from the focus group discussions, as follows.

1. The lands as part of the American national identity. Many participants identified feelings that correspond to Wallace Stegner's concept, "the geography of hope" (Stegner, 1960). Said one, "I'm more familiar with the eastern portion of the US. And as I'm approaching retirement age, I really hope to get out—all around out west and visit a lot of national parks" (see transcripts below, p. 182). This participant was doing what many of us do – looking forward to recreational travel in retirement. What he hopes to see during his retirement travels is America the way he has imagined it all his life.

The National Parks Organic Act of 1916 not only created the National Park Service, but also gave statutory expression to sentiments like that. It stated that the service should pursue "such means and measures as conform to the fundamental purpose to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and … provide for the enjoyment for the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." The participants in the focus groups may not have been aware of the 1872 Yellowstone Act, or the Organic Act, or any of the other federal lands acts, but they expressed the sentiment, in various ways, that 'these lands are our lands.'

For many of the focus group participants, to be an American is to know the land, and to feel a connection with this land. Federal recreational land, especially the national trails and national parks, seemed to help define a part of being an American. One participant noted, "Well, what's really nice is you can do Valley Forge. That's just very special – a part of our history and you can do it again. You can either take the bus trip, or they actually have a little cassette you can buy, and you just put it in your car, and just drive through, and it will 'stop here at number 5,' 'stop here at,' you know, at number two. And it will give you this whole history. So, it's kind of a neat thing to do that, and you can go to Independence Hall, doing that whole thing down there with those ships and everything. It's a really nice thing" (p. 59).

2. Double taxation. How we pay for access to these lands, however, was a point of debate among the focus group members. Opinions were bound up with the services provided, or seen as lacking, as the case may be. Focus group members were guided to discuss the existing National Parks Pass (NPP), Golden Eagle Passport, Golden Access Passport, etc. During the discussion of the different types of passes, a general feeling emerged that there was a need to distinguish more carefully between entrance fees and user fees (such as camping, parking, boat ramps, etc.). For example, several of the focus group members complained that the NPP did not cover user fees at campground sites. Said one focus group member, "We are being nickeled and dimed" (p. 71).

Some focus group members saw the different fees as a form of double taxation. "Well, many of the parks previously didn't charge any fees. And it seems like within the last five or six years they were able to initiate fees and it's just like passing a tax. It's easy to raise a tax once you get it passed. So it's easy to up the entrance fee" (p. 15). Three types of 'taxes' were discussed by focus group members.

a. Entrance into federal recreational lands, many argued, should be covered by *federal income taxes* already paid, unless there is development to warrant an entrance fee. As one participant stated, "I disagree about paying for access to everything … I mean, there should be certain things that you pay taxes for and you should be able to do" (p. 70). On the other hand, some saw site-specific surcharges, in addition to either taxes or passes, as an appropriate means to reduce crowding. Yosemite was singled out as particularly difficult to get into because of the crowding.

Focus group members generally believed that federal income taxes spent on federal recreational lands were a bargain. The use of tax money to help support federal recreational land was seen as appropriate for development of capital assets on federal lands and also for the salaries of personnel. Additionally, focus group participants saw the use of tax money for federal recreational land as a means to secure those lands for the future. "I don't mind paying for that privilege, knowing that the tax money made sure that the land was still going to be there" (p. 70).

b. Many focus group members stated that *entrance fees* should be used to cover development at a particular site for improvements such as campsites, showers, campgrounds, nature trials, and hand-cleaner dispensers in the toilets. Other discussants noted much confusion with the fee system, indeed with any system of fees or passes, including those in place for state parks. One participant said, "I think there should be some standardization (with entrance fees), because most of the parks themselves don't

even know how to, you know, what's involved with these. They are just so complicated. You get so many different agencies involved that are charging fees and they're not sure what these cards actually cover. So it's almost up to the cardholder go in and say 'No, I'm entitled to a discount.'....You have to explain to them why they have to honor the pass" (p. 22).

c. *User fees* were the third type of tax observed by several focus group members. In broad terms, focus group members were divided between those who believed that separate user fees put the cost of maintenance where it should be, on those who used the amenities, and those who wanted an entrance fee that also covered amenities on federal lands (such as beach access, boat ramps, or campsites). One focus group member stated, "I get outraged" by having to pay such fees (p. 122).

A backcountry camper put the problem this way. "In terms of camping, it makes sense to me that if you're staying in an established campground with amenities there, that you would pay an overnight fee, because several people would be vying for those sites, and it takes work to manage them. But I'm a backpacker, so as a backpacker, for example, where no one is maintaining backcountry sites, I think if I paid an entrance fee to get into a national park, that I should be able to camp without paying any additional fees per night of camping" (pp. 121-122).

User fees, however, were sometimes seen as the cost of keeping development interests out. There were a number of focus group members who voiced an opinion similar to a participant from Portland. "I'm worried that the Forest Service is going to be forced to cut more timber to do the improvements, and I'm willing to pay a forest fee if I know that money is going to pay for the trail, and we could see that on Mount Hood…I don't mind thirty bucks a year for a forest pass, if I know the money is going to make repairs" (p. 123).

3. Trust in use of pass fees. Several focus group members were concerned that money paid to purchase a pass might not stay with the area where the pass was purchased. "I already wrote that my distrust is so high that I thought, you know, that's great. You know? They'll say…`If you could be guaranteed that ninety-nine percent of the price would be used…' And then we all say, `Yes!' in that case, because you know that people do care. You've had focus groups. Then they'll make the higher price. But we don't know, you know? There's no guarantee that it really will be" (p. 213). On the other hand, a Virginia participant stated, "I don't mind a fifty dollar pass, because I know what the money goes for, and I don't mind buying at either Shenandoah or Petersburg, which are probably the two local ones that I go to most frequently, and you know, the money stays, for the most part, at that park" (p. 69).

A discussion in the Salt Lake City focus group further illustrated the concern about where the money goes: "… who's going to guarantee that it (pass revenue) makes it out here? This (entrance fee) stays and gets put into maintaining Zion, maintaining Lake Powell … Arches" (pp. 235-236).

4. Public lands and private business. Another issue to emerge in the focus groups was a skepticism or wariness about the relationship between federal land management and private business interests. While this is in some sense a political issue rather than a fiscal management issue, focus group participants pointed to the underwriting of business practices on federal lands. "…if you happen to find a gold mine and you have to deal with filing your claim the right way, you can go ahead and mine the gold, do whatever you want

to do, and the government don't hardly get anything for it. I'm sorry. I don't agree with that. Again, I don't care if you mine the gold if you take care of it (the land). If you need to pay a reasonable price, whether it goes back into parks, whether it goes back into taking care of public lands, and I think that's fair" (p. 96).

It was also argued that the managers of National Forests oversee business interests in the forests. That is, National Forests, more than the National Parks, were seen as serving the interests of business rather than the interests of visitors. Therefore, money from a joint pass that goes to the National Forests was viewed by some participants as money that would not be spent on development of trails and campgrounds, but on repair of timber roads.

Another participant tied private business practices to federal lands passes more tightly. "..it's hard for me to understand why we, as taxpayers, have to purchase a separate pass for federal lands. When our tax dollars should be dedicated to supporting those lands, and I already know that the government is also benefiting from timber sales, and, in fact, subsidizing timber removal by building roads, that kind of thing" (p. 122).

A similar discussion in several focus groups concerned the private concessionaires and best practices for federal land management. "The problem is when a concessionaire comes in, they take all the profitable areas … they don't want the ones that have little use. That's going to actually cost them money to operate. Where, which I travel a lot and to me if they're going to be giving them the profitable ones, they should also give them the non-profitable ones to balance them off" (p. 17).

5. Advertising. A fifth major issue to emerge in the focus group discussions was the lack of public knowledge about the current passes. Focus group participants were in strong agreement that knowledge of the National Parks Pass or the Golden Eagle Passport was not widespread. Said a participant in Portland, "I think this is the most unadvertised best buy in the United States, and they're not doing the job correct" (p. 125). Given the manner in which participants for the focus groups were selected, we would expect to have a group of volunteers who were more knowledgeable than the average person regarding annual passes for federal recreational lands. Nevertheless, even among the focus group members there was discussion that suggested they were not much aware of the annual passes, the costs of such passes, or the savings benefit from such a pass.

Additionally, these individuals made several suggestions regarding the advertising and sale of the annual pass. For example, it was suggested that the Park Service advertise the annual pass as an appropriate Christmas or holiday gift, and sell the pass similar to the marketing of prepaid credit cards. Giving people a sticker for their car when they purchase a pass was also suggested as a way to advertise subtly for the federal lands pass. Advertising might need to be different for different areas of the country, since the types of federal lands available for recreation differed from east to west. Participants also believed that more information in more locations needs to be available on the different types of passes, such as the Golden Access and the Golden Age.

Several participants believed that the federal lands pass should be advertised where it has not previously been advertised. One father suggested that his daughters got what they wanted, so if they saw the federal lands pass advertised on Saturday morning television, he would likely be cajoled into visits to federal recreational lands, and therefore be more likely to purchase a pass. Another person suggested that a list of benefits to social

security recipients include information about the Golden Age passport. Yet another participant suggested that there be a newsletter sent out to all those individuals who purchased an annual pass, both as a reminder to purchase a pass again, and as part of the benefits of the pass.

6. Accessibility of purchase. Accessibility of purchase for the annual pass was a sixth theme in the focus groups. No one in any of the focus groups knew that the cost of an entrance fee could be applied to an annual National Parks Pass upon leaving the park. There was a general opinion that this was a good policy, but little known and wholly unadvertised. Similarly, there was agreement that making the purchase of the pass easier through on-line capability, AAA, libraries, AARP, Chamber of Commerce offices, post offices, and hunting license locations would improve the demand for the pass. But placing the pass for sale through a commercial outlet like TicketMaster was viewed as creating an income stream rather than providing a service.

Many people suggested that the pass should be available in a two-year package, with a reduced per year cost. If that were not available, then there could be some incentive for present pass holders to renew, such as "renew now and get an extra three months for free" (p. 157). Similarly, there were suggestions that payment for the pass be made by monthly payroll deductions, much as some people do for savings bonds.

Several focus group participants suggested that visitors should be permitted to 'buy up' to the pass as they go from one federal recreational area to another. This would remove some incentive to purchase the pass, but it would also provide an incentive to keep going to the parks and national forests, etc. As each family or person traveled from one federal recreation area to another, an electronic memory could be kept on how much the individual had spent on entrance fees. When the total reached a set number, the family had then purchased an annual pass. It was suggested that the payment of entrance fees for national forests would likely go up, since that money would count toward the annual pass which includes the more popular national parks pass.

7. Additional pass benefits. A theme somewhat less clearly articulated than those above concerned the types of benefits which accrue to pass holders that are not automatic with a specific weekly or daily entrance fee. For example, some focus group members said that annual pass holders should receive camping and parking free with their annual pass. It was suggested that this would increase demand, while perhaps not reducing revenue to the same extent; thus the federal recreational lands might receive a net increase in funds. Other focus group members suggested that the pass be linked to discounts for camping, or discounts on books at visitor or information centers. Another suggestion was that coupons for discounted activities could come with the purchase of an annual pass.

One participant suggested, with the agreement of other group members, that there could be a special entrance line for the annual pass holders which would facilitate entrance at some of the more congested parks such as Yosemite, with an Easy Pass or Fast Pass lane. (Indeed, officials interviewed for the benchmarking part of the study, at Florida's state parks headquarters, cited precisely this benefit as one of the main selling points of Florida's annual pass to state park sites.) Such a pass could be in the form of a windshield sticker that would be read electronically, at least at the federal recreational sites with the heaviest visitor traffic.

Closely linked to pass benefits was the manner in which pass benefits were monitored. Quite a few focus group members were distraught that some concessionaires would not honor pass benefits. Confusion exists as to what land is federal (the private campground within a park, on the edge of a park, etc.); which federal lands fall under which passes; and which passes come with what set of benefits. Not all focus group participants could recall which federal lands they visited and which pass they tried to use. However, the amount of distress that was evident during these discussions suggests that advertising the pass needs to include clear information about it benefits, or confusion over benefits can become a source of distrust and dislike.

8. East coast vs. west coast. There was also discussion in four of the six focus groups regarding the distribution of federal recreational lands and the appropriate fees for access to those lands. East coast participants viewed the concentration of federal recreational land in the west as a reason to diminish the cost of a pass to easterners, or raise the cost of the pass to westerners. Said one participant, "I don't think it (the price) should be the same. ... Because they do have more on the west coast and so they should be more expensive" (p. 36). And from a Virginia participant, "Can we have a focus group on getting more parks here?" (p. 91).

On the other hand, focus group participants in the west viewed the widely separated roads and the sometimes poor quality of those roads in western lands as a reason to reduce the cost of a federal recreational land pass to the western state residents. "Our parks are so large compared to some of the ones, like, I've visited quite a few in New England, and they're tiny there. And they'll have a hundred miles of road in the Berkshires or something, and we've got thousands out here but, you know, access fee is the same" (pp. 235-236).

9. Pricing. With respect to the price of the NRP, a number of focus group participants suggested amounts up to $75 as a pass price. However, some participants stated that $100 was not too much to pay; and one even suggested $300 for an annual pass. Comments about prices were frequently linked with a concern that the pass revenue should be spent in the federal recreational areas, and not returned to the general treasury.

Prices mentioned for an annual federal recreational land pass ranged from $50 to $125 in Boston and $35 to $150 in Richmond. For the Portland and Fresno groups, the discussion became framed around the appropriate cost for an individual versus a family or group pass. Considering only the group pass prices, in Portland the range was $50 to $200, while in Fresno it was $100 to $300. With some caution (since the discussions in the two west coast groups differed in other ways as well, not just in the consideration of individual versus family passes), it can perhaps be inferred that the tolerable price for a group pass is higher when it can be explicitly compared to that for an individual pass. (Some state parks systems, including Florida, offer both individual and group passes at different prices, as does Parks Canada.)

The Madison and Salt Lake City focus groups had little discussion on the price spread since they were reviewing a draft of the questionnaire and discussing how the price questions were to be posed. One Salt Lake City participant suggested, however, a price spread of $60/$200 for an individual versus a family annual pass.

To a large degree, the focus group participants were split on the new recreation pass price. Simplifying some complex discussions, it may be said in general that they either

thought the present price of $65 per annum was too high, or they thought that a pass priced at $100 was a bargain. It is quite likely that this bifurcation of responses reflects the two dominant responders to our newspaper advertisements – those individuals who were attracted to a discussion of federal lands mainly by the $50 honorarium; and those who were mainly attracted by the topic of the discussion because of their positive sentiments toward federal recreational lands.

Conclusions

Focus groups are not intended, and not well suited, to generating firm analytical conclusions. For the present project, the focus groups served their key purposes in identifying themes and issues to be addressed quantitatively in the other phases of the larger study, and in pre-testing the survey questionnaire. They also provided suggestive qualitative information on a number of topics. These include the importance of federal lands as part of the American national identity, concerns over the fee structure for access to federal lands, and suggestions for improved marketing efforts such as better advertising and more attractive pass options and benefits.

Perhaps of greatest relevance to the central purposes of the larger study are the suggestions about pricing that emerged from the focus groups. Opinions on pricing the New Recreation Pass seemed to be divided. Some focus group participants favored pricing the New Recreation Pass no higher than the current Golden Eagle Passport. Others indicated a willingness to pay a substantially higher amount, if they could be assured that the revenues would be used to protect and enhance our national lands.

Reference Cited

Stegner, Wallace (1960). Wilderness letter. In W. Stegner, *The Sound of Mountain Water* (145-153). New York: Doubleday.

Introduction to the Transcripts

The remainder of this document provides nearly verbatim transcripts (redacted to protect the anonymity of participants) of all six focus groups. The transcripts are followed by several appendices providing details such as the screener questions (Appendix A) that were used to insure diversity in the participant groups, informational handouts that were distributed at each session (Appendices B and C), and two paper and pencil questionnaires (Appendices D and E), which were used respectively in the third and fourth and in the last two focus groups.

NOTE: At the outset of this project, the New Recreation Pass (NRP) was tentatively being called the “America the Beautiful Pass,” or “ATB” for short. These terms were used in all of the focus groups, and therefore they appear frequently throughout the transcripts and in the appendices.

Focus Group #1: Boston, Massachusetts
September 11, 2005

Moderators: Patricia (Patsy) Taylor, Russ Miller
Assistant Moderator: Zafar Khan
Executive Director Burke Grandjean in attendance as another facilitator
Research Aide: Vicki Barthels, not in attendance (transcript)

Moderators are shown by their first names. Participants are given participant numbers, as follows:

Group Demographics

Identifier	Gender	Age	Profession	Income Range
P1	Female	37	Receptionist in a Dental Office	2
P2	Female	59	Retired	1
P3	Female	61	Mail Clerk for the IRS	2
P4	Female	40	Homemaker	2
P5	Female	54	Park Attendant	1
P6	Male	54	Park Attendant for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	2

Russ: I'd like to thank you all for coming. I have a little script I have to read through whenever I get started, to let you know what's going on. My name is Russ and I'm with the Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center. We're part of the University of Wyoming. We're conducting these groups on behalf of The National Park Service, but also the US Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation. They've asked us… They've been asked to create a new pass called the America The Beautiful Pass (reader: New Recreational Pass or NRP). It's not on that list of passes you see in front of you; those are the ones that are existing right now, which would be The National Parks Pass, The Golden Eagle Pass, some of the other ones that we'll talk about coming up. Your opinions are very important to us and could go along way in helping the park service decide how to design this new pass, where to price this for example. Focus groups like this one are very much like organized conversations. My partner, Zafar, perhaps Patsy, who's helping us out today too. And I will start the discussion with a few questions, but these are just to get the ball rolling. Occasionally we may ask you to cut a comment short for time— that's not very likely today because we only have six of us— or to ask a specific person to answer a question in order to make sure everyone gets a chance to participate. We will sometimes intervene to keep the discussion on topic, but it's all right for you to speak up without having to speak to us directly. I think the natural tendency is for people to wait for me to call on them. You don't have to do that. If

somebody says something and there's a kind of a natural pause, you're more than welcome to join in without me calling on you or anything like that. There are no right or wrong answers. All perspectives are sincerely welcome, even if you feel they are unpopular. I think the unpopular opinions are the ones we're most interested in, actually, or we wouldn't have to do focus groups. We want to know honestly what you think; what you honestly think. You must only speak one at a time because our discussion is being recorded so they can be transcribed later and overlapping voices will garble what is being said. A lot of times when I'm typing these up afterwards I remember what they were saying, but they started talking over once, I can't make it out for anything. Most importantly, we've agreed to keep everyone's identity confidential. Participant 6 has volunteered to put your last name, but you don't have to do that. And that might not even be her real last name. Although I am ethically bound to guarantee that, as a researcher, that I will not associate your names with any comments that you say here. I can't *guarantee* that you won't, but I would like to have everybody raise their hand if they can consent not to reveal anybody's identity or what we said in this room. Thank you. Great. Great. If you haven't done so already, I think everybody has, we've got the cards ready. We'll be using these to keep specific comments associated with the particular person that said them, but we will delete any references to actual names when the transcript is written. For example, Participant 1 will become Participant 1, and Participant 6 will be probably Participant 6, since she's over on the right over here. What I would like to do is begin with a round robin question and after that everyone can feel free to contribute to the questions you're excited about answering. And you won't have to go around in a circle every single time when we do that. Just to get things rolling I'd like to ask everybody, what is your favorite National Park, and what do you enjoy doing while you're there? And I think I'm going to have to start with Participant 1 on the left side, since you're all by yourself.

P1: National Parks? Because I don't know what all the...I don't know if the parks are a National Park, federal park or state park.

Russ: You know what we could even throw in the forests. You can throw in the state parks. Even if it's… your favorite place is a dam.

P1: I'd have to say the Forest Park in St. Louis.

Russ: Okay, Forest Park. And what do you like to do when you're there?

P1: Just walk around or go play racquetball. They have a public racquetball court, which are free.

Russ: So it's kind of a recreational park? It's not like a wilderness preserve or anything like that?

P1: Right.

Russ: Okay, Participant 2.

P2: Well my first is the one near my house called Concord Road Recreational Center and that's part of… the federal government is tied in with that. And then there's Wayside Inn, which is also I think through the federal management and the land Concord, which is really beautiful. So in Concord you can go, they have trails you can bike ride. They

have, they have different bands playing. They have a whole bunch of different things going on all the time. So I like those two.

Russ: And what can you do at the Wayside Inn?

P2: At the Wayside Inn you can have picnics, you can walk, you can just go there. It's just gorgeous. They have an old mill. I think it's the only mill left in Massachusetts, where they have like this huge wheel that in the water keeps going around, and you can view that, walk through there, any time of the year, summer, fall, winter, spring. It's just absolutely gorgeous every time of the year. People have weddings there. They have parties. And there's a whole like, across the way there's a church, too, that people go to. And then of course you eat. You go there to eat, too. And it's just really a nice place to go. And when my family comes to visit, I go down there all time, just walk around and just sit. It's just really pretty, so…

Russ: Participant 3?

P3: It's not really the actual park, but the White Mountains in New Hampshire. It's just… I love the waterfalls and you know everything. It was just… expansive.

Russ: Okay. So, scenery for that?

P3: Right. Right.

Russ: Participant 4?

P4: I agree. I love New Hampshire, the White Mountains, also. But we did recently just go to the Boston Harbor. Take the boat over to George's Island, to Madison Island and it's beautiful over there. It's a nice getaway from being in the city, so, I like to hang out.

Russ: So you like the scenery too?

P4: Uh huh.

Russ: Participant 5?

P5: Yellowstone.

Russ: Out our way?

P5: Yup.

Russ: And what do you like to do while you're there?

P5: Go around and see all the animals.

Russ: Participant 6?

P6: I come from the south to Massachusetts. I guess I like the National Seashore, Cape Cod, the rails trail, because I enjoy biking. We got the beaches. And the Cape Cod Canal area I enjoy, also.

Russ: Do you have a...Oh, go ahead.

P6: It's Corp of Engineers. Go ahead.

Russ: I was going to ask, do you have to pay to get into any of those, like the National Seashore?

P6: The National Seashore you pay. The Cape Cod Canal, everything is free.

Russ: Okay. The next question I would like to ask and this is not round robin, not everybody has to answer, but do you ever hike or picnic or otherwise visit in a National Forest as opposed to say, a National Park, wilderness preserve or anything like that?

P2: The white mountains is like a forest. (*laughing)* You know where you have a picnic there.

Russ: Has anyone ever knowingly gone to a national forest to hike or picnic, or your just, you're there and then maybe you seen a sign that said it was a National Forest, but as far as your concerned you're going to the woods?

P4: We did. I think it was Arcadia. I think in the...It was spur of the moment and we happened to be in the area, but…

P6: I spent winter in the Ocala National Forest intentionally, because of the fees. The fees are low and basically the value. Kind of the forest of Florida, which is kind of...People don't associate Florida with forest.

Russ: Yes. A lot of it is more like the south.

P6: Yeah, beach.

Patsy: Swamp down in Florida. *(laughter)* Okefenokee in Louisiana.

Russ: How much did you have to pay to get into the Ocala National Forest?

P6: There's no entrance fee.

Russ: Okay so you're paying...

P6: Your paying for use fees. And the use fees kind of vary. I think you can get an annual camping pass for approximately forty dollars, which entitles you to go to certain campgrounds, designated campgrounds. Other campgrounds aren't included in that pass. The more developed ones. But you're...Well with one of the cards you're probably looking at the, twelve to thirteen dollars a night with a discount card. And it will give you water, electric, sewer, and camping in a developed area, which is pretty reasonable, I feel. If they were like KOAs, KOAs you might be looking at forty, fifty dollars. I mean, you're not going to get a swimming pool, but a lot of people don't, they don't want to pay for a pool.

Russ: And anybody else who has, including you, Participant 6, when you're recreating on federal land, have you ever had to pay a fee, and do you remember what kind of federal land it was that you were on? Was it a National Park or was it a wilderness preserve, or something like that?

P5: I usually don't notice the signs unless it does say the Corp of Engineers. That stands out as far as the National Park Service, or Forest Service, or Bureau of Land Management, I don't… You know, I look at the signs. It's a brown sign with the gold writing or the yellow writing. And I don't really, you know...I guess I just don't focus on that part of my... Whoo! The park! Whoo! Let's go have some fun. There is a forest, I can go camping here. You don't have to pay just to go camping, but don't have to pay fees to get into the park, to the forest. I like going where they have the natural water slides, like, they have some up in Vermont. They have several in Missouri. They have them in Arizona.

Russ: So you don't recall necessarily paying any fees the last time you went?

P5: Oh, no!

Russ: Okay. It's just a nice place to go.

P5: And I usually go to the park— or the forest, if you want to call it— because I don't have to pay. It's like a little mini getaway for me. Take my dog with me and just go.

Russ: Okay.

P6: Well, many of the parks previously didn't charge any fees. And it seems like within the last five or six years they were able to initiate fees and it's just like passing a tax. It's easy to raise a tax once you get it passed. So it's easy to up the up the entrance fee. And at some points I think they're actually competing with the private sector, depending where the park is located, if there is enough use there, in a high use area that they'll raise the fees much higher than they would if it wasn't on a low use area.

Russ: Does anybody else notice that, too? It seems like if you ever paid a fee before, where you didn't have to pay a fee, or recently? Or have the fees been going up in these places you would like to go?

P5: For camping.

Russ: For camping?

Uh huh.

P3: I never really noticed.

P2: I think the only park out on Salem is the Willow's, down *(overlapping voices)*. You have to pay in at the entrance. Winter Island. You have to pay just to get on the property.

Patsy: Is that state or federal? Do you remember?

P5: I have no clue.

Patsy: Okay. Because I didn't see it on my list for either one.

Unknown: It's likely state.

Patsy: Yes, the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia now charges a fee, and Valley Forge charges a fee. Yes, even if you have a pass, a National Parks Pass.

Unknown: Oh, that's interesting.

Patsy: So, I don't know if this is going to be for historic areas that this is happening or if it's a phenomenon with lots of the different parks?

It seems like once they start they all fall in line. *(laughing)*

P6: A lot of these parks are pretty like concessionaires now.

Patsy: Yes.

P6: And the concessionaires aren't necessarily obligated, unless it's in the contract, to honor the cards.

Patsy: Right. Right.

P6: And people that do have the cards should bring it to the attention of the people that are administering the contracts to include the discounts in the contracts. If you go into the Virginia right now one of the parks is Prince William Forest. And right in the Washington DC area, where there's a real nice campground. There's two campgrounds. One is in the National Park. The other is also in the National Park, just on the border near the highway and I think they charge like twenty-eight dollars a night for camping, and they don't honor any of the cards, but it's federal lands operated by a private contractor.

Russ: Yeah, I think we talked about this on the phone.

P6: Yeah, now the National Park campground which is in the park, it's a real nice campground, but it doesn't have a dump station. So you can only stay there for a few days and you really have to end up going to the private contractor to use their dump station and spend the night overnight, pay the higher fee.

Russ: What do you do at a dump station? Is that where you...

P6: *(overlapping voices)*. No I mean your indoor tanks like on an RV.

Russ: Oh okay.

P6: Yeah.

Russ: So the discount doesn't apply there?

P6: Now when I went to the park personnel, they weren't aware that the contractor wasn't honoring the cards.

Patsy: You'd think they would know that.

P6: No, but it wasn't in the contract. So they were really reliant on… the contractor's reliant on that contract as it's written. In some of the places the administrator is familiar with this and they'll put in that they're required to honor the cards.

Patsy: I don't know how that works whether each park is to contract with a private contractor or whether it's centralized or the regional parks and forest offices or not? But that would be an interesting question.

P6: They put out for bid like per every three years or so or five years.

Patsy: Xanterra is a big one in the west taking care of the big parks.

P6: Which… it works well in some areas if you have...The problem is when a concessionaire comes in, they take all the profitable areas.

Patsy: Right.

P6: Okay. They don't want the ones that have little use. That's going to actually cost them money to operate. Where, which I travel a lot and to me if they're going to be giving them the profitable ones, they should also give them the non-profitable ones to balance them off, and honor the discount cards obviously.

Russ: That's a good lead in for another question I was just about to ask, because I know you have the Golden Access Pass, don't you?

P6: Right.

Russ: Does anybody else...Have you all had previous passes such as the ones that are in front of you like the Golden Eagle Passport or the National Parks Pass?

P6: No. I have the...

Russ: Has anybody else owned a pass that gets you into any of the federal parks or federal lands, or even a state pass if you go to a lot of state parks.

Patsy: Could I ask a question before we get off on this? Doesn't Massachusetts have some trails, national trails that tie into like the Appalachian trail? Yes. Have any of you used those?

P2: I just went to the one in Virginia that has that.

Patsy: Yes.

P2: Where the mountains are.

Patsy: And is that managed by, then, a local group like clubs, or do you look at the federal government for management of that, state? I think it's called...I want to say the Concord Trail. Isn't there something like that here in Massachusetts?

(Multiple Voices)

Patsy: It runs east to west instead of north to south. The Appalachian Trail runs north to south. And there's one in New Hampshire too.

Russ: Isn't the red line that we have on our maps...

Patsy: Yes, that long one that starts down there in Georgia. It goes all the way up to Maine. That's the Appalachian Trail.

P2: Maybe it was in New Hampshire that I was in it?

Patsy: Then the one down in Mississippi is the Natchez Trace Trail.

P6: This shows as NST. What's NST? NST… National Scenic Trail. Appalachian.

Patsy: And then there's the Sierra Crest Trail, but I don't see it over here in California.

P2: They have some wonderful parks out in California.

Patsy: Yes, Yes. Okay.

P2: Do you control a certain area of...I think it's about 17 miles along the Pacific Coast. I know when I was out visiting my sister, we got to a certain point along the Pacific Coast and it was, we had to pay to go on that coastal area? Do you know if the federal government controls that or what?

Patsy: I don't know. California does have a lot of land over there that people—

P2: Oh, just absolutely gorgeous because you can pull in and just see the coastline. It is just *(Overlapping Voices)*.

Patsy: A lot of those are migratory waterways. You'll see them all along the east coast particularly, and then down like the Mississippi river, and then there's some also on the Pacific for bird migration. So it would tend to be Fish and Wildlife, both state and federal.

P2: We have bird sanctuaries in certain places. I don't know the...

Patsy: There are lots of wildlife refuges, sanctuaries.

P2: Right.

Patsy: I was taking a look.

P2: *(inaudible)* Massachusetts up near...You have to pay to go up there, too, I think, to go on the island, and it's just gorgeous.

Patsy: Yes. Parker River is one of them. Mashpee, No Mans, Monomoy.

P2: Is that federally controlled?

Patsy: Those are federal.

P2: A lot of nests, I've been there.

Patsy: It's a real nice refuge.

Unknown: They're beautiful. Oh, absolutely gorgeous.

P2: And it's like an island. It's like a... I remember going out there, just a single lane of traffic, just, but it is so beautiful. Seen birds that I've never seen before.

Patsy: Right.

P2: Isn't that funny, right here in Massachusetts.

Patsy: Right, right. That they stay on the coast rather than come inland.

Yes. Ah, they're just...

Patsy: I kind of took Russ away from *(inaudible)*. *(Laughing)* Sorry *(Multiple voices)*. Sorry.

Russ: A lot of the questions that were going to provoke a torrent of responses… I got… I got nothing. I've got to think of something. Let's see. Let me think.

P2: You asked everybody to say exactly where they've been.

P5: That was really a state park? Oh really! That was a forest?

Patsy: Yes, one question I think the federal government is grappling with is the extent to which they should make federal lands—recreational lands—more accessible. And some people want to kind of preserve the wilderness state of federal lands. Some people want to have snowmobiles and ATVs and able to travel over all kinds of federal lands. And out in Wyoming it's particularly acute right now. The Clinton Administration, you might know, put a ban on increasing snowmobile traffic in Yellowstone, and the Bush Administration has managed to lift that ban. Is there a problem with ATVs here on the east coast and even like Boston, not Boston, but the Cape, National Seashore or any of these other wildlife preserves?

P6: There's no place to operate these machines really. They sell the machines but there's no… there's really no place to operate them.

Patsy: Because I know Massachusetts has a license fee for ATVs. I was looking that up. Let me see if I...ATV, snowmobiles: forty dollars for a two-year permit for instate people.

P6: There's places for snowmobiles. I don't think there's any places for ATV's.

Patsy: Running ATVs.

P5: Are you talking about 4 wheel drives?

Patsy: Well, yes, they're usually *(inaudible)* dune buggy type things

P5: You know, there's a problem with that down the Cape. Now like just before you go over the bridge, etc., because there's a lot of people who have homes that are right on the cliff, and that sand is just being eroded away, and they have a problem with people going down there and just… they have four wheel drives. You know they have those trucks and you can convert it to that and they just kind of go up and down the beach area there. And that's problematic because it's causing a lot of erosion. Even though it doesn't seem like it would, but it does, you know?

Patsy: Yes, right, right. Just kind of eats away at it a little bit at a time.

P5: Yes. Yes.

Patsy: And I know that on Padre Island down in Texas they have sections where they've eliminated the ATVs because of the sand hill crane nesting. Are there problems in any of the refuges like that where they...You don't want to have people have access, especially with ATVs?

P4: The only place I've seen ATVs is up in the Berkshires. And I think it's usually private land and the owners let their kids go out.

Patsy: Yes.

P4: Just ride around.

P6: I live up near the Adirondack Park.

Patsy: Oh, yes? That's gorgeous.

P6: And I have some friends that, they go up the fall on four-wheelers, use the roads that were already in place for disabled people, and they get arrested every year for doing that. *(laughter)* Anyway, the point they were trying to prove was, when they actually looked into it, the state was doing more damage than they were, because the state was giving a lot of special permits like to the Sierra Club, the Boy Scouts, and everybody in vehicles and everything else in. And the federal court actually allowed *them* to use the land and stopped the state, because they felt the state was doing more damage than the citizens were.

Patsy: Interesting.

P6: Yes, it was actually a landmark ruling in the Albany Federal Courts. One of the people went through state court, but didn't have much luck. The only thing he did was he got his ticket dropped and about two years later he got his money back for the fine. But the federal court actually ruled in favor that these roads remain open for the

disabled; that they were being denied equal access to like the Boy Scouts and stuff. I mean Boy Scouts are very well capable of walking it.

Patsy: Walking it, yes.

P6: Yeah, and the Sierra Club.

Patsy: And that's another aspect of the wilderness and these protected areas: how much, how available do we make it to people who have disabilities? Aren't we saying there's no motorized vehicle, means even for the disabled, as well?

P2: Wheelchairs and stuff.

P6: It's like the National Seashore, some of the local towns wanted off some of the beaches up to the public and then putting these collapsible stairways in down the banks so that they can remove them. And it's kind of interesting listening to hearings. "Well what are we going to do about the people in wheelchairs?" "Well, we're going to get a waiver. We're going to put these things in and then apply for the waiver after we spend billions of dollars building something." Instead of doing it the right way they are intentionally circumventing the law.

Patsy: Right. Right.

P6: You know, I mean if there's an intent there to discriminate...

Patsy: We'll do it one step at a time. It's kind of like a salami approach, because we're going back on the protections.

P6: Yeah. And it's anyway we can put our buildings up. A lot of different places now I noticed are putting the parking and everything in before they put the building. The National Parks, like, if they want to build an entrance station, they put all the pavement and everything in. Because what's happened in the past, they put a building on it, and there's no handicap parking, but it's too late because the building is already up.

Russ: If you look down on that list of the different kinds of passes that you can get, I kind of need to explain them a little bit. The first one up top is the Golden Eagle Passport and that gets you into just about everything federal for free. The cost of it is sixty-five dollars and it's good for a year. The National Parks Pass for fifty dollars gets you into the National Parks, but it wouldn't get you into anything like a wildlife preserve or a National Forest. You would have to pay a fee to get in there. Or the Bureau of Reclamation lands, unless you buy the Golden Eagle Hologram, which is the little one in the middle and stick it on there for an extra fifteen dollars. And then there's the other two that we've kind of been talking about. There's the Golden Age Passport and what Participant 6 has is the Golden Access Passport. Both of those are good for a lifetime. And they cost either ten dollars for the Golden Age or they're free for the Golden Access. And those get you everything the Golden Eagle Passport would for a year, but they're good for a lifetime, plus they give you some discounts on federal use fees for different facilities and services like campgrounds that we were talking about. What they're trying to do with the new pass that we've been talking about is decide, well, if you retire a couple of these and replace them with something new that has some of the same features… Well, how expensive should that be, for example? And if you compare the

features that the other passes have, what do you think you would like to see included in there? I mean I know some of them have discounts for camping, for example. Would any of you enjoy getting discounts yourself on something that you could get and not have to be a certain age to do it, for example?

P4: Yeah, like some books.

Russ: Discounts on books from the visitors' center?

P4: Uh hum.

P6: I think there should be some standardization, because most of the parks themselves don't even know how to, you know, what's involved with these. They are just so complicated. You get so many different agencies involved that are charging fees and they're not sure what these cards actually cover. So it's almost up to the cardholder go in and say "No, I'm entitled to a discount." You almost have to be an attorney. Really. I mean to tell...They've already turned you down. You have to explain to them why they have to honor the pass.

Patsy: I think that's part of what the Bush administration is trying to do, is have one pass so that there's not all this...

P6: Confusion?

Patsy: Negotiation and differences between the Forest Service, the Park Service and...There will still be day use passes for different parks, but you could get one annual pass that would be good at all of the parks and forests. And not have this kind of misunderstanding.

P6: But even the day use isn't very clear, because at some places it's per car...

Patsy: Right.

P6: And other places it's per person. Now some places, like, say if I have a card, this will cover anybody that accompanies me. Other places the people, that accompany me would have to pay a fee. So it's still not really standardized.

Patsy: Right. Right.

P6: Especially the day use. The day use can be very expensive because I think like the White Mountains charge like five dollars per person to picnic.

Patsy: Wow!

P6: Now, I don't know how you feel about pulling off the highway and sitting down and eating a sandwich and have somebody come over and ask you for five dollars, because I don't feel very good about it.

Patsy: Yes. Right. Right.

P6: Because it's my property.

Patsy: Yes, it's public property.

P6: Yeah.

Russ: How did you become aware that you were eligible for a Golden Access Passport? What the features were and things like that? Is it through the *(inaudible)*?

P6: By accident.

Russ: By accident?

P6: By accident, yeah. I had visited Saratoga National Park, and most of the time people aren't really telling you you can get these things.

P5: Yeah, they don't say.

P6: But the Golden Access one, you need quite a bit of paperwork to get, that you have to have. It's not paperwork you normally carry around with you, for one thing. I think the Golden Age you can get through the mail, if you provide a driver's license or something like that, but this one you have to get in person. I did have to go back, actually, because I didn't have the paperwork with me. But it was like ten miles away from my house or something, so it wasn't a big deal. I did find out by accident. I didn't know about it. But then I found out the state also issued one. *(overlapping voices)*. Except this one that I had to apply to the state, and the state issues one that's basically the same as this. It covers state parks. Then I found out… somebody told me California issued one. Some states will issue them to non-residents, which California does. I think you pay a fee of three fifty. So I figure I'm going to apply for that one. If I ever go to California, at least I'll have it because it's three fifty now; it's probably going to be five dollars next year.

Patsy: Don't you think...Sorry.

P5: When you go to the visitors' center, they don't sell, you know, you have to ask. They're just walking around. They don't say anything to you.

P6: No.

P5: They don't offer passes to this. They don't read up on the new programs. You have to just wonder around and ask if you see something.

Russ: So, you've never seen a sign that looks sort of like this sheet that explains the passes?

P5: I have *never* seen this before.

Russ: So, where would you like to be able to purchase a pass like this? Do you think you should be able to get it at a park that you go to, or any federal land when you run into a park ranger, should be able to give you a flier or something like that?

P3: When you go straight to the visitor's center, it should be up in the lobby. You know, when you come in, "Did you know about the..." Or have it right at the desk or right behind the people.

Patsy: Yeah.

P3: That's a good idea. On the web.

P4: Do it on the websites so they can have it before you go away.

P3: Yeah.

P2: Is there a center downtown Boston at the old state house? Is there a federal center around there?

Patsy: There's a park service place right?

P2: Yeah, I've been...

P3: I haven't been in there yet.

P2: I have. They were very… They have a wealth of information.

P3: Overwhelming?

P2: No, a *wealth* of, a *lot* of information in there.

P3: But it's not overwhelming when you first go in there.

P2: It looks like it.

P3: Yeah. But I've only seen in the front of the building. Yeah.

P6: So, like this is almost too much information. 'Cause you don't really know which one you want.

Patsy: Right.

P6: I mean, you can look at all these and say, "Well, I could probably use that or that, maybe I should get that?" It's not really clear what's you know, what's a better deal.

P3: Well I'm looking at the National Parks Pass and the Golden Eagle Sticker and they look like they're the same thing as the Golden Eagle Passport. I mean it's the same price.

(overlapping voices)

Russ: Actually you kind of have that right. If you place the Golden Eagle sticker on your National Parks Pass it becomes the equivalent of the Golden Eagle Passport.

P5: You need both of them.

(overlapping voices)

P4: So why would you even bother, you know?

P5: Well, some people don't use them.

P4: Yeah, that's true.

Russ: So, is there any place else where you might want to be able to purchase one of these conveniently, like a sporting goods store or a gas station? Any place...

P4: City halls.

Russ: I know there's a lot of Dunkin Donuts in Boston. *(laughing)*

P3: Or even a bank. ‘Cause before you go on vacation you go to get money at a bank.

Russ: Cause it's almost like well they would do that with stamps.

P3: Right.

Russ: It's like a currency.

P6: A lot of people are entitled to Social Security. I mean, what's so hard about including a letter if you’re entitled to Social Security, you're entitled to the Golden Age Passport and put it, you know, with your Social Security paperwork, or whatever.

Patsy: All those.

P6: In fact I think Social Security sends out a statement to almost everybody every year now, anyway.

Russ: Or maybe where a lot of people go for disability benefits.

P6: Right.

Russ: If they had something like that brochure.

P6: Yeah.

P4: But they can advertise on TV. Just say, you know...

P5: What about your post office?

P4: There you go.

P5: They have passports. *(overlapping voices)*. Cause you know the post office would be the best place to get stamps, you know.

Russ: City hall, any government office maybe.

P6: The post office is a really good idea.

P5: You could even sign for it, you know?

Russ: There is kind of a really big difference in the benefits between the Golden Age Passport and the Golden Eagle Passport. One is for a lifetime and one is for just a year at a time.
Do you think maybe… I'm trying to figure out how to word this. There should be a pass, or do you think something like the Golden Age Passport should be more widely available? And if it was, it would probably have to be more expensive than the Golden Eagle Passport. Where do you think something like the Golden Age Passport, if it was available for everybody, *(inaudible)*.

P1: Well, first off *(inaudible)*. Of course, we've been seeing a lot of, there's more elderly than ever before, but and they're using RV's. But I think, first of all, you need to let people know what the Park Services have. Do some marketing. Because a lot of people are taking their grand kids or, you know, their children and they don't even know..."Should I go to the forest?" "No, the forest is just for camping." And "Isn't a bear going to get me? *(laughter)* So, a lot of people think "Oh, well there's skunks out there. I don't want to go out there; that's for country people." So I think, first of all, you need to get some marketing out there to let people know it's for everyone. I had to discover it in my twenties by myself.

Russ: Just stumbling on the National Forest?

P1: Yeah, I just got to make the best of a you know, the best of a bad situation. So, I just decided to do one of these and while I was in St. Louis and get the Missouri map out and go like this, "Okay, I'm going to go..." You know, every Sunday I would go on a four hour trip. And that's how I discovered the parks. And I discovered, you know, the water slides. They have the Elephant Rock State Park in Missouri. Where basically it's God-made water slides. The rocks have been just... smoothed out. and you can just go on a water slide and just jump in the water. It's wonderful.

P6: And these are something you can do once or twice a month. Where most people go to like Disney for example or Six Flags. I mean, you're looking at fifty, sixty dollars per person to get into one of these places to get into one of these places. You're not going to do that once or twice a month with a family. You would be lucky if you could do that once a year.

P1: Yeah.

Russ: But if you had a pass?

P6: But if you had a pass. If you had a pass, it's different.

Russ: That's kind of what we're getting to. And this would even include something like historic places if you were going to visit the Constitution, or the Liberty Bell, or something like that.

(overlapping voices)

P4: The USS Constitution in Charlestown, does the federal government control that?

Russ: In DC?

P4: No, in Charlestown they have a ship: the USS Constitution.

Russ: Oh, *that* Constitution? *(laughter and multiple voices)*

P4: I think you have to pay to get on that. I don't know if that's state or federal, whatever, but that's I mean...We do a lot of sightseeing. I think I'm just realizing that it really does, you know, with the children and...

Russ: Do you pay fees when you go to...

P3: Yeah. Yeah. When we go on the Duck tour and things like, you know, too expensive.

I know it is.

(overlapping voices).

P3: At the USS Constitution they do have a, I think it's on Sunday where you can go for free or something like that. Or maybe it's just when they turned the ship around.

P5: Where they might have one day?

P5: Yeah. And then they have the Rails and Trails. They have the Sails and Trails for the park service in Salem, that's in *(inaudible)* county.

P1: Oh, I love that then because you can go canoeing for free. They'll take you on some of those older boats where you can learn how to row or learn how to sail. Those are usually free.

P3: What does it need a pass for if it's free?

P1: It's free. Well, that special weekend.

P2: Oh, I see. Okay so people can *(inaudible)*

Russ: So, if everybody's kind of got an idea now of all the different places that you go and sometimes when you pay fees. Do you think if you owned a Golden Eagle Passport right now, that would be saving you money? Or would it maybe encourage you to go to more places, since you'd know you wouldn't have to pay it.

Many: More places. *(overlapping voices)*

Russ: Wow, there's so many people talking, I think I should almost go round robin. Let me start with Participant 2. I know Participant 2 wants to talk. And then come around all the way. Participant 2.

P2: I kind of do what you did, except I do it on like a weekly basis. So we go to different museums and things, and I definitely would. If there was a pass I would go more often, I would.

Russ: Even at sixty-five dollars?

P2: At sixty-five dollars a year? Let me think about that. *(laughter)*

Russ: And while you're thinking, Participant 3, you were going to say something?

P3: I would say it encourage you to go more.

Russ: Okay. Do you think you would break even on that deal, if you were just going your regular places that you like to go to?

P3: I have a lot of grandchildren so I would say yes, it would be beneficial to me.

Russ: Okay. And Participant 4?

P4: I would definitely, because I have three little kids that I like to take. We travel all over the place and I would rather go to places like this versus Disney, you know, the commercial, because I appreciate nature. Matter of fact, when we went that day to George's Island it cost, it was about forty-two dollars. My sister brought her kids, the fees were very, very high. It ended up for both families about a hundred dollars.

Patsy: Wow.

P4: It was *very* high. And you have to take that into consideration. Sometimes they charge for parking, because you park in Quincy. So, you just have to be prepared about how much money it's going to cost. So... And depending on how many people, if the pass was for the whole family. You know what I mean, as opposed to one person? I don't know if the...

P5: That's what I was thinking, yeah.

P4: ‘Cause when I saw Golden Age I thought that was a seniors’… The word Golden Age, I assumed was a senior citizen’s pass.

P6: I think it's for over sixty-two, isn't it?

P4: Is it?

P6: Over sixty-two.

P4: Oh it is?

P6: Yeah.

P4: Oh okay so...

P5: I don't see that.

P6: It doesn't say.

Russ: I deliberately didn't put that in there. I was going to keep it a secret.

P4: So, I would not be able to apply for that.

Russ: But now that we have that question out there, what does everybody think should be the ideal age where you could have that break? I mean they've been talking about raising the retirement age for Social Security, for example. That goes up a month every couple years now. It's not exactly 65 anymore.

P3: I don't see why they don't give it to everybody. Because, as Participant 4 was saying, you have three little kids. You know, it's very hard to take the families out today 'cause it's so expensive to go anywhere with them, you know?

P4: And they love it. It's amazing. I don't know what it is about going to an amusement park? I don't know if it's because it's so structured and everybody's kind of like let's go here, let's go there versus just going to a natural park, where they have the freedom to just enjoy it. You know and there's not that well now we have to get in line and we better rush here and do that. Everybody is just so much more relaxed and it seems... Well, and we have a good time, but we still have a good time at the parks.

Russ: If everybody had one of those, though, do you think the parks would just get so crowded that maybe...

P4: No, there's still people that don't want...They like the commercial stuff. They'd rather spend their money on that had value.

P6: That would be a good thing because there's a lot of people that volunteer and stuff in the park.

P4: Yes.

P6: And you go to any National Park, National Seashore; there's people that volunteer to operate the visitors' centers and most of the time it's, you know, except you have the holidays, you have a lot of people, but other than that there's really not that many people visit the parks during the week.

P1: And that's the thing. If you had the pass you could use it anytime you want to without having to wait for those *free days*, where you have to stand in line. Like, I did go to George's Island and all those little places. And that was just for 4th of July weekend or something like that. Oh my gosh! The lines were so long. It's like oh I have to pee, but I have to wait in the line, burning up in the sun. So if I had the pass I would definitely use it, if I had it.

Russ: Well, let's say if the Golden Eagle Passport became almost like the Golden Age Passport in that you could use it to help you with other discounts and things like that. Maybe even if it's a lifetime thing. Well if you look at what the Golden Age Passport costs, it's ten dollars for a lifetime. Where as the Golden Eagle Passport was sixty-five dollars per year. If everybody had something that was more like the Golden Age

Passport than...And I can tell you that the money doesn't go into just a general fund for the government. It goes to the parks. Whether it's some of it goes to the park in particular in particular where it was purchased and some of it is set aside to share among the different parks. Well, what do you think in order to make up for that loss, since maybe they weren't getting money every year anymore. How much should it cost if you were going to get a lifetime passport? Or if you were just going to get maybe an annual pass that gave you some of the discounts?

P1: I think what's hurting it is putting that five on the end of it. If you rounded up the number, and said like sixty dollars, seventy dollars, “Oh, well, okay.” Sixty-five dollars: “Oh, wow! That's a lot of money!” Seventy dollars: “Oh, okay I can do that.” Eighty dollars: “Oh, okay, that's fine”. That's for a whole family for, you know, in a year. “Oh, give my money back quick!”

P3: So is that the family or the single? What are we talking?

Russ: Well, right now the rules are that...Well, most of the entrance fees are paid by people who are driving into the park, at least where I live. Because everybody has to drive to get everywhere, but...

P1: So it's for a carload?

Russ: It would be for a carload or, if they're were walking into the park, it would be for the person’s parents, spouse or children— in other words immediate family that are coming in with them. Does that seem like a fair deal or should they change that, as well, to maybe allow at least a couple of people to get in on a particular pass? What do you think?

P5: I think a lot of people like when the residents get a discount and out of state people pay more. *(laughing)*

P6: That's actually unconstitutional. *(laughing)*

P3: That's… you know.

Patsy: Well, at the state parks it's okay. But the federal parks it's...

P6: Right, it's unconstitutional.

Russ: Right, yeah. Because we don’t live in different countries.

Patsy: But I think the question that the Park Service is trying to address is, you know: “What should the cost of a passport be and what should be included in it?” They want to know how to price this so the public feels that one, it's purchasing something that's valuable, but two, they're able to get enough money to make improvements and do the kind of maintenance they need to do. On the other hand, we're all paying taxes and they’re to some extent supported by taxes. So they're kind of in a tough position about how to price this pass.

P2: Sort of a catch 22.

P4: What about a single or a family or single or group, any more than one? Just do the two different prices?

Russ: So where should they price that, if there's two different prices?

P4: I don't like how it's a one year term. Because if you go, if this is vacation say, that one year comes up very quick. Do you know what I mean?

Unknown: It does.

P3: And you're already renewing it. So I think either two years or even two or three year term would be...Do you know what I'm saying? Because you couldn't get much...

Patsy: Because your planning, making reservations...

P3: Right.

P4: Reservations, and the thing is our year is not really 12 months here *(overlapping voices)*.

P1: In the summer time.

P4: In the summer and the fall and they don't use it in the winter.

(inaudible)

P3: I understand.

P4: Some of our parks are closed, you know, seasonally. So our year is really not 12 months, it might be 6 or 7 months.

Patsy: So, a two year pass makes more sense?

P5: Yeah, versus California where they use them all the time.

Patsy: Yeah.

P6: I'm taking on the… the loyal opposition? *(laughs)*

Patsy: Go ahead.

Russ: By all means.

P6: I believe all these fees should go into the general fund, because then all the parks would get an equal amount of the pie. Right now, you get parks like Yellowstone that get a big piece of the pie because they're popular. That money's being used back in that area, but the places that are unpopular have to fight to try to get funding. And also as citizens we lose control of the money when we allow the parks to run their own checking account. Because there is no oversight there. If they have to go to Congress and ask for money, they'll have to provide a need, why the need the money. Otherwise they don't get the money. Now you have the agencies operating their own business. They're

operating as a private business and if you look at it there's very, very little oversight on the money spent.

Patsy: Do you know which park is the most visited park?

P5: Yellowstone?

P2: Grand Canyon?

Patsy: No.

Unknown: What is it?

Patsy: It's the Great Smokey Mountains.

P6: Yeah.

Patsy: The problem is… the problem is there is no controlled access to it. It's like a big National Forest that you can just drive up and go into it. So if you have a controlled access, you know, with mountains all around and then the parks down in a bowl or something. It's real hard to...

P6: But there's nothing wrong with that. There's nothing wrong with that.

Patsy: Right. You're right there's nothing wrong with it, but how do you control entrance fees then?

P6: You don't need entrance fees; you should have user fees. If you're going to use the facilities, if you just want to go in the White Mountains that you used to be able to drive into in New Hampshire...I don't know if you realize, if you've been up there lately, but you have to pay a fee if you stop on the side of the road and park your car.

P4: Oh, I've seen it, yes.

P6: There's a $5 fee.

P4: Yes I did see that.

P6: That's previously free. Now I can see if you're going to, you're going to swim or fish or use the facilities, some kind of impact, you should pay a user fee and the card should be used to discount that user fee or whatever card you're entitled to get. But I don't think there should be entrance fees. There's people that live in these parks. Now they have to buy one of these just to get to their house. I'm aware of that. People live up in Yellowstone. There's private properties within some of these parks.

Russ: They've been asked at the gate. I think we we're talking about early this morning, because we have a focus group where somebody said they actually purchased a pass because they commuted through Yellowstone. They didn't want to have to pay *(inaudible)*. But we were discussing this with some of the officials and they said they didn't really need to do that. If someone had just been aware, the rangers of the gate,

that they were residents so they needed to pass through and they weren't going to use the facilities that they wouldn't have had to buy a pass.

P6: But there still sitting in line waiting to get through just like everybody else.

Russ: Well, that's true.

Zafar: User fee *(inaudible)* is very difficult to monitor, and the cost goes very high monitoring all those places. And it's hard to monitor because Yellowstone is a huge, big place and there's so many facilities that...

P6: No, no, I'm talking like the campgrounds. It's easy to monitor campgrounds. You've got an entrance and an exit. You count the people and...

P5: But if you're going to go hiking for the day and *(overlapping voices)*.

P6: *(inaudible)* like user fee, you're not impacting the land if you're hiking. You bring your trash in and you're going to take it out.

P1: But some people don't do that and you know it's getting bad now. I'm surprised when I go to the, you know, into the forest and I see cans, plastic. And I'm like, "What are these people doing?!"

P6: You know people are paying an entrance fee now and they're still doing that, so that's not going to stop that.

P1: Really?!

P6: Yeah.

Russ: Let's say that the entrance fee money, part of that goes to clean up the parks. I mean the more people go through, say the more litter accumulates or waste of one kind or another. If it's with the knowledge that any money that you spend on one of these passes will go to improve the conditions in the park and compensate for the fact that if more people have these passes, more people will be visiting the parks and leaving things behind, or creating wear and tear on facilities and things like that. Do you think you'd be willing to pay a little more than sixty-five dollars for something like that?

Yeah.

Russ: Sixty-five dollars a year?

P3: Now let's go back to something that was suggested earlier. Is it $65 that is going into the general fund, an then we have to go to our congress people and say, gee we need that money back.

Russ: Well now we don't have any control of that. I think it's already been decided that it's going to go mostly to that particular park where the pass is sold.

P3: Oh, so it stays within the system.

Russ: Yeah. But eventually what they'd like to do with technology is to be able to scan the passport, not just you flash your passport at somebody puts a little tick mark saying somebody used a passport here. But you scan it and that way you can tell, well even if somebody purchased it in Yellowstone, they were using it in lots of other places. And they would redistribute the money to the places to help them pay for the services the people were using there when they go there. But were not...I don't think it's being considered at all that it would go into the general fund that might be used on defense spending or something like that. *(laughter)*. It would mostly go to administrating the parks.

Patsy: The park system.

Russ: The government as a whole.

P1: I think Participant 4 had a really good idea when she said, instead of having it a year, it should be at least two years or more. Going up and *(inaudible)* pricing, I think that would be fine, as long as it's more than a year.

Russ: Okay.

P5: It's a real good idea. Like 5 year periods. You can buy something for 5 years and that way you know you'd really get the use out of it.

Russ: So what would you be willing to pay on an annual basis for something like that? Or even if you could buy a five-year block, or even five passports that would get you through those five years in advance without having to worry about what they would cost next year, with the prices going up and things like that?

P3: Yeah, that's a hard one.

Unknown: Yeah. *(laughter)*

Russ: Let me put it this way. What we're talking about willingness to pay, what do you think it's worth? Instead of that, what do you think something like that is worth?

P5: Depends on where you plan on traveling to.

P4: If your and avid… or if you're going all over the country or just...

P1: Well, that’s another idea. You should know. We're bringing up so many good ideas. If you were like in one part of the state or if you visit like just the eastern states or the midwestern states or up in the north, northwest, northeast, whatever. If they could make it like that: if you go three times a year or, you know, if you go more frequently, maybe they could break it down like that.

P2: Would you mean like you use it each time you go and then after you use it so many times you...

Patsy: It would be like a debit card. You know, you have this much in your account.

P2: All right. Okay.

Patsy: And you know and it's X dollars, and you get a discount for purchasing this park debit card.

P2: Yes.

Patsy: Instead of a pass that will get you in eighty-nine times a year. You could...I mean the technology is there. Does the Park Service and the Forest Service want to do this? I don't know.

P6: Well the Forest Service doesn't charge any entrance fees right now. There is no entrance fees in the forests.

Patsy: Well they do when they have an access fee. For example, Medicine Bow National Forest has an access fee. They don't have enough people to monitor it though.

P6: Now what's the access fee for?

Patsy: It's to go in and hike in the forest. And they can go to the parking lots and give you a ticket even if you're not, if you don't show your permit on your dash.

P6: Yeah but they use permits.

Patsy: And *now* the Forest Service has something new this year. I don't know if they're going to do it. They are now able under the law to take pictures of license plates and determine whether you've purchased the permit to park there for your license. I don't know how widely they're going to use it. The Park Service doesn't have that authority yet.

P1: That's a lot of money.

Patsy: It's a technology and it's going to cost them money. So they can do it if they can get the people and the technology together.

P6: 'Cause most of the forest is...When I have an entrance fee.

Patsy: Right, it's so vast. It's so easy to get into it.

P6: So which one are you paying for there? Are you paying for day use fee when you buy this pass? Is that what...What are they calling it? They're not calling it...

Patsy: An access fee is what I've always heard it called.

P6: Yeah.

Patsy: And I usually buy mine because I'm a big hiker in the Medicine Bow area.

P6: But you don't have to buy one everyday?

Patsy: No.

P6: You own an annual pass?

Patsy: It's an annual pass.

P6: Oh, okay.

Unknown: *(overlapping voices, inaudible)*

P6: It's like twenty bucks or something.

Patsy: Yes.

P6: Yeah, okay.

