An Exploration of Developed Forest Camping Experiences and Meanings in the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area

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ABSTRACT

Developed forest camping has received little attention in the recreation research since the late 1960s and early 1970s. Changes in socio-demographics, technology, and the public's expectations for amenities over the past forty years suggested that the nature of the developed camping experience may have changed. Thus, the purpose of this study was to understand the modern developed forest camping experience and associated meanings and the influence of technology on developed forest camping. In-depth interviews were conducted in the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area with thirty-eight camping groups in three campgrounds which varied in their level of development.

Developed forest camping experiences were described by participants as a combination of what they were doing (i.e., activities), who they were interacting with (i.e., social interaction), where they were camping (i.e., setting), and what they were feeling while they were there (i.e., psychological states/feelings). The camping experience occurred in stages and it emerged over the course of participants' trips, with emotional highs and lows. Camping was a social experience, with participants defining much of their experience in terms of who they were with. The developed camping experience was influenced by the natural environment, particularly scenic beauty and other aesthetic setting qualities.

The majority of participants in this study suggested that they were able to get a nature-based experience even in highly developed camp settings in which large motor homes, televisions, and satellite dishes were common. Participants used a range of camping gear and electronics, and this technology was important to promote comfort and conveniences and for a distraction during inclement weather.

The associated meanings of developed forest camping were restoration (i.e., rest, escape, and recovery), family functioning, special places, self-identity, social interaction, experiencing nature, association of God and nature, novelty, and the opportunity for children to learn. Restoration was the most commonly expressed meaning across all three campground types. The most commonly expressed life-context meanings were restoration and sharing positive family memories and stories. These family memories and stories often developed into important camping traditions.

Recommendations for recreation managers, study limitations, and opportunities for future research are identified and discussed.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Wayne and Jean Garst, who instilled in me the confidence to believe in my abilities and the determination and stubbornness to progress even when it was easier not to. Although living up the standards that you have always modeled often seems close to impossible, it is a goal that I am fortunate to have. Thank you for being supportive and caring, and a loving example of what marriage and parenthood should be.

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Afoot and light-hearted, I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me, leading wherever I choose.

--*Selected from "Song of the Open Road" (1856) by Walt Whitman*--

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Relevance of a Study of Developed Forest Camping

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences and the meanings that recreationists associated with modern developed forest camping. Camping in America began as a recreational pursuit almost 200 years ago (Cordell, Betz, Bowker, English, Mou, Bergstrom, Teasley, Tarrant, & Loomis, 1999), and it has evolved into an important recreational activity and a common way that Americans spend time in the outdoors. As opposed to dispersed or primitive camping, this study explored developed forest camping, which was defined as a recreational activity in which a person spends at least one night outdoors in a designated, managed setting using one of a variety of motor-based camping modes, including car camping with a tent, pop-up camper, trailer, motor home, or other recreational vehicle.

Public participation in developed camping has increased significantly from the 1960's to the present time. The number of campers in the 1960's was estimated to have been about thirteen million people ages 12 and older. The 2000 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE) found that 83.1 million Americans 16 years of age or older went camping at least once the previous year (United States Forest Service, 2000). This represents over one-fourth (i.e., 27%) of the U.S. population of this age according to the 2000 Census. With 701 million visitor days, camping is the eighth most popular outdoor recreation activity in American (Cordell et al., 1999).

Camping is also an important recreational activity in Virginia. The 2000 Virginia Outdoors Plan (Commonwealth of Virginia, 2000) reported 10.3 million visitor days of camping across the Commonwealth. About 28% of Virginia residents go camping, and

of these, approximately 31% camp at least seven times per year. This amount of participation places camping tenth among all outdoor recreation activities provided on state lands (Commonwealth of Virginia, 2000).

But camping is important for reasons other than its popularity. Camping is one of the primary ways that many Americans interact with nature. For these recreationists, camping may be one of the only ways that they experience an extended stay in the outdoors. Thus a study of camping may help us to better understand the American relationship to nature.

The historical roots of developed camping are intertwined with the history of the automobile and the rise of autocamping and motor-touring. Taken together, motor-based forms of camping and the associated consumer culture that supported camping greatly influenced nature-based recreation and Americans' relationship with nature. These issues are explored in more detail in Chapter 2.

Developed Forest Camping in the 21st Century

Although multiple studies of developed forest camping were conducted in the 1960's and 1970's by researchers such as Burch (1965), Hendee and Campbell (1965), Bultena and Klessig (1965), King, (1965, 1966), Burch and Wenger (1967), Cordell and Kykes (1969) and Lapage and Ragain (1974), studies have examined camping in the 1980s and 1990s. Although specific research about the nature of the modern developed forest camping experience is sparse, comparisons of camping in the 1960's and 1970's with modern camping suggests that the nature of developed forest camping has changed considerably over the past forty years. Many of these changes reflect the influence of the modern American consumer culture.

First, the socio-demographics of developed campers have changed (Cordell at al., 1999). In the 1960's, most camping occurred in developed campgrounds designed to accommodate families who were tent camping. Camping was essentially an inexpensive accommodation for families who were sightseeing or on vacation (ORRRC, 1962). Early researchers such as King (1965) and Burch and Wenger (1967), who studied camping in developed settings, found that family groups with children were the primary users of the campgrounds and that camping was an important part of summer family life. More than thirty years later, Cordell and his associates (1999) found that modern developed campers tended to be retirees camping in expensive motor homes, traveling non-married individuals sixteen to forty-five years old who were using camping as an inexpensive lodging option, or groups of recreationists using camping to gain greater access to climbing and canoeing opportunities. As these socio-demographics have changed, the social meanings that campers associated with camping may also have changed.

Second, technological advancements are influencing the modern developed camping experience. Some camping technologies can be found in modern fabrics, gear, and human-manufactured products. Synthetic materials such as polypropylene, fleece, kevlar, scotch-lite, capilene, lycra, cordura, velcro, mylar and Gore-Tex often have replaced natural fabrics such as goose-down, wool, and cotton in many types of clothing, tents, and sleeping bags (Tilin & Grudowski, 1997). Advancements in outdoor equipment such as weather-resistant tents, portable cook-stoves, internal frame backpacks, self-inflating pads, bivouac sacks, collapsible water bladders, solar-heated showers, and a wide range of recreational vehicles have made camping much more comfortable today than it was twenty years ago (Cordell, 1999; Gorman, 1998).

Publications such as *Backpacker* and *Outside* magazines devote entire issues to the identification and selection of high-quality camping gear, and the Internet now provides developed campers with instant access to camping products.

Modern developed campers are also utilizing a wide variety of electronic technologies for communication and entertainment. Two-way radios and cellular phones, which have been designed to be small, compact, and water-resistant, are increasingly common among developed campers. Televisions and VCR or DVD players have become standard camping equipment for many developed campers, and as manufacturers make these devices smaller and more portable, they become increasingly attractive. Satellite dishes are commonplace in the modern developed campground where campers often scramble to find a campsite with good reception. The *Washington Post* recently (Cho, 2004) reported on a campground in Fairfax County, Virginia that had recently introduced wireless Internet access. The increasing use of electronic technology in camping suggests that campers today may be more interested in being passively entertained during their camping experiences rather than engaging in a more active recreational camping experiencing. The use of this technology also suggests the importance of staying connected to technologies that have seemingly become inseparable from day-to-day living.

Taken together, the technological advancements in camping products and the increasing use of electronics during camping experiences may be insulating campers from nature. Thus, the relationship between campers and nature may be changing because of the influences of technology and the American consumer culture. As campers purchase and use more and more products, the meanings associated with the

modern developed camping experience may be found less in the outdoor places where people camp and more on the gadgets and gear that developed campers bring with them.

With the commerce surrounding modern developed camping, it comes as no surprise that campers today are spending a significant amount of money on their camping trips. For example, Shafer conducted a study in 1969 of 1,140 family camping groups and found that the average group spent approximately $50-70 on each camping trip, which included campground fees, food, entertainment, gas, and other miscellaneous supplies. Today, with modern fee programs, gasoline prices, food prices, and an assortment of entertainment opportunities, camping groups may spend between $200-300 per camping trip. In 1996 alone, Americans spent almost $300 million on basic camping equipment (e.g., stoves, flashlights, camp furniture, cookware, camp food, coolers, and water purification systems) (KMPG Peat Marwick, 1997), and hundreds of millions more on other camping-related items such as footwear, apparel, outdoor accessories, tents, packs, and sleeping bags (KMPG Peat Marwick, 1997).

Third, modern developed campers appear to have a different set of expectations for campground managers. The trend among public-managed campgrounds is moving away from rustic campgrounds to camping facilities that provide a range of amenities and services. Cordell and his associates (1999) described how developed campers are now able to choose from (a) full hook-ups with water, sewer, and electricity, (b) water and electricity, (c) electricity only, and (d) no hookups. From 1977-1996 the public sector almost tripled its number of “improved” campgrounds with 40,000 additional water and electric campsites (Cordell et al., 1999). Developed campgrounds in national forests

have evolved to include “single family,” “single family premium,” “multi family,” and “group” campsites (United States Forest Service, 2002).

This trend towards additional camping amenities and services has influenced campground management. Many Forest Service campgrounds are now managed by concessionaires. Rather than viewing campers as visitors, concessionaires use for-profit business models and treat campers as customers. Campground managers make different choices and different decisions when they manage for profits and consumption, and these decisions increasingly favor the provision of specific amenities to enhance camper comfort and convenience. As Tim Eling, Recreation Specialist at the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area, explained, “The Forest Service is becoming more of a business. The bottom dollar is more important now than it was thirty years ago…visitors are saying, ‘we want more hook-ups and we want more paving’” (personal communication, January 7, 2003). As campers continue to choose developed campgrounds with more amenities over developed campgrounds with fewer amenities, the most rustic and nature-based developed camping opportunities may become a thing of the past.

In summary, developed forest camping has changed over the past forty years because of the influence of social, technological, commercial, and managerial factors. Therefore, the nature of the developed forest camping experience and the ways in which camping is viewed as meaningful may have also changed. Resource managers and agency administrators serve a public that is losing opportunities for nature-based and forest-based experiences. The ability of agency administrators to gain scarce public financial and human resources to develop and sustain the developed forested camping

infrastructure, and the ability of resource managers to provide the necessary amenities and to develop appropriate regulations, require an understanding of the modern developed forest camping experience and associated meanings.

Limitations of Past Camping Research

In the late 1950's, 1960's, and into the early 1970's, most outdoor recreation research focused on recreation as an *activity* (Heywood, Christensen, & Stankey, 1991), such as studies of campground use (King, 1966; LaPage, 1967; Lime, 1971; Wagar, 1964) and camping participation (Burch & Wenger, 1967; King, 1965; LaPage & Ragain, 1974). However, this 'activity' approach was deficient because it failed to consider the totality of the recreation experience, which can be influenced by many factors in addition to what recreationists are actually doing.

In the early 1970's, recreation researchers went beyond the idea of recreation as simply an activity to conceptualize a second approach that included settings, experiences, and outcomes of recreation engagements (Driver & Tocher, 1970). Activities and settings were redefined as the inputs or "means to an end" with the outputs being a recreation 'experience'—a psychological outcome associated with participation in a given activity in a particular setting (Driver & Brown, 1978; Clark & Stankey, 1979). According to this approach, the recreation experience was seen as dependent upon the relationship between the activity and setting. This advancement in the conceptualization of recreation led to the development of the *Recreational Opportunity Spectrum* (ROS) *Planning System*, a recreation management framework based upon settings and experiences (Driver, Brown, Stankey, & Gregoire, 1987). A weakness of the setting/experience approach was that it was dominated by a psychological perspective that viewed recreation as goal-directed

behavior (Stewart, 1998). By viewing recreation behavior as goal directed, researchers overlooked the fact that many experiences during recreation may be emergent and unexpected (Patterson, 2002). Also, the approach diminished the role that campers and camping social groups may play in constructing the camping experience and giving it meaning within the context of their lives.

A third approach developed in the late 1960's and early 1970's focused on the social aspects of outdoor recreation (Burch, 1965, 1971; Etzkorn, 1964; Hendee & Campbell, 1969; Lee, 1972). Researchers examined the relationship between camping and socio-cultural variables (Burch & Wenger, 1967; Shafer, 1969) and compared the social behavior of campers at developed versus primitive campgrounds. Hendee and Harris (1970) observed that most developed campgrounds reflected complex social systems that involved social interactions among several groups. Researchers also explored why people went camping and what people valued about their camping experiences. Etzkorn (1964) found that campers valued the social resources that were available during camping more so than the resources available through the natural environment. Clark, Hendee, and Campbell (1969) suggested that a new camping style was emerging—one with "associated behavioral expectations less dependent on direct environmental contact, more compatible with highly developed structures, and increasingly social conditions" (p. 145).

The social camping research suggested that developed campers were constructing their own nature-based experience through social interaction (Lee, 1972). As Burch (1971) described, "natural phenomena are sociocultural phenomena in the sense that they are constructed through social interactions among members of a culture" (p. 9). In a

study of recreation behavior using observations and surveys in three developed campgrounds, Hendee and Campbell (1969) found that campers were more concerned about socialization during camping than they were about the natural setting, and that the social characteristics of the modern developed campground attracted recreationists. In fact, Hendee and Campbell observed that only a small percentage of campers' time was spent in a specific outdoor recreation activity, and that many of the rewards of participating in camping could be found in the "collective activities and interaction of the camping group" (p. 15). Although the social approach to understanding the developed camping experiences lessened the importance of physical and setting characteristics and emphasized the importance of the social context, this research did not consider how camping meaning develops and how people view camping as meaningful within the context of their lives.

Thus, while the activity, setting/experience, and social approaches can tell us something about why people go camping, what they do while camping, what experiences they receive while camping, and sometimes what they value while they are camping, they do not fully explore how people come to understand their camping experiences as meaningful. The problem is that a paucity of research exists regarding the nature and meanings of developed forest camping experiences since the 1960s and 1970s. Although several recent studies have examined the meanings associated with recreation experiences (Arnould & Price, 1993; Buchanan, Frederickson, & Anderson, 2002; McIntyre, 1989; Patterson, Watson, Williams, & Roggenbuck, 1998; Riese & Vorkinn, 2002; Shaw, Havitz, & Delamere, 2002), only three have explored the meanings of camping (McIntyre, 1989; Patterson, Williams, & Scherl, 1994; Shaw, Havitz, & Delamere, 2002).

Too often researchers have relied upon early studies of camping because modern studies did not exist. For example, a recent study by Warsecha, Manning, Lime, and Freimund (2001) about diversity in outdoor recreation used the results of camping studies from 1966-1973 to be indicative of the diversity of the modern camping experience. Because developed camping as a recreational experience evolved over the past forty years, modern developed camping research is needed.

Over the past ten years, recreation researchers have emphasized the human rather than the ecological dimensions of camping in studies of recreation specialization among campers (McIntryre & Pigram, 1992), how recreationists experience camping through narratives (Patterson, Williams, and Scherl, 1994), and the social meanings of camping (Field, 2000). The study reported here is situated among recent studies of the human dimensions of outdoor recreation and camping, while being informed and historically grounded by earlier studies which recognized that the social setting and even activities can be an important aspect of developed forest camping. This study adds to the growing body of knowledge related to emergent recreation experiences and meanings and to the number of studies that are utilizing constructivist, meaning-based approaches for understanding nature-based recreation. Additional information about the purposes, methods, and findings of specific camping studies are explored later in Chapter 2 and Appendix A.

Research Questions

Recognizing that socio-cultural, technological, and consumer-driven changes may have altered the nature of forest camping over the past forty years, the purpose of this

study was to understand the modern developed forest camping experience and associated meanings. The primary research questions in this study were:

1. What are the most salient elements of developed forest camping experiences?
2. How does technology influence developed forest camping experiences?
3. What meanings do people associate with developed forest camping experiences and how are meanings constructed?
4. What meanings do people associate with developed forest camping across the greater context of their lives?

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

"One of the greatest trends in modern recreation is the increasing demand for great open spaces set apart for the enjoyment of those outdoor diversions which have become so eagerly sought as a means of escape from the noise and confusion of urban life."

Jesse Steiner, *Americans at Play* (1933)

This chapter synthesizes the relevant historical and theoretical research related to developed camping, camping experiences, and camping meanings. I begin this chapter by exploring the influence of the automobile on the development of recreational camping and Americans' relationship with nature. Second, I locate this study within the constructivist paradigm and describe the constructivist assumptions of this study. Third, I provide an overview of the major theories related to experiences and meanings, within the field of recreation in general and also across specific camping studies. Finally, I share how camping experiences and meanings have been measured. In the interest of telling a compelling story about developed forest camping, some information was identified as more appropriate as an Appendix. For example, I provide a detailed review of the history of camping research in Appendix A.

Developed Forest Camping and the Automobile

The history of developed forest camping begins with the automobile. Throughout the last century, developed forest camping has emerged and thrived in conjunction with the rise of automobile in American culture. According to Sutter (2002), "the automobile… [is] the most important technology in the relationship between Americans and recreational nature" (p. 257). In fact, the automobile made a significant impact on Americans' relationship to nature and how they choose to recreate in natural settings. The automobile became the mechanism of escape—a technology that changed American culture. To understand the role of the automobile and related technologies on the

development of outdoor recreation and the resultant changes in Americans attitudes towards nature, it is important to remember how Americans viewed nature prior to the introduction of the automobile and the status of recreation prior to the automobile.

American Attitudes toward Nature Prior to the Automobile

American attitudes toward nature as a repulsive, dangerous wilderness were beginning to change during the 1800's. Many people began to recognize the value of nature because of its aesthetic or sublime qualities (i.e., romanticism). The American Romantic movement—which started in the 18th and early 19th century—had its roots in Europe's Enlightenment. European intellectuals began to emphasize the aesthetic and sublime qualities of wild country. The sublime view of nature suggested that vast, chaotic, uncomfortable scenery could also be beautiful. Sublimity suggested the association of God in nature (Nash, 1967). People also began to idealize a primitive life close to nature. In this new intellectual context, the same qualities of wild country which were once frightening, such as mystery, solitude, and chaos, began to be coveted. European Romantics were intrigued by, and responded favorably towards, the New World's wilderness.

Gradually a few Americans, particularly those intellectuals living in urban areas, began to adopt favorable attitudes towards wilderness. As Nash (1967) wrote, "Those whose business it was to explore, trap, farm, and otherwise conquer the wilderness were less susceptible than urban sophisticates and vacationers to the Romantic posture" (p. 63). These new attitudes towards nature, which were based on sublime and aesthetic notions—coexisted with the old view of wilderness as harsh and dangerous.

While Romanticism was creating a climate in which nature could be appreciated rather than despised, nationalism also played a role in changing Americans' relationship to the land. People began to argue that America's wild country was an asset rather than a limitation; it became America's cultural and moral resource. Although other countries had flowers, birds, and trees, it was America's wilderness that made it unique. When this sense of nationalism was joined with the concept of the sublime in nature, some Americans came to believe that in America's wilderness was the potential to get closer to God—that God spoke most clearly through nature as a medium (Nash, 1967).

Artists and writers did much to promote American wild country during this period. Several illustrated scenery albums were published, many of which highlighted American wilderness scenes. William W. Jackson's paintings helped to direct Americans' attention to wilderness as a source of nationalism. Although Europe had a history through its antiquity, Americans found history in their wilderness.
Writers such as William Cullen Bryant (*Thanatopsis*), James Kirke Paulding (*The Backwoodsman*) and James Fenimore Cooper (*The Pioneers*) created characters in their stories that were insensitive to the aesthetic and moral values found in wilderness. By contrasting these characters with wilderness, these writers dignified wilderness. Over time, some people began to believe that American was the product of a frontier encounter with wilderness. In this way, an experience in wild country was necessary in order to develop a desirable American identity, complete with specific characteristics such as strength, morals, and values (Nash, 1967). .

Transcendentalism was another view of nature that evolved in America during this period. Transcendentalism suggested that natural objects, when viewed properly,

could reflect universal spiritual truths (Nash, 1967). Transcendentalism was embraced by Americans who felt that civilization had become too materialistic

As was noted earlier, America's Romantic view of nature coexisted with other views of nature. This was also true for many writers. Artists such as Thomas Cole and writers such as Henry David Thoreau found the ideal life in a combination of wilderness and civilization (Nash, 1967). In Thoreau's writing, one can find lingering fear and antipathy in addition to awe. However, Thoreau also imbued nature with the ability to symbolize the unexplored qualities and untapped potential that existed in each American.

In summary, prior to the automobile some Americans began to recognize other qualities in nature beyond fear and loathing. They came to see nature as beautiful and aesthetically pleasing and as representative of God or a higher level of spirituality. They also came to associate wild country with a burgeoning sense of nationalism and pride in America. However, in many instances, these "new" values existed alongside of others values that viewed civilization or the taming of wilderness as important.

American Recreation Prior to the Automobile

In the late nineteenth century, for the first time in American history, it became possible for Americans to travel widely without coming into direct contact with wild country (Nash, 197). In 1893, Frederick Jackson Turner wrote about the end of the frontier. With increasing shock, Americans realized that the frontier way of life, a way of life that including contact and experiences with wilderness, were disappearing. As life became increasingly civilized and urbanized, many Americans looked for ways to retain and sustain the influence of wilderness. Increasingly, people began to look at wild areas in a different way due to scarcity.

Although Americans had many recreational opportunities at this time, these opportunities were not provided by the federal government. The national park and national forest systems had not yet been established, although some federal parks were created (Runte, 1987). These parks were not created because these areas were seen as valuable. As Cordell (1999) noted, "Yellowstone was established as a federal park in 1872 because some farsighted individuals held out for its public ownership at a time when the land appeared to be valueless and lost in distance from civilization" (p. 17). Thus, many cities led the way in establishing areas that would later become parks and recreational areas. Urban elites lobbied heavily for the establishment of parks in American cities. The idea, fashioned after European urban parks, was to beautify America and to guide people towards appropriate moral conduct (Taylor, 1999). In this way, urban parks were used for a type of social control. This was during this period when Frederick Law Olmstead created New York's Central Park.

Traveling was important in American in the late 1800's. Harmon (2001) noted that "throughout the last quarter of the nineteenth century… Americans took to the open air to rejuvenate their health, to get away from the urban lifestyle, and to simply enjoy the natural landscape" (p. 39). Before the automobile, people used trains, horses, horse-drawn wagons, and even foot-travel to tour America's wild country. In the West, railroad companies transported people to parks and resorts, and in the East people were attracted to Niagara Falls and eastern beaches (Sears, 1999).

Possibly the first documented camping occurred in Yellowstone National Park, which had developed extensive horse and wagon routes (Harmon, 2001). In 1881, William Wallace Wylie guided tourists around the Park in a wagon. In 1883, the Wylie

Permanent Camping Company was established to provide ten-day tours in portable camps. Wylie advertised these camps as "hotels under canvas" where he allowed campers to stay as long as they pleased during the season (Harmon, 2001). The opportunity to camp in a tent appealed to tourists who could not afford expensive hotels. By the 1890's, Americans had a growing appetite for camping and wild country. The railroads found a lucrative market in the selling of tourism opportunities on a large scale (Barringer, 2002). Soon after railroad touring appeared, so did the automobile.

In the early 1900's, the federal government got involved in the provision of recreation opportunities. Recreation was first mentioned in federal legislation as a legitimate use of public land in the 1902 Morrill Act (Cordell, 1999). The Forest Service was established in 1905 and the National Park Service was established in 1916. By creating the National Park System, Congress introduced a park concept that eventually spread to almost every country in the world (Cordell, 1999). With federal recreation areas established, many more Americans began to recreate on public lands.

The conservation and preservation movements developed in the late 1800's to early 1900's. These movements had different purposes. In short, the conservation movements stressed the utilitarian benefits of natural resources and promoted the development of forest reserves to be used for a steady supply of water resources and wood products, and the preservation movement sought to preserve natural areas for the benefit and enjoyment of the public. Recently, Steinberg has suggested that both conservation and preservation "sought to bend nature to conform to the desires of mankind" (p. 141). In this way, conservation and preservation reflected an

anthropocentric view of the natural world, as they both were an attempt to rationalize nature and to inflict a certain human-made order on the world.

Americans Find Escape through the Automobile

During the interwar period between World War I and World War II, three broad changes occurred that were important for outdoor recreation: the proliferation of the automobile, the government's involvement in road construction and infrastructure, and the maturing consumer culture. The automobile experienced a significant rise in the early 1900's. The Ford Motor Company's introduction of the famous Model T in 1908 is widely recognized as a major turning point in American travel. The mass-produced Model T was affordable to many American families and allowed many Americans to travel beyond the confines of their usual existence. Henry Ford's invention had a significant impact on the American way of life. He freed average city dwellers from the limitations of their geography by creating a mobile culture on a scale that had never before been seen (Sutter, 2002).

The overall impact of this change on American social and cultural life was immense. Prior to the automobile, people had to use horse-drawn transportation, and the practical limit of travel with a wagon was about ten to fifteen miles per day. Any person who lived more than fifteen miles from a city, a railroad, or a waterway was essentially isolated from the larger community and the associated benefits of social and economic interaction. In this way the automobile was important to rural America. The advent and mass production of the automobile allowed country residents to narrow the social and cultural gap that existed between their rural lives and the opportunities that were available in more urban settings (Sutter, 2002).

But the automobile was also important to urban America. People living in cities interpreted their world through an urbanized and industrialized lens, and their relationship with nature was shaped by this worldview. As Sutter (2002) suggested, "To many Americans, nature, once a raw material to be transformed by ceaseless labor, became a place of relaxation, therapeutic recreation, and moral regeneration. For many, nature offered psychic accommodation to a changing world (p. 21)." People wanted to escape the conditions of city-life to explore natural areas. Many Americans felt that their everyday lives were characterized by artifice and technological change, while nature seemed to be a timeless source of beauty and meaning (Sutter, 2002).

Indeed, the main reason that the automobile contributed to the remaking of leisure—the remaking of America in fact—was because it provided a means for escape. For the first time, people were able to take vacations. Of course, this was often only true for those who could afford it. Harmon (2001) noted that the "earliest automobile travelers were wealthy enough to afford not only the transportation costs but also the time and additional expenditures such as food, lodging, appropriate attire, and of course, extra money for postcards and those trinkets of Americana" (p. 36).

Automobile travel was soon supported by an automobile infrastructure as the government demonstrated an increasing willingness to sponsor road construction and the development of recreational facilities (Belasco, 1979). Specifically, the Federal Highway Act of 1916 was passed to recognize automobile infrastructure as a public good (Sutter, 2002). To identify the types of experiences that Americans wanted, the Forest Service commissioned a study of the recreational potential of the lands under its administration in 1917. The study concluded that recreational activities such as camping and hiking were

valuable uses for Forest Service lands (Nash, 1967). The National Park Service embraced automobile-based tourism by encouraging Americans to visit their "national playgrounds" (Shaffer, 2001). The National Park Service's engineers and landscape architects built roads in high-altitude landscapes and in places where few expected a road could be built (Sutter, 2002). Eventually, the increased use of national parks and forests was also a product of the closing of rural roadsides, which people often used for a range of activities. As automobiles flourished, the rural roadscape disappeared behind landscaping, fences, billboards, commercial development, and "no trespassing signs" (Sutter, 2002). Thus, increasingly rigid boundaries between public and private lands encouraged Americans to use public lands for recreation and leisure.

Autocamping, Motor-touring, and Consumerism

As Americans began to use their automobiles for camping, a major recreational pursuit called "autocamping" emerged (Belasco, 1979). Autocamping referred to camping with an automobile. Although Harmon (2001) conducted a thorough review of the early years of autocamping, he found that the roots of recreational camping were largely obscure. Nonetheless, from 1917 to 1920, prior to the completion of a consistent road system and facilities to support Americans' desire for recreation and leisure, it is likely that automobile camping remained largely unstructured. In fact, the first campgrounds on public lands were likely unplanned, unmanaged, and developed by forest visitors (Cordell et al., 1999).

However, by the 1920s, the automobile had become widely popular and widely used, and the new highway infrastructure made travel between cities possible. Autocamping campgrounds that were once primitive became enlarged and upgraded

because of popularity. These campgrounds eventually became the modern "developed campgrounds" that required public management (Hendee & Campbell, 1969). It was estimated that by the early 1920's, approximately fifty percent of all automobiles were used for autocamping (Sutter, 2002). In 1924, the first National Conference on Outdoor Recreation convened to consider (at that time) the novel idea of developing a national recreation policy to address the recreation resource needs related to autocamping and other forms of recreation.

For some campers, autocamping developed into motor-touring. Motor-touring, which involved using one's car to travel to different destinations, became an extremely popular form of leisure. Coupled with increased discretionary time (due to industrialization) and increased wages, the automobile democratized America (Harmon, 2001). The average person had enough money to purchase gasoline to carry his entire family from his town to a new, unique destination. The value of escaping into nature using an automobile became extended to people of average means.

By the 1920s, state and local governments were actively seeking the motor-tourists' business, and many municipal auto-camps were established. In fact, a desire for revenue from motor-tourists was one important motivation for the development of state parks and state forests. An entire business developed around the consumer needs of autocampers and motor-tourists. A wide range of camping vehicles and associated equipment had to be created for, and marketed to, campers. Early camping catalogs "demonstrated just how desirable it was to get back to nature as the extent to which one could equip for the outing" (Harmon, 2001, p. 82). As camping grew in popularity,

manufacturers and suppliers tried to meet the changing needs and desires of these campers through increasingly technological advances.

Eventually, as road conditions improved and modernized road infrastructures allowed people to travel effortlessly from place to place, a new system of modern roads and facilities developed. The roadside became more important for scenery than for recreation, and rural roadsides became closed off to autocampers who drove from one structured destination to another. For autocampers who still wanted a more nature-based camping experience, public lands became the last refuge. Public land managers and administrators took action to address the problems associated with auto-camping. It was during this time that the Forest Service began to develop campgrounds with basic facilities such as toilets and fire pits (Sutter, 2002).

In 1935, a U.S. Department of Agriculture plant pathologist named E.P. Meinecke circulated a paper to his superiors titled "The Trailer Menace," in which he sternly warned that forest managers needed to prepare for a new form of motor tourism in the form of enormous camping trailers. Meinecke (1935) suggested that these camping trailers were "a definite abandonment of the truly American ideal of the free enjoyment of forest and wilderness in simplicity and an invitation to bring the city into the woods" (p. 3). He also warned his superiors of the need for a definite policy to ward off the "coming danger" posed by the automobile and auto-camping. To address the ecological impacts that he associated with auto-camping, Meinecke created a developed campground design which is still being used today.

The automobile was thus closely and strongly associated with consumerism, and the act of spending time in nature while camping also became associated with

consumerism and increasing public expectations for inexpensive services and pristine nature-based experiences. The rise of automobile-based camping eventually led some people to organize against what they saw as an undermining of the American relationship with nature. In 1935, Robert Marshall, Robert Yard, Aldo Leopold, Benton MacKaye, and others formed the Wilderness Society, whose mission was to fight of the invasion of the automobile and "to define a new preservation ideal because of a common feeling that the automobile and road building threatened what was left of wild America" (Sutter, 2002, p. 4). The founders of the Wilderness Society viewed ordinary automobile-driven middle-class tourism as the major threat to wild places. This automobile-based tourism had fueled New Deal conservation work projects which led to increasing road construction in national parks and national forests. The Wilderness Society believed that once a road was built in the heart of a wilderness area for automobile-based recreation, that there was no stopping the additional development that would accompany the road-building.

As described by Sutter, the founding of the Wilderness Society was critical in the history of American environmental thought because it gave a name to certain qualities that were disappearing from the landscape due to the automobile and road building. According to Sutter, the Wilderness Society wanted to "redefine and position wilderness so that it stood in creative tension with mass consumer culture and modernity" (p. xi). Sutter (2002) suggested that the road-building in wilderness areas had made access too easy, and that these roads turned wilderness into just another consumer good, whose worth was then measured in monetary terms rather than deeper physical and spiritual values. Such consumerism and the need to pursue and purchase products and equipment

changed the nature of the camping experience and campers' relationship with nature. In this way, the automobile and related road construction led to an alteration of Americans' perceptions towards wild landscapes. Steinberg (2000) has similarly noted that human relationships with nature suffer as a result of such commodification, because "putting a price tag on the natural world and drawing it into the web of commerce led to sweeping changes in ecosystems throughout the nation" (p. xii). Consumerism encouraged outdoor recreationists to focus on what they were taking with them into nature, as opposed to focusing on nature itself.

Influence of the Automobile on Americans' Relationship with Nature

Although the automobile allowed Americans living in cities to escape, it also radically changed city life by rapidly accelerating the movement of the American public to the suburbs. In the years following World War II (i.e., the postwar period), between 1945 and the late 1960s, as automobiles became more affordable, the increasingly affluent American population demanded millions of new acres for subdivisions, industrial sites, highways, schools, and airports. The second Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 provided millions of dollars for automobile infrastructure. This act created the Interstate system and continued to demonstrate the government's commitment to building highways (and changing the nature of the American landscape) (Sutter, 2002). Thus, recreational interest soared with American's increasing affluence and discretionary time (i.e., leisure time). So, while industrialization and urbanization divorced many Americans from nature, the automobile carried them back to nature.

Outdoor recreation resources such as open spaces, forests, shoreline, and unpolluted waters quickly diminished as the public demanded more of everything else

(ORRRC, 1962). The public demanded that state and federal agencies take administrative and managerial action to provide outdoor recreation opportunities, and Congress was faced with legislative issues that involved outdoor recreation resources. In the 1950s and 1960s, the pressing nature of these problems became a major concern for Congress, state legislators, and the public. These concerns coalesced in the completion of several national assessments of outdoor recreation. These national assessments led to the development of a wide range of outdoor recreation opportunities. (Appendix A includes additional details about the history of national outdoor recreation assessments.)

The American desire to use the automobile for outdoor recreation and to connect with nature has been strongly linked to Americans' desire to search for and to find picturesque and sublime scenery (Harmon, 2001). People wanted to find pastoral America. Harmon (2001) has described the relationship between the automobile and Americans' relationship with nature as the "machine in the garden." Originally detailed by Leo Marx (1964) in *The Machine in the Garden*, this concept argues that the chief cultural symbol of the pastoral ideal is the machine in the garden. The machine represents industrialization and the garden is equated with pastoral America. Thus, the automobile serves as a means to an end, as a way for Americans to reconcile nature and technology—to reconcile the machine and the garden.

The automobile also changed Americans' sense of space, because along with the automobile came a certain ordering of space in order to accommodate the automobile (Wilson, 1991). Our highways, roadsides, and related landscapes all have specific functions now. So, in addition to taking us *to* nature our automobiles often separate us *from* nature. Automobiles make nature somehow "out there" instead of "in here."

Wilson suggests that "the car further divides the landscape, and our experience of it, into discrete zones. It promotes some landscapes and discourages others" (p. 29). In the same way, the automobile encourages some forms of recreation yet discourages other.

The modern American perspective towards recreation is to get into a "car" and drive somewhere to find a natural experience. Thus, life become ordered and structured around the preferred and available mode of transportation. Jesse Steiner (1933) was one of the first people to write about the influence of the automobile on the development of recreation in *Americans at Play*. He noted that

> with the improvement of means of travel people are finding it possible to go even farther…in their search for recreation and readily travel long distances during week-ends and vacations to places of scenic interest where their favorite forms of outdoor recreation life may be enjoyed (Sutter, 2002, p. 19).

Even in situations where Americans have scenic interests close to home, the automobile has also fed into the individualism that is so closely associated with Western culture. We believe in the power of the individual to do what he/she wants to do and to go where he/she wants to go. The automobile satisfies this perspective. Escape can be instantaneous. But this often means that we linger less in nature. Even when people spend time outdoor interacting with nature, whether with gardening, hiking, walking, bird watching, they often get back into an automobile to drive to their next destination.

These issues are complex—as are all of the issues related to the human relationship to nature—and involve much more than just the automobile, but the automobile has played a pivotal role within American outdoor recreation and camping in particular. It has helped Americans to escape to national parks and national forests. It

has allowed people to find personal restoration via multi-day excursions to places unknown. But the automobile has also contributed to the fact that many Americans are physically disconnected from natural spaces and places. Driving cars and camping in trailers and motor homes, the modern developed forest camper can practically avoid the natural world. The history of the automobile and its influence on developed forest camping and Americans' perceptions towards nature are important to this study of developed forest camping.

Construction of Experiences and Meanings

The underlying purpose of this outdoor recreation research is to understand human behavior in nature-based settings, and the key to this understanding is an exploration of how people come to know their world, how people construe their experiences, and how those experiences come to be viewed as meaningful (Bruner, 1990). Several paradigms have been used to explain how people come to know their world and how they perceive reality. Because constructivism has been identified as an appropriate approach for the study of the construction of experiences and meanings (Patton, 2002), and the purpose of this study was to explore the modern developed forest camping experiences and associated meanings, the constructivist paradigm was chosen as an appropriate theoretical paradigm. Although an extensive review of constructivism is beyond the scope of this chapter, an overview is critical for an understanding of the theoretical assumptions of this study.

Constructivism

This study of developed forest camping experiences and meanings was grounded in the constructivist paradigm. The constructivist paradigm originated in 20th century

psychology, philosophy, and sociology—from the cognitive and developmental perspectives of Piaget (1969), the interactional and cultural perspectives of Bruner (1990) and Vygotsky (1978), the sociological perspective of Mead (1910), and the interpretivist perspective of Gertz (1973). Constructivism is often referred to as 'constructionism' or referenced with the related terms of constructivist and constructionist, but the terms constructivism and constructionism are considered to be interchangeable (Driscol, 2000).

The constructivist paradigm makes several assumptions about reality, including (a) people construct and interpret reality using cognitive and social processes; (b) reality is culturally defined, shared, and negotiated among individuals; and (c) constructions of reality are relative, fluid, and may be changed (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The main assumption of constructivism is that people are meaning makers, and they actively construct knowledge about their world in order to make sense of their everyday experiences. Although knowledge and truth may come from many sources—including prior experience, learned information, personal beliefs, cultural norms, social interaction—constructivism emphasizes that knowledge and truth are created, not discovered (Schwandt, 1994). In other words, there is not one "true" reality that people are trying to discover, they are shaping their own reality using cognitive and social processes. Therefore, people are not viewed as empty vessels waiting to be filled, but rather they are active, purposeful organisms that seek to create meaningful lives (Driscoll, 2000).

Constructivism suggests that "constructions" of reality do not occur in a vacuum. Because people learn about their world using language in a social and cultural context, reality is very much a cultural construct. As Bruner (1990) suggested,

> The construction of meaning is based upon two premises "to understand [a person] you must understand how [his/her] experiences are shaped by [his/her] intentional states, and the second is that the form of these intentional states is realized only through participation in the symbolic systems of the culture" (Bruner, 1990, p. 33).

Although reality may exist outside of human perception and social construction, what we actually come to know of reality is culturally dependent. As each person interprets his/her world, the same world is being interpreted by others (Bruner, 1990). As people interact, they must find a way to understand a point of view other than their own, to resolve different interpretations of the world through a process of communication, collaboration, and negotiation (Driscoll, 2000). Thus, constructivism reflects that communication, collaboration, and negotiation are necessary in order for people to construct experience within the context of others' constructions. Therefore, "reality" can be understood as the constructed view of the world that remains following social collaboration and negotiation. Because constructions can vary from culture to culture, they are also culturally determined (Geertz, 1973). In other words, how we come to understand "reality" is also defined by our culture.

Constructivism also suggests that constructions of reality are relative in the degree to which they are "true" or "not true" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Because the construction of reality is based upon social and cultural interpretation and negotiation, and because social groups are fluid and continually and actively changing, their constructions are also actively changing. This fluidity makes constructions alterable and suggests that perception often becomes reality if enough people believe something to be true and those

perceptions become part of the culture and ultimately part of the socially constructed reality.

In addition, the fluid nature of constructions allows them to be changed by the individuals and groups who hold the constructions. When changes occur, the process of communication, negotiation, and interpretation occurs again. In this way, reality is continually being constructed through individual interpretation and social negotiation. The fluid, changing nature of constructions suggests that they do not necessarily have to reflect the world as it really is in order to be useful to people (Driscoll, 2000). They only have to be real enough to be useful for social interaction and communication (Bruner, 1990).

In this study, the underlying assumptions of constructivism served as a lens through which experiences and meanings were viewed.

Experience

Experience is both individual and global. We define our experiences and are defined by them. As Clandinin and Connelly (1994) noted,

> The word experience is found in homes, schools, higher education, and adult learning institutions. It is found in the most practical discussions… and it is found in the most revered theoretical texts. It is owned by no subject field and is found in virtually any community of educational discourse. It is mostly used with no special meaning and functions as the ultimate explanatory context…(p. 414).

But experience is more than just a popular concept; the social sciences are founded on the study of experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994).

The concept of an "experience" is important for any study of meaning because people use their experiences—with people, places, events, and things—as a starting point in the construction of meaning (Geertz, 1973). Thus, any study of meaning is by its very nature a study of experience. Therefore, to understand how people create meaningful experiences out of their day-to-day lives, it is necessary to understand how individuals cognitively and socially construct experience.

Individuals organize their experiences using *framing*, which is a cognitive process whereby people construct their experiences and their world (Bruner, 1990). In addition, people do not deal with their world as event by event. Rather, they frame events in larger cognitive structures called *schemas*. This process of utilizing schemas to understand experiences helps people to explain, mediate, process, and respond to the enormous amounts of information that they encounter each moment (Bruner, 1990). When people remember something, the first thing that comes to mind is an affect or attitude (i.e., something unpleasant, something that was exciting, something that led to embarrassment, etc.). The affect or attitude acts like a general thumbprint of the schema to be reconstructed (Bruner, 1990).

But the process of creating schemas does not occur in isolation. As previously described, people construct their experiences in a social and cultural context that involves communication, negotiation, and interpretation. As an individual thinks about and reflects on his/her experience, he/she tries to fit the meanings of those experiences into a framework that is consistent with both past individual experience and the collective understandings of his/her culture (Berger & Luckman, 1980). Thus, people are social creatures who purposefully interact with others and who are influenced by their socio-

cultural surroundings. So, the construction of experiences occurs cognitively through the framing of schemas and socially through the filtering of these schemas through one's social and cultural surroundings.

People often use narratives to frame their memory of experiences in a coherent, sequential manner. A narrative is inherently sequential and composed of a unique sequence of events, mental states, and situations involving people as characters or actors (Bruner, 199). These characters or actors are the constituents of a narrative, and their meaning is given by their place in the overall configuration of the sequence of the narrative as a whole.

Thus, experiences are organized through schemas and framed through narratives, giving experience both temporal and storied qualities. In this view, experience may be defined as the stories that people live. As Clandinin & Connelly (1994) suggest, "people live stories, and in the telling of them reaffirm them, modify them, and create new ones" (p. 415). This definition reflects the personal and social qualities of experiences.

Meaning

All people are meaning-makers and continually appraise and reappraise the people, places, events, and things that are a part of their world. From important events and experiences to the everyday mundane details of domestic life, life is interpreted and made meaningful. But people do not create meaning in the same ways. The meanings of anything—symbols, sights, experiences, feelings, etc.—necessarily differ from person to person because personal construct systems are different (Oxley & Hort, 1996).

Meaning occurs when a person actively interprets his/her experiences using internal, cognitive operations. Meanings are also tied to emotions (Cskiszentmihalyi &

Rochberg-Halton, 1981), and objects, places, and experiences that evoke emotion-laden memories and traditions can be particularly meaningful (Jacobi & Stokols, 1989). Private or personal meanings are thus the sum of the subjective meanings that an individual holds for an object, place, person or experience (Richins, 1994).

Meanings also have a social quality. Meanings are labeled and defined by a person's culture and social context (Geertz, 1973) based upon the language of that culture. Therefore, the language-based meanings that individuals assign to words, symbols, ideas, and concepts cannot be understood outside of this socio-cultural context. Richins (1994) noted that although the meanings that outside observers ascribe to objects, places, persons or experiences are likely to differ, members of specific social groups are likely to agree on some aspects of a meaning, and these agreements are the shared public meanings associated with an object, place, person or experience.

For example, we can explore personal and social meanings by considering the meanings of the automobile. I have personal knowledge and experience with an automobile that comes from driving and using an automobile. However, I also know what an automobile is because when I was a child I was taught by my culture to understand what the word "automobile" referred to. I was also taught to recognize what an automobile looks like (as opposed to a truck or a tank) based upon specific characteristics that an automobile possesses. I was also taught why automobiles are important or valuable. Although these public meanings of an automobile may differ among groups (e.g., an autoworker's automobile meanings versus an environmentalists' automobile meanings), if I took a certain subgroup and discussed the automobile, I could likely identify a set of shared meanings that the group ascribed to the automobile. So,

the meanings that I associate with an automobile are influenced not only by my personal experiences with, and knowledge of, automobiles, but also by the importance, value, and related shared meanings that are prescribed to automobiles by my culture and social groups.

Thus, meaning is both a personal and a social construct, and the process of meaning-making occurs both externally as constructions are interpreted and negotiated in a socio-cultural situation and internally as one filters these constructions through personal experiences, emotions, and beliefs and then accepts or rejects the constructions on a personal level. As Epting, Prichard, Leitner, and Dunnett (1996) suggest,

> The relationship between the personal and social world can be seen as like the relationship between a construct and an event or element. There would be no construct with nothing to construe, and there would be no meaning to an event if that event has not been embraced in a personal construct. The person would be empty and incomprehensible without a social surround; the social surround would be barren and even nonexistent if it were not for the personal action of constructing a meaning (p. 309).

Although several social science disciplines, including psychology, sociology, and human geography, have conceptualized "meaning" in different ways, and have explored how meaning is acquired and communicated using different approaches, this study of developed forest camping experiences and meanings adopted an approach to meaning that was consistent with its constructivist assumptions. Specifically, meaning was viewed as a symbolic and mediated interpretation of events or experiences influenced by both personal and socio-cultural constructions of reality. With this general understanding

of the concepts of experiences and meanings, we can now examine how camping experiences and meanings have been conceptualized.

Conceptualizations of Camping Experiences

Recreation Experience

Since camping is generally considered to be a recreational pursuit, camping experiences are best understood by examining the characteristics of a recreation experience. Research involving recreation experiences has been ongoing since the early 1970s, and there has been a significant amount of interest in 'experience' as a way to understand recreation behavior and to differentiate among recreationists (Manning, 1999). This body of research suggests that recreation experiences have six defining characteristics.

First, recreation experiences can create, or otherwise be the source of, various psychological or leisure states, such as happiness, well-being, and flow (Csikszentmihalyi & Kleiber, 1991; Mannell, 1980). These psychological or leisure states may also be associated with immediate, emotional, and physiological responses to certain stimuli (e.g., feelings associated with seeing a waterfall or a grizzly bear for the first time) (Knopf, 1987). Hartig and Evans (1993) proposed that the attraction recreationists feel towards nature experiences is somehow "built in" and that human beings are programmed to perceive natural environments in such a way as to promote relaxation and restoration.

When recreation experiences involve unusual, novel events and high levels of emotional intensity, they might be conceptualized as *extraordinary experiences* (Arnould & Price, 1993). Arnold and Price (1993) conducted a multi-method study of commercial

rafting participants and found that extraordinary experiences were manifested through harmony with nature, community, personal growth, and renewal.

Second, recreation experiences are dynamic and multi-phasic. In other words, recreation experiences are not static and may change from the beginning to the end of a recreational engagement. Early research found that recreation experiences occurred throughout five specific phases: anticipation/planning, travel to, on-site participation, travel back, and recollection (Clawson & Knetsch, 1966). Clawson and Knetsch proposed that satisfaction increased and decreased as a person went through the five phases.

More recently researchers have focused on the dynamic nature of recreation as it is experienced. These researchers, using methodologies such as the Experiential Sampling Method, have found that recreation experiences are not only multiphasic from the beginning of a trip to the end of a trip, but also that the on-site recreation experience—the experience within the five phases—can also be multi-phasic (Borrie & Roggenbuck, 2001; Celsi, Rose, & Leigh, 1993; Hull, Stewart, & Yi, 1992).

Hull and his associates found that mood varied across stages of the on-site recreation experience and that individual and environmental variables shaped mood during the recreational engagement. In other words, a person could experience moments of happiness, sadness, frustration, and elation all within a specific phase. Hull, Stewart, Yi's (1992) finding that the recreation experience involves "a sequence of relaxing feelings dotted with peaks of excitement" (p. 250) suggests the dynamic, emotional nature of recreation experiences.

Third, recreation experiences are related to the recreational activity and the setting in which the activity takes place. This view suggests that recreationists are rational, analytic, goal-directed individuals who evaluate alternative activities and settings based upon objective properties to determine which will provide desired benefits (Driver et al., 1987). In other words, people are able to process information about their needs, wants, or desired outcomes and make choices for particular preferred settings and activities to satisfy their needs or desired outcomes. In this sense, a recreation *experience* is defined as a psychological outcome associated with participation in a given activity in a particular setting (Driver & Brown, 1978; Clark & Stankey, 1979). Thus, a recreational experience results from an interaction between the activity and setting.

