AMERICAN NATURE AND HEALTH SURVEY REPORT 2026

Nature and Health Alliance

Report Authors
Taylor Kennedy Frenchi, M.A., Program Director, Nature and Health Alliance, Texan by Nature
Joni Carswell, MBA, CEO and President, Texan By Nature

Principal Investigator
Jay Maddock, Ph.D., Regents Professor, Texas A&M University

Data Analysis
Luis Alvarado, M.S., and Patrick Tarwater, Ph.D., Texas A&M University

Citation
Kennedy Frenchi, T., Carswell, J., Alvarado, L., Tarwater, P., & Maddock, J. (2026). American Nature and Health Survey Report 2026. Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22836404



Funded by:

rei cooperative action fund

Designed by:

TEXAN by NATURE™

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Nature and Health Alliance

Executive Summary 3
Acknowledgement(s) 4
Introduction 5
Methodology 5
Demographics of Survey Participants 6

FINDINGS

1. Time Spent in Nature 7
- Where do Americans Experience Nature? 8
- How Much Time Do Americans Spend Outdoors 10
- When Do Americans Spend Time Outdoors? 12

2. Activities in Nature 14
- What Are Americans Doing In Nature? 15
- Who Are Americans Spending Time With in Nature? 16
- Why Are Americans Spending Time in Nature? 17
- How Are Americans Using Technology in Nature? 18

3. Access and Barriers 20
- What is Preventing Americans from Spending Time in Nature? 21
- How Do Access and Safety Affect Nature Exposure? 22

4. Belonging 23
5. Nature and Health 26
6. Environmental Beliefs and Nature Relatedness 29
- Environmental Beliefs 30
- Nature Relatedness 33

Conclusions 37
- Authors / Contact 37

References/Appendix 39

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nature contact is associated with a wide range of physical, mental, and social health benefits. These benefits rely in part on whether or not people have opportunities to experience nature in their daily lives as well as how much time they spend in nature. Until now, there has been limited recent national information about how Americans' engage with nature, how much time they spend outdoors, and the barriers and motivations for doing so.

The American Nature and Health Survey examined where, how, how often, with whom, and how long people spend in nature, the motivations and barriers to nature engagement, perceptions of safety and belonging, as well as connections between nature, health, well-being, and pro-environmental beliefs.

KEY FINDINGS

- **75%** of respondents said they spend time in nature for their mental well-being and **60%** reported doing so for their physical health.
- **68%** of respondents reported that their most common place to spend time in nature is their yard or garden.
- **Nearly half (45%)** of Americans spend fewer than two hours in nature each week with almost **1 in three** spending time outside only once per week (or less).
- **Younger people, Black and Hispanic Americans,** and people with lower incomes reportedly spent less time in nature.
- There are regional differences in the months people spend the most time outdoors. June and July are the months people report spending the most time outside nationally, but in the southern United States, people reportedly spend more time outdoors in May and October.
- **79%** of respondents agreed that spending time in nature helps them to take a break from screens.
- The **top three barriers** to spending time in nature reported by participants were weather/climate, lack of time, and insects or concerns of wild animals.
- **84%** of respondents felt protection of nature is essential or very important.
- **79%** agreed that "having wild, open spaces is part of being an American."

Overall, respondents felt that spending time in nature was important for both their physical and mental well-being. However, a large proportion of American adults spend little time in nature. These findings provide a national snapshot of how Americans experience nature and where there are opportunities for making nature contact a more accessible part of everyday life and health for the nation.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Nature and Health Alliance

The Nature and Health Alliance gratefully acknowledges the 3,125 people across the United States who participated in the American Nature and Health Survey and shared their experiences with nature.

This work was made possible through the generous support of

rei cooperative action fund

We extend special thanks to the study's Principal Investigator, **Dr. Jay Maddock** of Texas A&M University for his leadership of the study.

We would like to thank the multidisciplinary team of researchers who contributed their expertise to the development of the American Nature and Health Survey.

Jay Maddock, Ph.D., Texas A&M University
Sara LoTemplio, Ph.D., University of Vermont
Ian Obus Siderits, Ph.D, Meredith College
Gina M. Besenyi, Ph.D., Kansas State University
Amy Eyler, Ph.D., Washington University in St. Louis
Olivia McAnirlin, Ph.D., Clemson University
Matthew H.E.M. Browning, Ph.D., Clemson University
Cathy Jordan, Ph.D., University of Minnesota
Sarah Walker, Ph.D., Colorado State University
Diego Catalán Molina, Ph.D., Hello Insight!
Elizabeth Himschoot, Ph.D., The Pennsylvania State University
Brandy-Joe Milliron, Ph.D., Drexel University
M. Renee Umstattd Meyer, Ph.D., Baylor University
Erin Allaman, Ph.D., Children & Nature Network
Taylor Kennedy Frenchi, M.A., Texan by Nature
Natalia Rodriguez, MPH, Texas A&M University
Will Klein, MEM, Trust for Public Land
Louise Chawla, Ph.D., University of Colorado Boulder
Isaac Castillo, M.S., KABOOM!

We also thank Texas A&M University for Institutional Review Board oversight.

This report is written and designed by

TEXAN by NATURE™

The American Nature and Health Survey reflects the collective expertise and commitment of researchers, practitioners, partners, and participants working to better understand Americans' experiences with nature and support greater access to its benefits.

INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE

Understanding how Americans experience nature in their daily lives is important for identifying opportunities to support health and well-being. How much time people spend in nature, where they go, what motivates them to get outside, and whether they feel safe and that they belong, can all shape opportunities to experience the benefits of nature contact. Despite growing research on nature and health, the United States lacks a consistent national approach to understanding these experiences and how they differ across populations.

To address this gap, the Nature and Health Alliance launched the American Nature and Health Survey, a nationwide survey of 3,125 U.S. adults conducted in the fall of 2025. The survey examines how often and where Americans spend time in nature, their activities and motivations, barriers such as safety, accessibility, and belonging, and connections with physical and mental health. Parents and guardians also provided information about their children's experiences with nature. The children's data will be released in a separate resource.

To be conducted every two years, the survey will enable us to track how Americans' experiences with nature change over time. These findings can help identify opportunities to reduce barriers, expand equitable access, and inform public health, planning, policy, and programs that make nature a more accessible part of everyday life.

METHODOLOGY

This report highlights results of a national survey of U.S. adults conducted between October 6 and November 5, 2025. Participants were recruited through Prolific, an online research platform that uses identity and eligibility verification procedures. The study used sampling targets for age, gender, and race and ethnicity to broadly reflect the U.S. adult population. Participants were 18 years or older, lived in the United States, and were able to complete the survey in English.

The survey was developed by a multidisciplinary team of researchers from the Nature and Health Alliance to better understand how Americans experience and engage with nature in their everyday lives. Participants were asked about the places they consider nature, how often and how much time they spend in nature, their health and well-being, their relatedness to nature, and their demographic characteristics and other topics related to nature contact and their experiences. Participants were given a definition of nature at the beginning of the survey that included a range of outdoor environments, including yards and gardens.

Participants provided informed consent and received a small payment for their time. The survey included attention checks, and responses with unusually fast completion times or other indications of potentially invalid data were reviewed and removed when they did not meet study quality standards. Researchers did not have access to participants' identities, and Prolific did not have access to their individual survey responses. The study was reviewed by the Texas A&M Institutional Review Board and determined to be exempt. Findings presented in this report summarize participants' responses using standard statistical methods.

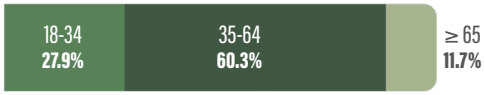


DEMOGRAPHICS

We asked **3,125 participants** to provide basic background and demographic information about themselves including age, race/ethnicity, gender, education, income, marital status, employment status, zip code, household makeup, and military status. We also asked about their health status and political ideology. ***(Survey Questions 21 through 36)***

Note: Self reported health status of participants was fairly evenly distributed from poor to excellent health. 95% of participants reported that they are able to walk unassisted. Eighty percent of participants report themselves to be in good or better health. Participants reported an average of 4.9 poor physical health days in the last month and 7 poor mental health days in the same time frame.

AGE



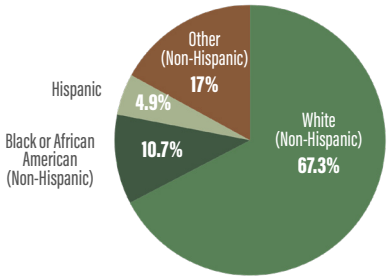
GENDER



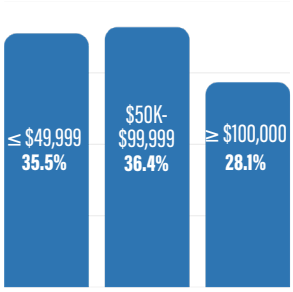
EDUCATION LEVEL



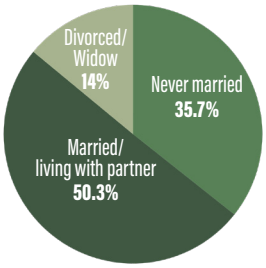
RACE/ETHNICITY



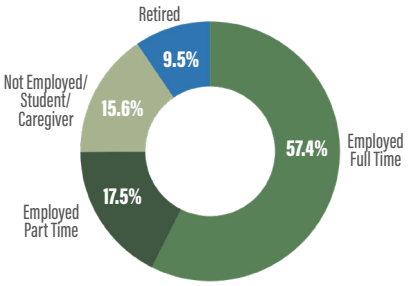
INCOME



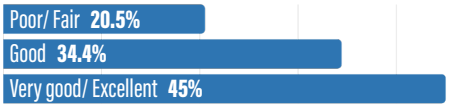
MARITAL STATUS



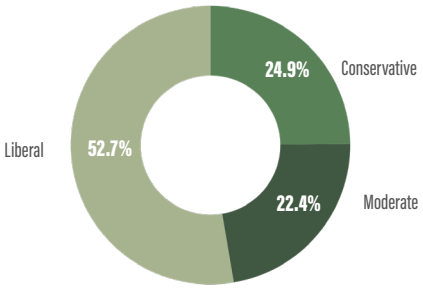
EMPLOYMENT STATUS



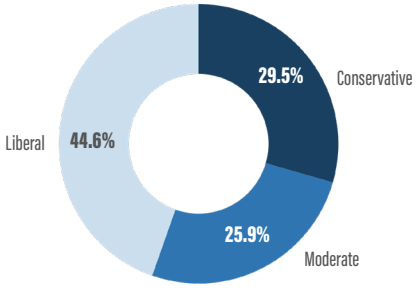
SELF HEALTH ASSESSMENT



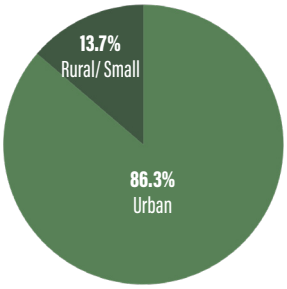
SELF IDENTIFY - SOCIAL ISSUES



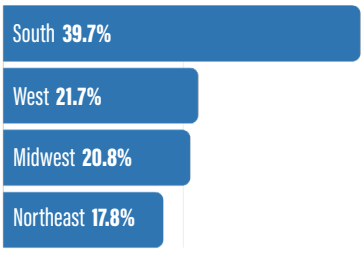
SELF IDENTIFY - FISCAL ISSUES



URBAN OR RURAL



U.S. REGIONS



AVERAGE NUMBER OF

POOR PHYSICAL HEALTH DAYS IN THE LAST 30 DAYS

4.9

AVERAGE NUMBER OF

POOR MENTAL HEALTH DAYS IN THE LAST 30 DAYS

7



1

TIME SPENT IN NATURE

Contact with nature is associated with a wide range of physical, mental, and social health benefits ranging from reduced stress and depression symptoms, improved cardiovascular health and immune function, to increased social connection and strengthened proenvironmental beliefs and behaviors [1, 2, 3, 4, 5] . Realizing these benefits depends in part on whether or not people spend time experiencing nature in their daily lives. Research suggests spending 2 hours per week in nature is associated with good health and well-being [6], while short visits of 10 minutes have been shown to improve mental health [7].

This section examines the patterns of Americans' engagement with nature. Where people go in nature, how frequently and how long they spend there, and when they choose to spend time outdoors all shape their opportunities to access the health and well-being benefits of nature contact. Understanding these patterns offers a foundation for identifying the opportunities available to reduce barriers, expand equitable access, and make contact with nature a more frequent and accessible part of everyday life.

1.1 WHERE DO AMERICANS EXPERIENCE NATURE?

Connection and time spent in nature can take a variety of forms from backyard exposure, to visiting local parks, to taking vacations in remote and wild places. Through this work, we want to better understand where people connect with nature in their everyday lives and the role nature plays in leisure and travel choices. These insights provide a more complete picture of Americans' relationship with nature and help us understand the different ways people can access the health and well-being benefits provided by nature.

