

Schmeeckle Reserve Student Survey

April 22-May 2, 2019



Schmeeckle Reserve
College of Natural Resources
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

Total number of respondents: **807** out of a total survey population of 8,147 (all students)

Response rate: **9.9%** Margin of error: **±3.3% at 95% confidence level**

Visitation Questions

1. On average, how often did you visit Schmeeckle Reserve in the past 12 months?

(All respondents, n=807)

- Over 6 times per month: 16% (118)
- 4-6 times per month: 20% (144)
- 1-3 times per month: 36% (265)
- Rarely (less than once per month): 28% (207)
- Never: 9% (73)

91% visited Schmeeckle in the past 12 months (734)

9% did not visit Schmeeckle (73)

2. What keeps you from visiting Schmeeckle more often? (All respondents, n=807)

- Not enough time: 65% (522)
- Weather: 51% (415)
- Too far away: 13% (104)
- Unfamiliar with Schmeeckle: 9% (70)
- Feel unsafe: 7% (54)
- Prefer to recreate elsewhere: 6% (51)
- Not interested: 4% (35)
- Other: 8% (62)

3. For what reasons have you visited Schmeeckle? (Of those who visited, n=734)

- For fun/recreation/leisure: 96% (705)
- For classes/research projects: 48% (353)
- For programs/special events: 25% (187)
- For athletics/training: 30% (220)
- Other: 5% (38)

➤ Of participants who chose fun/recreation, what recreational activities have you participated in? (n=705)

- Walking/hiking: 98% (691)
- Wildlife watching: 51% (363)
- Jogging/running: 48% (338)
- Hammocking: 38% (271)
- Photography/art: 37% (264)
- Nature study: 26% (183)
- Bicycling on trails: 25% (176)
- Fishing/ice fishing: 14% (98)
- Canoeing/kayaking: 12% (82)
- Snowshoeing: 4% (31)

- Geocaching: 3% (22)
 - Cross-country skiing: 2% (11)
 - Fat tire bicycling on snow: 0% (2)
 - Other: 4% (28)
- Of participants who chose classes/research, what types have you attended? (n=353)
- Natural resources: 75% (266)
 - Biology: 36% (128)
 - Wellness: 9% (32)
 - Art: 6% (21)
 - English/Writing: 3% (12)
 - Other: 4% (15)
- Of participants who chose programs/events, what have you attended? (n=187)
- Candlelight Hike festivals: 73% (136)
 - Student-led nature programs: 53% (99)
 - Student organization activities: 40% (74)
 - Volunteer events: 27% (50)
 - Organized walks or runs: 20% (38)
 - Other: 2% (4)

Value Statements

(Of those who visited in the past 12 months, n=734)

1. Schmeackle helps me escape the stress of college life.

- Strongly agree: 55% (401)
- Agree: 36% (262)
- Neutral: 7% (55)
- Disagree: 1% (9)
- Strongly disagree: 1% (6)

91% Agree or Strongly agree (663)

2% Disagree or Strongly disagree (15)

2. Schmeackle was a reason why I chose to attend UWSP.

- Strongly agree: 14% (102)
- Agree: 25% (184)
- Neutral: 32% (234)
- Disagree: 16% (119)
- Strongly disagree: 11% (83)

39% Agree or Strongly agree (286)

27% Disagree or Strongly disagree (202)

3. Schmeackle is a valuable part of my experience at UWSP.

- Strongly agree: 40% (290)
- Agree: 39% (285)
- Neutral: 16% (117)
- Disagree: 4% (28)
- Strongly disagree: 3% (12)

79% Agree or Strongly agree (575)

7% Disagree or Strongly disagree (40)

4. It is important that Schmeeckle continues to acquire and protect green space.

- Strongly agree: 76% (556)
- Agree: 19% (142)
- Neutral: 4% (30)
- Disagree: 0% (2)
- Strongly disagree: 1% (4)

95% Agree or Strongly agree (698)

1% Disagree or Strongly disagree (6)

5. Schmeeckle is an important part of my exercise/health routine.

- Strongly agree: 23% (170)
- Agree: 26% (188)
- Neutral: 35% (256)
- Disagree: 12% (86)
- Strongly disagree: 4% (28)

49% Agree or Strongly agree (358)

16% Disagree or Strongly disagree (114)

6. Schmeeckle is an important part of maintaining my mental wellbeing.

- Strongly agree: 35% (255)
- Agree: 33% (243)
- Neutral: 23% (167)
- Disagree: 6% (46)
- Strongly disagree: 2% (18)

68% Agree or Strongly agree (498)

8% Disagree or Strongly disagree (64)

7. Schmeeckle is important for recruiting new students to UWSP.

- Strongly agree: 32% (230)
- Agree: 45% (322)
- Neutral: 19% (137)
- Disagree: 3% (22)
- Strongly disagree: 2% (11)

77% Agree or Strongly agree (552)

5% Disagree or Strongly disagree (33)