Fourth, recreation experiences can be emergent (Arnould & Price, 1993; Patterson, 1993; Patterson, Watson, Williams, & Roggenbuck, 1998). Viewing recreational experiences as emergent requires two assumptions. One, experience is best understood as a whole rather than the sum of its parts. Two, the specific nature of recreation experience is best described by the concept of "situated freedom." Situated freedom is the concept that suggests that there is environmental structure that sets boundaries on what can be perceived or experienced, but that within those boundaries recreationists are free to experience the world in unique, individual ways. In this way, the nature of experience emerges during recreation and is not linear or predictable (Patterson et al., 1998).

Fifth, recreational experiences are multi-sensory. In other words, recreation experiences stimulate and involve the senses. As people participate in recreation, their experiences are shaped by the information that they receive through their senses. For

example, Gramman (1999) examined the impact of noise and sound on national park visitors and found that the restorative properties of recreation, experienced through the senses, were significant. Although the multi-sensory nature of recreation experience may be somewhat intuitive, this characteristic should not be overlooked.

Sixth, recreation experiences play a role in the broader context of participants' lives (Arnould & Price, 1993; Borrie & Birzell, 2001; Patterson, Watson, Williams, & Roggenbuck, 1998). Recent research using meaning-based approaches to examine wilderness meanings suggests that recreation participants seek stories that enrich their lives. These stories not only function as a memory of the recreation experience, but also help to frame the recreationists' identity (Brooks, 2003).

Thus, recreation experiences can be summarized as emergent, dynamic, multi-phasic, multi-sensory, unfolding across time, related to the activity and the setting, important for a desired internal state, and purposeful within the context of participants' lives.

Forest Camping Experiences

Although forest camping experiences are believed to have all of the qualities of recreation experiences described in the previous section, to fully understand forest camping experiences the impact of the natural setting must be considered. Nature, as an aesthetically pleasing, restorative, and inspiring setting in which camping occurs, may be an important component of forest camping experience because it contributes a spiritual or transcendent quality to forest camping experiences (Frederick & Anderson, 1999; Talbot & Kaplan, 1986; Williams & Harvey, 2001). At first glance, spirituality and transcendence may seem to involve some of the other characteristics just described (i.e.,

positive psychological state, multi-sensory, etc.). However, research suggests that the spiritual or transcendent nature of forest camping may go beyond psychological benefits or sensory perception.

Talbot and Kaplan (1986) asked campers on a nine-day wilderness trip to keep a journal to describe their experiences and benefits. Over time, while participating in recreation in a forest setting, people gradually noticed more of nature's details, became increasingly comfortable in the woods, and even began to experience awe towards the natural environment. By living simply in nature while camping, sometimes entirely alone, they felt that came to know themselves better. Many campers reported a sense of oneness with the environment—a sense of environmental harmony or coherence—that made them feel they were all part of the same system. After the completion of the camping experience, many participants reported feeling mentally and physically renewed.

Research also suggests that the biophysical setting may render a forest camping experience with a spiritual or transcendent quality. Frederickson and Anderson (1999) studied the spiritual nature of wilderness experiences of women in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and in the Grand Canyon. Although participants' journals indicated that interactions and relationships among the group were most important, tangible features of the natural environment, such as the presence of wildlife and shifting weather patterns, contributed to their experience. As Frederick and Anderson (1999) shared,

> Participants….frequently mentioned the significance of being out under an open sky, sleeping without a tent and being able to vividly see the stars at night without interference from other light sources. In effect, this

> direct contact with nature inspired many participants to identify that they rarely 'experienced' the natural world in their everyday lives…it helped them to 'get in touch' with more important spiritual matters (p. 31).

These findings were supported by Williams & Harvey (2001), who studied 131 people who visited, worked, or lived in forest settings. They found that two distinct forms of transcendent experience occurred in forests; one is characterized by strong feelings of insignificance, and the second is characterized by a strong sense of compatibility and familiarity. They also found that there was a close relationship between transcendence in the forests and the aesthetic and restorative functions of nature.

In this study, based upon the literature regarding recreation experiences and also recreation experiences in natural settings, *forest camping experience* was defined as an emergent quality of camping participation that is dynamic, constructed, emotional, multi-sensory, important in people lives, and connected to the natural setting.

Conceptualizations of Camping Meanings

Studies that purported to examine camping meaning began in the 1960's. However, camping meaning has rarely, if ever, been operationalized. Camping studies conducted before the 1990's used the concept of meaning interchangeably with other concepts such as *motive* (Burch, 1965), *value* (Burch, 1965; Etzkorn, 1964) and *importance* (Buchanan, Christensen, & Burdge, 1981). Recently, a meanings-based approach for understanding recreation experiences has been used to examine how people construct meaningful experiences while camping (Arnould & Price, 1993; Patterson, Williams, & Scherl, 1994). This approach has led researchers to consider how recreation meanings are constructed before, during, and after the experience and how recreation

experiences may be relevant within the overall life-course history of the recreationist (Borrie & Birzell, 2001). This section explores how camping meanings have been conceptualized through a review of relevant camping literature. This section also discusses recent studies that utilized the meanings-based approach to explore camping experiences.

Camping Meanings Related to Self

The ways in which people cognitively construct their experiences and meanings were discussed briefly in an earlier part of this chapter. Some recreation research suggests that camping meaning is related to cognitive, affective, and behavioral characteristics of individual campers. As people interact with their world in their everyday lives, they create a cognitive understanding or representation of their world. In other words, they create a personal understanding of their world and construct the meaning of their world. As Bruner (1990) suggested, "to understand a person you must understand how his/her experiences are shaped by his/her intentional states." Therefore, camping meaning may be individually constructed according to one's own perceptions and experiences.

Enduring Involvement

The concept of *enduring involvement* in recreation research evolved from studies of consumer behavior and the value that consumers associate with certain products, and was conceived as a continuum ranging from low to high levels of involvement. McIntyre (1989) conceptually linked the concept of enduring involvement with recreation specialization (McIntyre, 1989) and recreation involvement (McIntyre & Pigram, 1992), and viewed enduring involvement as the "personal meaning" of camping participation.

In this conceptualization, camping experiences were considered personally meaningful because they became intrinsically valuable to campers through their involvement in camping over time and their affective, emotional attachment to the activity. McIntyre (1989) suggested that the *personal meaning* of camping participation was related to attraction, self-expression, and centrality. McIntyre administered surveys to ORV (outdoor recreation vehicle) campers in three different areas that ranged according to environmental setting, degree of camper self-reliance, level of facility development, and management presence. It was suggested that each of these three areas would be the preferred choice of campers at different levels of enduring involvement. McIntyre found that camping *importance* was related to (a) enjoyment of the activity, (b) the centrality of camping to a participant's lifestyle, and (c) the social aspects of camping. Of the three, only centrality discriminated among the three campgrounds. Furthermore, McIntyre (1989) found that the actual camping activity may be of little value to the camper whose main involvement lies in the social aspects of the experience.

Self-Identity and Possessions

Social-psychology research into self-perception and self-affirmation suggests that participation in camping may embody distinct and measurable identity images, and that campers might select specific activities at least partially on the basis of the identity images symbolized in the activity and how they want to be perceived by others (Bem, 1972; Schlenker, B.R., 1986; Haggard & Williams, 1991). For example, if I was a male camper and wanted to be perceived as a "mountain man," then I might tend to experience developed camping through actions that I (and others around me) associated with this identity image, such as collecting and chopping wood, exploring the forests, and building

campfires. Although no specific studies of developed camping have articulated how self-identity meanings emerge and become meaningful, several studies suggest that these meanings may be important to developed forest campers. In Burch's (1965) study of developed camping, he referred to the fact that "when one enters or leaves a given play world, he is expected to assume the appropriate…identity and to leave others behind." (p. 606). The previously mentioned research into enduring involvement had "self-expression" as one of its three core attributes, a concept that is related to the identity that a person associates with a given recreational identity.

A large body of research into the meanings of possessions suggests that people form attachments to, and express their identity through, specific possessions that they own. These possessions can also be symbolic in nature and can represent expressive statements about the self. People may possess products that are organized around their various identities (Lavarie & Arnett, 2000), and they may "show-off" these possessions to enhance a particular identity to others. Thus, developed forest campers may express personal meanings related to their self-identity through their possessions—the camping gear and equipment that they purchase. As I discussed in Chapter 1, people are purchasing more and more camping-related gear and spending more and more money on camping. Consumer research suggests that possessions play an important role in forming and reflecting the self (Belk, 1988; Richins, 1994). In 1969, Bultena and Klessig noted the difference between the "Spartan" campers and "convenience campers" of that era. Spartans camped with only a minimum of gear, happy to meet the challenges of nature with knowledge rather than technology. On the other hand, convenience campers "take

the soft life of home out to the woods and with the travel trailers and campers meet nature on wheels" (p. 349).

Identity products are often used in situations where other people can examine these products, for instance using a new pop-up camper or a new tent (Laverie & Arnett, 2000). Campers may seek to achieve a type of *status* through their use of equipment and to have this status socially validated by members of their social group (Burch, 1965; Shafer, 1968). Sutter (2002) noted that "consumerism has taught Americans to see the world in more possessive and materialistic ways, not only in the acquisition of goods but also in the accumulation of experience" (p. 27). For some developed forest campers, camping may be meaningful because of their possessions and how they use their possessions during the experience.

Furthermore, although no studies have specifically examined equipment involvement or status among developed forest campers, the idea that developed campers might attach increasing importance to camping equipment as they become more experienced with camping, and to use this equipment to achieve status within their camping group, seems logical. However, as developed forest camping involves many different types of equipment that might be used in many different ways, it is unclear exactly how camping equipment, or the potential increasing "importance" of camping equipment, may influence camping meanings.

In summary, developed forest camping may be personally meaningful because camping experiences become intrinsically valuable to campers through their involvement in camping over time and their affective, emotional attachment to the activity. This highlights the importance of understanding how developed camping may be important

over the larger context of campers' lives, particularly those developed forest campers who have had long-time involvement and attachment to camping. Developed forest camping may also be personally meaningful because it allows people to demonstrate and validate specific identity images that are important for their self-conceptions. Many of these identity images may be communicated through the use and display of camping gear and equipment. This highlights the importance of understanding the meanings that developed forest campers associated with their camping gear, equipment, and mode.

Camping Meanings Related to Social Interaction

Social Interaction

One of the most prevalent meanings attributed to camping is social interaction (Buchanan, Christensen, & Burdge, 1981; Burch, 1965; Etzkorn, 1964; Hendee & Campbell, 1969; Irwin, Gartner, & Phelps, 1990; Lee, 1972; Patterson, Williams, & Scherl, 1994; Shaw, Havitz, & Delamere, 2002). In one of the first camping studies ever published, Etzkorn (1964) examined the social meanings of camping among sixty-four camping groups. Etzkorn's questions included, "How frequently do you camp?", "What do you like the most about camping?", and "What activities have you planned for this stay in camp?" Although not explicitly defined by Etzkorn, meaning seemed to be determined by identifying those aspects of the camping experience that were most valued. The results of this study led Etzkorn to conceptualize a "value-syndrome"; three clusters of values related to camping participation—rest and relaxation, meeting congenial people, and outdoor life. Etzkorn found that camping value depended less on natural resources (i.e., communing with nature) and more on social resources. He noted

that "camping in public campgrounds provides an institutional framework within which the social needs of some individuals can be most effectively met" (p. 85).

These results were supported by Hendee & Campbell (1969), who examined the social aspects of developed camping using conversations with camping groups. They found that campers viewed camping primarily as an opportunity to meet new people and to have enjoyable social experiences. Hendee and Campbell suggested that camping activities were not as important as the people with whom one was camping, and noted that when camping, campers often focused on people rather than the natural environment.

Research suggests that the importance of camping for social interaction is a cross-cultural meaning. In a study of Mexican-American and Anglo developed campers, Irwin et al., (1990) found that Mexican-Americans preferred the use of developed camping because of opportunities for socialization. Specifically, Mexican-American campers favored more closely spaced campsites so that they could be near other campers.

Family Functioning

A camping meaning that is closely related to social interaction is "family functioning" (sometimes called "'family bonding," "family enrichment," or "family togetherness"). Research over the past thrity years suggests that participation in outdoor recreation can lead to improved family functioning (Hawks, 1991; Holman & Epperson, 1984; Huff, Widmer, & McCoy, 2003; Zabrinskie, Potter, & Duenkel, 1998). Taken together, these studies indicate that the family benefits of outdoor recreation may result from the unfamiliar outdoor environment and the type of family interactions that are required in order for families to be successful in these environments (Orthner & Mancini, 1980; Zabrinskie, et al, 1998). Similarly, studies of family groups in developed

campgrounds suggest that the camping meanings for many families go beyond social interaction and are related to enhanced family functioning.

Burch (1965) was perhaps the first researcher to discuss "family togetherness" as one of the social meanings of camping. More recently, in Patterson, Williams, & Scherl's (1994) hermeneutic-based camping study, one of the participant's "personal projects" was the social context of camping and the desire to experience family togetherness. Shaw, Havitz, & Delamere (2002) conducted interviews with fifteen families to explore the meanings associated with their "Avacation" (a broad term meant to include weekend family camping trips and extensive trips away from home). They found that "family togetherness" was the most salient theme associated with camping meanings. They based this theme on the expressed importance of family interactions, communication, and spending time together. Shaw et al. noted that "many of the children reported that they liked spending time with their parents, and some said that their parents seemed to have more time for them on vacation, compared to being at home" (p. 2-3). The greater importance or meaning of family togetherness during camping was the development of a shared understanding of what family means.

Storytelling and the Social Constructing of Shared Memories

A large body of social-psychology research indicates that that how we perceive and come to know our world is directly influenced by others (Ross & Nisbett, 1991). As previously described, people create socio-cultural meanings through a process of interpretation, collaboration, and negotiation. Thus, developed forest camping meanings are likely socially and culturally constructed through the processes of interacting with other people while camping, sharing one's own interpretations of experiences, perceiving

others' interpretations of experiences, and arriving at shared meanings through collaboration and negotiation.

As people create shared meanings, these meanings are likely communicated through stories and shared memories. Storytelling seems to be an important aspect of social interaction during developed camping. Burch (1965) proposed that during developed camping experiences "only the exceedingly spectacular act will be endowed with life by being named and exchanged by an audience who may continue this act's existence until such time as a more spectacular act supplants it" (p. 612). Camping research into activity patterns of campers suggests that campers spend a lot of time in social settings around their campfires (Hendee & Campbell, 1969). Bachelard (1964) discussed the mesmerizing and primordial lure of fires, describing them as "backwoods televisions" that have dancing flames, flickering lights, and a wood-smoke aroma. Belk and Costa (198) recognized how the campfire is a social event and can serve a bonding function among people who experience a campfire together. For many developed forest campers, the campfire may provide the primary social setting for the construction of shared memories and storytelling.

Shaw et al. (2002) found that "creating memories" was the predominant or core theme related to all other meaning of family vacations which included camping. Through time and shared experiences, new memories were created and at the same time old memories are remembered. Furthermore, Shaw and her colleagues suggested that memories were important because of the role of memories in the social construction of a positive view of the family and a shared understanding of what family means. It is likely that developed forest campers create or socially construct memories of camping

experiences and that these experiences are related to the meanings of developed forest camping.

Camping Meanings Related to Activity

Although forest camping research has suggested that the activity—what a person is doing during camping—is often identified as less important than the person's social camping group, there are other reasons to believe that camping activities impact how camping experiences come to be viewed as meaningful. Burch (1965), in his study of family camping groups in developed campgrounds in Oregon's national forests, found that the play action of campers was a critical aspect of the camping experience. Burch described how men and women played out different roles while camping, and each of these roles had associated activities. For men, those roles were often primitivistic and represented the mythical American model of heroic masculinity. Male campers who constructed lean-tos and fireplaces in the campgrounds were believed to be motivated by a desire to return to the resourcefulness once held by men in primitive and pioneer societies. Burch documented that women's camping play action tended to be "prosaic and practical" (p. 606), yet Burch did not describe in detail the nature of this play. These findings suggest that camping activities may have meaning by allowing campers to imagine themselves as actors in a type of theatrical play living in a more primitive environment, particularly for male campers.

Similarly, Riese and Vorkinn (2002) proposed that people living in modern societies have lost many types of knowledge and skills that are now managed by institutions. As these knowledge and skills are lost, people seek to regain control over their own situations by *reskilling*—the process through which individuals seek knowledge

or skills. Riese and Vorkinn, who found evidence of reskilling through an analysis of outdoor recreationists' narratives, described the purpose of reskilling,

> In a modern technological society in which control over one's life conditions is impossible, the mastering of survival in natural surrounding may function as a means of regaining control. Outdoor recreation…may be regarded as a type of reskilling (p. 204).

These studies suggest that developed forest campers may use camping activities as a way to regain lost knowledge or skills or to develop new skills. On one hand, primitive role playing and reskilling seems intuitively easier to apply to dispersed (i.e., primitive) camping than to developed forest camping, as campers in dispersed settings may be better able to attain a feeling of being in a primitive environment. However, developed forest camping may appeal to Americans because of a desire to have both primitive and refined aspects of our lives (Nash, 1967). Recalling the words of Henry David Thoreau, Nash (1967) stated, "For an optimum existence…one should alternate between wilderness and civilization, or, if necessary, choose for a permanent resident in partially cultivated country. The essential requirement was to maintain contact with both ends of the spectrum" (p. 93).

Although researchers have often highlighted the social meanings of camping over the activity meanings, there seems to be at least some research to suggest that camping meanings may involve what developed forest campers are actually doing on a day-to-day basis. Kelly (1997) recommended that the commonplace activities that families participate in daily are central to family life and should have a meaningful part of theory

development. Thus, developed forest campers' daily camping activities may play a role in the development of camping meanings.

Camping Meanings Related to Place

From Settings to Place

As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, the outdoor setting of developed forest camping is an important part of the experience. Until 1990, much of the research into outdoor recreation settings examined the setting features necessary to support specific recreation activities or desired experiences. Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck, and Watson (1992) suggested that this view of recreation settings created a commodity metaphor, whereby settings were represented as collections of features or attributes. Because this commodity metaphor of recreation settings often fails to explain people's recreation site choices, their affinity for specific recreation places, and the total worth they assign to specific recreation resources, most of the current research on the meanings of outdoor recreational contexts has focused on the concept of *plac*e (Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck, & Watson, 1992). Thus, over the past fifteen years, a body of knowledge has developed within the recreation literature regarding human-environment interactions and the importance of specific places to recreationists (McCool, Stankey, & Clark, Williams, 2002; Scheyer, Jacob, & White, 1981; Williams & Carr, 1993, Williams et al. 1992). The term *place* originated in the field of geography, where place is considered to be the center of meaning as constructed by experience (Tuan, 1974, 1977). In this view, people come to understand specific places as meaningful over time.

People can form emotional attachments to places. The term *place attachment* has been developed to describe the emotional attachment or bond that can range in intensity

from immediate sensory delight to long-lasting attachment (Tuan, 1974). Highly attached individuals can eventually become place dependent, dependent upon the place or places of a given type. When place becomes central to a person's concept of self, his/her identity may become dependent upon place.

Research suggests that people participate in camping because of specific values or motivations associated with nature-based settings. As people camp in specific areas (i.e., specific parks, campsites, or campgrounds) over time, they may come to view these camping areas as special places (Williams et al., 1992).

Describing exactly what constitutes a "special place" is challenging. For example, are emotional attachments to camp places found in the meanings of the campsite, the campground, or some feature of the surrounding landscape? Etzkorn (1964) found that campers in developed campgrounds participated in activities that could have been engaged in almost anywhere. A minority of campers desired activities such as hiking and nature studies, which required the outdoor setting. This suggests that place meanings may not be entirely related to the environmental setting, but perhaps to a place that is perceived of as novel, somewhere other than a person's home.

Furthermore, although certain individual meanings associated with camp places may be unique, research suggests that a camping destination or setting may come to embody shared meanings as a symbol endowed with social or cultural significance (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981). As Crotty (1998) suggested,

> The social world and the natural world are not to be seen…as distinct worlds existing side by side. They are one human world. We are born, each of us, into an already interpreted world and it is at once natural and

social (p. 57).

These shared socio-cultural meanings are likely communicated through social interaction. Social interaction during camping may cause special camp places to be symbolically transformed from having individual meanings to socio-cultural meanings (Greider & Garkovich, 1994).

Place and Tradition

Camping meanings associated with specific camping places may be related to the traditions that campers develop. In this way, attachment to places may link people with friends, children, partners, and other associates in symbolic ways, providing reminders of childhood, parents, friends, ancestors, and others (Low & Altman, 1992). Jacobi and Stokols (1983) have classified the meanings of particular places using *tradition*—a concept which suggests that people can have a historical association with a place in three ways. First, a place can be associated with historical events, traditions, rituals, and meaningful actions. Second, a place can be association with an identifiable group, culture, family, or organization. Third, a place may serve as a symbol for values, ideas, ideologies, beliefs, and so on. Tradition cannot be understood as a physical property of a place, but rather a conceptual property that individuals hold. Through social interaction, individuals and groups communicate, share, and pass on the traditions of a place.

The research of Jacobi and Stokols (1983) and Tuan (1974) suggests that campers may come to view specific places—campgrounds or campsites—as meaningful because of the family traditions and the emotional attachments that evolved and became associated with those places. Low and Altman (1992) suggest that powerful landscape memories can be associated with positive experience in specific places. The importance

of storytelling and memories was described earlier in this section as a component of the social interaction meanings of camping. Clearly, the act of 'passing down' family camping traditions through stories and shared memories may also be an important aspect of place meanings.

Nature and Restoration

As a setting for forest camping, it is important to consider the values and meanings that people associate with nature. Knopf (1987) summarized four broad values that people hold regarding nature. According to Knopf (1987), people value nature because nature is restorative and offers a respite from everyday life (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989); nature builds an individual's sense of control, competence, and esteem; nature is symbolic of life, continuity, mystery, and spirituality; and nature is a diversion from the stimulus-rich, monotonous life that is common in other settings such as cities and suburbs. Knopf (1987) summarized the empirical studies of meanings ascribed to natural environments and found that the broad themes of escape, social interaction, competence building, and aesthetic enjoyment were most prevalent.

A significant amount of research supports the notion that people participate in nature-based experiences for personal restoration (Knopf, 1987; Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; Hartig, Mang, & Evans, 1991; Ulrich, 1983). Restoration generally refers to a reduction in stress, arousal, and anxiety. The research of Kaplan and Kaplan suggested that restorative settings should promote some sense of being away. The Kaplans's concept of "being away" referred to a change in the location and/or activities of daily life. The importance of being away—or *escape*—has been well documented in the outdoor recreation literature (Knopf, 1987). But the Kaplans proposed that escape alone did not

equal restoration. They proposed that a person also had to find some degree of "fascination" in the nature environmental, a level of sensory stimulation that does not leave time for deep thinking. Sensing the natural world, through contact with novel flora, fauna, and weather during developed camping, may provide this degree of fascination.

Ulrich's model of restoration (1983) differed from the Kaplans in that he suggested that people want to escape unwanted forms of arousal. An example of an unwanted form of arousal would be the sound of a work or home telephone ringing. Ulrich proposed that nature has a calming effect because it is a non-taxing stimulus that elicits positive emotions and blocks negative emotions (Hartig, Mang, & Evans, 1991). Taken together, these studies suggest that developed forest campers may associate camping with restorative meanings related to escape, either in terms of getting away to a different location with enough stimulation to take their mind off of their stressors, or getting away from arousal and stress in their home or work environment. Recalling Chapter 1, these themes of escape and restoration have been intertwined with American history. As Sutter (2002) suggested, "To many Americans, nature, once a raw material to be transformed by ceaseless labor, became a place of relaxation, therapeutic recreation, and moral regeneration. For many, nature offered psychic accommodation to a changing world" (p. 21).

The concept of "escape" is also a recurrent theme in the recreation research, and several camping studies have found that escape was an important camping meaning. In their study family "Avacation," which included some family camping, Shaw et al. (2002) found that escape was the second most prevalent theme. Specifically, fathers wanted to escape from the stresses and strains of paid work and mothers wanted to escape daily

household chores. Similarly, Burch (1965), in a study of family camping groups' forest experiences and social meanings, found that campers "leave behind [their] daily commitments" (p. 605). In Patterson, Williams, & Scherl's (1994) hermeneutic-based camping study, one of the participants "personal projects" was escape. This participant related her desire for escape to *attention* (interacting with fascinating stimuli), *convenience* (escaping the conveniences of civilization), and *safety* (isolation and a sense of security). These studies suggest that developed forest campers may want to escape from daily chores, stresses, and commitments, and may want to interact with environments that are fascinating and safe.

This section has explored the camping meanings that are associated with developed camping experiences. In summary, the research examined here suggests that developed forest camping meanings may be related to the self (enduring involvement, identity, possessions), social interaction (family functioning, shared memories), activity (skill-building, everyday actions), special places and traditions, and the restorative effects of nature. One of the primary purposes of this study was to better understand the expressed and constructed meanings of developed forest camping, and to better understand which of these meanings are most closely associated with the modern developed forest camping experience.

Influence of Technology on Developed Camping Experiences and Meanings

In Chapter 1, I discussed how technology has likely changed the nature of the modern developed forest camping experience. Although technology was not addressed in the previous section on camping meanings, it is believed to be very important and likely influences the meanings that developed campers associated with camping experiences.

Because there are no specific studies of the impacts of technology on developed forest campers, I had to draw some comparisons from other research.

Borrie (1999) has discussed the impact of technology on the meanings that recreationists associated with wilderness. According to Borrie, technology manipulates a person's wants and needs and "serves as a buffer between the visitor and the realities of the wilderness environment" (p. 1). The notion of technology as a buffer for recreational experiences sounds similar to what Etzkorn (1964) and Clark, Hendee, and Campbell (1971) discussed. These researchers noted that the developed campers who they studied preferred the conveniences associated with modern campgrounds—conveniences that would seemingly insulate them from direct contact with the natural environment. As camping technology becomes more sophisticated, it seems that the modern developed forest camper may be increasingly insulated and isolated from nature.

Turner (2002) has discussed the impacts of this isolation from nature. He suggests that the way that people perceive work in nature has changed; there was a transition from a working-knowledge of the land (e.g., woodcraft) to the use to of modern skills and the use of technology to insulate oneself from nature. However, it is unclear whether or not developed forest campers have made such a transition. Although they are often insulated from nature, it may be the case that the development of skills such as chopping wood with an axe, exploring in the woods, and other similar actions are still central to the developed forest camping experience.

Technologies such as the Internet, cellular phones, satellite television have removed the boundaries between people and places that might have existed even ten years ago. Exactly how these technologies impact developed forest camping experiences

and associated meanings (such as place meanings, the meanings of technology-based possessions, and related meanings) is unclear. However, as people living in the information age participate in developed forest camping, this increasing connectedness between people and technology may influence how place meanings are formed. Furthermore, the increasing ability to transport features of the urban or suburban environment into the forest camping setting may have changed how these places are experienced. Riese and Voorkin (2002), who examined the production of meaning in outdoor recreation experiences in Norway, proposed that the modern context for the production of meaning has changed, as time, space, and traditions have been altered in the modern age. In these circumstances,

> tradition no longer….offers ready explanation for all sorts of events, the time and effort required for the production of meaning are bound to rise. At the same time, as the contextualized meaning of the past disappears, the increased flow of information makes huge amount of information available for meaning construction. Thus there is simultaneously an excess of meaning and no meaning at all (p. 201).

Riese and Vorkin seem to suggest that the way that today's campers are inundated with information through technology may influence the construction of meanings that are associated with their experiences.

Measurement of Forest Camping Experiences and Meanings

End-State Frameworks

In Chapter 2, I have described several different conceptions of recreation experiences, camping experiences, and camping meanings. These conceptualization can

be grouped into two general categories—*end-state frameworks* and *process-oriented frameworks*. These frameworks vary because they make different assumptions about recreation experiences (Patterson 2002). End-state frameworks suggest that people participate in recreation to satisfy underlying needs and goals. A majority of the outdoor recreation research has utilized end-state frameworks. In many cases, researchers have made ontological and epistemological assumptions, consistent with this end-state approach, that seem inappropriate for research questions involving experiences and meanings. For example, McIntyre (1989), Williams et al. (1992), and Kaltenborn (1997) all adopted a reductionistic/multivariate perspective on human experience. They assumed that meaning can be represented through an *a priori* model and that the constructed meaning of the experience can be represented as the sum of the parts of the experience.

Process-Oriented Frameworks

In contrast, process-oriented frameworks suggest that the nature or meanings of recreation experience should serve as a basis for understanding recreation behavior (Diener, 1984). These frameworks include both experience-based and meaning-based models of behavior. The meaning-based approach suggests that happiness and well-being arise directly from the nature of the activity and from interaction with people, places, and objects—rather than from attaining a certain desired state (McCracken, 1987). Within the meaning-based model, people are seen as actively constructing meaning as they seek to create coherence in their lives. Meaning is viewed as "an emergent property that is actualized through a transactional relationship between person and setting" (Mick and Buhl, 1992, p.101). In addition, the meaning-based approach helps researchers to

understand peoples' experiences within the broader context of their lives (Arnould & Price, 1993). Several studies have used a meaning-based approach and narratives to better understand outdoor recreation experiences (Arnould & Price, 1993; Borrie & Birzell, 2001; Fredericksen and Anderson, 1999; Patterson et al., 1998; Patterson, Williams, & Scherl, 1994; Riese & Vorkinn, 2002), and three of these studies involved forest-based experiences or camping (Arnould & Price, 1993; Fredericksen and Anderson, 1999; Patterson, Williams, & Scherl, 1994). A meaning-based approach was used in this study, which was consistent with the constructivist assumptions that were described in part on Chapter 2 and are also described in Chapter 3.

Definitions of Primary Concepts

Developed Forest Camping

Developed forest camping is a recreational activity in which a person spends at least one night outdoors in a designated, managed setting using one of a variety of motor-based camping modes: car-camping with a tent, pop-up camper, trailer, motor home, or other recreational vehicle. Developed forest campgrounds may offer a range of amenities. At one end of this range is a more primitive type of developed forest camping in which campers may only be provided with a paved or gravel road, a tent pad, and possibly a pit toilet. At the more developed end of this range campers may have access to a tent pad, fire pit, paved or gravel roads, parking spaces, restrooms, showers, running water, electricity, water hookups, sewage hookups, and other amenities such as playgrounds, interpretive trails, and organized programming for youth and adults.

Camping Experiences

Camping experiences are emergent qualities of camping participation that are dynamic, constructed, emotional, multi-sensory, important in people lives, and connected to the natural setting.

Camping Meanings

Camping meanings are symbolic, emotional, emergent, and negotiated properties and interpretations of camping experiences that are communicated through social interaction and other related social processes. Experiences, situations, settings, and objects come to be viewed as "meaningful" through communication with others. Although developed forest camping meanings may not be universal, some meanings may be culturally/socially shared.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Research Approach

Ontological, Epistemological, and Methodological Assumptions

The purpose of this study was to understand the modern developed forest camping experiences and associated meanings, how developed forest camping may be meaningful across the larger context of campers' lives, and the influence of technology on the modern developed forest camping experience and associated meanings. This research was based on an underlying paradigm—a basic sets of beliefs that guided action—with specific ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions. Ontology refers to the nature of reality and what can be known about reality. Epistemology refers to the nature of the relationship between the "knower and what can be known" (i.e., researcher and phenomenon being studied), and methodology refers to how we gain knowledge about the world (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The research approach (i.e., methodology) in this study cannot be understood apart from the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the underlying research paradigm.

Constructivist Assumptions

This study explored developed forest camping using a constructivist approach. As previously described, the constructivist paradigm assumes a relativist *ontology* (which means that there are multiple realities), a subjective *epistemology* (the researcher and the study participants "create" an understanding together through communication, interpretation, and negotiation), and utilizes a naturalistic *methodology* (qualitative procedures including interviews). Constructivism suggests that realities: (a) can be understood as personally, socially, or experientially constructed, (b) can be shared among

individuals and across cultures, and (c) are dependent for their form and content on the individual person or groups holding the constructions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Although this study was based on a post-positivist, non-traditional constructivist approach, this dissertation does not attempt to disregard or discourage traditional approaches to studying experience and meanings. The constructivist approach merely encouraged me to strive towards an understanding of the modern camping experience while at the same time forcing me to acknowledge my own prior conceptions and assumptions.

Assumptions about Interpretation, Negotiation, and Change

This study was informed by the following assumptions. Individuals and groups socially construct reality. Shared experiences, language, and meanings create a basis for knowledge and understanding. In other words, an individual's beliefs, prior experience, knowledge, interactions with others, and culture influence how he or she perceives the world. Therefore, reality is a cultural construct. Although reality may exist outside of human perception and social construction, what we actually come to know of reality is culturally dependent. There can be multiple realities, and these realities are believed to be equally valid.

Individuals interpret their worlds and also interpret how others around them interpret this act of interpretation. Individuals then negotiate their own meanings and constructions of experience together in a social context to create what comes to be understand as a recognized "reality." The main idea here is that in many cases perception becomes reality. When something changes that causes past "realities" to be changed or questioned, people go through the same process of interpreting and negotiating meanings

through social interaction so that new meanings are created. This process of meaning-making continually shapes how people view their world. Although there can be a range of meanings related to a specific experience, some meanings are more shared than others.

Due to the constructed nature of camping experiences, the constructivist approach seemed ideally suited to this research. As Crotty (1998) states, constructivism is the view that reality is constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world and then developed and transmitted within a social context. This definition suggests that developed forest camping meanings develop as people participate in the activities of camping (both alone and with others), but that the meaning of camping evolves through communication and interpretation of these activities within the context of campers' lives and in association with their social group. Finally, through these social interaction processes, shared meanings about the camping experience emerge and may eventually become a widely recognized and communicated "meaning" of the developed forest camping experience.

Study Site

Data for this study was collected during the summer of 2003 at the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area (MRNRA). The MRNRA, a part of the Jefferson National Forest and the George Washington National Forest in Southwest Virginia, covers over 120,000 acres of high mountain lands and is managed by the U.S.D.A. Forest Service. The MRNRA is a major recreational destination for the eastern United States (Commonwealth of Virginia, 2000). The MRNRA was selected as the site for this study for three reasons. One, it had a range of developed campgrounds that were believed to be suitable to this study. Two, geographic proximity (Punch, 1994) was important and the

selected campgrounds within the MRNRA were a relatively short drive from the Virginia Tech campus. Three, the Virginia Tech Department of Forestry had conducted research with the U.S.D.A. Forest Service in the MRNRA in the past and thus a prior relationship was already established. Data were collected from June to August because these months represented the bulk of the summer visitation at the developed forest campgrounds that were selected.

Gaining Access to Mount Rogers Campgrounds

Meetings with Recreation Specialist

In the winter of 2002 and the spring of 2003, I met with the Recreation Specialist from the MRNRA to discuss the purpose of the study, to explore common goals and interests of a forest camping study, and to discuss the interview methodology and any concerns related to the use of this form of data collection. Once permission was obtained from the U.S.D.A. Forest Service, I worked with the Recreation Specialist to identify specific campgrounds that met the identified criteria (i.e., campgrounds that ranged in the type and level of on-site amenities, from less-developed to highly-developed).

In cooperation with the Recreation Specialist, three road-accessible campgrounds in the MRNRA were selected based upon the types of amenities provided (Figure 1). Ravens Cliff Campground was identified as less-developed (i.e., tent pad, fire pit, pump station for water, and no other amenities). Hurricane Campground was identified as moderately-developed (i.e., tent pad, fire pit, running water, electricity, and showers). Grindstone Campground was identified as highly-developed (i.e., tent pad, fire pit, running water, water hook-ups, sewage hookups, electricity, showers, playground, areas for satellite reception, and other amenities like children's programming).

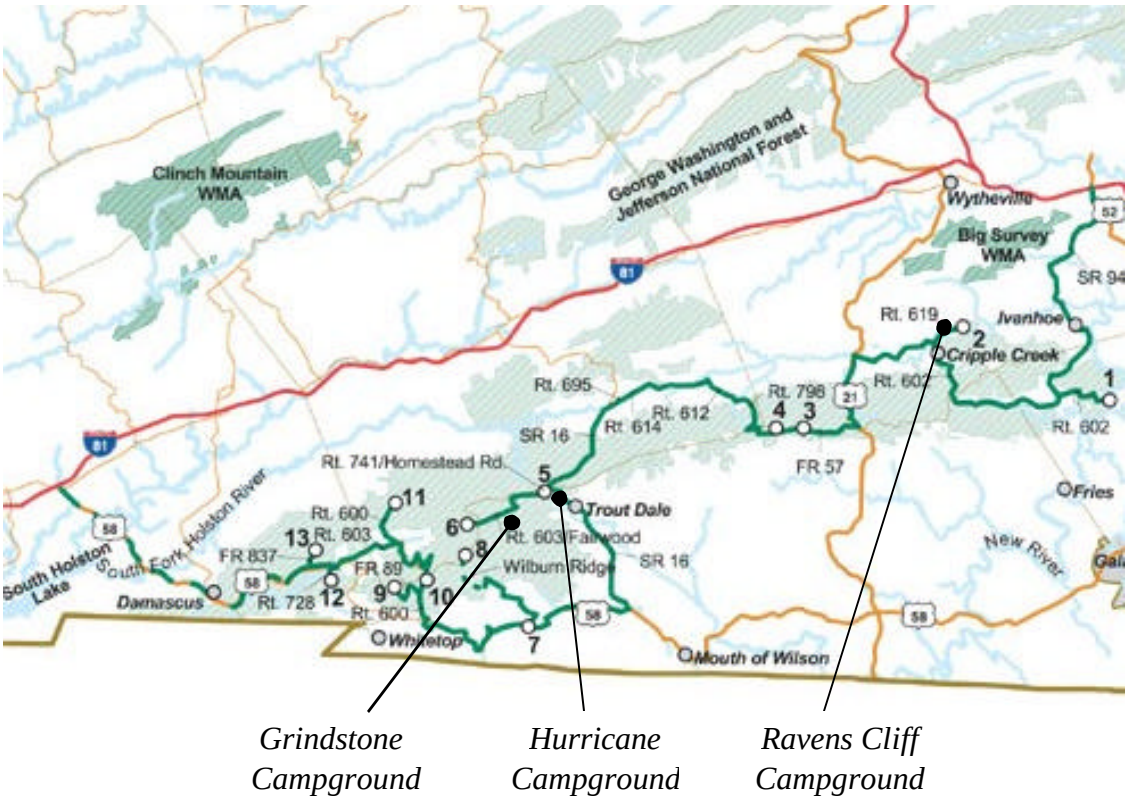


Figure 1: Approximate Locations of Grindstone, Hurricane, and Ravens Cliff Campgrounds in the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area

This range of campgrounds was selected because research suggested that dispersed (i.e., primitive) and developed camping are qualitatively different (Etzkorn, 1964; Hendee & Campbell, 1969) due to the influence of amenities and technology on camping experiences. Thus, meanings associated with camping in a less developed campsite were believed to be qualitatively different than meanings associated with camping in a highly developed campsite. Furthermore, to fully understand the meanings associated with developed forest camping experiences it was important to understand different types of developed forest camping.

Meetings with Campground Managers

Through the Recreation Specialist, I learned that the Hurricane and Grindstone Campgrounds had on-site managers (or hosts) who were responsible for the campgrounds. I believed that these managers might function as gatekeepers—people who protected their affiliated organizations and who would be crucial to me in terms of gaining access (Punch, 1994). The Recreation Specialist and I discussed strategies for building positive relationships with the campground managers and for gaining access to developed forest campers at each campground.

To establish trust, I conducted two face-to-face meetings, one with the managers from Hurricane and a second with the managers from Grindstone. These meetings, conducted at a location selected by the campground managers (i.e., a local diner), provided me with the opportunity to explain the purpose of the study and to address the managers' questions and concerns. The campground managers, who had worked multiple summers at Hurricane and Grindstone, recommended specific weekends during the months of June, July, and August when campers were most likely to be on-site. The final decision regarding when to collect data at the Hurricane and Grindstone campgrounds was based upon these discussions with the managers and conversations with the Recreation Specialist. The final decision regarding when to collect data at Ravens Cliff was determined by campground use data collected by the Forest Service based on fee collections.

Because I intended to approach campers towards the end of their camping trip to ask them to participate in the interview, it was necessary to identify campers' expected departure date. It was also desirable to interview campers who were camping for

multiple days. The campground managers at Hurricane and Grindstone agreed to give me access to the registration cards which identified campers' names and their intended date of departure. No such registration card was available at Ravens Cliff, so when I approached campers at Ravens Cliff I asked them how long they had been camping and when they expected to depart.

Building Communication and Rapport with Campers

Public versus Private Spaces

Developing a positive rapport with developed forest campers was a critical aspect of this study. The first step in rapport-building was assessing the nature of the field situation (i.e., the public forest campground) itself as a public versus a private space. It is not always easy to determine when a space is considered to be public and when it is considered to be private, especially in a public forest campground that can share both characteristics.

Campgrounds like those developed and managed by the U.S.D.A. Forest Service in the MRNRA are technically a part of public space because they are funded through taxes levied on all Americans and because of the long-held belief by many Americans that public outdoor recreation lands should be open and available to everyone at no cost. Over time, however, as Congressional allocations have continued to decline, there has been a philosophical shift suggesting that those that use public lands the most should pay for their associated costs (Bowker, Cordell, & Johnson, 1999). When campers pay these on-site fees, public forest campgrounds assume an element of a private space, such as a rental property in which one is paying to live there for a period of time. Because Grindstone, Hurricane, and Ravens Cliff required campers to pay fees (Table 3), they

were viewed as enclaves of private or semi-private spaces (Lofland, 1973) on public forest land. As private enclaves, campers in these campgrounds were treated with sensitivity when it came to communication and rapport-building strategies.

Table 1: Daily Camping Fees at the Ravens Cliff, Hurricane, and Grindstone Campgrounds within the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area*

	Ravens Cliff (Less Developed)	Hurricane (Moderately Developed)	Grindstone (Highly Developed)
Site Fee	$5.00	$14.00	$16.00 for single campsite $32.00 for double campsite
Vehicle Fee	$2.00 (max 4 people)	$3.00 (max 4 people)	No additional fee
Additional Fees	$0.50 per person over the 4 person max $0.50 per person on foot or bike	$0.50 per person over the 4 person max $0.50 per person on foot or bike	$4.00 for hookups

*Based on the fee schedules for the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, USDA Forest Service, 2002

Communication Strategies

To decrease the potential for negative responses (e.g., surprise, fear, anger) from campers associated with being approached by a stranger at their "private" campsite during their camping trip, it was important to inform campers of the study and that they might be approached by a Virginia Tech graduate student sometime during their camping trip. Three strategies were identified for communicating the study to forest campers. One, a sign was posted at the campground entrance station at Hurricane and Grindstone informing campers of the study. A sign was also posted at Ravens Cliff on the bulletin board near the camp ground fee box. The signed explained to campers that Virginia Tech was conducting a study of forest camping in cooperation with the U.S.D.A. Forest Service and that their group may be approached for voluntary participation. Two, a brief informational flyer was created and distributed to campers when they registered at Hurricane and Grindstone. This flyer read,

> The Virginia Tech Department of Forestry, in cooperation with the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area, is conducting a study of campers during the summer of 2003. As part of this study, you may be approached at your campsite and asked to participate in an interview about your camping experiences. Although your participation is voluntary, we appreciate your support of this research which will help us to better understand camping at Mount Rogers, and will aid in making decisions regarding future services within the National Recreation Area.

At Ravens Cliff, there was no way to distribute a flyer to each camper and therefore flyers were not used. Three, campground hosts in Hurricane and Grindstone verbally

informed campers that Virginia Tech was conducting a study of forest camping and that their group may be approached for voluntary participation in discussions about their camping experiences. At Ravens Cliff, this approach was not possible because there was no on-site host.

Rapport Building Strategies

Three strategies were used to develop a positive rapport with forest campers. The first strategy was tent-camping on-site during the data collection process. The MRNRA Recreation Specialist and the campground managers at the Hurricane and Grindstone Campgrounds agreed to reserve a tent campsite for me at no charge. At the Ravens Cliff Campground I found a campsite for myself once I arrived on-site. (This was not a problem due to the low numbers of campers that were on-site each time that I was there.) Fieldwork was generally conducted from Wednesday through Sunday or from Thursday through Sunday because these were the dates, based upon reservation data from previous years, that developed forest campers were most likely to be on-site at the selected campgrounds.

This process of becoming immersed in the world of the developed forest camper was consistent with the naturalistic approach to data collection and helped me to see and experience the situation as it was seen and experienced by participants. Patton (2002) identified a few advantages of having direct contact with a research setting during fieldwork. Each of these advantages is explained below with an example from my fieldwork in this study. One, I was able to have firsthand experience with the developed forest camping setting. For example, after spending all night in a drenching rain, I had a first-hand perspective when campers the next day talked about “last night’s rain” as their

low point of the day. Two, being on-site reduced the need for me to rely upon prior conceptualizations of the developed forest camping setting. This was important because most of my previous camping participation had occurred in dispersed rather than developed camping areas. Furthermore, I had never seen many of the different types of developed camping modes (e.g., pop-up camper). Three, camping on-site provided me with the opportunity to see things that might routinely escape the awareness of campers in the three campgrounds. This helped me to structure and frame probing questions in ways that stimulated discussion during the interviews. Fourth, immersion in the camp setting allowed me to be seen as more of a "fellow camper" than a stranger. Participants in this study often asked me if I drove into the campground that morning, and many were pleased to hear that I had not just arrived from the University, but rather I had been camping on-site for several days.

The second strategy that I used for building rapport with campers was a non-threatening approach when entering a campsite. I always entered a campsite using a main road or trail. I smiled and entered each campsite slowly. I requested permission to enter campers' campsites by stating, "Do you mind if I come into your campsite to ask you a question?" Only if the campers agreed to allow me to enter their campsite did I then explain that I was a graduate student from Virginia Tech and that I wanted to talk with them about their camping experiences. They were then asked if they would be willing to complete a consent form and to participate in an interview about their camping experience.

The third strategy that I used for building rapport with campers was assuring confidentiality. Not only was this required by the Virginia Tech Institutional Review

Board for studies that involve human subjects, but it was also appropriate practice in field research. As Punch (1994) suggested, "The major safeguard to place against the invasion of privacy is the assurance of confidentiality" (p. 92). In this study, campers were told that their names would not be used in any reports and that names would be changed when necessary. These strategies helped the participants in this study to feel more comfortable with the process of participating in interviews about their camping experiences and the meanings that they associated with camping.

Sample

In this study, the target population (Graziano & Raulin, 2000) was developed forest campers who camped in car-accessible campgrounds in the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area. As is common in qualitative research, I focused on a subset of the target population to provide a holistic understanding of the modern forest camping experience and associated meanings. Stratified purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002) was used to identify forty-two "camping groups" (defined as one or more campers in a specific camp site) from three different types of campgrounds (i.e., less developed, moderately developed, and highly developed) in the MRNRA who were participating in a multi-day (i.e., 2-7 days) camping trip.

Although the primary unit of analysis was the "camping group," ten individual campers and twenty-eight camping groups with two or more members were nested within the "camping group" unit of analysis. As Patton (2002) notes, "Fieldwork…can be thought of as engaging in a series of multilayered and nested case studies, often with intersecting and overlapping units of analysis" (p. 298).

Data Collection

Interviews as Directed Conversations

Campers were asked to participate in a discussion about their forest camping experiences and the meaning of those experiences. Because this study was grounded in a constructivist approach, a highly structured interview script was not appropriate because constructivism emphasizes the emergent, holistic nature of experiences and meanings and does not rely upon an *"a priori"* model to guide the development of measurement instruments. Instead, this study used a more narrative approach and treated each interview like a directed conversation (Charmaz, 1991). In this way, the interviews were flexible and variable to accommodate the way that participants understood, described, and talked about their forest camping experiences and meanings. General questions were used to evoke participants to share narratives or stories about their camping trip. I was alert for opportunities to probe more deeply in the areas related to experiences and meanings.

In situations in which participants did not respond well to general questions, I referred to an interview guide (Appendix C) to elicit additional information. This list of questions provided additional cues. The use of cues was supported by Krueger (1994), who suggested that group interviews begin with an *uncued* question (i.e., open ended and all-encompassing) followed by a *cued* question (i.e., prompts to encourage further discussion). I also remained attentive to shared experiences and meanings across participants in each camping group and probed more deeply into the processes whereby these shared meanings were created or attained.

Interview Timing

As previously explained, campers were informed of the study when they arrived at each campground by way of a poster, flyer, and/or verbal information. Based upon the departure date that campers identified when they completed their Grindstone or Hurricane campground registration cards (or verbal feedback at Ravens Cliff), campers were approached on-site and asked if they would be willing to participate in this study.

The first camping groups were approached on the morning of their last day of their camping trips. However, these campers seemed annoyed (and some verbalized their frustration) at being approached on their last day because they were busy packing up to go home. So, I modified my method by approaching campers' within the first couple of days of their camping trips and requesting an appointment to interview them within the last twenty-four hours of their camping trip. This approach elicited more positive responses from campers and yielded better interviews that tended not to be rushed. I allowed campers to establish a time for the interviews based upon what was best in their schedules. I soon learned that the most preferred time to be interviewed was between 9:00 AM and 11:00 AM on the last day of their visit. Although this time was most preferred, some campers requested 7:00 AM, "right after lunch," "when we return from our bike ride around 4:00 pm," or "right before dinner."

