

**SCHUYLKILL RIVER NATIONAL & STATE HERITAGE AREA
OUTDOOR RECREATION BUSINESS STUDY**

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NATIONAL & STATE HERITAGE AREA

Transcript of Group Depth Interview/Focus Group (December 2003)

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Group Depth Interview/Focus Group Transcript
December 2, 2003**

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Transcript

Person	Discussion
Dr. Hibbs	O.K., uh, first of all thanks for coming out tonight. The older I get the more I treasure my leisure time. So, I know you could all be doing something else, and I appreciate you coming out here and spending uh, some time with us tonight. Although I have 20 years experience in retailing, all of which are in the swimming pool business and therefore think I know a little bit about retailing. I also know enough to know that the key success factors are much different from business to business. So that's one of the reasons why we are here, is to try to determine what it would take to, uh, locate businesses along the Schuylkill River Heritage Area that would be successful, and I can't think of a better place to start in trying to determine, o.k. If this is something viable, if this is something do-able at a profit. I can't think of a better place to start than to talk to those people who are in the business, o.k. So we are basically here to do exploratory research, uh, which is a fancy way of saying, uh, let's put all the ideas on the table. No idea is a good idea or a bad idea, so a lot of

Dr. Hibbs, Continued	ideas come in, over time we apply a bunch of filters to those ideas, and what should end up spitting out in the end is some locations that we think stand the best chance of succeeding, o.k. So that's what we are here for today. Let's get started. The purpose of the meeting is to get your feedback on several topics related to the Schuylkill River Heritage Areas' recreational development of the area. Specifically your thoughts on creating a recreation area that will meet the needs of the residents in the region, and how the Heritage Area can help create an atmosphere in which local businesses can start and thrive. The Heritage Area has enlisted the help of Kutztown University, and that's what brings us here. Now, one of the problems with doing this kind of stuff is, it seems like it's hard to get going. And the reason why I'm saying that at this point is because before we can really get going, we kind of have to know a little bit about the players, try to become a little bit comfortable with who's in the room. So, I figured if we could go around the room and learn a little bit about each other. We can get an idea of what your backgrounds are and by getting a little better idea of what your backgrounds are, that might facilitate, you know, Jim and I asking some follow up questions, asking for your input at different spots. So, again, I guess I will go to my right first if that's o.k. Hugh, will you start?
Hugh	Sure, I'm Hugh Kelly, and presently I own Kelly's Canoe & Kayak, which is located about 5 miles from here. We've been selling boats there for approximately, I guess 22 years and uh, we got into the business sort of in a small way at first because we had a garden center to begin with, and then we started selling a few canoes, and 5 years ago we closed down the garden center, and went 100% with the canoes and kayaks. And we maintain about, oh, 175 boats in stock usually all the time, and we have all kinds of accessories. Practically everything you find in the catalog we have in stock for that particular end of the business. My wife and I do most of the (?) and we have part time help that help us run it. We don't do any rental.
Dr. Hibbs	Hugh, because I'm nervous.
Hugh	Yeah, yeah?
Dr. Hibbs	Some things go in one ear and out the other.
Hugh	Yeah
Dr. Hibbs	Did you say where you were located?
Hugh	Yeah, I'm located about 5 miles from here, closer to Gilbertsville. If you were right out here on Route 422 and getting onto Route 100, hit your trip odometer and when you've gone 4.8 mile you'll see a bunch of camping trailers, there you would hang a right on Grocer Road, and we're just down there.
Dr. Hibbs	And about how long?
Hugh	Huh?
Dr. Hibbs	In business?
Hugh	In business? Well we've been in business since 1972.
Dr. Hibbs	And how long has it been since it evolved into..

Hugh	Uh, the business has been the last 22 yrs., 5 yrs the layout has been just boats.
Dr. Hibbs	So you're seasoned huh?
Hugh	And also the Christmas trees. We grow Christmas trees. We had the garden center and nursery there. We do a lot of different things.
Dr. Hibbs	Very good. Thanks for coming, there's sure a lot of experience there. Mike, if you would.
Mike	Yes, I'm Mike Friedland, I'm with French Creek Outfitters in Phoenixville, PA, and uh, we've been open 10 yrs. Uh, we've been selling boats for all of those 10 yrs. We used to be located right here in North Coventry up on Rte.100, we're located now on Rte. 23 in Phoenixville. We have a large, uh, we have a lot of other things other than boats in the store, but the canoes and kayaks in particular have been growing rapidly in the last 5 years or so. And we've increased our inventory and the department size as a result. That's basically it for me.
Dr. Hibbs	Let me ask you a question. So you are seeing the canoe segment of boating is growing?
Mike	It's not necessarily canoes, kayaks in particular. Canoes are actually dwindling a little bit. Kayaks are kind of taking over.
Dr. Hibbs	Alright. Jack?
Jack	My name is Jack Gifford, and I am employed by Fred Beans in Limerick. I am more interested in the trail because of bicycle commutes back and forth to work. I am gonna be one of the guys using the trail, and its facilities. I've already used the trail back and forth between Valley Forge, and Philly, and back. I think Pottstown has the most to gain from the trail, opposed to it's location, I wonder if it could be like a trailhead for this sort of place. It gives people a place to drive to with their car and bike, and parking, plenty of it. Then for people coming out of Philly for this could be a destination because there's places to go, uh cause when the Perkiomen Trail got finished there's rides every week from Philly up to that, and there's nothing to do in Perkiomenville. Just to turn around and go back.
Dr. Hibbs	So let me get this straight Jack. You work for an automobile dealer...
Jack	Yup.
Dr. Hibbs	And you're looking to ride a bike to work?
Jack	I do ride a bike to work, about 7 yrs. now. I ride about two thousand miles a year.
Dr. Hibbs	This is very relevant to you. Vernon.
Vernon	Yes, right now I'm with Appalachian Outfitters in Port Clinton. Started out think' I was going to sell canoes, and I didn't realize that canoes aren't moving. Basically selling mainly kayaks as far as the boating industry goes, ah, also sell backpacks, sleeping bags. The Appalachian Trail comes right through Port Clinton so I see plenty of "thru" hikers at my store, people going 2200 miles on a trail, not 110.

Dr. Hibbs	Are you aware, excuse me for interrupting. Are you aware of any “counts” on the trail in that area?
Vernon	Counts?
Dr. Hibbs	Has anyone done any “counts” as to how many people come through there at any given point and time?
Vernon	I know how many come through my store.
Dr. Hibbs	O.K., I didn’t know if someone’s doing actual counts on the trail knowing what the traffic is through there.
Vernon	As far as “thru” hikers go, about 700 I see a year.
Dr. Hibbs	O.K.
Vernon	That’s about it.
Dr. Hibbs	How long were you there?
Vernon	3 years
Dr. Hibbs	3 years?
Vernon	Yup
Dr. Hibbs	Do you think you are out of the woods yet as a business?
Vernon	No honestly. I just got a big curve ball thrown at me. Cabela’s is one and a half miles from me.
Dr. Hibbs	I’m sure that will come up in conversation today. We’ll see what happens. And you are....
Marcie	Marcie, I’m Vernon’s wife
Dr. Hibbs	How long have you been married?
Marcie	2 yrs. in December
Dr. Hibbs	So you knew what you were getting into, and you still got into it?
Marcie	Well kind of, yes.
Dr. Hibbs	O.K., Bryan
Bryan	Hi, I’m Bryan Hoover. I’ve worked a couple of jobs, and decided to look for something else. I was unemployed for a 6 month period. So, I looked at the business I needed, and the trail. I wondered if people would ride surreys, like down on the boardwalk, at the shore on the trail, and that’s kind of how it started. I think that as of March or May I had the idea, and July 24 th I kicked it off. So now, um, I’m renting surreys from the Spring Mount trailhead, north to Green Lane on the Perkiomen trail for the last 3 months. So, that’s kind of been my experience, or what I’ve learned about who rents that type of vehicle or not.
Dr. Hibbs	You’re in bicycles?
Bryan	No, surreys. I talked with people at the shore and they said 60 to 75% of their business is the surreys. Even though they rent bikes, and all kinds of other stuff. So I thought I’d try that on a small scale, and see what happens. So I just went with it this year.
Dr. Hibbs	It’s a small world. When I am over on the Perkiomen Trail riding my bike, and I see him there, and I start talking to Bryan. I see him there another time, and I talk to him, and here he is.

Bryan	One connection actually. When I talk to people about what area they're from, and they talk about community revitalization in town there. So that's how I kicked off being at that location because I knew that Schwenksville was working on trying to attract businesses in that area.
Dr. Hibbs	Did they try to attract you?
Bryan	Yeah, I think they still, you know, the trail that they completed through that section this summer, um, well it turned out a lot hillier, and that may work for me, I'm not sure where I'll be.
Dr. Hibbs	So you're good in one direction basically. That one side is flat, and then there's the other side of the mountain. They were trying to attract you. What did they do to try and attract you?
Bryan	I just went to Borough Hall, and talked to the top designer there, and he got all excited right away, and I guess that (?), I'm not sure what organization did a study, and they had a little booklet, and everything that they were trying to work at, so they were real excited about me staying there. They have the lumberyard there that wanted to put some businesses there. Eventually a trailhead, a restaurant, that type of thing. So, they have some plans for there. I think they are falling behind schedule though.
Dr. Hibbs	Are these formal plans? Or is this just people talking to you?
Bryan	No, there's a formal booklet. I was going to bring it tonight but I forgot. But it's like a 40 page booklet, pretty involved.
Dr. Hibbs	This is probably a dumb question, but are you aware of this?
Doc Ogden	Would it be possible if you sent me a copy of that booklet, and I can send it back to you?
Bryan	Yeah, I can find the copy.
Doc Ogden	I'm pretty trustworthy
Bryan	Yeah, no problem
Dr. Hibbs	O.K. I can't read it from here.
Aaron	Aaron Weilerstein. I'm with the Philadelphia Canoe Club. A different role than many of you. The canoe club is, we're located where the West Haven Creek comes into the Schuylkill River, so right on the river at the base of Manyunk in Philadelphia. The club has been there for about 100 years. Its 100 th birthday is this year. Um, the clubs activities have changed over the years, but at the moment it's mostly a club of recreational boaters who are involved with canoeing and kayaking. A lot of them are white water boaters, some are moving water and sea kayakers, but in terms of what we participate in on the Schuylkill, it's mostly from Flat Rock Dam down to Boathouse Row.
Dr. Hibbs	You have some interesting input here because you have an idea of the range of canoers or kayakers. You know what I'm saying? The sense of people that do it once in awhile, the people that are regular at it, and those people who live by it. And that's kind of something that we are interested in. You're going to have some info there, I'm sure.

