

COASTAL MISSISSIPPI RESIDENT SENTIMENT TOWARDS TOURISM

This project was sponsored by Coastal Mississippi and prepared by The University of Southern Mississippi, Gulf Park

2,138

SURVEY RESPONDENTS

AGE Average age: 54 years old
Range: 18-87 years

HOUSE Average years living on the Coast: 28 years
Range: 2 months-83 years

PEOPLE 82% White

PEOPLE 59% Women

GRAD 58% Bachelor's degree or higher

WORK 49% Employed full-time and
28% Retired

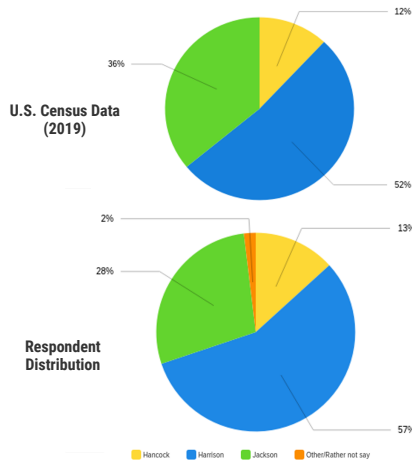
MARRIAGE 62% Married

HOUSE 40% Living in 2-person household

MONEY Average annual income of \$75,000 to \$99,000

WORK 88% Do not work in tourism industry

REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE



RESPONDENT DESCRIPTIONS OF TOURISM ON THE MS GULF COAST

RESPONDENTS SAY TOURISM CAN BE IMPROVED BY...



DERIVED FROM OVER 10,000 COMMENTS

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- Overall, residents report that the positive benefits of tourism outweigh any negative impacts.
- "Impact of tourism growth is more positive than negative."
- "[Coastal Mississippi] should advertise more often."
- COVID-19 does not appear to be a deterrent to tourism for the majority of MS Gulf Coast residents.

93%

of respondents are in favor of tourism on the MS Gulf Coast

"...Tourism is what keeps the coast growing."

coastal MISSISSIPPI
The Secret Coast

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI



92% of respondents are aware of Coastal Mississippi

"We have so many amazing attractions and dining options, but most people don't realize we're even here."

COVID-19
73% of respondents support opening the Coast community to visitors

CONCLUSIONS

- Residents are enthusiastic about the impact of tourism and tourism growth on the MS Gulf Coast.
- Perceptions that tourism on the MS Gulf Coast enhances quality of life are strong.
- Generally, residents of the MS Gulf Coast report that the benefits of tourism outweigh negative impacts.
- The majority of residents report awareness of Coastal Mississippi and that they are doing a good job.
- Regarding COVID-19, residents report an eagerness to welcome visitors to the MS Gulf Coast.
- Overall, perceptions of tourism on the MS Gulf Coast are positive, but residents offer opportunities for improvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Diversify activities
- Increase opportunities
- Increase and enhance marketing awareness
- Build infrastructure and policy alignment
- Consistently monitor progress and identify emerging issues