Hanging Lake Management

Presentation to the RFTA Board

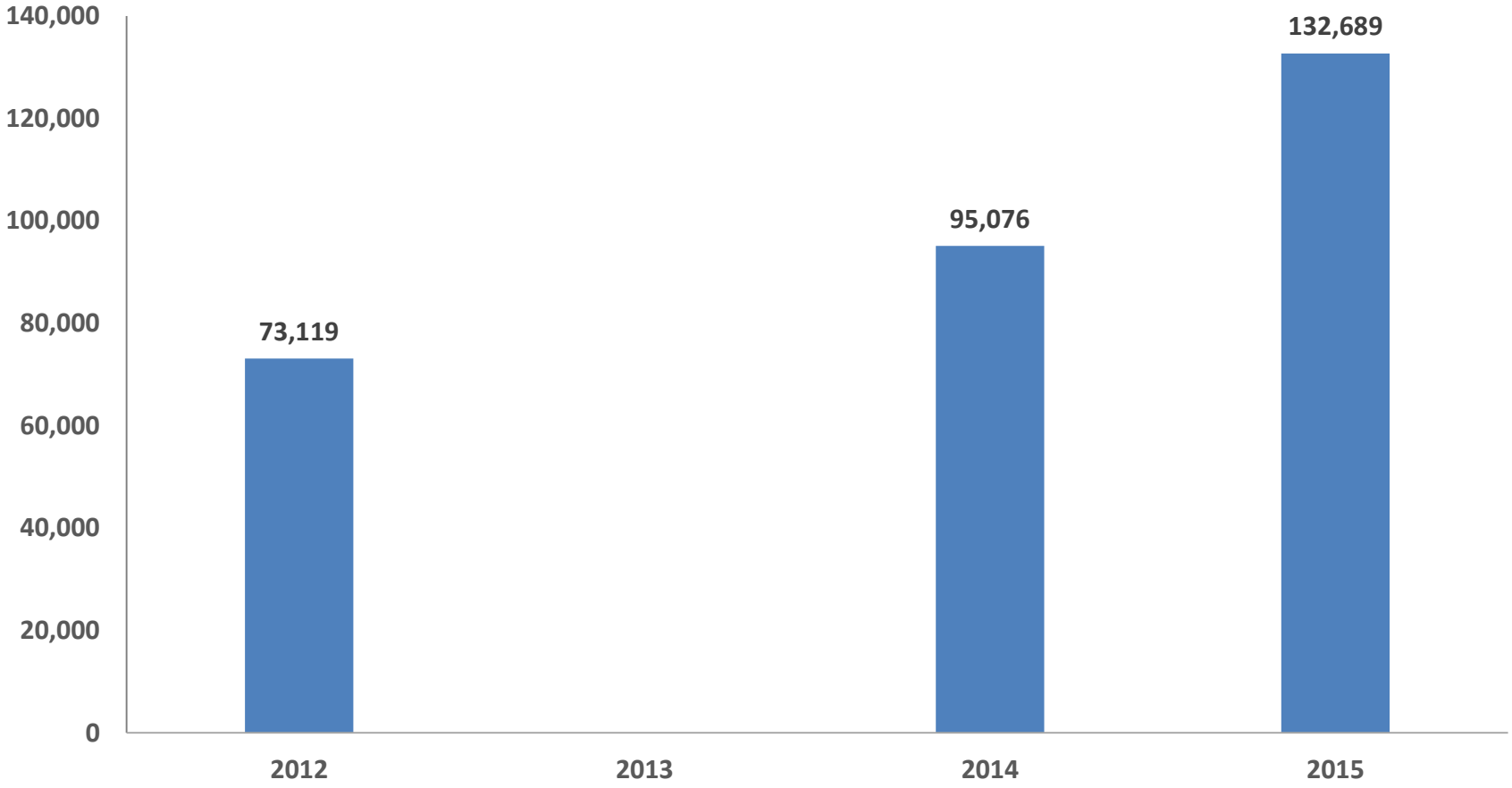
February 9, 2017

The National Transportation Systems Center

Advancing transportation innovation for the public good

