



City of Boulder Inquiry on the Needs and
Preferences of Spanish Speakers Visiting Open Space and Mountain Parks

REPORT OF FINDINGS

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report reflects the findings from two focus groups conducted with Spanish-speaking people living in and around Boulder, held on November 13 and 17, 2018, at El Centro AMISTAD, Boulder, CO.

To put the results in context, it is worth mentioning that the City of Boulder's Open Space and Mountain Parks department (OSMP) has designated economic resources and human talent in its Master Plan process in 2018-2019 to study the needs and preferences of the Spanish-speaking Latino community regarding their attendance and use of open space, green areas and mountain parks that are part of the 45,000 protected acres that the City of Boulder makes available for the responsible enjoyment of its residents and visitors.

Since 2001, El Centro AMISTAD has established influence, trust and respect within the Spanish-speaking Latino population in Boulder. Based on this expertise, OSMP contacted El Centro AMISTAD to gather information and suggestions from the community about their opinions related to open space and mountain parks.

II. PARTICIPANT RECRUITING AND METHODOLOGY

The methodology used to facilitate the focus groups was a **qualitative research type, based on open-ended questions** designed to encourage each participant's honest participation and highlight their personal experience and knowledge on the subject. El Centro AMISTAD incorporated interactive activities, such as ice-breakers, to establish trust between the interviewees and facilitators. In an effort to be competent and objective observers, the interviewers allowed the participants to express their opinions without influencing their responses.

As a theoretical reference, qualitative research seeks to analyze phenomena or social subjects in a deep and detailed way to produce knowledge that can be used in a place and with specific characteristics, in a specific place and time. In contrast to quantitative research, qualitative research does not pursue the accuracy or generalization of social facts. For this reason, **it is advisable to implement the results of this study within 1 to 3 years**. This time frame favors a more successful and effective intervention because human processes are naturally changing and multifactorial.

According to the theorists, the focal group technique *"is a meeting with an open and structured group interview modality, where a group of individuals selected by researchers discuss and elaborate on a thematic or social fact based on personal experience."* This approach is based on a collective representation at the micro level of what happens at the macrosocial level, since the participants' stories detail the images, concepts and common places that belong to their community. This process is ideal to look at the changes in a community, using between 6 and 10 guiding questions that go from the general to the most specific, from the simplest to the most complex, in a maximum period of 2 hours, helping the group to feel that their opinions have been validated and understood.

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After establishing these theoretical hypotheses, **the first step** in September 2018 was to design a flyer to promote the project and invite people to participate in these group sessions. The flyer outlined the objectives, relevant information about Open Space and Mountain Parks, contact information, meeting location and participant incentives for their contribution to the project. These flyers were primarily delivered during three activities where both AMISTAD and OSMP were present.

The second step was to develop a questionnaire to determine the participant profile. The questionnaire included demographic data such as age, place of residence, number of children, occupation and/or educational level, availability to participate and contact information. This questionnaire helped to organize the groups by date and special needs such as childcare. It was not intended to create a homogeneous group, but rather to facilitate diversity.

As part of the promotion, facilitators used digital and social media resources such as Facebook (Latino Outdoors, Latinos of Boulder County, Compañeras, etc.), websites directed to the local Latino community, emails to allied organizations, and a presentation on “Pasa la Voz” (Spread the Word) a community radio program on KGNU directed to Spanish speakers in the Front Range area. Facilitators also communicated with those interested in participating by phone or text messages to invite participants to participate as well as to remind them of the date and time of their group meetings.

Concurrently with the invitation process, **AMISTAD and the OSMP teams held exploratory and informational meetings** to determine the themes for the focus group sessions which were informed by the focus areas of the OSMP Master Plan and designed to help develop and refine strategies to achieve the desired outcomes for these focus areas. In these open and collaborative meetings, the teams set dates and defined the parameters and fundamental concepts that were incorporated in the **interview guide**.

III. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Given that this is the first focus group engagement approach with the Spanish-speaking community as part of the City of Boulder’s Open Space and Mountain Parks’ Master Plan process in this case only basic demographic data and general population characteristics were taken into account. In later phases, new parameters could be established, such as more specific participant characteristics, based on OSMP needs and interests.