Aaron	From the view of the user I guess.
Dr. Hibbs	Yeah if you could make your name on there real clear and large for me.
Aaron	Sure. My handwriting has never been good.
Dr. Hibbs	O.K. who do we have next?
Deirdre	Deirdre
Dr. Hibbs	Deirdre
Deirdre	I'm the chief planner for Valley Forge National Park, and I came because I have been doing some talking with Kurt and his staff about what's going on in the National Heritage Corridor. I actually worked on the corridor 15 yrs. ago. So I still say Heritage Corridor. We get about one and a half million visitors a year to the park, and 80% of them are recreational visitors. People who are not coming to look at the historical buildings. People who come to bike, walk, hike, and ride the horses. We're trying to figure out what we should be doing for recreational purposes. What services we should be providing, how recreation could help us build some of our many, many empty historic buildings that we have no money to keep standing. So this seems like a natural way to generate a lot of interest at once. The Schuylkill River Trail opened in the park in the summer of 002, and um the first couple of months and full months in August and September we saw 40 or 50 thousand bikers a month. We do have a counter, we don't think it's accurate. We have a bean counter.
Dr. Hibbs	Is that a before or after number?
Deirdre	Well before there was nothing.
Dr. Hibbs	O.K., so this is only on that trail. Unrelated to the normal trail that you would get on Valley Forge to go to Manyunk.
Deirdre	We are a nexus of trails. We have the Schuylkill River Trail, and other river trails that connect to the Schuylkill River Trail, not the Perkiomen, we're trying to connect. Chester County on the southern side is working on cross-country trails. We had 28 miles of trails in the park already. We've got a water trail. We're talking with Berks County and the Heritage Corridor about putting in a new landing at Ponds Rd. There's a parking lot there now for the park, it's too steep. We're talking to the county about combining with them to do something. We're interested in not doing things that would cause us to have to put in more parking. One of the things that I want to get across is how we can spread the parking lots up and down the trail still allowing people to come in the far end. We have people come in on bikes, and cars.
Dr. Hibbs	So, that's a lot of access issues you're talking about then? Correct?
Deirdre	It's more opportunities than issues.
Dr. Hibbs	You're interested in access opportunities then. O.K.
Bob	My name is Bob Smith. I represent Schuylkill River Keepers. And our concern is more for the river than the businesses that would be along the banks of the river. However, we recognize that's all part of it. We're interested in having some input, interested in hearing your input. And last

Bob, Continued	but not least I have been a canoeist for some 20 yrs. I have done the Schuylkill at least 20 times. I've done it 4 or 5 times with the Gray Lines on their sojourn. And probably will do it some more. But I have concern from Pottsville, and even a little above Pottsville to Fairmount Park and Fairmount Dam in Philadelphia, and everything in between, and I would feel better if I saw some more Vernons.
Dr. Hibbs	Some more what ?
Bob	Some more Vernons. I feel a lot better about that.
Jim	Jim Hartman, mostly representing the Keystone Canoe Club. I've been involved in canoeing for, I don't know, about 30 yrs. My interest is more as a user than a business. I'm obviously interested in what's going on here to.
Dr. Hibbs	I think that's the great part of what I see so far, is that there are people looking at this from very different angles, and unless you have that, you run the risk of developing tunnel vision. I mean you come up with ideas where you flatter yourself. But they don't mean anything to anybody else. I think it's great, the range of experience and types of interest that are represented here. O.K., very good. I appreciate you doing that because it still seems like we're trying to get started here. So, let's get started. O.K. Alright, site selection input and major output by the study. Kutztown University is providing retail site selection information for an outfitters type store. Outfitters' is used very loosely here. In other words it could be something as simple as just renting kayaks at a location. Or it could be a whole lone outfitters store. I don't know what categories or merchandise they would sell, but anyway. So, outfitters here is used very loosely, o.k. Type of store, or stores used along the Schuylkill, so today's topic will focus on site related questions.
Dr. D. Ogden	Roger, I do have a question. Does anybody actually rent kayaks and canoes or is it just selling?
Mike	Last of the Mohicans, huh.
Dr. Hibbs	That's an interesting comment, Last of the Mohicans.
Mike	Yeah, an unintentional pun. Because I don't know any that's renting canoes or kayaks on the Schuylkill anymore.
Dr. Hibbs	Is that the Schuylkill in specific, or is the same thing happening on the Delaware?
Mike	No, just the opposite on the Delaware. It's thriving on the Delaware, has been for years.
Dr. D. Ogden	What's the biggest drawback, liability?
Mike	No, I think it's two fold. I think, well we may be getting ahead of ourselves a little bit, but one was the liability issue. Which was certainly, you know, a big thing, But the other is that the Schuylkill for whatever reason is not thought of as a "scenic" river, clean. Most people think of the Schuylkill as an open sewer. Which we all know, since we've been

Mike, Continued	on it. That it's not true. But it's a perception thing. I've been on it quite a bit. Mostly in a fishing capacity. Most of the time I've had it to myself. Very, very few people using it, at least from Birdsboro down this way. Now below you get a lot of activity, down around Flat Rock and places like that. But certainly this section, there doesn't seem to be much.
Dr. Hibbs	Mike, you talk about perception there, the Schuylkill still being dirty, o.k. Do you know of any studies or any evidence that it is the same as the Delaware? Is it the same as the Schuylkill? Is it the exact same in these places or one is really not different than the other.
Mike	No I don't know what it is about the Delaware. And it had that perception for many years, but somehow broke out of that some time in the 80's I guess
Dr. Hibbs	I remember we used to dig for freshwater clams along the side
Mike	The Schuylkill is amazingly clean, I mean in this area anyhow. I'm amazed.
Bob	I had that same perception. Don't talk much. Be careful, there's a process of bringing suit. Our fellow government is in the process of bringing a suit against the city of Reading, for the dumping of raw sewage that comes from the river.
Wayne	There was this report released called the (?) Status Approval. Basically it was an indicator of how the river was doing. We have copies of it. Basically it has improved over the years but still has a long way to go.
Dr. Hibbs	Yes, but what I'm asking. Is it much different than the Delaware or is it pretty much the same?
Wayne	The Delaware seems to be much cleaner.
Bob	Especially around Trenton. The Delaware is cleaner overall. The upper Delaware from Hancock down to Marysville, alright, is pretty pristine. There's not a lot of industry there, and businesses are not polluting the river, per say. Once you get down below Trenton, the Delaware is, well the Delaware. That happens. Whereas the Schuylkill has some problems all the way from Pottsville. Years ago, alright, the Schuylkill was the place where all the mines of the county washed their coal. The Schuylkill was polluted almost to the point where you could almost walk across it on the top of the water from Pottsville to Philly.
Dr. Hibbs	In the 20's and 30's didn't it catch fire once in awhile?
Bob	That's what they say, I'm not sure I buy into that.
Dr. Hibbs	O.K., if we can move on a little bit. What do you think most people are looking for? I have a list here. Now when I say "most People" here we recognize that different people are looking for different things, different experiences on trails, and in the water. So we recognize that, but here we're interested the mythical "most" people. I'm going to say 80% of the people, just to throw a number out there. What are they looking for in a walking trail, a hiking trail, a jogging trail, and a biking trail? What are

Dr. Hibbs, Contineud	they looking for? And if we can let's take them one at a time, and just jump in at any point you want to. The more we keep it moving around, the more we can get those different opinions coming out. So, a walking trail.
Hugh	I think the same thing for all of these things. They want something that's going to be safe.
Dr. Hibbs	Ooh, that might be a good place to start too. If we can think in generalizations and apply it in the whole area, I think that's an excellent place to start.
Hugh	A good place to park where their car is going to be safe, or their rack isn't going to be removed from the car while they're going down the river or riding a bike. A place when it gets dark, before they get back they can feel safe. You know, getting back to their starting point.
Dr. Hibbs	I hadn't thought about after dark. Now the issues start to change.
Hugh	There used to be a little trail down here and I'm sure there are different perceptions at different times of the day when you walk along there.
Bob	In terms of degree or issue? I'm sure a walking trail would have higher concerns for security even around civilized, settled areas or major towns where you are going to get more people walking shorter trips, but more people walking alright? Yeah, security would be a major issue then, less so down between these towns. Between Reading and Pottstown I'm sure that, that the issue would come up, but percentage wise it wouldn't be there.
Dr. Hibbs	I'm probably going in the totally wrong direction here, if you had safety issues that you could put on the table for us.
Deirdre	Well, I was just thinking. We have people telling us that there are parts of the park that they don't feel safe. The parts of the park that are not populated. But we've had no assaults. Can't think of... When I think back over the last several years there have been absolutely nothing, and it's not because we're overrun with Rangers. We only have 2 Rangers that look over acres and acres. Fewer police type people in the park then you'd find into town. At the same time both walkers and hikers in secluded areas don't want to see anybody else so it's kind of hard to generalize. But I'd say in addition to safety, um, people want scenery, and they don't want, um, they don't want anyone else to get in their way. No matter which one of the things they are, they don't want to have to veer, or head in any other direction where anybody is, is astonishing to me. The many complaints that we hear, "I saw somebody", or "the dog is in my way". We do have accidents, particularly between bikers and pedestrians. The numbers, actually the bikers don't use common sense.
Dr. Hibbs	O.K., now we're looking at safety as a concern
Deirdre	Yeah, well in terms of assaults that's not an issue.
Dr. Hibbs	Does that say the issue would be wider trails do you think?
Deirdre	Well it would...
Dr. Hibbs	Well, wider is a bad way of saying it because wider and wider..