8. Schmeeckle is important for retaining students at UWSP.

- Strongly agree: 32% (228)
- Agree: 42% (301)
- Neutral: 21% (152)
- Disagree: 4% (28)
- Strongly disagree: 1% (10)

74% Agree or Strongly agree (529)

5% Disagree or Strongly disagree (38)

Awareness Statements

(All respondents, n=807)

1. Before taking this survey, I was aware that Schmeeckle has a visitor center that is open to the public.

- Yes: 86% (690)
- No: 12% (93)
- Maybe: 3% (24)

- Of those who were aware, how many times have you visited the visitor center in the past 12 months? (n=690)
 - I have not visited: 44% (302)
 - 1-2 times: 37% (255)
 - 3-4 times: 12% (81)
 - 5 or more times: 8% (52)

- 2. Before taking this survey, I was aware that Schmeeckle puts on biannual Candlelight Hike Festivals.
 - Yes: 74% (600)
 - No: 23% (185)
 - Maybe: 3% (22)
 - Of those who were aware, how many Candlelight Hike Festivals have you attended in the past 12 months? (n=600)
 - I have not attended any: 66% (394)
 - 1 Festival: 27% (160)
 - 2 Festivals: 8% (46)

- 3. Before taking this survey, I was aware that Schmeeckle offers free educational nature programs to the public.
 - Yes: 58% (470)
 - No: 35% (284)
 - Maybe: 7% (53)
 - Of those who were aware, how many times have you attended a nature program in the past 12 months? (n=470)
 - I have not attended a program: 72% (338)
 - 1-2 programs: 23% (106)
 - 3-4 programs: 3% (16)
 - 5 or more programs: 2% (10)

- 4. Before taking this survey, I was aware that Schmeeckle has a Friends group for support.
 - Yes: 19% (156)
 - No: 78% (627)
 - Maybe: 3% (24)

- 5. Before taking this survey, I was aware that Schmeeckle hires UWSP students to operate the visitor center and maintain trails.
 - Yes: 67% (538)
 - No: 30% (240)
 - Maybe: 4% (29)

- 6. Before taking this survey, I was aware that a portion of my annual student activity fee helps to fund Schmeeckle.
 - Yes: 42% (337)
 - No: 52% (419)
 - Maybe: 6% (51)

Segregated Fee Questions

(All respondents, n=807)

Schmeeckle needs to generate most of its own annual funding to maintain trails and facilities, manage land, present programs and events, and hire student staff. Currently, full-time students pay a total of \$1,541 in segregated fees each year, with \$9 of that amount (about 0.6 percent) being used to support Schmeeckle.

1. Do you support \$9 of your segregated fees being used to fund Schmeeckle's operational budget?
 - Yes: 94% (758)
 - No: 6% (49)
2. How much would you be willing to pay each year as part of your annual fees to support Schmeeckle? A slider was provided for choosing an amount. The slider for fee supporters ranged from \$9-\$100; the slider for non-supporters ranged from \$0-\$9.

Average Fee Numbers

- Average fee selected: All respondents (n=807): **\$19.23**
- Average fee selected: Those who support current fee (n=758): **\$20.28**
- Average fee selected: Those who do not support current fee (n=49): **\$3.00**

Increase or Decrease in Current Annual Fee

- Respondents who supported an increase in annual fee: **73%** (593)
- Respondents who supported fee staying the same: **22%** (174)
- Respondents who supported a decrease in annual fee: **5%** (40)

Open-ended Questions

(All respondents, n=807)

1. What do you value most about Schmeeckle Reserve?

- Respondents who answered: 60% (482)
- Respondents who did not answer: 40% (325)

Top repeated themes (Of those who answered, n=482)

- **Escape/retreat/mental wellbeing** (key words: escape, relieve stress/pressure, retreat, relax, get away, respite, unplugged, mental health): 29% (140)
- **Accessibility/proximity to campus** (key words: accessible, close by, open to public, free): 21% (103)
- **Nature/outdoors** (key words: view/enjoy nature, being outdoors, wilderness feel, untouched): 19% (90)
- **Beauty/scenery/cleanliness** (key words: beauty, views, scenery, aesthetics, pretty, cleanliness, well maintained): 18% (85)

- **Solitude/peace/quiet** (key words: solitude, seclusion, privacy, calmness, peaceful, tranquil, serenity, quiet, solace, remote): 16% (78)
- **Trails/boardwalks**: 15% (71)
- **Wildlife**: 12% (57)
- **Variety of opportunities** (key words: freedom to explore, options, versatile, activities, opportunities, diversity): 9% (44)
- **Learning opportunities** (key words: academics, classes, outdoor experiences, research): 9% (43)
- **Preservation of green space** (key words: preservation, open space, protection, conservation, habitats): 8% (37)
- **Lake/water/wetlands**: 5% (22)
- **Social aspects/friends/family**: 4% (20)
- **Connections to community**: 4% (18)
- **Physical wellbeing/health/exercise**: 3% (15)
- **Feel safe**: 2% (12)
- **Trees/vegetation**: 2% (10)
- **Others**: Everything/general support (8), fishing (7), reminds me of home (7), recruitment/retention (6), ecological benefits/diversity (6), hammock (4), employment (4), Candlelight Hikes (1), visitor center (1), don't use enough to comment (3)