We asked respondents the top three places they spend time in nature, if they spent more than an hour this week in a variety of natural locations, and how often they take vacations centered around nature and the outdoors. ***(Survey Questions 2, 3, and 7)***

KEY FINDINGS

Figure 2: Top places Americans spend time in nature | **Q2.** *Which of the following are the top three places that you spend time in nature?*


Backyard or Garden **67.5%**


Local Park **60%**


Beach/Lake/River or body of water **34%**


Landscaping near residence **27.7%**


Urban Greenway/ Trail **18.9%**



National Park or protected area **17.1%**


Forest **15.4%**


Sports Field **9.1%**


Indoor plants / green walls **3.5%**


Golf Course **3.2%**


Agriculture Area **2.5%**


Schoolyard **2%**

Figure 3: Nature Settings Americans Spent More than One Hour In the Last Week. | **Q3.** *In the past 7 days, did you spend +1 hr in the following places?*

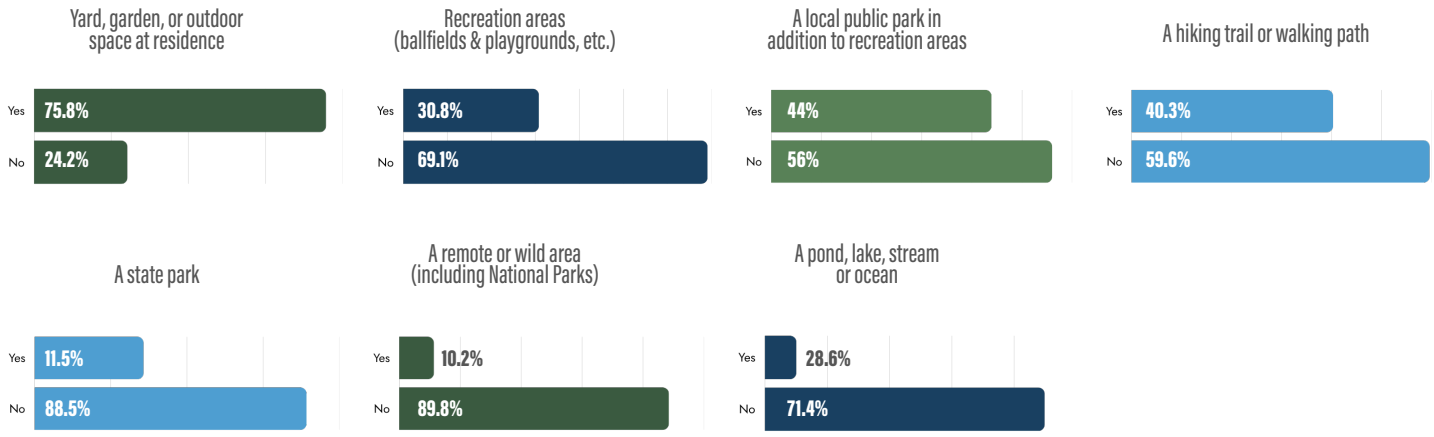


Figure 4: Nature-centered Vacation Frequency. | **Q7.** *How often do you take vacations centered around nature or the outdoors?*



KEY TAKEWAYS

- Most Americans' nature contact occurs in places close to home rather than remote natural settings. **68% of respondents** reported that their most common place to spend time in nature is their yard or garden. Other top locations include local parks, blue "water" spaces, and landscaping around their residence.

- While **over 75% of respondents** reported spending over an hour in the past week in their yard, garden or nature space around their residence, **only 10%** reported visiting a remote or wild area (including national parks) in that same time period.

- **Half of participants** report taking less than one vacation per year centered around nature or the outdoors, indicating that though nature vacations are valuable, they represent only a small portion of American's overall contact with nature but may emphasize the need for more "macro" doses of nature.

These findings suggest that the greatest opportunity for accessing the benefits of nature can be found close to home rather than in remote, natural destinations. For most Americans, contact with nature is primarily happening in their yards, neighborhood parks, local trails, and nearby blue spaces rather than in remote wild spaces, or state and national parks.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

As regular contact with nature can provide mental and physical health benefits, ensuring that people can easily access nature in places where they live their daily lives may be exceptionally important. Investing in and designing neighborhood trees and nature spaces, parks, community gardens, accessible blue space, and residential environments rich in nature offers the potential to create more frequent opportunities for Americans to experience nature without significant time, travel, expense, or planning.

These findings also outline a distinction between everyday nature exposure and immersive nature destinations. While remote natural areas play a vital role in America's environmental health and provide meaningful and immersive experiences, they account for a relatively small share of overall regular contact with nature. This reinforces the opportunity for accessing the health benefits of nature through frequent, nearby exposure rather than occasional visits to iconic natural destinations. Expanding opportunities for more routine nature contact may have a broader reach than relying on outdoor recreation or travel experiences.

Ultimately bringing nature into communities and everyday settings through accessible nature programming, neighborhood parks, urban tree planting, trails, community gardens, and residential nature spaces as well as helping people get out into the wilderness may be the key to unlocking a much larger population-level impact on health.



1.2 HOW MUCH TIME DO AMERICANS SPEND OUTDOORS?

The amount of time people spend in nature affects their opportunities to experience health and well-being benefits. Recent literature suggests that just 2 hours per week of nature exposure can support a range of physical and mental well-being benefits [6]. Understanding how often people spend time outdoors and how much time they spend there gives us a clearer view of if people are reaching that threshold.

We asked frequency of time spent in nature over the past month and the duration of time spent in nature during the past week in order to capture different aspects of nature engagement. Frequency tells us how regularly people are bringing nature into their lives and total time gives us insight into the cumulative duration of exposure. Together, frequency and duration illuminate the patterns of nature contact to examine how time in nature relates to health and well-being.

We asked participants how often on average they spent time outdoors in nature in the last month as well as how much total time they spent in nature within the last week. ***(Survey Questions 4 and 5)***

KEY FINDINGS

Figure 5: Frequency of nature visits. | **Q4.** *In the last month, how often on average have you spent time outdoors in nature?*

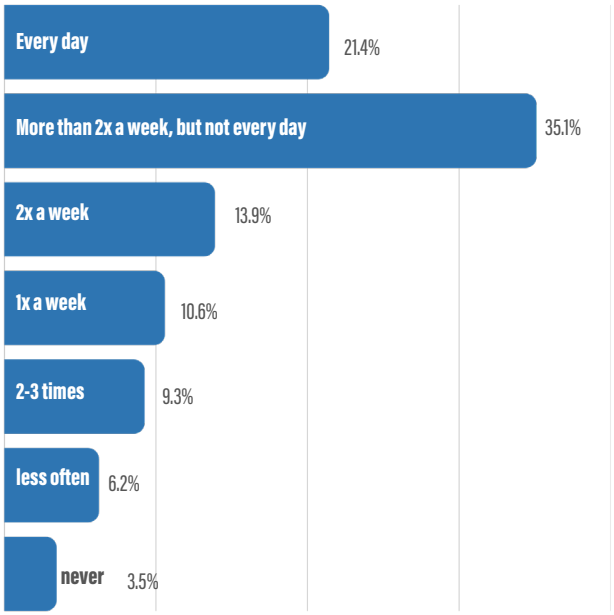


Figure 6: Weekly time spent in nature | **Q5.** *In the last week, how much total time did you spend outdoors in nature?*

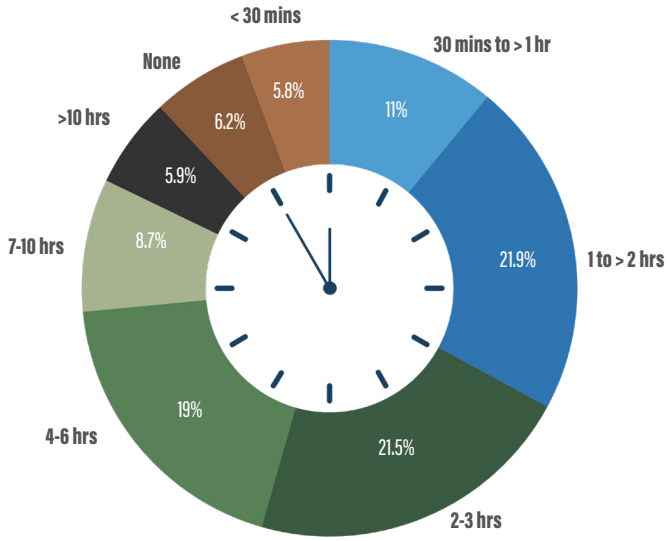


Figure 7: Demographic breakdown of time in nature per week

AGE	Overall	4 or more hours	2-3 hours	1-2 hours	None, <30min, <1hr
18-34	27.9%	27.6%	23.3%	22.5%	26.4%
35-64	60.4%	35.1%	20.5%	22%	22.3%
≥ 65	11.7%	36.2%	22.1%	19.8%	21.8%
RACE/ ETHNICITY	**Overall**	**4 or more hours**	**2-3 hours**	**1-2 hours**	**None, <30min, <1hr**
White (Non-Hispanic)	67.3%	36.2%	21.2%	21.1%	21.5%
Black or African American (Non-Hispanic)	10.7%	24.5%	23.3%	25%	27.2%
Hispanic	4.9%	32.7%	24.2%	22.2%	20.9%
Other (Non-Hispanic)	17%	29.4%	20.7%	23.2%	26.7%
INCOME	**Overall**	**4 or more hours**	**2-3 hours**	**1-2 hours**	**None, <30min, <1hr**
≤ $49,999	35.5%	29.4%	20.3%	21.3%	29%
$50,000-$99,999	36.4%	32.3%	23%	22.9%	21.8%
≥ $100,000	28%	39.2%	21.1%	21.2%	18.5%

KEY TAKEWAYS

- **Nearly half (45%)** of Americans spend fewer than two hours in nature each week.
- **29%** report spending time outside only once per week (or less).
- Younger people, Black and Hispanic Americans, and people with lower incomes reportedly spent less time in nature.
- Frequency and duration reveal different patterns of engagement with nature, revealing people may be spending more shorter visits in nature rather than longer periods of time.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Frequency and duration of exposure to nature may offer different benefits. Studies show short nature breaks of 10 minutes provide boosts to mood [7, 8], attention restoration [9] and decreases in blood pressure. Other studies show that longer visits in nature may be needed to reduce rumination [10] and improve immune functioning [11]. While there are currently no national guidelines for nature contact some combination of frequency and duration appears to provide the highest level of health improvement.

These findings suggest that nearly half of Americans are not reaching the two hours per week in nature associated with good health and well-being outcomes. While some respondents reported spending time in the outdoors regularly throughout the month, those visits did not always add up to significant amounts of time per week. This may indicate that even Americans who are maintaining regular contact with nature may not be getting enough exposure to realize the full health benefits.

There are also indications that time spent in nature might be declining. In our survey, 45% of respondents reported spending less than 2 hours per week in nature, compared with 25% reporting the same in the Nature of Americans Study almost a decade ago [12]. While differences in survey methods, measures, and samples should be considered in this comparison, the findings raise an important question of whether Americans are spending less time in nature than they did a decade ago and why that might be the case.

The differences in frequency and duration show that just getting outdoors regularly may not tell the whole story. Additionally, the need to understand what people are doing and what is preventing them from spending time in nature are essential to informing efforts to make nature exposure easier to incorporate into everyday life.

Through additional analysis of the data, we found differences in time spent in nature across demographic groups suggesting that opportunities for nature exposure are not evenly distributed. Younger adults, Black and Hispanic Americans, and people with lower incomes reported spending less time in nature and were less likely to reach two hours of weekly nature exposure than other groups. These disparities may reflect an expansive range of factors, including differences in access to neighborhood and residential nature spaces, transportation, work schedules, and available leisure time, perceived safety, access to resources, and the effect of historical and ongoing marginalization. Previous research has documented less access to tree coverage and parks as well as differences in park quality and amenities in communities shaped by racial residential segregation [13]. Further research should be conducted to determine which barriers are most influential and how they differ across communities.

1.3 WHEN DO AMERICANS SPEND TIME OUTDOORS?

Nature experiences often vary throughout the year due to weather, daylight, work schedules, school calendars, and seasonal activities. By asking participants to identify the top three months of the year when they spend the most time outside, we can better understand these seasonal patterns. This can highlight times of the year when opportunities for outdoor nature access can be limited and can assist with developing seasonal approaches to programming and initiatives promoting nature for health.