Incentives and Withdrawal

Incentives were provided to camping groups that completed an interview. Patton (2002) has discussed the pros and cons of offering incentives. Although incentives often fail to make a difference in participation rates, Patton noted that "we show that we value what [interviewees] give us by offering something in exchange" (Patton, 2002, p. 415).

At the end of the each interview, a $7.00 Nalgene water bottle was provided to each camping group.

Because I did not want campers to participate in the study just because they expected to receive a water bottle, I did not inform them of the incentive until the completion of the interview, at which point I opened up my backpack, handed them a bottle, and said, "Thank you for your time." Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that no one participated in the interview because they expected a specific reward.

Consistent with the informed consent form (Appendix B), each participant was verbally instructed that they could stop the interview at any time and withdraw from the study without penalty. Participants were also told that they could choose to stop the tape recorder at any time during the interview. No participant asked to stop the interview or to withdraw from the study.

Demographic Survey

Demographic information was collected using a brief survey that I distributed at the same time as the informed consent form (Appendix B). This survey included questions related to age, mailed address, email address, age range, gender, race, and years of experience with developed forest camping. This information was important because I wanted to better understand the demographics to the modern developed forest camper. Cordell et al. (1999) suggested that the socio-demographics of the average camper have changed. I hoped to compare the demographic data in this study with Cordell's data and with earlier developed camping demographic data from the 1960s and 1970s.

Data Analysis

Induction

Qualitative analysis of interviews involved induction—the process of discovering patterns, themes, and categories in the data (Patton, 2002). The goal of the data analysis was not to develop a precise model to describe what might have really happened to developed forest campers, but rather to understand how experiences and meanings were constructed and remembered (Patterson, 1999). Thus, data analysis in this study did not seek to make developed forest camping experiences predictable, but rather to make them understandable in ways that might be managerially relevant through an in-depth, rich understanding of a specific group of people who were experiencing recreation at a specific time in a specific place (Patterson, Williams, & Scherl, 1994).

Interview Data Management

I audio taped thirty-eight on-site interviews with forest campers using a hand-held tape recorder. The interviews lasted from twenty minutes to two hours in length. The audiotapes were labeled and sealed in plastic bags to avoid damage in a setting that was often wet from rain and thunderstorms. When all of the interviews were completed, a research assistant from Virginia Tech transcribed the interviews—verbatim—from the audiotapes directly into separate Microsoft Word documents. The transcribed interviews ranged from four to eighteen single spaced pages.

Coding Procedures

A constructivist approach (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) with content analysis (Patton, 2002) and grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) procedures was used to analyze the transcribed interviews. In a broad sense, the term content analysis refers to the processes

of reduction and sense-making applied to qualitative data to identify core consistencies and meanings (Patton, 2002). Grounded theory has three basic steps: description, conceptual ordering, and theorizing (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In the first step of basic description, I immersed (or grounded) myself in the data. This involved reading and re-reading each narrative to develop a general understanding of each participant's responses. I wanted to understand and describe what campers appeared to be saying about their forest camping experiences and associated meanings.

In the second step of conceptual ordering, I manually fractured the data based upon similarities or incidents and then conceptually grouped the fractured data into salient categories (i.e., coding) that seemed to capture the expressions of each individual campers' experiences and associated meanings (i.e., idiographic analysis). While coding the data, I looked for "indigenous concepts" (Patton, 2002). Indigenous concepts were "key phrases, terms, and practices" that were special to developed forest campers in Mount Rogers. As Patton (2002) suggests, "What people actually say and the descriptions of events observed remain the essence of qualitative inquiry" (p. 457). For example, some of the indigenous concepts that emerged in this study included "primitive camping" as a transition from a paved to a dirt road; "advanced camper" as somebody who uses a tent camping with a campfire versus a motor home with a microwave and refrigerator; and an "RVer" as a person who needs luxury and is really not a camper.

Once the categories for each narrative were identified, I conducted a deeper exploration of each category while simultaneously referencing my preliminary understanding of the whole (i.e., the results of the "basic description" step). With these categories in hand, the data was again read and re-read in an effort to identify meaningful

themes across individual campers and camping groups (i.e., nomothetic analysis). The process of reading and re-reading led to either the development of new themes or the collapse or subdivision of existing themes. I introduced "sensitizing concepts" (Patton, 2002) during this step. Sensitizing concepts referenced the categories that I brought to the data (Patton, 2002) from the recreation, leisure, and environmental psychology literature. Sensitizing concepts served as a reference when I was identifying the relationships among themes. For example, sensitizing concepts in this study included "restoration," "family functioning," and "place."

The third step was the development of a model to describe the relationships among the major themes in this study. Once the major themes related to developed forest camping experience, meanings, and life-context meanings were identified across all of the narratives, I read through the narratives again for a new understanding of the whole. I then developed conceptual models to describe the relationships that emerged in the data. This was similar to Strauss and Corbin's (1998) description of the process of developing theory—as a set of well developed themes that are interrelated through statements of relationships to form a theoretical framework that explains some phenomenon. In Chapter 4, Figures 2 and 3 demonstrate the relationships among the major themes in this study.

Trustworthiness

Defining Trustworthiness

"Trustworthiness" is a parallel to the term "rigor" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In qualitative research, trustworthiness techniques are used to validate the results of data analysis. In contrast to the traditional standard of "generalizability," the purpose of

qualitative analysis is not to predict, but to provide a rich understanding of a small number of cases that might be useful (e.g., the experiences and meanings of a small group of developed forest campers in the MRNRA). Qualitative researchers use trustworthiness procedures to persuade readers that the interpretations and conclusions of a study are worth paying attention to (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In short, trustworthiness procedures demonstrate to what extent the research results are credible (Patton, 2002). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), trustworthiness is comprised of multiple components, including *credibility* and *transferability.*

Credibility

Credibility can be thought of as the qualitative equivalent to internal validity. As described by Patton (2002), the credibility of qualitative inquiry depends in part on rigorous data collection and analysis procedures that yield "high-quality data that are systematically analyzed" (p. 552). In this study, credibility procedures included (a) reflective listening during the interviews, (b) the use of systematic data analysis procedures, (c) the identification of 'negative cases,' and (d) a participant review.

As the interviews were conducted with forest campers, I used a technique called 'reflective listening' to ensure that my questions were being understood and to ensure that I was correctly understanding and interpreting what campers were saying. Reflective listening involved restating what I heard the campers say to me so that each participant could confirm, deny, or clarify their statements, perceptions, feelings, and so on.

The use of systematic data analysis procedures was described in the "Coding Procedures" section earlier in this chapter. Careful attention was paid to these procedures. Whenever I doubted what was emerging from the data, I returned to the data

to reread portions of the text or an entire interview to ensure that my interpretations were grounded in what participants shared about their forest camping experiences.

Negative cases were "instances in which the cases did not fit within the pattern" (Patton, 2002, p. 554). For example, if a camper shared something about his/her camping experience that was inconsistent with other reported expressions, then this "inconsistent expression" was considered to be a "negative case." In this study, negative cases were identified during the data analysis process. Chapter 4 discusses examples of negative cases wherever applicable.

The purpose of conducting a participant review (also known as a "member check") was to allow me to assess "the extent to which interpretations that have been arrived at via [the] inquiry [were] credible to the constructors of the original multiple realities" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 296). In other words, I needed to confirm that the campers in this study agreed with the interpretations that resulted from my analysis of their interviews. Participant review, which is a form of analytical triangulation (Patton, 2002), involved sending each participant a copy of my results and interpretations (i.e., tables, themes, and figures from Chapter 4) so that they could confirm or deny that their experiences and associated meanings had been accurately represented.

Participants received a copy of the results, a participant review cover letter (Appendix E), and a "Participant Review Form" (Appendix F). These items were mailed to each camping group along with a self-addressed stamped envelope. Participants were given a few weeks to review the results and to provide feedback to me regarding whether or not their experiences and associated meanings were accurately represented in the results. A follow-up "Participant Review Form" was distributed to non-respondents four

weeks after the first mailing. The participant review process was critical—it was through this interactive dialectic process that my understanding of participants' realities was validated.

Researcher Credibility: The Human Instrument

A second element of establishing "credibility" involves assessing the credibility of the human instrument—the researcher (Patton, 2002). To allow readers of this dissertation to assess my credibility as a human instrument, this section includes a description of my qualitative research perspective, training, and experience (Patton, 2002).

It was important for me to recognize my perspective as the human instrument in this study. Due to the constructivist assumptions of this study, I recognized that there was no true interpretation "out there" that was waiting to be discovered. I co-produced meaning as a participant in the interviews and as the interpreter of the results. As a human instrument, my prior knowledge and experiences served as a filter for the interpretation and analysis of the interviews. For example, my knowledge of social and environmental psychology lead me to view experiences as socially, culturally and historically constructed and construed. My experiences as a wilderness mental health counselor with high-risk youth framed my understanding of the restorative qualities of nature-based experience. My experiences with nature-based recreation have shown me, on a personal level, that outdoor experiences have the capacity to fulfill physically, mental, emotionally, and spiritual needs. Given my role as a human instrument, I recognized that I was as much a part of the research process as my participants. My own constructed reality about forest camping experiences and meanings informed this

research.

My training and experience with qualitative research developed over the course of nine years. I have studied and applied qualitative research theory and methods since 1996, the year that I started by masters program at Arizona State University. I completed a masters-level qualitative research course and a second doctoral level qualitative research class at Arizona State University. In the first course, I had an opportunity to practice coding and interpreting procedures data from an eco-tourism study provided by a professor. Although I did not collect the data, I learned the systemic processes involved in "good" qualitative data analysis. In the second course, I conducted a study of undergraduate drinking which included field observations of—and interviews with—students in settings which involved heavy drinking. I combined thick descriptions and field notes with my interview and observation data. I transcribed the interviews and recorded notes, analyzed the data, and wrote up a report. In 1997, to complete my master's thesis, I conducted a mixed-methods evaluation of the impact of the outdoor adventure experience on adolescent self-perception. The qualitative portion of that study included interviews with eighteen adolescents immediately after, and one month after, a three-day outdoor adventure experience.

While working towards my doctoral degree at Virginia Tech, I completed a third graduate level qualitative methods course in 2002 which allowed me to revisit both qualitative theory and qualitative methodologies. Finally, during the summer of 2002, as an Extension Specialist with Virginia Cooperative Extension, I conducted focus groups as part of a qualitative study that explored how participation in residential summer camp in a leadership role impacted the developed of adolescent leadership skills. I analyzed the

data, identified the conceptual themes, developed a model to explain the relationships among the themes, and published a report. The purpose of describing my background and training with qualitative research is to give readers the opportunity to assess my credibility as a human instrument.

Transferability

Transferability can be thought of as the qualitative equivalent to external validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, *thick description* was used to demonstrate to readers the degree to which the results of this study might be valuable and meaningful when considering the experiences and meanings of other groups of developed forest campers. Thick description involved documenting (in detail) the sample, data collection procedures, study site, data analysis, and emergent themes.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Reporting Pertinent Information

The primary research questions in this study were: "What are the most salient elements of developed forest camping experiences?," "How does technology influence developed forest camping experiences?," "What meanings do people associate with developed forest camping experiences and how are meanings constructed?," and "What meanings do people associate with developed forest camping across the greater context of their lives?" The results described in this chapter are focused on addressing each of these questions.

These results are not meant to be exhaustive of all of the categories and themes that were identified through data analysis. While all of the data was analyzed using the same processes and the same level of detail, the pertinent categories and themes most closely related to the research questions in this study received the most attention. Data that were not closely related to the research questions are not included in this dissertation. (For example, a considerable amount of data was collected regarding campers' perceptions of management of the three selected campgrounds in the MRNRA. This data will be collected, analyzed, and reported to the USDA Forest Service.) Thus, Chapter 4 focuses on the salient elements of the modern developed forest camping experiences, the influence of technology on developed forest camping experiences, the associated meanings of developed forest camping experiences, and the relevance of developed forest camping experiences within the greater context of campers' lives.

Camping Group Response Rate

Out of the forty-two different "camping groups" that were approached and asked to participate in this study, thirty-eight camping groups (i.e., 80 individual campers) agreed to participate and completed the necessary consent form. Ten of the thirty-eight interviews were conducted with individual campers and twenty-eight were conducted with camping groups of two or more campers. The 90% response rate was attributed largely to the rapport building procedures that were used. (See Chapter 3 for more information about these procedures.)

Of the four camping groups who did not participate, two camping groups (both couples) refused to participate upon being approached at their campsites and shared no explanation for their refusal to participate, and two camping groups (3 or more campers) first asked several questions about the study and then indicated that they did not want to participate because they were too busy and did not have the time to devote to an interview. The four non-participating groups were spread out among the campgrounds; one was from Hurricane, two were from Grindstone, and one was from Ravens Cliff. Additional information about these "non-participants" (e.g., demographics, camping mode, etc.) was not collected.

As the purpose of this qualitative research was not to be generalizable to the overall population of developed campers, but rather to understand specific phenomenon experienced by specific groups of people in a specific place, the sample size in this study was not considered to be problematic. The number of participants in this study was comparable to the sample sizes identified in similar qualitative studies of recreation experience and meanings, which has ranged from four to thirty participants (Frederickson

& Anderson, 1999; Hollender, 1977; Patterson, et al., 1998; Patterson, Williams, & Scherl, 1994; Riese & Vorkinn, 2002; Shaw, et al., 2002.)

Participant Review Response Rate

Of the thirty-eight camping groups that were sent a copy of the results and a "Participant Review Form," eighteen completed and returned their forms for a response rate of 47%. All ten respondents agreed that the results that they received accurately reflected their camping experience at Mount Rogers with one exception. One White male camper, from the Hurricane Campground, stressed the importance of safety and the need for Mount Rogers to develop some type of communication system (e.g., pay phone) that campers can use in the event of an emergency. (Note: This information will be shared with the managers of the Mount Rogers NRA in a report that specifically addresses campers' recommendations for managers.)

Participant Descriptives

Campground and Camping Mode

A total of thirty-eight camping groups were interviewed involving eighty individual campers. Twenty camping groups were interviewed from Grindstone campground, twelve from Hurricane, and six from Ravens Cliff (Table 2). These campers used a range of modes for developed forest camping, including tent-camping, pop-up trailers, pull-behind trailers, and motor homes that ranged in length from twenty seven to thirty three feet (Table 4). Campers in the less developed campground (Ravens Cliff) used tents and a pop-up. The roads in this campground did not accommodate larger camping vehicles like motor homes. Campers in the moderately developed campground (Hurricane) used tents, pop-up campers, pull behind trailers, and a thirty

foot motor home. This campground could accommodate larger camping vehicles like motor homes because of wider, paved roads, but because it did not have full hook-ups motor homes were rare. Campers in the highly developed campground (Grindstone) tended to use motor homes, pull-behind trailers and pop-up campers. However, one tent-camper from Grindstone participated in this study. (See Appendix G for summarized descriptions of each of the camping groups that participated in this study.)

Demographics

Participant demographics (i.e., gender, age, race, camping experience, and state residence) are summarized in Table 3. A majority of the participants were male (55%). White (99%) was the predominate race. Participants' age ranged from less than eighteen years old to more than seventy years old, and a majority of the campers were either 30-39 years old (26%) or 40-49 years old (26%). A majority of the participants were highly experienced developed campers; forty-one percent of campers had more than twenty-six years of previous developed camping experience. Participants resided in eight different states—a majority in Virginia (37%) or Tennessee (30%). Marital status was not asked on the demographic survey but it was elicited in the interviews. Across all of the participants, twenty-seven married couples, fourteen married individuals, two non-married couples, and one non-married individual were involved (Table 4).

Table 2: Number and Percentage of Developed Forest Campers and Camping Groups Participating in the 2003 Mount Rogers NRA Developed Forest Camping Study by Campground Type and Camping Mode (n=38)

	# of campers	%	# of camping groups	%
Campground Type				
Less Developed (Ravens Cliff)	13	16.3%	6	15.8%
Moderately Developed (Hurricane)	25	31.2%	12	31.6%
Highly Developed (Grindstone)	42	52.5%	20	52.6%
Total	80	100 %	38	100 %
Camping Mode				
Tent	27	33.7%	14	36.8%
Pop-Up Camper	19	23.8%	9	23.7%
Pull-Behind Trailer	16	20.0%	7	18.4%
Motor Home or Recreational Vehicle (RV)	18	22.5%	8	21.1%
Total	80	100 %	38	100 %

Table 3: Participant Demographics for the 2003 Mount Rogers NRA Developed Forest Camping Study Based on Individual Campers

	n	%
Gender		
Male	44	55%
Female	36	45%
Total	80	100%
Age		
Under 18 years old	3	3.8%
19-29 years old	3	3.8%
30-39 years old	21	26.3%
40-49 years old	26	32.5%
50-59 years old	17	21.3%
60-69 years old	8	10.0%
Older than 70 years	2	2.5%
Total	80	100%
Race		
White	79	98.7%
American Indian	1	1.3%
Total	80	100%
Developed Camping Experience		
This was my first year	6	7.5%
2-5 years	1	21.3%
6-10 years	2	2.5%
11-15 years	7	8.8%
16-20 years	5	6.3%
21-25 years	10	12.5%
More than 26 years	33	41.3%
Total	80	100%
State Residence		
Virginia	29	36.7%
Tennessee	24	30.4%
North Carolina	18	22.8%
South Carolina	3	3.8%
Louisiana	2	2.5%
Pennsylvania	1	1.3%
Florida	1	1.3%
Indiana	1	1.3%
Total	80	100%

Table 4: Marital Status and Camping Mode for Participants in the 2003 Mount Rogers NRA Developed Forest Camping Study by Campground

	Marital Status	Camping Mode
Ravens Cliff Campground	Interview #1- Married couple (with grandson)	Pop-Up
	Interview #2- Married couple	Tent
	Interview #3- Married couple	Tent
	Interview #4- Married couple with two kids	Tent
	Interview #5- Non-married couple	Tent
	Interview #6- Married couple	Tent
Hurricane Campground	Interview #7- Married couple	Tent
	Interview #8- Non-married individual	Pop-Up Camper
	Interview #9- Three married couples (group of 6 people)	Motor Home (30')
	Interview #10- Married individual with Mom and uncle	Trailer
	Interview #11- Married couple	Camper
	Interview #12- One married couple and one individual	Pop-Up Camper
	Interview #13- Married couple	Tent
	Interview #14- Married individual (part of a couple)	Tent
	Interview #15- Married individual (part of a group of 5)	Tent
	Interview #16- Married individual with son	Tent
	Interview #17- Married individual	Tent
	Interview #18- Two married couples (group of 4 people)	Tent
Grindstone Campground	Interview #19- Non-married couple	Tent
	Interview #20- Married individual (part of a couple)	Motor Home (32')
	Interview #21- Married couple	Motor Home (30')
	Interview #22- Married individual (part of a couple)	Trailer (bi-fold)
	Interview #23- Married couple	Trailer (5th wheel)
	Interview #24- Two married women (part of a group of 6)	Pop-Up Camper
	Interview #25- Married couple	Pop-Up Camper
	Interview #26- Two married couples (group of 4 people)	Pop-Up Camper
	Interview #27- Married couple	Pop-Up Camper
	Interview #28- Married couple	Trailer
	Interview #29- Married individual (part of a couple)	Trailer
	Interview #30- Married couple	Trailer
	Interview #31- Married couple	Motor Home (30')
	Interview #32- Married couple (and their married son)	Motor Home
	Interview #33- Married individual (part of a couple)	Tent
	Interview #34- Married couple with daughter-in-law	Motor Home
	Interview #35- Married couple with son	Motor Home
	Interview #36- Married couple	Motor Home
	Interview #37- Two married women (part of a group of 6)	Pop-Up Camper
	Interview #38- Married individual with son	Trailer

Results of the Nomothetic (Between-Camper) Analysis of the Influence of Technology on Developed Forest Camping Experiences

One of the research questions in this study was "How does technology influence the modern developed forest camping experience?" In this study, technology was viewed as a general term used to encompass the range of camping gear, electronic devices, and related products that developed forest campers utilized. Technology also included the camping mode itself.

Expressions related to camping technology and the influence of technology on developed forest camping experiences and associated meanings were sometimes overt and resulted from specific questions (or probes) about camping technology. For example, the probing questions used to illicit information about camping technology included (a) "Describe the camping equipment, gear, and electronics that you brought and used on this camping trip.," (b) "How important were these items for your camping experience?," (c) "Did you purchase any equipment, gear, or electronics for this trip?," (d) "Are you able to experience nature when you camp in a campground that provides a lot of comforts and conveniences?," and (e) "How does the presence of technology impact your camping experiences?." Other expressions related to camping technology were couched within participants' narratives of their developed forest camping trips.

Idiographic (within-camper) and nomothetic (between-camper) analyses procedures yielded salient themes related to the types of camping technologies that campers utilized, the reasons why technologies were important for developed forest camping experience, and the influence of technologies on campers' developed forest camping experiences. The results of the nomothetic analyses are presented in the next

several sections. As described in Chapter 3, the purpose of the nomothetic analysis was to explore the patterns and themes that extended beyond individual campers (Patterson, 1993, Patterson & Williams, 2002; Brooks, 2003).

Description of Camping Technologies Utilized

Camping Gear

Campers across all three campground types identified the camping gear and electronics that they utilized as a part of their camping experiences (Table 5). Campers in the less developed campground utilized tents, recreational equipment (i.e., fishing rods, inflatable raft for fishing), an axe, coolers, a lantern, camp chairs, and a Coleman stove. Campers in the moderately developed campground utilized tents, tarps, camp stoves, Coleman grills, Gore-Tex raincoats, a portable shower, an air-mattress, a rain jacket, nylon bags, a water tank, a screen room, and a portable toilet. Campers in the highly developed campground utilized bicycles, chairs, a screen room, and a portable toilet. Because this list of camping gear is based on self-report, this list of gear may not be complete in terms of what campers actually brought. However, these are the items that were identified and discussed in the interviews. It is also important to note that moderately and highly developed campers that utilized recreational vehicles likely had a range of built-in appliances available to them that might have been classified as "camping gear." These built-in types of appliances were not inventoried.

Campers in the three campground types were compared based upon the types of camping gear that they utilized on their camping trip. In terms of the technologies associated with camping gear, campers from the moderately developed campground used the most technological-advanced gear (e.g., Gore-text raincoats, nylon bags, etc.), and

campers from the less developed campground used the most basic camping gear (i.e., axe, lantern, etc.). In terms of amount and range of camping gear, campers in the highly developed campground brought fewer items and a more narrow range of items. This seems consistent with the fact that a majority of these campers utilized motor homes (which often came with appliances) which reduced their need for many types of camping gear that other campers needed for basic food preparation, shelter, and other needs.

Electronics

Electronics were defined as any item used for developed forest camping that required electricity. Battery-powered items used for entertainment were also included in this category. Campers in the less developed campground utilized cell phones, a radio/television unit, and a phone. Campers in the moderately developed campground utilized radios, televisions, cell phones, and a VCR. Campers in the highly developed campground utilized televisions, radios, VCR, video game units (e.g., Nintendo, Game Boy, Sega, Play Station), cellular phones, microwave ovens, CD players, satellite dishes, coffeemakers, an electric blankets, a weather radio, an air conditioning unit, an electric grill, a toaster, a HAM radio, and a digital camera. Because this list of camping gear is based on self-report, this list of electronics may not be complete in terms of what campers actually brought. However, these items were identified and discussed in the interviews.

Campers in the three campground types were compared based upon the types of electronics that they used during their camping trip. Campers from the less developed and moderately developed campgrounds used the fewest types of electronics, and campers from the highly developed campground used a wide range of electronic technologies. This also seems consistent with the fact that a majority of these campers

utilized motor homes which gave them easier access to electric-related items and because they were camping in a campground which provided electricity, thus making electronic technology much more likely.

Camping Mode

Camping mode included tents and the types of camping vehicles that campers used (i.e., pop-up trailers, pull-behind trailers, and motor homes). Because camping modes inherently reflected the use of technology (fabrics in tents or auto-based technology for camping vehicles), camping mode is included was considered as one of forms of technology that campers utilized for developed forest camping.

As previously identified, campers in the less developed campground (Ravens Cliff) used tents and a pop-up. The roads in this campground did not accommodate larger camping vehicles like motor homes. Campers in the moderately developed campground (Hurricane) used tents, pop-up campers, pull behind trailers, and a thirty foot motor home. This campground could accommodate larger camping vehicles like motor homes because of wider, paved roads, but because it did not have full hook-ups motor homes were rare. Campers in the highly developed campground (Grindstone) tended to use motor homes, pull-behind trailers and pop-up campers. However, one tent-camper from Grindstone participated in this study. A description of the camping modes utilized by each camping group was presented in Table 4 on page 90.

Table 5: Results of the Nomothetic (Between-Camper) Analysis of Camping Gear and Electronics Utilized Across Three Campground Types (Less Developed, Moderately Developed, and Highly Developed) from the 2003 Mount Rogers NRA Developed Forest Camping Study

Less Developed *(Ravens Cliff)*	Moderately Developed *(Hurricane)*	Highly Developed *(Grindstone)*

Camping Gear (7)
• Recreational equip.(2)
  o Fishing Rods (1)
  o Inflatable Fishing Raft (1)
• Axe (1)
• Coolers (1)
• Lantern (1)
• Camp chairs (1)
• Coleman stove (1)
	Camping Gear (23)
	• Tents (4)
	• Tarps (3)
	• Camp stove (2)
	• Coleman Grill (2)
	• Coolers (2)
	• Chairs (2)
	• Gore-Tex raincoats (1)
	• Portable shower (1)
	• Air-mattress (1)
	• Rain jacket (1)
	• Nylon bags (1)
	• Water tank (1)
	• Screen Room (1)
	• Portable Toilet (1)
		Camping Gear (6)
		• Bicycles (2)
		• Chairs (2)
		• Screen Room (1)
		• Portable toilet (1)

Electronics (4) • Cellular phone (2) • Radio/TV (1) • Phone (1)	Electronics (8) • Radio (3) • TV (2) • Cellular phone (2) • VCR (1)	Electronics (71) • Television (21) • Radio (8) • VCR (8) • Nintendo/Game Boy/ Sega/Play Station (6) • Cellular Phone (3) • Microwave oven (3) • CD player (3) • Satellite Dish (3) • Coffeemaker (2) • Refrigerator (2) • DVD Player (2) • Electric blanket (1) • Weather radio (1) • AC unit (1) • Electric grill (1) • Toaster (1) • Ham radio (1) • Digital camera (1)

Importance and Influence of Camping Technologies

In addition to asking campers about the technologies that they brought and utilized on their camping trips, they were also asked (or probed) about whether or not technologies were important for their developed forest camping experiences and how technologies influenced their experiences. The emergent themes related to camping technologies were "transitioning," "technology incongruence," "comfort and convenience," "distraction," and "minimalism" (Table 7). Expressions related to campers' perceptions of RV campers is also presented in this section.

Transitioning

The most common theme related to technology, which was identified by campers across all of the campground types, was "transitioning." Transitioning included expressions of how and why campers had transitioned from using one type camping mode technology to another camping mode. Several categories within "transitioning" were identified, including age, health, financial means, and accommodations for children.

Age

One of the most common reasons for transitioning to a different camp mode was because of age and a desire for increasing levels of comfort as campers aged. As a White male camper from camping group #13 in the moderately developed campground shared,

> We went from a tent to a pop-up because we was getting so old we couldn't get down on the ground and get up. When you can't get off the ground, you gotta get up and find something a little higher…campers definitely want more comfort when they get older.

A White male camper from camping group #28 in the highly developed campground described his transition from a camper to a pop-up and his desire to transition to a more advanced camping mode. He said,

> We started camping on the ground, no tent at all, to camping with a pop-up. Of course as we get older we're looking to go on into something else. Age is a factor. Sleeping on the ground, from sleeping on the ground to getting up off the ground, then to having heat and lights, I mean it's just …a little more…convenient. I expect the older we get, I expect to travel more…to hopscotch to different campgrounds and it is hard when you are traveling in a pop-up camper. It'd make it a whole lot easier just to pull in, set up, just plug up, unplug and pull out. With the pop-up there's a lot of work involved.

Health

Another factor that influenced campers' "transitioning" from one camping mode technology to another camping mode was health. A White male camper and former backpacker from camping group #7 in the moderately developed campground shared how his health had impacted his camping.

> Before, when I was backpacking I used to chase technology a little bit. I would get the little MSR stoves, and the more alpine and cool and smaller the tent, and that stuff, that was the path that I was taking. The difference now is that I have a bad lower back, so the backpacking's not even really an option at all any more. That is just completely out. So I started to look at other types of camping. Comfort is even more important now.

Some campers explained that, although their personal health was fine, the health of some of their aging family members was not. As a White male camper from camping group #10 in the moderately developed campground explained,

> We went from a pop-up to a camper because my mom doesn't walk too good. She had bad legs. Her and my uncle both are getting on up in years, and the convenience of having an on-site bathroom was important. And on-site water and all, with the holding tanks and all, that was the main reason too. And, being able to set it up in a matter of ten minutes at the most, here at Hurricane, you're set up and you're good to go. And you pull into Hurricane late at night or something, and ten minutes later you can be getting ready for bed. I always have to think about my mom's health when we're camping.

Financial Means

In addition to age and health, "transitioning" could also be influenced by a campers' means. In other words, some campers expressed that whether or not they could transition to a more expensive and advanced type of camping mode depended on their ability to afford a new type of camping mode. As a White male camper from camping group #22 in the highly developed campground stated,

> We own a hard-shell bi-fold. It's got a complete shower, gas, electric, refrigerator, we have bathroom….it's got everything a larger one would have. We haven't always used this. We used a tent for years, when we were first married. Young, and lacking for money, and you just gotta go the way you can afford to go, and that's all we could afford at the time.

> It was a matter of getting off the ground for a change after several years, as we get older we want a little more comfort. You could go to something bigger, but we're satisfied with the smaller type of hardshell pop-up, because like I say it's easy to store and it still has all the conveniences of the big ones...and we can afford it.

Similarly, a White male camper from camping group #21 in the highly developed campground shared,

> It's kinda based on money, you do with what you can afford. Early on, you know, I could afford a tent, and in my real younger days, I'd throw my tent and my sleeping bag on the back of a bicycle and a bunch of us heading somewhere and spend a Saturday night out in the woods somewhere, that was our camping experience back in those days. As time went on I did some tent camping with my son when he was old enough to become a Scout. And we did tent camping up until the time we got the pop-up, and we went through two pop-ups, and then there was a couple years we didn't have any, and then we got the trailer, and now the motor home. As we've gotten older we've been able to afford these things.

Accommodations for Children

A fourth reason that campers had transitioned from one camping mode technology to another camping mode was to accommodate their children's needs. A White male camper from camping group #26 in the highly developed campground spoke about how having a child changed his style of camping.

> We went from backpacking to our pop-up primarily because of having

> a child. Growing up, both of our parents, our families spent quite a bit of time camping, so that was just kind of a natural thing that we would. We had a pop-up growing up. Then we moved on up into the travel trailers and that sort of thing. Yeah, we spent quite a few years of my childhood in the pop-up. It's the natural progression---from backpacking or tent-camping to other forms---that's just kind of natural as you grow up. It happened faster for us once we had a child.

Similarly, a White female camper from camping group #30 in the highly developed campground shared,

> The pop-up was a nightmare, simply because you have to tear it down in the rain, and there's no bathroom in it. Nowhere to give our kids a bath. You can't drag them out in the middle of the night to the bathhouse, that wasn't convenient, so the next trailer that we got had a bathroom in it. And it had everything in it, but it was pretty small. There was also potty-training, so the whole bathroom thing was important.

Thus, the need for increased convenience while camping with children influenced campers' decisions to purchase and utilize increasingly advanced camping modes.

Although the concept of transitioning was expressed by campers in all three of the campground types, not everyone felt that transition was a necessary part of camping. As a White male camper from camping group #11 shared,

> I prefer tent camping. I would never switch to a pop-up or a trailer. No way. I've stayed in the, you know, the motor-driven ones, a friend of mine, one of the guys that came in, he has a, I think he has about a 31 or

> 32-footer. To me, [tent-camping] is better. I don't mind sleeping on the ground on a Therm-a-rest. It straightens your back out. Much more pleasant to me. Age doesn't make a difference either. Not to me. Not at all.

Technology Incongruence

The second most common theme related to camping technologies was "technology incongruence." This theme was also expressed by campers in all of the campground types. Technology incongruence was the term given to campers' expressions of how some types of technology did not belong in a camp setting or how some types of technologies were incongruent with preferred nature-based experiences.

Several campers expressed that the presence of some types of technology, particularly electronic technologies like televisions, telephones, and video recorders and players, did not belong in a camp setting. To these campers, electronic technologies were the antithesis of what it meant to go "camping." As a White female camper from camping group #13 in the moderately developed campground stated,

> If we had televisions, and phones, and radios and stuff here, it wouldn't be camping. It would be like going back to work. You know, because people would be calling and people would be trying to get in touch with us, and like, you just can't get away from it if you bring any of that stuff with you.

Similarly, a White male camper from camping group #22 in the highly developed campground shared,

> We really don't want a lot of the technology things out here with us. We're kinda going back into nature a little bit with it. If we had

> a lot of technology with us, it wouldn't be a camping experience. I can watch TV at home. Why come out here and waste, and spend your precious time sitting in front of a TV?

Another comment that expressed the incongruence of technology and camping was expressed by a White male camper from camping group #19 in the highly developed campground

> If there were radios and televisions around us, we wouldn't want to hear them. I mean, that's the kind of the idea of camping, is to get away from boom boxes. Sometimes people bring a bunch of technology with them camping…that's just gadgetry for the sake of gadgetry. We just don't get into that."

According to these responses, there was a relationship between "technology incongruence" and the desire to escape from specific technologies that were available in campers' home environments. Escape meanings are discussed in greater detail later in Chapter 4.

To some campers, electronic technologies were incongruent with the type of nature-based camping experience that parents preferred for their children. As a White male camper from camping group #1 in the less developed campground shared,

> We don't need those things. As soon has he gets home, [my son] will be sitting in front of the TV. TVs should not be brought out to a campground. Campers that bring TVs won't be able to do anything, they'll just sit in front of the TV. They should be fishing, playing with their dog, and watching the fire instead of the TV.

Another White female camper from camping group #6 in the less developed campground stated,

> We don't bring TV, radio, phones, and electronic games camping. We don't do that. We really don't even like them to bring toys, but we let them bring a few dolls. Cause we want them to just kind of enjoy the nature, and be caught up in their own world.

Some campers' identified strict guidelines for their children to discourage the use of electronic technology and encourage other types of experiences. A White male camper from camping group #32 in the highly developed campground explained the ground rules that he established for his daughter (and also on himself) on their camping trip. He said,

> My stepdaughter brought a friend camping, and I told them both before we came up here that there wouldn't be any TV or electronic games. I told them they could bring a CD player with headphones, but that would even be limited. Because that's some of the things we're getting away from. I do have a portable satellite dish but I didn't bring it this time. If I had brought it, that's all the two 12-year-old girls would have done. I've not turned the TV on. And they have had a ball. [My stepdaughter and her friend] met friends, or made new friends, when they get out of there after eating breakfast, we probably won't see them except for check-ins, off and on all day. But they would never have experienced that if there was a TV on. They never would have experienced that had I not laid the ground rules before we left.

Comfort and Convenience

The third theme related to camping technologies was "comfort and convenience." This theme was expressed by campers in all of the campground types. "Comfort and convenience" represented campers' expressions of the importance of various forms of camping technology to enhance their overall comfort and to make camping more convenient by making certain camping tasks easier. A White male camper from camping group #15 in the moderately developed campground shared his perspective on technology. He said,

> Technology has been important to our trip. I mean, we wouldn't be here if we didn't have waterproof tents and nice nylon bags to put all of our stuff in, and plastic coolers to keep our ice frozen and our food secure. This kind of stuff is the kind of thing that we need, it really makes camping more comfortable.

For some campers, a desire for comfort occurred as they got older. This was different from the "age" category of the "transition" theme in that these campers did not have specific health or age-related constraints. These campers just developed a preference for a more comfortable form of camping. As a White male camper from camping group #7 in the moderately developed campground shared,

> I actually like the idea of being comfortable now, and not roughing it. I used to get off on the challenges of nature and weather and beating something, I'd hunt when it was an ice storm, and I would fish in the middle of February in western Maryland, and it would be four degrees outside and my friend and I would be backpacking and we could tell

> our friends that we caught brook trout when it was four degrees outside, you know, and the ranger said we were the only people in the park. That used to be kind of a fun thing for me. Now, the hell with it … I don't care if I'm one of the masses…I just want to be comfortable.

Campers who were not accustomed to spending time in nature expressed the importance of technology for comfort and convenience in order for them to have the type of camping experience that they preferred. As a White female camper from camping group #38 in the less developed campground shared,

> I want to be comfortable while I'm [camping] in, I call this the wilderness. To me it is the wilderness. When I camp, the boys have been camping in a tent before, but I am just not a tent camper. I've got to have my blow dryer and my curling iron, you know, of course I haven't used it yet, but I have to have those comforts, yes, it's important to me, because I was raised in the city, I don't know no better. To me, the trees and the birds make this a wilderness.

Another female camper from camping group #26 in the highly developed campground shared a similar perspective when she said,

> I appreciate that people can have, quote, the nature experience and go spend time in the woods and all that, but that's not where I'm coming from. I'm not where they are. We, my family did not camp when I was a child. This is kind of a new experience for me. And this is probably as close as it's gonna get for a nature experience for me (laughs). So I'm typically…roughing it means slow room service. So, this is, I've really

> enjoyed this. And I feel like you get what you create of the experience, and if you want to have all the amenities and comforts you can do that, or if you want to have a nature experience you can do that. I probably wouldn't have any kind of nature experience if it weren't for the amenities, because that's just not who I am, not my comfort level.

A White female camper from camping group #25 in the highly developed campground shared how watching movies contributed to she and her husband's camping experience. She explained,

> We have a television. Actually when we're at home we don't have time to watch TV. So part of our camping fun is watching movies, we go rent movies and videos and things like that and watch. My brother calls us the advanced campers. Our camping's not his kind of rustic camping. He likes the tent camping and he cooks over the fire. We have a microwave and TV, refrigerator, air conditioning, heat. Those types of conveniences are important.

To some campers, technology was found in their modern camping gear. To these campers, gear technology was important for their camping experience. For example, a White male camper from camping group #14 in the moderately developed campground explained the importance of his gear. He said,

> We're great believers in getting the best gear you can…waterproof gear and stuff like that, especially on weekends like this when it's raining, see, we went through a downpour Friday night but we came through it just fine. We stayed dry. I'm real particular about my fly fishing

> equipment, it's the best you can get, basically. I've just always been a believer in having the good stuff because it'll help you if, you know, if times get tough.

Another camper, a White male camper from camping group #7 in the moderately developed campground talked about a new piece of camping gear that he used on his trip. He shared,

> Speaking of technology, I need to admit something. We got a gift from somebody, and it's a self-inflating double or queen-size air mattress. And we brought it. I have all the little roll-out mats we could have brought, and it would have been fine. But we have a battery-operated air mattress. And we've used it. It's a big old thing. It was great.

A majority of the campers in the highly developed campground who were interviewed for this study used satellite dishes. To these campers, a satellite dish was an important technology. A White male camper from camping group #21 in the highly developed campground explained the importance of finding a good signal.

> When we got a satellite dish the site became important, well, what sites could we use the satellite dish in? So that more or less dictates what sites you get nowadays, if we want to use the satellite dish. There's, the foliage is so thick over here that there's very few locations that you have a clear view of the sky. Right here in this open field is real good, if you can get near it, then you know you can set one up there. It's not unusual to see four or five dishes usually sitting in that area."

A White male camper from camping group #29 in the highly developed campground shared his reasons for using a satellite dish. He said,

> I've got a dish receiver set up out here in the field up here now. Well, we've got a satellite system on here. It's portable but you know I use it everyplace I can get a signal. I like the dish because I like to keep up with financial matters and current events. So to me it's rather important. I wouldn't want to go back to not having a TV. I couldn't stand it if these things were taken away.

Table 6 provides excerpts supporting "comfort and convenience" as an emergent theme of technology related to developed forest camping experiences.

Table 6: Interview Excerpts Supporting 'Comfort and Convenience' as an Emergent Theme of Technology Related to Developed Forest Camping Experiences at the Mount Rogers NRA

Camper	Excerpt
White male camper from camping group #14 in the moderately developed campground	"I don't know if it's inevitable that people switch from tent-camping to pop-ups or campers, but I think it's a good way to go. With a camper, you don't have to do as much prep-work You don't wear yourself out so you can enjoy your camping trip."
White female camper from camping group #21 in the highly developed campground	"I've grown accustomed to having the satellite dish. It spoils you, it really does. I'd hate to have to go back to a pop-up."
White female camper from camping group #23 in the highly developed campground	"With the pop-up…they're easy to pull and they're not much trouble, but what I hate about that is you can't leave anything much in the camper in its place. [Pop-ups] don't have cabinets. .Because of course it folds down. And it was just a lot of work. In just a matter of minutes you can be set up and you can have everything before you even leave home. You can have stuff in the refrigerator and have it cold, and it's real easy to set up once you get here. So it's real convenient."
White male camper from camping group #26 in the highly developed campground	"We wouldn't have brought the TV out except for the driving rainstorm we had. We had it in the car. The children didn't even know it existed until like, you know, the rain starts…"
White male camper from camping group #30 in the highly developed campground	"We try to get whatever [camping equipment] makes it as easy and convenient that I can, where I don't have to spend so much time fooling with the camper itself."
White female camper from camping group #37 in the highly developed campground	"Last year we were down on the other end [of Grindstone] and we tent camped, and it was okay but I don't know that I'd want to do that again. I like electricity and I like the water. I'm not a huge camper, so I like as much as I can get. I need to have those comforts."

Distraction

The fourth theme related to camping technologies was "distraction." This theme was specific to campers in the highly developed campground who had brought electronic technologies that were generally not as common in the less developed and moderately developed campground. "Distraction" represented how campers used technology as a distraction from boredom and in situations in which severe weather did not allow them to be outside and participating in other camping-related activities and experiences. A White male camper from camping group #21 in the highly developed campground talked about how his satellite dish and television were a distraction for him and his wife. He said,

> We use the satellite dish quite a bit, really. When we first got it. We've got it now so we could just watch decent TV, cause when you're camping a lot of times you don't have a good signal to watch TV, from local stations. The television comes in real handy when it's pouring down rain and you can't get outside or anything, you have something to fall back on besides reading. I do, I try to catch up on my reading when I'm up here. And so she, she does more reading than I do. But you can't read all the time, you get bored, so television is a distraction from boredom.

The importance of technology as a distraction was identified by parents who were camping with their children. As a White female camper from camping group #24 in the highly developed campground shared,

> When the rain started, the television was something to keep the four kids that would much rather be doing something else, it was a good thing to

> occupy them. The television will, and it does, suck them in and get them interested in something other than the fact that it's raining.

Even campers who felt that television and electronic games were not a part of the camping experience used these items as a distraction during inclement weather. As a White male camper from camping group #35 in the highly developed campground described,

> We have a TV, a Sega, a Play Station, and I've got a Play Station 2 in the motor home. It's nice to have when it's raining and you can't go outside. That's when we use it the most. But, usually, like you find us right here at the fire cooking soup all day. This stuff isn't necessary for camping. But it sure comes in handy.

Similarly, a White female camper from camping group #20 in the highly developed campground shared,

> We're guilty of bringing a lot of stuff with us. Actually there's two TVs and a Play Station and a DVD player in there. We have two TVs. The kids can watch their movies, and we're back here and we watch whatever we want. That's about the only way [our kids] will go to bed at night is to watch TV. The Play Station is used as a DVD player. Now when it rained Wednesday [the Play Station and TV] worked out great, we sat in there and watched a movie.

Minimalism

The fifth theme related to camping technologies was "minimalism." This theme was not as common as the other technology themes and was represented in the comments

of only a few campers This theme represented the perspective of campers who did not want excess technology during their camping experiences because of their desire to have a more basic type of experience. As a White female camper from camping group #31 in the highly developed campground shared,

> [My husband] loves to keep things as basic as we can, and almost on purpose. We don't want to get to that next level [of buying a motor home] yet. We might down the road need to be there in something a little more comfort-related, but we're trying to have more of an outdoor experience, so we try to keep our gear and everything to the point where we spend a majority of our time outside. No matter really what the conditions are. He likes making sure that he has all the necessary, I would say still basic, items, but you know, I – look over there, we don't really have anything at all, really high-tech. We are still in that mode. We're trying to stay where this is the outdoor experience, and somewhat roughing it.

Another White male camper from camping group #13 in the moderately developed campground, who described himself and his wife as minimalists, shared their perspective on technology.

> We are minimalists. It's basically just backpacking gear that we're just using to car camp with too. We don't have a big, one of those Coleman stoves. We also don't have any other types of technology, like a television, radio, GPS, or anything else. That's just not the kind of stuff we need.

Perceptions of 'RV Campers'

The sixth theme is different than the first five themes. The first five themes were directly related to campers' perspectives of the importance or influence of technology relative to their desire forest camping experiences. However, "perception of RV campers" was directly related to a group of campers (i.e., RV campers), who were perceived by campers in the less developed and moderately developed campgrounds, as campers who used a lot of technology and required a lot of comforts and thus were not genuine "campers." Campers were not asked a specific question about their perception of RV campers (i.e., campers that used a motor home or other large recreational vehicle for camping), but comments about RV campers were often shared.

Generally speaking, RV campers were associated with undesired campground conditions, such as noise pollution. As a White female camper from camping group #6 in the less developed campground shared,

> We don't like the RVs and the big party scene, we don't care for that. We like it primitive and secluded, like we're out in the middle of nowhere. If there were RVs that could make it up here, this experience wouldn't be what we wanted it to be. It would get to be loud and obnoxious.

A White female camper from camping group #2 in the less developed campground, who was originally from Australia, shared similar sentiments. She said,

> I use a tent rather than other types of sleeping equipment because it's what I am used to. I don't like being in a building. If I was like in an RV or something, I would feel like I was inside a building. I need air. Here in America, when I say to somebody else, we're going camping,

> and they say, oh, you've got an RV. I mean in Australia, I don't think I've ever seen an RV in Australia…nothing like these monstrosities that you get here. Some people need all their comforts. And, you know, I'm not being critical. Some people, that is their experience, OK. It's not mine, but I think keeping campgrounds like Ravens Cliff around will keep those big vehicles out, which tend to bring a lot of noise.

RV campers were sometimes perceived as something other than "true campers." A White male camper from camping group #15 in the moderately developed campground expressed his view of RV campers when he shared,

> There's the RV group, the people that bring, to me, bring the city with them. They've got their TVs and their ovens, and their microwaves and what-not in their RVs, it's like, what's the point? I know the point is to get away from where you were at, so, and that's the point of any vacation or trip, to get away from where you're at.

A White female camper from camping group #5 in the less developed campground shared a similar view of RV campers when she compared the Ravens Cliff Campground with other, more developed campgrounds. She stated,

> [Ravens Cliff] is a lot better than the [campgrounds] with electricity cause you don't have as much hassle and you don't have the high fees and you don't have, you know, with that you've got the RVs and all that mess. RV campers are not campers. They have to have everything luxurized in order for them to make it and that's not camping.

A White male camper from camping group #1 in the less developed campground described how the presence of RV campers impacted his camping experiences. He said,

> I chose Ravens Cliff because I knew the trout stream…was gonna be here and everything, and I knew it wasn't like a real RV kind of place, a place to still be able to camp and put up a tent and feel comfortable. Cause when you camp with all the RVs and everything, it just makes it a little bit, you know, I don't know…artificial.

In summary, this section explored how the participants in this study utilized technology. Technology was broadly defined to include camping gear, electronics, and camping mode. The results indicated that campers used a range of camping gear and electronics. Campers from the less developed campground tended to bring fewer pieces of camping gear, used a narrower range of items, and used the fewest types of electronics. Campers from the moderately and highly developed campgrounds used the most technologically-advanced gear and used a broader range of electronics than campers from the less developed campground. Campers from the highly developed campground did not use as many individual pieces of camping gear, but they used a range of electronics.

This section also summarized the importance and influence of technology on developed forest camping experiences through the themes of transitioning, technology incongruence, comfort and convenience, distraction, minimalism, and perceptions of "RV campers." Many campers discussed the importance of their camping mode, gear, and electronics to promote comfort and conveniences and for a distraction, particularly during inclement weather. Campers also discussed the transition that occurs as developed campers move from tent-camping to increasingly sophisticated camping modes.

Although technology was important, campers across all three campground types suggested that technology is often incongruent with the type of nature-based camping experience that they preferred. For a few campers, technology was in complete opposition to the basic, minimalist style of camping that they were trying to experience. Finally, some campers associated technology with RV camping and suggested that RV campers relied too much on technology and associated comforts and thus were not true 'campers.'