P1: I don't think it should be the same. I think because they have more, it looks like they have more over on the west coast. *(overlapping voices)*

Unknown: I was wondering *(overlapping voices)*.

Unknown: We're very limited here.

P1: I love your idea, don't get me wrong. Like the debit card idea that's good. But what I was getting at is they if broke it, broke it up into, what do you call it?

(overlapping voices)

P1: Because they do have more on the west coast and so they should be more expensive. But yet somebody from say the east coast or the midwest wants to go over there, they just pay another additional fee.

Unknown: No.*(laughter)*

P1: Or get the little Golden Eagle sticker and put that on there.

P6: But the way it is right now, I think if you're going to into one, if you wanted to just use one forest, say, I think you could by an annual permit just for that one forest.

Unknown: I love that.

P6: Yeah.

P1: But if you're going to go to more places, then it should cost you a little bit more.

Russ: And you can do that. At most National Parks you can pay for a pass that just gets you into that park for maybe fifteen dollars. But it wouldn't get you anyplace else for that year.

Patsy: It's interesting when we were developing our ideas about this project, the National Parks people in particular said, “ Now don't you go developing this western perspective on us of families going to the big parks in the west.” I'm like “Oh, okay. sorry.” The east experience is really very different.

Unknown: It is. It is.

Patsy: The historic sites, the monuments rather than the big family vacation parks. But so that's a real interesting idea. Should we break it down the Mississippi River? You know, if you want to visit the places on the east, in the eastern part you pay a different fee than if you want to visit in the west.

P3: Well, for two reasons. One we don't have as many parks and two we don't have the full use for the year.

P1: I know it costs more to, you know, clean up a monument and, you know, the historic sites, but *(inaudible)* …costs as much as on the east coast. I don't know.

Patsy: Yeah, and that's certainly something we'll pass on to the people.

P1: Is reservations, there's tons of reservations out here, and in the midwest they call them conservations.

Patsy: Well, are you talking about Indian reservations? There are 275 Indian reservations.

P1: No, they're called.

(overlapping voices)

P1: Just reservations.

(overlapping voices)

Patsy: Oh.

P1: …in Missouri they called places instead of saying reservation they use the word conservation.

Russ: Yeah, I know "monument" is something that's used out west more for a big tract of land. Out here it's just more for a *(inaudible)* like the Washington Monument.

P1: Yeah.

Russ: And it means there's buildings standing there.

P1: Well, we need a list of definitions. *(laughter)*

Patsy: Well, if this pass were going to be, say, available for two years, a federal recreation pass.

P5: And that's all across the country?

Patsy: That's all across the country.

P5: Okay, great.

Patsy: What would it be worth to you? What would it be worth and what would you be willing to pay?

P5: Again, you have to figure out whether it's for one person or a family of five.

Patsy: Okay.

Russ: Well we'll say you can have two different tiers, even. One for single people and one for a family, and the family could be like up to twelve, if there was a limit.

Let's see. And for how many years? Did you say two years or three years? *(laughing, overlapping voices)*

P4: And how much would I spend? I'd do maybe a hundred, a hundred and twenty-five maybe.

P1: Yeah.

P6: I disagree because people aren't buying it now at sixty-five.

Russ: Well, they are, actually.

P6: Not that many people buy it.

P1: They don't know about it.

Russ: Zafar probably has the exact statistics. How many people buy the sixty-five dollar pass, do you know?

Patsy: It's about one-half of one percent, I think. About .5% of the households.

Unknown: Wow. *(overlapping voices)*.

Patsy: Yes. It's not, it's not huge, but...

P6: I mean there's other people in this room that are probably entitled to the Golden Age and the Golden Access pass, but they don't have the...

P1: People don't know about it.

P4: But like they said, it's probably more the west coast. If you could use them more.

P4: Is it more advertised out there?

Patsy: I think they...They have more of what they call the crown jewels of the park system: Glacier National Park, Grand Canyon, Bryce, Zion, Yellowstone, and Rocky Mountain and there's only one of those on the east coast and that's the Great...Well I guess there's two, Great Smokey and Shenandoah National Parks where, you know, you have wildlife protected and scenic beauty protected both.

P4: But I'm saying as far as the passports?

Patsy: Is it advertised?

P4: Yes.

Patsy: I can't say that it's advertised. I think it's...There are fewer water parks. *(laughter)* People go to the National Parks, the National Forests. There's a big hunting culture out there in the west.

P2: Don't you have federal parks in Hudson, Massachusetts too? I don't know why I think that there's a lot of them.

Patsy: On the western side of the state?

P2: No right here in Massachusetts, Hudson. Central Massachusetts.

Patsy: Well there's Great Meadows, a National Wildlife Refuge. There's Ox Bow, Parker River, those are national wildlife refuges. I don't know about National Parks there, though.

Unknown: Okay.

Patsy: Except for the Cape. That's a National Seashore. So a hundred and twenty-five has been offered for a two year pass. Anyone else?

P2: And that's for a family?

Patsy: For a family.

P2: An unlimited family or...

Patsy: Well, say everybody in a car, everybody in the van. You know, you show up, and you've got a pass, and, eight people in the van get in.

P2: Okay, what if my sister and my nephew who's an adult, what if we...

Patsy: That's fine. We do that.

(overlapping voices)

Patsy: You know if you're in one car, then you get to go in. You know, for two years, a hundred and twenty-five dollars to all the refuges and National Forests and seashore and...

P1: Do you get one of those passport books like Participant 6 has?

P6: No, you have to buy that. *(laughing)*

P1: But we would get a discount?

P6: Like if you get a discount at the bookstore, you know...

Patsy: I got those for my kids. Yes. Those are fun. They can stamp it.

(overlapping voices)

P1: Yeah, and then they did the trails...

Patsy: You get all the information in there.

P6: There's eighteen parks in Massachusetts.

P1: Ohh!

Patsy: Eighteen parks. National Parks?

P6: Yeah.

Patsy: That's with refuges?

P6: No that's National Parks.

P1: You could put something special like that in there.

(overlapping voices)

P6: Oh okay. Let's see. Maybe there's not eighteen. It starts at Adams, Boston African-American, Boston, Boston Harbor Islands, Boston National Historic Park, Cape Cod, Frederick Law Homestead, John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historical site...

P1: Is that in Brooklyn, or…?

P6: Yeah, Brookline. Longfellow National Historical site, Cambridge, okay, Lowell National Historical Park, Minuteman National Historic Park, The *(inaudible)* Museum, Salem Maritime Museum, Saugus Iron Works, and Springfield Armory.

P1: Yeah, I’ve been to the one in Saugus.

P6: It would be thirteen.

P1: Oh that's fun. Oh that's nice. You can take the...They used to do free canoe rides out there. You could just get in canoes and take it out. And...

P3: How do you get that information? Do you have to buy the book?

P1: I had to go online.

I'm just not acclimated to doing everything online. *(laughing)*

P1: A lot of people aren't. I have to go online and do research. Nobody I know likes to go out. They think bugs are going to attack them.

Unknown: No.

Zafar: I recently bought a National Park Service Pass and they give you a nice book.

P6: That map? You get a nice map?

Zafar: Currently, it's a nice book. It explains every single state where you can, which places you can access with that pass.

P1: Well, that would be super.

Zafar: Yeah, I'm not sure that is being provided everywhere. I believe that it's being provided everywhere, but that's what they give you and every single state, which parks and places you can access with that.

P3: That's good. That's excellent information.

Patsy: So again, a hundred twenty-five for two years. Anybody going to go a hundred and fifty for two years?

P1: A hundred and fifty for *five* years. *(overlapping voices, laughter)*

P6: How much discount on use fee? I mean like camping and stuff. I mean I think the entrance fee is a small amount of getting in.

Patsy: That's okay.

P6: I mean if you're going to stay for a week it makes a big difference if you're paying $30 or $15, you know?

Patsy: Yes that's a very good point.

P6: I mean most people can afford to get in and drive around the park, but if you want to stay there and camp or...

P1: Well we could...Are you saying that for an additional fee or...

P6: I feel the card should cover a reasonable discount. If you buy the card, it should cover the entrance fee and let's say twenty-five or fifty percent off of user fees.

P1: I like that, 'cause I love camping. And I usually stay, you know, the whole weekend, sometimes the week. Depending on if it's like a Labor Day weekend.

P6: I mean paying a hundred and fifty dollars for a card that's going to allow you to get in and avoid a five dollar entrance fee isn't very realistic. Twelve dollars every day.

P3: Well, if you have three kids and you go frequently and you don't camp.

Patsy: Yes.

P2: Some people just like sightseeing and...

P5: And picnicking. Just...

P6: But picnicking they charge you for it.

P5: Oh, they are?

P1: I know, but I'm just saying... *(overlapping voices)* What if you don't cook? What if you just consume? *(laughter)*

P3: Yeah, I like that because I'm usually paying somewhere from four and twelve dollars per night for camping. So, just to get a discount on the camping and pay my entrance if I had one of these cards, I think that would be great.

Patsy: Are any of you hunters?

P1: I am. Every now and then I'll *(inaudible)* my license.

Patsy: Fishing? Okay.

Patsy: Some of the National Wildlife Refuges charge a fee for hunting. Would that be attractive if you had a discount there?

P1: Oh definitely, definitely. *(laughter)* It's fun going out there early in the morning, just sitting out there.

Patsy: Yes.

P3: So, children under a certain age…?

P6: Sixteen.

Russ: All children under sixteen are admitted for free on the entrance fees. That would give you the discount.

P3: Can they raise the age to eighteen? I know *(inaudible)* International, I used to work for them. The free passes were for 18 and under, it was free. And over that age usually are going to college, so they start thinking.

Russ: Yeah, that was kind of interesting. I'm not sure exactly why that is, either. Why someone who is 17 is considered an adult?

P2: They're still in high school.

Patsy: Yes. *(overlapping voices)*

Russ: But in general. Well, I guess it's probably different out here because you guys don't drive in to see the Old Ironsides.

Patsy: No.

Russ: So you can't take a carload of people to the USS Constitution.

Patsy: No.

Russ: It really does make a difference here doesn't it? If somebody's seventeen, you still have to pay.

P6: When you go to Florida at the springs they don't count at the park. They charge per person, the use fee. Like they use the springs.

Unknown: *(inaudible)*

P6: What's the age on the kids?

Unknown: Five.

P6: Like 5. *(inaudible)* so if you go on with five, six kids, it's like three or four dollars a head.

Russ: How much does it cost to see Old Iron Sides?

P6: I'm not sure. *(multiple voices and music)*

Unknown: I think we spent a good three hours there because this is just the ship.

Unknown: Sorry.

P1: That whole area that's open. We're pokers. And they take you on a long tour.

Patsy: Yes. Yes. On Tuesday we're going to have a meeting in Washington DC with some officials from various interest groups. Like various conservation groups and environmental groups as well as with the National Parks Service and Forest Service people. Is there something that you would want us to tell them about public recreational lands?

P5: We appreciate them so much. Don't take them away you know, because sometimes, you know, this development that's going on is just amazing and there are people that are almost chopping at the bit to take some beautiful sites. And the big thing is oh the view or the scenery or whatever. And don't let that, you know, development. You know it's kind of like an erosion with us.

Patsy: Yes. You have some *(overlapping voices)*

P5: I'm confused; I'm confused because I don't know that's it state only or it's federal only? So I'm not too sure about that, but I mean just where I live it's just alarming. You would not believe the buildup, it's just… It's just… we have that little park that is like city, state and federal and it's just phenomenal the people that go there. There's not an entrance fee or whatever, but it's maintained and we just love it. And people...I don't

know. People are walking more today, you know at every age, and are looking for places that you're not walking with you know the cars screaming by. And, you know, even, you know, a lot of places don't have sidewalks, so just to walk just in your neighborhood is difficult. So people do drive to a parkland or whatever and they walk trails, too. So, if they don't start keeping up, especially if you're in Massachusetts...

P1; There's a place in Missouri… Oh, yes, before I left in '99 they started building condos right next to the park. I think it is a forest, but they started building condos right next to it. Mom and dad used to take us out there camping all the time, and I just couldn't believe it. You could just look through the forest and you could just see a condo right there. How horrible is that? That is...

P3: New Hampshire, they're taking mountains. They had the beautiful mountainside and they turned it into, you know, like the ski resorts and there just developing condos and all, you know. And it's private. I mean you know it's private money doing it. This is just really eating away.

Patsy: So control on development or something?

P3: Yes. Cause people want to get away. Get away from the city life you know. And all the traffic and noise, its amazing. You know it's right in the middle of this very, very traffic area, but once you're in there it's just so peaceful. And the birds are there and it's just phenomenal. And walking along and seeing turtles, you know. You know the kids are like "Oh!" And the little bunnies. I mean...*(overlapping voices)*

P5: I think they should get the marketing together. Let people know that they...*(*1:13:03*)*. You know like Participant 1 said.

Patsy: Yes, right. Smokey the Bear and all that.

P5: And let people know that there are volunteer opportunities available. The Corp of Engineers they always want them volunteers. And with the campsites, they have a camp program right now where they need volunteers to help out with the campsites. Get out there and maybe you'll get a free pass!

Patsy: Yes. *(*Laughter*)*

P5: If you volunteer enough hours.

Patsy: Yes.

P6: That's a good point because a lot of these places are run by concessionaires now. I don't know if you're aware how the concession program works? I'm going to tell you real quick. Say you're a concessionaire in a campground, the way you bid on these contracts is the return to the government. The government gives you say a viable business to operate and the return to the government is less than ten percent. The entire gross, that's how much these concessionaires are pocketing ninety percent of the money. Any repairs they do come out of the government's ten percent. So in almost all cases there's no money actually even going back to the government. It's being siphoned off by these so-called small businesses that employ 8,000 people.

P1: What business...

Unknown: How would you know that?

P6: Most of the parks and the campgrounds now are operated by private concessionaires, they call them.

P1: You mean like when we see the Pepsi Cola machines out there?

P6: No, no, no.

Patsy: Xanterra. Xanterra is the big one in the west, and they provide all the people to run the grocery store in Yellowstone Park or to the staff...

P4: The contractor. *(overlapping voices)*

P6: Right and they collect the fees. The amount of the fees, they keep the money. The money is not going back to their park. Ninety percent of the money goes in their pocket.

P2: But they have to maintain that area that they have.

P6: The money to maintain it comes out of the government's money. Their ten percent. The only thing you're doing is collecting money. And what I see is the areas being totally run down and then at the end of the contract they hand that over to another concessionaire, who happens to be their competitor. And it's just...If you follow this there's like three, four companies involved in this. American Land and Leisure, Recreation Resource Management...There's like four.

Patsy: Yes.

P6: And each one employs eight, nine thousand people. And they get under this small business classification.

Patsy: Now you said they take the profit of it.

P6: They're taking profits and nothing...We actually operated a campground in Utah and a camper came up to me and he said "This campground used to be free." And so I camped at the same site and when it was free the picnic table was broken. So they started siphoning five dollars and the picnic table was still broken. Now, the last time we were up there it was right before the Olympics. The county put a tax on the campgrounds. The state put an Olympic tax on the campgrounds. So the guy comes up and he says, "We've gone from zero to eighteen dollars in a matter of four years, and the picnic bench is still broken!" Hey, that's what you have is privatization is probably not a good thing when you're dealing with government lands.

Patsy: Yeah, yes.

P6: And also one other thing, there's no, there's no accountability to the public. You can't find out how much money they're actually taking in. The National Parks Service or Forest Service operates a campground you can just fill out a Freedom of Information Request and say "Oh, now how much money did you take in today?" They have to tell

you. Private contractor says “It's private business records. We can't, can't be disclosed.” And the government backs them up in that. They actually protect them. So now...

P4: Are you finding this information online?

P6: No, I've traveled all over the country. I just happen to travel all the time.

P4: Because I know you can purchase, they have the real estate up there on one of the national web sites where you can purchase some of the land. Like purchase a lighthouse or whatever.

P6: Yeah.

P4: that the government can't take care of it anymore. *(overlapping voices)*

P6: I found this out because I was turned down for a job there once.

Russ: We're running out of time. Go ahead Participant 2.

P2: Now see that's what's happening, we're loosing it. Little by little, a little bit of encroachment, you know?

Russ: Along those same lines and this is something...See, I lived in both the east and the west, but being a political science person in the west, if you say something like this you're in big trouble. If you can say something like, “Would you pay more if the money were to be used to make the National Parks or the forests or the federal lands bigger,” because I know if you look at the map, almost all of Laramie and Colorado for example, already are federal lands.

Patsy: Nevada.

Russ: …And if anybody says well can we use the money to buy more they'd say “Well hey, that's my ranch. You can't buy my ranch. And we don't have any lands to expand.” But in the east there are hardly any big tracts of federal land. And we talk more about losing what little that's left. But over here, I mean if the money was going to go not to just maintaining the parks but maybe condemning tracts of land that are near it, or tacking things onto the parks when an opportunity comes along, how many would be in favor of that? I didn't...I shouldn't have thrown out that word “condemning.” But when an opportunity comes along to purchase a tract or real estate, do you think that maybe that would be a good idea or good use of this money? Would you be willing to pay a little more for a pass if you knew that was going to happen?

P4: I think it would be a good idea because in Massachusetts what's happening is people, and this is like the generation that's dying off, and they owned many of these tracts of lands that were farm lands and that's what's happening. And usually what they'll do is they may have a thing where they'll say “Okay, the town, the city has the right of first refusal.” And if people were aware that the federal government needed to expand, you know, some kind of a PR, I think that would be a really good idea. Because that's where those big huge tracts of land are being broken up into normal development. You know, but I think, you know, I think it would be good.

P1: So within in reason, within reason as far, you know, don't put the condo right next to it. Don't put the new developments right next to it. You know have at least some space in between. Make it only for use that's going to be, that's positive. Nothing to bring the property down.

P4: If you go to a town called Dover, Massachusetts, I think it's all state forests. I mean if you go through there, the development there is so restricted and it's been that way since the later part of the '60s. They lost a lot of money in that town, but they realize the development that was going to...They saw it. And it's just so much of the land is owned by the state. And if you go to it you see beautiful trails, *(inaudible)*.

P6: Now you're taking that land off the state, off the state tax roles.

Patsy: That's true.

P6: 'Cause the federal government is deducting taxes, even at state level. So now the property owners are subsidizing it even more.

P4: But they were farms before that so *(overlapping voices)*.

P6: But those people were paying taxes.

P4: Well very little, very little taxes were *(overlapping voices)*.

P6: Now they pay zero taxes, but the pay fees to get in the park.

Russ: Right. Yeah.

Zafar: *(*1:20:46*)* if we say that the distribution of money wherever you buy the pass, the money goes to that park in larger portion. So you go to that, say for example you go to a particular park that you care about a lot and the money, the majority of the chunk of money is going to that park, would you care about that part? Would that affect your willingness to pay more above that?

P6: Yeah, I think people would be willing to pay more if they actually see a direct result of their fees being implemented.

Zafar: In that particular...

P6: In that particular park. I mean people might spend the money, but they want to see the money, something being done. That's the bench, exactly. You know it's not *(laughter)*. But I think the attitude of the government has been, in a lot of these parks, is they don't do a park over until they almost have to close it down, because it's gotten so bad. And then they do this way overdevelopment where they put in water, electric, sewers in every campsite and they charge you a lot of money for camping. And then you have another area that's just down the road where you got hand pump and no sewer. I mean why not, you know, put reasonable development in and spread the money around. I mean you put your clean water and sanitation in this one, but you don't have to turn this one into a resort, you know? It's still supposed to be...They are not supposed to compete with KOA or a private sector.

Patsy: Participant 4, you mentioned kids a couple of times. Are there some facilities that you think you need for kids that you're not finding in the public lands around here? Or when you go you expect to do a little bit of roughing it.

P4; Just restrooms, basically. Nice and clean ones.

Patsy: Rocky Mountain National Park added on their own these dispensers of, what is it called? It's a like a bacterial disinfectant - Purell.

Patsy: And that's even in the pit toilets they have there. So that you feel like at least you can get your hands clean when you're coming out of it.

Unknown: That's good.

Patsy: Lots of people have commented on that up and down there doing another research project. That kind of very small scale improvements can really affect the quality of the experience people have.

P6: But it seems like they tend to want to do a big project.

Patsy: It's one way or the other, yeah.

P6: Yeah, there's nothing in between. They don't seem to spend...You know like the Rails to Trails, like Rails to Trails here at Peabody. They always want to repave it. Why don't just go in there once a year and fix the cracks and the asphalt, you know? Instead of trying to repave this whole thing, let it get to a point where it's completely unusable.

Patsy: It's a trail, yes.

P6: Yeah. It seems like once they do something, they don't allocate enough money to keep it in operation. You know, they keep collecting fees and everything, but nothings being fixed.

P1; Well that's like the city of Salem. *(laughing)*

Patsy: I think the federal lands have been way under-funded for awhile now, maybe for twenty years.

P2; You know, I think in South Boston they have an area called Castle Island and I don't know if that's under the federal or state or what? But you can go through there. You know you can do the tour at Castle Island. But outside of that there's a place, I think it's called Sullivan's, where you can buy hotdogs, and hamburgers, and things like that, but they have the concession there and there's an agreement that they...You know because it's exclusive, you can't go some place else and get something so they get that huge amount of business.

P3: But it's very reasonable.

P2: But the thing is their contract requires that they keep it reasonable and priced down.

Patsy: Right, yeah.

P2: And, you know what you're saying is that there are people that contract with the federal parks and they're just the sky's the limit.

P6: Exactly.

P2: But there in South Boston and you *(overlapping voices)* for the same price today that you spent, you know, years ago and now that's part of their contract that they have to keep it reasonable, because so many families and people go there. And it is jam packed, you know?

P4: And I was there last weekend.

P2: Jam packed.

P4: I go down there. Everybody goes down there.

P2: So if they can do it there and I think that's a...I don't know if it's under federal management.

P4: I know, I don't know what it is.

P2: I think it is because you know they were all dressed up in period costumes. Have you ever gone through there?.

P4: Oh, yeah, the castle. *(overlapping voices)*.

P2: Because they… That's where they… You know, that's like historic, you know, from many years ago. So I don't know why the federal government couldn't do that with the concessionaire people. And he makes a nice profit. He's not running out of there; he's not crying, you know?

P1: That's why I'm going to the grocery stores. I always bring my stuff. Plus the *(inaudible)* are usually run down.

P2: Castle Island's food is fine and it's very reasonable.

Unknown: Yeah that is.

P1: When?

P2: Oh, you're talking about little stores. No this is where you walk in and you get lunch. No they're cooking hamburgers, cheeseburgers and hot dogs.

Unknown: Yeah, reasonable is good.

Unknown: They're reasonable there, but *(inaudible)*.

Russ: You get yourself a few more minutes and I think Zafar's got a question.

Zafar: Yeah, I had a professor ask this question about *(inaudible)* in a redefined way. Say the NPS is trying to increase the price, and… but the passes we are going to have are one annual pass, and one senior citizen that we have the age and the lifetime, and another one is lifetime. Now, say for the annual pass, we have this one year pass that gives access to you, to all the National Parks and other federal lands and say no discounts or any other expanded amenities or any other user fee. And still how much would you be willing to pay? I need...He'll give you the book, parks booklet describing where you can access this pass.

Is that individual or family?

Zafar: It's a family. Say for example four family members are the number of people you have in the car other than under sixteens, anyway. So how much would you be willing to pay? And I would like to go around the table.

P1: Seventy dollars.

Zafar: I'm sorry?

P1: Seventy dollars.

Zafar: Seventy dollars.

Russ: The zero effect.

Zafar: I'm sorry?

Russ: The zero effect where we knock off the five.

P6: The pass that you just described costs sixty-five dollars now.

Zafar: And if somebody is willing to increase that price, how...What is the maximum you can go?

(overlapping voices)

P6: I would say it's probably worth seventy dollars.

P5: Same thing.

Zafar: Same thing.

P4: Seventy-five.

Patsy: Do we hear any...*(laughing)*

P3: I mean it has to be an increase; it couldn't be a decrease? Is that what you'd say? *(Laughter)* I'll say fifty. Can I say fifty?

Zafar: Sure.

Russ: Participant 4, did you say the same thing?

P3: Seventy-five.

Russ: Seventy-five.

P3: I'd rather fifty, but... *(laughter)*

Zafar: That's the maximum right? That's the maximum you're willing to pay?

P2: But that's because so many more people are going to be coming, so that, you know, bring down the price. And that's why I said fifty dollars.

Russ: Was there a rule that said they couldn't go lower than $65?

Zafar: It does not say there's a rule but...Of course she can say that.

Russ: *(inaudible)* calculations about would it increase the number of sales if the price was lower.

Zafar: Yeah, but do you think the current price is worth?

P6: Is this a...

Zafar: But it gives you access to all the National Forests and...

P1: But you don't get a book with it. *(laughter)*

Zafar: Yeah, you do.

P1: You do?

Zafar: *(inaudible)* Well the list of the national parks in every single state.

Patsy: You don't get *that* book, the passport. *(overlapping voices)*

P1: And passport book with it. As cute as that...That one's kind of nice. What's that called?

P6: Have you ever seen one of these?

Russ: Passport to Your National Parks.

P1: Yeah, how cool.

Patsy: And there’s a stand at every visitor’s center?

Unknown: Yeah.

Patsy: Every park has it's own particular stand. If you take kids *(inaudible)*.

P1: It's pretty cool.

Unknown: Oh that is, excellent.

Patsy: So it's like a record while they're growing up.

(overlapping voices)

Patsy: Like an international passport.

P6: She has one for lighthouses.

Patsy: Oh you do? That's cool.

Unknown: Wow!

P6: But it's hard to find, a lot of lighthouses aren't open. It's hard to get into them, you know.

Patsy: Got to go down to Key West and go...

P1: You got to make the passes sound fun. You really do. You know if people are going to spend their little hard earned money, you know, make it sound fun. But some people, more people are working two, three, jobs you know?

Russ: So like it to escape. It's a way to get away from it all.

P1: Yeah.

Russ: For not very much money.

P3: Just like the southwest commercials. "Time to get away!" *(*Laughter*)*.

P6: The cards are actually an excellent value even with the entrance fees. I think.

Unknown: Yeah.

P1: It's all right if a kid runs into a skunk, it's his problem . *(laughter)*

We have a lot of fares out here in Massachusetts too you know so, you know I think that's what you do *(*1:31:11*)*.

Russ: Do you have anything?

Patsy: No, I think this is it.

(the focus group is directed on how to fill out their waiver forms for compensation and the discussion ends)

Focus Group #2: Richmond, Virginia
September 12, 2005

Moderators: Patricia (Patsy) Taylor, Russ Miller (transcript)
Assistant Moderator: Zafar Khan

Moderators are shown by their first names. Participants are given participant numbers, as follows:

Group Demographics

Identifier	Gender	Age	Profession	Income Range
P1	Female	55	Nurse Practitioner	3
P2	Female	57	Manager of Pre-Authorization for Waiver Services	2
P3	Male	49	Senior Engineer	2
P4	Male	47	Virginia Department of Health Program Director	3
P5	Female	44	Accountant	2
P6	Male	61	Project Specialist with Parks Planning, county-level	3
P7	Male	52	Part-time temporary job, Recently graduated	2
P8	Female	52	On disability, Former elementary school counselor	3
P9	Male	39	Guidance Counselor	2
P10	Female	56	Clinical Consultant	2
P11	Female	42	Analyst	2

Patsy: My name is Patsy Taylor, Patricia Taylor. I asked Russ if I could begin the focus group and introduce myself, because I lived in Virginia for fifteen years. I worked as a statistician at the federal civil service for a number of years. Lived in Alexandria, then my husband and I moved to Charlottesville, and I taught at the University of Virginia. And both my kids were born here in Virginia. They're now real Wyoming kids. They walk around in sandals in the snow, and T-shirts! It's a whole different mindset when you live in Wyoming. So, I wanted to introduce myself and say hi to you. It's nice to see the pines again, and the smells. Virginia… Virginia is just such a lovely state. I mean, you come here and it's a soft, visual look instead of that kind of hard plain, and the hard Rocky Mountains, and so forth. But I have lots of family in the west, a job opened up for me, and a job opened up for my husband, so we thought we had to go.

We're doing a study for the National Park Service, the US Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Bureau of Reclamation; and what they've asked us to do is to solicit citizen input on the number of issues related to access to the parks and the forest service, pricing of access, user fees to the parks and the forests, and dams, and lakes, and so forth managed by the Bureau of Reclamation and Bureau of Land Management. And we have a series of questions that we'll be asking and prompting you with for the discussion tonight. We also have, as Russ puts it—this is Russ Miller, who actually manages most of our focus groups. He is employed at the Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center. He's also an ex-Army guy, so he knows about keeping things in lockstep. Zafar Dad Khan just finished his doctoral dissertation in environmental economics at the University of Wyoming, so he knows all about these pricing issues we're going to be talking about, but he won't confuse you with any equations tonight. You know? We'll go back to Wyoming and do that. And my own background is as a statistician and sociologist. I love park service work. I have one project at Rocky Mountain National Park right now, and then I have this project on pricing. But what they want to find out is how people think about using the Park Pass, or the Forest Service Pass, how often they use recreational lands, what kinds of questions you have about the cost of a pass. And we'll try and elicit that information in a number of different ways tonight. We have recorders on, so everything you say is recorded. We'll, for our own convenience, associate a name with what's said. But by the time this is typed up and given to the federal agencies, there won't be a name associated with this. We do want you to feel free to give us unpopular positions, to give us kind of outrageous positions, whatever you think about these issues is important; because that will help us in constructing a questionnaire and in giving information back to the federal agencies. I also want to say that the Office of Management and Budget has given us a boilerplate of information to say. This has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget by law number such-and-such, the paperwork reduction act, and so forth. We have it written down. If you want to see it at the end of the focus group, we'll be glad to let you see the text of this. At the end of the focus group, also, you'll get fifty dollars each for participating. We can't pay you completely for your time, but we want to give you some honorarium. If you had to pay for parking, tell us that, too. We give ten dollars for parking, as well. So, please let us know at the end of the focus group what you need to recover. We'll go for an hour and forty-five minutes to two hours. I know some of you want to get back to that Monday night football game. I talked with a couple of you about that, so we will stop at 9 o'clock, maybe a little before. I'll sit back here next to the wall and jump up if I have something I just have to say, but Russ and Zafar, actually, will lead the focus group. Okay?

Maybe the first thing we need to do is go around the room and let all of you introduce yourselves to us, and we can start here with Participant 5.

P5: Participant 5. That's it. *(laughter)*

P4: Participant 4.

P3: Participant 3.

P2: Participant 2.

P1: Participant 1.

P11: Participant 11.

P12: Participant 12.

P13: Participant 13.

Russ: That reminds me: there's probably a couple of things I should say. We do have a few ground rules for focus groups. I want to make sure that everybody feels comfortable in that their identities are protected. So, if you want keep it down to first names, or if you want to contribute a last name, as well, then you can feel free to if you want to volunteer that. I just don't want to feel like anybody is under pressure to reveal their secret identity or their real identity, whichever it may be. I'm Russ Miller, and as Patsy said, I'm a scientist over at WYSAC, and Assistant Research Scientist, I should say. Zafar is also, and, well… a couple of the things we'd like to say just before we get started is if you have a cell phone, could you please be sure to turn it off. I know it's very difficult to get service down here anyway. It's almost as if we've descended to a dungeon or something like that. But just in case it goes off, we don't want you to interrupt anything. And, if anybody has anything they're very eager to say, if you could please just wait until anybody else is done talking, and then we won't have overlapping voices on the recorder. Because one of the things that I do when we're done is type up these transcripts, and even if we have these wonderful comments that we just can't wait get down, if two people are talking at once, even though we can comprehend it when we're watching them, when it comes time to do the transcripts it just becomes garbled. And we have to get together and huddle up and think "And what were they saying? Zafar, whose name is that in there?" And so forth. Want you to know that we won't actually be using your full names, although you're going to be signing a form that says you've received your money, and we will reimburse you for parking as well, we will not use your names in anything we deliver to our contractor, which, of course as Patsy said, are several federal government agencies that are related to parks. Even if you work for the state park system, you will become Participant 5, for example, or Participant 1, or Participant 3. And, even if the government sees the complete transcript, it should be very difficult for them to say "Ah… They're out to get us. We need to do something about that person. We'll bar them from all the national parks and see what happens. But I do have a *few* questions I'd like to lead off with. We've already gone around the room and gotten some names. I'm kind of curious about, especially in the Virginia area, us being spoiled, and from Wyoming where Yellowstone is, and near Glacier National Park, and Canyonlands, and things like that. I'd like to know what folks' favorite park, or forest, or wildlife refuge, or any kind of federal land that they'd like to visit or hunt on is. We could start right over here with Participant 1, and kind of work our way around the room.

P1: Federal Land?

Russ: Yeah.

P1: I would say George Washington National Forest. Is that federal land?

Many: Yes.

P1: There's a lot of state parks that I frequent, but I think that's what come to mind first.

Russ: Also, what do you like to do when you're there?

P1: We camp, and hike, and there's a river. We, you know, kayak. We enjoy the lake very much.

P2: Actually, I've never been to a federal park.

Russ: Really? Not at all? What about a historic site? I mean, we were just in Boston. In Boston, Old Ironsides is up there, and all kinds of historical buildings.

P2: Girl Scout camps?

Russ: Girl Scout camps? Some of those may actually be down on federal lands. I'm not sure. I know the one where I grew up was in a state park.

P2: I don't think so. I've been to a camping ground *(inaudible).*

Russ: Well, then my question would be "How come?" Is it too far to go? Is it inconvenient?

P2: It's been very far—it is very far to go.

Russ: Okay.

P3: I like Great Smokey Mountains National Park.

Russ: Isn't that the most frequently visited?

Patsy: Yes, that's the most visited by about a factor of two or three in the US.

Russ: And what do you like to do while you're there?

P3: Just… I like to go up there when it's hot here in the summertime, because it's nice and cool there.

Russ: Oh, yeah? We can do that all the time where I come from.

P3: Yeah.

P4: Hatteras National Seashore (9:22 Olympus).

Patsy: Yes.

P4: Hatteras… National… Seashore…

Russ: We had another one of those where we just came from in Boston. There's one near Cape Cod.

Patsy: But the Hatteras water is warm. *(laughter)*

Russ: And what do you like to do while you're there?

P4: Fish mostly.

Russ: Do you need any permit or anything like that while you're doing it?

P4: No.

Russ: Great.

(inaudible remark)

P4: *(laughing)* And that's okay!

Russ: Participant 5?

P5: The one I visit the most is the George Washington National Park. I've been to that the most. I go on horseback trail rides several times a year, and we camp, and I like *(inaudible)*. I guess that's a state park. I go there at least once a year.

Russ: And when you're in George Washington, do you have to pay any fees for camping or anything like that?

P5: We had to pay something to use a campground at least once, I know. Usually we go with the groups, so somebody would have to pay it to use the campground. 'Cause we had… We went to one that had like bathroom facilities, and grills, and things like that. We had to pay up there one time. It wasn't very much.

Russ: Okay. Yes?

P6: It's hard for me to pick my favorite one, but I have to say probably my favorite one is Rocky Mountain National Park, and second most favorite, after Hatteras, would probably be The Volcanoes National Park in Hawaii. I'd like to go back. I'm trying to get up the nerve to dawn my undersea gear and go down and look at the undersea part, *(laughing)* but I haven't had the nerve quite yet.

Russ: I'll bet that's got to be warm water, too.

P6: Pretty much. *(laughter)* Pretty much.

Russ: Patsy is actually doing a long-term contract with Rocky Mountain National Park. We've been sending folks down *every* weekend to do surveys.

P6: The only problem I have with Rocky Mountain National Park, is if you're from the east coast you need to try to get acclimated before you go up, because I thought I was going to die. *(laughter)* We actually left a few days early because of the altitude. I just couldn't take it. It was a beautiful place.

Russ: We feel like supermen when we come down to see you all. *(laughter)*

P7: My favorite is Bryce National Park. Yosemite, especially during springtime with waterfalls. But around here, civil war battlefields. Gettysburg and Manassas, Petersburg, and Richmond *(inaudible)*.

Russ: Do you have to pay to get into the battlefield areas?

P7: Not really. Gettysburg you don't, unless you take the little tours and stuff like that, which is, to me, highly recommended. You know, take the little bus tours, and people walk through Gettysburg, and Manassas. Going to have fun.

Russ: Participant 8?

P8: I guess Hatteras, because I spent so much time down there. But, as I was trying to think of other places, they're mainly state places. And if they're *near* federal places, then not to be able to take advantage of it because of time. Like Acadia, when we were taking our daughter on a college trip, and we had ten minutes. *(laughter)*. And… And where? I'm trying to think where else. But a lot of the historical places; I get taken there with my husband, but I'd rather go to—I'd like to go to some of the more outdoorsy parks and things.

Russ: Participant 9?

P9: Mainly I've visited the state parks. I guess Ferris Stone, what's the… Fairmont Park in Philly, went to Appomattox… I don't know if that's federal or not?

Unknown: That is federal, yeah.

P9: I'm a hiker, camper. I have a canoe in the backyard; I try to put that out there sometime, but my daughter is a little afraid of that. But we like to…

Russ: How old is she?

P9: Nine and seven.

Russ: Okay.

P9: But we do camping, and canoeing, and hiking, but mainly on state parks.

Russ: When you do that are there any fees you have to pay for camping? Things like that?

P9: Camping fees, minimal. Like twenty dollars.

Russ: Okay.

P10: I probably have done more of the historic type things with the… when I was a grandmother, I did a lot of the historic stuff with the Cub Scouts, doing the… You can do the junior ranger thing going to… From Richmond, doing all the Richmond battlefields. Then you can take the scouts to them, and they go into the nice little patch, and you can do the same with Hatteras, so that was one of the big things that… go, starting at

Nagshead… at the, like… what is the… white museum there? You know, going on down, and doing all Kitty Hawk, and doing all the lighthouses, and everything like that, and then the kids get a junior pack, too. So that was one of the big things. I'm from Philly, too, so Fairmount—yes! Well, that's a real historic park, and actually it's where the navy base used to be. It's a huge park, *(inaudible)*, and a huge park that's kind of like Central Park in New York, you know? That same type of thing where there's horse trails and things like that, too, so… But most… I love the historic part of it; Boston, I just *(inaudible)* do those, too! You know? So… Yeah, and Philly down to like Valley Forge, and things like that to Gettysburg and all.

Russ: We're so used to thinking, because we're out west, that these parks as being a thousand square mile area…

P10: Against… a building.

Russ: …coming through a road with car and people, but there's also… You can just get out of your car, and bring your whole family with you, if you…

P10: Well, what's really nice is you can do Valley Forge. That's just very special – a part of our history and you can do it again. You can either take the bus trip, or they actually have a little cassette you can buy, and you just put it in your car, and just drive through, and it will "stop here at number 5," "stop here at," you know, at number two. And it will give you this whole history. So, it's kind of a neat thing to do that, and you can go to Independence Hall, doing that whole thing down there with those ships and everything. It's a really nice thing.

Russ: Participant 11?

P11: Probably Yosemite. I went there as a child in the summertime. We got to see Old Faithful, and do some hiking and walking, and then… I actually did it in the wintertime a couple of years ago. My husband and I snowmobiled through it. So I got to see it both seasons, and probably go back again just because there's so much to see, different seasons and different parts of it.

Russ: We're hoping to get a glimpse of it when we visit Fresno for another focus group, but it's going to be rush, rush, rush. Do you have any recommendations for Yosemite? In thirty minutes or less? *(laughter)*

Unknown: That's my kind of tour!

P11: If you're going out there this time of year? I don't know. See Old Faithful, obviously.

Russ: Oh, okay.

Unknown: That's in Yellowstone.

P11: Oh! I'm sorry.

Russ: A lot of people confuse the Y ones.

P11: Okay, yeah. I'm sorry. Yellowstone. What I was thinking.

Russ: But, either way, scenery was kind of your objective.

P11: Definitely, yes.

Russ: One of the things we really like and we're hoping to do is kind of get an idea of what everybody spends when they're going to these places, because that's kind of our objective, is to figure out how this product with the Park Service and all these other federal lands-based agencies could be priced to meet your needs, and not be so ridiculously expensive that nobody would want to buy one, and yet still be a value for your money. Does anybody have an idea how much they spend? I mean, if you don't go to state parks, I would understand, so we don't necessarily want to do a… Or I should take a look at federal parks. But, even if you're just going to state parks and things like that, what do you pay on things? Especially if they're fees just to get in. What do you think you spend in a year? And folks can just volunteer on this one. You don't have to wait for me to call on you. If there's just a little pregnant pause, you can say…

P1: I had forgotten about the pass fee to go through the parkway entrance. I was so delighted that my… which one did I have? The National Parks Pass. *(inaudible))* That's a ten dollar fee just to drive on it, or twenty dollars for the whole season and the pass was good for it, so that was one of the things. But, ordinarily I'd pay ten dollars to drive it, and then *(inaudible)* state park, I mean, to camp and not the campgrounds along the way. So, it can get pricey unless you stay, you know, two weeks or something like that.

Russ: So, if you were using that on a regular basis before you had the pass, how much do you think you might have been spending on the—

P1: Well, I always paid the twenty dollar, you know, it was good for the whole year.

Russ: Oh, okay, just that park.

P1: Instead of paying ten dollars each time. And then you pay about ten or fifteen dollars to camp, which, you know *(inaudible)* to drive on it, so…

Russ: Oh, okay, but eventually you got the National Parks Pass.

P1: I did, because I went out to Gettysburg and I also went to Harper's Ferry. Gosh, it was good for a number of places. It was good for Philadelphia. It was… I really utilized it for the year that I had it, so…

Russ: Oh, so you don't have it anymore?

P1: Not currently, because I, you know… You're planning what you're going to be doing, and we went on a cross country trip and hit about ten different places, and kind of haven't been anywhere but state parks in the last year. So, it just depends. You kind of have to really search the internet and plan what you're going to be doing.

Russ: Do you think if you hadn't had the parks pass you would have planned that big trip? Or… Or is it… Gone to quite as many places?

P1: I had to go out there anyway, and I would not have done what we did. We stayed in Kings Canyon, Yosemite, and I think we hit several other places, too, so I wouldn't have done that otherwise, without the pass.

Russ: And did you have a National Parks Pass or was it a Golden Eagle Passport, or something like that?

P1: No. I didn't qualify, and that was the other thing I was rejected. What with the age. I'm glad they had the National Parks Pass.

P8: The Golden Eagle? Is that the one that's good for the national forests?

Russ: It's good for national parks, too.

Zafar: The Golden Age is the one where age is concerned, but not the Eagle. With a stamp you can, just another fifteen dollar stamp you can use for to make it a Golden Eagle, so…

Russ: I'd like to save the Golden Age one for last. So you… we don't really want to talk about that. A little piece of it is secret. But, anybody else? Fees that you knew you had to pay?

P8: This is not exactly what you're asking, but when I was younger and my husband and I were students at UVA, we liked to go up to Shenandoah Valley on weekends a lot and hike, and go up the waterfalls, and take picnics, but we were poor students. So we'd get up there, and we could nev—we didn't never want to pay those… the fee to go on the parkway, because we'd go the other direction and save us, whatever it was, ten dollars or whatever. It was a lot of money to us. So, I think that… I mean maybe we were the exception, but I didn't meet a lot of students that would pay it, but it kept us from being able to utilize the park like we would have liked to.

Russ: Okay, because there was a fee.

P8: One time we did go camping and paid the fee, but, you know, we didn't do it very often.

Russ: Do you think if you'd been able to get something like that that would have covered your fees for a year; if that had been available at that time, do you think you might have bought it?

P8: Yeah.

Russ: Would that have… Would that have seemed expensive for someone who is a student?

P: Well, we might have. I mean, they were not available at the time. Is that what you're saying? I mean we didn't know they were. *(laughs)*

Russ: Patsy, can you kind of fill them in?

Patsy: I think it was '91.

Russ: ’91.

Patsy: I think… when they started issuing passes for all the parks. To each of all the parks *(inaudible)* the National Parks Pass, and maybe ’94 or ’95… No, it’s the other way around. It was ’91 for the Golden Eagle Pass, and then the Parks decided to start issuing their own pass; the National Parks Service. So, sometime in the nineties.

P8: Well, if there’s a pass that includes all the historic places, and maybe there is and we just don’t know about it, I’m sure that that’s something that my family would do at this point. And we just don’t realize it.

Unknown: The parks were free before ’91, weren’t they?

Patsy: Some parks were, some parks still are. Great Smokey Mountains doesn’t have an entrance fee, because there are too many points to get into it. But Yellowstone, it’s kind of in a bowl, so it can be very well regulated. So, it depends on the park.

Russ: I think national forests were all free until just a few years ago.

Patsy: And now there’s a… the only way they can assess a fee is for parking, because if you park there and you don’t have a permit, they can issue you a ticket. Of course, their campgrounds have fees, too.

Russ: They’re trying to call it a “basic amenities fee” instead of an entrance and parking fee?

P9: The Maggie Walker House is a national park. I don’t think there’s a fee over there.

Russ: Okay, so not every historical site.

P9: It’s really just a block; a city block, but its… they have park rangers.

P10: The Richmond battlefield… we never paid a fee to go into any of that.

Patsy: But to go see the Liberty Bell now, in Philadelphia…

P10: Do you pay a fee now?

Patsy: There’s a fee now, and at Valley Forge there’s a fee.

P10: Yeah, we paid a fee at Valley Forge.

Patsy: Which is really unusual, that the historical sites will have a fee.

P10: Right, yeah.

P1: When does… When did the Liberty Bell have a fee?

Patsy: Three years ago. They put it in a visitor fee.

P1: It's been in that sink for a while. It's been in there for a while. I mean, because when my kids were little it was in… *(overlapping voices)* But, I can't remember if you had to pay to go into Independence Hall or not. I don't think so. I mean it's all right there.

Patsy: You've got to get a ticket now.

P1: You have to get a ticket?

Patsy: …for anybody in your group to go in. *(inaudible)* there's a fee *(inaudible)*

P8: Williamsburg's the same way. It's not a national park, but you can see certain things, but if you want to really see everything… and that's pretty expensive.

P10: Yeah, now Yorktown's a national… And you can get through, and you can go in there for free, and go drive through there. Again, I think you get the tape and stop, if you want, you can get the tape and stop at the little, you know, each little thing. But I don't think you pay for it to go through there. I can't recall paying for it. You know, sometimes you take these kids and you just…

Patsy: Give them your credit card *(inaudible)*

P10: I don't think they took credit cards back then.

P8: Is there a discount for taking a group of kids for Girl Scouts or something like that?

Russ: Kids get in if they're sixteen or younger for free.

P10: So maybe I don't pay for me *(laughs)*.

Russ: Plus we make them drive themselves in those cases. So, if you're going in a car, you just take a carload. Anybody else have an idea how much money they think they spend in a year?

P4: I use the National Parks Pass, and it gets me and my vehicle in. As I said earlier, I'm a scout leader, so I usually have an entourage, and not very many of the folks that drive for me and my other leaders have the passes, so we factor in, with the boys, with the cost of getting a vehicle. So we spend a lot of time up in Shenandoah National Park; and a lot of that is folks will… will come up, and there'll be two or three leaders on the trail with the boys, but we went up there with four or five cars. They dropped off the boys, turned around, and left. They still had to pay the entrance fee to get in, and were able to drop off the tickets so that the people coming up to pick them up don't have to pay again to get back in, because they're good for three days. But that's a cost that we build into what we're doing, and so we probably go up there and hike three or four times a year, so that's probably… we probably end up spending forty or fifty dollars each time.

Russ: To get a car through is it about ten dollars?

P4: I think it's ten dollars.

Russ: Without an annual pass. Anybody else?

P6: Between my wife and I, we probably average thirty to forty dollars a year. And now that I know I can get these passes, I'm going to drop the national forests. Sometimes our time is so limited that we never know where we can go when. So, when we get a chance, we just have to take off and go. So, we've never gotten a pass. The one time I did buy a pass I used it once and never was able to use it again. But most of those fees would be for historic sites, and museums, national museums of some kind. That's what that would be about.

Russ: Do you think you would go a lot more often if you had the pass?

P6: I think I would. I think the *biggest* detriment to my wife and myself is just time. We're thinking about retiring, so I was… That's just not going to be a problem. So the passes for us, if the prices are reasonable, probably be real. Beneficial I think. And I will not be… personally, as a citizen, I don't mind paying fees. I think it's a justifiable thing. I really do.

Russ: That is one of the things that we kind of wanted to get out there; that the parks do depend on fees to pay the rangers, to do upkeep, in some cases to expand when they get the opportunity to buy a little more land. And when you buy a parks pass or pay an entrance fee, most of the money goes straight to that park, and some of it may be set aside and split up among the other parks, but most of the money that you pay to buy one of these, whether it's a pass for the whole country, or that particular, or just one day's entrance fee goes to that particular park, the majority of it. Anybody else? Any idea how much they spend when they go into all their favorite places in here?

P10: I know with the State Parks it depends, like, for instance if you go down to Virginia Beach, and you go to the state park down there, if you want to go use the bay you can just use the bay. The bay is right there, Chesapeake Bay. I think it's eight dollars to go and use it for the day, and I was just in Delaware and used the state park there, and it was eight dollars. And it was a really nice, I mean, it wasn't a huge state park, but what was really nice about it is it did have a bath house, which is kind of an old fashioned thing where you can actually go change. You know, they had showers in there, and you could change your clothes, and what have you, which was really nice. Rather than driving a couple of hours with all that sand, you know? That was really nice. They don't, I don't think down at…, we always camped down at Virginia Beach, but they have cabins there, which were very reasonable. I think my kids loved it when we used to go down there… just, the cabins were really nice, that you go to cabins and all. And they ran about four or five hundred dollars a week, but that's pretty cheap for… for *(inaudible)* so… Much more expensive in Delaware *(laughs)*.

Patsy: Has anyone ever been down to False Cape State Park? I *love* that place. How did you get down to it; did you walk through the refuge? *(overlapping voices)*. I thought I'd be the only person in here that went down. We've seen wild horses, wild pigs, snakes.

P10: You know, you don't see them when you're taking kids. *(laughter)*

P1: I'd probably buy a pass and utilize it if there were more national parks in the Virginia area. I mean we've only got state parks for the most part, except up on the mountains,

and it may just be kind of a way. Stuff like that, all the way out there. Plan a trip or something.

P8: Can y'all do something about that? *(laughter)*

Russ: I'm sorry. What did you say?

P8: Can you do something about that and build us some more national parks?

Russ: Yeah, we're kind of spoiled in the west, because if you want to look at your map. When you talk about expanding a national park or creating a new national park out west, with all that land in all those different colors already set aside for the state or, actually, the federal government. Those are fighting words. Those will get a politician thrown out of office. I'm a political science person. Kind of the opposite in the east where all you see is that blank space there. Let me ask you this: if you knew that the money would be going towards expanding national parks in the state of Virginia, would you be willing to pay a little more in entrance fees, or be willing to buy the pass regardless of whether you planned a major trip around the…

P8: Yeah. Yeah, definitely *(agreement around the room)*

Russ: What's that? I see two nods, and a yes.

Unknown: Here's another yes.

Russ: Okay.

P6: I'd say one thing about national, state parks, whatever. Basically, I'd have to say overall that's the one government service that everybody can use, and I think the fees are very reasonable; I think the money's well spent. I can't say that about all government services. Some of them I will never use, or don't qualify, but that's fine. I don't have a problem with… I've been all over the country camping and I've never been less than a day's drive from a national or state park somewhere. We've camped in tents and in trailers, and for me, and for kids in particular the experience, it's just something different about that. My kids are thirty-five, forty years old, and basically speaking if you talk about vacations, the ones where we camped in the national parks is what they talk about. So the experience is great. I won't mind paying more if I get the quality experience. I really don't.

Russ: Are there other folks that would like to see the parks expanded? Do you have any ideas about places in particular that are neglected, maybe should be parks, or national forests, or protected in some way?

P6: I'd say more of our battlefields need protected than we have. I know that's not a popular subject in some circles, but we've just been through a major study in *(name removed)* county, and it's very discouraging when you see national b—what I consider important Civil War battlefields and some even from the Revolutionary War, the next thing you know the bulldozers come right through it. And I know it's not something that… you know, it's not very popular because you don't get tax return all out of that, but it's pretty discouraging, I think, to see how…

P8: That's something I have a lot of memories of when I was younger, for some reason, as a kid we used to go to the battlefields a lot.

P6: Right.

Russ: I think Walden Pond was a very big deal recently, where Thoreau or Whitman wrote a lot of poetry, nature poetry. Any areas around here that are sort of considered sacred, and nobody has dared touch yet?

P11: And something that's been underutilized is the James River in Richmond. And now they're going to build Rocket's Landing, but that's… I mean, that's nice in a way. You're going to bring money in, but we won't be able to share that with people that don't have a condo *(laughs)*.

P8: I went down there thinking I could afford to live there if I lived under water *(laughs, laughter)*. And for some reason I misunderstood something I read about what the houses or the condos start at.

P6: About two fifty.

P8: No.

Many: No. *(overlapping voices)*

P8: Higher. It's over three hundred and it's *very* small.

P6: But I think I'd have to act on your sentence about the change road. If there' any one area, probably, in *(inaudible)* Virginia that the historic sites have not been documented properly, and I'm not sure what the reason why is other than the fact that the landowners don't want it because they feel like the value of the land goes down. But we've got several sites I've just seen recently that, I'll tell you, if they're big—I mean Rocket's Landing's a big one, but Wilson Farms is right in the middle of two or three historic sites and this all will be gone. And one of the archeologists said, he said "You see that drywall barge going down the road?" We said "Yeah." Well, there goes another archeological site down at Chesapeake Bay." I said "What?"

P8: Well, Rocket's Landing has a… did you, have you been there? They have a… right if you go to the water's edge, there's a piece of cement there. And, evidently, that is some… It was some kind of mine and they turned it into a restaurant. And then… Is it Belle Isle where they used to have prisons during that… the Civil War? And they're putting condos there; and it used to be, you know, everybody could walk around there, and now they'll be a condo there.

P11: They're putting condos on Belle Isle?

P8: Yeah, aren't they?

P6: Brown—*(overlapping voices)*

P8: Okay, I hope not, because that is one area that you can see a little something. It's still underdeveloped there.

Russ: I have another question. Those of you that said they had parks passes of some kind, how did you find out about them?

P6: I found out from my wife who always shops the bargains. *(laughter)*

Russ: Okay, how did she find out?

P6: I'm guessing she looked at the park brochure as we went through the entrance gate, and told me after I went through the gate and paid the fee that I could have gotten a pass, a season's pass. But I think… I mean now… Now we know more about it, we would have probably used one, but that's how we first learned about it.

P11: I think there were times when we went through a gate and they actually brought it to our attention; the person collecting. Our family never utilized it because it was just passing through one time, and we knew we wouldn't be back.

Russ: Probably at Yellowstone or someplace like that?

P11: Yeah, and several other parks. Yeah, I mean we never bought one because we were just visiting from New Jersey, so…

Russ: Did they say anything like you could take the entrance fee that you had paid and use it towards the purchase of a parks pass later on if you wanted to? Your receipt?

P2: At the Great Smokey Mountains—it just occurred to me that I was there—it said that you could apply the fee towards a pass.

Russ: Okay, so there is at least one federal land that you've been to. Okay.

P5: I don't recall that, but that doesn't mean that they didn't.

P8: Why aren't the passes advertised more?

Russ: That's kind of why I was asking that question.

P1: In my search I was doing the trip planning thing, and trying to place different stays at different places, and checking all the different parks. And there are a lot of different national agencies, and federal agencies and, anyway, I came up on it like that. That… This… it's kind of difficult to maneuver when you've got, your—what is it? Your Forest Service, I found a cabin there. I had to *dig* and dig and dig on the internet to find that. It was a wonderful opportunity, but I had to spend hours planning the whole trip or I probably wouldn't have stumbled upon it, and that's kind of how I came up on the pass, too. It probably was something I clicked over in the sidebar or something.

Russ: Oh, it was on the internet. Maybe a little popup or something like that.

P4: When we went to Acadia and… signing in and getting our pass… and my son had a banner of a national monument, he'd heard of it. And the ranger said "Do you… Do you go a lot?" And we said "Yeah, all the time." And he said "Here's what you really need to do." And we bought one every year since. Just do it as an annual thing.

P8: Did they send you a reminder?

P4: They… No. But I go off and get it when it gets close to getting expired. I just buy another one.

Patsy: Yeah, if you sign up for coins and you buy coins, sets of coins from the Mint, the US Mint? They send you an announcement every year, "Finally, a new set!" You know, but I've been a Parks Pass owner for five years, and I've never gotten a reminder.

P1: Oh, I get emails all the time.

Patsy: Do you? To buy a Parks Pass? An email? Okay, so that part works.

P1: NPS.

Russ: Did anybody else buy theirs over the internet, if they bought one? Just Participant 1, and she gets email reminders? *(inaudible)* at the park entrance?

P7: A library book, national parks books.

Russ: Okay, and you got it through mail order?

P7: No, just national park books. You just get, you go to the library and get, you know, the book about national parks, and they always explain about the pass in the front.

Russ: Okay, and when did you purchase it then?

P7: Well, the very first time, the first park I went into.

Russ: Oh, okay.

P7: I asked them, I said "I'm going to a bunch of parks. I need a pass." Because I knew what I was looking for, first park I went to.

Russ: Where would everybody like to be able to get something like this? I mean, it's kind of hard to find out about… for some of us, or maybe some of us… I mean, how many of us have never even heard of these, before they came here today? *(inaudible)*

P8: I started reading about parks when I knew I was coming here, *(inaudible)*. Otherwise, I didn't know! *(laughter)*

Russ: I know that I live in Wyoming, and I had never heard of these before I started working on this project.

P8: We don't have any parks here, so…

P9: I was planning a trip out west one time, and I was pretty much search engines, researching, whatnot. And it never came across. Maybe I just wasn't looking in the right place.

Russ: So, you're kind of like when you drive in, you pay your entrance fee, and that's the way it works. There's no special way to get through to go to all these other parks for the same amount of money. Where would anybody like to be able to these passes? I mean, convenience stores?

P8: Libraries.

Unknown: AAA.

P7: Post Office.

P8: Libraries.

P6: I think the Post Office or the internet would be great, because most everybody's got access.

P8: Some people don't have the internet, though.

P6: But you can go to the library, I mean, most libraries have got that.

P5: My first thought was the post office, because that's where you go to get your passports…

Russ: Okay, so maybe the same place you go to get a passport to go overseas.

P4: I don't have any problem getting them when I go to the park, and my concern about doing something like at the Post Office, the Post Office is going to want their cut. And I don't… I buy them every year, whether I'm planning a trip or not. You can scout *(inaudible)*, but usually more frequently than that. I don't mind a fifty dollar pass, because I know what the money goes for, and I don't mind buying at either Shenandoah or Petersburg, which are probably the two local ones that I go to most frequently, and you know, the money stays, for the most part, at that park. That's even better for me *(inaudible 41:12)*.

Russ: *(inaudible 41:14)* say the money's going to the closest park, but maybe there was an extra two dollar charge on top of the fifty dollars, the sixty-five dollars, or whatever it was. So that the Post Office was paid for their time.

P4: Like I said, I don't have a problem with picking it up at the park when I go to the park, because I'm there often, and there will be other options if they're available on the internet, because that was… that would be fine, too. And, as long as the fifty dollars I'm paying still gets to the park service, pay the Post Office a surcharge, that's fine, too.

Patsy: Participant 4, it sounds like you're suggesting that part of what you're paying for is an altruism, that you just want to support the parks.

P4: Yeah, there's a fair amount of that.

Patsy: Yeah, has that been consistent in the way you've approached parks. Is that consistent… Do the people feel that way, too?