We asked participants to select the top 3 months they spend the most time outdoors. ***(Survey Question 6)***

Figure 8: Seasonal patterns of outdoor recreation **| Q6.** During which months do you spend the most time outdoors? (Select up to 3)

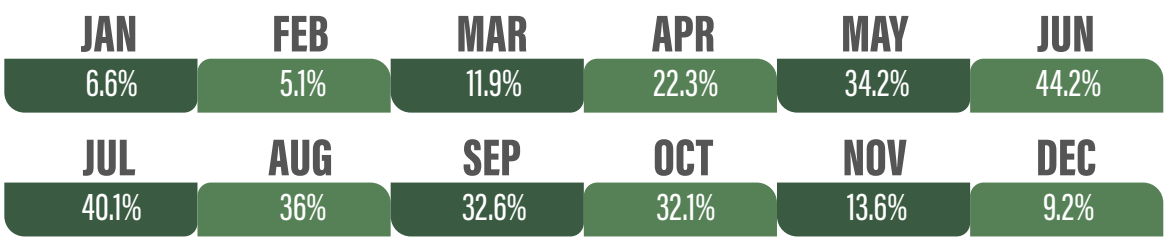
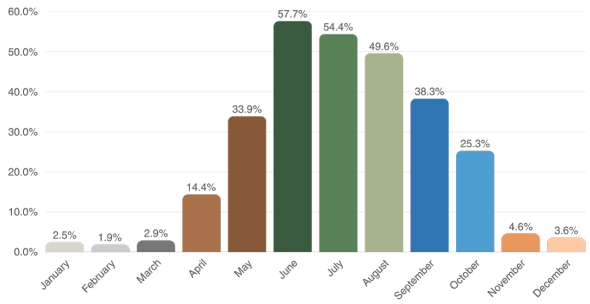
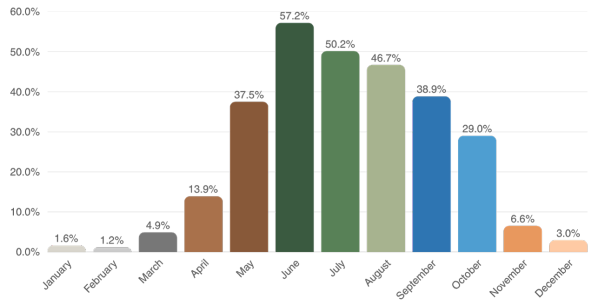


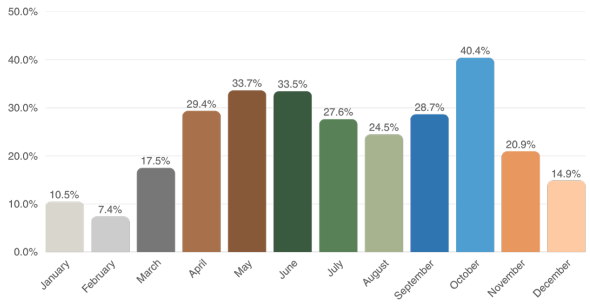
Figure 9: Regional breakdown of months people spend the most time outdoors



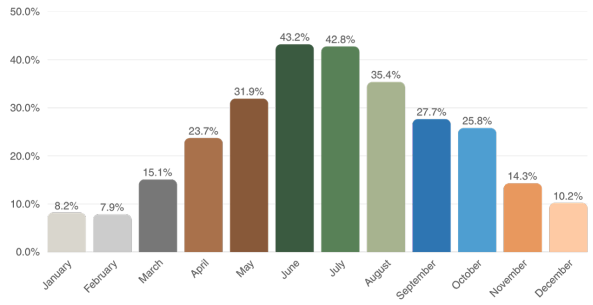
NORTHEAST



MIDWEST



SOUTH



WEST

KEY TAKEWAYS

- Overall, **June and July** are the months where people report spending the most time outside, but in the southern United States, people reportedly spend more time outdoors in May and October.
- Lowest participation months for time outdoors were **January and February.**

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

While the summer showed the peak season for outdoor activity nationally, respondents in the Southern United States reported their highest outdoor participation in October, reflecting the influence of season and regional climate. This finding shows that strategies to promote outdoor engagement should be tailored to both season and local environment rather than using a uniform seasonal pattern.

Some factors to the seasonal spike in activity in June and July may include favorable weather, school calendars, daylight hours, and availability of certain activities and outdoor venues. Conversely, January and February showed the lowest levels of nature contact nationally. As this period also overlaps with seasonal health concerns like seasonal affective disorder and vitamin D deficiency, these months may be particularly important for public health efforts to support nature exposure.

These seasonal patterns have implications for implementation of outdoor programming, nature prescriptions, and outdoor recreation participation. Alternate avenues for nature exposure could be explored to mitigate the declining participation in outdoor activities in winter such as promoting access to indoor arboretums, biophilic and green indoor design, etc. At the same time, the research base on interactions with winter and snow-covered (or "white") natural spaces remains limited, representing an important area for future research.



TIME SPENT IN NATURE SUMMARY

Americans interact with nature in a variety of ways, but respondent's experiences were heavily rooted in everyday environments close to home. While some individuals seek out nature through vacations and destination travel, most nature contact occurs through backyards, neighborhood parks, yards, trails, and other nearby nature spaces. This suggests that places where people live their daily lives may provide the greatest opportunity to increase general exposure to nature.

At the same time, Americans appear to be getting less nature exposure than evidence suggests for accessing the potential health and well-being benefits of nature. Nearly half of participants reported spending less than two hours per week in nature and comparisons with earlier research raise the possibility that time in nature may be declining. Time spent outdoors also varies substantially in who is accessing nature and who is not, with some demographic groups getting less exposure than others. These differences suggest disparities in opportunities, resources, time, access, belonging and other factors.

Nature exposure also varies throughout the year and across regions of the United States indicating factors like season, climate and other contextual factors shape and affect when Americans engage with the outdoors. Together, these results suggest that opportunities to increase nature engagement may depend on reducing barriers to frequent, accessible, safe, and year-round nature experiences close to home to offer the greatest opportunity to help more Americans incorporate and increase nature exposure in their daily lives.

QUESTIONS RAISED

- Why are many Americans not getting enough nature contact?
- What are the primary barriers that prevent people from spending more time in nature?
- Is time in nature actually declining over time?
- Why do some groups spend less time in nature than others? Are the barriers experienced different or more marked?
- How do access, safety, and belonging influence these patterns?
- Where should investments be targeted to have the greatest health impact?
- What would motivate people to spend more time in nature?
- Do snow-covered natural spaces (also known as "white" spaces) provide the same benefits as green spaces?

2

ACTIVITIES IN NATURE

Having explored how often and when people spend time in nature, we also want to know what they are doing there. Much research in nature and health explores the overlap with physical activity and exercise. Additionally, other impactful surveys about time in nature such as the Outdoor Institute's Participation Trends Survey provide insight into what recreational activities people are doing in nature and participation levels but do not give visibility to Americans' daily exposure to nature outside of recreation. By understanding the ways people engage with nature and what activities they are enjoying in natural spaces, we can better build programming and experiences that are relevant, accessible, and impactful.



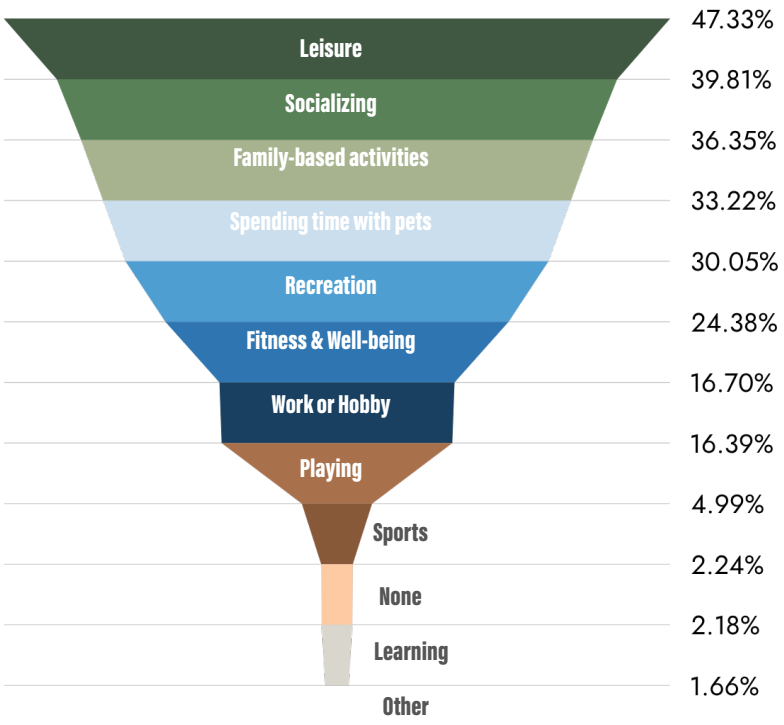
2.1 WHAT ARE AMERICANS DOING IN NATURE?

While our findings suggest that many Americans are not spending enough time in nature, we also wanted to understand what they are doing when they are spending time outdoors. The activities they choose can offer insight into what motivates them to be in nature and what they value about those experiences. Understanding these activities can help us think differently about how nature spaces are designed, used, and how they can support the ways people want to connect with nature.

We asked participants to tell us up to three activities they had done most often in natural settings in the last year ranging from leisure to learning to sports. ***(Survey Question 8)***

KEY FINDINGS

Figure 10: Activities in Nature | Q8. In the last year, what activities have you done in natural settings most often? (Select up to 3)



KEY TAKEWAYS

- Nature holds a key place for social needs. The top two responses for activities participants were doing in nature were Leisure and Socializing. Nearly half **(47%)** of respondents listed Leisure (Picnicking, Grilling, Reading, Walking), while 40% listed Socializing (Spending time with friends and peers, Attending community events).

- Family and pets play a role in nature activities. **36%** of respondents reported doing family-based activities in nature, while **33%** said they spent time with pets in nature.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

These findings suggest that Americans' relationship with nature is not limited to outdoor recreation or adventure. For many respondents, natural settings were places for everyday leisure activities like walking, reading, picnicking, spending time with friends and peers, socializing, and being with pets. With leisure and socializing emerging as the most commonly reported activities, natural settings may be important to social connection as places where people can slow down, connect with others, and step away from the demands of work and home.

These patterns might inform how green spaces and natural areas can better accommodate the ways people already use them. In addition to supporting recreation, offering and creating opportunities to gather, relax, socialize and spend time with family, friends and pets may increase use and community support for natural spaces.

2.2 WHO ARE AMERICANS SPENDING TIME WITH IN NATURE?

We learned that time in nature is often spent pursuing leisure and social activities, indicating that time in nature doesn't always happen alone. The people (and pets) we share nature experiences with can shape when, where, and how we engage with the outdoors. We asked Americans who they spend time with in nature to better understand the social side of nature contact. These questions can help reveal how nature serves as a setting for companionship and relationship building and how this may influence opportunities to get out in nature.

We asked participants to select up to three responses for who they spend time in nature with as well as whether they have pets in the home. ***(Survey Questions 9 and 37)***

KEY FINDINGS

Figure 11: Q9. Who do you typically spend time in nature with? (Select up to 3)



Alone	Partner/Spouse	Friends	Pets	Children
65.3%	**50.1%**	**37.2%**	**34.4%**	**32.9%**



Other family members	Colleagues	Other community members	Other	I don't spend time in nature
32%	**3.2%**	**2.9%**	**0.2%**	**1.6%**

KEY TAKEWAYS

- While the top choice for spending time in nature was alone (**65%**), participants indicated that they also spent time in nature with their partner/spouse (**50%**), and friends **(37%**).
- **68%** of respondents had pets and **35%** of respondents reported spending time with their pets in nature.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

These findings suggest that time in nature can serve and support different social needs. For many Americans nature provides an opportunity for solitude and time for themselves. At the same time, the strong response rates around spending time in nature with partners and friends suggest that nature is also an important setting for connection and shared experiences.

Pets may also play a role, with more than two-thirds of respondents indicating they had a pet at home and one third acknowledging they spend time in nature with their pets. Pets may serve as an additional avenue or motivation for getting people outside.

The implication of natural settings as a space for connection with family, friends, and pets suggests the opportunity to design and plan nature spaces and programming for these different uses outside of recreation. Making pet friendly green spaces, offering ample seating or eating areas, and providing programming that encourages social interaction may be opportunities to support both time alone and social connection.

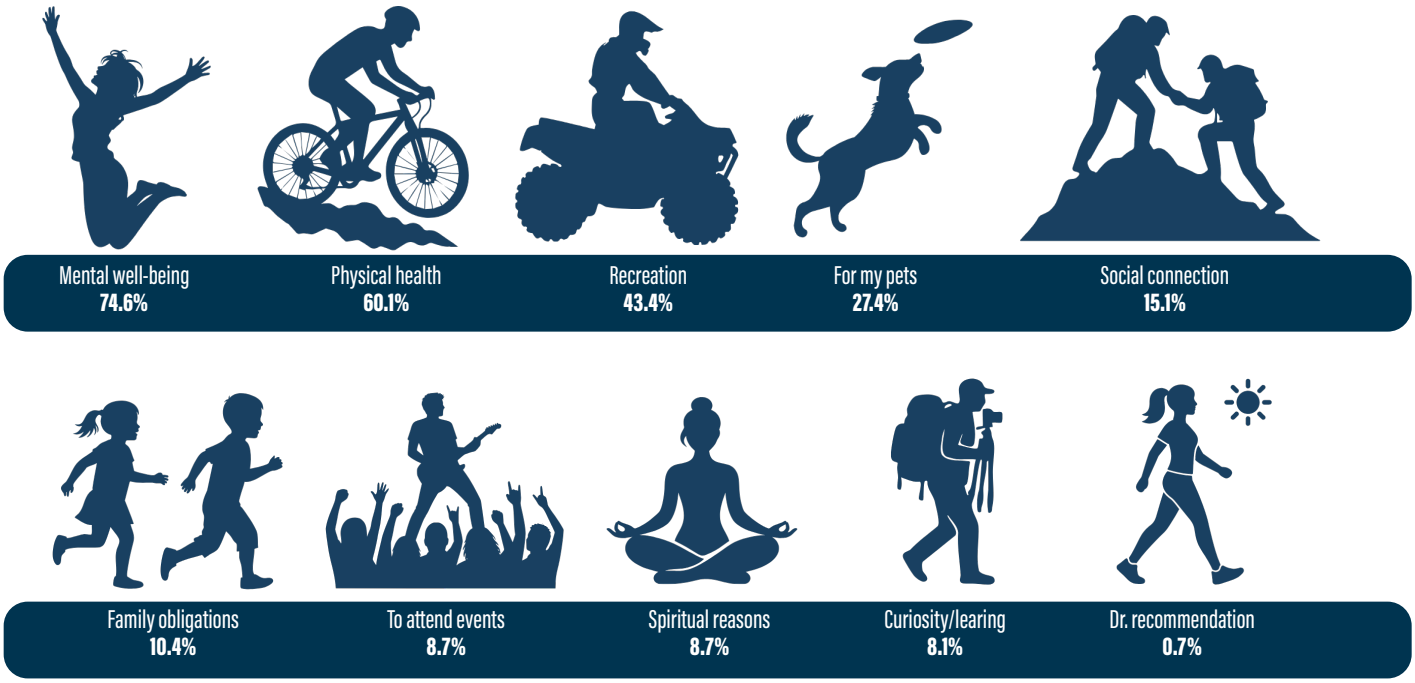
2.3 WHY ARE AMERICANS SPENDING TIME IN NATURE?