Deirdre	I don't think it's so much width because you're studying people not following basic safety directions. It's really designing trails for different places. The Schuylkill River Trail is ya know, is labeled as a walking trail, but I think it's very difficult to walk with the volumes of bicycles on it.
Dr. Hibbs	O.K. Would it be safe to say when we're talking about the safety issue, that the safety issue is probably gonna show itself. The safety issue is probably more relevant at those places that you would, put in, ya know. Put into the river, put into the trail.
Deirdre	Yeah, in terms of cars, as he mentioned. We do get that.
Jim	I would think in terms of walkers, that's not a good statement to make. Uh, as she's already pointed out they asked for secluded areas on a trail, and yet, those are the very areas where their imagination leaves to play with them. Really you're not dealing with an activity kind of security issue. She's not having problems with that, but you're dealing with peoples' thoughts about what might be dangerous.
Dr. Hibbs	O.K., do we have any other generalizations that may go across categories?
Mike	I think in the more urbanized areas. Say Pottstown. The trail has 2 issues I think. I, every time the river floods, or the river comes up high on the trail kind of. Well, I'm not real familiar with the trail, but most trails in urban areas that seem to be used a lot for the short term trips, like you mentioned, are usually raised up, and somehow they're walked, uh, in that area. That is some kind of surface that you know is like normal cleanup. It doesn't wash
Mike, Continued	away every time there is a flood. Above grade, right, and things like that, and at least in those areas that have heavy use, here in Pottstown for example. A more permanent type of trail might be something that people use more often for those short little hikes and things like that. Or just walking and things like that. Outside of the urban areas I really don't think that's an issue.
Jack	Some park benches would be good. Some rest areas would be good. Maybe some restrooms along the way somewhere
Dr. Hibbs	I think that's going to get into a bigger question that we want to talk about. What types of facilities are necessary? Ah, in these areas where people are going to be getting on the trail, and off the trail. Is that where you're going Jack? O.K., do we want to take these individually then? What do you think most people are looking for in a walking trail, a hiking trail, a jogging trail? What are some differences here? What are some unique differences among these users?
Jack	Well, on a biking trail you can go from here to Philly and back in a day. Whereas a walker they would walk Spring City and back, and so there's a range factor in there. Like for me, I would have supplies to water somewhere around Manyunk. Mike I don't know if you know about the pretzel stand on Lock St, he's got one of those to fill up our bottles.

Dr. Hibbs	That's interesting. What we talk about most, and I'm not supposed to inject myself in it. Because you're not here to listen to me. But the only reason I'm going to talk about this is by way of giving an example. Being somewhat of a biker, which isn't much, and having come in contact with this project. What I see about 80% of the bikers and walkers doing, they don't usually get much further then about 20 or 30 minutes from where ever they start at. You know what I'm saying? Now again we're talking about most. They only get to about 20 or 30 minutes from where they're going to, o.k. And it seems like the places that people put in the most are the ones that have what you were talking about a minute ago Jack. The places that have the bathrooms, that have the good parking. You know, these types of facilities. O.K., so it would seem to me what you were talking about a minute ago, o.k. is that when we talk about bathrooms, when we talk about the facilities. Is that almost a given if we're going to be considering a spot that is going to be a place that a business is going to be there.
Jack	The places that you can use the restrooms in Philly, uh, on the bike trail, or the place over in Valley Forge, the park facilities there, or the Norristown train station, there's a restroom at the top of that. Then after that you have to hold it until you get to (CITY ?) and Lloyds Hall in Philly. Lloyds Hall is about 16 or 17 miles.
Dr. Hibbs	Do you think that impacts the traffic in that area?
Jack	Yes
Dr. Hibbs	O.K.
Jack	It may, it may. It depends on who it is. Now around (?) you have a lot of family activity there. That seems to dry up a mile or so outside of Norristown. Then you get more seasoned riders going the distance then on in. When the trail runs out down around River Road. Ya know River Rd. where the road goes underneath the old railroad tracks? Well right there, uh, the more seasoned riders will take the road route into Manyunk. Whereas the novice will go down the canal footpath. That place, well there's really nothing going that way but Manyunk. That's where you start looking for facilities.
Dr. Hibbs	Who's on the trails a lot? Who here is on the trail a lot?
Vernon	I would say, like Hugh said, people want to get away, other people don't. The people will utilize a section of the trail that they like. I don't think it has to be beautiful. I think it should be continuous, but I don't think it has to be able to be biked from Philly to here. Or be able to be hiked from Philly to Pottsville. The people that don't want to bike and don't want to ride any kind of grade are gonna go to this section of the trail.
Dr. Hibbs	That brings up an interesting point. Can people self select based on their own wants and needs, the part of the trail they want to be on.

Vernon	Based on their own wants and needs and their ability to do it. I mean there can be a guy out there 95, and wants to walk the trail. He'll take a part with less grade, and obviously there isn't a lot of grade along the river. It's pretty flat most of the way, but some sections that would be more secluded like I can think, from Hamburg to Schuylkill Haven you go through Auburn without barely seeing Auburn. It's that mountainous. You're talking 16, 18, miles and um, if you want that type of experience on the Schuylkill River Trail, I would say that's where to go if you don't want to see people. I don't expect to see a lot of the people using the trail there, and if they are, they're I mean ... there aren't many people....
Dr. Hibbs	Would it be fair to say Vern, that people at your Port Clinton store... I wonder if the average person, this 80%. The person who is accessing the trail or accessing the river at Port Clinton, is significantly different than the person who is doing it down in Norristown? In other words, are yours more adventurous? Or do you think that you also have the people that are along the trail for 20 or 30 minutes, and turn around and come back.
Vernon	Yes, I would say it's the same people, they just didn't have a chance to drive north, I would think.
Dr. Hibbs	So, would you agree that the frequent users are probably these people who stay on the trail 20 or 30 minutes and then come back the other way?
Vernon	I don't know about 20 or 30 minutes. I have people that come into my store that go to the Pinnacle. I mean that come in to see me are not up there for 20 or 30 minutes.
Dr. Hibbs	O.K., that's what I was looking at. And what do you think the average is for those people?
Vernon	3 to 6 Hours
Dr. Hibbs	So, it's a destination. They're going there for the day.
Vernon	Yeah
Dr. Hibbs	Gotcha, that's interesting.
Wayne	The Schuylkill Trail up there is (?). It corners there, and people can use it. I did. Some people cannot bike it, ah, not many.
Dr. Hibbs	So we're self-selecting more adventurous.
Wayne	There's an intersection near the Appalachian Trail and the Schuylkill Trail underneath there at Port Clinton, and once the trail is developed I think you'll see a lot more 20, or 30 types, half the day.
Vernon	Yeah, once they know about it, now they don't.
Wayne	They take a Sunday walk from Auburn to Hamburg.
Vernon	People come in my store asking where the towpath is, all kinds of people.
Dr. Hibbs	I often wonder because we're talking about a site that suits them best. I wonder how many people access a path, and because there isn't the right signage for the paths. I'll give you an example. Because there isn't the right signage for the path, they have a negative experience, and don't go back. For example, if we were talking about, ah, ah, ah...
Vernon	Spring Mountain?

Dr. Hibbs	Spring Mountain. If you make a left, o.k. Well if I go up that one my thighs are burning. If you go to the right, it's flat as a pancake. So I wondered if information comes into play here, and communicating that information to people, so that when they go and have that initial experience, that it makes sense to them. To encourage people to use these trails, which may be getting off here a little bit.
All	General Hubbub
Bryan	I was kind of in agreement here as to where you were going, where you are heading as far as different types of people, different sections of the trail. Like Spring Mountain is really flat going to Green Lake, and people who don't even normally go out and have outdoor activity will go to walk that trail, and have a great time. They talk about it and have a good experience. Whereas, if some one is serious about hiking or somethin', it's just kind of boring cause it's an easy flat trail. For them it's like, walkin' down Main St. or something. So different types of people, and actually if you're talking about a walkin' trail, a lot of people walk their dogs..maybe 80% of walkers on Spring Mountain walk their dogs.
Dr. Hibbs	Wow, that's interesting. Percentages are that high?
Bryan	It is high.
Dr. Hibbs	80%?
Bryan	It's surprising and they cater to that with little doggie bags. People appreciate that I think. But, um, it is high. A lot of people walk their dogs, um, maybe it's a suburban section of the trail used by suburbanites.
Dr. Hibbs	Does anyone feel that I brought up a legitimate point? I have a problem with people saying, "Go to somewhere else". That communicating what each section of the trail is about character-wise can create a better atmosphere, can create a better first time experience for the trail. And get people to use it more often.
Deirdre	We did a meeting in October regarding the trails, regarding the connections to the counties trails, and that's the one thing we heard really overwhelmingly. That people wanted information, they didn't necessarily want a million signs. They wanted updated guides and some indication as to where they were, and how far to the next point. What was the name of the trail, and what were the basic services.
Dr. Hibbs	Did the terrain ever come up in that Deirdre? Did terrain ever come up?
Deirdre	No
Dr. Hibbs	They just wanted to get oriented to the place that...
Deirdre	The park is very hilly. But I just wanted to say that the other overwhelming thing was people want loops.
Dr. Hibbs	Loops?
Deirdre	Loops. Cause people don't really want to turn around and see the same thing from the other direction.
Dr. Hibbs	That's interesting.
All	General hubbub