Selected responses from students:

- "I love being able to have the trails right there. That's a big reason why I chose UWSP. I wanted trees and nature around me and I love it. I love going and taking pictures."
- "My family really values the quiet and solitude that can be found at Schmeeckle. It's very important for me to try and get my children out in nature as much as possible; I am a single parent and am always pressed for time so something that is close and convenient is important too."
- "Place to escape school, de-stress, and enjoy nature. So close to campus."
- "It's a large quiet place that's within walking distance of campus that allows you to escape a cramped dorm room. It's a very enjoyable hike and is a great place and resource for UWSP students."
- "A peaceful, clean wilderness that is available for the public and for UWSP students. Recreation, fishing, and school-related trips are very important to me and other students at Stevens Point. Schmeeckle should be preserved and kept up for as long as possible."
- "I may not be a CNR major and I may not know much about nature/the Reserve, however, I really like how Schmeeckle is open for all students to explore. As a college student, life gets really stressful sometimes and Schmeeckle is always a great place to go to if I want to clear my head and just get away from the stress."
- "Schmeeckle has wonderful scenery that I think anyone would enjoy. I like to go to Schmeeckle to relax and get away from campus. I purchased a hammock just to go to Schmeeckle more often. Also, I like to go Schmeeckle to go for walks by myself or with others."

- “I value having a secluded area in the city that protects and fosters nature. Being able to see deer and other wildlife is always enjoyable. I find that Schmeeckle is one of the best areas in the city for nature photography!”
- “The trails are nice to walk on and the nature is beautiful. I sometimes feel like I haven't walked as much as I actually do because it makes me content in the moment. I also have a favorite spot that I visit every time I go there.”
- “Schmeeckle has been my go-to place for hiking, biking, and drawing. Without Schmeeckle, UWSP would lose so much of its appeal.”
- “It was a formative part of my first 2 years in college. It was a great place for myself and friends to go explore and enjoy nature right next to campus. Before college, when I was up here for orientation, my mom and I walked around Schmeeckle thinking how excited I was to have that forest reserve right there.”
- “I just love that it’s a place to go and clear your mind. Although many students may not utilize it as much as they could, it is a godsend to those who can find time to enjoy our hidden gem. It is a huge part of our community.”

2. What suggestions do you have for improving Schmeeckle Reserve?

- Respondents who answered: 45% (360)
- Respondents who did not answer: 55% (447)

Top repeated themes (Of those who answered, n=360)

- **No suggestions for improvement:** 17% (61)
- **Improve habitat and land management** (key words: habitat improvement, restoration, wildlife enhancement, clean up, invasive species, forest management, clearing/cutting trees): 14% (50)
- **Enhance safety and security** (key words: trail rangers, enforce rules, trail lighting, emergency phones, cameras, creepy people): 9% (32)
- **Better trail/boardwalk maintenance:** 8% (29)
- **Increase marketing/awareness:** 8% (28)
- **Expand the green space/size:** 7% (26)
- **More benches and sitting areas:** 6% (24)
- **More signage/maps:** 6% (23)
- **More trails and boardwalks:** 5% (17)
- **More programs/events for college-age students:** 4% (16)
- **Lake improvements** (fish habitat, docks, shoreline restoration, water quality): 3% (10)
- **Provide equipment rentals:** 3% (9)
- **Modify rules/regulations:**
 - Allow swimming: 3% (11)
 - Allow use after dark: 3% (10)
 - Allow pets: 3% (9)
 - Provide trash receptacles: 1% (5)
 - Allow camping: 1% (3)
 - Less rules in general: 1% (2)

- **Others:** Increase accessibility (7), less construction/development (6), provide more volunteer opportunities (5), create more university courses (4), stop cutting trees/less maintenance (4), provide picnic tables (4), too many mosquitoes/biting insects (3), build a new restroom (3), more art (2), do not charge students (2), more funding for Schmeekle (2), more sustainability (1), fix worn fence (1), create disc golf course (1), new building closer to campus (1), provide fire rings (1), build another tree house (1), geese issues (1), do not use herbicide (1), increase size of maintenance crew (1), update exhibits in visitor center (1), improve pavilion (1)
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Demographic Questions

(All respondents, n=807)

1. Where do you live?

- On campus (residential halls): 48% (387)
- Off campus: 52% (419)
- Not answered: 0% (1)

2. What is your class status?

- Freshman: 23% (188)
- Sophomore: 20% (162)
- Junior: 24% (191)
- Senior: 27% (214)
- Graduate: 6% (47)
- Not answered: 1% (5)

3. What is your major?

Majors were divided into the four colleges at UW-Stevens Point. The percentage of majors reported per college is listed below:

- College of Natural Resources: 27% (217)
- College of Letters and Sciences: 26% (213)
- College of Professional Studies: 25% (204)
- College of Fine Arts and Communication: 11% (86)
- Unlisted/undecided: 11% (87)