P4: Yeah, I mean… Like I said, you're going to Hatteras National Seashore. There's not a charge there unless you're going to climb one of the lighthouses. There's a whole lot of being bantered back and forth about whether or not they're going to charge beach tax *(inaudible 42:22)*.. and so there's some talk about buying permanent drive on the beach. I don't have a problem with that, either. A little tough to enforce because there are so many access points; but the rangers patrol the beach. If they see you without a sticker, that's how they would do it. And I would buy that. I go down there probably a couple of weeks a year. Well, like I said, the park pass—whether I use it or not. I'll probably use it at least once. If I don't use it at all, that's still okay.

Patsy: That's still okay, though? Okay.

P4: Because there are those years when you use it fifteen times.

P8: I disagree about… Excuse me, I just put candy in my mouth. *(laughter)* I disagree about paying for access to everything, though. I mean, I'm fine about parks and things, but feel like going on the beach, the fish are… I feel like there should be certain things that you pay taxes for and you should be able to do.

P4: I disagree with that. I mean, I understand the point… and I think that there's a—from a tax base standpoint, everybody, whether you ever go to the park or not, benefits from having these lands set aside. So, from a… that's where the tax money comes in. But if I'm the one going down there, and pulling up and down the beach two weeks out of the year, I don't mind paying for that privilege, knowing that the tax money made sure that the land was still going to be there. I don't mind paying my way.

Patsy: What would be fair to charge a fee for. If you say "I should be able to get out into the land, the public land free."

P8: I'm a beach person *(laugh).*

Patsy: I'm just saying the Park Service and the Forest Service has to charge for some things. What should they charge for? What would be fair?

P1: I think you should pay for using campgrounds or facilities or, if you're going through and you're going to park your car and leave it there for a while. Now for that I guess I don't have a problem with it, but if it's a large beach, or a large park and it's just hiking and there's no other facilities there, then I don't think they should really charge.

P4: Yeah, and I'm talking about driving on the beach. Nobody's even talking about, down in Hatteras, about a fee to walk on the beach. To walk over and walk on the beach, there's not even a discussion. But for me to take my truck out there… hmm?

P8: What about to fish, though?

P4: You can walk over and fish. But, I mean I've done it a lot.

P8: But, *(inaudible)* truck or the car down to the shore over there and fish.

P4: And it's driving out there that they're talking about charging a fee for. Because, you know have traffic enforcement on the beach, so somebody has to pay for that ranger to be out there to enforce traffic.

P6: Exactly.

P4: There are issues associated with being on the beach from a cleanup standpoint, from an accident standpoint, from a fire standpoint, all of these other things; all problems that I've seen on the beach; somebody's got to stand up for that. And, if that's paying… somebody's got to go out there, and rope off the turtle nests, and rope off the piking clover nests, and all the rest of that stuff, so that I don't drive through them.

P8: Right.

P4: And I'm okay with that. If I'm out there walking, chances are I'm not walking through the piking clover areas.

P8: And I'm all for maintaining the beach and the turtle nests, and all those things, too. I'd never seen a… Not that I go fishing there all the time, but I have been down there, and I've been down on boats there, but I've never even seen a ranger down there on the beach.

Patsy: I'm running this project down at Rocky Mountain National Park, and I have to wear a volunteer outfit which looks very much like a Ranger outfit, and I have a cap, and it's khaki colored, it has the Rocky… you know, buffalo, bison, and arrowhead on the patch, and I was over in the brush looking at one of my trail counters and downloading the data from it, and two people come down the trail and they said "There's one." *(laughter)* "There's a ranger!" Because most of the parks are so under-funded they don't… they don't have enough rangers anymore. And I think that's true with the state parks as well as the forest service, too. What about road maintenance? Would you be willing to pay an entrance fee to be help with road maintenance? Every year we go to Yellowstone, there's a section on that big Circle 8 that's being re-surfaced…

P8: I don't want to give the impression that I'm a total cheapskate. *(laughter)* I do believe… I do want all of it maintained.

Patsy: We use your taxes. It's the access fees… is what I'm asking.

P8: Well, I believe in having passes. You know, take the thing in, because it goes towards maintaining the grounds and the salaries of the rangers that are still there, and any buildings on the property, and… I do started… you know, just listening, I started to get this feeling of, you know… Nickeled and dimed to death.

P8: Yeah! Every single thing we do; there's nowhere to go for free, just to see nature, or… Because here in Richmond you can't get on the river anywhere. Our lake… *(inaudible)* if you can park somewhere, like Pony Pasture, and go on the rocks, and you know that's not… you know, it… then it closes at dark or whatever at this… for safety. But, there's just so few places around that you can go to.

P10: I think one thing that would be interesting—and I think, as you bring these things up Patsy, is sometimes knowing where your fifty dollars is going, or whatever; that

twenty percent of this money is going for roads, and thirty percent of this is going for a Ranger's fee, and, you know. You know, you have it at United Way, type of bar thing and just putting that type of thing in front of a park might make things a little more palatable*(48:08)*. I think a lot of times, you're right, there's old… nickeled and dimed to death type of thing. "Oh, I'm going to go someplace. Oh, wait a minute. It's going to cost me money." You know, "I'm going to go someplace that's going to cost me money." And actually knowing where the money is going sometimes can make a big difference.

P4: You can talk about the… I mean, at Hatteras, I got to know some of the rangers because I'm down there so often, and one of the young kids—and he was. I mean fraternally, but he was a young kid. We got to talking, and he got to the point where he was—he trusted me enough, and he got really frank. That housing that these guys live in is substandard. You would not live in it. It leaked when it rained—

P10: The rangers'?

P4: Yes. The rangers' homes that were provided for them were substandard housing. I mean, they were plywood boxes for all intents and purposes. And there's no fees charged. I've talked to rangers at parks where there are fees that are charged, and those parks live off of those fees. And while they're not living in palaces, the roof doesn't leak. You know? And I think that there's a direct correlation there, and I think that it's unreasonable to ask these kids to go out there and do the job that they're doing, as undermanned as they are, and then go home and live in worse conditions than I am and I'm sleeping in a tent.

P8: And I think that's a whole 'nother issue., and I agree.

P1: Yeah, I'm not totally convinced that all the money goes to… Well, I just get the feeling that a lot of it just goes in the general fund somewhere, and when you read about these poor rangers out in the southwest that are trying to patrol the borders, and they're getting shot, and just… you know, where's the money for these people? Our parks are our most treasured prizes in the whole country, and I don't know why we're, you know, nickel and diming and not getting more resources into them.

P8: I guess I'm sensitive, too, to the fact that, you know, a lot of people in the country have… maybe they don't go on vacation but once every ten years or something, and paying, you know, for… you know, entrance to places, and having to pay for all these different fees that they make access, you know, prohibitive for them. I don't know. I mean, I used to. Years ago, I worked with kids who had never had wheat bread. And, just, you know, the poverty that they lived in. You know? These kids have never been to a park. I'm sure of it. They probably never would.

P11: *(inaudible)* know what a happy medium that is, because I understand the need for charges for housing, or, you know, for patrolling. But, at the same time. What is fair? You know? It's like smoking, you don't pay a tax on it unless you're a smoker. So, I understand the use of the parks, you know, and I'm sure the taxing locale has some provision for that. They'll attend, but at the same time maybe if it wasn't so expensive, they may get a little more traffic in there, which may make up for what they're lacking to begin with, but… Maybe that's why fees are so expensive now, because it was cheap, but they still weren't getting what they needed. You know? I don't know what happy… point is. I can see both sides.

Russ: I'd like to kind of bring out another thing because we're going to hold back for a little while. If you look at the different passes that are available there… At the bottom, there's a Golden Age Passport and there's a Golden Access Passport. Both of them are good for a lifetime. The Golden Age, as it says, is determined by age and it basically gives you the same things that the Golden Eagle Passport up at the top, or, what most people are familiar with, the National Parks Pass gives you… Only you pay that ten dollars up front, and then you keep it forever, plus you get a fifty percent discount for some of the use fees like for camping, or for dumping waste, and things like that that the campers have to do at the stations and things like that. What do you think, I mean especially if that kind of… if that… I know that logically it would seem like that would give people a lot more opportunities to visit the parks and to visit the national forests, and the other federal lands. But what do you think the cutoff should be in terms of the age, if that takes a big bite out of the revenues that the Park Service is losing because all those park passes are out there?

P8: What is the age? I mean, you talking about…

Russ: That's what I'm kind of after. What do you think the age should be where somebody should be able to buy something like that?

P8: And what is…? I don't understand the difference between Golden Access Passport…

Russ: A Golden Access is for disabled, so that's free, and as part of when you qualify for that you keep it for a lifetime. And it does basically the same things which the Golden Age Passport does, which is only ten dollars for a lifetime.

P9: I'm thinking, consistent with Social Security, you know, sixty-two. Or, I mean if it's good for a lifetime you don't want to lose *too* much money. *(laughter)*

P8: The fee is fifty, so that's kind of…
P11: Yeah, I would say mid-fifties, you know? Fifty-five and up, because some people retire early and they want to travel.

P1: *(53:27)* I was thinking fifty-five also, *but…* I mean, you're not going to get that many real senior citizens in the parks. So that gets people at least a good ten years of enjoying it. But, yeah, I mean you're not going to get the money…

P4: I don't know. There's a lot of seniors running around us in Winnebagos. *(laughter)*

Russ: Oh, Participant 6.

P6: I guess my concern about the Golden Age Passport, and I might be shooting myself in the foot because I can soon buy one of these, and not feel guilty about it, is that if I've got money to travel, I don't see why I wouldn't buy one every year. You mean I can't… I'm going to be traveling, and taking my Winnebago out west, and I can't afford ten dollars every year? That's ridiculous. Me, personally, I don't think it should be lifetime, but I'm just speaking for myself. Ten dollars is not going to keep me from going out west if I want to do it. But, the other thing is there's so many people in my generation, baby boomers, if the park service in these other areas are not careful, you're going to be

dominated… you could a…. You could take a revenue shortfall is what's going to happen. The… and I have to agree with what Participant 4 is saying. I've been (54:35) to some of these parks that you can't hardly find a place to camp because the senior citizens in there, and they get in and get a two week pass. They've taken all the campsites up. And they've been… They've paid… you know, fifty percent off! I can't get one and I'm willing to pay one full price! That's happened! So, me personally, I think I'd be opposed to the lifetime pass. If you're talking a lifetime pass for people that are disabled, I think it's an entirely different story. Like this lady up here said, for people who are disadvantaged, and can't go because of the price, I think I could afford to waive that, but I can't see ten dollars for a lifetime. Some of these people, we can say whatever we want to? They go from campground, to campground, to campground, and what they're doing is living in their Winnebago in the National Parks and the recreation areas! It's as simple as that, and I'm opposed to it.

P8: You mean having no other home?

P6: They don't have anything but a motor home. That's it!

P4: It's not that their homeless.

P8: I know, I know. *(laughing)*

P4: They're retired. They're doing what we would all love to be able to do.

P11: I think that would be a different story, though. I mean, if there's somebody that's got the RV, that is traveling obviously like that, then yes they probably could afford ten dollars a year. But I don't think many people do that. One, because of the cost to them, because of the cost of gas. I think… I think that group of people are an exception. Yes, they could afford ten dollars a year.

P6: Some of these people are driving a hundred thousand dollar RV vehicle. You mean to tell me they can't pay more than ten dollars a year to stay in the National Parks?

P1: Oh, I think… I think that's true. I think that would be a great compromise; not make it lifetime, but make it ten…

P6: I think… I think it could be less, but I don't think it should be lifetime. Because, if you can afford to do that and travel from park to park, you can afford ten bucks a year. That's ridiculous.

P11: They could get a sticker and put it on their RV, and show that each year, you know.

P6: And all you got to do is buy an annual pass; simple as that.

Patsy: Yeah, right.

P4: Well, to some extent the fees serve… You know, I don't know if it's written down anywhere, but they serve as a deterrent to some extent. I mean, you got parks out there where it's six hours just to get in!

P8: Oh, my gosh!

P4: You know, and *(inaudible, overlapping voices)* and I would rather pay a hundred dollar fee, and not have to wait in line, and get in there. You know, there are places out there where you have to set up and… I forget which park it was that we went to, just not to surely long ago out west, and I found out after I got there with three cars' worth of scouts behind me, that we were supposed to have made our reservations at least three months in advance.

P8: Yeah, I have heard…

P4: And they just *happened* to luck out and have a place for us to be able to camp, and they allowed us to double up and all so that we would fit. You know, so the fee works to some extent as a deterrent, you know, for folks that are living in the National Park. And that… I mean… Yeah, I would love to be able to do that, but that's not fair to you, because you can't get in.

P6: No, it's not. That's right. No, it's not.

Patsy: Grand Canyon reserves ten percent of its campgrounds for people who show up that day. But you've got to wait in line in that month of August. Rocky… usually you get into a campground, but the back country permits are gone two or three months in advance.
P1: Yeah, I went in June and I started planning in January, and I was doing it off *(inaudible)* was the name of the place, and it was calling almost daily to see if they had cancellations. I finally got—I think it was fairly expensive, and we're all jammed in there like sardines, and it was just that many months. It was like six months of planning and trying.

P8: My husband made a—planned a trip at the last minute to the Grand Canyon for our youngest daughter spring break, 'cause I was taking our oldest girl somewhere else for her senior spring break. And because it was last minute, meaning, you know, a month or six weeks, they couldn't stay anywhere near the Grand Canyon. So, that made their trip much shorter than they would have liked. They would have liked to spend more time there, you know, seeing things, but they had to drive so far, you know, to spend the night that it cut into the time they had. They couldn't…

P1: Maybe it's because the other… There's beautiful parks out there, when people are just know, Yosemite, Grand Canyon, you know. There's all these beautiful lesser parks that aren't enjoyed as much. They aren't utilized as much, but then they're probably just not known. So, that would be another advertising campaign.

P8: Glacier National Park? Is that as wonderful as it sounds?

P6: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, absolutely.

Russ: Frightening, too, in a way.

Patsy: Yeah.

Russ: I mean there's this high road—very narrow—where you look down over the edge, and all you have to do is be nudged over the side.

Patsy: It's called "Going to the sun road."

Russ: "The road to the sun." *(inaudible)* When I have relatives that are visiting and I want to take them on a little surprise amusement park ride, where the scenery is gorgeous, but it's also very tense.

P11: Sounds like Big Sur out in California, too.

P8: I get nervous driving around Squaw—

P11: But there's… that's another point, though. You know, you had to call six months out… You know, four to six months, and the demand is there and people are paying the prices to do these things, so maybe that's part of the justification. Again, yes, I'm sure they need it, and they are under-funded, but, at the same time, people are willing to pay it, and wait that long to utilize it.

P6: I think one of the answers to overcrowding these National Parks, that there are a lot of National Recreation Areas that are under-funded. Comes to mind Mount Rogers National Park—or National Recreation area—in Virginia. Absolutely beautiful park, but most of the facilities there: my wife and I looked at the campground. We got back in the truck and drove off, because in such bad shape we wouldn't stay there. That's at the facilities, and the resources there absolutely out of this world. If you've never been there, you need to go! It's beautiful! The hiking and horseback riding for miles, and there's practically no one that lives out there. So…

Patsy: It's got the only wildlife *(inaudible)* in Virginia.

P6: It's just a great place, but the facilities and getting to that place it's just absolutely… You know, it takes all day just to drive up the road to get there. It's a great place.

P8: That's like… There's… I bought last year this used book on the National Parks at the Varsity Thrift Store *(laughs)* and, looking at the and reading the article by the Shin Rock Park; they were describing the cabin, and had a picture of the cabin that was built by… I can't think of her name, way back…?

P10: The WPA.

P8: Yes, and I said "Can we rent it?" And you look at the picture *(laughs)*, and it looks like in the rain it would leak, there's… I mean, it just looks like… Who would want to stay there? You know, if it is historic.

Zafar: Participant 6, are you suggesting that money should be distributed equally to all the parks?

P6: I think it should be distributed more equally, but I think that we're talking about standing in lines, I think people might be willing—especially people who want to have a camping experience. You don't always have to go to Grand Canyon or the Smokies, but if you think about the facilities, like she's saying, of course… You know, if you've got your family with you, you're going to go to the park that's got the best looking facilities. And they don't have it. Virginia's done a lot of things to upgrade their state parks, which

I think has been really fine in the last fifteen or twenty years. But it wasn't like that until about twenty years ago; the facilities were falling apart. But I don't see that. When I went to Yosemite, I was actually embarrassed. I had to bathe in the creek. *(laughter)* The nearest shower was forty-five miles away from my campsite! And, you know, when you've already been driving all day long, who's going to drive at six o'clock at night forty-five miles to go to the shower. And, I think, even some of those campsites at Yosemite still had pitfalls, where you're not going to buy if you use one. But me personally, I'm getting to the age that I'm not really crazy about a pit toilet to tell you the truth! *(laughter)* But the park itself is great. I just… I just really think me, personally, because I can… I'm just speaking for myself, but I'd be willing to pay higher fees. That's why I don't like this ten dollar fee to have a pass for some of these areas that don't have any facilities, or better facilities at Yosemite, Yellowstone. I love those places, but I thought Yosemite, for the park, I think their facilities were absolutely terrible. It's been ten, fifteen years since I've been there, so I don't know now.

Russ: With that in mind… Oh, Zafar, did you have…?

Zafar: No, that's fine.

Russ: With that in mind, and let's say that there were certain kinds of people who were protected from prices. Like, say the disabled people, or the elderly people who live on a fixed income, and things like that. What do you think—and I may call on people this time, instead of just allowing everybody to jump in—a pass that would get you into any National Park, any National Forest, any kind of Wildlife Refuge, or some of the dams, like the Hoover Dam, and things like that, for a year, that would cover any fees that you went to around the country… What do you think something like that should cost, Participant 5?

P5: Who are we selling? Not disabled or elderly?

Russ: Exactly. Say, someone who's got a job, maybe a family, too. And so they want to take the kids out to *(inaudible)* and show them the forests, and show them the historic sites, and things like that. And historic sites would be covered by this, too, all the federal historic sites.

P5: I would say… I would say fifty dollars per year.

Russ: Fifty dollars per year? Participant 2?

P2: It would just be one pass for *all* the parks?

Russ: All the parks, all the forests, all the historic sites… These are all federal. State parks wouldn't be covered, but… And things like dams, stuff like that.

P2: I'd say about thirty-five to forty dollars.

Russ: Thirty-five to forty dollars?

P2: Mmm hmm.

Russ: Participant 3?

P3: I'd say about thirty-five to forty dollars, and then ten dollars a visit.

Russ: Ten dollars a visit on top of that?

P3: Yes.

Russ: Okay.

Zafar: So…. So, you pay for the pass thirty-five dollars, and then every time you enter a park, you pay another ten dollars?

P3: *(Inaudible)*

Russ: And… I can't see your name, because I have a pitcher in the way, but I know we've met. Participant 7! I'm sorry.

P7: I would charge fifty dollars for up to about three visits. A hundred dollars for more; for unlimited.

Russ: A hundred dollars for unlimited…?

P7: …and fifty dollars for up to three.

Russ: I haven't heard that one yet. That's an interesting idea. Participant 6.

P6: I think maybe more people would buy these passes if, for example, let's say you paid a hundred dollars, unlimited access. Now, I realize the park rangers might not like to have one of these little hole punchers with you, but let's say, for example, you have a hundred dollars and you have so many credits, or whatever you want to call it, on this pass. So, when you go in, if you don't use all these credits for the year 2005, they would carry at least part over to 2006 until you used it up. And who—what difference would it make? The Park Service is going to get the same amount of money, but my problem with buying some of these passes, and for younger people I think it's even worse, because if you've got kids, you can't always depend on when you're going. Participant 4's got, probably, scheduled camp trips—camping trips—scheduled a year in advance, but a lot of families, you can't do it that way. So, if you buy a big hundred dollar pass, you might not going to use a hundred dollars worth in a year. I'm just thinking maybe, you know, old people would buy a higher priced pass, unlimited, you know, a hundred dollar pass, and you just use it 'til your credits are gone, and when you do, you have to buy another pass. It's as simple as that. It's done.

P11: I think that's a good idea.

Russ: They do have a planned feature—this has more to do with how things are going to be distributed in terms of, you know, if you buy something in a particular park, most of the money goes there. But they'd also like to put a magnetic strip on it so that if you buy it in that park, then you go visit ten more, those other ten *(inaudible)*.

P6: That's a good idea.

P8: I don't see the end to that. If you go visit ten more what?

Russ: If you go visit ten more parks, or national forest, or dams, or historic sites, then it also knows that well, yeah, you *bought* the pass at this particular park—

P8: Oh, okay.

Russ: --maybe there's a gateway park, for example, that a lot of people go to, and that's where they buy all their stuff, but then they go all the way around the country visiting these other parks, and this would allow them to redistribute some of that money that was spent at that one park to all the other parks that were used, as well.

P6: That's a good idea.

Russ: Before we got going, I also wanted to ask Participant 9. Do you have an idea what something like that should cost, if it got you into everything for a year?

P9: I was thinking more in lines of seventy-five dollars.

Russ: Seventy-five?

P9: Say, if you use it three times, it pays for itself, you know?

Russ: Does anybody think maybe there should be, like, maybe a sliding scale depending on how much money people make? I mean, Bill Gates pays one price…

P6: He bought the park. *(laughter)*

P11: That would be too complicated…

Unknown: Yeah, you couldn't keep track of it.

P11: … than straight would.

Russ: Participant 5?

P5: Well I was thinking… I mean, I was thinking of myself. I typically go—and when I go, I go by myself. I don't have a family, because I don't have any kids, so… not a kid at heart anymore. So, I was thinking maybe if you bought a single person pass—because sometimes you can do that with different things? You know, you buy a sing—like, to the pool, I buy a single person pass, but then if I had a family, you got a family pass, and there would be a different price that way.

Russ: Are we allowed to talk about what the plan is for that?

Patsy: Sure.

Russ: I think the plan… well, it has been that things like the Golden Eagle Passport, the one up at the top, that allows your immediate family in and it would be, like, if I owned one, and I had kids, and a wife, and things like that. Well, they could get in with me—

Patsy: In a car.

Russ: Yes, in the car—especially if it was in a car. What if you were just walking together?

Patsy: Yes, but… but you can't have two cars; you can only have one car.

Russ: Okay. Well, let's say I was going to the historic site then,

Patsy: Okay.

Russ: and we'll put it kind of in eastern terms,

Patsy: Okay.

Russ: If we were all walking together as a group, my parents could get in, I could get in, my spouse could get in, my kids could all be getting in with me. Of course, if the kids were sixteen and younger, that wouldn't matter, anyway, because they could get in for free, but that's kind of how it works. But the way it's going to work is, when they come out with the new one, there are going to be two signature lines, and I think is it just that those two people can get in, or also anybody with them in the car?

Patsy: The… I think the immediate family is what I remember. But, again, this is being discussed. They're not going to come out with this until January of 2007. It has to be ready by then. This next year, for sure, is the time when all these decisions are going to be made.

Russ: And this thing where we're talking about, maybe it should be a different price for families, and for singles is one—

Patsy: Yes.

Russ: Of the things they'll probably consider.

Zafar: But my understanding right now is that it's not… the fundamentals are it's just for a person in the car, including those two signatories on the card. So…

P8: That's a lot if you have seven kids. *(laughing)*

Zafar: Kids enter free.

P8: Teenagers.

Zafar: Under sixteen, they're all free, so… Plus four people for a *(inaudible).*

P8: Can I say something? I know you didn't call on me *(laughing).*

Russ: I'm not a teacher, I'm not calling on you. *(laughter)*

P8: I like what he said about the punches. I mean, not that it had to be organized that way, but because we have so few National Parks. If we were to pay fifty dollars for a

year, and get all the parks we wanted, likely… the likelihood of being able to go to lots and lots of parks in one year is remote. So, if you have an extended time period, and you pay to put—some people pick up the last fifty dollars and they can go to the parks more easily. We pay fifty dollars and, well, the likelihood for a lot of people would be that they wouldn't have an opportunity. But, if they are… their time period *(coughs)*—excuse me—their term was extended, then I feel like they'd be more willing to pay the fifty dollars, or whatever, because they would collect—they would probably use it. It wouldn't run out.

Russ: If it wasn't per year then?

P8: Yeah.

Russ: However many uses, maybe? Like, almost like a punch card idea?

P8: Yeah. Don't do it by the year, but by the amount of use you had over…

Russ: Sort of like the debit cards they're passing out in New Orleans. *(laughter)*

P6: I think we need to do better than we did in New Orleans. *(laughter)*

P8: Yeah, that certainly says our model—

P6: This might be a pain in the neck for the people taking these things, but what with computers, and magnetic type cards, if you pass your card through and, you know, you get that credit on the computer—

Unknown: A barcode!

P6: Yeah, a barcode, then it would be just like, kind of like a credit card.

Patsy: Yeah.

P1: Or you could do like two, two or three years.

P6: Two or three years is an idea.

P8: Even two or three years, I think, is hard. I mean, if you have a family of kids; I'm just thinking about my husband when he was growing up, he was one of seven kids, and they did do a lot of camping in parks, but it was a real—it was *hard*. *(laughs)* I mean seven kids in one car driving, you know, to a park that was mainly up north, but I just think it's two or three years is not even long enough in my mind, but.

P11: Hmm, I agree.

P8: To drive out west, I mean that's a big deal.

P10: Trust me, in his mother's mind it was enough time. *(laughs)*

P8: Yeah, but here *(inaudible)* is flat, but I think driving out west is a big deal. You know, it's a long trip and I don't like driving cars, and not if I can afford to fly out there with all their kids.

Russ: Participant 8, I know you had something to say earlier.

P10: That's Participant 8. I'm Participant 10.

Russ: Participant 10, I'm sorry.

P10: I… just… just thinking of the cost, though. I'm just kind of chuckling here because I was thinking a minute ago, my kids went to King's Dominion couple weeks ago, you know, and they thought nothing of walking into King's Dominion. I mean, I got discount tickets for twenty-five dollars each from work, and there was no thought process about walking into King's Dominion for eight hours in the blasting sun for fifty dollars. Do you know what I mean? Like, there was no… there was no problem with… they give it to a commercial institution to get—hand over fifty dollars for one day. You know? As opposed to going to someplace that… who was it that said "making memories"? …for a, a long time. I like the idea of a swipe card, and perhaps with a limit on it? You know, like two years, or three years, using a swipe card, because I think if you make it limitless, first of all, you're going to lose it, anyway. Do you know what I mean?

P8: Well, you can have an expiration date of something much longer: ten years or five years, or something.

Russ: Yeah, but right now if you were to lose it, it's not replaceable.

P10: Right.

Russ: Oh, well. You've got to buy a new one.

P10: It probably would almost so be that way. But I do like the idea of a swipe card. I think that… First of all, I think that does two things. And maybe that's what they're thinking, but also let you know who'd in the National Park. I mean there have been problems, let's face it, in some of the parks. And who's in there? You know, and that's kind of one of those things. You may not be able to regulate everybody, but you kind of know who's in there that day, you know?

Unknown: Or that week.

P10: That type of thing.

Zafar: Did you… Did you mention about the price?

P10: I'm still thinking. I like the sixty-five dollars. I don't think that's unreasonable, you know?

Russ: Anybody else who didn't get a chance when I was going around. What does everybody else think, Participant 11, about what the price should be for something like that for a year if it gets you into all the historic sites, all the dams, all the parks, everything federal, forests, as well.

P11: The sixty-five is probably reasonable. Again, well, I think you have to be geographically fortunate to be able to take advantage of so many of those things. Otherwise travel getting there is going to either not let you go, or it's going to limit your time because of the expenses flying her out there. And, to her point, you know, if you've got a bunch of kids, you know, you can't take three or four vacations a year because you don't want to take them out of school.

Russ: Right.

P11: So, you may get that one trip out west once a year. So, if you've got, you know, a punch card that expires in three years, you still may not utilize it if you get unlimited, you know, up to ten visits, it may take them ten years to get there, but that they would probably use it.

Russ: Participant 8, did you ever throw out a figure?

P8: My kids are young adults, so… although we're still paying for a lot of things *(laugh)*, if I were sitting here and I had kids who were younger, and I was thinking sixty-five dollars for each one of them, that's a lot. Thinking of my husband and me, sixty-five is fine, but… I mean, maybe there should be some kind of family rate, you know? Pay for four, you know, *(inaudible)* and then, you know, after that forget it. It doesn't matter if you have seven kids. I don't know. Sixty-five dollars for, you know, a family of six, or something? That's a lot.

P7: How many visits would it take to the average park to make up that sixty-five dollars?

Russ: That's one of those *(inaudible)*. There's so few average parks.
P7: What was the low fee?

Zafar: Fifteen, ten, twenty, these are kind of *(inaudible)* I'd say four or five visits.

P7: At the low, at the low fee?

Zafar: Yes, for average. Average.

Russ: And then there's so many National Forests where there's no fee.

Zafar: That's right.

Russ: If we're not just saying National Parks, but forests, and wildlife refuges—

P7: How do… How do they decide which one to charge people?

Russ: How do they establish…? Well, for one thing it depends on whether it's actually feasible to collect fees. I mean, if you had to do something like the Shenandoah, and say "Well, we're going to rope it off, and build these fences, and have these guard towers, and…" *(laughter)*

Unknown: With machine guns.

Russ: It would probably be prohibitively expensive to even think about charging an access fee. But with something like Yellowstone, where there's very limited access…

Zafar: And to answer your… to be specific to an answer, I'd say there were… Well I , talking to… was talking to the park—National Park people, it was just arbitrarily decided.

P7: Oh.

Zafar: Congress just picked a number, so, and that's how the National Park prices came up.

P4: That does not… That's not very good.

Zafar: Yeah. *(laughter)* That's what we are trying to justify. That's what we are trying to justify now, with a more scientific analysis.

P5: Did they actually say they arbitrarily picked…?

Zafar: Yes. That's their amount *(inaudible)*

P5: Because I can remember back when they first decided to do this, and it was pretty much based on usage from what I understood. The parks that were more used were the ones that they decided to put fees onto.

Zafar: Oh! The park—I'm not talking about the *(inaudible)*, I'm just talking about this NPP, or the National Pass Program.

P5: Oh, okay.

Zafar: That… That fifty dollars, that was just arbitrary.

P5: Oh, okay, because I remember when they were doing the parks, and it was really based on usage of the parks. The high usage parks got the fees.

Russ: Yeah, we're not talking about the one-time fee, we're talking about the pass.

Zafar: The pass, an annual pass that *(cough, inaudible)* national, for National Parks. We didn't get any quote from you, Participant 1.

P1: Oh, I think sixty, sixty-five dollars would be… would be fair. And, like you said, it would be even a greater deal if we had more in Virginia.

Russ: Not that they're really considering this, but since we have a little extra time, what do… What if anybody could get the lifetime? What should that go for?

P11: Wow.

Russ: We'll do a round-robin for that one, because we have a minute or two. But, Participant 1, you said "Well, I'll need to think about it." Participant 6, what do you think?

P6: Well, if the purpose is… for collecting fees is for to, is to offset some of the cost. I mean, we've got to face facts; that fee is not offsetting the cost of operating that park. It's not possible. But if that's the point, I personally would be opposed to everybody having a lifetime pass, because I think that…. Well, I think that parks are already too under-funded already.

Russ: Okay.

P6: And the fees are helping at all, and offset some of the cost, I think there should be a fee. I mean, any of us in here, if you go to buy an ice cream cone, by the time you get two scoops for two people, it's six, seven, eight dollars. So, if you can afford to do that, I think for a quality experience, can afford to pay something. Most of us can, anyway.

Russ: So, even if it was something like two thousand dollars, you'd still be afraid that somebody would abuse that, maybe get more value than what it was worth?

P6: Well, I don't see most people paying that up front. That might happen, but I don't think so. To me this is kind of like, almost like pay as you go type of deal. And, me personally, I don't think sixty-five dollars… that's… no way that that's offsetting the cost of us visiting even one park, really, as a source. It just doesn't. But the value of it is that you can go to many parks with it. Me personally, if they told me I had to pay a hundred dollars for a pass? I wouldn't even flinch at it, because I know what I'm getting, and naturally I'm going to pick the best price, and I'm going to be smart enough to get my money's worth. Maybe it's… on the east coast, we do have a little of a handicap with National Parks, but there are lots of National Historic Sites that I have not seen, so I can assure you I'll get my money's worth.

Russ: Participant 7, what do you think? Anybody can get a lifetime. How much should that cost?

P7: Like Participant 6, I wouldn't do it for individual for lifetime. Maybe, like, Boy Scout groups, or tour groups, or something like that. Maybe, but not individual. They'll think it'll be… I don't know. You just, it's like… I'd say I'm very reasonable. I'd say except the Boy Scout groups; you know, groups that go there a lot.

Russ: Just exceptional…?

P7: Just exceptional groups.

Russ: Participant 8?

P8: I think the problem is putting the money up front. You know, I don't think that… I think… I agree that we need to… what am I trying to say? That the supporting of the parks and all the expenses that go into that; that's not going to be done with everybody getting lifetime cards that are at a price that people would pay. You know, and then if you put it, some reason at a park price that would really help the parks, putting that money up front would be prohibitive for most people, I think. Saying… That having been said, I qualify for a lifetime passport and I didn't even realize it, because I am disabled, and I almost feel like, you know, that's cheating.

Russ: So you would rather pay as you go, almost.

P8: I'm thrilled that I could qualify *(laughing).* The first inkling I got of that was at the aquarium down in Maneo this year, but… and a museum up in Chicago a year ago that gave me a special—I think I had some braces on my legs at that point, and they offered it to me, but I still feel, in a way, like it's cheating *(laugh)*. But I'm not able to work, so, you know, my income is, you know, a lot less than it used to be.

Russ: Participant 9, what do you think? If anybody can have a lifetime pass, how much should it cost?

P9: The figures that you mentioned, starting at two thousand, I thought that when you… when it was that high, it seemed like you'd have to get a credit union involved and take out a loan *(laughter)* and make payments on it, you know? And I just don't… I don't think that's feasible.

Russ: Okay. Do you think that any price is feasible then? Where you could… Where you wouldn't be ripping off the… government?

P9: I think it should just be pay as you go, because I don't see people making that kind of investment in something like going to a National Park.

P8: Take out a mortgage *(laughs)*.

P10: I can't help but agree with you, Participant 9, that I don't see people putting a *big* investment out, you know? "Okay, you can have this for two thousand dollars for a lifetime." People are going to sit there and say "But define 'lifetime.'" Or "Can I will it to my kids?" *(laughing)*

Russ: And I was just throwing that out there.

P10: Oh, I know. I know. And if you look at even the Golden Age Passport, and I would qualify for that if it was fifty-five, but I would feel like I was cheating for the ten dollars, too. I kind of agree with you on that. I mean, if I was going to get it for a lifetime, I'd want to get… I'd want to be kind of paying my way, you know? I don't think I'm… I'm still working, and I would think that if I got it at fifty-five and I had it for a lifetime, I'd probably have—hopefully—twenty years of use out of it.

Russ: Well, I've got five in a row who all believe the same. Let me just ask it this way: is there a dissenting opinion in the room that thinks maybe they're… if there was a *possibility* that there would be a lifetime pass available, that there could be a reasonable price for that lifetime pass. Or, does everybody kind of agree that perhaps that's just too good a deal, or something along those lines.

P6: I think we ought to make one exception to rich philanthropists who can afford to give reasonable amounts of money; good tax deduction, whatever, write-off. Give them a pass *(overlapping voices)*.

P8: For the donation of twenty thousand dollars, you earn a lifetime pass! *(laughs)*

P6: No, I think it ought to be higher than that, because you stop and think about what some of these people are giving.

P8: I know.

P6: And I'm… I'm glad we have philanthropists. There's some people that argue about the tax deduction that these people get, but my opinion in this country is we didn't have philanthropists like Rockefeller, who restored colonial Williamsburg, where would we be? Colonial Williamsburg would be ashes. I mean, nobody else will do it. But if, you know, if they want to go, as far as I'm concerned, if they want to give a million dollars or five hundred thousand dollars, give them all the passes they want. Just hand them out by the hundreds, I mean really. I think it's… I think that's an opportunity. My wife and I are working on a will, and I plan—I don't know how much I can leave, but other than my church and my kids, the money I leave will be to the National Parks, the state parks, and the local parks. That's going to be my investment in the future for my kids. And I think the people that are willing to do that, I think probably you ought to make some kind of exception to that rule. I wouldn't ask for it for myself, but my kids… My kids have seen hundreds of National Parks, the Recreation Areas, and that type of thing, and it's just, I guess, part of their heritage, and I'd like to pass that down to them. And to protect it. So, if you've got somebody that can really do that, a Nelson Rockefeller, or a Bill Gates, or somebody, make it interesting to them to make an endowment when they die.

Russ: Even if you have to change the name of Yellowstone to "Gates World"?

P6: *(laughter)* I don't think we should go quite that far.

Unknown: You could name a trail.

P6: And I don't think *(inaudible 1:25:58)*. You know, there have to be certain rules. But I think for people that can do that… the average person, I really don't think so.

P8: Can I ask a question? Do these passes pay for everything once you get in? I mean, they don't, do they?

Russ: No. Most of these—especially the top three—are what they call "basic amenities fees", and mostly refer to entrance fees and parking fees. Am I right? Is there anything I'm leaving out?

Patsy: Uh huh. No.

Russ: Yeah, and they've changed that from—they used to just call them "entrance fees." The terminology's changed, and now they're called "basic amenities fees" just to cover those couple of things. With the ones down at the bottom, though, the lifetime passes for the special groups, those include fifty percent discounts on things like camping fees, other services that you would get in the park. What else would that include exactly?

Zafar: Not really anything.

Patsy: It's really interesting. If you go down to… what's the one on the tip of Florida? Everglades. You can sign up for a canoe trip and it's free! You just sign up and you get on a wait list, and go in a day or two, and take this nice kind of "trip with a ranger." But, if you want to go to Rocky Mountains and go on a horseback ride, you've got to *pay* for the

horseback ride. So, every park is going to be a little different. I don't know of any National Park where you *camp* for free. There's always a campground charge; three dollars, five dollars, ten dollars, depending on the National Park.

P8: How much are the things like at Grand Canyon when they have that mule ride. How much is that?

Patsy: The donkey ride is, like, twenty-six dollars down.

P8: And is it like you have to make reservations…

Patsy: Yes.

P8: …so it's for… *(overlapping voices)*

P10: That… Is that by a ranger or is it commercial?

Patsy: That's a commercial operation. Xanterra Parks manage it.

P8: Right. Right. So, when you go to the Grand Canyon, you pay to get in, and then what do you get for that? You get to go look—

Patsy: You get to go to the precipice and look, you know, down a mile. You can go hiking on the trails. You can park in the parking lots. But if you're going to camp, or if you're going to have a guided tour, if you're going to stay in a lodge, you're going to be paying for that. Again.

P8: What kind of services are there for people who are disabled?

Patsy: Well, again, it's kind of a basic amenities model. It's ramps, and some more personal attention, but there aren't particular guided tours for people who are, say, blind or can't walk.

P8: No go carts.

P1: I think if you… You could go, like, with the hundred dollars, and not give me a discount for camping and stuff, and… you've got to always look at it and say "Well, how many go to the parks?" And if it's, you know, three or four hundred dollars, you might be… I mean, I wouldn't invest that, because I… It's just too short of a, you know, I'm more long-term with my… I don't know what my life's going to be like in two years, but I'd probably go with a hundred, and then you… you could just keep the other things, you know, the same. Plus, if the Administration changes, who knows what they might change? *(laughter)* Nothing's forever in the government, so a lifetime pass could be until the next President comes along.

Russ: Actually, you suggested something I was just about to ask. If some—probably, we should keep moving in this direction, and ask it all the way around. Is there a price where you think it would just be too expensive for most people? When we talked about thirty-five, forty-five, seventy-five, all the way up to maybe a hundred is what you think would be reasonable. But where would the top end be, where just nobody… you'd think maybe sales would go down, for example, over the existing passes, or you'd think it's

just… it seems like the government might be trying to gouge people, for example. What do you think would be too much to pay for something that pays for everything for a year, to get into the park, to pay for parking, or for the wildlife, or for forests, or any of those things?

P2: Probably a hundred dollars.

Russ: A hundred dollars?

P2: Mm hmm. Because it's only a certain group that's using the parks consistently enough, anyway. Everybody else kind of specializes; special occasions.

Russ: Right, maybe a special trip to Yellowstone or something.

P1: You're talking about just one year now?

Russ: A year, exactly. Participant 3?

P3: Probably about a hundred dollars. And that's just… there's no basis for that, it's just… not inexpensive, but not overly expensive.

Russ: Okay, yeah. Participant 4?

P4: Yeah, I think a hundred dollars is probably a good place… for… I mean, I'm willing to pay even more than that, but I think that the… if you talk about the masses… if making it accessible to everybody. I'm not sure that where it is right now is probably not a good place to put it. If you start upping it much more than that, you're going to lose a lot of folks, I think. Even going to as far as a hundred; I think if you top a hundred, you're going to lose a substantial number of people who are willing to pay for these passes.

Russ: Participant 5?

P5: I would put it lower. I'd put eighty…

Russ: Okay.

P5: …I would think would be the cut-off.

Russ: Participant 6?

P6: I personally would rather stick with a hundred. Not… I'll tell you why. I don't think you're going to lose that many people. You might lose a few, but my point is when I travel up the New Jersey Turnpike, and they go up the Garden State Parkway, and then go up the New York Freeway, by the time I get through I've got thirty-five, forty dollars and I have been driving for three hours. *(laughter)* And I'm going to tell you, if you don't think cars are bumper to bumper of every nationality, economic group, right on down the line, you're wrong. They're right there paying, so they want to go up the New Jersey Turnpike, you mean to tell me they won't pay a hundred dollars a year to go to Yosemite? You give me Yosemite any day. That's all I—it's prettier than the New Jersey Turnpike. I don't think a hundred dollars is… especially if you figure out a type of sliding scale so that if you don't use all of those credits in a year, so they guy is saying

"I'm getting… Yeah, I'm paying a hundred dollars, but I might actually be able to carry part of that over to next year." I don't think a hundred dollars is too much. Not for me, it's not.

Russ: Participant 7?

P7: I'll say about a hundred and fifty, two hundred. Or, if they start charging everybody in your family—kids and everybody—charge them… price, the same price. A hundred dollars for everybody in your car. I know they'll try getting some money, but that would be one way. It'll probably drive them out.

Russ: So that would reduce the crowds, say, if traffic was bumper to bumper in Yellowstone.

P7: You charge everybody in the car… the same price. You get four people in the cars, might as well, no matter what age.

Russ: So that they each have to have their own pass.

P7: Right.

Russ: For a hundred dollars.

P7: Mm hmm.

P8: If you're talking about for one year, and you want to weed out people, I think a hundred dollars would do it. Because how many people are going with just themselves? I mean, how many people are the car and the driver? People aren't going to go experience that by themselves, and for a family… You know, for me to go for a hundred dollars, fine. But when I take my husband, there's two hundred dollars, and… so I think seventy-five, because I can see paying a hundred and fifty, but I can't see paying two hundred.

Russ: Participant 9?

P9: Well, I thought the card was good for everyone in the car.

Russ: It is. It is. We're kind of speculating about...

P8: Just talk.

Russ: …how high it could go, and what—how you could maybe change the circumstances at the same time. But it is good for everybody in the car; it will be.

P9: As I'm looking at the map, have they ever considered having like a Western United States Pass and an Eastern United States Pass? *(laughter)*

Russ: Do you feel cheated *(inaudible)*

P8: We should get a discount.

P9: I mean, I can't see paying any more than seventy-five dollars a year for a pass if you live on the east coast just because of my geographic proximity to the amount of parks. But if I'm out west, God dang, a lot more of them, so it would be worth more. Seventy-five.

Russ: Seventy-five?

P9: Mm hmm.

Russ: I must say, though, that if you live in Wyoming, but it's got a four hundred and fifty mile drive to go to Yellowstone, so…

(overlapping voices)

P10: Yeah, but it's twenty-five hundred for us. *(laughter)*

P8: Yeah, can we have a focus group on getting more parks here?

P10: I think I should agree between seventy-five and a hundred would be… at a hundred, I think, people kind of have this prohibitive type blinders once they get to a hundred. "That's it!" You know, type of thing. I think that's probably where you would really start to lose people.

Russ: I kind of—as a small answer to Participant 9's question, I think it may have touched on the surface—but there are passes if you just want one particular park. If you just have a place that you regularly go that's nearby.

P9: Okay.

Zafar: And all the states—I'm sorry—all the states also have, like, their own annual pass that you just consider the *(inaudible)* pass for Virginia, or the state parks in Virginia. They have their own… own pass, too.

Russ: And they usually charge people from out of state more.

P10: Right. Right. That was interesting when I was in Delaware. Yeah, it's just like eight dollars for to go to the state park for a day because I was out of state, and I think it was only two fifty if I was… if I was… The girl asked me. I've got a Virginia tag on my car, and she goes "Are you from out of state?" *(laugh)* I should have lied, you know? I couldn't do it.

P8: How much is it for a state pass for a year?

Zafar: For…?

P8: Virginia.

Zafar: Virginia is… they call it "parking passes", and it includes parking and admission to the, all the state parks plus some package amenities. And I'm not sure exactly what they call it, package amenities. It's fifty-five dollars.

P8: Forty-five?

Zafar: Fifty-five.

P8: Fifty-five? And that includes historic sites?

Zafar: Um…. It's at all state parks, and I'm not sure about that part; if they include the historic sites. What do you think?

Patsy: State Capitol— it's a historic site— is free. But I don't know.

P1: It wouldn't include camping, though, so you'd have to…

Zafar: Well, again, no. It says package amenities. I'm not even sure what all goes in that *(overlapping voices)*.

P10: …to Seashore State Park, and you just go for the day and you park there, and you use the bay, I think it's up to… I think it might be up to ten dollars a day now. So that would be if you went for, you know, if you wanted to take the kids to the bay instead of going to the ocean, which sometimes is a little calmer down there *(laughs)*, you know? That… You could do that, and then go to Ferry Stone, or to Hungry Mother, something like that, which are worthwhile going to.

P8: Hungry Mother?

P10: Mm hmm. Have you ever gone up there? Oh, it's beautiful.

P8: What is it?

Russ: I do want to get our last person for the topic. What do you think the top end should be, Participant 11?

P11: I would say top would probably be a hundred. Around… But I just think there are so many factors. I mean geographics, age, things in life change, you know. Interests. So, it really is going to be, if it's an individual, what's the value to them? But I would say yeah, at a hundred bucks, you would probably… Anything more than that, then people would probably lose interest.

P1: I think you could make it more attractive by making a discount for a lifetime or a per year, five year. You know, if you buy a higher price you get a little more off than if you were *(inaudible Olympus 1:36:57).* That always appeals to me with my coupon mentality *(laughter)*.

Zafar: Did we get a quote from me about the maximum price?

Russ: Three or four hundred dollars?

P1: I'd say a hundred for the year.

Russ: Oh, three or four hundred for a lifetime? Is that… Did I…?

P1: No, I don't think I said that. I said it would just depend. Somebody said… I don't think I said three or four hundred dollars. I don't remember saying it *(laughs).*

Russ: Okay. Maybe I…

P1: Participant 7. Participant 7 said three or four hundred dollars. *(laughter)*

Patsy: We're getting close to the end of our time, and I just want to… We each, both Zafar, and Russ, and myself, each have our own kind of wrap-up question to make certain we get everything that we need. I want to tell you first that we had another focus group meeting last—yesterday afternoon up in Boston, and some of the issues that you're talking about here came up there. We're going to have a meeting tomorrow with the National Park people and what they call their stakeholders, some environmental groups that come in and talk with them every six months or so. So, we'll be passing on this information to them. But the question I have right now, I just want to make sure I got this information correctly, that if we were to allow—if the National Park Service, the US Forest Service, and Bureau of Reclamation said "Okay, you can come in our public land free, but we're going to charge you some user fees once you're in. You can drive through, but you don't have to pay for the Shenandoah Parkway anymore, that kind of thing. Even with you still paying for the campground, paying for driving on the beach, paying for fishing, what about boat ramps? I mean, anybody talking about boat ramps? Access to boat ramps?

P1: It's reasonable. Sure.

Patsy: What other kinds of services would you be willing to pay for at the park; at the National Parks? The bathroom?

P1: I would pay to use it but *(inaudible) (laughter)*

Patsy: For example, Rocky for this year put up dispensers of…

Unknown: Purell?

Patsy: …of soap. Yes! Purell, for cleaning. Both in their pit toilets and in their flow toilets, and people love those. But, you know, that money had to come from someplace. I mean it's not inexpensive to do that. What kinds of things would you be willing to pay for.

P1: Like on Locke Mountain, where you can get twenty-five cents for a three minute shower.

Patsy: Ah, showers, okay. Okay.

P4: Nature trail hikes.

Patsy: Okay.

P4: You know, the narrated trails.

Patsy: Okay, narrated. Yes. Yes.

P4: A ranger goes with you to narrate.

P5: There's firewood, you always have to pay for that.

Patsy: Right. Okay. I'm going to start thinking about that.

Unknown: I wish—oh…

Unknown: *(inaudible)*

Patsy: I'm sorry. What? What did you say?

P8: Under minor phrases, I wish there was a way to make things more… like trails more accessible to people who are disabled.

Patsy: Okay. We are asking about that, actually, in the Rocky project that's going on right now. Okay. That's the last question I had.

Russ: Does anybody have any last comments about parks and National Forests, and federal lands in general? Would like to chip in? Could be a suggestion, or a criticism about one that's nearby, or in general, improvements you'd like to see, or things you'd like to say that they're doing right, for example. Anything like that at all? Feedback?

P8: I'd like to see more publicity about what we do have. Raise awareness of what we have. I mean where do I go get this Golden Access Passport? *(laughs)*

Russ: I'm sure you can get it at most… or is it all park entrances that charge a fee, make it available that the Golden Access Passport?

Patsy: Yes. Yes.

Russ: Do they have to shovel some paperwork back and forth, or do they give you an application? We had somebody with the Golden Access pass in our last group who said there's a little bit of paperwork involved. Of course, it's well worth it.

P1: Yeah I want to… I would like to see it advertised more, and I didn't go to NPS.org, or whatever it is, and there may be a link, or may not be, but Forest Service, for instance, has in the… With the Forest Service and the other one, whatever the… It's just really hard to… to find all the stuff that's available. I mean all the campgrounds, and… some of them even have cabins, and you can't hardly figure out where, or where or how to get in touch with them.

P5: That's probably due to their lack of funding, you know. It's one of the places that they cut, so a lot of people don't hear about it.

P8: And I think the Virginia website hasn't been updated since 2002. At least the part that I looked at hadn't been.

P6: I got a question. I guess it relates to budget, and I'm not sure that I have the answer, so I thought I'd ask this silly little question, anyway, because I'm always

adamant about getting my tax money. Why is it we have—and I'm sure all of these, all agencies that are national or federal agencies are all under the Interior Department, but why is it we have a BLM, a USDA, an NPS, a Corps of Engineers, a USFWS, Indian Reservations, I can understand the different thing for that, TVA, military—I can understand that; maybe some of these others. But it sure seems like to me, that as much land as we got out west, we ought to have more use of it, or it ought to be sold to somebody. I'm not too sure that our parks are not suffering because we're trying to manage a third of the United States with that one budget, and I just don't see how you can do justice to the areas that we are using. That's just the way I feel about it. And there may be good reasons, but I'm sure when all this was set up a hundred hears ago, nobody lived in these areas, and there's nobody going there, so they had to put it under somebody.

P8: Where do they live?

P6: Beg your pardon?

P8: Where do they live? I mean, some of these states are all… what is BLM?

P6: That's Bureau of Land Management, and I can understand a hundred years ago, but right now, I think, basically speaking, if we're talking about a Department of Interior Budget, and then we're trying to divide it among all these agencies, some how or another Parks was probably—I'm thinking—was probably way down on the list somewhere. I don't know that. That's just what I'm wondering. I mean if there's a reason, maybe… Maybe we can… Maybe it's an education program that the federal government needs to come up with to tell us as a citizen, is how justify having all these agencies. You're managing a third of the United States out of this one budget. And there's no way—

Patsy: I can tell you what I've read. I can tell you what I've read, and that is that when we entered industrialization as a country in the 1880s, we developed machines that essentially cut down all the forests in the west in twenty years. And even the lumber companies themselves wanted controls on rapacious destruction of the US forests. The land—so that kind of explains the US Forest Service, which is in the US Department of Agriculture. The Bureau of Land Management was developed to manage lands that don't recharge well. That is, they don't get enough rain. They don't have enough moisture to replenish themselves. And so in order to prevent overgrazing by either cattle or sheep, the Bureau of Land Management came in. The Bureau of Land Reclamation came in in the 1930s to help reclaim used mining land. So, there's a history. Whether we need them all now is another question, Participant 6. I don't know that. I just—

P6: And I'm not… I'm not advocating that we do away with it. I just think that the government itself needs to do a better job…

Patsy: Yes, there's a lot of land.

P6: …of defining that to me as a citizen when I go to Yosemite and I don't have a cotton-picking shower within forty-five miles, and they're out taking care of some desert somewhere. I don't think we ought to allow people to destroy it. I don't think we ought to allow people to misuse it. I just don't think they're doing a good enough job justifying what they're doing. I really don't. And when we're letting people—Bureau of Land—

Bureau of Mines, which, a lot of these things, if you go to a National Forest or… I imagine there are other federal lands that you can go to, and if you happen to find a gold mine and you have to deal with filing your claim the right way, you can go ahead and mine the gold, do whatever you want to do, and the government don't hardly get anything for it. I'm sorry. I don't agree with that. Again, I don't care if you mine the gold if you take care of it. If you need to pay a reasonable price, whether it goes back into Parks, whether it goes back into taking care of public lands, and I think that's fair. You're making… I wish I could remember the name of the mine out there, but it's an open pit mine; it's a gold mine. I have no problem with the mine. My problem is: Bureau of Mining, billions of dollars, and our government allowed these people to mine that gold out there, and what the government… and the government, without *(inaudible)* the people are getting practically nothing out of it. That's my gripe. Now, when I go to Yuccas I could keep on to staying there, but Yosemite and no showers *(inaudible, overlapping voices, laughter)*. You can pay—

Patsy: … you know, they have a sign there that says "This is where your money's going."

P6: Exactly, and I think as citizens we ought to just demand these people need to be more accountable for what they're spending. Especially when I see… it's not quite half, but that's over a third of our land is out there under these people. I'm sorry. It's just not right.

Russ: We just have a couple of minutes left. Does anybody else have a closing comment? Zafar, do you have any—

P9: I'd like to piggyback on what was said earlier about the publicity. As a father of two Girl Scouts, you know, pretty much whenever they ask me to spend my money on, I'm falling for. *(laughter)* But if you show some commercials about the parks and what they have to offer during Saturday morning—

P6: I think that's a good idea.

P9: —you can reach kids who will then reach their parents' pockets. Now, it may be a, you know, budgetary issue, but I think you'll see some income on the other side. 'Cause kids pretty much dictate to parents what they're going to spend their money on.

P10: But there are commercials; I have seen it. If you've noticed the Indian? There's an Indian—one with an Indian, and then there's another one with the—not the crying Indian *(laughter)*, but the…

P4: You just dated yourself. *(laughter)*

P10: And then there's one with an eagle that I've seen. And I don't watch much television, so if I've seen it…

Russ: On a Saturday morning, ad stuff?

P10: See, I don't know. I'm sure it's not Saturday morning, because I don't watch Saturday morning television. *(laughter)* I don't even like… I hate the cartoons, but I know I've seen it. So, it may be that, you're right, pick the right focus groups. *(laughs)*

Russ: That's a new idea that we haven't pushed yet. Maybe. I think we're done!

(overlapping voices, instructions then begin about disbursing payments to participants)

Focus Group #3: Portland, Oregon
September 19, 2005

Moderator: Russ Miller (transcript)
Assistant Moderator: Zafar Khan

Moderators are shown by their first names. Participants are given participant numbers, as follows:

Group Demographics

Identifier	Gender	Age	Profession	Income Range
P1	Male	55	Outside Sales	3
P2	Female	38	Professor	2
P3	Male	57	Self-Employed / Retired	2
P4	Female	50	Part-Time Receptionist	2
P5	Female	39	Graduate Student	2
P6	Male	62	Retired	2
P7	Male	47	Clerical / Computer (injured, not working now)	2
P8	Female	55	Apartment Manager / Retired	1
P9	Female	44	Medical Assistant	3
P10	Female	60	Self-Employed Household Services	2

Russ: Thank you all for coming. For those of you I haven't introduced myself yet to, my name is Russ Miller. I'm an Assistant Research Scientist with the University of Wyoming's Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center. I actually work with the Survey Research unit; it's within that. Next to me is Zafar Khan. He's also an Assistant Research Scientist with the University of Wyoming. However, he has a PhD in Environmental Economics, so he's much more specialized in this particular area than I am. We're conducting focus groups on behalf of several government entities. One of them is the National Park Service, another one is the US Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife, and also even the Bureau of Reclamation—they're the ones who run the dams, things like that. If you want to see the Hoover Dam, that would be a Bureau of Reclamation item. They've been asked to create a new pass called the America the Beautiful pass, and it's going to replace several of the other passes they've issued previously in the next couple of years.

Your opinions are very important to us. It could go a long way to helping the Park Service and these other entities decide how to design and price this new pass. Focus groups like this one are very much like organized conversations. My partner, Zafar, and I will start the discussion with a few questions, but these are really just to get the ball rolling. It's not going to be like we're professors and you're the students so we're going to throw out a question and pick on you in order to get you to respond. In fact, once the ball is rolling, you don't have to raise your hand for a response or anything like that. If somebody on this side of the room says something, like Participant 2, and somebody on this side of the room when Participant 2 is finished, like Participant 8, wants to respond to what Participant 2 said, that's just fine. You don't have to wait for me to call on you or anything. What we do want to insist upon with a couple of ground rules is that nobody try and talk at the same time. As you can see we are recording what we're doing right here, and when I try and transcribe it later on, if people are trying to talk at the same time I may be able to understand them while I'm in the room, but when I go to transcribe it, it's just going to be garbled. I'm not going to be able to make out what it is.

I want you to know that all of your opinions are valuable to us. We don't want anybody to be made fun of for having an unpopular opinion or anything like that. In fact, we're hoping encourage unpopular opinions. Anything that we may not have heard before in previous focus groups that we've run, or that may be unique to this particular part of the country; an opinion or an attitude, or just something that somebody may have noticed here that just doesn't exist in, for example, Boston. One of the things we noticed when we were on the east coast, for example; if you'll look at the maps that you have, all the federal lands that we're talking about are kind of over here. On the east coast, when we talk about things like national parks and national monuments, a lot of what people go to see would be more like, say, the USS Constitution, or even the document the Constitution. They're not thinking of getting in a car and going off to Mount Hood or anything like that. They're thinking about getting in line just to see an exhibit somewhere. So, it's kind of a completely different story for some of them.

Occasionally we may ask you to cut a comment short for time, or we may ask a specific person to answer a question in order to make sure everybody gets a chance to make a contribution. We will sometimes intervene to keep the discussion on topic. We don't want to wander off too far from federal lands and the costs for recreating on them.

We do ask, really, that everybody's identity also be kept concealed. Some of you may know each other in the room, and that's just fine, but we want to make sure that nobody, when they leave the room, says "Well, I saw so-and-so. We were talking about this one topic at the focus group and they said such-and-such." We want to make sure that everybody's comments are kept within this room and that nobody's identity is revealed who is also in this room. That's one of the things we have to do, working for a university. Has anybody ever heard of an IRB or anything like that? It's what they do so that, well, for example, if we doing an experiment, we'd want to make sure that none of the human subjects who were participating were going to come to any harm. Even though this isn't sort of a mad scientist operation, we still want to make sure that nobody who participates in this kind of discussion may inadvertently be hurt by what they say here. So, can just have an agreement from everybody that we're not going to discuss what gets said in here? Can we just have a show of hands real quick? Okay, everybody did raise their hands.