Table 7: Results of the Nomothetic (Between-Camper) Analysis of Influence of Technologies (Camping Mode, Camping Gear, and Electronics) on Camping Across Three Campground Types (Less Developed, Moderately Developed, and Highly Developed) from the 2003 Mount Rogers NRA Developed Forest Camping Study

Less Developed *(Ravens Cliff)* *13 participants; 6 camping groups*	Moderately Developed *(Hurricane)* *25 participants; 12 camping groups*	Highly Developed *(Grindstone)* *42 participants; 20 camping groups*
Technology Incongruence (4) • Kids not allowed to bring TV, radio, phone, electronic games; kids create their play and experience nature (3) • Did not bring radio, TV, other electronics? listen to nature (1)	Transitioning (16) • Age-related constraints (7) • Greater flexibility (6) • Decreased set-up time (3) • Something different (1)	Transitioning (23) • Age-related constraints (9) • Desire for comfort/convenience (6) • Accommodations for children (5) • Health-related (2) • Safety (1)

Comfort and Convenience (2)
• Bathrooms (1)
• Low camping fee (1)
	Technology Incongruence (13)
	• Electronics ? "camping" (6)
	• Escape TVs and radios at home (4)
	• Kids not allowed electronics (4)
	  o Need to experience camping (2)
	  o Need exercise (1)
	• Brought electronics? did not use (1)
		Comfort and Convenience (13)
		• Hookups are convenient (2)
		• Bathroom important (2)
		• Fear nature/don't want nature (2)
		• Cold storage (1)
		• Cooking when it is raining (1)
		• Kids have own beds (1)

Transitioning (2) • Age-related constraints (1) • Financial means (1)	Comfort and Convenience (8) • Refrigerator (3) • Television (1) • Radio (1) • Hot showers (1) • Water/electricity (1) • Waterproof fabrics (1)	Distraction (15) • For kids (general) (5) • When it is raining (5) • Keep kids occupied (3) • When it is cold (1) • Watching movies? camping (1)

Table 7 (continued)

Minimalism (1)	Minimalism (1) • Technology isn't needed	Technology Incongruence (13) • Electronics ? "camping" (6) • Want to escape technology (2) • Radios, TVs not necessary (2) • Electronics unnecessary (1) • Don't want kids to use electronics (2)
		Minimalism (2) • Keep camping basic

Results of the Idiographic (Within-Camper) Analysis of Salient Experiences and Associated Meanings

Salient Elements of Developed Forest Camping Experiences

Another research question in this study was, "What are the most salient elements of modern developed forest camping experiences?" As described in Chapter 3, the first step of data analysis was the idiographic analysis of the salient characteristics of campers' forest camping experiences and the associated meanings of those experiences. This was an important step because it grounded future analyses (i.e., the between-camper analysis) across individual transcripts (Patterson, 1993, Patterson & Williams, 2002; Brooks, 2003).

In the within-camper analysis, I first analyzed each interview to identify each camper's expressions of the salient, significant elements of their forest camping experiences. The first column of Tables 8 through 45 identifies the salient elements of participants' forest camping experiences according to the three different camping modes explored in this study. Simply mentioning an aspect of the camping experience was not enough for that element to be considered salient. To be considered salient, an element of forest camping experience had to be mentioned repeatedly or be connected to some important aspect of campers' forest camping trip. For example, simply stating that it had rained that day was not necessarily sufficient for "rain" to be identified as a salient quality of a forest camping experience. However, a rain event that a camper described as ruining their first day of the camping trip was sufficient for "rain" to be identified as a salient quality of the experience. As a second example, a camper that stated that he/she was camping with his/her children was not sufficient to be considered a salient

description of the forest camping experience. However, a camper's description of a five-hour bike trip in which all of the family members were talking and interacting was considered salient.

Meanings Associated with Developed Forest Camping Experiences

Another research question in this study was "What meanings do people assign to modern developed forest camping experiences and what factors influence the construction of meanings?" In the idiographic analysis, I analyzed each interview to identify each camper's expressions of the important, significant meanings that they associated with their forest camping experiences. The second column of Tables 8 through 45 identifies the meanings that campers associated with developed forest camping experiences across the three different camping modes. The salient camping meanings identified in the idiographic analysis varied from camper to camper.

Expressions of meaning were most often overt and resulted from a specific question about the meaning of developed forest camping. (For example, the probing questions used to illicit information about associated camping meanings included (a) "Has this camping trip been meaningful or important to you?," (b) "If so, then describe the most meaningful aspects of your camping trip in as much detail as possible.," and (c) "What were you feeling during those moments?." Other expressions of meaning were couched within participants' narratives of their developed forest camping experiences.

Table 8: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 1 (CG1) (Ravens Cliff- Less Developed Campground, Pop-Up Camper)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (50s)	• Fishing • Chopping wood • Rest/relaxation • Visiting other campers • Local towns • Beautiful weather • Spending time with his wife and kids	• Getting out of the house • Getting away from people I work with • Relaxation and stress relief • Getting to know his sons better while camping • Teaching the kids camping and fishing-related skills
Female camper 1 White (40s)	• Cooking • Cleaning • Trip to the local flea market • Quiet, clean campground • Family-oriented	• Escape telephones and everyday stress • Learning to improvise • Talking more and communicating better with her family; everyone was a little bit closer

Table 9: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 2 (CG2) (Ravens Cliff- Less Developed Campground, Tent)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (50s)	• Cool temperatures • Walking through the forest • Listening to owls • Teaching his wife about American history and geography • Happiness • Spending time with his wife	• Spending time with his wife • Getting away from work; not having to think about work for a while
Female camper 1 White (50s)	• Walking through the forest • Swimming in the river • Dogs running around "off-leash"—a reminder of lack of isolation; desire for primitiveness • Spending time with her husband	• Spending time with her husband • Learning about American history • Escape work • Over the course of my life camping has made me more versatile

Table 10: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 3 (CG3) (Ravens Cliff- Less Developed Campground, Tent)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (50s)	• Nature is peaceful and quiet • Hard rain; rain is part of the tradition • Campfire	• Escaping work, work-related travel, phones, and overtime expectations • Building family memories and traditions related to Ravens Cliff • Place attachment and self-identity related to Ravens Cliff
Female camper 1 White (40s)	• Walking • Spending time at the campfire	• Escaping work and phones • Developing traditions

Table 11: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 4 (CG4) (Ravens Cliff- Less Developed Campground, Tent)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (30s)	• Fishing in Cripple Creek • Building large 'bonfires' • Sitting and talking • Chopping wood with his sons • Privacy and seclusion • Spending time with his wife and sons • Telling stories to his sons • Feelings of happiness	• Everybody gets along better; we don't have to calm the kids down as much • Opportunity to teach their kids to appreciate what they have • Escaping work-related pressures • Developing family traditions and story-telling about family camping trips
Female camper 1 White (30s)	• Fishing • Building fires • Sitting and talking • Sons playing cards and games • Shady campsite • Campfire • Spending time with her husband and sons	• "Kids don't fight when we are camping" • Opportunity to teach our kids to appreciate what they have • Escaping work-related pressures; getting some relief from stresses of work and home-life

Table 12: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 5 (CG5) (Ravens Cliff- Less Developed Campground, Tent)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (40s)	• Fishing • Collecting wood • Resting • Creek • Clean campsites with privacy • Swarms of bugs near the creek • Privacy • Listening to music	• Reconnecting with past identity as a hunter and fisherman; providing food to his family • Resting and relaxing to heal a back injury and prepare for surgery • Spending time with his significant other and developing a longer-term relationship
Female camper 1 White (30s)	• Feelings of peacefulness • Privacy; Nobody bothers us • Resting • Spending quality time with friend	• Spending time with her significant other and developing a longer-term relationship • Family members work together more

Table 13: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 6 (CG6) (Ravens Cliff- Less Developed Campground, Tent)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (40s)	• Research/planning for the trip via the Internet • Skipping rocks • Hiking along the creek • Exploring the woods • "Banana boats" for desert • Playing games • Helping my daughter with her Girl Scout badge project • Trees • Absence of buildings • Campfire • Perfect weather	• Remembering great camping memories with my parents • Developing stories that will be remembered and re-told • Developing a tradition of camping
Female camper 1 White (30s)	• Hiking along the creek • Exploring the woods • Cooking and eating • Importance of port-a-johns for kids • Gnat infestation • Feelings of surprise and concern about lack of water at Ravens Cliff (broken pump) • Campfire • Perfect weather • Kids playing better on their own	• Teaching kids camping skills (how to set-up a tent, how to cook outdoors, how to clean, etc.) • Developing stories that will be remembered and re-told • Developing a tradition of camping

Table 14: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 7 (CG7) (Hurricane- Moderately Developed Campground, Tent)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper White (40s)	• Fishing • Spending time with my wife • Building campfires and spending time at the campfire • New experiences • Desire for comfort	• Getting away from work • Reconnecting with my "outdoorsman" identity • Spending time with my wife • Seeking and finding new experiences in new places
Female camper White (20s)	• Spending time with husband • Watching the campfire • Desire for new experiences in new places	• Getting away from graduate schoolwork and related pressures • Spending time with husband • Seeking and finding new experiences in new places

Table 15: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 8 (CG8) (Hurricane- Moderately Developed Campground, Pop-Up Camper)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper White (40s)	• Meeting new people in the Hurricane campground • Talking with other campers • Downed tree; campers helping one another • Spending time with my dog • Building campfires and sitting by the campfire • Having a basic, primitive-type of camping experience • Feelings of peacefulness	• Escaping work, schedules, and pressures • Getting away from “pagers going off” • Being closer with the Lord

Table 16: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 9 (CG9) (Hurricane- Moderately Developed Campground, Motor Home)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (50s)	• Chopping and collecting wood • Campfire • Talking and playing cards with family members • Downed tree; everybody worked together • Helpful Hurricane campers • Creek is awesome • Fellowship	• Hurricane is our "gathering place" for family members • Spending time with family • Relaxation • Getting away from kids • Getting away from the hustle and bustle of truck driving • Freedom and being able to do what you want to do
Female camper 1 White (50s)	• Campfire • Spending time with family and friends (talking, playing cards) • Nature as a sanctuary	• Spending time with family • Relaxing • We need places like this for my grandchildren to remember
Male camper 2 White (30s)	• Hanging out by the campfire • Talking and playing cards	*No specific expressed meanings*
Female camper 2 White (40s)	• Campfire • Group-family feeling • Hurricane is 'well-kept nature'	• Spending time with family • Escaping chores, work, and phones
Male camper 3 White (60s)	• Spending time in nature	• Appreciation for what the Lord created
Female camper 3 White (50s)	• Love spending time with friends	• Hurricane is our "gathering place" for family members

Table 17: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 10 (CG10) (Hurricane- Moderately Developed Campground, Trailer)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (30s)	• Downed tree; we all pulled together • Sitting by the campfire playing cards with my mom and my uncle	• Getting away from everything ("I'd rather camp than eat if I'm hungry") • Relaxing • Spending time with family • Existence of camping as an opportunity; just having it there and available

Table 18: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 11 (CG11) (Hurricane- Moderately Developed Campground, Camper)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (40s)	• Sounds and beauty of the creek • Spending time with friends and loved ones • Watching the campfire • Importance of being comfortable with our air mattresses	• Spending time with friends and family • Telling stories • Family members talk more and get to know each other better • Getting away from work, schedules, and routine • Reducing stress
Female camper 1 White (30s)	• Creek • Safety • Family-oriented • Beauty of nature • Watching the campfire • Kids biking • Opportunity for kids to play outdoors and learn new things	• Family time; telling stories instead of watching television • Getting back to nature • Not dealing with schedules, housework, telephones • Teaching kids survival skills like how to start a fire

Table 19: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 12 (CG12) (Hurricane- Moderately Developed Campground, Pop-Up Camper)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (50s)	• Spending time with family • Hunting • Grandchildren playing; collecting rocks from the creek	• Spending time with family • Tradition of camping at Hurricane • Escaping work • Relaxing; no telephones or television
Female camper 1 White (50s)- wife of M1	• Spending time with family • Watching grandkids play • Friendliness of other Hurricane campers	• Spending time with family • Family tradition • Leaving behind pressures and relax (no phones, responsibilities, pressures at home) • Place attachment related to the Hurricane campground
Female camper 2 White (40s)	• Spending time with family • Desire for conveniences and comforts	• Escaping phones • Getaway/hobby

Table 20: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 13 (CG13) (Hurricane- Moderately Developed Campground, Tent)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (30s)	• Hiking to the top of Mt. Rogers • Playing Frisbee and football • Comfort and convenience of hot showers and flush toilets • Trees • Lack of RVs • Rain	• Memories of camping with his Dad and learning from his Dad • Strong family traditions with camping • Escaping hectic lifestyle, phones, televisions • Communicating better with spouse; more quality time
Female camper 1 White (20s)	• Fixing dinner in the rain • Hiking to the top of Mt. Rogers • Playing Frisbee and football • Spending time with dog • Rain	• Relaxing • Escaping "everyday" sorts of things (phones ringing, telemarketers, television)

Table 21: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 14 (CG14) (Hurricane- Moderately Developed Campground, Tent)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (30s)	• Fly fishing • Proximity to good fishing spots • Purchasing good camping and fishing gear • Nature • Spend time with family members • Rain and lightning storm (deluge; we sat in the truck) • Comfort and convenience of a camper	• Self-identity as a fisherman • Relaxation • Escaping work, phones, the city, everyday stress • Being in nature • Family traditions and memories of camping; camping was a "get-together" • Spending time with wife
Female camper 1 White (unknown)	Unavailable for interview	

Table 22: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 15 (CG15) (Hurricane- Moderately Developed Campground, Tent)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (30s)	• Exploring the creeks • Privacy • Lack of RVs • Watching the fire; campfire is the "center of everything" • Hiking • Spending time in nature (mountains, streams, trees) • Waterproof tents and related equipment are important • Feelings of concern and fear related to the rain • Spending time with dogs	• Escaping the hustle and bustle of city life and job hunting • "Communing with nature" and "getting back into the wilderness" • Self-identity related to "pioneering" and a return to nature and primitivism
Four other members of his group (two males and two females)	Unavailable for interview	

Table 23: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 16 (CG16) (Hurricane- Moderately Developed Campground, Tent)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (40s)	• Listening to the creek and the sound of running water • Seclusion • Hiking • Spending time with my son • Son bicycling with friends that he made • Building the campfire • Conveniences • Feelings of frustration over abuse of the campground registration process	• "Father-son activity" • Better listening to family members; more attentive to family members • Getting away from home distractions such as television and telephones • Opportunity to teach my son about the outdoors • Developing camping traditions and memories that my son will pass down to his children
Son of M1	Unavailable for interview	

Table 24: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 17 (CG17) (Hurricane- Moderately Developed Campground, Tent)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (70s)	• Sound of the creek and running water • Seclusion and privacy • Meeting up with close friends for day hiking • Reading newspaper • Purchasing camping gear and trying new types of gear • Feelings of peacefulness from spending time in nature • Rain • Rest and relaxation	• Family tradition of camping at Hurricane- place attachment • Age-related reflecting on life; this camping trip could be the last one • Self-identity related to camping and the outdoors • Experiencing the peacefulness of nature • Healing and recovery from prostrate cancer; staying active to stay healthy

Table 25: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 18 (CG18) (Hurricane- Moderately Developed Campground, Tent)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (40s)	• Teamwork for setting up camp • 'Catching up with friends' • Creek • Hiking • Eating • Relaxing	• Spending time with friends • Sharing stories with others • Escape work • Reducing stress
Female camper 1 White (40s)	• Preparing for the camping trip • Enjoying the campfire • Relaxing • Spending time with husband • Eating • Beauty of nature (mountains, creek)	• Spending time with friends • Opportunity to "make up" with my husband • Reducing stress • Getting away from my grown kids
Male camper 2 White (40s)	• Spending time with friends- eating, talking • Accidentally forgetting to bring food • Desire for comfort (getting too old for a tent) • Beauty of nature (mountains, creek, wild horses)	• Spending time with friends • Sharing stories with inmates- help them to see that there's more "out there" • Escaping work /monotony • Reducing stress and forgetting problems • Developing new traditions and memories
Female camper 2 White (40s)	• Friendly Hurricane campers • Spending time with friends • Beauty of nature	• Spending time with friends • Reducing stress • Escaping grown kids

Table 26: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 19 (CG19) (Grindstone- Highly Developed Campground, Tent)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (50s)	• Searching for national-forest setting • Hiking • Walking the 'Whispering Waters' trail • Trips to Damasus, Whitetop, Flattop • Rest/relaxation • Aesthetics of campground (the teardrop-shaped wading pool) • Campsite layout reduces noise pollution from other camping groups	• Rest and relaxation • Healthy change in perspective from doing something different and visiting new places • Satisfying an innate need to explore • "Simplest form of vacation" that does not require planning
Female camper 1 White (40s)	• Trips to local destinations • Rest/relaxation • Great weather • Listening to birds • Importance of bathhouse	• Getting away from the heat and humidity in Indiana • Learning something new • Slowing down, getting away from technology • Exercising and taking a mental break

Table 27: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 20 (CG20) (Grindstone- Highly Developed Campground, Motor Home)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (60s)	• Building campfires • Reading • Relaxing • Trips to Grayson Highlands State Park, local festivals • Trees = "nature's wallpaper" • Cool temperatures at higher altitude • Aesthetics/nature's beauty • Wife's chest pains • Convenience and comfort to make camping easier as he and his wife get older	• Lengthy history with developed camping at Grindstone and related place attachment • Developing good stories to share with wife • Being in the woods helps you to feel closer to the Lord • Age-related reflecting on life; this camping trip could be the last one • Rest and relaxation to help himself and to help his wife to get healthy
Female camper 1 (wife of M1)	Unavailable for interview	

Table 28: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 21 (CG21) (Grindstone- Highly Developed Campground, Motor Home)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (50s)	• Walking every day around the Grindstone loops • Reading • Building and enjoying campfires every night • Spending time with my wife • Rain • Using electronics (satellite dish, APRS, and ham radio) as a distraction from boredom when it's raining	• Lengthy history camping in Grindstone and related place attachment • Escaping chores at home and other distractions • Spending quality time with my wife • Developing family tradition and memories • Experience natural environments that are not available in the city of Bristol
Female camper 1 White (50s)	• Walking every day around the Grindstone loops • Reading • Campfire • Enjoying nature (mountains, trees) • Feelings of peacefulness • Campfire • Spending time with my husband	• Spend more time with my husband, pay more attention to each other, and enjoy each other's company more • Gets my husband away from technology and computers and radio equipment

Table 29: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 22 (CG22) (Grindstone- Highly Developed Campground, Bi-Fold Trailer)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (60s)	• Resting • Spending time at the Grindstone pond • Spending time with kids who visit us at Grindstone • Privacy • Comfort and conveniences associated with a pop-up camper • Nature's green colors (trees, plants)	• Lengthy history camping in Grindstone and related place attachment • Spending time with my wife- camping makes my wife and I closer • Sharing our family tradition of picking blueberries from the top of Pine Mountain and making a cobbler • Relaxing and getting away from the everyday chores, stressful jobs
Female camper 1 (wife of M1)	Unavailable for interview	

Table 30: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 23 (CG23) (Grindstone- Highly Developed Campground, 5th-Wheel Trailer)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (50s)	• Hiking to top of Mt. Rogers • Spending time with my wife, friends, and kids • Rain • Comforts associated with his pop-up	• Escaping the everyday routines at home • Spending time with wife • "Almost a religious experience"- you get closer to heaven through nature and you are "reminded of the beauty of creation"
Female camper 1 White (50s)	• Reading • Privacy • Campfire; "one of the joys of camping" • Spending time with spouse • Viewing nature (trees, rhododendron, underbrush) • Listening to the sounds of birds • Feelings of peacefulness	• Escaping everyday routines at home, telephone, and television • Spending quality time with husband

Table 31: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 24 (CG24) (Grindstone- Highly Developed Campground, Trailer)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Female camper 1 White (40s)	• Hiking the Mt. Rogers Trail • Biking the Virginia Creeper Trail • Sons fishing with their dad • Rain • Privacy • Creating a campground journal • Access to water • Campfire • Spending time with my husband • Getting locked out of the trailer • Importance of conveniences associated with the hookups and kids	• Husband's identity as an outdoors person • Camping as a cheaper alternative to a hotel/motel • Escaping your worries and your responsibilities; leaving those things at home • "Family participation" • Having better conversations with family members than when you are pulled in multiple directions at home; spend more one-on-one time with your kids • Telling stories about your camping trip, creating memories and revisiting those memories
Female camper 2 White (40s)	• Hiking the Mt. Rogers Trail • Biking the Virginia Creeper Trail • Nature (trees, birds) • Campfire • Spending time with my husband • Feelings of peacefulness	• Experiencing nature • Becoming re-energized after camping; it "pulls me back to center" and I can be focused again

Table 32: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 25 (CG25) (Grindstone- Highly Developed Campground, Pop-Up Camper)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (50s)	• Spending time with my wife • Watching the movie "Amadeus" • Playing cards • Spending time with my brother • Quiet and solitude • Walking and playing with our dogs • Campfire • Rain • Trees • Clean restrooms • Friendly campground managers • My brother leaving this morning because he was miserable due to the heavy rain • Identity as "advanced campers" instead of "roughing-it campers"	• You can get away from everybody and everything. • Relaxation and less worrying • Good family time with my brother
Female camper 1 White (50s)	• Watching movies with my husband • Listening to the radio • Spending time with spouse and other family members • Nice level campsites • Quiet • Listening to birds • Feelings of peacefulness	• Relaxing / reduce worries • Escaping everyday home routines, telephones, television • Spending time quality time with spouse; you can forget all of the troubles

Table 33: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 26 (CG26) (Grindstone- Highly Developed Campground, Pop-Up Camper)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (40s)	• Biking the Virginia Creeper Trail • Trips to local destinations • Hiking the Mt. Rogers Trail • Campfire • Spending time with family and friends • Distance between campsites promotes privacy	• Escaping normal routine and home distractions • Experiencing nature • Relaxation to prepare you to go back to work
Female camper 1 White (30s)	• Grindstone campsites offer a safe place for kids to play • Roasting marshmallows and making s'mores over the campfire • Spending time with family and friends • Electronics to keep kids busy during bad weather • Rain • Comforts and conveniences associated with full hookups	• Family time is different when you're camping; you are more vested in being together, doing interesting things together brings you closer, less distractions • Family traditions and stories • Spending time with friends and family is healthy • Opportunity for kids to have different, new experiences
Male camper 2 White (30s)	• Biking the Virginia Creeper Trail	• Camping is therapeutic
Female camper 2 White (30s)	• Spending time with friends • Doing the "family thing" around the campfire • The beauty of nature represented by the Virginia Creeper Trail • Feelings of peacefulness	• Spending time with friends and family is healthy • Escaping the "daily grind" • Family-oriented experience

Table 34: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 27 (CG27) (Grindstone- Highly Developed Campground, Pop-Up Camper)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (50s)	• Walking • Resting • Taking trips to local stores • Cooking outdoors • Playing bluegrass music (fiddle music) • Sitting by the campfire; the campfire is vital to the experience • Heavy rain and bad weather • Clean campground • Beauty of nature "untouched land and untouched forest" • Feelings of enjoyment • Respect and appreciation for nature • Desire to transition from a tent for more comfort and convenience	• Experiencing nature • You talk about things with your family that you don't normally talk about. • Social interaction with other camping groups • Freedom to do what you want to do and to go where you want to go • Family traditions, memories, and stories • Emotional attachment to Grindstone campground
Female camper 1 White (50s)	• Planning for the trip (cooking certain foods, etc.) • Outdoor cooking • Playing bluegrass • Spending time with friends, family, and spouse • Safe campground • Quiet setting • Campfire • Good programs for kids	• Escaping distractions related to work and fast-paced life • Family time together is more quality time than it is at home. • Place attachment to Grindstone campground • Spending time with friends and family • Experiencing nature

Table 35: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 28 (CG28) (Grindstone- Highly Developed Campground, Trailer)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (40s)	• Walking • Napping • Relaxation • Good water • After the rain it was perfect weather; not too hot and not too cold	• Getting away from my farm, the hayfield, and the responsibilities of "cutting" the hay
Female camper 1 White (40s)	• Walking • Napping • Relaxation • Reading • Playing cards • Relaxing • Campsite spots are "nice and shady" • Watching and listening to birds • Rain was "miserable"; everything got wet • Spending time with my husband	• Feeling that it is okay to rest; 'I feel guilty if I sit down at home because so much needs to be done' • Camping is re-energizing; time away from the norm • Spending time with my husband

Table 36: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 29 (CG29) (Grindstone- Highly Developed Campground, Trailer)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (60s)	• Working on my camper • Reading • Running errands to a local town • Undisturbed areas of nature • Campfire • Comfort • Natural beauty represented by the mountains and pond • Conveniences and amenities • Access to news and information via TV and satellite • Rain (having to stay inside) • Spending time with wife and friends	• Innovation and thinking of new ideas • Spending time with my wife and daughters • Developing new camping traditions as an adult; learning from my parents who used to camp at Grindstone • Camping "makes me more of a person like I need to be"—more humble and appreciative • Nature representative of God's beauty • Age-related reflecting on life; this camping trip could be the last one
Female camper 1 (wife of M1)	Unavailable for interview	

Table 37: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 30 (CG30) (Grindstone- Highly Developed Campground, Trailer)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (30s)	• Hiking • Sitting by the campfire • Gathering wood • Spending time as a family • Lack of big crowds- contrasted Grindstone with Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge • Importance of being able to make reservations at Grindstone • Wednesday we sat in the camper in the rain • Playing with Play Station and watching DVDs • Comfort and convenience • My wife seeing the wild ponies	• You have more quality time together while camping than at home • Getting away from work and the house; you don't have to mow the yard or take the kids to t-ball
Female camper 1 White (30s)	• Hiking • Watching the wild ponies at Grayson Highlands • Participating in structured activities with the kids like the bike parade, 'tromp in the woods' • Tromp through the woods • Spending time as a family • Kids ride their bicycles • "Forest-y" feel • Safe environment for kids • Rain • Seeing the ponies at Grayson Highland was amazing • Campers are friendly	• Experiencing nature • Camping is more family time. "It's a lot better quality time together."

Table 38: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 31 (CG31) (Grindstone- Highly Developed Campground, Motor Home)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (70s)	• Reading • Going out to eat at local restaurants • Driving to regional destinations like the Barter Theatre and the Parkway • Visiting with friends and family that come to Grindstone • Gathering wood; gathering your own wood is part of the satisfaction • Grindstone is the "rainforest of the south" • Spend time with friends and family • Keeping a campfire going from about 5:00 to 10:00 PM	• Lengthy tradition of RV camping with family- "Our entire family went across county in 1973 for six weeks." • Self-identity as Grindstone volunteers and RV camper • Getting away from dust and let allergies clear up; getting exercise by chopping wood • Escaping community responsibilities • Being able to afford something that you could not afford when you were younger
Female camper 1 White (60s)	• Quiet setting • Driving on the parkway • Knitting • Nature represented by the mountains and woods; Grindstone is "very nature, very much more nature here that most anywhere you go" • Importance of conveniences in the RV • Sitting by the campfire in the evening • Camping is social, its about spending time with family	• Self-identity as Grindstone volunteers and RV camper • Seeing and visiting with all of the campers here that we know from previous years • Relaxation; camping is something that we love

Table 39: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 32 (CG32) (Grindstone- Highly Developed Campground, Motor Home)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (60s)	• Smelling the smoke of the campfire; "get it in your eyes" • Replicating home life in a camping environment • Feelings of enjoyment • Spending time with family • Grindstone is a good combination of primitive and convenient camping	• Getting away from it all- the hustle and bustle • Relaxing and restoring myself • Freedom • Lengthy tradition of camping at Grindstone
Female camper 1 White (60s)	• Feelings of peacefulness and tranquility attributed to trees and birds • Feeding and watching the birds • Resting • Campfire • Setting features (trees, birds) • Spending time with family	• Lengthy tradition of camping at Grindstone • Invigoration comes from reliving old experiences and revisiting old memories
Male camper 2 (son) White (40s)	• Spending time with family • Telling stories; "we used to be like gypsies"	• Family traditions and memories camping at Grindstone • Camping represents freedom • Relaxation

Table 40: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 33 (CG33) (Grindstone- Highly Developed Campground, Tent)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (40s)	• Walking on the trails • Spending time at the creek • Looking at other people's camping • Building campfires • Grindstone has a "wilderness-type" setting • Developed campground in a natural setting • Solitude • Camping equipment for comfort • Rain- every time we come here it is raining • Creation of memories • Being aware of conservation and recycling are important	• Self-identity related to building camp-related electronics and being inventive with his camping gear • Escaping the routines of home-life • Freedom in terms of how you spend your time; lack of schedules • Spending time with family • Getting back to nature
Other members of camping group (wife, in-laws, and three kids)	Unavailable for interview	

Table 41: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 34 (CG34) (Grindstone- Highly Developed Campground, Motor Home)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (40s)	• "Chilling out" • Walking our Labrador • Feelings of peacefulness • Spending time with family • Friendly Grindstone campers • Perceptions of work—tasks at home are work but while camping the same tasks are considered restful • Cool temperatures • Several camping spots reserved for the entire family • Comfort/convenience	• Experiencing God in nature • Relaxation
Female camper 1 White (30s)	• Cooking and eating • Activities for kids • Spending time with family • Comfort/convenience associated with the motor home and the need to travel with a dog	• We have more time to focus on one another with less distractions; more quality time to talk • Spending time with family
Female camper 2 White (50s)	• Organized programs for kids • Spending time with family members • Purchasing camping equipment • Electronics keep kids occupied, particular in bad weather	• You can talk about things with your family members that you don't talk about at home • Spending time with family • Freedom to come and go as you want to
Male camper 2 White (60s)	Unavailable for interview	

Table 42: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 35 (CG35) (Grindstone- Highly Developed Campground, Motor Home)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (30s)	• Grindstone's wading pool • Large family meals • Privacy • Water and electricity important for comfort and convenience due to back problems. • Noise pollution from other campers' generator • Ordering camping gear (for motor home) from *Camping World Magazine* • Using the campfire to cook soup all day • Playing Sega and Play Station every evening • Fixing a big family dinner for family members that visited Grindstone	• Spending time with my wife • Relaxation
Female camper 1 White (30s)	• Entertaining family members who are visiting • Relaxing • Spending time with other campers/meeting new people • Quiet • Walking the dog • Talking to family members around the campfire • Noise pollution from other campers' generator	• Spending time with my husband • Relaxation
Male camper 2 (son)	Unavailable for interview	

Table 43: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 36 (CG36) (Grindstone- Highly Developed Campground, Motor Home)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Male camper 1 White (50s)	• Feelings of peacefulness • Quiet • Visiting and catching up with other Grindstone campers • Trips into Abingdon and Marion • Beautiful weather • Spending time with friends and each other	• Self-identity as part of the Grindstone camping community • Opportunity to re-connect with Grindstone campers who are close friends • Adventure- seeing new places and having new experiences
Female camper 1 White (40s)	• Nature needs to be left in its natural state, like the forested areas between campsites at Grindstone • Comforts and convenience important as you get older • Spending time with friends and each other • Pleasant weather • Private bathroom is important for camping • Enjoy the television	• Self-identity as part of the Grindstone camping community • Opportunity to re-connect with Grindstone campers who are close friends

Table 44: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 37 (CG37) (Grindstone- Highly Developed Campground, Pop-Up Camper)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Female camper 1 White (30s)	• Extensive research and planning for this trip- drove up to Grindstone to check it out before making a reservation • Ambiance of Grindstone (Large, wooded lots; Quiet) • Biking the Virginia Creeper Trail • Spending time with my husband and our friends	• Planning and anticipation of the trip give it an element of excitement • Experiencing new things and new places- an experience that puts you "in the game" rather than just being a passive observer
Female camper 2 White (40s)	• Reading a book all day • Spending time with my husband and our friends	• Spending time with friends • Relaxing/stress relief

Table 45: Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences and Associated Camping Meanings for Camping Group 38 (CG38) (Grindstone- Highly Developed Campground, Trailer)

Camper	Salient Elements of Forest Camping Experiences	Associated Forest Camping Meanings
Female camper 1 American-Indian (30s)	• Kids biking • Cutting watermelons • Picking my guitar / singing • Making s'mores every night over the campfire • Cooking/eating • Running errands to Wal-mart • Privacy • Grindstone is a family-oriented campground • Beauty of nature represented by mountains and forests • Spending time with my kids • Need to be comfortable in Grindstone- it is considered to be a "wilderness" • Kids participating in July 4th bike parade	• "I've learned more things about my sons since we have been camping than I would have learned at home.' • Family traditions and memories; "I hope my children will develop family memories of these camping trips, memories of spending family time together."
Male camper 1 White (< 18 years old)	• Wrecking my bike • Playing cards, Jenga, and Game boy • Eating sausage gravy and biscuits that Mom made • Chopping wood • Playing basketball • Making new friends in the Grindstone campground- "I would suffer boredom without other people" • Pouring rain; we couldn't get out of the camper • Having fun	*No expressed meanings*

Results of the Nomothetic (Between-Camper) Analysis of Salient Aspects of Developed Forest Camping Experiences

As described in Chapter 3, the second step of data analysis was the nomothetic (i.e., between-camper) analysis. The purpose of the nomothetic analysis was to explore the patterns and themes that extended beyond individual campers (Patterson, 1993, Patterson & Williams, 2002; Brooks, 2003). This step focused on the identification of emergent concepts related to participants' forest camping experiences. Table 53 shows the results of the nomothetic analysis of the salient elements of developed forest camping experiences according to the three campground types (i.e., less developed, moderately developed, and highly developed). The major themes related to the salient elements of developed forest camping experiences were "activities," "social interaction," "psychological states and feelings," and "setting" (including campground/campsite characteristics, nature, and camping mode).

It is important to note that although these themes were ranked based upon the frequency of responses, themes with a higher frequency were not believed to be any more or less valid (a representation of reality) than themes with a lower frequency. Multiple realities were assumed and were considered to be equally valid. Themes with a higher frequency were believed to represent a greater degree of commonality with regards to developed forest campers' experiences.

Activity

One of the most common salient themes of developed forest camping experiences was "activity"- what campers were doing during their camping trip. The "activity" theme was broad and contained several categories, including (a) pre-trip activities, (b) nature-

based activities, (c) activities involving social interaction, (d) activities involving basic human needs, (e) recreation/leisure activities that did not require technology and (f) recreation/leisure activities that required technology.

Pre-Trip Activities

Pre-trip planning was an important component of the developed forest camping experience. As a White female camper from camping group #37 in the highly developed campground suggested,

> We planned this for a long time. I think the planning part of it is fun, the looking forward to it for a very long time, kind of pulls you along in your day-to-day life until you say, 'Oh, we're going camping.'

Campers in all three campground types discussed the planning stage of their camping trips. From the less developed campground, a female camper from camping group #4 shared that "…we came down here and checked out the campground…it's been about two months ago when we came down." Another female camper from the less developed campground in camping group #6 described that "[my husband] did some research… well, he had a book and we also did some research on the internet."

Visiting the campground before the camping trip was also important to campers, as a male camper from camping group #13 in the moderately developed campground suggested,

> The other campgrounds were reserved. The ones that weren't reserved, we really didn't like. And then so we checked out this, we actually scoped it out about a week beforehand, and just to see what we could do. It was definitely, you know, planned out. Once again, I mean, I don't know what

> the campground was like this weekend, you know, over at Grindstone. They could be bumper-to-bumper RVs and we could have been like, you know, this is the worst experience, you know. But right now, Hurricane is really cool.

Similarly, a female camper from camping group #37 in the highly developed campground described,

> We actually did quite a bit of research in terms of campgrounds. My husband actually took a drive up here one whole day and toured campgrounds and just basically eliminated what we didn't want, and you know…actually looked at sites that we wanted to see and that we wanted to reserve in the future.

Pre-trip planning was also important for what campers described as the "popular campgrounds." A female camper from camping group #34 in the highly developed campground said,

> [Grindstone] is within a network that you can reserve on line and look at what's available. It's a fabulous setup…I really liked the on-line registration …I didn't even care that there was a cost associated with it. We have set out on too many occasions trying to be spontaneous campers and we have got into situations where a couple times we've had to turn home, there's been no availability on prime time weekends. That's probably the biggest surprise that I've had with camping, because you think of it as….oh, we're going to load in the car, we're gonna head out, you end up someplace. Especially when you're kind of geared to holiday weekends, you can't do

> that. Because you will find a closed gate on the other end if you haven't prepared – we prepare sometimes a year ahead for holiday weekends.

Other campers engaged in pre-camp rituals to get organized for their camping trip. For example, a female camper from camping group #18 in the moderately developed campground shared,

> …I started like a month ago organizing everything, getting all those little gizmos that would make camping a little easier…it's the anticipation, the anxiety, the adventure, the romance, everything like all balled into one. It's different planning for camping versus planning a regular trip. Cause on a regular trip it's like, well I got to plan for sleeping and something to do on the road, where with camping it's all about, when I get there what kind of an adventure is it gonna be? And when you get home you've got all kinds of different stories to tell.

Activities Involving Human-Nature Interaction

Campers in the all of the campgrounds engaged in a range of nature-based activities. In the less developed campground, salient nature-based activities included gathering and chopping wood, building and watching their campfires, fishing, hiking, swimming, skipping rocks, and walking through the forest. In the moderately developed campground, salient nature-based activities included gathering wood, building and watching their campfires, fishing, fly-fishing, hiking, hunting, exploring the creeks, biking the Virginia Creeper Trail, playing outside, chopping wood, and practicing primitive-type skills. In the highly developed campground, salient nature-based activities included building, watching, and maintaining campfires, hiking, gathering wood, walking

the trails and through the woods, biking, birding, and spending time at the creek and wading pool.

Walking and exploring in the woods was a common activity. A female camper from the less developed campground in camping group #2 shared how she and her husband "spent a lot of time just walking through the forest, which was beautiful. We had a couple of swims in the river, and then in the evening we sat down by the river with a bottle of champagne, and then yesterday we went exploring." Hiking was also an important way that campers interacted with nature. A male camper from camping group #13 in the moderately developed campground stated,

> We hiked Mt. Rogers – I don't know…it was great out in the mountains. The high point was reaching the top of Mt. Rogers. We started from Grayson Highlands, so it was about 8 miles round trip. It's beautiful. The terrain goes from, you know, like bald top mountains to you know, pine forests, to rocks, like the whole trail's rocks, one part. Then there's the wild ponies up there, and that was a lot of fun.

Campers' descriptions of their camping activities suggest that nature-based activities were prevalent among developed forest campers regardless of their campground type. Campers in the moderately-developed and highly developed seemed to engage in a greater diversity of nature-based activities which might be attributed to the additional equipment that those campers were able to carry in their trailers, campers, and motor homes. Table 46 provides excerpts supporting "nature-based activities" as a salient aspect of developed forest camping experience.

Table 46: Interview Excerpts Supporting "Activities Involving Human-Nature Interaction" as a Salient Element of Developed Forest Camping Experiences at the Mount Rogers NRA

Camper	Excerpt
White male from Camping Group #14 in the moderately developed campground	"The high point has been the fishing. I got a 16-inch rainbow…right on the fly. It's just basically been fishing…and just enjoying the outdoors. This campsite has been functioning as a base camp, so that we can go off and fish. We're in camp a few hours in the morning and all evening, probably gone 8 hours during the day."
White male from Camping Group #16 in the moderately developed campground	"My son picks up the salamanders and then lets them go next to the rocks…He got to have fun and I got to sit around in the woods, so it worked out good. He'd rather be out here doing something in the woods than be anywhere else."
White male from Camping Group #20 in the highly developed campground	"The high point's just being together in the woods and sitting by the fire and going where we have to. Just being out in the woods is the high point. We never know how many more days or years we're going to be able to. We both enjoy it.
White male from Camping Group #29 in the highly developed campground	"We love going and sitting by the pond up here where the water comes out of the mountains, you know, and just watching and listening. I could do that for hours. It's kind of like sitting by a campfire. You can see a million things in a campfire. Just give yourself time. Same way with the natural beauty here."
White female from Camping Group #30 in the highly developed campground	"The high point so far would be her petting them ponies, we got to see the wild ponies yesterday on top of Grayson. On top of the mountain. I love the horses…it was beautiful up there, it was the first time we've been up there."
White male from Camping Group #21 in the highly developed campground	"We build fires every night. One of the attractions is the fire at night. Every night that the weather permits we build a campfire."

Activities Emphasizing Social Interaction

Social interaction was a primary component of many of the salient activities that campers described. This category did not include general statements about social interaction, but rather specific expressions of activities that required social interaction with one or more people. In the less developed campground, these activities included teaching, storytelling, and helping each other. As a White male camper from camping group #6 described,

> Our oldest daughter is in Girl Scouts so she worked on some of her Girl Scout things on some of her badges. She had to find certain things, so we thought that's a good thing to do with kids, is come up with a list of things for them to look for throughout the camping trip, cause we're gonna go camping again in about a month with some other kids, so that's a good activity. It was something that we could all do together.

In the moderately developed campground, salient social interaction-based activities included talking and playing cards with family members and working together to set-up the campsite. For example, a comment from a female camper from camping group #18 described the socially-focused nature of her camping experience. She said,

> This trip's been about teamwork…we all threw the camp together. And the next morning we have a small bite to eat, the guys go off and toured the mountain. Then later in the afternoon everybody comes back, we have a small little hamburger or something, then we go off on your nature trail walk. Walked all the way down to the end and back. And then come back and had the real meal for the night and sat around here and talked about

> war stories and the news and whatever else, like that. We had six years to catch up on. So there was a lot of talking.

In the highly-developed campground, social interaction-based activities included preparing a big family dinner, sharing large family meals, sons fishing with their dad, talking to family members around the campfire, and telling stories.

For many campers, visiting with friends and family members who lived close to the MRNRA was a salient aspect of the camping experience. A male camper from camping group #17 in the moderately developed campground shared, "the main purpose of this [camping trip]was to meet with my other friends from Saltville…I know the hosts and a lot of the campers that come here. My friends and I have been backpacking for years." Similarly, a female camper from camping group #35 in the highly developed campground explained,

> [My husband]'s parents came up yesterday evening and had supper with us and we cooked out, stayed outside. That's when we see my parents most, when we're camping. They come up, cause they live in Bristol, so when we're out camping they'll meet us and have supper with us and hang out. We probably talk to them more when we're camping.

Another female camper from camping group #12 in the moderately developed campground shared,

> Our kids, they all live around, in Marion and down in Chilhowie and different areas, and they all come up and share meals with us, sometimes they'll stay an extra night, or just come and let the kids play, bring their bicycles and stuff, it's a good place for the kids to play. It's a great

place for us to be together.

Camping activities often revolved around the campfire. As a male camper from camping group #15 in the moderately developed campground shared,

> The fire pit was very important. We were concerned and afraid that it was going to rain because it's just nice to be around the fire, I guess maybe it's just, I, what do I want to say…kind of an archaic cultural thing. Because it used to be, the fire was the center of everything. You cooked your food, and eat yourselves, and it's just, that was the focal point of our civilization's culture, keep that fire going, make sure you keep that fire going. So that's our energy, that's our, where we cook our food.

But more that just a focal-point for experience, the campfire was often the center of social interaction. As a male camper from camping group #9 in the moderately developed campground explained, "we gather most of the time here, there's sometimes twenty or thirty of us that are around the campfire. We talk, we sing, we play cards, tell jokes, play some more cards." Similarly, a female camper from camping group #26 in the highly developed campground, said, "In the evening we've been having a wonderful campfire…roasting marshmallows and making s'mores and just doing the campfire thing. It's just something nice about the family sitting around the campfire, talking, and just having family time.

Activities Involving Basic Human Needs

Another set of salient camping activities involved things that campers did to meet their basic needs for food and comfortable shelter. For campers in all three camping groups, this theme included activities related to setting up their campground, cooking,

and eating. A male camper from camping group #3 from the less developed campground emphasized the importance of getting the campsite organized when she shared, "getting our wood in was our main thing, and getting set up like we wanted it, you know. I have to have everything in one little place…everything's got to be where we can go out and get it…" A female camper from camping group #18 in the moderately developed campground described how her camping group's experience revolved around food.

> When we're camping, food is a big deal. It's the biggest. When you come camping, it's like here I am in my head saying, OK, we can have such and such for breakfast for one meal, we can have such and such for dinner, I'll take this for supper, but when you're actually out here camping it's, it's not breakfast, dinner, or supper – it's whenever.

Recreation/Leisure Activities Not Requiring Technology

Developed forest campers spoke at great length about the recreation and leisure activities in which they participated. One emergent category related to recreation and leisure activities was activities that did not require technology. In the less developed campground, these activities included resting/relaxing, walking, and playing non-electronic games. In the moderately developed campground, these activities included resting/relaxing, Frisbee, football, biking, reading, and watching grandchildren play. In the highly developed campground, these activities included resting/relaxing, creating a journal, reading, knitting, napping, kids participating in a parade and biking, playing guitar/singing, basketball, cards, walking, and participating in activities with one's children.

For campers in the moderately and highly developed campgrounds, organized youth activities were offered by the U.D.S.A. Forest Service. These activities ranged from nature-based interpretation and exploration activities to a dress-up bike parade. For some parents, organized activities for kids were an important part of their developed forest camping experience. For example, a White male camper from camping group #30 in the highly developed campground shared,

> We went off-site yesterday because we knew today they'd start having the activities for the kids. They had their bike parade and the watermelons, and then they're having singing tonight, and then tomorrow they're having activities all day long tomorrow, starting at 10:00 in the morning. Those kinds of activities are very important, it's one of the reasons we came to Grindstone. The kids enjoy [programs at Grindstone]. They really love, they love it. They're always saying, 'Can we go back to Grindstone?'

Table 47 provides excerpts supporting 'recreation and leisure activities not requiring technology' as a salient aspect of developed forest camping experience.

Table 47: Interview Excerpts Supporting "Recreation/Leisure Activities Not Requiring Technology" as a Salient Element of Developed Forest Camping Experiences at the Mount Rogers NRA

Camper	Excerpt
White female from Camping Group #4 in the less developed campground	"Our kids don't have TV here. They haven't complained about anything. They brought some Pokemon cards. I guess they felt like they were pretty much alone or whatever, I guess, and they could do what they wanted to, you know, they didn't have to worry about anything. They just enjoyed spending time with each other and playing."
White female from Camping Group #12 in the moderately campground	"We bring the volleyball net for the kids…most of the time we have a volleyball net, badminton, Frisbee, and football. This field right here next to us, that's the reason we try to get [this campsite], because there's a big field and it's real handy for the kids. Good place for them to play.
White female from Camping Group #28 in the highly developed campground	"We took a lot of naps, got up and walked, took a nap, got up and walked, and eat, and took a nap, and sat down and rested. We've also played a lot of games and cards. We went on the trail this morning, was the first time we'd done that. The other times we walk mainly around the, around the circle. It's flat and level, you don't have to watch where you're going. Or it's not really level, but it's flat, the smooth surface I should say."
White male from Camping Group #25 in the highly developed campground	"We've spent about 80-85% of our time at our campsite. We didn't get to go to very many places. We didn't get to hike or anything cause of all the rain yesterday. Just relaxed, played some cards with my brother and his kids. It's been a relaxing trip."
White male from Camping Group #27 in the highly developed campground	"I've been reading and [my wife] does crossword puzzles. We're both music students so we practice a little music…bluegrass and the gospel bluegrass, which is fiddle music. Like I say, we're students, we've still got a lot to learn, but we enjoy doing that, though, it's relaxing. We brought some electronics, but we didn't use them. I brought an 8-pack of AA batteries for the Game Boy Advance, that color Game Boy, and we didn't pull out any of that. The radio was used very sparingly. [My son] said he didn't even want to get it out, he didn't want to get the Game Boy out. He was over there with the hatchet chopping a piece of wood, or trying to help with the fire. He's been too busy doing other things to mess with the Game Boy."

Recreation/Leisure Activities Requiring Technology

A second category related to recreation and leisure activities included those that required technology. Campers in the less developed campground listened to music with small "boom-boxes" and drove into local towns. Campers in the moderately developed campground played electronic games and took trips into local towns. Campers in the highly developed campground participated in a wide range of activities that required technology, including listening to the radio, playing electronic games, and watching VHS and DVD movies (i.e., electronic technology) and driving to local town and regional destinations such as Blue Ridge Parkway, the Barter Theatre in Abingdon, Virginia, White Top Mountain, and Grayson Highland State Parks (i.e., use of automobile technology). Table 48 provides excerpts supporting "recreation and leisure activities requiring technology" as a salient aspect of developed forest camping experience.

Table 48: Interview Excerpts Supporting "Recreation/Leisure Requiring Technology" as a Salient Element of Developed Forest Camping Experiences at the Mount Rogers NRA

Camper	Excerpt
White male from Camping Group #3 in the less developed campground	"We bring a radio. We listen to the news. We listened to the race yesterday…about the last twenty laps of it, but you know, then we bring tapes…If it's too quiet – you know, it sounds kind of silly in one way, but we like it to be quiet but then if it gets too quiet, you know, we're used to having radios or TVs or stuff going on at home. You just bring it over here, listen to the news or like, you know, knowing that the race is coming on, you know, we're going to listen to the race..."
White female from Camping Group #7 in the moderately developed campground	"This camp site has functioned like a base camp. We're using it to stay the evenings and to eat dinner, you know, and breakfast when we first get up, but most of the time we're taking time out during the day to go and do things away from the camp so we're not just sitting, you know, holed up right here. So it's just mostly base camp here and then take off." *(note: use of automobile technology)*
White female from Camping Group #38 in the moderately campground	"In the trailer we have cards and we have Jenga, we play a little Jenga, and he has that silly little Game Boy (laughs) Gotta have a Game Boy. That's almost all he does during some parts of the day when we're camping.
White male from Camping Group #21 in the highly developed campground	"We use the satellite dish quite a bit, really. We've got it so we can just watch decent TV, cause when you're camping a lot of times you don't have a good signal to watch TV, from local stations. This is a good place up here, because you're high and you get a lot of stations. The television comes in real handy when it's pouring down rain and you can't get outside or anything, you have something to fall back to besides reading.
White female from Camping Group #25 in the highly developed campground	"We have a television. Actually when we're at home we don't have time to watch TV. So part of our camping fun is watching movies, we go rent movies and videos and things like that and watch. We've watched a couple of movies already.