Dr. Hibbs	O.k., so what I'm hearing is that they're more interested in locating themselves, then they are to the next access point, or what the terrain is like.
Deirdre	They want to know the history of the park, what happened here. What is this building that is interesting but there's nothing to tell me about it.
Dr. Hibbs	O.K. We haven't heard much about the river here.
Jack	One thing that was said about signs. One thing that would help is like, the trails that are coming into the community. Like where the trail comes into Pottstown. Put a map of downtown Pottstown, where the McDonalds is, where the hospital is, where the drugstore is, where you can get to it.
Dr. Hibbs	We all want to be in the middle of nowhere, right next to somewhere.
Jack	As soon as they can get into town, they can see where that stuff is, and how to get to it.
Dr. Hibbs	Interesting. And you think that would be a way to connect with it?
Jack	Yes, just one map. Like "Welcome to Pottstown", and a map of downtown Pottstown that would list the businesses. Just think of the advertising that could go on that sign.
Mike	And historic sites, and things like that.
Jack	Like Pottstown Manor
Mike	Yeah, like Pottstown Manor, right.
Dr. Hibbs	So we almost have to discern what people are looking for.
Jack	Well if I was coming into Pottstown from Philly, and I was looking to get some snack foods and Gatorade.
Dr. Hibbs	Sure, sure. Where are the river people? Any comments on this stuff?
Bob	Well at this point I wanted to make a comment. I think you would need to be very careful of signage. That annoys people who are outdoor people. Ah, I am thinking, I am thinking that you're on the right track. I'm thinking rather than signage the hardware stuck along the trail somewhere, that perhaps pamphlets might work. And I know all the problems with pamphlets, alright. But uh, they are somewhat less obtrusive than the hard signage, and they may work out better. I think that people want to know where these points of interest are. Where I could go to the rest facilities, where I could get something to eat, that sort of thing. The other side of it is, a sign, a hard sign, a big thing is going to bother them, alright.
Jack	It doesn't have to be that big. On the Perkiomen Trail there's signs for the entire trail, like you are here, or something on that order. It doesn't have to be that big.
Vernon	Put a sign at the trailhead. How many miles you've come, etc.
Jack	Welcome to Pottstown. Here's where you get food, etc.
Vernon	On the Appalachian Trail they have a book called the "Through Hikers Companion". In the book it tells you every towns' services from Georgia to Maine. What's in every town. Where the food is, where the lodging is, where the grocery is, where the laundromat is, where the soda machine is, where you can sleep. Everything for every town.

Dr. Hibbs	Jim I saw you shaking your head a while ago. Do you want to chime in?
Jim	I just had some thoughts on having a map of the river, the Greenways Map. It lists all the access points and facilities, that sort of thing. Which is great. Signs along the river I don't think would be much good.
Dr. Hibbs	Which is different than the signs on the trailhead, am I understanding that correctly?
Aaron	The dams might be where we have safety issues, and danger spots. There are going to be people that are the novice. Canoers and kayakers, and they have no clue what's beyond the other side of the horizon line, and unfortunately a few have gone over. For
Aaron, Continued	safety we should have signs. Another thought I had, is where you have "put ins", and "take outs". Boaters like to change clothing, and that might be something to take into account. Um, planning those areas.
Dr. Hibbs	Facilities. So it's not just a bathroom you're saying. A place where someone can change.
Bob	And generally speaking this wouldn't have to be a facility that would accommodate 50 people, usually canoeing groups. Well if you have 12 to 15 people you have a large group. So something like that. That would accommodate that amount of people would be ideal. Because he's right, we do change.
Dr. Hibbs	Kind of reminds me of the Blue Marsh Lake, the bathrooms there are big enough to change in, but nothing tells you, you should change there. If that makes any sense. In other words, yeah, go ahead and do it, but we're not going to put a sign out saying come change here.
Aaron	In some areas where you have residents near a "put in", you can understand that they don't want some guy running around in his underwear.
Bob	It's my experience that you can be on a road that hasn't been used in 15 yrs., you drop your drawers and here comes a bus of old ladies. Happens every time.
Dr. Hibbs	O.K. Anyone else want to chime in? O.K., now we're going from the general to the more specific here. What I'm looking to try to do here is, is to try to, for a better lack of putting it, ah, segment what we did over here. In other words when we talk about a walking trail, do we see people with different characteristics and can we break that up into 2 or 3 groups, or however many logical groups there should be. Are there needs that are significantly different? I think I put the example up here, and this was totally out of my head, o.k. For example people that bike who might be put into 3 different categories; 1. Family Fun Riders. These people get out when they can, and usually ride where it's most convenient. 2. Week End Adventurers; People who get out every week and look for some variety in where they bike. 3. Active Bikers; People that have made biking a part of their lifestyle. These folks set distance goals, may join a biking club, and "live to ride". Terrain is not an issue when choosing a ride. So, that's kind of what I was looking for in describing the different users of the Heritage Area. Is to try and break it down even further.

Bob	I would think your walking trail.
Dr. Hibbs	O.K.
Bob	You would have different groups. You would have those people 20, 30 minutes. They are also the ones who want loops. You also have the hiker that is walking, not the Appalachian Trail kind of hiker, but someone who wants to go out for a longer walk.
Bob, Continued	Spending $\frac{3}{4}$ of the day walking. They are not going to want so many of the loops, as they are some facilities to use on the trail. Depending on how long it is. It may be just the trailhead. But if they walk for any length of time, yes, they have different needs than those people who only go out for 20 or 30 minutes. Ah, 20 or 30 minutes, yes, they will want the loops. I walk this way and I'll turn around and go back. I wanna go around and see everything new and wind up right where I started.
Dr. Hibbs	Leave it to me to be gross. I think of where I'm at, I am pretty much a weekend person. I'm at this enough to know that I need to put toilet paper in the backpack. You know what I mean? We don't need the hassle, you know what I'm saying, and that's an indication right there you know, that I'm one of the people that are going beyond the safety of a rest stop being 20 minutes away. You know what I'm saying? And I'm taking care of myself, kind of along the way. Um so we have identified 2 groups of people that would be walking the trail. These are people again, categorize it again Bob.
Bob	There are people who walk for 20 or 30 minutes, and they're dead. They want the loops. Things where they could see something new all the time, and end up right back where they started. Versus those who go out for the afternoon or $\frac{3}{4}$ of the day. They may start out at 8 or 9 in the morning, and get done at 2 or 3. That's fine, they love to walk, walk, walk. They're going to need rest facilities. Things like that at strategic locations, but they don't want the loops, and the trails. That's not something they're looking for.
Dr. Hibbs	Tom do you also think that they are also people who are kind of like the Week End Adventurers, they are looking or doing different trails in different places, on different days.
Bob	These are what I would call serious walkers. Versus those who, uh, just go for a walk.
Dr. Hibbs	O.K., Jack.
Jack	Let's get ready for the riders.
Dr. Hibbs	I think we're done there for a bit, then we'll come back to that.
Bryan	These are people that use it like a gym. Whereas like every 3 days I do my 10 miles and come back. They use it that way. You see them all the time.
Dr. Hibbs	Do we see any needs that lead to purchase opportunities here? Talking about these 3 groups. Do we see any needs among these 3 groups that might lend themselves to purchase opportunities, or selling opportunities depending on what side of the cash register you're on.

Jim	There's a stretch of trail along the Tulpehawken Creek that gets really heavy with hikers, bikers, and joggers. People use it for an exercise area, other people who are out for a casual walk in the afternoon.
Dr. Hibbs	So it's a good cross section of everybody?
Jim	On the weekend it's jammed. It's just a pleasant stretch that goes right along the creek. The scenery is nice. The trail is well maintained. There have been a few minor incidents, but generally it's pretty safe. That gets a lot of use, and because it's a park area there isn't much in the way of facilities. I think there are some food concessions.
Bob	Ah, there is out at...
Jim	The bridge?
Bob	Yeah, the bridge.
Dr. Hibbs	Have businesses come and gone there, or just no one came in?
Bob	I think the county pretty much controls it.
Jim	Yeah, it's all a county park, and so all the businesses are pretty much run by the county, or at least controlled by the county. I think that kind of place would have more business opportunities, particularly with the food sales.
Dr. Hibbs	Do you think that food is probably the number one opportunity along these trails?
Jim	The trail that gets that kind of use gets the kind of people that are gonna stop and buy.
Bob	Ice cream and hot dogs.
Dr. Hibbs	Do they have the bike rentals or the surrey rentals, canoe rentals, and kayak rentals?
Jim & Bob	No
Dr. Hibbs	Is that because it's the county?
Jim	I don't know.
Bob	I don't think anyone has ever looked into it seriously.
Dr. Hibbs	Alright. Where are we going next? Jack.
Jack	For the biking there. Again in all 3 of those categories, um, the Family Fun Riders, you're range is gonna be somewhere between 5 and 10 miles, depending on the skill level of the family. And when they get done, one of the kids is gonna be hungry. Those guys want to drive to this spot with bikes on the car and park it and go, come back, and then hit the nearest McDonalds. The Week End Adventurers, they may or may not ride from their house. So they will get off their bike for the restroom. They are also going to be interested in where they can take breaks along the way. The Active Bikers, they are going to have their route planned out. They will probably ride to the trail, and continue on from there. Their planned destinations are gonna be where they take their breaks and spend their money. They turn around and come back. So they are going to be looking for a place where they can take their bike. For example in town here, they

Jack, Continued	just built Borough Hall. They put bike racks out, but I don't want to use one of their racks. I'll chain my bike to a tree before I use one of their racks because of the way they're set up. Where as down in Center City, I'll use the hoops and chain it up to that, more secure. McDonalds up here on East End, there's no provision for a bike, and I'll just chain it to their bike hold. The Week End Adventurer and Active Bikers are looking for something like that. Where as the family, if they're going to be on the trail, as soon as the kids are tired they're going to turn around and come back.
Dr. Hibbs	Bryan, I was thinking about you a second ago. I was thinking about you in the context of, in the rentals that you have done. You're in a unique situation because you just opened up. Are those people deciding to ride these bikes as an impulse when they get to the trail or have they already heard about you and are seeking you out?
Bryan	At the shore they say it's impulse buys. The people at the shore, or if you talk to somebody who's trying to sell you a franchise, they'll say it's impulse.
Dr. Hibbs	They don't know that they're getting in that thing till they get there.
Bryan	Till they walk out, see it, and say, "Oh that looks like fun, let's try it." But I say it's a 50/50 thing maybe.
Dr. Hibbs	So it's already 50/50?
Bryan	Yeah, it depends on the customers, too. Some have ridden 5 or 6 times, yeah, so I don't know.
Dr. Hibbs	And how long have you been in business there?
Bryan	3 months
Dr. Hibbs	3 months?
Bryan	Yeah
Dr. Hibbs	Have you seen, in 3 months... I recognize it's a short period of time. But if you're already getting a lot.... A natural question comes up. If you are already getting people who are seeking you out, plus you're getting the impulse riders, o.k. Is your business already growing, you see a trend going on?
Bryan	Yeah, the weather, and when school started it dropped off. Fortunately, I got some coverage in newspapers. That really helped a lot. People talked about that a lot this summer.
Dr. Hibbs	So the people that were coming up to you had mentioned...
Bryan	Yeah, that they read the article about me in the paper. Stuff like that.
Dr. Hibbs	So, you can't attribute it to, uh, the business is already naturally growing from people who have already experienced it, plus the impulse buyers.
Bryan	Yeah
Dr. Hibbs	O.K., that's fine.
Mike	Getting back to the Week End Adventurers. Some of them will ride bikes to the trailhead, for example, Metropolis Bike Shop in Manyunk each Saturday, they would bring out a bunch of bikes because it's an excellent location, right next to the trail. That's one place for everyone to go....

