



**Study of Arizona Trail Users  
Completed for Copper Corridor Economic Development Coalition, Arizona Trail Association, and Arizona Office of Tourism  
April 2016  
Data collected from late Fall 2015 to Spring 2016 at various Arizona Trail trailheads**

Completed by: Maya Azzi (field work and analysis), Masters Student, Christine Vogt, Ph.D., Center Director for the Center for Sustainable Tourism ([chrsv@asu.edu](mailto:chrsv@asu.edu)), Kari Roberg (field work and analysis), Masters Student, Chase Perren (field work and analysis), Misha White (field work), Undergraduate Students

Center for Sustainable Tourism at Arizona State University

**Overview of Study and Methods**

This survey research study aimed to better understand trail users of the Arizona Trail, specifically in the Copper Corridor region. The Arizona Trail is an 800-mile, non-motorized, trail that spans North to South from the borders of Mexico to Utah through the state of Arizona. The Arizona Trail runs directly through the Copper Corridor region, which is an area of central Arizona that is made up of 11 mining and former mining communities. The Copper Corridor Economic Development Coalition (CCEDC) and the Arizona Trail Association (ATA) have partnered together with Arizona State University (ASU) to conduct this survey study as a way to gain better insight into the outdoor recreation market of the region.

Surveying was conducted at four trailheads. Each trailhead was selected based on its location to nearby towns of Superior, Kearny, or Oracle (all three towns are located in the Copper Corridor region). Surveying was done twice in the vicinity of each selected town to maintain a consistent sampling process, with the exception of Picketpost trailhead, which was surveyed three times because it is the most popular of all the surveyed trailheads in our study. Surveying took place during the tourist season from November 2015 to March 2016 (Table 1). Each surveying day consisted of roughly six hours of surveying from approximately 9:00 a.m. through 3:00 p.m. Surveying was conducted in trailhead parking lots, where there were approximately 20+ parking spaces available. A census sample was utilized in which any one person per household was intercepted and asked to participate in the survey. A travel party consisted of a group of people coming together in the same vehicle. Trail users were surveyed either at the start or finish of their trek on the trail. In total there were 85 responses from all completed surveyed trailheads (Table 1). There were a total of 16 refusals combined between all seven locations, when asked to participate in the survey (Table 1).

**Table 1. Overview of Surveyed Days**

<b>Trailhead</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Total # of Users Surveyed at Start of Hike</b>	<b>Total # of Users Surveyed at End of Hike</b>	<b>Total # of Refusals to Participate in the Survey</b>
American Flag Trailhead, Oracle	30-Jan-2016	4	2	0
Florence – Kelvin Trailhead 1, Kearny	20-Feb-2016	0	2	0
Florence – Kelvin Trailhead 2 <sup>a</sup> , Kearny	26-Mar-2016	0	0	0
Picketpost Trailhead 1, Superior	07-Nov-2015	4	13	12
Picketpost Trailhead 2, Superior	30-Jan-2016	6	28	1
Picketpost Trailhead 3 <sup>a</sup> , Superior	26-Mar-2016	23	3	3
Tiger-Mine Trailhead, Oracle	21-Feb-2016	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>37</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>16</b>

<sup>a</sup>. A half-day or 3 hours was spent at these trailheads.

## Demographics

The respondents to the questionnaire distributed to each travel party at the Arizona Trail trailheads were primarily middle aged adults, male, and local to Arizona (Table 2).

**Table 2. Demographic Profile of Arizona Trail Trailhead Users**

Age	Frequency	Percent		
18 to 24 years	7	8%		
25 to 44 years	30	36		
45 to 64 years	33	40		
65 years & over	<u>13</u>	<u>16</u>		
<b>Total</b>	83	100%		
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	58	69%		
Female	<u>26</u>	<u>31%</u>		
<b>Total</b>	84	100%		
<b>Primary Residency (Zipcode) by Metropolitan Area/State</b>				
Greater Phoenix Area	65	78%		
Greater Tucson Area	7	9		
Flagstaff Area	1	1		
Wisconsin	7	9		
Ohio	1	1		
Illinois	1	1		
California	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>		
<b>Total</b>	83	100%		
<b>Trail User Residency Status</b>				
In-State Resident	73	88%		
Part-Time Arizona Resident <sup>a</sup>	4	5		
Tourist <sup>a</sup>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>		
<b>Total</b>	83	100%		
<b>Number of Adults and Children Within Surveyed Party Using Arizona Trail</b>				
	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Adults	1	9	2	1.9
Children (Age 18 or less)	0	5	0	0.7

<sup>a</sup>. Zipcode was out of state.

## Experience Level with Arizona (AZ) Trail and Copper Corridor Communities

Almost half of the respondents were first time users of the trailhead being surveyed (Table 3). Over a third of the respondents had been repeat users and visitors of the Arizona Trail (somewhere in AZ), towns of Superior, Kearny, Oracle, and to the Copper Corridor region (Table 3). Respondents tended to select seasonal usage for the general usage rate of the trail (Table 4). Eighty-five percent of respondents selected hiking as their most participated activity on the AZ Trail (Table 5). Word of mouth was the most frequent (55%) source of information that respondents *first* learned about the AZ Trail (Table 6).