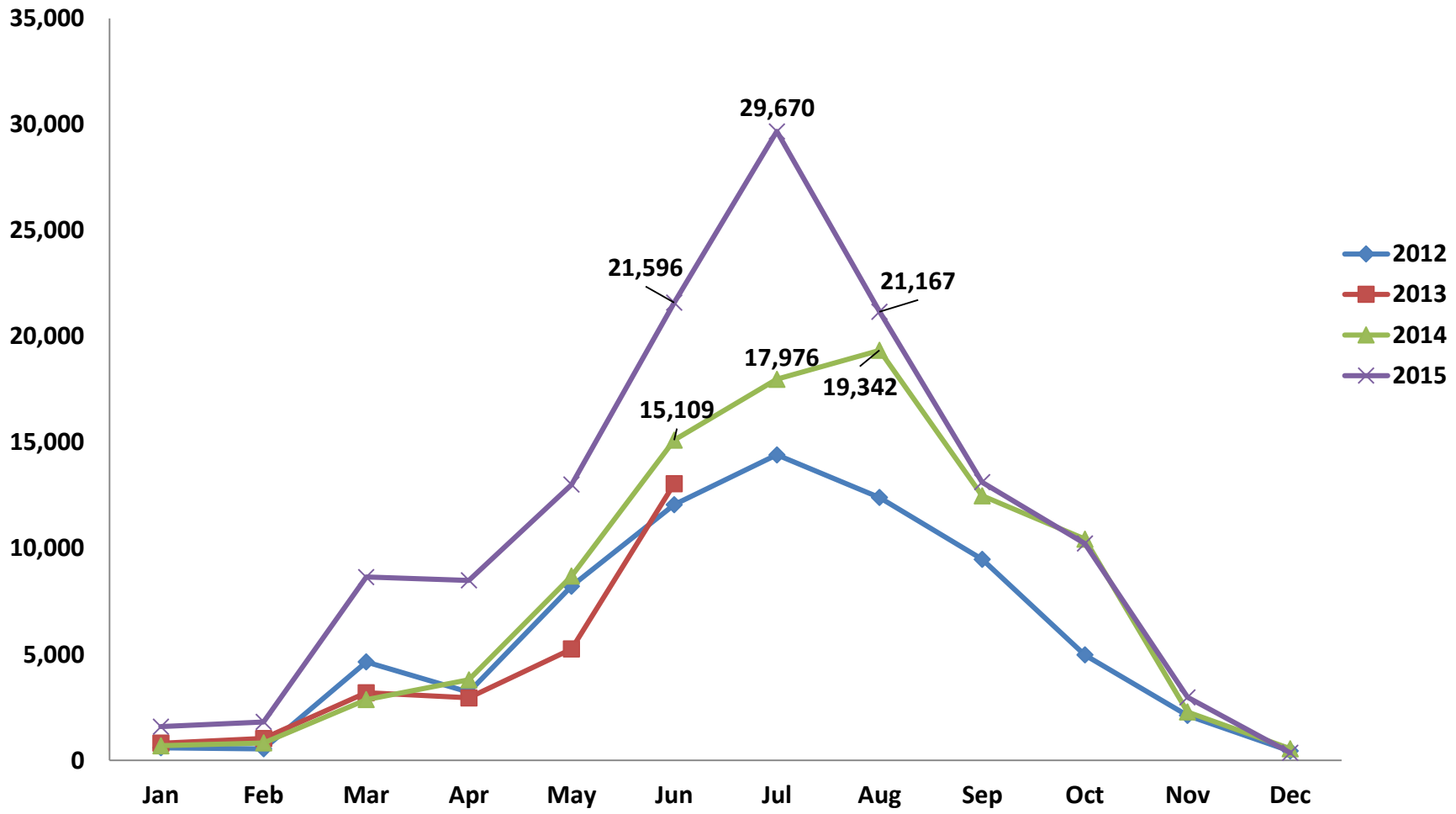
U.S. Department of Transportation
Office of the Secretary of Transportation – Research
John A. Volpe National Transportation Systems Center