Activities Related to Human/Companion Animal Interaction

Several of the developed forest campers brought companion animals with them during their camping experience. In most cases, these companion animals were dogs, however, in one case a camper brought a motor home full of cats. For campers in the moderately developed campground and the highly developed campground, spending time with their dogs, walking their dogs, and playing with their dogs were prominent activities of their camping experiences. A male camper from camping group #8 in the moderately developed campground explained how he and his dog spent time when camping.

> I walk up and down the campground and take the dog for a walk. She got up this morning, about 6:30, 6 or 6:30. She wanted up, jumped up and looked at me like, I want where you're at, and I figured that linoleum floor must have got cold… she was shivering. I got her up with me, and she was fine. We spend all of our time together. I won't camp anywhere that won't let me bring her.

Some campers shared that they selected specific campgrounds based upon how compatible the site would be with their dog(s). For example, a female camper from camping group #13 in the moderately developed campground stated, "…we wanted somewhere where the dog wouldn't bother other people as much, but needless to say he's been running off and being a pest anyway. A campground that could accommodate our dog was a priority for sure. He's part of our camping."

Campers in the less developed campground did not mention spending time with companion animals as a salient aspect of their forest camping experiences.

Social Interaction

A second salient theme of developed forest camping experience was social interaction. The theme included expressions of human social interaction as a salient aspect of developed camping. Campers in all of the campground types talked about the many ways that they interacted with others, and these opportunities for social interaction were prevalent and woven as a thread throughout their discussions of their forest camping experiences.

There was consistency across all the of the campground types in that spending time with friends and family members (including their spouse and children) was salient. Campers in the less developed campground also discussed talking with non-family members of their camping group and simply visiting with other campers. Campers in the moderately developed campground also discussed meeting new people, fellowship with other campers, and campers helping one another. Campers in the highly developed campground also discussed the campfire as the center for social interaction, entertaining family members who visited the campground from local towns, and the notion of creating memories with other campers. Table 49 provides excerpts supporting "social interaction" as a salient aspect of developed forest camping experience.

Table 49: Interview Excerpts Supporting "Social Interaction" as a Salient Element of Developed Forest Camping Experiences at the Mount Rogers NRA

Camper	Excerpt
White female from camping group #1 from the less developed campground	"But I like to meet people, too, you know, so that's why I like to, you know, go to different places, even it if it s little more crowded, you know, I like people. You can meet some really good people while camping. The few people who have been [at Ravens Cliff] are really friendly and everything."
White female camper from camping group #2 from the less developed campground	"Who I'm with is the number one priority when I am camping. For me it's most important to be with [my husband], because, well, he's my experience, I suppose, he's teaching me all those things, all the plants and animals."
White male from camping group #10 from the moderately developed campground	"Some trees fell down on the road. The word just spread around through the campsites and the next thing you know we had – what was it, six of us that went up there? Then [another camper], who had just gotten to Hurricane, just went and helped – he was waiting to come in, and set up, and he just pitched right in there with us and we just all pulled together in the situation of need like that. I don't know, people that camp, I mean, you may not know them from Adam, but if something happens and you need help with a vehicle, or a camper, or animal, or person, they're right there standing by your side."
White male from camping group #33 from the highly developed campground	"If you're with somebody, obviously [camping]'s going to be a social experience, and you sit around, you share a lot of things right here that you don't have time to share at other places, you know, cause you got time."
White female from camping group #34 from the highly developed campground	"This is our fifth time camping [at Grindstone]and we've met some of the nicest people everywhere we went. We talk to a lot of campers in other groups. Campers are the nicest people. I mean, you go to a hotel and you don't meet nice people like you do when you're camping. Hotel people are scared to talk. They're scared. Like if you go down there to the beach, and I mean it's just, they're scared of the people I guess. But it's a different world when you're here…in a campground everybody's just more laid back and friendly."

Psychological States and Feelings

A third salient theme of developed forest camping experience was psychological states and feelings. This theme included expressions of how developed forest camping elicited specific psychological states, emotional responses, or feelings. Campers in the less developed campground discussed happiness, peacefulness, surprise/concern, and desires related to comfort and convenience. Campers in the moderately developed campground discussed peacefulness, frustrations, desires related to comfort, and concern/fear. Campers in the highly developed campground discussed peacefulness, enjoyment, misery, frustration, desires related to comfort, appreciation, and concern. Table 50 provides excerpts supporting "psychological states and feelings" as a salient aspect of developed forest camping experience.

Some campers identified how their psychological states and feelings changed during their camping trip. For example, a White male camper from camping group #13 in the moderately developed camp ground described his experience hiking Mt. Rogers.

> We hiked Mt. Rogers. The high point was reaching the top of Mt. Rogers. The low point was thinking that we still had miles to walk to get back. The trail going up's rocky. And coming back down, you're getting tired and you're still walking on rocks for a mile. And both of us at one point were just like, this has got to be over soon. But then, you know, you get past that and it's fine. There are times when it's not as much fun as you pictured it was going to be, but once you actually accomplish it, you know, however long you're going, it's a good feeling.

Table 50: Interview Excerpts Supporting "Psychological States and Feelings" as a Salient Element of Developed Forest Camping Experiences at the Mount Rogers NRA

Camper	Excerpt
White female camper from camping group #4 from the less developed campground	"I should have come prepared. I didn't know that there was no water here [at Ravens's Cliff]. That was something that really got our attention, was the no water. We were getting real anxious about that…"
White male camper from camping group #7 from the moderately developed campground	"Yeah, it put the true fear in me. I hate lightning. I've been caught in it before, I can physically feel it when it's close, and it's not comfortable. We were coming along here the other day and one popped near the truck (laughs) and I about jumped into her lap when I was driving, so she got to see the wimpy husband that she married. That stuck with me all night."
White male camper from camping group #15 from the moderately developed campground	"The high point would be that the locals didn't get all the campsites. People from Marion and surrounding areas come up and set their trailers or their tents up and then leave. Last year we were here Thursday morning…and we saw a lot of that. We saw people come up on Friday night and leaving Saturday morning. Their site's sitting vacant for 36 hours or more and, and I guess that's one of the advantages of living close. Rules stipulate, and I read them again just to make sure, that you have to spend the first night here, and you have to be back within a 24-hour period. It'd be hard for, it'd be hard for the Forest Service I guess maybe to regulate that, but it does seem somewhat unfair. It made me so mad."
White male camper from camping group #20 from the highly developed campground	"We like the trees. Look out at the trees here? We call that our natural wallpaper. You know, I talked to a girl down in Knoxville, I said, she liked to go in a motel. I said, I love the wallpaper in the woods, you know, she said, What you mean? The trees. Oh- oh, you know. It's just peaceful, it gives you a peace that you can't have anywhere else."
White female camper from camping group #35 from the highly developed campground	"My low point was getting pissed off by the generator next door. The fellow next to us…they've gone now, they had a generator on for like an hour yesterday. Industrial strength. It was the type of generator we used when we built our first house, you know…a huge thing. And we couldn't even, we couldn't hear anything here. They had people complaining up here about it."

Setting

A fourth salient theme of developed forest camping experience was "setting," which included expressions related to the environmental setting of camping. This theme was comprised of three categories: campground/campsite characteristics, nature, and camping mode.

Campground/Campsite Characteristics

One of the main categories in the setting theme was "campground/campsite characteristics." Campers often referenced their campsite and campground when describing their forest camping experiences. Campers in the less developed campground discussed the privacy and seclusion provided by their campsite, the absence of buildings, the presence of portable toilets, and other campsite characteristics such as shady, quiet, and clean. In addition to privacy, seclusion, and the desire for a clean campsite, campers in the moderately developed campground also discussed friendly campers as a salient setting feature related to the campsite, as well as the lack of motor homes, the natural setting, access to conveniences, and a family-oriented atmosphere.

Campers in the highly developed campground identified a range of campsite/campground characteristics that were salient aspects of their experience. The most common responses included quietness, privacy/seclusion, planned activities for kids, safe places for kids to play, solitude, a campsite layout that reduced the noises associated with other camping groups, friendly campers, access to water, and a wading pool. Having access to a fire-pit for campfire-building and watching was important across all three campground types.

Several campers indicated an understanding that they were on public lands and expressed a preference for camping in campgrounds that were on public lands. A White male camper from camping group #26 in the highly developed campground shared his perspective on the differences between public and private campgrounds. He shared,

> The difference between this and a private campground. See, a private campground, you have to cater to the clientele. Where up here, they cater to the environment. I love that. No way I would come [to Grindstone] and have children running around on motorcycles and then you hear these trail bikes and stuff running around – no. No, I don't want to hear that. I think that is modernization. That's modernization. I mean, that's, you see it on television, you hear it on radio, and you live it at home. But camping is a different element. No, you don't need that. It should be close to primitive, but like I said a while ago, the modern conveniences, yes they are handy, but that would not stand in our way from camping.

Table 51 provides excerpts supporting 'campground/campsite characteristics' as a salient aspect of developed forest camping experience.

Table 51: Interview Excerpts Supporting "Campground/Campsite Characteristics" as a Salient Element of Developed Forest Camping Experiences at the Mount Rogers NRA

Camper	Excerpt
White female camper from camping group #2 in the less developed campground	"I'm not as isolated as I want to be. You know, it's like, some of the campsites we go to where you've got loud music and kids screaming and dogs barking. I'm just not used to camping in campgrounds. In Australia we just go out and drive, and stop in the bush somewhere…in Australia you just camp wherever you want. So to me that sort of takes away that feeling of isolation. But here at Ravens Cliff, you know, here, you could be quite isolated."
White male camper from camping group #4 in the less developed campground	"This river made this camping trip a whole lot more easier, the kids can get down and enjoy it, and they sit there and that's one thing they look forward to, the first thing this morning they got up, wanted to go fishing and stuff. It's made it more, you know you've got kids, if you don't' keep them satisfied you ain't gonna be [happy]."
White male camper from camping group #7 in the moderately developed campground	"There's a very nice element to car camping that allows for all the creature comforts, and this is one of those campsites that blends it pretty nicely. You're not overrun with people even though this is a big holiday weekend…the grounds are full as far as I know, and you don't have anybody around, so that's a real nice element to this camp site. You don't even feel like you are around other people. We've seen a lot of brochures where a lot bigger campsites that would hold like a hundred people, and we shy away from those kind, we like our privacy, and definitely this layout works for us."
White male camper from camping group #8 in the moderately developed campground	"A fire pit is important. I won't camp…if I go to a campground that says I can't build a campfire, I'll leave. Because that's, to me that's peace, right there. I got to have a fire. I mean, to me, I feel closer to the Lord that way than I do anywhere."
White female camper from camping group #11 in the moderately developed campground	"I feel safe here [at Hurricane]. The camp hosts always make a point to say hello, and the people we've met, it's always family-oriented, you know, there's not a lot of partying and a lot of, you know, you feel like if your kids are out of your sight for thirty minutes it's OK. You don't really have to worry about people that's around you. Because it's a family place. Some of the others are pretty spots, but I don't think I'd let my child out of my sight for more than five minutes at a time."

Table 51 (continued)

White female camper from camping group #19 in the highly developed campground	"One feature [of Grindstone] that we really liked was the pool…the water play area. It's really unusual. I've never seen anything like it. It's just this little pool that was built and they diverted part of the stream, and it comes in at one end and then the water goes out at the other. It's probably about a foot and a half deep. Well it seems so un-Forest Service like. It looks like a CCC-type project because it's natural stone laid all the way around the perimeter of this pond, and then they have a little chute that funnels the stream in, and that's all stoned along the side of that. It's really done nicely…it has an aesthetic quality to it, not just a function, it's not just a pool. It's you know, it's not just symmetrically round, it's kind of teardrop shaped. So that was a great idea that somebody had there. Of course if it's really hot you could dip your toes in there after a hike, and the kids play in there and stuff."
White male camper from camping group #22 in the highly developed campground	"We enjoy cooking out on the [fire pit] out there. Going back to kind of the rough crude way, even though we've got the gas stove and oven and all inside, if it's a nice evening we prefer fixing our meals, you know, over the hot coals, and just kindly going back to the old way of camping again, throwing a little of that in on it. A campfire is a must. The setting of the campfire, watching the coals burn during the night, letting your imagination run away with you. Yes, the fire, that's part of it."

Nature

The second major category in the setting theme was "nature," which included concrete and sensory-based expressions of nature, symbolic expressions of nature, and expressions of nature-based experiences. There was considerable agreement across the three campground types regarding how nature was a salient aspect of the developed forest camping experience.

Expressions about nature were often tangible, referring to specific aesthetic qualities of the natural environment. For campers in the less developed campground, the most salient aspect of nature was scenic beauty represented by the creek, trees, quiet, animals, weather, and insects. Campers in the moderately developed and highly developed campgrounds also discussed scenic beauty (i.e., mountains, Cripple Creek, wild horses on Mount Rogers), but the weather was also a salient quality of nature because several powerful thunderstorms had influenced their camping experience.

Expressions of nature were also sensory-based; campers expressed nature in terms of how they could experience nature through their senses. For example, a White female camper from camping group #38 in the highly developed campground shared,

> We're originally from the city. We like the trees and the shade from the trees. Our other site had full sunshine, and I'm more up the sunshine alley, I'm going to lay out and get a suntan, you know. I like to feel the sun on my face. But my boys and [my husband], they sweat and they like…, they love the shade right here, so I think what we'll do is we'll trade off. Every other year we'll go sunny and shady, sunny and shady. Now these trees, I like to wake up in the morning and smell the forest around me, I love that.

A male camper from camping group #30 in the highly developed campground spoke about his wife's experience at the top of Mt. Rogers,

> The high point so far would be her petting them ponies, we got to see the wild ponies yesterday on top of Grayson. On top of the mountain. Now she likes horses, but she rarely gets a chance to see them and touch them, and she really liked that. And that was beautiful up there.

Nature, as a salient aspect of developed forest camping, was not always expressed in terms of its physical or sensory-based properties. Campers sometimes spoke about nature in symbolic ways. For example, a camper in the less developed campgrounds described nature as a peaceful "sanctuary" (White female camper from camping group #9), and a White male camper from camping group #27 in the highly developed campground expressed how the natural camp setting was "untouched land, untouched forest, cleanliness, it's just nature, you know, it's ain't got no city to it…you walk right off the side there and you can walk two minutes and it's like you're one hundred miles from anywhere."

Table 52 provides excerpts supporting "nature" as a salient aspect of developed forest camping experience.

Table 52: Interview Excerpts Supporting "Nature" as a Salient Element of Developed Forest Camping Experiences at the Mount Rogers NRA

Camper	Excerpt
White male camper from camping group #6 in the less developed campground	"The scenery and the scenic beauty are breathtaking. This is why we came to Ravens Cliff. Certainly the creek, wooded, the trees, and an absence of structures…I mean buildings…made this trip what we were looking for."
White female camper from camping group #11 in the moderately developed campground	"We love the creek here at Hurricane- the sound of the water, the beauty of it, the relaxation. Of course, our sons like the salamanders and the crayfish. That creek is a natural stereo. That's the best stereo in the world."
White male camper from camping group #14 in the moderately developed campground	"The low point was probably Friday evening during the deluge when we couldn't do anything, we just had to sit around. We got in the truck for a while because the lightning storm was pretty bad. We got in the truck just to be safe."
White female camper from camping group #18 in the moderately developed campground	"Nature was the creek, you know, we took the trail walk along the creek, at certain spots, it was like watching a waterfall, it was just so beautiful, it was just like, breathtaking. And then with all of the trees, I mean, we've gone through here walking and pointing out the different trees, the pine, the honeysuckle, the buttercup flower, I mean there's just so much in nature…"
White male camper from camping group #19 in the highly developed campground	"If you like to be outside, which I do, and if you have any interest at all in birds or hiking, then camping is the natural thing to do. Every night there's been at least two different kinds of owls in these woods, and there's one bird that has kind of a xylophone trill but we haven't been able to identify it. So, you know, if you have any interest in that kind of stuff camping is the natural medium. I could do this all day every day."
White female camper from camping group #28 in the highly developed campground	"I just love watching the birds and listening to them, and seeing the different plants, and just, you know, yesterday there was birds fighting up here, and just watching them interact with each other is just amazing to me."
White female camper from camping group #37 in the highly developed campground	"We like the ambience of this type of campground, we like large lots, wooded lots, a bit away from your neighbor, the people that are here for maybe the same quiet type recreation that we're looking for. It's just beautiful scenery. It's spectacular nature."

Camping Mode

The third category in the setting theme was "camping mode." Camping mode was an inherent aspect of campers' setting because their camping mode was either their residence (in the case of the motor home, camper, or pop-up) or an auspicious and important aspect of their camp site (in the case of the tent). The theme "camping mode" included salient expressions related to how campers came to select specific camping modes and the relationship of their camping mode (and other types of technologies) to their overall developed forest camping experiences. Camping mode was discussed earlier in Chapter 4, as expressed through the themes of "transitioning" and "technology incongruence."

Nature-Based Experiences in a Developed Setting?

Campers across all of the campground types expressed that they were receiving a nature-based experience even though they were camping in a road accessible campground in which pavement, human-made structures, and other non-natural features were commonplace, particularly in the moderately and highly developed campgrounds. A White male camper from camping group #36 in the highly developed campground explained how some of his friends felt about his type of motor home based camping. He shared, "…a lot of people consider this not to be camping, if you have a motor home…they think you have to be roughing it." Another camper from the highly developed campground (White male camper from camping group #22) talked about how he reconciled his feelings about nature and all of the human-made properties of the developed campground. He said,

> When you're camping in a developed campground you've got to kinda

> overlook the pavement. You just overlook it. Look up. I mean, you've got to have a little imagination. I mean, you're not going to get anywhere where it's perfect. I used to do a lot of hunting. You'd get back in the woods and you'd think no one has ever been there before. You'd find a cigarette pack, or a pop can. And you're gonna find that everywhere. You've got to overlook that.

A similar perspective was shared by a White male camper from camping group #33 in the highly developed campground, who shared,

> Camping is like getting back to nature. Even when you hear those sounds [of cars on the road], I can block that right out of there. You know. I know the road's down there but I can block it right out. Just block it out, and if you walk up here five minutes you don't hear that, you know, only five minutes away.

A male camper from camping group #15 in the moderately developed campground suggested that whether or not he was able to receive a nature-based experience in a developed campground was dependent upon where he lived. He compared the Hurricane campground with his permanent residence in explaining how he was getting a "wilderness" experience.

> In this setting I was able to have a wilderness experience. But it's all relative. I come from a city of, an area, with a population of a million. So what's your perspective? What are you relating it to? I'm relating it right now, I'm relating this experience to my life in the triangle area. So it's just relative to where you are, what you're looking for, your

experiences.

Similarly, a female camper from camping group #2 in the less developed campground noted that camping in a developed campground was better than not camping at all. She explained,

> To me, this is better than nothing. I'd rather camp here than stay at home. So you know, I just accept [this development] as just part of being in America. You know, bloody dogs barking or something, but you know, it's still better than nothing. But one of the highlights…particularly here in Virginia, is the amount of woodlands…the amount of forest that's still around, that really has impressed me a lot.

As this camper suggested, the degree to which a developed campground allowed for a "natural" type of experience was often equated with the amount of forests on the landscape. This perception was shared by other campers. A White female camper from camping group #38 in the highly developed campground said, "I call this the wilderness. To me it is the wilderness. I was raised in the city…to me, the trees and the birds make this a wilderness." A White male camper from camping group #33 in the highly developed campground stated,

> I look for the wilderness-type setting. I'm thankful that, I guess, our forefathers foreseen all this country here to preserve it, and we have come in here, I guess four or five generations prior to us, and decided to put a campground here, and one here, and one there, but still leave it in almost a natural setting, you know. That's sort of what I look for. I look for a lot of trees, just being back away from everything.

Some campers even suggested that they were in a primitive environment. For example, a camper from camping group #8 in the moderately developed campground said, "I like it around here because it's basic and primitive, but you've got everything you need. Yeah. This is primitive camping, and I love it."

Even though several campers expressed that they were receiving a nature-based experience, consistent with the perspective that there are multiple realities, one camper felt that he was not able to have a natural experience in the highly developed campground. That camper—a White male from camping group #19 in the highly developed campground—felt that it was impossible to get a nature-based experience in the highly developed campground. He described what he defined as nature,

> The Grindstone campground by definition is almost an artificial construction. But it's certainly different from, from staying in a motel or a cabin. You know, you are right in the woods here, with the trees and stuff. But it's artificial, I mean, you can't get really a natural experience. Natural would probably be, you know, being out in the woods without any gear at all, naked, or something.

Another camper, a White male from camping group #10 in the moderately developed campground, spoke about the impacts of age on his perspective of nature-based experiences and highly developed camp grounds. He said,

> This type of campground is important. Well, when you get old, you can't get out there to where there ain't no roads. I'm 63 years old, and I can't get on top of them mountains. So this is as close to nature as I can get. We need to have this kind of camping for when people get older…

> they're not going to be able to do some of these other things. That's good that they've got other things for younger folks to do, but when you get our age, it's nice to have a road to get to a place like this to appreciate it.

Thus, this camper was a reminder of the barriers that come with age and the way that individual realities are shaped by personal experiences.

In summary, developed forest camping experience was described by campers as a combination of what they were doing before and during their camping trip (i.e., activities), who they were interacting with during their camping trip (i.e., social interaction), where they were camping (i.e., setting), and what they were feeling while they were there (i.e., psychological states/feelings). The camping experience occurred in stages and sometimes began months before the trip with pre-trip planning. The camping experience emerged over the course of the campers' trips, with emotional highs and lows based upon the influences of the setting (e.g., severe weather) and extraordinary, unique experiences like reaching the top of Mount Rogers and seeing wild ponies for the first time. The camping experience was very social, with campers' defining much of their experience in terms of who they were with. Finally, the camping experience was influenced greatly by the natural environment, particularly the scenic beauty and other aesthetic setting qualities that campers repeatedly mentioned in their interviews. Although not universal, the majority of campers in this study suggested that they were able to get a nature-based experience even in highly developed camp settings.

Table 53: Results of the Nomothetic (Between-Camper) Analysis of Expressed 'Salient Aspects of Forest Camping Experiences' Across Three Campground Types (Less Developed, Moderately Developed, and Highly Developed) from the 2003 Mount Rogers NRA Developed Forest Camping Study

Less Developed *(Ravens Cliff)* *13 participants; 6 camping groups*	Moderately Developed *(Hurricane)* *25 participants; 12 camping groups*	Highly Developed *(Grindstone)* *42 participants; 20 camping groups*
Pre Trip Activities (2) • 'Scouting' the campground (1) • Campground internet research (1) On-Site Activities (35) • Activities (nature-based) (15) o Campfire (6) ▪ Building campfire (2) ▪ Watching campfire (4) o Fishing (2) o Hiking (2) o Walking through the forest (2) o Gathering wood (1) o Swimming in the river (1) o Skipping rocks (1) o Chopping wood (1) • Activities (social interaction) (9) o Teaching wife about American history and geography (1) o Telling stories to his sons (1) o Helping daughter (1)	Pre-Trip Activities (1) • Preparing for the camping trip (1) On-Site Activities (48) • Activities (nature-based) (28) o Campfire (12) ▪ Watching campfire (9) ▪ Building campfire (3) o Hiking (4) ▪ Hiking (general) (2) ▪ Hiking Mt Rogers Tr. (2) o Spending time in nature (2) o Fishing (1) o Fly fishing (1) o Hunting (1) o Gathering wood (1) o Exploring the creeks (1) o Biking Virginia Creeper Trail (1) o Playing outside (1) o Chopping wood (1) o Practicing 'primitive' skills (1)	Pre-Trip Activities (2) • Pre-trip planning (2) On-Site Activities (109) • Activities (nature-based) (37) o Campfire (14) ▪ Watching campfire (8) ▪ Sitting by the campfire (3) ▪ Building campfire (2) ▪ Keeping campfire going (1) o Hiking (6) ▪ Hiking (general) (3) ▪ Hiking Mt. Rogers Tr. (3) o Bird-related (6) ▪ Feeding/watching birds (2) ▪ Listening to birds (4) o Biking Virginia Creeper Trail (5) o Gathering wood (2) o 'Tromping through the woods' (1) o Walking the trails (2) o Spending time at creek (1) o Spending time at wading pool (1)

Table 53 (continued)

• Activities involving basic needs (food, water, shelter) (3) o Cooking/Eating (3) o Cleaning (1) • Activities related to recreation and leisure (not requiring technology) (6) o Resting/Relaxing (3) o Playing non-electronic games (2) o Walking (1) • Activities related to recreation and leisure (requiring technology) (1) o Listening to music (1) o Driving to local towns (1)	• Activities (social interaction) (3) o Talking and playing cards with family (2) o Teamwork for campsite set-up (1) • Activities (human/companion animal interaction) (3) o Spending time with dog (3) • Activities involving basic needs (food, water, shelter) (3) o Eating (2) o Fixing dinner in the rain (1) • Activities related to recreation and leisure (not requiring technology) (11) o Resting/Relaxing (3) o Frisbee (2) o Football (2) o Biking campground roads (2) o Reading newspaper (1) o Watching grandkids play (1)	• Activities (social interaction) (5) o Large family meals (2) o Family talking/story-telling (2) o Sons fishing with their dad (1) • Activities (human/companion animal interaction) (3) • Walking/playing with dogs (3) • Activities involving basic needs (food, water, shelter) (9) o Eating (3) o Cooking (3) o Making s'mores (2) o Cutting and eating watermelon (1) • Activities related to recreation and leisure (not requiring technology) (32) o Resting/Relaxing/Napping (8) o Reading (8) o Walking (5) o Playing cards (3) o Kids biking (2) o Creating a journal (1) o Knitting (1) o Structured activities for kids (1) o Playing music/guitar/singing (1) o Playing basketball (1)

Table 53 (continued)

		• Activities related to recreation and leisure (requiring technology) (22) o Driving to regional destinations (8) o Driving to local town (6) o Playing electronic games (Game Boy, Sega, Play Station) (4) o Watching movies/DVDs (3) o Listening to the radio (1)
Social interaction (10) • Spending time with family, spouse, children (5) • Talking (2) • Visiting other campers (1) • Spending time with friends (1)	Social interaction (18) • Spending time with family, spouse, children (9) • Spending time with friends (5) • Meeting new people (1) • Campers helping one another (1) • Fellowship (1)	Social interaction (46) • Spending time with family, spouse, children (32) • Spending time with friends (12) • Meeting new people (1) • Entertaining visiting family members (1) • Creating memories with others (1)
Psychological States / Feelings (5) • Happiness (2) • Peacefulness (1) • Surprise/Concern (1) • Desire for comfort/convenience (1)	Psychological States / Feelings (7) • Desire for comfort/convenience (5) • Peacefulness (2) • Frustration (2) • Desire for novelty/new experience (1) • Concern/Fear (1)	Psychological States / Feelings (20) • Peacefulness (8) • Desire for comfort/convenience (8) • Enjoyment (4) • Misery (2) • Frustration (2) • Concern/fear

Table 53 (continued)

Setting (20) • Campground/Campsite (10) o Privacy (4) o Absence of buildings (1) o Clean (1) o Quiet (1) o Port-a-Johns (1) o Seclusion (1) o Shady (1) • Nature (10) o Weather (4) ▪ Perfect weather (2) ▪ Cool temperatures (1) ▪ Hard rain (1) o Insects (2) ▪ Gnat Infestation (1) ▪ Swarms of bugs (1) o Listening to owls (1) o Trees (1) o Quiet (1) o Animals (1)	Setting (32) • Campground/Campsite (15) o Seclusion (2) o Friendliness of other campers (2) o Lack of motor homes/RVs (2) o Natural setting (2) o Privacy (2) o Clean (1) o Safety (1) o Conveniences (1) o Family-oriented (1) o Primitive/convenient camping (1) • Nature (17) o Scenic beauty (7) ▪ Beauty (general) (2) ▪ Mountains (2) ▪ Creeks (2) ▪ Wild Horses (1) ▪ Trees (1) o Creek (5) ▪ Creek (general) (3) ▪ Listening to creek/sounds of rushing water (2) o Weather (4) ▪ Rain (general) (3) ▪ Rain / Lightning storm (1)	Setting (79) • Campground/Campsite (47) o Quiet (6) o Privacy (5) o Safe place for kids to play (3) o Natural/wilderness setting (3) o Solitude (2) o Campsite layout reduces noise pollution from other groups (2) o Friendly campers (2) o Access to water (2) o Wading pool (2) o Wooded/forested campsite (2) o Large campsites (1) o Distance between campsites (1) o Access to electricity (1) o Good drinking water (1) o Family-oriented (1) o Bathhouse (1) o Clean campground (1) o Lack of big crowds (1) o Clean restrooms (1) o Shady campsites (1) o Friendly campground managers (1) o Reservation option (1) o Level campsites (1)

Table 53 (continued)

• Camping Mode *(see technology discussion earlier in Chapter 4)*	• Camping Mode *(see technology discussion earlier in Chapter 4)*	• Nature (28)
		  o Weather (15)
		  ▪ Rain (general) (6)
		  ▪ Perfect/great weather (4)
		  ▪ Heavy rain/bad weather (2)
		  ▪ Rain was miserable (2)
		  o Scenic beauty (9)
		  ▪ Mountains (3)
		  ▪ Forests (3)
		  ▪ Beauty (general) (2)
		  ▪ Pond (1)
		  o Birds (6)
		  ▪ Watching birds (3)
		  ▪ Listening to birds (3)
		  o Wild ponies (3)
		  o Nature's green colors (1)
		  o Trees, rhododendron (1)
		
		• Camping Mode *(see technology discussion earlier in Chapter 4)*

Results of the Nomothetic (Between-Camper) Analysis of Associated Camping Meanings

As described in Chapter 3, the purpose of conducting a nomothetic (i.e., between-camper) analysis of the meanings that individual campers associated with their developed forest camping experiences was to explore the patterns and themes of camping meanings that extended beyond individual campers (Patterson, 1993, Patterson & Williams, 2002; Brooks, 2003). The major themes related to the meanings of developed forest camping experiences were: restoration, family functioning, special places, self-identity, social interaction, experiencing nature, association of God and nature, novelty, and the opportunity for children to learn. Table 59 on pages 221-223 shows the results of the nomothetic analysis for camping meanings across the individual interviews. Although these meanings may be related to the life-context meanings (i.e., meanings that were important across the greater context of campers' lives) that are discussed later in Chapter 4, Table 59 specifically refers to meanings that campers' associated with their on-site Mount Rogers developed forest camping experiences.

Again, although these themes were ranked based upon the frequency of participants' responses, themes with a higher frequency were not believed to be any more or less valid (a representation of reality) than themes with a lower frequency. Multiple realities were assumed and were considered to be equally valid. Themes with a higher frequency represented a greater degree of commonality with regards to the meanings that campers associated with their developed forest camping experiences.

Restoration

The most common theme of camping meanings across all three campground types was "restoration." As described in Chapter 2, the recreation and environmental

psychology literature suggests that "restoration" is a reduction in stress, arousal, or anxiety that results from being removed from one's home environment and being placed in a natural setting. Based upon campers' responses about the associated meanings of their forest camping experiences, restoration included the categories of "rest," "escape," and "recovery."

Rest

The first category of restoration meaning was "rest." For some campers, restoration meant the opportunity for rest and relaxation. As a White male camper from camping group #3 in the less developed campground suggested,

> We just come over here and just rest. That's about it, just kind of get out and get away, cause you come over [to Ravens Cliff] and it's, you know, always kind of peaceful…just get away to where it's peaceful.

Similarly, a White female camper from camping group #9 in the moderately developed campground shared, "To [my husband] and I it's just the peaceful relaxation for us…camping's the only time we get to rest." Getting away and resting did not always feel normal to some campers who were used to staying busy at home. As a White female camper from camping group 23 in the less developed campground suggested, "If I sit down at home I feel guilty, because I'm letting something else go. So up here you just, there is nothing else. You just relax and let everything else go."

Escape

The second category of restoration meaning was "escape." Campers across all three campground types discussed how camping was restorative because it provided a mechanism for people to "get away" or "escape" some aspect of their home environment.

One camper, a White male camper from camping group #2 in the less developed campground, described escape meanings in terms of experiencing a new environment. He said,

> Camping is a way to get out and relax. Just sort of come out here and soak up good oxygen. Other aspects of my life are not relaxing. Even though I enjoy my work, it's nice to get out and do something a little different and forget about it for a while.

This camper's perspective of "escaping to" a new environment was uncommon. In most cases, campers seemed to suggest that escape meanings were more related to "getting away" from stressful jobs or responsibilities that they had at work or at home. As a White male camper from camping group #14 in the less developed campground shared,

> [Camping's] a way of relaxing, getting away from the stress of everyday life, that's real important, no phones out here, you don't have to worry about it, I think that's the main thing. Escape from working and just everyday rigors.

Campers also described how they wanted to escape technologies like telephones, televisions, cell phones, and pagers. Table 54 provides excerpts supporting "restoration-escape" as an associated meaning of developed forest camping experience.

Table 54: Interview Excerpts Supporting "Restoration-Escape" as an Associated Meaning of Developed Forest Camping Experiences at the Mount Rogers NRA

Camper	Excerpt
White female camper from camping group #7 in the moderately developed campground	"For me it's just a chance to get away from school or work or whatever …the everyday stresses…and get out and be with [my husband] and see new things and get back to nature a little bit…and kind of simplify things for a few days."
White male camper from camping group #7 in the moderately developed campground	"There's a lot I like to leave behind, it's kind of a little hectic life with a house, we've got a lot of stuff going on, some goats, and cats, and this dog, and it's kind of nice to leave that a little bit, just to have a break, and we have somebody who's taking care of our ranch, and that's very nice, to let go of a little of that, sort of the house worries…"
White male camper from camping group #8 in the moderately developed campground	"I'm on fire and rescue, and there are always pagers going off. Out here there are no pagers and I can really concentrate a lot. Camping is a little time away from the hustles and bustles of everyday life. When you're at work, it's just a push to get everything done…and they want it done now. Camping, there's no time schedule. You don't have to get something completed in ten minutes. I mean, it's just, get away.
White male camper from camping group #10 in the moderately developed campground	"You get away from the rat race. I'd rather get away from the hassle of work and around home there's always something to do, yard work or housework. I just feel like you rest better and you don't have to worry about some of your responsibilities."
White female camper from camping group #12 in the moderately developed campground	"Camping is leaving pressures behind. Pressures, and everything. All that. Just leave it behind you, forget about it."
White female camper from camping group #13 in the moderately developed campground	"When we get out we tend to leave televisions and radios behind. Cause our, both of our jobs, we're both going into the medical industry. So it's technology-driven. It's nice to not have the cell phones and not have the, any sort of like real contact with anything like that. It's like nobody can get away anymore without just really just physically leaving where they live, because, I mean like, sitting at home you can't get through an evening without the phone ringing off the hook, whether it's people you know, or telemarketers, or, you know, whatever, and the TV's on…"

Table 54 (continued)

White male camper from camping group #22 in the highly developed campground	"When we're camping we like to relax. Getting away from the everyday chores, getting away from the stress job, it puts you in another atmosphere. If you're home you feel like you should be doing something; here you can only do so much and then you've got to relax. So it's an escape, it's a release."
White male camper from camping group #23 in the highly developed campground	"A few years ago the job I was on, the telephone rang constantly and it was usually somebody with a problem. And I came camping, I went camping to get away from the telephone, from hearing the telephone at all, because I just couldn't hardly stand to hear it."
White female camper from camping group #26 in the highly developed campground	"[Camping] is just getting out of the grind of what you do every day and coming and just spending time with friends and family and, I think it's really healthy for us to just spend time together as a family and, it's healthy just to be with our friends, it's just a, it's just, to me that's what it's about. Getting away from all the things that you have to do every day, doing the things you want to do."
White male camper from camping group #28 in the highly developed campground	"Just the relaxation. Being able to just leave everything at home and get away from it for a weekend, not have to worry about it. We own a farm, so if we was at home, I'd be, today I'd probably be in the hayfield, I'd be cutting hay or doing something. I'd be working."
White male camper from camping group #30 in the highly developed campground	"Cell phones don't reach out here. No cell phone, no cell phone service. So, you don't have to worry about that. It rings constantly at home. It's nice not to have to worry about that up here. I love being out in nature, don't get me wrong, but I like getting away, and away from the house, and away from work."
White female camper from camping group #38 in the highly developed campground	"…what I'm doing right now is unplugging from the world. I'm pulling out into the woods for a while, and I'm going to kick back and not hear no telephones, and nobody's going to be paging me, and nobody, I mean, no connection to the world at all, just out here as a family being together…"

Recovery

"Recovery" was the third category of restoration meaning. Several campers, all males, from the moderately and highly developed campgrounds discussed how camping was meaningful because it allowed them not only to escape their home environments but also to physically, mentally, or emotionally recover from various ailments. A White male camper from camping group #24 in the moderately developed campground suggested that camping helped his mental state of mind.

> Camping, whether by myself or with my friends, allows me to re-energize. It just energizes me. It gets me back to, it's a center, is what it is, it pulls me back to center. Back to where I should be, you know, everything is right. OK, I'm focused again, I'm back in balance, where I can go back and face everything else that has to be done and know that I can deal with it the way it ought to be dealt with.

Table 55 provides excerpts supporting "restoration-recovery" as an associated meaning of developed forest camping experience.

Table 55: Interview Excerpts Supporting "Restoration-Recovery" as an Associated Meaning of Developed Forest Camping Experiences at the Mount Rogers NRA

Camper	Excerpt
White male camper from camping group #16 in the moderately developed campground	"I haven't thought about any of my problems, you know, that's sometimes what I would do with, if I was camping with my wife and my son, I might want to take a day hike four hours away just to think about stuff, you know, I'm a lot better at thinking about my problems and their solutions when I'm in the woods than I am at the house."
White male camper from camping group #17 in the moderately developed campground	"Last year I had prostate cancer and I had the radioactive seed implants. And then I was pretty weak, so I came up here in August and all I did was mainly sit here and relax. I told my doctor 'Why can't I recover out there in the very pleasant surroundings rather than sitting back in the hot weather down in St. Petersburg in Florida?' Well, I think as you do get older, and this was a fairly meaningful trip because when you get older, and you know…you get to the point where you say, well, hey, this may be the last trip.
White female camper from camping group #19 in the highly developed campground	"[Camping] is healthy for my overall mental perspective. I'm pretty detail-oriented, and it's hard for me to break out of that unless I do it radically, in other words, physically remove myself from that environment and go somewhere where I'm away from e-mail and all that kind of stuff. So I think in that regard, any vacation, whether camping or any kind of travel, is probably meaningful."
White male camper from camping group #31 in the highly developed campground	"I come camping to get out of the dust from working on the farm which I'm allergic to, and to get away from a lot of the pollen. When I'm at home for a few days I get a small respiratory infection and it just gradually gets worse because I won't give up working. Now when I come [to Grindstone] and we're a long ways from any factories, and there's not a great deal of pollen, the respiratory problem goes away in about forty-eight hours, and I'm just much healthier here.
White male camper from camping group #32 in the moderately developed campground	"I had a rough two or three weeks at work. I was feeling physically bad, I mean like something was wrong with me last week. When I got [to Grindstone] the feeling was gone. This has happened before…this is the place where I can feel better. This is where I come to get a fresh start."

Special Places

A second common meaning associated with developed forest camping experiences was "special places." This theme included expressions about the three Mount Rogers campgrounds as special places. In most cases, campgrounds came to be viewed as special places because of family traditions and memories that were closely associated with them over time. For example, a White male camper from camping group #32 in the highly developed campground shared,

> I would have to say that camping means tradition, here at Grindstone more than anything. Well, [my dad] started bringing us here when we were kids before [Grindstone] was even finished. Hurricane was the beginning for us. We got a lot of stories. We used to be like a bunch of gypsies. We've kept the camping tradition alive, a lot of the other families, they're missing, and passing ways, and everybody goes their separate ways, but we've kept this tradition alive. Coming to Hurricane probably costs more than going to some places, the way you're gonna have your equipment and what have you, but it's part of who we are.

According to campers, place-related traditions and stories related were almost always family-related and always developed over a period of many years. Table 56 provides excerpts supporting "special places" as an associated meaning of developed forest camping experience.

Table 56: Interview Excerpts Supporting "Special Places" as an Associated Meaning of Developed Forest Camping Experiences at the Mount Rogers NRA

Camper	Excerpt
White female camper from camping group #3 in the less developed campground	"It's just kind of a tradition for us to go camping. We heard about it from my dad, cause he would come up through here riding a lot, a long time ago, and then, you know, we started coming over here camping and I don't think we've ever missed a year coming over here. I mean, just him, or if it's me and him, or the kids, the whole family, whatever, you know. About every year, somebody has been here about every year."
White male camper from camping group #13 in the moderately developed campground	"I had come [to Hurricane] back in the mid-to early 70s when these campsites were just formed. In fact the other campsite, number six, was the one we actually stayed at when I was a kid and I remember paying like one or two dollars to camp out here. This is where we used to take our vacations. It's amazing how I remember that being a dirt field where we used to play…everything was new. We've got family photographs from all that. To me it's like the memories of growing up, you know, going camping at Mt. Rogers.
White male camper from camping group #17 in the moderately developed campground	"I used to bring the kids over here [to Mt. Rogers]. We've been coming here for years. It's my favorite campground. I've stayed in all of [the campgrounds] – well, most of them, and Hurricane is my favorite. But we've been coming here for years, even when my kids were small."
White male camper from camping group #22 in the highly developed campground	"In the fall we go up on top of the mountain, Pine Mountain, and pick blueberries, that's an annual event for our family here at this particular campsite. When the blueberries are ripe that's usually when my grandson's birthday is, that's an annual event for us, going up on the mountain, picking blueberries and making a cobbler that night, we've been doing it for years."
White male camper from camping group #29 in the highly developed campground	"My folks used to camp here when they were living, and they introduced it to us and we've been coming ever since. Although I never camped as a child, I have been camping my whole life as a father."
White male camper from camping group #31 in the highly developed campground	"My sister and brother-in-law were hosting for the Forest Service here at Grindstone. And we came up to visit with them, and we hadn't camped in about 20 years when we came up here. We just fell in love with this area. These mountains…the woods, got us back into camping."

Family Functioning

"Family functioning" was another common camping meaning associated with developed forest camping experiences by campers in this study. This theme referred to expressions of how developed camping in Mount Rogers positively influenced social interactions among family members. Specifically, campers suggested that camping with a spouse and/or children enhanced family communication and cohesiveness. Family functioning was often catalyzed by the camp setting which provided fewer distractions than campers' home lives. As a White female camper from camping group #1 in the less developed campground shared,

> When we're camping there's no TV. We talk more. We talk, sit around and just talk. You communicate a little better….get a little closer maybe. Cause if you're at home, all you do is watch TV…everybody's got their eyes on it. When you're camping you're all in one little tiny box and you get close.

Similarly, a White female camper from camping group #37 in the highly developed campground explained,

> Camping allows you to eliminate your routine, technology, and all the distractions that there are at home, and I actually think you're much more grounded in an environment like this where you're sitting around talking with people. I mean, how often do you sit around at night conversing with a group of people for four to six hours? I mean it's almost a lost art in terms of, you know, we have such huge agendas. Everybody works, everybody does their thing. I think that this is why we camp. Camping pulls us out of that, that crazy scheduled life…it simplifies everything.

Thus, campers seemed to suggest that "family functioning" meanings were related to escape because campers need to get away from their home environments in order for the family functioning impacts of camping to be realized. As a White male camper from camping group #22 in the highly developed campground stated,

> [Camping's] been a family affair for us for years. It's kept our family closer together. Going back to the escape factor, it's hard to get away from it all at your own house. Your job's on your mind, your chores around your home is on your mind. It's there and you're thinking about it. I have a tendency to forget about it when I'm camping...and I focus on my family.

Table 57 provides excerpts supporting "family functioning" as an associated meaning of developed forest camping experience.

Table 57: Interview Excerpts Supporting "Family Functioning" as an Associated Meaning of Developed Forest Camping Experiences at the Mount Rogers NRA

Camper	Excerpt
White female camper from camping group #4 in the less developed campground	"[Our kids] fight over games and stuff at home, and you bring them here, and, they were all out here getting along. Too much technology is not good. I mean, the computers, the games…I think they need to be brought out away from it…"
White female camper from camping group #6 in the less developed campground	"You learn things about family that you didn't…that maybe you didn't see at home, it's just more laid back, you sing songs you wouldn't be doing at home, play games you wouldn't be doing at home because you have time. You don't have to go to a soccer game and you don't have friends knocking on the door, you're all together, there's no one else here. We just sit here and enjoy it, without all these other commitments and things going on, TV shows or video games or anything."
White female camper from camping group #11 in the moderately developed campground	"Camping means family time. Instead of the TV on we're sitting around the fire, so we talk, tell stories, that maybe the kids hadn't heard, about when we were growing up or something that's going on in their lives that, if you're sitting at home watching a movie you don't get into that stuff. I think that causes us to get to know each other as a person rather than just living together as a family. We get closer…"
White male camper from camping group #16 in the moderately developed campground	"This trip has been about spending time with my son. If he hadn't found friends to ride bikes with, I'd have been riding with him, or we'd have found other stuff to do. At home there are always distractions. You know, when we are camping, it's just, just us. I mean, you don't have any other distractions. I think maybe we hear each other better. I don't know. I don't hear very well sometimes, but we're more attentive, I guess, to each other."
White female camper from camping group #18 in the less developed campground	"I try to talk to my husband and he's got that TV in front of his face. He's trying to talk to me and I got the vacuum cleaner going, you know? We don't have those distractions when we come camping. I actually get to talk with him…get to know him."
White female camper from camping group #21 in the highly developed campground	"[Camping] gets him away from all of his computers at home (laughs). We sit together more and enjoy each other's company a lot more."

Table 57 (continued)

White female camper from camping group #26 in the highly developed campground	"Our family time is different when we're camping. We're very vested in being together and spending time together. And the activities are a lot different. Things that you don't get to do every day, and so it makes it a little more special. Our kids pick up on that. They notice that mommy and daddy are both here, mommy and daddy are both focused on them…"
White male camper from camping group #27 in the highly developed campground	"[Camping is just quality time with the family. Time to slow down a minute, you know. Talk about things you don't normally talk about. I mean, things you don't have time to even think about when you're going to bed, getting up and going to work, come home, going to bed…and then all those things that just keeps you moving all day long."
White female camper from camping group #30 in the highly developed campground	"For us it's more of just sitting around here and being together as a family and not running in 900 different directions like we are at home. You're more in close quarters and you're just kind of sitting here and you have nothing else that's pressing to do. Camping gives us more quality time."
White male camper from camping group #32 in the highly developed campground	"[Our family] can be more relaxed and more open and talk about things when we're camping. Don't ask me why. What it boils down to, if you're with the same group of people at home, they each one has their own….there's too much interference. Up here that interference seems to be gone. There's more communications."
White female camper from camping group #34 in the highly developed campground	"We sit around and talk, and really we use that time really to catch up on a lot of quality time that we don't have time for at home. It seems like when we're camping we can talk about things that we don't talk about at home that are important as a family. I think we've gotten a lot closer, because here we can talk one and one."

Self-Identity

Some campers expressed that camping meaning could be found in how the developed forest camping experiences allowed them to express some aspect of their identity. For example, a White male camper from camping group #19 in the highly developed campground expressed how camping allowed him to express his identity as an explorer when he shared,

> I think there's some element of the camping experience that doesn't have anything to do with your technology or your work, it's just the desire to get out into the woods, I think, I think there's something kind of innate about that…the aspect of exploring, just hike and do things on your own. Why is there any reason to explore? I think a lot of people travel because there is a certain amount of discontent in their existence, either because of work or whatever, and they're trying to find their true identity.

Camping gear and equipment was an outward expression—a symbol—of self-identity related camping meaning. When talking about how camping was meaningful to himself, a White male camper from camping group #7 in the moderately developed campground compared his current camping identity with his past camping identity as he shared,

> Fishing, bow hunting, and camping used to be huge in my life. They still are, but I don't do it the way that I used to. When I was younger I did it with a real drive, a real push to get very good, and I dedicated a tremendous amount of time and money to it, I had to have all of the best gear and stuff

> so that I could be the best….and that's not the case any more. I don't have the same motivation. Camping here reminds me of that part of myself. To kind of regroup and to do this again and start to look towards these things again, a little more fishing, is very important from my standpoint. I don't want to say like a rebirth, but it is an opportunity to kind of drift back and remember….to kind of touch base with who I was before.

Camping gear was central to the camping meanings of camping group #2 in the less developed campground. As the White female camper suggested,

> We buy camping equipment all the time. Buying equipment is part of the experience. We find we need something else and we need this or want this or walking around and meeting other campers, you know – oh, they've got this. We might need that too. So that kind of influences us to get other stuff for our trips. This gear allows us to make camping what we want it to be, and to be the type of campers that we want to be.