**Table 3. Trail User Experience with Community and Trailhead**

	First Time Trailhead Users		Repeat Trailhead Users	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Picketpost, American Flag, Tiger Mine, and Florence-Kelvin Trailheads	40	48%	43	52%
Arizona Trail (Anywhere in AZ)	17	25	51	75
Towns of Superior, Kearny, and Oracle	11	16	59	84
Copper Corridor Region	15	23	51	77

**Table 4. Usage Rate of the Arizona Trail**

	Frequency	Percent
Daily	1	1%
Weekly	7	9
Monthly	15	19
Seasonally	28	35
Annually	5	5
Infrequently	25	31
<b>Total</b>	81	100%

**Table 5. Activities Done on the Arizona Trail (Multiple Activities Allowed)**

	Frequency	Percent
Hiking	72	85%
Mountain Biking	10	12
Running	5	6
Horseback Riding	4	5
Painting	3	4
Camping	1	1
Other	1	1

**Table 6. Information Sources Used to *First Learn* About the Arizona Trail**

Information Source	Frequency	Percent
Friend/Word of Mouth	47	55%
Website/Search Engine	17	20
Media (TV/Cable News, Newspaper, Magazine)	4	5
Signage	4	5
Social Media	3	4
Other	3	4
Local to the Area	2	2
Hiking Club	2	2
Oracle State Park	1	1
Walked/Stumbled Upon It	1	1
Work	1	1
Email/Newsletter	0	0
<b>Total</b>	85	100%



## Facilities and Likelihood of Future Uses

Over half of the respondents found the natural resources on the AZ Trail, trailhead facilities, and signage to the trailhead to be in excellent condition (Table 7). Forty-four percent of respondents gave the road to the trailhead a rating of ‘4’ (out of a 5 point scale where 5 = excellent), while another 44% of respondents also gave the trailhead a rating of ‘5’ (Table 7). Seventy-one percent of surveyed trail users responded that they were ‘very likely’ to return to the trailheads they were surveyed at (Table 8). Almost half the respondents (46%) were highly likely to visit other Copper Corridor recreation areas in the future. Thirty-five percent of respondents said they were very likely to patronize businesses in the towns of Kearny, Superior, or Oracle, that encompassed the surveyed trailheads (Table 8). Of those surveyed, 60% were very likely to use other parts of the AZ Trail in the future and 25% said they were very likely to attempt the entire AZ Trail in the future (Table 8). More mountain biking opportunities was mentioned six times when respondents were asked about additional recreation opportunities sought for the Copper Corridor. Leaving it alone followed with four response mentions, more hiking with three response mentions, and more camping and climbing opportunities had two response mentions (Table 9).

**Table 7. Rated Conditions of Recreational Facilities by Trail Users**

	Poor (1)	2	3	4	Excellent (5)	Mean
Frequency (%)						
Natural resources on the AZ Trail	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	6 (7%)	25 (31%)	49 (61%)	4.51
Trailhead facilities (parking, bathrooms)	1 (1)	1 (1)	11 (13)	23 (28)	47 (57)	4.37
Road to the trailhead	1 (1)	2 (3)	7 (8)	37 (44)	37 (44)	4.27
Signage to the trailhead	1 (1)	6 (7)	5 (6)	29 (34)	44 (52)	4.28
Signage on the AZ Trail	3 (4)	7 (8)	17 (20)	28 (34)	28 (34)	3.86

**Table 8. Rated Likelihood of Future Uses by Trail Users**

	Not Likely (1)	2	3	4	Very Likely (5)	Mean
Frequency (%)						
Return to Trailhead (Picketpost, American Flag, Tiger Mine, or Florence-Kelvin)	3 (4%)	1 (1%)	8 (10%)	12 (14%)	59 (71%)	4.48
Use other parts of the AZ Trail	3 (4)	1 (1)	14 (17)	15 (18)	51 (60)	4.31
Visit other recreation areas in Copper Corridor	7 (9)	9 (11)	11 (13)	17 (21)	38 (46)	3.85
Patronize businesses in Superior, Kearny, or Oracle	10 (12)	7 (9)	21 (26)	15 (18)	29 (35)	3.56
Attempt the entire AZ Trail	36 (43)	5 (6)	13 (16)	8 (10)	21 (25)	2.67



**Table 9. Trail User Suggestions for Additional Recreation Activities in the Copper Corridor**

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Times Mentioned</b>
Mountain Biking	6
Leave it alone / none	4
Hiking	3
Climbing	2
Camping	2
Off Road Coaster Wagon Races	1
ATV Riding	1
Horseback Riding Trails	1
Geocaching	1
Picnic Area	1
Kayaking	1
Water	1
Shopping	1

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Outdoor recreation is a valuable asset to the Copper Corridor. The Arizona Trail is and should continue to be a highly treasured attraction of the Copper Corridor and should be further integrated into marketing efforts. Cooperative efforts between businesses in the Copper Corridor and Arizona Trail Association would be beneficial to visitors and to economic growth in the area.