Annual Visitation Growth



*Trail counter malfunctioned from July – December 2013

Monthly Visitation Growth



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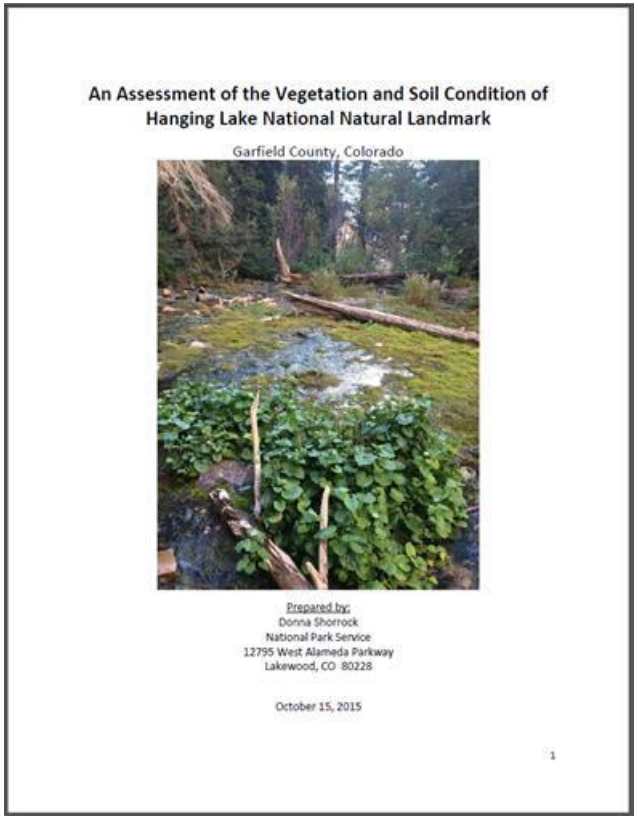
Hanging Lake Interagency Planning Effort Background

In response to public safety issues, capacity and resource degradation concerns, and public outcry:

- Increased interagency presence and enhanced on-site management efforts began during high use weekends in 2008-2009
- Starting in 2013, stakeholder and public meetings were held to discuss potential long term solutions, Volpe Center was hired to assist
- Monthly interagency working group calls continue
- Studies completed:
  - Annual report on summer visitation patterns
  - NPS Ecological Assessment (fall 2015)
  - Capacity study (spring 2016)
  - Visitor intercept survey and report (summer 2016)
  - Transportation and operations plan (Spring of 2017)



An Assessment of the Vegetation and Soil Condition of Hanging Lake National Natural Landmark

Garfield County, Colorado

Prepared by:
Donna Shorrock
National Park Service
12795 West Alameda Parkway
Lakewood, CO 80228

October 15, 2015

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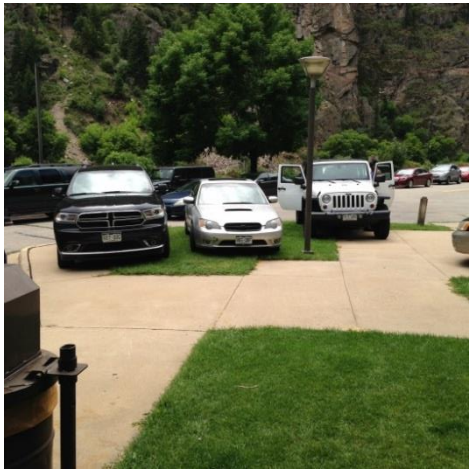