Beyond knowing what people are doing in nature, we also want to know what their motivations are for engaging with nature. This understanding helps us interpret the role nature plays in their lives. People may seek out nature for many reasons including exercise, spirituality, supporting their mental and physical health, and other motivations. By asking participants to identify their top motivations for spending time in nature, we can understand what gets people outdoors, how health and well-being factor into these choices, and how we can help more people experience the benefits of nature.

We asked people to select their top three reasons for spending time in nature spanning motivations from spirituality to doctor recommendation. ***(Survey Question 10)***

KEY FINDINGS

Figure 13: Motivations for Spending Time in Nature | **Q10.** What are your main reasons for spending time in nature? (Select up to 3)



KEY TAKEWAYS

- **75%** of respondents said they spend time in nature for their mental well-being.
- **60%** of respondents reported spending time in nature for their physical health.
- Recreation ranked third (**43%**) as the reason people spend time in nature.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Mental and physical health challenges affect millions of Americans; almost a quarter of adults in the United States experienced a mental illness within the last year [14] and cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in America [15]. Despite this, findings suggest that many Americans already recognize that nature improves their mental and physical health and that they are choosing to engage with nature for those reasons. 75% of respondents said they spend time in nature for their mental well-being, while 60% indicated their physical health motivations. Both of these outstripped recreational motivations as a reason for engaging with nature.

This points to an opportunity to think about nature not just as a place for recreation but as part of the broader landscape of health and well-being. As nature engagement can be relatively low cost, expanding opportunities to engage with nature could complement efforts to support public health. However it is important to note that nature access is not equal, making the provision and planning of safe, welcoming, nearby nature important for realizing that potential.

2.4. SCREEN TIME

Excessive screen time is known to have negative effects on memory, mental health, and sleep [16, 17]. Spending time in nature can offer an opportunity to step away from screens and the demands of a highly technological life. However, phones are increasingly part of people's day to day lives, including in nature.

We wanted to understand what role screens play when people spend time in nature and if nature helps them take a break from them. This can help us explore whether nature can further support health and well-being by offering a screen time break.

We asked participants how often they use their phone when in nature, what they used it for, and if nature helped them to take a break from screens.

(Survey Questions A11, A12, and A13)

KEY FINDINGS

Figure 14: Phone usage in nature. | **Q11.** *How often do you use your phone for any purpose while in nature?*

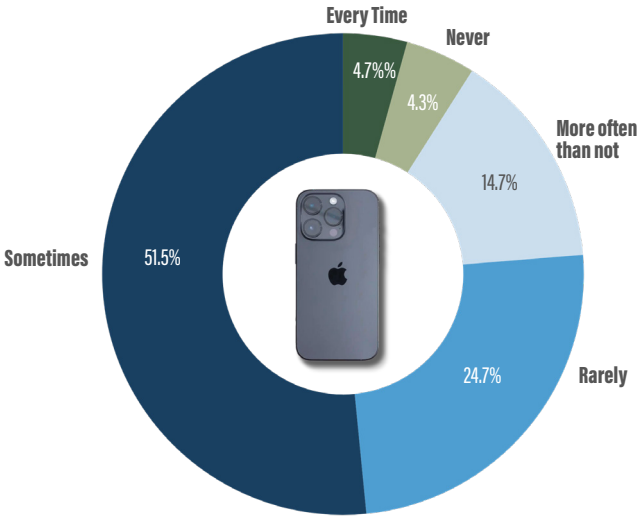
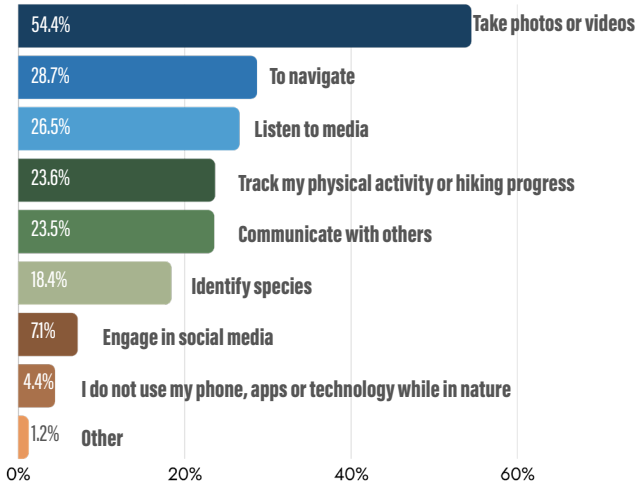


Figure 15: Technology Activities in Nature | **Q12.** *When in nature, I use my phone, apps, or other technology to ____ (Select all that apply)*



KEY TAKEWAYS

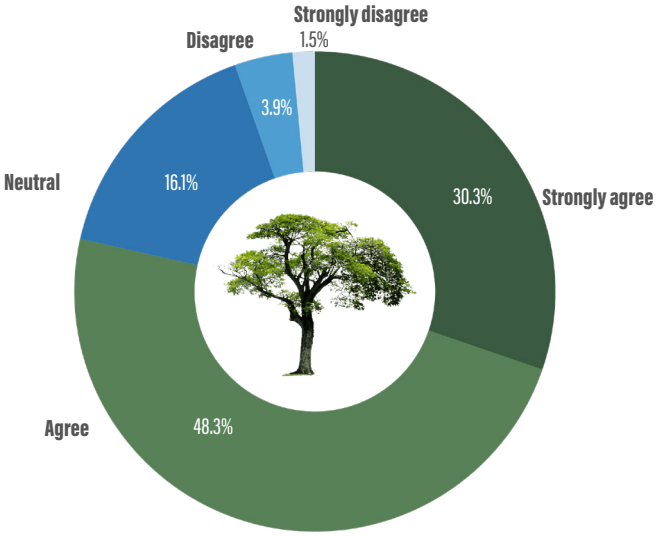
- Around **70%** of participants report routinely using their phone in nature.
- **55%** of respondents use their phone in nature to take photos or videos. Navigation, listening to media, tracking physical fitness progress, and communication with others were the remaining top activities for using phones in nature.
- **79%** agreed that spending time in nature helps them to take a break from screens.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Although 70% of participants reported that they routinely use their phone in nature, this may not mean that it is being used in the same way as when not in nature. Many of the reported activities for phone use in nature were connected to the experience of being in nature, including taking photos, using navigation apps, and tracking physical fitness progress.

At the same time, over three quarters of participants felt that being in nature helped them take a break from screens. Seemingly, even when phones are not completely put away, people feel that nature provides a rest from technology. Though phones may remain part of people's experiences in nature through photography or navigation, it seems that time outdoors may still provide a chance to reduce or change the type of engagement with screens that is part of everyday life.

Figure 16: Nature helps disconnect from screens | **Q13.** *Do you agree with the following statement? "Spending time in nature helps me take a break from screens"*





ACTIVITIES IN NATURE SUMMARY

The findings in this section show that Americans engage with nature in ways beyond the traditional ideas of outdoor recreation. Natural settings are places for everyday leisure, socializing, time with pets, and activities that support mental and physical well-being. Even with technology being used, people feel that nature gives them a break from the screen time of daily life.

Together this all suggests that nature can serve multiple overlapping roles in supporting people's lives. It can provide a place to enjoy solitude, and to allow for connection with partners, friends and pets.

Importantly, we also identified that many Americans are motivated to spend time in nature for their mental and physical health, suggesting that nature is not only valued as a location for leisure but as a tool that impacts how they feel and function.

These patterns broaden the implications for how natural areas and green spaces are planned, designed, funded, and programmed. Supporting people's relationships with nature extends beyond recreation infrastructure alone and should support comfortable places to gather and socialize, opportunities for relaxed leisure, pet-friendly spaces, and settings that accommodate both quiet time and shared experiences.

QUESTIONS RAISED

- What characteristics in a natural space make people more likely to spend time there?
- How does social context shape the experience of nature?
- What is the greatest opportunity for nature as a health intervention?
- Do pets and loved ones act as motivation for nature engagement?
- Can programming in nature be used to mitigate screen time?
- How much does being present (not on a phone) affect the health benefits of spending time in nature?

3 ACCESS AND BARRIERS



3. ACCESS AND BARRIERS

The opportunity to spend time in nature is not equally available to everyone. Having a park, trail, or nature space nearby is only one portion of accessibility. People may have practical, social, or personal barriers that make spending time outside difficult. Additionally, even a nearby nature space may not be truly accessible if people do not feel safe or welcome to use it.

Understanding these barriers is vital to identifying where environments, programs, policies, and community resources can make nature more accessible and help more people benefit from time outdoors.

We asked participants about their access to nearby nature, the top barriers that prevent them from spending time in nature, and whether they feel safe in the areas available to them. ***(Survey Questions 11, 12, 13)***

KEY FINDINGS

Figure 17: Barriers to spending time in nature.

What makes it hard for you to spend time in nature? (Select all that apply)	
Weather/climate	58.6%
Lack of time	52.1%
Insects or concern of wild animals	22.2%
Allergies or discomfort	16.8%
Lack of access	13.5%
Physical health or mobility	12.9%
Safety concerns	12.7%
Cost or lack of transportation	10.5%
I have no barriers to spending time in nature	8.4%
Mental health or well-being	8.3%
Not available	6%
I do not have anyone to go with	5.8%
Not interested	5.5%
Digital entertainment/screens	4.6%
Other	0.9%

Figure 18: Access to a green space within a 10-minute walk. | **Q12.** *Is there a park or public green space within a 10-minute walk from your home?*

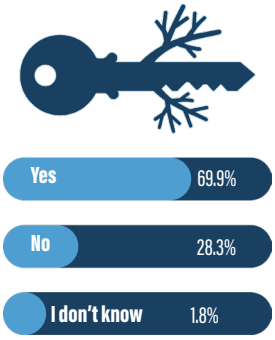
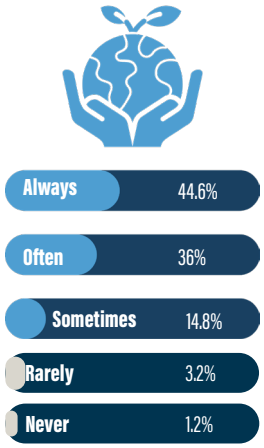


Figure 19: Perceived safety outdoors. | **Q13.** *Do you feel safe using the outdoor spaces near your home?*





KEY TAKEWAYS

- The top three barriers to spending time in nature reported by participants were weather/climate, lack of time, and insects or concerns of wild animals.
- Nearly **60%** of respondents listed weather or climate as something that makes it difficult for them to spend time in nature.
- **52%** indicated that a lack of time prevented them from spending time in nature.
- **70%** of participants indicated that they had a park or public green space within a 10-minute walk from their home. This shows that **30%** or 1/3 of participants do not have the same access.
- **80%** of participants stated that they often or always feel safe using the outdoor spaces near their home. This shows that 20% or 1/5 of participants do not feel safe in outdoor spaces near their home.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

These findings suggest that having nature nearby does not necessarily mean people are able to utilize it. While most participants reported having a park or public green space within a 10 -minute walk from home, and that they generally felt safe in nearby outdoor spaces, aspects like weather, lack of time and concerns about insects or wildlife were commonly cited barriers.

The heavy indication of weather and climate as a primary barrier may offer opportunities to make outdoor spaces more comfortable and usable under a wider range of conditions. Including features like tree canopy, shaded seating, water access, and other climate-responsive designs could help reduce barriers related to weather conditions.

At the same time, since over half of participants indicated that a lack of time prevented them from spending time outdoors, improving parks and green spaces may not be enough. Creating opportunities for people to experience nature as part of their everyday routines can make nature more accessible to people with busy schedules. This could include incorporating green space and nature contact into workplaces, commercial areas, schools, transportation corridors or other places where people already spend time. Supporting workplace practices that encourage outdoor breaks or access to green areas may make nature engagement more feasible during the day.

Additionally, despite a large portion of participants reporting having a park or green space in close proximity and generally feeling safe in outdoor spaces near their home, we cannot take this as a signal that all Americans' have the same opportunities to connect with nature in this way. Further analysis of the data is needed to see if these outcomes are reported equally across different demographic groups, urban versus rural populations, income levels, etc.

Overall, these findings indicate that access is about much more than proximity. It also depends on whether people have time, comfort, and opportunity to use the natural environments near them.



QUESTIONS RAISED

- What differences in nature access and perceived safety are seen across demographic groups?
- Are people accurately reporting green space within a 10 minute walk distance? Is that walk actually safe and realistic to utilize?
- What cultural and infrastructural changes are needed to ensure people have time to access nature?
- Does education around wildlife lessen people's perception of them as a barrier?