The majority of trail users (76%) intercepted for the study were between the ages of 25 and 64 years old. Sixty-nine percent of survey respondents were male, but this does not necessarily indicate men use the trail more. Eighty-eight percent of respondents were in-state residents, with 78% of those residents being from the greater Phoenix area. Of all trailhead users, nearly half were first time visitors (48%) and just over half were repeat trailhead users (52%). Respondents were most likely to use the trail seasonally (35%). Hiking was the most used activity on the trail (85%). Comments received indicated interest in more mountain biking opportunities (6 comments).

With its proximity to Phoenix, Picketpost trailhead proved to be the most visited trailhead of those surveyed. Trailheads in Oracle are near Tucson, which offers a large market of outdoor enthusiasts to market to and engage with. Roughly equidistant from Phoenix and Tucson, the trailheads near Kearny could be marketed to residents and visitors of both cities. Kearny has two nicely developed parking areas, which during our data collection, seemed to be underutilized. Comments received while surveying in the Oracle area indicated further distribution of Arizona Trail maps would be very beneficial and welcome. Displaying Arizona Trail maps at area campgrounds, visitor centers, and businesses is recommended.

A majority of people surveyed heard about the trail through word-of-mouth. Campaigns encouraging trail users to keep spreading the word and/or introduce a friend to the trail could continue to build on the word-of-mouth phenomenon. The lower use of social media and traditional media for first hearing about the trail could present potential opportunity to utilize these marketing mediums. Social media is one way to encourage trail usage in an inexpensive manner. As marketing funds become available, advertising in print and online would further grow awareness of the trail.

Signage at area businesses could also be used to inform visitors of the Arizona Trail. Trail users are often looking for a place to refuel and refresh during their outdoor adventures. It is recommended that the communities of the Copper Corridor grow their service offerings for trail users. Trail snacks, water, pre- and post-hike meals, gear, and trail guides are possible services community businesses can consider offering, along with managing their business listings on Yelp, TripAdvisor, Google, and Apple Maps. The Arizona Trail creates a foundation to bridge the communities of the Copper Corridor.

The Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT) also offers free services that should be utilized by the Arizona Trail Association and Copper Corridor. Press releases regarding trail developments, events, recreation opportunities and other news should be sent to AOT. Public events can also be submitted for inclusion on the Calendar of Events page, and businesses can manage listings on [visitarizona.com](http://visitarizona.com). Efforts to include the Arizona Trail in AOT's FAM tours, as well as future Copper Corridor FAM tours are encouraged.



**Copper Corridor Arizona Trail Survey**



**This survey starts with your trail experience.**

- Is this your first visit to.....? *(check one for each)*  
 Picket Post trailhead       No    Yes  
 Arizona Trail (anywhere in AZ)    No    Yes  
 Town of Superior                       No    Yes  
 Copper Corridor Region  
 (Superior to Oracle)                       No    Yes
- How often do you use the Arizona Trail, including the Picket Post trailhead? *(check one)*  
 Daily                       Seasonally  
 Weekly                       Annually  
 Monthly                       Infrequently
- Today**, what activities are you doing on the Arizona Trail? *(check all that apply)*  
 Running                       Mountain Biking  
 Hiking                       Horseback Riding  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_
- How did you **first learn** about the Arizona Trail? *(check one)*  
 Media (TV/Cable News, Newspaper, Magazine)  
 Email/Newsletter  
 Social Media  
 Website/Search Engine  
 A Friend/Word of Mouth  
 Other *(please specify)* \_\_\_\_\_

**This next set of questions asks you to rate facilities and likelihood of future uses.**

5. How would you rate the conditions of the recreational facilities? *(circle a no. for each line)*

	Poor				Excellent
Natural resources on the AZ trail	1	2	3	4	5
Trailhead facilities (parking, bathrooms)	1	2	3	4	5
Road to the trailhead	1	2	3	4	5
Signage to the trailhead	1	2	3	4	5
Signage on the AZ trail	1	2	3	4	5

6. How likely are you to do the following in the next 12 months? *(circle a no. for each line)*

	Not Likely				Very Likely
Return to Picket Post	1	2	3	4	5
Patronize businesses in Superior	1	2	3	4	5
Visit other recreation areas in Copper Corridor	1	2	3	4	5
Use other parts of the AZ Trail	1	2	3	4	5
Attempt the entire AZ Trail	1	2	3	4	5

7. What **2** additional recreation activities would you like to see available in the Copper Corridor? *(please list below)*

\_\_\_\_\_

**This next set of questions asks about yourself and the group you have traveled with.**

- How old are you? *(fill in a number)*  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Years Old
- Are you? *(circle one)*  
 Male                      Female
- How many people are with you today, including yourself? *(fill in a number)*  
 \_\_\_\_\_ # of adults  
 \_\_\_\_\_ # of children 18 or younger
- What is your zipcode at your primary residence? \_\_\_\_\_
- Do you live part-time in Arizona? *(circle one)*  
 No                      Yes

*Thank you for the completion of this survey. Your answers are extremely valuable to the region's future and success and we greatly appreciate your participation! From the Copper Corridor Economic Development Coalition.*

ID# \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ S/F