Also, that brings up another good point. If you want to agree to something that somebody said, or disagree, it's very important that you say "yes" or "no" and not nod or shake your head, or raise your hand in this particular case. Just because it'll have to go onto the recorder in order for it to count. Does anybody have any questions about what

a focus group is, or what's expected, or what we're going to be talking about today? Are we ready to get started? No one? Okay.

What I'd like to do, just to break the ice real quick, and then we're going to talk about some of the other documents that are in front of you, is go around the room. I'm going to actually start with myself and then I'm going to work my way over to Zafar, and ask you "What's your favorite national park, or national forest, or other federal land that's in this area—or even if it's not in this area—and what you'd like to do while you're there. And if you could also just, because some of the people can't see all of the placards, if you could just say your name when you get started. My name is Russ, and of course, being in the Wyoming area, my favorite parks are kind of in the Rocky Mountain region. In fact, my favorite one is Glacier National Park. I don't know if anybody's been there. They have this great road called the Road to the Sun, where if you just look over the edge, it's a sheer drop thousands of feet. I love to bring my relatives and scare them to death. It's my favorite ride in a national park. Zafar?

Zafar: Mine is Yellowstone National Park. It's one of the most beautiful places I've ever seen. I'm from India, so I've been to the Himalayas a lot of times, but Yellowstone is really a unique piece of land. So, I go hiking.

P1: My name is Participant 1, and probably the Cascade National Forest, particularly in the Three Sister Wilderness Area. They have a lot of hiking in that area, but also on the *(inaudible),* which is just north of Three Sisters. Camp Sherman.

P2: I'm Participant 2, and I think probably the most beautiful place in Oregon is the Eagle Cap Wilderness Area in eastern Oregon. It's in the Walla Wallas.

Russ: Is there something special about it that makes it unique?

P2: I think there are something like nine peaks above eight thousand feet, so we call it the little elks of Oregon. It's gorgeous.

P3: I'm Participant 3, and the national parks in the northwest, I like Olympics and Rainier, but I do a lot—or try to do a lot—in the national forests; Mount Hood, Indian Head Wilderness Area, and Mount Adams, Glacier Peak, and I especially like Canyonlands National Park. I've spent some time there.

Russ: What do you like to do while you're there?

P3: Hiking.

Russ: Hiking.

P3: Pretty much. Some low level climbing where the ice and snow's not too risky.

Russ: Do you do any sheer rock face climbing?

P3: Used to. Yeah.

Russ: We have—oh, go ahead.

P3: We used to rock climb in Utah and Wyoming. So, the Grand and that area.

Russ: Have you been to Vedauwoo, over in there?

P3: In Montana or Wyoming?

Russ: I think it's in between Laramie and Cheyenne.

P3: Is that those rock--?

Russ: Volcanic.

P3: Volcanic rocks.

Russ: And boulders, yeah.

P3: About four years ago I went there one time and we never made it. It got hit by a blizzard and we decided it was too cold.

Russ: Yeah, the weather is kind of a barrier. There's only a couple of months of the year where it's really enjoyable to climb.

P3: Unfortunately, didn't get there.

Russ: Okay.

P4: My name is Participant 4, and I'm originally from New York, and I know the Cape Cod National Dunes. I believe that's part of the system. That's my first introduction to really the wildlife, having grown up originally on the east coast, were the dunes. Haven't been back there in twenty-plus years, but that's my first recollection of a real kind of national parks system. But here I am drawn towards Cascade Mountains, and the Eagle Cap, and the Olympic Peninsula.

Russ: So, what do you enjoy doing while you're there?

P4: Hiking. I like really dense forest, dark, you know? I like that.

Russ: Sort of like what Europe was maybe a thousand years ago?

P4: Yeah, exactly.

Russ: The dark forests.

P4: I like… I like the west side of the Cascade; the old growth sections of the west Cascades.

Russ: Participant 5?

P5: I'm Participant 5, and the Olympic national rain forest is the main thing, although I'm scared of heights. I was thinking about what you said, you scare your friends, but…

Russ: Yes!

P5: There are all kinds of gorges that need to be crossed, and everything. And then, was it Indian Heaven?

P4: Indian Heaven?

P5: The one that's right across the Columbia?

P4: *(garbled)*

P5: Oh, it's—that's fantastic. That's a great place. I love all the little lakes there and every time you turn another corner you find a little lake. So, yeah, and I like hiking.

Russ: I guess we've got a lot of hikers here. And, Participant 6.

P6: Participant 6. When I was younger, I used to hike a lot, and climbed Adams and Hood. I got up to Rainier and said "This is out of my league. I'm out of here!" Probably Jefferson slid down further. Jefferson, I never climbed up the top of it. But, probably the most beautiful parks I've been, are still Crater Lake; when you first see that image, that's just very stunning. And the other one is Sunrise over *(inaudible)* Crater, about six in the morning, about 10,000 foot on Maui. Because the sun reflects everything inside of there, and you're just watching a burst of color coming at you, you know, for about thirty minutes.

Russ: Is it almost like a prism effect?

P6: Yes! So, it's really pretty up there, and it's really bitterly cold, too.

Russ: Okay, how far up is it?

P6: About ten thousand four, I think it is. So that's like taking off in eighty-five degree weather and freezing when we get up there.

Russ: Yeah, more of a Colorado thing than a Wyoming thing, but I've heard of it.

P6: Just as a side note, last weekend we were at Sisters, and they had an annual car show—I mean, at Seaside, that's on the beach. And they had the original Ford, I think, the original bus from Yellowstone. One of those big, long, buses they had, back in the thirties? And they've redone it, and they've done it in the Yellowstone colors on it. It was absolutely gorgeous. It was either Gorges or Glacier, I can't remember which national park originally used them in the thirties.

P3: Glacier.

P6: Glacier? Yeah, it was down in Glacier, and it was yellow cab and green body on it, and it was just a gorgeous-looking…

Russ: Participant 7.

P7: Participant 7, and I like, I saw Crater Lake about twelve, fourteen years ago and I thought that was nice. And Grand Canyon was really awesome. I've been there. But

my favorite place was Bryce Canyon National Park, where there's columns that are like, just right out of roadrunner cartoons; pillars of stone.

Russ: Uh huh.

P7: With the wind and, just basically the rotation of the earth, they're constantly just shaking back and forth, and, you know, there's some of them they kind of look like they have a, you know, a big formation on the top. Like, they're really unbalanced and they could at any time all come falling down and, you know, just flatten me like a pancake. That put it in perspective. You know, I felt like an ant in a, with grass blades around me or something.

Russ: Yeah, I was just at the Arches National Monument, and I was thinking the same thing. This is where coyote and roadrunner must have been. *(laughter).* Participant 8?

P8: Well, I like Mount Hood National Forest, and the *(inaudible)* River, and I'm not a hiker, but I used to go out there. They used to have horse camps up there, and you could ride horses, and swim, and everything like that when you wanted. For better *(laughing)*.

Russ: Is… We were kind of curious, looking out of the plane, Mount Hood and Mount Saint Helens seem to stand alone. Are they both volcanoes?

P8: Yeah. Mount Saint Helens is. Yeah. It just blew a few years back.

Russ: Right, I was sure about that one, but I thought maybe Mount Hood was also…

P6: It's still classified as an active volcano.

P3: Hood is.

P5: Hood vents.

P7: It just recently gave a few puffs you might have heard about.

Russ: But Mount Hood, does anybody know?

P8: All the Cascade Mountains are volcanic.

Russ: Really?

P8: Mount Hood has a few areas where sulfur is being emitted. We, all of, the peaks that stand alone plus a lot of other peaks are generally volcanic and, in the Walla Wallas they're..

P3: Granite.

P8: Pardon me?

P3: Granite.

P8: Yeah, and, so, yeah, they are.

Russ: And so everybody's in a little bit of danger *(inaudible)*.

P6: Well, there's some swelling going on over at Sisters right now.

Unknown: I was going to say.

P6: Big swell. So, that's probably the most dangerous site there is right now.

P3: It's like a foot a month—an inch a month, excuse me, but I think it's like twelve inches in a year. It's a lot. *(overlapping voices)*.

Russ: Yeah, we've got the supervolcano at Yellowstone which will probably take us out, too, although we're 350 miles away. Participant 9?

P9: Probably the Olympic National Forest would be my best. It's just, it's like being totally away from civilization. I camp.

Russ: Participant 10.

P10: I don't know that I really have one favorite spot.

Russ: You can have more than one.

P10: Okay, well I've lived in Oregon my entire life. I've climbed every major peak in the Cascades including Mount Shasta and *(inaudible)* some of the Olympics. I hike year-round, I snowshoe, I cross-country ski, I downhill ski. I have horses. I trail ride with my horses. Over the last five years I've focused on my rock climbing and I've, matter-of-fact I just got back from Utah where I was at a, I was climbing… Which, I've never climbed in Utah before and was impressed with the granite, the quartzite, and the limestone all within one area. I've climbed in Yosemite, I've climbed *(inaudible)*, I've climbed most of the classic moderate routes, and I've hiked quite a bit in Yosemite. I've been to Glacier National Park, which I truly live, and I live in the Cascade foothills, and I can say I'm doing something year-round. And, so, I don't really have a favorite. I have a lot of favorites: Walla Wallas, Stevens Mountain…

Russ: Wow. You've seen a lot of them, then.

P10: Yeah.

Russ: What we were hoping to get is people who've had lots of experience like that. The next thing we want to do is going to be, in part, a secret ballot. We don't want you to share what you're about to write down with anybody else. But the long handout that we gave you, the one with all the text on the front page, we don't want you to turn it over yet. Actually, not that one… That's the one right there. The one that says up at the top "The America the Beautiful Pass." What we'd like you to do is take a few minutes and read it over twice, actually. And is soon as everybody's done reading over twice, if they would just look up, so that we can know.

P4: Do you want us to read it two more times or one more time?

Russ: A total of twice. If you've already read it once, then you only have to read it one more time. It's very important when you're done not to turn it over.

P10: When we're done, what?

Russ: *Don't* turn it over.

P10: Oh, okay. I didn't even look at the other side.

Russ: Good! Okay.

(There is a pause of several minutes while participants read.)

Unknown: *(inaudible)*

Russ: Sure. *(inaudible)*

Russ: Okay. Everybody done? Now, I actually *would* like you to turn the sheet over and answer the three questions on the back. Does everybody have a pen? Does anybody need one?

P3: I have a pen. I just have a question.

Russ: Okay.

P2: When you're talking about "Would you purchase this?" or whatever, does it also apply—up here we also have the Northwest Forest Pass and you need that to park beside the road in the snow parks so you can go snow-shoeing. Would this also… people that have that pass, would this also…?

Russ: I'm not certain about that—
P2: Because you're saying it's like a laminated thing you keep in your wallet, and that pass is something that goes on your car to allow you to park on Mount Hood.

Russ: Well, it would be something that you show the park ranger at the entrance of a forest.

P6: I would guess, I was just going to ask that question, too, but I was… I thought I'd take a straight shot that no, it wouldn't surpass it, because you're parking on a public—a state highway, not a federal highway.

P2: So, you probably still have to also buy…

P6: State of Oregon is going to want their money.

Zafar: It just gives you the access to the federal land, no state parks are involved.

P10: Well, I think she's talking about—are you talking about the snow park permit?

P2: I'm talking about the snow park permit.

P10: Okay, well, when you use the snow park permit in the area where that's required, you don't have to have the Northwest Forest Pass at that time, if you're going uphill snowshoeing.

P3: This is apples and oranges here.

P2: Okay. No, I just wondered if it counted, or if you have to buy both.

P10: You've got to buy both, because the snow parks permit is forest service, and that is for keeping the snow parks free.

Russ: …And if we could just hold off on discussing any of those issues until we're done.

(overlapping voices)

P10: Oh, wait a minute. I don't know how much this Golden Eagle Passport is.

Russ: Oh, we deliberately kept that a secret.

P3: That's why they're asking the questions. *(laughter)*

P10: Free entrance to all of the national forests. Well, the national forests are free to enter in Oregon, unless you're going to park at a place where they require a Northwest Forest Pass. You know, is that going to replace that Northwest Forest Pass?

Russ: I don't think so.
Zafar: That's not going to be replacing any of the regional passes.

Russ: There are a few national forests where you do have to pay an entrance fee, and that's only been for the last couple of years. And they're just, I don't… I'm not familiar with the exact forests.

P1: So this would be for, like, camping fees at US Forest campgrounds or BLM campgrounds?

Zafar: No.

Russ: No, it doesn't include the camping.

Zafar: It's just the entrance fee.

Russ: *(inaudible)* …parking…

Zafar: …not even parking…

P2: You went to Crater Lake.

P6: …Crater Lake, but it says "entrance fee or access fee."

Russ: They're called access fees if it's a national forest, aren't they, as opposed to an entrance fee?

P6: What Participant 10 says is correct. There are no fees and you can drive up to Mount Hood, and be in the Mount Hood National Forest, and pull off on the side of the road, and hike into the forest, and there's no charge for that.

Russ: Most of the national forests are still that way. There's only a handful of them that, as of a few years ago, started charging a fee.

P10: Well—can I say something here? There's a trailhead where you have to have the Northwest Forest Pass and you have to have that pass on your car to enter at that trailhead, and they have eliminated some of the trailheads so that you don't have to have this permit; that you have to… but you have to have that.

P3: This is the entrance fees, though. I mean, that's what it says on the other side.

P10: …entrance fees, but…

P3: It's… There's no confusion, whether it's Northwest Forest Pass or snow park. We're talking about entrance fees to actually get into the federal land, or whatever it is. Whether it's a park, or a historic area, or…

P10: Right. Yeah. Right.

P3: …Olympics.

P10: Well, like, for example, in the Olympics, though, on one side you have to pay to go into the Olympic National Forest on the west side, but if you hike in from the south side—

P3: But you drive in, though. I mean, you're talking about, it says here "four people—up to four people."

P10: So, it's driving into a place like Olympic National Park or Rainier National Park, that type of thing.

P3: Exactly.

P10: Okay.

Russ: Has everybody had a chance to answer all of these questions?

P3: Do we turn them in right away?

Russ: Zafar, do you want to pick them up?

Zafar: Yeah.

P7: (*inaudible*) to him, because he's an environmental economics PhD? Not to be picky, but free entrance fees? Free entrance. What if I were a lawyer? I'd, like "Gotcha on that."

P4: I was looking at that, too. It says "free", but then you have to pay for it.

P: After you have your permit, then.

P7: It was a poor choice of words, but…

Zafar: Right!

P10: It's not free.

P2: It's "unlimited" entrance. (overlapping voices as Zafar collects the surveys).

P2: There's no free lunch, people.

P3: No free lunch.

Zafar: Thank you. *(side conversations continue)*

Russ: …"at no further cost."

P6: But you can't… You can't say "no additional" because the government always finds a way to make *(laughter)*.

Russ: Now that we've gotten these in—Zafar, would you like to take a look over them? I'll probably ask a couple more questions, and then you can… pop some questions, too?

Zafar: Yeah. Go ahead.

Russ: We had a few, a couple people who were commenting on what we said in there. Does anybody else that was kind of holding back, maybe had an opinion about what they just read…? Not necessarily? Okay.

P4: Sounds like something… I just… I think in Oregon—and other folks can correct me if I'm wrong—but, my sense is that for a lot of folks here, we don't necessarily really use national parks, but we're surrounded by wilderness area. And so, because we have this other issue of the Northwest Forest Pass, we are… we already pay to access many federal lands here. It's something that's true about this state, but may not be true of other areas where you are conducting surveys.

P3: Plus that snow park is another fee on top of that.

P5: And in some cases, if you go to a state park, and there's a trailhead there that requires a Northwest Forest Pass, you pay *both* fees.

Russ: I know Zafar's more familiar about this than I am, because you just met with some officials in Salem, but is what you're saying you need a Northwest Pass just to get into federal lands as well as state ones?

Many: State parks.

Russ: The *trails*.

P3: The trailhead.

P6: At the trailhead.

P10: But not all trails, and they have eliminated some trails from this list. But, yeah, it's…

P3: It's spotty.

P6: It's confusing.

Russ: I think alluded to earlier, does that mean that if there's a federal park, or national park, or national forest, the state may purchase some land right next to it in order to set up a parking lot?

Many: No.

Russ: Or am I taking that a step too far?

P3: Too far.

P2: My understanding is, yeah, that it was an experimental program initially to try to fund trail maintenance in public lands, and people paid. A lot of people were unhappy about it, and then it eventually, I think, became law. And, due to a lot of complaints, I think they reduced the number of sites where you have to use a Northwest Forest Pass, but several are already in place—are still in place.

P6: It was also confusing in the early stages of it. They required a pass, but you could not purchase a pass at the trailhead. So, if you arrived at the trailhead to go hiking, and it required a pass, and you didn't have a pass, you couldn't purchase it. It's not like a Forest Service campground where you pay for your camping spot at the campground. You had to go to a Forest Service facility, or other facility. It was rather confusing.

Russ: Okay, I see.

P10: There are a lot of things within, also within the state of Washington, that they have, well, for example to go into the Olympic National Park, you pay to go in, and if you're going to go into the wilderness, you have to pay for each night that you camp in the wilderness. In Washington there are a number of sites where, if you park in a parking lot near a stream to go fishing, you've got to pay to park in that parking. That's a *separate* permit.

P7: Is that a state fee, or is that a national…?

P10: It's a state fee, but it's just for, it's just for… Like at Titan, there's a parking lot, and if you park in that parking lot to go fishing, then you have to have either a daily or an annual pay to go for that.

P3: Titan being over on the Goat Rocks side? Titan South Fork, or North Fork?

P10: Like over west of Yakima?

P3: Right. Titan.

P10: Yeah, well, I know we went over there to do some climbing and we had to. Then they have a state parking permit, and I mean they're, they… Oh! And… for… annual access into Mount Saint Helens, you had to pay for a permit to go in there, a snow park permit, but then snowmobilers were able to, to, like climb and put they're snowmobiles up on the mountain. But, if you were going to do it, you had to pay to go in and climb.

Russ: Oh, I see.

P10: Oh, see that's another thing…

P3: Climber's permit.

P10: …you can't…

Russ: I should let you know that… I should interrupt for just a second to let you know that any issues that we have with the states and their particular policy, like the state of Oregon. We'll not, we'll not be able to tell them about that, Zafar and I, because we're *only* working for the federal government. So, even if we spent five or ten minutes talking about issues with state parking, and parking and things like that, all that information is only going to be sent to the federal government and they're not allowed to share it.

P10: I'm perfectly satisfied with the state fees. I'm satisfied with the snow park permit in Oregon, and I'm satisfied with the state, the state parks. I'm not satisfied at all with the, with the Northwest Forest Pass.

Russ: I see, but isn't that issued by… who issues the Northwest Forest Pass? *(to Zafar)* Do you know?

Many: The Forest Service. It's federal lands.

Russ: So it is federal lands.

P2: Yes.

Russ: Participant 5.

P5: I was just going to say that maybe the way that it would apply back to the federal thing that you're working with is if someone had purchased a Northwest Forest Pass, could they show that and get their thirty dollars off their national pass? Because it's for parking on federal lands. So, while the state stuff doesn't apply, if we're already paying

thirty or thirty-five dollars for our pass, maybe we could show that when we got *this* pass, and that would be deducted from the fee, so we weren't paying double.

Russ: Well, that's not part of the initial plan, but they are considering lots of things like that. Issues like that are brought up in focus groups like this, and then they give them one more thing to think about. Especially in *future* years. I mean, they do plan to have this one come out in 2007, but that doesn't mean that's going to be the *final* list of everything that it's going to be good for, everything you might be reimbursed for. In years that follow, they're thinking about creating special passes for special groups, for example, perhaps disabled people would get one break; people of a certain age would get another break. One idea that's being thrown around possibly, if there were groups of younger people like Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, they might get a different rate. It's just one of the ideas that's being tossed around. Does anybody else have a comment about what they just saw in the handout?

P7: I really thought that it was a great concept for several reasons, and I'm trying to keep them barely in my mind before you lose me, but I know one was that this seems like an outmoded setup with the Golden Eagle Passport and the National Parks Pass. I'm not exactly sure what the differences are. Even with reading the benefits, it seems like they're for the same thing, but apparently there is some difference. But, it supersedes both of them, the ATB (*NRP*), and you wouldn't even need the Golden Eagle sticker, I'm assuming, because of that. They did say whether or not they were going to keep the Golden Age and the Golden Access Passports.

Russ: And they will.

P7: Yeah, I figured with people with disabilities, especially. They can't exclude them or they'll give them hell.

P6: Trailblazers can, why can't they? *(laughter)*

Russ: I'm curious, not that we're bringing up that handout—and if anybody knows the answer, I hope they'll keep it a secret, just so that we can satisfy any curiosity just a little bit.

P7: But what I liked most about them was that they… shoot! Don't tell me it's going to get away from me. Oh! They didn't, they didn't, they weren't effective. They didn't go into effect until you actually used it. And that would be really great because some people might not be in their budgets to travel right away. They're, they're…

P6: Or Christmas gifts.

Russ: Exactly, exactly.

P7: And then gift cards and things like that. Yeah, it's good.

P4: So how does that get validated if you're at a… if you're using this new card, how does it get validated?

P6: As the instruction says, the date, the first date you use it. So, I'm going to assume you're going to validate it by going through the entrance.

P4: So they're… it… this pass, somebody would have to actually… you're going to, like, a toll both. It's not like the Northwest Pass where you can just park somewhere and have that ATB card. It's going to be a manned station, always, that card would have to be used at a manned station?

Zafar: Yeah, considering also having the stickers and all. Those things, we at this point are not sure what are the formats at issuing would be. But my understanding, talking to them, is that there are multiple formats. So you have, probably, a tag hanging on the car somewhere. I don't know. A sticker on your windshield, as long as also you have a card—a credit card in your hand with a magnetic strip on that, which will record your entrance at every park whenever you enter. So they will come with all these, all these things. We cannot tell you exactly what formats, and that's one of the things. That's why we are going from state to state to see what kind of formats all the states are using. So that you, to suggest that—

P4: To validate them?

Zafar: Yeah, to validate them.

P10: Are they planning to… Does this also mean that maybe they have changed the rates, for, say if you want to go to a park for a week, and you just want to pay for, you know, like twenty bucks, or whatever to go in for a week; or ten dollars to go in for a week. Are they going to change that?

Russ: No. That's… They're not tied to one another. This actually, to touch on the color handout that Participant 7 was just referring to, the pass with these features pretty much already exists right now. If you look at the Golden Eagle Pass—Golden Eagle Passport, that one does almost exactly the same things as what the America the Beautiful Pass is going to do, and I'm going to ask if anybody is aware of what that costs that they *please* keep it to themselves for purposes of this discussion. The National Parks Pass that Participant 6 also noticed, is a little different from the Golden Eagle Passport in that it's only good at national parks. If there was a national forest that you wanted to go to that did charge a fee, it wouldn't let you in there. But the Golden Eagle Sticker underneath it, if you purchase that and add it to your National Parks Pass, it becomes virtually the same as the Golden Eagle Passport. The one at the top. And the two that are at the bottom: the Golden Age Passport, the Golden Access Passport, as they would indicate, they're lifetime, but they're only for certain groups of people; people over a certain age, or people who already have a disability of some kind. And, out of curiosity, I was wondering what you might think the Golden Eagle Passport goes for, if you had to hazard a guess?

P10: I think that there… *(inaudible)* that at certain times they'll have like a little sale on them where it'll be less to buy them. You know, like a certain period of time.

Russ: Do they?

P10: Yeah. And I was thinking it was maybe fifty dollars?

Russ: Okay.

P4: I was going to say they'd be seventy-five for the Golden Eagle Passport?

Russ: Okay.

P4: About seventy-five for it.

Russ: Okay, interesting. Anybody else want to hazard a guess?

P3: I hazard at the fifty level, too. I was trying to compare that to the Canadian pass with the silver deal on it. I converted Canadian dollars to the US dollars and, the annual is more expensive.

Russ: What does the Canadian pass do? It's almost identical?

P3: It's, you use it to, especially if you're going up to Banff and they have a number of parks in a row, and you're like, hit with fees, and it's similar. You use that to enter within a twelve-month period. So, if you're going to visit the parks a couple times in the course of a year, it's cheaper to buy the pass than to pay individual fees. And I think they charge per day, too. It depends on the park. I'm not too sure, exactly.

Russ: And how much does that cost? In Canadian dollars?

P3: It's… It was when the Canadian dollar was sixty-two cents to the US dollar. I don't know what it is now. A Canadian dollar is like eighty-eight cents or seventy-nine cents.

Russ: Okay. And the pass itself was…?

P3: The pass was Canadian dollars; I thought was seventy-five to a hundred dollars, Canadian.

Russ: Okay, and five eighths of that in American, so…

P3: Depends on whatever it is now. I'm not too sure.

P6: I think it's about three fourths.

P3: Is it, the Canadian dollar, that high?

P6: Got a raise down in sixty, sixty-six.

P3: Sixty-six?

P6: In that range, yeah.

P3: Used to be.

P6: Used to be. I don't know where it's at now.

P3: It's much higher than that. It used to be the biggest bargain around, once you go to Canada.

P6: Good for those Canucks.

Russ: Participant 2, you were about to say something.

P2: Oh, I was going to guess seventy-five dollars for the Golden Eagle Passport.

Russ: Okay. So what if it just let you in the national parks and didn't get you into things like wilderness preserves, or national forests, or Bureau of Reclamation sites like dams, and things like that. What do you think?

P7: I got a question before I answer that. From what I'm familiar with, I've never been to a national forest that charged a fee. That was the big distinction that I always made; that they've been, I understand, doing that to some of them more recently, but about what percentage of national forests charge fees?

Zafar: Hard to say. I don't know.

P7: More than twenty-five or thirty-three percent?

P10: And what states are they in?

Zafar: Well, not twenty-five, not twenty-five percent.

P3: We're talking about *entrance* fees.

Many: Yeah.

Russ: One of the *keys* for whether it's even feasible to charge and entrance fee is whether there is restricted access to begin with. I mean the Smoky Mountains… That's a national forest, or is it part of that? There are so many different ways that you can get to that forest through the various trails, or just walking into it. They just consider it not feasible to charge an entrance fee. It's not enforceable. So they probably have no plans to do so at any time in the future. So, there will always be many national forests where they probably will never have a fee, because of their size and the difficulty of enforcing them.

Zafar: There are also many… I mean, I don't know the percentage at this moment. I know that there are many national forests which do charge an entrance fee.

P10: And what states are those in?

Zafar: I know in Wyoming they have like, in Sand Dunes, however, that they charge. That's a national preserve, not a national forest.

P10: But, for the national forests, though. What states would that be in, where they actually charge to enter?

Zafar: I cannot really tell you, but I know that they have a charge. If you can email, if you can give me your email, I can email you what exactly they—

P10: Well I was just curious if you happened to know what states they were in, but…

Russ: It's a very small fee, too, isn't it? I mean it's basically a token fee.

Zafar: Yeah, if you're talking about the daily use parks, then it's a token fee of three dollars, four dollars, five dollars.

P10: What is this… what do the entrance fees go for?

Russ: Well, I think Yellowstone is twenty dollars. *(overlapping voices)*

P10: Is that per person, or would it be per car?

P2: Per car.

P10: Is that for a week? That's for a week, isn't it?

Zafar: Yeah. Yellowstone is for a week.

P10: Okay, and that would be the same as Yosemite? I'd like to know that one.

Zafar: I do not know about… what is…

Unknown: That's twenty dollars.

Zafar: Twenty dollars? Yeah.

Russ: And some parks also have their own individual passes that you can purchase that's only good for that park. Instead of… and it may be for an entire year, but it wouldn't be the same as, say, a National Parks Pass that would be good at every national park throughout the country.

Zafar: It varies.

P10: Okay, well is this permit, *(inaudible)*, what is that going to pay for?

Russ: Entrance fees, primarily. And the other thing might be parking in some cases, but not—

P10: Okay, what are they going to use the money for; what is it going to use the money for?

Russ: Most of it goes right back to the park where this was purchased. If you were to purchase a Golden Eagle Passport or National Parks Pass, say at Yosemite, down in California, most of it goes to that park. Some of it will also go to the park system as a whole.

Zafar: Eighty-five percent of the revenue will go to whatever *(inaudible)*, well, whatever they have right now, is eighty to eighty-five percent of the revenue from the pass goes to the park where you're buying the pass.

P10: All right. Well, say this new permit were to come into effect and you could buy it like in *(inaudible)* or something, where would the money… how would they pay the money on that?

Russ: The same way.

P10: Because, you're buying at the *store*.

P2: But it's a good point. If you visited ten national parks in a year using that permit, would the money that you pay to purchase that permit be divided among those ten parks? Is there a way to track that?

Russ: That's an interesting idea that they've already thought of. They're thinking of putting a magnetic strip on the card—

P6: I was going to say then you could barcode this thing easily.

Russ: Yeah, and then that way… Say, if there are some parks that they're absolutely sure are like gateway parks, in that most people will purchase a lot of things there, but then they'll go on to other parks that are nearby where maybe it's not as easy to find a visitor's center. It's like that. What they're thinking of doing is putting a magnetic strip on the card, and thereby, at the end of the year, they would be able to calculate, well, not only where they *purchased* the card, but all the different parks that they visited; do a little re-distribution of the fees that were paid. That's one of the things that's kind of in the speculative stage, but Zafar knows a little bit more about that than I do. Is that pretty much the gist of it, then?

Zafar: Yeah, that's kind of still a consideration and most of the parks at this point, they do not even record the entrance with the National Parks Pass.
P6: I must have missed something here, because we're talking about selling at private locations, REI. You said that they would get eighty-five percent?

(overlapping voices)

Zafar: That's what I'm saying, that's as of right now. The new pass that's going to come, they, they will remain pretty much… They don't have any legislation at this point about that. What they say is that most of the revenue from those park pass sales will go to the development of the recreation land.

P2: In general.

Zafar: In general. Right now… whatever, that eighty percent or eighty-five percent, that estimate that I gave you, it's whatever we have right now. And that's… in future will be almost same, but we don't know exact—

P7: But I like that idea that Participant 2 brought up or proposed, and I guess you said that they're already thinking about that, voting with your dollars, and if it was already bar-coded and everybody pays, about how many people not only bought individual passes at that particular park, but used that park with their pass, then they could figure out which parks get the least amount of use, and which parks, you know, don't need as much help

because they're getting so much usage that they probably have… I don't know if the government ever has too much money, but you know what I mean.

P6: Never. *(laughter)*

Zafar: And we had this discussion in Virginia, too. Some people were saying, complaining that some parks keep on getting the facilities, and the developments, and everything. Some lands and some parks never get anything. So, it's kind of equal, and they're talking about equal distribution and managing that fund in a better sense. So, we are not sure at this point again about how that's going to work, or how that will come in effect, but that's very much what they say. Most of the revenue will go for the development of the federal recreation lands.

P6: Yeah.

Zafar: And I want to just… I'm just quoting.

P7: I just thought that was a great idea about keeping that up, a record, you know, through the bar-coding, of how much usage each park gets, and you could more wisely distribute the money that way.

P6: But, of course, there are the parks that probably could *never* pay for themselves, but they are there.

Zafar: That's one of the topics that came up in Virginia, one focus group there. Some of the parks, they said, never get anything, so…

P6: One thing that bothers me most is parking. A couple of weeks ago I was down at Huntington Beach, California, and they had Huntington Beach State Park. This is a free public beach, parking: ten dollars. And I had to take a picture of that! *(laughter)*

Russ: If you can walk all the way to the beach, it's free.

P6: Yeah.

P7: Send it to Jay Leno; the headline.

P3: Doesn't Oregon beach parks have parking fees, too? I've been on the beach recently. I can't remember paying a fee for the Oregon beach parks; the state parks.

P10: Right, your state park, generally you have to pay a fee for state parks. And they do have an annual permit.

P3: Permit.

P6: …is that a state law or a co-law?

P3: Just to access it.

P6: Just to access: three dollars a co-law.

P10: The day use fee.

P6: City beaches like Rockaway and Palovana; all of that's free—

P3: But you can buy an annual pass, similar to the park—

P6: You can buy an annual pass for the parking, yeah.

P3: One comment that I want to make about, that I think we're all in agreement on, in the Northwest we really only have three national parks that charge a fee that I know of: Rainier, Olympics, and Crater Lake. They don't charge a fee at North Cascades, do they? I mean an entrance fee, that I can think of, that you just drive right through.

P10: I think that at Pawana Lake—

P3: Pawana Lake is a national monument. Okay, and that would count. Pawana Lake, there's an access fee there?

P10: Well, I've generally gone up there just to ski up there during the winter time.

P3: Do they charge? Was there an entrance… Was there an entrance…? So…

P10: There was an entrance like during the summer, but during the winter they can get really snowed in.

P3: The only comment that I want to make is that—

Russ: I would ask that there not be overlapping comments.

P3: The only comment that I want to make, if I may?

Russ: Please, yes.

P3: …is that I always felt that the whole idea of a national park fee wasn't of much use to us in the Northwest simply because we didn't have that many national parks to visit, and therefore we might buy the fee, buy the pass, if we're going to make a trip to, say, the Utah/Arizona parks and do a loop or something.

Russ: And, actually, Participant 6, do you want to say something?

P6: What we're just discussing; I don't think there's a fee to get in at Crater Lake, is there?

P7: I didn't pay one, but that was twelve years ago.

P1: Oh, there is a fee. It's ten dollars, I believe.

P6: I remember now.

P1: I was just up there last year.

P6: I can't remember.

Russ: I have another question that I just wanted to touch on that Participant 3 almost brought out. If you did own one of these America the Beautiful (*NRP)* passes that they're going to be creating soon, do you think it would be more likely that you would tour the country to see all the different national parks that are out there, if you knew that you wouldn't have to pay to get into them? Would that affect your decision-making, if you're planning a big vacation?

(laughter)

P7: I would say yes and no for this reason: knowing that it's not going to be effective until I use it, I might just keep storing money up until I figure I can make a big swoop of the west coast, and the Rockies, and the Great Plains, until I run out of money, basically. *(inaudible)* But then that's being penny-wise and pound foolish, so somewhere between I'd probably find a middle ground.

P1: Well, the National Park Pass has been available for quite a few years. You can even purchase that on the internet. So, you have a pass like that, if you're going through Utah, or Arizona, where most of—a large percentage of national parks are, then it's worthwhile to use that. If some charge ten, some charge twenty, and the pass is fifty dollars, so, it's a deal if you're going through just three or four parks. So, the National Park Pass does pretty much what the America the Beautiful Pass (*NRP*) will do.

Russ: Participant 5, you wanted to say something.

P5: Oh, no, I was just going to say—and it goes back to what you were saying—we have so much wonderful, wonderful wilderness up here, unless I was already planning a trip, for example, to the west, then I might purchase a National Parks Pass before I went. But having the National Parks Pass wouldn't inspire me, necessarily, to leave the Pacific Northwest. And especially with gas prices what they are, I can't imagine why I would do that unless I was already going *(inaudible)*.

Russ: If you could turn back the clock a year ago to those gas prices, do you think that..?

P5: Like I said, if I were already planning a trip I might do this, but it would be something I might do one year for that trip. It wouldn't be something that I would renew year after year, because most of my recreation's done within this two-state, and a little bit in Canada.

P3: I would buy it if it included the Northwest Trail Pass, *and* I'd buy it if it included the Northwest Trail Pass and the snow park.

P4: Yeah, I would.

P2: Oh, I would, too. I would, too.

P3: Then *bingo*, sure, that would be great. That would be absolute. A single answer. One pass and use it in all of those locations.

P2: I agree.

Russ: Is the snow park the most expensive?

P3: No. The Trail—the Northwest Trail Pass is the most expensive. That's thirty dollars now?

P10: It's having to buy all those…

P3: …snow parks, twenty…
P10: …is ridiculous.

Russ: Okay.

P4: Oh, the county park pass. If you could buy a county park…

P10: One of the problems with some of the national parks is that there were a group of us that would make a trip, and we made trips for several years to Yosemite for climbing. And we had a hard time getting reservations for camping. So I think that the camping situation in some of these areas is a problem. It's hard to get a reservation. In a lot of areas it's hard to get a wilderness permit. You've got to get, you know, way ahead of time. And so probably the availability of having a place to stay while you were there would influence me. I'd rather just go for a week. And the other thing about the snow permit is that that is something that's for Oregon that it is… there's money for that that, you know, goes for our Oregon snow parks, and I would really hate to see it be on a federal level, because I think it would end up where they would end up not getting enough money. You know, it could be funneled down to them. Yeah, I'd really give up that Northwest Forest Pass, because it's just a big waste of money. Most of the work for the trail maintenance—is this going to go to the, is there going to be anybody listening to this on the federal level, if I comment about it? Am I just wasting time?

Russ: Yes, yes, there will be on the federal level.

P10: Well, the problem is—and this isn't just me, a lot of people feel this way—it sounds like a good idea, but most of the work is done by volunteers to maintain the trails. A lot of it goes for show. Like they'll have a lot of big signs on kiosks, or fancy bathrooms, and they'll just maintain the trail for maybe the first four miles, and then I've had it going in where, you know, you're packing in new climb, and the trail's okay, and then pretty soon—and this is like going up to Mount Shuckson and into Mount Stewart, and part of the way the trail is good, and then the rest of it you're climbing into blowdown; logs! Big logs! Multiple logs! To try and get to the area where you're going to camp. And then, they spend a lot of money, but people that go around, drive around in trucks, and give people tickets for not having their pass. And, like I said, most of the work is done by volunteers, and I think… if there's a lot of individuals who do it on their own, they do it in conjunction with club activities, and it, you know, it's being done by volunteers now.

Russ: I can tell you that the creation of this new pass isn't really going to *change* anything in terms of what already exists. The main reason it's coming out with this is because of the list of passes that you see on the color handout. They want to consolidate those.

P10: So maybe it'd be, it'd be mostly for the national parks and these, some of these others. So what about the national monuments like Mount Saint Helens?

Russ: Those would be included.

Zafar: Yeah. National historic sites and national monuments fall under…

P10: But then that's just for entry into the national monument.

Zafar: That's just the entry.

Russ: It wouldn't cover camping fees, for example.

(overlapping voices)

P9: If you're going to have a pass to travel to all these different places, most people, they don't know, if they're going to travel any distance, just go there for the day, or for a couple of hours. Well, why don't they have one that covers camping with it?

Zafar: We can't tell you the answer for that. Why don't they have it? But…

P7: Because they make too much money from *(inaudible)*.

Zafar: …extended amenities are not covered or will not be covered for, that's for sure, except for senior citizen pass which will be covered on fifty percent off on fees on camping and on other recreations. But this is just the entrance on national parks, national monuments…

P9: Actually, that's the thing. It's the effort. Who wants to just go in and spend an hour, and leave? You know?

Russ: I can tell you that one of the controversies that's involved with the two passes at the bottom that actually have a fifty percent discount for the camping fees. Some places they can use that discount and some places they can't, because some of the campsites are owned by the government and some are run by private concessionaires. And that's one of the—it's a very big controversy with anybody, especially, who owns one of those. That they feel cheated somewhat, that it's not useable in all the different campsites that they like to visit, even though they're on federal lands.

P9: Well, there are these campsites that I've come across this past summer that were managed by a company, and they did accept—because I knew a lady who had this Golden Age Passport… is that the fee was fifty percent. It was sixteen dollars, sixteen dollars a night, and for the site that she paid for it was half price. And if that paid more and more, then I'd notice it.

Russ: I heard something over…

P2: I just wanted to make a couple of comments related to that. One is that, in terms of camping, it makes sense to me that if you're staying in an established campground with amenities there, that you would pay an overnight fee, because several people would be vying for those sites, and it takes work to manage them. But I'm a backpacker, so as a

backpacker, for example, where no one is maintaining back country sites, I think if I paid an entrance fee to get into a national park, that I should be able to camp without paying any additional fees per night of camping. And then the other thing I wanted to say, which is on a separate issue, is that some kind of a lands benefit thing? And I believe Mount Hood or, pardon me, Mount Saint Helens is one area where this is taking place, and it's hard for me to understand why we, as taxpayers, have to purchase a separate pass for federal lands. *(clapping)* When our tax dollars should be dedicated to supporting those lands, and I already know that the government is also benefiting from timber sales, and, in fact, subsidizing timber removal by building roads, that kind of thing. One final comment is that I think a lot about low-income people, and I think, for example, with this Northwest Forest Pass, you know, I can afford to pay thirty dollars a year to park at a parking lot, to hike, but not everyone can afford that. And, again, I feel as US citizens that we're paying taxes, I would expect to have access to our public lands.

Russ: That brings up an interesting point that I wanted to raise, also it's a question. Does anybody think that there should be perhaps a sliding scale in terms of the price for something like the America the Beautiful Pass (*NRP*). Since not everybody has the same amount of disposable income, perhaps you should be able to show somebody what your 1040 said, perhaps receive a discount?

(overlapping)

Russ: Oh, one at a time, please.

P5: I can't imagine how they're going to do that.

Russ: Participant 5, please.

P5: Oh, I was just saying I think that would be a logistical nightmare.

Russ: Okay.

P5: Trying to run a sliding scale on a federal level, that would be really hard.

P6: I only earned five thousand last year. Prove it.

P5: Uh huh. But I do think that, obviously, senior citizens and the disabled, you can tell that they're going to have a more limited income, likely. That's not always true for senior citizens, but, again I don't think it's fair to ask them. But, I'm absolutely with you that we already pay taxes for federal lands, and they're logging them.

P4: That's true.

P5: And I don't understand why we have to pay access fees at all in the first place. So I get outraged by that.

Russ: Participant 10, do you have something that you wanted to say?

P10: I want to say I agree with everything that Participant 2 brought up.

P3: I agree with Participant 2 and Participant 5, but I also agree that I'm afraid that the Forest Service would be forced to cut more timber to subdue the repairs and make the improvements that they have to do. Currently, for instance, the Mount Hood National Forest's budget for trail improvements is down because they're not cutting timber. So where's the money going to come from? I'm worried that the Forest Service is going to be forced to cut more timber to do the improvements, and I'm willing to pay a forest fee if I know that money is going to pay for money for the trail, and we could see that on Mount Hood. Talk to *(name deleted)* up there, and she has no money to do trail improvements, and the volunteers help out, but it costs a lot of money to hire a helicopter to put a bridge in. Volunteers don't do that. Same with the Quest Trail up on Glacier Peak. It's been out of service now for three years. They don't have the money to put the bridges in. Bridges cost a million dollars, or you know, five hundred thousand dollars. Volunteers aren't going to put the bridges in. They are not going to be able to do that type of level. It needs, it needs some real bucks. And so I'm willing to pay. I don't mind paying thirty bucks a year for a forests pass, if I know the money is going to make repairs.

P10: There are grants that are accessible for this type of work, and I know that BLM has—which is in the area I live in—I know that there's been a lot of work that's been done on BLM land, that's been done by volunteers, and through obtaining grants. Yeah, there has been, there has been a lot, but…

P3: The BLM land, you know, the BLM land is classic for *not* having recreation. Go to—

P10: They're working on—

P3: Go to Trout Creeks, and you'll never—you know, that's amazing mountain range in Oregon's BLM land, and you won't find one direction sign, and it's amazing. The most beautiful mountain range in Oregon, next to the Stevens, and it's totally no recreation at all, and it's because why, it's because the emphasis is on grazing in certain BLM lands, not recreation.

P10: There's quite a bit of difference from one BLM office to the next, and the Salem office in Wildwood, up in the Mount Hood area? They have, you know, a campground, and so on. I lived in the Walla Walla River area, and there's been… there's Table Rock Wilderness, which is maintained by the BLM. And I've worked with them, you know, quite a bit. I know that there is a lot of work; that they're in partnership with volunteer groups. I know that the Forest Service in the *(inaudible)* Area. The trail work, there's a lot of areas that don't have *(inaudible)* pass permit, and I know a guy who is basically the person who is doing all the trail work. There is also the Pacific Coast Trail…

P3: Pacific Coast Trail Association.

P10: Right. And I mean I know a lot of people who do a lot of volunteer work, and I think a lot of it is getting the culture tuned into doing that; and it irks me to have all these expensive kiosks, and all these little spines, and all the bathrooms, and stuff… that they're putting the money into that, and they're not putting money into the trails themselves.

P3: I wonder if that's because most of the visitors to the national parks, for instance, and the national forests just go for the day. And so, therefore, and I see it all the time; I mean, you know, the first thing they do is they stop and go to the potty.

P10: Oh, yeah, that's okay.

P3: …And so therefore the expense, you know, if that money is being dropped into those type of amenities, it's real important that they have restrooms.

P1: Well, in the national parks, too. We made a trip two years ago through the desert southwest and purchased the National Park Pass because it was a deal for the number of parks we were planning on going to, and the parks provided a lot of services once you got in there. Because of the increasing number of people visiting these parks, they're putting in shuttle bus service so that instead of having cars going in, they have the shuttle bus. They do this at Grand Canyon at a couple of points, and I think they're doing it now at *(inaudible)* now and a couple of other places, and I can understand charging the fee, and I don't mind paying the fee for that, plus there's a lot of interpretive signs explaining about archaeological sites, things like that; but when you go into the national forests and your hiking on the trail, going back to what you said, there's little there that they're doing. They're not maintaining the trails the way they used to, and they're paying people to come in and make sure that the fees are being paid. Seems like a waste of time to me.

Russ: Participant 5.

P5: Oh, I just… I'm going back to the low income question. I've been pondering this and I have two ideas.

Russ: I actually wanted to add something to that just before you start on that. If it was something similar to the school lunch program, where it is relatively easy to determine, and it remains kind of constant throughout the year whether someone can qualify for reduced or free school lunch, just to throw that in there. But, your turn.

P5: I was just going to say you could base it on something like that, but I was thinking it might be easier, you could also… I was thinking "What about the volunteers?" I mean, wouldn't it be interesting if you could put in a certain number of hours of volunteer work on state or federal lands and you would get your pass in exchange?

P10: You can for the Northwest Forest Pass.
P5: Okay.

P10: You can.

P5: I was just going to say and donating to organizations that take kids out into the wilderness, because I've worked at a lot of schools and after school programs and stuff, and a lot of low income kids; that's the only way they ever get out into the wilderness, is through organizations. So, it would be nice if they could get those passes for free. Go ahead, I'm sorry.

P6: That last conversation we had, last night? Was whether you… originally, when you called me. So, whether you pick me or not, the point is I never knew about any one of

these things. Not one of these! I made the same canyon trip that you're talking about. I never saw a sign about any of those. I paid right through the nose. When our friends went clear back to the Dakotas and swung around, he came back, he showed me the pass. I said "Where'd you get that?" And he says "The travel agent told us about it." I think this is the most unadvertised best buy in the United States, and they're not doing the job correct. Which is a damn shame. Second thing is, US—I got really hot going on this—US Forest Department, running out of money, wants a survey: "How can we save money?" We can take those four green pickets we get new from the factory and not paint them a three thousand dollar green paint job.

P4: That's how much they cost? That special color?

P6: That's what they cost to paint; three thousand dollars to over-paint a green on top of a green. So that's what they're going to do.

Russ: You guys are doing my job for me. *(laughter)*

P6: …and you and I did talk about that. And that's the one point I want to leave with, that there's just not—and why aren't they, why aren't they sold at resorts? Or even at—Crown Point just opened up! I don't know if anybody's been up there. It's beautiful. You know, overlooking Kwami Gorge; there isn't one thing up there about that.

Zafar: They're calling this now "convenience value" and the increment—the increasing price that they're justifying, one of the issues is that making it more convenient to people and making it more available, widely available, and more advertised. So, that's one of—marketing and all these costs. That's another issue—

P6: They had non-government *(inaudible)* for somebody forty percent commission for selling them, or whatever.

Russ: Participant 8, you were about to say something?

P8: Well I was just surprised at what he said.

P10: All right, if you're sixty-two, you can get this. *(overlapping voices)*

Russ: I was hoping you could hold that back until the end of the group. Actually, I would like to take a quick poll around the room. I know what we're going to do with some of these focus group results is actually form a questionnaire that we'll use for a nationwide telephone poll to survey… how many people? It's probably over a thousand.

Zafar: Two thousand.

Russ: Two thousand.

Zafar: Not officially, but yes.

Russ: Okay. And I was really curious, especially after what Participant 6 said, how many of you had—and this is going to be a brief response—heard of one of the top two passes up here: either the Golden Eagle Passport or the National Parks Pass. Starting with Participant 10, and just working our way real quick around the room.

P10: I've heard of them.

Russ: You've heard of both of them?

P9: I have not.

P8: Have not.

P7: Have not.

P6: Not.

P5: I've heard of them. I've never bought them.

P4: I've heard of the Golden Eagle Passport.

P3: I've heard of both.

P2: I've heard of them.

P1: Yes.

Russ: And, those of you who've heard of them, where did you hear of them? And this could be maybe a one sentence answer.

P3: At the entrance station.

Russ: Entrance station?
P1: Entrance station, internet. And several of these, like the Golden Age Passport, and the Golden Eagle Passport, are usually mentioned at campgrounds—federal campgrounds.

Russ: Okay, because of the discount.

P1: Right.

P2: My parents are thrifty senior citizens who visit national parks, and they think it's a great deal.

P6: It is.

P4: Same with my father, he's retired. *(laughter)*

Russ: Yeah, they're exactly what I was going to get my Dad after I heard about this.

(laughter)

P5: Oh, I have no idea where I heard about them. I just knew that they were out there.

Russ: Word of mouth. And Participant 10?

P10: I've seen them at the entrance to a national park, and word of mouth.

Russ: Okay. So, this is one of the things that we've been running into in focus groups. A lot of people are surprised that these existed, and they've never heard of them, and so we know that one of the things we want to report to our client is that advertising would be a really good thing. They were looking to… especially bring the revenue they believe they need to improve the facilities in the parks. Whether it be restrooms, or rangers' quarters, or what have you. That if they could advertise some more, that they may actually see a return on that investment.

P4: I had another added thought is, you know, on our tax returns, even though we can designate some of our moneys can go to… is it the Democrat or Republic…?

Russ: It goes to donating for advertising, for campaign matching funds. Yeah, I have a degree in political science. I'm supposed to know about this stuff.

P4: It would just be nice as a United States citizen to have some other—when we're paying our taxes that we could have another little box that we could check for something that's more positive rather than, you know, I think having that as a choice that we can maybe have our park passes paid through our personal tax returns. That'd be great. You know what I mean?

Russ: A donation.

P4: A donation. Yeah.

P3: Of your refund.

P4: From our refund, yeah.

P6: You mean pay right out of your refund. Boy, that'd be a hit.

P2: Well, that'd be advertisements nationally. That would be an automatic placement.

P4: It would wake up people, you know?

P6: Because once the money comes home I got to see it, so… *(laughter)*

P7: I'm going to get a refill.

Russ: *(to Zafar)* Did you get to look at those results that you have? Did you have any questions?

Zafar: I don't think so.

Russ: Okay. And, just to see, and this is going to sound really greedy and shameless. If you knew that eighty to eighty-five percent, and you could be absolutely assured of that, was going to go to park improvements, things like facilities, rangers quarters, maintaining trailheads, and things like that, what would be—since we've already brought up the point of making a donation on your tax form—what would be the top end that

you'd be willing to pay for something like the America the Beautiful Pass? If you know that the money was going to something that you really did care about, that you thought was underappreciated. And we could go back around the room again, starting with Participant 1 this time.

P1: I'd say seventy-five dollars.

P2: Fifty.

P3: I'd agree with Participant 2, fifty. It depends on… It would always boil down to whether I was planning on actually visiting those particular national parks.

Russ: Because of, there's always *(inaudible)*

P3: Right.

P4: Because they're so many limited in the region, I would say fifty.

P5: That was the same thing I wrote on the back of my sheet. Although, if I were going on a trip and I were really going to use them for a few weeks I would probably go up to seventy-five.

Russ: Okay.

P5: For Oregon, yeah.

P6: Knowing what I know now, I'd take my figure out of my sheet, but… But I'd probably say I'd pay seventy-five.

Russ: Okay.

P7: Seventy-five or eighty. If I had the breakdown of what was going for park maintenance and service, and what was going for improvements.

P6: As long as it's a normal split for private foundations, or… I think it's eighty-two and eighteen. Eighty-two percent goes to private and eighteen goes to generate those funds.

P8: Well, I said a hundred because everything is always more than I think it is anymore, anyway. Everything. You know? And going to improvements on our parks, of course, I would say that. I don't know that it's going to that, but if it was, then I would. There.

P9: You know, you're all going to think I'm crazy, but I would pay up to two hundred dollars, because the back of the sheet said we get up to four adults, and up to an unlimited number of children up to sixteen. This isn't something I would buy for every year, but if I were taking a trip, and say we were going back east, and I was going to visit some of the monuments, you know, the national monuments, and I would… It would be a family thing, where we would take, you know, three adults and probably as many kids, and I have kids, and I have nieces and nephews, so we would make it a family thing. So, you know, say you visited a minimum four monuments and parks on your two-week trip, and you took four adults, and an unlimited number of kids. Say, at least four kids,

and for a whole year. You know, I would… sure. It would save me some money, and I would be willing to put out about two hundred dollars for it.

Russ: And actually I can tell you that's not the high figure that we've heard so far. Someone did say something higher than that. It was three or four hundred.

P10: What was the question? Could you repeat the question?

Russ: If you knew that the money was definitely, guaranteed, going to go to a cause that you care about. If the cause is improving facilities and maintenance at parks and other federal lands; things like rangers' quarters; things like restrooms, for example, creating more of them or making sure that they're properly maintained. What would be the high end that you'd be willing to pay for something like the America the Beautiful Pass?

P10: You know, right now the camping is limited so you can only stay there for a week. The fee is for your car. It doesn't matter if you have four people in there or one person for a week. I don't think that I would be willing to pay for it unless I was going to go on a, you know, a trip across the country. I would go buy it. Just pay twenty dollars for a week. I'd pay fifty dollars, because I don't think that I would be… I don't' think I would be using it that much to go.

Russ: Interesting point. And does anybody else have…

P5: Well, I was just going to add to Participant 9's thing. I have two kids, too, and this whole discussion I've been thinking about myself going hiking. So, 'cause I rarely… I mean, because we're not back east, I rarely would be paying to get into a monument or something. But I can see, on a trip like that, and it almost might be worthy to have two levels of pass. Because family passes, you could charge a lot more than you would for a single individual. You know?

Russ: That does come up a lot, too. I think in every group, at some point that question has come up. Anybody think that that is also a good idea?

P4: Yeah, I agree that's a good idea. Because I'm single, no children…

P10: But you're paying by the car to get in.

Russ: In most cases.

P10: I mean I haven't seen where you don't pay for just the car.

Russ: Again, like I was saying earlier, on the east coast a lot of times people just walk through the gate to visit a historic site.

P4: …because I would pay a lot more if I paying for a family, too…

Russ: And, yeah, and especially if they had a family, and they all wanted to see the national monument, and they had to pay by the head, that could get pretty expensive in a hurry.

P10: Maybe there should be a pass for the east coast and the west coast? *(laughter)*

Zafar: That issue also came up, the regional passes. They do have regional passes, but not dividing the country like east and west pass.

P10: It sounds like they're two different things that *(overlapping voices)*

Zafar: When we are calling these focus groups in east coast, there are people like "We don't have any national—" I mean, all of these parks, or whatever land I can see, it's all… everything is on the west side. Why should I pay anything for these kinds of passes? So, we had these issues coming up. So, everyone is saying "Yeah, we don't have any national parks or national forests where people… Where they're going to charge." So…

Russ: And they are really jealous of you. *(laughter)* Especially when they look at that map. Anybody else… about whether singles and families should pay… different kinds of passes?

P5: Oh, this is just an addendum, but I was really glad that you said on the original—you took that paper away, but where you were describing the pass, you said that you could put two adult names on the back? And you didn't require that they be a couple or a family, and I think that's a really good idea, because it means that same-gender couples, or friends, or anybody can buy that pass. A mother and a child. Of course, an adult child. So, it makes it a lot more flexible for different kinds of families. So, I think that's a really good policy.

Russ: The old rule for the Golden Eagle Passport, which is very similar, was immediate family. If I had one, I could take my parents. I could take a brother or sister. Isn't that part of it, too?

Zafar: Yeah, anybody…

Russ: Anybody I can get in the car.

Zafar: Some states have a maximum number, but most of them, they don't have a maximum number.

Russ: If I was going to a historic site where I was just walking through the gate, then I could take immediate family. Whether it was children…

Zafar: We have—

P5: But it's nice that you didn't define it as immediate family on your…

Russ: Right… It's more…

P5: I was glad that you didn't say that because…

Russ: …open to interpretation.

P5: Yeah.

Russ: …much more looser… guidelines.

Zafar: I was entering Yellowstone National Park a few months ago, and we were like thirty people in a van. We were all friends. None of us were family members *(laughing)*, related to anybody else, so we just got in. They just asked "Are you guys having a commercial trip or anything like that? Is it a commercial? Are you taking people in with any company, or…?" We just said "No," and that's it. Twenty dollars you pay for the whole thirty people and just get in.

P2: That was a crowded van.

Zafar: Yeah, that was a crowded van *(laughing).*

Russ: Long trip.

P2: I'd like to say for the record that I would support an individual and a family pass.

Russ: And as long as we've brought that up, and we have ten people focused on that idea, what do you… what does everybody think? I'm going to go back around again starting with Participant 1. What should the price difference be if you agree with that idea? I guess that should be the first question: do you agree with that idea, and, if so…?

P1: I'm not sure that I agree with that idea.

Russ: Yeah? Sure. Okay. So, that's probably a "no." You don't agree with that.

P1: I… Yeah.

Russ: Okay, then that can be part of what we're polling at the same time.

P7: Could you go the other direction this time, because those are the people that already knew about the passes, and we're the ones who mostly didn't.

Russ: Well, I could innovate and skip back and forth. *(Laughter)* A zigzag. We're going to jump.

Q10: Well, I don't think there should be two. *(inaudible)*

P2: I think there should be two, and I think the individual one—I mean, this is my own rate. If it was fifty for a family, it should be thirty for an individual.

Russ: So, a little bit more than half. And… Participant 9?

P9: Oh, I support the two; the family and the individual.

Russ: And what do you think the difference should be?

P9: You know, I would probably go with the regional idea, where… back east it would be more expensive to go into say the aeronautical space museum, or whatever they have… per person than it is per person to go enter a national park here, where you use a car. So, the difference, I would say… I don't know. I think I'd have to think about that.

Russ: Okay. And… Well, if you do come up with a figure, feel free to throw it out there. Participant 3.

P3: I like Participant 9's idea of, like, two hundred dollars for family, and then maybe a quarter of that for the individual. And then you didn't mention something that I didn't realize, that, wow, you could use the pass for the Smithsonian and those type of national places that are expensive to get in; Gettysburg and *(inaudible)*. You know, we've been kind of, we're blinkered here and we only focus in on wilderness areas, but you got to remember that we're talking about historical and all these other places that we would want to visit.

Russ: So do you think there should be one for singles and one for families, Participant 3?

P3: Yes, I do. And I like your idea with two hundred dollars for family and fifty for singles.

Russ: Participant 7. Oh, Participant 8. I skipped you entirely. I'm so sorry.

Participant 8: What, by family you mean two people, or people with children?

Zafar: Old people and children under sixteen are free.

Russ: And children will always be free if they're sixteen or under.

P8: Oh, okay, so that brings up a thorn. Okay, so they're free, anyway. And that brings up a new thing. *(laughing)* Okay. So, children under sixteen are free anyway. Then, I…
P4: Oh, but they're not free *now*, right? Are you saying they're free now?

Zafar: They are free now.

P4: Oh!

P8: It should be the same for both of them, if children under sixteen are free, anyway.

Russ: Okay. Participant 4.