Dr. Hibbs	Yeah, I wondered if someone set up a bike rental place. If there were opportunities there. You could go to the scouts. We could rent 10 bikes a day for whatever we'll pay an hour. Or church groups, that kind of thing. Cause that's what you just said isn't it Jack?
Jack	Metropolis Bike. Someone from out of town wanting to ride the trail for a day. They go there and rent out bikes for the day. The bikes they rent are high quality bikes. That's why they can command a higher price.
Bryan	About bike rentals. I wonder if it's like a thing of the past, just because bike prices have dropped so much. You can go to Wal-Mart, and buy one for 75 bucks. There's a little difference as far as bike rentals.
Jack	That's just depends on the bike it is. The bikes you get over at Wal-Mart are not that comfortable. You can spend a couple of extra dollars for a bike that fits you.
Dr. Hibbs	O.K., do we want to take a look at this list, and try to bring out other categories here. Canoeing, kayaking people?
Aaron	You could make the same sort of comparison as with the other categories. You have the white water boaters who maybe just want to go to a spot and play. Maybe a surf wave. Other boaters who want to go down stream, whatever distance. Something similar could be done with those.
Dr. Hibbs	So, in an area again. I think I've asked this already, where do you think there is more opportunity as far as the business goes?
Aaron	Well, the biggest opportunity is probably to rent kayaks, or canoes.
Dr. Hibbs	Which are going to be these people...
Aaron	More or less, yeah. They don't require as much skill to go out and use them.
Bryan	I don't know if there's a lodging possibility like the Baxter State Park in Maine. They have a hotel for hikers. They have a shelter, showers. And something that, since the trail's long enough now, that they could stay overnight and shower for 20 bucks, or something like that. Like a bed and breakfast.
Kurt	We're planning to do a survey of bed and breakfasts' in 5 counties, and maybe publish a guide or a pamphlet to attract visitor groups.
Vernon	I think people that hike the trail are going to stay in them. I don't think people are going to break down, and spend 75 bucks a night.
Bob	Help me out here. My thought is that you have white water boaters, you have moving water boats, day trippers, and you have play boaters. Doesn't matter so much as what kind boat, as much as what they're into to.
Aaron	Those are definitely categories I agree with, but I think that in this circumstance, on the Schuylkill there isn't any tough white, there's some mild white water, and potential for some play spots, but it's certainly not a hot white water trip.

Dr. Hibbs	Which gets into an interesting question. Do you think that this trail, even if it were full blown, would the trail and river ever attract much more then the people in the surrounding counties? I don't mean that as a leading question, it was asked almost as a leading question. It was unintentional.
Aaron	I would not imagine it as a major destination for boaters coming from far away, no. But other urban areas that are a little further away, it might be appealing.
Dr. Hibbs	Such as?
Aaron	Uh, the New York area, or the Philadelphia urban area.
Dr. Hibbs	O.K., for this discussion, though Philly is a part of....
Aaron	O.K., I doubt that you would see people from far away planning their vacation.
Dr. Hibbs	What percentage of people outside of the counties that the river runs through that you would think would visit us even if it were a full blown attraction.
Aaron	What percentage of users outside those counties?
Dr. Hibbs	Yeah
Aaron	Pretty small average.
Dr. Hibbs	As in?
Aaron	As in less than 10 percent.
Doc Ogden	Is that reason because they don't promote, or is that because this area hasn't been promoted, no one knows about it.
All	Yeah, that's right
Dr. Hibbs	People with experience though, that have been to different areas. Will this area ever measure up in physical attributes to other areas?
Bob	Yes, it will not measure up to the Salmon River, and places like that. But having been involved with Sojourn since its inception, I think if it were promoted, alright, we could draw in one or two outfitters, guided trips down the river. There's an awful lot of history here. The river can be very...
Dr. Hibbs	One moment. You said; "draw in one or two outfitters". I'm not sure what that means. I want to make sure. Is it like someone in another state who organizes a trip to come here?
Bob	More along the lines of someone here on the river who is reaching out, drawing people in from outside the area.
Jim	Like guided trips.
Dr. Hibbs	O.K. So, I'm outside, I'm not in my league. But, and this is common in other areas which leads me to believe that the physical attributes of this wouldn't lend itself to doing the same thing. It's more of like a regional destination then, being something in South Eastern, PA, not just the counties along the river.

Bob	Not to sound like Kurt's publicity man, but we do have a great facility. We have great resources. It's been a lot of fun, and having worked with the people on the Sojourn, the guests. I was really impressed with their joy at seeing the river, and hearing about the river, and being on the river. We have taken people of all levels down that river, and told the history as we go by. We stopped at night and had programs dealing with the local area, and told the history. Anything about that area. And they go home and come back for a second or third year. And having done it before, I always thought one trip down this river was enough. Ah, apparently it's not. Apparently these people do enjoy the river.
Kurt	Something I should think they should know, that is going through my mind. We've run the Sojourn for 5 years, and I think that you mentioned 10%, from outside the area. Because we have people from Mass., Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and they've read about this or heard about it from somewhere. We should probably get you those numbers from the last 5 years, and people from out of state can be interested in answering a survey. Why they come here. How they learned about it. It might be a small number, but they come here for a different experience.
Dr. Hibbs	The only thing I'm thinking about, Kurt, is with numbers that small it's hard to effectively appeal to them in a cost efficient manor. Jim?
Doc Ogden	It would be something you'd want to look at later on. Because if you're going to do some primary research with those people. Not only are you going to have to expand the market, we have to identify that easily. Typically with tourism it's exactly what you guys are saying, it's word of mouth build up. Then all of a sudden a promotional splash you get people in with.
Kurt	So it doesn't do anything for you then?
Doc Ogden	No, actually it probably does do something for you. But at this point and time with time restraints, etc., etc., etc., you're gonna need to draw a fairly large sample to get an accurate picture. So you're going to need to talk to thousands of people, if you want to get an accurate picture. 2000 people maybe to get an accurate picture of some of the regions that you're looking to assess. But what will give us a good hint is your telling us they're coming from Maryland, from Virginia wherever. Do they come back? How many repeat customers? That would be really good data. And the states they're coming from will help regionalize the drawing areas. Roger, can we move on and talk about businesses, cause they were kind of segueing into that, and what type of businesses might best suit the needs of these individuals. I don't want to interrupt, but I want to make sure we get that piece in.

Dr. Hibbs	O.K., we have 2 minutes left on this because I think I... This one here I'm asking, what group do you think the Schuylkill Area will attract, and why? Do you think there's anything unique to this area that points to one of these groups over another? Now again, this is so general because we haven't told where there's a "put in" at, what kind of facilities so this is very vague. But is there anything unique about this area that you feel is going to attract one group more than another?
Mike	One thing I can think of is that it's in our own back yard. It's got so many communities around it. That's where I see most of the usage, in the surrounding communities, more than people coming from outside the area. You don't have to look to far when you look at the Delaware River, and you look at the activities at that one facility – Point Pleasant Canoe.
Dr. Hibbs	I'm sorry to interrupt, but, yeah 2 minutes. Does one of those jump out of your mind that this area is going to uniquely speak to? I didn't mean to interrupt you. Does anyone think that there is one area that this area is uniquely more appealing to?
Bryan	I think there's one you're missing, and that's the historical aspect of it. If you put a story there for them about the river. Basically it was throughout the whole Industrial Revolution.
Dr. Hibbs	Oh yeah. The story is already there, it's just a matter of getting it out.
Bryan	You say this is that lock, or this is this lock. Put a picture or a piece of glass over the top of it, whatever. I don't know but that's something that you're totally missing.
Dr. Hibbs	What's interesting about that Bryan is... I'll get off it quick Jim, I promise. Aren't those people going to fall into the family...
Vernon	Family Fun Riders?
Dr. Hibbs	These are going to be the J.V. people. Because they're really here for, if I understand what you're saying. They're really here for the history that happens to co-inside with a walk.
Vernon	Right.
Dr. Hibbs	O.K.
Bryan	One of these should be people from this area that have people coming in from outside the area, and they want to show off something in this area. So they take them out. So they might never have walked the trail themselves, but when their Aunt Betty comes in, they might take her for a walk.
Vernon	Right, anybody can walk it.
Dr. Hibbs	Can we talk about what kind of businesses might work in this area? Again thinking back to different uses of the trail.
Doc Ogden	Roger, can I preface this before we start talking about this for a second? Remember along this Schuylkill River Trail there is a new business called Cabela's that was building up near Reading. That is going to be the number one tourist draw in the East. They are