As these campers suggested, the meaning of the developed forest camping experience could be found in how campers were able to express an aspect of their identity through the camping experience.

Social Interaction

Camping meanings were commonly associated with the social aspects of the developed forest camping experience. This "social interaction" theme was different from the "family functioning" theme of camping meaning in two ways. One, "social interaction" referred to social-based camping meanings that could be associated with people not in one's family. Two, the "social interaction" theme did not necessarily

include the enhancement of a social relationship. The social interaction theme had two categories: "social interaction with family and friends" and "social interaction with other camping groups."

Social Interaction with Family and Friends

Campers described that camping was meaningful because it provided the opportunity for social interaction with family and friends. As one White female camper from camping group #12 in the moderately developed campground suggested, "Camping is something that you do with your family. Good clean fun. Something to do with people you enjoy being with." A male camper from camping group #9 in the moderately developed campground expressed that the meaning of camping for him was spending time with his grandchildren. He shared,

> We've got two grandchildren, ages 9 and 6. We've brought them up here for several years. Every time they'd be at our house and see our camper they want to know when are they coming back to that place that had the creek….this is the gathering place and the grandkids even know it. This is our family time.

Table 58 provides excerpts supporting "social interaction" as an associated meaning of developed forest camping experience

Table 58: Interview Excerpts Supporting "Social Interaction" as an Associated Meaning of Developed Forest Camping Experiences at the Mount Rogers NRA

Camper	Excerpt
White female camper from camping group #5 in the less developed campground	"Camping gives us quality family time, being able to bring the whole family together, instead of everybody scattered every which direction. Just time together. We all get together, brothers and sisters and mother and father and aunts and uncles, and we all just get together and make it a big family thing."
White female camper from camping group #18 in the moderately developed campground	"Generally my husband and I camp together. When we come camping it's just me and him and our dog, and our dog just died. And we talk about what we need to do next when we get home, or someplace we'd like to travel, but for just me and him, just to come out for the weekend, and camp, we really don't do nothing, it's just time to be together."
White female camper from camping group #24 in the highly developed campground	"When you are camping you're spending more one on one time with your children... instead of, when they're at home they want to play their Play Station or be with their friends. I mean, our children are getting older, they don't really want necessarily to hang out at our house. So when you're in this atmosphere you're just spending more time with each other. You do things together when you're in a close environment…"
White male camper from camping group #25 in the highly developed campground	"It was a good family time with my brother. We don't get to see them very often, so that's a big part of this trip."
White female camper from camping group #26 in the highly developed campground	"This is our second trip together, the two families together, and it's been great. And our kids are three and four years old, best buddies, you know, really have a good time together, and we've really enjoyed the camaraderie too, and putting the kids to bed and sitting around the campfire. It's important to find friends you can camp and travel with."
White female camper from camping group #34 in the highly developed campground	"I think togetherness with the family has been great this time. Just time together."

Social Interaction with Other Camping Groups

Social-based camping meaning was also related to developing and maintaining social relationships with campers from other camping groups. In some cases, social relationships were pre-existing and the associated meaning was found in re-connecting with old friends. As a female camper from camping group #31 in the highly developed campground shared,

> I like seeing all the people that were here last year come in. Several couples…it's kind of nice to realize that they're still here, they're coming in…re-connecting with people that you saw last summer. It's always good to see couples come in that you've seen camping over the years. One of these couple we camped with the whole twelve years that we've been camping at Grindstone.

This reconnection with old friends was a common meaning among older campers in the highly developed campground who had been camping for multiple weeks over many years and had developed close friendships with other campers.

In other cases, campers developed new social relationships with members of other camping groups. A male camper from camping group #12 in the moderately developed campground described how the meaning of camping for him was watching his sons make friends. He said, "I want to give the boys a chance to meet new friends. Last night we had about seven of them, seven or eight kids out here playing, passing balls and everything near our camp site."

Experiencing Nature

Earlier in Chapter 4, "nature" was identified as a salient element of developed forest camping experiences. For some campers, "experiencing nature" was also an important associated camping meaning. As described by campers, this meaning could be symbolized by nature's aesthetic beauty. For example, a white female camper from camping group #9 in the moderately developed campground stated,

> Where I work, I'm inside of an office sitting at a computer. We don't have this kind of scenery this there. So when the weekend comes, we're ready for this. This is our sanctuary…this gives our camping trip meaning.

Nature-based meanings were also found in features of the natural landscape. As a White female camper from camping group #2 in the less develop campground shared,

> I love the wilderness feel here…this feels more wild here because the forest is coming right down to the edge of the river, yes. So it's not created, you haven't got paddocks, things like that. So to me that's wilderness and it's very meaningful.

Campers often described nature-based meanings with the phrase "getting back to nature," (e.g., White male camper from camping group #33 in the highly developed campground), which is reminiscent of "escape" meanings and the perspective of moving from one's home environment into a more preferred setting. A White male from camping group #23 in the high developed campground expressed a similar perspective on how camping was meaningful when he shared, "To me camping is getting back to nature, getting back into it and seeing nature first-hand. That's what I really enjoy about it. That's why this trip has meaning to me…getting to see things along the trail."

A White male camper from camping group #15 in the highly developed campground suggested that the nature-based meanings that he associated with camping experiences were important because they helped him to balance his desire for comfort and conveniences in other aspects of his life. He stated,

> It's just pleasant to be communing with nature. I love mountain streams and trees. To me the woods is, you're getting back, it's just, it's a good feeling to get back into wilderness. We're kind of a two-timing society in terms of our natural surroundings. We tend to want things too easy, we're too convenienced by modern technology. Modern technology is great, I'm a scientist and I've contributed my part to science, but there's a point, you've got to find a nice balance, and this does that. This provides that balance.

Association of God and Nature

Camping meaning was also associated with making a spiritual connection to God through nature. This spiritual connection was attributed to the opportunity that forest camping provided for campers to have more time to think, and was often symbolized and made real through elements of nature that surrounded campers. As a White female camper from camping group #18 in the moderately developed campground stated,

> My first priority was getting in touch with the Lord. You're sitting out here under nature, and even if all of us together do not even mention anything about the Lord, we're still sitting here in our private moments and looking up and saying, Lord, you have a good world. Looking at all these little critters, and that's what it's all about.

Similarly, a White male camper from camping group #20 in the highly developed campground shared,

> Camping out here is just, it's a part of us and we just enjoy it. The woods makes you feel closer to the Lord, sit out, read your Bible in peace, you know. When you're out of the fast life, you know, and you're living a slower life here than if you're working…when you slow down, and you're out in the woods, it just seems like, if you know the Lord, that he's closer to you. I can't explain it, except you think more of the Lord.

The importance of the campfire was suggested earlier in Chapter 4 as a salient element of developed forest camping experiences. One camper, a White male camper from camping group #8 in the moderately developed campground, associated campfires with his spiritual connection to God and how camping was meaningful to him.

> I got to have a fire. I mean, to me, I feel closer to the Lord that way than I do anywhere else. I love it. To me, I can be closer to the Lord this way. Being at peace with the Lord and talking to the Lord.

Novelty

Another meaning associated with developed forest camping was "novelty." "Novelty" referred to meaning that arose from experiences that were new or unfamiliar. A White female camper from camping group #11 in the moderately developed campground shared how new experiences were meaningful to her. She said,

> I love to camp. I think it's more what you're not doing than what you are doing. I like not having the same old routine as being at home and having to do the same schedule. With camping everything is new and

different instead of the same old stuff. New experiences are important.

For some campers, "novelty" meanings were related to their past outdoor recreation experiences. For example, a White male camper from camping group #7 in the moderately developed campground associated the meaning of his camping trip as the opportunity to find new places to fish. This meaning also seemed to be related to his identity as a fisherman. He shared,

> I'm looking for new experiences. It's almost like finding a balance between what I like to do and what I haven't done yet. Fishing used to be an unbelievably huge part of my life. And then I slowed down a lot. So for me this particular trip was very much an opportunity to see some new water…some new fishing spots. I miss a lot of what I used to do, and I don't have opportunities to do it, so it's a chance to kind of almost, not really regain my past, but experience some of the things I used to experience a little more. Being out and seeing things that are new and different- that's a big part of the meaning of camping.

A White female camper from camping group #26 in the highly developed campground who was camping with her husband and daughter discussed the importance of new, novel experiences. For this camper, "novelty" was an important camping meaning, not in terms of her experience but in terms of the experience that she wanted for her daughter. She stated,

> For us it's just an opportunity for our daughter to have a different kind of experience and she loves it, she has just, it's so much more appropriate, so much more geared for a child than some of the other kinds of family

things that we've done in the past. Camping is just a more appropriate activity. We don't have to tell her to sit still and be quiet all the time. She can run around if she needs to and play if she needs to, create her own structure, she has time to do what she wants to do on her own little schedule. It's more of an adventure for her. It's so different than what she does every day and it's a chance for her to experience things that, well, a lot of things that are very new, like, we found an inchworm the other night. And I had a chance to show them an inchworm crawling up my finger and let it crawl up their fingers.

Opportunity for Children to Learn

The final camping meaning theme that emerged in this study was the "opportunity for their children to learn." This theme referred to the ways in which campers' kids could develop new knowledge, skills, and an appreciation for nature during the developed forest camping experience. A female camper from camping group #6 in the less developed campground discussed how the knowledge that her kids learned had made her own camping trip meaningful. She shared,

This camping trip has been meaningful because it's been an educational experience for my kids, in that they've learned to…like we were talking about Leave No Trace. The daddy longlegs, now they're just picking them up and moving them, and when we first got here they would shriek and freak out and they just kind of appreciate nature more and understand how it all works together and I think this camping trip has taught them more about nature and that they're just a part of it and there's a chain to life. We

> did this scavenger hunt we learned a lot. We did collect a bunch of leaves that we're gonna go back and look them up and see what they go with, and that's kind of fun, so I think it'll be a big learning experience for them.

Campers also described how teaching their children new skills was the most important meaning of their experience. As a White male camper from camping group #1 in the less developed campground suggested,

> My kids learn a little bit here and there. [My son] learned how to scale a fish last night and clean it. I taught him. He learned what those fish had been eating. We saw crawdad's in the fish's stomach when we cut them out. He's also learning how to make do with what he's got, try to find something to make things out of to play with.

As this camper suggested, teaching kids how to improvise, how to play, and how to "make due" with something basic was important to some campers. Campers indicated that their kids often had many conveniences at home that were not available when they were camping. This seemed to influence the degree to which teaching their kids was meaningful. A White male camper from camping group #4 in the less developed campground stated,

> For me it's been time to show the kids that they don't need a lot of stuff that we have at the house—that they can 'make it' without a lot of conveniences, and they take for granted what they do have. I mean, like, some of the stuff that they consider they have to have, they may get out here and you realize, really you don't need nothing except food, something to drink, and something to keep you warm, that's it.

Another aspect of this camping meaning was that campers wanted their children to be able to survive in the outdoors and to enjoy the outdoors. They expressed the hope that the knowledge, skills, and appreciation for nature that they taught to their children during camping trips would translate into future behaviors. As a White male camper from camping group #6 in the less developed campground suggested,

> They're using their imaginations more and we feed off that and play along with whatever they're imagining or playing. And you're teaching them how to put up the tent, how to cook, how to clean, we're teaching, always trying to teach them the camping skills. This is very important to me, cause I've camped all my life and he pretty much has too, and we can, a lot of families when we told them we were going camping, they were just, oh, that's so awful. And it's a lot of work to get it all together, but then, you know, once you get there it's really such a great experience I don't even know how to describe it, and I want them to be able to do that as well, growing up with their own families, you know.

Similarly, a female camper from camping group #12 in the moderately developed campground expressed how she hoped that he children would learn survival-type skills when she said,

> I think that [camping's] very important because it's very educational. I want the children, when they grow up, to know how to survive if they need to, in some aspects. I mean, this isn't totally rough, but at least they'll know how to start a fire and do that kind of thing, and just, I want them to know about everything, not just sitting in front of the TV again,

because I think that's the worst thing for a child.

In summary, the major themes of camping meanings associated with developed forest camping experiences were: restoration (including rest, escape, and recovery), family functioning, special places (including traditions, memories, and stories), self-identity, social interaction, experiencing nature, association of God and nature, novelty, and the opportunity for children to learn. Restoration was the most commonly expressed meaning across all three campground types. Restoration, place, family functioning, self-identity and experiencing nature themes emerged across all three campground types. Opportunity for children to learn was expressed by several campers in the less developed campground and by one camper in the moderately developed campground. Novelty and association of God and nature were expressed by moderately and highly developed campers.

Table 59: Results of the Nomothetic (Between-Camper) Analysis of Expressed Forest Camping Meanings Across Three Campground Types (Less Developed, Moderately Developed, and Highly Developed) from the 2003 Mount Rogers NRA Developed Forest Camping Study

Less Developed *(Ravens Cliff)* *13 participants; 6 camping groups*	Moderately Developed *(Hurricane)* *25 participants; 12 camping groups*	Highly Developed *(Grindstone)* *42 participants; 20 camping groups*

Restoration (9)
• Escape
  o Work-related pressures, stress
  o Chores, schedules, responsibilities
  o Television/phones
  o Monotony/boredom
• Recovery
  o Back injury
	Restoration (27)
	• Rest
	  o General relaxation
	• Escape
	  o Work (and related technology)
	  o Chores, schedules, responsibilities
	  o Television/phones
	  o Grown kids
	• Recovery
	  o Stress-relief
	  o Cancer
	  o Heart condition
	  o Problem-solving major life issues
		Restoration (18)
		• Escape
		  o Chores, schedules, responsibilities
		  o Escape work
		  o Television/phones/cell phones
		• Recovery
		  o Camping as therapeutic
		  o Opportunity to change your perspective
		  o Mental break/physical exercise
		  o Respiratory health
		  o Achieving "balance"

Opportunity for Children to Learn (6) • How to use imaginations • How to improvise • "Leave No Trace" • Learn about nature • Camping skills • Appreciation for that they have	Place (13) • Lengthy history of camping at Hurricane • Hurricane is the "gathering place" • Places like Hurricane important for grandchildren	Family Functioning (16) • Improved communications (easier to talk to one another) • Quality time • Family members focused on one another • Share common experiences

Table 59 (Continued)

Place (6) • History of camping at Ravens Cliff • Annual traditions and memories associated with Ravens Cliff • Importance of building/continuing family traditions	Family Functioning (7) • Spend time with children/other family members with less distractions • Spend time with spouse with less distractions • Having quality conversations that are meaningful	Social Interaction with Family (12) • Family time • Camping as a family-oriented activity
Family Functioning (5) • Kids fight less • Kids are more relaxed and easygoing • Family members communicate better	Social Interaction with Family/Friends (7) • Spend time with spouse • Spend time with friends and family • Opportunity for kids to make friends • Spend time with friendly people from other camping grounds • Relationships with camping groups	Place (8) • Annual traditions and memories associated with Grindstone • Lengthy history w/ developed camping at Grindstone and related meanings
Self-Identity (3) • Hunter/fisherman; provider of food • Exploration	Experiencing Nature (5) • Creek • Woods/forests • Mountains • Primitive experience/wilderness	Experiencing Nature (7) • Getting back to nature/Coming to nature • Nature appreciation • Watching nature • Mountains
Experiencing Nature (1)	Self-Identity (4) • Pioneer identity/desire for primitivism • Developing fisherman identity • Freedom- “do what you want to do when you want to do it”	Self-Identity (3) • Current identity as Grindstone volunteer • Identity as part of the Grindstone motor home camping community • Identity as a builder of electronics and gadgets

Table 59 (Continued)

	Novelty (3) • Change your perspective with new experiences • Visit new places and try new things	Association of God and Nature (2) o Feeling closer to the Lord when in nature
	Association of God and Nature (2) • Being closer with the Lord	Novelty (1) • Being adventurous by trying new experiences
	Opportunity for Children to Learn (1) • Survival skills	

Construction of Developed Forest Camping Meanings

In addition to exploring the meanings that campers' associated with their developed forest camping experiences, I also wanted to understand how meanings were constructed. As suggested in Chapter 2, people cognitively and socially construct their experiences and associated meanings. The cognitive and social construction of meanings was suggested by the data.

The construction of camping experiences and meanings began as campers shared experiences in social settings (i.e., social construction). These experiences were imbued with each camper's prior knowledge and experience (i.e., cognitive construction). As a White male camper from camping group #20 in the highly developed campground suggested, "People are always gonna bring with them their memories and knowledge and experience, you can't really ever leave that behind. They're still in your head and in your, in the way that you experience the world." As campers interacted in social settings, their personal constructions based on their experiences were shared with others to form social constructions. As previously described in Chapter 4, social interaction was identified as a salient aspect of developed forest camping and as an associated meaning.

Although the social construction of experiences and meanings likely occurred through the communication and negotiation (through language) of meanings in social settings in ways that are imperceptible to individuals, other social constructions processes may be more tangible. Remembering, thinking about, and talking about shared experiences also reflects the social construction of experiences and association meanings. A White male camper from camping group #18 in the moderately developed campground talked about how camping experiences are remembered through stories. He said,

> You want to do something that [your group's] gonna remember when they go back home. You know, camping is something that usually sticks with you when you go back to where you come from, you know, it's like, 'We had a great time, we went out in the woods, we went, you know, next to the creek, you know, hear the water running, and went up to Mt. Rogers, you know, this and that, and it gives them something to remember when they go back home. Stories are important. Cause when we go down there to see our friends they'll try to show us a good time and there'll be things that we'll remember from that trip when we come back up here, and we do the same there. And I'm pretty sure when they go back they'll have some stories to tell to their own people, you know their daughters and the sons and the relatives, the in-laws and the out-laws. Some of these stories get repeated again and again, whether we like it or not.

A White female camper from camping group #37 in the highly developed campground shared how her family remembers stories from their camping trip. She said,

> We do have stories that come from our camping trips. We are very reflective on each trip that we take. We kind of keep a log of each trip that we've taken and there is always, always a story, even if it's just, you know, the two of us, and there's something we run across, you know, some form of wildlife or some weather pattern unbeknownst to us, you know, there's always something that evolves. It may not be interesting to anybody else. This year we'll have the lovely Creeper Trail

and my sore fanny. I'm sure I'll hear about it for years to come.

As these campers suggest, memorable stories are shared again and again in social settings. Through this process of recollection and reflection, camping meanings may be socially constructed and then passed on to different social groups. A male camper from camping group #33 in the highly developed campground shared how his memories of camping trips stayed with him for many years. He said,

> You learn something from every camping trip. It may not change you as far as who you are, but it'll be embedded in a memory in there and hopefully you'll never lose that. Even as we grow old we still….well there's so many camping trips in there some of them kind of fade away, but then there's another memory that kind of jumps up there. We were talking just now about Whitetop. And I can remember those days, I was only eleven or twelve years old, but I can remember my friend taking the time, taking us up there fishing. And spending the night in that old truck, getting out in the morning and it was freezing cold and it didn't even bother us then, we didn't care. All we wanted to do was get our clothes on and go fishing. We would be standing on the creek bank there at Whitetop and the ice would freeze up on the reels, I mean, you know, you're sitting there in the wind and it's that cold, and he taught us to stick that thing under our arm like that, and if you keep it under there for a minute, it thawed that thing out enough to where you could reel it in. But little things like that, every camping trip's got its special moments. And one moment will push the other one back, they're all still there, but it'll

just keep progressing up, and some of them will never leave. I've got some memories that'll never leave.

Taken as a whole, the responses of these campers (and data previously discussed regarding camping experiences and associated meanings) seem to describe one way that camping experiences and meanings may have been socially constructed. First, campers shared common experiences while camping; these experiences most often occurred in social group settings. The campers talked about their experiences while sitting around the campfire, while participating in recreational activities, or while eating meals together. A shared sense of meaning developed through group communication. Some experiences were then remembered and shared through stories. These stories were sometimes repeated to others, including friends and family members, long after the camping trip was over. This process of communicating stories and memories keeps the camping trip salient. During future camping experiences, the most memorable stories may be repeated again and again and in some cases these stories may evolve to become a part of a family's traditions.

Results of the Nomothetic (Between-Camper) Analysis of Life-Context Meanings Associated with Developed Forest Camping

While some developed forest camping meanings were associated with the on-site experiences during which the interviews were conducted, other meanings were associated with campers' overall lives or were meaningful within the greater context of campers' lives. The fourth research question in this study was, "What meanings do people associate with developed forest camping across the greater context of their lives?" Idiographic (within-camper) and nomothetic (between-camper) analyses procedures yielded salient themes of forest camping meanings. The meanings that campers described as being particularly important within the context of their lives were identified as "life-context meanings."

Expressions of 'life-context meanings' were sometimes overt and resulted from specific questions (or probes) about the meaning of developed forest camping in the across campers' life-spans and how camping had influenced campers' lives. (For example, the probing questions used to elicit information about life-context meanings included (a) "Has camping been meaningful in the bigger picture or the larger context of your life?," (b) "If so, then describe this meaning in as much detail as possible.," (c) "What positive or negative events/situations have resulted from your camping experiences?," (d) "Would your life be different if you were unable to go camping?," and (e) "If so, then describe how would it be different?").

Other expressions of "life-context meanings" were couched within participants' narratives of their developed forest camping trips and the importance of those trips in

their lives. The major themes of "life-context meanings" identified in this study were "restoration," "sharing positive family memories and traditions," "novelty," "experiencing and appreciating nature," "self-reliance," "self-identity," "freedom," and "family functioning" (Table 61).

Again, although these themes were ranked based upon the frequency of participants' responses, themes with a higher frequency were not believed to be any more or less valid (a representation of reality) than themes with a lower frequency. Multiple realities were assumed and were considered to be equally valid. Themes with a higher frequency represented a greater degree of commonality with regards to the life-context meanings that campers associated with their forest camping experiences.

Restoration

The most common theme of life-context meaning across all three campground types was "restoration." As previously described in this chapter, the theme "restoration" referred to a reduction in stress, arousal, or anxiety that resulted from being removed from one's home environment and placed in a natural setting. Three categories of restoration were identified through the analysis: "rest," "escape," and "recovery," and the most commonly expressed category was escape. Camping experiences which occurred across the life-span served a restorative function in peoples' lives—treatment for the stresses associated with day-to-day living. As a White female camper from camping group #18 in the moderately developed campground said,

> You get into that groove of work day in and day out, and if you don't get out of that groove, after a while, your work starts to be meaningless…It's just something that you don't look forward to, it's just day in and day out,

> work, come home, work, you know, it's good for the mind and the body just to get away, at least once or twice a year and just go camping and just enjoy yourself, forget all the problems that you have at home, and that's what camping does. It just lets you forget all your problems, it relieves your stress. Everyone needs an outlet to be able to run to when things get tough. Camping helps you get back into that groove again.

Table 60 provides excerpts supporting "restoration" as an associated life-context meaning of developed forest camping experiences.

Table 60: Interview Excerpts Supporting "Restoration" as a Life-Context Meaning Associated with Developed Forest Camping Experiences at the Mount Rogers NRA

Camper	Excerpt
White female camper from camping group #3 in the less developed campground	"When we're at home…[my husband] works all those long hours he comes in and he's tired and, you know, his body hurts. When we're over here camping we leave all of that at home…it's like a new world for us. It's completely different, no worries. It's not the worry that every time the phone rings, they want you to come in to work, or whatever like that, on your weekend off. So we get over here camping and we just take a big deep breath, let it out, and say hey, it's all right over here. We don't have to worry about that."
White male camper from camping group #25 in the highly developed campground	"Just the relaxation. Just to have an out from the real world, I guess, just being able to come up and chill out, and you know, we're only an hour away so it's a good release up here."
White female camper from camping group #26 in the highly developed campground	"[Camping just rejuvenates you. You know, I don't know how to explain it. It just makes you feel better. It just kind of takes your mind, gives your mind a break from the everyday hassles. Recharges you. Like the famous Harley Davidson expression, if I have to explain, you wouldn't understand."

Sharing Positive Family Memories and Traditions

The second most common theme of life-context meaning across all three campground types was "sharing positive family memories and traditions." In the previous section of Chapter 4, I discussed how traditions were a component of place meanings. In contrast, with regards to life-context meanings, traditions seemed to be less connected with place and more closely associated with social interaction and the importance of passing traditions and memories along to younger members of one's family. When discussing the life-context meanings associated with camping, many campers reflected on how they grew up with camping and how camping became a tradition in their families. For example, a White female camper from camping group #3 in the less developed campground shared,

> [Ravens Cliff] is where we first started camping…my first camping experience. And then we started with the children and then basically our children grew up coming over here, and now we've got three grandchildren and, you know, the middle grandchild, he loves to come over here. And you know, it's just, it's just something like it's part of our life during the summer…twenty-two years if not longer. You know, something that happens, you know, just like a birthday.

Memories were created around positive camping experiences and these memories stayed salient as campers aged. As a White female camper from camping group #13 in the moderately developed campground suggested,

> There's just wonderful memories, you know, of camping and growing up and stuff. Real family experiences, you know. Dad taught us, you

> know, all the basics…and walking around these mountains, especially Mt. Rogers…that's kind of where I learned about the outdoors. I was able to do so many things, it opens up a whole other world. I grew up in Philly, but when we came back here camping every year, we had two weeks to sit around and play. And these are, you know, it's just wonderful memories, and I mean, when I look back at the photographs, and you know, and you say, my gosh, that was something!

Similarly, a White male camper from camping group #23 in the highly developed campground shared,

> When I started camping, we were camping in the back of a pickup truck…or sometimes a tent. And our daughters came with us so many years ago doing the same thing, but they didn't like camping quite as much as mom and dad. So it's, with my wife and myself it's been an evolution, been a real lifetime experience. And I wouldn't trade it for anything, wouldn't trade it. We always talk about all the memories, you know, that have built up over the years. I wouldn't give this up.

For several campers, life-context meanings were associated with the importance of passing down memories of unique, positive experiences to their children. As a White male campers from camping group #4 in the less developed campground stated,

> I think camping just adds one more family life experience to hopefully what we intend to provide many in the future to the kids that they have the great memories of being outdoors and experiencing nature and so I think to me at least providing another life experience that they can

> remember and look back because as they get older they reflect more on those and remember those experiences and look forward to going again and just keep going with that. We have great memories of camping with our folks and families as kids, and want them to have that too. I think that's important.

Another White male camper who was camping with his son in the moderately developed campground shared the relevance of watching a falling star with his son. This camper from camping group #14 shared,

> Camping is about family time…I really think, you know, my son's ten years old, I'd like to get him doing stuff with us… I want to still instill some things in him, and I want him to be able to, I want him to take his kids camping and do the things that we did. I want him to learn what we're doing and, you know, try to teach him some things. We were watching a falling star, you know, I told him how the longer you sit in the dark the better you can see, stars get brighter. You know, we stared at one spot and we saw one good star the other night just in about five or ten minutes out there we saw one falling star.

Novelty

The third most common theme of life-context meaning across all three campground types was "novelty." Novelty was another meaning that was not only associated with the on-site experience but was also related to the greater context of campers' lives. As previously described, the theme "novelty" referred to meaning that arose from experiences that were new or unfamiliar. In terms of life-context meanings,

novelty referred to the opportunity to engage in unique experience in unique settings through developed forest camping. As a White female camper from camping group #15 in the moderately developed campground explained,

> [Camping's] something that I like to do often…every since I was young, so that I can enjoy going to places and seeing places, wilderness places, and just getting away from the so-called civilized world. Everything is so new to me out here.

Similarly, a White male camper from camping group #36 in the highly developed campground also expressed importance of seeing new places when he shared,

> I just love to camp. If I live long enough, I'm not going to say I'll do it full time but I want to, when I retire, I want to do a lot more, maybe even months at a time. I just love to see new places. I know [Grindstone] isn't a new campground, cause I've been here many times, but point me down the road and I'll go. I guarantee that I'll see something that I haven't seen before.

A White female camper from camping group #34 from the highly developed campground described how she considered new camping experiences to be particularly special. She said,

> [Camping]'s got greater meaning. I mean, each time we learn a little bit something special and something new each time. It's just a little something special that we take back home with us, something that we didn't see or do the year before.

Novelty as a life-context meaning was also associated with new types of recreational activities that campers could experience through developed forest camping. A White female camper from camping group #38 in the highly developed campground explained the difference between developed forest camping and family vacations.

> Camping is so different than really anything that you do. We've found that sometimes our hotel experience…wasn't always really filling the bill. And this is such a different type of vacation. I think you experience more in this setup….and get much more out of it than on other types of trips. This is just so vast, and like I say, this puts me in the game as opposed to other types of trips where you just show up and are entertained. This actually, I feel like so much more of a participant because there's typically much more to do in these environments. I mean, you know, from the standpoint of hiking, biking, you know, all the things there are to do in the mountains. We find more with camping environments where we can actually participate in these activities, things that we can't normally do.

According to this camper, developed forest camping provided her family with new, active experiences as opposed to passive, entertainment-based experiences that were usually found in a non-camping vacation.

Experiencing and Appreciating Nature

For some campers, the life-context meanings of developed forest camping experiences were found in the natural setting and the way in which campers developed a greater appreciation for nature through developed forest camping experiences. Thus,

"experiencing and appreciating nature" was another common theme of life-context meaning across all three campground types.

Experiencing nature-based settings across one's lifetime was an aspect of this theme. A White female camper from camping group #1 in the less developed campground shared that "just getting out each year and seeing wild things is important." Similarly, a White female camper from camping group #13 in the moderately developed campground shared "Just being able to, to, you know, get into the woods…I think is very important. For me it seems like it's necessary to do that from time to time…to be outside and in a more natural, wild environment. It's been very important for me to take my annual trip." Another White female camper from camping group #26 in the highly developed campground expressed, "Learning to appreciate what needs to be appreciated by this environment, for me, is just being in the forest instead of having to be in a mall or dense urban area. Just being here."

A White female camper from camping group #6 in the less developed campground explained how participation in camping influenced her appreciation for nature and her desire to protect natural areas. She said,

> [Camping] continues to reinforce your appreciation of the outdoors, and nature, and the beauty that surrounds it, more so than taking a walk at your neighborhood park, it's a natural setting and I think it continues to provide a level of respect in that by experiencing it you gain more respect for nature and the outdoors to protect it and preserve it and hope these types of areas and places remain as they are for the most part.

The "experiencing and appreciating nature" theme of life-context meaning was related to the "restoration" theme in that campers had to get way from home in order to experience and appreciate a more nature-based environment. A White male camper from camping group #27 in the highly developed campground explained how his appreciation for nature was dependent upon leaving his day-to-day environment. He shared,

> Everybody's like in the hustle bustle of work, their livelihood, you know, they don't, they don't slow down a lot of times to respect or to listen to the birds sing or be amazed when a hummingbird'll fly right up to your tent when you've got a feeder hanging there, you know, I mean, that's things you just don't pay attention to when you're in your busy life.

Experiencing and appreciation nature was an important life-context meaning for older campers who were not sure how many more years that they would be able to go camping. As a White male camper from camping group #30 in the highly developed campground described,

> To appreciate something like all this in nature I believe in a lot of cases is a humbling experience. To me personally, that is, this is where my heart is, out in the open, God's beauty. You can never get tired of it. And every time I come I enjoy it a little bit more 'cause I know my time here is shorter than it's ever been, and I appreciate it more. I don't know how many more years I may be able to go camping out here.

Self-Reliance

The theme "self-reliance" was an emergent life-context meaning for female campers in the less-developed campground and was not found in the responses of male or

female campers in the other campground types. These women expressed how camping had helped them to improvise, be creative, and to take care of themselves. For example, a camper from camping group #2 said,

> My experience being outdoors while camping has helped me not to be scared of anything. It has clearly helped me through many problems. I had been leading an eco-tour and the bus broke down in the middle of nowhere. So I had 17 people stuck in the bush who, some of these people had never ever been in the bush in their life before, and so, you know, I was just able to be calm and deal with the situation, we had the trailer, there's the food and I was able to get food and wine out, and wined and dined them out in the middle of this back bush, and we didn't have any light. So I got them organized to get a fire going. So, I think probably for me it's made me the person I am. I think I'm probably a little more versatile, I suppose, would be the word. I mean, I'm prepared to rough it, even if I have to sleep on the ground. I could whip up a meal, even if we couldn't get the gas working, I could whip up a meal, and I think I can, I'm just more able to deal with any situation that comes along.

A camper from camping group #1 expressed a similar comment about the meaning of camping in her life. She said,

> By going camping all my life I learned to improvise, make do with what I got. Creative, be creative. I didn't bring a lot of stuff to cook in, we just…you learn how to improvise, do with what you got…in terms of cooking and setting up your campsite.

Self-Identity

The theme "self-identity" was an emergent life-context meaning for male campers in the moderately and highly developed campgrounds. These men expressed that their identity had been shaped by a lifetime of camping experiences. For example, a White male camper from camping group #33 in the highly developed campground shared,

> Camping is a part, I guess, of me, because I'm an outdoorsman, I like to hunt, I like to fish, I like camping, walking, I like picking up rocks and looking at rocks. It's just part of me, I guess...part of who I am. Now some people, that's not part of them, there's other things that are part of them. I don't know if it's the right terminology, but camping and being outdoors, that's part of my life.

Thus, the life-context meaning for this camper was found in the degree to which camping was representative of his self-identity and how camping allowed him to express or connect with that particular identity over the course of his life.

Freedom

"Freedom" was an emergent theme of life-context meaning for campers from the moderately and highly developed campgrounds. This theme represented campers' expressions of being able to do whatever they wanted to do during their camping experiences, and the importance of having this type of freedom in their lives. As a White male camper from camping group #10 in the moderately developed campground stated,

> The most important thing about camping in my life is just knowing that it's there—knowing the campground is there, if next weekend I decide to come back up here, I mean, that's the most important thing. And, which

> I have talked about coming back up again next weekend, in the tent, and just knowing the ability to, if I want to go, to go for it.

Another male camper from camping group #21 in the highly developed campground described the freedom that he found through the use of his motor home. He said,

> You've seen the commercial I'm sure where they're selling RVs or something like that, and they say the best feature is the fireplace. Well, it's nice to have an RV where you can change scenery every week if you want to. One week you could be in the mountains, next week you could be like us, we go down to Pigeon Forge. You can go where you want to go and do want you want to do.

Freedom was also associated with choices and the lack of scheduling during camping. A White female camper from camping group #32 in the highly developed campground expressed,

> When you're home, most Americans now have a schedule. When you're up here camping you don't have a schedule. You kind of come and go and you don't have to eat breakfast at 7:00, you know, you can eat at 8:00 or 9:00, you can sit by the fire, you can just leave the dishes on the table and go sit around the campfire, go walk on the trail for an hour and then come back and do dishes. When you're on a schedule, it's just that, you're on a schedule. You gotta get this done because at 9:00 you gotta have this done, and at 11:00 you gotta be here. And that's one of the good things about camping, you're not really on a schedule. It's just, things just sort of fall in place. Everybody kind of gets to do their thing, which is good

> cause everybody don't like what I like, and a lot of people wouldn't like to walk that trail for an hour, and maybe just pick out a spot where they can see good, and sit down there with a pair of binoculars and hope they see a deer, or a raccoon, or whatever, come by. Some people like to ride bicycles. And everybody gets to do something different. We need to have this…we need to have this every year.

Family Functioning

"Family functioning" was identified earlier in this chapter as an emergent theme of camping meaning that MRNRA campers associated with their on-site experiences. This theme was a reference to how developed camping positively influenced social interaction and cohesiveness among family members. For some campers, "family functioning" was also a life-context meaning. For example, a White female camper from camping group #24 in the highly developed campground shared that her family "is a little closer with one another" each year because of their annual camping trip. For this camper, family functioning meaning was related to the sharing of experiences and stories. As she described,

> Because we've been together for a week in such small confines, and then just kind of, it lingers over once you get back home, and you can talk about what you did, you know, your experiences, share the fishing and the stories and how big the fish was, how many millipedes you found on the trail, you know you share what you did and what your fun parts was and maybe next year we can do this, and what you're looking forward to next year. This kind of closeness happens every year.

Similarly, another camper mentioned closeness as she described the life-context meanings of camping for her family. This female camper from camping group #38 in the highly developed campground said,

> Camping is important in our lives because of closeness with our family, you know, spending time together. The world is such a rat race right now, everybody's going opposite ways, everybody's running wild. But camping together, to me, that is what builds a strong family. And that is what's gonna build strong relationships with my kids' families when they grow up, to me. And my kids have been able to spend quality time with their dad, I mean that's their hero…dad, you know.

In summary, the major themes of life-context meanings associated with developed camping experiences were: restoration; sharing positive family memories and traditions; novelty; experiencing and appreciating nature; self-reliance; self-identity, freedom, and family functioning. Restoration, "sharing positive family memories and traditions," novelty, and "experiencing and appreciating nature" were expressed by campers across all three campground types. Self-reliance was expressed only by less developed campers. Self-identity and freedom were expressed only by campers in the moderately and highly developed campground, and family functioning was only expressed by campers in the highly developed campground.

Table 61: Results of the Nomothetic (Between-Camper) Analysis of Expressed Life-Context Meanings Across Three Campground Types (Less Developed, Moderately Developed, and Highly Developed) from the 2003 Mount Rogers NRA Developed Forest Camping Study

Less Developed *(Ravens Cliff)* *13 participants; 6 camping groups*	Moderately Developed *(Hurricane)* *25 participants; 12 camping groups*	Highly Developed *(Grindstone)* *42 participants; 20 camping groups*
Restoration (5)	Restoration (5)	Restoration (4)
Sharing Positive Family Memories and Traditions (5)	Sharing Positive Family Memories and Traditions (4)	Sharing Positive Family Memories and Traditions (3)
Experiencing and Appreciating Nature (3)	Freedom (1)	Novelty (3)
Self-Reliance (3)	Self-Identity (1)	Family Functioning (2)
Novelty (2)	Experiencing and Appreciating Nature (1)	Experiencing and Appreciating Nature (2)
	Novelty (1)	Freedom (2)
		Self-Identity (1)

Conceptual Models of Primary Themes

Conceptual Model of Developed Forest Camping Experiences

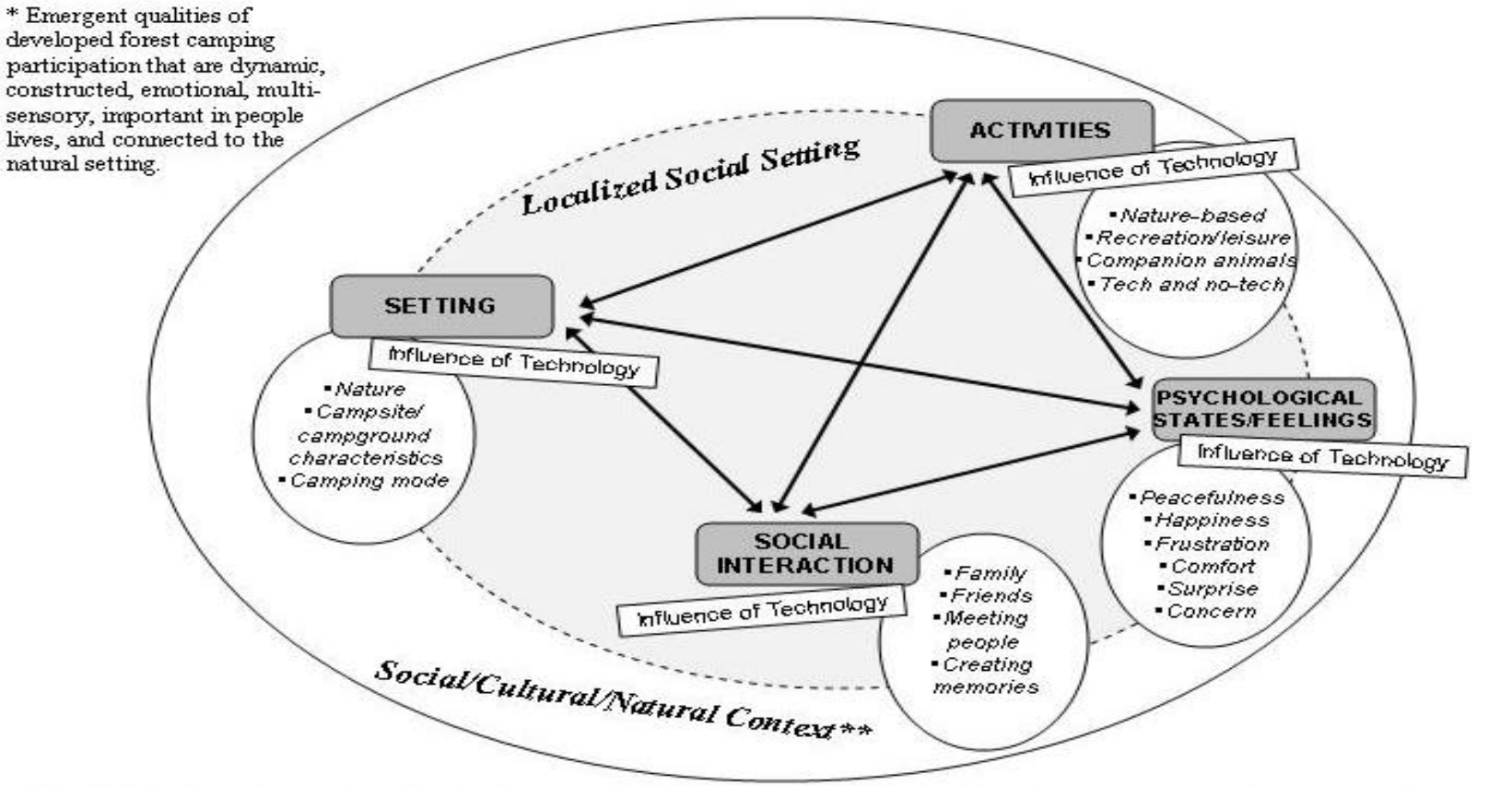
In this study, developed forest camping experience was defined as an emergent quality of developed forest camping participation that is dynamic, constructed, emotional, multi-sensory, social, important in people lives, and connected to the natural setting and the larger socio-cultural setting. Based upon the responses of developed forest campers, the major themes related to the salient elements of developed forest camping experiences were activities, social interaction, psychological states/feelings, and the setting (including campground/campsite characteristics, nature, and camping mode) (Figure 2).

Campers shared how they participated in a range of activities during their camping experiences, which could be nature-based, recreation and leisure-based, and could involve technology or no technology. Activities were almost always social, and a majority of campers stated that "who they were with" was most important. The setting of the experience was also salient, as expressed through nature-based activities, preferences for certain campground and campsite characteristics, and comments about campers' camping mode. Campers expressed a range of emotions that they felt during their camping experience, and these psychological states did not stay constant; they ebbed and flowed based upon what was happening to campers and what they were doing.

Technology influenced each salient aspect of developed forest camping experiences. For example, some activities required the use of technology (e.g., driving to a local destination, playing a hand-held video game, using specialized fly-fishing equipment). Although some camping activities did not require technology (e.g., reading, walking, etc.) and thus some campers experienced developed forest camping with very

little use of technology, the vast majority of campers in this study used a variety of technologies during their camping experiences. In some cases the setting itself was altered by camping mode technology, particular for moderately and highly developed campers. Some campers' emotional states were also influenced by technology and whether or not they were achieving desired levels of comfort which were often dependent upon the use of technology (i.e., television, inflatable mattress, portable shower).

Figure 2 shows how the four main themes of developed forest camping experience were believed to be influenced by the immediate social setting (i.e., campers' social groups and the related social context) and the larger social/cultural/natural context. Furthermore, all aspects of developed forest camping experiences were believed to take place within the larger social/cultural/natural context, and this context was believed to influence everything about developed forest camping experiences. This was consistent with the constructivist assumptions of this study.



** *Social Constructivism- (a)* individuals and groups socially construct reality, (b) shared experiences, language, and meanings create a basis for knowledge and understanding, (c) reality is socially, historically, and culturally dependent, and (d) there are multiple realities and all are equally valid.

Figure 2: Conceptual Model of Developed Forest Camping Experiences for Mount Rogers NRA Campers*

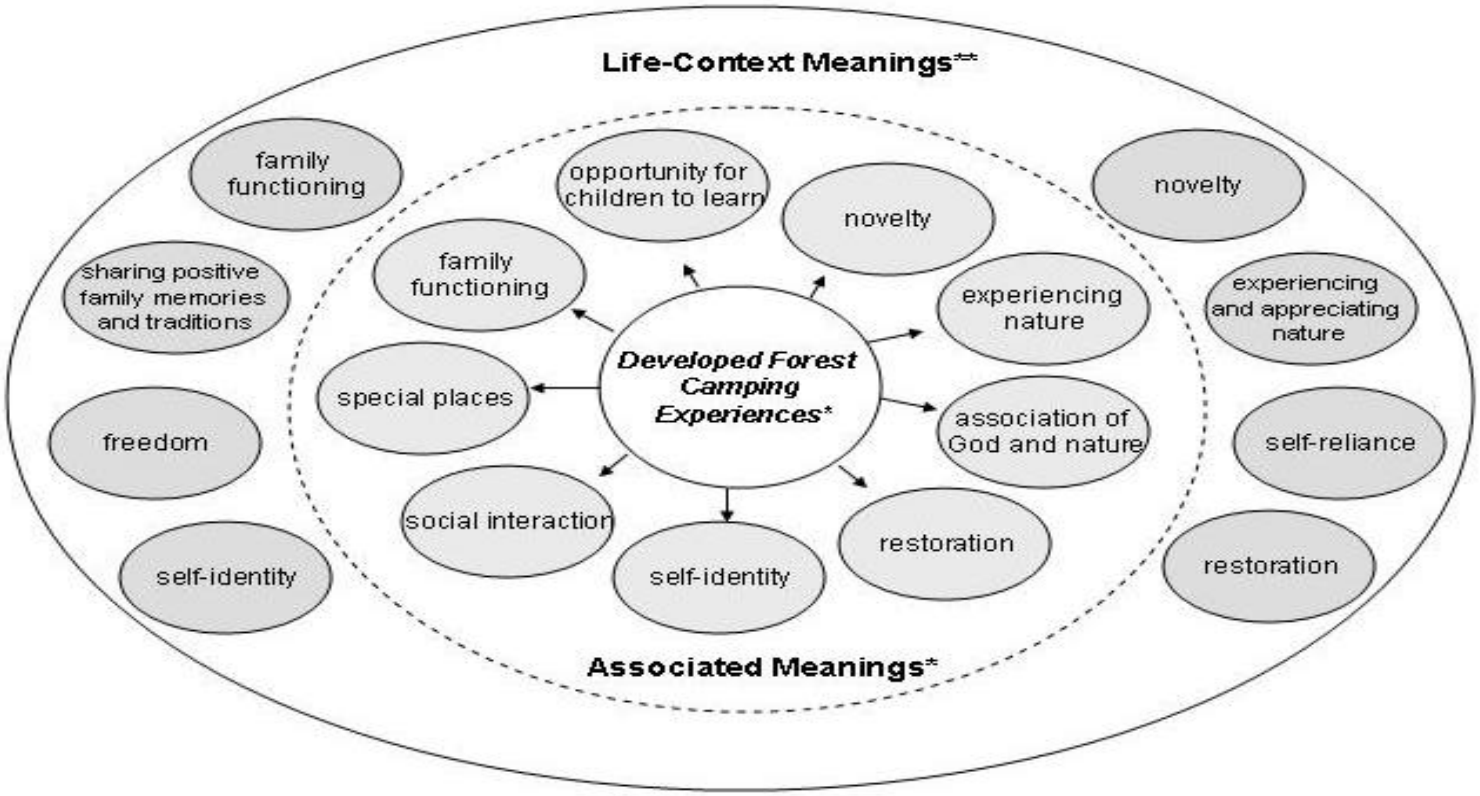
Conceptual Model of the Meanings Associated with Forest Camping Experiences

In this study, forest camping meanings were defined as symbolic, emotional, emergent, and negotiated properties and interpretations of camping experiences which are communicated through social interaction and other related social processes. Experiences, situations, and settings were believed to become "meaningful" through social communication with others. Although forest camping meanings were not believed to be universal, meanings were viewed as culturally/socially shared, and some were more commonly held than others. The major themes of camping meanings identified by developed forest campers in this study were "restoration," "family functioning," "special places," "self-identity," "social interaction," "experiencing nature," "association of God and nature"' "novelty," and "opportunity for children to learn" (Figure 3).

Camping meanings were interrelated. For example, family functioning meanings were related to the opportunity that campers had to "escape" (a category of restoration) the stresses of their home environments in order to focus on members of their family during their camping trips. Another example was "special places," which evolved from campers spending time in nature and then developing family traditions focused around their attachment to a particular campground. Another example was "appreciation for nature," which evolved from experiencing nature and restoration meanings. As campers spent time in nature and were restored through contact with nature, they expressed appreciation for nature.

Some meanings were not only associated with the campers' current camping trip but were also identified as important in the greater context of campers' lives. The themes of life-context meanings associated with developed camping experiences were

"restoration," "sharing positive family memories and traditions," "novelty," "experiencing and appreciating nature'' "self-reliance," "self-identity," "freedom" and "family functioning."



* Symbolic, emotional, emergent, and negotiated properties and interpretations of developed forest camping experiences that were communicated through social interaction and other related social processes.

