

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY
OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC
2008-09

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Overview



- About the 2008-09 Survey
- Key Differences from 2000 Survey
- Key Findings
- Comparisons to 2000 Survey
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About the 2008-09 Survey

- Conducted by the Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center at the University of Wyoming
- Surveyed April 2008 to March 2009
- 4,103 respondents to a 15-minute telephone interview
- Response rate: 12.5%
 - ▣ 15.4% for landlines
 - ▣ 5.7 % for cell phones
- Completion rate: 91%

Key Differences from 2000 Survey

- Used the 2000 visitor definition *and* a more flexible definition
 - ▣ 2000: Correctly name park visited in last 2 years
 - ▣ 2008-09: Additional prompts
 - Common aliases accepted (e.g., “Lake Powell NRA”)
 - Searchable list organized alphabetically and by state
 - Probing questions for state, alternative names, spelling, etc
 - ▣ Reporting results using the 2000 visitor definition for consistency with the 2000 survey
 - ▣ Will explore different definitions in a companion report

Key Differences from 2000 Survey

- Annual coverage
 - ▣ 2000: February to May 2000 only
 - ▣ 2008-09: April 2008 – March 2009
- Interview language
 - ▣ 2000: English only
 - ▣ 2008-09: English and Spanish
- Telephone use
 - ▣ 2000: Landline only
 - ▣ 2008-09: Landline and cell phone

Key Findings: General

- 47% of American adults visited a park in the last 2 years
- Preferred vacation types
 - ▣ Visitors: Nature and historical places or exhibits
 - ▣ Non-Visitors: Spas, resorts, theme parks, cruise ships, and casinos
- Activities that added the most to a park visit
 - ▣ Viewing outdoor exhibits (22%)
 - ▣ Attending ranger-led activities (17%)
 - ▣ Talking informally with a ranger (13%)
 - ▣ Going to the visitor center (12%)

Key Findings: Deterrents

- Why people did not visit more frequently
 - ▣ Visitors
 - Don't know much about parks (8%)
 - High hotel and food costs in parks (13%)
 - Takes too long to get to a park (11%)
 - Reservations have to be made too far in advance (13%)
 - ▣ Non-Visitors
 - Don't know much about parks (32%)
 - High hotel and food costs in parks (25%)
 - Takes too long to get to a park (23%)
 - Reservations have to be made too far in advance (15%)

Key Findings: Deterrents

- Less than 5% of visitors **and** non-visitors strongly agreed that:
 - ▣ Parks are unsafe places to visit
 - ▣ NPS employees give poor service
 - ▣ NPS units are unpleasant places for them to be
- My children are not interested in visiting parks
 - ▣ Visitors: 5% strongly agree
 - ▣ Non-Visitors: 10% strongly agree

Key Findings: Deterrents

- High entrance fees are a deterrent to more frequent visits
 - Visitors: 6%
 - Non-Visitors: 12%
- Marketing would encourage more frequent visits
 - Visitors: 38%
 - Non-Visitors: 45%

Key Findings: Sounds

- Hearing natural sounds in undeveloped areas of large parks is very important
 - ▣ Visitors: 74%
 - ▣ Non-Visitors: 76%
- Hearing cultural and historical sounds in parks such as Gettysburg, Valley Forge, or Mesa Verde is very important
 - ▣ Visitors: 56%
 - ▣ Non-Visitors: 60%

Key Findings: Sounds

- I should ***not*** be able to hear mechanized sounds like engines and cell phones in undeveloped areas
 - ▣ Visitors: 49% strongly agree
 - ▣ Non-Visitors: 45% strongly agree
- Aircraft flights should be limited over undeveloped areas
 - ▣ Visitors: 38% strongly agree
 - ▣ Non-Visitors: 39% strongly agree
- Similar results for jet-skiing and snowmobiling

Key Findings: Management Issues

- Large parks should be free of water pollution from outside sources
 - ▣ Visitors: 77% strongly agree
 - ▣ Non-Visitors: 77% strongly agree
- Large parks should be free of air pollution from outside sources
 - ▣ Visitors: 63% strongly agree
 - ▣ Non-Visitors: 71% strongly agree

Key Findings: Management Issues

- Non-Native plants should be removed
 - ▣ Visitors: 26% strongly agree
 - ▣ Non-Visitors: 23% strongly agree
- Non-Native animals should be removed
 - ▣ Visitors: 18% strongly agree
 - ▣ Non-Visitors: 25% strongly agree
- Animals that used to occur naturally should be brought back
 - ▣ Visitors: 54% strongly agree
 - ▣ Non-Visitors: 56% strongly agree