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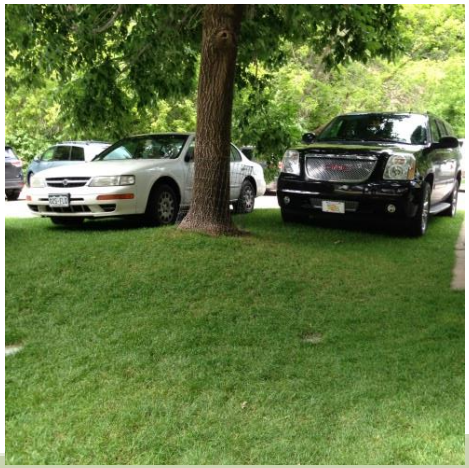
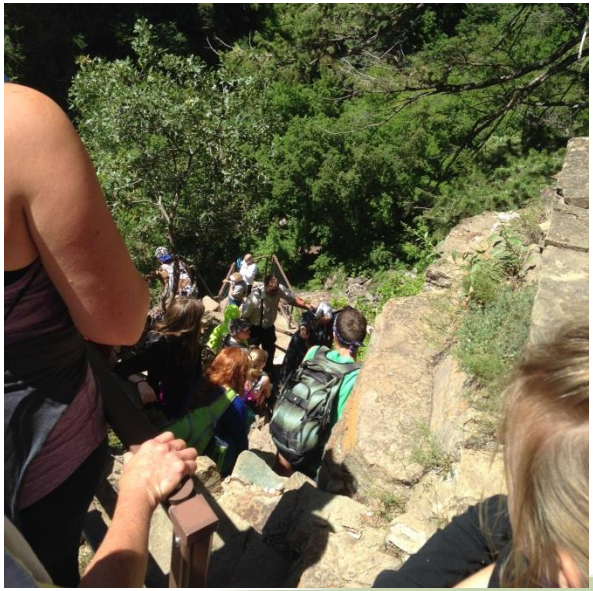
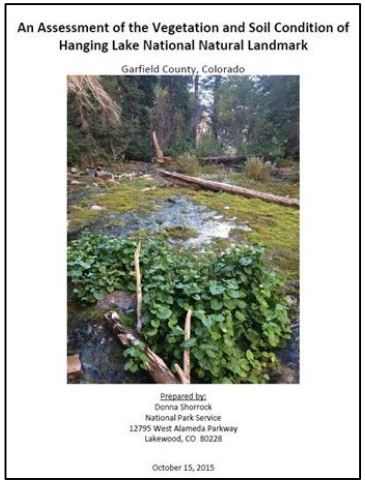