P4: I think I would support maybe a regional pass, you know, maybe two passes and I like the pass for maybe single, and one for family; and probably single fifty, and the family pass maybe a hundred and twenty-five.

Russ: Okay. Participant 7?

P7: I was going to say like a hundred eighty for a family pass, but I think, you know, two hundred is not extravagant at all, and could even be more for a family, but no more than three hundred. And probably about thirty-five to forty-five for a single, under fifty dollars. And the fees are probably more, and like she was suggesting, or someone was, that maybe they could provide an alternative way for low income or under poverty-level people to get a pass by, say, the federal minimum wage is like $5.75 to this day, around $6.00?

Russ: $5.15.

P6: $5.15.

P7: Oh? $5.15, so…

Russ: It hasn't gone up in a while.

P7: If they would volunteer at the rate of $5.15 reimbursement toward their ATB passport, they could work that many equal hours to obtain one.

P6: Unless they're in the state of Oregon, then I got to pay $7.25 an hour. *(laughter)*

P7: I think the other idea about splitting the country into half and regional passes would be… well, for that matter, you could quarter it. Well, like, you know, there's pretty clear lines if, you know, southeast, southwest, northwest, northeast. And that way, people would probably use it more frequently in their… just for like weekend jaunts in their area.

Russ: Okay. And Participant 5?

P5: I'm going with you on the prices? Didn't you say fifty and one twenty-five? I like that. And I agree with the regional thing, because I was saying like, living here, I would probably only buy it for a trip, so the regional thing would work. And again that means a lot of pass juggling from the federal government's part. It may be too much work, so I don't know. I don't know.

P10: I have a comment on that.

Russ: Let me get to Participant 6 first. *(overlapping voices)* We'll have a round robin so that you can throw in your last remarks, as well, though. Participant 6.

P6: Well, I think… I got a good friend. He's single, and he said he's getting tired of being nailed *(inaudible)* everywhere. But it happens to him. So I say there should be two prices: a single and a family rate. Single… well, a family rate, I would buy. But I would pay eighty. And for a single, I think, about twenty-five. I don't believe in a regional. I don't. It's just another layer, and I just don't see it. I don't see why.

Zafar: The values you just mentioned. With the convenience added to that pass, both of these passes, are more marketing advertisement. Would anybody change the price, or increase the price, or…?

P3: To compensate for the advertisement cost?

Zafar: More advertisement and more widely sold.

P2: I was just thinking, one thing that might be worth a couple of extra bucks is if there were really heavily traveled national parks and you're in the lines of vehicles, is you could *(whistles)* swerve through and run your pass through the thing, and not even have to deal with the thing, or the toll both, or whatever. Maybe there could be a separate lane for pass holders, and then that would be advertising right there, because everybody

else is sitting in this long thing, looking at the people whipping through on the fast lane, wondering why they get to do that.

Russ: So maybe like being out on some toll roads, you could have your own lane with the electronic, right through…

P4: And the post office; I mean I think the post office would be a great place to… I don't know how. That gets complicated, but they already sell pre-packaged envelopes and pre-, you know, designed things. And the stamps, now, are even… have… you know, they're more comical and light. The stamps that you buy. They could sell the passes at the post office, and that would be very visible.

P10: To all different people; that's the thing about that. It would be more accessible to…

P4: The accessibility. I like the post office. That's federal, right?

Russ: Yes.

P6: Union.

P10: Well, I… This is going back to the fee that we have for our state parks, just to compare it. It's three dollars for parking in a state park. You can buy it for that for two years for forty dollars. And so, if I'm going to go to a state park very frequently, at twenty dollars a year, to me, it just seems like it's a better thing than paying three dollars each time you go. But why would I want to pay that—a lot more money for a permit to go someplace, and then, on top of it, still have to pay sixteen dollars a day for camping, or whatever. I would think if you're buying a pass for a year, that you would do it because it would be convenient, less expensive, than paying twenty dollars… And I know some parks are different than others. Twenty dollars, each time you go, it should be something that, if you're going to use it several times, that there is a financial incentive in that for you to do this. A lot of these people buy a permit. They don't use it that many times, and the government comes out ahead that way, but I don't know why people would buy it if they didn't get any real benefit from it.

Russ: That actually brings up two points that we've discussed in other groups, and I was wondering what people thought in this group, as well. We did kind of mention this earlier, in that I think a couple folks thought that one year was sufficient, and if they were going to buy it, they would buy it maybe for that one special trip, and not want it for a longer period than that. But would anybody be interested in it being longer than one year term that you could purchase a passport? In another group discussion we got going, where people actually had National Parks Passes, they were kind of irked that nobody ever reminded them that they were going to expire. You couldn't just renew them automatically. Anybody kind of interested in those ideas, and one other thing, and then I'll release it to you guys. If it was sort of like a debit card in that you didn't have to pay for it if you only used it once or twice, and you didn't get your full money's worth out of it, would you be interested in that, too? But let's start out with the initial question, and I know Participant 6, you were ready to talk.

P6: I just wanted to say, about the single or family at lifetime, yes.

Russ: *(inaudible)*

P6: Oh, the government'd be poor as heck. You sell something to an eighty-year-old, and he dies the next year, and… *(laughter)* I mean. No, lifetime debts. I think some people are… I know that there are here in the room, there's a lot of people that are out there, that would take advantage of this, and I think they would buy a lifetime pass. They really would. But, again, we're isolated here. My comments… the last one comment I wanted made was, looking at this map, all the land, they crucified—the Indians really got had on this whole thing.

Russ: Participant 8, please.

P8: I like the idea that you were just stating, not just the one year, because you don't know… for long, you don't know what's going to happen in a year, either. You know, have a child. Somebody gets sick. You know. All sorts of things could happen in your family in one year. Maybe you can't use it that year, but you might be able to use it the next year, maybe. You know?

P5: I was just going to say you do it incrementally, like when you join a gym or something where you pay one year, it's one price. If you buy two years, it's cheaper per year, but it's more. If you buy three years, it's cheaper per year, but it's more. And I think the federal parks system would make a lot of money from that, because people tend to think "Well, that takes it down to twenty dollars a year if I buy three years for sixty bucks." And then some people will fall off and not use it as much.

Russ: And that almost ties into what Participant 6 was saying, in that, well, why not have a lifetime, too, if you're thinking about three years or four years at a discount? Why not get something that you could purchase…

P6: I'd say in business gift certificates are the most profitable things a person can sell, because only—what is it?—forty percent of them are redeemed?

Russ: It's something like that, and that's pure profit…

P6: It is.

Russ: If they don't redeem their gift certificates.

P5: And advertising it as a Christmas gift, I think that was a great idea.

P6: I like the check-off, too.

Russ: On the income tax form. *(to Zafar)* Are there any questions we haven't gotten around to, or need to?

Zafar: No.

Russ: All right. I think, well, I want to open it up. If anybody has any last-minute comments they want to throw out about any particular issue? Participant 9, did you come up with a pricing idea for the question that you thought of earlier?

P9: No, because I think I agree with a lot of people in the room, that for a family it would be more, and probably about two hundred for a year, especially if you lived in a place where you would use it a lot more, rather than, whereas here some places you pay, some places you don't. There's just more opportunity if you lived in another part of the country. So, maybe two hundred dollars, as opposed to… Well, I like the idea of the money—a lot of it going to causes that you care about, especially to support the upkeep. So, maybe a hundred dollars for a single, then for the regional, for this part of the country it would be cheaper just because I think that the people who are really enthusiastic and passionate about spending time in the beauty that we have up in the northwest; they're the people that we want to get out there. Not the people who are like "Oh, it sounds like a good day to go for a hike up the gorge!" And they come with their cooler full of Coke and, you know, Cheetos, and they leave it out there for other people to pick up. You know, they're "Well, let's go down here! It looks like nobody's been here." And yet, you know, someone who's out there really to be enjoying themselves, to pick up their M&M wrappers, or Starburst wrappers, or their *(inaudible)* Coors Light cans, or even the shell casings from people who are out there on the BLM land, you know, shooting up a car; or coming across a dead body, which has happened in this part of the country, too. So, I would say it should be cheaper for this part of the country, and probably about a hundred dollars for a family, and maybe around fifty to sixty; maybe from forty to sixty for single.

Russ: Okay. And does anybody else… I want to open up everything for about two minutes. Anybody has maybe a twenty second comment that they've been dying to make. That they've been holding back.

P2: I do! I've got my notes in front of me *(laughing)*. These are my final thoughts. One is that I think it's okay for us as US citizens to pay for a pass to access national parks where there are many amenities. For example, interpretive services, restrooms, visitor centers, and efforts to put in buses, for example, to deal with large crowds of people. So, I want to say that, but I don't believe we should be paying for access to other federal lands, where it's just a trail, for example. And then, second thing is that I think the money should go to all parks in the system. I know that I value many, many small parks, and I would fear that they would go away if money was only allotted to the parks that had a lot of visitors. So that they consider that they need help. And then I think that there should only be one national pass. I think it's stupid to…

Russ: And that was the whole idea by create— about creating this. Anybody else?

P6: I got a suggestion about what you ran by us earlier. The second question about if you didn't use your pass frequently enough, could you get some reimbursement, compensation, or…

Russ: Or maybe lengthen the expiration date?

P6: Yeah, either that, or maybe give them a choice. Say, if they used it under three times in the past year, that they could either give an extra half a year or half price off another year. That would kind of keep them *(inaudible)*. Keep them rolling.

P10: I'm wondering what… Are you figuring what the cost would be to switch over to what it is now into this… pass? Is that something that might be considered?

Russ: I think they've already made a decision, and I should probably start revealing some of the facts that I've been holding back to keep the conversation rolling. Let me just wrap things up and turn off the recorders first, though. I want to remind everybody please to just keep everything that we've said in here confidential, to yourself, especially as far as who said what, as well as the actual things that came out. As soon as I'm done revealing the secret facts, we'll be paying out fifty dollars in cash, and all I'll need in exchange for that is the signature at the bottom of the forms that each of you have. And with that, I'm going to turn off the recorders and…

P5: Hey, wait! I have one more quick comment!

Russ: Yes!
P5: It goes to Participant 6's comment on the green vehicles being painted green.

Russ: Okay.

P5: Who collects these things that you need to change the picture over here? Because that seems like that will end up being a weird, costly thing to find which picture comes on each year, and I don't know anyone that has a collection of the forest passes. It seems that that would make a lot more economic sense to keep the same picture.

Russ: Okay.

P5: Just a quick thought.

Russ: That's the last word.

(the focus group discussion ends)

Focus Group #4: Fresno, California
September 20, 2005

Moderator: Russ Miller
Assistant Moderator: Zafar Khan
Research Aide: Vicki Barthel, not in attendance (transcript)

Moderators are shown by their first names. Participants are given participant numbers, as follows:

Group Demographics

Identifier	Gender	Age	Profession	Income Range
P1	Male	43	Teacher	3
P2	Male	43	Self Employed/Landlord/Small Business Owner	2
P3	Female	21	Full-Time Student	3
P4	Male	24	Full-Time Student	3
P5	Female	40	Disabled	2
P6	Male	21	Full-Time Student	1
P7	Male	36	Administrative Assistant	2
P8	Male	47	Temporary Disabled	1
P9	Female	55	Program Assistant	1
P10	Female	43	In home health care provider	1

Russ: Okay we're going to get started officially now. Thank you for being so patient. I know it hasn't been a very fascinating 20 minutes. My name is Russ Miller. I am an Assistant Research Scientist with the Wyoming Survey and Analysis Center. It's a department at the University of Wyoming in Laramie, Wyoming. Next to me is Zafar, he's also an Assistant Research Scientist at the University of Wyoming. This is actually his project. He has a Ph.D. in Environmental Economics and the federal government in the form of the National Park Service, the US Forest Service, The Bureau of Land Management, The Bureau of Reclamation and The Fish and Wildlife Service has contracted with us to help them figure out what to do with the new passes they would

like to create. It's going to be coming out in a couple of years, for recreating on federal lands. It will help make it less expensive to recreate. Has anyone ever been in a focus group before, heard them, seen them on TV? More than two people? Okay. It's kind of like an organized conversation. My purpose is to kind of throw out some questions and get the ball rolling, but I'm not going to be like a professor in a classroom or a teacher or anything like that. If a conversation gets started and you want to respond to something that someone else has said in the room, you don't have to ask my permission or raise your hand to be called on or anything like that. Understand if it gets really busy and you need to be noticed that's what I'm here to help facilitate, is to make sure that nobody gets shouted down or anything like that. I'd like to let everybody know that all of your opinions are welcome. We especially want to hear opinions that maybe popular or interesting in any way, unique. We are doing focus groups all across the country. Actually, we started in Boston. We worked our way down to Richmond, over to Portland, down to here and we will eventually be going to Salt Lake City and Madison, Wisconsin, so that every region will be represented.

P1: That’s a great town. Great.

Russ: Really, I've heard good things.

P1: It’s a great town.

(Laughing)

Russ: Okay, Participant 1, you threw me off. *(Laughing)*

P1: *(Inaudible, overlapping voices)*

Russ: That's all right. We would like to lay down just a few ground rules before we get started. We'd like everybody's opinion to be respected. Some opinions may seem a little out of kilter with the popular opinion, but we hope that nobody would laugh at them, unless it was intended as a joke or something like that. Also, we'd like everybody just to be able to speak one at a time. And the reason for that is I'm going to actually be transcribing these once all the focus groups are done. And may be able to comprehend when multiple people are speaking. Right now I can lay my eyes on them, but you'd be amazed at how many things seem garbled on a tape recorder once you sit down and try and type them up. So we would like everybody to take turns, even though you don't have to raise your hand to get called on or anything like that. Anything I'm forgetting as far as ground rules that you can think of?

(Inaudible)

Russ: Oh, confidentiality. That's probably our most important one. We'd like everybody to keep what is said in this room in this room, know matter how fascinating or interesting. Even if you have a friend and have a third friend, a friend who’s here and a third friend. That is a situation especially where we would want you to keep what was said in here a secret. We don’t want names to be linked to comments or ideas that were expressed. We won't be sharing your names with anybody else. We do have your names on these documents just so we can prove to our payroll office that you really exist and we didn't just take fifty dollars and put it in a Swiss bank account. *(Laughing)* But we won't be sharing your names with the federal government, with our client, or with any of the other

people at WYSAC, besides the ones that are working on this particular project. And we would hope that you could also keep these things in confidence. Could we just have a show of hands, everybody who has no problem with keeping everything in here and not sharing names with their friends? That's great. So, in order to get the ball rolling this time, what I would like to do is kind of go around the room starting on this side with Participant 1 and could you tell us what your favorite national park or forest is and what you like to do there?

P1: Kings Canyon.

Russ: Kings Canyon, and what do you like to do there?

P1: Kings Canyon, I like cause you have the giant redwoods.

Russ: Okay.

P1: And it's only 45 minutes away. You've got the giant redwoods. I've never camped up there. It's my favorite.

Russ: Is it completely separate from Yosemite then?

P1: Oh yes.

Russ: Okay. And Participant 2?

P2: My favorite is Yosemite. Before we had kids it was because of the hiking opportunity, but now it's just the environment of Yosemite, it's just breathtaking. So the kids enjoy that scenery.

Russ: Okay. Participant 3?

P3: My favorite is Yosemite also. I just like to be there, whether it be picnicking or bicycling. It doesn't really matter. As long as I'm there.

Russ: Does it have good weather pretty much year round?

P3: Yeah. I mean it has its seasons, but yeah.

Russ: It's not where the Donner party got stuck or anything?

P2: That's Tahoe.

P3: Yeah.

Russ: More of a Wyoming story than a California story, I suppose. And Participant 4?

P4: Yosemite as well. Breathtaking, waterfalls, hiking, you name it.

Russ: Participant 5?

P5: Glacier National Park.

Russ: Okay. What do you like to do when you're there? I heard *(inaudible)*.

P5: Just horseback riding *(inaudible)*. It's just the scenery is so beautiful, it's breathtaking and the blue sky.

Russ: Yeah, Montana is supposed to be famous for that. Participant 6?

P6: I like the *(inaudible)* National Forest or Mammoth Mountain is. I'm not sure if it's exactly called the *(inaudible)* National Forest. But that drive around the backside of the Sierra Nevadas, through the desert out there, and then up on the side of the mountain just go straight up. I like going out there.

Russ: Okay. And Participant 7?

P7: I like Yellowstone, but it's so far away we never go there.

Russ: It's actually pretty far away from Laramie too. I drove once, it's a about 380 miles drive. We're in the southeast corner of the state.. Participant 8?

P8: Olympia peninsula, Washington State, that's where I'm from and I go up there and *(inaudible)* and put out...

Russ: Okay, scenery again. We heard a lot about that when we were up in Portland too. *(Inaudible)*.

P9: He just changed my mind. I forgot about Olympic. I was going to say Sequoia. Then I was to do Point Lobos. Never mind, Olympic. *(Laughing)*

Russ: *(Inaudible)* What do you like to do when you're up there?

P9: Look around. It's gorgeous. It's just so pretty. The dense greenery and nice gray skies. I appreciate cool weather.

Russ: Yes. Yes.

P9: After living here.

Russ: It's very warm. Participant 10?

P10: Muir Woods, actually I'm not sure if it's a state park. *(Inaudible)* kids...My little girl, age 3, he's into the smell of the dirt, smell of moss. Cold breeze, that's why. *(Inaudible)*.

Russ: I've got to see a redwood tree before I leave.

P10: *(Inaudible)*. Smell.

Russ: Do all of you have the handout that says, "America the Beautiful Pass up at the top? It's a long handout. Actually, I would like just to take about five minutes or so, if it takes that long, and I'd like to ask everybody to read that twice. And as I said earlier,

don't turn it over yet, because the back has a secret on it that we don't want to share with anybody.

Russ: I'd also like to ask if anybody has a cell phone, please turn it off or put it on vibrate or something like that, just in case it rings at that particular moment when you're right in the middle of *(inaudible)*.

Russ: If you could look at me when you're done. You don't have to stare at me the whole time.

(there is a silent pause of several minutes as participants fill out questionnaires)

Russ: Is everybody done? Anybody need a little bit more time? I'd like you to flip them over and answer the questions on the back. Also if anybody knows anything about these passes that are on the color handout, if you could keep it to yourself for the time being, especially anything about how much they cost.

Russ: Oh, and if anybody has any questions they can ask *(inaudible)*.

Russ: Does anybody have any comments or questions about that handout? Anything they'd like to...Take your guess.

P6: Are all the other passes sold at the same places that, that one will be sold at?

Zafar: Yes and additional places, for example the private vendors, like Wal-Mart...We don't now at this point, which private vendors, but yes. And online it's all there. So and all the National Parks entrance areas and...We don't have an exact list of places, but yes it will be widely sold in many places. So that's one of the convenience added to the park. But, the National Park Pass, so...

Russ: And that's one of the reasons why we're having this group, if there is anyplace where you would like this to be sold, you could of course contribute *(inaudible)*.

P7: AAA. AAA should sell it. Yeah, we …saying that, that's what supports some of the parks is pretty much just the entrance fee. And what I was thinking is in case they want to get, raise the price real high, if they kept it low and reasonable...Like me, I usually buy one when I have to go through Yosemite and then, so I only buy a pass every two years.

Russ: Okay.

P7: If they have like a certain price for this and it would be discount. 'Cause Yosemite is like twenty dollars, I think, just to go to Yosemite, but if you have this pass maybe it would be five dollars. So reduced or really reduced fee at all these places so that pass wouldn't cost so much. 'Cause some of us don't get to go out all the time. I just wonder if it could be a, like, a discount type of card.

Russ: So instead of getting completely free access...

P7: Yeah. *(Inaudible* - Multiple Voices*)*. If they give you a five hundred dollar access to everything card, keep it reasonable. So like if I go to Yosemite instead of it costing me twenty dollars, I have this card that says okay, it's only going to cost five dollars to get in.

Russ: Okay. So reduction instead of making it *(inaudible)*.

Participant 7: Yeah, ‘cause if it's one park that said it's going to get rid of all these other cards. I either pay that card or twenty bucks to go into Yosemite.

Russ: Okay.

Participant 7: And it's like, I'd probably quit going to Yosemite, given that option.

Russ: Okay. So you think what they're thinking of doing might make it too expensive?

Participant 7: If it ends up being too expensive.

Russ: And Participant 1?

P1: First off, a place I really don’t want it sold: Ticket Master *(laughter)*. It sounds like what we're trying to do here is update the National Park System. Create a new revenue stream. Just like we’re trying to update Medical, Medicaid, Social Security, things like that. We're trying to bring it into the 21st century, which to me is a great idea. One pass, ATB, nice marketing test here. You’re going to create an ATP Pass. I guess one of the biggest things right now is just like you said, if you want to drive through Yosemite, people really don't... really hadn't marked the national parks like they really should be marked. The only question I have is, will we have an influx of all these people suddenly going to the national parks and getting a little bit too crowded? One of the great things I liked about Kings Canyon near the woods is people don't really...It's off the beaten path. They really don't know about it. Okay, you go to Yosemite, there's times where they close the park. Price, you know, be reasonable. I think it's a very good idea. What they're trying to do is...Parks will probably never pay for itself. You’re still going to have to have government funding for it. It costs a lot of money to run parks. On the pass, too, and I don't mean to ramble on, but the pass, the signatures? Is it going to be automated so that you can tell exactly how many people are actually going into the parks? Is that for like security reasons? Is it for how many times that person's going to use the signature? Are they going to get the card. *(Inaudible)* using the card because... I think we’ve all done it in the past. They're abusing the signatures?

Zafar: Restricting number of...That's one reason that shouldn't get transferred very easily *(Inaudible)*. So they have a thing that checks that ID, they still use sometimes and they don't use sometimes.

P1: Which means the booth is probably going to have a scanner or some type of automated system?

Zafar: It's going to have a magnetic strip.

P1: So it's going to be plastic cards?

Russ: Yeah they'd be on *(inaudible)*.

Zafar And so that's how it measures, of course, how many times you use that. So it checks the use versus nonuse value of the park pass.

P1: So you could use it to go in the park 100 times.

Zafar: Right.

P1: I do like the other aspect to that point of collectors' edition. Americans collect so much junk. I mean, it's amazing. But something that's patriotic, something's hey, you know, limited editions for, you know, x amount, a hundred bucks. I've seen very wealthy people who may get into that collectors' edition. It just seems to me that we're trying to create a revenue stream to help the parks maintain themselves, which is a great idea. Because there is no government entity ever gets more money than it needs. And that's the same with national parks. I think this is a great idea. I really do. You just have to keep it at a certain price point to where people who have maybe used it aren't priced out. So you are trying to attract another segment of society.

Russ: Does anybody else have questions?

P2: I'm confused about, without getting it too detailed, about how it's paying for itself. Then, if we're going down that *(inaudible)* said something that the daily and weekly will pay, continue to pay for certain sites, or does it pay for everything? Because I heard everything.

Russ: Okay.

(Inaudible - multiple voices*)*.

Zafar: Daily and the regional passes, say, for any National Park there's a fee for entering that National Park only.

P1: Right, okay.

Zafar: So that is still there.

P2: Okay.

Zafar: Daily use or weekly use or whatever it is, that's going to be there. Regional passes...

Russ: *(Inaudible)*

P2: Okay.

Russ: But if you have one of these than you won't have to pay that *(inaudible)*.

P2: Okay.

P1: Makes sense.

Russ: But it won't be that the daily fees will go away and you have to have one of these.

P2: Okay. And this is going to open up to things, beyond the Washington Monument or I thought they said federal sites—

Russ: Most historical sites will be included like the Constitution, the ship and the document in Boston and Washington.

P1: Okay.

Russ: Things like that statue...I don't know if Statute of Liberty?

Zafar: Liberty Bell.

Russ: Exactly, exactly.

P3: I have a question.

Russ: Yes?

P3: What's the difference between the Gold...What else is included in the new pass that's not already included in the Golden Eagle? Like the monument. Is it...

Russ: It's very similar.

Zafar: It's yeah...

P3: Like what else do you get? Are you getting like some other access to some other...I wasn't clear on what...

Russ: I don't think the Bureau of Reclamation used to be included.

Zafar: Yeah.

Russ: That's one of the things. I mean if you wanted to visit the Hoover Dam, and they have that new visitors' center, I think you have to pay a fee to get in too. That would be waived. So they will, at least, tack on that.

Zafar: Army. Where you go the...

Russ: Corp of Engineers.

Zafar: That's going to be with… probably, you know. Were not sure at this point again, they're talking...Because we have a lot of campsites. So that's....But to answer your question *(inaudible)*, it does not defer that much.

P3: Okay.

Zafar What the Forest Service say it's a convenience value that's going to add...It's widely accepted through all the federal land, that's one thing. It's widely advertised, which is not very good at this point. And sold— widely sold. So these are the main components based on rate. Basically your Golden Eagle is coming back in the name of ATB.

P3: Okay.

P8: Doesn't the Presidential library and museums come under this?

Zafar: Libraries?

P8: Because we went through Truman's home in Missouri, or whatever, and it was a Parks Bureau. I was surprised.

Russ: Okay, yeah, all of the National Parks will be covered.

Zafar: It will be covered.

Russ: Can I have...If nobody else has comments or questions, I have a couple of questions for you guys. How many of you...I'd like you to actually go around the room starting with Participant 10 this time, have heard of any or seen any of the passes that are on this sheet before?

P10: Honestly, I've never seen them before. I've never used them. I just take my CD and just go into the park.

Russ: I'm the same way, before I got on this project.

P10: Me, myself, I don't really see this fitting into my life and none of them.

Russ: Okay.

P10: But they're good for other people.

Russ: Yes. And Zafar… Zafar actually had one. *(*Multiple voices*)*. Participant 9?

P9: The Golden Age.

Russ: You've heard of that one.

P9: Oh yeah. I lived in a town that was mostly retirement over the coast and quite a few of those people have them, and they go quite a bit.

Russ: Please don't tell anybody how much it costs until we're done.

P9: I just had the luxury of being invited on a few trips.

Russ: They're very nice to have. Participant 8?

P8: The National Parks Pass.

Russ: You do? Okay. And Participant 7?

Participant 7: I've heard of all of them and I have the National Parks Pass.

Russ: Participant 6?

P6: I've just heard of the National Parks Pass.

Russ: Participant 5?

P5: I've seen the names of all of them, but I hadn't seen the exact card.

Russ: Okay, so you've probably never owned one?

P5: No.

Russ: Participant 4?

P4: Yeah, I've seen the Golden Eagle and the National Parks Pass. Participant 3, your father had those right?

P3: Yeah, my father gets Golden Eagle every year for Father's Day.

P4: *(inaudible)*.

P3: And National Parks Pass, but I haven't heard of the sticker or the Golden Age.

P4: Yeah, I haven't heard of these.

Russ: Actually, when you take the sticker and put it on the National Parks Pass, it becomes the equivalent of the Golden Eagle Pass. The National Parks Pass is good at National Parks by itself and then if you add that Golden Eagle sticker to it, it can take you to all the other places that the Golden Eagle pass will cover. Participant 2?

P2: I've only seen the Golden Eagle Passport. I had one two years ago.

P1: The Golden Eagle Passport and the Golden Age.

Russ: Okay. It's probably one of the highest percentages of any group where everybody—where so many people have heard of them before. I wonder if it's because of the proximity to Yosemite? Us not being so close to Jackson is probably why I hadn't heard of them either. There aren't a lot of big National Parks near Laramie. Do you think they should be advertised more than they are? Especially *(inaudible)*. How did everybody find out about them if you found about them originally? Were they...Was it at an entrance station, or?

P9: I heard of it. Well, we paid the entrance fee and it listed all the different ones and they asked if we would like to by a pass or just pay the entrance fee.

Russ: Do you remember if this was at Yosemite?

P9: This was at Glacier.

Russ: Okay. Anybody else remember?

P8: I saw a new guide book for Yosemite and then my sister purchased it when they went through there.

Russ: Okay.

P3: I've never seen it advertised anywhere, outside of the parks.

P1: I haven't either.

Russ: So how did you find out?

P3: The park entrance.

Russ: Okay.

P3: By just by going.

Russ: And there wasn't really necessarily even a sign there? Just somebody reminded you?

P3: I think it's like she said they just list. When you go they go do want to pay $20 and you just want to buy the pass and just buy the pass.

Russ: And that was at Yosemite?

P3: Uh huh.

P1: At Kings Canyon, too.

Russ: Okay.

P1: You just do some quick math. If we go we'll probably go three *(inaudible* - noise*)*. That's good enough.

Russ: But if they hadn't offered it to you at the gate you probably never would have heard of it then?

P1: Would have never heard of it.

*(*Multiple voices saying "no"*)*

P10: I probably would because my mom's always had some things. We used to travel a lot as kids. So I would have known something. Some sort of pass.

Russ: And Participant 9 you were saying that you've heard of the Golden Age before?

P9: Well, the neighbors sell it. Here, look at what we use. Okay. They already had it. I don't know how much they, where they bought it from, what they paid. But they all seem to have one.

Russ: What kind of advertising do you think they should do so they could reach more people?

P9: Well for the seniors' one, that's quite obvious who they send out their advertisements too, for the seniors. Because like you said, around here we are...California is just chocked full of parks. You know, they're in every direction.

Russ: So do you think they should send junk mail or …?

Unknown: No! *(Laughing)*

P9: …Addressed to, you know, not exactly junk. But that's just for the seniors; what about other people? That would be nice to know about.

Unknown: Triple A

Unknown: AARP

Unknown: AARP, Triple A

P1: You have public service announcements. I don't think I've ever heard a National Parks public service announcement. By law they're supposed to do that.

Russ: Okay.

P1: Maybe not National Parks, but you know, alcohol abuse society, radio, TV.

Unknown: Yeah, because what if you're not with AARP, or a senior citizen, or you don't have AAA. What about all those?

P1: Even if it's at 1:30 in the morning, you know they could do a 30 second spot.

Unknown: In between the *(inaudible)* and the infomercials.

P3: Our newspaper. Newspaper, or like National Geographic, where they could take out an add or something.

Russ: Participant 10, where would you like to have seen it? I'm sorry. People do that to me all the time. The waitress always comes and ask if things are fine right after I *(inaudible, laughing)*...

P10: Actually the newspaper. Not really junk mail, but some type of something.

P3: And the travel section.

Russ: Okay.

P10: The newspaper or the Thrifty Nickel or something like that.

Russ: Sort of like where we advertised for the focus group?

P10: Exactly.

P10: That was just kind of *there* it seemed like.

Russ: We're on a budget. *(Laughing)*. Yes, please.

(Inaudible - multiple voices*)*

P1: People who use the parks now? They're going to use it. So I guess, you know, what I'm asking you, are you trying to expand the base? To get people who maybe use it like once a year, like myself, to get them to use it 2 or 3 times a year? Or are you trying to get people who have never used it before to use it once or twice a year? 'Cause I think if you get people up to Yosemite or Glacier, they're going to go back. And I think you...

Zafar: I was talking to the state park people this morning and that issue came up. That… does it… just holding the pass increase the number of visits? So is it a revenue loss in terms...They don't have any *(inaudible)*, but the objective is yeah of course get as many people as we can, but that does not mean that it should, this should be a condition.

Zafar: So that's also, we can't...There's an issue when you're talking to National Park people, they are concerned that we should not suggest and our task is at the university are researchers. To give them the where the revenue is maximized. At which price will revenue be the maximum. Now we give them a price, say for example 35. Okay. That's what we found. That's what we figured out. And so Congressman will come, say "Oh, this looks nice, 35." Now the other groups, state coordinators in all this issue who are concerned about the quality of the National Parks, too. So just setting a price, $15 can include all income groups. Everybody who wants to go can get into the park. Well that's a nice idea, but will that be a...how much quality am I going to get out of it?

P1: You've got facilities. You've got increased staff.

P5: I was born and raised here, and I didn't get up to Yosemite 'til I was 27, because I came from a separate income level that it wasn't affordable at the time for us. And then once I grew up and got married and went into a different income level, now we go quite a few times a year. Where like I said, it, being here for all my life and not getting there for 27 years is....

Zafar: That's understandable, and they're talking about sliding income again; include the low income group in some other way instead of just lowering the overall price, if there is some, any other way to include that. Again, we don't know at this point what's that going to be worth. Should it be the policy, or will it be the policy. But yes they are definitely concerned about that part. The state park system, they do have something like that. They were showing me today, and I did not look at that how… And I was asking them, "How do you do that?" So they go through the Medicaid to figure out say categories...

Russ: Categories.

Zafar: Categories of income. And I just go out and look into those things, but those are the ways to do it. And of course we will suggest all of these policies to them, to the

National Park people to take *(inaudible)*. But there is an issue like how we will recognize *(inaudible)*, so that's always a question mark there.

P8: Another area of exposure would be the hotel, airline, maybe frequent flyer. I used to manage up at *(inaudible)* call center up in Portland, and when we became a partner with like Alaska Airlines on Horizon, it was like our business just went through the roof. I mean just inquiry calls or bookings, you know. So, like in isolated areas in just Montana from like Glacier, target whatever airline goes in there and like that. That would be an exposure thing.

Russ: That kind of brings up another interesting point. Does anybody know if California as a state has passes that are similar to this that can get you into state parks?

Unknown: I think they have a state parks pass.

Zafar: Sorry, Russ, go ahead.

Russ: Well, I was just going to ask do you think they should be sold at the same places? Like you should just be able to do one stop shopping and get your National Parks Pass at the same time you got your…?

(Multiple "yes")

Russ: Okay. Anybody think not?

P1: I used to work for the government. Let's just put that in context. *(Laughing)*. You have competing interests. Okay, you have economies of scale. You got what's known as state pass, but your national pass is like FBI working with local police; it rarely happens. I would like it because you could buy it at one place if you wanted to. You sound like Ticket Master. *(Laughing)*. But if you were going to do something like that, maybe they could do it to where look, your National Park Pass is fifty bucks, you know, value added. Make it like an extra twenty five bucks, you can have both.

(overlapping voices)

Zafar: The park people are very much concerned about that part. That should not happen. You know again, competitive interests. The times...

P1: We can have someone who is going to the National Park. The National Park people are going to push their National Park at the point of purchase. They put the state park sign back there and then they'll push the National Park. If they go to the state park they're going to push the state park. So you have to again look at the there's only so much money to go around.

Zafar: The annual state parks and pass of the state park, the cost is $125.

Unknown: *(inaudible)* I think it's like seventy something.

Zafar: For annual parking pass.

P10: Annual?

Zafar: Annual.

P10: An annual parking pass?

Zafar: Parking pass is $125 for the state parks only. Which is costlier, way costlier, than the National Park Pass. Now, as soon as I tried to describe this thing to the director today, and her first question was, “Okay, wait a second. Is this going to replace or do something to our own pass or anything like that?” The answer is no. So they are relieved. “Okay, okay. Now you can go ahead and…” So, I don't know if that's going to be possible or not.

Unknown: Even the little pamphlets like when you stay at a hotel, they have all the little, the brochures. You know, because if you're going into a town it tells you what's near there. If you see and pick up one of those.

P7: Yeah they give the whole nation right there. Because that's what I always wondered. It's like okay. We're down in San Diego. Was there anything my National Parks Pass was good for? You know, I know there's a couple things down there, basically. You know, the motel, if they had something in there I could go “Oh, yeah! We can use my pass over here.”

Unknown: *(overlapping voices)* when I went there.

Russ: I'm sorry?

P7: One of the passes or one of the pamphlets? When I was in Montana they put my picture in there. They asked and *(multiple voices)*. I'm famous in Montana. Nobody knows me here, but I'm famous in Montana. Yeah.

Russ: We'll have to look for you next time I'm up there.

P7: Yeah, you pick up those and the kids are usually the ones that pick them up. They bring 50 of them in the car for you going, “Can we go here?” You know and like she said, you know where your card can be used your more apt to use it.

Russ: So maybe they should have something like a little icon for the pass on the bottom of brochures that will...

Zafar: That if for Washington and Oregon. They came up with this brochure, but not everybody has that, so...

Russ: It shows the different passes?

Zafar: Yeah, the different passes and it compares the prices at the same time.

P7: Yeah, see, that would be great. I've never seen it like I said until you got to the gate and they ask you "Do you want to pay?"

Zafar: And as far as I understand the National Parks, they don't have anything like that at the National Park *(*multiple voices*)*.

P1: At the breakpoint, the synergy between airlines and, you know, marketing through, you're flying through Billings, Montana, they have it right there. Then again you got to train people: "And, by the way, you can get…" and then some companies may not want to. "Look, we're trying to sell our product, not this product."

P6: Just to clarify?

Russ: Yes, Participant 6.

P6: The state… like a federal pass doesn't override for state lands, they're separate, two separate things?

Russ: Exactly. The federal pass would get you onto federal lands and the state pass would get you onto state lands; like state parks versus National Parks and US Forests and things of that nature.

P4: Do you know why is it there's a lack of advertising or like promotion of the parks?

Russ: I think it's for…. probably for budgetary reasons would be their rationalization. I don't know if that's 100% the case, though. Zafar, do you know if they've ever…?

Zafar: No, I have no idea why it's not*(inaudible)*. That's what my feeling is so far talking to these people. After the first two focus groups we kind of told them that it's ill advertised. It's not really advertised very well at all.

(multiple voices)

Unknown: Could not making a bathroom that costs a million dollars in the middle of nowhere help the budget out anywhere?

(multiple voices)

Unknown: But they could have a sign to advertise the card on it, huh? *(laughs)*

P4: I just don't understand the logic of not advertising to people who have never experienced the parks. How are those people going to get it in their head to go or even buy a pass, let alone buy a pass if, you know, if it's not in their head. That idea of, you know, if you live in the area....

P7: I never. Like I said, I never went to Yosemite. When I went the first time I went the next five weekends after that. I kept going up there every weekend because there was so much to see. I would have never have known it if I hadn't gone there.

P6: Yosemite and Kings Canyon both, Yosemite is a larger one. Who ever does the advertising must cost a few bucks because they have a guide that they just give out free at the airport that's slick paper; the whole thing is very well done. So that doesn't come cheap.

Russ: I would like to ask that the Participant 7 has brought it up, but just to take a quick spin around the room again. For those of you who own one of these passes, did you go

to the parks and forests and things like that more often when you had it? And for those of you who don't, do you think you *would* if you had a pass go to the parks more often? Would that affect, you know, the length of your trip if you were planning on going just maybe to see a park in Wyoming. Do you think you'd also stop in Montana and Idaho and other places on the way back? Starting with Participant 1, let's take a quick zip.

P1: I did. I had an annual pass. I went probably four times up to Kings Canyon. But, remember, it's only 50 minutes away. But yeah, the next year I don't think we renewed it.

Russ: Okay. Did you visit King's Canyon last year?

P1: No. It probably took me another year or two. But I guess to get back to what the point was, when you say recreation to Americans, you really don't think of National Parks.

Russ: Okay.

P1: At least I don't. I mean when you talk about recreation, you're talking about maybe softball and baseball, things like that.

Unknown: Movies.

Unknown: Chess games. *(Laughing)*

P1: We really don't want that. You know, chess games in the National Parks, state parks. Maybe drawing in an element that really can't handle it. *(Laughing)*. Although I guess *(inaudible)* state parks and that. I don't know. But the recreation thing, most people think it...there's more to do up there. I can be camping, hiking and things like that.

P2: We had that Golden Eagle Passport. I think for two consecutive years. That was three years ago and we did go more frequently because we had the pass. We probably would have gone more often, but we always kept in mind the size of the, the crowd size. So the seasons played a big role in how often we went. So, if we knew it was going to be...You know, if the weather was great, it would probably keep us away. And might not go that week, which might mean wouldn't go for another month or two. Then we stopped the pass because we had kids and were just too busy to go frequently enough to pay for it.

Russ: Okay. And do you think that having kids is an extra expense for you not to go to the parks or was it just that…?

P2: No it wasn't expensive. It was, Yosemite, it's a full day. It's a long day with kids.

Russ: Oh okay. *(Laughing)*

P2: It’s quite a drive up there and actually go into Yosemite, and then it’s a full day of biking or hiking, walking, whatever and then the drive home. It's...We cut back.

P7: The drive home is the longest with children.

P2: Yeah. Yeah. It definitely was a factor.

Russ: Participant 3?

P3: My family's had the Parks Pass ever since I was a little girl and we would by it annually. And I think we definitely make our money back on it because we go often enough and people come from out of town or out of the country. So, yeah, I think it's increased just because it's in your head, you know. You bought it. You see it in your wallet. You figure your going to get your money's worth. If somebody comes in from out of town especially, what do you want to do? Well, you have the Parks Pass, so.

Russ: Okay. So it's an excuse to go.

P3: Yeah. Well, plus you figure you think you got to like you know make your money back off the pass, and it's a great thing for people out of town so.

Russ: Okay.

P4: *(inaudible)* It's like I have the pass so might as well go.

Russ: Okay. Do you think it's increased your circle of friends at the same time? *(Laughing)*

P4: Possibly.

Russ: Okay. Let's go to Participant 4's house; he has a pass.

P4: Definitely.

Russ: Participant 5?

P5: I've never had the pass. I usually just pay as I go. But if I had the pass I would definitely use it 'cause the last five years I've done a lot of traveling through the different states, and one of the things about doing that is being able to visit the different parks and recreation or national monuments, you know, whatever state you happen to be in.

Russ: Okay.

P6: Yes, if I had one I would definitely use it more.

Russ: Okay.

P7: I've had one on and off every other year or so. And the years when I don't think I'll be traveling much, I'll go the south side up, because we go to Bishop. So, I either go through Yosemite or south side and avoid it, but if I know we might be going somewhere, like one year we went up to Yellowstone. It's, like, "Okay, get the Yosemite one because we're going up there. Oh, were else could we go?" And we hit all kinds of parks, over to Crater, everything, and we did a whole bunch on that one trip. Where if I didn't have the pass, we would have just driven in.

Russ: Just drove.

P7: And what I would have liked, too, is the camp sites, we didn't camp in the parks because it got expensive. If there was like even a discount—here I am with all my discounts. *(Laughing)*…discount on the camping if you have the pass, that would be nice. 'Cause it's like we can't afford to camp out other than Wal-Mart. *(Laughing)*

Russ: And they do have that for the Golden Age and the Golden Access passports.

P7l: Oh okay.

Russ: But I don't think they have it for any of the annual ones that include discount. Participant 6, do you think you'd use it more, or have you used it more when you had a pass?

P6: I've never had one, but I think I'd be like Participant 5, I would think I would use it once and then the next six months I would probably, you know, be more prone to go and that would motivate me to go.

Russ: Just worried that you might lose the value of the passport?

P6: Yeah.

Russ: For those of you...Well actually let me just finish off. Participant 9?

P9: Yeah, if I had one I would use it. I often find myself all over different parts of the western United States. So, I would use it.

Russ: Just an excuse to stop off and explore?

P9: Oh, yeah. Oh, I've seen parks and there they are. Why drive past them when you can drive in?

Russ: Okay. Participant 10?

P10: Me, I've never owned one and if it's at an affordable price I'd buy it. It would make me go often, make me go more. But I agree with her, they should have a discount on the camping. If you pay to go into the park, you got to pay for a space and then you have to pay for this. It adds up.

Unknown: Absolutely.

P10: Shouldn't even go there. If I had a card I'd use it.

Russ: Okay. Does anybody wish they'd been reminded when their pass was going to run out if they ever had one? So that they could replace it in time? I mean show up at Yosemite and had to *(inaudible)* "Oh, no. Should have brought an extra fifty bucks," or whatever.

Unknown: No. That's what I noticed on that one thing. I really liked where it says you can buy it at Wal-Mart. And if you don't use it for two months, fine. 'Cause I always wait

and it's like, “Oh, we got to go the park. Oh, I don't want to because I know I'm buying a pass when I'm going through Yosemite next month. Let's not go to the park.” And I'll put it off. So if you remind me I'm not going to renew it. I'm going to wait until I know I need it. So, that wouldn't help me at all.

P6: But on the other side there, the newer one, it starts when you start using it.

Unknown: Yeah, but if they’re renewing it, would it keep the twelve months and just keep going. See, I wouldn't want it. Yeah ,send me another one, but don't start that one just when this one ends. I want it...I don't want it started until I can use the second one.

Russ: I hadn’t thought of that before

(multiple voices)

Unknown: Yeah, I'll buy the next one, but if mine expires in June and I'm not going ‘til September I don't want this one used up September.

Russ: So you would want to take advantage of the gap between your last trip and your next trip.

Unknown: Yeah, definitely.

Zafar: Just to review that. It doesn't get started until you use it. So...

Unknown: But they're saying that next year when you get the new...

Zafar: Oh okay. Okay.

Unknown: Yeah.

P3: Like an automatic renewal.

Unknown: Yeah.

Russ: That leads into a lot of other potential areas. Does anybody else have a comment or a question?

P5: Well, I figure if they can keep track of everybody's Master Card and Visa when they expire, you know, they should be able to do that. I mean, you know when your card’s up when you try to swipe it and it says you can't use it, you know. Or your new one hasn't come in. But, you know, everything is so linked it seems like. You'd think it would be possible.

Russ: Suppose if you made a longer term commitment. Do you think you should....Oh, I'm sorry.

Unknown: Oh, yeah I do the San Diego Zoo and they send me things, “Hey, renew now and you'll get three extra months.”

Unknown: Yeah. So they do that. Or like if it's a discount. If it's this price, renew at your renewal date and you save $10 or something. Then I probably would. It would get me in that cycle.

Russ: Does anybody else agree with that or disagree with that idea? That you should get maybe a bonus for renewing of some kind?

Unknown: Yeah.

(Multiple voices) It's an incentive.

P5: I have a question as far as, I know we joined the Monterey Bay Aquarium membership, that when we went in and they told us about it, our payment for the day to get in was used toward the card. So, if our family cost $50, that $50 went against the card and then we could start using it. That would be, to me would be an incentive also, because you know your...By paying that, you're at least using it one time, if for some reason it doesn't… you don't work out for the rest of the year, you can go.

Unknown: That's where they could advertise. Yeah. When you come in the park, you say "No, I just want the $20 in Yosemite today," and have a little flyer that says "this you can credit towards..." But usually it's within that visit, a lot of places. So are you saying like in a month you could still use that credit or… was it just that visit?

P5: No, it's for that day.

Unknown: Oh, okay.

Russ: Did you get something in writing that said that? Or did somebody just mention it to you at the park entrance that you could apply...

Unknown: No, I'm saying, that's what they should do.

Russ: Okay.

Unknown: No, I'm saying that's what they should do. You know, I didn't know. But they have like they have like our water parks, a lot of times they'll say "You paid twenty bucks to get in today. If you would like to, at the end of the day..." If you want to say, I think a lot of the parks like Sea World, I think has done that. So a lot of the amusement parks do it. You pay your entrance today. At the end of the day, you can credit that for an annual pass.

Russ: And actually they *do* offer that, but it's not widely known.

Unknown: Do they? Okay. Yeah, I didn't know they did that.

Russ: In fact we didn't find out until just before we started doing the focus groups.

Unknown: Yeah, but why don't they… Yeah! There's nothing in all that paperwork they hand you.

P5: And I never, like I said, when we bought the Monterey one, we ended up using it and using it. Where we wouldn't have done that.

Unknown: Yeah, because if it's you first time there it's like "I don't know if I want an annual pass." But you go in and say "Hey, this is great." We did that with her at Lego Land. I went in, I said, "Well, what if we don't like...I want to buy the pass, but what if we don't like it?" They said "You're allowed to go in for like 45 minutes. If you don't like it, come back." And you got in free for 45 minutes. It's like "Oh, no, this is cool, we'll pay for it." *(laughs)* So it's kind of like a sample. You know, a trial run. Yeah, so that would work really good.

P1: By the way, she's very well behaved.

Unknown: Thank you. She's been a lot of places.

Unknown: She's drinking water and no sugar, notice? *(laughter)*

P2: Touching on that advertising and marketing. I was a San Diego Zoo member long ago and they used to have like a newsletter, Zoo News or something that they would send to all their members on a regular basis. And it's used as a marketing tool to retain existing, you now, card members.

Unknown: That's what Legoland does, you know? Coupons. *(*Multiple voices*)* All kinds of stuff.

P2: I don't know how feasible that is for national parks where the membership size is considerably larger, but something like that, more of an effort to retain, you know, current card holders. That might be an idea. This whole effort right now, you don't get anything.

Unknown: Yeah, you get the nice little collector card. *(Laughing)* But, yeah, they could send out just a small flyer, even like maybe twice... they don't even have to do it monthly. And if it said "This is good for camping at one National Park" or something, that would get me going out with you. *(laughs)*

P6: Does the...Is the federal system for government lands, is it like a for profit or is it non profit?

Russ: I'm pretty sure they lose money no matter what.

P6: Yeah.

Russ: I know it's kind of a bold statement to make. Another way of putting it: I'm pretty sure the services that they're required to provide outstrip the revenue that they receive and so there is always a shortage of services.

Zafar: But the objective is always to break even.

Russ: Right.

Zafar: That's the objective always. I don't know. Well, I've not seen recently their budget in terms of expenses and the revenue, where it may stand, but I know the

objective is to break even. Even this pass objective is to break even. That's why it's not going to be, probably it's not going to be, you know, $500. Nothing like that. So, the basic objective of the National Park Service is to break even with the revenue cost.

P7: On like the concessions up in Yosemite, the National Park I don't think runs any of that anymore do they? Isn't it all outside corporations, like any of the National Parks, runs like the horse rides, the...You know I think almost all the stuff.

Russ: It varies from park to park.

P7: Yeah, I wondered if they draw, 'cause they have the contract, if the government is getting a good chunk from all the money they're raking in.

P5: You mean just like the $7.00 soda can that you buy? *(Laughing)*

P7: Yeah. It seems like that's where some of the revenue should come from, too. You know because we're not supporting the park when we buy a soda pop there. We're supporting the concessions, it seems like. So, I don't know.

Russ: That's an especially big issue with the people who have the Golden Age and the Golden Access Passports, because they do get the 50% discount, but not through the private vendors, the concessionaires.

P7: Okay, so that's only the park support and stuff...

Russ: It's the government campgrounds or what have you. They get the discount, but it's a private *(inaudible)*.

P7: I'm just wondering if the concessionaires are getting a good deal.

P1: *(inaudible)* once more up in Yosemite.

P7: They used to. I think they've changed from a long time ago.

P4: I don't know, it could be.

P7: Yeah.

P1: I know they got to kick down some money towards it.

P7: I hope so.

P1: But it's just not enough.

Russ: Yeah I think it probably varies from contract to contract. I don't know if there's a universal contract around the country.

Zafar: Now, even the campsites like privately managed campgrounds *(inaudible)*..

P1: Reserve America. Why do I have to go through Reserve America to get a campsite? You know, you pay the convenience fee. I remember when we used to camp ten, fifteen years ago and they never tacked on that huge convenience fee.

Russ: Participant 5?

P5: The other thing, earlier he brought up about it being a collector card and how people collect them. Well, I know when I've been at most of the parks you always see people from other countries. I would think they would want to buy it as a collector or, you know, saying, when I was in California or Washington or Montana or wherever they went to visit, you know, they were able to get this card and keep it, you know.

Zafar: Many foreign tourists, as, for example, the recent study they did. They buy it and you'll see the trend of using the Park Pass, say at Zion, Bryce, and then at Grand Canyon, and it's going on at the same time, so they go from one place to another. So you can see that it's definitely the tourists and foreign tourists they recognized sometimes, sometimes take names on and silver pass, names and phone numbers. So, it's foreign tourists, they get a lot of times, those kinds of passes just to get into to various parks at the same time.

P5: Yeah, and then you'll see them on eBay in 10 years. *(Laughing)*

P3: I think Participant 7 is on to something. She mentioned like doing a coupon. I almost think it sound cheesy, but then as I think about it I think it's a good idea because people clip coupons for everything else. For restaurants, you'll go eat at a restaurant because you have a coupon. You'll go to Disneyland because you have the coupon. And it's a way of advertising at the same time. I mean you have a coupon in your wallet and it says, that's the advertisement. You know that could be in the paper. It can be in, you know, wherever. And just having a 20% off this day just to get people who have never got interested. Maybe they never thought about it as a way of advertising and then it will, especially if your lower income or like we're students so, I mean we like our coupons. Another incentive as well as like advertising.

Zafar: And some parks do that. In fact...

P7: Do they have a National Parks day where it's free entrance? I keep thinking they used to. Maybe that’s just state park. Because somewhere I've seen…

P5: I've seen that somewhere.

P7: Yeah.

Zafar: They do that. I know that for sure.

P5: But they usually advertise it that day.

P7: Yeah, you don’t know about it.

P5: When you’re like going to work. It's like “Oh, darn!”

Participant 7: Cause when I was in Montana that Sunday they happened to be letting you into all the museums. And it's like if we would have known that before we would have planned the day to go to as many museums in that town as we could, but we only went to the one, you know, thinking “Oh that's all the time we're going to have, and let's just take our time in this one.” But they said “Oh, no, it's free today. It's free at all of them.” It's like “Okay, let's try to run around and get to everything!” *(laughs)*

Russ: I know a couple of historic sites on the east coast in Boston I think, the Constitution, the ship, and a couple others. There's one day a year when you can get in for free, and that's where of course you have the biggest crowds. But a lot of people said they thought that was great.

P5: Yeah.

Russ: Participant 3 and Participant 7 when you were talking about the coupons, do you mean a coupon to get into a park for one day, or a coupon for the pass itself?

P7: Whatever.

P1: Camping.

P3: Anything to get people in. I think it's...Let's say you had a 20% off entrance fee to Yosemite. Especially on a day that's not very impacted. That would be great, because it would get...

Russ: The coldest day of the year?

P3: Not necessarily the coldest, but maybe like a Wednesday. Or, you know, when people don't normally go.

P5: Tuesday, Wednesday.

P3: Yeah.

P5: The day after Thanksgiving to walk off the turkey from the day before. Days where you would bring up...

P3: Because that way it doesn't irritate people I think who normally go and then it's an influx of people, just, you know, on a certain like busy day that's already busy like Saturday.

Russ: Do you think that you should be able to get a discount if you brought your pass in on a particular day, as well? If you were an America the Beautiful Pass owner, they might say, well this is customer appreciation day if you have an America the Beautiful pass?

P7: Discount for what, though?

Russ: You’re already getting in for free...

P7: Yeah, so that wouldn't work.

P5: I was going to say your getting in for free so what would the discount be?

P7: Yeah, and don't give a coupon on buying the pass cause that will get me mad because I paid full price. *(Laughing)* But something for services in the park.

P1: Or, you know, Russ, maybe a one year or two year or three year pass.

Russ: We were talking about it earlier. So the idea *(*Multiple voices*)*.

P1: Like health clubs do, you know. You got to sign up for one year or two years.

P7: And possibly I've seen on some other, something I was seeing, like say the pass is a certain amount, if it's kind of high, like I think Lego Land passes run about $95 if you buy them that day. Or maybe their less. I don't know, something. But you can do it monthly and it's like eight bucks a month comes out of your checking account, which you'd have to pay the whole 12 months, but that spreads it out, too. That might be something. So a spread out payment plan even would help on those, maybe.

Russ: Like an installment plan.

P7: Yeah.

Zafar: Going back to that discount dates or discount date, Oregon state park has, they have two months in April and December, if you buy the passes in those two months, you get discounts, $5 discounts. But it's just because they won't utilize the gates, December is the month *(inaudible)* season starts basically for the parks visit.

P5: That's what they used to do here. I don't know if they still do. At the zoo, the first Wednesday during the cold months you get in for free and then they try to get you to buy an annual pass. You know, but it's not advertised. Unless you know about it, you know, you don't...And they brought the price up quite a bit, so for some people it makes sense for them to go on those days.

Russ: Does anybody think that they should tie in the fact that they'll be changing the picture on the pass on a regular basis into anything like a discount? Like maybe a close out sale on the Yellowstone picture that's on the pass. Transition...

P2: Limited edition type of…?

Russ: Or a limited edition or anything like that. Does anybody…?

Participant 7: Yeah, I think his idea of limited editions where you could have like a $500 pass for the bigwigs *(laughs)*. If they want something fancy, maybe something that's printed on something nice.

P5: Either that or if you don't, if you don't buy your pass like until October, that it's good for the following, you know, if you buy it in October you get November and December free with the next year.

Russ: Okay, so maybe the month where they sell the fewest passes, they might want to do some kind of promotion like get an extra month if you buy it that way.

P5: Nowadays with the economy the way it is, everybody is trying to save, you know, in any little way shape or form. You know, as much as everybody wants to protect our land, helping in any way they can, you know, it's people are more apt to do that.

Russ: Participant 2, were you getting ready to say something?

P2: I may be the minority, but I would hesitate to put too much emphasis on the attractiveness of this card. I have enough cards. I don't really care how attractive the card is. I'm going to go to Yosemite and take great pictures. I'm going to value that picture much more than that scenic card. I certainly wouldn't buy a membership card based on what pictures may be on the card. But again, I may be the minority. I don't...You know, there are people, collectors who may, this may click for them and that may be the impetus it takes for them to go buy a membership.

P5: But do you know that you can send it and submit your photo and they can take it on the pass? *(Laughing)* I haven't taken one good enough yet.

(Multiple voices)

Russ: Oh, I'm sorry. Go ahead.

Zafar: I was just going to say, you're not the minority.

P2: Okay. *(Laughing)*.

P3: Yeah.

P5: Nope, I like to have my, a certain design on mine.

Russ: We came back from a meeting of lobbyists in Washington right after we got done with our Richmond focus group and they were throwing out a lot of ideas about what other groups besides people over a certain age, or people with disabilities, who get the Golden Access Passport, might at some future time also be eligible for a discount. Does anybody have an idea for what groups maybe should get a discount at some point in the future for the card?

P3: Students.

Russ: Students?

P3: For sure.

P7: But what constitutes a student, though?

Russ: See I was going to ask do you think students should get a discount but I was trying to broaden it *(laughs)*.

P3: Sorry.

Participant 7: But what constitutes a student? 'Cause I went back to college, so do I get a discount now?

P1: You should, re-entry students, university on down.

Russ: Okay. Anybody else?

P7: And how many units?

P1: Take one class and it's free.

P7: I got six, I'm about ready to drop them.

P1: Ag, students, military.

P7: Yeah, military, I think, should have free. I think military *(*Multiple voices*)*.

P1: Veterans, active duty, active duty who've been out in the bush, and they probably have no life, anyway. *(Laughing)*. Send them on a tour in the National Parks. I'm sure you've been there. Senior citizens, obviously. Things like that. Family pass. Could have a family pass?

P7: Yeah, family sounds normal, though. That's a regular one.

P1: Everything here is great gold, and this gold and this. Maybe the family value pack. Maybe...

P7: Yeah, that said four adults and all the kids. So that's jut families and kids.

Zafar: But our previous one, you can just take any number of people. *(Laughing)*

P7: Okay, so is the Park Pass.

P1: I'm saying…

Zafar: Oh, I'm sorry.

P1: Oh, okay. Family value meals.

Zafar: Oh I see.

P2: What we're talking about, P1.

Unknown: Yeah.

P1: As opposed to *(inaudible)* cause we know we could get in whoever.

Russ: So, you call it a Family America the Beautiful pass, but it's still the same pass.

P1: You know, marketing to the...I'm a patriotic guy, you know? Market it, you know, America the Beautiful pass. The Family Value Pack. Senior citizen pass. Something like that. If you appeal to the American sense of honor, duty, country, they step up to the plate.

P9: Well, going along with that I would think, I know my friend whose husband was in the military, every time she got, she was moved to a different state, just like the little pamphlets, let them know what places are available in their area that they could go visit. You know, because they're moving, usually they're moving to another town or state that they have no idea what's in the area and for them to be able to know that their pass will work in any of these parks or that they're close in proximity, they would use them.

Russ: Let's throw out the idea. Everybody is aware of how they have reduced lunch prices for kids in school and free lunch for some kids in school. Do you think they should maybe do that for this kind of a pass, too, so that if it became— eventually at some point in the future— like a $500 pass, but not everybody would have to pay $500 for it? Could we just go around the room real quick and take a quick poll? Participant 1, do you think?