Key Findings: Management Issues

- Large parks should provide basic facilities such as roads, trails, restrooms, and water fountains
 - ▣ Visitors: 64% strongly agree
 - ▣ Non-Visitors: 65% strongly agree
- Large parks should provide major facilities such as lodges, restaurants, and stores
 - ▣ Visitors: 22% strongly agree
 - ▣ Non-Visitors: 28% strongly agree

Key Findings: Management Issues

- Parks should have night skies without artificial light
 - ▣ Visitors: 53% strongly agree
 - ▣ Non-Visitors: 57% strongly agree
- Private vehicles should be limited during the busiest periods
 - ▣ Visitors: 40% strongly agree
 - ▣ Non-Visitors: 36% strongly agree

Comparisons to 2000 Survey

□ Participation by the American public

Status	2000 Survey	2008-09 Survey
Visited in last 2 years and correctly named a park	32%	46.5%
Others	68%	53.5%

□ Likely to visit a park in the next 12 months

Status	2000 Survey	2008-09 Survey
Very likely/strongly agree	33%	43.3%
Not at all likely/strongly disagree	20%	14.9%

Comparison is approximate due to differing scales

Comparisons to 2000 Survey

□ Participation by race and ethnicity

▣ 2000 survey

Race/Ethnicity	Visitors	Non-Visitors
Hispanic	27%	73%
White	35%	65%
Black	14%	86%

▣ 2008-09 survey

Race/Ethnicity	Visitors	Non-Visitors
Hispanic	32%	68%
White	53%	47%
Black	28%	72%

Comparisons to 2000 Survey

□ Satisfaction with national parks

Response	2000 Survey	2008-09 Survey
Very Satisfied	40%	44.6%
Somewhat Satisfied	46%	32.2%
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	9%	17.9%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	1%	3.3%
Very Dissatisfied	2%	1.5%
No Response	2%	0.5%

Comparison is approximate due to differing scales

Comparisons to 2000 Survey

□ Top reasons for non-visitors not visiting parks

Strongly agree with	2000 Survey	2008-09 Survey
Don't know much about parks	37%	31.8%
Take too long to get to parks	34%	23.0%
Hotel/food costs too high	25%	24.6%

□ Top ideas to increase visitation among non-visitors

Idea	2000 Survey	2008-09 Survey
Increased marketing	43%	44.5%
Lower fees, more parking	11%	7.3%
Nothing – no suggestions	9%	15.0%
Easier access, closer proximity	8%	4.9%

Preliminary Observations

- Our visitors come for the resources and activities parks offer
 - ▣ Duh!
 - ▣ Not all things to all people - no casinos!
- Emphasis on basic facilities in large parks by public
 - ▣ Want basic facilities: roads, trails, restrooms, water fountains (64-65%)
 - ▣ Want major facilities: lodges, restaurants, stores (22-28%)

Preliminary Observations

- Main reason non-visitors don't visit
 - ▣ Don't know much about parks (32%)
 - ▣ Most easily addressed (as opposed to travel cost, travel distance, and reservation times)
 - ▣ Increased marketing is the answer (45%)
- Other reasons are much less important
 - ▣ NPS employees give poor service (2.5%)
 - ▣ Parks are unpleasant places (4.0%)
 - ▣ Parks are unsafe (4.3%)
 - ▣ Children are not interested (10%)
 - ▣ Entrance fees are too high (11.8%)

Preliminary Observations

- Soundscapes are salient
 - ▣ Like natural, cultural, and historical sounds (56-76%)
 - ▣ Don't like noise (38-49%)
- Pollution is salient
 - ▣ Think large parks should be from (63-77%)
- Native animals are salient
 - ▣ Think they should be brought back (54-56%)

Preliminary Observations

- Non-Native plants and animals are much less salient
 - ▣ Think they should be removed (18-26%)

Preliminary Observations

- Marginal increases in participation for all race/ethnicity categories
 - 2000 survey: 14-35%
 - 2008-09 survey: 28-53%

Reports

- National technical **Released**
- Race and ethnicity **Released**
- Comparison with 2000 survey **Released**
- Parks as preferred vacation destinations
- Opinions on park management issues
- Soundscapes
- Regional (7)
- Non-Response bias

Reports

- NPS Social Science web site
 - <http://www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/products.cfm>