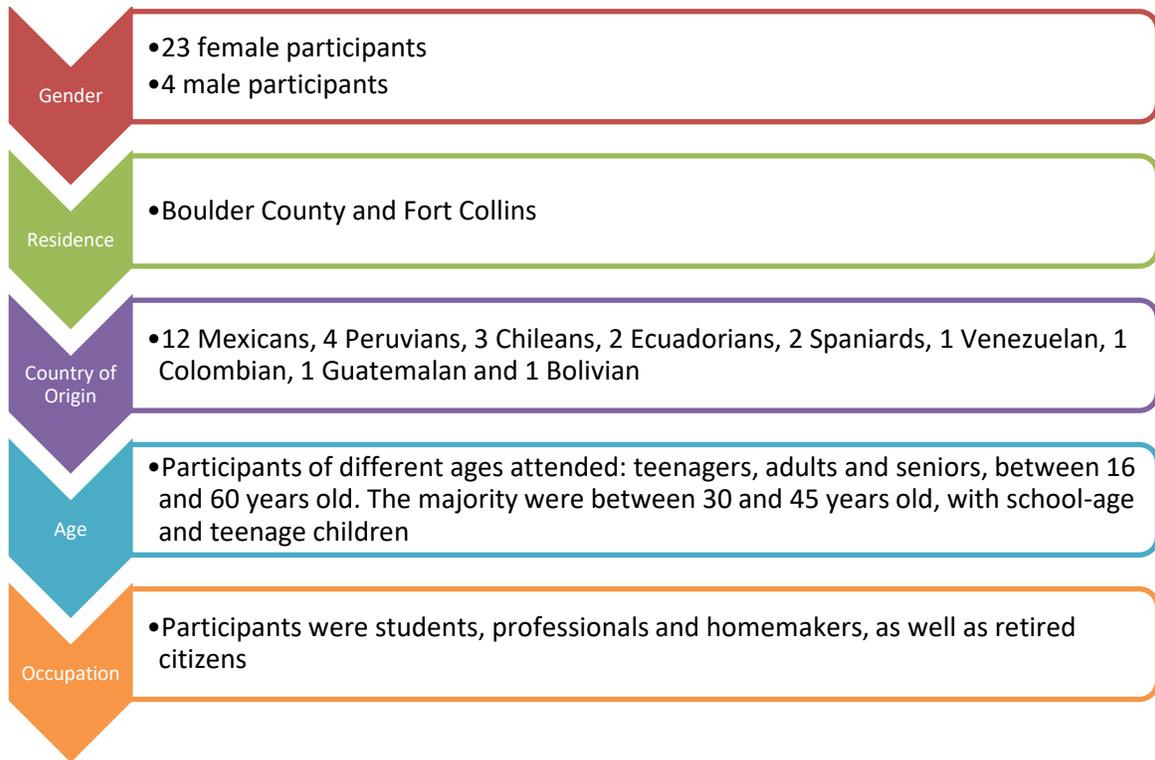
The demographic variables for this project were:

- Gender
- Age
- Place of residence

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- Country of origin
- Occupation and/or education level
- Whether participants had children or not

Based on the participation of 27 people from the Spanish-speaking community in two focus groups, here are the most important variables, focusing on the Spanish speaking Latino and Hispanic community and regardless of their place of residence:



Centro AMISTAD believes that one of the transcendental aspects of this study was the diverse multicultural representation of the Spanish-speaking community living in Boulder, with almost 45% from Mexico and 55% from countries in Latin America and Spain. In this regard, there was an excellent sample of the opinions and behaviors representing the Latino population in terms of their use and needs of Open Space and Mountain Parks.

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“Going to the mountains gives me peace. It motivates me because I can let all my stress out even if it is just a path near my house; just being in contact with nature creates a change in me.”

Within both focus groups several themes came up in a very natural way:

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- Participants shared their **feelings of gratitude** and quickly developed a **sense of ownership** when they were provided with information about the system established to acquire and protect land that everyone can responsibly enjoy. *"It makes me feel visible when I learn that my taxes make this wonderful project possible."* *"Now, if I see someone leaving their dog's poop there, I can tell them that's not okay."*
- Participants immediately shared an **emotional connection to nature** when remembering their childhood. Most of the emotions were positive, happy and relaxing *"I just traveled to my grandparents farm where we ate really good food in front of the fire."* *"I can hear the birds and smell the air just as if we were playing outside again as kids."* Some emotions, however, incorporated an aspect of fear of the unknown and/or a sense of insecurity when being alone in the wild: *"I am scared of wild animals, what do I do if a bear attacks me?"*
- **Language seemed to be the most important barrier** when participants talked about their visits to Open Space and Mountain Parks. Not having language access to the written materials in the parks, not being able to understand the information already there, as well as not understanding the "unwritten" cultural rules when one goes to the outdoors.
- As for information sharing, participants all agreed that **signage, posters and other graphic information needed to be more prominent and visible**, as well as more attractive.
- Cultural differences were shared by all. In Latino cultures, going to the outdoors is mostly **a family activity** such as fishing or picnicking. *"Hanging out with my family, with my extended family not just my immediate family, is the most important thing for me. I only have one day off a week and I want to spend it with my family"*. Along these lines, other suggestions were to have more play areas for children, better parking spaces, and better access to parks by bus.
- Participants felt that they needed **more education** about the animals and plants in the area, safety precautions, and facts and statistics. They also felt they needed more education on what type of equipment is needed when going outdoors; what is absolutely necessary and what can I get by without: *"In my case, I don't even know which kind of shoes are better. Are tennis shoes okay?"*
- Many participants felt there was a great lack of understanding about some ecological concepts such as the use of plastic, using reusable water bottles, or if recycling is available at parks.
- Some participants felt the lack of lighting in the parking lots may be a barrier for certain people. *"My teen goes to the parks with his friends... at night! Is that dangerous?"* Parking spaces are very scarce, so having a station to safely park bicycles would help with that.
Most participants also felt there were not enough trash receptacles in the facilities.
- More accessible facilities, such as changing tables in both men's and women's bathrooms, more bathrooms, more drinking fountains, better kept facilities, and perhaps an area to take cover if weather suddenly becomes colder.

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- One comment with which everyone agreed is that the name “Open Space and Mountain Parks” is not intuitively or broadly understood. In Spanish, an open space is a place where there are no buildings and where one can do what they want. In Spanish “open space” is more broadly called “green areas”, although this can create some confusion. The same goes for the name Mountain Park. In Spanish, the word park is more associated with childrens’ play areas. Participants suggested developing a more descriptive name for the entire department.

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V. FACILITATORS' RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, El Centro AMISTAD wants to provide OSMP with recommendations that it considers a priority for future departmental plans in order to continue on the path of integration, inclusion, recognition and respect for the differences of all the people, including the Spanish-speaking community, who live close to and enjoy the City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks.

As the first step on that path, El Centro AMISTAD proposes the following recommendations which incorporate comments and needs indicated by the participants during the sessions of the focus groups. El Centro AMISTAD feels these recommendations can help OSMP more effectively engage with and serve the Spanish-speaking community. These recommendations are stated in order of importance as determined by the participants.

RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Translate all trail and trailhead signs, announcements, invitations, maps, or other printed information found in open space and mountain parks. The website and any other forms of communication should also be translated.</p> <p>The signs in open space and mountain parks should be more visually pleasant with more graphic information, which would benefit all non-English speakers and those who do not read. Signs should be attractive in their design to capture the interest of all visitors to the area.</p>
<p>Provide educational information in Spanish at the entrance to each park about the animals, required equipment, facilities, rules of conduct, possible dangers and what to do in case of emergency, etc.</p>
<p>Keep public restrooms open and functional throughout the year and keep them cleaner. Include changing tables for babies in both female and male facilities or provide family restrooms. Increase the number of public restrooms in OSMP.</p>
<p>Increase the number of picnic tables, covered areas for resting, relaxing and family social activities, keeping larger families in mind.</p>
<p>Incorporate public transit routes or improve parking spaces, especially on weekends, to make the parks and open spaces more friendly to those who need transportation support.</p>
<p>Promote all activities and publish the OSMP calendar of events on Facebook, in both Spanish and English.</p>

VI. IMAGES FROM FOCUS GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES



Global view of focus groups on November 13, 2018



Juanita Echeverri, OSMP Education Coordinator, explaining some of the facts about the use of City of Boulder open space and mountain parks, while participants listen and take notes.



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Participants, discussing and listening attentively to other opinions and ideas on how their experiences could be improved.



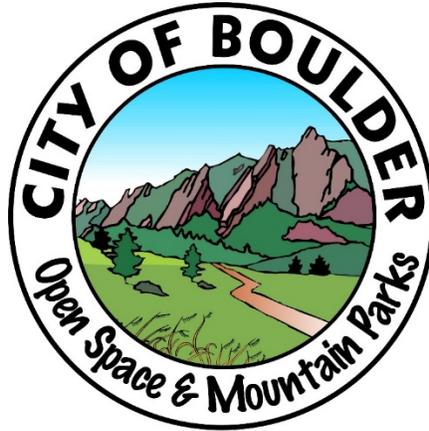
Informational tables at the OSMP Master Plan Community Workshop on Community Connection, Education and Inclusion and Agriculture – Today and Tomorrow on December 3, 2018



Promotoras de Salud, Amelia and Lupita, from El Centro AMISTAD informing community members about the amount of sugar in sugary drinks and its effects on our health.

