

Project Title: C&O Canal NHP Focus Groups: Employees of Businesses Located Near the Georgetown District Towpath

Dr. Dave Smaldone, West Virginia University

Focus group protocol & questions

Initial contact script (used with potential participants who respond, either by phone or email, to newsletter articles and flyers announcing the focus groups):

“Hello, this is Dr. Dave Smaldone, and I’m a professor at West Virginia University in Morgantown, WV. Thank you for contacting me /or; I was given your name by _____, who recommended you as someone who may be interested in participating in a focus group meeting about the health benefits associated with walking in parks. The National Park Service at the C&O Canal National Historical Park is interested in learning what you think about their park, and your thoughts on using the park for walking. Your participation in this meeting is voluntary, and the information you provide would be anonymous. Your name will not be connected to your answers, and you will not be identified with your responses in any way. We are planning on holding meetings in May 2007. Would you be interested in participating if your schedule allows?”

[If yes] “Thank you. I have one question before we try and schedule you. The Surgeon General guidelines for physical activity recommend that adults engage in moderate physical activity for 30 minutes, at least 5 days a week. At this time, do you meet these recommended guidelines for physical activity?”

[If yes] “OK, the following dates and times are available (read appropriate list). Which group meeting time would you be able to attend?” (Finalize meeting time and contact information. Thank person for their time.)

[If no] “OK, the following dates and times are available (read appropriate list). Which group meeting time would you be able to attend?” (Finalize meeting time and contact information. Thank person for their time.)

[If no] “Thank you for your time. If you change your mind, feel free to contact me at the following number: (304) 293-2941, x 2443. Have a great day.”

Focus group protocol:

Introduction:

“Good afternoon/evening, my name is Dr. Dave Smaldone, and I’m a professor at West Virginia University in Morgantown, WV. I’ve been asked by the National Park Service to help them understand what people working in Georgetown think and feel about the health benefits associated with walking in parks. Specifically, you were invited here to participate in a focus group about the C&O Canal National Historical Park. We will be asking you to answer some questions about the Park and your beliefs about the health benefits associated with walking in the Park. We will be doing this in two ways—first, using a short handout you will fill out individually; and second, we will have a group

brainstorm and discussion. First, we are going to pass out a handout with eight questions to answer. Please read the questions and then write down all of the answers you can think of for each one. When you have completed that, please let us know. Once everyone has completed that, we will move on to the second part—the group brainstorm and discussion.”

“All the information collected today will be used by park managers to better serve the public. There are no ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’ answers to the questions, so please express your true thoughts and feelings. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you have the right not to answer any questions at any time while you fill out the handout or during the group discussions. The information you provide is anonymous—your name will not be associated with any responses in the report. Does anyone have any questions at this point?”

(Pass out handout—see attached)

After participants are done filling out handout, we will begin the group-discussion phase of the focus group. The participants will hold onto their handout until the end of the group, thus allowing them to use their answers as a memory prompt during the discussion.

“Now that you’ve finished the handout, we’d like to get your thoughts as a group about the same questions. We are going to ask you to answer the same questions, but the added dimension of group input may help us expand the range of answers. We’ll be writing your responses down on this flip chart so we can keep track of them and see them as we go along. We’ll start with this question, and work our way down the list until we’ve answered each one. The first question is ‘What do you think would be the advantages for you in walking on a C&O Canal National Historic Park (NHP) trail for 30 minutes a day in the next six months?’ Who would like to respond to that?”

(As a group, go through each of the eight questions listed on the handout, until the group has answered all. Collect the individual handouts at the end.)

Focus Group Handout

Division of Forestry and Natural Resources

Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Consumer Sciences



Thank you for taking the time to answer the following questions. Our goal is to learn about your beliefs and feelings in regards to walking for health benefits on the towpath and other trails in the C&O Canal National Historical Park. Please read each of the eight questions, and then write in as many answers as you would like that come to mind. There are no 'correct' or 'incorrect' answers to the questions, so please express your true thoughts and feelings.

1. What do you think would be the advantages for you in walking on a C&O Canal National Historical Park (NHP) trail (such as the towpath) for 30 minutes a day in the next six months?

2. What do you think would be the disadvantages for you in walking on a C&O Canal NHP trail/towpath for 30 minutes a day in the next six months?

3. What would you like or enjoy about walking on a C&O Canal NHP trail (or towpath) for 30 minutes a day in the next six months?

4. What would you dislike or hate about walking on a C&O Canal NHP trail/towpath for 30 minutes a day in the next six months?

5. Who do you think would approve of you walking on a C&O Canal NHP trail (or towpath) for 30 minutes a day in the next six months (could be an individual or a group of people)?

6. Who do you think would disapprove of you walking on a C&O Canal NHP trail/towpath for 30 minutes a day in the next six months (could be an individual or a group of people)?

7. What would make it difficult for you to walk on a C&O Canal NHP trail (or towpath) for 30 minutes a day in the next six months?

8. What would make it easier for you to walk on a C&O Canal NHP trail/towpath for 30 minutes a day in the next six months?

OMB Control #:

Expiration:

PRIVACY ACT and PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT statement:

16 U.S.C. 1a-7 authorizes collection of this information. This information will be used by park managers to better serve the public. Response to this request is voluntary. No action may be taken against you for refusing to supply the information requested. Your name is requested for follow-up mailing purposes only. When analysis of the questionnaire is completed, all name and address files will be destroyed. Thus the permanent data will be anonymous. Please do not put your name or that of any member of your group on the questionnaire. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Person collecting and analyzing information: Dave Smaldone, Ph.D., Recreation, Parks & Tourism Program, PO Box 6125, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV 26506-6125; (304) 293-2941

Burden estimate statement: Public reporting for this form is estimated to average 90 minutes per response. Direct comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this form to: Bill Justice; C&O Canal National Historical Park, 1850 Dual Highway, Suite 100, Hagerstown, MD 21740-6620