Doc Ogden, Continued	going to have about 12 million visitors there a year. It will get more visitors than Independence Hall, or the Liberty Bell. Having said that, you have the outdoor sporting equipment there. You will see a huge growth in lodging. It's followed every Cabela's it's built. You will have growth in restaurants. In fact you will have substantial growth. It will amaze you. There will be 3 hotels around there within probably 2 years, around Cabela's. It will amaze you. It's a magnet, and it's going to happen. It happened in Monroe, Michigan. If you look at that site. The build up of Monroe, which was pretty much not near anything. All of a sudden you have every motel chain. You probably have 22 restaurants near there. You have your fishing. You have your hunting. They've got all sorts of new stuff coming up. So, keeping that in mind as we talk about businesses. That you're going to see a huge influx of people coming in. By the way, Valley Forge is going to see quite a few of those people. Can we sneak away some of those people? Or are there some businesses that will compliment that business. As we talk about trying to satisfy the needs of the current consumer there, I think we're going to see some new types of tourists coming into the area. In fact, I'm 100% sure of it. But can we compliment with Cabela's? Because it's there we don't want to fight it. Are there businesses that we can put in to compliment it quite well. So, keep that in the back of your mind as we discuss what attracts business to the area. That the area are attracting, restroom facilities to the area, or whatever we're trying to attract to the area.
Vernon	If anyone has a half a million dollars. I'll build a (?) outside of Cabela's, and I'll put maps out for the trail there.
Dr. Hibbs	You're saying that jokingly?
Vernon	Well ya know if people (?) parking lot, that would be a great spot, ya know.
Dr. Hibbs	In a couple of minutes I'm gonna ask if there's one place to be, where would it be? I'm gonna ask if there is one place...
Vernon	Are you talking about the river, or are you talking about Cabela's.
Doc Ogden	You could go away from Cabela's. You can look at the whole trail, and try to figure out where to locate the business and figure out what type of businesses.
Vernon	Port Clinton would be a good spot.
Doc Ogden	Yeah exactly! Or you can talk about Cabela's and what's around Cabela's. What kind of business would be needed by the groups coming in? The segments you guys are telling us about, there are significant segments here. So if we know these segments are coming in, and you have the Family Fun Rider, the Week End Adventurer, the Active Biker. We know these segments are coming in. What kind of businesses are they going to look at? Keeping in mind that you probably don't want unless you're really, really crazy want to compete with Cabela's.

Dr. Hibbs	Yeah, you need to compliment.
Doc Ogden	You need to compliment. You need to do that with the same product, but you'd have to market it differently. But what kind of businesses could come in there, and where should they locate? Perhaps along the trail.
Vernon	This is what I saw for Port Clinton before Cabela's was there. To me Port Clinton is Jim Thorpe, but there isn't the business there. Now one thing that Jim Thorpe has that Port Clinton does not have, is that they have an ordinance that no chain store can open within a 20 mile radius there. Now obviously that's not possible for that to happen now, but there has to be some type...If you're talking about small retailers, they have to have some type of protection in order to stay in business. Now I don't know, maybe that's...
Doc Ogden	Are you talking about small retailers, or are we talking about attracting larger retailers? What would be comfortable for these segments? Would they rather go to a café? Would they rather go to Bennigans? I mean, would that work? What type of business?
Vernon	Well if you look around here, there's nobody here for Bennigans.
Doc Ogden	No, but one person mentioned McDonalds.
Vernon	Yeah, they mentioned McDonalds, right.
Doc Ogden	Right, well they have McDonalds Cafes coming up, and Starbucks. Do you want something like that? Arby's people, yuppies. Are the Family Fun Riders yuppies? Would they want a Starbucks?
Vernon	I don't know....
Doc Ogden	I'm not trying to be...
Vernon	Don't try to put 'em in Port Clinton.
Mike	There's a place close around Philadelphia where they'll take an organized ride, just to go to Starbucks. Or someplace for bagels, just to have an end destination.
Dr. Hibbs	Let's try to see what best suits the needs of these groups in general, and each of these groups we've just discussed. So, someone tell me what they can envision somewhere along here. And what the question is gonna be coming up is; Can you think of a particular place, that's ideally suited? Now you might say, well, this is our job, and this is where the job begins, in asking you folks your opinion. Let's start with what best fits the needs of these groups.
Hugh	If we're talking about somebody trying to rent bicycles, or renting canoes, kayaks, things like that. I think that you almost have to have a business that someone has already established. Some place pretty close to the river. It's sort of like not giving up your day job, ya know? Because you're not going to be able to start up and actually stay in business effectively, I don't think. Unless there's a tremendous surge in interest, and business. Because you have a lot of expenses to start with. And it would seem to me that an existing business that is already on the river, or close to the river, could go on as a side line, and that would give you your greatest chance of success.

Bob	...it is all on the river.
Hugh	But there are other places. I mean if you're talking about food, etc. There are other places. People who are very close to the river at present, and you could manage it. I mean you don't have to be right on the river. I mean if you look at the places like Jay Pooles on the Brandywine, he's done well. But you've got to remember Jay was a school teacher for many years, and he could...He has a very economic location, behind a parking lot, etc. And he has wild signs to get people in there. Basically he has the whole Brandywine river at his disposal, to use for rental at no cost.
Dr. Hibbs	Hugh, where I'm going with this one. When I think about it, I can't remember the name of it. Pt. Pleasant, wherever it is. When you think about this location you could get much worse. Would you agree with that Mike?
Mike	Yeah, well you could get worse, but it's not...
Dr. Hibbs	I don't think you could get much worse. It's off the beaten path, o.k. Where he "puts in" at is very awkward and bad access o.k. When I take a look at it Bryan, the only attribute I see that falls into where he's at is, there's a parking lot somewhere that allows him to park there, o.k. If you think of some of these canoe places. What I'm trying to say is there's an opportunity here, o.k. to pick a sight, and possibly, possibly, o.k. Integrate a lot of the relevant attributes that are needed, and bring them all to one spot. Because when I think of Pt. Pleasant the only thing that he did was to recognize an unmet need. He didn't do a site selection study. Ya know what I'm saying? He didn't look at, where's my visibility. He didn't look at where are the bathrooms at.
Bob	I would tell you the first thing you need to do is look at the size of the business, alright. And I don't think the Schuylkill Heritage Corridor will ever support huge businesses. You'll never have a Kittanning canoe on the Schuylkill. You will have...
Dr. Hibbs	Where is that at?
Bob	Kittanning is on the Delaware. Their base is near Marshall's Creek. Where I'm going with this is they have landings all the way down.
Dr. Hibbs	That's what I'm getting at here. And if you think about it, we have one thing here that they don't have. Tons of people. Tons of people. You don't have to get in a car and drive there. Now, think about it. If they're willing to go there, how many more people would be willing to go 20 minutes, instead of 2 hours. So, what I'm trying to say is, if the location could integrate, o.k. what the bikers are looking for, a place to put in the boats, a place to put in the tubes, o.k. A place for hikers with the facilities. It becomes planned as far as, o.k. this is the major spot. They can put it in upstream, they could also put it downstream, and the facilities are there to suit. I think there's a synergy

Dr. Hibbs, Continued	there for bringing a lot of different elements together in one location. That says if a guy can make it on the Delaware, who has a location you couldn't trip on if you wanted to. That Pt. Pleasant canoe place. You couldn't trip on it if you wanted too, o.k. And yet it's successful by every, oh I don't know. What would happen if he had a location, and facilities, and access to a larger population? You see what I'm saying? And that's where the opportunity is I think. But that's me talking, you're not here to listen to me. I'm supposed to be listening to you.
Bob	You're going to run into a need for a lot of niche businesses. You're walking on a hiking trail. Ah, ice cream store, sodas. You don't need a full-blown restaurant. Snacks, that kind of thing. As far as canoeing, and kayaking. I think that there has to be a base and then it's up to that person running the business how far he wants his boats and bikes to be out of sight. And where they "put in" and "take out", rest places, and things like that. That's going to have to be worked out based upon where he wants.
Bob, Continued	He or she. But I think they are all going to be smaller businesses. They are not going to be the size of the Kittanning Canoe and if that's what you're envisioning, I don't think it's going to happen.
Vernon	They can support a small family maybe. Maybe your horse is before the cart right now. As it becomes more well known, it's possible. The higher numbers blow me away. 1.6 million? It seems to me it would be a no brainer. If you're looking for a place to put a business, and they want someone to put a business there. Have at it. Where do you want it?
Deirdre	I also want to mention that we're building a museum of American Revolution. We're expecting another 700 hundred thousand. The Audubon Society right across the road in Mill Grove has become a major Audubon Park on the site, the first in America. They haven't given us a projection. That's right at the extension of the park by the Perkiomen Trail, and the Schuylkill River Trail. We know there's potential for a Bed & Breakfast in that area. Now there's nothing. It's amazing to me that there's nothing. No decent Bed & Breakfast anywhere.
Dr. Hibbs	Did I hear in casual conversation with other people here that it's possible that Valley Forge is looking to do this, or invite someone in to do it?
Deirdre	We're not in the business of running businesses. We have concessions we are wanting to fill. We would be looking for professionals to come in and.....
Doc Ogden	They would be like a leased department, or area operations.
Deirdre	Yes
Doc Ogden	What type of businesses would you be looking for?
Deirdre	What we think would be successful is a Bed and Breakfast. We do think it would be a big opportunity for a Bed and Breakfast. And again, it would be trail related, thing might happen. We do have a number of things on the trail, including food service. My sense of bike rentals is that they won't work because I think everyone has one. Maybe we'll get some out of towners. They may or may not take the bike. It may work.