Invitación para participar en el taller de Recreación Responsable, Cuidado de la Tierra y Diversión en

Los Espacios Abiertos y Parques de Montaña los Invitan



Los miembros de la comunidad están invitados a unos talleres comunitarios que exploran las estrategias para el manejo de los Espacios Abiertos y Parques de Montaña (OSMP)

El próximo taller será a cerca de la Recreación Responsable, Cuidado de la tierra y Diversión. La información de estos talleres la encuentran en: OSMPMasterPlan.org.

- **Evento:** Taller comunitario de Recreación responsable, Cuidado de la tierra y diversión.
- **Fecha y hora:** lunes 5 de Noviembre de 5:30PM a 8:00PM
- **Lugar:** En el Centro Comunitario Judío, 6007 Oregon Avenue, Boulder CO 80303
- **Habrará interpretación simultánea. comida gratis y actividades para niños.**

OSMP los motiva a usar transporte público. Para los que no puedan asistir habrá un cuestionario en línea para que ustedes lo contesten desde la comodidad de su casa.

¡Los esperamos!

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

“The City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks” along with “El Centro AMISTAD”, invite you to a group interview to get to know your opinion about the free, open all year-round green areas that surround the City of Boulder for the enjoyment of our community.

The results from this study will help inform Boulder's directors about your needs and preferences

Come and participate, your voice is important!

We offer child care, snacks and a gift card.

For more information, read the back of the invitation

Did you know?

That you, as a Boulder resident are the owner of more than 45,000 acres of open spaces not farther than 10 minutes from your house.

A portion of the taxes you pay when you buy a product goes to protect and maintain your parks, green areas, trails and nature surrounding Boulder.

Kids, adults, seniors, people experiencing disabilities, families, pets, youth, artists, dreamers, sports people, stressed and relax...ARE ALL WELCOME!

How, when and where participate?

Contact:

jetzabel@elcentroamistad.org or leticia@elcentroamistad.org

The interviews will take place in the month of November of 2018 (dates to be determined), with an estimated duration of two hours.

We have a 30 people capacity.

Place: CENTRO AMISTAD, 2222 14TH St Boulder, CO

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Nosotros, **Espacios Abiertos y Parques de Montaña (OSMP) de la ciudad de Boulder y El Centro AMISTAD**, estamos agradecidos por su interés en participar en una de las Entrevistas Grupales que estaremos realizando en el mes de noviembre del año 2018. Le solicitamos que por favor llene este sencillo cuestionario, para poder registrarse en algunos de los tres grupos que estamos organizando. Los datos suministrados son confidenciales y su único propósito es comunicarnos directamente con usted. (NO SE ENTREGARÁ SU INFORMACIÓN A NINGUNA ORGANIZACIÓN NI PERSONA)

RELLENE O MARQUE CON UNA EQUIS (X) LAS SIGUIENTES PREGUNTAS:

1. NOMBRE COMPLETO: __Mariana Bastías__
2. CORREO ELECTRÓNICO o TELÉFONO DE CONTACTO: __msbastias@gmail.com__
3. ¿EN QUÉ CIUDAD DEL CONDADO DE BOULDER VIVE?: __Superior__

Por favor, indique su código postal: __80027__

4. EDAD: __16__
5. TIENE HIJOS: SÍ _____ NO _X_____

Edades 0-5 años _____ 6-11 años _____ 12-18 años _____ 19 y más años _____

6. OFICIO O PROFESIÓN: __Alumna/Estudiante__
7. NIVEL DE EDUCACIÓN (opcional):

Primaria: _____ Secundaria: _____ Preparatoria : __10º grado__ Estudios universitarios: _____

8. DISPONIBILIDAD PARA ASISTIR A ESTA ACTIVIDAD (en noviembre):

. Solo fines de semana _____ Mañanas (10:00 a 12:00) _____ Tardes (3:00 a 5:00) _____

. Días de semana (tardes 5:30 a 7:30) __X_____

. Todos _____

9. NECESITA CUIDADO DE NIÑOS ENTRE 2 - 12 AÑOS: Sí _____ Edades _____
No _X_____

¡Muchas gracias! Con su participación estará ayudando a la Ciudad de Boulder a conocer sus necesidades y preferencias para disfrutar de las áreas verdes y espacios abiertos. Le contactaremos para comunicarle el día y la hora seleccionada para asistir a la entrevista grupal (si resulta elegido).

