

New Mexico State Parks

Case Study: Research for the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

BACKGROUND

New Mexico's vast natural areas and ample sunshine make it well suited for state residents and visitors to partake in outdoor recreation. To help plan for and foster amazing outdoor recreation experiences, New Mexico State Parks hired a team of three consulting organizations to update its Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Corona Insights was a member of this team, sub-contracting about one-third of the project work for the prime contractor, Logan Simpson, between February and August 2015.

CORONA'S SOLUTION

A successful plan needed to be built upon an understanding of various populations' behaviors and desires for outdoor recreation. The plan also needed to demonstrate the economic value of outdoor recreation. To achieve these outcomes, Corona Insights surveyed New Mexico residents via phone (landline and cell) and visitors from nearby states via an online panel. While other research companies rarely invest the time and money to include cellular numbers, this is standard operating procedure at our firm. Our experience has taught us that these extra steps are critical to guarding against response bias.

The objectives of the statewide survey were to produce accurate estimates of residents' outdoor recreation behaviors, barriers, and preferred experiences — then highlight valuable insights and make sensible recommendations. The key to making results applicable to local land managers and recreation planners was to

show results on statewide and sub-state levels. To achieve this, Corona carefully designed a stratified sampling plan that balanced accuracy (i.e., results

examining results by sub-state regions).

The objectives of the out-of-state visitor panel were to understand visitors' travel and outdoor recreation behaviors,

satisfaction, and desire for new activities, facilities, and recreation experiences. We also examined New Mexico's competitive positioning compared to neighboring states. For example, New Mexico competes very well among neighboring states for outdoor cultural festivals, but competes well in snow sports only in Texas and Oklahoma. Lastly, we used this data to create statewide economic impact estimates associated with outdoor recreation.

THE OUTCOME

Corona delivered: a comprehensive report for the statewide survey and one for the visitor survey, a report of economic impacts associated with outdoor recreation, and a final report that integrated findings, insights, and recommendations on statewide and local levels. The final SCORP will be successful, in part, due to Corona's rigorous methodology, ability to integrate findings from multiple research components, and innovative focus on understanding desired recreation experiences rather than the typical approach of studying facilities and amenities only. The final plan was officially adopted in January 2016.

