Long-distance hikers (LDH) increasingly rely on smartphones (Baker, 2019; Harmon, 2015).

Information as a Management Tool
- Use of Information is an Important and Appropriate Management Tool (Roggenbuck & Watson, 1985; Flood, 2003)
- Understanding recreationist decision-making is complicated but necessary for the design of information materials (Vining & Fishwick, 1991)

Visitor action, example, & potential effectiveness of information to minimize impacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Action</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Info.'s Effectiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illegal</td>
<td>Knowingly camping where prohibited</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careless</td>
<td>Camping next to spring</td>
<td>✅ ✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
<td>Unable to locate marked campsite</td>
<td>✅ ✅ ✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uninformed</td>
<td>Camping on edge of established site</td>
<td>✅ ✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unavoidable</td>
<td>Soil compaction on tent site</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Technology produces both positive gains and new challenges (Freed, 2004)

Research Question
How do LDH use digital information sources to make spatial decisions?

Methodology
- Naturalistic approach: social phenomenon studied in its "naturally occurring state" (Bloor & Wood, 2006, p. 122)
- Participant-observation + semi-structured interviews on the AT in two phases
- Criteria to be LDH: 3+ weeks on-trail

Expected Outcomes
- Provide better understanding of LDH behavior
- Enable evaluation of management strategies in context of new technologies
- Inform design of informational materials that encourage preferred recreation behaviors
- Increase sustainability of long-distance trails and the protected areas through which they pass