Doc Ogden	Let me throw another cog in. Have you seen the back of this building? What if there were 4,5, or 6 people sitting around a table out there somewhere. They wanted to make sure they were servicing all these groups. So one of them did bike rentals. One did canoe rentals. One of them did whatever. You put in a location like the back of this building, all your 6. Now you've reduced the cost to 1/6 of what it would have cost you to operate that business. Maybe somebody has food service back there. Maybe allow someone a Bed & Breakfast. There's some kind of connection back there.
Dr. Hibbs	Like Jim was saying 4 or 5 different small businesses.
Doc Ogden	Like a flea market for tourism.
Dr. Hibbs	That way there's all kind of shared costs to bring the overhead down. Which brings the breakeven point down. Which may make it more survivable.
Doc Ogden	I'm just throwing that in to get your opinion on it. I'm not saying this is a good idea.
Vernon	I think everyone of us should exchange phone numbers, and pinkie swear, and say we're going to do something about this.
Dr. Hibbs	Exactly, like neighbor to neighbor. If you go to a Sports Authority, and it's not, it's Longhorn Ski and Sport in there with skis, and concessions. I don't know if that's the only one that's there. That's the same type thing as talking about possibilities here.
Wayne	I think like the people who own this building. The first couple of years they could give the concessions breaks on rent, and whatever. They could help them with the building of the business. There are programs that many communities have and they should be able to tap into that.
Dr. Hibbs	So it can help them get over their first year, second year. Who did I ask if they were out of the woods yet? Was it you Vernon?
Vernon	Yeah
Dr. Hibbs	And you said how long now?
Vernon	3 years.
Dr. Hibbs	3 years, and you're still scared? For lack of a better term.
Vernon	Sure, absolutely.
Dr. Hibbs	Any discussion you want to have on this? I thought we'd go a little further than this one.
Bryan	Is marketing a big issue for you? I mean as far as expense in this type of business. You just can't get the word out there. You can't get people to know about you. They don't know what they're missing..
Vernon	Yeah.
Bryan	Is there any organization that you could tap into and connect with?
Dr. Hibbs	See that's what's interesting too. What Jim was saying a minute ago, if you have 5 concessions together, you only need one ad.
Vernon	There are people who don't know about it, and there are people I could be talkin' with. I could be talkin' to Aaron here. I could be talkin' to Jim. But then, you know, how much time do you spend?

Aaron	Well one way is a promotion ad. You should consider this. Newsletters, and other opportunities for pretty inexpensive advertising can reach the real target audience.
Hugh	There are people that want to rent. We get calls all the time. We just refer all of them to the closest place. We get calls all the time. I just try to turn um around, and sell um a thing.
Vernon	What I do in my rental is that if they buy, I'll give um ½ off their rental back.
Hugh	You always want to have some sort of a deal for people. Everyone expects a deal today.
Dr. Hibbs	Here's something I think was hinted at earlier in this question. Does an outfitter, a bike rental place, even need to be next to a river?
Bob	No, but I think you're using the river to draw people together
Dr. Hibbs	You say it stands a better chance of success?
Bob	Sure
Dr. Hibbs	Again, that seems like, duh.
Bob	Now, if you take the one in Jim Thorpe. He's not on the trail. He's probably what, 3 miles from the trail.
Dr. Hibbs	As soon as you come into Jim Thorpe, he's right there. But you see what I'm saying , it's not on the trail
Vernon	There are other things to look at in Jim Thorpe on the bike, you don't necessarily....
Dr. Hibbs	Is there? You can't ride a bike...Can you really ride a bike around Jim Thorpe?
Vernon	Sure
Dr. Hibbs	Well it doesn't seem very user friendly to me.
Vernon	Well no, it's not user friendly. But what I'm saying if you wanted to do that...
Dr. Hibbs	What I'm saying is I don't think any one is going to Jim Thorpe to ride around town.
Aaron	No they would ride the shuttle.
Dr. Hibbs	That goes back to what I was saying earlier. There's a company making money where it has a positive attribute of being in a borough. You know what I'm saying? It has a positive attribute of being in the borough, has a positive attribute of all the parking at the railroad station. But yet they have added expense of trucking people all over the place. Because I think its Schuylkill Haven. 23 miles they take them.
All	White Haven
Dr. Hibbs	Excuse me, White Haven.
Aaron	There are some of the wilderness on the river where you don't have businesses built.
Mike	There are 2 types of rentals too. In the boat rentals. Well like you, are you right on the river itself where you are now?
Vernon	Yeah.

Mike	2 types of rentals I see is; 1. Where the person rents a boat, and they take the boat wherever they want to go. Not too much of that happening around I'll tell ya. And the other type of rental is a control rental. They are renting the boat, and whatever they need, but they are going from point A to point B. Many times there is an employee going along with them. Groups and things like that. Then when they get down river they need somebody to take them back up where they started. So those are really the two, and I think there's more of the later going on than the former. That's how I see it. And it would be difficult to do it unsupervised.
Vernon	For me it's nice cause I don't have to worry about taking them back because they end with me. I got a confluence of 2 rivers. I got the river I got the Appalachian Trail a mile up Rte.78, and a block up on Rte. 61.
Dr. Hibbs	So, you've got everything but people. Is it accurate to say there are no down sides to the river being there, and nothing but advantages to being located by the river, as a generalization? Now, we don't have a location, we don't have facilities. Is that accurate to say?
Mike	Yeah, I think so. Like you said, you don't necessarily have to be on the river if you can have a facility on the river, and run it. Or as he said, an existing business might be brought in, and what he meant by limiting your overhead. You're actually having an existing business going, and you can run this on the side somewhere. But again, the key point is having it on the river. No question as I see it.
Dr. Hibbs	O.K., what would the surrounding area look like? In other words, we talked about this idea of having signs where businesses that you would think would ideally support people using the trail would be. Remember we discussed that in the beginning? O.K., so that's what I'm kind of talking about here. Is there a good idea to link this to business? I'll leave it as simple as that. Is it a good idea to locate one of these things next to services that would commonly be found in a borough?
Jack	I think so.
Dr. Hibbs	When you say that Jack, it reinforces what I said a minute ago in my mind, about the one on the Delaware, Pt. Pleasant. Cause there's nothing there. Ya know what I'm saying? So that's when we say that being in a borough is a plus. O.K. Integrating all facilities and putting them together in one spot is a plus. I think there is something here because we can plan it. That really does increase the success for probability. That the probability for a success rate for a business. If we're in agreement of not just going alone. Anyone want to jump on that?
Bob	It's kind of a no brainer. If you locate your business where your people are, the communities.

Dr. Hibbs	Yes, one aspect. But we're also going back to the facilities that are there. The supporting businesses that are in town. Those are also areas that are going to enhance the success of the business. Especially in those first few years, I think. The Schuylkill River Heritage Area stretches from Philadelphia to the Pottsville/Tamaqua area. If you were to locate along the Heritage Area, in what general area would you locate an outfitter type store and why? Is there an exact location that you think lends itself to a retail location? Now there may not be any thoughts on this at all, at this point. But what I was hoping I might emerge is somebody saying; "No as we're talking here what occurs to me is there might be a spot here, or there might be a spot here, or there may be a spot there. That would be a natural place that we might investigate"
Bob	I would say somewhere between Reading and Pottstown. Why? You're pretty much half way down the river, alright. So that if you were taking canoeing trips, bicycles, to the headwaters. You're not, you're splitting it down the middle. So that you're only going half way. Versus going downriver to pick people up. You're only going half way.
Dr. Hibbs	If we could run with that somewhere between Reading and Pottstown, do you think of a natural split place in between those two boundaries.
Mike	Yeah, I think Birdsboro. I know it from the water.
Dr. Hibbs	So what do you think Birdsboro has to offer?
Mike	It's half way between pretty much. It does have facilities. There are places to get food. There are businesses. Ya know, geographically it's about half way between two population areas Pottstown and Reading.
Bob	The access to the river's there.
Mike	Yeah, like he said, it's about half way down the river itself. And there's not a lot going on just outside of Birdsboro either way.
Dr. Hibbs	That's a point of comparison. And I don't want anyone offended either. I have a preconceived idea of where this thing is gonna go. Compare Birdsboro with the backyard right here. And what do you think are the pros and cons of these two locations. Please, everyone feel free to jump in.
Mike	I think Pottstown probably has more to offer. Definitely has more to offer than Birdsboro. And certainly is on its way to making some scenic views, sure. Although just below Birdsboro, and just above is pretty nice as well.
Dr. Hibbs	What kind of distance are we talking about between Birdsboro and Pottstown?
Jack	It's about 10 miles. Cycling wise I would skip over Birdsboro, and go all the way to Reading. From Reading coming from Philly I'd want to stop here in Pottstown for rest, cause it's about 2 hours each way by bike. Canoe wise, Birdsboro would be a good trail jumping off point from Reading down.

Bob	I would think anywhere between Reading and Pottstown here would be a sight, a good place to be. I think the bigger question becomes; where is an open area you could use? Alright. Cause for boats, for bicycles, you're going to need a fairly large area to store this equipment.
Dr. Hibbs	You bring up an excellent point there, and that's beyond the scope of what we're doing now. Let's do the same thing again. Let's take a look at Reading to Hamburg. Is there any area there? Or is that general area out for a given reason. Ya know what I'm saying?
Jack	Up near Manahockasy some guy wants to build a racetrack up there, and on the side he wants to put up a camping center. Which the bike trail will be running through, past the river.
Dr. Hibbs	That would help, say that name again.
Jack	Manahockasy
Dr. Hibbs	Manahockasy? Where's that at?
Bob	That's up around Doylestown (Juniata County?). There was a livery there.
All	It was successful. I think there were liability issues.
Kurt	I don't think that was the issue. The issue was the kids were basically running it, and they both went back to school.
Hugh	Up in that area, right across the road, is one of the roads going into French Creek State Park.
Dr. Hibbs	How about Hamburg to Pottsville?
Vernon	Port Clinton!
Dr. Hibbs	Vernon does that strike any interest in you of incorporating other.... Like right now you're just, what. You're not in bikes right? You are boats.
Vernon	Backpacks and kayaks.
Dr. Hibbs	Backpacks and kayaks.
Vernon	And everything to go with those.
Dr. Hibbs	O.K., during this discussion has anything occurred to you that might be of interest to bringing into your business, and why?
Vernon	I've already worked through this in my head. I've been through this stuff with myself a million times, what you're doing now.
Dr. Hibbs	Vernon, do you think there would be any advantages to you opening up a second location in these areas that are South of where you're at now?
Vernon	I don't have the money to do it. Sure, yeah, if I had the money I could do a lot of things.
Dr. Hibbs	Deirdre, thank you for coming.
Dr. Hibbs	Do we want to go to the other end now? Bob, do we want to go from Pottstown to Philadelphia? Cause now you're getting into the population. And because of that, there would be more areas that might offer opportunities.