4 BELONGING

4. BELONGING

Feeling connected to nature is not only about time spent outdoors but also if people feel like nature is a place for them. Feeling a sense of belonging can shape how comfortable and welcome people feel in natural spaces and affects whether or not they choose to spend time there. We wanted to understand participants' sense of belonging in natural spaces to help us explore who may feel excluded in these settings.

We asked participants if they feel a sense of belonging in nature, if people like them spend time in nature, if they feel most themselves when in nature, or if they have avoided nature spaces because they didn't feel welcome there. ***(Survey Questions A4, A5, A6, A7)***

KEY FINDINGS

Figure 20: Sense of Belonging in Natural Spaces

"I feel a sense of belonging in natural spaces."

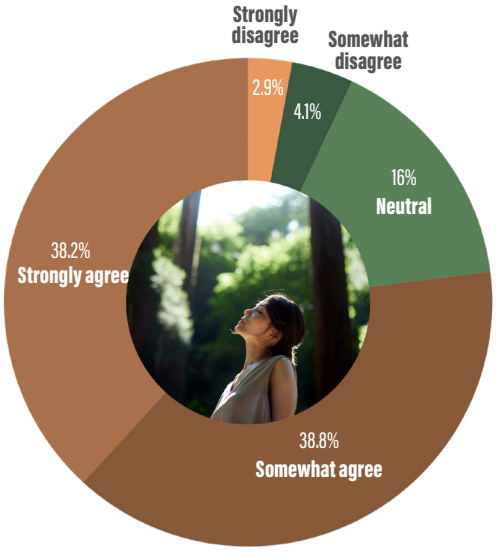


Figure 21: People "like me" spend time in nature

"I feel like people "like me" spend time in nature."

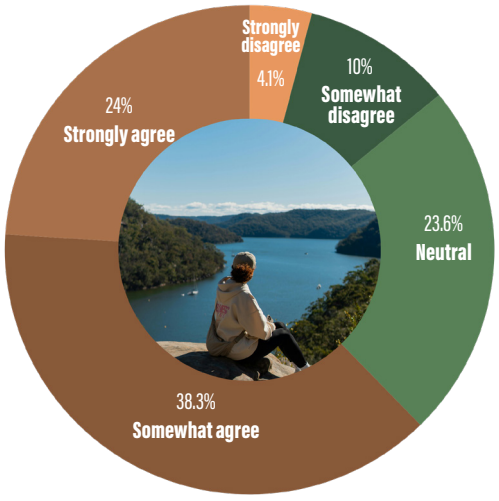


Figure 22: Feel like self in nature

"I feel most myself when I am in nature."

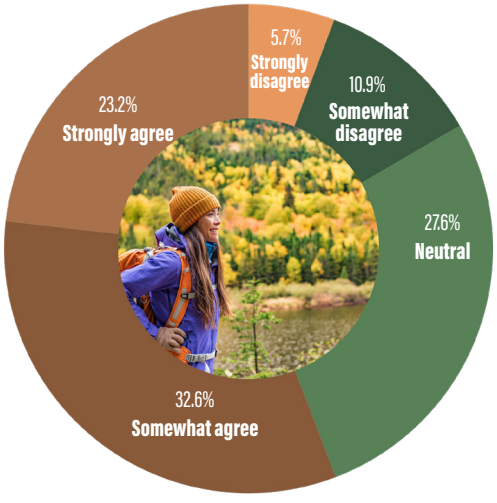
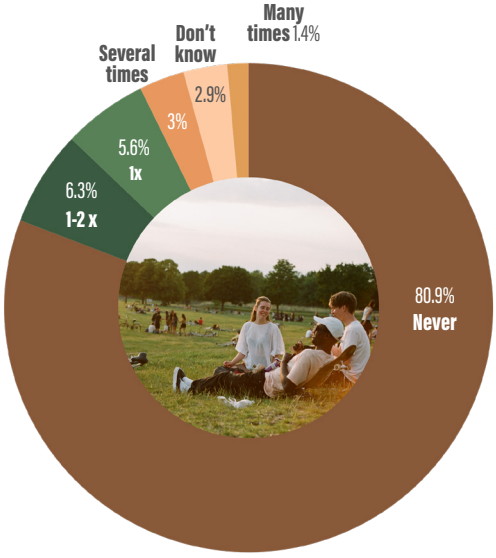


Figure 23: Feeling unwelcome in nature.

In the past year, have you ever avoided a park, natural area, trail, or other nature space (or left one early) because you didn't feel welcome there?





KEY TAKEWAYS

- **77%** of participants reported that they feel a sense of belonging in natural spaces.
- **56%** of participants indicated that they feel most themselves when in nature.
- **25%** of participants felt neutral or did not feel like people like them spend time in nature.
- **11%** of participants said they had avoided or left a natural space because they didn't feel welcome there.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

These findings suggest that nature can be a source of belonging and authenticity for many people. More than three-quarters of participants reported feeling a sense of belonging in natural spaces and over half said they feel most like themselves when in nature. At the same time, feeling a personal connection or sense of belonging may not translate to feeling socially represented or welcome. One in four participants were neutral about or did not feel that people "like them" spent time in nature and around one in ten had avoided or left a natural space because they did not feel welcome there.

This suggests a distinction between belonging felt in nature itself and those felt in outdoor culture or certain spaces. People can feel connected to the natural world while still running into social or cultural signals about who uses a space or who belongs there.

Further research is needed to explore which groups are experiencing a lack of welcome or lack of representation in natural spaces and if these experiences differ by demographic characteristics and other aspects of identity. By understanding this, we can identify ways to make natural spaces not only accessible but welcoming, inclusive, and representative.

QUESTIONS RAISED

- Who is more or less likely to feel a sense of belonging in nature?
- What makes a natural space welcoming or unwelcoming?
- Are certain types of nature more welcoming than others?
- Does feeling represented affect how often people spend time in nature?



5 NATURE AND HEALTH

5. NATURE AND HEALTH

Many participants in our survey indicated their mental health as a motivation for spending time in nature. We wanted to understand where Americans go when feeling stressed or unhappy and whether they recognize that nature has an impact on their health and well-being. We also wanted to explore the role of nature in healthcare to better understand how people use nature to support their health in daily life as well as how nature is being recognized as a formal part of healthcare.

We asked participants where they go to feel better when they are stressed or unhappy, how their mental and physical health are and if they feel they are impacted by nature. We also asked about their exposure to prescribed nature. Participants were fairly evenly distributed from poor to excellent health in their self evaluation of their health. ***(Survey Questions 1,16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 31, 32, 33, 34)***

KEY FINDINGS

Figure 24: Where do you go to feel better? | **Q1.** *When you are feeling stressed or down, where do you go to feel better? (Select up to three)*



Figure 25: Importance of time in nature for mental health

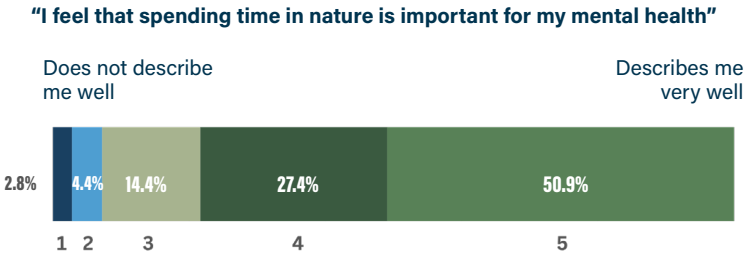


Figure 26: Importance of time in nature for physical health

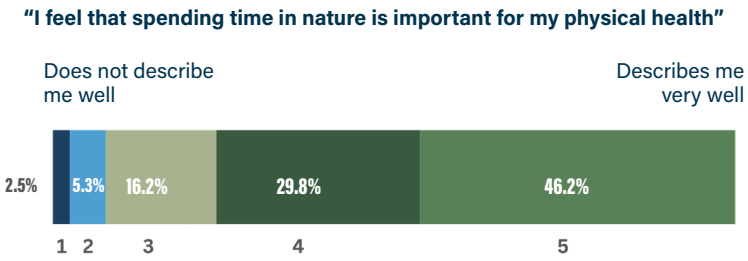


Figure 27: I feel good when spend time in nature

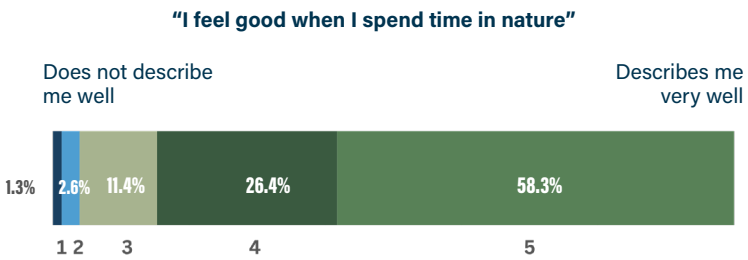


Figure 28: Nature prescription rates

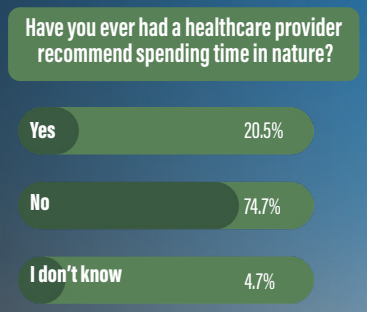
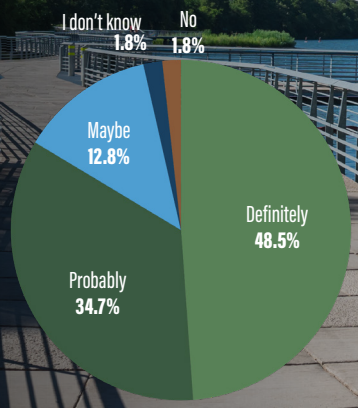


Figure 29: Nature prescription adoption
If a health professional recommended spending time in nature, would you follow through?



QUESTIONS RAISED

- What prevents healthcare providers from recommending time in nature?
- Does frequency or type of nature exposure matter for health and well-being outcomes?
- What role should healthcare and public health systems play in activating nature for health?
- Who is not using nature as a health resource and why?

KEY TAKEWAYS

- **66%** of participants state that they visit an outdoor space such as a park, natural area, trail or green space when they are stressed out or down in order to feel better.
- **95%** of participants are able to walk unassisted. And **80%** of participants report themselves to be in good or better health.
- **78%** of participants said that spending time in nature is important for their mental health
- **76%** said time in nature is important for their physical health.
- **85%** said they feel good when they spend time in nature.
- Only **20%** of participants have had a doctor recommend spending time in nature, but **84%** said they would be likely to follow through with time outside if it were recommended to them.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Participants see nature as an important part of their health and well-being and turn to it when they need support. Two-thirds said they visit an outdoor space when feeling stressed or down, while large majorities said spending time in nature is important for their mental and physical health and that they feel good when they spend time in nature.

These findings suggest that nature is not only something participants value but something many already use and recognize as a resource for coping with stress and supporting their well-being. Despite this, there is a noticeable gap in people's own use of nature for health and its use within formal healthcare settings. Only 20% of participants have had a doctor recommend spending time in nature, yet 84% said they would be likely to follow through if it were recommended.

Overall, the results suggest the appetite for nature as a health resource may be greater than its current use in healthcare. Opportunities to expand on this include integrating nature prescriptions into routine care, creating referral pathways to nature places and programming, or exploring insurance or public health funding for nature-based interventions. Programs like ParkRx America, Walk with a Doc, and forest therapy are some existing opportunities for nature based health interventions that could be expanded.

6

ENVIRONMENTAL BELIEFS AND NATURE RELATEDNESS

How people relate to the natural world is affected by a combination of attitudes, experiences, and personal connections over time. This section explores participants' environmental perspectives, formative experiences with nature, and their sense of connection to the natural world. These provide context for understanding the different ways people engage with nature and the role it may play in their lives.



6.1 ENVIRONMENTAL BELIEFS

Relationships with nature are shaped by more than just how often we spend time outside. Values, childhood experiences, and people who introduce us to nature can all influence how we connect with and care for the natural world. We asked about the importance of nature, environmental beliefs and actions, and childhood experiences with nature to better understand how these may contribute to their relationships with nature today and how these might influence engagement with nature as a health resource.

We asked participants questions about the importance of nature, their beliefs and behaviors around environmental stewardship, about who encouraged them to spend time in nature and their interactions with it in their youth.
(Survey Questions 14, 15, A1, A2, A3, A8, A9, A10)

KEY FINDINGS

Figure 30: Importance of protecting nature
How important is protecting nature to you?

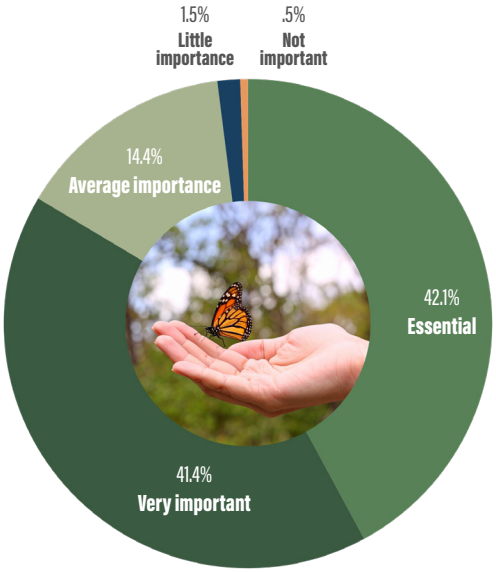


Figure 31: Climate Change Concern
How concerned are you about the effects of climate change?