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PREGUNTAS Y GUÍA PARA EL FOCUS GROUP

FOCUS GROUP AGENDA

BLOQUE UNO

1. Bienvenida y Presentación de los organizadores y Facilitadoras (propósito de la actividad)
2. Presentación de los participantes - Nombre, País de origen, años viviendo en Boulder
3. Establecer las normas del grupo
 - Respetar la ideas y opiniones de los demás, para crear un espacio seguro
 - Queremos escuchar todas las voces, dar oportunidad a los demás para que hablen
 - Crear turnos de participación
 - Entender que cada uno tenemos una visión diferente de la vida y todas las experiencias son válidas
4. Rompehielo

Actividad: hagamos un viaje....Por favor cierra los ojos, respira profundo, relaja los músculos y ahora trata de recordar un lugar o experiencia agradables que viviste en la naturaleza (aire libre) cuando eras niño. ¿Es de día o de noche? ¿Qué temperatura notas en la piel?

(hablar de los 5 sentidos)

Qué hacías? Cómo te sentías? Quién estaba allí contigo? Qué es lo que más te gustaba? que no te gustaba tanto. Quieres compartir la experiencia? Cómo te hizo sentir?

5. Cuándo fue la última vez que estuviste en contacto con la naturaleza y alguna área verde? Fue en Boulder? Por qué fuiste allí?
6. Conoces algún Parque de Montaña o Sendero aquí en Boulder?

Levanten la mano:

En los últimos seis meses has salido a la Naturaleza? Cuántas veces?

Cuántas veces has ido en el último mes?

En los últimos 15 días?

Hace 1 semana? El fin de semana? Hacer una tablita en el pizarrón con esa información.

7. Si has ido al menos una vez, qué te gustó de la experiencia. Qué te motiva a ir al parque o subir el cerro? Qué cosas se te hacen cómodas para asistir a ese lugar? Qué te parece incómodo o qué pudiera mejorarse en los espacios abiertos?
8. Qué te gusta hacer cuando estás en la Naturaleza?

Sabías que la existencia de esos espacios son gratuitos para todos porque se compran las tierras y se mantienen con nuestro dinero de los impuestos a las compras? Por tanto tenemos derecho de usarlos y disfrutarlos cuidándolos responsablemente.

DESCANSO DE 10 MINUTOS

BLOQUE DOS

9. Sientes que estás aprovechando los parques y los senderos de la forma en qué te gustaría? Por qué no? Cuáles son los obstáculos para utilizarlos con más frecuencia?
10. Si tuvieras una varita mágica, qué le quitarías y qué le agregarías a esos lugares para hacerlos más agradables y confortables para ti? (llevar varita o palito)
11. Los directivos del Departamento de Espacios Abiertos y Parques de Montaña de la Ciudad de Boulder están interesados y comprometidos contigo, con toda la Comunidad Latina para atraerlos y hacerlos participantes activos de los parques, senderos, áreas verdes que están a su

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alrededor. Hay programas educativos, oportunidades de voluntariado, visitas planificadas, seguridad, guardaparques. cuando acabemos el grupo, Juanita les puede dar detalles de estas oportunidades. Y están ofreciendo este proyecto para conocer qué más necesitas? Qué te hace falta para asistir con más frecuencia? Qué quieres encontrar en tus parques para visitarlos más?. Es tu momento de hablar y contarnos. Y si se te ocurre algo después de este encuentro, luego de pensarlo mejor y hasta comentarlo con tu familia o amigos, pues puedes escribirnos a Leticia o a mí y darnos más ideas, que son completamente bienvenidas.

12. Ahora bien, después de compartir y escucharnos, te sientes más dueño de estas tierras? Ves posible asistir al menos una vez a la semana? A quién llevarías contigo?

13. Para finalizar, juega con nosotros: Si yo digo una palabra , tú debes decir lo que asocias con esa palabra:

Montaña –

Pesca-
Naturaleza-
Parques-
Oso-
Risas-
Relajarse-
Tiempo-
Puma-
Familia-
Ardillas-
Árboles-
Aire fresco-

14. ¿Quieres brevemente compartir lo que aprendiste hoy sobre la Naturaleza a tu alrededor?

15. Distribuir la información sobre “Conexión con la Naturaleza” y la bolsita de agradecimiento.