P1: A $500 pass?

Russ: Well... *(Laughing)*. Oil going for what it's going for now...*(*Multiple voices*)*. A quick poll.

P1: No.

P2: No.

P3: Is the question should you get free meals included with...

Russ: No.

P3: I'm sorry.

Russ: Let me rephrase the question: do you think the pass should be discounted for certain income groups? Let's say if it became eventually, year after year, if the price just kept going up, do you think some people shouldn't have to pay the same price as everybody else? Sort of like what we do with school lunches.

P3: Absolutely. Absolutely, 'cause right off the bat your going to eliminate from public land, the public, I mean a good portion of the public. And so I think that's pretty elitist to like charge, you know, $500 and then that's the cut off and...I mean I definitely think it' just… there should be like a you know...

Unknown: A sliding scale.

P3: A sliding scale for sure 'cause it's...

Russ: Even if it was just two different prices and not a hundred, but...

P3: As long as there is another option for lower income people, yeah definitely.

Russ: Participant 4?

P4: I definitely agree with that.

P5: I agree with that, also.

P6: Yeah, a sliding scale.

P5: Sliding fees.

P6: I had another thought, too, as far as like the marketing, you hit certain...You know take like the Chamber of Commerce or groups like that.

P5: Oh, that was one thing I wanted to bring out. They always say you can get it on the internet. Or you're watching a TV program that says, you know if you want a computer, dial this internet. Not all of us have computers or computer literate, so how are you going to, you know, look it up on the web if you don't even have a web?

Russ: Do you think they should have an 800 number?

(Multiple voices "yes")

Zafar: Which they already have, so that's one thing, it's the front, pretty much.

P5: Yeah, because I know there's a...

(Multiple voices)

P5: I mean we do have a computer in my home, but I'm still learning to play with it. You know, I can ask my granddaughter and she can teach me the world on it, but there's older people that still, you know, they don't want to use an ATM card; they want to go in the bank and sign a check and know that they're getting their money, you know.

P1: My grandma does that. *(*Laughter*)*

P3: I think that should be number one. Like Participant 5 is saying, the exclusion of anybody is like...The inclusion of everybody should be the number one priority. Whether it be with an 800 number, primarily, and then the internet or like two different price brackets for different incomes, because I think that's like the number one priority. If you're going to start excluding people or making it too expensive for other people to come, that's not a good thing.

P1: $500 a pass, I'm out.

*(*Multiple Voices*)*

P7: But when fuel hits ten dollar a gallon…

Russ: I was loading the question.

P5: But like he said, we're Americans. Everybody comes from different ranges of ethnic groups to financial status. You know you need to remember everybody. If you start excluding them by raising it too high then, yeah, you're going to lose it and people aren't going to be able to see what this country really is.

Russ: Okay.

Zafar: It's not the word that, talking to them about this issue is, I don't see the motive is to exclude people, rather it's just typical to occupy that middle ground. You know, that becomes a policy issue. How are you going to identify those people? Even students, I mean that… we raised that issue. Are we going to have a student discount? Is the ID… you have to have verification from the students and that becomes in itself a big question mark. So, I don't think that is an issue that they have in mind something. "Exclude these people; we don't need them or we don't want them."

P5: Oh no, I'm not saying that. I'm just saying as you get your prices going higher and higher, you know...

Zafar: Yeah, it's automatic *(inaudible).*

P5: You want to start using coupons. You make your trips all one way. You know, you get the best that you can with gas prices the way they are.

Zafar: And this is the first time I saw in any state where we have visited so far that… where they do the state park pass based on also the income group. And that's the method I saw today. So, we're definitely going to propose something like that, similar to that, that's feasible or possible at that national level. So that's definitely will be in the report.

P1: That's why the state's broke, all do respect. I'm not rich, okay? I paid for the state park through my taxes. I don't mind plopping down a twenty. But, you know, you're getting dangerously to my point of purchase, my price break on that. So it's American land. By law we can't exclude anybody, but you're already paying for it with your taxes, anyway. So if we start tearing the system down, where's the fairness? Yet we have to be able to come up with something that's *fair* and equal.

P3: What if...

P1: I say because, you know, I have kids. So well he's a family so he should get, you know, 50% off. To be honest with you, it's not fair to people who may not have kids. That's the way I look at it. Okay? So we can...California is great for spending money. *(laughter)*. We laugh about it, but it's true.

Unknown: We're spending money on stuff like...

P1: Don't get me started. *(laughter)*

Unknown: That's a different focus group.

P5: We'll all come to that one, too. *(Multiple voices and laughter)*

Russ: If we have another hour…

P5: I'm going back to that bathroom….

Participant 3?

P3: I think a fair way to do it might be to maybe, perhaps, 'cause is it $20 to get into Yosemite, like if you don't have a pass, I think? Something like that? I think it....

Russ: I'm going to find out tomorrow. I've got plans.

P5: And it's like 7 days or something for $20.

P3: Yeah. I think if you keep that price low for people who are first-timers or people who may be interested in getting a pass, keep that maybe even lower than that. I mean to make it completely affordable to the point where you don't even like question that you're going to pay for it. And then people who are really serious about it, who go to the parks several times a year, they're already going to buy the pass.

Unknown: That's right.

P3: So, if you keep that price lower, you're not really excluding too many people. There's people want to come back 'cause it's, you know, the price of a movie. Or so you know for your family.

Russ: Let me just say that no matter what we tell our client that will not affect the price for the daily entrance fees. This is *only* with respect to the new passes.

P3: I see.

Zafar: We can propose your views in the policy issues that just came up, but again, the decisions are not ours.

P3: Okay.

P7: What was your last name again? *(laughter)*

Russ: We're just on a first name basis. *(laughter)*. It's Ford. *(laughter)*. And mine is Flockhart. *(laughter)* But in any case I also wanted to ask, this kind of came out in the focus group, does anybody think that single people should get a different pass? I mean this particular pass that they're coming out with covers two adults and an unlimited number of children.

P7: It said four adults. So you can bring your friends. It's good for the singles, because then you can bring more people. Like San Diego Zoo does that. They have the one where you can have yours and then invite a guest, or they have the one where there's two. Like ,e and my son now that he's an adult, where the two on there instead of me having a floater one on there.

Russ: Assuming that they...

P7: So, but, four people. That's fine. It doesn't bother me being a single person, you know, I'll bring another adult with me. And I like that even better, you know. 'Cause I'm not going to go up by, well some people probably go up by themselves, but, you know.

P5: Usually you want to take someone that hasn't been there.

P7: Yeah, so I like the four adults.

P5: But that's the same thing with like Monterey. You could have it where it was one person and then a guest or one person or one family, one whole family.

Russ: Okay.

P6: Are you saying two different prices?

Russ: I was trying to throw that idea out there. If anybody thought that single people who didn't intend, or didn't necessarily have plans to take their family with them. Whether it's brothers and sisters or parents, might—

P1: Look at it this way: it's less strain on the system.

*(*Multiple voices*)*.

P9: But there are a lot of singles without family.

P1: So, instead of $100 family pass, you're talking about a $50 single pass or something like that?

Russ: Something like that.

P7: Yeah, that might be good for like the backpackers and stuff. A lot of people that are traveling.

P9: There's a lot without family.

F3: Yeah.

P9: Tons I know of… people without…

P10: Then they'll put a limit on how many people I can bring, right?

P7: Yeah, they will. A single pass is a single pass. *(Laughing)*

P5: The backpacking group I belong to, one of them is a singles group. So, you know, that would make sense because when we go on our trips everybody's single. So, you know...

Russ: Okay.

P5: Yeah.

Russ: Now, a loaded question: does anybody think the parks and National Forests and other things like that, federal lands are under-funded in terms of the money they receive? That they should receive more than what they are getting, you know, to maintain things like facilities or the ranger station.

P7: I think they waste too much. I think they probably have not quite enough money, but I think they waste way too much.

*(*Multiple voices*)*

P7: Yeah, back to her bathroom. I remember that.

P6: More from the government or more from the...?

Russ: More funding for things like the quarters the rangers live in or the availability...

*(*Laughter*)*

Russ: Things like parking. Do they have enough parking? Do they have enough restrooms? Things of that nature.

P9: I think they just waste an enormous amount through bad management.

Russ: Okay. Does everybody else think the same thing?

P1: No.

Russ: Okay.

P1: They waste, but you got to remember the last two administrations increased their National Parks by millions of acres. They both increased, which was a great thing. They got added to.

Russ: …and your national monuments.

P1: Hundreds and hundreds of hundreds of square miles has been added to the National Park System in the last 12 years. And yeah they're probably under-funded and they probably waste stuff. But where does it actually go?

Russ: Okay.

P7: Some administrator that has to visit another park. *(*Multiple voices*)*.

P1: You got thinning of the forests. You've got to do that to have maintenance. In California every year there is always some type of forest fire going on out there. I'd like to really see them start thinning it a little bit more. It just... You know, I don't know. They're probably under-funded. They could probably do a better job managing the money that they get.

P5: Instead of, nothing against you and your survey group, but instead of spending 1.2 million dollars to do a environmental survey, that 1.2 million dollars could be used to thin

out the forest or, you know, update the bathrooms or, you know, make the trails better. But you know you hear this, or see it on paper and you know, they're using all of these millions of dollars to just get a survey.

P7: To think about it.

P5: To think about it.

P7: Yeah, I think somebody was really ticked when I said “There's a survey and we’re going to be paid for it.” They said “And where's that money coming from?” *(laughter)* They were a little bit... annoyed.

Russ: You know just as a point of clarification, it is $250,000. *(laughter)* We didn’t get quite 1.2 million.

P5: You didn’t save your Visa card? *(laughter)*.

P7: Yeah, how big is your extra budget for when your down here?

P1: She makes a very good point. A million dollar parking lot at Yosemite, the last 15 years, Yosemite has got a mess up there. Maybe they should start looking at where Yosemite should be a higher cost. I would probably hazard guess that most of the people who go to Yosemite are from other countries.

Russ: Okay.

P5: Yes.

Russ: International tourists.

P7: A whole bunch.
P1: Europeans are used to paying the value-added taxes. *(multiple voices)*

P7: Yeah, a foreign tax. An import tax.

P2: Turns out Yosemite took a big hit. They took a big hit because of the flooding, you know? And they lost a lot of money.

P1: That's right. I forgot about that.

Unknown: Money from the flooding was lost.

Many: The campsite. *(*Multiple voices*)*

Russ: Okay.

P2: They would shut it down, but you know there's no parking, so.

Russ: Now that we've been talking about it for a while, I'd like to ask everybody what they think it should be worth? Low end and high end. Say, like what you think it should...You'd be willing to pay for it, perhaps, to make it worth your while. And at the

high end, the high price might be, well, what do you think it's true value might be? Where people might still be able to break even. Even if it wasn't you, if it was someone else like an international tourist. What do you think the high end should be for the price on the pass? Both questions at once and around the room starting with Participant 10.

P10: Let's see, the lowest I think should be like $20.

Russ: Okay.

P10: And the highest I think should be no more than three hundred.

Russ: Okay. Participant 9?

P9: High about, I'll throw out $200. That's not what I was thinking, and low about $15.

Russ: Okay. What were you thinking?

P9: High?

Russ: Yeah.

P9: $150 at first.

Russ: Okay. Participant 8?

P8: High $250, low $75.

Russ: Okay. Participant 7?

P7: I was thinking like high $250 for international, $50 for US Citizens.

Russ: Okay.

P6: I was thinking like $100 to $300.

P5: I was thinking $50 low and about $200 high.

P4: $75 to like $200.

Russ: $75 to $200?

P4: Yeah.

Russ: Okay.

P3: I was thinking low $50 and high $100.

P2: I'm thinking low $50, high $125.

P1: I had low about $60 and you're talking about an annual pass?

Russ: Yes.

P1: Okay, 60 bucks, 200 high. International: whatever they'll pay. *(Laughing)*

Russ: Don't tell them what the price of it is.

P5: Take them to that bathroom!

P1: If they're going to come, they're going to come, and they're going to spend it.

P7: If they can afford to come they can afford to spend it.

Russ: I had a friend who recently visited a former communist country and when the police pull you over for a ticket, they'll explain to you the crime and they'll say, well what should we do about this? Just about when you think they were going to write you a ticket and hand it to you. "Well what do you think we should do about this?" Maybe we should do something like that. *(Laughing)*

P7: You want in the park today? *(laughter)*

Zafar: Yeah, about the international thing, it gives, I don't know. I'm from India and they do charge separate prices in India, getting to Taj Mahal, for example. A 100 bucks for a foreign tourist where it's $10 bucks for the local.

P7: There you go!

P5: In Hawaii they do that. If they know you're a local you pay one price, but if they know your a tourist they hike up that price.

Zafar: The idea is that if you're coming all the way say, from the United States, or another country to visit there, you'll spend so much money so *(inaudible)*. But I don't know. That's a little…

P5: Okay, we're taking you next time we go to India. *(laughter)*

P1: We're cousins.

P5; You look just like him. *(laughter)*

Russ: We're starting to get a little low on time, but I'd like anybody who's been holding back on any kind of issue they want to comment on, or it's just to beef about the parks in general. Not know the federal government in general, because we don't have that much time. *(laughter)* But any issues you think that should be addressed regarding the parks or the National Forests or the Bureau of Reclamation, Fish and Wildlife, any kind of federal lands that you visit that should be improved. Or even if you think they're doing a good job about something, you know?

P1: I don't go to the National Parks a lot. I go to state parks. But people at the gates at the National Parks are probably the nicest mannered people that you're going to meet.

Russ: Okay.

P1: Very polite, very courteous, very helpful. You get to the state park, they could...The state parks could learn something from them, the people at the front gates of National Parks.

Russ: Other comments?

P7: More open for horses, huh?

Participant 7: Yeah, I was just going to say, it would be nice if we could take our horses into the real nature. You know because they're taking the land away from us little by little, and we can't take our horsebacks.

Russ: So horses are being excluded?

Participant 7: They're being excluded because they want it to be a natural setting again. I'm like, “The horses were a natural setting last time I read.” But they're...

P7: And we can pack out more trash.

P5: Yeah. You know, and we clean up everything and the groups I belong to, we not only do our camping trips, but once a month they do a path where they clear, they clear paths, they make improvements and it's all on their own. We do it all on our own.

P7: A lot of the trails that everybody uses.

P5: Not just horse packed but, everybody.

P7: You know, when I was up in Yellowstone I went out, she was like 3 months old, I had my son, a dog, and a mule. And I pull in and said, “Well, where can we camp with the mule in Yellowstone?” They said “Oh, you can't.” And they sent us 15 miles away. We couldn't even bring it. I don't know if we were allowed to ride in Yellowstone, but I know Yosemite you could ride and Yosemite, and you can go overnight and stuff still there, but they're trying to shut all that down. But it's like some people, I can't hike very far. Put me on a horse, I can go in and enjoy all of it, so...

Russ: Other comments… or anything?

P3: Two things that are in my head still are advertising, the lack of. I think that's big. I've never seen an advertisement. So that's one thing and the other thing is I know that they could always use more funds and I'm sure they're like, you know, spend more than they make and whatnot, but I think it's a good idea not to make it too expensive; to still shoot for the breaking even and not to overshoot. To get it right on the mark as best as possible. Because as soon as you overshoot, people… once people are turned off from the parks because of the price I think they're turned off probably for good. So you wouldn't want to do that any sooner than you had to, I think.

P7: Do they have an international different price now, for anything? Yeah, see that's crazy. *(Laughing)*. That’s just crazy, ‘cause that would make up the difference a lot. Seems like yeah, we keep taking away things from us as citizens. .

Russ: I think they way they figure it now is if you're buying a National Park Pass, it's like buying a stamp. There's just one rate.

P5: I really think that the pamphlets would help with the advertisement. You know, because like I said, I've gone to different places and I pick up the little pamphlets, and if you know that there's a park or there's something near you, you know, you know you can go to it. Especially if you have a pass and you know it's good everywhere. You're going to go to it. And sometimes you don't know when you're going to travel. You know?

Zafar: There is no advertisement.

P5: Yeah, there isn't.

Zafar: There is none.

P5: I never had seen, what's the four guys? Mount....

Unknown: Rushmore.

P5: Mount Rushmore until I drove cross country and I stopped and seen it. And I though it was the most beautiful thing. You know, and I would definitely go back. I want to take my kids and grandkids back.

Russ: Maybe someday they'll have Crazyhorse finished, too. *(laughter)*.

P5: Yes.

P7: We're going to be real old.

P2 It's unfortunate that there's more emphasis on the deficit promotion than there is on the benefits of the parks. I think the emphasis on that... You know the negative, how much it costs. How much… where they're going to have to cut back versus what a person can gain from going to a park.

Like the pass thing like going in, and getting a discount for a campsite. That's the value added tax that the foreigners always used to pay. I'm telling you, Europeans will pay it. *(laughter)*

P5: We've got a marketer. We've got... *(laughter)*

Zafar: Opinions we'll file away. *(laughter)*

Russ: A family discount. *(laughter, overlapping voices)* Okay, before it degenerates… Zafar, did you have any other questions that we had to cover? What I'd like to do, I'm going to come around and collect the forms that you had to fill out.

(focus group discussion ends here)

Focus Group #5: Madison, Wisconsin
September 27, 2005

Moderator: Russ Miller (and transcriber)
Assistant Moderator: Zafar Khan

Moderators are shown by their first names. Participants are given participant numbers, as follows:

Group Demographics

Identifier	Gender	Age	Profession	Income Range
P1	Female	55	Naturalist	2
P2	Male	59	Retired Computer Science Teacher	2
P3	Female	31	Forestry Technician	2
P4	Male	59	Retired	1
P5	Female	57	Optometric Technician	2
P6	Male	30	Business Owner, Self-Employed	2
P7	Male	58	Information Specialist	1
P8	Male	30	Research Scientist	2
P9	Male	59	Carpenter	2
P10	Female	51	Domestic Abuse Program Coordinator	2
P11	Female	56	Teacher	2
P12	Male	53	Consultant providing Educational Services	2
P13	Male	25	Graphic Designer & Student	1
P14	Male	42	Alcohol & Drug Counselor	2

Russ: I'd like to thank you all for coming. My name is Russ Miller and I'm with the Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center. With me is Zafar Khan. We're both Assistant Research Scientists there, however Zafar has a PhD in environmental economics and he was able to get this contract for us with the federal government. We are conducting these focus groups on behalf of the National Park Service, the US Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Bureau of Reclamation. They've been asked to create a new pass called the America the Beautiful (*NRP*) pass that's going to replace some of the ones that you probably are seeing on your handout there.

Your opinions are very important to us. I don't know how many of you have ever participated in a focus group before? Wow, everybody's… Okay, so we've got a few. Three or four. Great. You're going to go a long way to helping the Park Service and these other agencies decide how to design this new pass, what specifications to give it. Focus groups like this one are very much like organized conversations. My partner, Zafar, and I will start the conversation with a few questions. These are just to get the ball rolling. Occasionally, we may ask you to cut a comment short for time. We don't want any one person to sort of dominate the discussion. We may ask a person who's been quiet to answer a specific question, just to make sure that everybody gets a chance to offer some input for us. We do ask, however, that we all stick to some basic ground rules. One thing I should point out: sometimes I'll feel like a teacher in that students are in the classroom and they feel like they have to call on me to get my attention. You don't. If there's just kind of a natural pregnant pause in the conversation where someone on this end of the table will stop talking, and you'd like to say something, you don't have to wait for me to call on you. You can just chime right in right there. I would ask, though, if I do interrupt you, that you please honor that request so that we can move on to the next topic. There are no right or wrong answers. One of the things we love about focus groups is that we get a lot of unpopular opinions, and that's just great. Sometimes we're looking for unpopular opinions. We're also very interested in what makes a Madison crowd different from, say, a Boston or a Richmond crowd. So, if you have something that you think may not be a popular opinion, we'd just love to hear it to found out how it may differ from other opinions we've heard so far. All perspectives are sincerely welcome. I do ask that we speak only one at a time. It's so easy once we start getting to know each other, to maybe go off into a side conversation with the person sitting next to us. Please avoid that temptation. It gets so difficult to transcribe the recordings that we have. I may be able to perceive what's going on when two or three people are talking right now, but when I sit down to try to transcribe it it will be just completely garbled, and we won't be able to go off of memory to do that. Most importantly, I would like everybody to agree to keep the identities of the people in this room a secret, as well as everything that they say here. We, as researchers, are obligated to do that. We do something called Institutional Review Board, in order to protect everybody that is involved in our study from coming to any sort of harm. Say, if someone was in here worked for the National Park Service, we wouldn't want word to get out of what they'd said that was critical of anyone in particular. Can we all agree to that with a show of hands, that we'll keep everything that gets said in this room in this room., the identities of the people in this room, a secret. Great.

And we already have first names on the index cards. Oh! And, in order to protect your identities, even though you've all written your first names or pseudo-first names, on the index cards, we're going to change your names when we write up the transcript. Probably starting on this side of the room, we'll have Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, so that your identities will be completely protected. Well, to the extent

possible. I mean, if you say in the conversation that you're the Governor of Wyoming, there's the finger pointed right at you. We'll try and disguise that as much as possible, but if you have a unique title or something like that, you may want to keep that to yourself, as well. Does anybody have any questions about what I've just said? Okay. Yes!

P9: Well, are you going to return to what the purpose of doing this is? You said it's designing a card and you particularly care about it's effect on Europeans.

Russ: Did I say "Europeans"?

(overlapping voices, laughter)

P9: Oh! Your opinions. *(laughter)* It's that Wyoming accent. All right. Anyway, you will be circling back…

P13: …I thought "Well, maybe that *is* what he said." *(laughter)*

(overlapping voices)

P9: Foreign visitors! They pump up the exchequer. All right. Anyway, you will be coming back to this topic.

Russ: Yes, actually when you—when we pass out the questionnaire, we're just going to do a quick round-robin and go around the room once before we do that, though. When we pass out the questionnaire, it will become very obvious as you read through it what the actual purpose of this focus group is. And what we'll do, once you've completed the questionnaire, it'll probably take what? About ten, fifteen minutes? It's four pages long. We'll go through it one block of questions at a time; probably about three questions at a time… at a time, so that you can tell us what you think of how we've created the questions. Whether they're clear, whether they make sense, whether you understand what we're trying to get at, even if you just think there's a word in there that could be wrong, we'd love to have your opinion about how we should change it. Any other questions?

Unknown: So who will be seeing the results of this, again? I mean, it's the *government?*

Russ: Yes, all the clients that I mentioned at the very beginning. Sort of like a consortium: the National Forest Service, the National Park Service, Bureau of Lands Management, Fish and Wildlife, and…

Zafar: Bureau of Reclamations.

Russ: …Bureau of Reclamations. *(coughing)* Those are the people with the dams.

Zafar: Army Corps of Engineers.

Russ: Army Corps of Engineers. Those are all the folks that manage these sites that this pass allows you to get into.

P4: Were we selected in some sort of cross-sample, or…?

Russ: What we did was advertise in a fairly wide variety of publications. I believe here it was… there was a weekly publication called the Isthmus? Did most people actually read that ad? Is that where most people… *(overlapping voices)*. That was actually the cheapest ad. I was very impressed.

Unknown: Yeah. Everybody reads the Isthmus.

(overlapping voices)
Unknown: …newspaper for us in… *(inaudible)*

Unknown: Someone went to my apartment the other day and left leaflets about it under everyone's door. That's how I found out about it. *(inaudible, laughter)*

Russ: …intentionally guard against things like that. That sort of goes under word of mouth. But we also advertised in the daily paper, which is the Capital-Times? And the student newspaper. Did anybody read the student newspaper?

Unknown: Which one? The Daily Cardinal? The Badger Herald?

Russ: The Badger Herald.

(overlapping voices)

Unknown: Now, when did that go in?

Unknown: …conservative, and the Capital-Times is the left. So, you covered all the bases *(laughing)*.

Terry: All right. Tell me, as far as age, income, race… Was there some sort of cross-section that you tried to…

Russ: Yes, but that probably should wait until the end of the focus group to tell you some things about that, because we do want to take enough time to go over the questionnaire first. If you have any sort of asterisk questions about the nature of the group itself or research-based questions, or things like that we're going to be sticking around to answer those, too. Okay? So what I actually would like to do is go around the room, probably starting on the right side, just to go counter-clockwise for a change, and ask you what your favorite national park, or national forest, or historic site (federal) is, and what you like to do there. Participant 14.

P14: The favorite?

Russ: Your favorite; doesn't have to be…

P14: Well, one thing that I'm most familiar with maybe is the Boundary Waters Wilderness Area, UWCA. It's a *(inaudible)* for USDA. And canoeing is what we do up there.

P13: Okay. I've never been to a national park in the United States, but I guess I don't really know too many of the parks. I guess if I was going to go to one I would probably go somewhere in the southwest, maybe Yellowstone? I really don't know.

P12: It would be hard for me to pick a favorite; I really liked Mount Rainier and the Olympic Rain Forest.

Russ: Oh? We just came back from Portland a few days ago as a matter of fact. Well, what do you like to do when you're up there?

P12: Hike around, look at the scenery, a little bit different in the sense that on Mount Rainier, you know, you're up there and you see all these mountains, and you feel like you're in the Himalayas? At the top of the world? And in the Olympic Rain Forest, it's like you're in the movie *The Hobbit*. I mean it's just so lush, and that's unparalleled at that latitude, so different reasons, but they're all in that same neighborhood, and they're both just unbelievably gorgeous.

P11: Ho National Forest, which is the Olympic Peninsula. The Ho is the part that's towards the ocean and on the ocean floor.

Russ: And what do you like to do when you're there?

P11: Hike, just be there, be healed. The ocean is there, too, so… It's quite incredible, the ocean there. It's phenomenal. You know, driftwood that's, you know, massive…

Russ: I think that's pretty close to where Lewis and Clark came out.

P11: Mmm-hmm.

Russ: Yeah.

P11: It is.

P10: Well, I absolutely love the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, and I went to camp there.

Russ: That's the one I heard most frequently over the phone, taking applications.

Unknown: Across the country?

Russ: No, just for this group.

Unknown: Okay.

Russ: But I heard it at least three or four times, I think. And are those in the Great Lakes, or is that…?

P10: It's in Lake Superior.

Russ: In Lake Superior. Participant 9?

P9: Well, I too am living here by choice and The Apostles, for sure, and the Snoqualmie… Snoqualmie National Forest has very nice pieces in it. It's an acquired taste, you understand. No mountains. And I suppose the Appalachian Trail is technically in this category, although it's maintained by volunteers, but I would rate that, as well. Although I've only walked little bits of it.

Russ: Okay. Participant 8?

P8: I don't know. It'd be—I have a lot of favorites, but probably the different monuments. Like Saguaro National Monument in the Tucson area? That's where I'm from originally. It's really just an incredibly gorgeous, serene place to be. You really feel apart from other people in a good way, in a good sense. It's free from tourism.

Russ: It seems like deserts are often associated with spirituality.

P8: Yeah. Traditionally.

Russ: …the ability to meditate. Participant 7?

P7: Oh, I love the Wind Rivers in Wyoming. I've been there a few times in the Bridger and Teton Wildernesses, and last month we went to Idaho to another wilderness I hadn't been to before, the Frank Church River of No Return? And I was also at Devil's Tower last month for the second time. I like that place. Yeah, I used to live in Idaho and hike a lot. And there's one in northern Nevada I really like, a beautiful wilderness not many go to so I don't want to tell people where it is. *(laughter)*

P9: Especially if it's going to be transcribed.

Russ: Participant 6?

P6: There's a lot of places. I'm from the west coast, so I would say the Redwoods, different state parks up there, and Mendocino National Forest is a favorite, too. I just like to camp and hike… and surf.

Russ: I regretted very much when we were in Portland and Fresno I didn't get a chance to see a Redwood tree. I'm going to go back.

P6: There's some big ones up there.

Russ: Participant 5?

P5: Well, now that he mentions Redwoods, I've seen the Redwoods out west, but I haven't traveled a great deal west of the Mississippi. I'm more familiar with the eastern portion of the US. And as I'm approaching retirement age, I really hope to get out—all around out west and visit a lot of national parks. But my favorite one east of the Mississippi is Acadia in Maine. I have friends in Maine that I go to visit every once in a while and I love to go to Acadia, and I've climbed to the top of Cadillac Mountain, which is not a great big achievement, you know? When you compare it to the Rockies or something, but I've got two crushed knees, *(laughing)* so it was a big accomplishment for me. And I love the ocean. Being from the Midwest, I'm just thrilled whenever I'm near the ocean, and like the other woman over there mentioned, I just feel that it's very

healing for me to go anywhere and just listen to the sound of the waves. And they say Cadillac Mountain is the point… the farthest eastward point where you see the sunrise in the US, and so that has some kind of wonderful feeling for me, too. I just… I've also been on whale-watching tours, but I don't think they're directly connected with a national park, but off the shore there. And I found that very thrilling.

Russ: Participant 4.

P4: Gulf Island National Seashore, is that the right name for it?

Russ: I think so, yeah.

P4: Florida and Alabama, and… it's, you know, the sugar white beaches are just great, and emerald green water, it's really… I've been there the last… I haven't been there since, well, you know, the hurricane hit Pensacola *(inaudible)*; I haven't been there since, so I don't know what kind of damage that whole area absorbed, but… plan to go back there as often as I can.

Russ: I understand they do sort of a rearrangement of the beaches a lot of times when the hurricane comes through. The whole shape may be changed. Participant 3?

P3: I haven't been to too many parks, but I've been to Haleakala, and I got my lists, you know, all of them I'm going to hit someday. Grand Canyon, for sure, I definitely want to see that before it's too late. But I'm a hiker, and camper, and so that's what I do.

Russ: Participant 2.

P2: Probably Yosemite, hiking and climbing.

Russ: We had made plans to sneak off to Yosemite and we didn't have enough time. *(laughter)*

Unknown: Trail of tears *(laughing)*.

P1: Havasu in the Grand Canyon. A small Indian village where people live and we stay when we are in the Grand Canyon.

Russ: Is that kind of… cliff dwellings, or…?

P1: No, not that I know of. They just lived way down at the bottom, and there are waterfalls to swim in, and it's a whole little town. Peachtree, Arizona is on top and it takes… fissures in there… used to hike down and hike out, and some people helicopter out, and so we'll take horses down *(inaudible)*… and it's kind of amazing that, I mean, it's just so beautiful there, and to know that these people spend their whole life, some of them just stay there. There's the church, the jail, everything; this little town down there. And that's where they stay.

Russ: Thank you. *(to Zafar)* Should we pass out the questionnaires, then? Does everybody have both a pencil and a pen? What we'd like you to do is to fill out this questionnaire in pencil, and hang onto your pens for later.

Unknown: You mean when we want to change our minds? *(laughter)*

Russ: No. Really, we just chose them because they were the most distinctly different colors. Take all the time you need to fill out the questionnaire. If everybody could look up when they're done. You don't have to stare at me when you're done *(laughter)* with your questionnaire. Then we'll know that everybody's ready to move on. No cheating.

(long pause of several minutes)

Unknown: Russ?

Russ: Yes

Unknown: Is *(inaudible)* a national wildlife refuge? *(inaudible)*

Russ: Those of you in the room are probably more qualified to answer that question than I am. *(laughter).* There are so many and we haven't studied Wisconsin in detail.

(long pause of several minutes)

Russ: Is anybody too warm or too cold?

Unknown: You know that one of the things they say about Wisconsin is that if you don't like the weather, wait a while because it's sure to change.

Russ: That's also exactly what they say about Kentucky.

Unknown: They say that about Kentucky?

Russ: Yes.

Unknown: Really? *(inaudible)* I always thought it was hot and humid. *(inaudible)* Maybe you can go hide out in a cave where it's only fifty-six degrees year-round.

Russ: I don't think I've ever been colder than when I was in a tent in Kentucky and it was snowing outside.

(overlapping voices, unrelated side conversations)

Unknown: It must get pretty cold out there on the plains, huh?

Russ: Yeah, we're actually in between two mountain ranges, but we're up fairly high; about seventy-two hundred feet. It can get down… thirty below is the coldest it's been since I've been there.

Unknown: Have you seen that... you mentioned Lewis and Clark earlier. Have you seen that show on PBS?

Russ: I'm sure I did.

Unknown: It's a Ken Burns thing?

Russ: Yeah.

Unknown: I was watching part of it the other night, and it was an indication of global warming, where the… measuring instruments… they were talking like thirty-five degrees below zero when they hit the Dakotas, and then… So…

Russ: I wonder how precise their instruments were.

Unknown: Huh?

Russ: I wonder how precise their instruments were.

Unknown: Well, that's what I said. That's what I suggested, I had suggested might have been the thing *(inaudible)*… a little cold.

(long pause of several minutes)

Russ: Someone once told me the best cheese in Wisconsin is three-year-old extra sharp cheddar. *(laughter, overlapping voices)*

Unknown: I actually take the three-year-old, and then *(inaudible)*

P13: There's a good cheese shop that's actually really close to here. I'm not sure exactly what the address is, but it's down like by all those car dealerships?

Russ: The cab driver was telling me about it.

P13: You can get a whole bunch of, like, knickknacks and, like, old books, and *(inaudible)*.

Russ: Are they open all night? *(laughter)*

P9: This is Wisconsin.

P13: It's right off of 151…

Russ: I understand it's within walking distance.

P13: …parkway or whatever.

Unknown: It probably is within walking distance.

P13: Yeah.

(overlapping voices, unrelated side conversations)

Russ: What we'd like to do now is switch from pencil to pen, and we'd like you to use the pen to scribble any comments that come to your mind as we're going through this. The *(inaudible)* notice about the questionnaire.

Unknown: You want them to scribble on the questionnaire?

Russ: You can scribble anywhere you want to on the questionnaire. And using ink so we'll know it's distinctive from your answers. Just so that *(inaudible)* on the questionnaire. What we're going to do is break the questionnaire up into blocks of questions, and go into the questions one at a time. And, of course, we'll start at the beginning and go to the end. With regards to the opening couple of paragraphs at the top of the very first page, and the three questions that follow that are yes, no, and don't know answers, does anybody have any suggestions or criticism about the structure of those questions in those paragraphs? Whether they're logical and they make sense?

P8: One suggestion, Russ. I thought they were fine, but wouldn't it be easier to read and to recall if you broke it out of sentence format and did it as bullets? *(inaudible)* Something to that effect.

Russ: Okay. This will actually—I should, I should cue you in. This is going to actually be a telephone questionnaire, and over the telephone they probably won't be able to distinguish whether they are bullets or not. *(laughter)* But that might work as *(inaudible, overlapping voices)*…

P8: …easier. I've worked in one of those phone marketing research…? It would be easier to read if it was in that format.

Russ: We may do that when we program it into the computer; a good point.

P13: I agree with Participant 8.

Russ: Do we have other suggestions on the logic, on the actual structure of the survey.

Unknown: No.

Russ: What about the individual questions themselves, those three questions right there?

P1: I think you could… permanent disability, is that just in your own mind, or…? *(laughter)*

Unknown: …whether that's mental or physical disability.

P1: It's not defined.

Russ: I think we've been wrestling with that word ourselves, as far as… I mean, there is a pass called the Golden Access Pass, that is free to people who have a disability. We were wondering how to ask that question as part of the questionnaire. For example, "Is there anybody in your household who has a…" Would we call it a "registered disability"? A "permanent disability"? A "certified disability"?

P8: Well, how do they define it for the purposes of acquiring that particular pass?

Zafar: Any permanent disability, and when we framed this question, we knew about that part and read up from the questionnaire, went around and tried to dig *(inaudible)*. They said mental, physical, anything that is permanent, that will *(overlapping voices).*

Unknown: So, it's more inclusive than what you need to get a disabled parking permit sticker for your car?

Zafar: Something close, yeah. Well, that's the—

Unknown: Well, schizophrenics don't get it *(laughter)*, but…

Zafar: The National Park Passes are not—they don't include the parking fees or anything like that. It's just an entrance fee, but most of the state parks, you're right, that's a parking pass.

Unknown: So, is it the same kind of criteria that you have in that…

(overlapping voices)

Zafar: Right, same kind of criteria.

P13: I would change the wording around to switch the two. Say "blindness or any other permanent disability" because it kind of separates blindness as a category of permanent disability, which I don't think is accurate. And I was wondering also, if you'd want to know the number of people in each household that are sixty years old, or how many people have permanent disability or blindness?

Zafar: Well, I agree with you on the first point, and the second is that it doesn't matter if we have two, or more than one. Because one person who is older than sixty years, if you have just one household member, or one disabled member, you just get one *(overlapping voices).*

P13: Okay, well, other point there. You'd mentioned the free pass for people with disabilities? I would include that information within the text of the survey I picked up in… because people might not otherwise know that. You know? I mean you could say that, you know, "Just so you know, the National Park Service offers this free pass." If they answer "yes," that would have to be the prompt for that. And then, you know, maybe give them an 800 number or something so they could get more information about it.

Russ: One of our other researchers, Dr. Patsy Taylor, I think picked up on that. Even though we can't really ask people who have the Golden Access Pass, or who are eligible for the Golden Access Pass, what they would pay for an annual pass that they don't *need*. You could at least use the survey as an opportunity to tell them about it; to educate them about it. Yes?

P1: *(Inaudible)* …to get these passes, do they have to prove their disability, or is--? Oh, they do. Okay.

Russ: There's documentation involved.

Zafar: And you have to get the pass *in person*.

P1: Ah.

Zafar: The disability pass has to be in person, so…

P1: Oh, that's good.

P8: Actually, in one—related to what you were saying, it would be good to be proactive and just say "Over the course of this interview," you know, assuming they've agreed to do it, "certain questions may be raised in your mind about current practices or pricing, and I'd be happy to talk to you about that more, within what I know, at the end of the questionnaire." It needs to be proactive; insert a sentence to that effect.

Russ: Anybody else, comments about the first three questions? What about, on those… Does anybody think there are areas that are *not* included, that should be? Those first three questions and those two introductory paragraphs. Yes?

Unknown: Just in the *(inaudible)*, I was thinking of something later on.

Russ: Okay.

Zafar: And the reason we are asking those questions at the beginning is because, if you have a person who is over sixty years old, you can get a pass for ten dollars per annual pass. And the access pass, Golden Access Pass, which is for disabled people, is for free lifetime. So, our basic purpose of doing this is to get the idea of what the price for the pass is. So, if you have any of these two members in your household, basically, you just can say "Why should I care about them? I mean, we have a pass at home which we can get for ten dollars or free." So, basically it doesn't make sense for *us* to get into that household and try to figure out the price of that household.

P9: A question you might consider adding to this, you know, between three and four, is if the answer to question one is "No, we haven't gone to any parks," right? Ask them why. It may be because it costs too much already. It may be something more neutral, like "They're too far away," or "I hate green things." *(laughter)*

P13: In addition to having that question, I think it's important to make that a closed response question. Like, have, you know, list seven or eight possible responses with an "I don't know" category, as well, because they might not have even thought about it, you know? But it could be one of those things that you just said; although you may not think about it, they may not be able to think of one reason spur of the moment, or they—it might be more than once. It could be, you know, "Answer yes or no to the following alternatives." So you can get more detailed information about why people aren't taking advantage of the resources, and whether it's related to the cost of attendance, which, I think, the focus of this…

P9: But consider just letting them *say* what it is, and the interviewer writes it down, and then it fits in a category; puts it in that category himself or herself.

P11: But doesn't that come later? I mean, that seams to be covered later on in the survey.

P9: It could be at the end of the survey.

P11: Well, that is at the end of the survey. It does get covered, I think, at the end of the survey, so…

P9: *(overlapping voices)* The question is never asked in the survey, I don't think.

P11: Well, it says "Are you willing to pay that particular price." That seems to cover, you know, that aspect.

P13: Well, we're talking about not just financial, there might be other concerns; other reasons why people aren't…

P11: Yeah, but I'm saying I don't know if that's particularly, at this point, if that's something to bring up. It seems to me that that particular subject is something that's broached in the latter part of the survey.

P9: Well, it's up to your clients whether they care if that level of knowledge…

Russ: And that's a suggestion that we could mention to them—whether they're interested in knowing *why* people don't attend the parks.

P4: Are you going to be paying these people that you interview on the telephone?

Russ: No.

P4: Because that would factor how much patience, you know, people will want to… To me, you know, I usually just want to "Okay, let's get this thing over with," you know?

Zafar: Does it seem like too long to you?

P4: Well, some of the things you talk about you kind of get into a lot of detail, you know. I think some people will just kind of, you know, get impatient. I don't see how you can read this whole thing over the telephone. It just seems way too long.

P13: I disagree. I think it seems like probably ten or fifteen minute survey for most people. None of the questions get too detailed. I mean, it's either yes/no or one word answer. From someone, I mean, I have experience with doing phone surveys and this doesn't seem like a terribly tenuous one.

P12: I agree with Participant 4. People call me up and ask for anything that's going to be over five minutes, I say "If you're not paying for my time, goodbye."

P9: But, it is… This is self-selecting, then. The only people who are going to have the patience to answer questions like this are people who do care about this subject, and it quickly weeds out the people who probably would never go to a national park, anyway.

Russ: I'm not sure how much weeding out we can afford to do on our budget, is the thing.

P9: They do it by themselves. They just won't answer the questions, and you call another phone number.

P13: Well… Can I ask a question about funding of the National Park Service? Is that paid for at all through our federal tax dollars? Okay, so, in that sense, you can grant it's relevance for people in terms of "This is where this important for you, because this where some of you have a chance to have a say on some of your federal tax dollars are going. Whether these passes should be subsidized by your tax dollars or not. We don't have to get that specific right away, but if you talk about money, their money, people will listen and will be more likely to respond.

Russ: Usually, a question like that—

P13: I don't mean in terms of a question.

Russ: Okay, but I mean a question where we might be asking them why they don't go to the national parks or something, may be covered by a catch-all question at the very end. An open-ended catch-all question. "Do you have any comments you'd like to add?" In which case if somebody really does have an itch to talk about why they went to national parks, they may actually *(inaudible)* that at the end of the survey. And it's not something that would be analyzed, I'm sure, it may not get thorough analysis, but it would be available for input that the client could…

P13: That's fine, but that's not really what I was talking about. I meant as an intro—as part of your introductory statement, you can tell people that this survey is relevant to your life because it involves the spending of your federal tax dollars as a way to entice people to participate.

Russ: Oh.

P8: Have a sense of ownership.

P13: Right, yeah, that's totally unrelated.

Russ: I was a half-step behind you. Sorry about that.

P13: That's fine, no problem.

P12: I've got one last thing to say about this. In this… And maybe this should wait, but in this, I don't know, I think the survey could be compressed.

Russ: Okay. Do you think…

P8: Maybe as we go we can just talk about which questions *(inaudible)* more superfluous.

Russ: Yeah… That's what I was trying to get to. There will probably be specific questions where you may think maybe some choices could be eliminated, for example? Let's actually move on to that second set of questions, because those do have quite a number of choices that would probably be read one at a time so that they could answer those. What do we think about questions four and five? Again, in terms of the structure,

are they logical? Do they make sense in the way that they're worded? Can anybody feel like they had to scratch their heads for a second or two to figure out what they were being asked?

P12: One thing I was curious about is, as far as I know—and my own experience is only a lot of different national forests—there is no entrance fee, unless you're at a point of service like a campground. The entrance fees in national forests are a fairly recent thing, and in many national forests, as you're saying, they have so many different points of entrance that it's impractical to charge entrance fees.

P9: But it's the neo-con thing, isn't it?

Russ: Oh, I wouldn't quite go off on that tangent.

P9: But it's only since 2000, right?

Russ: .*(overlapping voices)* …the last few years, that the national forests have charged… *(overlapping voices)*

P7: I mean this is a double tax. This whole thing is just a double tax, because *(inaudible)* Washington dismantling everything, and wanting everything nationalized, and we're entering a commercial world. A commercial—

Russ: I will have to keep us focused…

P9: There we go.

(overlapping voices)

Russ: Let's talk about that later. *(overlapping voices) …*It's good to have miscellaneous comments.

P9: I have a comment that is actually focused on our survey.

Russ: Is it focused on questions four and five?

P9: Yes.

Russ: Okay.

P9: In the interest of condensing this and still getting all the information, couldn't—could it not… for the person who's reading this, have the instructions "Read question four," and if anybody says "Yes, I'm aware of them," ask "And have you purchased one?" Obviously, if they're unaware of them, they have never purchased one. Then you, you don't have to go through this same—this list, and *(inaudible)*

P13: It says that right here: "If not aware, skip to number…" Well, maybe that should—Well…

P9: For instance, I checked off two of these that I was aware of. Then the person would say, "Well, did you buy one?" "Nope!" "Did you buy one of that?" "Nope." Okay, done.

Russ: We've done something similar to that. I don't know if we had planned to do that specifically for this one. But in the survey I use to train interviewers, it will… if you select a couple of responses and when you're answering a question similar to number four, it will say in the next one "Do not mention these responses." Because they've already said they know about those two responses. So, you're saying if they're not aware of any of these passes, then they shouldn't be asked in the next question if they've purchased any passes, and that could save quite a bit of time.

P9: Let me check my wallet, maybe I… *(laughter)*

P8: Moreover, since the primary purpose is not to gather information about what they're aware of, but to advertise the possibility of these different things? You're just asking their awareness and purchase history. You can really scratch the definitions you provide. So, rather than say "The Golden Eagle Passport, a yearly pass for all national forests," "Are you aware of the Golden Eagle Passport." Or, perhaps… Yeah, in the question itself leading up to the individual items, you sort of have an overview statement that says "There are a variety of passes you can purchase, and I'd like to ask you whether you're aware of certain ones." And then, just say "Do you know about the Golden Eagle?" "Do you know about the Golden Age or Golden Access Passport? The National Parks Pass?" And drop all the defining comments.

Russ: I'm wondering, though, if they are aware that there's a National Parks Pass that's annual, but they just can't remember what the title was.

P13: Yeah.

P11: I agree.

P13: Well, I just think of doing interviews with senior citizens on the phone and some of them get confused. Not to be biased, but that's my personal experience. So, I agree. I think keeping those there, although it might be a little tedious, is probably a good idea.

P10: Then I really think you need to describe what they are so that I might know that there is, indeed, a yearly pass for all national forests, but I don't know what it's name is, so…

Russ: Any other comments on the structure, or—Let me just go through these. Boy, are you going to get *tired* of me saying this. The individual questions, areas that are not included in questions four and five that you think should be, or are there any questions we shouldn't be asking in questions four and five? Participant 12.

P12: Basically, what you're doing and… was—is collapsing all these different passes here into one pass?

Russ: That's right. Basically, the three at the top.

P12: Okay.

Russ: Because the other two will still exist, but they'll be called America the Beautiful…

Zafar: …Senior and America the Beautiful Access.

P12: Okay, so my question is why, if you're going to—and this is going to be done. The feds are going to do this, anyhow?

Zafar: Very much. Yes. *(laughter)*

P12: Well you ask in, like, question five; why do you care about all these separate *ones*? If they're already going to go ahead and collapse them, anyhow?

Russ: I think that's so it will be able to compare people who've never heard of any of these passes as a group against people who have purchased passes as a group and see what prices they're willing to pay as a group, and brand them "group 1" and "group 2," for example.

P12: With the idea that you're getting a better value, because now it could collapse all these different potential passes? Is that sort of the sense?

Zafar: If you have already bought that pass, the idea is to get the demand, basically, in the market. And so if you have already bought the pass, some people, you will see that they don't visit. They just buy as a donation for the park. Now, some people will just buy it and visit fifteen times, and they'll… Okay, twenty times fifteen. So this is a great value for me, you know? So… And we're asking if you had this pass, or if you paid for this pass, the reason is just to see, "Okay, you already bought that pass, so your willingness to pay for that particular pass was this, and now how much you're willing—you use to consider that as an overpriced one, or an under-priced… that kind of thing. I'm not sure if I've answered your question…

Russ: It's almost like, say, if we worked for Ford. We may do a survey that says, well, "Have you ever owned a Ford before?" And if they say "Yes," Then we'll analyze our loyal customers on the one hand, against people who have never owned a Ford before and see how their opinions differ; especially in terms of what they're willing to pay for.

P12: Yeah, except my question was each one of these specific passes, which I think makes the question a longer question, and makes it potentially confusing to people. In number five, to ask every specific one of these, as opposed to "Have you ever--?" I mean that's like "Have you ever owned a—" I don't know what the hell the make. "…a Mustang." "Have you ever owned a—" Except for one that explodes!

Unknown: A Pinto!

P12: Yes! *(laughter)*

Russ: So…

Zafar: So you're saying… You're saying just ask…

P12: Can't number five just be collapsed into have you ever bought a—

Zafar: An annual pass.

P12: --any of the federal land use passes.

Russ: Or perhaps "any of the passes we mentioned in the previous question?"

P12: Exactly! Bingo.

P13: And then say "If yes, which one or which ones?" So that way you could get specific, or if you want to know just who's bought and who hasn't bought, does it matter which ones? So, that way you can get specific. Or, if you want to know just who's bought and who hasn't bought, does it matter which specific one?

P12: *(overlapping voices)* …trying to figure out why would they… They're already going to do it. It's not like you're doing a market survey here to find out about if you have bought this one in the past. The decision's already been made.

Zafar: Decision's made on that pass is going to be that.

P9: Not the price, though.

Zafar: So, what we *are* doing here is to determine the price.

P8: That's your point, that the survey really should be focused on price-related issues, rather than any of these other specific things.

P12: Yeah, but if you bought one pass, and he bought another one, and he bought another one, how or what's that got to do with this overall pass that collapses all of them? So, that's all.

P11: Because they just…

P9: What does the Golden Eagle Passport cost?

Russ: *(to Zafar)* Should we let that out?

Zafar: I'm sorry?

P9: The Golden Eagle Passport.

Zafar: Sixty-five dollars.

P9: Good God. Yeah, this has to be since 2000. All right. *(laughter)*

Unknown: The eagle has landed.

Zafar: Or you could be the National Park Pass which is good…

P9: Different price, huh?

Zafar: …fifty dollars and then you buy the Golden Eagle Stamp for fifteen dollars, which makes it, again, sixty-five, the equivalent of the Golden Eagle Passport.

Russ: Just because time is starting to run low, can we move on to the next block of questions, which would be questions six, seven, and eight, all of which start with "In just the past year." Does anybody have any comments they'd like to make about the way that those are worded? Do they make sense? Yes?

P9: I interpret—there's three people in our family, so if we all visit the Apostles, that's three visits, right?

P7: Or one family visit.

Russ: Is that three visits or nine visits, or one…?

P9: No, no. Your one trip to the Apostles by three people in a family counts as three visits, right?

Zafar: No. Any number of persons—right now, the rule is that any number of persons in a car will go with that pass. I'm sorry?

P9: No, no. Question number six, how many visits in the past year?

P1: That's just one visit.

Zafar: Oh! That's just one visit for three people, yes.

P9: "How many times have you or any member of your household visited a national park?" Now, it's just as badly worded there.

Zafar: Okay. Okay, I see what you're saying. "How often have you or your family or some other group you were in visited a park?" Have the answer: "one visit." But I, and my wife, and my daughter, right? So…

Russ: Perhaps "How many times has…"

Zafar: How many visits…

P9: Anyway, make a note that this is confusing.

Russ: Okay.

P13: Okay, and I have another point about the wording here. You say "About how many times," and then you say "If you don't know the exact number." I would say that's redundant and that you should say "How many times," and then say "If you don't know the exact number." Because when you say "About how many times," you're already giving people the prompt to estimate, and then you do it again, that don't know. It's either they know or they don't know, so, you want, obviously, if they know the exact number, you want to know the exact number—

Russ: So, you'd want to do…

P13: --and if they don't, then they would estimate. So, I would just say eliminate the word "about."

Russ: Okay.

P13: Because I don't… I think it's redundant.

P8: Going back to a theme we talked about on the first page, do you guys need, in terms of your individual clients, information about each of these separate categories? Or would it be sufficient to collapse questions six, seven, and eight into one big question that asks "In the past year since September of 2004, how many times have you blah blah blah National Forests or any other lands administered by the National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife, Bureau of Reclamation, or Bureau of Land Management." Any type of federal wilderness, basically.

Zafar: Okay.

P9: But you have different clients, right?

P8: Well, that's what I'm asking, whether it's—

Zafar: Oh, we have different clients, but when we are *surveying* people, we just… We are just asking people, and based on their answer, we are probably dividing them into different clients, but we don't know.

P9: So, is the Forest Service going to want to know what you got specifically from the people who said the visited forests, as opposed to those who never went to forests and only went to parks?

Zafar: That was one of the issues that came up, and we are discussing this with all the clients that are involved in this. And one concern of the US Forest Service was, "So, when you are going to calculate the revenue, how do you know how much we are losing?" So, this one pass gets in, and then it replaces many passes, but, at the same time, all these Bureau of Reclamation, National Forest Service, they have their own passes already in. So, those will be there. Okay, now this one pass gets into and replaces *some* of the revenue, and the revenue calculation is pretty nasty.

P8: Oh, so how do they share the revenue across groups, when it's a pass that applies to all of them?

Zafar: And how much will they be getting out of each individual client's pocket? We don't know, and that's a real nasty calculation, and we have experts—six… three… four experts working on that, and we have no clue. And I'm a student of economics, and we have no clue how we are going figure that out, but we have—

P9: Yeah, but fortunately it's not *your* problem.

Zafar: Well, it *is* our problem. It is our problem to figure out and *tell* them what would be at least the estimated revenue lost, or revenue gained, or the net revenue, for all these separate people. Separate Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management… So, that's why we are trying to figure out if we have different people hearing for different—

P9: So, you want to keep these questions then, don't you?

Zafar: There was a purpose for keeping those there, but we will convey your message to them when we discuss this on Monday, about that issue.

P11: I think there's a problem just with knowing whether you've been to, like many people in here are saying, I was at this place but I didn't know if it was a national forest, or if it was a—I don't think most people really know and distinguish between these categories very well.

Zafar: Even national park people don't know these sometimes.

P11: Yeah, and people don't know national forests from state forests.

P4: Why don't you start out with asking them specifically where they were and then leave the interviewer… check off, you know, whether it's a park or whatever. If it's in the last two years, and then whether they've been, you know. They'd know whether it was national, federal, you know.

P11: Say you had a list.

P9: Prove it, yeah. Name one.

Russ: A built-in database, in other words. Where you type in the name and it might be able to automatically figure that out for us.

P4: Right.

P5: I had forgotten some places I'd been until I went on the internet prior to coming here, and then I remembered. "Oh, yes! I've been there."

P9: In the past year?

Russ: Because several of you, when you asked me "Well, is this a federal land that I've been to?" I would just flip over to my computer on google and say "Why, *yes* it is." *(laughter)* So, yeah. That may be something that we can do, is have google available, at least to the supervisor of the call center. So if the interviewer comes up to them and says "Well, is this a federal land? That's what they're asking me." They could look that up.

P12: Even your map here, it looks like it has Mount Rainier in red there. And down here it says that's a state park. What does that mean?

Russ: There are two different shades of red there, very close to each other broken into two different legends. There's one further to the right.

(overlapping voices)

P12: *(laughing)* Oh, my color perception's not that good.

Zafar: It's not you. We were confused at the beginning, too.

Russ: I asked that same question. That's why I know the answer. I said "Wait a minute. This red thing. That's a state park? Because I saw it on another map. *(inaudible)*

Zafar: And my apologies that I did not get any better, but that's… *(laughter)*

Russ: However, I am digressing. I apologize. If you could move on to question number nine? "If you have visited any federal lands in the past year, was it for any of the following reasons." Does anybody have any comments about that question?

P10: I have a comment about some of the categories there: a *family vacation*. Can you just say "vacation" there? Not everybody is part of a family. Some people vacation as individuals. Some people vacation with a friend. They're not part of a family.

P13: Or you could have separate categories. I think—oh, okay. For this question, I think what we were just talking about, the idea of having a pre-established database and having the interviewer simply mark off which of the options were applicable would be more effective in this case. Otherwise, especially if they're… Yeah, It think that would be a more effective way, because there are, what? One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine…

P8: But the flip is that having these categories act as prompts; that helps you to remember. Because you just do it on cue. You're like "Well, you know, we walked around. We did some hiking." But I predict if you asked "Did you go fishing?" "Oh, right! We went fishing." So, it's useful in that way.

P10: Mm hmm. Yeah.

P13: That's also true.

P9: Regarding family, though, if you had a reunion… For instance, I was invited to a reunion of people I'd been in the Peace Corps. They were going to meet in a park our west. And, you know, a big opportunity to drown. So, it could be a family or group vacation.

P11: I would say a group… *(inaudible)* …I think.

P8: How big… *(inaudible)*

P11: Well, every time we go by ourselves, we're on vacation by definition.
P8: Right.

Zafar: That's a good point.

Russ: Left side of the room, any comments about number nine? Individual answers that maybe belong or don't belong, you think? Or is there something that maybe we've left out on question number nine?

(overlapping voices, laughter from P9)

P4: …telephone interviewer going to include each one of these, and I just can't imagine having that kind of patience.

Unknown: I would.

P13: I think skiing, snowshoeing, etc., and snowmobiling can be collapsed into winter sports.

(overlapping voices)

P11: Well, although the motorized thing is distinct, and has implications, also.

P9: Where's motorized? Is that in there?

P11: Well that's snowballing—snowmobiling, as distinct from skiing, snowshoeing, or snowboarding.

P8: Motorized and non-motorized winter sports.

P11: Yeah. I think it's good to make a distinction there. *(laughter)*

P9: Consider adding sailing and kayaking.

P11: Yes.

P9: …at the Apostle Islands, that's definitely what some of these people do.

(overlapping voices)

Russ: You're overlapping now.

P9: Yes.

P11: Yes.

Russ: One at a time, please. Oh, but actually I want to—Participant 4, when you said you thought it was too long, were you thinking any specific ones could be eliminated that seemed redundant?

P4: Well, I don't know. You've got skiing, snowshoeing, sledding, snowboarding, and, you know, snowmobiling, off-roading. It's getting into too much detail, I think, for what most people, you know; you're kind of anxious for you to get to your point, you know, what are you, you know? When I get a call from somebody, the first thing they say, "Hi, how are you doing?" And my switch goes on. I know it's got to be… let's get to the point, you know?

Russ: Okay. Anybody else think of anything they'd like to add or subtract from that list?

P5: *(overlapping voices)* I was frustrated you don't have any mention of horseback riding, and don't some people go up to the national parks to ride horses?

P9: Horses and camels.

P5: Also, it doesn't say anything about spiritual or religious reasons people might want to visit a national park.

P13: I think the reasons you mentioned are probably valid for some people, but I don't think that they would be for a high percentage of people. I also think "just passing through" would also be a very low percentage of respondents answering that. So, I would say eliminate that one and those could all be included in the "other" category, which could be a write-in for, you know, that small spectrum of responses.

Zafar: Well, it's really hard to say that, which is a higher proportion of… which activities are higher and lower. Trust me. Horseback riding? I don't know if that's really high. I mean, it's not very low, I would say.

Unknown: For Yosemite it's high. In Yosemite, it's like one of the things to do. Get on a horse, and…

P13: You're talking about on a national scale. I…

Zafar: It's very hard to conclude anything about that, so I would keep myself from concluding…

P9: And if you drive north, you could go through the Snoqualmie Forest.

Zafar: And your point about the reasons are spiritual, I—we have never talked about that. We won't say that it's high or low, but we will just consider that as an option.

Russ: I think it's maybe—what about the word "beauty"? I know that doesn't get to the heart of spirituality, necessarily, but there are a lot of people who say that they go to national parks and national forests—including these focus groups—to enjoy the beauty of the scenery, and that affects them.

P13: "Appreciation of nature?"