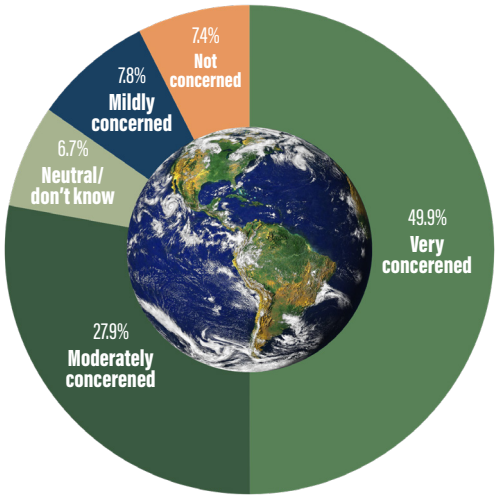


Figure 32: Biodiversity importance
How important is it to you that the nature you experience includes a variety of plants/animals, and natural features?

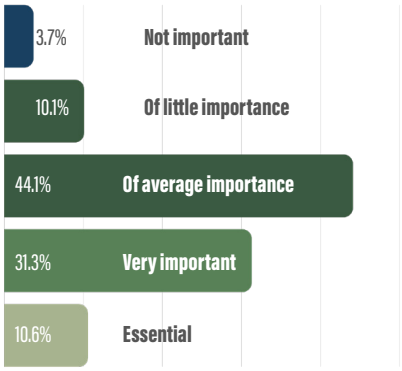


Figure 33: Pro-environmental Behavior Frequency
How often do you take specific actions to protect nature in your daily life? (examples include refusing straws, recycling, reducing carbon footprint, etc.)



Figure 34: Importance of wild natural spaces

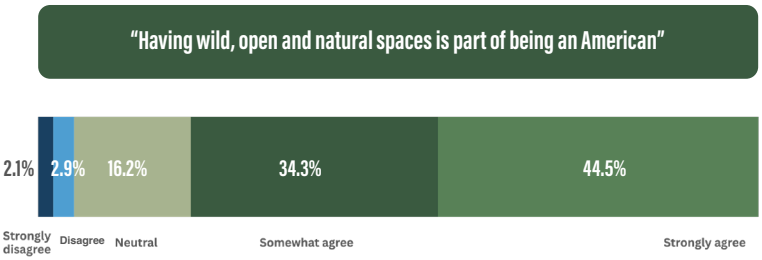




Figure 35: Time in nature as a child

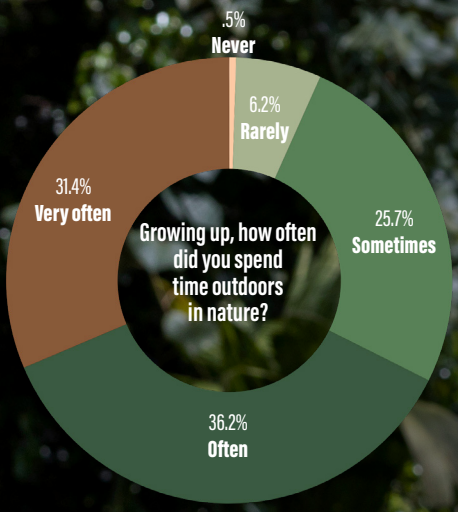
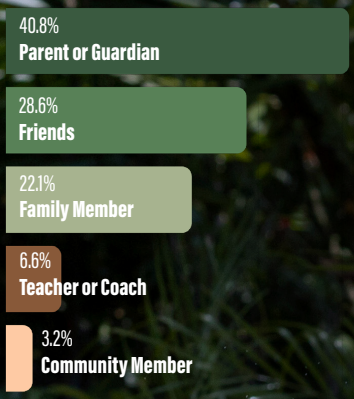


Figure 36: Who encouraged or shared a love of nature with you as a child? Select all that apply.



KEY TAKEWAYS

- **83%** of participants reported that protecting nature is very important or essential to them.
- **78%** said they are moderately to very concerned about climate change.
- **42%** reported that having a variety of plants/animals and natural features is very important or essential to them when experiencing nature, while **44%** reported that it was of average importance to them.
- **46%** report that they often or always take action to protect nature in their daily lives.
- **79%** said that having wild, open and natural spaces is part of being American. This was almost the same across people who identified as being conservative, moderate, and liberal in political views.
- **68%** said that growing up they often or very often spent time outdoors in nature.
- Parents, Friends, and Family members were noted as the top people who encouraged a love of nature in our participants when they were children.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Findings suggest nature is more than just a location for recreation and leisure as participants reported that nature is something they value, feel responsible for protecting, and often connect with a sense of identity both as individuals and as Americans. There was strong agreement that wild, open, and natural spaces are part of being American across political identities, suggesting that nature is a shared value even among groups that may differ on other issues.

Participants also showed an affinity for more biodiverse nature experience indicating that nature should not be viewed solely as presence or absence of green space but also in terms of the qualities of the natural space. Protecting natural landscapes and creating ecologically diverse parks and nature spaces may provide nature experiences that people value more than those in a uniform landscape like large areas of grass found in recreational fields.

There also may be some disparity between valuing nature and routinely acting to protect it. While 83% of participants said protecting nature is very important or essential to them, less than half indicated that they often or always take action to protect nature in their daily lives. This gap may point to opportunities to make environmental stewardship more accessible, practical, and connected to the ways people already value and experience nature.

Additionally, participants' childhood experiences highlight the potential importance of early exposure to nature. Many participants spent substantial time outdoors as children and had parents, friends and family members that encouraged them to do so. While we cannot say that childhood experience caused participants' current attitude towards nature, creating opportunities for children and families to experience nature together may help create lasting connections with the natural world.



6.2 NATURE RELATEDNESS

Nature relatedness describes the extent to which people feel connected to, value, and identify with the natural world. Understanding this connection can help us better understand how people think about, notice and value nature in their everyday lives.

We asked about nature relatedness because a person's connection to nature may shape their interest in spending time outdoors, what experiences they seek out, and the benefits they might receive from nature engagement. This measure also lets us see how connection varies across the population or how it might relate to other factors like health and well-being.

We used a brief nature relatedness score developed by Nisbet and Zelenski in 2013 to determine participants' nature relatedness [18]. ***(Survey Question 39)***

KEY FINDINGS

Figure 37: My ideal vacation spot would be a remote, wilderness area.

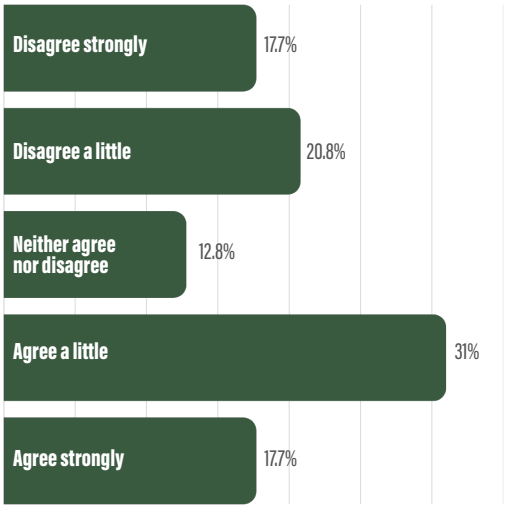


Figure 38: I always think about how my actions affect the environment.

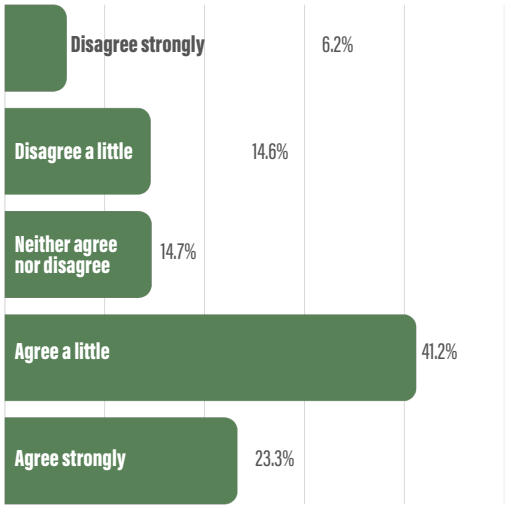


Figure 39: My connection to nature and the environment is a part of my spirituality.

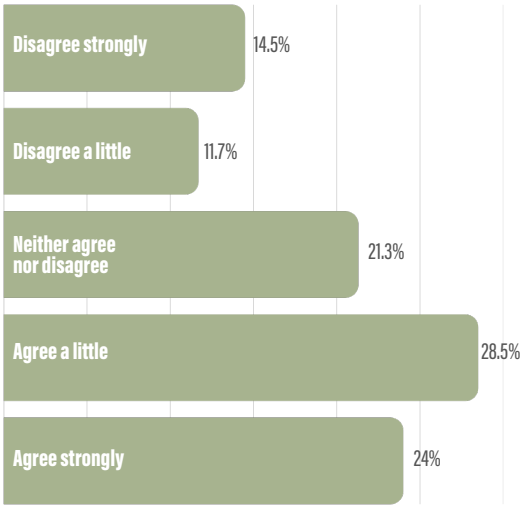


Figure 40: I take notice of wildlife wherever I am.

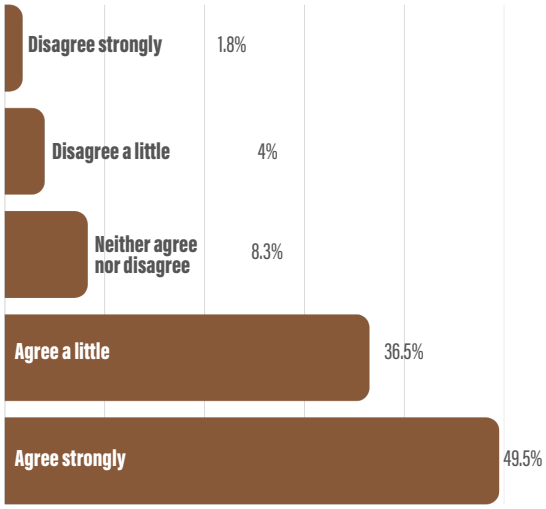


Figure 41: My relationship to nature is an important part of who I am.

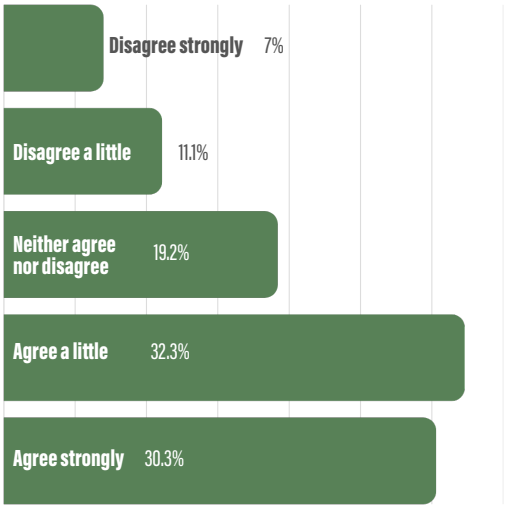


Figure 42: I feel very connected to all living things and the earth.

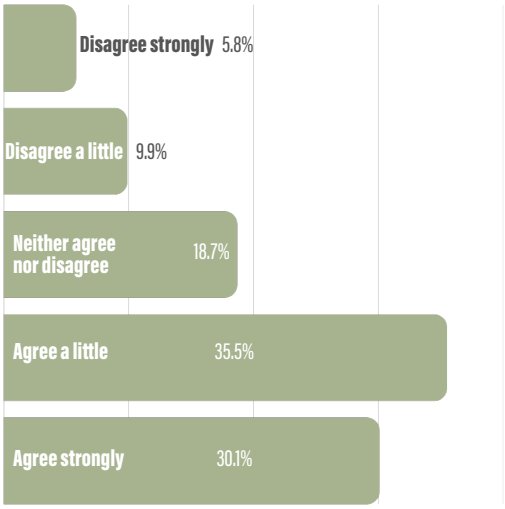


Figure 43: Time in nature vs Nature Relatedness
In the last week, how much time have you spent in nature?

Nature Relatedness, mean (SD)	Overall	4 or more hours	2-3 hours	1-2 hours	None <30min, <1h
	3.63	3.91	3.73	3.53	3.21







KEY TAKEWAYS

- The average Nature Relatedness Score of participants was **3.63** out of five. People with higher nature relatedness spent more time in nature.
- Only **18%** said that they strongly agree that their preferred vacation destination is a remote, wilderness area.
- **65%** said they think about how their actions impact the environment.
- Over **50%** consider their connection to nature to be part of their spirituality.
- **86%** take notice of wildlife wherever they are.
- **63%** consider their relationship to nature to be an important part of who they are.
- **66%** say they feel connected to all living things and the earth.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Overall, findings suggest that nature holds a meaningful place in many Americans' lives. The average Nature Relatedness score was 3.6 on a five-point scale, and majorities of respondents reported noticing wildlife, thinking about the environmental impact of their actions, considering nature an important part of who they are, and feeling connected to living things and the earth.

At the same time, connection to nature did not necessarily indicate a preference for wilderness or remote outdoor experiences. Fewer than half of respondents agreed that their ideal vacation would be in a remote wilderness area, while a much larger portion report noticing wildlife or feeling personally connected to nature, affirming that nature relatedness may be expressed through everyday experiences with nature and not only through recreation in wild or remote locations.