Bob	I'm thinking of the Phoenixville, Mont Clare area. Lock 60, they're already doing things to draw in people. If you could locate very closely to that on either side of the river, you would have a market looking for you. And you know, what business wouldn't desire that?
Dr. Hibbs	What do you think are the attributes that would be appealing?
Bob	Down there?
Dr. Hibbs	Yes
Bob	You have some businesses that would help attract the public to your area. Once I can attract them I can sell them, or at least I can try. In Lock 60 they have a nice park there, alright?
Dr. Hibbs	Give us a place name, cause Lock 60 means nothing to me,
Bob	Mont Clare, right across the river from Phoenixville. You have 2 towns. Mont Clare is a small one, Phoenixville a little larger. Mont Clare has the canal walk.
Dr. Hibbs	Is that where they ski?
Bob	No that's further down.
Dr. Hibbs	Oh, that's down further.
Bob	Mont Clare will be a very good area. Reason being, between Pottsville and Mont Clare there are no dams. Once you to get to Mont Claire, now you're dealing with dams. They're a pain in the butt. At Mont Clare you're at the first major dam, and the Yankee dam is there, and they're not allowing anybody to run.
Dr. Hibbs	After this we will wrap it up. Yes, Vernon.
Vernon	This is off the wall. Obviously there's a purpose to this for everybody, but who's really benefiting here?
Dr. Hibbs	As far as you guys go?
Vernon	Where does this information go?
Dr. Hibbs	Let me back up one step. I felt that the most natural place to start in looking for someone that would be successful in opening up in this area, is somebody who's already in business. That's the most fertile ground. That's the most stocked pond you're gonna fish in. O.k.? So that's the one reason is to see, number one, if anyone else shared that similar thought. To give an example, in the swimming pool business, and I was in that business for some 20 years, the chemical manufacturers would come into you, and say; "you're doing everything right, it's your business. You need to think about a second location. Now we're going to do anything we can to help support you at a second location".
Vernon	Are you the chemical manufacturer?
Dr. Hibbs	No, I was the retailer.
Vernon	No, but I'm saying...
Dr. Hibbs	The chemical manufacturer was selling to me...
Vernon	You're missing my point. I'm saying are you the chemical manufacturer in this scenario? The chemical manufacturer says to you, you're sales are really good I'm...

Bob	He's the consultant in this scenario.
Dr. Hibbs	Actual situation was the chemical manufacturer is coming to meet a retailer, o.k.
Vernon	O.K.
Dr. Hibbs	And saying we like everything you're doing in your business. We've seen how you're growing in your business. At some point you're going to have gotten all you can out of this location. We think you're a natural person to be thinking about a second location. What can we do to help you in deciding where that second location could be? Because if you go into a second location you're going to benefit us in the long run.
Kurt	We're really the chemical salesmen, because they're going to give the information to us. We're gonna say wow, the numbers look really good here. We could use another 2 businesses along the Schuylkill River. Then we're going to come to you and say, hey how about going to another location. If it doesn't work for you, then we go look to somebody else to start a business for us.
Dr. Hibbs	Vernon I don't think there's any grand plan here.
Vernon	I'm not looking for any grand plan, it just seemed like sort of a strange thing...
Dr. Hibbs	We're not reinventing the wheel. Rather than me go through a lot of investigating. What works for you, what works for you, what works for you, what doesn't work for you, what doesn't work for you? Let's put it on the table. You're successful. You've been here for 10 years. Are you thinking about a second location, and what do you think of this idea? You know, somebody says we're looking for a second location, everything you said just stunk. I'm interested in hearing that. Does that help?
Wayne	I think what Vernon might be concerned about is that he's helping a potential new competitor come in the Heritage Area. I think the way this is worded I think the results of the study could help Vernon in his business, versus helping somebody come in. I think all of these businesses here could be looking at a new opportunity and want to find out what the opportunities are to expand their businesses, and find new niches.
Kurt	The other thing I want to say is that the information we get from this study, we'll make available to all of you. If it helps you enhance your business, or grow your business, we've already achieved partial success. We want your businesses to succeed and grow, and we want to place some more businesses here if we can.
Dr. Hibbs	Vernon, would you agree that it was better to have you guys come to the table, rather than us operate without knowing your input?
Vernon	Sure I'm glad for these guys, ya know, show up to make sure nothin's going wrong, cause somebody has to protect it as well. That's a major concern of mine. Obviously because of my business, but not just for that. But because it is recreation for me too.

Dr. Hibbs	O.K. What were, or are the hurdles you encountered when you opened your business? Is there anything the Schuylkill River Heritage Area can you do to help a new business start up, and avoid the hurdles you encountered? How long did it take to consider your business safe and secure? You can see where my question earlier was coming from Vernon, with that. So, let's start out with the first one. What were/are the hurdles you encountered when opening up your business? Bryan can you chime in on that one?
Bryan	Well it worked out pretty well for me. I had to push a little bit, but as far as using the trail itself as a business. Ah, you're using the trail as basically your business. I mean if the trail isn't there, then basically your business is gone, for me renting surreys. I ran it by Ron Albright the director of Parks and Recreation, and the county commissioners. They gave a verbal o.k. But some people started complaining about my surreys running them off the road and what not. Going forward it may be more like location, finding a commercial property along the trail.
Dr. Hibbs	No major hurdles? Any idea how long it's gonna take you to break even? If anyone feels uncomfortable with these types of questions, then don't answer them.
Bryan	Yeah, I mean, I have no idea. Like you were saying, it's a part time business, unless you can get a couple other ideas. I think getting back to what you were saying about picking a location. Some of it is just being a smart businessperson. More so then location, I think. Like he was talking about the guy with flashy signs. Even though his location might stink, but because of his signs.
Dr. Hibbs	To compensate.
Bryan	More important, I would say that's 70% of the success factor of the business. I don't know.
Dr. Hibbs	Vernon, you're kind of a newbie still.
Vernon	For me being a retailer, which I opened up for 3 weeks, and I realized I was in retail. I've never worked retail in my life. I just started out providing a service, and the next thing you know I'm sellin' stuff. Getting the inventory was my biggest thing. I had to pay for everything before I went into my store.
Dr. Hibbs	No trade credit, you're saying.
Vernon	Not at all, none, zero.
Dr. Hibbs	Is that common in the industry you're in?
Hugh	That all depends. When I started out I was in landscaping. I couldn't believe how people looked at me. You know, you're putting out money. I never had this experience before. They think you're not going to pay your bills and this and that.
Dr. Hibbs	You 're the one that sort of evolved into this?

Hugh	Then when we got into the boats, that wasn't any problem. I mean the first company we went to was Old Town. We already had a business going, ya know. We just bought a few boats, and they agreed to do it, and they've been good as far as protection. There are a lot of things. I can understand Vernon. He's sitting over here thinking this guy right over here in Pottstown. He may want to start a place down here. This guy is right down the road here. He's gonna put a rental by the park, and I'm gonna get what's left on the upper part of the river. But I can tell you I'm not interested in rental.
Vernon	Nah, I'm not thinking that..
Hugh	Maybe you aren't, but I'm just telling you that right now. You can see the gray hair on my head.
Dr. Hibbs	And Vernon yours is starting, and you just don't know it yet. Let's get back to the hurdles, if you will.
Hugh	The hurdle, well money is an important thing. Usually you want to make the bank your partner rather than your friends. Because I had people when I first started...I was a chemistry teacher up at Daniel Boone in Birdsboro, and when I left them. There were people who said; "Yeah, we'll be your silent partners". I just avoided that because it's better to be dealing with the bank, even if you have the feeling there's more risk. Because at least then you're making the decisions. You don't have somebody who's not doing any of the work telling you that you're not making enough money because you're doing this all wrong.
Dr. Hibbs	That's assuming you can get money from the bank.
Hugh	Well yeah. That's true, that's true.
Mike	Another hurdle I see is insurance. Liability insurance in particular. Especially in Reading. If you're gonna be renting, especially with water craft of any kind. My God, it's not only do you have to really keep an eye on your business, and have people that are with these people all the time making sure it's done right. Just the liability insurance alone. We all know what the situation with liability is nationwide. Specifically a somewhat dangerous possibility of danger involved in canoeing and kayaking, or tubing for that matter.
Dr. Hibbs	Mike, if you feel uncomfortable answering this, don't answer it, o.k. What do you think the percentage is of your sales that are eaten up by liability insurance?
Mike	I really don't know without looking at...
Dr. Hibbs	Another angle then. You're renting boats...
Mike	No, I don't.
Dr. Hibbs	You don't?
Mike	No
Dr. Hibbs	Vernon, do you feel comfortable talking about, uh, uh, liability insurance?

Vernon	It's thirty five hundred a year. How many boats you gotta rent, pay that out....
Bob	O.K. That's what you're paying a year. That's not bad actually.
Hugh	If you want to be in the rental you have to be young, and not have to many assets they can take away from you.
Dr. Hibbs	Understood, understood.
Vernon	That's the way I look at it right now. If it ever comes to the point where I've got something that they can take....
Dr. Hibbs	You're not going to be renting. (Laughter)
Mike	And there's something that really is key to what you're trying to do here. The rental part of it, especially the water craft is really, and tubes and whatnot. That's a key feature here of why a lot of people don't want to do it. Because of the pitfalls. Insurance is certainly one of them, also the rental, whether it's the property, building or whatever....
	Tape runs out.