

## **FINDING THE ENVIRONMENTALIST IN THE CONSUMER ... LOOK NO FURTHER THAN YOUR LOCAL WOODS**

### *Research Unveils State Park Visitor Demographic: Loyal, Active, Environmentally Conscious, High-Earning Families*

PASADENA, Calif. (September 15, 2009) -- Companies seeking to leverage their environmental friendliness will find their ideal target market right in their local woods, according to five years of research on state-park visitors compiled by GSG, a marketing agency that facilitates cause-related marketing partnerships between corporations and state parks. These consumers purchase organic food twice as often as the rest of the U.S. and 61 percent make purchasing decisions based on a product or company's environmental impact (versus 23 percent of the general population).

Armed with these statistics, green marketers looking for loyal consumers need cast their nets no further than local waters to find high-income, highly educated consumers who care about the environment. U.S. state parks draw repeat visitors within local driving distances, essentially using the parks as an extension of their own backyards to hike, bike, camp and fish in state forests, beaches, lakes, mountain ranges and valleys.

Even though these families have the same marital status and number of children as the general population, they choose to make more environmental and active lifestyle choices. They are more than twice as likely to enjoy activities such as hiking, volleyball, biking, camping, endurance sports and swimming. Gym memberships and environmentally safe product consumption skew considerably higher. In addition to healthy and environmental choices, they also demonstrate an affinity for technology and far surpass the general population in ownership of consumer electronic devices such as GPS, digital cameras, MP3 players and laptop computers. Moreover, 65 percent of park visitors claim to enjoy photography (versus 30 percent of regular population).

Highlights from the research include:

- Although the general population and park visitors track on a par in desire to learn what companies are doing to have a positive impact on the environment; 61 percent make buying decisions based on a product/company's environmental impact (versus 23 percent of general population).
- When purchasing an auto, 29 percent consider the environmental and social policies of the manufacturer in their decision to purchase a vehicle (versus 15 percent of general population).
- State park visitors rank environmental issues "very important," over 2.5 times more than the general population (other choices offered "important" or "not very important").
- 58 percent of park visitors attained a bachelor's degree or higher. (versus 38 percent for the general population).
- \$75,000 is the median household income among park visitors (versus \$57,750 for the general population).
- 68 percent of state park visitors come from within 10 miles of their home.
- 78 percent visit state parks three times or more each year, making for a very loyal audience.
- State park visitation is on the rise across the country, with 730 million total state park visits in 2008, showing a 5 percent increase over the previous year.

"Weekend adventurers across the country – whether a beach-goer in California, hiker in the Adirondacks, or lake fisherman in Michigan – besides being super active and health conscious, all reflect a concern for the environment and their spending habits back up their beliefs," explained Shari Boyer, CEO of GSG.

GSG creates cause marketing programs on behalf of eleven state park agencies and have raised more than \$4.6MM for state parks over the past five years. Support from corporate partners seeking environmental and socially responsible ways to engage consumers continued to grow, despite the economy.

### **About the Research**

Since 2005, GSG has solicited market research data through Zoomerang online surveys to determine consumer perceptions about state park visitation. Fifteen of the top 20 major markets and 46 percent of total state park visitation are represented in their research, with data pulled from more than 1200 parks nationwide. For a full copy of the research data

and a graphic presentation of top-line data, email [saveria@govsolgroup.com](mailto:saveria@govsolgroup.com).

**About GSG**

Government Solutions Group (GSG) is a unique marketing company that facilitates cause-related marketing partnerships between corporations and state park government agencies to help reduce costs, increase revenue, and improve consumer relations. GSG is under contract with 11 state park systems across the nation and creates and manages win-win partnerships with corporations that have raised \$4.6 million in cash and in-kind services since 2003. The company is based in Pasadena, California.

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**Contact:**

Meg Aldrich  
Meg Aldrich Public Relations  
(626) 825-0309  
[meg@megaldrich.com](mailto:meg@megaldrich.com)