Higher nature relatedness was also associated with more time spent in nature. This could indicate that feeling connected to nature may encourage people to seek out more time outdoors, while spending more time in nature may also help strengthen that connection. Because these survey findings show associations rather than cause and effect, they cannot tell us which comes first.

These findings may be important for understanding the relationship between nature and health. If people differ in how connected they feel to nature, they may also differ in how often they seek out nature, what kinds of experiences they find appealing, and potentially how they experience the benefits associated with time in nature. Differences in nature relatedness across demographic groups may therefore provide additional context for understanding disparities in nature exposure and access.

ENVIRONMENTAL BELIEFS AND NATURE RELATEDNESS SUMMARY

How people value, perceive, relate to, and experience nature may also shape their engagement with nature. Most respondents place importance on protecting nature, express concern about climate change, and see wild and natural spaces as part of being an American. But nature also has personal meaning. Many participants notice wildlife in their everyday lives, identify their relationship with nature as part of who they are, and feel connected to other living things and the earth. However, connection to nature does not appear to depend on a preference for remote wilderness, suggesting that relationships with nature can be supported through ordinary and accessible encounters with nature, not only through traditional outdoor recreation or wilderness experiences.

The findings also suggest potential relationships among early experiences, present-day connection to nature, and nature contact. Many participants spent significant time outdoors as children and identified parents, other family members, and friends as people who encouraged their connection with nature. In adulthood, people with higher nature relatedness also reported spending more time in nature. This supports previous research findings that indicate that time spent in nature is associated with increased connection to nature and stronger pro-environmental beliefs and behaviors [19]. These relationships should be further examined to determine if nature relatedness may be supported by early exposure to nature or if there is a reciprocal relationship between nature relatedness and exposure to nature.

Finally, valuing nature does not always translate directly into environmental behavior. While 83% said protecting nature was very important or essential, only 46% reported often or always taking actions to protect nature in their daily lives. This presents an opportunity to find ways to connect people's values, their connection with nature, and their opportunities to spend time in nature with accessible, convenient options to support those beliefs with action.

QUESTIONS RAISED

- How does nature relatedness influence nature contact?
- Does exposure to nature build nature relatedness?
- How important are childhood experiences on later pro-environmental beliefs and behaviors?
- What kinds of nature experiences matter most?
- To what extent does biodiversity impact nature contact?
- Can wildlife focused programming be used as a way to build nature relatedness?





CONCLUSION

These survey findings show that nature already plays an important role in Americans' lives. People turn to nature to relax, connect with others, be active, cope with stress, and support their mental and physical well-being. However, there is still a gap between recognizing the value of nature and being able to experience it consistently.

Nearly half of participants spent less than two hours in nature in the previous week, and proximity to green space alone does not guarantee access. Time, weather, comfort, belonging, safety, and other factors can all shape whether people are able to make nature part of their daily lives.

These findings point to the importance of making nature more accessible and routine by incorporating it into the places people already live, work, learn, and receive healthcare, while addressing barriers that can make nature difficult to access or enjoy. They also highlight a role for healthcare and public health, as most participants recognize nature as beneficial to their health and would be receptive to recommendations from healthcare providers.

Ultimately, increasing nature contact is about more than encouraging people to get outside. It requires creating the conditions for nature to be a realistic, welcoming, and meaningful part of everyday life. Doing so can help more people experience the benefits of nature while strengthening a reciprocal relationship in which people have opportunities to care for and protect the natural environments that support individual, community, and planetary health.

AUTHORS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Report Author: Taylor Kennedy Frenchi, Texan by Nature, Nature and Health Alliance
Contact: Manager@naturehealthalliance.org



REFERENCES & APPENDIX

REFERENCES

1. Jimenez, M. P., DeVille, N. V., Elliott, E. G., Schiff, J. E., Wilt, G. E., Hart, J. E., & James, P. (2021). Associations between Nature Exposure and Health: A Review of the Evidence. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 18(9), 4790. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18094790
2. Shanahan, D., Bush, R., Gaston, K. et al. Health Benefits from Nature Experiences Depend on Dose. Sci Rep 6, 28551 (2016). https://doi.org/10.1038/srep28551
3. Arbuthnott, K. D. (2023). Nature exposure and social health: Prosocial behavior, social cohesion, and effect pathways. Journal of Environmental Psychology, 90, 102109.
4. Andersen, L., Corazon, S. S., & Stigsdotter, U. K. (2021). Nature exposure and its effects on immune system functioning: a systematic review. International journal of environmental research and public health, 18(4), 1416.
5. DeVille, N. V., Tomasso, L. P., Stoddard, O. P., Wilt, G. E., Horton, T. H., Wolf, K. L., ... & James, P. (2021). Time spent in nature is associated with increased pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors. International journal of environmental research and public health, 18(14), 7498.
6. White, M.P., Alcock, I., Grellier, J. et al. Spending at least 120 minutes a week in nature is associated with good health and wellbeing. Sci Rep 9, 7730 (2019). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-019-44097-3
7. Meredith GR, Rakow DA, Eldermire ERB, Madsen CG, Shelley SP and Sachs NA (2020) Minimum Time Dose in Nature to Positively Impact the Mental Health of College-Aged Students, and How to Measure It: A Scoping Review. Front. Psychol. 10:2942. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02942
8. Bettmann, J. E., Speelman, E., Jolley, A., & Casucci, T. (2025). A systematic review and meta-analysis on the effect of nature exposure dose on adults with mental illness. Behavioral Sciences, 15(2), 153.
9. Mason, L., Ronconi, A., Scrimin, S. et al. Short-Term Exposure to Nature and Benefits for Students' Cognitive Performance: a Review. Educ Psychol Rev 34, 609–647 (2022). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-021-09631-8
10. G.N. Bratman,J.P. Hamilton,K.S. Hahn,G.C. Daily, & J.J. Gross, Nature experience reduces rumination and subgenual prefrontal cortex activation, Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A. 112 (28) 8567-8572, https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1510459112 (2015).
11. Li, Q. Effect of forest bathing trips on human immune function. Environ Health Prev Med 15, 9–17 (2010). https://doi.org/10.1007/s12199-008-0068-3
12. Kellert, S. R., Case, D. J., Escher, D., Witter, D. J., Mikels-Carrasco, J., & Seng, P. T. (2017). The Nature of Americans National Report: Disconnection and Recommendations for Reconnection. DJ Case & Associates.
13. Kephart, L. (2022). How Racial Residential Segregation Structures Access and Exposure to Greenness and Green Space: A Review. Environmental Justice, 15(4), 204-213. https://doi.org/10.1089/env.2021.0039
14. Reinert, M, Nguyen, T & Fritze, D. (October 2025). "The State of Mental Health in America 2025." Mental Health America, Alexandria VA.
15. Palaniappan LP, Allen NB, Almarzooq ZI, Anderson CAM, Arora P, Avery CL, Baker-Smith CM, Bansal N, Currie ME, Earlie RS, Fan W, Fetterman JL, Barone Gibbs B, Heard DG, Hiremath S, Hong H, Hyacinth HI, Ibeh C, Jiang T, Johansen MC, Kazi DS, Ko D, Kwan TW, Leppert MH, Li Y, Magnani JW, Martin KA, Martin SS, Michos ED, Mussolino ME, Ogungbe O, Parikh NI, Perez MV, Perman SM, Sarraju A, Shah NS, Springer MV, St-Onge M-P, Thacker EL, Tierney S, Urbut SM, Van Spall HGC, Voeks JH, Whelton SP, Wong SS, Zhao J, Khan SS; on behalf of the American Heart Association Council on Epidemiology and Prevention Statistics Committee and Stroke Statistics Committee. 2026 Heart disease and stroke statistics: a report of US and global data from the American Heart Association. Circulation. Published online January 21, 2026. doi: 10.1161/CIR.0000000000001412
16. Nakshine VS, Thute P, Khatib MN, Sarkar B. Increased Screen Time as a Cause of Declining Physical, Psychological Health, and Sleep Patterns: A Literary Review. Cureus. 2022 Oct 8;14(10):e30051. doi: 10.7759/cureus.30051. PMID: 36381869; PMCID: PMC9638701.
17. Neophytou, E., Manwell, L.A. & Eikelboom, R. Effects of Excessive Screen Time on Neurodevelopment, Learning, Memory, Mental Health, and Neurodegeneration: a Scoping Review. Int J Ment Health Addiction 19, 724–744 (2021). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-019-00182-2
18. Nisbet, E. and J. Zelenski (2013). "The NR-6: a new brief measure of nature relatedness." Frontiers in Psychology 4(813).
19. DeVille, N. V., Tomasso, L. P., Stoddard, O. P., Wilt, G. E., Horton, T. H., Wolf, K. L., Brymer, E., Kahn, P. H., Jr., & James, P. (2021). Time Spent in Nature Is Associated with Increased Pro-Environmental Attitudes and Behaviors. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 18(14), 7498. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18147498

APPENDIX

American Nature and Health Survey Questions 2025

1. When you are feeling stressed or down, where do you go to feel better? **Select up to 3.**

    a. A place of worship or religious setting
    b. A recreational facility like pool, gym, or sports complex
    c. A bar, restaurant, cafe, or other food/drinking place
    d. A library, museum, or other civic institution
    e. A shopping center or retail store
    f. An outdoor space such as a park, natural area, trail or greenspace
    g. My home or somebody else's home
    h. Online gaming or virtual setting
    i. My workplace
    j. Other (Open ended text box)

2. Which of the following are the top three places that you spend time in nature? **Select up to 3.**

    a. Local park
    b. National park or protected area
    c. Backyard or garden
    d. Beach/Lake/River or other body of water
    e. Forest
    f. Golf course
    g. Urban greenway/trail
    h. Indoor plants or green walls
    i. Schoolyard
    j. Sports field
    k. Agricultural area
    l. Landscaping around my residence
    m. Other (Open ended text box)

The following questions are about the time you have spent outdoors in green or natural spaces. Most people define these as visits to… green spaces in towns and cities (e.g., parks, yards and gardens, rivers, trails), the countryside (e.g., farmland, forests, mountains, hills, lakes, rivers, springs, trails, deserts), the coast (e.g., beaches, lakes, dunes, shorelines) and activities in the ocean, intercoastal, marsh, ponds and wetlands, Do not count time spent outside but not in green or natural spaces, including parking lots and roads.

3. In the past 7 days, did you spend more than 1 hour in the following places?
   - Your yard, garden, or outdoor space at your residence
     - Y or N
   - Recreation areas (ballfields and playgrounds, etc.)
     - Y or N
   - A local public park in addition to recreation areas
     - Y or N
   - A hiking trail or walking path
     - Y or N
   - A state park
     - Y or N
   - A remote or wild area (including National Parks)
     Y or N

4. In the last month, how often on average have you spent outdoors in nature?
   a. Every day
   b. More than twice a week, but not every day
   c. Twice a week
   d. Once a week
   e. Once every 2-3 months
   f. Less often
   g. Never

5. In the last week, how much total time did you spend outdoors in nature?
   a. Less than 1 hour
   b. 1 to less than 2 hours
   c. 2 to 3 hours
   d. 4 to 6 hours
   e. 7 to 10 hours
   f. More than 10 hours

6. During which months do you spend the most time outdoors? (Select up to 3)
   a. January
   b. February
   c. March
   d. April
   e. May
   f. June
   g. July
   h. August
   i. September
   j. October
   k. November
   l. December

7. How often do you take vacations centered around nature or the outdoors?
    a. Never
    b. Less than once a year
    c. 1-2 times/year
    d. 3-4 times/year
    e. More than 4 times/year

8. In the last year, what activities have you done in natural settings? (Select up to 3).
    a. Socializing (Examples: Spending time with friends and peers, Attending community events)
    b. Family-based activities
    c. Spending time with pets (Example: Walking a dog)
    d. Sports (Examples: Exercise, Running, Biking, Basketball)
    e. Playing (Examples: Fort building, Nature games, Playground time)
    f. Recreation (Examples: Fishing, Hiking, Boating, Swimming, Camping)
    g. Learning (Examples: Environmental Education Programs or Nature-based Learning)
    h. In Service (Examples: Habitat Restoration, Tree Planting, Conservation)
    i. Work or Hobby (Examples: Landscaping, Forestry, Gardening, Animal Husbandry)
    j. Fitness and Well-being (Examples: Running, Biking, Yoga, Meditation)
    k. Sports (Examples: Raquetball, Basketball, Baseball)
    l. Leisure (Examples: Picknicking, Grilling, Reading, Walking)
    m. Other_please specify

9. Who do you typically spend time in nature with? (Select up to 3).
    a. Alone
    b. Partner/Spouse
    c. Children
    d. Other family members
    e. Friends
    f. Pets
    g. Colleagues
    h. Other community members
    i. Other (Open text box)

10. What are your main reasons for spending time in nature? (Select up to 3).
    a. Physical health
    b. Mental well-being
    c. Recreation
    d. To attend events
    e. Family obligations
    f. For my pets
    g. Social connection
    h. Spiritual reasons
    i. Curiosity/Learning
    j. Doctor recommendation
    k. I don’t spend time in nature
    l. Other (Open text)

11. What makes it hard for you to spend time in nature? (Select all that apply).
    a. Not available
    b. Safety concerns
    c. Lack of access
    d. Lack of time
    e. Physical health or mobility
    f. Mental health or well-being
    g. Not interested
    h. Insects or concern of wild animals
    i. Allergies or discomfort
    j. Weather/Climate
    k. Cost or lack of transportation
    l. Digital entertainment/screens
    m. I do not have anyone to go with
    n. Other (Open text box)

12. Is there a park or public green space within a 10-minute walk from your home?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. I don’t know

13. Do you feel safe using the outdoor spaces near your home?
    a. Always
    b. Often
    c. Sometimes
    d. Rarely
    e. Never

14. How important is protecting nature to you?
    a. Essential
    b. Very Important
    c. Of average importance
    d. Of little importance
    e. Not at all important

15. How concerned are you about the effects of climate change?
    a. Very concerned
    b. Moderately concerned
    c. Neutral/I don’t know
    d. Mildly concerned
    e. Unconcerned

16. Have you ever had a healthcare provider recommend spending time in nature?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. I don’t know

17. If a health professional recommended spending time in nature, would you follow through with time outside?
    a. Definitely
    b. Probably
    c. Maybe
    d. No
    e. I don't know

.