Carrying Capacity Analysis Overview

- Purpose:
  - The site is getting “loved to death”
  - Evaluate different visitation experiences and impacts in the parking lot, on the trail, and at the lake
- Examined four scenarios:
  - Actual Conditions
  - Original Capacity: every legal parking space is filled throughout the day
  - Slight Restrictions: reduces Original Capacity Scenario by 30%
  - Environmentally-Sensitive: reduces Original Capacity Scenario by 60%
- How?
  - Video and photo simulations, ecological assessment, visitor survey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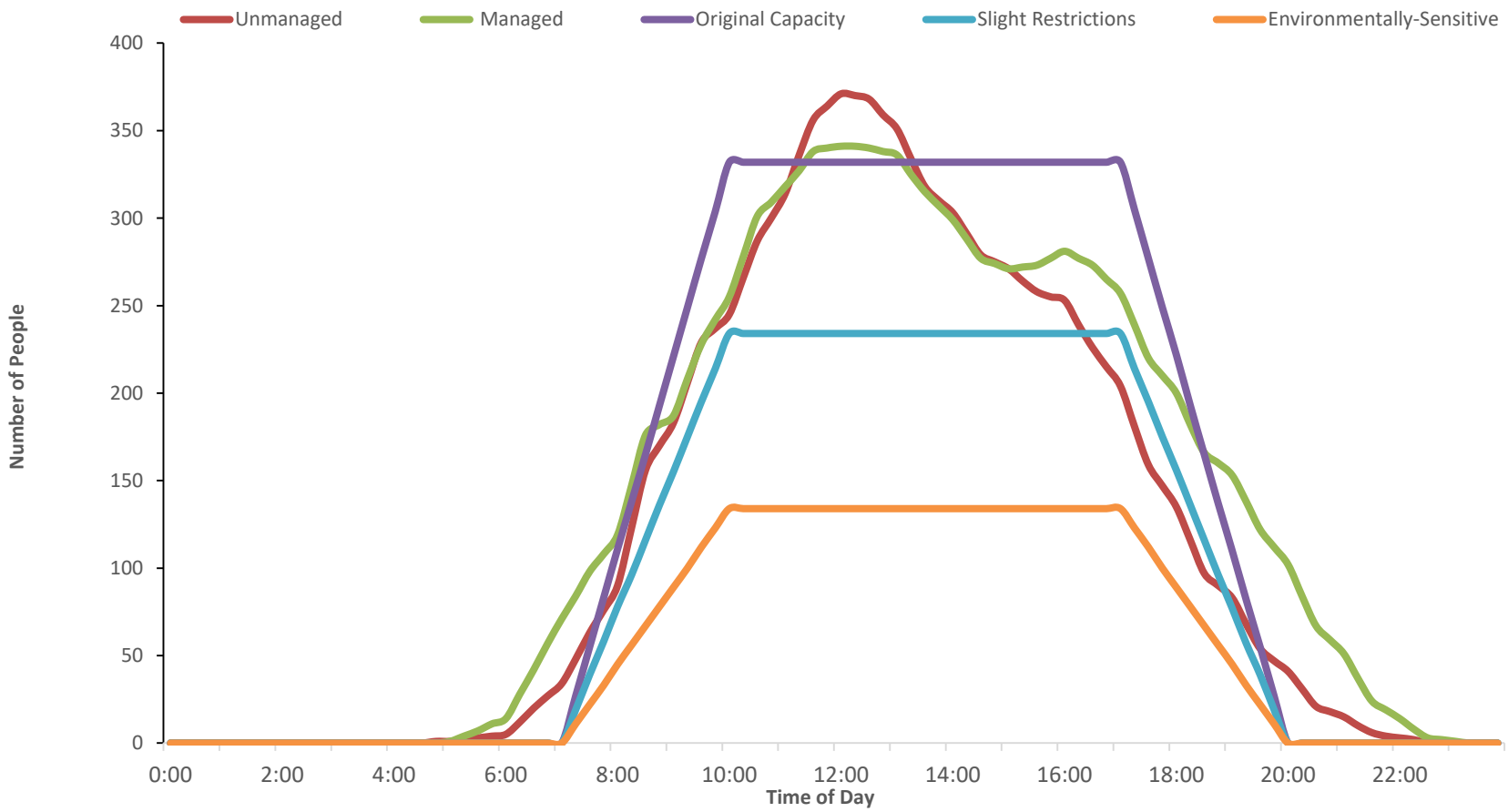
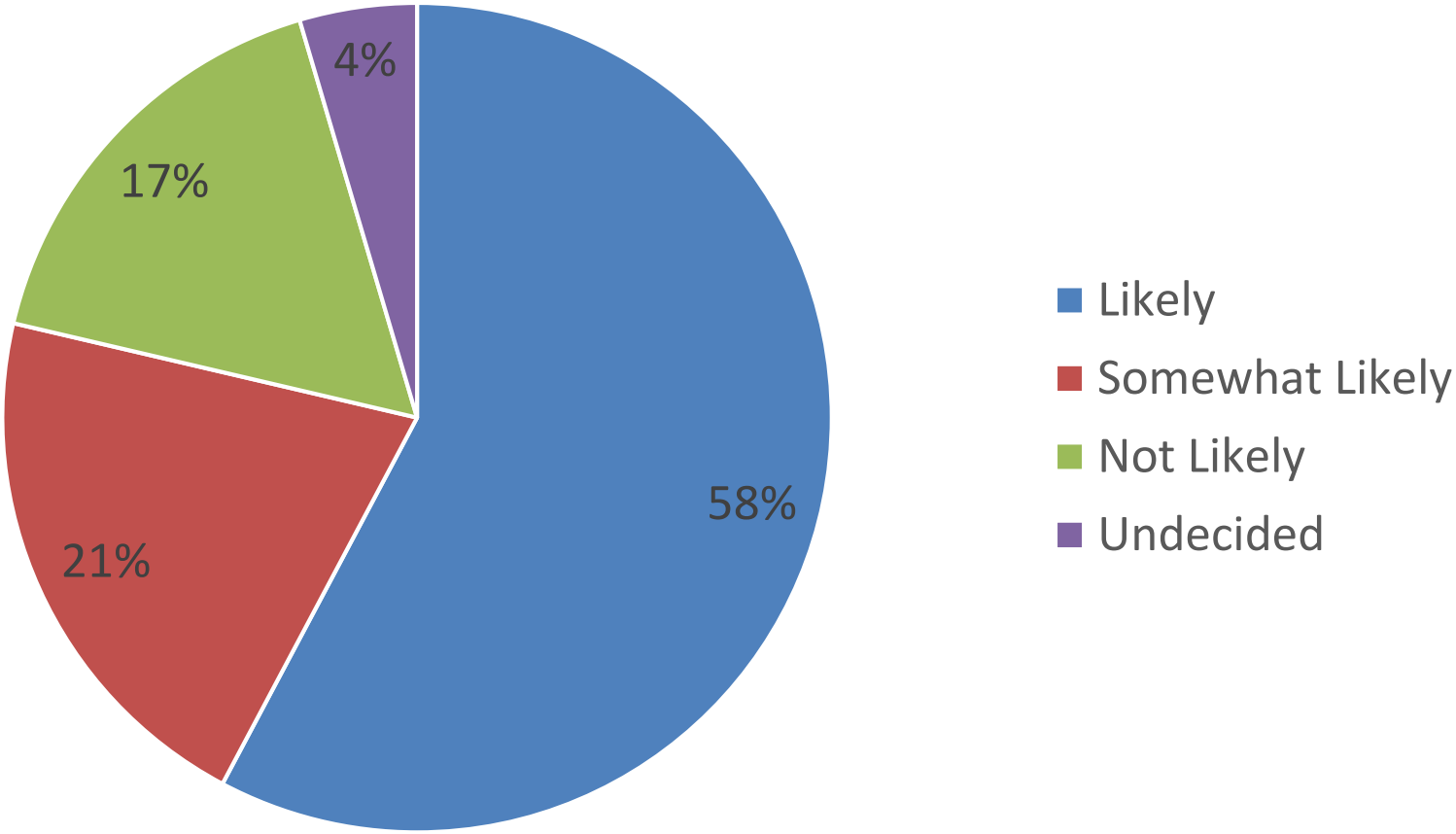
Capacity Scenarios Comparison



Willingness to take a shuttle



*These are preliminary results, do not redistribute. (n = 656)

Potential Route

Type of Service	Round Trip Distance	Round Trip Time	Annual Shuttle O&M Costs (RFTA)	Estimated O&M Cost per Hiker
3 35-40 pax buses	26 miles	48 minutes	$1,066,000	$10.38
2 57-pax buses	26 miles	48 minutes	$716,000	$6.97

Next Steps

- Continue interagency coordination
- Finalize Volpe's "Transportation and Operations Study"
- Complete USFS "Hanging Lake Management Plan" and associated NEPA to determine future long term management of the Hanging Lake area
  - Public scoping periods are expected in Spring/Summer of 2017
  - Aiming for implementation in 2018
  - Note: The Hanging Lake Management Plan and associated NEPA will not make decisions on USFS fees. In accordance with the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA), any new fee will have to undergo a separate process.