(overlapping voices)

P5: Another reason that I've gone to these places is to… as a host for foreign visitors. My family, we used to be very active in the past. We had many foreign visitors, and we always wanted to show them, you know, what a beautiful country this is.

P3: I have a suggestion. You just have fishing. Why don't you have "scuba" or "snorkeling" for all the coastal parks?

Russ: Right, for the ocean.

P9: Yeah, "ocean activities."

Russ: It was national seashores. There's more to do than just fishing, of course, and we don't really suggest that.

P4: I'd get back to the point that the most important thing, I think, is to ask "Where have you been?" And, once you've got that, then you're not going to ask them, you know.

Like me, *(inaudible)*, would you go snowmobiling there? *(laughter)* You know, once you've got where they've been, you know, "Where were you and what did you do?" That's basic, you know. You only have to go so far.

P12: You know, why are you really even asking this question, because then, again, if you're going down the Grand Canyon, you're not going snowmobiling. So why, you know, on a national basis—and to kind of get away, I mean, the idea of commune with… Mount Rainier, in fact, used to be called the mountain that is God. It could be that people are just sick and tired of the city and they want to get out, which is a related kind of answer to that. But, why, in this survey, are you even asking any of this?

Russ: Yes?

Unknown: I was curious about sledding. Do people sled in national parks?

P8: *(inaudible)* …as a winter sport. *(laughter)*

Unknown: It just seems like people usually sled, they just sled next door in the neighborhood park. I don't—

P13: Children on family vacations might do it.

Unknown: You think? Do they have sleds wherever they *(laughter, overlapping voices)*.

Russ: Let's move on to questions ten, eleven, and twelve.

P13: Can I make one quick little comment?

Russ: Oh, sure.

P13: I don't think you need to ask number nine if someone says "I have made zero visits to federal lands over the last year." Again, that would be…

Russ: Skip past that question.

P13: Yes. Yes.

P9: Again, it depends on what your clients want to know, but it could be the question would be "If you visited, why would you do it?" "If you do it in the future, what will your… why will you be doing it?"

Russ: Okay.

P9: I mean, I care, because I want the answer to be, "Well, it won't be for the sound of motorized vehicles." All right? But a whole lot of people might say "I want to run snowmobiles in the winter, and ATVs in the summer," you know?

Russ: Do you think the people who did visit federal lands should have their question begin with "If you—when you visited any federal lands," and the people who didn't maybe should have their question worded, same question, except that it begins "If you visited any federal lands in the future, will it be for…"

P9: Assuming your clients actually want to know this answer, right?

P13: I think that's a good point.

Russ: …on question—

P8: Actually, before you go on, one thing. I had sort of a stereotype in my mind that a lot of the folks that buy these passes are older folks, retired, who have more time and money to travel, and they may have different purchasing patterns than…

Russ: Well, actually, since the older folks, being folks aged sixty-two and older can buy the ten dollar lifetime pass, they're…

Zafar: Golden Age Passport.

Russ: Not the Golden Eagle, but the Golden Age Passport is available to age sixty-two or over. It's ten dollars and it lasts a lifetime. Very similar to the Golden Access Passport, but it costs ten dollars more than the National Parks Pass. So, we actually eliminate those. This comes back to Terry's comment at the very beginning. Those are the people who we eliminate from the survey and the focus group. Because they started saying "Well, I don't know what the big deal is about this annual pass. For ten dollars, I get this thing for a lifetime." That really changes the nature of the discussion from that point on. But, on questions ten, eleven, and twelve, that all start out with the phrase "In the upcoming year, between now and October, 2006…" What does everybody think about those questions. Did anybody recall anything that was awkwardly worded?

P4: Can you just say "In the coming year?"

Russ: "In the *coming* year?"

P1: Yeah, that would be better.

Russ: Okay.

P1: During the next year.

P11: During the next year.

Russ: Okay.

P9: During the next twelve months.

P8: Actually, why don't… Since you have the more specific "October, 2006" just cut to that? "Between now and October, 2006."

P13: Yeah.

P11: If it's October.

Russ: Or we could say… Usually when we have things in parentheses, though, I mean, it's optional for the interviewer to say it.

P8: Why not just be more specific from the get go?

P13: I agree. I think that would clear up any questions, because people might think "Do you mean the next calendar year?" You know, they could think a whole bunch of things, but if you say, specifically, between today and October, 2006 they know exactly what you're talking about the other way. I also think…

Russ: Well, the survey may go over…

P9: Exactly, you've got a phrase that…

P13: …change. I mean, you could put that so that it could be automatically done to whatever the date is that the survey is being administered. Okay. And then I would actually say… I don't know. I think these—ten, eleven, and twelve—are… I'm just thinking of people who haven't visited a national land over the last year. These questions seem to be prompting people to think about visiting, and so I think it might be effective for… if you were going to use that question, you know, in the next… in the upcoming year, or whatever, if you're going to visit, why would you? The number nine? But for the people who haven't been in the last year, move that to like a thirteen slot, or after those three questions, because of these questions are going to have people think about, you know, their vacation time. What they might do, if they were going to go, it would prompt them to think about specific things they might want to do. Does that make sense to you?

Russ: Can you rephrase it in two sentences?

P13: Okay, the broad questions prompting people to think about how often they might visit a park in the next year would lead them to think about specific reasons why they might visit. So, therefore putting the specific question, the more specific question, after the general question…

Russ: So, move number nine…

P13: Only for if you're using it in terms of the next year, the upcoming year, not *(inaudible)*

Russ: As Participant 9 was kind of suggesting, that we have two different versions of number nine…

P13: Right, exactly, and that would be for the people that had not visited over the last year, but when you're asking about the future visits.

Unknown: Good point.

Unknown: There might be a way to do, this is another point, too, but the preamble "In the upcoming year," *(inaudible)*, you could say "For the next three questions, it's for the upcoming year, and then just do parks, forests, national…" So, you know, you're shortening the question.

Zafar: I see. Thank you. That's a good point.

P4: I would ask "Where, specifically?" The way I kind of think about this is I always give myself the benefit of the doubt. "Oh, well. Maybe I will." You know? But if I had to put a specific place, then… You know. So, I would say "Where would you expect to…" You know, what specific forest or whatever.

Zafar: And figure out yourself whether that is a national forest, or a national park, or… whatever. Correct?

P4: Well, yeah. I mean, if you had named… It's just the same as "Where have you been?" "Where, specifically, do you plan to go?" Because otherwise you don't quite get accurate, you know, people will say "Yeah!" because, you know, he's being positive, you know?

Russ: I can tell you that to make a list that, say, a telephone interviewer could refer to, is very difficult because it's going to be so long. And that when people remember usually remember a park, they don't remember the exact name of the park. They may remember the middle word. You know, "That Apostle place," or "That Islands place."

P9: That place in the lake in Wisconsin.

Russ: But, yeah, that could be another point where a database that's integral to the survey could come in handy.

P9: The same question about defining what you mean by visit means our guys, who really love numbers, right? So, do three people in a car count as three visits or one?

Russ: I think it depends on whether it's a historic site where you're going through an entrance gate one person at a time, or whether you're going into, say, a big nature area or a national park where you're taking a carload of people.

P9: If you are asking advice of your clients before you finalize this, that should be one question that you ask them, I think, and then phrase it to reflect that.

Zafar: Since annual passes, so far, they're not per person, I would say three people going in a car is one visit.

P9: Okay, then the language should be unambiguous to reflect that, you know?

P8: You should have a preamble at the beginning where you say "For the purposes of this questionnaire, visit is defined as one carload."

Russ: Unless we're talking about a historic site.

P8: But because you're asserting about the pass, that doesn't really apply.

Zafar: Yeah, *(inaudible)*

Russ: Specific to ten, eleven, and twelve, does anybody else have any more comments?

P12: Just a question: is the reason for not collapsing these into one question is because each of these different bodies are trying to get some sense of what piece of the pie they should get?

Russ: I think the short answer to that is yes. This, the reason why we have ten, eleven, and twelve's, are the same as why we have six, seven, and eight as separate questions.

P12: Well, except for the difference on six, seven, and eight—you already have figures. I mean, I know probably accounting might be in a mess, but I mean that figure should be whatever they sold. They sold… they already have a percentage established, in terms of the past, of what's been done. Each one of these, if you have to buy a different kind of a sticker to get in, don't they already have figures that would track that? Track usage of the parks, track amount of money raised by that particular type of daily fees, that sort of stuff?

Zafar: Right, but, say… I used to go to national forests, and just… I'm using it for national forests which change an entrance fee, for example. Now, I'm buying a national—I did not buy that pass in past. Now, I'm buying a national park—ATB—pass. Now, I'm not buying the national forest pass, which I used to buy. They are losing money on that front, okay? I'm, like, making sense? So, I'm not buying the national forest pass, but I'm buying a national pass… a national p—

P12: And that covers both of them?

Zafar: Exactly.

P12: Okay.

Zafar: So, the National Forest Service loses that money, and that's why they're concerned about how much we're going to lose off of this… *(overlapping voices)* …pieces of pie.

P13: One way that you could condense these questions without losing information is simply to say… Okay, for six, seven, and eight, you'd say "In just the past year, about how many times have you or any member of household visited any of the following…" And then, do, and someone might have already have said this.

Zafar: Yes.

P13: Did someone say that?

Zafar: Yeah, I think you or somebody else…

P13: Okay, and so that way you would just—instead of reading the entire verbiage, you would just give bullet points of that. Like, you could do that for six, seven, and eight, then you could do that for ten, eleven, and twelve. The same exact thing. So, you would get all the specific information, and limit the amount of time that the interviewer is talking and saying the exact same thing.

P7: Yeah, I like that. You might want to—I don't know if you're interested in finding out like, if they would go anywhere? If they don't know, what would they want to go to specifically one of these three places, or, I don't know if were interested to know, if they would go to a state park, you know, too, because a lot of people go to state parks and some of those places.

Zafar: We aren't interested in knowing exactly whether they went to a state park or not, but that's true, sometimes they just don't know, and they go to a state park, and they just don't know the difference between those places. In Portland, we are just… people are like "Why should I care about this park?" because there are not many national parks around.

P13: Like, out here there's not many national parks or anything; there's lots of little state parks…

Zafar: State parks. Right, yeah. So, yes, that's a…

Russ: On the next page, starting with that large paragraph beginning with "In 2007," and going all the way through question fifteen, anybody notice anything that got to them?

P12: Is basically what you're trying to do, I mean, you get people to buy these passes, and then they hang onto it until they use it that first time, and then it's good for a year after that.

Russ: Yes.

P12: So, you don't, in here, ask for… instead of putting dollar figures out here… for example, like if I want to go to Mount Rainier and I buy this pass, blah blah blah. What's it cost me to go to Mount Rainier on a daily basis? I mean I have no basis to compare this to. How did I go from going to the Snoqualmie National Forest… I actually have passed through, whatever, Glacier and Yellowstone, and when I wanted to see them I specifically took that route, but I was going from the west coast to the east coast and that's the route I took. So, I mean it was a pass through? Was it to see the beauty? Kind of both, but the idea, depending on if I had to pay a separate fee, and all that, I mean that figures into it, and it seems that that's going to give you kind of an inaccurate answer here.

P8: I think it's about like, in terms of all the questions on three and on top of—most of page four, as well, the questions de-contextualize. In a way, it's very different than the decision I would actually make at the gate or on the internet site, because in all of those cases I would have available information about, well, what's the relative cost? How much does it cost me to get in once? What if I want to go five times over the course of the year? Whereas here, I don't know. I don't know how much it costs to get into Yosemite.

Russ: *(inaudible)* Well, I don't want to squash your thought, but there may just be such a long list, and such a wide variety of different entrance fees that it may not be possible to compile that for the purposes of this survey.

P8: Can you have some kind of mean or rough, like a benchmark?

P13: A range, because I personally have difficulty answering *(overlapping voices)*…

P8: Because I don't know if I'm saving money, or spending a lot more, or what.

P11: Right.

Zafar: Yeah, I understand what you're saying, but that is known as travel cost method. We call it that. And the problem is we can't really involve, in that way… We are making an assumption here, if you are buying, that you already have considered those costs. That I will visit five times Yellowstone, or visit five national parks, and I'm going to pay for all those costs involved with that. So, having that assumption in mind, now you're thinking that "Okay, if I buy this national park pass, then probably it will save money. So, I'm not sure…"

P13: Do you have access, like, for example, if someone wants to know the specific cost of what it costs to get into Mount Rainier, would it be possible to have a database available to the interviewers, so they can look up that information?

Zafar: That's very…

P9: Couldn't you have a list of, like, the top places? The top—

Unknown: …cost, you know, thirty dollars to get into.

P12: Is that a day?

P6: Yeah, but what I mean is as long as you want to stay or something, but that's like the entrance fee into the park, and then there's like other fees, obviously, at the campground to park there, but… People might be interested to know, if they can get into those big ones, that they're really going to be saving money. Shoot, I'd buy a pass if I knew I could go to Yellowstone and Yosemite as many times as I want a year and save, possibly, a lot of money.

Zafar: Yosemite is *(inaudible)* generally thirty, but you can get them at a range five to twenty-five dollars. About the specific park and the specific price, I don't know how…

P8: A range.

Zafar: Yeah, a range…

P6: You can at least say that you tell people that you can get into all of the national parks. I don't know if that's part of the deal, if there's a few, like, some of the more popular expensive ones that may not be covered by the pass. *(overlapping voices)*

P13: It says that in the top, I think, but I have a question about that, too. It says "The ATB pass will be good for entrance to all federal lands and waters that charge an entrance fee, blah blah blah, are managed by…" and then there's a whole list of all these agencies. Are there any national—what is it?-- federal lands and waters that are excluded? That are managed by other agencies? Or is that just lip service to those agencies, because that seems to be excess verbiage in the paragraph. People aren't

really going to care so much about those specific things. I think they just need to know that it's all federal lands and waters.

Unknown: I agree with that, because, you know—

P13: It just… It will distract—

P9: Oh, no, no!

Unknown: --specified all those, so you could probably just, you know, at the end, they already know that you're talking about all these lands, and it says it's all included, you know, with the… List them out again, because you've done that a few times already.

Russ: It's like we need an acronym.

P13: Who they're managed by is irrelevant to what this paragraph is about. It's kind of a tangent, you know? It's taking away from talking about the pass, and it's talking about the bureaucracy, which I think is just a waste of time.

P4: Typical of government. *(laughter)*

Russ: Or maybe there's a way that we could mention those five— or six agencies, if we count the Corps of Engineers, too— once in the survey, and then maybe say later on "those previous six agencies that we mentioned," or have it in parentheses so that if they say "Oh, what were you talking about? What six agencies?" Then they would get the paragraph saying that, but not say it over and over again.

Zafar: Because sometimes some people just… they buy the pass as very specific. I mean, just "I care about this US Forest, National Forest Service lands." And that's not in the paragraph with everybody asking the question. The person—interviewer—"Oh, so do you guys have a national forest that I have here?" or "Do you care about this Bureau of Reclamations land they charge a fee?" So that…

P13: If you know that's all of them, you can always answer "yes."

Zafar: Right, yeah. That's something that…

P9: But it doesn't include the Area 51, correct? *(laughter)*

P7: You can put that in there. Put a little provision in there: "Area 51."

P13: Leave your Martian probes at home.

P8: Some of the other details are similar, I think, in that you say "annual pass," then you say "valid for twelve months." Just say that it's valid for twelve months. The "adults age sixteen or over," that could be a parenthetical comment in case they ask. Otherwise, I don't think your typical phone interviewee will need to know that specific year, or care, and if they ask it's—

P13: Well, because sixteen is not usually considered the age of an adult. That's… I think that's important to specify that. Because, otherwise, if you say "adults," they're

going to assume eighteen and up. If they have seventeen-year-old twins, they might have a problem.

Zafar: Yeah, there are issues like this, and *(inaudible)* they—she used to visit with… she *visits* national parks; her children, and the nieces and then all… I mean *(inaudible)*… pretty much everybody in the family. All the children. So, she was very much concerned about that part. So…

P8: That's why it'd be in the parentheses. So, if there is a question about the specifics of it, it's available for the interviewer.

Russ: Okay, anything more on that one block? How about the block underneath it? Sixteen, seventeen, and eighteen. All of those refer to… Actually, they don't, do they? *(to Zafar:* Sixteen, seventeen, and eighteen. The bottom half on page three.)

P8: May I ask a question?

Russ: Yes. Expected ATB visits for federal lands. They all have the same answer, basically.

P8: This whole last junk about plastic wallet cards, outdoor recreation scenes… Is that because it's replacing… Does this replace the Duck Stamp, which is thought of as a collector's item?

Russ: Isn't it… It grants you access to the Fish and Wildlife lands, particularly bird sanctuaries?

Zafar: Right, so it's replacing, in one sense, and not replacing this in that you can just—

P8: You can buy it.

Zafar: Yes, you can still buy a Duck Stamp.

Russ: You can still buy it separately, but it covers what the Duck Stamp also covers. *(inaudible)*

P8: I would be inclined to drop all the aesthetic details, but…

P13: …But they're so proud. *(laughter)*

Russ: And was that included in that particular block of questions, or is that further along?

P9: No, no. That's in the verbiage at the start.

P13: The introduction to the section.

P9: Well, I mean… your clients, I'm sure, are very proud of this, and that equivalent of the Legislative Reference Bureau framed it, right? So they're not going want to willingly give it up. But you might have a brief description of this, and then at the very end offer it as a paragraph of prose to those who are interested. Wouldn't that satisfy everyone?

Russ: As in "for reference purposes," but not necessarily the first *(inaudible).*

P9: "If you want the text of the bill, we have it here."

P13: I agree. I think that this, a lot of this text here, like, the descriptive text, the marketing aspect of this paragraph could be moved to the end of the interview.

P8: Or just say "It's a collector's item."

P13: And say "If you want more…" Like, I don't know if it *(inaudible)* publicly, but "You can go to this URL," or "You can call this number." Refer to it that way.

Russ: Which is something that we do include at the end.

P13: Right, and I would say leave that descriptive stuff that's irrelevant to the actual services provided. Leave that to the end.

P7: Some of it is pertinent, though, to how much you would pay for it.

P6: "Do you like collector's items?" Or "You need to know how… what it covers"

P13: That's true.

Unknown: Yeah.

P9: No, a summary should be there, but it doesn't have to be.

P11: I don't see what you would eliminate from this particular summary, besides the last part of "the image of the outdoor recreational scene." But everything else is pretty pertinent.

P9: Well…

P8: I think you would simply say "It's designed to be a collector's item," and that would cover most of the last two lines.

Russ: Do we agree? Everybody that thinks that that paragraph should be shorter also agrees that it's the last two sentences that should be eliminated?

P13: I actually changed my mind. I think it is important, now that you mentioned the fact that people would buy it as a collector's item as people buy stamps as a collector's item. It's a collector's item.

P8: And then we talked about truncating that list of agencies to some version of "the aforementioned."

Unknown: Yeah. *(laughter)*

P5: Is it already written that it's going to be called "The America the Beautiful pass"?

Russ: Yes, in the legislation *(inaudible)*.

P5: I mean, I liked "America the Beautiful," but they should have gotten something catchier like… I mean they should have figured something out like the "BAT" and then had that. You know, a "Beautiful America" theme, or something with a better acronym. Because "ATB" sounds like "ATV" and it, you know, it's just *(inaudible)*, but they should have been a little more creative.

Russ: We can't change that, though. *(laughter)*

P5: I know.

P1: ATB (*NRP*) pass and all, because it sounds like… *(laughter)*

Russ: But we can't change that; sorry. Let's move on. Okay, what about questions sixteen, seventeen and eighteen. And actually let's expand that to include, since we're down to our last ten minutes or so, all the way up to question twenty on the following page. Anybody have any comments about the way that those were worded?

P6: I would say again that between sixteen and seventeen and eighteen, that you can, you know, kind of *combine* those together again *(inaudible)* the same thing; asking the general question and asking how many times we did this, and this, and this.

P9: In fact, you could say "If you got this pass, would you visit this national lands more often than you have in the past year? Would it affect your behavior?" And if they say "Yes," then you can ask these questions. I wouldn't go any more often.

P10: I think that, that having us—this is a Madison comment. *(laughter)* I think they should have a sliding scale based on income.

Unknown: I think it should be based on your state.

Russ: *(inaudible)* …brought this up in every focus group, "Do you think there should be a sliding scale?"

P10: Okay, well I think there should be.

Russ: What about questions twenty-one through twenty-three? Any issues with that? Is it structured correctly? Is it clear? Oh, one thing I haven't mentioned, but if anybody has noticed… anywhere in this questionnaire, is there a word that can be interpreted two ways, maybe, that should be replaced with another word that is more specific? If anyone has noticed a word like that.. Or, I remember "upcoming" was not a particularly popular word.

P6: Maybe the sentence that says "make it *good* for two more years." Have it "valid," or "extend it's, you know, the date."

P12: That *impacted* did.

P13: In question number twenty-three, I'm not really sure what a "discount store" is exactly.

P14: A C store.

P12: Stop and Shop, Seven Eleven… Wal-Mart?

P8: Like a K-Mart or a Wal-Mart where you buy your hunting gear.

Russ: I think a discount store is a generic word for "Wal-Mart," probably. *(laughter)*

P9: You can't sell them at Wal-Mart! *(laughter)*

P13: For me, that doesn't—isn't really clear.

Russ: Okay.

Zafar: Okay.

(overlapping voices).

Russ: But we don't want to advertise.

P9: No, you don't even want to *do* that.

Russ: K-Mart does still exist.

P9: On twenty-two, there's no… Personally, I think, it should go to the whole system, and let them argue about what percentage forestry, you know, forests get as opposed to parks. Do you want to include that as an option? Instead of "Don't know," how about "Don't care"?

Russ: Usually we will have a "don't know slash not sure."

P9: Well, I *am* sure. I *know* I don't care. I bet a lot of people would. *(laughter)*

Russ: That would be the "no answer slash refused."

P13: I would say, actually, with buttressing, could be used to say maybe there should be an additional question. Previous, or, you know, included right here, saying "Well, this one is specific to that specific federal land where you buy the pass." What I was thinking is, you know, maybe you could ask about, you know, whether people would be likely to pay more if it went… If they knew it were going to federal lands in general, and not fed… to some other, you know, branch of the federal government, you know?

P12: Like Iraq.

P13: Because I don't really know what the structure, what the fee structure is right now. I don't know where that money goes now. I mean, does it all go back into the federal lands system, or does it go back to the federal government?

Zafar: Eighty to eighty-five percent of that goes to federal, or where you buy the pass from.

P13: Okay.

P12: So, it will be an increase.

P13: I think that that would be important information to have.

Zafar: You know, that's just a number we put, ninety-nine percent, to see how people… how much people care about that. Because we, in different focus groups, we saw that people *really* care about that part, and it's a concern for National Parks Service, too, and that's why we are trying to see that how many people care, or how much people are trying to… be willing to increase the price for just for that reason. Now, ninety-nine percent is just a number we came up with. We just pulled that number.

Unknown: But…

Zafar: Now, basically it's *most* of the revenue. That's how the National Park Service worded this. *Most* of the revenue collected will be used for the fed—development of the federal land recreation. Federal recreation land. Sorry?

P8: They should go with a minimum.

Zafar: I'm sorry?

P8: A minimum, rather than the ninety-nine, which is unrealistic, or the very vague, bureaucratic "most."

Zafar: Most.

P8: "A minimum of such and such amount." "At least eighty percent."

Zafar: We don't know it, and National Park Service people don't know about that number yet. It has yet to be decided. So…

Russ: I want to make one suggestion. What about "Almost all"?

Unknown: It's vague.

P5: Well, you see, when I first filled out the survey, I already wrote in pencil—sorry, I didn't know about the pen comments yet.

Russ: That's fine.

P5: I already wrote that my distrust is so high that I thought, you know, that's great. You know? They'll say… "If you could be guaranteed that ninety-nine percent of the price would be used…" And then we all say "Yes!" in that case, because you know that people do care. You've had focus groups. Then they'll make the higher price. But we don't know, you know? There's no guarantee that it really will be. That's the cynical…

Zafar: Yes, that's right. But we as a researcher. We are asking these questions to see how much people are willing to pay for that, that…

P5: I know that's why you're asking, and that's a way that you can get more money, but whatever the money will actually, you know, then it probably wouldn't even be that good. You know?

Russ: What if to *avoid* the appearance of weasel words, we use the actual figure, which is eighty-five percent.

P8: That'd be great.

P9: Eighty-five percent. What happens to the other fifteen?

Zafar: Fifteen… fifteen goes to operating expenses.

P9: Of the park system? Of the forests. None of it's going to Iraq, right? I'm talking about the *(inaudible)*. *(laughter)* All of it is retained within the over—the universe of forestry, forests, and parks, and so on, right?

Zafar: Right now it's where we buy this. If you buy the pass at Yellowstone, Yellowstone always keeps eighty-five percent, and the fifteen percent goes to the National Park Service.

P9: Got you. Okay.

P12: Oh, wow.

Zafar: Now the problem, the issue—

P9: That's important.

Zafar: Yeah, that's very important. I did not, before that, how much people care about that part. I mean, people really, really…

P8: "That a hundred percent would be guaranteed to go toward upkeep of wilderness, at least such-and-such percent would go to the particular facility that you purchased…"

P9: Yeah. Now, once you're asking the question, you should mention what the present percentage is, and then say "Would you pay more if it all went to the Apostle Islands?" Or whatever.

Zafar: Okay.

P13: Yeah, that really changes the way the question is framed in my mind.

P10: I have big questions about this, twenty-four. I feel really stupid here, but it says "Would you be willing to purchase ATB pass for sixty-five dollars?" But I didn't see anywhere, and I read over and over and over again… You said fifty dollars, but is it written here? How much it would be? Because why… you know, why would I put sixty-give dollars, and no reference points to what it would be for, for the four passengers and all that; the carload. There's no benchmark here. There's nothing that says, so…

Russ: Do you think if we told them, for example, that this pass is basically the same as the Golden Eagle Pass, which costs sixty-five dollars, how much do you think it's worth? They may all say, "Well, it doesn't do anything the Golden Eagle Pass didn't do before, so sixty-five dollars is the answer."

P10: That's not my point, though. My point is if the A… If the ATB pass covered entrance, and one dah dah dah dah dah. Doesn't say how much that one was? Would you be willing… And then it says "Instead of four adults who would be willing to purchase the ATB pass for sixty-five, there's no reference for that. You have not said here, unless you can point it out to me, that you said how much the ATB pass was for? Did I miss that?

P9: No, they gave you a range from thirteen on, or fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen talks about it.

P13: Right, yeah, there… this question throws sixty-five dollars in there as what seems to be an arbitrary figure, since we don't know, as survey participants, what the original cost might be.

P10: Yeah.

P13: So, you could say "If the cost were fifty dollars originally, would you be willing to pay fifteen dollars more at sixty-five dollars for this pass?"

P8: I think part of it is it's two questions in one. One part is, I think, the original…

P13: Would you prefer it to be for…

P8: …for the pass owner and… Okay, so part of the question is pass owner and everybody else in the car, versus four adults.

P9: Plus an unlimited number of kids.

P8: Plus as many kids as you want. The other part of the question is the sixty-five dollar issue, and if you broke those two apart, I think you get into *(inaudible)*.

P10: Well, you still wouldn't know what it was comparing it to, though.

(overlapping voices)

P10: You wouldn't… it really… if it's like, "Yeah. Well, yeah! The ATB costs two hundred dollars, then the… *(laughing)* Yeah, sixty-five sounds great!"

P9: Sounds like a terrible deal, anyway. Unless you have a school bus, then it's… this is definitely not worth it. But four adults and an unlimited number of children spread over several cars fits under the ATB, right?

Unknown: No.

P10: No, it's just one vehicle.

Zafar: One vehicle.

P10: So, if you could SUV—which, of course is very good for the environment *(laughing)*—then you can get more people, more kinds into your…

P9: Well, in your description here, there's no mention of vehicles, is there?

P10: Well, how many could fit into one vehicle?

P9: No, no. No mention of vehicles. "They're with me."

P10: No.

P9: You could say. "That car right behind me," another couple. You know?

Zafar: Thanks for mentioning that.

P10: You're right! Okay? See? Good. So it's *(laughing)*. I subsumed.

Russ: What I would like to do is move to the very bottom of the last page, and if anybody… The last paragraph is not necessarily something that they're going to be saying because only the bold, the first sentence, is actually going to be said. *(inaudible, laughing)* Does anybody have a question about anything that maybe we didn't get a chance to call them on? Does anybody have a…?

P13: I think actually what you're saying here in this last paragraph, where it starts with—from, starting from, "all of your answers," which is in the middle paragraph, and then going up until "refusing the supply of infor—no, personal data will be reported with your answers." That should be read in the beginning of the call, because people are going to be concerned about that right away.

P9: Mmm! Good point!

P13: They're going to think it's a telemarketing call, or something like that, or consumer research…

Russ: I can tell you that we do have a stock introduction that we use that I don't think is *(inaudible)* on this questionnaire.

P13: …that would say… *(overlapping voices)*

P9: And, also, something that irritates me when it's never agreed to. I'd like the person calling me to identify himself or herself. Not completely, right, but mine would be "I'm T," right?

Russ: That's part of our stock introduction. "My name is Russ, and I'm with the Survey Research Center at the University of Wyoming…"

P9: Right, "And here's our phone number."

Russ: …and we're doing a survey about such-and-such…

Unknown: "I'm not trying to sell you anything."

Russ: I'm not trying to sell you anything.

Zafar: We also have a demographic question which is, you know, set by OMB. We cannot change, so there is no point. We didn't bring those questions in this survey because there is no point bringing this. OMB won't change those things at all. So those are fixed things.

Russ: *(inaudible)* Has anybody been holding back their comments, and just haven't been able to call on you, about anything?

P4: Is it possible, when you call these people, to give them an advance warning like a postcard, like, if you know what samples you're going to go use? Because I find if I know that, you know, and I'm interested in this, I'll be more patient, you know, with the, you know, I'd expect a call. It might not come, but if it does come, I'll be more receptive. But if it just comes out of the blue, and I'm cooking or something, and that's when I'm not going to be as receptive.

Russ: Well, what we do try to do is, if you get an answering machine on the first attempt, we'll leave a message telling them that we actually are doing a survey. That way they may be more likely to pick up the phone next time. "Oh, that survey that I was interested in!" We're trying that number again. They may pick it up at some point. We don't usually do mailouts for telephone surveys, but, well, we're interviewing the whole country. So, instead of sending a postcard or something like that out would be so prohibitively expensive.

P9: Also, when you do call and get an answering machine, often they are listening to you.

Russ: Right, screening.

P9: So, you might consider saying "I'm calling to conduct a survey on behalf of the National Park Service…"

Russ: Exactly.

P9: "…and if you can hear this, please, if you're willing, pick up." *(laughter)*

Russ: I don't think we've ever worded it that way, but that's a thought. That's different.

P13: I think at the end of the call you should—I mentioned this earlier—but you should include an 800 number, a URL, for obtaining more information.

Russ: And we do have that as part of an FAQ sheet. We don't actually say it out loud, but if they're interested, it's there at the interviewers' fingertips.

P13: And will the information obtained through this study be available to the public at some point?

Zafar: You know, before the public… State parks people, and where we are going we are also talking to the state park people, state park—except Madison, where they are… the schedule there this week was a conference. But, otherwise we have talked to all the state parks, and they are the people who are just "Are we going to get this report?" We don't know yet, and we have to get the permission from the National Park Service, and so we don't know quite… Yes, we will convey that message. We've already addressed them about that, results, and state park people are very much interested about that result. So, we don't know yet.

Russ: And on that note, I have to wrap it up. We've actually run a couple of minutes over and I don't want to have to pay overtime, *(laughter)* but we did want to remind everybody, no matter how interesting the comments were that came out of this discussion, we want to keep them in this room. And a lot of interesting points, a lot good jokes, even, came out and we want to make sure that they stay in this room along with the identitites of all participants who were in this focus group. We hope that you can maintain our promise of confidentiality that we all made at the beginning of the focus group. And, on that note, I would like to get the money out so that I can pay you.

(discussion ends; a few seconds of instructions for filling out forms is not transcribed)

Focus Group #6: Salt Lake City, Utah
September 28, 2005

Moderator: Russ Miller (and transcriber)
Assistant Moderator: Zafar Khan
Group Demographics

Identifier	Gender	Age	Profession	Income Range
P1 Lisa	Female	48	Consultant	2
P2 Chuck	Male	39	Unemployed, recently arrived in Salt Lake City when wife transferred	3
P3 Matt	Male	30	Military Liaison	2
P4 Adrienne	Female	29	Full-Time Student	2
P5 Xavier	Male	25	Unemployed	3
P6 Jordan	Male	31	Self-Employed/Full-Time Student	1
P7 Jen	Female	28	Ritz Carlton Reservation Agent Supervisor	refused
P8 Chad	Male	22	Sales Clerk at the State Liquor Store	1
P9 Richard	Male	37	Self-Employed	1
P10 Paul	Male	38	Laborer	2

(Initial introduction and first round-robin lost from recordings. Transcript begins while participants are in the process of filling out questionnaire.)

P3: Would this pass be transferable?

Zafar: No.

P3: Okay.

Zafar: Between the two signatories, but not beyond that.

P3: Oh, okay.

P14: The husband and wife, usually, can sign it.

P9: You can't give it as a gift?

Zafar: Yeah.

P9: You can give it as a gift, but you have to have the person's name put on it.

Zafar: Right. I'll leave the, need the space for the signatures… I'm sorry.

Russ: Okay.

Unknown: Is it fair to ask, the funds now, as it seems like *(inaudible)* when you pay at Zion, it stays at Zion. But the America the Beautiful (*NRP*) will be general monies.

Zafar: It says most of the money will go to the development of the federal recreation lands. Now, they're not very clear about that at this point, where the money will go, but it will go to the development of the federal... Now, as you said, it's probably at this point eighty-five, eighty to eighty-five percent of the money goes to the park where the park pass is sold.

Unknown: Right.

Zafar: But *(inaudible)* some parks are too rich, some parks are not, so, development-wise *(inaudible)* that's one of the concerns. But we don't know yet. The sentence, I'm just quoting, "Most of the revenue from the pass… passes sold will go to the development of the federal recreational lands."

(muffled voices, whispered side conversations as questionnaires are completed)

Russ: I should clarify: neither of us are Wyoming natives.

Unknown: Zafar, I was sure that you were. *(laughter)*

Zafar: Yeah, I'm from India, so…

(muffled voice and, whispered side conversations resume as questionnaires are completed)

Russ: It looks like everybody's done. What we'd like you to do now is… we ask for your help in, kind of, the content and the wording and the structure of the way the questionnaire is written. We're very interested to see what you have to say. We're going to divide up the questionnaire into little pieces, and the first piece is going to be the introductory couple of paragraphs, and those first three questions. And I'd very much like to know, because what we say in there, does it make sense? Is it clear? Are there any words that maybe have a double meaning that we didn't think about, or maybe there's a word in there that's very long that could be just replaced with a very short one? Anything like that, and if you don't have any comments about the *structure*, do we have any comments about those three individual questions? Are there areas that we should have included that we didn't? Are there questions in there that we shouldn't be asking? Is there a question in there that we should be?

P3: Oh, something I wasn't clear about…

Russ: Yes.

P3: …is… are you referring to national forests that have access fees, as well as those that don't? Like… when I filled this out… I… the national forest that I visit most often is where Alta ski resort is, so I included that number of visits in my total number of visits. So… So, yes.

Russ: So if we—*(to Zafar)* we *do* want to include all national forests, right? We don't want to necessarily distinguish…?

Zafar: Right. We are mainly focused on the… in the areas where we are… you are paying the fees.

Unknown: The fee areas?

P9: Then maybe you should… Maybe your question should say that. "Do you visit these areas where there was a fee?"

Russ: Okay.

P9: See, I'm surrounded by BLM land out there in Burnham, out there in southern Terwilla County where I'm at, but there's no fees in the areas that I go to. So, I've listed that I've visited BLM areas like, you know, a lot of times, but I'm not paying fees for those at this time.

P3: See, now that's why I included my visits to Alta. And, also, one place I go where they do charge a fee is Mill Creek Canyon, which is… is that Bridger National Forest?

P14: Boy, that's just a local fee.

P13: It's local.

P14: Yeah, it's a local fee. It goes to the county.

P12: Question three; what was the purpose of putting blindness outside of permanent disability?

Zafar: The reason for that is the Golden Access Pass is defined that way, and there are people questioning about… to define permanent disability in even a better way, because the way it defines when it describes the passes, just mental disability and any kind of permanent physical disability and blindness. So, we just kind of followed that… followed that trend of National Park Service.

P12: The reason why is, I mean, you know, when I think of permanent disability right off the bat, if you were visually impaired or hearing impaired that would be a permanent disability. So, to single that out, you may want to look at that.

P1: Well, some people that are blind may not consider themselves disabled, either, so… you know?

P12: Yeah, it just depends on what your definition is.

P1: "I'm not disabled, I just can't see anything." *(laughing)*

Russ: Any other comments about the first three questions in that introductory paragraph? Participant 12?

P12: Well, is sixty years old the current cut-off date for the Golden… is that…

Russ: The Golden Age Passport?

P12: Yeah.

Russ: You can get when you turn sixty-two, and it does everything that these other passes do, plus a little bit more.

Zafar: So, you're trying to distinguish in the sense, like, if you have a person who is sixty years or older at your household, that means you basically don't buy the pass. That guy will get the pass and you just go with him. So, it's good for a vehicle. Same with a Golden Access Pass, which is free for lifetime, and then we just get it and… So, they're not going to buy the pass, and our purpose of doing the survey is to figure out the price; so, how much people are willing to pay for the… So, not people who will not pay, anyway, so…

P12: I see.

Russ: Participant 7, did you have something that you wanted to say?

P7: Oh, no. I was just noticing that this was a Marriott pen, and I work for Marriott, so… *(laughter)* We're at a Quality Inn Hotel!

Russ: So, we should use different pens.

P7: Sorry, this is my eleventh day of work in a row, so I'm a little tired.

Russ: I was just commenting to my boss that I'd gone forty-two hours without sleep the other day.

P7: Oh, my. Yeah, I hear you.

Russ: But, anyway, let's move on then. We're done with that first block, and check out the next two questions. And one of the things I'm kind of interested in, do we have too many choices in there or not enough?

P12: I think this question would take a long time to answer, because you have to list off every single line. That's a way to maybe condense in the categories or something, but, it just seems like there's a lot of choices there.

Russ: Do you think there are any there that are obvious, that should, that could be removed? Maybe redundant, or maybe even just too long in the wording for the explanation?

P9: Do you really need all the information, all this information to set up a portable fee for the America pass? I mean, do you really need the Duck Stamp, and everything you have listed there, and…

Russ: I'm not sure… Well, maybe not the daily or weekly entrance fee, but I think that's some information that the client wanted us to gather, anyway.

Zafar: Yeah, there's some problem with the… since there are so many agencies involved, and the passes we've had previously, and, say, for example, Duck Stamp, which will still be there. Now, you're introducing a pass which, if you had that one, the new ATB pass, then you don't need to buy the Duck Stamp. Now, Fish and Wildlife Services is concerned about how much revenue they're going to lose out of that.

P9: So, they want you to ask this question. In fact, you have a certain number of questions in here that different groups requested you to ask specifically.

Zafar: So, it's basically client-specific sometimes, but there are issues with that, collapsing that a little bit, and I still think that we can do that with it, but not of all of them, probably. So, we have to keep some options clear, but we can still collapse a few of them.

P9: You're probably better off, then, trying to find some questions you can eliminate so that they have a few long questions like you've got here that you have to have all that information.

P2: I almost think that you could disregard, maybe, some of the explanations for what the passes are because a lot want to just recognize the names. If they don't recognize the names, they probably haven't bought it, I would think.

P12: It could just go… Maybe familiar with the annual passes, or lifetime passes, I get through a couple questions.

P14: I was going to say the last three you could combine into one question, literally. You could say "Fees, annual or daily," you know, type fees of any kind you could just combine into one and get rid of all that so it's simpler. Because if one, I mean, if I think of fees I'm, you know, sometimes it's per use. I want a daily pass, or week, or whatever it is that I'm doing, so they would, from common sense I hope.

Russ: Maybe instead of saying "national forest" or "national park" and then having another just below it, "national forest, national park or any other federal lands." That's just much less.

Unknown: Yeah.

P14: That's better.

P12: Very simple.

P14: I actually like it the way it is as far as asking "Are you aware of the different fees that you're charged, and I think it's good for you to understand from us, calling it the public, are you understanding that you are *(inaudible)* the pass, the eagle, what age do you qualify for it, that there's a daily, a weekly pass; sometimes for BLM, the Sand Dunes. They used to, now they will charge three dollars per person. So, that, I think that's a good… I think… It's wordy, but it's good to see who understands it. So, I don't think you can condense it.

Russ: Does anybody maybe see two words they can combine or any way at all it could be condensed?

P3: "Don't know" and "not aware" are synonymous.

Russ: Okay. Maybe "not aware" implies "doesn't know."

P3: Yeah.

Russ: …in a more tactful way. Anything on question five, or maybe you could… is already represented in question four? And all of the choices are the same.

P6: Again, maybe combining some of the last couple of questions and sorting, you know, "entrance or access fee (daily, weekly, annual)…" That…combine them. It would be less wordy.

P3: It seems like those are two distinctly different questions.

Russ: Are we ready to move on to the next block then? All those questions that start with "in the past year" or "in just the past year." Six, seven, and eight. Do they make sense? Does anybody—oh! I should say, the reason why we also have pens—I forgot to mention this—is if you'd like to make any notes or scribble any notes, you're welcome to on the questionnaire. We just would like that to be in pen so we can distinguish it from where you answered the questionnaire.

P6: For number six, I think you can just eliminate "in just the past year."

Russ: Okay.

P6: And put "since September of" and a date.

Russ: Okay.

P9: And probably one thing I wasn't sure of is whether you're talking about paid passes or free. Like, I didn't realize you were talking about free ones, too. You have the whole first part where you're talking about passes, so I've… assuming that you're only considering places where you pay an entrance fee; so I went, put something in there about how it… you're talking about lands that cover entrance fees and don't have entrance fees, as well.

Russ: Okay, so maybe distinguish between the lands where you have to pay a fee and the lands where you don't.

P9: Yeah, because again I live all around BLM lands that I don't pay anything for those areas, and I don't know how that would relate to your telephone survey is trying to figure out how much people would be willing to pay for an America pass.

P11: Yeah, because we have a lot of national forests that we don't pay to get in to use, so I put on why… how many is it they pay. So that is confusion.

P9: And that might be regional, too. I mean, in the western United States we have a lot more BLM areas and stuff like that where we don't have the fees.

Russ: *(to Zafar)* And aren't we supposed to… Is there a question that rejects the people that actually visited national parks and national forests, but didn't have to pay a fee.

Zafar: No.

Russ: So as long as you visit…?

Zafar: That's a very good point; that we had to…

Unknown: National parks, I think, you do visit. You pay a fee for *(inaudible).* But national forests…

Zafar: There are lots of them. There are very few, in fact, that charges an entrance fee. National parks do.

Russ: Anybody have any more comments? May I move on?

P11: I don't want to throw a wrench in the works, but places like Yellowstone, Bryce, almost every time I'm there, I see these busloads of tour groups, whether they're from the United States or some foreign country. Now, I don't know if they pay an individual fee or if it's all combined in what they pay the tour operator. So, if you ask a question of some of those people, I don't know if they would be aware that part of the fee they paid goes for a pass to, you know, have access to those areas. Does that make sense?

Zafar: Well, if you have a commercial vehicle, and they have a different fee structure for the commercial vehicles. But, if you just say… I mean… I entered Yellowstone National Park two months ago with thirteen people in a van. Although we are all friends, families, but… I mean, it seemed to me very illogical that we just bought a twenty dollars pass, thirteen people *in*. So, we just had to say "We are just friends and families." Which was true, but I mean that's how it is, but I'm not sure if I'm addressing your point.

P9: Well, he's saying the tour groups; if you go on a tour. *(overlapping voices)* You don't know if you pay a fee included with that tour. Like, if you asked somebody who was with a tour group, they paid the tour guide or whatever the fee and they don't know *(inaudible).*

P11: But even though they didn't pay it directly, they paid it as part of their fee to go on, you know, get with that group. And I don't know if there's a way to ask that as a separate question or somehow combined, you know.

Zafar: Well, that's a good point; a very good point.

Russ: Maybe a question in there that might say "Or do you think you may have paid a fee?" or "Were you part of an organized tour when you went to that particular federal land?"

P9: That would probably be the question.

Russ: Okay, because I'm sure the company's probably paid some kind of fee built into the price of the ticket.

P9: And that will probably still continue—

P4: Well, they've kind of addressed that. Question five says "Have you purchased any of these passes?" And it says "have not purchased" or "don't know or not aware." So, if they don't know or they're not aware they'll just answer that way.

Russ: Yeah. I should say that almost all the questions are going to have a "don't know/not aware" probably, eventually, slipped in there. That's pretty standard, but… Yeah, since they don't in this particular questionnaire, that's definitely a good point. Anybody else on that particular block? Any words that maybe should be shortened? Does anybody can think of an easier way to word something that sounds more natural? Any questions we shouldn't be asking? Anything we should include that we didn't?

P6: You know, the term "family vacation" in number nine is kind of vague, because the idea of a family is different for a lot of people. And I was like, "Do I check that?" Because my girlfriend and I go down? Or is it only…

P9: Or are you saying "Just say vacation"?

Zafar: That came up yesterday in Madison, too, so thanks.

Russ: Okay, let's skip down to actually question nine, then, which almost exists on its own right there. "If you visited any federal lands in the past year, was it for any of the following reasons?" In terms of the wording of that question; in terms of the choices listed; are there too many, or too few…? Anything seem unclear? Like "family vacation," for example, is one we could look at.

Zafar: Or, I think we are missing here…

P9: There's that *other* question, I guess, to kind of cover…

Russ: Yeah, we'll always include an "other" type of response so we can type in one, but the problem with the other response when we analyze the results is those just become a list that gets pasted at the back of the document in an appendix somewhere. So that doesn't really become part of the analysis. If we could get a popular choice inserted right here, then we could use it when we make our charts and graphs and keys in our report, and it wouldn't get lost in the back of our report.

P9: So, are you actually looking to add to… in the…

Russ: Possibly, or subtract if there are any redundant choices, or anything like that. Participant 13, you had a…

P13: Well, I'm almost thinking this would be better as an open-ended question or not, you know? Like, leave it open and then have, you know, fill it in depending on what they say.

Russ: Okay.

P13: As opposed to reading off a list.

Russ: I mean, we could keep the list so that we don't read off the choices, but when they're offered to the interviewer he can punch them into the computer. That would save time.

P4: Yeah, I'm not sure why you have the "don't know" answer on that one?

P3: Like "I don't remember!" *(laughter)*

Russ: It'd be more like a "no answer."

P4: I just thought that one was funny.

P15: I think maybe one that got skipped… I'm a guide; I get paid to go in there, so, like week after week after week that's would I would do. But it's not so much because I wanted inside. That was my job. That was my place of employment.

Russ: Oh, yeah. I guess we didn't really consider that.

P3: In Utah, it's not that uncommon.

Russ: Wyoming, too.

Unknown: But wouldn't that be under "other"?

Unknown: Yeah, that's what I thought, too.

Russ: Well, yeah, everything could conceivably be under "other." We could take all the other choices here and just say, well, "other," but…

P15: So, just make a check for "employment"?

Russ: Employment? *(inaudible)* Because we're just asking about reasons, but, yeah, employment could be one of those reasons.

P3: Professional reasons.

P13: Also, observing or photography may not necessarily be the same thing.

P14: I'd agree.

P11: I have mixed feelings just on making number nine short, you know, just have it as an open-ended question? I mean, that would make it quicker and more direct, so that it's good in that perspective. But, for me, when I look at the list, that's like "Oh, yeah! I did that while I was there. Oh, yeah! I did that, too!" If you just ask somebody an open-ended question, they may not realize all the activities they were *(overlapping voices)*.

Russ: One at a time, please, so Participant 11 can finish his thought.

P11: I just… if an open-ended question, right off the bat, it may not come to people; all the things they did, or different activities they participated in while they were there. But if you kind of go through a few things. "Oh, yeah! I did that. Oh, yeah! We did, you know, that, too." Because, usually, a trip like that to a national park, it could involve taking wildlife photos, hiking, looking at historical sites. I mean, you name it. So there could be several things involved.

P3: You'd probably get a more accurate, concise answer if it were an open-ended question. Like, "What did you do there?" and then the people would say, "Oh, we went bird watching, or we went there to go skiing," specifically.

P11: That's why I say I have mixed feelings.

P3: Because I think I checked every one here.

P9: Do you want multiple responses, or do you want just specific reasons?

P3: I didn't shoot anything, but I did everything else.

Russ: Oh, if we could just speak one at a time, please. Participant 9, you could finish.

P9: Do you want multiple responses, or do you want specific reasons that draw people to these national parks or these national wildlife areas?

Zafar: We want that specific because… we also want to note that… after they have stayed, how much people are paying who are just going to go for the scenery, entrance fee is good for you. But there are people who are going to go camping, and they pay the entrance fee, and then again pay for the camping, and they're very much concerned about this issue. So, that's what we want to see, how much the willingness to pay would be for people with different activities there. So, how many people are there for… just for scenery, or how many people are there for hiking, or paying the entry fee, and going for camping, or boating.

P9: I think open-ended would be best then, because then you will get the response that really brought people to the park, so.

P1: If it would be for specifics, you might want to include the cycling.

P7: Yeah.

P1: Mountain biking.

P6: Just for the purpose of the survey, to be considerate for the person answering it, if you give them a big long list, about halfway through they're going to be like "How many *are* there?" And if you tell them, like, beforehand, out of ten. You know like, say, well they're assuming you'd be like ten choices, or, you know, that way at least they know how many of these you're going to ask them.

P11: That's a good point.

P6: Rather than saying "Okay, guys. Come on. Get over this, you know?" They kind of get impatient. It's like… I used to do surveys, so I kind of know how people get.

Russ: I do know I can tell you one of the reasons why we don't have very many open-ended responses where you can just put in any answer you want, is because it would be so difficult to analyze at the end. I mean, if one person said "I go to enjoy the beauty of nature," and the other person said "I go to sightsee." Technically, those are kind of the same answer, but it would take a lot of man-hours to actually look at all those answers, and figure that out, and then divide them up into, say, ten categories and analyze it from there.

P9: But aren't you going to have these as part of your telephone response person, let them check the ones that were as close to…

Russ: Yes.

P6: But then, that's also a judgment call, isn't it?

Russ: Yes, very much so.

P6: Because I know if I was there, I'd want to be as specific as possible.

P5: I think river-running should be added to that list, too.

Russ: River running, like white water rafting?

P7: White water rafting, yes sir.

P12: One you may also want to include is a daytrip, because depending on your proximity to one of these, sometimes you can just go for the day and come back. So, just kind of a quick, you know, day or weekend type of thing.

P1: Open-ended questions on things like that, you may not want to hear what some people did… somewhere.

Russ: Oh, hmmm. Sexual…

P1: Some people just go up there and do whatever, and sometimes people just go on and on and on; they'll tell you about their whole trip. From the start they got there, until the end, and you're on the phone for an hour.

(inaudible, overlapping voices)

P11: Ask them what time it is, they tell you how to build a clock.

P1: Exactly.

Russ: Does anybody see any that we could eliminate… that maybe…?

P13: I think if six, seven, and eight were all zeroes, you could probably skip number nine altogether.

Russ: If six, seven, eight…

P13: Yeah, like if they haven't visited any of these places, you wouldn't need to ask them number nine.

P9: That's a good point. But they haven't visited, so they haven't had… *(inaudible)*

P3: Yeah, you could hang up on them.

Russ: Right. *(laughter)* That would skip past this.

P3: That would save some time.

Russ: Anything else about the relationships between the questions up until this point? If we separate them into blocks that becomes an easy thing to miss, so I'm glad you noticed that.

P12: Quick clarification. In considering these, are we looking at this from both points of view? Of the individual responding to the survey, *and* the person giving the survey, is that correct?

Russ: Oh, yes, from all points of view. That's why you're being paid so highly. *(laughter)* Okay, if we're just about done with that one, then, let's move on to the next block, which is ten, eleven, and twelve. They all start off with "In the upcoming year…"

P11: The same thing as on number six. Maybe have "During the next twelve months."

Russ: Okay. Or between now and some date?

P4: Yeah.

P9: Yeah, I think between now and some date would solve it, but…

Russ: Because we can actually program the computers to keep track of what day it is and say "Well, between now and that day…"

P1: Again these questions are subjective, because I put zero expected visits to a US Forest Service, but I'm sure I was skiing. So, it's not really zero. It's sort of… You have to sometimes distinguish between the ones you pay for and… Even though you did pay at a ski area. The ski area pays the Forest Service.

Zafar: That's a very good point, so.

P8: Yeah, I agree, because, being from New York, there's not a lot of stuff like that. And when I come out here and go into a ski area, I really don't think of me going to like a national forest at all. I think of it more as a ski area. And if somebody like that… on here I didn't even realize; I didn't even think of that. Because I go skiing so much that it's just… I don't even think of it being going out into the, you know, forest at all. It's just kind of some… a daily activity, I guess.

Russ: Or visiting a federal land.

P8: Yeah, I wouldn't think of that at all in that… in that manner, so…
Unknown: Well, that's something else that the interviewer would want to probably know, because let's say the person answering the question asked for clarification and the interviewer probably doesn't know the answer. You know, that would be something that…

Russ: And we usually do actually coach them to play dumb, because we don't want one interviewer giving one answer, and all the other interviewers giving the other answer that they're not aware of.

Unknown: Oh…

Russ: But that's a good point, too. We do have to ask *(inaudible)* to the point.

P9: And if… if the telephone interviewer has gotten a response from someone that they haven't visited any of these places recently, they're not aware of programs and stuff. Is this still a question that they really need to ask that person? Or is it possible that they could end the survey with that person, after they found out that they hadn't visited any of the parks, and they're not aware of any of the things you have going on. Because if they haven't visited any of the parks, and they're not aware of any of the programs going on, is there much of a possibility that they were making plans to visit these parks in all fairness, or are they people who don't go to the parks that often…?

P12: Well, you really don't know until you ask them. That's the whole point. The reason for the survey is to figure that out.

Russ: Or maybe a suggestion that if they were aware that the pass existed—I think that's why we go through the preliminary questions first, and then we describe the passes and then say "Well, would you be more likely, if you had one of these…"

P9: Yeah, that would be a good question to see if you would get more visitation.

P3: Well, is the point of doing this to sell as many passes as possible, or to get as many people to visit the park?

Russ: Well, we're not actually trying to sell the passes, but we're trying to determine for all these different government agencies what the best price point would be for it. Where it would become the most popular, I suppose.

P2: And awareness to the public to know that the passes are there. That'll give them that.

Zafar: And our task is not to determine the price. We will just say that "This is a demand curve. You pay this much, if you set this much of price, this will be the revenue. This many people probably will buy a pass. If this is the price, this many people will buy the price." And just give it to them. So there is tons of considerations that they'll have to take into consideration before they come with a policy, you know? And that's why a lot of people… some of the park people are very much concerned about… We, as a researcher, we say that "Okay, twenty-five dollars seems like a price where revenue is maximizing and there are like tons of people getting into the park." But they're concerned that "Don't quote something like that," and we had a long discussion about that. "Don't quote something like that. If some Congressmen come and sees that, and they're like "Whoa! That looks like a good price! Let's put thirty-five." And… But you're not considering the quality of the environment at that price. There are hundreds of considerations. We… our task is to figure out the demand curve. So, price and how many people will buy that. *(inaudible)*

P3: Would it be possible to sell it to different groups for different prices? Because, you know, if you could sell it to people who are almost certain not to go, for a cheaper price, then you could get something out of them. Then… And then ask more of the people that are likely to use.

(overlapping voices)

Zafar: Price, this discrimination issue came up, but it's very hard. We had to talk about students. Are they going to get any discount? Different sliding scales. Are they going to get any different pricing for that kind of thing? California state park people, I was talking, they have some system where sliding income scale. If you are a medical… some kind of medical. They call it Cal Walks or something like that. I don't even know what is that. There is some system; they have a database where they can figure out the income scale of people. So, they have some discounts for that. National park people are not willing to do that at this point, because that's very… at the very… at the national level, that would be very, very difficult thing to figure out, so.

P3: Just curious.

Zafar: Price discrimination is not an issue at this point, except senior citizens and—

P1: The disabled.

P4: Wouldn't it be easy to like, say "Well, no, I never go anywhere." And to go hop out in their muddy jeep or something and head to the mountains with their thirty dollar pass, right? Because they're paying a hundred and twenty dollars or something.

Zafar: At present, there's an issue coming up very much with this. That, wherever we went, talked to people that are… And we didn't even know about this. I read about this. I knew. So that is one of the *(inaudible)* that they're saying "convenience value." So, more widely available, more widely advertised. Those will be the characterization of this, the America the Beautiful.

P1: You mean people didn't know about these?

Zafar: Yeah. I mean, there are people… They visited and paid more than the total amount of fees, and they just didn't know. So, probably three times Yosemite, paying sixty dollars each time, the total, three times visiting. But, they didn't know that there was an annual pass available for fifty dollars which they could have used for all the national parks.

P1: Well, I've gone into national parks. They have it posted.

Zafar: That's right. That's very clear on.

P1: That there's a… yeah. It's right there.

(overlapping voices)

P2: I'm from Indiana, originally. The first time I went to a national park was Yosemite, didn't know anything about passes, but had to wait in long lines. Well, I saw it there so I just bought a pass right then. Had one every year since, so…

Russ: I should emphasize this is also good for national historic sites. When we were on the east coast, that's what they were most interested in. On the maps, of course, are those little dots representing historic sites, and not necessarily giant national parks or national forests.

Zafar: And about the price discrimination thing, another issue came up with looking at this map, people from the east coast said "Why should we not have a pass which divides people regionally? West American Pass or East American Pass." Something like that. "Why should we pay for this pass? We don't have anything here. *(laughter, overlapping voices)*

Russ: Focus. We need to focus again. Sorry. That sounds like we've just about mined those last three *(inaudible)*, and let's head on to the next page and start the second half. With that long paragraph there, is there anything we could do with that? Is there anything that… in there that seemed unclear? Yes?

P3: Well, the first thing that I saw was "ATB." You know, that abbreviation instantly brought to mind some sort of motorized vehicle like ATV, or all terrain bicycle or something, which, no offense to those of you who like them, but they drive me nuts. So… And I had to read it again before I figured out what you were talking about, the ATB. Even though it seems clearly enough, but I wonder if there's a different abbreviation that doesn't…

Russ: Suggestions?

P3: No.

P1: Well, that's the only place you use an acronym. You don't use it for the BLM or anything else.

P9: Couldn't you just use "for the pass," since you've already said the "America the Beautiful pass"?

Russ: Or maybe "the new pass"?

P9: The new pass, yeah.

Unknown: The new pass.

P1: Yeah.

P12: Also you limit yourself by, I mean, I don't know what the intent to distribute the pass, but for me part of the convenience factor would be able to, for instance, walk into a gas station and buy one, or at a Seven Eleven, whatever, versus some government building that's open certain hours that I probably can't get to anyway. So, if you open this up and say "It's on it at these places, internet, and other, whatever, locations" you might get more response.

P6: Well, it says it's *(inaudible)* over the internet, though.

P7: Yeah… *(inaudible)* let's do that.

P12: In addition to that putting other, you know, like something a little…

P7: In addition to; I got you.

P12: Yeah, something more convenient than government buildings.

Zafar: And we just wanted to include that at the end, where we say that if it's going to be available at grocery stores, discount stores, or all these places, so we're going to see how many people are going to pay if that's the case, so…

P15: The one thing that I was unsure about… maybe I just wasn't looking at it hard enough, but this is good for up to four adults. Does it have to be like the same four adults every time, or can you go with different people every time?