18. I feel that spending time in nature or the outdoors is important for my emotional or mental health.
    (Sliding scale)
    1 Does not describe me well
    2
    3 Sort of describes me
    4
    5 Describes me very well

19. I feel that spending time in nature or the outdoors is important for my physical health.
    (Sliding scale)
    1 Does not describe me well
    2
    3 Sort of describes me
    4
    5 Describes me very well

20. I feel good when I spend time in nature or the outdoors.
    (Sliding scale)
    1 Does not describe me well
    2
    3 Sort of describes me
    4
    5 Describes me very well

<u>Background/Demographics:</u>

21. What is your age?
    a. 18-24
    b. 25-34
    c. 35-44
    d. 45-54
    e. 55-64
    f. 65-74
    g. 75-84
    h. 85 or older

22. What is your race and/or ethnicity? Select all that apply.
    a. American Indian or Alaska Native
    b. Asian
    c. Black or African American
    d. Hispanic or Latino
    e. Middle Eastern or North African
    f. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
    g. White
    h. Other

23. What gender do you identify as?
    a. Female
    b. Male
    c. Prefer to self-describe -> *open text*

24. What is the highest level of school or degree you have <u>completed</u>?
    If currently enrolled, select the previous grade or highest degree received.
    a. Did not finish High School
    b. High School Graduate or GED
    c. Some College
    d. Associate's degree (ex. AS, AS)
    e. Bachelor's degree (ex. BA, BS)
    f. Master's degree (ex. MA, MS, MBA)
    g. Professional degree beyond a bachelor's degree (ex. MD, DDS, JD)
    h. Doctorate degree (ex. PhD, EdD)

25. Last year, in 2024, what was your total household income, from all sources, before taxes?
    a. Less than $10,000
    b. $10,000 to $14,999
    c. $15,000 to $24,999
    d. $25,000 to $34,999
    e. $35,000 to $49,999
    f. $50,000 to $74,999
    g. $75,000 to $99,999
    h. $100,000 to $149,999
    i. $150,000 to $199,999
    j. $200,000 or more

26. Which of these best describes your current marital status?
    a. Never married
    b. Married or civil union
    c. Divorced
    d. Separated
    e. Widowed
    f. Living with a partner

27. Which of the following best describes your employment status? (Check all that apply)
    a. Employed full-time
    b. Employed part-time
    c. Self-employed full-time
    d. Self-employed part-time

e. Not employed, looking for work
f. Not employed and not looking for work
g. Not employed, unable to work due to disability or illness
h. Retired
i. Full-time Student
j. Full-time Caregiver

28. What is the zip code of your primary residence?
5-digit text box

29. How many people (including yourself) live in your household?
Numeric text box

[*If value greater than 1]-*
Are you the parent or guardian of any children under 18 now living in your household?
a. Yes
b. No

[*If previous answer= YES]-*
How many children of each age? Enter the total number of children in the box that corresponds to their age:

☐ 0-5
☐ 6-12 (This will trigger the ancillary Children's study (Form B))
☐ 13-18

30. Have you ever served in the US military?
a. Yes, I am currently serving on active duty
b. Yes, I am currently serving in the Reserves or National Guard
c. Yes, I am a Veteran or retired service member
d. No, but I am the spouse of an active or retired service member
e. No, but I am the child or dependent of an active or retired service member
f. No

31. Would you say, in general, your health is–?
a. Poor
b. Fair
c. Good
d. Very Good
e. Excellent
f. Not Sure

32. Thinking about your physical health, which includes physical illness and injury, for how many days during the past 30 days was your physical health **not** good?
Drop down (0-30)

33. Thinking about your mental health, which includes stress, depression, and problems with emotions, for how many days during the past 30 days was your mental health **not** good?
Drop down (0-30)

34. Are you able to walk unassisted for 10 minutes at a time?
    a. Yes
    b. Yes, with the use of a cane or walker
    c. No, I use a wheelchair
    d. No

35. In relation to social issues, which of the following do you most identify with:
    a. Very Conservative
    b. Conservative
    c. Moderate
    d. Liberal
    e. Very Liberal

36. In relation to fiscal issues, which of the following do you most identify with:
    a. Very Conservative
    b. Conservative
    c. Moderate
    d. Liberal
    e. Very Liberal

37. Do you have any pets in the home?
    a. Yes *(IF selected, trigger question 38)*
    b. No

38. If yes, check all that apply:
    a. Dog
    b. Cat
    c. Bird
    d. Reptile/Amphibian
    e. Fish
    f. Other: (Open text box)

For each of the following, please rate the extent to which you agree with each statement, using the scale from 1 to 5 as shown below. Please respond as you really feel, rather than how you think “most people” feel.

		Disagree Strongly	Disagree a Little	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree a Little	Agree Strongly
1.	My ideal vacation spot would be a remote, wilderness area.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I always think about how my actions affect the environment.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	My connection to nature and the environment is a part of my spirituality.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I take notice of wildlife wherever I am.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	My relationship to nature is an important part of who I am.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I feel very connected to all living things and the earth.	1	2	3	4	5

Form A Optional Survey

A1. Growing up, how often did you spend time outdoors in nature?
   a. Never
   b. Rarely
   c. Sometimes
   d. Often
   e. Very Often

A2. Who (if anyone) encouraged or shared a love of nature with you as a child?
   a. Parent or Guardian
   b. Family member
   c. Teacher or Coach
   d. Friends
   e. Community member
   f. Other
   g. No one

A3. What was your childhood zip code?
OPEN TEXT

A4. I feel a sense of belonging in natural spaces
   a. Strongly Disagree
   b. Somewhat Disagree
   c. Neutral
   d. Somewhat Agree
   e. Strongly Agree

A5. I feel like people “like me” spend time in nature
   a. Strongly Disagree
   b. Somewhat Disagree
   c. Neutral
   d. Somewhat Agree
   e. Strongly Agree

A6. I feel most myself when I am in nature
   a. Strongly Disagree
   b. Somewhat Disagree
   c. Neutral
   d. Somewhat Agree
   e. Strongly Agree

A7. In the past year, have you ever avoided a park, natural area, trail or other nature space (or left one early) because you didn't feel welcome there?

a. Many times
b. Several times
c. 1-2 times
d. One time
e. Never
f. I don't know

A8. How important is it to you that the nature you experience includes a variety of plants/animals, and natural features?

a. Not at all important
b. Of little importance
c. Of average importance
d. Very important
e. Essential

A9. How often do you take specific actions to protect nature in your daily life? (examples include refusing straws, recycling, reducing carbon footprint, etc.)

a. Never
b. Rarely
c. Sometimes
d. Often
e. Very often

A10. Do you agree with the following statement? "Having wild, open and natural spaces is part of being an American"

a. Strongly Agree
b. Agree
c. Neutral
d. Disagree
e. Strongly Disagree

A11. How often do you use your phone for any purpose while in nature?

a. Never
b. Rarely
c. Sometimes
d. Often
e. Very often

A12. When in nature, I use my phone, apps, or other technology to __. Select all that apply.

a. Identify species
b. Track my physical activity or hiking progress
c. To navigate
d. Take photos or videos
e. Communicate with others
f. Listen to media (music, audiobooks, podcasts, etc.)
g. Engage in social media
h. I do not use my phone, apps or technology for any purpose while in nature
i. Other

A13. Do you agree with the following statement? “Spending time in nature helps me take a break from screens”.

f. Strongly Agree
g. Agree
h. Neutral
i. Disagree
j. Strongly Disagree

Form B- Ancillary Children’s Survey

You have qualified for an additional survey.

1. How many children under 18 currently live in your household?

   Open numerical- (cap at 9)

For the next set of questions, please answer the following questions about the child in your household who has the next upcoming birthday. For example, if you have two children, and child A had a birthday last month, and child B has a birthday in three months, think of child B when completing this survey. If you have more than one child with the same upcoming birthday, choose one of them to focus on. This child will be your “focus child”- **please respond about this child only.**

2. Please indicate the age of the focus child in your household.
   a. 0-2 years
   b. 3-5 years
   c. 6-9 years
   d. 10-13 years
   e. 14-17 years

We are asking about the time your focus child has spent “outdoors in nature.” Most people define these as visits to…

- Green spaces in towns and cities (e.g., parks, yards and gardens, rivers, trails)
- The countryside (e.g., farmland, forests, deserts, mountains, hills, lakes, rivers, springs, trails)
- The coast (e.g., beaches, lakes, dunes, shorelines) and activities in the ocean, intercoastal, marsh, ponds and wetlands

When responding to the survey questions:

- Please **do not** count time spent outside but not in green or natural spaces, including metal and plastic playgrounds, on artificial surfaces (e.g. parking lots and roads), and sports fields.
- Please count the time spent outside when your child can interact with natural elements such as animals, plants, and landscape views.

3. Where does the focus child in your household most often spend time outdoors in nature? (Choose up to 3)
   a. Our backyard or area near our home
   b. Schoolyard or child care grounds
   a. Local park or green space
   b. Trail, forest, desert, or wild area
   c. Lake, river, beach, or ocean
   d. Other _Please specify
   e. They don’t spend time in nature

4. **In the last 7 days**, how much time did the focus child in your household spend outdoors in nature?
    a. 0 minutes (They did not spend any time outdoors in nature)
    b. 30 minutes or less
    c. 30-60 minutes
    d. 1-3 hours
    e. 4-6 hours
    f. 7 or more hours

5. How does the amount of time your focus child spent outdoors in nature in the last seven days compare to a typical week for your child?
    a. My child spent **more** time outdoors last week than is typical
    b. My child spent **less** time outdoors last week than is typical
    c. My child spent **about the same** time outdoors last week as is typical
    d. I'm not sure

6. What does the focus child in your household typically do when they spend time in nature? (Choose up to 3)
    a. Socializing (Examples: Spending time with friends and peers, Attending community events)
    b. Family-based activities
    c. Spending time with pets (Example: Walking a dog)
    d. Sports (Examples: Exercise, Running, Biking, Basketball)
    e. Playing (Examples: Fort building, Nature games, Playground time)
    f. Recreation (Examples: Fishing, Hiking, Boating, Swimming, Camping)
    g. Learning (Examples: Environmental Education Programs or Nature-based Learning)
    h. In Service (Examples: Habitat Restoration, Tree Planting, Conservation)
    i. Work or Hobby (Examples: Landscaping, Forestry, Gardening, Animal Husbandry)
    j. Fitness and Well-being (Examples: Running, Biking, Yoga, Meditation)
    k. Sports (Examples: Racquetball, Basketball, Baseball)
    l. Leisure (Examples: Picnicking, Grilling, Reading, Walking)
    m. Other_please specify

7. In the last year, did the focus child in your household participate in any of these nature-based programs? (Check all that apply.)
    a. Nature-based preschool or forest preschool
    b. School-based outdoor or environmental education programs (such as a school garden, a field trip to a nature center, a school-sponsored overnight camp, or attendance at an environmental- or outdoor learning-focused school)
    c. After school or out-of-school time programs (such as scouting or outdoor clubs)
    d. Environmental education or outdoor education-oriented summer camps
    e. Other_please specify

8. What makes it difficult for the child in your home to spend more time in nature? Select all that apply.
    a. It's not safe for my child to spend time outdoors in nature near our home
    b. My child is too young to spend time outdoors in nature by themselves
    c. We live too far away - there is no nature nearby
    d. We don't have transportation to get to natural spaces
    e. We don't have enough time - we're too busy to spend time in nature
    f. The weather, climate, or temperature makes it difficult or uncomfortable
    g. The equipment needed and/or nature programming is too expensive
    h. I am worried about what other adults might think if my child plays outdoors without supervision
    i. Something else

9. When you think about your focus child's experience, do any of these factors make it difficult for them to spend time outdoors in nature?
    a. They are scared or do not feel safe in natural places
    b. They dislike nature or getting dirty (bugs, dirt, etc.)
    c. They have physical health challenges, such as mobility, allergies, or discomfort outdoors
    d. Their mental health or well-being makes time outdoors in nature challenging
    e. They are not interested in being outdoors in nature
    f. They are more interested in digital entertainment or "screentime."

10. Growing up, how often did you, the parent or caregiver, spend time outdoors in nature?
    a. Never
    b. Rarely
    c. Sometimes
    d. Often
    e. Very Often

11. How important is it to you that your focus child spend time outdoors in nature?
    a. Very important
    b. Important
    c. Somewhat important
    d. Not very important
    e. Not at all important