** Meanings that were important in the greater context of campers' lives.

Figure 3: Conceptual Model of the Meanings and Life-Context Meanings Associated with Developed Forest Camping Experiences for Mount Rogers NRA Campers

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Chapter Overview

The purpose of this study was to explore modern developed forest camping experiences and the meanings associated with those experiences. In this chapter I discuss the major findings of this study with this purpose in mind. This chapter also discusses process-oriented versus goal-directed approaches for understanding camping experiences and meanings, the challenges associated with measuring camping experiences and meanings, recommendations for Mount Rogers NRA management, limitations of this study, and opportunities for future research.

Study Findings

Technology and the Modern Developed Forest Camping Experience

As discussed in Chapter 4, technology use was pervasive across the developed forest camping experience, in terms of the camping modes that campers used for camping, in terms of the gear and equipment that they used for activities and for conveniences, and in terms of the electronics that they used for entertainment. The participants in this study, generally speaking, used one form of technology (auto-based camping modes) to escape another form of technology (i.e., phones, televisions, cell-phones, etc.) and once they entered a nature-based environment, many of them began to use other technologies to maintain a semblance of comfort and familiarity that they associated with the setting from which they hoped to escape. This technology was often sophisticated (e.g., DVD players and satellite dishes) and very much valued by the campers who had access to electricity.

In 1965, Gregerson published a unique article titled *Campurbia* in which he discussed the suburban nature of developed campgrounds in Michigan's State Parks. Gregerson noted that "people not only don't seem to want to get away from it all—they take it with them. Electric frying pans, irons, TV sets, and other electrical appliances are standard equipment with many campers" (p. 20). The same seemed to be true for campers in the MRNRA.

Campers' perceptions of technology seemed to depend upon whether or not the technology was desired or undesired, which also seemed to relate to the restorative meanings associated with developed forest camping. Campers in this study sought to escape from the undesired elements of technology which were associated with work, responsibility, and a distraction from more leisurely pursuits. However, desired technologies—those associated with comforts, conveniences, and entertainment—were very much enjoyed and utilized by many, but not all, of campers in this study. Thus, the use of technology and camping equipment ultimately seemed to revolve around perceptions of comfort and convenience. Campers seemed to gauge the level of comfort and convenience that they expected and made adjustments in their use of technology and camping gear to achieve their desired levels. Thus, a camper who wanted to escape technology at home (i.e., television, phones, etc.) may have turned to the use of similar technologies when boredom or bad weather made camping less comfortable than desired.

Campers in this study, even those who had the greatest access to technology and were the most common users of technology, stated that they were able to have a nature-based experience, by focusing on natural elements of their surroundings rather than the non-natural elements. But perhaps it is more than just a matter of attention. Rivers

(2003), in describing the nature-technology relationship, suggested that people no longer perceive nature as self-revealing, but rather need technological intervention to help reveal nature's essence. Thus, some of the campers in this study, particularly those campers who required technology in order to have a 'camping experience,' may have constructed a perspective of nature that is very inclusive of technology and human-made environmental elements.

Rivers has also suggested that "simpler (traditional) technologies perceived humans as passive and nature as active, but modern technologies perceives humans as active and nature as passive" (p. 405). Perhaps the relationship between human, technology, and nature continues to be modified within developed forest camping settings, in that nature is increasingly viewed as passive and mysterious and some campers are increasingly looking towards technology in order to successfully interface with nature. Turner (2002) has noted that modern backpackers increasingly use more and more modern technology (seemingly non-nature) to get back to nature. In other words, these recreationists take a "step back" to take a "step forward." When compared to dispersed-setting or backcountry campers, developed forest campers may not be as compelled to purchase the latest high-tech camping gear. The Gore-Tex fabrics and other modern gear technologies are not as necessary because of the comfort and protections (insulation) provided by the pop-ups, campers, and motor homes. But for an American population, which is becoming accustomed to particular levels of insular comforts associated with suburban and urban life, there may be a particularly strong motivation to use technology to make "spending time in nature" more accessible to those who find it difficult to give up the comforts of home.

With regards to camping mode, the participants in this study expressed the importance of comfort and conveniences associated with age, health, and financial means. This "transitioning" from tent-camping, to a pop-up, to a camper, and finally to a motor-home was seen by many developed forest campers as a natural progression and an inevitable aspect of developed camping. In contrast, in 1967, Burch and Wenger studied road-side campers in the Three Sisters and Lake of the Woods areas in Oregon and found that "there is a strong possibility that campers tend to shift from one camping style to another during their life cycle and that today's younger roadside campers are likely to prefer back-country camping later in their lives" (p. 24). Although comparing road-side campers and developed campers is not entirely like comparing apples and apples, this points to a difference that may have occurred over the last forty years. Campers in this study indicated that as campers get older, they prefer more developed camping modes. As the American population ages and confronts age-associated health problems, the results of this study related to "transitioning" might suggest that the number of tent-campers using developed forest campgrounds may decline and the number of campers using other types of camping modes (i.e., pop-ups, campers, and motor home) may increase.

Restorative Meanings of Developed Forest Camping Experiences

"Restoration," which included the categories or rest, escape, and recovery, was one of the most commonly expressed meanings of developed forest camping experiences. The importance of this meaning was not surprising, given that themes of escape and restoration have been intertwined with the history of auto-based camping (Sutter, 2002) and nature-based recreation (Knopf, 1987), and the importance of camping for rest and

escape has been well documented in previous camping studies.

As summarized in Chapter 2, Kaplan and Kaplan (1989) proposed that people are restored in natural environments because they escape from their usual settings and they become fascinated by stimulation in the natural environment that takes their mind off of their day-to-day problems. In contrast, Ulrich (1983) suggested that people want to escape from unwanted arousal. This study supported both models of the restorative nature of outdoor recreation experiences. Although the responses of developed forest campers from the MRNRA suggests support for the Kaplans' view of escape as promoting a sense of being away, as evidenced by the novelty meanings and the importance of new experiences, there is more commonality in campers' responses relative to Ulrich's view of restoration. Campers in this study expressed that camping was restorative because it allowed them to get away from telephones, televisions, cell-phones, and other unwanted, stressful sources of arousal and stimulation. These responses seem to support Ulrich's position that nature has a calming effect because it is a non-taxing stimulus that elicits positive emotions and blocks negative emotions (Hartig, Mang, & Evans, 1991).

The restorative meanings associated with developed forest camping experiences and the importance of escape for campers in this study provide additional support for the many studies, from across the last forty years, which have reported the nature of outdoor recreation and leisure as an escape (Burch, 1965; Shaw et al., 2002). With regards to camping studies, the importance of escape in this study supports Burch's (1965) findings that family camping groups wanted to leave behind their daily commitments. However, this study differs somewhat from Patterson, Williams, & Scherl's (1994) study in that

their participants related escape to attention (i.e., fascinating stimuli), convenience (i.e., escaping civilization's conveniences), and safety (i.e., isolation and security). With the exception of attention (which was a component of novelty meanings in this study), convenience and safety were not commonly expressed themes of camping meanings. (Note: Convenience was important to campers in this study, but not in the same way that is was to the participants in Patterson et al.'s study. In their study, participants wanted to escape conveniences that they associated with civilization. In this study, campers sought conveniences that were closely associated with civilization.)

The results of this study add to the considerable body of research that suggests that natural environments are a context for restoration. Knopf (1987) suggested that "nature serves as a haven for restoration" and that people are driven to natural settings in an effort to cope with unsatisfactory life situations. In other words, people go camping in the outdoors to leave behind a certain state of affairs (p. 802). Hartig et al (1991) found that restoration associated with natural settings was stronger than restoration in non-natural settings. Hartig and his colleagues posed an important question "Can environments be configured so that people can proactively withstand the demands of contemporary society?"

The results of this study provide at least some evidence to suggest that developed forest campgrounds might be configured to enhance restoration. Based upon the responses of campers in this study, the developed forest campgrounds in the MRNRA were *accessible*, both in terms of location and in terms of amenities. Developed campgrounds provided *fascination* (e.g., seeing wild ponies on Mount Rogers, watching the rushing water of Cripple Creek) and a *reprieve from unwanted stimuli* while

providing exposure to new stimuli (e.g., removal from the stimulation caused by phones and cell phones and the opportunity for stimulation from hiking and from watching a campfire). Thus, it might be possible to purposely enhance the restorative qualities of developed forest campgrounds.

Developed Forest Camping as a Nature-Based Experience

As described in Chapter 1, researchers in the 1960s and 1970s studied developed camping and found that social resources and social experiences were more important than natural resources and nature-based experiences (Etzkorn, 1964; Clark, Hendee, & Campbell, 1969). As Hendee and Cambell noted, "few visitors engaged in activities that were dependent upon the natural environment or displayed any concern for the flora, fauna, geology, or natural history of the area" (p. 15). However, in this study, nature was important. The importance of nature for developed forest camping can be seen throughout the results in this study. Nature and nature-based activities were two of the salient elements of developed forest camping experiences, "experiencing nature" was an associated meaning, and developing an "appreciation for nature" was a life-context meaning.

With the exception of the White male camper from camping group #19 in the highly developed campground, developed forest campers expressed that they did receive nature-based experiences, regardless of their camping mode. Campers looked to the outdoor context as a novel, quiet context for personal restoration and social interaction, and they constructed nature-based meanings, even as they surround themselves with equipment and electronics that allowed them to spend very little time in close proximity

to nature. Even campers in highly developed campgrounds who were somewhat isolated from nature by their motor homes said that they were experiencing nature.

Perceptions of nature were relative to the amount of nature that most people experienced on any given day while at home. Simply having immediate and direct access to forests and other nature-based setting features like a creek, a mountain, or birds created the conditions necessary for many campers to feel that they were in "wilderness" or in a "primitive" type of setting. Even the most obvious indicators of human presence, such as buildings, pavement, and the sounds of traffic could be overlooked because campers had the opportunity to walk down a trail to be surrounded in forests or to watch birds fly around in front of their campsites. Thus, the participants in this study constructed what "nature" meant to them. Accordingly, these campers seemed to be escaping from one construction (i.e., their home environment) into another construction (i.e., their camping environment).

In 1969, Burch and Hendee noted that "the campfire was the crucial part of camping for most parties" (P. 15). In Chapter 2, I surmised that campfires might play an important role in providing a setting for nature-based activities and facilitating social interaction among MRNRA campers. This study supported the importance of campfires for developed forest camping. Building, watching, and tending to one's campfire was one of the most salient activities across all three campground types. The campfire truly was, as Bachelard (1964) suggested, a "backwoods television." Concurrent with Hendee and Campbell's (1969) findings that developed forest campers spent a lot of time in social settings around their campfire, in this study the campfire was often the center of social interaction. As a male camper from camping group #9 in the moderately developed

campground explained, “we gather most of the time here, there’s sometimes twenty or thirty of us that are around the campfire. We talk, we sing, we play cards, tell jokes, play some more cards.”

Developed Forest Camping as a Social-Based Experience

With regards to the social nature of developed forest camping, the results of this study suggest that the modern developed forest camping experience has much in common with the developed forest camping experience of the 1960’s and 1970’s. In 1965, Burch reported that camping gains its meaning by being a part of the larger social world. Hendee and Campbell (1969) found that campers viewed camping “primarily as an opportunity to meet new people and to have an enjoyable social experience” (p. 14). Bultena and Klessig (1969) suggested that the appeal of camping was found in the opportunity that people had to meet “in a setting that affords an ease of social intercourse often unknown in the urban situation” (p. 350). Similarly, campers in this study identified social interaction as a salient element of developed forest camping and as an associated meaning of developed forest camping. For almost all campers the developed forest camping experience was a social experience, often defined according to whom one was camping with. Across the greater context of campers’ lives, developed forest camping was meaningful through the sharing of memories and traditions which had evolved through social discourse and were often enacted through social rituals around the campfire. Thus, campers constructed camping as a social experience and social meanings were commonly associated with developed forest camping.

Family functioning was an important associated meaning of developed forest camping experiences for the campers in this study. These results support the results of

recent qualitative studies of camping meanings (Patterson, Williams, & Scherl, 1994; Shaw, Havitz, & Delamere, 2002). Although some recreation researchers in the 1960s and 1970s suggested the importance of camping for family interaction (Burch, 1965; Gregerson, 1965; Hendee and Campbell, 1969), the idea that developed forest camping may actually improve a family's overall functioning, by providing the opportunity for family members to spend more quality time together and thus enhancing communication, listening, and overall family bonding, seems more salient now than it was in the 1960's and 1970's. At the very least this element of developed camping was not written about in the journal articles and Forest Service reports of that era. [With the notable exception of Hendee and Campbel (1969), who suggested that camping provided the opportunity for husbands and wives to spend time together as "children were expected to leave their parents and entertain themselves" (p. 14).] Cheek and Burch (1976) were perhaps the first camping researchers to note that "…behavior and meaning in the outdoors is linked less to the physical array than to the configuration of the group. The physical setting may be important to people, but it is important because it offers an arena for social interaction, reinforcement, and bonding" (p. 167).

Family functioning impacts of camping seemed to be an emergent (and occasionally unexpected) outcome of the developed forest camping experience at the MRNRA. Furthermore, campers shared that the long-term importance of camping in their lives was related to how camping had positively impacted their family, both in terms of immediate functioning but also in the creation of stories, memories, and traditions that led to increased family cohesiveness. These results are consistent with the work of Shaw, Havitz, and Delamere (2002), who found that "creating memories" was one of the most

salient themes in their study of family *Avacation* (which included family camping). Shaw et al. found that memories were important because of the role of memories in the social construction of a positive view of the family and a shared understating of what family means. Thus, the creation of these forest camping memories and traditions actually has a role in the social construction of the family.

Another important question about the developed forest camping experience—in terms of family functioning meanings—is, "How important is the natural environment to the association of these meanings?" In other words, does a family vacation to Disneyland lead to the same family functioning meanings that were associated with developed forest camping in this study? If family functioning meanings can be associated with other experiences (as suggested by Shaw et al.), then what is the importance of the natural environment in Forest Service campgrounds for enhancing family functioning.

It is impossible to say, based solely on this study, that the natural environment is necessary for family functioning. It is also impossible to suggest that family functioning is more likely to occur in nature-based settings than it is in other non-home environment settings such as would be available during a Disneyland vacation. However, the results do suggest that the developed forest camping setting may be important for family functioning because of its novelty, because it provides reduced access to stimuli that are distractions in home environments (such as televisions and telephones), and because it provides the opportunity for family members to participants in activities that might encourage closer contact and interaction. These novel situations often involve unexpected challenges that require family campers to work together in new, innovative ways in order to successfully solve problems. The family camping groups in this study

suggested that by spending time in a reduced-stimulus environment provided by the developed forest camping setting, and participating in social experiences in which family members were able to focus on each other rather than being distracted by situations in their home environment, family members became closer to one another.

Attachment to Special Places

"Special places" was the second most commonly expressed meaning associated with developed forest camping. As stated in Chapter 4, campgrounds and campsites came to be viewed as special places because of family traditions and memories that were closely associated with them over time. According to many campers who participated in this study, traditions and stories related to the campgrounds as special places were almost always family-related and developed over a period of many years.

The ways in which campers developed traditions that were associated with MRNRA campgrounds supports Jacobi and Stokols' (1983) concept of tradition. One, campers developed annual events and rituals (i.e., fishing, family meals, picking berries, etc.) that were replayed again and again each year that they camped at Mount Rogers. Two, these events and rituals were associated with groups of campers comprised of family members or friends and family. When viewed with expressions about social interaction, family functioning, restoration, and experiencing nature, campers' comments suggest that the campgrounds in this study came to be associated with aesthetic beauty and with positive family experiences. Essentially, the campgrounds as special places came to symbolize important valued qualities like rest, enjoyment, nature, and family. The campgrounds as special places also came to represent meaningful family traditions like picking blueberries at a special place within the MRNRA. Thus, campers formed

attachments to MRNRA campgrounds and wanted to share these aesthetic and symbolic qualities with other members of their families.

Comparing Process-Oriented Meanings and Goal-Directed Motivations

In this study, forest camping experiences were viewed through a constructivist lens as emergent, dynamic, constructed, emotional, multi-sensory, social, important in people lives, and connected to the natural setting and the larger socio-cultural setting. In this way, developed forest camping experiences were viewed as an emerging process that unfolded during the course of camping participation in a way that had meaning for forest campers. Although campers may have had specific reasons for camping, much of the experience appears to have unfolded in ways that were not entirely predictable. Unique events, new experiences, and unexpected social interactions appeared to have modified forest camping experiences from being predictable to being emergent. Furthermore, meanings were found in aspects of the experience—such as enhanced family functioning through positive interaction with family members—which were a source of happiness in and of themselves. These meanings evolved over time, as evidenced by the positive memories, stories, and traditions that were remembered and shared, and from a social constructivist perspective are likely still in evolution.

The process-oriented approach used in this study can be compared with Driver et al's (1987) goal-driven approach, which suggests that people are motivated to participate in recreation to satisfy underlying desired end states to eventually produce satisfaction. Anyone familiar with Driver (1977) and Driver et al.'s (1991) recreation experience domains may note similarities between the associated meanings of forest camping experience found in this study and Driver's motivational domains. Table 62 provides a

direct comparison. In fact, many of the meanings identified in this study seemed to be similar to the motives/outcomes that Driver and his colleagues identified, including restoration, self-identity, social interaction, experiencing nature, association of God in nature, and the opportunity for children to learn. This suggests that some of Driver's experience motives/outcomes may be closely aligned with the meanings that MRNRA campers associated with their forest camping experiences.

The similarities were not as apparent for *family functioning* (i.e., process of experiencing enhanced family relations through improved listening and communication), *novelty* (i.e., unexpected, emergent moments that were new) and *special places* (i.e., process of developing an attachment to a special campground and the development of family traditions around that place). Although Driver identified, as early as 1977, that "family togetherness" was an important domain of recreation experience, this study seemed to provide richer, more detailed information about how developed forest camping experiences enhance family functioning. For example, when the White male camper from camping group #16 explained why his camping trip was meaningful, he explained how he was listening to his son more on his camping trip, and how he and his son were more focused on each other and how they were paying attention to each other much more than they would at home. It appears that the qualitative, interview-based approach used in this study more thoroughly described the process of how developed camping might enhance family functioning than may have been captured by the items that Driver has used in his survey-based studies.

Similarly, we can compare the "special places" meanings found in this study with Driver's concept of "nostalgia." Although Driver (1977) identified "nostalgia" as an

important outcome of recreation experience which included "because it would bring back pleasant memories," "to think about good times I have had in the past," "to recall past satisfactions," and "to gain an experience I can look back on," this domain does not capture how memories and stories develop into traditions that are associated with special places and how these special places come to be meaningful.

These comparisons support how emergent and process-oriented approaches may be appropriate for providing a deeper understanding of recreation experiences (Patterson et al., 1998; Brooks, 2003). Brooks (2003) suggested that "goals and expectations in outdoor recreation are important, but they provide an incomplete picture…failure to achieve expectations does not always result in negative experience because the overall emergent narrative or story of the experience may have been a success" (p. 222). This was true for campers in this study. For example, campers from the Grindstone Campground who endured downpours of rain and who expressed feelings of concern and fear associated with the storms still expressed that they had a great camping trip. As another example, a downed tree that threatened to prevent campers in the Hurricane Campground from leaving resulted in increased camper bonding as campers worked together to cut the tree into pieces and haul it away. In this study, the meanings of camping experiences were not always associated with expected outcomes or goal-driven behaviors. Meanings were just as likely to be associated with unexpected, emerging moments that occurred in ever-changing social and natural settings.

Comparing the major themes of this study with Driver's motives/outcomes is not an entirely fair comparison because these comparisons highlight the strengths of qualitative research—the ability to understand processes and the inherent complexities

and ambiguities of human experiences and meanings. Many human behaviors can appear to be goal directed because humans seek to make sense and order out of their everyday lives. As suggested by constructivism, reality is complex and variable, and people construct meanings, and may change their meanings as their context changes or as their social setting changes. Although Driver's motives/outcomes may not tell us as much about the meaning-making processes of developed forest campers, Driver deserves considerable credit for developing a conceptualization of recreation experiences that remains surprisingly relevant almost forty years later.

Table 62: Comparisons Between Meanings Associated with MRNRA Developed Forest Camping Experiences and Driver et al.'s (1991) Recreation Experience Preference (REP) Domains

Associated Meanings	Experience Preference Domains
Restoration (rest, escape, and recovery)	• Reduce tension • Escape physical stressors (noise) • Physical rest
Family functioning	• Family togetherness (1977) and family relations (1987) address some aspects of family functioning, but they do not describe how recreation experiences lead to improved or enhanced family interactions.
Special places (traditions, memories, and stories)	• "Nostalgia" addresses some aspects of special places (memories) but not the development of traditions
Self-identity	• Independence • Achievement (Skill development)
Social interaction	• Share similar values • Family relations • Meet new people
Experiencing nature	• Enjoy nature
Association of God and nature	• Introspection (Spiritual)
Novelty	• Stimulation • *No direct comparison with emergent, unexpected moments*
Opportunity for children to learn	• Outdoor Learning (Learn about nature; Exploration; General learning) • Teach/Lead others

Comparing the Socio-Demographics of Developed Forest Campers

In Chapter 1, I suggested that the socio-demographics of the modern developed forest camper was changing, based upon data collected by Ken Cordell and his colleagues (1999). Cordell et al. reported that the "average" camper tended to be a retiree camping in an expensive motor home, a 16 to 45 year old single person traveling with friends and camping to reduce costs associated with lodging, or a person traveling in a group as a way of gaining access to other recreational opportunities such as climbing or canoeing (Cordell et al., 1999). The campers in this study did not match these socio-demographics. Generally speaking, the campers in this study tended to be married and camping with their spouse, children, grandchildren, or close friends. The majority of the campers were 30-39 years old (26%) or 40-49 years old (32%). These differences are likely due to the fact that Cordell and his colleagues' socio-demographic findings were based on a population survey of both dispersed and developed campers. Furthermore, in this study, I only examined one type of camping in one setting.

The small sample in this study does not allow me to make generalized statements about the socio-demographics of modern developed forest campers. However, I can say that the demographics of the participants in this study places this group of MRNRA developed forest campers in close comparison with the sample studied by Burch and Wenger in 1967—a set of camping groups in which the campers tended to be 30-44 year old married couples with 2-3 children, and the sample studied by Cordell and Sykes in 1969—a set of camping groups tended to be 40 year old married couples with 1-2 children.

It is important to note the ethnic homogeneity of the sample in this study. Almost all of the participants were White. As previously described, approximately forty percent of the participants in this study reside in Southwestern Virginia. The ethnic characteristics of the participants in this study were consistent with ethic characteristics of residents of Southwestern Virginia. The degree to which Whites are more likely to engage in developed camping has been documented by Cordell and his associates (1999), who found that Whites and other ethnic groups camped more frequently than African-Americans. In January 2004, The Recreation Roundtable reported that "White Americans participated in an average of 5.2 different outdoor recreation activities compared to 2.3 for African Americans and 3.5 for Hispanic Americans" (RoperASW, 2004, p. 8). The ethic makeup of the participants in this study was believed to reflect regional characteristics and national outdoor recreation trends.

Challenges Associated with Measuring Camping Experiences and Meanings

Some readers of this dissertation may struggle with the fact that the emergent themes of experiences and meanings are considered to be equally valid. Constructivist research, which is based on a relativist ontology, can be challenging to some readers because readers must reconcile the fact that multiple realities may be equally valid but some may be more useful than others in describing the nature of modern developed forest camping. Schwandt (1994) has noted that some constructions may be incomplete, simplistic, or uninformed. (Guba and Lincoln (1989) call these "malconstructions".) In other cases, constructions may not be as commonly held or shared. Thus, when determining the usefulness of the themes of identified in this study, it is appropriate to recognize when a construction (of developed forest camping experience and meaning)

might be held by one person or shared by several individuals. Although a meaning identified by twenty-five developed forest campers may not be considered more valid than one identified by two campers, the more commonly shared meaning may be more useful to managers and future researchers.

One of the anticipated challenges to measuring camping experiences and meanings was a concern that campers would be unable or unwilling to articulate the salient elements of their forest camping experiences and the meanings that they associated with their developed forest camping experiences. For example, in Chapter 2, I reported on the challenges that Arnold and Price (1993) found when recreationists were asked to talk about their extraordinary experiences. In this study, participants were very willing and able to discuss their developed forest camping experiences. It may be the case that similar challenges were not found in this study because the general nature of the developed forest camping experience was not extraordinary, even though campers' may have experienced extraordinary moments (e.g., hiking Mount Rogers, seeing deer for the first time, or catching fish in the stream). Ordinary recreation experiences may be easier to express than extraordinary recreation experiences.

Another anticipated challenge was defining the concept of "meaning." As reported in Chapter 2, even recreation researchers have used a range of terms in studies of meanings, including "value" (Burch, 1965; Etzkorn, 1964) and "importance" (Buchanan, Christensen, & Burdge, 1981). In this study, there were moments in which campers did not seem to entirely understand what I meant when I asked, "What was the meaning of this camping trip?" or "How was this camping experience meaningful to you?" It is likely that the definition of meanings, as everything else, was communicated, interpreted,

and negotiated through language during my conversations with the study participants. In the same way that people adjust to new and unfamiliar information and experiences, my respondents seemed to figure out what I was asking. I was careful to use reflective listening and checked and rechecked to ensure that participants understood my questions. Nonetheless, it is likely that campers responded in variable ways based upon their individual interpretations of the word "meaning." This is not viewed as a weakness because it is consistent with the constructed nature of reality and the fact that multiple realities exist and are equally valid.

Another challenge with exploring meanings through interviews and narratives involves the concept of *intellectual inferencing* (Reder, 1982). As previously described in Chapter 2, individuals cognitively organize their experiences using framing and schemas, which is based upon their own history, past experiences, knowledge, etc., and no two individuals frame experience in exactly the same way. Unfortunately, memory has gaps, and because no two people frame experience in exactly the same way, they also do not remember or forget the same aspects of their experience. People unconsciously fill in those gaps using a cognitive process called intellectual inferencing. In this study, intellectual inferencing may have impacted the accuracy of the described experiences and associated meanings.

One of the strengths of this dissertation research was that it was contextual, interpretive, and grounded in the on-site experiences of developed forest campers. This was a one-time glimpse at a group of developed forest campers, the salient aspects of their camping experiences, and the meanings that they associated with their experiences. It is possible that similar studies of developed forest camping experiences and meanings

will result in different findings. In fact, it would be surprising if the results of this study were entirely consistent with other similar studies. There are multiple realities, and people live in a complex world. Too often outdoor recreation research fails to consider the contextual nature of experience. Patterson, Williams, and Scherl (1994) suggested that our "perception is typically anchored in a reductionist, deterministic, stimulus-response model in which isolated stimuli presented out of their natural context are rated by respondents" (p. 214). For example, when survey research is used to explore developed forest camping, particularly mailed surveys in which recreationists are completing the survey from home, the survey may fail to measure the wide range of experiences and the contexts of those experiences. Thus, responses to these "isolated stimuli in artificial contexts" may not adequately represent outdoor recreation research.

Recommendations for Management

Presented below are several specific insights and recommendations for MRNRA management that were interpreted from conversations with the developed forest campers in this study.

1. Although nature-based experiences were possible in highly-developed campgrounds, some campers were not pleased with conditions associated with large campers and motor homes (i.e., noise pollution and a general sense of artificiality) found in the moderately and highly developed campgrounds. The most commonly associated meanings for campers from Ravens Cliff were "restoration" and the "opportunity for children to learn." According to these campers' responses, these meanings were dependent upon a more nature-based setting than was provided in developed campgrounds such as Hurricane and

Grindstone. Therefore, MRNRA managers should continue to provide opportunities for camping in less developed campgrounds.

2. Campers in the Grindstone campground applauded the organized activities that were provided for their children. These activities were a focal point for social interaction and positive family experiences. Thus, there is support for the development and provision of organized programs and other opportunities for developed forest campers. These results were consistent with the findings of Cottrell and Cottrell (2003). In a study of family campers, they found that organized programs were important to family campers and that campers who participated in programs were more satisfied with the overall camping experience and with the value of the experience. Considering the "opportunity to teach children" meanings that some campers associated with developed forest camping, and the importance that many parents in this study placed on their children having the opportunity to experience and create play in a natural setting, nature or environmental education programs—for parents and children—should be developed to facilitate this learning. Children should be given opportunities to create their own play (i.e., nature games, exploring, etc.) in developed forest campgrounds.
3. Developed forest campers desired comfort and conveniences. Comfort and convenience were most often associated with access to campsite amenities (i.e., water, electricity, hot showers, and clean bathrooms) and technologies (satellite reception, etc.). Today's developed forest camper will continue to demand these types of amenities. Because the provision of these amenities will encourage

continued camping participation, and thus the restorative functions that camping provides for many campers, these amenities should not be curtailed, as long a less developed camping opportunities are available.

4. Seeing water, listening to water, and water-focused activities (i.e., fishing, swimming, and exploring the creek) were particularly salient. Water-based natural resources located near developed forest campgrounds should be protected. Managers should consider how these resources can be enhanced to promote nature-based experiences and enjoyment.
5. Developed forest campers perceived many benefits with regards to family functioning and identified family functioning as an important meaning associated with developed forest camping experience. Some family members got along better after a multi-day camping trip. Therefore, managers should promote the potential family functioning impacts of developed forest camping and should educate campers about these potential benefits. Because family functioning seemed to relate to the opportunity for families to participate in social-based experiences (i.e., organized programs, campfires, self-directed trails, etc.) *and* the opportunity to have some "down-time" which allowed families to spend unscheduled time together, managers should promote both types of opportunities.
6. New, unexpected experiences were meaningful to campers. In fact, these experiences contributed to the restoration and self-identity meanings that campers associated with developed forest camping. Managers should encouraged these types of experiences and explore how these types of experiences might be facilitated in and around developed forest campgrounds. For example, managers

could provide campers with lists of unusual experiences or locales available within the MRNRA.

7. Developed forest campers, particularly those who had been camping at a particularly campground for multiple years, formed attachments to the Hurricane and Grindstone campgrounds as special places. They returned to these special places again and again, particularly with close friends or family members with whom they could share past memories and stories or carry on traditions. Managers should recognize the important place meanings and associated traditions that developed forest campers associated with developed forest camping. Furthermore, several developed forest campers who had been camping multiple years and who had developed emotional attachments to MRNRA campgrounds had camped there as children. Research by Cottrell and Cottrell (2003) suggests that "participation in outdoor activities in youth carries over into adult leisure-time activities. The greater the involvement in a specific type of activity in adolescence, the more frequent the participation in the same type of activity at midlife." (p. 37). Recurrent campers should be encouraged to return to the specific campgrounds to which they have formed attachments (e.g., reduced fees for multi-year campers, etc.). Managers should consider how group camping traditions can be facilitated. Campgrounds with a long history within the MRNRA should remain open. When existing low-use campgrounds are considered for closure, the public should be engaged in a dialogue about the meanings and importance of the campgrounds so that managers can make an

informed decision, keeping in mind the importance of campers' attachments to the campgrounds as special places.

8. Developed forest camping experiences were emergent and unexpected and shared through stories. Sharing and hearing stories about their experiences were an important component of the social construction of meanings, particularly life-context meanings. Managers should encourage storytelling opportunities and behaviors through considerations for camp site construction, visitor interpretation, and organized programming. Campfires were often the center for social experiences in the campsites and were the catalyst for the expression and sharing of stories and even traditions. Managers should encourage campfires by providing fire pits or fire rings at each campsite and a free cord of word to each camping group upon arrival. Managers should ensure that additional firewood is easily available. Managers should designate forest plots where campers can gather firewood.
9. As judged by the participant response rate and campers comments, the experience of participating in the interviews was non-intrusive and generally a positive (rather than a negative) experience. Collecting on-site interview data was a successful method for collecting data on the topics of experiences and meanings. In addition, participants verbalized that they valued the opportunity to talk about the camping experiences at the MRNRA. They appreciated the fact that management was listening to what they felt was important about their camping experiences. Mangers should consider additional ways that developed forest

campers can be engaged in a dialogue about the experiences and the associated meanings of those experiences.

10. Developed forest campers from all three campgrounds in this study shared that they were pleased with the aesthetically pleasing, clean, safe campgrounds that were provided to them. Long-time campers shared that these campgrounds were not always as safe and that on-site hosts and managers had greatly improved the safety and overall condition of the campgrounds. Recognizing what is occurring in the greater context of American life, in terms of "war on terrorism" and Americans' perceptions of safe places, managers should ensure that this attention to detail is maintained.

Limitations of This Study

One of the potential limitations of this study was associated with the interview method. With interviews, there is the possibility of distorted responses due to personal bias, anger, anxiety, or simply the influence of the participants' emotional state at the time of the interview (Patton, 2002). As mentioned in Chapter 3, I interviewed campers on the last day of their trips. In most cases, I had scheduled a time for the interviews that would not conflict with meals, packing-up, and other last day activities. However, this was not always possible. On two occasions, when I approached campers to participate in the study, they agreed to participate yet clearly seemed rushed and somewhat preoccupied. Thus, their responses might be influenced by their emotional state at the time of the interview.

A second potential limitation is the influence of investigator effects. According to Patton (2002), there are four ways that a researcher, or the mere fact that a study is taking

place, can distort the findings of a study. One, study participants can change how they normally talk and behave in the setting because of the presence of the researcher. Two, as a human instrument, changes in the researcher during the course of data collection (i.e., instrumentation effects) can distort the research findings. Three, biases or selective perceptions of the researcher can impact the findings. There is no way to know if participants in this study changed how they talked and behaved during the interviews because I was there. However, it is important to be aware of the effects that I might have had. Participants were aware that I was a graduate student from Virginia Tech, and some seemed to believe that I had a connection to the Forest Service or management of the campgrounds. Being perceived as someone in a position of authority and a part of an institutional body may have influenced how participants talked and behaved.

In Chapter 3, I outlined my assumptions and biases as a human instrument. Even though I was careful to recognize and articulate those assumptions and biases, and even though I was careful not to allow them to influence the interviews or the analysis anymore than they naturally would, these assumptions and biases could have influenced the results. As recommended by Patton (2002), I have tried to neither overestimate nor underestimate my effects as a human instrument, I am simply recognizing my responsibility to identify and articulate what those effects might be.

A third potential limitation was the sampling approach. As described in Chapter 3, stratified purposeful sampling was used to identify forty-two "camping groups" (i.e., one or more campers in a specific camp site) from three different types of campgrounds (i.e., less developed, moderately developed, and highly developed) in the MRNRA who were participating in a multi-day (i.e., 3-7 days) camping trip. It is possible that I did not

sample a wide enough range of developed forest campers in order to provide me with a complete understanding of developed forest camping experiences and meanings. It is also possible that I was too limiting or selective in my sampling or that some form of bias influenced my sampling approach. In other words, what data were missed because of non-participation by those campers who were not sampled?

Related to this limitation was the fact that few campers could be found at the Ravens Cliff Campground. A total of six interviews were conducted at that campground, and I made several additional trips to Ravens Cliff to collect more data. Unfortunately, no one was camping during my additional visits. Thus, the less developed campground is not equally represented in the results. By presenting all of the major themes according to the different campground types I hoped to represent the three campgrounds. The results suggest that there were several instances in which the less developed campers from Ravens Cliff differed from the moderately and highly developed campers. For example, campers in the less developed campground did not mention spending time with a companion animal as a salient aspect of developed forest camping experience. Furthermore, campers from Ravens Cliff did not mention identity and freedom as life-context meanings of developed forest camping. It is unclear whether or not with additional Ravens Cliff interviews these differences would have remained present.

A fourth limitation was the low response rate for the participant review. Although the 47% response rate was less than desired, it was not necessarily less than expected. The participant review process was, essentially, a mailed survey asking participants to read information, to check a box that represented their opinion, and to return the completed form to me. Porter (2004) has pointed out that response rates for mailed

surveys have been falling and that this decrease is likely due to changing cultural norms for cooperation and the increase in the use of academic and marketing surveys which have caused the public to be consistently bombarded by surveys. Furthermore, an "acceptable" response rate for a participant review process could not be found in the qualitative methods literature. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the individuals who did not respond to the participant review could have held alternate perspectives that were not represented in the final results and interpretations. Although I did send a follow-up "Participant Review Form" to non-respondents, the participant review response rate may have been increased by the use of additional strategies such as a person-to-person follow-up (i.e., phone call) with each non-respondent.

A fifth limitation was the lack of an "external audit." As described by Patton (2002), "an external audit by a disinterested expert can render judgment about the quality of data collection and analysis" (p. 562). An external audit is able to provide a measure of the confirmability and dependability of the results. The inclusion of an external auditor would have provided additional information regarding the trustworthiness of the themes that were identified in this study.

A sixth limitation is related to whether or not I was able to capture a complete representation of the developed forest camping experience. I received only a brief "snap-shot" of campers' on-site experience, and I relied upon campers to explain what else they had been doing during their camping trip. Many campers seemed to spend quite a bit of time in their campsites, but I do not have any measure of how much time they spent on any one activity. In other words, there was likely a lot going on that I did not observe and did not measure. Since the amount of time that campers spent on specific activities

may have implications for their camping experiences and associated meanings, such information may have helped to provide a richer understanding of their experiences.

Opportunities for Future Research

Since this dissertation has attempted to represent only the experiences, meanings, and life-context meanings of developed forest campers from the MRNRA, the results cannot be generalized to other developed forest campers in other settings at other campgrounds. This research was large descriptive rather than explanatory. Moreover, there is much to be learned about the modern developed forest camping experience that has not been explored.

The results of this study seemed to indicate that the utilization of technology in developed forest camping may vary and that developed forest campers may be able to be groups according to a typology of technology utilization. One, there are developed forest campers who take, utilize, and enjoy technology. Two, there are developed forest campers who take technology but only use it when they get bored or when they need a distraction from bad weather. Three, there are developed forest campers who take technology but only utilize it for emergencies and would prefer not to use it. Four, there are developed forest campers who purposefully leave technology at home and avoid experiencing technology, particularly for their children's sake. Additional research, or further analysis of the data set utilized for this dissertation, is needed to better understand whether or not this typology of technology utilization can explain differences among developed forest campers in the MRNRA.

In the 1960s and 1970s, some research suggested the importance of developed camping for allowing male campers to play out masculine-influences role identities.

Furthermore, these early researchers suggested that changes in how women are perceived in terms of work roles and family roles played out in developed camping settings. In this study, some meanings were only expressed by males (self-identity) and other meanings were only expressed by females (self-reliance). Thus, gender differences may have impacted the associated camping meaning of developed forest camping experiences. Some meanings may tend to be gender-specific. Qualitative explorations of identity formation and validation may be helpful in understanding developed forest camping experiences and how these gender differences might impact the meanings that campers associate with developed forest camping.

With regards to family functioning, I believe that there is much to learn. The following are just a few of the questions that need to be addressed related to family functioning meanings associated with developed forest camping. If family functioning is enhanced through developed forest camping, then how long do these effects last? Is it possible for developed forest camping to negatively impact family functioning? What factors make positive family functioning more or less likely to occur? How can family functioning meanings be enhanced or supported in ways that are positive and promote family togetherness, but are also managerially feasible?

As previously noted, data was not collected regarding the types of built-in technologies (i.e., appliances, electronics) that developed forest campers may had available in their recreational vehicles. Future research into developed forest camping technology should include some measure of built-in technologies, for example, an itemized checklist that each participant would complete.

Although this study was based on a post-positivist, non-traditional constructivist approach, this dissertation does not attempt to disregard or discourage these traditional approaches to studying experience and meanings. The constructivist approach merely encouraged me to strive towards an understanding of the socially constructed nature of the modern camping experience while at the same time forcing me to acknowledge my own prior conceptions and assumptions. The results of qualitative studies such as this one might be used to design quantitative instruments to explore facets of the modern developed camping experience.

In summary, developed forest camping experiences are emergent, socially constructed, and meaningful in many ways to campers. The same motivations that may have led early auto-campers to escape urban centers and to travel in social groups to less populated areas for the restorative effects of a camping trip are still very much present. Now, coupled with meanings like emotional attachments to special camping places, the strengthening of social family relationships through memories and stories, and the enhancement of a general appreciation of nature, developed forest camping continues to play an important role within the larger context of outdoor recreation experiences.

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Appendix A

History of Camping Research

Recreation Research Assessments and the Demand for Forest Camping

A majority of the camping research that has been conducted since the 1960s has examined camping supply and demand as part of national recreation resource assessments. Because of the diverse nature of outdoor recreation demand and the great extent of recreation resources, comprehensive national assessments of recreation resources have been needed. In these assessments, a recreational resource was defined as any land or water resource that people value because it produces satisfying leisure experiences (Betz & Cordell, 1998). As such, a recreational resource included a variety of resource types, settings, and attributes for outdoor recreation.

In most cases, these assessments have been funded and implemented by state governments (e.g., the Virginia Outdoors Plan, 2000) or the federal government through the United States Forest Service and the National Park Service (e.g., ORRRC report titled Outdoor Recreation for America; National Recreation Survey; National Survey on Recreation and the Environment). However, assessments have also been developed by non-profit and for-profit associations such as The American Recreation Coalition, The Outdoor Industry Association, and The Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (e.g., Outdoor Recreation Participation Report; State of the Industry Report). Private industry, through interest groups such as the consortium of outdoor retailers called The Recreation Roundtable, has also developed outdoor recreational resource assessments (e.g., Outdoor Recreation in American 1999: The Family and the Environment; Outdoor Recreation in

America 2000: Addressing Key Societal Concerns). These assessments have included information related to the supply and demand for camping opportunities.

National Recreation Surveys

In 1958, President Dwight D. Eisenhower established a bipartisan Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (ORRRC) to recommend future directions for conservation and outdoor recreation in America (ORRRC, 1962). The mission of the ORRRC was threefold: (1) to determine the outdoor recreation wants and needs of the American people now and to determine what they would be in the years 1976 and 2000, (2) to determine the Nation's recreation resources that were available in 1960 to satisfy those needs and in the years 1976 and 2000, and (3) to determine what policies and programs should be recommended to ensure that the needs of the present and the future are sufficiently met (ORRRC, 1962).

The federal government, through the ORRRC, initiated the National Recreation Survey (NRS) in 1960 to assess outdoor recreation demand and supply in the United States (United States Forest Service, 2000). From 1965 through 1977, the NRS work was administered by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation and its successor, the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service (HRCS). However, the HRCS was abolished in 1981, and responsibility for the survey fell to the National Park Service in the U. S. Department of the Interior (USDI). The National Park Service coordinated the development of a consortium that included itself, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service, the Department of Health and Human Services' Administration on Aging, and the USDI's Bureau of Land Management to continue the national

recreation survey. In 1994, the NRS was renamed The National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE) (United States Forest Service, 2000).

Since 1960, a total of six NRSs (i.e., 1960, 1965, 1970, 1972, 1977, 1982-83) and two NSREs (i.e., 1994-95 and 1999-2000) have been conducted, and these assessments provided information regarding trends in camping participation (Table 1). The first NRS conducted in 1960 was a four-season, in-the-home survey of outdoor recreation participation in the United States (United States Forest Service, 2000). The survey found that approximately 13 million people 12 years or older reported camping at least once within the past year (Cordell et al., 1999). The 1965 NRS, which consisted of interviews conducted only in the early fall (United States Forest Service, 2000), found that camping was drawing almost 19 million participants. The 1970 NRS instrument was a mailed supplement to the National Fishing and Hunting Survey and did not include questions related to camping participation. The 1982-83 NRS was conducted in person in cooperation with the National Crime Survey (United States Forest Service, 2000), and found that 42.4 million people reported camping within the past year (Cordell, 1999).

In 1994 and 1995, the NSRE survey involved interviewing approximately 17,000 Americans in random-digit-dialing telephone samplings. In the 1994-1995 survey, over 58 million people 12 years or older had participation in camping in the past year. This figure represented a roughly 350 percent growth in the 35 years since the first national survey was taken in 1960 (Cordell et al., 1999). In addition, this survey found that camping participants tended to be White males between the ages of 16-24 and that camping participation decreased as participants got older. The 1999-2000 NSRE was an in-home phone survey of 50,000 households across all ethnic groups. This survey found

that 51.6 million people camped at developed sites, while 31.5 million people camped at primitive sites (United States Forest Service, 2000).

The NRS and NSRE assessments conducted from 1960-2000 show that the public's participation in camping continues to increase, from 13 million in 1960 to 85 million in 2000. Furthermore, the data from 1982-2000 show that the public's participation in developed camping is increasing at a greater rate than the public's participation in dispersed camping.

Table 63: Trends in Millions and Percent of the Population 12 Years and Older Participating Annually in Developed and Dispersed Camping on Public Lands between 1960 and 2000*

	1960		1965		1982-83		1994-95		1999-2000	
	Percent	Millions	Percent	Millions	Percent	Millions	Percent	Millions	Percent	Millions
Camping (overall)	10%	13	13%	19	31%	59	37%	82	40%	85
Developed Camping	--	--	--	--	17%	33	21%	47	25%	52
Dispersed Camping	--	--	--	--	10%	18	14%	31	15%	32
Other camping	--	--	--	--	4%	8	2%	4	--	--

* Sources: Cordell et al., 1999; Unites States Forest Service, 2000

President's Commission on Outdoor Recreation Resources Review

In the 1980's, it became apparent that the demand for outdoor recreational opportunities had surpassed the 1976 projections of the ORRRC, and that another assessment of recreational supply and demand was necessary (Rottman & Powell, 2002). In 1982, Laurance Rockefeller, the chairman of the 1960 ORRRC, after prompting from a

consortium of interest groups, convened a small group of conservation and recreation leaders to revisit many of the outdoor recreation trends and needs that the ORRRC had explored 20 years earlier. The Rockefeller group recommended a comprehensive federal reappraisal of the nation's recreation policy and resources by a new commission that would be similar to the ORRRC.

When Congressional legislation failed, President Reagan established the Presidential Commission on Outdoor Recreation Resources Review (renamed the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors in August of 1985). The Commission published a report titled, *Americans Outdoors: The Legacy, the Challenge* in 1987 (Rottman & Powell, 2002). Although the Commission's report did not specifically address camping, it did state that Americans benefit in specific ways from outdoor recreation and wilderness, that additional outdoor recreation opportunities were needed close to peoples' homes, and that partnerships between government agencies and the private sector were key to expanding outdoor recreation opportunities (President's Commission on Americans Outdoors, 1987).

Outdoor Recreation in America Assessments

The Recreation Roundtable was formed in 1989 to provide a key group of outdoor recreation industry CEO's with a forum for discussing public policies affecting recreation and to serve as a catalyst for partnership actions that might enhance recreation opportunities in America (American Recreation Coalition, 1999). The Recreation Roundtable has published assessments of outdoor recreation supply and demand annually from 1994-2001, and its two most recent publications include *Outdoor Recreation in*

America 1999: The Family and the Environment and *Outdoor Recreation in America 2000: Addressing Key Societal Concerns*.

The *Outdoor Recreation in America 2000* assessment, which involved in-person interviews with 1,986 Americans 18 years and older, found that 26% had participated in camping during the past year. Of these campers, 17% were identified as "tent" campers and 9% were identified as "RV" campers. These figures are not consistent with those reported by Cordell et al. (1999), who found that a higher percentage of the American public who go camping are participating in developed camping, which may be most consistent with "RV" camping in The Recreation Roundtable's 2000 report.

The *Outdoor Recreation in America 2000* assessment summarized camping participation for 1994-2000 in three categories: campground camping, RV camping, and wilderness camping. Campground camping, which was at 16% in 1994, decreased to 12% in 1996-97 and increased to 17% by 2000. RV camping, which was 8% in 1994, decreased to 6% in 1996 and increased to 9% by 2000. Wilderness camping data were not collected until 2000, at which point it was 8%. The *Outdoor Recreation in America Assessment 1999* and the *Outdoor Recreation in America Assessment 2000* indicate that camping participation increased greatly between l 996 to 2000. Furthermore, they suggest that camping participation will continue to grow, and that the demand for camping opportunities in the United States outweighs the supply of camping opportunities.

Problems with National Assessments of Recreation Participation

The usefulness of these national assessments of recreation participation is limited by a number of conceptual and methodological problems (Manning, 1999). Although

these studies propose to measure demand, they actually are really measuring participation in actual recreation activities, not necessarily demand. They do not take into consideration existing recreation opportunities (Manning, 1999). It is likely that high participation correlates with high levels of supply. Chappelle (1973) suggested that if participation rates through national assessments are treated as measures of demand, then a never-ending cycle may be created whereby supply or opportunity is creating high participation, which in turn created more supply, and so on. Therefore, we may not have an accurate measure of camping demand.

The second problem is that these national assessments rely exclusively on activity participation and do not consider the underlying meanings that these activities have for participants (Manning, 1999). For example, recent studies have shown that people participate in recreation to satisfy certain motivations, and the overemphasis on activities ignores the potential for one activity to be substituted for another activity in fulfilling the same motivations (Manning, 1999).

The third problem is methodological, in that the same activities are not always included in national assessments of recreation. Table 63 demonstrates this problem as it relates to assessing participation in developed, dispersed, and other types of camping. This lack of consistency makes it very difficult to make meaningful comparisons over time. Furthermore, the same methods were not used to draw the sample and to collect the data. Therefore, the identification of actual trends from the data is problematic (Manning, 1999).