Russ: Different people every time.

Zafar: One of the signatories has to be there. One of those that has a signature on the pass. That person plus any three persons and plus anybody under the age of sixteen, which are free anyway.

P15: That makes sense.

P6: I think you guys could eliminate the last sentence, because I think that's immaterial, what it looks like, especially if you guys aren't trying to *sell* it. The fact that it's a collectable really doesn't seem like it's appropriate there.

Russ: Okay.

P2: I think it's a good idea having it there, because there is so many people collects so many different things, and if you're going to have a different picture they can sit there and definitely can differentiate that from each year.

P7: Like a credit card. *(laugh)*

(overlapping voices)

P3: I have all my old annual ski passes, though.

Unknown: It has to be on the survey, though. I mean it could be on the website, or where you try to sell it, but it doesn't need to be on the survey because, you know, people taking the survey don't even know that.

Zafar: So far they did not change the pictures on the card every year. *Now* they're going to do that, so…

Unknown: Well, could that be made into like a question, though, like, you know…

P14: What would you like?

P12: Would you pay more for a collectable image?

Unknown: Would a collectible image make you more likely to buy…

P12: My concern is that if somebody called me at home and then I went through the survey and started reading this long passage, I mean, at that point I'd be like "All right, I've got to go." You know what I mean? It's just that, I don't know, that just seems really long to me. I know you have to explain it, but I would get really bored with that.

Unknown: Something could be cut down.

Russ: Even if… Even if it wasn't the boredom factor, there's always the telephone battery factor. *(laughter)*

P6: I've got another question. Where you say "*most* of the money from sales at the recreation sites will be used where the pass is honored." That's kind of ambiguous. And, back to what Participant 14 said, I'd like knowing that when I go into a park and pay, that that money's going to be used to service the facilities at that park.

P14: That is a western sentiment. That's what we like.

P6: So, if you guys could say eighty— like, I think you live with the eighty-five percent. I think that would be more.

Zafar: That's the current structure that we have, but we asked about that with the Park Service people and they say "We haven't decided about that, so just leave it like that." And another issue would be right now as I say that, you buy the pass and eighty-five percent of that money goes to that particular park, that may not be the case in future. It may just get distributed overall equally; socialistic system or… probably…

P14: We don't have faith that the federal government will do it beneficial to the west.

P6: Yeah, I mean who's going to guarantee that it makes it out here? *(laughter)*

P14: This stays and gets put into maintaining Zion, maintaining Lake Powell, that that… Arches, the new facility *(inaudible)*

P3: Our parks are so large compared to some of the ones… like, I've visited quite a few in New England, and they're tiny there. And they'll have a hundred miles of road in the Berkshires or something, and we've got thousands out here but, you know, access fee is the same.

P6: Well, and also… again, this has nothing to do with the survey, but if they would also put above, like "Project: Your Fees at Work" or something in this park. Because I mean, I know myself you go into one of those broken down toilets with the doors falling off, and you're like "Wow! Where did the money go?!" You know? "It's certainly not here." You know? And I've seen that over and over, so…

P14: That's why Mill Creek works so well, then Mill Creek has been upgraded, too, for everyone's enjoyment, because the county… that money is, ninety percent goes to Mill Creek and we've all noticed the difference.

Unknown: Absolutely.

P14: So, whether you buy an annual pass or, you know, see the people go in at two and a quarter, or whatever. Two and a quarter is a great deal, and it's improved the experience for everybody.

Russ: And let's go on to the…

P14: Whoa. Why can't you just stay with the carload, the car, the pass. Like, we've got a Suburban. We have big families. We're going to have more than four adults. I mean that *for us*, in the, you know, Lake Powell experience. There's typically more than four. Right now it's a car. I don't want to change that for a van, but trying to think, four adults sixteen or older, plus all the kids I can stuff in the back.

P9: There's a question on here about if you…

P1: Yeah, number twenty-four.

P9: …would you say different from *(inaudible)*.

P14: What? Are you wanting to change that? Is the government wanting to change that?

Zafar: That's already… I can say that's fixed.

P14: It's fixed?

Zafar: Yeah, I don't think… I don't think… We will suggest. Another issue that came up, two years pass. "Why can't we have, instead of one year, why can't we have two years?" in other focus groups. I don't think…

P15: …it'll happen there.

Zafar: Yeah, we will suggest that they, many people, suggested this kind of thing and there are many people who wanted this kind of attributes added to those things, but I would be very doubtful about… at least for the next two or three years.

P14: We take a lot of youth groups that have more than four sixteen and older, so per carload just seems reasonable until you get to a van.

P6: The other thing is sixteen is, for an adult, as sixteen that seems pretty young to be considered an adult. I'd say, like, an adult would be at least a minimum of eighteen if not older than that. Because I know a lot of people that have big families, they have a lot of kids in that age group. So they'd ask to get a couple of passes to get all those kids into there. It really wouldn't work well.

P15: I know that's how it is right now at national parks. When I worked at the camp I worked for, the kids, they'd get in for free if they were sixteen. So I know that's a system they already have, and they were allowed to have one adult leader that actually got in free with them, and that's in Teton. I don't know if that's, like, representative of most of them, but I think they've already become accustomed to that.

Russ: I wonder if it's a coincidence that sixteen is the age where you get your driver's license. I hadn't thought about that before.

P9: Why in that paragraph do they have the bold print? Is that stuff that's required to be in there? Or is that just the way they printed this?

Russ: Just to call attention. I mean interviewers aren't going to be saying those words more loudly. *(laughter)(inaudible)* Yeah, we're very big on that. I think it's just to point out for your benefit, just the areas that we'd like to have focused on in particular in the questionnaire. But, I mean, that doesn't mean that the other words aren't just as important. If you see a better way to word something or anything like that.

P9: Do you have to list all the parks then, if you say "entrance to all federal lands and waters." You've got the full list of all the…

Zafar: Yes, we… Very sensitive. The other groups are very sensitive about that issue, and…

P9: They want their name mentioned.

Zafar: The proposal and that consequent… Some of the earlier reports, I just mentioned National Parks Service, and comment came from DC about saying, you better be careful about just saying "national parks." Instead of that, just say "Department of—agencies involved in this department, interior." So…

P9: So you're going to please everybody.

Zafar: Yeah. *(laugh)*

Russ: Can anybody think of a better way to word those six agencies? Maybe another term that we can use to refer to them?

P3: The Department of Homeland Fun?

Russ: Recreation agencies?

P9: You can actually use "BLM" I think, the Bureau of Lands Management, because that is the term that's mostly used.

Russ: I know when I lived on the east coast I had never heard that acronym before until I moved out here.

P9: Really? It's real common to say, especially where I live, all around it's BLM.

P14: That might be just a western thing.

P9: Yeah.

Russ: Anybody else think of a better way to word those six agencies? Because that's what I'm concerned about, because in every focus group I've had to list them, and I thought "Gee, if there was just a better way to mention our clients than to go through all of those six agencies."

P1: After what he said, I think you need those.

Russ: You could do it once, though. You could do it once in the beginning.

Zafar: Probably a better idea—I'm not, I'm not… get a variable for the center. That's what we can quote. I don't know. I mean…

Russ: And I've got about seventy-five telephone interviewers who are working on the survey who would love to come up with a better phrase than having to list all six all the times.

Zafar: All the times, yeah.

P6: Well, then take that out of there and put that at the beginning of this survey, like, you know? And just list that and then be done with it. Once you get the disclaimer out of the way, who it's for…

P1: Yeah. That'll work.

P9: How about Department Interior properties?

Russ: Okay.

P4: The aforementioned.

Russ: The aforementioned?

P4: Yeah.

Russ: The aforementioned agencies.

P9: The federal lands listed, or something like that.

Russ: Caretakers of federal lands?

P3: Or "You know who."

Russ: You know. *(laugh)*

Zafar: The only problem… The only concern we had about that, just saying "Department of Interior," and then they'll say "Oh! I have a National Forest… Is that a federal land?" I mean you can't think of that kind of question. So, we are just trying to be specific about those… That's the only concern we had about listing all those.

P9: But I like what he said. After you list them all, just the aforementioned *(inaudible)* or mentioned before; the federal lands mentioned before.

Zafar: Yeah, that's a good point.

Russ: And… Let's see. Have we done questions thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen yet?

Zafar: No.

Russ: Let's move on to those.

P13: I thought that thirteen should come after fourteen and fifteen. At least that's what I kind of thought, because you're asking what they would find affordable, but then you haven't really determined what affordable for that person is.

P1: I agree.

P6: I agree, too.

Russ: Anything else?

P12: Yeah, maybe thirteen might be… might be appropriate even around question, somewhere between question eight or nine or something. Where you realize or determine how much this particular participant utilizes these places to begin with. This, of course, some people are inclined to spend a greater percentage of their recreation budget on something like this than others would be.

P2: Cannot put it back there, though, because they haven't mentioned the new pass coming out yet.

P12: What was I talking about? I'm at right here between, like…

P2: Yes, but they don't mention the pass coming out until here.

P12: Oh, okay. Okay, we don't want to spoil the surprise.

Russ: You think maybe we should get them to consider the cost of what their spending before we get to that question? Is that kind of what you're trying to keep those two concepts close together?

P12: Yeah.

Russ: Okay. So, do you think maybe there should be a question in that area that says, well, not only how many times they visit, but how much money they spend on entrance fees?

P12: Yeah.

Russ: Okay. I hate to be a participant in my own group. *(laughter)*

P12: No, that would be a solution perhaps.

Russ: Okay.

P6: You, I mean, if your whole goal is just to establish a price point, you could combine a couple of these questions here, fourteen and fifteen, and just simply ask, you know, "Would you be willing to purchase a pass for forty, eighty, or a hundred and fifty?" I mean, just name three choices and let them, you know. Obviously, most people are going to choose probably the lesser of them, but, I mean, or say something like "Considering value of a pass" after you had just explained the value of it. Would you consider paying, to establish some type of a median?

P12: Yeah, or perhaps mention specific per-use charges, and then say "So, in light of that..."

P6: The awkward thing about fifteen A is that you've already asked if they're willing to pay sixty, but then you're asking to pay one twenty, you know.

P7: Yeah, I'd scratch that one altogether.

P6: Well, it's like Let's Make a Deal here, I mean, you know.

P1: Give them an option.

Unknown: Yeah.

P12: Yeah. I answered "yes" and then I answered "yes" again. I think two hundred bucks would still be reasonable.

P13: I think a lot of people would probably think, you know…

P7: Go on a bus pass to get there. *(laugh)*

Russ: Participant 13, if you could…

P13: Yeah. First you're asking them sixty, "Yeah. Then you're saying "What about one twenty?" You're thinking "Well, why should I pay one twenty when I could pay sixty?"

You know, if you give them an option for sixty, and then you ask them for more, they're not going to want to do more, because they, you've just kind of put in their mind that they can pay sixty dollars.

Russ: How do we get around that?

Unknown: Go down.

Russ: Start at the top, and work your way down?

P11: With some surveys…

(overlapping voices)

P3: I'd start asking one twenty, and see if they say yes. If they say yes to one twenty, then you don't have to ask them fourteen, if they say no, then you can ask them sixteen. If they still say no, then you can ask them thirty.

P1: You could print ranges of prices; like "Would you be willing to purchase a pass for sixty to eighty dollars?" Instead of just…

(overlapping voices)

Russ: Oh, please, just one person at a time. I'm sorry. You have to wait for a pause before somebody else should start. But I remember Participant 7 was ready to say something, too, and I think it got lost.

P7: I… I don't know, actually. I'm kind of agreeing with everybody else, that we should start kind of at the top and go down and say "What do you think is reasonable for a pass?" The price of a pass.

Russ: Okay. And Participant 9?

P9: Do we have different numbers on these questionnaires?

Russ: Yes. I should clue you in on that secret. There are three different versions of the questionnaire, but the only thing that's different about them are the price points of these three questions. We've had nationally renowned economists help us to decide what those price points should be. It doesn't mean they're necessarily the right ones, but if anybody else has suggestions…

P8: Yeah, I'd recommend maybe putting in the average price of, like, a daily pass. Because I know, being back east, a lot of people don't visit national forests so they don't have any idea what it would cost them to go in for a day. So, I mean if they have no idea, they don't know how good a hundred is if it costs ten dollars a day to go there. I mean, if you know it's ten dollars a day, and you know it's a hundred for a pass, well that's what you're asking them, you know that's ten times… "Yeah, I'll go there ten times. Yeah, that's worth it." You know? It makes it a lot easier to figure out the value of that hundred dollars, I guess, or the value of the pass.

P15: On that same line I'd mention that, like, the existing National Parks Pass, that's fifty bucks for all the parks, and you can tell them, right? So, it's always going to be at least fifty bucks, but plus you've also got to go to the monuments, all these other places, so maybe mention the price of that, and then what benefit this new pass would have.

Russ: And the folks on the east coast are usually more concerned about the historic sites because we have so many of those since *(inaudible)*… You can go see the Liberty Bell, and Gettysburg… *(inaudible)*

P6: What I learned, in terms of that, a lot of people in the west are willing to go to a park more than once because, you know, they went up for the atmosphere. Whereas, once you've seen the Liberty Bell once, you've seen it. You know? You don't have to necessarily see it again. You may not get as many repeat visits. At least I wouldn't think so.

Russ: Yeah, there's not as much to explore at the Liberty Bell.

P6: Yeah.

P2: Yes, but if you have *(inaudible 57:20)* on the east coast, all these historical sites, you're going to have family or friends coming to visit you; they're going to want to go see it, so why would you want to keep paying each time you go in? You set there, pay that one fee for an annual time, bring on all the people you want.

Russ: Be the guide. That's true.

P3: Yeah, be the favorite uncle.

Russ: Does anybody else have anything to offer on questions thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen? Let's move on to sixteen, seventeen, and eighteen.

P9: Definitely do away with "Now, please imagine…" and just use the word "if."

Russ: "If a member of your household"?

P6: Yeah, that sounds better.

Unknown: Close your eyes and imagine…

P1: Then you hear snoring on the other end of the line. *(laughter)*

Russ: Or perhaps just "Imagine that…" if we did want to keep the word "imagine." Because they may just assume that… Well, if nobody wants to spend money on something like that, but if they can just visualize that somebody would.

Unknown: That's better.

Russ: But… what else?

P6: Could you combine all those and just say "If you did purchase," or "If anybody in your household did purchase this pass, would you be more likely to visit national forests,

park, and federal lands?" Instead of just asking for specific numbers, 'cause I'll tell you my numbers didn't change.

Russ: Okay.

P6: And I don't know if you need numbers that you can—

P9: Or your different services—sorry. Are they requesting review of the numbers for each one?

Zafar: But still, it's… that's one aspect that they want to know about, again, figuring out revenue will be an issue, but still I think it's the you can collapse thing. Just asking them, and say "US Forest Service, *(inaudible).*" That's the way we ask the other questions at the beginning, given various options; US Forest Service, National Parks Service, BLM, this and that, so… But yeah, that's a point, you know, yesterday again, in Madison, collapsing those questions.

P13: All three of these questions are based on an assumption, like, if you're just getting a pass for free, basically, is what it's asking. At least that's the impression I got.

Russ: But if somebody else purchased the pass, it's almost how it's worded, you think?

P13: Yeah, but on the other hand, it's like… if someone else would have purchased it, I might be more willing to use a pass if I was given it. But if, you know, I had to go pay for it, I might not be as willing to do that.

Russ: Somehow just miraculously it appeared and…

P13: That's kind of the way it sounds like, almost.

P15: I kind of think just the opposite. If I buy something, it's like "Well, now I'm going to get my money's worth out of this. I've got to go a lot." Whereas if somebody else has it, you sort of take it for granted.

P13: Yeah, that's true, too.

Russ: So do you think that should be included in the wording of the question? If you were to invest…

P15: Yeah… like, yeah.

P8: Because it was like "Would you be willing, if you bought *(inaudible* 1:00:39*)*, then, like, would it increase and maybe by how much" versus typical.

Russ: Yeah, we don't really touch on that if you already have this investment tied up in this pass, would you go more often?

P12: But you might not be willing to make that investment, whereas if someone gives it to you. "Well, I have that. I might as well use it."

P6: I definitely agree with shortening these questions, though, because, thinking about this after listening to this long section up here, you want that fresh in the people's minds as they answer the questions, but by the time they're down here, I mean that's out. You know, because you're… You know what I mean? Because you're trying to make an impression on the person taking the survey with all this information, and that's going to evaporate if they're listening to all these long lists of things down here. I think you really need to condense these questions.

(overlapping voices)

P11: If you're talking to somebody in person, you can make eye contact. You can kind of get a sense if they're paying attention. On the telephone, you can't tell how many distractions they've got going on, so if you have something too long, they could… their mind could wander all over the place, and…

P6: Or if they hang up halfway through because they're bored, then you've just wasted your time with the other questions.

Russ: If we should cross out some words, which ones should they be?

P4: The stuff in parentheses.

P3: The parentheses I was confused about. Are those written, or maybe…?

Russ: Those are probably just instructions for the interviewers, or FYIs that they can use if somebody asks them about a particular topic, this information…

P12: Well, I mean, for instance, sixteen and seventeen you could say "In the same… or in the following year, or in the same year." You can combine that in like one quick sentence. And then, you know, say these things, and then get rid of all of this list: national park, national monument, historic sites. I mean, at this point, the person taking it should—this is for the whole shebang, this isn't just for one area.

Russ: Okay, so…

P12: It gets redundant.

Russ: National park, national monument, national historic site should be reduced to something like…

P12: Well, you could say it, I mean, I guess you could say it once, but then, cause like in each of these it's repeated over and over and over and over, and that's what makes it redundant.

P7: I agree on that.

P12: Yeah.

Russ: Same question as before then. If we had six agencies, or we had three different types of lands, what phrase should be used as a substitute?

P9: Federal lands before mentioned.

Russ: Yeah.

Unknown: That sounds good. I like that.

Russ: Okay.

Unknown: That works.

Russ: Okay, any other ideas?

P3: Destinations.

Russ: Destinations.

P3: I think it's…

Russ: Federal recreation destinations?

P3: Really, I think if you say anything they'll, by this point, know what you're talking about; the interviewees.

Russ: Okay. I do want to make sure that we're still distinguishing between federal and state, though.

Zafar: Yeah.

Russ: We always have to do that.

P3: Yeah, so say "federal" a lot, and this other stuff less.

P14: Who are going to be the participants? I mean, is this just random or…?

Russ: It will be randomly chosen, but we will screen out people who are aged sixty-two or older; people who don't visit federal lands, too, right?

Zafar: No. No, not those people, but yes, we absolutely… *(inaudible 1:04:12)* random digit dialing nationally. It will cover the whole nation.

P6: If… Back to the collapse of these three. The pass covers all six agencies and the lands they manage. Why do you need specific numbers for some of these?

Zafar: As I said, the revenue capitalization. So, if you buy a pass, then how many times you were visiting, or how many times are you planning to visit National Forest Services, or national parks; lands administered by National Forest Service or administered by National Park Service, so that we can calculate some of the revenue will be gained or lost by each agency. That's the whole purpose. But, yeah, that's something can be collapsed together. That's for sure.

P9: Can you do away with "for any member of your household"? Because I just… it's kind of hard for me to speculate how many times a member of your household, other than you, is going to visit a park.

Zafar: Okay.

P9: I didn't include that in my calculations when I was filling it out, so… Because I wouldn't have any idea how many times they were planning on going to one of these places.

Russ: Can anybody think of a substitute phrase for "You or any member of your household"?

P4: I might put "immediate household."

Russ: I'm sorry. Participant 4?

P4: "Immediate household," because that's where… brought up before. Immediate stuff, in the very beginning. But yet household, that could be your cousin that lives down the street that might want to borrow your pass, or was one of the four that you could take, usually it's like an immediate family thing, it's like a husband and wife; and if one's going to go, usually the other one's going to go.

P9: You'd say household or family.

P12: Well, I would say "You or any household member." Could you say that?

Russ: Yes. You or any household member. *(inaudible)* We're probably going to duck the word family.

P9: How about household? *(laughing)* Can you just use the word household? *(overlapping voices)* Even if you're a household of one, you're still a…

Russ: I think that has to do… Especially because this is a federal survey; when they do the census, for example, they refer to a particular household, not necessarily a family because they associate names with addresses.

P6: Sometimes houses… families don't live together, either.

P4: *(inaudible1:06:52)* household all in the same house? Like different family or, you know, kids living with their parents that are older that have their own kid or something and had to.

P9: But can you really speculate on, you know, distant relations on how many times they're going to visit these places.

Russ: Let's go on to the next couple of questions, and these, I guess, kind of spread out over this page or the following page. Nineteen and twenty.

P11: Well, I had to look at that real close, because the end of eighteen, there is no space between the end of eighteen and nineteen. Plus nineteen is continued on the next page. So, just a moment of confusion there.

P6: Nineteen and twenty could almost be put… *(overlapping voices)*

Russ: Oh, because we have different questions.

Zafar: Different questions.

P11: Space there, but no space here. *(overlapping voices)*

Russ: I'm sorry. Comment, Participant 12?

P12: On nineteen, one of the things I would do is get rid of the acronyms. I mean, those are irrelevant at that point. The FH… Just put "federal bureaus" or something like that. The "federal departments." I mean because, you know, again, you even pointed this out, that in the west we know what BLM is, but back east they really don't. They don't use that acronym. Just dispense with it.

Russ: FWS, BOR, BLM? Actually that's part of eighteen, but, yeah.

P12: Yeah, see yours… that's unused. How it's listed here is part of eighteen. *(overlapping voices)*

Russ: Do we still have objections to the use of "ATB" for pass?

P12: I don't have a problem with it, because you know right away what it means. I mean, if you were to just say *(inaudible 1:08:48)*ATB pass, without knowing what it means, you might be dumb and say "Oh, that's a vehicle," but, you tell people what it means.

P9: I still think "the new pass" after you say what you're talking about. They'll understand what you're talking about after you say that.

P3: Yeah, and that will remind people that it is a new pass rather than something that they could have already.

Russ: Participant 10, any ideas? Anything that you see so far?

P10: Not so far.

Russ: Okay. And anybody have any other things that they've been holding back for questions one through twenty?

P9: Didn't someone ask whether nineteen and twenty could be just one question. "What would you be willing…" or "What do you think the pass cost should be?" instead of "What's the maximum you're willing to pay?"

P14: I almost think that these questions are more appropriate to be right out near thirteen through fifteen.

P12: And you kind of go to this part, and then you talk about something else, and then you go back to pricing again.

Zafar: In fact, those questions won't be in the survey, because the thing is that we… we asked the last four focus groups were to determine those numbers and the survey as a whole. So, we still wanted to ask those questions, just to get a better idea of what that range of numbers that they are going to put in question number fourteen, fifteen… So, figure out the bidding, the numbers for the bid, that's the whole idea of putting those two questions; but in original survey that, after asking those questions, we'd only be asking the maximum price, or what, all things considered, that number twenty—both of those questions will be scratched out.

P9: Okay.

Zafar: But we're still in the process of building that range of numbers, and an expert will be coming on Monday from Canada to give us guidance about that optimal bidding procedure. How..; that's a very critical area. Like how, what numbers should we put.

P3: I was just going to say I think those questions sound clear, but I guess it doesn't matter. *(laughter)*

Russ: I guess you're part of the miniature survey for those particular two questions. Questions twenty-one through twenty-three then.

P6: I've got a problem with both of them, twenty-one and twenty-two.

(overlapping voices)

Russ: Participant 6, then Participant 7 please.

P7: I'm sorry.

Russ: That's okay. Participant 6.

P6: I didn't mean to cut you off, Participant 7.

P7: No worries.

P6: Towards the end of the last sentence in twenty-one is confusing. To make it good for two years from the first use instead of one year, kind of just runs all… runs on there. I would change it to "How much more would you be willing to pay to extend it for an additional year?"

P7: Oh, I like that.

(overlapping voices)

Russ: What were you going to say, Participant 7?

P7: I don't like the question at all, so…

Russ: Okay, you think it should be wiped out?

P7: I think things should go year by year.

P9: Well, didn't he say it was moot, anyway, because they weren't going to go for it?

Zafar: All the reason we put that question because there are so many in focus groups, in last focus groups, people came up with this two years, idea of two years, and five years. I… We know that the Park Service is not going to approve that, but we just wanted to get them the information, maximum information we collected from National Parks. But we know that that's pretty much decided, that they're… they're not going to have anything more than one year.

P7: Then why don't you just take the question out?

Zafar: Still, we wanted to tell them how much people care about that particular idea, and how much people would be willing to pay *more* if you just extend that two year. They're not scratching it out in future.

P7: Okay.

Zafar: So, maybe after three, four years, five years, who knows.

P2: And in twenty-two you might as well, I mean, take out the ninety-nine percent and just put "It could be guaranteed the majority of the price would be used," because we all know the government… It's not going to get… There's no way that figure's going to be correct. So, just say most of it, majority, something like that.

P12: I think…

Russ: Oh, go ahead.

P12: I think that whole entire question is confusing because it leads me to believe that every time I use my… When I buy that pass, that money will be at the site where it's purchased, regardless of where I use it afterward. And so, if I go… Like, I was down in Death Valley in March, and we actually used, I think it was the Golden Eagle Passport. And so, if… if we bought it there, so all the money would be used there regardless of whether or not I ever went back there within the year, or if I spent, you know, went twenty times to Zion National Park. And it gets back to that whole idea that it's comforting to know where your money goes.

Russ: Participant 5.

P5: I was going to say in twenty-one to twenty-three, you say "If the pa—if the price for the ATB pass is set at a level you might afford…" Wouldn't you cut that down to just "If the pass is affordable, you…" or something along that line so it's not such a long sentence. You just say, "If the pass was affordable, blah blah blah…" instead of having that long sentence. Maybe you cut it down to make it quicker, I guess.

Russ: Okay, so "Is set at a level" maybe sounds.

P5: Yeah, I mean instead of saying "Is it set at a level you find affordable," like it said, maybe say "Is it affordable?" "If it was affordable to you, would you do it?" You know, instead of saying all of the rest of this stuff.

Russ: Okay.

P13: I also think the answers should be probably in reverse, and down. Because when you start with like "nothing more," and then you start going up, they start thinking "Well, why should I pay more, when I could pay nothing more?" *(inaudible 1:14:39)*

Zafar: I'm sorry, I couldn't hear.

Russ: Have question twenty-three first, and then go twenty-two…

(inaudible, overlapping voices)

P13: The choices start with, like, twenty-five or higher… *(overlapping voices)* The choices backwards.

Russ: Okay, start with the highest dollar figure.

P13: And then go down.

P11: Yeah, and things you get in the mail that ask you to donate money? I've seen research that proves, when you get one of these things and it will list—well, it gives you a series of choices: a hundred dollars, fifty dollars… If you list the higher ones first, people are more likely to check off a higher amount. Yeah, you start off with the higher ones, the research indicates that you get more of a response at the higher amounts than if you started low.

Russ: I wonder if, though, if you start with the higher amounts, will they keep thinking there's going to be an extra choice that's even lower than the last one, and then… sort of like being in an auction. You keep hoping they won't outbid you. Would you be getting to a lower price? Does that make sense?

P6: I think that… This is just me, but I think that it's… When you're basically going toward the bottom, you almost psychologically think "Well, that makes me look cheaper." You know? That's just how I feel about it.

P3: I know that we're talking about the survey rather than the content, but is it possible that the fee would be twenty-five dollars or more? That really seems kind of exorbitant. Not even TicketMaster charges that much, so…

Russ: Isn't Yosemite in that range?

Zafar: Yosemite is twenty dollars per entrance, valid for seven days. But are you guys talking about annual pass price?

P3: No, I guess I'm talking specifically about question number twenty-three with the additional fee for the convenience of being able to buy it at a grocery store, or…

P9: Oh, that's a good point. Why would you want to pay twenty-five dollars more just so you could buy it at a...

P3: I would be willing to pay five or ten dollars more, just for the convenience, but not more than that. That just seems…

P9: Maybe you could ask; I guess maybe… maybe they want this info, but maybe you could just ask "Would you be willing to add on a convenience fee to have this available at each place."

Russ: Without suggesting what they could *(inaudible 1:17:12)*

P9: …suggesting what the fees could be, and then you guys could figure what the cost is for making it available, but…

Russ: Or maybe divide it into two questions: "Would you consider a fee?" and then "What should the fee be?"

P12: People will ask you that. They'll say "Well, how much of a fee are you talking about?" I think that they would, you know, that that would be… Then ask the interviewer a question, and you just leave it open-ended like that.

Russ: Well, it might not be open-ended. It might be a mult… A yes or no question, followed by a choice question. That's what I was kind of thinking.

P9: I think that'd work.

Russ: Participant 1, you made a suggestion.

P1: No, I just… I was agreeing with you. You might want to ask first if you'd be willing to pay more, pay a fee.

Russ: Okay.

P1: A convenience fee. When I buy concert tickets, I always go right to the menu.

P12: I really think… I think that should be a "yes," "no," or "maybe, depending on how much it's going to be." Because some people might not be able to answer that question until they know what kind of fees you're talking about.

P4: Maybe you can get rid of the "nothing more" on there. Just start out at the "five to ten dollars more" for some of this stuff. And then just leave the "don't know" or "nothing more" at the end.

P12: I think "don't know" and "nothing more" would be kind of the same.

Russ: It's almost like if you have the yes/no at the beginning, then you don't need to include zero as a choice in the follow-up question.

P4: Because, I don't know, I was going to be… I'm going to be marking "nothing more," "nothing more," "nothing more."

P6: Exactly.

P4: Because I'm cheap, you know?

Unknown: Why should I pay for one year when I could get two for nothing more?

P12: And the convenience fee would most probably be used as an incentive to merchants to get them to carry this in their stores, so they would get the kickback from that fee at some point, correct?

P3: And the people who might not otherwise purchase one of these ATB passes might buy one if it were available at a grocery store; as a gift or something.

P4: Yeah, or like in a Wal-Mart at kind of the sporting goods section when they're back there buying camping equipment. Like "Oh, well I can get this pass here while I'm already here at the store. I can just go ahead and pick it up here, instead of having to go drive around and track down where to buy one."

P11: I think if people understood that if you buy it at a sporting goods store, convenience store, whatever, if there was the awareness or the understanding that if you buy it ahead of time, that when you get to that entrance station, instead of waiting in line, you go through the express line because you've already got your thing to get in. I don't know if that would be a feature or, you know, people would be willing to pay that extra fee for that kind of convenience, also.

Russ: Participant 9.

P9: Yeah, I think that they would also, if they were available at like these truck stops and stuff, it'll actually help promote visitation to these parks. Because people are driving across the country, they see that… offerings at truck stops and stuff.

Zafar: It's just that that issue came up at the last thing… The express line for people having a pass.

(overlapping voices)

P9: That's a good idea, as an incentive for, to buy it before you get there.

P13: Well, and isn't the store going to advertise that they have these passes, if they carry them?

Russ: Might be free advertising.

Unknown: That's the best thing I've heard.

P3: If it weren't for the sign at Harmon's that says "Fishing licenses sold here," I would forget to go fishing.

Russ: I don't think I've ever seen the ad on TV for fishing licenses or anything like that, but I guess they do get advertised.

P3: Yeah, the customer service.

P12: To that express lane, what you could do—and, again, this isn't part of this, but they could establish a lane that needs no one to operate it. Just if like a gate. They pass…

Unknown: The easy pass.

P12: …bar code right over, and you open the gate, you're in. Take two seconds, you're right in the park. Don't have to worry about sweating the lines.

Russ: Like a vending machine?

P12: Well, no, just… You know how you go into a parking garage and you get a parking pass, you just slip it in *(snaps fingers)*

P3: Like the toll bridge on the Tri-Borough Bridge, you know? You go through there, and there's the Easy Pass lane, then there's the toll booth lane.

Russ: I think that one focus group suggested that there should be a lane for parks like that where you could go and get around the big line; you know, like a speed-pass lane.

P1: Yeah, I'd be willing to pay more for a pass if it would get me through a line. I hate waiting in those lines.

P9: That might be, you know; why don't you ask if people are willing to pay more if there's a speedy access available at the parks, you know?

P6: The problem with that is people could get ripped off. Like, you could have people hiding in the trunk. Like some people sneak into the Drive Thru, you know?

Russ: Although you could still do that now.

Unknown: Yeah.

P13: There's also… Aren't there regulations that force the ranger to tell you a little bit about where you're going? They like to talk to you before you go into the park and tell you what you can and can't do.

P11: Water restriction is high today. Here's a map. Bear sited in this campground.

P13: It would cut down on pollution, though, if you had less cars sitting there idling.

P3: Oh, yeah. Absolutely.

P2: Still have to be a manned booth, but… Because that's a checklist that cards have to be punched, anyway, as far as when they were first used.

Russ: So, like, I haven't really seen an automated tollbooth yet.

P12: They've got them for ski passes now. You can buy a pass now or ten of them, and they don't work until you walk pass this little reader. Then you can use it that whole day, or…

P3: Or, they also work per lift ride.

P12: Yup.

P8: The only thing, you have to be careful with one of those, because if it's something like that where you can take it from car to car, you don't know that the person that bought that pass is actually using it. Somebody else, they might just give it to their friend and they might just… You know, if you just have to go past something? It doesn't check who you are or anything? Then anybody, they could just buy one for thirty people and everybody could just use it to get in *(inaudible)*

P11: A co-op.

P8: Yes.

Russ: Throw it over the tollbooth.

P8: Because in New York they have like an Easy Pass system with this little thing that goes on your windshield, and as you go in, it sees it and lets you go through. But there's nothing that would stop you from taking that and putting it in another car, but it does charge—it charges a credit card, so that's a little different. It charges per use, as opposed to unlimited use. So, you have this unlimited use one, then you could just take the card, you don't have to worry about that.

Russ: I guess this takes us down to our last question. On twenty-four, any comments or suggestions?

P13: Well, this kind of changes the dynamic of the pass altogether, I think.
P11: Because we're going to go with a vehicle, right?

P13: It kind of seemed to me that it's not fair because someone that has a small, you know, sports car that only fits two people has to pay the same price as someone who has a huge van. You know *(inaudible)*

P9: That one, you said, was probably moot, anyway. This is one that you said that they're probably not going to consider *(inaudible)* to let them know how people's feelings were about that part. *(inaudible 1:24:69)* probably not going to consider?

Zafar: I'm sorry.

P9: The carload one?

Zafar: Oh, I don't think so. We're just giving those information, but I don't think… They're pretty inflexible about their settings at this point and kind of trying to figure out just the price.

P9: I kind of think maybe you should have a question on there asking if people would be willing to pay more if there was freer access into the national parks, because anything that would get me in without having to get behind lines and lines of cars would be something I would definitely would be willing to pay for.

P12: Since the whole point of twenty-four is basically to create added value for the pass. I mean, just like, for instance, the convenience portion of it. You could add, you know, a couple of these questions like the part about the convenience… to being able to buy them at these certain locations, a lane to get them in faster, and/or allowing you to consolidate into one vehicle. Or something like that combined one question, because all of this is just value-added, and instead of asking all of these things, just say "Okay, if we had A, B, C in this, would you pay more?" Because your whole goal is to fix the price point, right?

Zafar: Yeah.

Russ: So make the question "Would you pay more for this, this…?"

P12: Correct.

Zafar: To give you a little idea on that one, and it's my apology I'm not… I didn't sell this thing… Russ probably does. We are going to ask all these three value-added things to everybody. We just randomized these things. We're going to ask probably you just "How much would you be willing to pay for the two-years pass?" And then the caller is going to ask "So, if it's available widely for discount stores and all these places, how much would you be willing to pay for that?" So, not all these value-added questions will be asked to everybody. Randomized, and asked only one question out of these three: twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three. Only one question will be asked each person, on a random basis.

P6: To kind of go on back to these, instead of asking like "How much?" and then listing categories, I would probably say "Would you be willing to pay twenty-five?" And then if they say "No," you say "Well, how about fifteen?" *(inaudible 1:27:05)* You know, instead of using the term "how much" just listing of the price.

Russ: *(inaudible)* Go ahead.

P15: It's not really applicable. I mean there's not many people like myself that work in a park, but like, when I read that last one I remember thinking after, "Well am I cheating, then? To get other people in, like, they're paying me and I'm using this card which I paid regular for and now I'm taking them in. Like, maybe there should be a way for people who like work in a park to understand like if it's okay or if it's not okay. I don't know, though, because there's not many people that work in parks like that, so maybe it's not a very applicable question.

P12: I just think that twenty-four also kind of encourages people to do things that are not safe, you know? You know, once again, pack as many people into one car, you know, is not necessarily safe. But I think that it would encourage people to, you know, to do that.

Russ: I don't know if that's… I mean, there is a pass that does is basically all the same things as this pass called the Golden Eagle Pass. It's at the top of ours. I don't know if

that's really a problem at the parks right now. You can still get a carload of people from one pass.

P12: Yeah, how do define a carload, though, I mean is a carload just… is it how many people you can stuff in a vehicle, or is it…

(overlapping voices)

P13: If you encourage that kind of behavior and get less cars in the national park, I'm all for it. Put two people in the trunk. *(laughter)* Why not?

Russ: The kids still don't count under the Golden Eagle Pass, so…

P12: Another question you may think about asking in that is just asking the person "What is the most important value to you? Speed of entrance? Price of pass? Or… I don't know, quantity versus, you know, the whole thing. Packing everybody into the car. Ask which is, to them—Because a lot of people that use these parks, I mean, they care about the environment, they don't want to ruin it by, you know, packing in tons of cars. Maybe for them just the aesthetics and the beauty of it is, you know, you can't fully put a price of value on the pass, but if all these other things are taken into context, you know? Because I know a lot of people that, okay, if they can conveniently grab a pass, and they know they can get right in, they're going to pay more, obviously. Because of that fact, you know, those are value-added things that are tangible that they can say… I *(inaudible 1:29:50)* myself. So, you can go to Yellowstone. There's a special lane you can use. You've, you know, I'll pay more. That's fine, because I know the value of the park. But this gives me special access to get right in. I don't have to sweat lines. I don't have to wait around. I don't have to go to government buildings and wait in lines for hours to buy the pass. You know, eight to four, or whatever. You know what I'm saying? Just… I think that to me the price is irrelevant as long as I get certain things with that. I mean, because I already know, I mean, that the value of these things is…

P13: Well, that's just another category altogether, like, if a pass did include this, and this, and this, would you be more willing to buy it? Because right now these questions are based on what the pass does, and not what the pass could potentially do.

Russ: Should there be a question, then, about maybe ranking what features already exist in the pass? Like asking people "Which one of these is most important to you?" Does that get to the point of your question?

P13: Pretty much.

P1: Is this pass meant to replace all the previous passes?

Russ: Just, if you look at your list, the top three. The other two, the Golden Age and Golden Access Passports will remain the same in every way except the name. They'll just become the America the Beautiful…

Zafar: Senior Pass.

P3: So the National Parks Pass is cheaper than the Golden Eagle, and then if you come up with the extra… whatever, then they throw in the Golden Eagle sticker for you?

Russ: That's exactly right. The Golden Eagle Sticker and the National Parks Pass together are the equivalent of a Golden Eagle Passport.

P1: I noticed in the newspaper that a lot of the parks in Utah are raising their entrance fees. Can we assume that this new pass is going to be a lot more expensive than the ones it's replacing?

Russ: That all depends on how the survey comes out.

Zafar: And some state parks are. For example, California; their passes are so expensive. It's just beyond them. I was looking at a price, and I'm like "Wow." Virginia's, very expensive; a hundred and thirty five dollars, and twenty-five dollars for California park right now. And well, it's just… and those park passes are just called "parking pass." So just for parking. It does not include anything else. No, nothing. So, I'll be very suspicious if it goes somewhere near a hundred and twenty-five or anything like that. I… My suspicion… I'm kind of… What… From the ideas I got, it's somewhere between seventy-five, eighty, something like that. I've done it again. *(laughter)*

P13: What does the Golden Eagle Passport cost these days?

Zafar: The Golden Eagle Passport is sixty-five dollars right now.

P13: Oh. Oh, wow. *(overlapping voices)*

P9: It's probably not going to be less than that, since you're…

Zafar: Well, again that's an issue we don't know.

Russ: And the National Parks Pass is fifty dollars, and the Golden Eagle Sticker is fifteen. So that takes that up to sixty-five as well.

P3: Are those… Is the Golden Eagle Passport… is it for one person or for two?

Zafar: Golden Eagle Passport is good for the car load.

P3: Right, but is it transferable?

Russ: I think immediate family.

Zafar: Two signatures. Right now I have the National Park Pass, which says two signatures. And signatures it says *(inaudible 1:33:25)*, but… They're not checking.

Russ: People who are going to like the Liberty Bell or something like that, or say the Washington Monument, where there's no car involved. It would be immediate family. Father, mother, children, sister, brother. Any other questions? We're actually getting really close to the time. I didn't realize. Comments?

P11: Just kind of a question. Just wondering, as far as I know, the money that these agencies use to operate the national forests, parks, whatever. As far as I know, it's a combination of federal money *and* whatever they get from selling the passes; the

revenue they generate that way. Now, is there a certain level that they want to get to by selling this ATB (*NRP*) pass? I mean, do they want to be self-sustaining, or will there still be that revenue generated plus federal money to operate, to maintain a certain level of… whatever.

Zafar: Yeah, I don't think it's going to go that high.

P11: So, it will never be self-sustaining for the…

Zafar: Yeah, I would be very suspicious…

P11: Okay, I just kind of wondered if there was a magic figure, a certain level they wanted to get to with this…

Zafar: No, there's still a big… subsidies and all those things are still…

P14: I think this would be interesting for you. This group is active in using federal lands *(inaudible 1:34:56).* I don't think, based on the survey that I've taken, and concerned about he cost, would I be willing to listen to somebody for this long to take a survey. I think I would lose interest halfway through and just say "I am sorry. I've got other things to do." Even though I am concerned, and I want to participate, it just seemed too long. How many people would listen to this whole thing?

P3: Well, I have a lot of time on my hands, so I… *(overlapping voices)*

Russ: I'll try and act like a survey researcher and pin you down to a figure. If this survey is four pages and it's too long, how many pages should it be?

P14: You've got to tell me minutes on the phone.

P13: I'd take two pages.

Russ: Two pages? Cut it in half?

P13: Cut it in half.

P14: If you say more than five or ten minutes, and it's usually going to go past fifteen. Go past fifteen, you've lost your audience.

Russ: I think we're not going to… Our intention is to keep almost every survey that we do between six and fifteen minutes. More like six to ten, usually.

P1: That's still pretty long. I get a lot of survey of political surveys and whatnot, you know? But I… six, seven minutes. That seems long to me.

P3: *(overlapping voices)* …random group…

P11: *(overlapping voices)* …past fifteen minutes, I think your participation will… *(inaudible)*

P3: Would the quality of the results be affected? If you were to select some… a certain demographic? Like maybe a certain age, or maybe people in a certain region where there's greater access to these places. Would that information be valuable to you?

Zafar: We can't regionalize the survey that way, because…

P6: That's kind of why the survey exists, is to find this out.

Zafar: It's… It's… It has to be a randomized nationwide. That's number one. And then with your… What was that? I'm sorry?

P3: Age group, or people who might be more likely… or more… maybe people who shop at Gart Brothers or something.

Zafar: We kind of discriminate already from sixteen above and below sixty. They're kind of two groups, but not more than that.

Russ: What I'd like to do… We'll keep the recorders on for a little while longer, but in terms of formally holding the group we're going to go ahead and end right now, because I don't want to break the terms of our agreement and keep you much past nine o'clock. And, if you could give me your focus group participation consent form…

(Discussion ends at this point of the recording. Further voices refer to forms or are overlapping.)

APPENDIX A: SCREENER QUESTIONS

Hello, this is the Survey Research Center at the University of Wyoming.

1. [If needed]: Are you calling about the meeting in …

____ **Boston**, MA, or in [Sunday, 9/11, 2 PM]

____ **Richmond**, VA? [Monday, 9/12, 7 PM]

Thanks for calling. The federal government has contracted with the University of Wyoming to hold group discussions around the country about the prices for recreation on federal lands. Those who participate will receive $50 in cash at the end of the meeting. [If needed]: The meeting will be held at a conference room in a local hotel. This study has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget and the National Park Service. (OMB Approval #1024-0224. NPS #05-078.) The discussion will be tape recorded, but the University will not release the names of those participating.

2. **Would you be available for a group discussion in your area on** [day and date] **beginning at** [time] **and lasting about 2 hours?**

3. [If yes]: **Is there a telephone number where I can reach you in a few days, to let you know whether you have been selected to participate?** [PROBE for area code.]

(Area code): _____ (Number): _____

4. [If phone number provided]: **In selecting participants, we want to include a wide variety of people – all age groups; some who already recreate on federal lands, and some who don't; some who have purchased passes for access to federal lands, and some who haven't; and so on. May I ask you a few questions for that purpose?**

5. [If Yes]: **What is your age?**

_____ (years) [Code 99 for Don't know/No Answer/Refused]

[If <18, or DK/NA/Ref.]: I'm sorry, but only those 18 or older are eligible to participate.

6. [If 18 or older]: **In the past two years, have you personally made use of any federal recreational lands, like national parks, national forests, national monuments, or federal wildlife refuges?**

____ (Yes)

____ (No)

____ (Don't know/No answer/Refused) TURN OVER

7. **In the past two years, have you or has any member of your household purchased,** [Read, but code specific pass(es) ONLY if volunteered; DO NOT PROBE for specifics.]

____ an annual National Parks Pass
____ a Golden Eagle Passport
____ a Duck Stamp, or
____ an annual pass for access to a National Forest?

____ (Yes, one or more of the above, unspecified which)

____ (No, none of the above)

____ (Don't know/No answer/Refused)

8. **What is your current job title?** [Record as stated; write legibly.]

_____
[Code 97 for Homemaker Only, 98 for Not Currently Employed, 99 for DK/NA/Ref.]

9. **Including yourself, any other adults, plus any children, what is the total number of people who are currently living in your household?**

_____ (number of people) [Code 99 for Don't know/No Answer/Refused]

10. **Finally, which of the following categories would you say best describes your household's total income for the past year?**

____ Less than $25,000

____ $25,000-$75,000

____ More than $75,000

11. **That's my last question. If you are selected to participate, someone will call you back in a few days to let you know where the meeting will be held. Can you give me your name, so we'll know who to ask for when we call?** [Get full name if possible.]

_____ _____ (Full name; or first name only.)

Thanks for volunteering! If you have not received a callback by the end of the day this Friday, it means that you were not selected to participate.

12. [Gender: Code without asking. Make any interviewer notes that seem relevant.]

____ (Male) NOTES/COMMENTS:
____ (Female)
____ (Can't tell)

APPENDIX B:

Federal Recreation Passes

Name	Appearance	Term	Benefits
Golden Eagle Passport		**1 Year**	**Covers entrance fees for national parks, monuments, historic sites, recreation areas, and national wildlife refuges that charge a fee under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCFA).**
National Parks Pass		**1 Year**	**Covers entrance fees for national parks that charge an LWCFA fee.**
Golden Eagle Sticker		**1 Year**	**Combines with a National Parks Pass to provide the same benefits as a Golden Eagle Passport.**
Golden Age Passport		**Lifetime**	**For senior citizens, provides the same benefits as a Golden Eagle Passport, plus a 50% discount on federal use fees charged for facilities and services.**
Golden Access Passport		**Lifetime**	**For persons with disabilities, provides the same benefits as the Golden Age Passport.**

APPENDIX C: ATTRIBUTES OF THE NEW RECREATION PASS

The America the Beautiful Pass

In 2007 a new annual pass for recreation on federal lands will become available. It will be called the "America the Beautiful Pass," or "ATB Pass" for short.

- The ATB Pass will be good for **free entrance** to all the National Forests, National Parks, National Monuments, National Historic Sites, National Seashores, National Recreation Areas, and National Wildlife Refuges in the U.S. This includes all federal lands that charge an entrance fee or access fee and are managed by the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, or the Fish and Wildlife Service.
- The Pass will be **good for up to 4 adults and an unlimited number of children** under 16, and it can be used repeatedly for a single annual price. It is anticipated that there will be space on the ATB Pass for two people's signatures. The Pass will give free entrance to either of those two people, plus up to 3 other adults age 16 or over. There are no entrance fees for children under 16 years of age.
- The ATB Pass will be **valid for 12 months**, starting with the first time the Pass is used. For example, if someone purchases an ATB Pass in March of 2007 but doesn't use it until June of that year, it will be valid until June of 2008.
- The ATB Pass will be **widely available for purchase**. It will be sold at all of the thousands of Federal recreation sites where the Pass is honored, as well as over the internet. It might also be available through a toll-free call center, at camping supply stores, or from other outlets.
- This Pass will **replace the Golden Eagle Passport and the National Parks Pass**, which will no longer be sold. Daily, weekly, and annual admissions to individual federal recreation sites will still be available for purchase, for those who do not have an ATB Pass.
- Money from **sales of the ATB Pass will be used to maintain the lands**, improve facilities, and provide services at the federal recreation sites where the Pass is sold. The National Forests, National Parks, and other federal recreation sites depend on entrance fees and pass sales to help provide services to their visitors.
- The Pass will be an **attractive and convenient plastic wallet card**, with an image of an outdoor recreation scene. The image will change every year, making the annual ATB Pass a collectible item.

APPENDIX D: PRELIMINARY PRICING QUESTIONS

The America the Beautiful Pass

In 2007 a new annual pass for recreation on federal lands will become available. It will be called the "America the Beautiful Pass," or "ATB Pass" for short.

- The ATB Pass will be good for **free entrance** to all the National Forests, National Parks, National Monuments, National Historic Sites, National Seashores, National Recreation Areas, and National Wildlife Refuges in the U.S. This includes all federal lands that charge an entrance fee or access fee and are managed by the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, or the Fish and Wildlife Service.
- The Pass will be **good for up to 4 adults and an unlimited number of children** under 16, and it can be used repeatedly for a single annual price. It is anticipated that there will be space on the ATB Pass for two people's signatures. The Pass will give free entrance to either of those two people, plus up to 3 other adults age 16 or over. There are no entrance fees for children under 16 years of age.
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- Money from **sales of the ATB Pass will be used to maintain the lands**, improve facilities, and provide services at the federal recreation sites where the Pass is sold. The National Forests, National Parks, and other federal recreation sites depend on entrance fees and pass sales to help provide services to their visitors.
- The Pass will be an **attractive and convenient plastic wallet card**, with an image of an outdoor recreation scene. The image will change every year, making the annual ATB Pass a collectible item.

Please do not turn this page over until you are asked to do so.

Based on the description of the America the Beautiful Pass (ATB Pass) on the other side of this page, please answer the following three questions:

1. If the price for the ATB Pass is set at a level that you find affordable, how likely do you think it is that you will buy one?

____ Very likely

____ Somewhat likely

____ Somewhat unlikely

____ Very unlikely

2. What is the **maximum** price that you would be willing to pay for the ATB Pass?

$_____ per year

3. All things considered, what do you think the price for the ATB Pass **ought** to be?

$_____ per year

APPENDIX E: PRELIMINARY SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

The University of Wyoming is conducting this national study, for the U.S. Departments of Interior and Agriculture, about public use of federal lands for recreation. **Please read the information just below**, and then answer each of the questions that follow. Thanks for your help!

There are many different kinds of federal lands that can be used by the public for recreation. The U.S. Forest Service maintains the **national forests**, which are used for camping, hiking, and other outdoor activities. The National Park Service administers **national parks**, as well as **national monuments**, **national historic sites**, **national seashores**, **national battlefield parks**, and **national recreation areas**. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages the **national wildlife refuges**. The Bureau of Reclamation and the Bureau of Land Management maintain federal **dams, reservoirs, and other federal lands** where outdoor recreation is available.

1. In the **past two years** (since September of 2003), have you or anyone else in your household visited any of the different kinds of federal lands listed above? (Please check √ one answer.)

_____ Yes _____ No _____ (Don't know)

2. Is any member of your immediate household, **more than 60 years old**?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ (Don't know)

3. Does any member of your immediate household have a **permanent disability or blindness**?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ (Don't know)

4. Some federal lands charge entrance fees or access fees to support their facilities and services. Were you **aware** of any of the following ways that people can pay for admission to federal lands? (Please check all that you were aware of.)

_____ The Golden Eagle Passport, a yearly pass for all national forests and national parks
_____ The Golden Age or Golden Access Passport, for senior citizens and the disabled
_____ The National Parks Pass, a yearly pass for national parks only
_____ The Duck Stamp, a yearly pass for national wildlife refuges
_____ An annual pass for one particular national forest or national park
_____ A daily or weekly entrance fee for a particular national forest or national park
_____ An entrance or access fee to any other federal lands
_____ (Not aware of any of these) (If 'Not aware,' SKIP TO #6)

5. In the past two years, has any member of your household **purchased** any of these passes? (Please check all that have been purchased by you or another member of your household.)

_____ The Golden Eagle Passport, a yearly for all national forests and national parks
_____ The Golden Age or Golden Access Passport, for senior citizens and the disabled
_____ The National Parks Pass, a yearly pass for national parks only
_____ The Duck Stamp, a yearly pass for national wildlife refuges
_____ An annual pass for one particular national forest or national park
_____ A daily or weekly entrance fee for a particular national forest or national park
_____ An entrance or access fee to any other federal lands
_____ (Have not purchased any of these in the past two years
_____ (Don't know, or Not aware)

6. In **just the past year** (since September of 2004), about how many times have you or any member of your household visited a national forest? If you don't know the exact number, please give your best guess. (Please enter the total number of visits. If none, write a zero.)

_____ visits to lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service

7. In just the past year, about how many times have you or any member of your household visited any **lands administered by the National Park Service**, such as a national park, national monument, or national historic site? (Please enter the total number of visits. If none, write a zero.)

_____ visits to lands administered by the National Park Service

8. In the past year, about how many times have you or any member of your household visited any **other federal lands or waters**, such as a national wildlife refuge, federal reservoir, or other public lands under the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Reclamation or the Bureau of Land Management? (Please enter the total number of visits. If none, write a zero.)

_____ visits to other federal lands, administered by the U.S. FWS, BOR, or BLM

9. If you have visited any federal lands in the past year, **was it for any of the following reasons**? (Please check all that apply.)

_____ A family vacation
_____ Fishing or hunting
_____ Camping or boating
_____ Hiking, backpacking, or rock-climbing
_____ Observing or photographing nature
_____ Touring historical sites
_____ Skiing, snowshoeing, sledding, or snowboarding
_____ Snowmobiling or off-roading
_____ An outdoor program like scouts, Outward Bound, outdoor leadership experience, etc.
_____ Just passing through
_____ Other (What?): _____
_____ (Don't know)
_____ (Have not visited any federal lands in the past year)

10. In **the upcoming year** (between now and October, 2006), about how many times do you expect that you or any member of your household will visit a national forest?
(Please enter the total number of expected visits. If none, write a zero.)

_____ expected visits to lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service

11. In the upcoming year (to October of 2006), about how many times do you expect that you or any member of your household will visit any **lands administered by the National Park Service**, such as a national park, national monument, or national historic site?
(Please enter the total number of expected visits. If none, write a zero.)

_____ expected visits to lands administered by the National Park Service

12. In the upcoming year, about how many times do you expect that you or any member of your household will visit **any other federal lands or waters**, such as a national wildlife refuge, federal reservoir, or other public lands under the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Reclamation or the Bureau of Land Management? (Please enter the total number of expected visits. If none, write a zero.)

_____ expected visits to other federal lands, administered by the U.S. FWS, BOR, or BLM

In 2007, a new annual pass for recreation on federal lands will become available. It will be called the "America the Beautiful Pass," or "ATB Pass" for short. The ATB Pass will be good for **entrance to all federal lands and waters** that charge an entrance fee or access fee and are managed by the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Reclamation, or the Bureau of Land Management. The ATB Pass will be **good for up to 4 adults age 16 or older, and an unlimited number of children under 16**. It will be **valid for 12 months**, starting with the first time the Pass is used. (For example, if someone purchases an ATB Pass in March of 2007 but doesn't use it until June of that year, it will be valid until June of 2008.) The ATB Pass will be **sold at all of the thousands of federal recreation sites where the Pass is honored**, as well as over the internet. Most of the money from **sales of the ATB Pass will be used to maintain the lands**, improve facilities, and provide services at federal recreation sites. The Pass will be a plastic wallet card with an **image of an outdoor recreation scene**. The image will change every year, making the annual ATB Pass a collectible item.

Based on this description of the new America the Beautiful Pass (ATB Pass), please answer the following:

13. If the price for the ATB Pass is set at a level that you find affordable, how likely do you think it is that **you or a member of your household will buy one**?

_____ Very likely _____ Somewhat unlikely

_____ Somewhat likely _____ Very unlikely _____ (Don't know)

14. Would you be willing to purchase the ATB Pass for **$80**?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ (Don't know)

(If 'Yes' on #14, SKIP TO #15a; if 'No' or "Don't know,' proceed to #15, then #16)

15. (If 'No' or 'Don't know' on #14): Would you be willing to purchase the ATB Pass for **$40**?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ (Don't know)

15a. (If 'Yes' on #14): Would you be willing to purchase the ATB Pass for **$160**?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ (Don't know)

16. Now, please imagine that a member of your household does purchase an ATB Pass in 2007, or receives one as a gift. In **the following year** (between first use of the Pass and 12 months later), about how many times would you expect that you or any member of your household would visit a national forest?
(Please enter the total number of visits. If none, write a zero.)

_____ expected ATB visits to lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service

17. In that same year (between first use of the ATB Pass and 12 months later), about how many times would you expect that you or any member of your household would visit any **lands administered by the National Park Service**, such as a national park, national monument, or national historic site?
(Please enter the number of visits. If none, write a zero.)

_____ expected ATB visits to lands administered by the National Park Service

18. And in that same year, about how many times would you expect that you or any member of your household would visit **any other federal lands or waters**, such as a national wildlife refuge, federal reservoir, or other public lands maintained by the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Reclamation or the Bureau of Land Management? (Please enter the total number of visits. If none, write a zero.)

_____ expected ATB visits to other federal lands, administered by the FWS, BOR, or BLM

19. What is the **maximum** price that you would be willing to pay for the ATB Pass?

$_____ per year

20. All things considered, what do you think the price of the ATB Pass **ought to be**?

$_____ per year

21. If the price for the ATB Pass is set at a level that you find affordable, **how much more** would you be willing to pay to make it good for two years from the first use instead of one year?

_____ Nothing more
_____ $5 to $10 more
_____ $15 to $25 more
_____ $25 more or higher
_____ (Don't know)

22. If the price for the ATB Pass is set at a level that you find affordable, how much more would you be willing to pay for it if you could be guaranteed that 99% of the price would be used to improve the recreation facilities and services **at the federal lands site where you buy the pass**?

_____ Nothing more
_____ $5 to $10 more
_____ $15 to $25 more
_____ $25 more or higher
_____ (Don't know)

23. If the price for the ATB Pass is set at a level that you find affordable, how much more would you be willing to pay for it, for the convenience of **being able to buy it at grocery stores, discount stores, and wherever hunting and fishing , are sold**?

_____ Nothing more
_____ $5 to $10 more
_____ $15 to $25 more
_____ $25 more or higher
_____ (Don't know)

24. If the ATB Pass covered entrance for the **Pass owner and all accompanying passengers in one private vehicle**, instead of 4 adults, would you be willing to purchase the ATB Pass for **$65**?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ (Don't know)

Thank your for your help with this survey. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved this research under the Paperwork Reduction Act (OMB Approval No. 1024-0224). United States Code 1a-7 authorizes collection of this information, and the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Interior will use these results to better serve the public. All of your answers are voluntary and confidential. No action may be taken against you for refusing to supply the information requested. No personal data will be recorded with your answers that will identify you. You may direct comments on any aspect of this survey to:

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National Park Service, 1849 C Street, NW
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