Camping Research Timeline

In addition to national assessments of outdoor recreation supply and demand, numerous theoretical and empirical camping studies have been conducted over the past forty years. To explore the history of camping research, a literature search was conducted using the Virginia Tech library, the Internet, and the "References" section of published camping research. The search was limited to research conducted from 1958 to 2002, because 1958 was the year that the ORRRC was created and is generally considered to be the point at which outdoor recreation emerged as a field of scholarly study. The search included books, journal articles from multiple fields (i.e., leisure, recreation, tourism, sociology, geography, environmental management, forest ecology, and forestry), and research papers from the U.S.D.A. Forest Service and National Park Service archives.

One value of a reference list is that it can be used to explore when camping research has been conducted and to identify camping research topics. A total of eighty-nine references related to the study of camping (e.g., participation, characteristics of campers, social aspects of, motivation, experience, satisfaction, preferences, specialization, meaning, and ecological impacts) were identified. If these studies were placed along a timeline, one article was published between 1950-1959, twenty-seven were published between 1960-1969, twenty-one were published between 1970-1979, twenty-five were published between 1980-1989, ten were published between 1990-1999, and five were published from 2000-2004 (Table 64).

Although these figures suggest that a similar number of studies were published in the 60's, 70's, and 80's, many of the articles during these decades explored the ecological

aspects rather than the human dimension aspects of camping and campground development and management. In these studies, camping experiences, motivations, and meanings were not the focus of the study. Because studies of the ecological impacts of camping are least relevant to this study, these studies were removed from the overall list of references, for a total of seventy-two references. When studies of the ecological impacts are excluded, one study was published between 1950-1959, twenty-seven studies were published between 1960-1969, sixteen studies were published between 1970-1979, fifteen studies were published between 1980-1989, six studies were published between 1990-1999, and three studies were published between 2000-2004. This trend suggests that a majority of camping research dealing with experiences and meanings of camping was conducted in the 1960's and 1970's, and has since been steadily declining.

Table 64: Number of Camping Studies Published from 1958 to 2004

	Number of Camping Studies Conducted					
	1950-1959	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-1999	2000-2004
Total overall	1	27	21	25	10	5
Total excluding studies of ecological impacts of camping	1	27	16	15	6	3

Camping Research Topics and Trends

The topics addressed within the seventy-two identified camping references are consistent with trends that occurred within the outdoor recreation field between 1958 and 2002. In the 1960's and early 1970's, camping studies emphasized participation in camping (Beardsly, 1967; Burry & Margolis, 1964; King, 1966, 1968; LaPage, 1968; Love, 1964; Shafer & Thompson, 1968; Tombaurgh & Love, 1964; Wager, 1964), social aspects of camping (Burch, 1965; Burch & Wenger, 1967; Etzkorn, 1964; Hendee & Campbell, 1969, Shafer, 1965; Gregerson, 1965), and characteristics of campers (LaPage, 1967; King, 1965; Shafter, 1969). The social research most often examined the relationship between camping and socio-cultural variables such as family size, age of children, marital status, type of community, resident, auto camping frequency, education, and occupation. Many of these descriptive types of studies occurred across other aspects of outdoor recreation as part of the catalyst provided by the creation of the ORRRC and the need for better assessments of recreational supply and demand.

When the concepts of activities and settings as "inputs" and recreation experiences as "outputs" were developed in the 1970's, camping studies used these ideas and the ROS management framework to examine camping. Studies of campground settings and campers' experience preferences (James & Cordell, 1970, Cordell & James, 1972; Lime, 1971, 1974; Moeller, Larson, & Morrison, 1974; Magill, 1976; Heberlein & Dunwiddie, 1979; LaPage, Cormier, Hamilton, & Cormier, 1975; Knudson & Curry, 1981; McEwen & More, 1986), and satisfaction (Dorfman, 1979; Dorfman & Williams, 1975; Foster & Jackson, 1979; Yuan & McEwen, 1989) dominated camping research between the mid-1970's and 1980's. These studies examined a wide range of camping

issues, including location of campsites, location of campgrounds, presence of others, importance of solitude, arrangement/presence of campsite facilities, amount and character of vegetation at the campsite/campground, percentage of slope, drainage, aspect at the campground, use on adjacent campsites, importance of surrounding natural resources, importance of wildlife, absence of negative conditions, impacts of pricing, attitudes towards fees, and campsite characteristics.

In the 1990's and from 2000-2004, a range of camping studies were conducted. Studies of preferences (Hammitt & Patterson, 1993) and satisfaction (Rollins & Chambers, 1990), and user fees (Christensen, Stewart, & King, 1993) continued from the earlier decade. As previously discussed, many of the camping related studies conducted in the 1980's and 1990's involved the ecological impacts of camping. Field (2000) recognized this when he identified the need for more sociological rather than ecological studies of outdoor recreation behavior.

During this recent period researchers have emphasized the human dimensions—as opposed to the ecological dimensions—of camping in examinations of recreation specialization and personal meanings among campers (McIntryre & Pigram, 1992), how campers' experience camping through narratives (Patterson, Williams, and Scherl, 1994; Brooks, 2003), and the social meaning of camping (Field, 2000). This study was situated among these recent studies of the human dimensions of outdoor recreation and camping, while being informed by earlier studies regarding the social importance of camping.

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form for Participants in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

Project: An Exploration of Forest Camping Experiences and Meanings

Investigator: Barry Garst, Graduate Student, Virginia Tech Department of Forestry

The purpose of this study is to explore developed forest camping experiences and associated meanings. Approximately 30 different groups of campers will be involved. The only criterion for participation is that you are a camper in a developed campground in the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area. Participation in this study will involve a discussion of your camping experiences that will last approximately one hour.

Your participation is important, as it will help the Virginia Tech Forestry Department and the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area to better understand your recreation experience while camping at Mount Rogers NRA. No financial compensation will be provided for participation in this study.

A participant database will be maintained at Virginia Tech. This list will not be shared will any other group. Participants will be identified with a code for all data transcriptions. Participants will not be named in any report. Names will be changed where needed to provide confidentiality. At no time will the researchers release the results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent.

Participants are free to withdraw from a study at any time without penalty. If you choose to withdraw, you will not be penalized in any way. Participants are free not to answer any questions that they choose without penalty. Should you have any questions about this research or how it will be conducted, please contact Barry A. Garst, Investigator at (540) 231-6372 or bgarst@vt.edu or Joe Roggenbuck, Advisor at (540) 231-7418 or jroggenb@vt.edu.

This research project has been approved, as required, by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. This Informed Consent is valid from May 15, 2003 to May 15, 2004.

David M. Moore, Chair, IRB, Office of Research Compliance
Research & Graduate Studies, 540-231-4991/moored@vt.edu

Permission of Participant (or parent/guardian for participants under 18 years old)

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

_____ _____

Signature Date

Appendix C

Interview Guide

I. Tell me about this camping trip and about your camping experiences over the past several days.

A. Describe what you did on this camping trip. How important were each of those activities?

B. Describe the people in your camping group. How are the members of your camping group important to you? Who else have you interacted with on this trip other than the members of your camping group? How are they important to you?

C. What influenced your decision to camp in the Mt. Rogers NRA, at this particular campground and at this particular campsite? How would you describe your history with this place and the importance of this place?

D. When you think about this camping trip, what stands out most in your memory? Describe the high points and low points of this camping trip.

E. Describe the types of technology (such as camping equipment, gear, and electronics) that you brought and used on this camping trip. How important were these items for your camping experience? Did you purchase any equipment, gear, or electronics for this trip? Are you able to experience nature when you camp in a campground that provides a lot of comforts and conveniences? How does the presence of technology impact your camping experience?

F. What is more important when camping- the people you camp with, what you do while camping, the equipment that you have with you while camping, the place where you camp, or something else?

II. Has this camping trip been meaningful or important to you? If so, then describe the most meaningful aspects of your camping trip in as much detail as possible. What were you feeling during those moments?

III. Has camping been meaningful in the bigger picture or the larger context of your life? If so, then describe this meaning in as much detail as possible. What positive or negative events/situations have resulted from your camping experiences? Would your life be different if you were unable to go camping? If so, then describe how would it be different?

IV. Is there anything else that you would like to share about this camping trip or any other comments that you would like to make regarding our conversation today?

Appendix D

Participant Demographic Sheet

1. CAMPGROUND: _____

2. NAME: *(Please print)* _____
First *Last*

3. AGE: *[Please check ☑ one]*
❍ Under 18 ❍ 30-39 ❍ 50-59 ❍ 70 and older
❍ 19-29 ❍ 40-49 ❍ 60-69

4. GENDER: *[Please check ☑ one]*
❍ Male ❍ Female

5. RACE/ETHICITY: *[Please check ☑ one]*
❍ African-American/Black ❍ White/Caucasian ❍ American Indian
❍ Asian ❍ Hispanic ❍ Multicultural

6. PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH DEVELOPED CAMPING: (Car, RV, etc.)
[Please check ☑ one]
❍ This is my first year. ❍ 6-10 years ❍ 16-20 years ❍ 26+ years
❍ 2-5 years ❍ 11-15 years ❍ 21-25 years

7. MAILING ADDRESS / EMAIL

As a participant in this study, you have the opportunity to review and comment on the results before they are published in a final report. In fact, your feedback is integral to this study. Please provide us with your preferred method of receiving this information. A mailing address (for hardcopy) or an email address (for electronic copy) is appreciated.

Mailing Address:_____
Street or P.O. Box

_____
City *State* *Zip*

Email: _____

Appendix E

Participant Review Cover Letter

Barry A. Garst
107 Hutcheson Hall (0419)
Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061

Dear _____:

In the summer of 2003, you were camping in the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area in either the Grindstone, Hurricane, or Ravens Cliff Campgrounds. You participated in an interview with me about your camping experiences in Mount Rogers. (You may remember that you, or one of the members of your camping group, received a water bottle from me as a 'thank-you gift' for participating in the study. As you may recall, the Virginia Tech Department of Forestry, in cooperation with the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area, was conducting this study.

This study is almost completed, but your help is needed in the final step!!

The final step is called a 'participant review.' You have the opportunity to review the major findings of this study and to provide feedback regarding whether or not these findings are an accurate representation of your camping experience.

- Please take a few moments to review the enclosed results of the study.
- Once you have finished, find the ***Participant Review Form*** that was enclosed along with this letter.
- Check (v) one of the boxes on the review form, based upon whether or not you agree with the results of the study.
- If you do not agree, then please identify what needs to be added to the study, or identify what changes you feel need to be made to accurately reflect your camping experience at Mount Rogers.
- Simply return the completed ***Participant Review Form*** in the self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Your participation in this study is very important, and may help us to better understand the experiences of developed forest campers at Mount Rogers. Thank you very much for your assistance with this study. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (540) 231-9414 or email me at bgarst@vt.edu.

Sincerely,

Barry A. Garst
Graduate Student
Virginia Tech Department of Forestry

Appendix F

Participant Review Form

Participant Review Form

Please check (v) one of the boxes below and return this form in the self-addressed, stamped envelope.

I have read the results of the *Mount Rogers Camping Study* and….

? …I agree with the results as written. They accurately reflect my camping experience.

? …I disagree with the results as written. They do not accurately reflect my camping experience. I recommend the following additions or changes. (You may attach additional pages if necessary.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix G

Summarized Descriptions of Forest Camping Groups

Less Developed Campground (Ravens Cliff)

Camping Group #1- A group of six campers. Two campers—a husband (20s) and wife (40s) couple who were very experienced with developed forest camping—were interviewed. (Their two sons and other members of their camping group were asleep.) The campers were locals who lived about ten miles from Mt. Rogers. They had recently purchased a new camper but there were no campsites left in other campgrounds that had hookups so they ended up at Ravens Cliff. They spent their time fishing, relaxing, eating, spending time around the campfire, and chopping wood.) They liked Ravens Cliff because it was clean, quiet, and family-oriented. They did not agree with bringing electronics/video devices into a camping experience. They spent most of their time fishing during the day, and talking by the campfire (or gas logs) in the evening. Escape and self-exploration/self-expression (improvising) were their main motivations for camping. M1 wanted to escape work and the monotony of his work. F1 wanted to escape telephones and everyday stress. They both agreed that camping seemed to improve their family relationships, they talked more, 'communicated better" and were a little bit closer. M1 felt that camping was also meaningful because of the opportunity that he had to teach his sons camp-related skills.

Camping Group #2- A husband (50s) and wife (50s) couple who had met in Australia and had only been married for about a year. The husband was from Minnesota and the wife was from Australia. They both had more than twenty-five years of experience with developed forest camping. They preferred solitude while camping, particularly because of their camping experiences in Australia in which it was easy to find camping locations without people. F1 wanted to have more of a primitive experience, and was bothered by other campers' off-leash dogs which reminded her that she was not alone. M1 defined camping as "just being somewhere out in the woods, well, it wouldn't even have to be wooded, just that we were out." They preferred more primitive camping which influenced their preference for tent-camping. They felt that RVs should not be in campgrounds like Ravens Cliff. Camping was important for escape (from work), personal development (learning), and developing their personal relationship.

Camping Group #3- A husband (50s) and wife (40s) couple. They were from Wytheville, Virginia. They had a more experience camping at Mt. Rogers than most of the other campers who were interviewed (more than any others at Ravens Cliff). They had been coming to Ravens Cliff Campground for twenty-two years, before the Forest Service had any of the campsites formally constructed. They had a long history of family tent camping at Ravens Cliff, at least once or twice each summer. They had brought their children camping every year. They like tent camping and have never owned a trailer. They don't care about electricity, but they do like to have water and bathrooms. They spend their time walking and talking by the campfire. Rain was important- it was even viewed as part of the tradition. They were very concerned about the upkeep of Ravens Cliff, and they were (politely) critical of the management of Ravens Cliff, in terms of

how the facilities and campsites had not been maintained as well in recent years. Camping was meaningful because of the connection to their annual family traditions and memories, which were extensive. They also seemed to express some level of place attachment because of all of their years at Ravens Cliff, and as an escape from work and work-related responsibilities.

Camping Group #4-A husband (30s) and wife (30s) couple with two kids. They live in Galax about forty-five miles from Mt. Rogers. This was the first time that they had been camping in Ravens Cliff. They were concerned about camping in a safe location where their kids could play and the husband could fish. The family spent 100% of their time in the campsite. The kids played outside a lot, and spent a considerable amount of time collecting wood. The entire family liked to build large camp fires. This was the wife's first time camping. The husband had been camping all of his life. They valued camping because it represented the opportunity to spend time with their kids and to teach their kids to appreciate what they have and to learn that they don't need 'stuff' at home to have fun. They also wanted to escape work-related pressures and F1 felt that camping took all of her pressures away. M1 also shared that camping was meaningful in his life because he can create a family tradition of camping with his sons; something that they can talk about for years.

Camping Group #5-A male (40s) and female (30s) non-married couple who lived four miles from Mt. Rogers and that had a significant amount of developed forest camping experience. The couple had known each other for three months. They had been camping for several days at several different camp sites. They prefer quiet, secluded campsites, which they were able to experience for most of their trip, with the exception of the first night when a large group was staying at Ravens Cliff. They were camping in order to spend time together because their current family/life situations did not allow them to be together back at home. They both had some medical issues, particularly the man (back injury), and he was recuperating before he was going to go into surgery. For M1, camping was meaningful as an opportunity to rest and heal. For both M1 and F1, camping meant time for to spend with one another to develop their relationship and time away from negative situations back at home. Camping also connected M1 with his identity as a hunter and fisherman.

Camping Group #6- A husband (40s) and wife (40s) couple from Salem. Their kids were with them but the kids did not participate in the interviews. They had about fifteen years of experience with developed forest camping. They spent their time hiking, exploring the woods and the creek, cooking and eating, and hanging out by the campfire.
They did not like a lot of extra amenities while camping; just what they called "the basics." They were concerned about the lack of water at Ravens Cliff (the pump was broken), particularly F1. They did not bring electronics with them- they wanted to leave technology at home. They did not care for motor homes and "parties" that they associated with recreational vehicles. They enjoyed hiking, cooking, and spending time together. They felt that camping was a good opportunity for their kids to learn and to use their imagination. They felt that camping was meaningful in their lives because it reinforced their appreciation of nature and it was the opportunity to teach their kids

camping-related skills and about nature. Camping also had meaning as a family tradition. They had learned it from their parents and they wanted to pass it down to their daughters.

Moderately Developed Campground (Hurricane)

Camping Group #7-A husband (40s) and wife (20s) couple—White—who were celebrating their anniversary after getting married one year earlier. Both had more than ten years of experience with developed forest camping. They were tent camping and had not brought very many elements of technology with them, with the exception of a radio and an inflatable mattress, which they placed in their tent. They did not feel that TV and video equipment were a part of their camping experience. They tended to spend time out of camp during the day (hiking, fishing, etc.) and then returned to their campsite in the evenings. They were looking for a campsite that had some privacy. They liked the Hurricane campsites that were a little off the road and were right beside of the creek. They did not want a highly developed campground—anything more developed than Hurricane would not have appealed to them. Camping was important to the female camper because it represented a way to get away from work and graduate school pressures. She was working in a clinical veterinarian program at Virginia Tech. She also wanted to "simplify things for a few days." The male camper wanted to escape chores at home in addition to experiencing new things. He talked about seeing some "new water." He was a fly-fisherman and had a strong self-identity that was strongly associated with the outdoors and certain outdoor activities such as fishing and bow-hunting. He talked about how he used to "chase technology" in terms of the lightest, most high-tech gear. This identity had been developed when he was in college and in his early 20s. This camping trip gave him the opportunity to revisit this aspect of his identity and seemingly to reconnect to his youth. But he liked the idea of having comfort when he camped, which is why he enjoyed the inflatable mattress. They had brought their dog camping, a Brittany-Spaniel mix.

Camping Group #8- A individual male camper (40s)—White—who had 11-15 years of experience with developed forest camping. He camps in Hurricane about five times per year, and had been camping there for about four years. He had just purchased a pop-up, which he was using on this trip. He was "trying to get away from the tent." He wanted more comfort and the convenience of being able to quickly set-up, but he was not planning to purchase anything fancier than a pop-up. He was camping with his dog, which was very important to him. An important experience during this trip was when a tree fell down across the campground's main road during a storm. He talked about how everyone had worked together—campers and Forest Service employees—to clear the road. He spoke often about the friendliness of campers and how campers always help one another. During his camping trips he spends most of his time at his campsite. His campfire was very important to him, he selects campgrounds based upon whether or not there is a fire. He camps to get away from work pressures and schedules (i.e., having to keep track of time). He also camps to be closer to God and make some type of spiritual connection to God. He talked about camping as a way to "be at peace with the Lord." He had a radio (for music) and a refrigerator but could not use it at Hurricane because there was no electricity. He did not agree with campers who bring a lot of technology

with them when they go camping, he likes camping to be relatively "basic and primitive." His main concern with the management of campgrounds around Mt. Rogers was that the horse trails in the area needed to be improved.

Camping Group #9- A group of six campers, including a husband (M1) (50s) and wife (F1) (50s) couple—White—who had more than twenty-six years of experience with developed forest camping; a second husband (M2) (30s) and wife (F2) (40s) couple—White—who had mixed levels of developed forest camping experience (husband had between 6-10 years of experience and wife had more than 26 years); and a third husband (M3) (60s) and wife (F3) (50s) couple—White—who had more than 26 years of experience with developed forest camping. They were all camping in two different motor homes. They were long-time campers at Hurricane (about 12 years), and they were good friends with the campground hosts. M1 was an avid wood-chopper and collector when he camped. They spent most of their time in the campsite- talking, playing cards, and spending time at the campfire. They all felt that a campfire was a vital part of their camping experience. They had a strong sense of identity that is tied to Hurricane and the social relationships that they have with other campers and the hosts. They often helped to maintain the campsites in Hurricane. To them, camping was important because of relaxation (F1)(M1), the opportunity to escape kids (M1), to escape chores and work (F2), to escape phone (F2), to develop/maintain relationships with other campers F(3), and freedom (M1)." M3 also talked about a connection to God through nature while camping. One of the meanings that they shared as a group was camping as a "gathering," where several generations of their family got together and where they get together with other campers. They were the second group that talked about the tree that fell across the main campground road and how all of the campers worked together to move the tree. The creek was important for their camping experience. They felt that they were able to get a natural experience…as close to nature as possible considering their age-related limitations (M1). FI had a TV and F4 had a TV and VRC, but generally they felt that having too much technology while camping made camping too much like being home.

Camping Group #10- A male camper (30s)—White—who had some experience (6-10 years) with developed forest camping and who was camping in a camper trailer. (He was camping with his mom and uncle but they were unavailable to participate in the interview.) This camper was the third individual/group who mentioned the tree that fell across the main campground road and how all of the campers worked together to move the tree. He brought his dog, and the dog had a seizure disorder. He said that he was camping for escape, to "get away from the rat race" and from the hassles of work. He had transitioned from a tent to a camper trailer because his mom did not walk very well, and as his mom got older she wanted the convenience of a bathroom and on-site water. This camping trip had largely been a social experience—the weather was too poor for him to do anything other than visit with his family and other campers. He felt that camping was integral to his life, something that he simply had to do. He said, "I'd rather camp than eat." He said that camping was meaningful just because it was there-that it existed.

Camping Group #11- A husband (40s) and wife (30s) couple—White—who were camping with their two sons. They had mixed levels of developed forest camping experience (husband had more than 26 years of experience and wife had 16-20 years of experience). M1 felt that Hurricane was the best campground that they had ever found because of the creek (running water) and the beauty of the campground. M1 talked about the importance of camping for spending time with friends and loved ones, and for relaxation. Their sons biked a lot during this camping trip, and the entire family spent a lot of time watching the fire. FI talked about the importance of safety, and that she felt safe at Hurricane and that having a safe, family-oriented campground was what camping was all about. They were camping in a camper, but liked amenities like showers, and they had brought their own air mattresses. Although their sons had brought Game Boys, they expected them to spend time outdoors and doing things other than playing with their Game Boys. They limited their sons Game Boy playing so that they had to go outside and play in the creek, etc. They were camping for escape, to get away from telephones. F1 talked about escaping from schedules and housework. M1 talked about getting away from work. They also felt that camping represented family-time (talking, telling stories, get to know each other better), and getting back to nature. In the context of their lives, they felt that camping was meaningful as a stress-reducer, and as a way to teach their sons how to play in the outdoors without having to be entertained by TV, and basic survival skills like how to build a campfire.

Camping Group #12- A group of three campers, including a husband (50s) and wife (50s) couple and an individual female camper (40s). All were White with 11-15 years of experience with developed forest camping. They only live thirty minutes from Hurricane and had been camping at Hurricane several times a year for fifteen years. They had graduated from tent camping to a pop-up to a camper. F1 said that they were having trouble getting off of the ground with a tent. They like the social aspect of the camping experience- camping with their family. Their family often meets at Hurricane- it was a family tradition. Their kids and grandkids do a wide variety of activities when they come camping with them, from volleyball to playing cards. They thought some amenities at Hurricane were okay and convenient, but they did not want to change the character of Hurricane just for electricity and water. F2 talked about the experience as a social experience- with family members, and also as a type of hobby. M1 talked about the importance of being able to relax without a television—camping meant being able to get away from work and relaxing. F1 and F2 talked about escaping phones, but M1 thought a phone would be helpful to increase safety. F1 also talked about escaping pressures back home. M1 said that not being able to camp would not be a big deal.

Camping Group #13- A husband (30s) with more than 26 years of experience and his wife (20s) who was experiencing her first year of developed forest camping. They were tent camping in Hurricane and had completed a hike to Mt. Rogers during this camping trip. This had been a really wet trip, with severe rain. They played Frisbee and football when it was not raining. The husband liked Hurricane because it did not feel "artificial" like other campgrounds with a lot of RVs. The natural setting with lots of trees was important to him. Although he appreciated nature, he also wanted comforts, with access to hot water in the shower and flush toilets. She wife wanted a private, relatively

secluded setting and she had picked the campsite. They had a dog and wanted a campsite where he would not be a bother or be bothered. Accommodating the dog was important. They felt that too many RVs was a bad thing and that it wouldn't be 'camping' if there were televisions, radios, and phones. The husband, who was from Philadelphia, had a strong family history with camping and had wonderful memories of family camping experiences. His dad had taught him a lot about outdoor living skills in and around Mt. Rogers. His wife, who was from a rural area of Bristol, liked to go camping for relaxation. This trip was meaningful because it meant time together as a couple… quality time without being interrupted. M1 also talked about escaping from a hectic lifestyle, with phone ringing off the hook and televisions on.

Camping Group #14- A husband (White- 50s) and a wife (age unknown) couple who were tent-camping. The husband had grown up camping in the Mt. Rogers area, it was part of his family's traditions. The wife—who was unable to participate in the interview—had less experience camping but had been getting into it recently with her husband. They were from the city in Kingsport, TN. This camping trip was mostly for fishing (about eight hours a day), with their camp site acting as a base-camp. They had to deal with a downpour one of the nights they were camping. The husband believed in getting the best gear that he could, especially for dealing with wet weather. He spend a lot of time and money buying fly fishing equipment. They liked Hurricane because of its proximity to good fishing locations. He likes tent-camping, but thought that they might soon purchase a camper. Some of the conveniences like air conditioning on a hot day appealed to them. They were camping for rest and relaxation, to escape work, the city, and everyday stress, and to be in and around nature. The husband also talked about how he grew up in a family that camped and the importance of getting together with family for camping.

Camping Group #15- A group of five people from Raleigh, NC. Four members of the group, two guys and 2 girls were away from camp during the interview. Thus, the interview was conducted with one male (30s)—White. His group had been tent-camping. They were from the Raleigh/Durham/Chapel Hill area of NC. They had 2-5 years of experience with developed forest camping. They had selected their Hurricane campsite for privacy and to avoid RVs. They had been spending about six hours every day hiking and the rest of their time was spent at the campsite. They also like to walk the dogs down by the river. The campfire was very important to his group. He considered it to be the center of everything, "kind of an archaic cultural thing." The male camper viewed his camping experience as the chance to escape the hustle and bustle of city life, and to escape job hunting. There was also an identity aspect of his experience, whereby he was returning to and communing with nature (mountains, streams, and trees), having a type of primitive wilderness experience, "pioneering," and connecting with his past. He thought that technology was important and had contributed to their camping experience because of waterproof tents, nylon bags, plastic coolers, etc. But he did not agree with bringing TVs, microwaves, etc. into the camping experience ("bringing the city with them"). He also thought that campgrounds were destined to become more developed because of users who demanded a higher level of service.

Camping Group #16- A father (40s) and son—White—who were tent camping. They drove 300 miles to get to Hurricane from South Carolina, which the father described as a perfect campsite. The father had 26 or more years of experience with developed forest camping, and he had been camping with his wife and son for several years. They liked their Hurricane campsite because of the closeness to the creek (the sound of the water) and because it was secluded. The father and son usually go hiking. They spent their time in camp, chopping wood, building and watching the campfire, eating, and talking. On this trip the son made friends with other campers and was doing a lot of biking. The dad likes to be in nature, but also likes to have conveniences like radio, cooler, etc. The purpose and importance of the trip was so that the father and son could spend time together. He felt that without distractions (from their home environment) that he and his son could "hear each other better" and he could be more attentive to his son. This trip was also meaningful because it represented an opportunity to get out of the house and get into the woods—escaping distractions like TV, telephone. The father was very concerned about the lack of a reservation system for Hurricane. He felt that the locals took advantage of their easy access and the relaxed campground rules and were able to use too many camp sites, making it harder for out-of-town campers to get a site.

Camping Group #17- An individual White male camper (70s) who had been camping for more than 26 years. He was on a 15-day camping trip and was camping in a tent. He had traveled to Hurricane from Florida. He had spent many years in Hurricane and liked it because of the nice hosts and the family tradition of always camping in Hurricane. He had been bringing his kids to Hurricane since they were five and six years old. The purpose of this camping trip was to meet up with a few close friends who were going to go day-hiking and backpacking with him. He talked about the importance of the 'atmosphere' of Hurricane—the trees, the foliage, and the peacefulness of the woods. His career had been in engineering, and he liked to read evaluations of camping equipment and make good purchases. He also liked to observe the types of camping gear that other campers were using. He did not care at all for electronics, satellite dishes, etc. in a campground like Hurricane. To him, camping was meaningful because of his age—he was not sure how many more camping trips he might be able to take before he was physically unable to do it. He also had an outdoor identity from all of the time that he had spent outdoors in his life. He was using camping as a way to recover from prostrate cancer. He also considered camping to be the ultimate way to relax. Camping was also meaningful because it represented variety and that was also important to him because of his age.

Camping Group #18- A group of four campers, including a husband (40s) and wife (40s) couple—White—who had 11-15 years of experience with developed forest camping; a second husband (40s) and wife (40s) couple—White—who had more than 26 years of experience with developed forest camping. One of the couples was from Louisiana, and were visiting their friends (the other camping couple) who lived in Marion. They were all tent-camping, although both couples expressed an interest in purchasing a pop-up or a camper at some point in the future. They were camping to spend time with one another and to relax. Camping was meaningful because it gave them time to get away and to think better. FI said that she and her husband (M1) often got irritated with each other at

home and that camping was 'make-up' time. They told stories a lot, and talked about the importance of stories (M1) (M2). M2 worked with inmates (some place unidentified) and he talked about the importance of taking stories and pictures from this experience back to them so that they could get a sense that 'there's something else out there" other than being institutionalized. F1 always prepared weeks in advance for the trip. For her, the planning was very important. They did not have a lot of examples of technology with them, although they enjoyed a campground with amenities. M2 said that camping was meaningful in his life because of the importance of getting away from work and the everyday schedules of doing the same thing day in and day out. M2 also said that camping helped him to forget about his problems and relieved his stress. F1 and F2 said that they needed to get away from their grown kids. F2 said that "camping is like therapy." M2 grew up with camping and had a strong family tradition with camping. They did not care for a lot of electronics, etc. when camping—they felt that people should stay home if they were going to bring those types of items to a campground.

Highly Developed Campground (Grindstone)

Camping Group #19- A couple (marital status unknown) from Indiana. The man (50s) was White and had more than 26 years of experience with developed forest camping. The woman (40s) was White and had 11-15 years of experience with developed forest camping. They had traveled many miles to get to the Grindstone campground, which was recommended by a family member. They really liked national forests more than state parks. They left the campground each day to take day hiking trips to popular local peaks (Mt. Rogers, White Top, etc.) They had to deal with a lot of rain during their trip. M1 liked how the campsites were arranged in the landscape to reduce noise pollution between campsites, and he also liked the aesthetics of Grindstone, such as the way that pool was teardrop shaped. F1 liked the bathroom facilities (bathhouse). They were tent camping, and they preferred to be somewhat minimalist with regards to their equipment and technology. Essentially, they car camped with backpacking gear. They were well educated and had significant experience with geography, natural resources history, and recreation. Both M1 and F1 camped for rest and relaxation, but M1 also talked about an innate need to explore; a need which was fulfilled through camping. F1 also talked about getting away from technology and the opportunity to get exercise and taking a mental break. M1 said that the change of scenery—from going camping—helped him to change his perspective, which he thought was healthy. He needed to escape email and to go into a different type of setting. They also talked about the trip as a vacation. When talking about whether or not camping in a developed forest setting could be a nature-based experience, they both felt that the campground was an artificial construct, but at least the experience took place in the woods.

Camping Group #20- An individual White male camper (60s), who was camping with his wife in a 30+ foot RV. They were from Knoxville. His wife was resting and was not interviewed. The male camper had grown up in Marion. He had a long history with camping in Grindstone, since before the Cradle of Forestry in America began to manage it. He had more than 26 years of experience with developed forest camping, and had graduated from a tent, to a pop-up to a camper and to three different sized RVs. He felt that conveniences got more important as he got older. He and his wife camp at

Grindstone approximately three months out of the year. They spend about 75% of their time in the campground, building fires, reading, cooking, and relaxing. They rest of the time that are taking short trips to local and regional destinations. Grindstone is one of their favorite campgrounds because of the cool temperatures. They really enjoyed being in the natural environment- particularly the trees. They called it 'nature's wallpaper.' They felt that they got closer to God by being in nature. But they also enjoyed having access to technology like television. He was retired, and viewed camping as a vacation. But, he also was beginning to really cherish the times with his wife. Her health was not good, so they were beginning to talk about all of the stories they would carry with them when they were no longer able to go camping. He did not know how long he might have left to physically be able to go camping.

Camping Group #21- A husband (50s) and wife (50s) couple—White—with more than 20 years of camping experience. They were from Bristol, and had camped all over the Mt. Rogers area in all of the developed forest campgrounds. The male camper had brought a Boy Scout troop to Grindstone in 1970. They had graduated from tent-camping to a 30-foot RV, which the male camper had attributed to money—"you do with what you can afford." They enjoyed the amenities that came with the RV—such as the television, satellite dish, ham radio, and Automatic Position Reporting System—although at one time they could not envision ever owning one. M1 camper liked all of his electronic gadgets because they offered him a distraction from boredom. They spent most of their time relaxing, walking, reading, and enjoying nature. F1 really liked the mountain and the peace/quiet of Grindstone. Campfires were important and they built one every night that weather permitted. To them, camping meant the opportunity to have quality time with each other, which they said they didn't usually have back at home. FI also talked about the meaning of escape—getting away from computers, radio equipment, and other distractions.

Camping Group #22- - An individual White male camper (60s), who was camping with his wife in a hard shell bi-fold trailer. (The wife was not interviewed because she was taking a nap). They were from Bristol. They were very experienced campers with more than 26 years of developed forest camping experience. They had graduated up to the trailer from tent-camping for greater comfort, which they felt was inevitable as campers age. They did not like a lot of technology—like television—because it detracted from the camping experience. They usually spent time down by the pond or spending time with their kids. They liked private camp sites. They camped to get away from the everyday chores, and to get away from stressful jobs- M1 called it 'escape' and 'a release.' They have an annual trip with their grown kids in which they pick blueberries from Pine Mountain. This had become an important family tradition. They consider their kids and grandkids to be an important aspect of their camping experience. M1 said that camping kept their family closer together, and kept him and his wife (F1) closer together. They felt like it was possible to get a nature-based experience in a developed forest campground, you just have to overlook the pavement and other signs of management.

Camping Group #23- A husband (50s) and wife (50s) couple—White—with more than 26 years of experience with developed forest camping. They were using a 5th wheel trailer, and had graduated up from a pop-up which they did not like because of the added work of taking it up and putting it down. They have been camping at Mt. Rogers for several years. On this trip, they hiked, read, and sat by the campfire. F1 talked about the campfire as 'one of the joys of camping.' F1 really liked Grindstone, particularly the trees and rhododendron which provided some level of privacy and seclusion. Camping had several meanings to them, including escape (to get away from the everyday routine at home, telephones, TV), quality-time with each other, and getting back to nature and a closer to God through nature—which they felt that they could do even though they were camping in a developed camp ground really close to paved roads, buildings, etc.

Camping Group #24- Two White female campers (40s) were camping with their husbands and three other people (seven total members). (The other members of their group were hiking and biking and were not interviewed.) They had mixed levels of developed forest camping experience. One had between 2-5 years of experience and the other had between 21-25 years of experience. They camp about twice per year, and this was the second summer that they were using their pop-up camper. They liked the pop-up camper for the air-conditioning, and F1 they felt that the hookups were important because they had kids. Privacy was important to both women. F1 said that they spent their time hiking, fishing, biking. F2 agreed and also talked about reading. They stay gone all day until about 7:30-8:00 PM. Thus, Grindstone is functioning as a 'home-base' for their off-site activities. They talked about their roles during their camping experience and how they are consistent with their roles at home. F1 talked about the purpose of camping as coming together as a family. They do most of their activities as a family and thus camping has strong meanings related to family togetherness and improving their interactions since they are not pulled in multiple directions like they are at home. F2 said that she is re-energized after camping and that she felt that getting back to nature was meaningful. Television was not important, although it was a good distraction when it was raining. They were very pleased with the amenities and management provided at Grindstone.

Camping Group #25- A husband (40s) and wife (30s) couple—White—with 2-5 years of experience with developed forest camping. They lived about one hour away from Mt. Rogers and had been camping in Mt. Rogers for about three years. They were camping with their dogs, which were very important to them. They were camping in a pop-up. M1 liked Grindstone because of the large campsites, the clean bathrooms, and the managers. F1 talked about the level campsites, the quietness, and the trees. They spent about 85% of their time in their campsites. They watched movies, listed to the radio, played cards, and spent time with family. The modern conveniences (air, heat, microwave, television, etc.) were important to them. To both campers, camping was about spending time with each other. To M1, camping was also important because it was time to spend with his brother and his brother's kids, and time to get away from worries at home. F1 agreed that camping was a way to rest and relax and to get away from stress at home. They were pleased with the Grindstone management.

Camping Group #26- A group comprised of two married couples. The first was a husband (40s) and wife (30s) couple—White—who were experiencing their first year of developed forest camping. The second was a husband (30s) and wife (30s) couple—White—who had more than 26 years of experience with developed forest camping. They were from Asheville, North Carolina. They were camping in a pop-up camper. They selected Grindstone because of its access to the Virginia Creeper Trail and because of access to full hook-ups. F1 also liked Grindstone because it was a safe campground where their kids could play. They spent their time biking, hiking, and taking short trips to local destinations. They really liked their campfires, which were important for their experience. The Creeper Trail was very salient for everybody in this group; they talked at length about how peaceful and beautiful it was. They also really enjoyed the time that they could spend with each other. They liked having access to some technology and amenities, but they didn't want access to a satellite dish because they wanted their son to spend time outdoors and 'being in nature." They did enjoy being comfortable. They camped to spend time with family and friends, to spend time in nature and the beautiful scenery, to escape daily routine and responsibilities, and to give their kids new experiences. They also talked a lot about escape and restoration through camping, so that a person could be better prepared to go back to work.

Camping Group #27- A husband (40s) and wife (30s) couple—White—with 21-25 years of experience with developed forest camping, who were camping with 11-year old son in a pop-up. They had been camping in Grindstone for seven years, ever since hearing about the campground from a friend. FI talked about the importance of having a clean campground with locked gates, and she liked the hosts. She also liked nature. M1 called this 'untouched forest.' M1 felt that people needed to slow down in order to respect nature. They spent a lot of time in the campsite because of the weather; reading, cooking, walking, resting, playing bluegrass music, etc. The campfire was vital to their camping experience. They both felt that having a safe campground—like Grindstone—was important and a critical aspect of camping. They liked the fact that Grindstone had a lot of scheduled programs in which their son could participate, to teach him more about the outdoors and just to get him involved in new and different things. However, during this trip, because of the rain, he was spending quite a bit of time playing a video game with a next-door camper. They viewed camping as an opportunity to slow down and to get out of the everyday fast-paced routines of life. They felt that camp helped their family relationships; they were more focused on each other than when they are at home with many different distractions. M1 also talked about pure enjoyment, camping as freedom and the ability to do what you want, and the importance of camping for creating memories and stories. They were very concerned about Reserve America's camp site reservation system and its lack of fairness, in that local campers seemed to have easier access than out-of-town campers.

Camping Group #28- A husband (40s) and wife (40s) couple—White—with 2-5 years of experience with developed forest camping. They were camping in a 30-foot trailer, and had only recently gotten into camping. They resided in Abingdon, only about thirty-five miles from Grindstone. F1 said that they spent most of their time relaxing, taking naps, walking, eating, reading, playing cards, and napping some more. M1 liked the good

water at Grindstone. F1 liked the shaded campsites. F1 talked a lot about 'Mother Nature;' bird watching and her enjoyment of the plants. The wife was somewhat scared of bugs and wanted easy access to a bathroom, and thus she was unwilling to tent-camp. She was very happy with the camper. Although they liked the amenities that came with the camper, they did not feel that televisions, satellite dishes, and radios were necessary. In fact, they felt that these things took away from their camping experience. Camping was meaningful because it meant escape from farm work and from everyday routines. Restoration and relaxation were important meanings. F1 reported that she often feels guilty when she sits down at home to rest because so many other things need to be done. They did not feel that camping had much of an effect on their relationship…they got along about the same during and after camping as they did before.

Camping Group #29- An individual White male camper (60s) who was camping with his wife. She was unavailable to participate in the interview. He was a long-time camper, and had camped at Grindstone for more than twenty years. He had a long family tradition associated with Grindstone; his parents camped there for many years and introduced him to Grindstone. He had more than 26 years of experience with developed forest camping. He camped in a 36-foot camper, and felt that this was necessary because of his age. He needed comforts and amenities and he felt that Grindstone was much better with electric hookups, water hookups, etc. He said that campers are motivated to "do better" in terms of their camping mode. His satellite dish and television were very important for his camping experience, particularly to keep up with current events. He spent his time working on his camper, and reading, and he took a few trips into a local town to run errands. For him, camping meaning could be found in the humbling nature of the experience and its impact on him as a person. It humbled him. He compared camping to church and having a church family. Camping was also meaningful because it represented something that he felt he could only do a few more years because of his age and health. He appreciated it more and more.

Camping Group #30- A husband (30s) and wife (30s) couple—White—with 2-5 years of experience with developed forest camping. They were from Kingsport, TN and were camping with their two sons. They had heard about Grindstone from F1's friends. They had made reservations for this trip which was important. They were camping in a 26-foot travel trailer. Having access to bathroom and other conveniences were very important to them. They selected campsites like Grindstone that were kid-friendly and that offered structured activities in a safe environment. They spent their time hiking, taking a trip to Grayson Highlands, and just spending time as a family. They had several electronic devices with them, included two TVs, a Play Station, and a DVD player. They felt that their family time tended to be higher-quality during camping, because of the lack of distractions and the fact that the family is forced to interact more because of the situation. For the husband, camping meant the opportunity to escape (get away). For the wife, camping meant coming to nature and relaxation. The father made a point to contrast the natural setting of Grindstone with the more crowded and business-oriented campgrounds in Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge. He preferred Grindstone.

Camping Group #31- A husband (70s) and wife (60s) couple—White—with more than 26 years of experience with developed forest camping. They were from a town 15 miles north or Knoxville and often volunteered at Grindstone. They camped in Grindstone because of the cooler temperatures and because of the quietness. They usually split their time between doing things at the campsite and traveling around to local spots. They were camping in a 30-foot RV, and had graduated up from tent-camping over the years. Having children was the reason that they went from a pop-up to a motor home. The motor home allowed them to travel and to be secure. They liked the natural features in Grindstone (mountains woods). They always liked to have a campfire in the evenings. They had a TV and a VCR and a cell phone. They really liked having a VCR and being able to record TV shows. The husband got a lot of joy from gathering wood- the exercise was so important because it had physical benefits and had meanings associating camping with health. To the husband, camping meant health; the opportunity to get away from dust/allergies. For the wife, camping was restorative and also a social experience; she looked forward to re-connecting with old friends while camping. They seemed to have an identity connected with Grindstone, because of their volunteer experience but also because they were long-time RV campers. They felt that they could get a nature experience in a developed forest camping environment. M1 also talked about escape meanings because of his many community responsibilities.

Camping Group #32- A husband (60s) and wife (60s)—White—and their adult son (40s) who were from Tennessee. They were camping in a motor home (the couple) and a trailer (son). They all had more than 26 years of experience with developed forest camping. They had a long history camping in Mt. Rogers, and had camping at Grindstone since the early 1970s when Grindstone first opened. The husband strongly believed that the Forest Service should not have turned over management of Grindstone to the Cradle of Forestry in America. He was concerned that Grindstone was going to turn into more of private-style campground. There was a strong family tradition with camping, and camping represented freedom to the husband (M1) and the son (M2). Camping also represented relaxation and restoration to all three members of this group. This group enjoyed the comforts associated with their motor home and trailer, but they also felt that it was important not to transplant home-life (with technology) into camping.

Camping Group #33- An individual White male camper (40s) who was camping with his wife, his mother-in-law and father-in-law, and his brother-in-law, sister-in-law, and their 3 kids. The other members of the camping group were unavailable to participate in the interview. The male camper had more than 26 years of experience with developed forest camping. He was tent camping and the other members of his group had a motor home and a pull-behind trailer. He liked hiking, walking, talking to people, looking at other people's camping equipment, and building campfires. He felt that camp site amenities were nice—they added to his comfort—but that they were not required for him to have a positive camping experience. He did not bring a lot of extra equipment, technology, and electronics with him while camping. He had a strong identity with camping, and much of the meaning of camping came from this self-identity that was associated with camping. (Note: He had been a wilderness guide for five years.) Other salient meanings included freedom, escape, and spending time with family.

Camping Group #34- One large camping group of family members who were camping at three adjacent campsites. One couple was comprised of a husband (40s) and wife (30s) couple—White—who were camping with their two kids and had just started to camp in developed forest campgrounds. F1 and M1 had been camping at Grindstone about six or seven times. They selected Grindstone because of the large campsites and because of the cool temperatures. The second couple (parents of the first couple) was comprised of a husband (60s) and wife (50s) couple—White—who had 2-5 years of experience with develop forest camping. F2 talked about the importance of the campfire and the fact that they have a fire all the time. F2 liked the planned programs that were available for kids, such as the bike parade. F1 said that they had been 'chilling out'- which included cooking, eating, relaxing, and spending time with family. Because F1 and M1 have a motor home, they don't drive around and spend most of their time in the campsite. In contrast, F2 and her husband liked to come and go and having this freedom was important. M1 said that accommodations for his dog were important. F1 said that meeting new people was important to her, and that campers are always friendly.
F2 said that she and her husband are always buying new equipment, and they get ideas for what they need from other campers. F1 said that camping improves how her family gets along because they can focus on one another with fewer distractions. They have more time to sit and talk; more quality time. F2 agreed that they talked about things while camping that they usually would not talk about at home. M1 liked to rake his campsite. F1 stated that this type of task at home would be work but while camping it's total relaxation. M1 and F1 enjoyed the comforts that came along with the motor home, particular the bathroom and electricity. F2 and her husband always bring electronics (TVs, VCR, video games) on their camping trips because of their kids- to keep their kids occupied.

Camping Group #35- A husband (30s) and wife (30s) couple and their young son, all White, who were camping in a motor home. They were locals from Chilhowie and they had 2-5 years of experience with developed forest camping. M1 said that they camped at Grindstone because it is quiet and the sites are well-maintained. F1 talked about the importance of privacy. M1 said that water and electricity were also very important. They had transitioned from a tent to a motor home. Having to manage a child was one reason, and the husband also had back problems and the motor home was the most comfortable way to camp. They had a number of electronics, including multiple types of video games, which they often played every evening and when it rained. To this couple, camping was meaningful because it was time to spend as a family. They also liked the freedom and flexibility that came with camping via a motor home. They were pleased with the management of Grindstone.

Camping Group #36- A husband (50s) and wife (40s)—White—who were camping in a motor home. They were from Morristown, TN. They had been camping at Grindstone for twenty years. They liked the peace and quiet that they found at Grindstone. They had been spending their time catching up with campers with whom they were friends and had not seen in a year. They also visited several of the local towns. They were pleased with the management of Grindstone. They felt that the Cradle of Forestry in America was doing a better job of managing Grindstone than the Forest Service had done. Camping

was meaningful because it was the opportunity to re-connect with the Grindstone camping community, a community with which this couple had spent many summers during the past twenty years. Camping was also meaningful to M1 because it represented adventure; seeing new places and having new experiences.

Camping Group #37- Two women who were camping with their husbands in a pop-up camper. (Their husbands were hiking to Mt. Rogers and were unavailable to participate in the interviews.) F1 (30s) was White and had 2-3 years of experience with developed forest camping. F2 (40s) was White and had more than 26 years of experience with developed forest camping. Everyone in the camping group was from South Carolina. F1 had done a lot of research to find the Grindstone campground, and F2 had come along. F1 liked the large campsites, the quiet setting, and access to the Virginia Creeper Trail. The two women had different perspectives about technology and amenities while camping. One woman shared that she and her husband liked to keep camping basic. They had a pop-up, but did not want to upgrade any further. They brought very little in the way of electronics; only a radio for listening to music sometimes. The second woman felt that amenities were very important. If she was more of a camper, she said that she would probably want a hotel on wheels. For F1, camping was meaningful because it gave the family quality time where they tended to be more focused on each other. She also felt that the planning stage of the trip was meaningful for her and the trip represented a new experience and provided the opportunity to be a participant in recreation rather than a passive observer. For F2, the trip was meaningful to social interaction (spending time with her friends) and for relaxation.

Camping Group #38- A mother (30s)—American Indian—with 2-5 years of experience with developed forest camping, who was camping with her two sons in a trailer. One of her sons participated in the interviews. He was White, was less than 18 years old, and had 2-5 years of experience with developed forest camping. They were from Mountain City, TN. This camping group was all about family. The mother liked to be outdoors having fun with her kids. She was originally from New York, and was not comfortable "roughing it" outside. Her trailer provided her with some comforts and a way to enjoy the natural beauty of what she called "wilderness." They spent their time doing a variety of activities, including biking, cutting watermelons/cantaloupes, picking music, making s'mores over the campfire, cooking/eating, and running errands in the local towns. The son said that he was playing cards, Jenga, and a Game Boy. They did not have fancy camping equipment or electronics (only the Game Boy for rainy days). She enjoyed meeting other campers and had organized a small blue grass band made up of her friends and other campers. She felt that Grindstone was very family-oriented and was pleased that Grindstone offered structured activities for children. She was very pleased with the Grindstone management. Camping was meaningful because of the positive impacts of spending time with her family, but also because camping allowed for many positive memories and family stories to be created.

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